

Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790

In the first history of laywomen and the church in colonial Mexico, Jessica L. Delgado shows how laywomen participated in and shaped religious culture in significant ways by engaging creatively with gendered theology about women, sin, and guilt in their interactions with church sacraments, institutions, and authorities. Taking a thematic approach and using stories of individuals, institutions, and ideas, Delgado illuminates the diverse experiences of urban and rural women of Indigenous, Spanish, and African descent. By centering the choices these women made in their devotional lives and in their relationships to the aspects of the church they regularly encountered, this study expands and challenges our understandings of the church's role in colonial society, the role of religion in gendered and racialized power, and the role of ordinary women in the making of colonial religious culture.

Jessica L. Delgado is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Princeton University in New Jersey.

CAMBRIDGE LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

General Editors

KRIS LANE, Tulane University

MATTHEW RESTALL, Pennsylvania State University

Editor Emeritus

HERBERT S. KLEIN

Gouverneur Morris Emeritus Professor of History, Columbia University
and Hoover Research Fellow, Stanford University*Other Books in the Series*

109. *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico: Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531–1706*, Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva
108. *The Mexican Revolution's Wake: The Making of a Political System, 1920–1929*, Sarah Osten
107. *Latin America's Radical Left: Rebellion and Cold War in the Global 1960s*, Aldo Marchesi
106. *Liberalism as Utopia: The Rise and Fall of Legal Rule in Post-Colonial Mexico, 1820–1900*, Timo H. Schaefer
105. *Before Mestizaje: The Frontiers of Race and Caste in Colonial Mexico*, Ben Vinson III
104. *The Lords of Tetzaco: The Transformation of Indigenous Rule in Postconquest Central Mexico*, Bradley Benton
103. *Theater of a Thousand Wonders: A History of Miraculous Images and Shrines in New Spain*, William B. Taylor
102. *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution*, Marcela Echeverri
101. *Indigenous Elites and Creole Identity in Colonial Mexico, 1500–1800*, Peter Villella
100. *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians*, Tatiana Seijas
99. *Black Saint of the Americas: The Life and Afterlife of Martín de Porres*, Celia Cussen
98. *The Economic History of Latin America since Independence*, Third Edition, Victor Bulmer-Thomas
97. *The British Textile Trade in South American in the Nineteenth Century*, Manuel Llorca-Jaña
96. *Warfare and Shamanism in Amazonia*, Carlos Fausto
95. *Rebellion on the Amazon: The Cabanagem, Race, and Popular Culture in the North of Brazil, 1798–1840*, Mark Harris
94. *A History of the Khipu*, Galen Brokaw
93. *Politics, Markets, and Mexico's "London Debt," 1823–1887*, Richard J. Salvucci
92. *The Political Economy of Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, Roberto Cortés Conde
91. *Bankruptcy of Empire: Mexican Silver and the Wars Between Spain, Britain, and France, 1760–1810*, Carlos Marichal
90. *Shadows of Empire: The Indian Nobility of Cusco, 1750–1825*, David T. Garrett
89. *Chile: The Making of a Republic, 1830–1865: Politics and Ideas*, Simon Collier
88. *Deference and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890–1950*, Michael Snodgrass
87. *Andrés Bello: Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Ivan Jaksic

(Continued after the index)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-19940-8 — Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790

Jessica L. Delgado

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism
in New Spain, 1630–1790

JESSICA L. DELGADO

Princeton University



Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-19940-8 — Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790

Jessica L. Delgado

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.orgInformation on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107199408

DOI: 10.1017/9781108185639

© Jessica L. Delgado 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

NAMES: Delgado, Jessica L., 1972– author.

TITLE: Laywomen and the making of colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790 /
Jessica L. Delgado, Princeton University.DESCRIPTION: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Series: Cambridge Latin
American studies

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2017052814 | ISBN 9781107199408

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Catholic Church – Mexico – History – Spanish colony, 1540–1810. |
Catholic women – Mexico – History – Spanish colony, 1540–1810.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC BX1428.3 .D45 2018 | DDC 282/.7208209032–dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017052814>

ISBN 978-1-107-19940-8 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For Kaya

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-19940-8 — Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790
Jessica L. Delgado
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	page viii
Part I	
Introduction: Troubling Devotion	3
1 Sacramental Learning	33
2 Public and Scandalous Sin	73
3 Ambivalent Witnesses	110
Part II	
Places and Practices of Cloister	141
4 Cloister for the Poor and Virtuous	145
5 Cloister for the Unruly and Unhappy	191
6 In the Convent but Not of It	220
Conclusion: Laywomen Making Colonial Catholicism	259
<i>Bibliography</i>	262
<i>Index</i>	274

Acknowledgments

It would be impossible to properly thank everyone who deserves my gratitude here. This book was written with the help and support of countless friends and colleagues and is the culmination of a very long journey. What follows is by necessity utterly inadequate.

To my many mentors, there is a part of each of you in this book. Please know that you have taught and given me much more than what I can express here.

I began my graduate studies at the University of California at Santa Cruz and incurred many debts there. Akasha Hull inspired and affirmed my interest in women and spirituality. David Sweet showed me the importance of individual life stories built from fragments and the possibility of good history as a form of justice making. Farnaz Fatemi first taught me to write and then taught me to believe in where my writing could take me. Her friendship then sustained me through the years. Marilyn Westerkamp modeled determined and precise scholarship about religion and early modern women, and she supported my work, even when it led me to leave her program. Lisbeth Haas taught me that research could and should be nourishing; her unfailing support followed me far beyond my days at UCSC. Bettina Aptheker, Emily Honig, Tyler Stovall, Alice Yang-Murray, Edmund Burke, María Elena Díaz, Pedro Castillo, Sonia Alvarez, and Guillermo Delgado each played an important role in my formation as a scholar and in the long path to this book. I am grateful also to the wonderful History Department staff for the years of support. My fellow graduate students, too numerous to mention, also inspired and supported me. Tiffany Wayne, Rebecca Hall, and Rick Warner stand out as exceptional intellectual compañeros and lifelong friends.

I completed my doctorate and the dissertation version of this book at UC Berkeley, where I was blessed with exceptional mentors and colleagues. My advisor, William B. Taylor, deserves more gratitude than anyone else for my ability to be a teacher and scholar. Though I have accepted that I will never achieve the standard of excellence his example reflects, I will continue to strive

Acknowledgments

ix

toward it. This book owes much to his gentle pushing, generous critique, and infinite curiosity. I trust that he knows how grateful I am for his ongoing support, collaboration, and friendship. Margaret Chowning has challenged, inspired, and fortified me in equal parts throughout graduate school and beyond. Her precision, astute guidance, and loyal friendship have been indispensable. I thank Walter Brem for years of archival support and lessons. Working as his curatorial assistant at the Bancroft Library was a great honor and aided my research in countless ways. I am also indebted to David Kessler for his expert assistance, his warmth and humor, and the delicious sandwiches made from his famous homemade bread that got me through long days of work. I am eternally grateful to the wonderful and amazing Mabel Lee and the fantastic Barbara Hayashida for their incredibly generous administrative support and help through numerous logistical problems. Dalia Muller, Camilo Trumper, Celso Castilho, and José Refugio de la Torre will know that this brief expression of thanks for their companionship, intellectual engagement, and unforgettable friendship could never do justice to what we shared and built together in our Berkeley years. I thank them anyway, from the bottom of my heart. I thank Jennifer Hughes, the trickster genius of our field and my partner in mischief and discovery, for sharing resources, research travails, and friendship. I want to thank Sylvia Sellers-Garcia, Brian Madigan, Sean McEnroe, Paul Ramirez, Karen Melvin, Kristin Huffine, and especially Brianna Leavitt-Alcantara for their friendship, support, company, critique, suggestions, and continued collaboration. May it continue for years to come.

I am deeply indebted to many scholars, friends, and archivists in Mexico. Gabriela Cano and Brian Connaughton sponsored me as a Fulbright scholar when I began my research, and their assistance and good advice were indispensable. The Portilla family has provided shelter, wonderful food, important intellectual connections, warmth, and friendship for all of the years of research that went into this book and every year since. To Tina, Santiago, Dulce, and Anita, I truly could not have written this without you. This is also true for Lourdes Juarez Marusich, whose friendship and generous hospitality has supported me for more than a decade. I am grateful to the Colegio de Mexico and UNAM Itztapalapa for institutional sponsorship. I owe an enormous debt to the skilled and generous archivists and staff at the AGN, Condumex, AHAM, and Vizcainas. I cannot possibly name everyone individually who helped me with their expertise, time, and energy, but I am grateful to them all. Berenise Bravo Rubio and Marco Antonio Perez Iturbide of AHAM deserve special mention, however. Large parts of this book would not have been possible without their generosity and the depth of their knowledge. Many historians of Mexico will understand what I mean

when I say that it was tempting to spend all of my time working at AHAM under the excellent care of Bere and Marco.

I am grateful to the faculty and staff in the History Department and the Program in Latin American Studies at Smith College and to the Five College Women's Studies Research Center for the two years I spent in the Pioneer Valley writing my dissertation. I want to thank my writing companions and friends there, known among ourselves as the Forbes Library Crew. The company and support of Asha Nadkarni, Nerissa Balce, Dayo Gore, and Richard Chu made a crucial difference in those years and beyond. I am also grateful to Dana Liebsohn, Ann Zulawski, Nina Scott, Laura Lovett, Babette Faehmel, and Nela Trivkovic for their friendship and years of intellectual support.

The colleagues and friends at Princeton University to whom I owe a significant debt of gratitude could fill a chapter of this book. I am very grateful to Jenny Legath, Anita Kline, Robert Wuthnow, and the rest of the faculty and staff of the Center for the Study of Religion for the material and intellectual support during and beyond the three years I spent as a CSR fellow. My work owes so much to the conversations, friendship, and suggestions of the many fellows with whom I collaborated. Amy Kittelstrom's friendship has become a lifeline, and her intellectual acumen, scholarly rigor, and genuine vocation for what we do continue to inspire me. Phil Habberkern's humor and careful reading kept me afloat many a time, and his pointed questions made these chapters better. Manu Radhakrishnan and I shared drinks, ideas, and solidarity, and he offered key insights at crucial moments in my revisions. Annie Blazer, aka "the instigator," always got me to "do stuff" that I was later very glad I did, and she somehow got me to write both faster *and* better. Grace Yukich, Rebecca Sager, Martha Finch, and Hillary Kaell all offered important suggestions, which, along with their warmth and friendship, all improved my work.

I want to thank the entire faculty and staff in the Religion Department for nurturing an exceptionally stimulating and supportive environment in which to work. I will always be grateful to Leigh Schmidt and Marie Griffith for bringing me into this wonderful community and for their early mentorship at the start of my postgraduate career. Judith Weisenfeld, Wallace Best, Kathryn Gin Lum, Seth Perry, and John Gager all read and commented on my work extensively and have accompanied me through all stages of revision and publication with unwavering support and friendship. Eddie Glaude, Jeff Stout, Eric Gregory, Anne Marie Luijendijk, Shaun Marmon, Leora Batnitzky, Stephen (Buzzy) Teiser, Moulie Vidas, Naphtali Meshel, Al Raboteau, and Liane Carlson have all offered support and guidance in numerous ways throughout the process of revising and expanding the manuscript. I am grateful to the participants of the

Acknowledgments

xi

Religion in the Americas Workshop; the Gender, Sexuality, and Religion Working Group; and the Religion and Culture Workshop for years of critical suggestions and intellectual community. Rachel Lindsey, Rachel Gross, Nicole Kirk, Vaughn Booker, Ryan Harper, Kelsey Moss, Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada, Leslie Ribovich, Beth Stroud, Andrew Walker-Cornetta, Eden Consenstein, Madeline Gambino, Ahmad Green-Hayes, and Ileri Chavez Barcenas deserve particular mention among them. I am grateful as well to my research assistants, Valeria Lopez Fadul and Sophia Nuñez, for their invaluable work that stretched across several years. To BM Pietsch, who made me promise to call him that in these acknowledgments, I owe an immense debt of gratitude, not only for his close reading and excellent suggestions, but also for tirelessly coaching me through the final stretches of revisions when I was greatly in need of some tough love. And to those other steadfast coaches, my fellow “Deadline Oriented Productivity Experiment” members, Annie Blazer, Nicole Kirk, Kathryn Gin Lum, and Judith Weisenfeld, I offer thanks for hilarity and friendship and for keeping me on track over the long haul. They will understand everything encompassed in the now famous phrase: “DOPE, it works!”

I have been blessed with an intellectual home away from home in the History Department of the Ohio State University, and I am grateful to the faculty and staff for all of their help and guidance. I am especially grateful to Birgitte Solange and her daughter, Anna, and to Lucy Murphy and Tom Murphy for friendship and support, as well as intellectual and creative companionship, that have made a critical difference for me and for my family. Birgitte invited me to participate in a conference on the History of Kinship and the Family, and my respondents, Kristina Sessa and Mary Thomson, asked provocative questions that will continue to push me beyond what I have written here. I am also grateful to many other colleagues and friends who have enriched my work and time at OSU in many ways. Among them I especially want to mention Azita Ranjbar, Stephanie Smith, Thomas (Dodi) McDow, Margaret Newell, Randy Roth, Steve Kern, Nate Rossenstein, David Brakke, Jane Hathaway, Kathryn Marino, Robin Judd, Alexander Kaye, and Susan Hartmann. I am grateful for my talented research assistant, Dani Anthony, for the important work she did for me in the sabbatical year I spent at OSU completing this book. And of course, to Shalya Harrison, I could not have finished this book without the love and care you extended to my daughter and to me.

Scholars at other institutions have offered important support as well. I am grateful to a number of scholarly collectives, including La Patrona Collective for the Study of Colonial Latin America, Yale’s Material Economies of Religion in

the Americas, and the Tepoztlan Institute of Transnational Studies, for inspiration and collaboration that injected new life into my work at key moments. Ken Mills, Matt O'Hara, Donna Guy, Jocelyn Alcott, Pamela Voekel, Jennifer Hughes, Kirstie Dorr, and Sara Clarke Kaplan have all read or heard parts of my manuscript and engaged deeply with my arguments in ways that helped me to sharpen them. I am very grateful to the two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press who offered extremely helpful suggestions and critique.

At Cambridge University Press's New York office, my editor Debbie Gershenowitz and her assistant Kris Deusch have guided me through the process of publication from start to finish. I am grateful to both of them and to the series editors, Matthew Restall and Kris Lane, for their interest in this project and the work they did to bring it to fruition. I am also grateful to Bronte Rawlings, my content manager at the London office; Indhumathi Kuppusamy and Rogini Rajendiran, the project managers at Integra; and the copyeditor, Karin Kipp, for their time and skill. And for the best indexer I could ask for, Tiffany K. Wayne, I give many thanks and praises.

This project has benefited from the institutional and financial support of a number of programs and organizations. I am grateful for generous fellowships from the Bancroft Library, Fulbright-Hayes, and UC Berkeley's history department, and the Five College Women's Studies Research Center at Mt. Holyoke College for making the research and writing possible during the dissertation stage of this work. I would like to thank Princeton's Center for the Study of Religion, the Department of Religion, the Humanities Council, and the Program in Latin American Studies for research funding and fellowships that supported revision and expansion of the manuscript. I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for a summer fellowship that supported crucial final revisions.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to programs at a number of universities that invited me to present parts of the book and to the scholars who attended these talks and offered important feedback. At Princeton, these include the American Studies Workshop, the Latin American Studies Works in Progress Lunch Seminar, and the Davis Center for Historical Studies. Elsewhere, they include the Gender and Sexuality History Workshop at the Ohio State University, the Feminist Research Alliance and Early Modern Research Workshops at SUNY at Buffalo, and the Society for the Study of Women and the Renaissance at CUNY Graduate Center.

I am blessed beyond measure by a group of friends and extended family without whom I could not have done any of this. To my CCC sisters, for your

Acknowledgments

xiii

unconditional love and support, I can never repay you, and I know that you will never ask me to. Jennifer Hamelburg, Emily Leys, Kirstie Dorr, Vanessa Zelenak, Erica Steiner, Heather Murphy, and Sara Clarke Kaplan, this book belongs to you in so many ways. And to our second generation, Odile, Lily, Ava, Sara, Max, Abby, Miles, and of course, Kaya, you have helped me keep it all in perspective. And there are many more treasured friends who helped: Hilary Bryant, for her endless support and belief in me; Farnaz Fatemi, for inspiration and refreshing my spirit; Marla Hoffberg and Sutton Pierce, for their exceptional loyalty and ever-available cheer; Mary Ader, for her interest in my work and support in innumerable material and emotional ways; Conlaodh Guy, for more than I can find words for; Tanya and Greg Madigow, for taking care of my family and me when we needed it; my cousin Kirsten Delgado, for inspiring conversations, love, and appreciation; my sister-cousin Amanda Ferguson, her wonderful wife (and my dear friend), Jennifer Pariseau, and their two beautiful children, Oliver and Elodie, for years of friendship, food, fun, and shelter in both good and bad times throughout my writing and research. Without each of these people, this book would not exist.

My grandparents, Scott and Kel Ferguson, Rogelio Rodriguez Delgado, and Eva West Delgado, each inspired in me a love of learning and supported me in spiritual and material ways. My “baby” brother, Nathan Roger Delgado, has been my greatest champion through it all. My parents, Linda Ferguson Delgado and Roger Rodriguez Delgado, deserve at least one hundred pages of thanks. Your faith in me; your material, emotional, and intellectual support; your vast patience; and your unconditional love have meant more than any words I could find to describe them, so I will have to make do with saying thank you and that I will strive to make good use of them always. My life partner, Daniel Winunwe Rivers, has accompanied me from start to finish and helped me in more ways than I can enumerate. A brilliant historian and scholar, he blessed me with his insight at every stage of research and writing. As a friend and companion, he lifted my flagging spirits, quelled my doubts, and picked up the slack when the research and writing took me away from our family. For his understanding, love, and loyalty, I will be forever grateful.

But there is one person who has blessed my life more than anyone else, and that is my daughter, Kaya Linda Delgado-Rivers. Her light is brighter than anything I have seen, and her presence infuses everything I do. I dedicate this book to her. May her future benefit in some way from the lives and struggles of the women whose stories fill its pages.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-19940-8 — Laywomen and the Making of Colonial Catholicism in New Spain, 1630–1790
Jessica L. Delgado
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)
