

Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico

Using the city of Puebla de los Ángeles, the second-largest urban center in colonial Mexico (viceroyalty of New Spain), Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva investigates Spaniards' imposition of slavery on Africans, Asians and their families. He analyzes the experiences of these slaves in four distinct urban settings: the marketplace, the convent, the textile mill and the elite residence. In so doing, *Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico* advances a new understanding of how, when and why transatlantic and transpacific merchant networks converged in Central Mexico during the seventeenth century. As a social and cultural history, it also addresses how enslaved people formed social networks to contest their bondage. Sierra Silva challenges readers to understand the everyday nature of urban slavery and engages the rich Spanish and indigenous history of the Puebla region while intertwining it with African diaspora studies.

Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva is Assistant Professor in the History Department at the University of Rochester, New York.



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

- 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 Tetzcoco: 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

(Continued after the index)



Urban Slavery in Colonial Mexico

Puebla de los Ángeles, 1531–1706

PABLO MIGUEL SIERRA SILVA

University of Rochester, New York







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
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,

a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108419819

DOI: 10.1017/9781108304245

© Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva 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 & Assessment.

First published 2018

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-108-41981-9 Hardback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment 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 Felipe Monsón y Mojica



Contents

List of Figures and Tables		page xi
Ackn	owledgments	xiii
List of Archival Abbreviations		xvii
	Introduction	I
I	Early Puebla and the Question of Labor, 1531–1570	21
2	Ambition and Agency in the Obraje	45
3	Captive Souls: Nuns and Slaves in the Convents of Puebla	76
4	The Puebla Slave Market, 1600–1700	107
5	Life in the Big City: Mobility, Social Networks and Family	144
6	The Other Market: Commerce and Opportunity	177
	Epilogue	200
Appe	ndix A Bill of purchase for Arara captives on the	
Puebla slave market, 1615		205
Appe	ndix B Testament of Francisco Carmona, 1633	207
Bibliography		211
Index		223



Figures and Tables

Figures

Map of Puebla de los Ángeles, seventeenth century. Created by	
Benjamin Gerstner	page 3
Number of enslaved people sold on Puebla slave market,	
1600–1700	128
Map of central and eastern Mexico. Created by Tim O'Brien	142
Tables	
Workforces in inspected textile mills, 1583–1584	page 52
Number of married slaves owned by obrajeros in	
seventeenth-century Puebla	67
Enslaved people in Puebla convents, 1597–1710	91
Sample of slaves in Puebla bills of purchase by region of	
provenance, 1590–1639	130
Brotherhoods for people of African and Asian descent in	
seventeenth-century Puebla	161
Manumission of María de Terranova compared to other prices	182
	Benjamin Gerstner Number of enslaved people sold on Puebla slave market, 1600–1700 Map of central and eastern Mexico. Created by Tim O'Brien Tables Workforces in inspected textile mills, 1583–1584 Number of married slaves owned by <i>obrajeros</i> in seventeenth-century Puebla Enslaved people in Puebla convents, 1597–1710 Sample of slaves in Puebla bills of purchase by region of provenance, 1590–1639 Brotherhoods for people of African and Asian descent in seventeenth-century Puebla



Acknowledgments

This project began in the fall of 2006 when I arrived as a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles. The faculty and staff of this wonderful institution always made me feel a part of a greater academic community that challenged my thinking in ways I could have never foreseen. To my doctoral advisor, mentor and dear friend, Kevin Terraciano, I can only offer my utmost gratitude. I am just as indebted to Robin Derby, Andrew Apter, William Summerhill, Christopher Ehret, Brenda Stevenson, Teófilo Ruíz, Juan Gómez-Quiñones and many other UCLA historians. The seminars, independent studies and candid advice on the academic profession have proven invaluable. I must also extend a heartfelt "thank you" to Professors Mark Sawyer, Edward Telles, Claudia Parodi and Anna More for making me a better scholar. To my cohort, Dana Velasco-Murillo, Brad Benton, Verónica Gutiérrez, Xóchitl Flores, Peter Villela, Zeb Tortorici, Phillip Ninomiya and Sabrina Smith, mil gracias. I am especially in debt to my wife, best friend and colleague, Molly Ball. This project simply would not have been possible without you.

This book is also the product of the rich debates and conversations fostered at several academic conferences. My first paper was delivered at the Annual Meeting for the Society of Ethnohistory. The members of this vibrant community have always welcomed me into their midst, and for that I am grateful. Throughout the years, Matthew Restall, Susan Schroeder, Lisa Sousa, Laura Matthew and Camilla Townsend have offered insightful suggestions at Ethnohistory conferences. To Ben Vinson, Nicole von Germeten, Paul la Chance, Sherwin Bryant, Evelyn Jennings, Roquinaldo Ferreira, Joseph Miller and all of the commentators for the chapters that have gradually morphed into this book, thank you. Robert Schwaller contributed valuable insights for Chapter 1. Anne MacPherson and the members of the New York State Latin America History Workshop (NYSLAHW) have offered constructive criticism for Chapter 3. Tatiana Seijas has helped me understand the slave market of Mexico City, while David Wheat and Marc Eagle have been instrumental in expanding my understanding of the



xiv

Acknowledgments

transatlantic slave trade and Spanish circum-Caribbean. Alex Borucki, this book simply would not have been possible without you. Thank you for sharing your time and knowledge.

I am honored to publish this study as part of Cambridge University Press's Latin American Studies Series. Debbie Gershenowitz saw this project through from a few chapter samples to a finished product. Kristina Deusch put all the pieces together to complete this colonial puzzle. Thank you to both! Kris Lane and Matthew Restall, thank you for your time and invaluable support as series editors. It means the world to me. I would also like to thank this book's anonymous reviewers for their insightful commentaries and suggestions. I hope I have matched your expectations.

I am greatly indebted to the University of Rochester, where I have been warmly received as a member of the academic community. Matt Lenoe, Mike Jarvis, Laura Smoller, Ryan Prendergast, Margarita Guillory, Jennifer Kyker and all my colleagues at the U of R, thank you for making the transition from graduate student to assistant professor such an enjoyable experience. The wonderful maps found in this book are the careful work of Benjamin Gerstner and Tim O'Brien. I also hold a debt of gratitude to all the wonderful graduate and undergraduate students who have challenged my thinking during these first years of teaching. Tucker Million, many thanks for indexing this project. I owe an especially effusive "thank you" to Anna Jarvis for her copyediting and suggestions during this project's final phase.

Funding for this project came from several generous institutions. A Fulbright-Hays DDRA Fellowship supported research in Puebla and Mexico City. The UCLA School of Graduate Studies supported summer research in New Orleans, while UC-Mexus also contributed a grant to further fieldwork during my final year of doctoral research. An internal fellowship at the University of Rochester's Humanities Center provided valuable time to complete the manuscript and funded research in Seville. Further financial support from U of R made additional research in Lisbon possible.

I must express my gratitude to the gatekeepers of Puebla's archives, María Antonieta Esquivel Torres, Gabriela Rivera Carrizosa, María Aurelia Hernández Yahuitl. To the parish priests of Analco, San José and El Sagrario, and to the staff and directors of Puebla's Municipal, Notarial and Historical Judicial archives and many others: *mil gracias*. I will always be indebted to Blanca Lara Tenorio for her willingness to share handwritten archival notes, unpublished papers and the treasures found in the Centro INAH-Puebla. Through the years, Lidia Gómez García has provided a blueprint for the selfless researcher, mentor and colleague that I hope to become. *Gracias*, Lidia! Miguel Ángel Cuenya Mateos opened the doors of the Casa Amarilla library and the greater BUAP research community to me. I will always be indebted to Isis Zempoaltecatl, Guillermo García



Acknowledgments

xv

Rodríguez, Gustavo Mauleón and Rafael Castañeda García for their camaraderie and support.

Finally, this book would not have been possible without the care and support of my loving family (spread out across many lands and nations). *Familia*, *muchas gracias*!



Archival Abbreviations

Archivo del Cabildo Catedralicio de Puebla ACCP Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla AGI AGMP Archivo General Municipal de Puebla Archivo General de la Nación, México AGN Archivo General de Notarías de Puebla AGNP Archivo Histórico Judicial de Puebla, INAH AHJP AHN Archivo Histórico Nacional, España AHU Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, Lisboa APSI Archivo Parroquial del Señor San José **ASAC** Archivo del Santo Angel Custodio (Analco) ASMP Archivo del Sagrario Metropolitano de Puebla BNE Biblioteca Nacional de España FAJML Fondo Antiguo José María Lafragua, Puebla LAL Latin American Library, Tulane University

xvii