

## Beyond Babel

In the seventeenth-century, black linguistic interpreters and spiritual intermediaries played key roles in the production of writings about black men and women. Focusing on Peru and the southern continental Caribbean, *Beyond Babel* uncovers long-ignored or lost archival materials describing the experiences of Africans and their descendants in the transatlantic slave trade and the colonial societies where they arrived. Brewer-García's analysis of these materials shows that black intermediaries bridged divisions among the populations implicated in the slave trade, exerting influence over colonial Spanish American writings and emerging racial hierarchies in the Atlantic world. The translated portrayals of blackness composed in collaboration with these intermediaries stood in stark contrast to the pejorative stereotypes common in literary and legal texts of the period. This book reconstructs the context of those translations and traces the contours of the notions of blackness they created, which were characterized by physical beauty and spiritual virtue.

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# Beyond Babel

*Translations of Blackness in Colonial Peru and  
New Granada*

LARISSA BREWER-GARCÍA  
*University of Chicago*



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*Para La Boquilla, Cartagena de Indias*

*y*

*Sam*

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## Note on Transcriptions and Translations

The primary texts analyzed in this book were written in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan, Latin, and French. My citations keep the spelling and punctuation from the original printed and manuscript texts, with the exception of modernizing u/v and i/j reversal, and unifying split words erroneously separated by the typesetter. Any other modifications, such as making explicit content elided in abbreviations, are marked with brackets. In the English translations, I have standardized capitalization. All translations into English are my own unless otherwise specified.