SLAVERY AND THE CONTEXT OF ETHNOGENESIS: AFRICANS, AFRO-CREOLEs, AND THE REALITIES OF BONDAGE IN THE KINGDOM OF QUITO, 1600-1800

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the emergence of African slavery in the Kingdom of Quito, this dissertation argues that Quito was not only typical of large Spanish American slave societies, was in many respects the quintessential Spanish American slave society. Similar to New Spain and Peru, in Quito, African slavery emerged first within the urban center of Quito, and extended almost immediately to the kingdom’s rural periphery. A region dominated by a strong indigenous presence, the areas of modern-day Ecuador and southern Colombia were thought, until now, not to possess significant numbers of African-descended slave laborers. Nevertheless, the region was marked by slavery and possessed three principal slaveholding regions—Popayán, the north-central highlands, and the district of Guayaquil. Similar to other Spanish American slave societies, throughout Quito, Afro-Creole slave laborers commingled always with diverse racial and ethnic pools of coerced laborers. Although African slavery represented only one of several ways Spaniards chose to divide labor in the kingdom, enslaved Africans and their Afro-Creole descendants formed the critical quadrant of Quito’s work sector. Without them Spaniards would not have been able to exploit the region’s natural resources on the scale witnessed over the course of the colonial era, as Andeans represented a highly visible, yet unstable labor source. Elites employed slave laborers as bodyguards, auxiliaries in conquest campaigns, and as a mobile supplemental labor force when Andeans proved unavailable due to death, migration, and resistance. Nevertheless, the role of the enslaved was not always auxiliary. From the earliest moments of the colony’s history, enslaved rebels and fugitives helped to order and reorder the colonial regime. Through flight, rebellion, and violent confrontation, the enslaved forced slaveholders into an array of arrangements, creating, at times, a context of fear that even judicial officials could not afford to ignore. The crown and its American surrogates responded to early colonial anxieties over slave flight and rebellion through a series of pragmatic ordinances and control measures, meeting out
harsh punishments to incorrigible rebels and fugitives while maintaining a juridical space for slave laborers who complied with social norms and comported themselves as subjects of the Spanish King.

Intended as a first attempt at providing the field with a comprehensive analysis slavery and slave life in the North Andes, this work looks comparatively at the realities of bondage in two of Quito’s three principal slaveholding regions—Popayán and Quito, while exploring Quito’s unique context for African and Afro-Creole identity formation. Unlike late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Mexico City, eighteenth-century Louisiana, and eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Virginia and South Carolina, all of which held ethnically diverse slave populations, Quito’s enslaved population did not feature sizable clusters of any one or two African ethnic groups that might have allowed for endogamous unions or the formation of communities based upon ethnic or socio-linguistic affinities. Consequently, the socio-cultural matrix was always polyethnic and polycultural.

Thus, African-descended people in Quito engaged in at least two inter-related, ethnogenic processes occurring simultaneously. There, formerly discrete peoples from the interior of the Upper Guinea Coast, the Lower Guinea and West Central Africa were not only brought into contact with others from within their “culture zones,” but were also connected to individuals who fell outside of their culture zones. Arrival in the North Andes, then, precipitated two additional processes that ran concurrently with the previous two—intermarriage with Andeans and Afro-criollos (people of African descent born within the empire, both in Iberia and the Americas), and unions with the offspring of those unions and with Europeans; that is, the spawning and engagement of the so-called “castas” (e.g., pardos, mulattos, zambos, mestizos, morenos, etc).

Ultimately, this study suggests that returning to the world that work, geography, and demography made is not only necessary, but also essential to understanding identity formation within the African Diaspora. Engaging those seemingly marginal Spanish American slave societies is fundamental to a greater understanding of black life and the formation of creole consciousness throughout the Americas.
To

Aliyah and Naiyah
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before I could aspire to do academic work or even come to appreciate the importance of telling stories, my parents and grandparents emphasized the importance of history by ensuring that I understood my family’s legacy of struggle and hard work. One of my first history teachers was my paternal grandmother, Bessie Mae Bryant. Like her, I learned to appreciate the importance of the past during some of life’s most intimate and personal moments. For grandma Bessie and her sister, aunt Beulah, the moment came when they were washing the back of their grandmother—Katherine Hazard. There, they encountered the scars she bore as a result of a whipping she had received during “slavery days.” Reputedly an ex-slave of the “Bellamy Woods Plantation,” grandma Katherine recounted the horrors of slavery to her young granddaughters on that day. That story, told, sometimes with a little prodding but, usually in the context of grandma Bessie’s many admonitions that I hold dear our family’s legacy, left an indelible impression upon me. In many ways, writing about enslaved African and Afro-Quiteño grandmothers and grandfathers, and the children they reared, freed, and otherwise worked to shield from the masters’ lash, has been a rather personal endeavor. Consequently, this privilege and responsibility has been both wonderfully fascinating and, at times, extremely weighty.

In addition to grandma Bessie’s many admonishments, my maternal grandfather, William Clemons, provided me with a trust fund that will never run out—a glimpse of what hard work was really all about. A master carpenter and builder in his own right, granddaddy Billy employed me in his many housing construction and renovation projects throughout the Cape Fear River Valley in North Carolina. He taught me the trade just as he did his own sons, and for this I will be ever grateful. My memories of crawling under houses, tearing off and replacing shingles on the hot rooftops in mid-July and August while renovating and/or building houses are lasting impressions of the rewards of hard work and the centrality of perseverance in all of life’s endeavors.
In addition to grandma Bessie and granddaddy Billy, I benefited from the love and influence of several other senior family members, namely my maternal grandmother, Essie Mae Clemmons, and my two great-grandmothers—Bell Robbins and Laura Clemmons Kennedy. Although I did not interact with one of grandma Bessie’s first cousins—cousin Katie—much as a child, she also reinforced the importance of history and legacy just before I left for graduate school. It was cousin Katie who helped me as I began to reconstruct the Bryant family history in a more meaningful way, filling in some of the gaps in grandma Bessie’s stories while telling a few of her own. Learning about the experiences of certain family members during the Wilmington race massacre of 1898 was truly fascinating. Finally, the life of my paternal grandfather, Owen Hill, Jr., who entered the military as a young man in order to “learn to read and write, and get three square meals per day,” remains a source of inspiration. The professionalism and charisma that this soldier and gentleman displayed during his life was infectious and evident to all from the moment he entered a room, even as he suffered from severe dementia in his final years.

As inspiring as my grandparents were, I would not have valued fully the importance of our family’s history and tradition, or the centrality of hard work in success without the guidance of my parents—Joe H. and Connie C. Bryant. Had they chosen to abandon the principles of faith and family—faith in our ability to bring about a better day through hard work, thrift, and the collective ingenuity of the family unit—I might have missed many of the important lessons that allowed me to value deeply the sacrifice that they and previous generations had made. Saying thank you is but small recompense for the tremendous amount of worrying, strategic thought, sacrifice and perseverance that each of you invested in me. I thank you mom especially for your emphasis upon social graces, right thought and right action. And Dad, I thank you for your many sermons on the importance of higher education.

In addition to my parents and grandparents, I enjoyed the good fortune of having a host of aunts, uncles, older cousins, and community members supporting me along the way. I thank aunt Barbara for the biscuits from Biscuitville and for caring for me as if I were her very own son. The fellowship of my uncles Gregory, Wayne, Anthony, Curtwright, and Landon helped make me the man that I am. I thank them for coming to my basketball games and for reminding me that my performance in the classroom was what really mattered. In addition to her wonderful cooking, I thank aunt Laura Mae for her love and support.
Thanks also for taking Earlene and I to “Sportsworld,” even if we did have to leave just before the party “got started.” I thank my late aunt Janice V. Bryant for her words of inspiration and for helping me secure my first newspaper route with the Wilmington Journal.

At North Carolina Central University I benefited from a host number of mentors and guardian angels. The late Dr. Charles H. Gilchrist introduced me to the fine tradition of black choral music. The late Dr. Eugene Eaves demanded excellence of me, and insisted that I go abroad. I thank you for this Professor Eaves, even if I did not heed your advice until graduate school. I also thank Professor Eaves for encouraging me to attend graduate school and for introducing me to a range of summer internship and pre-graduate experiences, namely the Summer Pre-Graduate Research Experience sponsored by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a program that I had the good fortune of participating in during the summer of 1993. While there it was my privilege to have Dorothy “Dee” Gamble as my mentor. Dee encouraged my interest in Latin America and allowed me to do some of the research that led to a grant to take high school teachers to Costa Rica and Honduras to study literacy initiatives. Dee and her husband George Gamble have been extremely supportive over the years. Professor Doris Franklin helped me to stay focused while navigating the social matrix of undergraduate culture and the social pressures that undergraduate student life can bring. I thank you Dr. Franklin for your encouragement and support over the years.

In the Department of History at North Carolina Central University, I found a home among a cadre of teacher-scholars who remain amazingly engaged in their research and the historical profession in the midst of heavy teaching loads and extensive university service commitments. Dr. Sylvia Jacobs introduced me to South African history, and the rigors of historical research more generally. Dr. Lydia Lindsay introduced me to the Balkans and Eastern Europe more generally. While Dr. Freddie Parker introduced me to Southern History, Slavery and the themes of flight and resistance. I thank you all for a fine introduction to the discipline of history and the life of the mind.

By far, my most influential undergraduate professor was Dr. Lolita Guiterrez Brockington. Through her engaging lectures, after-class discussions, and life-changing reading assignments, Professor Brockington introduced me at once to Latin American and African Diaspora History. I can still recall as if
it were yesterday the great lengths that Professor Brockington went to ensure that Colin Palmer’s then out-of-print *Slaves of the White God* was available for our colonial Latin American history course. I thank her for that and for organizing the equally enriching lecture that Palmer gave later that semester on race in Latin America. As if great teaching were not enough, professor Brockington was the one who encouraged me more than anyone to pursue a PhD in Latin American history, and has supported me every step of the way. I thank her especially for reading chapter six of the dissertation at various stages. Saying thanks for her exemplary teaching, her ongoing scholarly work, and her friendship seems hardly enough.

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Other mentors were instrumental in my development and arrival at this point. Stephanie J. Shaw expanded and deepened my knowledge of African American History, pushing me to read widely and helping me to remain ever mindful of the larger implications of my work. Margaret Newell introduced me to the intricacies of Early American History while Thomas Klubock introduced me to the gendered worlds of Latin American workers. Donna Guy served informally on the dissertation committee, and proved to be a fine critic and supportive voice. I thank Stephanie Smith for serving on the committee, even if it was with a little late notice. I thank her for the fine comments she shared with me regarding tensions in my arguments, the gendered implications of many of sources, and for improving my writing in ways that I hope will remain between she and I.

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Although seldom acknowledged, narratives that seek to recount the lives and lived experiences of the enslaved and otherwise subjugated owe a great debt to those who lived these lives and endured the realities of bondage. I thank the people that African and European elites defined legally and socially as slaves for the esteemed privilege to write about them and the societies in which they lived. Not only did they live this history, they created the conditions that gave rise to the societies and social movements of the modern era. In addition to the creators of history, special praise is due to the preservers of historical documents. I thank the staffs of the Archivo Central del Cauca in Popayán, Colombia, the Archivo Nacional Histórico del Ecuador in Quito, the Archivo del Guayas, Archivo Municipal de Guayaquil, and the Archivo de la Parroquia El Sagrario in Quito, for their patience and support as I completed the research for this dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Inscribed on the outside walls of Quito’s Cathedral is a list of the men who invaded, occupied, and ultimately renamed the Inka city of Quito for Saint Francis on August 28, 1534. Listed among these individuals are two blacks—Juan (de color negro), and Anton (negro).\(^1\) Juan and Anton represented the hundreds (and perhaps thousands by this date) of blacks explorers, conquistadors, slaves, and squires who had come to the Americas during the age of conquest (1492-1550).\(^2\) Although the biographical records for Juan and Anton are sketchy, sources indicate that they were freemen. One imagines that, like many of their black counterparts throughout the Americas, Juan and Anton earned the prestige of founding a colonial city the hard way—shedding blood, sweat and tears in early conquest battles. Perhaps they fought at Cajamarca, or in that infamous battle against the Inka general Rumiñavi, which occurred just south of the city of Quito in Puruhá near Mount Chimborazo.\(^3\) In either case, Juan and Anton must have contributed significantly to the conquest effort of the north highlands because their Spanish counterparts bestowed

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\(^1\) *Libros de los Cabildos de Quito*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 1534-1538, 3-5. On page 55 of the same text documents the presence Pedro Salinas color negro, and Pedro Moreno (brown) among the 204 people present at the [re]founding of Quito. See also. Fernando Jurado Naboa, “Algunas reflexiones sobre la tenencia de los esclavos en la colonia: 1536-1826,” *Boletin del Archivo Nacional*, (Quito, 1992), 93.

\(^2\) People of African descent had been coming to the Americas since Columbus’ fourth voyage in 1502. It is possible, however, that black servants and slaves came to the Caribbean with Columbus in the 1490s. Historians, for example, have speculated that the pilot of the Niña (1492)—Alonso Pietro (possibly Prieto meaning black in Portuguese) was indeed a ‘mulato’. While some came as equals and fought in the early conquest battles, many others served as “unarmed axillaries,” participating in and contributing to nearly every voyage and conquest campaign of the period. See for example. Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440-1870*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 87-91. See also, James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Colonial Society*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 171-172; Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 3-7; and Matthew Restall, “Black Conquistadors,” 174-176.

upon them the title of fundador of the city of Quito. Yet, even as Spaniards envisioned a society where black men could gain notoriety and even serve as founders of colonial cities, they were also laying the foundation for what historian David Eltis calls the “slave-free paradox” (the simultaneous rise of modern notions of freedom and new World slavery) in early colonial Spanish America. As historian James Lockhart has shown, black slave laborers were “a part of the general pattern of Spanish ambition.” All sought the ownership of “a large house, land, livestock, and-most to the point here—Negro servants. Most Spaniards could not hope to achieve this goal in its entirety, but they aimed at least for two essentials, a house (which could be rented) and Negroes.”

But despite their early presence, it seems that for most living in the region the history of blacks in the colonial Quito remains the substance of myths. By and large, Afro-Ecuadorian history has been submerged into the caverns of contemporary memory. Sadly, scholars have left the highly nuanced and diverse experiences of Africans and their descendants seldom explored and largely forgotten. In modern

4 These rewards often came in the form of important posts within a burgeoning municipality, freedom for the enslaved, or even the highly coveted encomienda (rights to indigenous labor) grant. For a more in-depth discussion about blacks’ prominence in conquest battles and the rewards they received see: Restall, “Black Conquistadors,” 174-196. Historian Frederick P. Bowser noted, moreover, that Africans were seen on both sides of the civil wars among the Pizzaros and Almagros. Some were also commissioned to supply the royal army with harquebuses, lances, and swords. And, at least one African woman was contracted to provide soldiers with rosaries. Bowser, The African Slave, 8-10.

5 James Lockhart, Spanish Peru, 181. Note also Kris Lane’s citation of a letter of one “don Diego [Tomalá]” to the Counsel of the Indies in 1557 to “ornament” himself with armed slaves as bodyguards, and the 1568 letter from a Latacunga cacique, don Sancho de Velasco to the council “requesting rents, a coat-of-arms, and two black bodyguards armed with swords. Kris E. Lane, Quito 1599, 58, 241, note #3.

6 It must be said, however, that work on blacks in Quito has increased significantly over the last two decades. Pioneering were the works of anthropologist, Norman Whitten, historian Manuel L. Salmoral, and Rafia Savoia. See: Norman E. Whitten, Black Frontiersmen: Afro-Hispanic Culture of Ecuador and Colombia, (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press [2nd edition]); Manuel Lucena Slamoral, Sangre sobre piel negra: La esclavitud quiteña en el contexto del reformismo borbónico, (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1991); and Rafael Savoia, eds., Actas del primer congreso de historia del negro en el Ecuador y sur de Colombia, (Quito: Centro Cultural Afro-Ecuatoriano, 1988). Both Michael Hammerly and María Luisa Laviana-Cuetos blazed important trails for scholars interested in the social history of the city and province of Guayaquil. See. Michael Hammerly, Historia social y económica de la Antigua provincia de Guayaquil, 1763-1842, (Guayaquil, 1973); idem, El comercio de cacao de Guayaquil durante el periodo colonial: un estudio cuantitativo, (Guayaquil, 1976); María Luisa Laviana Cuetos, Guayaquil en el siglo XVIII: recursos naturales y desarrollo económico, (Seville, 1987). More recently, in the wake of greater interest in the history of the North Andes and the African Diaspora to Spanish America, several scholars have begun to explore the history of blacks in the region. Charles Beatty’s work on Esmeraldas promises to deepen our understanding of a familiar, yet complex and grossly understudied aspect of colonial history—what he refers to as the colonizing and, at times, anti-colonizing efforts of the so-called Afro-Esmerealdeños. Charles Beatty-Medina, “Rebels and Conquerors: African Slaves, Spanish Authority, and the Domination of Esmeraldas, 1563-1621 (Ecuador),” (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 2002). Still others like, María Eugenia Chaves and Camilla Townsend have gone far to enlighten our minds regarding the lives of enslaved black women at the end of the colonial era. See. María Eugenia Chavés, María Chiquinquirá Díaz un esclava
Ecuador, as in many other regions of Latin America, blackness has been relegated to the geographical and historical margins. For many, the legacies of Afro-Ecuadorians are to be found in two regions and amongst two groups: blacks living in contemporary Esmeraldas and those who reside in modern Chota-Mira valley. While these regions and, indeed, the ancestors of those living there today occupy an important place in the history of the region, they alone cannot account for the tens of thousands of Africans and Afro-Quiteños that history has forgotten.

This work is about those forgotten souls, their worlds, their actions, and their voices. It is about contexts—spatial, economic, colonial, and geopolitical contexts, and the ways that enslaved people worked to shape them. It is about work and natural environments, and the ways that those contexts served to structure slave life. It is also about how slaves resisted and shaped these contexts, pushing the boundaries of their servitude while influencing colonial society. It asks, what did it mean to be a slave in colonial Quito, and how did this change over time? To be a slave in the sweltering mines of Popayán was not the same as being enslaved in the city of Quito and its environs. City life was distinct from life on Spanish estates. Moreover, the rigors of sugar cane cultivation provided a unique structure to the daily lives of those forced to labor within the estate complexes of the Chota-Mira valley. One’s physical environment mattered greatly, perhaps just as much as the type of work one performed. The diverse typographies of the Gobernación of Popayán and the North Central highlands formed two of the most important spatial boundaries for slave life in the Kingdom of Quito. The context created by these two regions and their corresponding industries form the core of this study.

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Map 1.1 The Kingdom of Quito
Source: Kenneth J. Andrien, The Kingdom of Quito, 83.
Map 1.2 Kingdoms of Granada and Quito

Defined primarily as a social history of African slavery, this work marks a point of departure from studies of the African Diaspora that seek to uncover the specific process of *ethnogenesis* or *creolization*; that is, how ‘Africans’ established a new identity in the context of New World slavery, thus becoming Afro-American. Rather than attempt to chart the direct transferal of African cultural mores and institutions (or the lack thereof), this work seeks to complicate the identities of Africans by historicizing the context of ethno-racial change in this area of the Americas. More specifically, it examines the changing *contexts* of “African” ethnic identity throughout the audiencia from 1600 to 1750.

This work is decidedly not about the material culture of slaves (i.e., what tools, instruments Africans used); neither does it concern the ideological origins of their material culture, which tells us why they used the things they used). It does not address cultural productions such as religion, aesthetics, or folklore; neither does it explore the ‘performative’ elements of Afro-American culture such as music and dance. Instead, its aim is to show clearly the context that demography, trade patterns, regional geopolitics and local economic activity each created for cultural transmission and identity formation. It begins with the premise that a profound understanding of the development of Afro-Diasporic identity and culture is served best by a detailed analysis of the social conditions of New World slavery. It assumes that throughout the Americas the rigors and cycles of work combined with local sociopolitical realities of a given society to create specific contexts for the development of life patterns among slaves. Consequently, work and the context it created must figure prominently in our analysis identity formation among enslaved Africans in the New World. One cannot appreciate fully human agency and cultural formations without grappling first with the social issues that give rise to these phenomena. Thus, any attempt to engage the details of slaves’ lives must begin with a thorough exploration of the locus of their experience. Ultimately, this work examines the intersection of people and contexts—both institutional and spatial, and the

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7 Scholars such as Stuart B. Schwartz have long held that in our efforts to understand cultural transmissions we need a more precise notion of how these factors “made the resulting African American cultures different.” I argue that a necessary first step involves laying out the dynamic context that these factors created over time prior to undertaking a thorough exegesis of cultural transmission and change. See Stuart B. Schwartz, Book Review of John Thornton’s *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), in *Hispanic American Historical Review* 73:3 (August 1993): 500-501.

development of the “slave-free paradox” in early colonial Quito. Relying upon a body of literature that has highlighted the period between 1550 and 1640 followed by an emphasis upon the early nineteenth century, historian David Eltis has argued that African slavery in mainland Spanish America was on the wane by the late seventeenth century. Eltis argues that the slave-free paradigm experienced a false start in the Latin America, with slavery declining throughout much of Spanish America by the late seventeenth century. Yet, this was the precise moment when slavery began its ascent in Popayán, Ibarra, and to a lesser extent in coastal Guayaquil. Foundational movements towards the slave-free paradox (the way that modern notions of freedom grew out of a context of slavery in western society) were made in the early years of the seventeenth century. As the century ended Quito’s elite turned evermore aggressively towards African slavery. Indeed, one of this study’s principal aims is to show why this occurred. That is, why did slavery emerge so forcefully within Quiteño society at the precise moment that scholars like Eltis argue that mainland Spanish America was abandoning African slave labor?9

In early colonial Quito, those who could worked hard to tie their fortunes and their freedom to slave ownership. Indeed, from the earliest moments of the colony’s history people of African descent could be found working in the region’s mines, serving in households, tilling on estates, and vending in city streets. While few came in those early years, by the late 1530s the preference for slave ownership was becoming increasingly apparent in the city of Quito. By 1538, for example, several encomenderos based in the city of Quito were mining the region’s ore deposits with gangs of Andeans and small numbers of enslaved Africans. For many of those early arrivals, life would take them away from the highland capital to the gold mines of Santa Barbara, a small town near the city of Cuenca located in the south-central highlands.10

To the far north, in the Gobernación of Popayán, Amerindians and blacks were already producing some 30,000 gold pesos annually by the 1540s.11 Slaves were mining gold in the towns of Arma, Cartago,

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10 Lane, Quito 1599, 122-129.
11 By the end of the century Popayán was producing ninety percent of all gold smelted in Quito. At the turn of the seventeenth century, Africans and Amerindians throughout Popayán were producing ninety percent of all gold smelted
Caramanta, and Anserma. In the early 1550s, there were some 2,000 blacks and Amerindians mining in the town of Almaguer. Some estimates suggest that the African population of Almaguer had risen close to 1,400 individuals by this time. As Payanese elites came to depend increasingly upon slave laborers, they crafted elaborate proposals aimed at generating royally subsidized shipments of African slave laborers.

While elites in the city of Quito were not as quick to develop a large slave population, by the late 1570s the enslaved black population had reached upwards of 100 individuals amid an overall population of 400 property owners, and 2,000 mestizos. In subsequent years, the enslaved population would grow exponentially, both through natural births and the importation of ethnic Africans. Between 1580 and 1600 some 250 enslaved Africans and Afro-Creoles were exchanged, marking the beginning of slavery’s rise in the north-central highland area more generally.

Similar to Popayán, by the 1570s, the coastal port city of Guayaquil boasted a slave population of 333 individuals (216 men and 117 women); by 1600 the number had grown to 1,000 individuals. But whereas Popayán’s slave population found themselves panning for gold in the region’s river- and stream-beds, laborers in Guayaquil filled the high demand for domestics, lumberjacks, polemen, carpenters, and shipbuilders. Undoubtedly, they built the four churches (templos), three small convents, and sixty-one houses that marked the geographical landscape of the city in the year 1605. In addition to providing labor for the seemingly never-ending public works projects, Africans worked also as pearl divers off the coast of Quito. Indeed, the 42,000 kilograms of gold they produced between 1535 and 1639 was far from insignificant, as it accounted for a full twenty-three percent of all gold registered in Seville during this period. Although Almaguer was home to 3,520 Amerindians, only 636 were employed in mining by the late sixteenth century. Licenciado Francisco Auncibay, high court justice, devised two schemes for importing upwards of 4,000 African slave laborers to the region’s two chief gold-mining centers--Popayán and Zaruma. See RHGQ, 1:550, 567-68, 518-26.

RHGQ, 1:84-89
Lane, Quito 1599, 58.
RHGQ, 1:15-24.
Ibid.
Guayaquil in those early years. As one scholar has noted, during those early years, “Popayán and Guayaquil were quickly becoming de facto colonies of West Africa,” as elites and aspiring elites turned quickly to employ them in myriad tasks throughout the region.

In short, by the late sixteenth century, the preference for African slave labor was well established throughout the kingdom. In Quito’s lowland coastal district, the town of Puerto Viejo possessed some thirty-three enslaved men and fourteen enslaved men, outnumbering the ten “married Spaniards,” fifteen “married creoles,” and the three Spanish bachelors of the port. Jipijapa, situated in the central coast of modern Ecuador, was said to be home to “some slaves.” Even Jaén de Bracamoros, situated at the southern tip of the kingdom, registered at least ten slaves. These were not mere “pockets of masters and slavers”; African slaves were fundamental to the colonial regime that Spaniards sought to create. The presence of these enslaved laborers provides direct evidence of elites’ efforts to establish a system of slavery throughout the kingdom, even at the colony’s most foundational moments.

**Geographic Contexts**

Stretching over four hundred miles from the modern Ecuador-Colombia border northward to Antioquia, the Gobernación of Popayán held a diverse typography that encompassed an array of altitudes, temperature zones and landscapes, including: coastal lowlands, inter-Andean valleys, highlands, and regions of Upper Amazonia. Just north of the modern Ecuador-Colombia boarder, the Andes mountains split forming three distinct major ranges or cordilleras—the western (cordillera occidental), central

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18 RHGQ, 1:531.

19 Lane, Quito 1599.


21 By this date there were approximately: 250-300 enslaved blacks in Quito city; 350 in Guayaquil; 2,000 in the district of Popayán; 300 in Cuenca and Loja; 150 in Zaruma; an additional 150 were dispersed throughout the central coastal and highland Corregimientos. See RHGQ, 1 & 2. Lane, Quito 1599, 58; West, *Gold Mining in the Lowland Pacific Littoral*. In Cuenca alone, at least thirty wills, inventories and land sales from the years 1587 to 1620 feature slaves. In addition, there are upwards of 1,000 documents pertaining to slavery and freedom located in the provincial Archivo Histórico Nacional del Cuenca for the period corresponding to the years 1587 to 1748. I thank Debbie Truhan for sharing these citations with me by personal correspondence, October 16, 2000.
(cordillera central), and eastern (cordillera oriental)—the peaks of which reach mean altitudes of 2,700 meters (9,000 feet) on the central and eastern cordilleras, and 1,800 meters (6,000 feet) on the western cordillera that runs along the Pacific coast. Forming the western-most boundary of the Gobernación is the Magdalena river that flowed south from the Caribbean Sea through the port towns of Honda, Neiva, La Plata and into the Cauca valley near the mining town of Almaguer. In the heart of the Cauca valley, situated at an altitude of 6,000 feet, is the town of the Popayán, from which the Patía River flows southward through the western and central Andean cordilleras into the province of Barbacoas before draining into the Pacific. While the Cauca valley and areas to the far north-west of the region constituted the principal sites of gold mining during the late sixteenth- and early-to-mid seventeenth-century, the district of Barbacoas would emerge as the Gobernación’s chief producer of gold and, consequently, one of Quito’s principal slaveholding centers. To speak of gold mining in the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries was to speak of Barbacoas—Popayán’s sub-district in the lowland Pacific littoral.\textsuperscript{22}

The Province of Barbacoas corresponded to the Colombia’s south Pacific littoral and the northwestern coast of Ecuador. Characterized by all of the virtuous and unfriendly elements of most rainforests, its natural environment stood in stark contrast to the highlands and lower intermontane valleys that marked the city of Quito and the town of Popayán. In addition to the heat, humidity and constant rainfall, the region was known best for its stilt-houses (Barbacoas). Much like the eastern cordillera, where the resilient Paéz and Pijao Indians formed the human landscape, the lowland Pacific littoral was home to various Amerindian groups, chief among whom were: the Boyas, Chupas, Guapíes, Nulpes, and the Sindaguas. If the seemingly ceaseless torrents of rainfall and mosquitoes failed to keep Spaniards at bay, these groups succeeded in blocking Spanish encroachment well into the mid-seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22} Due north of Barbacoas was the Chocó, a region that was home to large numbers of African slave laborers beginning in the 1680s. Until 1726, this area was subject to the Audiencia of Quito by way of its provincial seat of authority the Gobernación of Popayán, but passed on in that year to the Audiencia of Santa Fé. While slave life in the Chocó falls outside of the scope of this study it will be important to point out the effect that Spanish colonization efforts in the region had upon the development of slavery and slave trading in Popayán from the 1680s going forward. For a discussion of slave life in the Chocó during the eighteenth century See. William F. Sharp, \textit{Slavery on the Spanish Frontier}, (Norman: University of Okalahoma Press, 1976).

\textsuperscript{23} The Spanish had attempted to make inroads and establish settlements in the region since the mid-sixteenth century, but restive Amerindians had resisted their advances and maintained an effective hold on the region through the late
Slave life in the gold mines of Popayán, whether located in intermontane valleys like the Cauca, or in the mosquito-infested rivers and mangroves of Barbacoas, was distinct from that in the north-central of the kingdom. In the Cauca Valley, life revolved around the tasks of panning the region’s rivers, securing water reserves, building sluice canals for flooding dry gravel beds, and a host of mining-related tasks. In the sixteenth century, it meant living and working in one region for extended periods of time only to be forced to migrate to long distances over the region’s notoriously treacherous roadways. It meant braving un-navigable rivers, snakes, diseased mosquitoes, and perturbed Amerindians who sought to defend their homeland. But if restive Amerindians, perpetual rainfall and harrowing trips over washed-out roads and un-navigable rivers characterized life in Barbacoas, moderate temperatures and subjugated Amerindians helped to form the geopolitical context of life in the kingdom’s north-central highland core.

Corresponding to the Andean region between Ibarra and Riobamba, the north-central sierra contains large expanses of pasturelands (páramo) and fertile intermontane valleys. Dispersed along this expanse of Andean mountain chains are several active volcanoes that disrupted the lives of ancient and colonial peoples. Along with the threat of volcano eruptions, the people of highland Quito had to contend with epidemics, earthquakes and other natural disasters, making for a rather volatile natural environment. Twin volcanoes flank the urban center on the east, with rough mountain passes to the west. Much like the rest of the north-central highland core, the urban center is situated at approximately 9,200 feet above sea level, where temperatures are a pleasant 45 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. These two different landscapes, with their distinct human and ecological characteristics, gave way to the development of distinct industries, which in turn, precipitated different labor demands, rates of immigration, and distinct realities of bondage.24


24 Insightful here is the work of Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, who show us very clearly how important work was in shaping the lives of slave laborers. They assert, “Slaves worked. When, where, and especially how they worked determined, in large measure, the course of their lives.” See. Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan (eds.), The Slaves Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1991), 3. For close to a generation scholars struggled to understand the similarities and the salient differences that existed between slavery in Anglo and Latin contexts. While studies of slavery in the US forged ahead, exploring slavery and slave life throughout the region that became the US, studies on slavery in Latin America, with the exception of Brazil and the Spanish Caribbean, fell behind. While scholars like Philip Morgan, in his seminal Slave Counterpoint, have shifted to comparing slave societies within a single colony, Latin Americanists have only recently come to appreciate the saliency of this approach. See. Philip D. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint: in the Chesapeake and Lowcountry, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998).
There were, however, some similarities. Both regions contained agro-pastoral complexes that employed slave laborers who worked alongside Amerindians. Both housed urban centers, where sizable numbers of enslaved women and children could be found in elite homes, monasteries, and convents. In both locations, masters apprenticed and leased their slaves. Similar to others of their ilk throughout the Americas, apprenticed and leased slaves in both regions of Quito enjoyed increased mobility and a greater potential for self-purchase (coartación). In general, the experiences of slaves in Quito, much like those who lived in other Spanish American slave societies, rested upon a continuum, ranging from direct and constant supervision (mostly in the mining camps and landed-estates) to those with increased independence and minimal supervision (principally, leased and/or contract workers who lived mostly in the urban centers, but also within the mining region).²⁵

**A Spanish American Slave Society**

In this way, Quito constituted the quintessential Spanish American slave society. Not only did slave life resemble that experienced by slaves throughout the Spanish Main, but the influence of blacks was far-reaching, affecting the development of Quiteño society from the principal moments of contact. Although slavery never dominated Quito’s economic life as it did in nineteenth-century Cuba or Brazil, throughout Quito, slave labor provided a level of productivity that would have proven impossible to achieve without slaves’ efforts. Moreover, African and Afro-criollo captives’ ubiquitous presence in colonial documentary evidence underscores the ways that slavery served to order Quiteño society, and the extent to which servitude occupied a dominant position within the colony’s socio-political discourse.

Some may take issue with the classification of Quito as a slave society (let alone the quintessential Spanish American slave society) given that the kingdom’s slave population never exceeded 12,000 out of

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²⁵ By the eighteenth century Payanese mine holders would come to rely on leased and contract laborers as well. For a discussion of the slave continuum see the work of Rachel O’Toole. See Rachel O’Toole, “Inventing Difference: Africans, Indians, and the Antecedents of Race in Colonial Peru, 1580-1720,” (Ph.D., dissertation, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, History, 2001), 379. Included in O’Toole’s discussion of this continuum were: short-term fugitives; independent, long-term fugitives; and groups of fugitives or maroon settlements. These characteristics marked the slave experience in colonial Quito, and constitute some of the fundamental characteristics of slave life in Spanish American slave societies.
an overall population of 430,000. There, slave laborers were given that slaves were always part of a mixed labor pool, dominating only in three regions of the kingdom—Popayán, Ibarra, and Guayaquil. Historian Ira Berlin finds a slave society to be one “where slavery formed the foundations of economic production, and the master-slave relationship served as the “model for all social relations.” According to historian Moses Finely, slaves societies required three conditions to emerge: private, concentrated landownership, significant commodities and markets, and a significant shortage of internal labor. Yet even colonies possessing small slave populations and diverse labor regimes could fit these descriptions. In the Kingdom of Quito, Popayán, Guayaquil, and Ibarra were each known for possessing private, concentrated landownership as well as for the presence of high priced commodities like gold, cacao and agricultural products. Moreover, given the high demand for slaves throughout the kingdom it would be difficult to prove that the master-slave relationship was not at least a critical model for social relations, if not the “social exemplar.”

Although sizeable numbers of Amerindians were present and, often available to large estate holders, during the eighteenth century, chronic labor challenges plagued these rural enterprises. After suffering significant population losses to the epidemics and natural disasters of the late seventeenth century, Andeans never returned to the peak population total of 300,000 that they enjoyed in the 1670s. Moreover, Andeans, similar to many subordinated people, were a people on the move. As economic opportunities developed in the south-central highland town of Cuenca, many migrated to these regions, working even there alongside Africans slaves in the Cascarilla industry and later in the cacao plantations of the Guayas.


These movements helped to maintain a need for African slave laborers, who could be held by force at desired workstations and taken to new, more desirable locations as the need arose. Local elites clearly desired both systems: *encomienda*, which provided them access to the surplus productions emanating from existing indigenous economic systems in exchange for protection and religious instruction; and *African slavery*, which allowed them “mobile capital”, added prestige, and a relatively flexible labor source.

Most recently, several scholars have encouraged us to rethink the “slave society/society with slaves” dichotomy, particularly as it relates to mainland Spanish America. In particular, Herman Bennett and Kris Lane have suggested that the institution of slavery had profound implications upon the larger society even in areas such as colonial New Spain and Quito, where slavery was neither the predominant method of dividing labor, nor marked by the eminence of a plantation complex. Moreover, Lane and Bennett along with Steven Epstein each suggest that the “ethos of slavery,” specifically its power discourse, held profound significance for racial, gender, and social perceptions in many societies that would fall outside of the traditional definition of a “slave society.”

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30 It seems that part of what complicates our attempts to rethink the existence of slave societies in Spanish American involves the way we view the region’s two principal labor systems—*encomienda* (grants of indigenous labor to an individual) and African slavery. At first glance it would appear that African slavery could only rise in a context devoid of sizeable groupings of Amerindians and a thriving *encomienda* system. Scholars examining Popayán, for example, have remarked upon the longevity of this institution in the region. Historian Kris Lane has argued that the transition from *encomienda* to African slavery between 1620 and 1700 due to *encomienda*’s dual role as “a genuine labour subsidy offered by the crown” as well as “a ‘socially embedded’ economic institution.” The point should be made, however, that while Lane sees a transition occurring from one system to another this was not an either/or proposition. See. Luis F. Calero, *Chiefdoms Under Siege: Spain’s Rule and Native Adaptation in the Southern Colombian Andes, 1535-1700*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Germán Colmenares, *Historia Económica y Social de Colombia*, 3 vols. (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura Hispánica, 1995); and Robert C. West, *Colonial Placer Mining in Colombia*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952). See also Robert J. Ferry, “Encomienda, African Slavery and Agriculture in 17th Century Caracas,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 61, 4 (November 1981), 609-635; and Timothy J. Yeager, “Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown’s Choice of Labor Organization in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America,” *Journal of Economic History*, 55, 4 (December 1995), 842-859. For a discussion of the origins of the encomienda and how it formed the basis for elite Quiteño society see. Ducasse, *Los Encomenderos*. Kris E. Lane, “The Transition from Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas (Colombia),” *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 2000, 73-95.


concept of captivity (based fundamentally upon African slavery) help to order society by informing the
construction of many social relations, Quito also possessed the principal characteristics of typical mainland
Spanish American slave societies—the emergence of enslaved Africans first within the urban centers of
colonial power, an immediate (and at times simultaneous) extension of African slave labor to the rural
periphery, and the commingling of diverse racial and ethnic pools of laborers, enslaved, free and/or
coerced. Furthermore, contrary to the position of some scholars, the slave-free paradox was established
firmly on the Spanish Main in those early colonial years preceding the rise of African slavery throughout
the Atlantic World more generally. Although slavery in colonial Quito did not reach its apogee until after
the late sixteenth century, African slavery was decidedly a part of the early colonial socio-economic milieu
of Spanish America, as masters turned increasingly towards the slave paradigm (greater use of slave labor
for economic initiatives) during those early years.

Expanding the Boundaries of the Atlantic World

Although Quito lay at the margins of the Atlantic World and the Spanish American empire, it was
far from insignificant to either of the two. Portuguese and Africans laid the foundation for the vast
“regional system” now referred to as the Atlantic World beginning in the mid-fifteenth century. For much
of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Iberian and African players dominated this arena. After Europeans
discovered the Americas, they, along with their African counterparts, extended the web of the Atlantic,
creating an Atlantic vortex received the products of markets that lay far beyond the shores of the Atlantic
Ocean, or the circum-Caribbean. This Atlantic vortex encompassed vast portions of the Pacific and
Andean communities. From the earliest moments, then, those seemingly marginal areas like the Audiencia

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34 Bennett, Africans in Colonial Mexico, 14-15. Lane’s captivity gradient is particularly insightful because it forces scholars to rethink one of the central components of New World slavery—captivity—and ways that other colonials found themselves to be both captives and coerced laborers. Chief among these were Amerindians. Clearly, their legal enslavement had been outlawed (with the exception of those captured in “just wars,” like the Sindagaus of Barbacoas, or the Paéz and Pijaos of the upper Cauca valley) since the early sixteenth century. While initiatives such as the New Laws of the 1550s, along with subsequent ordinances, demonstrate royal attempts to stand by this decision, little was accomplished in the effort of ending what was, to my mind, de facto Indian slavery. Spanish labor abuses continued unabated, especially in the case of Quito, well into the eighteenth century, thus ensuring de facto Indian slavery’s long career. Although this perspective is not new, and while Indian slavery falls outside the scope of this project, it might serve scholars well to consider seriously the indigenous slavery when defining New World slave societies and the realities of bondage more generally. For a brief, yet poignant look at the experiences of forced indigenous laborers in Quito’s early colonial obraje complex (textile mill) see. John L. Phelan, The Kingdom of Quito, 71-74.
of Quito held considerable importance in the “vast regional system” now known to scholars as the Atlantic
World. Iberian Monarchs and merchants, preoccupied with the events of conquest and colonization
occurring in New Spain and throughout the Andes, placed a premium upon the goods and markets that lay
beyond the shores of the Atlantic. At the same time merchants, native lords, and enslaved Africans in
places like Lima, Potosí, and Quito focused upon the system and process that fell within the Atlantic’s web.
The terms of these connections not only facilitated material exchange, but also engendered cultural
encounters. One must recall that enslaved Africans who came to Quito had spent nearly one year within
the Atlantic, and perhaps just as much time somewhere within the Caribbean basin prior to their arrival in
the North Andean and Pacific lowland regions of South America. Consequently, Africans helped to not
only extend the network of commerce and imperial exploration, but also engaged in the forging of new
socio-cultural realities in the Americas, realities that were based not only upon the Africans’ ethno-cultural
heritage emanating from their home continent, but also upon their time and experiences in North America
and the circum-Caribbean.

The central link in the process that tied the early modern Atlantic and Pacific Worlds was silver,
which was directed by the Spanish commercial monopoly that drew everything from one Ocean to the
other. In fact, during the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries, the Atlantic World was silver. The
Spanish invasion of the Indies had begun the gradual process of integrating the Americas into an expanding
nexus of regional markets connected to the Atlantic World. The introduction of European-style market
exchanges began slowly at first, as European invaders divided most indigenous communities of
Mesoamerica and the Andes into encomiendas, or grants of indigenous laborers, which served to drain
surplus production from existing indigenous economic systems. Nevertheless, the discovery of extensive
metallurgical reserves, particularly gold and silver led to an accelerated expansion and integration of
regional market economies that were increasingly drawn into the expanding Atlantic web.
Historian James Lockhart’s railroad metaphor of “trunk lines and feeder lines” describes this expanding network of South American markets. The principal avenue for market exchanges, or the trunk line, extended from the viceregal capital of Lima, first by sea to Arica and then inland through Arequipa and the populous indigenous zones of Bolivia to its terminus at the famous “red mountain” of Potosí. The produce of these economic exchanges was then shipped by sea to Panama and sent by boat and dragged overland across the Isthmus and then across the Atlantic to Seville. Thus, the Pacific trading zone became a vital component in the Atlantic world. This was an ungainly arrangement that cared little for the geographical realities or economic rationality, but made sense to mercantilists in Spain seeking to control markets, maximize wealth (especially bullion), and keep out their European rivals (the Dutch, French, or English). Nevertheless, any Spanish or indigenous communities located along the trunk line complex became progressively drawn into market exchanges while those on the subsidiary feeder lines took longer to feel the influence of the new economic order.

In early Quito Spaniards solidified Quito’s connections with the Atlantic World through the trade of imported luxury items. By the end of the sixteenth century Quito had developed a thriving export economy, based largely upon the production of gold, which they exchanged for commodities from Europe, China, and East India. Like their counterparts throughout Spanish America, the conquerors of Quito began the process of colonization by dividing Amerindian settlements into encomiendas (grants or entitlements to indigenous labor and tribute). Spaniards, with the help of their African auxiliaries, sought to use this system to levy taxes and extract labor from Andeans, thereby consolidating colonial authority.

Gradually, Spaniards and their descendants developed a thriving commercial export economy based on trade in gold and livestock products. Quito’s encomenderos, merchants, and high-ranking church


36 For the most complete study addressing the formation of colonial elites and the durability of the encomienda in Quito see, Javier Ortiz de la Tabla Ducasse, Los encomenderos de Quito, 1534-1660: origen y evolución de una elite colonial, (Seville, 1993). See also, Kris E. Lane, “The Transition From Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas (Colombia)” in Slavery and Abolition, vol. 21, no.1, April 2000, pp. 73-95; and idem, Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002). Lane’s work provides an excellent and thoroughly engaging exposition of Quito’s gold-luxury trade in the late sixteenth-century.
officials were all well connected to the Atlantic vortex, and helped to make the city of Quito the marketplace of the North Andes. Merchants traded gold, biscuit, and leather for books, clothes, olives, oil, tools and wine from Europe. Quiteños also purchased relatively large quantities of spices from East India as well as porcelain and fabrics from China, all in an effort to mimic Mediterranean high society. Moreover, Quito’s merchant class developed elaborate credit arrangements based largely upon gold and/or the promise of gold production. Regardless of their station and class, Quiteños sought the accoutrements of high society, and therefore made every effort to move up the socioeconomic ladder, including the ultimate status symbol—enslaved Africans. Apparently, Quiteños were preoccupied with giving the illusion of having attained nuevo riche status. Thus, throughout the mid-to-late sixteenth century the production of gold, livestock products, and the consumption of luxury imports drove Quito’s economic development, tying Quito proper and its provinces ever more intimately to the Atlantic World. And in the midst of it all were enslaved African men, women, and children. In short, Quito’s ties to the Atlantic web, and the relative importance of African slavery within the region, makes this region an excellent location to explore issues and themes lauded by scholars of the Atlantic core. One fundamental supposition of this study is that it is at the margins where scholars can best examine their assumptions and ideas about slave life, how it is that we conceptualize slave societies, and the process of identity formation and change amongst people of African descent in the Americas.

Slavery and the Context of Ethnogenesis

When I started this work, I was interested primarily in answering two questions: what was it like to be a slave in the primarily indigenous environment of the North Andes? And, more specifically, to what extent was the process of creolization amongst Africans and their descendents in the North Andes distinct from that of those who resided in other areas in the Americas? At the time, it seemed that the best of

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37 Lane, Quito 1599, 210-213; and Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 227.
38 Lane, Quito 1599, 211-214.
39 For an excellent introduction to such elaborate credit arrangements (which often included mortgaging slaves), and Early Quiteños’ preoccupation with the trappings of wealth and European high society See, Ibid, 207-210.
African Diasporic scholarship envisioned African slave laborers as having formed “identifiable communities based on their ethnic or national pasts.” Thus, as historian Philip D. Morgan stated, it appeared that “an orthodoxy [had] emerged that [saw] slaves as forming identifiable communities based on their ethnic or national pasts.” But to my mind, the question remained: what of the regions where ethnic Africans could not find, in significant numbers, others with similar ethno-linguistic backgrounds with whom they might communicate, marry, and/or form communities?

Bolstering scholars’ claims were new data concerning the transatlantic slave trade, which showed clear patterns from catchment sites along the coasts of West and West-Central Africa to ports of debarkation in the Americas. Citing one example, historians David Eltis and David Richardson asserted, “The African part in the re-peopling of South and Central America (with the exception of Bahia and Minas

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Gerias) was dominated by West-Central Africa, as was its European counterpart by Iberians. Indeed, there was no denying that in certain regions of the Americas the enslaved ethnic African population was dominated by those drawn from one or two of the six specific catchment sites throughout West and West-Central Africa, a finding that seemed to increase the probability that certain New World slave populations were dominated by the presence of one or two specific African ethnic groups. Despite such findings, dissenting voices continued to emerge, as certain scholars warned that such “ethnic clusters” varied across time and space, spawning a second wave of debate between the African survivals and creolist camps that has continued up to the present.

But for all the intellectual vigor that characterized, and continues to characterize, the field of African Diaspora Studies and the corresponding survivals/creolist debate, few studies had explored the question of African ethno-cultural change on the Spanish Main. Those who had seemed to concur with what appeared at the time to be conventional wisdom regarding the debate between “rapid creolizationists” and “African retentionists”—Africans, drawn from various regions and ethnic groups—found sufficient numbers from their own ethnicity with whom they could communicate and form communities.

For Philip Morgan’s part, it was important to note the fact that such dominance often changed with marked trade shifts over time. According to Morgan, when analyzing the Atlantic slave trade and its influence upon New World slave societies we should emphasize “heterogeneity over homogeneity: for several reasons. First, because it involved various Europeans trading with specific African ethnic or national groups. Secondly, because of the heterogeneity within in a given trading center such as West-Central Africa, and within a given port of arrival. Relying upon the work of Joseph Miller, Morgan cites the fact that West-Central Africa comprised an area as large or larger than the U.S. east of the Mississippi. People arrived on the coast from various places deep in the interior, and often represented different ethnic groups. Subsequent movements of Africans, he argued, were equally difficult to trace as were the complex web of movements from the African interior to the coastal region. See Morgan, “The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations and New World Developments,” in Eltis and Richardson (eds.) Routes to Slavery, 130-133; and Joseph C. Miller, Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). This cautionary tone was not new, but echoed the rapid creolization argument put forth by Sidney Mintz and Richard Price. See for example, Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, The Birth of African-American Culture: An anthropological Perspective, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992 [original 1976]). And for a more recent response by Richard Price to the ongoing debates regarding his and Mintz’s rapid creolization theory see. Richard Price, “The Miracle of Creolization: A Retrospective,” New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids vol.75, no.1&2 (2001): 35-64.

The work of Mary Karasch is exceptional in this regard, as she highlights the diversity among ethnic Africans arriving in Rio de Janeiro during the early to mid-nineteenth century. See. Mary Karasch, Slave Life in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850, (Princeton: Princeton Univeristy Press, 1987).
historian Colin A. Palmer’s part, marriage between individuals of the same perceived ethnicity was an indication of Africans’ attempts to reconstitute Old World ethnicities.46

Unlike late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Mexico City, eighteenth-century Louisiana, and eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Virginia and South Carolina, all of which held ethnically diverse slave populations, Quito’s enslaved population did not feature sizable clusters of any one or two African ethnic groups that might have allowed for endogamous unions or the formation of communities based upon ethnic or socio-linguistic affinities. Consequently, the socio-cultural matrix was always polyethnic and polycultural. Throughout Quito, slave communities—groupings of individuals, households, and families, who (in the case of Quito) first shared common spaces and experiences, and then common and identifiable networks of socio-cultural communication—took the form of multiethnic groups in the context of large numbers of New World-born blacks (Afro-Creoles).47 Indeed, it seems that for much of the period under study, Afro-Creoles outnumbered ethnic Africans throughout the kingdom. Yet, even when Afro-Creoles did not form a majority, their presence was undeniable and served to complete the picture of diversity that was generally the rule and seldom the exception. Nevertheless, the question

46 My interest in this question was influenced greatly by Herman L. Bennett’s doctoral dissertation, “Lovers, Family, and Friends,” where he showed that in the early years Africans carrying and identifying with the same ethnic moniker, chose to marry those of apparently similar ethnic origin, although race (conceptualized principally in phenotypical terms) later emerged as a factor, as did class and communal affinities. Colin A. Palmer’s 1995 article, “Ethnicity in Early Black Communities of the Americas,” presented essentially the same perspective, albeit with more statistical analysis as to the frequency of this phenomenon. Whereas Bennett concerned himself with providing a nuanced description of African ethnicity and culture, Palmer offered little in the way an exploration of the meaning of ethnicity. Around the same time Michael Gomez’s Exchanging Our Country Marks appeared, suggesting also that Afro-American community and culture emerged first within the context of Africans’ attempts to preserve ethnic affinities through the formation of communities based upon ethnic affinities, developing subsequently along lines of race (phenotype) and then class. See. Herman Bennett, “Lovers, Family and Friends: the Formation of Afro-Mexico, 1580-1810,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1993); Colin A. Palmer “From Africa to the Americas: Ethnicity in the Early Black Communities of the Americas,” Journal of World History, 6 (1995), 223-36; and Michael Gomez, Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

47 While I certainly argue for a view of slave communities that engages the locus of the mine, plantation and urban center, it seems clear also that a larger slave community (one that extended beyond such boundaries) existed, not merely in the sense of shared experiences, but also through their movement with slaveholders, communication with slaves working with itinerant merchants, and the networks of knowledge that grew from such contact. For scholarly works that influenced my thinking on the matter of the “slave community” see. John Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979 [revised edition]); Ann Patton Malone, Sweet Chariot: Slave Family & Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Philip D. Morgan, Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
remains, why does it appear that Quito was marked by greater diversity than other New World slave societies?

The most direct answer lies in the distinct range of ethnic diversity exhibited amongst *bozales*, or African captives arriving directly from the continent into the two principal Spanish-Caribbean slave ports—Cartagena de Indias and Veracruz. To put it simply, the African population concentrated at the port of Cartagena, the port from which Quito received almost all of its African slave laborers, was ethnically more diverse than many other ports throughout the circum-Caribbean, especially Veracruz, which served Mexico and Meso-America more generally. Historian Enriqueta Vila Vilar found, for example, that between 1595 and 1640, Angola was the port of debarkation for eighty-four percent of all ethnic Africans entering the port of Veracruz, with Cape Verde and São Tomé providing six percent and seven percent, respectively. On the other hand, in Cartagena, Angola was registered as the port of debarkation for only forty-six percent of all slaves, while Cape Verde registered forty-four percent, and São Tomé three percent.**48** Much like Panama, Cartagena represented a secondary market or shipping point for slave-traders working within the circum-Caribbean and, therefore, imported slave laborers from a wider range of trading companies, and itinerant merchants working both legally and clandestinely at the nexus of the Atlantic, Pacific and circum-Caribbean.**49** In short, data from all points that could have provided slaves to Quito reveal diverse ethnic mixes.

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**48** See Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica y el comercio de esclavos*, 169-179. It is no small wonder then that Mexico held a much high proportion of “Angolans” (75.4 percent) while in Lima they accounted for just over 20 percent of the overall ethnic African enslaved population between 1560 and 1650. Historian Colin A. Palmer sampled some 402 sales and exchanges of all those registered in Mexico City during the seventeenth century, and found that 303 of the 402 had embarked from West-Central Africa, and that 271 carried the ethnic monikers “Angola”, (24) Congo, (1) Loango, (2) Anchico, and (1) Luanga. Among the other ninety-one sales examined by Palmer were the following: (22) Guinea, (3) Golofs, (2) Cabo Verde, (1) Berbesi, (8) Bran, (2) Bañol, (1) Xoxo, (6) Arara, (1) Mina, (1) Bioho, (14) São Tomé, (9) Arda, (6) Carabali, (1) Terra Nova, (2) Zape, (7) Cafre, (7) Mozambique, and (1) Zozo. See. Colin A. Palmer, *Slaves of a White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), 20-23. Historian Frederick Bowser’s work on Peru is particularly insightful, since Quito drew a good number of its enslaved population from the port of Callao. Out of all existing slave sales and exchanges in Lima for the period spanning 1560 and 1650, Bowser sampled 5,278, finding: (1,355) Angolans, (849) Brans, (594) Biafrians, (316) Bañols, (284) Mandinga, (267) Congo, (237) Folupos, 214 (Zape), (180) Guinea (unspecified), (143) Terranovos, (128) Jolofos, and (103) Nalus had entered Peru; and these are merely those groups whose numbers registered over 100 individuals. See. Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 40-44, and 79.

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**49** This was especially true in the late seventeenth century, when traders sought to “season” ethnic Africans by stopping in the Caribbean to allow their African captives, and themselves, rest and refreshment prior to traveling on to Cartagena.
Defining ethnicity and discerning the most profitable method of identifying ‘Africans’ on the continent and throughout the Diaspora remains a critical concern and hotly debated theme among scholars. Specialists will quickly note that my formulation and description of ethnic diversity depends upon a rather specific reading of ethnic monikers. My intention, however, is not to gloss over the need to complicate the usage of such labels. Contextualizing African ethnic identity involves, of course, unpacking the ascriptive, though at times highly suggestive, ethnic monikers that Europeans applied to ethnic Africans. Although these labels were derived largely from the names of port cities or points of embarkation, it seems appropriate to view these labels as “signposts” that lead to disparate locations as well as to fluid and dynamic notions of ethnicity and “belonging” emerged. These labels, so-called “African” “castas” or “nations” (naciones), affixed often as surnames of sorts, represented Europeans’ best approximations regarding individual points of origin and Africans’ perceived relationship to one another (i.e., the ability to communicate with one another, and/or possession of similar scarification patterns). While falling short of precision in defining African ethnic identity, these monikers, when read with slave-trading data, and observer commentary from the period, provide a window into the very complex and multivariate dynamic of West and West Central African ethnicity. They chart a diasporic path that moves...
through the Atlantic World into the rivers, lands, communities and states of West and West-Central Africa where ethnicity was produced and reproduced.

Moving from Atlantic coastal trading posts into the interior of Africa, the vision of ethnicity becomes even more obscure. According to historian Douglas Chambers,

Diasporic named groups did not signify specific political identities or known aspirations for separate nation-states, and generally did not have their own written languages. But they appeared to have been affinity groups’, or intentional communities with a shared proper name, language, cultural identity, links to a homeland, collective memories and, as significantly, ‘shared amnesias’. Chambers prefers to view these groups as ethnies, “a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.”

Consequently, he argues, “ethnies and ethnicity…exist only when people are in direct contact with others unlike themselves, and are used to distinguish ‘us’ from ‘them’. This, I argue, was precisely

Douglas B. Chambers, “Ethnicity in the Diaspora: The Slave-Trade and the Creation of African ‘Nations’ in the Americas,” Slavery & Abolition, Vol. 22, No. 3 (December 2001), 25-39 (27-28). Chambers notes, “Since diasporic ethnies had proper names, which distinguished groups of ‘us’ from ‘them’ within communities of enslaved Africans in the Americas, the fact that they were named groups presupposes the establishment and maintenance of ‘boundaries’, which further presupposes cultural boundary-markers, or ‘indices of difference’. But not all of such markers were of equal importance. Certain ‘deep markers’ or primary indices such as kinship (fictive or genetic), commensality (in-group equality, shared foodways), and cult (shared values, symbols, religious praxis) are the fundamental ‘building blocks of ethnicity’ and together constitute a ‘single recursive metaphor’ of belonging.” Drawing upon Eriksen, he states of ethnogenesis: “Ethnogenesis happens under specific historical conditions, either from a process of subdivision among already existing groups, or by expanding a zone of contact (a ‘system’) that brings formerly discrete peoples into contact for the first time.” “Enslaved Africans…funneled from broad regions through a limited number of entrepots…were thrown together with others culturally not unlike themselves, expanded the boundaries of ethnicity by

Hutchinson and Smith, Ethnicity, 6-7 quoted by Chambers, “Ethnicity in the Diaspora,” 27.

Chambers, “Ethnicity in the Diaspora,” 27; and Gomez, Exchanging Our Countrymarks.

the case in colonial Quito. Quito possessed ethnic Africans drawn from ‘discrete’ locations throughout West and West-Central Africa. The small size of the population served to exacerbate ethnic diversity, making it difficult for individuals to form communities based upon Old World ethnic affinities, thereby necessitating ethnogenic processes.

This is not to overlook the accuracy and relevance of the Melville Herskovits’s culture zone approach to reading ethnicity in West Africa so cogently revised by historian John Thornton. Ignoring any African skill, especially “multilingualism—or nonlinguistic cultural sharing” might lead us back to the deeply flawed perspective that saw these groups as distinct “tribes.” Nevertheless, historian Sandra Greene has shown that it is also important to understand “how culture zones were formed,” and how that process impacted the ethno-linguistic, cultural, and even the socio-political disposition of various ‘ethnies.’ Greene demonstrates that while the Anlo-Ewe of the western-most slave coast did, in fact, develop significant relationships with the Yoruba speaking peoples to the east, these relationships did not begin in earnest until after 1702, when the Akwamu peoples invaded Anlo. Underscoring the dynamic process of inter-ethnic engagement and change in West Africa, she notes that it was not until the post-1750 restricting the indices of difference in the diaspora. They leveled localized cultural idioms wherever they found themselves, and maintained primary ones above all else, to create meta-ethnies or socio-cultural koinê, which initially were meaningful in the diaspora. In doing so, people created many living variants or common traditions out of loosely shared ancestral ones; the ethnicity of these neo-African named groups, therefore, were ‘invented traditions’ which combined the familiar with the functional. The process of creating new diasporic African-derived cultures in the Americas, ‘historical creolization’, was likely to have been a group phenomenon enacted out of shared roles as captives and forced migrants, rather than the supposedly random and ad hoc experimentation of ‘crowds’ of cultural strangers.”


era that Akwamu people moved eastward such that they could develop an affinity for Yoruba culture, and Ifá divination, more specifically.  

It seems that in Quito there were at least two inter-related, ethnogenic processes occurring simultaneously. There, formerly discrete peoples from the interior of the Upper Guinea Coast, the Lower Guinea and West Central Africa were not only brought into contact with others from within their “culture zones,” but were also connected to individuals who fell outside of their culture zones. Arrival in the North Andes, then, precipitated two additional processes that would run concurrently with the previous two—intermarriage with Andeans and Afro-criollos (people of African descent born within the empire, both in Iberia and the Americas), and unions with the offspring of those unions and with Europeans; that is, the spawning and engagement of the so-called “castas” (e.g., pardos, mulattos, zambos, mestizos, morenos, etc). The actors participating within these four to six, seemingly circular processes of relationship-making would change over time, and would decide what these relationships, communities, and incipient ethnies would mean. They would be the ones who would decide ultimately who they were and what they were not.

But if a process, broadly described as ethnogenesis (spread over six phases) was occurring in the Kingdom of Quito, what are the broader its implications for what Mintz and Prince saw as a process of rapid creolization? Is this phenomenon (ethnogenesis) to be viewed as confirmation of their now badly bruised theory? If “rapid creolization” is meant to imply something fundamentally less than African then, our answer must be, no. “Africans” had undergone and were undergoing processes of ethno-cultural change. Ethnogenesis may, in fact, be said to be a signature feature of many West African societies, not merely because of ethno-linguistic or socio-cultural similarities, but given that many of these cultures were

61 Complicating the terrain further, scholar J. Lorand Matory, has argued, for example, that Yorùbá identity proper did not exist prior to the Diaspora. Rather, Matory insists that, “Yorùbá-ness was created in the Creole society of the coast, in a place and in a time that put in constant dialogue with the nations of the Afro-Diaspora.” Matory contends, moreover, that groups like the Oyo, Egbú, Egbado along with the Ijesa, Ijebú, and Nagó, who arrived in Brazil in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries came collectively to be called Nago because “a shared name and common experience in Brazil (as in other American locales) allowed them to develop a collective identity hitherto unknown in the African lands of their origin.” For his part, “Oyo and various existing socio-political units around the Gulf of Benin supplied much of the cultural raw material of the Lucumi identity formulated in Cuba, the Nago identity formulated in Brazil, and the Yoruba identity that was first articulated in Sierra Leone.” See. J. Lorand Matory, “The English Professors of Brazil: On the Diasporic Roots of the Yorùbá Nation,” in Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 41 (1999): 72-103.
the outgrowth of many years of migration, warfare, and intermarriage, it is possible that many West-Africans were predisposed to see the utility of ethno-cultural cooperation and alliance-making.

While the proper usage of terms such as Bram, Biafara, Angola, Arara, Mina, Biojo are likely to remain the subjects of much debate, they have been used here as signposts, or as one scholar has suggested, the “end of funnels,” that lead ultimately to a wide and complex terrain, where more localized, dynamic “African” notions of ethnicity held sway. That is, while it may be difficult to define precisely the terms “Angolan” and “Bram,” it is clear that these two groups emerged from discrete ethno-cultural contexts, only to be thrust upon one another by the markets and managers of New World slavery. How they behaved in relation to one another, and in relation to the context of slavery within the North Andes more generally, remains the chief concern here. If Biafaras, Brams, Lucumís, Araras, Mandingas, and Angolans desired to marry and/or create community primarily with those from their culture zone, the context of ethnic diversity in Quito, exacerbated by the enslaved population’s low numbers, made it difficult for them to do so. Understanding their decisions requires a thorough engagement of their range of options. Returning to the world that work, geography, and demography made is not only necessary, but also essential to understanding identity formation within the African Diaspora. Engaging those seemingly marginal Spanish American slave societies is fundamental to a greater understanding of black life and the formation of creole consciousness throughout the Americas.

Sources, Methods, and Organization

Like most studies, this work is driven as much by the sources as the by the research questions. Similarly, it is also true that the limits and problems of colonial archives have, in fact, shaped both the questions that have been raised as well as those that have been avoided. In the case of Quito, sources tell us far more about individuals’ range of potential marriage partners, their co-workers, and the networks that individuals formed than they do about why they choose to cultivate certain relationships. In the absence of sources like marriage petitions and Inquisition records, both of which often contain rich ethnographic

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62 For an insightful exploration of the modes and meanings of historical production see Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995).
information, I have relied upon sources like: marriage and baptismal registries, estate and mining camp inventories, will and testaments, dowry records, and bills of sale. Such records allow us to reconstruct a composite of the enslaved population, the communities they built and the social networks they forged. When appropriate, I have drawn upon memorials (testimonial accounts of events, situations, and conditions affecting slave laborers) to explain conditions and changing contexts affecting the lives of the enslaved.

Among the richest sources available to scholars of slavery in Spanish America are civil and criminal court cases. Slaves all over Spanish America and Brazil sued their masters for mistreatment and the right to self-purchase. As they engaged their owners in these suits for both freedom and redress from physical cruelty, they forced the courts to do something that was perhaps never intended—generate huge legajos detailing the lives of slaves. Indeed, they forced officials to generate large sums of written testimony that stand now as brief and, at times, not-so-brief autobiographical sketches of their lives and their family lineages. In these documents we not only find information addressing slavery and slave life, but also that pertaining to slaves’ social networks. Some of these were very localized, some were found most directly with other blacks (free and enslaved) and Andeans; still others were forged with elites as well as with those who harbored elite aspirations. While there have been many studies over the years that sought to “give voice to the voiceless,” few sources provide the voices of the enslaved with the degree of clarity and vibrato found in colonial court records. And although it is true that these sources must be contextualized and treated with some degree of caution given that these voices were filtered through the medium of the court and its recorder, it is also true that they tell stories that, when taken together, bespeak the experiences of families, friendships, love affairs, and hard fought fights. Put differently, they showcase the lives of real people, documenting events and experiences that become larger than the struggle portrayed between slave laborers and their owners, and larger than the issue of resistance.

Working with the same types sources for colonial Cuba, historian María Elena Díaz that these sources are perhaps most “illustrative of public, official discourses generally mediated by scribes or professionals.” “These,” she asserts, “are complex texts in which ‘lay’ voices that are intertwined with official language or discourses, often in revealing ways.” Key to my usage of these texts she states, “At the very least these texts constitute evidence of what must have passed as legitimate proposals and discourses at the time, otherwise they would not have been raised in official contexts.” Thus, in the midst of struggles between slaveholders and slave laborers, we find acceptable interpretations of the slave system as well as an ongoing struggle for dominance. Slave laborers continued to struggle for improved conditions while slave holders sought the right to exploit and harness completely the strength and resources of the

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of the dialectic between slave agitation within the courts and those seemingly more radical individuals who chose resistance methods that fell outside of the boundaries of the law is treated extensively here, this study represents the beginnings of my attempt to mine these sources for the voices of the enslaved and slaveholders alike. Indeed, the attempt has been to see these sources as testimonies on the experiences of slave laborers, testimonies that emerged from different players and stakeholders in the enterprise of slavery. By comparing and contrasting the experiences of slaves who lived in these two areas, I isolate the peculiarities of slavery throughout the region under study, thereby providing a more accurate understanding of the realities of African slavery in the North Andes.

Chapters two and three examine the rise of slavery in these two regions, exploring the changing context of slave life throughout the long seventeenth century. Continuing the comparative scope, chapters four and five explore slave life in these areas while slavery was at its apogee—during the eighteenth century. Chapter five explores the ways that slave laborers ordered and reordered Quito’s colonial society through their myriad acts of resistance and rebellion. It explores the connections between actions perceived as radical (marronage, rebellion, and violent confrontation) and slave legal action, highlighting slaves’ old history of employing both to gain desired outcomes.

Chapter two shows how the changing geopolitical landscape, sparked by the opening of vast new territories, changed the tenor of slaveholding and slave life. The opening of the lowland Pacific littoral, intermingled within the texts are competing interpretations of what slavery should be, and how one ought to access freedom. As Díaz asserts, we find in these sources “the intermingling of languages and voices in different sorts of contexts”. See. Maria Elena Díaz, The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 24. See also the work of Emilia Viotti da Costa, who, drawing from the work of James Scott, argues that such cases present a kind of “public transcript,” wherein plaintiffs (usually slave laborers) “invoked norms that they thought whites in positions of authority might find acceptable.” Adding greater complexity to this approach da Costa states, “Less visible but equally compelling was their commitment to ‘rights’ that they did not claim publicly but that remained inscribed in a ‘hidden transcript,’ grievances that did not reach the fiscal’s ears, but still fed anger, generated forms of behavior that masters considered devious, and eventually triggered rebellion.” See. Emilia Viotti da Costa, Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 72-75; and James Scott, Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). See also. John Smolenski, “Hearing Voices: Microhistory, Dialogicality and the Recovery of Popular Culture on an Eighteenth-Century Plantation,” Slavery and Abolition, Vol. 24, No. 1, April 2003, 1-23. Smolenski argues for the need to read elites sources like diaries, typically viewed from the perspective of “self-making,” “as an ongoing dialogue between masters and slaves.” Reading sources like diaries and court cases (although mediated through the language of, and the need to appeal to the judicial system) as “narratives of interaction between slave owners and enslaved people,” promises to yield great rewards, particularly as we seek to ‘hear’ the voices of the enslaved and present a more accurate account of life in bondage throughout the Americas. Since court cases are inherently ‘dialogical’ they almost naturally lend themselves to this methodological nuance.
witnessed in the pacification of Barbacoas by the 1650s and the Chocó in 1680s and 1690s, confirmed Popayán as a slave society in the most traditional sense of the word, ending an era of ongoing migration while creating the possibility for long-standing labor communities. This process also created the necessity of large importations of ethnic Africans, and thus changed slave community morphology in ways that were sure to have been profound in the lives of all involved.

Chapter three charts the emergence of a slave society in the North-Central Highlands. While slavery’s emergence in Popayán was swift and evident even in the midst of changing regional contexts, the institution’s development in the north-central highlands underwent a much more deliberate and protracted process. Changing socio-economic realities coupled with sustained epidemics and natural disasters produced simultaneously a context of diminished ‘need’ for, and increased affordability of, African and Afro-Creole slave laborers. Among the many variables that contextualized slave life in the seventeenth-century north-central highlands were the demographic realities of both the larger society and the enslaved community. By the early seventeenth century, the slave population of Quito’s urban center was largely Afro-Creole—the result of diminished rates of African imports to the region in concert with increased exchanges of Afro-creoles within the intra-colonial slave trade. Fundamental to the development of this Afro-Creole population, and serving the interests of urban slaveholders more generally, was a sizeable population of enslaved African and Afro-Creole women, most of who lived and/or worked in the elite homes that outlined the city’s central square.

Demography and work were not, however, the only variables that shaped the lives of slaves living in the north-central highlands during the seventeenth century. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, drastic changes in the socio-economic context of the north-central highlands spawned changes that reshaped the lives of those living in the north-central highlands, providing impetus for the importation of ethnic Africans in unprecedented numbers. It is within the context of describing these changes and the emergent demand for slaves in the north-central highland core that this chapter shifts to explore the role of the Jesuit estates in shaping the demand for slaves in the region. By the end of the century the north-central highlands could be characterized as a slave society in the most traditional sense of the term. This period
marked the dawn of the institution’s zenith within the kingdom, and was characterized by many of the precedents would form the realities of slave life within the region for next one hundred years.

Chapter three advances the discussion of the changing realities of slavery and slave life in the gold-mining district of Popayán while paying special attention to the ethnic, gendered, and political variables that shaped the contours of African and Afro-creole community and culture. Much like the processes of forming communities and cultural norms, slavery did not exist solely within the context of work, although the dictates of gold mining and refinement did indeed impact greatly the lived experiences of slaves throughout the region. Still, the work and communal lives of slaves existed, as always, within the geopolitics of the region. Moving first through a discussion of the legal slave trade to Popayán and its sub-district of Barbacoas, this chapter explores the contraband trafficking of African souls and the associated importance of marked bodies as a ceremonial possession of the enslaved and the region they sought to exploit.

Chapter five returns our attention to the realities of slavery and life in the north central highlands over the course of the eighteenth century. The early-to-mid eighteenth century marked slavery’s zenith in the north-central highlands of the kingdom. In the urban center, and on the estates that darted its environs, enslaved blacks were both prevalent and considered necessary. Employing marriage and baptismal records, this chapter explores the lives and relationships that slave laborers created and nurtured even through the socio-political upheaval of the 1760s, when the expulsion of the Jesuits and the sharp decline of the highland economy made the colonial state the largest slaveholder in the all of the colony. With little interest or ability in managing and maintaining such large numbers of slave laborers, the colonial state began the painful process of dividing what had been long-standing communities of enslaved families and friends. The chapter ends with an exploration of their plight and struggle, a struggle that continued well into the principal decades of the nineteenth century.

Although chapters two through five emphasize the changing structures of slavery and colonialism, and the ways that these structures formed the contours of slave life, chapter six moves to explore ways that rebels and fugitives created a context for court disputes between slaves and masters. Its principal aim is to position the discussion beyond the examination of structural forms of colonialism and slavery to an
interpretation of the dialectic that existed between slave resistance and the structure of colonial society. Ultimately, it highlights slaves’ long-standing knowledge and use of the judicial system, a departure from existing scholarship, which locates the political implications of enslaved legal action in the late colonial and early independence eras ostensibly because earlier forms of legal action came under the guise of pleas for mercy rather than overt challenges to the politics of slavery. Here I argue that early attempts at mercy and change of master were inherently political and part of larger resistance continuum that ranged from flight and violent confrontation to legal action. Consequently, this chapter focuses upon the power dialectic that played out between masters and slaves throughout the various stages of colonial life, be they violent confrontations or the dramas that filled colonial courts. It advances our discussion more forcefully to an exploration of what historian Eugene Genovese called “the world they made together” in an effort to uncover the enslaved and ex-slaves’ engagement of the masters’ real and successful attempts to circumscribe their existence.

The story of resistance appears last not because it lacks significance or compelling evidence of agency and slave voice. On the contrary, the reality of slave resistance and agency was of overwhelming importance to the ordering of Quiteño society, and Spanish colonial societies more generally. Implicit within this story of resistance and agency is the fact that Quito was a slave society, one touched by slave laborers who actively sought freedom and, in so doing, informed colonial notions of justice and mercy, a reality clearly not lost upon those seeking to engage the slave paradigm in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For them, the critical role of slavery and slaveholding was already evident, and it would not be shunned for a full two and a half centuries.
CHAPTER 2

FINDING GOLD, FORMING SLAVERY: THE CREATION OF A CLASSIC SLAVE SOCIETY
IN A SPANISH AMERICAN FRONTIER, POPAYÁN, 1600-1700

By the late sixteenth century the turn towards African slave labor was clearly evident throughout the Gobernación de Popayán. Even justices of the highest court of the land had endorsed the mass importation of enslaved Africans. In 1592, Quito high justice Francisco Auncibay requested of Philip II a royally subsidized shipment of some 1,000 enslaved Africans from the ‘land of Guinea.’ Like most petitions of the era, Auncibay expressed that the group would reflect gender balances, their ages ranging from twenty-seven to forty years. That slave laborers were already ordering public discourse and social concerns is evidenced in Auncibay’s assertions that to control the enslaved they would be prohibited from learning to ready and write; there would be no swordplay, riding of horses or bearing of arms; and, most importantly, black men would marry black women. Tools would be collected at night, and harsh punishments would befall all who challenged the peace and sanctity of colonial society through flight and/or rebellion. They were a necessary element within this society, that is, if Popayán was to become the pearl of Quito through the continued exploitation of gold reserves that lay just beneath the region’s rivers and streams. Local mine owners would, of course, repay the crown with the great wealth that captives from the land of Guinea promised to provide by the seat of their brow. But much to the chagrin of elites like Auncibay, such requests were ignored with considerable consistency during this period, leaving Payanese elites in a lurch where the matter of slave labor was concerned.

By the turn of the seventeenth century the importation of African slaves to Popayán could be best characterized as sporadic, and of low volume. Between 1583 and 1605 only fifty-three slaves changed

64 RHGQ, 1:550, 567, 518-526.
ownership in Popayán with the majority of exchanges transpiring in the 1592, 1603, and 1605. Among the fifty-three slaves sold in those years were: twenty-nine men, twelve women, six boys and six girls under the ages of fourteen. Illustrative of the ethnic diversity that characterized the city of Quito at this time, they were comprised of: five Brans, three Biafarans, one Guinea, one Jolofo (Geolofo), eight Angolans, two Congos, one Terranova, one Cazanga, and twenty-nine described as “mulatos or criollos.” Enterprising miners and merchants had gone to great lengths to address the region’s growing labor shortage, bringing at least one of these slaves—Francisco Catacamango (30 years-of-age nación Congo) from as far away as the town of Cuenca, situated in the south-central highlands of the kingdom. Mothers and children such as Lucrecia Angola and her daughter, Garcia, or Maria Bran together with her two sons, and one daughter, were fortunate enough to be sold together, even if changes in ownership brought with it a great deal of uncertainty. They, along with families like that of Anton Biafara and Felipa (no nación) and their two Creole daughters, Maria (3) and Fabirnal (1), would experience life under the command of their new slaveholders together.

This chapter is about the world in which Maria and Fabirnal came of age. It engages the changing socio-economic realities that helped form the contours of slave life in seventeenth-century Popayán. Intended as a descriptive overview of slavery’s emergence within the region, it begins with a discussion of elite petitions to the crown for royally subsidized shipments of African captives and the importance of black slave labor at the beginning of the century. The chapter moves from there to discuss the rigors of gold mining and the labor-intensive processes that typified regional techniques in an effort to underscore

65 Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán) {hereafter ACC}. Protocolos, Primera Notaria, Tomos I & II. I thank historian Kris E. Lane for generously sharing this data with me while at the ACC in August of 2000.
66 ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo II, f. 867.
67 ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo II, 819v, 994v.
68 The family was to be sold in Quito, but their seller, in an apparent change of heart, traded them for sugar with a Cali merchant. Sec. ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo II, f. 812. Children like, Ysabel (10 years-of-age) were, unfortunately, left without access to their parents love. Life in the mines was extremely dangerous, especially for young children. In 1674, for example, in the town of Popayán, Fray Matias Sanchez of the Dominican monastery sold a male infant—Nicolas Francisco—to Francisco Antonio Beltran. Selling the baby, described as a two-month-old, mulato boy (un mulatillo, nación criollo de dos meses), Fray Sanchez maintained the infant’s mother and siblings as the property of the monastery, thereby breaking up a family for his and perhaps the monastery’s gain. See. ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo I, f. 253v; and ACC Sig. 415 (Col. JI. 2cv) 17 November 1674, folios 1-2.
mine holders’ chronic labor challenges. Thereafter, it explores the establishment of early mining settlements and the corresponding acquisitions of slave laborers. Here, the point is to underscore the shifting geographical context of slavery in the first half of the century. Finally, the chapter explores the opening of Colombia’s lowland Pacific littoral in the second half of the seventeenth century, and the process of re-Africanization that occurred in the wake of these movements. The opening of the Pacific lowlands, witnessed in the pacification of Barbacoas by the 1650s and the Chocó in 1680s and 1690s, allowed slave holders to end an era of forcing their slaves to migrate over long distances in search of mineral deposits. From the 1690s on, there would be an emphasis upon growing large, relatively stable labor groups who would mine gold within a close radius of the camps that were then situated along the river ways that darted the district of Barbacoas. The transition to mining in the lowland Pacific littoral also created the necessity of large importations of ethnic Africans, and thus changed slave community morphology in ways that must have held interesting implications for the process of ethnogenesis.

Throughout the seventeenth century Afro-Creoles had accounted for the majority of Popayán’s slave population. Interspersed within this group were ethnic Africans, the majority of whom had emanated originally from regions within Central Africa and the Upper Guinea Coast of West Africa. Many of these ethnic Africans were “ladinos,” who spoke Spanish, “professed” Catholicism, and understood the inner-workings of Spanish colonial societies. Newly arrived ethnic Africans (most of them from the Bight of Benin, the Gold Coast, Central Africa, and, to a lesser extent, the Bight of Biafra) would have to find a space within this ethnically diverse population as they entered the kingdom at the end of the century.

Continuing the tradition begun by high court justice Licenciado Francisco Auncibay, merchants, miners and local officials inundated the crown with petitions for royally subsidized shipments of African captives. In 1598, Popayán’s solicitor general, Juan de Rada petitioned the Council of the Indies with a number of concerns, among them was a request for the crown to dispatch eight hundred African captives as a subsidy for the mines of Popayán. Just five years later, the provincial governor, Vasco Mendoza y Silva, along with Popayán’s town council joined the chorus, pressing the monarch to dispatch two hundred

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slaves. Each petitioner took great care to demonstrate how African slavery might further the cause of establishing a well-ordered society predicated upon proselytizing Amerindians and generating large caches of wealth for Spain from the gold-rich deposits of the region’s mountains and streams. Each specified that shipments would be marked by balanced sex ratios, a characteristic that promised conformity to Christian norms regarding marriage and gender roles, and reproduction of the slave labor pool. Perhaps more importantly, such provisions served the goal of quelling the violent urges of black men. In addition to remitting the real quinto (royal fifth—mining tax), merchants promised to repay the royal treasury four hundred pesos per captive in eight installments, an arrangement that could easily be met, they argued, given that one captive promised to produce some two hundred pesos of gold annually. To the dismay of local proprietors, the crown ignored their requests, leaving would-be slaveholders and colonial officials with the burden of addressing the region’s labor demands. Although the crown had underwritten the establishment of African slaving gangs (cuadrillas) in Spain and in some areas of the Indies, the crown owned such slaves and employed them in imperial projects. Apparently, the crown was not interested in going into the mining business of Popayán. Indeed, the crown had already taken steps to avoid tying its resources to the costly enterprise of shipping slaves to the Indies. Through the sale of trading licenses (asientos), the crown forced individuals and trading companies to undertake the high risks associated with slave trading. But more importantly for Payanese elites and their ilk, the crown charged merchants and trading companies import taxes (almorjarifazgos), and charged sales taxes (alcabalas) on all subsequent transactions.

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70 This number promised to solidify the basis of a self-sustaining slave population, which needed, for the moment, a steady infusion of 250 bozales (African-born captives) per annum just to offset the ongoing decline in available Amerindian charges, or so the argument went.

71 Royal officials operated under the assumption that the companionship of presumably more docile females would serve to placate the restive spirits of male captives, thereby preventing violent outbursts of flight and rebellion. Royal and ecclesiastical dogma had already defined male and female sexuality, setting forth required codes of conduct. Marriage was not only an expected, gendered behavior it became the “grand remedy” needed to quell the potential for violent revolts and mass desertions. Gender balanced cargoes, therefore, became a normative element in all petitions to import African captives to the Indies. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see. Bennett, Africans in Colonial Mexico, 33-50.

72Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 75-76.

Through taxation, then, the crown was poised to gain large sums of bullion, and thus had little incentive to subsidize slave shipments. Rather than undertake the practice of subsidizing business ventures in the Indies, the royal treasury would simply receive its share of whatever colonials produced, risk free. In exchange, colonist received royal protection and finished good from the metropolis. This was, after all, colonial fiscal policy.

As of 1615, however, the issue remained unsettled in the minds of colonial Payanese officials. In that year, Popayán’s town treasurer, Gerónimo Perez de Ubillus, appealed to the Council of the Indies for assistance with procuring African captives. Still the council refused to comprise on the matter, insisting that would-be slaveholders could travel to Cartagena and herd their slaves from there. Local elites appeared desperate and they had sufficient cause. There was gold to be had, indeed more than enough to make good on their proposals to the crown. Between 1595 and 1600 Popayán registered an average of 50,295 pesos or 87.6 percent of all gold smelted in the Kingdom of Quito during the period.74 Old mining centers were nearing depletion; many Amerindians were either dying from overwork and/or epidemics, or fleeing the mining centers of Popayán for the North-Central highlands of Quito. In order to maintain this scale of production, they needed large labor reserves, laborers who could move at will in search of rich gold deposits scattered over long distances throughout the Gobernación of Popayán. Although the encomienda was alive and well in those years, many mine owners had already begun the process of shifting their indigenous charges away from work in the mines to agricultural endeavors in an effort to stem the tide of indigenous death and flight. Miners and merchants, moreover, needed laborers who could be forced to work and travel over long distances to emerging mining centers throughout the Gobernación of Popayán.

Mining systems and the demand for slave labor

The search for and mining of gold was an intense and daunting undertaking. Popayán’s long fabled riches of gold often proved illusive, as gold extraction demanded much foresight and skill. While masters sought to compensate for these challenges through technological innovations, Amerindians and

74 Lane, *Quito 1599*, 166.
enslaved blacks used fairly primitive and labor-intensive methods to search for gold. Yet, throughout the early colonial period Amerindians and blacks mined sizable amounts of gold dust, found within the region’s mountains and riverbeds. To accomplish this, they employed a number of techniques, chief among them were vein mining and various forms of placer mining, both of which demanded sizeable labor groupings.  

Vein mining required that workers drive vertical and/or inclined shafts (normally three feet wide) along “outcropping veins” to average depths of 20 feet. Blacks and their Amerindian counterparts used pointed, wooden coas or dribbles made with fire-hardened tips along with roughly shaped stones as their primary tools when digging in soft, “weathered material.” The next step involved workers carrying the gangue (soft material ore extract) out of the shaft in baskets. Once extracted from the earth and lifted out of the shaft, laborers crushed the soft ore on stone querns, washing the gold that had separated in a batea (a shallow wooden or clay bowl).

But in Popayán, a region long regarded as an indigenous gold-placering center, more gold came from placering than vein mining. Placering as a general technique took on a number of forms, ground sluicing, stream placering, and pit placering. Each of these approaches involved a form of washing gold from the deposits of streams and gravel deposits. Not only was a considerable amount of gold found in the gravel of streambeds, placering, as a technique, yielded more gold as a result of the relative ease of exploitation. In general, placering involved working the gravels of streambeds with a batea. During “dry periods,” when water levels ran low, workers were able to pay close attention to yet another area that was reputedly rich in fine gold—the clay that lay beneath large boulders in streambeds.

Among the more common forms of placering was the technique of ground sluicing, a method of “washing” gold from the stream terraces and high gravel deposits. According to historian Robert C. West, the process occurred in the following manner:

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75 While scholars such as Robert C. West have provided the field with thorough descriptions of the gold search and extraction process, for the sake of providing ample context and texture to this discussion of Popayán slavery, it is worth discussing briefly the intricacies of this process.

76 Robert C. West, Placer Gold Mining in New Granada, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1952), 54. West’s work represents one of the most complete analyses of colonial gold mining techniques published to date.
A ditch, called a sluice cannel (canelón), was excavated along the base of a gravel bench, or terrace, to the depth of false bedrock (the peña, or hardpan), where the richest pay streaks were usually encountered. With iron bars (barras) and iron-tipped poles (barretones) the mineworkers dug back into the face of the terrace, dumping gold-bearing sand and gravel into the sluice. Water was then run through the sluice and the finer materials were washed out; large cobbles were thrown from the sluice with pairs of concave wooden plates, or cachos; and the remaining gravel was gradually washed off, while the gold settled to the bottom of the highly auriferous clay layer immediately above the peña, was scarped with almocafres, short-handled dibbles with hooked metal blades. Lastly, the fine residue, rich in concentrated gold dust, was heaped in piles within the sluice and the precious metal was carefully washed out in bateas, round, shallow wooden bowls.77

Ground sluicing was especially challenging because it required the maintenance of large water supplies, a critical problem in areas located away from streams and river ways. In these areas in particular, masters and/or overseers forced the enslaved to construct (pilas) reservoirs, and position them on hilltops in order to collect rainwater. Later, these reserves were directed to ditches or handcrafted canals in an effort to wash gold from the gravel found therein.78 This was a multi-layered process that required large groups of laborers (cuadrillas) be assigned individually and, at times, in groups to specific tasks. But even then, maintaining large numbers of workers presented another set of challenges. One of the major drawbacks to this system, however, was its seasonal aspect, for in some areas of the region work ended during the dry seasons (January-February and June-July), thereby labeling sluice mines as minas de invierno or rainy season mines.79 While many workers could be rotated into agricultural service, including caring for crops and working in sugar mills, most slave owners were, at this time, small-time investors who could little the seasonal hiatus.

Stream placering, another commonly employed technique, was far simpler than ground sluicing principally because it relied on the rushing waters of streams to wash gold. Consequently, this technique did not require the building of canals or reservoirs. But simple did not necessarily mean easy, as stream placering required that one pan in the middle of the river. Panning dictated that workers scoop gravel with large bateas, while simultaneously washing out worthless materials. That panners had to stand in waist-

77 Ibid., 56.
78 Ibid., 56-57.
79 Ibid., 57.
high rapids ensured this technique a position among the most dangerous of techniques. Quite literally a back-breaking endeavor, workers often tied rocks to their backs in an effort to stabilize themselves against the raging currents, a feat that required great balance, skill and endurance. And while the extant colonial record provides next to nothing in the way of hard evidence, one wonders just how many novices (bateas), as masters commonly referred to the enslaved working these streams, met their deaths by drowning in these “golden waters” of the region.80

In addition to balancing oneself among river rapids, stream placering required yet another death-defying technique: the act of “diving with a large elliptical batea.”81 In this process, workers constructed large wing dams (trinchos, caballos) made of logs and latticework, constructed from palm fronds with heavy cobbles, to hold the ranchos in place “half way across [the] swift-flowing streams,” all in an effort to slow the currents just enough to produce down-stream flow. Once accomplished, divers (zambullidores) anchored themselves momentarily with a heavy stone secured around their waist. This allowed them to submerge themselves with a large batea and scoop gravel. Releasing the stone produced a propeller effect, driving the diver to the surface with a load of gravel. When batea loads were too heavy for the make shift propelling system, divers climbed to the surface on a notched log latter.82

Digging large pits (hoyos) on flood plains, rivers bars, or along low terraces adjacent to streams was yet another form of placering commonly referred to as pit placering, a technique employed to remove volumes of gold-bearing earth for washing. In the pit-placering process, workers excavated to depths ranging from ten to fifteen feet after digging pits with iron bars and bateas.83 More intensive still were the large hoyo operations that required laborers to cut steps of five to six feet tall into one side of a cavern, positioning workers at various points to extract gravel from the pit.84


81 West, *Colonial Placer Mining*,

82 Ibid., 58-59.

83 Ibid., 60-61.

84 Ibid., 61.
But sluicing, panning, and digging were only first steps in the search for gold. These initial advances in the process usually produced a thick black concentrate composed of magnetic iron oxide, ilmenite and gold dust, commonly referred to as jagua.\textsuperscript{85} Once this was accomplished, workers repeated the process of washing the concentrate with the batea, this time in a smoother pan designed especially for separating mass from other metallurgic properties. More common still was the process of washing this thick glob in a solution that contained a “glutinous sap” made from a number of tropical plant extracts.\textsuperscript{86} And although the phenomenon of employing mercury has yet to be found in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Popayán sources, by the eighteenth the use of mercury for purifying “plantiniferious gold” had become commonplace.\textsuperscript{87} While most laborers were assigned to these tasks, other Africans and Afro-criollos assumed the positions of ironworkers, producing almocafres and bateas for the camp, all of which made for a laborious and dangerous system that demanded large numbers of workers.\textsuperscript{88} Many Africans were quite adept at these processes, emanating as they did from gold and iron producing regions of West and West Central Africa. Indeed, the requirements of mining, the decline of Amerindian workers, and the skill and availability of African captives had precipitated the called for royal subsidies. The finding of gold was, then, predicated upon the formation of slavery. With that process well under way, miners and merchants would turn their attention quickly to establishing mining settlements.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 62.

The Establishment and locations of Early Mining Centers:

Some of the earliest and most important mining centers of Popayán were those of Anserma-Cartago (See Map 2.1).\textsuperscript{89} But by the 1580s many of the placers of this region were near depletion. Over the course of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, however, miners exploited the deposits of several hills and mountains. One of the most productive of these was Quiebralomo, which had been worked by over 600 Amerindians in the late 1550s. But by the 1620s the shafts of had been penetrated beyond profitable points, making it inefficient to continue working these veins. And by 1627, miners such as the prominent Arboleda family found it necessary to end many of their mining operations in this area and move their African and Afro-criollo captives elsewhere, thereby decreasing the number of enslaved blacks working this area by more than half. By this date, there were some 242 enslaved blacks working within this region, whereas in 1572 there numbers reached upwards of 1,000.\textsuperscript{90} Nevertheless, historian Robert C. West notes that, despite reductions among their ranks, this was a rather productive group. Between 1629 and 1635 enslaved blacks along with their 200 Amerindian counterparts produced approximately 190,000 pesos of gold, the majority of which emanating from the vein workings assigned to 180 esclavos and 110 Amerindians.\textsuperscript{91}

Trading patterns were also shifting and seemingly ever changing. During the early days of conquest and occupation the region was accessed from the Atlantic and circum-Caribbean via Panama and Buenaventura. Owing to Amerindian retaliation, the decline in the number of Amerindian porters, and royal officials’ inability to provide the port with sufficient soldiers, Buenaventura fell into ruin.

\textsuperscript{89} Slaves had long been employed in this region, and by the 1580s a second generation were growing up in the region. In 1592 one finds sales of slaves like: Pedro “criollo de Anzerma,” a twelve-year-old boy, who, obviously was born in Anzerma in 1580; In addition to Pedro, there was a young boy named Adán turns who, apparently, was sold twice; the second time for twice the price of the first; and a young man, named Anton “criollo de Anzerma” would have been born in Anzerma in the year 1577, if his reported age of 26 years was accurate. See. ACC. PN. Tomo I, folios 337, 373, and 283; ACC. PN. Tomo II, folio 855.

\textsuperscript{90} Robert C. West, Colonial Placer Mining in Colombia, 10, 36-37.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid. There were also three agricultural villages that feed and otherwise supplied these mining operations. These included Supía la Baja, La Montaña, and Pirísá, worked by 30, 30, and 50 Amerindian charges respectively. Five cattle ranches (hatos de Ganado vacuno) were also located in village of Vega de Supía. See. Ibid, 37, note # 19.
Map 2.1 Colonial Mining Activities
It seems that, an early reorientation of trade routes just prior to the end of the sixteenth was ultimately the death knell for this fledgling port. In the 1620s prominent Payanese vecinos (property owners) underwrote the development of a toll road that crossed the Guanacas pass, connecting the town of Honda and the upper Magdalena valley directly to the town of Popayán, thereby bypassing the old Buenaventura—Cali route.92

Such initiatives were aimed, in part, at connecting trade to yet another of the region’s early and significant mining districts was the placer region of the upper-Cauca valley surrounding the city of Popayán. Gravels along the Esmita and Quilasé rivers apparently flowed with gold, while gravels near many Cauca tributaries—La Teta, Jelima, Ovejos, located between the town of Popayán and Cali—were known to hold much gold by the late sixteenth century (See Map 2.2). In addition, Quilicho, Quinamayó, and Caloto (situated nearly 40 miles north of the town of Popayán) were all famous mining camps. Among these, Jelima was noted to be a rather dangerous place where slaves suffered severely.

According to Jesuit brother and historian, Pedro de Mercado, when Fray Francisco de Fuentes visited the mines of Jelima he encountered three Spaniards who stood out for their cruelty and love of gold over god. They were so obsessed with gold, he urged, that they forced their slaves “with the rigor of the lash” to awake and work before sunrise, all while neglecting to instruct them in the “treasures of heaven” (tesoros del cielo).93 Moreover, he argued that they had not taught these slaves anything of Jesus; neither had they provided them with a good example in the faith. Although Mercado’s account is derived from only one observer, the rigors of mining were arduous, and at least one slave lost his life at the hand of a

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93 Mercado was concerned primarily with the presence of the church in this region. For his part, the spiritual conquest had not succeeded in this region, as evidenced by enslaved Africans, Afro-Creoles and Indians who knew not of his Jesus or the law of his god. Mercado insisted, however, that evangelizing the enslaved was a feat that could be accomplished easily with a church presence in the region. Although these individuals were ignorant of the mandates of his god and church, they were apt learn. Over the course of two nights, blacks from an area mining camp (ranchería) who knew nothing of the Faith were taught, and after that received the communion. Success was had in Anserma when Father Juan de Rivera arrived he was received properly. Rivera had also entered the mining camps to evangelize the slaves. Not only was he well-received, enslaved couples who had been living in sin “mala amistad” came to be properly married. P. Pedro de Mercado S.J., Historia de la provincia del Nuevo Reino y Quito de la Compañía de Jesús, Tomo IV. (Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia, ), 22, 28-30.
man from a nearby mining town. But similar to other cases of murdered slaves, the concern was not for the life the enslaved, but rather for his value. The question rose and fell around the issue of whether or not the owner would be able to recoup lost resources. Life was rough within this mining frontier, and sometimes vigilante justice had to be served, especially if it meant killing a rebellious slave.

94 See the power of attorney to take legal action against a man in the town of Toro for the slaying of “Chrisóbal criollo” ACC. PN. Tomo I, folio 326v and 378v.
Map 2.2 Mining Areas in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Popayán
In addition to Jelima, by 1628, there were some 250 slaves working the mines that surrounded the town of Popayán. Christobal Mosquera, one of the first encomenderos move to slave labor, acquired some thirteen slaves in 1626, and by 1633 he held some forty slaves who were assigned to the mines of La Teta and Gelima. These included “males and females, children and adults” (machos y hembras, chicos y grandes). Mosquera reserved another six (three males and three females) to work in his home. In his will, Mosquera recommended that his wife place 5,000 gold pesos in his co-exectuor’s (dean don Francisco Vélez de Zúniga) charge for the purchase of more slaves. Zúniga had also been connected to the slaving and mining. In 1634, he partnered with Andrés Martín, each investing twenty captives in the Gelima mine maintained by Martín. Undoubtedly, these were the same individuals who went on to form the Jesuits’ mining operations in the region.

Three additional mining centers dominated Popayán’s seventeenth-century gold production: Chisquío, located to the west of the town of Popayán itself, generated large sums of gold from activity around Cerro Munchique; Almaguer, located south of Popayán city on the western slope of the central Cordillera, and the various tributaries that fed into the Patía River—in the so-called “hot zone” that encompassed a site called Matarredonda—a region that came be the hotbed of maroon activity by the late sixteenth century. While West suggests that Chisquío held only marginal importance over the course of the colonial era, Kris Lane and historian Guido Barona have both demonstrated the significant production levels “oro de Chisquío” as evidenced by colonial smeltery ledgers. According to Lane, Chisquío may have well been the “city’s (Popayán) lifeblood” until the mid-seventeenth century. On the other hand, all seem to agree that Almaguer, situated between Popayán city and Pasto was not only critical commercial link between the cities of Popayán and Quito, but also that mine owners experienced great success,

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95 Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 36.

96 See, for example, ACC. PN Tomo 9; 14 septiembre 1633, folio 329v; and Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 45.

97 West, Colonial Placer Mining; and Lane, Quito 1599, 131-132.

98 West, Colonial Placer Mining, 13; Lane, Quito 1599, 131; and Guido Barona, “Estructura de la producción de oro en las minas de la Real Corona: Chisquío (Cauca) en el Siglo XVII,” Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura (ACHSC) No. 11 (1983): 5-42.
producing nearly 30,000 pesos per annum during the last quarter of the sixteenth century, and thus formed one of Popayán’s most significant mining-slaveholding districts in the early seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{99}

But if gold production figures fall short of illustrating the extent of slavery in the region of Almaguer, sales and transactions from the 1580s offer further confirmation. In fact all existing transactions from the year 1583 are from Almaguer. Like most cuadrillas during this early period, those of Almaguer were comprised of Amerindians and enslaved blacks. Revealing an interesting cluster of ethnic Africans from the Upper Guinea Coast, these sales feature: Agustín Bañol (35) and Quiteria Terranova, Juan Bran and Francisca Bran, Domingo Biafara and Pedro Biafara.\textsuperscript{100} While this concentration of ethnic Africans from the same general region was not entirely rare, ethnic diversity was the norm. Illustrative of this fact are the presence of children under the age of fourteen—Rodrigo (14), Mateo (9), María (6), Juan (2) and María (5); they too, are indicative of a growing Afro-Creole population who would soon formed the majority amongst enslaved blacks.\textsuperscript{101}

Members of Popayán’s religious community had also established mining gangs in the area of Chisquío. By the year 1614, the nuns of the Encarnación Convent held large gold-mining assets, including a cuadrilla (gang) of slaves, various tools, oxen and ass held among an array of mining and associated agricultural properties. The laborers who made up this mining gang of slaves numbered forty-seven and were found in family units. Approximately one-third of them carried the African ethnic markers of Angola, Bañol, Bran, and Folupo, identifiers that further underscore the ethnic diversity that characterized Quito’s enslaved population. Although thirty-three of them were active miners the remaining seven


\textsuperscript{100} ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo I, f. 127.

\textsuperscript{101} The final two children listed—Juan (2) and María (5)—sprang from a rare union of two slaves carrying the ethnic moniker Bran—Juan and Francisca, both 35 years-of-age. Such intimate relationships were the outgrowth of more than “African retentionists” or an affinity for endogamous unions. Historian Herman Bennett has shown that most often such slaves who married had a longstanding familiarity with one another, sometimes based upon meetings in the Old World or on slave ships in route to the New World. In other instances, slaves formed the bonds that led to marriage and community building upon arrival in the Americas sometimes on the same estate or within the same household or due to their living in the same quadrant of the city. Thus, we should see the formation of slave marital relations much like we see our own here in the postmodern West—unions that grow out of contexts and experiences that foster intimacy between the couple and their inner circles. ACC. PN. Tomo I, 22v, 127, 127v, 130, and 132.
occupied support roles, such as cooking, blacksmithing, or providing other logistical aid like building the much needed canals.\footnote{See, Kris E. Lane, “Captivity and Redemption: Aspects of Slave Life in Early Colonial Quito and Popayán,” The Americas 57:2 (October 2000), 243-245; and See Peter Marzahl’s work for a discussion of the audit (prompted by scandals of sexual and fiscal improprieties) that revealed these findings. See. Peter Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 143-146.}

Even at this early date some mine owners, like the sisters of Encarnación, were not only committed to employing Africans, but endeavored also to create the proper circumstances for slaves to reproduce themselves, an aspiration expressed also by Auncibay, Rada, Goméz and others.\footnote{Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 244.} The forty-two captives held by the sisters of Encarnación included, for example, twenty-five men and seventeen women, yielding a net sex ratio of nearly one and one half to one. Moreover, most petitions for royal subsidy in the way of slaves called for gendered balanced groupings. And although most argued, like Auncibay, that such balances would serve to pacify black men, yet another apparent motive was “slave breeding.” While the aforementioned ratio of one to two was not the balance called for by Auncibay (two or two-thirds male), a good number of Encarnación’s captives lived in nuclear family units, as twenty-two of the forty-two total formed eleven couples, seven of whom had bore children. Marzahl notes that when the second bishop, Fray Agustín de la Coruña, established the convent in 1592, he endowed it with great wealth that included some twenty-seven slaves assigned to work the mines of Chisquío, located in the southwestward vicinity of Popayán proper.\footnote{Kris E. Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 243-245; and Peter Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 13, and 143-146. While the scandals of the second decade of the seventeenth century nearly caused the demise of this convent, it was not until the 1660s when the sisters applied to transfer to Ibarra. Apparently, they had suffered more than a blow to their reputations, given the significant losses in mortgages. Nevertheless, during this era they remained serious players in the mining and slaving industries. See. Ibid.} The sisters had wasted little time leveraging these slaves for raw capital, as they were found issuing a power of attorney to collect the value of “negros de minas” from a debtor in the same year.\footnote{ACC. PN. Tomo I, 279v.}

In addition to activity in Chisquío and Almaguer, the mines of Caloto were counted among those mined early in the century. One large-scale slaveholder, Diego de Victoria, moved his mining gang of
fifteen captives from Anserma to the town of Popayán in 1619, repositioning himself and his slaves for a long career in gold mining. As the experience of these captives demonstrates, the province of Popayán would be a place where they would experience continued displacement. Owners of slave gangs often chose to move their residence, shifting slave gangs from one location to another. In an example cited by Marzahl, “the Arboledas, a family of mine operators in Anserma and later in Popayán, shifted their slave gangs from Anserma to Caloto to Barbacoas and back to Caloto in the course of one generation.”

By 1661, captain Diego de Victoria Salazar (Arboleda’s son-in-law), a resident of Popayán and property holder of Caloto, held twenty-six piezas de esclavos in the trapiche (sugar plantation); he had purchased at least ten of these from doña Antonia de los Arcos y Ríos sold ten of her slaves to Diego Salazar, back in April of 1646. Salazar left this small number of slave laborers to his wife, doña Mariana de Victoria and maestro Juan Net Polo with instructions to further develop the slave gangs and the family’s gold mining enterprise. In addition, Diego also held another fourteen slaves in his Caloto mines named “Minas de Las Obejas y Honduras.” These were probably divided into two gangs of five to seven each (the typical size of a small start-up, mining gang). Diego was relentless, and had already transferred a gang of eight slaves from their mining operations in Caloto to a sugar mill on the Río Paila after they had failed to produce more than 90 pesos of gold per annum.

Reflecting the nature of gold mining, the whims of slaveholders like the Arboledas, local struggles with Amerindians, and the difficulties involved in supplying mining centers, over the course of the seventeenth century, the epicenters of mining would shift from the northern portions of the province near Arma to the south around Almaguer, and even as far south as Mocao. Miners would have to wait until

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106 Arboleda married Diego’s daughter—doña Teodora de Salazar, and the two men started a long-term business relationship in 1633, purchasing the canal and water rights of Usenda, which Diego then developed. Connecting the canal with other water sources, Diego then contracted with other mine owners to supply them with water from the Victoria/Arboleda canal. This was a process that was sure to demand an increase in labor hands, thereby further precipitating an importation of bozales or the transferal of captives from other mining camps and haciendas in the region. By his death, in 1671, Arboleda owned 145 slaves, including sixty-one women and children (boys <15 and girls <12).


108 ACC. Sig. 931 (Col.—CI—12nt) folio, 20v.

mid-century to turn their attention westward to Barbacoas, and then northward again in the last decades of
the century after the pacification of the Chocó. In the meantime, they concentrated their efforts developing
the region’s slaving ranks. Many leveraged their way to slave ownership, but found it difficult to hang onto
their captives, as debtors and municipal officials were all too willing to foreclose and auction off slaves or
any other property in hoc.

Amid a 1603 will and testament one finds an enslaved boy and girl, both ages eight or nine, who
were listed along with debts that included a loan of 200 pesos backed by a slave. Apparently, the loan had
been taken out in an attempt to purchase Pedro Jolofo, and Anna Criolla and her son, Andrés, at an auction
of a nearby estate. In yet another ad hoc arrangement from the era one finds a loan for 579 gold pesos
with a lien (escripura de empeño) against two slaves, one “don Diego” and Leonor, both listed as
“criollos.” By 1605, a subsequent sale of “don Diego” had been revoked when it was discovered that he
suffered from a tumor in his stomach (“una opilación y postema en el estomago”). Don Diego’s owner
was not alone, as highly leveraged slaveholders continued to struggle in their treasure hunt for gold, slaves,
and status in Popayán.

In 1621, don Geronimo Perez de Ubillús, the town treasurer, along with the royal accountant, don
Juan de Palacio Alvarado were foreclosing upon the mortgaged slaves of don Arias de Silva Saavedra and
his wife doña Maria de Lerzundi to cover their debt of 406 pesos de oro de veinte quilantes. This action
included the confiscation of at least one slave that the couple had sold to another elite vecino of Popayán—
Diego Hurtado. Often it was not government officials who slaveholders struggled to keep at bay.
Instead their foes were with their fellow vecinos (property holders). Accusations of theft were commonly
followed by lawsuits to retain or regain people defined as property.

10 ACC. PN. Tomo II, 735v (19-vi-1603).
11 ACC. PN. Tomo I, folio 257v.
12 ACC. PN. Tomo II, f. 142v. In a similar transaction, the buyer of Magdalena Criolla de Quiembralom was held
responsible for the seller’s debts. See ACC. PN. Tomo II, f. 268v.
13 ACC. Sig. 671 (Col—CI—8h), 1621, folios 1-2. See also, the cancellation of a mortgage on four slaves in
1633—ACC. PN Tomo 9 (1633), folios 132v-133. While most elites tended to employ their black slaves in the gold
mining industry, others like don Joseph Hurtado charged them with duties on agricultural estates, enterprises that were
normally dedicated to supplying the mines with food, clothing, and liquor. In 1633, Hurtado had 12 slaves working in
his ingenio (sugar mill). ACC. Primera Notaria, 1633, fol. 55v; See, also Marzahl, Town in the Empire.
In 1643 el maestro de campo, Diego Ramón, argued before the governor of Popayán (don Juan de Borja) that Martín Nararro had robbed him of his slave—Francisco Angola. According to Ramón, he had purchased Francisco from Nararro (having been business partners (socios) in a mining project near the Chocó). Now, Nararro claimed the slave as his own. As time passed officials placed Francisco in deposito (protective custody) at the home of doña Ana de Salazar, where the judge ordered that he remain while they determine his rightful owner. The extant record contains only three folios of what was sure to have been an extensive documentary trail, replete with copies of bills of sale, inventories, and other critical pieces of evidence that informed the court’s decision in determining the rightful owner of Francisco Angola as well as contemporary knowledge of the historical event.

For much of the seventeenth century slaveholders struggled to acquire and hold onto sufficient numbers of slave laborers. In addition to the arduous tasks of gold mining, mine owners forced their mining gangs to move frequently over long distances. Mining and forced mass migrations required a sound organizational scheme, informed by much foresight. Work was one of the most fundamental arbiters of slave life here and elsewhere. The rhythm of mining, the tenor of gang labor, and the mobility requirement each served to structure slave life.

The Organization and Challenge of Labor

As the techniques discussed above imply, gold mining relied upon the construction of labor gangs (cuadrillas). Although there were individual work assignments, a great many of the tasks required that groups of individuals work in tandem to accomplish a series of projects. In the larger gangs, laborers were divided into two groups comprised of both women and men. Normally, mine owners and/or administrators dedicated one half of the group to mining duties while others (piezas de roza) set about addressing the

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114 See. ACC. Sig. 1805 (Col.—JI—Cv) 1643; 3 folios.

115 The case of don Gaspar González Lauro, Presbitero, is illustrative of this fact. In 1658, he solicited the local notary for a copy of the writ in order to verify that don Alonso de Godoy was a “deudor” of his father’s (Francisco González). Lauro was most concerned about the value four “piezas de esclavos” that his father had purchased and owned at the time of the testament, notarized on May 13, 1658.
agricultural and domestic needs of the camp. A few others served the gang as blacksmiths, and could be
called upon to repair tools, and aid in the gold refinement process.

Although slaves produced some foodstuffs for themselves, most agricultural goods and supplies
more generally came from the agro-pastoral estates that darted the Cauca Valley and the North-Central
highlands of Quito—a fact that caused many slaves and slaveholders much consternation. Even some
foodstuffs like, meat, wheat, flour, salt and sugar came from outside of mining areas. Although resident
blacksmiths, no doubt many of them Africans who emerged form iron-producing regions of West Africa,
fashioned many of the tools used in the mines, steel and iron had to be imported from outside of settlement
areas. Textiles and agricultural goods entered the region from the North-Central highlands and landed-
estates that darted the lower Cauca Valley. Wine and brandy came from Peru and, to a lesser extent,
highland Quito. Foods like wheat and cheese came into the mining areas from Popayán proper and the
region surrounding Tunja, situated high in the eastern cordillera.116

Owing to the region’s notoriously dangerous and, often, impassable roads, most supplies arrived
by river transport, which, incidentally, was the principal means of travel within the region more
generally.117 Indeed, slaves throughout Popayán’s mining districts lived in watery world. Not only did
they work the raging rapids of rivers, building sluice canals and reservoirs to flood gravel beds in dry areas,
they also worked as polemen on the dugout canoes (*champáns*) that transported individuals and good along
the Magdalena and Cauca rivers.118 River transport came to a screeching halt during the rainy seasons
(April-May, September-November), as high water levels made the task of polemen—many of them
slaves—nearly impossible.

Despite logistical challenges, mine operators did their best to secure the much-needed tools and
agricultural goods for their slaves and coerced laborers more generally. Supplies came into mining towns,
around the perimeter of which lay the actual mining camps themselves. Assuming supplies were available,

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116 West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, 117-121

117 Ibid., 123; See RHGQ, 1:1-15, 332-334.

118 West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, 125.
they provided their slaves with weekly rations that included plantains, maize, salt, and meat. As of the eighteenth century, slaves were receiving an allotment of “six plantains a day, a small weekly portion of maize and salt, and, in some camps, two pounds of salt pork or beef per week.” Obviously, in the wake of natural disasters slaves felt the brunt of the loss, since masters were forced to cut rations, leaving slaves to fend for themselves or starve to death.

Cuadrillas could range in size from groups of five to seven laborers to upwards of one hundred individuals. Resembling many of the labor groupings of estate-complexes in the Cauca Valley and throughout the North-Central highlands, most cuadrillas were a hodgepodge of Amerindian coerced laborers, free black itinerant gold panners (mazamorreros), and slave laborers (owned and leased). Small time mine holders could not afford to subcontract the management of their mining operations. Nonetheless, those mine holders who could, contracted with mayordomos (mine administrators), who in turn established the chain of command for a given cuadrialla. Larger labor gangs (twenty-five to fifty) usually had one captain, whereas even larger mining gangs (one hundred or more) had at least one captain with a series of co-captains. Captains, usually men, distributed tools in the mornings and collected them in the evenings. They also collected the weekly quota of gold for the mayordomo, distributed food, and disciplined cuadrilla members. The role of the captain was, obviously, of critical importance, filled with privilege as well as high-pressure responsibilities. Collecting tools that could become weapons, for example, was surely one of his chief concerns. The effective management of a mining camp depended largely upon a series of

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119 Ibid., 87.

120 West notes that, “in 1616 and 1631…plagues of locusts destroyed the maize crop around [the region of] Remedios. Rations per slave were reduced to four yuccas (sweet manioc roots) and two maize cakes per week.” He related, moreover, that, “again, in 1715, a severe crop failure in the Chocó caused the starvation of more than three hundred slaves.” See. Ibid., 86, and note #55 on page 99, respectively.

121 Citing an early seventeenth-century visita to the mines of Antioquia, Robert West noted that on occasion, women served as capitanas of female gangs. This appears to have been a rare, though not prohibited method of labor organization. We must remain open, however, to the notion that enslaved Africans may have influenced the organizational hierarchy of cuadrillas and the division of labor within the camps. Although men seem to have occupied positions of authority, women remained the most likely to acquire their freedom. According to historian Kathleen Higgins, in the gold mining camps of early eighteenth-century Saloarã, Brazil, women tended to have greater access to “unregulated income, unsupervised free time, masters’ and mistresses’ personal patronage, and manumission.” Enslaved women, she argues, were perceived as less of a threat than their black male counterparts. There were fewer women, and they did not compete with white men for gold-bearing land. See. West Colonial Placer Mining, 87 & 99, note 52. Kathleen J. Higgins, “Licentious Liberty” in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region, 5.
reciprocal relationships, relationships between mine owners and mayordomos, mayordomos and captains, and those between captains and the community of laborers more generally. Many captains abused their authority, and fell short of maintaining outer and prevent flight. Although slave resistance is addressed at length in chapter five, it is worth noting here the ways that slaves thwarted commercial initiatives during this early and tenuous period.

In one notable example from the 1611, one finds that don Diego de Sandoval and his father-in-law, governador don Vasco de Mendoza y Silva had lost control of their slaves. Upon calling for the help of the authorities, their slaves grew ever more restive, maintaining their rebellious stance, and insisting that they would not surrender the swords they brandished. Subduing the two individuals, the officials then took them into custody. Because it was a master’s charge to ensure that their captives walked unarmed and report all rebellious incidents (especially marronage), officials confiscated the slaves and fined Sandoval 20 pesos.1

A petition filed by the defendants prompted Licenciado Diego Zorilla, the audiencia judge commissioned to Popayán, to rule on March 20, 1611 that don Diego de Sandoval could finally receive his slave after Diego Hurtado, Sandoval’s guarantor, paid 320 pesos (the cost of the slave) along with the fine of 20 pesos. While some might argue that “repurchasing” these slaves represented an unwise financial decision, the extant documents tell us little about how Sandoval and Mendoza y Silva had acquired these slaves, and thereby have little to go on in our attempts to evaluate their decision. Perhaps they had devised a method of recouping the costs of this infraction and still realize some of the profits from their initial investment. Perhaps they would work the slaves for a while in the region’s mines, and then sell them off in the Quito marketplace, where captives typically fetched higher prices than those in Popayán, principally because of their limited availability in the highland capital. In either case, Sandoval’s interest in reclaiming his confiscated property is not so unimaginable, even if doing so might involve bearing a large financial

122 ACC. Sig. 1391 (Col.—I—Icv). 28 Marzo de 1611, folios 1-12.
burden. In early colonial Quito slaves constituted a most valuable piece of property, even when they proved bellicose and therefore difficult to manage as they did quite often.\footnote{123}

Despite the challenges of acquiring slaves, maintaining food and supply lines, and inducing slaves to work, miners and merchants relied increasingly upon slave labor as century waned. Although many of the region’s cuadrillas constituted a jumble of various laborers—enslaved, free black, contract/itinerant miners, and Amerindians—slaves remained the most suitable option. They could be leased, mortgaged, passed down to progeny, sold in times of despair, and most importantly for this era, forced to move over long distances. Because of the presence of so-called “bellicose” Amerindians like the Paez to the east and the Sindaguas in the western littoral, merchants had been confined to the upper and lower Cauca Valley. By mid-century, this position had become quite problematic, as much of that region’s mineral wealth had been sufficiently exploited. New sites were needed if Popayán was to return to the high levels of gold production it had enjoyed in the sixteenth century.

As ore levels reach depletion, slaveholders had forced previous generations of slaves to live a life on the go. By the mid-seventeenth century African and Afro-criollo slave laborers had been employed widely throughout Popayán, especially in the region of Caloto, an area comprised of a series of mining settlements, including: La Teta, Gelima, Quinamayó, Honduras, La Jaqua and San Antonio.\footnote{124} In the 1660s at least four slave gangs were located in Quinamayó. Undoubtedly, these were groups that had grown out of a process initiated by captain don Jacinto de Arboleda, a major leader in the development of Popayán’s slave society. Previous generations had established mining towns—administrative centers, around the perimeter of which they worked in migrating mining camps. These shifting settlements, “shells of towns”

\footnote{123 Early sales reveal several slaves who were known runaways, including: Martín de Trejo, thirty years-of-age and married to an indigenous woman named Lucia, noted to have “walked as a fugitive on one occasion”; Augustin, described to be twenty-six years old, and married; Juan Criollo (20 years-of-age), sold by the Dominican friars in an attempt to purchase slave woman (“una negra”) to wash clothes and prepare food for the monastery in the town of Popayán; and the sale of one referred as a “grando cimarrón”. Sec. ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo I, folios 3, 249, 321, and Tomo II, f. 829.}

\footnote{124 Between 1650 and 1670 only six received their cartas de libertad, a finding that suggests, among other things that it was difficult to earn enough gold to purchase their freedom or that of a loved one. This is not to say, however, that the enslaved were not engaged in this process. While some received their freedom due to the benevolence (or religious strategy) of a dying master, others like Catalina de los Arcos, who purchased her freedom for 150 pesos de ocho reales, acquired their freedom after having struggled to earn what was by any standard, and especially for a slave, a large sum of money.}
as one observer dubbed them, offered little in the way of stability and security. Although such movement continued beyond mid-century and well into the 1690s, the 1650s marked a shift in the mining process, and thus in the lives of the region’s slave laborers. During these years slave sales slowed, as masters turned much of their attention to reorienting existing labor gangs to new locations while supplementing them slowly with new slave laborers and Amerindian encomienda charges when necessary. Random sampling of sales records reveal, for example, that during the period between 1650 and 1670 yield slave sales averaged 11.8 per year in the town of Popayán, corresponding to the following raw sales totals: (19) in 1650; (19) in 1655; (5) in 1660; (9) in 1665; and (7) in 1670. But while the numbers of sales appear small in comparison to those that transpired in Peru or New Spain during the same period, these movements were sizable in the context of greater Quito. Moreover, they represent life-altering events for individuals and families alike.

For enslaved Africans and Afro-Creoles the subsequent shift to Barbacoas meant accommodating a new climate, new geopolitical boundaries, and new mining possibilities. Although settlement patterns would remain largely unchanged—administrative centers with mining settlements outlining the perimeter—the context of slavery would undergo significant change. Slaves would now be forced to move further away from colonial authority, away from cool intermontane valleys into the a humid coastal rainforest. They would be a part of a last wave of colonists whose hold the region would remain tentative, at best, over the next fifty to seventy-five years. Barbacoas would soon prove to be the pearl of Quito and the bane of slaves.

125 West, Colonial Placer Mining.

126 I have examined all extant bills of sales for the years cited. Thus, when I refer to “random sampling” it is to point to the examination of sales registries for every five years over the course of the two decades between 1650 and 1670. See. ACC. PN. Tomos 11, 12, 13, and 14. “themselves” during this period.

127 See, for example, the sales of: Leonardo (25yrs) who was sold for 320 patacones; Domingo (12yrs) who sold for 270 patacones; Juan (7yrs) 200 patacones; Francisco (2yrs) 100 patacones [all Afro-criollos]; Francisca criolla de Popayán who sold for 400 patacones; Augustín de nación Angola (36yrs) purchased by the local Jesuit colegio for 410 patacones; Paula nación Angola (26 yrs), who was married to “Negro Agustín” (also purchased by Jesuits) for 410 patacones; Luis criollo (25yrs) 300 patacones; Antonio criollo (7yrs) 230 patacones; Francisca (no age given, but probably between 16 and 35 given that she sold for 410 patacones); Leonardo (criollo) 400 patacones; and Joana criolla de Cartagena (24yrs) who was sold with her son Juan (un niño mulatto 1yr) for 450 pesos. ACC. PN Tomo 12 año 1650; folios, 14, 50v, 53v, 60v-63, 75, 76v, 82, 83, 86, 102. Folios 132v-133 contain, moreover, the previously cited canceled mortgage of four slaves.
Expanding the Margins: Barbacoas, the Chocó and the Re-Africanization of Popayán

Your Majesty has in this Gobierno de Popayán certain provinces that fall at the margins of the South Sea, named the Barbacoas. They are situated in the western cordillera, in the part that faces Gorgona, island of the said sea. In these provinces one finds when one enters the gobierno, that a town has been founded under the title of Santa María del Puerto, something of a detour from the sea, yet in canoes over a navigable river, named Telembí and other in the same coast of the said sea, just beginning to be populated, that they named, the port of Santa Bárbara of the Island of Gallo. This one founded here for the grand ease that one can have with the said port since it is very large and accommodating, and since it is not further than a five-day trip to Panamá over the said sea, to which they can board large ships in large quantities and there they will be well guarded and secure in all instance…. Close to this port there is a province named el Sindagua, whose Indians after giving peace and obedience to Your Majesty, they live beyond sixty years; and all of them are in such [condition] that they do not fall into decline, neither can one pacify them because they are bellicose people and very cannibalistic, inclined to eat human flesh and make a thousand assaults…

According to this observer, the region of Barbacoas and, more specifically, the towns of Santa María del Puerto, Telembí, and Santa Bárbara at Isla Gallo held much promise as ports of call for His Majesty. (See Map 2.3) Ships could move in and out of the region, transporting goods and people between Panama and this region of the gobierno. Facilitating this process was the region’s close proximity to the Isthmus of Panamá. Preventing this endeavor, however, were the formidable and incorrigible Sindaguas. As the observer suggests, pacification of the lowland Pacific littoral was a hard fought ordeal, and it was not until the 1650s that the Spanish could begin to make a credible claim on the region.

At mid-century elites had mining gangs located in all areas of Popayán from as far north as Cali to the South Pacific littoral province of Barbacoas, a region that fell to Spanish pacification efforts by 1650. This prompted miners to move frantically in the development of operations there. As miners and merchants intensified their search for gold, they increased their base of African slave laborers. Even those involved in agro-pastoral enterprises aimed at supplying the mines with valuable foodstuffs, tools, and livestock products, all processes where Africans and Afro-criollos dominated the labor force. In 1656, one

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128 RHGQ, 2:203-207.
mine owner was already making inroads into Barbacoas. Although this vecino de Santa María del Puerto held only a few slaves, he owned a large cache of specialized mining tools. An incomplete census from just one year prior to Arboleda’s move, in 1659, revealed that there were at least 313 enslaved blacks living and working the mines located near the town of Popayán. In addition, as of 1658 a Barbacoan mine owner purchased four slaves, including three men and one woman, named Manuel Santa Fé, “nación Angola, his wife, Lucía, also nación Angola, Juan Philupo de los Ríos, and Juan Razón, an Afro-criollo, with ages of 40, 35, 35, and 16 respectively.

The substantive increases in the flow of African captives through and into the Gobernación de Popayán was not only connected to changes in highland labor policies and increased need for slaves exploring mining sites within the region, nor was it merely a reflection of colonists’ long-standing desire for a significant African work force. Rather, Popayán owed its prominence as the principal slave market for the North Andes to the colonization of the Chocó over the course of the sixteenth century (See Map 2.4). The Chocó, the lowland Pacific littoral region surrounding Barbacoas, and the highland area of the present-day Departamento de Pasto remained Amerindian-dominated enclaves that lay just beyond the reach of Iberia control at middle of the sixteenth century. Organized largely by zealous, gold-hungry Payanese miners and merchants, and endorsed by successive regional governors, brutal campaigns (entradas) brought the region under subjugation by the end of the seventeenth century.

129 Kris E. Lane, “Mining the Margins,” 104.

130 Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 36. This incomplete census probably accounted only for the mines of Caloto and Almaguer and the mountainous region of Tierradentro, which was inhabited by the Paéz. Like an earlier report from the year 1628, which cited only 250 slaves, however, understated the number of African and Afro-criollo slave laborers present in the region as elites were in the midst of their quest for royal subsidy in the form of large imports of African slaves. ACC. PN Tomo 12, (Año 1650), folio 76v.

131 Another Babacoan elite purchased an entire mining operation in 1676, an enterprise that included 28 slaves, water rights, plantations groves, and other items. See Lane, “From Encomienda,” 84. Drawing from the work of John Thornton and Hernán Colmenares, Lane correctly asserts that Juan Philupo de los Ríos was likely to have come from the Fulupo Kingdom situated along the Casamance River in West Africa. See also, Hernán Colmenares, Popayán: una sociedad esclavista, 48-54; and John Thornton, African and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp.184-205. While Colmenares argues that “most” of Popayán’s slaves (after 1680) embarked from the coasts of West Africa that surround the mouth of the Niger and the Congo River in the south, as will be illustrated in coming pages Popayán’s slave market was characterized by heterogeneity from beginning to end. Lane, “From Encomienda,” 85.

In some ways the move toward gold exploration in the Chocó reflected a natural progression that had begun with the establishment of early trade routes that ran through the towns of Cali and Buga. The foundational mines of Chisquio and Anserma had been supplied with foodstuffs such as cured meats, sugar products, tobacco, and wheat from a network of plantations located strategically to access trade routes that fed the mining towns. But fundamental to colonial expansion throughout the region had been a lively search for gold, one that was challenged by regional topography and indigenous rebels intent upon staking claims upon their ancestral homelands.

Map 2.3 Barbacoas c. 1650.
Source: Robert C. West, Colonial Placer Mining, 18

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133 Ibid.
Map 2.4 The Chocó

Source: Robert C. West, Colonial Placer Mining, 17.
Since the early sixteenth century, in the context of Spanish colonial campaigns and the rumors of gold within the region, Spaniards had sought to dominate the region through *entradas* (privately funded conquest expeditions), clerical occupation and aggressive attempts at conversion, and brute force.\textsuperscript{134} Owing to their significant numbers, military adeptness, and the region’s foreboding topography, Amerindian groups like the Burgunia, Citará, Noama, Soruco, and the Tatamá were able to hold off Spanish domination until the last decade of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{135} By the 1670s, however, these ethnic groups were the only five left in the Chocó, and all were showing the effects of severe population decline—the result of decades of disease, battle loses, and migration. It was within this context, and under the guise of advancing the cause of Amerindian conversion that a series of governors in Popayán and Antioquia initiated successive campaigns to subdue the native peoples of the Chocó. With the support of local governors, and under-girded by royal cedúlas issued between 1666 and 1674, the Franciscans joined in the colonizing force, thereby opening the way for miners, merchants, clerics and slaveholders more generally from Popayán (along with those from Antioquia) to extend mining operations further in to the pacific littoral.\textsuperscript{136} Entering the region along with the parade of Old World diseases were significant numbers of African captives. To be sure, they each brought with them a host of microorganisms that aided the cause of Amerindian subjugation through disease, death and displacement—the watchwords of Iberia’s colonization of Andean peoples. As a result of smallpox-related deaths and displacements, by the 1670s there were a mere 4,000 Amerindians in the region, and for them the proverbial handwriting was on the wall. Compromised by their now low numbers, the politics of intertribal warfare, and the continued advance of Spaniards, Africans, Afro-criollos and a host of microbes, Amerindians of the Chocó fell to the Spaniards in a decisive manner between 1670 and 1690—when groups were defeated violently after a series of bloody Indian-led revolts. Over the course of this twenty-year period, large numbers of enslaved Africans and Afro-criollos were transferred from Anserma and Antioquia into the Chocó. At first, production was

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{135} Williams, “Resistance and Rebellion,” 400.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, 399-401.
low. Mine owners were forced to develop their cuadrillas slowly and in tandem with the requisite tools and supplies. From the 1670s on cuadrillas continued to be characterized by a hodgepodge of enslaved, ex-slave, free, and Amerindian laborers.

In addition to increased movements in the Chocó and Barbacoas, the period from 1670 to 1700 marked a critical turning point in the region’s transition from *encomienda* to African slavery, as the region entered an era marked by significant increases in slave ownership and a re-Africanization of the enslaved population. In 1670 alone, one investor purchased an entire mine that consisted of twenty-eight slaves. And between 1674 and 1679, a total of sixty enslaved blacks were exchanged in the town of Popayán alone, not to mention the numbers exchanged within the boundaries of the province. At least one mine inventory, for example, revealed the presence of forty-six enslaved blacks. Moreover, in 1676, thirty-seven *bozales* (African born slaves) arrived at the Magdelenas river port of Honda, further underscoring both as Popayán emerged as they slave market for African bozales headed to the Chocó, Barbacoas, and the north-central highland core of the kingdom. But even as Popayán entered a period marked by an influx of African captives, ethnic diversity remained the rule with Afro-Creoles enjoying a clear majority. The following two cases illustrate the relative magnitude of these numbers and the diversity found among them.

In 1676, for example, when Constantino de Aguilar received his *carta de libertad*, a list of forty-six enslaved black men, women, and children were cited among the holdings of the mines of “Zojeguia” and “Cerro de la agua.” The inventory of thirty-one males and fifteen females reveals that seven of the

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137 Just twelve years later, in 1682, this same minero, Gaspar Estaco Armo y Villada held an even larger cuadrilla (slave gang) consisting of 77 enslaved Africans and Afro-criollos. See Lane, “The Transition From Encomienda to Slavery,” p. 85.

138 Recall that during the middle years of the century, sales figures averaged approximately 11.5 annually, dropping at times to five sales per year.

139 ACC. PN. Tomo 14 (Años 1674-1679). For the mining inventory of the 46 slaves See ACC PN. Tomo 14, 1676, folios 9-10v. See also folios 56v-57v and 95v-97 for the importation of 20 and 17 bozales respectively. Among these one finds the Monjas de la Encarnación contracting with Capitan Joseph de Morales Fanega to sell 30 “piezas de esclavos” for 2,900 patacones. Fanega accomplished this on May 22, 1674, a move that is reflective of the previously cited troubles that the convent continued to experience during this era. See. Ibid, folios 46v-49.

140 Forty six piezas de negros esclavos, of them the following names, nations ‘naziones,’ and ages: Sebastian moreno criollo (37yrs); Salvador (27yrs); Vitovio (25yrs); Francisco Angola (53yrs); Luis Angola (53yrs ‘de los mismos’); Joseph Angola ‘criollo’ (27yrs); Nicolas criollo (19yrs); Bernardo (19yrs); Manuel (17yrs) son of criolla Elena de la
forty-six carried African ethnic markers—(five) “Angolan” males, (one) “Angolan” female, and (one) “Bran” male, all of whom were adults. While this inventory clearly cites the considerable presence of captives carrying the ethnic marker “Angola,” it also highlights the fact that Afro-criollos constituted the majority within these mining gangs. Moreover, almost all of the Angolans listed are males, with only one “Angolan” female, who constitutes the only ethnic African female of the group, suggesting, among other things, that of the children listed most were the offspring of African and Afro-criollo unions.

Nevertheless, this picture was already beginning to show signs of change as the majority of the newly imported ethnic Africans documented in Popayán notary protocols show them emanating from the region of lower Guinea. In 1677, for example, Francisco de Arboleda purchased four ethnic Africans who had arrived in the village of Honda in a canoe along with sixteen other ethnic Africans, all of whom were registered under the asiento of the Royal Guinea Company and marked with its brand. According to the declaration, the names of these slaves were not known because they were bozales who had just arrived in the city of Cali (cuyos nombres no sean por aversido bozales y aviendo entregado en la ciudad de Cali).

In similar fashion, on May 14, 1676, Arboleda sold eight slaves to Miguel García de Alcátara. All of them, he proclaimed, were bozales de guinea, who helped to make up a group of seventeen slaves just arriving in the district of Popayán. Alcátara’s group included six females with two infants, illustrating, among other things, the increasing presence of other ethnic Africans and enslaved women and children in the trade as well as what might have been Alcátara’s attempt to create an auto-reproducing mining gang.

One also finds the sale of Isabel de nación de Conga (18yrs for 500 patacones), and the sale of five “piesas de esclavos” four of them males, three of which were bozales de la ciudad de Cartagena and one “Sambo criollo” from the village of Honda, along with one female bozal (asi mismo bozal de las que de oha ciudad

Cruz (43yrs); Aneta (41yrs); Catalina (47yrs); Victor (53yrs) Leonor (27yrs); Agustin (4yrs); Manuela (16yrs); Joseph (13yrs); Another Joseph (8yrs); Julian (5yrs); Sebastian Angola (53yrs); Christobal (63yrs); Maria Angola (58yrs); Manuel Conde criollo (30yrs); Joseph criollo (18yrs); Juan criollo (19yrs); Gregorio his [Juan’s] brother (21yrs); Francisco criollo (19yrs); Bernardo (15yrs); Marta (20yrs); Maria (40yrs); Juaneta (28yrs); Maria {daughter of Juaneta} (5yrs); Joseph {son of Juaneta} (2yrs); Fausta {also nursing daughter hija de pechos} (2 months); Domingo Angola (27yrs); Domingo Bran (23 yrs); Bisente (7yrs); Marz (1 and 1/2 year); Pasqual (5yrs); Francisco {nursing son of Leonor}; Diego Concha (60yrs). See ACC. PN. Tomo 14, 1676, folios, 9-9v.

141 ACC. PN. Tomo 14, 1677, folios 56v-57v. Ibid, folio 59.

142 Ibid.
During this era Ana Angola (thirty years-of-age) was sold along with her son Juan (five years-of-age). Since Ana was very ill with “wounds or sores,” suffering from “fits or seizures” (unas llagas y otros ataques), she and her son fetched their owner, Juan Lopez Rico, a mere 400 patacones, a considerable loss given their potential of 550 to 600 pesos. These five slaves were a part of a larger group of seventeen ethnic African males, four women, and one infant (cria a pecho), who were listed along with two more “negras” for a total of twenty-three “piezas de indias,” all of them marked with the brand of the monarch over their left breast, and the seal of the Royal Company of Guinea on the upper right side of their back to indicate their legal entry into the Spanish colonies. Two other sales included the eighteen-year-old Isabel nación Conga (for 500 patacones), and Maria de nación Zozo (for 200 patacones).

Apparently, during this era, the enslaved found it difficult to amass enough capital to purchase their freedom. Contrary to popular ideas about slavery in Spanish America, more generally access to freedom appears to have been severely limited. Throughout the seventeenth century masters seldom freed slaves upon their deaths, preferring rather to leave them to their progeny in an effort to further the family business of mining. Others sold slaves to create chaplainries, or donated them to the church in hopes of improving their chances of passing from death to life. And as the prospect of passing encomiendas on to

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143 Ibid, folios 88v-90, and folios 95v-97v. See also. Ibid, folio 95.


145 The creation of chaplainries also included payments for masses and prayers for the soul of the deceased. Churches might also sell donated slaves and rendered prayers and misas for their deceased masters. Some masters expected, moreover, that their god would have mercy upon them for committing merciful deeds in their death. This ideology is particularly compelling when one considers the fact that the concept of enslaving fellow Christians had never been completely resolved within Christian theology (i.e. inherent contradictions between the enslavement of people who were assumed ‘free’ in the blood of Christ)—canon law notwithstanding. Deathbed manumissions may have reflected some sense of guilt and desire for absolution on the part of many slaveholders. The other side of the same coin, however, is a self-serving desire for immortality. For a discussion of baroque redemption ideology see. Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 53-54. See also van Deusen, “The ‘Alienated Body’.”
subsequent generations became more elusive, the prestige of leaving a well-staffed cuadrilla to one’s descendants must have gained in significance. In an evolving frontier economy like Popayán a small cuadrilla of well-maintained African and/or Afro-criollo captives often constituted the mainstay of a family’s financial future. In this context, healthy slaves represented an appreciating asset, and masters could expect handsome returns on their investment on commoditized persons who were in high demand. Even when captives found ways to accumulate sufficient capital to purchase their freedom or that of a loved one, masters often proved less than willing to sell them their freedom at their fair market value. Finally, access to judicial authorities in outlying mining camps presented yet another obstacle along freedom’s journey. For those situated in regional mining centers, distance from officials must have prevented any number of captives from laying claims to the rewards of freedom, thereby prolonging the brutal experiences of bondage for some.

Throughout the late 1660s the enslaved community continued to be characterized by great diversity in terms of ethnicity, skills and assignments. While most worked alongside Amerindians in the mining industry, some served as skilled and semi-skilled workers in the towns of the region, providing the carpentry, masonry, and domestic services for elite and not-so-elite inhabitants of Popayán. Although most had arrived from Cartagena through the Magdelana river port of Honda, a number had entered through the region of Barbacoas, an illegal point of entry that would witness a significant rise in the numbers of African slave laborers who docked at the ports of the province, a phenomenon that would only increase in frequency as the century came to a close.

While the period from 1600 to 1670 represented an era of foundation, transition, and slow growth, the last quarter of the century was characterized by tremendous growth and expansion. During this period elites came to rely upon Africans and Afro-criollos as the chief labor source of the region of Popayán. And as the mining centers began to expand the number of slave communities and mining gangs swelled. Consequently, it was during this period that Popayán moved from being a “society with slaves” to a full-fledged “slave society.” This occurred not only because of the increased dependence upon black slave labor in the mines, but was also a product of the town’s geographical location, which made it a perfect a way-station to the Chocó. From around 1675 to 1700, the numbers of enslaved Africans entering the
region surged, making Popayán the slave market for the North Andes, changing slave population morphology in significant ways.

After 1680, the discovery of rich alluvials of gold in the Chocó led to an influx of African slaves in Popayán, many of whom were passing through in route to the Chocó. Even the Jesuits who had typically supplied the mines with foodstuffs and textiles were a part of the frenzied search for gold that continued to overtake elites in this area. From the mid to late 1680s local members of the order registered significant sums of gold with officials in Popayán. They were also in the regime to purchase slaves for their extensive agro-pastoral enterprise in the Cauca valley and the North-Central highlands of the kingdom. Others, however, remained in the gobernación to work for mine owners in the rivers and ceros of Barbacoas, Chisquió, Caloto and Almaguer.

While the 1670s and 1680s represented decades of tremendous growth in Popayán’s slave market one need only glance at the notary registries for the 1690s and early 1700s to see that the number of sales and slaves entering the region simply exploded during the last decade of the century. In the year 1690 alone, 35 slaves were exchanged. Compared to nineteen in 1670, this was quite an increase of nearly fifty percent. Going forward large shipments of sales of ten to twenty individuals would come to characterize Popayán’s market. And although early shipments had come principally from the Upper Guinea coast, West Central Africa, and to a lesser degree, the region of lower Guinea, new shipments emerged from the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, Angola, and, to a lesser degree, the Bight of Biafra.

On May 6, 1699, Captain don Sebastián Torijano, one of the region’s most active itinerant merchants and slave traders, registered the arrival of sixty-five enslaved Africans at the behest of Captain of Juan Gonzalez (a vesino of San Bartolome de Honda), a group of ethnic Africans which included thirty-

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146 See. ACC. Sig. 2202 (Col.—CI—21mn) 12 julio 1684 – 12 junio 1686, 8 folios; and Sig. 1107 (Col.—CI—21mn) 5 mayo 1688—2 agosto 1689, 8 folios.
147 ACC. NP. Tomo 17, 1690-I, folios, 1-4, 64-66, 78v-80, and 85-86.
148 See for example the sale of Isabel nación de Mina (30yrs) along with her one and half month-old-daughter who was born after the initiation of the sale, both for 620 patacones. ACC. NP. Tomo 17, 9 junio 1691, folios 136v-138. See also the following sales: una negra bozal, Catalina de nación Popo (16yrs) and María criolla de Cartagena (42yrs). Ibid.
seven *negras* and twenty-eight *negros* who had arrived on 16 February 1699 in the river port of Honda. These sixty-five souls were the cargo of ships owned by the *Royal Company of Guinea*, whose agents described the captives as “*castas Congos, Araras, and Minas*, between the ages of twenty and thirty,” all of who were “marked” with all necessary marks and brands (*marcados y contramarcados con las marcas del magen*) to indicate legal entry. Torijano wasted little time dispersing these captives, as he sold and/or donated most of these individuals shortly thereafter. It was unusual for factors to waste time dispensing with their caches of human cargoes; they usually sold the majority of them within a month or two of their arrival.

In addition to showcasing the great degree of commercial activity generated by individuals like Torijano, Popayán’s notary protocols also reveal an interesting mix of dowry/sale transactions, highlighting further the tremendous importance that slaveholding held for the region’s elites. In the dowry of doña Antonia Arboleda, for example, one finds six *piesas de esclavos*—Antonio Largo (24yrs), Josepha (22yrs), Sebastianico (described as “soltero 17yrs”), Juan Luango (18yrs), Francisco (26yrs), and Vicente Luango, all of whom were appraised at 500 patacones each, or 3,000 patacones total. In addition to the purchased captives, one finds the sale of Valentín, an enslaved male described as “*un mulatto fugitivo*,” who Antonio Olquin, *alcalde de la Santa Hermandad de Hacienda*, sold to don Francisco Hurtado de Aguila (*vesino de Buga*) for a mere 200 patacones (a price that apparently accounted for Valentín’s reputation as a runaway or maroon). Thereafter, Torijano sold seven slaves to Captain don Francisco Joseph de Arboleda for 3,500 patacones, *un negrito* (probably a boy between 12 and 15 years of age given his price of 400 patacones), and two more captives for 1000 patacones. Torijano sold at least three other slaves, including one of the previously noted 25 female bozales “*de casta Arara*,” Antonio de casta Mina, and María con su cria Joseph (1 and 1/2 yrs) for 1,125 patacones. See also the sale of another enslaved male, *casta Arara* on Ibid, folio 191v. Sebastian Torijano also sold the following “instruments” as he often described the enslaved: Beatriz (1 1yrs) for 370 patacones; Lucia (15yrs) and Ana María *de nación Congo*, for 1000 patacones; twelve slaves (*chicos y grandes de diferentes hedades y nombres*) to Pasqual de Goaicochea y Vergara for 3,095 patacones; donated an enslaved man named Andres to *los padres Carmolitas* of Popayán in the name of Rev. Fray Juan de la Cruz (*presidente y superior de otros religiosos*); and eight *piezas de esclavos negros de diferentes hedades y nombres* to Liz. Pedro de Balderrama *clergio prebisterio vezino de Popayán*. See Ibid, folios 268-269, 269-69v, 276-277, 289-89v, 289v-290. In the second volume of the protocols from the year 1699 one finds the cleric, Liz. Pedro de Balderama to whom Torijano had sold eight slaves, selling an enslaved woman—Barbara (18yrs)—to Juan de Salamanca (a property holder of Popayán and resident of the Chocó). See Ibid, Tomo 19, 1699–II, folios, 217-218v. In the midst of these exchanges one also finds Francisco Lopez (*vezino de Popayán*) mortgaging three slaves in order to pay a debt of 500 patacones owed to doña Juana Fernandez. The individuals in hoc included: a black man named Juan, an adult female named Maria, and a small slave boy, perhaps Maria’s son. See ACC. NP. Tomo 19, 1699-I, folios 289-289. Ibid, folios 145-145v, 275v, 301, 304, 305, 308, 308v, 315, 319-319v, 320, 321-321v, 322v.
aforementioned captives, doña Antonia and her husband, Manuel Jironossa also took ownership of an enslaved woman named María along with her nine-month-old daughter—Juana María. Maria senior had been serving Antonia for some time, and continued in this service.152

Despite the fact that she and her new groom now possessed what amounted to a small mining gang, comprised of five able-bodied enslaved men and two enslaved women, doña Antonia and her husband did something that implied they had no immediate plans of entering the mining business; they sold all six of the slaves to her brother, don Pedro de Arboleda, keeping only María and her infant daughter.153 The exchange was a part of a not-so-elaborate plan to give doña Antonia a proper dowry while leaving the enslaved in the mines. In this way, while legally passing through at least three sets of hands, these slaves were never removed from the resource base of the Quinamayo mining community, a holding that belonged to her father don Jacinto de Arboleda. Like many large-scale miners and slaveholders of the region, it seems that don Arboleda senior had already tapped Antonia’s brother, Pedro, as heir apparent to the mines of the Arboleda estate. Arboleda senior must have orchestrated this entire exchange in an effort to ensure the stability of the family mining enterprises.154 Most importantly, this source reveal slaveholders’ growing attempts to consolidate slave labor, situate their gangs in a given locale, and subject them to as little disruption as possible, thereby marking a substantial switch from earlier years of movement over vast distances.

**Conclusion:**

Previous movements of slave laborers underscore at least four factors, including: (1) the disruptive process of slave distribution, (2) the increasing volume of slaves entering the region, (3) the

152 Ibid, folios 251v-252. Both María and her daughter—Juana María—were valued at 600 patacones, giving doña Antonia de Arboleda a dowry valued at a minimum of 3,600 patacones.

153 Ibid, folios 254v-256.

154 Ibid. Colmenares points to the fact that masters went to great lengths to maintain the constitution of mining gangs, leaving their progeny with strict instructions concerning their management, along with details concerning important resources like water rights. In most instances these patriarchs appointed one heir to the mines and associated resources, distributing the remainder of their estates to remaining heirs.
importance of Popayán as a marketplace for slaves going to greater Popayán and the Chocó, and (4) the sporadic timing of large shipments Africans entering the region. At times various ethnic groups represented a majority in the principal transatlantic shipments, but once they arrived at the Magdelena River port of Honda, factors like Torijano and others dispersed them quickly without regard to ethnic or familial arrangements, thrusting them into environments where they seldom constituted the majority. Since mid-century Afro-criollos had come to constitute the majority members within most mining gangs. And even in instances when Afro-criollos were not the majority, ethnic Africans typically found themselves within an ethnically diverse mining community; a point well illustrated by the 1695 testament/appraisal of don Pedro Fernandez de Novia’s property.

At the time of his declaration Novia’s estate included fourteen slave laborers, of whom there were eleven adults (seven ethnic Africans and four Afro-criollos) and three children, two of whom were born to African/Afro-criolla unions, one born to a mixed African union; not one was born of an endogamous union between two ethnic Africans carrying the same ethnic moniker. Moreover, amid the Africans cited, there were (3) Minas; (2) Golofos; (1) Congo; and (1) Popo, a picture that further underscores the inevitability of ethnogenesis in the formation of Afro-Quiteña communities. Moreover, while Antonio Golofo and his wife Llina were apparently of the same ethnic persuasion—Golofo—Manuel Congo and his wife, María Popo enjoyed no such distinction, a reality that characterized the African experience in the city of Quito, as the next chapter will show. The morphology of Popayán’s slave community was changing, however. While ethnic diversity would continue to characterize these slave populations, Afro-Creoles were beginning to lose their majority status.

From the late seventeenth century to the principal decades of the eighteenth century, ethnic Africans had enjoyed a slight majority in their over population figures, a reality reflected in the ethnic descriptions of captives exchanged in the Popayán during the waning years of the seventeenth century. For example, of the 188 slaves exchanged in the town of Popayán during the year 1700, 147 were ethnic

155 Antonio Minas (35yrs), Polina [no ‘nation’ given, probably a criolla] (30yrs); two black girls, daughters of the aforementioned—Laura (2yrs) and the other, an unnamed infant of three months); Manuel Congo (30yrs) and his wife, María Popo (25yrs); Juana, daughter of the aforementioned (3yrs); Antonio Golofo (40yrs) and Llina, his wife of the same nación; Miguel Mina (60yrs); Bernardo Criollo (18yrs); Marta Criolla (16yrs); Gaspar Criollo (40yrs), and Francisco Mina (45yrs). ACC. Sig. 8736 (Col.—JI—22su), Año 1694-1695, folios, 47v-48.
Africans, the majority of whom were bozales who had been transported by the Royal Guinea Company. Consequently, as these figures illustrate, while the last quarter of the seventeenth century marked a critical turning point of departure from the earlier lower-scale trade in human cargo, the eighteenth century ushered in a period of wholesale dependence upon African slave labor throughout the region of Popayán and the Chocó—the gobernación’s chief trading partner. By this time Spanish invaders had adequately pacified the region of the Chocó, and gold-seeking Spaniards and Mestizos scrambled for the rights to the regions gold-rich river ways and mountainous deposits, bringing Africans into the region at unprecedented rates, and thereby precipitating a renewal of various African elements of local slave culture and consciousness.

Between 1686 and 1690 alone some 271 slave laborers had been sold or exchanged in Popayán, 217 of who were bozales; forty-five were criollos, and nine were without any reference to ethnicity or caste. Of these, 135 were men, seventy-five were women, and sixty-one lacked a clear reference to gender. Ultimately, in the final decade of the seventeenth century (1691-1700) some 685 slave laborers changed hands in the town of Popayán alone, underscoring further my formulation of Quito as a slave society. Even those who cling to classic definitions of slave societies cannot ignore the centrality of slavery within the Gobernación de Popayán, even during the seventeenth century.  

Although classic definitions of slave societies have been largely dismissive of slavery on the Spanish Main, the early history of Popayán shows this region to have constituted much more than a region comprised of “pockets of slavery.” While Popayán lay at the geographic margins of what is typically seen as the Atlantic World and the Spanish American empire, it was of great significance to both, first, as an importer of large numbers of African slave laborers from the Caribbean port of Cartagena, and second as a producer of large sums of gold. But if Popayán’s movement towards the slave-free paradigm was immediate and decisive, the same could not be said of the north-central highlands, where slave labor was not the bedrock of the economy; neither was gold the driving industry.

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156 See. Hernán Colmenares, Historia económica y social II.
If the region Popayán had quickly become an “African” world, the north-central highlands remained very much an “Andean” world, where textiles and the obraje complex ruled markets and the concerns of both elite men and women alike. In the midst of that world, filled with volcanoes and epidemics, were enslaved Africans and Afro-Creoles.
At the turn of the seventeenth century the Kingdom of Quito was moving from an export-based economy, predicated largely upon gold production and the consumption of European luxury items, to a more diverse economy fueled by gold production in the north, the obraje complex in the center, and the growing local consumption of domestic goods. Amerindians also stimulated the economy by working in the region’s mines, tilling the grounds of Spanish estates, paying taxes, and consuming domestic goods. In addition to these much needed stimuli, clerics and merchants invested considerable amounts of the capital they had earned in the gold-luxury trade. Innovation and new private sources of capital combined with increased governmental subsidies to promote “regional diversification and prosperity, even in [a period] when international trade [was] contracting.” In short order, the obraje became the central piece of highland economy, generating revenues of 1 to 2 million pesos from the markets of Peru and New Granada. Although elite Quiteños could have employed Africans as the principal labor for this

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157 According to historian Kenneth J. Andrien, the Spanish population had grown, and the world recession of the 1620s slowed the flow of European goods into the transatlantic trade. This caused shortages of within the Peruvian mining sectors and throughout the viceroyalty more generally, forcing prices to surge while encouraging traders to extent commercial (legal and contraband) throughout the Pacific and to the Far East. See. Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito, 1690-1830: State and Regional Development*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 17.

158 During this time the Viceroyalty of Peru retained large portions of royal revenues for defense initiatives, local governmental salaries and mining subsidies. See. Ibid., 17-18. See also Andrien, *Crisis and Decline: The Viceroyalty of Peru in the Seventeenth Century*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985), 1-41. And for greater discussion of the Quito’s gold-luxury trade at the turn of the sixteenth century see. Kris E. Lane, *Quito 1599, City & Colony in Transition*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 157-188.

enterprise, a large Amerindian population stood ready to play the central role in the productive process of the obraje complex.

Beginning in the 1550s, large numbers of Popayán’s Amerindian population moved southward to the north-central highlands, amid processes that historian Karen Powers has called “periphery-to-center” migrations or, in this case, “intrasieran” migrations. They had suffered and/or witnessed their loved ones languish under Spanish abuses and Old World diseases. As Spanish abuses continued along with disease and death, so did the north to center migrations, decimating the indigenous population of the Gobernación of Popayán while staffing the populations of Quito and its environs.

These were not neat processes. Migrating populations did not fill easily those positions left by Andeans decimated in the preceding waves of epidemics and natural disasters. Many of these incoming groups found a space in the corregimientos (Amerindian provinces) that surrounded the city of Quito and darted the north-central highlands. These so-called “vagabonds” frustrated encomendero and royal initiatives because they lived without an encomendero, and were, therefore, absent from regional tribute roles. Moreover, they added to the ongoing challenge of policing foresteros (Amerindians living outside their place of birth) who lived illegally within the Amerindian provinces (corregimientos).

While the crown sought to regulate this enterprise in the early 1600s by prohibiting the use of forced Amerindian labor in the mills, the considerable demand for Quiteño cloth forced the crown to relax

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160 According to Powers, the onslaught of Spanish diseases coupled with encomienda abuses sparked widespread demographic disruptions as Amerindians migrated away from the central highland core to the periphery of the audiencia. Initially, then, the eastern and western mountain regions experienced a surge in their Andean populations. The imposition of colonialism undermined the effectiveness of traditional Andean vertical economies, further displacing large numbers of Andeans. Moreover, a series of subsequent population contractions served to “replace” Andeans who had died off or loss themselves through earlier migratory processes as new migrants returned from the periphery to the highland core. In short, the impositions of colonialism led to “demographic chaos,” and not necessarily to the scale of decimation that was posited by earlier studies. See Karen Viera Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis, and the State in Colonial Quito*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 33-39. See also. Suzane Austin Alchon, *Native Society and Disease in Colonial Ecuador*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Robson Brines Tyrer, *Historia demografía y económica de la Audiencia de Quito: Población indígena e industria textil, 1600-1800*, (Quito: Banco Central del Ecuador, 1988). See also, Ann Wightman’s seminal work on indigenous flight in Ann Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Foresteros of Cusco, 1570-1720*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990).

its restrictions.\textsuperscript{162} Apparently, practical interests won out over moral concerns. Spanish fiscal policy initially served to undergird mill operations while further displacing Amerindians, prompting more “intersierran” migrations.\textsuperscript{163} According to historian Kenneth J. Andrien, tribute prices of four to nine pesos annually were considerably high for the small-scale agrarian economies of the highlands, and thus prompted Andeans to seek employment in urban centers, rural estates, and textile mills in order to pay their taxes or avoid tribute altogether.\textsuperscript{164} Together, these processes produced simultaneously a context of diminished “need” for and, increased affordability of African slaves.\textsuperscript{165} On the other hand, the “demographic chaos” of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century helped maintain a space for African and Afro-Creole slave laborers, if only within the urban district of Quito.

Amerindians who migrated into the urban center created a large pool of cheap labor for urban elites, but in times of epidemics and natural disasters they fled the urban center, leaving behind positions filled by slave laborers. Although slaves were also prone to absconding, they could not meld into outlying indigenous provinces (corregimientos) with the relative ease that Andeans enjoyed. This was, after all, an Andean world, a terrain that Africans and Afro-Creoles had to learn to navigate over time. Throughout the seventeenth century, elites in the north-central highlands continued to view slaves as highly coveted status symbols, and a valuable labor secondary labor reserve. They were a necessary supplemental labor force to

\textsuperscript{162} Andrien, \textit{The Kingdom of Quito}, 21-27; See also. Nicholas Cushner, \textit{Farm and Factory}; Javier Ortiz de la Tabla Ducasse, \textit{Los encomenderos}; and John Leddy Phelan, \textit{The Kingdom of Quito}.

\textsuperscript{163} Powers, \textit{Andean Journeys}, 16-43.

\textsuperscript{164} Andrien, \textit{The Kingdom of Quito}, 20.

\textsuperscript{165} The recognition that the Andean Population recovered, providing a highland economy predicated upon the production of cheap woolen cloth with more than adequate numbers of laborers might lead some to conclude that slavery occupied a marginal role in highland society. While African slave-laborers were marginal to the “central productive processes” of the obraje complex, they were far from insignificant labor hands. Although one doubts that it has been the intention of scholars to suggest that slavery was insignificant in “society with slaves,” thinking of these regions as places with “substantial pockets of masters and slaves,” though in some cases an accurate assessment, is misleading because it suggests that they so distinct from confirmed slave societies that useful comparisons cannot be made. Careful attention to elite’s efforts to engage the slavery paradigm might say more about the importance of slaves to a society than sheer numbers and “productive value” might imply. Of note here is Genovese’s assessment of Spanish American slave societies as possessing “pockets of slaves” as opposed to the large plantation complex that typified slave societies of the nineteenth-century Atlantic World and US South. See, for example, Eugene D. Genovese, \textit{The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation}, (New York: Vintage Books 1971), 9; See also, Ira Berlin, \textit{Many Thousands Gone: The First Tow Centuries of Slavery in North America}, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1998), 8-9; David Eltis, \textit{The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas}, 24-27; and Bennett, \textit{Africans in Colonial Mexico}, 14-15.
whom fell the responsibilities of any number of tasks, especially the production of agricultural goods and all manner of skilled and domestic labor.

From the 1620s to the mid 1640s life in the highland core would be relatively stable. Although the city would not witness the scale of disease and death that it had previously for another two generations, the end of the century would bring a collision of epidemics, natural disasters, and yet another “demographic crisis”. During this period Amerindians lost a third of their members, undermining mining elites’ ability to secure cheap labor. Elites would respond to these concerns, in part, by importing large numbers of African bozales.

This chapter explores slave life in the city of Quito and its environs during the period leading up to the late seventeenth century, when slaves came to occupy a more central role in the highland economy. Organized in three sections, it focuses first upon the lived experiences of slaves from 1600 to roughly 1650. Employing relaciones from the period along with marriage and baptismal records as a lens to view human behavior, it describes communal relations, and the corresponding context of ethnogenesis. From there, the chapter turns to address the experiences of slave women in the city of Quito. Enslaved women formed a slight majority over enslaved men in Quito during this period. Their experiences in elite homes and in the streets of Quito constituted a critical aspect of slave life during the period. They were also the most likely to gain their freedom and/or the freedom of a loved one. The chapter then shifts to examine the changing socioeconomic context of slavery, the onset of economic crisis in the last quarter of the century, and the space this created for the growth of African slavery at the precise moment when “Spanish American slavery” was thought to be in decline. Africans and Afro-Creoles were integrated into all aspects of

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166 For example, for the seventeenth century I have slave sales and exchange data for Quito (gleaned from the notary protocols of the ANHQ from the following years: 1600, 1604, 1632, 1641, 1661, 1666, 1667, 1668, 1670, 1671-1673, 1676-1679, 1681, 1682, 1684, 1686, 1688; marriage data (from El Sagrario Parish Records): 1653, 1657, 1660, 1661, 1671, 1675, 1682, 1688, 1690-1700; and baptism data: 1606-1613, 1633, 1665, 1666, 1695-1707. In comparison, for the city of Guayaquil, I have yet to find any marriage data for the seventeenth century in the parish records of El Sagrario. For the eighteenth century, however, available marriage and baptism registries correspond roughly to the following dates: 1701-1725, 1775-1800.

167 According to historian David Eltis, “Spanish slavery was in…decline after 1650 until Cuba embraced the plantation complex in the late eighteenth century.” In fairness to Eltis, existing scholarship does lead one to that conclusion. With this in mind, the question then becomes, why, at the precise moment when Spanish American slavery was thought to be in decline, did Quito turn so aggressively to African slave labor? The short answer is, that this perceived decline has been overstated, and is in need of greater nuance and a broader empirical base. Historian Frank T. Proctor argues
Quiteño society; from the house to streets, from the church to courts, they were present. In the interim, they forged relationships amongst themselves, with Amerindians, and with elites that often belied perceived and imposed boundaries. The decline of the obraje complex further displaced large numbers of Amerindians, as many migrated away from the north-central highlands to the south-central sierra, opening the way for greater, and more widespread use of enslaved Africans in the city of Quito and throughout the north-central highland core of the kingdom.

A Community Takes Shape

The seventeenth century brought significant changes to the lives of Africans, Andeans, and Spaniards living and working within the highland core of the audiencia. Perhaps most notably, the century’s early years marked a shift in the morphology of Quito’s slave population. At the turn of the century ethnic Africans accounted for fifty percent of the city’s slave population, and diversity seemed to be one of their defining characteristics.

Among the 250 slaves sold between 1580 and 1600, there were ninety-three ethnic Africans, including: “(20) Biafrans, (20) Brans, (16) Angolans (along with a company contract to import nearly twenty more), (8) Congoloese, (7) Bañols, (8) Capes, (3) Mandigas, (2) Nalu, (1) Biojo, (1) Cape Verde, (1) Cacanga, (1) ‘Ciciliano’, (1) Folupe, (1) Gelofo (or “Wolof”), (1) Mojango, (1) San Tomé, (1) Terra Nova.”

Accounting for a little more than thirty-seven percent of the 250 slaves sold between 1580 and 1600, they fell roughly into two of John Thornton’s cultural groups—the Upper Guinea coast, and Angola. While almost sixty-nine percent of enslaved ethnic Africans could trace their origins to the Upper Guinea coast, it is worth pointing to the diversity of ethnic monikers—Biafran, Bran, Bañol, Biojo, Cacanga, and

that, in the case of New Spain, slavery’s role in the economy did not decline after 1650. Rather, slave labor was tied directly to the growth that New Spain’s economy through the eighteenth century. Judging from Proctor’s work, it appears that the lack of attention to the extent of slaves’ role in the obraje complex, (and, to my mind, the neglect of the middle colonial period more generally {1650-1750} where slavery is concerned) has led the field to this flawed interpretation of the enslaved Africans’ and Afro-Creoles’ role in Spanish America during the mid-to-late colonial period. See. David Eltis, The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27; and Frank T. Proctor, III, “Afro-Mexican Slave Labor in the Obrajes de Paños of New Spain, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” The Americas 60:1 (July 2003): 33-58.

168 Kris E. Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 223.
Folupe, all of who corresponded to Thornton’s Western Atlantic (northern) sub-group. Others, who had called the Upper Guinea coast home included: the Mandinga and the Geolof. They corresponded to Thornton’s Mande, and Western Atlantic (southern) subgroups, respectively. And although Central Africans had come to constitute the majority of ethnic Africans in New Spain, they represented only 25.8 percent of all Quito sales between 1580 and 1600. Rounding out this diverse group were Afro-Creoles, who outnumbered ethnic Africans by a ratio of 2:1, an increasing reality even during a period when the number of ethnic Africans entering Spanish America was on the rise.  

Exactly how many ethnic Africans entered the North Central highland core during the first few years of the century escapes us for now. Still, it seems that fewer ethnic Africans entered the Kingdom of Quito during this period, especially where the highland core was concerned. In general, most bozales entering Spanish America were destined for the markets of New Spain and Peru. The few ethnic Africans who made it to the Audiencia of Quito quickly became the priority of miners and merchants in Popayán and the emerging slaveholding-elite of Guayaquil, leaving even fewer ethnic Africans for would-be slaveholders of the central highlands. As the importation rates of ethnic Africans into the region diminished, an Afro-Creole majority began to emerge within the city of Quito and throughout the kingdom’s central highland core. Quito’s growing Afro-Creole majority owed its impetus to the evolution of two parallel processes—an increasing number of creoles within the intra-colonial trade network that ran

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169 Sampling 5,278 of all slaves sold in the city of Lima between 1560 and 1650, historian Frederick Bowser found: (1,355) Angolans, (849) Brans, (594) Biafrans, (316) Bañols, (284) Mandinga, (267) Congo, (237) Folupó, (214) Zape, (180) Guinea (unspecified), (143) Terranos, (128) Jolofos, and (103) Nalus had entered the region; and these were merely those groups whose numbers registered over 100 individuals. In addition, Bowser found that only one-third of all ethnic Africans were bozales. See Frederick P. Bowser, *The African in Colonial Peru*, 40-44.

between Cartagena, Panama, Callao, and Quito, and the development of a maturing, Creole-dominated slave community in the highlands of Quito.\footnote{Increasingly, one finds ethno-racial monikers such as, criollo de Cartagena, criollo de Lima, natural de Quito, or natural de Latacunga, etc ascribed to the enslaved of Quito. Seventeenth-century documentary evidence is peppered with evidence of slaves' presence and their value to vecinos (property-holders) of Riobamba, Latacunga, and Hambato. The theme of migration is often a primary feature of ethnohistorical accounts of Andeans in Quito and beyond, but the point should be made also that merchants, obrajeros, encomenderos, and would-be elites alike, moved throughout the region, at times with considerable frequency, relocating their slaves to Andean towns and moving between the highland core and the lowland district of Guayaquil. In so doing, they integrated the communities and worlds of slaves that might have otherwise been ruptured, or never connected.}

Central to that process were enslaved women. Enslaved black women formed a slight majority among the 400 enslaved blacks living in the city of Quito at the turn of the century. They could be seen selling goods, congregating with other poor women of color, and accompanying the entourages of their masters. The population was relatively young and apparently producing a good number of Afro-Creole children. The process that led to this growing population of Afro-Creoles had begun, in earnest it seems, in the final two decades of the sixteenth century. Critical to the natural growth of a population, 116 of the sales from that period featured women, twenty-two of whom were with children, and one was pregnant. Growth was apparent as twenty-two children below the age of sixteen were sold within this period as well.\footnote{The point should be made, however, that despite conventional wisdom, this was not a unique feature within Spanish American slave societies, or Latin America more generally. African-descended populations were reproducing themselves in New Spain during this time as well. Between 1570 and 1646, the Creole population of New Spain had increased by 50 percent (from 2,437 to 116,529). Moreover, ethnic Africans constituted only thirty percent of the total population of African descent. Black reproduction was not the preserve of British North America. See, Bennett, \textit{Africans in Colonial Mexico}, 23, and 202 note # 29. See also the work of Laird W. Bergaid, who found that slaves in Minas Gerais reproduced themselves as well, in \textit{Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais, 1720-1888} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).}

Preserving the marriages of enslaved blacks of childbearing age was likely to produce more slaves for the realm. It was a measure condoned by the crown ostensibly to quell the restive urges of enslaved black males and, as we have seen through petitions for royally subsidized shipments of African captives, local elites at least spoke with such intentions when appealing to the crown. Yet, the question of whether elite Quiteños were working actively to establish the conditions for the natural increase of the slave population continues to evade us for the moment. What is
certain, however, the slave population was growing and elites who could were making every effort to engage both the slave paradigm and protect their investments in human capital.

That slaves were valued highly is reflected in the sales and chaplaincy transactions in those early years. In the year 1600, Ynés Bran (24 years-of-age) and her two sons, Manuel (4 years old) and Juan (1 1/2 years) were sold for 1,000 pesos of “current silver”; the debt was paid with a “large gold disk.” That same year, Beatriz Biafara, age twenty-two, fetched along with her daughter 900 pesos in current silver. Reflecting their high demand, the values assigned to African and Afro-Creole slave laborers remained high. Values were so high that slaves served as a kind of high-stakes “real estate,” serving as collateral for various debts, and providing funding for chaplainries where masses and prayers would be given on behalf of their deceased masters’ soul. In 1600, three slaves were donated at the value of 1000 pesos to fund a chaplainry. In some instances it was slave labor (apparently leased) that provided funding for the prayers and masses for the souls of deceased slaveholders. Employing slaves in life and in death helped to link slaves to the city’s “moral economy,” and, in some instances, tied them to a given church or cloister.

Quito’s Dominican order, for example, possessed several chaplaincies; one was home to a black cofradía (mutual aid society). There was the chapel of “Our Lady of the Rosary,” which housed a cofradía of “mulatos y negros,” referred to also as the “cofradía de morenos.” The chapel, described as an image of striking beauty, was the site of festivals and processionals performed by the congregants. Much to my dismay, accounts of these festivals and processionals remain hidden in sources that have to be discovered, thereby preventing further exploration.

Nevertheless, chaplaincies were not the only method of drawing blacks into Quito’s spiritual community. In his review of the region’s spiritual state in 1648, Quito’s archbishop Agustin de Ugarte Sarvia noted Jesuit efforts to memorialize ministries of some noteworthy brothers. Accordingly, he cited

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175 Lane, Quito 1599, 53-54.

176 ANHQ Protocolos, Notaria Primera, Tomo II, 9-I-1600, ff. 9v-11v; and Lane, “Captivity and Redemption,” 230; and AN/Q Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 1-vi-1604, f. 1.

177 RHGQ, 2:259. Relación and visita by Don Agustín de Ugarte Sarvia, Diego Rodriguez DoCampo, Presidente secretario del venerable dean y cabildo de Aquiella Catadral.
the work of Fathers Bastidas, and Vergara y Caicedo, who “died having served to teach the negros y mulatos with great fervor, giving the prayer with notorious examples of their lives and virtues.”

According to Jesuit father and historian Pedro de Mercado, blacks were themselves quite devout, celebrating holy days with much pomp and circumstance. Describing an annual festival, he states:

A congregation of negros y mulatos who belong to our school each year perform a festival to Jesus, not with the title of this delicious name, but with the one of “Holy Savior,” which is the same as Jesus. The of the day of Transfiguration is the one designated for this celebration and they do this with much adoration of flowers and candles, and seek always for the most desired singers of the republic to offer the Mass. And in order that this festival be of great enjoyment to the Savior’s soul, the pardo y moreno congregants are informed that they have been whitened by the blood of Christ, which flows in the sacrament of confession; And in the day of the festival they eat as partakers at the holy table of the altar, and this they do with devoted diligence (solicitud devota).

To the savior enclosed in the misadventures of the bread (accidents de pan), they make a feast placed him on a thrown during the Shrovetide (three days preceding Ash Wednesday) in order to prevent with his presence [any] disruption of those days. During these ceremonies one preaches in the morning and afternoon to a large number of listeners who congregate at our church (La Compañía). It gives the fervent workers of La Compañía great spiritual pride to see those innumerable men and women who come to the festival of Shrovetide [and] eat [of] the body of Christ; and in gaining this joy they avoid the loss of their spiritual property in the snares that the demon hurls to introduce.

Although scholars have explored in significant detail the inner-workings of black cofradías, including their African influences and their impact upon black life in Latin American slave societies more generally, for sixteenth-century Quito we have little to go on. Nonetheless, the contemporary accounts discussed above provide some details of blacks, enslaved and free apparently, involvement in church life during the early colonial period. Though not surprising, they suggest that the regular clergy made a concerted effort to evangelize amongst Quito’s black population. Indeed, it seems that blacks were a part of a larger, social evangelism efforts that targeted the poor generally.

178 Ibid, 276.
This was likely to have been the case since Indians and others were cited in celebrations of the Holy Virgin and the saints of the parish (La Compañía). But if the soldiers of Christ, as the Jesuits were referred to commonly, were going to great lengths to secure the souls of blacks who docked upon the doors of La Compañía, it was the city’s secular clergy that ensured blacks access to the “holy sacraments” of marriage and baptism. While the festivals discussed above provide a window into the existence of a black spiritual community and its corresponding holy convocations, parish records offer a lens through which to analyze the various components of blacks’ social networks. Such networks are often seen most vividly when examining those small intimate moments of life.

Among Quito’s six parish churches, El Sagrario, situated adjacent to the Cathedral, which outlined the central square, was the parish church whose clergy managed the spiritual affairs of Quito’s elites and those serving within their homes. And as such it is the ideal location to look for information regarding the growth of the Afro-Quiteño population. On November 23, 1607, in the parish church of El Sagrario, Antonio and his wife, Madalena (both slaves of Juan Portero) baptized their son, Miguel, in the Catholic faith. As was customary, in accordance with Canon law, the infant received two godparents to assist in the instruction of the faith and to promote his overall wellbeing. Assigned godparents to Miguel were two slaves—Gaspar and Isabel—a move that reflected a common occurrence among Quito’s enslaved. Indeed, Miguel’s baptism was typical in many ways, reflecting the eighty-five Afro-creoles (forty-eight females: thirty-seven males) baptized in El Sagrario parish church between 1606 and 1613. Among the eighty-four Afro-Creoles baptized in Quito’s El Sagrario parish between 1606 and 1613, sixty-one fathers were listed, nine of whom were married to the mothers. Unfortunately, some twenty-two infants were left without one or both parents; fourteen lacked both a mother and a father; five were missing solely the father, and in at least three were without their mother.

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181 Mercado, 14-17.

182 El Sagrario Parish Church, Libro de Bautismos de niños de toda clase: Montañeces, Mestizos, Indios, Negros y Mulatos, (Quito, 1 April 1606 – 7 October 1613). There were, in fact, 96 individuals who comprised my sample of baptisms, of whom 82 were clearly identifiable as enslaved children (with one adult—María in 1611), and two free black children. Eleven of the 96 baptisms featured Andean children.
That eighty-five Afro-Creole infants were born within a seven-year period offers some evidence to suggest that Quito’s enslaved population was indeed on the rise, due, in no small part, to high birth rates. Although much of Quito’s general population growth has to be attributed to migration; corresponding to this phenomenon were increasing natural births among Quito’s Spanish and Andean populations more generally. Demographic studies of slavery throughout the Americas have shown that the enslaved population’s birth and death rates often corresponded to those of the larger society. Although pre-industrial societies like Quito had relatively high death rates, it seems safe to assume that, during the early seventeenth century, the inhabitants of the city of Quito were beginning a pattern of natural growth, even if epidemics and natural disasters interrupted this trend from time to time. Yet, even those unpredictable tragedies seem to have abated until the second half of the seventeenth century. Given the high number of births documented here, and the absence of colonial correspondence lamenting significantly high numbers of deaths within the slave population, it seems clear that a good number of these eighty-five survived to adulthood and, perhaps, old age.\(^1\) Moreover, sizeable numbers of Quito-born adults are present in subsequent decades.\(^2\)

In addition to the presence of a considerable number of infants, over two-thirds of the children enjoyed the presence of both parents. Moreover, the large number of *comadres* (godparents) standing for these infants, underscores the sizeable community these infants were entering. Most were assigned at least one godparent (*compadre*); sixteen of the children had both a *padrino* (godfather) and a *madrina* (godmother); forty-six had only a *padrino*, while thirty-four had only a *madrina*. At least sixty-two of the

\(^1\) As I mentioned previously, Africans and Afro-Creoles throughout New Spain were reproducing themselves at considerable rates. And while historian Frederick P. Bowser found high death rates among Lima’s slave population (a full ten percent annually), the work of Tardieu reveals a striking number of Afro-Creoles for Cusco. It seems that Lima suffered from a number of setbacks, chief among them was a markedly different environment from Quito; as a coastal city, vulnerable to the spread of infectious diseases, Lima received large imports of infirmed *bozales* annually. Many had enjoyed little rest in Cartagena before being forced on to Lima, adding longer times at sea to their journey. Those arriving in Veracruz, however, enjoyed shorter times at sea and, perhaps for this reason, fared better. And while Quito was not exempt from epidemics and natural disasters, it was not a distribution point of slaves for an entire viceroyalty. Compounding Lima’s death rate was the fact that one-third of all slaves arriving in Lima were subsequently shipped throughout the viceroyalty. No doubt, at times Lima lost some of its healthier slaves to this intra-colonial trade, leaving a good many sick and emaciated souls to die in the slave pins of the city. See. Bowser, *The African in Colonial Peru*, 75.

\(^2\) Caution is needed here due to the inconsistency of sales records, and birth and death records for these years. Nevertheless, existing sales, discussed below, provide suggestive data that lean in favor of this hypothesis.
godparents are easily identified as enslaved individuals. And since the terms ‘moreno,’ ‘pardo,’ and ‘negro’ had become almost synonymous with slave one can rightly assume that a majority among those in the “status unknown” group were, in fact, slaves.

Rarely during this period did slave owners or relatives of slave owners serve as godparents. In this sample, only five elite males served as godfather of enslaved children. In three of those cases, the children’s parents were documented as unknown “padres no conocidos”; the other two were presented by their mothers. In only one case is it clear that the owner was the godfather (“el amo fue su padrino”). Apparently, this was rare enough that it drew the attention of the priest scribe, who would normally fill in the name of the person along with their appropriate title.¹⁸⁵

Similarly, only seven cases revealed an elite woman serving as godmother.¹⁸⁶ In one instance the child was a free black; the other six were slaves. At least two lacked both a mother and a father, and only one these received both godparents.¹⁸⁷ One such case was that of Melchora, baptized on 3-ii-1696. Discovered by a free black woman, Melchora had been left at the doors of a Jesuit-owned store (‘expósito a las puertas de las tiendas de la Compañía de Jesus’) with no hint as to who her parents were. Like most in her situation, Melchora received only one godparent, an elite—doña María Vaca de la Cadena, who served as her godmother.

Only once did I find free blacks serving as the godparents of the enslaved during this period. In that case, Catalina de Cepeda, described as ‘morena libre,’ served as the godmother for an enslaved boy named Juan.¹⁸⁸ Juan’s parents—Madelen (the slave of “don León”) and Cosome (the slave of “don Juan”)—were among those married. Yet, even in this instance, the child had only one godparent. It seems that while free blacks served as the godparents of the enslaved, albeit rare in this period, in contrast, the

¹⁸⁵ These cases occur in my second sample that stretches from 1653 to 1707.
¹⁸⁶ All seven of thee instances appear in the later period, corresponding with an apparent increase in this phenomenon. More on this below.
¹⁸⁷ Libro de Bautismos.
¹⁸⁸ Libro de Bautismos, 9-2-1610.
slaves did not serve as the godparent of free children. Apparently, even when free blacks found themselves with only one godparent, they did not select slaves as *compadres* (godparents).

As historian Stuart Schwartz found for nineteenth-century Brazil, the selections of godparents seems to have reflected familial and communal affinities and, perhaps to a lesser degree, slaves’ aspirations towards upward mobility. Although with the lack of elite and free black *compadres*, it seems more likely that godparent selection reflected kinship and communal ties more than anything else. By and large, Africans and Afro-Creoles (enslaved and free) controlled this aspect of their lives. There was little reason to select an elite as godparent. There were no ecclesiastical impediments to selecting slaves, or ex-slaves as the godparents of one’s child.

Yet, if slaves were seeking to form such alliances with free blacks, there were potential limitations to their accomplishing this goal. In the early decades of the seventeenth century, Quito’s free blacks were few in number. Consequently, it is possible that, at times, some free blacks and slaves would have lacked sufficient contact with one another to establish the degree of familiarity and affinity to warrant inclusion in such personal matters as rearing one another’s children. Furthermore, one should not assume that those who did find themselves in close proximity to one another even enjoyed one another’s company or, otherwise formed intimate bonds. While some may have been open to the idea of developing such ties, it is also possible that, at times, individual idiosyncrasies produced interpersonal differences that precluded such connections.

In short, these were extremely personal decisions that individuals—usually mothers and fathers together—made for themselves.

Reflecting those intimate and personal decisions, sources reveal that blacks and Andeans served as godparents for each other’s children. Though a rare occurrence, in at least one instance, an Andean served

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189 Difficulty in estimating population figures during this period, but probably no more than 50 to 75 free blacks in the city.

190 The issue of class is undertaken by several authors exploring the history of blacks and race relations in Latin America more generally. See, for example. Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places*; Ben Vinson III, *Bearing Arms for His Majesty*; and Jane Landers, *African in Spanish Florida*.

as the godparent for the enslaved. On October 10, 1610, a woman described as Gorbala India served as the sole godparent of the enslaved child, Manuel (“natural de Angola”). Apparently, Manuel’s owner, Pedro Pinto, brought him to be baptized, as the scribe documented his parents as “unknown.”\(^{192}\) Judging from the lack of other such cases, and the absence of Manuel’s parents, it seems that blacks rarely chose Andeans as their godparents in Quito during this period. In contrast, it appears that Andeans lacked the same degree of latitude to make such decisions, or simply chose to be more flexible than their African and Afro-Creole counterparts in this matter.

Among baptisms of indigenous children, occurring between 1606 and 1613, there were eleven cases where blacks served as the godparents of Andean children.\(^{193}\) In 10 of these instances, the African-descended godparent was a godmother; only one featured a godfather—Joan Bram, who was, in that instance, the sole godparent.\(^{194}\) In five ceremonies, the godparents were ethnic Africans. This was the case on February 5, 1612, when María de Luis de Pabra and Alberto Xillochu (both naturales de Latacunga) came to baptize their daughter, Ponda. Here, Lorenca Biafara, the slave of don Francisco Lodoño, served as the child’s godmother.\(^{195}\) In other similar cases, women such as: María Guinea, Gracía (morena de doña de Ortega), Ana (morena del don Fico y Alauis), and Ana (‘negra’), served as godmothers for indigenous children.

Historian Martin Minchom, who examined this phenomenon within the El Sagrario parish between July and December 1596, found that 19.3 percent or 18 out of 93 indigenous baptisms featured black godparents.\(^{196}\) While elites had already expressed fear and contempt for Afro/Indigenous alliances,
there appears to have been little an elite could do to prevent such occurrences. Throughout seventeenth-century Spanish America, the church held sway in all matters pertaining to the sacraments, insisting upon individual free will in the selection of spouses and spiritual sponsors. Of course, the church’s sovereignty in such matters underscored its position in colonial society. Above all, however, these were spiritual concerns that facilitated the process of Christian conversion.

The service of black godmothers may have emerged within the hierarchy of elite households, where enslaved blacks—valued at the price of prime real estate—occupied a position above that of Andean servants. Indeed, if patronage helped to form the basis for indigenous godparent selections, choosing a “high-ranking” domestic might have served them well. Black women were already serving as caregivers for many of the children within these homes; the idea of formalizing expectations of special care for an indigenous child was not likely to have been considered without reason. It is also quite possible that, as historians Frederick P. Bowser and Martin Minchom suggested, blacks were intermediaries of sorts, who straddled the *República de Españoles* and the *República de Indios*.\(^\text{197}\) As blacks lived within the same households, worked together on estates, and occupied the same urban spaces, the lines of these two “*repúblicas*” blurred to near invisibility. As individuals built communities within the structures of work, based upon kinship, familiarity and, perhaps, aspirations of upward mobility, these often transcended perceived racial boundaries. Thus, for some, it must have become quite natural for blacks and Andeans to stand for one another in some of life’s most intimate and important moments. These were, of course, extremely personal matters, which varied from person to person, family to family, community to community and, perhaps more importantly, across time.

Africans and Afro-Creoles were creating communities and families that apparently fit within their desires, degrees and durations of familiarity, kinship ties, and geographical proximity.\(^\text{198}\) Their

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\(^{197}\) A more thorough definition will follow. Frederick P. Bowser and James Lockhart were two of the first scholars to suggest this to have been the case for colonial Peru. See also Minchom, *The People of Quito*, 55.

\(^{198}\) Bennett and Schwartz.
communities were filled with Afro-mestizos (pardos, mulattos, and zambos), Afro-Creoles, and ethnic Africans (some bozales and ladinos). Afro-Creoles constituted the clear majority; fifty-two of the couples featured two Afro-creoles, while nine featured an Afro-Creole and an ethnic African. But even here, diversity was the rule. Among the ethnic monikers assigned one finds: Angola, Bañon, Biafara, Bram, and Conga. Only two unions featured two ethnic Africans: Palonia Biafara and Juan Biafara, who baptized their daughter, Melchora in 1610; and Juliana Angola and Francisco Biarfora, who baptized their son Antonio.

To the extent that Palonia Biafara and Juan Biafara were looking for others of the Biafara caste to serve as Melchora’s godparents, they would have found a good number of them in Quito. Of the fifteen Africans listed among the baptisms, six of them carried the moniker Biafara. But ethnic origin would not have been the sole reason for individuals to form unions, engage in friendships, and serve as godparents. Historian Herman Bennett has shown that kinship, long-standing, transatlantic friendships and geographical proximity informed individuals decisions regarding the communities they formed. Hence it is possible that Juliana Angola and Francisco were shipmates, or household workers who entered into a romantic relationship. Their selection of Simón Biafara and Catalina Biafara as godparents for their son Antonio, may have reflected friendships they had formed in route from Cartagena to Lima, or while passing through the region of Popayán. It is also quite possible that, Simón or Catalina were the siblings or cousins of Francisco; or, perhaps the three had known one another while in the ‘land of Biafara’. Like many others, they might have experienced years of separation, only to be reunited in the highland capital of Quito.

Unfortunately, baptismal registries—simple lists detailing dates, the names of individuals present at the baptism, and their role/position in the child’s life—leave hidden the thoughts and motivations of

199 Afro-mestizos clearly fell within the rubric of Afro-Creoles, it is worthwhile to call the reader’s attention to the distinction between an Afro-Mestizo (say, a child of an African and an Andean or Mestizo), and the children of two ethnic Africans. The evidence of mestizaje is apparent, even if we are left with the flawed and rigid monikers of European scribes. Yet, the complexity of identity and its evolution ought to be underscored here, given the array of terms that Europeans applied to mix-race peoples, as well among those that African-descended peoples took on when identifying themselves. For two recent and highly sophisticated discussions of these matters see. Bennett, Africans in Colonial Mexico; and Vinson, Bearing Arms.

those participating in the ceremony. In the sole instance of apparent endogamy, for example, Palonia Biafara and Juan Biafara secured only one godparent for young Melchora—an Afro-Creole named [Do]mingo. Was there a kinship (biological or fictive) tie that remained hidden within the silence of the source? Could this have signaled the limitations of Palonia and Juan’s communal connections? Perhaps they were relatively new to the city, and knew only Domingo and a few other individuals. It is also possible, of course that, they were simply choosy parents who continued to agonize over the decision of a godmother. As such, the two may have had difficulty reaching agreement regarding who would serve as young Melchora’s godmother.²⁰¹

A sampling of marriage records reveals some similar trends: the presence of a large number of Afro-Creoles; a small, yet diverse group ethnic Africans; and few marriages between ethnic Africans generally, and even fewer of perceived endogamy. Among the records consulted, only a few are from the 1650s, 1660s, 1670s and 1680s. Among the 53 marriages that make of my sample, only four feature ethnic Africans marrying one another; and only two of those feature endogamous unions (1653—Esteban Angola and Ana Angola; 1675—Joan Angola and Catalina Angola). In the case of the former, both witnesses carried the ethnic moniker ‘Angola’. In the case of the second, however, the witnesses were apparently not of Angolan decent. Perhaps an indication of the size of the enslaved population, both of these wedding parties fell short of the requisite four witnesses, featuring only two.

The extent to which ethnic Africans sought endogamous unions is unclear. In one of the unions, occurring in 1688, the novios were described simply as “ambos bozales.” Further, the union of Manuel Bran and María Josepha Conga, in 1704, obviously lacked any hint of endogamy. Moreover, neither of these unions featured ethnic Africans as the sponsors. But this should not cause the modern observer great alarm. Historian Herman Bennett has shown that marriages amongst people of African descent were based upon far more than ethnic affinities. Instead, they were the result of long-standing familiarity, facilitated by

²⁰¹ In other instances ethnic Africans served as godparents for the children of apparent Afro-Creoles. See for example, the baptism of Leonor on 24-09-1609. Her parents were Ines negra and Gernabe negro; serving as godfather was Juan Mandingo. Similarly, in 1609, for Santiago, the son of Maria Bran and Leonar[do] de Olmedo (two married slaves), Alonso Angola served as godfather. Finally, in the baptism of Simón, the adult slave of Sebastian Francisco…Agustin, described as “moreno Congo,” served as godfather. See. El Sagrario, Quito, Libro de Bautismos 1606-1613.
kinship ties and geographical proximity. That is, individuals married people that they knew for some time, lived near, or knew through an acquaintance or relative. In like manner, they chose sponsors they had known for some years, as they could give sufficient testimony to the fact there were no impediments that might make them ineligible for marriage to the proposed fiancée.

Reflecting the character of the population, most marriages featured Afro-Creoles. Nine of the fifty-three unions featured free blacks; two of these cases involved free black men marrying indigenous women. In the other seven, both novios were Afro-Creole (most described as pardo); only one featured the union of an enslaved black man and a free black woman. In at least seventeen of these unions, the scribe failed to document clearly the status of the individuals getting married. But because the scribe cites the race of at least sixteen of the thirty-four novios featured in these unions, one is left with the idea that at least one of the novios in these instances was enslaved. Eight of them carried the label of ‘pardo or parda,’ two were cited as ‘Angolans,’ two ‘mulatos’, three ‘moreno,’ and one ‘negra’. Because we are left with only the scribe’s notations, and without any reference to the words the bride and groom spoke, it is nearly impossible to ascertain how these individuals thought of themselves. Had they taken on these racial/casta labels themselves? Or, had the priest assigned these labels based upon potentially changing perceptions of what they meant? While these are worthy questions that merit our best efforts and our most imaginative intellectual engagement, sources that might provide clearer direction continue to elude this scholar’s grasp.

Nevertheless, the picture of ethnic diversity and Afro-Creole dominance remains vivid. Even at the end of the century, when the city witnessed sizable population losses due to epidemics, natural disasters, and out migration, coupled with the decline of the obraje complex and the rise of the classical hacienda—all of which led to an unprecedented influx of African bozales, diversity would continue to mark the city’s slave population. Slave traders such as Joan Lanzagorta, brought increasing numbers of African captives into the city of Quito in the waning years of the century, imported sizeable numbers of slave laborers from West Central Africa, or so-called “negros de casta Congo,” slave laborers carrying the ethnic monikers of Arara, Popo, Mandinga, Miña, Lucumí, Bambara, Chala, and Caramantí, also entered the
region in large numbers at this time. These slaves would marry and produce offspring with the ethnically heterogeneous slave population that occupied the city and region. Indeed, if ethnogenesis had proven essential in the fostering of community during the century’s early years, ethnogenic processes would continue to prove useful to discrete culture groups that markets and men had trust upon one another.

Market and Household: Enslaved Women

The presence of so many fathers, who often took an interest in their children’s lives, seems to suggest that, enslaved men and women engaged one another over issues regarding children and the proper ways to cultivate family life. The high degree of illegitimacy and, the absence of a good many fathers, also suggests, however, that just as many women were left, at some point, to carry the burden of caring for the children and securing their freedom. Slave sales often display the combined sale of women and their children, thus shedding light upon this reality. They reveal, moreover, the significant presence of African and Afro-Creole women within Quito’s slave market.

On January 5, 1632, Joan de Avila sold five young captives—María Bioso (20 years-of-age), her son Raffael, “of the same nation” (six-years-old), María (15 years), Isabel Primera (15 years), and Juan (14 years)—to Joan de Vera for a total of 1,900 patacones de oro at 380 cada pieza (each full piece).  

See the “visito del despacho” of some 166 slaves arriving at the river port of Honda in 1712. A fascinating document, it shows the considerable diversity, not only through the display of various ethnic monikers, but also in its detailed description of the scarification that marked the bodies of these Africans. Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán), PN, Tomo 22, Año 1712, folios 63-71.

The term Bioso is an ethnic moniker meant to signify a Bioho captive from the Upper-Guinea coast.

Piezas de esclavos (pieces of slaves), used interchangeably at times with piezas de indias, was used in slave trading parlance signify the equivalent of a mature, male or female captive, who was thought to be in good physical condition. Not to be confused with cabeza de esclavos or literally heads of slaves, which signified the actual number of captives, pieza de indias was an attempt to account for and appraise accurately the value all captives in a given sale, including those who lived “como alma en boca” (with their very souls in their mouths, or on the brink of death). For the above sale, see. AN/Q; Protocolos; Notaria Primera; Diego Rodriguez DoCampo (hereafter DRD); Tomo I-1632; folios 4-6. Need a note explaining patacones, pesos, pesos de oro corriente, and units of measurement more generally.
The sale contained the usual formal legal language and disclaimers, indicating that the seller had fulfilled his legal obligation to disclose all known tachas (defects—moral and/or physical), and, had thereby, negotiated a just price for the captives. In this instance, the owner did not list any “defects”, leaving few details about these individuals. The scribe was careful to note, however, that Maria Bioso and her son, Raffael were of the “same nation”; the absence of other ethnic and/or racial descriptions for the other captives might suggest that they were Creoles, born either in Quito or in some other area of the Spanish empire.

By the early 1630s, Diego Rodriguez DoCampo, along with the other nine scribes writing legal transactions in the city of Quito, had signed hundreds of such legal contracts, facilitating the sales, mortgages, dowries, wills and testaments, letters of freedom and land contracts involving enslaved blacks and their offspring. Not only do the names of children like Raffael listed above appear as artifacts of Quito’s human commerce market, women like María Fulupa and Catalin[a] Bañón could tell the story of just how uncertain slave-life was in seventeenth-century Quito. Similar to the experiences of so many enslaved Africans, their owner’s death in “the city of the kings” (Lima) prompted their sale in the city of Quito. For a few, the death of a master was a time of jubilation, the beginning of freedom, but for others, the master’s death proved to be, quite literally, an unsettling time. For traveling merchants and executors of estates, looking to make a quick sale of two slave women, the urban center of Quito was an ideal location.

That enslaved women held a significant presence in a city like Quito should come as no surprise. Similar to many early colonial Spanish-American cities, there were any number of positions available to enslaved women in Quito.

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205 ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaria, 4:1, DRD, 4-ii-1632, folios 79-102.

206 Deathbed manumissions, though occurring sporadically, were a reality, and are covered in more detail ahead.

207 See. Eltis and Richardson, eds. Routes to Slavery; Hawthorne, Planting Rice and Harvesting Slaves; Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade; Hebert Klein, The Atlantic Slave Trade; See also. Bowser, who was surprised to note that Lima’s importation of bozales was nearly forty percent female.

208 Regarding Quito’s slave market, Gauderman suggests that some of elite women’s slave purchases were likely to have been speculative in nature. A study of ownership patterns, marking the time between purchase and resale, or the assigning of a power of attorney for resale might lend some suggestions, but the fragmentary nature of seventeenth-
They were called upon to work as domestics in the city’s private homes and cloisters, to serve as nursemaids and wet nurses, and provide companionship to their owners. Street vending, the preserve of the impoverished, proved to be another endeavor that drew enslaved Quiteñas into the bustle of life in the highland city. And at an average price of 450 pesos, they served as excellent collateral against debts, thereby easing the process of securing capital for other investments or goods. Consequently, they were often a signature item in dowries.

209 While Bowser found that enslaved women ran pulperías (general stores) in colonial Lima, in Quito these seem to have been the preserve of Andeans, Mestizos and, occasionally, free blacks. Gauderman cites the example of Pedro de Vega, mulatto pulpero, who ran the pulperia owned by doña Francisca de Varas. In Popayán, we find local officials lamenting the lack of sufficient numbers of these stores. See Bowser, The African in Colonial Peru; ; Gauderman, Women’s Lives, 81. A review of the slave sale activity of several convents and monasteries and their members reveals enslaved women’s presence in the cloisters as well as their vulnerability to the financial woes of masters. See ANHQ, Notaría Primera, No. Act. 226, Quito, (16-noviembre-1668), folio 48v. Here, the sisters of Quito’s La Concepción convent petitions to sell Marcela, an enslaved Afro-Creole of 50 years (note that she would have been born in the city in 1619). On 20 February 1669, she is sold to Canónigo don Francisco Piñar for 400 pesos de ocho reales. Just one year later doña Catalina of Limpia Concepción is found selling Lucrecia Angola, another enslaved woman who is fifty-years-of-age. See. Ibid, folios 16-17v; yet another indication that men and women served, at times, to underwrite Quito’s “spiritual economy”. For more on convents and their involvement in the economy of the Andes see. Kathryn Burns, Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

210 ANH/Q, Protocolos, 1600, 1604,1632,1641, 1661, 1666, 1667, 1668, 1670, 1671-1673, 1676-1679, 1681, 1682, 1684, 1686, 1688, 1693-1700. Among those sold here, the average price was 413.09 pesos de ocho reales, and the average age was 20.5 years. See, for example, the mortgage of two slaves by don Bartolome Estupiñan for 332 pesos de oro. The mortgage of Laura Manuela (described as married) and Manuela (a single woman) was for a period of six months. Both were described as “de nación criollas”. ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaría Primera, 223 (1666-1690), folio 79v. See also the power of attorney issued by a resident of Barbacoas to sell four slaves for a total of 700 pesos de oro placo a 6 m². The slaves, María (40 years of age), her son Lorenco (10 years-of-age) Andrade (16 years-of-age) and Simon (17 years-of-age) all naciones criollas. ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaría Primera, 223, (1666-1690), 88-88v. A final example is found in the dowry of doña Manuela Fernandez Sierra, where one finds five slaves (four men—Mateo (60 years-of-age), de nación Angola; Lorenco (15 years-of-age) criollo; Bernardo (10 years-of-age); Joan (6 years-of-age), and Ruffina (18 years-of-age), all children of Matteo, valued at 2,000 pesos de ocho reales. While dowry values were sometimes inflated, an average of 500 pesos per slaves was not outside of the range, especially given the ages of those listed. ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, AMC (1666-1690), folios, 219-223v.
In her dowry of 1677, doña Josepha de Sandoval received two enslaved women—Clemente (15 years-of-age and valued at 400 pesos) and Juana (10 years-of-age, and valued at 300 pesos). They were each given to doña Sandoval by her grandmother, doña Luisa de Espinosa. In a similar example, in 1679, Captain Bartolome Fernandez del Sierra and his wife, doña Olalla Gonzales de Bargas gave their daughter doña Manuela Fernandez Sierra five slaves, four males and one female: Mateo (60 years-of-age, ‘de nación Angola’), Lorenco (15 years, ‘criollo’), Bernardo (10 years, ‘criollo’), Joan (six years-of-age, ‘criollo’), and Ruffina (18 years, ‘criolla’); all of them were children of Mateo, and combined for a total value of 2,000 pesos de ocho reales.

Noting the fact that enslaved women were often the personal property of elite women, historian Kimberly Gauderman found that slave women were charged also with the duty of overseeing the labor of the indigenous servants who worked in elite homes. In one notable example cited by Gauderman, witnesses testified, in 1641 that doña Catarina Bravo de Saravia used one enslaved woman—Isadora (a mulatta)—to control her indigenous workers, charging her with the responsibility of whipping and shaving head of one indigenous woman she suspected of getting pregnant in order to avoid work in her obraje. At times, she finds, they were even assigned their own indigenous servants, noting the case wherein Maria, the slave of Maestro de Campo don Manuel Ponce, was assigned an indigenous chichera as her personal servant. It should be said, however, that few enslaved women in Quito would have enjoyed such a privilege, since it was costly and, likely to have been the preserve of only the wealthiest of slaveholders. Maria’s experience was, in all likelihood, more of a conspicuous display of prestige than a typical aspect of slave life. Nevertheless, both of these examples are insightful in that they speak to the education that enslaved women received through their work and workplaces.

Elite homes constituted a beehive of activity, where the social norms, gendered codes of conduct, and the overarching hierarchy of the colonial order were not only displayed, but also spoken of readily.

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211 ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaria Primera, No. 237; JMM, 8 de noviembre 1677, folios 26-28.
212 ANHQ, NP; AMC (1666-1690); Quito, 9 de noviembre 1679, folios 219-223v.
Through their education in the politics of the home, poor women of all hues and stripes gained valuable insight into the mores of Spanish society.

Masters’ suspicions, disregard, and contempt for certain workers would have been expressed openly and, more importantly, laced with the gendered and ‘racialized’ discourse of honor and shame. The elite household was indeed one of the principal places where enslaved women, at all stations in the home, came to possess an intimate understanding of social norms, societal boundaries and barriers, and their permeability. Proximity to power and wealth served not only to increase a slave woman’s chances of earning enough money to secure her freedom and/or that of her child, but served also to initiate her into the performance and functions of power. Here, the litigious nature of Quiteño society also became evident, as did the mediating role of colonial courts.

Enslaved women and their children were also the most likely to achieve freedom in seventeenth-century Quito. One example from May 8, 1688, reveals Melchora, a fifty year-old enslaved woman, who then received her freedom along with that of her children: María Sandura (12 years), Pedro Thomas (five years), and one small child, Lorenzo Cayetana (two years). Doña María Fueres, widow and property holder of Quito, was executing the desires of her then deceased mother. Apparently, María (not a young woman herself in this period) had taken excellent care of María’s mother, prompting her to free her and her children. Deathbed manumissions are insightful, revealing how some slaves received their freedom. They also bring into relief the contradiction of being Christian and owning one’s bothers and sisters in the faith, as some went so far as to suggest that they were relieving their conscious prior to departing this life. Where all of these enacted out of true benevolence? Or, had the owners proven unwilling to grant the freedom even after entering a binding legal contract?

In another example, this one a death-bed manumission from the year 1672, features El M. de Campo don Francisco Ponce and his wife, doña Phelipa de Huvillos granting the freedom of an African-descended woman described as Maria ‘mulata’ and her three children—Petrona (4 years), Miguel (3 years) and Nicolas (1 year). As one of the executors of the estate of doña Nicolassa de Escoabar, a nun in Quito’s

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Santa Clara convent, doña Phelipa had been called upon to give witness that doña Nicolassa had given notice of her wishes. In an interesting, and not altogether rare statement, doña Phelipa had left a record of what prompted her apparent generosity. According to her will this was to be done “in conformity and to sooth her conscious in this way.”

By mid-century enslaved women had gained the benefit from as well as suffered the costs of elite associations. Some had already applied their knowledge to civil and criminal court case. Indeed, they had begun to develop their own ideas and constructions of honor and shame. No doubt, there existed a range of normative behaviors and expectations that governed interactions between enslaved blacks, both female and male. Perhaps more importantly, enslaved women, with the help of their male counterparts, were giving birth to Afro-Creole children who would continue to employ the knowledge that had been reproduced within the streets and homes of early colonial Quito. Enslaved women, perhaps better than anyone, had learned how to maneuver colonial courts during this period. They understood intimately the inner-workings of power in all of its guises, both visible and invisible. Through the relationships they forged with elites, poor women of color, and their black male counterparts would over time stand ready to engage the colonial courts and force the terms of relationships with masters, mistresses, and elite acquaintances. Nevertheless, several phenomena threatened to disrupt black communal formation and the acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the colonial order, namely epidemics and natural disasters occurring in the second half the century.

215 ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, MO, 232 (1670-1673), 21-octubre-1672, folios 89-89v. See also the freedom papers of María Mandinga de los Ríos (negra 50 years), for her “loyal, loving care and good will, caring for her as if she was her mother.” No children were mentioned—ANHQ, NP, FHM, 230 (1670-1671), folios 224-224v.

216 Ibid.

217 This theme is discussed more forcefully in the context of resistance and the law in chapter six.
The Transitional Years

Beginning in the late 1640s diseases and natural disasters began to plague the region. By the time a plague of measles hit the city in 1645, it had been a full generation since the last epidemic struck in 1619. Consequently, according to historian Suzanne Alchon, Quito possessed a large non-immune population, made up mostly of children and young adults.218 These individuals suffered the greatest in the measles epidemic. Over the course of the subsequent two years the number of deaths declined; but in 1648 viruela (smallpox) and alfombrilla hit, killing upwards of 100,000 people throughout the province. Exacerbating matters further was a series of natural disasters that swept the area during the balance of the seventeenth century. In 1645 a major earthquake rocked the area of Riobamba, and from 1650 to 1654 drought, flooding, and earthquakes pummeled the region. Between 1660 and 1669 eruptions from Mount Pichincha (the city’s active volcano), earthquakes, and heavy rains combined to deal the city and region a mighty blow, undercutting crops while driving up food costs. While earlier droughts and deluges had produced only temporary, seasonal shortages, the region suffered a series of food shortages in 1654 and during the 1680s, when droughts coupled with periods of heavy rains caused severe damage to crops, sending prices surging, making life extremely onerous for those residing in the highland capital.219

During the transitional years of the mid-to-late seventeenth century, Quiteños came to rely almost exclusively upon the intra-colonial slave trade when supplementing their slave population. The legal transatlantic slave trade to Spanish America had ended in 1639 with the last Portuguese asiento, and the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns meant that it would be another three decades before African captives entered the kingdom legally. Nevertheless, the African and Afro-Creole community in Quito became increasingly diverse population, comprised largely of Afro-creoles, many of them born in


219 Ibid., 66-70.
Quito, and an eclectic mix of ethnic Africans. Moreover, speculators and traveling merchants continued to supply the highland city with Afro-Creoles from other areas. In the wake of epidemics and natural disasters, the values of slave laborers remained steady. Disputes over the enslaved highlight both their value and role within the local economy.

In one dispute from the town of Ibarra, filed on June 4, 1655, an elite woman sought to lay claim upon four slave laborers, valued at an average 400 pesos. Farther south, on May 17, 1656, doña Josepha Pasco sought also lay hold to an enslaved male she claimed that her then deceased husband had purchased in Latacunga. Disputes of this sort pepper the colonial record, underscoring the fact that, all who could, did, in fact, engage in the establishment of the slave-free paradigm.

One such case involved three enslaved women, Ysabel (forty years-of-age, de nación Angola), her daughter, Francisca Solano (24 years-of-age), and Francisca’s baby girl of four “recent” months. Don Pedro Gutierrez Flores (vecino of Ambato) had sold Ysabel on March 10, 1659 to the Governor don Lorenzo Abad, but had placed the captives in the care of Lorenzo Chatre Abade Chantre de la Iglesia Cathedral, until such a time when she would be remitted to the Governor Fransisco Abad. Doña Juana Abad, the governor’s wife, was calling upon these slave women, and would not stop short of calling upon civil authorities to deal with this church official. On March 18, 1684, the high court decided in doña Abad’s favor, ordering that the slave women be remitted to her charge.

A notable exception is the sale of Thomas de Artiago, (criollo de esta ciudad) 15 years-old, whom his master, El Maestro Joseph de la Chica Narvaes presvitero sold to Juan Lopes de Galarca (vesino de esta ciudad) for 270 patacones; On the other hand Agustin de la Chica (24 years), also the slave Maestro Joseph, sold for the usual 425 patacones de ocho reales. While an enslaved Afro-Creole woman, María (34 years) and her two little girls—María (2 years) and Petrona (6 months), both born in Cuenca—sold for 700 patacones. See. ANHQ, Primera Notaria, 1668-1669, Miguel de Ortega Osorio, folios. 15-15v; 51-51v; and 56-56v.

ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 4-vi-1655.

ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 17-v-1656.

ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 8-iv-1683, folios 34, 39v-43, 50. Others cases emerged from the town of Ambato as well. In one instance we find owners and would-be owners clamoring over the precise value of a slave laborers, as is evidenced in the case surrounding, Lazar Constante (a thirty-five year-old male, described as esclavo de color pardo). See also the price dispute surrounding Bitorio Criollo (25 years old and valued at 400 pesos). ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 17-ix-1687; and Exp. 25-vi-1688, folios 3-4.
Apparently slaves were in such high demand in the highland capital that one could sell a runaway who was not even his/her possession. On August 11, 1661, in the city of Quito, Joseph de Orellano sold the fugitive, Antonio Fueres (‘criollo’ 30-years-of age) to don Diego Ruiz Derrjas (vezino de Latacunga) for 525 pesos. Orellano stated that the slave remained at large while noting the usual disclaimers and the terms of payment. In a similar example, on November 9, 1672, doña Francisca de Cardenas of Quito, sold a “mulata esclava” named Rufina (35 years) to Diego Ortis Quintero of the village of Ibarra. According to doña Francisca, Rufina had been “walking as a maroon” in the jurisdiction of Ibarra; the sole description given was that Rufina looked like a mestiza “parece mestiza.” Orellano agreed to pay 400 pesos for Rufina, 205 by December of that year, and the remaining 195 pesos within the following eight months.

There was considerable movement of slaves from various regions during this time. Afro-creoles were entering and leaving Quito. Many of those entering were from Cartegena, Riobamba, Cuenca, and Guayaquil. On July 26, 1672, Dr. don Luis de Royas—Chantre of Popayán’s Cathedral—gave his power of attorney to don Manuel Morejon, Canonigo of the Cathedral, to sell Francisco Folupo, who had entered the region in one of the several shipments that were starting to enter Popayán’s river port of Honda. Ultimately, don Manauel was successful, selling Francisco for 370 pesos to a Quito resident.

While vecinos from Riobamba, Latacunga, and Ambato seemed to enter the region’s slave market only tentatively—normally to flesh out their estates with status symbols or steady labor hands, or even

224 ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, AMC, 223 (1666-1690) 11 Agosto 1666, folio. 115.

225 ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, TSF, (1670-1673), folios 313-315. Other interesting “racial” descriptions include “with tanned/burned noses. Non-racial, but interesting physical descriptors include also, “marcada en la [es]paldilla” and “mediana estatureza” ANHQ, Protocolos, NT, No. 231, TSF, (1670-1673), folio 208-209v.

226 Note the power of attorney to sell an entire slave family—Joan Congo (40 years), Pablo (son of Joan—6 years), and Petrona (Joan’s daughter of 7 years). Marcos Garcia Muñes, property holder of Ibarra and resident of Quito, had purchased this family along with their then deceased mother (Augustina criolla negra) from don Antonio Enrriquez Mancilla presbitero in Popayán in 1663. Now he was sending his father—Francisco Garcia Muñes—power of attorney at the hand of Joseph E. Gutierrez, in order that his father might release the slaves into Gutierrez’s possession. Gutierrez would then bring them to Quito, where they would be sold. See. ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, TSF (1670-1673), folio 81.

227 ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, 231, TSF (1670-1673), folios 265-266v.
simply for speculative economic gains, the Society of Jesus were in the process of establishing a large agro-
pastoral complex, and was quickly becoming the largest single slaveholder within the kingdom.\textsuperscript{228}

The Jesuit’s largest enterprise was the Colegio Máximo, which had holdings stretching from Ibarra to Latacunga. The Jesuits came to own these lands of the Chota-Mira valley during what Rosario Coronell characterizes as the period of transition, 1610-1680, when the Jesuits made their first acquisitions via small purchases of estancias from Andeans and Spaniards in the northern portion of the basin, and the period from 1680-1740, which continued the process of expansion of the Jesuits property but on a larger scale and in the lower lands of the basin.\textsuperscript{229}

The early small tracts were first used for the cultivation of coffee, cotton, olives, and grapes, but these crops presented difficulties and were not converted into dominant projects in the zone. The prize crop quickly became sugar, since it adapted easily to the climate and fertile soil of the Chota-Mira valley.\textsuperscript{230}

Initially the Jesuits refrained from usurping Andean lands. They received a few mercedes (land grants) from the local cabildos for the lands in the higher portion of the valley. The land that the Jesuits found useful they employed in cane cultivation, while those thought to be of little use were sold. During the period of transition (1610-1680), the Jesuits purchased and received lands in the high valley, acquired through small and medium purchases of properties owned by Indians and small Spanish haciendados (creole or peninsulars who owned haciendas).\textsuperscript{231} These lands had previously been managed by local caciques of Andean ayllus (Andean localized kinship groups with a territorial base). In some cases the

\textsuperscript{228} Other sales and exchanges of slaves from the region of Latacunga include: doña María Romero selling Theresa (21 years) with her daughter Bernarda de la Crus (six months), both criollas de Latacunga, for a total of 300 pesos to Captain Francisco Gutierrez, property holder and merchant of Quito. See also the transaction between Antonio Bassate de Rio (property-holder of Latacunga) and doña Josepha María Lisperquez of Juana criolla de esta provincia (22 years-of-age) along with her son Juan, four months-old, “nacido en casa” for 800 pesos—a high price to be sure. ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaria Tecera, Act. 8 (1680-81), folios 26v-27v; and ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, 225 (1688).

\textsuperscript{229} Coronel, \textit{El Valle Sangriento}, 54-56.

\textsuperscript{230} Ibid, 51-60.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
Jesuits purchased these properties, while other lands had been abandoned by Andeans migrating out in an attempt to avoid the *mita* (corvé labor) and the ravages of epidemics and disasters.\(^{232}\)

Between 1648 and 1692, the Jesuits modified the tenancy of land. During this period the Society went from making a large number of small purchases to buying large tracts of land. And by 1692 the Jesuits owned more land with fewer individual *estancias* (small farms). While acquiring large amounts of land in Chota-Mira valley, the Society of Jesus also fought to control water resources throughout the zone, in order to assist in their cane cultivation.\(^{233}\) They organized these holdings into integrated estate complexes, which produced a wide variety of products (e.g., wheat, corn, potatoes, peas and sugar cane). The Colegio Máximo de Quito, the largest complex, held the primary haciendas of the northern valley of Coangue, linking the large estates in Ibarra-Santiago, Carpuela, Chaluayaca and Caldera to the large obraje holdings in the Chillos Valley.\(^{234}\)

Africans accompanied the Jesuits on their initial descent into the valley in 1534. As the Jesuits turned increasingly toward the use of African slave laborers, the enslaved black population grew to the point that in 1637, the Procurador (priest and local head administrator of the local order) Miguel Xil de Madrigal, sold 114 slaves (24 men, 24 women, 37 boys and 29 girls).\(^{235}\) Coronel also notes that four additional boys were born during the period between the actual sale of the slaves and their delivery. But this was not to be the end of Jesuits use of African and Afro-Creole slave laborers. Beginning in 1680, the

\(^{232}\) The *Mita* was an indigenous labor draft adapted by Spanish from the Inca *mit’a*. *Mitayos*, or indigenous draftees, were rotated mills, mines, public works as well as other tasks.

\(^{233}\) Ibid, 67-76.

\(^{234}\) The Jesuits held their estates under Colegios or colleges. Within a given colegio the Society might hold an obraje (textile mill), a trapiche (sugar producing hacienda), a hospital or schools, as well as other estates. Andrien, *Kingdom of Quito*, 103; Coronel, *El Valle Sangriento*, 96; See also Nicholas Cushner, *Farm and Factory: The Jesuits and the Development of Agrarian Capitalism in Colonial Quito 1600-1767*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1982).

\(^{235}\) One cannot be certain as to why the Society sold these slaves at this time. It may have been that this was a part of the overall transitional period, where the society was acquiring more properties and re-structuring their holdings. Ibid., 86.
Jesuits undertook initiatives to purchase a “determined” number of slaves for their growing estate-
complex.\textsuperscript{236}

The Jesuits were something of an omnipresent force in the slave markets of the region. Throughout the region, in the mines of Popyán, and purchasing slave laborers in the markets of Guayaquil and Quito, the Jesuits were at the heart of a late seventeenth-century pattern of re-Africanization.\textsuperscript{237} In 1681, they purchased three ethnic Africans—Francisco Arara (22), Pedro Arara (20), and Domingo Arara (22) in the city of Guayaquil for a total of 700 pesos.\textsuperscript{238} Over the course of the next three decades the Society would continue to secure even more from the markets of Guayaquil, Quito, and Popayán while trading directly with their representative in the Caribbean port city of Cartagena de Indias.

By the 1690s the Society of Jesus possessed nine haciendas in the Chota-Mira basin, eight of which held slaves and produced sugar cane. These haciendas were complemented by obrajes, staffed largely by Andeans. Still, the slaves who worked as cattle ranchers, weavers, and bricklayers, were available both to the hacienda and the obraje. The nine haciendas were a part of two large complexes. Again, the Colegio Máximo de Quito held four haciendas (3 in Coangue and 1 in Mira) with a large textile mill in Chillos.\textsuperscript{239} Their second complex was under the jurisdiction of the Colegio de Provincia, and contained the large haciendas of Concepción and Chamanal. These were located in the Mira and Tumbaviro basins, located in the northern lands of the Chota, and used exclusively to produce sugar cane. These three haciendas were connected to the obrajes in Otavalo and two cattle ranches, named Naxiche and Cuzumbamba in Latacunga.\textsuperscript{240} The third Jesuit complex was under the jurisdiction of the Colegio de Ibarra, and had one cane-producing hacienda named Cuajara (Mira) connected to other local cattle ranches. Although three separate complexes existed with three distinct hierarchies and operations, they cooperated

\textsuperscript{236}Ibid, 93-94.

\textsuperscript{237} ACC. Sig. 2202, (Col—C—I-21mn), 12 julio 1684-12 de junio de 1686: 8 folios; and ACC. Sig. 1107 (Col.—CI—21mn), 5 de mayo 1688 – 2 de agosto 1689, 8 folios.

\textsuperscript{238} Archivo Histórico del Guayas (Guayaquil) Protocolos, EP/P 1681

\textsuperscript{239} Coronel, \textit{El Valle Sangriento}, 105.

\textsuperscript{240} Ibid, 106.
with one another. Each served to supplement the needs of the other, whether in supplies or laborers. Haciendas, obrajes, and grangerias (farming enterprises) were in close proximity to each other, allowing for supplies and laborers to be transferred with ease.

Although these complexes housed large numbers of indigenous jornaleros (day laborers), forasteros (resident migrant Amerindians), and volunteers who were attempting to evade the mita requirements, the Jesuits also relied heavily upon the labor of African slaves. During the period of transition 1610-1680, the Jesuits requested that the crown allow them to employ indigenous forasteros, vagabundos (vagabonds) or voluntarios (voluntary indigenous workers), however, this was met with Andean resistance until 1648. Thus, the valley did not have a substantial resident labor force.

Producing sugar cane and aguardiente (cane liquor) involved arduous productive processes, requiring large supplies of laborers to cut, re-collect, and wash the sugar cane. Prior to this process the sugar cane had to be seeded, fertilized, and ultimately planted. This process was one suited well for chattel slavery, requiring workers year round. For example, it took one year for a new plant to mature, and during this time the plants had to be fertilized and weeded. After the plant matured it had to be cut, seeded, washed, processed and refined as sugar, molasses or aguardiente, which took, altogether, an average of nine months. During this time, workers were needed in the fields, mills, and forests to chop huge amounts of lumber for the large fires necessary for boiling cane in the refining process. Africans slaves adapted well to the climate of the region, and many possessed skills necessary to work in such an intricate enterprise. Hence, the Society quickly turned to direct importation of Africans from Lima and Cartagena.

Ibid.

Coronel, El Valle Sangriento, 78.

The Jesuits also had large estate holdings near Popayán. These also employed a mixed pool of laborers. Their close proximity to largest slave market in the north Andes (Popayán), coupled with their “man on the ground” in Cartagena, facilitated the quick growth of an African-descended population in the Chota-Mira valley. Above all, it the highly sophisticated organization of the Jesuit enterprise made for efficiency and profitability, thereby enabling them to own unprecedented numbers of African slave laborers over the course of the eighteenth century. See. Andrien, The Kingdom of Quito, 103.
In 1681, the Society of Jesus had purchased Quaxara from the inheritors of Juan Espinosa de los Monteros—his widow and two sons. This hacienda had a chapel, houses, tools, 200 horses, 250 cows, 800 sheep, twenty-four mules and eleven bulls. It also held fifty cuadras of cane, accompanied by six slaves and four Indians from Quito. The Jesuits went on to purchase all properties surrounding Quaxara. And on the southern shore of the river Mira across from Quaxara were the Jesuit haciendas of Santa Lucía, Chamanal, and La Concepción, all of which held large cadres of slaves, and produced sugar cane.

The Jesuits were a part of a larger audiencia-wide movement towards the slave paradigm occurring in the final decades of the seventeenth century. As the transatlantic slave trade began to peak, thrusting ethnic Africans from discrete cultural contexts into the region of the north-central highlands by way of Popayán, the region witnessed yet another change in slave population morphology. If the African descended population had been made up largely of Afro-Creoles throughout much of the century, the end of the century brought a re-Africanization of the slave population that would last well into the first three decades of the eighteenth century.

**Conclusion: Re-Africanization & the Ascendancy of Slavery in the North-Central Highlands**

By the mid-to-late seventeenth century the lot of Africans and their descendants was well defined. They constituted a secondary source of labor throughout much of the kingdom, doing all the menial tasks their masters could not or would not do. In addition, they supplemented labor gangs where Amerindian hands failed to be sufficient. For those who could afford them in the highlands, they were commodities to be leased, mortgaged and pawned when the need arose; they were indeed ‘mobile capital’ and collateral used not only to secure the refinements of Quiteño life, but also a better existence in the afterlife. While they lived and worked alongside Amerindians in the obraje complex they were few in number and acquired only marginal importance to the actual productive process of the obraje regime. Throughout the seventeenth century elite Quiteños had enjoyed favorable fiscal policies that had given rise to a thriving textile sector. Large numbers of Andean workers and favorable market conditions in the mining centers of

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Peru and Bolivia made for a dynamic industry that made slavery both affordable and increasingly necessary. But far beyond their position as status symbols, the enslaved of Quito had serviced the textile sector, producing agricultural goods and services that served to supplement Quito’s booming seventeenth-century economy, thereby solidifying their position in society and influencing its socio-cultural form.

By the 1680s, however, the favorable conditions of the obraje complex were diminishing. The markets of Peru and Bolivia now demanded fewer shipments of Quito’s paño azul (Quito’s much-coveted, refined cloth), and Quiteño manufacturers bore stiff competition with cloth producers situated much closer to the region’s silver mines. Moreover, earthquakes, beginning in 1687, ravaged the city of Lima, thereby undermining one of Quito’s primary textile markets. In the following years, natural disasters and epidemics wrecked the audiencia, undercutting both the textile sector and the region’s Amerindian populations. Droughts, epidemics, and earthquakes, decimated nearly one-third of the Amerindian population, but it was the importation of high-quality European cloth that provided the death knell to Quito’s obraje complex. In 1693 a major epidemic of measles hit the city, undercutting any attempts the population had made to rebound from the epidemic of 1665, just a generation prior. The decline of the obraje further displaced large numbers of Amerindians, as many migrated away from the north-central highlands to the south-central sierra, opening the way for larger, more widespread use of enslaved Africans in places like Ibarra.

Thus, the failing obraje sector combined with developments in Quito’s mining districts to the north, the growing Jesuit complex in Ibarra, and the dramatic increase in the availability of slaves (the result of a booming transatlantic trade) all served to bring increasing numbers of African and Afro-Creole slaves into the north-central highlands and the urban center of Quito in the last decade of the seventeenth century. Afro-Creole captives arrived from Puerto Viejo and Guayaquil in the coast, Hambato and Cuenca to the south, and even as far away as Trujillo on Peru’s northern coast. Supplementing Quito’s domestic

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slave trade were itinerant merchants, like Joan Lanzagorta, who brought increasing numbers of African captives into the city of Quito in the waning years of the century.

Between 1694 and 1695, Lanzagorta sold 16 African captives carrying the ethnic moniker of Loango and/or Congo at an average of 340 pesos de ocho reales; his combined revenues for these sales alone reached 5,445 pesos. Lanzagorta had provided various Quiteños with seven, 10 year-old African males and three “negritos de casta Congo”. Other merchants were selling captives like Lazaro (criollo de esta ciudad), Luisa casta Congo, Joana Josepha de casta Congo, and Manuel Bozal. Despite the drastic increase in the supply, however, prices for slaves remained considerably high, rising at times to 525 pesos for a healthy adult female. This was in fact the price of the “Conga” women listed above. Moreover, an average price of 340 pesos for a ten-year-old African male was quite high as well.

While slaves emanating from West-Central Africa had assumed a notable presence in the highland capital, Quito’s (both city and colony) the slave population would maintain its multi-ethnic character. Arriving at the river port of Honda over the next few years were, in fact, several shipments of African captives, carrying the ethnic monikers of Arara, Popo, Mandinga, Miña, Lucumi, Bambara, Chala, and Caramanti. One need only survey Quito’s notary protocols of the first two decades of the eighteenth century to see that itinerant merchants, working the Cartagena-Popayán—and Panama-Barbacoas—trade route, were bringing large numbers of these West Africans into the city of Quito and the highland core more generally.


248 Ibid.

249 Similar to the findings of scholars in the recent anthology edited by Linda M. Heywood, Central Africans maintain a formidable presence in the enslaved population of Quito. See, Linda M. Heywood, eds., Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Nevertheless, as shown in the pervious chapter, the late seventeenth century brought a sizable contingent of slave laborers from the Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, and to a lesser degree, the Bight of Biafra. See, for example, ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, DOL, Act. 304 (1709-1711), folios 143-145, wherein Captain, don Marcos de Arugillo (vecino de la ciudad de Popayán) sells a family of slaves—Salbador de nación Arara, su mugger llamada Theresa de nación Popo, ambos dos de hedad de veinte y quarto años poco mas o menos, y el otro llamado Manuel hijo de los dichos—to doña Mariana Guerrero de Jelazar. The sale was completed for 1,150 pesos de ocho reales.
Slavery had begun its ascent throughout the kingdom and would come to occupy a role of critical importance in the life blood of the kingdom’s economy and society in general well into the 1760s. On the Jesuit plantations of the north, they were already the principal labor choice, even if the Jesuits did continue to rely on large numbers of Andean paid laborers. Gold was king in the north; it would drive Popayán’s economy, pulling large numbers of African captives into the gobernación as they made their way to the mining center of Barbacoas and the Chocó farther north. Absentee masters residing in Popayán and, some as far away as Quito would reap considerable fortunes as a result of this scheme.

The seventeenth century had brought significant changes to the lives of Africans, Andeans, and Spaniards living and working throughout the Kingdom of Quito, a colonial middle ground of sorts, located on the margins of both the Atlantic world and the Spanish American empire. As they continued to build the prototypical Spanish American slave society, elite Quiteños had drawn increasingly upon African captives emerging from a broad cross section of locations throughout West and West-Central Africa. Throughout much of the century, Quito’s communities of enslaved Africans and their descendants evolved in a context unlike that of some better-known New World slave societies (Brazil, Mexico, etc). Unlike colonial Mexico, where slaves carrying the ethnic moniker of ‘Angolan’ tended to marry other ‘Angolans’ over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, ethnic Africans in Quito tended to marry individuals who apparently fell outside of their ethnic or national group, creating what were perhaps myriad Afro-Creole identities and communities within the urban center.

To be sure, these communities included, at times, Andeans. As people of African descent worked with, married, entered into sexual liaisons, and served as the godparents and sponsors for Andeans, they created a complex and diverse network of relationships, ties that were sure to serve them in the years ahead. Perhaps more importantly, they learned valuable pieces of information and gather much-needed resources from these interactions. Nevertheless, Black/Indigenous relationships were complex, situational affairs that depended largely upon what individuals made of them over time. By the end of the century, it became less

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250 Guayaquil would follow a slightly different chronology, witnessing, as it did, a boom in the 1760s at the precise moment when the highland economy in concert with the northern mining centers had fallen into decay.

251 See for example the testament of don Juan de Prado y Canoga, who possessed thirty-three slave laborers in a mine in Barbacoas in 1671, ANHQ, NP, AMC, folio 128.
common to see blacks serving as the godparents for Andean children, and vice versa. This does not mean, however, that their relationships were on the wane. If anything, it probably meant that individuals had chosen to redefine these relationships, organizing their lives in ways that made more sense depending upon the context.

Life had not been easy for the enslaved of the city. Slaves working on the region’s haciendas and, to limited extent, in the region’s obrajes had endured much hardship. But if slaves living and working on the Jesuit estates in the north could look forward to little reprieve from the harrowing work of chopping cane, and working the ingenios to produce the “fire-water” drink of aguardiente, in Barbacoas, slaves would have to spend their days standing in waist-high water, surviving and fending off viper bites while finding food and clothing for themselves. The gold mines were in full boom and would demand large shipments of African captives for at least the next four decades. If slave life in the north-central highlands fell within the shadow of an Andean world, the world that Africans created in Barbacoas, the Chocó and the outlying gold fields of greater Popayán would have a distinct Afro-Creole texture. There, Amerindians would come to form the backdrop and live in the shadow of African slavery.
CHAPTER 4

MARKING BODIES, TRAFFICKING SOULS: SLAVERY AND THE CONTEXT OF ETHNOGENESIS ON QUITO’S NORTHERN FRONTIER, 1700-1800

By the turn of the century Popayán’s eminence as a slave society, by any definition, was indisputable. Exchanges featuring slaves were not only common, they formed the critical component of the region’s economic activity. As miners and merchants scrambled to lay claim to the riches found in the lowland Pacific littoral, African slaves flowed in from the Atlantic and circum-Caribbean, their numbers quickly eclipsing those born in the New World. In all, Popayán took in some 9,400 slave laborers between 1680 and 1800, receiving an average of 9.4 percent of all who entered Cartagean between 1698 and 1757 (See Table 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Asiento</th>
<th>Sales in Cartagena</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Sales in Popayán</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Cacheu (Port.)</td>
<td>2,538</td>
<td>1699-1703</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703-1713</td>
<td>Guinea (French)</td>
<td>4,251</td>
<td>1704-1715</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715-1718</td>
<td>South Sea Co. I.</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>1716-1720</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1722-1727</td>
<td>South Sea Co. II.</td>
<td>3,949</td>
<td>1722-1728</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730-1736</td>
<td>South Sea Co. III.</td>
<td>4,919</td>
<td>1730-1738</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1746-1757</td>
<td>Mayort-Noriega</td>
<td>12,957</td>
<td>1746-1757</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>30,044</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,827</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1
Percentage of Cartagena slaves sold in Popayán
Source: Colmenares, *Historia económica y social*, p. 34.

Facilitating this process were a number of local and regional factors (individual slave traders) that were connected to slave trading networks within the Atlantic and circum-Caribbean. Individuals, such as
Captain don Matheo del Masso, supplied miners and would-be mine owners’ seemingly insatiable desires for African captives. Responding to local demands, on January 18, 1700, Masso appeared before Popayán’s notary to certify the legality of some fifty-nine enslaved Africans, whom he had purchased from Captain don Gaspar de Adrade, treasurer and administrator general of the Americas by the *Royal Guinea Company*, stationed in Cartagena. Masso’s group of men, women, and children (one small child, and one infant) was comprised principally of individuals from West Africa’s Gold Coast including: twenty-two adult female *castas Ardas* (one listed as *casta Mina*), and thirty-seven men *negros barones*, all between the ages of twenty-five and thirty.

Masso wasted little time dispersing these slaves. Immediately following this registration, he sold two of these Africans to Captain don Diego Ignacio de Aguinaq (*alcalde y vecino encomendero of Popayán*) for 1,010 patacones. And just nine days later, on January 27, 1700, Masso sold fourteen of the Africans to Joseph Veltran de Carzedo (*vesino de Popayán*), along with six more to Christobal de Mosquera Figueroa for 10,100 patacones, or 505 patacones per slave. Supply seemed barely able to keep pace with local and regional demands.

Later that year, a local factor—don Juan Damian de la Torre—also purchased 65 African captives from Captain don Gaspar de Adrade. Describing them with the typical disclaimer—bags of bones whose souls lay within their mouths—de la Torre dispersed them quickly through a series of sales. Usually a passing legal reference, in this instance it was accompanied by a reference to several slaves who lay dying.

252 ACC. Protocolos, NP. Tomo 19, folios 17-19v, 28-29, and 77-78.

253 While they had arrived in Cartagena de Indias in the year 1698, it was not until 1700 that they made their way into the *Gobernación de Popayán* through the river port of Honda. This seems odd even when allowing for time spent in Cartagena and travel to Popayán. Even when one considers that river travel was suspended for approximately five months during the rainy season (April-May; September - November), eighteen months seems well outside of the typical time frame of six to nine months for slave laborers arriving into the region. David L. Chandler, “Health and Slavery: A Study of Health Conditions in the Viceroyalty of New Granada and its Associated Slave Trade, 1600-1810,” (Ph.D., dissertation, History, Tulane University, 1972), 48-95.

254 The complete Spanish phrase is: *como huesos en costal y alma en boca*. One also finds the phrase *por huesos en costal*, or, as in this instance, simply *casi muriendo*. Normally, however, the latter did not constitute a disclaimer such as those found in a typical sales transactions, but was phrase found typically in registries of new arrivals. See Bowser’s *African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 84 who credits Fernando Ortiz for making sense of the term in Spanish. See also Kris E. Lane, *Quito 1599*, p. 65, and note #22 on page 244. A full explanation of measurements and terms such as *piesas de Indias, piesas de negros, pesos, patacones, ect* will be found in the introduction with a glossary following at the end of the document.

110
(algunos casi murriendo). Apparently, the eighteenth-century practice of “seasoning” or allowing slaves a bit of rest and rehabilitation in the Caribbean before moving on to Cartagena or Porto Bello had done little good for these slaves.²⁵⁵ Had de la Torre fallen victim to the notorious camouflaging techniques employed to disguise the ill conditions of disease ridden, emaciated dying souls?²⁵⁶ Both were likely scenarios that often resulted in significant losses for slave traders. For his part, de la Torre would be forced to adjust the final price, calculating the sale for sixty-three captives rather than sixty-five.²⁵⁷ But if de la Torre was forced to suffer financial losses from their death, his troubles paled in comparison to the men, women, and children who had suffered the challenges of that harrowing transatlantic journey.

In addition to large-scale individual traders like Masso and de la Torre itinerant merchants, miners and small-scale traders also supplied Popayán’s slave market. During the late seventeenth century, Popayán had become the slave trading center of Quito’s northern frontier. Yet it was during the early-to-mid eighteenth century when this reality became even more apparent. Hérman Colmenares noted, for example, that, “between 1694 and 1748 the factors of asientos sold sixty-one licenses to various merchants who passed through the town of Popayán. These equaled the sale of some 4,000 slaves, fifty-six percent of them sold in Popayán.”²⁵⁸ Moreover, between 1698 and 1736, at the height of the trade, these licenses represented twenty-two percent of all slaves entering Cartagena.


²⁵⁷He discounted the group by the price of two slaves or three piesas de indias.

²⁵⁸Colmenares, Historia econômica y social,
Miners, merchants, and small-scale traders were not the only players in Popayán’s slave market. Analyzing sales between 1731 and 1735 (288 transactions with 840 captives), Colmenares found that,

Thirteen miners had purchased 29.4 percent of the slaves (or 247); 43 clerics purchased 11.4 percent (96 captives); five religious orders—Santo Domingo, the Convent of the Sisters of Encarnación, the Colegio of the Society of Jesus in Popayán and Ibarra, and the Covent of La Merced in Cali—combined to purchase 16.3 percent (137 captives); while 18 merchants combined to purchase six percent (or 50 captives); with 23 local property owners (vesinos) purchased yet another 50 captives. The remaining 31 percent were divided among smaller groupings to landholders, functionaries and common property holders. 259

In short, slavery was pervasive and held a considerable impact upon local society. The master-slave relationship was the social exemplar, and slaves were central to the region’s productive process. Indeed slaves and slavery formed a critical quadrant of this society, achieving a level of importance that was unparalleled throughout the Audiencia, except for the port city of Guayaquil.

This chapter is about the lives of those slave men, women and children who were sold in Popayán’s marketplace while before going to the goldfields of Barbacoas. It is about their everyday experiences, their personal struggles, and historical processes that shaped colonial life—human struggles, markets, and the functioning of local social milieu. More specifically, this chapter will show how slave life evolved within the changing context of Quito’s gold-producing frontier; it explores, ultimately, what it meant to be a slave in Barbacoas during the eighteenth century.

The chapter first situates slavery within the socio-political context of Barbacoas—the epicenter of Popayán’s gold boom—and that of the Audiencia during the principal decades of the eighteenth century. Throughout this period a lively contraband slave trading network operated, which extended Panama to Barbacoas through that circuitous route that darted along Colombia’s Pacific coastline. Complicating matters was Barbacoan elites’ failure to pay their mining taxes, sales taxes, and import taxes to officials in Popayán and Quito. By the early eighteenth century officials in Quito were working through a series of audits to stem such practices. As royal officials attempted to increase oversight and royal revenues from Barbacoas, they also turned their attention to policing the slave trade. Local elites fought back, resisting

259 Ibid, 41. Among the more prominent slaveholders one finds La Marquesa Dionisa Pérez Marique, daughter of the president of the audiencia, in whose death the slaves passed to the Society of Jesus. Don Christóbal de Mosquera Figueroa, who held at least 45 slaves; don Francisco José de Arboleda, who held 42; don Pedro de Valencia held 28; and don Fernando Baca de Ortega, holding 20. Ibid.
new efforts oversight and taxation. The civil and criminal cases that emerged from these regional struggles open a window into the socioeconomic position of slaves and slavery in coastal New Granda and Quito, demonstrating both slaves’ economic importance and the socio-political context of slave life in Barbacoas. They illustrate, moreover, that making commodities of people was as much about physical acts of possession; “handling,” branding, and reading (examining) black bodies were each as important the commoditization of blacks as the ultimate act of sale. After exploring the economic and geopolitical implications of contraband slave trading, the chapter shifts to examine the context of slave communities and the struggles between mine owner and slave laborers over freedom and autonomy. These struggles, seen most vividly through the murder case of a runaway slave, highlight the context that slaves lived and worked within, highlighting the real challenges that led many mine owners to form arrangements with slaves over freedom that they never intended to honor. Freedom was expected, and slave life was very much about acquiring it. In the midst of all of these struggles, the slave population did experience natural growth. Moving beyond the theme of regional struggles to an exploration of the variables of age, gender, and ethnic origin, the final sections of this chapter provide a composite of the region’s mining communities, offering some suggestive insights about their stability and growth over time, and the demographic implications for ethnogenesis. Being a slave in Barbacoas meant living in a context laden with fierce, bloody struggles for freedom and increased autonomy. But beyond the purview of the master, though in the context of these bloody struggles, a diverse population of Africans and Afro-Creoles formed relationships and raised children, forging communities that must have been the result of ethnogenic processes.

**Transitional Decades**

In the year 1702, don Francisco Arboleda Salazar sold the water rights, tools and seventeen slave laborers associated with the “minas de Guitarraco” (within the region of Pasto). The cuadrilla

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260 Mining rights of various forms were predicated upon several complicated and undependable claim-making processes. Hard-rock claims were measured in depth as opposed to surface. Placer claims, on the other hand, sought to cover the area of stream gravels, and could extend up to three or four leagues (16 miles) in length. In this scenario, miners would obtain the rights to work the gravels within 80 square varas to the side of the bed. The constitution of a
(mining gang) included: ten men, whose average age was thirty-five and one-half years, four women, whose ages averaged fifty-two, and three children (one boy of seven years, and two girls, four- and two-years-old, respectively). All but three were Afro-creoles. Given the ages of the three ethnic Africans—Diego Luango (thirty-five years), Maria Luango (thirty-six years), and Sebastian de casta Arara (forty-five years)—one can assume that they had been in the Americas anywhere from three to seven years. Thus, it is likely that they were proficient in the Spanish language and Spanish socio-cultural mores in general.

No doubt, Salazar was trading up, as the enslaved women present were beginning to move beyond their reproductive years; the men were far from young lads themselves. Nevertheless, an up-start like Phelipe Lopez (lacking the then customary title of ‘don,’ Lopez must have lacked elite status) probably viewed the acquisition of this gang as a great deal. He would pay a hefty price, however, as the bill totaled 6,500 patacones de ocho reales, and like most cuadrillas, the value was sure to be found primarily in the labor. While the writ of sale does not provide a detailed valuation of each “instrument” (as tools and slaves were often referred in the slave trading parlance of the day), it is likely that the enslaved adults carried an average value of 400 patacones, with the children fetching no more than a total of 230 pesos, leaving approximately 500 pesos for the water rights and tools. Given the high costs associated with staffing and

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261 Underscoring the role that Popayán’s religious community played in the dual enterprises of slaving and mining, Arboleda de Salazar noted that he purchased the mining gang from doña Sebastiana de Santa Ana, who professed Pasto’s Concepción convent. ACC. Protocolos, PN; Tomo 20; 10 de septiembre 1702, folios 180v-181v.

262 A few more children would not be impossible, however. Andrea Thobar and Juliana Criolla were both 38 years old, and Maria Luango was only 36. One wonders, however, if all three of these women had given birth to children, as two of the children (Joseph and Manuela referred to as “hijo de Vernalillo and hija del mismo,” were noted to belong to their father—Vernalillo. The other young toddler, Maria of two years, lacked any reference to parents. And the sole parental reference for young Joseph of sixteen years, was his father Agustin Espinosa of 38 years. Apparently, none of these individuals were married, as the wives are usually indicated as such. See. ACC. Protocolos, PN; Tomo 20; 10 de septiembre 1702, folios 180v-181v.

263 Lane cites a similar exchange occurring in Barbacoas in 1670, wherein a Portuguese “hidalgo” gentleman purchased a mine comprising twenty-eight slaves, several tools, water rights, plantain groves, and other corresponding items for 9,000 pesos. Underscoring the challenges of managing such an enterprise and turn a profit, Lane notes that within six years this would-be elite had fallen behind in his payments. See. Kris E. Lane, “The Transition from
maintaining cuadrillas, it is no small wonder why large mining gangs (greater than twenty five individuals) remained the preserve of the wealthiest of mine owners through mid-century.

The early years of the century were marked by myriad transitions in Barbacoas. Despite increased access to the region’s mineral riches, gold outputs were low. During the 1680s outputs had ranged from 4,400 to 109,060 in 1684, averaging 53,000 castellanos per annum between 1680 and 1691. By the turn of the century, however, Barbacoas had fallen into a period of decline, and would not even approach the production of 30,000 pesos until mid-century. These had been transitional years, indeed.

Although African captives continued to enter the region in unprecedented numbers during the first half of the eighteenth century, many cuadrillas continued to resemble those of that had typified seventeenth-century labor organization. As discussed in chapter one, during the previous century, mine owners usually staffed cuadrillas with enslaved and free people of African descent, Amerindian day laborers, and a declining population of *encomienda* charges. By the 1717 census of all gold mines within the Barbacoas—Raposo corridor, could still have upwards of 250 free wage laborers of all racial stripes, compared to 530 slave laborers. A 1709 *prorrata* (advance payment of the imposed mining tax) from Santa Bárbara de la Isla del Gallo revealed that twenty-two of the seventy-two laborers were not slaves, but “confidantes” of the slaveholder. Half of these worked as *playadores* (self employed stream panners). As these examples illustrate, vestiges of the old regime continued to linger as mine owners struggled to devise the most efficient method of wealth accumulation. But while Amerindians and the *encomienda*...
remained a part of the equation in the short run, both were starting to fade into backdrop of the region’s socioeconomic landscape.\textsuperscript{268} Yet if some mine owners were forced to staff their gangs with a mixture of laborers, enslaved blacks, be they owned or leased, clearly had become the preferred labor hands.\textsuperscript{269}

Slavery was already vital to the region’s economy, and a vibrant slave trade into the region, both legal and clandestine, promised that as demand was high, slave laborers would be available.

**Marking Bodies, Trafficking Souls: Contraband Slave Trading and Regional Geopolitics**

It is difficult, of course, to know how many slave traders circumvented royal checkpoints and their corresponding tolls. By its very nature, the contraband trade remained hidden, making it difficult for historians to produce narratives describing this process. We do know, however, that Panamá had long been a conduit for illegal trading activity, both unauthorized trade between the Spanish American colonies, and

\begin{quote}
manage their holdings. While slaves were, indeed, present, most of the work gangs featured leased slaves, indigenous laborers, and free blacks. Lane reports that many of these small-time mine owners were heavily leveraged, and often fell into default on the mortgages of the mines. See Kris E. Lane, “Mining the Margins: Precious Metals Extraction and Forced Labor Regimes in the Audiencia of Quito, 1534-1821, volume II,” (PhD dissertation, History, University of Minnesota, 1996), 334-335.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{268} Here, I am speaking largely in economic terms; that is, African-descended workers (enslaved and free) were coming to displace Amerindians throughout the mining settlements of Barbacoas just as they had in the north-central Cauca Valley. The death knell to Amerindian participation in the mining regime came in 1700 when the Audiencia outlawed for good encomenderos’ and mine owners’ right to employ them in the “productive process” of gold extraction. Nevertheless, Americans were by no means absent, ongoing encomienda abuses notwithstanding. Although the indigenous peoples of the region had become a minority, those who remained, along with those who had passed on, had weaved the socio-cultural fabric of the region. Not only were they central to the ongoing struggle for encomienda (a battled they waged effectively in the courts), they possessed the “intellectual property” of “indigenous magic,” derived largely from their extensive knowledge of the region’s ecological systems and the medicinal properties found therein. Consequently, they operated with a considerable amount of cultural capital, functioning as intermediaries and cultural brokers within the district. For a cogent discussion of the connections between slaves and “indigenous magic” (brujeria), slavery more generally, and the struggle for the encomienda in Barbacoas at the turn of the eighteenth century see. Kris E. Lane, “Taming the Master: Brujeria, Slavery, and the Encomienda in Barbacoas at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century,” *Ethnohistory*, Volume 45, Issue 3 (Summer, 1998), 477-507. For a discussion of witchcraft as a “hegemonic force… based largely upon caste qualities…” see. Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Witchcraft, Caste, and Power in Colonial Mexico*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2003); for a more extensive discussion of the theoretical underpinnings of the idea of “Indian magic” as a “hegemonic social force” in contemporary Colombia see. Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wildman: A Study in Terror and Healing*, (1987); and for a discussion of slaves’ use of “diabolism” as a form of resistance in the Cauca valley see Taussig’s, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 41-46.

\textsuperscript{269} According to Lane, mine owners “complained bitterly of the un dependability of free wage workers, be they African-American, indigenous, or mixed.” Citing one mine owner who suggested that free laborers were much like “the changing of the weather… [going] out to work some days and not others,” Lane underscored the fact that mine owners preferred the slave paradigm. See. Lane, “From Encomienda to Slavery,” 90.
illegal exchanges with the British and the French.\textsuperscript{270} Although other goods and merchandise filled the cargoes of such shipments, ‘illegal slaves’ were, in fact, a signature feature of this market.\textsuperscript{271} Over the course of the eighteenth century, colonial authorities adjudicated many civil and criminal cases against slaveholders and slave traders for the charge of possessing and/or exchanging “esclavos de mala entrada”.

On September 10, 1710, the governor and the official judges of Popayán began to investigate don José Pérez de Vivero for allegedly “introducing clandestinely” eleven slave children (\textit{once negros muleques}). By the time the officials caught up to Vivero, he had already sold the slaves to José Sánchez. Like many such cases, officials had learned of these “illegal slaves” through an informant who noticed that they lacked the brands of the crown.

By 1711, officials were making great strides in prosecuting the matter against Vivero, finding seven of the slaves in the Chocó, and at least one in Buga. Ultimately, Vivero was fined 230 patacones for each of the seven slaves found in the Chocó, and 400 patacones for the child found in Buga.\textsuperscript{272} During that same period officials were hearing another case involving six slaves “de mala entrada” who were then working in the mines of Nóvita, near Popayán. Unfortunately, the extant record stops short of providing

\textsuperscript{270} According to historian Colin A. Palmer, the slave trade connecting the islands of Jamaica and Barbados to the Spanish ports of Cartagena and Porto Bello functioned in many ways as a cover for illegal trading activities between the nations. While Cartagena had been the primary trading slave trading port leading to South America, Porto Bello and Panama (notorious for its then centuries’ old contraband activity) came to rival Cartagena in the early years of the eighteenth century as English slave traders took adopted the trend of refreshing slaves in the Caribbean (principally in Jamaica and Barbados) before transshipping them directly to Porto Bello. During this period, Porto Bello also received ships directly from Africa. Palmer, \textit{Human Cargoes}, 136-137.

\textsuperscript{271} Apparently some slaves entered through the ports within the district of Barbacoas legally, as customs records note the arrival of captives not classified as “de mala entrada”. Historian Kris Lane found one such record as early as 1678, a contract to import bozales from Panamá to Barbacoas. There is also the citation of the Royal Guinea Company bringing five slaves—three men and two women—directly from Panamá into Playa de Amaral, a port town situated near Iscuandé in the district of Barbacoas. See Lane, “The Transition From Encomienda to Slavery,” 85, 93, note 32; and ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 2 (1716). A similar record emerges for the year 1788, documenting the entrance of 2,000 \textit{bozales de Panamá} into Barbacoas. See. ACC. Sig. 6041 {Col.—CIII—2h} Año 1788. This is interesting, however, given that Colmenares notes that few \textit{bozales} appear in the notary protocols of Popayán after 1780. Apparently, there were two processes running concurrently; as the mining camps of the Chocó declined during the 1780s, mine owners were moving south into the district of Barbacoas, thereby supplying any continuing demand in the region. In addition, the secondary and illegal, slave-trading network that operated between Panamá and Barbacoas continued in concert with other, legal market activity occurring between Panamá and Barbacoas.

\textsuperscript{272} ACC. Sig. 2758 (Col.—CI—22h), Popayán, 14 de julio – 10 de septiembre 1710, folios 1-12; ACC Sig. 2762 (Col.—CI—22h), 19 diciembre 1710 - 13 marzo 1711, folios 1-10.
Nevertheless, it is clear that many individuals, on both side of the law, were caught up in this process, and elites were at the heart of it.

In 1723 local officials in Popayán were on the trail of don Jacinto Mosquera y Figueroa, one of Popayán’s wealthiest slaveholders for employing African captives who lacked the crown’s “mark” (brand, esclavos sin marca) working in his mines located in the Chocó. Reviews of Mosquera’s holdings continued well into July of 1725, and included searches of his mines in Santa Bárbara. There, officials discovered “los negros de Chure…Bombas, Araras, and Minas,” ensconced in one of his holdings near the river Izcuandé. Despite Mosquera’s claims that he acquired the captives legally, officials found that since the slaves lacked the requisite brandings they could not have entered the Spanish provinces legally.

Popayán’s colonial records are replete with cases resembling that of Mosquera. One of the most interesting cases, and perhaps the one most illustrative of the extensive contraband network that ran along the Pacific coast of New Granada, first analyzed and partially edited by historian German de Granda, is that

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273 ACC. Sig. 2761 (Col.—CI—22h), Nóvita—Popayán, 6 de octubre – 11 de diciembre 1710, folios 1-10. There was a good deal of money to be had in prosecuting such cases; usually, officials confiscated, fined and auctioned their slaves. In addition, those who had sold the “illegal slaves” were often fined. In one case that reached officials in Bogotá (signaling the bureaucratic overlap within the Spanish north Andes at this time), the trafficker was fined 33 patacones for each slave introduced “de mala entrada”. In this case, the slaves had the “marks” of the of the South Sea Company, but lacked those of the Spanish Crown. ACC. Sig. 3104 (Col.—CI—22h), 31-x-1722.

274 ACC. Sig. 3124 (Col.—CII—2h) 21 de junio 1723 – 24 octubre 1724. Most of these cases were discovered when individuals tried to make good on the slaves—legalize them…or when someone related the fact that such slaves lacked the necessary brands to officials. This was the case with one slave named Antonio, who claimed that his master “Eduardo Bolton” from Jamaica (where he had a mother and siblings) had brought him to Cartagena con las tropes de Fernón y fue herido y preso en la acción de San Lázaro…se adjudicó a don Manuel Castrellón por 300 patacones…in Popayán. See. ACC. (Sig. 4173 (Col.—CII—6h), 6 de junio—18 de Julio 1748, folios 1-10).

275 ACC. Sig. 3144 (Col.—CII—2h), 11 de junio a 1 julio 1725, folios 1-3. See also. ACC. Sig. 4150 (Col.—CII—6h), which features the denunciation of an enslaved man named José Congo, who had been introduced illegally by his first master, Manuel Gozález, who was then deceased…González had purchased José from one Juan de Orejuela, and made an attempt to send him to Raposo with “una negra de Miguel Cortês,” to whom José was married. Fortunately for the couple, José was “deposited” in the home of Miguel Cortês while officials sought to resolve the case. Unfortunately for the modern scholar, like many such cases, the resolution for this case remains unavailable.

276 A similar case, adjudicated in Buga, against don Miguel Nagle Alvarez de Toledo, featured two female African captives (negras bozales), named, Petrona la Colarada y Poloni. The two were appraised at a value of 400 patacones each, giving officials license to auction them off for 710 patacones to doña Ana de Becerra. Don Miguel Nagel Alvarez de Toledo protested, insisting upon his right to the slaves, but officials found that they were in fact “contraband” given that they lacked the necessary marks indicating legally entry into the provinces. In this instance, officials were a bit lenient; the slaves would be returned to Toledo, if he paid doña Becerra the 710 patacones. ACC. Sig. 3319 (Col.—Jl—4cv), 7 de mayo 1721 – 4 de marzo de 1728, folios 1-46).
against don Miguel de los Reyes. On March 18, 1730, Reyes obtained clearance from officials in Panamá to transport goods (mostly clothing) to Isla del Gallo, Iscuandé, San Buenaventura, and the bocas de Chirambrí. After paying customs duties totaling 366 patacones and one real, Reyes proceeded in the preparations for his trip. Twelve days later, Joseph de Ochoa y Aría, a property holder of Popayán, declared before the royal scribe of Panamá that he had purchased fifty slaves from England’s South Sea Company. What officials did not know, however, was that forty of these souls belonged to don Miguel de los Reyes, and were the subjects of a series of sales pending throughout the district of Barbacoas. Although Reyes’s scheme had gone undetected thus far, a snare awaited him down the Pacific coast.

By September 18 of the same year, officials in the city of Santa Bárbara had apprehended Reyes and confiscated the twenty-three blacks who remained in his custody. Crestfallen, Reyes confessed that five slaves were in a mine, owned by don Gaspar de Estacio, located on the Juajuy River; at least three others could be found in a mine on the Timbiquí River. Although Reyes might have hoped that by cooperating with local officials he would receive mercy, it would soon become clear that don Joseph de la Guerra and don Bernardo de Araujo y Bueno, alcalde ordinario y juece oficial of Santa Bárbara, intended to prosecute this matter within the fullest extent of the law. Identifying and capturing the remaining contraband slaves would be their first order of business, both of which were matters that involved fundamentally the “reading” enslaved bodies and European markings of possession.

Arriving at the mine on the Juajuy River, Araujo and de la Guerra set out to inspect the brands of the slaves. Accordingly, they washed the slaves’ sores with vinegar, ostensibly to make “the marks they

277 See. German de Granda, “Una ruta maritima de contrabando de esclavos negros entre Panamá y Barbacoas durante el asiento Ingles,” Revista de Indias, núms. 143-144, (Madrid, 1976), pág. 123-147. Focusing upon the contraband trade between Barbacoas and Panamá, Granda based his analysis upon the first fourteen pages of this forty-nine-page document: ACC. Sig. 3607 (Col.—JI—2cr), 30 de marzo de 1730 – 23 de diciembre 1734, folios 1-49), transcribing critical portions of the central facts in the turn of events surround the capture of Reyes found in the first fourteen folios of the document, as those were the details that allowed him to reconstruct the clandestine trade route and the network of individuals who drove it. While Granda transcribed and edited critical portions of the aforementioned fourteen pages, the remaining thirty-five remain unedited and in their original form in the Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán, Colombia). Although of lesser concern to Granda, they contain important information regarding the contraband slaves in question, the local economy, and the region’s relationship with the Audiencia and its regional subsidiary—the Gobernación of Popayán.


279 Ibid, 127-128.
carried” more apparent. While one might assume that brandings would appear clear, reflecting the form of the iron that had burned the flesh of African captives, this was not always the case. People of African descent (although not all) often suffer from excessive keloids that can morph into indistinguishable scares, rather than the clearly recognizable insignia of the crown and/or licensed trading company. How vinegar helped render a brand more visible remains unclear. Perhaps it was used simply to clean scabbed and purulent-filled wounds, cleaning sores that were yet healing. In either case, in this instance it was the slaves themselves who cleared up the matter for Araujo and de la Guerra.

Shortly after the officials had begun their “inspection,” two slaves who had been absent upon their arrival returned to the area. Upon questioning, they explained that the marks they carried had been burned into their flesh on a place called Chiman, located outside the city of Panamá just prior to their departure. The evidence was mounting against Reyes. Officials were beginning to trace his steps and infiltrate his clandestine network. The two slaves continued in their role as informants, explaining that while in the city of Panamá, their handlers had kept them hidden in a very small house prior to their departure in the middle of the night with Reyes and crew. Not only did Araujo and de la Guerra learn that these slaves and several others had been branded, “with much fire” (“con much fuego”), on the beach of Chiman, they discovered from two other informants that Reyes had contracts to bring at least seventy slaves into the region.

As news of Reyes’s capture spread, individuals associated with his network began to abandon him; several fled Isla del Gallo, where they had awaited his arrival and the African captives he was to bring. Reyes’s network had been extensive, and included the mayor of Isla del Gallo, Ypólito de Pinada, who himself had contracted with Reyes to bring seventy slaves into the region, with full knowledge of their illegal status. Noting the corruption in Isla de Gallo, the skipper of the boat the Jesús, María y San José, Domingo López, said that Reyes had instructed him to drop the slaves off at Isla del Gallo because “no judges were there” (allí no había jueces). Bringing Reyes’s scheme into greater relief, an indigenous

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280 Ibid, 128.
281 Ibid.
282 Ibid, 128-129.
sailor from the *Jesús, María, y José* testified that they had extracted the slaves from Panama by moving them "*por el postigo de San Juan de Dios*." With these last details, officials then had more than enough evidence to prosecute Reyes. On May 4, 1731, don Bernardo de Araujo ordered the imprisonment of Reyes and the confiscation of all of his property, including thirty-four pounds, six “*castellanos and four tomines*” of gold that he had earned through his illicit commerce. The final step in the process was to appraise the slaves and calculate the corresponding the taxes that Reyes would have paid. The question before them then was, how much more, if any, Reyes would have to pay the *real caja*?

Officials, such as Araujo and de la Guerra, along with those in Quito and Santa Fé, had long been plagued by fraud of various forms. Going back to the late seventeenth century, the Audiencia of Quito suspected Popayán’s treasury of embezzlement. Problems surrounding the collection of the crown’s portion of gold mined in the region were endemic. Although the royal fifth (*quinto*) was administered inadequately throughout the colonial era, by the 1690s, remittances emerging from the Chocó and Barbacoas had fallen to all-time lows. By and large, clandestine gold fell into a network that featured arrangements between masters and slaves, mine owners and freelancers, and those who transported the untaxed bullion for a commission (*porción*).

In an attempt to provide greater oversight and increased compliance, the Audiencia dispatched several judges to the region. Those living in the region, however, were not receptive to the coming investigations or the corresponding attempts to siphon off much-needed funds. Despite their lack of a warm welcome, however, royal judges entered the region at their own peril. Several of these judges

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283 Granda makes it clear that this was a little patrolled area within the province of Darién, located along Panama’s Pacific coast. I am not sure, however, if “el postigo” is meant to refer to an inlet, or an actual doorway, or gate. Ibid, 130, see especially note #19. Slaves were also introduced illegally through the Altrato River that flowed into the heart of the Chocó and the northern-most portions of the Gobernación of Popayán. In 1705, for example, officials were investigating Vazquez León for having introduced five slave men and three women to mines in Raposo by way of the Río Altrato. In this case officials confiscated them and placed them in the custody of Carlos Camacho, ironically, a miner of Raposo, while and investigation took place. Sec. ACC. Sig. 2657 (Col.--JI--3cv), 4 septiembre 1705, folios 1-15.

284 Lane, “Mining the Margins” I, 129.

285 Ibid., 149-150.

286 Ibid, 186.
disappeared mysteriously; others were murdered.²⁸⁷ Officials in Quito had a serious problem on their hands, chiefly a rapidly declining economy, a reality that was exacerbated by their inability to collect of the royal fifth with any real consistency. Complicating this picture further was the Audiencia’s failure to secure sales taxes exchanged within one of the kingdom’s most prosperous zones.

In addition to declining mining tax remittances, Barbacoas had long been charged with failure to submit sales taxes (alcabala) and import tariffs (almorjarifazgos).²⁸⁸ The regional economy was predicated upon ad hoc arrangements characterized largely by debt, and local exchange networks that lay hidden from the purview of tax officials dispatched from Quito. Moreover, the proliferation of commercial activity between the coastal communities of Panamá, Barbacoas, and Guayaquil, further undercut highland oversight and royal profits. As such realities continued to frustrate the efforts of officials residing in Quito and Bogotá, rising defense concerns seemed to complicate matters further for everyone.

During the 1680s and 1690s, English and French pirates stepped up their presence in the Spanish South Sea, lurching along the Barbacoan coast near Isla Gorgona, and stopping on occasion at Isla del Gallo. While reports of numerous attacks were well known, historian Kris Lane confirmed only two small attacks at Tumaco, one in 1680 and another in 1684, suggesting that most were merely small skirmishes.²⁸⁹ Nevertheless, if left unchecked, small skirmishes could lead to both significant loses for local property holders and added frustration for colonial authorities. Still, the threat of piracy and foreign encroachment was, by all accounts, real. In 1687, for example, Dutch pirates sacked and burned the coastal city of Guayaquil, leaving little doubt regarding the need for additional defenses, especially for those living along

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Not only did these realities help form slavery’s context, as we have seen, slaves were often mere pawns in this processes. Officials were relentless, demanding that miners who failed to pay sales taxes hand over submit slaves for auction and cancellation of the outstanding debts. In at least one instance, such mayhem prevented a slave from enjoying his freedom. When mine owner, Pedro de Santa Cruz failed to pay his alcabalas, the treasurer, Bernardino Pérez de Ubillus apprehended one of Santa Cruz’s former slaves and auctioned him summarily. Unfortunately for Christóbal Ruiz, Santa Cruz had purchased him with credit some years earlier, and although “freeing” Ruiz, Cruz failed to cancel the debt with the previous owner. Ibid,178.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 184-197.
the coast. Such challenges to Spanish sovereignty would continue, thereby forming the context of colonial commerce, governance, and servitude.

In 1720, while settling her deceased husband’s estate, doña Feliciana de la Torre y Haro, then resident of Guayaquil, claimed that in 1709 the British had robbed the family home in Barbacoas of 300 pesos plus other valuables. Entering the family’s residence on the beach of San Joseph, “the enemy, the British” ransacked their home, taking a number of valuables and leaving them ‘naked’ (desnudos). While the couple had filed a claim regarding this event, which, according to señora Torre, was public and notorious (publico y notorio), eleven years had passed without the family receiving repayment for their loss. Señora de la Torre was now miles away from Barbacoas, and concerned herself mostly, it seems, with the goal of receiving all that she could from her husband’s estate for herself and her daughter. Consequently, her claim may have overstated the extent of British encroachment and regional defense needs. Ultimately, however, the family’s claim provides a glimpse of coastal commerce, regional geopolitics, and the discursive tactics deployed by elites appearing before royal and municipal authorities. Defense had become the rationale used by all who sought the region’s bullion, and thus represented yet another fault line dividing coastal elites and royal authorities located in the highlands of Quito and Bogóta. Barbacoans argued that attacks and the threat of further foreign encroachment were great enough to warrant war-tax credit. Nevertheless, officials, prompted in part by the strain of mounting defense costs and associated public works projects (forts, garrisons, etc.), launched a campaign against miners and merchants who sought to evade taxation through a series of visitas (royal audits). But try as

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200 Note the caveat provided by Lane concerning defense initiatives along the Pacific coast. Cite also Phelan, Lane Dissertation, Piracy book, and the small book on the 1687 attack on Guayaquil.

291 The 300 pesos were to be viewed as credit towards her husband’s estate, and used, thereby, to offset any outstanding debts. Archivo Histórico del Guayas, EP/J 798 (Año 1720) “Ynventories de los bienes quedados por fin, y muerte de don Francisco del Haro.” Amid the real property left by don Haro were the following slave laborers: Phelipe de casta Chala (30 years), Pedro de casta Congo (30 years), Attancio de casta Arara (30 years), Diego de casta Chala (28 years), Francisco casta Congo (30 years), Juan de casta Chala (25 years), Ignacio Criollo (20 years), Christobal de casta Chala (27 years), Francisco Xavier de casta Lucumi (30 years), Joseph de casta Congo (30 years), Maria de casta Mina (50 years), Manuel (son of Joseph, 12 years), Theresa de casta Lucumi (30 years). Of the three other enslaved blacks—una negra nombrada Maria Criolla con una mulatilla su hija nombrada Margaritta, doña de la Torre related that in an oral communication between the two her husband had declared them to belong to her. Ibid.
they would to penetrate this frontier, their efforts would be riddled with difficulty and death. Conflicting views regarding the visitas, emerging wars across the Atlantic, increased piracy, worsening economic challenges, and the deep indebtedness of Barbacoan miners due to low levels of gold production, all converged to exacerbate the existing tensions between local elites and highland officials. Thus, the concluding events of the Reyes saga, discussed earlier, came as no surprise.

In 1730, as don Bernardo de Araujo and Joseph de la Guerra continued their search for the remaining members of Miguel de los Reyes’s clandestine crew, they sought to enter the mines at Timbiquí. There, they encountered anything but a warm reception. While traveling up the Timbiquí river, de la Guerra and don Agustín de Germendi, a royal official, encountered resistance from three miners: el maestro, don Manuel de Erazo a local priest, José Ruiz Bazán, and his mine administrator (su minero), Captain Antonio Guerrero. According to de la Guerra and don Agustín de Germendi, a royal official, when they attempted to enter the mines at Timiquí, these three men prevented them from entering the mine, which belonged to presibítero Erazo. Encountering the priest, he yelled, “long live the King of Spain, death to bad government (viva el Rey de España [y] muera el mal gobierno).” Determined to execute their duties and apprehend the contraband slaves, the officials forged ahead. As they continued up river, at the command of the priest, the three men captured the canoe, forcing the tripulantes a essharse al agua para salvarse. Unlike some of their predecessors, Araujo and de la Guerra escaped with their lives. Relentless in their efforts, they then turned their attention to prosecuting their assailants.

The delicate balance of power that characterized Barbacoan geopolitics was evident to all involved. Justice and compliance with royal authority were both conditional and contested matters. As

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292 Both Kris Lane and historian Peter Marzahl tell us that half the Barbacoan miners were jailed at the mines, while a sizable number of slaves were implicated in the murders of the these government officials. See Lane, “Mining the Margins,” I, 186-189; and Peter Marzahl, Town in the Empire, 133-34.

293 Lane, “Mining the Margins” I, 184-197.

294 ACC. Sig. 3607 (Col.—JI—2cr), 30 de marzo de 1730 – 23 de diciembre 1734, folios 15-49. Subsequent documents suggest that don Miguel de los Reyes was not going down without a fight, as he is found requesting copies of the case against him in order to petition officials in Popayán. What happens beyond these maneuvers escapes us for the moment. For these legal actions see. ACC. Sig. 3530 (Col. CII—2h), 14 septiembre 1734, folios 1-9; and ACC. Sig. 3531 (Col.—C II—2h), 17 noviembre 1734, folios1-36.

295 ACC. Sig. 3607 (Col.—JI—2cr), 30 de marzo de 1730 – 23 de diciembre 1734, folios 15-49.
other scholars have shown, in frontier societies justice could often take the form of vigilante action, emerging as it did from within a context of contestation and exchange.\textsuperscript{296} In the margins, even priests and colonial officials operated as vigilantes, or at least acted according to the situation. Indeed, the location of judicial authority vis-à-vis mining camps seems to have escalated efforts to circumvent colonial protocols. Regional boundaries and barriers were at once permeable and impenetrable, accessible to those who ‘belonged’ in the region, and yet closed off to those who apparently did not. In perhaps some small way, the margins had become the center. At the very least, regional concerns now threatened to undermine highland efforts to establish royal hegemony within the region. Shifting the tide in the favor of the colonial state would depend largely upon officials’ ability to regulate the acquisition slave labor.

Interestingly, at the precise moment when the rest of Spanish America was moving into the mid-colonial period, Barbacoas was in the midst of a rather familiar, immediate post-conquest process, a process that mirrored late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century realities far more than those of the eighteenth century. After all, the district of Barbacoas was, for the most part, a newly conquered region, one where state hegemony had hardly been consolidated. Fundamental to the colonial regime and its corresponding mercantilist project was the regulation of trade and the ability to levy taxes. Both of these matters required the sustained presence of governmental authority. Nevertheless, the Barbacoan economy remained sufficiently hidden from royal oversight and management. And with a very limited number of Amerindians to provide local elites with surplus production and labor, African slave laborers were quickly becoming the lifeblood of the region, both as a source of labor and as a commodity. Regulating the trade in black bodies was at once an extension of state efforts to control regional commerce, and, therefore, a means to establishing hegemony in the region.

Compounding slaveholders’ struggles with state authorities was their endless quest for the mastery of slave laborers. As slave laborers escaped to outlying maroon settlements, purchased their freedom, and engaged in personal struggles with local citizens (both elites and subordinated peoples), they helped to create a society where gold production was tied directly to the prospect of freedom. Slave resistance, the

increasing availability of huge sums of gold, and the law placed masters in a precarious position vis-à-vis black slavery and black freedom in eighteenth-century Barbacoas. Mine owners’ desires for gold, and the limited utility of violent coercion seen through the increased frequency of slave flight forced masters to hold out the troupe of freedom to induce slave laborers to remain at mining sites and produce gold. Nevertheless, because mine owners were seeking perpetual slave laborers, not temporary laborers or a large pool of itinerant panners, they often resisted the obvious limits of bondage and the increasing availability of freedom through self-purchase and flight, dealing harshly with their bondsmen and women. In either case, master authority was neither secure, nor absolute. Ongoing struggles for freedom and mastery shaped the region and the context of bondage in mines. These were violent, bloody struggles that seemed to permeate and define life in the region.

To Kill A Slave: Flight, Freedom, and the Context of Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Barbacoas

In 1727, after escaping a mining settlement on the Miscay River, Luis Banegas approached the ranch house of doña Josepha de la Rosa, and requested some to purchase some cheese. Although doña Josepha and her largely indigenous staff had already pegged Banegas as a runaway slave, she attempted to placate the fugitive. Initially it must have seemed that both would benefit. Banegas would get the cheese he desired, and doña Josepha would earn some extra cash. But things quickly went wrong for Banegas and doña Josepha. Taking issue with the price of the cheese, Banegas protested, and by all accounts, complained bitterly, beginning an argument that would soon turn deadly.

Eating his lunch nearby was one of doña Josepha’s several indigenous workers, Melchor Panazo. According to his observations, the argument was escalating quickly. And soon it became too much for him to stand idly by as Banegas insulted this elite woman with expletives. Perhaps it was the fact that Banegas was heard uttering “many blasphemies against the holy name of God and his blessed mother” that made Melchor uneasy. Perhaps it was the machete Banegas carried, or his presence in general. In either case,

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297 ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 2, Exp. 26-x-1727.

298 Ibid., folios 1-5v.
Melchor grew restless, and decided to act. Taking a blunt wooden object in his hand ("un barejon"), Melchor struck the fugitive slave across the eye, bathing Banegas’s face in blood (lo baño [de] sangre). Despite his frustrations, a bleeding eye, and, no doubt, extreme pain, Banegas fought back, throwing many punches, and slamming Melchor to the floor. In short order, the two men found themselves in a wrestling match that was beginning to take a deadly turn. By his own admission, Melchor was starting to loose the fight. Now, Banegas was wielding the machete he carried at his side. At this point doña Jospha reentered the brawl, and began to strike Banegas repeatedly about the body, face and head with a large wooden object, subduing Banegas and dislodging the machete from his hand.\(^{299}\)

Amazingly, Banegas’s was still alive. Instructing an indigenous domestic servant to carry her two children to the house of don Miguel Solarte, doña Josepha and Melchor planned for the fugitive’s care and his return to this master. Or, so they would have the courts to believe. According to them, following the fight they cared for Banegas for several days, sending notice to his owner, and then transporting him to the neighboring town of Chapa to receive medical attention, all at the expense of doña Josepha. But despite their best efforts to care for Banegas he died, according to them, while in the care of the local physician. Now his owner, doña THEREASA ALFONSA DE LARIA Y VALESCO, was suing doña Josepha for Banegas’s value of 250 pesos plus the cost of travel to Chapa.

The precise number of times that doña Josepha and Melchor had struck Banegas remains a mystery. Melchor claimed that the only serious blow he had dealt Banegas was the one to his eye. Though bloody, he argued, the wound was not fatal. In either case, deadly or not, violence was his only recourse if he was to defend doña Josepha from the grave danger that Banegas represented. But while Melchor claimed with certainty that he had struck Banegas with only one potentially fatal blow, doña Josepha was much more circumspect and uncertain, even as she acknowledged that she hit Banegas in the head and hand. Still, to her mind, she had no choice; Banegas had a machete and was reaching for it at the very

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\(^{299}\) Ibid., folios 5v-16.
moment when she began striking him. In short, it had not been their intention to kill Banegas, yet violence was necessary and ultimately instrumental in saving lives, namely doña Josepha’s two young children.\textsuperscript{300}

Banegas’s mistress, doña Alfonza de Lorria y Velasco, had a different interpretation of the events leading up to his death, however. For her part, Banegas had done little to provoke the brutal attack that she believed led to his death. To doña Alfonza, it seemed reasonable that Banegas would negotiate the price of the cheese. Being a fierce negotiator was no reason to kill a slave, not even an incorrigible maroon. Moreover, Melchor had attacked Banegas before he had an opportunity to leave the Velasco estate. Indeed, as she argued, it was possible that Banegas would have decided to leave if Melchor had not attacked him, leaving him with three fatal blows, one directly in his forehead just above his eyebrows, one near the temples, and the other over the head. But above all, property rights emerged as her best argument for compensation for the fallen slave captain.\textsuperscript{301}

The response of the defense came as no surprise. doña Josepha and Melchor worked to draw the court’s attention to the reputation and character of Luis Banegas. According to Melchor, while carrying the slave captain to the town of Chapa for medical attention, he encountered an Indian who insisted that Banegas was the same maroon who had robbed him in the road and threatened to rape his wife. Apparently, this Indian had been looking for Banegas along with several others, and now begged of Melchor, “allow me to kill this thief who robbed me and stated that he should rape my wife (deje me mata a este ladron, me ha robado, dizieendole…que quiesiete forsar a mi mugger).” Melchor would have the court believe that an entire community wanted the injured slave dead. And yet even after his own close call, he choose to spare Banegas’s life, ensuring him safe passage to the town of Chapa by paying a mulato carrier.

Witnesses for the plaintiffs, however, emphasized just how close to death Banegas was as he lay in the town of Chapa. Over and over, witnesses described Banegas as having wounds to the face and head, underscoring his inability to eat or sit upright. All stated that they knew or had heard that Banegas died

\textsuperscript{300} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{301} Ibid., folios 16v-23.
within five days of arriving in the town. Tomás Mancipía, a free *pardo*, testified that he witnessed the doctor call Banegas by his name three times without any physical response from the fallen slave laborer. While he knew nothing of the alleged struggle for cheese, he related that it was notorious amongst the local Amerindians. Underscoring the extent of Amerindian attention to this matter and the communal interaction they had with local blacks, Marcos, the ladino (*ladino en la lengua Castellana*) chanter from the town of Piqua, testified that he had learned of the incident from a black man named Panasco.\(^\text{302}\)

Nevertheless, the defense continued their efforts to depict Banegas as a marauding robber and rapist who had terrorized the region for far too long. Mathías Rodriguez, who worked as the administrator of a nearby mining settlement owned by don Xavier de Mosquera, offered an interesting twist to the slave’s life history and the way he arrived at the post of captain general. Apparently, years earlier doña Theresa’s husband, don Germundí decided that he would sell four slave laborers in the town of Barbacoas. Among them was the now infamous Luís Banegas. While traveling from Miscay to Barbacoas with the group two of the four, Banegas and another, escaped. Apprehending the fugitives, don Germundí held them captive at a site near the mines. There he promised to make Banegas captain general of the *cuadrilla* if he would remain at the site. Yet, according the defense, Banegas was such an incorrigible maroon that even the privileged position of captain general could not rehabilitate his penchant for flight and rebellion. Indeed, this arrangement was short lived, as Banegas soon “took the tradition” of escaping the settlement, getting caught, and then fleeing again.\(^\text{303}\)

For don Miguel de Torrez, husband of doña Josepha, Banegas was a wanted man who deserved death. To his mind, his wife and Melchor were justified under the guise of self-defense even if the golpes led to Banegas death. The rebel slave was wielding a machete, and such a threat had to be met with the force that only a blunt object offered. Indeed, to his mind, it was critical that the court recognize the fact that Banegas was terrorizing the area, robbing and killing one Indian while attempting to rape another. Banegas’s reputation as an attacker and “violator” of women was confirmed in the fact that he possessed

\^\text{302} Ibid., 20v-23.

\^\text{303} Ibid., 37v.
the audacity to arrived at his house, which, he pointed out, was situated in a remote and somewhat deserted location. He shuddered at the thought of what might have happened to his “defenseless” wife, if Melchor had failed to act so decisively. Indeed, killing a notorious robber and rapist was not only just it was necessary to protect his wife’s honor.\textsuperscript{304}

Other witnesses emphasized the notion that Banegas was a regional threat. According to Francisco Solarte, Banegas had spent time in the maroon communities of Patía, San Juan, and “other areas”. Worse still, he had learned from an Indian named El Paezito that Banegas had murdered an indigenous woman in the “mountain of San Juan,” and raped El Paezito’s wife. For this, he and other Indians wanted Banegas dead. At least one witness, Miguel de Thorrez, insisted that he could confirm that Banegas had worked as highway robber, primarily in the region surrounding the mines of Chisquío.\textsuperscript{305}

For María Muguite (\textit{India natural del pueblo de Tambo, ladina en la lingua Castellana}) the threat that Banegas posed to the region was quite real. Although she was unsure as to how long Banegas had been a slave, two years earlier she had gone to the mines of Nay with Fray Antonio Bentaneur. While there, she encountered Banegas working in the mines. Though a brief and uneventful encounter a more dramatic exchanged followed. Shortly thereafter, Maria, her husband Sevastian Achitni (\textit{Indio natural del pueblo de Guanacas, ladino en la lingua Castellana}), and her niece encountered Banegas outside of the mines as he searched for the bridge above the San Juan River. According to María, Banegas explained to them that an Indian wished to kill him because he had killed an Indian woman and her daughter in self-defense. Bold in his telling of the events, Maria explained that Banegas insisted that he would have killed the Indian man who accompanied the mother and daughter if the had not chosen to run away. Now Banegas was working his way through the region as a robber in search of his next prey.\textsuperscript{306}

Things took a turn for the worse when María and Sevastian told Banegas that they could not help him find his way to the home of “some whites” (\textit{los blancos}). Sequestering them at machete point, he

\textsuperscript{304} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{305} Ibid., 35.

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid., 37-41.
forced them into a small shack, where he kept them throughout the night, “saying many blasphemies against god and his saints, persuading [them] to abandon their holy faith.” According to Sebastían Banegas had uttered “a thousand blasphemies against god.” Allowing Sebastían to leave the next morning to search for plantains, Banegas continued in his adoration of a “false god,” and then made an “illicit proposition” to her niece. Taking her cue from the rage that Banegas displayed as her niece rejected him, María stood up and confronted the Banegas. When he reached unsuccessfully for his machete, she had her niece seized the moment to run out of the small ranch. But while they had escaped quickly to the other side of the river, he was hardly unscathed. The tip of Banegas’s machete had sliced through María clothing, leaving her physically exposed and in terror.307

As the defense continued to bring witness after witness, all testifying to the havoc that Banegas wreaked upon the region, the plaintiff’s case seemed to shrink under the sheer volume of the testimony. To the judges and to all involved, it must have appeared that Banegas was the embodiment of all they feared of rebels, fugitives, and, perhaps, black men more generally. After all, if judges believed the defense, Banegas was a robber and rapist, whose sexual appetite was so insatiable that he raped black women, indigenous women, and even posed a sexual threat to young indigenous girls. Worse still, it appeared that he had ties to long-standing maroon communities in the region. Ultimately, the cumulative affect of these narratives weighed doña Theresa’s property rights claim. Moreover, she had not proven that doña Josepha and Melchor had killed the slave. The defense had undermined the plaintiffs’ case, emphasizing the fact that far too many individuals wanted Banegas to establish clearly the cause of his death. Even if their blows were found to have been the cause of death, who could argue against Melchor’s obligation to protect the honor of an elite woman? Thus, it came as no surprise when the court found Melchor and doña Josepha not guilty for the murder of Banegas. What was surprising, however, was the lower court’s instance upon fining the two 250 pesos, the valued of the then dead slave. An obviously inconsistent ruling, the defense

307 Ibid., 41-45v
appealed to the high court in Quito, which found on 29 January 1728 that if they were absolved of the crime, they were not liable for his value.  

Ultimately, the Banegas case opens a window into life in Barbacoas. There, local struggles for mastery were fierce. Rebellious fugitives roamed the area intimidating whites, Amerindians, and, apparently, blacks into a range of social and financial agreements. Though filled with many details and intriguing implications at the heart of the case lies the matter of freedom and increased autonomy.

**Slavery and Struggles for Freedom**

The mines of Barbacoas and the Chocó were in many ways a world unto themselves. They had grown to large-scale operations with slave laborers numbering well above fifty or even 100. Most slaveholders were absentee mine owners. Preferring as they did life in Popayán and Quito, many chose to manage their holdings through the use of on-site managers (*mayordomos*), mostly white males, who ran the operation with a series of enslaved captains and co-captains. By the time mine of *Nuestra Señora de la soledad de Sezego*, a series of seven co-captains managed an enslaved population of 139 men, women, and children. A community where a person’s job title apparently mattered, the inventory listed: eleven male canoeists (*canoeros*) (the son of one of whom was apprenticed to the position (*aprendiendo ofizio*)), one carpenter, one *corporal [de] paxe*, the cook, who in this case was a woman—Barbara Criolla—but in at least one instance featured a man as well, and one midwife (*partera*)—Barbara Conga, apparently single and fifty-five years of age. 

Large-scale operations such as the one at Sezego demanded, of course, a great degree of oversight and organization. The captains, slaves themselves, constituted a valuable management team. The extent to which the enterprise functioned well depended in large measure upon them and their ability to not only induce people to work at their several work stations, but rested also in their ability to keep order. This they

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308 Ibid., 62v.
309 ACC. Colonia (JII-18su) Sig. 10.362, folios 37-44.
did, no doubt, through a series of concessions, but also through the meting out punishments that were often quite severe, appearing equally as sadistic as those of white overlords.\textsuperscript{310}

Similar to the realities of other frontier regions, the church’s presence was not particularly strong in the region of Barbacoas, or the Chocó, for that matter. Nevertheless, it does appear that slave laborers were baptized, instructed in the faith, and allowed church-sanctioned marriages, as all inventories mention marriages. Husbands and wives are listed as such, followed by the children of the couple. Other children of a man or the woman, but not from the marriage, were listed later, and cited as the son or daughter of the person listed several households before. Single men and women were also listed, while widows, or women whose legitimate husbands were then deceased, were noted as well.\textsuperscript{311}

In addition to marriages, there was the matter of Sunday rest and time off throughout the year for the observance of religious holidays. Since the sixteenth century it was understood that slave laborers were entitled to rest on Sundays and other religious holidays. But while some masters afforded their bondsmen and women this concession, most connected it to slave provisions, reducing food and clothing rations.\textsuperscript{312} Just as slaves were allowed to work the mines for themselves on days off in order to secure money to buy freedom, masters often forced slaves to provide food and clothing for themselves. This was a chronic problem, and slaves used this abuse in the court cases they brought against their owners. In 1788, the royal inspector to the Cauca Valley found that close to fifty percent of all slaveholders had transferred the much of the responsibility for rations and clothing to the slave laborers in exchange for Sunday and other religious holidays.\textsuperscript{313} While some mine owners gave their slaves Sunday as a day of rest plus one

\textsuperscript{310} The colonial record is replete with examples of individuals who bring cases against their slave masters due to abuse and mistreatment. See the case between don Pedro Agustine de Balensia and his administrator Joseph Manuel Rodrigues in ANHQ, Ramo Popayán, Caja 73; Exp. 17-x-1742 (abuso y maaltro a los negros). Apparently, a minor slave revolt had resulted in the firing of Rodrigues, who argued that he was fired unjustly, insisting that he had done all he could to prevent this occurrence. More importantly, however, was the fact the mine owner had fined him 100 pesos and initiated a lawsuit against him.

\textsuperscript{311} ACC. Colonia, JII—18su, Sig. 10.362 (1767), folios 37-44; ACC. Colonia, JII-15su, Sig. 10.282, 10v-16v; ACC. Colonia, CI—21mn, 2834, folios 6-12, 14v-17v; and ACC. Colonia Judicia su, (Año 1699-1727), Sig. 8742, folios 4, 18-19.

\textsuperscript{312} Robert West, \textit{Colonial Placer Mining}. 88.

\textsuperscript{313} David L. Chandler, “Health and Slavery,” 237.
additional day to work for themselves, the royal inspector ordered slaveholders to provide either for their
slave laborers or give them two free work-days, in order that they might provide for themselves. This was
of little effect, however, as the fine for this infraction was a mere fifty pesos. The amount that slaveholders
would save by reducing their costs in rations must have appeared a cheap investment in exchange for
saving close to one-third of what were rather sizeable maintenance costs.\textsuperscript{314} Although the crown ruled,
ultimately, in favor of the one day rule, enslaved blacks were the ones pressing the issue, not royal
inspectors who appeared infrequently over the course of the late eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{315}

In 1729, Gonsales, an enslaved \textit{pardo}, responded to these abuses when he filed a claim against his
owner don Joseph Aguirre, a property-holder in the town of Buga.\textsuperscript{316} Not only had Gonzales been
neglected, he had been forced to depend upon his free black wife for food and sustenance. His wife’s food
was not free, which led Gonzales to argue that his master had in fact “purchased the meat” from his wife
because he did not have enough to eat. Gonzales felt that Aguirre should discount the price of his freedom
since it was Aguirre who was responsible for feeding and clothing him. Underscoring Aguirre’s immoral
character, Gonzales emphasized that Aguirree had not “allowed them to hear Mass.”

After loosing his case in the lower courts, Aguirre continued the fight, prolonging the inevitable
for two years through appeals, first to the court in Cali, and then to the high court in Quito. Nevertheless,
both courts found in favor of Gonzales, insisting that his prospective owner be allowed to purchase him for
the proposed 380 pesos. This was quite a coup for Gonzales, given that most captains were valued between
450 and 500 pesos. He had just cut the price of his freedom by nearly one third through use of both his
wife’s material resources and the very grave legal and moral infractions of his owner.\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{314} Colmenares, \textit{Historia económica y social} II.

\textsuperscript{315} See. Gernán Colmenares, \textit{Historia económica y social} II, 136-138; See. ANHQ, Popayán, Caja 55, Exp. 13-vii-1731; Caja 55, Exp. 11-vii-1731.

\textsuperscript{316} ANHQ, Ramo Popayán, Caja 55, Exp. 21-x-1730, folio 3.

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid., Manuel Mina, the enslaved captain of a cuadrilla in the Chocó filed a similar claim with officials in Buga. ACC. Sig. 8638 (Col.—JI—23cv), 27 de junio 1752—7 de junio 1754, folios 1-25.
Other slave laborers, such as Fernando Caravajal, made similar claims in their freedom cases, insisting that slave holders had forced them to endure “more rigor than the laws and their principles favor… and what is more, in the Kingdom of the Catholics” (emphasis mine). While the attorney for Caravajal's owner was correct in his rebuttal that masters could not be forced in an arbitrary fashion to sell their slaves, or allow them to purchase their freedom at any price of the slaves choosing, the plaintiffs were depending upon the convergence of three points: the court’s abhorrence of harsh treatment, their righteous indignation regarding the denial of instruction in the faith, and the various infirmities that Caravajal stated he had. Fortunately for Caravajal, the court found merit in his argument and awarded him his freedom for 300 pesos.

Throughout Popayán the hope of freedom remained pervasive. Living in or around most mining settlements were free blacks who had purchased their freedom, or who had grown up in freedom. Since inventories were documented by households, free black women appear quite often through their attachment to their husbands and children. Bartola Reyes, a twenty-four year-old woman described asmulata libre, was listed with her enslaved husband, Salbador. María Nybana, also a mulata libre, was listed with her husband Manuel. Although the couples appear without any children, others were cited with children, some of who were free as well. Madeleena, a thirty-two-year old free mulata widow, for example, was listed with her free children—Joseph (14 years of age), Theodora (10 years), and Triburico (one year). Rare, however, were women like María Criolla, described as the wife of Juan Criollo liverto, a free black man. While it seems plausible that blacks had prioritized the freedom of women and children, it is clear that black men and women formed various arrangements that defied patriarchy, and then turned to deploy the discourse of male honor against slaveholders who sought to deny them freedom.

318 ANHQ, Popayán, Caja 67, Exp. 5-V-1738.
319 ANHQ, Popayán, Caja 55. Exp. 28-ii-1731.
320 ACC. Colonia, CI—21mn, Sig. 2843, (1716), folio 8.
321 ACC. Colonia, JII-18su, Sig. 10.362 (1767), folio 40v.
Both slaves and slaveholders entered into relationships that they intended to manipulate in the interest of securing their desired outcomes. Indeed, freedom was a very fundamental part of general public discourse of Barbacoas. Long before Republican notions of liberty became pervasive within the region, the lexicon of freedom, just treatment, and natural laws, or as they and their attorneys often put it, “the laws of heaven” were all part of the discourse that the enslaved drew upon long before there was any talk of pulling away from Spain. Throughout the mining district, masters held freedom as leverage to induce slaves to work and extract gold, while slaves leveraged their labor, excess production, ability to provide and care for themselves as well as the threat of flight and rebellion for freedom. Freedom was, then connected to a range of incentives that masters held out to motivate slave laborers to stay put and produce. Ultimately, however, mine owners needed laborers, and thus had little to gain from selling slaves their freedom, which explains why they usually chose not to honor arrangements for freedom, and often accused slave laborers of stealing to acquire their freedom. Unlike the findings of historian Kathleen Higgins for eighteenth-century Sabará (Minas Gerías), slave autonomy does not seem have been gendered in the sense that it was tied disproportionately to black women because of a predominance of white bachelors and a lack of white females. It is true, however, that enslaved women in Barbacoas, much like those in Quito and Guayaquil, drew upon relationships with white men as a means of securing their freedom along with that of their children. And in some instances the white man helping them to secure this freedom was their husband.

Although there seems to have been few interracial marriages featuring white men and black women in the region, such relationships were not uncommon. While there were only a few whites living in the mines, they were by no means absent from regional administrative towns connected to the mining settlements. In 1738 Juan Santiago Selorio came forth with his wife Juana Bautista de la Plaza (de color parda) to sue don Juan de los Santos Ocuna for Juana’s freedom. The husband, a free white man, and

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322 Purchasing one’s freedom was not an easy feat as several slave laborers initiated lawsuits for their freedom during this period: Gregoria y Rufina Godoy mulatas hermanas (of Barbacoas) against the children of doña Juana Jacome de Obando about their freedom. ANHQ, Popayán. Caja 55. 13-v-1731. The sisters were slated to receive their freedom upon their masters’ death, but his heirs now promised to prevent this from becoming a reality. Nevertheless, in another case, the court rules that masters cannot be arbitrarily made to sell a slave his/her freedom, but more importantly that the price of the slave had to be sufficient to compensate the slaveholder for the loss of the value of the slave laborers. (ANHQ, Popayán, Caja 67; exp. 5-v-1738).
323 ANHQ, Popayán, Caja 72, Exp. 22-viii-1742
his wife, a free woman of color, had entered into an arrangement with her owner. Upon his death his heirs moved quickly to sell the so-called “free parda”. Nevertheless, the couple had paid 280 pesos previously and, was, therefore, under contract with Juana’s then deceased owner in order to earn Juana’s freedom. While Juan and Juan Santiago contended that the previous arrangement should be forced upon his estate, the reality of her condition remained. She was property. And upon the property holder’s death, barring strict instructions to the contrary, his heirs were free to dispose of what had become their property in any manner they deemed fitting. Fortunately for Juana, her new owner had paid a mere 160 pesos for her. According her with mercy, the court forced her new owner, de los Santos Ocuna, to sell her freedom to her for 160 pesos. De los Santos, conveniently, felt he was entitled to more, as Juana was sure to fetch him a greater profit on the Barbacoan slave market. For his part, he could not arbitrarily be made to grant freedom. After several years of appeals, however, the judges of Quito’s high court ruled in Juana’s favor. One hundred and sixty pesos would be her price, and consequently the cost of her freedom. Obviously, however, her freedom had cost her so much more. Ultimately, Juana’s struggle highlights both the pervasiveness of such arrangements and slaves’ enduring hope for freedom. Nevertheless, it seems clear as well that freedom could only be won through the marshalling of strategic and timely resistance measures. The principal concerns of any slaveholder, especially those situated within a mining frontier must have been: how to keep labor at the assigned site; how to keep them working at the pace necessary for profitable production, and connected to the latter, how to maintain order. Harsh punishments coupled with an array of concessions, most notably freedom, helped to accomplish this to some degree.

**Forging Community**

Historian Germán Colmenares has suggested that the demographic history of Popayán’s mining camps (be they in Barbacoas, the Chocó, or the upper Cauca Valley) can be characterized by three periods: the first, beginning around 1710 constituted a period of construction the “primordial nucleus” of these cuadrillas; the second, beginning at 1740 marked the height of intensive purchases in bozales for the staffing of these cuadrillas; and the third, placed at 1770 marked a period of clear stability in which the
population was not maintained by imports of African bozales, but depended in large measure upon a growing Afro-Creole population.\textsuperscript{324}

By mid century Barbacoas had begun to emerge from an era of transition, consolidation, and slow growth and was now on the heels of a gold boom that, though punctuated by periodic production shortfalls, would continue through the end of the century. In the 1750s registered gold outputs grew from 30,000 \textit{castellanos} to approximately 40,000 \textit{castellanos} in the 1760s. The number would grow to 110,000 \textit{castellanos} in 1777. Going forward, the region would sustain highs of 100,000 \textit{castellanos} through the end of the century. While historian Kris E. Lane notes this boom was largely the result of the crown’s tax concession in 1777 of three percent severance, it is also important to pay special attention to the influence of labor.\textsuperscript{325}

Mine owners had spent the previous seventy-five years building mining gangs, securing water rights, making concessions and arrangements with managers, and laborers of all sorts. They also admonished their children not disrupt the mining enterprise, by selling slave laborers, nor by conceding water rights.\textsuperscript{326} These realities had set the conditions for the establishment of enslaved communities that were generations old. Consequently, mine holders were now benefiting from a well-developed technical knowledge base, informed by the skills of ethnic Africans, who for several decades had been emerging from gold and iron-producing regions of West Africa. Their skills must have mixed with those of Afro-Creoles, who contributed not only their skills as panners, smelters, and smithers to the mining project, but also their knowledge of the terrain. It is no wonder then that Barbaocoas was entering a boom at precisely this moment. Years of creative labor arrangements, complemented by the singular ownership and maintenance of labor gangs within individual families, and water rights was starting pay dividends. In the midst of it all people of African descent were living their lives. They were making friends, creating households, having children, and creating marriages. As they loved one another and nurtured these

\textsuperscript{324} This he argues, in part, because he can show a consistent four percent annual population increase after 1770. See Ibid., 60-63.

\textsuperscript{325} Kris E. Lane, “Mining the Margins,” I, 193.

\textsuperscript{326} Gernán Colmenares, \textit{Historia Económica y Social} II, 50-51; William Frederick Sharp, \textit{Slavery on the Spanish Frontier}. 

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relationships, fussed and fought amongst themselves, they created communities and lives, filled with value and meaning.

Despite the fact that both the infant and overall population mortality rates were high, in Barbacoas the population continued to grow, even if it was insufficient to undermine the need for additional slave imports. In spite of recent scholarship confirming slaves’ ability to reproduce themselves, even in places like nineteenth-century Brazil, it must be said that slave laborers in Spanish America were able to reproduce themselves. To appreciate this fact, however, it is necessary to make the distinction between rates of natural increase and the ability to reproduce at a rate sufficient to address ongoing labor demands. The two were not necessarily the same. Understanding the general demographic layout, and placing the issue of population growth in the context of freedom and flight might help to shed some light on eighteenth-century Barbacoan demographic trends.

Although mine owners were determined to purchase a disproportionate number of young male captives, it is important to note the fact that, when compared to all captives caught up in the trade find that adult males were not the dominant group. In fact, throughout this period women and children (less than fifteen years) outnumbered adult males, combining to account for 53.6 percent of all individuals traded between 1705 and 1713, 50.3 percent between 1715 and 1727, and 61.3 percent in the period from 1730 to 1738. This was the case even as men generally outnumbered women in Popayán’s market at ratios of: 7.3 to 2.7 (1706-1715), 5.8 to 4.2 (1716-1730), and 6.7 to 3.3 (1731-1740).\(^{327}\) Preferred ages, more generally, fell primarily between sixteen and twenty years-of-age, with those between the ages of eleven and fifteen following close behind.\(^{328}\) (See Tables 4.2 and 4.3).

\(^{327}\) Colmenares, *Historia Económica y Social II*, 51.

\(^{328}\) Ibid, p. 36.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>1705-1713</th>
<th>1715-1727</th>
<th>1730-1738</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
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<td>29.3</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.3</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>66.9</td>
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**Table 4.2 Percentage by Age and Gender of Slaves Sold in Cartagena**


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Afro-criollos</th>
<th>Bozales</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,074 cases)</td>
<td>(749 cases)</td>
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<tr>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.3 Percentage by Age of Slaves sold in Popayán**

Source: Colmenares, *Historia económica y social*, 36.

Among the nine extant mining inventories from the district, on average children under the age of ten represented 26.7 percent of the enslaved population. In some mining camps they accounted for as

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329 ACC. Sig. 8742, folios 4, 76; ACC. Sig. 12.177, folio 103 (1742); ACC Sig. 10.232, folio 10; ACC Sig. 10362, fols. 45, 99, and 37; ACC. Sig. 11.269, and Sig. 10.906; See also Colmenares, *Historia económica y social II*, 253-263.
little as 16.6 percent of the overall population. But because the average age of children arriving in the slave trade was at or around ten and since many of them are associated with Creole parents, we can surmise that a good many of these were born in the mines themselves.

Exploring infant mortality on Jesuit agro-pastoral estates throughout the Cauca Valley, Colmenares found that something close to thirty-five percent of infants did not survive, and of those who did forty-seven percent did not live beyond the age of twenty-two. But depending upon the number of those born, having nearly one-third of all children born survive well into adulthood, encouraged natural growth of the slave populations.

In 1724 within the Mina de San Cayetano (located in the Chocó) amid a population of fifty-one adult women accounted for twenty-six percent while adult men twenty percent. In addition, children below the age of ten accounted for forty-three percent of the population. Although it is impossible to say at this point how many of these would have survived to old age, three other cuadrillas, inventoried two decades later in 1743 and 1745 reveal striking similarities. Adult men between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five represented only fourteen to twenty-five percent of the population, while women of the same age constituted almost ten percent of the population. Adult males between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five, children under ten, and seniors (ages fifty-five and up), accounted for the remainder of community members. As historians William Frederick Sharp and Germán Colmenares have pointed out, it seems clear that while slaveholders in the Chocó and Barbacoas remained dependent upon new imports of African captives for the staffing of their cuadrillas, throughout the eighteenth century the African-descended population was stable, if not growing.330 Both underscore the validity of mid-century growth rates.331

In the mining camps of Sesego and El Salto, inventoried in 1768, the number of enslaved Afro-Creoles was sixty-three percent, whereas ethnic Africans accounted for only twenty-eight percent. But


331 This is, to my mind, a function of the sources, however. An accurate picture of eighteenth century demography processes depends our ability to first track cuadrillas over time, following patterns of birth and death. Equally important is an analysis of both manumissions and patterns of flight.
Afro-Creoles were not the only ones reaching old age; several ethnic Africans above the age of fifty are listed, including Francisco Arara Bobo, noted as being eighty years of age and “useless.” And Francisco’s wife, María Thereza Zetre, also an ethnic African, though very much his junior in age, at age forty-six was not considered young either. In addition, the inventory lists: Michaela Caravali (70 years), Lorenzo Caravali (53 years), Manuel Nongó (52 years), and María Caravali (50 years). Others included Ignasio Mina (50 years of age), Juan Criollo (50 years), and María Mina (70 years) and noted as “living in perpetual sickness.”

Completing the picture of a stable and growing slave gang were children below the age of ten, who accounted for thirty-seven percent of the population while men and women between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five were almost equal, accounting for eighteen and seventeen percent of the population, respectively. This is not surprising given the fact that, when the mining gangs were consolidated in 1753 each aggregate populations were relatively balanced sexually; Mina de Sesego featured seven men and sixty-six women, while in El Salto the numbers were twenty-six and twenty-five, respectively. Out of the forty couples came eighty-nine children. In addition to these, an additional nine children had been born to single women living within the camp. The populations for Santa Gertrudis, situated on the Dagua River and Mallorquín reveal a similar population structure. Inventoried in 1753, individuals clearly identifiable as Afro-Creoles accounted for seventy percent of the population, while those clearly noted to be ethnic Africans were fourteen percent of the overall slave population of the two camps. Men between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five accounted for 14.6 percent compared to their female counterparts’ 13.8 percent.

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332 ACC. Colonia, JII—18su, Sig. 10.362, folios 37-44. See also Comenares, Historia económica y social II, 58.

333 Colmenares, Historia económica y social II, 58.

334 Ibid.

335 Ibid.

336 Ibid., 58-59.
Finally, while Colmenares three stages of demographic development are insightful, marking communal stability and the growth of an Afro-Creole population at 1770 seems a bit too conservative, especially considering that Colmenares’s own findings reveal a sizable population of children under the ages of ten as early as 1718. Colmenares suggests that the child population of most cuadrillas was slightly higher than one third for much of the period, rising at times as high as forty-five percent, and in the case of at least one cuadrilla arrived at the very high figure of fifty-three percent in 1778. If one takes this into consideration while accounting for the fact that individuals between the ages of forty-five and fifty-four years of age accounted for nearly ten percent and those above fifty-five were eleven percent, it becomes quite plausible to think of a population that was, in fact, “naturally” stable, and yet in need of infusions of new laborers for reasons other than the failure to reproduce. That is, people of African descent were reproducing themselves and growing to old age consistently throughout the eighteenth century. Continuous shipments of African bozales had been necessary first to grow slave gangs to levels sufficient for effective gold mining operations, a process that continued well into the second half of the eighteenth century due to slave flight and rebellion, increasing manumissions, and relatively high mortality rates. Stemming the tide of slave flight and self-purchase (coartación) might have diminished the need for such high numbers of ethnic Africans. Such a finding would cast greater light upon a process that remains somewhat hidden within the history of the era. Although it is beyond the scope of the dissertation, further exploration of rates of flight, rebellion, and manumissions in Barbacoas might open a window into our understanding of the connections between slavery, freedom and slaveholder hegemony, and the extent of natural population growth over the course of the eighteenth century.

337 Ibid., 61.
Marked Bodies and the Context of African Ethnic Identification

Because enslaved Africans had quickly become both a heavily traded commodity and a fundamental labor source for the region, the regulation of trade and the advancement of royal authority into the region involved examining and marking African bodies. For Africans, having their bodies handled, examined, poked, prodded, and branded were first stages in their New World rites of passage. Reading, marking, treating, and baptizing black bodies came to signify not only individual ownership, but also political and commercial ownership. These were “ceremonies of possession” that all Europeans deployed as they endeavored to make commodities of people. Brands confirmed the king as both sovereign of both slavery and regional market economies. Branding formalized the rendering of the captive body as a source to be examined, read, and interpreted. Historian Walter Johnson has remarked that, “slaves’ bodies were shaped to their slavery.” “Slave children,” he relates, “learned to view their bodies through two different lenses, one through their masters, the other belonging to themselves.” Hence the black body became a site to inscribe and endow meaning, making it both text and repository.

On February 18, 1712, four large canoes, carrying 166 enslaved Africans arrived at the Magdelana River port town of Honda, just northeast of Popayán. Among the group were: (95) men, (37) women; (29) boys <15 yrs.; (4) girls <12 yrs; and two infants who were listed with their mothers (crias de la teta or del pecho). Among the group there were (35) Arara; (44) Mina; (4) Luango; (16) Lucumi; (7)


340 ACC. PN, Tomo 22, folios 63-71v.

341 ACC. Protocolos, PN. Tomo 22, Años 1712-1713, folios 63-71v.
Caramanti; (4) Congo; (13) Chala; (7) Popo; (14) Mandinga; (1) Hablar; (1) Prama; (1) Bandu(bi); (1)
Poropue; (1) Boama; (2) Bambara; (4) Barbara; (7) Ibo; (3) Mondongo; (3) Chara; and (1) Yupó.342 All
were noted to have “all marks with the royal insignia coronilla burned their right breast and the mark of the
asiento on the left side of their back.”343 The reading of bodies was such an integral portion of making
commodities of people that even the would-be marks of little babies and young children had to be
accounted for and assigned a mark even if only a symbolic one for the moment. Confirming this reality,
the scribe remarked, “As expected the mark of the two babies and the small black boy, these are included in
the number of children who are not marked.”344 In the early modern world, there was an obsession with
marking bodies and the act of literally wearing one’s state on one’s sleeve, or, in the case of Africans,
castas, and whites for that matter, on their skin.

The body as a source was not lost on Africans, but was, in fact, a concept that held great currency
among West African body artists and those initiated into the dynamic cultural mores of the diverse
region.345 Although much has been made of ‘country marks’ or ethnic scarification and body art as

342 Ibid.
343 Ibid.
344 Ibid., 63.
345 Country marks or scarification, which usually took the form of varying types of incisions but could also appear as a
tattoo, could signify conditions of birth, having undergone particular rites of passage, or serve simply the purpose of
beautification. Others incisions, which might have appeared to Europeans as “country marks” were used also for the
injection of various medicines into the body. Among the ‘Yoruba’ some of the marks themselves are thought to have
curative and empowering objectives; that is, apart from any medicinal properties that may or may not have been
injected. While the process and meaning of country marks varied regionally, changing over time, the phenomenon
draws our attention to the “the bodily basis of experience and knowledge,” a “sense based” approach to learning and
making one’s way in the world, or a “bodily, multi-sensorial basis of understanding.” According to anthropologists
Henry John Drewal and John Mason, “Language...is just one of the ways we experience and represent the world. But
before language we began by perceiving, reasoning, theorizing, and understanding through all our senses, and these
continually participate though we may often be unconscious of them, in the ways we literally make sense of the world.
Sensing (hearing, tasting, etc.) is thinking; sensing is theorizing. In the beginning, there was no word.” Thus, the body
was not only a site of subjection, it was a source to be read, interpreted, and from which sensed. Applicable here is
historian John Thornton’s suggestion that language was not the only arbiter of cultural interaction and exchange.
Africans were sensing both differences and similarities as they created Diasporic communities in the New World. That
these processes involved and included relationships of power is not lost here either. Sensing as a social and cultural
technique could be deployed by various ‘African’ actors in various situations to gain knowledge and wield various
forms of power. See Henry John Drewal, “Art or Accident: Yoruba Body Artists and Their Diety Ogun,” in Sandra T.
Barnes, Eds. Africa’s Ogun: Old World and New, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); and Henry John
Drewal and John Mason, “Ogun and Body/Mind Potentiality: Yoruba Scarification and Painting Traditions in Africa
and the Americas, in idem, 333.
indicators of ethnic distinctions and ‘Africanity’ few have emphasized these for studying the context of ethnic identity formation in Spanish America.\textsuperscript{346} While African scarification has many cultural implications, country marks (señals naturales) are noted here as signals of the changing context of ethnic identity formation in early eighteenth-century Popayán, and the audiencia more generally. They are noted to highlight the fundamental ways that Africans sensed their world and those around them, and body markings of all kinds helped to form the context for New World ethnic identity formation.

Revealing are visitas de despacho, internal customs clearances, that reflected two of the more formal customs reports completed at Cartagena and other Spanish American ports, known as the visita de palmeo and the visita de sanidad (health inspection). Together these reports conveyed both the legality of the group and the general impression of health formed by officials in the Caribbean. Slave ships arriving in the Indies were subject to at least five standard searches: the health inspection (visita de sanidad), inventory inspection (visita de reconocimiento e inventoria), anchorage inspection (visita de fondeo), and the entry inspection (visita de entrada).\textsuperscript{347}

In late sixteenth century officials had instituted these reviews and health inspections with the governor’s ordering of the royal health officer protomedicato to inspect all crews, and cargoes of African captives for signs of epidemics or “dangerous” diseases. Inspections varied in their degree of thoroughness. Nevertheless, some proved to be quite complete. In one example from 1742, the Mahotori asiento introduced 116 African captives who were found to be “completely healthy.”\textsuperscript{348} In this instance, the protomedicato based his diagnosis upon the captives’ “appearance and their pulses.” Others were more circumspect, reporting that slave laborers “seemed well” and appeared to be without disease with infectious potential.\textsuperscript{349} But if the general reports issued by physicians to governors were at times vague, others

\textsuperscript{346} I am thinking primarily here of Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Africans in Colonial Louisiana, and to a lesser degree, Mary Karasch for Brazil. There could be others who don’t spring to mind at the moment.

\textsuperscript{347} Chandler, “Health and Slavery,” 64.


\textsuperscript{349} Ibid.
contained information that suggests great attention was paid to the captive body. At a minimum, it seems that attention was paid to three bodily concerns: the marks of the crown and asiento, bodily signals of disease, and—most to the point here—ethnic scarification. The visita de despacho translated and reproduced from the import records of the 1712 trade in 166 captives noted earlier, offers a rare glimpse at slaveholders attempts to read African bodies. It reminds us of the text that Africans were working with, bodily distinctions that signaled culture similarities while marking difference.

One [enslaved] black male de Casta Arara 18 years of age, more or less, with lines upon his temples and cheeks
Other Arara 22 years of age with incisions in the temples and one small hole in each cheek
Other Chala 18 years of age without any “natural markings” or country marks.
Other casta Luango 24 years of age with confusing lines in his temples
Other Arara 20 years of age with small lines in the temples
Other Arara 18 years of age with very subtle (nearly faded) lines in the temples.
Other Lucumi 20 years of age with piercing lines in the cheeks.
Other Popo 30 years of age with la barua (?) very closed
Other Arara 24 years of age with the forehead and temples pierced, and both cheeks pierced and one in between the eyebrows.
Other Arara 16 years of age without country marks
Other Caramante 24 years of age without country marks
Arara 18 years of age with a row of lines in the temples
Other “the same”
Other Arara 18 years of age without country marks
Other Caramanti 26 years of age with a ramalao on the left side of the face.
Other Arara 25 years with the forehead and the cheeks “picados” (normally followed by the term viruelas)
Other Arara 18 years of age with large spots (piquetos gruesos) in the forehead and temples
Other Congo 25 years of age with a few smallpox spots (poco picado de birbuelas)
Other Arara 18 years of age without any natural markings
Other Lecumí 15 years of age with four piercing lines in each cheeks
Other Arara 15 years of age with the forehead and temples “spotted” piqueteadas [from smallpox]
Other Chala 18 years of age with three lines in each temple, one in the forehead and cheeks
Other Arara 18 years of age with a small line in the temples.
Other Arara 16 with many lines in the temples
Other Arara 22 years of age with rows of piercing (piquetillos in the temples and throughout the forehead.
Other Arara 16 years of age with muchos piquetes gruesos in the temples, cheeks and between them.
Other Caramanti with a line in the middle of the forehead
Other Chala [no age listed] with a piercing in the forehead and cheeks.
Other Mandinga 25 years of age without any country marks
Other Chala 26 years of age with a herdigon in the left temple and ‘wrinkles’ between the eyes.
Other Chala 25 years of age with the entire face and forehead filled with large lines.
Other Chala 18 years of age with a herdigon in both sides of the nose through to the quifadas
Other Mina 20 years of age “said 26” (digo veinte i seis) very scarred from the pox (mui picado de birbuelas)
Other Arara 25 years of age with many marks in the forehead and face.
Other 25 years of age with a small mark between the temple and the left eyebrow

Table 4.4  (Translation of Visita de Despacho)
Physical Description of the 166 Slave Laborers That Arrived with the Royal African Company on 18 February 1712

147
Table 4.4 continued

Other Mandinga 22 years of age with several lines in the temples and forehead
Other Caramantí 30 years of age with confusing lines in the temples
Other Mandinga 26 years of age with a line between the eyebrows
Other Casta Luango 25 years of age with a scar (*señal de herida de vafo*) over the right eye
Other Mandinga with three very large lines in each temple and throughout the chest and a scarred belly.
Other Popo 25 years old *serrado de barara*.
Other Lucumi 26 years with many very subtle lines throughout the face, forehead, and the mark of "v y 'c over the left breast.
Other Arara 18 years of age with two small piercing in the forehead and many lines each temple.
Other Lucumi 20 years of age with unas lamalasos on the left side of the face.
Other Lucumi 26 years with fine lines on the left cheek.
Other Arara 25 years of age with piercing in the temples.
Other Arara 26 years with the forehead and checks marked (picados) [from the pox]
Other Lucumi without any country marks
Other Lucumi 22 years of age with rows or long lamalasos in the temples and three piercing in the each cheek.
Other Mandinga 25 years with a row of marks all over the forehead and on the top lip *endido*
Other Mandinga 25 years with a large scar near the throat.
Other Mina 25 years with lines in the temples.
Other Mina with a *borron* between the eyebrows and four lines in each cheek
Other Chala 20 years with very thin lines in the temples and one wide line in the forehead
Other Mina 25 years with many fading lines in the forehead
Other Chala 20 years of age with many lines in the cheeks, temples and forehead
Other Mina 20 years with lines in the temples
Other Mina 22 years of age with six lines in each temple, three in the left cheek and one between the *sejas* and right cheek.
Other Mina 26 years of age with six lines in each *baron* between the eyebrows, three of the said in the right cheek and a cross on the left cheek.
Other Mina 22 years of age with five lines in each temple, other in the right cheek and a cross upon the left.
Other Chala 25 years with very faint lines in the face, temple and forehead.
Other Caramantí 18 years of age with small marks like two lines upon the left cheek.
Other Popo 26 years of age without country marks
Other Barbara 18 years of age without country marks
Other Mina with very faint lines that one can barely recognize upon the temples and cheeks
Other Mandinga 20 years of age without country marks.
Other Chara 18 years of age with a *berdugon* above the right temple
Other Mina 28 years of age with six lines, three between the eyebrows with two crosses in the right cheek and four lines on the left.
Other Lucumy 25 years of age without country marks
Other Luango 18 years of age with a country mark or line *atrauesada desajos* over the right eye.
Other Casta Poropue 28 years of age scarred from smallpox along with a line in the middle of the forehead
Other Mina 26 years of age with four lines in each temple and a cross on the left cheek
Other [Mina] of 18 years of age without country marks
Other Casta Babara 26 years of age with a line on the forehead.
Other Casta Boama 22 years without country marks
Other Mina 25 years of age with confusing lines on the temples and forehead
Other Mandinga 22 years of age with lines in each of the temples
Another the same.
Table 4.4 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Mandinga 20 years of age with three long lines in each temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mina 18 years of age with seven lines in each temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 25 years with two scars from wounds (<em>señales de herida</em>) in the forehead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mina 26 years with three lines in each cheek and several other small ones above the eyebrows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Arara 18 years with three lines upon each temple and very scarred from smallpox</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Archivo Central del Cacua, PN, Tomo 22, Año 1713, folios 63-68v

±The women and children follow this listing of men in the inspection.

Although the intent of these visitas was to help identify the overall physical well being of the enslaved, it provides a text within a text, highlighting the fact that enslaved bodies were a first indicator of how and where the person might be integrated into an evolving complex of community and identity formation. Intentional scarification suggested regional and ethnic origins just as the involuntary picados de virvelas or smallpox scars, served as reminders of the horrors of the passage. They encoded a person’s history upon the body. Hence the body is not only a source to the historian reconstructing the history of ethnogenesis, bodies were also sources to those involved in the very process themselves. For Africans, body art and scarification must have spoken just as loudly as smallpox scars did for European medical examiners.

The document highlights, quite forcefully, the changes in slave community morphology and the degree to which slave traders and scribes might have become familiar with the very real ethno-cultural distinctions existing among slaves arriving at Spanish America’s chief slave port (See Illustration 4.4). Araras were found to have incisions on the temples, some carrying one small hole in each cheek. Other Araras, usually those who fell below the age of eighteen, were found without their country marks, while others of the same age were cited as having at least one small line on the temple, and another, age sixteen, many lines in the temples.

To the uninitiated ethnicscarification was likely to have been of little utility. Underscoring this perspective, Minas were found to have “lines in the temples,” some carried six, others three, and four. Again, one finds some who appear to be “of age” without any marks at all. Highlighting the scribe’s or the
medical inspector’s frustration, others were described frankly as having “confusing lines on the temples and forehead,” ironically so as to suggest some understanding of at least the pattern of other markings.

Mandingas, too, held “several lines along the temples and forehead.” For other ‘Mandingas’ their lines were to be found “between the eye brows,” “throughout the chest cavity,” “in a row over the forehead and on the lip endido” (See Table 4.4).

But try as they did to document these iconic and aesthetic renderings of Old World ethno-cultural formations, this source also betrays elites’ frustration in this effort as well as the larger limitations they, and consequently we, face in attempts to understand ‘African’ ethnic identity. What remains, however, is the fact that Europeans saw ethnic Africans as discrete culture groups (though erroneously referring to them as nations or castes), whose distinctions mattered, even if those distinctions were found in the nuances of body art and scarification.

Nevertheless, examining the group found in Table 4.4, it is clear that these were large number Araras and Minas present. This reflected a trend that began in the last decade of the seventeenth century when the region of the Gold Coast made the transition from slave importer to slave exporter in response to shifting regional geopolitical realities and the sustained presence of the Dutch as a trading partner. Although diversity remained the rule, slave laborers carrying the ethnic monikers Mina, Arara, Caravali, Lucumi, Congo, and Cetre would maintain a significant presence in the Popayán’s slave market throughout the eighteenth century. Recall that don Mateo del Masso’s 18 January 1700 importation of fifty-nine captives included twenty-two Araras and thirty-seven Minas, all reputedly close the age of twenty-five.

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351 ACC. Protocolos, PN. Tomo 19, 18 hernero 1700, folios 17-19.
This should come has no surprise since the Royal African Company drew well over half of its African captives from the Gold Coast (31.2 percent) and the Bight of Benin (39.6 percent) during the period circa 1713.\textsuperscript{352}

To categorize the slave laborers listed in the \textit{visita} translated and discussed above, we would find that they fall into four of historian John Thornton’s six ethno-linguistic sub-culture groups we find ‘members’ of four of them present here: the Akan-Ewe-Ga (who corresponded roughly to the Gold and Slave Coast); the Yoruba-Edo-Igbo (who corresponded to the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra; the Mande (who corresponded to the Upper Guinea coast near Senegambia); and the Western Bantu (Central Africa).\textsuperscript{353} In the following table, informed by Sandra Greene’s cautionary note regarding the Anlo-Ewe, I have categorized them using the conventional regional model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gold Coast</th>
<th>Bight of Benin</th>
<th>Bight of Biafra</th>
<th>Upper Guinea</th>
<th>Central Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mina (44)</td>
<td>Arara (35)</td>
<td>Ibo (7)</td>
<td>Mandinga (14)</td>
<td>Congo (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caramanti (7)</td>
<td>Lucumí (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mondongo (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaba (16)</td>
<td>Popo (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boama (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poropue (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bandu(bi) (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Babara (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Luango (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Regional/Ethnic Breakdown of Slave Laborers listed in 1712 Visita de Despacho

\textit{Source: ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo 22, Año 1713, 63-71v.}

But much like the transatlantic trade that fed Popayán’s slave market, the origin of slave laborers fluctuated over time. During the early years (1705-1713) most slave laborers emerged from the Gold

\textsuperscript{352} Philip Curtin, \textit{The Transatlantic Slave Trade}, 129. It was Minas and Popos who figured prominently within the mining camp of Santa Maria de los Remedios, numbering five of twenty-eight and one of twenty-eight, respectively. Among the twelve who made up the Señora de la Soledad gang (situated along the Raposo river as well) were three Arara and one Mina. See. ACC. Colonia. C—I—21mn, Sig. 2834, folios 6-9.

Coast, followed by the Bight of Benin, Senegambia and Central Africa. Subsequently, (1715-27) most slave laborers emerged from the Bight of Benin, followed by the Gold Coast, and the Congo; between 1730 and 1738 the order was Gold Coast, Bight of Biafra, followed by Central Africa or Congo; in this era the Bight of Benin was a distant fourth. The 153 African captives that don Juan Ildefonso de Nieva introduced in 1733 offer a poignant example. Distinct from earlier groups the earlier group, this was comprised of: (94) Congo, (32) Mina, (14) Zetre, (10) Guaqui, and (3) Chamba. The group was comprised of eighty-three enslaved men, thirty women, twenty-six boys, and fourteen girls. Since the group is found in another visita de despacho, we find details of scarification as well. Of note are the many references to individuals being “picado de virvuelas,” thus calling our attention to the disease and death that marked their journey form Central Africa, for example, into the heart of the North Andes and its Pacific littoral frontier.354

The diversity of Popayán’s slave market is further underscored by the fluctuating trade routes of slavers providing African captives to the two principal ports that supplied the region—Cartagena and Panama. In 1712, the ship the Comte de Lamoignon purchased African captives in the Bight of Benin at the port of Whydah before stopping first in Cartagena to deliver 398 of the 465 captives prior to continuing on to Panama. In the year 1704, the Badine, also destined for the Spanish Main, purchased slaves first along the Gold Coast, then at Whydah, but the trip was an unsuccessful because of a slave uprising. The Galant purchased slaves in Senegal before making delivery of 273 captives at Panama in the year 1711. Similarly, the English ship the John, traveling from Jamaica in the year 1719, tried to deliver 300 captives they had no doubt been gathered largely form the Bight of Benin and the Gold Coast, but was thwarted by their capture by the Spanish. The Leusden (a Dutch ship) in 1723 purchased the majority of the 535 African captives it delivered to the “Spanish Mainland” from the Bight of Benin. While the Fortune had purchased some 190 from the port of Bonny in the Bight of Biafra, stopping in Kingston prior to traveling on to Panama in 1754. Finally, even more emblematic of the overall trade, particularly to Cartagena and

354 ACC. Protocolos, PN. Tomo 28, Año 1733; folios 16-22. For a sense of the extremely high local demand follow the rapid dispersal of these captives in Ibid., 28-48v, 50, 65-70v, 72, 75v, 80-80v, 83v, 86-87v, 98v-100, 176v, 179, 198-201, 204v, 207, 213v, 206-208.
Panama, the *Jonge Issac* delivered some 514 African captives to the Spanish Main in 1758 after having made purchases in the Winward, Ivory, Gold, and Benin Coasts.\(^{355}\)

Thus, contrary to conventional wisdom, some New World ports were marked by greater diversity than others because the slave trade changed over time and because of the greater diversity of slave trading companies, whose ships docked in their harbors. Cartagena’s position in the transatlantic market economy produced a “randomizing” effect for ethnic Africans. During the period from 1705 to 1738, Cartagena was marked by African captives entering from four principal locations: the Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, a mixture of locations throughout Senegambia and the Windward Coasts, and Central Africa. While the period was marked by fluctuations occurring over decades, these regions overall introduced similar numbers of ethnic Africans into the region. This maintained an ethnically diverse pool of African slave laborers throughout the region.

Slave laborers were drawn from a broad cross section of locations throughout West and West Central Africa, traded at the ports of Panama and Cartagena, and then shipped into Popayán, largely by way of the Magdelana River, but also by way of the Pacific Ocean. The diversity of ethnic Africans was made evident not only in the records of slave traders, but was also marked clearly upon their skin and in their flesh. Indeed, the marriages of Clemente Arara and Ignacia casta Arara, Romano Arara and Josepha Popo were quite the rare case, as was the birth of Bernabe to Romano and Josepha. More common was the union of Ambrozio Congo and Agustina Caravalí, who gave birth to a son, Manuel.\(^{356}\)

Though lacking marriage registries for the region of Barbaocas, mining inventories reveal two patterns: marriages between Africans and Afro-Creoles or inter-ethnic marriage that feature exogamous marriages between Africans, and births of the vast majority of children from within such unions. Although there were moments when the aggregate *bozal* population could claim, in general terms, a specific region in West Africa, or specific affinity groups, it appears that most chose not to formalize such affinities through their marital arrangements. That is, by and large, marital unions and the relationships among the African-


\(^{356}\) ACC. Colonia, Sig. 10.362 (1767), folio 44.
descended population were not based upon Old-World ethnic affinities. Even in mining camps like that of
don Jacinto de Arboleda’s Quintamayó, where two African ethnicities appeared to dominate, they were often
out numbered by the presence of Afro-creoles. In the case of Quintamayó, when inventoried in 1699, the
total population numbered forty-five slave laborers, of whom thirteen were ethnic Africans (six Conga; one
Mina; one Bram; and five Luango). Though a clear Central African majority, the remaining thirty-two
captives were Afro-creoles.357 While Calavarís, Arara, Minas, Congos, Zetre all appear quite commonly,
the vast majority of those carrying these monikers were married to someone who apparently fell outside of
their culture zone.

During the eighteenth century, twenty-four percent of all children were born to a union featuring
one African and one Afro-Creole; thirty-two percent of children were born to unions of two Afro-Creoles;
twenty percent were born to single Afro-Creole women; while only four percent were born to unions
featuring two ethnic Africans carrying the same ethnic moniker or who hailed from the same culture zone;
two percent were born to Africans from distinct culture zones; while ten percent were born to single
African women. Finally, at least one percent of inventoried children were found with their fathers, and
nine percent with their single African fathers. These findings underscore the fact that despite large imports
of African slave laborers, Afro-Creoles formed a clear majority in most mining communities throughout
Barbacoas. Moreover, they suggest that Africans were not forming unions based upon Old World ethnic
affinities or with individuals from their culture zones. Rather, it seems that Africans and Afro-Creoles had
engaged and were engaging in an ethnogenic process, forming intimate bonds with those who fell outside
their ethnic group and culture zone.

Colonial society had expanded into the lowland Pacific littoral along with the proliferation of
slavery and slaveholding. New territories were conquered through the possession of additional black
bodies. Re-Africanization inaugurated a new period of wherein the new people from West Africa were
thrust upon an existing population of Africans and Afro-Creoles, with whom they married and/or formed

357 ACC. Colonia, C—I—21mn, Sig. 8742, 1699, folio 4.
lasting bonds. This is not meant to suggest, however, that something fundamentally ‘African’ could not have been at work in these communities.

When the mine of Sezego was inventoried in 1767, unlike many of the inventories, the scribe sited some very fascinating ethnographic material. In addition to ethnic monikers like Caravalí, Nongó, “Pompo”, and Zetre, it contained both titles associated with work, and at times, more common or communal names and alias. Moreover, the presence of Pio Quinto (or fifth, referring to the fifth day of the week), a young boy of seven years offers evidence of African day naming. Pio, a rare enough name on its face, was listed along with his sister, Petrona and their mother, who was none other than María Caravalí. Her ethnic moniker is associated very easily with the Akan-Caromantee conglomerate emerging out of the Bight of Benin during the mid-eighteenth century. Among other socio-cultural formations, the Akan-Caromantee ascribed to the spiritually based practices of Ifa divination, day names, and more the Igbo-associated notion of transmigration. Given María Caravalí’s age, it is likely that she emerged from the region sometime in the mid 1740s, the very moment when historian Sandra Greene tells us that connections between the Anlo-Ewe and the Yoruba or Akan speakers were taking place in West Africa.358

In addition to young Pio Quinto, one finds one finds Juan Criollo, whose alias was Bishop (Obizpo), listed shortly after Manuel Obache (Obeah?).359 Were these Afro-Creoles the spiritual leaders of the entire mining population, or had they formed their own spiritual community apart from others in the population? In either case, it is clear that ethnic Africans drawn from discrete culture groups throughout West and West-Central Africa were developing communities and cultures that were complex and based upon a range of ethnic affinities. Four likely participants in this process were: Manuel Criollo, Francisco Arara Bobo and his wife and daughter, Maria Zetre and Francisca. Manuel Criollo, one of the gang captains, a canoeist, and a “curandero de viboras” curer of vipers. In the next dwelling lived Francisco Arara Bobo along with his wife Maria Zetre and their daughter Francisca.360 It would seem that the

358 Antonio Cufi (meaning Friday or sixth) a thirty year-old was listed also in the mines of Caloto, inventoried in 1757. See. ACC. Colonia JII—15su, Sig. 10.282, folio 11.
359 ACC. Colonia JII-18, Sig. 10.362 (1767), folio 41v-42.
360 ACC. Colonia JII—18su, Sig. 10.362 (1767), folio 38v.
descriptions of these two men speak louder than one might imagine. First, Manuel’s eminence as co-captain, canoeist, and curer suggests the prominent role that Afro-Creoles might have played in ethnogenic processes. Whether his knowledge had come from local Amerindians, various African ethnies, or some mixture of both, it seems clear that people within the community, presumably Africans and Afro-Creoles, saw Manuel as possessing curative powers. Secondly, Francisco Arara Bobo’s name, Arara—associated with people from the region of Dahomey in the Bight of Benin, and Bobo—associated with people north of the Asante state and thought to enter the slave trade from the Gold Coast, suggests the making of an identity that was perhaps sensitive to memories of one locale or another, and yet in solidarity with those emerging from more distinct West African contexts. Ultimately, the slave trade did produce a randomizing effect in the region of Barbacoas and Quito more generally. What people made of these realities could change over time. The secluded context of Barbacoas was sure to have facilitated what ever it was that people of African descent were doing socially and culturally, even if the patterns of these process were not altogether unique from those of other Africans and Afro-Creoles throughout Quito and the Americas more generally. Life in the sweltering mines of eighteenth-century Barbacoas had been hard, even if talk of freedom filled the air. And though connected and reflective of the slave experience throughout Quito, life in the north-central highlands was sure to have undertaken a different pattern and texture.

Conclusions:

In eighteenth-century Barbacoas, slavery and slave life evolved within the context of two fierce struggles—mine owners’ battles with colonial officials for the right to determine their’s and the region’s economic destiny, and citizens’ (slave, free, black, Indian and white) everyday battles to define the socio-cultural characteristics of the region. Although slaveholders and court officials ultimately reduced slave laborers to personal property, a confluence of actors and social forces undermined masters’ ability to wield absolute power. Spanish colonial law (civil and canon), masters’ conflicts with the state, and the availability of gold increased slaves’ chances at self-purchase. Maroon communities, the presence of free blacks living among slave laborers, and terror that marauding rebels and fugitives created, formed a context
where slaveholders had little choice but to form arrangements with slaves regarding their freedom and/or that of a loved one. Consequently, not only did slaves hope for freedom, they came to expect freedom.

But while regional geopolitics and slave resistance created a context for elaborate freedom arrangements, the contours of slave life were marked also by ethnic diversity. In the early eighteenth century African slaves (drawn from a broad cross section of locations throughout West Africa) entered the region in unprecedented numbers. From 1705 to 1713, most entered the region from Africa’s Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, Senegambia, and Central Africa. Between 1715 and 1722, however, they emerged from the Bight of Benin, the Gold Coast, and the Congo. Finally, between 1730 and 1738, they emerged from the Gold Coast, the Bight of Biafra, Central Africa, and the Bight of Benin. In the end, Cartagena’s position as a secondary trading port in the circum-Caribbean, which drew human cargo from a range of trading partners (Duetch, English, and French) produced a randomizing affect upon African ethnic configurations in the mines of Barbacoas and throughout Quito more generally. This made it difficult for ethnic Africans to create communities based solely or even largely upon ethnic affinities, thereby necessitating Africans’ and Afro-creoles’ engagement in ethnogenic processes.

At the close of the century, as gold outputs sustained the high levels reached in the 1780s, three realities remained: slaves continued their longstanding resistance struggles, masters continued to place greater pressure upon slaves to produce gold and provide for themselves, and Africans and Afro-Creoles continued to draw creatively upon varying ethno-cultural traditions as they produced and reproduced their culture within a highly diverse slave population.
CHAPTER 5

‘IN THE DAYS OF OUR KEEPERS’: SLAVERY AND THE CONTEXT OF ETNOGENESIS IN QUITO’S HEARTLAND, 1700-1800

On September 28, 1700, amid the noxious scents of salt water, human excrement and decaying corpses, don Gaspar de Andrade, treasurer and general administrator for the Royal African Company, and Juan Ruíz Bonifacio, the ranking Jesuit priest for all of Quito, exchanged thirty-six African captives—twenty-two men, twelve women, and two infants. For those residing in the port city of Cartagena de Indias, this transaction was quite ordinary, and no doubt for some quite insignificant. But for Jesuit operations in Quito, and for the north-central highlands in general, this exchange, followed by the group’s arrival in the kingdom’s heartland, marked the beginning of a new era. These thirty-six captives were a part of a new wave of ethnic Africans entering the North-Central highlands. Although the re-Africanization of Quito’s enslaved population had begun in earnest in the late 1680s and 1690s, African captives arriving in those years tended to arrive intermittently in groups of five, ten, and fifteen, brought in usually from Popayán or Guayaquil as the supplemental cargo of merchants carrying gold, silver, agricultural goods, books, and luxury items to the kingdom’s central marketplace. Now, in the principal decades of the eighteenth century, sizeable numbers of African captives were designated specifically for Quito north-central highland core. Upwards of 500 ethnic Africans entered the region during the first half of the century. Ironically, most of them do not appear in the marriage and baptism records of the city. Given the Jesuits large labor needs and their vigorous efforts to import ethnic Africans, it seems that most ethnic Africans imported during this era were destined for the Jesuit estate complex, and other landed estates that darted the region, leaving the city of Quito with a distinctly Afro-Creole communal formation.

361 ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 28-ix-1700, folio 1.

362 Upwards of 500 ethnic Africans entered the region during the first half of the century. Ironically, most of them do not appear in the marriage and baptism records of the city. Given the Jesuits large labor needs and their vigorous efforts to import ethnic Africans, it seems that most ethnic Africans imported during this era were destined for the Jesuit estate complex, and other landed estates that darted the region, leaving the city of Quito with a distinctly Afro-Creole communal formation.
This chapter explores the expansion of slavery in the north-central highland during the early-to-mid eighteenth century. Looking first at the rapidly increasing number of African slave laborers imported to the region, it highlights changes in slave population morphology. Quito’s era of re-Africanization was prompted by a confluence of factors. The weakening of Quito’s textile export sector, coupled with large-scale labor losses, due to Amerindian migrations, prompted Quito’s landed elite to develop agro-pastoral complexes predicated largely upon the use of African slave labor. In the city of Quito, as Amerindian numbers fell, slave laborers emerged to occupy a greater role in elite homes, in the city’s convents and monasteries and, to a lesser degree, in the city’s service and trade sectors. Despite a prolonged period of re-Africanization, however, ethnic Africans were largely missing from the city’s baptismal and marriage registries. After exploring the Afro-Creole façade that covered what was in reality a widely diverse African-descended population, the chapter turns to explore lived experiences of slaves in the city of Quito as seen through their attempts to acquire and maintain freedom. From there, the chapter shifts to the context of slave life on the Jesuit estates of the north-central highlands. From 1700 to 1750 the texture and tenor of slave life remained relatively constant. But after 1767, when the crown expelled the Jesuits (who up until that point had been the largest owner of slaves in all of the audiencia) from all of its American colonies, the state became the largest slaveholder—a title filled with duties and challenges that the state proved ill-equipped to undertake. Changing socio-economic conditions placed new burdens upon slave laborers. In fact, at the very moment when most scholars argue that slaves could find a juridical or discursive opening for their freedom (coartación) and mistreatment (sevicia) claims, the state emerged to place greater pressure upon slaves to live apart from their loved ones, produce more goods with fewer resources, and do without the concessions of the past—holidays and Sundays off. Put differently, in the midst of Bourbon reforms, which included slave codes admonishing slaveholders of their duties to their bondsmen and women, the state, the largest slaveholder in all of Quito, became the emblem of the wayward slaveholder. Even as the state enforced the Code of 1789, which limited corporal punishment, and required that masters feed, cloth, and educate their slaves in the faith, the state took on the responsibility of removing slave laborers from their presumed “Christian example” of their Jesuit owners, disrupting communities, households, and families, and placing them in conditions where they received less care and
lived under greater duress. Ironically, state policies were largely responsible for the Quiteños inability to compete in the textile sector at the beginning of the century. True to form the state would have a particular impact upon markets and lived experiences at the end of the century as well.

**The Decline of the Obraje Complex and the Rise of a Quasi-Plantation Society**

In the heartland of the kingdom, the close of the seventeenth century thereby brought with it a series of socio-economic disruptions that sparked a new period of “demographic chaos,” signaling a distinct moment in the life cycle of this Spanish American slave society. Of note was the decline of the obraje complex, Quito’s chief export sector predicated upon the production and sale of coarse woolen cloth (*paños, jergas, and bayetas*). Receding markets in Peru and Bolivia had curtailed the demand for Quiteño cloth in the south. Eroding Quiteño obrajeros’ market share was also the development of textile mills closer to the mines in the provinces of Conchucos, Huaylas, Cajamarca, Cusco, and Cochabamba. Now, as the prices of woolen textiles declined in the principal decades of the eighteenth century, royal policies and local endeavors would serve to diminish greatly what had once driven Quito’s north-central highland economy.

The fall of the Spanish transatlantic fleet system (*systema de flotas y galeones*) amid the War of Spanish Succession (1700-1716) left the markets of Portobelo and Cartagena vulnerable to the introduction of European textiles, primarily at the hands of the French who were in a fine position geopolitically and economically to exploit certain niches within Spanish American markets. As the French made inroads into Spanish American markets through increased royal concessions, local operatives facilitated French

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363 The so-called “sweatshop of the Andes” had required that large groups of laborers (mostly Amerindians) raise sheep, collect wool and turn wool into finished textiles by first preparing the wool, which involved soaking it a mixture of water and urine (ammonia) to remove undesired materials like grease and dirt, rinsing and drying the wool, combing, spinning, dyeing and weaving it into textile patterns, and finishing the *paños* a high-quality textile, made typically of indigo and larger looms for the more refined of tastes, and the *bayetas and jergas*, both textiles of lower quality, woven on smaller looms for a more rustic product. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito*, 60-61.

364 Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito*, 27.

365 Ibid., 28-29.

366 Ibid.
contrabandists’ entrée into these markets. Owing to French merchants’ ability to provide a range of European textiles at varying prices, French contrabandists were able to offer products with considerable appeal among Peruvian colonials. Since these contrabandists had circumvented royal checkpoints, and had, thus, avoided commercial taxes, they could then sell high quality cloth at lower prices.\(^{367}\) This diminished greatly the demand for Quiteño woolens.\(^{368}\) Although the Bourbon dynasty reasserted its control over the Pacific markets by the second quarter of the century, royal policies continued to undermine Quiteños’ ability to compete in the Lima market, this time, by easing trade restrictions, thereby ensuring the flow of cheap European textiles into American markets.\(^{369}\)

Complicating matters further was a rapidly declining and increasingly mobile highland-Amerindian population. From the 1690s to the 1730s the Amerindian population suffered severe losses as result of epidemics compounded by a spate of natural disasters. Amerindians who did not die in the midst of these crises fled the urban center of Quito and its surrounding corregimientos for areas in the south-central highlands and the coastal district of Guayaquil. While the north-central highland Amerindian population showed modest signs of growth, their numbers would not return to their late seventeenth-century (c.1670) peak number of 284 – 355,000.\(^{370}\) According to historian Suzanne Alchon, upwards of 3,000 Amerindians had died in Quito alone between April 1692 and December 1694. Death tolls were so staggering that several priests related that they had been overwhelmed by deaths and, thus, unable to account for them all. Among dead, Amerindian children outnumbered their parents. Children were, in fact,

\(^{367}\) Ibid.


\(^{369}\) Ibid., 32

\(^{370}\) Historian Kenneth Andrien relates that, “ In Riobamba, for example, absenteeism reached 50-60 percent in most communities by the early eighteenth century. Migration from the north-central highlands continued to rise over the course of the next century. The central-highland towns of Riobamba and Ambato lost between twelve and twenty-three percent of their population between 1779 and 1825.” See. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito*, 39; Powers, *Andean Journeys*; and Suzanne Alchon, *Native Society and Disease*, 80-81.
twice as likely to be stricken in death as their parents or other adults.\footnote{Ibid., 97} Compounding these losses were Amerindian responses to economic depression and increased elite demands.\footnote{Andrien, \textit{The Kingdom of Quito}, 67.}

Part of Amerindians’ push factor was not only the loss of jobs, but also the significantly lower tax assessments and the \textit{mit’a} (draft labor system) exemption they received once they acquired legal emigrant status (\textit{forastero}) in their new communities. For many, migration affectively took them off the tax rolls, since royal officials often failed in their efforts to locate indigenous migrants. Those who could find work in the prosperous zone of the south-central sierra settled there, while those who cold not migrated throughout the kingdom, laboring within the city of Quito as well within the landed estate complexes of the north-central sierra.\footnote{Ibid., 100-102.}

As \textit{obraje} owners sought to diversify their operations, initially in hopes of improving their market share of Lima’s textile imports, many turned to producing foodstuffs and agricultural goods for the intra-colonial market. Such endeavors required steady labor supplies in the form of individuals who could be forced legally to remain in one location, be mortgaged in times of need, and sold during moments of economic despair. According to historian Kenneth J. Andrien, “the most prosperous \textit{obrajes} during the eighteenth century were the larger privately owned mills, situated on rural estate complexes.” “Materials, labor, and administrative expenses” he relates, “accounted for approximately 67-75 percent of the cost of producing \textit{paño azul}. A large rural \textit{obraje} complex could meet most of these costs without having to expend any specie.”\footnote{Ibid., 37-40.} As the landed elite continued to struggle in these endeavors, many realized what slaveholders throughout the Americas knew—purchasing a specified number African slave laborers,

\footnote{From 1700 to 1730, food shortages and epidemics, cost the city many lives. A bout of influenza hit the city in 1708-09; dysentery struck in 1713, and at least one unnamed disease afflicted residents of the north-central highlands between 1724 and 1726. Amerindians responded to these epidemics and sicknesses in the manner they always. Those who did not die migrated away from Spanish settlements. Ironically, disease and death, the two constants in slaves’ journey, now maintained a space for them within the socio-economic milieu of the north-central highlands. Ibid., 100-102.}
depending upon the size of the operation, could provide agricultural workers, who (if managed properly) might ultimately pay for themselves.

Indeed, African slave laborers fit neatly within the designs of large estate complexes that featured obrajes, estancias (agricultural operations), and trapiches (sugar cane plantations). From Ibarra to Riobamba estate owners acknowledged this by purchasing an unprecedented number of African captives. None, however, did it with the speed and efficiency of the Jesuits, who quickly became the single largest slaveholder in all of the audiencia. Shaping Quito’s enslaved community were ethnic Africans and Afro-Creoles from throughout the Diaspora. Consequently, Quito became the site of a cosmopolitan African-descended population in the early years of the eighteenth century.

The early eighteenth-century also brought increasing numbers of slave laborers to the city of Quito as well. Over the course of the seventeenth century Quito’s economy had centered upon the city’s prominence as a manufacturing, commercial and administrative center. Ongoing public works projects, skilled jobs and domestic service, not to mention elite’s penchant for status troupes, kept slave laborers employed. Early purchases by monasteries and convents are revealing as well, highlighting the early and critical role that slave laborers played in Quito’s service sector, its “moral economy,” and the speculative value that slave laborers carried. While some enslaved men must have worked within the city’s “underground service economy,” work contracts involving slave laborers were often so meager that they did not warrant cost of the notary.

375 Andrien, The Kingdom of Quito, 44.

376 Some early clerical and elite purchases include: don Juan de Albalos’s sale of María Josepha (35 year-old) criolla de nación…to Dr. don Sebastian Perez de Ubiñus See. ANHQ, Protocolos, No. Act. 250, folios 433-434v; doña Vioantget de Miranda viuda de don Antonio Onaqoiha sale of María Conga, who was four months pregnant to doña Julia Roza de Sossa for 500 pesos, Ibid., 257v; and the sale of the Orden del Santiago of Joseph Matambo for 400 pesos. See ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, Act. 300, folio 204.

377 Andrien, The Kingdom of Quito, 46.
Captive Bodies, Worldly Origins, and Jesuit Fathers

On December 3, 1701, don Joseph Blaco García reserved and purchased fifty-four of the one hundred and four slave laborers that don Joan Damian de la Torre had purchased and planned to sell in the region of Popayán. Purchased under the asiento of the Royal African Company, all had been branded with the seal of the company and the crown. Although the corresponding documents do not feature the captives’ perceived ethnicity, slave trading data shows that the group would have emerged from the Gold and Slave Coasts of West Africa. Much like the visita de despacho cited in chapter four, careful attention was paid to ethnic scarification, wounds, and scars that resulted from smallpox.

That a little over half of a shipment had been earmarked for the Quito market was quite telling. Within one year a total of ninety-one slave laborers had been imported into the region, and many more were in route. Their varying origins and the circuitous routes they traveled offers some insights into the changing composition of the north-central sierra slave population and the expansive quality that Quito’s slave market had taken on in the early years of the century. Indeed, the Kingdom of Quito, particularly, its north central highland core, now occupied the minds of traders and interlocutors working the Cartagena-Panama-South Sea corridor as never before.

In 1713, for example, don Andres Martines de Castro sold five slaves to don Roque Garcia Salgado, who in turn contracted with don Bartolome de Alba Yvarrientos in the city of Panama to transport five slave laborers from the Playa Amaral and sell them somewhere between the ports of Barbacoas and Guayaquil.

378 While the document does not cite their perceived ethnicity, it includes a general description of each captive. Much like the despacho cited in chapter 4, careful attention was paid to scarification, wounds and blemishes due to smallpox. (ANHQ, NP, Act. 250, folios 289v-291).

379 Although ethnicity was often less of a concern citing bodily conditions was almost always a matter of course in sales, particularly those sales featuring bozales. Knowledge of any potential “defect” (tachas) mattered greatly when determining the good faith exercised by the seller, and the extent to which the seller might be responsible for sicknesses or problems arising in the life of the slave after the sale.
Although Salgado had given Ybarrientos power of attorney to sell the captives as far away as Lima, both, Barbacoas and Guayaquil were short distances from Panama and a quick sale would bring both the men a rapid return on their investments. Surely, Salgado would not object to receiving payment earlier than expected. Yet, as promising as his prospects for a quick profit must have appeared, Salgado would have to wait much longer than he expected.\(^{380}\)

Anticipating better profits, don Bartolome de Alba Ybarriento decided to bypass Barbacoas for the port city of Guayaquil, where he stopped to consider the money he might loose if he did not continue to the market in Lima. Given the prevalence of contraband slave trading in coastal Barbacoas as well as officials’ ongoing attempts to police the region, it is little wonder that he by passed Barbacoas. While these captives might have constituted legal merchandise, the contraband market was sure to cut into his profit margins.

But as fate, or perhaps markets, would have it, Bartolome’s brother, don Estaban de San Ybarrientos, was living in the town of Ibarra at the very epicenter of the burgeoning Jesuit estate complex. Whether the Ybarrientos brothers had plans to sell those five captives to the Jesuit operation remains unclear. Salgado had sold one of the slave laborers to his brother while leaving the other four in his care. In either case, it seems that the growing demands in Quito’s north-central highland market was simply too hard to resist, as Bartolome never took the group to Lima. Now, as never before, there were handsome profits to be had in Quito’s highland slave market, albeit with some difficulty and risk of great loss. But for most merchants and interlocutors, the profit potential must have appeared to outweigh the risks.

Similar to the purchase they made in 1700, the Jesuits often opted to bypass middlemen like the Ybarrientos brothers. In 1722, they purchased Maria de la Cruz (described as a 22 year old woman “\textit{de nación Guinea}”) directly from her previous owner in Guayaquil.\(^{381}\) Now María was headed to the north central highland court, no doubt with others whom Father Francisco Ruiz had purchased for the Jesuits.\(^{382}\)

\(^{380}\) ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 2, Exp. 16-1-1713

\(^{381}\) María de la Cruz, whose moniker “Guinea” betrays only that she was an ethnic African, since the Upper Guinea was by this time almost completely out of the slave trading business, had been the slave of Rosa de Solarte, who had purchased the woman from doña Ignasia de Texada in 1715. ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 2, exp. 4-11-1722, folios,1-3.

\(^{382}\) The Jesuits continued their efforts to purchase slave laborers well into the middle of the century. In 1743, for example, they documented with the scribe of Quito their purchase of Phelipe Santiago, a 19-year-old Afro-Creole born
Seven years later the Jesuits purchased Bonifacio, an eighteen year-old who had been working during the previous ten months on the Colegio Maximo’s Nebli hacienda. Consequently, they paid a mere 250 pesos for him, tax-free.\textsuperscript{383}

As these sales suggest, Quito’s emerging slave population hailed from all over the Atlantic World, most emanating first from the Gold and Slave Coasts of West Africa. Note the 1710 sale of Salbador (24 years-of-age \textit{de nación Arara}), his wife Theresa (24 years-of-age \textit{de nación Popo}) and their son, Manuel (an Afro-Creole of two years and ten months) from a Popayán elite to doña Marriana Guerrero De Salar.\textsuperscript{384}

In addition to these Gold and Slave Coast African captives, others emerge from the region, including: Juana de la Crus (a thirteen-year-old “Mina” girl); Catharina de casta Mandinga;\textsuperscript{385} Domingo \textit{de nación Popo} sold along with María \textit{de nación Lucumi};\textsuperscript{386} and the sale of Francisco \textit{Arara} (28 years of age), Antonio Basofia \textit{de nación Arara}, Casimiro \textit{Arara}, and María Colorada “\textit{de la mesma nación}.”\textsuperscript{387} Random sampling of Quito’s notary protocolos for the period between 1692 and 1750 reveals that in 229 sales of slave laborers, 150 were ethnic Africans.\textsuperscript{388}

\textsuperscript{383} ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, Act. 330, folio 238.

\textsuperscript{384} ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, DOL, Act. 304, folios 143-145.

\textsuperscript{385} Purchased by the Rev. Padre of the Order de los Predicadores purchased from doña Theresa de Panto la Española, who in turn had purchased her from Captain don Antonio de Falabarria, vecino de la ciudad de Guayaquil in 1702 for 525 pesos. See. ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, GL, Act. 302, folios 999v-1002v. The Dominicans provide a useful example of the extent to which slave laborers helped fuel Quito’s moral economy, as well as trade in the city more generally. Note the purchase they make of an enslaved ‘mulato’ boy named Manuel in 1704. Valued at 300 pesos, the Dominicans exchange the boy for 100 mules. See. ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, OM, Act. 250, folios 125v-126.

\textsuperscript{386} Entering the region from Guayaquil in 1703, these captives were traded for a total of 910 pesos de ocho reales. See. ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, OM, Act. 250, folios 287.

\textsuperscript{387} This group arrived in the context of a subsequent shipment of African captives from the Caribbean port of Cartagena, purchased by Joan de Corral and sold in Popayán in November of 1702, and sent to Quito by power of attorney for sale shortly thereafter. Ibid., folios 303-303v.

\textsuperscript{388} ANHQ, Protocolos.
While most slave laborers arrived in the north-central sierra entered by way of Popayán, many spending time in mining towns like Buga or Santa María, other slave laborers, such as Josepha (25 years, de nación Loango) and María ([same nation] “otra nombrada”), emerged from West Central African by way of the city of La Plata. Many more emerged from the port city of Guayaquil. Still others arrived in the kingdom’s heartland from Puerto Viejo (a port town north of Guayaquil), the village of Riobamba, the Asiento de Latacunga, Santa Fe de Bógota, and the “Portuguese Empire.” In short, Quiteños, with the help of itinerant merchants and large-scale slaveholders like the Jesuits, were building a slave population that was truly Diasporic, if not cosmopolitan. To the extent that one could speak of a “black world” or a “black Atlantic,” slave laborers in the north-central highlands were perhaps one of the best indications of it. The culture and worldliness that characterized Quito’s enslaved must have contributed to slaves’ ability to maneuver the socio-political matrix of Spanish colonial society. Africans and Afro-Creoles living and working in Quito must have known a great deal about the Atlantic, circum-Caribbean, and the greater Spanish empire. But for all of the diversity that characterized the group of slave laborers entering the region, ethnic Africans are conspicuously missing from the in marriage and baptismal of El Sagrario.

389 ANHQ, NP, Act.250, (1702-1705), folios 177-178v.

390 See the sales of: Luis de nación Portugues in 1713, María de casta Conga (30 years) from a master in Riobamba in 1717; Rossa de Casta Mina (23 years of age) from the “city” of Puerto Viejo in 1718; Baltassera, a native of the “city” of Puerto Viejo (14 years of age); Francisco Criollo in the city of Santa Fee (24 years of age). See, ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, GL, Act. 302, folios 947v-949; ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaría Primera, No. Act. 250, (31-julio-1703), folios 177-178v; ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, Act. 313, (18-diziembre—1717), folio 524v; ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaria Tercera, No. Act. 29, (6 de Abril 1710), folio 31;

391 Early/Elite and Clerical Purchases: R.P. Pres. G. don Manuel Aguinal of Order de Pres. Al Cap. Don Antonio Vera Pissarro, in the pueblo of Santigo de Marchache within the jurisdiction. Antonio 4 years of age. 200 pesos. See ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, Act.312, f.633; Don Alberto Martíz de Prado (merchant of Quito) to don Francisco Atanasio Ruiz a slave named Joachin de Nacion Mina 26 years of age. (450 pesos). He had just purchased the slave in Popayán a year earlier. See ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, No Act. 324 (1723-1730) f.27v; On April 23, 1727, Doña Martina de San Josepha, a nun from the Limpia Concepción Convent Ana Vitoria 15-16 years of age from Ibarra. See.See Act. 330 f. 20b. On 15 August 1730 Fray Raymundo de la Cruz del Ordan de Presbiteros Purchased a mulatto slave named Juan de Buga 18 years of age a criollo de Buga for 152 pesos. See ANHQ, Protolocos, NP, Act.330, f. 349; See also. Doña Manuela de Santa Marina religiosa de Santa Clara sale to Pedro Caceres del orden Predicadores nombrada Thomasa crilla de esta ciudad de hedad de treinta años poco maqs a menos 400 pesos. ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaria Tercera, No. Act. 41, (Fecha 28 de Octubre de 1733) folios 283-287v.

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An Afro-Creole Façade:

The marriage of Manuel Balensuela to Magdalena Balensuela (both de casta Congo) on April 1, 1761 was an anomaly of sizeable proportions. First, inventories and marriage registries from the region revealed that, much like the seventeenth century, ethnic Africans of this period were not typically in a position to allow ethnicity to be the overriding determinate in their selection of spouses. Obviously, as Manuel and Magdalena demonstrate, some managed to accomplish this; most did not, however. Still, the marriage of Manuel and Magdalena was unique in yet another way: they were among the few ethnic Africans appearing in the marriage and baptismal registries of the Parish. In fact, ethnic Africans only appear in the unions of: Manuel Bran and María Joseph Cruz (1704); Thomás Colisto (negro Congo) and Josepha Grijolba (1766); and Luis de villa Rocha (Congo) and María Antonio Sanches (color parda) in 1766.

While this might suggest that ethnic Africans had discarded ethnic monikers as they sought to formalize their relations, taking on instead Spanish surnames, the prevalence of ethnic monikers such as: Popo, Arara, Lucumi, Congo, Mina, and the occasional Zetre all suggest otherwise. Even as late as 1731, elites such as don Alberto Mathías del Pradeo were purchasing ethnic Africans. Dropping ethnic labels, in fact, would have offered ethnic Africans almost no advantage when appearing before church provisors. According to historian Herman Bennett, for ethnic Africans residing in seventeenth-century Mexico City, the use of these labels allowed them to represent themselves in a manner that resonated with

392 El Sagrario, Libro de Matrimonios.
393 El Sagrario, Libros de Matrimonios.
394 In addition, there was doña Juana María’s purchase of Michaela Nieva, a fifteen year-old girl, described as “de casta Cetra”. ANHQ, Protocolos, Notaría Tercera, No. Act. 41, folio 276.
395 ANHQ, Protocolos, NP, DO, Act. 334 (Tomo II), folios 643v-644v.
colonial church officials. That is, the intentional self-aggregation of discrete culture groups from Central Africa, for example, facilitated the legitimacy of marital petitions. Slave laborers who claimed to have known one another while in the region of “Angola” appeared usually with four witnesses who testified that they knew the couple while in the same “land.” Long-term familiarity underscored the credibility of a couple’s claim. Ethnic labels served, then, as code words or the touchstones in the process of creating credible identities and, therefore, valid marriage petitions. Consequently, there is no reason to think that claims presented by an Arara seeking marriage with an Afro-Criolla from Cartagena, for example, would be viewed as any less compelling by Quiteño officials, provided that their stories meshed with the history of the diaspora to Quito. Such individuals could have made the case, along with other witnesses, that they had known one another while in Cartagena, Guayaquil, or where ever their story began.

Quito’s Afro-Creole façade was largely an outgrowth of the fact that people of African descent used the few monetary resources they had first to purchase and defend their freedom, or that of their offspring. Formalizing intimate relationships with the help of the church was a costly endeavor. Moreover, many of the ethnic Africans who arrived in the region lived and worked on landed estates that darted the north-central highlands. This took them away from the urban center. Thus, if they married, they did so within these estates or in the parishes of the corresponding towns. Still, in eighteenth-century Quito, church marriages seem to have been largely the preserve of free blacks. The marriage registries of Quito’s central parish church reveal 181 marriages involving people of African descent between the years of 1700 and 1816. Among these, thirty feature free black women. Free black women were notable as well. Eleven married free black women, one married a mestiza, and twelve married Andeans. Apparently, enslaved black men also preferred women with free status. At least nine slave men married indigenous women during the period. Marriage was not only a method of achieving upward mobility, it was a way of signaling that increased status and freedom had been achieved. Parda women, for example, were more likely to marry free black males or those whose status trumped the average negro libre. Six pardas, for example married montañes men, while at least two enslaved pardas married montañes men. Similarly, free men carrying of the pardo caste tended to marry women of a higher casta status. Eleven enslaved men, for example, married montañes women. Apparently, montañes women were so discriminating in their spousal
choices that only one, Joaquina Carabajal, married an enslaved man named Josef (1802). Likewise, only two montañes males were married to enslaved women, both of whom were described as pardas. Thus, although slave laborers and Africans alike, valued marriage, most, it seems, lacked the resources to acquire freedom and have a church wedding.

Nevertheless, those who married in spite of their limited resources and lack of freedom, defended vigorously their right to enjoy the conjugal bond and care for their children. Joachin and Ysabel Congo serve as a fine example. In 1749, they appeared before colonial authorities in search of new owners in order to protect their conjugal rights. Joachin stated that after looking for a new master, he had identified one who was willing to pay 750 pesos for him and his wife, but current master don Estevan de Cuesta (the sheriff) had raised their price to 1,200 pesos, which according to Joachin was against the kingdom’s overarching sense of justice, or comun equidad. The extra 450 pesos were to defray the cost of items that Joachin had allegedly stolen from his master. According to Joachin, however, he had only taken some books that he sold for 15 pesos because he and his wife had nearly starved to death because of the inhumane treatment they had received at the hands of don Estevan. He claimed that he had no choice but to resort to taking the books, given that his master was so merciless that he had only given them two reales and “un medio carnero.” As a result of a merciless master who had failed to “fed, clothe and educate them in the faith,” Joachin and Isabel were in bad shape. Therefore, raising their price would constitute yet another injustice.

Estevan insisted that he had not mistreated the captives, demanding his right to sell them for a just price. While he might be forced to sell them, he insisted, he could not be forced to sell them below their value, which according to him was at least 1,000 pesos, given that Joachin had stolen from him. Insisting upon his property rights, and his authority in this matter, Estevan sought to bolster his argument further by stating that he could get a good price for the two captives in the mines of Barbacoas. Joachin’s efforts underscore ethnic Africans’ efforts to both enjoy the privileges of a church wedding and acquire freedom.

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396 El Sagrario, Libro de Matrimonios.
397 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 4, Exp. 7-x-1749.
Baptismal registries reveal both a similar paucity of ethnic Africans and the prevalence of free black babies. In only one instance is it clear the child in question if the “legitimate” child of two ethnic Africans, in this case Francisco Angola and Dominga Congo, who baptized their child on March 23, 1701. Illegitimacy rates were especially high. Between 1695 and 1760 El Sagrario’s parish priest baptized 115 children of African descent. On seventy-seven occasions the father was not present, and in at least thirty-seven instances the mother was absent. Overall, the El Sagrario’s priest documented only sixteen “legitimate” births.

Similar to seventeenth-century slave laborers, eighteenth-century slave parents selected godparents from among the slave population. Although elites served as slave godparents, this was a rare occurrence that took place in moments of necessity. Among the eighty-one children baptized between 1700 and 1760, forty-two held slave status. Of these, eleven had an elite male, usually the owner, as their sole godparent. Likewise, eight female slaveholders served as the sole godparent. In almost every instance, the reason for this arrangement was the absence of the biological parents. For slaveholders, baptizing the offspring of the female captives offered additional evidence of their legal entitlement to the enslaved infant.

Almost all ensured that their slaves were baptized, even if it meant doing so twice. On February 4, 1696, for example, Monseñor Dr. Juan Gonzalez Gordillo from Latacunga presented the young infant María for baptism in the parish church of El Sagrario. Fray Gonzalez had already baptized little María in the presence of her mother, Ariana Cidana and her indigenous midwife, Angelina Yndio. Young María’s first baptism was more of a spiritual observance, “en caso de necesidad (durante) el mes que nacio,” meant to protect her soul if she died before the formal baptism. The concept of original held that sin was inherited naturally at birth. Sin existed, therefore, even within the hearts of the most precious and innocent of humans. Baptizing her in Quito, however, served two purposes, religious compliance and legal documentation.

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398 El Sagrario, Libro de Bautismos.
399 El Sagrario, Libro de Bautismos.
400 Ibid.
Nevertheless, the documentary achievements of official baptisms worked both ways. The thirty-nine free black parents who baptized their children must have known this. (In nearly every one of these instances the godparent was also a free black person.) Fortunately, given the sizeable presence of free black with the corresponding dearth of enslaved Africans descended people (both African and Afro-Creole) it seems clear that African descended people had placed a premium on freedom first, secondary to that was institutionalizing intimate relationships through church marriages. Forging and defending freedom were both costly initiatives that required all the resources that many slaves could muster.

Thus, three patterns and processes combine to offer the most plausible explanation for the relative absence of ethnic Africans in Quito’s eighteenth-century parish records even in the midst of an influx in bozales: (1) elites, such as the Jesuits, purchased a disproportionate number of ethnic Africans for their estate-complex, (2) few slaves were able to afford both a church wedding and freedom, and (3) high rates of illegitimacy among free and enslaved black mothers suggest that black women worked in the city’s sex trade. Above all, however, it seems that the quest for freedom was the ultimate goal for most African-descended people living in Quito. As blacks worked to find their way to freedom, they entered into a series of arrangements aimed at facilitating this process. In short, freedom and upward mobility informed blacks’ decisions when choosing to marry or not to marry, and, perhaps more importantly, who to marry. Free blacks, male and female, chose free spouses, but they were not the only ones. Whenever possible, it seems that slaves married freed people too, even if they rarely had the opportunity to do so. Freedom, it seems, was the reason to struggle, to labor, and often the reason why some slave women chose to “love” elite white and mestizo males. Thus, in the actions they undertook and the words they uttered, enslaved and would-be free blacks of the era, made freedom the watchword of the greater community. Although they did not relate one another or seek to access this goal in the same way, it seems clear that blacks had begun an antislavery campaign, one that was often quiet, while at other moments quite loud and obvious.
Finding Freedom

Once acquired, freedom was not necessarily easy to maintain. Many free blacks, like Leonardo and Franciscsa Baluez of Latacunga, came to the courts accompanied by free parents and loved ones endeavoring to maintain their lives of liberty. Leonardo testified,

Here in the carsel publica at the behest of Maestro Fray Andres de Araujo of the Dominican Order, and I am [not] his slave, being free or as I am and not a subject of servitude as it states in the authentic clauses of the testament that I presented to him with every solemnity …which supports executing the [said clause] of María de Valuarte y Aguilar, now deceased, returning me [to my] original [state].

During the proceedings Leonardo and Francisca’s father, Juan Baluerde (vecino de Quito y residente de Latacunga) testified that María Baluarde had freed both his children in two clauses of her last will and testament. In addition to bringing a number of witnesses to corroborate their testimony, they produced a copy of María’s 1681 will, which stated that both children (at the time 8 and 10 years of age respectively) “should not be sold under any circumstances, but should enjoy the same freedoms that any other free person enjoyed.”

401 ANHQ, Caja 1. Exp. 15-iv-1707. For other examples see the cases of Augustín Menza ANHQ Caja 2 Exp. 15-xii-1716; María Josepha Guerro and Ines Guerro—mother and daughter captives, Exp. 29-vii-1718; Manuel de Adarbe Exp. 18-vi-1720; Exp. 113-v-1722; Exp. 27-iii-1726; Francisca Montero Exp. 13-i-1730; Andres Dominguez with Phelipa Thomero ANHQ Caja 3. Exp. 5-v-1730; Josepha Porto Carrero Exp. 26-v-1732; María de Losas and her children Exp. 9-xi-1737; Exp. 8-x-1744; Cazetaro de Guerra with wife and child Exp. 3-xi-1744; Maria Nicolasa along with children and cousins in ANHQ Caja 4, Exp. 12-xii-1746; and a host of others including ANHQ, Caja 4. Exp. 9-v-1750; Exp. 3-viii-1750; Exp. 25-viii-1750; Exp. 6-ii-1751; and Geronima Nates’ case in Caja 5. Exp. 22-iii-1753.

402 “Preso en la carsel publica a pensamiento del Maestro Fray Andres de Araujo de Orden de Predicades y [no] soy su esclavo siendo libre o como lo soy y ni sujeto a servidumbre como consta de las clausulas de este testamentos autentica que de Maestro con casa solemnidad resesaria ortogada por de la María de Valuarte y Aguilar ya difunta para que se me vuelara original…” (ANHQ Esclavos Caja 1, Exp. 15-iv-1707, folios, 1-1v).

403 Ibid, folios 5-7.
Leonardo and Francisca’s case did not hinge solely upon the validity of María’s will, however. Like many others they further bolstered claims of libertad with complaints about sevicia. They offer, therefore, not merely a comment on the challenges of freedom, but the real lives of slave laborers. Francisca, like many women of color, presented her case, saying,

Now I am in the house of deposita. I generally use the table of the captain don Gregorio Matheos and he has given me over 100 lashes and has pulled out my hair and I have learned of his vile [plan] to dispatch me to Barbacoas not observing the law.404

Apparently her testimony was used to further demonstrate the injustice meted out to them. Not only had they been forced into bondage, Gregorio had denied them the basic rights accorded to slaves. Moreover, Gregorio was threatening to send her to one of the worse places for a Quiteña captive—Barbacoas.

Gregorio argued, however, that he had purchased Francisca legally and contended that he knew nothing of the previous owner (María Valuerde). He insisted, moreover, that Francisca should be made to return with him or present documents substantiating her claims; something that was impossible from Gregorio’s perspective, given that he knew that he had a bill of sale, documenting that he purchased her for 350 pesos from General de la Cauallería don Feliz de Luna in Ibarra on 16 May 1706. The court, however, found in favor of Leonardo and Francisca, declaring them free and all sales null and void, saying nothing of don Gregorio’s 350 pesos.405

Juan Beroes (natural del reino de Portugal) sued his master because even after he paid for his freedom at the real caja of Cuenca his master refused him the carta de libertad.406 Two years later, however, Antonio Botín (negro libre residente de Quito) of Quito requested to have a “certified statement of freedom.”407 Antonio was the former slave of the now deceased doña Michaela de Ayala (widow of the President of San Nicolas del Palenque, don Augustin Botín) who had issued him his freedom in the

404 “Ahora estando yo en la casa del depocita que uso general mesa lo el capitán don Gregorio Matheos y me [h]a dado mas de cien asotes y me a quistado el pelo y me tiene enseñada con miserable desparcharme a Barbacoas no guardando el fuero del manato.” (Ibid, folio 16).

405 Ibid, folio 31.

406 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 4, Exp. 9-v-1750.

407 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 5, Exp. 31-I-1752.
presence of don Pedro Antonio de Ribera, teniente de Corregedor. The problem occurred because she had failed to sign the will and testament (por falta del sellado y para en ningun tiempo ni lugar) prior to her passing. After a lengthy trial and investigation Botín was awarded a certified carta de libertad. Yet for many other captives, justice was not as swift, and for others it never came.

In 1731, for example, Santiago, an enslaved Afro-Quiteño, enlisted Doctor don Diego Suaraes de Villamar in his case against Suaraes’s nephew, Miguel de Neras. Santiago had been in the carsel publico (public jail—in this instance custody or deposito) for eight days because Miguel was prolonging the process by demanding more than 300 pesos (Santiago’s value) of his new master judge Antonio Lastarno.⁴⁰⁸

In a similar case, María Thello de Menesses initiated a lawsuit against her master, don Manuel del Sandas. She was depositada in the monastery of Santa Chatherina of Quito, and claimed that her master had punished her severely. She had therefore left his household in search of a new master. Her problem was that in addition to the challenges of seeking new master, mother Pricora, the director of the cloister, had thrown her out of the monastery. María’s saga was a sorded one that involved her master’s wife punishing her with “many lashings,” and placing her in the Santa Martha convent of Quito. At this point, however, she was requesting that the justices implore mother Pricora to allow her to remain in the Santa Chatherina’s custody. This was critical for María, not only because she needed shelter and protection, but also because her husband, with whom she had a child, worked for the monastery.⁴⁰⁹

Others fought for the freedom to enjoy their conjugal bond. In 1748, for example, Santiago, a slave of don Alexos Gonzales de Mendoza, argued for his marital rights.⁴¹⁰ Santiago was married to Antonia Flores, whom he met while in the highland town of Ambato with his master. According to Santiago, his master had placed his marriage in jeopardy by forcing him to travel long distances, which he insisted was “violating human laws, ecclesiastical laws, and holy orders which circumscribe the conjugal

⁴⁰⁸ ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 3, Exp. 16-iv-1731.
⁴⁰⁹ ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 3, Exp. 20-vii-1741.
⁴¹⁰ ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 4, Exp. 26-ix-1748.
union.” His wife’s master, doña Ignacia Flores, was willing to purchase him for 300 pesos, but Alexo Gonzales—Santiago’s master—stood in their way. According to Santiago his master was “a harsh man, excessive in his punishments (which normally meant frequent whippings) [who] feeds his servants very little, administering food and clothing scarcely and late as a result I have been exposed to necessity while in his authority.”

Not only was don Alexo denying Santiago and Antonia their right to enjoy their union, he was a physically abusive and negligent master. Ultimately the high court found in favor of Santiago and Antonia, and after several appeals concerning the Santiago’s value, don Alexo was forced to sell Santiago for 300 pesos—his appraised value.

Like Joachin and Isabel, the couple featured at the beginning of this section, other captives who sought new masters had to face the dual challenge of both proving that their situation merited that they be sold to a new master and fighting their current owner’s attempts at extorting more money from the pending sale. María Gutrudis de la Cruz, for example, faced similar challenges when she tried to intervene on behalf of herself and her family.

On March 5, 1751, María appeared before the high court stating that two months earlier Dr. don Joseph Cabezera y Banda had sold her and four other slaves to don Nicolas Baldeniso (vesino de la villa de Riobamba) for 1,100 pesos. They were Manuel de Rojas, his wife, María’s daughter Ylaria, and two children—Mariano de Rojas, nine years of age, and Francisco de Rojas two years of—both the legitimate offspring of Manuel and Ylaria.

After the sale, they passed into the possession of don Nicolas who placed them on a trapiche where he barely provided for them. Moreover, he had placed them in danger of loosing their lives through the “bloody operations of the trapiche [and] the venomous animals [that were present] such as vipers, cobras and other small reptiles.” Fearing their lives, they set out to find a new master to rescue them from these dangerous conditions.

By the time they appeared before the high court they had found don Pedro Fernando de Herrera who was willing to pay the 1,100 pesos for them. The only problem was now Nicolas was requesting 1,500 pesos.

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411 Ibid.

412 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 4, Exp. 5-iii-1751.
for the enslaved family. Although don Nicolas presented the customary argument that he had a right to determine the price of his property, the justices sided with Maria and enforced the sale for 1,100 pesos. Still this dual challenge of suing to change masters and counter suing for a proper price would continue to haunt the enslaved until the abolition of slavery. As a matter of fact, the record indicates that that masters increasingly sought to extort higher values when forced to sell their captives.

Although freedom does not appear to have been as likely a possibility in the north-central highlands as it was for slave laborers in the Gobernación de Popayán, freedom was expected and widely sought after. Some took their lives in their hands, “stealing a little freedom.” Some enslaved women achieved freedom through their relationships with white men. In either case, expectations and efforts towards freedom was a defining feature of Spanish American slave societies, and Quito was no different.

Slave Life in Transition: Life in the Jesuit Estate Complex

On December 1, 1757, doña Ysabel Yepe undertook a legally required, but seldom observed action; she gave legal notice that her bondwoman, Antonía, had fled her jurisdiction (a echo fuga huir). Striking were her choice of words as she described Antonia’s husband “a slave of her religion.” Doña Ysabel alleged, in fact, that her Antonía had fled to, and found asylum within the hacienda of Pusír, where she remained with her husband, who was a slave laborer of this Jesuit-owned estate. La doña had made “repeated requests” to be allowed entrance into the hacienda to confirm her worse suspicions, but to no avail. Now she was calling upon her no doubt estranged husband (given that she was a recogida of the Limipía Concepción Convent) to assist in the execution of her legal claim.413

Similar to the experience of many slave laborers in Quito’s north-central highlands, Antonia’s love and life existed within the world that was a Jesuit-owned and operated, agro-pastoral estate complex.

413 ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 5, Exp. 1-xii-1757.
Pusír, a farming enterprise, fell within the jurisdiction of the Collegio de Ibarra, and was connected directly to at least two sugar-producing estates (*trapiches*)—La Concepción, which by this time possessed close to 380 slave laborers, and Caldera, where the enslaved population approximated ninety-five individuals. (see Table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haciendas</th>
<th>Number of Slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tumbaviro</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Carpuela</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Santiago</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Chalguayacu</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chamanal</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Concepción</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Caldera</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cuajara</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1
Jesuit Sugar Haciendas and Slave holdings, ca. 1779.

By the year 1780 each Jesuit-owned sugar producing estate held an average of 165 slaves.\(^{414}\) At this time the order held lands stretching from the Chillos Valley to Ibarra. In this region, Amerindian population figures had fallen into severe decline, opening the way for widespread use of ethnic African and Afro-Creole slave laborers. The region’s warm zone and proximity to the Chota and Mira rivers made it ideal for agricultural endeavors, especially sugar cane cultivation. Nevertheless, only 44 percent of Ibarra’s

\(^{414}\) According to historian Rosario Coronel, the Jesuits purchased a “determined” number of slave laborers between 1680 and 1750, but turned thereafter to depend upon the growth of fourth generation criollos. Coronel, *El Valle Sangriento*, 93-94.
Amerindian population lived on Spanish estates. On the other hand, situated in and around the town of Otavalo, there were large numbers of Amerindian laborers, who produced foodstuffs and worked within the corresponding Jesuit-owned Obrajes.\textsuperscript{415} The Jesuit tied textile mills to agro-pastoral estates, which held sizeable pools of laborers, who could be rotated to disparate estates when needed to address agricultural, transport, or any of the grueling demands of sugar cane and its corresponding refinement process. These were self-sufficient enterprises that, “allowed the Jesuits to control land and water resources across different ecological zones, recruit needed laborers, and dominate many local markets for rural produce.”\textsuperscript{416}

Stretching from Ibarra to Latacunga, the Jesuit system supported its thirteen colleges and missions. Textile and food production in the Chillos Valley served the needs of slave laborers working the trapiches of Ibarra. Not only was food production connected to trapiches, trapiches were in-turn connected to livestock ranches, which formed the complete systematic circle.\textsuperscript{417} By 1776, in the trapiches of Santiago, Carpuela, Chaluayaca, and Caldera alone, 398 slave laborers along with large numbers of Amerindians were producing aguardiente and an excess of 500 cuadras of sugar cane.\textsuperscript{418} While the mines were booming in Barbacoas, Jesuit production remained strong in the north-central highlands as well. Production along with extensive land holdings enabled the Jesuits to leverage the capital needed to developed their “pastoral enterprise”. The Order’s total revenues during its final years in the region ranged from 222,896 pesos in 1765 to 168,975 in 1766, with profits rising as high as 60,000 pesos.\textsuperscript{419} Although their enterprise was far more elaborate, with a greater overhead costs than that of a large mining operation, they also generated revenues and, at times, turned profits that eclipsed regional gold outputs. Sound fiscal management combined with a good organization structure and a highly efficient operations predicated upon strict control of laborers produced profitable results.

\textsuperscript{415} Andrien, \textit{The Kingdom of Quito}, 84-85.

\textsuperscript{416} Ibid., 102

\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 103.

\textsuperscript{418} Ibid., Cuadra is equal to one urban block. See also Nicholas Cushner, \textit{Farma and Factory}, 193.

\textsuperscript{419} Idem, 104.
Examining inventories emerging from the records *Administraición de Temporalidades* in 1780, Coronel shows that there were 1,037 *cuastras* (small blocks of land approximately 83.5 metres each) of sugar cane and 1,271 slaves, 508 *borriqueros* (mule loaders/drivers), 181 *conductores* (drivers), 94 *viejos* (seniors) and *liciados* (handicapped), and 488 children below the age of ten.\(^{420}\) Although these figures were taken over a decade after the expulsion of the Society of Jesus, it is plausible that at the very least, the Jesuits maintained this number of slaves throughout their tenure in the valley after their last major land acquisition in 1692. According to Andrien, Carpuela, Chaluayaca, and Caldera, “an inventory of the estates in 1776 listed over 500 *cuastras* of sugar cane, tended by 398 slaves and numerous part-time Andean laborers.”\(^{421}\) Hence, Coronel’s assertion that the eight slave-holding haciendas possessed a total of 2,615 slaves throughout the Jesuit’s tenure in this region is probably accurate.\(^{422}\) Several *padrones* (census records) taken in the Jurisdiction of Ibarra, during the years: 1779, 1780, 1784 and 1786, reveal that there was an average of 1,203 slaves in this area, approximately fifty percent of these were married. The other fifty percent were single males, females and children. Their sexual ratio was almost always balanced--1:1.\(^{423}\) These numbers further underscore the existence of a significant Afro-Quiteño community, a people who although subjected to the onerous tasks of sugar cultivation, created families and communities that persisted over several generations.

According to the Jesuit plantation operation manual—*Instructiones a los hermanos jusitas*, Jesuits were to establish firmly the spiritual and temporal viability of their estates. When managing slave laborers, barracks, which were to be enclosed in a fence, were to be locked at night. A male captain was to be selected from among the slaves and charged with watching for possible disorder and remedying disagreements. It was the captain who would give slave laborers their daily instructions. In addition to the

\(^{420}\) Coronel, *El Valle Sangriento*, 104. See also ANHQ, Temporalidades, Caja 18 (Años 1782-83), and Caja 25, Exp. 18-viii-1786, and Exp. 3-iii-1785.

\(^{421}\) A quadra is equal to an “urban plaza one block around.” Andrien, *Kingdom of Quito*, 103. See also, ANHQ, Temporalidades, Caja 18, 22-xi-1782.

\(^{422}\) Coronel, *El Valle Sangriento*, 89.

\(^{423}\) Andrien notes this average slave population at 1,203; Andrien, *Kingdom of Quito*, 36; For documentation of the number of married slaves and singles including children see. ANH-Q, Empadronamientos, Caja 15, Padrones de Ibarra, 1779, 1780, 1784, 1786. Cite the inventory as well.
mandadero, the manual instructed that a *mandadera de las mujeres* be assigned watch over the women and, most importantly, administer the lashes to wayward slave women. And although the manual indicated that leaders not punish slaves at will, justice was to be harsh and swift. Above all, the manual admonished that slave laborers be fed, clothed and instructed in the faith. In connection with religious instruction, each estate was to have its own chapel, and managers were expected to provide laborers with time off on Sundays and holidays.

For most of the eighteenth century life on Jesuit haciendas must have resembled that described in the manual. Enslaved men and women lived and worked within the estate complex. They formed relationships within and outside of those ‘imagined communities’ and fought vigorously to maintain their ‘right’ to those relationships. Judging from the manual and the Jesuits treatment of their own members, punishments were harsh, and swift. Because of the highly efficient quality of their estate complex it is also plausible that the Jesuits worked their slaves vigorously, allowing reprieves only on Sunday and church holidays. As one slave leader from the hacienda of Quaxara put it 1789, “in the days of our keepers” slave laborers received time for rest on Sundays, and time to observe various holidays (*días de festival*). While slaves did not live in barracks as prescribed by the instruction manual, they did have houses made of straw and bamboo. The Chalmanal estate, inventoried in 1786 had 162 slave laborers organized by households, most often nuclear or extended family units; solitaires were grouped and placed in homes together, creating a barrack of sorts of those single, widowed, or otherwise detached members of the community.424 Much like the slave trade to the region, the hacienda inventory revealed a range of ethnic monikers, including: Congo, Mina, Caravali, Arara, Mondongo, all of who lived with and married Afro-creoles who by this time formed an overwhelming majority. Nevertheless, ethnic monikers like Mina, Chala, Congo, and Arara had now emerged as surnames that even Afro-Creoles took on and passed down to their progeny.

Within the overall population, children under the age of ten accounted for 35.2 percent (fourteen were, in fact, infants), whereas adults over the age of 52 constituted 6.79 percent. A rather remarkable group for this period, one half of them were over the age of sixty, and two –Ignacio Indungui (82 years)

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424 ANHQ, Temporalidades, Caja 25, Exp. #4 (18-viii-1786).
and Francisco Congo (72 years) were above the age of seventy. Similar to the manual and the mines of Barbacoas, the hacienda was led by a captain and several older community members, not doubt Ignacio and Francisco. Whereas mine owners often referred to senior community members as “useless” the Jesuits placed them in an advisory position to assist young captains, such as Josef Bonifacio, who was only thirty-six years of age, but selected “due to his intelligence and government.” Bonifacio, a married man (the husband of Vicenta de Larrea 32 years) and father of six, was not flanked with a female captain, however. It was his charge to motivate and maintain order among the thirty-two families represented within the plantation. Life, as described on the pages of this eighteenth century inventory, looked relatively stable, or so it would seem. But by 1786, the year of the inventory, it had been nineteen years since the crown had expelled the Jesuits from all of its American provinces, sequestering all of the their properties and extant documentation. The expulsion marked a point of departure for those living and working within the estate complex.

The state made a good faith attempt at maintaining the Jesuits’ massive operation, but failed in its attempt to execute the Jesuit’s strategic management process. According to historian Kenneth J. Andrien, the state was hampered in three ways: through the hiring of “corrupt or inefficient administrators,” the lack of warehouses, market connections, and capital reserves.” Ultimately, however, it seems that the state did not understand the inner-workings of the Jesuits system. That is, as Andrien points out, on successive occasions, the stated failed to understand completely the rationale for the various complexes. To increase profits, for example, the state often sold livestock, ignored much-needed maintenance projects and improvements, and fired workers. Thus, the state’s failure to comprehend the objectives and roles of each obraje, trapiche, and hato, undermined its ability to manage the entire system effectively.

In the 1780s the state undertook a different approach to the challenges of the Jesuit properties—selling them to the highest bidder, thereby undercutting the reciprocal relationships that had

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425 Ibid.
427 Ibid.
existed between the various estates. Now one estate would be called upon to undertake what three or more had handled in the past. At this time, trapiches in the north would be cut off from agricultural estates in the south, leaving slave laborers with the burden of feeding and clothing themselves. Indeed, new pressures befell the enslaved, as the state and subsequent estate owners pressured them to produce at a level that had now known previously. But that was just the beginning. Whereas the Jesuits had been careful not to disrupt estate communities through the sale of its members, leaving them intact for several generations, new owners would move almost immediately to either relocate or sell members of these communities.

As of 1778, slave laborers like Pedro Pascual Lucumín of the Concepción estate, were petitioning colonial officials concerning the mistreatment they were receiving, largely in the form of neglect. For Pascual, and others, the question would quickly become, who does a slave petition when the state is the abusive master in question? Operating with little regard for the slave laborers, the state sold all of these estates several times over. Most often the sale was in the form of credit, and followed by default. Consequently, these estates changed hands several times over the course of the remainder of the colonial period. Chamanal, when inventoried in 1786, for example, was in the on its way to a third owner—Gomez de la Torres, who would soon sell the property to Carlos Araujo, an unscrupulous itinerant merchant, who would soon amass several properties in a reckless fashion, and then begin to divide the slave community through a series of sales.

On November 9, 1784, doña María Ana Nava filed a civil lawsuit against her brother-in-law, don Antonio de Peña, then owner of one of the largest sugar plantations—Santiago. Don Antonio, who was deceased by this time, had charged her with the duty of giving oversight to his plantation. While managing the property she heard the outcry of slaves who, as she put it, were crying of “extreme necessity”. Having pity on them she gave them flour and honey, and in short order initiated a legal claim against his estate. After doña’ María’s attorney, Francisco de Xavier Barbara, filed his deposition, the high court justices commissioned a lengthy investigation. But while the case is replete with testimony that addresses the contract between doña María and her brother-in-law, those involved ignored almost entirely the conditions

428 ANHQ, Caja 8, Exp. 26-I-1778.
and experiences faced by the slaves that don Antonio left to starve on the Santiago plantation. Indeed, the slave laborers were incidental, as the principal concerns of investigators were: had she given the food to the slave laborers? Did she have authority to do? And finally, how she would be compensated for her gesture?

By the time Doña Ana Nava received her payment for her services in December of 1788, the property had changed owners at least twice. Unfortunately, the extant record relates nothing of how the population of slaves fared during this period or thereafter. It is clear, however, that their lives had change for the worse since the “days of [their] keepers.” Snatched from the bowls of a brutal, yet functioning estate complex system, slave laborers who might have wondered previously if things could get any worse while ruled by the Jesuits encountered a form of extreme cruelty that they had never known. The irony of it all, however, was that this cruelty came at the hand of the state and courts designed ostensibly to protect them.

By the end of the century the state’s role in the growth and administration of slavery in the north-central highlands had come full circle. At the beginning of the century state policies had dealt a mortal blow to the obraje complex, prompting new waves of Andean migrations and provoking elites to turn to African slave labor as they search for a cash crop. During this era the state served as the mediator of struggles between slaveholders and the enslaved, according mercy to those found deserving and unworthy of extreme cruelty. Over the course of the century the state had admonished masters to treat their slaves fairly in justice and in accordance to the law. The high court had honored the marriage vows of the few slaves who found their way to Quito’s central parish church, issuing judgments that protected slave families and their avenues to freedom. But at the end of the century, the state took on a more ambiguous role, as it became the single largest slaveholder in all of the audiencia.

Reckless in its management of the formerly Jesuit-owned estate complex, the state dismantled what had been an efficient agro-pastoral enterprise, breaking apart longstanding slave families and communal formations. Nevertheless, although victimized and downtrodden under the feet of the state, slave laborers would not stand idly by as Bourbon officials and unscrupulous merchants undermined the constitutions of their households, families, and communities. For centuries their watchwords had been

429 ANHQ, Temporalidades, Caja 25, Exp. 9-xi-1784
freedom and resistance. Now, in a changing world, these two themes would continue to shape their actions and embolden their resolve.
CHAPTER 6

ENSLAVED REBELS, FUGITIVES, AND LITIGANTS: THE RESISTANCE CONTINUUM IN
COLONIAL QUITO

On May 7, 1640, in the town of Popayán, Francisco, an enslaved Afro-criollo, filed a lawsuit against his master, Fray Diego Revelo de Chaves, a priest in the local Augustinian monastery. Francisco explained that Fray Chaves was a harsh taskmaster who punished him daily with extreme cruelty. Referring to his master’s influence and perhaps also to his lack of confidence in a system that tended to prefer elite interests, Francisco said, “[although] one flees, neither is this effective, and [now] they have me in the jail (carsel) to return me to his command.” Theoretically, in such instances the cárcel pública served as a locus for deposito (a form of protective custody), as masters were required to pay one real per day to cover the costs associated with the slave’s stay while the authorities investigated the veracity of the charges. But according to Francisco, officials were holding him there only to return him to the abusive Augustinian Friar. Unfortunately for the historian, the documentary trail ends with four folios or eight

430 ACC. Sig. 108, Col.—JI—lcv, 1640.

hand-written pages; missing are the resolution of the case as well as precious details of Francisco’s experience before Popayán’s judicial authorities. Consequently, it is difficult to know for certain if Fray Chaves had in fact “mistreated” Francisco, or if Francisco was simply a maroon seeking to evade punishment by filing a *sevicia* (mistreatment) claim. Francisco’s basic argument, however, is certainly plausible and reflects, moreover, the phenomenon of legal action by the enslaved, a resistance strategy that African and Afro-criollo captives would carry to its full extent throughout the colonial era and beyond.

Fundamentally, Francisco’s case illustrates both the real abuses that occurred, and the resolve of the enslaved to resist brutality whether from exacting secular figures, or an Augustian friar. Specifically, it provides evidence of early legal action by the enslaved, a resistance strategy that African and Afro-criollo captives would carry to its full extent long before Europeans began to engage Lockean notions of liberty and freedom.

In Quito, as in many other areas of Spanish America, slaves had been suing their masters since the early 1590s. As the 1596 freedom suit of Duarte González (native of Angola) demonstrates, slave petitions, involving everything from mistreatment to the right to *reclamaciones* (*libertad* or freedom lawsuits), underscore Africans’ and Afro-criollos’ early-acquired legal savvy along with their keen awareness of their rights as persons, though described as property. Determined to insert themselves further within the sociopolitical fabric of colonial societies, the enslaved seized moments in order to flee their masters, thereby claiming the spaces of courts, mountains, and brush-laden river ways, all in an effort to take possession of their lives. In going to court their immediate goals varied considerably. An enslaved woman, for example, might seek to stop the sale of a husband and/or the father of their children, while others sought to enforce the terms of agreements that had been made with their master regarding their freedom or the freedom of their offspring. Still others sued to change masters, expecting that their new master might provide new and more acceptable conditions of servitude.

The right to sue a master was initially set forth in medieval codes that Spaniards transferred to the Indies and further endorsed within New World legislation found in both the civil and canonical codices.\(^{432}\)

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\(^{432}\) For Castilian civil laws regarding slaveholding See. *Las Siete Partidas del Rey Don Alfonso el Sabio cotejadas con varios codices antiguos por la Real Academia de la História*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1807). For American codices see.
While both sets of laws contain what, at first glance, appear to be paternalistic measures, the central concern for both crown and clergy was controlling potentially restive souls and maintaining the empire. Royal edicts ordering masters to Christianize, Hispanicize, feed, and clothe their slaves often included discussions as to how the measure might control an errant population, and thereby maintain public peace. Even so, such edicts constituted legal mandates that, when applied, could pressure slave owners to manage their captives with a level of benevolence. They served to remind slaveholders of their Christian duty to temper justice with mercy. Perhaps more importantly, paternalistic slave codes signaled that even masters were subject to God and the Crown. But while we know that blacks were responsible for urging judiciaries to enforce these codes, until recently, the question of when slaves were able to take consistent advantage of the Spanish legalistic tradition had escaped scholars.

Highlighting the foundations of black legal action, Herman Bennett finds that as early as 1572 ethnic Africans in New Spain had obtained the “cultural, if not linguistic, dexterity” needed to petition provisors for marriage licenses, and often sought ecclesiastical intervention when masters threatened to separate them from spouses. Bennett finds, moreover, that by 1579 the enslaved sued unscrupulous masters who sought to deny them their conjugal rights. His work shows that slaves were able to find Recopilación de Leyes de los reinos de las Indias (Madrid: Consejo de Hispanidad, 1791), 3 vols. A number of royal codes that were left out of the Recopilación may be found in collections such as Richard Konetzke, ed. Documentos para la historia de la formación social de hispanoamérica. 1493-1810, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1953-1963) (Hereafter referred to as Las Siete Partidas, Recopilación, and Documentos, respectively). For an excellent commentary on laws and the Spanish legal tradition see. Juan de Solorzano y Pereyra ([1629] 1972, especially volumes 252 and 253). See also, Manuel Lucena S. (1996) and Alan Watson (1989).


437 Brockington has shown also that in the area of Mizque, in the Audiencia de Charcas, the enslaved sued for their freedom as early as the 1580s. Citing the fact that the Audiencia of Charcas “heard dozens” of such cases, Brockington points to the “fugitive overtones” of this process, highlighting the fact that the enslaved had to flee their place of employment in order to engage the judicial process. The early political implications of this phenomenon are not lost on Brockington. Referencing this phenomenon’s pre-eighteenth century longevity she states, “it can be argued
openings within the colonial system, primarily because of crown and clerical authority. Laws and royal edicts emanating from the metropolis encroached upon the master’s domain while the clergy’s determination to have exclusive authority in the administration of sacraments, such as marriage, further eroded masters’ authority over human chattel. The enslaved quickly realized this dichotomy and moved to exploit every loophole (real and theoretical) available to them. But while church and crown efforts at absolutism established a colonial system that eroded some of the master’s autonomy, in many ways it was male and female captives who became the catalyst that propelled the system into action. This they accomplished both within and outside of the legal arena.

Despite the fact that slaves in early colonial Quito used the law astutely and politically, most historians examining the region have paid scant attention to these earlier cases, leaving the field with an imbalanced, if not incomplete, treatment of the phenomenon. Most scholars have suggested that earlier cases were inherently different and less political than those of the later period, based upon the premise that earlier enslaved litigants were seeking mercy, not change. By the mid-eighteenth century, they argue, slaves awoke and began to employ the legal tradition “in more radical ways.” And although enslaved

that the reclamaciones, appearing earlier than expected, harkened to something far more deeply ingrained than political independence from colonial rule” See. Brockington, “The African Diaspora in the Eastern Andes,” 223.

James F. King (1941) and David M. Davidson (1966) were two of the earliest scholars to examine this phenomenon for Latin America. Both argued, as did Palmer (1976) that the law ultimately had little substantive effect in the lives of the enslaved. While the right to sue was available, they asserted, few cases existed, hence the law’s limited effect. David L. Chandler (1982) and Norman A. Meiklejohn (1974) examined enslaved legal action for late eighteenth-century New Granada, an area whose juridical authority encompassed the Kingdom of Quito or modern-day Ecuador and Southern Colombia. Chandler highlighted New World legislation and its bearing upon how the process functioned, emphasizing laws passed as late as 1775 as the key to enslaved legal action. Meiklejohn, on the other hand, was one of the few to question why this system worked. Yet, he often overstated the importance of attorneys and magistrates, arguing that they were so dedicated to implementing colonial legislation that they “made the slave institution more humane.” Meiklejohn argued that places like New Granada which were geographically and economically on the margins of the Spanish empire constituted colonies with cultures wherein “medieval Iberian attitudes and practices regarding slaves were able to survive and event to evolve.” (p.182). While this is certainly part of the answer we must remember that this phenomenon occurred throughout Spanish America, and was allowed and even encouraged by civil and clerical officials as early as the sixteenth century. Furthermore, such an argument bent towards economic determinism causes the scholar to overlook the role that the enslaved played inside and outside of the courts. It was not merely the geography or the economic limitations of the region, but a host of factors, including the enslaved agitating inside and outside of the courts, that forced this system to work as well as it did.

men and women had imbued their legal arguments with the gendered discourse of honor since the early colonial era, some have argued that it was the context of the Bourbon and Independence eras that allowed slave women to employ the discourse of honor when challenging their masters. In short, scholars have heralded the post-1750 era as the watershed moment of black radical discourse in colonial Spanish America. According to Peter Blanchard “the wars of independence had given the black population of Spanish South America an unprecedented opportunity to give voice to their feelings,” thus they “fervently

Evidence of blacks employing honorific language in their late sixteenth-century pleas is found in the case of Bartolomé Hernández, a free black Quitéño, sued two Spaniards for encroaching upon his property located near present-day Ibarra. In a legal battle left unresolved from 1596 to 1602, Bartolomé employed a discourse of mercy and need that reflected his honorable desire to perform his manly duties, pleading, “being as I am a poor, old black man of more than eighty years, in charge of a wife and children, I do not have any other capital (hacienda) nor means by which to support them except for the aforesaid, my estancia” (Quoted in Lane 2002, 64). Not only was Bartolomé in need of mercy, justice demanded that he be able to maintain the wife and children in his “charge.” Perhaps more importantly, his honor depended upon it. Although Bartolomé was obviously not a slave, such cases would not have escaped entirely from the purview of enslaved Afro-Quitéños, especially not those living and working in the homes of the two Spaniards involved in the lawsuit. Thus, cases involving free blacks and elites are also insightful for the education that they were likely to have provided the bonded.

Perhaps what has driven this perspective is scholars’ overwhelming interest in the ways that slave litigation corresponded to Bourbon and Independence era politics, and the subsequent abolition of slavery (Aguirre 1993, 1999; Chaves 1998, 2000; Hündefedlt 1994; Soulodre-LaFrance 2001; and Townsend 1998). It would appear that this preoccupation has led many scholars to focus almost exclusively upon this later period, understating, if not overlooking, slaves’ long history of using the courts in deeply political ways. As the work of Bennett (2003) shows, yet another possible reason for scholar’s failure to address early cases of enslaved legal action lies in the fact that scholars have overlooked (particularly in the case of the North Andes) the importance of canon law and the cases generated by ecclesiastical courts in Latin America. Ecclesiastical courts represent another arena where the enslaved challenged their master’s authority. This is seen particularly in the area of conjugal rights. Enslaved and free, male and female often sought out ecclesiastical authorities when a master attempted to move or sell a spouse to a location that might prohibit, or otherwise limit their ability to enjoy the privileges of marriage. Although slave experiences before church courts in Quito falls outside of the scope of this article, a comprehensive analysis of slave resistance and legal action must include captives’ experiences before ecclesiastical courts and tribunals. Colin A. Palmer (1976) was one of the first to demonstrate the importance of these records. In so doing, he highlighted slaves’ early radical critique of Catholicism and canon law. Most recently, the works of Paul Lokken (2001), Kathryn Joy McKnight (2003) and Javier Villa Flores (2002) have also underscored the critical importance of “church as strategy” in the lives of the enslaved.

For Peru, see the works of Jean Pierre Tardieu (1997). For an examination of the ways that royal slaves employed colonial courts see María Elena Díaz (2000: 285-313).
adopted the catchword of the period, freedom.\textsuperscript{443} Consequently, the enslaved, having found a “liberating language,” could move more deliberately towards the complete destruction of the ‘peculiar institution.’\textsuperscript{444}

Despite their imbalanced characterizations, however, scholars have shown the critical importance of consulting colonial court records in order to show agency and recover the heretofore-lost voices the enslaved of Spanish America. Maria Eugenia Chaves and Camilla Townsend, for example, have employed civil court cases to highlight the ingenuity, courage, and complex networks that enslaved women drew upon in their fight for the legal recognition of their honor and control over their lives in a radicalizing world.\textsuperscript{445} Carlos Aguirre has emphasized the far-reaching implications of legal action by slaves, arguing that as the enslaved continued to participate in the Spanish legalistic tradition of Early Republican Peru, they helped to dismantle the system of slavery by insisting that judiciaries issue rulings that went far beyond the scope of contemporary law.\textsuperscript{446} And as Peter Blanchard’s recent work suggests, Independence leaders’ adoption of slaves’ “lexicon” of liberation and social inclusion must have emboldened slaves’ resolve to fight evermore fervently for freedom.\textsuperscript{447}

It must also be said that there are far better records for the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries. In the case of colonial Quito, the extant record contains far more civil cases after 1750, especially those addressing masters’ mistreatment of slaves (sevicia). Of the 100 cases appealed before Quito’s high court, only twenty-three were heard before 1750, with the number of civil cases rising yet


\textsuperscript{444} Ibid., 523.

\textsuperscript{445} Chaves, \textit{Strategies}, 2000; Townsend, “En busca de la libertad: los esfuerzos de los esclavos quayquilenos por garantizar su independencia después de la Independencia,” \textit{Procesos: Revisita Ecuatoriana de la Historia} 4 (1993): 73-86; and “Half My Body Free.” Christine Hünefeldt was one of the first to publish analysis of court cases to examine the ways that families deployed the force of civil law to gain freedom in Early Republican Lima. Highlighting the overwhelmingly female presence among Afro-Limeño litigants, Hünefeldt demonstrated also, the ways that female litigants invoked the discourse of honor in their efforts to gain emancipation via the courts. Although path-breaking, Hünefeldt’s work focused also upon the nineteenth century, thereby eliding the early colonial foundations and formations of this slave-led phenomenon. See Christine Hünefeldt, \textit{Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor Among Lima’s Slaves, 1800-1854}, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1994).

\textsuperscript{446} Aguirre, \textit{Agentes de su propia libertad}.

\textsuperscript{447} Blanchard, “The Language of Liberty.”
again after the turn of the nineteenth century. Moreover, this period does appear to constitute what several scholars have referred to as a “discursive opening”. The language of the Enlightenment, Bourbon Policies, and the Independence movements must have helped to maintain a juridical space for slaves, and provided a language that resonated with blacks’ long-standing discourse on freedom and improved treatment. Further, during this period when Bourbon kings, hoping to regain control in the Indies, issued edicts like the Real Cédula de 1789, encroaching, yet again, upon the master’s domain reinforcing slaves’ rights to just treatment while reaffirming their right to a day in court. But while it is true that the Bourbon Reforms and then the Enlightenment and the Independence movements gave litigants particular political opportunities, the existing notion that earlier lawsuits on the part of slaves were inherently different—less radical—from those of the later period is simply not accurate. Moreover, it is inconsistent with broad patterns and processes of slave resistance in Quito and throughout the Americas more generally.

This chapter will show that throughout the Audiencia of Quito enslaved rebels and fugitives consistently contributed to white fears and to white law-making from the very earliest moments of the colonial enterprise. It highlights, moreover, slaves’ long history of playing directly and indirectly upon those fears in their interactions with slaveholders and in the legal cases they brought before colonial courts, showing the continuities in slave resistance strategies over time. Not only did slaves use the courts in deeply political and radical ways from very early in the colonial period, existing documentary evidence from Quito’s courts reveals a continuum, not a break, between earlier cases and those emanating from the late colonial era. Although this continuum may be difficult to document—principally because slaves’ most successful tactic in the pre-Revolutionary era was to claim to be divorced from politics and rebellion and to be seeking individual mercy—we can identify early legal precedents that are reflected in civil court cases

448 ANHQ Esclavos, Cajas 1-54.


451 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 16 1790-1794: folios 214-223.
heard by the audiencia (high court) of Quito over the course of the colonial era. In so doing, scholars can arrive at a more in-depth understanding of the realities of bondage in colonial Quito, the continuities and points of departure within slaves’ resistance methodologies, and the gendered challenges facing enslaved men and women in their courtroom performances.

Like their counterparts throughout the Americas, Africans and Afro-criollos in Quito resisted slavery in myriad ways. Lawsuits, like that of Francisco, were only one among many resistance methods (absconding, personal confrontation, sabotage, open rebellion, etc.) that the enslaved used to gain more autonomy under slavery and colonialism.452 Judging from the actions of the enslaved, the language they used when confronting elites, and the reactions of elites, there were visible connections between so-called radical resistance methods (read: overt reactions against the system) and legal action (read: often as passive accommodation or working within as opposed to against the system). Despite the dichotomous language used typically by scholars when describing the resistance continuum, resistance was not necessarily an either/or proposition. Even when “working the system,” slaves were, in fact, questioning and challenging the very foundation upon which it rested. Consequently, over the course of the colonial era they established juridical patterns and precedents that might ultimately loose the shackles of bondage in perpetuity. On the other hand, radical resistance, like the cruelties of the master class, helped to cast and recast the context for all slave-master interactions, thereby assisting in the formation of the socio-political sphere of all slave societies. Therefore, it is within the context of the potential for radical resistance that we must place the cases of Francisco and other enslaved litigants in our effort to understand how and why, at times, they were able to take advantage of openings within the system.

The slaves’ ability to bring suit was almost always connected to-and enhanced by-other, more radical, forms of resistance employed by the enslaved. Indeed, one of the primary reasons why this process worked as well as it did was because Africans and Afro-Quiteños acted not only as litigants, but also as rebels and fugitives, thereby motivating judicial authorities to consider seriously the concerns of the peaceful. While colonial authorities consciously sought to uphold laws (leyes) and legal principles (derecho), it is also probable that they were motivated by their anxieties about captives who might choose

more radical forms of resistance such as rebelling, absconding, and/or joining maroon settlements. The specter of maroon settlements coupled with well-known incidents of flight, confrontation, and outright rebellion would have provided judiciaries with an added incentive for taking the pleas of the enslaved seriously. Through their roles as rebels, fugitives, and litigants the enslaved played upon elite fears and hatred of blacks, carving out small amounts of autonomy for themselves even as they suffered under the onslaught of brutal masters and institutional realities. By claiming their rights under the law, while others functioned as rebels and fugitives, they forced the system to work as well as it did. The legal system thus served as a safety valve, allowing an avenue for redress without resorting to more violent, extra-legal measures.

By understanding the ways that rebels and fugitives contributed to elites’ fears and anxieties concerning how they would control their slave population, scholars can provide a more precise description of the context of enslaved legal action, its possibilities and its challenges. Rebels and fugitives threatened the social order, and thereby occupied the position of “outsiders”. As such, the law prescribed that they be treated with all harshness, given their perceived posture towards society. Consequently, slave litigants desiring fairness and mercy had to assume a posture of subservience, and in effect distance themselves from the anti-social behavior of their seemingly more rebellious counterparts. Slave litigants, then, held the challenge of presenting and re-presenting themselves as “insiders,” subjects of the king who deserved royal mercy instead of the harsh punishments prescribed for their more radical brethren.

But even as so-called rebels and fugitives helped to create a context where legal action remained a possibility, litigants must have realized that the legal system, like all resistance strategies, had its limits. Often the process and the judgments rendered served only to underscore further the chattel status of the enslaved. Francisco was not the only one to doubt the objectivity of the system. The legal system, in effect, confirmed that the enslaved was a subjugated being, vulnerable to the backlash of his/her master, and to a system that was built to control and exploit their bodies. In many instances the enslaved lost their cases or witnessed them being tied up in months or even years of legal maneuvering. Their motive for suing was, therefore, not because their counterparts had experienced overwhelming success in winning the judgments they sought. Rather, the enslaved possessed a number of possible motives for suing as well as
varying definitions of what constituted success. The challenge, then, is to explore the various definitions of success that might have motivated the enslaved, realizing that at times they must have determined that they would fight despite the potential outcome. Even those who failed were educating themselves, speaking out, and illuminating other captives in the ways of the system. The process demanded, at the very least, that they develop their legal and performance skills. Acting, speaking, or merely appearing in the courtroom required a complex performance, one that evoked specific ideas or feelings in the minds of whites, including not only pity, but also fear of rebellions and attitudes about judicial fairness.

Radical Resistance: Rebels, Fugitives and the Evolving Context of Early Colonial Spanish Jurisprudence

Spaniards in the Old World knew all too well of Africans’ methods of resistance. From the mid-fifteenth century on it became increasingly clear that Africans, like all humans, desired autonomy for self-expression, and that they would not go willingly, nor simply remain in bondage. A.C. Saunders has noted that Portugal had long-standing problems with fugitives during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. During the 1430s, Portuguese officials standardized further old medieval laws that were initially intended to address the problem of fugitive Moors and Jews, thus providing incentives for private individuals to capture runaway slaves. Similar concerns persisted in Seville. And while Ruth Pike posits that most slaves in Seville were “well behaved,” she also found that some slaves committed acts of violence against their masters. Moreover, city officials feared that urban slaves might band with Moriscos (typically enslaved Muslims from Granada) and take over the town. Hence, city council members issued a series of municipal ordinances that included prohibiting slaves from carrying arms except in the company

453 Aguirre, “Working the System”


455 Ibid., 134-38.

of their masters, along with strict limitations on the number of enslaved Africans who might assemble in
taverns inns, and other public places.

Scholars have shown that such challenges continued to plague Iberians as they sought to transplant
African slavery to the Indies. Iberians experienced slave uprisings on the coast of West Africa, during the
Middle Passage, and continued to realize the difficulty of subduing their captives in settlements like
Hispanola, Veracruz, Cartagena and Panama, thereby serving to complicate further the already complex
challenge of conquering and colonizing the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The first documented case
of maroons in the Americas, dated 1503, occurred on the island of Hispanola. Shortly thereafter, in 1522,
also on the island of Hispanola, the first documented slave rebellion occurred. From the 1540s on
Spaniards witnessed slave revolts throughout the Spanish Caribbean as well as in Mexico, Central and
South America. From the mid-sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth century the areas around the New
Spain towns of Córdoba, Jalapa, Orizaba, and Veracruz were notorious as regions that were home to
maroon settlements or palenques. This was also the case in and around the port city of Cartagena, and
throughout the Audiencia of New Granada. And many African captives chose to flee while crossing the
Isthmus of Panama, an area where the specter of maroon settlements plagued Spanish colonial officials,
slave owners, and slave traders.

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457 Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Jane Landers,
“Cimarron ethnicity and cultural adaptation in the Spanish domains of Circum-Caribbean, 1503-1763” in *Identity in the
plantation societies: A comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press,
1971).

458 Patrick J. Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin: University of

459 Chandler, Health and slavery, 1981; S.J. Alonso de Sandoval, De Instauranda aethiopum salute: el mundo de la
esclavitud negra en America (Bogota: Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia, 1956 [1627]); William Frederick

460 Similar concerns plagued officials in Lima and throughout the Viceroyalty of Peru. See for example. Frederick
addressing the implications of overtly radical behavior by slaves in other parts of the Americas See. Barry Gaspar
Gerald Mullin (1972), Mieko Nishida (1993), and João José Reis (1993).
In spite of the ongoing challenges facing slaveholders throughout the empire, elite Quiteños imported African captives in hopes that they would aid and abet the cause of colonization. In so doing, they established what was in many ways the quintessential Spanish American slave society.\textsuperscript{461} Although African slavery represented only one of several ways Spaniards chose to divide labor in Quito, enslaved Africans and their Afro-criollo descendants formed the critical quadrant of Quito’s work sector. Without black labor Quiteños would not have been able to exploit the region’s natural resources on the scale witnessed over the course of the colonial era. Black captives worked along side Andean encomienda charges (entrusted laborers), yanaconas (indigenous servants), and free blacks, toiling in the gold mines of Popayán, within the agro-pastoral complexes of the north-central highlands, and in the skilled and semi-skilled sectors of the region’s two principal urban centers—Quito and Guayaquil. In addition, enslaved blacks worked on the cacao plantations in the lowland coastal region of Guayas. Still others labored in the cascarilla industry that dominated the economy of Cuenca during the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century. The influence of blacks was far-reaching, affecting the development of Quiteño society from the principal moments of contact.

While some blacks, like Juan (de color negro) and Anton (negro), who were listed among the founders of Quito, represented a host of black “conquistadors” who aided the cause of Spanish colonialism, others, such as an unnamed “rebel” who in 1527 escaped from an expedition off the coast of modern-day

\textsuperscript{461} Although slavery never dominated Quito’s economic model as it did in nineteenth-century Cuba or Brazil, throughout Quito slave labor provided a level of productivity that might have proven impossible to achieve without slaves’ efforts. Moreover, African and Afro-criollo captives’ ubiquitous presence in colonial documentary evidence underscores the ways that slavery served to order Quiteño society, and the extent to which servitude occupied a position of dominance within the colony’s socio-political discourse. Most recently, several scholars have encouraged us to rethink the “slave society/society with slaves” dichotomy, particularly as it relates to mainland Spanish America (Herman Bennett 2003; Kris E. Lane 2002). As these historians have suggested, the institution of slavery had profound implications upon the larger society even in areas such as colonial New Spain, where slavery was neither the predominant method of dividing labor, nor marked by the eminence of a plantation complex (Bennett 2003, 14-15). And as Herman Bennett (2003), Kris Lane (2003), and Steven A. Epstein (2001) all seem to suggest, the “ethos of slavery,” specifically its power discourse, held profound significance for racial, gender, and social perceptions in many societies that would fall outside of the traditional definition of a “slave society”—where slavery formed the foundation of economic production, and the master-slave relationship served as the “model for all social relations” (Berlin 1997: 8). In the case of Quito, not only did the Baroque concept of captivity (based fundamentally upon African slavery) help to order society, informing the construction of many social relations (Lane 2003), Quito also possessed the principal characteristics of typical mainland Spanish American slave societies—the emergence Africans first within the urban centers of colonial power, an immediate (at times simultaneous) extension of African slave labor to the rural periphery, and the commingling of diverse racial and ethnic pools of laborers, enslaved, free and/or coerced (Bennett 2003: 14-15). For more on traditional definitions and characterizations of slave societies see the works of Ira Berlin (1998) and Eugene A. Genovese (1971).
Ecuador, occupied a more dubious position. This “counter-conquistador,” and many others like him, escaped from a ship in route to Peru, swam ashore, formed alliances with the local Amerindian population, and for years wreaked havoc upon all Spaniards who dared to enter this region. Around 1545 another ship, in route from Panama to Callao (near Lima), was wrecked in an area called Esmeraldas, located just off the northwestern coast of modern-day Ecuador. The surviving slaves escaped and allied themselves with the local indigenous population. As other ships and castaways followed their path over the course of the sixteenth century Esmeraldas quickly became both an enclave for runaway slaves and a thorn in the side of colonial officials.

Local officials sought to conquer the Esmeraldas maroons and their allies throughout the mid to late sixteenth century, continuing their efforts well into the seventeenth century. Esmeraldas was critical to the colonial regime not only because of its purported emeralds, but also because it undermined the colony’s safety in several ways. First, the coast was already the target of pirates, and without a reliable Spanish presence this portion of the coast, and perhaps the colony as a whole remained vulnerable. Second, ships carrying trade goods, slaves and travelers, in route from Panama to Callao where prone to run a-shore near this location, and needed safe passage to the highlands or to another coastal port. Third, Esmeraldas represented a potential haven for future maroons who might leave their masters and join this Afro-Amerindian stronghold, thereby further weakening the crown’s grip upon this area and perhaps the entire

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462 Jose Gonzalez Rumazo, Libro Segundo de cabildos de Quito (Quito: Archivo Municipal, 1934); Robert Cushman Murphy, “The earliest Spanish advances southward from Panama along the west coast of South America,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 21 (1941): 16.

463 I am borrowing this terminology from historian Matthew Restall (2000), who has shown that early blacks fell into two categories—conquistadors and counter-conquistadors. He argues, moreover, that the militaristic aspect of their position continued in the late colonial era as many blacks occupied positions within militias. Restall’s work, demonstrates clearly the importance of a renewed focus upon the African Diaspora in Spanish America, and rightly places marginal areas within the broader context of exploration, a context that belied the boundaries found along the shores of the circum-Caribbean. See also. Colin A. Palmer’s (1998) cogent discussion of the “modern African Diaspora”. And for a thoroughly engaging discussion of free blacks militias in colonial Mexico See. Ben Vinson, III (2001).

464 Murphy, “Advances,” 1941.

465 Kris E. Lane, *Quito 1599: City and colony in transition* (Albuquerque: University of Mexico Press, 2002).
region. Concerns about maroon settlements within the jurisdiction of Quito were not relegated to the coastal areas of the kingdom. In addition to Esmeraldas, the areas of modern-day southern Colombia in the Gobernación de Popayán (northern-most provincial district of the Audiencia of Quito) were also known to house runaway settlements. And while the jagged terrain of the Andes, coupled with the relatively small numbers of slaves in the highlands may have challenged the prospect of ‘grand marronage’, such reports persisted well into the eighteenth century, signaling both the extensive challenge of slave flight and rebellion as well as the sustained and often unsuccessful Spanish-led efforts to subjugate blacks.

Local Spanish officials from Quito initiated unsuccessful entradas into Esmeraldas for four successive decades, beginning in the 1550s and ending in the 1590s when they sought more peaceful methods of pacifying this Afro-Amerindian, maroon settlement. Between 1596 and 1601 the Audiencia spent thousands of pesos paying missionaries and providing tokens aimed at ingratiating the Esmeraldas maroons to the church, and thereby to the crown. Thereafter, Afro-Amerindians from Emeraldas were invited to feasts of great pomp and circumstance, and were baptized along with caciques (native lords) from neighboring indigenous ethnic groups in the parishes of Quito. In July 1600, for example, two Afro-Amerindian power brokers from the region—Sebastián Yllescas and his brother Baltásar Antonio—were confirmed in Quito’s San Blas parish church. The ceremony was well attended by all of Quito’s “most prominent citizens,” including many of the city’s clerics. A considerable number of

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467 Lane (2002), for example, cites a 1590 report of palenque existing “in a site called Matarredonda, on the Upper Patía, north of Pasto” (246).

468 Recently Brockington (2000) has shown that despite the topography and their relatively low numbers, enslaved Africans and Afro-criollos in the Audiencia of Charcas took flight, in groups and individually, with increasing frequency, beginning in the earliest moments of the colony. Casting maroons within the context of Amerindian flight and migration practices, she explores the ways that ethnic Africans, blacks and Andeans in general adapted to and took action against the subjugation of colonialism and slavery.


470 Lane, Quito 1599, 44-45.
Spaniards and Andeans were also in attendance.\textsuperscript{471} To be sure, enslaved Africans, Ladinos, and Afro-criollos were also present, if not in the church of San Blas in the outer courtyard, or perhaps in the area surrounding the church. This magnificent gesture, however, was a far cry from the harsh Spanish and American legislature that prescribed multiple lashings for runaways, and other cruel punishments including castration. Perhaps this grand diplomatic gesture was the one pardon that repentant runaways were allowed under the law\textsuperscript{472}, or maybe officials had decided that they were not maroons after all, and rather preferred to view them as free Afro-Amerindians. In either case, this ceremony was another example, like the courts, of how authorities were pushed into conciliatory actions by the threat of revolt and encroachment. Given the notoreity that this performance must have garnered, it must have been clear to masters and slaves alike that when met with a formidable demand, power would have to concede something, even if only meager experiences of autonomy like receiving a pass to seek out a new master. Sometimes, of course, the concession was a smaller, more meager gesture, like offering a pass to seek out a new master. Ultimately, this ceremony signaled to all that local efforts of maintaining a colonial society predicated upon the exploitation of Africans, Afro-Criollos, Amerindians, and castas in general would necessitate a delicate balance between cooperation—extensions of mercy—and domination.

\textbf{Regulatory Responses to Rebels and Fugitives}

Confronted by multiple challenges—internal conflicts among Spaniards, restive Amerindians, and the need for a tighter grip on in the empire in the face of piracy—the crown stood to loose the very stability and future of the colonial empire if it failed to check rouge elements existing within its territories. Something had to be done to shore-up the authority of the crown and its agents in the Indies. As a result, municipal governments in concert with the Crown issued numerous pieces of legislation, much of which responded directly to resistance and rebellion by the enslaved. Royal decrees and municipal ordinances

\textsuperscript{471} Lane, \textit{Quito 1599}, 48.

\textsuperscript{472} Recopilición de leyes, tomo ii, Libro vii, título v, ley xxiii: folio 289v.
provide evidence of elite fears, underscoring the fact that rebels and fugitives helped to form the evolving judicial context where laws (leyes) were made, and judgments rendered.473

By 1538, Quito’s cabildo (town council) found it necessary to address the matter of runaways, establishing at tax of two pesos de oro, for anyone who failed to report their delinquent captives. The town council continued to express concern for the threat slaves posed to Quiteño society. Slaves discovered living in indigenous villages were to be punished first with 100 lashes. The second offense carried the penalty of loosing all toes on the right foot, and the third death.474 To be sure, this law concerned not only the collection of tribute, but sought to maintain social order and prevent the formation of potentially destructive alliances between blacks and Andeans, a concern so grave that the cabildo declared that if a black was simply found in the indigenous marketplace (tianguez), they were to receive 100 lashes at the post. Coalitions between blacks and Amerindians aside, however, the more nagging problem for municipal officials in Quito seems to have been the presence of runaways.475

In January of 1551 the cabildo declared that any runaway found after being absent for more than eight days would be punished in the following manner: women were to receive 100 lashes and men castrated, having their “genital members and testicles cut off”.476 This was in spite of a 1540 Reál Cédula,

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473 While long-standing slave codes emanating from Castilian law formed the basis for governing slavery and slaveholding in Spanish America, slave law was not entirely proactive. Events in the Americas provided the impetus for the “transculturation” of Old World practices and principles to local circumstances (van Deusen, 2001). Although historians have long-heralded the connections between fear and paternalism within the law, treatments of enslaved legal action have failed to place civil court cases filed by the enslaved within their proper context (Bowser, Davidson, Palmer). The point here is not only to highlight the mere fact that paternalism in the law owed its impetus to a culture of fear generated largely by the actions of restive African and Afro-criollo captives. But also, to emphasize the many ways that slaves, however small their numbers, ordered and reordered colonial societies. Spanish law was both proactive and reactionary. Like the crown and royal officials who issued laws and cedulas (royal decrees), judiciaries were not ruling in a vacuum, as radical behavior influenced the socio-political arena that the legal system sought to regulate. See also Herbert Aptheker (1943), who went to great lengths to show how slavery and the culture of fear, generated by rebels and fugitives, ordered colonial life in the US south. And for a classic study addressing the interrelatedness of paternalism and hegemony see. Eugene Genovese (1976).

474 Gonzalez Rumazo, Libro Segundo, 18.


476 Kris E. Lane (2000: 242), who highlights these codes for early Quito, and has found evidence that such punishments were indeed enforced. Citing the work of Alfonso Anda Aguirre, Lane states, “Evidence that such punishments were in fact carried out comes from the govern of the southernmost gold districts, Juan de Salinas Loyola. In 1572 he claimed that Spanish masters controlled their slaves with lashes, but also punished marronage and other crimes (delitos) with
in which the crown declared, “We demand that in no case shall you punish black maroons by cutting their parts, which honestly one cannot name, and ensure that they are punished consistent with the law (derecho), and laws (leyes) of this text.” The very fact that such a decree became necessary demonstrates, however, that drastic measures like castration had been employed with some frequency. Perhaps local officials found it necessary to reserve a heinous punishment like castration for offenses like chronic marronage, sleeping with indigenous women, or other more menacing crimes. While such a measure fell outside the letter of the law, it would not have been wholly inconsistent with the spirit of social control that permeated all legal discourse, both local and imperial. Lest we forget, while the crown spoke out against castration, it endorsed the penalty of death by hanging for those who committed the gravest of crimes “delitos graves.”

Local codes and correspondence had provided the crown with a sense of things to fear, and problems warranting royal directives. By mid-century the crown spoke incessantly about the disruptive force and the formidable threat that restive blacks posed to the public peace of its American colonies. On numerous occasions the crown addressed the threat of blacks “walking the city streets at night,” citing the occurrence of grave incidents when blacks went through cities, villages and other areas outside the watchful eye of their masters. In addition to chiding slave masters for failing to provide adequate supervision, the Crown condemned the practice widespread among masters of arming enslaved blacks, genital mutilation: “The most effective punishment for them, in order to domesticate them has been to cut off their genital member.” See Lane (2000, 242, note 50). See also Carlos Aguirre (1993). Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, titulo v, ley xxij, folio 289v. emphasis mine.

Further evidence that these penalties were generally accepted is found in a petition by Licenciado Francisco de Auncibay’s 1596 declaration regarding the care and control of a proposed, crown-subsidized shipment of enslaved ethnic Africans. Auncibay stated, “the punishments administered to blacks will be lashes and the loss of ears, and for three-time runaways, they shall be stripped (desgarronarles), placed in shackles, leg irons, pillories, and the campanilla [iron collar with a hanging bell], but not exile nor the galleys, and if the crime is heinous, death” (Pilar Ponce-Leiva, 1: 518-526). This accompanied Auncibay’s 1596 petition to the crown for subsidy in the development of Popayán’s gold fields. Among other things, Auncibay requested that the crown purchase 1,000 Africans with an equal number of makes and females. And as several scholars have pointed out, ensuring that slave groupings were balanced in age and gendered was thought to promote marriage, which would thereby effectively pacify African male captives. [Lane’s translation]

Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, titulo v, ley xxj, folio 288.

Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, titulo v, ley xij, folio 286v.
saying, “blacks, lornos (one of African and Amerindian heritage), and free blacks [must] not carry weapons,” reserving hefty fines and stiff penalties for those who failed to comply. Edicts emanating from Spain, echoed many of those decreed by municipal governments throughout the empire, outlining the penalties for maroons and delinquents.481 One notable code begins by stating, “In the province of Tierra Firme (Panama) there have been many deaths, robberies, [and] injuries, committed by runaway blacks in mobs, and hidden in frontier regions and fortified or secure locations (arcabacas).”482 Regulatory responses, however, were far more nuanced than punitive measures alone reveal.

Royal edicts and admonishments emphasized also the crown’s pragmatic approach to the regulation of slaveholding. In concert with harsher social controls, royal admonishments to American courts included, for example, the command that judiciaries ensure that free blacks who adhered to the rule of law were not molested or provoked to unruly behavior: the Real Cedula of 1540, for example, ordered American courts to ‘hear and provide justice to those [blacks] that proclaim free status…and do justice, and rule, that in this they are not mistreated by their masters.’ From the very beginning the crown had encouraged the importation of gendered balanced cargoes of enslaved men and women in hopes that marriage might quell the restive urges of male captives. In addition, the crown extended slaves the rights to marriage, good treatment, own and inherit property, and self-manumission, all practical platitudes aimed at curbing male slave discontent. Such concessions, though emerging from medieval era law, canon and civil, were seen as an essential means of promoting the peaceful coexistence of slave and master by tempering slave resentment.483

From the 1550s to the 1640s restive blacks, along with “unruly” and “disruptive” citizens more generally, found themselves within a shifting imperial context. Royal attempts at absolutism coincided

481 Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, título v, ley xxj, folio 288.

482 “en la provincia de Tierra Firme (Panama) han sucedido muchas muertes, robos, danos, hecho por los negros cimarrones algados, y ocultos en los terminas, y arcabacas.” (Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, título v, ley xxj, folio 288. The edict was extensive, insisting, among other things, that masters should punish fugitives who were absent four days with 50 lashes. If one was found one league outside of the city limits and absent for eight days, they were to receive 100 lashes with the added penalty of wearing stocks that weighed twelve pounds. If the person had been absent for more than two months, they were to remain in stocks for an indefinite period of time and receive 200 lashes for the first offense. The second offense, however, warranted 200 more lashes, and the wearing of stocks for four months. And, for masters who removed the stocks, the law prescribed a fine of 50 pesos.

483 Davidson, “Slave control,” 85-86.
with a renewed emphasis upon an “imperial” de jure order to circumscribe the lives of all subjects while promoting an increasingly racialized discourse that quickly cast all persons of color into the context of all things wild and potentially subversive. The need for various forms of regulation had spawn strict controls aimed at all potentially disruptive citizens.\textsuperscript{484} In the case of the enslaved, conciliatory slave codes—rights to marriage, property ownership, inheritance, and merciful treatment—continued to reward complicity in hopes of quelling all potential for violence. On the other hand, restrictive legislation with its corresponding punishments—whippings, castrations, and lynching—served to encode the hopes and fears of the crown and its American surrogates. Regulatory responses, therefore, signaled the pervasiveness of actual imperial threats, providing a two-fold approach to social control. Complicity would be rewarded by inclusion, providing one with access to the law; flaunting royal authority, however, rendered one worthy of the most brutal aspects of the \textit{reconquista}.\textsuperscript{485}

By the early seventeenth century the juridical context was established with great certainty. Imperial and municipal slave codes had emerged over the course of the early colonial period as responses to the cumulative effects of slave flight and rebellion. Though functioning within \textit{derecho} (the legal tradition and system) and while extending the boundaries of the royal court, royal edicts and municipal ordinances constituted judicial reactions to radical resistance by the enslaved, reactions that were predicated upon elite fears and assumptions about blacks, both enslaved and free. The Crown and its representatives in the New World had articulated a legal discourse that sought to be both conciliatory and restrictive in an effort to achieve and sustain social order. The dividing lines were clear, as all were cast as

\textsuperscript{484} Nancy E. van Deusen (2001), for example, charts the increased policing that \textit{beatas} (pious lay women with informal religious vows) experienced in late-sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Lima.

\textsuperscript{485} In several codes addressing runaways, we find the crown using phrasing such as “\textit{war on maroons}” and “\textit{campaign to search out maroons}” (italics supplied) (Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, título v, folios 288v-289v; título xviii, ley vij, folio 88; and título v, ley xxv, folio 289v-290). In many ways this was a true war and/or campaign from the earliest moments. The crown went to great lengths to administer this “campaign” or “war” on maroons, prescribing in 1624 that those who worked in this service in Cartagena receive six reales for each maroon they apprehend. While setting forth legislation aimed at governing this war the crown also provided incentives for slaves who returned voluntarily, and even ‘better’ incentives for those willing to bring in other runaways (Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, título v, ley xix, folio 287v). On the island of Cuba, for example, officials sent out armed militias accompanied by dogs (\textit{perras de busca}) to seek out and apprehend runaways. Apparently this measure caused just as much confusion as it sought to quell. These bands often forced free blacks into slavery and/or extorted cash, goods, and services from them. This became such a problem that in 1623 the crown demanded that these bands not ‘molest’ free blacks (“\textit{que los randcheadores no molesten a los morenos libres, que estuvieren pacíficos}”) (Recopilación, tomo ii, libro vii, título v, ley xix, folio 287v.; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall (1971, 74-78). See also. Jane Landers (1999, 2000).
either “insiders” or “outsiders” of an expanding imperial order. Those who conformed, and performed the duties of loyal would be accorded certain conciliatory measures; those who failed to comply would suffer the harsher side of the law. In this way sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century antecedents laid the groundwork for managing colonial Spanish America, and controlling errant slaves. But even if laws were in part about extending the reach of the church and crown, the fear that rebels of all stripes invoked was real to those who lived in the Indies. News of contentious encounters between whites and the enslaved continued to strike fear in the hearts and minds of whites, both poor and elite.

Eighteenth-century events mirrored those of the early colonial era. So-called radicals continued to undermine the delicate balance of hegemony, frustrating the efforts of elites while seizing moments and claiming all sorts of spaces within the colonial milieu. Retracting the much-coveted rights and privileges enjoyed by the slaving ranks promised to fracture the already fragile constitution of public order.

The Challenge of Rebels and Fugitives in Eighteenth-Century Quito

In 1727, Friar Augustín Melén from the town of La Cruz in the valley of Patía came forth to verify the existence of a maroon settlement called “El Castigo” near the river Bajo. Melén stated that runaways “live outside of the service and jurisdiction of their masters, and there others—free blacks (libres de colores pardos) why I do not know—live also.”486 Other individuals addressed the court with Fray Melén, expressing their concern that several masters were losing their slaves to this area. They sought to bolster their case, stating that these blacks “go without the Mass and without confessing their sins and some are even murderers. If one tries to go into this palenque, they are even killed.” Fray Melén concluded that those living in this area were indeed “living outside of the precepts of the holy mother church,” in part he argued, because they lacked a judge there. In other words, Patía was another area that the local officials had not adequately pacified. Both crown and clergy needed an official presence in this area to check this rogue, pagan element that threatened the order of the colony. These statements echoed those of enslaved plaintiffs like Francisco and others who used affiliation with the church as a way of differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate behavior—that is, situating oneself within, or in this case, outside of, the expected

norms of society. In response to this complaint, on January 28, 1729, the high court in Quito dispatched a group of soldiers to this region to apprehend all slaves and “suspicious persons (personas sospechosas).” Local officials along with their soldiers failed at this and subsequent attempts, leaving the maroons of Patía in place throughout much of the colonial period and well into the Independence period. By 1732, the town council of Popayán was still pondering how to deal with the maroon problem in Patía.\footnote{Popayán cabildo (town council) proceedings reveal steady streams of correspondence between the town councils of Popayán, Cali and the high court in Quito surrounding this matter (ACC Libros de los Cabildos Popayán, no. 11, 28 May 1732). Similar to that of Esmeraldas and other palenques, Patía’s geographical location, in a valley, near river ways, and laden with thick brush, provided its inhabitants with a considerable defense mechanism (Escalente 1996: 76-77).}

The fear generated by reports of maroons in Esmeraldas and Patía along with reports of runaway slaves throughout the kingdom heightened elite concerns about daily interactions with blacks. One only needs to review notary records of the period to find that there were a significant number of enslaved Africans and Afro-criollos who chose absconding, if only for a matter of days, as one of their methods of resistance in their negotiations with masters.\footnote{In addition to Lane’s findings and other examples found in the notary records of Quito, a number of cimarrons are documented in civil and criminal court cases, including Juan de San Martin of Cuenca, Pasqual, and Antonia who was reputed to be a repeat or chronic runaway. See. ANHQ, Caja 1. Exp. 15-ix-1702; Caja 3 Exp. 29-ix-1740, and Caja 5. Exp. 1-xii-1757 respectively. For documentation of runaways and delinquents in sixteenth-century Quito See. Lane (2002: 67).}

In addition to the problem of flight, colonials had to manage those blacks who continued to express themselves aggressively. The task of “managing” such blacks would prove, however, to be one that required an undying resolve, as blacks challenged the status quo and aggravated existing tensions and power struggles among elites throughout Quito. One notable example reveals two slaves who found themselves at the center of a 1739 dispute involving Captain don Xavier de Mosquera Figueoa, his friend don Francisco Arboleda, and the bishop of Popayan, don Diego Fermin de Vergara.\footnote{ACC Libros de los Cabildos Popayán, no. 11, 28 May 1732.} According to don Xavier, while visiting the home of his friend Arboleda, he had encountered a slave attempting to enter the city of Popayan mounted on a horse and armed with a sword and lance. When he instructed the slave to disarm, the slave responded that he would not unless instructed by his own master, a cleric named Jacinto Sánchez. He then insisted that he intended to travel on to his master’s house, spear in hand. Arboleda instructed one of his own slaves to attack the rebel from behind.
He did so, dislodging the spear from his hand. Don Xavier pulled a gun and shot, and both slaves attempted to flee. He misfired, drew another gun and fired again. Unfortunately for don Francisco, but fortunately for the two slaves he missed, allowing them to escape allegedly into the confines of the local monastery.490

At times the enslaved verbalized the threat of violence and flight in order to motivate their masters to accord them with measures of freedom and autonomy. Slaveholders, like Carlos Araujo, experienced violent confrontations when they threatened the socio-cultural constitution of slave communities.491 Araujo, a long distance merchant, took possession of the previously Jesuit-owned sugar plantation of Quajara in March of 1783.492 The plantation held some 266 slaves, composed of fifty-five families. The estate was part of a Jesuit-owned complex of sugar plantations located nearby. When Araujo officially took possession of the plantation, he prohibited the slaves from leaving the premises or working on other near-by estates. He then transferred six to eight young slaves to work in the city of Quito. Shortly thereafter, the entire enslaved community confronted Araujo, threatening that unless they were allowed to live together as a community and observe their customs, they would kill off all of his indigenous workers, and flee to the mountains. 493 Araujo had a serious problem. Even the few slaves that he had sent to work

490 One doubts that the Augustinians were truly offering "safe haven" to the enslaved. While the monastery might have represented a haven from shots coming from Arboleda’s gun one must take note of the fact that the Augustinians, like many other men and women of the cloth, also owned mines and slaves in the region of Popayán. Therefore, given the economic incentives it is questionable as to whether or not this was a humanitarian effort on their part at all. Perhaps this was an opportunity for them to gain the labor of two able-bodied captives without risking any of the monastery's capital. This certainly would not have been outside the range of possible motivations, as it is becoming increasingly clear that men and women of the cloth were not only ruthless with their captives, but they were ruthless in the acquisition of said captive (ANHQ Popayán, Caja 69; Exp. 22-vi-1739). A similarly violent confrontation is reported in the murder case of an enslaved Afro-criollo—Luis Banegas, which occurred also near the mines of Barbacoas, a prominent mining town and a notorious entrepot for contraband slaves. The language employed in the Banegas underscores further the extent of white and Amerindian fears of blacks. (ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 2, Exp. 26-x-1727; Lane 1996).

491 Exploring the “nature” of marronage in late colonial Colombia, Anthony MacFarlene (1986) states, “At times, rebellion and the threat of flight was used to bring pressure on the slave owner, while stopping short of actual escape to a palenque” (158).


493 ANHQ, Temporalidades, Caja 18, Años 1782-83; ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 10, Exp. 19-iii-1783. See also. ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 12, Exp. 16-xii-1788. Araujo had similar problems with enslaved Afro-criollos from the haciendas of Puchimbuela and San Joseph. See. ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 12, Exp. 30-vii-1789, ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 12, Exp. 26-ii-1790 and ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 12, Exp. 13-iv-1790. See also. ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 12, Exp. 23-viii-1790. For another example of enslaved Afro-criollos who chose direct-confrontation on yet another formerly Jesuit-owned plantation—La Concepcion—See. ANHQ, Esclavos, Caja 15; Exp. 25-vi-1798. Christiana Borchert de Moreno (1989)
in other places had fled those sites, returning to their community at Quajara. Araujo needed only two thirds of the existing slave community to complete the work at Quajara, and could not afford to maintain even one more. Consequently in May of 1785, Araujo requested a small cadre of soldiers from the government to assist him in removing the slaves so that he could sell them. Apparently, the specter of slaves as thieves or robbers hiding along roads, convinced the officials of the audiencia to get involved. Audiencia members must have understood that, at a minimum, Araujo was forced to either sell off some of the slaves or employ them on other plantations. Thus, in 1786, soldiers assisted Araujo in the sale and removal of 88 captives. These souls were dispersed in two groups. The first comprised 60 individuals who were sold to don Gregorio Larrea, the owner of other haciendas in the Ibarra region, while the remaining twenty-eight were sold to doctor don Martín de Chiriboga, a parish priest from Urcuquí. Ultimately, the judiciaries must have registered these slaves’ actions as both an affront to the authority of the master class and that of royal officials like themselves. Although masters were required to provide the enslaved with adequate care and education in the Christian faith, they also had the right to dispose of them as property.

The Politics of Mercy: Fealty, Obeisance and Bodies of Evidence

Throughout the colonial era, notorious incidents, such as Araujo’s challenges with the Quajara slave population, would have been difficult for crown officials to forget. And as rebel actions in Esmeraldas, Patía, and throughout Americas evidenced, from the outset it was apparent to royal officials that controlling restive blacks demanded a number of concurrent approaches. Absolute authority on the part of the crown was an illusive goal, and the maintenance of an orderly society seemed to reside in a delicate balance between domination and the application of an abbreviated policy of fairness and mercy.

From the earliest era, in an effort to garner royal mercy, however, the enslaved had to present and ‘perform’ their cases in a manner that was consistent with conceptions of royal power. They had to ‘perform’ like, and assume the posture of, vassals who understood the ‘implied’ royal authority of the

was one of the first to publish analysis of this incident and the post-Expulsion fate of formerly Jesuit-owned enslaved women, children and men. Rosario Coronel Feijóo (1991) provided an excellent discussion of Jesuit land acquisition and management processes. While Benard Lavellé used the aforementioned case in developing his argument for increasing slave resistance in the latter half of the eighteenth century. For discussions of the Jesuits and their agro-pastoral, slaveholding enterprises throughout Quito See. Kenneth J. Andrien (1995), and Nicholas Cushner (1982).
crown and its representative in the Indies—the audiencia. As historian Kris Lane suggests, like the church, the courts’ mediating role in the colonial hierarchy rested on a shared belief in, or at least shared acceptance of, a central mystery, in this case the divine right of kings rather than divinity itself. Nevertheless, ‘shared belief and acceptance’ did not mean uniform understanding or experience across lines of color, gender, etc., but could often play out as parallel interpretations that appear to have been uniform on the surface. Thus, scholars must question the extent to which slaves’ and mestizos’ expectations of “royal mercy” might have differed, and why. Ultimately, although Africans and Andeans alike came to the courts with ‘culturally specific’ notions of regalism and how it functioned, the success of their pleas hinged upon their ability to perform within what was a European-derived and ordered spectacle. Mercy had to be won by declarations of fealty, penitent pleas, and bodies of evidence, for even one’s posture and physical condition could effect one’s day in court. When petitioning, the enslaved almost always included a plea for mercy along with declarations of fealty aimed at the Christian God, the Church, and/or even the Crown of Spain. Careful to depict themselves as observant Christians and humble subjects, they often bowed before the scribe, prostrating themselves with their head in hand. Several who found themselves badly bruised, beaten, and scarred entered their bodies as evidence of the brutality of their current owners. All of this was a part of what appears on the surface to be ritualized behavior that individuals of all levels of society participated in to some degree. Yet, for the enslaved and other members of the lower classes, this was far more than ritualized behavior, these were necessary performances aimed at ingratiating themselves to court officials in hopes of eliciting royal mercy.

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494 In his work on enslaved legal action in nineteenth-century Peru, Carlos Aguirre (1999) points also to courts’ mediating role in society, arguing, “The courts are not only arenas for the contention between different sets of actors but, in addition, they are also scenarios for the deployment, reshaping, and dissemination of social and political ideas, cultural values, and different forms of representation” (idem 204). See also the work John Leddy Phelan (1967).

495 I thank Kris Lane for pointing me in this direction, and for encouraging me to see that colonial courts were not merely instruments of domination and resistance, and that the “implied authority” of the audiencia was connected to that of the crown and its “central mystery”—the divine right of kings (Personal communication—9/25/2001).

496 I have benefited greatly from scholarly works in the area of Performance Studies, particularly the works of Dwight Conquergood (1992, 2002), Richard Schechner (1985), and Margaret Drewal Thompson (1992). Thus, when I refer to performances, while identifying a common thread or troupe used by petitioners—requests for mercy and honorific comportment—I do not intend to suggest that slaves’ [re]presentations before the courts were rigid, stoic, or uniform. To be sure, the legal process imposed its conventions and protocols. Nevertheless, litigants improvised, transforming each court appearance into a dramatization that became their very own. I thank Sandra Richards for pointing out key
Slaves, in fact, manipulated a variety of norms and postures in their attempts to gain their ends. Early conflicts among slaves hint specifically at subaltern belief in the effectiveness of articulations of honor—and perhaps also at the internal code of ethics that informed slave interaction. Evidence of both is found in one notable case against four slave women—Barbola, her mother María, Sabrina (all slaves of doña Mariana de Porteros), and Beatriz (a ‘mulatta’ deposited with Juan Ortiz)—and an unnamed female servant. In 1615, officials from the town of Popayán initiated criminal proceedings against the women for attacking, “in word and deed” (de palabra y obra), Catalina who was the slave of Diego de Salazar, chief magistrate of Popayán. Officials charged and convicted the women for attacking Catalina while at a local river mill.

Catalina had suffered serious injuries. Perhaps she had been injured for life; one cannot be sure. Nevertheless, given the description of the crime “descalabrada,” which referred normally to the act of smashing one over the head, it is clear that Catalina’s condition was nothing short of critical. In all likelihood, she was still hemorrhaging (externally and perhaps internally), and was quite possibly at deaths door. Still lurking behind the matter of her physical injuries was the allegation that her assailants had also “insulted [her] with intimidating words,” thereby impugning her honor (emphasis added). Though not an outright claim of honor, and perhaps more appropriately assigned to the rubric of assault and intimidation, the use of the verb insultar is quite suggestive. It had the dual effect of suggesting that Beatriz held a level of honor that her violent, unladylike comrades lacked while criminalizing both the actions and the personas of her alleged assailants. The justification for Catalina’s belief in her own honor is not clear. Perhaps she

works in Performance Studies. Other influential works include: Robin D.G. Kelley (1993), and James Scott (1985, 1990).


498 ACC. Sig. 1407 (Col.—JI—2Cr) 1615.

felt she derived a level honor and status from that of her owner, insisting upon some superiority to the other
women. This certainly would not have been a stretch in a society bound by concepts of honor and shame
such as early colonial Quito. On the other hand, she might have assumed a level of honor based upon her
observance elite honorific norms and well-established standards of piety and virtue. In either case, it is
clear that codes of conduct, indeed notions of honorable behavior existed among Quito’s enslaved and
could be used in court. Whether derived from elite notions of honor and virtue, or found within heart of the
emerging Afro-criollo culture, or both, it is clear that, like slaves in colonial New Spain and the Eastern
Andes, Quito’s bondmen and women were developing the discursive tools needed to maneuver colonial
courts long before the mid-eighteenth century, a reality reflected in the legal activity of free blacks of the
era as well.

The source of slaves’ increased legal acumen is found not only in their interactions with attorneys
and elite whites, but also in their associations with free blacks. By the last quarter of the seventeenth
century free blacks like Adán Pardo were turning to the courts with increasing frequency to adjudicate in
matters concerning their honor. On July 12, 1675, for example, Adán Pardo presented a case against
captain Juan Larra de los Archos y Ríos, the alcalde ordinario of Cali. Adán alleged that Juan had forced
his sons, two married daughters, and his one engaged virgin daughter to serve him. While the colonial
record does not reveal with certainty if the court upheld Adán’s claims, it is certain that he vigorously
defended the honor of this family, and thus his own. All who fell within Adán’s orbit (enslaved and free)

500 The desire to assert and defend one’s honor was the likely catalyst in the 1580 incident where audiencia judge Diego
de Ortegón’s slave was murdered by the master of another enslaved Afro-Quiteña in the city plaza for having
questioned his authority to settle an argument (Lane 2002: 67).

501 Nancy E. van Deusen (2001) found that enslaved black and casta women in seventeenth-century Lima deployed the
concept of honor with considerable frequency (90-92). Van Deusen cites one “mulatta slave” named Jacinta de
Horosco who, in 1635, requested that Limeño officials facilitate her sale to a benevolent owner who might carry her
safely to the city of Quito, where her husband Pedro Rico, an enslaved black man, resided with his master. According
to van Deusen, Jacinta did not “emphasize her virtuous character.” Rather, she directed officials to the “self-control”
she had displayed in resisting the impulse to “flee or hide” (ibid 93). For women like Jacinta, that is, abused women
who had a just cause to flee, their honor lay in their ability to employ the virtue of “self control”. In her case, it seems
to have paid off as her new owner transported her to Riobamba. Although her battle to preserve her conjugal union was
far from over, she was now much closer to her husband.

502 ACC. Sig. 2010 (Col.—JI—2cv) 1675.
would have been aware of his concern for family honor. Slaves who took notice stood to gain an education in the nuances of Spanish American jurisprudence.

Early enslaved and free black litigants were -perhaps unintentionally- establishing a pattern of legal precedents, a corpus of case law as it were. They sought change for themselves and their loved ones, employing tactics that foreshadowed those used by litigants of the late colonial period. Individuals like Francisco, the captive cited at the beginning of this article, labored to alter radically their circumstances, costing their masters time, lost wages, and legal fees. Rather than see his case thwarted by patronage politics, Francisco implicated local officials in the crime of his suffering, charged the local priest with malfeasance, and questioned the integrity of the local magistrate, both moves that were far from apolitical.

Gradually informed by a body of legal precedents, and emboldened by their knowledge of the possibilities that legal action afforded, slave litigants forged ahead in some notable cases. On 6 September 1690, in the city of Quito, Pedro de Silva initiated a lawsuit against don Thomás and doña Geronima Reymundo for the freedom of his wife, Phelipa del Castillo. Pedro declared that the 400 pesos he had offered doña Reymundo ought to have been sufficient to secure the freedom of his 32-year-old enslaved wife, Phelipa. Moreover, Geronima had refused to submit the portion of Phelipa’s day wages (jornales) as the law prescribed. Don Thomás countered, insisting that Pedro de Silva was seeking more than he and Phelipa’s fair share of the day wages. He argued that Phelipa had run away some time earlier, and that despite having knowledge of this, Pedro continued to charge Thomás and Geronomina 4 reales per day as a stipend to care for Phelipa while on contract assignment. By Thomás’s reckoning, Pedro and Phelipa owned him 1000 pesos. The case, however, would rise and fall upon the testimonies of two elite whites, an enslaved black woman and a free black man. Perhaps more importantly, the case hinged upon their ability to cast themselves as loyal, trustworthy subjects who deserved a most merciful judgment.

Pedro and his wife endeavored to showcase their honorable, law-abiding behavior while highlighting the deplorable actions and disposition of Phelipa’s master. Not only was don Thomás in violation of the agreement he had entered into with Phelipa and Pedro, his actions undermined the realization of the very legal principle that allowed for such master-slave arrangements—the idea that

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503 ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 9-xi-1690.
slavery was inherently transitory. Extorting potentially endless amounts of money from Phelipa, prevented her from realizing her dream of freedom. But if don Thomas was to be believed, Phelipa was a thieving runaway who had joined forces with an opportunistic free black whose integrity was questionable at best. And while Pedro and Phelipa might have felt an overwhelming sense of anger and frustration over such allegations, they had to suppress such emotions while before judiciaries for the lack of composure was sure to undermine their credibility while simultaneously upholding that of Thomás. In such instances, performing the role of loyal subject with great humility proved both useful and necessary.

Yet humility and restraint were not the only performance techniques that slaves deployed before the courts. When Juana Rica and her two daughters appeared, along with her grandchildren and great-grand children, before the high court (audiencia) of Quito in 1703 to present their libertad petition, they brought with them a certain dramatic appeal that could not have been felt by the mere presence of the matriarch Juana and her attorney. On that day the judiciaries witnessed the gestures, physical resemblances, and familial affinities that legal discourse could not convey. The spectacle of four generations of would-be free blacks emphasized the importance of the court’s verdict. Such appearances were, in fact, rare, and might therefore lend added credence to the case they sought to present.

Juana and her family argued that they were all free, claiming to be descendants of a free black woman by the name of Ana Rica, who had lived in the village of Zaruma. According to the plaintiffs, Ana Rica had been a free woman who lived with a mestiza by the name of Francisca Calderón. They argued that although she lived and worked in the home of Francisca, she had not been this woman’s slave. As time passed, Ana Rica gave birth to a daughter – Magdalena Rica – who also lived in the home with Ana and Francisca until she was about eight or nine years of age. Around this time Pedro Pesantes arrived, requesting to take Magdelena to the town of Cuenca. She was not to be his slave, but his maid. According to these plaintiffs, their ancestor – Ana Rica – agreed, and sometime later had occasion to travel to the town of Cuenca. There, she found her daughter in the home of doña Magdalena de Espinosa. In the course of their conversation and visit she decided that this woman was treating her daughter well. She was well dressed, fed, and appeared to be in a good situation. But over the years the descendants of

\[504\] ANHQ Esclavos, Caja 1, Exp. 2-xii-1706.
Magdalena—Juana and her children—somehow came to be understood as the property of doña María de Zúñiga and doña Juliana Espinosa Montero.

According to the white women, María and Juliana, these claims of the Rica family were absurd. They argued that they had owned Juana and her family for years, and that recently they had sold some of their relatives, including a mulato named Bernardo to Cristóval de Raíz of Cuenca, and a mulata, named Gregoría, to Don Diego Ruiz de Roxas of Latacunga. They had also sold another mulata, named Augustina to Maestro Benito Montero, their brother who was a priest in the city of Quito. One of these purported slaves, Bernardo, had run back to the city of Cuenca, and was ultimately resold to, the aforementioned, doña María de Zúñiga. They went on to argue that their uncle, Maestro Antonio Espinosa de las Monteros, had indeed freed some of his slaves upon his death, but he had left others in slavery; still others he left as donations to the church. At this point in the case, they requested that the slaves be placed in depósito while an investigation and trial took place.

The Rica family argued that they had lived in freedom, and had not received any day wages as slaves, nor had they received any sort of maintenance from doñas María, Juliana or their family. Furthermore, they argued, “We have tended our own gardens in order to feed and maintain ourselves and our children”. While stopping short of invoking the term honor, this family clearly sought to demonstrate that they were not only free, but honorable, industrious subjects, and by extension that the doñas were dishonorable owners who had failed to provide for their would-be slaves. The might-be slaves brought several witnesses to help substantiate their claims, ranging from other blacks, both slave and free, to whites and Indians. Each argued that they knew various aspects of the history as told by this family to be true. Several of the witnesses even argued that the ancestor, Ana Rica, was the daughter of an indigenous woman.

The defendants – doñas María and Juliana – continued to bring forth evidence in support of their case. During the course of the trial they produced the following: bills of sales, documenting that they had indeed sold some of Juana’s family members, the will and testament of their brother to whom they had sold

505 Ibid., folios 1-2.
a couple of the relatives, a will of their mother leaving slaves to them by the name of Magdalena and Ana, and a statement from the Zaruma parish which claimed that Magdelena had been born the daughter of Ana, who was the slave of Beatriz [not Francisca] Calderon.

Nevertheless, Juana and her family members pressed ahead, basing their claims not only upon the corroboration of their account of their lineage, but also upon the very constitution and viability of their union. Mother testified for daughter while husband testified for wife and mother-in-law. Ultimately, however, they sought to convey a larger, and perhaps more notable picture. Even if their story was to be viewed as mere family folklore supported only by a barrage of hearsay, their larger message was undeniable. They were the model free black family, who loved and supported one another, adhering doggedly to the laws of the land. They were an honorable family whose members had inherited and earned their freedom. After all, they had not lived as slaves; neither had they received support from their alleged owners. Rather, they were victims of generational wrongs, and now it was up to the high court to correct the injustices of a bygone era.

The extant record does not provide the outcome of this case. By the time the documentary trail ends, Ana and her descendants had been assigned a new lawyer, and the case was being held up because of delays from the opposing side. Nevertheless, the dramatic effect, the considerable degree of tenacity, and the resourcefulness displayed by the Rica family is an undeniable indication of the long and protracted process of legal action, and the politically radical nature of early eighteenth-century slave lawsuits, foreshadowing cases that would emerge in the late colonial and Independence eras.

Prudencio Correa, an enslaved pardo from Quito, demonstrated that he, too, possessed a sense that acting out submissiveness was key to resisting via the courts. Prostrating himself before the scribes, Prudencio petitioned for his freedom, claiming his parents had been free, and “had baptized him in the faith.” In so doing, he bolstered his bonafide claim as a Christian and a legitimate member of society—an insider—in contrast to those who sought illegitimate/anti-social recourse. Prudencio sought to nullify the recent sale of his person on two accounts: (1) his true libero status, and (2) because of the cruelties that he had suffered at the hands of the purchaser. According to Prudencio, the priest, Sebastian

506 ANHQ Esclavos Caja 1, Exp. 5-x-1702, folios 1-3.
de Araujo, falsely had stated that he was a slave, forging documents that said that his father and mother did not present him to the faith in baptism.\textsuperscript{507} His would-be owners, doñas Bernarda de Ariniga y Margarita de Sambrano, argued, however, that not only was Prudencio their slave, but that he had been “born and raised” in their home as the son of Gerónima Correa, an enslaved woman who had another child, a daughter named Getrudis. According to these two elite women, his mother sought her freedom some years earlier, but could not find anyone to help in the matter. They were also careful to point out that they had inherited this family as the heirs of Barnada Pérez, the daughter of their great-grandmother, Magdalena Pérez, arguing, moreover, that their great-grandmother had owned both Prudencio’s grandmother, and his great-grandmother as well.\textsuperscript{508} Nevertheless, Prudencio continued to appeal to the justices, complaining that don Jaime Ortiz had information about his freedom, which would nullify the sale “of his person”. According to Prudencio “el maestro Sebastián de Araujo clergio Presbítero” falsely stated that he was a slave and forged documents to state that his father and mother did not present him to the faith in baptism. Prudencio explained:

Proceeding maliciously he (Fray Sebastián) turned over [a false] writ of sale to don Jaime Ortiz, architect of this city [Quito], who has committed a grave crime because he has sold a free person which is against one to give attention to such evil and grant the said sale without bringing in someone who could protest this falsely-placed slavery, and without bringing in anything [such as] information that has not been considered [which might] resolve my case [or demonstrating that] I am free, and as I have been as such in the city of Loja and in [my] travels to this city.\textsuperscript{509}

\textsuperscript{507} For examples of similar cases see: Augustín Menza ANHQ Caja 2 Exp. 15-xii-1716; María Josepha Guerro and Inés Guerro—mother and daughter captives, Exp. 29-vii-1718; Manuel de Adarbe Exp. 18-vi-1720; Exp. 113-v-1722; Exp. 27-iii-1726; Francisca Montero Exp. 13-I-1730; Andres Dominguez with Phelpa Thomera ANHQ Caja 3. Exp. 5-v-1730; Josepha Porto Carrero Exp. 26-v-1732; María de Losas and her children Exp. 9-xi-1737; Exp. 8-x-1744; Cazetaro de Guerra with wife and child Exp. 3-xi-1744; María Nicolasa along with children and cousins in ANHQ Caja 4, Exp. 12-xii-1746; and several others including ANHQ, Caja 4. Exp. 9-v-1750; Exp. 3-vii-1750; Exp. 25-viii-1750; Exp. 6-ii-1751; and Geronima Nates’ case in Caja 5. Exp. 22-iii-1753.

\textsuperscript{508} Ibid., folios 10-17.

\textsuperscript{509} “Prosendiendo maliciozamente ha otorgado escritura de benta a don Jaime Ortiz arquitecto de esta ciudad en que a cometido delito grave por aber bendido a persona libre deg. Ma contra la persona o personas que tal maldad antentiendo y otorgar oha escritura sin instrumento alguno que conteste la esclavitud que despone falsa y sin instrumento por lo qual…me resiua la información que fresco de como soy libre y como tal he uido asi en la ciudad de Loxa a en los transportes en esta ciudad.” (ANHQ Caja 1, Exp. 5-x-1702, folio 32).
Citing the bodily harm that he had endured at the hands of Ortiz, he stated:

Yesterday, Thursday, which makes 14 days of the current [month] around seven at night, the mayordomo of the house of don Jaime Joseph de Ortiz requested to keep me inside the obraje (textile mill), dragging me into it, I leaned against a staff which I had, and for this the said, don Joseph, knocked the staff out of my hand. He gave me many blows to the body and luckily I am [not] totally crushed, after which he took a strip of leather and gave me cruel lashes, leaving me defenseless and at risk of losing my life because my chest, arms, and back are swollen with marks so prominent and in order to use my right as it suits me… I ask and plead [that you] circulate [this] petition [in order] that an attorney might receive my case, for heaven’s sake given the beating, marks, and the swelling place me in the carcel real de cuerpo while you determine the case of my freedom I will be in [the] said carcel, and moreover, [because] he has assaulted me and will [assault me], and nevertheless the said has in times past knocked my wife down as she carried the petitions to the Real Audiencia de Cruz, don’t be malicious.510

Prudencio’s case highlights both the technical sophistication of slave petitions as well as the great lengths that they went to in order to characterize themselves as “insiders” who were not only royal subjects, but plaintiffs who deserved justice and mercy. Like Francisco (the slave cited at the beginning of this discussion), Prudencio prostrated himself before the court scribe, paid obeisance to royal authorities, and called for justice and mercy. Even captives who related testimony as compelling as that of Prudencio could not be strident in their claims. Rather they had to draw upon their position as subjects of the king when imploring the court not to be malicious in is verdict. This phrase “don’t be malicious,” found throughout court petitions, reflects the petitioners’ final attempt to impress upon the court the critical importance of its decision. Not only did Prudencio seek to ingratiate himself to the court, insisting that he was an upstanding citizen who had been “baptized in the faith,” his body became evidence of the cruelties he had endured while in a defenseless position at the hand of a master to whom he did not belong, not to mention the abuses his wife, a defenseless women, suffered in her attempts to aid his just cause. Simply put, the court could either accord them mercy and put an end to the injustice, or become complicit in their masters’ cruelties. The investigation of Prudencio’s case continued until August 3, 1703, when the justices of the

510 “Ayer jueves que se contaron catorze de el corriente [mes] como a oras de las siete de la noche solisito el mayordomo de caza del oho don Jaime Joseph de Ortiz llebarme a enserrar en oho obraje arrastrandome por lo que al me arrime en un bordon de que tenia y por esto el oho don Joseph Ortis quitandome el bordon de la mano. Me dio tantos golpes por el cuerpo de suerte que estoy totalmente melido y luego cogio una loa de piel de baca y me dio tan crueldes asotes haziendome tener indefenso de que estoy arriesgado de mi vida por que tengo el pecho brasis y espaldas hinchadas con señales tan sobre salientes y para usar de mi derecho como me combenga… pido y suplico secirua de mandar que un escribano que ceptor ponga por fe las señals golpes y hinchazon y me remueba a la carcel Real de corpse que entre tanto que se determine la cauza de mi libertad, estare en oha carsel y mas me [h]a asalto el grotesco que me dara y no obstante lo referido que a mi mugger asi mesmo los días pasados la tiraron por dezir que llebava las peticiones a la Real Audicneia de Cruz no ser de malicia.” Ibid., 38-38v.
audiencia ruled in favor of the alleged masters. And while Prudencio filed appeals, protesting that he was being treated maliciously, when the document ended he was no closer to his freedom than when he began the process.

For enslaved women, the process of seeking freedom could be a double-edged sword. Those who earned enough money to purchase their freedom were assumed to be prostitutes or thieves, and on the other, those in loving relationships with men, who desired to purchase their freedom, also risked being viewed as prostitutes, inherently dishonored and untrustworthy. Since the master-slave relationship was fundamentally coercive, the very nature of the relationship meant that anytime a woman entered into an agreement with a man to “purchase her freedom” (which in fact meant purchasing the slave, male or female) she was vulnerable to her new owner’s advances and demands (sexual or otherwise).

This is the picture that Juana Antonía Márquez painted when giving her deposition in the lawsuit she filed against her owner, Francisco Antonio de Abellendeas. On August 8, 1754, Juana testified that she had just received word that Francisco was leaving for Guayaquil “early in the morning of the following day.” His departure would disrupt and perhaps jeopardize her pending lawsuit aimed at acquiring her freedom. Juana testified that she and Francisco had had an arrangement, or more precisely a relationship, one that extended back some five years. In 1749, she had agreed to enter into an “illicit relationship” (amistad ilisita) with Francisco in exchange for him purchasing her freedom from captain don Juachin DeSoto Mayor for 370 pesos. And, while Francisco had indeed purchased her, five years had passed in which he had not granted Juana her freedom. Juana contended:

> it has been my obligation, without giving him my hand (marrying him), the affliction [or forced sex continually] until he impregnated me with his baby boy, who lives [and is] four years of age, and as in all that I have reported as I said, I have served [him] not only in this city [Quito] but as far as the city of Guayaquil with my person and my mother per the contract that I made owing me the writ of freedom, and in the city of Guayaquil, there [were] many potential purchasers, not only as a servant but also in order to take me, or enter with me into the holy state of matrimony, and in such cases don Francisco prevented me, saying many times that I did not have the freedom to marry (in this case that she was not free to marry, insinuating that she was married or possessed some other moral impediment) to make such an arrangement, and these proposals were not two or three times, but many more, thus in the city of Guayaquil, las Bodegas y Esuaranda, but also in the city of Quito...

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511 AHHQ Eslavos Caja 5, Exp. 8-viii-1754, folios 1-1v.

512 Ibid., 38-38v
She stated, moreover, that throughout their illicit affair Francisco mistreated her:

Not only with blows but with an instrument in his hand as in all that I demonstrate I have only endured all of this to obtain my freedom, and not all of the abuses that I [have endured] have been solely [at the hand] of my master, but also his brother-in-law, don Juan Romero, who tried to kill me when I had been violated [in order] to extract the aforementioned for which I add also that [he caused] me to miscarry another child—also the result of the maltratos (rapes) of don Francisco—of one month and fifteen days pregnant.\textsuperscript{513}

According to Juana, she had paid a hefty price for her freedom, a price that included: her body, time, opportunities at meaningful, desirable and church-sanctioned relationships, the death of an unborn fetus, and the use of her mother’s time. Juana entered into this arrangement expecting to give of herself and her resources for a limited time in exchange for her freedom. Her owner Francisco claimed, however, that he had not purchased Juana under any such pretenses; neither had he committed any of the alleged crimes. Rather, he claimed that his sister—Juana Abeldebeas—had requested that he purchase Juana, and he had obliged. His attorney, Carlos de Larrayos, insisted that the claims brought by the enslaved woman were unfair, and constituted a misrepresentation of the truth, imploring the court to seek the truth by investigating these claims.\textsuperscript{514}

In an apparent effort to neutralize Juana, they requested that she be placed in depósito. Once Juana was placed in the custody of the Santa Catherina Monastery, Larrayos moved to have the case thrown out. He claimed that around the time when Juana would have conceived Juachin Phelipe (the living child) that Francisco was in Panama, and therefore the young child could not be his. Furthermore, since he had never made such an agreement, the case lacked merit and should be thrown out.

Yet, much to the chagrin of Larrayos, the justices found that the case warranted a trial, and ordered both sides to develop their cases and present them. While Juana was depositada in the Santa Chatherina monastery, her lawyer (Phelipe Victorio de Miranda, procurador de los [pobres]) continued to build and argue her case, insisting among other things that shortly after Juana gave birth to Juachin Phelipe,

\textsuperscript{513} “sino de mano armada como todo lo de muestro solamente he aguantado para conseguir oha libertad, y tod l as extorciones he padesido no solamente de oho mi amo sino tambien su cuñado don Juan Romero que me torado a matar que he estado violado y sacar mentado por lo qual añadido tambien que aborte de otra criatura para los maltratos de don Francisco de [un] mes y quinse dias de embarasada” (38v).

\textsuperscript{514} Idem, folios 2-3v.
Francisco went to Panama city, leaving her in the care of Dominican priest Fray Santiago de Jesús for
several weeks while he traveled to Panama. Miranda argued, moreover, that this “illicit friendship”
continued upon Francisco’s return while in the home of Francisco’s aunt. The couple had made one trip to
the coastal city of Guayaquil along, but upon their second, Francisco carried Juana’s mother—Getrudis de
la Cruz (morena libre)—to serve him and assist with laundry and other household chores in the city of
Guayaquil, the Bodega de Babaoyo, and in the town of Guaranda. Thereafter, Francisco placed Juana in
the house of his brother in-law because it was “known publicly” that he could no longer keep her in the city
of Guayaquil because his wife had learned of the relationship and of the “excesses that he had committed
with his own slave.” “If he brought her there,” they argued, “that would cause a scandal”. Therefore, he
chose to leave her in his brother in-law’s house. It was during this stay, they argued, when his brother in-
law also abused Juana.

Juana and her attorney developed a considerable cadre of witnesses, many of them women of all
classes and hues. María Petrona Sotomayor, for example, testified on Juana’s behalf, stating that she met
Juana when she and Francisco were occupying a rented room in the home of Miguel Sotomayor. She
testified that Francisco did not treat Juana like his slave, but “like his lady” (sino como su dama) with
whom he had “business” (con quien tenia comercio). According to María, he had Juana to stay in the same
room where he slept. On various occasions she noticed that in the mornings and in the evenings Juana
Antonia got out of the same bed as don Francisco “with whom she slept and recognized with much
love”. Several other witnesses came forth testifying essentially to the same account, many of them
arguing that the relationship between Juana and Francisco was “public and notorious” (público y notorio en
oha ciudad de Guayaquil) in the city of Guayaquil. One witness, Juan Bezerra Chabarria said that when
Juana sojourned at his house in the parish of San Marcos on various occasions. He also claimed to have

515 Ibid., folio 16.
516 Ibid., folio 17.
517 For discussions of the critical implications of what was ‘publico y notorio’ see Tamar Herzog (1993: 96-100, 201-
202).
witnessed Francisco de Abeldebeas come searching for Juana. Upon finding her, Chabarria stated that Francisco:

Mistreated her with words, and actions, and the witness did not know what the motive was, and
only learned from a conversation with Juana Antonio, that she was the slave of the said don Francisco, and was his lover, and had a son by him in ilisita amistad and that he wanted to take her to the city of Guayaquil and being with her he promised to give her 50 pesos and with these she could work and search out her life and with which to increase her freedom and move out of the esclavitud that she possessed (folio 18).

Another witness, Bernarda Muños Chamorro, testified that she and Juana Antonia worked in the home of one Señora Leonora. According to Barnarda, Francisco proposed that she hold Juana hostage in the room where Juana and Francisco had lived together previously. While she never agreed to this, she testified that Juana and Francisco did share a room, explaining that Francisco had Juana “for his friend which has been public and notorious just like it is also known that he had offered her freedom like this witness has heard on various occasions from his mouth.” In addition, Bernarda noted that Juana suffered because she lacked “…various necessities, enduring hunger and many bouts of mistreatment” 518. As a result the witness saw that Juana took occasion to hide in the home of one señor Thobar. When this occurred, Bernada noted, don Francisco sent doña Luisa Amaya to look for Juana and to promise her that she would receive her freedom in exchange for returning. But rather than return with doña Amaya, Juana caused a scene, recounting openly the escapades of she and Francisco, all while screaming through the door of the house where she hid. Bernarda alleged that during this exchange Juana insisted that she would not return until Francisco provided her with a carta de libertad plus 50 pesos. Several other witnesses would testify in support of Bernarda’s claims, each claiming to have witnessed or heard about Juana’s now infamous performance.

As the trial ensued Francisco’s lawyer came forth on several occasions, complaining that Juana should be confined to the recogimiento de Santa Martha, insisting that it was not legal for her to be walking the streets and plazas while in deposito. 519 He continued to prolong the case, filing complaints that stated,

518 Ibid., folio 21.

519 Recall that Juana’s owner complained of her movement while in deposito. This is not a mere coincidence, but rather a pattern that reflects gendered norms. Nancy E. van Deusen has found, for example, that men commonly sought to control the mobility of their wives during divorce proceedings. They often sought to restrict the woman’s ability to
among other things, that he had not received all of the “autos”—evidence, testimonies, and the like in order that he might review them before the trial.

Entering her body and physical state as evidence, Juana and her lawyer called upon the testimony of Fray Jasinto Gausandes, a local priest who had cared for Juana at the behest of her master Francisco. Fray Jasinto claimed that Juana fell into his care because of abuses she had suffered at the hand of her master. He explained,

[Juana] suffered from pain in her body as a result of an object that her master used to beat her because the night before he had been in a bar…enjoying himself with some of his acquaintances, but he needed the said mulata to be treated in order that she might travel to Quito as he did the third day of my having the confessed (Juana); and I did not receive notice that she had another accident; neither that she might miscarry from this bout of sickness.520

Francisco and his attorney countered, basing their case upon two fundamental points: one that the case lacked merit and should be thrown out, and two, they sought to demonstrate the absurdity of Juana’s claims by denying the sexual relationship, the paternity of Juana’s child (ren), and the alleged pretences under which he purchased Juana. Calling upon several witnesses, they argued Francisco had never engaged in such an illicit affair. For their part, it was impossible; Francisco was traveling in Panama at the time of the child’s conception, and could not have impregnated Juana. Evidence of this fact, they claimed, lay in their view that the child did not resemble Francisco (ni en color, ni en fisonomia), but reflected, rather, the likeness of one Manuel Nicolas, a free black tailor from Quito, the man witnesses claimed to have seen leaving Juana’s quarters on several mornings.

The defense continued its simultaneous attack upon Juana’s reputation and the validity of her claims, charging that she had a pattern of making outlandish accusations against former masters. When purchased her, he argued, she was in deposito, looking for a new master after having leveled similar claims communicate with their family members, holding that such interactions would allow for negative influence. Moreover, men insisted that their wives mobility and freedom to communicate with relatives was “a male prerogative” (van Deusen 2001: 93-94). In a real sense Juana’s case reveals the kind of patriarchy of ownership all enslaved subjects endured.

520 “[h]a dolorido el cuerpo de una sova le avia pegado su amo don Joan Joseph Romero, porque avia estado la noche antes, en el estanco … divertiendose con unos paysanos suyos, pero que esta enfermedad para se la fixio oha mulata por viajar a Quito como lo executo al terser dia que haver la confesada; y no tuve noticia de que hubiera tenido otro acesidente; ni el que ubiese mal parto, asi para la enferma;” (folio 45).
against her former owner. Her reputation as an incorrigible, bellicose prostitute was so notorious, that when Francisco tried to sell her, he found that no one wanted to purchase, even from as far away as Guayaquil, he contended.

Eventually, the president of the audiencia rendered a verdict declaring,

I find that the said María Juana Antonia has not proven the said promise (como probar le convino), and that her master proved en bastante forma his exception and defense. And in conformity I must order and [therefore] order that the said mulata be returned (restituida) to the dominion and esclavitud of her master understanding that only for the effect because she is not to be returned to his service, not to his house, neither to his custody due to the danger of (sin de incontinensia que se le harre consido) and for the scandal that he had caused, the said don Francisco Antonio de Aveldebeas with the said concubinage with his own slave to whom he was obligated to give good doctrine and example, I apply the fine of 50 pesos...

Although Juana failed to receive her freedom, the court had granted her thirty days to secure a new owner. While hardly the verdict she sought, the justices had accorded her with a measure of mercy, a signal to the merits of her case, and an acknowledgement of her ability to present herself as an insider, as opposed to the rebellious harlot Francisco alleged she was. She continued to appeal her case to the justices’ sense of fairness and compassion, requesting three additional months to find a new master or the money to purchase her freedom. By the end of the extant record it is clear that things are not moving in Juana’s favor. Her owner’s fine of 50 pesos had been forgiven, and her appeals largely ignored. Juana had done all that she knew to do in her quest for freedom. Like many others in search of freedom, she relied upon the concepts of sevicia while reifying the extra-legal contract she had created with her owner. Following the pattern and process of her predecessors, Juana also relied upon on the art of performing submissiveness to present herself as a mercy-worthy esclava, one whose last opportunity at just treatment lay in the hand of the court. Juana’s case showcases how black women, awash in a sea of subjugation and despair, displayed fortitude, legal savvy, and social awareness. In addition to epitomizing the struggle of enslaved black Quiteñas, it forms a chronological bridge spanning from cases presented in the early colonial era to those emanating in the late colonial and early national periods. Over the course of the second half of the eighteenth century many more slave women would follow Juana’s course, employing a strikingly similar pattern of legal and

521 Ibid., 74v.
performative techniques when appearing before the court. By century’s end the salience of Juana’s the
techniques would have been obvious to enslaved litigants throughout the Audiencia. Consequently, women
like María Chiquinquirá Diaz and Angela Betallas would present cases in 1794 and 1823, respectively, that
strongly resembled those brought by Juana and her predecessors.

Like Juana, María Chiquinquirá Díaz entered into a legal battle with her alleged owner, Presbyter
Afonso Cepeda de Arizcum Elizondo, in the city of Guayaquil in May 1794. Diaz demanded legal
confirmation of her freedom and that of her daughter, María del Carmen Espinzo, on the basis that her
mother had secured “compulsory manumission” prior to her birth, a legal action sparked by Cepedas’s
treatment of her daughter. Retreating from earlier days of generosity, Cepedas characterized Maria del
Carmen as “a filthy bitch…worse than a whore, a prostitute and lascivious.” For María Chiquinquirá’s
part such an insult was an affront to the family’s honor, and constituted grounds for severing all ties to
Cepedas. María, in turn, challenged the Presbyter’s honor, charging him with taking sexual liberties with
his slave women, and fathering children by some. It was these alleged improprieties that led to further
investigation by the court.

For María Eugenia Chaves, the first to publish analysis of the Diaz case and a pioneer in the
study of enslaved women in Guayaquil, Chiquinquirá’s use of the discourse of honor constituted a new
tactic for enslaved women, one peculiar to the late colonial era. For her part, Bourbon Reform policies
reified notions of race and honor in gendered terms, providing enslaved women with a normative discourse
that made it possible for esclavas to put forth claims of honor in the waning years of the eighteenth
century. But enslaved men and women had employed honorific language in lawsuits dating back to the
early seventeenth century. Many proclaimed, for example, that they had been tormented in “word and
deed,” and in turn attacked and disparaged their master’s honor, recounting dishonorable acts including:

523 Quoted in Chaves, Strategies, 114.
524 Chaves, Strategies, 115.
siring children with slave women, requiring work on Sundays, withholding time for mass, and failing to provide instruction in the faith.

Although the Diaz case displays subtle differences from those of earlier generations, María Chiquinquirá’s use of the language of honor was not as unique as Chaves suggests. Rather, it typifies slaves’ well-established pattern and process of combining “compulsory manumission” and/or special contractual arrangements with charges of sevicia. Prior to Chiquinquirá many others had merged sevicia claims with any number of infractions including: the denial of conjugal rights, neglect, and harsh words, disparaging comments, and extreme physical cruelty. In Juana v. Juachin DeSoto Mayor, for example, the verdict came not as the sole result of her mistreatment, but was due also to the court’s desire to condemn Juachin’s dishonorable conduct. Juana had combined successfully the claims of freedom with charges of sevicia (mistreatment) and shameful actions. During the colonial period sevicia had become the touchstone for slave lawsuits, as slaves sought to extend this category to include all possible discomforts and disquietudes experienced at the master’s hand.

A case studies by Camilla Townsend illustrates, even when slaves deviated from this norm they continued to rely upon well-established arguments from previous generations, arguments that often concerned feminine honor and masters’ deplorable behavior. Townsend finds that in 1823, when Angela Batallas sued her master Ildefonso Coronel, a prominent citizen of Guayaquil and leader in the Independence movement, she did not put forth any evidence of sevicia. Rather, she argued that her master had fallen in love with her, promised her freedom, purchased her a house, visited her regularly, and had fathered a child by her. To Angela’s mind, Ildefonso had “become one with her,” consummating a symbolic marriage that manifest itself in the literal union of his freedom with her bondage, thereby redeeming her from the yoke of servitude.

Ildefonso had a different perspective, however. His explanation was simple; Angela was lying. The child was not his, but rather the offspring of a free Afro-Guayaquileño and known friend of Angela. Seeking to characterize her as a knavish whore, Ildefonso suggested also that the child might well belong to Angela’s attorney, a typical accusation leveled at women’s sexual comportment so as to discredit them and

their testimony. This trial, like that of Juana, was inherently about honor, as questions of paternity implied
the maligning of either the character of the owner or that of the enslaved woman. But try as he would to
muster a formidable defense, Ildefonso had already made a colossal mistake. At the time of the child’s
baptism Ildefonso had given Angela’s parda midwife a note to take to the priest, stating that the child was
his, making no mention of the status of the mother. Whether Ildefonso meant this gesture as
acknowledgment of the agreement he had made with Angela, or as a basic step in securing the free status of
his offspring is unclear. In either case, the note would become a critical piece of evidence as the trial
unfolded.

Uncertain as to whether or not her well-articulated case, supported by the baptismal note, would
be enough to secure her freedom, Angela visited the liberator himself—Simón Bolívar. We may never
know if the liberator was truly impressed with the merits of Angela’s case, or if he merely saw an
opportunity to make an important political statement regarding the values of the new regime and perhaps
garner the support of an unhappy segment of the population. Townsend tells us, however, that Bolívar
supported Angela, sending a note to the court in recommendation of “justice for this unhappy slave.”
While Bolívar’s support held obvious significance, the case rose and fell upon Ildefonso’s baptismal note to
priest. Whereas Juana, the slave woman cited earlier, had failed to “prove the said promise,” Ildefonso’s
note offered evidence that demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that he promised Angela freedom. And
although Anglea must have benefited greatly from the politically radical moment of independence, above
all she had presented key evidence while relying upon well-worn tactics and techniques of her ancestors in
emphasizing her master’s dishonorable behavior.

Conclusions

By the end of the eighteenth century, slaves had relied upon their long history of contributing to
white fears and white law making for nearly 200 years. They had extracted merciful concessions by calling
upon their long history of contributing to white fears and white law making. Dating back to the early
1600s, slaves had also played indirectly upon those fears in the legal cases they brought and in their

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528 Townsend, Half my body, 117.
interactions with whites. Rebels and fugitives had helped create a context where judges and officials were unlikely to ignore the larger implications of their rulings. The laws and the judicial process reflected a sort of pragmatism born out of elites’ long history with slavery and the human reaction to bondage—resistance. And at the close of the eighteenth century slaves like Claudio Delgado and Bonfacio Isidro Caravalí continued to remind colonial officials of this perspective, providing judiciaries with a range of factors to consider when rendering a verdict.

On July 4, 1798 Claudio and Bonfacio appeared before the scribe of the high court protesting the ill treatment that they and their wives had received at the hand of their overseer—Captain Onorio Estopiñan. Onorio had whipped Claudio’s wife relentlessly, lashing her torn flesh 100 times in the morning and evening for two straight days; after this, reducing the amount to 50 lashes and then to 25. Captain Onorio then set her about curing pieces of meat, denying her rest and recuperation. Despite the lacerations of her flesh Onorio had proceeded to commit other “abuses,” but stopped abruptly, leaving her to die in an inconspicuous area near the mining camp. Fortunately for her, family members heard her crying and rescued her, treating her wounds with aguardiente and cascarilla. Claudio had suffered the castigation of many lashes as well, enduring whippings to the point that large pieces of flesh tore and hang from his buttocks. Underscoring the gravity of their circumstances, he lamented, “It would have been better to receive a bold of fire than to suffer such punishments. Only infidels should suffer in this manner.”

Despite the fact that their wives had been using “dust” to cure foot injuries, and were guilty, by their own admission, of engaging in “superstition,” Claudio and Bonfacio displayed confidence in their case, advising the court:

Now we are not in any state to return to the said mine. Therefore, we supplicate with major submission, [that you] order that the said master provide us [with a] license to look for [a] new maser. And when he gives it to us [it can be] for wherever he wishes, since none will intimidate [us] to see the similar barbarous experience [again]. This liberty the laws give us for having all been born free since the beginning of the world. And if other slaves have obtained such with less cruelty, we will expect with [our] more just causes to obtain this justice from Your Excellency.

The message was clear, they were not moving until the judiciaries awarded them their desired judgment. While it is impossible to peer into the thoughts of the judges, the potential implications of this case must

529 ANHQ, Esclavos Caja 15, Exp. 4-vii-1798.
have been obvious. Standing before the audiencia were two men at their wits end. Failure to grant their reasonable request might have motivated these slaves, their wives, and their extended family member to runaway; or worse still, revolt. After all, longstanding maroon settlements darted the south pacific littoral where Claudio and Bonfaco’s mining camp was situated. Moreover, the longstanding palenques (maroon settlements) of Esmeraldas and Patia were not far away. Judiciaries must have found themselves in an even greater quandary as these types of complaints were occurring ever more frequently. The booming gold economy that centered upon Barbacoas was in decline. Masters were selling off slaves in large numbers, separating entire communities of slaves who had built lives and cultures together while producing several generations of offspring. Similar problems were occurring in the north-central highlands on the former Jesuit-owned sugar estates. Recall that just ten years prior to Claudio and Bonfaco’s case, officials had dispatched a small contingent of soldiers to assist Carlos Araujo in dismantling a generations-old slave community. Members of the community had threatened his life and the lives of his Amerindian workers precisely because he mistreated them, denying them time off on festival days, adequate food and supplies, and an opportunity at maintaining their household units. Similar concerns filled the docket of the high court, such that any number of slaves might have known about the pending claims of the other. Now facing judiciaries was the challenge and legal obligation of sending a message to all involved, one that upheld slavery, but reminded masters that immoderate lashings and mistreatment was unacceptable.

Consistent with long-held legalistic and performance techniques, Claudio and Bonfaco represented themselves as insiders. At the outset of their deposition they had stated their knowledge of the laws of “the heavens” and royal law. For their part, both legal codes demanded “humane treatment.” If references to the heavens were not enough, they had also made striking a reference to the damnation and destruction that infidels should suffer. While appearing somewhat strident in their claims, they had been careful to address the court with all of the honorific trappings, gestures and codes required for proper consideration in Spanish American courts. Even their admission of their wives’ socio-cultural activities was spoken in a manner that would distance them from the behavior itself, almost as if to discredit the system and draw attention to the greater, more damning crime of the their master—the failure to restrain an sadistic overseer. Whether Claudio and Bonfaco believed in the power of their wives’ spiritual activities
evades our comprehension, just as the motivations of the judges they stood before. In this instance, what
seems to have mattered more than beliefs and motivations was the extent to which they were convincing in
their role before the court. Had they placed enough distance between their claims and their wives’
questionable activities? Or, had the overseer been just in stamping out such ruinous behavior in the context
of the moment? One might accurately assume that they were convincing in their role, given the fact that
they won their desired judgment. Nevertheless, for Claudio and Bonfacio, the question would quickly
become, what was the educational value of this process? What had they learned in route to Quito, as they
maneuvered the city, and in their interactions with court officials? These lessons were likely to serve them
well as they returned to Barbacoas to exercise the rights and privileges that they had received from the high
court on January 15, 1799. As judiciaries transferred the case to officials in Barbacoas for oversight and
enforcement, Claudio and Bonfacio quest to receive good treatment and protection for their family seemed
to have just begun. Theirs would be the challenge of locating a new master and working with the local
court that had denied them their legal rights from the very beginning. If the behavior of other masters is
any indication, Claudio and Bonfacio were sure to face a series of setbacks as they continued to fight to
enjoy the rights granted them by the law and enforced by Quito’s high court. They would be forced to face
the fact that, in colonial Quito, legal entitlements and opportunities to engage in justified acts of resistance
always seemed to mix with the limitations of bondage. The legal struggles of the enslaved were old; their
own battle for a degree of autonomy had a long life too. And while the Republican era would usher in a
new sociopolitical context, the war for freedom and justice was far from over.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Quito constituted the quintessential Spanish American Slave Society. By the late sixteenth century slavery had become an important social force in the region, informing everything from regional labor needs and the luxury-gold exchange economy that characterized the region’s socioeconomic milieu at that time. For many, owning African slave laborers was one of the most important methods of acquiring and displaying wealth. For others, the institution allowed for a more expedient labor arrangement in a world where Amerindians could neither be forced legally to move over long distances, nor compelled to remain at specific work sites. All, who could, purchased slave laborers. Many employed them as bodyguards. While others apprenticed them as blacksmiths and carpenters, many charged them with the responsibility of suckling their children. Although slavery’s importance as both a labor source and social system was evident by the 1580s, its development in the Gobernación of Popayán and the North-Central highlands of Quito followed distinct trajectories over the course of the seventeenth century.

In Popayán, two challenges plagued mine owners during the early years of the seventeenth century—the costs of purchasing and transporting slave laborers to the region, and the depletion of ore reserves in the Cauca Valley. Although elites resolved the former challenge through the series of purchase agreements made with regional factors and itinerant merchants, the matter of finding suitable ore reserves remained a concern for much of the century. As mine owners undertook a frenzied search for gold, they spent the seventeenth century moving their slaves and mining operations across the vast region of the Cauca Valley. During this time, Spanish authorities found it difficult to consolidate power beyond the Cauca Valley because restive Amerindian groups, such as the Sindaguas, continued to control the gold-rich
area of Barbacoas. In the Chocó, another gold-rich region within the lowland Pacific littoral, the Burquínia, Citará, Noama, Soruco and the Tatamia kept Spaniards at bay until the final decades of the century, thereby preventing miners from establishing stable mining camps beyond the Cauca Valley beyond the borders of the Cauca Valley until the last decades of the seventeenth century. Once colonial authorities overthrew restive Amerindian groups and removed them from their homelands, new challenges emerged, namely the need for additional laborers for complete exploration of the region’s gold reserves.

Although the opening of the lowland Pacific littoral exacerbated regional labor needs, it coincided with the increasing flow of slave laborers who arrived in the region as a result of the resurgent transatlantic slave trade, initiating a period and process of re-Africanization. By the 1670s Afro-Creoles outnumbered ethnic Africans by a margin of two to one. The sizable presence of Afro-Creoles seen throughout Popayán at the beginning of the century coupled with their large presence at the end of the century suggests not only a natural increase in the population, but also a distinct context for the formation of culture and consciousness. Nevertheless, this slave population was not large enough to respond to the increasing labor demand that expansion into the lowland Pacific littoral required, thus prompting mine owners to turn more aggressively to the importation of ethnic Africans, these from the lower Guinea Coast, the Bight of Biafra, and West-Central Africa.

From 1600 to the 1680s, in the north-central highlands, slavery was most prominent in Quito’s urban center. There, African and Afro-Creole slave laborers constituted a secondary labor source for an economy predicated largely upon the production and sale of woolen textiles to the mining centers of Peru, Bolivia, and, to a lesser degree, Popayán. Similar to the slave laborers in Popayán, slaves who occupied the elite homes, monasteries, and convents of Quito were ethnically diverse. Among them were ethnic Africans who carried ethnic monikers, such as: Bañol, Biafran, Biojo, Bram, Mandinga, Cape Verde, Caçanga, Ciciliano, Folupe, Wolof, Mojango, San Tomé, and Terra Nova. While most emerged from the Upper Guinea Coast, a region marked by considerable ethnic diversity, ethnic Africans from West-Central Africa constituted one-fourth of all sales between 1580 and 1600. Nevertheless, like their counterparts in Popayán, Afro-Creoles outnumbered ethnic Africans throughout the century, reproducing themselves naturally throughout much of the seventeenth century. Most married across ethnic lines, selected other
enslaved blacks as the godparents of their children, and formed relationships with local the local Amerindian population.

Similar to many New World slave societies, in the Kingdom of Quito the control of large expanses of land and access to natural resources, such as water rights, remained central in the development and expansion of slavery. As the Jesuits turned to agro-pastoral enterprises in the north-central highlands over the course of the seventeenth century, they spent much of the century consolidating land and water rights in the Chota-Mira valley in preparation for sugar cane and *aguardiente* production. As the textile economy of the north-central highlands fell into decline in the waning years of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits were poised to supplement their textile production with the cash crop of sugar cane, and its by-product—*aguardiente*, thereby precipitating an influx of large numbers of newly imported ethnic Africans.

Whether residing in the urban center of Quito or the mining camps of Popayán life for seventeenth-century slave laborers was filled with disruption, uncertainty, and death. In Popayán, mine owners forced their slave laborers to move over large expanses of territory throughout the century, as they left old mining centers in search of new ones. Environmental challenges, restive Amerindians, and the dangers of the gold mining process all threaten and took the lives of many Africans and Afro-Creoles forced to live and work within the region. In Quito, while slaves’ geographical location was a bit more stable, their lives were shaped by the epidemics and natural disasters that plagued the region from 1645 on. In both locations, those who survived until the end of the century witnessed a period of re-Africanization. They along with the new arrivals began anew the process of creating households, families, and communities in an increasingly ethnically diverse community.

The beginning of the eighteenth century marked a significant change in the live cycle of slavery and the lived of slave laborers. In Barbacoas, mine owners thrust slave laborers into a world marked by fierce battles between local elites and state officials. Although these struggles were largely over mining taxes, they soon became struggles over the very bodies of slave laborers, as royal officials attempted to police the lively contraband slave trade network that ran from the circum-Caribbean down the Pacific coast of New Granada and Quito.
In the north-central highlands, the context was different. There, slaves lived in an environment marked by greater stability. Unlike their counterparts who lived in Barbacoas, water, humidity, and venomous snakes did not characterize their world. Instead of spending their days in waist-high water most slave laborers in Quito worked in the city’s skilled sector, and enjoyed the mobility that leasing their services afforded. Most bondwomen spent their days living and working within elite homes, monasteries, and convents. Although some peddled goods in the streets along with other poor women (indigenous and free blacks), judging from the high rates of illegitimacy, many, some by choice and others by force, lived as sex workers.

For slave laborers forced to live within the Jesuit estate-complex that ran from Ibarra to Riobamba, life was in a word, brutal. Punishments were swift and unforgiving. Work was exacting and bloody. Similar to others who lived and worked on New World sugar plantations, many of the slaves who worked on the eight Jesuit-owned sugar plantation must have lost lives and limbs as a result of the dangerous machetes, exhaustion and other work-related hazards. Hazards aside, however, there were some advantages to life inside the Jesuit estate-complex, namely, acceptable amounts of food and clothing, the ability to maintain friendships and familial relations, and time off on Sundays and other Holy Days.

The end of the century, however, brought with it a series of disruptions that affected all of the kingdom’s slaves. Although Barbacoas was experiencing a boom in gold production, the Chocó had fallen into decline, prompting slaveholders, most of them residing in Popayán, to either sell off sizeable numbers of slave laborers or transfer them to Barbacoas. As masters forced slave new slave laborers into previously existing communities and mining camps they prompted new cycles of ethno-cultural interaction while placing new pressure upon slave communities to produce additional amounts of food and clothing for its new members, and additional amounts of gold for mine owners. But if it mine owners were responsible for the added pressures that slaves felt in Barbacoas at the end of the century, it was the state that was responsible for much of the disruption felt by those living in the north-central highlands.

After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, the state took ownership of the former Jesuit-owned estate complex, and thus became the single largest slaveholder in all of the audiencia, ending an era of relative stability by selling and separating slave households, families and communities that had existed, in
tact, for several generations. Although the state initially tried to maintain these properties, it lacked the resources and expertise needed to continue the Jesuits’ managerial process. After the state divided and sold these properties, the cash-strapped merchants who purchased these properties failed miserably in their efforts to maintain the estates. But while the state and debt-laden merchants lost time and resources in these endeavors, slave laborers were the real victims in this process. After all, they were the ones who suffered under extreme hunger and pain form the lack of food and the loss of loved ones. Yet, in the midst of extreme suffering and victimization, slave laborers did not stand by passively and accept these conditions.

Slave laborers responded to the onslaught of mistreatment and extreme cruelty just as they had throughout the colonial era—they ran away, confronted slaveholders violently, and appealed to royal authorities for merciful intervention. While many had been successful in forcing masters into compromising arrangements and in securing favorable judgements, at the end of the century the state became the ultimate example of a cruel and unjust slaveholder, awarding mercy to those slaves who did not conflict with its initiatives, while remaining stoic and unmoved by the pleas of those who did.


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