

Finding Gold, Forming Slavery: The Creation of a Classic Slave Society, Popayán, 1600–1700

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## FINDING GOLD, FORMING SLAVERY: THE CREATION OF A CLASSIC SLAVE SOCIETY, POPAYÁN, 1600-1700<sup>1</sup>

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*).<sup>2</sup> 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).<sup>3</sup> Although the biographical records for Juan and Anton are sketchy, sources indicate that they were freemen.

<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this article was presented to the Department of History at Penn State University and the Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellows Workshop. Thanks to the participants for their criticism and suggestions. I would like to extend a very special thanks to Kenneth Andrien, Ben Vinson, and the anonymous readers from *The Americas* for their insightful comments on various versions of this article. Thanks also to Badia Ahad, Martha Biondi, Richard Iton, Stephanie Shaw, and Stephanie Smith for their invaluable suggestions on earlier drafts. Research support was provided by an IIE/Fulbright pre-dissertation grant in 2000, a summer stipend from the Office of International Education, and the Department of History at The Ohio State University. Thanks also to the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University for underwriting the costs associated with producing the three maps that appear in this article. Finally, I would like to thank the Judd A. and Majorie Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern University for the time and support provided through a College Fellowship during the 2004-2005 academic term. Any errors that appear here are mine.

<sup>2</sup> *Libros de los Cabildos de Quito*, Tomo 1, Vol. 1, 1534-1538, pp. 3-5. The same text documents the presence of Pedro Salinas *color negro*, and Pedro *Moreno* (brown) among the 204 people present at the [re]founding of Quito. See also, Fernando Jurado Naboia, "Algunas reflexiones sobre la tenencia de los esclavos en la colonia: 1536-1826," *Boletín del Archivo Nacional* (Quito, 1992), p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> 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 and Schuster, 1997), pp. 87-91. See also, James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532-1560: A Colonial Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), pp. 171-172; Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 3-7; and Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas*, 57:2 (October 2000), pp. 174-176.

Like many of their black counterparts throughout the Americas, Juan and Anton must have 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.<sup>4</sup> In either case, Juan and Anton must have contributed significantly to the conquest effort of the north highlands because their Spanish counterparts bestowed upon them the title of *fundador* of the city of Quito.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

Relying upon a body of literature that has highlighted the period between 1550 and 1640 followed by an emphasis upon the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, historian David Eltis has argued that the slave-free paradigm experienced a false start in mainland Spanish America, and that African slavery was on the wane by the late seventeenth century. Yet, the case of the Kingdom, or *Audiencia* of Quito suggests otherwise (see Map 1).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Quito was a quintessential Spanish American slave society. There, elites made foundational movements towards the “slave-free paradox” during the early years of the seventeenth century. As the century ended, Quito’s elite turned evermore aggressively towards African slavery, not away from the institution.<sup>8</sup> No Quito sub-district illustrates this more than the Gobernación of Popayán.

Destined to remain a colonial outpost, isolated at Quito’s northern frontier, gold and the enslaved Africans who mined it transformed the Gobernación of Popayán into a slave society *par excellence*. While this process

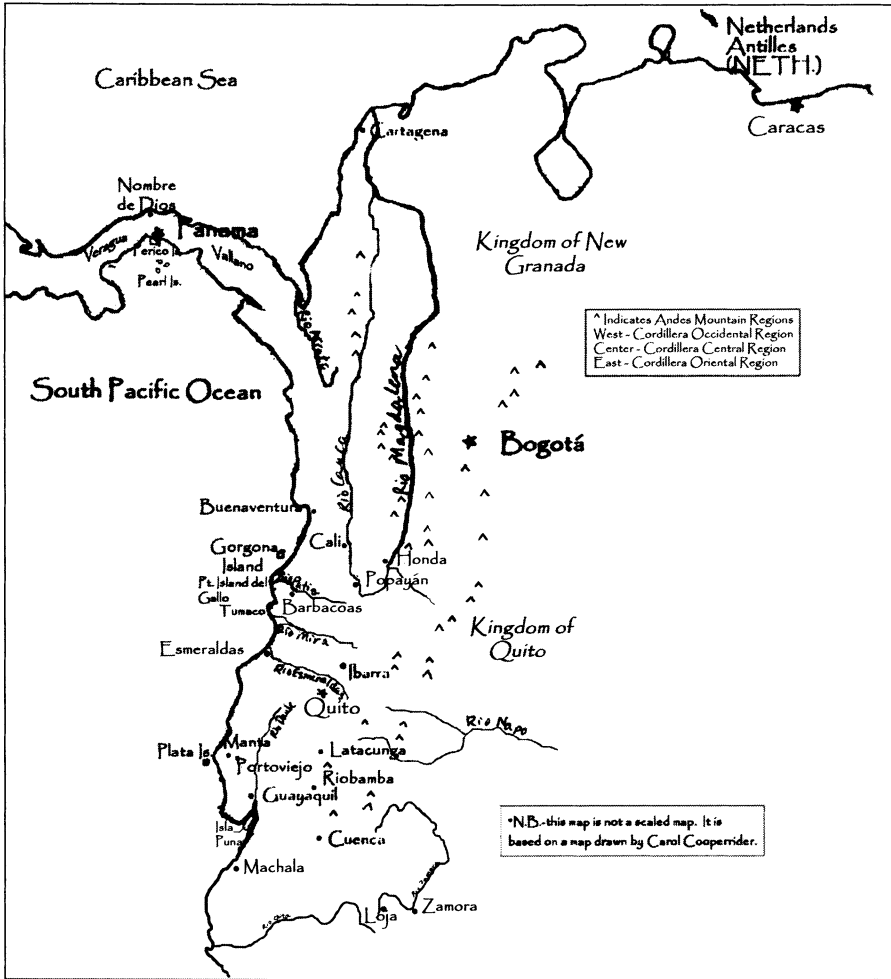
<sup>4</sup> See James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), pp. 36, 96-102, 380, 421-22, and 447. See also, Matthew Restall, “Black Conquistadors,” pp. 174 and 184.

<sup>5</sup> 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,” pp. 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*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>6</sup> David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-29.

<sup>7</sup> The kingdom was also referred to as the *Audiencia* or Presidency of Quito after the crown installed a high court in the city of Quito in 1563 to head the imperial bureaucracy of a region that stretched from the provinces of Popayán modern-day Colombia southward through the country of Ecuador.

<sup>8</sup> Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery*, pp. 23-29.



MAP 1. Kingdom of Quito. Map drawn by Shannon Schmidt.

spanned much of the seventeenth century, early decisions by elites to employ ethnic Africans in the hunt for gold positioned slavery as the bedrock of Popayán's economy. Not only did slavery and slave ownership signal status and wealth in Payanese society, slave labor quickly became the chief method for acquiring and maintaining wealth and elite status in early colonial Popayán. Although Popayán held marginal importance to the greater Quiteño economy for most of the sixteenth century, gold production surged during the last quarter of the century peaking in the early years of the seventeenth century. These events led to sizeable tax profits for the highland-based audiencia, increasing Popayán's importance in the kingdom's socioeconomic milieu. The increase in gold outputs helped to forge strong

commercial links between mine owners based in the Gobernación of Popayán and merchants in the city of Quito, even as the highland economy turned quickly to producing woolen textiles for the mining camps of Peru.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the century, Popayán would be both the kingdom's largest producer of gold and the principal slave-trading center for the north Andes.

Detailing colonial elites' attempts to build a society and economy predicated upon gold exploration, this article argues that Quito was a quintessential Spanish American slave society. Here, the *encomienda* and slavery were not mutually exclusive but rather interdependent systems of exploitation. Intended as a descriptive overview of slavery's emergence and early significance within the region, this article explores the establishment of early mining settlements and the corresponding acquisitions of slave laborers, underscoring the shifting geographical context of slavery in the first half of the century while charting the growth of gold exploration in Colombia's lowland Pacific littoral during the second half of the seventeenth century. In what would have otherwise been a colonial backwater, gold quickly became king, and enslaved Africans were its subjects. Here, the potentially moderating influences of the Church were scarcely recognizable.

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 riverways that dotted the district of Barbacoas. Thus, the story that follows is one that emphasizes business, greed, expansion, and coercion, countering other portraits of slave societies that emphasize the plantation complex to the exclusion of regions such as the Kingdom of Quito. It is one that calls upon scholars to think more carefully about the importance of slavery in areas that scholars have defined as outside of the boundaries of what constituted a slave society. It demonstrates that Popayán, a frontier area in what most scholars would view normally as a "society with slaves," was heavily dependent upon slavery for its socioeconomic evolution from the very start.

#### TOWARD A QUITEÑO SLAVE SOCIETY: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Despite enslaved Africans' early and enduring importance to gold production, their centrality to skilled and domestic service sectors in Guayaquil, and

<sup>9</sup> Kris E. Lane, *Quito 1599: City and Colony in Transition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), pp. 131-133.

their dominance in the Jesuit-owned agro-pastoral estates of Ibarra (see Map 1), the Kingdom of Quito remains at the margins of most writing on the African Diaspora. In fairness to Diaspora scholars, however, the literature on blacks in colonial Spanish America can be characterized, at best, as uneven, and at worst, in a nascent state, as a new generation of scholars has only recently begun to grapple with the challenges put forth by scholars such as Colin A. Palmer and Frederick P. Bowser some thirty years ago.<sup>10</sup> Although there has been an outpouring of work on Afro-Mexico, the north Andes remains situated within a historiography that is grossly underdeveloped.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the work of at least two scholars—Kris E. Lane and Germán Colmenares—is particularly insightful here not only because they center African-descended people in the history of the colony, but also because in so doing they have centered slavery as an economic system in their analysis of

<sup>10</sup> Scholars, for example, have only recently turned their attention to the Eastern Andes. See Lolita G. Brockington, "The African Diaspora in the Eastern Andes: Adaptation, Agency, and Fugitive Action, 1573-1677," *The Americas* 57:2 (October 2000), pp. 207-224.

<sup>11</sup> The historiography on African slavery and blacks in colonial Quito is so underdeveloped that it is difficult to point to well developed arguments or sustained debates about this aspect of the African Diaspora. Nevertheless, some important works remain. Pioneering were the works of anthropologist, Norman Whitten, historian Manuel L. Salmoral, and Rafael Savio. See Norman E. Whitten, *Black Frontiersmen: Afro-Hispanic Culture of Ecuador and Colombia* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press [2nd edition] 1986); Manuel Lucena Salmoral, *Sangre sobre piel negra: La esclavitud quiteña en el contexto del reformismo borbónico* (Quito: Abya-Yala, 1991); and Rafael Savio, ed., *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, highlighting the presence of African descended people. See Michael Hammerly, *Historia social y económica de la Antigua provincia de Guayaquil, 1763-1842* (Guayaquil, 1973); Hammerly, *El comercio de cacao de Guayaquil durante el período 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-Esmeraldeños. 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 del siglo VIII: Acerca de las identidades de amo y esclavo en el Puerto colonial de Guayaquil* (Guayaquil: Archivo Histórico del Guayas, 1998); idem, "Slave Women's Strategies for Freedom and the late Spanish Colonial State," in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, edited by Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); and *Honor y libertad: Discursos y recursos en la estrategia de libertad de una mujer esclava (Guayaquil a fines del período colonial)* (Departamento de Historia e Instituto Iberoamericano de la Universidad de Gotemburgo, 2001); Camilla Townsend, "'Half My Body Free, The Other Half Enslaved': The Politics of the Slaves in Guayaquil at the end of the Colonial Era," *Colonial Latin American Review* 7:1 (June 1998), pp. 105-128. See also Bernard Lavallé, "Logica esclavista y resistencia negra en los andes ecuatorianos a finales del siglo XVIII," *Revista de Indias* 53 (1993), pp. 699-722.



the region's socioeconomic development.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it was Colmenares who first referred to Popayán as a "slave society" in his 1979 study, *Historia Económica y social de Colombia II: Popayán una sociedad esclavista* (1979). But while Colmenares' work underscores the critical importance of slavery in eighteenth-century Popayán and New Granada more generally, his choice of a later starting point for characterizing Popayán as a slave society is misplaced, and points to the need to rethink the dichotomous approach to characterizing slave regimes as either societies with slaves or slave societies, rearticulated most recently by historian Ira Berlin.

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."<sup>13</sup> Berlin's construction rested upon an historian Moses Finely's earlier construction of "genuine slave societies," slave societies, which required three conditions to emerge: private, concentrated landownership, significant commodities and markets, and a significant shortage of internal labor.<sup>14</sup> But as historian Herman Bennett has posited, such a criterion does little to help us understand the nexus between slavery and colonialism in Latin America, where slavery was fundamental to the social and political economies even as it fell within the context of multiple labor forms. As a number of scholars have stated, slavery formed the baseline for all social relations in Spanish America.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, even colonies possessing small slave populations and diverse labor regimes could

<sup>12</sup> Historian Kris Lane's recent social history of the kingdom at the turn of the seventeenth century along with his interrogation of gold mining and the corresponding labor demands throughout the region has done much to place blacks at the center of the region's history. His scholarship underscores the need to look comprehensively at the experiences of blacks in colonial Quito. See, Kris E. Lane, "Taming the Master: Brujería, Slavery, and the Encomienda in Barbacoas at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century," *Ethnohistory* 45:3 (Summer, 1998), pp. 477-507; idem, "The Transition from Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas (Colombia)," *Slavery & Abolition* 21:1 (April 2000), pp. 73-95; idem, "Captivity and Redemption: Aspects of Slave Life in Early Colonial Quito and Popayán," *The Americas* 57:2 (2000), pp. 225-46; and idem, *Quito 1599*; Germán Colmenares, *Historia económica y social de Colombia II: Popayán una sociedad esclavista* (SantaFé de Bogotá: Tecer Mundo S.A., 1997 2<sup>nd</sup> edition [1979]).

<sup>13</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: Two Centuries of American Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Belknap Press, 1997), p. 8. Historian Eugene D. Genovese has argued that mainland Spanish America did not develop slave societies, insisting that it was a region home to "pockets of slaves and masters." Eugene D. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> See also Moses I. Finely, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (New York: 1980), p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Herman L. Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 14-32; Kris E. Lane, "Slaves, Rebels, Apprentices: The Captivity Gradient in Early Colonial Quito," Paper presented at the American Historical Association and Conference on Latin American History Annual Meetings, Chicago, IL, 2003. See also, Sherwin K. Bryant, "Enslaved Rebels, Fugitives, and Litigants: The Resistance Continuum in Colonial Quito," *Colonial Latin American Review* 13:1 (June 2004), pp. 13, 36 and 37, note 11.

fit the more traditional description of slave societies offered by Finely and Berlin. In the Kingdom of Quito, three towns and sub-districts—Popayán, Guayaquil, and Ibarra were known for possessing private, concentrated landownership as well as for the presence of high priced commodities like gold, cacao and agricultural products.

All three relied heavily upon the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendents thereby making Quito a Spanish American slave society quite similar to those of Peru and New Spain.

Despite the fact that the kingdom's slave population never exceeded 12,000 out of an overall population of 430,000, slave laborers were always part of a mixed labor pool, dominating only in three regions of the kingdom—Popayán (a gold mining district), Ibarra (where slaves worked on sugar estates), and Guayaquil (where slaves served in both the city's skilled services and domestic sectors as well within the agricultural estates that dotted the perimeter of this Pacific port).<sup>16</sup> Although sizeable numbers of indigenous Andeans 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.<sup>17</sup> 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 African 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.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For discussions of population figures, see Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Kingdom of Quito*, pp. 37-44.

<sup>17</sup> For demographic histories of the region, see the works of historians Suzanne Alchon, *Native Society and Disease* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Martin Minchom, *The People of Quito* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988).

<sup>18</sup> Kris E. Lane, "The Transition from Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas (Colombia)," *Slavery and Abolition*, 21:1 (April 2000), pp. 73-95. See also. 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), pp. 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*.



Part of what complicates our attempts to rethink the existence of slave societies in Spanish America 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 occurred 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. Local elites clearly desired both systems: *encomienda*, which provided them access to the surplus production 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.

Although Lane has characterized the Gobernación of Popayán as moving from *encomienda* to slavery, it seems clear that merchants, miners and colonial officials were unwavering in their recognition of the centrality of slavery to the region's economy beginning in the late sixteenth century.

#### EARLY CALLS FOR SLAVE LABOR

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.’<sup>19</sup> Like most petitions of the era, Auncibay expressed hopes that the group would include equal numbers of men and women, ranging in age from twenty-seven to forty. Signaling the importance of slavery—and controlling slaves—to the social order, Auncibay announced that the enslaved would be prohibited from learning to read and write, using swords, riding horses or bearing arms; and, most importantly, black men would only be permitted to 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. African slave laborers were a crucial element of 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

<sup>19</sup> *RHQ*, 1:550, 567, 518-526; see also Lane, “Captivity and Redemption.”

course, repay the crown with the great wealth that captives from the land of Guinea promised to provide by the sweat 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.

At the turn of the seventeenth century the importation of African slaves to Popayán was sporadic, and low in volume. Between 1583 and 1605 only fifty-three slaves changed ownership in Popayán with the majority of exchanges transpiring in the 1592, 1603, and 1605.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

Continuing the practice initiated by high court justice Licenciado Francisco Auncibay, merchants, miners and local officials inundated the crown with petitions for African captives. In 1598, Popayán's solicitor general, Juan de Rada petitioned the Council of the Indies for the crown to dispatch eight hundred African captives as a subsidy for the mines of Popayán.<sup>22</sup> 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 slaves.<sup>23</sup> 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 gender norms as well as reproduction of the slave labor pool. Perhaps more importantly, such provisions served the goal of quelling the alleged violent urges

<sup>20</sup> Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán) {hereafter ACC}. Protocolos, Primera Notaría, Tomos I & II. I thank historian Kris E. Lane for generously sharing this data with me while at the ACC in August of 2000.

<sup>21</sup> ACC. Protocolos, PN, Tomo II, f. 867. Illustrative of the ethno-regional 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.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Marzahl, *Town in the Empire: Government, Politics, and Society in Seventeenth-Century Popayán* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), p. 75.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

of black men.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup> Apparently, the crown was not interested in going into the mining business in 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. 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 goods 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. The Council refused to compromise on the matter, insisting that would-be slaveholders could travel to Cartagena and

<sup>24</sup> 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*, pp. 33-50.

<sup>25</sup> Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>26</sup> María Elena Díaz finds the crown employed 'royal slaves' consistently in state-sponsored public works projects, most notably in fortification efforts throughout the Spanish Caribbean. For a thorough explication of the peculiarities of royal slavery in the context of copper mines in the Spanish Caribbean see Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670-1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

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.<sup>27</sup> 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 over long distances throughout the Gobernación of Popayán in search of rich gold deposits. 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. Shifting mining locations further illustrate this point.

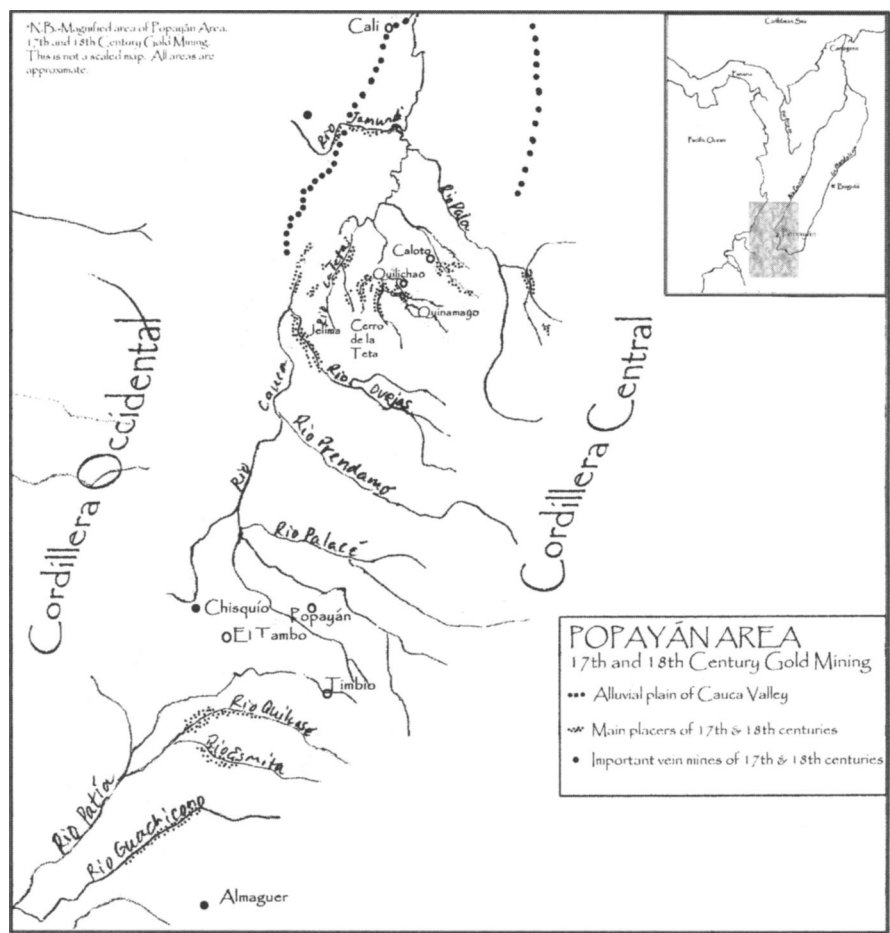
#### THE ESTABLISHMENT AND LOCATIONS OF EARLY MINING CENTERS

Some of the earliest and most important mining centers of Popayán were those of Anserma-Cartago (see Map 2).<sup>28</sup> But by the 1580s many of them 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 Quiebralomo had been penetrated beyond profitable points, making it inefficient to continue working these veins. Consequently, 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. Indeed, there were just 242 enslaved blacks working within this region in 1627, whereas in 1572 their numbers reached upwards of 1,000.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Lane, *Quito 1599*, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Slaves had long been employed in this region, and by the 1580s a second generation was 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 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.

<sup>29</sup> Robert C. West, *Colonial Placer Mining in Colombia*, pp.10, 36-37.



MAP 2. Colonial Mining Activities. Map drawn by Shannon Schmidt.

Between 1629 and 1635 enslaved blacks along with their 200 Amerindian counterparts produced approximately 190,000 pesos of gold, the majority of which emanated from the vein workings assigned to just 180 *esclavos* and 110 Amerindians.<sup>30</sup>

Trading patterns were also shifting. During the early days of conquest and occupation the region was accessed from the Atlantic and circum-Caribbean

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. There were also three agricultural villages that fed and otherwise supplied these mining operations. These included Supía la Baja, La Montaña, and Pirsá, 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 West, p. 37, note 19.

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. 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 (see Map 2).<sup>31</sup>

Such initiatives were aimed, in part, at connecting trade to yet another of the region's early and significant mining districts—the placer region of the upper-Cauca valley surrounding the city of Popayán. They were indicative also of the unstable locality of gold mining centers and the need for slave labor. Gravels along the Esmita and Quilasé rivers apparently flowed with gold, while gravels near many of the Cauca tributaries—La Teta, Jelima, Ovejós, located between the town of Popayán and Cali—were also known to hold much gold by the late sixteenth century (see Map 2). In addition, Quilicho, Quinamayó, and Caloto (situated nearly 40 miles north of the town of Popayán) were all famous mining camps. The presence and lived conditions of slaves was not lost upon contemporary observers. Among these, Jelima was noted to be a rather dangerous place where slaves suffered severely.

According to historian, Pedro de Mercado, S.J., when Fray Francisco de Fuentes visited the mines of Jelima he encountered three Spaniards who stood out for their cruelty. They were so obsessed with gold, he note, 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*).<sup>32</sup> 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 represents only one

<sup>31</sup> See Pilar Ponce Leiva, ed., *Relaciones histórico-geográficas de la Audiencia de Quito*, 2 vols. (1991-1994), 1: pp. 16-56, 445-457; 2: pp. 203-206; and Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> 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 to 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 noted that 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), pp. 22, 28-30.



observer, the rigors of mining were arduous, and at least one slave lost his life at the hand of a man from a nearby mining town.<sup>33</sup> But similar to other cases of murdered slaves, there was more concern expressed over the slave's monetary value than his life. Owners worried about whether they would recoup their lost investment and resources.

In addition to Jelima, by 1628, there were some 250 slaves working the mines that surrounded the town of Popayán.<sup>34</sup> Christobal Mosquera, one of the first *encomenderos* to employ slave labor, acquired thirteen slaves in 1626, and by 1633 he held 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.<sup>35</sup> In his will, Mosquera recommended that his wife place 5,000 gold pesos in his co-executor's (don Francisco Vélez de Zúniga) charge for the purchase of more slaves. Zúniga had also been connected to slaving and mining. In 1634, he partnered with Andrés Martín, investing twenty captives in the Gelima mine. Undoubtedly, both Martín and Zúniga were the same individuals who eventually went on to establish the Jesuits' mining operations in the region.

Three additional mining centers dominated gold production in seventeenth-century Popayán: 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 to be the hotbed of maroon activity by the late sixteenth century.<sup>36</sup> While West suggests that Chisquío held only marginal importance over the course of the colonial era, Kris Lane and 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.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, all seem to agree that Almaguer,

<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, p. 36.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, ACC. PN Tomo 9; 14 septiembre 1633, folio 329v; and Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, p. 45.

<sup>36</sup> West, *Colonial Placer Mining*; and Lane, *Quito 1599*, pp. 131-132.

<sup>37</sup> West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, p. 13; Lane, *Quito 1599*, p. 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) 11 (1983), pp. 5-42.

situated between Popayán city and Pasto was not only the critical commercial link between the cities of Popayán and Quito, but also that mine owners experienced great success. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century alone, Almaguer produced nearly 30,000 pesos of gold per annum, thereby remaining one of Popayán's most significant mining-slaveholding districts in the early seventeenth century.<sup>38</sup>

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 mules distributed among an array of mining and associated agricultural properties. The forty-seven slaves who made up their mining gang were organized into family units, and approximately one-third of them had been assigned the ethno-regional monikers of, *Angola*, *Bañol*, *Bran*, and *Folupo*, identifiers that point to the ethno-regional diversity that characterized Quito's enslaved African population. Although thirty-three of them were active miners the remaining seven occupied support roles, such as cooks, blacksmiths, construction workers, and canal builders.<sup>39</sup> As the foregoing examples illustrate, gold mining required both a sizeable and mobile labor force. Even if miners were privileged enough to have large groups of Amerindians at their disposal, forcing them to move across long distances in search of new gold reserves was usually impossible to accomplish with any lasting success.

The movement that characterized the mining activity within the mines of Chisquío and Almaguer further underscores the necessity of a mobile labor force, and thereby highlights the appeal of slavery. In addition to activity in Chisquío and Almaguer, enslaved blacks also worked the mines of Caloto early in the century. One large-scale slaveholder, Diego de Victoria, moved his gang of fourteen captives from Anserma to the town of Popayán in 1619, repositioning himself and his slaves for a long career in gold mining.<sup>40</sup> Owners of slave gangs often chose to move their residence, shifting slave gangs from one

<sup>38</sup> Lane, *Quito 1599*, pp. 131-132; and West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>39</sup> See Kris E. Lane, "Captivity and Redemption," pp. 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 Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, pp. 143-146.

<sup>40</sup> Arboleda married Diego's daughter—doña Theodora 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).

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.”<sup>41</sup> 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*<sup>42</sup> in the *trapiche* (sugar plantation); he had purchased at least ten of these from doña Antonía de los Arcos y Ríos back in April of 1646.<sup>43</sup> Salazar left this small number of slave laborers to his wife, doña Mariana de Victoria and maestro Juan Nieto 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*” (see Map 2). 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 (see Map 2).<sup>44</sup>

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, mine owners shifted the mining epicenters from the northern portions of the province near Arma to the south around Almaguer, and even as far south as Mocoa. Miners would have to wait until mid-century, however, to turn their attention westward to Barbacoas, and then northward again in the last decades of the century after the complete conquest of the Chocó. In the meantime, they concentrated their efforts on 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. Indeed foreclosures, sales and lawsuits over slaves underscore the extent to which slavery was important to the economic and political sectors of Popayán.

<sup>41</sup> Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Piezas de esclavos* (pieces of slaves), used interchangeably at times with *piezas de indias*, was used in slave trading parlance to 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 of 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). See also, Enriqueta Vila Vilar’s discussion of these term and their import in quantifying slave imports in Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1977).

<sup>43</sup> ACC. Sig. 931 (Col.—CI—12nt) folio, 20v.

<sup>44</sup> ACC. PN. Tomo 13; 9 julio 1661 folios 53. and 56. See also. Marzahl, *Town in the Empire*, p. 26.

A 1603 will and testament documents two slave children—a boy and a girl, both ages eight or nine, who were listed among the items that made up a loan for 200 pesos de oro. 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.<sup>45</sup> In yet another ad hoc arrangement from the era one finds a loan for 579 gold pesos with a lien (*escriptura de empeño*) against two slaves, “don Diego” and Leonor, both listed as “criollos.”<sup>46</sup> 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*”).<sup>47</sup> 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 María 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.<sup>48</sup> 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. But while all aspired to own slaves and establish mining operations, organizing and controlling slave laborers presented another set of challenges.

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 protective custody (*deposito*) at the home of doña Ana de Salazar, where the judge ordered that he remain while they

<sup>45</sup> ACC. PN. Tomo II, 735v (19-vi-1603).

<sup>46</sup> ACC. PN. Tomo I, folio 257v.

<sup>47</sup> ACC. PN. Tomo II, f. 142v. In a similar transaction, the buyer of Magdalena Criolla de Quiebralomo was held responsible for the seller’s debts. See ACC. PN. Tomo II, f. 268v.

<sup>48</sup> 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*.

determine his rightful owner.<sup>49</sup> 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.<sup>50</sup> Although the question of who could lay legitimate claim to Francisco escapes the modern scholar, such struggles bring the importance of slave ownership in early colonial Popayán into greater relief.

#### THE ORGANIZATION AND CHALLENGE OF LABOR

Gold mining relied upon the construction of labor gangs. 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 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 other supplies came from the agro-pastoral estates that dotted 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 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 also entered the region from the North-Central highlands and 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 (see Map 1).<sup>51</sup>

Owing to the region's notoriously dangerous and often impassable roads, most supplies arrived by river transport, which, incidentally, was the princi-

<sup>49</sup> See ACC. Sig. 1805 (Col.—JI—Cv) 1643; 3 folios.

<sup>50</sup> 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.

<sup>51</sup> West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, pp. 117-121.

pal means of travel within the region more generally.<sup>52</sup> In addition to building sluice canals and reservoirs to flood gravel beds in dry areas, slaves also worked as polemen on dugout canoes (*champáns*) that transported individuals and goods along the Magdalena and Cauca rivers.<sup>53</sup> River transport came to a 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. Assuming that supplies were reportedly available, they provided their slaves with weekly rations that included plantains, maize, salt, and meat. By the eighteenth century, slaves were reportedly 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.”<sup>54</sup> 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.<sup>55</sup>

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 mine administrators (*mayordomos*), who in turn established the chain of command for a given cuadrilla. 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.<sup>56</sup> They also collected the

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 123; See *RHGQ*, Vol. 1, pp. 1-15, 332-334.

<sup>53</sup> West, *Colonial Placer Mining*, p. 125.

<sup>54</sup> West, p. 87.

<sup>55</sup> 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 West, p. 86, and note 55 on p. 99, respectively.

<sup>56</sup> 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 a 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



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 reciprocal relationships, relationships between mine owners and *mayordomos*, *mayordomos* and captains, and those between captains and the community of laborers. Many captains abused their authority, and fell short of maintaining order and prevent flight. As I have argued elsewhere, slaves shaped public discourse through their rebel action and litigation beginning at the earliest moments of the colony's history.<sup>57</sup> And while the themes of resistance and accommodation fall outside the scope of this article, it is worth noting here the ways that slaves thwarted commercial initiatives during this early and tenuous period.

In one notable example from 1611, don Diego de Sandoval and his father-in-law, *governador* don Vasco de Mendoza y Silva lost control of their slaves. After they called the authorities, their slaves grew ever more restive, maintaining their rebellious stance, and refusing the surrender their swords. Subduing the two slaves, 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.<sup>58</sup>

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

to acquire their freedom. According to historian Kathleen Higgins, in the gold mining camps of early eighteenth-century Sabará, 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*, p. 87 and p. 99, note 52. Kathleen J. Higgins, "*Licentious Liberty*" in *a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region*, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Bryant, "Enslaved Rebels, Fugitives, and Litigants," pp. 7-19.

<sup>58</sup> ACC. Sig. 1391 (Col.—J I—Icv). 28 Marzo de 1611, folios 1-12.

still realizing 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 burden. In early colonial Quito slaves constituted a very valuable piece of property, even when they proved bellicose and difficult to manage as they did quite often.<sup>59</sup>

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 the 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.<sup>60</sup> In the 1660s at least four slave gangs were

<sup>59</sup> Early sales reveal several slaves who were known runaways, including: Martín de Trejo, thirty years-of-age and married to an indigenous woman named Lucía, noted to have “walked as a fugitive on one occasion”; Augustín, 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 to as a “*grando cimarrón*.” See ACC. Protocolos. PN, Tomo I, folios 3, 249, 321, and Tomo II, f. 829.

<sup>60</sup> 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.

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 offered little in the way of stability and security.<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup>

For enslaved Africans and Afro-Creoles the subsequent shift to Barbacoas meant accommodating to 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 intermountain valleys into a humid coastal rainforest. They would be a part of a last wave of colonists whose hold on 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.

<sup>61</sup> West, *Colonial Placer Mining*.

<sup>62</sup> 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.

<sup>63</sup> 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; Agustín *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 (25 yrs) 300 patacones; Antonio criollo (7 yrs) 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* (24 yrs) who was sold with her son Juan (*un niño mulatto* 1 yr) 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 others 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. . . .<sup>64</sup>

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 3). Ships could move in and out of the region, transporting goods and people between Panama and this region of the *gobernación*. The region's close proximity to the Isthmus of Panamá facilitated this process. 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 relied upon slave labor. In 1656, one mine owner was already making inroads into Barbacoas. Although this *vecino de Santa María del Puerto* held only a

<sup>64</sup> *RHGQ*, Vol. 2, pp. 203-207.



teenth century. The Chocó, the lowland Pacific littoral region surrounding Barbacoas, and the highland area of the present-day *Departamento de Pasto* was a constellation of Amerindian-dominated enclaves that lay just beyond the reach of Iberian control at the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>67</sup> Organized largely by zealous, gold-hungry Payanese miners and merchants, and endorsed by successive regional governors, brutal campaigns (*entradas*) finally brought the region under subjugation by the end of the seventeenth century.

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.<sup>68</sup> 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.

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 complete transition from *encomienda* labor to African slavery, as the region simultaneously entered an era marked by significant increases in slave ownership and experienced a re-Africanization of the enslaved population. In 1670 alone, one investor purchased an entire mine that consisted of twenty-eight slaves.<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup> 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 Magdalena river port of Honda, further underscoring Popayán's emergence as the critical slave market for African *bozales* headed to the Chocó, Barbacoas, and the north-central highland core of the Kingdom of Quito.<sup>71</sup> But

<sup>67</sup> Caroline A. Williams, "Resistance and Rebellion on the Spanish Frontier: Native Responses to Colonization in the Colombian Chocó, 1670-1690," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79:3, pp. 397-424.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Just twelve years later, in 1682, this same *minero*, Gaspar Estacio Armal 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.

<sup>70</sup> Recall that during the middle years of the century, sales figures averaged approximately 11.5 annually, dropping at times to five sales per year.

<sup>71</sup> 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 Captain Joseph



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. Although these numbers may appear relatively low for New World slave societies, in the context of decades of sales figures of five to ten per annum, they are quite sizeable. Indeed, finally, by the 1670s, miners were beginning to arrive at a point where they could staff single mining gangs with upwards of forty to fifty slave laborers, the average size of a large mining gang during the boom years of the eighteenth century.

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.”<sup>72</sup> The inventory of thirty-one males and fifteen females reveals that seven of the forty-six had been assigned ethno-regional monikers that signaled origins in West-Central Africa and the Upper Guinea Coast—(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

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.

<sup>72</sup> Forty six *piezas de negros esclavos*, of them the following names, nations ‘*naciones*,’ and ages: Sebastian *moreno criollo* (37yrs); Salvador (27yrs); Vitovio (25yrs); Francisco Angola (53 yrs); Luis Angola (53 yrs ‘*de los mismos*’); Joseph Angola ‘*criollo*’ (27 yrs); Nicolas criollo (19 yrs); Bernardo (19 yrs); Manuel (17yrs) son of criolla Elena de la Cruz (43 yrs); Aneta (41 yrs); Catalina (47 yrs); Victor (53 yrs) Leonor (27 yrs); Agustin (4 yrs); Manuela (16 yrs); Joseph (13 yrs); Another Joseph (8 yrs); Julian (5 yrs); Sebastian Angola (53 yrs); Christobal (63 yrs); María Angola (58 yrs); Manuel Conde criollo (30 yrs); Joseph criollo (18 yrs); Juan criollo (19 yrs); Gregorio his [Juan’s] brother (21 yrs); Francisco criollo (19 yrs); Bernardo (15yrs); Marta (20yrs); María (40yrs); Juaneta (28 yrs); María {daughter of Juaneta} (5 yrs); Joseph {son of Juaneta} (2 yrs); Fausta {also nursing daughter *hija de pechos*} (2 months); Domingo Angola (27 yrs); Domingo Bran (23 yrs); Bisente (7 yrs); Marz (1and 1/2 year); Pasqual (5 yrs); Francisco {nursing son of Leonor}; Diego Concha (60 yrs). See ACC. PN. Tomo 14, 1676, folios, 9-9v.

Africans, all of whom were registered under the *asiento* of the Royal Guinea Company and marked with its brand.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> These sales and movements into the Chocó and Barbacoas signaled the expansion of slavery in the Gobernación of Popayán and the Audiencia of Quito. All who were not sold to the emerging mining camps in Barbacoas and the Chocó were soon shipped overland to the burgeoning Jesuit-owned estate complex in the north-central highlands of Quito. Still others were sold to the city of Quito to fill the service and domestic sectors of that city. All of which suggested a trend that would quickly mark Popayán as one of the critical slave markets for the north Andes.

Apparently, during this era, the enslaved found it difficult to amass enough capital to purchase their freedom.<sup>75</sup> Contrary to popular ideas about slavery in Spanish America, 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 the afterlife.<sup>76</sup> As the prospect of passing *encomiendas* on to subsequent generations became more elusive, the prestige of leaving a well-staffed *cuadrilla* to one's descendants also gained

<sup>73</sup> ACC. PN. Tomo 14, 1677, folios 56v-57v. Ibid, folio 59.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Examining another, and perhaps similar, frontier region, Paul Lokken has argued that enslaved men employed marriage as a strategy, entering into unions with Amerindian women in an effort to secure free status for their children, while Amerindian women sought to evade tribute obligations. Lokken sees marriages between enslaved black men and free black women within this vein as well, a finding that might help to explain the presence of a significant number of free black women in the mining camps of Popayán. See Paul Lokken, "Marriage as Slave Emancipation in Seventeenth-Century Rural Guatemala," *The Americas* 58:2 (October 2001), pp. 175-200. For further discussions regarding race and colonial Spanish American tribute policy see Cynthia Milton and Ben Vinson, III, "Counting Heads: Race and Non-native Tribute Policy in Colonial Spanish America," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3:3 (2002), pp. 1-21.

<sup>76</sup> 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," pp. 53-54. See also van Deusen, "The 'Alienated Body': Slaves and Castas in the Hospital de San Bartolomé in Lima, 1680-1700," *The Americas* 56:1 (July 1999), pp. 1-30.

in significance. In an evolving frontier economy like Popayán a small cuadrilla of well-maintained African and/or Afro-criollo captives could often constitute 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 in 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 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 a number of captives from laying claims to the rewards of freedom, thereby prolonging the brutal experience of bondage.

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 the elite and non-elite inhabitants of Popayán. Although most had arrived from Cartagena through the Magdalena 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 its ports.

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 slave growth and expansion, as elites came to rely upon Africans and Afro-criollos as the chief labor source in Popayán, particularly in the booming mining centers. Consequently, it was during this period that Popayán transitioned from simply being a "society with slaves" to a full-fledged "slave society." The process of this transition was facilitated by Popayán's geographic location, perfectly situated as a way station to the burgeoning Chocó and the north-central highlands of Quito. From around 1675 to 1700, the numbers of enslaved Africans in Popayán surged such that undoubtedly, it became the central slave market for the North Andes. In the year 1690 alone, 35 slaves were exchanged.<sup>77</sup> Compared to nineteen in 1670, this was a substantial increase of nearly fifty percent. Indeed, during this decade and into the early eighteenth century large shipments of slaves, numbering ten to twenty individuals would come to characterize Popayán's

<sup>77</sup> ACC. NP. Tomo 17, 1690-I, folios, 1-4, 64-66, 78v-80, and 85-86.

market.<sup>78</sup> And although shipments of slaves from earlier in the century had come principally from the Upper Guinea coast, West-Central Africa, and to a lesser degree, the region of lower Guinea, new shipments now began emerging from the Gold Coast, the Bight of Benin, West-Central Africa and, to a lesser degree, the Bight of Biafra.

From the late seventeenth century to the principal decades of the eighteenth century, ethnic Africans had enjoyed a slight majority in their overall 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 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 region's 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.

### CONCLUSION

Like most dichotomies, the slave society/society with slaves binary often obscures as much as it reveals. Uncovering the realities of slavery in places situated at the margins of colonial and transatlantic systems of commerce serves to not only add to what we know about the institution of slavery in the Americas; it changes what we know about slavery as a social system, its overall impact upon societies, and the lives of enslaved across time and space. Likewise, writing the north Andes into the history of the early modern African Diaspora does more than merely expand our Diasporic lens; it shifts the our field of vision, allowing for the writing of a history of intertwined Diasporas without losing sight of the local peculiarities precipitated by distinct social, cultural, and economic trajectories.

<sup>78</sup> See for example the sale of Isabel *nación de Mina* (30 yrs) along with her one and a 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* (16 yrs) and María *criolla de Cartagena* (42 yrs). Ibid.

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 slaves from the Caribbean port of Cartagena, and second as a producer of large sums of gold. Indeed, Popayán’s movement towards the slave-free paradigm was immediate and decisive.

Elite petitions for royally subsidized shipments of Africans laborers reveal the early and critical importance of slavery to Popayán’s development, even as early as 1592. Gold was everywhere and nowhere, requiring sizeable numbers of laborers who could be forced to move over long distances. Shifting mining centers and changing trade patterns made it difficult for mine owners to rely on indigenous labor charges in the hunt for gold, thereby fueling their desire for enslaved Africans, even as Amerindians remained at their disposal through the *encomienda*. Nevertheless, miners and *encomenderos* alike did not adopt one form of labor organization in exchange for the other. *Encomienda* and slavery were not mutually exclusive. Elites desired both systems and defended their rights to both vigorously, a common feature of most Spanish American slave societies.

In the early years of the seventeenth century local observers could not overlook the presence of slaves throughout the *Gobernación* of Popayán even in some of the most remote areas of the *gobernación*. Yet, even as everyone from religious orders to colonial officials obtained slaves, whether for speculation or gold exploration, it was the opening of the lowland Pacific littoral that ensured Popayán’s place as a classic slave society.

Without slave labor, the riches of Barbacoas and the Chocó would have remained largely unexplored and, in spite of all of the gold that was smelted in the seventeenth century, Popayán would have then remained the colonial backwater it was in 1600. But at the close of the century Popayán was anything but a marginal player in the economics of Quito and New Granada. Earlier problems importing African slaves had been more than remedied, as Popayán emerged as the entrepot for ethnic Africans entering both the lowland Pacific littoral and the north central highland core of the *audiencia*. Between 1686 and 1690 alone, 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) the number of slaves entering the Gobernación had more than doubled since the previous decade, as 685-slave laborers changed hands in the town of Popayán.<sup>79</sup>

Popayán was in short everything that most traditional slave societies were, a place “where slavery formed the foundations of the economic production and the master-slave relationship served as the ‘model for all social relationships.’” As Popayán’s dowry/sale transactions demonstrate, slaves were both the sources of wealth and the principal signifiers of wealth. In the dowry of doña Antonia Arboleda, for example, one finds six *piesas de esclavos*—Antonio Largo (24 yrs), Josepha (22 yrs), Sebastianico (described as “soltero 17 yrs”), Juan Luango (18 yrs), Francisco (26 yrs), and Vicente Luango, all of whom were appraised at 500 patacones each, or 3,000 patacones total. In addition to the 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. María senior had been serving Antonia for some time, and continued in this service.<sup>80</sup>

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.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> In either case, the Arboledas

<sup>79</sup> See Germán Colmenares, *Historia económica y social II* (Santafé de Bogotá: Tercer Mundo, SA, 1997 [1979]).

<sup>80</sup> 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.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, folios 254v-256.

<sup>82</sup> 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.



were not poised for the closing of a slave system; they were positioning themselves for its continued expansion. Slaves were both the touchstone of a proper dowry and the lifeblood a family's economy. At the close of the century, elite dependency upon slave labor was nearly absolute. Just as elites recognized the importance of African slave labor at the beginning of the century, Arboleda knew in the end that finding gold depended upon slavery.

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