

Looking for an Artist in Black and White: Identity and Agency among Eighteenth-Century Engravers in Lima



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There is only one known representation of a colonial Spanish South American print shop. Engraved by Dominican friar and painter-engraver Miguel Adame, the image is composed of two separate plates that together portray the press of printer-publisher José de Contreras y Alvarado (fig. 1-2).¹ Adame cut the plates for inclusion in José de Buendía's 1701 account of the ritual mourning ceremonies held in Lima in honor of the death of Carlos II.² Despite his prominent signature, "F. Michael Adame Sculp," the plates tell us little about the engraver. Here it is the publisher that is the protagonist—he is shown supervising the work of three employees. In contrast to his simply attired assistants, the Contreras y Alvarado wears a long coat with ample sleeves and a lace collar. He does not himself work, but instead oversees operations. His downcast eyes and solemn gesture suggest he is conveying the grim news of the king's death to the typesetter who sits before him

ready to place the metal types within the composing stick carefully supported by his right hand. Below the two engravings typeset sonnets written by the printer-publisher demonstrate his erudition and loyalty to the king. The narrative told by the plates is remarkable in part because of the contrast it supplies between the publisher's self-conscious self-promotion and the contemporaneous state of engraving in Lima. While Contreras y Alvarado shows himself to be a sophisticated intellectual who guides the labor of others, printmaking was far less professionalized or established. In 1701, Lima was the only place in South America in which engravers regularly cut plates of copper or other metals for use as printing matrices. Even in Lima, however, during the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth, most of these engravers had only limited production. Furthermore, they do not seem to have understood themselves to be "professionals" dedicated to the art. Indeed, many of them produced only one or two prints, and were members of religious orders or practicing silversmiths, professions which occupied the majority of their time.

Adame's representation of Contreras y Alvarado's press is evocative of the broader relationship of early *limeño* engravers to typographic presses, often relying on printer-publishers to edition their plates. It is also, however, a powerful metaphor for colonial printmaking more broadly: as this article will explore, even in the eighteenth century when printmakers became more professionalized and increasingly independent from typographic presses, their body of work hid as much as it revealed about their agency and identity. This disconnect between the information preserved in archives about engravers' lives, families, and ethnic heritage, and the story told by their graphic production is symptomatic not only of engraving, but of colonial art more broadly, in which the visual appearance of a work frequently tells us little about who made it. Adame's engravings of Contreras y Alvarado's press offer one

1. My thanks to Ricardo Kusunoki who not only has supported this research since its beginning, but also carefully and generously copy edited the Spanish version of this article. On Miguel Adame, see Susana Janet Vargas León, "Fray Miguel Adame de Montemayor. Grabador y Pintor Del Siglo XVIII" (Master's thesis, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2007).

2. José de Buendía, *Parentación real al soberano nombre e inmortal memoria del Católico Rey de las Españas y Emperador de las Indias el serenísimo señor Don Carlos II* (Lima: Joseph de Contreras y Alvarado, 1701).



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figures 1 and 2: Miguel Adame, *The printshop of José de Contreras y Alvarado*, engraving, sheet 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 13/16 in. (20.1 x 14.8 cm); plate 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (8.6 x 13.1 cm); image 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (8 x 12.4 cm), in José de Buendía, *Parentación real al soberano nombre e inmortal memoria del Católico Rey de las Españas y Emperador de las Indias el serenissimo señor Don Carlos II* (Lima: Joseph de Contreras y Alvarado, 1701). Beinecke Library, Yale University (photograph by the author)

model for imagining colonial limeño print production: situated within the space of the typographic printing press, the same space from which books and other printed materials emerged. In this model, the printer-publisher is a figure intimately involved in the production of visual as well as textual materials. The press is a typical platen press of the period, used for the printing of both typographic material and of woodblocks.³ In order to print the plates from which Adame's engravings were produced another kind of press was needed—a

3. On historical printing, see Antony Griffiths, *The Print before Photography: An Introduction to European Printmaking 1550-1820* (London: British Museum Press, 2016); Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching, 1400-2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (London; Houten, Netherlands: Archetype Publications, 2012).

roller press which allowed for the even application of great pressure over the plate. In the engraving, on top of the press bed is the image of a heart, which might be either a typographic form or a woodblock. To the left of the printing matrix is a white rectangle of paper on which we see the impression of this heart, reversed onto the paper support, embellished with the name of the king.

Contreras y Alvarado's typeset sonnets, which accompany the engravings, offer a metaphoric explanation of the iconography of the prints. The printer-publisher writes:

Para formar mis letras, ó borrones,
Oy el humo mas negro Señor, hago,
De las cenizas, que, dejò el estrago.

...

Que harà Señor, la Imprenta en negros humos?
Mas que ha de hazer? Que giman oy sus prensas,
Para imprimir llorando tanta historia.

...

Nos dejarà de estampa su memoria.

...

Queda CARLOS impressa en Coraçones.

To form my letters, or drafts,
Today I make the darkest smoke, Sir,
From the ashes, which the ravages have left behind.

...

What will the Press do, Sir, in black smoke?
But what can be done? Today its presses moan,
To print, crying, such a history.

...

They will leave your memory impressed.

...

CARLOS stays imprinted on hearts.⁴

"*Humo negro*" (black smoke) is both a play on the idea of dark clouds of smoke in the aftermath of a disaster to which the printer-poet compares the king's death, and a reference to *negro de humo* (lamp black), a carbon-based ink used by printers and produced by burning resinous woods, oils, grease, or resin. Similarly, the "moaning" of the presses in despair at the death of the monarch seems to evoke the creaking of the wood of the apparatus as it churns out pages of type. The phrase "CARLOS stays imprinted on hearts" both uses the

4. Buendía, *Parentación real*, 148r-148v.

common language of impression as a parallel for memory, and reflects the imagery of Adame's second engraving, in which two workers are shown operating a press, printing literal hearts with the letters "CARLOS II" on them.⁵

If the representation of the print shop here personifies the mourning of its owner, it could also be said to personify a discrete period in the history of limeño engraving. The book in which these prints appear dates to the end of one era and the beginning of another—with the death of Carlos II, the Hapsburgs left the Spanish throne and the Bourbons claimed it—; but the year 1701 could also be seen as a turning point between two worlds of limeño graphic production. The prints of the workshop of Contreras y Alvarado represent the world as it existed in the seventeenth century—a world in which the production of prints was tightly tied to the typographic presses, a time in which most named printmakers (all engravers) were inconsistent producers of printed imagery, and most were friars or metalworkers first and engravers second. Friar Francisco Bejarano, for instance, cut and signed only two known plates in a 29-year period (1612-1641); other seventeenth-century engravers such as Friar Juan de Benavides (Franciscan, active 1669-1679, five known works) and Friar Joseph Martínez (likely Dominican, active ca. 1673, two known works) have similarly limited oeuvres. The goldsmith Gerónimo de Oliva produced only one known print (in 1645); the goldsmith Diego de Figueroa cut numerous engravings for Juan María de Guevara y Cantos's 1644 *Corona de la divinissima María* but never seems to have cut plates for printing again.⁶ It was only in 1666 with the first engraving published in Lima by the Mercedarian and engraver Pedro Nolasco (active until 1697, 11 known works) that an artist was responsible for consistent production of plates over a period of decades.⁷

5. On printing and memory, see Kelly Donahue-Wallace, "Picturing Prints in Early Modern New Spain," *The Americas* 64, no. 3 (2008): 332.

6. Emily C. Floyd, "Grabadores-plateros en el virreinato peruano," in *Plata de los Andes*, ed. Ricardo Kusunoki and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2018), 87.

7. Nolasco was of French descent and arrived in Lima around 1663, entering the Mercedarian Order in 1669. Prior scholars have suggested that his complete name was Pedro Nolasco Mere, but "Mere" should be understood as "Merc"—an abbreviation for "mercedario." Prior to joining the Mercedarian order, Nolasco signed his first limeño works P. A. Delhom. Archivo Arzobispal de Lima (AAL) Convento de la Merced, Leg. 7 Exp. 38, 1v; Estabridis Cárdenas, *El grabado en Lima virreinal*, 108; Vargas Ugarte, *Ensayo de*

The Dominican Miguel Adame was the last of the significant friar-engravers, and after him the eighteenth century would bring with it an increase in the professionalization of limeño engravers. In the eighteenth century we begin to see entrepreneurial engravers who owned their own workshops and presses, and as such were outside the direct control of typographic print shops. There are no other surviving representations of limeño presses, but if there had been engravings on this theme from the second part of the eighteenth century, it would not be surprising for them to depict scenes of engravers guiding the impression of plates on roller presses or overseeing their own workshops. In this period, engravers such as Joseph Vásquez, Domingo de Ayala, and Marcelo Cabello ran and actively promoted their businesses, acting as more than just plate cutters. Indeed, Cabello even published a sonnet in honor of the Viceroy Ambrosio O'Higgins, which we could see as a parallel to José de Contreras y Alvarado's earlier work. Like the printer-editor's sonnet, Cabello's sonnet represents an opportunity for self-fashioning, in which he presents himself as a loyal servant to the viceroy and an erudite intellectual.⁸ As this sonnet suggests, Cabello presents an interesting case study. He produced a substantial and wide-ranging oeuvre and there is ample documentary evidence attesting to his life.

In contrast to seventeenth-century limeño engravers for whom scholars have yet to identify contracts or documentation of payment for works, the names of Marcelo Cabello and of his father, the master silversmith Doroteo Cabello, appear repeatedly in the account books of confraternities such as the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of the Rosary of Spaniards (fig. 3).⁹ Doroteo Cabello often cleaned and made silver pieces for the same confraternities that employed his son to produce prints.¹⁰ Cabello worked consistently for the Rosary confraternity from 1807 until at least 1826,

un diccionario, 224. I thank Luis Eduardo Wuffarden for pointing out the true significance of Merc ("Mere") and the connection between Delhom and Nolasco. See Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, "El mural y su estela iconográfica," in *El Señor de Los Milagros: historia, devoción e identidad* (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2016), 179; Emily C. Floyd, "The Mobile Image: Prints and Devotional Networks in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century South America" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2018), 70, 77.

8. Omar Gonzalo Esquivel Ortiz, "Un retrato para el virrey Ambrosio O'Higgins. El grabado de Marcelo Cabello perdido en Chile," *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq* 16, no. 16 (2019): 66–77.

9. My thanks to Ricardo Kusunoki who first brought these documents to my attention.

10. Archivo de la Beneficencia Pública de Lima (ABPL), PE_0006_AHBPL_COF_ROS_031, 1791-1793, 34r, 40v, 57r, 81r, 99v.



Figure 3: Marcelo Cabello, *Virgin of the Rosary*, engraving, late-eighteenth–early-nineteenth century, sheet 6 3/16 x 4 1/8 in. (15.7 x 10.4 cm), image 5 3/8 x 3 15/16 in. (13.6 x 10 cm). Biblioteca Nacional del Perú

cutting, retouching, and printing plates for the organization. He editioned engravings in large numbers, ranging from 1000–12,500 prints per year. The language used to describe Cabello’s actions on behalf of the confraternity is important. In the 1808–1809 fiscal year, for example, the confraternal expense account includes, “152 [pesos] paid to Don Juan Macho [a former *mayordomo* of the confraternity] for the engraving of 3600 Prints of Our Lady that he had Marcelo Cabello pull, and a Ream of paper for them.”¹¹ The verb used here to describe Cabello’s actions “*tirar*” (pull or print) implies Cabello’s agency as the printer-publisher of the engravings as well as the cutter of the plates. Various engravings cut by Cabello for the rosary confraternity survive, as do prints for other confraternities, such as the Congregation of the Virgin of the O, and for devotees of various saints. In addition to Cabello’s devotional prints, various of his secular works appear in limeño

11. ABPL, PE_0006_AHBPL_COF_ROS_32, 1807–1810, 27v.

publications from the last decades of the colonial period and into the Republican era.

The fact that the confraternal account books include payments to Cabello for printing and not just for the cutting of plates suggests something important about Cabello’s career: in contrast to engravers of the previous century, Cabello owned a press. The evidence of the confraternity account books is supported by a legal case brought against Cabello by an angry landlord. On April 24, 1818, Don Antonio Mora filed suit against Marcelo Cabello alleging that the engraver had failed to pay rent on a three-room apartment that he had leased from Mora beginning in February of that year.¹² The landlord asserted that Cabello owed him a total of 192 pesos in unpaid rent.¹³ Cabello protested Mora’s suit claiming that Josefa Caballero, whom he acknowledged as his “*legítima mujer*” (legitimate wife), had taken on the lease of the apartment against his wishes and without his permission. Refusing responsibility for the debt, Cabello insinuated that his wife’s desire to stay was motivated by an affair with a fellow resident, one Doctor Don Jose Lira Abogado. According to Cabello, Lira even rather impertinently offered to pay Caballero’s rent, going so far as to threaten Cabello “with sticks and yelling in order to violently expel me from that house.”¹⁴ This narrative has the character of a soap opera or seedy paperback novel, but it also attests to Cabello’s ownership of a press. In Mora’s declaration, alongside suggesting an enslaved man owned by Cabello be placed in a *panadería* (bakery) as a possible means of recouping the lost funds, the landlord noted: “In the event of any difficulty in the transfer of title of the embargoed Slave and having positive information that in the possession of Doña Josefa Caballero Wife of the Debtor, exists a Printing Press that belongs to the Debtor, Your Lordship has to be served by ordering that the execution be extended to the said Press.”¹⁵

The information presented thus far offers an image of Cabello as a man with a turbulent personal life, but who maintained active professional and business connections, with strong and lasting relationships to various confraternities. Owning a press would have had significant financial benefits to Cabello as well as

12. Archivo General de la Nación, Lima (AGN), Caja 1, Legajo No. 182, Doc 3530, 1r.

13. AGN Lima, 2r.

14. AGN Lima, 4v.

15. AGN Lima, 2v, 4v. On *panaderías* as places for the jailing of slaves, see Michelle A. McKinley, *Fractional Freedoms: Slavery, Intimacy, and Legal Mobilization in Colonial Lima, 1600–1700* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 213–5.

freeing him from reliance on typographic printer-publishers to edition his work. Printing plates, once cut, did not necessarily stay in the hands of their maker. When an engraver produced a plate for a confraternity, for example, the plate then belonged to the confraternity and not the engraver. The confraternity could take the plate to any printer to have as many copies printed as the organization desired. Engraving a plate implied a single payment; the ability to print a plate allowed for an engraver like Cabello to offer a repeat service.¹⁶ Confraternities and other organizations could bring him their plates for him to print in addition to asking him to cut new plates or retouch their existing ones. Cabello could also have made plates on speculation and editioned them to sell individual engravings to peddlers, booksellers, or directly to the consumer. A plate was an investment that, once made, permitted the production of multiples.

As the contrast between Cabello and seventeenth-century limeño engravers demonstrates, over the course of the colonial period the lives of engravers changed dramatically, from being only occasional producers of printed images to professionalized and entrepreneurial businessmen who owned their own presses. The visual appearance of prints made in Lima varied as well, with neoclassical elements increasingly appearing over the course of the eighteenth century, and individual printmakers possessing their own recognizable approaches to handling the burin and representing the human figure. Despite changing international trends and individual idiosyncrasies, prints made in colonial Lima consistently adhered to European stylistic norms: limeño engravers depict human figures according to imported understandings of beauty and proportion, they endeavor to convey ideas of perspective and three-dimensionality, and they use techniques such as cross-hatching and stippling. These representational modes and technical approaches to the medium have their origins in early modern Italy and northern Europe. The European appearance of limeño engravings may perhaps explain the relatively few studies dedicated to limeño engraving, especially by non-Peruvian scholars.¹⁷ When scholars do write about limeño prints, they

16. Floyd, "The Mobile Image," 106-108.

17. Aside from works by this author and occasional references to individual prints within broader projects, literature on limeño printmaking is relatively limited. Estabridis, *El grabado*; Vargas León, "Fray Miguel Adame;" Omar Gonzalo Esquivel Ortiz, *Marcelo Cabello, 1773-1842 maestro grabador limeño* (Lima: Instituto Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 2019); José Abel Fernández, *Grabadores en el Perú: bosquejo histórico 1574-1950* (Lima: Did de Arteta S. A., 1995).

typically focus on works with explicitly non-European subject matter, often consisting of depictions of Incas.¹⁸ As Carolyn Dean and Dana Leibsohn have described, modern scholars seeking to "raise questions about (if not also align one's scholarship with) the subaltern, the previously colonized" have often sought out the visible presence of Indigenous forms and actors within colonial products, presence often deemed as "hybrid," combining elements from more than one culture.¹⁹ However, as they point out, this "presumption that mixing will manifest itself physically and thus be visually apparent," means that modern perceptions of hybridity can obfuscate colonial realities.²⁰ In the case of limeño printmaking, for example, its stylistically European qualities disguise a much more complex picture. Not all the artists who made these works were *criollos* or Europeans. As revealed in baptismal and marital records preserved in the Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, there were various *criollo* engravers, two French engravers, one possibly *mestizo* engraver, and one engraver, Marcelo Cabello, the adopted son of a family of mixed African, European, and Indigenous heritage.

The evidence of Cabello's ethnic heritage, and the challenges of uncovering it, point not only to the need to handle the apparent ethnicity of historical figures with care, but also to the malleable nature of racial categories within the colonial period. Cabello's own marriage record, dated May 22, 1803, declares both he and his bride, Doña (María) Josefa Caballero simply as having been born in Lima ("naturales de Lima"), a category that leaves their parentage opaque.²¹ Similarly, no document from his career as an engraver, from the legal documents that survive in relation to him, or from the baptismal and christening records of Marcelo and Josefa's four children, gives any information about

18. See for example Gustavo Buntinx and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, "Incas y reyes españoles en la pintura colonial peruana: la estela de Garcilaso," *Márgenes* 4, no. 8 (1987): 151-210; Thomas B. F. Cummins, "Forms of Andean Colonial Towns, Free Will and Marriage" in *The Archaeology of Colonialism*, ed. Claire L. Lyons and John K. Papadopoulos (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2002), 199-240; Thomas B. F. Cummins, "The Indulgent Image: Prints in the New World," in *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. Ilona Katzew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 222-3; Ramón Mujica Pinilla, *La imagen transgredida: ensayos de iconografía peruana y sus políticas de representación simbólica* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2016), 61-85.

19. Dana Leibsohn and Carolyn Dean, "Hybridity and Its Discontents: Considering Visual Culture in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 9.

20. Leibsohn and Dean, 10.

21. AAL, Matrimonios El Sagrario Libro 11, 111v. I found these marital, baptismal, and death records employing the Mormon database familysearch.org; I thank Ricardo Kusunoki for introducing me to this resource.

Cabello's background.²² In contrast, when Cabello's parents married on March 27, 1773, the record unequivocally declares his father, Joseph (Doroteo) Cabello to be a free man of mixed African and European heritage born in Lima and his mother Petronila de la Llave to be an Indigenous woman born in the northern coastal town of Lambayeque.²³ This would seem to suggest that Cabello was of mixed Indigenous, African, and European heritage.²⁴ When Petronila de la Llave made her will on April 19, 1806, however, she declared "we have not had any children and I have only had an adoptive one[,] Don Marcelo Cabello who I raised from his tender years."²⁵ Based on records from Cabello's own life we might easily interpret him as a *criollo*, as it is often criollos or Spaniards who appear in the archival record "unmarked."²⁶ As Ananda Cohen-Aponte suggests, however, we might also think of Cabello's lack of ethnic markers as a sign of his professional success. She points out that in the case of colonial Cuzco, highly successful Indigenous artists lost the ethnic label in the archive, either choosing "not to represent themselves as indigenous or who were not classified as native artists because of the success they had achieved in their profession."²⁷

Recognition of Cabello's ambiguous ethnic heritage might also encourage us to rethink ways in which art historians have typically understood Lima, framing it as a characteristically "European" space in contrast to Indigenous Cuzco.²⁸ The characterization ignores the reality, however, that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries almost half the population of

Lima was of African heritage.²⁹ Recognizing the impact of individuals of African, Indigenous, and mixed heritage on Lima's visual culture is an exercise not only in disturbing our assumptions about Lima's colonial culture and its predominantly Spanish qualities, but also in challenging the assumed binary of Indigenous vs. European that prevails in much of art historical writing on the colonial Andes. As the African, European, and Indigenous heritage of Cabello's adoptive parents suggests, such binaries ignore the complexities of colonial society with its diverse, mixed population.

Cabello's case also underscores a point that cannot be made enough—an artist's heritage will not necessarily be reflected in his work. Furthermore, European stylistic forms need not be incompatible with expression of Indigenous, African, or other non-European communal identity. Cabello's early nineteenth-century engraved indulgence of the Lord of Miracles (*Señor de los Milagros*) nicely illustrates this point (fig. 4). The engraving shows the image of Christ crucified with the Virgin and Mary Magdalene at his sides, God the Father and the Holy Spirit hovering above. Cabello uses heavy cross-hatching to convey the dark sky, and combines fine lines and stippling to represent the mountainous landscape and city scene below. This is a relatively conventional depiction of a popular limeño devotion: there are more surviving limeño colonial engravings of the Lord of Miracles than of any other theme. The image of the Lord of Miracles is widely recognized to have its origins within the diverse African population of the neighborhood of Pachacamilla in the parish of San Marcelo. In his 1771 *El día deseado*, Felipe Colmenares Fernández de Córdova describes how "it is believed that in the year 1651 a wall belonging to a Confraternity of Black Angolans was painted," clarifying that "confraternity" is the word used to refer to the buildings (*casas*) "in which the blacks gather to celebrate their festivals. In [these houses] they build a spacious room, and typically they paint an Image on one of its front walls."³⁰ Although Colmenares identifies the confraternity as belonging to Angolans, other sources describe the artist and his community as hailing from Guinea.³¹ This ambiguity likely reflects a lack of knowledge (and interest) on behalf of

22. See AAL, Bautismos El Sagrario Libro 17, 75v; AAL, Bautismos Santa Ana Libro 12, 262; AAL, Bautismos San Marcelo Libro 11, 149v; AAL, Bautismos El Sagrario Libro 17; AAL, Bautismos Santa Ana Libro 12, 196v.

23. AAL, Matrimonios San Lázaro Libro 5, 92r. To my knowledge, Omar Esquivel was the first to locate the marriage record of Cabello's parents. Omar Esquivel Ortiz, "Marcelo Cabello: Grabador de Lima virreinal y Lima independiente," exhibition, Seminario de Historia Rural Andina, 2017.

24. Indeed, this is what I believed to be the case when I wrote my 2018 dissertation. Emily C. Floyd, "The Mobile Image," 127.

25. AGN, Lima, Protocolos notariales 247, fol. 51. Quoted in Omar Gonzalo Esquivel Ortiz, ed. *Marcelo Cabello*, 26.

26. Joanne Rappaport, *The Disappearing Mestizo: Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 10.

27. Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Decolonizing the Global Renaissance: A View from the Andes," in *The Globalization of Renaissance Art: A Critical Review*, ed. Daniel Savoy (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 79.

28. See for example Thomas B. F. Cummins, "A Tale of Two Cities: Cuzco, Lima, and the Construction of Colonial Representation," in *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*, ed. Diane Fane (Brooklyn: The Brooklyn Museum, 1996), 159.

29. Maribel Arrelucea Barrantes, *La presencia afrodescendiente en el Perú: siglos XVI-XX* (Lima, Perú: Ministerio de Cultura, 2015), 23.

30. Felipe Colmenares Fernández de Córdova, *El día deseado* (Lima: en la Oficina de la Calle de San Jacinto, 1771), 6.

31. Julia Costilla, "'Guarda y custodia' en la Ciudad de los Reyes: la construcción colectiva del culto al Señor de los Milagros (Lima, siglos XVII y XVIII)," *Fronteras de la Historia* 20, no. 2 (2015): 162, 115.



Figure 4: Marcelo Cabello, *Lord of Miracles*, engraving, ca. 1806-1823, sheet 7 1/8 x 5 1/16 in. (18.2 x 12.8 cm), image 7 1/16 x 4 3/8 in. (18 x 11.8 cm). Biblioteca Nacional del Perú

the chroniclers, who barely mention this Black population, emphasizing instead the role of criollo and peninsular elites in the promotion and growth of devotion to the Lord of Miracles.³² As Julia Costilla points out, this rhetorical diminishment of the role of Black devotees in the first century of the devotion’s development likely reflects white elites’ negative perceptions of the Black population as prone to idolatry and inappropriate religious practices.³³ The colonial chronicles describe an

earthquake that destroyed the confraternity’s building but left the wall with the image of Christ standing as marking the true beginning of the cult, leading to growing recognition of the image as miraculous.³⁴ Alarmed by the increasing flow of people coming to the image to ask favors, the authorities sent an “Indian painter” to erase the image, but as he drew near to the work he

32. Costilla, “Guarda y custodia’ en la Ciudad de los Reyes,” 171-3.

33. Costilla, “Guarda y custodia’ en la Ciudad de los Reyes,” 171-3.

34. Costilla, “Guarda y custodia’ en la Ciudad de los Reyes,” 172-3. The chronicles are Colmenares, *El día deseado* and Pedro Vásquez de Novoa, *Compendio histórico de la prodigiosa imagen del Santo Cristo de los Milagros*, (1766; reprinted Lima: Concha, 1868).

fainted, covered in sweat.³⁵ The authorities interpreted this event as a sign of the image's power and of divine support for the devotion. The criollo and peninsular elites took the image as their own and it was eventually housed within the church of Discalced Nazarene Carmelites of Saint Theresa, a feminine religious order with its origins in Lima; the current building was inaugurated in 1771.³⁶

The almost total absence of references in the chronicles to Lima's Black population, beyond acknowledging the image's initial origins within the African confraternity and the Black identity of the artist, seems deliberately intended to shift the readers' attention away from this community. The effectiveness of this strategy as employed by these chroniclers but also by other chroniclers of colonial Lima and later writers can be seen in the ongoing perception of Lima as a white space, and in recent works on the Lord of Miracles that engage only peripherally with the image's origins in Lima's Black community and ongoing importance to that community today.³⁷ We might think of Luisa Elena Alcalá's work on the role of the Indigenous artists in colonial chronicles: as she explains, "the scant information on the artists recorded in the chronicles is a direct consequence of the implied competition between the object and its maker."³⁸ Alcalá also underscores, however, the important role of Indigenous artists within the chronicles beginning in the seventeenth century.³⁹ The presence of Indigenous artists, although rarely named or accorded direct agency in the creation of images, demonstrated the capacity of the Indigenous population to accept Catholicism, thus justifying Spanish presence in the Americas. We could think of something similar in the case of the Lord of the Miracles in relation to the African population of Lima. The image's origins within this community affirmed the capacity of Blacks to embrace Catholicism, thus perhaps from a Spanish perspective redeeming the sins of slavery and the forced trip from Africa to the Americas. The brief reference to the image's Black artist was enough to fulfill this task, further engagement with this community's contributions to the devotion could

35. Colmenares, *El día deseado*, 7-8.

36. Costilla, "'Guarda y custodia' en la Ciudad de los Reyes," 167, 169.

37. *El Señor de Los Milagros: historia, devoción e identidad* (Lima: Banco de Crédito, 2016).

38. Luisa Elena Alcalá, "The Image and Its Maker: The Problem of Authorship in Relation to Miraculous Images in Spanish America" in *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World*, ed. Rhonda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2009), 56.

39. Alcalá, "The Image and Its Maker," 68-69.

risk characterizing the Lord of Miracles as dangerously syncretistic.

The ambiguous presence of Black devotees in the chronicles of the image should not be taken to imply that they were really absent. Nor should the European face of the Lord of Miracles signify that the image's devotees were of the same color. In contrast with Mexico, where the Virgin of Guadalupe tends to be described as dark skinned, or Cuzco where the dark skin of the *Lord of the Earthquakes* (*Señor de los Temblores*) has linked it to the Indigenous and mestizo population of the city, the Lord of Miracles is not typically identified as Black, either in color or in physiognomy.⁴⁰ It isn't the outward appearance of the image that links the Lord of Miracles to Lima's African population but rather the origins of this image within that community and their ongoing devotion to him. Equally, Cabello's hand, which guided the burin that cut the plate that served as the matrix for this print, does not reveal its ethnic identity in the final work. Parallel to Miguel Adame's engraving of the printshop of José de Contreras y Alvarado, Cabello's engraving of the Lord of Miracles hides more complex stories behind the black lines and white spaces of its iconography.

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40. On the Virgin of Guadalupe, see Jeanette Favrot Peterson, *Visualizing Guadalupe: From Black Madonna to Queen of the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014). On the Lord of Earthquakes, see Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, "Shifting Ground: Elite Sponsorship of the Cult of Christ of the Earthquakes in Eighteenth-Century Cuzco," *Hispanic Research Journal* 8, no. 5 (December 2007): 445-65.

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