



Hidalgo, Javiera Jaque and Miguel A. Valerio, eds. Indigenous and Black Confraternities in Colonial Latin America: Negotiating Status through Religious Practices

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[See table of contents](#)

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Hidalgo, Javiera Jaque and Miguel A. Valerio, eds. *Indigenous and Black Confraternities in Colonial Latin America: Negotiating Status through Religious Practices*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022. Pp. 408. ISBN: 978-94-6372-154-7 (hardback) € 119.

This volume focuses on the indigenous and black confraternities founded in colonial Spanish America and Brazil between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. This collection consists of thirteen articles grouped into three parts, plus an introduction by the two editors and an afterword by Nicole von Germeten.

In their introduction "Negotiating Status through Religious Practices in Colonial Latin America" (9–34), Hidalgo and Valerio point out that the volume seeks to present "varied cases of religious confraternities founded by subaltern subjects in rural and urban spaces to understand the dynamics and relations between the peripheral and central areas of colonial society, underlying the ways in which colonial subjects navigated the colonial domain with forms of social organization and cultural and religious practices" (10). In this perspective, the volume "analyzes indigenous and black confraternal cultural practices as forms of negotiation and resistance shaped by local devotional identities that also transgressed imperial, religious and ethno-racial hierarchies" (10). The editors also focus on the hierarchical composition of the brotherhoods and the statutes that regulate their life, making the social role of the brotherhoods possible. For example, the indigenous brotherhoods "fulfilled a central social role", because the members "were able to navigate the segregated urban fabric [...] as well as to access spaces and social statuses reserved for hegemonic subjects in the colonial society" (14). In the case of the Afrodescendants, however, their aim in founding or joining a confraternity was "to form community in the diaspora, pool their meager resources to care for each other in times of need, and express their Afro-Catholic identity through devotional and festive practices" (21).

The first part, "Indigenous and Black Confraternities in New Spain", opens with an article by Laura Dierksmeier on "Religious Autonomy and Local Religion among Indigenous Confraternities in Colonial Mexico, Sixteenth-Seventeenth Centuries" (37–62). Then Cristina Verónica Masferrer León focuses on "Confraternities of People of African Descent in Seventeenth-Century Mexico City" (63–90), showing the role of confraternal organisations as "a form of cultural resistance" (85). Finally, Krystle Farman Sweda ("Of All Type of *Calidad* or Color"; Black Confraternities in a Multiethnic Mexican Parish: 1640–1750": 91–113) shows how the "black confraternities situated in the complex, everchanging social dynamics of the colonial parish functions as part of the colony's social and cultural milieu, not as a social organization distinct from it" (111).

In the second part, "Indigenous and Black Confraternities in Peru", Ximena Gómez ("Confraternal 'Collections': Black and Indigenous *Cofradías*

and the Curation of Religious Life in Colonial Lima": 117–133) reflects on the ways in which "black and indigenous people defined Lima's religious landscape through their participation in devotion and festivals, and through the display of their confraternal art and *bienes* in their decorated chapels and in public professions (131). Then, Karen B. Graubart, in her "'Of Greater Dignity than the *Negros*': Language and In-Group Distinctions within Early Afro-Peruvian *Cofradías*" (135–162), uses "the fragmentary *cofradia* records of Lima's Archivo Arzobispal to ask what the rhetoric of African and African-descent *cofrades*, free and enslaved, tells us about the development of racialized hierarchies within early Lima" (139). These documents are used to understand how "the people today we group together as Afro-Peruvians recognized distinctions and schism within that collectivity, and utilized this rhetoric to identify and police their divisions during the period when African slavery was being institutionalized in South America" (139). Tamara Walker, on the other hand, focuses in particular on the devotional practices of women of African descent. ("African-Descent Women and the Limits of Confraternal Devotion in Colonial Lima, Peru"; 163–180), while Angelica Serna Jeri's article ("Glaciers, the Colonial Archive and the Brotherhood of the Lord of Quyllur Rit'i"; 181–207) addresses the dances performed during the annual pilgrimage to Quyllur Rit'i by the Andean peoples, showing how these rituals help to cement "their continued relevance and centrality as arbiters of spiritual, social, political, and economic order in the region for the centuries to come" (204).

In the third part, devoted to "Indigenous Confraternities in the Southern Cone", Jaime Valenzuela Márquez ("Immigrants Devotions: The Incorporation of Andean Amerindians in Santiago de Chile's Confraternities in the Seventeenth Century"; 211–240) analyses the role of the confraternal institution, which becomes an "anchor", "based on new community and corporate weavings" for immigrants of Andean origin who, on arriving in Santiago, experienced the "the deep and daily interaction with the 'others' that inhabited the city" (235). The next contribution, by Candela De Luca, focuses on "The Marian Cult as a Resistance Strategy: The Territorialized Construction of Devotions in the Province of Potosí, Charchas, in the Eighteenth Century" (241–271), whereas Enrique Normando Cruz and Grit Kirstin Koeltzsch study the religious festivals of indigenous confraternities in Colonial Jujuy ("Between Excess and Pleasure: The Religious Festivals of the Indigenous People of Jujuy, Seventeenth-Nineteenth Centuries"; 273–295).

In the fourth and final part, "Black Brotherhoods in Brazil", Célia Maia Borges analyses the meaning of affiliation and some rituals of the Afro-Brazilian Brotherhoods, which "made it possible to reorganize the captives' cultural and religious matrices by enabling African brothers to meet. Together, *irmãos* had the ability to redefine their religious space and time of worship and shape a new awareness of themselves before other social categories" ("Black Brotherhoods in Colonial Brazil: Devotion and Solidarity"; 299–318: 317). After the presentation by Marina de Mello e Souza ("Cultural Resistance and

Afro-Catholicism in Colonial Brazil"; 319–334), Lucilene Reginaldo focuses on the festivities organised by the black brotherhoods in eighteenth-century Salvador that represent “privileged spaces for the study of brotherhoods’ internal dynamics as well as their relations to their broader slavocratic world” (“‘Much to see and admire’: Festivals, Parades, and Royal Pageantry among Afro-Bahian Brotherhoods in the Eighteenth Century”; 335–357: 355).

As a whole, the book, enriched by an extensive bibliography (367–397), offers, to quote Nicole von Germeten in the “Afterword” (359–365), “important contributions” to reconstruct the African Diaspora History with particular reference to Colonial Latin America (363–364), showing how “sodalities and confraternities of various kinds represented a reaction to the conditions of imperialism and enslavement, often based on colonial identities relating to race and place of origin” (360).

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