

MAKING MESTIZOS: RACE, RELIGION, AND GENDER IN 16TH CENTURY PERU

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the late summer of 1582, Jesuit leadership in Spanish Peru converged at the capital of the viceroyalty in Lima to discuss the state of their missions in the New World and make decisions for how to move forward with that project. In many ways, this meeting, the Third Lima Council, which included representatives of the religious orders and the secular religious community, marked the culmination of years of racialization of people who came to be labeled as *mestizos*, a process that had begun at the start of the sixteenth century, if not earlier. The decisions made by the Third Lima Council would in turn open the door for further racialization of *mestizos* and limit the opportunities available to them, especially within the Church. The council would meet with some interruptions through October of the following year, as church leaders drafted plans for how best to serve an increasingly diverse colonial population. Jesuit leaders were particularly concerned with how to approach the conversion of the indigenous population while meeting the demands of the growing Spanish population. In connection with this preoccupation, Jesuit leaders wanted to determine how to deal with people increasingly perceived to be caught in between “Two Republics,” namely, the (often illegitimate) children of Spanish fathers and indigenous mothers who were increasingly known as *mestizos*.¹ This watershed moment would influence colonial race-making for years to come.

Although the scope of discussion for the Third Lima Council was vast, one issue stands out among the rest: the council voted to exclude *mestizos* from full membership as priests within the Society of Jesus at the same moment that church leaders in colonial Peru decided in favor of

¹ The “Two Republics” was the Spanish Crown’s attempt to keep the indigenous population separate from the Spanish population and govern them as separate entities. This illusion quickly disintegrated as unions between Spanish and indigenous people increased in the early colonial years.

translating the basic catechism into Spanish and Quechua.² This translation committee was led by José de Acosta, the Spanish Jesuit Provincial of Lima, who oversaw the work of the *mestizo* Jesuits Blas Valera and Bartolomé de Santiago, creole professor of Quechua Juan de Balboa, a prebendary of Cuzco named Dr. Alonso Martínez, and secular *mestizo* priest Father Francisco Carrasco.³ The make-up of the catechism translation committee reflects the Catholic Church's reliance on *mestizo* linguistic and cultural knowledge to supplement the work of Spanish priests less familiar with indigenous languages. On the surface, the decisions to exclude *mestizos* from priesthood and to translate the catechism into Quechua may seem contradictory, but they were deeply entangled with the creation and reinforcement of the same emerging racial hierarchy. *Mestizo* exclusion and the translation of catechism into Quechua were related because early modern racial thinking affected Church decision makers who understood language as an inherited trait, so *mestizos* were seen as optimal translators resulting from their inheritance of their mother's tongue while being raised speaking Spanish and following the Catholic faith in their father's household.⁴ When the Third Lima Council chose to formally exclude *mestizos* from ordination as priests, they were not exactly excluding *mestizos* from participation within the Society; they were excluding *mestizos* from formal recognition of their roles as translators in the project of indigenous conversion.⁵

² *Catecismo en la lengua Española y qvichva: Ordenado por auctoridad del Concilio Provincial de Lima el año de 1583 (Catechism in the Spanish Language and Quechua: Ordered by Authority of the Provincial Council of Lima in the Year 1583)*. Lima, Peru: Francisco del Canto, 1613. PDF. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021666928/>.

³ Sabine Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas: The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera, S.J.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 64.

⁴ See Jane Mangan, "Moving *Mestizos* in Sixteenth-Century Peru: Spanish Fathers, Indigenous Mothers, and the Children in Between," *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 273-294 for more on how *mestizos* were removed from the homes of their mothers after a few years to guarantee the reproduction of Spanish culture over indigenous cultures in the Americas.

⁵ Larissa Brewer-Garcia, "Bodies, Texts, and Translators: Indigenous Breast Milk and the Jesuit Exclusion of *Mestizos* in Late Sixteenth-Century Peru," *Colonial Latin American Review* 21, no. 3 (May 2012): 365-390.

The Jesuits were not alone in their concern over the role of *mestizos* within the Society of Jesus, the Church, and colonial society as a whole, and these concerns were certainly not reserved for men; in related spheres of social interaction, *mestizas* seeking life as nuns were increasingly discriminated against as well in this period. Similarly to their male counterparts, *mestizas* would not be immediately excluded from participation within the church but would see their roles diminished over the course of the sixteenth century. Whereas during the sixteenth century *mestizos* were eventually removed from priesthood and relegated to unrecognized roles as translators, *mestizas* were allowed to take vows as nuns but often could not ascend to the highest rank of their orders and were predetermined to wear a white veil instead of black.⁶ Not only were *mestizas* marginalized in the roles they were allowed to take, they were also distanced from the indigenous side of their heritage to present a more culturally Spanish front. The Catholic Church's concerns over *mestizaje* were thus part of a larger trend toward exclusion. The Third Lima Council's exclusion of *mestizos*, as well as similar decisions to exclude *mestizos* and *mestizas* made by individuals and other institutions, were not made lightly or randomly by any means – they were the product of a century of race-making in the Spanish Americas, which itself was built upon another century or so of race-making in the Old World.⁷

Therefore, race-making was a process that took time to solidify. It thus follows that *mestizo* as a category did not just suddenly come into existence; *mestizos* were made over the course of the colonial period as colonial subjects grappled with how to identify themselves and others. Past the sixteenth century, *mestizo* identities and identifications would continue to evolve

⁶ Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 32.

⁷ María Elena Martínez, "The Language, Genealogy, and Classification of 'Race' in Colonial Mexico," in *Race and Classification: The Case of Mexican America*, ed. Ilona Katzew and Susan Deans-Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 25-42. See this article for a more in-depth analysis of the history of *casta* and *raza* as solid, definable terms.

as much as any other socio-racial categories.⁸ Despite these constant transformations, the sixteenth century gives important insights into the mechanisms behind race-making in Spanish America, and in particular, how those categories were built in the first generations of conquest. “Making” *mestizos* and other groups in relation to preserving Spanish culture while excluding indigenous ones was a project that grew increasingly important to colonial minds with each passing year. The earliest years of race-making in Spanish America also reveal an intensely gendered process across the growing empire. *Mestizaje* had differing meanings for men and women. As a result, *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women experienced differing levels of discrimination as a product of the different expectations for their performance of *mestizaje* based on their gender.

This thesis argues that both femininity and masculinity – understood as historically-constructed and socially-rooted ideological concepts – were important in determining the application of race to a person of mixed indigenous-Spanish descent. Men and women had different, yet equally important, roles to fulfill in the reproduction of Spanish culture and in establishing the emerging colonial order in the New World. These roles would in turn impact the socio-racial identifiers applied to *mestizas* and *mestizos* in the sixteenth century and onwards.

At first glance, it may appear that within the Church those power structures would play out differently, since priests and nuns would (ideally) not be active participants in the biological reproduction of Spanish people in the New World. Based on my research for this thesis, however, it turns out that the circumstances were not so different in the religious sphere. Both

⁸ Robert H. Jackson, “Race/Caste and the Creation and Meaning of Identity in Colonial Spanish America,” *Revista de Indias* 55, no. 203 (1995): 149–173. See Robert Jackson for an in-depth review of the influence of individual priests on racial drift and the demographics of a certain region. Jackson finds that seemingly discrete categories often had considerable overlap due to the fluid definitions of race, and especially of the influence of gender in the process of applying race to an individual.

secular and religious thinkers saw *mestizos* and *mestizas* in similar terms, which played out in their different levels of acceptance within religious roles. *Mestizas* were typically allowed more open access to conventual life than *mestizos*' access to priesthood because of the divergent roles of men and women in Spanish cultural reproduction. These divergent roles effectively aided in the creation of two different definitions of *mestizaje*. This thesis finds that gender contributed to determinations on the trustworthiness of *mestizos* and *mestizas* and whether they could indeed move to higher ranks of society. I argue that this was because *mestizos* and their advocates increasingly relied on competition with their Spanish counterparts in the heart of their arguments while *mestiza* advocates aligned their arguments with acculturation and reproduction based on distancing themselves from their "race."

What remains to be seen is how the language of exclusion or inclusion reflects the intersectional nature of race-making. I argue that gender played an extremely important role in the racialization of *mestizos* and *mestizas*. Gender dynamics can be identified in source material by looking for examples of competition for men and acculturation for women. Though not the only cause for differences in the discrimination experienced by men and women of mixed heritage, these themes certainly contribute to the processes of applying "race" to these men and women. This analysis can be achieved using edited source compilations containing Church and Crown edicts, historical works on the Americas written in the sixteenth century, and religious philosophical writings from Church leaders. Other sources used in this thesis include the Jesuit priest Jose de Acosta's *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales de las Incas*, the now-lost works of Padre Blas Valera (reconstructed primarily in the biographical work by Sabine Hyland and the sections included in De la Vega's *Comentarios*), the deliberations of the Third Lima Council translated from Latin to Spanish by

Rubén Vargas Ugarte, S.J., *Real Cédulas* from Charles V and Philip II included in Richard Konetzke's *Colección de Documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica (1493-1810)*, a dossier of petitions written by *mestizos* as cited in Felipe Ruan's work, and papal bulls from Pope Julius II, Sixtus IV, and Gregory XIII included in Paulo Suess's *La Conquista Espiritual de la América Española. 200 documentos - Siglos XVI*. All these church decisions, religious and philosophical writings, and Crown edicts come together to paint a textual picture of the process of race-making in the sixteenth century. Although this thesis is far from comprehensive in its source material, it is my goal to take a focused look at this important literature signaled to me by secondary authors looking into similar subjects and provide a narrow view into the role of gender in sixteenth-century racialization processes. Reading these sources with the aforementioned attributes of performed gender – and gender expectations – in mind can help to address the question of why *mestizas* and *mestizos* were conceptualized – and treated – differently within the church. Understanding their divergent treatment within the church provides insight into the social repercussions of “making” *mestizos* in Spanish colonial America at large.

<....>

Since Bartolomé de las Casas published his *Short Account on the Destruction of the Indies* (1542), proponents of the Black Legend have used the Spanish Reconquista and subsequent *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) codes to explain the developing *sistema de castas* in Spanish America. Even through the 1940s, sociologist Frank Tannenbaum and his contemporaries were still using arguments that linked Reconquista politics to modern “race-relations.”⁹ More recently, María Elena Martínez has argued that, although the Black Legend is too reductive of the realities of *limpieza de sangre* and the *sistema de castas*, the connections

⁹ Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1946), 40-45.

between the two are undeniable.¹⁰ Since at least the 1990s, historians have recognized the need to move away from the reductive arguments that simply link the origins of modern racism to the post-Reconquista statutes of *limpieza de sangre*. Considering the history of *limpieza de sangre* in late-medieval and early modern Iberia and its travel across the Atlantic into Spanish America has allowed historians of recent decades to consider the religious and socio-economic aspects of the emerging *sistema de castas* in addition to “race.” Up until the last 30 or so years, few historians had approached the issue of gender in the process of race-making, and the few that did were most often concerned with the changing status of indigenous women as the Spanish gained power in the Americas. During the sixteenth century, the earliest years of colonization during which “race” was inscribed into European, indigenous, and African bodies resulting from the colonial encounter, colonizers found those religious, economic, and gendered divisions to be extremely important.

During the 1990s, historians started redirecting the conversation regarding colonial race-making in the Spanish Americas. Historians had begun to grapple with the changing roles of indigenous women resulting from Spanish influence as early as the 1980s, creating an opening in the historiography that historians were ready to begin addressing. Irene Silverblatt’s *Moon, Sun, and Witches* (1987) examines how both the colonizers and the colonized used gender to influence the construction and consolidation of social hierarchy in the Andes.¹¹ Silverblatt found that the changing gender roles experienced by Andean women and the way they pushed back against those changes reflected an acknowledgement by both Inca and Spanish imperial powers that gender was extremely relevant in coding a social hierarchy. *Moon, Sun, and Witches* thus

¹⁰ María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 8-9.

¹¹ Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), xix.

makes an important contribution to contemporary understandings of indigenous culture and the nature of conquest for indigenous women, although it does not fully consider the long-term effects that the Spanish conquest of the Americas had on women in the context of race-making. This would change, however, in 1995, when Elizabeth Kuznesof opened the door to ask how both biological and cultural reproduction would affect all women in the New World as colonizers grappled with categorizing an increasingly diverse society.

Kuznesof's article, "Ethnic and Gender Influences on "Spanish" Creole Society in Colonial Spanish America," remains foundational to historians interested in studying the many categories that came together to be known as "race" in the early colonial world. For Kuznesof, the greatest evidence of "race" as a fluid identifier is found in creole marriage records. "Creole" is to be understood, in this context, as referring to people of Spanish descent born in the Americas. Kuznesof maintains that marriages represent a level of cultural hybridization that does not come through in a study of temporary or illegitimate unions.¹² Through her examination and reconstruction of these records, Kuznesof first notes that due to a simple lack of Spanish women in the colonies, Spanish men who elected to marry often chose indigenous women or *mestiza* daughters of other conquistadors in significant proportions. Kuznesof thus asks why historians before her seemed to argue for a biological impossibility of a population classified as "Spanish" beyond demographic realities.¹³ To begin to address this issue, Kuznesof presents gender as a determining factor in creating a "Spanish" population despite demographic impossibilities, arguing that gender had not yet been considered adequately on its own terms as a factor that contributed to the creation of race in the early colonial period.

¹² Elizabeth Anne Kuznesof, "More Conversation on Race, Class and Gender," *Colonial Latin American Review* 5, no. 1 (1996): 129-133.

¹³ Elizabeth Anne Kuznesof, "Ethnic and Gender Influences on "Spanish" Creole Society in Colonial Spanish America," *Colonial Latin American Review* 4, no. 1 (1995): 159.

By drawing on connections to *limpieza de sangre* prevalent in Iberia at the same time, Kuznesof argues that control over women's bodies as the vehicles for biological and cultural reproduction of religious purity and Spanish ideals made gender the most important contributing factor to racial categorization. Racial "drift," or legal records indicating a change in racial classification between baptism and marriage, was much more common for women in the early colonial world because they were seldom included in legal documents without some attachment to a man in their life. Whether that be a father or a husband, women in the legal documentation often "absorbed" the race of the men to whom they were connected. To Kuznesof, this absorption proves a willingness from Spanish society to ignore *mestizas'* indigenous heritage in order to preserve and reproduce "Spanishness" in the New World, meaning that *mestizas'* gender and ability to reproduce, if happening in a "proper" Spanish setting, was more important than their "race."¹⁴ *Mestiza* nuns who remained in convents, though they would not take part in the biological reproduction of Spanish people in the Americas, became tools for continuing this process of erasing "race" from *mestiza* women in future generations through the same means as they were. In such fashion, *mestiza* nuns who remained in the convent were implements in the process of continued cultural reproduction for the growing Spanish empire.

In a response to Kuznesof's injection of gender into the conversation of race-making in the sixteenth century, Stuart Schwartz defends the idea that class was the most impactful consideration influencing racial categorization, not gender.¹⁵ While he concedes that gender should be considered in the conversation, he still argues that Kuznesof's analysis places too much emphasis on marriages and too little influence on self-identifications based on economic

¹⁴ Kuznesof, "Ethnic and Gender Influences on "Spanish" Creole Society," 155-156.

¹⁵ Stuart B. Schwartz, "Colonial Identities and the Sociedad De Castas," *Colonial Latin American Review* 4, no. 1 (1995): 194-195.

advantages or convenience.¹⁶ Although he recognizes Kuznesof's argument that gender was a factor, Schwartz still sees class and its surrogates (which he argues is the case for nobility or lineage) as the most important factor for racial determinations. While on the surface these two seem completely at odds, in reality the major difference between Kuznesof and Schwartz is a difference in opinion on how to classify lineage. To Kuznesof, lineage stems directly from reproduction, making it a product of gender, but to Schwartz lineage acts as a signifier for nobility, making it a product of class. Therefore, this exchange between Kuznesof and Schwartz opened the door to a larger conversation on how both class and gender interact to create the complex, fluid identifier that came to be known as "race" based on lineage. Though Kuznesof and Schwartz each set out to determine whether class or gender was important, historians since then have recognized the complexity of race-making and have carried aspects of both their arguments into the 21st century.

In the decade following Kuznesof and Schwartz's exchange, historians dove further into the topic of constructing race with the objective of determining how much it was affected by outside factors, including gender and class. By 2005, enough had been written that Karen Powers could compile the field's general trends into the almost textbook-style work *Women in the Crucible of Conquest*. Powers' book is the culmination of a decade of work that expanded the lens through which historians understood early modern and colonial racial thinking, with special attention to the position of women in the construction of a racialized social hierarchy. Powers synthesizes the findings that had been made up to that point regarding the changing gender roles experienced by indigenous women, concerns over cultural reproduction, and women's agency in

¹⁶ Schwartz, "Colonial Identities and the Sociedad de Castas," 186.

manipulating the systems placed upon them.¹⁷ *Women in the Crucible of Conquest* is thus directly drawing from the historians of the 1990s. In addition to those who have already been mentioned, Powers' concern with women's agency synthesizes and elaborates on the work done by Verena Stolcke in a 1994 chapter titled "Invaded Women: Gender, Race, and Class in the Formation of Colonial Society." Stolcke was interested in the specific role that women played in the formation and stabilization of Spanish colonial society due to their reproductive capabilities and status as objects of family honor.¹⁸ She argues that women were perceived as exemplars of how honorable a family was based on their virtue before marriage, and as such became signifiers for the gendered nature of social stratification based on nobility and honor.¹⁹ Where Stolcke emphasized the ways that women in the Americas and in Iberia were affected by the establishment of the colonial social structure, Powers seeks to add to her findings by considering women's own manipulations of the emerging systems. Stolcke notes that women had a profound impact on the way that the colonial social structure would form, but Powers is more interested in the examples of how women worked in and around that growing structure.

While Powers was synthesizing the "gendered genesis of Spanish American society," her contemporaries began to look more closely at the Iberian origins of colonial racial thought.²⁰ Though Iberian precedents had been on historians' minds since at least the 1940s, historians of the 21st century began changing the way they viewed the transfer of Iberian ideas into the colonial sphere. The mid to late 2000s produced a surge in literature that directly compared the racialization of converted "New Christians" in Spain to the racialization of indigenous people

¹⁷ Karen Vieira Powers, *Women in the Crucible of Conquest: The Gendered Genesis of Spanish American Society, 1500-1600* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 8-9.

¹⁸ Verena Stolcke, "Invaded Women: Gender, Race, and Class in the Formation of Colonial Society," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Margo Hendricks and Patricia A. Parker, (London: Routledge, 1994), 272-286.

¹⁹ Stolcke, "Invaded Women," 282-286.

²⁰ Powers, *Women in the Crucible of Conquest*, 1-14.

and their descendants in the New World. Andrew Fisher and Matthew O'Hara's edited volume *Imperial Subjects* is another work that grapples with the creation of race in Spanish America, arguing that identity was a social construct which did not neatly fit into concrete definitions of race and ethnicity.²¹ Writing in 2009, Fisher and O'Hara's work compiled the work of like-minded historians looking to address the disparities between modern notions of race and early modern definitions. *Imperial Subjects* contributes to the conversations surrounding race and gender by allowing the authors within to connect the two as socially constructed categories that intersected with other methods of categorization or stratification, moving away from preconceived notions that either could fit a concrete definition throughout history.

In the first decade of the 21st century, historians found that part of reconstructing the racial hierarchy that emerged in Spanish America is recognizing that race did not exist in a vacuum and neither did its creators. European conquerors and settlers carried the ideologies that were unfolding in Iberia to the New World, where they took root and spread as Spanish holdings grew there.²² David Nirenberg has argued that during the *Reconquista*, so-called "Old Christians," Jews, and Muslims in Iberia developed a language of "race" in conversation with one another based on lineage and purity.²³ Thus, Iberian racial language was formulated between groups, not as a top-down directive from "Old Christians" onto others. This definition can thus be extended to the Americas as the conversation expanded across the Atlantic. Tamar Herzog argues that the role of local power added questions of community belonging (*vecindad*) to deliberations on purity and lineage, meaning that "race" could also be representative of an

²¹ Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara, ed., *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 1-24.

²² James Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Jan 1997): 143-166.

²³ David Nirenberg, "Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain," *Past and Present*, no. 174 (Feb 2002): 3-41.

individual's place of origin.²⁴ Herzog found examples of belonging or outsider status in both Iberia and the Americas. Historians thus began to excavate the transformations of "race" as Old Christians gradually moved from a language of religious lineage to something – a sort of immutable "essence" – that went beyond conversion just as they physically moved from the Old World to the New. The 2000s marked a move towards tracing the social construction of race across time and space as it traveled to the Americas from Iberia, therefore expanding the historical lens to a more global scope.

Historian Kathryn Burns has urged her peers to "unfix" race when writing about the colonial past and to opt instead for the fluid definitions made in conversation between Iberia and the Americas.²⁵ This fluidity is reflected in the evolution of *mestizo* as a term, as it would come to represent the "stain" of illegitimacy as much as it represented an ethnic "mixture." Since the mid-2010s, the focus has shifted in the study of race in colonial Spanish America to one of self-identification and the fluidity of race in this period, largely leaving behind the question of gender in the creation of race. Both Adrian Masters and Felipe Ruan have paid special attention to the creation of *mestizo* as a term through the petition-and-response system employed by the Spanish crown, showing how race continued to evolve in conversation among groups.²⁶ This is reflective of David Nirenberg's findings within Iberia, namely, that "race" did not emerge as a top-down directive. Connecting the pieces Ruan and Masters have written to the Iberian processes

²⁴ Tamar Herzog, "Beyond Race: Exclusion in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America," in *Race and Blood in the Iberian World*, eds. Max S. Hering Torres, Maria Elena Martinez, and David Nirenberg, (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012), 151-167.

²⁵ Kathryn Burns, "Unfixing Race: Exclusion in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America," in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, eds. Margaret Greer, Walter Mignolo and Maureen Quilligan, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 188-202.

²⁶ Adrian Masters, "A Thousand Invisible Architects: Vassals, the Petition and Response System, and the Creation of Spanish Imperial Caste Legislation," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 98, no. 3 (Feb 2018): 377-406; Felipe Ruan, "The Probanza and Shaping a Contesting *Mestizo* Record in Early Colonial Peru," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, (2017): 1-27.

elaborated on by Nirenberg and Herzog shows the transition from Iberian precedents to colonial realities experienced by *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women in sixteenth-century Spanish America.

Masters and Ruan each have provided excellent studies in the nature of self-identification, but both leave out the variable of gender. This may be largely due to the fact that women's voices were not directly recorded in those petitions sent to the Crown, but still leaves a gap in recent historiography.²⁷ Other historians have also recognized this gap in literature, as Max Deardorff is preparing to publish *A Tale of Two Granadas: Custom, Community, and Citizenship in the Spanish Empire, 1568-1668*, which addresses *mestizos* seeking positions in New Granada as they debated with exclusionary thinkers about what should be the means of deciding merit for a position. Deardorff finds that it evolved into a debate on whether *limpieza de sangre* or Christian citizenship was more important to determining merit for access to equal positions.²⁸ Unfortunately, a more in-depth analysis of *A Tale of Two Granadas* cannot be provided since this book is not yet out, though I look forward to Deardorff's contributions. This thesis also seeks to fill that gap through a comparative analysis of the language of exclusion in the Church regarding *mestizos* and *mestizas*, with special attention to gender as a variable. Drawing attention to both masculinity and femininity provides a means to illuminate race-making in the early Spanish colonies at large.

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To begin, I will move into analysis of the arguments written in favor *mestizo* and *mestiza* participation in the Church in the Americas. These documents can be placed within two

²⁷ Felipe Ruan, "Andean Activism and the Reformulation of *Mestizo* Agency in Early Colonial Peru," *Colonial Latin American Review* 21, no. 2, (2012): 209-237. This earlier article by Ruan details the content of the dossier compiled by Pedro Rengifo on behalf of *mestizos* seeking access to inheritance, weapons-holding, and priesthood in colonial Peru. Though women were not barred from inheritance in Spanish law, the specific arguments for priesthood meant that the documents compiled here did not include petitions from *mestiza* women themselves.

²⁸ Max Deardorff, *A Tale of Two Granadas: Custom, Community, and Citizenship in the Spanish Empire, 1568-1668*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2023). At the time of writing, this source is not yet published.

categories: those written in favor of *mestizo* participation within the Church and those written against. Throughout both of these, the language of competition and/or acculturation is present. This thesis argues that it was this issue of competition, especially for *mestizo* men, that contributed to the differences in treatment of men and women of mixed descent in Spanish America. Those who took the time to write about *mestizo* participation, not just in the Church but in other sectors as well, often focused on their ability to perform their jobs better than their Spanish counterparts. This added a layer of competition to the debate that simply was not present for *mestiza* women seeking similar roles.

In addition to competition for religious honors and offices or secular positions of local authority, Spanish and *mestizo* children also were placed in competition with one another for inheritances of *encomiendas* from their Spanish fathers. The question of inheritance made it even more important for *mestizos* to assert their legitimacy while it encouraged Spaniards to stress *mestizos*' illegitimacy. As such, Spanish inheritance laws placed *mestizos* and Spaniards in direct competition with one another for access to economic gain as well. As a result, throughout the sixteenth century many *mestizos* were left disaffected and dissatisfied when their half-brothers' claims to inheritance were upheld over their own. Their dissatisfaction with the state of legitimacy and neglect would result in collective uprisings in the early sixteenth century known as the *mestizo* rebellions.

Though *mestizo* rebellions were largely unsuccessful in achieving their goals of amending their disaffection, rebellious activity would continue to stain the "*mestizo* image" for years to come and impact the legislation against *mestizos*. This image of rebellion affected advocates, who had to make sure to emphasize loyalty in their arguments in favor of *mestizos*, as well as detractors, who would cite violence and untrustworthiness in their statements against

mestizos. To take it one step further, when referencing competition *mestizos* and their advocates had to be very careful to continue to cite their loyalty to the Catholic faith and the Spanish crown as they argued for *mestizos*' superior capabilities in missionizing the indigenous population. On the other hand, detractors could urge wariness when discussing *mestizos*' perceived illegitimacy and reference violent action on the part of the first generation of *mestizos* that had risen in response to their discrimination.

Where *mestizo* men emphasized their capability to compete with Spaniards seeking the same roles as them, *mestiza* advocates emphasized women's ability to drift into Spanishness over anything else. So, as competition became construed with *mestizo* men, willing acculturation became construed with *mestiza* women. This disparity allowed *mestiza* women to experience less severe discrimination in religious houses and marriage opportunities than their *mestizo* brothers. The issue of competition versus acculturation also shows that gender was an important factor for men as well as women. Though historians of the past have argued that *mestizas*' femininity impacted their experience, I argue that *mestizos*' displays of masculinity through competition also impacted their experience.

While some may argue that the disparity between the treatment of *mestizos* and *mestizas* was rooted in the differences in the power held by priests versus the power held by nuns, this is too simple of an analysis. To start, though their power came from different avenues, both nuns and priests occupied an extremely valuable role in colonial society. Both priests and nuns were important spiritual authorities for maintaining the religious integrity of the community in addition to acting as financial authorities that could lend money without the sin of usury attached.²⁹ Therefore, it is evident that the disparity between the exclusion of *mestizos* and

²⁹ Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 2-4.

mestizas within the church was not so much the result of only a power imbalance but of larger forces – including gender expectations – operating from without.

To complicate matters, the racialization of *mestizos* and *mestizas* was born out of a long history of racialization and othering that relied on religious purity, lineage, nobility, and culture. All these categories interacted differently for men and women. This project will consider how Church leaders used both *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women as tools of expansion, because despite their differing roles within and outside of the Church both *mestizas* and *mestizos* were extraordinarily valuable to religious officials for their knowledge of both Spanish and indigenous languages that allowed a more rapid spread of Catholicism. Studies into men or women's roles in the church have been done, but the historiography is somewhat lacking in a comparative analysis of the gendered nature of exclusive socio-racial categories that considers masculinity in addition to femininity. Though this thesis cannot claim to be comprehensive, I am seeking to provide an exploratory look at the nature of gender performance from sixteenth-century *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women seeking roles within the Peruvian Church.

2. ADVOCACY BY AND FOR *MESTIZOS*

Despite being associated with indigenous-Spanish ancestry, the terms *mestizo* or *mestiza* did not fit a concrete or “fixed” definition overnight, if at all. *Mestizos* and *mestizas* were born to parents of both Spanish and indigenous-American backgrounds, which would make them culturally or ethnically “mixed,” but that is too simple of a definition for the complex process of making *mestizos*. *Mestizos* were made in the petition and response system, in the debates of the Third Lima Council on *mestizo* priesthood, in the decision to establish a convent in Cuzco for *mestiza* daughters in the earliest years of conquest, and in individual fathers’ decisions to legitimize the children that had resulted from unions with indigenous women and, in some cases, raise them in Spanish households. To put it simply, making *mestizos* was a dialogical process.

I will continue to elaborate on how gender impacted early modern race-making but must begin with an attempt to define gender as a category. Gender is a multifaceted and complex category to begin to define. Since Joan Scott’s contributions to gender history in the 1980s, historians have argued that gender functions on a spectrum, often separate from biological sex, that is more of a performance than a fundamental “fixed” trait.³⁰ When defined this way, gender increasingly mirrors our understanding of early modern definitions of “race” as it was evolving and becoming an increasingly performed trait. Scott’s arguments about the “unfixed” nature of gender in fact lay the foundation for other social categories, like race, to be understood along similar lines.³¹ That being said, for the purpose of this project it is necessary to at least “fix” some of the characteristics of these somewhat indefinable categories. The introduction to this project has already defined how race functioned in the context of sixteenth-century Spanish

³⁰ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (Dec 1986): 1053-1075.

³¹ Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 1059.

America - therefore outlining its functions for the purpose of this thesis - but I have not yet defined how I am identifying gender within my source material. It is necessary to outline the ways that *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women performed their gender in addition to their assigned “race.”

Whenever a *mestizo* writer argues that they are better suited for a role than their Spanish peers, they are exhibiting a performance of masculinity recognizable to contemporary readers based on competition. The disparity between the application of racial exclusion to *mestizas* and *mestizos*, respectively, leaves a space in the dialogue surrounding “race” in the New World for this project to provide a comparative analysis of the language of exclusion for men and women of mixed heritage. Competition can be construed with masculinity because it is not present in the arguments for *mestiza* inclusion. If anything, the opposite is true for arguments in favor of *mestizas* joining the Church. When a *mestiza* woman was admitted into a convent it was most often on the premise of her potential Spanishness, rather than her connection to indigenous culture or knowledge. *Mestiza* advocates did not argue that they would or could compete with their Spanish peers, instead they argued that they could become culturally Spanish if raised in the “proper” setting to “absolve” them of their indigenous blood.³² So, when competition acts as an index for masculinity, acculturation can act as an index for femininity as it was understood to interact with racialization in the early modern period.

It is therefore the goal of this project to assess the role that gender played in forming the long-lasting, complex, socio-racial hierarchy that considered both masculinity and femininity in its formation. In this chapter, I am interested in exploring how *mestizos*, *mestizas*, and their advocates wrote about themselves and the ways that gender impacted their understanding of

³² Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 17-18.

what it meant to be part of these imagined communities. In doing so, I will in turn highlight the religious, genealogical, and class distinctions that play out in diverse ways for men and women within the church and outside of it.

2.1 The Santa Clara Convent

One of the first institutions founded in Cuzco following Spanish conquest was the Santa Clara convent for women. Santa Clara was founded through funds donated by Diego Maldonado “El Rico” as one of the very first acts of the newly reigning conquistadors in Cuzco. As Kathryn Burns has noted in the book *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cuzco, Peru*, the process of establishing the convent began in the 1550s. This simple fact that a convent was more, or as, important to the city’s new leaders than other city infrastructure shows how Spanish fathers viewed their *mestiza* daughters as a tool for consolidating their authority in Peru. Juan Polo de Ondegardo, the mayor of Cuzco in the 1550s, elaborated that “although it appears that the same should be done for the orphan boys, they run less risk than the girls, and...it is fitting to provide for the greater need,” showing that the protection of *mestiza* daughters’ virginity within the Santa Clara convent to ensure legitimate Spanish cultural reproduction was a more useful tool to the *cabildo* than cloistering *mestizo* sons.³³ Their concern with establishing a foundation for religious purity in the New World is reflective of the general fears of religious difference that had arisen back home in Iberia, and they wanted to alleviate those fears by protecting the means for reproducing religious purity. Santa Clara’s founders’ concerns with

³³ “Libro original que contiene la fundación del monasterio de monxas de señora Sta. Clara desta cibdad del Cuzco; por el qual consta ser su patrono el insigne Cabildo, Justicia y Reximiento desta dicha cibdad: Año de 1560,.” ed. Domingo Angula, *Revista del Archivo Nacional del Perú II* (1939) as cited in Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 15-16.

consolidating power and protecting religious purity were both important as the convent's leaders worked to determine who its first members would be.

Most people of mixed descent seeking entrance into a religious house such as Santa Clara were already connected in some way to the rising upper class composed of conquerors, landowners, and intellectuals and therefore had a connection to an outside Spaniard when they were not "fully Spanish" themselves. Burns has illustrated the ways that *mestiza* women found themselves in the Santa Clara convent in Cuzco, Peru, which was sometimes in connection to their fathers' wishes, though often they were brought in by merchants or priests who had passed through their home villages and deemed them worthy of sponsorship within the convent due to their partial Spanish ancestry.³⁴ Therefore, most *mestizas* entering Santa Clara and other early colonial convents had some connection to Spanishness even before entering the convent.

As their lives continued in the convent (and in some cases moved out of the convent if they chose not to profess), *mestizas* experienced racial drift, moving them towards Spanishness and away from their indigenous heritage. As a result, many would cease to be recorded as *mestizas*, however for simplicity's sake I will continue to refer to them as such. It is difficult to know how they identified themselves publicly or in their own minds, but *mestiza* functions as a shorthand for the thesis to identify this group.

The language used in the founding of the Santa Clara convent in Cuzco and the records of admittance of women into the convent show how the convent's leaders determined how to address purity and power in each individual admitted to the institution. These documents are reflective of the language of race used in Iberian *limpieza de sangre* statutes and *probanzas* because "race" continued to be seen as an extra "stain" rather than a fixed characteristic. An

³⁴ Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 24-27.

example is Juana, who had been taken from an Indian village in the Andes and was “to be catechized and remedied for the love of God,” showing how the Spaniards who brought these women into the convent saw an opportunity to “correct” them of their “race” and create “Spanish” women.³⁵ Santa Clara’s records of its early entrants also illuminate how each woman came to be in the convent and who they were connected to outside of it. It was important to Santa Clara’s record keepers to take note of whether a new member was illegitimate, in the case of unknown parents, connected to important members of Spanish or Inca society, as in the case of women like Doña Maria de Betanzos, whose parents held an *encomienda*, or Dona Beatriz Clara Coya, the only Inca child admitted to the convent, or had joined the convent at the behest of a father or another sponsor.³⁶ All of these come together to inform Santa Clara’s leaders about how to maintain these women within the convent as well as how to make suitable Spanish matches when the time came which considered class in addition to completing the “remedying” process.

The original *cabildo*, or city council, in Cuzco worked toward establishing the convent with the distinct goal of “remedying” their *mestiza* daughters of the “stain” of Inca heritage, as recorded by Maldonado in the minutes of the *cabildo*’s meeting on April 30, 1551.³⁷ Spanish fathers sought to establish the convent as a tool to create culturally Spanish daughters by separating them from their indigenous mothers. Historian Jane Mangan has illustrated how moving *mestizo* children into a Spanish context was used as a tool of acculturation on Spanish

³⁵ “Libro original que contiene la fundación del monasterio de monjas de señora Sta. Clara desta cibdad del Cuzco; por el qual consta ser su patrono el insigne Cabildo, Justicia y Reximiento desta dicha cibdad: Año de 1560,” ed. Domingo Angula, *Revista del Archivo Nacional del Perú II* (1939) as cited in Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 26.

³⁶ “Libro original que contiene la fundación del monasterio de monjas de señora Sta. Clara desta cibdad del Cuzco; por el qual consta ser su patrono el insigne Cabildo, Justicia y Reximiento desta dicha cibdad: Año de 1560,” ed. Domingo Angula, *Revista del Archivo Nacional del Perú II* (1939) as cited in Burns, “Appendix 1: Santa Clara’s First Entrants,” in *Colonial Habits*, 217-224.

³⁷ Archivo Departamental del Cuzco, *Libro de Actas del Cabildo I (1545-52)*, fol. 153 as cited in Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 27.

terms that attempted to eliminate the influence of indigenous culture.³⁸ Mangan argues that this was a practice used by Spanish fathers resulting from their paternal responsibility to their illegitimate children. She writes that in claiming those children they were simultaneously reinforcing the legal precedence of paternal rights over maternal rights as they reinforced Spanish tradition in place of indigenous tradition.³⁹ This can be applied to *mestizas*' placements within convents as well, as Mangan makes the case that this was one of the typical ways for a Spanish father to distance a daughter from her indigenous mother. When those women came of marriageable age, up and coming *encomenderos* sought partnerships that connected them to the remaining Inca nobility but remained culturally Spanish and reinforced the cultural hegemony the early conquistadors had established. By claiming illegitimate daughters and placing them in convents and/or providing suitable marriage alliances, Spanish fathers thus connected themselves to the royal Inca lineages of the indigenous mothers without perpetuating the "stain" of indigenous heritage perceived to be inherent in their illegitimate children. This was the early formation of acculturation being construed with *mestiza* and indigenous femininity in conquest-era Peru.

The case of Doña Maria de Betanzos, as outlined by historian Kathryn Burns, shows how important the marriage of *mestiza* women to the right Spanish match became in the sixteenth century. Betanzos, the daughter of a Spanish *encomendero* and his indigenous wife, was abducted from the Santa Clara convent and wed to her captor.⁴⁰ The circumstances of Betanzos' marriage illustrate that despite the power her parents held and the supposed protection from harm she should have found within the convent, her marriage to a captor was still legitimized because

³⁸ Mangan, "Moving Mestizos," 275.

³⁹ Mangan, "Moving Mestizos," 276.

⁴⁰ Burns, *Colonial Habits*, 27-30.

he was Spanish and their union ultimately fulfilled the goals of the convent as an institution for solidifying Spanish culture and power in Cuzco at the expense of indigenous culture. Betanzos' circumstances present a dramatic version of a harsh reality. Though certainly the kidnapping of a potential wife was not commonplace, their marriage still followed the template of acculturation outlined for *mestiza* women by the founders of the convent and other advocates seeking their acceptance in religious roles. In other words, despite its questionable start, their marriage followed the guidelines of acculturation set before *mestiza* women who entered the Santa Clara convent.

2.2 Padre Blas Valera

The Jesuit priest and *mestizo* historian Padre Blas Valera argued for continued *mestizo* participation within the Society of Jesus based on his knowledge of indigenous language and culture. Valera, born in Chachapoyas around 1544 and raised by his Spanish father and Inca mother, believed that the Inca religion could act as a parallel for Christianity. Valera's life gives some insight into the process of seeking priesthood for a *mestizo* man, and especially to the ways that individual *mestizos* relied on their knowledge of indigenous languages to advance their careers. Valera, like many of his peers, was connected to the Spanish upper classes through his *encomendero* father, who took measures to legitimize both his sons despite the circumstances of their birth outside of wedlock. This connection and their legitimate status allowed both the Valera sons access into the church (Blas Valera's brother also became a priest, though he was Franciscan rather than a Jesuit).⁴¹ Blas Valera would go on to join the Society of Jesus despite the heavily gendered arguments against the inclusion of *mestizo* men in the church as well as

⁴¹ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 18-26.

write historical works on the Inca including *Las costumbres antiguas del Peru* and *Relación de las costumbres antiguas* in the 1590s which were included in Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales*. Most of Valera's written works are now lost or incomplete, but his beliefs have been reconstructed by his biographer, historian Sabine Hyland, through her readings of short treatises Valera wrote, letters, and references to Valera in other works.

In the earliest years of the colonial project, Spanish conquerors recognized the need to, both literally and metaphorically, reproduce Spanish culture and replace indigenous culture to the best of their ability to secure their place in the Americas. Conquerors also recognized that men and women occupied very different roles in that reproduction. Where elite Spaniards saw *mestiza* women as a means to expand the Spanish marriage market - given that they had been “remedied” of their indigenous “race” - they came to perceive *mestizo* men as a threat to the Spanish foothold in the Americas, especially in light of the first generations' rebellious actions against discrimination from the Spanish. Valera contested this characterization by arguing that the roots for what was perceived as “good Christian behavior” at the time could be found in indigenous culture as well, making *mestizo* men perfectly apt to maintain their roles within the Church.

Blas Valera was known to hold classes for his peers on the language of the Incas and was vocal in his opinion that Quechua was an effective missionary language. At the time that he was serving on the translation committee for the Third Lima Council's new catechism, he argued that the Inca word for *god* translated to the Christian God at the same time that his contemporaries, like his coreligionist José de Acosta, argued “*no tuviesen vocablo propio para nombrar a Dios*

(they have no word of their own with which to name God).”⁴² Instead, Valera believed that their main god was actually an appearance of Christ in the Americas, so the Inca word for their god could also apply to the Christian God.⁴³ Specifically, Valera wrote that “*Illa tecca* signified the ‘Light Eternal,’ or God... that *huamincas* signified angels; that *tito* signified chastity; and that *huancaquilli* denoted the hermit.”⁴⁴ Rather than allowing his peers to paint indigenous people and their children as completely ignorant of the Catholic religion, Valera is instead replacing that image with one of people willing and able to accept true conversion in their hearts because they could grasp it in familiar terms. Valera is thus painting a picture that brings indigenous people closer to the Spanish notion of “Old Christian” purity and distancing indigenous people from the *conversos* familiar to Iberian minds because he sees indigenous people as prone to truer conversion based on prior familiarity with religious terminology. To take it one step further, Valera even compared the Incas to the native people of Mexico, calling the Mexicans a “race of terrible and cruel men,” accusing them of cannibalism and human sacrifice to act as a foil to the “Incas’ own moral virtue and holiness.”⁴⁵

By arguing for the usefulness of Quechua as a missionary language acceptable for the conversion of the indigenous population, Valera is placing *mestizo* knowledge on par with or even exceeding Spanish knowledge. A *mestizo* himself, Valera recognized the power that he and his peers held in the project of colonization; he saw the knowledge of Quechua as a positive attribute that made someone more prone to true conversion, because he thought that Quechua

⁴² Josef de Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, Edición crítica de Fermín del Pino-Díaz, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008), 214.; Jose de Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, edited by Jane E. Mangan with an Introduction and Commentary by Walter D. Mignolo, Translated by Frances Lopez-Morillas, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 257.

⁴³ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 171.

⁴⁴ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 64-65. In this section, Hyland is paraphrasing Valera’s *Relacion de las costumbres antiguas*, originally written in 1594 and edited by Francisco Esteve Barba in 1968.

⁴⁵ Garcilaso de la Vega, “...la gran Florida,” in *Comentarios reales de los Incas*, vol. 1, ed. Angel Rosenblatt, (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1944) as cited in Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 96-97.

makes its learners “keener in their understanding and more tractable and ingenious in what they learn,” and that the language was essential to a successful missionary project.⁴⁶ Placing *mestizo* knowledge as equal or even superior to Spanish knowledge is a distinctly masculine way to present his argument for *mestizo* inclusion in the Church and within the society of Jesus.

Since the comparison of *mestizo* knowledge to Spanish knowledge here can be seen in the light of competition as an argument for their value to the goals of the Church, Valera is relying on the masculine trait of competition here to promote his own role in the Church rather than relying solely on his connection to Spanishness as would have been done by advocates for *mestiza* women. Valera is thus using *mestizo* masculinity as a reason for their inclusion in the ongoing evangelization project in the New World because their knowledge of indigenous languages is, in Valera’s eyes, equal to the usefulness of knowing Latin in the scholarship of holy texts.

2.3 Non-Mestizo Religious Advocates

The crucial point for the inclusion of *mestizos* within religious orders was their understanding of Spanish and Andean languages as a tool of evangelization, and so it also acted as the center point to the many testimonies for *mestizo* participation by non-*mestizo* advocates within the Church. Though most would not agree with Blas Valera on the value of Quechua as being equal to Latin, anyone arguing in favor of *mestizo* participation within the Church as priests relied on the usefulness of the indigenous languages for the evangelization of the Americas in their arguments. Indeed, even the pope recognized the need for adept translators to

⁴⁶ As quoted in De la Vega, *Comentarios Reales*, 409-410.

accomplish the Church's and the Spanish crown's goals to evangelize the American indigenous population. Pope Gregory XIII writes:

“[E]xiste una penuria muy grande de sacerdotes que conozcan la lengua de los indios...la palabra de Dios debe ser anunciada por medio de intérpretes esos indios, sufriendo con eso la palabra...Con respecto a esos hechos, los hijos de los españoles y de los indios y solamente los habitantes de esas tierras, una vez dispensados por autoridad apostólica de los impedimentos resultantes de ser ilegítimos...y teniendo en cuenta las circunstancias y pudiendo ser promovidas a todas las órdenes sacras.”

“There is a great scarcity of priests [in the New World] that know the language of the Indians...The word of God suffers through the use of translators...In light of this, the children of Spaniards and Indians, and only in those lands, we, with apostolic authority one time dispense with the impediments that result from their illegitimate birth...Taking into account these circumstances, they may rise to all sacred orders.”

– Pope Gregory XIII, *Nuper ad Nos* (1576)⁴⁷

In this dispensation for *mestizo* priests seeking roles within the Church despite the potentially illegitimate circumstances of their births, Gregory XIII directly references the usefulness they pose to the evangelization project the Spanish are undertaking here. This indicates a stated preference for fluent, ordained priests to spread the Church's message in the Americas rather than Spanish priests paired with translators. Gregory XIII's concern for true conversion of the indigenous people through the most accurate language possible outweighed any doubts he may have held regarding the “stain” of their heritage, which was connected to illegitimacy. However, without the implied illegitimacy they inherited at birth, those priests could not have inherited their ability to perform that role based on the language they inherited through their mothers. Gregory XIII is therefore also relying on the idea of competition to support his arguments for the inclusion of *mestizo* priests in the New World. So, though he was

⁴⁷ Pope Gregory XIII, “La bula Nuper ad nos de Gregorio XIII (1572-1585), permite a los Obispos dispensar candidatos indígenas, españoles o mestizos al sacerdocio del impedimento de ilegitimidad siempre y cuando hablen una lengua indigena,” in *La conquista espiritual de la América española. 200 documentos - Siglos XVI*, ed. Paulo Suess (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2002), 141. *My translation.*

not a *mestizo* himself, Pope Gregory XIII called only for *mestizo* men to remain close to the indigenous side of their heritage and made no such calls for *mestiza* nuns. Though *Nuper ad nos* does not apply to women at all because women cannot be ordained as priests, it can give insight into the perception of *mestizo* men and especially to *mestizo* masculinity. Gregory XIII is relying on their distinctly masculine connection to their indigenous heritage and the language they inherited through that connection, which was, ironically, passed down maternally. He recognizes the value of *mestizo* priests' ability to perform equal or better to their Spanish peers and relies on that level of competition to support his call for more "*sacerdotes que conozcan la lengua de los indios* (priests that know the language of the Indians)."⁴⁸ In recognizing their value to the evangelization project in the Americas, Gregory XIII is also implicitly validating *mestizo* skills more broadly.

Advocates for *mestizo* ordination working in the field in the Americas were even more vocal on *mestizos*' superior abilities to operate as priests in rural missions. Sebastián de Lartaún, the Bishop of Cuzco between 1570 and 1583, was fully in favor of *mestizo* ordination because he saw the value they carried in communicating with indigenous groups. Despite being told directly from Philip II to halt his progress in ordaining *mestizos* as priests, Lartaún wrote that *mestizos* "*son los mejores clérigos que tengo en mi obispado* (are the best priests in my bishopric)" due to their keen ability to connect with indigenous people based on a shared history with the land.⁴⁹ Lartaún did not doubt the sincerity of their methods because he had confidence in their connection to the Catholic faith through their Spanish heritage. Lartaún's assuredness in the

⁴⁸ Gregory XIII, "La bula Nuper ad nos," 141.

⁴⁹ Emilio Lisson Chavez, ed., *La iglesia de España en el Perú: Colección de documentos para la historia de la iglesia en el Perú que se encuentran en varios archivos, Sección Primera: Archivo general de Indias, Sevilla, siglo XVI, 5 vols.* (Sevilla: Editorial Católica Española, 1944), 824 as cited in Felipe Ruan, "Language, Genealogy, and Archive: Fashioning the Indigenous Mother in the Comentarios Reales and in Sixteenth-Century Mestizo Petitions," *Revista Candiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 41, no. 1, (2012): 42.

mestizo priests he worked with exemplifies an emerging definition for *mestizaje* rooted in a combination of both Spanish and indigenous traits important to their perceived value as missionaries. In doing so, Lartaún is also reliant on the masculine trait of competition attributed to *mestizo* men. When assuring others of their capability in the field, he is noting that *mestizos* are the *best* in his bishopric, not just equal to their Spanish counterparts, and therefore better for the role than a Spanish priest may potentially be. When the goal is to create true converts to Catholicism, it was important to the Church to have the best possible missionaries out in the field because they wanted to ensure the purity of the newly converted population.

Though Gregory XIII and Bishop Lartaún were strongly in favor of *mestizo* participation within the Church, others were still somewhat distrustful. Some non-*mestizo* “advocates” would write in favor of *mestizo* participation but not full access to equal positions, like the attendees of the Third Lima Council, calling for access to *mestizos*’ linguistic knowledge and *mestizas*’ culturally reproductive roles without acknowledgement for their efforts. Calling for a diminishment of *mestizo* efforts makes for poor advocacy, however. It was these types of arguments that prompted *mestizos* to speak out for their positions and argue in favor of full, equal positions to their Spanish peers. The gendered language of competition is present in their reasonings, as all advocates for *mestizo* participation in the Church relied on arguments of *superior* capabilities among *mestizos* to Christianize the indigenous population of South America based on inherited languages, whether that participation was fully recognized or not.

2.4 Mestizo Petitioners

In response to growing discrimination against *mestizos* in the mid-sixteenth century, Pedro Rengifo, a *mestizo* himself, began compiling a dossier of *mestizo* petitions appealing to retain their places within the Church, as well as appeal the ban on weapons-holding (which was a direct result of the *mestizo* rebellions of the early sixteenth century) and advocate for their *mestiza* sisters on their behalf. This compilation was presented at both the Council of the Indies and the Third Lima Council in the 1580s. Rengifo relied on the writings of his peers across the viceroyalty (totaling 140 representatives from 5 cities) to argue in favor of their skills and trustworthiness in front of Spanish decision makers.⁵⁰

Within these petitions, *mestizos* sought to highlight their skills and the importance of their roles. They did so by placing themselves in competition with their Spanish counterparts, arguing that their closeness to the indigenous people in the Americas predisposed *mestizos* to produce more authentic converts and more effectively deliver their missions. The *mestizo* petitioners were able to argue their superior capabilities by emphasizing the traits they inherited from both their indigenous mothers and Spanish fathers. From their Spanish fathers, they are “*hijos de españoles que tanto le han seruido... en el descubrimiento, conquista, población, [y] recuperación dellas [provincias]* (the sons of the Spanish who have served [the Crown] in the discovery, conquest, population and maintenance of the provinces) and from their mothers “*ser descendientes... de los señores dellas [provincias] y caciques e indios principales, en cuya possession vuestra magestad subcedio* (they are descendants of the lords and principal indians whose possession of the land was succeeded by the king).⁵¹ Historian Felipe Ruan has done much to illustrate the methods by

⁵⁰ Ruan, “Language, Genealogy, and Archive,” 38.

⁵¹ Archivo General de Indias, Lima 126, ff. 1r and 115r, “Los hijos de españoles e indias del Perú. Prouanca e autos fechos ante el concilio prouincial que se celebró en la Ciudad de los Reyes del Perú, en favor de los hijos de

which *mestizos* shaped their own identity, with a special focus on the Rengifo dossier. In Ruan's analysis of *mestizo* petitions contesting the Third Lima Council's decision to formally exclude *mestizos* from the Peruvian priesthood he outlines their arguments that "*saben y entiende mejor que los demás y con más perfección la lengua de los indios* (we know and understand the languages of the Indians with greater perfection than Spaniards)." ⁵² Ruan traces this line of thinking to the ultimate conclusion that "[*mestizo* priests] should be chosen over Spanish [priests]" in the eyes of *mestizo* petitioners and their advocates. ⁵³

Ruan's purpose in analyzing these petitions is to highlight the ways that *mestizos* defined themselves and present an argument about the importance of both sides of their heritage. It is true that *mestizos*' reliance on both indigenous and Spanish culture impacted their creation of their own imagined community, but I argue that the comparison of their arguments about *mestizo* inclusion to their arguments presented in favor of their *mestiza* sisters adds another level to the conversation. Ruan's illustration of *mestizos*' use of both sides of their heritage leaves in stark contrast the reliance on mainly Spanish heritage afforded to *mestiza* women. Where these petitioners and others like them had the opportunity to place themselves between "two republics," *mestiza* women were pushed into one, because *mestizo* men emphasized their inheritance of nobility from their mothers but for *mestiza* women highlighted their inheritance of religious purity. This can be seen in the assertion in a letter to Pope Gregory XIII in the same

españoles e yndias nascidos en este reyno. Va a los reynos de Castilla ante su magestad a sus reales consejos. Por el año 1583." as cited in Ruan, "Language, Genealogy, and Archive: Fashioning the Indigenous Mother in the Comentarios Reales and in Sixteenth-Century Mestizo Petitions," 47. *My translation.*

⁵² Archivo General de Indias, Lima 126, ff. 1r and 115r, "Los hijos de españoles e indias del Perú. Prouanca e autos fechos ante el concilio prouincial que se celebró en la Ciudad de los Reyes del Perú, en favor de los hijos de españoles e yndias nascidos en este reyno. Va a los reynos de Castilla ante su magestad a sus reales consejos. Por el año 1583." as cited in Ruan, "Language, Genealogy, and Archive: Fashioning the Indigenous Mother in the Comentarios Reales and in Sixteenth-Century Mestizo Petitions," 40. *My translation.*

⁵³ Ruan, "Language, Genealogy, and Archive: Fashioning the Indigenous Mother in the Comentarios Reales and in Sixteenth-Century Mestizo Petitions," 40.

year that “*nuestras madres, una vez recibida la fe cristiana, verdaderamente nunca la han abandonado* (our mothers, once they received word of the Christian faith, have never abandoned it),” showing that they wanted to dispel fears of similarities with Iberian *conversos* and *moriscos* as they addressed *mestiza* women’s inheritance of Christian fidelity from their mothers, despite indigenous women’s status as neophytes.⁵⁴

The opportunity to participate in the formation of identity seems distinctly male in this context and resulted in the distinctly masculine concept of competition with Spanish peers, but such an opportunity was not afforded to *mestiza* women as a community, at least not during this early period. *Mestizo* petitioners celebrated the knowledge they inherited from their indigenous mothers but focused on the devotion to the faith those same mothers passed on to their *mestiza* daughters. The petitioners wrote that “*mestizas...no [h]an desmerecido por parte de sus madres* (had not been marked by the heritage of their mothers)” and “*ora que vinieron en consçimiento de la ley de Jesu Cristo nuestro señor* (prayed for the knowledge and acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ)” by the indigenous Americans, to show how they could be distanced from their indigenous heritage and subsequently distanced from any perceived status as New Christians.⁵⁵ As a result, the racial drift experienced by *mestiza* women began to act as a facet of feminine *mestizaje* and indigeneity in such a way that *mestiza* women were painted as willing participants in their acculturation, a trait inherited from their indigenous mothers.

Without *mestizo* priests’ knowledge of indigenous languages, their Spanish peers could have very easily written off their illegitimate birth and excluded them from the Church

⁵⁴ Archivo Vaticano Secreto, Stato di Spagna 30, ff. 390r-92v, “Sanctissimo ac piissimo Gregorio XIII, Pontifici Maximo, Indiarum Uncolae [13 februarii 1583]” as cited in Felipe Ruan, “Identidad mestiza y la formulación de un sujeto colonial de superior devoción en el Perú del siglo XVI,” in *Amicitia fecunda*, Homenaje a Claudia Parodi, eds. Jimena Rodriguez and Manuel Perez (Madrid: Iberoamericana 2015), 84. *My translation*.

⁵⁵ AGI, Lima 126, ff. 4v-5r. as cited in Ruan, “Language, Genealogy, and Archive: Fashioning the Indigenous Mother in the *Comentarios Reales* and in Sixteenth-Century *Mestizo* Petitions,” 48.

altogether. Therefore, the basis of language would act as the center point to most arguments in favor of *mestizo* priests being ordained in the Andes. Both *mestizos* themselves and their advocates would rely on their usefulness to the missionizing project to argue for their inclusion in the Peruvian priesthood. Though Spanish advocates were vaguer about it, *mestizo* petitioners and historians placed themselves in direct competition with their Spanish peers by arguing that they were not only as good but better than their Spanish counterparts for the job because they could more adequately comprehend the multifaceted indigenous languages that they claimed Spaniards could not fully understand. *Mestizo* historian Garcilaso de la Vega attributes these differences to the many meanings words could have in Quechua that the Spanish were not grasping and to the difficult pronunciations of Inca words. For example, De la Vega spends the first five chapters from the second book of his *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* outlining the many names for Inca royalty, the “many meaning of the words Huaca,” and the difficult pronunciations of these words, and Inca syllabic intonation in general, for which the Spanish “take not the slightest notice of” because they do not exist in Spanish.⁵⁶ These two things often led to difficulties in understanding among indigenous audiences as they listened to confusing lectures and sermons from Spanish priests incorrectly speaking their languages.

The *mestizo* men who petitioned for their own roles in the Church had the opportunity to frame themselves in a specific lens of their own choosing, meaning they could highlight specific traits that they believed would be more successful in convincing Spanish authorities to prohibit bans based on their lineage. This distinct privilege to paint themselves and others in a desired light was one reserved for men in sixteenth-century Spanish America. *Mestiza* women were not left without a voice to advocate for them, but they did not have the same privilege to represent

⁵⁶ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru*, Vol. 1. Translated by Harold V. Livermore, (Austin: University of Texas Press 1989), 5-80.

themselves as they saw fit. Instead, while *mestizo* men petitioned for themselves, *mestiza* women usually (though not always) relied on their *mestizo* brothers or Spanish fathers to advocate on their behalf.⁵⁷ This created a divide between *mestizos* and *mestizas* in the type of representation they received. Where *mestizo* priests came to be defined by both sides of their lineage and the abilities that were attached to both Spanishness and indigeneity, *mestizas* seeking life as nuns were framed as the ushers of cultural reproduction, relying on their ties to Spanishness over their indigenous culture to maintain their roles within the Church. *Mestizo* priests argued that they were better at their jobs because of their dual ties to the land, but they simultaneously argued that their *mestiza* sisters were suited for roles within the Church and within society at large that turned away from their indigenous heritage and reproduced Spanish culture in the Americas rather than embracing both sides for their strengths. Self-advocacy thus allowed for wildly different treatment toward *mestizos* than what was received by *mestizas*.

2.5 Garcilaso de la Vega

I have established that *mestizos* within the Church often portrayed themselves as competitors to their Spanish peers and worthy of the same honors, but these arguments were not strictly confined to the Church. Among secular writers, those seeking to consolidate power along the same lines as Iberian Old Christians would cling to those same Old-World discourses, whereas those advocating for greater opportunities being afforded to *mestizos* often rejected those old arguments in favor of arguments that elevated both indigenous and *mestizo* status as ideal vassals and full and active participants within the colonial structure. Among the most

⁵⁷ Sara Vicuña Guengerich, “‘No todos se honraban con el término ‘mestizo’: cusqueños en Sevilla y la racionalización de la diferencia racial en los siglos XVI y XVII,” *Historia y Cultura* 33, (2022), 13-41. In this article, Guengerich discusses women who represented themselves in appeals through the case of Doña Mariana de Ciancas y Sotomayor, who was from Cuzco but living in Seville.

famous of these latter arguments is Garcilaso de la Vega's, who asserts in the introduction to his *Comentarios Reales* (1609) that "as a native of the city of Cuzco, which was formerly the Rome of that empire, I have fuller and more accurate information than that provided by previous writers."⁵⁸ Within this statement, De la Vega is not only arguing for his better comprehension of Peruvian history based on his genealogical connection to its indigenous inhabitants, but he is also asserting a level of pride in his mixed heritage by elevating the Inca to the same level as the ancient Romans who were so well regarded by learned men at the time, because "the two can be compared with one another, for they resembled one another in their nobler aspects."⁵⁹ Though both had to be condemned as pagans, they could also be praised for their knowledge of science, the arts, and "excellent laws applied to the good government of the two states."⁶⁰

Additionally, at the time of Garcilaso's writing, Rome was the center of Catholic power, a connection that Garcilaso doubtlessly hopes is present in the minds of his readers as he makes connections between the Inca religion and Catholicism. These parallels include the arrival of the first king and queen as sons of their primary god just as Jesus appeared to the Christian world as a son of God, mourning practices for the Inca king including a "recital in a loud voice of all [his] deeds...after the first month repeated fortnightly" just as masses are said and repeated for the dead in Catholic doctrine, and the existence of houses for women who remained virgins and dedicated themselves to religion like Catholic nuns do.⁶¹ Though Cuzco was certainly once a home of paganism in the eyes of the Spanish, Garcilaso continuously bridges the gap between its history and its potential to also become a center for Christian power in the Western Hemisphere.

⁵⁸ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 4.

⁵⁹ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 417-418.

⁶⁰ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 417.

⁶¹ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 52-53, 202-203, 324.

De la Vega relied more or less equally on Spanish and *mestizo* sources to support the claims he bases on the stories told to him by his mother and uncle about the history of the Inca. His blending of source material can be representative of his blended upbringing, as he believes that both make for a more reliable history of the region. The *Comentarios* themselves are therefore exemplary of what allows *mestizos* in general, and Garcilaso specifically, to place themselves in competition with their Spanish peers because the *Comentarios* rely on both sides of the story just as *mestizo* men characteristically rely on both sides of their heritage when they argue for the recognition of their roles in the Church and for equal access to positions of local power. In writing the *Comentarios Reales*, Garcilaso de la Vega created a work that accomplished much, including the legitimization of *mestizo* knowledge and methods, and creating a template for identifying the performance of *mestizo* masculinity in the circumstances of the late sixteenth century.

In creating this blend of indigenous, *mestizo*, and Spanish source material, Garcilaso de la Vega cites the Jesuit Padre Blas Valera more often than any other formal source.⁶² He includes large passages of Valera's now lost work throughout the *Comentarios*, creating a conversation between the two of them that showcases the learning to be gained from *mestizo* historians in their own right rather than just in addition to Spanish knowledge. Historian Sabine Hyland, in her biography of Blas Valera, has even postulated that perhaps in some areas Garcilaso de la Vega has taken Valera's words and passed them off as his own or lied about things that Valera wrote.⁶³ Though the questions of plagiarism raised here by Hyland are certainly interesting for historians to explore, for the purpose of this thesis it is more important that he cites Valera at all. The

⁶² De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 81-627.

⁶³ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 222. Hyland also presents the idea that some of Valera's work has been incorrectly attributed to Guaman Poma de Ayala as well.

invention of a conversation between the two, since they never met and Garcilaso received a copy of Valera's work posthumously, lends itself to a larger conversation between *mestizo* intellectuals in general. Garcilaso seeks to elevate his own work by simultaneously elevating the imagined community of all *mestizo* historians and writers. Even though on occasion his and Valera's accounts do not agree, by displaying academic discourse solely within the *mestizo* community, Garcilaso is placing *mestizo* knowledge equal or higher than Spanish knowledge, especially of the New World. Garcilaso is subversively arguing that, at least in discussions of the history of the New World, Spanish historians are superfluous as *mestizos* are perfectly capable if not better suited to the discussion.⁶⁴ His own performance of *mestizo* masculinity is therefore central to this work that places *mestizo* knowledge in competition with Spanish knowledge.

On the contrary, *mestizos* did not represent their *mestiza* sisters in the same way. Instead of arguing for their essential or even superior roles within the Church, they highlighted the inclination of indigenous and *mestiza* women to assimilate to and perpetuate Spanish culture in the Americas. Garcilaso de la Vega is no exception to this rule. De la Vega makes similar arguments on the inclination of *mestiza* women to adopt Spanish culture and reject their indigenous heritage by using his own mother, Palla Chimpu Ocllo, as a template for the traits passed down from indigenous mothers to their children, especially their daughters. Sarah Guengerich has provided evidence to show that De la Vega used his mother as a literary device to persuade readers of the value of indigenous knowledge about the history of the New World before Spanish arrival based on the knowledge he inherited from her as well as the legitimacy of that connection. She argues that De la Vega's use of the indigenous mother as a literary device furthers his argument that *mestizos* bring essential knowledge that their Spanish peers simply

⁶⁴ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 5.

cannot access, but Guengerich does not address the potential effects this had for *mestizas*.⁶⁵ I would argue that his depiction of indigenous women has an equally profound impact on *mestiza* women that is coded in the gendered language of race.

Without his mother, De la Vega would not have had important ties to the history of the Inca, the tales of which he “imbibed with [his] mother’s milk.”⁶⁶ His inheritance of Inca history through his mother’s line is reinforced with his discussion of the Inca royal line, from which his mother was a descendant, who “did indeed hold in the highest veneration the purity of blood they received [from the gods]” who had been sent to Earth by their father to enlighten the Inca and their vassals.⁶⁷ De la Vega chronicles each Inca king from the very first, detailing the importance with which their genealogical records were kept and further reinforcing the purity that had been passed down for generations to himself. Palla Chimu Ocllo would not not maintain Inca purity under the same standards as her ancestors (which would’ve been incestuous and pagan in the eyes of the Spanish), but by adopting Spanish purity standards through her marriage to a Spanish man, conversion to Catholicism and adopting a Spanish name (Isabel Suárez Yupanqui), and having a legitimate son. Therefore, through both her Inca lineage and through her adoption of Spanish norms, Chimu Ocllo illustrates the standard for indigenous and *mestiza* women for becoming legitimate Spanish vassals of the Crown.

Within the context of early modern definitions of race, it becomes clear that Garcilaso de la Vega understood that the behavioral traits of the indigenous people he described in his histories would be extended to *mestizos* and *mestizas* in contemporary minds through the lines of

⁶⁵ Sara Vicuña Guengerich, “[Por] Haberme Cabido En Suerte Ser De La Familia Y Sangre De Los Incas”: Linaje, Lengua Y Limpieza De Sangre Materna En La Obra Del Inca Garcilaso De La Vega,” *Philologia Hispalensis* 32, no. 2 (2018): 117-30.

⁶⁶ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 51.

⁶⁷ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 61.

inherited traits. Additionally, he would have recognized the gendered divisions of race and known how to use both race and gender to depict his desired image for the *mestizos* and *mestizas* he was seeking to represent. De la Vega's inclination to portray his own mother - and by extension the image of "the indigenous mother" - as a willing participant in the strengthening of Spanish and Christian presence in the New World was a deliberate move to portray her descendants as trustworthy Spanish subjects.⁶⁸

Most notably, he paints the indigenous mother as a participant in the strengthening of Spanish power in South America. Though still connected to her Inca heritage enough to support Garcilaso's interest in the subject by allowing those stories to be told in her home, De la Vega moves his mother away from the political power structures of the Inca and makes her a bystander to the Inca contenders for power that were fought by the Spanish. Therefore, the indigenous mother provides an important link to the indigenous world without being dangerously attached to Inca loyalty.

Each of the advocates mentioned in this section provides examples of the gendered nature of Spanish race-making processes by adhering to different personas for *mestizo* men and *mestiza* women, respectively. The accounts presented in this chapter illustrate how *mestizo* men's indigenous heritage was characterized in terms of the benefits they gained from both sides of their lineage, whereas *mestiza* women's indigenous heritage was addressed as a characteristic that could be erased away. The differences in the treatment they received therefore were undoubtedly influenced by Spanish expectations for gender performance. Additionally, those different characterizations of masculine and feminine indigeneity also impacted *mestizos'* own understandings of their roles in broader colonial society. As a result, *mestizos* and their advocates

⁶⁸ De la Vega, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*, 612-625.

would continue to elaborate on the competitive edge *mestizos* held and on the capabilities of *mestiza* women to adapt to Spanishness.

3. “MAKING MESTIZOS” INTO INADEQUATE VASSALS

As competition and acculturation gradually emerged as the expected traits for *mestizos* and *mestizas* to exhibit, respectively, they also became subjects of contention for enemies of *mestizo* participation. Gender expectations resulted in different types of discrimination against men and women of mixed backgrounds. For *mestizo* men, this discrimination came in the form of being denied access to full ordination as priests and a lack of recognition for the roles they performed in the Church as translators and aids of the missionizing project. For *mestiza* women, discrimination came in the form of losing their connection to their indigenous heritage - at least publicly. Though we do not know their inner thoughts on the matter, at least in the colonial record women were likely to be assigned to the racial category that matched the men in their lives, meaning that as they moved up in the Church or were married to Spanish men, they also often were labeled as Spanish as well. Therefore, in order to advance their position, *mestiza* women had to publicly sacrifice part of their lineage to “remedy” their racial status.

Since men and women experienced different kinds of discrimination, detractors often had different goals as they addressed *mestizos* and *mestizas*. *Mestizas*’ detractors were really only concerned with the process of “remedying” their race, as discussed in the previous section on the Santa Clara convent. As such, positions were restricted to *mestiza* women, but after they could be considered Spanish were reopened. This reopening was based largely on *mestizas*’ performances of the traits Spanish peers expected to see. On the other hand, *mestizos*’ detractors clung to Iberian precedents for withholding access to positions of local power based on their fears of competing with *mestizos* for honors and offices. Their arguments often mirrored the language of *limpieza de sangre* statutes that had solidified in the Old World, expanding that discourse across the Atlantic.

3.1 Race as a Barrier to Local Power

One of the major reasons that there was an emerging system of categorization in Iberia to expand upon in the Americas was due to anxieties held by Old Christians related to maintaining their grip on local authority following the Reconquista. Old Christians used statutes of *limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood) to withhold official power from *conversos* and *moriscos*, or “New Christians.” In communities where converts looked as similar to the Old Christians in the area as they did to their neighbors who chose not to convert, lineage grew to be a major concern for Old Christians who sought to consolidate their power and prevent power from falling into the hands of former non-Christians.⁶⁹ New Christians’ access to local power became a major source of anxiety for Old Christians who were witness to the neighbors they had once barred from opportunities for local power suddenly gaining the privilege to attain those offices. Those who came to see themselves as Old Christians, “untainted” by mixture with other religious groups, increasingly deployed the language of race to exclude “New” Christian converts from access to local power.⁷⁰ Thus, Old Christians started to use lineage based in religious purity and nobility as the measure for social and political mobility.

The Iberian concern with lineage is especially relevant to *mestizos*, as both heritage and legitimacy were called into question by those attempting to discredit their ability to act as religious officials. The language of *limpieza de sangre* used in the Iberian Peninsula to paint New Christians as outsiders traveled across the Atlantic and was subsequently used to paint *mestizos* as outsiders. Based on these precedents, many holy orders in the Americas used perceived “*mestizo* behavior” to present *mestizos* as “other” and as external to their organizations.

⁶⁹ Herzog, “Beyond Race: Exclusion in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America,” 155-156.

⁷⁰ Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” 4.

Iberian racial ideologies also grew more complex as the Spanish applied their concerns for “pure” Christian lineage and illegitimacy to the Americas. They presented even further concern for indigenous converts to Catholicism and their children, especially if those children were born from unions between Spanish colonizers and indigenous women. Complicating matters, *mestizos*’ and *mestizas*’ understandings of their place in Spanish society was based on differentiated performances of race and gender. Concerns about “pure” lineage and access to local power affected both secular and religious sectors, leading to strong debates between the Church and the Crown over whether and how to include *mestizos* within holy offices.

Modern racial thought relies almost entirely on a person’s appearance, but in early modern times “race” encompassed much more. As racial ideology cemented itself into early modern Iberian society, “race” came to mean more than a religious marker, acting instead as a permanent “stain” upon one’s lineage that was representative of far more than just appearance. Identifying the “stain” of impure lineage relied on physical characteristics like hair texture, behavioral traits like the performance of nobility, and what was believed to be an inherited trait at this time, language. All three of these were cited in the *probanzas* organized by individuals defending their lineage in order to ascend to positions of local authority or to get permission to travel to the Americas.⁷¹ Immigration was restricted to those who could prove *limpieza de sangre* because the Crown was explicitly concerned with establishing religious purity in the Americas as it existed in Iberia and intended to do so by prohibiting contact between the “heretics” present in Europe and the newly converted indigenous American population. Requiring *probanzas* in order to gain permission to travel to the new colonies shows

⁷¹ Karoline P. Cook, “‘Moro de linaje y nación’: Religious Identity, Race and Status in New Granada,” In *Race and Blood in the Iberian World*, ed. María Elena Martínez, David Nirenberg and Max Hering Torres, (Berlin: Verlag 2012), 81–97.

the literal travel of *limpieza de sangre* from the Old World to the New. With the travel of *limpieza de sangre* came the establishment of the same barriers that prevented upward mobility for those of “impure” lineages that could be traced through the complex emerging category of “race.”

3.2 The Position of the Crown

Past the local level, the Crown was also quite distrustful of *mestizo* roles in the evangelization project in the Americas. In large part, this distrust can be traced back to the conclusion of the Spanish Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula, and more specifically to the establishment of the Inquisition in its aftermath. The monarchs responsible for the completion of the Reconquista, Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, were suspicious of the remaining non-Christians in Iberia, and sought to eliminate their influence and consolidate the Crown’s power in a single move - forced conversion or removal of the non-Christian population.⁷²

1492: Catholic Spanish victory in Granada, the last Moorish holdout in the South of the Iberian Peninsula, concluded the Crown’s project to reunite the region under a singular authority grounded in the Catholic faith. With the completion of the Reconquista, Pope Sixtus IV granted the Spanish Crown *real patronato*, or royal patronage, in Granada since it was acquired in holy conquest based on the establishment of the practice in the 1482 papal bull *Ortodoxe Fidei*.⁷³ *Real patronato* gave the Spanish Crown the authority to nominate individuals of their choice to holy offices in the areas they conquered, including archbishops, bishops, and cathedral chapters.⁷⁴

⁷² Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion and Genealogical Mentalities: Jews and Christians in Fifteenth-Century Spain,” 3-41.

⁷³ Pope Sixtus IV, “Ortodoxe Fidei, de Sixto IV (1471-1484) concede la bula de la cruzada a los reyes católicos para la reconquista de Granada,” in *La conquista espiritual de la América española. 200 documentos - Siglos XVI*, ed. Paulo Suess (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2002), 117-123.

⁷⁴ Sixtus IV, “Ortodoxe Fidei,” 117-123.

Spanish influence on some religious offices created a division between the religious orders who acted mainly under Roman/papal authority and a new “secular church.” In this case, “secular” refers to the connection these individuals had to the Crown, not to a “nonreligious church.” *Real patronato* traveled to the New World through 1508 the papal bull *Universalis ecclesiae*, in which Pope Julius II granted the Crown “*el derecho de Patronato y de presentar personas idóneas para las citadas iglesias* (the right to patronage [of the Church] and to present suitable people to holy offices)” in the Americas.⁷⁵ *Real patronato* played out in the process of colonization as a competition between the two strongest metropolitan powers seeking to maintain authority in the New World: the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church. The Crown, for its part, wanted to maintain the authority they had gained during the Reconquista through *real patronato* by enforcing religious purity on their subjects in the Americas in addition to the expectations that had taken hold in Iberia. Conversely, the Church sought to maintain its own authority by means of mass conversion of the indigenous population and often were far less concerned with the “purity” or sincerity of the conversion than the Spanish were. To achieve their goals, both entities had to begin defining what it meant to be a “pure” Christian and began that task from the starting point of the emerging category of race. Each relied on the precedents that had been established in the Old World as they sought to categorize the New World.

Both advocates and detractors of *mestizo* and *mestiza* participation within the church worked to create a definition of *mestizaje* that aligned with their desired outcome. Along the way, *mestizos* were “made” in the space in between these two sides, as the broad strokes of defining *mestizaje* emerged based on these distinct schools of thought, informed by secular,

⁷⁵ Pope Julius II, “*Universalis ecclesiae* de Julio II (1503-1513), Concede a los reyes de España explícitamente el derecho del patronazgo sobre la iglesia en las tierras americanas conquistadas,” in *La conquista espiritual de la América española. 200 documentos - Siglos XVI*, ed. Paulo Suess (Quito: Abya-Yala, 2002), 127. *My translation.*

religious, Spanish, and indigenous influences. The Crown presents an interesting mix of all these factors, as decrees from Charles V and Philip II illustrate the ways that Spanish leadership grappled with defining *mestizaje* and its place in their empire.

As early as 1549, the Crown was already addressing the exclusion of “*mulatos, mestizos, and others who are illegitimate*” from holding *encomiendas*, or royal or public offices in New Granada.⁷⁶ The competition for *encomiendas* added another level of competition as it added questions of inheritance into the mix of the discussion around legitimacy. Charles V wrote to the Audiencia Real expressing his desire to require a special license for “illegitimates” seeking positions proving their knowledge of the law (*Que ningún mulato, ni mestizo, ni hombre que no fuere legítimo, pueda tener indios, ni oficio real o público, sin tener para ello especial licencia nuestra*).⁷⁷ In counting *mestizos* among the perceived “illegitimates” he was afraid of, Charles V is following the established method for determining “race” through inheritance that had been established in Iberia. Additionally, since he is addressing the availability of honors and offices, Charles V is in agreement with the expected behaviors for *mestizo* men as competitors to their Spanish peers. Over the next decades the Crown would continue to voice concern over the roles they saw as acceptable for *mestizos* to obtain, expanding their desires for exclusion to religious sectors as well. Charles V’s successors would continue to follow the same methods of exclusion as they argued for the concerns with the growing influence of *mestizos* in the New World.

Philip II, also taking his cues from the established rhetoric of racialization in the Old World, viewed race as an inherited trait and therefore could not dismiss the “stain” of indigeneity

⁷⁶ Charles V, “167. R.C. Que ningún mulato, ni mestizo, ni hombre que no fuere legítimo, pueda tener indios, ni oficio real ni público,” in *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica (1493-1810)*, Vol. 1 (1493-1592) ed., Richard Konetzke. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 256. *My translation.*

⁷⁷ Charles V, “167. R.C.,” 256.

he perceived to be a part of *mestizaje*. As a result, Philip II began to communicate orders to the bishops in the Americas to discontinue the ordination of *mestizos* as priests throughout the 1570s. Just as *mestizo* and *mestiza* advocates relied on the language of *limpieza de sangre* to argue in favor of their participation in the Church, so too did their detractors. Although there was an early commitment to creating culturally Spanish individuals from mixed-race backgrounds, in later years the Crown would push back against prominent roles for *mestizos* within the Church as King Philip II warned the Bishop of Cuzco in 1577 to “*dando las dichas ordenes solo a las personas de quien tuviéredes mucha satisfacción, y entendiéredes tienen las partes, calidades y virtud necesarias para ejercer tan alto ministerio, excluyendo a los que carecieren dellas, y principalmente mestizos* (give orders only to those who satisfy the requirements for priesthood and...exclude those who lack those qualifications, principally *mestizos*).”⁷⁸ This example is one of a series of warnings delivered to bishops across South America who had continued to ordain *mestizos* in their regions because they believed in the strength of *mestizos*’ use of indigenous languages. Philip II’s orders against *mestizo* ordination cited the illegitimacy and the inheritance of indigenous traditions perceived to be a facet of their “race” in the early modern context. The king’s distress about the sincerity of their missionizing process and his inability to dismiss the inheritance of their “race” prompted his decisions to forbid *mestizo* priesthood in the Americas. Additionally, Spaniards in the Americas placed pressure on the Crown to protect their access to offices and uphold the precedents set by *limpieza de sangre* statutes to withhold local power for “Old Christians.” Similarly to Charles V, Philip II’s commitment to restricting the access of

⁷⁸ Philip II, “372. R.C. Que manda al obispo del Cuzco que excluya de las órdenes a los que carecen de las calidades necesarias y principalmente a mestizos,” in *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica (1493-1810)*, Vol. 1 (1493-1592) ed., Richard Konetzke. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 506. *My translation.*

mestizo men to positions of local authority follows the established expectations for competition from *mestizo* men.

Though most of the Crown records focus on the role of *mestizo* men in the Americas, the Crown does not completely neglect to address *mestiza* women seeking positions in New World convents. In direct response to the Rengifo dossier of *mestizo* petitions discussed in the previous chapter, Philip II wrote in 1588 “*sobre las facultades para dar las órdenes de sacerdote a mestizos y admitir en los monasterios de monjas a mujeres mestizas* (on the abilities to give *mestizos* holy orders of priesthood and to admit *mestizas* into convents).”⁷⁹ Though he reiterates his concerns about *mestizo* priesthood, Philip II writes to amend those statements and tentatively reopen the religious houses to *mestizos* and call for *mestizas* to be able to wear the full veil and habit of a nun.⁸⁰ Despite Philip II’s reluctance to do so, he retracted his earlier statements to avoid the ordination of *mestizos* at all costs, writing “*se resolvio el que debía cesar el cumplimiento de las dichas cédulas y darse las dichas órdenes a los dichos mestizos... y suspender las dichas cédulas* (he resolved to cease enforcement of his previous statements to encourage to ordination of *mestizo* priests and to renounce the former cedulas against ordination).”⁸¹ Philip writes that “son hijos de personas principales, que me sirvieron en el descubrimiento, pacificación y población de esas provincias,... [y] por parte de sus madres, son descendientes de los señores que poseyeron esas provincias...[E]llos han continuado siempre y continúan el servirme en todo (they are the children of important [Spaniards] who have served me in the discovery, pacification, and populating of the colonies, and from their mothers are the

⁷⁹ Philip II, “452. R.C. Sobre las facultades para dar las órdenes de sacerdote a mestizos y admitir en los monasterios de monjas a mujeres mestizas,” in *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica (1493-1810)*, Vol. 1 (1493-1592) ed., Richard Konetzke. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953), 595-596. *My translation.*

⁸⁰ Philip II, “452. R.C.,” 595-596.

⁸¹ Philip II, “452. R.C.,” 596.

descendants of the Inca leaders who had held those lands before. They have continued and will continue in my service in every way).”⁸² Among all of the arguments made by *mestizos* in their petitions, Philip II hones in first on their ability to contribute to the Spanish colonization efforts not based on language, but on their adoption of Spanish norms, loyalty to the Crown, and on noble lineage. In this passage, he is specifically interested in the noble lineage they inherit from their mothers, but not in any of the culture they may have inherited from her as well such as language. Therefore, Philip II is tracing the language typically applied to *mestiza* women - acculturation, religious fidelity, and reproducing Spanish culture and stability - in his reasoning for nullifying his previous warnings against *mestizo* participation.

If the Rengifo documents had not addressed indigenous women and *mestizas*’ ability to lean into their Spanishness and access the noble heritage with losing Spanish loyalty, it is possible that Philip II would have never looked past the potential for competition he saw in *mestizo* men and may not have changed his mind about the status that *mestizos* should maintain in the Americas. The *mestizo* petitioners were deliberate in emphasizing their indigenous mothers’ fidelity to the Catholic faith once they had learned it, and though they meant that trait to be inherited mainly by their *mestiza* sisters Philip II also applied it to *mestizo* men. Therefore, Philip II was able to trace their arguments about noble lineage and the genealogical inheritance of religion to the conclusion that *mestizos* and *mestizas* should be given access to full participation within the Church.

Outside of Crown edicts, court cases also exist in colonial America that continue to demonstrate anxiety about the presence of “impure” converts amid the newly Christianized indigenous populations. Historian Karoline P. Cook has provided an analysis of the life of Diego

⁸² Philip II, “452. R.C.,” 596.

Romero, whose case shows the ways that these overlapped in real world application. Romero lived in New Granada during the seventeenth century, but his case illustrates how race-making expanded throughout the Americas following the era of conquest. Romero's neighbor accused him of being of Moorish descent based on the texture of his hair, meaning that he should not be allowed to live in the New World.⁸³ Romero contested this accusation based on his noble behavior. Both the prosecution and the defense in this case show how "race" encapsulated many characteristics in the early modern period. Romero's case therefore directly connects the Old World to the New based on the language used for and against him in the courts. Although Romero was not a member of the Church and his case does not reflect ecclesiastical debates on the ordination of people of mixed heritage, Romero's case does illuminate the nature of racial thought in the colonial period, which was incredibly relevant to the debates happening within the Church on *mestizo* and *mestiza* participation. The accusations against Romero are clearly representative of concerns about access to local power and competition between *criollos* and men of mixed descent.

3.3 Religious Detractors

Church edicts outlining the desired treatment for *mestizos* and *mestizas* seeking membership within the Church used the racial language inherited from the Iberian Peninsula but applied it differently to men and women born and living in a nascent colonial society initially predicated on the differences between conquerors and conquered. Both *mestizos* seeking priesthood and *mestizas* seeking life as nuns were affected by Church and Crown arguments over lineage and Christian purity labeled as "race," but were affected differently by such labels. This

⁸³ Cook, "'Moro de linaje y nación': Religious Identity, Race and Status in New Granada," 81–97.

begs a major question: If *mestizas* and *mestizos* were the product of the same “mixture,” why were they treated differently in practice?

Identifying the “stain” of impure lineage would come to rely on physical characteristics like hair texture, behavioral traits like the performance of nobility, and what was believed to be an inherited trait at this time, language. In the early modern mind, for instance, breast milk acted as a carrier for an infant’s first language.⁸⁴ The inheritance of a language implied an infant’s heritage, something that made a *mestizo* child stand out in the Americas because their knowledge of a native language was not simply something they learned from an indigenous parent but rather evidence of an “impure” heritage rooted in New Christian lineage. Larissa Brewer-Garcia has elaborated on how *mestizo* translators within the Society of Jesus were excluded following the Third Lima Council in such a way that allowed the use of their knowledge without recognition for their work. Brewer-Garcia connects the *mestizo* translators’ bodies to their knowledge of language to explain how the Jesuits created a marginalized and yet influential subject class through an analysis of the term *lenguas*.⁸⁵ Brewer-Garcia’s investigation of this term highlights how *mestizo* linguistic abilities became construed with physical characteristics defined within the confines of “race.” By connecting these two, the Jesuits were able to continue using native languages in the project of conversion through *mestizo* efforts while simultaneously adhering to the Crown’s early insistence on avoiding *mestizo* ordination. The result was that *mestizos*’ linguistic skills were then connected to their physical bodies and to their “race,” meaning that the skills that gave them a competitive edge as they vied for the same honors and offices as the Spanish peers would also distance them from Spanishness.

⁸⁴ Brewer-Garcia, “Bodies, Texts, and Translators,” 365-390.

⁸⁵ Brewer-Garcia, “Bodies, Texts, and Translators,” 365-390.

Multilingual abilities would end up working in favor of *mestizo* participation because of their usefulness to the Church, but they would also serve as a reminder of their mixed heritage. This connection between linguistic abilities and illegitimacy can be seen in *Nuper ad nos*, which advocated for *mestizo* participation in the evangelization project but nonetheless confirmed Iberian connections between *mestizaje* and illegitimacy. *Nuper ad nos* assumes that *mestizo* children were always born of illegitimate unions, and even though this was often true, it perpetuated the Spanish idea that *mestizos* would always be marked with the stain of illegitimacy as a characteristic of their race.⁸⁶ As a result, though Gregory XIII intended this bull in favor of *mestizo* participation as discussed previously, anti-*mestizo* writers could use these connections to argue against the acknowledgement of their roles within the Church.

3.4 Jose de Acosta

The Jesuit leader Jose de Acosta (1539-1600), known for his participation in the Third Lima Council and his history works about the New World (like the *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias* 1590), was one of those who addressed the question of whether *mestizo* ordination was a best practice within the Church. Writing throughout the 1570s and 1580s, Acosta makes for an interesting study in the nature of the debate surrounding whether *mestizos* should or should not be ordained as priests, because he exhibited an ambivalence on the subject. On one hand, he did not trust *mestizo* participation within his own order and pointed out the “stains” of their indigenous heritage when the question was whether *mestizos* should be given full priesthood in the Society of Jesus. On the other hand, Acosta wrote in favor of *mestizo* priesthood as members of the secular church and believed their usefulness as rural clergy outweighed potential doubts.

⁸⁶ Gregory XIII, “La bula Nuper ad nos,” 141.

Acosta sought to determine the balance between pragmatism in the evangelization project and the perceived “purity” of his order as they carried out said project. With these two things in mind, Acosta’s works illustrate how individuals grappled with the issues of purity, race, and religion in their own minds.

To begin, Acosta was extremely careful to create distance between the new indigenous converts to Christianity in the Americas and the *conversos* of Iberia. With the common understanding of the inheritable traits connected to race at the time, Acosta was thus subsequently distancing *mestizos* from the distrust held for Iberian converts as well. In his *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias (Natural and Moral History of the Indies)*, published in 1590, José de Acosta is very quick to dispel the theory that the indigenous people of the Americas were related to the Jews of the Old World based on stereotypes. In the 23rd chapter of book one, titled “*Que es falsa la opinión de muchos que afirman venir los indios del linaje de los judios* (How the opinion of many, who believe that the Indians come from the race of the Jews, is false),” Acosta states that “*el vulgo* (ignorant folk)” believe in this connection because “*el ser medrosos y decaídos y muy ceremoniáticos, y agudos y mentirosos* (they are cowardly and weak and much given to ceremony, and cunning, and lying).”⁸⁷ This is a clear example of how people traced behavioral characteristics through a lineage, regardless of the validity of those accusations. Acosta contradicts this line of thinking by instead highlighting the lack of evidence in favor of this conjecture and outlining the many differences between the two groups. In doing so, Acosta can argue for the sincere conversion of indigenous people and their children which works to bolster *mestizo* claims for advancement within the Church and bolsters the Jesuits’

⁸⁷Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral*, 98.; Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 69.

missions in the New World since they can argue more strongly for the success of their projects when the “stain” of *converso* heritage is removed from the picture.

On the other hand, however, when Acosta wrote that “*no solo es útil sino del todo necesario que los cristianos y maestros de la ley de Cristo sepan los errores y supersticiones de los antiguos, para ver si clara o disimuladamente las usan también agora los indios* (it is not only useful but absolutely necessary for Christians and teachers of the law of Christ to be familiar with the errors and superstitions of the [Inca] and to observe whether the Indians use them nowadays, whether openly or in secret),” he was implying the existence of false converts in the New World.⁸⁸ By retelling the customs of the Inca religion, Acosta was presenting behaviors for he and his peers to watch out for to identify these false converts and to use against their descendants, namely the *mestizos* who inherited the “stain” of false conversion from their indigenous mothers. Even though *mestizos* seeking membership in the Society of Jesus were likely not false Christians, and in many cases probably not even converts but raised Catholic, Jesuits could point to behavioral characteristics that they believed were related to the Inca religion. In doing so, Acosta is relying on Old World discourses that used race as a barrier to positions of local power.

In addition to the distance Acosta sought to create between the converts of the New World and the Old, he is also interested in attesting to the potential for conversion inherent in the indigenous Americans based on “*algún conocimiento de Dios* (some knowledge of God among the Indians).”⁸⁹ He does not go as far as Blas Valera to argue that their principal god was in fact the Christian God, but he does concede that their ability to recognize one god as supreme to all others predisposed the indigenous population to a stronger understanding of Christian religion

⁸⁸ Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral*, 256; Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 327.

⁸⁹ Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral*, 213; Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 256.

and set them up to become strong and sincere converts to Catholicism.⁹⁰ Furthermore, he begins the sixth book of his narrative with assertions on “*el orden y modo de proceder que estos tenían cuando vivían en su ley* (their order and behavior when they lived under their own law)” to refute claims that the indigenous population lacked understanding.⁹¹ In conjunction with his earlier arguments in favor of the purity of their conversion to Christianity, Acosta’s assurances in the capabilities of the indigenous population underscore his foundations for the validity of the Jesuit missions and the roles of *mestizos* as translators or aids, if not priests, in the New World.

Though he does not mention *mestizas* directly in the *Historia Natural y Moral*, Acosta’s statements on indigenous people would reflect on them as well. Acosta’s assertions for the indigenous people’s ability to absorb the Catholic faith and accept Spanish norms was reinforced by the decades of *mestiza* acculturation that had been occurring in the Americas. Just as *mestizos* would have been perceived to inherit this agreeableness to Spanish standards, *mestizas* would have been understood to be even further disposed towards the absorption of Spanish norms. Therefore, every argument that Acosta makes in favor of the indigenous population’s ability to fully convert to Catholicism and the submit to Spanish rule is also indirectly in favor of *mestizas’* ability to “convert” to Spanish by leaving behind their indigenous “race.”

3.5 The Third Lima Council 1582-83

While Acosta’s *Historia* was not published until after the Third Lima Council took place, similar themes would have still been on his mind as he attended and participated in this convocation of religious thinkers in Spanish America. In fact, many who attended the gathering would have been in conversation with one another about the success of the evangelizing mission

⁹⁰ Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral*, 213; Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 256.

⁹¹ Acosta, *Historia Natural y Moral*, 261; Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 329.

so far and the continuation of said project. Amidst these conversations, Council attendees would lean towards the restriction of honors, offices, and recognition for *mestizos* within the Church. The decision to exclude *mestizos* from full participation within the Church was despite the arguments presented by and for *mestizos* such as the Rengifo dossier, encouragement from the Pope and the Crown, and the efforts lay and religious *mestizo* intellectuals to prove the value of their knowledge and experience to the Church.

As mentioned, a major goal of the Council was “*la redacción de un Catecismo único en las lenguas de los nativos, a fin de que todos se rigiesen por él y con toda claridad y precisión se les enseñase la doctrina cristiana* (the writing of a singular Catechism in the native languages [of the Americas], after which all would be able to follow and to be taught the Christian doctrine with full clarity and precision).”⁹² An important caveat to their decision in favor of translating doctrine was the clarity and precision of new converts’ understanding, which would rely on precise translators. In other words, to achieve such a clear translation from Latin into Spanish and indigenous languages, the Council would be forced to rely on *mestizo* priests based on their linguistic skills and the early modern understanding of language inheritance.

We know that the committee responsible for translating the Catechism was composed of a variety of religious thinkers and evangelizers, including *mestizo* Jesuits Blas Valera and Bartolomé de Santiago and secular *mestizo* priest Francisco Carrasco.⁹³ However, within the records of the Third Lima Council the final version of the translated document is attributed almost entirely to the head of the translation committee, José de Acosta.⁹⁴ Instead, they include the names of the others merely as reviewers. The Council’s records write that “*P. Blas Valera, a*

⁹² “Capítulo V,” *Concilios Limenses (1551-1772)* trans. Rubén Vargas-Ugarte, S.J. (Lima: Sociedad de Jesús, 1954), 71.

⁹³ Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 64.

⁹⁴ Vargas-Ugarte, *Concilio Limenses*, 72-73.

quien comúnmente se ha considerado como uno de los autores del texto quechua, vemos que sólo le cupo la revisión del mismo (Valera, initially considered one of the authors of the Quechua portion of the text, actually only had time to review the document).”⁹⁵ This erasure of *mestizo* efforts in the committee is a prime example of the way that *mestizos* were excluded from full honors and recognition of their important roles within the Church. Their decision to diminish Valera’s contributions – especially in light of his many works that even in their incomplete form we are able to piece together today show his capabilities – can be read as a direct response to the competition argued by *mestizo* advocates, meaning that they wanted not just to diminish Valera specifically but also the potential that *mestizos* held to compete with their Spanish peers in general.

Alexandre Coello has argued that as time went on, more and more Spanish priests had sufficiently learned indigenous languages, decreasing the competitive edge that *mestizos* had relied on for retaining their positions within the Church.⁹⁶ Coello cites this learning as a reason for justifying the choice to exclude *mestizos* from priesthood, but I would argue that language was very much still a point of contention during the Third Lima Council. The Council’s recordkeepers were careful in the credit they afforded to *mestizos* in the Catechism translation committee for a reason. Diminishing Valera’s contributions to the Quechua section of the Catechism, I suggest, was a deliberate action to undermine *mestizo* linguistic knowledge and promote Spanish capability to serve as adequate missionaries across the Americas. Acting to belittle *mestizo* linguistic skills can thus be read as an effort to reduce their competitive edge in appearance (if not in reality), as a direct response to the argument made by and for *mestizos* over

⁹⁵ Vargas-Ugarte, *Concilio Limenses*, 90.

⁹⁶ Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “De mestizos y criollos en la compañía de Jesús (Perú, siglos XVI-XVII),” *Revista de Indias* 68, no. 243 (2008): 37-66.

the course of the sixteenth century, which relied on those skills making them better suited for honors and offices than their Spanish peers.

Revoking the recognition for their works as translators allowed Jesuit leadership to effectively eliminate any internal struggles they felt about competition. Their decision to essentially exploit *mestizo* knowledge for the project without reward was in direct response to contemporary anxieties about the effects of competing with *mestizos* for what they saw as Spanish roles. By deciding to neglect to recognize *mestizos*' efforts, the Jesuit leadership had therefore removed the need for Spanish priests to compete with *mestizos* over who was better suited for the role. Instead, Spanish priests were given the green light to use *mestizo* knowledge for their own evangelizing purposes without having to compete for the benefits that came with full priesthood, circumventing anxiety about the pressures of competition.

Finally, the Council wrote "*a nadie se le conferirán las órdenes... a no ser que lo hubiese contraído legítimamente y según las normas del derecho* (no one will be given [holy] orders... unless they have been given legitimately and under the norms of the law).⁹⁷ Bolstering their decision to exclude *mestizos* based on the appearance of losing their competitive edge, the Council also cited the illegitimacy perceived to be attached to the "race" of *mestizo*. Just as language had been attached to their physical bodies, so too had illegitimacy been joined to their physical "race."⁹⁸ The processes of race-making that had occurred over the course of the sixteenth century therefore culminated in the Third Lima Council as they applied race to *mestizos* in the Church by rebutting their assertions of competitive advantage in an official decision to exclude them based on perceived "racial traits."

⁹⁷ Vargas Ugarte, *Concilios Limenses*, 107.

⁹⁸ Brewer-Garcia, "Bodies Texts, Translators," 371.

4. CONCLUSION

Genealogy had grown in Iberia to be a major concern for Old Christians who sought to consolidate their power and prevent power from falling into the hands of former non-Christians. In the Americas, this concern with ancestry had stretched to include concerns about illegitimacy. This stretching of the language of race would continue to impact people of mixed heritage in the Americas as the *sistema de castas* “crystallized,” to use the words of historian Maria Elena Martinez.⁹⁹ “Race” thus acted as the umbrella term for a person’s status as a new or old Christian, and questions of legitimacy became the shorthand for *mestizaje*. Race dealt primarily with access to power and wealth, “pure” lineage rooted in religious purity, and citizenship, which all came to be identifiable in external characteristics, including but not limited to appearance. Lineage, power, and purity affected sixteenth century debates on *mestizo* ordination because priesthood and mobility within the church represented access to resources and authority for many *mestizos* who had few opportunities elsewhere. As they worked for access to religious positions, *mestizos* and *mestizas* relied heavily on gender to reinforce their arguments.

Evangelization was clearly on the minds of conquerors from the beginning, especially when one looks closely at the priorities of those on the ground in the Americas. It is easy for historians to make comparisons between New Christians in the Iberian Peninsula and indigenous converts to Christianity in the Americas based on what we know about existing parallels, but even contemporaries of the time were concerned about similarities between the two groups. These concerns even sparked debates about the origins of the indigenous people in the Americas and whether they were related to the Jews and Moors that had been expelled from Iberian lands. This affected *mestizas* and *mestizos* because early modern knowledge defined religious purity in

⁹⁹ Martinez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 8-9.

connection to inherited traits. This can be seen in the language of *limpieza de sangre* that was applied to New Christians in the Iberian Peninsula, and which translated to the language used against *mestizos* and *mestizas* seeking upward mobility. These Old-World notions thus acted as the basis for further racialization in the New World.

Spanish distrust only grew as *mestizo* children came of age for inheritance and found themselves empty-handed. The first generation of *mestizos* became frustrated that they were barred from familial inheritance due to their real or perceived “illegitimacy,” leading some to rebellion. The rebellions of the first generation, or illegitimate status in general, did not necessarily represent most *mestizos* but became construed with all *mestizos* in the eyes of the Spanish. This means that the distrust of *mestizos* was primarily rooted in their masculinity, not on their socio-economic status. *Mestizos* were feared because they were men and were associated with rebellion or competition, but *mestizas* were groomed for the reproduction of Spanish culture because of their biological ability to produce Spanish children in addition to their cultural roles as domestic educators that could pass on Spanish ideals and norms, if they were “properly raised.” Keeping this in mind, *mestizos* thus became construed with competition to their Spanish peers as *mestizas* became identified as tools for acculturation of indigenous people into Spanish norms.

Within the Church and in general colonial society, *mestizaje* had thus taken shape over the course of the sixteenth century to follow separate definitions for men and women. *Mestizo* men and *mestiza* women were experiencing racialization in markedly different ways because of the traits expected to be exhibited by men and women, respectively. By tracing the major themes of competition and acculturation through the religious debates on *mestizo* inclusion within the Church, gender becomes a signifier for which way the argument will go. This thesis has

illustrated how both femininity and masculinity were important considerations as race in the New World was formulated on a highly ambivalent, case-by-case basis.

As the conversation about *mestizo* and *mestiza* participation in religious houses, orders, and positions vacillated between advocates and detractors, even among *mestizos* themselves, both sides were careful to follow the emerging paths for men and women. Advocates for *mestiza* nuns consistently relied on their connection to Spanishness over indigeneity, arguing for their ability to embrace and enforce Spanish culture in the New World. As such, potential for acculturation and cultural reproduction became the reigning characteristic assigned to *mestiza* women. On the contrary, advocates and detractors for *mestizo* men focused on their ability to compete with their Spanish peers based on the strong connections they held to *both* sides of their heritage. As follows, competition became one important index for *mestizo* masculinity in these arguments. Along these lines the gendered framework for *mestizaje* crystallized, following two diverging paths for men and women that relied on opposing thoughts to highlight their perceived values to the growing Spanish colonial community.

The production of race, differentiated by gender, made it easier for people to discriminate against each other. It also made it easier for people to discriminate in diverging ways, which helps to explain why *mestizos* and *mestizas* entering the church received different treatment. Since “race” carried a more fluid connotation in the sixteenth century, men and women were racialized differently, relying heavily on gender in determining the outcome of an assigned racial status. This thesis has begun to trace the causes of such differentiation by following the threads of competition and acculturation through the writings both for and against *mestizo* participation in the Church. Though a first step, it is far from comprehensive.

As stated previously, the regulation of *mestizos* and *mestizas* within the Church was not relegated solely to that jurisdiction. The judgments made on *mestizo* and *mestiza* participation in religious houses would affect their roles in secular society as well, because of the close connections between the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church borne out of the Renaissance period and carried through the Age of Empires. Additionally, the gendered aspect of racialization had implications not just outside of the Church, but outside of the sixteenth century as well. There is room for continued study over time as well as in other groups. The subject of this study can be extended to general colonial society in the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century based on the strong connections between the Church and Spanish society in these years. Since Christianity was a central pillar of the Spanish empire, decisions made within the Church rippled throughout colonial society. Conversely, the world of the Church was not closed to external influences either. These ripples make it so that *mestizos* and *mestizas* within the church were not the only ones prescribed to the same gendered expectations for racial identity. Namely, this plays into *mestizo* sons and *mestiza* daughters seeking to distance themselves from the perceived “stain” of illegitimacy to receive inheritances, particularly *encomiendas*, from Spanish fathers.

Under Iberian law, inheritance was protected for both sons and daughters, but relied on legitimacy. This stipulation was important for both Spanish interests and *mestizo* interests, as either side sought to present a case for the importance of “race” in determining these matters. Spanish parties, when applicable, sought to marry legitimate *mestiza* daughters in order to prove eligibility to inherit *encomiendas* from their fathers-in-law. In doing so, *mestiza* women often experienced “racial drift” as they absorbed the race of their new husbands in the colonial record.¹⁰⁰ Racial drift reinforced the acculturation experienced by *mestiza* women in the Church

¹⁰⁰ Robert H. Jackson, “Race/Caste and the Creation and Meaning of Identity in Colonial Spanish America,” 149–173.

as they became pieces of the puzzle that was Spanish cultural reproduction. The same was true for *mestiza* women outside of convents, as their marriages (to Spanish men rather than a betrothal to Christ) brought them closer to their Spanishness and pushed them from their indigenous heritage other than distant connections to Inca nobility.

Just as *mestiza* women in secular colonial society shared experiences with women in the Church, so too did *mestizo* men share experiences with their peers seeking priesthood. Garcilaso de la Vega is just one example of this occurrence. De la Vega was part of a larger group of advocates looking to emphasize how *mestizo* men were better suited for certain roles based on their inherited connections to the land in the Americas from both sides of their heritage. This can additionally be seen through the *mestizo* petitioners of the 1580s being concerned with weapons bans in addition to religious issues.¹⁰¹ Both of these examples go to show just how important Church debates were to wider colonial society, as the ramifications of those arguments would have important reverberations in secular spheres.

Additionally, the *mestizo* rebellions of the early sixteenth century, mentioned previously, show that the fight for honors and offices within the Church does not mark the extent of the battles fought by *mestizos* and *mestizas* for access to social mobility. Indeed, the conflicts resulting from disputes over illegitimacy and inheritance acted as another battleground for access to wealth outside of the Church which would influence the discussion on manifesting *mestizaje* throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries. The overlap between Church and secular racialization of *mestizos* and *mestizas* is reinforced by the interconnectedness of Catholic and Crown authority in the Spanish empire, especially as it solidified during the seventeenth.

¹⁰¹ Felipe Ruan, "Andean Activism and the Reformulation of Mestizo Agency and Identity in Early Colonial Peru," *Colonial Latin American Review* 21, no. 2 (2012): 209-237.

As mentioned in the introduction, historian Adrian Masters has examined the influence of individual letters and petitions on Crown decrees, finding that oftentimes the language used by the Crown was reflective of the language used by the people. By tracking language in a bottom-up way, Masters illustrates how the language of “race” was constructed in a conversation between the people and the Crown.¹⁰² In conjunction with my project, it becomes clear that the Church was also a member of this conversation, and as such was influential in the construction of “race” as it was understood to function on the ground in the Americas. By examining the arguments made within the Church, this project also illuminates the general consensus on race for individuals living in Spanish America. Church arguments were reflective of the ways that not just decision-makers, but also regular people interacted with the emerging category known as “race” through gendered performances of identity.

Overall, it seems that a move in historiography towards the importance of gender, for both men and women who became racialized in specific ways, is imminent. It seems as though masculinity will emerge as a defining trait for historians of race to grapple with as they delve further into the reasoning behind *mestizo* exclusion in South America, as important to our understanding of their experience as femininity is to our understanding of women’s experiences throughout history. As historians have leaned further in recent years toward studying the concept of performance and identity, it becomes clear that gender is as much a facet of those performances as race, class, and religion.

¹⁰² Masters, “A Thousand Invisible Architects,” 377-406.

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