

when the Cuzco convent of San Juan de Dios (which had acquired the property in the mid-seventeenth century) sold it to a private individual. However, it differs from previous studies which have sought to use colonial legal records as the key to understanding wider social and economic issues, in that its primary preoccupation is to exploit the title deeds to reconstruct for their own sake the mechanisms of the civil/property law of the colonial period.

This process inevitably provides much fascinating information about broader issues: the first of the four substantive chapters (pp. 1–84) summarises the history of the Carrasco family and pulls together scraps of information about the size, structure, labour force and equipment of the estate; the second and third (pp. 85–254) provide a more comprehensive analysis of the operation of colonial property law, and the fourth (pp. 255–84) analyses the functioning of the system of *censos*, showing, *inter alia*, that the convent's income from this source fell gradually from 480 pesos a year at the end of the seventeenth century to 200 in 1819, reflecting perhaps the relative decline of the region (or at least the enterprise) in the Bourbon period. A conclusion of sorts – ‘Notas Finales’ (pp. 285–309) – provides some information on the *cuzqueño* Pablo del Mar y Tapia, who purchased the property from the convent in 1819 for 4,000 pesos and resold it in 1822 for 7,200. Thereafter, the history proper of the estate is not explained beyond a note in the prologue that it belonged to the author's family ‘hasta que fue expropiada por la Reforma Agraria’ (p. xv). It is not made explicit where the title deeds are now located. Other documents are stated to be in the personal archive of Rafael Guevara Ochoa, presumably a member of the same family.

Within its own terms of reference this is a well-constructed and careful study, although its principal appeal will be to legal historians, and its value is somewhat limited for those interested in wider socioeconomic issues.

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Carlos Aguirre, *Agentes de su propia libertad: Los esclavos de Lima y la desintegración de la esclavitud 1821–1854* (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1993), pp. 335.

This is an admirable first book by a social historian of talent. It rides a (belated) breaking wave of interest what was, in republican Peru, so peculiar an institution. Black slavery in greater Lima was a socially and structurally mixed one, set in a crossroads of urban and rural cultures, between coercion and market, and colonialism and republic. Wounded since 1821, it somehow limped on until abolished by executive *fiat* in 1854. Aguirre moves deeper than others – we're blessed at once with four new works on coastal slavery – in untangling the rotting underworld of Afro-Peruvian bondage. Important findings abound here, starting with Aguirre's firm grasp of Peruvian slavery as a system in mortal decline, subtly undermined by the slaves' own efforts. (Enslaved numbers around Lima dropped from nearly 10,000 to fewer than 5,000 by 1850.)

The book is well-crafted into two parts – the first clarifying social structures, and then slave responses to their conditions. In terms of material life, we learn of the broad diffusion of owners and the shifting occupational complexities of the slaves; of falling chattel prices amid labour scarcity; of contrasting urban household and plantation treatment; and of intersects with the *Limeño* ‘plebe’.

We then learn how slaves contested oppressions in the legal system; of negotiated (yet still constrained) spaces and concepts of liberty; of the high, quickening pace of self-purchased manumissions (in which wage-earning slaves pushed a dynamic of bargaining their own price of freedom); the social universe of runaways and rogues; why the exceptionalism of open revolt; and how together, as slow erosions of social control, such factors coloured the form of Peruvian abolition.

Apart from compelling findings, Aguirre's book brims with methodological virtue. He has produced a mature, even an exemplary piece of social history. The work builds from scratch, mainly from the difficult undergrowth of legal and criminal records, a lost social world of Peruvian slaves. It deftly deploys fresh quantitative materials; carefully subjects data to lucidly-posed questions; yet all the while providing a keen feel for the quotidian lives and even moral dilemmas of slaves. It is strong antidote to stale elite narratives on slavery and abolition in early republican Peru. Best of all, Aguirre integrates the leading paradigms of the field – drawn from Rebecca Scott and James Scott (no-relation), sociologist Paterson, comparativist Klein – with nuance, insight, balance. For example, slave resistance and transcripts become key, but never exaggerated links in the slow meltdown of the system. Thus, few doubts linger on the solidity of Aguirre's findings, which superbly round out global understandings of this still murky period and region.

A cranky reviewer can always quibble with an excellent job. While Aguirre shines in social analysis, it sometimes comes at the expense of complementary economic or political perspective. A recent Nobel Laureate of slavery stands conspicuously absent from the bibliography, and may have helped sort out those paradoxes of price and freedom; a world the slaveholders (politically) made appears overly impoverished. One also hoped for more on the cultures of Afro-Peruvians – as more than a quarter of Lima's population, they left an indelible mark on creole society and I would think, indirectly, even on nascent national identities. The lean closing chapter on abolition whets an appetite for fuller analysis. And one wonders who gave the book its sexy but misleading title – 'agentes de su propia libertad' – for as Aguirre subtly shows, those ideas require a lot of historical caveat.

Yet, these are tiny quibbles to Carlos Aguirre's laudable and lasting contribution to both Peruvian history and comparative slave studies.

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Herbert S. Klein, *Haciendas and 'Ayllus': Rural Society in the Bolivian Andes in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. xvi + 230, £39.50.

This study contributes to the growing literature on the mercantile activities of the indian peasants, and on the nature and evolution of landed estates in the highland Andes. Klein has been researching the La Paz region for some time and has now drawn together and rethought some of his earlier publications into a monograph form. Making use of extensive census materials from the 1780s to the 1880s, he examines the structure of rural society in highland Bolivia.

His principal argument is with what he calls the traditional view of an immobile feudal class of landowners and an equally immobile oppressed