

## embodying the Sacred

# EMBODYING the Sacred

WOMEN MYSTICS IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LIMA

Nancy E. van Deusen

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#### Introduction

In his history of Lima, completed in 1639, the Jesuit Bernabé Cobo described the city as the "mystical body" of a "Christian republic." Other observers would have agreed with his characterization of a locale forever "caught up in an endless cycle of liturgical celebration." Processions of statues of popular saints and other public rituals took place on a daily basis. Different religious orders were represented on every street in churches, schools, monasteries, and convents.<sup>2</sup> Some would argue that the gradual transformation of this metropolis into a "baroque theatre state" over the course of the seventeenth century only increased its spiritual and political power.3 Each hour, the chiming church bells reminded *limeños*, the inhabitants of Lima, of the centrality of the sacred to their lives. Each evening, bells tolled on behalf of the dead during the toque de animas, and heads nodded in unison in prayer, uniting the living faithful and fleshless souls. 4 The exemplary religiosity displayed by its populace, Cobo suggested, was the city's principal ornament; it allowed Lima to live up to its reputation as the American epicenter of baroque Catholic culture.5 In the greater scheme of things, the urbs (city) was an integral part of the supernatural and divine order. Like the Eucharist, the City of Kings was a consecrated space and a territorial container for the fully divine and fully human body of Christ.6

Lima was therefore seen as a *cuerpo místico*, itself part of a larger, organic soul, with each member contributing to the well-being of the two corporate republics of Spaniards and Indians.<sup>7</sup> Given the variety of people from Asia, America, Europe, and Africa migrating to and living in the lively viceregal capital, it is not surprising that distinct manifestations of Catholicism should make up the substance of daily life.

The purpose of this volume is to consider the variety and complexity of individual and collective spiritual pathways taken by renowned and lesser-

known women religious figures—including nuns, laywomen, and beatas—in seventeenth-century Lima, many of whom knew one another. I explore the humanity of their acts of charity, their engagement with material objects, and the meanings of their interiorized visions, revelations, and mystical communion as expressed in narrative accounts of their lives. I argue that as women experienced moments of spiritual transformation, they engaged in innovative and powerful ways with the material and immaterial worlds of early modern Catholicism.<sup>8</sup>

In colonial Lima, Peru, one of the two viceregal capitals of the early modern Spanish Empire, women chose a spiritual vocation based on faith, often without knowing where their journeys would lead. Thousands of females lived lives of simple piety in a body politic that encompassed both church (*el cuerpo místico*) and state (*el cuerpo político*). In their ongoing search for the sacred and in their actualization of their piety, they hoped that the pathways they followed, whether inside or outside a monastic setting, would ultimately lead to closer direct, mystical union with God and, perhaps, salvation.

In the stories of the lives of these mystics and deeply pious women we follow the plurality of human impulses that led to the metamorphosis of Catholicism in the "organic soul" of colonial Lima. This book focuses primarily on women and their life narratives, but, in doing so, it underscores the multifarious nature of early modern Iberian Catholicism as it was experienced by all colonial vassals, female or male, and European, African, or Native American. The heterogeneous diffusion and transformation of key theological notions by women facing different kinds of constraints and possibilities was part of this monotheistic religion's richness, adaptability, and perseverance. Women could work as servants in convents, beg for food on the streets, or live in a viceregal palace and still experience the transcendence of the divine.

Expressions of piety ranged from modest to grandiose. Catholics believed that through private acts of faith they could draw closer to God. They whispered supplications to any of the number of saintly individuals from Lima who were being promoted for beatification in Rome, hoping that, in exchange for their veneration, the saints would offer them protection. Maidens or long-married and elderly couples might opt to take formally sanctioned vows of celibacy, thus effectuating monastic-like vows within lay society. Catholics also believed that they could access divinity through holy material objects, and nowhere was this more evident than in the microcosm of the home. Most households contained religious images; families read hagiographic texts and regularly discussed theological issues that departed from orthodox ideas of the supernatural. In their actions, limeños engaged

continually with relics and images of saints—both local and European—in their supplications for health, wealth, and safety. If we consider, for example, the manner in which colonial vassals appropriated saints in their different incarnations—as relics, shrines, paintings, or statues—we see how the belief that sacred energy could manifest in material objects (that were intended to represent the original person) was embedded in praxis.<sup>13</sup>

In the seventeenth century, "sacred materialities" mattered a great deal. David Morgan defines this construct in terms of the features of physical objects, as well as the cultural spaces in which these objects were "produced, consumed, exchanged and displayed."14 Sacred objects are mentioned in manifold ways in documents, but historians can easily overlook them or consider them only as a part of the mise-en-scène they are trying to depict. But sacred objects were important not only for their symbolic content but also for the ways in which they were actualized and appropriated by women who employed their senses to mediate what they deemed to be holy. Understanding how the sacred became "real" to women is key to understanding the gendered nature of female spiritual expression, which could occur in the most quotidian of ways. Limeñas embodied the sacred when they wore scapulars near their hearts and jeweled sacred images pinned to their cloaks. They embodied the sacred as they arranged freshly cut flowers on altars or cut their hair as a symbol of their complete rejection of the world. Expressions of devotion toward the divine could occur at a moment's notice or take the form of lavish, scripted gestures. Anyone could engage with the supernatural world—by gazing at a portrait of the Christ child, snipping a piece of a garment still gracing a holy corpse, or stitching birds and flowers on the banners to be carried in a procession by a venerated saint's confraternity. Divinity was present in the mundane.

Sacred acts and actions were also gendered. Pious women might take calculated risks, engaging in behaviors that would lead some to see them as conforming to orthodox Catholic tenets, but others to condemn them for excessive pride or self-aggrandizement. María Jacinta Montoya (1645–1710), one of the mystics considered in this volume, had to navigate the fine line between arrogance and respectability in how she represented herself before ecclesiastical authorities. She was an esteemed figure in Lima, the governess of a lay pious institution called a *beaterio*, and the wife of the saintly indigenous tailor Nicolás de Ayllón (1632–77), whose beatification hearings began soon after his death. Like other women, Montoya interpreted the tenets of Catholicism in creative ways. She was a writer, an advocate, and a mystic (someone chosen by God to channel divine knowledge). In her understand-

ing, theology meant scrutinizing the soul's interior under the steady guidance of a confessor or experiencing a wordless comprehension of the divine alone in a spare monastic cell. Female mystics seeking an internal path toward God might express their beliefs in the ineffable by engaging with holy, venerated objects; by uttering prayers they knew by heart; or by entering a state of mystical rapture. That is not to say that men did not perform the same actions. But these women's cultural opportunities and constraints, ideas of self in relation to others and particularly to God, and venues for written and verbal expression were uniquely feminine.

This book focuses on female religiosity in part because, by 1700, Lima was indeed a city of women raising the hems of their skirts as they stepped into carriages or navigated the muddy streets. Fifty-eight percent of limeños were female. Accustomed to having their husbands, fathers, or brothers leave for the silver-rich city of Potosí in Bolivia, bounteous coastal estates, or faraway Atlantic and Pacific ports, they ran households and were often the de facto center of families. Many women operated small businesses selling slaves or merchandise, or earned income from renting properties or plots. In a metropolis with a wealthy Spanish aristocratic minority and a large plebeian majority, one-quarter of all women lived independently from men in their own dwellings. Dozens of unhappily married women sought annulments or divorces (legal separations) before the ecclesiastical court.<sup>15</sup>

Certain sacred spaces were uniquely female, however. In this viceregal capital, home to the royal court (the Audiencia, established in 1542), the seat of the archbishopric and the Inquisition tribunal, 20 percent of females lived in convents, *recogimientos* (institutions of enclosure and education for women and girls), beaterios (lay pious houses generally affiliated with a religious order), or smaller, informal establishments, as nuns, *donadas* (religious servants), boarders, schoolgirls, servants, or slaves. 16 Entering any one of the dozen convents for life or on a temporary basis was a popular option. Even if a female did not spend time in a convent, she knew an aunt, sister, or daughter of a servant or slave who had. Girls and women entered the cloistered domain for different reasons and at different stages of their lives. Girls of Spanish heritage might enter at a tender age to be schooled, leaving years later with an institutional imprimatur that enhanced their chances of a favorable betrothal to the worthiest of suitors. Convents were also spaces that reinforced hierarchies of difference based on lineage, ethno-racial categories, or economic status. Only women of Spanish or mestiza heritage could become nuns of the black veil (the highest rank) or white veil (the second-highest rank). The

only option available to women of African or indigenous descent was to take informal vows as *donadas* or to work as *criadas* (personal servants).

Devout women who preferred life in *el siglo* (the world) might become beatas, or lay pious women who were affiliated with the third rule of the regular clergy, which included the Franciscans, Dominicans, Mercedarians, and Augustinians. They might also seek the counsel of Jesuit priests. Some beatas lived alone or informally in a community with other women. To survive, they formed broadly based consanguine and fictive kinship ties with other families, including with women (married or single, elite or disenfranchised) who later took their vows as poor nuns in convents. Others worked as servants in the homes of wealthy benefactors. Facing poverty, unemployment, marital strife, or issues with child care or health, these women supported one another as they attempted to eke out meager livings: changing the bandages of the infirm in hospitals, requesting alms for the poor, or sewing mattresses for convents. 17 After 1660 the foundation of several formal institutions called beaterios allowed women of modest means to take vows as beatas; many of them were genuinely committed to social assistance and education efforts.<sup>18</sup> Life as a poor tertiary (a synonym for *beata*) was their only option, since the required large dowry prevented them from entering a convent.<sup>19</sup>

Others had different reasons for disavowing a monastic life. When Feliciana de Jesús (1600–64) came to Lima from the northern city of Trujillo, she feared that convent life would be too confining. At the age of fifteen, she took her vows as a tertiary, while Isabel (Rosa) Flores de Oliva (1586–1617, canonized in 1671 as Santa Rosa) was still alive, and sought her advice. Like the hundreds of female migrants to Lima in the early seventeenth century, Feliciana sought gainful employment as one of the dozens of lay religious employed by the city's convents and monasteries. She supported herself, her mother, and her sister by arranging flowers and gardening. She also gained a reputation as a skilled seamstress by stitching linens. Even then, she was barely able to pay for her small room in the humble neighborhood of San Lázaro; as curtains she used "paper (or cards) stamped with images of saints to whom she was devoted, and especially [those of] Our Lady."<sup>22</sup>

Despite the strict cloistering in convents and beaterios mandated by the Council of Trent (1545–63), beatas actively participated in the broader Lima community as prophets, mystics, healers, and teachers.<sup>23</sup> Because of their charitable efforts, several beatas were recognized by the Lima community as being living saints or worthy of sanctification.<sup>24</sup> The most celebrated, the aforementioned Rosa (Isabel Flores de Oliva), who died in 1617, set the *pri*-

mus inter pares example for a number of poor and wealthy women in Lima to emulate.<sup>25</sup> Even after several beatas were sentenced by the Inquisition for false sanctity in 1625, tertiaries continued to thrive in Lima. Most of these women were not recognized by the Lima community as worthy of sanctification, but documents such as wills, inventories, and divorce proceedings reveal them leading quiet, pious lives and engaging in charitable activities. These beatas were not the *alumbradas* (false mystics) or sorceresses demonized in Inquisition proceedings, sources on which scholars often rely too heavily to understand female devotional practices.<sup>26</sup> If we compare Inquisition-generated sources with other documents, a more balanced view of female experiences and concerns emerges.

Not only did pious women inhabit institutional spaces reserved for their gender, but many spent a great deal of time in each other's company, dressing statues about to be carried in procession, witnessing a moment of rapture in a friend's home, or kneading dough in convents. Clustered in private and public settings, women labored, bickered, and imparted their innermost thoughts.<sup>27</sup> Hierarchical differences based on *calidad* (categorizations based on physicality, occupation, and other criteria) distinguished the kinds of opportunities that women of Spanish or African descent, orphans, or women with aristocratic surnames had in those public and private spaces.<sup>28</sup> On outings to Mass or any of the religious festivities that occurred on a daily basis, for instance, elite women of Spanish descent would surround themselves with a retinue of female servants and slaves. Mistresses and servants alike, some adorned in "a thousand silks," covered their faces with lace veils and devotional scapulars and embellished their lavish apparel with jeweled medallions. Less affluent women, concerned with the mouths they had to feed, might wear a simple gold-lacquered cross inherited from their mothers, a coarser cloth shrouding their heads.

Females learned about the sacred from other women. Lay and religious women apprenticed with one another; they studied recondite secrets in each other's homes, in convent vestibules, or in the churches they frequented. From sermons they understood how sins received particular punishments, and why it was so necessary for souls to gain assistance. From visions they learned to "see" and "hear" the multitudes of needy souls. In churches they read the narrative details of paintings depicting naked souls caught in flames and reaching for redemption.<sup>29</sup> Learning about the lives of medieval female saints facilitated a sororial dialogue connecting past and present.

In gender-specific locations, and in shared company, women iterated their social positioning vis-à-vis other women in an exchange of material objects

and theological ideas.<sup>30</sup> Women carried in processions crosses and banners they had sewn, or stood on the edge of a crowd hoping to get a glimpse of a passing statue, or collected grains of earth from the tomb of a recently deceased "saint." These public spaces were not exclusive to women; men could inhabit the same "physical" space: a church vestibule, the marketplace, or the streets where processions passed by. But they did not participate in the interactions and exchanges that occurred there in the same ways.<sup>31</sup> Women also created patterns of habitual movement as they traveled from their homes into public spaces—plazas, hospitals, and churches—and facilitated the everyday "performance of gender."<sup>32</sup> On their daily routines they would pass by one or more of the female institutions that distinguished each city block, thus enhancing their epistemological understandings of what it meant to be female in seventeenth-century Lima.<sup>33</sup>

#### How to Write a History of Female Catholic Religiosity

Scholars who study female Catholic religiosity in the late medieval and early modern periods often engage historian Joan Kelly's classic argument in her article "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" that women lost status in the Renaissance period and beyond.<sup>34</sup> Those who follow this line of argumentation argue that female mystics often experienced oppression under the Inquisition or other censorious ecclesiastical figures but that they also manifested gendered forms of authority in navigating patriarchal constraints.<sup>35</sup> This volume takes as a given that women continually faced specific, gendered limitations, some of them severe, and that they were sometimes perceived and treated as inferior beings. 36 Masculine biases against pious women were further complicated by perceived differences in European, African, or indigenous American heritage; the strength of family connections; and economic constraints, as well as physical appearance and dress. But feminine expressions of spirituality were generally not manifested to counter male oppression or subvert ideological constructs, since the ultimate goal for pious women was spiritual self-transformation on behalf of others. Spiritual self-transcendence involved submitting to God's will, but it was a process that empowered women and gave them spiritual authority in the eyes of others.<sup>37</sup> If transcendence involved women experiencing the divine beyond form or substance, it also meant conveying in language "what is there."38

Moreover, males and females were not opposite poles on a religious spectrum: they often collaborated and cooperated to produce new forms of Catholic expression.<sup>39</sup> Deeply pious, spiritual men also lived under the watchful

gaze of Inquisition bureaucrats; they too risked adapting the complexities of Catholicism to their own conceptualizations of the divine, to their own palette of understanding. But a gendered study of masculine religiosity in Lima has yet to be written.<sup>40</sup>

Generally, considerations of how early modern women acquired theological knowledge emphasize the pivotal nature of the confessorial relationship and the dominant role confessors played in women's lives. Confessors were responsible for ensuring that their female protégées were following orthodox practices. They were also authorized to represent their pious confessees in hagiographic and other writings that described visions, supernatural healings, and prophecies. These accounts would determine how the women would be remembered and accessed in the centuries to come. But these unequal power-laden relationships could, as Jodi Bilinkoff and John Coakley have shown, be mutually constituting and filled with tenderness and affinity. Furthermore, although "dominant male personalities" certainly played a key role in many women's lives, their influence needs to be seen in tandem with the intimate spiritual relations that developed among women. The "binomial relationship between confessor and holy woman" formed only one aspect of the circulation and expression of mystical knowledge. "2"

Men were continually present in women's lives, but at times they stood in the background. There were the confessors who loaned women books or offered them sage advice, or the authors of vidas who scripted the lives of some of the female subjects considered in this volume. Male ecclesiastical authorities regularly co-opted the words and experiences of women for their own glorification, and women had to gain or maintain their support. Pious women still referenced their deceased, saintly husbands, or how the women had defied formidable brothers and imposing archbishops. But this book is a history about women who were at the center of a small universe. It seeks to convey their individual and collective experiences of the sacred but does not take as a given that the categories of "female mystic" or "pious woman" were stable ontological categories. Rather, this book's exploration of the sacred itself a complex array of practices—questions some of the universalizing representations of female piety in a new way. It takes as its foundation "the relentless interrogation of the taken-for-granted" and explores unspoken assumptions about femininity.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, it moves the lens away from dissecting patriarchal discourses or analyzing how women negotiated or resisted the strictures of the female pious self. Instead, it moves the discussion of piety into the realm of relationality with other women and objects and, with the exception of chapter 5, away from a consideration of the oppositional binary of "male" and "female." Moreover, the book's methodologies do not ask the reader to make a false choice between representation and discourse, on the one hand, and the lived experiences of women, on the other. Instead, it centers on female sensorial, linguistic, and relational resonances with the sacred at a particular historical place and time.

Admittedly, part of the problem of seeing pious "women" as continually navigating misogynist discourse (overcoming one's weak nature, for one) is in the nature of male-generated sources. A heavy reliance on Inquisition records has led to the general assumption that female expressions of piety threatened society more broadly. The presence of one of three Spanish-American Inquisition tribunals in Lima in 1570 determined the parameters of orthodox and unorthodox female religiosity and pursued disciplinary measures to ensure that women conformed to those guidelines. As the seventeenth century progressed, the tendril-like inquisitorial bureaucracy insinuated itself into the private domain of limeños, enabling authorities to determine whether Lima's Catholic subjects (excluding Indians) were abiding by the Catholic canon. 44 In the locus of Lima, female mystics and beatas were particularly susceptible to being scrutinized and discredited. Although men were tried more often than women for crimes of minor and major heresy, women were punished more severely if proven guilty. Thus, these records would have us believe that an increased criminalization of female piety corresponded to the Inquisition's active interventions to constrain and persecute women.<sup>45</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that Inquisition authorities, not the women placed on trial, drew the line in the sand that defined orthodox and deviant conduct. 46 One could accept at face value the assertion of one ecclesiastical authority who described the gathering of some lay pious women in 1622 as a "grangería de raptos"—a commercialization of ecstatic raptures. 47 Certainly this view came to predominate in a major sea change that occurred in the early 1620s among the upper echelon of the Jesuits and regular orders. 48 But beyond the disparaging portrayals of contemporary female spiritual practices, and beyond the valorizations that codified the experiences of pious women as "false" inventions (or what might later be characterized as Freudian hysteria), lies a wealth of information about the complex and contradictory gendered notions of spirituality in daily life. 49

Despite the watchful presence of the Inquisition and a devaluation of female sanctity, a spiritual renaissance and a "feminization of piety" characterized by affective spirituality, visionary experiences, contemplation, penitential asceticism, and suffering in imitation of Christ was occurring in the vibrant urbs. <sup>50</sup> A broad constituency of devoted Catholics—from eccle-

siastical superiors to mendicant widows to beatas—embraced the practice of *interioridad*, deep, internal spiritual contemplation.<sup>51</sup> Performing external manifestations of faith was also a key component of female piety; good works, including charity toward the dispossessed, were integral to female expressions of conformity to God's will.<sup>52</sup> Mystics might suffer bodily on behalf of the souls in purgatory, but they also took on the suffering of the infirm and the poor by begging for alms or sewing linens for hospitals.

In an urban environment where inward piety and external displays of charity were not only promoted but much admired, healers, nuns, beatas, and sorceresses developed personal contacts and fomented important spiritual networks.<sup>53</sup> One could argue that feminine knowledge of the sacred in this period was often based less on formal learning than on what was "spiritually experienced" (experimentado), which transpired both corporeally and through visions.<sup>54</sup> Learning about the sacred could occur through word of mouth, through personal tutoring, or through the *imitatio morum*—literally, the "imitation of ways" of pious authorities, both male and female. It could also occur in the process of imparting understandings of specific texts, religious icons, or a body in rapture. By being in each other's company and by sharing knowledge of the divine, women developed cognitive maps of the ineffable and feminine understandings of theological matters.55 They shared religious ideas about the self in relation to God, sin, notions of the corporeal and immaterial body, and the power of the material to manifest the divine. They also imparted to other women the centrality of service to the infirm or poor, the meaning of monastic vows, and ideas about what constituted a saint.56

If an overreliance on Inquisition records has led to a false reading of how early modern women conceptualized unorthodox and orthodox conduct, so too we have tended to identify the spiritual practices of "sorceresses" as distinct from those of "nuns." Generally, we associate predictions and incantations with sorceresses, but nuns and beatas regarded by limeños as virtuous and saintly also invoked the spirit worlds through distinct means—spells, prayers, or self-flagellation—to alleviate poverty, illness, or marital strife.<sup>57</sup> That can be explained by the fact that, for limeños of all walks of life, the line between religion and the supernatural was opaque. "Magicality," or the belief that divinity was ubiquitous and readily accessible in material form, was integral to daily life.<sup>58</sup> Magicality could be made manifest by silently appealing to Jesus or Mary or by placing earth from the tomb of a venerated mystic on an afflicted area. Incantations to aid in healing the infirm or finding a lost object might mix orthodox, bona fide and magical practices.

Nuns commonly pleaded with the saints to intervene on behalf of distressed patrons, and they shared visions and prognostications with the members of the religious community or visitors in the *locutorio* (visitors' parlor).<sup>59</sup> In her Inquisition hearing in 1592, doña Isabel de Angulo, accused of sorcery, responded that she had learned "holy incantations" and rituals from nuns in Seville. 60 When Gerónima de San Francisco, a discalced nun of the Monasterio de las Descalzas de San José (or San Joseph), heard that a woman had not given birth to her stillborn child for three days, she located an old cord once worn by a friar, cleaned it, and prayed to Saint Francis for a miracle while the afflicted woman held the object against her swollen belly and successfully expelled the dead child.<sup>61</sup> Even Santa Rosa, known for performing major miracles, also participated in more mundane, "magical" spiritual practices. She once predicted that a fugitive slave would return to work the following day; she helped cure an *india* (female Indian or indigenous) servant working in a convent. 62 Secular and ecclesiastical authorities lauded the ability of Isabel de Porras Marmolejo (1551–1631), the former governess of the Colegio del Carmen, a school for elite girls, to heal the sick by making the sign of the cross over the afflicted area.<sup>63</sup> Just as female religious were involved in socalled esoteric practices, the activities of so-called sorceresses were generally not the result of megalomania or harmful intentions; on the contrary, they formed the economic and spiritual manna of daily life. 64 In spite of the wishes of Inquisition authorities, the desire to control the unknown operated along a continuum where the boundaries between life and death, the quotidian and the esoteric, were not readily distinguishable. In churches, markets, small apartments, and crowded convents, laywomen and nuns shared perceptions that combined the heretical and the fantastic with the theologically sound.<sup>65</sup>

#### Biography and Autobiography, Person and Object

As difficult as it is to discern how women established networks inside and outside institutional settings, or to gain an understanding of their shared experiences of orthodox and unorthodox beliefs from extant sources, it is also sometimes difficult to determine where the life of a pious woman began and ended. Thus, we turn to biographies and autobiographies to frame life events into narratives with beginnings and endings that create a believable "truth." As a genre, spiritual vidas (life writings) are like autobiographies and biographies in that they focus on key events and transitions in an individual's life, and emphasize the impact on others of the subject's actions, gestures, and words. <sup>66</sup> A vida might be published or unpublished, and its author might be

the nun or mystic herself, a confessor, or some other religious authority.<sup>67</sup> In the medieval and early modern periods, dozens of autobiographic vidas were written by women in Spain and Spanish America at the bequest of their spiritual confessors. Dozens more spiritual biographies were written by male ecclesiastics (occasionally ones penned by nuns would remain in manuscript form) hoping to promote a female candidate for sainthood.<sup>68</sup>

Like biographies and autobiographies, vidas stress their subjects' major achievements but also emphasize their heroic virtues of charity, prudence, love, and fortitude. <sup>69</sup> They follow the canonical conventions of the period, conventions that were constrained by how the saintly characteristics of the candidate for beatification or canonization should be crafted, the construction of the timeline of the "life" from childhood to death and beyond, and the kinds of miracles that would attract attention in Rome. Vidas might be book length or only take up several folios in the larger histories of a given order (called *crónicas conventuales*). <sup>70</sup> The sources on which vidas were based included confessional narratives as well as the notes (*apuntamientos*) left by confessors or nuns.

That being said, vidas had their own methodological baggage distinguishing them from more conventional biographies and autobiographies. They were meant to demonstrate irrefutably that the female mystic had manifested extraordinary devotion to God and had been chosen by God to be a voice of divinity and to act on behalf of others. Although vidas provide important insights into popular religious beliefs and female spiritual practices, they must be used with caution, since they tend to reveal more about imagined, gendered notions of female sanctity than about women's creative interpretations of theology. Moreover, contemporary notions of physical and cultural difference, including the relationship between whiteness and purity, also determined how archetypes of white saints and saints of color came into being.

Produced in a specific context at a specific time, these texts and their conventions were shaped by local historical contingencies and intended for specific audiences.<sup>73</sup> Just as the mystic's exemplary life was scripted to conform to specific conventions related to heroic virtues, vidas were meant to convey a sense of spiritual truth *in time*.<sup>74</sup> Time in these texts could be a chronological simulation of the woman's life (*chronos*), or it could follow certain annual liturgical events in Christ's or a saint's life (*kairos*). The writings of or about female mystics shared a common discourse sometimes dating back to the medieval period as women mimicked the emplotment of one another's life stories.<sup>75</sup> Women's self-portrayals also engaged in sororial dialogue with the written accounts of their medieval and early modern predecessors,

linking (and integrating) past and present lives across space and time.76 This literary connection concatenated time and space in new ways. For example, the unpublished vida of Gerónima de San Francisco (written on the orders of her confessor in 1635) was at once deeply personal as well as highly scripted and predictable. Gerónima's conscious attempt to mimic the structure and contents of other female vidas, like that of the Spanish Carmelite nun and mystic Teresa de Ávila (1515–82), was by no means unusual. Because it closely followed contemporary canons of hagiographic writings and engaged with some of the ideas expressed by Teresa de Ávila, it was more than a simple biography. It was also a composite of "biographies" and intricately linked to a larger canon of writings by female mystics.<sup>77</sup> Teresa de Ávila in particular served as a model for seventeenth-century female writers. She was canonized in 1622, and her vida (or that written by her confessor), mystical treatises, and regulations for her Carmelite nuns provided written guidelines for seventeenth-century mystics in Spain and Latin America wishing to pursue similar paths.<sup>78</sup> Given the intersected nature of vidas, how, then, do we as readers navigate the temporal and structural parameters of life narratives and still gain a sense of both extemporaneity and authorship in them? What is their relationality?

Beatification hearings provide another rich source by which to study the gendered nature of female religious practices and beliefs. These *procesos* had two stages—the ordinary or diocesan stage and the apostolic one—which might lead to the beatification and, ultimately, canonization of the holy person in question. Initiated by the Vatican in Rome, the hearings were inquiries that followed an established set of questions about the virtues and miracles of the saintly candidate, which scores of witnesses were required to answer. Although the questions were somewhat formulaic, respondents' answers often included unrehearsed stories and vibrant particulars, especially during the first, diocesan phase.<sup>79</sup> This material would later be excerpted and recast or rescripted into published or unpublished vidas that fit canonical norms of virtuous conduct.<sup>80</sup>

The purpose of vidas, and, to a lesser extent, beatification *procesos*, was to demarcate a "life" within the ideal gendered parameters of sanctity. This contrasts with Inquisition trials meant to delineate which spiritual practices deviated from orthodox norms. Inquisition proceedings (or the summaries of them) present another kind of challenge in finding a woman's voice because of the structural nature of procedures to be followed, the line of questioning, and the time and manner in which they were produced.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, in the responses of female mystics answering charges that they were engaged

in heretical or delusional practices, we can detect certain truths about how they negotiated sanctity and gendered practices. 82 There are fissures within their portrayals of constraint and conformity. There are glimmerings of the sacred in the mundane. Even within the rigid interrogation framework and structuring of narratives about unorthodox conduct, elements of spontaneity can be found, as Stacey Schlau argues. The devil is in the details. 83

It is also possible to find the multivalent locations of female voice in other kinds of sacred materialities: texts that include petitions, the female body in ecstasy, or a list of relics.<sup>84</sup> These too were "readable" texts, as historian Roger Chartier argues. Texts, he posits, "did not necessarily come in book form: some were orally produced works, or visions which were then rendered into a narrative structure using language and symbols to invite interpretation and appropriation."85 Descriptions of a female body in ecstasy and a list of relics of the living and dead were texts containing voice, plot, and a sense of change over time. Documentary fragments, including the rather formulaic, two-sentence autos de ingreso (entrance petitions) and expedientes de profesión (profession documents) of girls and women seeking to enter convents as donadas, contain biographical elements. When considered in the aggregate, they produce prosopographical narratives that enhance our understanding of the desires, constraints, and possibilities of spiritual expression for young women, many of them women of color. These bits and pieces representing human experience can be communicated, translated, and assimilated into story form. 86 In sum, the kind of text, its form of transmission (orally, in writing, or through a visual performance), and its reception (how the "language" of that text was received by means of the senses) help explain how sacred texts were created and how we might use them.

Each of the six chapters in this volume considers a variety of sources to re-create autobiographies and biographies in the broadest sense of the term. In general, our understanding of female saints comes from examining how they were appropriated and emplotted as characters into an already known story. We know the beginnings and endings of saints' lives because of the subjective renderings made by others in beatification and Inquisition procesos, and in unpublished or published hagiographies.<sup>87</sup> We know how renowned pious women were supposed to behave, because written accounts or oral testimonies (in beatification hearings, for example) recounted specific supernatural events that were then used to construct spiritual vidas or to promote the women's candidacy for beatification or canonization. As students, we are trained to distinguish between the narrating and the narrated self.<sup>88</sup> We pay attention to the selves in these texts, since there were the "I's" in the past (the

observer and the observed in the past) and the "I's" in the present reflecting on the past while constituting a narrative in the present.<sup>89</sup>

But what if we look at the creation of the subject and the emplotment of events (who did what when) in the saint's life in another way? According to Michel de Certeau, mystical practices created new spaces (texts) from which spirit could speak and from which different biographical utterances were rendered knowable. 90 Thus, if we consider the objects with which Rosa de Lima interacted as narrative fragments, we can explain how she used them to teach theological principles to her disciples.<sup>91</sup> Exchanges of knowledge were taking place, even if they are scarcely visible in the written account. These objects are integral to Rosa's story and that of her disciples. If we step back and observe the observer observing the mystic do something with something or someone (the event fragment that will help unify the narrative thread), we can see the narrator recounting an event where learning and creating meaning vis-à-vis her engagement with objects and with each other occurred simultaneously.92 Material objects were often the intermediaries between a mystic and her audience, and between the processes of communication and reception. The interrelationality of religious expression and the communication of ideas and meaning is, therefore, key to deepening our understanding of early modern female spirituality.

This book's first section, "Material and Immaterial Embodiment," consists of three chapters and argues that the biography of things is the story of their classifications, renderings, valuations, and performances. 93 Things have "thingness," but they also have a social life because of how they are perceived, adopted, and utilized. Sacred material objects like statues, cloth, and relics contain biographical elements, and stories about the relationality between humans and objects inform one another. Early modern individuals employed their somatic literacy to access what was divinely alive in these ever-changing sacred objects. Sacred objects or "holy matter" might include relics, contact relics (things that the saint or holy person had touched), and devotional images such as statues. But these things were also believed to have cultural meaning in themselves. Their thingness or capacity to convey divine ineffability was also what made limeñas covet and engage with them. They were believed to be loci where profound religious exploration might occur. 94 That being said, religious objects differed in how they were conceptualized and consumed.95 There were differences, for instance, in how a mystic engaged with a statue of the baby Jesus, a deceased nun's finger bone, or a swatch from a garment once worn by a holy individual. Moreover, because Catholics believed they could also objectify the body of the mystic (not the fleshand-blood self), people interpreted and "read" bodies as mystical texts. Furthermore, relics, or holy body fragments of the living or the dead, could also convey biographical information about the fragmentary objects or about the mystic whose body parts were being circulated.

Chapter 1, "Rosa de Lima and the Imitatio Morum," considers Isabel Flores de Oliva (known as Santa Rosa de Lima or Rosa de Santa María), one of America's most revered saints, who was beatified in 1667 and canonized in 1671. I build on the vast literature on Santa Rosa to center on the small circle of devotees called hijas espirituales, laywomen and beatas who knew Rosa intimately. Several went on to found monastic institutions or become renowned spiritual leaders, or they were themselves the subjects of short biographical accounts. Their testimonials during the first, ordinary (1617–18) and second, apostolic stage (1630-32) of Rosa's beatification hearings contain information about how her companions gained a sensorial knowledge of prayer, ritual, and theological precepts of charity, fortitude, and humility by means of the imitatio morum, learning by imitation. 96 Rosa's disciples observed and listened to her give spiritual talks or teach them prayers, some of which she had written. But they also observed her engaging with material objects, most notably cloth and statues, which were thought to contain divine matter. Through their actions, words, and intentions, by dressing and praying to what Amy Whitehead calls "statue-persons," they invested them with divine personhood.<sup>97</sup> One of the statues mentioned frequently by respondents during the beatification hearings was that of Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-80), a spiritual model for Rosa with whom she regularly communicated.98 Adorning religious statues and readying them for processions not only connected disciple and teacher, with the material objects as intermediaries, but enabled them to "think back through" (to adapt Virginia Woolf's term) their saintly predecessors and commune with the saints' divine essence and history.99

Chapter 2, "Reading the Body: Mystical Theology and Spiritual Actualization in Early Seventeenth-Century Lima," focuses on the stories that the bodies of female mystics could tell. The body was composed of flesh, but it was also a site of pious expression and a divine vessel that facilitated spiritual ecstasy (*arrobamiento*), healing, protection, and salvation. Of course, flesh-and-blood women were involved in communicative supernatural processes, but their bodies were also objects that held meaning and could be appropriated and read. As illuminated women, their spiritual bodies served the higher purpose of facilitating spiritual communications. It was not their personhood but their communicative bond with the divine that mattered;

observers could access and then interpret the interior layers of these mystics' souls—their godness, if you will. Particular women mentioned in the chapter, including Isabel de Porras Marmolejo, Luisa Melgarejo de Sotomayor (1578–1651), Rosa de Lima, and Gerónima de San Francisco, were all considered to be conduits through whom God spoke. <sup>101</sup> As a result, others constituted narratives about the encounters these mystics had with the beyond. The ecstatic female body therefore had a particular kind of biography that tells us a great deal about how seventeenth-century readers and mystics experienced and conveyed their understandings of the divine in a gendered, somatic manner.

Early modern Iberian vassals also believed that the parts of the whole, and especially relics, could embody Christian materiality and that holy body parts were endowed with supernatural powers. Chapter 3, "Living in an (Im)Material World: Ángela de Carranza as a Reliquary," considers the biography of the living Augustine beata Ángela de Carranza (ca. 1642 – after 1694). Ángela's history was more than a biography of a strong-willed, intelligent woman who developed her own theological notions, claimed to be illuminated, and questioned the male ecclesiastical power structure. As she gained recognition and authority as a mystic, theologian, and prophet among limeños, she dispensed (and sold) the products of her body, including her hair, nails, and urine, as well as objects which she came in contact with (i.e., contact relics) to her devout followers. The more these relic fragments of Ángela circulated, the more power and prestige she gained. They told stories, stories that created multiple narratives and rendered Ángela both a relic and a reliquary, or dispensary of relics.

Whereas part 1 of the book explores how material objects helped compose the biographies of mystics, part 2, "The Relational Self," argues that the "lifelines [of female piety] came from and extended to others," whether at the individual or group level. <sup>103</sup> Each of the three chapters in the second half of the book considers how pious women constituted their spiritual, gendered selves in relation to others, male and female, kith and kin. <sup>104</sup> If we accept the liberating and limiting aspects of biographical and autobiographical writings and our reliance on these texts to understand female spirituality, it becomes essential to interrogate more closely the forms and elements that structure life narratives, whether in documentary or published form. What follows in this section of the book is an exploration of *relationality*, or the mutually constitutive self-constitution and constitution by other individuals, as key to understanding biographical and autobiographical portrayals. Relationality assumes that the "I" is predicated by relationships to other persons, and that

the "I" in autobiographical writings is both subject and object. The framing of a spiritual self might occur as juxtaposition to someone else's behavior or through gendered mirroring. Spirituality in this period was also defined in a positional manner, vis-à-vis superiors or divine beings.

In 2004 the publication of The Souls of Purgatory made available the spiritual diary of Úrsula de Jesús (1604–66), an Afro-Peruvian donada, recorded at the request of her confessors. This source has a lot to say about Lima and the conventual culture within which the freed slave Ursula lived, worked, and experienced mystical communications with divine beings and souls in purgatory. Her diary also contains heart-wrenching passages about how she suffered discrimination, fear, and bone-weary tiredness. It references the "little ones," or those servants and slaves ignored by the convent's nuns but considered blessed by God.<sup>105</sup> Apart from Úrsula's diary, we know little about the hundreds of other women of African and indigenous heritage who lived and labored in Lima's highly regimented convents and who, like Úrsula, were denied the right to be nuns because of their color or legal status. Instead, they chose the only available option and took vows as donadas. Chapter 4, "Carrying the Cross of Christ: Donadas in Seventeenth-Century Lima," creates a prosopographical assemblage of the biographies of over five hundred donadas based on the petitions and licenses associated with the legal process of entering a convent as a novice and taking one's vows a year later. 106

Generally, prosopographies seek to unite the common characteristics of a particular group. However, to avoid essentializing the spiritual practices of disparate women who all happened to hold the same title and status as donadas in any number of Lima's convents, I tease out the *dimensionality* of donadas. By considering the heterogeneous motivations for wanting to take formal vows, and the different economic and family backgrounds of the aspirants, I illuminate what some would call the sociographic aspects of their collective biographies as well as their relationality to others living inside and outside the convent walls. Donadas lived in convents with hundreds of other religious women, and they expressed themselves as spiritual beings in a relational or positional manner to the nuns, their superiors, and other donadas, as well as the servants and slaves. As they polished floors and chopped wood, they maintained sororial dialogues about their intimate understandings of the divine with their peers, protégés, and superiors. They also related to those living in the siglo, especially their parents or other family members. That donadas were laborers did not make them less spiritual than the nuns.

Chapter 5, "María Jacinta Montoya, Nicolás de Ayllón, and the Unmaking of an Indian Saint in Late Seventeenth-Century Peru," follows the complex

story of a wife's pursuit of her husband's beatification. In 1679 ecclesiastical authorities initiated proceedings to consecrate the Indian tailor Nicolás de Ayllón (1632–77), a popular "saint" known as the "Apostle of the Poor." Within twelve years, however, the *proceso* had stalled. The delay was blamed on Ayllón's wife, the mestiza María Jacinta Montoya (1645–1710), who was viewed as having an "arrogant nature" and accused of falsifying information related to Ayllón's miracles. An examination of the beatification hearings and Montoya's self-denunciation before the Inquisition in 1701 reveals how she created a "relational self." As she fashioned the symbolic identity of her husband as a humble, masculine, Christlike Indian saint in her writings and political activities, she also contrasted his positive qualities with her own negative ones. Through gender mirroring, she promoted her own Magdalene conversion, thus constructing herself symbolically as "what he is not, and therefore as an essential reminder of what he is." 107 At the same time, as she peered into a hall of mirrors, she acted on his behalf as a strong religious authority in her own right. Her writings express a double consciousness: a deep awareness of others' perceptions of her and her husband and also of the complex gender norms that reinforced her representations of herself as a female authority and mystic. Her relations with others also extended to the public. She encouraged indigenous authorities and the general populace to vocalize and record the heroic events of Ayllón's sacred life narrative that they had experienced, while simultaneously highlighting her own self-discovery of the sacred within. 108

Chapter 6, "Amparada de mi libertad: Josefa Portocarrero Laso de la Vega and the Meaning of Free Will," concerns a mother's and daughter's struggles around the daughter's wish to establish and enter a convent. Following the death of the Count of Monclova (viceroy, 1689-1705), his daughter, the Spanish aristocrat doña Josefa, determined to invest her ample inheritance in founding a new monastery in Lima dedicated to the now-canonized Santa Rosa de Lima and to take her vows as a nun and remain there for life. This decision prompted her mother to file a legal suit against her, involving the archbishop of Lima, the king of Spain, and other secular and ecclesiastical authorities. This chapter examines the conflicting interpretations that lay at the heart of Josefa's power struggles: the meaning of freedom (libertad) and of being protected (amparada) by canon (and natural) law to choose a monastic vocation. Her self-characterization, predicated by her relationship to her self, to other family members, and to God, contrasted sharply with her mother's representation of Josefa as she attempted to foil her daughter's desires. Here is another kind of mirroring, pitting mother against daughter as each attempted to control the gendered message of who Josefa was.

On one level, this volume explores the possibilities of spiritual expression—opportunities, venues, ways of learning—that were effective for women. I show how pious women conveyed a knowledge of theology to others, how others created narratives about female mystics' spiritual practices, and how women gained power for themselves or for others through the written word and in relationship to nuns, masters, husbands, and mothers. I explore how ideas of the self were expressed in a relational manner.

On another level, the book is a study of the modal underpinnings of biographical and autobiographical representations of female Catholic spirituality in early modern Lima. My intention is to broaden our understanding of the range of possible texts that contain the elements of narrativity: whether in the piecemeal petitions that constituted the lives of donadas, or in the objectification and representation of body parts representing a blessed whole. Texts such as vidas, ecstatic bodies, and cloth were invested with meaning based on their ability to constitute stories about the interrelationship between divinity and humanity. Indeed, life narratives were always in dialogue with early modern understandings of sacred materiality and immateriality.

Each of the six chapters of this book reveals women searching for meaning, investigating who they were in relation to God, who they were in relation to others, and who they were in relation to the sacred objects that completed their lives. Such multivalent forms of self expression helped construct early modern Catholicism, writ large. A gendered consideration of women's mysticism and piety in seventeenth-century Lima contributes to our understanding of how the broad palette of Catholicism evolved in a colonial context and transcended restrictive assumptions about European versus other forms of spiritual expression. It helps to move us beyond stale paradigms that assume that Catholicism was both monolithic and oppositional to other religious practices. <sup>109</sup> Indeed, in the most basic of acts, in the smallest of gestures or touches, or in the carefully chosen words on a page, women engaged with the materiality and immateriality of early modern Catholicism in meaningful and multifarious ways.

#### Notes

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 "Cuerpo místico (mystical body) and "Christian Republic" come from Cobo, Historia de la fundación, 1:137. By "cuerpo místico," Cobo referred to what had originally been intended to represent the divine Christ in the Eucharist, and to the Church as the body politic with Christ as its head. The quote on "endless cycle" comes from Brading, First America, 322; Hayes, Body and Sacred Place, 95.
- 2 Iwasaki Cauti, "Vidas de santos."
- 3 Mujica Pinilla, "'Dime con quién andas," 200. The term theatre state comes from Clifford Geertz and was used by Edward Muir in his article "The Virgin on the Street Corner" (31). On the different kinds of spectacles that took place in Lima, see Osorio, Inventing Lima.
- 4 Barriga Calle, "Muerte en Lima," 96.
- 5 Cobo argued that Lima had reached a level of piety comparable to that of the great European cities. Cobo, *Historia de la fundación*, 1:137; Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 196; Osorio, *Inventing Lima*, 81–102.
- 6 "Christ was simultaneously fully human and fully divine," and humans consumed the mystical body of Christ in the Eucharist. Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place*, xxi, 3; see also Sánchez-Concha Barrios, "La tradición política," 102–3. Augustine's *De civitate Dei: City of God* talks about humans (body-spirit) as inhabitants of earth and the heavens. Ernst Kantorowicz talks about the fusion of *corpus Christi* (the body of Christ) with *corpus mysticum* (the mystical body). He wrote, "The Pauline term [*corpus Christi*] originally designating the Christian Church now began to designate the consecrated host; contrariwise, the notion *corpus mysticum*, hitherto used to describe the host, was gradually transferred—after 1150—to the Church as the organized body of Christian society." Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 196.
- 7 Sánchez-Concha Barrios, "La tradición política," 102-3, 113; Regalado de Hurtado, "Reflexión sobre el cuerpo." Muir has argued that towns "were themselves

- mystical bodies, a corporation both in the legal sense and the literal one of a number of persons united in one body, nourished and protected by a civic patron saint." "Virgin," 26.
- 8 Braude, "Women's History"; Myers, Neither Saints nor Sinners, 3.
- 9 Lima maintained a strong character of civitas (the communal gathering of its inhabitants) by maintaining harmony between the two elements of piety and policía. Kagan, Urban Images, 11 (based on Covarrubias Orozco's dictionary, Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española [1611]), 126–28 (for Guaman Poma's definition of policía). Alexandre Coello de la Rosa quotes Bartolomé de las Casas's notion of policía (in the latter's Apologética Historia Sumaria). Coello de la Rosa, Espacios de exclusión, 48. On the various authors extolling the virtues of Lima, see Fray Buenaventura de Salinas y Córdova (his history of Lima, 1630), Antonio de la Calancha and Bernardo de Torres and Bernabé Cobo. The literature of the latter part of the seventeenth century follows this same trajectory; see the works of Diego Córdova y Salinas (Crónica franciscana de las provincias del Perú, 1651), Juan Meléndez (Tesoros verdaderos de las Indias, 1681), and Francisco de Echave y Assu (La estrella de Lima . . . , 1688).
- 10 Mills, "Naturalization of Andean Christianities."
- 11 Mills, "Religion."
- 12 For examples of vows of celibacy taken by young women, married couples, or widows, see Doña Baltasara de Bustamante, petition, Lima, 1633, Archivo Arzobispal de Lima (AAL), Celibato, no. 3. One witness said doña Baltasara took communion every day. See also Pedro Ruíz Vela and Juana Baptista de las Nabas, petition, Lima, 1606, AAL, Celibato, no. 1; Pedro Fernández de Peralta and doña María de Benavides, petition, Lima, 1620, Celibato, no. 2. For a discussion of the historical tradition of celibacy in marriage, see Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*. For an example of a couple entering convents as religious servants (*donados*), see "Autos seguidos por Antonio de Cordova y Juana Maria Hurtado," Lima, 1665, AAL, Monasterio de la Encarnación, 11:86.
- 13 Bilinkoff, "Saint." Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins's Beyond the Lettered City reminds us that we need to consider how both Europeans and native Andean peoples understood literacy (reading and appropriation) of different kinds of visual, pictorial, and alphabetic texts.
- 14 D. Morgan, "Materialities of Sacred Economies."
- 15 Van Deusen, Between the Sacred, ch. 4; Premo, Children of the Father King; on slaves and disputes with masters over marriage choices or the right to cohabitate with one's spouse, see Wisnoski, "It Is Unjust"; McKinley, Fractional Freedoms.
- 16 The city-wide census of 1614 reports 820 female religious, equaling 16 percent of the total female Spanish population (4,359 + 820). The 1613 census (padrón) of all indigenous people in Lima counted 640 native Andean females. Of the five hundred adults, 30 percent were single, widowed, or divorced. Several of these women worked as servants in convents. Vergara Ormeño, "Migración y trabajo femenino," 136; Estenssoro Fuchs, "Construcción de un más allá," 415. By 1625 there were six convents; five of them included women of color, with over 130

- women of color living and working as donadas. Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred*, 173–76.
- 17 See, for instance, the will of the Spanish Melchora de Ribera, a professed beata from the School of Carmen (AAL, Testamentos, 7, no. 10, 1618). She died in 1618, leaving fifty pesos for masses for the souls in purgatory and fifty masses for the "convent." Francisca de la Concepción, another beata affiliated with the Franciscans, lived in the neighborhood of San Lázaro (across the Rímac River from the core of the city) and in 1622 left money for 150 masses to be said in the Church of San Francisco and also to another beata, the widow Catalina de Jesús (AAL, Testamentos, 8, no. 10, 1622).
- 18 Van Deusen Between the Sacred; Meléndez, Tesoros verdaderos, 798-803; Martín, Daughters of the Conquistadores, 287-88.
- 19 Van Deusen, Between the Sacred, xv.
- 20 Cobo, Historia de la fundación.
- 21 Paul Charney's analysis of the *Padrón de Indios* of Lima (1613) concludes that 95 percent of the people designated as *indios* in that census (constituting 8 percent of Lima's total population) were migrants. Charney, "El indio urbano." Teresa Vergara Ormeño points out that only rarely did the census of 1613 specify the occupation of females beyond the generic designation "domestic servant." Vergara Ormeño, "Migración y trabajo femenino." Jane Mangan's *Trading Roles* effectively uses notarial records to find deeper evidence of females' contributions to the colonial economy.
- 22 Meléndez, *Tesoros verdaderos*, 3:746–67; on work, see 759; on her extreme poverty, see 760; on using *estampas* (printed images, in this instance of divine subjects) as her curtains, see 754. See also Vargas Ugarte, *Historia de la Iglesia*, 3:438–40.
- 23 An important work that views convents as centers of intellectual and economic exchange in colonial Peru is Kathryn Burns's *Colonial Habits*; Arenal and Schlau, "Leyendo yo y escribiendo ella." For a European perspective, see Diefendorf, "Rethinking the Catholic Reformation." On deeply religious women expressing their piety in uncloistered congregations or as individuals, see Rapley, *Dévotes*; and Delgado, *Troubling Devotion*.
- Van Deusen, "Manifestaciones de la religiosidad femenina." It is hard to calculate the precise number of beatas or tertiaries in seventeenth-century Lima.
- 25 Some chroniclers emphasized how Rosa helped convert many lost and scandalous women. Meléndez, *Tesoros verdaderos*, 2:508–9, 3:795.
- 26 Jaffary, False Mystics, 5-11; van Deusen, "Circuits of Knowledge."
- 27 For a discussion of single women and their networks in eighteenth-century Mexico City, see Pescador, *De bautizados*; Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*, 167–217. For an example of networks in a French rural setting, see Cashmere, "Sisters Together."
- 28 Burns, *Colonial Habits*; van Deusen, *Between the Sacred*; O'Toole, "Danger in the Convent."
- 29 Ursula de Jésus, Souls of Purgatory, 32-37.

- I argue that space and social location are gendered and that identities are constituted in part by the kind of space in which the individual can imagine herself. A number of feminist geographers have explored this subject. See McDowell, Gender, Identity and Place; Massey, Space, Place and Gender, 264. Doreen B. Massey conceptualizes space as "the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales." Social relations, according to Massey, "always have a spatial form and spatial content. They exist, necessarily both in space . . . and across space" (168).
- Anthony Giddens prefers the term *locale* to *place* in his discussion of social geography, "for it carries something of the connotation of space used as a *setting* for interaction" and communication. Giddens, *Social Theory*, 207.
- 32 Here I concur with Judith Butler, whose notion of performance is linked to the idea that "gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts.*" Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140. See also Michel de Certeau, who considers identity to be a "spatial practice," which involves mapping and enunciating a theater of action. Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 35, 98–100, 115–30.
- 33 Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 91–110. See Alejandra Osorio's detailed discussion of seventeenth-century descriptions of Lima. Osorio, *Inventing Lima*, 7–11.
- 34 Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?"
- 35 Herlihy, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" See also Wiesner-Hanks, "Do Women Need the Renaissance?"
- 36 De Groot and Morgan, "Beyond the 'Religious Turn'?," 397–98. On female efforts to transform themselves through mystical conformity to God's will, see Mack, Visionary Women. For the argument that mysticism was a transgressive strategy to subvert male authority, see Finke, "Mystical Bodies."
- 37 Mack, "Religion, Feminism," 156-57.
- 38 Hollywood, Sensible Ecstasy, 113.
- 39 This point is made in the review essay by Leavitt-Alcántara, "Holy Women and Hagiography."
- 40 For a consideration of gendered forms of religious expression, see Bilinkoff, "Navigating the Waves"; and Weber, "Gender."
- 41 In *Related Lives*, and "Confessors, Penitents," Jodi Bilinkoff demonstrates that while some scholarship emphasizes the controlling nature of the confessor-penitent relationship, these confessor-confessee relations were complex, nuanced, and mutually influencing. In that vein, John Coakley has argued that male-female gendered expressions of authority could coexist and build on one another. Coakley, *Spiritual Power*, 2–4; see also J. Hillman, "Soul Mates and Collaborators."
- 42 Iwasaki Cauti, "Mujeres al borde," 591. Fernando Iwasaki Cauti emphasizes the dominant, censoring role of the confessor. Certainly, women reproduced and adapted orthodox and popular spiritual knowledge learned from male clerics and numerous confessors, but many had multiple confessors (Santa Rosa had at least twelve), which indicates a varied influence and choice on the part of the confessee.

- 43 Boydston, "Gender," 559.
- 44 Silverblatt, Modern Inquisitions. For a broader consideration of the early modern Inquisition, see Vose, "Beyond Spain."
- 45 Castañeda Delgado and Hernández Aparicio, *Inquisición en Lima*; Elliott, *Proving Woman*, 1–3; Giles, *Women in the Inquisition*; Holler, "Inquisition and Women," 124; Diefendorf, "Rethinking the Catholic Reformation," 46–47.
- 46 Scholars working with Inquisition records have long recognized the fluidity between orthodox and popular theological knowledge. Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*; Henningsen, "Evangelización negra"; Sánchez, "Mentalidad popular," 36; Mannarelli, *Hechiceras, beatas y expósitas*, 47. Women communicating "esoteric" ideas certainly did not always think in terms of orthodoxy versus heterodoxy. See Leonor de Verduga, deposition, Lima, 1621, Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid (AHNM), Inquisición, Lima, Leg. 1030, 251r-252r.
- 47 Luisa Melgarejo de Sotomayor, propositions, Lima, 1624, AHNM, Leg. 1647, no. 5, 16v.
- 48 The inquisitor Joan Gaytan cited an edict published in 1622 in Seville by the bishop of Cuenca, Andrés de Pacheco, which in effect considered anyone who possessed books related to revelations or ecstatic states or who wrote without official Church approval to be suspicious. This edict was read in the Cathedral of Lima on November 14, 1623 (Joan Gaytan, Theological Assessments [Calificaciones], Lima, 1624, AHNM, Inquisición, Leg. 4467). It served as the basis for prosecuting a number of beatas accused of alumbrismo, or illuminism and heresy.
- 49 Palma, *Inquisición de Lima*; Medina, *Tribunal de la Inquisición*; Millar, "Falsa santidad e Inquisición." Iwasaki Cauti considers the beatas' interest in religious matters to be an escape from domestic routines and conjugal patriarchy, Iwasaki Cauti, "Mujeres al borde," 584. A number of historians have unpacked the misogynist discourse behind the inquisitors' motives; see Guilhem, "La Inquisición."
- Medieval scholar André Vauchez has discussed the "intermittent cycle" of lay piety that emerged in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Italy, and again at the end of the fourteenth century, when the feminization of lay spirituality occurred. Vauchez, "Lay People's Sanctity," 21, 24; Vauchez, Sainthood, 348–54, 369–86, 409; see also Weinstein and Bell, Saints and Society, 220–23; Bynum, Holy Feast, 16–30. A similar surge in lay feminine spirituality occurred in early seventeenth-century Lima.
- 51 For an important discussion of the diversity of mystical thought and mystics in early modern Spain, see Andrés Martín, "Pensamiento teológico"; and Andrés Martín, Los místicos. Until the 1620s the Jesuits, the preeminent religious society in Lima, openly advocated various types of divine contemplation and mental prayer. Diego Alvárez de la Paz (1549–1619) was a distinguished theologian, mystic, and influential teacher (he was prefect of advanced studies [estudios mayores] at the Colegio de San Pablo in 1609–17) who also served as the confessor of one of Lima's most well-known beatas, Luisa Melgarejo. Other Jesuits included Juan Sebastián Parra, Francisco de Contreras, Diego de Torres, and Diego Martínez. See Torres Saldamando, Antiguos Jesuitas, 349–53; Iwasaki Cauti, "Luisa Melgar-

- ejo de Soto," 227. A Dominican, Pedro de Loayza (who had served as one of Santa Rosa's confessors), also supported the mystical practices of the beatas accused of heresy by the Inquisition in the 1620s.
- 52 Howells, "Early Modern Reformations," 119-23.
- 53 Van Deusen, "Circuits of Knowledge."
- 54 Ahlgren, "Negotiating Sanctity," 376; Kieckhefer, "Holiness"; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*; Bynum, "... And Woman His Humanity," 257–88; María de San José, *Wild Country*.
- 55 Mulder-Bakker, "Metamorphosis of Woman," 117.
- 56 Lynn Hankinson Nelson argues that "experience is inherently social, not individualistic," and that "what constitutes evidence for specific claims and theories includes the knowledge and standards constructed and adopted by epistemological communities. Based on our experiences, we can each contribute uniquely to what we know—but none of us knows what no one else could." "Epistemological Communities," 141.
- "Relación de Causas," Lima, 1597, AHNM, Inquisición, Lima, Leg. 1028, 495v-497r. Doña Francisca Maldonado (from Seville), Luisa de Ocampo (Lima), Costança (Chuquisaca), Francisca de Espinosa (mestiza, Trujillo), Maria de Aguilar, Catalina de Mena, Mariana Clavez, and Francisca Ximenez were listed as the accused. Among other things, they taught one another invocations to Santa Martha, the stars, and the Holy Trinity to procure a man. See Osorio, *Inventing Lima*, ch. 4, who also questions this bifurcated paradigm.
- 58 Tausiet, Urban Magic, 1; Lamana, "What Makes a Story Amusing," 87-102.
- 59 "Calificación de unos papeles atribuídos a la Vicaria del Convento de las Descalças Reales," Lima, 1624, AHNM, Inquisición, Censuras, Leg. 4467, no. 11. African and European healers and barbers brought their own "magical-religious" healing practices into the convents where they worked. Tardieu, "Genio y semblanza," 566n32.
- 60 Doña Isabel de Angulo, deposition, Lima, 1592, AHNM, Inquisición, Lima, Leg. 1028, 262r–263v. She then recounted a specific ritual and prayer, which she had learned from nuns in Seville.
- 61 "Vida de Gerónima de San Francisco," Lima, 1635, Archivo Franciscano de Lima, Registro 17, no. 38, 477r.
- 62 Meléndez, *Tesoros verdaderos*, 2:433–34. She also carried an image of the baby Jesus, which she called "el Médico," (the doctor) and consulted it to determine the best medicine to cure an illness.
- 63 Fray Jerónimo Alonso de la Torre, testimony, Lima, 1633, AAL, Beatificaciones, Isabel de Porras Marmolejo, 32r-v. See the short vida of Isabel de Porras Marmolejo in Córdova y Salinas, *Crónica franciscana*, 938–48.
- 64 This important argument has been made by others. See Campos, "Mulher e universo magico"; Jaffary, "Virtue and Transgression," 9–28. Sara Scully says that women probably considered "witchcraft" (divination or sorcery) as "part of an economic strategy, which could also include marriage and prostitution," and that studies about their practices should form part of "family history" or "labor

- studies" rather than "Inquisition studies." Scully, "Marriage or a Career?," 858. For Guatemala, see Few, "Women, Religion, and Power." For Peru, see Mannarelli, *Hechiceras, beatas y expósitas*; Osorio, "*El callejón de la soledad*."
- 65 Weber, "Introduction."
- 66 Myers, Neither Saints nor Sinners, ix. As scholar Kathleen Myers explains, vidas draw on the complex traditions of confessional autobiographies and hagiographic biographies. See Velasco, "Teaching Spanish Women Mystics."
- 67 Ibsen, "Honor thy Father"; Myers, Neither Saints nor Sinners, vii-viii, 3-4.
- 68 Kristine Ibsen argues that although many vidas were ordered to be written with the colony's political interests in mind, they also offered women a narrative space for self-expression. Ibsen, Women's Spiritual Autobiography, 11, 13.
- 69 Like Mónica Díaz, I disagree with Certeau, who argues that hagiographies and biographies are completely different genres. Certeau, Writing of History, ch. 7 (esp. p. 277); M. Díaz, "Biografías y hagiografías," 540–41.
- 70 Meléndez, Tesoros verdaderos, 3:747. See also the request that Diego de Córdova y Salinas made to Juan de Tuesta to write a brief account of his confessee, Isabel de Cano. Córdova y Salinas, Crónica franciscana, 955–56. On the importance of conventual chronicles in seventeenth-century Lima, see Guibovich, "Hagiografía y política."
- 71 Bynum, *Holy Feast*; Greenspan, "Autohagiography"; Coon, *Sacred Fictions*; Kreiner, *Social Life of Hagiography*. For works that explore the gendered nature of hagiographies, see J. Smith, "Female Sanctity"; Mayeski, "New Voices"; Ashton, *Generation of Identity*. On the gendered male-female influences in the creation of spiritual autobiographies and other texts, see Coakley, *Spiritual Power*, 7–24.
- 72 Brewer-García, "Negro, pero blanco"; Brewer-García, "Imagined Transformations"; Rowe, "Her Face Turned White."
- 73 Ibsen, Women's Spiritual Autobiography, vii, 16–17; Certeau, Writing of History, 272–73; Kleinberg, Prophets.
- 74 Greenspan, "Autohagiography"; Sikorska, "Between Autohagiography and Confession," 87. For an important discussion of what constituted heroic virtues, see Myers, *Neither Saints nor Sinners*, 3–19.
- 75 For instance, Mariana Clavijo reported to the Inquisition that in Potosí women found out who knew a lot about cures and spells by word of mouth. Mariana Clavijo, deposition, Lima, 1597, AHNM, Inquisición, Lima, Leg. 1028, 508r.
- 76 Van Deusen, introduction to *Souls of Purgatory*, 40–44; Ibsen, *Women's Spiritual Autobiography*, 14–15.
- 77 See the short but useful essays about the importance of Teresa de Ávila in Weber, Teaching Teresa of Ávila.
- 78 Slade, Saint Teresa of Avila; Ibsen, Women's Spiritual Autobiography. Just as Teresa de Ávila's written works influenced women for centuries to come, works written by men about Rosa de Lima also influenced how other women scripted themselves. The vida of Mariana de Jesús (1618–45; she was beatified in 1850 and canonized in 1950) directly invoked Rosa de Lima. R. Morgan, "'Just Like Rosa;"
- 79 Cussen, Black Saint, 138-39.

- 80 The term rescripting comes from Myers, Neither Saints nor Sinners, viii-ix.
- 81 Giles, Women in the Inquisition; Ahlgren, introduction to Inquisition of Francisca; Vollendorf, Lives of Women, 1–8; Jaffary, False Mystics, 5.
- 82 Schlau, Gendered Crime and Punishment, 15-18.
- 83 Schlau, Gendered Crime and Punishment, 15-18.
- 84 For an exploration of how different kinds of texts make up the autobiographical genre as expressed by distinct South Asian women, see Malhotra and Lambert-Hurley, *Speaking of the Self*, 4–7. See also van Deusen, "In So Celestial a Language."
- 85 Chartier, "Texts, Forms and Interpretations," 81.
- 86 White, "Value of Narrativity."
- 87 Cosslett, Lury, and Summerfield, Feminism and Autobiography.
- 88 Sidonie Smith and Julie Watson, Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpretation of Life Narratives.
- 89 Cosslett, introduction to Feminism and Autobiography.
- 90 Certeau, Heterologies, 81-83, 90.
- 91 Bynum, "Perspectives, Connections and Objects."
- 92 Often, as medievalist Claire Sponsler argues, when we consider artifacts, they become the "focal point of study rather than the 'process' of cultural creation and transmission." Her method, which has influenced the approach I take in this book, is to "find a way of accessing the shifting processes of appropriation that produced those results now apparently fixed in ink or paint or stone" (or paper). Sponsler, "In Transit," 19, 21.
- 93 Kopytoff, "Cultural Biography of Things," 67-68.
- 94 Bynum, Christian Materiality, 18.
- 95 Bynum, Christian Materiality, 30.
- 96 Mulder-Bakker, "Metamorphosis of Woman," 117. My methodology has been influenced by what Teresa de Lauretis calls "the epistemological priority which feminism has located in the personal, the subjective, the body, the symptomatic, the quotidian, as the very site of material inscription of the ideological; that is to say, the ground where socio-political determinations take hold and are real-ized." Lauretis, "Feminist Studies/Critical Studies," 11–12.
- 97 Whitehead, Religious Statues and Personhood, 5.
- 98 Saint Catherine is Santa Catalina in Spanish.
- 99 Woolf described a woman referring to her mother as a repository of memory in A Room of One's Own (101).
- 100 Bynum, "Why All the Fuss?"
- 101 For studies of Luisa Melgarejo, see Glave, *De Rosa y espinas*, 209–20; Iwasaki Cauti, "Luisa Melgarejo de Soto."
- 102 Bynum, Christian Materiality, 132.
- 103 Stanton, "Autogynography," 140.
- Mary Mason points out that the relationship to divine beings was central to the self-conceptualizations of mystics. Mason, "Other Voice," 207–34.
- 105 Ursula de Jesús, Souls of Purgatory, 56.

- 106 Verboven, Carlier, and Dumolyn, "Art of Prosopography." Prosopography was and continues to be a useful method in classical studies, but Lawrence Stone's seminal essay "Prosopography" (1971) also popularized its usage for the early modern period.
- 107 S. Smith, Poetics of Women's Autobiography, 48.
- 108 Friedman, "Women's Autobiographical Selves."
- 109 See, for example, the edited volume by Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf, Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World (1600–1800).

#### CHAPTER I: ROSA DE LIMA AND THE IMITATIO MORUM

- 1 Hansen, *Vida admirable, y muerte preciosa.* In works of art, hagiographies, and sermons, saintly individuals were sometimes placed in bucolic settings, considered to be places where one could easily sense the presence of God. Gardens were also symbols of the interior garden of one's own soul; see Mujica Pinilla, "El ancla," 69–71. The painting *Los árboles se inclinan ante Santa Rosa* (eighteenth century) was the eighth in a series. The artist, Laureano Dávila, was a painter of the Quito school. The painting is currently located in the Monasterio de Santa Rosa in Santiago, Chile, and is reproduced in Ramón Mujica Pinilla's "El ancla de Rosa de Lima." Juan de Lorenzana, one of Rosa's confessors, described how Rosa told him about her communications with the trees. Fray Juan de Lorenzana, O.P., testimony, 19 January 1618, transcribed in Jiménez Salas, *Proceso*, [2591], 337.
- 2 The legend on the above-cited painting says, "Sabiendo una matrona que Rosa convidava alas plantas, y arboles, a halabar de Dios, movida de curiosidad le pidio a Rosa, le entrase en su jardin, y al punto que entraron vio, q[ue] arboles y plantas se movian e inclinavan al suelo, en señal de reverencia de la qual, quedo muy admirada."
- 3 The building resembles a tower: could this be an allusion to Teresa de Ávila's inner castle? Or might it reference the Virgin as the tower from the Song of Songs—especially as the Virgin herself is a "garden enclosed"? On symbolic representations of the Immaculate Conception in art, see Stratton, Immaculate Conception in Art. I would like to thank Tanya Tiffany for this observation and reference.
- 4 Fray Pedro de Loayza, testimony, 19 January 1618, in Jiménez Salas, *Proceso*, [2231], 296–97; Fray Juan de Lorenzana, testimony, 29 January 1618, in Jiménez Salas, *Proceso*, [258v], 337. Celia Cussen says the cell's dimensions were about five feet by three feet. Cussen, "House of Miracles," 12.
- 5 Mulder-Bakker, "Metamorphosis of Woman," 117.
- 6 Mulder-Bakker, "Metamorphosis of Woman," 118.
- 7 Mulder-Bakker, "Metamorphosis of Woman," 117.
- 8 There are dozens of scholarly works about Rosa. A few important ones include Mujica Pinilla, *Rosa limensis*; chapter 1, "Redeemer of America: Rosa de Lima (1586–1617)—The Dynamics of Identity and Canonization," in Myers, *Neither*