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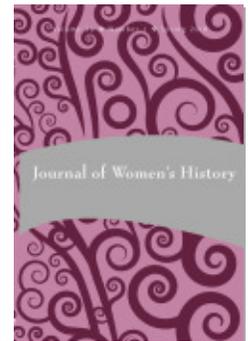
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WOMEN'S POWER AND MATERIAL EXCHANGE IN TRANSATLANTIC SPAIN, 1550S–1650S

Lauren Beck

The early modern dowry letter constituted a panoramic vision of the material and consumer life of a woman upon entering into marriage. It also contained a subjugating discourse that converted her into a possession belonging to her husband. At the same time, these letters publically exposed her material potency within the home. Correspondence couples exchanged after settling into conjugal life, particularly when considerable distance separated the couple, subsequently reveals women's authority and domain over matrimonial materiality and suggests that husbands relied upon it to a significant degree, such that, once separated from their wives, men's quality of life significantly worsened despite sustaining the means to generate income. This article approaches the subject of material possession as a source of power and authority exercised by women of varying backgrounds over men in the early-modern Spanish world and uncovers a number of archival sources located in Mexico and Spain.

Scholars have redirected the material gaze toward understanding how the value and possession of goods intersected with the subjects of gender, ownership, and power.¹ Scholarship of this nature can importantly challenge the masculinist paradigm through which scholars do not often or seriously consider the possibility that women exercised power and authority in the past, particularly with respect to fiscal matters and the exchange of goods.² Popular belief, not surprisingly, encourages this judgment that women, once married, became the property of their husbands.³ Historical sources (dowry letters, wills and testaments, personal correspondence, and petitions) reveal a different picture of that gendered past in a Spanish transatlantic context because, as the historian Jane E. Mangan observes, women's lives during transatlantic separation often defied stereotypes that exist to this day concerning the abandonment and victimization of women by their husbands, as well as female obedience.⁴ The personal and matrimonial property described in rural Toledo, urban Seville (where many husbands resided for a period prior to undertaking the voyage to the New World), and colonial Mexico allows us to apprehend the degree to which both impoverished and better-off women exercised authority over men in the early modern period within and outside of the household.⁵ The Toledan catchment of letters comprised writings from the same sorts of professionals and laborers who

later moved to Seville and then departed for the Americas. Wives and all Spanish women possessed authority over property and inheritance rights that equaled those of men. And, with the inalienable bride price received upon marriage, women benefited materially more than men from marriage.⁶ Focusing on this female demographic through the aforementioned forms of documentation also yields important access to otherwise marginalized voices. This article explores transatlantic separation between Spain and postconquest Mexico during the first hundred years or so following the Council of Trent, which redefined marriage in order to understand how marital materiality could empower women.

While scholars cannot consider the authority of women as participants in marriage significant during the medieval period when parents influenced matches to a greater degree, after the Council of Trent concluded in 1563, the Church's definition of marriage narrowed to exclude other forms of consensual and informal unions that society and law tolerated in both Spain and Mexico.⁷ The Church confirmed marriage as a sacrament, which required the mutual consent of both husband and wife. This consent became transubstantiated beyond the union of bodies in the decided and mutual amalgamation of households composed of personal items, furniture, goods and livestock, cash, and real estate.⁸ The cultural theorist Bill Brown's research into thing theory and material possession concludes, "The tale of that possession—of being possessed by possessions—is something stranger than the history of a culture of consumption."⁹ Brown's observation proves thought provoking when we consider how couples existing within a patriarchal matrimonial system documented their material lives together, especially because women's belongings fell within the catchment of masculine possession during the tenure of their legal marriage. The dowry process early modern Spaniards used exemplifies this phenomenon of summarizing a woman's worth using her possessions—which ranged from her earrings, underclothing, and shoes, to her bedding and furniture, as well as to perishable items that included her virtue and virginity—and then exchanging this worth for the protection and custodianship of her husband who possessed his spouse's material substance as his own until the end of their marriage.

Dowries, which were common practice for centuries before Alfonso X el Sabio's thirteenth-century *Las Siete Partidas*, were formally inscribed as a legal requirement of marriage and were meant to help offset the cost of maintaining the woman after she left her parents' household. Their contents provided the couple with the material foundations for conjugal life.¹⁰ The dowry process involved a series of letters prepared by notaries who usually went into the homes of the betrothed and catalogued the goods they would exchange alongside the family and other witnesses. The law required fathers

provide dowries for their daughters with the reasoning that these belongings would help support the marriage from a practical standpoint.¹¹ When the marriage ended, the dowry process required men to return goods to the daughter or her inheritors, which meant that both the dowry and the *arras* (or masculine dowry) remained in her control should the husband perish first.¹² Later, and because of the “excessive dowries that were being promised,” the *Recopilacion de las leyes destos reynos* (1598) further regulated the process and capped the value of the dowry according to the annual salary of the bride’s father with the rationale that “men who become engaged or marry usually give their wives at the time of their betrothal or marriage excessive jewels and outfits.”¹³ This regulation evidently ensured that women did not amass even larger estates as a result of men’s extravagance during the enraptured moments of entering into marriage when, among other things, alliances formed through strategic marriage and men consumed her virginity from a material perspective.

Given the intimate nature of this last object, the dowry process was surprisingly public. The letters promising a dowry to the husband, guaranteeing an *arras* to the wife, or documenting the post-consummation payment and receipt of the transaction of material goods often confirmed the intact state of a woman’s virtue.¹⁴ A little-studied component of the dowry process involved the masculine dowry (the *arras*) that, unlike the feminine dowry, was not returned to the husband after the marriage ended due to annulment, divorce, or death.¹⁵ Virgin brides received an *arras* whereas widows, upon remarrying, did not.

A sampling of the hundreds of dowry letters notaries created between 1604 and 1614, and located at the provincial archive of Toledo, demonstrates how this process worked in both rural and urban contexts within a region where local officials widely recorded dowries. Each of these letters began with a rubric that the author meant to share with a broader public when and if necessary.¹⁶ Such letters typically began: “In God’s name, Amen. Let those who read this letter know that I, Antonio Fernández of the town of Borox, declare at the time of preparing this letter that I have married Juana Denbas, my wife, and she has promised me a certain sum in cash and belongings and furniture in dowry. As is my right, having now married, my wife gives me. . . .”¹⁷ The notarial component situated the dowry within the private and public spheres in a way that the notary himself as well as witnesses from outside of the families experienced when the bridal party invited them into domestic spaces to perform these functions. This dowry letter for Juana Denbas, composed in rural Toledo in 1604, described how the amount of her modest dowry was calculated through a valorization of its contents. The letter, importantly, is formatted so that the wife gave the dowry to her husband, demonstrating the juridical authority she had

over these belongings. Denbas, this letter continues, brought with her "two burlap sheets measuring two and a half feet, worth two ducados" and "a big iron saucepan, worth four reales," along with numerous other dishes and household articles.¹⁸ For the living room and matrimonial chamber, she brought "two cotton pillows embroidered with black strips of cloth, together worth sixteen reales" and "three burlap mattresses, worth nine ducados," as well as an assortment of furniture and other bedding items.¹⁹ From studying these dowries, it is evident that Spaniards expected women to furnish the matrimonial home with comfort and beauty; in particular, they almost always brought a complete set of bedroom furniture and bedclothes and household furnishings and items involved in the preparation of food, the quality of which varied according to the background of the woman and her family. Each of these items was evaluated for its market value and fiscally assessed, in the case of Juana Denbas, as a dowry totaling 85,135 maravedís.

While this process delineated the value of what belonged to and remained with the wife's estate following the marriage, it also commodified and thingified women. The Spanish poet and theologian Luis de León (1527–1591) demonstrated this view of women and affirmed masculine authority over a matrimonial materiality that included wives: "So they say that in plazas and public places, and wherever it is that important men gather, the man . . . will be known and signaled by her, and evaluated accordingly."²⁰ León viewed the woman as some extruded representation of her husband's fortune and honor; within this social context, her person and possessions adorned her husband, who exercised authority and held jurisdiction over both the woman and her possessions.²¹

In 1608 and just prior to their expulsion, morisco Francisco de Atrenza, originally of Granada, provided his bride, María Rubias of Toledo, with a comfortable arras valued at 55,316 maravedís. Some dowries, particularly those transacted between morisco couples, contained lengthy sections recording women's testimony in the first person; women described their own possessions and values as well as affirmed their backgrounds. In others, like the case of Atrenza and Rubias, notaries captured the men's voices, transcribing them in the second person so that the couple's interaction, rather than a monologic statement on the part of one or both spouses, was inscribed within the letter itself.²² Because they were a wealthier couple—demonstrated by the few kitchen and household goods Rubias included in her dowry and the significant extent of her wardrobe assessed as part of that sum—the contents of Atrenza's arras celebrated his wife. The arras included a special outfit for the occasion of their nuptials: a scarf from Granada embroidered with twelve silk braids and a blue and gold velvet dress, which together a notary valued at twenty ducados and two reales. Atrenza also provided Rubias with luxuries like lengths of silk, a mirror,

and some jewelry.²³ In contrast, Juana Denbas's husband bestowed upon her nothing of this nature; rather, her arras was composed of sheep and other livestock as well as debts owed to Denbas, which once recovered would become part of her arras. Grooms usually included costly gifts as a part of the arras, which represented 10 percent of the husband's belongings that he gave to the wife "in recognition for her qualities," for her nobleness, honor, and chastity.²⁴ Many dowries explicitly stated that the arras was recompense for the wife's virginity. Zuil de Sanzoles gave an arras to his wife in 1587, stating, "For your honour, María de Mirando Salón, my wife and woman that you are, God willing and for your virginity and purity, and in compliance with the regulations and to all they pertain, I give you a post-nuptial arras to augment the above-described dowry from my own assets worth 1500 ducados."²⁵ As this letter suggests, the arras became part of the wife's estate.

Like virginity, the arras was not something to recover, and the husband intended the latter as recompense for the former. Men transacted financial and material wealth in exchange for an ephemeral quality, which they commodified as an object of desire that women could and did substantiate without a necessary regard for authenticity.²⁶ Women demonstrated their virginity by their honorable comportment rather than by undergoing physical examinations, although verifications of this nature did occur. Such literary works as *Celestina* and *La Lozana* popularized the business of remediating virginity for those sexually active prior to marriage or creating the appearance of virginity for those ignorant about the likelihood that the woman's hymen had disappeared due to exercise and other factors of a nonsexual nature.²⁷ Remediation practices involved surgical or cosmetic prostheses that synthesized hymens. A doctor, nurse, or family member frequently verified women's virginal condition prior to finalizing the nuptial transaction. Dowries compensated women for being treated as a commodity and perishable product, which, unlike their virginity, became an important financial prospect for their futures.

The arras as a contribution to the woman's estate could allow women to increase their own personal wealth throughout the course of their lives, an outcome exemplified by María Coxa who married for the third time in 1600 after progressively increasing the value of her dowry. In 1583, Coxa's first husband received 12,827 maravedís from her dowry. After his death in 1588, she recovered the original dowry, and her parents increased it slightly to a value of 13,910 maravedís, this time without her virtue intact; for this reason, she did not receive an arras from her second husband. When her second marriage ended in 1599, Coxa's personal wealth included her dowry in addition to the arras from her first husband, totaling 18,500 maravedís, with her share worth 18,570 maravedís from the inn she started with her

second husband (which she received upon the death of the second husband). The law entitled widows to recover not only their dowry and the arras but also half of the wealth the couple accumulated during the marriage. Coxa's third dowry thus equaled 190,825 maravedís.²⁸ With each marriage that concluded with the death of a husband, therefore, women accumulated wealth while enjoying longer lifespans as a result of the relative security of their lifestyle and the gendered assignment of tasks that tended to befall, and abbreviate the lives of, men. Moreover, it was not uncommon for widows to possess objects relating to masculine indumenta or to the deceased husband's trade, which could considerably benefit the wife and her second husband.²⁹ A couple in Madrid exemplified this outcome in 1622 when a baker living in that city married a widow possessing 146,472 maravedís in her dowry, which included not only male clothing but also various articles and ingredients for bread making, as her first husband had been a bread maker. With these possessions, the baker Juan Palanca specialized and became a master bread maker who provided his products to the court, as opposed to a common baker that he had been prior to acquiring these tools.³⁰ When his wife died, her personal wealth had increased as a result of the couple's prosperity, enabled by the contents of her dowry, to more than 5,220,336 maravedís.³¹

It is from this other perspective that scholars can see the dowry process as an economically beneficial, feminist one that certified the juridical and political ability as well as competence of women to govern their own material lives. In transatlantic Spain, women at all stages of life could administer their own property, particularly when their parents and husbands were dead or absent.³² The law allowed for this kind of feminine autonomy and also required women to exercise their voices as part of fiscal transactions.³³ Scholars can also look upon these dowries as inventories of possessions owned and used by women and oftentimes not by men, such that when men left the matrimonial home, they became incapable of sustaining the same quality of life because they no longer had usufruct of that complement of household necessities and comforts. Wills and testaments confirm that men possessed very little in the way of household goods compared to the nature and variety of these same items owned by women. Nearly half of the dowries from the Toledan archive contain mostly household goods and women's clothing with a much smaller percentage relating to property and money, whereas the husbands tended to bring large sums of cash into the marriage along with property. The documentation of these household inventories at the moment in which man and wife cemented their union reveals the material foundations for the subsequent power dynamics in that marriage, especially years later when difficulties arose in the relationship. The early modern phenomenon of transatlantic relationships allows us to

understand how matrimonial materiality challenged wives and husbands as well as the uniquely gendered difficulties both parties faced.

Spanish efforts to explore and colonize following the conclusion of the reconquest in 1492 meant that great numbers of married and single men were leaving both Spain and their families behind. The crown realized that sending men abroad could, on the one hand, result in abandonment should they not return to Spain, while on the other hand, increase the stability of settlements by reuniting married couples in the Americas. In 1528, the crown issued the first of several decrees that allowed men in the Americas to make arrangements for their wives to join them after a period of time.³⁴ Concerns about abandonment also worked in reverse: some women refused to travel to the Americas to reunite with their husbands, claiming the journey was too onerous or citing concerns about not seeing family members again.³⁵ Abandoned wives and widows, meanwhile, composed an increasing cohort of the Spanish population in the sixteenth century, the latter demographic equaling as much as 20 percent of Toledo's population according to the late sixteenth-century *Relaciones geográficas* conducted by Philip II.³⁶ Italian ambassador Andrea di Navagero famously declared that Seville, from which most traffic passed to and from the Spanish New World, had been emptied of men and the city was left to the control of women.³⁷ One wife in Seville attested to this in a letter she wrote to her husband in Mexico in 1603, explaining that due to his absence, women like her taught their children how to till the land.³⁸ Her admission demonstrates that women possessed the tools and skills needed to support themselves and their families while contributing to the marketplace as producers of goods and services.

Women also demonstrated competency in fiscal matters when they assumed the duties and responsibilities of their husbands who were away from home, sometimes becoming what the historian Mary Beth Norton termed "fictive widows" who functioned as independent women in their husbands' absence.³⁹ Centuries of masculine engagement outside of the Iberian home during the reconquest, in support of the Christian effort to regain territory ruled since 711 by Muslims, paved the way for this possibility. Husbands either consented to this arrangement or simply accepted women's authority, or a judge endorsed the wife's authority to manage the couple's affairs.⁴⁰ Unlike women in other European countries, Spanish women during the medieval and early modern periods learned trades and operated businesses due to circumstances wrought by war and as a result of becoming a widow and thus inheriting tools for a trade. The imprints of publishers attest to this practice. One sixteenth-century woman named Isabel de Basilea, for example, successively married two publishers and her imprints became *Viuda de Alonso de Melgar* and *Viuda de Juan de Junta*, respectively (*viuda* meaning widow). Women also served in admin-

istrative capacities and as lawyers and worked in the fields and markets.⁴¹ Empowered to develop commercial opportunities, women started their own companies in sixteenth-century Seville, hired female workforces, and arranged for male heirs to represent the business's interests on the behalf of the proprietress.⁴²

The historian Stephanie Fink de Backer concludes that, despite what scholars previously thought, the participation of men in conflicts abroad led to women's involvement in the production of goods and in particular the raising of livestock that towns paid in tribute to the crown, which associated valuable material goods like chickens and clothing with the presence of women and the stability that they lent to the town, the economy, and the local households.⁴³ The situation lends context to Navagero's observation that, aside from men traveling to the New World, shipments of goods flowed in the same direction: "All of the wine and wheat grown here is sent to the Indies and they also send doublets, shirts, shoes, and similar items."⁴⁴ Women became professional producers of the same goods they helped create and process as wives, and trade guilds supported them when they assumed their absent husbands' professions. In the event that a husband died, for example, the widow could continue in his profession and make use of tools owned by the guild for a period following the husband's death. After proving that the quality of their work was suitable for the profession, women could continue and even take their children on as apprentices, which in turn allowed them to contribute to their families' future financial prospects by providing education and training.⁴⁵

Spaniards normally, however, expected husbands to generate income as producers of goods and services and to support the marriage with some kind of financial contribution. During a transatlantic separation, wives expected their husbands to send money home to them. Mangan's assessment of transatlantic correspondence notes some men made an effort to comply with the decrees of 1528 and their subsequent iterations, which required they send financial support back to their wives in Spain.⁴⁶ Hardships in the New World that left some husbands without the means or ability to send material goods from the Americas to Spain meant that when this money did not materialize, women had to earn additional income outside of the home. Women documented these circumstances in personal correspondence they exchanged with their husbands, which also reveals the directness and firmness of the early modern female voice. In 1595, for example, María de Jesús of Seville learned that her husband Juan de Rillo, who raised livestock and had gone to Mexico years before, had been in touch with some friends in Seville and sought a death certificate for his wife. Upon divining the reason for such a request—namely, the desire to remarry in the New World—she wrote a pointed letter to her husband, emphasizing that he never in seven

years sent her a letter or any money, yet: "You sent two letters, one to my brother Diego de Mercado and the other to your friend Pedro Juan. You asked them to send proof that I was dead, that you were in need of it. If you want me to send you this proof, I will send it, for whoever has such vane hopes about you, like I once did, will discover that I live despite being dead."⁴⁷

Matrimonial materiality represented by the dowry, the arras, and the wealth accumulated by the couple during the course of the relationship became an important factor for any participant in the marriage who desired to either end the relationship or move on once a marital reunion seemed improbable. Proving the death of a spouse was one means of doing this. The fictitious or real death of a wife would not yield any financial reward to the husband because he had to sever her dowry and the arras from his estate and then return it to her heirs. Transatlantic separation therefore either protected this portion of the estate because it was with the husband abroad or resulted in him abandoning it along with the wife in Spain. It is in this last letter that we discover that de Jesús found the means to continue clothing and providing for their children without her husband's income. She believed, indeed, that she completed these tasks better than her husband could have: "You could never have done better than I have in clothing our son and providing him with food and sustenance these seven years without any relief from you, and with only my own effort."⁴⁸

Dead wives were a major theme throughout this type of transatlantic correspondence because they represented one of the only legitimate ways men could move on with their lives in the Americas alongside others who knew of their prior marriages in Spain. Estefanía Bernal, for instance, confirmed this in her letter to her husband, Manuel Luis, in New Spain in 1597, explaining one year after his departure: "Remember how you left me burdened with children and without support or anywhere to seek it: the least you could do is provide for your children and for me. I'm not dead yet nor is God going to take me until I see you."⁴⁹ From the wife's perspective, so long as the husband was not documented as dead, they could not formally recuperate the dowry and arras, leaving them in a state of limbo for great lengths of time. Sometimes the documentation of a spouse's death did not necessarily correlate to her confirmed demise, which was the case for an *encomendero* (a Spaniard who managed an estate and the lands that relied on indigenous labor) named Francisco Noguerol de Ulloa who accompanied the Spanish conqueror of Peru, Francisco Pizarro (c. 1471–1541), in the 1530s and later settled in Arequipa. Believing his first wife dead and claiming that she had coerced him into the engagement, Noguerol de Ulloa remarried in the New World as a wealthy man. Upon returning to Spain, his first wife brought forth a series of lawsuits, and a criminal trial ensued

in the 1550s. After a number of years, which included a period of incarceration for the husband as well as the dissolution of the second marriage as invalid, a papal order confirmed his first marriage invalid because consent had not been adequately obtained by the husband, as per post-Tridentine requirements, and it affirmed the legitimacy of the second.⁵⁰ Questions concerning the belongings of all parties arose at each stage of these trials, and in particular by both wives who actively pursued litigation to ensure they received what their husband owed them.

Women also fell prey to believing or claiming to believe that their spouses had died, only for them to turn up in Spain after remarrying. The duration of a couple's transatlantic separation in addition to a failure to communicate no doubt accelerated the rate of illegitimate remarriages for both sexes, such that one study devoted to early modern Galician bigamy found that the average period of abandonment lasted fifteen years before the wife decided to remarry.⁵¹ While the Inquisition proportionately tried more women in Galicia for bigamy than men, in Seville between 1559 and 1648, the Inquisition investigated 164 men for this crime, which was nearly 10 percent of all trials that institution conducted during this period.⁵² These bigamist men were more geographically mobile than women and likely embraced opportunities for travel afforded by Spain's principle port city (whereas the women of Galicia abandoned rather than experienced abandonment). The historian Mary Elizabeth Perry's study of this cohort of bigamists concludes that almost all of them came from the lower classes; the Casa de Contratación in Seville recorded three exceptions among laborers and artisans, two of the most common professions for those passengers who went to the Indies.⁵³

While women went without monetary support and assumed the professional activities of men, men went without women's material contribution. Because material life was precarious in the New World, it makes sense that husbands waited until they had settled and created a home before arranging for their wives and children to join them, and some letters exchanged between couples show that husbands wanted to end their separation.⁵⁴ One reason for this desire is that authorities in the New World incentivized Spaniards to live in settlements with their families by allotting them more land, titles, and privileges because settled families lent greater stability than a single man's occupation would have in the territories. Therefore, while they supposedly created a new life for their families abroad, husbands almost always requested material objects from their spouses. Several husbands hinted at or openly admitted to having few belongings with them. The many instances where women sent basic domestic as well as comfort items across the Atlantic testify to this lack of domestic materiality men experienced in the New World. Some of these items included mattresses

and books; lengths of cloth to make clothing; pillows and handkerchiefs; clothing, shoes, and hats; and a specific request that included "six little plates, two spoons, and two forks."⁵⁵

This transatlantic correspondence also revealed the expectation that husbands should live without basic comforts while away from the family home. In 1617, Juana Díaz wrote from Seville to her son in Mexico complaining about his father's long absence and silence. Díaz had learned that her husband had settled in Veracruz, that he became a merchant, and "that he had a house with beds and could provide sustenance. Son, it's not fair that this traitor ridicules me."⁵⁶ She went on in her letter to request that her son turn her husband in to the Inquisition rather than allow him to continue this double life. In another letter, a woman reinforced the relationship between "having beds" and the presence of a wife when she asked several men who had returned to Seville on a recent flotilla to turn her husband in to the Inquisition because he "had beds, and because of these clues you will secretly help me out."⁵⁷ Female correspondents evidently associated beds with the presence of women because bedroom furniture and textiles were key components of early modern dowries.

The subject of abandonment, which might result in bigamy, also raised the possibility of unfaithfulness; and there were implications for these activities from a material perspective. If a husband either cohabitated with or married another woman and was reported to authorities then the Inquisition would incarcerate him and seize the belongings he brought with him to the New World as they conducted their investigation. More than one man wrote to his original wife requesting she send him clothing because the Inquisition had taken his; and, in more than one letter, such men requested that wives send letters in return using pillows, sheets, and clothes as the surface upon which to write or within which to conceal her missives: "If you write, let it be on a shirt collar hidden well within the folds of a sheet."⁵⁸ This last practice emphasizes the connection between domestic materiality and women with respect to the needs of men who relied upon women and their ability to provide for those needs. The consequences for bigamous men were serious; authorities would mete out a severe punishment that could include incarceration, fines, exile, and branding. Men typically lost half their belongings when they married or became engaged to a second woman without the proper dissolution of the first marriage.⁵⁹ Upon discovery of living as "casado dos veces" (twice married), authorities apprehended the man, and the Inquisition scrutinized him during incarceration. In several cases, men claimed that they believed their wives had died and that they were thus free to remarry.⁶⁰ During one trial in 1600, the second wife, María Ortega Patiño (whom the first wife called "doña María la aceitera" or "Doña María the oil vender"), applied to the Inquisitorial authorities who had seized her

husband's belongings asking that her dowry and arras be released to her.⁶¹ Authorities annulled her marriage and returned her wealth to her, freeing her to marry once again.

All unions, and any transgressions against them, had material consequences. When the Inquisition became involved in these affairs, moreover, the matter of women's property quickly arose. Leonor de Andrada, for example, recovered the amount of her dowry and arras through litigation in 1543 after the Inquisition seized her husband for having been previously married.⁶² The Inquisition even had a department (the Real Fisco) that handled these matters. Once the Inquisition seized the husband's belongings and catalogued them, then the wife could request that the authorities return anything rightly belonging to her or provide her with a sum equal to her dowry and arras as well as any portion of the couple's wealth that was due to her. Women and their estates were not obliged to pay the debts or fines of their husbands and could not be imprisoned for their husbands' debt, unlike men who were held accountable for such debts.⁶³ The same situation occurred if the wife became incarcerated—the Inquisition used its litigious processes to extract and seize her belongings as a condition of her arrest and detainment from the marital abode. The seizure of women's belongings evidently interrupted the husband's usufruct of them and could diminish the household's contents, including basic items like bed clothes and dishes in addition to male clothing and professional tools that were useful for the husband's trade. In the case of Leonor de Andrada, who the Inquisition investigated for practicing Judaism, men's collars, the marital bed and bedding, a black slave named Antón, a chestnut-colored horse, several pieces of household furniture, and some of her own clothing were among her inventoried possessions.⁶⁴ The removal of such items during de Andrada's trial for heresy no doubt impacted her husband's way of life.

Bigamy rates for women in this situation—perhaps excepting the example of Galicia—were much lower compared to those for men; women tended to be accused and not convicted of adultery. Women's adultery was left by law to the husband to punish. In 1574, Francisca Hernández de los Arcos wrote from Seville to her lover, Cosme Sánchez de Bilbao, in Mexico about his long absence and lack of response to her letters. She discovered that he had married in the New World despite his cohabitation with her in Spain and that she was left with three children, the last of whom was born after Sánchez de Bilbao departed and whom she had to name and raise on her own. Cohabitation, or what many people today consider common-law marriage, was permitted in medieval and early modern Spain; and, in this particular case, Hernández de los Arcos made this arrangement upon abandoning her after her adultery had been discovered and punished by her husband and his family. It is in this letter that she tersely reminded her

lover of what aspects of her material life she gave up by choosing to be with him rather than her husband and their children: "You haven't done this as you promised me, it's unchristian. Rather, you have shown by your deeds that you have no conscience and might as well be dead. You know well how because of you I lost my land and property and husband and children. I'm hated by my siblings and mother, and I've been a target of my husband's relatives since you left."⁶⁵

This form of union known as *amancebimiento* (a form of cohabitation) had some benefits for the women involved, who were called *barraganas*, a term which meant "outside earner" and descended from the Arabic term meaning "from the outside" (rendered in Spanish as *barra*) as well as a conjugation of the Spanish verb "to earn" (*ganar*). Formally expressed as law as early as the twelfth century, this union allowed for men and women to cohabit without marrying. The law specifically forbade married men and women from participating in such an arrangement. A woman who decided to live with a married man thus risked paying a fine and facing one year of exile from the town or city upon her first offence. And a married man who decided to keep a mistress (*manceba pública*) and live openly with her would be punished severely. The punishment for transgressing his marriage vows thus involved the loss of one-fifth of his belongings or a maximum value of 10,000 maravedís for each time that his mistress was found with him. This amount and any future amount collected was meant for the woman's security, to be held by city authorities or by her relatives "in case she desires to marry and make an honest life. This fine will be given with her dowry to her future husband."⁶⁶ The same applied should the woman take orders and enter a convent; rather than a husband, however, it was the person in charge of the institution that received this sum. If the woman decided to live honestly but without marriage or taking orders—that is, without a man—then she would receive this sum of money to support herself.

It was not until after the Council of Trent that tolerance for cohabitation waned, in part because concubinage involved a sustained period of fornication or illicit sexual relations, unlike prostitution, which involved brief encounters; the latter thus became preferable as a model for when extramarital relations occurred. Spaniards increasingly viewed women who received a legal settlement after the discovery of their live-in husbands' previous marriage (in the form of one-fifth of his estate for her future dowry) as akin to prostitutes; this view dominated public opinion in the early modern period.⁶⁷ When couples that legitimately lived together without marriage separated, authorities reviewed a form of documentation similar to the dowry to ensure that women retained their property. When a man decided to abandon the woman with whom he legitimately cohabited under the law, and if he determined to marry another woman, the first woman and

her family then had grounds for litigation that could yield some economic benefit for her estate, which later became part of her dowry should she determine to marry in the future.⁶⁸

As might be expected, few spouses voluntarily reported their treachery, and for this reason, Juan de Balsa's letter home from Valladolid (New Spain) to his wife in Spain in 1646 is unique, more so because his bigamy trial occurred decades later in 1690. In it he explained: "I have gone through many lands, passed by many calamities, and right now I'm in Guacana with a countryman of mine called Don Juan Castellano de Torres, resident of Guacana, and I have some mules. And what I beg of you is that you look after yourself because I have become a bad man."⁶⁹ Antonio de Liden took a slightly different approach by admitting, "I have acted badly, retreating to the mischief of younger men, but pustules have now erupted and I have decided to put myself on the rack for these devotions in order to purge all of my sins."⁷⁰ He wrote lovingly to his wife in Spain, which his love poem revealed was named Antonia, and wished her good health and happiness. Confessions of this nature transformed into evidence that women could provide to authorities for having their marriages annulled and property returned.

In conclusion, an examination of the dowry process as well as the structure of the exchanges that took place between early modern Spanish couples demonstrate that women, first and foremost, exercised authority over the dowry, which was entrusted to husbands only for the duration of the marriage. Because the dowry, along with the arras, had to be restored to the wife after the marriage ended due to death or separation, women could benefit considerably from their marriages from a material perspective, even more so because with each marriage the amount of the dowry increased because the initial arras and wives' half of the wealth accumulated during each marriage were added to it. The laws in place also protected women's authority and inheritance rights, which was in the interest of society in general as impoverished women would only burden male relatives or future husbands. The process essentially certified women's juridical ability and competence to govern their material lives and to administer both her materiality as well as their husbands' in his absence, providing an important opportunity for women to exert authority in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spain when husbands were often abroad in the Americas.

Women's exclusive use of great portions of the couple's domestic materiality in particular sublimates his knowledge and authority to use and interact with those possessions. In short, feminine power and authority did not necessarily compete or conflict with patriarchal power that desired female competency and achievement to ensure the smooth and productive functioning of society. A desire for an orderly and fruitful society no doubt

eased the transition of wives into their husbands' roles as producers of goods and services in cases where husbands were abroad in the Americas. Without women assuming these roles, basic goods like wheat, wine, and clothing may not have been produced in sufficient quantities to satisfy demand both domestically and abroad in the Americas. This area requires greater scholarly attention, particularly on the degree to which female labor in Spain supported men's material needs abroad and on the number of women who assumed the professional pursuits of their husbands who were away from home.

This article has taken a new approach to the study of marriage as glimpsed in early modern documentation by focusing on the materiality of Spanish conjugal life. By studying women's possessions, and the power and influence that they exerted within the marriage from a material perspective, we can apprehend women's economic and political authority within and outside of the domestic abode. We have also examined the social and legal apparatus supporting marriage, which enabled women's authority within a patriarchal matrimonial system that otherwise appeared to subjugate women. Many scholars have negated women's ability to exercise power over men within that period but, clearly, scholars can challenge this masculinist paradigm when they consider the gendered materiality of the marriage.

NOTES

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¹Representative scholarship on this subject includes Genevieve Carlton, "Viewing the World: Women, Religion, and the Audience for Maps in Early Modern Venice," *Terrae Incognitae* 48, no. 1 (2016): 15–36; James Casey, *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain: The Citizens of Granada, 1570–1739* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2007); Moira Donald and Linda Hurcombe, eds., *Gender and Material Culture in Archaeological Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Nancy C. M. Hartsock, *Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism* (New York: Longman, 1983); Martha C. Howell, *The Marriage Exchange: Property, Social Place, and Gender in Cities of the Low Countries, 1300–1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); María del Carmen Martínez Martínez, "Inquietudes, viajes y equipajes," in *Viajeras entre dos mundos*, ed. Sara Beatriz Guardia (Lima: CEMHAL, 2011), 45–63; Katherine A. McIver, "Material Culture: Consumption, Collecting, and Domestic Goods," in *The Ashgate Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Jane Couchman and Allyson M. Poska (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 469–88; and Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²Gabriela Carrión, *Staging Marriage in Early Modern Spain: Conjugal Doctrine in Lope, Cervantes, and Calderón* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2011); James, *Family and Community in Early Modern Spain*, 121–44; McIver, "Material Culture," 476; and Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain*, 4. Also see Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 86; Margaret P. Hannay, "'O Daughter Heare': Reconstructing the Lives of Aristocratic Englishwomen," in *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1994), 35–63, 38–39; María Ángeles Hernández Bermejo, "La imagen de la mujer en la literatura moral y religiosa de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Norba. Revista de Historia* 8–9 (1987–1988): 175–88, 177–80; Teresa Langel de Paz, "En busca del paraíso ausente. 'Mujer varonil' y 'autor femenil' en una utopía feminista inédita del siglo XVII español," *Hispania* 86, no. 3 (2003): 463–73, 467–68; María Victoria López-Cordón, "Familia, sexo y género en la España moderna," *Studia Historica* 18 (1998): 105–34, 107; Sarah Pennell, "Consumption and Consumerism in Early Modern England," *The Historical Journal* 42, no. 2 (1999): 549–64, 553–54; and Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000), 73–74.

³In addition to the other manuals for women cited later in this article, two works represent this popular position: Juan Luis Vives, *Libro llamado Instrucción de la muger christiana* (Seville: George Coçi, 1539); and Vicente Mexía, *Saludable instrucción del estado del matrimonio* (Cordoba: Juan Baptista Escudero, 1566).

⁴Jane E. Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations: Creating the Bonds of Family in Conquest-era Peru and Spain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 91.

⁵James Casey, *Early Modern Spain: A Social History* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 28–29; Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 41; Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain*, 118–19; and Deanna Shemek, *Ladies Errant: Wayward Women, and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 29–30.

⁶Jutta Gisela Sperling, "The Economics and Politics of Marriage" in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender*, ed. Jane Couchman and Allyson M. Poska (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 213–33, 227.

⁷Richard Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists: Marriage, Family, and Community in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 31, 65.

⁸Dawn Bratsch-Prince, "Pawn or Player?: Violant of Bar and the Game of Matrimonial Politics in the Crown of Aragon (1380–1396)," in *Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Eukene Lacarra Lanz (New York: Routledge, 2002), 59–89.

⁹Bill Brown, *A Sense of Things: The Object Matter of American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 5.

¹⁰Diego de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destes reynos, hecha por mandado de la Magestad Catholica del Rey don Philippe Segundo nuestro Señor*, vol. 1, book 5 (Alcalá

de Henares: Iñiguez de Lequerica, 1598), title 1, law ix, fol. 286r. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.

¹¹Manuel José Pedraza Gracia, "La documentación notarial: fuente para la investigación de la historia del libro, la lectura y los depósitos documentales," *Documentación de las ciencias de la información* 24 (2001): 79–103, 82–83.

¹²Marie-Catherine Barbazza, "Les paysans et la dot: un exemple de quelques pratiques en Nouvelle Castille, 1580–1610," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 25 (1989): 161–74, 161–62.

¹³de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destos reynos*, vol. 1, book v, title 2, law 1.

¹⁴Francisco Zarandieta Arenas, "Riqueza y consumo en la Baja Extremadura en el siglo XVII. Análisis a través de las cartas de dote," *Historia Agraria* 21 (2000): 63–97, 64.

¹⁵Marie-Catherine Barbazza, *La société paysanne en Nouvelle-Castille: Famille, mariage et transmission des biens à Pozuelo de Aravaca, 1580–1640* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2000), 57; and Francisco J. Crespo Muñoz, *El notariado en Baza (Granada) a comienzos de la edad media: Estudio y catálogo de los protocolos notariales (1510–1519)* (Granada: Editorial de la Universidad de Granada, 2007), 207.

¹⁶Mario Carlos Vivas, "Los documentos dotales en Córdoba del Tucumán (1573–1650)," in *Derecho y administración pública en las Indias hispánicas*, ed. Feliciano Barrios Pintado (Toledo: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2002), 2:1811–36, 1822.

¹⁷The original text from Denbas's dowry letter begins with her husband's statement concerning their marital transaction of wealth: "En nombre de dios amen. Sepan quantos esta carta de dote bieren como yo Antonio Fernandez de la villa de Borox digo que por quanto al tiempo y quando se trata que yo me he casado con Ju[an]a Denbas mi mug[e]r [y] ella me prometio en dote una cierta cantidad de maravedís [en] ciertos bienes y muebles, y ahora aber mi derecho en hecho dicho mi matrimonio, la d[ic]ha mi muger me da." Quoted from Archivo Histórico Provincial de Toledo (hereafter AHP, Toledo), Prot. Not. 6231 (Borox, 1604), fol. 26v–28v.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, fol. 27r.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 28r.

²⁰"Pues dicen que en las plazas y lugares públicos, y adonde quiera que se hiciere junta de hombres principales, el hombre . . . será por ella conocido y señalado, ypreciado entre todos," in *La perfecta casada*, Luis de León (1583) (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1980), 119.

²¹Ian MacLean, *The Renaissance Notion of Women: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11.

²²Ana Labarta, "Contratos matrimoniales entre moriscos valencianos," *Al-Qantara* 4, no. 1/2 (1983): 57–87. Also see Wilhelm Hoenerbach, *Spanisch-Islamische*

Urdunden aus der Zeit der Nasriden und Moriscos (Bonn: Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1965); and Juan Martínez Ruiz, "Siete cartas de dote y arras del Archivo de la Alhambra, 1546-1608," *Revista de dialectología y tradiciones populares* 22, no. 1/2 (1966): 41-72, 54-60.

²³AHP, Toledo, Prot. Not. 7066 (Illescas).

²⁴Pablo Rodríguez and Annie Molinie-Bertrand, eds., *A través del tiempo: Diccionario de fuentes para la historia de la familia* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 2000), 45.

²⁵"[P]or honra de vos la dicha doña María de Mirando Salón, mi esposa y mujer que sereis, dios queriendo y de vuestra virginidad y limpieza, en cumplimiento de la dicha escritura de capitulación y concierto de suso referida, os mando en arras proter nuncias para aumento de la dicha dote, de mis propios bienes . . . mil y quinientos ducados." Quoted in Archivo Histórico Provincial de Burgos, Prot. Not. 2950.

²⁶María Teresa López Beltrán, "En los márgenes del matrimonio: transgresiones y estrategias de supervivencia en la sociedad bajomedieval castellana" in *La familia en la edad media. XI Semana de Estudios Medievales*, ed. José Ignacio de la Iglesia Duarte (Nájera: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2001): 1-38, 9.

²⁷Georgina Dopico Black, *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 25. Also see Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 27-28.

²⁸Barbazza, "Les paysans et la dot," 171-72.

²⁹An interesting example, also from Toledo, of this situation can be found in María de Arroyo's dowry composed in 1608, which contained "seis cuellos de ombre. Los cinco de bofeta y uno de lana, en çientos y quatro reales" (six male collars, five made of cotton and one of wool, worth 140 reales) and "seis lienços de narices de ombre de Ruan, en quatro reales cada uno" (six male handkerchiefs made of linen, worth 4 reales each). AHP, Toledo, Prot. Not. 6233 (Borox, 1608), fol. 184v-187v.

³⁰María F. Carbajo Isla, "La hacienda y la política matrimonial de un panadero del siglo XVII," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* no. 34 (2009): 33-66, 37-38.

³¹*Ibid.*, 40, 44.

³²Carrión, *Staging Marriage in Early Modern Spain*, 98-99.

³³Petra Neukirchen, "Aproximación jurídica a los derechos de la mujer en los contratos matrimoniales," in *Historia de la mujer e historia del matrimonio*, ed. María Victoria López Cordón and Montserrat Carbonell Esteller (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1997), 139-51, 141.

³⁴The decree and its successors is discussed in Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*, 71-72, 76-77.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 83-84.

³⁶Stephanie Fink de Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain: Protectors, Proprietors, and Patrons* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2.

³⁷“[S]alen tantas personas para el Nuevo Mundo, que la ciudad se halla poco poblada y casi en poder de las mujeres.” Andrea di Navagero, *Viaje a España del magnífico señor Andrés Navagero (1524–1526): Embajador de la República de Venecia ante el Emperador Carlos V* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1951), 57.

³⁸Rocío Sánchez Rubio and Isabel Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une: las relaciones epistolares en el Viejo y Nuevo Mundo, siglos XVI–XVIII* (Mérida: Universidad de Extremadura, 1999), letter 115, 252–53.

³⁹Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Random House, 1996), 164.

⁴⁰de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destos Reynos*, vol. 1, book 5, title 3, laws iii and vi.

⁴¹Marjorie Ratcliffe, “Mistresses and Prostitutes: Extramarital Relationships in Medieval Castile,” *Hispania* 67, no. 3 (1984): 346–50, 346.

⁴²Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, 15–16.

⁴³de Backer, *Widowhood in Early Modern Spain*, 6–9.

⁴⁴“Todo el vino y el trigo que aquí se cría se manda a las Indias, y también se envían jubones, camisas, calzas y cosas semejantes.” di Navagero, *Viaje a España*, 57.

⁴⁵Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, 17.

⁴⁶Mangan, *Transatlantic Obligations*, 82.

⁴⁷“Enviasteis dos cartas, una para mi hermano Diego de Mercado y otra para vuestro amigo Pedro Juan; enviasteis a decir encasadamente que os enviaran la fe de que era yo muerta, que teníais necesidad de ella. Si queréis que yo os la envíe, yo os la enviaré, que quien tan vanas esperanzas tiene, como yo, hace cuenta que aunque vivo, muero.” Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 103, 231.

⁴⁸“Que no pudierais vos hacer con él como yo lo he hecho: vestirlo y calzarlo y sustenarlo siete años sin remedio ninguno que me dejasteis, sino con mi puro trabajo.” Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 103, 232.

⁴⁹“Os acordéis me dejasteis cargada de hijos y sin remedio, ni de dónde haberle, y acudáis a favorecerme para sustentar vuestros hijos y para mí, que aun no estoy muerta ni me lleva Dios hasta que yo os vea.” Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 108, 240. A year later, a woman with her name acquired permission to travel from Seville to La Habana, but it is not clear if she arrived in time for her husband’s process with the inquisition. See Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Seville, Contratación 5257, núm. 2, fol. 58r.

⁵⁰Alexandra Parma Cook and Noble David Cook, *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance: A Case of Transatlantic Bigamy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991).

⁵¹Allyson M. Poska, "When Bigamy is the Charge: Gallegan Women and the Holy Office," in *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary E. Giles (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 189–208, 194. Also see Boyer, *Lives of the Bigamists*, 118.

⁵²Poska, "When Bigamy is the Charge," 196–97, 203–4.

⁵³Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, 70, 118.

⁵⁴Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire: Brihuega, Spain & Puebla, Mexico, 1560–1620* (Sanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 132.

⁵⁵"[S]eis platillos, dos cucharas, dos tenedores." Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 30, 97–98; 95, 217; 236, 443; 255, 467; and 299, 530.

⁵⁶"[Q]ue tenía casa de camas y daba de comer. Hijo no es justo que este traidor haga burlas de mis canas." Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 138, 290–1.

⁵⁷"[T]enía camas, y por estas señas me hará v.m.d. merced en secreto." Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 139, 292–93.

⁵⁸"[S]i escribiereis que sea en un cabezón de una camisa muy bien puesto entre los dobleces de una sábana." Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 248, 459. Also see letter 247, 457–58.

⁵⁹de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destos reynos*, vol. 1, book 5, title 1, laws v–vii. Also see vol. 2, book 8, title 20, law viii.

⁶⁰See Hernando Alemán's letter to the priest Alonso de Ávalos, which he sent from his prison in Guatemala in 1600 and explains these precise circumstances. Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 111, 245–46. His trial occurred two years later in 1602, see Archivo General de la Nación (hereafter AGN), Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición 61, vol. 256, expediente (hereafter exp.) 9.

⁶¹AGN, Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferente Virreinal, caja 6708, exp. 129 and caja 6609, exp. 52; also see caja 6596, exp. 131. Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 109, 242–3.

⁶²AGN, Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición 61, vol. 251a, exp. 5.

⁶³de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destos reynos*, vol. 1, book 5, title 3, laws vii–viii.

⁶⁴AGN, Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Indiferente Virreinal, caja 1336, exp. 1.

⁶⁵"No lo habéis hecho como me lo prometisteis como Cristiano, sino mostrasteis las obras como si no tuvierais conciencia y habíais de morir. Bien sabéis que por vos perdí mi tierra y mi hacienda y a mi marido y mis hijos y aborrecida de mis hermanos y de mi madre, y he sido corrida de parientes de mi marido después que os fuisteis." AGN, Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición 61, vol. 105, exp. 4. Also see Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 26, 88.

⁶⁶“[P]ara que si ella quisiere casar y fazer vida honesta, que la dicha pena le sea dada por bienes dotales al marido q con ella casare.” de Atienza, *Recopilacion de las leyes destes reynos*, vol. 2, book 8, title 19, laws i–v.

⁶⁷Eukene Lacarra Lanz, “Changing Boundaries of Licit and Illicit Unions,” in *Marriage and Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia*, ed. Eukene Lacarra Lanz (New York: Routledge, 2002), 158–94, 165–66.

⁶⁸Lacarra Lanz, “Changing Boundaries of Licit and Illicit Unions,” 162.

⁶⁹“He recorrido muchas tierras, pasando muchas calamidades, y ahora al presente estoy en la Guacana con un paisano mío, llamado don Juan Castellano de Torres, vecino de la Guacana, y tengo unas mulillas. Y lo que te suplico es que mires por tus muchas obligaciones, ya que yo he sucedido a mal hombre.” AGN, Mexico, Instituciones Coloniales, Inquisición 61, vol. 435, exp. 317; and Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 167, 334.

⁷⁰“[Y]o quedo muy malo, padeciendo travesuras de mozo antiguas porque me he acabado de llenar de bubas, y he determinado ponerme en el potro de las unciones a purgar todos mis pecados.” Sánchez Rubio and Testón Núñez, *El hilo que une*, letter 175, 349.
