

A Companion to Early Modern Lima

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The Sonic Construction of a New Capital: Urban Soundscapes and Acoustic Communities in 16th-Century Lima

Javier Marín-López

This chapter explores the role played by music – in its different degrees of elaboration – and, more generically, sound in the complex process of the construction of the symbolic capital of Lima, the recently established viceregal capital, during the first century after the city's foundation.¹ The creation of an *ex novo* city as the viceregal capital, with no glorious indigenous past, was contested during the 16th century by the former symbolic and spiritual capital of Inca Peru, Cuzco. Thus, local chroniclers produced an apologetic discourse based on Lima's urban virtues, such as its proximity to the sea, its thriving commerce, and its Spanish and courtly nature as *Ciudad de los Reyes* [City of Kings].² The main hypothesis of this chapter is that sound had a decisive role in the consolidation of the *limeño* [Lima] Catholic colonial regime and in the construction of an acoustic identity by the communities that comprised the city. It favored the creation of a new spatial sense that integrated Catholic doctrine into a community that supported the coexistence of conquerors and conquered in a new urban imaginary. Moreover, it allowed the Spanish power to establish colonial structures through its religious and civil institutions, and it facilitated the integration of a diverse population of migrant residents into the new urban life through musical practice by assimilating European cultural practices, and simultaneously transforming them.

Although the modern historiography of colonial Lima has recognized the importance of sound expression in the articulation of the city's urban space

¹ Usually, the first colonial settlements were established in indigenous urban centers. However, in the case of Lima, another formula was adopted. For geo-strategic reasons the capital city of the Viceroyalty was not settled in Cuzco, the Inca Empire's ancient capital located at an altitude of 3400 meters, but in a semi-populated deserted plain at 12 km from the seashore in order to favor its communications with the metropolis.

² A.B. Osorio, *Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru's South Sea Metropolis* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 35–55.