

Colonial Latin American Historical Review

Volume 7

Issue 1 *Volume 7, Issue 1 (Winter 1998)*

Article 7

12-1-1998

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Recommended Citation

Stein, Stanley J. "Cristina Ana Mazzeo, El comercio libre en el Perú: las estrategias de un comerciante criollo, José Antonio de Lavalle y Cortés, 1777-1815." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 7, 1 (1998): 63. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol7/iss1/7>

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El comercio libre en el Perú: las estrategias de un comerciante criollo, José Antonio de Lavalle y Cortés, 1777-1815. Por Cristina Ana Mazzeo. (Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 1994. 279 pp. Ilustraciones, mapas, cuadros, apéndices, notas, bibliografía. Precio no disponible.)

Cristina Ana Mazzeo offers a compact, carefully organized, and ambitious monograph on a major issue: the economic repercussions of a late eighteenth-century Spanish Bourbon "reform"—*comercio libre* of 1778—on Lima's commercial interests. Some themes are explicit, others implicit. Did Lima's economic role in South America change for better or, as some would have it, for worse? Why did Lima's merchant oligarchs, peninsular and *criollo*, remain royalist and colonialist? Most important for the monograph, can analysis of the business career of a prominent *criollo* merchant stand for the Lima commercial community as a whole? What lends particular weight to Mazzeo's book is its reliance upon painstaking mining of the manuscript holdings of Lima's Archivo General de la Nación port records (*aduanas*), the *sección consulado*, and especially the *sección notarios* (1755-1815).

In brief chapters (some rounded out with relevant tables), Mazzeo lays out the structure of Peru's overseas and internal trade, the metropole's decision to separate the huge La Plata area from Lima's viceregal jurisdiction, and an analysis of the *reglamento del comercio libre* and its general impact. Supplementing this historical matrix are observations about Lima's social and economic elites, its *aristocracia mercantil*, and then the career of a representative figure, José Antonio de Lavalle y Cortés. Two subsequent chapters treat the analytical core of the monograph: Lavalle, his colleagues in both high and low places, and their networks; their payment mechanisms and shipping facilities; and—key to the monograph's argument—the development of non-traditional exportables, namely Guayaquil cocoa, Chilean copper, and

Peruvian quinine, after 1778. Between 1786-1794, the leading export by value was quinine, followed closely by cocoa and copper. No data on precious metals exports are provided by way of comparison; however, one table (p. 124) listing exports by value of precious metals and other products to Spain in 1792, indicates that *caudales* still constituted more than 90 percent, a very traditional proportion. To be sure, Lavalley moved rapidly to enter the slave trade after 1783 in which he figured significantly. While the data is quite inconclusive, Mazzeo's statistics show that merchants from Peru purchased in Buenos Aires 2,301 slaves (1779-1809); Lavalley in the same period imported 3,040 slaves from Callao, who he marketed up and down the Pacific coast from Trujillo to Valparaíso.

Mazzeo's prosaic account of Lavalley's life can be reconstructed to reveal a career that reads like a classic Spanish colonial *cursus honorum*. His father was a Spanish (*vizcaíno*) immigrant merchant who accompanied a cousin, Tomás de la Bodega, to provincial Peru where he became *contador* in the local colonial treasury. His mother was a *criolla* whose male ascendants were peninsular immigrants invariably marrying *criollas*. Lavalley was born in Trujillo in 1735, attended a Jesuit school, became an *alcalde* (1762) in Trujillo, then *corregidor* of Piura (1767-1772)—an office he may have bought. There are no personal papers, letters, memoirs, or business correspondence and one can only surmise why he moved to Lima, became an *almacenero* (one of eighty-eight), and married a *criolla* in 1767 whose family had mining and hacienda properties. Perhaps the trading activities of his father's extended family, the Bodega y Cuadra, shaped his career choice. In Lima his career was meteoric: *alcalde* (1779), *regidor perpetuo* (1784), and then, in the footsteps of Tomás de la Bodega, prior of Lima's Consulado. For service in the armed forces or for his financial assistance in suppressing the violent social upheaval in the Central Andes under Tupac Amaru, Madrid awarded him the title of Conde del Premio Real in 1782.

By then Lavalley had six sons: two in the military (one in Peru, the other in Spain), two bureaucrats (in Peru and Spain), and two followed their father into colonial trade. In addition, there was a maternal uncle, canon of the Lima cathedral, and a brother in the state tobacco monopoly and Lavalley's business agent in Buenos Aires. From these details drawn from Lima's notarial records, Lavalley emerges as a member of Lima's upper class interlocked with peninsular and *criollo* officials, clerics, and merchant oligarchs prospering under Spanish colonial rule ever hospitable to social climbers in the colonies.

One explanation of Lavalley's success in business was his readiness to take advantage of pools of investible capital available after 1778, a time when investors ranging from religious corporations to private individuals were shifting from Consulado funds financing the Spanish government to prudently aggressive merchant bankers like Lavalley. In Lima he invested in urban properties that provided income and security for funds he accepted on deposit.

Thus, he mobilized a capital fund that over forty years totaled more than 500,000 pesos, returning to investors between 3 and 6 percent annually. He applied his funds exclusively to commercial ventures: importing European products (via Cádiz, where a son was his agent), exporting copper, cocoa, and quinine, speculating in slaves purchased in Buenos Aires, and lending over 300,000 pesos. As Mazzeo underscores, Lavalle avoided productive ventures in agriculture or manufacture; in this sense he was a conservative, hardly innovative businessman.

In light of his social background, extended family networks, and his standing as a valuable member of Lima's influential mercantile community, Lavalle had no reason to abandon Spanish colonialism in America after 1810. His skill in adapting to post-1778 trading conditions in the empire together with fear of the radicalism of popular movements for independence explain his unconditional support of the old regime in colonial Peru.

Mazzeo's monograph illuminates how much can be teased from notarial records by patient analysis. Pity that the publisher has so poorly bound such a useful study.

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