

5. "The Extreme Need for Monasteries": Three Convents, 1569-1580

Santa Clara

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After the foundation of the Colegio de Niñas Mestizas and Jesús de la Penitencia, the cabildo turned its attention to a project it considered very important: the foundation of a new convent of professed nuns. The perpetuation of Mexico's first convent and the establishment of a second had been regularly discussed in the early 1560s. The city's existing Conceptionist convent had continued to expand, receiving the grant of a new *solar* in 1559. ¹ In 1560, the city's *procurador mayor* was ordered to intervene in the matter of royal support for the convent, whose nuns were at the time "very needy." At the same time, Bernaldino de Albornoz and Don Fernando de Portugal, both important cabildo members, were commissioned to seek permission to found a Dominican convent in Coyoacán, in accordance with the last wishes of the Marqués del Valle. ² In 1562, the cabildo sent representatives to court to solicit support in a number of matters, among them the building program of La Concepción, the perpetuation of the "school of orphan girls," and the creation of "a monastery of Dominican nuns." ³ Here again, the cabildo's proprietary interest in institutions for women was expressed in its protective and activist stance. Indeed, the urban government was to take its strongest advocacy role to date in the late 1560s, in the foundation of the new convent Santa Clara de México.

Santa Clara, the second nunnery in Mexico City, was, of course, a Franciscan institution. The Franciscan order for women traced its origin to Saint Clare, a noblewoman born in Assisi around 1194. Clare was attracted to the message of St. Francis and, at the age of eighteen, left her home to found a new religious community, which her sister and mother later joined. Clare's order was approved by Pope Innocent III in 1212. Three years later, after much controversy, Clare received papal approval for a rule requiring strict poverty: effectively, the right to live solely on alms and without property, in imitation of the First Rule of St. Francis. The remainder of Clare's life was devoted to defending this privilege. ⁴

The order spread rapidly through Europe, but its maturity was accompanied by the growth of dissension over the rigor of the First Rule of St. Clare. Clare's privilege of poverty was not extended to all houses, nor was an exemption from *clausura*. Instead, in 1263, Pope Urban IV issued a new and less strenuous rule. The nuns who followed it became known as Urban Clares, and were allowed to possess all the property "which they would have enjoyed had they remained in the world." ⁵ Poor Clares, followers of the original rule, became a discrete order. In Spain, the sixteenth century was a period of rapid growth for the order. Between 1500 and 1599, eighty-three convents of

Clares were founded in Castile. By the end of the century, the Franciscan order dominated women's monasticism on the Iberian peninsula. [6](#)

In Spanish America, despite the rapid spread of Franciscan houses for men, [7](#) the order's female wing got a slower start. The first Franciscan nunnery in Spanish America was Santa Clara de Cuzco, founded as a beaterio in that South American city in 1551, and later converted to a regular convent. [8](#) This institution, and all the other Franciscan convents for women founded in sixteenth-century Spanish America, without exception observed the less-strict rule of the *Clarissas urbanistas*. Not until 1665 would a convent of *Capuchinas* — observers of the First Rule of St. Clare — be established in Mexico City. [9](#) The foundation of a Franciscan convent for women, then, should not be understood as a return to a more primitive monasticism than that offered by La Concepción, or a more authentic culmination of Bishop Zumárraga's dream. The way of life offered by Santa Clara, in its material conditions at least, would not differ dramatically from the Conceptionist model.

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Initially, the foundation of Santa Clara de México was marked by cooperation among cabildo, viceroy, and archbishop. [10](#) Nonetheless, the cabildo's interest was the catalyst for the project. In March 1566, the city council's members composed two letters, one addressed to the pope and one to the king, soliciting the foundation of "a monastery of nuns and enclosed women." (*un monasterio de monjas y mujeres recogidas*) The proposal languished for two years, apparently because these letters were never sent; they were found more than two years later among the papers of one of the cabildo's members. [11](#) Thereafter, however, the city government pursued the project with renewed interest. In 1568, the city government approached the Franciscan provincial Fray Miguel Navarro and gained his approval. [12](#) The foundation was on its way.

As an organ of the elite, Mexico's cabildo was, of course, concerned with the preservation of elite honor and with the provision of more convent spaces. La Concepción was an insufficiently large repository for the growing number of elite women without honorable prospects. "How necessary it is," wrote the cabildo to Philip II, "that there be in Mexico City monasteries of nuns of all orders, because of the great number of noble maidens whose parents cannot marry them, nor do they want anything but to follow the service of God." [13](#)



The cabildo's mention of "all orders" reflects first of all the notion that a sense of urban completion required the establishment of convents of all the orders that existed in Spain. After all, the city had been urging the

establishment of a Dominican convent since the early 1560s. But why a Franciscan foundation now? It has been suggested that the answer lies in the great love held by the citizenry for the Franciscans. ¹⁴ The respect the Franciscans enjoyed is undisputed, and there were notable links between this order and the elite of Mexico City.

The quest for a Franciscan foundation also reflects the recent clarification of the status of La Concepción. In the late 1530s, as we have seen, the municipal government expressly asked for the creation of one Franciscan and one Dominican convent. Until the 1560s, the city council seems to have understood the Conceptionist convent as nominally Franciscan, supporting Franciscan rather than episcopal jurisdiction over La Concepción in 1566. ¹⁵ When, in the 1560s, it became clear that La Concepción was not exactly a Franciscan house, the cabildo sought to establish such an institution while continuing to solicit approval for a Dominican house as well.

The nature of Santa Clara's planning, moreover, would determine the character of the foundation. In the case of La Concepción, there is no evidence that Conceptionist foundresses were the cause of the order's selection for the first American foundation. The foundresses of Santa Clara, conversely, were living under the rule of Saint Clare long before the cabildo promoted the idea of converting their informal arrangement into a legitimate convent for women. The proposed foundresses were the five daughters of fifty-six-year-old Alonso Sánchez and his wife Francisca Galván, Spanish immigrants who had come to the Indies some two decades earlier. ¹⁶ The Sánchez family was a devout one, even by the standards of the sixteenth century. The family's sons included an Augustinian who had assisted "in the conquest of the Philippines." ¹⁷ Another was a Dominican, a third had travelled to Spain to take the Franciscan habit, and a fourth wanted to become a priest. The couple's five daughters claimed to have lived as beatas since about 1558, wearing nuns' habits and living under the rule of Saint Clare in their family home in Puebla. Galván and Sánchez now proposed to separate, he joining the Franciscan order and she, with their daughters, the new convent. ¹⁸

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Writing in the eighteenth century, Fray Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa, archivist of the convent of San Francisco, described how once knowledge of the foundation project got out, "God touched the heart of Alonso Sánchez, his wife, and their five daughters, who lived in their own house next to the hermitage." ¹⁹ This account, however, minimizes the extent to which the Sánchez family directed the foundation. Contemporary sources suggest a much more extensive role for the founders. The foundresses themselves claimed that their fame had been the impetus behind the foundation proposal:

The Most Reverend Archbishop and Cabildo of this city of Mexico, seeing [the daughters'] good life and fame and the zeal they had for the service of God, and considering the extreme need for convents in this land, prayed and importuned the parents to create a monastery. [20](#) 

Thus the family came to Mexico City about 1567 from Puebla de los Angeles, expressly to found the convent, and expressly at the invitation of the cabildo and archbishop. One can therefore describe the trajectory of the project thus: the cabildo sought to establish convents of both Franciscan and Dominican orders and solicited the support of the archbishop. Either the city government or Archbishop Alonso de Montúfar heard of and contacted the Sánchez family, who were brought to Mexico to found a Franciscan convent because they were living under the Franciscan rule already.

Thus far, the roles of the Sánchez family and the cabildo of Mexico were of great importance. An important role in the foundation was also played by Pedro Thomas. The identity of Thomas has been the source of some confusion. Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora referred to him as a friar, an impression possibly created by the existence of convent papers referring to a "Padre Tomás." [21](#) But none of the contemporary sources examined refer to Thomas using a religious title, so this seems unlikely. Thomas was, however, an important philanthropist.

Thomas said that in 1569 he had rented the house now occupied by the convent to Doctor Pedro López. López was a well-known physician, "*taken for a saint because of his good life,*" [22](#) who repeatedly served the city as *protomédico*. [23](#) His involvement in the foundation of a convent is not surprising, because his philanthropic activities were many and varied. [24](#) After López rented the house, María de San Nicolás, three of her sisters, and her mother moved in. While the women were retired (*rrecogidas*) in the house, Archbishop Montúfar was approached by Doctor Çahinos, oidor of the audiencia; Doctor Villalobos; and by "other gentlemen and noble persons" to favor the *recogidas*. The archbishop responded by visiting the women and granting them clausura. [25](#) This contemporary version of events privileges the founding family's role in the decision to found a convent, complemented by the activity and support of one of the city's leading citizens and philanthropists.

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The enthusiasm of the city and its cabildo was matched by that of Viceroy Gastón de Peralta (the Marqués de Falces) and Martín Enríquez, who gave his consent "with special pleasure." [26](#) Archbishop Montúfar manifested his support by writing to Philip II on 31 March 1569 seeking his approval. The

archbishop's letter speaks of a rare unity of purpose among cabildo, viceroy, and episcopacy:

Understanding what fruit and result it would be to carry forward such a good and holy determination, and how much God Our Lord would be served from it, and because of being asked with great insistence by the Marques de Falces your Viceroy and by the government of this city, I indicated a convenient site upon which to create and build a monastery of the said order of Saint Clare. [27](#) 

Montúfar made reference in his letter to the "no small damage that would result to this republic" (*no poco daño [que] se seguiria a esta rrepublica*) if the foundation of Santa Clara did not proceed, again because of the many young women, daughters of "noble citizens," who had no possibility of contracting suitable marriages. [28](#) The archbishop, viceroy, and city government, then, were united by the apparently universal perception of a need to protect the honor of elite women, the conventional reason for foundation. The degree of consensus this objective elicited is clear; Montúfar, a strong opponent of the power of the regulars, and particularly the Franciscans, did not oppose a Franciscan foundation for *women*.

While awaiting royal approval, Montúfar offered the new convent a hermitage then in the possession of the Cofradía of the Holy Trinity, an organization of tailors, jacketmakers, and hosiers. [29](#) The hermitage contained only a sacristy, a few rooms, and a patio. [30](#) To begin the work of conversion, Don Fernando de Portugal and the *alcalde* Bernaldino de Albornoz collected alms for the convent. [31](#) Montúfar prohibited any interference with the transfer of the hermitage to the convent's power, rather summarily ordering the guilds and cofradía that owned it to vacate the buildings on pain of excommunication, leaving behind all of the ornaments pertaining to the hermitage. [32](#) The guilds were able to remonstrate with the archbishop and to arrange certain compensatory masses and services with the foundresses, though it is unclear whether these agreements were ever honored—a reminder that the burden of supporting women religious was conceived of as a project for all classes, just as the benefit of their presence was assumed to extend to all of the city's inhabitants.

The archbishop appointed Pedro Thomas mayordomo of the new project, ordering him to collect alms for the new site and to begin the work of converting the buildings to a bona fide cloister. His first task was to construct an alley (*callejón*) between the church of the hermitage and the living quarters of the nuns, so that they could travel to prayers without being seen. On 1 October 1568, the archbishop ordered that no one interfere with this

project, on pain of excommunication. [33](#)

The cabildo also worked to speed the process. Its members wrote to the king, asking that he favor the foundation and allow the profession of the nuns after their novitiate, in accordance with the decrees of the Council of Trent. In addition to emphasizing the importance of such a project, the urban government spoke optimistically of the foundation's viability; by 1569, six girls had already joined the foundresses in the church, "which is sufficient place for one hundred nuns and more,"  and the fledgling community already possessed 1235 *pesos de oro común* in yearly income. [34](#) Remaining obstacles to the foundation were quickly cleared away. Alonso Sánchez professed in San Francisco in December 1570, with license of his wife and the archbishop, leaving her free to pursue religious life. [35](#) Miguel de Dueñas was successful in obtaining the bull of foundation in 1570, specifying that the convent of Santa Clara was licensed to exist and that it should be under Franciscan jurisdiction. [36](#)

The flurry of supportive activity from the cabildo, the viceroys, and archbishop notwithstanding, this was, after all, to be a Franciscan foundation, and the friars were to carry responsibility for governing the nuns (*cura monialis*). Indeed, the Franciscan provincial, Navarro, seems to have responded enthusiastically to the project. He invested the foundresses as beatas and supplied them with Franciscan instruction before leaving, accompanied by Fray Jerónimo de Mendieta, for the Franciscan general chapter meeting to be held in France. [37](#) The foundation of Santa Clara de México was thus conceived as a project of the cabildo, but united virtually all the representative bodies of the Spanish commonwealth.

Regina Coeli

The city's thirst for more convents was not slaked by the foundation of Santa Clara. Only three years later, in 1573, a new convent was founded by the nuns of La Concepción. Like that of La Concepción, Regina Coeli's foundation is shrouded in mystery because the chronicle of its foundation composed during the sixteenth century has been lost. [38](#) The foundation occurred during a period of *sede vacante*; Archbishop Moya de Contreras had been elected but not invested. The convent was certainly created without papal authorization, which only arrived in 1578. [39](#) Despite the murky origins of the house, at least some members of the urban elite clearly took strong part in its foundation. In 1586, Bernaldino de Albornoz called himself "one of the founders" of the house. [40](#) Like La Concepción, it was conceived as a refuge for "many daughters and granddaughters of conquerors ... and many other principal persons of this kingdom." [41](#)  If anything, it partook of an even more markedly elite character than La Concepción, with ethnic restrictions and a huge dowry [42](#) requirement guarding its door. The encerramiento that inaugurated the convent was attended by the audiencia, cabildo, and

principal citizens of the city. ⁴³ Though there is no evidence that the cabildo participated in the foundation as a governmental body, the presence of Bernaldino de Albornoz among the founders is significant. Indeed, one of Albornoz's daughters came from La Concepción as a foundress of Regina Coeli. ⁴⁴ By 1586, Albornoz reported that he had two daughters in the convent along with another female relative. By that time, three daughters of Don Luis de Velasco the Younger were also residing in Regina. Given the complete lack of evidence of wealthy patrons who might have undertaken the foundation as a patrimonial project, it was likely another cooperative project uniting various members of the elite.

Jesús María

If the foundation of Regina Coeli shows that the urban elite was concerned with the creation of convent spaces for its daughters, there was still concern for those worthy women without the wherewithal for convent dowries. Once again, the urban government was the vehicle for the articulation of this concern. In 1579, the cabildo of Mexico City and the city's cathedral chapter united with New Spain's audiencia to support a worthy and urgent project: the foundation of a new convent to accept poor women who were daughters and granddaughters of conquerors, first settlers, and principal people of New Spain.

While no *cofradía* was apparently created to support the foundation, it was nonetheless a cooperative project characteristic of the period. Pedro Thomas, recently an actor in the foundations of Santa Clara and Jesús de la Penitencia, and Gregorio de Pesquera, then administrator of the Colegio de Niñas, were the official founders of Jesús María. Neither apparently held offices in the urban government, yet both were active on the urban scene. Pesquera was an old man who had turned to good works for the good of his soul "after having spent the ardors of his youth in conquering these lands." ⁴⁵ 

Thomas, for his part, had participated not only in the aforementioned foundations of women's institutions, but also in establishing hospitals, assisting the incarcerated, and performing "other pious works." ⁴⁶ Indeed, both Thomas and Pesquera seem to have been philanthropists above all, but specializing in the protection of women. Both were also highly effective in attracting the support of local government for their various charitable projects.

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The two men began by communicating their aims to Bernaldino de Albornoz, then *alcalde mayor*, who undertook to gain viceregal and episcopal approval. ⁴⁷ Albornoz was sufficiently interested in the affair to later describe himself as "one of the first founders of the said monastery, and [one of] those in charge of the solicitation of alms." ⁴⁸  Thomas and Pesquera also consulted members of the various religious orders of the city to

enlist their support. The viceroy and archbishop were informed and gave their enthusiastic blessings. While Albornoz and others solicited alms in the city, Thomas dedicated himself to collection on a wider geographic scale. Inside the city some 12,000 pesos were collected or pledged; outside it, on a city- and church-funded tour of "many parts and mines of New Spain," Pedro Thomas received some 4700 pesos. ⁴⁹ Many miners and merchants of the mines of Zimapán contributed sums from 5 to 50 pesos. In addition, Mexico City councilor Baltasar Mejía contributed 500 pesos; ⁵⁰ Jerónimo López, another venerable councilor, gave 2000. ⁵¹ The founder Pesquera, a man of some means, contributed 4300 pesos in *censos*. ⁵² Clearly, there was widespread support for the project.

Bernaldino de Albornoz used the money to purchase houses that had once belonged to the city councilor Diego Arias Sotelo. The houses were situated next to the parish church of Veracruz, appeared "very comfortable and in a good spot," (*muy cómodas y en buen sitio*) and cost 4900 pesos. ⁵³ Immediately, work began to transform the houses into a convent, on which project "many thousands of pesos" ⁵⁴ were spent. The founders later claimed that they had spent 8500 pesos on this part of the project. ⁵⁵

The building complete, the convent of Jesús María was founded on 10 January 1580, with ten professed Conceptionist nuns as foundresses and thirteen or fourteen girls as novices. ⁵⁶ According to the ordinances laid down by the archbishop for its administration, Jesús María was to follow the Conceptionist rule and to render its obedience to the ordinary. The Conceptionist nuns selected as foundresses promised the archbishop that Jesús María would become "one of the most principal [convents] and of the greatest quietude that there could be in this city." ⁵⁷ 

The new foundation was conceived as an intervention in the lives of poor but honorable young women who were in imminent danger of being "lost." ⁵⁸ Archbishop Moya de Contreras made it clear that his support for the convent was linked to this objective: "My principal intent," he wrote to the king, "is the remedy of the poor." ⁵⁹

In accord with this intention, the convent was to accept as novices "those most poor, needy, and with least possibility of remedy." ⁶⁰ (*las mas pobres, necesitadas, e imposibilitadas de remedio*) The convent's particular concern with protecting young women from sexual dishonor was exemplified in the decision to choose attractive applicants over unattractive ones because the former were at greater risk. ⁶¹ Moreover, the noble - that is, descendants of

conquerors and first-generation settlers - were to be selected above the plebeian, and the orphaned over those with parents. All were to be over fifteen, maidens "of exemplary life and reputation." (*de exemplar vida y opinion*) Widows and *quarteronas* ⁶² were forbidden unless their admittance might be of obvious benefit to the house. Mestizas were not to be admitted under any circumstances. Also forbidden was the entrance of "girls" and "boarders of any age." ⁶³ (*pupillas de ninguna edad*)

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The women for whose benefit the convent had been created were to be supported by chantries (*capellanías*). The first novices, in accord with the ordinances, were to be poor daughters of "honorable persons," selected from among many applicants. ⁶⁴ The constitution instituted them as holders of capellanías, so that if they died new poor nuns could be selected to replace them. ⁶⁵ The audiencia had set the value of the chantries at 1400 pesos de oro comun in principal, or 100 pesos per year. The ordinances increased this amount to 1800 pesos: 1400 to provide 100 pesos per year income, plus 400 for "the common necessities of the house." ⁶⁶ Originally, fifteen capellanías were instituted: six by Pedro García (deceased), three by Gregorio de Pesquera, two by Juan Rodríguez de Herrera, and four out of the alms collected. The women who held the capellanías were obliged to say the Divine Offices for their benefactors three days per week. ⁶⁷ By the time of the convent's official opening, there were only funds to admit thirteen young women. Six were named by the late Pedro García's executor. For the remaining seven positions there were thirty-nine applicants, from whom Bernaldino de Albornoz, the factor Martin de Yrigoyen, and Antonio de Mansilla selected. One woman chosen was the daughter of Rodrigo Ruiz, probably the same man who served the city as procurador and in a variety of other offices during the 1550s and 1560s. Another was the daughter of Francisco Montaña, who received a solar from the cabildo in 1531. The daughter of Pedro Rodríguez, possibly the same man who received a solar in 1527, was also admitted. ⁶⁸ The thirteen girls and women chosen were all daughters of men who, while not all prominent in the city, were at least apparently of long standing. Given the antiquity of some of the names, many of the maidens in question were undoubtedly well into adulthood.

The local response to the project was gratifying, but Pedro Thomas had loftier ambitions: royal sponsorship. On 26 March 1582, Thomas left Mexico to consult with the king about the convent. On St. Mark's Day (25 April) 1583, after enduring the punishing cold of Madrid for some time, Jesús María's patron met with Philip II in his palace. ⁶⁹ The royal response to the project was enthusiastic. ⁷⁰

Because he was suffering from the cold, and because a fleet was about to depart, Thomas had to leave the court before his business was concluded.

Before leaving Spain, however, while at San Lúcar, Thomas received both a memorial of the indulgences of the convent and a copy of a royal cédula ordering that the convent be favored in a lavish fashion. The convent would be received under royal patronage, and would be endowed with 20,000 ducados. Returning to New Spain, Thomas must have been well pleased with such royal favor that went beyond what anyone could reasonably have expected. Any citizen of the colony with a historical bent, in fact, might well have felt gratified by this mark of royal approval. Only forty years earlier, the Crown had attempted to prevent the establishment of convents in the new colony; now, the king encouraged and gave succor to what was generally recognized as an important and necessary component of urban colonial society.

Indeed, even in the absence of royal favor, the three recogimientos and three convents founded between 1548 and 1582 had served their purpose admirably. They marked urban space as Spanish and expressed the civic confidence of the Hispanizing city. In protecting the sexual honor of the women of the Spanish republic, the recogimientos and convents also protected the honor of their families and, by extension, that of the city as a whole. In this manner, Mexico's institutions for women were an emblem of the pride its inhabitants felt in the greatness of their city. At the same time, women's institutions were a potent antidote to anxieties about the nature of the city and colony, and a particular remedy to the perceived problem of disorderly colonial women. Because all of these diverse institutions were so important to the city, they were all graced by sixteenth-century witnesses with the name of "monesterio." Thus, though the institutions were heterogeneous, they were united in their status as municipal resources, critical to the city's success in social and spiritual realms.

The diversity of the women's institutions of Mexico City during this period is striking. So too is the manner of their foundation, which departed from the traditional pattern of foundation of monastic and quasi-monastic institutions. That pattern emphasized the role of a wealthy patron. All of the foundations undertaken between 1548 and 1582 were, conversely, cooperative projects in which the cabildo and its officeholders took an important role, not as patrons in the traditional sense, but as enthusiastic organizers and fundraisers.

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Yet the involvement of the elite did not imply that only the daughters of the wealthy were served. Indeed, though the institutions we have examined served only women and girls of the *república de españoles*, within those limits concern was expressed for a broad range of women, from wealthy members of the elite to streetwalkers. By 1600, the landscape of Mexico's women's institutions would be considerably more homogeneous, as we shall see in Chapter Six.

Appendices

[Appendix 1. AGI, México 2557, Exp. 3. A SM del cabildo secular de México. 30 March 1569.](#)

[Appendix 2. AGI, México 286. De officio en la audi\[enci\]a rreal de mex\[i\]co, a pedimi\[ent\]o de gregorio de pesquera y p\[edr\]o thomas primeros fundadores del monesterio de monjas de mexico llamado Jesus maria para donçellas pobres hijas y nietas de conquistadores. 5 October 1581.](#)

Notes:

Note 1: *Guía*, Acta del 17. xi. 1559, 354. [Back.](#)

Note 2: *Ibid.*, Acta del 12. i. 1560, 355. [Back.](#)

Note 3: *Ibid.*, Acta del 29. iv. 1562, 384. [Back.](#)

Note 4: McNamara, op. cit., 305-12. [Back.](#)

Note 5: *Ibid.*, 311. [Back.](#)

Note 6: Sánchez Lora, op. cit., 98. [Back.](#)

Note 7: In 1569, there were already 69 Franciscan conventos for men in New Spain. See Patricia Nettel D, op. cit., 39-53; 40. [Back.](#)

Note 8: Burns, "Convents," 27-9 passim. [Back.](#)

Note 9: Josefina Muriel, "Cincuenta años escribiendo historia de las mujeres," in Ramos Medina, ed., *Monacato Femenino*, 19-31; 28. [Back.](#)

Note 10: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. The *Guía de las Actas de Cabildo* records no such activity. [Back.](#)

Note 11: *Guía*, Acta del 20. viii. 1568, 456. [Back.](#)

Note 12: Muriel, *Conventos*, 168. [Back.](#)

Note 13: AGI, México, 2557, Exp. 3, ff. 5r-v. Carta del cabildo secular. 30 March 1569. [Back.](#)

Note 14: Muriel, *Conventos*, 169. [Back.](#)

Note 15: Marroquí, op. cit., I, 140. For more on sixteenth-century jurisdiction disputes, see Chapter Seven. [Back.](#)

Note 16: AGI, México 282. Lo que maria de san niculas y mariana de jesus e ysavel del espiritu santo y franca de la concepcion... suplican a su santidad. 26 October 1571. [Back.](#)

Note 17: Ibid., f. 1. [Back.](#)

Note 18: Muriel, *Conventos*, 168. Muriel suggests that the idea of the foundation preceded the identification of the foundresses, and that Alonso Sánchez and Francisca Galván owned the house next door to the hermitage. These ideas are suggested by Muriel's source, the 1793 account by Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa; but the contemporary accounts are very clear. Pedro Thomas, speaking on 5 December 1573, said that "*perhaps five and a half years ago this wtiness ernted the house where at present the said monastery is founded to Doctor Pedro López. After it was rented, he saw that María de San Nicolás with three of her sisters and her mother came to he house, and they enclosed themselves within it.*" AGI, México 283. Informacion de como se le dio la obediencia al provisor, f. 6. [Back.](#)

Note 19: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. [Back.](#)

Note 20: AGI, México 282. Lo que maria de san niculas y mariana de jesus y ysavel del espiritu santo y franca de la concepcion... suplican a su santidad. 26 October 1571. [Back.](#)

Note 21: Nuria María Rosa Salazar Simarro, "El Convento de Jesús María de la Ciudad de México: historia artística 1577-1860." Tesis de licenciatura, Universidad Iberoamericana, 1986, 25. [Back.](#)

Note 22: AGI, México 339. Carta del cabildo eclesiástico a SM. 9 March 1600. [Back.](#)

Note 23: *Guía*, Acta del 1.i. 1579, 553; Acta del 1. i. 1581, 572; Acta del 15. vi. 1582, 593; Acta del 1. i. 1585, 627; Acta del 4. i. 1588, 669; Acta del 11. i. 1589, 685. [Back.](#)

Note 24: In 1582, for example, he founded the Hospital de Desamparados for foundlings. He also submitted a memorial to the 1585 Mexican Provincial Council urging the establishment of a confraternity for blacks. Poole, op. cit., 145. [Back.](#)

Note 25: AGI, México 283. Informacion de como se le dio la obediencia al provisor. Testimony of Pedro Tomas, f. 5v. [Back.](#)

Note 26: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. [Back.](#)

Note 27: AGI, México 336A. Carta del arzobispo Montúfar a SM, 31 March

1569. This letter is reproduced in Paso y Troncoso, *Epistolario X*, No. 618, 291. [Back.](#)

Note 28: AGI, México 336A. [Back.](#)

Note 29: AGI, México, 2557, Exp. 3, ff. 5r-v. Carta del cabildo secular. 30 March 1569. [Back.](#)

Note 30: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. [Back.](#)

Note 31: AGI, México 283. Proceso y informaciones fechas en la ciudad de México y otros autos sobre haver salido las monjas de Santa Clara del monasterio... 1574-5. Testimony of Pedro Thomas, f. 4v. [Back.](#)

Note 32: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. [Back.](#)

Note 33: AGI, México 336A. Carta del arzobispo Montúfar a SM, 31 March 1569. [Back.](#)

Note 34: AGI, México 2557, Exp. 3, ff. 5r-v. Carta del cabildo secular. 30 March 1569. [Back.](#)

Note 35: INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42 bis, ff. 1-23. Nomina de religiosas del convento de Santa Clara de México, 1570-1747. F. 1 [Back.](#)

Note 36: Muriel, *Conventos*, 169. Muriel suggests that Pedro Thomas was in charge of getting the papal bull from Rome; however, Miguel de Dueñas claimed that he did it: "*this witness sent, at his cost and that of the convent, to the Roman court of His Holiness for a brief for the foundation of the said monastery, and Estevan Ferrofino brought it.*" See AGI, México 283. Proceso y informaciones fechas en la ciudad de México y otros autos sobre haver salido las monjas de Santa Clara del monasterio... 1574-5. Testimony of Miguel de Dueñas, f. 5. Also see INAH, Colección Gómez de Orozco 42. Crónica suscinta del convento de Santa Clara de México por fr. Antonio de la Rosa Figueroa. C. 1793, f. 1v. [Back.](#)

Note 37: Torquemada, op. cit., III, Cap. lxxiii, 562. The *capítulo general* was the supreme legislative body of the Franciscan order. [Back.](#)

Note 38: Muriel, *Cultura*, 48. [Back.](#)

Note 39: Muriel, *Conventos*, 74. [Back.](#)

Note 40: AGI, México 218, N. 7. Ynformacion de oficio rrescibida en la rreal audia de mexco dela nueva espana sobre la que dio el monesterio de Rregina Celi della va ante su magd a su rreal consejo de yndias. 1586, Im. 5. [Back.](#)

Note 41: Ibid., Im. 8. [Back.](#)

Note 42: Muriel, *Conventos*, 75. Unfortunately, Muriel does not list either sources or dates for the institution of such high dowries and ethnic restrictions. [Back.](#)

Note 43: AGI, México 283. Proceso y informaciones fechas en la ciudad de México y otros autos sobre haver salido las monjas de Santa Clara del monasterio... 1574-5. Testimony of Andrés Quixelmo, f. 53v. [Back.](#)

Note 44: Muriel, *Recogimientos*, 49. She was also appointed *cronista*, and was the author of the lost chronicle of the foundation. [Back.](#)

Note 45: Sigüenza y Góngora, op. cit., f. 6. [Back.](#)

Note 46: AGI, México 286. La ciudad de mexico a SM. 20 March 1582. [Back.](#)

Note 47: Salazar Simarro, op. cit., 26. [Back.](#)

Note 48: AGI, México 286. De officio en la audia rreal de mexco a pedimio de gregorio de pesquera y po thomas... 1581. [Back.](#)

Note 49: AGI, México 286. Cartas y informacion de oficio sobre el convento de jesus maria de mexico. 1583. F. 16: Información de oficio en el Audia rreal de mexco... 5 October 1581. Many pledges, of course, were never collected. [Back.](#)

Note 50: Nuria Salazar Simarro, "Monjas y benefactores," in Manuel Ramos Medina, ed., *El Monacato Femenino*, 193-212; 195-6. [Back.](#)

Note 51: Sigüenza y Góngora, f. 12v. [Back.](#)

Note 52: Ibid. [Back.](#)

Note 53: Ibid., f. 16v. [Back.](#)

Note 54: Ibid. [Back.](#)

Note 55: AGI, México 286. De officio en la audia rreal de mexco a pedimio de gregorio de pesquera y po thomas... 1581. [Back.](#)

Note 56: Sigüenza y Góngora, f. 16v. Also see AGI, México 286. Cartas y informacion de oficio sobre el convento de Jesús María de México. 1583. F. 16v: Información de oficio en el Audia rreal de mexco... 5 October 1581 and AGI, México 336A, Ramo 3, doc. 145. Pedro Moya de Contreras a SM. 28 March 1580. Josefina Muriel gives seven as the number of Conceptionist nuns who founded Jesús María. See *Conventos*, 82. [Back.](#)

Note 57: AGI, México 336A, Ramo 3, doc. 155. El arzobispo de México, sobre que se declare lo que convenga para que vaya adelante... Jesús María. 25 October 1581. Carta de la abadesa de Jesús María al Arzobispo de México, s.f. [Back.](#)

Note 58: AGI, Indiferente 740, N. 101. Consulta del Consejo de Indias sobre la fundación de Jesús María. 17 December 1582. [Back.](#)

Note 59: AGI, México 336A, Ramo 3, doc. 155. El arzobispo de México, sobre que se declare lo que convenga para que vaya adelante... Jesús María. 25 October 1581, f. 1 [Back.](#)

Note 60: Ibid., Constituciones de Jesús María. [Back.](#)

Note 61: Sigüenza y Góngora, op. cit., f. 8v. [Back.](#)

Note 62: The meaning of this term is unclear. If it is used in its later colonial sense, to mean "quadroons," it surely represents an early appearance of a rarefied racial sensibility more commonly identified with the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. [Back.](#)

Note 63: Ibid. Women of property who sought to enter the convent had first to divest themselves of property, because admittance was forbidden "*except as a poor woman.*" However, such women were welcome if they donated their wealth to the house as a "pious bequest." The constitution allowed for its return if the woman in question did not complete her novitiate. This provision for the entry of women of property along with subsequent decisions became a source of controversy, as we shall see in Chapter Six. [Back.](#)

Note 64: AGI, México 286. Cartas y informacion de oficio sobre el convento de Jesus maria de Mexico. 1583. F. 16: Información de oficio en el Audia rreal de mexco... 5 October 1581. [Back.](#)

Note 65: Ibid. [Back.](#)

Note 66: AGI, México 336A, Ramo 3, doc. 155. El arzobispo de México, sobre que se declare lo que convenga para que vaya adelante... Jesús María. 25 October 1581. Constituciones de Jesús María. [Back.](#)

Note 67: Ibid. [Back.](#)

Note 68: *Guía*, Acta del 15.xi. 1557, 335; Acta del 27. ii. 1531, 71; Acta del 11. i. 1527, 30. [Back.](#)

Note 69: AGI, México 286. Cartas y informacion de oficio sobre el convento de Jesús María de México. 1583. Carta de Pedro Thomas, 23 December 1584, f. 2. [Back.](#)

Note 70: "*This is very good, and thus let it be done as you see fit, bearing in mind whether it can be done under royal patronage (as the grant they receive is much greater, and the work and its perpetuity will be better), and giving the most appropriate orders in everything.*" AGI, Indiferente 740, N. 101. Consulta del consejo sobre la fundación de Jesús María. 17 December 1582. Historical rumor links Philip II's approval of the convent to the enclosure there of a girl who had arrived with the Inquisitor (and later Archbishop) Moya de Contreras in 1572. This girl, Doña Micaela, has been supposed by some to have been Philip

II's illegitimate daughter. (See Sigüenza y Góngora, op. cit., f. 18.) [Back](#).

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