



## Desastres en la América colonial Hispánica.

### Redes, circulación de la información y memoria (siglos XVI-XVIII)

13<sup>th</sup> September 2021

University of Pablo de Olavide

### ABSTRACTS

## «Nunca sabré explicar cómo fue aquel día». The transmission of news on earthquakes in the Hispanic Monarchy (17<sup>th</sup> century)

**Gennaro Varriale**, University of Naples "Federico II"

During the early modern age, earthquakes became a topic of interest for the Spanish imperial administration given the great seismic risk to which those who lived in different areas ruled by the Habsburgs were exposed. Varriale has examined the collection and transmission of information on earthquakes with a broad perspective benefiting from the extent of the possessions of the Hispanic Monarchy. In fact, he has conducted a comparative analysis of some calamitous episodes that occurred in European territories and in the colonial world during the seventeenth century. The main object of the research has been the internal communication system of the Hispanic administration. Furthermore, the formal characteristics of the texts elaborated when earthquakes occurred in the Spanish dominions and, in particular, the themes and contents that appear most frequently in this type of writing have been studied in depth.

## Disasters in the viceroyalty of Peru: the pontifical and royal *dos cuchillos* in the story of the catastrophe (second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century)

**Yasmina R. Ben Yessef Garfia** (Federico II University, Naples / ERC DisComPoSe).

The expression *dos cuchillos* was used by the Augustinian regalist bishop Gaspar de Villarroel in his work *Gobierno eclesiástico pacífico y unión de los dos cuchillos, pontificio y regio* (published in two volumes in Madrid by the printer Domingo García Morrás in 1656 and 1657). Even if the attempt was to establish the foundations for a happy coexistence and collaboration between Church and State, this text does not ignore more or less veiled criticisms of the excesses of the monarch towards ecclesiastical institutions. Indeed, the relations between these two institutions in this period were characterized by great uncertainty. The analysis of calamitous events such as, for example, the earthquakes that occurred in those years in the Viceroyalty of Peru, constitutes an excellent perspective to understand the difficult relationship established between the ecclesiastical and secular agents.

Ben Yessef set herself the goal of analyzing the way in which the secular and religious authorities of the Viceroyalty of Peru contributed to the narration of the earthquakes that struck some of the most important cities in the area. Through the study of the documents produced by bishops, clerics regular, *oidores* of the *Reales Audiencias*, viceroys, governors and officers of the *cabildos*, it is possible to deduce the different interests of these figures. It is also possible to understand how these texts reflect not only the particular purposes of the authors but also the importance of the relationships entertained - in the American context and under the profound influence of the international situation - between the Church and the State in the second half of the seventeenth century.

## Information networks and business opportunities during the Lima earthquake of 1687. The catastrophe through tales of the slave *asiento*.

**Jonatán Orozco Cruz** (Pablo de Olavide University, Seville).

On 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> October 1687, Lima and its surroundings suffered two earthquakes which destroyed a large number of the public and private buildings in the city. A third earthquake caused a tsunami that devastated the port of Callao. In the following days, the first stories about the catastrophe began to circulate. Two of these were written by Martín de Miguelena, agent of the Lima's slave *asiento* who, in his papers, addressed the various agents of the *asiento* in America, not only describing the material damage and human losses caused by the earthquakes, but also reporting the event as a propitious occasion for the *asiento*, given the desperate need for slave labour for the reconstruction of the city. The analysis of Miguelena's correspondence allows us to understand the importance of merchant networks in the circulation of news on the catastrophe. This case study has also been compared with some of the other channels that conveyed the dissemination of information on the disaster - such as religious or municipal communication networks - to grasp the different objectives and approaches to the catastrophe of the public and private agents of the Peruvian viceroyalty.

## The 1717 plague epidemic in Peru: management, control and narratives

**Valentina Favarò** (University of Palermo).

Favarò has analyzed the political dynamics set in motion by the plague epidemic that struck the viceroyalty of Peru in 1717. The perspective adopted has made it possible to link together two levels, local and global, to understand which actors were involved in the management of the emergency and what forms of political interaction there were between the institutions in Lima and Madrid. This has been followed by a reflection on the narration and transmission of information, on the rhetoric identified and on the authorized channels, especially at a time when the *Consejo de Indias* was being deprived of some of its functions in favour of the *via reservada*.

## The flow of knowledge on the origin of earthquakes and tsunamis in the territories of the Hispanic Monarchy during the eighteenth century.

**M<sup>a</sup> Eugenia Petit-Breuilh** (University of Seville).

The printing and dissemination of texts such as the *relaciones de sucesos* allowed a constant flow of information on important events that took place on both sides of the Hispanic Atlantic. This exchange of knowledge on the origin of earthquakes and tsunamis became even more frequent in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century due to the considerable increase in the incidence of such disasters, such as that of 1746 in Lima and Callao, those of 1751 in Santo Domingo

and Concepción (in Chile) and those of 1755 in Quito and in vast territories of the Bay of Cadiz. This last disaster gave rise to a wide debate on the origin of this type of natural phenomena. The analysis of these texts allows us to understand the ideas conceived by the different sectors of society in an era in which the Enlightenment coexisted with the censorship of the monarchical Inquisition.

### **The catastrophe as a *reajuste*. Urban transfers in Hispanic America**

**Manuel Lucena Giraldo** (CCHS, CSIC).

The dynamics of Hispanic imperial expansion beyond the Atlantic led to the creation of numerous urban centres. The success of this experience of merging, "transplanting" and re-founding cities is partly explained by the flexibility and speed with which the urban phenomenon developed. In America, the three fundamental elements of the Mediterranean urban tradition - the institutional, the political and the material - were articulated in such a way as to be able to define as real successes, rather than failures of the urbanization process, the forced transfers (the so-called "portable cities") carried out because of catastrophic events. Lucena Giraldo has analyzed some case studies of American cities affected by various environmental threats in the Modern Age.

