**Piety, beeswax and the Portuguese African slave trade to Lima, Peru, in the early colonial period**

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**Abstract**

The demand for beeswax for liturgical and medicinal purposes in the Americas vastly increased with the arrival of the Spanish. However, the absence of bees in early colonial Peru meant that this demand could not be met locally so that beeswax and candles had to be imported. While some beeswax was imported from Spain and from other American regions, an alternative source emerged with the Portuguese slave trade from Senegambia where the product was abundant. Using the account books of one of the main slave traders to Peru, Manuel Bautista Pérez, this paper follows the trajectory of the beeswax from Senegambia to Lima, via Cartagena de Indias and the Panamanian isthmus. It reveals how the trade in an everyday product might link producers and consumers in distant regions and how it was dependent on social relationships, cultural values and ecological conditions that were geographically and historically contingent. It shows how the beeswax trade was inextricably linked to the operation of the Portuguese slave trade so that when Portugal lost the monopoly contract for the introduction of slaves to Spanish America in 1640, the beeswax trade from Africa evaporated despite ongoing demand and profitability. Subsequently Lima imported most of its beeswax from Europe or other American regions, but the operation and profitability of the trade continued to be influenced by the same factors that characterised the trade from Africa. Due the centrality of bees to the story, it reveals how animals may play an important role in history even if they are not regarded as active agents and their significance is circumscribed by humans.

**Keywords**

Beeswax; stingless bees; Portuguese slave trade; Peru; Senegambia; wax chandlers

In his seminal study, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast* published in 1970, Walter Rodney drew attention to the supplementary role played by beeswax in the West African slave trade.[[1]](#endnote-1) However, nearly fifty years later this issue has still received very little scholarly attention. Michael Tuck has recently considered the beeswax trade from an African perspective, focusing primarily on the period after 1650 and on the balance between slaves and commodities in the Atlantic trade.[[2]](#endnote-2) However, the question of why the slave traders became interested in such an everyday commodity as beeswax in the first place has remained unexplored, as have the mechanisms by which they acquired it, from whom, and what profits they made. It is not the aim of this study to estimate the relative importance of beeswax and slaves in the transatlantic trade, but rather through an analysis of account books associated with this trade, throw light on the broader processes of how residents of Spanish America actually obtained items of everyday use, revealing that they were not always acquired locally or supplied through the well-documented Spanish galleon trade, but also drew on circuits of trade that extended to distant regions both across the Atlantic and within the colonies.[[3]](#endnote-3) By following the journey of the beeswax from producers, through the hands of transatlantic traders to its sale in Peru, the study reveals how trade in even a simple everyday commodity such as this was embedded in social relationships and cultural values that were geographically and historically contingent, both at the local and global level. Due the centrality of bees to the story, the study also reveals how animals and the environmental context may play important roles in history even if they are not regarded as active agents and their significance is circumscribed by humans.[[4]](#endnote-4)

**The sources**

This study of the beeswax trade is based largely on account books kept by the Portuguese New Christian slave trader, Manuel Bautista Pérez,[[5]](#endnote-5) and his business partners. Pérez was one of the most prominent slave traders in Peru in the 1620s and 1630s, when he was responsible for the shipment of about 300 to 400 slaves a year to Lima.[[6]](#endnote-6) Before he became resident in Lima, he embarked on two ventures in 1613 and 1616 when he personally sailed from Spain to Upper Guinea and subsequently to Peru, on each occasion spending between ten and eleven months on the African coast where he traded not only in slaves, but a wide range of other commodities. His brother, João Batista Peres and his business associate, António Nunes da Costa were based in Cacheu, in present-day Guinea-Bissau, and, after his brother’s death in 1617,[[7]](#endnote-7) Manuel Bautista Pérez used António Nunes da Costa as his main contact in Upper Guinea. As a New Christian, Pérez’s loyalty to the Roman Catholic faith was always open to question and in 1635 he was brought before the Inquisition in Lima on charges of Judaizing and put to death. During this process, his papers, which also included those of his business associates, were seized and they are now housed in the Santo Oficio (Inquisition) section of the Archivo General de la Nación in Lima, Peru.[[8]](#endnote-8)

**Beeswax and its demand in early colonial Peru**

Beeswax is a natural wax produced by honey bees. Bees generally secrete white wax, but in creating the honeycomb in which they raise their young, they bring in pollen, nectar and other materials which make it yellow. In the Old World beeswax was used for candles from Egyptian times and in the 1100s wax chandlers, who processed and sold beeswax, candles and other wax products, emerged as an independent group of artisans.[[9]](#endnote-9) In Christian Europe candles were in particular demand for liturgical purposes for which white wax candles was generally preferred; the exception were burials and funerals when yellow wax candles were used.[[10]](#endnote-10) In order to make white wax therefore the beeswax has to be purified. Beeswax candles were taken to symbolise the body of Christ and a burning candle the Trinity (of wax, wick and flame). Traditionally beeswax was used for a variety of other purposes, that included casting, strengthening sewing thread or cord, and in the preparation of medicines.

The greatest demand for beeswax was for candles. An alternative raw material that could be used for this purpose was tallow. Unlike beeswax which has a pleasant smell and is easy to work, tallow candles have an unpleasant odour and produce a lot of smoke; for medicinal use it also has the disadvantage that it tends to become rancid. Tallow candles were therefore generally considered less desirable and more frequently used for everyday purposes, most notably for providing light. However, due to shortages of beeswax tallow was often used for liturgical purposes as well.

While beeswax candles were used extensively in Europe, in the New World beeswax was not employed to make candles, even though it was produced in some regions for use in medicines, rituals and metalworking.[[11]](#endnote-11) Hence, Bernal Díaz del Castillo referring to Mexico described how the Spanish “…showed them [native peoples] how to make candles of the native wax and ordered these candles always to be kept burning on the altar, for up to that time they did not know how to use the wax.”[[12]](#endnote-12)

Spanish arrival in the New World vastly increased the demand for beeswax particularly for the manufacture of candles, but also for medicines. This was especially so in Lima. Lima as capital of one of the two viceroyalties in the New World was seat of the archdiocese of Peru that covered all of South America and as such it possessed numerous and impressive ecclesiastical institutions. The Jesuit Bernabé Cobo writing at the beginning of the seventeenth century recorded that in Lima there were 43 churches, convents and hermitages and 57 chapels of religious brotherhoods (*cofradías*) (25 for Spaniards, 3 for Indians, 19 for Blacks).[[13]](#endnote-13) These churches generated a regular demand for candles as well as for large quantities for annual processions, especially those associated with holy week and the festival of Corpus Christi.[[14]](#endnote-14) Hence the Monastery of La Concepción alone consumed over 400 pounds of beeswax candles and 1,575 pounds of tallow in 1632.[[15]](#endnote-15) Candles were also used by secular bodies that participated in religious events. For example, every year the city council paid for two to three hundred pounds of large white candles (*hachas*) for its councillors to carry in the procession of the Holy Cross (Santo Veracruz) that left the church of Santo Domingo on Maundy Thursday.[[16]](#endnote-16) Candles were used in other less regular festivals, for example, to celebrate the birth of a Spanish prince,[[17]](#endnote-17) or to petition God for relief from earthquakes or an epidemic. [[18]](#endnote-18) In addition, donations of candles were often a requirement of membership of *cofradías* and were important in funeral rituals.[[19]](#endnote-19) Hence, Cobo remarked “It causes admiration to see the great consumption there is of it [wax] and liberality and magnificence with which these people use it, without noting the price even though it might be excessive…”[[20]](#endnote-20) The Augustinian Antonio de Calancha similarly reported that “… white wax is used in such abundance in convents, parishes, *cofradías* and processions that more white wax is consumed in Lima in one month than all the great cities of Europe in eight, costing two or three pesos a pound. Lima is lauded as the most charitable [*limosnera*] city in Christendom.”[[21]](#endnote-21)

Apart from its use for candles, in early colonial Lima beeswax was required for the preparation of medicines. Spanish medical practice involved the regular application of ointments and plasters that were composed of wax, animal fat, and resins, in which vegetable or mineral ingredients were incorporated.[[22]](#endnote-22) These were used primarily to treat ailments of the skin, such as scabies, and sometimes for venereal disease and muscle strain.

Given the high demand for beeswax in early colonial Lima, where did the beeswax come from?

**Beekeeping and wax production in the pre-Columbian Andes**

Apart from textiles, clothing, and hardware, which were imported because Spain sought to restrict local production for fear its manufactures would compete with those produced in the Peninsula, most items of everyday use were produced in Lima using local resources.[[23]](#endnote-23) One exception was wood for construction and the manufacture of furniture. This was imported from Chile and Guayaquil, since it was scarce on Peru’s treeless cost. Another exception was beeswax. This similarly had to be acquired from other American regions or more significantly from across the Atlantic either from Europe or Africa. Even then, the beeswax available was not always of the type or quality desired.

It is generally accepted that New World bees were distinct from those in Old World. Those present in the pre-Columbian Americas were stingless bees (*Meliponidae*), which nest in trees or under the ground. Stingless bees were found primarily in Mexico and Central America, particularly in the Maya region.[[24]](#endnote-24) They were exploited for honey and their wax, which among others was employed in metal casting using the lost-wax or *cire perdue* method.[[25]](#endnote-25) Archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that the lost-wax method was more prevalent in regions north from Colombia.[[26]](#endnote-26) As such Junius Bird has attributed the relative scarcity of lost-wax techniques in pre-Columbian Peru to the general absence of stingless bees, especially in the highlands and the dry Pacific coast. [[27]](#endnote-27) He notes, however, that some beeswax may have been obtained by trade with the eastern lowlands where moist tropical conditions favoured the presence of stingless bees and where bee-keeping remains an important economic activity today.[[28]](#endnote-28) Although bees seem to have been absent on the coast of Peru, towards the north around Piura, where the rainfall is heavier and the vegetation is characterised by dry forest rather than desert, the sixteenth-century *relación geográfica* for the region recorded that bees that produced honey were to be found everywhere and were different from those found in Spain.[[29]](#endnote-29)

Early Spanish observations on the distribution of bees are generally vague and at times contradictory.[[30]](#endnote-30) Nevertheless, Cobo who had extensive knowledge of the natural history of the Andes concluded that in the Indies honey from bees was most abundant, “In the provinces of Yucatan and Guatemala, in New Spain and in that of Charcas in the province of Peru [today Bolivia].” [[31]](#endnote-31) Their presence in Bolivia was also noted by Antonio de Calancha but not elsewhere in the Andes.[[32]](#endnote-32) José de Acosta writing from Peru concurred that better honey and better formed honeycombs were to be found in the provinces of Tucumán, Chile and Cartagena.[[33]](#endnote-33)

**Developing local sources of beeswax and their alternatives in colonial Peru**

Even though indigenous bees were not abundant on the coast of Peru, the growth in demand for beeswax in colonial times might in theory have encouraged the development of beekeeping through the importation of stingless bees from American regions to the north or honey bees from Europe. However, several factors militated against this. In the case of stingless bees, the honey and beeswax that was produced by American stingless bees was not regarded as being of high quality.[[34]](#endnote-34) José de Acosta commented that the honey they produced was sour and black, [[35]](#endnote-35) while Bernabé Cobo also described the beeswax they produced as being black or brown and often mixed with mud, wood or plant or animal remains or faeces, and of no use for anything.[[36]](#endnote-36)

The Spanish could have introduced the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera* L.), which produces better quality honey and wax. Honey bees were not unknown in the New World from the sixteenth century, with Cobo noting their presence in Peru.[[37]](#endnote-37) However, they did not become widespread in South America until the nineteenth century.[[38]](#endnote-38) The reason for their late dissemination was that there was no impetus to develop beekeeping to produce honey, since the demand for a sweetener was met through the cultivation of sugar. Sugar haciendas were established in Peru’s coastal valleys at an early date and in the early seventeenth century two-thirds of the sugar was being used to produce cane honey with some 50,000 *botijas* being consumed in Lima a year.[[39]](#endnote-39) Sugar was said to be superabundant and the consumption of confectionery so great that there were attempts to ban its production on the grounds it made people “lazy and vagrant” when it should be used for necessary items and the sick.[[40]](#endnote-40) The availability of sugar effectively reduced the demand for bee honey and indirectly inhibited the production of beeswax.

At the same time, an alternative local product that could be used for candles was tallow. Tallow is a by-product of cattle raising which developed in the hinterland of Lima at an early date.[[41]](#endnote-41) The supply of tallow faced opposition from the city’s guild of wax chandlers (*cereros)* which wasfounded in 1551 and was said to be profiting from the importation and working of beeswax from Europe and regions further north. Under pressure from the guild it pressured the city council to restrict the supply of tallow to a number of large producers and eliminate the small scale hucksters who the guild argued were using poor quality tallow or substitutes and were threatening their trade. [[42]](#endnote-42) Not only did the *cereros* press the city council to regulate the supply of tallow, but also maintain the price of candles in the face of substantial imports from Chile and despite criticism from the *mayordomos* of some monasteries about the high prices they charged.[[43]](#endnote-43)

Despite efforts by the city council to ensure the availability of tallow through regulating prices, by requiring that all tallow not sold in the meat market be sold to wax chandlers, and by banning the sale of tallow outside the city, there were often shortages. Lima came to depend heavily on the importation of tallow from Chile, although this supply was sometimes disrupted by export controls and regulations that were imposed in Chile. [[44]](#endnote-44) Even though tallow candles were less desirable, the shortage of beeswax meant that churches consumed large quantities encouraged by their lower cost. In 1630 the Monastery of La Concepción was purchasing tallow candles at about 1.5 reals a pound while beeswax candles cost 17 to 22 reals, with the result that the latter accounted for only 20 percent of its annual consumption of candles.[[45]](#endnote-45)

**Other American and European sources of beeswax**

Although tallow partially substituted for beeswax in Lima, the latter was still required for liturgical and medical purposes so that external sources were sought in Central America and Europe. Clear distinctions were made between the beeswax from Nicaragua, Campeche and Castile, which guild ordinances stipulated were not to be mixed when processed.[[46]](#endnote-46)

A brisk trade in beeswax developed with Mexico and Nicaragua, where as noted above it had been exploited from pre-Columbian times. In the early seventeenth century beeswax was judged to be one of only seven products that Peru did not possess which needed to be imported from northern regions; the others were honey, tobacco, indigo, cochineal, pitch, and chocolate.[[47]](#endnote-47)

In early colonial times beekeeping was an important economic activity in many parts of Mexico and Central America, to the extent that substantial quantities of honey and wax were paid as tribute by groups on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua.[[48]](#endnote-48) The wax from Nicaragua was described by Bernabé Cobo as dark yellow, very smooth and sticky, so that it could be used for repairing goods or sticking things together and for medicinal purposes to soften the skin and remove callouses.[[49]](#endnote-49) Nicaraguan beeswax was considered less desirable than that imported from Europe such that in early seventeenth-century Lima it was about one third of the price, being valued at 20 pesos as opposed to 52 to 60 pesos a quintal.[[50]](#endnote-50)

Less commonly mentioned than Nicaragua as a source of honey and beeswax was Campeche. Campeche was said to produce the best honey and beeswax in the New World.[[51]](#endnote-51) At the end of the sixteenth century honey from Campeche was being purchased regularly by the hospital of Santa Ana in Lima.[[52]](#endnote-52) In the early seventeenth century Peru was importing rolls of wax (*rolletes de cera*) from Campeche at 2 *tomines* or reals pound, the equivalent to 25 pesos a quintal.[[53]](#endnote-53)

Despite the existence of these American sources, most beeswax consumed in Lima was imported from Europe either in a raw state, processed or in the form of candles. High quality European beeswax was the most esteemed. Bernabé Cobo claimed, most likely exaggeratedly, that all the white wax consumed in Lima came from Valencia and Cadiz.[[54]](#endnote-54) However, the availability of Castilian beeswax and hence its price depended on the despatch of fleets from Spain and sailings became more irregular from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Although the timing of imports might occasionally create a temporary glut in the market, especially for high quality wax, generally the local, regional and transatlantic sources of wax taken together appear to have been insufficient to meet local demand.[[55]](#endnote-55) In times of shortage Limeños might turn to imports from China.[[56]](#endnote-56)

Against this background of the high demand for beeswax and shortfalls in supply, Portuguese slave traders to Peru who had observed the availability of beeswax in Africa, notably in Senegambia where it was abundant, viewed it as a potentially profitable commodity that could be imported with the slaves and also be used as a ballast on the transatlantic journey.

**African sources of beeswax**

In the early years of the transatlantic slave trade, the Portuguese held the monopoly contract for the supply of African slaves to Spanish colonies and their interest first focused on Senegambia.[[57]](#endnote-57) Here local people raised both stingless bees (*Meliponidae*) and the African honey bee *Apis mellifera* adansonii.[[58]](#endnote-58) Early African travel accounts contain numerous descriptions of bees that nested in trees or hollows in the ground that were being exploited primarily for their honey; they were said to be particularly abundant around the Gambia River.[[59]](#endnote-59) In addition to exploiting wild bees, André Alvares d’Almada writing at the end of the sixteenth century observed that in the Casamance region beekeeping was practised with hives being constructed of straw and some trees possessing more than two hundred hives.[[60]](#endnote-60) The extent to which this account of beekeeping as opposed to the exploitation of wild sources of honey was an indigenous practice or an early response to European demand is not clear. While it seems certain that honey was being exploited, Alvise Cadamosto who explored the coast of Senegambia in the mid-fifteenth century claimed that the inhabitants of the Senegal River did not know how to make candles, but relied on fire for light and threw away the wax.[[61]](#endnote-61) With wax seemingly of little value to local Africans but prized by Europeans, it is perhaps not surprising that it quickly emerged with the African slave trade to become an important trade commodity.[[62]](#endnote-62) As early as the end of the sixteenth century, beeswax was being traded by Europeans all along the Guinea Coast, but especially at Cacheu.[[63]](#endnote-63)

Even though beeswax was available on the African coast, the means by which it was acquired by Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is worthy of closer examination for it reveals how local producers in Africa, often living in interior regions, were linked to distant consumers in Peru. Studies of the Atlantic slave trade, both in Upper Guinea and more generally, have argued that Africans were active players in trading relations with Europeans, often determining the types and prices of goods exchanged, exploiting new markets for products, such as textiles and beeswax, and forcing Europeans to adapt to local trade networks.[[64]](#endnote-64) It is well known that Portuguese traders did not generally deal with African producers directly, but operated through a range of intermediaries collectively known as Luso-Africans. These were generally persons of mixed ancestry who were integrated to different degrees into African societies.[[65]](#endnote-65) It has been suggested that these different social and ethnic groups might have traded different commodities.

In pre-European times West African leaders generally aimed to control the trade in prized commodities, such as, gold, iron, salt, kola, malaguetta pepper, and cotton textiles.[[66]](#endnote-66) However, beeswax was not a traditional or valued trade commodity, but effectively regarded as a waste product. As a consequence, Michael Tuck has argued that leaders did not control this trade and that this enabled African commoners to participate directly in exchange with Europeans.[[67]](#endnote-67) In fact the sources to which he refers are to the exploitation of palm oil on the Gold Coast in the nineteenth century, though the general proposition he makes is worthy of exploration.

In Senegambia it is not clear who controlled the exploitation of honey and beeswax in in pre-European times. It was the case that honey was sold widely in local markets and routinely consumed in drinks, which suggests that access to it was relatively free to all.[[68]](#endnote-68) Yet, without citing the precise source, Walter Rodney also refers to the need for gifts to be offered to Banhun chiefs to allow beeswax to be collected in their territory.[[69]](#endnote-69) Rodney doesn’t indicate what persons were seeking access, whether it was Europeans, Luso-Africans or Africans who actually collected the beeswax. George Brooks has argued that in stratified societies, which include the Banhun, intermarriage with Europeans and Luso-Africans was discouraged and their access to African land and resources was limited. He contrasts this with non-stratified societies where intermarriage was permitted and their offspring and outsiders were accorded more rights.[[70]](#endnote-70) Furthermore, he argues that in the latter societies women might trade on their own account, whereas in stratified societies they served primarily as interpreters and commercial intermediaries.[[71]](#endnote-71) The account books analysed here, which indicate in detail the persons from whom the beeswax was acquired, provide some insight into the nature of indigenous control over natural resources and the nature of trading relations in Senegambia at an early stage in the development of the African slave trade about which relatively little is known.

**Beeswax in the slave traders accounts**

Much of the beeswax in Senegambia was obtained from interior forests. The accounts of António Nunes da Costa are the most revealing since between 1616 and 1620 he was personally involved in trading wax about 150 miles up the Gambia River among the socially stratified Banhun and Mandinga. His accounts contain entries for 118 people with whom he traded, though information on the products they delivered is only available for 80 individuals; of them only 30 supplied beeswax. Beeswax accounted for about 14 percent of the total value of goods he acquired.[[72]](#endnote-72) Indications of the ethnic background of his clients may be seen in their names and titles.[[73]](#endnote-73) Some possessed African names and others were referred to as *senhor/a* or as *grumetes*. The *senhores* were generally Luso-Africans who being persons of mixed ancestry were excluded from access to land and marriage partners in native communities. They engaged in trade with the Portuguese, becoming familiar with their language and culture and as such essential commercial and cultural intermediaries between them and Africans.[[74]](#endnote-74) *Grumetes* also functioned as trade intermediaries, interpreters, but in this region were often boat hands. George Brooks has suggested that they were often apprentices sent by native elites to work for the Portuguese or Luso-Africans in order to gain commercial experience or acquire skills in navigating European-style vessels.[[75]](#endnote-75) Most individuals recorded in these accounts did not have a title or African names, but were referred to by Christian names. However, in many cases their occupations, such as those of servant or boat hand, suggest that despite their Christian names they were Africans, rather than Europeans.

[Insert Table 1 here]

From an analysis of the ethnic and social background of those from whom António Nunes da Costa acquired beeswax, it would appear that it was not traded exclusively by any particular group. However, those called *senhores* together with those with Africans names delivered about three-quarters of the total beeswax by value. While the average amount traded by Africans was nearly four times that of *senhores*, the figure is skewed by the exceptionally large amount (worth 973 *panos*) purchased from one Antonio Vaz Tumba. He was also referred to as a *senhor* and he handled more merchandise that any other named African recorded in these accounts. If he is included as a *senhor* rather than as a person with an African name, then the percentage traded by all *senhores* increases to 73 percent. Nearly all other sales of wax were valued under 200 *panos*, and most were considerably smaller than that. The *senhores* thus appear to be acting as important intermediaries in the beeswax trade, probably acquiring it from Africans who had access to this resource; whether they were African leaders or commoners is not known. It is worth noting that some African women were trading wax and slaves on their own account, but they were a minority. Overall more individuals traded beeswax than slaves; in fact only 9 of the 30 individuals who were trading beeswax also sold slaves. While this could reflect their limited access to slaves, whose trade may have been controlled by African leaders or middlemen as potentially more profitable, but it might also reflect a preference for trading in non-slave commodities. It is perhaps significant that Vaz Tumba, although a prominent trader, did not sell slaves. In return for the beeswax, traders received beads, wine, kola, imported cloth, and iron in that order of importance by value. There does not appear to be any status or gender difference in the types of products that local traders received.

The traders acquired beeswax in the form of blocks which were referred to figuratively as *paes* or loaves in Portuguese. To harvest the beeswax, the honey was drained out of the honeycomb, the wax melted in boiling water, strained to remove impurities, and left to set in blocks.[[76]](#endnote-76) In 1617 António Nunes da Costa acquired in 72 *paes* of beeswax.[[77]](#endnote-77) This beeswax formed part of a larger cargo that Manuel Bautista Pérez assembled in Cacheu from a variety of traders. When in April 1618 Pérez departed from Cacheu on the slave ship Nuestra Señora de Vencimiento for Cartagena de Indias, the vessel was carrying 303 *paes* of wax.[[78]](#endnote-78) *Paes* varied in size but averaged about 45 pounds, so this cargo represented about 13,635 pounds of wax or 136 quintals.[[79]](#endnote-79) At this time trade in Senegambia was conducted using pieces of cotton cloth or *panos* as a medium of exchange. One quintal of wax was worth 40 *panos*, which at the prevailing exchange rate of 5 reals for one *pano* meant each quintal was the equivalent to 25 pesos. Given the high price that beeswax could command in Cartagena and Lima, this was a valuable cargo. It is worth noting that beeswax was often shipped across the Atlantic not only for sale, but also to serve as ballast on the journey, with single ships carrying as much as 400 quintals.[[80]](#endnote-80) It is difficult to estimate the total volume of beeswax being exported from Senegambia in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Writing from Cartagena in the early seventeenth century, Alonso de Sandoval noted that more than 500 quintals were being exported from Cacheu annually.[[81]](#endnote-81) However, the evidence presented here suggests that Sandoval’s assessment was a considerable underestimate for he himself recorded that 12 or 14 slave ships a year were arriving in Cartagena.[[82]](#endnote-82) It is perhaps worth noting that small amounts of beeswax were being sold on the African coast, mostly to persons of Portuguese descent and sometimes explicitly for making candles.

**The journey of beeswax to Lima**

On his slave trading venture in 1617-1618, Manuel Bautista Pérez remained in Cartagena for four months where he sold some of the slaves and merchandise that he had acquired in Cacheu. This included two quintals of beeswax which he sold at 50 pesos a quintal to an apothecary, João dos Santos; he also gave small amounts to seven relatives and business associates together valued at 78 pesos.[[83]](#endnote-83) Unfortunately little additional information exists for the sale of beeswax in Cartagena on this particular journey, but during his sojourn in the city on an earlier venture in 1614, he sold beeswax at the same price of 50 pesos a quintal, some of it to the Jesuits.[[84]](#endnote-84)

When Manuel Bautista Pérez departed Cartagena for Lima in September 1618 he had in his possession 128 quintals of yellow wax, of which 114 quintals were valued at 48 pesos a quintal and 14 quintals at 47.5 pesos, giving a total of 6,137 pesos. [[85]](#endnote-85) Given that in Cacheu the market price for beeswax was 25 pesos a quintal and in Cartagena about 50 pesos, this represented a net profit margin of 50 percent. At the same time, the slaves he transported, which numbered 482 had increased in value from about 94 pesos for an adult slave in Cacheu to about 315 pesos in Cartagena, thereby suggesting they were a more valuable commodity.[[86]](#endnote-86) However, this did not take into account expenditure on food for the slaves, taxes, and transport which amounted to about 112 pesos.[[87]](#endnote-87) The profit margin on slaves transported from Cacheu to Cartagena was therefore lower than for beeswax at about 35 percent. In fact the profit generated by the shipment as a whole was considerably lower, since 94 of the slaves died during the transatlantic crossing.

[Insert Table 2 here]

The journey from Cartagena to Peru crossed the Panamanian isthmus. The beeswax was first shipped to Portobello in Panama and then by the Chagres River to Cruces, where it was stored in a warehouse for several months awaiting transhipment to Peru. From Cruces it was transported in fifty-seven loads by mule to Panama on the Pacific coast, before being shipped to Callao, the port of Lima. Manuel Bautista Pérez arrived in March 1619, but by August that year he recorded that he had been unable to sell any of the beeswax. [[88]](#endnote-88) A year later he wrote to his uncle and business associate, Diogo Rodrigues de Lisboa that he had still not had much success in selling the beeswax and had lost money on the venture. He explained that this was because the type of beeswax he had shipped to Lima was unknown in the city.[[89]](#endnote-89) As a result, he entrusted the wax to a few local wax chandlers to purify it into white wax, which he said was the colour that was preferred.[[90]](#endnote-90)

Perhaps based on this experience, in 1622 on another trading venture Manuel Bautista Pérez purchased 100 quintals of white wax in Cartagena, on which he hoped to make a profit because there was no fleet that year.[[91]](#endnote-91) This was probably part of cargo of 250 quintals and 23 pounds of “cera labrada y en pan blanca” (white wax both worked and in cakes) from Cádiz that he and his business partner, Duarte de León Marqués, had purchased from one Juan de Urbina from Caceres, Spain.[[92]](#endnote-92) Merchandise brought by the fleets from Spain was offloaded in Cartagena or Panama, where it was sold and transported elsewhere, including to merchants arranging transport to Peru. Merchants travelling from Panama competed with each other to arrive in Lima first in order sell their products before the market was glutted. In a letter to a business associate Sebastian Duarte in 1633 Manuel Bautista Pérez reported that prices in Lima were lower than the previous year but he was pleased that one of his business associates, Francisco López Feo, had arrived ahead of other traders and sold the beeswax to a good customer, one Enrique de Paz.[[93]](#endnote-93)

On the 1618 venture some beeswax was sold to a number of wax chandlers in Lima, namely to Sebastián de La Cueva, Alonso Hernandes, and one Valladolid.[[94]](#endnote-94) These wax chandlers then sold the purified beeswax direct to churches, *cofradías* and hospitals. The financial accounts of the hospital of Santa Ana in the 1570s indicate that it acquired wax from the ‘tienda [shop] de Valladolid’ for the preparation of ointments.[[95]](#endnote-95) This store most likely belonged to the Valladolid family of wax chandlers, if not to the same ‘Valladolid’ who purchased large quantities of beeswax from Manuel Bautista Pérez in 1619. The latter was most likely Sebastián de Valladolid, who was son of the *cerero* Pedro de Valladolid and in 1610 became an inspector for the guild of wax chandlers.[[96]](#endnote-96) In Lima wax chandlers plied their trade on the Calle de las Mantas close to the city centre,[[97]](#endnote-97) and one block of this street was known as Calle de Valladolid after the name of the owner of the store.[[98]](#endnote-98) This store was also selling beeswax from Guayaquil. There is no evidence that Manuel Bautista Pérez himself sold any beeswax direct to ecclesiastical establishments. He did, however, sell smaller quantities, probably of unprocessed yellow wax, to prominent apothecaries, such as Mateo Pastor and Bernardo Gil.[[99]](#endnote-99)

The price of beeswax in Lima varied considerably in price according to its availability that depended in large part on the timing of imports. Large quantities of beeswax were shipped to the South American mainland with the Spanish fleets, but their sailing became more irregular as the seventeenth century progressed, as did the amount of wax they carried. In peak years in the early seventeenth century, notably in 1609, 1614 and 1620, the fleets delivered between 1,750 and 2,700 quintals, but in most years less than 100 quintals arrived.[[100]](#endnote-100) The beeswax that arrived with the fleets was destined for the whole of South America, so only a small proportion would have made the onward journey to Lima. Hence, Pérez’s cargo of 128 quintals, though it might seem small, would not have been insignificant in a time of shortage.

In 1619 Manuel Bautista Pérez sold c*era labrada* (worked or purified wax) for about 120 pesos a quintal and *cera amarilla* (yellow beeswax) for between 68 and 90 pesos.[[101]](#endnote-101) These were relatively low prices for in the 1570s the hospital of Santa Ana had been paying 100 pesos a quintal for *cera amarilla*,[[102]](#endnote-102) and in 1630 the monastery of La Concepción was being supplied with yellow wax at 125 pesos.[[103]](#endnote-103)

Given an average price of 50 pesos in Cartagena and transport costs per quintal of about 11.5 pesos, the net profit margin made on the yellow wax between there and Lima in 1619 was relatively low, between 10 and 32 percent. In 1627 the city council, in attempting to encourage the trade in wax to meet shortages, set the price of raw blocks of wax at 165 pesos. They based this figure on the price of wax in Cartagena, transport costs to Lima of about 15 to 16.5 pesos,[[104]](#endnote-104) and an expectation of 25 percent profit.[[105]](#endnote-105) However, in times of shortage the price could rise even further to 2 to 3 pesos a pound, that is 200 to 300 pesos a quintal for white wax.[[106]](#endnote-106) In these circumstances large profits could be made. Certainly, the low prices that Manuel Bautista Pérez was forced to sell his beeswax in 1619 did not deter him from continuing to participate in this trade. Probably the market for beeswax was no more unpredictable than for many other commodities at the time. However, it seems that as his business developed he preferred to purchase more valuable European white wax in Cartagena, than import yellow wax from Africa.

[Insert Table 3 here]

Compared to slaves, the net profit on African beeswax was low much lower than for slaves because of the much lower value of the commodity. The price of slaves varied according to gender, origin, health status, and market conditions, but the demand for slaves in Lima was so high that they generally sold for between 570 and 600 pesos.[[107]](#endnote-107) However, this value did not take account of the costs of food, medical care, transport, taxes, which amounted to 169 pesos per slave. While this might suggest a profit margin of over 50 percent, it did not take account of mortality which could vary considerably from one trading venture to another. On this particular venture in 1618 94 of the 482 slaves he embarked in Cacheu failed to survive the transatlantic journey due to outbreaks of smallpox and scurvy.[[108]](#endnote-108)

Beeswax, while certainly not immune from the vagaries of the market, may have been a less risky supplement to the trade in slaves.

**Conclusion**

The beeswax trade from Senegambia to Peru reflected local conditions on both sides of the Atlantic. Most obviously this included the distribution of different types of bees, but also the cultural values placed on beeswax and the control exercised over its production and marketing. While these conditions may have encouraged the development of the beeswax trade, as the opening sentence of this study indicates, it was inextricably linked to the operation of the Portuguese slave trade, which in turn was vulnerable to changes in state policy and political events that occurred outside the boundaries of the regions connected by the trade and took no account of local needs or economic logic. Thus, despite the continuing high demand for slaves and beeswax in Lima and the profits they might generate, the trade collapsed.

Prior to 1640, the monopoly contract for the introduction of African slaves to the whole of Spanish America was held by the Portuguese. However, with the Portuguese revolt in 1640, Portugal lost this monopoly and many Portuguese, including Manuel Bautista Pérez, were brought before the Inquisition.[[109]](#endnote-109) Subsequently the Dutch, French or English were contracted to deliver African slaves to the Spanish colonies, but unlike the Portuguese who had hitherto been allowed to settle or trade in the New World, they could only deposit slaves at ports in the Caribbean. The commercial network of business associates and relatives that the Portuguese had built up across the Atlantic over forty-five years was irrevocably broken. African producers and suppliers soon found alternative outlets for their beeswax and it remained an important supplementary commodity for slave traders in Africa.[[110]](#endnote-110) As early as 1647 the French, Dutch, and English were purchasing more than 4,000 quintals of wax and ivory on the Upper Guinea Coast.[[111]](#endnote-111)

While the trade in beeswax from Senegambia may have ended in 1640, there is no evidence that the demand for beeswax in Lima declined. Although cheaper tallow came to be used for everyday candles and the residents of Lima turned to sugar for a sweetener, beeswax continued to play an essential role in religious observance and celebrations and was needed for medicinal purposes. This study has shown how the operation and profitability of the beeswax trade was influenced by the vagaries of imports from Europe, by the protectionist interests of the wax chandlers, by local regulation, and by preferences for different types of beeswax. Even though henceforth the beeswax came from Europe or the Americas rather than Africa, there is no evidence that these factors ceased to be significant influences on the trade.

1. **Notes**

   Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Tuck, “Everyday Commodities.” [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. For trade networks between Africa and the Americas at this time see: Studnicki-Gizbert, Nation upon the Ocean Sea. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. This is not new, for it was advocated over forty years ago by Alfred Crosby in *The Columbian Exchange*. However, the role of animals in Latin American history is receiving more concerted attention. See for example, Few and Tortorici, *Centering Animals*. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Manuel Bautista Pérez’s name is hispanicised in this article. His accounts and letters are at different times written in Spanish and Portuguese. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. For the role of Manuel Bautista Pérez in the African slave trade to Lima see: Minchin, ‘May You Always Care for Those of Your Patria’; Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*; Bowser, *The African Slave*, 49-50, 58-71. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. João Batista Peres drew up his will on 12 January 1617 when he was ill and confessed (AGNL (Archivo General de la Nación, Lima) Santo Oficio (SO) Contencioso (CO) 33-348 fols. 6-12). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. For all three sets of accounts see AGNL SO-CO 18-197 1613-1620. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Crane, *World History of Beekeeping,* 525. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. *Diccionario de autoridades* (1780); Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 525; Brand, “Honey Bee”, 79. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Brand, “Honey Bee,” 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera,* vol. 2, cap. 50: 36. For other references to Spaniards teaching indigenous people to make candles see: Schwarz, *Stingless Bees*, 136. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 2: 455-56. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. For the numerous processions conducted in the city see Suardo, *Diario de Lima, passim*. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Archivo Arzobispal, Lima (AAL) Monasterio de la Concepción leg. 6 exp. 24 Demanda que hace Pedro López de Lara 1635 [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. For example, *Libros de cabildos de Lima* vol. 22: 188-90 Libramiento a Pedro López Lara cerero 9 Aug. 1632; *Libros de cabildos de Lima* vol. 23: 121 Libramiento a Pedro López Lara cerero 11 Aug. 1634. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. *Libros de cabildos de Lima* vol. 15: 161 Que se pague a Hernando Sánchez 16 Jun. 1606. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. *Libros de cabildos de Lima* vol. 16: 191 Libramiento para que de los propios se dan 50 pesos 15 Oct. 1610, *Libros de cabildos de Lima* vol. 20 Archbishop of Lima 9 Jan. 1626. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. # Charney, *Indian Society,* 121.

    [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 2: 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Calancha, *Coronica moralizada*, lib. 1: 245. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. **Oviedo, *Methodo*, 385-524;** Laval, *Botica de los Jesuitas,* 107-111, 189-97; Newson, *Making Medicines*, 153-54. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. For Lima see Quiroz, *Artesanos y manufactureros*, 30-32; Aldana, “Las industrias.” [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 288-98. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid., 532-33; Hogue, *Latin American Insects*, 463. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Warwick Bray, “Gold-Working in Ancient America,” 136-143. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Bird, “Legacy of the Stingless Bee,” 50-51. For the absence of stingless bees in the coastal desert and highlands of Peru see: Hogue, *Latin American Insects,* 464; Brand, “Honey Bee,” 72. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Schwarz, *Stingless Bees*, 159-60. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. *Relaciones geográficas de Indias*, vol. 2: 36 Relación de la ciudad de Sant [sic] Miguel de Piura [no date] [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. For example, Cobo states (*Obras*, vol. 1: 333) that “No native honey is collected in the whole kingdom of Peru” and then goes on to say that “all the honey that is collected in the kingdom of Peru is wild.” [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 1: 336. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Calancha, *Coronica moralizada*, lib. 1: 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Acosta, *Historia natural,* lib. 4 cap. 34: 279. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 293. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Acosta, *Historia natural*, lib. 4 cap. 34: 279. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 1: 333-34. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid., 332. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Brand, “Honey Bee,” 76-81; Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 354, 361-63. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Lewin, *Descripción,* 51; Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 1: 333. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 2: 317. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Keith, *Conquest and Agrarian Change*, 57-60. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 4: 23 Candelas 12 May 1553; *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 4: 25 Candelas de sebo 15 May 1553; *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 4: 57 Candelas de sebo 14 Jul. 1553; Quiroz, “Gremios,” 504-507. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 15: 168 Sobre la postura de las velas de sebo 3 Jul. 1606 and 15: 184 Sobre la postura de las velas de sebo 28 Jul. 1606; *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 16: 247-49 Postura de velas de sebo a real y media 22 Nov. 1610 and 16: 269-71 Postura de velas de sebo a real y cuarto 26 Nov. 1610; *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 23: 464-65 Sobre el precio de sebo 6 Jul. 1637. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. AGNL Protocolos Siglo XVI 71 fols. 981-982v. Obligado del abasto de las carnicerías de Lima, vende a Pedro de Valladolid, residente en esta ciudad todo el cebo de vacas de esta carnicería 24 Sep. 1573; Archivo Histórico Municipal, Lima, Libro de cédulas y provisiones 3B fols. 586-628 Ordenanzas de cereros 25 Jan. 1594; *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 23: 491 Sobre la falta de sebo 3 Nov. 1637; [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. AAL Monasterio de la Concepción leg. 6 exp. 24 Demanda que hace Pedro López de Lara 1635. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 17: 311-12 Hordenanzas de los cereros 10 Mar. 1613. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Lewin, *Descripción*, 53-54, 114. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Stanislawski, *Transformation of Nicaragua,* 33-34, 66; Newson, *Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua,* 55, 100-101, 158, 181. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 1: 335. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. AGNL Cajas Reales: Lima H-3 Leg. 4 Libro 24-a fols. 1-39 Aranceles para cálculo del almojarifazgo (1617). These were wholesale prices set for the payment of import taxes and not retail prices in Lima, which were generally significantly higher. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Crane, *World History of Beekeeping,* 18, 293. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Archivo de Beneficencia Pública, Lima (ABPL) 9084 fols. 241-242v. Libro de cuentas de gastos del hospital de Santa Ana año 1598; ABPL 9085 Libro de la razón que toma Bartolomé de la Cueva, escribano veedor del hospital de Santa Ana 1595-1596. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. AGNL Cajas Reales: Lima H-3 Leg. 4 Libro 24-a fols. 34-39 Aranceles para cálculo del almojarifazgo (1617). [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 2: 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. See Manuel Bautista Pérez’s experience discussed below. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 13: 268 Ropa de China 25 May 1599. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. For the systems of *asientos* (monopoly contracts) for the supply of African slaves to Spanish America see Vila Villar, *Hispanoamérica*, 23-58. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Ndiaye, “Beekeeping in Senegal,” 171-179; Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 261. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Among early contemporary observations are Fernandes, *Description de la côte*, 54; D’Almada, *Tratado breve,* 44, 69, 76; Álvares, *Etiópia menor*, chap. 3 p. 1; Van Den Broeke, *Journal*, 40; Gamble and Hair, *Discovery of the Gambra River,* 168-69; Donelha, *Account of Sierra Leone,* 83, 165. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Almada, *Tratado breve*, 69, For hives see also Alvares, *Etiópia menor*, cap. 3 p. 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Crone, *Voyages of Cadamosto*, 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Tuck, “Everyday Commodities,” 285-303. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Almada, *Tratado breve*, 76. See also the accounts by Francisco Pires de Carvalho in 1635 (Thilmans and Nize Izabel de Moraes, “Le Routier de la côte de Guinée,” 354) and Francisco de Lemos Coelho (*Duas descrições*, 139-141) in 1669. [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. For this general observation see: Richardson, “West African Consumption Patterns,” 311-20; Thornton, *Africa and Africans*; and Northrup, *Africa’s Discovery of Europe.* For the Senegambian region see: Brooks, *Landlords and* Strangers and *Eurafricans;* Havik, *Silences;* Wright, *The World*; and Newson, “Bartering for Slaves.” [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast*, 71-94 and “Portuguese Attempts at Monopoly,” 307-22; Boulègue, *Les Luso-Africains;* Teixeira da Mota, “Contactos culturais,” 659-67; Brooks, *Eurafricans*, 22-27, 51-52, 68-101; Cultru, *Premier voyage,* 192-93; Mark, *‘Portuguese’ Style*, 24-27, 46; Mark and Horta, *Forgotten Diaspora*, 52-58. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 50. [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Tuck, “Everyday Commodities,” 286-88. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Fernandes, *Description de la côte*, 68, 70; Coelho, *Duas Descrições*, 141. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast*, 85. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Brooks, *Landlords and Strangers*, 189-90 and *Eurafrican*s, 51-54, [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Brooks, *Eurafricans*, 125-27. [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Newson, “African and Luso-Africans,” 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. For a full discussion of the social categories used in the analysis see: Newson, “African and Luso-Africans,” 7-14. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Brooks, *Eurafricans*, 51-54, 131, 134. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid., 52-54, 128-29; Mark, *‘Portuguese’ Style*, 57; Havik, *Silences*, 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Curtin, *Economic Change*, 223; Crane, *World History of Beekeeping*, 496-97. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fols. 741v.-742 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1613-1618. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fols. 873v.-874 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1613-1618. [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. This is calculated from AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fols. 844v.-845, 865v.-866, 873v.-874 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1613-1618. Curtin suggests that beeswax cakes weighed between 10 and 60 kilograms (Curtin, *Economic Change in Pre-Colonial Africa*, 223). [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Brásio, *Monumenta missionaria africana*, ser. 2 vol. 4: 701-702. Francisco de Moura ca. 1622. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Sandoval, *Tratado sobre la esclavitud*, 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., 151. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fol. 893v.-894 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1619; AGNL SO-CO Ca. 18 Do. 197 fols. 2v.-5 Libro borrador de Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1623. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fol. 501v.-502, 506v.-507, 532v.-533 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1613-1614. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fol. 902v. Accounts of Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1619. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 69, 154 for the price of slaves. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fol. 912v.-915 Accounts of Manuel Bautista Perez 1618-1619. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 Do 197 Manuel Bautista Pérez to Diogo Rodrigues de Lisboa 12 Jul. 1620. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 Do 197 Manuel Bautista Pérez to Diogo Rodrigues de Lisboa, no date [1619?]. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 Do 197 Manuel Bautista Pérez to Diogo Rodrigues de Lisboa 18 Dec. 1622. This comment is difficult to explain because a fleet under Juan de Lara sailed from Spain in April 1622 and would have arrived in the New World only a couple of months later. However, this fleet of fifteen vessels included ships for some Caribbean islands, Venezuela and Florida, with only three ships sailing to the ‘Tierra Firme’. Moreover, these three ships contained only very small quantities of wax (Archivo General de Indias, Seville (AGI) Contratación 1172 N2 Galeones de Juan de Lara 1622). [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. AGNL SO-CO Ca 2 Do 8 Contract between Duarte León Marqués and Manuel Bautista Pérez with Captain Juan de Urbina 3 Sep. 1622. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. # Archivo Nacional Histórico, Santiago, Chile Fondo Vicuña Mackenna Vol. 79-II fols. 5-12v. Manuel Bautista Pérez to Sebastian Duarte 8 May 1633.

    [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. AGNL SO-CO Ca. 18 Do. 197 fols. 19v., 21v.- 22, 35, 37 Libro borrador de Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1623. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. ABPL 9080 Libro de cuentas del hospital de Santa Ana 1575 a 1585, ABPL 9127 Memoria de lo gastado en la botica…Feb. 1641. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 16: 24 Behedores [sic] de cereros y confiteros 15 Jan. 1610. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. Lewin, *Descripción*, 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Bromley, *Viejas calles*, 316. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. AGNL SO-CO Ca. 18 Do. 197 fols. 21v., 35, 37 Libro borrador de Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1623. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. These figures are based on a detailed analysis of all cargoes shipped to the South American mainland between 1583 and 1622 (AGI Contratación 1080 to 1172 *passim*). [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. AGNL SO-CO Ca. 18 Do. 197 fols. 20v-22 Libro borrador de Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1623. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. ABPL 9080 Libro de cuentas del hospital de Santa Ana 1575 a 1585. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. AAL Monasterio de la Concepción leg. 6 exp. 24 Demanda que hace Pedro López de Lara 1635. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. All costs are given in *pesos ensayados*, equivalent to 450 *maravedís*. These have been converted to *pesos corrientes* of 272 *maravedís*. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. *Libros de cabildos de Lima*, vol. 20: 628 Tasa y precio que se pone a la cera en pan 20 Dec. 1627. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Cobo, *Obras*, vol. 2: 456. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 71, 227-34. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 111, 114. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. Vila Vilar “La sublevación de Portugal.” [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Tuck, ”Everyday Commodities,” 292-303; Curtin, *Economic Change,* 223, [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. Rodney, *Upper Guinea Coast*, 132. See also pp. 143, 161-62.

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     **Tables**

     |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
     | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
     |  | Number of traders | Number trading beeswax | Percent trading beeswax | Percent traded by value | Total beeswax traded by -value (in *panos*) | Average amount of beeswax traded by value (*in panos*) | Number trading slaves | Percent trading slaves |
     | Africans | 16 | 3 | 19 | 31 | 1013.0 | 338 | 6 | 38 |
     | *Senhora* | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 1 | 33 |
     | *Senhor* | 34 | 16 | 47 | 43 | 1417.5 | 89 | 8 | 24 |
     | *Grumetes* | 2 | 1 | 50 | 6 | 214.0 | 214 | 0 | 0 |
     | Female untitled | 14 | 6 | 43 | 12 | 383.5 | 64 | 2 | 14 |
     | Male untitled | 11 | 4 | 36 | 8 | 268.5 | 67 | 3 | 27 |
     |  | 80 | 30 | 38 | 100 | 3296.5 | 110 | 20 | 25 |

     Source: AGNL SO-CO 18-197 fols. 285-330v., 685v.-742v., 917v.-971v. António Nunes da Costa accounts 1616-1620. A *pano* was worth 5 reals.

     Table 1 Traders of beeswax and African slaves in Senegambia, 1616-1620.

     |  |  |
     | --- | --- |
     |  | Value of beeswax per quintal in pesos |
     | Price in Cacheu 40 *panos* a quintal [at 5 panos a real] | 25 |
     | Sale price of beeswax in Cartagena | 50 |
     | Sale price of beeswax in Lima | 68 – 90 |
     |  |  |
     | *Expenditure incurred in the transport of 128 quintals from Cartagena to Lima* | Reals |
     | Transport from Cartagena to Portobelo | 2,124 |
     | Taxes paid in Portobelo | 188 |
     | Rent of house in Cruces to store the wax | 144 |
     | Transportation of wax by mule from Cruces to Panama [to muleteers Floriano Mendes, Cristóbal Ortiz, Pedro Caballero and Jorge Rodríguez] | 5,508 |
     | Cloth to wrap the bundles of wax | 176 |
     | For the embarkation of wax in Panama | 280 |
     | Transport from Panama to Callao the port for Lima | 2,540 |
     | Entry taxes paid on the wax in Lima | 480 |
     | Transport from Callao to Lima | 285 |
     | A box for the wax [marqueta para la cera] and two notarised documents | 40 |
     | *Total expenditure* | 11,765 |
     | *Total expenses per quintal* | 92 reals (11.5 pesos) |

     Sources: AGNL SO-CO Ca 18 doc 197 fols. 907v-911 Manuel Bautista Accounts 1618-1619; AGNP SO-CO Ca. 18 Do. 197 fols. 6v.-37v *passim* Libro borrador de Manuel Bautista Pérez 1618-1623; AGNP SO-CO Ca. 2 Do. 8 Venta e rendimento de duzemtas e vimte e sete peças de escravos 1618.

     The precise expenditures under each heading vary between accounts.

     Table 2 Beeswax prices and expenditure on the transportation of beeswax, 1618-1619

     |  |  |  |
     | --- | --- | --- |
     |  | Cost of African beeswax per quintal (pesos) | Approximate cost of adult slaves (pesos) from Upper Guinea |
     | Africa (Cacheu) | 25 | 94 |
     | Expenses to and in Cartagena | Unknown | 112 |
     | Expenses from Cartagena to Lima | 11.5 | 57 |
     | Value in Lima | 68-90 | 570-600 |
     | Net profit | 31.5-53.5 | 307-337 |
     | Net profit margin (percentage) | 46.3-59.4 | 53.9-56.2 |

     Sources: See Table 2 and Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 69, 71, 118, 228-34.

     Table 3 Profits on beeswax and African slaves 1618-1619

     **Brief biography**

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