

that the author mistakenly considers feelings of affection as gender manifestations. In fact, love could developed between a king and a vassal. The positions of lord and servant implied reciprocal obligations, under both European and Andean standards (216, 227–229).

The book is very valuable for the attention it pays to newly emerging Spanish American historical actors, both in its contribution as a whole and in individual essays. All the chapters are of interest and could be discussed in graduate classes to great advantage.

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BOURBON POLICING IN LATE COLONIAL MEXICO CITY

The Enlightened Patrolman: Early Law Enforcement in Mexico City. By Nicole von Germeten. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. Pp. 350. \$99.00; \$30.00 paper; \$30.00 e-book.
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On any given night, the men lit the lamps on their assigned blocks, blew their whistles, shouted “*iSerenos!*” and dragged inebriated residents to jail. On other less tranquil evenings, they skirmished with militiamen or imbibed with the very same people they were supposed to apprehend. The late colonial patrolmen or *serenos* of Mexico City, their neighborhoods, and their foes are the subjects of Nicole von Germeten’s immersive and engaging monograph.

In a preface, an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, and an afterword, the author examines the nightly routines, tedious lamplighting, and fraught interactions that defined the lives of men tasked with patrolling the central blocks of Mexico City. The research is grounded in two sets of logbooks, the *Libros de Reos* and the daily report of the capital’s head guard. Von Germeten animates the rather dry information from these surveillance registers into lively accounts of the *serenos*’ activities from the 1790s through the 1820s. In so doing, she invites a reconsideration of Bourbon illumination projects, state surveillance, and paternalism from the optic of these low-ranking watchmen.

The author carefully reconstructs fragments of information on just over 100 guards, despite the challenges posed by the anonymized records. *Serenos* were rarely identified by name in late colonial documents; rather, their assigned patrol area (*ramo*) came to represent their actions, arrest records, and grievances. Watchman 23, for instance, guarded the blocks surrounding the Calle de Santa Cruz, while Watchman 86 patrolled the Santo Domingo neighborhood. In this regard, the inclusion of several maps helps the reader navigate a nocturnal geography of *pulquerías*, taverns, and open-air stalls.

The nightly trajectory of José Bernal (Watchman 23) sheds light on these working-class men who, from dusk to dawn, were expected to find priests to administer last rites and escort midwives to women in labor, while also “massacring dozens of stray dogs each night” (63). Bernal patrolled his area with three emblematic pieces of sereno equipment: the handheld lantern, a whistle, and a pike. Thus, Von Germeten demonstrates that bearing firearms, uniforms, and identifying insignia were associated with Mexico City’s post-1826 municipal police force, but not the watchmen. The serenos of the late colonial period, then, preceded the “effort by the state to militarize law enforcement” (254).

Chapters 5 and 6, “Guards in Trouble” and “Guards under Attack,” convincingly illustrate the challenges serenos faced as members of a disrespected underclass, even as they were expected to uphold the expectations of Bourbon officials. Most watchmen were low-ranking Spaniards or mestizos in their twenties and thirties and were deeply embedded in the communities they were supposed to guard. They also consumed copious amounts of pulque and aguardiente prior to (or during) their evening shifts. This culture of consumption, in combination with the fatigue of working day jobs, led to considerable absenteeism among serenos by the early 1820s, when “between around 9 and 18 percent of the total number of guards might stay away from the job on certain nights” (158).

While acknowledging the serenos’ problematic reputation as unreliable watchmen, or worse, thieves with violent tendencies, von Germeten does well to complicate these charges by considering the debasement that serenos encountered in their frequent encounters with military men. Because the latter were protected by the legal exemptions of the *fuero militar*, serenos had little to no recourse when insulted, obstructed, or attacked by military patrols and off-duty soldiers. Viceroy Branciforte’s pleas in the mid 1790s to protect the serenos from military aggression had no effect, and these conflicts would only intensify as military forces expanded in the turbulent years leading to the War of Mexican Independence.

In sum, von Germeten provides a thought-provoking examination on the origins and structural limitations of policing in late colonial Mexico City. The book will especially appeal to scholars and students of urban history, class relations, state surveillance, machismo, and the Bourbon reforms.

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