

Acknowledgments



I am indebted to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Literatures, Cultural Studies, and Linguistics, and the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago, especially Dean Astrida Orle Tantilillo and my fellow faculty members, for their unwavering institutional and personal support. I thank the University of Toronto Press Editorial Board and Toronto Iberic for embracing this project, and Suzanne Rancourt and her team for their careful editorial assistance. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to Noelia García Pérez, José Miguel Granados, Natascha Reihl, Ignacio Hermoso Romero, the Archbishop's Office of Seville, and the anonymous collectors who so graciously offered their assistance in securing illustrations.

This book project was in large part developed during my tenure as a Faculty Fellow at the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Early on, Ronda Kasal and Stacy Schlau generously wrote letters of support. Stephan Leopold and the University of Mainz, Germany invited me to offer two seminars that proved instrumental to fine-tuning some of its central tenets. Mercedes Alcalá Galán and Steven Hutchinson kindly allowed me to present a part of the final manuscript at the University of Wisconsin, Madison to their wonderful graduate students. The editorial assistance offered by my UIC doctoral students – Lisa James and Jill Quarles – was of great value.

Anne J. Cruz – wise mentor, thoughtful critic, and closest of friends – lent her watchful eye to the book proposal and continuously reminded me of the balance between rigour and passion that is required in order to successfully complete a book manuscript. She is a champion of and an exemplary model for women scholars across the profession, and I count amongst my luckiest the day I entered her classroom in spring 1992. I am also forever indebted to my loving sister, Arlene Hernández, who so often took the time to call and ask in the softest of ways, “¿y el libro?”

This book is dedicated to my children, Antonia, Manuela, and Joaquín. They spent several years being told to stay out of my hair when I was writing, and still every time the subject of this project came up their faces beamed with pride in and anticipation for the fruit of my labour. They did not write one word of this book, but without their patience and open hearts not one word could have been written. Finally, the idea for the book was first sowed at the small bookshop of the Iglesia de Santo Tomé in Toledo when, on a hot summer day, Michał Paweł Markowski identified and insisted on buying for me a four-hundred-page catalogue on images of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. He carried that book all day and many others in many cities after. Most significantly, he generously lent his immense wealth of knowledge and excitement for the topic of images and the imagination as I developed my own. The intellectual and emotional richness of our relationship has profoundly shaped this project and my life for the past seven years.