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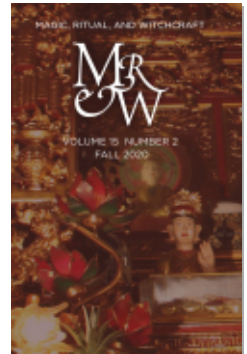
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WITCHCRAFT AND SLAVERY IN CARTAGENA DE INDIAS

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The early modern European witchcraft trials showed remarkable plasticity in adopting the intellectual construction we know as demonology to local conditions, wrapping local vocabulary and culture around a common European intellectual core belief in the existence of organized devil-worshipping witches.¹ Yet, the question of how these trials spread across Europe and the European colonies has always posed problems of both evidence and theories. Historians have frequently used the vocabulary of medicine, describing witchcraft trials as “epidemic” (in contrast to the more prosaic trials for sorcery and magic, labeled as “endemic”) and spreading through “contagion,” or being caused by a “craze.”² Some describe this contagion as spreading through cultural and intellectual influences, while others again have stressed the significance of individuals who brought with them experiences and knowledge that triggered witchcraft trials in new areas.³

This article argues that the trials for diabolical witchcraft in Cartagena de Indias cannot be understood properly without connecting them to events in Spain: several of the main characters initiating and conducting these trials had personal connections to the Basque country, and we find explicit references to Basque witchcraft in the sources from Cartagena de Indias. The Spanish

1. A point well made by Norman Cohn more than four decades ago. Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London: Sussex University Press, 1975).

2. E.g. Anne Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (London: Pandora, 1994); Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004).

3. Gunnar W. Knutsen, “Topics of Persecution: Witchcraft Historiography in the Iberian World” in *Writing Witch-Hunt Histories: Challenging the Paradigm*, ed. Marko Nenonen and Raisa Maria Toivo (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 167–90.

Inquisition's tribunal in Cartagena de Indias thus furnishes clear evidence both of the adaptation of the description of demonic witchcraft to very different local conditions, as well as mechanisms of transference of such beliefs, even putting a newly minted Basque word for the witches' sabbath in the mouths of alleged witches of African origin.

Almost one-third of the known trials (213 of 660) from the Spanish Inquisition's tribunal in Cartagena de Indias include charges of some sort of magic, sorcery, or diabolic witchcraft.⁴ Furthermore, as noted by Gustav Henningsen many years ago, Cartagena was the only one of the three tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition in America to deal with a number of accusations of diabolical witchcraft, where witches were accused of (and confessed to) being part of a satanic sect, flying through the air at night to take part in the witches' sabbath, and harming their neighbors by supernatural means.⁵

Despite the high number of trials, it seems likely that the number of accused witches tried in Cartagena de Indias—or at least within the district of the Spanish Inquisition's tribunal in Cartagena de Indias—was in fact considerably higher than the number of trials in the preserved inquisitorial records. The reasons for this claim are twofold. First, the letters that the tribunal sent to the *Suprema* (the Spanish Inquisition's central council) in Madrid complain that the bishop of Cuba (which was part of the district of the Holy Office of Cartagena de Indias) acted as ordinary inquisitor and dealt with a number of such cases himself.⁶ Some letters also indicate that other judicial authorities had also dealt with such matters, which is unsurprising given that witchcraft was a crime of shared jurisdiction in Spain and its empire, and the Inquisition frequently struggled with other courts over the right to try witches.⁷ The second reason for this claim is that a significant number of cases of diabolic witchcraft tried by the Holy Office mention a large group of other confessed witches who do not appear to have been prosecuted by the Inquisition. For

4. Numbers from Gunnar W. Knutsen, Mauricio Drelichmann, Gustav Henningsen, and Jean Pierre Dedieu, *The Early Modern Inquisition Database*. <http://emid.h.uib.no>. Accessed August 11, 2020.

5. Gustav Henningsen, "The Diffusion of European Magic in Colonial America," in *Clashes of Cultures: Essays in Honour of Niels Steensgaard*, ed. Jens Christian V. Johansen, Erling Ladewig Petersen, and Henrik Stevnsborg (Odense: Odense University Press, 1992), 160–78.

6. Letters in AHN (*Archivo Histórico Nacional*), Inq, Lib 1008.

7. See, for example, Gunnar W. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan and Masters of Demons: The Spanish Inquisition's Trials for Superstition, Valencia and Barcelona, 1478-1700* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2009); and María Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los ojos. brujería y superstición en Aragón en el siglo XVI* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2000).

example, Ana de Avila was prosecuted based on evidence that included nine people who claimed to have seen her at the witches' sabbath.⁸ Since outsiders never saw the witches' sabbath, these witnesses must have claimed to have been her fellow witches. This is explicitly the case with a certain Justa, who was denounced by "eleven women older than 25 years old who were her accomplices in the crime."⁹ Teodora de Salcedo was declared to be a witch by "eight witnesses above the age of 25, accomplices in her crime."¹⁰ In the case of Juana de Mora, the case summary states that the witnesses were "fifteen black women who were her accomplices in the crime of being a witch."¹¹ The list goes on.

The preceding three examples come from the *auto de fe* of 1633. According to the case summaries in the *relación de causas* of this *auto*, the Inquisition had finalized proceedings in eighteen cases of witchcraft that year. Every one of the eighteen trials was said to start with the testimony of accomplices, and only in one case is one of those accomplices said to be one of the other seventeen witches named in the *relación*. The case summaries in this *relación* alone mention as many as 229 alleged witches in total, spread out over much of present-day Colombia and Cuba. It is impossible to know how many individual cases these represent since the witnesses are not named. What is more, no case is identified as the first one, as was true in an earlier series of cases in 1622. Instead, numerous cases from Havana, Tolu, and Cartagena de Indias are simply said to be the result of the previous confessions of dozens of other witches of whom we have no other record. In a letter from 1633 the inquisitors claim to be in the process of trying seventeen confessed witches who in turn have denounced more than 180 other witches, causing logistical problems and a lack of prison cells.¹² Letters from the bishop of Cuba mention "a great number of witches" on the island, "witches who grow and increase [in number] every day," claims he would repeat over a period of years.¹³ These are just examples, and not meant to be a complete enumeration of alleged witches mentioned in the extant documents, yet they show clearly that the persons accused of witchcraft in Cartagena de Indias in this period number in the hundreds.

We face the same conundrum encountered by investigations into witchcraft trials in Spain, where the best-preserved and most accessible sources,

8. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 313v.

9. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 315r.

10. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 316v.

11. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 319v.

12. AHN, Inq, Lib 1011, fols. 246r-247r

13. For example, AHN, Inq. Lib. 1009, fols. 23r, 56r, and 287r-v.

those from the Holy Office, likewise tell us that much of what we are interested in happened either in other jurisdictions or extrajudicially.¹⁴ There is, indeed, much to remind one of witchcraft trials in Spain in the trials at Cartagena de Indias. Nevertheless, much of the recent research on these trials has focused on tying them into local affairs and local processes of cultural integration, appropriation, and the various modes of oppression in a brutal slave society.¹⁵

As fruitful as those approaches may be, this article will take another tack and focus on the repression of alleged diabolical witchcraft, viewing these cases as based on the fears of the accusers and officers of the court rather than on any real practice undertaken by the accused. Indeed, Willem de Blécourt is right when he states that the “historiography of the sabbath shows a disturbing preoccupation with a search for ‘reality’ in several forms.”¹⁶ Trials for diabolical witchcraft followed a certain script that gave them a great deal of similarity

14. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan and Masters of Demons*; Agustí Alcoberro, “Cacera de bruixes, Justícia local i inquisició a Catalunya, 1487-1643: Alguns criteris metodològics,” *Pedralbes* II, no. 28 (2008): 485–504; idem, “El caçador de bruixes, Joan Malet, l’home que va terroritzar Catalunya al sege XVI,” *Sàpiens*, no. 71 (2008): 20–27; Nolasc del Molar, ed., *Procés d’un bruixot* (Olot: Aubert Impressor, 1968); Joan Guillaumet, *Bruixeria a Catalunya* (Barcelona: Edicions la paraula viva, 1976); Marina Miquel i Vives and Museu d’història de Catalunya, “Per bruixa i metzinera”: *La cacera de bruixes a Catalunya museu d’història de Catalunya 25 de gener-27 de maig de 2007* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya Departament de cultura i mitjans de comunicació, 2007); Antonio Pladevall i Font, *Persecució de bruixes a les comarques de Vic a principis del segle XVII* (Barcelona: N.p., 1974); Francesc Riera i Montserrat, *Remei amatoris, pactes amb el dimoni, encanteris, per a saber de persones absents, cercadors de tresors, remeis per a la salut: bruixes i burixots davant la inquisició de Mallorca en el segle XVII* (Barcelona: Olañeta, 1979); Javier Tomeo, *La bruixeria popular catalana* (Barcelona: Edicions Proa, S.A., 2005); Jordi Torres i Sociats, *Bruixes a la Catalunya Interior: Lluçanès, Osona, Bagès, Moianès i Berguedà* (Barcelona: Farell, 2002).

15. See e.g. Fermina Álvarez Alonso, Paulino Castañeda Delgado, and Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso, *La inquisición en Cartagena de Indias durante el siglo XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999); Diana Luz Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, brujería e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada. Un duelo de imaginarios* (Medellín: Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1994); Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades entre los africanos y sus descendientes en la Nueva Granada, siglo XVII* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2005); Nicole von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends: Sex, Race, and Honor in Colonial Cartagena de Indias* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013); Heather Rachelle White, “Between the Devil and the Inquisition: African Slaves and the Witchcraft Trials in Cartagena de Indias,” *The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History* 8, no. 2 (2005): 1–14.

16. Willem de Blécourt, “Sabbath Stories: Towards a New History of Witches’ Assemblies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 84–100, at 86.

over time and space since they followed a theoretical model distributed in demonological works. These were adopted to local conditions as accusers, witnesses, and prosecutors tried to gain confirmation of their fears, and the defendants struggled to make confessions that would satisfy their judges and bring their ordeals to an end. The central and unifying core of these trials derives from the view and actions of the prosecution, not of the defendants. The “reality” of the witches’ sabbath is grounded on this cosmopolitan prosecutorial vision rather than on local customs or concerns.

Consequently, it is my contention that the trials for diabolical witchcraft in Cartagena de Indias cannot be correctly interpreted without connecting them to events in Spain. Perhaps the best way to do that is to take a step back and first look at events as they unfolded in Spain. The Spanish Inquisition’s tribunal in Cartagena de Indias was established late, in 1610. That same year the most famous witch hunt in Spanish history saw its culmination in an infamous *auto de fe* in Logroño.

If we are to properly understand the significance of the inquisitors’ attitudes it is imperative to understand something of the workings of the Spanish Inquisition itself. The basis of inquisitorial action was the denunciation, in other words some sort of action “from below.” However, once a denunciation was made, the initiative passed to the inquisitors, who decided how to move forward. This part of the decision-making process is opaque to us, and few attempts have been made to study it. However, the best available figures from research on the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions indicate that ninety-five percent of all denunciations did not result in a formal trial.¹⁷ The inquisitors’ influence goes further than this, however, as they also controlled the publication and public reading of the Edicts of Faith that reminded every Christian of their personal obligation to make denunciations, on pain of excommunication in case of failure to do so. These edicts played a significant role both in informing the population of what sort of offences to look out for, and in fomenting denunciations. In other words, the inquisitors were key movers of these trials, first actively encouraging denunciations, and then deciding whether to initiate formal trials or leave the denunciations to gather dust in the archives. How they made the decision about which denunciations to discard and the five percent of denunciations to pursue, as well as their criteria for these decisions, is impossible to ascertain with certainty. From a reading of

17. Jean-Pierre Dedieu, *L’Administration de la foi: L’Inquisition de Tolède (XVIe-XVIIIe siècle)*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1992), 282; José Pedro Paiva, *Bruxaria e superstição: num país sem “caça às bruxas” 1600-1774*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Editorial Notícias, 2002), 208.

hundreds of full trials, thousands of trial summaries, and tens of thousands of letters from the Holy Office, it appears that the best explanation is that the inquisitors were above all persuaded to move forward by the possibility of proving the accusation at the *consulta de fé*, where the inquisitors passed judgment along with the bishop or his ordinary, and a selection of judges from the local royal appeals court.¹⁸ Thus there was a much higher likelihood of a formal trial to result if there was at the outset full legal proof: a confession or the testimony of two “perfect witnesses,” such as two accomplices. At the same time, confessing to the accusation in the inquisitorial system entailed a conviction but not an execution for a first-time offender if the defendant was deemed to have made a full confession. In other words, this was a judicial system that favored chain-trials, and where extrajudicial confessions would significantly increase the chances of formal proceedings. It is easy to see how such a system could favor witch hunts.

WITCHCRAFT TRIALS IN NORTHERN SPAIN, 1609-1622

In the case of the Basque trials in the years 1609–1614 we can use the phrase “witch hunt” safely and advisedly: there was an actual hunt for witches, and almost two thousand were duly found after the Holy Office published a number of edicts against them, triggering both denunciations and self-denunciations.¹⁹ The first trials initiated in 1609 resulted in a number of confessions, which led to further trials, which produced more confessions and in turn led to further trials, and so on. Yet only six persons were executed at the *auto de fé* in Logroño in 1610. The reason so few were executed when so many were convicted is very simple: they confessed, and were consequently convicted but not relaxed to the secular branch to be burned.²⁰ Thus, contrary to

18. For a rare discussion of this, see Sebastian Rothe, “Decisive Dissent: The Role of Learned Men in Decision-Making Processes of the Spanish Inquisition According to the Records of the So-Called Consultas de Fe Held in the Tribunal of Cuenca (1489-1500)” in *Revista de la Inquisición* 22, 185–202.

19. Much has been written about these events, yet the best account remains Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614)* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980). More light has been cast on the issue by the documents Henningsen later found and published: *The Salazar Documents: Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frias and Others on the Basque Witch Persecution*, ed. Gustave Henningsen (Leiden: Brill, 2004). A recent article by Homza has brought even further clarity: Lu Ann Homza, “When Witches Litigate: New Sources from Early Modern Navarre,” *The Journal of Modern History* 91, no. 2 (2019): 245–75.

20. It should be noted that other Spanish jurisdictions were not so forgiving, and those who confessed in the Holy Office might still be burnt in effigy if they died during the course of the trial.

virtually every other European judicial system at the time, the surest way for a woman to survive a witchcraft trial in the Spanish Inquisition was to confess that she was in fact a witch and name others. Only those six among the first group of convicted witches who refused to confess were killed in Logroño in 1610.²¹ It was precisely this apparent leniency that had allowed the Spanish Inquisition to produce massive amounts of information on the alleged Judaizers among Spain's *converso* population, which again led to its almost total destruction as members of virtually every family implicated each other in the thousands of trials that followed the first round.²² When this judicial dynamic was transferred to the alleged sect of the witches the effect was equally dramatic, furnishing hundreds of confessions in a relatively short time span.

What followed this initially successful prosecution of alleged witches by the inquisitors in Logroño was a long and spectacular undoing of the whole chain of evidence underpinning the hundreds of confessions of witchcraft when Alonso de Salazar y Frías, the junior inquisitor at the tribunal,²³ became convinced that the whole thing was a sham. Salazar has traditionally been viewed as a rationalist who came to disbelieve in witches, but a recent study emphasizes his skepticism towards the evidence, rather than toward the existence of witches as such.²⁴ The only real evidence in these cases was confessions, confessions that he in many cases proved to be contradictory and untruthful. These false confessions were originally obtained "only through mental and physical assault" in the villages,²⁵ and repeated in the Holy Office because the alternative was to be burned alive.

The findings of Alonso de Salazar y Frías, immortalized by Gustav Henningsen as "the witches' advocate,"²⁶ eventually convinced the central council of the Spanish Inquisition, the *Suprema*. Consequently, in the wake of these trials the *Suprema* issued new rules for witchcraft trials (but not for trials for sorcery and magic) in 1614, making it almost impossible for the Spanish Inqui-

21. See the table in Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, 198–99.

22. The classic study of these trials is Haim Beinart, *Conversos on Trial: The Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (Jerusalem: The Magnus Press, 1981).

23. Salazar had taken up his post on June 20, 1609, when the trials were already well underway under the auspices of his two senior colleagues; see Henningsen: *The Witches' Advocate*, 48.

24. Homza, "When Witches Litigate," 248. However, a skepticism toward the phenomenon of witchcraft itself could more safely be expressed by attacking the evidence rather than the existence of witches, a point discussed in Gunnar W. Knutsen, "The End of the Witch Hunts in Scandinavia," *ARV Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 62 (2006): 150–53.

25. Homza, "When Witches Litigate," 250.

26. Henningsen: *The Witches' Advocate*.

sition to convict anyone of diabolical witchcraft. Yet this was not the end of trials for diabolical witchcraft in Spain. They thenceforth took place in secular courts rather than in the Holy Office.

This development was an extension of previous practice: the offence of witchcraft had been one of *fuero mixto*, mixed jurisdiction, which could be prosecuted by both secular courts (who could punish the infanticides and other forms of *maleficium* practiced by the witches), by the bishops (who could discipline and guide misguided sinners), and by the Holy Office of the Inquisition (which was the only jurisdiction allowed to punish the formal heresy and apostasy inherent in devil worship).²⁷ Which court actually tried an accused witch was therefore the result of a complex interplay between the denouncers' choice of venue and the power relationship between the various courts, and also the interest of the judges in trying these cases. When the inquisitors showed little inclination to prosecute these alleged offences, other judges were frequently eager to step in.²⁸

By the time the trials for witchcraft started in the 1609 tribunal in Logroño, the Spanish Inquisition had more than a century of experience with such trials. Yet the chain of denunciations and trials set off in 1609 did not originate in Spain: it started when a servant girl, returning to her village, crossed the border from France where Pierre de Lancre was conducting a massive witch hunt. Soon thereafter she started to talk of witches, and before long her allegations were brought to the attention of the Holy Office in Logroño.²⁹ It was long thought that this massive complex of allegations and confessions, numbering almost two thousand confessed witches, was confined to the Inquisition. Documents later unearthed and published by Gustav Henningsen, and now more fully exploited by Lu Ann Homza, show that there was significant extrajudicial violence as well as lawsuits in other courts between several of those implicated in these trials.³⁰ Details of these trials were widely published in pamphlets, some of which made their way to the Americas. Stories of these trials were also undoubtedly told by the many Basques who emigrated to the Americas. In 1614 a similar (and rare) outbreak of witchcraft trials appeared in the Mexican town of Celaya after a public reading of the Edicts of Faith.³¹ The

27. The only study so far to encompass all three jurisdictions is Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los ojos*.

28. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 85–115.

29. Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, 30–50.

30. Henningsen, *The Salazar Documents*, especially 62–74; Homza, “When Witches Litigate.”

31. Iris Gareis, “New Spain,” in *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, Vol. 4, ed. Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: AB-CLIO, 2006), 824. In the third American

Edicts of Faiths contained long lists and descriptions of offences that should be denounced, effectively detailing what a witch was to the listening crowd.³²

One significant development during the trials in the Basque country in 1609–1614 was the emergence of the Basque word *aquestrarre* to signify the witches' sabbath in Spanish, a meaning it carries to this day.³³ Previously, the sabbath was referred to as *junta de brujas* (meeting of witches) in the Inquisition's documents. Yet, it took time for the use of this new word to become universal. Later trials and letters describing witches in Galicia and Catalonia, the two areas to the west and east of the Basque country, respectively, continue to use the phrase *junta de brujas*. This suggests that witchcraft trials and suspicions of witchcraft that use the word *aquestrarre* probably have been influenced by the trials in the Basque country in how the alleged events were described and conceptualized.

However, the main result of these trials was the later reluctance of the Spanish Inquisition to act in witchcraft trials. This became visible when a large number of witchcraft trials took place in Catalonia almost immediately after the trials in Logroño, or even concurrently with them. Exactly when this Catalonian wave of trials started is somewhat uncertain since they were held in courts with less developed archival routines than the Holy Office, but they are known to have been underway by 1614. They had their climax in 1617 and appear to have ended in 1622,³⁴ though trials in Catalonia are documented later, such as in 1636, 1674, and 1689.³⁵ In 1619 the *fiscal* (prosecutor) of the

tribunal, in Lima, there were no known cases of diabolical witchcraft. Iris Gareis, "Peru," in *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, Vol. 3, ed. Richard M. Golden (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 894.

32. Of course, witchcraft was rarely the sole offence detailed in these edicts, and a similar effect of creating and spreading the description of a non-existent criminal has convincingly been argued in the case of the Spanish Inquisition's persecution of the alleged heretical sect of *alumbados*: see Jessica J. Fowler, "Assembling Alumbradismo: The Evolution of a Heretical Construct," in *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 251–82. The argument that the persecutors created what they persecuted is an old one, receiving its most cogent formulation in Moore's theory of a persecuting society. R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

33. Gustav Henningsen, "El invento de la palabra 'aquestrarre'," in *Akelarre: la caza de brujas en el Pirineo (siglos XIII-XIX)*. *Homenaje al profesor Gustav Henningsen* (Pamplona: Colección Riev Cuadernos, 2012), 351–59.

34. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 56, 86–115; Alcoberro, "Cacera de bruixes"; Agustí Alcoberro i Pericay, "The Catalan Church and the Witch Hunt: The Royal Survey of 1621," *eHumanista: Journal of Iberian Studies*, no. 26 (2014): 153–69.

35. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 90.

Holy Office in Barcelona was furious with the inquisitors because of their inaction in these trials, which left the field open to secular judges and “caused great damage and injury to the jurisdiction” of the Holy Office.³⁶ In 1621 the situation was felt to be so precarious that the viceroy was ordered by the king to step in and resolve the matter. The viceroy asked the Catalan bishops how the situation should be handled, suggesting a general amnesty for all witches and that the Holy Office should deal with all further trials of this sort.³⁷ The question of how important the earlier trials in Logroño were for these trials is a difficult one to answer. The strict instructions issued by the *Suprema* in 1614 certainly influenced the Inquisition’s timid response to the crisis and opened the door for the much more severe and less critical local courts. Surprising, perhaps, is the absence of the word *aquelarre* in these proceedings and the letters documenting them. On the other hand, one visible direct influence on these trials was that of the witchfinders who entered Catalonia from France (even those of Spanish origin appear to have spent time in France before acting as witchfinders in Catalonia) and proceeded to identify witches who were then tortured by secular courts until they confessed, and were then hanged, frequently on the same day.³⁸

WITCHCRAFT TRIALS IN CARTAGENA DE INDIAS

Therefore, when we consider the trials for diabolical witchcraft in the Holy Office in Cartagena, they can be seen as a continuation of the series of witchcraft trials that had spilled into northern Spain from France before they spread eastwards on the Iberian peninsula, and then crossed the sea to America. There is a clear temporal and cultural continuity in these trials, in the Basque country, then in Catalonia, and finally—or perhaps simultaneously—in the Viceroyalty of Peru (to which Cartagena belonged).

In 1617 the bishop of Panama claimed to have found “a great number of witches and people who had a pact with the devil” in his bishopric two years earlier, and to have punished some of them who were Indians and others who were black.³⁹ This pushes the first witchcraft trials within the Cartagena tribunal’s district back to 1615. However, the first denunciation of diabolic witchcraft that resulted in an inquisitorial trial by the Holy Office in Cartagena came in 1618,⁴⁰ even though the sentence was only passed in 1622 and published

36. BN, MS 2440, fols. 139r-144v.

37. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan*, 112.

38. *Ibid.*, 105–10.

39. AHN, Inq, Lib 1009, fols. 23r-23v.

40. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 208v.

in the *auto de fe* held that year. In this case we have concrete links to the Basque country, in addition to the suggestive chronology. Some of the main drivers of these trials had connections to the Basque country, and we find direct reference to Basque witchcraft. These first trials originated in Cuba, where fray Alonso Enríquez, the bishop of Cuba, claimed to have the right to try cases of both heresy and witchcraft as the ordinary inquisitor of his bishopric. Significantly, before Enríquez became bishop of Cuba in 1610, he had held the post of auxiliary bishop in Burgos,⁴¹ the bishopric adjacent to Logroño. He was fully aware of the witchcraft trials in Logroño, where the *auto de fe* of November 7, 1610 occurred after he had been named bishop of Cuba but before he left to take possession of his diocese in the New World.⁴² Judging from his correspondence, fray Alonso Enríquez oversaw dozens if not hundreds of trials in Cuba, even though the Inquisition's tribunal in Cartagena was founded in 1610, and he may have been the inspiration for or instigator of many of those trials that eventually reached the Holy Office of Cartagena de Indias (even though he claimed the right to try them himself). In his correspondence we also find a direct mention of Basque witches: in January 1619 Enríquez, apparently oblivious to the discredit that had befallen the Logroño trials after he left for Cuba, wrote that in Cuba "there is such an enormous infinity of witches and sorcerers that I don't think there be as many in all of Logroño and Vizcaya."⁴³ The reference to Logroño and Vizcaya as places particularly rife with devil-worshipping witches is of course no coincidence, and is as close to a smoking gun as one can come.

Enríquez's reference would have been well understood both in Madrid and in Cartagena, since he was not the only actor in this drama with a connection to Basque witchcraft: Inquisitor Juan de Zamora Mañozca (who liked to go by the name Juan de Mañozca, using his mother's surname rather than his father's) was born in 1577 in Marquina, in the Basque country within the district of the tribunal of Logroño,⁴⁴ though he moved to Mexico with his uncle Pedro Sáenz de Mañozca in 1594 when his uncle took up a secretarial post with the Inquisition there.⁴⁵ He was named as inquisitor in the new tribunal in Cartagena de Indias when it was founded, taking up his functions in

41. Actoz, action 00070275.

42. Actoz, action 00048067.

43. AHN, Inq, Lib 1009, fol. 56r.

44. Actoz, action 00115258.

45. Kimberly Lynn, *Between Court and Confessional: The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 243. Lynn devotes an entire chapter (238–93) of her excellent monograph to Juan de Mañozca and his career.

1610.⁴⁶ In 1623 he left Cartagena when he was named inquisitor of Lima. Thus, for the years 1610–1623 we have two prime movers of these trials with backgrounds from northern Spain and personal knowledge of (and at least one of them with personal connections to) the trials in Logroño and those undertaking them. As if that was not enough, the new inquisitor who arrived in 1623 to replace Pedro Mathe de Salcedo (who died in 1621),⁴⁷ Agustín de Ugarte y Saravia, was originally from Burgos and had been awarded his doctorate by the University of Oñate in Vizcaya.⁴⁸ He remained as inquisitor in Cartagena de Indias until he was named bishop of Chiapas in December 1629.⁴⁹

After the first convictions were published at the *auto de fé* in 1622 there were no new witches on display at the *autos* in 1626 and 1627.⁵⁰ Not until 1628 were alleged devil-worshipping witches again sentenced in Cartagena.⁵¹ On this occasion we have new evidence of influence from the Logroño trials since the alleged witches are said to have confessed to having attended *aquelarres*, not *juntas de brujas*, something that they appear to have never done in Galicia or Catalonia. The word, originally minted in the course of the Basque trials sometime around 1610, has now been put in the mouths of African slaves. One could hardly ask for better evidence of a direct influence of the Basque witch hunt on these New World trials, or that they were driven by European fears rather than by African traditions.

PROSECUTING WITCHCRAFT

The personal connections that link these trials to events in Spain are clear, the continuity in time is obvious, and we have seen the adoption of words from Basque trials that suddenly show up in America without having had much impact elsewhere in Spain. There are further influences from Spain that we should mention before we come to the way the European conceptual core of these trials was transformed when it emerged into actual trials in Cartagena de Indias. The number of pamphlets produced and circulated after the Basque trials makes it perfectly clear that the news of these trials travelled far and fast. And so did the instructions to judges and inquisitors all over the King of Spain's realms. The new instructions issued to the tribunal in Logroño in 1614

46. Actoz, action 00116539.

47. Lynn, *Between Court and Confessional*, 256.

48. Federico González Suárez, *Historia general de la República del Ecuador* (Quito: Imprenta del Clero, 1893), vol. IV, 230.

49. (No author) "Bishop Agustín de Ugarte y Sarabia." <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bugarte.html>. Accessed August 2, 2020.

50. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 255r–261r and 272r–276r.

51. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 293r–302r.

at the end of the Basque trials were sent to all other tribunals also. We thus have institutional connections that were meant to serve as checks on the inquisitors' actions but which also functioned as reminders, not to say definitions, of what diabolical witchcraft was. The main reason why such cases continued to be tried in large numbers in Cartagena de Indias after 1614 was the lack of central control. Given the distances and the long time for correspondence to make its way between Madrid and Cartagena de Indias, the inquisitors had significant freedom of action when compared to their colleagues in Spain, and the *Suprema* had correspondingly greater difficulty in enforcing the rules, though it was able to prevent witch burnings in Cartagena de Indias. As we shall see, this was so even when the local tribunal had in fact sentenced alleged witches to death.

The first inquisitors in Cartagena de Indias complained bitterly about the behavior of fray Alonso Enríquez as bishop of Cuba. In 1623 they cited more than a decade of their own written complaints about him, and claimed that he was “naturally quarrelsome and restless, does not know how to remain in peace,” and that he publicly called all the old women he quarreled with “witches and sorceresses.”⁵² The bishop and the inquisitor, Licenciado Juan de Mañozca (who was, in fact, the future archbishop of México) had, as we have seen, connections to Logroño and the Basque country, and they agreed on two things: there were many witches, and this was due to excessive lenience by the Holy Office of Cartagena de Indias. Thus the bishop of Cuba in 1622: “the multitude of witches and sorceresses . . . [is due to] the little care of the ministers of the Holy tribunal . . . by which reason these witches increase and grow [in number] every day since there has been no exemplary punishment.”⁵³ And the inquisitor, the same year: “secular courts should keep watch over the witches and punish those caught with full rigor and not with the softness of the Inquisition.”⁵⁴ What we have here, then, is both bishop and inquisitor arguing the need for a more vigorous and brutal punishment of witches, and blaming the Inquisition’s “softness” for a dramatic increase in the number of witches. This is all very familiar for anyone who is acquainted with studies of such trials in Spain. In response to the viceroy’s query, the bishop of Vic in Catalonia wrote—also in 1622—that the Inquisition in Barcelona had not prosecuted witches with sufficient vigor, which caused those who saw the damage they created to seek redress in other courts.⁵⁵ This also echoes a

52. AHN, Inq, Lib 1009, fol. 296r.

53. AHN, Lnq, Lib 1009, fols. 287r-287v.

54. AHN, Inq, Lib 1009, fol. 281v.

55. ACA, CA, Leg 368. Letter dated February 22, 1622.

complaint made by a group of Catalan theologians seventy-four years earlier. In 1548 they declared that

when the Inquisition in earlier times judged these cases [i.e. witchcraft] this plague was limited to a few in the mountains, but after the Inquisition lifted its hand from them they have descended to the plains and the cities.⁵⁶

Like the trials in the Basque country and in Catalonia, the trials in Cartagena can be seen to be a phenomenon restricted to a limited number of years with very dramatic events. Trials for diabolical witchcraft were epidemic, while trials for other forms for superstition tended to be endemic. In this case we can also trace the epidemic back in time and space across the Spanish empire and back into France and Pierre de Lancre's infamous witch hunt. In fact, there is a higher continuity and overlap between the trials in Cartagena and those in Logroño and Barcelona than there was within Cartagena itself: after the first convictions were published at the *auto de fé* in 1622 there were no new diabolical witches on display at the *autos* in 1626 and 1627.⁵⁷ Only in 1628 were alleged witches again convicted in Cartagena.⁵⁸ As we have seen, by then the stories the witches told were even more clearly influenced by earlier events in the Basque country since they now called the witches' sabbath by the word of *aquejarre*, first used in the trials in Logroño and unknown from the Catalan and Galician trials.

By 1632 another pair of inquisitors were operating in Cartagena de Indias: licentiate Domingo Vélez de Asas y Argos and licentiate Marin de Cortázar y Azcárate. They investigated the case of Paula de Eguiluz, who had been reconciled as a diabolical witch in 1624 and who now was convicted as a relapsed witch who had again taken Satan as her master, attended the witches' sabbath, and so on. The inquisitors, Cortázar from Vizcaya and Vélez from Santander,⁵⁹ voted with five theologians and jurists that Paula de Eguiluz should be relaxed to the secular branch and burnt alive; however, they did not dare to carry out the sentence without permission from Madrid. The *Suprema* replied coolly to the suggested witch burning and sent them another copy of the 1614 instructions, telling them to retry Paula de Eguiluz and to follow the instructions this time; "and if you after having done this still vote to relax her, without carrying

56. BN, MS 2440, fol. 98v.

57. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 255r-261r and 272r-276r.

58. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 293r-302r.

59. The notary signing these documents was Juan de Uriarte Araoz, a man carrying Basque surnames, but whose origins have proven hard to ascertain.

out the sentence you will send the council a copy of the trial so that after having seen it the council can order what is most suitable.”⁶⁰

Some months later, before the *Suprema* had even received the news of the conviction of Paula de Eguiluz, let alone replied to it, the tribunal had convicted and sentenced to death another confessed devil-worshipping witch: Elena de Viloria. In this case we know that there was a split vote, with four voting in favor of relaxing her and three voting for reconciliation, with the inquisitors dividing their votes: Vélez wanted to burn her, while Cortázar voted for reconciliation.⁶¹ The inquisitors did not take the hint from the *Suprema*'s reply in the case of Paula de Eguiluz and apply this to other trials. Instead they continued to try new cases as they were denounced and let Elena de Vilora rot in jail while they waited for the *Suprema* to respond to the decision to burn her. In 1635, two years later, they had still not acted further on her case and wrote Madrid again, this time requesting that the *Suprema* reply to their letter and copy of the sentence from 1633. A note on this letter indicates that the *Suprema* ordered that she was to be reconciled and not relaxed.⁶² The tribunal obeyed, and Elena de Vilora was reconciled on June 1, 1636.⁶³ In the case of Paula de Eguiluz they waited even longer. Even though they had been instructed to reconcile her in 1633, they only did so on March 25, 1638!⁶⁴ The will to burn witches was very much present in the tribunal in Cartagena de Indias, and only by asserting its authority in correspondence that spanned years did the *Suprema* prevent such executions from taking place.

By this point it should be clear that these trials in Cartagena de Indias cannot be fully understood without putting them in the context of contemporary events on the other side of the Atlantic. When we look at both chronology and who urged and undertook prosecution, we see a great deal of connection, similarities, and overlap. The similarities continue in that most inquisitors in the America had previously served as inquisitors in Spain. Furthermore, we find references to demonological works by authors such as Martin Delrio in the correspondence from the tribunal in Cartagena de Indias as early as 1614.⁶⁵

Another similarity bears mention: it has emerged in recent years that a number of the trials for witchcraft in Spain in the early seventeenth century had been preceded by popular violence against suspected witches. They were

60. AHN, Inq, Lib 1011, fols 107r-108r, 182r, and 252r-254v. Quote on fol. 108r.

61. AHN, Inq, Lib 1011, fols. 248r-250r, and 363r-365r.

62. AHN, Inq, Lib 1011, fol. 362r.

63. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 470v.

64. AHN, Inq, Lib 1021, fols. 4v-5r, and 47r-47v.

65. See, for example, AHN, Inq, Lib 1008, fol. 108r.

beaten or even tortured until they confessed that they were witches. Their tormentors then set them free and denounced them to the Inquisition as self-confessed witches, and this set the ball rolling for a chain of trials.⁶⁶ This was never noted in the Inquisition's trial summaries. We know about these practices now because contemporary letters from Catalonia complain about this abusive behavior, and because some of the victims of this violence sued their aggressors in secular courts in the Basque country. Exactly the same procedure of extrajudicial violence to force a confession led to the first trial of a witch by the Holy Office in Cartagena de Indias. What is more, unlike in Spain, in this case it is reflected in the trial summary. In 1618, the slave Leonor Zape was whipped by her owner and his brother until she confessed she that was a witch. They then denounced her to the Inquisition as a self-confessed witch. The whole process was easier in the Americas than in Spain since the slave owners could legally subject their slaves to the violence necessary to force them to confess. However, this was not something that most slave owners did readily, since it meant a significant economic loss to them if the Holy Office convicted their slaves and gave them sentences which removed them from their owners for a period of time, such as banishment, prison, or in the worst case, execution.⁶⁷ In fact, slaves are known to have used the Inquisition as a way of escaping abusive owners in the Americas, by blaspheming and thus forcing their owners to denounce them or themselves run the risk of being prosecuted for harboring heretics or obstructing the Inquisition.⁶⁸ In other words, Leonor Zape's owner was desperate to have her convicted as a witch and willing to take a significant economic loss in order to do so.

The connections and similarities between the trials in Cartagena de Indias and the Basque country don't stop there; they also extend to the content of the accusations, which—unsurprisingly, given the personal connections to the Basque country and the reading of demonological literature by the Inquisition's employees—display great similarity with northern Spain, and indeed with trials for diabolical witchcraft throughout Europe. For example, Leonor Zape confessed to be part of a group of witches serving the Devil, who had assumed the shape of “a black man with horns, who covered his genitals with

66. Henningsen, *The Salazar Documents*, 62–73; Homza, “When Witches Litigate.”

67. The inquisitors mention the high cost of these trials for slave owners several times in their correspondence with the *Suprema*, since it was the slave owners who paid for their slaves' food and lodging in jail during their trials.

68. Javier Villa-Flores, “‘To Lose One's Soul': Blasphemy and Slavery in New Spain, 1596–1669,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (2002): 435–68.

a cloth and who wore a handkerchief on his head to hide his horns.”⁶⁹ As was commonly told in Europe, the colonial Devil required new witches to kiss his anus and foreswear God and the Virgin Mary before paying homage to him. The Devil sometimes appeared in the shape of a he-goat, and the witches had to lift his tail to kiss his bottom.⁷⁰ As in Spain, some witches stated that he farted in their mouths as they bent to kiss him. The sabbath then continued with dancing, and the Devil had anal intercourse with all the witches, male and female, before flying them home. Leonor’s alleged accomplice Guiomar Bran added the detail that they could fly through the air due to a salve that the Devil had given them, which they smeared under their arms in order to fly.⁷¹ As in Europe, they sallied forth at night to do damage to “the Christians.” More than 150 witches gathered, and then divided in groups of twenty to spread out over the countryside. Harvests were ruined, and babies were killed by sucking their blood until they died. The dead children were later disinterred and brought to the next sabbath, where they were then eaten.⁷²

All of this could be told anywhere in Europe. There is nothing to set Leonor’s confession apart from one made in Finnmark, Bavaria, or Catalonia, apart from one significant detail: she stated to have been part of a group of *black* male and female witches “of different nations.”⁷³ They were organized in troops of twenty, and each troop was sent out to wreak havoc in a different area.⁷⁴ Maria Linda also told of an exclusively black group of witches, confessing that she had first been invited by two black men “to go with them to a place where they gathered with other black men and women.” Only when she arrived there did she realize that she was at a witches’ sabbath.⁷⁵ These stories of groups of purely black witches gives the concept of witchcraft a new dimension.

THE WITCHES

This is where we have a clear break with the Spanish and European trials for diabolical witchcraft: not in *what* the alleged witches were accused of and

69. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 212r–214r.

70. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 223r.

71. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 220r.

72. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols. 208v–214v.

73. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 212r. There is one other detail in this trial that Gustav Henningsen has singled out, which is that Leonor confessed to having taken the soul of another woman by embracing her. Henningsen, “The Diffusion of European Magic in Colonial America.”

74. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fols 213v–214r.

75. AHN, Inq, Lib 1020, fol. 225v.

what they were made to confess, but in *who* was accused of and made to confess such things. The European sabbath myth was literally placed in the mouths of slaves who were made to use made-up Basque words even as they adopted their stories of the Devil's actions to local realities and fears. The story of the witches' organization may remind the modern reader of the *benandanti* of Italy or the witches of Finnmark who were said to be commanded by an admiral,⁷⁶ but it would have reminded the slave owners of the Viceroyalty of Peru of the armies of runaway slaves who haunted perhaps their deepest fears. It has often been said that the European witch stereotype of the post-menopausal woman dependent on others reflects those societies' subconscious fears. In slave-owning Spanish America, the witch stereotype embodied a different subconscious fear: the fear of the black population joining together across "nations" in a single military structure headed by the Devil himself and aiming to destroy the slave-owning Christian society.

The idea of slaves organized as a collective of witches appears to have provided a female counterpart to the *macombos* and *palanques*, the settlements and chiefdoms of cimarrons—runaway slaves—in the South American hinterland. Armies of male former slaves conducted raids against the colonial settlements, engaged at times in open war with Spain and Portugal, and would be the sources of the great slave rebellions of the nineteenth century.⁷⁷ In Panama they saw their greatest extension in the sixteenth century when they allied with English pirates and could not be subdued by military means. Only formal peace treaties acknowledging the freedom of the escaped slaves eventually pacified the area, and those treaties stopped future unrest by obliging the former rebels to hunt down escaped slaves in the future.⁷⁸ In Colombia they endured much

76. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983). The witches of Finnmark were also said to be organized in military fashion and led by an admiral. Rune Blix Hagen, *Ved porten til helvete : trolldomsforfølgelse i Finnmark* (Oslo: Cappelen Damm, 2015).

77. Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1973); José L. Franco, *Maroons and Slave Rebellions in the Spanish Territories* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

78. Ruth Pike, "Black Rebels: The Cimarrons of Sixteenth-Century Panama," *The Americas* 64, no. 2 (2007): 243–66; Frederico Guillot, *Negros rebeldes y negros cimarrones: perfil afroamericano en la historia del Nuevo Mundo durante el siglo XVI* (Buenos Aires: Fariña Editores, 1961); Armando Fortune, "Los negros cimarrones en Tierra Firme y su lucha por la libertad," *Revista Lotería*, 1970, vol. 171, 172, 173, and 174, 17–43, 32–53, 16–40, 46–66, reprinted in *Obras Selectas*, ed. Gerardo Maloney (Panamá: Editorial Mariano Arosemen, 1994); Enriqueta Vila Vilar, "Cimarronaje en Panama y Colombia: El costo de una guerilla en el siglo XVII," *Caravelle*, no. 49 (1987): 77–92; Ignacio Gallup-Díaz, "A

longer,⁷⁹ and panic caused by the rumors of a combined slave revolt and attack by the cimarrons caused chaos and a number of deaths in Cartagena de Indias in 1693.⁸⁰ An alleged secret conspiracy by the town's slave population to aid the cimarrons in invading the town was uncovered just as the governor and militia had left the town undefended by going on campaign against the cimarrons in the *palanques* in the interior. This was not the first time that Spanish colonial society in Cartagena de Indias was under threat from the black population. Ten years earlier the militia had put down a small slave insurrection. The rebels had attempted to gain control of the town, but were forced to flee, swelling the ranks of the cimarrons.⁸¹ By then the area had already seen decades of low-intensity warfare, starting after the founding of the *palanque* La Mantuna in 1600. Numerous expeditions had failed to destroy the *palanques*, and the cimarrons continued to attack Spanish plantations and caravans. The fear of attack and slave revolt was therefore well founded.

The diabolical witch in Europe was the archenemy of Christian society, the representation of the sum of all fears. Having given her soul to Satan and taken him as her god, the witch received supernatural powers to harm her neighbors and threaten society. The world of the witches was the world upside down, with reversal of roles, and connected to the Carnival.⁸² In the Catholic Church there are sacraments, and in the Devil's church there are excrements, wrote the demonologist fray Martín de Castañega in 1529.⁸³ The witches danced backwards, the food and drink tasted horribly at the sabbaths, and the sex was also reversed, as the Devil and the witches sodomized each other. The witch represented society's worst fears, and so the stories told and the confessions forced

Legacy of Strife: Rebellious Slaves in Sixteenth-Century Panama," *Colonial Latin American Review* 19, no. 3 (2010): 417–35.

79. Roberto Arrázola, *Palenque, primer pueblo libre de América* (Cartagena: Ediciones Hernández, 1970); María del Carmen Borrego Plá, *Palenques de negros en Cartagena de Indias a fines del siglo XVII* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-americanos de Sevilla, 1973).

80. Sandra Beatriz Sánchez López, "Miedo, rumor y rebelión: la conspiración esclava de 1693 en Cartagena de Indias," *Revista Historia Crítica*, no. 31 (2006): 77–99; Jane Landers, "Conspiradores Esclavizados en Cartagena de Indias en el siglo XVII," in *Afrodscendentes en las Américas. Trayectorias sociales e identitarias: 150 años de la abolición de la esclavitud en Colombia*, ed. Claudia Mosquera, Mauricio Pardo, and Odile Hoffman (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, IRD, ILSA, 2002) 93–101.

81. Arrázola, 83.

82. Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past & Present* 87, no. 1 (1980): 98–127.

83. Martín de Castañega, *Tratado muy sutil y bien fundado de las supersticiones y hechicerías, y varios conjuros y abusiones* (Logroño: 1529).

out of the defendants varied somewhat with local preoccupations. Destabilizing society, destroying crops, killing children, and leading their converts to perdition, the witches were the worst possible hidden enemies Europeans could imagine. In the version of witchcraft told in Cartagena, it was even worse. Here the witches were the absolute colonial underclass, the black slaves, joining the Devil in a diabolical struggle against the white Christian rulers and slave owners. Like the witches, the slaves could be imagined as wanting to turn the world upside down, making rulers out of slaves and slaves out of rulers. The traditional role reversal that is so important in witchcraft beliefs always adapts to local conditions, and Cartagena de Indias was no exception.

The normal demonological explanation that witches were predominantly female because women are more emotional, less educated, and less intelligent than men was easy to transfer to slaves recently brought from Africa. The argument was repeatedly and explicitly made in the inquisitors' correspondence that the slaves had such a poor understanding of Christianity that they were easily tricked by the Devil.

CONCLUSION

The witchcraft trials in Cartagena de Indias are a clear extension of the trials in northern Spain in the same period, which again were triggered by events in southern France. Just as the trials in the Basque country were marked by the local situation and contained local words and contexts, so were the later trials in Catalonia and in America. We see in the adoption of the word *aquelarre* and in the explicit comparison with Logroño and Vizcaya clear evidence of a direct influence from the Basque country to the trials in Cartagena de Indias. This is not surprising given the direct connections to the Basque country that several of the most important actors in these trials had. Furthermore, we see this influence carried by named, identifiable persons, with no need to resort to more general concepts such as spirit of the age or intellectual currents. As already noted in European witchcraft historiography, we find further evidence that specific persons could influence events, inducing and stopping trials.⁸⁴ Moreover, a plurality of views among both inquisitors and prelates is visible within the interconnected global Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church, even after the *Suprema* tried to put the matter to rest in 1614. We find here, in short, very clear and concrete evidence of how trials for diabolic witchcraft

84. See, for example, Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*; Knutsen, "Topics of Persecution"; Maria Sofia Messana, *Inquisitori, negromanti, e streghe nella Sicilia moderna (1500-1782)* (Palermo: Sellerio editore, 2007).

could directly cause such trials in another place, even if far away and under other circumstances.

Those differences did not make such trials impossible. Rather, they forced changes in the confessions, as these were adapted to local geography, flora, fauna, and fears. Confessions of diabolical witchcraft must not be imagined as free-flowing storytelling shaped by the defendant's folkloric background. They were forcibly extracted from defendants who were forced to say things that they did not want to say while desperately trying to satisfy those questioning them. In Cartagena de Indias, the slave population was a source of fear and an easily available scapegoat. It was a natural outlet for witchcraft fears, which always tend to focus on the powerless. The combination of violence against slaves and inquisitorial leniency towards confessing witches facilitated the production of self-confessed witches, while the slave owner's fear of the slaves gave these confessions an extra dimension of social revolt that reflected the peculiarities of a slave owning society.