Enchanted Landscapes
Transforming Spaces through Witchcraft and Sorcery in 17th-Century Cartagena

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Introduction

On February 2nd, 1614 on a small peninsula sitting on the northern end of South America, the Inquisitors of Cartagena celebrated the first *auto de fe* – literally translated as "act of faith" – in the city's main plaza. This event brought 36 prisoners who had been persecuted during the previous four years by the Holy Office of the Inquisition to be publicly shamed, forced to wear outfits specifically designated for penitents, and receive a public sentence as punishment for their unholy crimes. Among the criminals were Lorenzana de Acereto, Ana María de Olarriega, Isabel Noble, and Juan Lorenzo, all found guilty of *hechicería* – sorcery. The most notorious among them, Lorenzana was an upper class European woman active in Cartagena society. Her crimes, which included the creation of spells to bring a man under her will, a prayer invoking three demons, and enchanting food to make the consumer ill, rocked the population. Not only was a sorcerer living and practicing in the city, but she was doing these demonic acts *in the city*.

To the colonial Spanish mind, the city was a place of organization: from meticulously laid-out streets to a social code that came with being in public, one knew what to expect when in the city; it was "a space for a concentration of power in which orderly reason, hierarchical social order, and geometrical distribution of power converged."[1] This order was in direct contrast to the hinterlands which marked an undomesticated and uncivilized frontier.[2] Therefore, it was particularly worrisome when the chaos and danger of the hinterlands encroached into their beloved city, a process which was facilitated through the proliferation of heretical magical practices inside the city's walls. Thus, the Inquisition, an organization dedicated to rooting out

[1] Santa Arias and Mariselle Meléndez, "Space and the Rhetorics of Power in Colonial Spanish America: An Introduction," in *Mapping Colonial Spanish America: Places and Commonplaces of Identity, Culture, and Experience*, ed. Santa Arias and Mariselle Meléndez (London: Bucknell University Press, 2002), p. 15.
[2] Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 3.

heresy, targeted and persecuted alleged *brujas* – witches – and *hechiceras* – sorcerers – who spread disorder and heretical practices throughout the city. Through this thesis, I will analyze how these practices, like the ones confessed by Lorenzana, were reported to be used by the imprisoned witches and sorcerers of the Cartagena Inquisition to transform their surroundings and carve out spaces of resistance against the oppressive and strict Spanish hegemony.

Background

The city of Cartagena de Indias was founded in 1533 by the Spanish commander Pedro de Heredia on land inhabited by the indigenous Calamarí. Due to its strategic location on the Atlantic Ocean, it quickly became a port city. One of the main cargo passing through were enslaved people. According to William Chamberlin, a scholar of African studies, over 220,000 people journeyed from Africa to Cartagena, of which about 180,000 survived the treacherous and hellish Middle Passage, meaning that the journey had a fatality rate of just over 18%.[3] For those that did survive the journey, the Spanish required cargo ships to stop in Cartagena as a checkpoint before being transported to their final destination. Thus, the importance of the small peninsula quickly grew in the eyes of the lucrative slave trade.

In addition to passing through the city on route to their final destination, many people of African descent, enslaved and otherwise, found a long-term home in Cartagena. As the city grew, so too did its population, containing a vibrant mix of cultures, from the Africans to the *mulatos* – people of African and European descent – and *mestizos* – people of Indigenous and European descent – to the Spaniards.[4] However, colonial Cartagena's society was also extremely hierarchical, with the Catholic Spanish man at the top and the enslaved African clear at the

[3] William Chamberlin, "Silencing Genocide: The Jesuit Ministry in Colonial Cartagena de Indias and Its Legacy," *Journal of Black Studies* 49, no. 7 (October 2018): p. 677.

[4] Although the terms *mulato* and *mestizo* are culturally insensitive in English, they do not carry the same connotation in the Spanish world. Additionally, they were the terms used at the time to refer to people of a certain ethnicity. My use of these words in this thesis has no intention of offense.

bottom, despite a near constant reliance on the services provided by the African and mixed populations, enslaved or otherwise. To escape this oppressive hierarchy, many enslaved people took the risk of fleeing the city and their owners to join communities of escaped enslaved people, known as *cimarrones*, in villages, known as *palenques*, which occupied the hinterlands.

Whether in *palenques*, the city of Cartagena, or its surrounding areas, people of color relied on one another for support both emotionally and physically. This was especially true for the newly arrived enslaved Africans leaving the slave ships that brought them across the Atlantic Ocean. After disembarking from slave ships, it was more likely than not that those who survived the journey were extremely ill due to the horrid conditions onboard. The majority of the treatments for these illnesses came from fellow Afrodescendant people living in Cartagena, using ancestral healing practices to remedy illnesses. Many scholars, most notably Pablo Gómez, have researched these healing practices which existed at the intersection of medicine and spirituality, and which "allowed black Caribbean ritual practitioners, many of them African, to claim access to truths about the nature of the world and allege morally superior knowledge in communities composed of ragtag groups of Atlantic people coming from a diverse number of cultural backgrounds."[5] However, these healing practices, which often included some element of herbology and spiritual incantations, were quickly deemed as witchcraft by the Spanish authorities. Thus began a decades-long tradition of persecuting and policing these practices by judging them as demonic by the elite of Cartagena.

Although this type of "witchcraft" was looked down upon by the colonial elites for years, the persecution against such actions escalated after the establishment of a Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena in 1610. The Inquisition itself was first established in the 12th century

[5] Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p. 3.

by the Catholic Church to combat heresy against the faith. While its initial targets were those of other faiths, most notably Judaism, it quickly expanded to patrol any type of heresy, from blasphemy to bigamy to witchcraft. In 1570, the Inquisition was brought to the Americas, with offices being established in the Kingdoms of Peru and New Spain. The residents of the Kingdom of New Granada, which included modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, and other Andean countries, were originally under the supervision of Peru's office. However, as the population, and, in turn, heresy, quickly grew, the Spanish government saw a need to establish an office of the Inquisition in Cartagena, which they did in 1610. The Inquisition tried its first sorcerer in 1614 and its first witch in 1632. In its first fifty years in existence, it imprisoned a total of 62 witches, for the crime of doing magic through an explicit pact with the devil, and 82 sorcerers, who also allegedly did magic just without an explicit pact.[6]

Source and Literature Review

Most of the information about the proceedings of these witchcraft and sorcery trials comes from *relaciones de causa*, or case summaries written by the officials of the Cartagena Inquisition to be sent back to Spain for review. In particular, I will be only looking at the *relaciones* of people on trial for either witchcraft or sorcery, who resided in either Cartagena or a nearby town called Tolú which had close ties to the city of Cartagena. I will further narrow the sample by focusing on those who were on trial between 1610 and 1660, totaling over 50 prisoners. *Relaciones* provide information about a prisoner's name, occupation, race, marital status, genealogy, how many people accused them, what they confessed during each trial, and their sentence. Each trial is separated out into audiences, or times when the prisoner was brought before the Inquisitors. Each *relación* has as few as one or as many as 40 audiences, depending on

[6] Data from Anna María Splendiani, José Enrique Sánchez Bohórquez, and Emma Cecilia Luque de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición en el Tribunal de Cartagena de Indias, 1610-1660*, vol. 4, 4 vols. (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 1997).

how long it took the prisoner to confess. *Relaciones* also highlight events happening behind the scenes of the actual trial, one example being that many prisoners informed the Inquisitors that they heard other prisoners communicating in the cells while they were imprisoned, an act that was forbidden.

However, it is also important to note that these *relaciones* rarely – if ever – give an objective view of the motivations and experiences of the prisoners, as they were all under extreme duress while on trial. If a prisoner denied accusations, it was common to torture them until they confessed. Even if they were not tortured physically, the psychological torture of being imprisoned for months to years would lead many to confess to a crime they did not commit. Additionally, these *relaciones* are summaries; the vast majority of the full trial records were either lost in the many sackings of Cartagena or were lost due to time and humidity destroying the paper itself. Therefore, we do not have exact transcripts of each trial proceeding, and only have the summaries written by the Spanish, which more likely than not twisted the words of prisoners or left out crucial information.

Despite this myriad of issues, *relaciones* still provide crucial information to the trial proceedings of the Inquisition and allow the prisoner to narrate their own experiences to the Inquisitors. By analyzing what a prisoner chooses to include, exclude, or emphasize, historians are able to piece together a view of the margins of colonial Spanish society, as well as the existence of resistance to this society. Additionally, whether or not what the prisoners confess is literally true, these confessions reveal what they believed *could* be true, reflecting societal expectations and beliefs surrounding witchcraft and sorcery as a whole. These reported actions of resistance by those on trial transform the landscape from one where the typical European Catholic Spaniard reigned unquestioned into one where the marginalized populations exert what

power they have to resist this hegemony, seen through the confessed practices of witchcraft and sorcery.

As most of the evidence from my argument comes from Inquisitorial trial records, it is important to gain an understanding of the Spanish Inquisition itself – both as an institution and how it approached the issue of witchcraft and sorcery with a largely skeptical attitude. Although the cases examined in Gustav Henningsen's *The Witches' Advocate* center around the Basque region of Spain, it still provides valuable insight into the methods used by authorities to police and uncover the crime of witchcraft. Despite the geographic differences between Henningsen's research and my own, the Inquisition followed the same rules regardless of location. It details how confessions were obtained and how the institution dealt with people who consistently denied accusations. Most importantly, it demonstrates that, while Inquisitors did not necessarily believe in witchcraft, the fact that the witches on trial believed they could perform acts of magic was a grave concern for them. In other words, regardless of the validity of the magic performed, taking steps to perform acts of magic was deemed as heresy and thereby under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.[7] My study also follows the lead of scholars such as Nicole von Germeten and Kathryn Joy McKnight who, in researching the Cartagena Inquisition in particular, have analyzed how people on trial narrated their experiences during audiences before the Inquisitors, arguing that their stories – which were seemingly perfectly crafted to offend Catholic sentiments – were actually a way of asserting their own authority during the trials.[8]

By understanding both the Inquisitorial and prisoner side of the witch trials and how the prisoners relayed their experiences before the Inquisitors, I craft an understanding of how the

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[7] Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition, 1609-1614* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980), p. 13.
[8] Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Performing Double-Edged Stories: The Three Trials of Paula de Eguiluz," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, no. 2 (2016): p. 155; Nicole von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends: Sex, Race, & Honor in Colonial Cartagena de Indias* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), p. 103.

accused were able to transform the space of the Inquisitorial Palace for their own means. In understanding the Inquisitor's perspective, one can learn what is permitted under the canon law, as well as the strategies that the Inquisitors employed during an audience to extract confessions. On the other hand, understanding the conditions and mental state of the prisoners allows for expansions on their acts of resistance both through confessions and while being held in the secret cells. These acts of resistance transformed the Inquisitorial Palace from a place where the Inquisitorial authorities held all the power into a location where the prisoners were able to increase their influence in their own future.

Much of the evidence that the Inquisition used to imprison someone for witchcraft was based in the demonization of traditional African healing or religious practices. María Cristina Navarrete writes of these practices and their subsequent criminalization by the Spanish in *Practicas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*. Using Inquisitorial trials as her evidence, she argues that the witchcraft practiced by the Cartagena witches was a sort of syncretism of religiosity among their ancestral religions and the Catholicism forced upon them by the Spanish.[9] Additionally, Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo provides an overview of the lives of African and Afrodescendant people in New Granada during the seventeenth century in *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades entre los africanos y sus descendientes en la Nueva Granada, siglo XVII*. Here, she argues that Afrodescendants in New Granada were able to reconstruct their identities primarily through a revitalization of the cult of ancestors.[10] In my own research, I found that not only were they able to reconstruct their identities through the cult of ancestors, but also more generally through the formation of communities and reconnecting with a forcibly

[9] Title translated as: *Black Religious Practices in the Colony: Cartagena, 17th Century*. María Cristina Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia: Cartagena, siglo XVII* (Santiago de Cali: Universidad del Valle, Editorial Facultad de Humanidades, 1995), p. 14.

[10] Title translated as: *Witchcraft and Reconstruction of Identities Among Africans and their Descendants in New Granada, 17th Century*. 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), p. 536

removed African past using the experiences associated with witch gatherings. Other crucial sources to understanding both the syncretism of West African religious tradition and Catholicism, as well as the subsequent demonization of this syncretism, are analyzed by Andrew Redden and Jaime Humberto Borjas Gómez respectively.[11]

Most of the above sources focus on the practices of witchcraft as exhibited through witch gatherings – or *juntas* – in the hinterlands of Cartagena. However, these illicit magical practices also permeated the cities of Cartagena and Tolú themselves. Perhaps the most influential piece of writing for this thesis is Ana María Díaz Burgos's article "A Cartography of Sorcery," which analyzes the trial of Lorenzana de Acereto, the first sorcerer tried by the Cartagena Inquisition, with a special focus on the transformation of city spaces through the practices of sorcery. Specifically, Díaz Burgos researches how the "practice of sorcery transformed the nature of certain spaces into thresholds… [and the] ways in which practitioners appropriated geography and architecture in their sorcerers practices."[12] Similarly, Kathryn Joy McKnight and Pablo Gómez have used the witchcraft trials of Paula de Eguiluz, as well as reports on Eguiluz's prolific career as a healer in Cartagena, to analyze her use of ancestral healing practices to make a career for herself in the city, which in turn got her imprisoned by the Inquisition, and how she continued her career as a healer after her imprisonment.[13] Additionally, *Mapping Colonial Spanish America* provides an insight into how the Spanish perceived the city and its hinterlands as ideas, arguing that "space offers a critical stance from which we can further examine colonial

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[11] Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, *Rostros y Rastros Del Demonio En La Nueva Granada: Indios, Negros, Judíos, Mujeres y Otras Huestes de Satanás* (Bogotá: Editorial Ariel, 1998); Andrew Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90, no. 2 (2013).
[12] Ana María Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery: Mapping the First Auto de Fe in Cartagena de Indias, 1614," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 1, no. 3 (Summer 2013): p 244-45.
[13] Pablo F. Gomez, "Incommensurable Epistemologies? The Atlantic Geography of Healing in the Early Modern Caribbean," *Small Axe* 18, no. 2 (2014); Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Disturbing Place: Afro-Iberian Herbalists Interrupt Imperial Cartagena de Indias," in *Latin American Literature in Transition Pre-1492–1800*, ed. Rocío Quispe-Agnoli and Amber Brian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

discourse as it relates to gender, ethnicity, race, identity, and the colonial experience as a whole."[14] Finally, Laura Lewis' *Hall of Mirrors* provides valuable insight into the separation of the "civilized" city and "uncivilized" hinterlands by Spanish authorities despite its area of focus being New Spain and not New Granada.[15]

Historical Interventions

However, unlike the works above, my work seeks to take a holistic view of these spatial transformations and analyzes how the prisoners were able to use witchcraft to transform their environments. This is important because the practices of witchcraft and sorcery allowed the accused to form a community with fellow magic users, whether this be a gathering of witches in the hinterlands or a network of knowledge among sorcerers in the city. The formation of this community is notable because it had a direct effect on how witches and sorcerers experienced their realities. In forming social networks, the accused were both able to proliferate heretical knowledge and connect with people who had similar experiences to them. In an environment as religiously hegemonic as colonial Spanish America, these social networks would have been a reprieve from the mundane, helping to transform the surroundings of the witches and sorcerers from ones of oppression to ones of power.

Additionally, while scholars have analyzed how prisoners in the Inquisitorial Palace might have crafted their narratives for their own benefit, rarely do they focus on the physicality of the jails, the audience room, and the torture chamber. I aim to take these into account while analyzing how the prisoners recounted their experiences before the Inquisitors, as well as how the prisoners resisted the oppressive laws of the Inquisition while in the cells through attempting to influence the trials of fellow prisoners. Understanding the actual environment of the

[14] Arias and Meléndez, "Space and the Rhetorics of Power in Colonial Spanish America," p. 21.
[15] Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*.

Inquisitorial Palace is essential when analyzing the words and actions of those imprisoned by the Inquisition. Their physical surroundings surely would have shaped their experiences and behaviors, and only when taking these into account can historians craft a detailed view of how and why the accused confessed what they did. On the other hand, the architecture reflected the authority and control wielded by the Inquisitors, but it also provided opportunities for resistance and subversion. Therefore, in emphasizing these factors, I move beyond individual case studies and towards a more comprehensive understanding of how these witches and sorcerers used the practices associated with these crimes to resist Spanish hegemony.

To address these questions, I will first analyze how the hinterlands of the city were transformed through the presence of *juntas*, taking into account the various narratives of these *juntas* by the witches on trial in addition to how the *junta* acts as a sort of *palenque* of the soul. Since the *juntas* were physically separated from the central government in Cartagena, they allowed larger and more elaborate expressions of "magic" by their attendants. Next, I will examine the narratives of magic in the city itself, in the home, in the hospital, and in religious places. The magic exhibited in the city usually took the form of spells, potions, and incantations to heal, co-opt free will, or actively cause harm to those living in the city. Finally, I will examine how the imprisoned witches and sorcerers narrated their experiences while on trial and how they were able to circumvent the all-encompassing gaze of the Inquisitors. Overall, I will demonstrate how the witches and sorcerers living in Cartagena and Tolú were able to utilize practices deemed as witchcraft and sorcery to transform their surroundings and form community in an environment determined to stamp out their cultural heritage.[16]

[16] While this thesis focuses only on the witches and sorcerers who resided in Cartagena and Tolú (located about a week-long commute from Cartagena), it is important to acknowledge that the Inquisition also persecuted witches who came from anywhere under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of New Granada, including areas in modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic. Many of the practices discussed in this thesis were also exhibited by alleged witches and sorcerers living in other cities and town in Spanish America, but I decided to limit the scope of the trials I will be focusing on to those residing in Cartagena and Tolú because the two locations were

Chapter 1: Magic in the Hinterlands

Deep in the hinterlands surrounding Cartagena de Indias, dozens of women reported to have gathered to perform rituals of witchcraft, which included rejecting God as their savior, committing acts of cannibalism, and even having sex with demons. These reports greatly troubled the Inquisitors, and in 1632, the Cartagena Inquisition imprisoned its first witches. Among them was Juana Fernández Gramajo, a free Black woman from Cartagena. During her first audience before the Inquisitors, she denied doing any crimes against the faith, but by the second audience, she volunteered that she was a witch and that a certain person had taken her to a witch gathering, known as a *junta*, where she rejected God and accepted Lucifer as her lord and savior.[17] After many months of the Inquisitors attempting to gather more information on her and her co-conspirators, Juana was finally sentenced publicly to exile from the city for three years, 200 lashings, and having her goods confiscated.[18] In the years following that trial, thirty-four people residing in Cartagena and Tolú gave testimony before the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena under suspicion of witchcraft, all but one of whom were found guilty.

Most of the crimes confessed in these witchcraft trials occurred in the aforementioned *juntas* which typically happened outside the city centers in the hinterlands. The physical distancing of these gatherings from the general populations of Cartagena and Tolú is also indicative of a mental distancing of the witches and their rituals from day-to-day life under the supervision of the Spanish authorities. The separation of these *juntas* from the Spanish eye led to them becoming centers of larger and more explicit portrayals of witchcraft, where existing outside these urban centers permitted them to escape the control of the authorities and the

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closely intertwined, and, since the topic of this thesis is the transformation of geographic spaces, putting a limit on the geographic locations of the occurrences was the most logical course of action.

[17] Anna María Splendiani, José Enrique Sánchez Bohórquez, and Emma Cecilia Luque de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición en el Tribunal de Cartagena de Indias, 1610-1660*, vol. 2, 4 vols. (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 1997), p. 331-332.

[18] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 333

mindsets of the colonizers.[19] Though the hinterlands were not physically transformed by the *juntas*, the witch gatherings led to an intellectual transformation where these people, primarily Afrodescendant women, were able to form a community, connect with each other, and have a space to themselves, if only for one night a week.[20]

The origins of *juntas*

Before the proliferation and subsequent infamy of *juntas* by Cartagena's witches, the practices exhibited there occurred in the city centers themselves, which in turn were inspired by rituals from West Central Africa, specifically modern day Angola, Benin, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.[21] When the first enslaved people arrived in Cartagena, shortly after the founding of the city in 1533, they often joined together to sing and dance.[22] The most common reason for these dances was for funerary rites, and they often mirrored practices attached to confraternities, or lay brotherhoods.[23] However, as early as 1573, enslaved people were prohibited from these gatherings under Spanish law, most likely due to its being a reminder of the enslaved people's African past, a fear of their "otherness," and its parallels with European rituals of invoking demons.[24] Despite this ban, enslaved people and their companions found ways to unite, celebrate each other, and resist Spanish rule, even if it had to be outside the city center. For some, this came about in the form of

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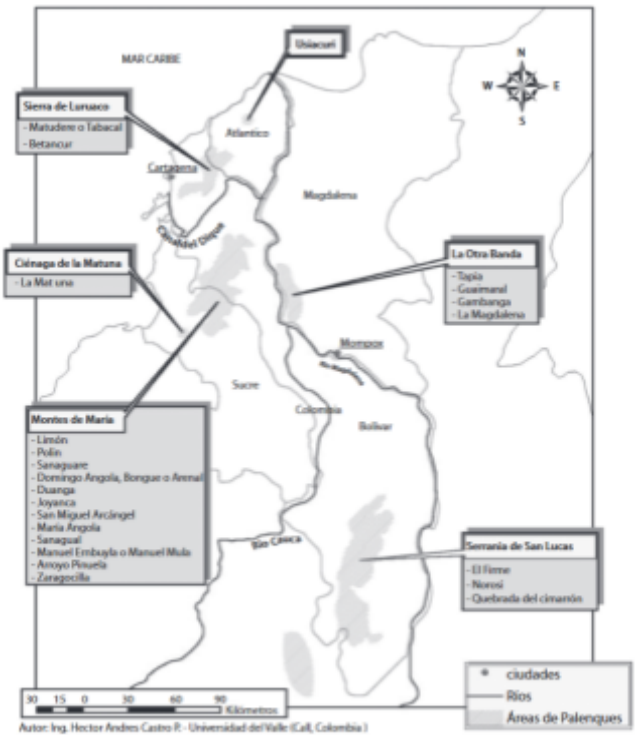
[19] Luis Carlos Restrepo, *El discurso de las condenadas: brujas y hechiceras en la inquisición de Cartagena de indias siglo XVII (1610-1650)* (Mauritius: Editorial Académica Española, 2020), p. 192.
[20] Restrepo, *El discurso de las condenadas*, p. 234.
[21] These locations are known through the ethnonyms of those on trial: Caribali/Kalabari (from Nigeria and Ghana), Mandinga/Mandinka (from the Kingdom of Mali, or modern-day Guinea, Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bisseau, Liberia, Sierra Leone), Arará (from the Kingdom of Dahomey, or modern-day Benin), Angola, Biafara/Biafra (from Nigeria), and Aberu (from Nigeria). However, it is also important to note that these ethnonyms do not reflect their origins with complete accuracy. Often, an ethnonym was given to an enslaved person based on the port that they were sold out of, which might be hundreds of miles from their actual home. However, there is no better way to determine the exact geographic origins of those on trial, especially with the fractional *relaciones de causa* and not the full trial record.
[22] Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada*, p. 139.
[23] Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," p. 240.
[24] Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada*, p. 148-149.

witch gatherings, or *juntas*, in the hinterlands of the city. Along with forming a community, *juntas* also became ways to reconnect with a forcibly removed African past through various practices and experiences.



Map of *palenque* locations.[25]

Another precursor of these *juntas* were *palenques*, which were communities of escaped enslaved people who "[created] autonomous communities in isolation from and in opposition to the demands of servitude."[26] Due to its nature as a slave port, Cartagena was no stranger to the formation – and danger – of *palenques*, with over twenty recorded *palenques* in the backwoods and mountains surrounding Cartagena. In physically separating themselves from the city – and the forms of oppression that came with it – *cimarrones*, those who escaped enslavement to live in a *palenque*, were able to transform their new homes into "a space that could overcome European linguistic and geographic discourse: indicated but undefined, known to exist but nearly impossible to locate."[27] The geographic association of *palenques* with *juntas* was an easy one to make, and Inquisitors would likely be wary of the two groups interacting.

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[25] María Cristina Navarrete, "Palenques: Maroons and Castas in Colombia's Caribbean Regions: Social Relations in the 17th Century," in *Contact Language Library*, ed. Armin Schwegler, Bryan Kirschen, and Graciela Maglia, vol. 54 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017), p. 277.
[26] Anthony McFarlane, "*Cimarrones* and *Palenques*: Runaways and Resistance in Colonial Colombia," in *Out of the House of Bondage*, by Gad Heuman (London: Routledge, 1986), p.148.
[27] Margaret M. Olsen, "African Reinscription of Body and Space in New Granada," in *Mapping Colonial Spanish America*, p. 57.

Experiencing the *junta*

While on trial, the alleged witches name various motivations for their desire to become involved with the diabolical sect of witches. Almost always, the accused tries to shift the blame to someone else who had sought them out and tempted them to convert. For Juana de Mora, a free Black woman who lived in Cartagena, it was a friend who convinced her, for Rufina, a free *mulata* woman in her mid-twenties, it was an enslaved person owned by her deceased husband, the captain Amador Perez, and for Gerónima, an enslaved woman from Tolú, it was a fellow enslaved person who convinced her.[28] Following the identification of the one who persuaded them, the witch almost always declared that "being a weak and miserable woman," they fell victim to the persuasion to join the evil sect.[29] In framing their constitution as "weak," the defendant was able to plead a sort of sympathy from the Inquisitor, implying that they didn't know any better and indirectly pleading for mercy.

For the women of Cartagena, the central motivation for becoming a witch pointed back to their desire to gain a foothold in a society that stripped them of power. Sometimes, this took the form of the desire for a man. In some cases, like Gerónima's, the witch was even in love with a married man, and the powers of being a witch would allow her to have him.[30] Another common motivation was wealth. Often, these witches came from the bottom of society; the vast majority of these witches were women, who were already at a disadvantage in prospects of generating independent wealth, and, on top of that, many were also either enslaved or formerly enslaved. The powers allotted to them through witchcraft would theoretically help them achieve some

[28] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 300, 303, 317.
[29] For more on the specific word choices of "weak and miserable," see Chapter 3.
[30] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 317.

semblance of power or influence in society.[31] After agreeing to become initiated into the sect of witches, the witch-to-be would be taken to a *junta* to complete the transformation.

The exact location of the *junta* varies by account, however, there are many similar themes across testimonies. Some cite a *junta* as being behind a *matadero*, or slaughterhouse, in Getsemaní, a place that Bishop Diego de Torres Altamirano once called "the place where the most scandalous people in the city lived."[32] In reality, Getsemaní was a neighborhood primarily made up of Afrodescendant people.[33] Other alleged witches report a *junta* occurring on the other side of the gate of the Media Luna, which stretched across a thin lake and separated Getsemaní and the city of Cartagena from the hinterlands.[34] If anyone were entering Cartagena by land, they would have had to cross this bridge, effectively making it a barrier protecting the city from the uncivilized hinterlands.[35] A third common location was at a beach of *manzanillo* trees in the neighborhood of Bocagrande, about a mile south from the main city center.[36] Once, the *junta* even began in the house of notorious witch Elena de Viloria, who resided in the infamous neighborhood of Getsemaní, and later migrated out to the beach behind the walls of the Santa Catalina convent.[37] The varying accounts of locations for *juntas* points to the existence of multiple subgroups of witches, with each transforming their surroundings to fit their needs. What each location had in common was that they were outside the Cartagena city center, a place which represented order and civilization to the Spanish. In giving *juntas* a physical distance from the

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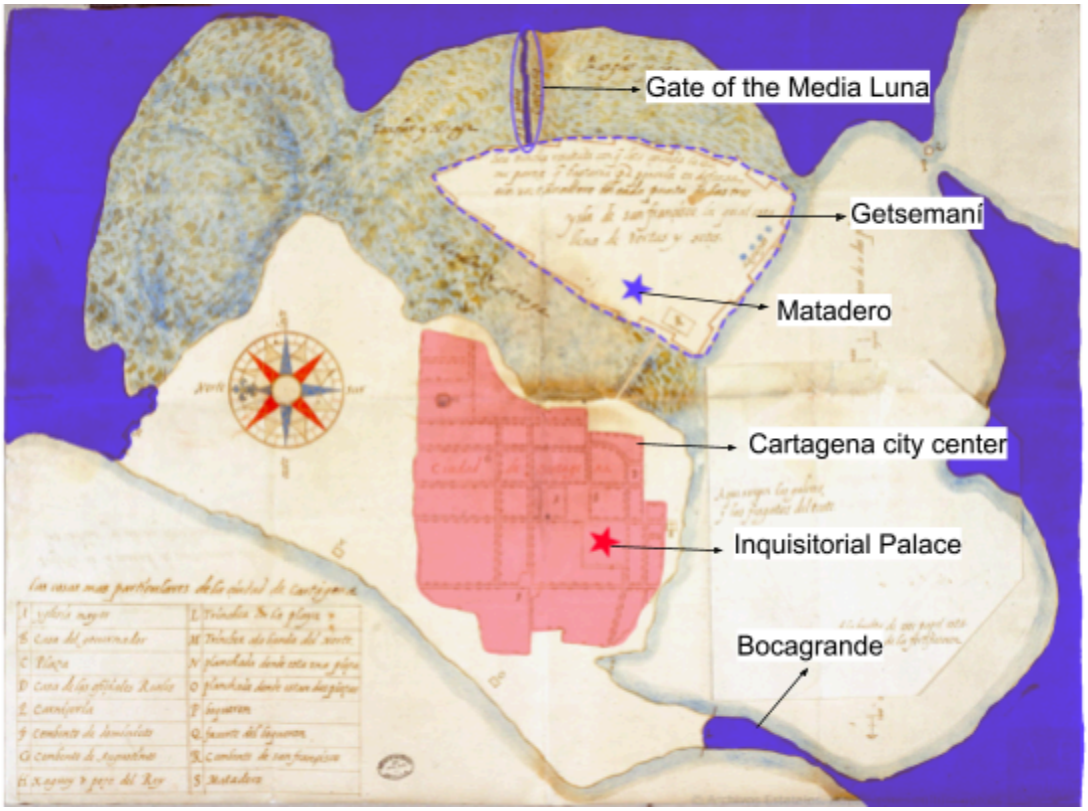
[31] For more on witchcraft and the generation of wealth, see Chapter 2 or "Fragile fortunes: Afrodescendant women, witchcraft, and the remaking of urban Cartagena" by Ana María Silva Campo.
[32] McKnight, "Performing Double-Edged Stories," p.158.
[33] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 313, 315, 421; Ana María Silva Campo, "Through the Gate of the Media Luna: Slavery and the Geographies of Legal Status in Colonial Cartagena de Indias," The *Hispanic American Historical Review* 100, no. 3 (2020): p. 394.
[34] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 331; Silva Campo, "Through the Gate of the Media Luna," p. 394.
[35] More on the separation between the city and the hinterlands will be explored in Chapter 2.
[36] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 319, 320, 339.
[37] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 422.

core of Cartagena society, these witches were also able to mentally distance themselves from Spanish hegemony and embrace a community of similar individuals.



Map of Cartagena with reported location of juntas in blue and the city center in red.[38]

Those present at *juntas* vary by account. In *Swimming in the Christian Atlantic*, Jonathan Schorsch claims that the majority of witch gathering attendants were Spanish Europeans, with Rufina, a *mulata* woman, being the sole exception.[39] However, in my own research, I have found quite the opposite; overall, out of all the accused witches from Cartagena and Tolú in the first fifty years of the Inquisition, all except one were of African descent, the exception being Elena de la Cruz.[40] These *juntas* thus functioned as a place to socialize with people with similar

[38] *Plano de la Ciudad de Cartagena de Indias y de sus fortificaciones*, Archivo General de Indias, MP-PANAMA, 20, circa 1600. Coloring and labelling done by me.
[39] Jonathan Schorsch, *Swimming the Christian Atlantic: Judeoconversos, Afroiberians and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century*, The Atlantic World, v. 17/1-2 (Boston: Brill, 2009), p. 131.
[40] Lorenzana de Acereto, referenced in the introduction, was tried as a sorcerer and not a witch. The distinctions between these two categories will be explored in Chapter 2.

experiences. Additionally, multiple witches might confess to attending the same *junta* as another witch. Angelina de Nava, Ana María de Robles, and María Méndez all confessed to attending a *junta* hosted by a woman named María la Alta, who was not tried by the Inquisition. Both María Méndez and Angelina were Black women in their late twenties, Ana María was a thirty-year-old *mulata* woman, and all three were formerly enslaved, but were freed at the time of their trial. A "great *junta*" was also recorded to have happened in 1631, involving over 20 individuals. We only know the demographics of eight of these people, but every single one of those eight had African ancestry, with four of them having previously been enslaved.[41] Therefore, race and ethnicity united most of the witches in Cartagena and Tolú, and *juntas* provided them with a space to connect with each other outside the scope of the watchful Spanish eye, possibly serving as a replacement for the shared cultural and experience of the gatherings prohibited half a century previously.

Another common factor among those on trial for witchcraft is their gender; out of 36 Cartagena and Tolú residents on trial for witchcraft between 1610 and 1660, all except one of them were women, with the exception of Diego López.[42] To the colonial mind, the practice of witchcraft was closely associated with the female gender. Many of the popular notions of witchcraft during the time were recorded in the *Malleus Maleficarum – The Hammer of Witches* – a 15th century treatise on how to uncover and deal with witches. The author, Heinrich Institoris, also known as Heinrich Kramer, was a German Inquisitor who was criticized by the Bishop Golser of Brixen for his investigation of a suspected witch. Golser accused him of "[presuming] too much that had not been proven" and focusing too much on the sexuality of the

[41] Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 138.-139,
[42] Juan Lorenzo, referenced in the introduction, was tried as a sorcerer and not a witch. The distinctions between these two categories will be explored in Chapter 2.

witch on trial.[43] In response to these accusations, Institoris wrote a treatise on witchcraft, which eventually became the *Malleus Maleficarum*. In it, the author uses quotes from the Bible and other religious authorities to enforce a long list of claims to explain why women were more likely to become witches than men, a sentiment likely agreed to by the general European population.[44] Such claims included evidence from Ecclesiastes 25: 22 – 23: "there is no head worse than the head of a snake, and there is no anger surpassing the anger of a woman. It will be more pleasing to stay with a lion and a serpent than to live with an evil woman." Additionally, the *Malleus Maleficarum* claims that women are "by nature more easily impressed upon to receive revelations through the impression of the disembodied spirits, and when they use this temperament well, they are very good, but when they use it badly, they are worse," and that women are evil "as a result of nature because she doubts more quickly in the Faith. She also denies the Faith more quickly, this being the basis for acts of sorcery."[45]

Although the *Malleus Maleficarum* was condemned by the official theologians of the Inquisition for its recommendation of illegal and unethical procedures, and is thus not an official guideline to Inquisitorial investigation of witches, it does provide a window into the feelings surrounding witchcraft among Europeans during the time, and sentiments expressed in it would likely be echoed by the Inquisitors and the rest of the European population in Cartagena. Thus, as a result of these deeply ingrained sexist attitudes in colonial society, it is hardly a surprise that those dedicated to rooting out heresy and diabolism would find women much more likely perpetrators of this unholy crime.

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[43] Joseph Bergin, *The 'Malleus Maleficarum' and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 17-18.
[44] Heinrich Institoris, *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Christopher S. Mackay (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 162.
[45] Institoris, *The Hammer of Witches*, p.162, 164, 66.

Although the locations themselves were spread across the hinterlands of the city, the reported events that occur at each *junta* are eerily similar across the various testimonies. Scholars like Nicole von Germeten believe this similarity among trials to be the result of a sort of coaching by a fellow prisoner, namely Paula de Eguiluz, to have all the accused witches confess the same narrative.[46] To support this theory, many witches on trial claimed that Paula de Eguiluz spoke to them while they were all in the Inquisition's jail and told them what to confess.[47] However, Daniel Dawson refutes this, finding specific trial accounts where there is simply too much variation to have been strictly coached by a single person.[48] On the other hand, the similarities across trial testimonies could be the result of a deeply ingrained cultural idea of witch gatherings among colonial Spanish societies. Indeed, witch gatherings were reported to have occurred in Europe and other areas of New Granada, and the accounts of the Cartagena testimonies echo certain elements of these other ones.[49] However, von Germeten has pointed out one unique feature of Cartagena's *juntas*: the demon companions were given names that resemble African languages.[50] This alteration of these experiences is evidence of the merging and adaptation of African and European cultures into something new.

My perspective of the formation of the narratives of these *juntas* lies somewhat in between these theories. It is almost certain that the prisoners' accounts were influenced by popular notions of witch gatherings that stemmed back to early modern and medieval European views of witches and the female gender at large. Additionally, the sentencing of witches was done publicly in events called *autos de fe*. Therefore, if the witches on trial had attended these

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[46] Von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends*, p. 128.
[47] More on these communications will be explored in Chapter 3. Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 373.
[48] Daniel James Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena: Slavery, Religion and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century Caribbean Colombia" (James Madison University, 2018) p. 99, 101.
[49] Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*, p. 57-59.
[50] Von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends*, p. 108.

autos de fe, they would also have an idea of the characteristics and actions that condemned someone as a witch. However, there is also evidence that the prisoners communicated among themselves in the Inquisitorial jail cells, not just centered around Paula de Eguiluz as von Germeten has researched, but also as a larger group of witches. Either possibility points to the formation of community among the witches of Cartagena and Tolú's societies, as well as an intellectual transformation of the hinterlands around the cities through these practices of witchcraft and sorcery, which is the central tenet of my argument.

According to the confessions, the first step to joining the diabolic sect of witches at the *juntas* was rejecting God and accepting the devil as a lord and savior. Sometimes, the devil was noted to appear under a large tree. The significance of the tree ties back to multiple central African religious customs, especially those of the Yoruba and the communities surrounding them, which would make up contemporary Nigeria, Benin, and Togo. In the Yoruba tradition, the tree acts as a meeting place to celebrate various cult practices, so the association of a tree with these *juntas* indicates that they also acted as a sort of spiritual replacement or supplement, allowing their souls to be in conjunction with nature.[51] Using the ethnonyms of the witches on trial, those with the names "Carabali," "Biafra," "Aberú," and "Arará" came from the same area as the Yoruba and thus might have either followed this tradition, or at least been familiar with it.[52] As seen in Teodora de Salcedo, Lusia Domínguez, Ana María, and Ines Martín's accounts, the devil himself might appear under a large and imposing tree, drawing a parallel from the spiritual significance of trees in traditions similar to the Yoruba to the soon-to-occur acceptance of Lucifer as lord and savior.[53] Although we do not have the ethnonyms of those who claimed to

[51] Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 139.
[52] Ana Carabali in 1634, Lucía Biafra in 1633, Potencia de Aberu in 1634, and Mateo Arará in 1652.
It is hard to determine exactly to what extent the people on trial might have followed these religions. At the time, the Inquisition persecuted anyone practicing a religion that was not Catholicism, so those on trial would likely not admit outright to having practiced a different religion out of fear of persecution.
[53] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 229, 316, 397, 414.

have seen Lucifer under the tree and thus cannot confirm their exact ancestral geographic origins, it stands to reason that they might have interacted with those who had beliefs similar to those of the Yoruba, which would have influenced their accounts.

This devil did not appear the same to every witch. Most trials did not note how the devil appeared physically, but occasionally he was reported to appear as a goat or a horned man. Such appearances harken back to West African ritual dances and ceremonies, such as those practiced by the Kombo, where horned headdresses and animistic spirit masks were used in rituals connecting the spirit world to the human world. Witches from modern-day Ghana, Togo, and Benin, like Ana Caribali, Francisco Mandinga, and Mateo Arará, would have been familiar with these religious practices. This furthers the association of the *junta* as a way of reconnecting with an African past.[54] Additionally, according to Alonso de Sandoval, a Jesuit missionary who dedicated his life to evangelizing enslaved Africans, the Popos, who resided in modern-day Benin, worshiped live goats.[55] Although Sandoval is hardly an infallible source and brings many European biases to his treatment and evaluation of the Africans in Cartagena, other scholars, like Andrew Redden, have also drawn and legitimized the connection between the goats present in religion, and the figure of the goat at the *juntas*. Choosing to accept the devil-goat as a lord and savior might indicate the witches choosing to hold fast to a religion they had been forcibly separated from, considering the prevalence and significance of goats among the religious practices of the ancestors of the witches.

However, this devil did not only appear as a goat; to some, the devil appeared in a more human form. Juana de Mora and Rufina, two women on trial for witchcraft in 1633, both claimed

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[54] Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," p. 246.
[55] The Popos are a people who lived in modern-day Ghana, Togo, and Benin. People on trial from this region include Ana Caribali and Francisco Mandinga.
Alonso de Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery: Selections from De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute*, trans. Nicole von Germeten (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), p. 37.

that the devil wore a pointed hat, similar to one that a bishop would wear.[56] This association literally made a demon out of a religious figure, appropriating the Catholic religion forced upon them by missionaries into a demonic savior and mocked Catholic aesthetics. While portraying the devil himself as a bishop – and vice versa – is definitely a perversion of Catholic sentiments, it also indicates that witches like Juana de Mora and Rufina at least somewhat believed in the power of Catholicism, reinterpreting its symbols of hierarchy in a way that is meaningful to them. These witches acknowledged the power of Catholicism through the very act of describing the devil similarly to a bishop: both were powerful figures in their own right, but the witches chose to reject the bishop in favor of the devil. In these ways, the witches transformed this demonic power into either a manifestation of their own ancestral religious practices through the goat-devil, thus holding to practices that the Spanish attempted to eradicate, or a demonization of Catholic practices through the bishop-devil, appropriating Catholic ideology and hierarchy for their own means.

This rejection also commonly included kneeling on the ground before the devil, in a way evocative of how Sandoval writes of enslaved Africans kneeling to receive baptism when they first arrived in Cartagena, or as how one might kneel during Mass or before a king.[57] This positioning is indicative of declaring subservience to a person in a position of power, except here, the witch substituted a religious or royal authority with a literal demon from Hell, mocking Catholic Spanish sentiments and views of the world. In addition to kneeling, the initiates might put a hand on either a black book, a stick, a bone, on a stone table, or on the devil himself.[58] The imagery this invokes would remind the Inquisitorial authorities of how litigants were required to

[56] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 301, 303.
[57] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 558.
[58]Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, for book: p. 303 (Rufina), 305 (Angelina de Nava), 316 (Luisa Domínguez), 320 (Rafaela de Nava); for wood: p. 310 (Juana de Ortensio); for bone: p. 313 (María Méndez); for table: p. 311 (Bárbola de Albornóz); for devil: p. 318 (Gerónima), 322 (Elena de la Cruz).

swear on a Bible while in court. However, in this situation, the witch would not be making a solemn oath to God, but would rather be sworn into Lucifer's court. Once in position, the witch would "reject God and his saints and Our Lady the Virgin Mary and [swear] that she would take Lucifer as [a] powerful god who would save her and give her glory and give her many temporal goods."[59] Having done this, the witch was officially initiated into the sect of witches.

The rejection of God in and of itself is one of the most prominent ways that these witches rejected the Catholic hegemony thrust upon them by Spanish society. As previously mentioned, these witches were often lower class, with a fair number of them even being either enslaved or previously enslaved; if the Catholic God had not saved them from this fate, what loyalty should they have to him? At these *juntas*, they found a new god in the devil, in a narrative reminiscent of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." As Dawson has written, the witches "appropriated the figure of Satan for their own protection and self-preservation, and that ideas about devils and demons represent a 'point of convergence' between African and Christian societies," transforming the hinterlands into not only a space of self-expression, but also one of religious syncretism.[60]

Once the newly-formed witch completed this rejection, she was awarded a demon companion. As historian Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez notes, these demon companions often had African or Islamic sounding names, reminiscent of the Christian demonization of Islam and African cultures.[61] Such names included Mahoma, Tumaque, Masao, Zambapalo, and Solimán.[62] The inclusion of these African names is something that makes the Cartagena witches' *juntas* unique among all other contemporary accounts of witch gatherings. These demon companions

[59] "*...había de renegar de Dios y de sus santos y de la Virgen María Nuestra Señora y que lo había de tener por dios y señor poderoso para salvarla y darle la gloria y muchos bienes temporales*." Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 305.
[60] Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena," p. 82-83.
[61] Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada*, p. 217.
[62] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 306, 311, 347.

might also "mark" the witch as theirs. While this devil's mark, usually represented by a small mark on a concealed part of the body that indicates that someone has made a satanic pact, is a common feature of those suspected of as witches around the world, it holds a special meaning to the witches of Cartagena.[63] This marking is reminiscent of what enslaved Africans would have been put through; often an owner would mark or brand a person to indicate ownership.[64] In contrast to this forced marking of slavery, the witch chooses to become involved in the diabolic sect, reclaiming one identity by proxy of another. Finally, once awarded and marked by the demon companion, almost all witches confessed to being commanded to inscribe a cross on the ground with their left foot, then erase it with their behind, physically removing a representation of their abandoned Christianity.[65]

The next step in the usual *junta* narrative was a dance of all the witches and demons, with the devil Lucifer in the center. The art of group dancing was very important in the ancestral cultures and celebrations of the witches, and so disruptive to colonial authorities, that it was banned fifty years earlier. Additionally, dances, like the ones accounted for in the trial records, were also commonly associated with funerary rites, particularly symbolizing the invocation of life and that the dead person had already been promoted to the status of "ancestor" among the Kassena people of contemporary Ghana and Burkina Faso.[66] During a *junta*, the witches would dance around the devil, taking turns kissing him on the behind. When he was kissed, he would "release a sulfurous air," which often took new initiates by surprise.

A key part of these dances were the instruments used. Bárbola de León, a free *mulata* woman on trial in 1634, cites there being music played with *adufes*, a square tambourine with

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[63] William Burns, *Witch Hunts in Europe and America: An Encyclopedia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2003), p. 65-66.
[64] Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada*, p. 289.
[65] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 312, 314, 318, 322.
[66] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 335-336; Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 84. Ana Caribali and Francisco Mandinga were from this area.

North African origins, and *sonajas*, a type of rattle commonly used in West African religious ceremonies, particularly those of the Yoruba.[67] The use of these instruments also connected the *junta* attendants to an African past; by keeping these traditions alive halfway across the world, these witches were able to transform the space of the hinterlands into a sort of syncretic location between the forested landscape surrounding Cartagena and an African homeland; a place not limited by a certain geographic location, but rather one which resonated with everyone in attendance, forming a community outside the rigid Spanish hierarchy and oppressive religious culture.

In these accounts, the witches would reportedly sit down to dine together after the dance. Those on trial often noted that the food was tasteless and unsalted; it was commonly believed among the European population that witches were unable to eat salt.[68] The meat itself varied in accounts from beef to fish, chicken, duck, or even, in some cases, human flesh. Accusations of cannibalism were common against witches at the time. Cannibalism was an indication of barbarity, and the Spanish readily associated it with anyone they wished to deem "barbaric," including the indigenous people of Central and South America, Africans, non-Catholics, and witches. In his writings, Sandoval claims that various African nations were populated by cannibals, though the nations that converted to Christianity also saw a decline in their cannibalistic ways.[69] The witches on trial played into this fear, confessing to having disinterred graves or even outright killing people on command of their demon companion to collect flesh to bring to *juntas*.[70]

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[67] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 421.
[68] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 303.
[69] Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, p. 14-15, 29.
[70] More on this will be explored in Chapter 2.

An explanation for these reports of cannibalism might be seen by examining West African religions tradition, again specifically that of the Yoruba in addition to the Dahomey – contemporary Benin – and Akan – contemporary Ghana – which might include Mateo Arará, Ana Carabail, or Francisco Mandinga, as their ethnonyms indicate that they came from those regions. According to these traditions, the land of the dead lay on the other side of a vast ocean. In traveling across the Atlantic to Cartagena, these enslaved people might have believed that they were interacting with the dead. As Andrew Redden writes, "the practice of magic – especially the potent magic that involved ritual killing and cannibalism – paradoxically would have been an important method of survival in this mirror world to the land of the living."[71] Nonetheless, the prevalence of dancing and feasting in these *juntas* provides "the most direct evidence that African men and women drew on their ancestral traditions when they confessed to taking part in diabolism when tried by the Holy Office."[72]

Once satisfied with food, the witches "united carnally" with their demon companions. In the 17th century, the crime of witchcraft was inextricably linked to the act of sex. However, in most European trials, the intercourse was for the purpose of producing a demon-child, while there was no evidence of this in Cartagena.[73] In these accounts, the semen was either extremely hot or extremely cold, with some witches, like Ines Martín, noting in their confessions that the sex was not good. Others like Ana Caribali and Gerónima even reported that the act physically hurt them.[74] In the case of Catalina de Otavio, this interaction was so harmful that after returning to her house, she fell ill and spent three months in bed.[75] For Luisa Domínguez, a moment of distraction during the sex caused the demon to separate from her, spilling his semen on her which

[71] Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," p. 247.
[72] Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena," 96.
[73] Burns, "Witch Hunts in Europe and America," p. 275.
[74] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 306, 318, 414.
[75] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 302.

left her covered in leprosy.[76] In recounting these experiences as negative, the witches might have been trying to portray to the Inquisitors that these practices were not for the simple purpose of pleasure, but rather were a necessary – if painful – step to gain the power of a witch. Additionally, the inclusion of these sexual practices in testimony would be sure to offend the Catholic Inquisitors, who would have believed that sex outside marriage was a harmful sin. In addition to the baseline sin of extramarital relations, some of these women would be married – bringing adultery into the long list of sins reportedly committed by the witches.

Interestingly, this demon companion was always male, even for Diego López, a male surgeon on trial for witchcraft in 1634. The rest of Diego's experience at the *junta* followed the same formula as the others; he arrived, rejected God, danced, feasted, and had sex with his demon companion, who was named Taravia and who was dressed like an *indio* – indigenous American.[77] He even noted that it was more pleasant than if he had been with a woman.[78] As one might expect, homosexuality, specifically sodomy, in colonial Latin America was looked down upon and seen as "unnatural" due to its direct opposition to God's command to be fruitful and multiply.[79] Sodomy was also linked to anti-African sentiments by Alonso de Sandoval, believing that Africans spread irreligious behavior through their acts of transvestism and same-sex relationships.[80] Thus, Diego's confession to same-sex intercourse to the Inquisition could possibly have been expected, despite its scandalous nature. However, there were likely few things as terrifying to the Inquisitors as the already-demonized African committing the sin of

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[76] Von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends*, p. 129.
[77] For more on the feminization of indigenous people in colonial Spanish America see *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* by Laura A. Lewis.
[78] Interestingly, Diego López is one of the few who did not report to be harmed by his sexual experience with his demon companion.
[79] For more on the demonization of homosexuality and other deviant sexual practices, see *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America* edited by Zeb Tortorici.
[80] Nicole von Germeten, "Archival Narratives of Clerical Sodomy and Suicide from Eighteenth-Century Cartagena," in *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America* edited by Zeb Tortorici (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016), p. 31, 35.

sodomy with a demon who appeared as an "uncivilized" indigenous man, and, to add insult to injury, López enjoyed the act.[81] Interestingly, the *Malleus Maleficarum* noted that demons felt horror towards sodomy, while Diego's confession does not indicate that Taravia, his demon companion, was repulsed by the act at all.[82]

Almost every witchcraft trial follows the above formula. However, some trials depart slightly from the norm or add additional details. Occasionally, a witch will confess to being anointed with an unguent by her demon companion or by her *madrina* – the person who "sponsored" her becoming a witch – which then gave her the power of flight. Historians have researched the ingredients listed as being a part of this unguent, and have determined that the combination of plants included in it produces a hallucinatory effect which would allow the witch to believe herself to be flying.[83] However, the act of flying to *juntas* seemed to be more sinful than simply walking, as many witches would take care to note that they had traveled to the *juntas* on foot, and if they flew, it was due to someone else applying an unguent to them. One notable *junta* that many witches confess to flying to is that of Maria la Alta, who was never prosecuted by the Inquisition but who shows up in three different trial accounts. So, with no way for the Inquisitors to confirm or deny their transportation methods – the prisoners narrated their story in a way that would give them the best chance of a more lenient sentence.

The *junta* as a way of escaping Spanish hegemony

These *juntas* existed as a way of forming a community among the primarily African descent witches, where they could become empowered in a society that sought to break them down at every turn. Since witches might attend the same *juntas* as other witches, they were also

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[81] Carolina Giraldo Botero, "Esclavos sodomitas en Cartagena colonial. Hablando del pecado nefando," *Historia Crítica*, no. 20 (December 2000): p. 176.
[82] Burns, "Witch Hunts in Europe and America," p. 276.
[83] Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada*, p. 193; Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 119-120.

able to form social bonds during these gatherings. Sometimes, the witches, such as Diego López and Rufina, would have already known each other before the *juntas*. Diego and Rufina had been in a relationship since 1627, and according to each of their testimonies, they had been part of the diabolical witch's sect for almost a decade.[84] If a witch did not have prior connections, the repeated attendance at *juntas* would allow them to form social connections. In addition to the simple formation of community, these *juntas* would provide a space for attendants to exchange knowledge of ancestral healing and spiritual practices, helping those practices survive in a world that attempted to quell them.

The system of having a *madrina* would also serve to create or strengthen social bonds among witches. These *madrinas* were older women of African descent, inhabiting a sort of mentor role. A number of witches – Angelina de Nava, Diego López, Juana de Ortensio, and María Méndez, and sisters Justa and Rufina – named sixty-year-old Elena de Viloria, the infamous "captain of witches," as their *madrina*. María Méndez claimed her *madrina* was Antonia Mandinga, who was not tried by the Inquisition byt whose ethnonym indicated that she hailed from the historic Mali empire.[85] Notorious witch Paula de Eguiluz was also a commonly cited *madrina*, although she breaks the pattern of *madrinas* being older than their mentee, as she was a similar age to many of the other prisoners.[86] Nonetheless, it is clear that these witches had a vibrant and complex social life centered around these African *madrinas*.

Additionally, the *juntas* acted as a sort of pseudo-*palenque*, where people could escape Spanish hegemony if only for one night. Some practices in the *junta* narratives mirror what we

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[84] Jéssika Cabral, "A economia do pecado. Ocupações e negocios dos processados pela Inquisição de Cartagena das Indias no seculo XVII," *Historia Caribe* 17, no. 40 (2022): p. 25; Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 303.
[85] María later claims that Elena de Viloria was her madrina, it is unsure if she was claiming to have two madrinas, or if she was recounting Antonia as her madrina and replacing her with Elena. Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 338.
[86] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 341.

know about *palenques*, particularly Palenque Limón. Palenque Limón resided in the Montes de Maria, but was broken up by the Spanish in 1633 – the same year that the majority of witch trials occurred. During the raid, eighty former *cimarrones* were captured, with thirteen of the leaders being sentenced to execution for various crimes.[87] Through the trials of the captured *cimarrones*, historians are able to craft an understanding of life in *palenques*, with many of the practices exhibited there paralleling what witches narrated about their *junta* experiences.

Palenque Limón was ruled by a *cimarrona* known as Queen Leonor. Like *juntas*, the Palenque Limón was centered around a matriarchal figure that acted as a guide for new members of the group. Like a *madrina* would bring a new witch into the sect, so too would Leonor welcome the escaped slaves into her community.[88] Additionally, according to testimonies, two Malemba men had recently joined the *palenque*, quickly risen in status, and eventually became adjacent to advisors to Leonor. These advisors seemed to encourage Leonor to embrace something similar to the Imbangala tradition, which originated from the Mbundu region of West Central Africa. This tradition included ritualized human sacrifice and the consumption of the blood of the sacrifices, paralleling the reported cannibalism of the *juntas*. Both *juntas* and *palenques* functioned as ways to reconnect with an African past through the formation of a community, whether the community be made up of fellow witches or fellow *cimarrones*.

Additionally, only about 16% of the alleged witches were actually enslaved at the time that they stood trial.[89] Therefore, the rest of the witches who *were* legally free did not actually need to escape enslavement, and attending the *juntas* acted as a less extreme version of rejecting Spanish hegemony rather than the outright abandonment of the city to live in the hinterlands with

[87] Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Confronted Rituals: Spanish Colonial and Angolan 'Maroon' Executions in Cartagena de Indias (1634)," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5, no. 3 (2004).
[88] McKnight, "Confronted Rituals."
[89] Data from Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición* vol. 4, p. 119-128. It is also important to note that for many alleged witches, we do not know their official status as enslaved or not due to the fragmentary nature of *relaciones de causa* (see Prisoner Index).

the *cimarrones*. Therefore, although *palenques* were a more permanent and obvious rejection of Spanish hegemony, through the literal escape of an oppressive slave system, the act of going to *juntas* allowed for a temporary spiritual escape for the witches. In keeping ancestral traditions alive halfway across the world, these witches were able to form a community outside the rigid Spanish hierarchy and religious culture, essentially creating a pseudo-*palenque*, or *palenque* of the soul.

One of these traditions was the revitalization of the cult of the ancestors, the loss of which was one of the great losses that the African population of Cartagena experienced in crossing the Atlantic.[90] The cult of the ancestors was a practice largely associated with the population of the kingdoms of Kongo and Angola, as well as those living in contemporary Senegal and Gambia.[91] It was largely demonized as a type of idolatry by the Spanish, but in actuality it referred to the belief that ancestors existed as a sort of spirit that could manipulate and be of service to the physical world.[92] Although it was never completely restored in Cartagena, specific practices associated with it can be seen in the practices of *juntas*. One of the main ways to invoke or contact the ancestral spirits was through dance, and dancing was one of the central tenets of every testimony of a *junta*.[93] Additionally, invoking ancestral spirits often required a blood sacrifice, which could have been repurposed in *junta* narratives as the reported acts of cannibalism.[94] In these ways, experiences of the *junta* functioned to supplement the loss of the cult of the ancestors among the Cartagena witches.

The *juntas* of the hinterlands allowed the witches of Cartagena and Tolú to reconnect with their African heritage, transforming the spaces outside direct Spanish influence into spaces

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[90] Navarette, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 34.
[91] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 306.
[92] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 296, 331-332.
[93] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 335-336.
[94] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 328.

where cultural knowledge and social connections could flourish. It gave them an opportunity to express their "magical and religious training" and to adjust their sacred experiences through ritual.[95] Through the incorporation of ancestral elements like the worship of a goat, ritual dinner and dancing, and a revitalization of the cult of ancestors, *juntas* transformed the hinterlands into an anti-colonial space.[96] In addition to the more ritualistic aspects of the *juntas* they also provided a space for primarily Afrodescendant women to connect with each other and their heritage, an act seeming almost insurmountable under the watchful eye of the Spanish. However, the heretical practices that occurred in *juntas* were also found in the city, along with the formation of networks among the users of these practices.

[95] Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 18.
[96] Navarrete, *Prácticas religiosas de los negros en la colonia*, p. 125.

Chapter 2: Magic in the City

In the early 17th century, Cartagena socialite Lorenzana de Acereto recruited the help of Juan Lorenzo, a *mulato* enslaved by friar Antonio Cisneros, to assist her in creating a spell to manipulate her lover, Sergeant Santander. Paid in both jewels and money, Juan Lorenzo ventured to the town of Tolú, a week's journey away, to gather the root and juice of a local herb that, when rubbed onto Lorenzana's body, would make Sergeant Santander fall for her.[97] Lorenzana could not make the journey herself, being a proper Spanish woman who did not wish to attract the wrong sort of attention, so Juan did what he was asked. A time later, he was summoned once again by Lorenzana to complete another spell. His involvement in this one was deeper – he was told to go to the town of San Augustín to bewitch the image of Santa Marta, the patron saint of housemakers, single laywomen, and travelers.[98] After returning to Cartagena, Juan would give the enchanted image to Lorenzana, which she would then pray to in order to resolve her marital problems. So Juan traveled to San Augustín, along with Lorenzana's own slave Catalinica, to enchant the image of Santa Marta, returning a few days later to give Lorenzana the bewitched image.[99] In both journeys – to Tolú and to San Augustín – Juan brought illicit materials across the city's fortified walls for the purpose of completing a spell.

To the colonial Spanish mind, the city was supposed to be a place of organization – of civilization – whereas the hinterlands represented a place where "witchcraft and devils flourished . . . [and which] symbolized the intertwined themes of sacrilege and moral flaccidity" associated with witchcraft.[100] While this explicit and imposing crime of witchcraft was more so associated with the outskirts and hinterlands of the city, other magical and illicit activities were confessed to

[97] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 256.
[98] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 257.
[99] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 257.
[100] Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, p 64.

have occurred in the city. This transformation of the city was examined by Ana María Díaz Burgos in "A Cartography of Sources," seen through the accounts of the first sorcerer on trial in Cartagena, Lorenzana de Acereto.[101] However, this transformation goes further than Lorenzana's trial; for decades, the witches and sorcerers of Cartagena and Tolú transformed their town plazas, their churches, their hospitals, and even their homes into thresholds where the mundane mixed with the magical.

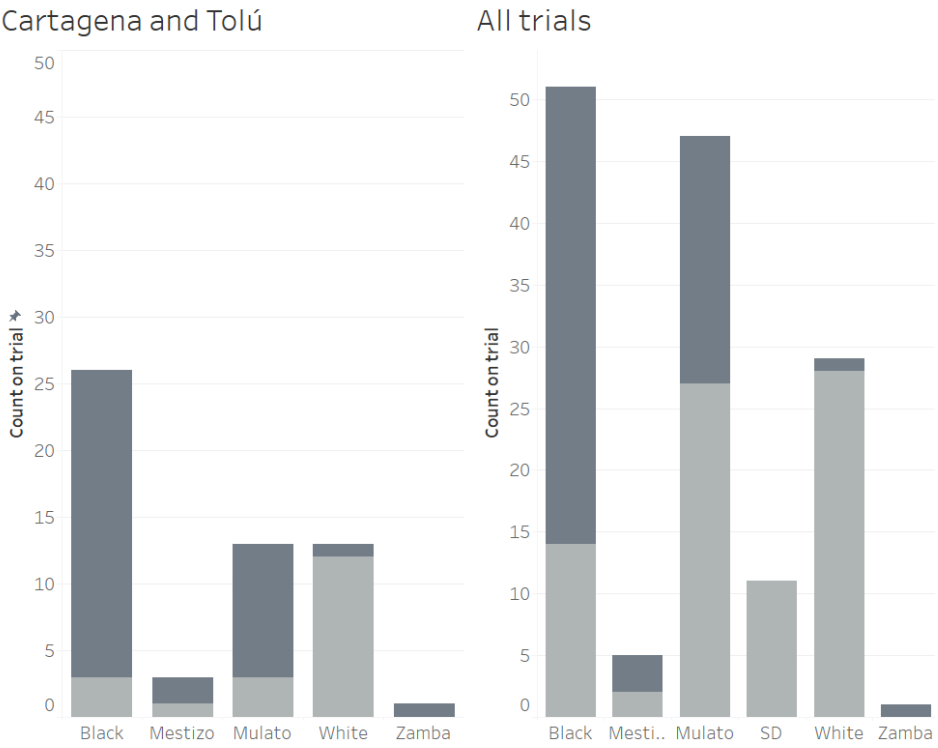
Approaches to witchcraft and sorcery

Although some might think of witchcraft and sorcery as being nearly synonymous, the colonial mind distinguished the two. Both involved the use of magic, often through demonic origins, but the defining feature of a witch was an explicit pact with the devil, while a sorcerer might also use demonic techniques in their magic, just without the pact. For this reason, the Inquisition classified witches as the ones who attended the *juntas* in the hinterlands where they rejected God and formed a pact with Lucifer himself, while sorcerers were those who did "smaller" forms of magic, such as "the use of spells, incantations, potions, pagan prayers, and superstitious practices" *without* having an explicit pact with the evil forces that facilitated the magic.[102] Additionally, witchcraft is more commonly associated with *juntas*, covens, or groups of individuals, while sorcery is much more likely to be a solitary crime. These distinctions formed the main criteria for Inquisitors to condemn a prisoner as a witch or sorcerer.

However, something else split those accused of witchcraft and those accused of sorcery, namely their race. 97% of those living in Cartagena and Tolú who were accused of witchcraft had some level of African ancestry, as opposed to 37% of those accused of sorcery.[103] As seen in

[101] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery.".
[102] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 250.
[103] Note that Indigenous people were not under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition and are thus not a part of this statistic. However, many practices from witchcraft and sorcery had their roots in Indigenous healing practices in addition to African religious and healing practices.

the graph below, Afrodescendant witches far outnumbered those of European descent, while the reverse held true for sorcerers. Witchcraft was a more serious accusation to levy against someone, and the disproportionate amount of Afrodescendants tried for witchcraft as opposed to sorcery demonstrates a bias in the Inquisitorial system. This phenomenon goes beyond those witches and sorcerers residing in Cartagena and Tolú; across all witches and sorcerers tried by the Cartagena Inquisition, 98% of witches were Afrodescendant as opposed to 68% of sorcerers.



Graphs of those accused of witchcraft and sorcery analyzed by the accused race. The first graph only includes the trials of those who lived in Cartagena and Tolú, while the second includes those from all cities. The darker shade indicates those on trial for witchcraft, while the lighter shade indicates those on trial for sorcery.[104]

One of the reasons for this dichotomy between the quantities of each race associated with each crime, besides the racist attitudes of colonial Spanish society, is also linked to the nature of the crimes of witchcraft and sorcery. Sorcery was more of a solitary crime; with the exception of knowledge networks among the sorcerers on trial, the defining characteristics of a sorcerer rarely

[104] Numbers from Gunnar W. Knutsen, Mauricio Drelichmann, Gustav Henningsen, and Jean Pierre Dedieu, The Early Modern Inquisition Database.

required more than one person.[105] On the other hand, witchcraft, often characterized by attendance at *juntas*, was more of a social crime. Thus, it was easier for witches to accuse each other, and, as most of the population reported to be in attendance at *juntas* was of African descent, it stands to reason that a similar proportion would be accused of witchcraft by their fellow witches. One of the most common ways to satisfy the Inquisitors' hunt for heresy was by naming co-conspirators, so in attempts to alleviate sentencing, witches might have accused the other – primarily Afrodescendant – witches. Despite this caveat, the fact still stands that many, many more people of African descent were tried for the crime of witchcraft than would be expected based simply on population metrics at the time, and, to the Inquisition, the worst sorcerer was less evil than the witch.[106]

Despite these distinctions, the "crimes" of someone considered a witch and someone considered a sorcerer often overlapped. Both were commonly accused of herbology and casting spells. These spells could be benevolent, to heal an illness, for more selfish purposes, such as making a man fall in love with them, for nefarious purposes, such as intending to cause harm to someone who had wronged them. However, no one on trial strictly for the crime of sorcery was either accused of or confessed to using magic to kill someone, while some witches did. Nonetheless, Inquisitors were adamant about the distinctions between a witch and a sorcerer, and being classified as one over the other often led to more extreme treatment.

The specific spells done among the magic makers in Cartagena and Tolú almost exclusively focused on "love magic, the binding of wills, [and] harm done through poisonings."[107] Often, these spells were created with the use of herbs which, according to Paula

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[105] Diana Luz Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: Un duelo de imaginarios* (Bogotá: Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1994), p. 87.
[106] Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada*, p. 88.
[107] McKnight, "Disturbing Place," p. 72.

de Eguiluz, were found outside the Santa Catalina Gate, a fortification built by the Spaniards to keep the city safe from outside invaders.[108] By nonchalantly bringing in herbs able to do harm to citizens, Paula made a mockery out of the barrier. Similarly, Lorenzana de Acereto sent Juan Lorenzo to collect herbs only found in Tolú for the purposes of creating a spell to make her lover fall for her.[109] Like Paula, Lorenzana brought in ingredients from outside the city limits for unholy purposes, bringing the danger – and opportunities – of magic inside the city and her own house.

Heretical practices in the home

One of the main locations to practice magic in the city was in the houses of the witches and sorcerers themselves. In colonial America, the house represented the sphere of women; they were responsible for cooking, cleaning, childcare, and other miscellaneous tasks dealing with keeping the household put together. Since the vast majority of those tried by the Inquisition for these blasphemous magics were women, it makes sense that they were able to manipulate the location they knew best – the home – to their own benefits, in turn modifying the "official boundaries between the public and private."[110]

For Lorenzana and her accomplices – Ana María de Olarriega and Catalina de los Ángeles – the home became a nexus of sorcery, where countless possibilities could occur. Lorenzana used her balcony to perform various prayers and enchantments. The structure of the balcony in particular was "characteristic of Cartagena's colonial architecture… [and an] indicator of wealth and socioeconomic position," and using it for such an unholy purpose transformed the

[108] McKnight, "Disturbing Place," p. 74.
[109] The trial of Lorenzana de Acereto, the first person to be on trial for sorcery in Cartagena, is analyzed by Ana María Díaz Burgos in "A Cartography of Sorcery" and *Tráfico de saberes: Agencia femenina, hechicería e inquisición en Cartagena de Indias (1610-1614)*; Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 255-256.
[110] The home was a common place for many practices deemed as heretical by the Inquisition to occur, including covertly practicing Judaism and Islam. Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 255.

physical space from one of high society and order to one of demonic influence and magic.[111] It was on this balcony where she recited the *oración del señor de la calle* (prayer of the Lord of the Street), which would invoke "a diabolical messenger also known as the *diablo cojuelo* (lame devil) . . . that functioned as a wicked go-between in love magic, invocations, and spells," literally summoning a demon from the comfort of her home[112] However, the balcony was not the only place in the house that fell victim to being a site for sorcery – in 17th-century Cartagena, the whole house could become a conduit for demonic magic.

The kitchen was a prime location for Cartagenero witches and sorcerers to practice magic and exert their authority. Food was a particularly common medium with which to facilitate the effect of spells and potions. Since food preparation was commonly a woman's task, this gave them the opportunity to imbue a harmless substance, like bread or soup, with a powder, prayer, or potion that would take over the target's free will.[113] Isabel de Carvajal, a woman on trial for sorcery in 1614, confessed to having been given consecrated powder by an enslaved person which she then put in a man's food for him to fall in love with her.[114] Other times, food was tampered with through magic for more nefarious purposes, with some on trial allegedly going so far as killing people. Teodora de Salcedo, a Black woman living in Cartagena, confessed to being given powders by *Volador*, her demon companion, which she then incorporated into chocolate bread which, when eaten, killed two Black women in the city because she was jealous of them.[115] Similarly, Juana de Ortensio was also given powders by her demon companion, which she then cooked into a broth to serve to her owner, Juan Ortensio, to kill him.[116] Another witch, Rafaela de Nava, confessed that her demon companion, *Buenos Días*, gave her a yellow powder which she

[111] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 265.
[112] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 263-264.
[113] Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, p. 64.
[114] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 88.
[115] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 299, 335.
[116] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 310.

put in the water at a party so that a specific person would fall ill. However, this backfired and ended up not only killing the intended target, but also unintentionally killing two more, and causing the others who drank it to become sick.[117] However, there were other methods of enchantments that served similar purposes, just without the ingestion of food.

Other spells, such as the *suerte de las habas* (luck of the beans), *suerte del cedazo* (luck of the sieve), *suerte del pan* (luck of the bread), and *suerte del agua* (luck of the water), were practiced to divine the future. These spells used every-day household materials, such as beans, bread, a sieve, or even something as simple as water, to learn the future. This practice was forbidden by the Catholic Church because of the belief that only God can know the future. The fact that these blasphemous practices were so easy to do, requiring little more than household objects and knowledge of the procedures associated with each spell, would have also scared the Catholic authorities of Cartagena. Thus, through these spells, the women on trial were able to transform their own homes into places where heresy was made manifest.

Other spells invoked pagan versions of saints to achieve the goals of the spellcaster. Mixing the sacred – a saint's name – with the profane – heresy – was one of the charges that the Inquisition associated with the crimes of witchcraft and sorcery. Most prominently, the *oración de Santa Marta* (prayer of Saint Martha) was invoked by a number of witches and sorcerers alike, including Lorenzana de Acereto, Bernarda Álvarez, and Jusepa Ruíz. This spell, which required the user to bewitch an image of Santa Marta, the patron saint of homemakers, recite a pagan version of the Prayer of Santa Marta, and – in some versions – have a Catholic mass dedicated to the saint. This spell had many different purposes, including finding a lost object or getting married, but it was most commonly done with the intention of taking over a desired

[117] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 334.

man's free will.[118] The particular use of Santa Martha – the patron saint of homemakers – by the witches/homemakers themselves to transform their own households into sorcerous thresholds is evidence of these sorcerers transforming their spaces through the use of magic, as well as their carving out spaces of resistance. Other saints invoked in these *oraciones* include San Zebrian, in order to see the future, and San Juan and San Pablo to know if a man desired the caster. Not only were these sorcerers committing acts of heresy, but they were also appropriating the figures of Catholic saints to do so, once again mixing the sacred with the profane.

Even more terrifying than spells infiltrating the home – the barrier between the inside and outside worlds – would be demons themselves crossing this barrier between public and private. According to the testimony of Barbara Gómez, an enslaved Black woman from Tolú, while she was living in Cádiz, a demon named Cojuelo entered her house after she had performed the *suerte de las habas* in her bedroom, after which they proceeded to have sex three times. At the end of this first meeting, Cojuelo gave her a garment in which he could manifest himself. What followed was six months of consistent sex with the demon, which, similarly to the accounts of the *junta*, produced semen so hot that it burned her.[119] After moving to Tolú, her owner's niece asked for Barbara's help to become a witch. What followed was a typical *junta* narrative, complete with the rejection of God, a dance, a feast, and sex with demons.[120] However, the demon appeared in Barbara's home before she went through the rites of the *junta*. Thus, even without the formalities of becoming a witch, a demon was able to manifest himself in Barbara's house, both with and without her consent, breaking the privacy that a home supposedly offered its inhabitants.

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[118] Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," p. 226; Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 43, 85.
[119] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 307-308.
[120] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 308.

Heretical practices through healing

The line between what might be counted as a miraculous healing on behalf of God or an unholy manipulation of a body was often blurred, and often depended on who was doing the healing. For example, many records exist of supposedly "divine" healings, where the healer invoked God or Mary in order to miraculously cure someone of ailments.[121] On the other hand, and particularly among those of African descent, the use of cultural healing practices through herbs and other similar means was both widely circulated and largely demonized. Often, Africans and Afrodescendants were left to heal their own kin, as those in authority frequently ignored their plights. When leaving a slave ship, many, if not all, of those who went through the journey were in an extremely poor physical condition, and most of the time they would be left to either heal on their own or die.[122] While Europeans mostly entrusted healing to those educated as doctors, surgeons, or other similar professions, Black understandings of health and healing were often widely circulated among community members, placing more value on first-hand learned experiences.[123] Additionally, many traditional African religious practices did not distinguish between medicine and magic, and, while the Europeans definitely looked down upon many of these practices as primitive, they also saw them as a threat to Spanish authority, hierarchy, and order.[124]

Mateo Arará, a forty-year-old enslaved Black man, in particular was criminalized for his use of these ancestral healing practices. When brought before the Inquisition in 1652 on charges of sorcery, Mateo recounted his story before the Inquisitors; he was summoned to a mine in

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[121] Karen Shears Cousins, "Shapes of Love in the Miracle Testimonies of the Virgin of Chiquinquirá, New Kingdom of Granada, 1587 to 1694," *Colonial Latin American Review* 28, no. 3 (2019): p. 407.
[122] Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena," p. 17.
[123] Although many healers in Cartagena were of African descent, they were trusted as healers because of their education and qualifications rather than a cultural and first-hand knowledge of healing practices. Gómez, "Incommensurable Epistemologies?" p. 97.
[124] Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena," p. 45; Gómez, "Incommensurable Epistemologies?" p. 97.

Mompox, a town a few days away from Cartagena, to heal a group of sick enslaved people. Using various methods, including making powders out of healing herbs, a sacrificial chicken, an enchanted broom, and a cross made out of sticks, Mateo was able to heal the group of enslaved Africans. However, when asked how he knew how to do these things, Mateo claimed that this healing ability was innate – he learned it from the earth, absorbed it from the womb of his mother.[125] One of the most concerning things about his testimony to the Inquisitors were the words that he used when completing these healing practices. Mateo invoked "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit" as well as the Virgin Mary when completing these rituals, once again mixing the sacred with the profane.[126] To account for this, the Inquisition brought in four "holy men," or theologians, who then concluded that Mateo's actions were facilitated through a pact with the devil. Despite presenting an incredibly similar narrative to other healings deemed as "miracles" and having no mention of a devil in his testimony, Mateo was condemned as a sorcerer and sentenced to 200 lashings and serving in the Santo Domingo Convent for ten years.[127]

Before his imprisonment, Mateo was already widely regarded as a healer, but he was not the only person tried by the Inquisition who held that reputation. Paula de Eguiluz and Diego López, two witches who appeared before the Inquisition in the 1630s, had worked in hospitals prior to their trials. Paula and Diego were accused of doing magical practices in the hospital, being used as scapegoats for any unfortunate instances, including the death of children.[128] Paula

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[125] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 336; Pablo F. Gómez, "Transatlantic Meanings: African Rituals and Material Culture in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean," in *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic*, ed. Akinwumi Ogundiran and Paula Saunders (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), p. 125.
[126] "*Dios padre, Dios hijo, Dios espiritú santo*." Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 336.
[127] I am not sure why Mateo was classified as a sorcerer despite his alleged pact with the devil, more research remains to be had on this topic. Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 318.
[128] Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada*, p. 128.

worked in the hospital as part of the sentence that she received the first time she appeared before the Inquisition (she ended up appearing before the Inquisition a total of three times – the last two of which she lived in the city of Cartagena). Diego was a *mulato* who initially began working at the San Sebastián hospital while enslaved. He was eventually manumitted, but worked as a *cirujano*, a barber/surgeon, in the same hospital, and he was brought before the Inquisition because of Paula naming him during her second trial.[129]

The hospitals of Cartagena were commonly overworked and underfunded; countless reports exist how San Sebastián overran its capacity, occasionally even having to adapt fleet ships to accommodate the diseased.[130] Due to its function as a port city, Cartagena often had to treat sick people from all over the Caribbean. In an environment with a relatively high mortality rate – especially infant mortality – it would have been easy to blame the death of someone on the person in charge of their health, even if the death was not their fault. Diego López and Paula de Eguiluz were both accused of using witchcraft to kill babies and of using their blood for nefarious purposes – Paula was accused of drinking the infant's blood through its navel while Diego was accused of bringing the body to a *junta* to consume it.[131] Thus, even if practices related to witchcraft did not actually occur in the hospitals, the associations of healer witches with the hospitals they worked at would have transformed those spaces into ones of fear among the general Cartagena population.

Heretical practices in holy places

Perhaps the most horrifying to Spanish religious officials was the penetration of witchcraft and sorcery into holy places, such as the central and prominent Church of Santo

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[129] McKnight, "Performing Double-Edged Stories," p. 167; Pablo F. Gómez, "Hospitals and Public Health in the Sixteenth-Century Spanish Caribbean," in *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World in the Long Sixteenth Century*, ed. Ida Altman and David Wheat (UNP - Nebraska, 2019), p. 221.
[130] Gómez, "Hospitals and Public Health in the Sixteenth-Century Spanish Caribbean," p. 215.
[131] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 376.

Domingo. The entrance into and mixing of these heretical practices with that which is sanctified is yet another example of the Cartagena witches and sorcerers mixing the sacred with the profane. Lorenzana de Acereto spent many years in a convent before her trial. She first went to the convent as a way to escape her marital troubles, but Ana María Díaz Burgos argues that the convent also allowed her to escape suspicions she was raising in the city since, by that point, she already dabbled in using sorcery to remedy ailments and physical sufferings.[132] The physical separation between Acereto and the rest of the city gave her the freedom to escape both the Inquisitorial eye and her husband. Nonetheless, Acereto was later imprisoned on suspicions of her sorcerous deeds and was later convicted of the crime of sorcery.[133]

Magic users in Cartagena also allegedly used physical remnants of churches in their spells. Ana María de Olarriega confessed to buying a small piece of an altar from a priest to use in a ritual in her house. The priest told her that it was consecrated, and she then put a few hexes on it to help her marry a man. She baked the altar piece into a sponge cake that she then gave the man that she intended to marry.[134] It is unknown whether this worked or not, but the implication that Catholic priests dealt with witches and that consecrated objects could be used for evil means would have likely scared the Inquisitors. Typically, the accusation of mixing the sacred and the profane applied to the verbal mixing of holy and evil words, but the use of a consecrated altar in an unholy ritual would have definitely been considered part of this sin.

Other spells had to be spoken in a church to reach their full potential. Lorenzana de Acereto recited spells inside a church, where instead of saying the normal liturgy, she would instead say a pagan prayer to Santa Marta. According to Lorenzana, she had to say the prayer

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[132] Ana María Díaz Burgos, *Tráfico de Saberes: Agencia Femenina, Hechicería e Inquisición En Cartagena de Indias (1610-1614)* (Madrid: Vervuert, 2020), p. 49.
[133] Díaz Burgos, *Tráfico de saberes*, p. 57.
[134] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 86.

during mass in order for the spell to be effective, transforming the church from a "sacred location into a sorcerous threshold."[135] Similarly, Isabel Noble confessed to reciting a certain prayer five times during a single mass, which was supposed to result in a man desiring her.[136] Another woman, Isabel de Carvajal, did not confess to speaking such spells inside a church, but instead used the sign of the cross to ensure the effectiveness of a love spell.[137] The recitation of these spells either in church or of the use of the holy symbols to achieve a demonic purpose was most definitely blasphemous, but is also exemplary of the transformation of the church into a place where sorcery and illicit magic reigned.

Another common required material in spells and rituals was human bone, which led to many witches confessing to disinterring grave sites. The disturbing of the dead was strictly taboo in Catholic canon, and for the disinterred bodies to be used in demonic rituals was an additional insult on top of the disinterring itself. Ana Caribali, an enslaved Black woman living in Tolú, was accused by three people of drinking the blood of recently disinterred children. Rufina was accused by her previous lover, Diego López, of disinterring a newly-dead Black girl to consume her flesh and blood at the *juntas*.[138] The act of disinterring graves meant not only disrespecting a religious site, but also disrespecting the dead, transforming the solemn space of the graveyard into one where witches would partake in macabre rituals and desecrate the sanctity of the dead.

Expansion of heretical practices

Thus, an economy of sorcery flourished in the Cartagena city walls, where the exchange of goods and services centered around sorcery and other magical practices expanded. Some beneficiaries of this economy were the go-betweens, such as Juan Lorenzo, who did not

[135] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 260.
[136] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 227.
[137] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 88.
[138] Schorsch, *Swimming the Christian Atlantic*, p. 145.

complete the heretical practices himself, but who was paid for gathering materials necessary for spells.[139] Others would receive money for their divinations, with people paying her to conduct spells on their behalf. One of these people was Marota, a ten-year-old *mulata* girl prosecuted by the Inquisition for sorcery. During her trial in 1653, she confessed that her peers would pay her to conduct spells to know if a certain person would fall in love with them and to see if another person was alive or dead.[140]

While Marota's funds came from her peers, other higher-profile witches, such as Paula de Eguiluz, might find customers among the colonial elite, even including the Bishop Pérez de Lazarraga and the Inquisitors themselves.[141] The bishop employed Paula while she was completing her sentence of perpetual imprisonment, which she was condemned to after her second trial. She likely was his healer for the last months of his life until he died in February of 1648.[142] The public sentencing of the Inquisition likely gave Paula a lot of publicity, leading to the bishop, among other customers, seeking her out. A 1652 letter from the sergeant major of the Inquisition even cited her as a "charitable soul who, despite her old age and jure incarceration, healed hundreds of cartageneros who lay outside the prison walls."[143] In general, an increase of customers to these witches and sorcerers would lead to more of the population becoming familiar with their practices, which would then lead to the proliferation of witchcraft and sorcery inside the city walls, transforming the city from a place free from those heretical practices to a breeding ground of blasphemy and paganism.[144]

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[139] Díaz Burgos, "A Cartography of Sorcery," p. 256.
[140] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 403.
[141] Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, p. 167.
[142] Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, p. 170.
[143] Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, 170-171.
[144] For more information on the economy of magic in Cartagena, see Ana María Silva Campo, "Fragile Fortunes: Afrodescendant Women, Witchcraft, and the Remaking of Urban Cartagena," *Colonial Latin American Review* 30, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 197–213.

Additionally, explicit expressions of a community of magic users were not only relegated to the hinterlands; a few accounts tell of *juntas* occurring inside the city limits themselves. Famed "captain of witches" Elena de Viloria allegedly held *juntas* in her house in the neighborhood of Getsemaní, less than a mile from the Inquisitorial Palace. Juliana de Ariza, a *mulata* Cartagenera woman accused of witchcraft in 1634, confessed while under torture that a large gathering began at the house of Elena de Viloria, before it moved to behind the Gate of Santa Catalina.[145] Ana Caribali confessed that the *juntas* she would attend began in the town center, a place which "symbolically, physically, and above all, violently [launched] the westernization of all the non-European inhabitants, that is, an attempted elimination of native cultural identity," before migrating out to the hinterlands.[146] Elena de la Cruz, the sole European Spaniard witch of the Cartagena trials, also confessed to attending a *junta* which began in Tolú's plaza, after which she could not say that she loved God nor any holy things nor say Jesus nor name the Holy Lady Mary.[147]

One of the most prolific accounts of a gathering of witches that occurred inside city limits was the funeral of an old witch named Juan Bran. Despite not being tried by the Inquisition, it is clear that Juan Bran was an important and influential figure among the Cartagena witches, as five of the most prominent witches attended his funeral. Historically, funerals among the Afrodescendant population in Cartagena were nighttime events, where those involved would dance around the dead accompanied by music played on drums.[148] This description of funerary rites is almost identical to the rituals of music and dance exhibited in *juntas*. In replicating these *junta* rituals at a funeral, the witches connected to the dance's history of being used to invoke the

[145] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 422.
[146] Alvaro Félix Bolaños, "A Place to Live, a Place to Think, and a Place to Die: Sixteenth Century Frontier Cities, Plazas, and "Relaciones" in Spanish America," in *Mapping Colonial Spanish America*, p. 289; Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 306.
[147] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 321.
[148] Navarrete, *Prácticas Religiosas de Los Negros En La Colonia*, p. 87.

cult of the ancestors. Not only were these rituals directly tied to a pagan religion, but they were also practiced right in the center of the city. Thus, through this funeral, the city center was transformed into a place of resistance against Spanish hegemony.

The rampant proliferation of witchcraft and sorcery inside the walls of Cartagena de Indias surely would have terrified the Inquisitors and fueled a strong desire to quash any further spread of this heresy. Thus began a large and targeted campaign by the Inquisition to bring in these heretics – between the years of 1610 and 1650, 30% of the prisoners who testified before the Inquisition did so for the crimes of witchcraft and sorcery, but between 1630 and 1639, that number jumps to about 50%.[149] Now that we are familiar with the magical practices that alleged witches and sorcerers were brought before the Inquisition for, we can examine how they were able to transform the Inquisitorial Palace itself into a place where they could manipulate the authorities and craft their own narratives that would best suit their own ends.

The number of trials divided by accusation across the years. The darker line represents those on trial for witchcraft or sorcery, and the lighter line represents those on trial for any other crime.

[149] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición* vol. 4, p. 119-128.

Chapter 3: Crafting Narratives in the Inquisitorial Palace

The secret cells of the Inquisitorial Palace were among the worst places in Cartagena to be. Situated in the center of the city and cut off from family and friends, prisoners could spend days, or even months, trapped in the jails without an idea of the reason for their imprisonment.[150] These jail cells were built underground, theoretically to limit disease in prisoners due to Cartagena's high humidity, but which mostly served to act as an oppressive and physical pressure to coerce the prisoners to confess.[151] Aside from this theoretically more practical reason for building the jails the way they were, they were also purposefully constructed to provide an atmosphere for "silent introspection and profound self-scrutiny during the days and month between hearings."[152] What this meant in actuality was an environment of quiet tension, where a prisoner would wait in solitude until the next time the Inquisitors called upon them. A small reprieve from the constrictive and isolating nature of the cell would be the trial room, which brought them before Inquisitors who attempted to get them to confess to crimes they might not even have committed. If a prisoner refused to confess, they were at the risk of being brought to the torture chamber, where they would be stripped naked and stretched out on the rack to the point of the ropes breaking, fainting, or bones breaking. Often, if a witch confessed, they would be sentenced to a year or more of perpetual imprisonment, where their life in the dismal environment would continue.

Despite these bleak conditions and rampant degradation, prisoners in the Inquisitorial Palace found small but significant ways to assert their own accounts of their experiences and resist the power of the Inquisition. This ability was mostly exercised through the crafting of

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[150] Restrepo, *El discurso de las condenadas*, p. 375.
[151] Díaz Burgos, *Tráfico de saberes*, p. 201.
[152] Ana Schaposchnik, *The Lima Inquisition: The Plight of Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Peru* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), p.134.

narratives during trials, purposefully choosing what to emphasize or leave out in the narration of their reported crimes. However, the trial room was not the only location where these prisoners took control of their own narrative; in places unlikely as the secret cells and even the torture chamber, prisoners transformed the spaces where oppressors reigned into those where they were able to exert some power. Through an examination of the transformation of these spaces, prisoners were able to co-opt their narratives and resist the hegemonic institution of the Inquisition.

The imprisonment

The hunt for and prosecution of witches and sorcerers among the Inquisitors had less to do with the belief that these practices were occurring and more to do with the policing of the ideologies of witches and sorcerers. The Spanish Inquisition had a very skeptical approach to witchcraft and sorcery trials, as opposed to the rest of Europe which often went on large scale witch hunts. This might lead one to question why witches and sorcerers were persecuted if the Inquisitors did not truly believe that they did the evil deeds associated with the sin. The answer lies in their intention; those on trial *intended* to reject God and make a deal with the devil; they *intended* to form communities with other witches; they *intended* to have sex with their demon competitions. Similarly, sorcerers *intended* to invoke pagan rituals for their own benefit and *intended* to charm a target into doing their will.[153] The intentionality and mindset of these crimes is what the Inquisitors dedicated their time to investigating more so than the explicit acts of the crimes themselves.

To end up in the secret cells, one first had to be denounced as a heretic. According to the Inquisitor's Manual, there were three ways to form this accusation of heresy.[154] The first, and

[153] Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate* p. 13.
[154] Nicolau Eimeric, *Manual De Inquisidores Para Uso De Las Inquisiciones De España y Portugal*, trans. F. Aviñon (Barcelona: Editorial Fontamara, 1974), p. 1-6.

most common, was the accusation, where someone – likely a close family member or friend – would accuse the prisoner-to-be of heresy. The Inquisition thrived off of such accusations, as most of the crimes of heresy, such as spell-making or blasphemy, were committed in the domestic sphere where the Inquisition did not exert its surveillance. To assist in remedying this blind spot, the Inquisition would also regularly employ *familiares*, who were lay people hired by the Inquisitors to observe the population and report any acts of heresy.[155] The fear that a neighbor, a friend, or even a family member might accuse someone of heresy ran rampant in Cartagena, creating an oppressive environment of fear and paranoia. The second way to end up in the secret cells was the self-defamation, where the heretic themselves would come before the Inquisitors to confess their crimes along with their desire to change their ways. While this method was less common, people still denounced themselves before the Inquisition, believing the penance to be a way to save their souls from their heretical acts. Someone might also denounce themselves if they suspected someone else was planning on accusing them of a crime, hoping that it would lead the Inquisitors to give them more leniency in their sentencing. The final way was an inquiry, where there was no accuser or person to volunteer their crimes, but the Inquisitorial authorities themselves would purposefully seek out an individual who they had suspicions of. No matter which way the prisoner was brought to the attention of the Inquisition, if the Inquisitors found the accusation of heresy to be valid, the individual would be brought into the Inquisitorial Palace and thrown into the secret cells in preparation for their standing trial.[156]

Witch trials often led to chains of accusations and denunciations due to the social nature of the crime. Since the main identifier of the practice of witchcraft was through attendance at a

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[155] Robin Vose, "V. Familiars and Officials," *Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections*, University of Notre Dame, 2010, inquisition.library.nd.edu/genre-familiars-and-officials-introduction.
[156] Eimeric, *Manual De Inquisidores Para Uso De Las Inquisiciones De España y Portugal*, p. 16-18.

junta, once a single witch was arrested, she could denounce the others at the *junta*, who, in turn, would denounce others, or possibly even the person denouncing them. According to the Inquisitor's Manual, prisoners were not to be told the identities of the person who denounced them, as it could put the accuser in danger. Therefore, a mutual accusation of witchcraft might lend more credence to the validity of the crime in the Inquisitor's eyes. However, they did also recognize that some people might accuse another out of enmity and not due to witnessing an actual crime, and during the trial process, they would ask the prisoner if they had any enemies who might desire to wish them harm. If the prisoner responded that one of their enemies was someone who had secretly denounced them, the Inquisition would be more skeptical of that accusation. However, many witches had upwards of 10 accusers, making the denunciations of that prisoner more credible.

The audience room

After their imprisonment, prisoners would be brought before the Inquisitors to investigate the extent of their crimes. The fact that most people did not arrive in jails through self-defamation is important: if this were the case, they would likely not know why they were arrested in the first place. Each meeting before the Inquisitors was called an "audience," and it was policy to not inform the prisoner of the reason why they were arrested until after the third audience, in order to see what they confessed themselves.[157] It is not hard to imagine the confusion and distress of a prisoner experiencing this arrest out of the blue one day and being thrown in jail with no indication as to why. The Inquisition held its witches and sorcerers inside the secret cells – *cárceles secretas* – a location where they were forbidden from contacting the outside world. This secrecy was essential to the workings of the Inquisition, and Inquisitors were dedicated to ensuring that the secret of the Inquisition remained behind locked doors. Witches

[157] Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada*, p. 45.

and sorcerers were held in these secret cells, dark and murky places where both disease and fear ran rampant. They were kept there until they were brought before the Inquisitors in the trial room to testify.

During an audience, prisoners were asked for basic biographical information, such as their name, age, race, occupation, and family history. The family history in particular was important to the Inquisitors, as they believed in a "blood purity" in regard to religion; if a person had ancestry that was not strictly Catholic, they would be deemed as a lesser social class.[158] Additionally, it was believed that if someone had an impure family line, they would be more inclined to commit a sin against Catholicism. Since the vast majority of prisoners were of African descent, they did not have the ability to claim a strictly Catholic lineage. To get around that, they would testify that they were baptized and confirmed Christians, like Angelina de Nava de Guinea did, that they were dedicated to being a good Christian after the trial's end, like Isabel López did, or, if they were on trial for witchcraft, that they only rejected God with their voice and not their heart at the *junta*, like Juana Fernández Gramajo did.[159]

After gathering the basic details of a prisoner's life, the Inquisitors would then ask open-ended questions, trying to get the witch to confess to their alleged crimes. Sometimes, this would lead to them confessing more than they were accused of, like in the cases of Bernarda Álvarez, Angela María, and Catalina de Molina de Acevedo. The fact that these prisoners knew what to confess before the Inquisitors means that at least some part of the population knew what the Inquisitors were looking for in these accusations. It also speaks to the amount that the concepts of witchcraft and sorcery were ingrained into Spanish American society at the time.

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[158] María Elena Martínez, "Introduction" in *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 1.
[159] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 314, 336, 393.

One of the Inquisition's goals – other than stamping out heresy – was to inform the public what that heresy might look like. Through public *autos de fe*, the population would learn of the crimes of the alleged witches and sorcerers, and internalize that these actions would lead to punishment. However, the spectacle of these might have backfired in the Inquisition's hunt for the truth: in spreading a certain narrative publicly as witchcraft, the person on trial might simply parrot what they had heard during a previous *auto de fe*. This might be the reason why some people confessed more than they were accused of – in confessing what they thought the Inquisitors expected to hear, even if it was a false confession, the prisoners would be seen as cooperative and would receive their sentence as soon as possible, minimizing their time in jail.

Each audience gave the prisoner an opportunity to craft their own narrative before the Inquisitorial authorities, and in some cases, prisoners even asked to be brought before the Inquisitors in order to tell their story. The witches and sorcerers of Cartagena and Tolú used a variety of techniques to generate pity and sympathy from the Inquisitors. One of these strategies was self-deprecation; in almost all instances where a prisoner recounted their joining of the sect of witches, they recount that they had been persuaded by another person and, as a weak and miserable woman, she did what she was asked.[160] In portraying themselves and "weak and miserable," they intentionally manipulated the power dynamics at play during these trials.

The word choice of "miserable" is also significant, as it referred to a legal classification for those that the Spanish felt obligated to protect. Typically, this would include "widows, orphans, olds, slaves, [and] hindered," appealing to the Gospel message of being charitable and pious towards the poor.[161] In this way, prisoners pled mercy from the Inquisitors, appealing to

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[160] "*...como mujer flaca y miserable, vino en lo que le pedía*." Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 310.

[161] Magdalena Díaz Hernández, "Indian and Black Slaves: The Miserable as a Social Concept of Resistance against the Injustice in Veracruz in the 18th Century" (Conference of the European Social Science History Conference, Vienna, 2014).

their status as men of God. Rafaela de Nava took this a step further, declaring to the Inquisitors that God does not want the sinner to die, rather convert and live.[162] These direct and indirect pleads for mercy highlight both the vulnerability of the prisoners and the duty of the Inquisitors to uphold religious law.

Additionally, in claiming that someone else had convinced them to become a witch, a sort of bystander narrative emerges, where they confessed "not to doing evil, but rather having evil done to them."[163] They did not choose the path of witches of their own volition and would not have even known of the existence of a sect of witches in the city without someone else convincing them to join. They actively chose to portray themselves as passive, attempting to appear as innocent as possible while still confessing enough that the Inquisitors would be satisfied that they weren't leaving anything out. During her trial in 1614 Isabel Noble, an alleged sorcerer, claimed that she never believed the things she did to be evil, portraying herself as innocent, if not a little ignorant of Church law.[164] However, the Inquisitors recognized the employment of this strategy when Elena de la Cruz attempted to use it, writing in the *relación de causa* that it seemed like she "had been a witch a longer time than she had confessed to and that even this was done through excuses to minimize the guilt for what she had confessed to."[165] Thus, the bystander narrative was only effective to a certain extent, and those on trial had to employ other strategies to narrate their trials and manipulate the Inquisitors.

When confessing the actual events of the witch gatherings or the spell-making, prisoners recounted a narrative almost tailor-made to outrage the Catholic authorities. While this may seem counterintuitive, it actually indicates that the prisoners knew exactly what the Inquisitors wanted

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[162] "*... Dios no quería del pecador la muerte sino que se convirtiese y viviese*." Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 335.
[163] Dawson, "The Devil in Cartagena," p. 96.
[164] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 78.
[165] "*... haber sido bruja mas largo tiempo que el que confesaba y que aun eso lo hacia procurando con escusas paliar la culpa que confesaba*." Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 359.

to hear, and confessed to get their prison sentence over with as soon as possible. If a prisoner refused to confess or claimed that they were innocent, the Inquisitors would often sentence them to torture. In confessing what the Inquisitors expected to hear, even if it was a false confession, the prisoners avoided torture and received their sentence as soon as possible, minimizing their time in jail. Historian Kathryn Joy McKnight analyzed this dichotomy through the trial of Paula de Eguiluz in "Performing Double-Edged Stories," writing that "Paula faced a delicate balancing act. She had to admit guilt in order to conclude her story with convincing remorse. At the same time, admitting guilt required her to place herself within the fantastical imaginary of the diabolical and dangerous witch, an imaginary that contributed to the ideology of European superiority and fed a violence-provoking fear of difference."[166]

Thus, crafting a narrative convincing enough to the Inquisitors required a lot of trial and error on the part of the prisoners and, over time, the prisoners would learn to properly denounce themselves.[167] Often, prisoners would confess to a certain amount of "fault" in the initial audiences, testing the waters to see if it would satisfy the Inquisitor's hunt for heresy. However, once they realized that this would not satisfy the narrative that the Inquisitors expected, they would narrate increasingly sinful experiences, including participating in *juntas*, cursing others, and even murdering people in the city through magic. Another way to satisfy the Inquisitors was to name other co-conspirators in the crimes of witchcraft and sorcery, incentivizing betrayal and leading to chains and webs of accusations among the prisoners of the Inquisition.

Additionally, those on trial might use a previous personal connection to defame and blame a fellow prisoner.[168] Diego López in particular used this tactic against Paula de Eguiluz.

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[166] McKnight, "Performing Double-Edged Stories," p. 156.
[167] Heather Rachelle White, "Between the Devil and the Inquisition: African Slaves and the Witchcraft Trials in Cartagena de Indies," *The North Star* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2005), p. 6.
[168] Von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends*, p. 119.

Before their imprisonment, the two were prominent healers in the city of Cartagena and held a fierce rivalry with each other. While on trial, Diego claimed that Paula had invaded the society of the elite – European Spaniards – with her influence as a healer in the city.[169] During another audience, Diego claimed that Paula had given him certain powders which he used to "kill Governor Diego de Escobar within the walls of his own home."[170] To my knowledge, Paula did not defame Diego, but she did name him as an enemy, discrediting his accusations as being born out of enmity rather than fact, and also had two fellow prisoners ratify that Diego had malicious intentions when he defamed Paula.[171]

In addition to denouncing other witches and sorcerers, prisoners also had the ability to protect loved ones by omitting them from their confessions. In October of 1635, Justa amended a previous confession, saying that she was lying when she had previously confessed to seeing her sister Rufina at a *junta*.[172] Although the end result of the trial did not change – both Justa and Rufina were found guilty of witchcraft and were sentenced publicly in an *auto de fe* – the fact exists that witches had the ability to manipulate trials by selectively confessing who they might have seen committing heretical acts.

However, this tactic balanced on a thin line between confessing enough to avoid being tortured and being too offensive to the faith which would result in an extended prison sentence. Additionally, if others on trial accused someone of certain crimes, the sentence could be extended for the other person. The typical sentence for a convicted witch was one year of imprisonment, three to four years of exile from the bishopric, and the confiscation of their goods. However, some witches received a much harsher sentence as a result of their crimes. Elena de

[169] McKnight "Disturbing Place," p. 72.
[170] McKnight "Disturbing Place," p. 75.
[171] McKnight "Performing Double-Edged Stories," p. 167.
[172] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 416.

Viloria, the "captain of witches" was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment as a result of many people naming her as their *madrina*. Elena, along with other witches, such as Juana de Mora, Diego López, Juana Fernandez Gramajo, Justa, Rufina, and Teodora de Salcedo, also received a sentence of 200 public lashings. This group of people were constantly referred to in other trials as either people who convinced others to become witches or people who conspired inside of the jail cells themselves to manipulate the accounts of others.

The not-so-secret cells

As alluded to earlier, the secret cells were a location where the prisoners were theoretically supposed to have been kept in isolation from the outside world. These cells were horrifying locations. Underground, damp, and under constant surveillance, being imprisoned in the Inquisitorial Palace's jails would have been a torture in and of itself. Marota, a ten-year-old imprisoned for witchcraft in 1653, said in an audience that she was constantly afraid while being kept in the cells because she heard screams all around her.[173] Prisoners were forbidden from either contacting or being contacted by the outside world and, although prisoners were kept near each other, they were forbidden from colluding or sharing details about trial processes. However, these theoretically impermeable walls served as places of transmission of information, with prisoners not only communicating with each other, but also with loved ones outside the cells.

One of the biggest worries of the Inquisition was communication with the outside world, as they were afraid that it would ruin the secret of the Inquisition, which referred to the necessity of keeping the processes of Inquisitorial trials and practices secret. However, these walls were not as secure as the Inquisitors believed them to be. Rufina, one of the most prominent witches on trial, was in a relationship with Francisco de Llano Velasco, the lieutenant-general of the Cartagena government. One night, Francisco entered the jails and proceeded to kiss and hug her,

[173] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 403.

as well as advise her to recant her first confession where she confessed to being a witch, as well as to tell her sister Justa to do the same, as he had also been her lover.[174] He told her that he would corroborate her story, as well as the story of her sister, so they would have someone confirming their innocence. This conspiracy was discovered in 1633 after Diego López, another prominent witch and her ex-lover, revealed it to the Inquisitors, claiming that he was not interested in getting involved with the conspiracy to retract the statements, since his sentence was not as serious as those of the women. After the revealing of this conspiracy, Justa and Rufina reaffirmed their crimes and exposed Francisco's role in the plot.[175] Although nothing really changed as a result of this conspiracy, it does prove that communications with the outside world could and did happen, and thus the walls of the secret cells were not as steadfast as the Inquisitors might have believed.

The secret cells were also allegedly visited by supernatural beings. Isabel López confessed that one night during Holy Week, she heard a voice that sounded like a man, but who identified himself as her demon companion Nené. Often, prisoners would confess that they had not seen or spoken to their demon companions since their imprisonment in the secret cells and, while the Inquisitors might have taken this to mean that the Inquisitorial Palace was a location safe from demons and their influence, Isabel's confession of having heard a demon speaking to her refuted this assumption. Instead, the claim that a witch had not seen or spoken to a demon companion since her imprisonment becomes a testament to her renunciation of the practices of witchcraft: she theoretically would be able to communicate with her demon companion, but instead chose not to.

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[174] Cabral, "A economia do pecado," p. 26; Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 381.
[175] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 406.

Inside the cells, prisoners were forbidden to collude with each other. The retractions exhibited by Justa and Rufina's conspiracy with Francisco de Llano Vasco were only the tip of an iceberg that reveals a complicated ring of accusations and retractions orchestrated by the prisoners that plagued the Inquisitors. The communications between the ringleaders of the group, Rufina, Juana Zamba, Ana María de Robles, Juliana de Ariza, and Diego López, were reported by Leonor de Castellanos and Isabel López.[176] In audiences on October 6th and 7th, 1634, Leonor and Isabel respectively declared hearing some people communicate in the cells and, two days later, Juana Zamba confessed to communicating with other prisoners inside the cells.[177] Specifically, she declared that Diego López had told her to confess to being a witch, as it would be more convenient for her to confess now rather than continue pleading innocence. In the following months, María Méndez retracted a confession, claiming that Juana Zamba had told her to give her initial confession, Juana de Mora retracted all of her confessions, claiming that Paula de Eguiluz told her to confess, Juana Zamba retracted her confessions, claiming that Paula told her that they would torture her if she did not confess, and Luisa Domínguez retracted blaming Paula for the initial confession.[178]

This pattern continued until July 1635 when under torture, Rafaela de Nava confessed not only to being a witch, but also that Justa had told her to retract her confessions, to say that Paula had told her to do so, and if she did these things, she would be paid well after her imprisonment was over.[179] On September 20th, Justa confessed a very similar story under torture, claiming to being persuaded by Juana Zamba to retract her confessions and that the truth was that she was a witch.[180] From September to April of the following year, those involved in this web of retractions

[176] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 391, 393.
[177] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 373.
[178] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 373, 408.
[179] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 406.
[180] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 415.

and accusations were also tortured, with most other prisoners eventually confessing to being guilty of the crime of witchcraft. On June 1st of 1636, Juana Zamba, Diego López, Inés Martín, Dominga Verdugo, Guiomar de Anaya, Isabel Márquez, Potencia de Aberu, Bárbola de León, Juliana de Ariza, Inés de Otavio, Elena de Viloria, Bernarda Álvarez, and Sebastian Botafogo were all sentenced publically in an *auto de fe*, six of whom were involved in this communication ring either as perpetrators or targets. While the end sentence of each person likely would have been the same without this web of accusations and retractions, the existence of it proves that the prisoners did not idly sit in the cells and await their sentences. They actively tried to conspire with and betray each other in an attempt to alleviate or lessen their own sentences. They brought the secret of the Inquisition into the secret cells, likely telling each other the things that the Inquisitors would be looking for, or possibly feeding them false information to make their own trials seem more convincing.[181]

Another possible instance of illicit communication in the secret cells might have come from those employed by the Inquisition itself. Although there is not much evidence of this in Cartagena, the Lima Tribunal has abundant evidence of personnel in charge of the prisoners – which often included enslaved Africans – being the subjects of bribes, favors, and other corruption on behalf of the prisoners.[182] These acts might have included the circulation of information related to the trial proceedings of other accused witches and sorcerers, allowing the imprisoned to better craft their narratives before appearing in an audience. Other examples also exist of these personnel purposefully leaving cells unlocked, allowing prisoners to converse and further circulate information.[183] Since the Holy Offices likely would have been structured very

[181] Ana María Díaz Burgos, "Tras la conjuración de brujería en Cartagena de Indias (1634-1636): Retractaciones, espacios carcelarios y tortura," *Edad de Oro* 38, no. 38 (2019): p. 323.
[182] Schaposchnik, *The Lima Inquisition*, p. 137.
[183] Schaposchnik, *The Lima Inquisition*, p. 144.

similarly, it is not that far of a stretch to assume that similar things were happening in the secret cells of the Cartagena Inquisition, especially if the people employed by the Inquisition who ended up collaborating with these witches and sorcerers were enslaved or of African descent. This further transformed the Inquisitorial Palace from a place of unchecked Spanish Catholic authority into one where the marginalized were able to gain power right under the nose of the authorities. The secret cells were not as secret as the Inquisitors might have believed, and these subversive acts of communication are prime examples of the transformation of the Inquisitorial Palace from a place where the prisoners were totally and completely at the mercy of the Inquisitors into a place where the prisoners could craft their own narratives to manipulate the Inquisitorial processes and alter their sentences.

The torture chamber

The Spanish Inquisition is infamous for its use of torture, and the Cartagena Inquisition was no exception. Out of 56 prisoners from Cartagena and Tolú on trial for either witchcraft or sorcery between 1613 and 1659, over 20 were tortured by the Inquisitors to extract confessions, most of them being witches. The main reason for someone being tortured was a refusal to confess despite belief on the side of the Inquisitors that there was enough evidence against them that they should be considered guilty. The Inquisition rationalized the use of torture though the belief that it was better for someone to suffer physically and be saved spiritually than to be spared physically and be condemned for their sins.

The torture was extreme, with some prisoners even fainting during the process. To begin, prisoners would be stripped naked and attached to the *potro*, a type of stretching rack. They would be asked questions and, if they refused to answer, the rack would be tightened. Little by little, prisoners would be stretched so far that the straps cut into their skin, their bones would

break, or worse. One prisoner, Ana Beltrán of Tolú, actually passed away as a result of her torture; after three rounds and over an hour of torture, her left wrist broke during the process and the injury became infected. Recognizing that her life was at risk, the authorities brought in a doctor who ended up cutting off four fingers, and eventually her entire hand, in an attempt to save her. On September 11th, 1633, Beltrán passed away in her cell. The doctor who performed the operation reported that he had done everything possible to cure her, but she succumbed to the infected injury. Later, she was absolved of her accusations, was interred in the Church, and her confiscated goods were returned to her family.[184]

To avoid such extremes the Inquisitors recognized that prisoners might confess falsely while under torture in order to escape the process. In an attempt to remedy this, prisoners would have to ratify their confessions a few days after the torture was conducted. Many testimonies said outright that the prisoner claimed that they did not confess due to the torture, but rather because they wanted to clear their conscience and confess their sins. Most people ratified the confession they gave under torture, but María Méndez was not one of them – at first. After being imprisoned for over two years, she was sentenced to the torture chamber on November 24, 1635.[185] While there, she confessed to the usual actions associated with the crime of witchcraft, but when she was brought in to ratify that confession, she denied it all. Only days later, María found herself back in the torture chamber, and this time, after confessing, she validated everything that she said while tortured. Though the records of what she confessed the second time are missing from the historical record, it stands to reason that it was enough to satisfy the Inquisitors, as she was not brought back to the torture chamber again afterward. It seems that María learned how to play the

[184] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 328-330.
[185] Splendiani, Bohórquez, and de Salazar, *Cincuenta años de Inquisición*, p. 408.

Inquisitor's game and knew that if she once again retracted what she confessed under torture, she would likely just be sent back to the chamber.

The torture chamber was the location where prisoners objectively had the least power. While there, they were subject to the whims of their captors, but they could still manipulate their narratives and confess exactly what the Inquisitors wanted to hear for the torture to cease. Therefore, even in this place of oppressive hopelessness and pain, prisoners still managed to transform this space of total subjugation into one where they would be able to tell their story in their own words, even if forced.

Despite the bleak conditions of the Inquisitorial Palace, the witches and sorcerers there still found ways to manipulate how they were treated. During audiences, people would strategically choose what to include in their confessions, and would often implicate their fellow prisoners in the hope of getting on the Inquisitors' good side. While in the jail cells themselves, prisoners would communicate with each other to influence narratives, strategically manipulating the prisoners around them to confess and retract certain things that would benefit their own account. It is important to note that, despite these acts of resistance, ultimately those in authority held most of the power. However, the testimonies presented before the Inquisitors prove that even in a place as dismal as the torture chamber – where life itself was at risk – prisoners had the ability to shorten their sentence by confessing exactly what the Inquisitors wanted to hear.

Conclusion

During its approximately 200 years of existence in Cartagena de Indias, the Inquisition tried over 800 people – about a quarter of those for the crimes of witchcraft or sorcery – held 56 *autos de fe*, and sentenced people for a variety of crimes ranging from Protestantism to bigamy to the circulation of prohibited books to, as we know, witchcraft and sorcery.[186] Despite its attempts of quelling African and Indigenous spiritualities under the guise of fighting heresy, the *relaciones de causa* produced by the trial proceedings ended up serving as a way of preserving the existence of those practices and beliefs in the centuries since then. Indeed, the Inquisitorial records should be considered a part of the cultural heritage of those tried by the Inquisition.[187] Although these magical practices reported to have happened by those on trial did not legitimately make use of magic itself, they tied the prisoners to ancestral African and Indigenous spiritual and healing practices.

At the heart of these accusations and imprisonments was the rampant vilification of African and Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices by the Spanish. To colonial Spanish society, the devil could be seen in just about anything, from food to illness to a perfectly natural death. Thus, the connection of witchcraft and sorcery to African ancestral religious and healing practices was easy to make, as they did not align with the typical view of Spanish supremacy. Those in authority were quick to deem these practices as heretical, leading to mass incarcerations of primarily Afrodescendant people for the heretical crimes of witchcraft and sorcery.

Despite these oppressive and restrictive practices, the witches and sorcerers of Cartagena and Tolú found ways to use these magical and heretical practices to gain a foothold in society and form community with like-minded people. The networks of witches and sorcerers provided

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[186] Knutsen, Drelichman, Henningsen, and Dedieu, The Early Modern Inquisition Database.
[187] Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y reconstrucción de identidades*, p. 677.

intellectual transformations of spaces into places free from Spanish hegemony, if only for a few hours of the day.

One of the main ways that these beliefs and practices were expressed was through *juntas* in the hinterlands of the city. While on trial, prisoners deemed as witches would give eerily similar accounts of their experiences at the *juntas*, including rejecting God, being given a demon companion, dancing and feasting with fellow witches, and even having sex with their assigned demon companions. Although these accounts seem fantastical and unbelievable, many of the narratives presented were tied back to ancestral religions, like those of the Yoruba and Popo people. In these ways, the *juntas* served as a sort of *palenque* of the soul, allowing the participants to escape the oppressive yoke of Spanish hegemony on certain nights of the week.

Occasionally, these magical practices seeped inside the city walls, infecting the home, hospital, churches, convent, and more, transforming the city from a place of strict Spanish order into one where these demonic practices reigned supreme. This imposition frightened the Spanish authorities with the fear that these heretical acts – which usually only required common household products and a knowledge of what words to say during a spell – were easily accessible by the general public, and would allow almost anyone to co-opt someone's free will, invoke a demon, twist a saint's name into something demonic, or even allegedly kill people.

Once caught and imprisoned in the Inquisitorial jails, the witches and sorcerers still found ways to exert their own beliefs and craft their own narratives despite near constant surveillance by the Inquisitors or other wardens. By forming illicit communication networks inside the secret cells, prisoners attempted and succeeded in manipulating both their own narratives and those of their fellow prisoners. Additionally, in choosing exactly what to confess, retract, and blame, prisoners resisted Spanish hegemony through attempting to ensure their own self-preservation,

"fabricating accusations against other defendants, and implicating friends or neighbors in the alleged demonic conspiracy."[188]

However, the transformative practices of witchcraft and sorcery were not the only instances of resistance against the Spanish empire. As mentioned earlier, the formation of *palenques* was another, more explicit, form of resistance. Depending on the identity or identities of the person resisting, they would be allowed more freedom in how they resisted. For example, a European Spaniard woman would still face oppression under the Spanish due to her identity as a woman, and might end up resisting empire through pursuing a career outside the home.[189] However, an enslaved African woman would not have the freedom to resist in that way, and would find other forms of resistance, such as purposefully slowing her work or convening with fellow enslaved people in a way that would preserve certain cultural practices at odds with the Spanish empire, possibly maintaining oral or spiritual traditions from a forcibly removed heritage, in a way similar but not necessarily identical to the ways explored through the practices of witchcraft and sorcery. As I demonstrated in this thesis, European Spaniard women were more likely to partake in sorcery, a "lesser" crime under the eyes of the Inquisition. On the other hand, those of African descent found community through the *juntas* associated with witchcraft, but which also defined their resistance as a more serious crime.

Each of these acts of resistance was met with backlash from the Spanish authorities. Most obviously, the alleged witches and sorcerers were imprisoned by the Inquisition, coerced into confessing, and possibly even tortured as a result of their retaliation against Catholic hegemony. The Spanish government also sought out *palenques* in the hinterlands, seeking to destroy the community they formed and bring the *cimarrones* back into enslavement. Community formation

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[188] White, "Between the Devil and the Inquisition," p. 12.
[189] Carlos Orlando Rico Bonilla, "Making Women Visible in the (Accounting) History of Colombia," *Accounting History Review* 30 no. 2 (May 2020): p. 207-232.

inside the city itself was often also met with backlash, with the formation of slave laws that forbade Africans from wearing certain types of clothes, carrying weapons, or even being outside past a certain time without accompaniment.[190]

However, it is also important to note the successes of these forms of resistance, as well as the many forms that these successes took. Through their imprisonment in the Inquisition, the witches and sorcerers of Cartagena were able to record their experiences through the trial records, preserving the fact that they existed and did not subject completely to Spanish norms. There is even evidence that certain enslaved people purposefully became imprisoned by the Inquisition in order to either denounce their owner or be moved to a different owner.[191] While both of these examples might seem like a "loss" on the part of the marginalized, they were actually able to manipulate the institution created by the Catholic Church to their own benefit.

To a *cimarron*, a success would look like escaping their previous master and joining a community of people with similar experiences to them. Although the Spanish government often sought out *palenques* to destroy, they reached a peace with the largest *palenque*, that of San Basillo, in 1772, almost 100 years before the government outlawed slavery as a whole.[192] These acts of explicit and implicit resistance by those marginalized by the Spanish – particularly those of African descent – demonstrate the resilience and agency of oppressed populations in the face of colonial racial and religious oppression.

The Cartagena Inquisition's downfall began on November 11, 1811, when revolutionaries against the Spanish empire arrived in Cartagena and declared that the Inquisition was to be

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[190] Michael C. Meyer, William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History*, 6th ed (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 206.
[191] Kristen Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), p. 19-37.
[192] Aquiles Escalante, "*Palenques* in Colombia" in Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas ed. Richard Price (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 79-80.

suppressed and that the Inquisitors were to hand in their passports.[193] The Inquisition was reinstated in 1815 when the Royalists won back the city, but the institution was officially abolished in 1821 when the revolutionaries once again took over the city and Gran Colombia gained its independence from Spain.[194] It took another thirty years before slavery was abolished in Colombia, and more work remains to be done on the persecution and demonization of African and Indigenous spiritualities during this interim period.

Despite the suppression of their spiritual practices, both under the Inquisition and outside of it, practicants of what the Inquisition deemed as witchcraft and sorcery used the practices associated with those crimes to transform their surroundings and escape the hegemonic society they lived in, fighting back against the oppression that the Spanish attempted to subjugate them under.

[193] Henry Charles Lea, "New Granada," in *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies: Sicily, Naples, Sardinia, Milan, the Canaries, Mexico, Peru, New Granada*, Cambridge Library Collection - European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 507
[194] Lea, "New Granada," p. 510.

Glossary of terms

Auto de fe
Public spectacle of those persecuted by the Inquisition as an act of penance and embarrassment.

Brujería
Witchcraft

Cimarron
Someone who escaped slavery to form or join a settlement of other *cimarrones* (see ***palenque***)

Familiar
Literally, "familiar." Someone employed by the Inquisition to watch the people around them and report any acts of heresy

Hechicería
Sorcery

Junta
A witch gathering

Madrina
Literally, "godmother." The person who brings someone to a witch gathering as a sponsor.

Oración
Prayer

Suerte
Literally, "luck." Used to denote a spell.

Palenque
Community of ***cimarrones***

Relación de causa
Inquisition trial summary

Prisoner Index [195]

Name	Gender	Year on trial	Race	Age	Occupation	Crime	Page(s) mentioned
Ana Beltrán	F	1633	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	64
Ana Caribali	F	1634	Black	52	Slave	Witchcraft	22, 27, 46, 48
Ana María	F	1635	Mestiza	52	?	Witchcraft	18
Ana María de Olarriega	F	1633	Black	30	?	Sorcery	2, 38, 45
Ana María de Robles	F	1633	Mulata	30	?	Witchcraft	18, 61
Angela María	F	1632	?	?	?	Sorcery	54
Angelina de Nava	F	1633	Black	27	?	Witchcraft	18, 30, 54
Barbara Gómez	F	1633	Black	?	Slave	Witchcraft	41
Bárbola de León	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	25, 62
Bernarda Álvarez	F	1632	Mulata	?	?	Both	40, 54, 62
Catalina de los Ángeles	F	Not on trial	?	?	?	Not on trial	38
Catalina de Molina de Acevedo	F	1632	Mulata	?	?	Sorcery	54
Catalina de Otavio	F	1633	Black	?	?	Witchcraft	27
Diego López	M	1634	Mulato	41	Surgeon	Witchcraft	18, 28-30, 43-44, 46, 57-62
Dominga Verdugo	F	1634	Black	?	?	Witchcraft	62
Elena de la Cruz	F	1633	White	40	?	Witchcraft	17, 48, 56
Elena de Viloria	F	1633	Black	60	Midwife	Witchcraft	16, 30, 48, 58, 62
Francisco Mandinga	M	1640	Black	50	Slave	Sorcery	22, 27
Gerónima	F	1633	Black	?	Slave	Witchcraft	15, 27,
Guiomar de Anaya	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	62
Ines de Otavio	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	62
Ines Martín	F	1633	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	21, 27, 62
Isabel de Carvajal	F	1614	White	40	?	Sorcery	39, 46
Isabel López	F	1634	Black	?	Slave	Witchcraft	54, 60-61
Isabel Márquez	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	62
Isabel Noble	F	1614	White	48	?	Sorcery	2, 46, 56
Juan Bran	M	Not on trial	Black	?	?	Not on trial	48

[195] Most of this data comes from *Cincuenta años de Inquisición* vol. 4 by Anna María Splendiani, José Enrique Sánchez Bohórquez, and Emma Cecilia Luque de Salazar. Question marks in the data refer to unknown values.

Juan Lorenzo	F	1614	Mulata	26	Slave	Sorcery	2, 34, 38, 47
Juana de Mora	F	1633	Black	?	?	Witchcraft	15, 22-23, 59, 61
Juana de Ortensio	F	1633	Black	26	?	Witchcraft	30, 39
Juana Fernández Gramajo	F	1634	Black	28	?	Witchcraft	12, 54, 59
Juana Zamba	F	1633	Zamba	48	?	Witchcraft	61-62
Juliana de Ariza	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	48, 61-62
Jusepa Ruíz	F	1620	Black	40	?	Witchcraft	40
Justa	F	1633	Mulata	30	?	Witchcraft	30, 58-61
Leonor de Castellanos	F	1634	Mulata	?	?	Witchcraft	61
Lorenzana de Acereto	F	1613	White	27	?	Sorcery	2-3, 9, 34-35, 38, 40, 45-46
Luisa Domínguez	F	1633	Black	26	?	Witchcraft	27, 61
Maria la Alta	F					Not on trial	18, 29
María Méndez	F	1633	Black	27	?	Witchcraft	18, 30, 61, 64
Marota	F	1653	Mulata	10	?	Sorcery	47, 59
Mateo Arará	M	1652	Black	?	Slave	Sorcery	22, 27, 43
Paula de Eguiluz	F	1634, 1635	Black	33	Healer	Witchcraft	9, 20-21, 30, 37-38, 43-44, 47, 57-58, 61
Potencia de Aberu	F	1634	Black	36	?	Witchcraft	62
Rafaela de Nava	F	1633	Black	?	?	Witchcraft	39, 55, 61
Rufina	F	1633	Mulata	21	Slave	Witchcraft	15, 17, 22-23, 30, 46, 58-61
Sebastian Botafogo	M	1635	Black	50	Slave	Witchcraft	62
Teodora de Salcedo	F	1633	Black	?	?	Witchcraft	21, 39, 59

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