



**Department of History and Civilization**

# **As Above, So Below. Astrology and the Inquisition in Seventeenth-Century New Spain**

**Ana Avalos**

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of  
Doctor of History and Civilization of the European University Institute

Florence, February 2007

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A Bernardo y Lupita.

*'That which is above is like that which is below  
and that which is below is like that which is above,  
to achieve the wonders of the one thing...'*

Hermes Trismegistus

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## Abbreviations

AGCA= Archivo General de Centroamérica (Guatemala City)

AGI= Archivo General de Indias (Seville)

AGN= Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City)

AHN= Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid)

BNM= Biblioteca Nacional de México (Mexico City)

BNE= Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid)

INAH= Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (Mexico City)

BAN= Bibliotheca Astrologica Numerica (Warburg Institute)

DHM= Documentos para la Historia de México

HMES= *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (Lynn Thorndike)

## Introduction

History of astrology is no longer neglected. Studies on the subject now benefit from a rich historiographical tradition within various fields, such as history of science, history of art, intellectual history, and so on. In this opening section, I would like to present a general overview of the main themes and arguments that serve as a framework for a study on the history of astrology and the Inquisition in seventeenth-century New Spain. Other methodological and historiographical issues will be discussed in their corresponding sections.

First, I will show how astrology became a salient object of historical inquiry as the result of crucial changes in the historiography of the Scientific Revolution from the 1960s onwards. This *new* historiography reflected both on the flexibility of previously fixed categories such as *reason* and *faith* or *rationality* and *superstition*, as well as on the boundaries between different fields of knowledge. Astrology was thus not considered anymore as a superstitious belief, but as a field whose transformations during the seventeenth century played a fundamental role in the shaping of modern disciplinary boundaries.

Secondly, I will show how this change of narrative about the Scientific Revolution shifted the attention from the texts to the various contexts in which this entity called modern science was developed. As opposed to an *internalistic* analysis, this *externalistic* approach focuses on the study of different sites of knowledge, such as laboratories, universities, museums, or, in this case, the inquisitorial courtroom. Moreover, what this emphasis on context shows is that knowledge is not transmitted from one place to another in a unidirectional way. Rather, knowledge is adapted and creatively transformed in every different context.



## 1. The place of astrology in the history of the Scientific Revolution

As early as 1917 Franz Boll published his *Stern Glaube und Sterndeutung; Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie*, regarded as the best introduction to history of astrology. And almost a century has passed since George Sarton asserted in his *Introduction to the History of Science* that ‘the historian of science cannot devote much attention to the study of superstition and magic, that is, of unreason, because this does not help him very much to understand human progress.’<sup>1</sup> When talking specifically about astrology, Sarton referred to it as a ‘superstitious flotsam of the Near East’. Otto Neugebauer, one of the most prominent scholars of the history of astronomy and mathematics in Ancient Greece, reacted immediately to Sarton’s affirmation in his famous letter to *Isis*, “The Study of Wretched Subjects” (1951). He underlined that a great number of scholars have worked “to recover countless wretched collections of astrological treatises from European libraries, and they succeeded in giving us an insight into the daily life, religion and superstition, and astronomical methods and cosmogonic ideas of generations of men who had to live without the higher blessings of our own scientific era.”<sup>2</sup>

In the last decades, astrology has without doubt gained more and more attention by historians of science. To ascertain this, one needs only to look at recent bibliographies on the history of science, including entire biographies on medieval, renaissance, and early modern astrologers.<sup>3</sup> The question that is perhaps necessary to ask here is *how* astrology became a

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<sup>1</sup> Sarton, George. *Introduction to the History of Science*, Baltimor, Williams and Wilkins, for Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1927-1947, 1:3, p. 19. Quoted in Debus, Allen G. “Science and History. The Birth of a New Field” in Stephen McKnight. *Science, Pseudo-Science, and Utopianism in Early Modern Thought*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press; 1992, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Neugebauer, Otto. “The Study of Wretched Subjects” in *Isis*. 1951; 42(2):p. 111

<sup>3</sup> Kassell, Lauren. *Medicine and magic in Elizabethan London. Simon Forman : astrologer, alchemist and physician*. Oxford : Clarendon press, 2005. Dooley, Brendan. *Morandi’s Last Prophecy and the End of Renaissance Politics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press; 2002; Grafton, Anthony. *Cardano’s cosmos : the worlds and works of a Renaissance astrologer*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999; Geneva, Ann. *Astrology and the Seventeenth Century Mind. William Lilly and the Language of the Stars*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1995; Smoller, Laura. *History, Prophecy, and the Stars. The Christian Astrology of Pierr d’Ailly (1350-1420)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1994; D. Parker *Familiar to All: William Lilly and Astrology in the Seventeenth Century*, London, 1975., C.H. Josten (ed.) *Elias Ashmole (1617-1692) : his autobiographical and historical notes, his correspondence and other contemporary sources relating to his life and work*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966. For some interesting data about publications of journals and books on astrology see: I.W. Kelly, G.A. Dean, and D.H. Saklofske “Astrology: A Critical Review” in Grim, Patrick. *Philosophy of Science and the Occult*. Albany: State

salient object within history of science. In other words, *why* is it no longer described by historians as if it were “some kind of irrational disease suffered by western culture, which subjected it to bouts of insanity of varying intensity, until mental equilibrium was eventually restored after the scientific revolution”.<sup>4</sup> The revision of some elements of the traditional narrative of the Scientific Revolution was certainly one of the reasons why the role of astrology during the Renaissance and early-modern period started being reevaluated. In the other direction, this reevaluation of astrology, and other previously neglected subjects led to a re-formulation of the concept of Scientific Revolution.

The term *scientific revolutions* is generic and describes changes that occur with a certain frequency; it has made an enormous impact on the intellectual world since the publication of Kuhn’s classic *The structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In contrast, the term *Scientific Revolution* (or even preceded by the article *The*) is not generic, but specific and refers to a particular episode in the history of science. It conveys the idea that there was a period in history, from Copernicus (1473-1543) to Newton (1642-1727), when the human view of the world changed radically and brought about what we now call modern science. As a conceptual tool for speaking about this process, the term was coined by Alexander Koyrè in the 1940s, when he described the Scientific Revolution as “the most profound revolution achieved or suffered by the human mind”.<sup>5</sup> In 1949 the term gained considerable currency through the publication of Herbert Butterfield’s series of lectures *The Origins of Modern Science*. He considered that the Scientific Revolution “outshines everything since the rise of Christianity and reduces the Renaissance and Reformation to the rank of mere episodes [...It is] the real origin both of the modern world and of the modern mentality.”<sup>6</sup>

The idea of *revolution* as a radical and irreversible reordering, as the point of origin of a new state of affairs that the world had never witnessed before and might never witness again developed together with a linear conception of time during the Enlightenment. But even though the French philosophers of the eighteenth century noticed the “uniqueness” of the

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University of New York Press; 1990; pp. 51-81.

<sup>4</sup> Carey, Hilary M. *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the University in the Later Middle Ages*. London: MacMillan; 1992., p. 5

<sup>5</sup> Koyrè quoted in Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.1

<sup>6</sup> Butterfield quoted in Shapin (1996), p. 2

Scientific Revolution, they did not create a historical category for this event.<sup>7</sup> The Enlightenment considered seventeenth-century science as the bearer of the illumination of human mind and conceived science as developing in a revolutionary way. Individual men of science (especially Descartes and Bacon) were glorified as the “pioneers of a new age in which Enlightenment thinkers felt themselves to be fully participating—a new age of light and reason now that the forces of superstition and darkness had been vanquished.”<sup>8</sup>

In the nineteenth century, Comte thought that the history of each science could be divided into three successive stages: theological, metaphysical and positive. The latter is the one to which every science should aspire and it is marked by laws that bind together facts in a quantitative fashion. According to Comte, natural sciences had attained their positive stage by undergoing a “revolution” during the seventeenth century. He described it as “the grand movement impressed upon the human mind two centuries ago by the combined action of Bacon’s precepts, Descartes’ conceptions, and Galileo’s discoveries, as the moment when the spirit of positive philosophy began to pronounce itself in the world, in evident opposition to the spirit of theology and of metaphysics”.<sup>9</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two important moments in the history of the concept of *Scientific Revolution* can be identified. In 1906, Pierre Duhem stated in his *Etudes sur Leonard de Vinci* that it was in the fourteenth century that a number of natural philosophers at the University of Paris laid the groundwork for early modern science. Thus Galileo’s battle against Aristotelianism was actually a rediscovery and reformulation of the science already created in France two and a half centuries before. Although Duhem’s theory about the *true* birth of early modern science in the fourteenth and not the seventeenth century was not very powerful, the battle against scholasticism remained at the center of almost every

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<sup>7</sup> The uniqueness of the Scientific Revolution may also be discussed. For instance, some scholars uphold that there has been a second Scientific Revolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<sup>8</sup> Cohen, H. Floris. *The Scientific Revolution. A Historiographical Inquiry*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1994, p. 1. The author points out (p. 23) that in Jean Le Rond d’Alembert’s entry “experimental” in volume 6 of the *Encyclopedie* (1756), Bacon and Descartes are presented as the minds who put an end to the “vague and obscure method of philosophizing” that characterized the “dark times” when Aristotelianism reigned. And then there was Newton, who completed this revolution and formed “an exact, profound, luminous, and novel science [...] the light has finally prevailed”.

<sup>9</sup> Comte, Auguste. *Philosophie premiere: Cours de philosophie positive, Lecons 1 a 45*, ed. M. Serres, F. Dagobnet and A. Sanaceur, p. 27. Quoted in Cohen (1994), p. 36

study on the Scientific Revolution. After Duhem, Edwin Arthur Burt wrote *The metaphysical foundations of modern physical sciences: a historical and critical essay* (1925), where he tied events from Kepler to Newton much closer together than had been done before.<sup>10</sup>

Koyré was inspired by both authors. The concept *Scientific Revolution* was coined in his *Etudes Galiléennes* (1939) and it described a mutation in human thought that occurred during a few decades before and after 1600.

It expresses the replacement of the classic and medieval conception of the Cosmos -closed unity of a qualitatively determined and hierarchically well ordered whole in which different parts (heaven and earth) are subject to different laws- by that of the Universe, that is of an open and indefinitely extended entirety of Being, governed and united by the identity of its fundamental laws; it determines the merging of the *Physica coelestis* with *Physica terrestis*.<sup>11</sup>

At the outset, the term denoted more a specific event than a historical period, but the concept began to expand after it was taken up in the United States during the late forties. Herbert Butterfield and A. Rupert Hall “used the term for a large time span in the history of science, even though both also recognised some sort of ‘inner core’ Scientific Revolution, stretching roughly from Galileo to Newton, inside the full, ‘outer’ Scientific Revolution”.<sup>12</sup> After considering other disciplines besides mathematical physics and astronomy, and exploring fields such as technology, arts, and crafts, Koyré’s Scientific Revolution eventually covered the entire period from Copernicus to Newton.

In more recent decades, however, a series of questions have transformed the studies on early modern science: Was there a single event, in a specific time and space, which can be pointed to as The Scientific Revolution? Is it useful or not as a historiographical concept? Is it valid to apply twentieth-century disciplinary boundaries to seventeenth-century intellectual history? Was there actually a single and coherent cultural entity in the seventeenth century that can be regarded as science? Have the boundaries within science remained static throughout history? Is it legitimate to study actors and disciplines outside the canonical

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<sup>10</sup> Cohen (1994), p. 495.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander, Koyré. “Galileo and the Scientific Revolution of the Seventeenth Century” in *The Philosophical Review*, No. 4, July 1943, p. 334.

<sup>12</sup> Cohen (1994), p. 496.

standards? In an attempt to answer these questions, recent scholarship of the Scientific Revolution has concluded that not all disciplines underwent the same kind of changes, and not all transformations were simultaneous. Moreover, individual thinkers appropriated ideas from a wide variety of sources, among them magic and the so-called occult sciences.<sup>13</sup> This category usually includes alchemy, natural magic, and astrology.

The debate about the role of magic, hermetism, and the *occult sciences* in the Scientific Revolution became central especially after the publication of Francis Yates's famous *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (1964). As Curry puts it, the debate can be understood in terms of two conflicting positions. The first one claims that what is science now was science then, "and the same, *mutatis mutandis*, goes for the occult."<sup>14</sup> The second one proclaims the importance of Hermetic magic, Neoplatonic alchemy, and astrology in contributing to those intellectual changes that are now regarded as ancestors of present-day science.<sup>15</sup> According to this view, Renaissance natural philosophers dealing with the *occult* insisted upon penetrating the secrets of nature and uncovering the hidden causes of natural phenomena. Whereas in medieval natural philosophy the unexplained belonged more to the realm of the divine and miraculous, Renaissance and early modern natural philosophers sought explanations for what was in principle considered unknowable.<sup>16</sup> This new attitude towards the *occult* was the seed of experimental science.

I agree with Rutkin when he says that the category of the so-called occult sciences "is fundamentally anachronistic and dependent on too many misleading assumptions to be conceptually or historically useful."<sup>17</sup> When used to refer to certain arts or disciplines during the early modern period, the term *occult sciences* seems to respond more to modern

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<sup>13</sup> The term *occult* comes from the opposition between occult and manifest qualities: physical properties (mass, shape, electrical charge), or dispositions (properties in virtue). Manifest qualities are those perceived directly by our senses, while occult qualities are not. Their operation is occult or hidden for us.

<sup>14</sup> According to Curry, this position is represented by Hall, Hesse, Westman, McGuire, and Rossi. See: Curry, Patrick. "Revisions of Science and Magic" in *History of Science*. 1985; 23, p. 299.

<sup>15</sup> According to Curry (1985) this group is represented by Yates, Pagel, Walker, Rattanasri, Debus, and Rossi (again). (p. 299)

<sup>16</sup> Eamon, William. "Magic and the Occult" in Ferngren, Gary B. (ed.) *The History of Science and Religion in Western Tradition*. New York-London: Garland Publishing Inc.; 2000 p. 538 A similar idea is found in Henningsen (2003), who argues that demonology was the precursor of modern science.

<sup>17</sup> Rutkin, Darrel H. "Astrology" in *Cambridge History of Science*. Volume 5. Early Modern Science. 2005, p. 544.

presuppositions than to a contemporary understanding of the boundaries between different fields of knowledge. However, there are two reasons why we should not set this term aside completely (yet).

First, because I believe that some recent studies on the history of early-modern astrology, while trying to show that this discipline was not regarded as *occult* or *pseudo* science at the time, have focused mainly on the relationship between astrology and other fields of knowledge that are now regarded as *proper* science, namely astronomy and medicine. By doing so, these studies, paradoxically, might reinforce the science/pseudo-science dichotomy and fail to contribute to the reconstruction of the pre-modern intellectual landscape in all its complexity.

Secondly, I think that one needs to acknowledge that the historiographic trend aimed at reassessing the role of magic and the *occult* in the history of science and technology has contributed in giving astrology a more central position within scholarly discussions about early modern science. In this sense, it is perhaps important to underline that many studies on astrology during the early modern period are framed within broader discussions about the origins of modern science, which is in turn one of the main elements of the narrative of modernity. The history of astrology has thus been shaped by some questions concerning this bigger narrative: the rupture with scholasticism; the shaping of disciplinary boundaries; the decline of superstition, and the triumph of rationality; the transmission of knowledge from one cultural context to the other; and the importance of non-Western intellectual traditions. There is, however, much work to be done before the proper link between the history of astrology and the history of western science can be established. A more accurate picture of the way in which astrology was practiced and understood during this period needs to take into account a greater variety of cultural contexts. And maybe when this picture is clearer it will be possible to understand “the centrally important problem of astrology’s relationship to the new science of seventeenth century, perhaps the most important desideratum in the historiography of science.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Rutkin, Darrel H. *Astrology, Natural Philosophy and the History of Science c. 1250-1700: Studies toward and Interpretation of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola’s Disputationes Adversus Astrologiam Divinatircem*. PhD

## 2. The place of astrology in the history of the Inquisition

In his work about ancient astrology, Barton acknowledges that historians of science, by being mostly concerned with what astrology could mean for the history of contemporary mathematics or astronomy, had overlooked its social or even intellectual context.<sup>19</sup> I believe that astrology needs to be studied both from an intellectual perspective, in terms of its place in the early-modern map of knowledge, and from a social perspective, in terms of the ways in which astrological knowledge was used within specific contexts. Because some of these uses were officially condemned by the Catholic Church from the end of the sixteenth century, astrology also falls into the area of religious history, and, more specifically, of the history of early modern heresy and superstition.

Studies on the Inquisition and its development for a better understanding of the problems of religious intolerance, heresy, and their prosecution date back to seventeenth century.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, the “discovery of inquisitorial records as an extremely valuable historical source is a surprisingly late phenomenon.”<sup>21</sup> As the French historian Pierre Chaunu pointed out in 1956, the archives of the Inquisition offer the possibility for “a new social history”, because of its long series of cases and the meticulous registration of the procedures.<sup>22</sup> It was during the sixties and seventies that new studies on the Inquisition emerged in the context of some particular trends in historical research:

the movement to combine anthropological and historical methodology; the increasing interest in ordinary people and everyday life; the renaissance in witchcraft scholarship; the shift of paradigm from the history of the ruling class to that of those who were ruled; and, not least among other developments, the fascinating hypothesis of Mikhail

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Dissertation Indiana University, 2002, p.20.

<sup>19</sup> Barton, Tamsyn. *Power and Knowledge. Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire*, University of Michigan; 1994, p. 30.

<sup>20</sup> Simonouti, Luisa. “Between History and Politics: Philip Van Limborch's *History of the Inquisition* (1692).” in Laursen, John Christian, editor. *Histories of Heresy in Early Modern Europe. For, Against, and Beyond Persecution and Toleration*. New York ed. Palgrave MacMillan; 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Ginzburg, Carlo. “The Inquisitor as Anthropologist” in *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, London: Hutchison Radius; 1989; p. 156.

<sup>22</sup> Henningsen, Gustav. “The Eloquence of Figures: Statistics of the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions and Prospects for Social History” in Alcalá, Angel. *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*. New Jersey: Columbia University Press; 1987, p. 217. The author is referring to Chanau's article “Inquisition et vie quotidienne dans l’Amerique espagnole au XVIIe siecle” published in *Annales*. 1956; 11.

Bakhtin, namely the culture of the elite in early modern Europe had its dynamic and autonomous counterpart in popular culture.<sup>23</sup>

The Inquisition studies of the seventies reflected a change in historical methodology, which highlighted the importance of previously neglected subjects, such as the so-called “minor heresies” (in contrast to major heresies: Protestantism, Judaism). Among them were included: heretical propositions and blasphemy; crimes against the Holy Office; unacceptable sexual behavior (bigamy, homosexuality, bestiality, and solicitation in the confessional); superstition, magical beliefs and practices (witchcraft, sorcery, astrology, necromancy, chiromancy).<sup>24</sup> Studies on this kind of topic called for interdisciplinary cooperation and opened the doors of inquisitorial archives to scholars outside the field of religious history.<sup>25</sup> Anthropological, psychoanalytical, and linguistic approaches shed new light on inquisitorial sources, and produced works as influential as those of Carlo Ginzburg and Lyndel Roper.<sup>26</sup> Especially within the framework of studies on early-modern European witchcraft, as Eliade pointed out, “it became evident that witchcraft cannot be satisfactorily understood without the help of other disciplines, such as folklore ethnology, sociology, psychology, and history of religions.”<sup>27</sup>

In the last decade, social historians and historians of science are paying special attention to *little tools of knowledge*, such as tables, reports, questionnaires, and protocols,

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<sup>23</sup> Henningsen, Gustav and John Tedeschi. *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods*. Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press; 1986, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Henningsen (1987), p. 220.

<sup>25</sup> Henningsen (1987), p. 182.

<sup>26</sup> Ginzburg, Carlo. *I benedanti: Ricerche sulla stregoneria e sui culti agrari tra cinquecento e seicento*, Torino, Einaudi, 1966; --- *Il formaggio e I vermi*, Torino, Einaudi, 1976. Roper, Lyndal. *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe*. London: Routledge; 1994.

<sup>27</sup> Eliade, Mircea. “Some Observations on European Witchcraft” in *History of Religions*. 1975; 14(3), p. 151. The author discusses in this article some of the classical studies on European witchcraft: Julio Caro Baroja. *The World of the Witches*, Chicago, 1964; Etienne Delcambre. *Le concept de la sorcellerie dans le duché de Lorraine au XVI et XVII siècle*, Nancy, 1948; Austin P. Evans. *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, New York, 1969; Carlo Ginzburg’s *Benadanti*; Henry Charles Lea, *Materials towards a History of Witchcraft*, Philadelphia, 1939; Margaret Murray. *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*; Oxford University Press, 1921; J.B. Russell. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1972; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, New York, 1971; H.R. Trevor Roper *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays*, New York, 1969. For the historiography of witchcraft see: William Monter “Historiography of European Witchcraft: Progress and Prospects”, *Journal of disciplinary History* 2 (1972): 435-51



which were previously neglected in cultural studies.<sup>28</sup> For historians dealing with inquisitorial sources, this revaluation of protocols may serve as an interesting starting point to focus their attention on what went on *inside* the courtroom. In this light, the narrative elements of inquisitorial proceedings are underlined: story-telling and emplotment; information flow (inclusions, exclusions, exchanges of information); expectation of authenticity; audience-orientation of testimonies; rhetorical devices; strategies of validation; summarizing techniques, translation; authorship (inquisitors, notaries and lawyers as authors).<sup>29</sup> Likewise, special attention is paid to the procedures, such as interrogation techniques, manuals, guidelines, and instructions. These rules were of course not immutable, but *tools* to be used flexibly within existing procedures. The challenge thus resides on trying to understand *why* they were used in one way rather than the other; *what* could the violations to protocols possibly mean; and *how* were the interactions between different actors reflected on this flexible use of protocols.<sup>30</sup>

Within the inquisitorial procedure, a guided series of interrogations to both witnesses and defendant were carried out to prove whether a heresy was actually committed or not. The claim was for an objective reconstruction of the crime, but the way in which questions were posed and answered was not a simple and invariable implementation of the procedure according to the manuals. Both the inquisitor's formulation of questions and the choice of the respondents for a specific answer were strategic actions which frequently reveal hidden meanings and intentions.<sup>31</sup> New readings of inquisitorial trials can emerge when questions

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<sup>28</sup> Becker, Peter and William Clark. *Little Tools of Knowledge*. University of Michigan: University of Michigan Press; 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Outside the inquisitorial field, Zemon Davis' work on royal letters of pardon and remission in sixteenth century France is a prominent example of this kind of analysis. She focused on their literary or 'fictional' qualities of the letters, and concluded that *stories* (accounts that sound real, true, and meaningful) told by the defendants and written down by legal experts were fundamental for the outcome of the case. See: *Fiction in the Archives. Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth Century France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; 1987.

<sup>30</sup> My gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor Peter Becker, for underlying the importance of these *little tools of knowledge* for my own work.

<sup>31</sup> A very similar approach is used by Francisca Loetz in her study on blasphemy: "How to do things with God: blasphemy in Early Modern Switzerland" in Lindemann, Mary. *Ways of Knowing. Ten Interdisciplinary Essays*. Boston, Leiden: Brill; 2003, pp. 137-151. As Lindemann puts it in her introduction: "What Loetz wants to know is what 'blasphemers actually did when they used blasphemous words' and what does this tell us about early modern Swiss/German society? What seems obvious here, an understanding of what blasphemy means, becomes in her detailed and anthropologically informed reading of speech acts (here from ecclesiastical court record) many things, non of them simple of transparent." pp. XXII-XXIII

and answers are regarded not only as requests and supplies of information, but as “strategic choices made by speakers among sets of verbal alternatives.”<sup>32</sup>

In my view, history of astrology can profit from new approaches to inquisitorial studies in two different ways. From the social perspective, the records of inquisitorial trials can serve to reconstruct some uses of astrology at the time, and the way in which different actors perceived, understood, and talked about these uses. From the intellectual perspective, the focus on certain *little tools of knowledge*, particularly on interrogation techniques used during the trials, can reveal much about the inquisitorial attitude towards astrology, which is in turn one of the main concerns of this work.

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<sup>32</sup> Joel Sherzer, in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Feb. 1980), 207-208 Book review: Goody, Esther N. *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press ; 1978.

### 3. Astrology and the Inquisition in New Spain during the seventeenth century

In recent decades, history of science in the New World has acquired new relevance within the frame of colonial studies. The works of Cañizares-Esguerra, Macleod, Pagden, and Schiebinger are among the most representative of this colonial approach to science.<sup>33</sup> In the best case, the rich mix of traditions shaping colonial science comes to light.<sup>34</sup> In the worst case, science emerges as one of the imperial power's instruments (together with the military, economic, and religious) to dominate the newly discovered territories and, perhaps more importantly, to construct the image of an inferior "other" who *had* to be colonized. Furthermore, as commercial interests from the Empire increased, the ways of possessing the New World's nature grew more specialized. "The need to control faraway lands brought together royal bureaucrats, merchants, pilots, and cosmographers in an effort to produce practical knowledge that could be used to govern the new lands and profit from its resources."<sup>35</sup> It is thus not surprising that medical botany, cartography, and metallurgy, disciplines which contributed to colonization, were more highly funded than others.<sup>36</sup>

Studies on science in the New World have also become salient as a result of a recent interest in processes of transmission and adaptation of knowledge outside the *centers* where

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<sup>33</sup> Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge. *How to write the history of the New World : histories, epistemologies, and identities in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world*. Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2001. --- "Iberian Science in the Renaissance: Ignored how much longer?" in *Perspectives of Science* 12 (2004), pp. 86-124. --- "Iberian Colonial Science" in *Isis* 96 (2005), pp. 64-70. MacLeod, Roy (ed.) *Nature and empire : science and the colonial enterprise*, Chicago, University of Chicago, 2000. Pagden, Anthony. *The Uncertainties of Empire. Essays in Iberian and Ibero-American Intellectual History*. Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain : Variorum; Brookfield, Vt., USA : Ashgate Pub. Co, 1994, --- *The fall of natural man : the American Indian and the origins of comparative ethnology*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1982. Schiebinger, Londa and Claudia Swan (eds) *Colonial botany : science, commerce and politics in the early modern world*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania press, 2005. --- "The European Colonial Science Complex". Introduction to "Colonial Science" in *Isis* 96 (2005). See also: Miguel de Asúa and Roger French. *A new world of animals: early modern Europeans on the creatures of Iberian America*. Aldershot-Vermont, Ashgate, 2005. Barrera, A. *Nature and Empire in the New World* (PhD Dissertation), University of California, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Schiebinger (2005) explains that the term *colonial science* can refer either to science done in Europe's overseas territories or to "any science done during the colonial era that involved Europeans working in a colonial context. This includes science done in Europe that drew on colonial resources in addition to science done in areas that were part of Europe's trading or territorial empires." p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> Barrera, Antonio. "Local Herbs, Global Medicines. Commerce, Knowledge, and Commodities in Spanish America" in Findlen, Paula and Pamela H. Smith (eds.) *Merchants and Marvels. Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Routledge; 2002, pp. 163-181. On Philip II and cosmography in Spanish colonial America, see chapter 1.

<sup>36</sup> Schiebinger (2005), p. 55.

the intellectual changes of the seventeenth century took place. Which mechanisms served for the transmission of knowledge from these centers to the *periphery*? How was this knowledge accepted or refuted? Which were the continuities and ruptures with already existing (local) scientific knowledge in these peripheral territories?<sup>37</sup> From this perspective, it has become evident that the exploration of the New World was indeed a crucial element for the intellectual revolution of the seventeenth century. The encounter with a new natural reality made it impossible for classical authorities to remain uncontested. With this “weakening of faith in ancient authority”, considered by some as “the single most important long-term consequence of the Iberian discoveries,”<sup>38</sup> empirical research gained a new status as a mode of scientific inquiry.<sup>39</sup>

History of science in New Spain has been approached from the colonial perspective by scholars such as Raquel Álvarez, and Barbara Mundy.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps as a colophon of a general historiographical tradition which tended to overlook the seventeenth century, studies of science during the colonial period have focused mainly on the period after the Conquest and before the Independence movements.<sup>41</sup> As Cañizares-Esguerra puts it, “the so-called decline of Spain has made historians of science focus mostly on the sixteenth-century apogee of the empire and its eighteenth-century Bourbon revival, to the detriment of the long

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<sup>37</sup> Lértora Mendoza, Celina A., Efthymios Nicolaïdis, and Jan Vandersmissen (eds.) *The spread of the scientific revolution in the European periphery, Latin America and East Asia*. Proceedings of the XXth International Congress of History of Science (Liège, 20-26 July). Turnhout, Brepols, 2000. Two of the contributions (Ramos, Saldaña) deal with the Mexican case, but they focus on eighteenth and nineteenth century science. See also: *Historia Social de las Ciencias en América Latina*, México, Porrúa, 1996; Luis Saraiva (ed.) *History of Mathematical Sciences: Portugal and East Asia II, Scientific Practices and the Portuguese Expansion in Asia (1478-1759)*. Singapore. World Scientific, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Goodman, David. “The Scientific Revolution in Spain and Portugal” in Roy Porter (ed.) *The Scientific Revolution in National Context*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 168. On this point see also: Anthony Grafton with April Shelford and Nancy Siraisi. *New worlds, ancient texts : the power of tradition and the shock of discovery*. Cambridge (Mass.) : The Belknap press, 1992.

<sup>39</sup> On the exploration of the New World and the importance of empirical research see: Barrera, Antonio. “Empire and Knowledge: Reporting from the New World” in *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 15: 1 (June 2006), pp. 39-54. And Sandman, Alison. “Mirroring the World. Sea Charts, Navigation, and Territorial Claims in Sixteenth-Century New Spain.” in Findlen and Smith (2002), pp. 83-108.

<sup>40</sup> Alvarez Peláez, Raquel. *La conquista de la naturaleza americana*, Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1993. Mundy, Barbara. *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*. Chicago, University of Chicago, 1996.

<sup>41</sup> For a study on the first period see: Alvarez Peláez (1993); --- “La tiranía de los astros sobre el hombre: melotesia zodiacal ” in . J.M. García González and A. Pociña Pérez (eds.) *Pervivencia y Actualidad de la Cultura Clásica*, Granada, 1996, pp. 263-286.

seventeenth century, allegedly characterized by forms of decadent, baroque scholarship.”<sup>42</sup> Within the more specific field of the history of astronomy-astrology, scholars have concentrated mainly on the Mesoamerican astronomical-astrological traditions.<sup>43</sup> Others have approached the history of astronomy from the point of view of the importance of cosmography for the discovery, exploration and colonization of the New World.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cañizares-Esguerra (2005), p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> On general **Mesoamerican** astronomy, astrology, and mathematics see: Galindo Trejo, Jesús. “La astronomía en el pasado prehispánico de México” in *Revista de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*. No. 486 (jul. 1991), p. 37-41. Garcés Contreras, Guillermo. *Pensamiento matemático y astronómico en el México precolombino*. México, IPN, 1990; García, Horacio and Norma Herrera. *Los señores del tiempo: sistemas calendáricos en Mesoamérica*. México- CNA, Pangea, 1991. Ibarra Grasso, and Dick Edgar. *La ciencia antigua y los zodíacos del viejo mundo y América*. Buenos Aires: Kier, 1995. Magaña, Edmundo and Peter Mason (eds.). *Myth and the imaginary in the new world*. Amsterdam: Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, 1986; Peeler, Damon E. And Marcus Winter. *Tiempo sagrado, espacio sagrado: astronomía, calendario y arquitectura en Monte Albán y Teotihuacán*. Oaxaca: Instituto Oaxaqueño de las Culturas, 1993. Sprajc, Ivan. *Venus, lluvia y maíz: simbolismo y astronomía en la cosmovisión mesoamericana*. México, INAH, 1996.

On **Mayan** astronomy and astrology see: Barrios, Carlos. *Ch’umilal wuj: el libro del destino: astrología maya*. Guatemala, Guatemala: Cholsamaj, 2004; Barrera Vásquez, Alfredo. *Horóscopos mayas*. México, 1943. Beverido Pereau, Francisco. *La astronomía en el mundo maya*. Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1994; Escalona Ramos, Alberto. *Cronología y astronomía maya-mexicana* (con un anexo de historias indígenas). México: Fides, 1940; González Torres, Yólotl. *El culto a los astros entre los mexicas*. México: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1975; Harleston, Hugh. *El zodiaco Maya: su horóscopo y características psíquicas*. México, Diana, 1991; Martínez Hernández, Juan. *Significación cronológica de los ciclos mayas*. Mérida, J. Díaz-Bolio, 1977; Martínez Paredes, Domingo. *Tres signos de eclipse en los jeroglíficos mayas*. México, 1957; Tedlock, Barbara. *Time and the highland Maya*. Albuquerque, N.M, University of New Mexico, 1992.

On **central-Mexican** (Aztec) tradition see: Caso, Alfonso. *El Calendario mexicano*. México: Academia Mexicana de la Historia, 1958. Doreste, Tomás. *Las insólitas profecías de Quetzalcóatl*. México, Planeta Mexicana, 1989; Galindo Trejo, Jesús and César Meraz (eds.) *Lajas celestes: Astronomía e historia en Chapultepec*, México, INAH-UNAM, 2003. Johnson, Charles William. *The Aztec calendar : the pointer*. New Orleans, La. : Earth/Matrix, 1995; Noriega, Raúl. *Interpretación matemático astronómica de la Piedra del Sol*. México, 1974; ---*La piedra del Sol y 16 ciclografías calendárico astronómicas del México antiguo: claves y significados*. México: Superación, 1955.

On **Archaeoastronomy** see: Aveni, Anthony F. (ed.) *Oxford International Conference on Archaeoastronomy* (selected papers). Merida, Yucatán, México: 1986. New York : Cambridge University, 1989; --- *Archaeoastronomy in the new world*. London : Cambridge University, [c1982]; ---*Skywatchers of ancient Mexico* (foreword by Owen Gingerich). Austin, Tex. : University of Texas, [c1980]. Broda, Johanna, Stanislaw Iwaniszewski, and Lucrecia Maupomé (eds.) *Arqueoastronomía y etnoastronomía en Mesoamérica*. México : Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas-UNAM, 1991. Galindo Trejo, Jesús. *Arqueoastronomía en la América antigua*. Madrid : Equipo Sirius, 1994.

<sup>44</sup> See: Cruz, Manuel. *Naos y estrellas : el firmamento que guió a Colón*. Madrid : Sirius, 1990; Lamb, Ursula. *Cosmographers and pilots of the Spanish Maritime Empire*. Brookfield, Vt. Variorum, 1995. Rodríguez Sala, Ma. Luisa. *El eclipse de Luna : misión científica de Felipe II en Nueva España*. Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 1998. González González, Francisco José. *Astronomía y navegación en España, siglos XVI-XVIII*. Madrid : MAPFRE, 1992.

Without the shadow of a doubt, Elías Trabulse is the scholar who has carried out the biggest effort to reconstruct the history of science in Mexico.<sup>45</sup> He has systematically reconstructed the lives and works of the most outstanding astronomers-astrologers of the seventeenth century: Friar Diego Rodríguez and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora.<sup>46</sup> The latter, considered as the most prominent scholar of the time, has long been the focus of historians' attention.<sup>47</sup> As far as I know, however, only three scholars have dealt with astrology in New Spain during the seventeenth century: José M. Quintana, Miruna Achim, and Rosalba Tena. Quintana undertook the important task of extracting from the inquisitorial archives the yearly almanacs and forecasts composed by astronomers, astrologers, and physicians of seventeenth-century New Spain.<sup>48</sup> As for Miruna Achim, she has recently published an article where she

<sup>45</sup> See Trabulse's five volumes on *Historia de la ciencia en México*, México, FCE-Conacyt, 1983-1989. And the condensed version in one volume: *Historia de la ciencia en México*, México, FCE, 1997. On the history of Astronomy in Mexico see: Alvarez, Manuel, et. al. *Historia de la astronomía en México*. México, FCE, 2003; Gallo, Joaquín. *Panorama de la astronomía en México*. México, 1960.

<sup>46</sup> On Friar Diego Rodríguez see: Trabulse, Elías "Un científico mexicano del siglo XVII: Fray Diego Rodríguez y su obra" in *Historia Mexicana*, XXIV (1974), I, pp. 36-69; *El círculo roto*, México, FCE, 1985, 85 pp; "La vida conventual de un científico novohispano" in *Historia Mexicana* (1989); 152:743-769; "La ciencia en el Convento. La Vida Cotidiana de un Científico Novohispano del siglo XVII" in Gonzalo Aizpuru, Pilar, editor. *Historia de la Vida Cotidiana en México*. Vol II. La ciudad barroca. Mexico: FCE-Colmex; 2005; pp. 193-219. Moreno, Roberto. in López Piñeiro, J.M (et.al) *Diccionario histórico de la ciencia moderna en España*, Barcelona, Península, 1983, II, 244. Orozco y Berra, *Apuntes para la historia de la geografía en México*, México, 1881. Francisco Fernández del Castillo. *La Facultad de Medicina*. México, UNAM, 1953. Muñoz Delgado, Vicente. "Profesores Mercedarios de la Real Y Pontificia Universidad de México hasta 1821" in Ramírez Clara Inés y Armando Pavón (comp.) *La universidad novohispana: corporación gobierno y vida académica*. México, UNAM, 1996, pp; Rodríguez Sala, María Luisa. "Fray Diego Rodríguez: astrónomo-astrólogo-matemático, precursor de la modernidad científica nacional." In Rodríguez Sala (ed.) *Del estamento ocupacional a la comunidad científica : astrónomos-astrólogos e ingenieros, siglos XVII al XIX*. México: UNAM; 2004; pp. 85-130.

<sup>47</sup> One of the best known is: Leonard, Irving. *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Gongora : a Mexican savant of the seventeenth century* tr. by Juan José Utrilla, México, FCE, 1984. See also: Chavero, Alfredo. "Sigüenza y Góngora" in *Anales del Museo Nacional*, Primera Época, Vol. III, (1886), pp. 258-271. Frías, Valentín. "Noticia bibliográfica de los escritos de don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora y José María Zela e Hidalgo" en *Memorias de la Sociedad Científica "Antonio Alzate"*, XXIV (1906-1907), p. 131. León, Nicolás *Tres obras de Sigüenza y Góngora*, Morelia, 1886. Pérez Salazar, Francisco *Biografía de Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora seguida de varios documentos inéditos*, Antigua Imprenta de Murguía, México, 1928. Trabulse, Elías. *Ciencia y religión en el siglo XVII*, México, Colmex, 1974. Moreno, R. "Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora" in J.M. López Piñero, T. F. Glick, V. Navarro Brotóns, y E. Portela Marco (dirs.) *Diccionario Histórico de la Ciencia Moderna en España*, Barcelona, Península, Vol. 2, pp. 324-326. H. García Fernández, "Manifiesto filosófico sobre un genio novohispano: Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora" in *Ciencia y Desarrollo*, num. 75, año XIII (julio-agosto 1987), pp. 41-50. Mayer, Alicia. *Dos americanos, dos pensamientos: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora y Cotton Mayer*, México, 1998, UNAM. Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. "La Libra astronómica y philosophica de Sigüenza y Góngora: la polémica sobre el cometa de 1680" in *Cronos*. 2000; 2(1):105-144. On the polemics Sigüenza-Kino about the comet of 1680 see also: Montané Martí, Julio César. *Intriga en la Corte*. Universidad de Sonora, Hermosillo, 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Quintana, José Miguel. *La Astrología en la Nueva España en el Siglo XVII*. México: Bibliófilos Mexicanos; 1969. This work is more bibliographical than analytical, and I will strongly rely on it for my Chapter 7 on the different kind of astrological predictions.

analyses an inquisitorial trial against the astrologer Nicolás de Aste.<sup>49</sup> Through this case study, Achim contests the “official and teleological” history of Mexican science, by underlining the coexistence and mutual influence of elite and popular cultures. Finally, Tena has reconstructed the life and works of an astronomer-astrologer of the seventeenth-century called Gabriel López de Bonilla.<sup>50</sup>

The works of both Quintana and Achim have emphasized the importance of inquisitorial archives for historians of science. Before them, the outstanding works of Julio Jiménez Rueda revealed the value of these sources for reconstructing the cultural history of colonial Mexico. His classic work *Herejías y supersticiones en la Nueva España* dealt specifically with the question of astrology and its persecution by the Holy Office.<sup>51</sup> However, the relationship between astrology and the Inquisition has never been the central focus of any academic undertaking yet.

A history of astrology and the Inquisition in seventeenth-century New Spain is at the crossroads of history of science, intellectual history, history of religion, social, and colonial history. My aim is to write a social history of intellectual practices that makes apparent the complexity of the subject, while contributing to a better understanding of the *functions* and *roles* astrology played in seventeenth-century New Spain. By doing so, I would like to challenge histories of the inquisition that concentrate mainly on the institution’s political role. Without neglecting the importance of power struggles, I will suggest a reading of inquisitorial trials as shedding light on some relevant intellectual issues of the time. Important as it is to see that the Inquisition fulfilled a political function in the colonial context, a too strong focus on institutional power conflicts might overlook the way in which the Inquisition actually engaged with astrological debate.

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<sup>49</sup> Achim, Miruna. “De dragones y astrólogos” in *Fractal*. 2005; VII(27):129-142. The author has made other contributions to the subject which are unfortunately unpublished: “El siglo de las luces mágico o ilustrado? Ciencia, astrología y sus públicos en el siglo XVIII?”, Seminar at the IIF, UNAM, September 8th, 2004; “Entre Aristóteles y Newton: la astrología colonial mexicana en ‘tierra de nadie’”, paper presented at the IX Congreso Mexicano de Historia de la Ciencia y la Tecnología (15-18 August, 2004); and “Reading signs: the use of astrological calendars in XVIIth century México.”

<sup>50</sup> Tena Villeda, Rosalba. “Gabriel López Bonilla, un astrónomo-astrólogo en el siglo XVII mexicano.” In Rodríguez Sala (2004), pp. 33-83.

<sup>51</sup> Especially: Jiménez Rueda, Julio. *Herejías y supersticiones en la Nueva España*. México: UNAM; 1946.

In my dissertation, I will first present an outline of the main features of astrology during the early-modern period (Chapter 1), and explain the problematic relationship between astrology and the Inquisition (Chapter 2). Secondly, I will present three case-studies of inquisitorial trials against astrologers in New Spain between the years 1641 and 1655.\* Chronologically, the first trial was carried out against a member of the Mercedarian Order, Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, who was accused of making astrological predictions for the president of Guatemala.<sup>52</sup> In this case, special attention will be paid to the institutional setting, the role of political predictions, and the overlapping of astrology with other fields of knowledge. The second trial took place in 1650, when the mulatto Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos was accused of practicing judicial astrology and making slanderous accusations against members of the Holy Office.<sup>53</sup> The aim of this chapter is to show how the practice of astrology, usually regarded by Mexican inquisitors as a minor crime, could become more dangerous in a context of extraordinary political unrest, such as the campaign against the crypto-Jewish community in New Spain. Finally, in 1655 Melchor Pérez de Soto was accused of possessing forbidden books, and practicing judicial astrology.<sup>54</sup> In this case, I will focus on the process of transmission of astrological knowledge, and, by tracing some material means of dissemination of knowledge, I will try to identify an intellectual network of practitioners of astrology at the time. Moreover, I will aim at reconstructing some ways of appropriation of astrological knowledge, reflected on the use of specific readings for practical purposes.

Each case-study will be read as an independent account whose details might obscure a more cohesive story. Yet, when read as a whole this story proposes an interpretation of

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<sup>52</sup> *Causa contra Fray Nicolás de Alarcón de la orden de nuestra señora de las Mercedes sobre las figuras que ha lebantado conforme esta astrologia judiciaria en favor de Don Arturo de Quiñones Osorio, cavallero de la orden de Santiago Marques de Lornecanda presidente de la real Audiencia de Guatemala.* (1641). AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 370, exp. 1, folios 1-195. (From now on AGN-370)

<sup>53</sup> *Proceso y causa criminal contra Gaspar de Rivero Vazconcelos, mulato libre y estudiante canonista, descendiente de portugueses, natural de la Ciudad de Tanger en Africa y vecino de esta ciudad de México, por astrólogo judiciario, calumniador del Santo Oficio y sus Ministros y Sospechoso de la Fe.* (1650). AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 435, Tomo 2, expediente 248, folios 475-653. (From now on AGN-435)

<sup>54</sup> *Causa a Melchor Perez de Soto, astrólogo, sobre retener libros prohibidos de astrología judiciaria y usar de ella.* (1649). Biblioteca del INAH, 2; Sección de Manuscritos, Inquisición, folios 126-238. (From now on INAH-2)



inquisitorial trials that can shed some light on two main features: the way in which astrology was practiced and understood (talked about) in seventeenth-century New Spain, and the inquisitorial attitude towards this practice.<sup>55</sup> Chapters 6 and 7 will emphasize these two aspects while integrating more material from the inquisitorial archive.s The former will reflect on the wide spectrum of astrological predictions and the position of Mexican inquisitors towards them. The latter will return to the reflection on pre-modern disciplinary boundaries, while looking at astrology's relationship with other fields of knowledge.

The question about the role of the Inquisition in the shaping of modern science in Iberian countries has been more than often framed within the long lasting *Black Legend* controversy.<sup>56</sup> However, recent scholarship on the history of Iberian and Ibero-American science has proved the sterility of such an approach.<sup>57</sup> In my view, the question is not whether the Inquisition actually undermined the development of modern science within Catholic countries. Rather, the question is how (and to what extent) this institution contributed to the resettling of boundaries between knowledge and belief.

\* A note on the translation: All translations into English from original documents in Spanish cited in this work are mine. The original versions will be found in footnotes, with modernized spelling.

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<sup>55</sup> My emphasis on the inquisitorial attitude towards astrology was partly inspired by Ginzburg's post-scriptum (1972) to his *Benadanti* where he points out that some of his reviewers had criticized the insufficient attention paid to inquisitors and their attitude towards witchcraft. Ginzburg (2002), p. XVII.

<sup>56</sup> The term was coined in 1914 by Julián Juderías in order to describe the stereotype of early modern Spain as 'inquisitorial, ignorant, fanatical, incapable of taking a place among the cultured nations, always inclined toward violent repression, an enemy of progress and innovation.'

<sup>57</sup> For a very interesting discussion on this debate see: Navarro and Eamon "Spain and the Scientific Revolution: Historiographical Questions and Conjectures", introduction to the international meeting organized in Valencia (September, 2005). See also Pardo Tomás, José. *Ciencia y Censura. La Inquisición española y los libros científicos en los siglos XVI y XVII*. Madrid: CSIC; 1991.

## Chapter 1. Early Modern Astrology: a Question of Discipline?

It is now well known that astrology was not regarded as a *pseudo* or *occult*-science during the Renaissance or the early modern period, mainly because this definition was constructed as a diametrical opposite of another entity (modern science) which did not exist yet. Thus the use of these terms to refer to astrology during the seventeenth century is clearly anachronistic. However, it is *also* mistaken to assume that at the time there was no difference whatsoever between astrology and astronomy. Ptolemy, the highest authority on the science of the stars during the Ancient period, distinguished clearly between astrology (*Quadripartitum*) and astronomy (*Almagest*), though he used the term *astrologia* to refer to both of them.<sup>58</sup> The problem lies precisely on this fact: while we nowadays use a stable terminology to differentiate astrology from astronomy, the difference between the Latin terms *astronomia* and *astrologia* (and their vernacular variations) was very shaky and they were often interchangeable during the early modern period. Either of them could be used to refer to a general science of the stars, which included both fields of knowledge: the study of the movement of the celestial bodies, and the study of their influence on Earth.<sup>59</sup> This means that the use of the term *astrologia* does not necessarily imply that we are dealing with astrology in the sense we understand it today. Likewise, astrology could be found in texts dealing with *astronomia*.

If astrology was not an occult-science, a religion, a magical practice, astronomy, alchemy, or witchcraft, how can we talk about it without being anachronistic? Newman and Grafton had referred to astrology as a “recognized publicly practiced art.”<sup>60</sup> Geneva defines it as “a unique divinatory and prognostic art embodying centuries of accredited methodology and tradition.”<sup>61</sup> According to Capp, astrology “was the most systematic attempt to explain natural phenomena according to rigorous scientific laws until the modern scientific

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<sup>58</sup> On this topic see: Paul Kunitzsch. “Die astronomische Terminologie im Almagest” in *Stars and numbers : astronomy and mathematics in the medieval Arab and western worlds*. Aldershot : Ashgate, c2004. Albertus Magnus used the term *astronomia* for both sciences of the stars. (Rutkin, 2002, p. 21)

<sup>59</sup> See Rutkin (2005a), p. 543. On this topic also: S. Pines. “The Semantic Distinction between the Terms Astronomy and Astrology according to al-Biruni” in *Isis*, Vol. 55. No. 3 (September, 1964), pp. 343-349.

<sup>60</sup> Newman, William R. and Anthony Grafton. *Secrets of Nature. Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge-London: MIT Press; 2001.

<sup>61</sup> Geneva (1995), p. 9-12.

revolution.”<sup>62</sup> Caro Baroja describes it as a “system of judgements inferred from the observation of the stars, regarding the effects they are believed to produce in human events and terrestrial things in general.”<sup>63</sup> Keith Thomas argued that astrology served during the seventeenth century as the basis and justification of all the other *occult sciences*: it permeated almost every aspect of scientific thought because it was necessary for the understanding of physiology, botany, metallurgy, and psychology. Therefore, it was “an essential aspect of the intellectual framework in which men were educated.”<sup>64</sup> Astrology did share some common ground with other fields, such as astronomy and mathematics. However, as Geneva explains, it developed unique diagnostic categories and methodologies, which had more in common with medical diagnosis.<sup>65</sup> The fact is that it is difficult to find a stable enough category that is useful for historical inquiry, especially because we are situated in a period of intense re-shaping of knowledge.<sup>66</sup> At the outset, the concept of *discipline* seems to be a safer ground from where to observe astrology and its relationship with other fields of knowledge.

As Grafton and Newman point out, early-modern astrology “formed more than a set of abstract theories and beliefs. It was also a coherent body of practices, strongly supported by institutions”.<sup>67</sup> Like de Certeau frames it, it is the institutional setting, the shared knowledge, and the community of practitioners that shape a discipline. According to Kelly, the virtue of the concept of *discipline* resides on the fact that it is a social, institutional, and intellectual structure which preserves a certain unity across geographical and chronological divisions.<sup>68</sup> Originally, *discipline* was defined as the relationship between disciple and master

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<sup>62</sup> Capp, Bernard. *Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs 1500-1800*. London: Faber and Faber; 1979, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> Caro Baroja, Julio. *Vidas Mágicas e Inquisición*. Taurus: Madrid; 1967, p. 159. The translation is mine.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas (1971), p. 285.

<sup>65</sup> Geneva (1995), p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> On the problem of the “classifications of the sciences between the time of the medieval *Studium* and that of the French *Encycopédie*” and the question of seventeenth century philosophy of “how to cope with the huge weight of intellectual tradition produced by Renaissance scholarship”, and the fundamental question facing “how to deal with the doctrinal past” see: Kelley, Donald R. and Popkin, Richard H. *The Shapes of Knowledge from Renaissance to the Enlightenment*. Dordrecht (Netherlands): Kluwer Academic Publishers; 1997. On the classification of knowledge in the Middle Ages see: Dahan, G. “Les classifications du savoir aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles” in *L'Enseignement philosophique* 40/4 (1990), p. 5-27. and. Weisheipl, J.A. “The Classification of Sciences in Medieval Thought. *Medieval Studies*, 27 (1965), p. 54-90.

<sup>67</sup> Newman and Grafton (2001), p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Kelley, Donald R. (ed.) *History and the Disciplines. The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*. New York: University of Rochester Press; 1997, p. 26.

and thus possessed both religious and pedagogical connotations. Marks of disciplinarity became more complex, and include other features, such as: a characteristic method, specialized terminology, a community of practitioners, a canon of authorities, and agenda of problems to be addressed, and formal signs of a professional condition: journals, textbooks, courses of study, libraries, rituals, and social gatherings.<sup>69</sup> Each discipline has of course its own distinctive traits, but there are some common patterns that can be identified. One is the impulse to achieve parity or superiority to rival fields of knowledge. The other one, very closely related, is the adoption of a social and institutional base in order to preserve an intellectual continuity.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, one of the keys for understanding whether a field of knowledge can or cannot be regarded as a discipline is its community of practitioners.

In my work, I will argue that it is not possible to talk about a community of astrologers in New Spain during the seventeenth century. This is mainly due to the fact that the group of people who were engaged with the study of the influence of the stars on Earth was not homogeneous. Moreover, they were not fully devoted to the cultivation of this particular field of knowledge, but they studied and practiced astrology as a complementary tool for carrying out other activities. In this first chapter, I will present a general overview of the main features of astrology during the early modern period: its tradition, language, and institutional environment. This outline will serve as a starting point for contrasting these general characteristics with the specificity of astrological practice in the cultural context that concerns us.

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<sup>69</sup> Kelley (1997), p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Kelley (1997), pp. 25-26.

## 1.1 The astrological tradition

From ancient times, astrology was an important part of the intellectual repertoire of the mathematician-astronomer.<sup>71</sup> Babylonian cosmology in the seventh century BC developed a conception of the universe where the movements in the cosmos were related to human acts. Babylonians and Chaldeans established the first correlations between celestial bodies and terrestrial events.<sup>72</sup> This system of correlations appeared to be very successful among Egyptians (Herodoto, *De Astrologia*, usually printed together with Luciano's works) and the Hellenistic world. According to classical mythology, astrology was introduced by Orfeo, who gave an astrological interpretation to some scandalous events such as Venus's adultery.<sup>73</sup> Ptolemy, the most famous of Greek astrologers, regarded both astronomy and astrology as complementary, though he considered that astrology was 'not so self-sufficient' because it depended on astronomy for its factual basis.<sup>74</sup> The 'most divine Ptolemy' thus clearly distinguished between the two sciences of the stars, and he dedicated his *Quadripartitum* to astrology, and his *Almagest* to astronomy.<sup>75</sup>

Medieval astrology seems to have been very rudimentary before receiving the influence of Muslim sciences. There seems to have been almost no knowledge of anything which could be regarded as an authoritative textbook. Neither Firmicus Maternus nor

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<sup>71</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 133.

<sup>72</sup> On Babylonian astrology see: Brown, David. *Mesopotamian Planetary Astronomy-Astrology*. Groningen, Styx, 2000. Campion, N. "Babylonian Astrology: Its Origin and Legacy in Europe", in *Astronomy Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Astronomy*, éd. H. Selin, Dordrecht, 2000, pp. 509-559; Hunger and Pingree. *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 1999, 303 pp; Koch-Westenholz, U. *Mesopotamian Astrology: An Introduction to Babylonian and Assyrian Celestial Divination*, Kobenhavn, 1995, 223 pp. Neugebauer, O. *Astronomical Cuneiform Texts*, London, 1955, 3 vols. Pettinato, G. *La scrittura celeste. La nascita dell'astrologia in Mesopotamia*, Milano, 1998. Rochberg-Halton, F. *Babylonian Horoscopes*, Philadelphia, 1998, 164 pp. ---*The Heavenly writing: Divination, Horoscopy, and Astronomy in Mesopotamian Culture*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004. Steele, John M. and Annette Imhausen. *Under one sky: astronomy and mathematics in the ancient Near East*. Münster: Ugarit, 2002.

<sup>73</sup> Caro Baroja (1967), p. 161.

<sup>74</sup> Tester, Jim. *A History of Western Astrology*. New Hampshire: The Boydell Press; 1987, p. 57.

<sup>75</sup> Bouché-Leclercq's *L'Astrologie Grecque* (1899) has for long been regarded as the best introduction to Hellenistic astrology. Moreover, his work can also be considered as a landmark in the history of astrology for it emphasized the importance of astrology within western culture. As Lanuza (2005, p. 5) points out, the publication of Leclercq's work coincides with the edition of classical astrological texts such as Firmicus Maternus by Kroll (1897), and Manilius by Housman (1903). Furthermore, during these same years, Franz Cumont published the first volume of his monumental compendia for the study of classical astrology, the *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum* (1898). The twelfth and last volume appeared in 1953.

Manilius were known before the ninth century, and the *Quadripartitum* only came in the wake of Islam.<sup>76</sup> During the low Middle Ages the main sources of medieval cosmological notions were the works of Aristotle (*De Caelo*, *Metaphysica*, *Physica*, *Meteorologica*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*), through his Greek and, especially, Arabic commentators such as Averroes, and Albumasar. The latter's *Great Introduction to the Science of Astrology* was one of the main sources for the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth century. As early as the second century Ptolemy had identified the planets with the four Aristotelian qualities, but it was Albumasar "who effected the complete amalgamation of Aristotle's theories of the processes of natural change, growth and decay, with the determining principle of celestial control of sub-lunar events that gave astrology its main claim to credibility in the Middle Ages."<sup>77</sup>

In the later Middle Ages, astrology's applications varied from the most practical to the most theoretical.<sup>78</sup> On the practical side, astrology was a fundamental part of the physician's training, and it offered information about weather, crop size, and personal matters. In medieval courts, the rise of astrology was particularly marked in France, England, and Italy. Horoscopes influenced political and military decisions, while other public events were allowed to take place only on auspicious days. "The stars were questioned for every great state decision, consulted for the most propitious hour on which to engage in any undertakings of importance, particularly for princely travel, and especially for decisions in time of war."<sup>79</sup> On the theoretical side, it was in the later Middle Ages that the finest intellectuals of the day (Robert Grosseteste, Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon and Thomas Aquinas) set the natural philosophical basis of what Rutkin has called a "deeply astrologizing Aristotelianism."<sup>80</sup> In

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<sup>76</sup> Clarke, Angus G. *Giovanni Antonio Magini (1555-1617) and late Renaissance Astrology*. Warburg Institute (PhD thesis); 1985, p. 191.

<sup>77</sup> Carey (1992), p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Smoller (1994), p. 22. For recent publications on history of medieval astrology and astronomy see: Edson Evelyn and Emilie Savage-Smith. *Medieval Vies of the Cosmos. Picturing the Universe in the Christian and Islamic Middle Ages*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, 2004. Kunitzsch, Paul. *Stars and Numbers: Astronomy and Mathematics in the Medieval Arab and Western Worlds*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot/Burlington, Ashgate, 2004. Mercier, Raymond. *Studies on the Transmission of Medieval Mathematical Astronomy*. Variorum Collected Studies Series. Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2004.

<sup>79</sup> Bedini, Silvio. "Falconi, Renaissance Astrologer". *Nuncius*. 2004; XIX(1):31-76

<sup>80</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 15.

the medieval university, astrology was a honorable member of the *quadrivium*, and cultivated with high interest by scholars, despite theological opposition.

Renaissance astrology has received scholarly attention from many different perspectives, probably because it was in this period when art, science, religion and philosophy began to converge or to conflict in the debates surrounding astrology.<sup>81</sup> Within the fields of history of art and philology, the Warburg school made invaluable contributions to the understanding of astrological motifs in Renaissance pictorial art as means of transmission and re-interpretation of classical mythology.<sup>82</sup> Some scholars have recently criticized Warburg's method and his attitude toward superstition.<sup>83</sup> Yet, it is worth noting that the Warburg Institute nowadays is the *alma mater* of scholars who recognize astrology as one of the main fields in the intellectual landscape of the Renaissance. Furthermore, scholars from the Warburg school (Burnett, Goldstein, Lemay, Pingree, Yamamoto) have also turned their attention towards astrology in an attempt to reassess the importance of non-Western intellectual traditions.

Scholars concerned with the role of magic in Renaissance natural philosophy have regarded Marsilio Ficino's astro-magical theories as one of the most sophisticated elaborations of astrological doctrines during this period. Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* (the third book of his *De triplici vita*) is probably one of the most complex and detailed elaborations of the magical-astrological conception of nature during the Renaissance. According to Ficino, through the stellar radiations, the heavens influenced the entire physical and moral state of men. Every man was tied to his planet from the moment of his birth through an indestructible bond.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, all earthly and natural effects were *inclinations of* but not *determined by* stellar radiations. Through the distinction between astral inclination

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<sup>81</sup> Garin, Eugenio. *The Zodiac of Life*. London: Routledge; 1983.

<sup>82</sup> Aby Warburg himself and, especially, Franz Boll and Carl Bezold (*Sternglaube und Sterndeutung. Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie*, Stuttgart, 1966); Saxl, Fritz (*Lectures*, London, 1957) R. Klibansky y E. Panofsky (*Saturn and Melancholy*, 1964). See also: Jean Seznec. *La survivance des dieux antiques*. (1980).

<sup>83</sup> See Ginzburg's critique of the *Warburg method*: "From Aby Warburg to E.H. Gombrich" in *Myths, Emblems, and Clues*, pp. 17-60. Newman and Grafton (2001) said that Warburg inherited from Burckhardt not only his method, but also his attitude to superstition. "Warburg saw astrology as incoherent and debased and its practitioners as credulous", p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> Cassirer, Ernst. *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*. New York: Dover Publications; 1963, p. 16.

and determination, Ficino tried to reconcile his astrological ideas with his Christian faith. This attempt was part of a tradition as old as Christianity itself and, during the early modern period, it continued being a relevant issue of theological debate.<sup>85</sup>

The basis for Ficino's astro-magical theory was the Neoplatonic doctrine of the *vehicle of the soul*. After the second century of the Christian era, the hypothesis of cosmic information printed on the soul before the moment of birth and determinant of an individual's destiny, was combined with the doctrine of the incorporation, descent and ascension of the soul. During its journey from the heavens down to the Earth (the descent), the soul assimilates planetary concretions which will be kept until the ascension back again to the cosmos, to its original place of birth.<sup>86</sup> The seven planets then reinforce in human bodies and souls the seven original virtues conceded by God. Contemplation is reinforced by Saturn; power, by Jupiter; the value of soul, by Mars; the clearness of the senses, by the Sun; love, by Venus; the capacity of interpretation and expression, by Mercury; and generation, by the Moon.<sup>87</sup> The souls descended to their bodies through the constellation of Cancer and ascended through Capricorn, covered with a celestial veil, called *pneuma*.<sup>88</sup> The neo-Platonic language of correspondences and harmonies in which Ficino's astrological theories were based was dismantled by the end of the early modern period. A consequence of this dismantling, Geneva states, was the decline of astrology by the end of the seventeenth

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<sup>85</sup> On Ficino and astrology see also: Copenhaver "Astrology and Magic" in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 265-299. And Vasoli, Cesare. "Marsilio Ficino e l'Astrologia" in Istituto di Studio Umanistici F. Petrarca. *L'astrologia e la sua influenza nella filosofia, nella letteratura e nell'arte dall'eta classica al Rinascimento*. Milano: Nuovi Orizzonte; 1992; pp. 159-186. For a general bibliography on Ficino Vasoli refers to: P.O. Kristeller. *Marsilio Ficino and his work after five hundred years*. Firenze, 1987, pp. 36-66.

<sup>86</sup> Culianu, Ioan. *Eros y magia en el Renacimiento*. Madrid: Siruela; 1999, p. 54. The Translation is mine. "Como en el caso de la pneumofantasmología, una disciplina antigua -esta vez la astrología- ha engendrado la hipótesis de una información cósmica prenatal impresa en el alma y determinante en el destino del individuo. A partir del siglo II después de J.C., esta idea se combinó con la historia de la incorporación del alma, de su descenso a la tierra y de su regreso al cielo. Ahora podemos imaginar cómo el alma, penetrando en el mundo, asimila concreciones planetarias que no abandonará hasta la salida del cosmos, durante la ascención que lo conduce a su lugar de nacimiento. La doctrina del 'vehículo del alma', perfeccionada por los neoplatónicos, hará su entrada gloriosa en la entrada gloriosa en la astromagia de Ficino y de sus discípulos." (p. 54)

<sup>87</sup> Culianu (1999), p. 76.

<sup>88</sup> In Stoic philosophy, the world is analyzed, at the lowest level, into an active principle, God, and a passive principle, matter, both probably corporeal. Out of these are generated, at a higher level, the four elements, air, fire, earth, and water, whose interaction is analogous to that of god and matter: air and fire, severally or conjointly, are an active rational force called breath (Greek *pneuma*, Latin *spiritus*), while earth and water constitute the passive substrate on which these act. In inanimate objects this unifying *pneuma* is called a *hexis* (state), in plants it is called *physis* (nature), and in animals *soul*. See "Stoicism" in Robert Audi (ed.), *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999 (Second edition), pp. 879-880.



century. This question, however, is much more complex, and will be tackled at the end of this chapter.

Last but not least, cultural historians have acknowledged the role, occasionally crucial, played by astrology in courtly as well as ecclesiastical politics during the Renaissance. Perhaps one of the most important contributions of the cultural studies to the history of science is the emphasis on the reconstruction of the social dimension of science. The notion of *patronage* has been defined by Biagioli as a “historiographical category by which ritual interaction in civic life, sense of heritage, kinship and friendship bonds, political and economical activity are analysed.”<sup>89</sup> It may work as a tool for understanding certain processes of identity and status formation, which are also key to understanding scientists’ cognitive attitudes and career strategies.<sup>90</sup> Two of the most paradigmatic examples of astrological patronage in the Renaissance, are Kepler’s dedication of his *Astronomia Nova* (1609) to Rudolf II, and Galileo’s dedication of his *Sidereus Nuncius* (1609) to Cosimo II.<sup>91</sup> When Galileo claimed that the “four stars were reserved for the illustrious name of the Medici”, he related his *gift* of Jupiter’s stars to Cosimo II personally by the device of relating Jupiter to Cosimo’s natal horoscope. Galileo’s model was Kepler’s dedicatory letter, which also had an astrological motif at the center.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Biagioli, Mario. “Galileo’s System of Patronage” in *History of Science*, vol. 28, 1990, pp. 1-62. On patronage, see also Westfall (“Science and Patronage: Galileo and the Telescope” in *Isis*, Vol. 76: 1985, pp. 11-30), and Westman (“Proof, Poetics and Patronage: Copernicus’s Preface to *De Revolutionibus*” in David Lindberg and Robert S. Westman. *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1990, pp. 167-205.

<sup>90</sup> Biagioli (1990), p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Rutkin, H. Darrel. “Celestial Offerings: Astrological Motifs in the Dedicatory Letters of Kepler’s *Astronomia Nova* and Galileo’s *Sidereus Nuncius*” in Newman and Grafton. (2001), pp. 133-172. And Biagioli, Mario. “Galileo the Emblem Maker” in *Isis*, vol. 81, no. 307, June 1990, pp. 230-256.

<sup>92</sup> Rutkin (2001), p. 135.

## 1.2. The astrological practice

Astrology, the art of judging the influence of the stars on earthly matters, has a practical and a theoretical side. As Rutkin explains, the practical aspect is concerned with the actual construction and interpretation of horoscopes, while the theoretical aspect has a more complex structure and requires a further distinction based on how the theorizing is oriented. It can be oriented toward practical applications, for example, answering questions about the nature of a planet, sign or house so that the practitioner can interpret the *meaning* of a given astrological figure. This would be the kind of theory found in many astrological textbooks. But astrological theory could also be oriented, although it happened less often, “toward the natural philosophical scientific foundations for astrology, asking more fundamental questions, such as, how does astrology work, that is, what is the nature of planetary influence in general on the terrestrial world, how do they work, etc”.<sup>93</sup>

As regards the practical side of astrology, Albertus Magnus, elaborating on Ptolemy’s distinction between *astronomia* and *astrologia*, described as early as the thirteenth century the different types of astrological praxis in his work *Speculum astronomiae* (1260s).<sup>94</sup>

a) *Revolutions* were concerned with large-scale changes, primarily of weather, but also in political affairs. These general predictions usually took note of extraordinary astronomical events (such as eclipses, comets, or conjunctions), and they were made for a whole city or country to show the likelihood of war, disease or famine in the year of the prediction or in coming years. The theory of planetary conjunctions, imported to the West from Arabic astrology, was one of the most successful doctrines for understanding historical events and elaborating general predictions.<sup>95</sup>

b) *Nativities*, also known as genethliology, studied the astrological configuration at a person’s birth; the astrologer would normally explain what consequences this state would have for

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<sup>93</sup> Rutkin (2002), pp. 20-21.

<sup>94</sup> Rutkin (2005a), p. 543.

<sup>95</sup> A planetary conjunction means that, as seen from the earth, two celestial bodies appear near one another in the sky. Planetary conjunctions in general, and in particular those of Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars are to the world what the horoscope is to man: they are the signs and the causes of great historical events. See: Garin (1983), p. 76.

his/her health, wealth, travels, marriage, fortune, and death. In the case of nativities, the term *revolutions* could also refer to a yearly analysis of the positions of the planets at the anniversary of the client's birth, over a period of fifty or sixty years.<sup>96</sup> Nativities could be made at the moment of the child's birth or reconstructed for older people who were able to supply the necessary details of their time of birth.

c) *Elections*, also known as catarchic astrology, determined the most propitious moment to begin an enterprise or perform an activity, such as crowning a ruler, passing the baton of command to a general, or laying the cornerstone of an important building. Sometimes, elections were made by comparing the future movements of the heavens with the tendencies indicated by the client's horoscope.

d) *Interrogations* addressed questions on any matter of concern, including personal, medical, and business related issues. They were "horary questions" based on the configuration of heavens at the moment of the question. The client would sometimes also ask the astrologer to cast the interrogation of a past event of his or her life in order to find out how it was going to develop in the future.<sup>97</sup> The use of talismans and amulets was sometimes included in this category, because they had to be carved at a specific time so that the stars and planets could exert their curative influence on men.<sup>98</sup>

The act of interpretation is the feature that gave astrology its coherence; but not all kind of interpretations had the same reputation. Interrogations were "especially controversial and lost ground during and after the Renaissance, when there was a tendency to reject medieval accretions and return to the purity of the Ptolemaic science."<sup>99</sup> These astrologers proposed a new and reformed astrology, based on Ptolemy's authority, instead of Manilius'.<sup>100</sup> In Book III of his *Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon called for a *sane Astrology* for civic purposes. This was the kind of astrology applied for agricultural purposes

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<sup>96</sup> Newman and Grafton (2001), p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Rutkin, H. Darrel. "Various uses of Horoscopes. Astrological Practices in Early Modern Europe" in. *Horoscopes and Public Spheres* (2005), pp. 167-180. And Smoller. (2000), p. 431.

<sup>98</sup> See chapters 5 and 7

<sup>99</sup> Capp (1979), p. 17.

<sup>100</sup> The Stoic author of the *Astronomica*. became an authority in astrological from his rediscovery by Poggio in 1416 and all through the rest of the fifteenth century.

(grafting, sowing and planting), and for the predictions of natural disasters: comets, meteors, inundations, droughts, heats, frosts, earth-quakes, eruptions, plagues, epidemic diseases, famine, wars, transmigrations, “and all commotions or great innovations of things natural and civil.”<sup>101</sup> By contrast, he dismissed the *wild Astrology* associated with magical practices, such as the uses of talismans and amulets.<sup>102</sup>

As for Astrology, it is so full of superstition, that scarce anything sound can be discovered in it. Notwithstanding, I would rather have it purified than altogether rejected [...] I do not hesitate to reject as an idle superstition the doctrine of horoscopes, and the distribution of houses, which is the very delight of astrology, and has held a sort of Bacchanalian revelry in the heavenly regions [...] The doctrines of nativities, elections, inquires, and the like frivolities, have in my judgement for the most part nothing sure or solid, and are plainly refuted and convicted by physical reasons [...] Let the greater revolutions be retained, but the smaller revolutions of horoscopes and houses be dismissed [...] There is no fatal necessity in the stars, but that they rather incline than compel’<sup>103</sup>

Let us now elaborate on this Baconian distinction between *sane* and *wild* astrology, and connect it with the different practices just mentioned. What Bacon condemned, in the same vein as many of his contemporaries, was the casting of nativities, elections, and interrogations, including the use of talismans. However, he seems to accept the validity of general revolutions for keeping track of astronomical events. Actually, he proposed his own reform of astrology in the *Augmentis scientiarum* of 1623, one of his last scientific Works.<sup>104</sup>

Better known than this Baconian terminology is perhaps the distinction between *natural* and *judicial* astrology.<sup>105</sup> In general terms, natural astrology was concerned with the general character of planetary influences in agriculture and medicine, and the calculation of natural phenomena, such as the measurement of time, prediction of tides and eclipses, and meteorological phenomena. Judicial astrology was the art of judging the influences of the stars and planets upon human affairs. The fact is, however, that the distinction between natural and judicial astrology was not very clear, neither in theory nor in practice. Moreover, I will argue throughout my work that the problematic status of early modern astrology is

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<sup>101</sup> Tester (1987), p. 222.

<sup>102</sup> Tester (1987), p. 222.

<sup>103</sup> Bacon quoted in Tester (1987), p. 221.

<sup>104</sup> Rutkin (2005a), p. 541

<sup>105</sup> For the Catholic Church this distinction had its origin in the writings of the Fathers and councils. The most solid foundation was in Thomas of Aquinas’ *Summa theologica*, II, 2, q. 95, art. 5

better understood by keeping in mind the difference between the four astrological practices mentioned above than by only focusing on the distinction between natural and judicial astrology.

Studying the British case, Patrick Curry has proposed an alternative categorization of astrologies, depending on their different interpretation and uses. The first, cosmological astrology, was concerned with the Earth as a whole, and it was the field of study of the natural philosophers. The second, judicial astrology, was the interpretation of horoscopes and individual predictions, which was widely accepted among gentry and nobles. Finally, popular astrology was used for practical purposes, especially in agriculture and medicine, and it was an important part of oral culture. In this case, the most important considerations were the phases of the Moon, and “supernatural” phenomena such as comets, eclipses and conjunctions. By the turn of the seventeenth century, astrology disappeared from the discourse of astronomers and natural philosophers and, at least in appearance, it also disappeared from elite social and intellectual life. But the popular astrology of the laboring classes continued almost untouched and, “somewhere between these two ends of the social pole, men of middling income and education continued to consult ephemerides and cast figures, albeit less frequently and more privately than before.”<sup>106</sup>

The virtue of Curry’s characterization is that it allows for a better assessment of the so-called decline of astrology during the seventeenth century. Depending on the social group one takes into consideration, this process can assume different shapes: more radical in one case, smoother in the other, and so on. However, these categories do not seem to work when we look at the specific context that concerns us in this study. The distinction between a learned cosmological astrology and a popular practical astrology cannot be applied to seventeenth-century New Spain. Physicians, astronomers, cosmographers, and theologians with the highest education practiced all kinds of astrology (including interrogations, and elections), and the relationship between medicine and astrology in university endured well into the eighteenth century.

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<sup>106</sup> Curry, Patrick. “Astrology in early modern England: the making of a vulgar knowledge”. in: Stephen Pumfrey, Paolo Rossi and Maurice Slawinski eds. *Science, Culture and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press; 1991, p. 277.

Medicine or physics “has been astrology’s oldest and most constant associate.”<sup>107</sup> From Hippocrates to the seventeenth century at least some knowledge of astrology was a necessary part of the physician’s training. Scholarship on the relationship between astrology and medicine is abundant, and its history is beyond the scope of this dissertation.<sup>108</sup> Thus, I will briefly outline some general aspects of the practice of “medical-astrology” or *iatromathematics* during the early modern period. The basic principle behind medical astrology was that celestial bodies exerted a noticeable influence on everything on earth, including plants and stones. A corollary to this theory was the principle that each part of the human body was influenced by a different sign of the zodiac and that each of the ‘openings’ of the body were influenced by one of the planets.<sup>109</sup> Ideas common in medieval medical thought about the relationship between medicine and astrology (the role of the stars in generation, the omnipresence of knowable and medically useful astral signs and/or influences and action by specific form as well as by complexion) may have been reinforced during the Renaissance by the developments of Neoplatonic doctrines in humanist thought.<sup>110</sup>

Medical astrology was based on the Hippocratic-Galenic humoral theory and on the long-lasting metaphor of the correspondence between the Microcosm and the Macrocosm, as

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<sup>107</sup> Tester (1987), p. 223.

<sup>108</sup> On the history of astrology and medicine see: Arnold, Ken. “Time in History of Medicine” and Federici Vescovini, Graziella. “Astronomia e Medicina all'Università di Bologna nel secolo XIV e agli inizi del XV” in Pierluigi Battistini, *Seventh Centenary of the Teaching of Astronomy in Bologna*. Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria; 2001, pp. 123-149; Cardoner-Y. Planas. “La medicina astrológica durante el siglo XIV en la Corona de Aragón” in *Actes du IXe congrés international d' Histoire des sciences* (sept. 1959) Paris, 1960, p. 314-366. e *Historia de la medicina en la Corona de Aragón (1162-1479)*, Barcelona, 1973. Clark, Charles W. *The Zodiac Man in Medieval Medical Astrology*. University of Colorado at Boulder (PhD thesis), 1979. Conti, Lino. “Quadri cosmologici e formazione del medico nel Cinquecento: l'analogia fra le maree e il movimento del sangue” in Vannozzi, Francesca. *L'insegnamento della Medicina in Europa (secoli XIV-XIX)*. Siena: Tipografia Senese; 1994; pp. 179-194. French, Roger. “Astrology in Medical Practice” in Roger French (ed.). *Ancients and Moderns in the Medical Sciences. From Hippocrates to Harvey*. Aldershot-Burlington: Variorum Collected Studies Series; 2000, also included in *Practical Medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, ed. García Ballester, French, Arrizabalaga and Cunningham, Cambridge University Press, 1994. Sudhof, K. *Iatromathematiker vornehmlich im 15. und 16 Jahrhundert*, Breslau, 1902. Wear, Andrew. *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1985.

<sup>109</sup> Azzolini, Monica. “Reading Health in the Stars. Politics and Medical Astrology in Renaissance Milan” in Oestman, and Rutkin (2005), p. 187.

<sup>110</sup> Siraisi, Nancy. *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy. The Cannon and Medical Teaching in Italian Universities after 1500*. Princeton; 1987, p. 280.

a symbol of the unity of creation.<sup>111</sup> According to this analogy, man was considered as the link between the material and spiritual realm, being composed of a physical body and an immaterial soul. “As a microcosm, the individual mind is a symbol or image of nature and therefore is both related to nature and distinct to it.”<sup>112</sup> Man was a mirror of the whole Universe and, “pursuing the analogy in the opposite direction, cosmic laws were seen as projections of those laws that governed human nature.”<sup>113</sup> The parts of a man’s body corresponded to a different sign of the zodiac: heart/ Sun; head (seat of the soul and the faculty of reasoning)/ empyrean heaven; lower abdomen (site of the anus and genitals)/ Earth (site of generation and corruption). Each planet had a particular influence on a part of the body, its function and its characteristic diseases; each part of the body and its illnesses were distributed among the Houses of the Zodiac, which provided an hourly guide for prediction.<sup>114</sup>

These theories were often illustrated in medieval and Renaissance texts through drawings such as the ‘zodiac man’ and the ‘microcosmic man’. Theories of influence were particularly significant for the practice of phlebotomy as well as surgery, and could be extended to the administration of medicines. As medication was composed of herbs and minerals, the relative influence of the signs of the zodiac and planets on its ingredients was another factor for the physician to consider when administering the treatment. One last aspect that pertained to medical astrology was the theory of critical days, which was related to solar and lunar cycles. It was believed that these cycles determined the days when a crisis would occur during an illness; for this reason, the manifestation of certain symptoms on specific days allowed the physician to make a more accurate prognosis as to the outcome of the illness.

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<sup>111</sup> On the use of metaphorical language see Brian Vicker’s study “Analogy versus identity: the rejection of occult symbolism, 1580-1680” in Brian Vickers (ed.), pp. 95-163. The author argues that the difference between scientific and occult mentalities resides precisely on the fact that the occult tradition does not recognize the distinction between metaphorical and literal language. “Words are treated as if they are equivalent to things and can be substituted for them [...] Analogies, instead of being, as they are in the scientific tradition, explanatory devices subordinate to argument and proof, or heuristic tools to make models that can be tested, corrected, and abandoned if necessary, are instead, modes of conceiving relationships in the universe that reify, rigidify, and ultimately come to dominate thought.” p. 95 Especially, it was Paracelsus who cancelled the distinction between macrocosm and microcosm. He “collapsed the two poles into one. Man does not merely resemble the macrocosm, but he *is* the microcosm. The move from analogy to identity is total.” p. 126

<sup>112</sup> Norford, Don Parry. "Microcosm and Macrocosm in Seventeenth Century Literature" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 1977; 38(3): p. 409.

<sup>113</sup> Henry, John "Macrocosm/Microcosm" in Ferngren (2000), p. 341.

<sup>114</sup> French (2000), p. 47.

Because it was related to predictable cycles and was consistent with the main tenets of astronomy, natural philosophy, and humoral theory, the theory of critical days proved particularly popular.<sup>115</sup>

According to the humoral theory, man was composed of four humors (yellow bile, black bile or melancholy, blood and phlegm), which in turn had their own temperament in terms of hot and cold, wet and dry, and were ruled by different planets according to their sympathetic natures. For instance, an illness with Saturnian symptoms (cold, stiffness, etc) should be treated with medicines ruled by the opposite planet, the Sun (associated with warming and relaxing virtues).<sup>116</sup> Jupiter was associated with the hot and moist, muggy atmosphere before a thunderstorm and it ruled over the hot and moist sanguine humor. Health was maintained by keeping the proportion among humors relatively balanced. If a patient was feverish and sweaty, he or she would be treated for an excess of corrupted blood by a phlebotomy or bleeding.

Based on these correspondences, astrological medicine linked every stage of treatment (diagnosis, prescription, and prognostication) to the disposition of the heavens.<sup>117</sup> The first step for diagnosis was to cast a figure for the *decumbiture*, which is the exact moment when the illness began.<sup>118</sup> This moment was easier to identify in the case of epilepsy, apoplexy, or haemorrhages, than in the case of fevers. In general, it was assumed that it was the moment in which the first symptom of the illness was felt in the body.<sup>119</sup> Some astrologers would cast a second figure for the moment when the urine was voided for the sample or when the patient

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<sup>115</sup> Azzolini (2005), pp. 187-188.

<sup>116</sup> Curry, Patrick. *Prophecy and Power. Astrology in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Polity Press; 1989, p. 9

<sup>117</sup> On the difference between *diagnosis* and *prognosis* see Maclean, Ian. *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance. The case of Learned Medicine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2002. See especially the part on “the doctrine of signs”, pp. 276-309.

Prognosis (alias *praecognitio*, *praenotio*, *providencia*; not however strictly the same as *praedictio*, which relates only to the communication of future events to the patient or his or her attendants) is said to be the main task of the doctor: medicine and prophecy are related, since Apollo is the author and father of both arts. (p. 301) “Prediction is acknowledged to be not always right; it is an 'ut plurimum' procedure.” (309)

<sup>118</sup> The word comes from the Latin verb *decumbere*, which means lying in bed. Conte, Gian Biagio. *Dizionario della Lingua Latina*, Milano, Le Monnier, 2001. 1. Coricarsi per dormirsi, mettersi a letto; coricarsi per pranzare, mettersi a tavola. 2. Cader malato, abbattersi; di combattente, cadere a terra, soccombere.

<sup>119</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 122. The author is referring here to Magini’s astrological medicine.



had arrived at his consulting room.<sup>120</sup> However, this phase of the diagnosis was more controversial and some physician-astrologers were completely opposed to these “irregular practices”.<sup>121</sup>

After casting the figure (or figures) and diagnosing the disease, the physician could select the proper times for the correct administration of medicine and for deciding whether a blood letting or a surgical operation was necessary. Known as *elective days*, this practice was based on the idea that days of conjunction (eclipses and other planetary conjunctions) were not benefic for performing bloodletting or purges. It was a highly controversial idea among physicians of the seventeenth century, but also very widely spread. Indeed, one of the main reasons for the publication of yearly almanacs was because it indicated, month by month, which were the elective days.

By casting horoscopes, the astrologer-physician would also be able to foretell the crisis and eventual outcome of the sickness. Diseases were divided in two kinds: *acute*, which never lasted more than a month, or not even more than a week; and *chronic*, which went on for much longer than a month. Acute diseases were to be judged according to the positions and aspects of the Moon, while chronic diseases depended on the Sun. The critical days were marked by the Moon passing through the cusps of the houses; judicial days were identified when the Moon was in the same degree as the *decumbiture* in the following houses; and *intercidental* days, when the Moon was in the degree sextile to the position of the *decumbiture*.<sup>122</sup> Galen’s *De diebus decretoriis* was the most coherent authority for the notion of critical days.<sup>123</sup>

Giovanni Antonio Magini, the Paduan professor of Mathematics in Bologna, read Cardano’s medical texts and observed that, “in accordance with the common opinion of all excellent practitioner of the art of astrology, both astrologers and physicians, one should construct a celestial figure to the onset of each disease, to make it possible to predict its essence, its critical days, the varieties of its accidents, and finally its outcome. For we can use

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<sup>120</sup> Thomas (1971), p. 286.

<sup>121</sup> Clarke (1985) p. 122.

<sup>122</sup> Tester (1987), p. 223.

<sup>123</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 123.

such a celestial figure to work out whether an illness is lethal or will end in health, long-lasting or short.”<sup>124</sup> Other contemporary texts expanded this idea and argued that celestial informations dictated the moment in which surgeons should carry out their operations, the kind of prescriptions that pharmacists should prepare, and the type of regimens that physicians should recommend.<sup>125</sup>

With the development of anatomy, and throughout operations and dissections, medical hypothesis became verifiable, whereas the *occult* aspects of astrological diagnosis remained in the field of conjectural knowledge. Besides, because of the attacks of the Catholic Church against magic and some astrological practices, physicians became increasingly careful about the nature of their prognostications.<sup>126</sup> The end of the long-term relationship between medicine and astrology can be located only after the first decades of the eighteenth century. However, the link between both fields changed considerably from the sixteenth to the late seventeenth century. By the second half of the seventeenth century astrological phenomena were considered as part of many other external conditions that influenced human health. Moreover, the astrological considerations disappeared in individual cases and remained important only in cases of epidemics.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Siraisi, Nancy and Anthony Grafton. “Between the Election and My Hopes: Girolamo Cardano and Medical Astrology” in Newman and Grafton (2001), p. 73.

<sup>125</sup> Siraisi and Grafton (2001), p. 73.

<sup>126</sup> Siraisi (1987), p. 284.

<sup>127</sup> My gratitude goes to Professor Maria Pía Donato for clearing up this point.

### 1.3. Astrology and Medicine in the New World

During the period of colonization of Spanish America, health issues were particularly important because many Spaniards either died during the long voyages, or got sick as soon as they reached the New World. The medicines the Spaniards brought with them were already dated, or did not last long in the new environment. Moreover, some of them would pass on their diseases to the Native Americans, who would die in massive numbers. Thus for both indigenous people and for Spaniards health issues constituted a main concern in the early phases of contact.<sup>128</sup> After this early phase, health issues remained salient because they were framed within the discussions about racial inferiority. In the New World, the relationship between astrology and medicine was in turn embedded in this debate.

In a recent article, Jorge Cañizares Esguerra approached the question about astrology in the New World from the point of view of the development of the Creole intellectual movement during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>129</sup> He argued that Creole scholars of the seventeenth century, such as the Peruvians Buenaventura de Salinas y Cordova and León Pinelo, developed a form of “patriotic astrology” as a response to Europe’s negative climatological and astrological characterization of the New World.<sup>130</sup> It is important to mention that, as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century, Friar Bartolomé de las Casas had already found in the celestial bodies an explanation for the high intellect of the Indians living in the southern hemisphere. Las Casas wrote in his *Apologética Historia* that ‘in this austral part [Chile] the stars and celestial bodies are bigger and more shining... because this part is the head of the world... and because all the Indians are closer to the centre they are more intellective.’<sup>131</sup> By the

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<sup>128</sup> Barrera (2002), p. 163. On the role played by disease in the conquest of the New World see Alfred Crosby. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1972; Noble David Cook. *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>129</sup> Cañizares (1999), pp. 33-68.

<sup>130</sup> León Pinelo. *El paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo: Comentario apologético, historia natural y peregrina de las Indias Occidentales*, Lima. Buenaventura de Salinas y Cordova. *Memorial de las historias del Nuevo Mundo Piru: Méritos y excelencias de la ciudad de Lima, cabeza de sus ricos y estendidos reynos y el estado presente en el que se hallan*, Lima, 1630

<sup>131</sup> ‘...en aquella parte austral las estrellas y los cuerpos celestiales son mayores y más resplandecientes... por ser aquella parte austral la cabeza del mundo... y como están más cerca del centro todos los indios son más intelectivos.’ Las Casas, *Apologética Historia*, p. 80. Quoted in Vázquez Núñez (1968), p. 50. The author refers to these “astronomical reasons” as a proof of Las Casas’ fantasy regarding the intelligence and good character of the Indians. For Vázquez they were only ignorant cannibals: “Los que se imaginan que nuestras

end of the sixteenth century, explains Cañizares, America was perceived as an overly humid and thus degenerating land, but, “more important, it was assumed to be ruled by those new, negative constellations that Europeans had recently discovered and charted in the Southern Hemisphere”.<sup>132</sup>

In Mexico, Friar Bernardino de Sahagún established a link between a demographic, moral, and economic crisis that affected Mexico in the second half of the sixteenth century and evil astral influences.<sup>133</sup> Physician Francisco Hernández explored the negative effects that the constellations of the New World had over the Indians.<sup>134</sup> José de Acosta denounced those who argued that the stars of the New World were brighter and more numerous than those in Europe.<sup>135</sup> Giovanni Botero (1596) concluded that the stars and constellations of America were “inferior” and that Europe was under better and more benign heavenly influences. Juan de la Puente claimed that the heavens of America induce inconstancy, lasciviousness and lies.<sup>136</sup> Finally, the English editor Samuel Purchas said that the Sun and stars had rendered the New World colder, with fewer animals, spices, and fruits and little to show in way of intellectual life.<sup>137</sup>

Creoles and long-term European residents in the Indies, explains Cañizares, were constrained to react to this negative characterization of the stars, the lands, and peoples of the New World. But they had to face “an extraordinary paradox: how to maintain that America was under benign, soothing influences without giving up their construct of the Indians as phlegmatic miscreants”.<sup>138</sup> The alternative, as the works of Pinelo and Salinas Cordova show, was “to postulate the existence of separate bodies for Indians and Europeans, which would make any

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armas derrocaron allí un imperio civilizado y próspero desconocen en absoluto la realidad. Los aztecas eran un pueblo sanguinario y antropófago, en lucha continua con sus vecinos, a los que exigían, entre otras contribuciones, la de centenares de jóvenes para comérselos.” (p. 28)

<sup>132</sup> Cañizares (1999), p. 37. The idea that the stars influenced the bodies and gave societies distinct characteristics can be traced back to Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, where he established the relation between stars, signs and cities.

<sup>133</sup> *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva Espana* (1570)

<sup>134</sup> *Antigüedades de la Nueva Espana* (1570)

<sup>135</sup> *Historia Natural y Moral de la Nueva Espana* (1589)

<sup>136</sup> *De la conveniencia de las dos monarquías católicas de la Iglesia romana y la del imperio español, y defensa de la procedencia de los Reyes Católicos de Espana a todos los reyes del mundo*, 1612.

<sup>137</sup> Cañizares (1999), pp. 38-49.

<sup>138</sup> Cañizares (1999), p. 58.

radical transformation due to climatic or astral influences unlikely, if not impossible.”<sup>139</sup> Based on European scientific ideas of the day, and Hippocratic-Galenic medical astrology, they “articulated a form of scientific racism that claimed there were innate bodily and mental differences separating people from one another.”<sup>140</sup> While trying to differentiate the bodies of Indians and white Europeans, they “hammered out forms of patriotic astrology and, more important, a discourse of scientific racism that long predated the one invented in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe.”<sup>141</sup>

Cañizares regards Enrico Martínez’s work, *Repertorio de los Tiempos e Historia Natural de la Nueva España* (1606) as an early seventeenth-century Mexican example of the genre of patriotic astrological literature.<sup>142</sup> Martínez was a prominent astronomer, astrologer, geographer, mathematician, natural philosopher, physician, engineer, and printer.<sup>143</sup> Born in Hamburg, his real name was Heinrich Martin, and he moved at the age of eight to Spain, from where he travelled all around Europe. After having studied Mathematics in Paris, he reached the New World in 1589, where he stayed until his death in 1632. He lived in Mexico City, where he had his own printing shop and worked as interpreter for the Inquisition.<sup>144</sup> His *Repertorio de los Tiempos* was one of the printed books dealing specifically and extensively with non-religious subjects at the times. *Repertorio* was the name used by Spanish authors to entitle books about astrology and cosmography during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. *Natural history* is an allusion to father Acosta, who had published in 1590 his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*. Martínez’s work is divided in 6 treatises:

1. On the world in general and on the celestial region in particular.
2. On the parts and quality of the elemental region.

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<sup>139</sup> Cañizares (1999), p. 58.

<sup>140</sup> Cañizares (1999), p. 35.

<sup>141</sup> Cañizares (1999), p. 68.

<sup>142</sup> Martínez, Henrico. *Repertorio de los tiempos y Historia natural desta Nueva España. Compuesto por Henrico Martínez Cosmographo de su Magestad e Interprete del Sacto Officio deste Reyno. Dirigido al Excelentísimo Señor Don Iuan de Meondoça y Luna Marques de Montesclaros, Virrey, Governador, Presidente y Cappitan General por el Rey nuestro Señor en esta Nueva España §c.* México; 1606. Reprinted in México, SEP, 1948. Int. Francisco de la Maza, Apéndice Bibliográfico. Francisco González de Cossio.

<sup>143</sup> On Martínez see: De la Maza, Francisco. *Enrico Martínez. Cosmógrafo e Impresor de Nueva España* (México, 1943) México, UNAM, 1991 (ed. Facsimilar); Moreno Corral, Marco A. “La astronomía en el México del siglo XVII” en *Ciencias*, abril-junio 1999, pp. 52-59; and Trabulse (1994) and (1997).

<sup>144</sup> There is a complete catalogue of the books printed at Enrico Martínez’s printing shop.

3. Some particularities of New Spain.
4. On the knowledge and quality of Astrology, its terms and use.
5. On the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on December 24, 1603.<sup>145</sup>
6. Brief report of noteworthy things in New Spain and the kingdoms of Castile and other parts of the world from 1520 to 1590 taken out from chronicles and trustworthy authors.

Martinez's text, as Cañizares pointed out, is situated within the broader discussion about the climatological characterization of the New World and its influence on European and American bodies. But it is also an example of the way in which natural philosophers had to adapt old texts to new contexts; of the way in which knowledge was transmitted, assimilated, and re-interpreted as a response to specific needs.

In the first chapter of the fourth treatise of his *Repertorio*, Martínez explains the meaning of judicial days, and their natural causes. The whole treatise is a summary of the main astrological principles needed for the treatment of any illness, according to the teachings of Hypocrites, Galen, Plinio, Ptolemy, Albert the Great, and Ficino. In Chapter II he explains why and how the Moon causes alterations in sick people. Chapter III shows how to judge judicial days astrologically and to predict the outcome of an illness. Chapter IV demonstrates how to know, by means of astrology, if an illness is dangerous or not. Chapter V explains how to read symptoms according to the teachings of Hypocrites, Galen, Plinio, and others. Chapter VI talks about the specific hour in which old or ill people usually die. Chapter VII establishes the exact time when the Moon rises and sets every day of the year. Chapter VIII explains why certain days are beneficial and appropriate for purges and bloodlettings while other days are harmful for the same purpose. Chapter IX deals with the controversy among physicians on the subjects mentioned above. Finally, Chapter X expands on the idea of *climateric* years, when Saturn influences the lives of men. Martínez main sources are classical texts, works by natural philosophers of the Renaissance, and the

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<sup>145</sup> The conjunctions of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn were believed to have evil effects on distinguished characters; therefore, the great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 1603 was studied by a great number of astronomers all around the World. Kepler wrote an extensive comment in Chapter XII of the second edition of the *Misterium Cosmographicum*.

teachings of more contemporary Spanish authors, such as Rodrigo Zamorano, Diego Pérez de Meza, and Pedro Ciruelo.

While the fourth treatise of the *Repertorio* is an illustrative example of transmission and dissemination of knowledge from the Old to the New World, the second one (on “Some particularities of the New World”) better illustrates the process of adaptation and re-interpretation of knowledge. In the first chapter of this second treatise, Martínez aims at defining the sign of the Zodiac that governs New Spain. He explains that, since ancient times, natural philosophers acknowledged the effects of strange conjunctions of planets, of eclipses and comets. They noted carefully the cities or regions in which these effects took place and, according to their observations, they identified what sign governed each city or region. This opinion became stronger when they saw that each time a conjunction, eclipse or planet took place in a specific sign, certain cities or provinces were affected by calamities. Following this idea, Martínez states that New Spain is under Capricorn’s influence, because every time this sign has been affected by a comet, conjunction, or eclipse, the *naturals* of the land have suffered great misfortunes: the Spanish Conquest in 1519; the General plague called *cocoliste* that killed eight hundred thousand Indians in 1546; and the great plague of 1566 that killed two million Indians.<sup>146</sup>

Being that New Spain was under the influence of Capricorn, both Spanish and Indians were subordinated to the effects caused by different accidents taking place in this sign. However, because Spanish and Indians were born in different lands, and thereby had different complexions, the same celestial accidents did not always produce the same effects in both peoples.

Natural Indians of New Spain are generally of phlegmatic and sanguine complexion, and being this a natural quality of them, it is evident that they will be damaged every time they see any coincidence of the stars that has an influence on the elements and qualities that are contrary to those of their complexion. The damage would be stronger if the coincidence occurs in the sign of this kingdom (Capricorn). Therefore, it is Saturn’s coldness and dryness, and Mars’ heat and dryness, and the conjunction of both planets in Capricorn which influences cholera and melancholy with extraordinary force, because these humors are

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<sup>146</sup> Martínez (1948), pp. 259-262. The translation is mine.

contrary and opposite to phlegm and blood, which constitute the natural complexion of the Indians.<sup>147</sup>

Once established the signs that influenced the lands of the New World, how did Martínez attempt to conciliate the idea of negative astral and climatic influences with the idea of an autonomous body, which remains almost the same from one continent to the other? In Chapter XII of the second treatise, Martínez explains that, though it is true that natural complexion never changes, it may be reduced or increased with the passing of time, depending on accidental events during the course of life. The dominant humor in the Spanish kingdom is yellow bile, with its corresponding choleric temperament. However, those Spanish who were born or lived in New Spain were accidentally of phlegmatic and sanguine humor. They were only *accidentally* phlegmatic or sanguine, because their inherited choleric temperament resisted the phlegmatic influence, both temperaments being opposite in every aspect. Martínez therefore concluded that Spanish people born in New Spain generally had a sanguine-choleric complexion, both temperaments being equally present.<sup>148</sup>

The last chapter of the second treatise is entitled: “Why do people who were born in Spain and other parts of Europe become cleverer in these lands and lose their physical strength?” The author explains that, according to Aristotle (sentence 15, book 14 of his *Problemata*) people who live in cold lands have intense inner heat, which produces steam and vapors that go up to the brain and cloud the understanding. On the contrary, warm weather, like the one in New Spain, is more appropriate to develop good skills. Moreover, food in New Spain is lighter and easier to digest, and thus, according to physicians, it hardly disturbs the understanding. This is why those coming from Spain and other kingdoms of Europe to these lands go through some changes that depend on the temperament and celestial influence of the climate. Because of the new quality of food, they raise new blood, which produces a new humor. In turn, this new humor produces new ability and condition.<sup>149</sup>

Martínez’s *Repertorio* shows a mutual process of adaptation of knowledge: on the one hand, the teachings of canonical texts and authors serve to explain a new natural reality; on

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<sup>147</sup> Martínez (1948), p. 262.

<sup>148</sup> Martínez (1948), p. 281.

<sup>149</sup> Martínez (1948), p. 283.



the other hand, the new evidence is integrated in the traditional cluster of knowledge as a missing piece in the puzzle of Nature.<sup>150</sup> Through this process of adaptation, the New World was transformed by Martínez from a place of corruption and degradation to a benevolent environment where intellectual skills were easily developed.

Cañizares' suggestion concerning the relationship between medicine, astrology, and racial theories is certainly an important contribution to the history of astrology in Spanish Colonial America. Other scholars have emphasized the overlapping of medical and astrological ideas in printed texts of the seventeenth century. In her PhD dissertation, Lanuza underlines the importance of Diego Cisneros' work published in Mexico in 1618, and Juan de Figueroa's *Opúsculo de Astrología*, published in Lima in 1660.<sup>151</sup> As for the case of Lima, Guibovich highlighted the contrast between Figueroa's *Opúsculo*, and Juan Jerónimo Navarro's work, which rejected astrology's usefulness in medicine.<sup>152</sup> Yet, the history of astrology and medicine in the New World has still many unexplored areas.

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<sup>150</sup> On the cultural fusion of Spanish and Mexican medicines see: Lopez Piñero and J.L. Fresquet. *El mestizaje cultural de la medicina noohispana del siglo XVI y su influencia en Europa*. Valencia, Instituto de Estudios Documentales e Históricos sobre la Ciencia-CSIC, 1995; J. Comas "Influencia indígena en la medicina hipocritica en la Nueva Espana del siglo XVI" en *América Indígena*. 14 (1954), pp. 327-361; G. Somolinos. "La fusion cultural indo-europea" en *Medica Nacional*, 1 (1966), pp. 9-20.

<sup>151</sup> Lanuza, Tayra. *Astrología, Ciencia y Sociedad en la España de los Austrias* (PhD Dissertation). Universitat de Valencia. Departament d'Història de la Ciència i Documentació. Valencia, 2005, p. 358 and 366. See: Figueroa, Juan de. *Opúsculo de Astrología en Medicina y de los términos y partes de la Astronomía necesarias para el uso della compuestas por Juan de Figueroa, familiar del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición, regidor, tesorero de la Casa de Moneda de la ciudad de los Reyes. Dirigidos al Excmo. Sor. Don Luis Henríquez de Guzmán, Conde de Alva de Aliste y Villaflor, Grande de España, Virrey, Gobernador y Capitán General de los Reynos del Perú, Tierrafirme y Chile*. Lima; 1660.

<sup>152</sup> Pedro Guibovich. *Censura, libros e inquisición en el Perú Colonial, 1570-1754*. Sevilla: CSIC; 2003. The author refers to: Navarro, Juan Jerónimo. *Sangrar y purgar en días de conjunción, aprueba en este discurso el doctor Juan Jerónimo Navarro*. Lima: Joseph de Contreras; 1645.

#### 1.4. Institutional environment: teaching astrology at University

The relevance of the history of universities for a better understanding of the intellectual transformations of the early modern period tended to be overlooked by an *internalist* historiography of science which focused on the theories that were conceived and propagated during the Scientific Revolution. Universities were thus regarded as mere settings for the intellectual debates carried out by the revolutionary figures. Moreover, some historians echoed the negative judgments about the sterility of the academies voiced by seventeenth-century intellectuals, such as Francis Bacon and other contemporary critics of academic scholasticism.<sup>153</sup> However, in recent decades the role of universities within the shaping of early modern science has been reevaluated as a result of the renewed attention to the social structures that sustained this process. The special issue of *Science and Education* dedicated to “Science Teaching in Early Modern Europe” (Spring 2006) together with the volume *Universities and Science in the Early Modern Period* (2006) are two of the most recent examples of the relevance of university studies within history of science.<sup>154</sup> Not only new sources, but also different geographical areas are studied to reveal the richness of academic culture during this period.

In the early-modern period, astronomy and astrology did not only share the stars in the high realm of the heavens, but also the curriculum in the terrestrial campus of University. It is important, however, to bear in mind that the above does not mean that there was no difference between one field of knowledge and the other. Moreover, the fact that astrology was part of the curriculum did not necessarily imply that practical astrology for casting horoscopes was taught inside the classroom. While some astronomical texts studied in the Arts faculty were indeed a necessary tool for the astrologer, it cannot be automatically concluded that wherever these texts were studied astrology was practiced. Because what was actually taught did not always correspond to the program established in the statutes, it is

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<sup>153</sup> Gascoigne, John. “A reappraisal of the role of the universities in the Scientific Revolution” in Lindberg and Westman (1990), p. 208. The author refers to Westfall, who asserted that ‘not only did natural science have to develop its own centers of activity independent of the universities, but the universities were the principal centers of opposition for the new conceptions of nature which modern science constructed.’

<sup>154</sup> For an on-line bibliography on the history of universities see: [www.ulb.ac.be/philo/scholasticon/universitas.htm](http://www.ulb.ac.be/philo/scholasticon/universitas.htm)

necessary to search for new material (diaries, lecture notes, textbooks) which can shed some light on the actual contents of the teachings. Although some scholars (Azzolini, Federici, Feingold, Jardine, Navarro, Rutkin, Siriasi) have already produced important contributions in this respect, some comparative studies are still needed to build a broader picture of the teaching of astrology during the early-modern period. This broader picture will in turn shed clearer light on the process of demarcation between astrology and her two sister sciences, astronomy and medicine.

From the establishment of medieval university, which coincided with the introduction of Aristotle's treatises on philosophy and the study of nature into Western Europe, astrology was taught in three distinct disciplinary locations: in mathematics, in the natural philosophy, and in the medicine.<sup>155</sup> In the mathematical curriculum, astrology was taught with astronomy as *sister sciences of the stars*, after propaedeutic work in arithmetic and geometry. In the natural philosophy course, astrology was considered in relation to core texts of Aristotelian physics and cosmology, most notably, *De caelo* and *De generatione et corruptione*.<sup>156</sup> In the medical faculty, astrology was also taught as a necessary tool of the physician's practice. As Rutkin asserts, by retracing the development of these patterns it is possible to more accurately characterize the pre-modern scientific map of knowledge, its educational institutionalisation, and some important stages in the transformation from pre-modern to modern disciplinary patterns.<sup>157</sup>

The general European scheme for the teaching of astronomy from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century included the study of the *Sphere*, the *Theoretica planetarum*, and the Alfonsine Tables.<sup>158</sup> Astrological teaching, often using Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum* and the pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium*, was usually included in the curriculum.<sup>159</sup> The casting of horoscopes was indeed a way of exercising practical knowledge of astronomical calculations and the use of the astrolabe. The study of the *Sphere* meant the study of the Aristotelian

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<sup>155</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 16.

<sup>156</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 4.

<sup>157</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 17.

<sup>158</sup> Navarro Brotóns, Victor. "Astronomía, Cosmología y Humanismo" in Enrique Martínez Ruiz (ed.) *Felipe II, la ciencia y la técnica*. Madrid, Actas, 1999, pp. 197-216.

<sup>159</sup> Jardine, Nicholas. "The Places of Astronomy in Early-Modern Culture" in *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 1998; 29 (part 1), p. 50.

theory of the elements and the two regions (celestial and terrestrial); the movements of the celestial spheres; elements of spherical astronomy; shape of the Earth; and the theory of the zones and climates in the terrestrial region. The most widely used text for studying the sphere was Sacrobosco's commented version, which included a brief introduction to planetary theory and a brief chapter on Lunar eclipses. Peurbach's text was usually used to teach *Theoretica planetarum*, namely the Ptolemaic models for the basic aspects of the movement of the Sun, the Moon, and the planets. The Alfonsine Tables were used for the numerical parameters of these models of the movement of the celestial bodies. The use of the Tables was usually combined with the use of an instrument, preferably the astrolabe.<sup>160</sup> The text more frequently used for this purpose was Messahala's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*.

According to Jardine, university statutes and textbooks show astronomy teaching to have been mostly practical: calendrical, navigational, agricultural, and medical applications of the subject. According to Beaujoan, the idea of the *quadrivium* from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century gradually became unbalanced to the advantage of astronomy because of the widespread interest in astrology, and the importance of calculating critical dates in the liturgical year. "However poor an opinion we may have of judicial astrology, we must admit that the care given to the use and to the improvement of astronomical tables is one of the most interesting manifestations of the medieval scientific mind."<sup>161</sup>

The medical faculty also played an important part in supporting astronomy, due to the strong links between medicine and astrology. The well-established institutional practice of medical faculties providing instruction in astronomy continued to leave its mark on early modern universities.<sup>162</sup> Copernicus was a student of medicine for a good part of his academic career; Tycho Brahe's astronomical interest appears to have been stimulated by Hans Frandsen, professor of medicine and mathematics at Copenhagen; John Gostlin, professor of Medicine at Cambridge (1623-1626) was also the author of a treatise on comets; John Baibridge, inaugural Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford (1619-1643) was also a

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<sup>160</sup> Navarro (1999a), pp. 197-216.

<sup>161</sup> Beaujoan, Guy. "Motives and Opportunities for Science in the Medieval Universities" in A.C. Crombie (ed.) *Scientific Change*. London: Heineman Educational Books; 1963, p. 223.

<sup>162</sup> Gascoigne (1990), p. 240.

licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians.<sup>163</sup> Krakow University, Copernicus's *alma mater*, had two astronomy professors, one in the arts faculty and the other in the medical faculty, who was teaching future physicians how to read the stars for the purpose of medical prognostications.<sup>164</sup>

A proper understanding of the way in which the teaching of astrology developed from the Middle Ages to the early-modern period would require a comparative study of the changes within the mathematical, medical, and natural philosophical curricula in Europe and beyond. It appears that scholarship in this field has focused more on astrology's place within the mathematical-astronomical curriculum, rather than on the medical, and natural philosophical ones. In this section I will do a very schematic review of some studies on astrological teaching in Europe, and describe in more detail the place of astrology within the Spanish university, a model for higher education in Spanish Colonial America.

As far as Italian universities in the Renaissance are concerned, Grendler has studied the differentiation between astronomical and astrological knowledge, and pointed out that changes in name of the chairs of mathematics, or astronomy, or astrology, reflect changes in the contents of the teachings.<sup>165</sup> Angus Clarke's study on Magini is very successful in reconstructing the institutional setting of astrological teaching in Bologna during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.<sup>166</sup> Monica Azzolini has studied the case of Pavia, and recovered the notebook of a medical student who studied astrology at this university in the years around 1484. The value of this kind of source is that it gives us a better idea on what was actually taught inside the classroom.<sup>167</sup> In my view, the best work on the teaching of astrology in Italian universities (1300-1500) is Rutkin's, particularly because he does not limit himself to the study of astrology in relation to astronomy and medicine, but also of natural philosophy and cosmology.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Gascoigne (1990), p. 241.

<sup>164</sup> Gingerich, Owen. *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus*. New York: Walker and Company; 2004, p. 186.

<sup>165</sup> Grendler, Paul. *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*. London: The John Hopkins University Press; 2002.

<sup>166</sup> Clarke (1985). On Bologna see also Federici (2001).

<sup>167</sup> Azzolini (2005), pp. 183-206.

<sup>168</sup> On the teaching of astrology at the Italian universities from 1300 to 1500 see Rutkin (2002), pp. 130-144.

For the case of France, Ariew Roger has studied the teaching of astronomy in the University of Paris at the beginning of the seventeenth century, while Isabelle Pantin has studied the teaching of the same subject outside university, at the *Collège Royal*.<sup>169</sup> Regarding the British case, Hillary Carey has underlined the importance of the Merton College at Oxford for the advancement of mathematical sciences in the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>170</sup> In the Renaissance, John Dee, and Robert Fludd, “the most celebrated English magicians”, spent some time studying and teaching astrology during their Cambridge and Oxford years, despite the authorities’ warnings against it.<sup>171</sup> In Prague, during the fourteenth and sixteenth century, astronomy was one of the required branches for students to be admitted to bachelor and master examinations. By the sixteenth century, astronomy stopped being closely linked with the university, but it continued being pursued by university graduates. A recent *International Symposium on the History of Science in the Rudolphine Period* (Prague, October, 2001) produced some interesting contributions on the teaching of astronomy and astrology in Prague.<sup>172</sup>

In Portugal, the Chair of Mathematics was officially established in 1537 and occupied by the leading Portuguese mathematician Pedro Nuñez between 1544 and 1562. The fact was, however, that in this period the Portuguese university almost completely neglected mathematical studies and “there was hardly any University-based teaching or practice of mathematics in Portugal.”<sup>173</sup> Astronomy, in contrast, was promoted due to the Crown’s imperial necessities. Around 1574 the *Aula da Efera* was founded in the College of *Santo*

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<sup>169</sup> Ariew, Roger. “The *Sphere* of Jacques du Chevreul: Astronomy at the University of Paris in the 1620s” in Víctor Navarro and Mordechai Feingold. *Universities and Science in the Early Modern Period*. Dordrecht: Springer; 2006, pp. 99-109; and Pantin, Isabelle. “Teaching Mathematics and Astronomy in France: The *Collège Royal* (1550-1650)” in *Science and Education*. 15 (Special Issue: Science Teaching in Early Modern Europe), p. 189-207.

<sup>170</sup> Carey (1992), especially pp. 58-79.

<sup>171</sup> Stahlman, William. “Astrology in Colonial America: an extended Query” in *William and Mary Quarterly*. 1956; 13:551-563, p. 554. See also: Feingold, Mordechai. “The occult tradition in the English universities of the Renaissance” in Vickers (1984), p. 80.

<sup>172</sup> Christianson, J. B. (ed.) *Tycho Brahe and Prague: Crossroads of European Science*. Frankfurt: Research Center for the History of Science and Humanities, Prague. 2002; p. 381. See especially: Borek Neskudla. “Astronomy and Astrology at Prague University before the Battle at White Mountain” and Michael Svatos, “Teaching Astronomy at the Prague University in the 14th and 15th Century”.

<sup>173</sup> Leitão, Henrique and Luis Miguel Carolino. “Natural Philosophy and Mathematics in Portuguese Universities, 1550-1650” in Navarro and Feingold (2006), p. 161.

*Antão*, the leading educational center of the Jesuits in Lisbon, in response to an appeal by the King for the instruction of sea-pilots. Great importance was given to nautical questions: elements of cosmography, rules of nautical astronomy and navigation, uses of nautical instruments, etc. In the later decades professors sometimes introduced more advanced material, such as theoretical astronomy (including the Theory of Planets).<sup>174</sup> Another particularity of the Portuguese case was that the Jesuits had a strong influence on the teaching of natural philosophy. Cosmological issues, including the theory of the influence of the celestial region on the terrestrial and the arguments on the anti-astrological debate, were developed by Coimbra Jesuits, whose philosophical commentaries on the works of Aristotle were widespread all over seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>175</sup>

In Spain, like in Portugal, the need for better nautical and cosmographical knowledge for exploration favoured the teaching of astronomy. Apart from university, there were other Spanish institutions sponsored by the Crown where astronomy and astrology were taught as part of the necessary nautical knowledge for the exploration of the New World. As Navarro explains, the *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade) in Seville and the Academy of Mathematics in Madrid were “created especially to answer to the scientific and technical demands imposed by the geographical explorations, the control and rule of the lands conquered, the maintenance of empires and the construction of the state.”<sup>176</sup>

At the *Casa de Contratación*, an institution specifically created for administering the problems related to navigation to the New World, astrology was regarded as one of the necessary tools. The post of Pilot Major or Chief Pilot, responsible for training and examining the pilots sailing towards the West Indies, was created in 1508, five years after the foundation of the *Casa*. But the need to regulate and control the content of the teaching led to

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<sup>174</sup> Leitão and Carolino (2006), p. 163.

<sup>175</sup> Leitão and Carolino (2006), p. 155.

<sup>176</sup> Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. “The Teaching of Mathematical Disciplines in Sixteenth-Century Spain” in *Science and Education*. 2006; 15 (Special Issue: Science Teaching in Early Modern Europe), p. 211. By the same author see: ---“La cosmografía en la época de los descubrimientos” in Carabias Torres, A.M. (ed.), *Congreso Hispano-Portugués: Las relaciones entre Portugal y España en la época de los descubrimientos y la expansión colonial*. Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, 1994, pp. 195-207. On the topic see: Lamb (2005); Haring, C.H. *Trade and Navigation between Spain and the Indies*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1918; Sandman, Alison. *Cosmographers vs. Pilots: Navigation and the State in Early Modern Spain* (PhD Dissertation). University of Wisconsin, and Sandman (2002).

the establishment of the chair of cosmography in 1522, with the appointment of Jerónimo de Chaves (1523-1574), son of the “Cosmographer and Master chart-maker” Alonso de Chaves (ca.1493-1587).<sup>177</sup> It is possible to find references to the influence of the planets on Earth, or the signs of the Zodiac in the works of some of these cosmographers (Alonso and Jerónimo Chaves and Rodrigo Zamorano), but this does not mean that they were dealing with astrology for predictive purposes.<sup>178</sup>

It is however well documented that astrology for prognostication purposes was taught at the Imperial College in Madrid. The foundational program (1625) established that the lessons would include: ‘Mathematics, where one professor during the morning will read the sphere, astrology, astronomy, astrolabe, perspective, and prognostications.’<sup>179</sup> One of the professors, Hugo Sempilius (ca.1590-1654) published his *De mathematicis disciplinis Libri duodecim* in 1635. The work had some success in Europe, and one of the twelve books dealt with astrology, while one of the chapters of the book on astronomy talked about the properties of planets.<sup>180</sup>

In the Academy of Mathematics, the three-year course of mathematics fundamentally coincided with the program for the chair of astrology in Salamanca established by the statutes of 1561. Julián Ferrofino, was the first holder of the chair of mathematics during the seventeenth century. Andrés García de Céspedes, Cosmographer of the Indies, was appointed to the chair in 1607, and from that moment both offices became a joint position.<sup>181</sup> Juan Cedillo, successor of Céspedes in 1611, wrote a *Tratado de astrología* in which he explains

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<sup>177</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 212.

<sup>178</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 98. Rodrigo Zamorano, Pilot Major and profesor of the *Casa* from 1575 until 1613, elaborated the *Compendio de la Arte de Navegar* (1581), which was re-edited six times in Spanish until 1591 and once in Dutch (Amsterdam, 1598). It was also translated into English and published as an appendix to an edition of Edward Wright’s *Certain Errors in Navigation* (1599). Navarro (2006b), p. 213.

<sup>179</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 103. ‘De matemática, donde un maestro por la mañana leerá la esfera, astrología, astronomía, astrolabio, perspectiva y pronósticos.’ The translation is mine.

<sup>180</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 103.

<sup>181</sup> Navarro (2006b) explains that García de Céspedes and his collaborators were the first Cosmographers of Iberian territories to elaborate tables of the Sun’s declination from new observations required to calculate the longitude of the Sun and the obliquity of the ecliptic. Until then, all authors of nautical tables had been based on the Alphonsine Tables or the Prutenic Tables, by means of Ephemerides calculated by various authors (Zacut, Stoeffler, Stadius, Magini). p. 216.



that some astrological prognostications were regarded as acceptable. After Cedillo's death, the chair was occupied by Jesuits of the Imperial College of Madrid.<sup>182</sup>

In 1571, the Council of the Indies, the monarchy's supreme advisory board for the governance and administration of the New World, underwent a profound reform initiated by its chairman, Juan de Ovando. One of the results of the reform was the creation of the post of Chief (or Major) Cosmographer-chronicler of the Indies. Ovando appointed his assistant Juan López de Velsco (ca. 1530-1598) to this position. At the same time, Juan de Herrera (architect, engineer, and *Aposentado* (Steward) *de Palacio*) proposed the creation of an Academy of mathematics in Madrid as a response to the urgent necessity of improving navigational charts and instruments. Juan Bautista Lavanha (1555-1624), a Portuguese cosmographer of noble descent who had studied in Rome, was chosen to run the academy, and Pedro Ambrosio of Ondériz (?-ca.1596) was appointed as his assistant.<sup>183</sup> Moreover in 1571, members of the Parliament (*Cortes de Madrid*) complained to king Philip II about physicians' ignorance of planetary movements and put pressure on him to order that 'from now on no university can grant a physician a degree without a diploma in astrology.'<sup>184</sup> No chair of astrology was announced, and Philip II reaffirmed the fifteenth century decree of Pope John II forbidding divination, but made no specific reference to astrological divination.<sup>185</sup>

In Spanish universities, astronomy was taught as a preparatory course within the Arts faculty. As early as the fifteenth century, the University of Salamanca was an active center for the cultivation of astronomy.<sup>186</sup> As Chabás explains, the astronomical activity taking place in Salamanca during the 1460-70s culminated in the astronomical works of Abraham Zacut

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<sup>182</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 103.

<sup>183</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 214. On the Academy of Mathematics see: Piñero, Esteban and Jalón, M. "Juan de Herrera y la Real Academia de Matemáticas" in *Los instrumentos científicos del siglo XVI. La corte española y la escuela de Lovaina*. Fundación Carlos de Amberes, Madrid, pp. 55-67. Vicente Maroto, M.I. and Esteban Piñero. *Aspectos de la ciencia aplicada en la España del Siglo de Oro*. Junta de Castilla y Aragón, Valladolid, 1991.

<sup>184</sup> Goodman (1990), p. 26.

<sup>185</sup> Goodman (1990), p. 26.

<sup>186</sup> On the University of Salamanca see: Esperabe de Artega, E. *Historia pragmática e interna de la Universidad de Salamanca*. 2 vols. Salamanca, 1914-1917. On the teaching of astrology at the University of Salamanca see: C. Flórez, P. García y R. Albares, *La Ciencia del Cielo. Astrología y filosofía natural en la Universidad de Salamanca 1450-1530*, Salamanca, Caja de Ahorros, 1989.

(1452-1515), the leading astronomer in the Iberian Peninsula the fifteenth century. Zacut was born in Salamanca, where he composed, in 1478, a voluminous set of astronomical tables known as *The great composition*.<sup>187</sup> In the following century, the statutes of 1538 established that, for the teaching of mathematics, a professor will ‘read arithmetic, geometry, astrology, perspective, and cosmography as the students might request.’<sup>188</sup> The teaching of astronomy in Salamanca is best known for the optional inclusion of Copernicus among the authors in the curriculum of its chair of astrology according to the statutes of 1561.<sup>189</sup> The stipulations for this chair stated that:

1. In the chair of Astrology during the eight months of the first year the *Sphere* and Theory of planets will be read, together with some Tables; in the substitution, the Astrolabe.
2. In the second year, six books of Euclid and Arithmetic, up to square and cubic roots, and the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, or its *Epitome* by Regiomontanus, or Gerber, or Copernicus, upon the vote of the students; in the substitution, the *Sphere*.
3. The third year, Cosmography or Geography, introduction to Judiciary astrology and Perspective, or an instrument, upon the vote of the students; in substitution whatever the professor, in consultation with the rector, deems appropriate.<sup>190</sup>

The introduction of Copernicus’s name in the constitutions was mainly due to the activities of the brothers Juan and Hernando de Aguilera, both of them professors of astrology in the sixteenth century. The latter taught Euclid’s *Elements*, the sphere, parts of the *Almagest*, theories of planets and the *Tables* of Alfonso X, the astrolabe and its use,

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<sup>187</sup> Chabás, José. “Astronomy in Salamanca in the Mid-Fifteenth Century: The *Tabulae Resolutae*” in *Journal for the History of Astronomy*. 1998; 29 (part 2)(95) pp. 67-175. On Zacut see also: J. Chabás and B.R. Goldstein. *Astronomy in the Iberian peninsula : Abraham Zacut and the transition from manuscript to print*, Philadelphia : American philosophical society, 2000; Goldstein, B. R. “An occultation of Venus observed by Abraham Zacut in 1476” in *Journal for the history of astronomy*, Vol. 30 (1999), p. 187-200; ---“Some astronomical tables of Abraham Zacut preserved in Segovia” in *Physis*, Vol. 35 (1998), pp. 1-10; ---“Abraham Zacut and the medieval Hebrew astronomical tradition”, *Journal for the history of astronomy*, Vol. 29 (1998), p. 177-186; Samsó, Julio. “In Pursuit of Zacut’s *Almanach Perpetuum* in the Eastern Islamic World” in *Z. Gesch. Arab-Islam. Wiss.* 15 (2002/3)

<sup>188</sup> Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. “The Reception of Copernicus in Sixteenth Century Spain: The Case of Diego de Zuñiga” in *Isis*. 1995; 86(1), p. 55. On the medical faculty in the Spanish University see: Olagüe de Ros, Guillermo. “Insegnamento della medicina e pratica professionale nella Spagna del Rinascimento”. in Vannozzi, Francesca. *L'insegnamento della Medicina in Europa (secoli XIV-XIX)*. Siena: Tipografia Senese; 1994; pp. 33-56. The faculty of Medicine was founded in 1252 in Salamanca; in 1404 in Valladolid; and in 1514 in Alcalá de Henares. Valencia was the first Spanish university with a chair Surgery, founded in 1501. See also: López Piñero. “The Faculty of Medicine of Valencia: its Position in Renaissance Europe” in Navarro and Feingold (2006), pp. 65-82.

<sup>189</sup> On this topic see: Navarro (1995); Bustos Tovar, E. “La introducción de las teorías de Copérnico en la Universidad de Salamanca” in *Revista de la Academia de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales*. 1973; 67, pp. 235-252. Fernández Álvarez, M. *Copérnico y su huella en la Salamanca del Barroco*. Salamanca. Universidad de Salamanca, 1974.

<sup>190</sup> Navarro (1995), p. 55.

cosmography according to Petrus Apianus and Gemma Frisius, and astrology according to Alcabitius.<sup>191</sup> The new statutes of 1594 for the chair of astrology and mathematics included materials concerning cartography and navigation. Moreover, it was stipulated that Ptolemy's *Almagest* should be studied in combination with Copernicus' *De revolutionibus*. Astrology continued to be taught and it included the study of comets.<sup>192</sup> The statutes of 1625 reproduced in full the text of the 1594 regulations for this chair.<sup>193</sup>

As a result of Philip II's interest in training skilled cosmographers, the teaching of astronomy in Salamanca was enlarged with the appointment of an associate teacher of mathematics around 1590.<sup>194</sup> Among the professors of astronomy at Salamanca during the sixteenth and seventeenth century were: Jerónimo de Muñoz (?-1592), "one of the most outstanding Spanish astronomers of the period", who had been professor of Hebrew and Mathematics at Valencia and moved to Salamanca in 1578 to occupy the chair of astrology; Gabriel Serrano (1590-1598), disciple of Muñoz, who did not publish but left an astrological manuscript written for his classes in the university; Antonio Nuñez Zamora (1594-1612), physician and professor of medicine, astronomy and philosophy, who published the prognostication of an eclipse (*Pronóstico del eclipse de Sol de 1600*), a treatise on the nova of 1604 (*Juicio de la máxima conjunción de 1604*), and one on the comet of 1610 (*Liber de cometis de 1610*);<sup>195</sup> Bartolomé del Valle (1612 –1623), physician, and author of a treatise on the comets of 1618.<sup>196</sup> Besides professorial publications, some manuscript documents are an important source for reconstructing the teaching of astrology in Salamanca. One of them is the *Tractatus Astrología colecti in Salmanticensius Schola, per Petrum de la Torre* (1617), a collection of treatises on the astrology that was taught during the first decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>197</sup>

At the University of Valencia (founded in 1499-1500), astrology was included among the disciplines taught by the chair of mathematics at least from the 1540s onwards, when it

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<sup>191</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 221.

<sup>192</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 222.

<sup>193</sup> Navarro (1995), pp. 59-60.

<sup>194</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 222.

<sup>195</sup> Navarro (1995), p. 55. See also Lanuza (2005), p. 84.

<sup>196</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 86.

<sup>197</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 87.

was compulsory for students of medicine to have an arts degree.<sup>198</sup> The Chair of Mathematics was founded in 1503, but there is no documentation on what was taught during the early decades of the sixteenth century; it can only be assumed that the teaching of mathematics during this period must have concentrated on the preparation of alumni to study natural philosophy and logic.<sup>199</sup> The records of an inquisitorial trial against an arts graduate in Valencia in 1545 suggest that arithmetic, music geometry, perspective, cosmology, and judicial astrology were taught.<sup>200</sup> As for the teaching of astronomy, the constitutions of 1561 established that professors read the sphere, the *theorica* of planets, tables, and the use of astrolabes.<sup>201</sup> Some additional texts included the treatise of Alcabitus, translated by Juan de Sevilla, Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, and pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*, with a commentary by Ali ib Riwan (Egyptian astrologer of the eleventh century).<sup>202</sup>

The teaching of astronomy in Valencia enjoyed a great moment when Jerónimo Muñoz occupied the chair of Mathematics (1564-1578). Muñoz graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in Valencia in 1537, and continued studying abroad; he lived in Italy for some time and taught Hebrew at the University of Ancona. On returning to Valencia in 1563, he was appointed as chair of Hebrew, and the following year he started combining it with the chair of mathematics, position he held until he moved to Salamanca in 1578. In Valencia, he taught arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, geometrical optics, astronomy, geography, and astrology.<sup>203</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that Muñoz composed his commentary to the treatise of Alcabitus precisely while he was in Valencia (around 1565), a city where, due to Arab influence, a tradition of astrological practice existed long before the foundation of the

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<sup>198</sup> On the University of Valencia, Navarro (2006b) refers to: Felipo, A. *La Universidad de Valencia durante el siglo XVI (1499-1611)*. Valencia, Universitat de Valencia, 1993. Gallego Salvadores, J. "La Facultad de Artes de la Universidad de Valencia desde 1500 hasta 1525" in *Escritos del Vedat*, pp. 215-258. Peset, M (coord.) *Historia de la Universidad de Valencia. Vol. 1. El Estudio General*. Valencia, Universidad de Valencia, 1999.

<sup>199</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 217.

<sup>200</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 227. On the trial against Jerónimo Conqués, the author refers to: Ardit, Lucas. *La Inquisició al País Valencia*, Valencia, Tres i quatre, 1969.

<sup>201</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 217

<sup>202</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 94.

<sup>203</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 217. The author explains that Muñoz published very few works, but some holograph documents or copies made by students of his lessons in all these documents are still to be found in several libraries across Europe: Salamanca, Barcelona, Madrid, Munich, the Vatican, Naples, and Copenhagen. For a list of Muñoz's works, he refers to: Navarro and Rodríguez. *Matemáticas, cosmología y humanismo en la España del siglo XVI. Los comentarios al segundo Libro de la Historia Natural de Plinio de Jerónimo Muñoz*. Valencia, Instituto de Estudios Documentales e Históricos sobre la Ciencia, 1998.

university (1499).<sup>204</sup> His most extensive work on astronomy was the translation of and commentaries on Theon of Alexandria's *Commentaries* on Ptolemy's *Almagest*. Muñoz's fame beyond Spanish borders was mainly due to his *Libro del nuevo cometa*, published in Valencia in 1573, where he discussed the supernova of 1572 as a response to Philip II's request for his opinion on this astronomical phenomenon. Muñoz was one of the authors who determined with the highest accuracy the position of the supernova and, moreover, understood most keenly the cosmological implications of the phenomenon.<sup>205</sup> In his *Commentaries* to Pliny's *Natural History* (around 1568) Muñoz defended astrology against its detractors. His cosmological ideas were indeed "closely linked to his astrological convictions, according to which the stars influence the earth by their light, heat and hidden processes, and it is the air, saturating the entire universe, which transmits these influences."<sup>206</sup>

In 1611, it was stipulated that two chairs of mathematics were to be assigned Valencia, and that one of the professors would be in charge of teaching astronomy and astrology. The fact that astrology was taught, at least up to a certain extent, by professors of Valencia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is attested by the works of Antonio Juan Ripollés, Onofre Pelechá, Vicente Vázquez, Leonardo Ferrer, Francisco Lloret, Sebastián D. Cólera de Avinent, and Luis de los Daunes. Ripollés, successor of Muñoz, occupied the chair of astrology between 1601 and 1632, and published a *Pronóstico* for the year 1580. Pelechá (1632-35) was the author of a treatise on the comet of 1619. Luis de los Daunes, translated Giunitini's astrological works. The Augustinian Leonardo Ferrer (1667-1689) was one of the most prolific scholars, and he condensed in his work the main astrological doctrines of the time: the theory of the great conjunctions, the belief on comets as signs, horoscopic astrology, and the theory of planets as Lords of the years. Aparici held the chair of mathematics, while

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<sup>204</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 94.

<sup>205</sup> The "discovery" of the supernova of 1572 made it almost impossible to maintain the Aristotelian dogma of the incorruptibility of the heavens. Tycho Brahe was provided, by Haegicus, correspondent of Muñoz in Viena, with some letters he and Bartholomaeus Reisacherus had received from Muñoz about the supernova. Tycho Brahe copied and used these letters in his discussion of Muñoz's works in the *Astronomiae Instauratae Propgymnasmata* (1602). Navarro (2006b), p. 218.

<sup>206</sup> Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. "The Cultivation of Astronomy in Spanish Universities in the Latter half of the 16th century" in Navarro and Feingold (2006), p. 87.

Ferrer taught astrology, and some of his manuscripts on arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and astrology are preserved.<sup>207</sup>

There is less information concerning the University of Alcalá de Henares than Salamanca, but it can be assumed that the teaching of astrology in both institutions was similar.<sup>208</sup> From its inception in 1508-1509, Alcalá had a chair of mathematics and astronomy. The university's constitutions underwent two reforms, one in 1564, and the other in 1603.<sup>209</sup> The program was similar to the one taught by Muñoz in Valencia and Salamanca, but without the presence of astrological texts. Two of Muñoz's disciples, Gabriel Serrano, and Diego Pérez de Mesa, taught in Alcalá.<sup>210</sup> It is very likely that, despite the fact that astrology was not included in the program, Serrano and Pérez de Mesa taught the subject, as in fact they did in Salamanca and Seville, respectively.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, Pedro Ciruelo, author of a defense of astrology against Pico's criticism, was professor of theology between 1509 and 1523. He also published various works on arithmetic, geometry and astronomy.<sup>212</sup> Pérez de Mesa, who occupied the chair of mathematics around 1586, published no texts, but some of his manuscripts on navigation (*Tratado de arte de navegar*), astronomy (*Commentarios de Sphaera*), and two on astrology are preserved.<sup>213</sup> It is not known what he taught in Alcalá, but his lessons were probably similar what he taught in Seville, namely astronomy, arithmetic, algebra, practical geometry, and astrology and its application in medicine and navigation.<sup>214</sup>

In New Spain, the *Real y Pontificia Universidad* in Mexico City was built on the model of Salamanca. Astrology was, like in the motherland, a compulsory subject for

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<sup>207</sup> Lanuza (2005), pp. 94-97.

<sup>208</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 89.

<sup>209</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 223. Like in the case of Salamanca, the constitutions of 1564 included Copernicus as an optional author.

<sup>210</sup> The fact that Serrano taught in Alcalá is affirmed by Beltrán. *Cartulario* (note 31), Vol. IV, p. 324. Navarro (2006a and 2006b).

<sup>211</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 225.

<sup>212</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 223 and 225. Ciruelo's major work on astronomy was the edition of Sacrobosco's *Sphaera* with his own commentaries and the fourteen questions of the French astronomer-astrologer Pierre d'Ailly and his defence of astrology. See chapter 5 of this work and: Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. "La astronomía (siglos XVI-XVII) in *Historia de la ciencia y de la Técnica en la Corona de Castilla*. Vol. III. Junta de Castilla y León, Valladolid, 2002, p. 294

<sup>213</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 89. On his commentary to the Sphere see: Navarro (2006a), pp. 92-93.

<sup>214</sup> Navarro (2006b), p. 224.

students of medicine.<sup>215</sup> The chair of Astrology and Mathematics was opened in 1637, almost a century after the foundation of the University in the capital of the viceroyalty.<sup>216</sup> Its first occupant was the Mercedarian friar Diego Rodríguez until his death in 1668. A chronicler of the order narrated that Friar Diego foresaw his own death by means of the science of the stars.<sup>217</sup> His successor was Friar Ignacio Muñoz, who held the chair officially until 1672, although he had returned to Spain in 1670.<sup>218</sup> Before Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora was appointed in 1672 as the new professor of Mathematics and Astrology, Luis Becerra Tanco held the position for two months before his death. Juan de Saucedo, and José de Salmerón y Castro were the opponents of Sigüenza, who held the chair until 1693. He retired that year, but continued to lecture for some time. Luis Gómez Solano occupied the chair after Sigüenza, in 1696. In the course of the following century, the chair was more often held by physicians than by astronomers or mathematicians.<sup>219</sup>

According to Trabulse, during the first half of the seventeenth century, an intellectual network of literate Creoles emerged around the figure of Friar Diego and astrological

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<sup>215</sup> Maza, Francisco de la. *Las tesis impresas de la antigua Universidad de México*. México: Imprenta Universitaria; 1944, p. 19. See also: Rodríguez, M. E. "La enseñanza de la medicina y la Cirugía en Nueva España" in Peset. *La ciencia moderna* (1958), pp. 113-116. Francisco Fernández del Castillo. *La Facultad de Medicina*. México, UNAM, 1953. González González, Enrique. "La enseñanza médica en la ciudad de México durante el siglo XVI" in López Piñero (1995), pp. 129-144; Norto, Luca. "Medicina in Nuova Spagna: aspetti di regolamentazione e formazione medica" in *Antropos & Iatria*, 7: 3 (2003), pp. 72-75.

<sup>216</sup> The Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico was founded in 1551 by Charles V for the purposes of teaching all branches of learning. It was modeled on the famous University of Salamanca and was governed by the same rules until 1645, when Viceroy/Bishop Palafox y Mendoza drew up a new set of ordinances for its administration. Four degrees were offered (bachiller, licenciado, maestro and doctor) in the four faculties: *Artes* (philosophy), *Cánones* (canon law), *Leyes* (civil and criminal jurisprudence), and *Teología*.

On the history of the university see: J. M. Espinosa. *La comunidad científica novohispana ilustrada en la Real y Pontificia Universidad de México*, Master thesis on Philosophy of Science, México, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Iztapalapa, 1997; Becerra López José Luis, *La organización de los estudios en la Nueva España*, México, 1963. Carreño, Alberto María. *La Real y Pontificia Universidad de México*, UNAM, México, 1961. De la Maza, Francisco *Las tesis impresas de la antigua Universidad de Mexico*, México, 1944. De la Plaza y Jaén, Cristóbal *Crónicas de la Real y Pontificia Universidad de México*, México, 1931. González González, Enrique y Leticia Pérez Puente (eds), *Colegios y Universidades*, 2 vols., UNAM, 2001; Pavon Romero Armando (coord) *Universitarios en la Nueva España*, México, UNAM, 2003, and *La Universidad Novohispana: corporación, gobierno y vida académica*, Mexico, UNAM, 1996; Pérez Puente Leticia. *Universidad de Doctores*, Mexico, UNAM, 2000; ---*De maestros y discípulos*, Mexico, UNAM, 1998.

<sup>217</sup> Pareja, Francisco de. *Crónica de la Provincia de la Visitación de Nuestra Señora de la Merced. Redención de Cautivos de la Nueva España*. México: Imprenta J.R. Berbedillo; 1882, Vol. I, p. 246.

<sup>218</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 107. Navarro points out that there is a Ms by Friar Ignacio Muñoz at the National Library in Madrid (*Operación geométrica synoptica y universal para dividir cualquier ángulo rectilineo en las partes proporcionales, que se pidieron*. 1678), which is being studied by scholars of the History of Science Department in Valencia.

<sup>219</sup> Moreno, Roberto. "Astronomía mexicana del siglo XVIII" in Moreno Corral (2003), p. 140.

knowledge was taught and learned, both in and outside the University walls. Besides holding the chair of Mathematics and Astrology at the University, Friar Diego was also an outstanding engineer. He collaborated with the government in important works to solve the problem of floods in the capital. He was also the first one to calculate with great accuracy the latitude and longitude of Mexico City. He built a sun clock at the Convent of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca. In his *Tratado del modo de fabricar relojes* he made references to the works of Cristopher Clavius, Oroncio Fineo, Andreas Schone, Adrian Metio, Johannes Stoeffler, Antonio Magini and John Neper. The Count of Alba came to know Friar Diego while he was in New Spain as viceroy. He was appointed with the same charge in Peru, and founded in 1657 the chair of mathematics in the University of San Marcos. The first holder of the chair was the cosmographer Francisco Ruiz Lozano, student of Friar Diego in Mexico.<sup>220</sup>

At the University of Mexico, a candidate for the three-year long bachelor's degree had to study, in addition to Latin and rhetoric, topics such as dialectic, logic, ontology, physics (in the Aristotelian sense of natural philosophy), mathematics, organography, theodicy, and ethics. The course ended with a formal examination. After the baccalaureate came the licentiate. It could only be received three to four years after the granting of the bachelor's degree. The licentiate required two examinations, one private and one public. The last two and highest degrees were the master's and the doctor's, which required, in addition to the examination, an imposing and costly ceremony, half secular and half religious in nature. After this ceremony there was a burlesque examination, full of jokes and wit at the expense of the candidate. Finally the candidate's sponsor would present him with a ring as a symbol of the right to teach and, in some cases, also with a sword and gilded spurs which represented the defence of truth and knowledge.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> He also composed almanacs, see chapter 6.

<sup>221</sup> Maza (1944), p. 44.



## 1.5. The Decline of Astrology.

Perhaps one of the most puzzling questions for historians of astrology is the one concerning its decline, its “seemingly sudden demise as an intellectually respected art after centuries of prominence.”<sup>222</sup> Some have found in the differentiation between natural and judicial astrology a clue for answering, though partially, this question. By underlining the differences between University astrology for weather prediction or medical practice, and the popular astrology of soothsaying or recovery of stolen goods, it seems understandable that it was the former which prevailed as a respectable field of knowledge, while the latter remained as popular superstition. However, a clear-cut distinction between high and low astrology is not so easy to delineate. Thus the question about the decline of astrology becomes more complex: Did it disappear or was it transformed? Did it disappear everywhere and from everyone’s system of beliefs or only partially? Was it a gradual decline or a sudden and radical collapse? When did it actually take place?

Mary E. Bowden differentiates two general types of explanation for the decline of astrology. The first one focuses on the discipline itself and thus identifies the new theories, methods, and technological advances of the Scientific Revolution as the destructive agents of astrology.<sup>223</sup> With some variations, Lynn Thorndike, William Stahlman, Mark Graubard, Marjorie Nicolson, Thomas S. Kuhn, and Keith Thomas share such an opinion. The second one seeks an internal movement, a changing concept of man and his place in the universe. Cassirer, Don C. Allen, Thomas and Rossi have expressed views along these lines.<sup>224</sup> From their point of view, astrology declined with the triumph of human free will over celestial determinism.

The astrological vision of the world was overcome, essentially, neither by empirical and scientific reason, nor by new methods of observation and of mathematical calculation [...] The agent of liberation was not the new view of nature but the new view of the value of humanity. The power of *Fortuna* is confronted with the power of *Virtus*; destiny is confronted with the self-confident and self-trusting will. What may be really and truly called the destiny

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<sup>222</sup> Geneva (1995), p. XIV.

<sup>223</sup> Bowden, Mary E. *The Scientific Revolution in Astrology: 1558-1686*. Yale: Yale University; 1974.

<sup>224</sup> Bowden (1974), p. 2.

of man does not flow to him from above, from the stars, but rather arises from the ultimate depths of his innermost self [...] Destiny is the daughter of the soul: *sors animae filia*.<sup>225</sup>

The demise of astrology was thus part of the end of an animistic concept of nature: “men and nature then went on separate ways: on the one hand, there is human conduct where free will reigns; on the other, there is natural law characterized by mechanical determinism.”<sup>226</sup> Together with new discoveries, there emerged a new mentality or attitude of man towards nature; “a new faith in the potentialities of human initiative” was born.<sup>227</sup>

One explanation for astrology’s decline, with a wide resonance among historians, can be found in the work of Keith Thomas, who considered that this decline took place in the context of a broader decaying process of magical thought. To build up his argument, Thomas took as a starting point Malinowski’s influential theory of demarcation between science, magic, and religion; the relationship between themselves, and their cultural function. According to this theory, “magic is akin to science in that it always has a definite aim intimately associated with human instincts, needs, and pursuits. The magic art is directed towards the attainment of practical aims.”<sup>228</sup> If one of the primary functions of magic is to provide a means of influencing forces and events normally outside human control, then it is no longer necessary when scientific knowledge allows men to have control over these events.

The parallels between the decline of magic and magical thinking and the decline of astrology and astrological belief have been frequently highlighted. Nevertheless, one should not forget that putting astrology and magic under the same umbrella corresponds to a modern assumption. During the early-modern period (and before), although magic and astrology did meet in some ways, they were sharply distinguishable in many others. Therefore, the extrapolation of any conclusion about the decline of magic to astrology needs to be considered carefully. What I would like to take up from Thomas’s explanation is his distinction between three different factors which contributed to the weakening of magic and *occult arts* by the end of the seventeenth century: religious, scientific-technological, and

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<sup>225</sup> Cassirer (1983), p. 120.

<sup>226</sup> Bowden (1974), p. 3.

<sup>227</sup> Thomas (1971), p. 661.

<sup>228</sup> Malinowski, Bronislaw. *Magic, Science, and Religion*. Illinois: Waveland Press; 1948, p. 86.

social. In my view, the decline of astrology is better understood when these three factors are taken into consideration.

Regarding the religious factor, I would like to draw attention to Baldini's argument that the religious attack against astrology during that period was the first death blow against astrology and, in a way, prepared the ground for the epistemological blow of the Scientific Revolution. "It is therefore correct to say that judicial astrology left the scientific domain (abandoning public output by accredited scholars, and the accepted typology of scientific writings) prior to the onset of Galilean epistemology, which plunged it further into crisis."<sup>229</sup> By obstructing the publication of writings on judicial astrology and dissuading those who aspired to a university career from concerning themselves with the subject, the Church heavily contributed to exclude astrology from the scientific disciplines and to distinguish sharply the figure of the scientist from that of the astrologer. "Thus, ecclesiastical prohibition helped to bring about a change in astronomy's form and status as a discipline which fixed certain modern features before the advent of the epistemic principles that should have preceded and engendered that change."<sup>230</sup>

In my work, I will argue that Baldini's point is difficult to sustain as soon as we have a closer look at the inquisitorial activity against astrologers, and at the way in which censorship was actually exercised within different national contexts. What is in my view very interesting is Baldini's emphasis on the role that a religious institution might have played on the shaping of the social status of the astronomer-astrologer during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. However, my impression is that, at least for the case of Spain and Spanish America, the Catholic Church's concern about astrology was rather marginal. Thus it seems to me difficult to assert that this institution played an active role in the transformation of astrologers' social status and thereby in the decline of astrology.

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<sup>229</sup> Baldini, Ugo. "The Roman Inquisition's condemnation of astrology: antecedents, reasons and consequences" in Gigliola Fragnito (ed.) *Church, Censorship, and Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2001; p. 109.

<sup>230</sup> Baldini (2001), p. 110.

Regarding the intellectual-scientific factor, some historians have claimed that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's extensive attack on astrology, *Disputationes aduersus astrologiam divinatricem* (1496) convinced astrologers to stop practicing upon its publication.<sup>231</sup> Because of its relevance for the theological debate about astrology, I will discuss the question about Pico's influence in the following chapter. In this section, I will talk about the role of the new cosmology brought about by the Scientific Revolution in the epistemological discredit of astrology. Is it true that the consolidation of a heliocentric cosmology, made it impossible for some astrological principles to survive? Field has regarded Kepler's criticism of the Zodiac as a paradigmatic example of a criticism towards astrology under the light of the new cosmology.<sup>232</sup>

However, as Rutkin reminds us, two of the protagonists of the astronomical revolution of the seventeenth century, Galileo and Kepler, were practicing astrologers. "Indeed, influenced by Pico's *Disputationes*, Kepler set out to reform astrology on a sounder natural philosophic and mathematical foundation."<sup>233</sup> This does not mean that the changes in cosmology brought about by the Scientific Revolution played no role in the removal of astrology from its central place in pre-modern natural philosophy. Indeed, some ideas of this new cosmology may have well assisted the opponents of astrology to underline the inconsistency of some astrological principles, and reformulate previous arguments against it. What it means is, first, that our periodization needs to be revised, and second, that other factors need to be taken into consideration. As Navarro points out, the emergence of mechanistic theories, the acceptance of the Copernican system, and the development of Newton's celestial mechanics were not the only causes for the decline of astrology.<sup>234</sup>

In the case of Spain and New Spain, Navarro suggests that the controversy about the comet of 1680 can be considered as symptomatic of an increasing scepticism towards astrological doctrines.<sup>235</sup> Although the discussions about the nature of comets as divine messengers or as natural phenomenon date back to much earlier times, it was this "great

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<sup>231</sup> On Pico and the anti-astrological debate see Rutkin (2002), especially chapter 6.

<sup>232</sup> Field, J. V. "Astrology in Kepler's Cosmology" in Curry (1987), p. 144.

<sup>233</sup> Rutkin (2005a), p. 541.

<sup>234</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 133.

<sup>235</sup> On this topic, apart from Navarro, see Trabulse (1974b).

comet” which triggered the most severe attacks against “astrological superstitions” related with supernatural events.<sup>236</sup> In Madrid, the Comet of 1680 started a controversy between Andrés Dávila y Heredia, military engineer, the physician Gaspar Bravo de Sobremonte, Alonso de Zepeda y Adrada, and other authors who wrote using pseudonyms. This coincides with the configuration of the *novator* intellectual movement, which proposed a systematic reception and assimilation of modern science in Spain. It is important, however, to note that not all opponents of astrology were supporters of the new cosmology. Likewise, not all of them denied any kind of influence of the stars on Earth.<sup>237</sup>

In New Spain, the *Diario de Sucesos Notables* reported that a comet was seen to the East at around four o’clock on the morning of November 14th. Wishing to relieve the fear and uneasiness caused by the celestial messenger, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora wrote his *Manifiesto Filosófico contra los Cometas...* The manifest was dedicated to the viceroy’s wife, countess of Paredes, who was afraid of the terrible events that this comet could provoke. Three astronomers reacted to Sigüenza’s statements and wrote their own manifests to support the traditional opinion that comets were signs of tragedies and calamities to come: Martin de la Torre, a Flemish living in exile in Campeche; Joseph de Escobar, physician and professor of surgery at the Royal University; and Eusebio Kino, the great missionary of north-western Mexico, who observed the comet while he was in Cadiz waiting to travel to New Spain.<sup>238</sup> The cometary tilt of 1680 in New Spain, as in other countries, is an interesting example of the way in which astronomical theories affected astrological beliefs.

With these considerations about the cometary debate, one between skeptics and believers, we reach our last point: the social factor of astrology’s decline.<sup>239</sup> Why did the

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<sup>236</sup> Robinson, James H. *The Great Comet of 1680. A Study in the History of Rationalism* (PhD Thesis, Columbia University) Northfield, Minnesota, 1916. See also: Schaffer, Simon. “Newton’s comets and the transformation of astrology” in Curry (1987), p. 216.

<sup>237</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 136. For an interesting discussion, in the Portuguese context, on the comets of 1577 and the discussion about the Aristotelian incorruptibility of the heavens see Leitão and Carolino (2006), pp. 153-168.

<sup>238</sup> Kino’s most thorough biography is H. E. Bolton’s *Rim of Christendom: a Biography of Eusebio Kino, pacific coast pioneer*, New York, Russell and Russell, 1960.

<sup>239</sup> Geneva has also talked about the linguistic factor of astrology’s decline, which is too complex to be discussed here, but certainly deserves more attention. See: “The Decline and Fall of Astrology as a Symbolic Language System.” in Dörries, Mathias. *Experimenting in Tongues. Studies in Science and Language*. Stanford:

figure of the astrologer loose respectability? Did the skepticism towards the divine meaning of celestial phenomena created an insurmountable distance between the astrologer and the new scientist? In my view, this new skepticism did play an important role in the shaping of the scientist's image, but the process was long and the consequences became evident only during the eighteenth century, when a new *enlightened sensibility* brought about a new attitude towards the supernatural.<sup>240</sup> As Daston pointed out, from the Enlightenment onwards, certain attitudes (such as wonder or excess of astonishment) became "disreputable in a workaday science, redolent of the popular, the amateurish, and the childish. Scientists now reserve expressions of wonder for their personal memoirs, not their professional publications. They may acknowledge wonder as motivation, but they no longer consider it part of doing science."<sup>241</sup>

In the case of astrology, I believe this change of *sensibility* to be more visible in the change of attitude towards *enthusiasm* or divine inspiration (*inner light* or *gift of the Spirit*). In a religious world, divine inspiration was considered as a way of understanding nature, including the language of the stars. In a secular world, where the divine is swept away from the realm of scientific knowledge, there is no room left for practices that claim to be at the same time divine and scientific. Predicting, prophesying, divining and foretelling formed together a "notion of great importance in religious and astrological discussion from the sixteenth century"<sup>242</sup> Two centuries later, astrology was unable to stay unaffected by the sceptics' criticism of prophecy and their denial of the possibility of knowing the future.

While the new scientist of the Enlightenment was in search of clarity, objectivity, and secular knowledge of nature, the astrologer became more and more associated with the figure of the prophet who foretold the future by divine inspiration. Without being able to maintain their credibility and respectability, there was no chance for astrologers to form a professional community, and maintain the necessary institutional support for the consolidation of a

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Stanford University Press; 2002; pp. 89-110.

<sup>240</sup> Daston, Lorraine. "Preternatural Philosophy" in Lorraine Daston (ed.) *Biographies of Scientific Objects*. Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2000.

<sup>241</sup> Daston (2000), p. 15

<sup>242</sup> Popkin, Richard H. *The Third force in Seventeenth-Century Thought*. Lieden: Brill; 1992, p. 6. On enthusiasm see also: Rosen, George. "Enthusiasm: 'a dark lanthorn of the spirit'". *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. 1968; XLII(5), p. 403.

modern scientific discipline. As Thagard has claimed, it was physicians and not astrologers who succeeded in legitimating their practice as *scientific* enough for Medicine to become a respected discipline.<sup>243</sup>

Even though these considerations might be useful to understand why astrology lost its central position in early-modern intellectual landscape, they are not sufficient or free of contradictions. As Navarro has pointed out, the question of astrology's decline is far from being answered or fully understood. A comparative study about astrology's decline within different European countries is still to be done.<sup>244</sup> It is my belief that the study of astrological traditions and practices outside Europe might also prove useful pieces to solve this puzzle. The study of astrology in the New World during the colonial period is only one of these pieces.

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<sup>243</sup> Whright, p. 96.

<sup>244</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 133.

## Chapter 2. The persecution of Astrology

### 2.1. Astrology and the Inquisition, or Science and Religion

At the outset, the relationship between Astrology and the Inquisition could be regarded as one among many expressions of the clash between science and religion, a subject with a long historiographic tradition.<sup>245</sup> However, I believe that this approach might be misleading, especially if the conflict between science and religion is constructed as a binary opposition between two abstract entities, such as reason and faith, or modernity and tradition. The problem is better assessed when considered within its institutional frame: Who persecuted astrology? To what extent? What other issues were at stake? In the end, it is only by having a closer look at inquisitorial activity against astrology, and the way in which censorship was exercised that we can reach a better understanding of the Catholic Church's position towards astrological practice.

As understood by David B. Wilson, the historiographic tradition of science and religion, can be divided in four different argumentative phases: the conflict thesis, the reaction to the conflict thesis, the Christian foundations of modern science, and the complexity thesis.<sup>246</sup> The conflict thesis, with the paradigmatic example of Galileo's sentence by the Roman Inquisition in 1633, understands the clash between science and religion as a binary opposition between reason and faith, knowledge and authority, Scripture and the book of nature.<sup>247</sup> The nineteenth-century scholars John William Draper (*History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, 1874) and Andrew Dickson White (*A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 1896) strongly contributed to shape this kind of view, "in which scientific explanations repeatedly challenged religious

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<sup>245</sup> For some recent publications see: Croker, Robert (ed.) *Religion, Reason, and Nature in Early Modern Europe*. International Archives of the History of Ideas, 180. Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer, 2001. Russell, Robert J. (ed.) *Fifty Years in Science and Religion: Ian G. Barbour and his Legacy*. Ashgate Science and Religion Series, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2004. Ian G. Barbour *Religion and science : historical and contemporary issues*, translation into Spanish by José Manuel Lozano Gotor, Madrid : Trotta, 2004.

<sup>246</sup> Wilson, David B. "The Historiography of Science and Religion" in Ferngren (2000), pp. 5-9.

<sup>247</sup> See Feldhay, Rivka. *Galileo and the Church. Political Inquisition or Critical Dialogue?* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press; 1995. On the institutional attitude of the Church towards science see also: Riza Morales, José María: *La Iglesia en la Historia de la Ciencia*. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 601. Madrid, BAC, 1999.



sensibilities, in which ecclesiastics invariably protested at the presumption, and in which the scientists would have the last laugh.”<sup>248</sup> In the 1930s, Butterfield (*The Whig Interpretation of History*, 1931) argued that this kind of thesis responded to a “Whig interpretation of history”, which divided “the world into friends and enemies of progress.”<sup>249</sup>

On the opposite side of the conflict thesis, the separationist position identifies two different kinds of mentalities (one dealing with provable facts, and the other with matters of faith), though “not as contending forces but as essentially complementary, each answering a different set of human needs. From this view, scientific and theological languages have to be related to different spheres of practice.”<sup>250</sup> Discourses about God, for instance, would be thus appropriate in the context of worship, or self-examination, but inappropriate in the context of a laboratory. In the 1950s, a reaction to both positions was launched by philosophers of science, such as Koyrè, and Kuhn. In *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (1957) Koyrè reflected on the role that theology played during the Scientific Revolution and concluded that the process “involved philosophy and theology as well as science, and all three dimensions of thought existed” within the minds of the protagonists of this revolution.<sup>251</sup> In *The Copernican Revolution* (1957), Kuhn stated that the “astronomers’ philosophical and religious views were as *equally fundamental* to their scientific ones.”<sup>252</sup> In the 1950s, some fresh interpretations of the relationship between science and Christianity came out.<sup>253</sup> These interpretations expressed “a more intimate relationship between scientific and religious concerns.”<sup>254</sup> From this point of view, certain religious beliefs may be conducive to scientific activity, and the interaction between religion and science can work to the advantage of both.

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<sup>248</sup> Brooke, John H. *Science and Religion. Some historical perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1991, p. 2. Barker (2000) that, as far back as 1928, Charles Singer described White’s book as ‘lacking in depth despite its learning’. (p. 79)

<sup>249</sup> Wilson (2000), p. 5.

<sup>250</sup> Brooke (1991), p. 1

<sup>251</sup> Quoted in Wilson (2000), p. 5.

<sup>252</sup> Wilson (2000), p. 5.

<sup>253</sup> A. Hunter Dupree (Asa Gray, 1810-1888), Charles C. Gillispie (*Genesis and Geology: A Study in the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology, and Social Opinion in Great Britain, 1790-1850*), Paul H. Kocher (*Science and Religion in Elizabethan England*), Giorgio de Santillana (*The Crime of Galileo*), and Richard S. Westfall (*Science and Religion in Seventeenth Century England*).

<sup>254</sup> Brooke (1991), p. 4.

The effort to abandon “the warfare metaphor” moved a step forward in the 1970s, when some scholars retraced the “Christian foundations of modern science”. In his work *Religion and Rise of Modern Science* (1972), Reijer Hooykaas concluded that, ‘in total contradiction to pagan religion, nature is not a deity to be feared and worshiped, but a work of God to be admired, studied and managed.’<sup>255</sup> In *Science and Creation* (1974), Stanley L. Jaki argued that two barriers to science pervaded non-Christian cultures: ‘a cyclic view of history and an organic view of nature.’ In contrast, the Judeo-Christian view ‘historically regarded nature as the nonliving creation of a rational God, not cyclic but with a definite beginning and end. In this conceptual context (and only in this conceptual context), modern science emerged, from the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries.’<sup>256</sup>

From the nineties onwards, historians of science and religion had attempted to overcome the simplification of a unilateral relationship (either conflictive or harmonious) between science and religion and ‘reveal something of the complexity of the relationship between science and religion as they have interacted in the past.’<sup>257</sup> Scholarship in both subjects has revealed so extraordinarily rich and complex a relationship between science and religion that general statements are almost impossible to sustain. Not all religious believers can be regarded as obscurantist, or all scientists as non-believers. “Conflicts allegedly between science and religion may turn out to be between scientific interests, or controversially between rival theological factions. Issues of political power, social prestige, and intellectual authority have repeatedly been at stake.”<sup>258</sup> Thus the clash is no longer considered between two abstract entities (science and religion), but as conflicts within concrete individuals and their religious beliefs, or as conflicts between competing *epistemes* or systems of science, or as struggles between different groups of professionals, both scientists and clergymen fighting for the control over education.<sup>259</sup>

These interpretations reflect a growing inclination among scholars “to take science down from its traditional pedestal and treat it as mere ideological property, intrinsically not

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<sup>255</sup> Quoted in Wilson (2000), p. 6.

<sup>256</sup> Quoted in Wilson, (2000), p. 7.

<sup>257</sup> Wilson (2000) referring to Brooke, p. 9.

<sup>258</sup> Brooke (1991), p. 5.

<sup>259</sup> Lindberg (1986), p. 7.

different from any other kind of knowledge -religious, political, social.”<sup>260</sup> And, it appears to me that it is not only science which has been taken down from its traditional pedestal, but a whole set of *ideas* previously considered as *motors of history* which are now being re-dimensioned and associated with much more concrete and down-to-earth aspects of everyday life. Thus both science and religion are increasingly studied in context; scientific discoveries and theological debates are observed within the framework of the places where they took place, the institutions which supported them, and the network of people which participated in them.

The attempt to contextualize scientific and religious debates and take into consideration those issues which were at stake outside the debates themselves has opened the path for new approaches, and new subjects within the history of both science and religion. One could think, for instance, of the recent works about the study of natural philosophy within different religious orders, more particularly the Jesuits in the early modern-period.<sup>261</sup> Nevertheless, I believe that an over-emphasis on the institutional background of science might lead to the temptation of explaining all kind of philosophical, religious, and scientific debates only in terms of power struggles. Neither ideas nor power can be regarded as single motivations, lest the result be an impoverishment of historical explanation.

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<sup>260</sup> Lindberg (1986), p. 9.

<sup>261</sup> In the catalogue of the Library of the History of Science Museum in Florence, I found 264 entries by searching “Jesuits” in the subject index, 9 entries for Franciscans and Dominicans altogether, and none for the rest of the religious orders. For recent publications on the subject see especially: Feingold, Mordechai. *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters*. Cambridge-London, MIT Press, 2003. And Hellyer Marcus *Catholic Physics. Jesuit Natural Philosophy in Early Modern Germany*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.

## 2.2 Theological background

More than a clash between reason and faith, some scholars have suggested that the Catholic Church reacted only when the new natural philosophies of the Renaissance was contrary to traditional Aristotelianism. Contesting this traditional cosmology was a dangerous threat to the apparent unity that the Catholic Church had built ever since its foundation.<sup>262</sup> Paula Findlen refers to famous historical examples to support this argument. Girolamo Cardano was arrested in 1570 by the Inquisition of Bologna on suspicion of heresy. "His unorthodox intellectual practices included casting the horoscope of Christ, arguing for the natural causes of supernatural events, and advocating the value of dreams in foretelling the future."<sup>263</sup> Tommaso Campanella was imprisoned in 1592 by the Neapolitan Inquisition for his adherence to Telesian natural philosophy. Giordano Bruno was imprisoned one year later, accused by the Venetian Inquisition of teaching the diabolic arts of memory, denying the Trinity, and attempting to start his own sect in Germany. "It was not Bruno's heliocentrism that offended, but his conviction that a new philosophy would be the bases for a new theology."<sup>264</sup> The Congregation of the Index condemned Francesco Patrizi's *New Philosophy of the Universe* (1591), dedicated to Gregory XIV, because of the theological implications of his idea of a world soul, and the author's rejection of Aristotle's traditional concept of the four elements in favour of the four principles of space, light, heat, and humidity.<sup>265</sup>

For the Catholic Church, the border into heresy and magical practice was sometimes dangerously crossed by these natural philosophers and their new philosophies. Once again I would like to start by making some general remarks on the position of the Catholic Church

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<sup>262</sup> Baldini, Ugo. "L'Inquisizione romana e le scienze: etica, ideologia, storia" in Borromeo, Agostino (curatore) *L'Inquisizione. Atti del Simposio Internazionale. Città del Vaticano, 29-31 ottobre 1998*. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; 2003, pp. 661-707. It is worth to reproduce here Baldini's words: "Ciò che entrò in urto con la nascente scienza moderna (ma anche, spesso, con dottrine eterodosse non più moderne scientificamente, né più corrette di quelle tradizionali) non fu una generica religione o fede, e neppure un cristianesimo o cattolicesimo attemporali, ma una realtà storica: un corpo, stratificato in fasi diverse e estremamente composito, di credenze, conoscenze, tesi, metodi, presupposti, al quale un'opera plurisecolare di sistemazione aveva conferito una unità esterna che poteva apparire una vera omogeneità, pur senza esserlo (basti ricordare l'evidente diversità della cosmologia biblica dall'aristotelica)." (p. 678).

<sup>263</sup> Findlen, Paula. "Science and Society" in John A (ed.) *Early Modern Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2002, pp. 166-187.

<sup>264</sup> Findlen (2002), p. 174.

<sup>265</sup> Findlen (2002), p. 173.

towards magic and the *occult sciences*, before considering the particularities of the catholic-astrological controversy. Magic was dangerous to orthodox Catholicism for two main reasons. First, natural magic could easily become supernatural magic, which involved trafficking with demons. Second, and probably even more importantly, the supernatural often became natural, which lead to explanations of the miraculous.<sup>266</sup> Despite the attempts to create an occult theory based solely on non-demonic principles, magical practices were inevitably the focus of religious controversy. The distinction between natural magic and making pacts with the devil grew ever finer, until it was blurred altogether.<sup>267</sup>

In the context of Counter-Reformation politics, the debate about magic became part of the general debate concerning the unity of Christendom.<sup>268</sup> The Church's attack against magic was not only an attempt to protect the faithful from a superstitious attitude towards the supernatural, but also an effort "to consolidate its monopoly over supernatural forces" and eliminate any "threat to its jurisdiction over [the] miraculous".<sup>269</sup> After condemning all magical activity as heretical, the Inquisition became the main instrument to prosecute and punish magical heresy. In the late sixteenth century, illicit magic became one of the most common charges brought before the local tribunals of the Holy Office. The accused were usually charged with using charms, incantations, and magical devices to heal physical ailments, to detect thieves, to find stolen objects and buried treasures, or to incite sexual passion.<sup>270</sup>

It is important to underline, however, that the higher number of denunciations for magical practices does not necessarily imply that there was a radical change in the Church's

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<sup>266</sup> Asworth, William. "Catholicism and Early Modern Science" in David Lindberg (ed.) *God and Nature. Historical Essays on the Encounter between Christianity and Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1986; p. 149.

<sup>267</sup> Eamon (2000), p. 537.

<sup>268</sup> For a discussion on the historiography of the Counter-Reformation see Feldhay's *Galileo and the Church* (2005), especially chapter 4: 1. The current of the Enlightenment and idealist philosophy which emphasizes the authoritarian and reactionary aspects of the Counter-Reformation (Croce, Bari, Chabod, Cantimori, V. de Caprariis, N. Valeri). 2. The current which emphasizes the impulse for change and innovation which autonomously brought about the Catholic reform (Brezzi, H. Jedin, G. Lecchi and O. Niccoli, Evennett). 3. The current which emphasises the tendency for reform common both to Reformation and Counter-Reformation. (J. Lortz, and B. Ullianich, Bendiscioli, Prodi).

<sup>269</sup> Eamon (2000), p. 537.

<sup>270</sup> Eamon (2000), p. 538.

attitude towards magic during the counter-Reformation. Generally, magical practices were treated as minor religious crimes and punished softly. Moreover, one should bear in mind that even within the context of the Counter-Reformation, some philosophers and theologians did not abandon the effort to conciliate magic with religious orthodoxy. The Jesuit Francisco Suárez, one of the *champions* of the Counter-Reformation agreed that certain phenomena were ‘most occult [and] must be traced to some power of a higher order, ...a wondrous and occult power... assisted perhaps by some special and connatural celestial influence.’ He distinguished natural magic and its occult qualities from superstitious magic and its evil spirits.<sup>271</sup>

The *clash* between astrology and Christian theology can be dated back to the time of the Fathers. Augustine’s final position in his attack against astrology, based in turn on Cicero’s attack, was a clear distinction between ‘the useful observations of the heavenly bodies in connection with the weather, such as farmers or sailors make’ and ‘the vain hallucinations of men who observe the heavens not to know the weather... but merely to pry into the future and learn what fate has decreed.’<sup>272</sup> As for Isidore of Seville he divided astrology into natural and superstitious; the later is ‘the one used by the *mathematici* who tell the future from the stars and who relate the 12 signs to the parts of the body and the soul, and who attempt to predict the births and customs of men from the courses of the stars.’<sup>273</sup> In the context that concerns us, however, two moments were crucial: the publication of Pico della Mirandola’s twelve-book attack on judicial astrology, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* in 1496 and the promulgation of the Bull *Coeli et Terrae Creator Deus* by Pope Sixtus V in 1586.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Copenhaver, Brian. “The Occultist Tradition and its Critics” in Daniel Garber (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth Century Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2003, p. 458.

<sup>272</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 81.

<sup>273</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 82.

<sup>274</sup> On Pico’s *Disputationes* see Rutkin (2002); Tester (1987); Bowden (1974); Sheila Rabin. *Two Renaissance Views of Astrology: Pico and Kepler* (PhD Dissertation, CUNY, 1987); and Don Cameron Allen. *The Star-Crossed Renaissance: The Quarrel about Astrology and its Influence in England*. Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1941. On Sixtus V’s Bull see Thorndike, Lynn. “The Catholic Reaction: Index, Inquisition and Papal Bull” in *History of Magic and Experimental Science* (HMES) New York: Columbia University Press; 1941, Vol. VI, Chapter XXXIV, pp. 145- 177. See also: *Bullarium Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum Taurinensis editio, Tomus VIII: a Gregorio XIII ad Sixtum VI*. Turin, Seb. Franco et Henrico Dalmazzo editoribus, 1863, p. 647. Quoted in Carolino (2003), p. 80. The complete bull is also reproduced in: Whitmore, A. *A Seventeenth-Century Exposure of Superstition: Select Texts of Claude Pithoys (1587-1676)*. The Hague; 1972.

The *Disputationes* was published in Bologna two years after Pico's death by his nephew Gianfrancesco Pico, who edited and modified the original work for publication together with his personal physician Giovanni Mainardi.<sup>275</sup> Pico's attack was not against that astrology 'which measures the sizes and motions of the stars with mathematical argument', but against 'that which announces what will happen from the stars, a fraud of mercenary mendacity, prohibited by laws both civil and papal'.<sup>276</sup> He attacked all kinds of divinatory astrology and its practitioners, from the most professional to the mere charlatans. He asserted that astrologers were only interested in wealth and self-advancement and that they didn't even agree among themselves: 'from this various and manifold variety of opinions, it can easily be perceived how uncertain divinatory astrology must become'.<sup>277</sup>

In Book I Pico first tackles the central issue of disciplinary configurations in Guido Bonatti and Ptolemy, and then discusses contemporary and recently deceased anti-astrological authorities.<sup>278</sup> The first part of Book II is a response to the part of the *Tetrabiblos* where Ptolemy presents his arguments to support his claims for astrology's usefulness. "Pico responds by arguing the other side, including an attack on both Pierre d'Ailly and Roger Bacon's further claims that astrology could be useful for religion."<sup>279</sup> The second part of Book II "is comprised of a rather heterogeneous set of arguments meant to cast doubt on the reader's belief in several of astrology's different domains."<sup>280</sup> Book III, studied thoroughly by Rutkin, is the core of Pico's attack on the natural philosophical foundations of astrology.<sup>281</sup> In Book V Pico tried to show the mistakenness of the idea that great conjunctions signified major historical events: If the sky is the same everywhere, why should different regions in the sky produce different effects? If all the planets and all the stars are always present in the heavens at every moment, why is one nativity different from the other, or one conjunction

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<sup>275</sup> On the importance of Gianfrancesco's role see: Garfagnini, Gian Carlo. "La Questione astrologica tra Savonarola, Giovanni e Giovan Francesco Pico" in *Rinascimento*. 2004; XLIV(Seconda serie):17-47. On Mainardi's own anti-astrological works see: Zambelli, Paola. "Giovanni Mainardi e la polemica sull'astrologia" in *L'opera e il pensiero di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola nella storia dell'Umanesimo*, vol. II, Firenze 1965.

<sup>276</sup> Quoted in Rutkin (2002), p. 47.

<sup>277</sup> Quoted in Tester (1987), p. 209.

<sup>278</sup> Rutkin (2002), pp. 49 and 51.

<sup>279</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 57.

<sup>280</sup> Rutkin (2002), p. 57.

<sup>281</sup> Rutkin (2002), pp. 61-101.

greater than the other? If the actual coming together of the planets –even those involving the slow-moving Saturn and Jupiter- occupies so short a time, how can the effects of these conjunctions persist for such long periods? In Book IX, Pico argues that establishing the exact condition of the heavens and position of the stars at a certain hour is virtually impossible and that ‘astrologers have always been content with the inaccuracies of their Tables, unsupported by observations.’<sup>282</sup>

The resonance of Pico’s arguments among theologians and natural philosophers is too complex a subject to be discussed here. However, it is important to state that the *Disputationes* is considered the landmark of a series of later attacks, which not only tried to refute astrology’s claims to possess a *scientific* (or natural philosophical) foundation, but also to condemn any effort to reconcile astrology with theology.<sup>283</sup> On the opposite direction, Pico’s work also served as a fundamental source for natural philosophers that were committed with the reformation of astrology.<sup>284</sup>

From the theological point of view, the most problematic issue about astrology was that the influence of celestial bodies could turn into astral determinism, which was incompatible with Christian doctrines of free will and moral autonomy.<sup>285</sup> As the controversy about astrology took on more importance during the sixteenth century, some theologians tried to conciliate the belief in astral influence with human free will. During the early modern period, the Dominican Tomasso Campanella (1538-1639) was probably the most committed catholic theologian to the defence of astrology. After strong oppositions against astrology during his youth, he became profoundly interested in such doctrines, trying to separate the natural and empirical basis of astrology from the divinatory and superstitious one (generally

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<sup>282</sup> Quoted in Tester (1987), p. 210.

<sup>283</sup> One should bear in mind that Pico composed his *Disputationes* after Pope Alexander VI had condemned a handful of his nine hundred theses as heretical, in 1487. Pico altered the theses, and the Pope granted him absolution in 1493.

<sup>284</sup> Kepler being the most famous of them. Rutkin (2002), p. 61. Confront with Rabin, Sheila. “Kepler’s Attitude Toward Pico and the Anti-astrology Polemic” in *Renaissance Quarterly*. 1997; 50(3):750-770. Rabin concludes that: “An examination of Kepler’s attitude toward Pico and his polemic shows us that Kepler, despite his continuing acceptance of astrology, did not completely deviate from the tendency of the Copernican cosmology to discredit astrology, for Kepler’s astronomy had an anti-astrology bent. Thus, Pico’s work did not influence Kepler to modify his attitude toward astrology; Kepler’s astronomy made him modify his attitude toward Pico.”

<sup>285</sup> I will go back to the problem of free will and astral determinism in chapter 3.



linked to Arabic astrology).<sup>286</sup> His approach was to try and identify a physical astrology compatible with catholic orthodoxy: interpreting the language of the stars was equal to understanding one of the ways in which the Divine Providence acts through natural intermediaries, without denying the thesis that the divine grace was beyond any kind of human power of direction.<sup>287</sup> Only superstitious astrology was then to be considered evil or demonic.

Directly related to the issue of free will, there was a secondary conflict which illustrates the complexity of the relationship between Christian belief and astrological practice: the contradictory explanations offered by theology and natural philosophy for the same kind of phenomena, particularly natural disasters and supernatural events.<sup>288</sup> On the one hand, clergymen taught the faithful to regard these events as portents, messengers of God's will; on the other hand, astronomers-astrologers reduced these phenomena to the realm of natural and predictable events. Some of these natural philosophers, as we have seen before, remained convinced of the effect on Earth of these natural phenomena; others started developing a more *sceptical* attitude towards this kind of interpretation.<sup>289</sup>

At the outset, the belief in supernatural events as portents seems incompatible with the rejection of celestial influence in human events. In other words, how could a Christian believe in portents and reject astrology at the same time? First of all, a complete disbelief in the terrestrial meaning of celestial events "was simply not an option for orthodox seventeenth-century Christians."<sup>290</sup> Secondly, it was possible to conciliate both positions. In the same way that understanding the Macrocosm meant explaining the Microcosm, interpreting the Book of God meant understanding the Book of Nature and vice-versa. The Celestial bodies had been set in the Heavens by God himself; their movements were to be

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<sup>286</sup> Ernst, Germana. *Religione, ragione e natura. Ricerche su Tommaso Campanella e il tardo Rinascimento*. Milano: Franco Angeli; 1991, p. 23.

<sup>287</sup> North, John. "Astrology and the Fortunes of Churches" in *Centaurus* (International Magazine of the History of Mathematics, Science, and Technology). 1980; 24, p. 183.

<sup>288</sup> See Schechner, Genuth. *Comets, Popular Culture, and the Birth of Modern Cosmology* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997.

<sup>289</sup> On the relationship between cometary debates and the decline of astrology see chapter 1.

<sup>290</sup> Burns, William E. "The Terribliest Eclipse that Hath Been Seen in Our Days: Black Monday and the Debate on Astrology during the Interregnum" in Margaret J. Osler (ed.) *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2000; p. 139.

observed as a representation of his majesty and power, and therefore, “knowledge of their operation could only redound to his greater glory.”<sup>291</sup>

Contemplating the regularity and harmony of celestial dynamics made the astrologer aware of the existence of a sovereign ordering intelligence, thus “the impulse towards the sky [does] not derive from human pride, but it sharpens its awareness of their limitations and fragility. It reinforces rather than diminishes *pietas*.”<sup>292</sup> Girolamo Cardano, for instance, argued that “contemplation of the order and harmony of the celestial spheres and the whole great ‘machinery of the world’ would make man conscious that a single, sovereign intelligence existed. No branch of learning was better equipped than astrology to make man recognize the wisdom, power, and love of God.”<sup>293</sup>

The line traced by the Catholic Church between legitimate (providential prodigy-interpretation) and illegitimate inquiry of celestial phenomena was very thin. Astrologers could study these phenomena only as *signs* and not as *causes*, because God is the only primary cause. “Unlike judicial astrologers, who treated celestial prodigies as causes as well as signs, claiming that the stars, as well as unusual celestial events such as comets, exerted direct influence on the terrestrial world, providential prodigy interpreters treated God as the only active force, and prodigies merely as signs or warnings exerting no force of their own.”<sup>294</sup> Based on their observations, they could even make predictions, but only for general human affairs, such as wars or epidemics, and not for individual matters.

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<sup>291</sup> Thomas (1971), p. 360.

<sup>292</sup> Ernst, Germana. “Astrology, religion, and politics in Counter-Reformation Rome” in Stephen Pumfrey (1991), p. 251.

<sup>293</sup> Ernst (2001b), p. 55.

<sup>294</sup> Burns (2000), p. 140.

### 2.3. The institutional background

Sixtus V's Bull *Coeli et terrae creator Deus* (1586) was one of the main instruments of the Catholic Church in her battle against the practice of divinatory arts, and the possession of books on the subject. With this Bull, *divinatory* astrology acquired the status of heresy and the whole inquisitorial apparatus was authorized to combat it.<sup>295</sup> Inquisitors and other ecclesiastical officials were to prosecute those who dealt with contingent or fortuitous events, or with events dependent on human free will, even though the astrologers argued that they did not affirm such matters certainly and absolutely, but only in a conjectural way. However, the practice of *natural* astrology, and the publication of books on the subject were still permitted. This branch of astrology dealt not with future contingent events, but with events that occur frequently or necessarily from natural causes. Thus, as the bull itself stated, judicial astrology for agriculture, navigation and medical practice was not subject to prosecution.

Sixtus V's Bull was reaffirmed by Pope Urban VIII in 1631, which, according to Thorndike, may suggest that the original decree had not been properly enforced in the previous period.<sup>296</sup> Urban's text stated that no one, whatever his rank, was immune from the bull's prohibitions, and that he/she who went against it was exposed to severe penalties, including confiscation of property and death. It condemned particularly the practice of predictions on political and ecclesiastical matters, such as the life of the Pope. This emphasis on the danger of astrology's involvement with politics "makes one suspect that it was the boldness of astrologers in forecasting such matters which elicited the bull, and that it was such predictions which would actually be most likely to be punished."<sup>297</sup> Indeed, Urban had been interested in astrology, to such an extent that he used to cast the horoscopes of cardinals resident in Rome, and predict their deaths. But by 1626, Urban had himself become the target of such predictions, "which were apparently being stirred up by pro-Spanish factions who were trying to scare the pope to death."<sup>298</sup> The Roman astrologer Orazio Morandi, abbot of the Vallambrosa monastery, published predictions on Pope Urban's and his nephew's deaths.

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<sup>295</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 86.

<sup>296</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 157.

<sup>297</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 171.

<sup>298</sup> Rutkin (2005b), p. 177.

In July 1630 Morandi was summoned to the Holy Office and thrown into prison, and in April 1631 Urban issued his bull *Inscrutabilis* against astrology.<sup>299</sup>

As important as the Papal Bulls might be in order to understand the inquisitorial attitude towards astrology, it is important to bear in mind two crucial points. First, that these documents were not the only guidelines for inquisitors in cases dealing with astrological practices, but they also relied on the indexes of forbidden books. Secondly, that the condemnation by these texts of certain astrological predictions has been many times misunderstood by recent scholarship on the subject. Some historians have generalized the idea that the Bulls' condemnation of divinatory astrology was based on a clear division between natural-licit astrology and forbidden-judicial astrology. The fact is that the term *judicial* was actually used in the Papal texts to refer to the astrology useful for agriculture, navigation, and medicine. As early as 1665, the professor of Mathematics in Pavia, Placido Titi, denounced the misuse of the term *giudiciaria* to refer to the condemned and superstitious astrology, which he calls *temeraria*.<sup>300</sup> Titi explained that the pejorative connotation of the term *judicial* was actually mistaken because all sciences, including philosophy, and mathematics, make *judgements* and conclusions based on previous propositions.<sup>301</sup>

The already complicated distinction between licit and forbidden astrology becomes even more complicated when one takes into account not only the Papal Bulls, but also the criteria of the indexes of forbidden books. The Roman Index of 1564 or *Tridentine Index* was the basis of all later lists until and it contained a series of rules relating to the reading, selling and censorship of books. One of these rules, the often quoted Rule IX, allowed not only astrological predictions related with agriculture, navigation, and medicine, but also predictions on 'general events of the world' and nativities for the knowledge of peoples'

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<sup>299</sup> Rutkin (2005b), pp. 178-179. On the Morandi affair see Dooley (2002).

<sup>300</sup> Titi, Placido. *Tocco di paragone : onde euidentemente appare che l'astrologia nelle parti concesse da S. Chiesa è vera scienza naturale, nobile & vtile quanto la filosofia...* In Pavia : per Gio. Andrea Magri, imprimatur 1665. My gratitude goes to Dr. Darrel Rutkin, who showed me Titi's work, and who helped me understand the misunderstandings of the concepts *judicial* and *natural* astrology.

<sup>301</sup> Titi (1665), p. 20. "...la Filosofia, la Medicina, la Legge e tutte le Matematiche sono giudicarie, imperoche tutte procedono alla cognitione del suo oggetto per mezzo del sillogismo et argomento nel quale si raccoglie il giudizio e conclusione dale propositioni antecedenti già note e concesse..."

‘inclinations, conditions, and qualities.’<sup>302</sup> This point, as we will see, was crucial for astrologers to defend themselves before the inquisitorial tribunal. They argued that even nativities were within the limits of natural astrology, because they only enunciated the moral and physical *inclinations* of a person at the time of his or her birth, without predicting their future.

The Roman and the Spanish Inquisitions issued their own indexes with different targets.<sup>303</sup> Both of them included books on astrology, magic and other kind of divinatory practices in their lists, but they were actually much more concerned with forestalling the expansion of protestant ideas. After all, they were both elaborated at the time when the expansion of the *Lutheran danger* was one of the main concerns of the Catholic Church. In Spain, this concern turned into panic after the discovery of Lutheran followers in Valladolid and Seville, in 1557 and 1559, exactly the years between the elaboration of the first and the second Spanish Indexes (1551 and 1559).<sup>304</sup>

Both the Roman and Spanish Indexes have received extensive attention by scholars concerned with the problem of censorship in Catholic countries. Thorndike studied the impact of the Tridentine Reforms on the publication of works on astrology and other *occult sciences* in Italy, France, and Spain.<sup>305</sup> More recently, Gigliola Fragnito has focused on the question of religious censorship in Italy, while Baldini has specifically studied the incidence of the Roman Index on the cultivation of astrology.<sup>306</sup> In recent decades, the Spanish case has been studied in depth mainly by Virgilio Pinto and José Pardo Tomás.<sup>307</sup> The latter’s *Ciencia*

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<sup>302</sup> Goodman (1990), p. 43.

<sup>303</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 73. A famous example of the difference between Rome and Spain was the condemnation of Copernicus, who was not included in the Spanish Index of 1632.

<sup>304</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 50.

<sup>305</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, pp. 145- 177.

<sup>306</sup> Fragnito, G. *Proibito capire : la Chiesa e il volgare nella prima età moderna*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2005, and --- “The central and peripheral organization of censorship” in Fragnito (2001); Baldini (2001) and (2003). See also: Rossi, Paolo. “Society, culture and the dissemination of learning” in Pumfrey (1991), pp. 143-175; Grendler, Paul. “Printing and Censorship” in Schmitt (1988), pp. 25-53, and --- “The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605” in *Journal of Modern History*. 1975; 47(III), pp. 48-65.

<sup>307</sup> Pardo (1991); Pinto, Virgilio. *Inquisición y control ideológico en la España del Siglo XVI*. Madrid; 1983, --- “Thought Control in Spain” in Stephen Haliczer (ed.) *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*. London: Croom Helm; 1987, pp. 175-184, and --- “Censorship: A System of Control and Instrument of Action” in Alcalá (1987), pp. 303-318. See also: Alcalá, Angel. *Literatura y Ciencia ante la Inquisición Española*. Madrid: Ediciones del Laberinto; 1991.

y *Censura* focused on the problem of inquisitorial censorship of scientific works, and it devotes a whole section to the debate on astrology. The question of censorship in New Spain will be assessed in more detail in chapter 5 of this work.<sup>308</sup> Therefore, I will only mention here, as a guideline, some general remarks on the specificity of Spanish Indexes, and their attitude towards astrology.

The Spanish Index of 1559, known as Index Valdés, “has often been taken to represent the beginning of an epoch of repression in Spanish Culture” because of its attack against notable works of Castilian poetry and literature.<sup>309</sup> This Index gathered together two previous compilations (Louvain, 1550 and Portugal, 1551), and divided the books according to their language. It also contained a list of twenty rules that served as guidelines for further prohibition. Rule V prohibited works on nigromancy, necromancy, and other superstitious practices, but said nothing about astrology. Rule IV condemned Arabic and Jewish books, which could be regarded as an indirect attack on astrology, due to the strong Arabic tradition of the subject. Thorndike points out that, regarding the *occult* arts, the Index Valdés is very similar to the Roman Index of 1559, with a few additional items of interest.<sup>310</sup>

The second catalogue, known as Index Quiroga, appeared in 1584 and “it was the most conscientiously elaborated catalogue of the sixteenth century.”<sup>311</sup> Among other novelties, this is the first Spanish Index that introduces an expurgatory, which rescued some works and authors from absolute prohibition. Strongly inspired by the Roman *Tridentine* Index of 1564, the Quiroga Index condemned works on magic, chiromancy and divinatory astrology. Following Rule IX of its Roman predecessor, the Spanish index left the door open for the publication of works on natural astrology, including those dealing with individual matters.

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<sup>308</sup> For censorship in Spanish Colonial America see: Guibovich (2003), and Hampe-Martínez, Teodoro. “The Diffusion of Books and Ideas in Colonial Peru: A Study of Private Libraries in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 1993 May; 73(2), pp. 211-233.

<sup>309</sup> Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition. An Historical Revision*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson; 1997, p. 109.

<sup>310</sup> Thorndike, HMEs, Vol. VI, p. 149.

<sup>311</sup> Pinto (1987a), p. 313.

Seventeenth-century catalogues (1612, 1632, and 1640), introduced only minor modifications compared with their predecessors of the sixteenth century, but they were used in a different way: they served mainly as guidelines to expurgate some works and release certain authors from total prohibition.<sup>312</sup> The Index of 1612 was issued under Inquisitor General Sandoval y Rojas. Instead of publishing a separate list of expurgated and prohibited books, he made a single *Index librorum prohibitorum et expurgatorum*, divided in three categories: books from authors who were completely prohibited; books that were prohibited, even if they were written by non-forbidden authors; and books without the author's name. The index contained twice as many forbidden books as the Quiroga Index (1584) and three times as many expurgated books; two appendixes to the original list were issued in 1614, and 1628.<sup>313</sup>

The *Novus Index* of 1632, issued by Inquisitor General Zapata, was the most bulky catalogue ever published by the Spanish Inquisition, adding about 2,500 titles to the previous catalogue. In the history of scientific censorship, this catalogue became famous because of the exclusion of Copernicus, who was already prohibited by the Roman Index.<sup>314</sup> Something similar happened with the *Novissimus librorum prohibitorum* of 1640, issued by Inquisitor Sotomayor, which did not include Galileo. As Protestants, Kepler and Tycho Brahe, were classified as *auctores damnati*, but virtually all their works were permitted in Spain after minor expurgations. Some were allowed even without expurgation, but with the stipulation that a note on the book should state that its author was condemned. Such was the case of Kepler's *Astronomia nova* (1609), his *Epistome Astronomiae Copernicanae* (1618), and his *Chilias logarithmorum* (1624).<sup>315</sup> After 1640, no other Spanish Index was issued during the seventeenth century.<sup>316</sup>

As instruments of censorship, the Indexes had many limitations, such as not being really up-to-date, or not being printed in sufficient copies to insure widespread distribution in

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<sup>312</sup> Pinto (1987a), p. 316.

<sup>313</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 64-66.

<sup>314</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 70.

<sup>315</sup> Kamen (1997), p. 117.

<sup>316</sup> The Index of 1640 was reprinted in 1667. The three Spanish Indexes were published during the eighteenth century: 1707, 1739 y 1747.

all areas where the Holy Tribunal was active. Once again, it needs to be emphasized that the question of astrological censorship is better understood by looking closely at the inquisitorial activity in different contexts. My work aims at being a contribution to the subject by considering the case of seventeenth-century New Spain. We can only anticipate here that, in general terms, inquisitorial control was less severe than in the metropolis, and that the main concern of Mexican inquisitors was, like in Europe, religious and not *scientific* literature.



## 2.4. The Inquisitorial Procedure

The Papal Inquisition was born in the thirteenth century, under the Papacy of Gregory IX (1127-1241), as a Catholic tribunal for the suppression of heresy and punishment of the Cathars in southern France.<sup>317</sup> Strictly speaking, it was not a single institution, but several tribunals controlled by numerous inquisitors selected by the Pope from among Dominicans and Franciscans.<sup>318</sup> The Roman Inquisition was established three centuries later by Pope Paul III to fight against Protestantism in Italy. The former was a rather simple tribunal with no lawyers, and only a notary to keep records of proceedings. Penance varied from a ten-day diet of bread and water, completion of a pilgrimage, or imprisonment for one year or life.<sup>319</sup> The latter was not only the renewal of a previously existing institution, but the creation of a more complex one as part of a wider program of centralizing authority in Rome.<sup>320</sup> In 1584, the guidelines of the Roman Inquisition, under Jesuit direction, were published as the *Directorium Inquisitorium* dedicated to Gregory XIII. Three years later, in 1587, the Holy Office was reorganized as the Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, in order to supervise faith and morals in the whole of Christendom.<sup>321</sup>

The Spanish Inquisition, as a separate national institution, was established in 1478 to uproot a heresy that was spreading subversively among the Marranos: the generic name given to converted Jews who were actually still followers of Judaism or, as the Catholic Kings put it, 'Christians only in name and appearance'.<sup>322</sup> During the first fifty years of its history, the Holy Office did not deviate from this well-defined object, but after the Reformation and with the threat of the expansion of Protestantism throughout Europe, the Tribunal persecuted anyone who deviated from the official dogmas defined by the Council of Trent in 1563. Thus the initial inquisitorial model was extended.<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ruiz, Teófilo F. "The Holy Office in Medieval France and in Late Medieval Castile: Origins and Contrasts" in Alcalá (1987), p. 34.

<sup>318</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia on-line. [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

<sup>319</sup> Waite, Gary K. *Heresy, Magic, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Palgrave; 2003, p. 24

<sup>320</sup> Tedeschi, John. "The Organization and Procedures of the Roman Inquisition" in Alcalá (1987), p.188.

<sup>321</sup> Bowker, John. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford University Press; 2000.

<sup>322</sup> Netanyahu, Benzion. "The primary cause of the Spanish Inquisition" in Alcalá (1987), p. 11.

<sup>323</sup> Bennassar, Bartolomé. "Patterns of the Inquisitorial Mind as the Basis for a Pedagogy of Fear" in Alcalá (1987), p. 177.

On November 1478, Sixtus IV signed the bull *Exigit sinceræ devotionis*, which granted the sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella the Castille, authority to appoint ‘honest and worthy men in any region of these our kingdoms and dominions to investigate and proceed against those guilty and blemished with the said faithlessness and heresy against those who help and welcome them’.<sup>324</sup> In 1483 the same Pope appointed the grand inquisitor of Castile, Tomás de Torquemada, Grand inquisitor of the kingdoms of Aragon, Catalonia, and Valencia as well. Unlike Aragon, the Inquisition of Castile had never been subject to the papal inquisition of the Middle Ages, and, even after the reorganization of the institution during the fifteenth century, it retained a special status, not depending directly on Rome but having instead its own Inquisitor General who was appointed by agreement between the Pope and the King of Spain.<sup>325</sup>

In 1488 the separate Inquisitions of Castilla and Aragón were united under the Council of the Supreme and General Inquisition (frequently called simply *La Suprema*), presided by Torquemada. From its headquarters in Madrid, the *Suprema* directly controlled the twenty one provincial or local tribunals: three in the Mediterranean (Sicily, Sardinia and Majorca), fourteen in the peninsula, one in the Canary Islands, and three in the New World (Mexico City, Lima, and Cartagena de Indias). The Secretariat of Castile and the Secretariat of Aragon (Navarre and America) were the two ministries that served the Council as contact with all the local tribunals. “Almost daily, the local inquisitors wrote to the Inquisitor General to keep him abreast of changing events, and with surprising rapidity, the Council responded from Madrid, with orders and advice.”<sup>326</sup>

In the New World, the Tribunal of the Inquisition was established with a *royal cédula* issued by Phillip II on January 25, 1569. Two tribunals were founded, one in Mexico City and one in Lima, and they were directly accountable to the general Inquisitor in Spain and the Council of the Supreme. The Mexican tribunal’s jurisdiction included not only what is now

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<sup>324</sup> Quoted in Alcalá (1987), p. 1.

<sup>325</sup> Henningsen Gustav. “The Archives and the Historiography of the Spanish Inquisition” in Henningsen and Tedeschi (1986), p. 54.

<sup>326</sup> Henningsen (1986), p. 55.

Mexican territory, but also Central America, the Spanish dependencies in North America, and the Philippines.<sup>327</sup> The tribunal of Mexico City had jurisdiction over the four *Audiencias* that shaped the viceroyalty of New Spain: Mexico, Guatemala, New Galicia and Manila. The tribunal of Lima had jurisdiction over Peru and most of Chile and Argentina.<sup>328</sup> The tribunal of Cartagena, founded in 1610, was in charge of what are now Colombia and Venezuela, and of the Caribbean Islands. The great territorial jurisdiction of the American tribunals, and the effects resulting from it, was one of the main characteristics of the Inquisition in the New World. Among these effects we can mention the relative independence of the American Tribunals from Spain, and the slowness to resolve some cases, which was translated into a somehow more permissive attitude. The first inquisitor general of Mexico, Pedro Moya de Contreras, arrived in Mexico City on September 12, 1571 together with his notary and prosecutor.<sup>329</sup> The first prison was built in Mexico City in 1598, adjoining the *Casa de la Inquisición*, which faced the square of Santo Domingo.

a) How to proceed? The Inquisitor's manual

From the whole cluster of inquisitorial literature, it is possible to identify several sub-genres: official texts from the ecclesiastical and secular authorities; treatises on heretical doctrine and practice; and procedure guidelines or inquisitors' manuals. It was very frequent that doctrinal and procedural matters were mixed together within these texts. The basic distinction between inquisitorial texts and their medieval predecessors is that the former were printed, and the latter manuscript.<sup>330</sup> Even though manuals represent the continuation of a medieval genre of inquisitorial writing, their revival in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries responded to a particular need of the new Inquisition: updating medieval practice and establishing a uniform procedure. Only by studying these texts is it possible to understand the gap between procedural rules and actual inquisitorial practice.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> This jurisdiction was delineated by *Real cédula* of 16 August 1570,

<sup>328</sup> Henningsen (1986), p. 54.

<sup>329</sup> Greenleaf, Richard. *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press; 1969, p. 59

<sup>330</sup> Errera, Andrea. *Processus in Causa Fidei. L'evoluzione dei manuali inquisitoriali nei secoli XVI-XVIII e il manuale inedito di un inquisitore perugino*. Bologna: Monduzzi Editori; 2000.

<sup>331</sup> Jobe, P. H. "Inquisitorial Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: a Preliminary Handlist" in Henningsen and Tedeschi (1986), p. 38.

The author of the most famous medieval inquisitorial manual, the *Directorium Inquisitorium*, was the Dominican inquisitor of Aragon, Nicolas Eymerich (1320-1399). The *Directorium* was initially printed in Seville around the year 1500, and again in Barcelona around 1503. The first part of the text defines the fundamentals and contents of the Faith; the second one deals with the notion and different types of heresy; and the third might be considered as the first attempt to present and describe the various phases of the inquisitorial proceeding as a coherent and organic unit. The text concludes with one hundred and thirty *questiones* to illustrate and clarify specific problematic issues of the anti-heretical procedure.<sup>332</sup>

In 1578, Francisco Peña published his commented edition of Eymerich's *Directorium*, which can be regarded as one of the most important texts of inquisitorial literature during the early-modern period. Peña was born in Villaroya de los Pinares, near Saragossa, around 1540, and died in Rome, in 1612. He studied law in Valencia, until Philip II appointed him auditor of the Sacred Roman Rota, the second highest ecclesiastical court in the Roman Catholic Church. He was a member of the commission handling the preparation of the official edition of the *Corpus juris canonici*, published in 1582.<sup>333</sup>

Preparations for the new edition of the *Directorium* started in 1577 with the *restitutio textus* of the last edition of the text, based on the largest and most trustworthy manuscript testimony of Eymerich's work, and in accordance with the more stringent rules of Renaissance philology. However, a simple re-proposal of the text would have been contrary to what modern inquisitors needed. The development of new heretical doctrines, and the transformations of inquisitorial procedures after Eymerich's time, required a detailed update of the manual, both from the theological and the procedural point of view. Peña thus composed a series of *scholia*, which provided a commented update of several fragments of the original version, according to several pontifical, patristic, and juridical texts. The *scholia* were completed in May 1578 and the new edition of the *Directorium* was printed in Rome

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<sup>332</sup> Errera (2000), p. 125. On the *Directorium* see also: Borromeo, Agostino. "A proposito del *Directorium inquisitorium* di Nicolás Eymerich e delle sue edizioni cinquecentesche" in *Critica Storica*. 1983; 20:523.

<sup>333</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia* on-line : [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

between 1578 and 1579. The work included the original text followed by the *scholia*, and an appendix with medieval and modern apostolic letters dealing with the suppression of heresy. The latter circulated both as part of the *Directorium* and as an independent publication.<sup>334</sup>

In 1585 a second re-edition of the work appeared, with a brief treatise on anti-heretical norms, written by Peña himself. The name *scholia* was substituted for *commentaria*, which were inserted immediately after the passage they referred to. The final version of Peña's *Directorium* varied slightly from the previous one, and it was published in 1587. This version was reprinted in Venice three times in the year 1595 and once in 1607; these were themselves reprints of three other editions in 1589, 1591, and 1597. The seven editions of the *Directorium* between 1578 and 1607 are testimonies of the success of Peña's work. This success was due not only to the attention paid to new forms of heresy, but also, and more importantly, to the organization of the subject.<sup>335</sup>

In New Spain, the Mexican inquisitors did not follow the procedural guidelines of a single manual, but a series of instructions issued by several Spanish tribunals before Peña's edition of the *Directorium*.<sup>336</sup> Perhaps the most relevant of these instructions were those issued in 1484 by Torquemada, the first Spanish Inquisitor. All the guidelines are gathered in volume 1519 of the inquisitorial archive in Mexico City under the entry *Instrucciones que Rigieron en la Inquisición de la Nueva España y modo de proceder de la misma*. In 1951, Edoardo Pallares undertook the task of publishing them.<sup>337</sup> A first look at these series of instructions reveals that they were all focused on the sole practical-procedural aspect, and did not tackle any doctrinal questions. Moreover, they seem to insist on questions regarding the inquisitorial staff, rather than on the trial of the accused. They regulated salaries, hours of work, and the proper conduct inside the courtroom.

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<sup>334</sup> Errera (2000), pp. 118-125.

<sup>335</sup> Errera, (2000), pp. 118-125.

<sup>336</sup> Instrucciones de Sevilla, 1584; Instrucciones de Valladolid, 1488; Instrucciones de Avila, 1498; Instrucciones de Sevilla, 1500; Instrucciones de Toledo, 1502; Instrucciones de Toledo, 1538.

<sup>337</sup> Pallares, Edoardo. *El Procedimiento Inquisitorial*. México: UNAM; 1951.

b) The procedure: from the edict of grace to the *auto de fe*

Theoretically, the Inquisition in the Spanish colonies functioned in the same way as in the motherland. The institution of course needed to adapt to the particularities of the territory; however, in order to understand the procedure, we will refer to the general organisation of the Spanish Tribunal. Inquisitors issued orders known as edicts of grace stating that those people with any knowledge of heresy among their neighbors should report it. The testimony of two witnesses, whose identities were kept secret, was considered as enough evidence against the accused. In theory, before the arrest took place, the evidence in the case was presented to the examiners to determine whether heresy was involved. If they decided that there was sufficient proof, the prosecutor drew up a demand for the arrest of the accused, who was then taken into custody. However, in numerous cases the arrest took place before examination and without the preliminary safeguards against wrongful arrest.<sup>338</sup> The *familiars* were the officers in charge of finding and arresting the suspect, and inventorying every good owned by him and his family.

Inside the cell, chains were used most of the times and prisoners were not allowed to speak to anyone. Unless overcrowding made it necessary to put several persons in the same cell, solitary confinement was the norm. Inquisitors then visited the prisoners in their cells and encouraged them to confess. Since suspects were arrested only after conclusive evidence against them, the accused was considered guilty from the start, and the sole task of the Inquisition was to obtain the admission of guilt. Sometimes because of excessive work or sometimes because of neglect, prisoners could spend months or years inside the cells without knowing what they were accused of. After long periods of imprisonment, it was not surprising that they would confess crimes they had actually not committed. Otherwise, it was not rare that the severities of prison life and unhealthy conditions in the cells lead to death because of disease.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Kamen (1997), p. 183.

<sup>339</sup> Anderson James M. *Daily Life During the Spanish Inquisition*. London: Greenwood Press; 2002, p. 66.

When confession was not voluntary, the inquisitors would proceed with torture. Thus it was not considered as a punishment itself, but as a last resort for confession. Inside the torture chamber, the accused were stripped of their clothes and introduced to the instruments of torture. This alone sometimes made them confess. Torture was performed by public executioners and not by inquisitors, but the latter were present to hear the confession. A notary was also there to take down the confession and a physician, in case some complications occurred. Confession made under torture, however, was not considered valid and the accused was called upon to ratify his or her statements afterwards. If he refused to confess and/or to reveal the names and sins of acquaintances, the inquisitors would threaten with more torture. Inquisitorial instruments and techniques for torture were similar to those used in other secular or ecclesiastical tribunals, and there was no age limit or gender distinction for torture.<sup>340</sup>

Denunciation could come not only from witnesses, but also from delinquents themselves. Though written denunciations were possible, there were most often given orally in front of an inquisitor or a commissioner, and always before a notary, who would immediately write them down. Interprets were used in cases where the witness did not speak the language. The notary summarized the witness's words, following closely the sequence of his statements, but almost always eliminating the hesitations, repetitions, and redundancies.<sup>341</sup>

Interrogations were carried out in a chamber with black drapes on the windows and black buntings on the walls. The inquisitors sat at a long table in white robes and black hoods covering their faces.<sup>342</sup> According to the manuals, all denunciations and depositions had to be done secretly. The *Repertorium Inquisitorium* (Valencia, 1491) stated that 'witnesses must lodge their deposition in secret, not publicly, so that they may speak without restraint and tell the whole truth' The Instructions of General Valdés (1561), warned against any kind of confrontation between defendant and witnesses. And Peña's *Directorium* (1578) was also contrary to any confrontation between both: 'If there is a confrontation, no secrecy can be

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<sup>340</sup> Anderson (2000), pp. 69-70.

<sup>341</sup> Dedieu, Jean Pierre. "The Archives of the Holy Office of Toledo as a Source for Historical Anthropology" in Henningsen and Tedeschi (1986), p. 178.

<sup>342</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 67.

kept. And we have already hinted at all the precautionary measures taken by the law in order to preserve the secrecy of all charges.<sup>343</sup> Secrecy was not originally a part of the inquisitorial framework, but it became the general rule by the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The trial was not a single act in a specific period of time, but it unfolded in a series of hearings and interrogations. The number of hearings was not fixed, but there was a regular structure for the first ones. The first hearing included a questionnaire on the suspect's identity, followed by a recitation of his genealogy, an autobiography o *discurso de vida* and an interrogation of his Christian doctrine. Then, the defendant was asked the same first two questions as the witness: if they know why they had been summoned and if they should denounce any crime against the faith. Next, depending on whether or not the defendant confessed, the inquisitors proceeded to the first admonition, summoning him, in the name of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary, to tell the truth.<sup>344</sup> If the inquisitors were sure the accused was victim of malice or resentment, they would release him after this first interrogation. If released, the accused had to take an oath that everything they had heard, seen, or done during the interrogation and imprisonment had to be kept secret. Penalty for breaking the oath could be as severe as 200 whiplashes.<sup>345</sup>

The second hearing often consisted only of the second admonition. The third admonition was followed by the accusation, where the prosecutor summarized the charges resulting from information, and interpreted them as proofs of heresy. It was not the judge's opinion about the crime, but, above all, a necessary element of procedure to continue the trial. After the accusation the testimonies were read to the accused, without the names of the witnesses and any information or detail that would permit their identification. After this reading the accused was allowed to prepare his or her defence with the services of an advocate. The accused could then proceed to call for favourable witnesses, or object to his judges, a process known as recusation.<sup>346</sup> Otherwise, he could present a written defence that could be of two types: an *abono*, which consisted of proving that the accused was a good

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<sup>343</sup> Bennassar (1987), p. 180.

<sup>344</sup> Dedieu (1986), p. 180.

<sup>345</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 68.

<sup>346</sup> Kamen (1997), p. 195.



Christian, or a *tacha*, which consisted of showing the irrelevance of the testimony that had been offered by attacking the credibility of the witnesses.<sup>347</sup>

Once the suspect of heresy was found guilty, his or her sentence could be read either inside the tribunal's chambers (without spectators and simply announcing the punishment) or during an *auto de fe*. Before the sentence was pronounced, it was required to form a *consulta de fe*, a kind of committee formed by the inquisitors, a representative of the bishop, and officials (consultants) qualified in theology or law. All of them voted on the case, though their votes did not carry equal weight. If the inquisitor and the representative agreed, the vote prevailed even against a majority of consultants.<sup>348</sup> Condemnation by the Inquisition usually meant that the sentence of the accused was to be read in a public ceremony called *auto de fe*, which is probably one of the most thoroughly studied Inquisitorial protocols of the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>349</sup> It has been understood as an "act of punishment, an act of faith, an act of public exaltation of triumphant Catholicism, a collective expression of the social rejection of heresy and of the public subjection to the strictest orthodoxy."<sup>350</sup> It has been regarded as the most "spectacular or pedagogically efficacious representation of the social model of Spanish Baroque society."<sup>351</sup> Finally, it has been considered as a ritual that actually became the "anti-image of the Christian Church, in which the victims of the Inquisition were portrayed as true victors."<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> Dedieu (1986), p. 180.

<sup>348</sup> Kamen (1997), p. 196.

<sup>349</sup> See Maqueda Abreu, Consuelo. *El Auto de Fe*. Madrid; 1992.

<sup>350</sup> González de Caldas, María Victoria. "New Images of the Holy Office in Seville: The Auto de Fe" in Alcalá (1987), p. 267.

<sup>351</sup> Avilés, Miguel. "The Auto de Fe and the Social Model of Counter-Reformation Spain" in Alcalá (1987), p. 249. Social model is here understood as a mental image that reproduces a given social reality, reflecting the elements of that reality as they are perceived by the mind in terms of a coherent structure.

<sup>352</sup> Bethencourt, Francisco. "The auto da fé: ritual and imagery" in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 1992; p. 155.

### c) Punishment: from confiscation to the death penalty

Confiscation was the general punishment imposed on any individual convicted of heresy. The measure was established in the Middle Ages and adopted by the Spanish Inquisition through a pontifical concession: in 1477, Sixtus IV issued a bull conceding the goods confiscated by the Inquisition of Sicily to Queen Isabella the Catholic. For the next two centuries, confiscation of property (together with church donations) remained the major source of income for the Inquisition, which then invested this share of money in property, houses and annuities to obtain a regular income through rents and interest.<sup>353</sup>

After the Familiars apprehended a person on suspicion of heresy, the sequestration of property was carried out. First, the notary of sequestration registered an inventory of the prisoner's property in the presence of the *constable* and the *receiver*, two other members of the inquisitorial staff. Then, the prisoner was called for a hearing where he or she was asked to make a declaration of all his property. Once the inventory was completed, the notary read it to the prisoner for his or her confirmation and signature. The list contained only the property owned by the prisoner himself, and not the goods held by third parties until the 'judge of properties' could elucidate the ones pertaining to the trial. One copy of the inventory was then handed over to a *sequestrador*, a second one remained in the hands of the receiver of the tribunal, and a third was forwarded to the *Suprema* along with a report of the case. The report was signed by the tribunal's oldest inquisitor, who added all the details that had arisen during the process of sequestration (whether that property was involved in litigation, and so on).<sup>354</sup>

After the above procedures were accomplished, the prisoner went to jail and awaited his trial; his goods were deposited either with "an honorable and trustworthy person", either with the *sequestrador*, or in the depository for their administration. Whatever the outcome of the trial, the person in charge of the confiscated goods would pay whatever debts the prisoner had incurred to individuals and/or to the government. After making these payments, he

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<sup>353</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 65.

<sup>354</sup> Martínez Millán, José. "Structures of Inquisitorial Finance" in Alcalá (1987), p. 160.

administered the rest of the property as though it were his own, keeping careful record of all expenses and income, and reporting to the receiver of the tribunal. If the prisoner was not convicted of heresy at the trial, which frequently happened, the Holy Office returned his property, after subtracting the expenses incurred by the bureaucratic procedures. If the prisoner was indeed convicted, the *sequestrador* delivered the estate to the Inquisition, together with a detailed account of the administration he had performed, and from that moment on it belonged to the royal treasury. The decision was obviously not readily accepted by the prisoner, who could turn to the civil and ecclesiastical tribunals in an attempt to revoke it. Finally, the monarch conceded a license to put up the goods for auction for a period of thirty days. Sometimes, the auction was not even held if a buyer appeared who could pay the receiver the amount he was asking.<sup>355</sup>

Light punishments were the kind of penalties imposed on the accused when he or she confessed a slight offense and asked to be reconciled with the church. A survey of the thousands of surviving sentences suggests that in fact milder forms of punishments were more frequent than one might expect.<sup>356</sup> Some of these light punishments included: public humiliation, in the form of abjurations read on the cathedral steps on Sundays and feast days before the throngs of churchgoers, salutary penances; fines to be paid for the benefit of charitable establishments; seemingly endless cycles of prayers and devotions to be performed over many months or years; fasting once a week or going on a pilgrimage; showing up at the church each Sunday with a halter around the neck. In case of whipping, two hundred lashes was the maximum limit, and a hundred lashes was a more common punishment. The prisoner was then paraded through town on the back of a donkey, preceded by the town crier, who announced the event, and accompanied by a clerk to keep record and the executioner.<sup>357</sup>

The wearing of a *sanbenito* (word coming from *saco bendito*, which means blessed sack) was also very common and its use goes back to the medieval Inquisition. The *sanbenito* was a penitential garment, which hung on the body down to the knees and was made of sackcloth with a hole in the top of the head. Penitents were condemned to wear it every time

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<sup>355</sup> Martínez Millán (1987), p. 161.

<sup>356</sup> Tedeschi (1987), 197.

<sup>357</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 72.

he or she stepped out from the house onto the street, and the duration of the punishment would vary from a few months to years. Wearing it publicly amounted to carrying a sandwich board proclaiming one's humiliation. The family name was always embroidered or written across the top of it, and when the convict was finally allowed to stop wearing the *sanbenito*, the Holy Office would hang it on the wall of the local parish church to cast infamy over the descendants of the accused.<sup>358</sup>

Infamy could also arise through publicisation of the sentences at the *autos de fe*, by exposing the defendants to public shame, or by administering the penalty of lashing outside the *autos* proper. Infamy involved certain important restrictions regarding one's way of life, such as not to wear silk or jewelry, or not to bear arms, and the inability to marry honorable people. Other restrictions were related to one's career, since certain positions and professions, the university itself, and some confraternities were closed to inquisitorial convicts. Misery was often the consequence of such restrictions mentioned above.<sup>359</sup>

Other punishments included fines, exile, galleys, and imprisonment. Together with confiscation and church donations, fines were a source of income for the Inquisition, and their amount was at the inquisitor's discretion. Condemnation to exile usually meant financial disaster to craftsmen, merchants, or any person whose activity was linked to a particular place. Lifetime imprisonment was the punishment imposed on those who escaped the death penalty by confession and usually meant about ten years. Since imprisonment involved housing and feeding the inmate, the Inquisition preferred to confine the accused to a monastery or even a private house. 'Relaxation' was the ultimate penalty and it owes its name to the fact that it was handed over to the state authorities for death by burning. By doing so, the church avoided violating its own principles of not taking human life. Two types of prisoners were subject to this ultimate penalty: unrepentant and relapsed heretics. Trials and sentences of the already dead were common in cases where prisoners died inside the cells of the Inquisition and their bones were unearthed, condemned and burned.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 72, and Bennassar (1987), p. 181.

<sup>359</sup> Bennassar (1987), p. 182.

<sup>360</sup> Bennassar (1987), p. 182, and Anderson (2000), p. 72.

## 2.5. Astrology and the Inquisition in Spain and the New World

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several Spanish theologians took part in the debate about astrology. In 1556, Pedro Ciruelo published his *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Salamanca). He firmly believed that stars had an influence on earth, but argued that astrologers could not say anything about human affairs, such as voyages, games, thoughts, or the heart's will.<sup>361</sup> Another theologian, Alvaro Gutiérrez de Torres, composed a treatise on astrological conjunctions in 1524 where he discussed various opinions about astrology.<sup>362</sup> In his book *Silva de varia lección*, the humanist Pedro Mexía (also known as *el astrólogo*) reflected on the connection between the ages of human life and the seven planets, and on the sympathies and antipathies produced by the influence of the stars. The theologian from Zaragoza, Bernaldo Basin composed *De artibus magicis ac magorum maleficiis*, where he attacked astrology and the *error genethliacorum* (nativities or horoscopic astrology). The jurist Diego Simancas, condemned astrology and every other method of divination, but his systematic criticism was not assimilated in inquisitorial practice. On the occasion of the comet of 1577, Francisco Sánchez also wrote against astrologers.<sup>363</sup>

Sixtus V's Bull was not published in Spain until 1612, 26 years after it was issued in Rome. Still in 1605, the year of birth of Phillip IV, the casting of horoscopes was a widely spread practice in Spain.<sup>364</sup> According to the classic studies of Henry C. Lea, astrologers were systematically prosecuted by the Tribunal. However, more recent scholarship has shown that *esoteric* practices were actually one of the Inquisition's minor concerns: they constituted only 1% of cases in Toledo between 1560 and 1600; 5.5% of 6,000 people tried between 1540 and 1700 in the case of Zaragoza; in Valencia, crimes of this category reached 14% between 1540 and 1700, and most of them took place in the seventeenth century. Only 4% of the 29,000 trials of the Spanish Inquisition between 1560 and 1614 dealt with so-called occult practices, being the most common judicial astrology, magical rituals for finding lost objects, and

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<sup>361</sup> Quoted in Caro Baroja (1967), p. 186. The translation is mine.

<sup>362</sup> *La verdadera y muy provechosa declaración que se ha de tener acerca de las varia y diversas opiniones que en Astrología fueron escritas por causa de las muchas conjunciones...*

<sup>363</sup> Caro Baroja (1967), p. 188.

<sup>364</sup> The Italian astrologer Argoli di Padova casted a horoscope for the king, predicting numerous disasters.

magical-medicine.<sup>365</sup> Henningsen's calculation is that the Inquisition in the Catholic countries of the Mediterranean carried out twenty thousand trials regarding witchcraft and magic (most of the times astrology was mixed with these two charges), which ended with either minor punishment or absolution.<sup>366</sup>

The problem with this kind of statistics is that it considers the Church's condemnation of astrology and *other divinatory practices*, as if they were all the same kind of practice, which makes it difficult for historians to identify those cases actually dealing with the persecution of astrology *per se*. In any case, as Lanuza has underlined, the fact that during the inquisitorial trials some expert-astrologers were called upon to examine the evidence against the accused astrologers is sufficient to indicate that astrologers were not systematically persecuted.<sup>367</sup> Moreover, once the accused were tried, it seems that the Tribunal was not particularly severe. Rather, astrologers who exceeded the limits of what was licit were usually punished with a mild penalty.

Caro Baroja mentions four trials against astrologers carried out by the Tribunal of Toledo during the seventeenth century.<sup>368</sup> One of the accused was a mathematician called Juan Piquer, born in 1571, who studied Mathematics and Astrology at the University of Valencia and was imprisoned in Toledo on August 25, 1622. The second trial was against the presbyter Juan Ramírez, born in Valencia in 1551, who was accused for the first time before the tribunal of Valladolid in 1604, and then tried in Toledo. The third case was against a professor of Mathematics in Salamanca, *Licenciado* González, in 1605. The same witness who accused the professor denounced the painter Luis Rosciler, who was also tried in the same year.<sup>369</sup> The four cases were actually registered in the catalogue of the Tribunal of Toledo under the category of witchcraft (*hechiceria*). According to my own survey of the catalogue, there were a total of 192 trials of this kind during the seventeenth century, and 5 of them included the specific charge of practicing judicial astrology.

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<sup>365</sup> Goodman (1990), p. 45.

<sup>366</sup> Henningsen, Gustav. "La Inquisición y las Brujas" in Borromeo (2003), p. 583.

<sup>367</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 318

<sup>368</sup> Caro Baroja (1967). There is a description of each trial in p. 234.

<sup>369</sup> On these cases see also: Lanuza (2005), p. 315

According to Barreiro, the tribunal of Santiago carried out 40 witchcraft trials during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; 6 of these cases are related to astrological and divinatory practices.<sup>370</sup> In 1602, the Franciscan Friar Juan de Vega was accused of possessing a forbidden book to invoke demons; the trial was suspended due to a lack of witnesses. That same year Juan Gómez Tameirón was accused of practicing sorcery and possessing a book about astrology. On June 21, 1622 the Irish professor of Rhetoric, Patricio Sinot, was punished with two years of exile after being accused of practicing divination by means of astrology and the Kabala. The Dominican Friar Andrés Dorado was accused in 1622 of possessing a forbidden book for the practice of exorcism inside a Convent of nuns. In 1623 Don Antonio de Beauforth, marquis of Camarasa and knight of Santiago, was accused of possessing a medal used for divination and sorcery. The lawyer Pedro Alonso was accused of being a judicial astrologer in 1630; he was imprisoned but the trial was suspended on February, 1637.<sup>371</sup>

In the New World, the Inquisition operated through the tribunals of Mexico City, Cartagena, and Lima. From the year of publication of the first edict of grace (1610) until its dissolution, the tribunal of Cartagena carried out a total of 731 trials, including unsolved cases and absolutions. The typology of crimes can be presented as follows: 21% were cases of heretical propositions and blasphemy; 21% witchcraft, 12% Judaism, 11% protestant doctrines, 10% bigamy, 11.3% crimes against the Holy Office, and 4% erroneous doctrines.<sup>372</sup> Those accused of astrology were most probably included among the 21% cases under the category of witchcraft, but the exact number is missing. The Tribunal of Lima, throughout all its years of operation, condemned approximately 1700 prisoners. The main activity in Lima took place between 1570 to and 1615. During this first period blasphemy appears as the main crime (37%), followed by bigamy, Judaism, and disrespect to the authorities of the Holy Office. During the second period, from 1615 to 1750, the main crimes were: Judaism, bigamy, and sorcery.<sup>373</sup> The edict of faith published in 1629 included a

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<sup>370</sup> Barreiro, Bernardo. *Brujos y astrólogos de la Inquisición de Galicia*, Galicia: La Voz de Galicia; 1885 (reditado en Madrid, Ediciones Akal, 2003), pp. 107-200.

<sup>371</sup> Barreiro (2003) pp. 107-200.

<sup>372</sup> Alvarez Alonso, Fermina. "Panorámica de la Actividad Inquisitorial en Cartagena de Indias (siglo XVII)" in Borrromeo (2003), pp. 275-289.

<sup>373</sup> Millar Carvacho, René. "La Inquisición de Lima rasgos de su identidad" in Borrromeo (2003), pp. 251-274.

special clause about judicial astrologers, chiromancers, and sorcerers. The Fiscal of the Tribunal had informed the inquisitors that many people in the region were “studying judicial astrology”, and practicing this art together with many other superstitions.<sup>374</sup> Without having the exact percentage of each crime, one can notice that sorcery (most probably including astrology) became a more dangerous crime after the Council of Trent.

In the case of the Mexican tribunal, I have done a systematic survey of the Inquisition’s catalogue for the seventeenth century (from 1582 to 1713) and found 38 cases related with astrology, including edicts and examinations of forbidden books. Out of this total, 22 entries refer to denunciations and self-denunciations which did not turn into complete trials; 9 entries refer to complete trials; and 5 of them refer to edicts and documents on forbidden books.<sup>375</sup> In his study about the Inquisition of Guatemala, Chinchilla includes the category “astrology and divination” in his classification of the types of crimes prosecuted by the Holy Office in that territory.<sup>376</sup> He concludes that, from the second half of the sixteenth century onward, astrology was no longer practiced by educated people like in the Middle Ages.<sup>377</sup> The decline of astrology was in a way reflected on the number of denunciations presented before the Inquisition. Between 1609 and 1633, there were 6 denunciations against astrologers;<sup>378</sup> after 1633, “there were no more accusations regarding these practices.”<sup>379</sup> In Guatemala, the only case against astrologers after the year 1633 took place in 1641 against

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<sup>374</sup> Castañeda Delgado, Paulino. *La Inquisición en Lima (1570-1635)*, Vol. 1. Madrid, Editorial Demos; 1989, p. 370. “El promotor fiscal les había hecho saber que en aquel distrito muchas personas se daban ‘al estudio de la astrología judiciaria’ y la ejercitaban con mezcla de muchas supersticiones ‘haciendo juicio por las estrellas y sus aspectos sobre los futuros contingentes, sucesos y casos fortuitos o acciones dependientes de la voluntad divina o del libre albedrío de los hombres, y sobre los nacimientos de las personas, el día y la hora en que nacieron, y por otros tiempos’; adivinaban ‘por rogaciones’ los acontecimientos pasados y futuros, el estado que habían de tomar los hijos, las desgracias o venturas, la salud, la enfermedad, las pérdidas y ganancias de hacienda que habían de tener, la manera de muerte, etc.”

<sup>375</sup> See Documentary Apendices 1 and 2.

<sup>376</sup> Chinchilla Aguilar, Ernesto. *La Inquisición en Guatemala*. Guatemala: Editorial del Ministerio de Educación Pública; 1953.

<sup>377</sup> Chinchilla (1953), p. 225. The translation is mine. “Desde mediados del siglo XVI conoce la Inquisición casos de astrólogos y adivinos en Guatemala. Hacia entonces la Astrología ha dejado de ser una ciencia cultivada por las gentes más cultas, como había ocurrido durante algunas centurias del Medioevo, y las personas que la practican se han convertido en verdaderos adivinos, víctimas de su propia credulidad.”

<sup>378</sup> He mentions the denunciations against Juan Santiago Chávez (1609), Sebastián Gudiel (1620), Alonso Dávalos (1627), Friar Juan Ximeno (1633, who was actually accused of crimes against the Holy Office), Juan de Espinosa (1630), and Lázaro Torres (1633).

<sup>379</sup> Chinchilla (1953), p. 226. “...y no se vuelve a presentar ninguna acusación por estas prácticas.”



the Mercedarian Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, which is the case I am going to discuss in the following chapter.

### Chapter 3. The Mercedarian Astrologer

In 1641 Friar Nicolás de Alarcón was denounced to the Inquisition in Guatemala for practicing astrology and making predictions for the president of the High Court (*Real Audiencia*) of Guatemala.<sup>380</sup> Captain Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio was appointed by royal decree of April 14, 1633 as successor of Captain Diego de Acuña (1626-1633) for the presidency of Guatemala.<sup>381</sup> Son of Diego Pérez de Quiñones and Francisca Osorio, Álvaro Quiñones was born in 1575 in the Spanish city of Leon, where he was appointed as governor.<sup>382</sup> In March 1609 he took his vows in the military Order of Saint James of Compostela.<sup>383</sup> He married Doña Juana Salazar y Zuñiga in 1635.<sup>384</sup> In his chronicle, the Dominican Francisco Ximénez described Quiñones as “a restless man, who took care of his office even during meals, or when travelling in his carriage. He had an outstanding instruction for political matters, and his ability for governance made him a highly respected man. His only defect was his immoderate inclination to become richer during his governance.”<sup>385</sup> Quiñones governed Guatemala until 1642, when he left the city with his family and his fortune; he died at sea on his way to Peru.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> The *Audiencia* of Guatemala was established in 1542 as an autonomous institution, with its own administrative, governmental and judicial functions, and separated from that of New Spain See: Juarros, Domingo. *Compendio de la Historia del Reino de Guatemala. 1500-1800*. Guatemala: Editorial Piedra Santa; 1981.

<sup>381</sup> *Real Provisión a D. Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio, dándole título de capitán general de la provincia de Guatemala*. 1633. AGI; INDIFERENTE, 452, L. A. 15.F. 171-172. See also: *Nombramiento de D. Álvaro Quiñones Osorio para el cargo de Presidente de la Audiencia, cargo que desempeñaría por ocho años y con 5000 ducados de sueldo anuales*. AGCA, AL. 23, leg. 4577, fol. 90. The appointment, however, was conditional upon the favourable result of a lawsuit brought against him in Panama by the bailiff Agustín de Franco. See: *Real Cédula a Fabián de Valdés para que averigüe la verdad sobre la querrela que Agustín Franco presentó contra Álvaro de Quiñones Osorio, Juan de la Rinaga y Juan de Alvarado Bracamonte*. 1635. AGI; PANAMA, 238, L.15, F.137v-138v.

<sup>382</sup> *Expediente para la concesión del título de caballero de la orden de Santiago a Alvaro de Quiñones*. 1609, AHN; OM-EXPEDIENTILLOS, No. 210. According to the witnesses who testified for the concession of the title, Quiñones was born either in 1577 or in 1579. According to his horoscope (vid .infra.) he was born in 1575.

<sup>383</sup> Founded in the twelfth century, it owes its name to the national patron of Spain. Unlike the contemporary orders of Calatrava and Alcántara, which followed the severe rule of the Benedictines of Citeaux, Santiago adopted the milder rule of the Canons of St. Augustine. It had a mixed character between hospitaller and military order. Quiñones Osorio was elected as *caballero* in 1609.

<sup>384</sup> *Copia de las capitulaciones matrimoniales de Alvaro Quiñones Osorio, presidente de la Audiencia de Guatemala*. 1646. AGI; Guatemala, 16, R.7, No. 46

<sup>385</sup> “Era hombre infatigable en el despacho de los negocios, de los que se ocupaba aún cuando comía o salía en su coche en donde para el fin llevaba siempre recado de escribir. Su capacidad para el gobierno le hizo muy respetado y las mejoras que introdujo en el servicio de las oficinas y en la forma de los despachos que el mismo dictaba sirvieron de regla para su sucesores. Tenía una instrucción no común en materias de política como lo acreditó en una obra que escribió sobre la decadencia de la monarquía española que ya en su tiempo se hacía

Friar Nicolás de Alarcón was born in Mexico City in 1616, from the marriage of Diego de Alarcón Bordado and Mariana del Castillo, both of them born in the capital of the New Spain. At the age of thirteen he took his vows in the Order of Our Lady of Mercy.<sup>387</sup> The Mercedarian Order was founded in 1218 in Barcelona by Pere Nolasch as a lay congregation dealing with the ransoms of Christian captives in the hands of the Muslims. It was approved in 1235 by the bull *Devotionis vestrae* of Gregory IX, which recognized its existence and conferred the Rule of St Augustine upon it. After the approval, the Order entered a period of sustained expansion, and by the time of Nolasch's death in about 1245 the Order had expanded throughout the Crown of Aragon, with some sixteen foundations. After Nolasch's death, the Order kept expanding in the Kingdom of Aragon and the Occitan, and spread into the Kingdom of Castile, numbering over thirty houses in 1270.<sup>388</sup> The government and organization of the Order were consolidated during the mastership of Pere d'Amer, who followed Nolasch in 1271, and composed the statutes known as the Amer Constitutions. They were promulgated at the chapter general (main forum of the Order) of Barcelona in May 1272, and "represent both the first extant legislation of the Order and its own codification of the standard Augustinian Rule."<sup>389</sup> Many important aspects of the medieval organization survived into the sixteenth century and beyond, both in Europe and the New World.

In the New World, the history of the Order began with the journeys of Christopher Columbus. According to the Italian chronicler Peter Martyr D'Anghera, Columbus was accompanied by at least one Mercedarian friar during his second journey to the Caribbean in

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sentir demasiado; y entre todas sus estimables prendas no encontraron sus enemigos otro defecto que la inmoderada inclinación que descubrió a enriquecerse durante su gobierno". Ximénez, Book 4, chapter 71. Quoted in Gavarrete, Juan. *Anales para la Historia de Guatemala. 1497-1811*. Guatemala: Editorial José de Pineda Ibarra; 1980, p. 105.

<sup>386</sup> Macleod, Murdo J. *Spanish Central America. A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1973, p. 391.

<sup>387</sup> All the biographical information is taken from his own *discurso de vida*, given during the first hearing. AGN-370, folios 129 to 135.

<sup>388</sup> Taylor, Bruce. *Structures of Reform. The Mercedarian Order in the Spanish Golden Age*. Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill; 2000, pp. 14-17.

<sup>389</sup> Taylor (2000), p. 19. However, according to this author, there were the Albertine constitutions of 1327 which represent "the first fully integrated codification of the live, devotion, and structure of the order." (p. 36)

1493.<sup>390</sup> “From this moment the province was committed to an overseas enterprise to which it would devote much of its energy and from which it would, years hence, derive great wealth. Time would demonstrate the Castilian Mercedarians to be among the few Spanish religious congregations prepared to accept the challenge of expansion in the New World.”<sup>391</sup> The first Mercedarian convent in America was founded in Santo Domingo in 1514, and the first one in Central America (*Tierra Firme*) was established in Panama in 1522. From Panama the Order expanded northwards through Nicaragua and Chiapas, while Peru was the entrance gate to the south.<sup>392</sup> In 1563, the provinces of Guatemala, Cusco, Lima, and Chile were founded, and Tucumán, Santo Domingo, Quito, and Mexico completed the total of eight provinces in the New World by the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>393</sup>

In Spanish America, the Order acquired certain features that distinguished it both from its parent order in Spain, and from other religious orders. The main scope of the Order in the New World was not the ransom of Christian captives but the collection of alms for rescuing those who were imprisoned during their journeys from Spain to America and vice versa. The task was theoretically shared with the Trinitarians, but this Order was never properly established in the New World. Apart from the collection of alms, the Mercedarians were supposed to perform the same duties as the rest of the orders: spiritual guidance for the Spanish population, and conversion of Indians and blacks.<sup>394</sup> However, by the 1540s the leading figures in the American Church had come to regard the Order as unfit for missionary work. This could be explained by the fact that Mercedarians participated not only in the process of spiritual conquest, but also in the military campaigns of colonization organized during the sixteenth century. Due to their participation as chaplains in these campaigns, the

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<sup>390</sup> Taylor (2000) refers to: Peter Martyr D’Anghera. *De Orbe Novo: The eight Decades...*, translated and edited Francis Augustus MacNutt (2 vols. New York, 1912); I, p. 99, and Fr. Guillermo Vázquez Núñez. “Colón y los Mercedarios” in *La Merced en Hispanoamérica*, Madrid, 1968, pp. 23-31. Vázquez explains that it has been impossible to document the name of this Mercedarian, though some claim that he was Friar Jorge de Sevilla, provincial of Castille. (p. 28)

<sup>391</sup> Taylor (2000), p. 58.

<sup>392</sup> Borges, Pedro. *Religiosos en Hispanoamérica*. Madrid: MAPFRE; 1992, p. 14. The Mercedarian presence in Peru is documented as early as 1534, and a letter of 1552 from the local authorities to the king confirms that the Order had a monastery in Curzco “almost since the foundation of the city”. Vázquez Núñez (1968), pp. 55 and 116.

<sup>393</sup> *The Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mercy (1218-1992) A Historical Synthesis*. Rome, Historical Institute of the Mercedarian Order, 1997. See also: Morales, Alonso R. O. de M. *La Orden de la Merced en la Evangelización*. Bogotá: Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano; 1986.

<sup>394</sup> Borges (1992), p. 14.

Mercedarians were granted with individual property (*encomiendas*) like the rest of the settlers.<sup>395</sup> They could thus not be considered as a mendicant Order, and this dubious status was not suitable for a missionary endeavour.<sup>396</sup>

The first priest to set foot in New Spain was the Mercedarian Bartolomé Olmedo, who arrived with Hernán Cortés in 1519 as his chaplain and adviser.<sup>397</sup> After Olmedo's death, Friar Juan de las Varillas replaced him as Cortés' chaplain, accompanying him on his expedition to Honduras in 1524. From Guatemala, he attempted to establish the Order in Mexican territory, but was not successful. Another attempt was made in 1533, but it was only in 1597 that the first Mexican monasteries were founded, one in Antequera (Oaxaca) and one in Puebla de los Ángeles.<sup>398</sup> The Mercedarians found it more difficult to convince the civil authorities of the benefits of establishing the Order in the capital of New Spain, where the rest of the major Orders had already established their convents.<sup>399</sup> In the capital of Guatemala, by contrast, the Mercedarians encountered favourable conditions for their establishment, namely the absence of other religious Orders.<sup>400</sup>

As early as 1535 two Mercedarians coming from Santo Domingo, Friar Juan de Zambrano and Friar Marcos Pérez, founded a house in Santiago in Almolonga.<sup>401</sup> In 1537 a second Mercedarian Convent was founded in *Ciudad Real de Chiapa*. Friar Marcos Dardón,

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<sup>395</sup> The *encomienda* was a grant of tribute-collection rights over a designated number of Indian families to an individual, in return for certain military and religious obligation on his part.

<sup>396</sup> The Order was banned from creating any further foundations in the Indies, and restrictions were placed on the dispatch and movement of personnel. However, the Order began a slow rehabilitation by 1547, and started building up a major missionary presence in America. By 1770 it numbered 1933 friars in 115 houses, even though the number of Mercedarians coming from Spain remained the lowest of all orders: 2.5% of the total of fifteen thousand missionaries traveling to the New World between 1493 and 1824.

<sup>397</sup> The first book of Aldana's *Crónica de la Merced de México* (México, Sociedad de Bibliófilos Mexicanos, 1929) is devoted to Olmedo's biography. In his *Historia verdadera...* Bernal Díaz relates that Olmedo played a significant role as negotiator between Cortés and Pánfilo de Narváez in early 1520 and survived the terrible retreat from Tenochtitlán later that year. (Taylor, 2000, p. 83) On Olmedo see also: Pareja (1882), Vol. I pp. 1-164 and G. Placer López. *Fr. Bartolomé de Olmedo, capellán de conquistadores* (Madrid, 1960).

<sup>398</sup> *Síntesis Histórica* (1997).

<sup>399</sup> Muñoz Delgado (1996), p. 312. The convent in Mexico City, known as *Convento Grande* was founded in 1601 and served as a house for the instruction on religious from different places within the New Spain.

<sup>400</sup> See León Cazares, María del Carmen. *La Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced: redención de cautivos en el Arzobispado de México*. México: UNAM (tesis doctoral); 1999.

<sup>401</sup> Zuñiga Corres, Ignacio. *750 Aniversario de la Fundación de la Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced. Homenaje de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala*. Guatemala; 1971, p. 23. and --- 'El Origen de la Orden de la Merced en Guatemala' en *Anales de la Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala*, 41. No. 2/4 (1968), pp. 432-542

and another member of the order travelled from Mexico to Guatemala together with the first bishop, Francisco Marroquín.<sup>402</sup> After Santiago in Almolonga was destroyed in 1541 by an avalanche of mud from the slopes of an adjacent volcano, the city of Santiago was established in the valley of Pachoy, which is the actual location of the city of Antigua. The Mercedarians were immediately granted some land to rebuild their convent in the second capital, but it was only in 1548 that Friar Juan de la Barrera asked the local authorities for financial support in order to enlarge the old temple.<sup>403</sup> With the royal ban of 1543, the convents of *Ciudad Real de Chiapa* and Santiago were meant to disappear, but Friar Marcos Dardón undertook a successful process of reorganization of the Order in Guatemala. By 1563, the convent of Santiago was consolidated as head of the *Provincia de la Presentación*, which celebrated its first provincial chapter in May 1563.<sup>404</sup>

At the outset, the *Presentación* included the convents of Guatemala, Real de Chiapa, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico. In Mexico, however, the Mercedarians claimed autonomy arguing that the great distance between Mexico and Guatemala was both dangerous and problematic.<sup>405</sup> The independence of the Mexican *Provincia de la Visitación* (with the convents of Mexico, Veracruz, Morelia, Tacuba, Oaxaca, Atlisco, and Colima) was granted by a papal brief of December 1615, and a royal decree of June 1616.<sup>406</sup> The relationship between both provinces, as the story we are about to recount here shows, was certainly not always free of conflict.

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<sup>402</sup> Gavarrete (1980), p. 19.

<sup>403</sup> Though a second church was built in 1583, the magnificent building which survives today was inaugurated only on 10 October, 1767. See: José Joaquín Pardo, Pedro Zamora Castellanos y Luis Luján Muñoz, *Guía de la Antigua Guatemala*, Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Guatemala, Editorial José de Pineda Ibarra, Guatemala, 1969, pp. 172-176.

<sup>404</sup> In 1563, the provinces of Lima, Cuzco, Chile, and Guatemala emerged, each with its own provincial, but exempt from the authority of the general. Taylor (2000), p. 90.

<sup>405</sup> Pérez Rodríguez, Pedro Nolasco. *Religiosos de la Merced que pasaron a la América española*. Madrid; 1968, p. 129.

<sup>406</sup> Pérez Rodríguez (1968), p. 129. Chiapas was the only part of Mexican territory which remained in the province of Guatemala after 1616. See also: Morales (1992), p. 18.



*Mercedarian Convent in Antigua, Guatemala.*



*Courtyard of the Mercedarian Convent*

### 3.1. Scandalous predictions in Guatemala

In the autumn of 1640, Friar Nicolás arrived from Mexico to the Convent of Santiago de Guatemala as the new lecturer of theology. The Mercedarian priests in the New World followed the European tradition for the education of novices, which implied the study of theology both in convents of the Order and in universities of the major cities.<sup>407</sup> The first indications of Mercedarian involvement in academic life date back to the 1330s, and by the last decade of the fifteenth century the emphasis on learning was bringing forth attracting a number of distinguished academics within the ranks of the Order. As Taylor explains, the growth of learning in the Order coincided with the process of clericalization it experienced from the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>408</sup> Thus it is not surprising that a special emphasis was placed on the theological and philosophical formation of the brethren. University was a place of interaction for religious students and professors of different provinces both in Europe and in the New World.

Before the foundation of the University of San Carlos in Guatemala in 1676, students from Central America used to study theology at the Royal University in Mexico City, and came back to their convents after six years.<sup>409</sup> The exchange between students of different religious Orders was frequent as well. Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, for instance, studied Grammar and Rhetoric at the Jesuit College of *San Pedro y San Pablo* in Mexico City.<sup>410</sup> He went to Puebla to study Arts at the convent of his Order, and then went back to Mexico City to study theology at the Mercedarian convent and at the Royal University. Apart from the convents of Mexico and Puebla, it was possible for the Mercedarians to study Arts in Oaxaca, Philosophy and Theology in Guadalajara, and Grammar in Aguascalientes, and Lagos de

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<sup>407</sup> *Síntesis Histórica* (1997), p. 123.

<sup>408</sup> Taylor (2000), pp. 59 and 64.

<sup>409</sup> *Síntesis Histórica*, p. 123

<sup>410</sup> The Society of Jesus arrived in New Spain in 1572. In August 1573 the viceroy granted the provincial of the Society of Jesus, father Pedro Sánchez, and seven rich neighbours of Mexico City permission to organize the foundation of the College of San Pedro y San Pablo. Between 1575 and 1576 the Jesuits founded three more colleges: San Gregorio, San Bernardo and San Miguel. In 1588 they founded San Ildefonso, which integrated in one institution the older colleges of San Bernardo, and San Miguel. San Pedro y San Pablo was closed in 1597 due to lack of budget, among other reasons. In 1618, it was merged with San Ildefonso too. See: Flores Padilla, Georgina. "El patronato laico de un colegio jesuita: San Pedro y San Pablo de la ciudad de México" in González González (2001), pp. 17-36. and Clementina Díaz y de Ovando. *El Colegio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo*, México, UNAM, 1951.



Moreno. From a total of twenty two convents in New Spain, eight were mainly devoted to intellectual tasks.<sup>411</sup>

In 1637, Friar Nicolás started teaching at the Arts Faculty of the Convent in Mexico City, where he stayed until he was sent to Guatemala by the general vicar of his Order, Friar Diego de Velasco. Velasco was born in Madrid, where he took his vows in the Order in 1600. He went to Peru as provincial of Cusco in 1618, and went back to Madrid at the end of his mandate.<sup>412</sup> In April 1639, he was appointed by the master general of the Order as visitor and general vicar of the Indies.<sup>413</sup> In May of the same year he left from Sevilla directly to Panama on board of the *Santa Ana* ship, and from Panama he travelled to the harbor of Realejo in order to begin his visitation of the convents and doctrines of Nicaragua.<sup>414</sup> He continued to Guatemala for the celebration of the chapter provincial, occasion in which he appointed Friar Nicolás as lecturer of theology in the Convent of Santiago.<sup>415</sup>

General vicars were periodically appointed by the general master to ensure the smooth running of distant sectors of the Order; they had the power to confirm or revoke the election of local offices, and mediate in case of conflicts. It was decided in the chapter general of 1587 that two general vicars, always coming from Spain, were to be appointed for the New World: the one residing in Lima was head of the provinces of Lima, Cusco, Chile, Quito, and Tucumán; the one in Mexico commanded New Spain, Guatemala, and Santo Domingo. The appointment of the American vicars was one of the reforms that resulted from the “chapter of the Reformation” celebrated in Guadalajara in 1574, but it was only enforced from 1587 onwards.<sup>416</sup> Before the reformation, the Provincials of Castile were granted, jointly with the

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<sup>411</sup> Borges (1992), p. 23.

<sup>412</sup> Pareja (1882), p. 576. Gari y Siu mell. *Biblioteca Mercedaria*. Barcelona: Imprenta de los Herederos de la viuda Pla; 1875. See also: AGI; CONTRATACION, 5387, No. 19.

<sup>413</sup> Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero de Fray Diego de Velasco, a Nueva España por Nicaragua por visita general. 1639AGI; CONTRATACION, 5421, No. 1. The general was the high office of the Order and his election took place at the chapter general with the holder enjoying life tenure (Taylor, 2000, p. 22). At the time of Velasco’s appointment as general vicar, the master general was Friar Dalmacio Sierra, elected in the chapter celebrated at Murcia in 1639.

<sup>414</sup> Pérez Rodríguez (1968), p. 48. Friar Diego Velasco went to Mexico City in March, 1647, after the celebration of the chapter Provincial in Guatemala and at the end of the visitation. Pareja (1882), Vol. II, p. 76.

<sup>415</sup> As early as 1319, Albert introduced a system of annual chapters provincial presided over by the general or his vicar that were designed to embrace that local business. Taylor (2000), p. 43.

<sup>416</sup> *Síntesis Histórica* (1997), p. 162.

master general absolute power over the affairs of the Order in the Indies by an emperor's decree of 1526.<sup>417</sup> Because of the wide extent of the vicar's powers, the American provinces were always weary of the vicar's presence in their territories, and very often complained about abuses of authority, or interferences with the local jurisdiction.<sup>418</sup>

Less than a year after Friar Nicolás was appointed as lecturer in Guatemala by Velasco, the commendator Friar Bartolomé de las Casas accused him of practicing judicial astrology. The office of commendator or superior was one of the lasting features of the Mercedarian institutional system. The generals exercised direct control over them as the delegates of his authority. The nature of the office was, like that of the general, borrowed from the practice of the military orders. As the Order expanded, commendators were appointed with local responsibility for a house or group of properties and its domain or commandery. The commendator was responsible for the management of the property upon which the income of the Order depended, and above all for overseeing the spiritual life and welfare of his community. However, in major questions of discipline and finance his authority was subordinated to a higher office. According to the Amer constitutions, the consensus of general, prior and diffinitors in the chapter general was required for a commendator to be elected or removed. Office was invariably held for longer than the stipulated three years and individuals tended to move in local rotation from one commandery to another; life tenure was a privilege occasionally granted to distinguished clergymen. "The commendators therefore represented the backbone of the Order, the essential link between hierarchy and rank and file."<sup>419</sup>

Commendator Friar Bartolomé de las Casas testified against Friar Nicolás de Alarcón on October 7, 1641 before the commissary of the Holy Office in Guatemala, Ambrosio del Castillo Baldés. The commissary was the grandson of Captain Bernal Díaz del Castillo, from whom he inherited the manuscript of the famous chronicle *Historia de la Conquista de Nueva*

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<sup>417</sup> Taylor (2000), pp. 87 and 90. The province of Castile also retained rights to the alms collected in the Indies for the ransom of captives.

<sup>418</sup> *Síntesis Histórica* (1997), p. 162. In 1639 the *Consejo de Indias* and the Mercedarian Order reached an agreement to restrict the prerogatives and limit the jurisdiction of vicars.

<sup>419</sup> Taylor (2000), p. 23.

*España*.<sup>420</sup> He studied Arts and Theology in the Dominican College of Saint Thomas Aquinas at Santiago, where he was conferred with the title of doctor in Theology in 1620, immediately after the college received the authority to grant degrees.<sup>421</sup> That same year he was appointed as lecturer of the arts faculty, and was later granted the chair of moral theology.<sup>422</sup> He was particularly devoted to Thomism, and, according to the chronicles, he kept Saint Thomas's works always illuminated in his library as a sign of veneration.<sup>423</sup> He was appointed as commissary of the Holy Office in Guatemala in 1637, but his career within the inquisitorial bureaucracy had already started in 1620, when the commissary of the Holy Office at the time, Felipe Ruiz del Corral, appointed him as notary. His career, from notary to inquisitor, was probably facilitated by a family tradition: as early as 1616 or 1617 his brother Tomás was appointed as commissary of the inquisition at Santísima Trinidad; another brother, Bernardo, was also a commissary in 1623 and 1624.<sup>424</sup>

In accordance with the procedure, inquisitor Ambrosio del Castillo asked the commendator of the Convent if he knew the reason why he had been summoned. In principle, the Inquisition allowed the witnesses to say whatever they wanted and it officially asked only three questions. If they answered negatively to the first question, they were asked if they knew about any crime against the faith that they should denounce or confess. If they answered negatively again, or if they discussed a different affair than that for which they had been summoned, they were succinctly told what was at stake without mentioning the names

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<sup>420</sup> Zuñiga (1971), p. 14.

<sup>421</sup> Though all the orders had their own programs of study in Guatemala from the late sixteenth century onwards, the Dominican *Colegio de Santo Tomás*, erected in 1619 in an atmosphere of competition with the Jesuit *Colegio de San Lucas*, was the first to receive the authority to grant degrees. See: Lanning, John Tate. *The University in the Kingdom of Guatemala*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1955. Quoted in Van Oss, Adrian C. *Catholic Colonialism. A parish History of Guatemala. 1524-1821*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1986, p. 164.

<sup>422</sup> *Genealogía y limpieza de Sangre del doctor Ambrosio del Castillo Valdés, pretendiente de Comisario de Guatemala*. AGN; Inquisición, 494, exp. 3 : “Y así el año de 1620 el deán Don Felipe Ruiz de Corral comisario del Santo Oficio y el padre prior Fray Agustín Montes erigieron cátedras de artes, cánones, teología con licencia del conde de la Gomera Presidente de esta Audiencia y para leer la cátedra de artes nombraron al Doctor Ambrosio del Castillo la cual cátedra leyó por espacio de 4 años. Después el dicho deán don Felipe Ruiz del Corral y padre maestro Fray Francisco de Savallos, prior de este convento de Santo Domingo, nombraron al dicho doctor Ambrosio del Castillo para que leyese la cátedra de teología moral del dicho colegio de santo Tomás en el cual leyó por más de 6 años.”

<sup>423</sup> Ximénez, Book 4, chapter. 82, quoted in Gavarrete (1980), p. 131. “Fue particularmente devoto de Santo Tomás de Aquino, cuyas obras había estudiado profundamente y conservaba en su librería con una lámpara encendida en señal de su veneración especial porque este gran doctor de la Iglesia.”

<sup>424</sup> *Genealogía...* AGN-494, exp. 3.

of the accused. In this case, the witness was asked whether he knew about any person or persons, dead or alive, who had cast astrological figures, predicting or foretelling things that are dependent on divine or free will; or who had spoken about things which are going to happen in distant places.<sup>425</sup> By having a look at these basic questions one can identify the commendator Friar Bartolomé as the main witness. He was the only one who immediately replied to the inquisitor's first question by talking about Friar Nicolás and his astrological predictions for the president of the High Court. Moreover, his testimony served as a basis for the inquisitor to structure the questions and to guide the accounts of the following witnesses, who were two other Mercedarian colleagues, and two Jesuits. This first denunciation is therefore key to understand the contents and structure of the stories told by the other witnesses.

According to the commendator, Friar Nicolás had knowledge of astrology and had cast astrological figures, especially for the president of the Court. This witness had warned Friar Nicolás about the dangers of making use of judicial astrology, by showing him the fifth volume of Diana's work containing the bull of Urban VIII, and a description of two particular cases against astrologers.<sup>426</sup> Antonio Diana, moral theologian born in a noble family from Palermo in 1586, was the author of a famous work called *Resolutionum moralium*, an anthology of writings on various cases of moral conscience. The first and second parts of the *Resolutionum* were printed in Palermo in 1628 and 1634; parts three to nine were printed in Lyon between 1635 and 1650.<sup>427</sup> A copy of Diana's ninth part of his *Resolutiones Moralium*, published in Lyon by Lorenzo Anisson in 1651 is listed in the catalogue of the Library of the Mercedarian Convent of Mexico City. It is thus likely that Friar Nicolás, as the commendator himself would declare, did not know Urban VIII's bull against astrology before going to the

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<sup>425</sup> "Fuele preguntado si sabe que alguna persona o personas vivas o difuntas hayan levantado figuras por la astrología judiciaria pronosticando o diciendo algunas cosas que dependen de la voluntad divina o de la libre voluntad o libre albedrío". AGN-370, ff 12, 24v. "Preguntado si sabe, ha visto u oído decir que alguna o algunas personas presentes o ausentes traten de la facultad de la astrología judiciaria y hayan dicho o pronunciado algunas cosas que dependen inmediatamente de la voluntad divina o del libre albedrío de le hombre o que estando ausentes y en larga distancia del lugar digan lo que pasa o ha de pasar en el tal lugar distante." AGN-370, f. 29v.

<sup>426</sup> "Le llamó un día estando en la huerta de su convento y mostrándole el tomo 5º. De Diana donde esta la bulla de su Santidad Urbano VIII y dos casos particulares que en el dicho tomo están escritos." AGN-370, f. 7.

<sup>427</sup> Portone, P. "Diana, Antonio" in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*. Società Grafica Romana; 2001; 39, pp. 104-108.

Convent of Guatemala. The commendator showed Diana's work to Friar Nicolás one day in the garden of the Convent, and admonished him in front of other colleagues. One of them was Friar Luis Zapata, professor of Theology, and the other one was Friar Andrés de Morales, censor of the Inquisition.<sup>428</sup>

Censors were usually regular clergymen in charge of evaluating whether a particular crime was a heresy or not. Indeed, when the Mercedarian Friar Andrés de Morales, presented himself before the inquisitor Ambrosio del Castillo on October 9, 1641 he presumed he had been called for an examination.<sup>429</sup> Contrary to the commendator, he only mentioned the astrologer's case after the third question: if he knew about any person –dead or alive- who had cast astrological figures, predicting or foretelling things that are dependent on divine or free will. He said that a member of his Order, called Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, knew the faculty of astrology and had printed forecasts, especially one in Mexico for the year 1641, of those called Moon-calendars.<sup>430</sup> As for the occasion when Friar Nicolás was warned against the dangers of practicing judicial astrology, Friar Andrés de Morales confirmed the commendator's version: one afternoon he was in the garden of the convent with another colleague when the commendator showed Friar Nicolás the second rule of Urban VIII's Bull against the astrologers and Diana's decision in the fifth volume of his *Resolutionum*. The censor mentioned other authoritative texts, such as Sixtus V's Bull of 1586, the second book of Thomas of Aquinas' *Summa*, the first volume of Suarez's *Religiones*, and Leyman's entry on *divinatio*, to emphasize that judicial astrology was forbidden by the Catholic Church and its practice was thus to be persecuted by the Holy Office.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> "Se los mostró donde entraron a galeras por levantar figura esta vez le amonestó en publicó y le mandó expresamente que no levantase figura a lo cual estaban presentes el Maestro Fray Andrés de Morales, calificador del Santo Oficio y Fray Luis Zapata, lector de Teología, religiosos de su orden y otros de que no se acuerda" AGN-370, f. 7v.

<sup>429</sup> "Preguntado si sabe o presume la causa porque ha sido llamado por el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición dijo que no la sabe [...] presumió era llamado como calificador para alguna calificación y que no sabe ni presume la causa para que ha sido llamado esto responde." AGN-370, f. 12v.

<sup>430</sup> "Dijo que sabe que un religioso de su orden llamado el padre lector de Teología Fray Nicolás de Alarcón que vino de la provincia de la Nueva España a lo que le parece por el mes de noviembre del año pasado de 1640. Sabe la facultad de la astrología y que ha impreso pronósticos particularmente este de este año de cuarenta y uno en México estos que llaman Lunarios." AGN-370, f. 13.

<sup>431</sup> "Dijo mas este testigo que el padre Maestro Fray Bartolomé de las Casas comendador del Convento de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes le notifico al dicho padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón en presencia de este testigo y de otro religioso de su orden de quien no se acuerda en particular una tarde estando en la huerta del dicho convento y en la celda de este testigo Segunda Regla [¿] Bulla de Urbano Octavo que hoy gobierna la Iglesia

However, it does not seem that the inquisitor wanted to find out whether Friar Nicolás was aware or not of the fact that judicial astrology was forbidden by the Church, or whether he continued practicing astrology even after the commendator of his convent had admonished him. What appeared to be a priority was to figure out if these astrological predictions were provoking any scandal. According to the commendator, what was provoking scandal was the fact that Friar Nicolás left the Convent of Santiago and went to *Ciudad Vieja* (Santiago in Almolonga) every time the President called him.<sup>432</sup> It was well known, he continued, that the guardian of the Franciscan Convent in *Ciudad Vieja*, Friar Mauro Sánchez, also knew about astrology because Friar Nicolás himself had taught him to cast figures.<sup>433</sup> Moreover, a magistrate of the High Court, Captain Antonio Justiniano, had attended a banquet at the president's house where he listened to Friar Nicolás and his disciple Friar Mauro speaking about the birth-chart of the president's son, who was born approximately two months before the trial started.<sup>434</sup>

Antonio Justiniano, knight of the Order of Saint James, was the son of Tobías Justiniano, and nephew of Juan Antonio Justiniano or Gustiniani, two of the richest men in Guatemala, and descendents of a noble family from Genoa.<sup>435</sup> He was summoned by the inquisitor on December 19, 1641 but was reluctant to talk about any matter that could be of interest for the Holy Office. Only when told what was at stake, did he declared that he had eaten many times at the president's house with Friar Nicolás and Friar Mauro Sánchez, and

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contra los astrólogos judiciarios y la decisión que trae Diana en el quinto [una palabra] de su [una palabra] advirtiéndole como es caso del Santo Oficio el levantar figura judiciaria y el testigo añadió mas la Bulla de Sixto Quinto expedía en Roma el año de 1586. Y así mismo lo que universalmente asientan por cierto el padre Tomas Sánchez [¿??] en el libro segundo de su Suma, capitulo treinta y ocho y el Padre Suárez en el tomo primero de *Religiones* y Paulo Layman en la palabra *divinatio* que todos conforman cuan abominable es a los ojos de Dios". AGN-370, f. 7-7v.

<sup>432</sup> Santiago in Almolonga was the capital of Guatemala from 1527 until its destruction in 1541. After the foundation of the new capital in Antigua, the old capital was referred to as *Ciudad Vieja*.

<sup>433</sup> "...que el mismo Fray Nicolás de Alarcón dijo a este testigo que le había enseñado al dicho guardián a levantarlas y que ya lo sabía y lo que en adelante se supiese sería por las figuras que levantase el dicho guardián". AGN-370, f. 8.

<sup>434</sup> "...y que hallándose presentes a un convite que hizo en su casa el dicho Presidente el Capitán Antonio Justiniano, regidor y alcalde ordinario de esta ciudad y otras personas que el dicho alcalde declaraba juntamente los dichos Fray Nicolás de Alarcón y Fray Mauro Sánchez. Después de la comida habían tratado de esta figura y de la inteligencia de ella y que esto fue público en las Casas Reales y en todo se remite a lo que dijese y citase di dicho capitán Antonio Justiniano." AGN-370, f. 8-8v.

<sup>435</sup> He died on 27 November 1658. Gavarrete (1980), p. 124.

other times in *Ciudad Vieja* with the president and Friar Mauro, but he couldn't think about any occasion when they discussed about astrology or about the nativity of the president's son.<sup>436</sup>

The fact that there could be somebody else close to the President who was also able to make astrological predictions was not underestimated by the inquisitor, especially because the teaching of astrology could be used as an excuse for bringing news from one city to the other.<sup>437</sup> All witnesses were asked in various ways about the possibility that Friar Nicolás had taught the art of astrology to somebody else. According to the Mercedarian censor Friar Andrés de Morales, Friar Nicolás travelled often to *Ciudad Vieja* "to serve" the President on the subject, and for this purpose he received help from the guardian of the Franciscan Convent, Friar Mauro Sánchez, who also knew about astrology.<sup>438</sup> Once, this witness heard Friar Nicolás saying that the President needed him no more because he had already taught Friar Mauro Sánchez enough about astrology.<sup>439</sup> However, Friar Nicolás continued talking about these things which were regarded by the witness as "nonsense".<sup>440</sup> Later on, the censor himself confessed that, before knowing of the Papal Bulls against astrology, he had asked Friar Nicolás to find out, by means of the "licit science of mathematics", how many years he was going to live.<sup>441</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Dijo que ha comido muchísimas veces con el dicho presidente y con los dichos padres Fray Nicolás de Alarcón y Fray Mauro Sánchez juntos no se acuerda si una o dos veces y que con el padre Fray Mauro Sánchez muchas veces en casa del dicho presidente una o dos veces a lo que quiere acordar y muchas en la Ciudad Vieja con los dichos Presidente y Fray Mauro Sánchez y que como que se le pregunta no lo entiende en cuanto alzar figura y lo aborrece aún de que lo tratar no se acuerda que haya pasado esta cosa en su presencia y que dado caso que hubiere sucedido no reparó en ello como cosa de burla y que no se le da nada de ello y que si tal hubiera pasado lo dijera porque es hombre de verdad..." AGN-370, f. 36v-37.

<sup>437</sup> One of the witnesses (the provincial of the order, Friar Crisóstomo de Loayssa ) uses the word "tales" (*cuentos*) instead of news. "Ha llegado a entender este testigo que muchas personas estando ausente visitando su provincia han llegado al Padre Comendador Fray Bartolomé de las Casas a que recogiese al dicho Fray Nicolás por los cuentos que presumían llevaba al dicho Presidente y que lo que ha dicho es la verdad." AGN-370, f. 23.

<sup>438</sup> "...y que va muy a menudo el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón a Ciudad Vieja para servir en la materia en que también ayudaba algo el guardián Fray Mauro Sánchez aunque poco porque entonces no sabia tanto de la materia como al presente." AGN-370, f. 13.

<sup>439</sup> "El dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón dijo a este testigo que ya no necesitaba de él el dicho Presidente para las dichas figuras porque le había enseñado todo lo bastante al dicho padre Fray Mauro Sánchez." AGN-370, f. 14v-15.

<sup>440</sup> "Pero sin embargo persevera todavía en decir estos disparates que por tales los tiene este testigo." AGN-370, f. 15.

<sup>441</sup> "Y que portándose humildemente a los pies de los Ilustrísimos Señores Inquisidores Apostólicos [verificar] del Santo Oficio de México se acusa así y declara que antes que viese las Bulas de su Santidad le había preguntado al dicho padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón que viese lícitamente en todo aquello que podía alcanzar la

The censor recalled that he had met Friar Nicolás at the Franciscan Convent of Ciudad Vieja, and he told this witness that he had cast a figure for the president's son, who was going to live a short life and have bad inclinations because of the influences of a certain star and a planet.<sup>442</sup> Moreover, the witness had seen some drafts of Friar Nicolás's figures and others done in Mexico for the president's son.<sup>443</sup> Friar Nicolás also told this witness that he had foreseen that the president was going to have some enemies, but in the end he was going to overcome the difficulties, and he was going to receive some nobility titles, like Count or Marquis.<sup>444</sup> The latter proved right a couple of years later, when Quiñones was granted by royal decree of 24 June 1642 with the title of Marquis of Lorenzana, which he had bought for 2,250 *ducados*.<sup>445</sup>

The provincial of the Mercedarian Order, Friar Crisóstomo de Loayssa, presented himself before the inquisitor on October 15, 1641. According to his version, the President Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio had asked him for permission to call Friar Nicolás de Alarcón to *Ciudad Vieja*. Over the preceding month, Friar Nicolás had gone twice, with his authorization as provincial of the order, to the Franciscan Convent of *Ciudad Vieja*, though before that he had gone several times to the President's house. It was publicly known inside the Mercedarian Convent that the president had paid Fray Nicolás one hundred *ducados* each time he had called him to *Ciudad Vieja*, where he kept him busy with the natal horoscope of his son Antonio.<sup>446</sup> Natal horoscopes were "the most obvious ways in which an astrologer

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ciencia de la matemática cuantos años había de vivir este declarante lo uno con el deseo de natural de la vida y lo otro porque si fuera este año pudiese hacer más estrecha la vida y mucha penitencia pero que nunca le pasó por el pensamiento pedirlo ni alcanzarlo por medios ilícitos y que después que vio el rigor de las dichas Bulas a prohibido en todo lo que le ha sido posible que tal cosa no se haga." AGN-370, f. 19.

<sup>442</sup> "...dijo a este testigo el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón que había levantado figura a un hijo de don Álvaro de Quiñones, caballero de la orden de Santiago y presidente de esta Real Audiencia llamado y las malas pronosticaciones que le prometía una estrella y planeta y los pocos años que había de vivir y que había de ser rico y otras cosas de este tono pero que había de ser hombre de malas inclinaciones como bastan decir mucho en su cualidad..." AGN-370, f. 13.

<sup>443</sup> "...y que algunos borradores de las figuras que va haciendo mostró a este testigo y otras figuras que al mismo don Antonio levantaron en México..." AGN-370, f. 13.

<sup>444</sup> "...que le estaba haciendo figura judiciaria así de la vida como de los ascensos [verificar] como son de Conde o Marques y que había de tener algunos enemigos pero estos los había de sujetar y salir siempre victorioso." AGN-370, f. 13v.

<sup>445</sup> *Real Provisión a D. Álvaro de Quiñones Osorio, dándole título de marqués de Lorenzana*. 1642. AGI; INDIFERENTE, 455, L. A24, F.153V-155V.

<sup>446</sup> "Es público en este convento de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes que el dicho Presidente llamó estas dos



was called upon to put his art at the disposal of the world [...] People have children and ask the astrologer whether they will survive and what kind of life they might be expected to lead.”<sup>447</sup> What this witness could not tell for certain was whether Friar Nicolás was teaching astrology to the guardian of the Franciscan Convent, but he knew there were brothers inside the convent, whose name he could not remember, who said so. The Jesuit Friar Salvador de Morales did not refer to this fact with certainty either. Instead, he declared that it was the commendator Casas who said that Friar Nicolás had taught Friar Mauro Sánchez how to do draw astrological birth-charts because they were currently drawing up the nativity of the President’s son.<sup>448</sup>

Friar Salvador de Morales, lecturer at the Arts Faculty in the Jesuit College of Santiago, was summoned on November 7, 1641.<sup>449</sup> He declared that Friar Nicolás once said that the president had asked him “to see” the birth chart of his son Antonio, who was two or three years old at that time.<sup>450</sup> In this same occasion, Friar Nicolás had showed him two charts: one was from his teacher Friar Diego Rodríguez, religious of the Order and lecturer of Astrology at the University of Mexico City; the other was the one Friar Nicolás had cast for the president’s son. He had seen both charts and thought they were similar to those in Origanus’s book,<sup>451</sup> which he had seen in hands of Lieutenant Juan Baptista de Carranza, who

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veces a la Ciudad Vieja por más de cien ducados cada vez donde se ha dicho le tenía ocupado el dicho Presidente levantando figuras par el nacimiento de su hijo que a pocos días tuvo y así se ha dicho en el Convento.” AGN-370, f. 20.

<sup>447</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 166.

<sup>448</sup> “...que el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón se la enseñaba y le enseñaba juntamente a hacer el juicio astrológico de nacimientos porque entonces le dijo el dicho padre comendador Casas hacían el juicio del nacimiento del dicho Don Antonio que tiene referido. Y también le dijo más el dicho Comendador a este testigo que le había dicho al mismo Comendador Fray Nicolás de Alarcón que él le disponía al dicho Fray Mauro Sánchez las casas y los números para que él luego discurriese sobre eso.” AGN-370, f. 28v.

<sup>449</sup> On Jesuit education in Guatemala see Carmelo Sáenz de Santa María. *Historia de la Educación jesuítica en Guatemala, siglos XVII-XVIII*. Madrid: Instituto Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo; 1978.

<sup>450</sup> According to the first deponent the child was born in September of that same year, 1641.

<sup>451</sup> David Origanus (1558-1628) was mostly known for his composition of ephemerides: *Compendiaria ephemeridum enarratio*, Francofurti ad Viadrum, typis A. Eichornii, 1599. *Ephemerides novae annorum XXXVI incipientes ab anno 1595, quo I. Stadii maxime aberrare incipiunt, et desinentes in annum, 1630, etc.* Francofurti ad Viadrum, typis A. Eichornii, 1599. *Ephemerides Brandenburgicae* for the years 1595-1624 and 1625-1654, which appeared in 1599 and 1609, respectively. He also wrote *Astrologia naturales sive tractatus de effectibus astrorum absolutissimus*, Massiliae, Io. B. Senius Genuensis, 1645. See: Proverbio, Edoardo. “Francesco Giuntini e l'utilizzo delle tavole copernicane in Italia nel XVI secolo” in Massimo Bucciantini (curatore). *La diffusione del copernicanesimo in Italia: 1543-1610*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki; 1997.

in turn said that the book belonged to the painter Pedro Liendo.<sup>452</sup> When the witness was asked whether these charts dealt with free actions, he declared he did not notice anything regarding this matter, and he had never listened neither to the President nor to Friar Nicolás talking about fortuitous cases, such as regencies or long life. The only person he had heard talking about these matters was the censor Friar Andrés de Morales, who said that Friar Nicolás had predicted that the President was going to live for 104 or 108 years if he overcame a disease, while his son was going to suffer from “bad inclination” after a serious sickness at the age of six.<sup>453</sup>

The fact that the painter Pedro Liendo and Lieutenant Juan Baptista de Carranza were to some extent interested in astrological matters is confirmed by a previous indirect denunciation against them. On May 8, 1622 in Santiago de Guatemala, a witness accused a certain Espinoza of reading the lines on the hand and talking about past, present, and future events.<sup>454</sup> The witness was aware of this because he was once at the Lieutenant’s place and, together with some other people, they were discussing this matter and about those “circular signs that are done at the time when somebody is born”.<sup>455</sup> Moreover, this denunciation also confirms the fact that Pedro Liendo and Carranza had access to books on these subjects. According to the witness, on this same occasion, Carranza was announcing some things

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<sup>452</sup> In the National Library in Mexico City (RFO 93-40357) there is a copy of David Origano’s *Novae motuum caelestium ephemerides brandenbugicaes annorum LX, incipientes ab anno 1595, e de sinentes in annum 1655*, Francoforti ad Viadrum, Typis Ioannis Eichormi: Apud Davidem Reichardum, 1609. Manuscript ex libris: “Del Colegio de la Compañía de Jesús” “Corregido conforme al expurgatorio de 1632”.

<sup>453</sup> “...Dijo este testigo que nada de lo referido a oído decir este testigo al Presidente ni al dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón, pero que ha oído decir no se acuerda a quién más a que le parece fue al padre Fray Andrés de Morales que había dicho el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón que a tantos años no se acuerda el número que dijo había de tener el dicho Presidente una grave enfermedad y que si de ella escapara había de vivir hasta ciento y cuatro o ciento y ocho años.” AGN-370, f. 27v. “...por la figura del nacimiento del dicho niño Don Antonio había sacado el dicho padre Fray Nicolás había de tener a los 6 años de edad una enfermedad grave y en adelante había de ser de mala inclinación.” AGN-370, f. 25.

<sup>454</sup> *Denuncia contra un fulano Espinoza por adivinar por las rayas de las manos* (1622). AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 343, exp. 6. The name of this said Espinoza could be Juan, who was denounced again more than ten years later before the commissary of Guatemala, this time explicitly for practicing astrology: *Testificación contra Juan de Espinoza, astrólogo*. (1633) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 431, exp. 20.

<sup>455</sup> “...lo que pasa es que habrá 6 u 8 meses que estando este denunciante en casa del alférez Joan Baptista Carranza, y presentes el Capitán Pedro Álvarez de la Fuente y don Jerónimo de Carranza y Juan Vázquez de Cabrera esta entre otras veces oyó decir y vio que un hombre llamado Esponisa que entiende es de los reinos de España oficial de sastre que se halló en la dicha casa el dicho día y presentes los dichos tratándose de las señales de las manos y signos circulares que se hacen el día del nacimiento de alguna persona por ella y por las manos decía el dicho espinosa algunas cosas así pretéritas como presentes y futuras...” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 343, exp. 6, f. 18

based on the signs of the face and the hands, “and on books he had about this faculty”.<sup>456</sup> Moreover, the witness remembered that the painter Pedro de Liendo “judged births according to circular figures” and had told him that “he [Liendo] had a sign which inclined him to be a sorcerer.”<sup>457</sup>

To the question concerning the scandal provoked by the predictions, the Jesuit Salvador de Morales replied that he only knew that the magistrate Antonio de Lara and Friar Pedro de Prado had talked about the notoriety of the frequent visits of the President to Ciudad Vieja.<sup>458</sup> The Jesuit Friar Pedro de Prado, lecturer of theology in the College of Santiago de Guatemala, testified on December 18, 1641 before Ambrosio del Castillo, and Juan Sáenz de Mañozca, who was on his way to Mexico after being appointed as inquisitor. He was the only witness who mentioned a completely different affair when he was asked to tell the reason why he presumed he had been summoned. Only after the fifth question did he declare that he had heard somebody, whose name he could not remember, saying that Friar Nicolás had drawn up a chart for the President’s son, who was going to have bad inclinations. When the inquisitor asked him whether Fray Nicolás or any other person had predicted any event dependent on the child’s free will, and whether these facts had provoked a scandal in this Republic, he answered that he had heard some gossip (*hablillas*), but did not consider that those who were talking about the subject were scandalized.<sup>459</sup> Regarding the possibility that Friar Nicolás had talked about his astrological charts with the Franciscan Friar Mauro Sánchez, and had taught him how to draw up these charts, the only thing this witness had heard was that the president had discussed with the Franciscan some things related with

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<sup>456</sup> “...y que el dicho Joan Baptista Carranza mostrándose capaz de aquel mismo ministerio y por libros que tenía de la facultad denunciaba algunas cosas por señales del rostro y de las manos practicándolas con el dicho Espinosa...” AGN-343, exp. 6, f. 18v.

<sup>457</sup> “...y así mismo oyó decir al dicho Espinosa y a otras personas que no se acuerda que Pedro de Aliendo, pintor, juzgaba por figuras circulares los nacimientos y esto lo supo este denunciante del dicho Pedro de Aliendo de que decía que él en su nacimiento había visto que tenía un signo que le inclinaba a ser hechicero y esta es la verdad...” AGN-343, exp. 6, f. 18v.

<sup>458</sup> “Dijo que en cuanto a lo primero que se le pregunta que fuera de lo dicho cuando[iba] el oidor don Antonio de Lara con el dicho Padre Pedro de Prado tratando de que se notaba mucho cuan a menudo iba a la Ciudad Vieja el presidente a ver al dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón oyó tratar de ello a los dichos y no sabe más...” AGN-370, f. 29.

<sup>459</sup> “Dijo que este testigo ha oído algunas hablillas y que juzga que no están escandalizados aquellos a quien ha oído hablar en estas materias.” AGN-370, f. 31.

astrology. However, he had never heard anybody saying that Friar Mauro has predicted free future contingents.<sup>460</sup>

Because the inquisitor was not being successful in obtaining the information he requested, he told the Jesuit that the Holy Office had proof that he had been asked to warn the president about how notorious it was in the city that he consulted an astrologer. Friar Pedro de Prado replied that it was actually the magistrate Antonio de Lara who had told him how notorious it was that the president was coming and going to consult Friar Nicolás. The name of this magistrate had first been mentioned by the censor Friar Andrés de Morales, who declared that it was Antonio de Lara who had told him that Friar Nicolás was casting a daily figure for the President and his son Antonio.<sup>461</sup> Based on these nativities he predicted what was going to happen each and every day of their lives, and in exchange he received cacao as a gift from the President. More specifically, Friar Nicolás had foreseen that the President was likely to live approximately 80 years, but could live to 108 if he overcame a certain disease.<sup>462</sup> The censor knew all these details because the magistrate had spoke about them, though he had also talked about the President's predictions with Friar Nicolás himself. Moreover, he considered the President as "a very superstitious man". Indeed, "there were few days during the week when he would leave Friar Nicolás peacefully in his room without calling him for these judicial astrologies."<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Future contingents are "singular events or states of affairs that may come to pass, and also may not come to pass, in the future. There are three traditional problems involving future contingents: the question of universal validity of the principle of bivalence, the question of free will and determinism, and the question of foreknowledge." Audi (1999), p. 336.

<sup>461</sup> Lic. Antonio de Lara y Mogronejo governed *ad interim* from 1649 to 1654, after the death of Diego de Avendaño, successor of Alvaro de Quiñones in 1642. See: Macleod (1973), p. 391.

<sup>462</sup> "Oyó decir este testigo al dicho Don Antonio de Lara Mogronejo oidor mas antiguo de la Real Audiencia que el dicho padre lector Fray Nicolás de Alarcón le estaba levantando figura diaria al dicho Presidente don Álvaro y al niño su hijo don Antonio de todos los días de su vida de lo que en cada día le había de suceder y de lo que le había sucedido al dicho Presidente o al dicho Antonio desde que nació y que en eso es muy notado el dicho Don Álvaro de Quiñones. Y que regala con cargas de cacao al dicho Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón y de las figuras que ha levantado y en particular que viviría ochenta y tantos años y que si escapaba una enfermedad que para el dicho tiempo amenaza viviría ciento y ocho años. Esto como ha dicho se lo oyó al dicho oidor don Antonio a lo que este testigo se quiere acordar y que lo cita por cierto en este caso." AGN-370, f. 13v.

<sup>463</sup> "Tiene este testigo por muy supersticioso al dicho presidente don Álvaro [...] y que pocos son los días de la semana que deja quieto en su celda al dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón sacándolo para estas astrologías judiciales." AGN-370, f. 14.

After listening to the magistrate's warnings, the Jesuit Pedro de Prado told the President twice that his consultations with Friar Nicolás were creating unease. Quiñones then, unexpectedly, blamed Friar Bartolomé de las Casas and Friar Andrés de Morales, and said that "he knew very well the limits of illicit astrology, and that he mocked the astrologers' business because they are people who should not be totally believed or totally underestimated, referring to Tacitus' motto: *nec omnino reiciendum*."<sup>464</sup> Just like the emperor Tiberius tested the methods of his astrologer Thrasyllus "if any suspicion had arisen of imposture or trickery," the president of Guatemala could not be regarded as a victim of superstition or false prophecies.<sup>465</sup> Moreover, the witness declared that he especially emphasized how notorious it was that a man with such a profession went for these consultations to *Ciudad Vieja*, which is five kilometres from Santiago.<sup>466</sup> But the President insisted that he consulted the astrologers only for entertainment since he knew more about astrology than the said Friar Nicolás de Alarcón.<sup>467</sup>

We can only speculate on the reasons why the magistrate Antonio de Lara talked to Friar Pedro de Prado about these scandalous matters. The relationship between the magistrate and the president had been very tense at least during the first years of Quiñones's presidency. On March 9, 1636 Lara and two other magistrates of the Court sent a letter to Madrid complaining to the King about the bad performance of Quiñones and his authoritarian

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<sup>464</sup> "diciendo que sabía muy bien hasta dónde llegaba lo vedado de astrología y nunca había llegado a lo prohibido y que se reía de las cosas de los astrólogos porque es una gente que ni totalmente se les ha de dar crédito ni totalmente se han de menospreciar usando del dicho de Tácito: *nec omnino reiciendum*." AGN-370, f. 32,

I have not found this passage of Tacitus, but there are at least two references to astrology in his *Annals*. The first, in book VI, ch. XXI: *Caeterum plerisque mortalium, non eximitur, quin primo cujusque ortu ventura destinentur: sed quaedam secus quam dicta sint cadere, fallaciis ignara dicentium: ita corrumpi fidem artis, cujus proeclara documenta, et antiqua aetas et nostra tulerit*. The second, in Book IV, ch. LVIII: *Mox patuit breve confinium artis & falsi; veraque quam obscuris tegerentur. Nam in urbem non venturum, haud forte dictum: caeterorum nescii egere, cum propinquo rure aut littore, & saepe maenia urbis adsidens, extremam senectam compleverit*. Both of them are quoted in the article "Astrologie" of the *Encyclopedie. Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*, 1751-1765.

<sup>465</sup> Tacitus. *Annals*. Adler, Mortimer, editor. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1996. (Great Books of the Western World) Translated by Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, Book VI, ch. 21, p. 91.

<sup>466</sup> See map on page below.

<sup>467</sup> Y dice más que es lo que más hincapié hizo este testigo fue que un hombre de su oficio y prendas de su Ima. fuera a la Ciudad Vieja que dista una legua de esta ciudad a estas consultas a que respondió su Ima. que los consultaba por entretenimiento y risa porque su Ima. sabía más de astrología que el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón." (f. 32) *The legua* is a variable measure, though the Spanish standard is equal to 5,572.7 meters.

behaviour.<sup>468</sup> One of the other magistrates was Pedro Melián, a highly educated bureaucrat who had come from Spain in 1633, and was appointed as fiscal of the Court in Mexico City when his mandate expired in Guatemala.<sup>469</sup> His name had also been brought to light during the trial, when the Jesuit Pedro de Prado was asked by the inquisitor if he knew about any person who had felt something contrary to the irrefutable truth that the Church teaches about the immortality of the soul.<sup>470</sup> The witness replied that it was the fiscal of the Court, Don Pedro Melián, who said that he had listened to the President saying that dying was like a yawn or any other gesture. However, in his own conversations with the President he had always heard him talk about the after world, especially referring to some of his relatives.<sup>471</sup>

In their letter to the king, the magistrates mentioned some particular cases in which the President had, in their view, proceeded wrongly. More generally, they complained about the president's bad temper, his disrespect for law, and his strive for absolute power.<sup>472</sup> One

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<sup>468</sup> *Carta de la Real Audiencia de Guatemala dirigida al Rey, dando cuenta del mal proceder del presidente don Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio*, 1636. AHN; DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES, 32, No. 14.

<sup>469</sup> See: *Nombramiento de Pedro Melian como oidor de la Audiencia de Guatemala* (Madrid, 1632-11-27). AGI, CONTRATACION,5789,L.1,F.123V-124V. *Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a indias del doctor Pedro Melián, oidor de la Audiencia de Guatemala, con Juan Baena Parada, natural y vecino de Madrid, hijo de Luis de Baena Parada, escribano del número y de Antonia Sandoval, a Guatemala*. (1633-04-12). AGI, CONTRATACION,5414,N.19. *Real Provisión al Dr. D. Pedro Melián, oidor de Guatemala, promovéndolo a la plaza del fiscal del crimen de la audiencia de México* (Madrid, 1638-08-26) INDIFERENTE,454,L.A21,F.204-206V

<sup>470</sup> The controversy about the immortality of the soul is strongly related to Averroism and its heretical doctrines, condemned by the Church in 1277. Averroes "seeks to return natural theology to the physics of matter and motion, discrediting Avicenna's metaphysical approach and locating God's act in the ordering of eternal matter [...] He retains the idea that the intellect is immortal, indeed impersonal: since only matter differentiates individuals, all minds are ultimately one; they reach fulfilment and beatitude by making contact with the Active intellect." See: "Averroes" in Audi (1999), p. 63. The Lateran Council of 1513 required that the immortality of the human soul be proved philosophically.

<sup>471</sup> "Dijo que al Doctor Don Pedro Melián, fiscal de la Real Audiencia de México y oidor de aquesta le oyó decir que dijo el dicho don Álvaro de Quiñónes Osorio, Marqués de Lorenzana, que el morir era un bostezo más o menos o un gesto u otras palabras equivalentes a estas, pero que en conversaciones siempre este testigo ha oído decir al dicho marqués de cosas de la otra vida y en especial refiriendo dos casos de parientes suyos con que parece que Dios prenunciaba a sus deudos sus muertes ha dicho varias veces a este testigo las palabras siguientes = Estas cosas nos enseñan que hay por allá más de lo que acá vemos. Hablando de la otra vida..." AGN-370, f. 33v-34.

<sup>472</sup> "...vino de esta Audiencia de Panamá a ser Presidente en ésta Don Álvaro de Quiñones Osorio, caballero que ni hubiera dejado que desear ni dado que temer y sentir si la apariencia de su entendimiento se comunicase por la voluntad que cuando ella es siniestra, y él, aunque bueno la sirve, convirtiese en mal el bien y sólo obra con más fácil disposición y copia de medios su perdición y la ajena. Desde el principio hizo por el horror de los súbditos paso a la introducción de su gobierno: temido antes por las experiencias de Panamá\* y sentido hoy por las propias. Asentó con obras y palabras en el miedo común en poder absoluto, sin respeto, sin sujeción a más ley que su voluntad ya lo continuado y pretendido asegurar con demostraciones durísimas y de grande peligro." *Carta de la Real Audiencia...* AHN; DIVERSOS-COLECCIONES, 32, No. 14. \*Probably they are referring to

hypothesis could thus be that, because the magistrates were not able to resolve their conflicts with the president within the sphere of civil justice, they decided to turn to the ecclesiastical realm, and start an inquisitorial trial against Quiñones. More than a year before the trial against Friar Nicolás began, inquisitor Ambrosio del Castillo had already written a letter to the Holy Office in Mexico City informing it of an accusation against the President for possession of forbidden books.<sup>473</sup> Although this letter does not provide enough evidence to confirm this hypothesis, it is possible that the inquisitorial machinery was initially set in motion by the magistrates of the court. The Mexican inquisitors, however, seem to have overlooked the denunciation. It was only in Guatemala, that astrology and politics intertwined and gave rise to a trial against the President's astrologer.

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the legal controversy between Agustín Franco, mayor of Panamá, and Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio, Juan de la Rinaga y Juan de Alvarado Bracamonte in 1635. See: AGI; PANAMA, 238, L.15, F.137v-138v; and AGI; Santa\_Fe, 57, No. 55.

<sup>473</sup> *Carta del Comisario de Guatemala, Ambrosio del Castillo Valdés, denunciando a Alvaro Quiñones*. 1639. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 388, exp. 17.





### 3. 2. Astrology, physiognomy, and politics

As shown above, some events prior to the trial itself are key to understanding what was at stake. In July 1641, three months before the commendator testified against Friar Nicolás, the general vicar of the Mercedarian Order, Friar Diego Velasco, had already received a complaint about the astrologer. It came from Guatemala to Mexico City in the form of a letter written by a scribe (*escribano*) called Sebastián Ramírez, who was sent into exile by president Quiñones as a consequence of an astrological prediction. In Spanish colonial America, the *escribano* was a notary of various types: the royal *escribano* (or *escribano de número*) was the equivalent of today's public notary; the *escribano* of governship was directly under the supervision of the governor and his lieutenants; the *escribano* of register, mines, and reports were similar to the private property registrar in Spain, and dealt with the ownership and exploitation of mines and the registry and certification of incoming and outgoing loads of freight cargoes as well as passengers; the *escribano* of *cabildo* kept the books of the town hall (*cabildo*) and the minutes of its meetings.<sup>474</sup> In 1638, a royal decree was issued establishing a new office: the *escribano anotador de hipotecas* or “recorder of mortgages”; no mortgage could be binding unless registered in the protocol of this *escribano*.<sup>475</sup>

Sebastián Ramírez was the son of Sebastián Rodríguez Cano, royal scribe in the Spanish city of Talavera, and María Ramírez Castaño. He was married to Violenta Mejía, granddaughter of Gonzalo Mejía and Melchor de Malvenas, conquerors and settlers of Nicaragua.<sup>476</sup> At the time, this kind of ancestry was crucial in order to obtain offices, pieces of lands, and other royal graces. His career can be traced back to the year 1618, when he was appointed as public notary for the Indies at the age of twenty five.<sup>477</sup> In 1624, he was granted the office of *escribano público, de cabildo, y registros* of Realejo, the most important commercial harbour of the province of Nicaragua and of the whole Central American region.

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<sup>474</sup> Artiles, Jenaro. “The Office of Escribano in Sixteenth Century Habana” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 1969; 49(3), p. 499.

<sup>475</sup> Artiles (1969), p. 492.

<sup>476</sup> *Relación de méritos y servicios de Sebastián Ramírez, vecino de Guatemala* (1648). AGI; INDIFERENTE, 113, N. 169.

<sup>477</sup> *Expediente de información para título de escribano público de Indias para Sebastián Ramírez* (1618). AGI; GUATEMALA, 82, N. 14.

Apart from keeping the books of the town hall, the scribe of *cabildo* had many other duties: he filed the royal documents received and assumed custody over books, papers, and the treasury of the city; he took the census of town residents, kept the register of haciendas assigned to the settlers and of taxes, and also accounted for the property of the deceased.<sup>478</sup> In 1631, with a royal recommendation on his behalf, Ramírez moved from Nicaragua to Guatemala, where he was awarded the office of general attorney by president Diego de Acuña.<sup>479</sup> On March 25, 1635 president Quiñones appointed him as *escribano público y de visitas* of the city of Santiago.<sup>480</sup> But this was all before the Mercedarian astrologer started causing troubles. As Ramírez himself referred to the general vicar of the Order:

A little friar who came from there [Mexico] has ruined me because he cast a figure to the president's liking [...] In this figure, the astrologer told the president that a pale and black-bearded scribe was going to destroy him (this was after seeing me imprisoned), and believing in it as if it were the faith or a saying of Saint Thomas, the president has punished me more severely [...] Your highness [should] find the necessary remedy to the case, which is scandalizing the whole republic[...]<sup>481</sup>

Some days before the commendator Friar Bartolomé de las Casas was summoned by the Inquisition, he had asked Friar Nicolás to intercede with the President for clemency in the scribe's case. Quiñones was very upset by this intercession and said that he was aware that there was an accusation against him and Friar Nicolás before the Holy Office. Moreover, the President lost all composure and started to insult Friar Bartolomé de las Casas and Friar

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<sup>478</sup> Artiles (1969), pp. 499-500. The author explains that the *escribanía de bienes de difuntos* was perhaps the only exclusively American notariate, for it was not transplanted from Castile, but improvised as the need for it arose.

<sup>479</sup> *Real Cédula a Don Diego de Acuña, gobernador de Guatemala, recomendándole a Sebastián Ramírez* (1631). AGI; INDIFERENTE, 452, L.A.14, F.53v-54v.

<sup>480</sup> *Sebastián Ramírez en la causa sobre la renunciación de Matías Tejero del oficio de escribano público. Confirmación de Oficio*. AGI; GUATEMALA, 85, N. 6.

<sup>481</sup> 'Un Frailecito mozo que vino de allá me ha echado a perder por haber alzado figura a su gusto porque le trae en el coche y hace favor encargando al Presidente Comendador cuide mucho de esta persona. En la figura que alzo le dijo que un plumario descolorado barbinegro le había de destruir (esto es habiéndome visto y que me tenía preso) y creyéndolo como si fuera fe o dicho de Santo Tomás me ha ido agravando causas y haciendo lo que arriba dije y escribo al dicho Pedro Melián. Dios le pague a este padre la buena obra y vuestra Ilustrísima ponga el remedio necesario en el caso suplicóselo que de ello está escandalizada esta república y ha puesto horror más que un sacerdote haya hecho semejante figura siendo las señas más y sabiendo y viendo que me tiene preso y me ha destruido de más de lo que ha hablado (por darle gusto) mal de mi persona. Vuestra Ilustrísima sabe lo que ha de hacer de manera que no lo echemos más a perder.' AGN-370, f. 4v.

Andrés de Morales.<sup>482</sup> Following this, the minister Antonio de Lara met Friar Pedro de Prado at the Jesuit College, and together they went to see the President and told him that his “understanding” with Friar Nicolás was notorious.<sup>483</sup> According to the commendator, it was publicly known that Friar Nicolás had established the exact day in which the scribe Sebastián Ramírez was sent into exile by the President: September 14, 1641. As seen above, these kinds of predictions were known, in astrological language, as *elections* or catarchic astrology, and they consisted in the casting of horoscopes for the choice of an auspicious moment to begin any kind of enterprise. By doing this prediction, said the witness, Friar Nicolás implied that an action which actually depends on free will is dependant on the Planets.<sup>484</sup>

Moreover, continued the commendator, Friar Andrés de Morales had told him that one day Quiñones talked with Friar Nicolás about some astrological figures while they were travelling together in the President’s carriage. From these figures they inferred that a scribe with certain physical traits was going to harm the President, and the signs corresponded to those of the scribe Sebastián Ramírez: pale, black-bearded, and always looking at the floor.<sup>485</sup> Friar Andrés de Morales confirmed the commendator’s version in his own deposition. He declared that Friar Nicolás had told the president that “a scribe, with certain color of the skin, moustache, small hands, posture of the body, and other sign which *almost* indicated the said Sebastián Ramírez, was going to harm him during his government.”<sup>486</sup> Because of this

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<sup>482</sup> “Esto presume este testigo por conocer el natural arrojamiento y viveza del dicho Presidente como le sucedió en días pasados a este testigo con el dicho presidente y fue que por pedirle este testigo por un preso que era Sebastián Ramírez escribano del Valle que estaba preso por su mandato. Haciendo la intercesión [sic] al dicho Presidente por medio del dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón sin más razón ni mas causa respondió el dicho Presidente a la intercesión [sic] que sabia que este testigo y el dicho padre Maestro Fray Andrés de Morales le habían acusado al Santo Oficio al dicho Presidente y al dicho Fray Nicolás”. AGN-370, f. 9.

<sup>483</sup> The notary uses the word *facilidad*, which could refer to the disposition for understanding. “Con el dicho Padre Prado fue a ver al Presidente y dijo que mirase su Señoría que se notaba mucho la facilidad que tenia con el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón”. AGN-370, f. 9.

<sup>484</sup> “dando a entender que su ida dependía de los planetas siendo así que depende de la voluntad de dios y de causas segundas subordinadas a la divina omnipotencia”. AGN-370, f. 11v.

<sup>485</sup> “Dijo mas que el dicho Padre Maestro Fray Andrés de Morales y el alférez don Fernando de Araque dijeron a este testigo que un día saliendo el Presidente a pasear en su carroza y llevando en ella al alférez mayor de esta Ciudad Juan Baptista de Carranza Medinilla y dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón habían tratado y por las figuras que se habían hecho se había sacado que un plumario de quien refería las señas le quería mal y le había de hacer mucho daño y que consideras las senas eran las mismas de Sebastián Ramírez escribano del Valle que era por señales cubano plumario color pálido barbinegro y que miraba siempre el suelo.” AGN-370, f. 9v.

<sup>486</sup> “...por haberle dicho al dicho Presidente el dicho Padre Alarcón que un hombre plumario, de tal color, de bigote, de tal cara, manos chiquitas y tal posición de cuerpo y otras señales que casi indicaban al dicho Sebastián Ramírez y había de hacerle mucho mal en su residencia...”. AGN-370, f. 15.

prediction, the President imprisoned the scribe, and sent him into exile on a day chosen by the astrologer as auspicious because of the influence of a specific planet.<sup>487</sup> The witness added that he had seen the president looking at some books with images of the faces of men and animals, and some other books that might be forbidden because their authors were Flemish and French.<sup>488</sup>

After listening to this denunciation, inquisitor Ambrosio del Castillo asked all witnesses about the issue: if they knew about a certain scribe who was sent into exile or imprisoned because of the affirmations of a certain astrologer. Whenever the issue was not broached by the witnesses, he would give more details or even ignore the procedure and mention explicitly the names of all the actors involved. Apart from the commendator and the censor, no other witness could actually confirm this accusation against Friar Nicolás. When the provincial of the Mercedarians, Friar Crisóstomo de Loayssa, was asked about the issue, he replied that he did not know or had heard anything about it. The Jesuit Salvador de Morales had heard somebody else, whose name he could not remember, saying that Friar Nicolás had predicted a difficult government for President Quiñones, and that a literate person was going to disturb him.<sup>489</sup> The same “somebody” said that Friar Nicolás had understood through the stars that the scribe’s exile was going to be negative for the president, and that the man was black-bearded and almost white.<sup>490</sup>

The Jesuit Pedro de Prado also had indirect knowledge of the issue, because he had heard somebody saying that Friar Nicolás had drawn up a chart for the President in which he

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<sup>487</sup> “y que siendo público en esta ciudad que el dicho Sebastián Ramírez había de salir a su destierro un día después de la natividad, además se vio que se detuvo hasta el sábado siguiente que se contaron catorce del dicho mes porque se decía como ha dicho públicamente que si aguardaba que reparase un planeta cuya influencia ayudaba a conseguir el efecto de que de dicho Ramírez llegase a Chile”. AGN-370, f. 15v.

<sup>488</sup> “En algunas ocasiones que este testigo había citado al dicho Presidente don Álvaro le ha hallado con algunos libros con formas de rostros de hombres y animales y algunos libros que presume este testigo son prohibidos como son de autores flamencos y franceses. Un día el dicho Presidente sabia este testigo que yendo en la carroza y llevando consigo por compañero al dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón dijo le prestaría un libro de los referidos y se lo presto con tal se lo volviese”. AGN-370, f. 14.

<sup>489</sup> “Y también que oyó decir no se acuerda a quien que le había dicho al Presidente el dicho Fray Nicolás que tendría trabajosa residencia aunque saldría bien de ella. Y que una persona letrada le había de inquietar en la Residencia”. AGN-370, f. 28.

<sup>490</sup> “oyó decir no se acuerda a quien que el dicho Fray Nicolás había dicho o dado a entender al dicho Presidente que le vendría mal si desterraba a Sebastián Ramírez y que esto lo entendía así de los astros y que el hombre era barbinegro y casi blanco.” AGN-370, f. 28.

enunciated that a certain man with the traits of Sebastián Ramírez was going to cause him grief during his government.<sup>491</sup> He could not remember the name of the ones who said it, but he was certain that the reason why the President sent the scribe away “was not because of astronomical conjectures, but because the marquis was certain that the said Sebastián Ramírez was trying to harm him.”<sup>492</sup> When he was asked if he knew that September the 14th was the chosen day to send Sebastián Ramírez to the kingdom of Chile because a certain astrologer had said that the influence of a certain Planet was going to be favourable for the enterprise, he replied not to have heard anything about it.

Not all witnesses thus agreed that an astrologically auspicious moment had been elected for the scribe’s exile, but all of them talked directly or indirectly of the way in which Friar Nicolás had identified the president’s enemy by means of physiognomy. It was not surprising for astrologers, during the Renaissance and early modern period, to also have a vast knowledge of physiognomy. Girolamo Cardano, for instance, “had mastered all the mysteries of facial interpretation.”<sup>493</sup> Moreover, physiognomy was a widely spread tool “for constructing the most basic structure of social relationship’s across the social spectrum, from friends to enemies.”<sup>494</sup> Therefore, the art of physiognomy was not only an area of interest for specialized scholars, but for anyone who regarded it as a useful tool for deciphering the *other*. The extent to which it was considered useful was somehow reflected on the considerable number of older physiognomic texts that were printed in Latin and the vernacular during the last decades of the fifteenth and early decades of the sixteenth centuries. Such compendia offered the reader clues to detect the secret features of their enemies with the help of

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<sup>491</sup> Lo que sabe “es haber oído decir y no se acuerda a quién que el padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón, [...] había levantado figura y por ella pronunciado al Marqués de Lorenzana don Álvaro de Quiñónez Osorio, presidente de esta Real Audiencia y un letrado de profesión que un hombre de las señas de Sebastián Ramírez, escribano del valle, le habían de dar pesadumbre en su presidencia.” AGN-370, f. 30v.

<sup>492</sup> “...que sabe con cierta ciencia que el motivo del dicho marqués para echar de aquí a la tal persona que fue Sebastián Ramírez, escribano del Valle, no fue tanto por conjeturas astronómicas, sino por saber el dicho Marqués con cierta ciencia los graves daños que el dicho Sebastián Ramírez intentaba hacerle con informaciones de que tuvo noticia cierta el dicho marqués” AGN-370, f. 33.

<sup>493</sup> Grafton, Athony, "From Apotheosis to Analysis: Some Late Renaissance Histories of Classical Astronomy" in Kelley (1997), p. 265.

<sup>494</sup> Porter, Martin. *Windows of the Soul. Physiognomy in European Culture 1480-1780*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2005. p. 246.

physiognomy, ‘a striking natural art’ to identify ‘reckless disgraceful people through their bodily signs.’<sup>495</sup>

In general terms, physiognomy is the discernment of character from the physical (and especially facial) features;<sup>496</sup> the discipline that seeks to detect from individuals’ exterior their character, disposition, or destiny;<sup>497</sup> the “art of discovering the nature of a person by sight.”<sup>498</sup> The most accurate term to refer to the “theory of physiognomy as it was presented to early modern readers of books on the subject” is the classical word *physiognomony*, which derives from the Greek *physis* (nature) and *gnomon* (indication, knowledge, judgement, essence). A more colloquial term was the word *fisnomy* (sometimes spelt *physnomy* or *phisnamy*) which referred to “that general, intuitive, even unconscious ability that human beings (including those who are blind or deaf) somehow have, which enables them to discover something about a person simply by looking at, and listening to them.”<sup>499</sup> The term *physiognomy* was used in several ways during the early modern period: one, was to refer to the face or the whole physical appearance in a merely anatomical sense; another one, was to refer to a specific physical trait expressing an internal characteristic; finally, it was also used to designate the theory, discipline, or art of physiognomy.<sup>500</sup> In what follows, I will use the term *physiognomy* as being a more standard concept, and more representative of the heterogeneity of the subject.

There are four major works on physiognomy in the classical period. The earliest known one is attributed to Aristotle, and it is “a work of considerable interest and intelligence and it exercised an enormous influence right down to the seventeenth century.”<sup>501</sup> The sophist Polemon or Polemo of Laodicea, a wealthy and powerful political rhetorician of the second century, developed the pseudo-Aristotelian material, especially in a detailed treatment of the eyes.<sup>502</sup> For a long time Polemo’s treatise was only known in its Arabic Form; it was first

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<sup>495</sup> Groebner, Valentin. “*Complexio/ Complexion: Categorizing Individual Natures, 1250-1600.*” in Daston (2004), pp. 361-383.

<sup>496</sup> Percival, Melissa. *Physiognomy in Profile. Lavater's impact on European Culture.* Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont; 2005, p. 17.

<sup>497</sup> Barton (1994), p. 96.

<sup>498</sup> Porter (2005), p.III.

<sup>499</sup> Porter (2005), p. IX.

<sup>500</sup> Porter (2005), p. XI.

<sup>501</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 226.

<sup>502</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 226. The author refers to Förster’s study (1893).

printed in Greek in 1545 and translated into Latin seven years later by Nicolaus Petreius. Another ancient treatise is an epitome of Polemon's tract possibly by a writer named Adamantius, whose tract was firstly published in Greek in Paris in 1540, and four years later in a Latin translation by Janus Cornarius.<sup>503</sup> Finally, there is a single anonymous Latin text on physiognomy that has been attributed to different authors, including Apuleius and Aristotle.<sup>504</sup> It is known as the *Anonymous Latin* treatise and it is a compilation of the previous three works with some new material added by an obscure physician named Loxus.<sup>505</sup> By contrast to astrology, Greco-Roman physiognomy was less focused on prediction and more on character and nature; on the judgement of the emotions from outward signs, a process that was described as "pathognomical analysis."<sup>506</sup> The pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica* furnished the conceptual foundation for physiognomy: it established the natural link between mind and body, explained the way to interpret physical signs, and distinguished those traits which were more significant.

In Islamic culture, physiognomy was regarded "as a necessary ancillary to such activities as the appointment of subordinates to positions of responsibility, the purchase of slaves, the selection of spouses, concubines and servants, and in assessing the truthfulness of witnesses."<sup>507</sup> Mourad suggested that it was the Muslims who first united physiognomy with astrology, mainly through the work of the Syrian cosmographer ad-Dimashqu (1327), but the question is still unresolved. The notion that the planets and the zodiacal signs were associated with specific physical and psychological types can be traced back as early as the *Tetrabiblos*.<sup>508</sup> What is certain is that, by the tenth century, the corpus of Greek physiognomical texts was circulating in Muslim lands, translated into Arabic, and mixed with local tradition on the subject. The major texts by Arabic authors on the subject were Book II of the *Liber almansoris* (or *Liber ad regem Almonsorem*) by al-Raz, Fakhr al-Din

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<sup>503</sup> Maclean (2002), p. 316.

<sup>504</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 226.

<sup>505</sup> Porter (2005), p. 50.

<sup>506</sup> Barton (1994), p. 96.

<sup>507</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 227.

<sup>508</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 229. See: Mourad, Youssef. *La physiognomonie arabe et le Kitab al-Firasa de Fakr al-Din al-Razi*, Paris, Geuthner, 1939. Reviewed by Aly Mazaheri in *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences*, No. 7 (1949), pp. 787-89.

Muhammad ibn Umar (or Rhazes),<sup>509</sup> and the *Secretum Secretorum* which included a section devoted to physiognomy as early as the tenth century.<sup>510</sup> The *Secretum secretorum* is a translation of a ninth or tenth century work of Arabic origins known as the *Kitab sirr al-asrar*. It is presented as the mystical advice that Aristotle sent to Alexander the Great during his conquest of Persia.<sup>511</sup> Through a long period of accretion it gradually became a sort of encyclopaedic work, including various miscellaneous information on astrology, physiognomy, alchemy, and magic, and rather detailed medical sections. This encyclopaedic character was what made the *Secretum* a text of interest for a wide variety of readers in different intellectual contexts.<sup>512</sup>

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Greek-Arabic physiognomical tradition was transmitted to the West through the translations into Latin and commentaries of the Arabic texts. The *Liber almansoris* was translated by Gerard of Cremona in the twelfth century, and it was the basis for Aldrobandino da Siena's brief physiognomics.<sup>513</sup> The text, however, must not have had a great impact on the reception of physiognomical theories in the west, since it was most widely known through Book IX, which does not contain any physiognomy. The physiognomy of the *Secretum Secretorum* was included in the late thirteenth century highly influential Hebraic encyclopaedia written in Castile called the *Book of Splendour*, and known as the *Zohar*. It is also between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries that the term *physiognomia* entered the written Latin language. Thus it could be said that medieval physiognomy was born during this period. However, there is some evidence that suggests the existence of physiognomical practice before the twelfth century.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> Gabrieli, Giuseppe. "Fakhr-al-din-al-Razi." In *Isis*. 1925; 7(1):9-13. According to the author, Abú Abdallah Muk. B. Umar. B. Al-Husayn Al-Tammit Al Bakri Al Tabáristáni, born in 1148, was "the last great philosopher produced by the Arabs, the last powerful diffuser of sciences in the high Asia." (p. 11) The work of Fakhr al-din embraced all kind of subjects, from history and law, to astrology and occult sciences. (p. 12)

<sup>510</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 229.

<sup>511</sup> Porter (2005), p. 64.

<sup>512</sup> Schmitt, Charles B. and W.F. Ryan (eds.) *Pseudo-Aristotle The Secret of Secrets. Sources and Influences*. London: Warburg Institute; 1982. Introduction. See also: Williams, S.J. "The Early Circulation of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets*" in *Micrologus* 2 (1994), pp. 127-144.

<sup>513</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 229 and Porter (2005), p. 62.

<sup>514</sup> Porter (2005), pp. 64-68.



The main medieval texts on physiognomy were the works of Peter of Abano, Michael Scot, Roger Bacon, and Jean Buridan, together with Albert the Great's commentary on *De animalibus*, and Cecco d'Ascoli's physiognomical section in his *De principiis astrologiae*.<sup>515</sup> Michael Scot's *Liber phisionomie* was the third book in a work entitled *Liber introductorius*, and it was possibly the most influential of all medieval treatises on the subject.<sup>516</sup> Albert's most important contribution to the subject was to suggest a necessary link between anatomy and physiognomy, as opposed to the astrological link.<sup>517</sup> Abano's *Compilatio Phisionomiea* (Paris c. 129) emphasised the intellectual connection between physiognomy, astrology, and mathematics. While Abano was not the first to relate astrology with physiognomy, "he did explore this link in more detail than any previous writer in the physiognomical canon."<sup>518</sup> In his *Speculum Phisionomia*, Michele Savonarola's (1384-1464) attempted to correlate the doctrine of the four elements, and four temperaments with physiognomy.<sup>519</sup>

The first printed treatise on physiognomy was a late fifteenth-century edition (around 1471) under the title *Decisiones physiognomieae* of Pietro d'Abano's work.<sup>520</sup> In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the production of physiognomical works increased considerably.<sup>521</sup> According to Clarke, despite their degree of originality, "the shadow of the PS-Aristotelian physiognomics never entirely disappeared [from these works]".<sup>522</sup> In the late Renaissance and early modern period, physiognomy kept attracting the attention of many scholars who

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<sup>515</sup> Clarke (1985) refers to Siraisi (1980).

<sup>516</sup> Porter (2005), p. 69. The author refers to P. Mopurgo: 'Michele Scoto tra scienza dell'anima e astrologia' in *Clio. Rivista trimestrale di studi storici*, 19 (Rome, 1983), 441-50, and "Il capitolo *de informacione medicorum* nel *Liber introductoris* di Michele Scoto" (Rome, 1984), 156-60.

<sup>517</sup> Porter (2005), p. 71.

<sup>518</sup> Porter (2005), p. 73.

<sup>519</sup> Porter (2005), p. 74. On Savonarola see also: Jacquart, Danielle. "Médecine et alchimie chez Michel Savonarole (1385-1466)" in J.C. Margolin and S. Matton (eds.) *Alchimie et philosophie à la Renaissance*, Paris, J. Vrin, 1993, pp. 109-122.

<sup>520</sup> Porter (2005), p. 83.

<sup>521</sup> Girolamo Manfredi published his *Liber de homine* at Bologna in 1474; Alessandro Achillini published his *Quaestio de subiecto physiognomiae et chiromantiae* also at Bologna in 1503; Bartolomeo della Rocca printed his *Physionomie ac chiromantiae anastasis* at Bologna (1504) with a section on chiromancy by Andrea Corvi of Mirandola, which was a copy from a medieval manuscript commentary on the Pseudo-Aristotelian text; Michelangelo Biondo edited Peter of Abano's physiognomics (Venice, 1548); Agostino Nifo's commentaries on Aristotle in the *Parva naturalia* (Venice, 1523) included one on the physiognomics; Johannes of Glogau or Glogovien printed a non-astrological compilation entitled *Phisionomia hinc inde ex illustribus ...recollecta* (Cracow, 1518); Szymon z Lowicza's *Enchiridion chiromantie compendiosum* (Cracow, 1532) suggests that Glogovien's work was not the only physiognomical treatise published in Central and Eastern Europe at the time.

<sup>522</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 229.

regarded it “as a useful and plausible activity”.<sup>523</sup> The first book printed in English devoted solely to the ‘art of Phisiognomie’ was published in 1556 by a writer from London named Thomas Hill.<sup>524</sup>

In 1597, Gerónimo Cortés published his *Phisonomia y varios secretos de la naturaleza* in Valencia.<sup>525</sup> The immediate success of the work is proven by the successive editions in 1598 in Valencia again, in 1601 in Córdoba, in 1603 in Zaragoza, and in 1609 in Tarragona.<sup>526</sup> The 120 leaves of the treatise are divided in 5 treatises: physiognomy, rosemary, *aqua ardens*, a collection of natural secrets, and the elementary and celestial regions.<sup>527</sup> The text can be considered as “non-divinatory and barely astrological.”<sup>528</sup> It does not predict fortuitous events from the parts of the body, “but does indicate the mental and moral characteristics corresponding to various physical features.”<sup>529</sup> The three authorities on physiognomy cited by Cortés in his preliminary bibliography are ‘Isnerio, Escoto, y Pedro de Ribas’. The first two names seem to refer to Taisner and Michael Scot, respectively, while Pedro de Ribas was vicar of the church of St. Nicholas in Zaragoza, and had recently addressed to the archbishop of the city a translation from Italian of a text on medicine, botany, and physiognomy. In the fifth treatise, he devotes a chapter to the physiognomy and characteristic of those born under each planet and its sphere.<sup>530</sup>

Without underestimating the importance of Cortés’s work and its resonance in the Iberian territories, it must be underlined that the Spanish phisiognomical tradition precedes the publication of his *Phisonomia*. In 1535, Andrés Laguna, a converted Spanish Jew,

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<sup>523</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 251.

<sup>524</sup> Porter (2005), p. IX.

<sup>525</sup> Navarro Brotóns, *et. al. Bibliographia Physico-Mathematica Hispanica (1475-1900)*, Vol. I. Libros y Folletos, 1475-1600. Cuadernos Valencianos de Historia de la Medicina y de la Ciencia. LVI, Serie C (Repertorios Bio-bibliográficos., Instituto de Historia de la Ciencia y de la Documentación “López Piñero”, Valencia, 1999, pp. 115-117

<sup>526</sup> The 1598 edition was entitled. *Libro de Phisonomia Natural y varios secretos de la naturaleza, el qual contiene cinco tratados de materias diferentes no menos curiosas que provechosas*. Thorndike had no knowledge about the first two Valencian editions, and considers the one of 1601 as the first publication of the treatise.

<sup>527</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 166. He studied the text of 1609: *Phisonomia y varios secretos de naturaleza: contiene cinco*

<sup>528</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 229

<sup>529</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 166.

<sup>530</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 167.

renowned physician to emperors Charles I and Phillip II, and Pope Julius III, published in Paris his commentary on the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomonica*.<sup>531</sup> Gabriel Serrano, disciple of Muñoz and professor of astrology in Salamanca until his death in 1598, composed a manuscript treatise on judicial astrology where he explains the influence of the planets and the signs of the Zodiac on physiognomy.<sup>532</sup> The manuscript also includes some of Serrano's comments on the books of astrological aphorisms by Pérez de Mesa, who had in turn written extensively about physiognomy, and a discussion of *De nati complexione* by the licentiate Balthazar de Mendoza.<sup>533</sup>

Giovanni Battista Della Porta (ca. 1535-1615) published his *De humana physiognomonia* in 1586, and his six books on *Celestial Physiognomy* in Naples in 1603. He became “the most famous individual physiognomist of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Europe [...] the individual whose name, until the arrival of the next one, Lavater, came to be synonymous with physiognomy.”<sup>534</sup> Della Porta defined physiognomy as ‘a method (ratio) of investigating natural characteristics (mores) from fixed signs which are in the body and accidents which change the signs’.<sup>535</sup> His *De humana physiognomia* was basically an exhaustive collection of the opinions and traditions of earlier authorities; it was a vehicle for what scholars call today heteroglossia: multiplicity of authorial voices from different eras and places.<sup>536</sup> Della Porta absorbed the treatises of Pseudo-Aristotle, Polemon, and Adamantius, and provided illustrative examples from poets together with striking engraved images of paired human and animal faces.<sup>537</sup> Della Porta also systematised the signs of masculinity and femininity from the scattered remarks of the pseudo-Aristotelian work, and provided a hierarchy of common signs, the more certain being in the face, and the least certain the lower body.<sup>538</sup>

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<sup>531</sup> Porter (2005), p. 123.

<sup>532</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 43.

<sup>533</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 165, and Lanuza (2005), p. 93.

<sup>534</sup> Porter (2005), p. 129.

<sup>535</sup> Della Porta (1593) quoted in Maclean (2002), p. 205.

<sup>536</sup> Porter (2005), p. 129.

<sup>537</sup> Berland, Kevin. “Inborn Character and Free Will in the History of Physiognomy” in Percival (2005), p. 27.

<sup>538</sup> Maclean (2002), p. 318.

After Della Porta, some scholars continued developing the theoretical and methodological basis of physiognomy, and some new works dealing with the subject were published during the seventeenth century.<sup>539</sup> Though it is beyond our scope to trace here a whole history of physiognomy, it is necessary to present a general overview of this field of knowledge for a better understanding of the way in which it was related with the astrological practice. To conclude this overview it is perhaps important to point out that, contrary to astrology, physiognomy was not left out of the elite map of learning by the end of the early modern period, even enjoying a revival with the works of the Swiss physician Caspar Lavater (1741-1801).<sup>540</sup>

The main modes of discovering people's character with a physiognomic eye were established in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica*, and re-elaborated by later authors. The first mode deals with the significance of human resemblance to a specific animal, which in turn is endowed with a particular "mental character".<sup>541</sup> Secondly, there is the physiognomy of racial difference which distinguishes appearances and characters along ethnic lines and their corresponding behavioral pattern.<sup>542</sup> The third method consists in assigning certain physical traits to a given disposition of the soul, such as anger, fear, and so on.<sup>543</sup> Pseudo-

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<sup>539</sup> The *Cefalogia Fisonomica* by Cornelio Ghiradelli, written in vernacular, was published in Bologna in 1630. Richard Roussat's *The most Excellent, Profitable, and Pleasant Booke of the famous Doctor, and expert Astrologian, Arcandam, or Alcandrin, to finde the fatall destiny, constellation, complexion, and natural inclination of every man and child by this birth: with an addition of Phisiognomie, very pleasant to read* was translated into English by William Warde and printed in London in 1626. Helvetius *Microscopium physiognomiae medicum* (1676) was a primarily medical work; the chief physiognomical feature is the association of certain physical types with the seven planets and illustrating this by portraits of particular personages. François Bayle printed both in Toulouse (1677) and The Hague (1678) his *Dissertationes physicae*; the third dissertation was on physiognomy and occupied about one third of the volume. After 1676 less seems to have been written on the subject during the remainder of the century. See Thorndike, HMES, "Physiognomy", Vol. VIII, pp. 448-475.

<sup>540</sup> His four-volumed and lavishly illustrated *Physiognomische Fragmente, zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniss un Menschenliebe (Physiognomical Fragments for the Promotion of the Love and Understanding of Mankind*, Leipzig and Winterthur, 1775-78) became one of the most widely known books on physiognomy by the end of the eighteenth century. Berland (2005), pp. 27-28.

<sup>541</sup> "Alcuni fanno della fisiognomica partendo dale specie degli animali, determinando per ciascuna specie un dato aspetto di animale e un suo temperamento. Per questo essi pensavano a un dato corpo di animale e poi supponevano che quell'uomo che avesse a sua volta un corpo simile a quello, avesse anche un animo simile." Pseudo-Aristotle. *Fisiognomica*. Introduction, translation and notes by Giampiera Raina, Milano: Rizzoli; 1993, p. 59.

<sup>542</sup> "Altri poi seguivano questo stesso criterio, ma nella loro indagine non partivano dagli animale, ma dal genere umano stesso, distinguendo secondo le razze, quante differiscono per aspetto e carattere, come ad esempio Egizio, Traci e Sciti, e similmente facevano una raccolta dei tratti distintivi." Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 60

<sup>543</sup> "Altri ancora poi, partendo dalle caratteristiche esteriori, elencarono a quale disposizione d'animo ciascuna

Aristotle mentions later in the text another way of doing physiognomics, which nobody has ever experienced, and which is suitable only for those who already know philosophy. This method relates a certain inner disposition with another one or more, and then deduces that whenever one is present, the other will be found as well.<sup>544</sup>

Another internal influence on character, which is not in Pseudo-Aristotle, was the balance (*krakis*) of the four humors. The balance or imbalance of humors generates different character types, each bearing typical marks.<sup>545</sup> Sanguine complexion was reflected on a mixture of red and white color; sanguine people have a pleasant feel to them when touched, are moderately hot, pulse is strong, but fairly rapid, and moderately fleshy. Choleric people were reddish in color with some touch of yellow and occasional freckles; they are sharply hot, and hairy. Their pulse is strong and rapid, their body feels rough when touched, and their organs are hard and lack fat. Phlegmatics are white colored and in general extremely soft when touched; not hairy, their pulse is weak, and their flesh is fatty and flabby. Melancholic people are dark in color, cold and mixed with dryness, their spermatic organs are fatless, and their bodies are generally small and thin; not very hairy and their pulse is weak and slow; their hair is straight, brownish, and not thick.<sup>546</sup>

Besides explaining the different methods, the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise provides a list of signs which remained fundamental for physiognomical interpretation: movements, postures, color, facial traits, hair, quality of the skin (smooth or rough), voice, complexion, the single parts of the body and the whole physical aspect. Not all signs, however, are equally significant to discern the person's inner character; a hierarchy among signs must also be taken into account. The most reliable signs are in the region of the eyes and forehead, head, and face; next comes the chest, and shoulders, followed by the legs, and feet; the stomach is

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caratteristica fosse connessa, così per l'irascibile, il pauroso, il sensuale e così via per ciascuna di tutte le altre affezioni." Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 60.

<sup>544</sup> "Ma c'è un altro modo di fare fisiognomica, nessuno però l'ha ancora sperimentato. Ad esempio è consequenziale che chi è irroso, scontato e meschino sia invidioso, anche se non sono presenti le notazioni dell'invidioso, sulla base delle notazioni precedenti dovrebbe essere possibile a chi fa della fisiognomica, riconoscere l'invidioso. Ma questo metodo è adatto soprattutto a chi già conosce la filosofia". Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 73.

<sup>545</sup> Berland (2005), p. 27.

<sup>546</sup> Ziegler, Joseph." Skin and Character in Medieval and Early Renaissance Physiognomy." in *Micrologus*. 2005; XIII, p. 529. The author is referring in this part to Michele Savonarola's *Speculum phisonomie* (1440).

the least relevant.<sup>547</sup> “In a word, the clearest signs are derived from those parts in which intelligence is most manifest.”<sup>548</sup> Though the text does not mention it explicitly, it is possible to infer that the most important inner characteristics to be discovered by physiognomy are courage, cowardice, kindness or wickedness.

Taking into account these general considerations about physiognomical doctrine, we could attempt to reconstruct some ideas about natural and moral complexion which were the background for the discussions about the scribe’s case and his exile to Chile. It is extremely difficult, however, to derive a stable meaning for the various physical features subject to interpretation, especially when lacking documentation on the sources where these ideas might have come from.

One of the oft mentioned physical characteristic of the scribe was his paleness (*descolorado* or *palido*), a feature with a relatively consistent meaning, namely cowardice. Pseudo-Aristotle taught: “a certain paleness in the face” is one of the distinctive signs of the coward;<sup>549</sup> a white skin is also a sign of dissoluteness: <sup>550</sup> a white face, by definition soft and cold, was considered to belong to a woman; thus in a man was regarded as a sign of effeminacy.<sup>551</sup> One of the witnesses mentioned that Ramírez had small hands, which could also be considered as a typically feminine feature; long, thin hands are also symbols of cowardice. Two witnesses said that the scribe was medium-sized, and only one said that he had a small body, which is generally associated with a melancholic complexion.<sup>552</sup> Most witnesses said he was a black-bearded man, which is in contradiction with an effeminate hairless face. The absence of facial hair in young boys and women alike explained a shared

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<sup>547</sup> “In ogni scelta dei segni alcuni segni danno indicazioni piú chiare sul soggetto rispetto ad altri. I piú chiari sono quelli che si trovano nelle posizioni piú favorevoli. La posizione piú favorevole é la zona degli occhi, della fronte, della testa e del volto, al secondo posto quella del petto e delle spalle, poi quella delle gambe e dei piedi; proprio all'ultimo posto quella del ventre.” Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 121

<sup>548</sup> Porter (2005), p. 55.

<sup>549</sup> I segni del codardo sono: capelli morbidi, rilassatezza, non energia nel fisico, polpacci larghi in algo, un certo **palore nel volto**, occhi spenti e che spesso si chiudono, estremitá dei corpi deboli, gambe piccole, mani lunghe e sottili, fianchi piccoli e deboli, e teso nei movimenti, non è attivo, ma indolente e spaventato, l’espressione del volto è mutevole e depressa.” Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 57.

<sup>550</sup> “I segni del dissoluto: di pelle bianca, villosa, capelli dritti, grossi e neri, anche le tempio son coperte di capelli dritti; l’occhio è lucido e libidinoso.” Pseudo Aristotle (1993), p. 83:

<sup>551</sup> Porter (2005), p. 195.

<sup>552</sup> Ziegler (2005), p. 524.

characteristic, namely the tendency to lie. In general, the lack of facial hair was believed to be the result of excess cold and dryness, and was seen as a sign of unreliability and cunning.<sup>553</sup>

Some traits are mentioned only once, such as a round face, a head with some white hair, and that he was always looking at the floor. If *round face* meant chubby, then it signified laziness, and, again, cowardice.<sup>554</sup> Moving the eyes down could mean either weakness and effeminacy, or depression and pessimism.<sup>555</sup> The eyes, however, more than any other physical feature escape simple interpretations. Generally, small eyes were a bad sign, and usually an indication of deceit, because they could not be clearly seen. Eyes that were too big were not such a good sign either; the most common meaning was sluggishness, or sloth, or dullness, and it was often seen as ox-like. If they appeared luminous and moist, they revealed an elevated soul capable of great things, if somewhat inclined to cholera, drunkenness, and an excessive desire for glory. A moist look was, on the whole, better than a dry look. Some eyes looked up, some down, some inclined to look to the left (apathy), some to the right (adultery). Some moved, others were more fixed; some opened one way, some opened another, and their meaning changed accordingly.<sup>556</sup>

In sum, we could say that most of the scribe's physical signs, as described by the witnesses at the trial, corresponded to a cowardly effeminate. One of the deponents actually spoke explicitly about Ramirez's moral qualities, saying he was "very cunning and too much in his profession, not well intentioned."<sup>557</sup> However, nobody talked about any of the distinctive marks registered both on his travelling permit of 1632, and on his arrest warrant of 1642. The former was issued after Sebastián Ramírez had gone to Spain in order to meet his sister Jerónima, and bring her back to the New World with him. According to these records, the scribe was approximately thirty-two years old at the time, medium-sized, and he was

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<sup>553</sup> Ziegler (2005), p. 525.

<sup>554</sup> "Quelli che hanno la faccia in carne sono pigri; si vedano i buoi. Quelli che l'hanno scarna sono zelanti, in carne codardi." Pseudo-Aristotle (1993) p. 105.

<sup>555</sup> "L'abbattimento degli occhi indica due cose: debolezza ed effeminatezza, o depressione e pessimismo." Pseudo-Aristotle (1993), p. 79.

<sup>556</sup> Porter (2005), p. 177.

<sup>557</sup> "Dijo que [Sebastián Ramírez] es un hombre de buena estatura no muy alto cari redondo y barbinegra y la cabeza pinta algo en cano y le parece será de más de cuarenta años de edad y hombre muy ladino y demasiado en su oficio y no de buena intención". AGN-370, f. 180.

easily recognized for a sign on his left cheek.<sup>558</sup> According to the arrest warrant, issued by President Quiñones on January 7, 1642 Ramírez was rather corpulent, and he had a good size, pale skin, some white hair on the beard, and the mark of a wound under the left eyebrow.<sup>559</sup>

I want to emphasize here that the physiognomic eye was probably much more developed at a time when identification was not based on photographs like today. Describing in detail facial and corporal traits was more frequent because it was also necessary; deciphering the hidden meaning of those traits, however, was reserved only to a few. It is thus not surprising that president Quiñones himself was versed in the art of physiognomy. As Friar Nicolás declared in his defence: “in physiognomic matters the said marquis is an eminent man and has no need of my judgement in order to conjecture that he [the scribe] was mercurial, except that the physiognomy of the said Sebastián Ramírez is not mercurial, according to the precepts of astrology.”<sup>560</sup>

In his written defence, Friar Nicolás explained that what he had discovered in the president’s revolution for the year 1640-41 was that he was going to have a mercurial enemy. In astrological practice, revolutions of the year could refer either to a general horoscope to forecast world affairs cast annually when the Sun enters the head of the sign Aries, or to an individual analysis of the position of the planets on the anniversary of the a person’s birth (usually until his or her 64<sup>th</sup> birthday). According to this revolution, Mercury was in the twelfth house, which is the house of secret enemies, as Francesco Giuntini explains.<sup>561</sup> And because Mercury rules writing and letters, the enemies were going to be scribes. However, he never extended his judgement beyond this conjecture, and he couldn’t have identified

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<sup>558</sup> See: *Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a Indias de Sebastián Ramírez y Jerónima Ramírez, hermanos, hijos de Sebastián Ramírez Cano y de María Ramírez Castaño a Nicaragua*. 1632. AGI; CONTRATACION, 5413, No. 30.

<sup>559</sup> “Sebastián Ramírez es de buena estatura, algo gureso de cuerpo color pálido entre-cano la barba y vigote y el cabello crespo con una señal de herida abajo de la ceja del ojo izquierdo y de edad de cuarenta años poco más o menos...”. See: *Orden de Prisión y secuestro de bienes contra Sebastián Ramírez (1642)*. AGCA; AL. 24, Exp. 10203, Leg. 1559, fol. 15.

<sup>560</sup> “Fuera de que en materias de fisionomía [sic] el dicho marqués es hombre eminente y no había menester juicio mío para conjeturar que aquél era el mercurial además de que la fisionimia [sic] del dicho Sebastián Ramírez no es de mercurial según los preceptos de astrología...” AGN-370, f. 124v.

<sup>561</sup> “En esta conformidad digo que en la revolución del año de 40 asta el de 41 hallé al Planeta Señor de la duodécima casa en la 5 casa en signo de Escorpión, que buscando su significación en clave de Francisco Juntino, que es librilla que tengo dicho dice el aforismo que denota que los enemigos ocultos le harán provincialmente falsedades y por ser Mercurio que serán mercuriales estos enemigos.” AGN-370, f. 124.



Sebastián Ramírez as the president's enemy because he had never seen this scribe before. Moreover, Ramírez was in prison two months before Friar Nicolás did his astrological judgement. Finally, he asked the inquisitor to interrogate the president and ask him whether his main accusers, the commendator Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, and the censor Friar Andrés de Morales, were relatives of the scribe.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> "...no le conocía ni había visto en mi vida al dicho Sebastián Ramírez cuando hice este juicio y no había razón para que hiciese mal a quien no me lo había hecho a mi ni conocía fuera de que más de dos meses antes de hacer este juicio este ya preso el dicho Sebastián Ramírez suplico a vuestra ilustrísima en esta parte se le tome declaración al dicho marqués y vea que como el dicho Sebastián Ramírez es deudo del Padre Maestro Fray Bartolomé de las Casas y del Padre Maestro Fray Andrés de Morales". AGN-370, f. 124v.

### 3.3 Accusation and Defence: the Problem of Free Will

On April 11, 1642 the Mexican inquisitors asked the commissary of Guatemala to send Friar Nicolás to Mexico City for his appearance in court. Friar Nicolás, however, on his way to the capital attempted to escape from justice's hand and went back to Santiago. It was not until the following year, on February 13, 1643 that Friar Nicolás was captured in the house of Don Alonso Zapata, where he was hiding. He was immediately imprisoned in the convent of his Order in the capital of Guatemala. Ten long months of prison, without any light and bounded with fetters of iron, were the Mercedarian's torture. On January 7, 1644 he arrived to the Convent of his Order in Mexico City. His first hearing took place on April 19, and the second one on July 14. More than one year later, on August 18, 1645, the fiscal of the inquisition, Antonio de Gaviola, presented his criminal accusation against Friar Nicolás in the following terms:

[Friar Nicolás de Alarcón] had done, said and performed, had seen other people do, say and perform many and diverse crimes against what our holy mother Roman Catholic Church and evangelic law believes, predicates and teaches, by using the art of judicial astrology and other types of divination, having and reading books that deal with this art, against the prohibition of our mother Church, trying with sober intention to know the coming things and the future events and future cases that God has reserved for his own, for being His eyes the only ones that can penetrate in the most obscure thoughts of men and foresee the actions consequent to them. And by using the said art, so vane and tricky, introduced to the world by the cleverness of lost men and the untruths of demons, predicting by means of their cooperation, advice and help or because they are explicitly invoked so that they tell the future to the Astrologers [...], the said Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, believing with all his heart that it was licit, has done and performed many and severe crimes, and taught the said art of Judicial Astrology.<sup>563</sup>

The inquisitor then unfolded the accusation in thirteen chapters:

1. That Friar Nicolás cast a figure for the President of the *Audiencia*, and he continued doing so even after one of his colleagues showed him Diana's work.
2. A colleague of the Convent warned Friar Nicolás against the dangers of casting figures and making use of judicial astrology, but he continued casting figures and travelling to *Ciudad Vieja*.
3. Friar Nicolás cast the nativity of the president's son, called Antonio.

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<sup>563</sup> AGN-370, f. 138.

4. He was responsible for the expulsion of a scribe called Sebastián Ramírez. Based on astrological judgments, he had told the President that a certain man, with the exact physical traits of this Sebastián Ramírez was going to cause him a lot of trouble.
5. He told the President the exact day and time when the scribe had to leave the city and go into exile, as if he believed that the accomplishment of the affair depended on the stars and Planets.
6. He possessed a nativity that an astrologer had cast for the President in Italy.
7. He cast a figure for a nun, and such figure was found inside the nun's house after her death.
8. He said that he could know where a lost plate was by casting a figure.
9. In *Ciudad Vieja* he said that the star and planet of the President's nativity signified bad prognostications, and a short life.
10. He said that he was casting a figure about the President's life, nobility titles (such as Marquis or Count), and enemies.
11. He said that the President was going to live eighty years, or even one hundred and eight years, if he would overcome certain illness.
12. Ignoring the Holy Office's censorship on forbidden books, he possessed and read books that deal with judicial astrology, composed by suspicious authors and printed in free lands.
13. He said that when the President was young he had turn to certain magicians in Madrid to know what was going to happen with his illicit affairs.<sup>564</sup>

After the accusation Friar Nicolás presented a written defence where he tried to prove his innocence by underlying that he never practiced illicit judicial astrology. On the one hand, he stated that the kind of predictions he made were not evil divinations and did not contradict the Catholic doctrine of free will; furthermore, they were in accordance with the kind of conjectures defended and permitted by canonical theologians. Thus the Mercedarian claimed that he had not exceeded the limits of what was allowed in the practice of natural astrology, which was concerned with the general character of planetary influences in agriculture and medicine, as opposed to judicial astrology, which interpreted these influences in order to make predictions or give advice.

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<sup>564</sup> AGN-370, f.138-41v.

On the other hand, he argued that his astrological calculations were based on authorized books, written by approved authors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Index et Catalogus Librorum Prohibitorum* issued in 1583 by general Inquisitor Gaspar de Quiroga was the first index reflecting the Spanish Inquisition's own listing, while the previous indexes were practically a reproduction of indexes issued in Rome. The *Index Quiroga* classified books by language and added a series of rules in order to cover all the books, even those which were not originally included on the list. Rule IX forbade all books "about occult sciences, which are used for the invocation of the demon and all books about judicial astrology, which claim to know what depends on human's freedom and fortune." By contrast, books about natural astrology (including almanacs and ephemerides), based on the observation of stars and useful for human activities, were not forbidden. Rule XIII forbade all books which were printed without the name of the author, publisher, place, and date of publication.<sup>565</sup> In his defence, Friar Nicolás alluded to this rule, which could mean that it was Quiroga's *indice novisimo* that he knew.

In December 1640, President Álvaro Quiñonez sent Fray Nicolás a manuscript book containing his birth-chart in the sign of Leo, at 42 degrees. Besides the general judgment, the author included the *revolutions* until his sixty-third birthday. According to the theory of the climacteric years, which considers all multiples of seven and nine as harmful years, the sixty-third year or grand climacteric year was believed to be a particularly critical period in life.<sup>566</sup> Since the president had already overcome this climacteric year, he asked Friar Nicolás to continue with the following revolutions and write them down in some blank pages of the same book. Friar Nicolás did what he was requested in May of the following year, 1641.<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> Pérez Villanueva, Joaquín. *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos. Centro de Estudios Inquisitoriales; 2000, Vol. III, p. 811.

<sup>566</sup> This theory, as Lanuza (2005) explains, was not only related to astrological doctrines but also with magical and cabalistic traditions. (p. 133)

<sup>567</sup> "Procede en el hasta el año de 63 de edad que es el climatérico más contrario a la naturaleza y en que ésta pierde sus fuerzas y como ya el dicho marques había pasado de este año de edad por haber nacido el año de 1575 mes de octubre días dos, horas 15, minutos 34 al cual tiempo se levantó la figura, me pidió que prosiguiese en la misma forma con direcciones, profeciones [sic] y revoluciones el juicio en algunas hojas blancas del mismo cartapacio que he dicho. Caí malo de fríos y calenturas con que no pude hacerlo hasta el mes de Mayo del año de cuarenta y uno." AGN-370, f 123v.

For his calculations, he used David Origanus' work, in three volumes, which belonged to Pedro de Liendo, neighbour of Guatemala, and expurgated by the Franciscan censor Friar Blás de Morales. At the time of the trial, Pedro Liendo had the first volume of Origanus' work, which explains the principles of astrology and contains the ephemerides. Fray Nicolás handed over to the notary of the Inquisition the second and third volumes; the former explained the movement of the planets, and the latter contained ephemerides.<sup>568</sup> Besides Origanus, he also used "the aphorisms that doctor Francisco Juntino has in a small book entitled *Revoluciones Annuas*."<sup>569</sup> The "Tractatus iudicandi reuolutiones nativitatum" was printed either as a separate treatise or as part of Giuntini's famous *Speculum Astologiae*.<sup>570</sup> It dealt with the specific astrological practice known as *reuelutiones annorum* for individuals' anniversaries. They should not be confused with the other kind of revolutions, which are also made on a yearly basis, but are concerned with general large-scale events of weather, politics, and religion.

The two volumes of the *Speculum astrologiae*, written by the Carmelite Francesco Giuntini, constitute an encyclopedia of astronomical and astrological texts.<sup>571</sup> It was published for the first time in 1573, and corrected by the Holy Office. In the first three parts, a total of 232 pages, the author tackled the questions related with a correct interpretation of the stars and planets for the reconstruction of a horoscope. In the fourth part (a total of 100 pages), following the tradition of astrological treatises, the author described the meaning of the most brilliant stars, planets, and comets for astrological purposes. In the fifth part (102 pages), dedicated to Caterina de Medici, the author offered new charts of the movement of

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<sup>568</sup> "...juzgule en la forma que enseña David Origano autor que escribió tres tomos del 1o. texto y principios de astrología y aforismos, el segundo y tercero tomo efemérides de movimientos de los 7 planetas, todos tres tomos son del Pedro de Liendo, vecino de Guatemala, natural de Vizcaya, los cuales están corregidos y expurgados por el Padre Fray Blás de Morales de la orden de San Francisco de la Provincia de Guatemala, lector jubilado en ella y ex purgador de este Santísimo Tribunal en aquellas partes." AGN-370, f. 123v.

<sup>569</sup> "Así mismo usé de los aforismos que el Doctor Francisco Juntino trae en un libro pequeño intitulado *De Revoluciones annuas*, en latín al cual toma suma de dos grandes que escribió el mismo autor y están corregidos por este Santo Tribunal." AGN-370, f. 123v.

<sup>570</sup> See chapter 5 of this work.

<sup>571</sup> Ernst (1991a), p. 256.

the Sun, the Moon, and the 5 visible planets, based on new astronomical data. The *Speculum* was published for the first time in Lyon in 1573 and again in 1575, 1581, and 1583.<sup>572</sup>

Being these the authors I have studied I say to your Highness that I made the revolutions of Marques de Lorenzana's birth according to the way they teach and putting in the judgment, from my part, only the counting and aphorism of the said authors, that are written in Latin. I translated them into romance, which is proved in some papers I handed in to the said attorney and that are extracted from the book.<sup>573</sup>

At this point, Friar Nicolás explained that he stripped from the book those pages on which he had written his own judgments because he knew that rumours against him were spreading in the city of Guatemala. So he asked Don Alvaro to give him the book back in order to have these documents with him and hand them to the Holy Office whenever necessary.<sup>574</sup>

He declared to have traced six more nativities, including one for the president's son called Antonio.<sup>575</sup> He also prognosticated the death of a nun and of a physician of Guatemala City. By drawing up a chart at the time of the *decumbiture*, which is the moment when the patient feels ill, and with the ephemerides of the mentioned authors, he was able to tell when the life of a sick person was in danger. In both cases, nativities and medical prognostications, Fray Nicolás emphasized that his work consisted more in doing translations from Latin into Spanish and mathematical calculations, than actually predicting the outcome of specific events. He even describes himself as a "mere grammarian" who calculates ephemerides and

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<sup>572</sup> Proverbio, Edoardo. "Francesco Giuntini e l'utilizzo delle tavole copernicane in Italia nel XVI secolo." In Bucciantini, Massimo, curatore. *La diffusione del copernicanesimo in Italia: 1543-1610*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki; 1997. See also: Pizzamiglio, Pierluigi. *L'astrologia in Italia all'epoca di Galileo Galilei (1550-1650)*. Milano: V&P; 2004.

<sup>573</sup> "Supuesto ser estos los autores en que he estudiado digo a su ilustrísima que en la forma que ellos enseñan hice las resoluciones annuas de nacimiento del marques de Lorenzana poniendo en el juicio de mi parte sólo la cuenta y cómputo y el aforismo de los dichos autores que esta en latín en ellos. Lo volví en romance por escrito que constará de unas hojas que entregué al dicho notario de vuestra ilustrísima, las cuales están cortadas del dicho cuaderno del marqués." AGN-370, f 123v.

<sup>574</sup> "Por causa de que habiendo tenido yo noticia de que contra mí se divulgaban en Guatemala rumores de que por astrología le decía yo al dicho marqués, Presidente entonces de aquella Real Audiencia cuanto pasaba, quise llevar el librito o cuaderno al comisario de Vuestra ilustrísima y habiendo sospechado el dicho Marqués de Lorenzana me le pidió y quitando de él los juicios que estaban hechos por mí le volví su libro o cuaderno reteniendo las dichas hojas para presentarlas cuando se me hiciese cargo de ellas." AGN-370, f. 124.

<sup>575</sup> AGN-370, f. 125v.

always speaks about “natural inclinations”.<sup>576</sup> To prove the above he handed in to the notary all the figures and nativities he had traced, together with the book by Origanus he had borrowed.<sup>577</sup>

Indeed, neither Origanus’ nor Giuntini’s books were included in the above-mentioned Indexes of forbidden Books. It is however interesting to note that both authors were regarded as *suspicious* since beginning of the century. In the inquisitorial archives of Mexico City, there is a letter written by the censor Friar Francisco de Herrera on September 1618 where he explains that he had “confiscated some books dealing with judicial astrology, until I know what your honour commands, such as the works by Francesco Giuntini, Florentine, who deals with the judicial art; another book by Julio Firmico; the *Ephemeredes*, by David Origanus; and Bonati’s *Astronomia Tractatus*”.<sup>578</sup>

In his written defense, Friar Nicolás declared that someone had showed him Sixtus V’s Bull against judicial astrology in Guatemala, but he did not know whether that was before casting the figures for the president or afterwards. “But once I read and understood it, it seemed to me that it forbids the judgment of human acts and divinations [...] therefore, where there is no divination, there is no prohibition.”<sup>579</sup> He also adduced to Urban VIII’s Bull, and said that he had known both Papal decrees through Diana’s *Resolutiones Morales*, a work that he probably did not read before going to the Convent of Guatemala. However, the ignorance of these texts was not his main argument to convince the Holy Office of his innocence. The challenge for the Mercedarian was to prove that nativities, even though they

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<sup>576</sup> “Y en suma Vuestra Ilustrísima en materia nacimientos he sacado algunos no poniendo de mi parte más que la figura que se hace por cuentas y en el Juicio solo he sido un **mero gramático** construyendo los aforismos de los dos dichos autores que refiero, advirtiendo siempre que sólo hablo de los actos animales y de las **inclinaciones naturales**”. AGN-370, f. 125v.

<sup>577</sup> Unfortunately, these manuscripts, as far as I know, were lost.

<sup>578</sup> *Cartas de Fray Francisco de Herrera sobre el edicto contra la Astrología Judiciaria* (1618). AGN; Inquisición, 293 (Segunda parte), f. 399.

Bonatti, Guido, *Astronomia Tractatus*, printed in Basilea in 1550. "Guidonis Bonati. Foroliviensis Mathematici de Astronomia Tractatus X Universum quod ad iudiciariam rationem Nativitatum, A?ris, Tempestatum attinet, comprehendentes. A diectus est Cl. Ptolemaei liber Fructus, cum Commentarijs Georgij Trapezuntij. (Basileae, Anno MDL.)

<sup>579</sup> “...digo pues, si cesante el motivo de la ley, cesa su prohibición y el motivo de esta ley es prohibir la adivinación donde no hay adivinación ni juicio”. AGN-370, f. 127v.

were explicitly forbidden by the Papal Bulls, could be considered as natural astrology because they dealt with *natural inclinations* and not with *moral causes*.

As mentioned above, Friar Nicolás tried to prove his innocence by underlining the difference between natural and judicial astrology, the border of which had long been “a vital part of the synthesis of Christian theology and Aristotelian natural philosophy wrought by Thomas Aquinas.”<sup>580</sup> This synthesis allowed recognizing the influence of the stars on Earth, but always stressing the freedom of the will and the power of God, the only one capable of knowing the future. Therefore it is not surprising that Friar Nicolás quoted mainly Thomas of Aquinas (*Summa*, I: 14, article 13, “Whether the knowledge of God is of Future Contingent Things?) when stating that astrological judgments were not to be considered as divinations because they dealt with *natural inclinations*.

It is conjectural knowledge, when the astrologer says that a particular planet means a particular inclination, because this inclination is a natural cause. He is talking about good or evil physical and not moral inclinations; there are no good or evil in natural inclinations, but only involuntary acts [...] Therefore, astrological judgments talk about those actions which precede the voluntary actions and, since these previous actions are inclinations that move the will (they incline it), the astrologer predicts the inclination which may well be resisted and men can even do the opposite thing to it: *vir sapiens dominabitur astris*”<sup>581</sup>

Thomas Aquinas was probably the Christian thinker who most deeply reflected on the question of human free will and divine providence. Both in his *Summa theologiae* and *Summa contra Gentiles* he admitted a direct influence of the stars upon the human body and an indirect one upon his mind and will, which could also be affected by bodily tendencies and passions.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Curry (1989), p. 10.

<sup>581</sup> “Confirmase esto con otro lugar de S Thomas, el cual en la I parte question 14, articulo 13 dice que el que conoce el efecto en su causa solo es conocimiento conjetural y así el astrólogo diciendo tal planeta significa esta inclinación no habla certo [...] porque en las inclinaciones naturales no hay bondad ni malicia moral pues la bondad o malicia moral consiste en actos voluntarios formales o en actos que pudo y debió la voluntad imperar o prohibir a la parte sensitiva [...]Háblase pues en el juicio astrológico de los actos antecedentes al acto ilícito de la voluntad y como estos actos antecedentes son inclinaciones que mueven *obiectie* la voluntad esto es la inclinan [...] el astrólogo pronostica más que inclinación que bien puedo resistirla y aún hacer acto contrario a ella la voluntad libre que *vir sapiens dominabitur astris*...”AGN-370, f. 126v-127. The motto *vir sapiens dominabitur astris* is traditionally attributed to Ptolemy. Rotzko (1991, p. 236). The author explains that Gerome Torrella in his *Opus* dedicates several pages to the famous Ptolemaic motto: *sapiens dominabitur astra*.

<sup>582</sup> Ernst (1991a), p. 256.



Medieval philosophy was, in general, opposed to divination in all its forms, but astrology was still widely practiced. Moreover, it is significant that the West did no effort to recover or reinterpret the Islamic philosophical and theological considerations of the evils of astrology. During the twelfth century, Islamic treatises against astrology were not translated into Latin, while the works of Arabic and Greek science and philosophy fascinated western scholars, who were more concerned to justify the practice of astrology than to support the reservation of the Fathers. Between the defenders and the critics of astrology, the core issue of the debate was not its validity, but rather its legitimacy.<sup>583</sup> On the one hand, there was a general tolerance for astrological prediction which involved general affairs or the public good, such as medical astrology, weather prediction and general predictions for the year; on the other hand, predictions about the fates of individuals were always regarded as suspicious. However, after the Paris condemnations of 1270 and 1277, even general predictions “become tainted with the old objection of determinism” and theologians emphasized the primacy of human free will and divine providence.<sup>584</sup>

A widely used argument to demonstrate that divinatory arts, especially astrology, were compatible with Christianity was that those natural or astral phenomena that were considered as a basis for making predictions did not *oblige* the will, but only *inclined* it. Therefore, there was no incompatibility with the doctrine of free will. Another defense, strongly linked to the explanations of supernatural events, purported that these phenomena were *signs* and not *causes*, and thus they did not *produce* events, but announced them. This argument explains why the Church was much less severe in condemning the prediction of collective physical phenomena, such as epidemics, wars, natural disasters, or famine. In contrast to the prediction of human actions, there was not elimination of responsibility in the case of natural events.<sup>585</sup>

But even when divine and human will could be conciliated with astral influence, the problem of the moral status of astrological prediction remained. Since prediction implies an idea of determinism, and determinism is not compatible with Christian doctrines, divinatory

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<sup>583</sup> Carey (1992), p. 12.

<sup>584</sup> Carey (1992), p. 14.

<sup>585</sup> Baldini (2001), p. 82.

practices could only belong to the realm of Evil; only supernatural demonic agents could participate in the infinite foresight of God. The possibility of prediction was generally justified in terms of *influences* exerted by natural entities on man's physical and intellectual state (even determining individual thoughts and psychic states); but the compatibility of these influences with biblical cosmogony and the relationship between man and God, as defined by Christianity, was highly dubious.<sup>586</sup>

During the Renaissance, together with the texts of classical philosophers, came the recovery of the ancient and early Christian discussions about free will. And, contrary to the medieval tradition, the discussion was taken outside the merely religious realm to be discussed in the secular forum as well. "The three most important Italian humanist treatments of the problem of foreknowledge and freedom are those of Coluccio Salutati, Lorenzo Valla, and Pietro Pomponazzi."<sup>587</sup> The discussion about free will was particularly relevant in the context of astrological debate, which gained prominence after Ficino translated and published the Hermetic corpus and other magical-mystical literature.<sup>588</sup>

For Ficino, there was a threefold order of things: *providentia, fatum, natura*. Providence is the realm of the mind, fate the realm of the soul, and nature the realm of the body. "Through our mind we are subject to providence, through our imagination and sensibility, to faith; through our particular natures, to the general laws of the universe. And yet, by virtue of reason, we are unfettered masters of ourselves (*nostris juris*)." <sup>589</sup> He argued that "man cannot choose his star, and thus he does not choose his physical and moral nature and his temperament. But he is free to exercise his choice within the limits prescribed by his star. For every constellation contains within its circle a multiplicity of different, even of contradictory possibilities of life, and it leaves the final choice among them open to the

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<sup>586</sup> Baldini (2001), p. 81.

<sup>587</sup> Schabel, Chris. "Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom. Auriol, Pomponazzi, and Luther on *Scholastic Subtleties*" in Russell L. Friedman, Russell (ed.) *The Medieval Heritage in Early Modern Metaphysics and Moral Theory, 1400-1700*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers; 2003, p. 172. On the Italian humanist thought (Pico, Valla, Pomponazzi) about the problem of free will see: Trinkaus, Charles. "The Problem of Free Will in the Renaissance and the Reformation." in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 1949; 10(1):51-62.

<sup>588</sup> Osler, Margaret J. *Divine will and the mechanical philosophy. Gassendi and Descartes on contingency and necessity in the created world*. US: Cambridge University Press; 1994, p. 82.

<sup>589</sup> Cassirer (1983), p. 114.

will.”<sup>590</sup> This means that the sphere of man’s volition and action is rigidly circumscribed, but the direction of his will (towards the higher or lower, the intellectual or the sensible) is not. Born under a certain star, man has to conduct his life under its dominion; but he is free to decide which of the powers and possibilities contained within this star he will develop within himself. Saturn for instance is not only the demon of melancholy, but also the genius of intellectual observation and meditation, intelligence and contemplation. “The same planet can become friend or foe of the man.” Moreover, “according to the intellectual tendencies and aspirations that he allows to flourish and nourishes within him, he can place himself under the influence of one star, now under the influence of another.”<sup>591</sup>

After Ficino, Pomponazzi reasserted the legitimacy of astrological prediction by reconsidering the notion of contingency and future contingents. Contingency, according to Pomponazzi, is not an indication of indifference, in the sense of “the possibility for an effect to be or not to be.” Rather, it refers only to things which happen sometimes and others not, such as meteorological phenomena. If it rains or if it does not rain, both things happen *necessarily*. “Since the human will falls within the ‘universal hierarchy of natural causes’ our intuition of free is an illusion based on ignorance of the true causes of our actions.”<sup>592</sup> Referring to future contingents, he claimed that “insofar as God's predestination relates to the future, it is contingent and undetermined, depending on a human choice not yet made; in this aspect not even God has certain knowledge of it.”<sup>593</sup> The influence of God upon the world is carried out through the influence of the heavenly bodies, and whether we can show exactly how the intermediation works or not is of little relevance; it suffices to know that it exists, that it is *necessary*. The accidental and individual dissolves thus into the necessary and general. This foundation of astrology is dominated “neither by the longing to reach into the future to wrest its secret, nor by empirical observation or mathematical theory.”<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> Cassirer (1983), p. 113.

<sup>591</sup> Cassirer (1983), p. 114.

<sup>592</sup> Osler (1994), p. 82.

<sup>593</sup> Cranz, Edward (bookreview) *Petri Pomponatii Mantuani libri quinque de fato, de libero arbitrio et de praedestinatione. Speculum*. 1959; 34(2), p. 310.

<sup>594</sup> Cassirer (1983), p. 103.

During the Reformation, the question of human free will came under further scrutiny in the eyes of the Protestant thinkers. Luther concluded his debate with Erasmus with the resounding statement that human freedom is incompatible with divine foreknowledge: 'If we believe it to be true that God foreknows and predestines all things, that he can neither be mistaken in his foreknowledge nor hindered in his predestination, and that nothing takes place but as he wills it (as reason itself is forced to admit), then on the testimony of reason itself there cannot be any free choice in man or angel or any other creature.'<sup>595</sup> Calvin's doctrine of election similarly denied human freedom: 'God, whenever he wills to make way for his providence, bends and turns men's wills, even in external things; nor are they free to choose that God's will does not rule over their freedom.'<sup>596</sup> In the Catholic world, the reformers' challenge was tackled in the Council of Trent (1545-63) together with the formulation of a homogeneous doctrine in response to the controversies.

Luis de Molina (1535-1600) suggested in his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina praescientia, providentia, praedestinatione et reprobatione* (1588) that God knows what possible creatures would do in any possible situation. "This 'middle knowledge' theory about counterfactuals of freedom has remained a living theme in philosophy of religion."<sup>597</sup> For Molina, even though God has foreknowledge of what human beings will choose to do, neither that knowledge nor God's grace determine human will; the cooperation (*concursum*) of divine grace with human will does not determine the will to a particular action. This is made possible by God's middle knowledge, which is knowledge in between the knowledge God has of what existed, exists, and will exist, and the knowledge God has of what has not existed, does not exist, and will not exist. Middle knowledge is God's knowledge of conditional future contingent events, namely, of what persons would do under any possible set of circumstances. Thanks to this knowledge, God can arrange for certain human acts to occur by prearranging the circumstances surrounding the choice without determining the human will. Thus, God's grace is concurrent with the act of the will and does not

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<sup>595</sup> Luther *De servo arbitrio*, quoted in Osler (1994), p. 83.

<sup>596</sup> Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion* quoted in Osler (1994), p. 83.

<sup>597</sup> "Future Contingents" in Audi (1999), p. 336.

predetermine it, rendering the Thomistic distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace superfluous.<sup>598</sup>

Molina's treatise was adopted by the Jesuits in the famous controversy with the Dominicans on the relationship between divine grace and human free will. The Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez adopted Molina's views, defending and expanding them in his treatise in response to a request by Pope Clement VIII in 1594. The Dominicans had emphasized divine omnipotence to such an extent that they considered God's decree as imposing itself on people, determining their future actions. Although they argued that this determination does not destroy free will, the Jesuit rejected their argument, adopting instead Molina's view, which attempted to preserve divine omnipotence without sacrificing human freedom. Molina described three kinds of knowledge that God has of future contingents: knowledge of naturally necessary states of affairs; *scientia media* or knowledge of conditional future contingents; and knowledge of his own causal contribution to any state of affairs.<sup>599</sup>

The doctrine of *scientia media* to preserve free will while maintaining the Christian doctrine of efficacy of divine grace was opposed by Thomists such as Bañez, who maintained that God exercises physical predetermination over *secondary causes* of human action. Thus the grace is intrinsically efficacious and independent of human will and merits. One of the theologians who took part in this famous controversy between Molina and Bañez was the Mercedarian Zumel, professor of moral philosophy in Salamanca and master general of the Order (1593-1599). He sent his report to Rome with his personal point of view on the question of the relation between free will and divine grace, proposing that the latter assists free will, which does not suffer from it nor is it conditioned. Zumel has been regarded a free-minded Thomist, and he authored extensive commentaries on Saint Thomas' works.<sup>600</sup> However, in his written defence, our Mercedarian-astrologer did not quote Zumel, but Caietanus's commentaries to the *Summa*. Zumel is mentioned only once, when Friar Nicolás explained the "division of judicial astrology," and its prohibition.

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<sup>598</sup> "Molina" in Audi (1999), p. 580.

<sup>599</sup> Osler (1994), p. 85. See also. Feldhay, Rivka. "Knowledge and Salvation in Jesuit Culture" in *Science in Context* 1, 1987.

<sup>600</sup> *Síntesis Histórica* (1997).

It is divided in meteorological, genethliology, and interrogatory. Meteorological astrology deals with natural causes, and natural effects in the elements, genethliology [deals with natural causes and effects] in men, and interrogatory is the one which deals with every future it is asked about, casting a figure at the time of the question and judging by this figure, without taking nativities into account. The latter, says master Zumel, is forbidden, and I am not certain about any other author [who forbids it].<sup>601</sup>

I want to emphasize here that Friar Nicolás's distinction between these three different kinds of judicial astrologies is key to understand that the terms *natural* and *judicial* astrology are not always accurate enough to describe the contemporary differentiation between licit and forbidden astrology. Friar Nicolás, thus, strategically chose two theological authorities to build up his argument: Zumel, who defended the casting of horoscopes as part of licit astrology; and Caietanus, one of the most *liberal* Catholics in the astrological debate.

Tomasso de Vio Gaetani or Caietanus (1469-1534) was a Dominican cardinal, philosopher, theologian and exegete. He entered the Dominican Order before the age of sixteen. He was appointed as master of sacred theology, and for several years expounded the *Summa*, principally at Brescia and Pavia, to which latter chair he had been called by the Duke of Milan, Ludovico Sforza. In 1501 he was nominated procurator general of his Order and appointed to the chairs of philosophy and exegesis at the Sapienza. In 1507, he was named vicar-general of the Order, and the next year he was elected to the generalship. Ten years later, Pope Leo X made him cardinal. It was the common opinion of his contemporaries that had he lived, he would have succeeded Clement VII on the papal throne. Caietanus' position in the theological debate on astrology was probably one of the most *liberal*. Among all theologians he was the only one who did not regard astrological/astronomical images as mere superstitions.<sup>602</sup> Moreover, his commentaries on Thomas Aquinas and Pierre D'Ailly were

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<sup>601</sup> “Estos son los motivos que a mi corto ingenio le han hecho parecer ser lícito el juicio genethliaco, estoy presto a la obediencia de lo que v. ima. me enseñase como hijo obediente de la iglesia católica romana que lo he sido siempre, soy y seré sujeto a su enseñanza pero porque suele tal vez el modo ser el prohibido aunque el futuro y su conocimiento sea natural diré breve la división de la astrología judiciaria. **Divídese en meteorológica, genethliaca e interrogatoria.** La meteorológica trata de causas naturales y efectos naturales en los elementos, la genethliaca en los hombres y la interrogatoria es aquella que trata de todo futuro de que se pregunta levantando la figura a la hora que le pregunta y juzgando por ella sin atender a nacimientos esta dice el Maestro Zumel que está prohibida su prohibición no me consta más que de este autor.” AGN-370, f. 128.

<sup>602</sup> Rabassini, Andrea. Seminar at the *Istituto di Studi sul Rinascimento*. Florence. 28 October, 2005.

deeply astrological in a strikingly positive manner.<sup>603</sup> The former were officially embraced by the Council of Trent, which did not itself reject astrology in its legislation.<sup>604</sup>

In the catalogue of the Library of the Mercedarian Convent in Mexico City, there is a copy of Caietanus' commentary to the second part of the *Summa* printed in Lyon in 1581, and his *Opera Omnia* printed in the same city and year. Other authors who commented the work of Thomas of Aquinas and are registered in this catalogue are Gabriel Vázquez Bellomontano: *Commentariorum, ac disputationum in primam secundae S[ancti] Thomae tomus primus*, t. I, Alcalá de Henares, 1599, *Commentariorum, ac disputationum in primam secundam S[ancti] Thomae*, t. II, Ingolstadt, 1612; and the Jesuit Francisco Suárez: *Commentariorum, ac disputationum in tertiam partem divi Thomae*, t. II, Madrid, 1598. Unfortunately, the existing catalogue of this Library is not completely reliable, due to the fact that many of the books in the Convent's collection were lost and burned during the religious war in Mexico at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>603</sup> See: Schmitt, Charles. "Thomas Linacre in Italy" in D'Amico *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, John Hopkins University Press, 1991; and Walker, J. P. *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, London, Warburg Institute, 1958. Walker states that 'Cardinal Caietano's commentaries on Thomas' *Summa*...boldly defend the legitimacy of astrological predictions and talisman's against Thomas's condemnation of both'. Quoted in Rutkin (2002), p. 409.

<sup>604</sup> '...in the official edition of Thomas's works, the great Roman edition of 1570, dedicated to Pius V and edited with express regard to the decrees of the council of Trhen.' Walker quoted in Rutkin (2002) p. 409. Caietanus's works, however, were later banned by the Index. See: Claus Arnold "Il progetto d' espurgazione delle opere del Gaetano nelle Congregazioni romane dell'Indice e dell'Inquisizione (1558-1601) in *I Domenicani e l'Inquisizione Romana*, III Convegno Internazionale su "I Domenicani e l'Inquisizione", Pontificia Università di San Tommaso d'Aquino in Urbe, 15-18 Febbraio, 2006.

<sup>605</sup> I haven't found any Catalogue of the Library at the Mercedarian Convent in Guatemala,, but it would be interesting to compare the two collections. Unfortunate too is the fact that those horoscopes or nativities that Fray Nicolás declared to have handed in to the notary of the Holy Office are probably lost.

### 3.4. Resolution: inquisitorial censors in action

On December 14, 1645 the inquisitors of the Holy Office in Mexico City called two Jesuit censors, lecturers at the *Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo*, in order to evaluate the contents of the trial against Friar Nicolás de Alarcón. The Jesuits Baltazar López and Lorenzo de Alvarado took their oaths, and the notary proceeded with the reading of the relevant information contained in the depositions, as well as the confession and defence of the accused.<sup>606</sup> For a better examination, they requested all the charts and other documents regarding astrology that Friar Nicolás have submitted to the Holy Office. The inquisitors handed in a chart of the child don Antonio, son of president Quiñones, together with five notebooks dealing with astrology and the doctrine of Saint Thomas about the subject.<sup>607</sup> After six days the examiners submitted their conclusions before inquisitors Argos and Higuera:

It does not seem that Friar Nicolás performed any astrological judgements which should be condemned or qualified as illicit. However, after reading the documents and charts he cast, it seems that he went too far on reading a lot about such subjects. And it seems that he touched the forbidden because these documents contain some cases regarding free will and contingent events which do not fall within the natural knowledge of Astrology. On the contrary, they are expressly forbidden by Sixtus V's constitution (renovated by Urban VII), which is the north [the guide] of our discourse.<sup>608</sup>

Apart from Sixtus V, the examiners referred to other authorities, such as Saint Thomas, Caietanus, Lessius, and Suárez, in their attempt to mark a clear boundary between licit and illicit predictions. Based on these authorities, they argued, first, that Friar Nicolás's prognostications contained all kind of predictions forbidden by Sixtus V: dignities, royal

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<sup>606</sup> The Jesuit Baltazar López, reader of Holy Scriptures at the College of San Pedro and San Pablo, was appointed as censor of the Inquisition on June 12, 1645. And most likely Lorenzo de Alvarado's appointment took place around the same time. See: Zambrano, Francisco S. I. *Diccionario Bio-Bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México*. México: JUS; 1965, Tomo IV, Siglo XVII (1600-1699), p. 530.

<sup>607</sup> "Los dichos señores inquisidores mandaron entregar una figura que esta con estos autos, tocante a don Antonio, hijo del marqués de Lorenzana y otros cinco cuadernos sueltos tocantes a astrología y doctrina de Santo Tomás en esta materia con que fueron mandados salir de la audiencia". AGN-370, f. 168.

<sup>608</sup> "Aunque por el proceso formado contra Fray Nicolás de Alarcón en razón de haber hecho juicios astrológicos en materias prohibidas no parece realizaba cosa que conocidamente se debiese condenar y calificar por ilícita, pero habiendo leído los papeles y figuras astrológicas que según parece el dicho hizo, digo parece haber excedido de leer [sic, leer] mucho en semejantes materias y haber tocado en lo vedado por contener estos papeles pronósticos de casos tocantes al libre albedrío y otros muy contingentes, que no caen debajo del conocimiento natural de la Astrología, antes expresamente están vedados en la constitución de nuestro muy santo padre Sixto V, renovado por la santidad de Urbano VIII y porque esta constitución ha de ser el norte [la guía] por donde hemos de guiar este discurso...". AGN-370, f. 168.



professions, enlarging fortunes, defeating enemies, accusation before the king, harm against the enemies, winning public and occult controversies, etc. Secondly, that judgements about contingent particular events are illicit because it is impossible for the stars to incline them. They are allowed only when the conjectures are based not merely on the interpretation of the stars but also on the person's temper and other circumstances. According to father Suárez and Tomas of Aquinas, there is no divination in this case, but providence.<sup>609</sup> Saint Thomas also teaches, as Caietanus clearly says, that such conjectures are licit as long as they are not affirmed as truth.<sup>610</sup> Thirdly, that the astrological judgements contained in Friar Nicolás's papers do not belong to this kind of licit conjectures. According to father Lessius, one cannot infer from the temper any particular contingent event, such as marriage.<sup>611</sup>

In the birth-chart of a child, Friar Nicolás said that he would marry twice, that Venus prognosticated three daughters, Mars prognosticated two sons, and the Sun prognosticated that one of them was going to be a prominent person. All these predictions are forbidden by the doctors.<sup>612</sup> Nevertheless, the censors conclude, there is one thing in favour of Friar Nicolás, which is the fact that he always spoke with doubt, saying that the statements are nothing more than conjectures; that everything is subject to the Church's correction; that God is above all; and that free will remains always expressed. Moreover, these words indicate his good disposition and intention because he wrote them before he could presume that such documents could come to this Holy Tribunal. Therefore he deserves clemency and benignity.<sup>613</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> "...semejantes juicios cuando no se toman sólo de los astros sino del temperamento y otras circunstancias no son prohibidos porque entonces no es divinación, sino providencia como enseñan Padre Suárez, Sánchez [?] y Santo Tomás". AGN-370, f. 169v.

<sup>610</sup> "Es verdad que graves doctores enseñan no ser pecado ni cosa ilícita decir semejantes cosas conjeturales como no los afirme de cierto, según se colige de Santo Tomás que claramente lo dice Cayetano". AGN-370, f. 169v.

<sup>611</sup> Léonard Leys, S.I. (Brecht/Anvers 1554-Louvain 1623). I have identified eighteen extant copies of different works by Lessius at the National Library in Mexico City. Two of them preserve the *ex libris* of the Jesuit College of San Pedro y San Pablo: *De perfectionibus moribusque divinis: libri XIV: quibus pleraque sacrae theologiae mysteria breuiter ac dilucidé explicantur* (Antwerp, 1620), and *De providential numinis et animi immortalitate: libri duo ad versus atheos et politicos* (Antwerp, 1623).

<sup>612</sup> "Y también levantando figura de un niño dice será dos veces casado [...] que Venus le pronostica tres hijas, Marte varones dos, Sol uno grande. Todos los cuales pronósticos con semejantes circunstancias ponen los doctores por prohibidos." AGN-370, 169v.

<sup>613</sup> "una cosa favorece a Fray Nicolás y es que siempre hablan con mudo y duda, diciendo es aquello conjetura no más, que pase por discurso, y en todo se sujeta a la corrección de la Santa Iglesia que Dios es sobre todo, que

In general, it is known that the Jesuit position regarding the astrological debate was fundamentally based on the Thomist conciliation of divine providence and free will.<sup>614</sup> As it was stated in Question 95 of the *Summa*, astrology was based on a clear difference between soul and body. Only the material body could be influenced by the celestial bodies, whereas the will and the intellect (being immaterial) could not. However, because men are weak and governed by their senses, and because the celestial bodies do have an influence in the bodily organs (responsible for the senses), there is an influence of the stars in human actions. Following Thomas, the Jesuit theologian Francisco Soares (1605-1659) tackled the limits of planetary influence by stating that human faculties (immaterial) could only be influenced *indirectly* by celestial bodies through the bodily organs (material).<sup>615</sup> This *indirect* influence opens a space for astrological predictions of human actions, and thus the demarcation between licit and illicit prediction seems not to be completely resolved. It is likely that this lack of a clear boundaries between both kind of predictions made the two Jesuit censors call for a third opinion on Friar Nicolás's case.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1646 the Jesuit examiners suggested that, for a more accurate evaluation of the case, they should call an expert on the subject, such as the Mercedarian Friar Diego Rodríguez, professor of Mathematics and Astrology at the University of Mexico.<sup>616</sup> The professor's conclusion was that Friar Nicolás "did not exceed the limits of judiciary astrology", even in the case of nativities, because all judgements were circumscribed within the sphere of natural astrology.<sup>617</sup> Moreover, the papers examined by

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el libre albedrío queda siempre expreso y tanto más seguramente indican estas palabras su buen ánimo e intención cuanto extrajudicialmente las dijo y las puso en sus papeles aún antes de tener presunción de pod

er venir tales papeles a este Santo Tribunal y por esto digno de la benignidad y clemencia de vuestra señoría ilustrísima." AGN-370, f. 170.

<sup>614</sup> On the Jesuits and the astrological debate see: Carolino (2003); Rivka (1987); and Barbuto Gennaro Maria. *Il Principe e l'Anticristo. Gesuiti e ideologie Politiche*, Napoli, Guida Editori, 1994, pp. 107-116.

<sup>615</sup> Carolino (2003), p. 101.

<sup>616</sup> Los calificadores señalan que "sería conveniente que [los papeles que ellos examinaron] los viesen otras personas doctas y ejecutadas en semejantes juicios y figuras para que con más maduro acuerdo los viesen y examinasen. A vuestra Ilustrísima pedimos sea servido de mandar que los dichos papeles se remitan a las personas que fueren servidos y en especial al Padre Maestro Fray Diego Rodríguez, catedrático en propiedad de matemáticas de la Real Universidad de México para que los vea y de su parecer." AGN-370, f. 172.

<sup>617</sup> "Digo pues que el Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón no excede los límites de la judicaria de nacimientos..." AGN-379, f. 175v.

Friar Diego showed that the accused had not incurred into any illicit astrological predictions, such as interrogations.<sup>618</sup> Once again, we can see how the categories of *judicial* and *natural* astrology need to be revised when dealing with astrological practice in the seventeenth century, and when trying to understand the inquisitorial attitude towards this practice. As Friar Diego's examination of his colleague's case shows, it was possible to argue that nativities could be regarded as belonging to natural astrology, as long as they dealt with physical and moral *inclinations*. Furthermore, this examination evidences the fact that the controversies about astrology's legitimacy can be better understood when the different modes of astrological praxis (revolutions, nativities, interrogations, and elections) are taken into account.

In his book *Origenes de la Ciencia Moderna en México*, Trabulse suggests that the request for Friar Diego's examination was actually a strategic move from the Jesuit's in order to protect Friar Nicolás.<sup>619</sup> The friendship of the accused with such a notorious character as could only result in the inquisitors' mercy. I believe, however, that other factors need to be taken into account when trying to explain the outcome of Friar Nicolas' trial. Mainly, I consider that the distance between Guatemala, where the trial started, and México City, where it was concluded, produced a detachment of the case from the specific socio-political context where some hostilities against Friar Nicolás might have been rooted.

On October 10, 1646 the inquisitors issued an act suspending the case, declaring Friar Nicolas's innocence, and warning him about the danger of such practices. From that point onwards the Mercedarian should "refrain from doing birth-charts, or trying to do them through other person, as well as reading books on the subject not even on the licit or on signs, and learning again anything that might deal with the forbidden."<sup>620</sup> Moreover, the inquisitors

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<sup>618</sup> Friar Diego's examination is found in f. 175 and 175v of AGN-370. See full transcription in the documentary appendices.

<sup>619</sup> "Aunque la maniobra para proteger a Alarcón era obvia, a los inquisidores no les quedó más alternativa que aceptar la opinión de los jesuitas." Trabulse, Elías. *Los Origenes de la Ciencia Moderna en México (1630-1680)*, México: FCE; 1994, p. 135.

<sup>620</sup> "...parecen ser unánimes [los votos] y conformes que esta causa se suspendiese y que por lo que resultaba de haber usado el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón de la astrología judiciara y habiéndose de que llevado de su inclinación no diese en este camino mayores deligios se le proveyese el no hacer juicios de nacimiento de personas algunas en adelante ni de tratar de hacerlos por si ni por interpósita persona ni tener libros que en cualquier manera trate de esta facultad aún en lo licito ni en señas ni aprender de nuevo cosa que toque o pueda

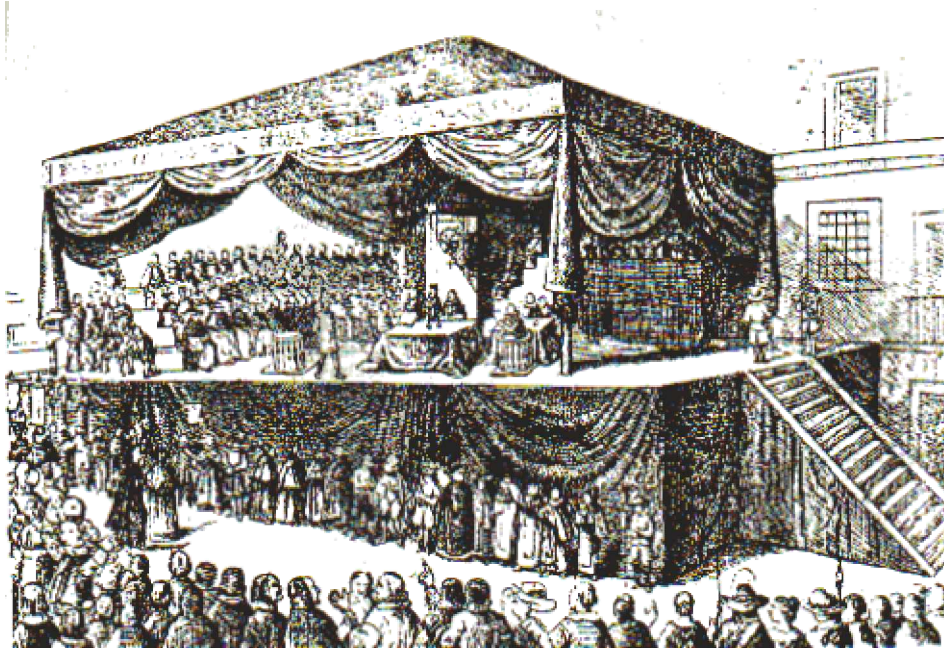
continued, he was not allowed to talk about this subject with anybody, “not only in a narrative way, but neither in a way that shows he has studied it.”<sup>621</sup> It is difficult to assess the exact meaning of this “narrative way” of using astrology, but I would like to conclude this chapter with a reflection on this point. I consider that the inquisitorial trials against astrologers reveal precisely this difference between studying or practicing the learned astrology and talking about astrology to refer to a wide variety of topics: institutional conflicts, changes of power within religious and civil governments, family relationships, self-knowledge and knowledge of the others, weather, love, etc. The following chapters will aim to show some other aspects of both the practice of astrology itself and the narrative way of using it.

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tocar a lo que le prohíbe...” AGN-370, f. 194.

<sup>621</sup> “...y asimismo el poder con cualquiera cosa persona conferir ni tratar no solo por modo narrativo pero ni aun dando a entender que la ha estudiado so pena de que se procederá contra el como contra inobediente a los mandatos.” AGN-370, f. 194.

## Chapter 4. Astrology and the great *Auto* of 1649



On April 11, 1649 the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico City celebrated its most spectacular *auto de fe*. In essence, the *auto de fe* was an exemplary act of public penitence for a committed crime in which the judges proclaimed the magnitude of the transgression and informed the delinquents of the penalty.<sup>622</sup> Its predecessor was the medieval *sermo generalis* (general sermon), which consisted of a ceremony almost always held on a Sunday to allow for a large turnout. It began with a sermon delivered by the inquisitor, who would stop to ask the crowd to shout out its faith. After the sermon the audience was notified of the indulgences granted and the accused of their sentences. The latter abjured their sins, received absolution, and were freed from excommunication. Only recalcitrant heretics were then sentenced to the death penalty and led to the place of execution.<sup>623</sup> This primordial *sermo* gradually evolved into “an elaborate public solemnity, carefully devised to inspire awe for the mysterious authority of the Inquisition, and to impress

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<sup>622</sup> González de Caldas (1987), p. 267. See also: Maqueda Abreu, Consuelo. "El auto de fe como manifestación del poder inquisitorial" in José Antonio Escudero. *Perfiles jurídicos de la Inquisición Española*. Salamanca: Instituto de Historia de la Inquisición de la Universidad Complutense; 1989.

<sup>623</sup> Avilés (1987), p. 251.

the population with a wholesome abhorrence of heresy by representing in so far as it could the tremendous drama of the Day of Judgement.”<sup>624</sup>

The *auto de fe* was conceived in mid sixteenth century by the Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdés as a colorful, flamboyant, spectacular event with the aim of strengthening the Inquisition’s presence. The solemnity of the auto, the place of its performance, and the protocol followed, could vary depending on the number of prisoners, their social and economic position; the nature of the cases; and the type of the sentences.<sup>625</sup> Frequency depended both on the discretion of individual tribunals and on the availability of prisoners. Generally, the ceremony took place on Sundays or holy days in the biggest squares or public space available, in order to attract large crowds. People came from remote districts to attend the event, which was announced a month earlier, together with a threat of excommunication for those who missed it. It could last from early in the morning until nightfall or even several days.

On the eve of the appointed day, the condemned were told that on the following day they would be burned alive, but the Inquisition would assign each of them two priests who would do their utmost to save their souls if they confessed and repented. In such case, they would be strangled instead of burned. At sunrise they were gathered in the hall of the prison and ropes were tied around their necks and arms. The procession began. In the square, the crimes of each person (from the lightest to the most severe) were read out. “From the altar, an appeal was made for the secular arm to show mercy to the guilty. With this formality the Inquisition had done all in its power to save the soul. What happened to the body was not its concern.”<sup>626</sup> Upon completion of the auto, those destined to be burned were taken off by mules to the *quemadero* outside the city.<sup>627</sup> The ritual of the *auto de fe* was performed with few modifications for an entire century after its birth, and it started declining around the mid-

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<sup>624</sup> Avilés (1987), p. 251.

<sup>625</sup> González de Caldas (1987), p. 267.

<sup>626</sup> Anderson (2000), p. 76.

<sup>627</sup> Anderson (2000) pp. 72-76.

seventeenth century. It started moving from the square, to the interior of the Church, then to the cloisters, and finally inside the courtroom.<sup>628</sup>

According to its official chronicler, the Jesuit Matías de Bocanegra (1612-1668), the great Mexican *auto* of the spring of 1649 was, without any doubt, the most memorable *auto* ever celebrated outside the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>629</sup> García Icazbalceta's classic *Bigliografía mexicana del siglo XVI* lists 13 public autos between 1528 and 1595 in which 41 persons were burned alive and 99 in effigy. For the seventeenth century (1574 to 1699), Alberro lists a total of 56 autos.<sup>630</sup> Among other reasons, what made this *Auto* so different was that it involved a significantly higher number of Jews, a total of 109, than previous autos. Thus it is also known as the *Jewish Auto the Fe*.<sup>631</sup>

In the auto of 1605, there was only one Jew among the 35 penitents; in 1606, 16 Jews were pardoned; in the autos of 1607 and 1608 no Jews appeared; in the auto of 1609, one was burned in effigy and another one was committed of bigamy after being acquitted of the suspicion of being a Jew; the auto of 1635 included 22 Jews, but the majority were members of single families; in the auto of 1637 there was only one Jew.<sup>632</sup> Despite the great number of Jews arrested between 1641 and 1644, no auto was celebrated until 1646. There were 48 people in this auto: 2 were priests who had married, 4 bigamists, and one monk who performed sacraments beyond his powers. The remainders were 40 Jews, 24 men and 16 women.<sup>633</sup> In the auto of the following year, 4 suspects of Jewish practices were acquitted

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<sup>628</sup> Bethencourt (1992), p. 159.

<sup>629</sup> *Auto público y general de la fe, celebrado en la muy noble y muy leal Ciudad de México* by Matías de Bocanegra: "la ceremonia resultó imponente; sin duda alguna, el auto de fe más memorable que haya sido celebrado fuera de la península ibérica", quoted in Israel, Jonathan. *Razas, clase sociales y vida política en el México Colonial, 1610-1670* (original title: *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico*. London: Oxford University Press; 1975), trans. by Roberto Gómez Ciriza México, FCE, 1997, p. 248. Seymour Liebman has translated the whole chronicle into English.

<sup>630</sup> Alberro, Solange. *Inquisición y Sociedad en México, 1571-1700* (original title: *Inquisition et Société au Mexique, 1571-1700*, México, Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos), México: FCE; 1998, p. 137.

<sup>631</sup> Liebman, Seymour. *The Jews in New Spain. Faith, Flame and the Inquisition*. Florida: University of Miami Press; 1979. Compare with: García de Proodian, Lucía, 1966. *Los judíos en América: Sus actividades en los virreinos de Nueva Castilla y Nueva Granada, s. XVII*. Madrid, Instituto Arias Montano.

<sup>632</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 205.

<sup>633</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 254.

and 20 were found guilty. Finally, in the auto of 1648, 23 Jews, 15 men and 10 women, appear in the list of the 29 penitents.<sup>634</sup>

Of the total of 109 Jews presented in the auto of 1649, 57 were already dead, 29 abjured, 13 were burned at the stake (7 men and 6 women), 8 had escaped, and 2 were reconciled in effigy, which means that their wish to be taken back into the bosom of the Church was only granted *post mortem*.<sup>635</sup> Of those who were burned only one, Tomás Treviño de Sobremonte, was burned alive.<sup>636</sup> Treviño died thus as a martyr of Jewish faith, contributing to the remembrance of the 1649 auto as the Jewish *auto de fe*.<sup>637</sup> In his chronicle, Matías de Bocanegra stated that, among the Jews presented before the inhabitants of the city during the ceremony, one could identify “the best of [Mexican] Jewry”.<sup>638</sup> Treviño de Sobremonte himself was “one of the more notorious and wealthy *converso* merchants” in New Spain.<sup>639</sup> Simón Vázquez de Sevilla and his wife, Juana Enríquez, captain Antonio Vázquez Castelobranco, captain Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo and Matías Rodríguez de Oliveira were also among the most notorious characters of Mexican Jewry in particular, and Mexican society in general, who participated in this auto.<sup>640</sup>

Sebastian Vázquez de Acevedo was one of the most prominent characters of the Mexican capital at the time, personal friend and conational of the viceroy marches of Villena. He was imprisoned by the Holy Office on October 8, 1645 for *judaizante* and abjured in the auto of 1649.<sup>641</sup> He died in the Hospital of Our Lady (*Hospital de Nuestra Señora*) abandoned by

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<sup>634</sup> Liebman (1979), pp. 256-257.

<sup>635</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 260. According to Israel (1997), 8 Jews were burned and 27 were reconciled (p. 135). Normally, a *reconciliado* was ordered by the Holy Office after confession; he or she was then readmitted to the Faith and punished with his or her loss of property and the wearing of a sanbenito.

<sup>636</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 260.

<sup>637</sup> See: Kohut, George Alexander. "Martyrs of the Inquisition in South America" *American Jewish Historical Society*, 4: 101-87

<sup>638</sup> “Fueron presentados al pueblo muchos judaizantes, parece que unos 40, entre los que se encontraba lo mejor de la judería”, Matías de Bocanegra quoted in Israel (1997), p. 248. Bocanegra’s complete description is included in Alberro (1998), p. 581.

<sup>639</sup> Hordes, Stanley. *The Crypto-Jewish Community of New Spain, 1620-1649. A collective biography*. Tulane University: PhD dissertation; 1980, p. 98. In note 61 the author refers that Treviño’s process is published in the *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, 6, 1935; 7, 1937; 8, 1937. Liebman (1979) also devoted a whole chapter to Treviño’s case.

<sup>640</sup> The letters ‘B’ and ‘V’ are used interchangeably in the documents. To reduce confusion, I chose to use the letter ‘V’ for the family name ‘Vázquez’.

<sup>641</sup> *Memoria del día...* AGN, vol. 387, exp. 11. The term *judaizante* was applied primarily to those who were



everybody, except his former secretary Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos.<sup>642</sup> The latter, in turn, was tried by the Holy Office not for *judaizante* but for being a judicial astrologer.<sup>643</sup> It is his case that will be discussed in this chapter. I will attempt both to relate this particular trial to the broader context of the inquisitorial campaign against Mexican Crypto-Jews during the period 1635 to 1649, and to identify those elements which specifically deal with the problem of astrology and its practice in Mexico City during the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>644</sup>

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Jewish apostates but practiced Judaism secretly. Some had the word ‘dogmatizer’ appended to ‘judaizante’, and were those who sought to bring new Christians back to Judaism. Greenleaf defines it as ‘the term applied to Jewish pseudo-converts to Catholicism who were discovered practicing and teaching the old religion’. See: Liebman, Seymour. “The *Abecedario* and a Check-List of Mexican Inquisition. Documents at the Henry E. Huntington Library” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 1964; 44(4), p. 562.

<sup>642</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 583. See: Guijo, Gregorio. *Diario 1648-1664*. Mexico: Porrúa; 1953, Vol. I, p. 142.

<sup>643</sup> An homonymous of the Mexican astrologer, the Italian Gaspare Ribeiro was tried by the tribunal of the Holy Office in Venice 80 years before. Brian.S. Pullan. “The Inquisition and the Jews of Venice: The case of Gaspare Ribeiro, 1580-1581”, *BJRL*: 62 (1979); and --- *Gli Ebrei D'Europa e l'Inquisizione a Venezia dal 1550 al 1670*. Roma: Il Veltro Editrice; 1985.

<sup>644</sup> There are some controversial issues concerning the persecution of Jews by the Inquisition in both the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish colonial America. We do not attempt here to solve any of these issues, but just to contextualize the case that interests us. Thus I will mainly rely on the two authors who have systematically studied the crypto-Jewish community in New Spain and the inquisitorial campaign of the 1640s: Seymour Liebman, and Stanley Hordes.

#### 4.1. A Judicial Astrologer or a *Judaizante*

In accordance with the procedure, the trial against Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos started with a series of voluntary denunciations after the publication of the general edict of faith issued on February 15, 1650 by the inquisitors Francisco de Estrada y Escobedo, Juan Sáenz de Mañozca, and Bernabé de la Higuera y Amarilla.<sup>645</sup> The first five deponents presented themselves voluntarily before the tribunal to ease their conscience: The *mulatta* Antonia de la Cruz was 25 years old, born in Mexico City, *vecina* (resident) of the slaughterhouse square, and widow of the mulatto Antonio Pardo, butcher.<sup>646</sup> She testified on 29 March, 1650. The tailor Diego Pérez was a 20 year-old single man of Spanish origin, born in Mexico City, and *vecino* of Necatitlán. He also testified on 29 March.<sup>647</sup> Bartolomé Benítez Palomino, the main witness against Rivero, was a 46 year-old tailor, born in Castille, *vecino* of Mexico City, and lived in the street of San Francisco. This was the address of highly elite families, and the place where mulatto street vendors plied their wares among the master silversmiths.<sup>648</sup> He testified twice, on 14 and 30 March.<sup>649</sup> His two sons, Gregorio and Bartolomé, testified on April 4 and 5, respectively.

Among these five deponents, two different groups can be identified: on the one hand, the *mulatta* and the tailor, who had various common acquaintances; on the other hand, Bartolomé Benítez and his two sons, who were Gaspar Rivero's students. The first two depositions were presented on the same day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

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<sup>645</sup> Because it was read in church, an edict of faith gave *heretics* an opportunity to secure absolution by making a confession within 30 days after the reading of the document.

<sup>646</sup> The family name "De la Cruz, followed by *de la Concepción, de los Reyes*", *Antonio*, and *Santiago* were predominant as baptismal names among mestizos, blacks, and mulattos, during this period. See: Cope, Douglas R. *The Limits of Racial Domination. Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; 1994, p. 62. There was another Antonia de la Cruz, born in San Luis Potosí and slave of the crypto-Jews Tomás Nuñez de Peralta and his wife Beatríz Enríquez. See: Alberro (1998), p. 236. Liebman (1964, p. 564) explains that among the mestizos, Negroes, and mulattos, the family names of 'de la Cruz' and 'de la Concepción' were predominant. These were obviously baptismal names given by the officiating priest or monk.

<sup>647</sup> During the ratification, the notary read to the deponent his first deposition to confirm whether it have been written correctly, and to correct or add new information if necessary. After doing the necessary modifications or corrections, the deponent was then officially appointed as witness.

<sup>648</sup> Cope (1994), p. 9.

<sup>649</sup> Alberro (1998, p. 471): "El principal denunciante de Vasconcelos es un odioso malsín, el zapatero Benítez, cuyos dos hijos reciben la enseñanza del mulato, 'de tan mal natural que curioso de todo cuanto be y dicen, los escribe en unos cartapacios'."

They appear to be the kind of neighbour gossiping of informers who take the opportunity “for avenging insults or setting old scores by turning in one’s enemies to the Inquisition.”<sup>650</sup> Antonia de la Cruz, described the time when her husband lost a horse, and somebody told him that a certain Riveros could help him find it. On a different occasion, Rivero helped a tailor called Gaspar Díaz to find a cloth that somebody had stolen from him. Finally, one of her neighbours had also consulted the mulatto in order to find a lost rag. According to the *mulatta*, a tailor called Diego Pérez had told her that the said Riveros had consulted some books and papers in order to find the lost rag. Diego Perez himself testified that the woman who lost the rag was called Gregoria and was married with another tailor called Nicolás Delgado. When the deponent found out what had happened, he remembered that once a *mulatta* called Antonia de la Cruz said that a certain Riveros had found a lost horse that his husband, Antonio Pardo, was missing, together with a cloth which was missing from her neighbour, who was also a tailor. The deponent went to meet the said Riveros the following Saturday, but could not find him, so he came back on Sunday and found him in his room. He told the mulatto that the loss of the rag had happened at 5 in the afternoon. The said Riveros took out some books and drew some circles, and numbers, and then said that the rag was not missing, but had been stolen.<sup>651</sup>

The reference to books, circles, and numbers may have been enough to raise the inquisitors’ suspicion about the illicit practice of astrology. However, one could wonder whether these references were enough evidence to proceed against the mulatto. The fact is that Rivero was not only charged with practicing judicial astrology but also with being a calumniator of the Holy Office and its ministers, and a suspected heretic. The evidence for such charges came mainly from the denunciations of the Benitez family. By contrast to the first witnesses, their depositions did not provide any evidence that could be regarded as a

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<sup>650</sup> Cope (1994), p. 33. The author says that this indeed occurred, but, in general, people belonging to the lower classes of colonial society were reluctant to play the role of informers.

<sup>651</sup> “...le dio cuenta este declarante de la falta del dicho manto y que había pasado a las cinco de la tarde y habiéndole oído a este declarante el dicho Riveros sacó unos libros escritos de mano que tenía allí sobre la mesa de largo de la mitad de un pliego y comenzó a hojearlo y a ver un una hoja tres círculos que había en ella, uno dentro de otro en que había algunos números de cuentas y estuvo mirando allí en un rato y luego hojeó otras dos o tres hojas y vio otros círculos de la misma manera y en medio del dicho círculo había una manchita de tinta y puso el dicho Riveros sobre ella un dedo y le fue corriendo por una raya larga que había hasta el último círculo y dijo a este declarante que el dicho manto no había faltado..” AGN-435, f. 485v.

basis for a case against a judicial astrologer. It is worth noting that the first deposition of Bartolomé Benitez (the father) took place on March 14, before the *mulatta* Antonia de la Cruz and the tailor Diego Pérez presented their denunciations, on March 29. The records, however, do not follow a chronological order, but it seems that the notary tried to underline the astrological issue by placing Antonia de la Cruz and Diego Pérez as the first two witnesses.

Concerning the question of blasphemy and other religious offences, the Benitez family denounced the following misbehaviours: Gaspar Rivero said “Good night” instead of “Good night God gives to you”. He ate meat over the lent arguing that the doctor had advised him to do so, but he gave the name of a doctor who was already dead at the time. He said that praying was not a commandment of God.<sup>652</sup> He said that every religious order had a superior with the power to absolve the members of their order from any kind of crime, ‘even incest’.<sup>653</sup> The kind of misbehaviour described by the deponents was even more suspicious in the case of somebody who, like Rivero, had Portuguese blood. At the time of his trial, the word “Portuguese” was almost a synonym of crypto-Jew or *converso* before the inquisitorial apparatus. The term *crypto-Jew* refers to those baptized as Catholic Christians and living outwardly as such, but secretly practicing Judaic rites and customs.<sup>654</sup> The terms *converso* and *New Christian* should strictly refer to those Jews who actually converted to Catholicism, but more often than not they were all interchangeable. The “damning equation” which involved a complete confusion between religion, race, and nation was: New Christian (*converso*)= Jew (crypto-Jew)= Portuguese.<sup>655</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Saying that mental prayer is more important than vocal or oral prayer is a statement associated with the *alumbrados*.

<sup>653</sup> ‘mire vuestra merced que absuelven hasta de incesto’ the same words are quoted in the depositions of Gregorio and Bartolomé Benítez.

<sup>654</sup> Hordes, Stanley. “The Inquisition as Economic and Political Agent: The Campaign of the Mexican Holy Office against the Crypto-Jews in the Mid-Seventeenth Century” in *The Americas*. 1982; XXXIX(1):23-38.

<sup>655</sup> Silverblatt, Irene. *Modern Inquisitions. Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World*. US: Duke University Press; 2004. On this topic see also: Talmage, Frank. “To Sabbatize in Peace: Jews and New Christians in Sixteenth-Century Portuguese Polemics” in *Harvard Theological Review*. 1981; 74(3): 265-285. Lewin (1967, pp. 38 and 57) exemplifies this “equation” with the case of Juan de León, tried in 1642 and called *Portuguese* by the Inquisitors, though they knew he was not.

Before its integration to the Spanish crown in 1580 Portugal had not expelled the Jews like the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon had done; thus the equation Portuguese equals Jew was a wide-spread misconception.<sup>656</sup> Not only inquisitors, but also viceroys, the general populace, and even the accused themselves confused the terms and used the word *Portuguese* when they referred to a Jew.<sup>657</sup> With the expulsion of *conversos* from the unified kingdom of Castile and Aragon by the Catholic monarchs in 1492 the Jews of Castile were confronted with a dilemma: “receive baptism or go into permanent exile.”<sup>658</sup> Some of these Jews found shelter in Portugal, a kingdom which was initially more tolerant towards Jews. However, from 1496 onward they were also the victims of severe repression in Portugal. Many sought refuge in south-western France, England, the Low Countries, Germany, northern Italy, some countries of the Middle East. Between 1580 and 1640, the period of union between Castilian and Portuguese Crowns, those *conversos* who had stayed in Portugal had the opportunity to return to Castile, where they were considered Portuguese, despite their Castilian origins.<sup>659</sup> In 1628, an Edict was issued allowing Portuguese *converso* bankers to circulate freely and conduct their affairs in Spain. Already since 1580, when Philip II annexed Portugal, the empire received “a prosperous segment of the very population which had been expelled for Spain almost a century earlier.”<sup>660</sup> This means that even before the decree of 1628, New Christians, with and without permission, had been living in Spain. Most of them were merchants who settled in Valencia de Alcántara, Mérida, Cáceres, and other border towns, while others went to Seville with its promise of trade with the New World.<sup>661</sup>

Even though the constraints of *purity of blood* excluded New Christians from obtaining *encomiendas* or even from settlement in Spanish America, *conversos* found

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<sup>656</sup> Troncarelli, Fabio. *La spada e la croce. Guillén Lombardo e l'Inquisizione in Messico*. Roma: Salerno Editrice; 1999, p. 74. The translation is mine: “Dal momento che il Portogallo, prima dell’annessione alla corona spagnola non aveva espulso gli ebrei come aveva fatto il regno di Castiglia e Aragona, l’equazione portoghese eguale giudo o giudaizzante fu un equivoco diffuso.”

<sup>657</sup> Silverblatt, Irene. *Modern Inquisitions. Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World*. US: Duke University Press; 2004. p. 132.

<sup>658</sup> Alberro, Solange. “Crypto-Jews and the Mexican Holy Office in the Seventeenth Century” in Paolo Bernardini (ed.) *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*. New York: Berghahn Books; 2001, p. 173.

<sup>659</sup> Sachar, Howard. “Columbus consulted with Jews, and transported some to the New World.” in *My Jewish Learning.Com*. 1994.

<sup>660</sup> Constance, Rose H. “The Marranos of the Seventeenth Century and the Case of the Merchant Writer Antonio Enríquez Gómez” in Alcalá (1987), p. 55.

<sup>661</sup> Constance (1987), p. 55.

different ways to immigrate to the New World.<sup>662</sup> Portuguese immigrants indeed constituted one of the main components of the white population in Spanish America. Already in the sixteenth and all through the seventeenth century the Portuguese presence was documented from the southern lands of Río de la Plata, through Peru and Nueva Granada, to the north in the New Spain.<sup>663</sup> Permits of exemption were sold and, for the right price, ship captains would disembark New Christian passengers at secret inlets along the Gulf of Mexico, south of Veracruz, or on the Honduran coast. Indeed, the infiltration of *conversos* became an influx once the Spanish throne assumed its rule over Portugal in 1580. At the end of the sixteenth century, there were compelling incentives for those who embarked in Seville for the remote possessions of the Spanish Crown on the other side of the Atlantic. In the early seventeenth century, between three and five thousand Portuguese New Christians might have departed for the New World. In New Spain, as many as two thousand *conversos* settled in Mexico City, Guadalajara, Vera Cruz, Puebla, and Guatemala City. By the 1630s, almost every town in the Spanish Empire sheltered at least a scattering of *conversos*, some of whom migrated as far as New Mexico and Florida.<sup>664</sup>

What motivated the heavy migration of Spanish and Portuguese crypto-Jews to New Spain during the first decades of the seventeenth century was a combination of positive incentives within different spheres. From the religious point of view, one should consider that, compared to Spain and Portugal or even Brazil, New Spain offered an atmosphere of relative toleration for crypto-Jews. In 1618, a zealous inquisitor was sent from Portugal to Brazil. His efforts caused many of the New Christians to seek refuge in other Spanish colonies. Many of them travelled by boat from Brazil to what is now Uruguay, then by foot or horse into Argentina, and then across the pampas and over the Andean cordilleras into Chile. Those who had official licenses left from Valparaiso, while those who were emigrating illegally and planning to land in New Spain without licenses left from Concepción.<sup>665</sup> Moreover, the Tribunal in Mexico City, especially during the first decades of the seventeenth century,

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<sup>662</sup> The grants of *encomienda* were the rights received by the conquistadores to demand labor and tribute from designated groups of Indians.

<sup>663</sup> Lewin, Boleslao. *La Inquisición en Hispanoamérica : judíos, protestantes y patriotas*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Proyección, 1962, p. 139.

<sup>664</sup> Sachar (1994).

<sup>665</sup> Liebman (1979), pp. 189-190.

focused its attention upon minor heresies (witchcraft, bigamy, solicitation, slanderous words) rather than upon the persecution of judaizers. From the economic point of view, the western Indies represented commercial opportunities of which Iberian New Christian merchants were willing to take advantage.<sup>666</sup> The capital of the viceroyalty, together with the big cities like Puebla, and the northern mining camps “held a population that was thirsty for luxury goods and possessed the means to acquire them.”<sup>667</sup> By taking advantage of these opportunities, the crypto-Jews became as prolific in the Americas as in Spain, Portugal, or the Netherlands.<sup>668</sup>

During the first half of the seventeenth century, New Christians of Portuguese origin (both genuine *conversos* and crypto-Jews) were very influential in commerce in the Iberian Peninsula and the New World. “In Portugal and Brazil they are thought to have constituted the essential part of the merchant class.”<sup>669</sup> For the Mexican case, it is important to clear up two points: first, that not all New Christians of Portuguese origin were crypto-Jews; second, that not all merchants were Portuguese New Christians. As Hoberman states, “it is misleading to speak about a monopoly of trade by Portuguese judaizers” in New Spain. In other words, “to say that a small but important group of merchants were judaizers is not to say that colonial commerce was in their hands.”<sup>670</sup>

In general terms, it can be said that the callings of the members of the crypto-Jew community in New Spain (mostly of Portuguese origin, but not only) were no less diverse than in Europe, and that most of their activities were centered on commerce. Those settled in Mexico City or Veracruz engaged in trans-Atlantic trade, importing goods from Spain or slaves from Angola, and exporting Mexican products, such as silver and dyestuffs. Some of them maintained *tiendas* (general stores) or *caxas* (stalls) in the capital of the viceroyalty.<sup>671</sup> The importation of slaves was one of the more lucrative monopolies for several *converso* merchants and, by the 1620s and 30s, Portuguese *converso* bankers had complete control

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<sup>666</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 50.

<sup>667</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 174.

<sup>668</sup> Sachar (1994). On this topic see: Israel. *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1570*. New York: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press; 1985.

<sup>669</sup> Hoberman, Louisa. “Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Mexico City: A preliminary portrait” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 1977; 57(3), p. 496.

<sup>670</sup> Hoberman (1977), p. 499 and 497, respectively.

<sup>671</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 69.

over the trans-Atlantic slave trade. During these decades, New Spain was the market destination of several thousand slaves each year, two-thirds of all the slaves brought from Africa to Spanish America by Portuguese contractors.<sup>672</sup> Andrés de Acosta was the largest factor of the Portuguese slave merchants in New Spain from Angola, Sao Tome, and Cabo Verde.<sup>673</sup> It would be difficult to establish the exact number of blacks who were introduced to Spanish Colonial America during the seventeenth century, but the calculation is around 250 or 300 thousand for the period 1595-1640.<sup>674</sup> It is likely that the Portuguese monopoly right to import African slaves may have favored the chances of Portuguese crypto-Jews residing in Mexico to acquire them; the fact is that many of them owned slaves in domestic service.<sup>675</sup> In Veracruz, these monopolists were represented by crypto-Jewish *factores*, who oversaw the distribution of slaves and the return of the proceeds to Spain.<sup>676</sup> Usually slaving was only engaged in initially by Jewish entrepreneurs, in order to gain entry into Mexico (many of them via Angola) and financial foothold; subsequently, “there was a marked tendency to switch from slaves to textiles.”<sup>677</sup> Some of them, like Don Francisco Tejoso, the most prominent slave-factor, textile importer, and general contrabandist of Veracruz, remained involved in both activities.<sup>678</sup>

The crypto-Jews settled in Acapulco were mainly into Philippine trade, a highly attractive activity because of “the high quality of Far Eastern goods, their cheapness relative to European imports of similar types, and the dominant role of Mexico City merchants in the relations with Manila merchants.”<sup>679</sup> Other crypto-Jew merchants operated between Veracruz and the Caribbean coast of Venezuela, participating in the trade of cacao, which was a highly popular product in both New Spain and Europe.<sup>680</sup> Others were involved with the trade within

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<sup>672</sup> Ferry, Robert J. "Don't Drink Chocolate; Domestic Slavery and the Exigencies of Fasting for Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth Century Mexico" in *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*. 2005; (5).

<sup>673</sup> Hoberman, Louisa. *Mexico's Merchant Elite, 1590-1660*. Durham and London: Duke University Press; 1991, p. 50.

<sup>674</sup> Domínguez Ortiz, Antonio. *La Sociedad Americana y la Corona Española en el siglo XVII*. Madrid. S.f., p. 133.

<sup>675</sup> Ferry (2005).

<sup>676</sup> Hordes (1980), pp. 107-108.

<sup>677</sup> Israel, Jonathan I. *Empires and Entrepreneurs. The Dutch, the Spanish Monarchy and the Jews, 1585-1713*. London: Hambledon Press; 1990, p. 322.

<sup>678</sup> Israel (1990), p. 322.

<sup>679</sup> Hoberman (1991), p. 214.

<sup>680</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 81. On the trade with Venezuela see: Eduardo Arcilla Farías. *Comercio entre Venezuela y*



the northern mining regions, which was one of the more significant areas of commercial activity in which New Spain's crypto-Jews participated. Finally, a considerable portion of the community served as distributors, storekeepers, and craftsmen in the urban centers of the viceroyalty.<sup>681</sup> As Israel explains, the connections with the Philippines, Peru, and Venezuela were fundamental for the development of Mexican commerce in the seventeenth century. Thus it is not surprising that the leading members of the Portuguese-Jewish community in New Spain had widely scattered social and business connections in those regions. What is perhaps striking, he continues, is that they scarcely kept any links with Portugal or Brazil, which indicates that, to a considerable extent, they had broken the bounds with their mother country.<sup>682</sup>

During the first half of the seventeenth century the relationship between the Portuguese Jewish community and the Inquisitors in New Spain was characterized by a precarious balance that broke down after 1640. Before this crucial year some Inquisitors and crypto-Jews knew each other well and their understanding ranged from criminal conspiracies to personal relationships.<sup>683</sup> Not even a denunciation like that of 1622, when the Holy Office in Mexico City was informed of the location of a synagogue just a few streets away from the house of the Inquisition, was able to initiate a campaign against the crypto-Jewish community. According to this denunciation, there were about 500 Jews in the city at the time, who congregated on Saturday mornings in the synagogue on the street of Santo Domingo.<sup>684</sup> In New Spain in particular, and the rest of the Spanish American world in general, the members of this community belonged to the same ruling elite as the Inquisitors, which is one of the reasons why they could coexist more or less harmonically. According to Alberro, it was when the crypto-Jewish community started to be divided along lines of rich and poor that the relationship between the two elites grew more hostile.<sup>685</sup>

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*México en los siglos XVII y XVIII*, México, 1950, p. 24.

<sup>681</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 86.

<sup>682</sup> Israel (1990), p. 327.

<sup>683</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 181.

<sup>684</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 216. According to Alberro (2001, p. 181) the community was probably numbered between 150 and 250 people in the mid seventeenth century.

<sup>685</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 181.

More significant perhaps than this “deep schism” within New Spain’s crypto-Jewish community was the unique economical and political context around the year 1640 together with the role played by certain key individuals, such as Count-Duke Olivares, or Bishop Juan de Palafox, who turned out to be fundamental for the prosecution of *conversos* in New Spain during the mid seventeenth century.<sup>686</sup>

Concerning the economic context, Ferry mentions, first, the crisis in the Atlantic and the Pacific trades, “including the spectacular capture of the entire Atlantic fleet by the Dutch corsair Piet Heyn in 1628, the loss of galleons in 1630 and again in 1640, and the serious interruption of the Asian trade after 1635 in a misdirected and overzealous effort to control contraband at Acapulco.”<sup>687</sup> Secondly, he mentions the increasingly severe competition for native labor due to the continuing decline of the indigenous population, which raised significant Creole criticism against the royal administration. Finally, he points out that the catastrophic series of floods in Mexico City starting in 1629 and the controversy that followed over relief and flood control raised important doubts about the authority of the viceroy, the royal court, and the city council.<sup>688</sup>

As for the political context, the revolts of Cataluña and Portugal in 1640 to obtain their independence from Spain was the spark that started the inquisitorial fire. Many of the Portuguese in Spain and America who supported independence were crypto-Jews. The Portuguese considered Cataluña’s revolt as an opportunity to rise up against the Spanish crown, and tried to convince the Duque Juan de Braganza to declare Portugal’s independence. In Lisbon, the civil servants were the first to support the Braganza House for commercial reasons. The Jesuits also supported this cause, regardless of the Vatican’s hostility. In Rome, the independence of Portugal was dangerous because it could lead to a search for religious autonomy. The restoration movement started on the first of December, 1640 and lasted 28 years.

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<sup>686</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 181.

<sup>687</sup> Ferry, (2005).

<sup>688</sup> Ferry (2005).

After the separation of Portugal from Spain, the situation worsened for Portuguese bankers and merchants. “Long accused of having allegiance to no country (indeed, many were thought to have come to Spain solely to migrate legally to the New World), Portuguese -some 120,000 of them- began leaving Spain. Some returned to Portugal and others fled to France, a country also at war with Spain.”<sup>689</sup> The news about the revolution in Lisbon was sent from Madrid to New Spain by a *Real Cédula* of January 7, 1641. The viceroy Escalona was instructed to carry out certain precautionary measures, such as stopping the admittance of more Portuguese, investigating recent Portuguese arrivals, and prohibiting the presence of Portuguese ships in the ports. It was established that, in principle, the Spanish government had no intention of expelling its Portuguese subjects, unless there was a special reason to doubt their loyalty to the Crown.<sup>690</sup>

It was not until the autumn of 1641 that the Portuguese question became a serious issue for both secular and ecclesiastical authorities in New Spain. This was mainly due to the circulation of reports of recent Portuguese uprisings in other regions of Spanish America: “the revolt of Madeira and Brazil against Spanish authority, wild rumours telling of the slaughter of 3 thousand Castilians in Brazil, and wildly exaggerated reports of the so-called Portuguese conspiracy at Cartagena, the relatively nearby Spanish stronghold in the Caribbean.”<sup>691</sup> According to the *visitador-general* and bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox, ‘New Spain was confronted with a real danger of Portuguese subversion for the Portuguese were numerous in the viceroyalty, wealthy, fired by the example of their compatriots in Brazil and Cartagena, well-known for their finesse and subtlety in all illicit and secret dealings...’<sup>692</sup> There is no evidence that the Portuguese in New Spain were actually conspiring against the Crown; however “there are a few signs that at least some of the Portuguese Jews in Mexico did sympathize to some degree with the Portuguese national movement”<sup>693</sup> The exaggeration of the Portuguese threat by Palafox might have been due to

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<sup>689</sup> Constance (1987), p. 57.

<sup>690</sup> Israel (1990), p. 312-13.

<sup>691</sup> Israel (1990), p. 313.

<sup>692</sup> Israel (1990), p. 313. Palafox concluded by saying: ‘y están llenos de esclavos y otros dependientes y finalmente no solo en esta ciudad sino en la tierra adentro tienen todo el poder que basta para hacer embarazo a la seguridad de estos reynos’. Left in original by the author.

<sup>693</sup> Israel (1990), p. 329.

his own agenda of undermining Madrid's confidence in the viceroy Escalona.<sup>694</sup> However, our interest here is to point out the reasons why the Holy Office in Mexico City started the persecution of Portuguese New Christians, even though these reasons might have also been fabrications in order to achieve goals that were not strictly religious.<sup>695</sup>

The inquisitorial campaign against the crypto-Jewish community in New Spain began in 1641, when Gaspar de Robles, who had been introduced by his uncles to Judaism in Angola, changed his creed and, as a sincere Catholic, denounced others as practicing Jews (*judaizantes*).<sup>696</sup> Gaspar de Robles was born in 1609 in San Vicente de la Vera, Portugal and he was a member of the large López-Méndez-Enríquez family, one of the most severely persecuted by the Holy Office.<sup>697</sup> The matriarch of the family was Doña Blanca Enriquez, mother of Simón Vázquez de Sevilla and one of the main spiritual guides of the Jewish community in New Spain until her death in 1642.<sup>698</sup> Though fundamental, Gaspar de Robles' denunciation was only the spark of a crisis which had already been gestating during the previous months. The explosion, as mentioned above, had multiple causes.

It is worth underlining that the complexity of the political context around the year 1640 intensified some of the anxieties that the Jewish presence in the New World had generated in the Inquisitorial imagery from the very beginning. In Spanish Colonial America, the image of New Christians was a mixture of old stereotypes (commercial advantage, perfidy, hatred of Christians, and extraordinary manipulation of language) and new fears: "New Christians usurped trade and merchandising to the detriment of Castilians; New Christians, because of their international ties, were not loyal to the Spanish empire; New Christians were plotting with the potentially subversive groups within the colony (Indians and blacks); finally, New Christians were able to ally themselves with these 'enemies within' because of a remarkable ability to conspire in secret languages."<sup>699</sup> The Holy Office, in its

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<sup>694</sup> Israel (1990), p. 314.

<sup>695</sup> As Liebman, and Hordes suggest.

<sup>696</sup> AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 390, exp. 11. Quoted in Uchmany, Eva Alexandra. "New Christians and Crypto-Jews in Spanish America" in Bernardini (2001), pp. 187-201.

<sup>697</sup> Lewin, Boleslao. *La Inquisición en México: impresionantes relatos del siglo XVII*. Puebla, Mex.: Biblioteca Cajica de Cultura Universal; 1967, p. 20. The author transcribes some parts of Robles's denunciation.

<sup>698</sup> Lewin (1967), p. 29.

<sup>699</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 144.

role of the Crown's right hand for the preservation of social order, could not remain silent faced with such a threat. "Its job was to protect the viceroyalty from enemies within, from the heretics -fraudulent *beatas*, witches, blasphemers, bigamists, adulterers, and hidden Jews- who would undermine the Spanish empire and civilization, one and the same."<sup>700</sup> Moreover, the Mexican inquisitors had received reports on some alarming events that had taken place outside New Spain. In Lima, between 1635 and 1639, the tribunal of the Holy Office, commanded by Andrés Juan Gaitán, arrested over one hundred people for plotting to secretly practice Judaism. Those convicted for participating in this *Complicidad Grande* (Great Conspiracy) "were punished in Peru's bloodiest and most dramatic *auto de fe*".<sup>701</sup> Eleven of them were tied to the stake and burned alive, while fifty two were whipped, publicly shamed and exiled. The violence of such an event echoed in the rest of the Continent, and "the anxiety experienced by the crypto-Jewish community turned to panic by late spring of 1642."<sup>702</sup>

The arrests in Mexico City began on July 12, 1642, one month after Juan de Palafox, "armed with a cédula appointing him viceroy, forced Escalona to step down from office before his normal term expired."<sup>703</sup> Israel has suggested that the fact that the arrests started only after Escalona was removed from his seat could be a confirmation of the fact that the viceroy was protecting the Portuguese community from inquisitorial scrutiny.<sup>704</sup> The night of the 12<sup>th</sup> of July agents of the Inquisition apprehended 7 persons, and 30 more the following night.<sup>705</sup> In 1646, the Holy Office apprehended 40 Jews, and in his *relación* of the auto inquisitor Estrada y Escobedo wrote that 'New Spain was boiling with Hebrews, who

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<sup>700</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 90.

<sup>701</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 31, and Troncarelli (1999), p. 186. During the period 1570 to 1635, the tribunal of Lima sentenced 84 judaizers, of which 62 were Portuguese. See also: Castañeda (1989), p. 431.

<sup>702</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 137.

<sup>703</sup> Hoberman (1977), p. 488.

<sup>704</sup> Israel (1997), p. 217. En 1642, con Palafox en el gobierno, la Inquisición descubrió la *complicidad grande* (la principal red de grupos criptojudíos en México) y el 13 de julio comenzó una serie de detenciones que continuaron durante 3 o 4 años con un total de 150 judíos arrestados. El descubrimiento de dicha comunidad precisamente en ese año abre la siguiente pregunta: "es posible que el duque de Escalona, quien favoreció por lo menos a algunos cristianos nuevos y portugueses, especialmente a Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo y Matías Rodríguez de Oliveira, y él mismo también tenía en las venas algo de sangre de cristianos nuevos, haya detenido la labor de la Inquisición, o fomentado su inactividad cuando ésta se hallaba bajo la dirección del corrompido inquisidor mayor Marcos de Bohorquez; y si en cambio Palafox, más de acuerdo con la opinión popular, más puritano y riguroso anti-portugués, permitió que la Inquisición actuara o por lo menos la alentó a ello."

<sup>705</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 141.

imitated Catholic actions outwardly by dissimulating with continuous lies; [they were] cruel people, whose hate against all nations of the world, if one could take away the mask with which they hide themselves, with how many atrocities will the volcano of their implacable hate erupt.’<sup>706</sup> In 1647, 21 Jews were apprehended and 40 more the following year.<sup>707</sup> Warrants for the arrest of many more were issued by the Inquisition, but the suspects had either died or escaped the agents.<sup>708</sup> According to Liebman, in the four autos de fé celebrated between 1646 and 1649, a total of 212 judaizantes appeared (either in person or en estatua) to be publicly penanced.<sup>709</sup> Uchmany states that “more than 188 judaizantes” were displayed and punished during these autos.<sup>710</sup> The first half of the seventeenth century can thus be considered as the period of the most intense persecution against crypto-Jews in New Spain; however, trials against judaizantes continued well into the end of the century.<sup>711</sup>

Within this context of high political and religious tension, it was essential for *conversos* to comply with the strictest and most public Catholic obligations (such as baptism, mass, confession, taking communion on Easter, and extreme unction) in order to appear as good Christians and wipe away inquisitorial suspicions. “Moreover, it was helpful for one’s image to participate in Holy Week, processions, to carry a rosary, to have one or another religious paintings and a crucifix at home, and to remember to utter the appropriate sacred formulas at the ends of certain sentences, for example when someone sneezed.”<sup>712</sup> On the other hand, any behavior which seemed to contradict such Catholic obligations was enough to raise suspicions about the faith’s genuineness. Not saying “Good night God gives to you” or eating meat over the lent could be regarded as insignificant offences, but not when the person in question had a double stain in his blood: Portuguese, and black.

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<sup>706</sup> Estrada y Escobedo *Relación Sumaria del auto particular de la fe*, abril de 1646, en DHCM, XXVIII, p. 18. Quoted in Israel (1997), p. 135. The translation is mine: ‘Hervía México y la Nueva España de hebreos que disimulando con una continua mentira su perfidia imitaban en lo exterior las acciones católicas; gente cruel, cuyo aborrecimiento a todas las naciones del mundo, si se pudiese quitar la máscara con que impaciente se encubre, con cuántas atrocidades no desahogara el volcán de su implacable odio.’

<sup>707</sup> Israel (1997), p. 135.

<sup>708</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 141.

<sup>709</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 146.

<sup>710</sup> Uchmany (2001), p. 198.

<sup>711</sup> Lewin (1967), p. 66. The author presents the case against Fernando de Medina, a French Jew who was processed in 1690.

<sup>712</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 177.

The case against Gaspar Rivero, officially tried by the Holy Office because he practiced judicial astrology, started only one year after the celebration of the Great *Auto de fe*. He was a “free mulatto, student of canon law, descendent of Portuguese, and natural of Tangier,” the only Portuguese colony which remained loyal to the Spanish Crown after the uprising of Portugal in 1640. His Portuguese origins made him immediately suspicious for the Holy Office, especially in the years after the inquisitorial campaign against the crypto-Jewish community. His being *mulatto* put him in a more vulnerable position, an easier target for inquisitorial attacks.<sup>713</sup>

In Colonial Spanish America, all men and women brought before the tribunal of the Holy Office were asked to define themselves in terms of the formal categories of state (name, age, place of birth, marital status, and social standing) and in terms of their caste and lineage. The system of caste was a hierarchical ordering of racial groups according to their proportion of Spanish blood.<sup>714</sup> In the seventeenth century, this *casta y generación* usually referred to Indian, Negro, and Spanish, as moderated by the ‘mixed breeds’ (mainly mulatto and *mestizo*), “who didn’t fit the original colonial plan.”<sup>715</sup> Spanish and partly Spanish *mestizos* and mulattos were also required to specify the nature of their Spanish ancestry, especially whether it was an Old or a New Christian ancestry.<sup>716</sup> “In theory, one’s place in the racial hierarchy was based on lineage; in reality, few except for the most elite families could trace their ancestry back for several generations.”<sup>717</sup> The presumption was that race followed from descent, which was rather a functional or pragmatic way of defining race than a theoretical categorization.<sup>718</sup>

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<sup>713</sup> The term ‘mulatto’ is derived from the Arabic *muwallad*, which originally referred to persons who were not ‘genuine’ Arabs, especially individuals born of black–white ‘misalliances’. With the beginning of the transatlantic African slave trade in the fifteenth century, the word mulatto first found its way into Portuguese, and then into almost all European languages, as the term for offspring of mixed Caucasian and Negroid parentage. The social position of these ‘half-breeds’ varied from place to place and over time. See: Peter Martin “mulatto” in *The Oxford Companion to the Body*. Ed. Colin Blakemore and Sheila Jennett. Oxford University Press, 2001.

<sup>714</sup> Cope (1994), p. 24.

<sup>715</sup> Silverblatt (2004) p. 121. She mentions some earlier studies of race and cast in colonial Latin America, such as: Schwartz, “Colonial Identities and the Sociedad de Castas”. Cadena. *Indigenous Mestizos*, and Poole *Vision, Race, and Modernity*.

<sup>716</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 121.

<sup>717</sup> Cope (1994), p. 24.

<sup>718</sup> Cope (1994), p. 57.

Scholars have long used inquisitorial trials for research on racial differentiation within the New Spain, though not always with the same results.<sup>719</sup> Alberro's work shows that the number of inquisitorial cases against blacks decreased during the seventeenth century while the cases against mulattoes increased, which could be explained by the active racial mixing between Negroes and Spanish or *mestizos*.<sup>720</sup> At the beginning of the century, according to Israel, there were approximately three times more mulattoes than blacks in New Spain, and the sum of both has been estimated at one hundred and forty thousand.<sup>721</sup> The information provided by the inquisitorial records presents a variety of occupations among the members of this social group: from domestic service, to sugar plantation, agricultural *hacienda*, or urban textile workshops.<sup>722</sup>

According to the accusers, Gaspar Rivero was able to speak "African languages," which was not only a wide-spread stereotypical characteristic of Jews, but also an instrument for conspiring in and outside the Inquisitorial cells. Gregorio Benitez, for instance, said he heard Rivero himself saying he had been to Angola and was proud of knowing "the languages of the blacks, particularly one which is the most general, like the one of the Indians in Mexican territory."<sup>723</sup> Most verbal communications between the crypto-Jews inside the cells were done in Angolan, a language they learned through the slave-trade and domestic services.<sup>724</sup> The case that was being presented before the inquisitors seemed not only like heresy but also like potential social disorder. Not only were his religious practices suspicious, but he also sympathized with Jews who had been previously persecuted by the Holy Office, such as Sebastián Vázquez, Fernando Moreno, and Luis de Olivera.<sup>725</sup>

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<sup>719</sup> Cope (1994, p. 52) contrasts Aguirre Beltrán's confirmation of the correlation between a person's physical appearance and his racial label with Dennis Valdés's conclusion (also based on inquisitorial sources) that 'there were no clearly defined standards which determined race'. See: Aguirre Beltrán, G. *La población negra de México, 1519-1810*, México, FCE, 1946, and Dennis Nodin Valdés. *The decline of the Sociedad de Castas in Mexico City*. PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978.

<sup>720</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 455.

<sup>721</sup> Israel (1997), p. 76, referring to Aguirre Beltrán (1946).

<sup>722</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 460.

<sup>723</sup> "...y le ha oído este declarante decir al dicho Riveros que ha estado en Angola y se precia de saber las lenguas de los negros y en particular una que es la más general como aquí en esta tierra la mexicana de los indios..." AGN-435, f. 499v.

<sup>724</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 469.

<sup>725</sup> Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo was the guarantor of both Fernando Moreno, and Luis de Olivera. See: *Juan de Morales contra los bienes de Luis de Olivera, Fernando Moreno como principales y Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo como su fiador por 4 mil mesos de oro común* (1645), . AGN; Real Fisco de la Inquisición, Vol. 41, exp. 11, f.



As noted above, Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, Rivero's employer, was one of the most prominent figures of the Portuguese crypto-Jewish commercial elite of New Spain. He was the religious leader of one of the three main factions of the Crypto-Jewish community. The most orthodox group was led by Tomás Treviño de Sobremonte, while the less orthodox were led by Simón Vázquez Sevilla. Those who were "almost assimilationist" were led by Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, son of Felipe Vázquez de Acevedo and Leonor de Acevedo, who had been tried by the Inquisition in Lisbon.<sup>726</sup> Sebastián secretly practiced Judaism inside his house, which served as a meeting place for his adherents. In his trial before the tribunal in Lima, Luis Valencia testified that he and his son (Juan de Acosta) went to Mexico in the 1630s and had a room in the home of 'Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, another Portuguese *judaiizante*, and that the house was on the street Santa Teresa and that father and son stayed for a month and a half.' They were acting as commercial agents for Manuel Bautista Pérez in his dealings with Sebastián Vázquez and during their stay at his house they practiced Jewish rituals.<sup>727</sup> While he was still single, Vázquez de Acevedo had intimate relations with the crypto-Jewish sisters María and Isabel de Campos.<sup>728</sup>

Outwardly, however, Vázquez de Acevedo participated in Catholic ceremonies. For sixteen years he attended the Convent of the Barefoot Franciscans of Saint Isabel on Holy Thursday and carried the royal standard in the religious procession.<sup>729</sup> He was married to a renowned Catholic, Doña Lorenza de Esquivel, daughter of Francisco de Esquivel Castañeda, one of the most politically powerful and wealthy merchants in Mexico City.<sup>730</sup> The marriage took place in 1639, and Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo received a significant dowry of more than 25 thousand pesos from his mother in law, Doña Margarita de Covarrubias.<sup>731</sup>

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128-139.

<sup>726</sup> Liebman, Seymour. *New World Jewry, 1493-1825: Requiem for the Forgotten*. New York : KTAV Publishing House; 1982, p. 62

<sup>727</sup> Liebman (1982), p. 63. See also: AHN, Inq. leg, LIMA, 1647, No. 12, fol. 40.

<sup>728</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 422.

<sup>729</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 230.

<sup>730</sup> Liebman (1982), p. 62. According to Alberro (1998, p. 423), Doña Lorenza de Esquivel was an ugly, but rich old Christian. Vázquez de Acevedo "se casó con una cristiana vieja –fea y de edad madura ciertamente- pero rica y emparentada con una familia muy afamada."

<sup>731</sup> *Carta de Dote que entregó Sebastián Vaz de Acevedo en favor de Doña Lorenza de Esquivel su mujer de 35U151 pesos de oro común*. 1639. AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 3, f. 6-10.

According to Hoberman, between 1591 and 1642, two-thirds of the Mexican merchants received dowries worth 20 thousand pesos or more, which was at the time the equivalent to the entire estate of a well-to-do person.<sup>732</sup>

The reason why Doña Lorenza and her family never came to suspect Sebastián's real faith is unclear. Liebman suggested that Doña Lorenza "may have been sympathetic to his faith, she having been a devoted wife, or she may have detested the Tribunal, thus pretending to be unaware of his real religious affiliation."<sup>733</sup> Vázquez de Acevedo was not the only prominent crypto-Jewish merchant who married a wealthy Catholic. His fellow, Rodrigo Serrano, had also married an illustrious Catholic woman, related with a viceroy, with inquisitors, and other powerful families.<sup>734</sup> It is not surprising that this kind of marriage represented an advantageous contract for both parties. Not only was it a means of protection for Vázquez de Acevedo against religious persecution, but it was also a strategy for keeping the stability of both fortunes. Passing the business on to a member of the immediate family or an outsider recruited into the family were two basic strategies for maintaining "a stable community which could transmit profits, managerial skills, and entrepreneurial values."<sup>735</sup>

Thus, despite the religious differences, it is very likely that the relationship between the Esquivel and the Vázquez families was a cordial and peaceful one until the time of the Great Auto de Fe.<sup>736</sup> It was in February 1649, a couple of months before the Auto was celebrated, that Doña Lorenza started taking some preventive measures which were probably meant to allow her to cope with the turbulent times coming. She signed a document in order to entrust all her financial power to her brother Don Joseph de Esquivel Castañeda and to the attorney

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<sup>732</sup> Hoberman (1991), p. 66.

<sup>733</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 229. Lorenza de Esquivel divorced Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo after the great auto of 1649. See: *Lorenza de Esquivel y Castañeda contra su marido el capitán Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, sobre que se haga preparación y divorcio perpetuo de su matrimonio por las causas que contienen su demanda* (1649). AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2.

<sup>734</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 424. The translation is mine. Rodrigo Serrano también "tomó por mujer a otra dama madura y de casa ilustre, vinculada con un virrey, con inquisidores y diversas familias poderosas y antiguas."

<sup>735</sup> Hoberman (1977), p. 495.

<sup>736</sup> Written in an affectionate tone, a letter from Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo, Sebastián's brother, to his sister-in-law seems to confirm this idea of a cordial relationship. See: *Doña Lorenza Esquivel, mujer de Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, pide se le entreguen mercancías que le envió su cuñado Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo de Manila* (1646). AGN; Real Fisco de la Inquisición, vol. 42, exp. 22, f. 336-338.

Fernando Olivares de Carmona.<sup>737</sup> It was the latter who, eleven days after the celebration of the Auto, sued Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo before the archbishop of Mexico City, Juan de Mañozca. Doña Lorenza's representative argued that the divorce from Sebastián Vázquez was compulsory after he had been regarded by the Holy Tribunal as a suspected heretic. Moreover, he demanded the restitution of the whole dowry.<sup>738</sup> Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo was defended by Juan de Rivera Diego Flores Cabezas, who claimed that there was no legal basis for requesting neither the divorce, nor the restitution of the dowry since Sebastián Vázquez was not a condemned heretic, but only a suspected and afterwards reconciled one.<sup>739</sup> Finally, he claimed that Doña Lorenza was acting under pressure of some of her relatives, who would be financially benefited from the divorce.<sup>740</sup> The legal battle continued all through the year 1649, until the archbishop issued his final sentence in favour of Doña Lorenza on January 11, 1650. The marriage was separated *quo ad thorum et mutuum cohabitationem* and Sebastián Vázquez was compelled to reconstitute the 25 thousand pesos of the dowry.<sup>741</sup> The sentence was confirmed on appeal by the bishop of Puebla Juan de Palafox, and doctor Juan de Merlo, canonical of the city's cathedral.<sup>742</sup>

Sebastián Vázquez and his brother, Captain Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo, were both engaged in the Pacific trade. While Antonio was established in Manila, Sebastián was settled

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<sup>737</sup> *Poder de Doña Lorenza Esquivel a su hermano Don Joseph de Esquivel Castañeda y a Fernando Olivares de Carmona procurador de la Real Audiencia* (1649). AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2, foja 5.

<sup>738</sup> *Doña Lorenza de Esquivel y Castañeda contra su marido el capitán don Sebastián Baz [sic] de Acevedo, sobre que se haga preparación y divorcio perpetuo de su marido por las causas que contienen su demanda* (1649). AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2, folios 12-14, 21-22.

<sup>739</sup> Diego Flores Cabeza: "los doctores teólogos, canonistas y juristas de Castilla respondieron a favor del matrimonio de los maridos convencidos de herejía, si bien reconciliados después por el Santo Oficio [...] supuesto que la sospecha vehemente que dio causa a la condenación de mi parte no fue bastante a su sujetarle al rigor de la pena ordinaria, como ni tampoco a los efectos que produce contra los declarados herejes". AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2, f. 29v.

<sup>740</sup> "De que resulta haber sido el primer auto involuntario o ya por dicha razón o también por otras que pudo ocasionar el tiempo o la persuasión de los deudos, parientes u otras personas, de quienes tiene dependencia la dicha Doña Lorenza". AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2, f. 22

<sup>741</sup> "...hacemos separación y divorcio del matrimonio contraído entre la dicha Doña Lorenza Esquivel de Castañeda y dicho Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, *quo ad thorum et mutuum cohabitationem* para que estén y vivan cada uno de por sí separadamente, con toda honestidad, recato y buen ejemplo como deben y son obligados [...] Y le condenamos a que dentro de 10 días primeros siguientes que corran desde la notificación de esta nuestra sentencia dé y pague, vuelva y restituya a la dicha Doña Lorenza de Esquivel 25,150 pesos de oro común..." AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 2, f. 41v.

<sup>742</sup> *Carta de Justicia contra el licenciado Don Antonio Rodríguez Carvallo sobre el divorcio solicitado por Doña Lorenza de Esquivel y Castañeda, de su matrimonio con el Capitán Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo* (1650). AGN; Bienes Nacionales, Vol. 114, exp. 3, foja 1v.

in Mexico City and from there he made large investments in the Pacific cacao trade. Cacao firstly became a popular beverage among the Creoles, and, by the 1630s, among European middle-class consumers. Within New Spain cacao was grown near the Pacific coast (Colima, Purificación, Acapulco, Huatulco, Zacatula), southern Veracruz, Tabasco, Northern Oaxaca, and Soconusco. By the 1570s, however, the chief centers of production had moved southeast in Guatemala to Izalcos. From the 1610s, Guayaquil began exporting the bean, followed by Venezuela from the 1620s, “so that cacao’s role in the colonial Mexican economy was in part as a domestic crop, in part as an import.”<sup>743</sup> The Crown unsuccessfully attempted to tax cacao and to restrict its trade to Mexico City from Guayaquil and Lima. Mexico City Merchants, such as Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, Cristóbal Bonilla Bastida, and Antonio Urrutia de Vergara, were active in the Pacific coast trade cacao with Guayaquil and Lima after 1634, precisely when all trade between the viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru was prohibited.<sup>744</sup>

Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo was, together with Simon Vázquez de Sevilla, the most prominent Mexican Portuguese New Christian entrepreneur connected to the Manila trade.<sup>745</sup> By the 1620s and 30s, almost a dozen New Christian merchants found themselves in Manila.<sup>746</sup> “While Philippine shipments included such exotica as alligator teeth capped with gold, fabric constituted the staple item. Inventories of stock from the 1630s and 1640s show a predominance of silks, linens, satins, damasks, and cottons.”<sup>747</sup> One of the differences between the Pacific and the Atlantic trade was that considerably fewer people were involved in the former, and they were more likely to be professional merchants. According to Hoberman, the number of large investors in the Manila trade ranged from 43 in the 1590s to 3 in the 1650s; depending on the decade, they made up between 44.4 and 10.5 percent of total investors.<sup>748</sup>

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<sup>743</sup> Hoberman (1991), p. 119.

<sup>744</sup> Hoberman (1991), p. 127. See: AGI, Mexico, 32, 28 September 1635, ff. 646

<sup>745</sup> Two classics on the Manila trade are: Pierre Chaunu. *Les Philippines et Le Pacifique des Iberiques* (Paris, 1960) and William Lytle Shurz. *The Manila Galleon* (New York, 1939), p. 155.

<sup>746</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 78.

<sup>747</sup> Hoberman (1977), p. 492.

<sup>748</sup> Hoberman (1991), p. 39.

In Manila, Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo “served not only as importer and exporter, but also as a creditor of many vice regal and ecclesiastical officials.”<sup>749</sup> He commanded an infantry detachment in Mexico City and held other offices, subsequently becoming *alcalde mayor* of Pampanga in the Philippines.<sup>750</sup> The Pacific was infested with ships hostile to Spain, and cargoes destined for Manila and Acapulco were often attacked by the enemy. During one of his voyages in 1645, Antonio Vázquez and a shipment of merchandise were captured by a hostile Dutch ship, and taken to what now is Djakarta. Two years later he was still a prisoner in the Dutch jails and it is unknown whether he ever returned to New Spain. Captain Vázquez de Acevedo was captured on the ship *Nuestra Señora de Eguía*, which was taking him to Manila, where he was expected to board the *Nao* to Acapulco. According to one of the assistants [*ayudante*] of the ship, Francisco López de Chávez, they were attacked by three Dutch ships and two smaller boats; Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo was captured together with Joan de la Padre [*condestable*], and three Indian rowers.<sup>751</sup> In a letter dated December 1647, Antonio Vázquez informed the inquisitors of Mexico City about his imprisonment by the “Dutch enemy”, and expressed his intention to present himself before the tribunal as soon as he could go back to New Spain, which would take him approximately 4 years.<sup>752</sup> In 1648, however, the Holy Office tried him *in absentia* for *judaizante*, labeling him as a fugitive.<sup>753</sup> According to the report on Mañozca’s visit to the Mexican Tribunal, Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo was not captured by the Dutch in 1645, but deliberately sailed to the Dutch colony in order to escape arrest by inquisitorial authorities.<sup>754</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 80.

<sup>750</sup> Israel (1990), p. 325.

<sup>751</sup> *Proceso contra Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo, ausente fugitivo hereje judaizante en la Ciudad de Lisboa en el reino de Portugal*. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 430, exp. 7, f. 493v. “...prosiguiendo el viaje con ánimo de tomar la nao que era la orden que llevaba estando una legión del puerto sin por ello prevenir le envistieron tres lanchas y dos embarcaciones pequeñas de holandeses y un champan [sic] por la popa tirándole muchos versos y mosquetazos y habiendo tomado las armas para defenderse y ordenando al condestable le cogió el enemigo dentro de la misma embarcación por lo cual le fue forzoso a este declarante echar su arcabuz a la mar y echarse al agua y lo mismo hizo Joseph Cornejo artillo que al presente están en cabite [sic] y por este accidente el enemigo holandés descosió la dicha embarcación con todo lo que en ella estaba y así se llevó dicho pliego que estaba debajo de escotilla y a Antonio Vázquez de Acevedo y a Joan de la Parada condestable y a tres indios remeros que los demás escaparon a nado...”

<sup>752</sup> “...se han de pasar más de dos años y aún tres de [...] hacerle por los vecinos de Castilla por donde con ayuda de [me...] dentro de un año estaré en esa ciudad ante Vuestra Señoría donde me presentaré...” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 430, exp. 7, f. 482.

<sup>753</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 79. See the complete process in: AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 430, exp. 7, f. 466-494.

<sup>754</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 80, footnote 28.

Before the campaign of the Mexican tribunal against crypto-Jews started, Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo was not only a successful merchant, but he also held important public functions. In 1635 he became an elector of the merchant's guild or *Consulado* of Mexico City, the body which legally represented the merchant's community in the capital of the viceroyalty.<sup>755</sup> The electors were the official leaders of the community; between 1621 and 1653, 119 merchants qualified as electors of the *Consulado*.<sup>756</sup> In 1640, Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo was officially appointed by the duke of Escalona<sup>757</sup> as commissary general (*proveedor general*) of the Armada de Barlovento (Windward Fleet),<sup>758</sup> and reconfirmed by viceroy Salvatierra in 1644.<sup>759</sup> Apparently, Vázquez de Acevedo had interrupted his work because of some illness. The viceroy himself referred to Vázquez de Acevedo as an "intelligent, trustworthy, and careful" person, qualified to be in charge of providing all supplies for the Fleet with the efficiency he had shown previously.<sup>760</sup>

The *Armada de las Islas de Barlovento y Seno Mexicano* was authorized by the Spanish Crown in about 1635 to police the sea lanes in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea in order to protect Spanish shipping and coastal settlement from foreign raiders, especially Dutch.<sup>761</sup> Already by the end of the sixteenth century, the Spanish Crown was aware of the need of a powerful marine to defend an empire with broad maritime borders. In 1575 the Consejo de Indias resolved that two groups of galleys, one in Cartagena and one in the Mayor Antilles, should be sustained for navigation around these areas. They were known by the name of windward fleet or *Armada de Barlovento*. But such fleet was not strong enough to cope with French, British, and Dutch attacks, and the need to establish a more powerful fleet in the Caribbean Sea became imminent. Despite the strong need and numerous

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<sup>755</sup> Hoberman (1977). The author refers to Guice's Ph.D. Dissertation: *The Consulado of New Spain, 1594-1795*, University of California, Berkeley, 1952.

<sup>756</sup> Hoberman (1977), p. 481.

<sup>757</sup> Don Diego López de Pacheco y Bobadilla, marquis of Villena, and duke of Escalona; 16th Viceroy of the New Spain, from August, 1640 to June, 1642.

<sup>758</sup> Israel (1997), p. 134, and (1990), p. 315; Hordes (1980), p. 134, and Liebman (1982), p. 62.

<sup>759</sup> *Armada. Concediendo título de proveedor de la Real Armada de Barlovento al Capitán Sebastián Baz de Acevedo* (1644). AGN. Reales Cédulas. Vol. 14, exp. 321, foja 235.

<sup>760</sup> "...nombrando proveedor general de la Armada al capitán Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo, con atención a las muchas partes y servicios que en su persona concurren de inteligencia, confianza y cuidado como se experimento el tiempo que ejerció la dicha plaza hasta que la dejó de servir por sus enfermedades...." AGN. Reales Cédulas. Vol. 14, exp. 321, foja 235.

<sup>761</sup> "Armada de Barlovento" in *Handbook of Texas Online*. 2001.

wishes expressed to build the fleet, many obstacles, especially economical, interfered in the consolidation of the project.<sup>762</sup>

It was only in 1635, due partly to the direct intervention of the count-douche of Olivares in Spain and the appointment of the marches of Cadereyta as viceroy of New Spain, that more serious steps for the building of the fleet were taken, and the fleet was established by Royal decree of May 4.<sup>763</sup> According to the plan, it was supposed to be composed of 12 strongly armed ships and two or three lighter ships. The expenses were going to be covered by all the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean Sea and the Mexican gulf; however, the biggest part of the expenses was assigned to New Spain. Viceroy Cadereyta, a Peruvian Creolle who had served as commander of New Spain's fleet from 1606 to 1634, knew very well what was needed for the defense of the Caribbean sea. In order to unblock the project, he convinced the authorities of Mexico City to finance, at least partially, the construction of the fleet through special taxes, and he came up with a more realistic structure, which included only 5 or 6 ships to begin with.<sup>764</sup> In December 1636, the *Ayuntamiento* of Mexico City accepted to contribute 200 thousand pesos out of the 500 thousand needed yearly to construct and maintain the fleet.<sup>765</sup> The amount was obtained through an increase in the taxes (*alcabala*) paid by the merchants in Mexico City. But even with the needed budget there were serious delays in the building of the fleet, and it was the duke of Escalona who managed to accelerate the process. He bought some ships and rented others; he negotiated with gunpowder producers; and he commissioned the ammunitions' supply from Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo.<sup>766</sup> As *proveedor general* of the fleet, Vázquez de Acevedo was in charge of providing the ships with everything

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<sup>762</sup> Torres Ramírez, Bibliano. *La Armada de Barlovento*. Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos. Sevilla. 1981. pp. XVII-XX

<sup>763</sup> Torres (1981), p. 35.

<sup>764</sup> Torres (1981) and Alvarado Morales, Manuel. *La ciudad de México ante la fundación de la Armada de Barlovento. 1635-1643*. México: Colmex; 1983.

<sup>765</sup> Israel (1997), p. 197. For a detailed research on the links between the government of México City and the fleet's financing see: Alvarado (1983). The book is based on his PhD dissertation: *El Cabildo de la Ciudad de México ante la fundación de la Armada de Barlovento. 1635-1643* presented in July, 1979.

<sup>766</sup> Israel (1997), p. 198. "Puso el abastecimiento de provisiones y municiones en las capaces manos del comerciante judío portugués Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo." The translation is mine. See: AGN; Reales Cédulas. Vol. 14, exp. 321, f. 235; *Armada. Ordenando que el Capitán Sebastián Vázquez [sic] de Acevedo pague la compra de abastecimientos de la Armada de Barlovento* (1641). AGN; Reales Cédulas. Vol. 12, exp. 275, f. 267; *Armada. Ordenando que el proveedor de la Armada de Barlovento, Capitán Sebastián Vázquez [sic] de Acevedo compre abastecimientos para la mencionada fuerza* (1641). AGN; Reales Cédulas. Vol. 12, exp. 278, f. 269.

necessary for navigation, and he had under his command a whole group of staff, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, and other workers. The commissary's annual salary was 1,050 pesos, which was equivalent to one third of the captain's stipend (three thousand pesos per year).<sup>767</sup>

The fact that Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo was entrusted to develop important duties for the Windward Fleet somehow shows his good relation with the civil authorities, and his membership of the merchant's guild shows his privileged socio-economic position. Moreover, he was, like other crypto-Jews at the time, in more than good terms with the Mexican Holy Office before the campaign of the 1640's began. In the report of his visit to the Mexican tribunal,<sup>768</sup> Juan Sáenz de Mañozca informed that the Portuguese Sebastián Vázquez had dealt with inquisitors in order to avoid the payment of royal taxes for some merchandise he had brought from China.<sup>769</sup> The deal consisted in corrupting the ministers of the Tribunal to present the merchandise as confiscated goods. "There is nothing strange," says Alberro, "in the fact that people like Simón Vázquez Sevilla or Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo would deal with Inquisitors, give some of them expensive gifts, or even ask them for favours. Acevedo, for instance, did not hesitate to ask the Mexican Holy Office tribunal to warehouse goods he had brought from the Philippines in order to hide them from the royal tax auditor."<sup>770</sup> Saenz de Mañozca, scandalized, even accused his colleagues in the Tribunal of the Holy Office of being Vázquez's clients.<sup>771</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> Torres (1981), p. 307.

<sup>768</sup> *Cuaderno de la Visita de Pedro Medina Rico al Tribunal de México, sobre los cargos que resultaron contra los ministros del tribunal*. 1656, 70; AHN, Vol. 1737, exp. 12.

<sup>769</sup> Sebastián Vázquez Acevedo, 'portugués de nación, que después fue processo y penitenciado por judío judaizante, aviendo trahido de China cantidad de fardos y mercaderías que eran suyas propias y parando en el puerto de Acapulco; por escuchar los derechos debidos a Su Majestad, se valió del Tribunal, que fingió pertenecerle dichos fardos y mercaderías; y por ello los pidió sin gaga de derechos algunos, a que resistieron los oficiales reales de dicho puerto de Acapulco; y últimamente, viendo el pleito mal peso, se valieron del Señor Virrey, que a la sazón era, conviene a saber por el año de 1645 poco más o menos, con que su Excelencia envió despacho para que se entregasen dichos fardos y mercaderías sin pagar derechos algunos, como en efecto se trajeron al cuarto del señor Inquisidor doctor don Francisco de Estrada; y de allí, los llevó el dicho Sebastián Vázquez, con grande nota y escándalo". *Cuaderno de la visita...* AHN. Legajo 1737, quoted in Alberro (1998), p. 47.

<sup>770</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 179.

<sup>771</sup> Liebman (1982), p. 63, quoting Hoberman (1977), p. 499.



## 4.2. An astrologer or a calumniator of the Holy Office

Corruption was one the main features of the Tribunal of the Holy Office in Mexico City and its ministers during the first half of the seventeenth century. The institution was “hungry for new sources of revenue and eager to seize upon any new opportunity to enlarge its power and authority.”<sup>772</sup> Based on the written reports sent to the *Suprema* in Madrid by visitors Juan Sáenz de Mañozca (1645) and Pedro Medina Rico, different scholars have expressed similar views about the tribunal’s particularly bad administration during the years of the campaign against the Crypto-Jewish community and those immediately after the great auto of 1649.<sup>773</sup> The period of 1625-1650, affirms Liebman, “witnessed more *autos de fe* in New Spain in which Jews were the principal penitents than any other era in the colonial period and in any other viceroyalty. The confiscation of the Jews’ wealth by three inquisitors ran into millions of pesos, and the inquisitors’ moral depravity was rarely, if ever, exceeded during the entire history of the Inquisition.”<sup>774</sup>

The three inquisitors who served between 1642 and 1650 have been regarded as “the most venal” of all.<sup>775</sup> Motivated largely by economic and political forces, concurs Hordes, they “disrupted the commercial activities of the *conversos* and diverted the estates of the latter into the hands of the former.”<sup>776</sup> They “spared no effort in [their] search for shipments of merchandise consigned to the crypto-Jews in their charge, for valuables that prisoners might have hidden, or for uncovering even the most insignificant debt that might have been owed to the *judaizantes*.”<sup>777</sup> During the period in question, says Troncarelli, “some mediocre characters obtained high charges by simony. When the visitors from the *Supreme* threatened for the ministers’ illegal activities, they started accusing each other.”<sup>778</sup> In 1646, the Inquisition possessed a total of 29 389 pesos (in goods, lands, and cash), administered directly by the ministers. A year later, in 1647, the sum reached a total of 148 562 pesos.<sup>779</sup>

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<sup>772</sup> Hordes (1980), p. 126.

<sup>773</sup> Medina, Lea, González Obregón, Phipps, Greenleaf, Alberro, Escandell Bonet, Liebman, Hordes, etc.

<sup>774</sup> Liebman (1979), p. 218.

<sup>775</sup> Liebman (1982), p. 65.

<sup>776</sup> Hordes (1982), p. 24.

<sup>777</sup> Hordes (1982), p. 35.

<sup>778</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 188.

<sup>779</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 192.

According to Alberro, the most important consequence of the *autos de fé* was probably economic. The confiscated property included a great amount of merchandise belonging to important brokers in Seville, and it was never paid back to them. “The seized property was partially sold at public auctions, and the money was used for current necessities of the Holy Office, such as ornaments for chapels and churches. The rest was invested in state bonds on the public debt, called *juros*, which paid their holders and annual revenue of 7 percent.”<sup>780</sup>

The image of the Mexican tribunal as an institution concerned more with the pursuit of fortune than with the prosecution of heresy is not only a retrospective historical explanation, but it was also a contemporary perception in both the *high* and the *low* levels of colonial society. On the highest point of the social scale, viceroy Palafox, who had initially supported the inquisitorial campaign against the crypto-Jewish community, was getting more and more skeptical about it. According to Palafox, the tribunal should be working for the preservation of religious orthodoxy and moral purity, instead of going after rich Jews. In the capital of the viceroyalty, where most people supported Palafox, the inquisitors were being mocked through the circulation of leaflets. To defend themselves, they published special edicts where they stated that it was a crime against Catholic faith to make insinuations against the inquisitors, especially in a time when the Tribunal was fighting against Judaism in the name of Christ.<sup>781</sup> It is interesting to point out that a similar situation occurred in Lima when the Tribunal of the Holy Office was fighting against the *Complicidad Grande*. There too, prisoners mocked the Inquisition and expressed their doubts about the institution’s legitimacy. “Victims had little else. Their courageous criticisms and obvious disdain went straight to the institution's flaws and debilities.”<sup>782</sup> Some of the accused claimed that the Lima office ‘arrested people without blame’; denounced the inquisitor’s avarice; called them ‘pilferers’, ‘cruel’, and ‘barbaric’. “As an institution proclaiming moral authority, the tribunal was ripe for charges that it didn't live up its mission: in addition to cupidity, magistrates were accused of being womanizers and drunkards.”<sup>783</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Uchmany (2001), p. 198.

<sup>781</sup> Israel (1997), p. 232. See: AGN, Inquisición, Vols. 424 and 429.

<sup>782</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 85.

<sup>783</sup> Silverblatt (2004), p. 89.

At the time of Rivero's trial, Domingo Veléz de Asas y Argos, born in Spain in 1582, was the oldest of the active Mexican inquisitors. He studied for seven years at the *Colegio de San Bartolomeo*, and for six years at the University of Salamanca. In 1599 he was appointed as canonical, and in 1602 he entered the Holy Office as a fiscal. After nine and a half years, in 1611, he was appointed as general inquisitor. In 1621 he had a conflict with the governor of Cartagena Francisco de Murga (1629-1634) and was forced to clear out his position and go back to Spain.<sup>784</sup> After a long period of inactivity he was elected as inquisitor in Mexico City and arrived there on August 20, 1638 when he was already old and tired. His health condition was so critical that he couldn't even sign the documents. He died on August 26, 1647.

As for inquisitor Francisco de Estrada y Escobedo, he was born in 1604, and his career in the Holy Office began on November 13, 1634 as fiscal. In 1642 he was appointed as inquisitor, and his previous charge was taken up by Antonio Gaviola, who had studied theology at the Royal University in Mexico City. He had also taken some law courses in Salamanca, but acquired his degree (*magister*) in Sevilla, which was a less prestigious university.<sup>785</sup> Inquisitor Estrada y Escobedo was in the New Spain with his mother, who lived ostentatiously, and three brothers.<sup>786</sup>

Finally, Bernabé de la Higuera y Amarilla was born in 1597 and had studied not at Salamanca but at the University of Mexico, a fact which made his ascension more difficult in comparison with some of his colleagues. He was appointed as supernumerary inquisitor on August 19, 1647.<sup>787</sup> Like Estrada y Escobedo, he travelled to New Spain together with some relatives. One of his nephews owned a sugar plantation, and one of his cousins was commissary of the Holy Office in the port of Veracruz. Some conflicts arose there between the latter and the inquisitorial notary, Sebastián de Campos, who was the brother in law of

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<sup>784</sup> *Pleitos fiscales de Francisco de Murga. Informaciones hechas por el gobernador de Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), Francisco de Murga, sobre el embargo del equipaje del inquisidor del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Cartagena de Indias, Domingo Vélez de Assás y Argos* (1641). AGI, INQUISICION, 4816,EXP.20 Digitalizada. Exp. 15, 16, 18, 23. Francisco de Murga was married with Juana de Salázar y Zuñiga, widow of Alvaro Quiñones Osorio, governor of Guatemala (See Chapter 3 above).

<sup>785</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 184.

<sup>786</sup> "...tenía consigo a su madre 'que está con toda ostentación en México, cuatro hermanas casadas y con hijos, otro hermano casado, otro friele, otro medio racionero de esta Iglesia, a quien tuvo en esa corte años por la pretensión de la plaza de inquisidor, otro estudiante diácono'." Alberro (1998), p. 43, quoting Medina (1905).

<sup>787</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 184.

inquisitor Estrada y Escobedo.<sup>788</sup> Inquisitor de la Higuera y Amarilla had extra-marital relationships with two female slaves, one African and one *mulatta*, and publicly recognized the children he had with one of them as his sons.<sup>789</sup>

Juan Sáenz de Mañozca y Murillo, “the main figure behind the persecution of New Spain's *marranos* in the mid 17th century,”<sup>790</sup> arrived in Mexico City in 1641 and was appointed as supernumerary on 17 March, 1642.<sup>791</sup> He was born in New Spain in 1608, and was the only Creole among his colleagues. He was the son of two Spanish immigrants with a modest background and high ambitions, Pedro Sáenz de Mañozca and Catalina Murillo. The former was the “founder of the Mañozca *dynasty* in the Mexican capital”.<sup>792</sup> According to Troncarelli, this dynasty was one of the first expressions of a complex historical transformation, which is the consolidation of a Creole bureaucracy by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>793</sup> As a secretary of the Inquisition, Pedro Sáenz de Mañozca was dismissed for corruption and thus decided to send his son Juan to study in the city of Lima, where the family scandals were unknown. Juan’s career was especially favoured by his cousin’s authority, Juan de Mañozca y Zamora, who was inquisitor in Lima between 1624 and 1639.<sup>794</sup> Afterwards he became a member of the *Suprema* in Spain and archbishop in

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<sup>788</sup> “se encontraba literalmente agobiado por la parentela; uno de sus sobrinos era dueño de un ingenio azucarero mientras su primo era comisario del Santo Oficio en Veracruz. Allí, lo opacaba completamente el notario inquisitorial, Sebastián de Campos, quien era nada menos que cuñado de Estrad y Escobedo; em efecto, no solo Campos acaparaba los dos cargos, el de notario y el de comisario, de seguro lleno de atractivos en un puerto por el que pasaban todo el comercio y las relaciones de la colonia con la metrópoli; además, obtuvo, con la ayuda del inquisidor, su cuñado, unos prestamos cuantiosos sobre las rentas fiscales, practica obviamente ilegal.” Alberro (1998), p. 43, quoting Medina (1905).

<sup>789</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 48.

<sup>790</sup> Alberro (2001), p. 181.

<sup>791</sup> See: *Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a Indias del doctor Juan Sáenz de Mañozca, inquisidor apostólico del Tribunal de la Inquisición de México, con sus criados Domingo de Arriola, natural de Berriatúa (Vizcaya), hijo de Pedro de Odiaga y de María de Arriola, y Pedro González de Trejo, natural y vecino de Toledo, hijo de Diego González de Trejo y de Ana Martínez, a México* (1641-06-04). AGI, CONTRATACION,5424,N.1,R.21.

<sup>792</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 185.

<sup>793</sup> “...bisogna osservare che il successo di personaggi nati in Messico o laureati in Messico e in Perú é la spia di una trasformazione storica che dará i suoi frutti solo a partire dalla fine del secolo con la formazione di una burocrazia creola, tutta costituita da funzionari nati nelle Indie. Il clan dei Mañozca é una delle prime manifestazioni di questa tendenza che riflette la decadenza della Spagna e lo sviluppo autoctono delle sue colonie. Nello stesso tempo, tuttavia, una simile ascesa sociale nel XVII secolo non testimonia la crescita e la maturazione di forze economiche e politiche simili a quelle che generarono i movimenti di indpendeza agli inizi del XIX secolo, ma solo della presa del potere da parte di fazioni che mirano unicamente ai propri interessi e che agiscono ai limiti ed a volte contro la legalitá.” Troncarelli (1999), p. 186.

<sup>794</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 186. For the history of the Inquisition in Lima see: Castañeda (1989).

Mexico City; finally, in 1645, he was appointed as *visitador* of the Mexican Inquisition.<sup>795</sup> It is important not to confuse the two cousins. Mañozca y Murillo, the Mexican inquisitor, came back from Lima in 1635, and was appointed first as *fiscal* (in 1642) and then as inquisitor (1648). Some scholars have described him as “the most corrupt” and “the most cruel” of all Spanish-American inquisitors.<sup>796</sup>

According to the Benitez family, Gaspar Rivero complained more than once about the ministers and the inquisitorial procedure. He had said that the accused were in prison for a long time so that the Holy Office could confiscate their goods (*haciendas*), like in the cases of Francisco Moreyra and Sebastián Váez. The Holy Office had confiscated 100 000 pesos from the latter and the ministers (archbishop, Estrada Mañozca, the secretary Saravia, and Almonacir) had also taken jewels and other valuable objects. Rivero also claimed that, if Portugal hadn't rebelled against the Spanish empire, the Inquisition wouldn't have prosecuted so many Portuguese.<sup>797</sup> He stated that prisoners only confessed because they were tortured and not because they had really committed a crime. Moreover, the inquisitors made people who were only suspects and had not yet received a sentence wear *sanbenitos*, which was something that did not happen in other Tribunals.<sup>798</sup> He said that inquisitor Argos was transferred to the tribunal in Mexico City because he had had a fight with the governor of Cartagena. Finally, he spoke about a man who had left for China to escape from the Inquisition as if it were a funny anecdote or as if he thought it had been a success.<sup>799</sup>

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<sup>795</sup> Troncarelli (1999), p. 186 and Hordes (1979), p. 157.

<sup>796</sup> Hordes (1979), p. 157, and Lewin (1967), p. 58, respectively.

<sup>797</sup> “...que si Portugal no estuviera levantado no se hubieran hecho por este Santo Oficio tantas prisiones como lo hicieron”. AGN-435, f. 499v

<sup>798</sup> A *sambenito* or *sanbenito* was a garment worn by penitnet convicts of the Inquisition. There were different kinds, depending upon the nature of the punishment or penance. After the completion of the judgement, they were returned to the Santo Oficio and hung on the walls of the Cathedral, with the name of the wearer, the date, and the details of his or her crime. It was later substituted for the *tablillas*. (See Chapter 2 above).

<sup>799</sup> “Y que en otra ocasión en casa de este declarante [...] el dicho Riveros riéndose y como halagándose a este declarante y a su hermano Gregorio y al dicho su padre que no había chiste como el que hizo un hombre que pasó a China que lo nombró, no se acuerda del nombre, que era primo del dicho Mezquita el que penitenció el santo oficio habiendo comprado primero un navío con que se huyó y pasó a partes porque había sabido que iba orden de este Santo Oficio prenderlo y esto dicho el dicho Riveros como holgándose del buen suceso que había tenido el dicho hombre...”. AGN-435, f. 506.

Showing admiration for certain people and/or their actions was an indirect way of exposing one's ideas, especially when those ideas were polemical. It was not uncommon among blacks, free mulattos or slaves to express their rejection of specific social or religious norms by showing admiration towards those who transgressed these rules. In 1651, for instance, the slave Diego de la Cruz presented a self-denunciation for wanting to become a Jew in order to become rich as well.<sup>800</sup> A more direct way of challenging the inquisitor's authority was through slander, calumny, or defamation. They are all synonyms of the making of false and defamatory statements about someone in order to damage their reputation.<sup>801</sup> In law, defamation is "the publication of a statement about a person that tends to lower his reputation in the opinion of right-thinking members of the community or to make them shun or avoid him. Defamation is usually in words, but pictures, gestures, and other acts can be defamatory."<sup>802</sup> A slander is "the action or crime of making a false spoken statement damaging to a person's reputation."<sup>803</sup>

Even though slander was not strictly regarded as heresy by canonical texts, it was within the inquisitorial jurisdiction to prosecute crimes against the Holy Office. In general terms, it can be said that not all crimes that were actually prosecuted by the Tribunal were consistent with the formal concept of heresy (theological heresy), but some of them (or even most of them) exceeded its limits (inquisitorial heresy).<sup>804</sup> As mentioned above, at the time of Rivero's trial, the Mexican Tribunal had published edicts against this kind of behaviour as a response to the political tensions of the moment. Prohibitions, as it is well known, very frequently reflect a widely spread practice which somehow threatens the established order.

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<sup>800</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 467. See: AGN. Inquisición, Vol. 520, exp. 116.

<sup>801</sup> "Calumny" in *The Oxford Dictionary of English*. Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2003. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. European University Institute Library. 17 May 2005 <http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.bibliosun.iue.it> In Spanish *calumnia* (1729): La acusación falsa y maliciosa que se hace de alguno, por enojo o venganza, para causarle daño, infamarle, o desacreditarle. Voz puramente latina *Calumnia*. And *Calumniador* (1729): El que en cualquier modo atribuye falsamente a otro delitos u defectos que no tiene para desacreditarle o hacerle perseguir injustamente por la justicia. Voz latina *Calumniator*.

<sup>802</sup> "Defamation" in *A Dictionary of Law*. Ed. Elizabeth A. Martin. Oxford University Press, 2002. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. European University Institute Library. 17 May 2005.

<sup>803</sup> "Slander" in *The Oxford Dictionary of English*. Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2003. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. European University Institute Library. 17 May 2005. - DERIVATIVES slanderer *noun* slanderous *adjective* slanderously *adverb*. ORIGIN Middle English: from Old French *esclandre*, alteration of *escandle*, from late Latin *scandalum* (see scandal).

<sup>804</sup> Pinto, Virgilio. "Sobre el delito de la herejía (siglos XIII-XVI)" in Escudero (1989), pp. 195-204.

Thus it is not surprising to find in the inquisitorial archives other denunciations against calumniators of the Holy Tribunal.

Antonio Pérez was accused in 1650 of saying that Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo had been apprehended because the inquisitors wanted to confiscate his estate, and not for being a Jew.<sup>805</sup> The Portuguese Gonzalo Juan, being already dead, was accused in the same year of having said that many of those who were sentenced in the *Auto* of 1645 had been punished without being guilty in order to confiscate their estates, and that either the accused themselves or their descendants would go to Castile “to bring remedy against the inquisitors.”<sup>806</sup> The last interesting example is the case against the *Bachiller* Don Bernardo Guerrero, a lawyer attached to the *Audiencia* of Mexico who had changed his surname, whose father had been reconciled for judaizing by the Inquisition in Lima, who became involved in Bishop Palafox’s struggle with the Mexican Inquisitors in 1647, and was arrested for uttering an angry outburst about the Inquisition and saying that Viceroy Salvatierra, Archbishop Mañozca, and the Inquisitors were “all beautiful thieves”.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> *Denuncia contra Antonio Pérez por decir que más habían preso a Sebastián Vázquez de Acevedo por quitarle la hacienda que por judío* (1650). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (1a. parte), 1650, Legajo. 5, f. 269.

<sup>806</sup> *Denuncia contra Gonzalo Juan, portugués ya difunto, sobre decir que muchos de los penitenciados en el Auto General de la Fe que celebró el Santo Oficio en 11 de abril de 1645 habían sido castigados sin culpa por quedárseles con su haciendas y que ellos o sus herederos irían a los reinos de Castilla donde traerían remedio contra los inquisidores* (1650). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (1a. parte), f. 236.

<sup>807</sup> ‘son todos muy lindos ladrones’. AGN, Inquisición, vol. 429, f. 406. Quoted in Israel (1990), p. 324.

### 4.3. Accusation and Defence: the Blessing of Ignorance

After the first series of depositions, on October 21, 1650 the fiscal Don Antonio Gaviola presented his formal accusation against Gaspar Rivero:

Being the said Riveros a baptized and confirmed Christian, who benefits from the privileges, premises, and exemptions, granted to all catholic and faithful Christians, he has acted against the vow taken during the holy baptism. And motivated by his natural malevolence he has used judicial astrology and other kind of superstitions against the teachings of the Holy Mother Roman Church. He has taught it to others and read to them many books about her [astrology], trying to know, with arrogance, about future contingents, which consist in human free will, as well as present and occult things which only the demon can reach when invoked together with God and the saints.<sup>808</sup>

The arrest warrant was issued on the third of November, and the following day Gaspar Rivero was called before the Holy Tribunal for the first hearing. He declared to be born in the city of Tangier, to be 29 or 30 years old, and a student at the Law Faculty of the Royal University. Concerning his genealogy, he declared to be son of Manuel Rivero and Mónica, who died when he was six years old. He never met his grandparents from either side.<sup>809</sup> Regarding his education, he declared that he knew how to read and write and he learned it in La Habana [Cuba] from a teacher named Francisco Ramírez, and he studied grammar and rhetoric in the Jesuit College in Mexico City. His professor of *mínimos* was Francisco Reinoso, *medianos* Juan Mendez, and *mayores* Francisco de Arteaga. At the University of México, there were two different academic degrees: *menores* (*bachiller*, which was the minor degree in every faculty; at the faculty of Arts it was obtained by simply attending the lectures) and *mayores* (bachelor, master, and doctor).<sup>810</sup>

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<sup>808</sup> “...digo que siendo el susodicho cristiano bautizado y confirmado y gozando de los privilegios, premisas y exenciones de los católicos y fieles cristianos gozan y deben gozar contraviniendo contra a la profesión hecha en el Santo Bautismo y llevado de su mal natural ha usado de la astrología judiciaria y otros géneros de supersticiones contra lo que dice, predica y enseña nuestra santa Madre la Iglesia Católica Romana enseñándola a otros muchos leyéndoles muchos libros de ella procurando con intento y soberbia saber los futuros contingentes que solamente consisten en el libre albedrío del hombre y las presentes y ocultas que solo el demonio las puede alcanzar invocándole juntamente con Dios y con los santos...” AGN-435, f. 478.

<sup>809</sup> An accused Spanish could usually remember the names of their ancestors for even two generations, but among blacks and mulattos it was very frequent not to have knowledge of their roots. Alberro (1998), p. 456.

<sup>810</sup> Pérez Puente, Leticia. “Las cátedras de la Universidad de México: entre estudiantes y doctores” in Pérez



Concerning his *discurso de vida*, he declared that he had gone with his father to Angola when he was six years old. There, in the city of San Pablo, his father died and his uncle Gaspar Rivero brought him to Brazil.<sup>811</sup> After being there for fifteen days they went to Cartagena [now Colombia], where they stayed for two years. From Cartagena they went to San Cristóbal de la Habana, where his uncle, also called Gaspar Rivero, got married with his first wife, Doña Marta de Estrada, and had three sons. While he was living there with his uncles, he started studying in the Augustine Convent.



*Gaspar Rivero's (uncle) house in La Habana, Cuba.*

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Puente (1998), p. 15.

<sup>811</sup> “Dijo que nació en dicha ciudad de Tánger donde estuvo hasta edad de casi seis años en casa de sus padres y le llevó de aquella edad a Angola el dicho su padre, donde estuvo dos años poco más o menos y que habiendo muerto su padre en Angola en la ciudad de San Pablo le trajo desde Angola a Brasil su tío el dicho Gaspar Riveros...” AGN-435, f. 527.

The second wife of Rivero's uncle was called Beatriz de Farias and it was with them that he travelled to New Spain. He stayed eight days in Veracruz and then came to the City with Captain Pedro de Aguilar for whom he worked as a scribe. Four months later the Captain left the city and Gaspar Rivero stayed with Alonso Pacho, presbyter, and continued working as a scribe and studying grammar. While he was living at that house, around the year 1645, he finished the lessons on rhetoric and started to attend the Arts faculty in 1648. He also lived with Sebastian Vázquez de Acevedo for one and a half years, and worked for him as a scribe. Sebastian Vázquez referred him to Jacinto Morrones, with whom he stayed for six months, until his employer was persecuted by the Inquisition.

Apparently, after Sebastian Vázquez was captured, Rivero spent some time in the city of Oaxaca. When he came back to Mexico City he finished the Arts course while living in the house of a lady named Doña Catalina.<sup>812</sup> Then he moved again to Francisca de Heros's house, where he taught grammar to some boys. Then he went to the city of Campeche with Juan Martínez del Huerto, for whom he worked as accountant [*cajero*]. After being in Campeche he stayed eight months in Mérida.<sup>813</sup> Then he came back to Mexico City "two years ago" (1648), and stayed for approximately four months at the house of the Creole Juan Gómez in the street of the Palma, where he rented a room [*aposento*] in the apartment building [*vecindad*] and was teaching grammar to earn his living. Then he moved to the house of Doña Antonia Ramírez, and continued teaching grammar, while at the same time working at the Cathedral. Finally, he moved to the house of Martín de Acosta Amezquita, Sebastián Vázquez's lawyer and attorney of the *Real Audiencia*, in the street of Saint Augustine. At the time of his arrest, Rivero was working as an accountant (*contador*) both at the cathedral and at the Jesuit Convent; he was working for the attorney Acosta Amezquita; and he was also teaching Grammar for three *pesos* a month.<sup>814</sup>

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<sup>812</sup> Persons with the honorific title *don* or *doña* formed the large majority of tenants in buildings renting for more than 100 pesos per year. Cope (1994), p. 30.

<sup>813</sup> Both cities being well-known for hosting crypto-Jewish communities. Alberro (1998), p. 471.

<sup>814</sup> AGN-435, f. 527v-528.

Instability and geographical wandering was, as Alberro points out, one of the main characteristics of blacks and mulattos.<sup>815</sup> Rivero was no exception: without counting the time he spent in the cities of Campeche and Mérida, he lived in 9 different houses in Mexico City between 1638, the year of his arrival to the capital, and 1650, the year of his apprehension by the Holy Office. According to the information he provided during the first hearing, most of the time he rented a room or *aposeno* on the ground floor of the building where his different employers lived at the time. Few people in Mexico actually owned their own homes. Most residential buildings were in the hands of the city's 22 convents and 29 monasteries. Ecclesiastical rent books usually distinguished between *cajas bajas o pequeñas* (one-story dwellings) and *casas altas o grandes* (two-story structures of stone built around a central courtyard). The latter often served as apartment buildings (*casas de vecindad*). The most affluent tenants would live in the upper stories, in suites of rooms called *viviendas*, and would have their own servants or employees renting the single-room apartments (*aposenos*) on the ground floor.<sup>816</sup>

After the first three hearings, the inquisitors called four more witnesses to testify against Gaspar Rivero. The *Bachiller* Jerónimo de Legorreta was called before the Tribunal on November 9, 1650. Apparently he had presented his voluntary deposition more than one month earlier, and the inquisitor asked him to write it down in order to declare when the tribunal called him.<sup>817</sup> On November 18, he was presented as witness for the trial against Rivero. The Spanish Cristóbal de Padilla (*gorrero*), owner of a shop in the *Calle del Reloj*, presented his denunciation on the same day, after he found out that Gaspar Rivero was imprisoned.<sup>818</sup> He was presented as witness on November 22. His wife, María de Zaragoza, was called before the tribunal on the following day. When she was asked if she knew the reason why she had been summoned, she immediately presumed that she was called in order to

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<sup>815</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 459.

<sup>816</sup> Cope (1994), p. 30.

<sup>817</sup> “que por el descargo de su conciencia habrá más de un mes dio noticia al dicho inquisidor de algunas cosas que había oído a un mulato llamado Gaspar Rivero, estudiante y dicho Inquisidor le ordenó las tuviese apuntadas para declarar cuando este tribunal le llamase y así habiéndole avisado ayer viniese ha venido a declarar”. AGN-435, f. 514.

<sup>818</sup> “que habiendo sabido que está preso en este Santo Oficio un mulato llamado Gaspar Riveros de Vasconcelos, que es estudiante y solía escribir en la contaduría de la catedral de esta Ciudad y para descargo de su conciencia viene a declarar a este Santo Oficio lo siguiente contra el dicho Riveros.” AGN-435, f. 518.

declare what had happened with a student called Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos.<sup>819</sup> She was presented as witness on November 26. On the same day, the inquisitors called Catalina de Medina, who lived in the street of *Correo Mayor* in the houses of Cristóbal Barriento. When asked if she knew why she had been summoned, she presumed that she was called to declare about a medal that María de Zaragoza had showed to her.<sup>820</sup>

Once again, it is notable that none of these deponents accused Gaspar Rivero of practicing judicial astrology. Instead of providing evidence about this specific crime, these depositions seem to be a collection of information which questioned the genuine Catholic faith and moral reputation of the accused. According to these witnesses, Rivero possessed a picture of a woman on the opposite side of an image of the Virgin; he had committed incest with a lady called Mariana and her sister; and he ate meat over the lent. It is worth recalling that alimentary habits were a key element to identify Jews or crypto-Jews. Accusations presented before the Holy Tribunal about people fasting were regarded as evidence enough to prosecute somebody for *judaizante*; similarly, it was well known that crypto-Jews elaborated different strategies in order to prevent their servants from noticing when they were fasting.<sup>821</sup> Regarding the slanderous accusations against the Inquisition, the bachelor Jerónimo de Legorreta declared that the accused had once said that, if Portugal had not rebelled against the Spanish empire, the Inquisition wouldn't have prosecuted so many Portuguese. He had also said that Inquisitor Argos was transferred to the tribunal in Mexico City because he had a fight with the governor of Cartagena, which was actually the case.<sup>822</sup>

Once the inquisitors had gathered all the necessary information throughout the depositions, the fiscal López de Erenchun presented his formal accusation in 26 chapters,

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<sup>819</sup> “Dijo que presume será para declarar en él lo que pasó con un mulato estudiante llamado Gaspar Riveros de Vasconcelos, en presencia de la declarante y de su marido Cristóbal de Padilla, un día por la tarde en la dicha tienda, porque hizo escrúpulo de lo que declaraba y quedó el dicho su marido de dar noticia de ello a este Santo Oficio”. AGN-435, f. 520v.

<sup>820</sup> “presume será para declarar sobre una lámina que le mostró una mujer llamada María de Zaragoza, mujer de Cristóbal de Padilla”. AGN-435, f. 523.

<sup>821</sup> See for instance the accusations against captain Antonio Váez de Acevedo.

<sup>822</sup> “Que cuando contó el dicho Riveros lo de el judío de Cartagena que tiene declarado dijo que por haber penitenciado al dicho hombre los Inquisidores de Cartagena los habían mudado de allí y al Inquisidor Argos lo habían mudado a esta Inquisición por esta causa y por el pleito que había tenido con el gobernador de aquella ciudad como se había dicho por acá”. AGN-435, f. 502.

which are basically a sum of the witnesses' declaration.<sup>823</sup> These 26 chapters can be broken down in four different categories. The first one, in which eight different accusations are included, refers to forbidden practices such as finding lost objects; having made an explicit or implicit pact with the devil, and reading or possessing forbidden books. Two of these accusations explicitly established that the accused had found lost objects by means of astrological interrogations, and that his pact with the Devil consisted of the invocation of the demon through the use of judicial astrology.

The second category, in which eleven accusations were included, dealt with heresy and crimes against the catholic faith. On the one hand, some of the alleged actions and expressions, such as eating meat over lent or pronouncing slanderous words in front of a Virgin's image, raised suspicions about his genuine faith. On the other hand, the sympathy he showed for some of the crypto-Jews who were processed by the Holy Office was reason enough to suspect that he had "corrupted blood" as well.

The third category refers to the crime of speaking against the inquisitorial procedure and the ministers themselves. The six accusations under this category include: saying that the accused stayed in prison for a long time so that the Holy Office could confiscate their goods; saying that the inquisitors pronounce unfair sentences, or that they put *sanbenitos* on people who were not supposed to wear them, or that they were corrupt; saying that the accused confessed only because they were tortured, or that every religious order had a superior with power to absolve the members of their order from any kind of crime, 'even incest'. Finally, Rivero was also accused of incest, though none of the witnesses provided information which could confirm this accusation.

On the first hearing, on November 4, 1650, Gaspar Rivero was asked if he knew the reason why he had been summoned. He mentioned incest as the first possible reason, which was not a surprising answer if one considers that Inquisitors were always suspicious about the

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<sup>823</sup> Though a list of 26 accusations may seem long, it was a frequent practice of the Mexican Tribunal to charge the accused with numerous crimes. The *judaizante* Juan de León, for instance was accused of committing 104 "Jewish crimes". See: Lewin (1967), p. 47.

sexual morality of blacks and *mulattos*.<sup>824</sup> The second cause he mentioned was the fact of casting some astrological charts, like the one he cast for a friend who wanted to know whether a certain lady was going to show up. Rivero mentioned that he had translated from Latin into Spanish some works on astrology for Julián de Espinoza and the *Saboyano*, a tailor. The former had taught Gaspar Rivero some astrological principles, and the Zodiac wheel with the “divisions of the months, days, and hours.”<sup>825</sup>

During the second hearing, on November 7, 1650, Gaspar Rivero declared that some people had asked him to cast some astrological figures. First, a certain man called Romero asked him to find a mule that belonged to a priest and had escaped from the slaughterhouse. Gaspar Rivero asked the *Saboyano*, who in turn consulted the ephemerides, and was then able to find the mule. Secondly, a certain widow Ormigos asked him if she was going to get married again. Rivero knew she was going to get married with Domingo Gonzalez because he had talked with a person who knew this man, and not because he used astrology. Finally, he had consulted the astrologer Julián de Espinosa to find some documents he had lost. Espinosa told him that somebody who lived with him (the only suspect was a student called Francisco Navarro) had taken them. That was the time when Julian de Espinosa told Gaspar Rivero that he would teach him astrology, “which was a very good thing to know when something was missing or stolen, and he gave him nine notebooks about astrology to translate them.”<sup>826</sup> When Gaspar Rivero went to Campache, he gave these notebooks to Melchor Pérez de Soto, an architect who lived in the Hospital of Our Lady (*Hospital de Nuestra Señora*) and who also dealt with astrology.<sup>827</sup>

During the third hearing, on November 8, 1650, Gaspar Rivero declared that a butcher called Manuel Francisco had lost two silver plates, and the presbyter Francisco de Borges o

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<sup>824</sup> “sospecha que ha sido por un incesto y comercio con dos hermanas de madre y no de padre y son mestizas habrá seis meses”. AGN-435, f. 528.

<sup>825</sup> “Y a una rueda de pergamino que [...] Don Julián de Espinoza, secular que vive en Tacubaya que fue el que comenzó a enseñar la astrología, la cual tiene caracteres y divisiones de los meses, días y horas de que se valió”. AGN-435, f. 528v.

<sup>826</sup> “Y en esta ocasión le dijo el dicho Don Julián que le enseñaría la astrología que era una cosa muy buena para que si le faltase algo supiese quién se lo había hurtado y le dió unos o nueve cuadernos a este confesante que trasladase que trataban de astrología y para elevar figuras para descubrir minas, hurtos y otras cosas...” AGN-435, f.532.

<sup>827</sup> The trial against Melchor Pérez started 5 years later. See Chapter 5 of this work.

Bohorques advised him to go to Gaspar Rivero, who knew about astrology and could help him find the plates. Rivero knew where the lost plates were because the *mulatta* who had stolen them (called Luisa) had told him, and not by means of Astrology.<sup>828</sup>

In his reply to the accusation, Rivero defended himself with the following arguments: First, he said he had no pact with the Devil; he was “a faithful Catholic and Christian, and would not want to be assisted by the enemy of humankind”;<sup>829</sup> and he had “never used judicial astrology maliciously or with pact with the demon.”<sup>830</sup> The second argument he used was his lack of astrological knowledge and thus his incapacity to divine the future by means of this art. “He only knows some astrological principles which, as he had confessed right after his apprehension, Don Julian de Espinosa taught to him” because they were useful for medicine.<sup>831</sup> Rivero pointed out that he did not possess any books, forbidden or not. Thus he went to the Saboyano’s house whenever he wanted to cast a figure.<sup>832</sup>

In his written defence, he stated that “I always relied on the knowledge of *Saboyano* and Julián de Espinoza and never had books of astrology that can prove the crimes of which I

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<sup>828</sup> “...y encontró a la dicha mulata junto a dicha casa del dicho rastrero y le dijo que no dijese que ella le había tomado, sino que había sido un muchacho hablando en general que entrando le había hurtado y no le dió razón del dicho plato lo cual refirió al dicho rastrero entregándole el dicho plato y que no se sabía por astrología, sino porque la misma mulata se lo había referido diciéndole lo que con ella le había pasado y que de aquí se pudo originar el entender que había este confesante sabido este por interrogación de astrología”. AGN-435, f. 534.

<sup>829</sup> “No niega que se hallaron entre sus papeles algunos temas y preguntas que le hicieron, pero que ninguno es de importancia ni está ajustado y tiene declarado y a qué personas le hicieron las interrogaciones, pero que esto de ninguna manera fue con pacto del demonio por que es fiel católico y cristiano y no se había de querer valer del enemigo del género humano. Y que lo demás es mentira y falso testimonio que le levantan algunas personas, sus enemigos”. AGN-435, f. 549.

<sup>830</sup> “Dijo que él es fiel y católico cristiano y cree en el misterio de la santísima trinidad y en Jesucristo Nuestro Señor y en todo aquello que cree, tiene, predica y enseña nuestra santa madre Iglesia católica romana y no ha usado de la judicaria para malos [fines] ni con pacto alguno con el demonio”. AGN-435, f. 547v.

<sup>831</sup> “...no sabe de astrología mças que unos principios que como tiene confesado desde luego que entró preso le enseñó Don Julián de Espinoza en esta ciudad, con todo como lo tiene ya así mismo dicho y confesado habérsele perdido a este confesante unos papeles de su posesión por donde constaba que era libre y que el dicho Don Julián le dijo que aprendiese aquellos principios que le podían aprovechar para la medicina, porque aunque hiciese alguna interrogación, estos señores (diciéndolo por sus señorías) la primera vez que lo supiesen le darían una [re]prensión y este confesante fue continuando con aquellos principios sin salir de ellos y que sabiendo sólo estos pocos principios mal podía enseñar a otras personas y que no se hallará ninguno que tal diga”. AGN-435, foja 547v.

<sup>832</sup> “para hacer cualquiera tema se iba a casa del Saboyano porque no tenía libros y le preguntaba que qué había en aquellos casos...” AGN-435, f. 548.

am accused.”<sup>833</sup> Without books and without a proper knowledge of astrology he could not have made predictions neither taught the art of astrology to anyone else. His third argument was that the use of astrology for entertainment was not regarded as a crime. The said *Saboyano* used to tell him that, since astrology was not an occupation to earn one’s living, it was just a curiosity and thus it meant no crime.<sup>834</sup> Moreover, the said Don Julián had told Rivero that he was teaching astrology to the *corregidor* of the city (Don Jerónimo de Bañuelos) so he did not think it could be so harmful.<sup>835</sup> And he also knew that there were “many” others who translated books and cast interrogations without being punished by the Holy Office.<sup>836</sup> Finally, Rivero argued that he had no knowledge of the inquisitorial prohibition against astrology. Before being called by the Holy Tribunal, Rivero did not know any of the Papal bulls against astrology.<sup>837</sup> “Had he known that it was so bad and forbidden to use these things [astrology and other divinatory arts] he would have never got involved in such thing.”<sup>838</sup>

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<sup>833</sup> “Y se ha visto esto bien entre mis papeles, que no se halló cosa que pertenezca a ello, pues siempre me valí de lo que confería con el Saboyano y don Julián Espinoza y nunca tuve libros de astrología que en ellos se hallase razón de lo que se me imputa”. AGN-435, f. 618.

<sup>834</sup> “...decía [el Saboyano] que como es oficio de que no se comía ni vivía, no se delinquía en nada y sólo era curiosidad...” AGN-435, f. 548v.

<sup>835</sup> “...me dijo dicho don Julián trataba de enseñarla al corregidor de esta ciudad y visto es que oyendo yo esto y otras cosas que solían decir los dichos no me pareció fuese tan dañosa” (f. 618) On Jerónimo de Bañuelos see: *Relación de Méritos y servicios de Jerónimo de Bañuelos Carrillo, caballero de la Orden de Alcántara, Gobernador de la Armada de Barlovento* (1647-09-18), AGI, INDIFERENTE,113,N.55. *Pruebas para la concesión del Título de Caballero de la Orden de Alcántara de Jerónimo Bañuelos Carrillo y Peñalosa de la Cerda y Vivero Tarsis, natural de Córdoba* (1644), AHN, OM-CABALLEROS\_ALCANTARA,EXP.143. *Peticiones y documentos sobre el gobierno de Corcuera: Carta de Pedro Hurtado de Corcuera a Juan de Solórzano sobre el tratado publicado en México por Jerónimo de Bañuelos y Carrillo, titulado 'Conveniencias de las Islas Filipinas', contra su tío Sebastián Hurtado de Corchera* (1 de mayo de 1639). AGI, FILIPINAS,8,R.3,N.104.

<sup>836</sup> “...y actualmente hay hoy en México muchos que traducen libros y han hecho muchas más interrogaciones que otros y esto (señor) sin condenar a ninguno de malicia, y como nunca vi que haya vsa. En todo el tiempo que he asistido en esta ciudad, reprendido ni castigado a ninguno que tratase de dichos disparates entendí siempre como hombre que no lo alcanzo a enteneder no me aconteciese cosa alguna por la falsedad de dichos ita Deus movet astra”. AGN-435, f. 618.

<sup>837</sup> “...y si tuviese noticia como nunca loa tuve de las bulas apostólicas y el rigor con que se procedía con los que trataban de la astrología (como vsa. Me lo ha declarado en este santo tribunal) ni aún por el pensamiento me pasara”. AGN-435, f. 618.

“...se verá bien esto entre mis papeles que no tengo cosa que pertenezca a ello pues siempre me valí de lo que decía el saboyano y Don Julián de Espinoza que nunca tuve libros de Astrología que en ellos se hallase fundamento ni razón de lo que se me imputa y si yo tuviese no noticia como nunca la tuve las Bullas Apostólicas y el rigor con que se procedía con los que trataban de la astrología, como vsa. Me lo ha declarado en este santo tribunal, ni aún por el pensamiento lo hiciera...” AGN-435, f. 636v.

<sup>838</sup> “este confesante está firme en la santa fe católica y que si hubiera alcanzado el que fuese tan malo y prohibido el usar de estas cosas por ningún modo ni manera, ni por ningún interés del [mismo] se hubiera metido en ello y que siempre he reverenciado al santo oficio de la inquisición y los señores jueces y ministros y



Together with all these arguments, Rivero claimed that his case was only motivated by animosity and thus he asked for a change of witnesses.<sup>839</sup> Within the inquisitorial procedure, it was frequent that the accused called for favorable witnesses, or object to his judges, a process known as recusation.<sup>840</sup> The written defence could be of two types: an *abono*, which consisted of proving that the accused was a good Christian, or a *tacha*, which consisted of showing the irrelevance of the testimony that had been offered by attacking the credibility of the witnesses.<sup>841</sup> Whenever it was proved that the witness or witnesses were “mortal enemies” of the accused, the accusation would be eliminated (*tachada*) even in case of heresy.<sup>842</sup> Rivero was probably convincing enough for the Tribunal to show mercy and pronounce a mild sentence: he received the standard two hundred lashes, and was condemned to exile for two years, one compulsory and the second one voluntary. He was scolded for his behaviour, and admonished not to speak again about the Holy Office and its procedures; not to talk to people who had been previously persecuted by the Inquisition; and not to practice judicial astrology or possess any books on the subject.<sup>843</sup>

According to Alberro, the mild sentence was a proof of the validity of Rivero’s criticism; the inquisitors would not have dared to punish harshly somebody who was well

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que sólo refirió lo que oyó decir al dicho Sebastián Báez de Acevedo, no con ánimo dañado como se dice en esta acusación, sino refiriendo sus cosas y dichos como de hombre loco y desatinado, como podrá decir Don Nicolás Coronado, Don Nicolás Flores y Joseph Valdés”. AGN-435, f. 548v.

<sup>839</sup> “Mandar se ajusten los testigos y se verá con ellos que en lo que disponen en la primera y segunda parte no se diferencian en los dichos, casi en ninguna cosa, todos son símiles en el decir y no tienen más fundamento que la malicia y odio y aborrecimientos ue dicho me han tenido y tienen como se ve en la de la astrología, que unos a otros se van llamando y el ser de un barrio y lo que dicen no me ha acontecido”. AGN-435, f. 636. “así lo que ha dispuesto los testigos que tan vehementemente se han investigado y conformado en los dichos con sus malicias no fue así y se ve bien porque parece se fueron adecuando más a lo imperfecto que a la razón”. AGN-435, f. 638.

<sup>840</sup> Kamen (1997), p. 195.

<sup>841</sup> Dedieu (1986), p. 180.

<sup>842</sup> Lewin (1967), p. 152.

<sup>843</sup> “...de aquí adelante se abstenga de decir semejantes palabras en deshonor del Santo Oficio y de sus Ministros, ni de tratar semejantes materias que miran al modo y orden de procesar en el Santo Oficio. Y así mismo de tratar de acaecimientos sucedidos a personas que hayan sido presas, penitenciadas y reconciliadas por la Inquisición por ser como son imposturas y casos fingidos por enemigos de tan Santo y Recto Tribunal y también se le mandase debajo de ex comunión mayor *ipso facto incurrenda* y de doscientos azotes no tratase de la astrología judiciaria ni aprendiese cosa alguna tocante a ella, ni tuviese en su poder libro alguno, que principal o incidentemente tratase de dicha astrología, ni escribiese, ni hiciese escribir cosa alguna que a ella mirase, ni comunicase con las personas mencionadas en su proceso que traten de ella”. AGN-435 f. 648.

informed and was only telling the truth.<sup>844</sup> However, I think it is important to take into account some other factors: first, he might have been successful in convincing the magistrates that he was innocent and that the testimonies against him were not valid. Secondly, the punishment for those who were accused of practicing divinatory arts was generally not severe, especially when he or she was an “ignorant and simple” person.<sup>845</sup> In his defence, Rivero emphasized his own ignorance, by saying he did not know enough about astrology to predict future events, and his own simplicity. Indeed, a closer look at one of the astrological charts that were confiscated by the notary shows that that Rivero was far from being a specialist. As the image below shows, the chart is not only extremely simple, but also has very basic mistakes, such as the wrong representation of the Zodiac. The standard form of genitures was a diagram representing the Zodiac as flattened out onto the page (like in this case), with the traditional symbols for the twelve signs in the outer margin, starting with Aries at nine o’clock and moving counter-clockwise.<sup>846</sup> In Rivero’s chart, Aries is located at twelve o’clock and the Zodiac moves clockwise, which means in the opposite direction of the standard chart.<sup>847</sup>

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<sup>844</sup> Alberro (1998), p. 472. “La benignidad del castigo muestra la validez de las críticas de Vasconcelos, por lo que los inquisidores renunciaron a cometer la infamia de castigar con dureza a una persona de hecho perfectamente enterada y que no proclamaba sino verdades.”

<sup>845</sup> Castañeda (1989), p. 373. The author explains how the crime of divination was more severely punished in the case of clergymen, because in their case, there was no “ignorance or simplicity” which could excuse them.

<sup>846</sup> Grafton (1999), p. 24.

<sup>847</sup> My gratitude goes to Dr. Darrel Rutkin, who helped me with these technical matters, and suggested that it could be possible that Rivero did this mistaken geniture on purpose in order to have a proof of his supposed ignorance on astrology in case the Inquisition would persecute him.

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Julio 1553

Por la rason que tengo nacio  
 a quiebes. a seis de enero a  
 las tres. mas de la tarde, estan  
 do el sol en capricornio en  
 20 el sol en capricornio en  
 23 grados, y siete minutos.  
 de Leon = bien buo tiene  
 dos planetas. que le dominan  
 los mejores. Júpiter a fortu  
 nador. son sagitario y leon  
 tengo por ciello no le falta  
 ra con que pasar su vida a  
 un que sera mal pagada de  
 os beneficios que quiere = no dexara de tener un que  
 rdes. a la edad de treinta y nueve años y pad  
 era algunas. enfermedades por colera = era  
 de buen entendimiento y de buen parecer de  
 mediana estatura = con padecia de pobres  
 onrrada y reconocida enemiga de cosas mal  
 ccas guardese mucho de traydores, y tenga  
 cuidado de guardar no se fi de nadie y mir  
 que corre riesgo de golpe de sierra y caer  
 de alto y no detener grandes pesadumbres  
 en su casamiento y padecer alas. c. n. e.  
 tres años tendra a la edad de treinta y nueve  
 años. y remedio y ser aduena y señora de lo  
 suyo sola y si vuelve a casar tendra mu  
 chos descensos y gusto mire por salud que n  
 de para deser arrebatada y colerica en  
 mucho grado sera atrevida y para todo  
 amiga de galas y noias y pretendida

A nativity found among Gaspar Rivero's confiscated papers. AGN-435, f. 594.

Last but not least, it is important to mention that Rivero cooperated with the inquisitors and gave information about other people practicing astrology in Mexico City. During the ratification of his confession, Rivero brought up the names of some other astrologers, such as Bonilla (Gabriel López de Bonilla), Don Juan Guerrero, and the Mercedarian Fray Diego Rodríguez.<sup>848</sup> He also referred to a day when he went to Don Julian de Espinosa's house and together with Don Julian was an Augustinian priest called Fray Nicolás, whose last name he could not remember. Both of them were casting a figure with books and texts to predict who the next provincial of the Order was going to be.<sup>849</sup> Don Julián de Espinosa told him that he used to go for confession with Friar Nicolás, who was Don Julián's pupil and absolved him.<sup>850</sup> Doña Juana de Marquina brought the defendant to the house of Don Francisco de la Torre, who showed him two astrological interrogations: the first one was done to know whether he was going to be imprisoned, and the second, to know whether somebody was going to ask him for his son's inheritance.<sup>851</sup> Julián de Espinoza and *Saboyano* are frequently mentioned in Rivero's declarations. The inquisitors, however, did not proceed against any of the "astrologers" denounced by Rivero, except for Melchor Pérez de Soto, the librarian astrologer, whose case will be analysed in the following chapter.

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<sup>848</sup> Don Julian de Espinoza "le dijo que él sólo alcanzaba lo que aquello significaba y que para que entendiese este confesante que el dicho don Julián era más eminente que no Bonilla (Gabriel López de Bonilla), don Juan Guerrero, el maestro Fray Diego Rodríguez, el saboyano y otros que tratan de astrología de que no se acuerda" AGN-435, f. 642. On Gabriel López Bonilla, see chapter 5 of this work.

<sup>849</sup> "...fue a buscar al dicho Julián de Espinosa a la dicha casa de la Marquina y le halló en una sala, juntamente con Fray Nicolás, cuyo sobre nombre no sabe y es religioso sacerdote predicador y confesor de la orden de san agustín que le parece será de treinta años, bien dispuesto y es discípulo de dicho Don Julián en la astrología, que estaban ambos elevando figura con libros y papeles para saber quién había de ser Provincial de San Agustín...." AGN-435, f. 642v.

<sup>850</sup> The Augustine said that "eran embustes andar escrupulizando [sic] en esto de la astrología". AGN-435, f. 644.

<sup>851</sup> "Y el dicho Don Francisco de la Tore, llamando aparte a este confesante le metió en su recamara y le dió escritas de su letra en un papel dos horas, la una para que viese si había de caer en la cárcel y la otra para que viese si le habían de pedir la herencia de su hijo el fraile Benito que estaba en España". AGN-435, f. 644v.

## Chapter 5. The Astrologer's Books

In December 1654, Melchor Pérez de Soto was apprehended by the Inquisition in Mexico City for practicing judicial astrology and possessing forbidden books. Pérez de Soto was born in Cholula in 1606 and worked, like his father, as an architect. He was the son of Juan Pérez de Soto, born in Galicia, and Ana de León García, who was in turn daughter of an *hidalgo conquistador*, Sebastián de Espinosa, and Elvira de León from Guatemala. He learned to read and write in the schools of Francisco de Clavijo and Juan García, and began to study Latin but gave up in order to help his father, who taught him architecture. In 1628 he married Leonor de Montoya, and together they had 8 or 9 children who died in early childhood.<sup>852</sup> In December 1643, he left for California as cosmographer on a frigate for a three-month exploration voyage.<sup>853</sup> On February 18, 1653 Pérez de Soto was granted the position of *maestro mayor* of the cathedral and the royal buildings of Mexico City.<sup>854</sup> At the time of his apprehension he was working on the calculations for moving the bells from the old to the new Cathedral.

From November 1650 to December 1652, the inquisitors collected three different denunciations against Pérez de Soto. All three denunciations were presented by students whom the accused had employed to translate books from Latin into Spanish. Based on these testimonies, the inquisitors concluded that Pérez de Soto should be tried. On January 12, 1655 an order was issued to seize Pérez de Soto and bring all his books and manuscripts to the chambers of the Inquisition, where they were inventoried.<sup>855</sup> Unsurprisingly, the extant inventory of this outstanding library has called the attention of scholars concerned with the

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<sup>852</sup> *Melchor Pérez de Soto contrae matrimonio con Doña Leonor de Montoya*. (1628) AGN; Matrimonios, Vol. 64, exp. 20, fojas 75-77.

<sup>853</sup> Mathes, Michael (intr.) *Documentos para la Historia de la Explotación Comercial de California. 1611-1679*. Madrid: Porrúa; 1970.

<sup>854</sup> *Real Cédula concediendo título de maestro mayor de la obra de la catedral Melchor Pérez de Soto* (1653, 18 de Febrero). AGN; Reales Cédulas, Vol. 18, exp. 448, f. 241v. Pérez de Soto was appointed to this position after the previous *maestro*, Juan Serrano, died in 1652. His successor, Luis Gómez de Trasmonte, was appointed for the charge on 2 February 1656. *Nombramiento de Maestro Mayor de la Construcción de la Catedral de México para Luis Gómez de Trasmonte*. Reales Cédulas (Febrero 2 de 1656), Vol. 25, exp 210, folio 83v. On Pérez de Soto's works on the Cathedral see Trabulse (1994), p. 265.

<sup>855</sup> *Inventario de los libros que se le hallaron a Melchor Pérez de Soto, vecino de esta ciudad y obrero mayor de la santa Iglesia catedral de ella. Los cuales se metieron en la Cámara del secreto de este Santo Oficio*. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 440, ff. 1-107

*bookish culture* of colonial Spanish America.<sup>856</sup> The earliest study on the case was published in 1920 by Manuel Romero Torrerros.<sup>857</sup> In 1947, Julio Jiménez Rueda published the transcription of the whole inventory in his collection *Documentos para la historia de la cultura en México*.<sup>858</sup> Daniel Castanien devoted his PhD dissertation to identify all 1592 volumes listed in the inventory and classify them in three different genres: belles-lettres, secular non-fiction, and religious literature.<sup>859</sup> The inventory, concluded Castanien in a later article, “reveals that Pérez de Soto had gathered together one of the finest private collections of books in seventeenth-century Mexico. Certainly, it is the most extensive of which there is any trustworthy record.”<sup>860</sup> More recently, Elías Trabulse looked at Pérez de Soto’s library as a testimony of the introduction of *modern scientific ideas* into New Spain.<sup>861</sup>

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<sup>856</sup> Leonard, Irving. *La Epoca Barroca en el México Colonial*. México: FCE; 1974 (original title: *Baroque Times in Old Mexico*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1959). Chapter VI is dedicated to Pérez de Soto’s case. On book history in sixteenth and seventeenth-century New Spain see: Some studies on Mexican libraries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are: Beristáin de Souza, José Mariano. *Biblioteca Hispanoamericana Septentrional*, Tipografía del Colegio Católico, Amecameca, 1833. “Una biblioteca del siglo XVII” en *Documentos para la Historia de la Cultura en México*, Publicaciones del AGN, No. 3, México, 1947. Eguiara y Eguren, Juan José. *Prólogos a la biblioteca mexicana*, nota prel. por Federico Gómez de Orozco, versión española anotada, con un estudio biográfico y la bibliografía del autor por Agustín Millares Carlo, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1944, 303 p. Fernández del Castillo, Francisco. *Libros y libreros del siglo XVI*, 2a. ed., AGN, 1982. Martínez, Jose Luis. *El libro en Hispanoamerica. Origen y desarrollo*, 2a. Ed., Madrid, Ediciones Piramides, 1986. Medina, José Toribio. *La imprenta en México (1539-1821)*, Santiago de Chile, 1907; and *Biblioteca hispanoamericana*, 7 vols., Santiago de Chile, 1898-1907. O’Gorman, Edmundo. “Bibliotecas y librerías coloniales” en *Boletín del AGN*, X, 4, (1939), pp. 664-665. Osorio Romero, Ignacio. *Historia de las Bibliotecas Novohispanas*, México, SEP. 1986. De Paula Andrade, Vicente. *Ensayo bibliográfico mexicano del siglo XVII*, México, Imprenta del Museo Nacional, 1899. Teixidor, Felipe. *Ex libris y Bibliotecas de México*, México, 1931. Torre Revello, José. *El libro, la imprenta y el periodismo en América durante la dominación española*, Buenos Aires, 1940. Valverde y Téllez, Emeterio. *Bibliografía filosófica mexicana*, 2a. ed. Imprenta de Jesús Rodríguez León, México, 1913.

<sup>857</sup> Romero Torrerros y Vincent, Manuel (Marqués de San Francisco). *Un bibliófilo en el Santo Oficio*. México: Librería de Pedro Robredo; 1920.

<sup>858</sup> Jiménez Rueda, Julio. “Una biblioteca del siglo XVII” in DHCM. Mexico : Imprenta Universitaria. 1947.

<sup>859</sup> Castanien, Donald. *A Seventeenth Century Mexican Library and the Inquisition*. Michigan: University of Michigan; 1951. An interesting comparison with: Ernst, Germana “Scienza, Astrologia e Politica nella Roma Barocca. La Biblioteca di Don Orazio Morandi” in Canone, Eugenio, editore. *Bibliothecae Selectae. Da Cusano a Leopardi*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki; 1993; pp. 217-253. She classifies the texts in the library in three different kinds: literary, historical-political, and scientific.

<sup>860</sup> Castanien, Donald. “The Mexican Inquisition Censors a Private Library, 1655” in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1954; 34(3), p. 375. According to Romero Torrerros (1920) and Jiménez Rueda (1947) the library had 1502 volumes, and according to Trabulse they were 1663.

<sup>861</sup> Trabulse (1994), pp. 87-89 and 137-152. For similar approaches see: Ramos Lara, María de la Paz. “Introducción de las Teorías Mecanicistas en la Nueva España” in Lértora Mendoza (2000), pp. 91-98; Uchmany, Eva Alexandra. “Inquisición y Ciencia en el México Colonial” in Peset, Jose Luis (coord.) *Ciencia Vida y Espacio en Iberoamerica*. Madrid, CSIC, 1989.

My own discussion will focus on the processes of transmission, dissemination, and assimilation of astrological knowledge. In the last decades, the question about transmission of knowledge has become central for historians of science, and intellectual historians. Within the field of history of science, this question was previously assessed as a matter of *normalization* of new paradigms, of measurement of innovation, or of intellectual domination or dependency. The notions of *high* and *low* culture were also regarded as key for understanding the transmission of knowledge within different social groups. More recently, all these rigid dichotomies (high and low, normal and pseudo-science, dominator and dominated, tradition and innovation) have been challenged, and transmission of knowledge has been regarded as a creative process itself. The question is no longer tackled in terms of *degradation* or *improvement* of original ideas. Rather, special attention is paid to the practical means of dissemination of knowledge: interpretation and translation of texts, correspondence, manuscript diffusion, publishing strategies, means of popularisation of scientific knowledge, methods of commentary, conformation of networks. All of them are “visible signs of life in a tradition that would have the marmoreal perfection of death if it froze in a stable form instead of continuing to undergo creative adaptation.”<sup>862</sup>

In this chapter I would like to show how inquisitorial records may be used to trace some of these practical means of transmission and dissemination of knowledge. I will first focus on two important stages in this process, namely translation and censorship; secondly, I will aim at reconstructing an intellectual network linked by a shared interest in astrology, and by the exchange of books on the subject; and finally, I will try to understand the way in which this knowledge was appropriated: the reading of specific works motivated by a particular interest, and the use of this knowledge obtained through readings for practical scopes. Through the records of the trial we can recover (always in a mediated way) some of the actors’ voices, which put some flesh to the bones of a list of books. Moreover, the voices of witnesses, censors, and the accused himself shed some light not only on the material aspect of the process of transmission of knowledge (books, manuscripts, texts), but also on the immaterial aspects (language, social status, prestige, authority). The ultimate question we

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<sup>862</sup> Grafton, Anthony and Ann Blair (ed.) *The Transmission of culture in early modern Europe* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.

wish to answer with this approach is how astrology was read, translated, studied, censored, understood, and used in seventeenth-century New Spain.

### 5.1. Translating books on astrology

The first denunciation against Pérez de Soto took place almost four years before his apprehension, during the trial against the mulatto Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos.<sup>863</sup> It was a common practice of inquisitors to keep files or *dossiers* in order to collect evidence against one or more suspects whose names came up during another trial. On different occasions throughout Rivero's trial he provided the inquisitors with the names of those who were practicing judicial astrology at the time in Mexico City.<sup>864</sup> Rivero declared in his second hearing that Julián de Espinoza, the man who had taught him the usefulness of astrology for finding lost objects, had also given him some notebooks about astrology to translate. When Rivero left Mexico City to go to Campeche, he gave these notebooks to Melchor Pérez de Soto, and never recovered them after he was back. Pérez de Soto said he had lost them, but he lent Rivero a translation of one of the originals he had given to him.<sup>865</sup>

Later in the process, when Rivero identified his confiscated papers, he recognized a translation of a treatise by Albumasar that Pérez de Soto had requested. Apparently, it was not the first time that Rivero was asked to translate an astrological work. In one of the hearings, he declared that a man who lived in Guatemala had asked him to translate from Latin into Spanish "some astrological principles" by Giuntini, a widely read author in New

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<sup>863</sup> See Chapter 4 of this work.

<sup>864</sup> "*Relación*: Este reo [Gaspar Rivero] y testigo fue preso en la ciudad de México en tres de Noviembre del año de 1650 por usar de la Astrología Judiciaria y calumniados del Santo Oficio y sus Ministros y sospechoso en la fe. Por información que contra él se recibió de usar tal Astrología y las demás cosas y en algunas Audiencias que fue pidiendo y las que fue mandó subir al Tribunal fue declarando contra diferentes cómplices, entre ellos contra el dicho Melchor Pérez lo siguiente". INAH-2, f. 226v.

<sup>865</sup> "...y volviendo este confesante de Campeche, le pidió dichos papeles al dicho Melchor Pérez y le respondió que ya se le habían perdido y de ahí a algún tiempo le prestó el susodicho a este confesante un cuaderno de los principios de astrología trasladado del que le había dado a guardar, añadidos otros principios de motivo del dicho Melchor Pérez a quien le volvió el dicho cuaderno este confesante porque se lo pidió el dicho Melchor Pérez..."AGN-435, f. 532-532v.



Spain at the time.<sup>866</sup> Among those interested in horoscopic astrology, however, Albumasar was probably the most popular authority. In his first hearing, Rivero informed the tribunal that he had translated some works by this author for Julián de Espinoza and *Saboyano*. Rivero would then use the drafts of these translations to cast his own horoscopes, which were sometimes accurate and sometimes not.<sup>867</sup>

Albumasar or Abû Ma'shar is "probably the greatest of the Arab astrologers, known widely in Latin and even in Byzantine Greek."<sup>868</sup> Albumasar was an important source for the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy to Europe in the twelfth century. Within the field of astrology, it was he "who effected the complete amalgamation of Aristotle's theories of the processes of natural change, growth and decay, with the determining principle of celestial control of sub-lunar events that gave astrology its chief claim to credibility in the Middle Ages."<sup>869</sup> He was born in Balh in the Persian province of Hurasan (or Khurasan) in 787 and died in central Iraq in 886. It is unclear how much he owed to his early life in Bahl, which had close contacts with India and further East. He made his career in Baghdad, capital city of Islam, and a flourishing centre for the arts and sciences at the time. One of his contemporaries in the city was the philosopher al-Kindi who is said to have brought Albumasar to the study of Astrology.<sup>870</sup> He wrote about forty treatises, several of which were translated into Latin from the twelfth century onwards. Astrology was his central concern, and he wrote texts on all of its branches: nativities, elections, and interrogations. His best-known work, both in the Middle Ages and in later periods, is his *Great Introduction to Astrology* "which sets astrology firmly within an Aristotelian cosmological framework."<sup>871</sup> Of comparable importance is the

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<sup>866</sup> "...que traía unos cuadernos de lo que iba traduciendo de latín en romance de principios de astrología de un autor llamado Juntino o Claudio que se le dio Don Francisco Doblete de Espinoza, que está al presente en Guatemala..." AGN-435, f. 533.

<sup>867</sup> "...por algunas interrogaciones de astrología que ha hecho [...] haciéndolos unas veces bien y otras mal, acertando o errando [...] Y entre el Saboyano, que un sastre que vive en esta ciudad y el dicho Don Julián de Espinoza la hicieron [una rueda del Zodiaco] y que a ambos les traducía al romance el latín de algunos libros de astrología de Albumasar y de algunos borradores que le quedaban se valía y que no tiene otra cosa de que acusarse" agn-435, f. 528.

<sup>868</sup> Carmody, Frances J. *Arabic Astronomical and Astrological Sciences in Latin Translation. A Critical Bibliography*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press; 1956, p. 91.

<sup>869</sup> Carey (1992), p. 7.

<sup>870</sup> K. Yamamoto and C. Burnett, *Abû Ma'sar on Historical Astrology. The Book of religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2000, 2 vols.

<sup>871</sup> Yamamoto and Burnett (2000), p. XIV. The authors explain that two versions of this work appear to have been written (848 and 876); it was translated into Latin twice in the twelfth century (1133 and 1140); and the

work known as *The Book of Religions and Dynasties* or *On the Great Conjunctions*, which introduced to the West the theory of conjunctions, “probably Islam’s single most striking contribution to astrology.”<sup>872</sup>

The *Flores* or ‘Book of Revolutions of the World-Years’ was probably translated into Latin by John of Seville in the first half of the twelfth century. Extant in over forty manuscripts and six printed editions from 1488 to 1506, it was among Albumasar’s most popular works in Latin. It consists in a short treatise of about thirty chapters giving various rules for the interpretation of the horoscope of the revolution of the year, a special horoscope to forecast world affairs cast annually when the Sun enters the head of the sign Aries. The *Flores* also gives rules for predictions according to the planetary lord of the year, in detail for Saturn and briefly for the other planets; explanations on the nature and attributes of the planets; a review of some of the standard topics: harvest, rains, wars, plagues, and earthquakes; the position and nature of prominent fixed stars; the effect of the fixed stars on the lord of the year; and interpretation of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and the Head/Tail of the Dragon in each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac.<sup>873</sup>

According to Rivero, Pérez de Soto had asked him to translate from Latin into Spanish two notebooks about the *Flores* by Albumasar for four *reales* each. But because he was busy at that moment, he decided to pass these notebooks to the bachelor Joseph de Avila, nephew of the astrologer *Licenciado* Becerra, who translated them for six *reales*.<sup>874</sup> One of the translations was kept by the bachelor, and the other one was confiscated by the Holy

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Arabic and Latin texts have recently been edited by Richard Lemay.

<sup>872</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 48. On the theory of conjunctions see Chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>873</sup> BAN. References to: Carmody (1956), pp. 92-94; D. Pingree, ‘Abû Ma’shar al-Balkhî Ja’far ibn Muhammad’, in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, I, New York, 1970, pp. 36-37; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, VII, Leiden, 1979, pp. 142-143. See also: Clark (V.A.) *The Illustrated ‘Abridged Astrological Treatises of Albumasar’: Medieval Astrological Imagery in the West* (Phd University of Michigan, UMI, 1979; Lemay, Richard. *Abu Ma’ Shar and Latin Aristotelianism in the Twelfth Century: The recovery of Aristotle’s natural philosophy through Arabic Astrology*, American University of Beirut, publication of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Oriental Series, 38. Beirut. 1962; and Federici Vescovini, Graziella (ed.) Sadan. *I Segreti Astrologici di Albumasar*”. Torino: Nino Argano Editore; 2000.

<sup>874</sup> This *Licenciado* Becerra could be Luis Becerra Tanco, professor of astrology and mathematics at the University in Mexico City. See: *Ruego y encargo al recto de esta Real Universidad para que proceda a la provisión de la Cátedra de Astrología y Matemáticas* (1672). AGN; General de Parte Vol. 14. Or he could also be Jerónimo Becerra, autor of the *Disertación física y anatómica de los sentidos interiores y exteriores del hombre*. México: Agustín de Santiesteban y Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio; 1657.

Tribunal.<sup>875</sup> Joseph de Avila must have been successful in giving his translation to Pérez de Soto, who, according to the inventory of the library, owned a manuscript that started *Albumazar, Flores de Astrologia*.<sup>876</sup> The other translation was inventoried as the third item of Rivero's confiscated papers under the following entry: "a manuscript in twelve folios that starts *Flores de Albumazar*, and ends *que de este modo imitan*."<sup>877</sup> The fourth item was the original printed version in Latin (*Incipit Tractatus Albumazaris*), which Rivero identified as the copy that Pérez de Soto had given him for the translation.<sup>878</sup>

Joseph de la Cruz Benítez, student of philosophy at the Jesuit's college, also worked as a translator for Pérez de Soto. He presented himself before the Holy Office on April 11, 1652 to denounce Pérez de Soto for the possession of forbidden books. According to Joseph de la Cruz, the accused owned "books that should be expurgated according to the expurgatory and are not. One is called Ali Aben Ragel, moor, and the other one Abraham Abenes Re, moor or Indian, and another one by Claudio Ariot, physician, and one more by a Dominican friar who calls himself Campanela and which deals with nativities, and another one that deals with sigils for medical works which I don't know whether it is forbidden or not."<sup>879</sup> The accuser then gave an account of different occasions when Pérez de Soto was asked to cast horoscopes, mainly to help find lost or stolen property, but also for other kind of predictions. After his first deposition, Joseph de la Cruz was asked by the inquisitors to present a written denunciation against Pérez de Soto. A week later, the witness was back before the tribunal

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<sup>875</sup> "habiéndole reconocido dijo que habiéndole dado Melchor Pérez, de quien dijo en otra Audiencia, dos cuadernos en latín de las Flores de Albumazar para que se los tradujese este confesante en romance a cuatro reales cada cuaderno, le dio este confesante al Bachiller Joseph de Ávila, sobrino del Licenciado Becerra el astrólogo para que los tradujese como lo hizo por estar ocupado este confesante y así es de letra del dicho Bachiller Ávila este cuaderno pagándole seis reales y que el otro lo tiene el dicho Bachiller." INAH-2, f. 227. Corresponds with folio 588 of AGN-435.

<sup>876</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 155.

<sup>877</sup> "Número 3: Un cartapacio manuscrito en doce fojas que comienza *Flores de Albumazar* y acaba *que de este modo imitan*." AGN-435, f. 513.

<sup>878</sup> Número 8: "Y asimismo otro cuaderno impreso del número cuatro en siete fojas escrito en lengua latín que comienzan *Incipit Tractatus Albumazaris* y acaba *bel fortuna sicut in* y habiéndole reconocido dijo ser el cuaderno que le dio el dicho Melchor Pérez para que se lo tradujese". INAH-2, f. 227, and AGN-435, f.588v.

<sup>879</sup> "...que también sabe en esta ciudad un hombre llamado Melchor Pérez de Soto que tiene su casa enfrente del Corral de las Comedias de la calle del Arco, el cual tiene en su poder libros que manda el expurgatorio corran expurgados y no lo están, el uno llamado Ali Aben Ragel, moro y el otro Abraham Abenes Re [Abraham-Ben-Meir Ibn-Erza], moro o indio, y otro de Claudio Ariot, médico y otro más de un fraile dominico llamado el mismo Campanela que trata de nacimientos y otro que trata de sigilos [secretos] para obras médicas que no sabe si está prohibido." INAH-2, f. 235.

“with a manuscript that filled five and a half closely written pages, where he listed 20 books on astrology possessed by Pérez de Soto.”<sup>880</sup> But before we find out which books they were, it is worth taking a closer look at the first four authors mentioned by this translator.

The “moor Ali Aben Ragel” or Haly Albohazen (or Alboacen) was better known by his father’s name Abenragel, and was one of the most influential astrologers of the Arab world in the Middle Ages and beyond. Born in Cordova or elsewhere in Spain or in northern Africa, he was active in Tunis between 1016 and 1040, and composed an enormous compendium of practical astrological instruction: *De iudiciis astrorum* or ‘the distinguished book on the judgements from the stars’<sup>881</sup> It was translated from Arabic into Old Castilian (*El libro conplido en los iudizios de las estrellas*) by Yhuda ben Moshe in 1254, and some years later from Castilian into Latin by Aegidius de Tebaldis of Parma and Petrus de Regio in the court of Alfonso X the Wise.<sup>882</sup> *De iudiciis* is one of the most extensive astrological compilations of the Middle Ages, and the primary source of most quotations attributed merely to ‘Haly’. At least 25 extant manuscripts and 7 printed editions from 1485 to 1571 have been identified. It contains a complete method of astrology, divided into eight books covering all branches of astrology: interrogations, nativities, elections, revolutions, and general astrology.<sup>883</sup> A copy of Abenragel’s treatise printed in Venice in 1503 was listed in Perez de Soto’s inventory.<sup>884</sup>

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<sup>880</sup> Castanien (1951) p. 38.

<sup>881</sup> Sarton (1927-47), Vol I., pp. 715-716. He refers to: C. Broeckelmann. *Arabische Literatur* (vol. 1, 224, 1898); H. Suter. *Die Mathematiker un Astronomen der Araber* (100, 1900; Nachträge, 172, 1902); *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (vol. 2, 356, 1916).

<sup>882</sup> A discussion on the exact date of the translation is found in: Thorndike, Lynn. “The Date of Aegidius de Tebaldis’ Translation of Haly Abenragel, *De iudiciis astrologiae*” in *Modern Language Review*, XLV, 1951, p. 517. According to Carmody (1956, p. 150) the year was 1256. On the translation see also: E.S. Procter. “The Scientific Works of the Court of Alfonso X of Castille: the King and his Collaborator” in *Modern Language Review*, XL (1945), pp. 25-26.

<sup>883</sup> BAN. References to: Stegemann, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Astrologie. I. Der griechische Astrologe Dorotheos von Sidon und der arabische Astrologe Abu’L-Hasan Ali ibn abi’r-Rigal genannt Albohazen*, Heidelberg, 1935; V. Stegemann, ‘Astrologische Zarathustra-Fragmente bei dem arabischen Astrologen Abû l-Hasan ‘Ali ibn abi r-Rigal (11. Jhdt.)’, in *Orientalia*, 6, 1937, pp. 317-336 F.J. Carmody (1956), pp. 150-152; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, VII, Leiden, 1979, p. 187; D. Pingree, ‘Ibn Abi ‘l-Ridjal’, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New Edition, III, Leiden-London, 1971, p. 688.

<sup>884</sup> Albohazen Haly Filius Abenragel (Aboul Hazan Alí ibn Aboul Ridjal, Al Shaibani) *Praeclarissimus in Iudiciis astrorum Albohazen Haly filius Abenragel, noviter impressum et fideliter emendatum... A la Fin: Finti feliciter liber completus in iudiciis stellarum, quem composuit Albohaçen... bene revusis... per dominum Bartolemum de Alten ...Impressus arte et impeisi per Jo. Bapti. Sesa, anno Domini MCCCCIII. Die IIII Aprilis* (Venetiis). Castanien (1951), p. 155.

The other “moor or Indian” mentioned by Joseph de la Cruz is Abraham Ibn Ezra (ca. 1089-ca. 1167), a Jewish religious thinker who was also devoted to the study of natural philosophy. Also known as Avenaris or Judaeus, Ibn Erza left a large corpus of biblical exegesis, religious and profane poetry, grammatical and theological monographs. Within the realm of natural philosophy, the main part of his writings consists of a series of astrological treatises which the historian Shlomo Sela has defined as an *astrological encyclopedia*.<sup>885</sup> One set of treatises was composed in the same year (1148) and in the same place (the city of Béziers in Provence); from a thematic point of view, they may be regarded as chapters of a single major work.<sup>886</sup> Indeed, the seven astrological tracts of Abraham Ibn Ezra were printed in Latin as a compendium under the title *In re iudiciali opera*. Before the Renaissance, however, some of his treatises were translated individually, and into other languages than Latin. The first tract, “The Beginning of Wisdom”, was translated into French in 1273. “The Book of Nativities”, considered by Ibn Ezra as one of his most central astrological works, was translated from Catalan into Latin in Lyon in 1448, and published in Venice in 1484 under the title *Liber Abraham Iude de nativitatibus*. Manuscripts of different astrological tracts in Latin translations are also very numerous.<sup>887</sup>

By studying Ibn Erza’s works, the reader would become familiar with basic astrological concepts (the zodiac constellations, the planets and their astrological meanings), the theory of planetary conjunctions (following Albumasar), and the main astrological practices: nativities, elections, and interrogations. The treatise on nativities dealt with the problem of determining the criteria to be employed in order to choose an ascendant for the

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<sup>885</sup> Sela, Shlomo. *Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science*. Leiden-Boston: Brill; 2003. By the same author see also: “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s special strategy in the creation of a Hebrew scientific terminology” in *Micrologus: Natura, scienze e società medievali* 9 (2002), p. 65-87; and “Encyclopedic aspects of Abraham ibn Ezra’s scientific corpus” in *The medieval Hebrew encyclopedias of science and philosophy: proceedings of the Bar-Ilan University conference*. edited by Steven Harvey, Dordrecht : Kluwer, 2000.

<sup>886</sup> Sela (2003), p. 58. For a synoptic view of Ibn Erza’s astrological works Sela refers to: Steinschneider, M. “Abraham Ibn Ezra (Abraham Judaeus, Avenare)” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 495-498; Rosin “Die Rieligionsphilosophie Abraham Ibn Ezra’s” in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 42, 1898, pp. 250-251; and Levy, T. *The Astrological works of Abraham Ibn Ezra*, 1927, pp. 11-13. Vallicrosa (1949), pp. 289-347, focused on Ibn Ezra’s astronomical work, and edited two Latin treatises ascribed by him to Ibn Ezra. *Liber de Rationibus Tabularum* and *De Astrolabio*.

<sup>887</sup> Sela (2003), pp. 59 and 62. Thorndike, Lynn. “The Latin Translations of the Astrological Tracts of Abraham Avenezra”. *Isis*. 1944; 35:293-302.

nativity; with the techniques to interpret the characteristics of the twelve astrological houses; and the question of the *revolutiones annorum*, that is, the analysis of the position of the planets at the anniversary of the person's birth. The fifth treatise or "Book of Luminaries" is concerned mainly with medical astrology, more specifically, with the influence exerted by the Moon on man's health.<sup>888</sup>

The copy of Ibn Ezra's *In re iudiciali* found in Pérez de Soto's library was the Latin translation by Peter of Abano printed in Venice in 1507.<sup>889</sup> Peter of Abano (d.ca. 1315), the Paduan physician, philosopher and astrologer, was active around the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Not only was he a translator, but also a widely known author on astrological subjects himself. He wrote systematically about astrology in three important works: *Lucidator dubitabilium astronomia*, *De motu octavae sphaera* and *Imagines*, or *Astrolabium planium*.<sup>890</sup> In 1293, he made an *improved* Latin version of Ibn Erza's treatises based on the pre-existing French translation by Henri Bate of Malines, who translated directly from the Hebrew in 1281 and 1292. Arnoul de Quinquempoix, a doctor at the court of Philip the Fair in the early years of the fourteenth century, also translated into Latin from the French translation, apparently in ignorance of the fact that Peter of Abano had already done so.<sup>891</sup> In any case, the translations by Peter of Abano gained far wider currency than those of Arnoul, and they remained popular and influential until the Renaissance when they were first printed.<sup>892</sup>

Besides the original Latin edition, the inquisitors found among Pérez de Soto's confiscated books two manuscript translations into Spanish of Ibn Erza's works. One of them was entitled *Razones de Abraham Abenarre (The Book of Reasons)* and the other one,

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<sup>888</sup> Sela (2003), pp. 58-72.

<sup>889</sup> *Abrahe Avenaris Judei, astrologie peritissimi, in re iudiciali opera, ab excellentissimo philosopho Petro de Abano...in latinum traducta introductiorim quido dicitur Principium sapientie. Liber rationum. Liber nativitatum et revolutionum earum. Liber interrogationum. Liber electionum. Liber planetarum et revolutionum annorum mundi, quid dicitur de mundo vel seculo. Tractatus insuper quidem particulares Cantiloquium Bethen breve ad modum. Ejusdem de hors planetarum.* Venetiis, ex officina P. Liechtenstein, 1507.

<sup>890</sup> Federici Vescovini, Graziella. "Peter of Abano and Astrology" in Curry (1987), pp. 19-39.

<sup>891</sup> Thorndike (1944), p. 293.

<sup>892</sup> Federici (1987), p. 19. On the Latin translations of Peter of Abano see also: Federici Vescovini: "Le fonti Greco-arabe-latine del *Lucidator*" in *Atti del Convegno 'Primo Umanesimo e Filosofia a Padova'*, Padova, 1985; Halbron, Jacques. Traduction du *Livre des Fondements Astrologiques* d'Abraham Ibn Ezra, Préface G. Vajda, Paris, Retz; and Levy, Raphael. "A Note on the Latin Translators of Ibn Ezra" in *Isis*. 1947; 37:153-155.

*Comienza el libro de la introducción (The Beginning of Wisdom?)*<sup>893</sup> Probably they were made by Joseph de la Cruz, who declared that he had “translated into romance many notebooks on this forbidden astrology taken from Abraham Abenarre, even though there was a manuscript note at the beginning of the book saying that *it should not be read until expurgated.*”<sup>894</sup> Joseph de la Cruz saw that this note was later erased, and he assumed it was Pérez de Soto who had done it, but he was not sure about it.<sup>895</sup>

Claude Dariot, and Tomasso Campanella, were the two other authors identified by Joseph de la Cruz in his first denunciation against Pérez de Soto. The accuser had not translated any work by the former, but only a book about nativities by the latter. He had made the translation from a book that Pérez de Soto had borrowed from a man called Luis Zapata.<sup>896</sup> This could explain why no work by Campanella is listed in the inventory of the library. One possibility is that the book to which the translator was referring is the *Astrologicorum libri 6*, where the Dominican theologian dealt with nativities and elections.<sup>897</sup> As mentioned in a previous chapter, Campanella (1568-1639) was one of the Catholic theologians most committed with the defence of astrology. In his *Six Books of Astrology*, he claims “to eliminate all superstition of the Arabs and Jews, to treat the subject naturally and according to Holy Scripture and the doctrine of Aquinas, Albertus, and the leading theologians.”<sup>898</sup>

By contrast to Campanella’s work, a copy of Dariot’s elementary textbook *Ad astrorum judicia facilis introductio* is registered in the inventory of books confiscated to

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<sup>893</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 153.

<sup>894</sup> “Y también le trasladé en romance muchos cuadernos de esta astrología prohibida sacados de Abraham Abenarre sin embargo que decía en el principio de este libro de letra de mano según me parece que no se leyese hasta que se expurgase...” INAH-2, f241v.

<sup>895</sup> “...y después vi borrado este parecer no sé si el susodicho lo borró.” INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>896</sup> “Y también le trasladé de la misma manera un libro que trataba también de natividades cuyo autor era Campanella, fraile dominico tiene el traslado pienso que en su poder y el libro dicho tenía Don Luis Zapata a quien lo [...] el dicho Melchor Pérez.” INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>897</sup> *Astrologicorum libri 6, In quibus astrologia, omni superstitione Arabum, & Iudaeorum eliminata, physiologice tractatur, secundum S. scripturas, & doctrinam S. Thomae, & Alberti, & summorum theologorum; ita vt absque suspicione mala in ecclesia Dei multa cum vtilitate legi possint.* First edition: Lyon, 1629. Second edition: Frankfurt, 1630. A false seventh book was later added to the text. See: Grillo, Francesco *Questioni campanelliane: la stampa fraudolenta e clandestina degli "Astrologicorum libri."*, Cosenza, 1961.

<sup>898</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VI, p. 173.

Pérez de Soto.<sup>899</sup> This text was first published in Latin in 1557, translated into French the following year, and published in English in 1583, 1598, and 1653.<sup>900</sup> Dariot (1533-1596) was a French Paracelsian physicist and astrologer who introduced the principles of horary astrology to France and Great Britain. From chapter one to eighteen, his treatise explains basic astrological concepts such as the Zodiac and the division of the Signs; the movements, qualities, dignities, and accidents of the planets; the twelve houses of the Heavens, and their signification; and the way to cast a figure. From chapter nineteen to thirty two, the author focuses on the practice of astrological interrogations. He starts with a general consideration of the “things as are to be observed before you give judgement to any question” and proceeds with very specific questions for each chapter: how to know whether any man that is absent, be dead or alive; to know whether any man shall have or possess riches and substances, and when; whether a man shall keep or leave his servant; whether a man shall obtain in marriage that woman which he desires; whether a man shall enjoy the goods and dowry of his wife; of the speed and flack return of him that takes in hand any journey, and of such things as shall happen in the journey; to understand whether a man shall obtain that dignity or office that he desires or seeks for; of a man secret enemies, and so on.<sup>901</sup>

A manuscript translation of Dariot’s work was registered in Pérez de Soto’s inventory under the entry *Fácil introducción para los juicios de los astros*.<sup>902</sup> In this case, Joseph de la Cruz had not worked alone in the translation, but together with another student called Nicolás de Robles. The *bachiller* and scribe Nicolás de Robles, who was born in Valladolid (Michoacán) and lived in Mexico City, presented himself voluntarily before the Holy Office on December 11, 1652. He declared that “a year ago more or less, living in the house and company of a man called Melchor Pérez de Soto, professor of Mathematics,” he gave this

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<sup>899</sup> Claude Dariot, *Ad astrorum judicia facilisi introductio. Ejusdem tractatus de electionibus principiorum idoneorum rebus inchoandis quibus accessit fragmentum de morbis et diebus criticis ex astrorum motu cognoscendis*, Lugduni, apud M. Roy et L. Pesnot, 1557.

<sup>900</sup> See: Halbronn, Jacques (avec D. Labouré) Ed. *Introduction au Jugement des Astres* de Claude Dariot, 1990, Ed Pardès.

<sup>901</sup> I have consulted the English translation by Fabian Wither. *A breefe and most easie Introduction to the Astrological iudgement of the Starres. Whereby everye man maye with small labour, give answers to any questions demanded. Written by Claudius Dariot Physition, and translated by Fabian Wither*. Imprinted in London by Thomas Purfoote. [1583?] At the end of the work, the translator also includes *A brief Treatise of the proper elections for the enterprising or beginning of anything: written by Claudius Dariot, physician, and translated, corrected, and augmented by Fabian Wither*.

<sup>902</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 173.



deponent a book by Ali Aben Ragel in Latin to be translated into Romance.<sup>903</sup> Robles's translation is probably the manuscript registered in the inventory under the entry: '*Libro Clarísimo de las estrellas' el cual sacó a luz Alboacen.*<sup>904</sup> Besides Dariot and Haly Abenragel, Robles declared that he had also translated Thomas Boderius, whose treatise *De ratione et usu dierum criticorum* was also registered in the inventory.<sup>905</sup>

According to Joseph de la Cruz, Nicolás de Robles had translated, besides Dariot and Abenragel, "a book of sigils for medical works".<sup>906</sup> In his written declaration, he revealed that the author of this book was Jerónimo Torrellas, and that he had refused to translate it himself.<sup>907</sup> Robles, however, did not declare to have translated any work by Torrella, and no manuscript translation is registered in the inventory, but only a copy of the *Opus praeclarum de imaginibus astrologicis*.<sup>908</sup> Printed in 1496 in Valencia, this treatise dealt extensively with the use of astrological images or talismans for medical purposes. The problem of talismans, and generally of the *scientia imaginum*, was located in the area where astrology met magic, and was often discussed by medieval intellectuals.<sup>909</sup> Jerome, Girolamo, or Hieronymus Torrella was born in 1456 in Valencia, and he obtained his doctoral degree *in artibus et medicina* in Pisa at the age of twenty.<sup>910</sup> He became personal physician of King Ferdinand of

<sup>903</sup> "...habrá un año poco más o menos que viviendo en casa y compañía de un hombre llamado Melchor Pérez de Soto, profesor de matemáticas que vive en la calle del arco, en la casa que llaman del barco le dio a este declarante un libro de a folio de dos dedos de alto, su autor Ali Aben Ragel en latín para que se lo tradujese en romance, como lo hizo por entender la lengua latina..." INAH-2, f. 230.

<sup>904</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 155. Another translation is registered under the following entry: Maestro Simón Yerges, Libro cuarto de los Juicios de las interrogaciones, según el método de Ali Abenragel. Castanien (1951), p. 276.

<sup>905</sup> *De Ratione et usu dierum criticorum opus recens natum, in quo mens tum impius Ptolemaei, tum aliorum astrologorum hac in parte dilucidatur, auctore Thoma Boderio... cuius accessit Hermes Trismegistus de decubitu infirmorum, nunquam antea in lucem editus*. Parisiis, in officinina Audoeni Parvi, 1555. Castanien (1951), p. 164.

<sup>906</sup> "Y también tiene Claudio Darioto otro libro de la judicaria trasladado en romance por mí y el dicho Nicolás Robles y el dicho libro de Ali Aben Ragel trasladado todo o grande parte en romance por el susodicho Nicolás de Robles y también el libro que tiene que trata de sigilos para obras médicas en latín y se llama su autor Jerónimo Torellas." INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>907</sup> "no quise trasladarle a Hierónimo Torrellas de sigilos para obras médicas porque le dije que no entendía las abreviatura de la letra del Ortiz [¿]..." INAH-2, f. 249v.

<sup>908</sup> Hieronymi Torrella medici Valentini. *Opus praeclarum de imaginibus astrologicis non solum medicis verum etiam litteratis viris utile ac amenissimum*, Valente, Alfonsus d'Orta, ca. 1496. Castanien (1951), p. 226.

<sup>909</sup> See Chapter 7 for a broader discussion on the topic. The best studies on the *scientia imaginum* and on Torrella's work are those by Nicolas Weill-Parot. "Causalité astrale et science des images au Moyen Age : éléments de réflexion". *Revue D'Histoire Des Sciences*. 1999; 52(2):207-240; *Les 'images astrologiques' au Moyen Age et a la Renaissance. Spéculation intellectuelle et pratiques magiques (XIIe-XVe siècle)*. Paris: Honoré Champion; 2002. See especially chapter thirteen, pp. 759-871 : and "Magie Solaire et Magie Lunaire" in *Micrologus. Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali*. 2004; 12.(Il Sole e la Luna):165.

<sup>910</sup> Rotzoll, Maïke. "Considerazioni sul 'De jmaginibus astrologicis' di Geronimo Torrella" in *Rinascimento*.

Aragon, to whom he dedicated his *Opus*, and his sister Johanna of Aragon, queen of Naples. Jerome Torrella was brought up in a family of physicians: his father Ferrer had studied in Montpellier, and his two brothers were also physicians. One of them was active in Cagliari and the other, Gaspar, became famous at the court of Pope Alexander VI in Rome.<sup>911</sup> After the Italian period (Siena, Pisa, Bologna), Jerome Torrella went back to Valencia, where he taught at the university, and completed his *Opus*.<sup>912</sup>

Thorndike described Torrella's treatise as "long, disorderly in arrangement, and repetitious. Throughout it the general question of the validity of astrological images, which Torrella argues both pro and con but evidently with a sneaking preference for such images."<sup>913</sup> One of the scopes of the work, divided in four parts, was to compile the most authoritative opinions on the use of talismans. Secondly, Torrella proposed to inform about the beneficial effects of the image of the lion. When carved in gold under a specific constellation, the image of a lion was believed to have the power to cure illnesses affecting the kidney, like the one suffered by King Ferdinand. Because the image had to be carved at a specific time so that the stars and planets could exert their curative influence on men, the question of talismans was framed within the debates about horary astrology.<sup>914</sup> On the whole, Torrella tends to recognise a certain power to astrological images, but he regards any exaggerated claim as superstitious, diabolical, and forbidden for Christians.<sup>915</sup>

In his written declaration, de la Cruz mentioned one more book translated by Nicolás Robles. He said that Pérez de Soto owned "other books by Antonio Mizaldo in Romance or Latin, one of them can be read cautiously and deals with astrology, and he has the translation made by a student named Nicolás de Robles."<sup>916</sup> In the inventory of confiscated books we

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1991; XXI(Seconda Serie):219-237. Rotzoll refers to: A.F. Verde. *Lo studio Fiorentino 1473-1503. Ricerche e documenti* II, Firenze, 1973

<sup>911</sup> On Gaspar Torrella see: Arrizabalaga, J. "Medicina universitaria y *morbus gallicus* en la Italia de finales del siglo XV: el arquiata pontificio Gaspar Torrella (c. 1452-1520)" in *Asclepio* 40 (1988), pp. 3-38.

<sup>912</sup> See Navarro (1999b), p. 295.

<sup>913</sup> Thorndike, HMES. "Jerome Torrella on Astrological Images", Vol. IV, Chapter LXIV pp. 574-585.

<sup>914</sup> Weill-Parot (1999), p. 207.

<sup>915</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. IV, p. 582.

<sup>916</sup> "Y también tiene otros libros de Antonio Mizaldo en romance o latín de los cuales uno es permitido leer con cautela toca materia de astrología y tiénelo traducido en romance por Nicolás de Robles, un estudiante." INAH-2, f. 241v.

find indeed two works by Antonius Mizaldus, one dealing with judicial astrology, and the other with natural astrology. The latter was translated into Spanish, probably by Robles, and the manuscript is registered under the entry *Efemérides perpétuas del aire*.<sup>917</sup> The astrologer, naturalist, and physician Antoine Mizauld (1510-1578) was born in Monluçon in the Bourbonnois. He studied medicine in Paris, graduated and started a medical practice, in which he was so successful that he was dubbed the French Aesculapius. Under the cartographer and mathematician Orance Fine, he acquired skill in astrology, and became astrologer and physician to Marguerite de Valois. He was a prolific author, who published on a wide variety of topics, from medicine and meteorology, to astronomy, astrology and poetry.<sup>918</sup> His works were on the bookshelves of some of his contemporaries, such as the British astrologer John Dee, or the parson-astronomer George Hartgill.<sup>919</sup>

So far we have introduced two of Pérez de Soto translators, and we have come across the names of authors and works which are representative of two main astrological traditions: the Medieval Arabic-Latin, and the Renaissance. From the written declaration of Joseph de la Cruz, we can identify some other works and authors belonging to these two traditions and for which Pérez de Soto showed a special interest. Among the medieval authorities, we can include Bede, Omar Tiberiadis, Alcabitius, and Guido Bonatti. Joseph de la Cruz had translated “from Latin into Romance a book by Guido Bonato in which the treatises on nativities, interrogations, and elections were already translated [from Latin] into French.”<sup>920</sup>

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<sup>917</sup> *Antonii Mizaldi... Zodiacus, sive Duoedecim signorum coeli hortulus*. Parisiis, apud C. Guillard, 1553. And *Ephemerides aëris perpetuae seu popularis et rustica tempestatum astrologiae*. Paris, 1554. Castanien (1951), p. 197.

<sup>918</sup> On Mizauld’s astrology see: Jean Dupebè (PhD dissertation, Paris X), 1999. And Margolin, Jean Claude. “Ordre cosmique et recherches caussales dans la pensée astrologique d’Antoine Mizauld” in Annie Cazenave, Jean-François Lyotard (eds.) *L’art des confines: Mélanges offerts à Maurice Gaudillac*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.

On Mizauld’s botany: Leclerc, Henri. “L’art d’obtenir des fruits laxatifs d’après Antoine Mizauld” in *Bul. Soc. Franc. Hist. Med.* 1921, 15, 121-4. A propos de l’“Alexikepus” d’Antonius Mizaldus, traduit en français par Antoine Caille, 1578. On Mizauld’s poetry: Isabelle Pantin. *La Poesie du cel en France dans la seconde moitié du seizième siècle* (Travaux d’Humanisme et Renaissance, 297), Geneva, Droz, 1995, 555 pp.

<sup>919</sup> Morgan, Paul “George Hartgill: An Elizabethan Parson-Astronomer and his library” in *Annals of Science*. Volume 24, Number 4, December 1968. 295-311; and “John Dee’s Annotated Books from the Library of the Royal College of Physicians, London” in *Renaissance Man. The Reconstructed Libraries of European Scholars, 1450-1700*.

<sup>920</sup> “Trasladé de latín a romance un libro del susodicho que eran las obras de Guido Bonato en el cual están contestados al francés el tratado de los juicios de nacimiento y el tratado de los juicios de interrogaciones y el tratado de elecciones...” INAH- 2, f. 241.

He translated into Spanish the treatises on interrogations, and elections, “and almost all the book [...] except for the treatise on nativities.”<sup>921</sup> The accuser was not certain whether Pérez de Soto had Bonatti’s book in his possession, but the inventory reveals that he owned a 1506 edition of the *Liber Astronomicus*.<sup>922</sup> Guido Bonatti (died c. 1300) stood out as one of the most distinguished and successful astrologers of his time. His influence and popularity was such that Dante placed him in the eighth circle of the *Inferno*.<sup>923</sup>

The *Liber Astronomicus* has been defined by Thorndike as “the most important astrological work produced in Latin in the thirteenth century.”<sup>924</sup> The popularity and influence of Guido’s work is attested by the numerous manuscripts, the various printed editions of the Latin text (1491, 1506, 1530, 1550), and translations of the work into several modern languages, like Italian, French, German, and English.<sup>925</sup> It is a voluminous work divided into ten or twelve treatises, but only three of them (on nativities, interrogations, and elections) seem to have caught Pérez de Soto’s special attention. The treatise on nativities revealed everything which will ‘naturally’ befall the child from birth to death ‘and also what will be said of him after death’. The author considered such topics as lengths of life, physical and mental qualities; offices and property to be held by the person concerned; the fate of this brothers, parents, children, servants, and domestic animals; his or her sickness and health, mental afflictions, marriage, feuds, death, religion, learning and journeys. The treatise on interrogations answers questions on all sorts of matters from winning crowns or gaining one’s freedom to knowing the details about a dinner to which one has been invited. The treatise on

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<sup>921</sup> “...de los cuales trasladé el de las interrogaciones y elecciones según pienso y casi todo el libro [...] excepto el tratado de natividades...” INAH- 2, f. 241.

<sup>922</sup> *Guido Bonatus da Folivio, decem continens tractatus astronomie. A la fin.* Venetiis... per Jacocum Pentium Leucensem, anno domini 1506. Castanien (1951), p. 164. A MS registered as La segunda parte del segundo tratado del ser del círculo accidental, sacado de Guido Astrólogo could be a translation of a part of Bonatti’s work. Castanien (1951), p. 271.

<sup>923</sup> On Bonatti see also: Cesare Vasoli’s entry in the *Dizionario degli Italiani*, Vol. 11, pp. 603-608: And Urbinati, Raffaello. “Guido Bonatti da Forlì, astrologo e astronomo del Duecento” in *Veltro*, A. 28 no. 1-2 (1984), pp. 138-149.

<sup>924</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. II, Chapter LXVII, pp. 825-840. On Bonatti see also: Cesare Vasoli’s entry in the *Dizionario degli Italiani*, Vol. 11, pp. 603-608. And Urbinati, Raffaello. “Guido Bonatti da Forlì, astrologo e astronomo del Duecento” in *Veltro*, A. 28 no. 1-2 (1984), pp. 138-149.

<sup>925</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. II, p. 827.

elections selects favourable hours for every act of life from weaning and circumcising infants to trimming one's nails, hair, and beard.<sup>926</sup>

Another medieval author translated by Joseph de la Cruz was Beda Venerabilis. Born at the end of the seventh century near Jarrow, Durham, Bede was a Benedictine historian and theologian, who also devoted his time to the study of natural philosophy. He is known as the father of English history and as one of the best medieval historians. His main work, the *Historiae ecclesiasticae gentis Anglorum*, was completed in 731.<sup>927</sup> He composed a philological work (*De metrica arte*), a rhetorical study (*De schematibus et tropis*), and various works on arithmetic and chronology.<sup>928</sup> Within the field of natural philosophy, Bede composed *De temporum ratione*, which contains a remarkable theory of tides; the *De loquela per gestum digitorum* (or *De indigitatione*), one of the few existing sources for the study of medieval finger reckoning or symbolism; and *De natura rerum*, where he exposed some of his main cosmological ideas.<sup>929</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bede's works were known through the different editions of his *Opera omnia*: 1544-1545 and 1554, Paris; and Basel, 1563, reprinted in Cologne in 1612, and 1688. The Basel edition of 1563 was included in Pérez de Soto's inventory, though no translation of any of Bede's treatises is registered.<sup>930</sup> John Hervagius' edition of 1563 was so popular and influential "that a large part of the commentary of the intervening centuries that professes to discuss Bede's works is actually discussing the work of Hervagius". Perhaps no "other single edition of any other author has ever foisted upon the

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<sup>926</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. II, pp. 833-834.

<sup>927</sup> Sarton (1927-47), "The Time of Bede", Vol. I, Chapter XXVII, pp. 510-511.

<sup>928</sup> On Bede's arithmetics and chronology see: Wallis, Faith. "Number mystique in early medieval computus texts" in T. Koetsier, L. Bergmans (eds.) *Mathematics and the divine : a historical study*. Amsterdam : Elsevier, 2005. Folkerts, Menso. "De arithmetis propositionibus : a mathematical treatise ascribed to the Venerable Bede" in *Essays on early medieval mathematics : the Latin tradition*. Aldershot : Ashgate, c2003. "Doubts about the calendar : Bede and the eclipse of 664" in *Isis*, Vol. 89 (1998), pp. 50-65. Moreton, Jennifer. "Doubts about the calendar : Bede and the eclipse of 664" in *Isis*, Vol. 89 (1998), pp. 50-65. Jones, Charles W. "Bede, the Schools and the Computus" edited by Wesley M. Stevens. Aldershot : Variorum, 1994.

<sup>929</sup> Sarton (1927-47), Vol. I, pp. 510-511. See also: Jones, Charles W "Manuscripts of Bede's *De natura rerum*" in *Isis*, Vol. 27 (1937), pp. 430-440. On Bede's cosmology see: De Pila, Alessandra. "Il mondo sublunare nel *De natura rerum* di Beda" in *Seminario internazionale sulla letteratura scientifica e tecnica greca e latina* 1, 1992 : Trieste pp. 48-64.

<sup>930</sup> *Opera Bedae Venerabilis presbyteri, Anglosaxonis: viri in divinis atque humanis literis exercitatissimi omnia in octo tomos distincta prout statim post praefationem suo elecho enumerantur...* Basileae, per J. Hervagium, 1563.

public more spurious or corrupt works without substantiating evidence.”<sup>931</sup> One of these spurious treatises was *De Mundi Celestis Terrestisque Constitutione*, which dealt with cosmological and astrological topics. Extant also in various manuscripts, this text seems to be “a body of knowledge passed on from scholar to scholar, perhaps orally in the form of a *lectura* as much as through the *scriptorum*.”<sup>932</sup> It probably had its greatest diffusion in the late eleventh century and early twelfth century, and it may have continued developing and changing over time.<sup>933</sup> The treatise is divided in two parts: *De Mundo* (About the Universe) and *De Anima* (About the Soul). It is in the first part where an exposition of astrological topics, such as the Houses and the Zodiac, is found.<sup>934</sup>

Apart from *De Mundi Celestis terrestrisque constitutione*, the Basel edition included other treatises which might have been the source of Pérez de Soto’s references to Bede’s astrological teachings, such as *De planetarum et signorum coelestium ratione*, *Prognostica temporum*, or *De nativitate infantium*.<sup>935</sup> He did not refer to any specific work, so we can only assume that he referred to some general concepts he had grasped from his reading of this series of treatises. Further down, we will see how he used pseudo-Bede’s teachings to make a concrete prediction.

From the Arabic medieval tradition, we find two more authors translated by Joseph de la Cruz: Al Tabari and Alcabitius. He gave no details on the works, but only mentioned superficially that he had translated “forbidden astrology” by “Omar Tyberino. And I also translated other judgements from a book by Alcabcicio Moro which deals with judiciary forbidden in Latin”.<sup>936</sup> Al Tabari or Omar Alfraganus Tiberiadis, was active in Baghdad and

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<sup>931</sup> Jones, Charles. *Bedaes Pseudepigraphia: Scientific Writings Falsely Attributed to Bede*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press/ London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1939, p. 14

<sup>932</sup> Burnett, Charles (ed.) Pseudo-Bede. *De mundi celestis terrestrisque constitutione : a treatise on the universe and the soul*. London : The Warburg Institute; 1985. Burnett explains that Hervagius must have used a manuscript of *De mundi* which has not been identified for the publication (p. 7). See also: Pizzini, Ubaldo “L’armonia delle sfere nell’interpretazione dello Pseudo-Beda” in *Seminario internazionale sulla letteratura scientifica e tecnica greca e latina* (1 :, 1992 : Trieste), pp. 128-135.

<sup>933</sup> Burnett (1985), p. 3.

<sup>934</sup> Pseudo-Bede (1985).

<sup>935</sup> Jones (1939), p. 16.

<sup>936</sup> “traslade la misma astrología prohibida, su autor era Omar Tyberino. Y también me parece que le trasladé y es cierto otros juicios sacados del libro de Alcabcicio Moro que trata de la judiciaria prohibida en latín” INAH-2, f. 241.

died ca. 815-816.<sup>937</sup> His treatise on birth horoscopes, *De nativitatibus*, was translated by John of Seville in the first half of the twelfth century. Extant in at least sixteen manuscripts and five printed editions from 1503 to 1551, the text is divided in three books, quoting Ptolemy, Messahallah, and Hermes. The first and second books deal with the determination and interpretation of the significant positions in the horoscope that enable the astrologer to compute the length of life. The third book explains how to interpret the sectors of the native's life corresponding to the twelve houses.<sup>938</sup>

Joseph de la Cruz had seen two more books by Alcabitius in Pérez de Soto's possession, "one or both of them commented."<sup>939</sup> Al-Qabisi or Alcabitius (d. ca. 967) was active in Syria, and became one of the most famous astrologers in medieval Europe, his works being used to teach at medieval universities.<sup>940</sup> His main works are his *Introduction to the art of astrology* and a treatise *On the conjunctions of planets*. The former was translated into Latin by John of Seville in the first half of the twelfth century, while there is no evidence for the translator of the latter. . It was John's translation, the *Liber Introductorius*, which led to Alcabitius's work becoming "the standard introduction to astrology in Western Europe."<sup>941</sup> The text contains a complete presentation of astrological practices and materials, with definitions, distinctions, numerous lists of place names classified by climates and influences.<sup>942</sup> Unfortunately, I have so far not been able to identify any work by Omar or Alcabitius in Perez de Soto's library.

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<sup>937</sup> Carmody (1956), p. 39 See also: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, VII, Leiden, 1979, p. 112. Pingree, D. "Al-Tabari on the Prayers to the Planets", in *Sciences occultes et Islam*, éd. A. Regourd, P. Lory, Damas, 1993 (*Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 44, 1992), pp. 105-117; ----"The *Liber Universus* of Umar Ibn-al-Farrukhan al-Tabari" in *Journal for the History of Arabic Science*. 1 (1977): Julio Samsó and Hamid Berrani. "World Astrology in Eleventh-century Al-Andalus" in *Journal of Islamic Studies*. 10: 3 (1999), pp. 293-312.

<sup>938</sup> BAN.

<sup>939</sup> "Y también me parece que le trasladé y es cierto otros juicios sacados del libro de Alcabicio Moro que trata de la judicaria prohibida en latín y de este autor vi en su poder dos libros, uno de ellos comentado o entrambos." INAH-2, f. 241.

<sup>940</sup> Sarton(1927-47), Vol. I, p. 669; Carmody (1956), p. 149, and Pingree *The Encyclopedia of Islam*. (1924) Vol. 2, p. 593.

<sup>941</sup> For a critical edition of the Arabic and Latin texts with an annotated English translation, and a catalogue of all the manuscripts of the known medieval versions of the work and of the Renaissance editions of the Latin text, see: *The Introduction to Astrology*. Edited by Charles Burnett, Keiji Yamamoto, and Michio Yano. Warburg Institute Studies and Texts, 2. 2004.

<sup>942</sup> Carmody (1956), p. 149.

Let us now turn our attention from the group of medieval Latin-Arabic texts to the group of Renaissance works on astrology, though, as we will see, the boundaries between the two are often porous. Perhaps one of the most representative authors of Italian humanism was Giovanni Pontano (1429-1503). “An Aristotelian-Ciceronian moral philosopher, a philological theorist, a highly esteemed Neolatin scholar as well as author of Latin and Italian poems, a valued and influential secretary and ambassador of the Aragonese rulers of Naples, Pontano was also an astrologer.”<sup>943</sup> Pontano’s major astrological work was *De rebus coelestibus*, in fourteen books, but his writings on astrology also include a poem entitled *Urania*, a treatise called *De Fortuna*, and the translation of pseudo-Ptolemy’s *Centiloquium* together with a lengthy commentary.<sup>944</sup> According to Joseph de la Cruz, Pérez de Soto had in his possession “a book by Joviano Pontano [...] in Latin and the translation I made into Romance.”<sup>945</sup> He also owned “the Centiloquio by Ptolemy translated by Georgio Trapezuntio, which I cannot remember whether I translated or not, but I have translated another one like this [...], and I think he has the translation.”<sup>946</sup>

The pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium* or *Liber fructus* (from Arabic Kitab al-Thamara and Greek Karpos) was one of the most celebrated collections of astrological aphorisms. As Clarke explains, these aphorisms were very popular during the early modern period, probably because they condensed a vast bulk of astrological lore in a more economical form, and made it easier to digest and remember. The certainty with which the *Liber Fructus* was attributed to Ptolemy seems to have diminished considerably by the Renaissance, but it did not disappear completely. Richard Lemay suggested that it was compiled around 922 by an Egyptian

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<sup>943</sup> Trinkaus, Charles. “The Astrological Cosmos and Rhetorical Culture of Giovanni Pontano” in *Renaissance Quarterly*. 1985; 38(3), p. 449. The author refers to: Tateo, Francesco. *Astrologia e moralità in Giovanni Pontano*, Bari, 1960. Toffani, Giuseppe. *Giovanni Pontano fra l'uomo e la natura*. Bologna, 1983. Also Michele Rinaldi, “Pontano, Trapezuntio ed il Graecus Interpres del Centiloquio pseudo-tolemaico” in *Atti della Accademia Pontaniana*, 48, 1999, pp. 126-71.

<sup>944</sup> Rollenbeck, Georg. “L'astrologia nella poesia del Pontano: l'*Urania*.” in (Istituto di Studio Umanistici F. Petrarca) *L'astrologia e la sua influenza nella filosofia, nella letteratura e nell'arte dall'eta classica al Rinascimento*. Milano: Nuovi Orizzonti; 1992; pp. 187-199. On Pontano’s poetry see also: Benedetto Soldati. *La poesia astrologica nel Quattrocento* (Florence, 1906). And Liliana Monti's profile in *Poeti Latini del Quattrocento* eds. Francesco Arnaldi. *et. al.* Milan-Naples, 1964, pp. 307-314.

<sup>945</sup> “Y también otro de Joviano Pontano del mismo tamaño [de a octavo] en latín y el traslado que hice en romance...” INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>946</sup> “Y tiene el Centiloquio de Ptolomeo trasladado por Georgio Trapezuntio [Georgi Trapezunti] que no me acuerdo bien si he traducido este, pero le he traducido otro como este de a folio, pienso que tiene el traslado.” INAH-2, f. 241v.



mathematician, but the only certain thing is that it was not by Ptolemy, and that some aphorisms refer to astrological procedures which were developed by Muslim astrologers, that is after Ptolemy.<sup>947</sup> The first translation was made by Adelard of Bath around 1120, and the second was made in 1136 by either Plato of Tivoli or John of Seville. Amongst the Renaissance translations were those by George of Trebizond or Georgius Trapezuntius (before 1458) and by Giovanni Pontano (1477), which occurred in numerous printed editions.<sup>948</sup> A copy of both translations was found in Pérez de Soto's library: Trebizond's was registered "with no printer's name or year of publication".<sup>949</sup> The copy of Pontano's *Centiloquium* was a 1519 Venetian edition, printed together with his *De Rebus*.<sup>950</sup> A manuscript translation into Spanish was registered under the entry *De las cien sentencias de Claudio Ptolomeo o Frutos de sus Libros*, which was the one made by Joseph de la Cruz of Pontano's work.

Pontano, like many others of his time, tried to reconcile astrology with the Christian doctrine of human free will. His *De rebus coelestibus* consists of a series of poems intended to explain and justify astrology, rather than setting forth the details of its teaching. In Book XII, he considers the question of the legitimacy of astrological knowledge by disputing the validity of Pico's famous critique.<sup>951</sup> Concerning the debate on free will and astral determinism, the Spanish theologian and natural philosopher Pedro Sánchez Ciruelo (Daroca, ca. 1470-Salamanca, 1548) composed a work entitled *Apotelesmata Astrologiae Christianae*,

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<sup>947</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 55.

<sup>948</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 54. I have consulted the two copies (Prague, 1610 and Basel, 1551) at the Institute of History of Science in Florence: "Cl. Ptolomaei Centiloquium, sive, Centum sententiae / Io. Iouiano Pontano interprete." In *Claudii Ptolemaei De praedictionibus astronomicis cui titulum fecerunt Quadripartitum libri IIII : nunc primum ex vetustissimo codice & interprete in lucem editi : ejusdem fructus librorum suorum siue Centum dicta*. Praegae : typis Caspari Kargesii : sumptibus Iacobi Brechtani, 1610. p. 262-280. And "Cl. Ptolemaei Centum dicta, siue fructus librorum suorum, Iouiniano Pontano interprete" in *Claudii Ptolemaei ... Omnia quae extant opera praeter geographiam, quam non dissimili forma nuperrimè aedidimus / summa cura & diligentia castigata ab Erasmo Osualdo Schreckenfuchsio & ab eodem Isagoica in Almagestum praefatione & fidelissimis in priores libros annotationibus illustrata*. Basileae : in Officina Henrichi Petri, mense Martio anno 1551, pp. 438-442.

<sup>949</sup> *Cd. Ptolomei Centiloquium siue aphorismi a Georgio Trapezuntio ex greco en latinum versi et commentariis illustrati* [sin lugar de impresión ni año]. AGN, Vol. 440, folios 94 and 94v.

<sup>950</sup> *Centum Ptolemai sententiae ad Syrum fratrem a Pontano a graeco in latinum tralatae atque expositae. Ejd. Pontani libri XIII de Reb. Coelest. Liber etiam de Luna imperfectus*. (A la fin) Venet. In aedibus Aldi et Andreae Soceri mensi septembri 1519. Castanien (1951), p. 212.

<sup>951</sup> Trinkaus (1985), p. 463. On the astrological debate between Pico and Pontano see: Desantis, Giovanni. "Pico, Pontano e la polemica astrologica" in *Università degli studi di Bari. Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia*. XXIX, 1986.

in which he also attempted to defend astrology from Pico's attack.<sup>952</sup> He denounced this attack as inconsistent, and argued that astrology was indeed sometimes inaccurate, but the same happened with medicine or law, which, nonetheless, were not regarded as vain or superstitious.<sup>953</sup>

Pedro Ciruelo, professor of theology in Paris and Alcalá de Henares (1509-1523), composed, among other works, a commentary to Sacroboscus's *Sphaera*, and a famous treatise against superstition and witchcraft, *Repoblación de las supersticiones y hechizerías* (1530).<sup>954</sup> His *Apotelesmata*, printed in 1521, is divided in four books (following Ptolemy's example), and deals with both natural astrology for medicine, agriculture, and navigation, and judicial astrology for nativities.<sup>955</sup> In the same vein as Tomasso Campanella, Ciruelo attempted to defend a pure Christian astrology, as opposed to an astrology corrupted by Arabic superstition. Thus he contested the theory of planetary conjunctions and the practice of interrogations. In the second chapter of the second book (*De las magnas conjunciones de los planetas superiores*), he refuted Albumasar's theory of conjunctions by saying that only Solar and Lunar conjunctions (eclipses) were universally efficacious.<sup>956</sup> In chapter eight of his third book, he criticized predictions dealing with fortuitous cases and free acts, but he retained valid those concerning friendship or enmity, or the ability of men for sciences, 'among other questions.'<sup>957</sup> The whole third book, divided in seventeen chapters, deals with nativities or birth horoscopes, and revolutions (*De los juicios particulares de los hombres por las figuras de sus natalicios y sus revoluciones*). In his written declaration, Joseph de la Cruz said that he had translated the "judgements on nativities" included in Ciruelo's *Apotelesmata* together with some other judgements for weather prognostication.<sup>958</sup>

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<sup>952</sup> Pedro Ciruelo's *Apotelesmata Astrologiae Christianae...super duabus tantum iudiciorum partibus: hoc est: de mutationibus temporum et de genituris hominum*. In Alma Complutensi academia, Opera et impensis Arnaldi Guilielmi Brocarii, 1521. See Navarro (1999b), p. 108.

<sup>953</sup> Navarro Brotóns, Víctor. "La astronomía (siglos XVI-XVII)" in *Historia de la ciencia y de la Técnica en la Corona de Castilla*. Vol. III. Junta de Castilla y León, Valladolid, 2002, p. 294.

<sup>954</sup> See Chapter 1 of this work and Navarro (2002), p. 276.

<sup>955</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 276-283.

<sup>956</sup> Zambelli, Paola. *Astrologi hallucinati. Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter; 1986, p. 21.

<sup>957</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 280. The translation is mine.

<sup>958</sup> "Y también he trasladado para el susodicho en romance una materia de juicios acerca de los temporales sacada de un libro cuyo título es Apotelesmata Astrologie Cristiana nuper edita Magistro Petro Ciruelo

According to Joseph de la Cruz, Pérez de Soto owned other books on nativities, such as “*De revolutiones nativitatibus* by Doctor Juntino, which I translated into Romance”.<sup>959</sup> A copy of Giuntini’s *Tractatus judicandi revolutionis nativitatibus*, printed in Lyon in 1570, was found in Pérez de Soto’s library, and the inventory listed a manuscript translation under the entry: *Francisco Juntino, primero tratado de juzgar las revoluciones de las natividades*.<sup>960</sup> As we have seen in previous pages, this treatise was printed either independently or as part of Giuntini’s major work, the *Speculum Astrologiae*, which was also included in Pérez de Soto’s library together with a manuscript translation entitled *Espejo de Astrologia*.<sup>961</sup>

De la Cruz translated into Romance another book “which deals with nativities by Henrico Ranzobio.”<sup>962</sup> Born into the higher ranks of the nobility, Henrik Rantzau or Henricus Ranzovius (1526-1598) was a correspondent of better-known scholars of the time, such as the astronomer Tycho Brahe, the geographer Gerard Mercator, or the alchemist Michael Maier.<sup>963</sup> He matriculated in Wittenberg in 1538, and there is good evidence that he studied directly under Melanchton. Indeed, Rantzau’s “inspiration to study, practice and publish on astrology closely followed Melanchton’s strenuous promotion of the science of the stars, as

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Darocensi del cual he trasladado también los juicios de natividades que aunque no son *in totum* prohibidos tienen que expurgar”. INAH-2, f. 242.

<sup>959</sup> “Y creo me acuerdo que tiene un libro de a octavo en latín *Des volutionibus nativitatibus* del Doctor Juntino que trasladé en romance y tiene su traslado”. INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>960</sup> *F. Iunctini Tractatus judicandi revolutionis nativitatibus*. Lugduni, 1570. Castanien (1951), p. 265.

<sup>961</sup> See Chapter 3. Giuntini’s work registered in the inventory was: *Speculum Astrologiae, uersam mathematicam scientiam in certas classes digestam complectens. Accesserunt etia Cometaria ...in duos posteriores. Quadripartiti Ptolomei libros...* Lugduni 1583.

I have consulted a copy of the *Speculum Astrologiae* (Lugduni : in Officina Q. Phil. Tinghi Florentini apud Simphorianum Beraud, 1581. Ex libris ms: “De la librería del Colegio de Tepozotlán”) kept at the national library in México City (RFO 94-43474) and could not identify the treatise on revolutions.

<sup>962</sup> “Y también le traducí [sic] en romance a Henrico Ranzobio que trata de natividades y la tiene en su poder, pero estaba [...] de letra de mano”. INAH-2, f. 241v. Ranzovius, Henricus (Rantzau, Henrik) *Tractatus astrologicus de genethliacorum thematum judiciis pro singulis nati accidentibus, ex vetustis et optimis quibusque acutoribus, industria Henrici Ranzovii... collectus...* Francofurti, impr. Haered. P. Fischeri, 1602. Castanien (1951), p. 213.

<sup>963</sup> On Rantzau’s life and intellectual environment see Günther Oestmann’s monograph: *Heinrich Rantzau und die Astrologie: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, (Habilitationsschrift) Braunschweiger Beiträge zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte Band 2, Braunschweig: Braunschweig-druck GmbH, 2004. On his correspondence with Tycho Brahe see: Oestman, G. “Tycho Brahe’s attitude towards Astrology and his Relations to Heinrich Rantzau.” in Christianson (2002), pp. 84-94. On his correspondence with Michael Maier see: Figala, Karin and Ulrich Neumann. “Ein früher Brief Michael Maiers (1568-1622) an Heinrich Rantzau (1526-1598) in Menso Folkerts und Uta Lindgren. *Mathemata : Festschrift für Helmuth Gericke*. Stuttgart : F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1985.

the best way to access knowledge about God's providential ordering and governance of the world.<sup>964</sup> He established one of the biggest private libraries in Europe at the time, with 6300 volumes in the main fields of knowledge.<sup>965</sup> Rantzau's library suffered from the turmoil of the Thirty Years War, but its remains suggest that he must have possessed almost every relevant astrological publication of the sixteenth century.<sup>966</sup> He was himself a prolific writer of several astrological textbooks, mainly serving to promote the art and to make some of its features more easily accessible.<sup>967</sup> One of these textbooks was his *Tractatus astrologicus de genethliacorum thematum judiciis*...which formed part of Pérez de Soto's collection, and which indeed "dealt with nativities".<sup>968</sup>

Finally, Joseph de la Cruz declared to have translated into Romance some other judgements extracted from David Origanus (1558-1628).<sup>969</sup> All of them or almost all of them referred to natural astrology for weather prognostication, but "this book also included many judgements of nativities with examples of birth [charts] of various illustrious people." The accuser thought that Pérez de Soto kept the manuscript translations, but he was not certain whether he still possessed some of the original books.<sup>970</sup> According to the inventory, Pérez de Soto owned a copy of Origanus's *Ephemerides brandenburgicae*, printed in Francfurt in 1609.<sup>971</sup> Giuntini (1523-1590) and Origanus (1558-1628) were often quoted by astrologers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century because they composed up-dated ephemerides which

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<sup>964</sup> Rutkin, H. Darrel. "Book review on Günther Oestmann. Heinrich Rantzau und die Astrologie: Ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte des 16 Jahrhunderts" in *Early Science and Medicine*. 2006; XI(1):113-115.

<sup>965</sup> Oestman (2002), p. 85. On Rantzau's library see: Posselt, W. "Die Bibliothek Heinrich Rantzaus" in *Zeitschr. der Gesellsch. Für Schleswig-Holstein-Lauenburgische Geschichte* 11, 1881, pp. 69-124. And Walther, C. "Zum Verbleib der Bibliothek Heinrich Rantzaus" in *Ibid.* 12, 1882, s. 192-196.

<sup>966</sup> Oestman (2002), p. 85.

<sup>967</sup> Rutkin (2006), p. 114.

<sup>968</sup> *Tractatus astrologicus de genethliacorum thematum judiciis pro singulis nati accidentibus, ex vetustis et optimis quibusque auctoribus, industria Henrici Ranzovii... collectus... 1593 Francofurti, producis Cimbrici collectus, or Francofurti, impr. Haered. P. Fischeri, 1602. Registered in the inventory as: Tractatus Astrologicus por Henrici Razón. Jiménez Rueda (1947).*

<sup>969</sup> See Chapter 3 of this work.

<sup>970</sup> "También trasladé en romance otros juicios sacados de David Origano los cuales pienso eran todos de la natural astrología o casi todos y acerca de los temporales y este dicho libro tenía muchos juicios de natividades con ejemplos de nacimientos de varias personas ilustres. Era de a folio y de más de cuatro dedos y de todos estos no sé si tiene alguno en su poder, aunque pienso que tiene a David Origano o sus cuadernos trasladados de la dicha astrología prohibida..." INAH-2, f. 241.

<sup>971</sup> Origanus, David. *Ephemerides brandenburgicae coelestium motuum et temporum annorum 60 a 1595-1654 in luminarib. Calculo duplici Tychnico et Prutenico, in reliquis planetis Prutenico s. Cpermicano summa dilig. elabor. Annexa etiam ratione, qua calendaria duo, Judaicum et Arabicum at quaevis tempora construi possunt.* Frcft. 1609.

were fundamental to cast horoscopes with higher accuracy. Such works that focused rather on the technical aspect of astrology, could not be absent from a proper astrological library, because they were complementary to those textbooks concerned with the more theoretical side of the subject.

With this remark, on the difference between the practical and the theoretical aspects of astrology, I would like to conclude our visit to Pérez de Soto's library. I pointed out before how the compilation of works which Pérez de Soto had had translated are representative of two main traditions on the subject. Leaving chronological criteria aside, I would like to underline that this collection also embodies the two main thematic divisions of astrological texts. They can be oriented toward practical applications, answering questions about the nature of each planet, sign and house so that the practitioner can interpret the meaning of a given astrological figure. In the group of practical works, we can include all the Arabic texts mentioned, the works of Bonatti, Dariot, the *Centiloquium*, and the texts on nativities. Among the authors of theoretical texts, concerned with the natural philosophical foundations for astrology, we could include Ibn Ezra, Peter of Abano, Torrella, Campanella, Pontano, and Ciruelo. However, as we had seen, their texts had a strong practical component as well. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that most of these philosophical reflections on the influence of the stars on Earth were motivated by the religious concern of concealing the doctrine of free will with the belief on such influence.

## 5.2. Censoring dangerous books

In both Spain and Spanish America, censorship was exercised at two different moments: preventive censorship (or *censura praevia*) occurred before the printing or publishing of a work; punitive censorship (or *censura repressiva*) was exercised after printing. Civil authorities were in charge of the former, while the Inquisition, leaving university outside of the process, monopolized the latter. In some cases, the Holy Office even intervened in matters of preventive censorship as well, like in the publication of almanacs.<sup>972</sup> Aside from total prohibition, books could be censored in three other ways. The most frequent consisted on extracting one or two sentences which were regarded as *offensive, scandalous, erroneous, heretical*, and so on. A second type was the expurgation, which had the purpose to allow the circulation of those books that were not heretical as a whole, but contained some erroneous sentences or paragraphs. The method simply consisted in crossing out the sentences or tearing out the forbidden pages. Finally, protestant authors or authors suspected of any other kind of heterodoxy could also be condemned as *auctor damnatus*.<sup>973</sup>

In New Spain, book censorship started to be exercised even before the establishment of the Inquisition, by means of Episcopal censorship, which was mainly concerned with the circulation of books on Christian doctrine written in indigenous languages for the use of missionaries.<sup>974</sup> As soon as the Holy Office was established, the first Mexican inquisitor, Pedro Moya de Contreras, issued an edict where he stated that all booksellers and library owners should present a detailed list of the books they possessed so that the Inquisition could control the circulation of forbidden books. The importance of these lists of books submitted to the tribunal has been underlined by the pioneering studies of Irving Leonard.<sup>975</sup> His conclusion was that, even though the majority of books arrived to Mexico from Spain, these

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<sup>972</sup> See Chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>973</sup> Alcalá (1991), p. 16.

<sup>974</sup> Schons, Doroty. *Book Censorship in New Spain*. Austin; 1949, p. XV.

<sup>975</sup> Leonard, Irving "On the Mexican Book Trade, 1683", in *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (August, 1947) p. 413. See also by Leonard: *Los libros del conquistador*, tr. de Mario Monteforte Toledo, México, FCE, 1953, 397 p; "One Man's Library, Manila, 1583" *Hispanic Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Schevill Memorial Number. (Jan., 1947); "On the Mexican Book Trade, 1576", in *Hispanic Review*, vol. 17 (1949). "On the Mexican Book Trade in 1600: a Chapter in Cultural History", in *Hispanic Review*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Crawford Memorial Number. (Jan., 1941); "Perez de Montalbán, Tomás Gutiérrez and Two Book Lists", in *Hispanic Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4. (Oct., 1944)

printed volumes not always came from the publishing centres of the motherland, but also from leading presses of Antwerp, Brussels and Lyon. “Thus the flow of European books and ideas to the Spanish Indies was far freer and prompt than usually acknowledged by historians, and the Creole intellectuals and other literate inhabitants of the vice-royalties were far less removed from stimulation of Continental thought than is often dogmatically asserted.”<sup>976</sup>

Elías Trabulse reached a similar conclusion and explained that the reading of controversial authors such as Galileo, Descartes or Newton in their original texts was possible in Mexico because inquisitorial control was less rigid than in the metropolis.<sup>977</sup> Indexes of Forbidden Books were sometimes obsolete and censors were uninformed. Some books coming from protestant countries did not pass through Spain, and, once they reached the other side of the Atlantic there were different ways to avoid censorship. One of these ways was contraband and illegal commerce, which proved to be quite successful in New Spain. Some merchants would alter the texts (titles, authors, places and dates of publication, or even suspicious paragraphs) in order to introduce illicit works. Robberies inside libraries or convents, where forbidden books were not always separated from the rest, were also frequent.<sup>978</sup> Moreover, it was also common to read about forbidden works through the comments and refutations of orthodox authors. All this explains why Mexican scholars could quote works that are not found on the lists that librarians gave to the Inquisition.<sup>979</sup>

Apart from these lists of books, there are other sources in the inquisitorial archives that shed some light on the question of censorship in New Spain. One of them, studied by Dorothy Schons, is the correspondence between Mexican inquisitors and the Supreme

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<sup>976</sup> Leonard (1947), p. 414.

<sup>977</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 16.

<sup>978</sup> On the libraries belonging to religious orders in New Spain see: Díaz y de Ovando, Clementina. *El Colegio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo*, 2a. ed., México, UNAM, 1985. Grijalva, Fray Juan de. *Crónica de la Orden de N. P. S. Agustín en las provincias de Nueva España*, 2a. ed., México, Imprenta Victoria, 1924; *Indice de todos los libros impresos del Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo de México. Año de 1769*, AGN, Jesuitas, vol. III, Num. 30; *Inventario de la Biblioteca del Convento Franciscano de Totiemehuacan*, Private collection. Mathes, Miguel. *Santa Cruz de Tlateloco: la primera biblioteca académica de las Américas*, México, SRE, 1982. *Memoria de los libros que se depositaron en el Convento de Santo Domingo para su examen (1618)*, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 317, p. 59; *Sebastián de Estrada envía nota de libros que se encontraron en la librería del Colegio de Tepoztlán (1617)*, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 536, Num. 81; Valle, Rafael Heliodoro. *El Convento de Tepoztlán*, México, Talleres Gráficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, 1924. Zambrano (1961).

<sup>979</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 16.

Council in Spain regarding books and other related matters. The relevance of these letters resides, first, on the fact that they mention books that never found their way onto the Indexes; secondly, that they illuminate some points of view and procedures; and thirdly, they give a picture of the relationship of Spanish and Mexican Inquisitions, Spanish and Roman Inquisitions, and Mexican and other censorship officials.<sup>980</sup> Edicts and instructions against forbidden books, issued regularly by the Holy Office from its birth to its extinction, are also a useful source to understand censorship in its local context.<sup>981</sup> Through these documents, it is possible to discern the concerns of the Mexican Inquisition from those of the Spanish and Roman tribunals.

Usually, it was the arrival of a new inquisitor or the discovery of a specific forbidden book in circulation that would urge the Inquisition to publish edicts on forbidden books or to start audits. Whenever a suspicious book was found, a *revisor* would determine whether it should be taken to the censors of the Holy Office for examination. If the two or more censors determined it was safe, the book was returned to its owner; if it needed to be expurgated, it was returned after expurgation and included in the subsequent edict of forbidden books. Expurgated works could also be kept in the *Cámara del Secreto* of the Inquisition or burned. If anyone knew about someone else having a forbidden book, he or she had to go directly to present a denunciation to the commissaries of the Holy Office. If the denunciation was relied upon and its veracity proven, the owner of the book was excommunicated and had to pay a fine.<sup>982</sup> Most of the times, denunciations occurred after the publication of an edict against forbidden books or a general edict of faith, which mentioned the obligation to deliver prohibited books and denounce suspects. That was the case, for instance, of the denunciation against Juan de Molinedo “for possessing a book on astrology without expurgation.”<sup>983</sup> The accuser presented himself before the local tribunal in the city of Guanajuato on March 20, 1650, after listening to the edict of faith. In this case, contrary to what happened with Pérez de Soto, the inquisitorial authorities decided not to pursue the case.

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<sup>980</sup> Schons (1949), p. XI.

<sup>981</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>982</sup> Serrano, 2000, p. 398

<sup>983</sup> *Denuncia contra Juan de Molinedo por tener un libro de astrología sin expurgación*. (1650) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (1a. parte), f. 221.



On December 14, 1654 the Mexican inquisitors called five censors in order to evaluate the denunciations against Pérez de Soto. The Dominicans Gregorio Curiel, Alonso de la Barrera, and Rodrigo de Medina, the Mercedarian Juan de Herrera, and the Jesuit Juan de Ibarra gave their resolution five days later, on December 19.<sup>984</sup> The censors concluded, first, that the accused deserved the punishments established by Sixtus V's Bull because he had cast figures and used spells in order to discover robberies and to divinate future contingents, such as the election of new provincials and other similar events; secondly, that he deserved the punishments of the bull *In Coena Domini* because he possessed books by heretic authors, and he deserved other kind of punishments established by the Holy Office against those who possess and read books on magic.<sup>985</sup> If the accused ignored the fact that the authors of these books were heretics, he did not violate the bull *In Coena Domini*, but he would still infringe the rules of the Holy Office concerning the possession of books. Finally, the censors added that both the possessor and the translator of forbidden books should receive the same penalties.<sup>986</sup>

The translators themselves seemed to have been aware of the intrinsic risks of their profession. More than once, they expressed their hesitation to translate certain works, and they confessed to having talked with other people about these doubts. In this sense, we can observe a mechanism of self-censorship, which somehow goes beyond the limits of what was

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<sup>984</sup> INAH-2, f. 270-270v.

<sup>985</sup> The *In Coena Domini* was a recurrent papal bull between 1363 and 1770, so called from its opening words in Latin "At the Table of the Lord" referring to the liturgical feast on which it was annually published in Rome. Its first publication was in 1363 under Pope Urban V, and it was a statement of ecclesiastical censure against heresies, schisms, sacrilege, infringement of papal and ecclesiastical privileges, attacks on person and property, piracy, forgery and other crimes. It was modified from time to time, receiving its final form from Pope Urban VIII in 1627, after which it remained practically unchanged till its formal abrogation. *Catholic Encyclopedia* online : [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

<sup>986</sup> "...y estando presentes para calificar esta causa dijeron conformes que por haber el contenido levantado figuras y usado de sortilegios en orden de descubrir los tres hurtos y adivinar futuros contingentes como fueron las dos elecciones de provinciales o las nuevas de esta orden y todo lo demás a esto semejante que el cómplice atestigua de vista, incurrió en las censuras y en las demás penas de la constitución de la santidad de Sixto V y por haber sido los sortilegios de que se valió para dichas divinaciones heréticas es sospechoso *se vite de fide*. Y por tener en su poder libros de herejes incurrió en las censuras de la bula *in coena domini* y por los dichos libros que tratan de magia que así mismo tiene en su poder incurrió en las censuras y demás penas que tiene compuesta el Santo Oficio contra los que retienen en su poder los dichos libros y los leen y si ignoró que eran de herejes los libros que tenía no incurrió en las censuras de la bula *in cena domine*, pero sí en las otras impuestas por el santo oficio. Y que lo mismo que procede y queda dicho en el reo principal de este negocio procede también en el testigo que tradujo y traduce dichos libros y ha hecho otras acciones semejantes y algunas supersticiosas y así lo acordaron y firmaron". INAH-2, f. 270v-271.

officially established by the Holy Tribunal as licit or illicit knowledge. Readers in seventeenth-century New Spain knew about forbidden books directly by consulting the indexes, or by attending the reading of inquisitorial edicts, but also through conversations with neighbors, friends, and relatives. Sometimes they would not be certain whether a work was forbidden or not, but they would have the suspicion that they were entering dangerous territory by reading it. It is in this grey area where we can identify a different layer within the process of censorship, which implies an internalization of the imposed limits between licit and forbidden knowledge. What is perhaps interesting to note is that, somehow paradoxically, the doubts and hesitations concerning these limits led to a *de facto* circulation of forbidden books and ideas. Whenever somebody read a book or fragment of a work dealing with a suspicious subject or written by a suspicious author, he or she would sometimes bring the book to a religious authority for his opinion, or would comment the point with his or her acquaintances.

Joseph de la Cruz, one of the most active translators of Pérez de Soto's works in Latin, declared that he was ultimately convinced to denounce his employer after the publication of an inquisitorial edict that was read at the church of *Santa Veracruz*.<sup>987</sup> After listening to this edict, the accuser "had misgivings again about these matters of judiciary [astrology], and, because the edict commanded to declare such things, I think I stopped translating the said books by Haly [Abenragel]".<sup>988</sup> Moreover, de la Cruz tried to convince Pérez de Soto to have the book expurgated by showing him the name of the author in the expurgatory "and telling him in Romance what was forbidden."<sup>989</sup> The witness probably referred to the index of 1632, the most voluminous catalogue of forbidden books issued by the Spanish Inquisition, which was listed in Pérez de Soto's inventory.<sup>990</sup> Abenragel's *De iudiciis astrorum* was indeed

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<sup>987</sup> To my knowledge, the last edict about forbidden books before de la Cruz's deposition in January 1655 was issued more than a year earlier on 25 October 1653: *Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohiben 18 obras, 2 de ellas de magia*. (1653). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 112. The witness was probably referring to another edict, which is now lost.

<sup>988</sup> "habiendo yo asistido cuando se leyó [el edicto] en la santa Veracruz volví a escrupulizar cerca de dichas materias de la judicaria y como en el se mandaba la declaración de semejantes cosas me parece que cesé de trasladar el dicho libro de Haly" INAH-2, f. 248.

<sup>989</sup> "y que fui un día a su casa y para convencerle en que tenía que expurgar alguna parte del dicho libro le hice que sacara el expurgatorio y le busqué en él el nombre del autor y le dice en romance lo que tenía prohibido..." INAH-2, f. 248v.

<sup>990</sup> Registered under the entry: *Catálogo y expurgatorio del año de mil seiscientos treinta y dos*. Castanien

forbidden from the first Roman Index (1559) onwards, and as early as 1584 by the Spanish Index Quiroga.

Even before the edict was read, Joseph de la Cruz was aware that the translation of certain works required some precaution. Thus he kept himself up-dated about the works and authors included in the indexes and expurgatory. At the time of the denunciation, Joseph had begun the translation of Giuntini's *Speculum*, "which is not expurgated and I have in my possession at the moment."<sup>991</sup> Concerning Ciruelo's *Apotelesmata*, he said that the judgements on nativities by this author were "not *in totum* forbidden, but had to be expurgated."<sup>992</sup> Ciruelo's work was actually not listed in the Spanish indexes of 1584, 1612, or 1632, but the copy now extant at the National Library in Madrid seems to have suffered some expurgation.<sup>993</sup> He said that Pérez de Soto had "one book whose author is Juan Bautista de la Porta, written in Tuscan language, and whose title is *Maggia Naturalis*." He did not know whether Pérez de Soto had it expurgated, as the expurgatory indicated.<sup>994</sup> Regarding Mizaldus, he knew that "one of his books was allowed to be read with precaution". Mizaldus was indeed included in the Spanish Index Valdés (1559), and the expurgatory of 1612.<sup>995</sup> In the case of Bonatti's work, he did not know whether it was indexed, but a manuscript note at the beginning of the book saying *that the said treatises were against the first precept of the Decalogue*, confirmed his presumption that the work was forbidden.<sup>996</sup>

Because Joseph de la Cruz had refused to translate Abenragel's work, Pérez de Soto took the work to the Augustinian priest Felipe de Castro for examination. Afterwards, Pérez

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(1951), p. 277.

<sup>991</sup> "Y también he comenzado a traducir el *Speculum Astrología* por el dicho Juntino, el cual no está corregido según el expurgatorio y le tengo al presente en mi poder." INAH-2, f. 243.

<sup>992</sup> "...he trasladado también los juicios de natividades que aunque no son *in totum* prohibidos tienen que expurgar." INAH-2, f. 242.

<sup>993</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 283.

<sup>994</sup> "Y también tenía en su poder un libro cuyo autor era Juan Bautista de la Porta en lengua toscana que su título era de *Maggia Naturalis* no sé si corre según el expurgatorio que me parece que tiene que expurgar". INAH-2, f. 242.

<sup>995</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 82; and Pérez Villanueva (2000), Vol. III, p. 892.

<sup>996</sup> Trasladá "casi todo el libro, el cual era de octavo de pliego de alto de cuatro dedos, excepto el tratado de natividades y esto sin embargo que en una foja en el principio de este libro decía de letra de mano que los dichos tratados eran contra el primer precepto del decálogo y pareciendo de cierto que eran prohibidos (y lo mismo me parecía en sus demás tratados que escribí tocantes a esta materia) trasladé en romance para el susodicho lo referido en muchos cuadernos" INAH-2, f. 241.

de Soto returned it to the translator, and showed him the Augustinian's opinion at the beginning of the book: *hunc librum visum et correctum secundus expurgatorium permissum est.*<sup>997</sup> Pérez de Soto implied that he could translate the work, and, "because I was sick and had no means earn a living, I translated an interrogation about the invention of occult treasures."<sup>998</sup> The rest of Abenragel's book, however, was translated by the student Nicolás Roblés. The same thing happened with Dariot's work, which Joseph de la Cruz had refused to translate after the publication of the edict.<sup>999</sup>

Robles expressed his own hesitations about Abenragel's and Dariot's works. About half way through the text by the former, he discovered a discussion on the freedom of the will and the foretelling of the future.<sup>1000</sup> Even though Robles had the impression that these were forbidden subjects, he completed the translation because he was afraid that otherwise Pérez de Soto would suspect a denunciation against him.<sup>1001</sup> Nevertheless, he pointed out to his employer that the author of the book indicated auspicious days for circumcision, but the reply of his employer was that it was all "Moorish nonsense", and that this specific chapter was to be omitted from the translation.<sup>1002</sup> After finishing the translation of Abenragel's work, Robles brought the original book to the Jesuit Alonso de Medina, who told him that the work indeed dealt with forbidden judicial astrology. Thus the deponent "took the book and put it back *discretely* among the rest of the books of the said Pérez de Soto."<sup>1003</sup> Concerning

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<sup>997</sup> "...me trajo a que le tradujese y trasladase algunas cosas de interrogaciones y de la judiciaria de un libro de a folio de Haly Abenrragel en latín y yo lo resistí de manera que lo llevó al padre Fray Felipe de Castro, [...] de la orden de San Agustín, para que lo viese y [...] diciendo que lo había visto el dicho padre y dándome a entender que lo podía traducir y trajo dicho al principio este parecer: *hunc librum visum et correctum secundus expurgatorium permissum est.*". INAH-2, f. 248.

<sup>998</sup> "...y por estar yo enfermo y no tener de qué sustentarme le trasladé una interrogación cerca de la invención de tesoros ocultos..." INAH-2, f. 248.

<sup>999</sup> "Y también que desde el tiempo que se publicó el dicho edicto de este santo oficio como he declarado dejé de escribir dichos libros de la judiciaria prohibida y por eso como he dicho no le trasladé Hali Abenrragel, ni a Claudio Darioto". INAH-2, f. 250.

<sup>1000</sup> Castanien, (1951), p. 35. "...corriendo en la traducción de dicho libro a la mitad de él poco más o menos hizo reparo este declarante en una interrogaciones del discurso sobre el libre albedrío y querer alcanzar los futuros contingentes que le parecieron materias escrupulosas..." INAH-2, f. 230.

<sup>1001</sup> "...prosiguió en traducir dicho libro hasta el fin por que el dicho Melchor Pérez no reparase en el escrúpulo de este declarante y recelase había de denunciarle..." INAH-2, f. 230.

<sup>1002</sup> Castanien, p. 36. "...comunicándolo al dicho Melchor Pérez le dijo a este declarante que aquello era borrachera de moros que no corría entre los cristianos, que no tradujese aquel capítulo sino que lo borrara, como con efecto lo borró este declarante..." INAH-2, f. 230v.

<sup>1003</sup> "Y que habiéndolo acabado de traducir dicho libro se lo llevó original al padre Alonso de Medina de la Compañía de Jesús, que lo tuvo una noche en su poder, comunicándole este declarante su escrúpulo por ser todo

Dariot's work, Robles said he had "noticed some forbidden issues about the understanding of future contingents, inclinations, life and habits of men".<sup>1004</sup>

Pérez de Soto himself had asked for examination of some works on astrology he had translated by students friends of his, like Nicolás de Andrade, Leonardo Sálazar, who was already dead at the time, and the *bachiller* Joseph de la Cruz Benítez.<sup>1005</sup> Pérez de Soto had taken the books, including one by Pedro Ciruelo, another by Julio Firmico and several others whose titles he could not remember, to the Jesuit Francisco Javier de Fava. It was actually Firmico's work which provoked Joseph de la Cruz's greatest hesitations about the translations of works on judicial astrology, and he thus decided to bring the book directly to the tribunal.<sup>1006</sup> Pérez de Soto, by contrast, said that the Jesuit priest had the works examined by the rector of the college of *San Pedro y San Pablo*, and then "gave the books back to this confessant, and told him they were good, and accepted by the rector."<sup>1007</sup> The rector, father Horacio Carochi, had once even translated for Pérez de Soto from Greek some words at the end of the treatise on astrology by Venerable Bede, whose copy was also in the library of the Jesuit College.<sup>1008</sup>

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lo más astrología judiciaria prohibida por el Santo Oficio como se lo dijo también a este declarante el dicho padre Medina y este declarante se lo llevó y puso al disimulo entre los demás libros del dicho Melchor Pérez a donde se hallara." INAH-2, f. 230v.

<sup>1004</sup> "ambos [Dariot and Boderius] están en latín y tratan de nacimientos en lo sustancial para levantar figuras, en los cuales libros asimismo reparó este declarante algunas cosas prohibidas en orden a la comprensión de futuros contingentes, inclinaciones, vida y costumbres de los hombres..." INAH-2, f. 230v.

<sup>1005</sup> "que ha hecho trasladar de latín en romance, los cuales le trasladaban estudiantes amigos suyos que uno de ellos se llama Nicolás de Andrade de edad de más de veinte años, seglar, el cual tiene escuela en la calle del hospital de Nuestra Señora. Y que también ha dado a trasladar dichos libros a Joseph Benítez, bachiller de más de veinte años, hijo de Alfonso Benítez, barbero que fue de esta Ciudad que ya es difunto y el otro que le ha trasladado libros era Leonardo de Salazar, que ya es difunto y vivía hacia el convento de San Francisco y no se acuerda que haya dado libros a trasladar y traducir a otros". INAH-2, f. 297.

<sup>1006</sup> "que ayer martes por la mañana le dio el dicho MPS a este declarante un libro de Julio Firmico de astrología para que le trasladase algunas cláusulas de él tocantes a la judiciaria de nacimientos y por haberle hecho escrúpulo viene a dar cuenta de ello a este santo oficio y por hacerle cosas prohibidas hace presentación del dicho libro para que se le ordene lo que deba hacer". INAH-2, f. 245v.

<sup>1007</sup> "y el dicho Padre Francisco Javier dio a este confesante dichos libros, diciendo que eran buenos y que los había aprobado por tales el dicho Rector." INAH-2, f. 297.

<sup>1008</sup> "Y añade más que en la rueda que deja dicho haber visto que trae el Venerable Beda al fin de sus obras, están escritas unas letras griegas y por no entenderlas éste fue al Padre Rector de la Compañía de dicho Colegio de San Pablo llamado Padre Horacio Carochi para que le explicase qué querían decir dichas letras y habiéndole preguntado dónde estaban escritas y díchoselo este confesante fueron a la librería de dicho Colegio y en ella halló dicho libro y mirando las letras dijo su significado, lo cual escribió este confesante". INAH-2, f. 297.

These consultations, however, did not always have a happy ending. According to Joseph de la Cruz, his employer once said that he had lost 100 pesos when he brought some books by Origanus to a Jesuit priest for examination.<sup>1009</sup> The testimony is quite confusing, but apparently the books were confiscated, and Pérez de Soto complained about having lost not only the money he had paid for the book, but also for the translations.<sup>1010</sup>

In a further hearing, Pérez de Soto remembered another time when he had asked for advice on forbidden books. He had some doubts about “a book on astrology whose author is Diego Pérez de Mesa, from Seville, and some other manuscript notebooks that deal with the same [subject]”, so he took them directly to the tribunal of the Holy Office for examination.<sup>1011</sup> Pérez de Soto asked the inquisitor Francisco de Estrada whether he could study this subject “because he was fond of knowing about it”. The inquisitor replied that it was allowed for him to study it, but not to tell anyone about it. Pérez de Soto then wondered why, in that case, he would be interested in studying it, and the inquisitor answered that he could talk about it with wise people, “but not with women or other unlearned persons, for they might think that it was an evil art”.<sup>1012</sup>

The same inquisitor issued, on January 12, 1655 an order to arrest Pérez de Soto and to bring his books and manuscripts to the chambers of the Inquisition. The Jesuit Juan Ortiz de los Heros was in charge of examining Pérez de Soto’s library in order to determine which works needed to be expurgated. To undertake his task, the inquisitorial examiner had two instruments: the specific titles listed in the Index, and the general rules or classes into which prohibited books might fall. The first class included works by heretic authors or those

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<sup>1009</sup> “...el susodicho [Melchor Pérez] me ha certificado que cuando los llevó pienso que al dicho padre de la Compañía perdió más de cien pesos en los cuadernos que le quitaron.” INAH-2, f. 241.

<sup>1010</sup> “...y le dijo el dicho Melchor Pérez los había llevado a un padre de la Compañía que le había quitado algunos cuadernos que le habían costado más de cien pesos el escribirlos.” INAH-2, f. 235.

<sup>1011</sup> “...que teniendo este declarante en su poder un libro de astrología cuyo autor era Diego Pérez de Mesa, natural de Sevilla, y otros cuadernos manuscritos que trataban de lo mismo y otro cuaderno de una quiere decir sacada parte de ella, habiendo entendido que había dificultad en si se podía estudiar o no la astrología, trajo dicho libro y cuadernos a este tribunal...” INAH-2, f. 305v.

<sup>1012</sup> “...y lo entregó todo al señor Inquisidor Don Francisco de Estrada diciéndole que mirase si podía estudiar aquello porque era aficionado a saber de ello y el dicho Señor Inquisidor le dijo que lo estudiase y no comunicase a nadie y este le respondió que para qué lo había de estudiar si no lo había de comunicar con nadie, a que respondió el dicho señor Inquisidor que lo comunicase con personas doctas y no con las mujeres, ni otras personas poco savidoras [sic] porque podían pensar que era mala arte...” INAH-2, f. 305v.

suspected of heresy; the titles in the second class were prohibited because of the content of the book (suspicious doctrines or ideas), and not because of the author; finally, the third class included books published without the name of the author and publisher, place and date of publication. From the total of 1500 volumes in the library, 304 items were kept in the secret chambers of the Inquisition for examination, the majority of them dealing with astrology and astronomy. Sixty three of them were corrected, and only thirty items were considered as forbidden *in totum*.<sup>1013</sup> Probably due to the magnitude of his task, the censor did not write any extensive opinions on the works he had to examine, but further research on this document will still shed interesting light on the question of inquisitorial censorship in New Spain at the time.

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<sup>1013</sup> *Calificación de los libros de Melchor Pérez de Soto por Juan Ortiz de los Heros, S.I* (1655). AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 440, exp. 1.

### 5.3 Circulating books on astrology: an intellectual network

We have previously argued that it is not possible to identify a homogeneous community of practitioners of astrology in seventeenth-century New Spain. However, a closer look at the circulation and exchange of books on the subject can help us to reconstruct a rather heterogeneous network of men with different intellectual backgrounds who shared a common interest in astrology. Some of them studied and taught astrology at university within the faculties of mathematics or medicine; others needed astrology to compose and publish annual almanacs; others relied on astrology as an auxiliary tool for cosmography; inside the convent, some of them read about it as part of their studies in natural philosophy; finally, others were in contact with astrological doctrines because translating books on the subject was a means of earning a living.<sup>1014</sup>

In one of his hearings before the Holy Tribunal, Gaspar Rivero, the first accuser against Melchor Pérez de Soto, gave some hints on the configuration of this intellectual network. When he was asked by the inquisitor for how long he had been using astrology to find out about future events, Rivero declared that he started learning astrology from Don Julián de Espinoza six months before the beginning of the trial, when he moved to the neighborhood of Santiago.<sup>1015</sup> From that moment, he started getting involved in some conversations in which he talked about the things he learned.<sup>1016</sup> One of these conversations was about a fleet that was going to arrive in 1649.<sup>1017</sup> Two astrologers, Bonilla and *Saboyano*, had foretold that the ship was not going to arrive, and a merchant wanted to know whether the prediction was true or not. Rivero and Julián de Espinosa cast a figure which confirmed

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<sup>1014</sup> See chart below.

<sup>1015</sup> “Fuele dicho que él tiene dicho y confesado que no había más de seis meses poco más o menos que trataba de cosas de astrología y de responder algunas interrogaciones que le hacía por algunos amigos y por el papel del número siete parece por la fecha de la carta escrita por el Licenciado Diego Nieto de Orozco a su hermana cuya fecha es de veintidós de febrero de 1647, que desde aquel tiempo y aún antes trata de dar respuestas según reglas de astrología judiciaria.” AGN-435, f.591v.

<sup>1016</sup> “...desde entonces trataba este confesante en algunas conversaciones de lo que iba aprendiendo de la astrología con que corrió voz de que era astrólogo...” AGN-435, f.591v.

<sup>1017</sup> It is possible that they were talking about the arrival of the new viceroy Don Luis Enriquez de Guzmán, conde de Alba de Aliste who took possession of his charge on June 13, 1650.



the prediction, and Melchor Pérez de Soto did the same thing.<sup>1018</sup> According to Pérez de Soto, Julián de Espinoza used to go to his place to borrow some ephemerides in order to cast his figures, “which he believed were nativities.”<sup>1019</sup>

*Saboyano*, from Savoy, was a tailor who had learned astrology from Nicolás de Aste while both of them were imprisoned in the secret cells of the Inquisition around 1617.<sup>1020</sup> We don't have information on the identity of this character, but a report on books from the Mexican inquisitors sent to the *Suprema* in Spain on March 18, 1633 drew attention to certain works, among which was a work called *Astrologia*, by Pedro Floquet Saboyano Sastre.<sup>1021</sup> Pérez de Soto referred to the *Saboyano* as a rather unlearned astrologer, who had no knowledge about arithmetic.<sup>1022</sup> However, contrary to Julián de Espinoza, who had to borrow books from Pérez de Soto, *Saboyano* did own some books on astrology. Gaspar Rivero declared that he used to go to *Saboyano's* house whenever he needed to cast a horoscope, because he did not own any book on astrology. Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, the Mercedarian astrologer, said he had borrowed Giuntini's work from the *Saboyano*, and gave it back to him before leaving from Mexico City to Santiago de Guatemala.<sup>1023</sup> In Guatemala, Giuntini's work seems to have been circulated before Friar Nicolás's arrival in 1640. Almost two decades before, in 1620, a certain Sebastián Gudiel presented himself before the commissary of the Holy Office in Guatemala to confess that he had studied astrology “according to the

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<sup>1018</sup> “...uno de ellos [un cajonero de la plaza] llamado Juan Dávila por decir que Bonilla, el Saboyano y otros decían que no había de venir flota, se llegó a este confesante por saber que tenía cuadernos y libros de astrología y le pidió que viese si vendría o no flota y si se confirmaba con lo que decía Bonilla y que entonces este confesante y el dicho Don Julián de Espinoza hicieron por mayor un tema y salió una dirección conforme a lo que decía Bonilla que no vendría flota. Y que la misma dirección hicieron los dicho Melchor Pérez y Don Julián de Espinoza, el cual le dijo la había hecho también el Saboyano.” AGN-435, f.592

<sup>1019</sup> “...y también vio levantar figura a Don Julián de Espinoza, vecino de esta ciudad que de presente está en Tacubaya a donde entiende está al presente, el cual por no tener efemérides se iba a casa de éste y con las suyas levantaba dicha figura, a lo cual fue tres o cuatro veces, no sabe acerca de qué levantaba dichas figuras, pero le parece que serían de nacimiento.” AGN-435, f. 597v.

<sup>1020</sup> Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1021</sup> Schons (1949), p. 5.

<sup>1022</sup> “Y también ha visto éste levantar figura a un fulano Saboyano sastre que a la sazón era de esta Ciudad y ahora es religioso lego de Santo Domingo, que decía que no sabe bien el dicho ministerio de levantar figura, se ayudaba de algunos instrumentos como de tablas proporcionales, por no saber la aritmética...” INAH-f. 298.

<sup>1023</sup> See Chapter 3. “Así mismo usé de los aforismos que el Doctor Francisco Juntino trae en un libro pequeño intitulado *De Revoluciones annuas*, en latín al cual toma suma de dos grandes que escribió el mismo autor y están corregidos por este Santo Tribunal, los cuales habrá seis años que [una palabra] el saboyano en este santo tribunal y se los volvió otra vez [...] era mío y así lo entregué al dicho Antonio Cano Gaitán.” AGN-370, f. 123v.

doctrine of doctor Juntino and the aphorisms with which it deals, and without involving myself with the rising of figures or making judgements.”<sup>1024</sup>

Gabriel López de Bonilla, another of the astrologers denounced by Rivero, was a physician, composer of almanacs between 1632 and 1668. He was born in Spain around 1600, and arrived to New Spain in 1628 with his wife, Ana de Herbas. He stated in one of his works to have studied in Salamanca, where he was disciple of Bartolomé Barrientos. In Mexico, he became related to one of the most famous intellectual of seventeenth-century New Spain, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, when his son, who was also called Gabriel, married Sigüenza’s daughter, Inés.<sup>1025</sup>

López Bonilla was the author of a treatise on the comet of 1652, (*Discurso y Relación Cometográfica*) which formed part of Pérez de Soto’s library, and a treatise on the measurement of lands for agriculture (*Tratado de las medidas de tierras*), which received some circulation in manuscript form.<sup>1026</sup> According to Trabulse, Bonilla did some astronomical observations on the eclipse of 1638 together with the Mercedarian Friar Diego Rodríguez.<sup>1027</sup> Even though this affirmation has not been fully proved, it is very likely that both astronomers knew each other, and their relationship, in turn, could explain why the Mercedarian Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, Friar Diego’s friend, had “some manuscripts nativities apparently made by Gabriel López de Bonilla” at the time of his apprehension in Guatemala.<sup>1028</sup>

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<sup>1024</sup> “...conforme la doctrina del doctor Juntino y a los aforismos que de esto tratan y sin haberme entre metido en levantar figuras ni hacer juicios en ninguna cosa”. *Denuncia de Sebastián Gudiel contra sí mismo por estudiar astrología* (1620). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 333, exp. 8.

<sup>1025</sup> Tena Villeda (2004), pp. 33-36. According to this author, some previous scholars (Quintana, Pérez Salazar) had confused the father with his son, and had therefore wrongly stated that it was López Bonilla, the father, who became Sigüenza’s brother-in-law. The marriage certificate, quoted by Tena, is located in: AGN, galería 1, 2do. rollo de “Matrimonios de españoles de la catedral metropolitana”, f. 90, 1644-1680. López de Bonilla’s son and Inés de Sigüenza y Figueroa had three sons: María Guadalupe, Tomás y Gabriel López de Sigüenza. See: Tena Villeda (2004), p. 39.

<sup>1026</sup> Trabulse (1997), p. 78.

<sup>1027</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 197. Tena and Rodríguez Sala (2004) have pointed out that there is no evidence in Diego Rodríguez’s work to support this affirmation.

<sup>1028</sup> “Vine a este convento de nuestra señora de la merced y recibí del padre comendador un cuadernillo manuscrito de una figura hecha (según parece) por Gabriel de Bonilla”. AGN-370, f. 42v.

In one of the hearings, Pérez de Soto declared that Bonilla used to go to his place to show him “how to cast a figure and to bring some books that he used to borrow from him”.<sup>1029</sup> On other occasions, Pérez de Soto would join Bonilla “to watch him cast figures about the patients he visited, and help him with the arithmetic, and to prognosticate the development of the illnesses.” This happened “many times during the nights after he [Bonilla] finished with his visits.”<sup>1030</sup> According to one of the witnesses, Bonilla had also cast the natal horoscope of Pérez de Soto, who in turn requested the translation into Spanish of some aphorisms in Latin concerning his nativity.<sup>1031</sup>

Apart from his experiences with López Bonilla, Pérez de Soto said that he had also learned astrology from the Mercedarian Friar Diego Rodríguez, “professor of mathematics at the University in this city [...] who was also teacher in geometry and arithmetic”, and who used to lend him some books.<sup>1032</sup> When the student Nicolás de Robles spoke to Friar Diego about the books he was translating for his employer, the Mercedarian said that “Melchor Pérez knew well that he should not deal with astrology in front of him because he repudiated it so much. And though he was his friend, his soul was first, so he advised this deponent to denounce him before this Holy Office”<sup>1033</sup> But Friar Diego was not the only clergyman who had taught Pérez de Soto “the art of astrology.” The Augustinian Felipe de Castro, who composed an almanac for the year 1649, “had given this confessant a notebook on astrology

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<sup>1029</sup> “Y también Gabriel López de Bonilla vecino de esta ciudad y que se ejercita en hacer pronósticos, solía venir a casa de este a enseñarle cómo habían de levantar figura y a llevar algunos libros que pedía prestados a éste; y que no se acuerda de otra cosa.” INAH-2, f. 299.

<sup>1030</sup> “Y que ahora se ha acordado que algunas veces se juntaba este confesante con el Doctor Bonilla, médico que fue de esta ciudad que ya es difunto [según Trábulse murió en 1669 o 1670] y éste iba a verle levantar figuras acerca de los enfermos que visitaba y éste le ayudaba en lo que toca a la aritmética y pronosticaba los sucesos de las enfermedades, lo cual sucedió muchas veces de noche después que acababa sus visitas.” INAH-2, f. 299.

<sup>1031</sup> “...le sacó el dicho MP un cuaderno de a cuarta en que tiene escrita la figura de nacimiento que le levantó a Gabriel López de Bonilla como lo tiene ya declarado en el dicho escrito que presentó en este tribunal y le dijo el dicho MP a este declarante que le volviese en romance dos aforismos que allí había en latín...” INAH-2, f. 245-245v.

<sup>1032</sup> “Y también ha aprendido de Fray Diego Rodríguez, religioso de la Merced, conventual en su convento de esta Ciudad que es catedrático de matemáticas en la Universidad de ella, el cual prestaba a este confesante los libros que él tenía, el cual también era maestro en la Geometría y Aritmética”. INAH-2, f. 297v.

<sup>1033</sup> “Y que asimismo comunica al dicho Melchor Pérez el Padre Maestro Fray Diego Rodríguez de la orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced, catedrático de matemáticas, el cual dijo a este declarante tratándole de estos libros que tradujo que bien sabía Melchor Pérez que con él no había de tratar de la astrología judiciaria por lo mucho que la aborrecía. Y que aunque era su amigo primero era su alma y así aconsejaba a este declarante que viniese a denunciarle a este Santo Oficio”. INAH-2, f. 231.

which he keeps among his papers and deals with the five accidents that can occur in this science.”<sup>1034</sup> Apart from lending him books, we had seen before that the Augustinian priest would also advise Pérez de Soto on whether a text was forbidden or not.

Last but not least, Pérez de Soto had also learned astrology from admiral Pedro Porter Casanate, knight of the order of Santiago. Born on April 30, 1611 in Zaragoza, Pedro was the second of seven sons of Juan Porter and Esperanza Casanate.<sup>1035</sup> He started studying at the Law faculty in the university of the same city, but later decided to follow a military career, which gave him the opportunity to travel to the New World for the first time in 1629-30.<sup>1036</sup> His interest in the art of navigation resulted in the publication, in 1634, of a treatise entitled *Reparo a errores de la Navegación española*, two of whose copies were in Pérez de Soto’s library. In this text, the admiral dealt with the problem of determining a point’s longitude in the higher sea, one of the biggest puzzles of cosmographers and mathematicians at the time.<sup>1037</sup>

In 1635 he offered the viceroy of New Spain, count of Salvatierra, his services to explore the territory of California. His aim was not the search of treasures, like his predecessors had done since 1524, but finding a passage between the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. The admiral arrived to New Spain on April 1643.<sup>1038</sup> From Veracruz he travelled to Mexico City in order to recruit the staff and get the necessary provisions for the expedition. He stayed in the capital, and sent the members of the crew to Acapulco to buy the frigate

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<sup>1034</sup> “...declara que de las personas de quien ha podido tomar enseñanza era el arte de Astrología han sido y son el Padre Fray Felipe de Castro de la orden de San Agustín, difunto religioso de esta Ciudad, el cual dio a este confesante un cuaderno de astrología que éste tiene entre sus papeles y trata de los cinco accidente que puede haber en dicha ciencia.” INAH-2, f. 297v. On Castro’s almanac see: *Lunario y Pronóstico de Salud para 1649*. AGN; Inquisición, 670.

<sup>1035</sup> *Expediente para la concesión del título de caballero de la orden de Santiago a Pedro Porter Casanate* (1640). AHN, OM-EXPEDIENTILLOS, N.2353. *Pruebas para la concesión del Título de Caballero de la Orden de Santiago de Pedro Porter y Casanate, natural de Zaragoza, Almirante* (1640). AHN, OM-CABALLEROS\_SANTIAGO,EXP. 6617.

<sup>1036</sup> Porter y Casanate, Pedro. *Reparo a errores de la navegación española*. Zaragoza: María de la Torre; 1634. Reproducción facsimilar en la Colección Chimalistac de libros y documentos acerca de la Nueva España. Ediciones Porrúa, Madrid, 1970.

<sup>1037</sup> Trubulse (1997), p. 69.

<sup>1038</sup> *Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a indias de Pedro Porter Casanate, caballero de la orden de Santiago y almirante al descubrimiento del golfo de California, a Nueva España*. (1643-04-17). AGI, CONTRATACION, 5425, N.6; *El Almirante Pedro Porter Casanate, Caballero de Santiago, a Nueva España* (1643-04-17). AGI, PASAJEROS, L.12, E.435.

(called *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*) for the trip to Sinaloa, where they would build a shipyard. However, before they could leave, some news arrived from the viceroyalty of Peru about the arrival of Dutch ships to the Chilean Coast. In response to the threat, Porter Casanate offered his frigate for the defence of the coast.<sup>1039</sup> He finally left Mexico on December 6, 1643 together with “Melchor Pérez de Soto, expert cosmographer for the discovery, and *Licenciado* Juan de Luna as chaplain.”<sup>1040</sup>

According to Pérez de Soto, he had learned astrology mainly from admiral Pedro Porter Casanate, who had lived at his place for more than three years “and showed him the principles and way to cast a figure by the books and tables.”<sup>1041</sup> Another witness declared that in a conversation with a shoemaker called Bartolomé Benítez, the latter said that, when Porter Casanate was going to start his voyage to California, he met Pérez de Soto and together they determined the most auspicious time to begin the enterprise. This witness, who was probably the same Bartolomé Benítez who testified against Gaspar Rivero, said that the admiral actually postponed his departure after knowing the result of the astrological calculation.<sup>1042</sup> Benítez added that Porter Casanate knew about astrology, and had books on the subject with inquisitorial license to read them.<sup>1043</sup> The concession of inquisitorial licenses to read forbidden books was established in 1559 by pope Paul IV, and the practice seemed to become so widely spread at the beginning of the seventeenth century that in 1628 the Spanish Inquisitor Zapata suspended the grant of licenses until 1634, when inquisitor Sotomayor re-established this privilege.<sup>1044</sup> Another translator, Nicolás de Robles, said that Porter Casanate,

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<sup>1039</sup> Porter y Casanate (1970).

<sup>1040</sup> “Carta Relación de D. Pedro Porter Casanate, Caballero de la Orden de Santiago, desde que salió de España el año de 1643 para el descubrimiento del Golfo de la California hasta 24 de enero de 1649, escrita a un amigo suyo” (BN, MS 6438; DIL, 9; P) in Mathes (1970), p. 869.

<sup>1041</sup> “Y también ha visto levantar figura y aprendido de Don Pedro Porter del hábito de Santiago que pasó en esta ocasión al Perú [en 1653, dos años después fue nombrado capitán general de Chile] en compañía del Conde de Alba, virrey, el cual vivió en casa de este confesante más de tres años y enseñó a este los principios y modo de levantar figura por los libros y tablas...” INAH-2, f.238.

<sup>1042</sup> “...que el dicho Bartolomé Benítez le dijo fue que para hacer viaje a las Californias por aquel tiempo Don Pedro Casanate, caballero del hábito de Santiago [...] se había visto por los dichos Don Pedro de Casanate y Melchor Pérez cual sería la hora buena para hacer el viaje sin referir el dicho Bartolomé Benítez el modo sino que se había detenido el dicho Pedro Casanate de salir para su viaje a la ora que tenía dispuesto y salió a otra hora.” INAH-2, f. 259.

<sup>1043</sup> “...que también entendía de la astrología el dicho Don Pedro Cassanate, el cual tenía libros sin declarar qué libros fuesen estos ni de que tratasen, pero que tenía el dicho Don Pedro Casanate licencia de la suprema inquisición para tenerlos y que esto tiene que declarar...” INAH-2, f. 259v.

<sup>1044</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 41.

“who communicated with Pérez de Soto with great friendship, and closeness”, had once told him that the books he was translating “could circulate in Romance for curiosity as long as they were not printed.”<sup>1045</sup> Pérez de Soto did not declare to have borrowed any of the admiral’s books, but only a manuscript notebook on chiromancy, the art of predicting a person’s future by reading the lines on the palms of the hand.<sup>1046</sup>

The above seems to indicate that Pérez de Soto and Porter Casanate shared not only an interest in astrology, but also in other kind of divinatory arts and practices. Pérez de Soto’s translator, Joseph de la Cruz, said during his first deposition that his employer had told him about “an experience” he had done “with his *compadre* Don Pedro Porter Casanate” to know whether some ladies had been in a certain place or not. The *experiment* consisted in putting a key on top of a book of hours with the psalm *De profundis* and waiting to see if the key moved, which would have confirmed the ladies’ presence.<sup>1047</sup> Finally, Joseph de la Cruz declared that Pérez de Soto’s wife had once told him that her sister in law had lost a young child, and the admiral Porter Casanate had “cast a figure in which he said that if the child did not appear after a certain time he would never appear, [...] and on the other hand he judged that the child would appear in royal houses with ostentation and greatness or something like that.”<sup>1048</sup>

These testimonies reveal, first, that the relationship between Pérez de Soto and Porter Casanate was not restricted to an intellectual affinity, but also had a strong personal component. Moreover, it sheds some light on a very interesting feature of astrological

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<sup>1045</sup> “Y que vio este declarante que el dicho MP le comunicaba con estrechaza de amistad y compadrazgo Don Pedro Porter Casanate que también solía profesar la astrología pero no los vio tratar de ella [...] que el dicho Don Pedro Porter tratándole este declarante de dichos libros le respondió que bien podían correr en romance por curiosidad como no fueren impresos.” INAH-2, f. 231-231v.

<sup>1046</sup> On astrology and chiromancy see Chapter 7 of this work.

<sup>1047</sup> “Y antes de firmar dijo que el dicho Melchor Pérez le contó que él y un compadre suyo llamado Don Pedro Porter Casanate [...]habían hecho una experiencia que fue acerca de saber si ciertas mujeres habían entrado en cierta parte o no, que fue coger una llave y cogiendo unas horas donde había el salmo de profundis pusieron la dicha llave sobre el dicho salmo y volvieron a juntar las horas y las pararon y que había hecho intención de que si la dicha llave se volviese a cierta parte sería verdad lo que querían saber”. INAH-2, f. 237v-238.

<sup>1048</sup> “...me contó doña Leonor de Montoya la dicha su mujer del dicho Melchor Pérez de Soto que a su cuñada doña María de Cariagaga se le perdió un hijo de poca edad y acerca de esto se levantó figura en que se juzgó que si no parecía antes de cierto término de día el niño no parecería nunca y este juicio me parece que una de las susodichas cuñadas dijo haberlo pronunciado Don Pedro Porter Casanate y por otra parte el juzgó que parecería en casas reales con ostentación y grandeza o cosa tal”. INAH-2, 248v.

predictions, which is their potential to ease people in times of emotional distress (provoked, for instance, by the loss of a child) or anxiety in front of an uncertain future (felt, for instance, before embarking on a long trip). These, as we will see in the following section, were the main reasons why people, literate and not, turned to the astrologers' aid and consultancy.

Table 1. Readers and Practitioners of Astrology in Seventeenth-Century New Spain			
Name	Information	Place	Date
Aguilar Cantú, Antonio Sebastián	Physician, almanac-writer	Mexico	1682
Aliendo, Pedro de	Painter, possessed a book by Origano	Guatemala	1641
Aste, Nicolás	Student	Mexico	1618
Avila, Joseph	Nephew of <i>Licenciado</i> Becerra	Mexico	1651
Avilés Ramírez, Juan	Physician, almanac-writer	Mexico	1684
Bañuelos, Jerónimo	<i>Corregidor</i> . Rivero taught him astrology	Mexico	1650
Becerra Tanco, Luis	Professor of astrology and mathematics	Mexico	1672
Campos, José	Physician, almanac-writer	Mexico	1687
Castro, Fray Felipe de	Augustinian, and almanac-writer , he taught astrology to Melchor Pérez de Soto.	México	1655
Chávez, Juan Santiago	He talked about astrology with Sebastián Gudiel	Guatemala	1609
Civicos, Juan de	Priest, accused of practicing astrology by Alonso Flores	Manila	1617
Córdova, Martin (pseudonym)	Almanac-writer (Melchor Pérez de Soto or Friar Diego Rodríguez)	Mexico	1638
Doblete de Espinoza, Francisco	He gave Giuntini's book to Gaspar Rivero	Guatemala	1649
Escobar, Catalina de	Chiromancer		1614
Espinoza, Julián	He taught astrology to Gaspar Rivero	México	1650
Figueroa, Juan	Familiar of the Inquisition. Author of the <i>Opúsculo de Astrología en Medicina...</i>	Peru	1660
Flores, Alonso	Astrologer from Madrid, cosmographer	Manila	1617
Gamboa y Ryaño, Marco Antonio	Physician, almanac-writer	Mexico	1698
Garrido, Fray Jacinto	Dominican, lecturer of Theology	Guatemala	1641
Gudiel, Sebastián	Scribe, he denounced himself for practicing astrology.	Guatemala	1620
Guerrero, Juan	Astrologer, accused by Gaspar Rivero	Mexico	1650
Jufre del Aguila, Melchor	Soldier, author of the <i>Compendio historial...</i>	Peru	1630
Koenig, Joan Ramón	Cosmographer, Jesuit, and almanac-writer.	Peru	1680
López de Bonilla, Gabriel	Physician, almanac-writer, and friend of Melchor Pérez de Soto	Mexico	1632
Martín, Fray Pedro	Dominican, astrologer, and chiromancer from	Puebla	1613

Table 1. Readers and Practitioners of Astrology in Seventeenth-Century New Spain

Name	Information	Place	Date
	Valencia.		
Martínez Enrico	Astronomer, printer, and almanac-writer	Mexico	1606
Matta, Nicolás	Priest, almanac-writer	Mexico	1670
Molinedo, Juan	Miner. He had a book on astrology without expurgation	Guanajuato	1650
Montenegro, Juan	Author of some ephemerides confiscated to Friar Nicolás de Alarcón	Guatemala	1641
Moreno, Antonio	Cosmographer, accused of practicing astrology by Alonso Flores	Manila	1617
Navarro, Juan Jerónimo (opponent of astrology)	Priest and Physician (University of Valencia), Author of <i>Sangrar y Purgar...</i>	Peru	1646
Peralta, Pedro	Cosmographer, almanac-writer	Peru	1680
Porter Casanate, Pedro	Cosmographer. He taught astrology to Melchor Pérez de Soto, and was his friend	Zaragoza-México	1643
Ríos, Hernando de	Priest, accused of practicing astrology by Alonso Flores	Manila	1617
Ríos, Hernando de los	Priest, accused of practicing astrology by Miguel Garcetas	Manila	1617
Rodríguez, Fray Diego	Mercedarian, astronomer, professor of Astrology and Mathematics in Mexico	Mexico	1637
Ruiz Lozano, Francisco	Physician-Cosmographer, author of almanacs and a treatise on a comet	Mexico-Peru	1651
Ruiz, Juan	Astronomer, printer, and almanac-writer. Son of Enrico Martínez	Mexico	1641
Saboyano	Tailor, he owned a book by Giuntini	Mexico	1635
Salmerón y Castro, José	Almanac-writer, contestant for the chair of Astrology and Mathematics in Mexico	Mexico	1667
Sánchez, Fray Mauro	Franciscan, lecturer of Theology	Guatemala	1641
Santiago, Saucés Francisco	He studied astrology with Sebastián Gudiel	Guatemala	1620
Saucedo, Juan	Almanac-writer, contestant for the chair of Astrology and Mathematics in Mexico	Mexico	1673
Segura, Juan de	Cosmographer, accused of practicing astrology by Alonso Flores.	Manila	1617
Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos	Astronomer, mathematician, professor of Astrology and Mathematics in Mexico	México	1671
Torres, Lázaro	Organist, he taught astrology to Friar Juan Ximeno	Chiapa	1631
Ximeno, Fray Juan	Dominican, practitioner of astrology	Chiapa	1631
Zapata, Luis	He lent to Melchor Pérez de Soto a book by Campanella	Guatemala	1650



## 5.4 Some uses of astrological knowledge

We mentioned above that Pérez de Soto was frequently approached for help in finding lost or stolen objects, but his astrological skills were also sought after for casting nativities, finding treasures, and predicting the outcome of changes of power within civil and ecclesiastical governments. In this section I will show how the testimonies concerning these predictions make it possible to reconstruct a process of assimilation and appropriation of astrological knowledge. These testimonies reveal some of the ways in which certain works on astrology were read, and how this knowledge was applied for practical purposes.

Pérez de Soto's first hearing took place on January 14, 1655 before inquisitors Francisco Estrada y Escobedo, Juan Sáenz Mañozca, and Don Pedro de Medina Rico. The defendant had requested the hearing because, after trying to figure out in his cell the reason of his imprisonment, he concluded that he had not failed in fulfilling his Christian obligations. Therefore the reason might be that he had done some astrological judgements, such as those concerning Provincial elections of a religious order or nativities.<sup>1049</sup> He had also been consulted for finding stolen objects, and had made judgements "according to the rules of astrology that he had studied".<sup>1050</sup> Finally, he had also requested the translation into Spanish of some Latin books on astrology to be able to study the subject, "because this confessant does not know Latin, and he also had had translated into Castilian some books on geometry, and astronomy, arithmetic because they are related to the science of architecture which he practices."<sup>1051</sup>

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<sup>1049</sup> "Dijo que habiendo quedado ayer solo en su cárcel se puso a discurrir cual causa sería la de su prisión y haciendo memoria de su vida le parece que no ha faltado a las obligaciones de cristiano a lo menos de manera que él lo pueda haber advertido en las cosas de nuestra santa fe católica que en lo demás se confiesa por muy gran pecador, de lo cual infirió que puede ser que por algunos juicios astrológicos que ha hecho, como preguntarle quién había de salir Provincial en alguna religión o por algunos nacimientos de personas". INAH-2, f. 277.

<sup>1050</sup> "...y ha dicho su parecer en dichos casos y también en otros en que han sucedido algunos hurtos preguntándole por la cosa hurtada y por el ladrón en que ha dado su parecer conforme a reglas de astrología que ha estudiado..." INAH-2, f. 277.

<sup>1051</sup> "y ha hecho traducir algunos libros latinos tocantes a ellas al lenguaje español para poderlo estudiar porque este confesante no sabe latín y también ha hecho traducir en castellano algunos libros de geometría y astronomía, aritmética [escrito arizmetica] por tocar tanto a la ciencia de arquitectura que profesa..." INAH-2, f. 277.

The inquisitors then proceeded to ask the defendant to give more details on these predictions. First, they asked “what kind of judgements he had done about the Provincial elections and the rules by which he had done them.”<sup>1052</sup> Provincial chapters, as established by a *real cédula* issued in 1570 by Phillip II, were to be celebrated every five or more years in the Spanish Colonies instead of every three years, as the Council of Trent established. The traditional rule was modified due to the fact that the metropolitan Cathedrals in the New World were too far from each other and thus it was very difficult and expensive to call the prelates together every third year.<sup>1053</sup> As we will see in the following chapter, provincial elections were a crucial issue in New Spain’s political life, and astrological predictions concerning their outcome were more frequent than one might expect at the outset.

Pérez de Soto was asked to predict the results of the Franciscan Provincial elections of 1648 and 1654, and the Augustinian chapter of 1648. Concerning the Franciscan chapter of 1648, Pérez de Soto explained that he had gone one day to a bookshop and found the book seller Antonio Calderón trying to predict the outcome of the election. Antonio Calderón was the son of Paula Benavides, one of the best-known printer and booksellers of the seventeenth century. She took care of the business after her husband (Bernardo Calderón) died, and at her death, her sons took over and kept it in the family until the eighteenth century.<sup>1054</sup> One can easily imagine that the owner of such an amazing library like Pérez de Soto’s would pay frequent visits to this bookshop. During one of these visits, Pérez de Soto saw that Antonio Calderón had a hat with some slips of paper inside. In each slip he had written down the names and last names of the candidates for the election, and asked one of his younger brothers to draw one of the slips from the hat.<sup>1055</sup>

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<sup>1052</sup> “Preguntado qué juicios ha hecho acerca de las elecciones de Provincial y por qué reglas se ha gobernado en ellos”. INAH-2, f 277v.

<sup>1053</sup> Pinelo, Antonio de León. *Recopilación de las Indias*. México: Porrúa; 1992. Libro I. Título IX. 2. “Que los Concilios Provinciales se celebren en las Indias conforme a lo que se declara” (Don Felipe II, en Madrid a 9 de Febrero de 1521).

<sup>1054</sup> Rivas Mata, Emma. “Impresores y mercaderes de libros en la Ciudad de México” in Castañeda, Carmen. (coord.) *Del Autor al Lector*. México: Porrúa; 2002; pp. 81 and 91.

<sup>1055</sup> “...el caso fue que Antonio Calderón, vecino de esta ciudad y librero que es de la calle de san Agustín que al presente es sacerdote y entonces no lo era estaba un día en su tienda y tenía en un sombrero echadas diversas cédulas escrito en cada una el nombre y apellido de los que parece que podían ser provinciales y hacia que un muchacho hermano suyo metiera la mano en el sombrero y sacase una de dichas cédulas para ver el

When Pérez de Soto found out what the prediction was about, he “reduced the discourse to astrological principles” and observed that, at one in the afternoon, the Sun was in the ninth house, which is a religious house, together with Mars, which is a planet fond of arms. Therefore, he concluded that the provincial was going to be red-haired and fond of arms.<sup>1056</sup> During his deposition before the Holy Office on March 6, 1655 Antonio Calderón declared that, after listening to Pérez de Soto’s judgement, his mother, his brother, and himself said that the blondest candidate was Friar Alonso de Lima, and the astrologer replied: *then he will be the one.*<sup>1057</sup> According to the chronicles of the city, Friar Alonso de Lima was elected as provincial on November 28, 1648 when the 42<sup>nd</sup> election of the order was celebrated.<sup>1058</sup>

Concerning the Franciscan chapter of 1654, Pérez de Soto declared that over the Christmas season of the previous year (1653) a Franciscan called Friar Juan de Uvilla asked him who the next provincial was going to be. The defendant needed to know the exact time when the election was taking place, and with the given information (23<sup>rd</sup> of December, at 7:00 AM) he cast a figure. His interpretation was that, according to the ascendant sign (Capricorn) and its correspondent physiognomy, the next provincial was supposed to have a face that resembled a goat.<sup>1059</sup> According to physiognomic tradition, the goat was always associated with lust. The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomica* explains that slim and strong legs, though associated with birds and not with goats, are lustful.<sup>1060</sup> A person who has hairy legs is lustful, see the goats;<sup>1061</sup> someone who has reddish eyes is lustful, like the goats;<sup>1062</sup>

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nombre del que salía”. INAH-2, f. 278.

<sup>1056</sup> “...reduciendo el discurso a preceptos de astrología vio que por ser la una del día el sol estaba en la nona casa con Marte y que era casa de religión la dicha nona casa y que por estar el sol en ella y Marte aficionado a armas, sería el provincial que había de salir hombre bermejo y aficionado a armas”. INAH-2, f. 278.

<sup>1057</sup> “y entonces este testigo, dicha su madre y hermano le dijeron al dicho MP que el más rubio y bermejo que había entre los propuestos era Fray Alonso de la Lima y entonces dijo el dicho Melchor Pérez ese será.”

<sup>1058</sup> Ocaranza, Fernando. *Capítulos de la Historia Franciscana*. 2 vols. México; 1934, vol. II, p. 91. “Guijo narra que el 28 de noviembre de 1648, en el capítulo en San Francisco, salió Fray Francisco de Lima...”

<sup>1059</sup> “...según el signo que salió por el ascendente que fue Capricornioel cual da por fisonomía que el que había de salir por Provincial había de tener el rostro semejante a el de la cabra...” INAH-2, f. 279.

<sup>1060</sup> “Quantí invece hanno le gambe sotiili, ma muscolose, sono lussuriosi; si vedano gli uccelli”. Pseudo-Aristotle (1993), p. 97.

<sup>1061</sup> “Chi ha le gambe pelose é lussurioso: si vedano i capri”. Pseudo-Aristotle (1993), p. 113.

<sup>1062</sup> “Quelli che li hano [gli occhi] caprini [color del vino] sono insaziabili di piacere: si vedano le capre”. Pseudo-Aristotle (1993), p. 111.

and those who have a piercing voice can never get enough pleasure, like goats.<sup>1063</sup> The Franciscan Friar Juan de Uvilla talked to Pérez de Soto about the interpretation of the astrological figure, and “decided that the stars pointed definitely to his election, for though he was fat he did have slender, goat-like legs and arms, and he lifted up his habit in proof.”<sup>1064</sup>



*Physiognomy of a man resembling a goat, from Charles Le Brun's illustrations (1671).*

We find here another example of the way in which astrological and physiognomic ideas were interwoven, though this is not the place to discuss the relationship between both disciplines.<sup>1065</sup> What would be interesting to know is the source from which Pérez de Soto had acquired his knowledge on physiognomy. He made no reference to any specific author,

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<sup>1063</sup> “Quelli che invece hanno una voce acuta e schiamazzante sono insaziabili di piacere: si vedano le capre”. Pseudo-Aristotle (1993), p. 117.

<sup>1064</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 46.

<sup>1065</sup> For the relationship between astrology and physiognomy see chapter 3.

but we know that his library contained some of the classic works on the subject, such as Della Porta's *De humana physiognomonia*, both in Latin and Italian,<sup>1066</sup> or Jerónimo Cortés's *Libro de phisonomia natural*, in its 1598 edition.<sup>1067</sup> More surprising is perhaps the fact that Pérez de Soto owned also some manuscripts in Romance by Diego Pérez de Mesa, an author who did not publish but wrote extensively on the subject.<sup>1068</sup>

Pérez de Soto was not so sure about his prediction concerning the provincial election, because he knew that the judgement “could be fallible for he was not a perfect astrologer”, for which it was necessary “to be a good Latinist and a good philosopher.”<sup>1069</sup> Therefore, the Franciscan priest asked if it would be useful for Pérez de Soto to know the names of all the competitors. Pérez de Soto asked the Franciscan to write all the names down, and took the list to his house. “By the rule and Pythagorean wheel which is found at the end of Venerable Bede's book in which he deals with astrology”, Pérez de Soto made a judgement by combining the letters of the names, with the numbers of the days of the Moon and of the Planet that governed that day.<sup>1070</sup> Joseph de la Cruz, who had translated Bede's work for Pérez de Soto, explained that “in this book it was taught how to prognosticate by assigning a number to each letter composing a name, and with the result one would look for the prognostication in the figure or wheel, which was at the end of the book.”<sup>1071</sup>

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<sup>1066</sup> Della Porta, Giambattista. *Phytognomica Jo. Baptiste Portae... octo libris contenuta, in quibus nova, ficillimaque affertur methodus, qua plantarum, animalium, metallorum, reru denidus, qua plantarum, animalium metallorum, rerum denique omnium ex prima extimae faciei inspectione quivis abditas vires assequatur... accedunt ad haec confirmanda infinita propemodum slectiora secreta ...* Neapoli, apud H. Slvaianum, 1588.

*Della fisonomia dell'huomo. Libri Sei. Trad. Di Latino in volgarte e dall'istesso Autore, accresciuti di figure e di passi necessariii a diverse parti dll'opera. Et hora in quest'ultima Editione miglirati in piu di mille luoghi che nella stampa di Napoli si leggevano scoretissimo e aggiontavi la Fisonomia Naturale di Mons. Giovanni Ingegneri.* In Vicenza per Pi. Pa. Lozzi 1615.

<sup>1067</sup> *Libro de Phisonomia Natural y varios secretos de la naturaleza, el qual contiene cinco tratados de materias diferentes no menos curiosas que provechosas.* Impreso en Valencia, en casa de Chrysostomo Garriz, Vendese en casa del mismo Auctor, 1598. It was listed anonymously in the inventory. Castanien (1951), p. 172.

<sup>1068</sup> “Y unos cuadernos de letras de mano del licenciado Diego Pérez de Mesa en romance”. INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>1069</sup> “...siempre ha entendido que dicho juicio podía ser falible por no ser éste perfecto astrólogo y ser menester muchas partes para el conocimiento de lo referido como ser buen latino y buen filósofo”. INAH-2, f. 279.

<sup>1070</sup> “...y por la regla y rueda pitagórica que está al fin del libro del Venerable Beda en que trata de la astrología hizo juicio por el nombre y letras porque comenzaba y todas las del nombre y juntando las letras del número y los días de la luna y los del día del planeta que reina en aquel día que se hace el juicio se hace suma de todo y sacados los treinta por los que quedan se va a buscar a dicha rueda el número que sale si está en grado superior o inferior y según esto se juzga”. INAH-2, f. 279.

<sup>1071</sup> “Y también tenía el susodicho otro cuaderno que le trasladé de latín en romance sacados de un libro grande de Beda que entiendo que le tiene todavía en que se enseñaba a pronosticar por el nombre de algunos dando a

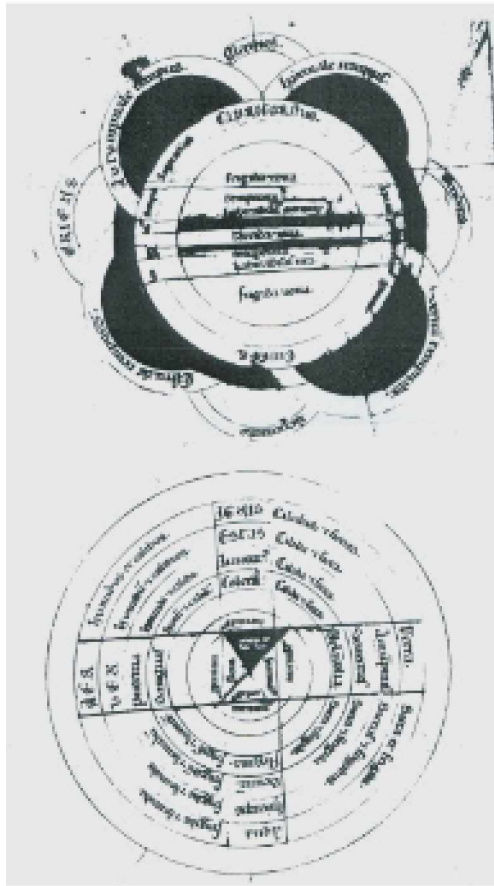
By using the Pythagorean wheel in Bede's book, Pérez de Soto predicted that the successful candidate was going to be Friar Juan de Sicilia. The bookseller Antonio Calderón had himself attempted to predict the outcome of the election, in which he was particularly interested because one of the competitors was his uncle Friar Gabriel de Benavides. His divination method was more rudimentary than the use of the Pythagorean wheel. Just as he had done during the election of 1648, Calderón put some slips of paper with the names of the candidates inside a hat, and took one of them out.<sup>1072</sup> The name written on the slip was Friar Tomás Manso, who was actually elected as the new provincial of the order.<sup>1073</sup>

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cada letra cierto número y según cierta cuenta se buscaba luego en una figura o rueda el pronóstico, lo cual estaba en el dicho libro al fin" INAH-2, f. 242.

<sup>1072</sup> "Y que habrá mes y medio, con ocasión de la elección del provincial de San Francisco de esta Provincia de México a que era opositor Fray Gabriel de Benavides, tío de este testigo y hermano de su madre; entre sus mismos hermanitos echó las suertes en la forma que ha declarado para saber por su consuelo si le caía al dicho su tío, como no le cayó y le parece que salió de los papelillos el en que estaba escrito el nombre de Fray Tomás Manso, que fue el electo." INAH-2, f. 258.

<sup>1073</sup> Ocaranza (1934), Vol. 2, p. 91.



*Image of a Pythagorean wheel in one of the MS of Pseudo-Bede's De mundi celestis terrestrisque constitutione. (In Burnett, 1985)*

Besides these predictions regarding provincial elections, Pérez de Soto confessed to have cast figures on the arrival of new Archbishops, viceroys, and even inquisitors to predict the events of their terms of office.<sup>1074</sup> He was correct in predicting that archbishop Don Juan de Mañozca would die in office; while a similar forecast about the death of the Viceroy Conde de Alba proved to be wrong.<sup>1075</sup> Strangely enough, however, the Inquisitors did not ask for more details on these prognostications, but proceeded immediately to inquire about

<sup>1074</sup> Y que así mismo ha levantado otras figuras a la entrada de los Arzobispos y Virreyes de esta Ciudad, para saber lo que había de suceder a cerca de sus gobiernos, conviene a saber a la entrada de Don Francisco Manso [Arzobispo Don Francisco Manso de Zúñiga] y del Señor Don Juan de Mañozca, y de el Señor Don Marcelo de Azcona; y a la entrada del Conde de Salvatierra [García Sarmiento de Sotomayor] y a la del Conde de Alba, mirando la hora en que entraban por el arco en donde entrega la Ciudad las llaves, mirando por aquella hora los astros que predominan y signo que sale como en los nacimientos y en las figuras que ha levantado no ha hecho más reparo si eran ciertas o no, pero se acuerda que le dijeron la hora en que había caído malo el Señor Don Juan de Mañozca y levantó figura y salió que había de morir en aquella ocasión como en efecto sucedió, la cual figura se levanta conforme se levantan las de los nacimientos. Y también halló por su figura que el Conde de Alba no había de gobernar bien y que había de morir en el gobierno y salió cierta." INAH-2, f. 238.

<sup>1075</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 46.

other kind of predictions. They asked for the way in which he had answered to questions about stolen objects and whether this objects had reappeared.

Pérez de Soto recalled a time when he cast a figure, “by the ephemerides of David Origano”, in order to find some clothes which had been stolen from the friend of a woman who consulted him. Knowing the exact time of the theft he was able to cast an interrogation, and discover that the stolen object was in an elevated place or in the kitchen.<sup>1076</sup> However, he did not want to resort to physiognomy in order to find out who the thief was. Pérez de Soto explained that he knew that it was possible to do so by identifying whether the sign of the Zodiac of the seventh House, which corresponds to thieves’ physiognomy, is terrestrial, aqueous, aerial, or igneous. He made clear that he only knew this because the authors on the subject say so, and not because he had practiced it himself.<sup>1077</sup>

One of his translators, Joseph de la Cruz, declared that he had gone one day to Perez de Soto’s house because a neighbor wanted to find a lost object by means of astrology. His employer had cast the figure and then given him a book by Abraham Ibn Ezra “so that this deponent, in his room, according to the said figure, could conjecture by the said book what it indicated.”<sup>1078</sup>

Regarding the discovery of treasures, Joseph de la Cruz declared that he had translated some astrological judgements that showed how to find buried treasures or other precious things, which Pérez de Soto needed to discover a treasure or a mine. From a book by Ali Aben Ragel, de la Cruz translated some judgements of lunar mansions, which taught how to

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<sup>1076</sup> “y por ello este confesante levantó figura por las efemérides de David Origano y halló que dicho hurto estaba en parte alta o en la cocina y cree que dicho hurto pareció porque así se lo dijo a su mujer de éste la dicha Doña Andrea de Mesa y su hija Doña María y que el fundamento que se halla para decir dónde estará el hurto es conforme a la hora en que se hizo.” INAH-2, f. 283v.

<sup>1077</sup> “Si el signo es terrestre, aéreo o ígneo o aqueo y por la séptima casa se saca la fisonomía del ladrón y lo sabe éste por cierto según el signo que cae en dicha séptima casa, pero no ha querido usar de dicha adivinación y que sabe ser cierta dicha señal por lo que dicen los autores, no porque éste lo haya experimentado, porque como deja dicho no lo ha revelado porque puede ser que hierre [sic, de errar] y porque puede venir daño al ladrón”. INAH-2, f. 283-84.

<sup>1078</sup> “...se puso a levantarla luego dándole un libro a este declarante que es el que deja referido de Abraham Abenarre, después de haberle mostrado a este declarante y dado la figura dicha para que este declarante en su aposento conforme a la dicha figura conjeturase por el dicho libro lo que indicaba y según la doctrina del dicho libro daba esperanzas de que parecería el abanico y el día siguiente volvió la dicha mujer a saber la respuesta de lo propuesto...” INAH -2, f. 236v-237.



find treasures.<sup>1079</sup> The lunar mansions are the 27 or 28 divisions of the ecliptic circle (the Course of the Sun through the heavens) marked out by the Moon in its monthly course. In Islamic and Western astrology, these divisions represent a complementary and often alternative way of dividing the ecliptic circle to that of the twelve signs of the zodiac. The Latin West, as Burnett has shown, inherited and developed several genres of astrology based on this division. Since this is not a division used in Classical Greek astrology, its immediate sources in Medieval Latin and Byzantine astrology are Arabic. Its ultimate origins lie in pre-Islamic agricultural astronomy, blended with traditions coming from further east, in India, or even in China.<sup>1080</sup> A chapter of Abenragel's *In Judiciis astrorum* Book VII, which is entitled in its Latin translation *De electionibus secundum motum Lunae per mansiones*, deals with the use of lunar mansions for elections.<sup>1081</sup>

Besides Abenragel, Pérez de Soto had also used Agricola's book on mineralogy in order to find treasures. According to this book, he declared, one should use a stick from a hazelnut tree, "but this confessant never experimented it or talked about it."<sup>1082</sup> Agricola or Goerg Bauer (1490-1555) was a physician from Saxony who composed, among other works, a famous treatise on mineralogy entitled *De re metallica* (1556), which was also included in Pérez de Soto's collection.<sup>1083</sup>

Finally, the inquisitors asked Pérez de Soto about the nativities he had made, and the way in which he had *handled* his knowledge on the subject and the answers given.<sup>1084</sup> The defendant admitted that "he was frequently asked to cast horoscopes for the children of his

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<sup>1079</sup> "También le trasladé de latín a romance unos juicios de la dicha astrología que enseñaban cómo se podía saber el lugar donde estaba enterrado algún tesoro o cosa preciosa y otros juicios de las mansiones de la Luna sacados del libro que de Ali Aben Regel y los primeros de estos juicios me parece que los trasladé porque el susodicho los vio menester para saber sobre descubrimiento de tesoro o minas." INAH-2, f. 241v.

<sup>1080</sup> Burnett, Charles. "Lunar Astrology. The Varieties of Texts Using Lunar Mansions" in *Micrologus. Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali*. 2004; 12(II Sole e la Luna): 43-133.

<sup>1081</sup> Burnett (2004), p. 50.

<sup>1082</sup> "...y halló en el principio del libro de Jorge Agrícola que trata de la minería que estas varillas habían de ser de árbol de avellana y que se había de quitar una rama y llevándola en la mano y pisando una veta el que la lleva, la misma rama se inclina, pero que este confesante no lo ha experimentado ni tratado de ello..." (INAH-2, f. 287v.

<sup>1083</sup> G.A. *De re metallica, libri XII. Ejusdem de anmantibus subterraneis liber ab autore recognitus* Basileae 1556. Castanien (1951), p. 154.

<sup>1084</sup> "Preguntado qué veces le han preguntado acerca de nacimientos de personas y qué juicio ha hecho y cómo se ha gobernado en la materia de saberlo y dar respuesta". INAH-2, f. 282.

friends, but that he had seldom complied and that when he had made some statement based on his astrological calculations, he had done so with misgivings and only for the sake of experiment.”<sup>1085</sup> On the casting of horoscopes, he said that the sign under which a man is born may affect his inclination to good or evil, but never affect his free will.

It has always seemed to me that making these judgments of births and robberies is a licit thing, because is a natural thing that the sign which prevails when one is born transmits the four elements, the four humors, according to the quality of the sign and this seems to have an influence on the inclination of the subject, but not on the free will he has, because he will always be able to make use of it, because the stars were not able to dominate on the three potencies that God our Lord has given to Man, that means memory, understanding and will, but the faculties are to operate freely.<sup>1086</sup>

On one occasion, a merchant had asked him to cast his daughter’s nativity, “and this defendant took Enrico Ranzobio’s book, of which he has a translation into Romance”, and told the merchant what he needed to write down according to the signs and house of the figure.<sup>1087</sup> Pérez de Soto had also consulted Rantzovius’s aphorisms on a time that an organist of the city gave him the year and day of his birth, and asked him to cast his nativity. By casting the horoscope, Pérez de Soto found that the planet Venus was in the first house, which meant, according to these aphorisms, that the newborn was going to become an organist. The inquirer was actually so astonished by the answer, that he remarked that it seemed as if the author were in communication with the devil, but Pérez de Soto explained that it was only by experience of other nativities that the author was so accurate.<sup>1088</sup>

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<sup>1085</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 47.

<sup>1086</sup> “que siempre le ha parecido que el hacer dichos juicios de nacimiento prelaturas y hurtos es cosa lícita por parecer que es cosa natural que el signo que prevalece cuando uno nace le infunde de los cuatro elementos los cuatro humores según la calidad del signo y que esto le parece que puede infundir en la inclinación del sujeto, pero no en el libre albedrío que tiene porque siempre podrá usar de él porque en las tres potencias que Dios nuestro señor tiene dadas a los hombres, conviene a saber, memoria, entendimiento y voluntad, no le parece que pueden dominar ni violentar los astros, sino que ellos han de obrar libremente...” INAH-2, f. 277.

<sup>1087</sup> “y éste tomó el libro de Enrico Ranzobio que tiene este traducido en romance, por haberlo echo sacar y por ser buen escribano el dicho Pedro de Medina le hizo ir escribiendo y este testigo fue dictando lo que había de escribir conforme a los signos y casa de la figura”. INAH-2, f. 280.

<sup>1088</sup> “y éste levanto figura y habiéndola levantado halló en la figura en la primera casa al planeta venus y yéndola a buscar en los aforismos de Enrico Ransobio halló que decía que sería el tal naciente organista, lo cual hizo admiración a este confesante y así lo dijo al dicho Juan Vital que se admiró diciéndole éste que dicho autor parecía que hablaba con el diablo, y que no era sino por la experiencia que se había tomado de otros nacimientos.” INAH-2. f. 283.

In his defence, Pérez de Soto argued that he was sure that what he had done was permitted according to the rules of trustworthy authors who dealt with the subject. “Astrology was not his profession; he was led to investigate and use it only by vain curiosity or by the desire to give pleasure to some friends and acquaintances who had asked him for information.”<sup>1089</sup> He promised that, if he had gone too far in his practice of astrology, he would amend his behavior and never again have anything to do with the science. Unfortunately, Pérez de Soto did not get an opportunity to amend his behavior. After two months of imprisonment, he was killed in prison on March 16, 1655 by his cellmate Diego Zedillo, who in turn committed suicide.<sup>1090</sup>

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<sup>1089</sup> Castanien (1951), p. 49.

<sup>1090</sup> *Causa criminal a Diego Zedillo Jurador. Este reo se ahorcó en su cárcel a los 5 de abril de 1655.* AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 457, exp. 1, folios 1-39.

## Chapter 6. Foretelling the Future: from Forecast to Prophecy

Between weather forecasting and apocalyptic prophecies there is a wide spectrum of predictions. Regardless of their variety, all different attempts to know the future need to share a notion of the world as an orderly cosmos that works with certain regularity. However, not all predictions are based on the same theoretical grounds, and not all of them enjoyed the same reputation. Knowledge of the future can be more or less accurate, rationally predicted or divinely inspired, expected or feared, supported or suppressed, respected or mocked. In the early modern period, astrology played a central role within different kinds of predictions: from weather forecast to political or ecclesiastical prophecy. This period was, as we have mentioned above, also one of intense debate about the validity of astrology. Therefore, the defenders of astrological predictions continued to resort to the argument that knowledge of the future is possible because God has set natural causal patterns that can be studied by men.<sup>1091</sup>

Prophecy is a particular kind of prediction of future events which was traditionally regarded as one of the ‘spiritual gifts’ or ‘supernatural virtues.’<sup>1092</sup> However, in the seventeenth century (and especially after Hume’s critique of prophecy as a form of miracle) it was not only seen as a form of divine inspiration, but also as a *rational* or *scientific* way of understanding the regularities of nature and predicting future events. Prophecy “and its successful interpretation actually relied upon a lawful, and hence predictable, course of events in nature. Future contingents could be foreseen only if some lawful principle was operating in the history of the cosmos. Prophecy, and scientific prediction, it might be said, would then rely equally upon a determined or mechanistic order of things.”<sup>1093</sup>

In theory, astrology was a uniquely rigorous predictive discipline, which in method and substance had nothing to do with prophecy. In practice, however, some astrologers used

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<sup>1091</sup> Popkin (1992). Among some of the publications which defended astrology, Popkin names: William Ramsey. *Lux Veritatis, or Christian Judicial Astrology, Vindicated, and Demonology Confuted: in Answer to Nth. Homes D. D.* (London, 1651) and William Rowland, *Judicial Astrology Judicially Condemned* (London, 1652).

<sup>1092</sup> Harrison, Peter. "Prophecy, Early Modern Apologetics, and Hume's Argument Against Miracles" . *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 1999; 60(2), 1999, p. 250.

<sup>1093</sup> Harrison (1999), p. 252.

both “the most rigorous astrological data and the most bizarre and unrepeatable portents as revealing divine plans for the years to come. In their cases, the astrologer evidently claimed to have and use not only a particularly sharp set of intellectual tools, but also a particularly rich personal gift of insight into the mysteries ahead.”<sup>1094</sup> As I argued before, this assimilation of the image of the prophet and the astrologer was one of the reasons why the latter’s intellectual status started to lose respectability by the end of the seventeenth century.

In this section, I will use the term *prophecy* in the sense of a *rational* way of knowing the future by interpreting the language of the stars, and not in the sense of divine inspiration. I will differentiate *prophecy* from *prediction* and *forecast*, which are also ways of anticipating the future, but deal with different kinds of events. While prophecy has to do with events that concern a community, predictions focus on individual cases. Forecasts, like prophecies, deal with a collective rather than an individual future, but not within the human realm, which is the case of prophecies and predictions. I will discuss the role that astrological discourse and practice played in the two modes of collective prediction (forecast and prophecy), and the inquisitorial attitude towards both of them.

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<sup>1094</sup> Grafton, Anthony. "Starry Messengers: Recent Work in the History of Western Astrology" in *Perspectives on Science*. 2000; 8(1):70-83, p. 81.

## 6.1. Astrological prophecies

One way of approaching the subject of prophecy is through its link with political propaganda, especially in times when “political instability encouraged a desire to peer into the future and anticipate events that cut across party lines.”<sup>1095</sup> The British case has been studied in detail by scholars such as G. Elton (*Policy and police. The enforcement of reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell*. Cambridge, 1972), K. Firth (*The apocalyptic tradition in Reformation Britain, 1530-1645*), and Bernard Capp (*The fifth Monarchy Men: a study in seventeenth century English Millenarism*, London, 1972). Through these studies it has become evident that prophecy during the modern period was part of the artillery of power. Nevertheless, a purely political approach, which understands prophecy as a mere instrument and symptom of conflicts between the Church and the State, is insufficient and might be misleading.<sup>1096</sup> It would be as distorted as, on the other side, limiting the study to a “history of mentalities” which neglects the political, institutional, and intellectual context.<sup>1097</sup> In terms of “mentalities”, astrological prophecies during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation period can be regarded as inserted within a “whole framework in which knowledge of the future was a guiding light for human beings in terms of their destiny in a religious drama.”<sup>1098</sup>

It would be difficult to deny that political and religious instability are highly favourable conditions for the proliferation of astrological prophecies. However, it is important to bear in mind that underneath these prophecies lies a long tradition of interpretation of historical events (religious and political) according to astrological phenomena, such as planetary conjunctions or the appearance of comets. The belief in the metaphysical role, announced by the stars, of some States as the establishers of a Christian dominion in the world was profoundly disseminated through Europe from the beginning of the modern period. Extraordinary and supernatural cosmic phenomena, such as new stars, conjunctions, and comets, were regarded by many authors as a basis for predicting the

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<sup>1095</sup> Black, Jeremy. *Culture and Power in England. 1585-1685*. New York: Macmillan; 1999, p. 124.

<sup>1096</sup> *Miracles and prophecies in Nineteenth-century France*, Rutgers, 1983.

<sup>1097</sup> Niccoli, Ottavia. *Profeti e Popolo nell'Italia del Rinascimento*. Milano: Laterza; 1987, p. 9. The translation is mine.

<sup>1098</sup> Popkin (1992), p. 285.

eminency of an all-mighty monarchy which would inaugurate a golden age of global peace.<sup>1099</sup> Astrology, in its political application, was not merely a matter of divination; “it was also a means of discovering patterns in the affairs of state and society that were effectively independent of gods’ changing intentions.”<sup>1100</sup>

Given that human beings were subject to the laws of the stars, “it followed that human behaviour might be analysed both mathematically and according to the motions of the most important celestial bodies.”<sup>1101</sup> The fundamental proposition of astrology that the analysis, measurement, and interpretation of celestial phenomena and motions can yield information about life on Earth can be extended to the idea that the laws of planetary motion can be applied to social and political life. This notion immediately raises the question of the links between cosmology, astronomical theory and historical theory.<sup>1102</sup> In *The Open Society*, Popper stated that astrology shares with historicism the belief in a predetermined destiny which can be predicted; and it shares with some important versions of historicism (especially with Platonism and Marxism) the belief that, notwithstanding the possibility of predicting the future, we have some influence upon this future, especially when we actually know what is coming. Astrology thus involves the apparently paradoxical conception that the knowledge of our fate may help us to influence it. “In this sense astrology is sustained by the need for security in a world beset by potentially threatening change and instability. Security is to be obtained through the manipulation of a future that, once forecast, can be turned to human advantage.”<sup>1103</sup>

For a better understanding of the way in which astrological phenomena and historical explanation were related it is perhaps useful to follow Krysztof Pomian’s explanation of the

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<sup>1099</sup> Carolino (2003), p. 167, and by the same author: “Scienza, política ed escatologia nella formazione dello ‘scienziato’ nell’Europa del XVII secolo: il caso di Manuel Bocarro Francés-Jacob Rosales” in *Nuncius*. 2004; 19(2), pp. 477-506. Carolino refers to: Miguel A. Granada. “Cálculos cronológicos, novedades cosmológicas y expectativas escatológicas” in *Rinascimento*, 2a serie, 37, 1997, pp. 357-435. Aby Warburg, “L’astrologia e le profezie politiche nell’età della Riforma”, in Vasoli, *Magia e scienza nella civiltà umanistica*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1976. oo. 165-180. It is important not to forget that during the early-modern period comets were considered as celestial bodies only by few; the more general view was that comets were portents which announced catastrophic events. They were both *signs* and *causes* of wars, plagues, natural disasters, etc.

<sup>1100</sup> Champion, Nicholas. *The Great Year. Astrology, Millenarism, and History in the Western Tradition*. London: Penguin; 1994, p. 27.

<sup>1101</sup> Champion (1994), p. 6.

<sup>1102</sup> Champion (1994), pp. 21-22.

<sup>1103</sup> Champion (1994), p. 23.

different types of inquiries about history: Chronography is the “description of events we are witness to as they arrive one after another or of facts we reconstruct applying the principles of historical criticism to whatever may be interpreted as an evidence about the past.” Chronometry is the “measuring of temporal intervals between events or between facts.” Chronology is the “localization of events or facts in a temporal frame where some event or some fact is chosen as a point of reference out of which starts the counting of days, years, centuries.” Finally, chronosophy is the “integration of the past, the present, and the future in order to complete the history of its past and its present. Every chronosophy is therefore dependent upon some procedure supposed to predict the future, sometimes even a very distant one, with a reasonable if not absolute certainty.”<sup>1104</sup> Theology of history is the most ancient form of chronosophy and it “tries to provide history with the intelligibility and/or meaning looking for the sufficient reason of its course (assimilated to a succession of events) not only outside history itself but even outside the world human beings are living in.”<sup>1105</sup> It is in this sense that astrology can be regarded as a “naturalistic theology of history”. Astrology is chronosophy when it integrates past, present, and future in order to provide history with intelligibility. “In fact, the most important characteristic of astrology to have emerged is that it provides a language as much for talking about the past, and for making sense of the present, as for predicting the future.”<sup>1106</sup> Astrology is theology and not philosophy of history because it searches for the meaning of history outside history itself, like the former, and not inside, like the latter.<sup>1107</sup> It is naturalistic because it finds human history intelligible in the same way that natural phenomena are intelligible.

The doctrine of planetary conjunctions is probably the most representative example of astrological knowledge serving as an historical tool, “used to structure and otherwise inexplicable random past.”<sup>1108</sup> It was “an overarching system which transcended individual

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<sup>1104</sup> Pomian, Krysztof. “Astrology as a Naturalistic Theology of History” in Zambelli (1986), p. 29.

<sup>1105</sup> Pomian (1986), p. 29.

<sup>1106</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 189.

<sup>1107</sup> For the relevance of astrology to the medieval representation of history, Pomian (1986) refers to F. von Bezold (1892). For the opposition of astrological and Christian conceptions of time and on its consequences for the idea of history in the later Middle Ages he refers to: Gregory, Tullio. *La filosofia medievale: i secoli XIII e XIV*, Milano: F. Vallardi, c1983:

<sup>1108</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 165.



countries, cultures, and religions, it generated an astrological paradigm for history itself.”<sup>1109</sup> As mentioned before, the doctrine of conjunctions was imported into Western Europe mainly through the works of Albumasar, and it offered simple procedures for predicting the fortune of churches and religions on the strength of conjunctions of the superior planets, namely Saturn and Jupiter.<sup>1110</sup> Even though conjunctionism was one of the main targets of Pico’s attack against astrology, it did not lose popularity in Europe during the Renaissance, when the “astrological doctrines about the recurrence of planetary conjunctions had helped to form the concept of a historical period”.<sup>1111</sup> Moreover, it was still taken seriously in certain university circles at the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>1112</sup>

Many astrologers who were unlearned in the more complicated technicalities of astrology felt they could easily grasp the idea of conjunctionism and thus engaged themselves with prophesizing religious events such as the death of Popes. In this case, an individual prediction becomes prophecy because the outcome of the event affects a collectivity. These are the kind of prophecies that we will find more frequently in seventeenth-century New Spain: predictions concerning changes of power within both civil and ecclesiastic spheres.

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<sup>1109</sup> Geneva (1995), p. 122.

<sup>1110</sup> See North (1980)

<sup>1111</sup> Keith Thomas quoted in Campion (1994), p. 22.

<sup>1112</sup> North (1980), p. 181.

## 6.2. Dangerous prophecies and the Mexican Inquisition

In a previous chapter, we saw how astrology, physiognomy, and politics were interwoven in the story of the Mercedarian astrologer. Besides being accused of casting a horoscope for the *election* of the scribe's exile, Friar Nicolás had also predicted some nobility titles for President Álvaro Quiñones, and said that he would have some enemies, but in the end he was going to overcome the difficulties. At a certain age, the President was going to suffer from a serious disease, but, if recovered, he would live 104 or 108 years. For the President's son, don Antonio, Friar Nicolas had foreseen some bad influences of a star and a planet, a short life, wealth, and bad inclinations.

When the President's successor was appointed, Friar Nicolás predicted that captain Diego de Avendaño was going to drown on his way from Spain. This prophecy was known in the city by means of a lampoon with a depiction of the Franciscan Friar Mauro Sánchez with some astronomical instruments; Friar Nicolás looking at the ephemerides; and the painter Pedro Liendo with a compass, and a letter where it said the Captain was going to drown. The lampoon appeared at the main square one day after the arrival of the new president. According to Friar Nicolás, other priests of the Mercedarian convent had placed the lampoon at the square because they were opponents of the former President.<sup>1113</sup> The chronicles relate that Captain Avendaño reached the city of Santiago de Guatemala on December 12, 1642 and governed until his death on August 2, 1649.<sup>1114</sup>

In his written defence, the Mercedarian explained that President Quiñones learned of his successor on October 8, 1641 at 14:30. Friar Nicolás cast a figure for that day and time in order to find out which Planet was in transit by the degree of the horoscope in order to correct the President's nativity, just like David Origano teaches in his first volume, second part,

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<sup>1113</sup> "...el marques de Lorenzana me preguntó si pasaría a Guatemala su sucesor porque ya tenía nuevas de que se había embarcado en Panamá, allí mismo le respondí que corría grave peligro su vida por cuanto había fuertes constituciones de Planetas que inducían a tormentas graves que los astrólogos llaman aperción [sic] de Puertas como constará de las efemérides y de la...Constitución de los Planetas en aquel mes = Para esto no hice figura alguna sino que discurrí probablemente del efecto natural así del año como de los aspectos, el día siguiente amaneció o dentro de muy pocos días un libello [sic] en la Plaza con que llegado el Presidente nuevo Don Diego de Avendaño comenzó a darse por sentido e indignarse contra mí ayudado de los padres de aquella provincia y de los mal contentos del marques." AGN-370, folios 125-125v.

<sup>1114</sup> Gavarette (1980), p. 124.

chapter *De correctione per accidentia nati*. He argued that this kind of horoscope was not an *interrogation*, because interrogations are done by casting a figure at the time the interrogator comes to ask the astrologer.<sup>1115</sup> President Quiñones had received the news that his successor had already embarked in Panama, and thus he wanted to know when he was going to arrive to Guatemala. At that point, the Mercedarian replied that the future governor's life was in danger because the strong constitutions of Planets induced heavy storms. In this case, Friar Nicolás did not cast a figure but he "pondered over the natural effect of the year and the aspects."<sup>1116</sup>

Once again, it is interesting to notice how Friar Nicolás's defense before the Tribunal consisted of explaining the differences among astrological practices. While interrogations and elections were definitely prohibited by the Church, in the case of nativities, there was always some room left for maneuvering. Thus the Mercedarian argued that the prediction about the President's successor was actually not a *horary question* to know the outcome of a specific event, but a way of correcting a natal horoscope. Likewise, the prediction of a storm was certainly within the limits of licit astrology for weather prognostication.

Gaspar Rivero, the mulatto astrologer, was also involved in political prophecies. In one of his declarations before the inquisitor, he talked about a time when he went to *Saboyano's* house, and found him together with the major sheriff of the Royal Mine of San Luis, analysing the sheriff's birth chart. *Saboyano* asked Rivero to read Origano's ephemerides and cast an interrogation. The sheriff wanted to know whether he was going to get a higher aspiration, and the answer was that it would still take some time for it to happen.<sup>1117</sup> In this case, we could either suppose that Rivero was not so familiar with the

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<sup>1115</sup> "Sucedió así mismo que el dicho marques de Lorenzana, que entonces era Presidente y no Marqués porque esperaba la merced del titulo, tuvo nueva de que tenía sucesor en el gobierno y que su Majestad le había hecho la merced que esperaba esta nueva llevo año de 41 a 8 [3] de octubre a las dos y media de la tarde. Levanté a la dicha hora mes y año una figura celeste a fin de averiguar cuál era el Planeta que hacía el tránsito por el grado del horóscopo y por él corregir el nacimiento, como lo enseña David Origano en el dicho primer tomo, parta 2, capítulo *De correctione per accidentia nati*= que ésta no fuere figura de interrogación consta porque la forma de interrogación consiste en levantar la figura a la hora que llega el interrogante al astrólogo." AGN-370, f. 125.

<sup>1116</sup> "Para esto no hice figura alguna sino que discurrí probablemente del efecto natural así del año como de los aspectos." AGN-370, f. 125v.

<sup>1117</sup> "...que yendo a casa del dicho Saboyano le halló en compañía del alguacil mayor de las minas de San Luis Potosí, cuyo nombre no sabe, con una elevación y descrita del nacimiento del dicho Alguacil mayor y le mandó

subtle distinctions of astrological practices and their condemnation, or he wanted to denounce *Saboyano* by explicitly saying that he had cast an interrogation.

Regarding political prophecy, Melchor Pérez de Soto declared during his first hearing that he had also cast horoscopes on the arrival of some of the viceroys, such as Count of Salvatierra (1642-48) and Count of Alba (1650-53), to predict the events of their terms of office. He did so by casting a figure at the time when they passed through the arch of the City, and observing the predominant stars and sign of the Zodiac, just like he did in the case of naticities.<sup>1118</sup> By using this technique, he discovered that the Count of Alba was not going to be a good governor and was going to die in office, which proved to be correct.<sup>1119</sup> However, he explained, he was not really interested in knowing whether his predictions were actually right or not. Pérez de Soto thus admitted to have cast interrogations, but his remark implied that this practice was illicit only when the astrologer was interested in the outcome, and not when he did it out of curiosity, or as a way of practicing his skills.

Like in New Spain, most prophecies in Spain also dealt with changes of power within both secular and ecclesiastical spheres. And, like in New Spain, the Holy Office was suspicious of these kinds of prophecies. Joan Vidal, for instance, was tried in Barcelona because he used to cast figures in order to find out who was going to be nominated to a public position.<sup>1120</sup> Hierónimo Oller was accused of predicting the appointment of the marquis of Almazán as viceroy of Cataluña.<sup>1121</sup> During his trial, Jerónimo Pramosellas declared that the douche of Medina de las Torres and the marquis of Palacios had requested some astrological figures, and that the douche had asked for his son's nativity.<sup>1122</sup> Finally, one of the witnesses who testified against Luis Rosicler denounced the accused as having cast a nativity for the

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el dicho Saboyano que le leyese este confesante los aforismos de David Origano que hablaban sobre la dicha elevación, oyéndolo dicho alguacil mayor, y todo venía a parar en si conseguiría el dicho alguacil mayor una pretención a que había venido y se le pronosticó había de tardar en conseguirla.” AGN-435, f. 548

<sup>1118</sup> “...y a la entrada del Conde de Salvatierra [García Sarmiento de Sotomayor] y a la del Conde de Alba, mirando la hora en que entraban por el arco en donde entrega la Ciudad las llaves, mirando por aquella hora los astros que predominan y signo que sale como en los nacimientos y en las figuras que ha levantado no ha hecho más reparo si eran ciertas o no.” INAH-2, f. 238.

<sup>1119</sup> “Y también halló por su figura que el Conde de Alba no había de gobernar bien y que había de moror en el gobierno y salió cierta.” INAH-2, f. 238.

<sup>1120</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 140. She refers to the records of the process: AHN, Inquisición, Libro 732, fol. 220v.

<sup>1121</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 138. She refers to the records of the process: AHN, Inquisición, Libro 732, fol. 116.

<sup>1122</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 139. The process was previously studied by Caro Baroja (1967).

marquis of Villena, and having predicted some particular events of the marquis's life.<sup>1123</sup> Rosicler declared as well that some members of religious orders had also asked for some predictions.

Predictions about the election of new provincials within different religious orders seem to have been a widely spread practice in seventeenth-century New Spain. This is, I believe, one of the distinctive characteristics of the practice of astrology in New Spain, where provincial elections were an important issue of the power conflicts between Spanish and Creoles. After the first years of colonization, it became evident that neither the regular nor the secular clergy, could continue their expansion by only relying on peninsular priests. However, the discrimination against the American-born candidates for the habit arose simultaneously with the acknowledgement of the need of Creole participation. Contrary to what happened among regular friars, the conflict between Spanish and Creoles was not so intense among the seculars because they did not intervene in the election of their superiors.<sup>1124</sup> "The creolization of the orders created unforeseen stresses, since Spanish-born friars continued to monopolize the higher provincial offices. Nativistic prejudices persisted, manifesting themselves in rivalry between Peninsulars and Creoles, and giving rise to serious internal altercations."<sup>1125</sup> Such altercations were supposed to find a solution in the system called *alternativa* (alternation), which established that a Spanish and a Creole should alternate in every provincial election. Between 1612 and 1629, a series of Papal Bulls commanded that, in all American provinces, the post of provincial should be held by a Spanish and then by a Creole after a period of three years.<sup>1126</sup>

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<sup>1123</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 140. She refers to the records of the process: AHN, Inquisición, Legajo 87, exp. 12.

<sup>1124</sup> Luna Moreno, Ma. del Carmen. *Fray Juan de Grijalva Cronista de la Orden de San Agustín y su Crónica*. México: UNAM (tesis); 1982, p. 26.

<sup>1125</sup> Van Oss (1986), p. 157.

<sup>1126</sup> Rubial García, Antonio. "Votos pactados. Las prácticas políticas entre los mendicantes novohispanos" in EHN, enero-junio 2002, pp. 51-83. For the case of Guatemala, where Franciscans voted to adopt the *alternativa* in the Provincial Chapter of 1628, but did not implement it until 1647, see Van Oss (1986), p. 157. The author refers to Morales's work (*Ethnic and Social Background of the Franciscan Friars in Seventeenth-Century México*, Washington, D.C. Academy of American Franciscan History, 1973 pp. 63-75) on the internal divisions of Mexico's Franciscans and the adoption of the *alternativa* there as a solution to 'these problems which were nothing more than the result of the rapid growth of the Franciscan order in Mexico'. And to Antoine Tibesar's study ("The *Alternativa*: A Study in Spanish-Creole Relations in Seventeenth-Century Peru" in *The Americas*, 9 (1955), 229-83) on parallel developments in Perú.

When referring to the Americanization of the secular clergy in Guatemala, Van Oss explains that this process took place more rapidly and to a greater extent than in the case of the regular clergy, precisely because the former never experienced the factionalism that drove the orders to the *alternativa*. “Once institutionalized, the *alternativa* persisted, requiring the continued sending of friars from Spain, and thus artificially maintaining a substantial peninsular minority which would otherwise doubtlessly have tended to disappear [...] If it had not been for the *alternativa*, the Creole majority would have been even larger.”<sup>1127</sup> Even though I have no elements to confirm that a similar process occurred in New Spain, it is interesting to observe that astrological prophecies reflected, to a certain extent, the intense controversies about the creolization of religious orders.

Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, for instance, had predicted for the general vicar of his order, Diego de Velasco, that if he appointed Friar Diego Chávez as the new provincial, he would pay obedience.<sup>1128</sup> According to the Mercedarian statutes of 1493, the chapter provincial lasted about three days and was normally attended by commendators or their representatives and religious of the host convent, though others might present themselves with the permission of the general, or the provincial. A four-member deffinitory conducted the business of the chapters, and was drawn from the assembled commendators at the start of the proceedings under the scrutiny of the president. It was during the chapter that individuals were allocated to commanderies at the discretion of their superiors, who were in turn prohibited from removing them from office within a year of their appointment. By the sixteenth century, in line with the frequency with which chapters were convened, the commendator’s tenure had been reduced to three years, though this rule was widely ignored and distinguished clergymen continued to be granted office with no fixed term.<sup>1129</sup>

During the early decades of the seventeenth century, the Mercedarian order was famous for big scandals occurring during its provincial elections. Thomas Gage, the English

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<sup>1127</sup> Van Oss (1986), p. 159.

<sup>1128</sup> “...el dicho Fray Nicolás de Alarcón había dicho en el Capitulo Provincial [verificar] pasado al Padre Maestro Fray Diego de Velasco, vicario general de la orden de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes que si hacia provincial al padre Maestro Fray Diego de Chávez le había de levantar la obediencia y esto fue publico entre los padres capitulares”. AGN-370, f. 15.

<sup>1129</sup> Taylor (2000) p. 44.

Dominican who traveled to New Spain, even recalled the time when one of these elections ended in physical violence among the members of the Order.<sup>1130</sup> One of the main reasons of conflict within the Mercedarian elections was the special rule which established that all Creole members of the Order should donate the whole amount of their inheritance to the Order. The conflict reached its highest point during the elections of 1620 and 1623, when even the respectable Friar Diego Rodríguez was accused of using his astrological knowledge to predict the outcome of the conflict between the Spanish Friar Juan Gómez, and the Creole faction of the Order.<sup>1131</sup> On June 25, 1622 the Mercedarian Friar Juan Menéndez presented a denunciation before the tribunal of the Holy Office in Mexico City about the scandal caused by the fact that some members of the Order were using judicial Astrology to know future contingents, especially about the conflicts between the general vicar Friar Juan Gómez and the provincial Friar Antonio Gutiérrez.<sup>1132</sup>

The Augustinians had their own conflicts. In 1627, Pope Urban VIII issued a Bull establishing the alternation system for the Augustinian Order. According to Rubial, the history of the Augustinian Order in New Spain can be divided in four clearly differentiated stages during the seventeenth century according to the problem of alternation.<sup>1133</sup> Between 1627 and 1658, the confrontation between Creoles and Spanish was circumscribed within a legal frame; the Spanish friars, regardless of their reduced number, could keep their right to alternation, while two Creole factions were struggling for a dominant position within the Order. Between 1658 and 1675, the *Creole monarchy* was consolidated, the Bull of 1627 was suspended, and the Creole faction enjoyed absolute dominance. Between 1675 and 1681 the alternation system was re-established, but attempts for a structural reform were unsuccessful. Finally, between 1681 and 1705, the legal fiction of the alternation was kept, but the Creole faction controlled *de facto* the majority of the provincial elections.<sup>1134</sup>

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<sup>1130</sup> Gage. *Viaje a la Nueva España*, p. 66, quoted in Rubial (1990) and Israel (1990).

<sup>1131</sup> Trubulse (1989), pp. 743-769.

<sup>1132</sup> “Que ha muchos días que en el dicho Convento corre fama con escándalo de que algunos religiosos usan muy al descubierto la astrología judiciaria alzando figuras de nacimiento y para saber los sucesos y futuros contingentes especialmente sobre la diferencias y pleitos que tienen el padre vicario general Fray Juan Gómez con el padre provincial Fray Antonio Gutiérrez y el comendador pasado Fray Andrés de Herrera y que el principal profesor de esta ciencia es Fray Diego Rodríguez...” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 335, exp. 94.

<sup>1133</sup> Rubial García, Antonio. *Una Monarquía Criolla. La provincia Agustina en el siglo XVII*. México: CNA; 1990, p. 39. By the same author see: *El Convento agustino y la sociedad novohispana, 1533-163*(1989);

<sup>1134</sup> Rubial (1990), p. 39.

Rivero, the mulatto astrologer, was involved in some prophecies concerning the Augustinian Order. During one of the hearings, he referred to an occasion when he went to Don Julian de Espinosa's house and found there an Augustine priest who was Don Julian's disciple in astrology. Both of them were casting a figure with books and texts to predict who was going to be the next provincial of the Order, how long he was going to live and the events of his life.<sup>1135</sup> The above happened "more or less six years ago when many Spanish provincials died."<sup>1136</sup> Most likely, Rivero was referring to the elections celebrated in 1648, when the Spanish Francisco Jiménez was appointed as provincial, but died on December 19. His substitute, Friar Diego Pacheco, died slightly more than a year later.<sup>1137</sup>

The librarian-astrologer, Pérez de Soto, made his own prediction on the same provincial election of 1648. One of the witnesses of the trial testified that, on the eve of the election, Pérez de Soto cast a horoscope to determine the outcome of the election. The answer was that there would be two elected candidates, but one would die shortly after because of the negative aspect of the Moon with Saturn.<sup>1138</sup> The prediction proved to be true, "for the young Friar Francisco Jiménez died within a couple of months and was succeeded by Friar Diego Pacheco, who was very old."<sup>1139</sup> As previously seen, Pérez de Soto himself said he had predicted the outcome of a provincial election. He did not refer to the case of the Augustinian Order, but to the Franciscan chapter of 1654.<sup>1140</sup>

Finally, astrological predictions were also cast among the Dominicans. In 1631, a Dominican priest from the province of Chiapa sent a letter to the commissary of the Holy Office in Guatemala to denounce the provincial of his order, Friar Juan Ximeno, for

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<sup>1135</sup> "...fue a buscar al dicho Julián de Espinosa a la dicha casa de la Marquina y le halló en una sala, juntamente con Fray Nicolás, cuyo sobre nombre no sabe y es religioso sacerdote predicador y confesor de la orden de san Agustín que le parece será de treinta años, bien dispuesto y es discípulo de dicho Don Julián en la astrología, que estaban ambos elevando figura con libros y papeles para saber quién había de ser Provincial de San Agustín, cuánto había de vivir y los sucesos también...", AGN-435, f. 642.

<sup>1136</sup> "...habrá 6 años poco más o menos hubo la muerte de tantos provinciales gachupines." AGN-435, f. 642.

<sup>1137</sup> Rubial (1990), p. 44.

<sup>1138</sup> "la figura indicaba haber dos provinciales, uno mozo y otro viejo y que quizás el uno de ellos iba a salir por padecer algún detrimento en la salud, por el mal aspecto de la Luna con Saturno" INAH-2, f. 236.

<sup>1139</sup> "y salió en esta ocasión por Provincial Fray Francisco Ximénez que era mozo y murió dentro de pocos meses y le sucedió Fray Diego Pacheco, que era muy viejo..." INAH-2, f. 236.

<sup>1140</sup> See Chapter 5



practicing judicial astrology.<sup>1141</sup> In December of that same year, the commissary summoned several witnesses to collect information on the case. One of them confirmed that he had seen the provincial walking around by night, with an astrolabe, and some books, looking at the stars.<sup>1142</sup> The other four witnesses gave details on the different occasions in which Friar Juan Ximeno had cast horoscopes, together with an astrologer-organist called Lázaro Torres, in order to predict the outcome of events taking place in Mexico City or Seville, or to choose the best prior for his Convent. The evidence was sent to Mexico City for examination, but the provincial was not tried by the Tribunal because he died after the Easter of 1633.<sup>1143</sup>



*Horoscope cast by Friar Juan Ximeno. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 367.*

<sup>1141</sup> *De las proposiciones y hechos de Fray Juan Ximeno, además, sobre los hechos suyos y de Lázaro de Torres, organista y astrólogo judicial* (1632) AGN, Vol. 367, exp. 1, folios. 268-272. See also Chinchilla (1953), p. 226.

<sup>1142</sup> “Y este testigo vio una noche en el dicho pueblo de Chiapa al dicho padre provincial con sola la túnica que por una ventana del convento estaba mirando al cielo y de la que buscaba en el cierta estrella [...] y que de ordinario anda con los dichos libros y astrolabio diciendo que cuanto sabía en dicho [¿] era mediante tales figuras que alzaba y esta es la verdad...” AGN-367, f. 225v.

<sup>1143</sup> “Murió Fray Joan Ximeno en Guatemala, después de la cuaresma de 1633 a según consta de la carta del Comisario de aquella ciudad, de la cual se sacó el capítulo de esta causa”. AGN-367, f. 1.

### 6.3. Almanacs and Forecasts

As early as the fourteenth century, the words *tacuinum* and almanac were considered synonymous, and used simultaneously in different texts. Traditionally the word *taqwin* was translated into Latin as *dispositio per tabellas*, which expresses the action of precisising something and establishing it in the right manner. It was used to designate tables that presented knowledge of a certain subject in a clear and synoptic way. This idea was probably inspired by the astronomical and trigonometrical tables for which the use of tables was fundamental. However there is no evidence of the word *taqwin* being used to designate astronomical tables. In modern usage *taqawim* means almanac and this word is commonly used in Arabic, Persian, Hindustani, and Turkish.<sup>1144</sup>

The origin of the word *almanac* is more problematic. Of the three earliest Arabic glossaries quoted in Sarton's *Introduction*, the first one (*Glossarium latino-arabicum*, second half of the XIth century) does not contain any such word. The *Vocabulista in Arabico* (second half of the thirteenth century) and Pedro de Alcalá's Spanish-Arabic vocabulary (second half of the fifteenth century) contain the word *manákh*, meaning *almanaque*, *calendario*. This means that the use of the word *manak* in Spain in the sense of almanac can be traced back to the second half of the thirteenth century. However *manak* cannot be traced back to any Arabic root since it has not been found in any Arabic dictionary. It is found in some Egyptian and Sudanese dictionaries with the meaning of climate.<sup>1145</sup> "To sum up, the two synonymous *tacuinum* and almanac are of Arabic origin. The first is simply the transcription of the good Arabic word *taqawim*, meaning table; the second is derived from a bastard Arabic word *manakh*, meaning climate, calendar. The almanac enigma is not completely solved, but it is reduced to finding the origin of the Arabic word *manakh*."<sup>1146</sup>

There is no agreement among historians about the date of appearance in the West of the word *almanaque*. It is found in Medieval western texts, Arabic texts, and their translations. But because a considerable part of Arabic astronomy derives in turn from Greek

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<sup>1144</sup> Sarton, Gorge. "*Tacuinum taqum*, with a digression on the word almanac" in *Isis*, X (1928), p. 490.

<sup>1145</sup> Sarton (1928), p. 490.

<sup>1146</sup> Sarton (1928), p. 493.

sources, it might be useful to ask whether this term finds its origin in a Greek source as well.<sup>1147</sup> Besides the Arabic, *al-manak* (time) or *al-manneh* (computing days and months) other etymologies have been proposed for the word almanac, like the Saxon *al-monght* (containing all moons) or *al-monaght* (a stick where the ancients registered the moon cycles). What is certain is that the almanac, present among Egyptians, Arabs, Greeks, Saxons, and Chinese in the form of perpetual tables indicating the movement of the planets or of another instrument that indicates the position of the planets, always refers to the attempt of computing and organizing time.<sup>1148</sup>

In general terms, almanacs are annual astrological predictions of weather, war, and disease. Before the introduction of printing, there were manuscript almanacs, most of them of ecclesiastical provenance, and owned by physicians. They tended not to restrict themselves to a single year and were heavily used as reference books. "Some idea of what documents were circulating can be had from the *Shepherd's Calendar*, from the various *Krankheitslunaria*, *Monatsdiätiken* and popular astrological manuals, and later on, the *libri di segreti*."<sup>1149</sup> In England, manuscript *lunaria* enjoyed enduring popularity until they were supplanted by printed almanacs.<sup>1150</sup> The first such printed annual almanac was done in 1448 by Gutenberg.<sup>1151</sup> The spread of printing made it possible to produce cheap ephemeral pamphlets in large numbers. Next to Bibles, almanacs were one of the most common forms of printed word in the early modern period, often exempt from the usual limited print-run.<sup>1152</sup> "Almanacs were the staple product of many presses and their sales were no doubt essential to the economic viability of many printers."<sup>1153</sup> They were thus produced almost everywhere, almost every year throughout the Renaissance and beyond.<sup>1154</sup>

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<sup>1147</sup> Millás-Vallicrosa, J. M. "La transmisión del Almanaque desde Oriente a Occidente" in *Archives Internationales D'Histoire Des Sciences*. 1951; 17: p. 874.

<sup>1148</sup> Solari (1989), p. XV, note 23.

<sup>1149</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 192.

<sup>1150</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 191.

<sup>1151</sup> This date is provided by Curth (2004), while Clarke (1985) states it was 1471.

<sup>1152</sup> Porter (2005), p. 97.

<sup>1153</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 192.

<sup>1154</sup> On the almanac tradition in the sixteenth century, Clarke (1985) refers to: Lovarini (1912), Sorballi (1938), Hellman (1924), and Piancastelli (1913). Hammer (1952).

During the early-modern period, almanacs or annual calendars were normally composed of three separate items: the Almanac proper, which indicated the astronomical events of the coming year (eclipses, conjunctions and movable feasts); the calendar, which showed the days of the week and months, together with the fixed Church festivals; and the prognostication, which was an astrological forecast of the notable events of the year. More sophisticated almanacs included also Ephemeris, which were tables including the daily position of the planets throughout the year.<sup>1155</sup> Besides weather prognostications, they generally included agricultural predictions on the size and quality of specific harvests. Many of them included instructions for the diagnosis and treatment of common diseases in man and beast. Their composition implied a good command of astronomical data, which not everyone possessed. Therefore, almanacs cannot be so easily placed in the category of popular astrology.

It is clear that most of the predictions in calendars are based on the idea put forward in Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, that the roughly cyclic movements in the sublunary world are consequences of the perfect cyclic movements in the celestial world. Thus the intellectual context of this kind of prediction is that of Aristotelian cosmology, which also provides the background for university teaching in astronomy and other subjects. Weather prediction, like medical astrology, clearly belongs to a learned tradition.<sup>1156</sup>

In his work *Practical astronomy during the seventeenth century*, John T. Kelly makes a historiographical survey on almanac-studies during the seventeenth century and concludes that, besides English and American almanacs, these texts had not been fully studied in Continental Europe or Latin America.<sup>1157</sup> However, more recent scholarship has focused on the production and contents of almanacs in other parts of continental Europe, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy.<sup>1158</sup> For the English case, the most comprehensive work is probably

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<sup>1155</sup> Thomas (1971), p. 293.

<sup>1156</sup> Field (1987), p. 145.

<sup>1157</sup> Kelly, John T. *Practical astronomy during the seventeenth century: Almanac makers in America and England*, Harvard Dissertation in the History of Science, Garland Publishing, Inc. New-York and London, 1991, 315 pp. The author refers to some studies on French and Belgian Almanacs: Auguste Denis, *Recherches Bibliographiques et Historiques sur les Almanacks de la Champagne et de la Brie* (Paris, 1880); John Grand-Carteret, *Les Almanacks Francais* (Paris, 1896); Zech-Du Biez, *Les Almanacks Belges, Etude Bibliographique (Belgium, n.d.)*. Geneviève Bollème's *Les Almanacks Populaires aux XVII et XVIII siècles, Essai d'Histoire Sociale*, Paris, 1969

<sup>1158</sup> For Portugal see: Carolino (2003), and by the same author *Escrita Celeste. Os Almanagues Astrológicos em Portugal nos séculos XVII e XVIII*. Rio de Janeiro, 2002. For Spain see Lanuza (2005). For Italy see: Casali, Elide. *Le Spie del Cielo. Oroscofi, lunari e almanacchi nell'Italia moderna*. Torino: Einaudi; 2003; Solari, Gabriella. *Almanacchi, Lunari e Calendari Toscani tra Settecento e Ottocento*. Firenze: Giunta Regionale

Bernard Capp's *Astrology and the Popular Press: English Almanacs 1500-1800*. For the American case, Milton Drake and Silvio Bedini's are the most notorious studies.<sup>1159</sup>

The development of almanacs in England by the end of the fifteenth century was slower than in other countries of continental Europe. By the 1470s large numbers of almanacs were being printed in France, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland, while most English almanacs were translations of continental ones. The first English almanac was printed around 1537 and this form of publication became increasingly popular during the following decades. In the following century, almanacs "surpassed all previous levels of popularity with some three to four million distributed over the course of the century."<sup>1160</sup> By the second half of the seventeenth century, they reached their greatest popularity. This success may be explained, up to a certain point, because of the important political role they played during the Civil War, when astrologer's predictions of battles, murders, or sudden deaths were more and more frequent. However, the wide diffusion of almanacs can also be linked to the emergence of astronomical textbooks written by English scientists.<sup>1161</sup>

Many of the English almanacs were short-lived, with names appearing and disappearing, but other almanacs were more constant and appeared for many years. Some were stable "even throughout the century, descending from father to son, or from master to disciple, sometimes under the same name, sometimes with a change of title."<sup>1162</sup> In general

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Toscana, editrice Bibliografica, 1989; and Clarke (1985).

<sup>1159</sup> Drake, Milton *Almanacs of the United States*, The Scarecrow Press Inc., New York, 1962, 2 Vols. Bedini, Silvio. *Thinkers and Tinkers*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1975; ---, *The life of Benjamin Banneker*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1972; Briggs, Samuel. *The Essays, Humor, and Poems of Nataniel Ames, Father and Son of Dedham, Massachusetts, from their Almanacs, 1726-1775*, Cleveland, 1891; Clark, John C. "The famous Doctor Stearns", *American Antiquarian Society*, 1935, 45, pp. 317-324; Guerra, Francisco. "Medical almanacs of the American colonial period" in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 1961, No. 16; Jorgenson, Chester E. "The new science in the almanacs of Ames and Franklin" *New England Quarterly*, 1935, 8, pp. 555-561; Paltsits, Victor Hugo. "The Almanacs of Roger Sherman, 1750-1761". American Antiquarian Society, 1907, 18, pp. 213-258; Sidwell, Robert T. "The Colonial American almanacs: a study in non-institutional education", PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1965; Stahlman (1956); Wolf, Harry "Science for the people: Copernicanism and Newtonianism in the almanacs of early America", *Colloquia Copernicana*, 1972, pp. 293-309.

<sup>1160</sup> Curth, Louise H. "Seventeenth-century English Almanacs: Transmitters of Advice for Sick Animals" in Willem, Blecourt (ed.) *Cultural Approaches to the History of Medicine*. Great Britain: Palgrave ; 2004, p. 57.

<sup>1161</sup> See Curry, Patrick. "Saving Astrology in Restoration England: 'whig' and 'tory' reforms" in Curry (1987), pp. 245-259.

<sup>1162</sup> Nicolson, Marjorie. "English Almanacs and the *New Astronomy*" in *Annals of Science*. 1939; IV(1), p. 2.

terms, Nicolson concludes that almanac-writers were, “on the whole, men of little learning except in the art of astrology” during the earlier period, whereas in the later one “it is not uncommon to find men of intelligence and learning turning to almanac-making.”<sup>1163</sup> A parallel situation can be identified on the audience’s side. During the first half of the century, the majority of almanacs were intended “for simple people”, and the more sophisticated readers consulted them mainly as calendars.<sup>1164</sup> They were designed primarily for farmers and artisans; yet they were not indiscriminately aimed at the lower levels of the society. Most surviving copies belonged to bibliophiles, gentlemen or clergymen. Although they were directed to a male reader, there is evidence of a rise in the female reading public.<sup>1165</sup>

As the popularity of almanacs increased, not only did the number of almanac-makers grow, but the astronomical data also needed to become more accurate. Until the first half of the seventeenth century, most astronomical data was copied directly from ephemerides published outside England. The lack of planetary-tables prepared for English coordinates commonly produced errors in the predictions. With people demanding accurate predictions for their daily-life activities, English almanac-makers could no longer allow these errors and were encouraged to publish their own ephemerides.<sup>1166</sup> The process was a virtuous circle: as the popularity of astrology increased, astronomers were forced to compile more exact data; and as the astronomical information became more accurate, astrology gained credibility. Such credibility is confirmed by the fact that a Society of Astrologers existed in London between 1649 and 1658, with members such as Lilly, Culpepper, John Booker, Richard Sanders and Elias Ashmole.<sup>1167</sup> The case of English almanacs illustrates the complexity of the relationship between astronomy and astrology. Astronomical knowledge may well have contributed to the discredit of astrological beliefs; but the popularity of astrology may have also encouraged the advancement of astronomical knowledge.

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<sup>1163</sup> Nicolson (1939), p. 3.

<sup>1164</sup> Nicolson (1939), p. 3.

<sup>1165</sup> Capp, Bernard. “The Status and Role of Astrology in Seventeenth-Century England: the Evidence of the Almanac” in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore; 1980, pp. 284-85.

<sup>1166</sup> Kelly (1991), pp. 35-37.

<sup>1167</sup> Kelly (1991), p. 60.

In North America, almanacs were the major astronomical publication during the seventeenth century. The first American almanac was prepared for publication by Captain William Pierce in 1639; from 1643 to 1649, almanacs were printed yearly in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They were sold in bookshops and by itinerant peddlers; and their runs generally consisted of three to five thousand copies, but a particularly popular almanac could be sold out and reprinted again up to 10 000 copies.<sup>1168</sup> As almanacs evolved, they added tables of distances between towns and cities, monetary tables, hints on diet, recipes and medical advice. To these categories were often added literary contributions in the form of proverbs, verses, essays, and occasionally short stories and essays on religious, historical and astronomical matters.<sup>1169</sup>

In Italy, from the second half of the sixteenth century and during the first half of the seventeenth, almanacs proliferated in almost every city and they were presented with rather strange titles. Almanacs only obtained the ecclesiastical and civil license for printing after having the authorization of a more or less illustrious professor of philosophy, medicine, astronomy, or mathematics.<sup>1170</sup> Apart from the standard information, they also included judgements about war and peace, the birth and death of famous men, public and private business, and even about personal matters of individuals. Bolognese almanacs, for instance, often included a section forecasting what sort of coming year will be enjoyed by individuals of the various planetary types. In Bologna, two identical versions, one in Latin and one in Italian, were printed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Towards the middle of the century, the versions diverge, the Italian being more simplified and omitting the technical information that was found in the Latin version. Around the middle of the century, both kinds of almanacs were suppressed by ecclesiastical censorship. However, popular vernacular almanacs kept circulating, more or less under the table until the end of the century.<sup>1171</sup>

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<sup>1168</sup> Kelly (1990), p. 89.

<sup>1169</sup> Kelly (1990), p. X.

<sup>1170</sup> Pizzamiglio (2004), p. XIX.

<sup>1171</sup> Clarke (1985), p. 256. For the seventeenth-century almanacs, Clarke refers to the works of: Lovarini (1912), Mazzetti (1981-82), Piancastelli (1913), Riccardi (1885), Sorbelli (1931 and 1938), and Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VII, 117-19.

In Portugal, the *Prognósticos* or *Lunarios dos tempos* were printed in large numbers and sold for low prices in bookshops or by ambulant booksellers. During the seventeenth century the readers could find them in the main street of the cities, and by the eighteenth century in the streets adjacent to the main avenues or in regional ferries. Contrary to what happened in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Portuguese almanacs were not the chosen means for dissemination of new astronomical theories, and the new cosmological systems of Copernicus and Brahe. Regardless of their doctrines, almanac-makers based their predictions on the Aristotelic-Ptolemaic cosmology, organized through the ontological distinction of the celestial and terrestrial regions.<sup>1172</sup>

In the Spanish territories, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the words *Lunario*, which originally meant Moon-table, and *Almanaque* were the most widely used to refer to annual prognostications. However, it is important to bear in mind that not all almanacs and moon calendars included astrological prognostications. Some *Lunarios*, for instance, were nothing else than astronomical ephemeris of the Moon, while some *Almanaques* were actually liturgical calendars of religious festivities.<sup>1173</sup> There were different methods to elaborate these almanacs. One of them consisted in casting the four different astrological figures for the two equinoxes and two solstices, which meant, the entry of the Sun in Aries, Libra, Cancer, and Capricorn. Occasionally, four more figures, referring to the conjunctions of the Sun and the Moon, were added to the original ones. Once the figures were cast, the astrologer would proceed with the weather forecasting and medical prognostication. Another method for the elaboration of almanacs was based on the theory of the “Lord of the Year” (*Señor del Año*), which was an attempt to establish which of the seven planets was going to have a strongest influence during the year. Finally, another method involved the casting of figures for each lunar month of the year. Most of the times, all three methods were used in a mixed way and other figures concerning eclipses and conjunctions were also added.<sup>1174</sup> Political and religious prophecies were usually found in the general

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<sup>1172</sup> Carolino (2003), p. 203, 219, and 223.

<sup>1173</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 55.

<sup>1174</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 56.



prognostication, almost always based on the theory of the planet Lord of the Year, whereas the monthly prognostications dealt only with natural astrology.<sup>1175</sup>

One of the most famous Spanish almanacs was Jerónimo Cortés's *Repertorio*, which was condemned by the Spanish Inquisition from the publication of the 1632 Index of forbidden books onwards.<sup>1176</sup> It has been argued that the Spanish Tribunal systematically persecuted astrologers and condemned all works on the subject. The fact is that many almanacs and other astrological works circulated freely in Spanish territories during this period.<sup>1177</sup> It is interesting to know that, contrary to the Spanish case, no Mexican almanacs were forbidden by the Inquisition. While the Spanish Tribunal included various almanacs by Spanish authors in the indexes of forbidden books, the Mexican Inquisitors prohibited only one forecast by a Spanish author in 1666: Armengol's *Iuicio Universal Astrologico*<sup>1178</sup> Indeed, it was the only text on astrology that I have found so far which was prohibited by an inquisitorial edict during the seventeenth century. Armengol's text was not the only Spanish almanac known in New Spain; we have documentation that at least Cortés's repertory was also known in the New World.<sup>1179</sup> However, Armengol's almanac contained a special dangerous prognostication on 'conflicts among ecclesiastics and religious, and destruction of convents.' This was the main reason why this almanac was included in the Spanish Index of 1707.<sup>1180</sup> The fact that Mexican Inquisitors reacted faster to the *dangers* of this text may be regarded as a further indication of the inquisitorial concern about astrological predictions among members of religious orders in New Spain.

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<sup>1175</sup> Lanuza (2005), pp. 57-61.

<sup>1176</sup> Pardo (1991), p. 282.

<sup>1177</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 337.

<sup>1178</sup> *Iuicio Universal Astrologico computado para el Año del Señor de 1666. Sacado de los aspectos y configuraciones de los planetas y estrellas para el merdiciano de Valencia y los de quarenta grados de elevación. Hazele Gerónimo Armengo de Folch generoso Valenciano.* Con licencia en Valencia, por Lorenzo Cabrera, Año de 1665. See: *Se prohíbe un papel impreso por contener información de astrología judiciaria.* (1666). AGN; Edictos, IV (43).

<sup>1179</sup> Pérez de Soto's library (see Chapter 5) and Sebastián Gudiel's self-denunciation in Guatemala: AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 333, exp. 8.

<sup>1180</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 337.

#### 6.4. Censorship of Almanacs in New Spain

Within the history of books and readers, the almanac (its contents and reception) has played an important role in the study of popular literary genres. Interesting questions have been raised from this perspective: What social, religious and political role did they play? Where were they sold? How wide was the readership, both geographically and socially? Who were their purchasers? How did they affect their reader? What was the buyer looking for? What did he regard as the most important material? Within the history of astrology, the contents of almanacs have been analysed from different perspectives: the relationship between astrology and medicine, the separation of astronomy from astrology, the transmission of astronomical knowledge (Kelly), the decline of astrology (Carolino), the means of communication of astrological prophecy (Capp), and so on.

Because this thesis focuses on astrology and the Inquisition, I will propose here an initial approach to this material in terms of their forbidden and permitted contents. On the one hand, I do not think that almanacs constitute by themselves (definitely not for the Mexican case) sufficient evidence to answer macro-questions such as those of the decline of astrology, or the triumph of astronomy. As Nicolson acknowledges, "...not even 800 almanacs can tell the whole tale of the complex century in which science was emerging, and in which 'new astronomy' was threatening old astrology."<sup>1181</sup> On the other hand, the material at our disposal is particularly interesting because the censor's evaluations of the almanacs, previous to their publication, are preserved in the archives. Thus we can have a closer look at the way in which inquisitorial censorship was actually exercised, and the way in which the limits of forbidden knowledge were set.

The first printed Mexican almanac we know about is called *Kalendario Perpetuo*, published in 1579 by Alejo García. *The Kalendarium officii divini*, written by the Franciscan friar Jerónimo Descacena was published in 1609.<sup>1182</sup> During the seventeenth century there

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<sup>1181</sup> Nicolson (1939), p. 9.

<sup>1182</sup> Trabulse. *Archipiélagos siderales. Eclipses y astronomía en la historia de México*. México: SCT; 1991, p. 56.

was probably no astronomer or professor of astrology who did not participate in the elaboration of almanacs, which was a better-remunerated practice than the payment they received for the lessons at the University. By the eighteenth century, almanacs started losing their astrological contents and remained as meteorological texts composed entirely of astronomical ephemerides.<sup>1183</sup>

We have almost no documentation about almanacs published in Mexico City prior to 1647, because there was no need to present them to the Inquisition and they were printed with ordinary licenses. There are, nonetheless, some exceptions: the almanacs published by Enrico Martínez between 1606 and 1620 survived through his printed work *Repertorio de los Tiempos e Historia Natural de la Nueva España*. There is also documentation on the ordinary licenses to print the almanacs by Gabriel López de Bonilla in 1632, 1640, and 1641, and by Juan Ruiz in 1641.<sup>1184</sup> It must be pointed out that these ordinary licenses did not exempt texts from ecclesiastical approval. The civil authorities would only accept to print an almanac *after* it had been examined by a religious censor.

On October 26, 1647 the Spanish Inquisition issued an edict ordering that only forecasts about agriculture, navigation and medicine could be made and all of them should be examined by the Holy Tribunal before they were printed and sold.<sup>1185</sup> The date of this edict suggests that these kinds of measures to control astrological predictions might have been reinforced after Urban VIII confirmed the bull against judicial astrology in 1631. Not all Mexican almanacs are extant in the inquisitorial archives, but we have most of the comments and observations made by the censors of the Inquisition. These documents are themselves an important source to better understand the conflict between religious institutions and astrology in the Mexican context.

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<sup>1183</sup> Trabulse (1991), p. 56.

<sup>1184</sup> *Licencia a Gabriel López Bonilla para hacer imprimir el Diario y Discurso Astronómico para el año de 1633*. (1632) AGN; General de Parte, 348, 7; *Licencia a Gabriel Lopez de Bonilla para hacer imprimir el Diario y Discurso Astronómico para el año de 1641* (1640) AGN; General de Parte, Vol. 8, exp. 23, foja 13v; *Licencia a Gabriel López de Bonilla para hacer imprimir el Diario y Discurso Astronómico para el año de 1642* (1641) AGN; General de Parte, vol. 8, exp. 156, foja 98. *Licencia a Juan Ruiz para hacer imprimir el Diario y Discurso Astronómico para el año de 1642* (1641) AGN; General de Parte, vol. 8, exp. 160, foja 100.

<sup>1185</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 82.

Trabulse considered that most of the information in these almanacs was “a product of their authors’ fantasies and not the result of their concrete scientific research.”<sup>1186</sup> However, he acknowledged the importance of these texts in terms of the valuable astronomical, meteorological, geographical, and historical information they contain. Moreover, he explains that the censors’ evaluations of these works make it evident that the intellectual environment of the time regarding scientific matters was not one of complete ignorance and credulity.<sup>1187</sup> From my perspective, these evaluations constitute an important source for understanding the extent to which the Church’s prohibition of astrology was actually observed and executed. The famous Papal Bulls of 1586 and 1631 allowed *only* astrological predictions in connection with agriculture, navigation and medicine. However, what the Mexican almanacs show is that the authors of these texts did not limit themselves to natural predictions, but they frequently entered into the territory of human actions. In theory, it was the task of inquisitorial censors to avoid the infiltration of such illicit material into licit works. Yet, there were no unanimous criteria among censors to undertake their task, and the variety of opinions played an important role in the attempt to discern *natural* from *judicial* predictions.

Most almanacs were written by astronomers, mathematicians, and physicians of the Royal University. As for clergymen, we find only one almanac printed by the Augustinian friar Felipe de Castro in 1649, and one more published in 1670 by a priest from Michoacán, Nicolás de Matta.<sup>1188</sup> In general terms, it can be said that while astronomers were more active at the beginning of the century, the composition of almanacs was taken over by physicians at the end of the thirteenth century all the way through to the eighteenth century. Among the physicians who were also involved in almanac-writing we find: Juan Avilés Ramírez, who received his doctorate at the University in 1684; José de Campos, who graduated in Arts in 1660; Antonio Sebastián Aguilar Cantú, physician and mathematician, who composed almanacs during the last two decades of the seventeenth century; and Marco Antonio de Gamboa y Riaño, student of Medicine, who published an almanac for 1698.<sup>1189</sup>

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<sup>1186</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 117.

<sup>1187</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 117.

<sup>1188</sup> Castro, Felipe. *Lunario y Pronóstico de Salud para 1649*. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 670, folios 247-249; and Matta, Nicolás. *Lunario y Pronóstico de Temporales para 1670*. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 670, folios 275-276.

<sup>1189</sup> See: *Autos hechos en los grados de licenciado y doctor que recibió por esta Real Universidad en la Facultad de Medicina el doctor Juan de Avilés Ramírez*. 1684. AGN; Universidad, Vol. 285, exp. 22, f. 308-

Juan Ruiz, architect, mathematician and printer, wrote numerous almanacs between 1641 and 1676.<sup>1190</sup> He was the son of Enrico Martínez, astronomer, printer, and almanac-writer, and he graduated in Arts in 1655. Juan Saucedo and José Salmerón de Castro, two competitors of Sigüenza for the chair of astrology in 1672, wrote almanacs in the last decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>1191</sup> The latter graduated in 1667 in the Arts faculty.<sup>1192</sup> Francisco Ruiz Lozano, founder of the chair of astrology and mathematics at the University of San Marco in Lima, printed two almanacs in Mexico City (1651 and 1652).<sup>1193</sup> In Lima, he continued printing almanacs every year between 1654 and 1659, and in 1665 he published a treatise on the comet of 1664-65.<sup>1194</sup> In the viceroyalty of Peru, the task of composing almanacs was usually entrusted to the royal cosmographer, and, like in New Spain, these texts needed inquisitorial license for printing.<sup>1195</sup>

Sigüenza y Góngora published almanacs between 1671 and 1701 under the pseudonyms of *Juan de Torquemada* or *Mexicano*.<sup>1196</sup> The use of a pseudonym could have been a result of his reluctance to write such works, and his general criticism against the validity of astrology. Indeed, in his almanac for the year 1691, he referred to astrology as a ‘trifle’ (*bagatela*), and regrets: “Years ago I should have done what the eminent mathematician Juan Keplero did, which was to completely stop doing forecasts, because the

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321v; and *Grado de Bachiller en Artes por su licencia de Joseph de Campos*. 1660. AGN; Universidad, Vol. 143, exp. 202, f. 461.

<sup>1190</sup> *Grado de Bachiller en Artes por su licencia de Juan Ruiz*. 1655. AGN; Universidad, Vol. 143, exp. 66, f. 148-149v.

<sup>1191</sup> Sigüenza won the contest for the chair with a lecture on the *ortu et ocassu signorum*. See: Quintana (1969) and Navarro (2000), p. 107.

<sup>1192</sup> *Grado de Bachiller en Artes por su licencia de Joseph Salmerón de Castro*. 1667. AGN; Universidad, Vol. 143, exp. 333, f. 766.

<sup>1193</sup> Medina. *La imprenta en México. 1539-1821*. Santiago de Chile; Casa del Autor, 1907, Vol. II, p. 293.

<sup>1194</sup> *Tratado de los cometas, observación y juicios de que se vio en esta ciudad de los Reyes, y generalmente en todo el mundo por los fines del año de 1664 y principios deste de 1665. Compuesto por el capitán Francisco Ruiz Lozano, cosmógrafo mayor deste Reyno y Cathedrático de Prima de Mathematicas en esta dicha Ciudad*. Lima; 1665. See Medina. *La imprenta en Lima. 1584-1650*. Santiago de Chile: Fondo histórico y bibliográfico José Toribio Medina; 1966, Vol. II, p. 82.

<sup>1195</sup> Guibovich (2003), p. 262. The order for censoring almanacs in Peru was issued in 1650, three years later than in New Spain. See: *Los inquisidores Andrés Juan Gaitán y Luis de Betancurt y Figueroa al Consejo*. (Lima. 10 de febrero de 1650). AHN, Inquisición, 1043, f. 99r.

<sup>1196</sup> Most of Sigüenza’s moon calendar are in vol. 670 at the AGN, but there are also some in vols. 303, 478, 486, 490, 495, 543, 671 and 715.

credit we loose is bigger than the amount of *reales* we earn.”<sup>1197</sup> In the almanac for 1694 he reiterates that the reasons why he was involved in such task were his obligation towards the university, and the additional income it brought.<sup>1198</sup>

According to Quintana and Trabulse, *Martín de Córdoba* and *El Cordobés* were probably the pseudonyms used by Friar Diego Rodríguez, founder of the chair of astrology and mathematics at the University of Mexico City, to publish his own almanacs.<sup>1199</sup> However, this pseudonym could have also been used by the librarian-astrologer Melchor Pérez de Soto. One of the witnesses who testified in Pérez de Soto’s trial said that he was positive that the accused read books on astrology, but he was not sure whether he actually practiced judicial astrology. What this witness knew was that Pérez de Soto “was professor of mathematics, and he makes prognostications, and he keeps the manuscripts, and he does not hand them to the press, even though this deponent presumes that some printed prognostications under the name of Martín de Córdoba are of the said Melchor Pérez,” though this assumption could only be confirmed by the printer.<sup>1200</sup> It would be interesting to discover the identity of this author who published almanacs both in Madrid (1638 and 1659) and in Mexico (1655, 1662, 1663, 1665, and 1666).<sup>1201</sup> The Spanish Inquisition banned *in totum* the almanac of 1659, and, according to the examiner, the text was composed by ‘Martín de Córdoba, born in Africa in the province of Numidia.’<sup>1202</sup> The Mexican Inquisition granted licenses for printing all of Córdoba’s almanacs except for one in 1665, which was *unresolved*.

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<sup>1197</sup> Sigüenza y Góngora, Carlos de. *Almanaque para el año de 1691*. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, ff. 343-352.

<sup>1198</sup> Navarro (2000), p. 137. The quote is in Quintana (1969), p. 226: ‘...lo que fue entonces ardor de la juventud se continuó después como obligación del puesto que, obteniendo en la Real y Pontificia Universidad de México la cátedra de esta facultad, a 21 de julio del año de 1672, así por este como por los cortísimos medios con que hasta aquí he pasado, me necesité proseguir la publicación de los lunarios, a que dio principio la consideración de lo fútil y desaprovechado de semejante empleo y de la ninguna honra y ascensos que se medran en este estudio.’

<sup>1199</sup> Quintana (1969), pp. 51 and 62, and Navarro (2000), p. 107.

<sup>1200</sup> “...no sabe este declarante que el dicho Melchor Pérez use de la astrología judiciaria, pero sabe como dicho tiene que es profesor de matemáticas y que hace pronósticos de los tiempos y los tiene manuscritos y que no los da a la imprenta si bien presume para sí que unos pronósticos que corren impresos con nombre de Martín de Córdoba, son del dicho MP, que la verdad de esta duda la declarara el impresor.” INAH-2, f. 230b-231.

<sup>1201</sup> Córdoba, Martín de. *Pronóstico para 1655*. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, f. 277; *Pronóstico y Lunario para 1662*. AGN; Inquisición. Vol. 670. f. 195; *Diario para 1663*. AGN; Inquisición, 670. f. 182-183; *Pronóstico para 1665*. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 495; *Pronóstico para 1666*.; Inquisición. Vol. 670, f. 119-120.

<sup>1202</sup> Quoted in Lanuza (2005), p. 337.

The “astronomer and mathematician” Gabriel López de Bonilla, as he presents himself in his *Diario y discursos morales* for 1665, was born in Castille and lived in the city of Puebla. As seen before, he was a friend of Friar Diego Rodríguez, and Mélchor Pérez de Soto. Apart from almanacs, Bonilla wrote a text on the comet of 1652, which, according to Trabulse, is “a clear example of that mentality full of hermetism which had not yet abandoned the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic conceptions of the generation of the cosmos.”<sup>1203</sup> Dedicated to the mayor of the city, the main aim of Bonilla’s text was to discuss the cause of the comet, which he claimed was the reiterated conjunction of Mars and Mercury.<sup>1204</sup> To determine the comet’s cause, Bonilla followed Aristotle’s doctrine, and the teachings of the Spaniard Bartolomé Barrientos, author of a treatise on the comet of 1572.<sup>1205</sup> He expressed the frequently held opinion that comets were not a cause of disasters, but only a sign that announced them.<sup>1206</sup> The ultimate cause of the great accidents that a comet could produce was the Supreme Creator.<sup>1207</sup> The only case in which comets were regarded as a cause is in monstrous births, like the one in Saxony in 1515. A woman gave birth to a creature with the feet of a bull, four eyes, the mouth and nose of a sheep, and a monk’s hat, made out of the same skin. This monstrous birth “was followed by the [birth of the] wicked sect of Luther, which is one of the worst accidents that have happened to the world.”<sup>1208</sup>

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<sup>1203</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 74. See: López de Bonilla, Gabriel. *Discurso y relación cometographica del repentino aborto de los astros que sucedió del cometa que apareció por Diciembre de 1653*. México, Viuda de Barnardo Calderón, 1653.

<sup>1204</sup> “...y todo a las causas celestes que para ello concurren que los principales aspectos fueron la Conjunction reiterada de Marte y Mercurio, que la ultima sucedio a la entrada del Sol en el signo de Leon, a quien miraba Jupiter de oposición” López Bonilla (1653), p. 4.

<sup>1205</sup> Barrientos, Bartolomé. *Commetarum explicatio atque praedictio...Salmanticae*, Impensis Simonis Portonarii (Al fin:) Excudebat Petrus Lasus, 1574. 8o. 64h. See: Navarro (1999b), p. 89.

<sup>1206</sup> “ Y aunque es verdad que los cometas por si no causan estos efectos, pero son señales de los que inmediatamente están por venir, como por muchos Autores muy señalados en letras se podrá ver...” López Bonilla (1653), p. 6.

<sup>1207</sup> “Dicho está (a mi parecer) lo que basta en razón deste Cometa y que todos cuantos se aparecen son Anuncios de grandes accidentes pues no se causan sin muy justa y determinada permisión del sumo Hazedor.” López Bonilla (1653), p. 11

<sup>1208</sup> “Y no sólo los Cometas son anuncios y presagios de Hambres, Pestes y demás accidentes, sino que también son causas de que con la corrupción del Aire le engendren monstrues como Fisicamente lo tran muchos Doctores, que también son presagios de muy señalados accidentes en el mundo, como del caso presenté constará. En Saxonia, después de averse aparecido un Cometa el año de 1515 nació de una mujer un género tan horrendo de mostruo que causaba admiración el verle, el cual tenía pies de Toro, quatro Ojos, Boca y Nariz de Becerro, capilla de moge hecha de la misma carne a manera de corona sacerdotal. A lo qual poco despues le siguió la maldita secta de Luthero que fue un accidente de los peores que han sucedido en el mundo.” López Bonilla (1653) p. 12

Trabulse drew attention to an interesting dispute between López Bonilla and the Jesuit Diego Molina concerning the censorship of almanacs. Molina was a Creole priest from a noble Castilian family, who was active as censor between 1660 and 1674.<sup>1209</sup> Molina's confrontation with Bonilla was triggered by the astrologer's accusation that censors did not have enough knowledge about astrology to be authorized to say what was right and what was wrong. Moreover, he complained that censors were not up to date in terms of prohibition of books, and condemned authors who were actually not forbidden, such as Giuntini and Rantzau.<sup>1210</sup> Medina replied not only by arguing that these authors could only be read after expurgation, but also by defending his right to exercise censorship: 'It is a human mistake of the author [Bonilla] to assume that in order to censor his predictions the theologian needs to know astronomy when they [the predictions] are not dependant on her [astronomy], like in the case of fortuitous events. What he [the theologian] needs to know about predictions is what the Church commands not to be touched by astrologers.'<sup>1211</sup>

In my view, it can be misleading to approach the question of censorship, as Trabulse does, in terms of a clash between tradition and innovation, or between ignorance and wisdom. The dispute between the astrologer Bonilla and the Jesuit censor illustrates an aspect of censorship that goes beyond a confrontation of two forces. Rather, it is evidence of a conflict of what we could call *epistemological jurisdictions*. This, I believe, is one of the most problematic issues of the condemnation of astrology by the Catholic Church. Just like in the case of miracles and the supernatural, the future was a territory that the Church wanted to keep under her jurisdiction. She resisted relinquishing it to astrologers, astronomers, or any other person who claimed the possibility to acquire a non-religious knowledge of the things to come.

For the period between 1647 and 1700, I have identified sixteen censors who were in charge of revising almanacs.<sup>1212</sup> We know for certain that four of them were Jesuits, two were Dominicans, one was Franciscan, and one was Mercedarian. The best-known censor was the

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<sup>1209</sup> Trabulse (1994), p. 124. On Molina, he refers to Zambrano (1961), X, pp. 34-60.

<sup>1210</sup> On this dispute see Trabulse (1994), p. 124.

<sup>1211</sup> Quoted in Trabulse (1994), p. 124. The translation is mine. See: *Diario y Discursos Morales y Políticos según la Revolución y Eclipses del año 1665*. AGN; Inquisición. Vol. 670, folios 143-145.

<sup>1212</sup> See chart below.



Jesuit Antonio Núñez, confessor of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and one of the most influential intellectuals in seventeenth-century New Spain.<sup>1213</sup> He examined twelve almanacs between 1667 and 1691, and, during his thirty years as censor of the Mexican tribunal, he was frequently called to give his opinion on books and other matters.

In terms of the number of almanacs they revised and the length of their opinions, the most active censors were the Dominicans Agustín de Dorantes and Alonso de la Barrera. The latter was rector of the University in 1665, and later became provincial of his order.<sup>1214</sup> The Jesuit Juan Ortiz de los Heros, who examined three almanacs between 1662 and 1663, was the same censor called for the examination of Pérez de Soto's confiscated library in 1650. Ortiz, a Creole of great erudition, was active in censorship for more than ten years before moving to the city of Puebla as rector of the Jesuit College.<sup>1215</sup>

The main guidelines used to exercise censorship were Sixtus V's Bull and the Index of Forbidden Books of 1640. The Index served as a guide to the censors not only on strictly astrological issues, but also for other kind of questions, such as the attacks and criticisms among almanac-makers. For example, in his evaluation of Sigüenza's almanac for 1691, the censor Agustín de Dorantes relies on Rule 16 of the Index to decide that all kind of satiric sentences against the good reputation of Mathematicians should be erased.<sup>1216</sup>

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<sup>1213</sup> On Núñez see: Oviedo, Juan Antonio de. *Vida ejemplar, heroicas virtudes y apostólicos ministerios del V. P. Antonio Núñez de Miranda de la Compañía de Jesús...*, México, Herederos de la viuda de Francisco Rodríguez Lupericio, 1702; Zambrano (1961), X; and Águeda, María. "No es lo mismo ser calificador que calificado: una adición a la bibliografía del padre Antonio Núñez, confesor de sor Juana" in Martha Elena Venier (ed.), *Varia lingüística y literaria. 50 años del CELL. II. Literatura: de la Edad Media al siglo XVIII*, México, Colmex, pp. 397-413, and in Dalia Hernández Reyes (ed.) *Secretos del Oficio*. México, 2001, pp. 165-195. On Núñez's relationship with Sor Juana see: Bravo Arriaga, María Dolores. "Erotismo y represión en un texto del padre Antonio Núñez de Miranda" (1997), pp. 49-54, ---"La retórica de la conciencia: *Cartilla de la doctrina religiosa* del padre Antonio Núñez de Miranda", pp. 55-62, ---"Dos dedicatorias de Núñez de Miranda a sor Filotea de la Cruz, indicios inéditos de una relación peligrosa", pp. 63-71 and ---"La excepción y la regla: una monja según el discurso oficial y según sor Juana", pp. 73-82.

<sup>1214</sup> Trubulose (1994), p. 122.

<sup>1215</sup> Trubulose (1994), p. 120.

<sup>1216</sup> "...se deben quitar todas las cláusulas satíricas y detractorias del buen crédito de los matemáticos que hay en México contenidas en el párrafo 2o. de dicho juicio conjetural y en el párrafo de los eclipses, pues según la Regla 16 del Expurgatorio de este Santísimo Tribunal se deben también borrar los chistes y gracias publicados en ofensa o perjuicio y buen crédito de los prójimos". AGN; Inquisición. Vol. 670, f. 356-362.

The position of the censors regarding the debate about free will appears ambivalent. Censor Juan de la Barrera, for instance, recommended the authorization for printing López de Bonilla's almanac for 1665 only after removing the title "Diary of moral and political discourses" (*Diario y Discursos Morales y Políticos según la Revolución y Eclipses del año 1665*), because Pope Sixtus V prohibited judicial astrology, which is the subject matter of this kind of discourses.<sup>1217</sup> Regardless of the title, and the fact that the author extended his judgements to the moral realm, the printing of the text was not inconvenient, because these moral judgements are preceded by the author's warning that 'the person's free will is always superior to every kind of inclination.'<sup>1218</sup> By contrast, the Jesuit Antonio Nuñez seems to make a clearer distinction between judicial-divinatory propositions and licit predictions. In his evaluation of Sigüenza's almanac for 1675 he condemns the phrase 'everybody be careful in the ways' and 'a notorious person will die'. The first phrase is condemned because it refers to robberies, which depend on free will; the second, because only God can determine the duration of life.<sup>1219</sup>

More than once, the censors recommended canceling certain words, such as 'anger' or 'uprising', not only because they interfered with free will, but because they were "not convenient in present times".<sup>1220</sup> A similar observation is found in the censorship of Avilés Ramírez's almanac for 1691. When the author prognosticated the effects of Mars and said that the planet 'won't stop sending its bad influences,' the censor said "he exceeds the limits of pure conjecture" not only because it is expressed with certainty, but also because he

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<sup>1217</sup> "Debe mandar al autor tilde y borre el titulo de *discursos morales y políticos* que le da a su obra por cuanto por la santidad de Sixto Quinto *de felice memoria* esta prohibida la astrología judiciaria que es la que mira a las costumbres a las cuales son asimismo anexas las políticas y no es bien que de la misma materia prohibida se saque el título para este diario..." AGN; Inquisición. Vol. 670, exp. 72, f. 143-145.

<sup>1218</sup> "...Y aunque en el se extiende el autor a tocar obras morales no tiene inconveniente se imprima por cuanto es debajo de la advertencia que da el autor en la plana 4 a la vuelta donde dice: *siendo siempre el libre albedrío de la persona, superior a todas cuantas inclinaciones de ellas pueden sobrevenir*. Asi lo sentimos. 30 de agosto de 1664." AGN; Inquisición. Vol. 670, exp. 72, f. 143-145.

<sup>1219</sup> "...he visto este lunario de Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora y salvo siempre mejor parecer a que sujeto este se me ofrecen tres cosas reparables en el. La primera, al fin de las notas vulgares pone aquella cláusula. *Todos en los caminos anden con cuidado y prevención etc, denota morirá una persona grave*. Tengo estas dos proposiciones formalmente judiciarias y divinatorias de actos libres. La primera en robos que son actos libres del ladrón, la segunda de dios a cuyo supremo dominio toca el termino fijo de la vida y determinación de la muerte y calidades de la persona ..." Transcription in Quintana (1969), p. 147.

<sup>1220</sup> Censor Agustín Dorantes referring to the almanac of Avilés Ramírez for 1693: "se debe mandar que el contenido escuse estas dos palabras *iras* y *alborotos* que están en el juicio conjetural del año, folio 4, plana 1, línea 18 y 19 por parecer tocar en pronosticación de actos libres y no convenir a los tiempos presentes. Así lo siento. 7 de noviembre de 1692." AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, exp. 66, f. 161.

prognosticates effects that are dependent on free will, such as wars and uprisings.<sup>1221</sup> The censor proposed a solution for this excess and suggested that the phrase ‘[Mars] won’t stop sending’ be changed for ‘it can be expected that it [Mars] sends’.<sup>1222</sup> By changing the formulation of the phrase, the certainty of the prediction was transformed into conjectural, and entered into the category of licit predictions. A similar suggestion is done for Sigüenza’s almanac for 1690. Agustín Dorantes and Diego Marín proposed to remove the phrase ‘without any doubt’ because it expressed an absolute and certain prediction, which is forbidden when it refers to contingent events such as the abundance of water.<sup>1223</sup>

Censors continuously emphasized the importance of free will in order to overcome astral inclinations and dispositions, but they did not contest the idea of the influence of the stars on Earth *per se*. It is true, says Agustín Dorantes, that the stars influence the disposition of humours, the agitation of anger and cholera; however, it cannot be doubted that free will has the main and major efficacy over these humours and it is never necessitated by inclination of corporal temperament.<sup>1224</sup> What is illicit, he continues, is to talk about effects that are completely uncertain and contingent, or are completely deduced from the causality of the stars.<sup>1225</sup> Censor Nicolás de Lomas also recognized the influence of the stars on the sublunar realm, but emphasized the limits of such influence. For instance, the Sun and other stars generate gold and other precious metals and stones; however God only is entitled to

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<sup>1221</sup> “En el párrafo último del juicio conjetural del año, pronosticando los efectos de Marte, excede de los límites de lo puro conjetural, porque la predicción no sólo está absoluta o casi certitudinal en lo que suena la cláusula que dice: **‘No dejará de enviar a los sublunares sus nocivas influencias’**, etc; sino que pasa peligrosamente a pronosticar efectos en que indispensablemente intervienen actos humanos y libres, como son las guerras y los alborotos.” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, foja. 174. Transcription in Quintana (1969), p. 192.

<sup>1222</sup> “Me parece que lo que debe el autor reforma en el párrafo ultimo del juicio conjetural del año es en la línea 5 quitando la predicción asertiva y absoluta que dice: *No dejara de enviar*, decir: *Se podrá temer que envíe* etc y borrarse en la línea 8 hasta la décima esta cláusula: *Y por otra parte incendios, guerras y alborotos* con todo el paréntesis que le toca hasta la dicción cólera.” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, foja. 176.

<sup>1223</sup> Los calificadores proponen que se quite la frase *sin duda alguna* "por ser nota de predicción absoluta y certitudinal, que en pronosticar cuentas puramente contingentes como lo es la abundancia de aguas de que habla está prohibido a los astrólogos" Quintana (1969), p.19.

<sup>1224</sup> “Porque aunque es cierto que los astros influyen cuanto a la disposición de los humores, excitación de la ira y de la cólera, en orden a estos efectos; sin embargo no se puede dudar que tiene en ellos la mayor y principal parte de eficacia el libre albedrío y nunca queda necesitado de la inclinación o temperamento corporal...” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, foja. 174. Transcription in Quintana (1969), p. 192.

<sup>1225</sup> “Y por cuanto de no contener a los autores de estos pronósticos dentro de la esfera de la materia *circa quam* proporcionada a sus predicciones, resulta el arrojarse temerariamente a extenderlas a efectos meramente inciertos y contingentes o que totalmente se substraen de la causalidad de las estrellas me parece que siendo V. Sa servido podrá mandar reforma dicha predicción en lo que toca a los efectos dichos. Así lo siento.” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, f. 174.

discover these precious materials and men's diligence is not enough to find them. For this reason, he suggests in his evaluation of Sigüenza's almanac for 1675 to erase the proposition 'discovery of mines towards noon.'<sup>1226</sup>

As mentioned above, one of the functions of almanacs was to establish every year the exact date for changeable religious festivities, such as Easter. Sometimes, there were some debates regarding this topic. In his evaluation of Sigüenza's almanac for 1683, the censor Agustín de Dorantes wrote that, even though it may seem striking to the unlearned, the establishment of the exact date of Christ's death was not a Catholic dogma and was not officially established by the Church. Therefore, the fact that this almanac establishes that Christ died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April instead of the 25<sup>th</sup> of March (as it is commonly held) does not contradict any dogma.<sup>1227</sup> This evaluation illustrates another common concern among censors, namely that almanacs were read by an unlearned or *vulgar* audience that was not able to understand some of the subtleties of astrology and could misinterpret certain information. Thus the authors of these texts should be aware of this fact and be careful with their judgements.

It has been argued, first, that astrology declined during the last decades of the seventeenth century; secondly, that the prohibition of judicial astrology by the Catholic Church, together with the persecution of its practice by the Inquisition, somehow set the ground for astrology's death blow by the astronomical revolution. What I tried to show along these pages is that both arguments need to be revised before any general conclusion can be drawn regarding the decline of astrology and the role of the Catholic Church in this process. On the one hand, it needs to be emphasized that, if astrology is to be understood as the belief

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<sup>1226</sup> "y porque aunque con sus influencias engendran el sol y otros astros el oro y demás metales y piedras preciosas el descubrirlos y darlos toca solo a Dios pues vemos a su consecución a vista de noticias y de muestras de minerales no bastan diligencias de los hombres para descubrirlas debe quitarse la proposición *descubrimientos de minas hacia la parte del medio día* que se contiene en el juicio del otoño". AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 670, ff. 165-166. Transcription in Quintana (1969), p. 149.

<sup>1227</sup> "Por lo cual siendo tan probable el discurso de que Cristo señor Nuestro murió a 3 de abril en la feria sexta en que concurrieron la llena de luna y el primero día de Pascua, como sólidamente prueba el autor así con las suputaciones astronómicas que en semejantes controversias se deben atender mucho como con las congruencias, razones y fundamentos escriturales de que se valen los autores que son de este parecer; y he visto con toda atención, siento que podrá, siendo servido Vuestra Señoría, darse a la estampa sin ningún inconveniente." AGN, Inquisición. Vol. 670, f. 190-193.

on the influence of the stars on Earth, this belief did not disappear completely by the end of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, it is important to underline that the position of the Catholic Church towards astrology was often ambiguous. The thin line dividing natural and judicial astrology was frequently crossed not only by astrologers themselves, but also by theologians. From Saint Thomas onwards, it was not difficult for both of them to find ways to conciliate the dogma of free will with the influence of the stars. Therefore, it is not so straightforward that the Catholic Church radically prohibited judicial astrology, and that this prohibition triggered the scholars' scepticism towards astrology.

**Table 2.** Almanacas of the seventeenth century preserved in the inquisitorial archives at the AGN.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Censor</i>	<i>Location</i>
1649	Fr. Felipe de Castro	Moon calendar and health forecast	Francisco Calderón, S. J.	Vol. 670, ff. 247-249
	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and astronomical discourse	Francisco Calderón, S. J.	Vol. 670, ff. 246-248
1655	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Astronomical Discourse	Juan Ortiz de los Heros	Vol. 670, ff. 96-97
1659	Juan Ruiz	Forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 387-388
1660	Juan Ruiz	Forecast	Juan Ortiz de los Heros	Vol. 670, ff. 185-186
1661	Juan Ruiz	Repertory		Vol. 670, ff. 181
1662	Martín de Córdova	Forecast and Moon calendar		Vol. 670, ff. 195
	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and astronomical discourse		Vol. 670, ff. 170-171
1663	Martín de Córdova	Weather forecast	Juan Ortiz de los Heros	Vol. 670, ff. 182-183
	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary		Vol. 670, f 170
	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar and health regiment		Vol. 670, f 184
1665	Martín de Córdova	Forecast		Vol. 495, f 37
	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and moral and political discourse according to the revolution and eclipses	Juan Ortiz de los Heros	Vol. 670, ff. 57-72 and 143-145
	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar, health regiment and weather forecast		Vol. 495, ff. 146-147
1666	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and astronomical discourse		Vol. 670, f 142 and 289-391
	Martín de Córdova	Forecast	Fr. Jacinto de Guevara	Vol. 670, ff 119-120
	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar, health regiment and weather forecast		Vol. 670, f 196
1667	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and astronomical discourse	P. Francisco de Uribe y Anotnio Nuñez	Vol. 670, ff 148-154 and 252-265
	Juan Ruiz	Forecast	Francisco Uribe y Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, ff 155-158
1668	Gabriel López de Bonilla	Diary and astronomical	Fr. Jacinto de	Vol. 670, ff 220-222

<i>Year</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Censor</i>	<i>Location</i>
		discourse	Guevara	
1669	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar, health regiment and weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff 179-180
1670	Nicolás de Matta	Moon calendar and weather forecast	Fr. Alonso de Becerra (Dominican) P. Diego de Medina P. Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, ff 275-276
	Juan Ruiz	Forecast		Vol. 670, ff 114-115
1671	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez, P. Diego de Molina	Vol. 670, f 213
1673	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar and forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, f 270 and 273-274
	Juan de Saucedo	Forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, f 271
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and forecast	Fr. Nicolás de Figueroa	Vol. 670, f 267-268
1674	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar		Vol. 670, ff 385-386
	Juan de Saucedo	Forecast		Vol. 670, ff 167-169
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, ff 165-166
1675	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez P. Francisco de Pareja y P. Nicolás de Lomas	Vol. 670, ff 163-164, 197, 208 and 383
1676	Juan Ruiz	Moon calendar, health regiment and weather forecast		Vol. 670, f 370
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez	Vol. 670, f 383
1677	Juan de Saucedo	Forecast		Vol. 670, f 251
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez P. Francisco de Pareja	Vol. 670, ff. 241 and 252
1678	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar, health regiment and weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 244-245
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 12-17
1679	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar and health regiment		Vol. 670, f. 384
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	Fr. Antonio León y Araujo Fr. Agustín Dorantes	Vol. 670, ff. 354-355
1680	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar and weather forecast		Vol. 670, f. 278
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 117-118
1682	Antonio Sebastián de Aguilar Cantú	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 310 and 340
	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar and weather forecast		Vol. 670, f 243
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez P. Agustín Dorantes	Vol. 670, f 98
1683	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar and forecast		Vol. 670, ff 8 and 10
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and weather forecast	P. Antonio Nuñez P. Agustín Dorantes	Vol. 670, ff. 190-193
1684	José Salmerón de Castro y Escobar	Moon calendar and weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff 381-382

<i>Year</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Censor</i>	<i>Location</i>
1686	Juan de Avilés Ramírez	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, f 194
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Forecast	Fr. Francisco de Pareja	Vol. 670, ff 188-189
1687	Antonio Sebastián Aguilar Cantú	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff 38 and 41
	Juan de Avilés Ramírez	Weather forecast		Vol. 495, ff 42 and 43
	José Campos	Forecast	Francisco Deza y Ulloa	Vol. 671, ff. 376-379
1688	José Campos	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 4 and 7
	Juan de Avilés Ramírez	Weather forecast		Vol. 495, ff 99-101
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Forecast and moon calendar		Vol. 670, ff. 1-3
1689	Antonio Sebastián Aguilar Cantú	Weather forecast	Antonio Nuñez Martín de Rentería	Vol. 670, ff. 91-95
	Juan de Avilés Ramírez	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 363-365
	José Campos	Forecast	Agustín Dorantes Francisco de Deza y Ulloa	Vol. 670, ff. 227-231
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Moon calendar and forecast	License	Vol. 670, ff. 367-369
1690	Antonio Sebastián Aguilar Cantú	Weather forecast		Vol. 670, ff. 224-226
	Juan de Avilés Ramírez	Weather forecast	Antonio Núñez	Vol. 670, ff. 217-219
	Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora	Almanac		Vol. 670, ff. 198 y 206-207

## Chapter 7. Astrology and Other Fields of Knowledge

Studying the coexistence of and interaction between astrology and other fields of knowledge is crucial for a better understanding of pre-modern disciplinary boundaries. Not taking into account this coexistence and interaction might lead to either overlooking the presence of certain fields of knowledge in places where (according to our own taxonomy) they are not supposed to be or overemphasizing their importance in places where they shared functions with other fields. In what follows I will attempt to show how inquisitorial sources might prove useful to reconstruct, up to a certain point, the practice of astrology within a specific context. Moreover, I will show how astrological prediction was interwoven with other disciplines (such as cosmography, physiognomy and chiromancy) and other practices (magical and divinatory).

### 7.1. Astrology and Cosmography

Reconstructing a practice is probably one of the greatest challenges for cultural historians. However, when the practice to be reconstructed is forbidden, the historian has the advantage that the laws prohibiting such practice constitute an important source for its reconstruction. From this point of view, it is interesting to direct our attention to some inquisitorial edicts that prohibited the practice of astrology in New Spain. The first two edicts were published at the beginning of the seventeenth century, in 1616 and 1622, and the third one almost a century later, in 1712.

In the first edict, astrology is regarded as a major threat; thereby, its practice is explicitly forbidden together with the possession of books on the subject. The inquisitors urged all neighbors of the city to denounce those who had practiced or were at the moment practicing judicial Astrology “making judgements by the stars and their aspects about future contingents, events and fortuitous cases or actions which depend on the holy will of God or the free will of men...”<sup>1228</sup> The list of fortuitous events which were not to be foreseen by

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<sup>1228</sup> “Si sabéis o habéis oído decir que alguna persona haya profesado o ejercitado, profese o ejercite la Astrología Judiciaria, haciendo juicios por las Estrellas y sus aspectos sobre los futuros contingentes, sucesos y



means of astrology or any other divinatory art included both individual and collective events. The former regarded different stages in a person's life such as marriage, health, sickness, fortunes, misfortunes, or the time and manner of death.<sup>1229</sup> The latter dealt with events that affected a whole community, such as the arrival of ships, the discovery of treasures, the robbery of objects. Together with astrology, the list of forbidden arts and practices included geomancy, hydromancy, chiromancy; the use of spells, sorcery, and enchantments; the interpretation of dreams; the reading of beans, corn, wheat, coins, playing cards or any other form of invocation of the demon to know past and future events.<sup>1230</sup> Finally, the inquisitors explicitly prohibited the possession of any book or paper on any of these divinatory arts, and allowed "only those books on astrology which deal with judgements and natural observations for Navigation, Agriculture, and Medicine."<sup>1231</sup>

The edict of 1616 seems to have had a strong effect in the Philippines, which formed part of the viceroyalty of New Spain at the time. In a letter sent to the tribunal of Mexico City dated 17 July 1617, the commissary of the Holy Office in Manila, Francisco de Herrera, informed that the edict against astrology was meant to be read together with the general edict on the first Sunday of the Lent, but it did not arrive on time due to the negligence of the captain of the ship that was supposed to bring it.<sup>1232</sup> Thus the edict was only read on the fourth Sunday in the Cathedral. He also informed the tribunal that there were four people in Manila who had studied "some astrology and practiced the judiciary": the cosmographers

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casos fortuitos o acciones dependientes de la Voluntad Divina o del libre albedrío de los hombres..." *Edicto contra los que practiquen astrología judiciaria, nigromancia, suertes con habas, monedas, sortijas y semejantes* (1616). AGN; Edictos, II (43); Edictos I (2-4), f. 83-84.

<sup>1229</sup> "...adivinando por el día y hora en que nacieron y por otros tiempos e interrogaciones los sucesos y acaecimientos que han tenido por lo pasado o han de tener por adelante, el estado que han de tomar los hijos, los peligros, las desgracias o acrecentamientos, la salud, enfermedades, pérdidas o ganancias de hacienda que han de tener, los caminos que han de hacer y lo que en ellos les ha de pasar y los demás prósperos o adversos casos que les han de suceder, la manera de muerte que han de morir, con otros juicios y adivinaciones semejantes." AGN; Edictos, II (43); Edictos I (2-4), f. 83-84.

<sup>1230</sup> "... [que se denuncie a personas] que para el mismo fin de saber y adivinar los futuros contingentes y casos ocultos, pasados o por venir, han preguntado o preguntan sobre ello al Demonio en los cuerpos endemoniados, espiritados o lunáticos. O que ejercitan el Arte de la Nigromancia, Geomancia, Hidromancia, Piromanca, Onomancia, Quiromancia, usando de sortilegios, hechizos, encantamientos, agujeros, cercos, brujeías, caracteres, invocaciones de demonios..." AGN; Edictos, II (43); Edictos I (2-4), f. 83-84

<sup>1231</sup> "...dejando tan solamente permitidos los Libros o Escritos de Astrología que tratan de juicios y observaciones naturales para efecto de ayudar a la Navegación, Agricultura y Medicina." AGN; Edictos, II (43); Edictos I (2-4), f. 83-84

<sup>1232</sup> *Cartas de Fray Francisco de Herrera sobre el edicto contra la Astrología Judiciaria* (1618) AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2ª parte), f. 399.

Juan de Segura and Alonso Flores, and the clergymen Juan de Servicos[?] and Hernando de los Ríos. There had been many accusations against them, and especially against Juan de Segura, who had cast nativities and interrogations about lost objects.

The accused judicial astrologers confessed that they indeed used judicial astrology and promised to correct their mistake. However, “experience shows that it is very difficult to persuade these judidical astrologers that they are mistaken when they cast these figures and interrogations, and the astrologers mentioned here have implied with their words that they cannot understand that the judicial science is wicked”.<sup>1233</sup> According to the inquisitor, the most persistent of these astrologers was the cosmographer Juan de Segura, who did not limit himself in these matters and was even “composing a book in which he used examples to prove the truth of that science.” He justified his science because it had proved correct in the cases he mentioned, “and to justify it even more he dedicates the book to your Highness, without acknowledging that there is no space for corruption in the Holy Office.”<sup>1234</sup> To conclude his letter, the commissary mentioned that he had confiscated some books on judicial astrology by Giuntini, Taisneri, Firmicus, Origanus, and Bonati.<sup>1235</sup>

The cosmographer Juan Segura was the first to confess after the edict against astrology was read in the Cathedral of Manila. Juan de Segura Manrique, son of Pedro de Segura and Bautista de Berastegui, was appointed Cosmographer for the Philippines in 1608, after being examined by the Pilot Major Andrés García de Céspedes on November 11,

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<sup>1233</sup> “No obstante la confesión de los susodichos astrólogos judiciares, conociendo haber usado de la judicaria y prometiendo la enmienda, la experiencia muestra cuan dificultoso sea persuadir a los tales judiciares que erran en levantar figuras e interrogaciones y los astrólogos aquí citados lo han dado a entender con sus palabras que no pueden entender se mala la tal ciencia judicaria...” AGN-293 (2ª), f. 399.

<sup>1234</sup> “...aún por más pertinaz en su opinión tengo al cosmógrafo Juan de Segura que es el que más a rienda suelta se da a la judicaria, con escándalo de los que bien sienten, y al presente iba componiendo un libro en el cual con ejemplos sucedidos va probando la verdad de aquella ciencia y como ha salida cierta en los casos que cita y para mas justificarlo lo dedica a V.S. no advirtiendo que en Santo Tribunal de la Inquisición no tiene lugar el soborno ni cosa que lleve apariencia de ello...” AGN-293 (2ª), foja 399.

<sup>1235</sup> “Algunos libros que tratan de la astrología judicaria tengo recogidos hasta saber lo que V.S. ordena que se haga, como son las obras de Francisco Juntino florentino, que tratan de la judicaria, las matemáticas de Taisnerio, otro libro de Julio Firmico, *Item Compilatio Leopoldi Ducatus Austris filii de Scincia Lecem continentis tractatus*, *Efemérides David Origano*, Guidonis Bonati *Mathematici de Astronomia Tractatus Lecem Uni usu que iudicarias ratio nem compubendentes*.” AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2ª), foja 399. It is posible that by the name Taisnerio, the inquisidor was referring to Jean Taisnier (around 1508 -1562) who published: *Astrologia Iudicaria* (Cologne, 1559) *De Annuli Sphaerici Fabrica* (Antwerp, 1560), and *De natura magnetis* (Cologne, Birckmannus, 1562).

1607.<sup>1236</sup> The Pilot Major was responsible for the entire technical control of navigation of the *Casa de Contratación*, and he served as teacher and examiner for pilots, and for instruments and charts.<sup>1237</sup> Segura Manrique embarked for New Spain with all his instruments in the fleet of captain Lope Díez de Armendáriz. Viceroy Luis de Velasco was asked by Real Cédula to provide him with the necessary resources for Segura to transport his instruments all the way to Acapulco. From Acapulco he had to go as soon as possible to Manila, where he was ordered to stay during eight years because of the great need of a cosmographer in the region. Among the tasks assigned to him, Segura had to take measurements in the land and the sea; teach other pilots and sailors; verify the altitude and meridians; keep track of the tides and eclipses; make new maps of the lands and ports he visited; and produce copies of existent maps considered as reliable. On June 8, 1608 he embarked for the Philippines together with his wife Luisa Machuca, and his son Juan.<sup>1238</sup>

On March 10, 1617, Segura Manrique confessed to the inquisitor that he had cast some figures, “by means of his science”.<sup>1239</sup> Some of the figures were nativities and others were interrogations, but he understood that they were all natural, and there was no pact with the devil. He assigned them “no more faith or certainty than the one that can be taken from natural rules and conjectures.”<sup>1240</sup> Every time someone had asked him to cast a figure, he had explained that they were fallible, “because he feels that giving certainty and affirmation to

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<sup>1236</sup> Esteban Piñeiro, Mariano. “Instituciones y oficios matemáticos en la España del siglo XVI”, Seminario “Orotava” de Historia de la Ciencia, Año IX-XII. See also: *Peticiones sobre elección de cosmógrafo a Juan Segura*. AGI, FILIPINAS, 27, N.67. Céspedes was the autor of the treatise called *Regimiento de navegación*, published in 1606. According to Navarro (1999a), the great period of Spanish cosmography and art of navigation culminated with this publication.

<sup>1237</sup> Lamb (1995), VI, p. 681. On the cosmographer’s instruments for navigation see: Maroto Vicente, María Isabel. “El arte de navegar” in Martínez Ruiz (1999), pp. 343-368. The classic work on the art of navigation is López Pineiro, José María. *El arte de navegar en la España del Renacimiento*, Barcelona, 1986. See also: Martín Fernández de Navarrete. “Historia de la Náutica” in *Colección de los viajes y descubrimientos que hicieron por mar los españoles desde fines del siglo XV*. Madrid, 1829-1859, Vol. 5.

<sup>1238</sup> See: *Orden de ayudar al cosmógrafo Juan de Segura Manrique* (Madrid, 1608-05-01). AGI, FILIPINAS, 340, L.3, F.37V-38R; and *Orden al cosmógrafo Segura Manrique de ir a Filipinas*. (Madrid, 1608-02-13). AGI, FILIPINAS, 340, L.3, F.17V-18V. *Instrucción al cosmógrafo Juan de Segura Manrique* (1608-05-01) AGI, FILIPINAS, 340, L.3, F.33V-35V; *Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a indias de Alonso Brasa, a Perú, y Juan de Segura Manrique, cosmógrafo, a Filipinas*. (1608-06-08) AGI, CONTRATACION, 5308, N.2, R.37; and AGI, PASAJEROS, L.9, E.763.

<sup>1239</sup> *Confesión de Juan de Segura por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología*. (1617) AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76, foja 444.

<sup>1240</sup> “...que tiene entendido ser todas naturales sin que en ellas intervenga ni haya intervenido pacto ni asenso con el demonio, algunas figuras y juicios mediante ellas así de nacimiento como de preguntas sin atribuirles más fe ni certeza de la que se puede tomar de unas reglas naturales y conjeturas...” AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76, f. 444.

things that do not have it might repulse not only our Holy Religion, but also the good philosophy.”<sup>1241</sup> Even though he had asserted some times in his predictions, he had never considered this science as infallible, but always within certain limits, and he had always regarded God as the cause of all good effects. Finally, Segura confessed that he had never learned “any other of the divinatory sciences because he considers all of them as useless, frivolous, and against our holy religion.”<sup>1242</sup>

More evidence on Segura’s interest on astrological and astronomical matters is found in the records of the trial against the Mercedarian Friar Nicolás de Alarcón. In his examination of the confiscated papers, the Mercedarian Friar Diego Rodríguez identified twelve folios of a translation that Segura had done of Magini’s work. This work, the censor underlined, was composed by a catholic author and served only as a mere mathematical basis for astrological nativities. Apart from Magini’s translation there were twenty other folios written by Segura in defence of judicial astrology for nativities, but none of them dealt with interrogations.<sup>1243</sup> This evaluation is of special interest because it sheds light on a differentiation we have seen above. Not all practices that we now consider as belonging to the category of judicial astrology were regarded as illicit. Nativities, as Friar Nicolás argued in his defence, could still be considered within the limits of licit astrology, while interrogations seemed to be definitely beyond these limits.

One week after Segura’s declaration, on March 16, 1617, two more people confessed before the tribunal of Manila. At three o’ clock in the afternoon, the presbyter Miguel Garcetas presented himself before the commissary of the Holy Office to accuse father

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<sup>1241</sup> “Todo lo cual siempre que lo ha entregado o pedido que lo haga les ha dado a entender no ser infalibles sino falibles porque siente que dar certeza y afirmación a cosas que no tienen no sólo repugna a nuestra Santa Religión, sino también a la buena filosofía...” AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76, f. 444.

<sup>1242</sup> “...declara y confiesa de su voluntad ni más ni menos que ninguna otra ciencia de las divinatorias por tenerlas a todas por inútiles, frívolas y contra nuestra santa religión sabe ni ha estudiado ni ejercido...” AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76, f. 444.

<sup>1243</sup> “Luego se siguen veinte fojas de letra de Juan de Segura Manriquez, cosmógrafo que fue en las Filipinas y murió en esta ciudad de México, todas son en orden a defender la judicaria de nacimientos y las últimas tres fojas son también de nacimientos como en ellas se ve, con que en todos los dichos papeles no hay figura, ni doctrina de interrogación como tengo dicho.” AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 370, exp. 1., folio 175. See full text in the documentary apendices.

Hernando de los Ríos of casting some astrological figures.<sup>1244</sup> De los Ríos had cast the witness's nativity and told him about past and future events, though he could not remember any particularity of the predictions. The witness also accounted that two or three days after the edict of the Holy Office was read in the Cathedral of the city, a cosmographer called Alonso Flores went to his house and expressed his astonishment because of the reading of the edict. Finally, the witness declared that he had publicly heard on numerous occasions that the cosmographer Juan de Segura had cast many figures of things that had happened in the city, of robberies, lost objects, and eclipses.<sup>1245</sup>

At four o'clock in the afternoon Alonso Flores presented himself before the inquisitor to confess that he knew "the science of astrology for eight years or more and during this time he had cast around twenty nativities and six interrogations".<sup>1246</sup> The mathematician Alonso Flores was born in Madrid, and was sent to the Philippines by a Royal decree of February 17, 1613. He travelled on the ship lead by captain Ruy González de Sequeira. Because it was the first time that the ship was going to the Philippines around the Cape of Good Hope, it was necessary to have "somebody who knows the science of navigations, and how to make *derroteros*, and observations back and forth."<sup>1247</sup> Alonso Flores was supposed to go back to Spain after the expedition, but he stayed in Manila until at least 1619.<sup>1248</sup>

According to Flores's confession, the interrogations dealt with some robberies, but he could not remember how certain they were. Regarding the nativities, he said that he only

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<sup>1244</sup> *Confesión de Miguel Garcetas por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología* (1617) AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76, foja 443.

<sup>1245</sup> "Y también dice haber oído muchas veces públicamente en esta ciudad este delator que un Juan de Segura, cosmógrafo de esta ciudad, ha levantado muchas figuras de cosas que han sucedido en esta ciudad y de algunos hurtos y pérdidas de otras cosas y de los eclipses que ha habido en esta ciudad...." AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76, f. 443.

<sup>1246</sup> *Confesión de Alonso Flores por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología*. (1617) AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76., foja 442. "Dijo que habrá como ocho años poco más o menos que este delator sabe la ciencia de la Astrología y en este tiempo ha levantado algunas figuras de nacimiento que le parece habrán sido veinte poco más o menos y otras seis poco más o menos de interrogaciones...."

<sup>1247</sup> "Real Cédula al capitán Alonso Flores, ordenándole que vaya embarcado como matemático en la carabela capitana del socorro que se envía a Filipinas por el cabo de Buena Esperanza con el capitán general Ruy González de Sequeira, pues es la primera vez que se va a esas islas por esta vía y se necesita alguien de ciencia en materia de navegaciones que haga *derroteros* y observaciones de ida y vuelta..." (1613-02-17) AGI, FILIPINAS, 340, L.3, F.90V-91V. The *derrotero* consists of an alphabetic list of place names which are given their position, and distance, and direction to the nearest ports of reference. See. Lamb (1995), II, p. 6.

<sup>1248</sup> *Orden sobre regreso a España del matemático Alonso Flores* (1619-07-02). AGI, FILIPINAS, 340, L.3, F.205R-206R.

“wrote two in the long way” and handed them to the inquisitor.<sup>1249</sup> After his confession, Flores asked for forgiveness in case he had made a mistake or gone beyond the limits of what was allowed, and promised not to deal with astrology again. Finally, he accused some other people in the city “who know how to cast figures because they know judicial astrology”.<sup>1250</sup> He denounced three priests, one fulano Ramírez, and two cosmographers: Juan Segura, and Antonio Moreno, cosmographer of the House of Trade (*Casa de Contratación*).<sup>1251</sup> Antonio Moreno was professor of cosmography in Seville around 1610, and he had an active role in the discussions about the problem of longitude: how to measure it and how to project it on a globe.<sup>1252</sup> As far as I know, no other accusations against Antonio Moreno are found in the archives, and the Holy Tribunal in Manila did not proceed against any of the cosmographers.

One could assume that the reason why the Inquisition did not proceed against these cosmographer-astrologers was their fundamental role for the Crown’s imperial enterprise. Of course cosmographers were active in Europe before the era of the discoveries in the sixteenth century. However, it was only after the New World was found that they became indispensable, “and they were called upon literally to take its measure, fix its image, and to comprehend and explain its nature.”<sup>1253</sup> Cosmographers were a rather reduced group and the body of knowledge they needed to master was quite broad: astronomy-astrology, mathematics, applied physics, technology of ship-building, naval armament and war, cartography, and textual description. “What one can say about the cosmographers collectively is that they were a mobile group of experts often found working outside their country of origin, and they were remarkably versatile [...] As a social group the cosmographers were

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<sup>1249</sup> “...que en ellas habría algunas de hurtos pero no se acuerda de la certidumbre de ellas para explicarlas en particular y de las de nacimientos solas dos escribió a la larga, las cuales entrega y exhibe al Padre Comisario”. AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76., f. 442.

<sup>1250</sup> “Declaró este delator que conoce en esta ciudad algunas personas que saben levantar figuras porque saben la Astrología judiciaria...” AGN-293 (2ª.), exp. 76., f. 442.

<sup>1251</sup> AGN-293 (2a.), exp. 76., f. 442.

<sup>1252</sup> Lamb (1995), IV, p. 171. The author explains that the measure of longitude was a theoretical and practical enterprise. Men building and handling instruments confronted those who drew up stellar regiments and who posited the length of a latitudinal degree measured in miles. A *junta* of 1566 had considered the problem and found it insoluble except by some timing mechanism, as yet beyond the competence of watch-makers, or the use of stellar reference (the moons of Jupiter) which depended on the use of instruments at sea. It is probable that the suggestion for a public competition to solve the problems originates with the Royal Academy of Mathematics in Madrid and the proclamation of it is variously dated. Announced by Philip II, the first records of funds in support of travel to the court and recompense for instruments submitted, date from the time of Philip II in 1598 and continue under Philip III and IV.

<sup>1253</sup> Lamb (1995), VI, p. 676.

closest to Renaissance artists, and were granted a degree of social mobility which was not found in other professions”<sup>1254</sup> Disputes among cosmographers were quite frequent, and many times they were framed in terms of the conflict between theoretical cosmography versus practical navigation.<sup>1255</sup>

Originally, there were three institutions concerned with the *carrera de Indias*, or convoy routes across the Atlantic: the *Casa de Contratación* in Seville, the *Consejo Real y Supremo de las Indias* also in Seville, and the Royal Academy of Mathematics in Madrid. In 1573, Cristóbal de Barros, Philip II’s advisor on nautical issues in the north, proposed the creation of seminars for the instruction of pilots in the Cantabria. The purpose was to establish an itinerant chair for teaching during periods of three months in each province: Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya, and Cantabria.<sup>1256</sup> Later on, the Philippine Academy of Mathematics became part of this group of institutions when it opened its doors to students of nautical science on the first of January of 1584. In the Philippines, the solution of nautical problems was essential for the Manila trade, but the viceroys of New Spain and Peru also “sponsored voyages of reconnaissance duly staffed with knowledgeable pilots and cosmographers.”<sup>1257</sup>

Because of the importance of its institutional setting and the relative cohesion of its community of practitioners, early modern cosmography could be more clearly identified as a discipline than astrology. And this point brings us back to a question we posed at the outset: whether astrology can be regarded as an autonomous discipline during the early-modern period in general, and in seventeenth-century New Spain in particular. The importance of the relationship between astrology and cosmography we have just underlined allows us to put forward a preliminary conclusion: astrology in seventeenth-century New Spain was not an autonomous discipline, but an auxiliary skill for other professional activities, especially medicine and cosmography. It is thus not surprising that one of the first printed books in Mexico dealing with astrology, astronomy, cosmography, and medicine, was written and printed by the cosmographer Enrico Martínez. Likewise, it is not astonishing to discover that

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<sup>1254</sup> Lamb (1995), VI, p. 676.

<sup>1255</sup> Maroto Vicente (1999), p. 347.

<sup>1256</sup> Maroto Vicente (1999), p. 347.

<sup>1257</sup> Lamb (1995), VI, p. 681.

the cosmographer Antonio Moreno was a correspondent of Captain Pedro Porter Casanate, explorer of California and patron of Melchor Pérez de Soto, the librarian astrologer. Finally, it could also be suggested that people involved with the Manila trade were more prone to get interested in astrological matters because of their continuous contact with cosmographers. This might have been the case of the Jewish merchant Sebastián Váez de Acevedo, employer of the mulatto astrologer, Gaspar Rivero Vasconcelos.



## 7.2. Astrology and Magic

To the inquisitorial eye, magic was probably one of the most dangerous areas where astrology could enter. While its relationship with cosmography could give astrology a more respectable status, its links with magical practices brought astrology closer to the realm where the Devil governed. In their attempt to fight against magical practices and judicial astrology, the Mexican inquisitors issued an edict against astrology on November 20, 1622 in which they specifically prohibited the use of astrological images, talismans, or seals.<sup>1258</sup>

[It is forbidden to wear] certain medals, images, or plates that are called seals, or rings engraved or sculpted on gold, silver, or any other metal, or written, delineated, or painted on planks, or carton, or paper or any other form, made and forged with certain letters, numbers, names, and characters under the constellation and influence of one or more planets in order to know occult and future things which depend on the free will of man, prosperous or unfortunate events about marriages, pretensions or to obtain the grace and benevolence of Princes and lords, and for other uncertain and doubtful purposes which usually constitute great offence to our lord God and danger for the souls because all this is vain, evil, and superstitious, and usually there is tacit or expressed pact with the Devil...<sup>1259</sup>

The question about seals stands at the intersection between astrology and magic, and magical practices were in turn a serious concern for the Mexican Holy Tribunal. As seen before, the use of talismans triggered an intense debate during the Middle Ages, especially after the *Speculum Astronomiae*, attributed to Albert the Great. The work attempted to conciliate the use of sigils with the orthodoxy of Catholic faith on the one hand, and the causality of natural philosophy on the other. Talismans were engraved at the moment in which a star or a specific astrological figure dominated in the sky in order to be impregnated with the “virtues” or powers that constituted the specific star or constellation.<sup>1260</sup> They

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<sup>1258</sup> *Edicto que prohíbe todas las medallas e imágenes que tengan signos relacionados con la astrología. Se ordena recoger libros y papeles.* 1622. AGN; Edictos, Vol. III, (43).

<sup>1259</sup> “Conviene que no se hagan ni se traigan en manera alguna ciertas medallas, imágenes, láminas que llaman Sigilios o anillos esculpidos o gravados en oro, plata o otro cualquier metal, o escritos, lineados o pintados en pergamino, tabla o cartón o papel o en otra forma alguna que se hacen y forjan con ciertas letras, números, nombres, caracteres debajo de la constelación e influencia de alguno o algunos Planetas para fin y efecto de saber cosas ocultas y por venir y que dependen del libre albedrío del hombre, prósperos o malos sucesos cerca de casamientos, pretensiones o de alcanzar la gracia y benevolencia de Príncipes y señores y para otros fines inciertos y dudosos de que de ordinario se sigue, y suele seguirse grande ofensa de Dios nuestro Señor y peligro de las animas, por ser todo ello vano, malo y superstitioso y que de ordinario suele intervenir en ello pacto tácito o expreso con el Demonio...” AGN; Edictos, Vol. III, (43).

<sup>1260</sup> Weill-Parot (2002), p. 210.

worked by means of natural astrological mechanisms and were often considered as astrological elections.<sup>1261</sup>

An interesting case on the use of astrological images was presented before the inquisitors after the publication of the edict against astrology of 1616. On the first of April of 1617 the blacksmith Diego Chavarría presented himself before the inquisitor to accuse the student Nicolás de Aste and the architect Martín Collado, who had ordered the witness to carve two talismans with the image of a golden dragon.<sup>1262</sup> Nicolás de Aste was called to testify, and when he was asked if he knew the reason why he had been summoned, he replied that it was because of a golden sigil that he had made a smith carve for him “by the art of astronomy”.<sup>1263</sup> According to Aste, somebody he knew possessed a book “by a certain Paracelso which dealt with medicine and astrology”, and which he had read before it was forbidden by the new catalogue.<sup>1264</sup> A chapter entitled *De Sigilis* showed how the sigil of the Sun was used to heal cold illnesses while the sigil of the Moon cured warm diseases; it also showed how to do the sigils, the blend and materials that had to be used.<sup>1265</sup>

After reading the book, he talked about it with an astrologer called Juan de Beteta, who had shown Aste the art of sculpting talismans and had died three or four months before his deposition.<sup>1266</sup> According to Beteta, the sigil of the Sun had to be made out of gold, with some of the hot signs (Leo, Dragon, or Eagle) printed on it, and some numbers summing up 61, which is equivalent to the number of years that the Sun takes to move towards the center

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<sup>1261</sup> See Chapter 4 of this work, and: Burnett, Charles. “Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts” in Burnett. *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds*. Alershot, Variorum, 1996.

<sup>1262</sup> Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1263</sup> “que entiende habrá sido por un sigilo de oro que mandaba hacer en esta ciudad por el arte de astronomía”. Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1264</sup> “un corredor de aquí, llamado Bonami de Bonami tenía en su poder antes que se publicase el catálogo y expurgatorio nuevo de la prohibición de libros por este Santo Oficio unos libros de astronomía y otras facultades y entre ellos unos cuyo autor era un fulano Paracelso, que trataba de medicina y astronomía, en el cual leyó este confesante algunos ratos antes que el Santo Oficio le recogiese como le recogió por el nuevo catálogo.” Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1265</sup> According to Achim, *De Sigilis* is the seventh volume of Paracelsus’ *Opera omnia*. On the sigil of the Sun see: Weill-Parot (2004) and Federici Vescovini “Il Sole e la Luna nelle citazioni di Pietro d’Abano dei Segreti di Albumasar, di Sadan” in *Micrologus*. 2004; 12, pp. 185-194.

<sup>1266</sup> Beteta himself had confessed before the by Inquisition in 1582: *Juan de Beteta se denuncia por practicar la astrología judiciaria*. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 125, 41. See also Jiménez Rueda (1946), p. 215.

of the Earth or away from it.<sup>1267</sup> The words *in mandatis tuis commendor* had to be printed and addressed to the Sun or to any other person whose grace was desired, such as a prince or a noble man.<sup>1268</sup> The sigil of the Moon, which served the same purpose of obtaining the grace of others, had to be made out of silver. The numbers printed had to sum up 18, and the signs were Cancer or Taurus, which are the two signs where the Moon predominates.<sup>1269</sup>

What I would like to underline here is that the inquisitorial attitude towards astrology and magic seemed to have changed throughout the seventeenth century. By contrast to the two previous edicts, the one issued in 1712 did not focus mainly on astrology but attacked a whole miscellany of divinatory practices, and other heresies.<sup>1270</sup> The list included: practicing the Law of Moses; following Luther's sect; invoking the demon, or insulting the Virgin or the saints; solicitation; advising any act of disobedience, rebellion, or unfaithfulness towards the Lord; marrying twice; being a judicial astrologer, fortune-teller, or superstitious person; asking the Demon or any other demonic spirit to know about the future; using magic spells, enchantments, dreams, witchcraft or invocation of the demons to discover treasures, or stolen

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<sup>1267</sup> “Y la forma era ésta: que el del sol había de ser de oro muy puro en cantidad de once castellanos [un castellano es la quinquajésima parte en que se divide el mar de oro, que es de ocho onzas y cada castellano hace 8 tomines] el que se había de dividir en pedacitos y luego mezclare con muchas cosas y drogas calientes como anís, romero, cal viva, agua rosada, espolio coloquintivas [colochyntida: planta medicinal que 'sirve a diferentes enfermedades y es uno de los medicamentos purgantes...'], solimán crudo, como demás tantos cortados en luna menguante, y de todo esto junto hecho una masilla, había de estar puesto el oro en ella quince días y sacarle después de allí, y echarlo en su vaso de vidrio, el cual se había de poner luego debajo de un destilador donde estuviese un poco de sebo de macho que se fuese derritiendo en el vaso sobre el oro; y hecho esto, sacarle y fundirle en forma redonda con un asa para poder traerle al cuello que tocase al estómago; y que, estando esto fundido cuando la luna estuviese en el signo que es la casa del sol, poner en la una parte del dicho sigilo unos números dentro de una forma cuadrada de todo el tamaño del sigilo; que los dichos números, siendo 36 y seis por cualquier parte que se sumasen hacen setenta y uno que son los años que tarda el sol en llegarse al centro de la tierra o apartarse de ella. Y la otra parte del sigilo se había de fundir de medio relieve uno de los signos calientes, como León, Dragón o Águila, que tuviese entre los pies una corona, una figura de una de las dos coronas sobre que domina el sol...” Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1268</sup> “y una de las letras -al lado de los números si cupiesen y si no al lado del signo- en latín que dicen *in mandatis tuis commendor* [en tus mandatos me encomiendo] Las cuales se dirigían al sol, como pidiéndoles su favor o a la persona de quien se pretendiese gracia o favor porque el dicho sigilio demás de aprovechar contra todas las enfermedades frías, aprovechaba también para tener gracia e introducción con príncipes y gente noble...” Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1269</sup> “Y el sigilo de la luna, que sería para el mismo efecto, de ser un hombre grato y bien querido y aprovechaba contra todas las enfermedades calientes, había de ser de plata, de la misma forma y hechura y con los números diferentes, que habían de ser nueve y sumar por cualquiera parte 18, y el signo había de ser Cáncer o Toro, que son los dos en que predomina la luna, sin las letras ni otras cosas.” Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1270</sup> *Edicto contra las personas que siguen a Lutero, que tienen la ley de Moisés, a los astrólogos, adivinos o supersticiosos* (1712). AGN; Edictos, I (43).

objects; or to know about journeys, navigations, fleets, armies, deaths or any other events taking place in hidden or distant places.

This was the case of a black woman called Cecilia, who was accused of foretelling the arrival of ships. Captain Pedro de Olea presented himself before the commissary of the Inquisition at the port of Acapulco on December 2, 1621. He said that a Dominican friar once asked Cecilia about the arrival of a ship. The woman replied: 'don't be afraid my son, that the ships are coming, and they left the Philippines.' The woman explained that the reason of the delay was that the pilot was very young in the profession. She said that many of the people on board had died, but could not answer whether there were any Dominicans on the ship.<sup>1271</sup> In Cecilia's case, there was no reference to astrology, but it is interesting to point out how we find once more a member of a religious order involved in divinatory practices. At the time of the captain's denunciation, one of the martyrs of the Dominican Order, Friar Luis Flores, was on a missionary journey in Japan. Flores and his Augustinian companion, Friar Pedro de Zúñiga, were burned in Nagasaki on August 19, 1622.<sup>1272</sup> It is likely that before this, their fellows on the other side of the Pacific Ocean wanted to know whether they were going to come back.

The second witness against Cecilia was Domingo de Asturias, who made his deposition on December 6, 1621. According to him, Cecilia announced the arrival of ships from China and Peru, and most of the times her predictions were accurate. On a different occasion, she guessed where the entrance of a mine was. The Indians kept a precious treasure there, and that is why they were so curious. Like Cecilia, the student Nicolás de Aste was also consulted by people who wanted news about their relatives in Spain, Peru, and the Philippines, or who wanted to know the destiny of ships carrying goods from China. Another similitude between these two cases was the fact that Aste had also tried to discover a secret treasure of the Indians, namely Moctezuma's treasure. To do so, Aste had cast a figure based on the time, day, month, and year when Moctezuma, the last Aztec emperor, had surrendered to the conqueror Hernán Cortés. Aste had also cast the revolution of the year of the Conquest,

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<sup>1271</sup> *Denuncia contra una negra llamada Cecilia porque anunciaba las llegadas de las Naos adivinando con exactitud las más veces* (1621). AGN; Inquisición, 335, 102.

<sup>1272</sup> *Breve historia de la provincia Dominicana de Santiago de México*.

his own nativity, and the date and time when he first wanted to find the treasure.<sup>1273</sup> Aste's first attempt to find the treasure was interrupted by an earthquake, and two subsequent attempts were also frustrated for different reasons. Thus, he interpreted it as a sign that he should give up to his ambition.<sup>1274</sup>

One of the main reasons why astrologers, both in Spain and in New Spain, were involved in such divinatory practices was that people went to them for help when they were confronted with uncertain or violent situations. In early modern Spain, people were deeply concerned about robberies and deaths on the roads, and thus consulted astrologers and soothsayers to know whether it was safe or not to start a journey. This kind of prognostications can be found in the majority of texts that deal with predictions; however, there was no agreement whether they should be regarded as 'naturally based' prognostications or not.<sup>1275</sup> Finding treasures and stolen or lost objects was another frequent consultation that came up in many inquisitorial trials for witchcraft. And even though most magicians or witches were not involved in astrological practices, many astrologers were indeed consulted for such matters.<sup>1276</sup> For instance, the presbyter Hierónimo Oller, who was accused of being a judicial astrologer, had divined who had stolen a golden chain and where it was.<sup>1277</sup> Domingo Pérez, a physician of Zaragoza, had also said that he was able to find a stolen object and discover who was responsible for the theft.<sup>1278</sup> Gabriel Serrano, professor of astrology in Salamanca, wrote about the use of astrology for finding lost objects in his introductory lectures to judgements, which are preserved at the Escorial.<sup>1279</sup>

In New Spain, the practice of stealing goods (including religious objects) and pawning them was very widely spread among the popular classes, especially among *mestizos* and mulattoes who then used the money to pay for gambling debts or to buy *pulque* and other

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<sup>1273</sup> El astrólogo decidió alzar cuatro figuras a base de: "el día, hora, mes y año que se entregó México al Señor Cortés; la revolución del año de la conquista; el año cuando levantaba la figura; y, finalmente, su natividad [de Aste] y día y hora en que tuvo el deseo de hallar el tesoro". Achim (2205)

<sup>1274</sup> Achim (2005)

<sup>1275</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 108.

<sup>1276</sup> Lanuza, (2005), p. 134. She refers to the witchcraft trials studied by Pérez, P. 1985.

<sup>1277</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 135. The trial is in: AHN, Inquisición, Libro 732, fol. 116.

<sup>1278</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 135. The trial is in: AHN, Inquisición, Libro 732, fol. 101.

<sup>1279</sup> Lanuza (2005), p. 83.

alcoholic drinks.<sup>1280</sup> Whenever these cases were presented before the Holy Tribunal, the inquisitors had to deal with a triple crime: the profanation of sacred objects, the consumption of a forbidden drink, and the use of a divinatory art to find the stolen goods. It is thus not surprising that in the trial against the mulatto Gaspar Rivero, the first two depositions are a collection of anecdotes on how he was consulted in several occasions by neighbors who had been robbed and pawned. These consultations, however, were not limited to the sphere of the 'lower classes'. Our cases suggest that turning to astrologers when a good was missing was a common practice also among the literate.

The use of astrology to know about journeys, navigations, fleets, armies, deaths or any other events taking place in hidden or distant places was not the only kind of divinatory practice forbidden by the Holy Office. Inquisitorial edicts included the use of beans, wheat, corn or any other seed, playing cards, dices, coins, rings or similar objects for the same purpose mentioned above, and the combination of these profane practices with sacred ones, such as the use of holy water, sacred cloths, and prayers. It was also prohibited to carry or give to other people any paper with words or superstitious prayers, or circles, lines or any other forbidden sign; or to use any heirloom or spell to bring good luck and success in battles, or to get married, or to be protected against violent death, and enemies; to invoke God or the saints for the same effects mentioned above, and at the same time to use other profane invocations or indecent words in front of images, at a certain time during the night, with a certain number of candles, and glasses of water; and to interpret dreams, or what people say in the streets, or the signals in the sky, or the birds, or any other vanities, and mad things; adoring the demon; drinking certain beverages made out of herbs and roots, such as peyote, herb of Holy Mary or other name to have visions; possessing books on judicial astrology, magic, superstitions, enchantments, spells; or on Luther and other heretics' sects; or the Alcoran, and other books on Mohammed's sect; or bibles in romance, or any other forbidden books; not denouncing any of these crimes before the Holy Office; covering somebody who has committed any of these crimes.<sup>1281</sup>

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<sup>1280</sup> Cope (1994), p. 41.

<sup>1281</sup> *Edicto contra las personas que siguen a Lutero, que tienen la ley de Moisés, a los astrólogos, adivinos o supersticiosos* (1712). AGN; Edictos, I (43).

From the inquisitorial perspective, what all these divinatory arts had in common was precisely what made them forbidden: the explicit or implicit invocation of the demon to know future contingents. Augury and sortilege are the main methods for superstitious divination. The former implies the search of information about occult things, based on information about known things. There are nine different types of augury, of which the most frequent is judicial astrology, the art of conjecture about past, present, and future occult events according to the movement and position of the stars. Sortilege, a word that comes from the Latin *sortes legere*, is a form of divination by superstitious lots. There are two kinds of sortilege: the first one, called divisory sortilege, consists on using lots to decide what is to be done; the second one, called *divinator*, is the attempt to know something future or occult, which cannot be known by natural means. The former is licit, when it is practiced with the common agreement of people of equal position; the latter is illicit because it implies the invocation of the demon.<sup>1282</sup>

We will not elaborate here on the demonological aspect of magic and its relationship with astrology from the inquisitorial point of view. What it is perhaps important to mention when looking at the link between astrology and other divinatory practices is that the former cannot be understood through the lens of a clear division between *high* and *popular* cultures. Even among the *literate* groups of seventeenth-century New Spain, the infiltration of *popular* practices into scholarly language appeared as a constant element.

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<sup>1282</sup> Castañeda (1989), p. 364-65.

### 7.3. Astrology, Physiognomy, and Chiromancy

In his recent monographic study devoted to the history of physiognomy between 1480 and 1780, Roy Porter points out that the resonance of physiognomical treatises during this period may have been out of proportion to their number. He suggests that an example of how this may have been so “is provided by considering the very close and often very confused relationship between physiognomy and two of the most widely disseminated bodies of knowledge (textual and non-textual) in the early modern period: astrology and the doctrine of the four humors.”<sup>1283</sup> This assertion takes us back our initial remarks at the beginning of this chapter: in order to trace the presence of a particular discipline within the early modern intellectual context is necessary to consider its interrelation with other fields of knowledge, especially in the case of immanently interdisciplinary subjects, such as astrology and physiognomy.

While some divinatory arts were more clearly regarded as demonic and superstitious ways of divining the future, physiognomy had, like astrology, a more ambiguous status. It stood somehow in the middle between science and divination, between licit and forbidden knowledge. It is thus not striking that the personal astrologer to Pope Paul III, Luca Gaurico, edited a collection of tracts on physiognomy and chiromancy whose publication (in 1551) “is evidence in itself that church attitudes towards the occult in general, and physiognomy in particular, very much depended upon who was pope at the time.”<sup>1284</sup> Almost a century later, Honorat Niquet (1585-1667), a professor of rhetoric and philosophy at the *Collegio Romano* and censor of books published a book on physiognomy entitled *Phisiognomia humana libris iv distincta* (Lyon, 1648). One of Niquet’s purposes was to contest, based on Sacred Scripture and other authoritative sources, the idea that physiognomy was a discipline with no reasonable foundation. In a second book he elaborated on what can be conjectured from different parts of the body in terms of personality, character, and inclination.<sup>1285</sup>

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<sup>1283</sup> Porter (2005), p. 99.

<sup>1284</sup> Porter (2005), p. 159.

<sup>1285</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VIII, p. 461-462.



From the religious perspective, both disciplines had to deal with the Church's condemnation of divination and the theological conflict between knowing the future and preserving free will. It was argued that astrology and physiognomy not only attempted to identify a person's character either by reading the stars or by interpreting physical traits, but in so doing they also aimed to predict the person's future. Physiognomists, in the same vein as astrologers, argued that visible marks of character indicated *possibility*, not *necessity*. Their arguments took up those of Cicero in *De Fato*, where he emphasized that natural inclinations are reversible with effort, education, and strength of will. Character is not fixed at birth, though some people will lean more heavily in the direction of one vice or another. It is through the rational control of passions that men can overcome these inclinations. Cicero's study case was Socrates, who was 'stigmatised by the *physiognomist* Zopyrus [...] He said that Socrates was stupid and thick-witted because he had not got hollows in the neck above the collarbone...'. Socrates admitted Zopyrus had diagnosed him correctly saying that he was 'naturally inclined to the vices named.'<sup>1286</sup> The argument that innate disposition may be overcome was always crucial in the debates on the legitimacy of both physiognomy and astrology. The position of the Church remained ambivalent. Sixtus V's Bull, for instance, prohibited chiromancy, which is a branch of physiognomy, but not physiognomy itself. Moreover, there was always room for manoeuvring, and the practitioners of these disciplines could object to the prediction of future events by their means, but keep employing them for making conjectures about people's character, personality, or inclination.

From the natural philosophical point of view, both astrology and physiognomy were *conjectural* disciplines, that is to say that their conclusions were inferred from signs (would say the defenders of such disciplines) or from defective evidence (would say the opponents). In the Middle Ages, the group of conjectural arts included "astrology, physiognomy, chiromancy, metoposcopy, dream interpretation and weather forecasting; in the Renaissance, the Paracelsian doctrine of signatures can be added to this list."<sup>1287</sup> For some Renaissance natural philosophers, such as Cardano or Magini, all investigations within the area of the

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<sup>1286</sup> Berland (2005), p. 29.

<sup>1287</sup> Maclean (2002), p. 280.

divinatory arts were part of a rational and empirical attempt to build a conjectural knowledge that would be the closest possible to certainty.<sup>1288</sup>

According to Thorndike, “the popularity of physiognomy is to be accounted by the fact that, while other forms of divination, including for many even judicial astrology, were condemned as superstitious, it was regarded as having a natural basis.”<sup>1289</sup> I would say that, rather than a contrast, a comparison can be made between physiognomy and judicial astrology when speaking about this natural basis. During the early modern period, and with the spread of the new natural philosophy, the defenders of these conjectural disciplines advocated for the natural basis of the signs they interpreted, as well as the causal link between the signifier and the signification. Their power thus resided on the fact that they were understood and perceived as ‘natural languages’ which only the learned could decipher. For instance, Richard Saunders, an astrological physician based in London, claimed that physiognomy was a ‘natural language’ that descended from Adam through the written language of Hebrew, and that there was a mysterious, natural link, a ‘resemblance’ between the signifiers and the things signified.<sup>1290</sup>

According to Porter, one of the reasons why physiognomy could not be reduced to a mere curiosity or superstition by the new natural philosophy was the epistemological limitation of keeping the physical and moral spheres somehow joined.<sup>1291</sup> Even Francis Bacon, the great reformer of natural philosophy, agreed that the art of physiognomy was the *scientia* which dealt with the ‘league’ or ‘common Bond between the soul and body’.<sup>1292</sup> Physiognomy was “the pre-verbal prism through which people came to interpret each other, be it in local, regional, national, or *New World* terms.”<sup>1293</sup> I consider this moral aspect key for understanding both the strong bound between astrology and physiognomy, and their

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<sup>1288</sup> Rizzardini, Massimo. “La ‘lettura della pelle’. Introduzione alla *Metoposcopia* di Girolamo Cardano” in *Micrologus*, 2005; XIII, p. 613: “Le ragioni che spingono Magini verso la divinazione sono le stesse che ritroviamo nelle carte cardaniane, dalle quali emergono il significato e il senso dell’arte metoposcopica come indagine razionale ed empirica per la costruzione di un sapere congetturale che ha come obiettivo quello di raggiungere il grado piú prossimo alla certezza.”

<sup>1289</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VIII, p. 449.

<sup>1290</sup> Porter (2005), p. 9.

<sup>1291</sup> Porter (2005), p. 167.

<sup>1292</sup> Porter, p. 169. Quoting Bacon’s *Collected works*, Vol. III, p. 366.

<sup>1293</sup> Porter (2005), p. 322.

endurance in western intellectual tradition. Both disciplines were concerned with the primordial questions of human behaviour and man's self-knowledge. They aimed at a better understanding of the processes that shape human personality, and the possibility to transcend them. Thus their history, as Clarke states, can be located within the history of psychology or, more specifically, within the history of personality theory (called ethology, characterology or character typology).<sup>1294</sup> And this perspective liberates them "from the procrustean bed of the history of the 'hard' sciences and it opens up what seems to me to be both a more appropriate and a somewhat neglected field of research."<sup>1295</sup>

To sum up, astrology and physiognomy both had an ambiguous status, between science and pseudo-science, reason and superstition; both faced a religious conflict in terms of the contradiction with the Christian doctrine of free will; both looked for more solid scientific grounds during the early modern period; and in both disciplines there was some feedback between learned and popular cultures.

We have talked about the relationship between astrology and physiognomy in the trials against Friar Nicolás de Alarcón, and Melchor Pérez de Soto. The case of Nicolás de Aste is another good example of this intellectual relationship. Aste cast an astrological figure at the request of a man who wanted to know when his son was going to die. The astrologer did not know the son, but guessed his physiognomical traits: tall, slim, a bit dark-skinned, big eyes, and narrow forehead. After the father confirmed the description, Aste predicted that he was going to die of violent death because the Lord planet of life and the Sun were in violent signs and Mars was in quadrature, which is a sign of violent death.<sup>1296</sup> The astrologer also foretold that the assassin was going to be a relative, whom he identified through physiognomy. The killer was going to be a very small man, young, a bit hunchbacked, with long hands, and big mouth. Moreover, Aste also foresaw that the cause of the crime would be

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<sup>1294</sup> It is not by chance that dream interpretation, a field reserved to psychology in our days, was then regarded as a branch of physiognomy.

<sup>1295</sup> Clarke (1985), pp. 253-54.

<sup>1296</sup> "...el mozo iba a morir de muerte violenta, porque el planeta señor de la vida y el Sol estaban en signos violentos y Marte los miraba de cuadrado que es señal de la muerte violenta..." Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142. The translations are mine.

a woman, because Mars was with Venus in quadrature with the Sun.<sup>1297</sup> After a long night of nightmares, Aste met the father of the victim the following day, and he confirmed that his son had been killed by his cousin, whose traits matched the astrologer's description.<sup>1298</sup>

The physiognomical eye scrutinized every kind of bodily trait: the eyes, the hands, the form of the face, the color of the hair, the resemblance with a particular animal, and so on. And there was also a degree of specialization, which focused on the lines of the forehead and hands. Metoposcopy is to the forehead what chiromancy is to the palm of the hand; they claim to interpret a person's character and/or destiny from the lines and other marks in these areas of the head and the hands. Whether metoposcopy and chiromancy were considered as branches of physiognomy or as independent arts is not certain.<sup>1299</sup> And the classification becomes even more complicated if one takes into account the wide variety of bodily signs which could be interpreted by the physiognomer, such as moles, nails of the feet and hands, color of the eyes, voice, laughter, dreams, or even handwriting. Most early modern authors usually dealt with more than one of these subjects in their treatises on physiognomy, but some texts appear to be more specialized. In 1611, for instance, Prospero Aldoriso published his *Gelotoscopia*, a treatise on the art of judging character from laughter, and his *Idengraphicus Nuntius*, on the art of judging character from handwriting. Handwriting is an interesting example of a border case between strictly bodily signs, and external circumstances. The latter were also taken into account by natural philosophers who studied the formation of individual's character. For instance, the Italian philosopher and mathematician Scipione Chiaramonti, considered the voice, movements of the body, or care of the person as external signs, while the weather, region, and education were outward circumstances, which were also useful for reading a person's mind and character.<sup>1300</sup>

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<sup>1297</sup> El asesino sería “pariente del mozo y vio en la figura su fisionomía que era un hombre muy pequeño, mozo y algo gibado, las manos largas y la boca grande y que la causa de la muerte había de ser por alguna mujer porque Marte, que significaba la muerte violenta, estaba con Venus, señora de la séptima casa, y miraban al Sol de cuadrado” Quoted in Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1298</sup> Achim (2005), pp. 129-142.

<sup>1299</sup> See for instance: Rizzardini: “Diversamente da quanto é stato scritto piú volte, la metoposcopia non é banalmente da considerarsi come una branca della fisiognomica.” (p. 607)

<sup>1300</sup> Thorndike, HMES, Vol. VIII, p. 450. The treatise were Chiaramonti exposed his physiognomical doctrine in *De coniectandis cuiusque moribus et latitantibus animi affectibus* published at Venece, in 1625. Maclean (2002, p. 186) refers to this work as *Semiotike*, but, as far as I know, the only work published by Chiaramonti in 1625 is *De Coniectandis cuiusque moribus et latitantibus animi effectibus*, which indeed deals with

Moles were regarded as a very significant bodily sign; their interpretation was repeatedly discussed in physiognomical treatises, and frequently associated with astrological doctrine. According to Porter, from 1540 onwards tracts on moles and chiromancy often appeared printed alongside expositions of physiognomical doctrine in the same work. On the contrary, from the late seventeenth century onwards expositions of chiromancy, moles, dreams, and fortune telling were much more numerous than those including physiognomy.<sup>1301</sup> Some treatises on moles also discussed astrological physiognomy, and dealt with the correspondence between the signs of the Zodiac and different parts of the body.<sup>1302</sup> The last book of Cardano's *Metoposcopia*, contains a didactic series which delineates the correspondence between moles and the twelve signs of the Zodiac.<sup>1303</sup> In his *Physiognomie, Chiromancie Metoposcopiae*, published in London in 1653, Richard Saunders studied the physiognomical and astrological interpretation of moles and birthmarks.<sup>1304</sup>

In what follows, I will focus on chiromancy, also known as palmistry, and its relation to astrology. According to a legend, Aristotle found a book in Herme's altar about the hand written in golden letters, and sent it as a gift to Alexander the great. What is true is that within the Aristotelian work, the hand shows clear magic-divinatory characters. The argument is the following: those animals with numerous articulations or whose non-articulated parts are movable have a longer life; those that have junctures, like fish, have a shorter life. This is the basis for the explanation which states that those who have a long line crossing through the whole palm of the hand, and therefore have a hand which folds completely, will live longer than those who don't.<sup>1305</sup>

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physiognomy.

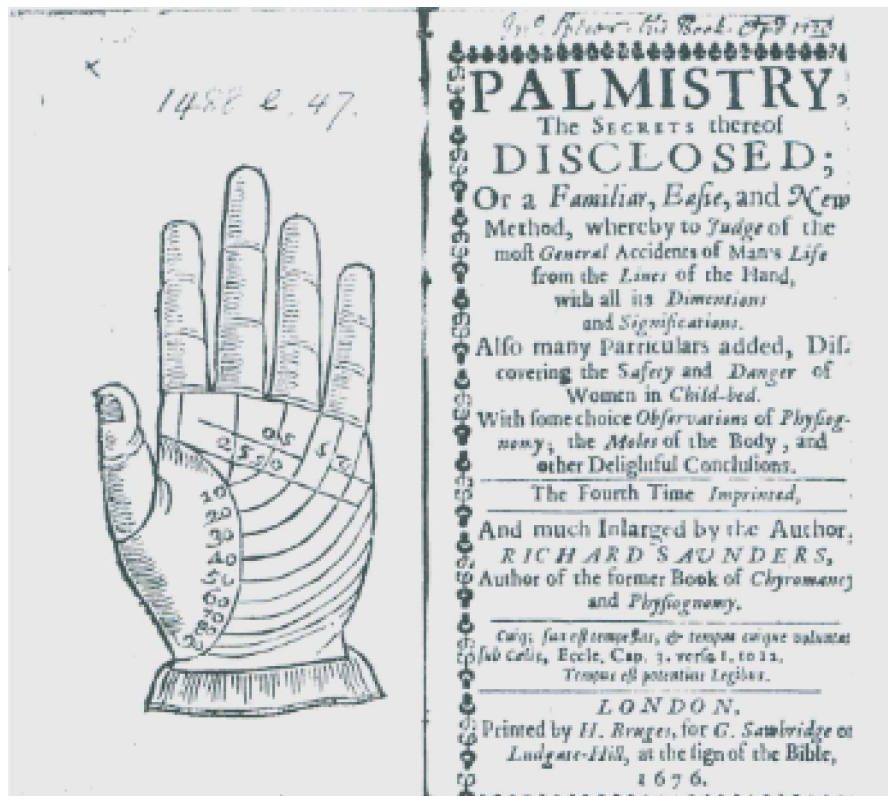
<sup>1301</sup> Porter (2005), p. 89.

<sup>1302</sup> Ludovico Settala's *De Naevis* explained that the seven apertures of the face also correspond to the planets: eyes to sun and moon, nostrils to Jupiter and Mercury, mouth to Venus, and ears to Saturn and Mars. The moon controls vegetative force; Mercury, fancy and intellect; Venus, lust; the sun, vital force; Mars, wrath; Jupiter, natural actions; Saturn, retentive force. On Settala see Rizzardini (2005), p. 612. According to Thorndike (HMES, Vol. VIII, p. 453) Settala's treatise on moles (*De Naevis*) was initially published together with other treatises (*Analyticarum et animasticarum disertationum libri II. His accesserunt eiusdem...de naevis...*) in 1626 in Milan, and two years later separately in Padua.

<sup>1303</sup> Rizzardini (2005), p. 612.

<sup>1304</sup> Porter (2005), p. 9.

<sup>1305</sup> Premuda. Loris. "La mano strumento di divinazione" in *Acta Medicae Historiae Patavina*. 1968; XV, p. 97. The author refers to Aristotle *De part. anim*, IV, 10.



Front page of Richard Saunderson's treatise on chiromancy

Chiromancy, daughter of physiognomy and astrology, belonged to the category of divinatory arts.<sup>1306</sup> It was thus explicitly forbidden by Sixtus V's Bull and the Roman *Indexes* of 1554 and 1559. Like in the case of astrology, some natural philosophers tried to establish the *scientific* basis of chiromancy. Such was the case of the Jesuit professor Inácio Vieira, who taught chiromancy in Lisbon in 1712. When defining his subject matter, he asserted: Chiromancy 'is not a small part and no less certain a part of physiognomy. However, bad use and false application have made it hateful. We will free chiromancy from this charge, by declaring certain what is proved and false what is false.'<sup>1307</sup> The argument of the Jesuit was similar to the one set forth by Cocles (Bartolomeo della Rocca), author of the *Chiromantie ac physionomie anastasis cum approbatione magistri Alexandri de Achillinis*, printed in

<sup>1306</sup> Premuda (1968, p. 100) uses this expression to define chiromancy: "le fu padre la fisiognomia, dottrina di ispirazione somatologica, di cui agli inizi fu un ramo non trascurabile e madre l'astrologia, che nell'ambiente greco-romano fu considerata una scienza esatta".

<sup>1307</sup> Leitao, Henrique. "Jesuits Teaching Astrology and Chiromancy in Lisbon". In *The Jesuits II. Cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540-1773*. John O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy (eds.) University of Toronto Press, 2006.

Bologna in 1504. Cocles sustained that chiromancy was a more reliable science than physiognomy, since the former had more a solid basis because the characteristics of the hand, contrary to facial traits, persist from birth to death without major changes.<sup>1308</sup>

Despite the fact that chiromancy could have been regarded as an independent art, the analysis of the palm was an integral part of the physiognomic gaze, and thus chiromancy was often incorporated into treatises about physiognomy throughout the early modern period.<sup>1309</sup> During the Renaissance some natural philosophers reserved some parts of their physiognomical treatises to the art of chiromancy, such as the 24 folios out of 214 in Scriptoris's work, which are dedicated to a theoretical introduction and a practical guide on the art. Others authors composed entire works on the subject, such as Joannes ab Indagine's (1467-1537) *Introductiones Apotelesmaticae* or Cocles's *Chyromantie ac physionomie Anastasis* (Bologna, 1504).<sup>1310</sup> Indagine's treatise was first published in a Latin folio in Strasbourg in 1522, and it enjoyed an immediate European-wide success: by 1523 it had been translated into vernacular German; by 1536 into Dutch; by 1545 into French, with at least 23 different editions between 1545 and 1666 alone; and by 1558 into English.<sup>1311</sup>

Della Porta was again the great authority on chiromancy during the Renaissance and early modern period with his treatise *Della chirofisonomia*, translated into vernacular by Pompeo Sarnelli and printed in Naples in 1677. In this text he considered the hands as the most wonderful part of the human body for their noble functions, and supreme position.<sup>1312</sup> Big and well formed hands, according to Della Porta, are characteristic of generous, intrepid, simple, and lively men; delicate hands with invisible junctures usually belong to women who

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<sup>1308</sup> Premuda (1968), p. 101.

<sup>1309</sup> Ziegler (2005), p. 522.

<sup>1310</sup> There is another work on physiognomy and chiromancy called *Physiognomiae et chyromantiae compendium* or *Complexioenbüchlin*, usually (but falsely) ascribed to Cocles. According to Groebner (2004, p. 372), it was a sixteenth century edition based on the *Secretum Secretorum* and the writings of Michael Scotus. According to Zaccaria (1989, p. 305), the *Physiognomiae compendium quantum attinet ad partes inter captitis, gullam et collum* was printed in Strasburg in 1533, and it was a re-edition of the *Chyromantie ac physionomie Anastasis*, regarding the physiognomical part.

<sup>1311</sup> Porter (2005), p. 157. On Indagine astrologer the author refers to: F. Herrmann, 'Der Astrolog Johannes Indagine, Pfarrer zu Steinheim a M., und die Frankfurter Kaiserwahl das Jahres 1519', *Archiv für hessische Geshichte und Alterhumskunde* 18. Darmstadt, 1934, pp. 274-91.

<sup>1312</sup> Premuda Loris. "La mano strumento di divinazione" in *Acta Medicae Historiae Patavina*. 1968; XV (1968), p. 97.

lie, and steal, and who are shy, irascible, and audacious at the same time. Every elevation, depression, or unevenness indicate situations of misery, mediocrity, or abundance. The relationship between chiromancy and astrology is explicitly established in this same text: the seven planets corresponded to the seven protuberances of the hand; the Saturnine hand is a sign of melancholy, while the Jovial hand indicates great and noble aspirations, and the Venereal hand shows a Venereal complexion.<sup>1313</sup> In his work *Della fisonomia di tutto il corpo umano* (1637), Della Porta affirmed that different personalities, such as the thief, the clever man, the unfaithful, or the docile, could be inferred by the distinctive features of the hands.<sup>1314</sup> In short, the hands were for Della Porta a clear hint of people's temperaments, the inclinations of their soul, and the duration of their lives.

Pérez de Soto, the librarian-astrologer, declared during his trial that more than once he was asked by nuns to read their hands and foresee their future. One of the witnesses testified that a woman had asked Pérez de Soto what a white stain on a nail of the forefinger meant. He replied that such stain signified that she was going to receive a message from a clergyman. After a short period, the woman received indeed a message from a religious called Juan del Rosal, chaplain at the Hospital of Our Lady, who had called her to work for him.<sup>1315</sup> Another witness declared that Pérez de Soto had once held her left hand, which is the hand that is read in women's case. The signs on the hand signified that she was going to be a nun because there were two lines on her palm at the beginning of her forefinger that were equal and formed the shape of a cross.<sup>1316</sup>

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<sup>1313</sup> Premuda (1968), p. 105.

<sup>1314</sup> Premuda (1968), p. 104.

<sup>1315</sup> Joseph de la Cruz.: "...una mujer llamada María de Mayorga, de quien en otros dichos suyos tiene dicho, le dijo a este declarante habrá más de dos años poco más o menos no se acuerda en que parte que le había salido a ella una pinta blanca en una uña del dedo índice, no sabe si de la mano derecha o izquierda y que había la susodicha consultado al dicho MPS sobre lo que significa la dicha pinta y el dicho MP le respondió que denotaba que tendría un *recaudo* [la palabra se usaba con el significado del actual *recado*] de un clérigo. Y que dentro de breve tiempo había tenido ella un recaudo de un clérigo llamado Juan del Rosal, capellán del Hospital de Nuestra Señora [verificar] en que la llamaba para acomodarla en su servicio como en efecto se acomodó en su servicio y le sirvió algún tiempo". INAH-2, f. 250v-251.

<sup>1316</sup> María de Espinoza: "...y de hecho le cogió a esta testigo la mano izquierda (diciendo que era la que se miraba a las mujeres) rehusando esta testigo y diciendo que no quería saber cosa que la diese a pesadumbre y que habiéndole visto las rayas de las manos el dicho MP le dijo que si como tenía en la palma de la dicha mano al principio del dedo índice dos rayas que estaban parejas e iguales las tuviera en cruz había de ser religiosa..." INAH-2, f. 265v.



During the second hearing, Pérez de Soto himself declared that he read for the first time “about the lines of the hand” fifteen years earlier in a manuscript text that captain Pedro Porter Casanate had given him.<sup>1317</sup> The notebook contained “some drawings of hands and signs applied to the fingers and the planets”. He did not read the whole texts, but he knew that a certain line signified that the person was married; when the line called “the line of life” was long it meant that the life was going to be long, and when it was short that life was going to be short.<sup>1318</sup> Once, he had seen the hand of a girl staying at his house and told her that she should be a pious person because her life was going to be short. The girl became a nun and told her fellows the anecdote. Afterwards, the nuns of the convent asked Pérez de Soto to read their hands, but he explained that what he had told the girl was only with the intention of advising her to be a virtuous person, and not because he really knew about these matters.<sup>1319</sup>

The case of the Dominican Friar Pedro de Martir provides another interesting example of the relationship between astrology and chiromancy, and the way in which this link was perceived. He was accused before the Holy Office in the city of Puebla on April 13, 1611, by a member of his order called Bartolomé Sánchez. The witness recalled a time when he was talking with another religious of his convent, Friar Juan Navarro, who said that Martir knew “more about being a sorcerer than an astrologer, because he left me some words to invoke the devil.”<sup>1320</sup> On a different occasion, the said Friar Pedro Martir told this deponent, by looking

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<sup>1317</sup> “Y que la noticia que este confesante tuvo de la significación de las rayas de las manos fue de un cuaderno manuscrito que habrá quince años poco más o menos que le dio su compadre Don Pedro Porter Cassanate, caballero de la orden de Santiago [gobernador y capitán general del reino de Chile] que profesa astrología y matemática y marinería, que pasó a los Reinos del Perú con el Conde de Alba”. INAH-2, f. 286.

<sup>1318</sup> “Y que en el dicho cuaderno están dibujadas algunas manos con signos y aplicados en los dedos a los planetas y por haber leído en él acaso porque no lo ha leído todo, que una raya que parece garabato, demuestra que el que la tiene ha de ser casado y la tenía el dicho hermano, allí se le ofreció acordarse y por eso se lo dijo y que este cuaderno se hallara entre sus papeles. Y que también se acuerda que por lo que leyó en dicho cuaderno de una raya de las manos que llaman de la vida, que si es larga será larga la vida y si es corta será corta la vida según dice en dicho cuaderno...” INAH-2, f. 286v.

<sup>1319</sup> “y que viéndole las manos a una niña que tenía en su casa un día para que entrase monja en la encarnación como con efecto lo es y se llama María de San Juan, la dijo que fuese buena religiosa porque había de vivir poco, de que ha resultado ser monja recogida y tratar de virtud, la cual lo ha dicho a algunas de las religiosas de dicho Convento y entrando este confesante en él a la obra de una celda, dichas religiosas le han pedido les vea las rayas de las manos y el se ha escusado diciendo que no entiende de aquello diciendo así mismo que lo que dijo a María de San Juan había sido como a modo de consejo de que fuese religiosa virtuosa y que de presente no se acuerda otra cosa que toque a las rayas de las manos.” *Causa a Melchor Perez de Soto...* INAH, 2; Sección de Manuscritos, Inquisición, f. 286v

<sup>1320</sup> *Testificación contra Fray Pedro Martin (dominico) por astrólogo y quiromántico*. (1613) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 478, exp. 43, fojas 309-326. “...y en esta ocasión dijo este declarante a Fray Juan Navarro mucho sabe de

at the lines on his hand, that he was going to have a serious illness at 32, but he was going to live forty or fifty years in case he would overcome it. Furthermore, the said Friar Pedro Martir announced to other religious some signs they had in their bodies, by measuring the lines of the hands with a compass and saying things that were going to happen.<sup>1321</sup>

The second witness, Friar Francisco de Gracia, declared that Friar Pedro Martir once told him, by looking at the lines on his hands, that he had had three illnesses when he was a kid, one of them very serious. Martir predicted that the witness was going to be sick again in the future and was going to become a prelate at the age of 28. His subjects were going to like him, but he was also going to have a mortal enemy. The witness declared that he had somehow believed in what Martir said because he knew about his childhood illnesses. Since Martir had come very recently from Spain to the New World, there was no chance that he knew about these illnesses before.<sup>1322</sup> According to this witness, Martir had shown to other clergymen that they had occult signs in their bodies, or wounds, or other things, and he told some of them that they would have opportunities with great lords, or with women, and some other things.<sup>1323</sup> Finally, the witness declared that he had seen some papers with “Iberian characters which seemed to be about astrology” that other religious had taken out from some printed books on astrology.<sup>1324</sup>

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estas cosas Fray Pedro Martir y le respondió el dicho Fray Juan Navarro pues mucho más sabe de hechicero de que de astrólogo porque me dejó aquí unas palabras con que invocaba al demonio” The case is mentioned by Jiménez Rueda (1946), p. 213.

<sup>1321</sup> “En otra ocasión dijo a este declarante el dicho Fray Pedro Martir mirándole las rayas de las manos que a los 32 años de edad había de tener una grave enfermedad y que si escapaba de ella llegaría a 40 ó 50 años. Y así mismo delante de este declarante anunció el dicho Fray Pedro Martir a otros religiosos señales que tenían en su cuerpo midiéndoles con un compás las rayas de las manos y así mismo les decía cosas que les habían de suceder” AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 478, exp. 43, fojas 309-326.

<sup>1322</sup> “Así mismo dijo este declarante que le había dicho el dicho Fray Pedro Martir mirándole las rayas de las manos que había tenido siendo de pequeña edad tres enfermedades y la una de ellas muy grave y que siendo de mayor edad de la que ahora tendría otras y que siendo de edad de 28 años tendría una prelación en la cual le querían bien sus súbditos y que tendría un enemigo mortal que le desearía la muerte y este que declara le dio algún crédito por haberle dicho lo de las enfermedades que había tenido considerando que siendo forastero y no habiéndole visto en su vida le anunciaba lo que le había sucedido...” AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 478, exp. 43, f. 314.

<sup>1323</sup> “Y a otros señalaba que tenían en su cuerpo ocultas señales a unos de golpes y otras cosas y les decía que tenían cabida los unos con grandes señores, otros con mujeres y otros muchos casos...” AGN-478, exp. 43, f. 314.

<sup>1324</sup> “Y así mismo dijo haber este que declara hallado en la celda donde vivía en compañía de Fray Juan Navarro unos papeles con caracteres ibéricos que parecen de astrología los cuales sabe que el dicho Fray Juan Navarro sacó de unos libros de astrología que andan impresos...” AGN-478, exp. 43, f. 314.

In his declaration, Friar Juan Navarro talked about a whole series of magical practices and spells. According to this deponent Friar Pedro Martir had seen the image of his mother reflected in water; he had spoken of a way to become invisible by putting in one's mouth the stone that a swallow has in its head; he had taught other clergymen some words to attract women; and he had showed them a spell to make dead people appear inside a room, by mixing sulphur, alcohol [*aguardiente*], and some herbs.<sup>1325</sup> In the last part of this deposition, the witness spoke about some mixed magic-astrological practice: the said Friar Pedro Martir had once explained that in order to make appear a man armed with fire in a room it was necessary to write down some letters on an empty piece of paper when the Moon was under certain sign.<sup>1326</sup>

Martir, who came from Valencia, was supposed to go to China with the general vicar of the order, but the vicar did not want to travel because he was ill. Therefore, Martir had to go to Oaxaca, and on his way there he stayed for some days in the Dominican Convent in Puebla. It would not seem too risky to conclude that members of religious orders turned to the tribunal of the Inquisition whenever they did not want to accept a new member, accusing him of being an astrologer, sorcerer, chiromancer. Once again, astrological predictions reflect some of the main conflicts within orders: the Spanish-Creole controversy during provincial elections, and the rivalry among members of the same order coming from different provinces of the viceroyalty.

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<sup>1325</sup> "...y que en un librito de agua vio el dicho Fray Pedro a su madre que estaba sentada en una silla hablando con las muchachas de su casa [...]que el dicho Fray Pedro Martir les había dicho que para hacerse uno invisible habían de tomar una piedra que trae la golondrina en la cabeza y ponérsela en la boca y con esto se harían invisibles [...]que les había dicho el dicho Fray Pedro Martir que para atraer una mujer a su voluntad dijese unas palabras que les dio las cuales este testigo ha leído y las tuvo escritas pero que no se acuerda de ellas [...]que en una sala apareciesen todos los que en ella están muertos tomasen un poco de agua ardiente y piedra azufre y la hierba martes [¿] y todo ello junto lo quemasen y que con esto parecerían difuntos, lo cual les salió falso y mentiroso y comenzaron a hacer burla en ausencia del dicho Fray Pedro Martir..." AGN-478, exp. 43, f. 319.

<sup>1326</sup> "También dice este testigo que le oyó decir al dicho Fray Pedro Martir que para que en un dormitorio o sala pareciese un hombre armado de fuego habían de tomar un pergamino virgen y en un mes que cayese martes a veinticuatro a media noche estando la Luna debajo de cierto signo se habían de escribir unas letras que le dio con régimen de los demás, el cual pergamino puesto en el dicho dormitorio en un palo colgado a ella y parecería un hombre armado de fuego..." AGN-478, exp. 43, f. 320.

## Conclusive Remarks

The two main purposes of this work were to reconstruct the way in which astrology was practiced in seventeenth-century New Spain, and to understand the inquisitorial attitude towards it. To do so, we moved from a macro-perspective towards a micro-scale. The macro-lens pictured astrology not as a marginal but as a central feature of the early-modern intellectual landscape; as a practice with certain features that were officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church from the end of the sixteenth century onward, but that was not completely eradicated, nor from the learned circles, neither among popular groups. When shifting our attention to the micro-dimension, we encountered a member of a religious order who was accused of predicting the future of the President of Guatemala; a mulatto astrologer who happened to be involved in the inquisitorial campaign against the crypto-Jewish community in New Spain; and an architect whose passion for knowledge lead him to learn and practice astrology.

In this final part, I would like to present some conclusive remarks by moving in the opposite direction, from the micro to the macro perspective. In my work, I argued, first, that the distinction between a learned-cosmological astrology, and a popular-practical astrology cannot be applied to seventeenth-century New Spain. Most astrological practices that are generally considered as *popular*, were actually found among all layers of the Mexican society at the time. Moreover, all practitioners had at least a partial university education, and knew how to read and write. Even those belonging to socially alienated groups, such as mulattoes and *mestizos*, could have some knowledge of Latin and were up-dated with the latest information about politics in the viceroyalty.

Secondly, I argued that it is not possible to talk about a community of astrologers in New Spain at the time, mainly because those who were engaged with the practice of astrology did not form an homogeneous group, neither were they fully devoted to the cultivation of this discipline. Instead of a community of practitioners, we were able to trace, mainly by looking at the exchange and circulation of books on astrology, a heterogeneous network of men with different intellectual backgrounds who shared a common interest in the

subject. Some of them studied and taught astrology at university within the faculties of mathematics or medicine; others published annual almanacs; others relied on astrology as a tool for navigation; some read about it inside the convent, or by translating books on the subject. Each case-study analysed in this work can be regarded as representing some of the different pieces that comprised this multi-colored socio-intellectual mosaic.

Thirdly, I argued that one of the distinctive characteristics of astrological practice in New Spain was the use of this art in order to know in advance the outcome of the provincial elections within different religious orders. These elections were, in turn, an important issue of the power conflicts between Spanish and Creoles. Thus astrological prophecies reflected, to a certain extent, the intense debates about the *creolization* of the orders. It is worth underlining that these prognostications occurred more frequently within the religious sphere, because university studies in New Spain were only a requirement for an ecclesiastic career, not for the civil service. To serve the Crown, one had to be noble or descendant of *conquistadores*. The clergy, therefore, had easier access to books on astrology, and thus higher probabilities to grow interested in the subject than other parts of Mexican society.

Finally, I posed the question about the inquisitorial attitude towards astrology: was the Mexican Tribunal really concerned with its practice at the time? My conclusion is that, in general terms, the Inquisition was not engaged in a systematic persecution of astrologers in New Spain. This is reflected in the reduced number of denunciations that were actually tried by the tribunal in comparison to those neglected. In this respect, it is important to point out that there seems to be a difference between the local tribunals, which tended to ignore accusations against astrologers, and the central one. Another indicator of the inquisitorial concern is the censorship of printed books and manuscript on the subject. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Mexican tribunal issued more than sixty edicts about forbidden books, and only one of them (1666) prohibited a text on astrology by a Spanish author. Inside the courtroom, the inquisitors' attitude was not one of denial or scepticism about the influence of the stars on earth. Rather, they seemed to be concerned about the fact that astrological predictions could affect the social order they were in charged to maintain. Thus, their interrogations usually focused on discovering whether specific predictions were

spreading in the cities, or whether the accused had taught other people how to do these predictions themselves.

With these remarks, I would like to move again to the macro perspective and talk about my own contribution to the history of early-modern astrology, both in terms of its relationship with the Inquisition and its practice. In my view, recent scholarship has focused too much on the distinction between *natural* and *judicial* astrology. Both terms were actually used (and abused) in the seventeenth century to distinguish between licit and illicit astrology. However, what was understood as natural and as judicial referred to some principles that do not exactly correspond to the historians' modern criteria to separate one kind of astrology from the other. The only way in which we can achieve a better understanding of this division is by knowing the differences between the four astrological practices: revolutions, nativities, elections, and interrogations. While elections and interrogations were generally considered as *judicial-divinatory* predictions, revolutions and nativities had a much more ambiguous status, because they could be inserted within the category of natural predictions. Moreover, many Catholic intellectuals regarded the former as traditionally Arabic astrological practices that *contaminated* the *pure* teachings of Classical authors.

Some scholars have argued that the prohibition of *judicial* astrology by the Catholic Church, together with the persecution of its practice by the Inquisition, somehow set the ground for astrology's death-blow by the astronomical revolution. I believe, however, that we cannot reach any general conclusion regarding the decline of astrology and the role of the Catholic Church in this process as long as we keep relying on a simplified and anachronistic differentiation between natural and judicial astrology.

I have argued that the best way to understand astrology's prohibition is to look directly at the way in which censorship was exercised. To do so, it is necessary to understand censorship in its institutional setting, rather than considering it as an expression of the clash between two abstract entities: science and religion, reason and faith, modernity and tradition, or rationality and superstition. As we stated before, the condemnation of astrology was part of a conflict of *epistemological jurisdictions* not merely over the future, but over the whole

realm of the natural. The seventeenth century inaugurated a period of secularisation of knowledge about the natural world. The Church used censorship as an instrument to preserve her jurisdiction over territories where natural philosophers tried to enter: the future, the *occult*, and the laws of nature. Within the frame of this conflict of jurisdictions the figure of the *censor* acquired a special relevance. He emerged as the expert who was entitled not only to set the limits between forbidden and licit, but also to trace the boundaries between secular and theological knowledge.

One more aspect of censorship that needs to be taken into account is the internalisation of the imposed limits between licit and forbidden knowledge. While inquisitorial edicts and indexes of forbidden books shed light on the official concerns of the Catholic Church, the records of inquisitorial trials illuminate a different layer in the process of censorship, namely the mechanism of self-censorship. Sometimes, readers expressed their hesitations to read a particular work; they would talk about it with neighbors, friends or relatives, or they would ask for a priest's opinion. The result was, perhaps paradoxically, that these doubts about forbidden books, actually produced a circulation of texts and ideas on *dangerous* subjects.

To conclude, I would like to make a final remark on boundaries, not between licit and forbidden knowledge, but between different fields of knowledge. I stated before that some recent studies on the history of early-modern astrology, while trying to show that this discipline was not regarded as *occult* or *pseudo* science at the time, have focused mainly on the relationship between astrology and other fields of knowledge that are now regarded as *proper* science, namely astronomy and medicine. My interest in underlining the relationship between astrology and other fields of knowledge that are not considered as proper science any more, such as physiognomy and chiromancy, was to shed some light on a particular aspect of astrology which is sometimes neglected. Astrology, in my view, served as a tool for self-understanding and understanding others, and this moral dimension is perhaps the key for understanding the resilience of the belief in astrology throughout the centuries.

## Documentary Appendices

### Appendix 1. Inquisitorial documents related to astrology.

1. Juan de Beteta se denuncia por practicar la astrología judiciaria (1582). AGN; Inquisición, 125, 41.
2. Denuncia contra Juan Santiago Chávez por decir que los planetas y los astros ejercen influencia en la vida de las personas. (1609). AGN; Inquisición, 285, 30.
3. Testificación contra Fray Pedro Martín (dominico) por astrólogo y quiromántico (1613). AGN; Inquisición, 478, 43.
4. Confesión de Alonso Flores por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología. (1617). AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76.
5. Confesión de Juan de Segura por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología. (1617). AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76.
6. Confesión de Miguel Garcetas por levantar figuras y practicar la astrología. (1617). AGN; Inquisición, 293 (2a. parte), exp. 76.
7. Causa contra Nicolás de Aste. (1618). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 314, 288f.
8. Denuncia de Sebastián Gudiel contra sí mismo por estudiar astrología. (1620). AGN; Inquisición, 333, exp. 8.
9. Carta del licenciado Moratilla, comisario en Taxco, acompañando un cuaderno de suertes de astrología y una lista de personas que han tenido supersticiones. (1621). AGN; Inquisición, 339, 29.
10. Denuncia contra un fulano Espinoza por adivinar por las rayas de las manos. (1622). AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 343, exp. 6, 2 fojas.
11. Denuncia presentada por Fray Juan Menéndez (mercedario) de que en su convento se practica mucho la astrología judiciaria. (1622). AGN; Inquisición, 335, 94.
12. Carta del Lic. Juan de Ortega acompañado de un tratado de astrología manuscrito. (1623). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 303, exp. 80.
13. Proceso criminal contra Fray Juan Pérez, religioso de la Orden de Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes, natural de Milán en Lombardía, por adivinador, embustero y tener revelaciones. (1623). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 346, exp. 4.
14. Testificación contra Fray Pedro de Sandoval (mercedario) por haber alzado figuras por adivinaciones. (1626). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 354, exp. 39.
15. Información contra Lucas Martín del Montijo por usar hierbas y tener un libro vedado de adivinaciones. (1627). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 360, exp. 155.
16. Testificación contra Alonso de Avalos, por consultar astrólogos. (1627). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 360, exp. 193.



17. Proceso contra Fray Joseph Félix de Borja Morán (dominico) por solicitante (astrólogo, Lázaro de Torres). (1632). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 375, exp. 10.
18. De las proposiciones y hechos de Fray Juan Ximeno, además, sobre los hechos suyos y de Lázaro de Torres, organista y astrólogo judicial. (1632). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 367, exp. 1.  
Proceso contra Fray Juan Ximeno (dominico) por proposiciones mal sonantes, impedir el libre espacio del Santo Oficio y practicar la astrología judicial. (1633). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 367.
19. Testificación contra Ana y Lucas de Madrid, astrólogo (1633). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 373, exp. 20.
20. Testificación contra Juan de Espinoza, astrólogo. (1633). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 431, exp. 20.
21. Información contra Diego Lenor por creer en la astrología y contra María de Molina, negra esclava, por reniegos. (1636). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 376, exp. 23.
22. Causa contra Fray Nicolás de Alarcón de la orden de nuestra señora de las Mercedes sobre las figuras que ha levantado conforme esta astrología judicial en favor de Don Alvaro de Quiñones Osorio, cavallero de la orden de Santiago Marques de Lorenzana presidente de la real Audiencia de Guatemala. (1641). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 370, exp. 1.
23. Proceso contra Guillén de Lampart, por hereje protestante, astrólogo judicial y tener ideas de independencia. (1642). AGN, Colección Riva Palacio.
24. Denuncia contra Juan de Molinedo por tener un libro de astrología sin expurgación. (1650). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (1a. parte).
25. Denuncia de Felipe Flores de Villamayor contra Bernardo Fernández, astrólogo y Francisco de Grajales, por adivinar por las rayas de las manos. (1650). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (2a. parte).
26. Proceso contra Gaspar de Rivero Vasconcelos, mulato libre, estudiante canonista, descendiente de portugueses, natural de Tanger, por astrólogo judicial. 1650475-655; Proceso inquisitorial. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 435 (2a. parte), exp. 248.
27. Testificación contra Jerónimo, astrólogo. (1650). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 436, exp. 23.
28. Causa a Melchor Perez de Soto, astrólogo, sobre retener libros prohibidos de astrología judicial y usar de ella. 1654126-238; Proceso inquisitorial. Biblioteca del INAH, 2; Sección de Manuscritos, Inquisición.
29. El Señor Inquisidor contra Pedro Vidal o Vidales de Ledezma, de oficio curandero y barbero, por curandero, supersticioso, quiromántico planetario con sabor de astrología judicial (1713) Proceso Inquisitorial. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 1205, exp. 19.
30. Fray Juan de la Encarnación presenta un cuaderno de astrología judicial. (1713). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 746.
31. Fray Simón Ponce absuelve a dos sujetos. Denuncias de las personas siguientes: Juan Antonio de los Santos (adivinación). Francisco Romo contra un mozo por tener un libro de astrología. Contra Torentina por hechicera. Contra María por leer las manos. (1713); Denuncia. AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 746.

## **Appendix 2. Documents on forbidden books at the AGN (Mexico City)**

1. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1573). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 43, num. 4.
2. Declaración de Pedro de Juárez de Mayorga, acusado de nigromante. Se acompaña de un tratado de Quiromancia muy extenso con un gran número de ilustraciones. (1583). AGN; Inquisición, 128, 4. No corresponde. No hay un tratado de Quiromancia.
3. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos (1583). AGN; Edictos, III, p. 22.
4. Fray Bartolomé Alonso (franciscano) avisa a los Inquisidores lo que de malo ha encontrado en los libros prohibidos. (1585). AGN; Inquisición, 139, 24.
5. Edicto general y libros prohibidos. (1601). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 256, num 2.
6. Carta de Pedro de Irala contra García de Cuadros por ciertos libros que vinieron de España sin licencia. (1602). AGN; Inquisición, 256, 7G.
7. Carta del Comisario de Manila Fray Bernardo de Santa Catalina acerca de libros prohibidos. (1602). AGN; Inquisición, 263 (primera parte).
8. Edicto de libros prohibidos. General. (1606). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 484, f. 316.
9. Lista de libros que se prohíben. (1607). AGN ; Inquisición, 467.
10. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos (1612). AGN; Edictos, III, 32-35.
11. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se retiran licencias especiales para leer libros prohibidos. (1612). AGN; Indiferente General, Edictos III, f. 39 (5 copias manuscritas).
12. Información del Comisario de Manila sobre un libro de Paracelso. (1612). AGN; Inquisición, 293.
13. Cuaderno de la publicación del Breve de SS y provisión del Cardenal Arzobispo de Toledo Inquisidor General Bernardo de Sandoval Rojas, del nuevo índice y catálogo de libros prohibidos y expurgados. (1613). AGN; Inquisición, 299, 4.
14. Edicto para que denuncien a los que posean libros prohibidos y que paguen la pena impuesta; y que cada año, dentro de los primeros sesenta días, den aviso de los libros que antes tenían estén por vender. (1613). AGN; Edictos, 1, 1.
15. Solicitud de Francisco de Medina Reinoso para que el Santo Oficio examine 300 libros de la obra “La Corona de Jesucristo”, dictamen de los calificadores según el edicto de 23 de octubre de 1613 del que se acompañan dos ejemplares (1613). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 300, exp. 8 y 9, foja.
16. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos (1613). AGN; Indiferente General.
17. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos (1613). AGN; Edictos, I.
18. Carta del comisario de Guatemala, Don Felipe Ruiz del Corral, sobre libros prohibidos. (1614). AGN; Inquisición, 301, 2.

19. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Que se añada un apéndice al Índice del Expurgatorio de 1612 (1615). AGN; Edictos, III (manuscrito).
20. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Que se añada un apéndice al Índice del Expurgatorio de 1612. (1615). AGN; Edictos, III.
21. Edicto contra los que practiquen astrología judiciaria, nigromancia, suertes con habas, monedas, sortijas y semejantes (1616). AGN; Edictos, II (43); Edictos I (2-4), f. 83-84.
22. Sebastián de Estrada envía nota de libros que se encontraron en la librería del Colegio de Tepoztlán. (1617). AGN; Inquisición, 536, 81.
23. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos (1618). AGN; Edictos I, exp. 3.
24. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 3 obras. (1618). AGN; Inquisición, 317, exp. 9.
25. Memoria de los libros que se depositaron en el Convento de Santo Domingo para su examen. (1618) Memoria. AGN; Inquisición, 317.
26. Carta de Juan de la Paraya al Comisario de Guatemala (sobre edicto de astrología y cometas). (1619). AGN; Inquisición, 484, f. 343v.
27. Instrucción del Inquisidor Juan de la Paraya sobre libros prohibidos. (1619). Inquisición, 484, f. 342.
28. Autos relativos a la revisión de libros por el Santo Oficio. (1620). AGN; Inquisición, 289.
29. Carta de Andrés del Moral al Comisario de Guatemala, Felipe Ruiz del Corral (libros prohibidos). (1620) AGN; Inquisición, 484, f. 408.
30. Edicto del Santo Oficio contra libros prohibidos. Que todos los libros y sus memorias sean llevados ante los inquisidores. (1620). AGN; Edictos III, foja 65; Inquisición, 289, exp. 14.
31. Memoria de las personas doctas de esta Nueva España a quienes se puede someter a la corrección de libros. (1620), AGN.
32. Memoria de los libros que presentó Simón García Becerril. (1620) AGN; Inquisición, 289.
33. Se prohíben los libros, cuyos títulos son: *Vida, virtudes y muerte del venerable varón Francisco de Yopez*, por el padre Fray Joseph de Velasco y *El Solitario contemplativo y guía espiritual*. (1620) Edicto. AGN; Edictos, I, exp. 3.
34. Autos que hizo el Comisario de Guatemala, Felipe Ruiz de Corral por un cajón de libros que llegó sin licencia. (1621) AGN; Inquisición, 339, exp. 1.
35. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. General. (1621). AGN; Inquisición, 289, exp. 13.
36. Instrucción de lo que el comisario que es o fuere por tiempo de este Santo Oficio en este obispado de Nicaragua y su jurisdicción debe advertir y guardar para mejor ejecución del título y comisión que tiene. (1621) AGN; Inquisición, 335, exp. 110.
37. Testificación contra Juan Pelayo, francés de nación, por haber publicado un pronóstico que causó escándalo. (1621). AGN; Inquisición, 486, 75.

38. Carta de Juan de la Paraya al Comisario de Guatemala, Felipe Ruiz del Corral (sobre libros). (1622) AGN; Inquisición, 484, f. 520.
39. Edicto que prohíbe todas las medallas e imágenes que tengan signos relacionados con la astrología. Se ordena recoger libros y papeles. (1622). AGN; Edictos, III, (43).
40. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 7 obras *in totum* y se manda expurgar una. (1624). AGN; Edictos, III, f. 69.
41. Carta de Don Francisco Bazan de Albornoz al Comisario de Guatemala (sobre libros). (1626) AGN; Inquisición, 484, f. 656.
42. Instrucción de Don Francisco Bazan de Albornoz para corregir libros en Oaxaca. (1626) AGN; Inquisición, 484, f. 663.
43. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1626). AGN; Indiferete general .
44. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos y cruces pintadas. (1626). AGN; Edictos, III, f. 47.
45. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 4 obras. (1628). AGN; Edictos, I.
46. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1628). AGN; Indiferente General.
47. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 4 obras *in totum* y se mandan expurgar 3. (1630). AGN; Edictos, III, f.48-49.
48. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Que los libros útiles de autores prohibidos sean expurgados y permitidos. (1634). AGN; Edictos, III, f. 76.
49. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 5 obras *in totum* y se manda expurgar una. (1634). AGN; Edictos, I, no. 7.
50. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíbe un libro sobre la religión de los Carlmelitas y otro con título *Gasparis Kloc Kij iuris Consulti Comitís Palatinis, etc.* (1635). AGN; Edictos, III, f. 77.
51. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben papeles contra el obispo Palafox. (1635). AGN ; Edictos, III, f. 82.
52. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1640). AGN; Indiferente General.
53. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1646). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 93 Y 94 (2 copias).
54. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1647). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 66.
55. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. 1650; Edicto. AGN; Indiferente General.
56. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíbe el meomoriaal de Julián Pedraza (S.I.) y otros papeles sobre la materia. 1653; Edicto. AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 110 y 111 (2 copias).
57. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 18 obras, 2 de ellas de magia. 1653; Edicto. AGN ; Edictos, III, fs. 112.

58. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 5 obras. (1655). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 113.
59. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben cuatro obras *in totum*. (1655). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 114.
60. Inventario de los libros que se le hallaron a Melchor Pérez de Soto, vecino de esta ciudad y obrero mayor de la santa Iglesia catedral de ella. Los cuales se metieron en la Cámara del secreto de este Santo Oficio. (1655) AGN; Inquisición, 440.
61. Memorias de los libros que presentaron en este tribunal los libreros que hay en México. (1655) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 438, exps. 43-76.
62. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 9 obras. (1656). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 84.
63. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Sobre la obra *Relación auténtica de las Idolatrias y Supersticiones vanas observaciones de los Indios del Obispado de Oaxaca*. (1659). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 121.
64. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben 3 obras. (1660). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 122.
65. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1660). AGN; Indiferente General.
66. Sobre el libro *Arbol de la Ciencia*, de Raimundo Lulio. (1661) AGN, Vol. 579; Inquisición.
67. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíbe el manuscrito *Memoria de las gracias que nuestro señor Jesucristo, etc.* (1662). AGN; Edictos, III, 93.
68. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1663). AGN; Indiferente General.
69. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben *in totum* 14 obras impresas y manuscritas. (1664). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 125.
70. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben *in totum* 2 obras y otras 2 hasta ser expurgadas. (1664). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 126.
71. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. Se prohíben *in totum* 6 libros impresos y uno hasta que se expurgue. (1665). AGN; Edictos, III, fs. 127.
72. Se prohíbe un papel impreso por contener información de astrología judiciaria. (1666). AGN; Edictos, IV (43).
73. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1667). AGN; Edictos, IV, f. 3.
74. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1668). AGN; Indiferente General.
75. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1672). AGN; Inquisición, 621, no. 633.
76. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1673). AGN; Inquisición, 624, no. 353.
77. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1673). AGN; Edictos, vol. IV, f. 5.
78. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1674). AGN; Inquisición, 518, no. 449.
79. Sobre la lista de libros que poseía el padre Gerónimo de Ortega, ya que algunos estaban incluidos en el

*Expurgatorio*. (1680). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 639.

80. Sobre una lista de libros pertenecientes al mercader Francisco Rodríguez Lupercio. (1683). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 645, 3a.
81. Sobre una memoria de libros pertenecientes a Paula Benavides, impresora. (1683). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 645, exp. 3b.
82. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1690). AGN; Edictos, I.
83. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1690). AGN; Edictos, I, foja 12.
84. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1690). AGN; Edictos, I.
85. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1690). AGN; Indiferente General.
86. El Señor fiscal del Santo Oficio contra Nicolás de Baldarrazo por leer libros prohibidos. (1693) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 449, exp.2, 7 folios.
87. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1694). AGN; Indiferente General.
88. Edicto prohibiendo varios libros, uno de Machiavelli (1696). AGN.
89. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1696). AGN; Edictos, I.
90. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1696). AGN; Edictos, IV, f. 8.
91. Edicto prohibiendo un papel manuscrito. (1698); AGN.
92. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1698). AGN; Edictos, IV, f. 9.
93. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1698). AGN; Edictos, I.
94. Edicto sobre libros prohibidos. (1698). AGN; Edictos, IV, f. 71.
95. El señor inquisidor contra el doctor José Fernández Lechuga por usar libros prohibidos. (1698) AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 540, exp. 30, 2 folios.
96. Sobre la memoria de libros que Paula de Benavides, viuda, impresora, presentó al Santo Oficio en 1673. (1699). AGN; Inquisición, Vol. 683, exp. 4.
97. Edicto contra las personas que siguen a Lutero, que tienen la ley de Moisés, a los astrólogos, adivinos o supersticiosos (1712). AGN; Edictos, I (43).

### Appendix 3. Calificación de Fray Diego Rodríguez (AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 370).

Sábado 13 de enero de 1646.

“Muy Ilustre Señor.

Fray Diego Rodríguez del orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced Redención de Captivos, catedrático de Matemáticas en propiedad en aquesta Real Universidad de México digo que he visto, leído y entendido los cientos y cuarenta y una hojas escritas de los papeles sueltos del Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón en todos los cuales no hay figura alguna ni doctrina de interrogaciones y la materia más prohibida por aqueste Santo Tribunal y reglas de su expurgatorio general, por ser mera adivinación sobre fundamentos falsos en ciertos y porque toda la judicatura [sic] de las interrogaciones en cosas particulares como si Pedro, Juan o Francisco casar con María, Juana o Josefa y con qué circunstancias y medios o en materias de hurtos determinar personas y sus nombres y esto todo por la hora en que se pregunta al astrólogo. Todos los cuales sin duda alguna son comprendidos en las Bulas de los sumos pontífices Sixto V y Urbano VIII y sagrados cánones como hombres vanos, supersticiosos y seductores no hay pues en los dichos papeles figura, ni doctrina de esta calidad porque las primeras catorce fojas son revoluciones anuas o cadañales del nacimiento del Marqués de Lorenzana son de letra del dicho Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón y de la misma las seis siguientes hojas de otro nacimiento cuyo nombre no puso, luego se siguen ocho fojas de un defensorio de judicaria de nacimientos y aunque está de su letra no es suyo sino de traslado de algún Autor, como del doctor Francisco Juntino u otro. Luego se siguen trece fojas de sciencia dei por artículos, materia que debía de leer en el convento de Guatemala, todo de su letra. Después se siguen cuatro fojas escritas de su letra del nacimiento de don Antonio Pérez de Quiñones y al fin de la quinta foja una figura del nacimiento de Don Álvaro Pérez de Quiñones. Luego se siguen doce hojas de a medio pliego en papel de china escritas de letra de Juan de Sigura Manrique, cosmógrafo que fue de su majestad en Filipinas, y este papel le hubo el dicho Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón cuando se fue a Guatemala es trasladado de un autor llamado Juan Antonio Magino [...] católico y que sólo escribió tablas matemáticas y este papel sirve sólo estas direcciones de nacimientos cuyo fundamento es mero matemático. Después de éste se figura un borrador de tablas de veinte y una fojas es de las cosas racionales y su fundamento matemático aún si no está acabado hubo de mi cuando se fue a Guatemala. Luego se sigue un cuaderno de dieciocho fojas de mi letra contiene las figuras del Año de mil y seiscientos y treinta y nueve para el repertorio del Juicio de temporales de dicho año que se lo di para ejemplar de repertorios y modo de fabricarlos, no tiene nada de judicaria sino solas las figuras de los cuatro tiempos y meses del Año. Luego se siguen veinte fojas de letra de Juan de Sigura Manrique, cosmógrafo que fue en las Filipinas y murió en esta ciudad de México, todas son en orden a defender la judicaria de nacimientos y las últimas tres fojas son también de nacimientos como en ellas se ve, con que en todos los dichos papeles no hay figura, ni doctrina de interrogación como tengo dicho.

Sólo resta el determinar si es lícito o no el juzgar las figuras de los nacimientos que pone y juzga y si habla en particular o en general y su por esto es comprendido en las bulas bulas de los sumos pontífices acerca de lo cual digo lo primero que la Bula de nuestro muy santo pontífice Urbano VII de gloriosa memoria no es general (f. 175)

sino particular contra los judicarios y astrólogos que hablaren acerca del Sumo Pontificado y determinaren la elección de algún particular y de sus consanguíneos hasta el tercero grado, o esto sea por vía de interrogaciones o por vía de nacimientos, donde se ve que no son comprendidos los que hablaran de otras personas por vía de nacimiento con las limitaciones del expurgatorio general y no

condena de todo punto a los Astrólogos genealógicos o que tratan de nacimiento, los cuales no deben hablar nunca en particular ni afirmando, porque este es un mero discurso filosófico fundado en el temperamento del nacido, si es colérico, o flemático, si melancólico o sanguíneo y aunque se determinen sus costumbres y accidentes es en orden a este principio sólo, no afirmando ni destruyendo la libertad y libre elección, sino conjeturando sólo la natural inclinación de cada uno abstrayendo siempre del libre albedrío, que éste tiene su fuerza en todo tiempo para obrar libremente, aunque las estrellas le inclinen al contrario y pues no son prohibidos los defensorios particulares de muchos consultores[¿] que defienden la judicaria de nacimientos como Francisco Juntino y otros innumerables síguese que ni la judicaria de nacimientos pues son permitidos los libros de ella, como el primero tomo de Francisco Juntino, el de David Origano, expurgado y otros innumerables y son corrientes porque si esta materia fuera de todo punto prohibida todos los libros de astrología de cualquier calidad que fuesen serían prohibidos y no se consentirían astrólogos en la cristiandad y pues los libros son corrientes expurgados no van contra los sagrados cánones y Bulas los que los estudian y leen, conjeturando templadamente los accidentes de las personas y de sus consanguíneos, amigos, criados y de su felicidad o infelicidad, etc, que son los significados de las doce casas.

Digo pues que el Padre Fray Nicolás de Alarcón no excede los límites de la judicaria de nacimientos y guarda en juzgar el mismo estilo y tenor de los autotes que de esto tenía escrito ya expurgados como esta de Origano y Juntino que hablaron y juzgaron de aquesta misma suerte y lo mismo en todos los que escriben de temporales, que pronostican a las tierras y provincias accidentes particulares de terremotos, inundaciones, pestes, hambre y guerras, etc. Y esto no es hablar en particular sino en general, porque decir este nacido casará una o dos veces con una rica o pobre, hermosa o noble, etc, no es proposición particular sino general porque para ser particular había de decir se casara con fulana, hijo de fulano, etc. Diciendo mujer rica, noble y hermosa ni determina región ni ciudad ni la casa solariega de donde será, ni da las señas particulares de hermosura que se pueden adaptar a esta o aquella mujer en particular y si en esto es comprendido lo que son también cuantos astrólogos tiene el mundo, y antes habla más asentado que los autores porque ni afirma de cierto ni se arroja a lo que pudiera llevarle la adulación de un príncipe y de ser tenido por grande judicario que es lo que a otros suele despreciar y hablando con el debido acatamiento que se debe a este Santo Tribunal me parece niñería lo contenido en sus papeles y por ello nunca incurrió en la censura de los sagrados cánones y bulas de los sumos pontífices, no hay astrólogo libre de este delito. Ese es mi parecer so cargo del juramento hecho ante Vuestra Señoría, sometiéndome siempre a la censura en esto y en todo de los teólogos y doctores sagrados y demás personas doctas. Y lo firmé de mi nombre en once de enero de este presente año de mil seiscientos y cuarenta y seis.” (f. 175v)

[Firma] Fray Diego Rodríguez.



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