

Tráfico de saberes agencia femenina, hechicería e Inquisición en Cartagena de Indias (1610–1614). Ana María Díaz Burgos. Madrid: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2020. 264 pp. €24.00. ISBN 9788491921202.

Ana María Díaz Burgos's *Tráfico de saberes* is a theoretically sophisticated, interdisciplinary microhistory centered on the Inquisition trial of doña Lorenzana de Acereto, one of the first reputed sorceresses (*hechiceras*) processed by the Holy Office in Cartagena de Indias. Doña Lorenzana, an elite Spanish creole, practiced erotic magic to manage her rocky marriage with a royal scribe and to pursue a lover of her preference. She learned from and taught others in a multiracial community that shared divination rituals, magical substances, and powerful incantations to control their intimate partnerships. Employing a close reading of Acereto's 106-folio trial transcript, Díaz Burgos illuminates for her readers the structures of Inquisition investigations as well as the self-fashioning and defensive rhetoric used by women suspected of sorcery. Díaz Burgos focuses her analysis on the situational

agency that Acereto practiced at various moments in the trial. The book begins with a chapter on the official arrival of Inquisitors in Cartagena, their institutional calculations within local power structures, and their prosecutions of a circle of six (mostly) women processed for love magic–related heresy from 1610 to 1614. Readers then shadow doña Lorenzana in chapter 2 as she enters the local Carmelite convent, ostensibly to escape a bad marriage, but also to protect herself from the Inquisition, given widespread knowledge of her heterodox practices. Acereto chose to make a series of voluntary statements to Inquisitors to narrate her role (as she claimed, a minor, mostly observational one) among the city’s practitioners of erotic magic. Díaz Burgos takes readers step-by-step in time as Acereto manipulated coconspirators, confessors, and family members from within the refuge of the convent, using the restrictions of the cloistered life both to control her image as a pious woman and to distance herself from Inquisitors, for a time. But the Holy Office finally brought the full weight of their fight against heresy to Acereto, arresting and imprisoning her within the newly erected secret Inquisition prisons.

The project is intensely local, a superb introduction to the port city of Cartagena de Indias, exploring both the city within its region and its local geography, including the private spaces where women could meet and practice their sorceries. Although the book is clearly framed as a literary analysis (Díaz Burgos earned her PhD in a Spanish literature program), the text is nearly equally a history of Cartagena in the early seventeenth century. Chapter 3 describes the city’s importance as a hub in the system of Spanish imperial governance, as a thriving site for commerce and contraband, and as a place of cultural interchange between indigenous, European, and African practitioners. As she does with Acereto’s stay in the Carmelite convent, Díaz Burgos examines the contours of women’s lives by using context from the excellent historiography on gender and society in colonial Latin America. Drawing on studies of Inquisition trials of women in Spain, Mexico, and Peru, Díaz Burgos traces the early modern and colonial continuities of erotic magic across the Iberian world. She examines how prayers to San Cipriano or Santa Marta became popular among women to attract or control partners, and how indigenous and black participants with knowledge of plants could teach the desperate how to poison abusive spouses or tame jealous lovers. In one of her best sections, in chapter 4, Díaz Burgos goes intensely local by exploring the cartography of sorcery and the ways that elite women engaging in love magic networks used lower-caste servants and slaves to find plants growing in the wild (like in the swamps of Tolú)

and knowledge held by indigenous *curanderos* in nearby towns. Moreover, the chapter explains how women arranged the spaces in their own homes—such as their balconies, windows, and bedrooms—to talk about forbidden things and to perform secretive rituals. (An earlier version of this chapter’s method is incorporated into her English publication, “A Cartography of Sorcery: Mapping the First Auto de Fe in Cartagena de Indias, 1614,” *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 1, no. 3 [2013]: 243–72.) Díaz Burgos closes the story of the trial by covering in detail the ways that doña Lorenzana used her class and financial privileges to offer bail money try to get out of the Inquisition secret prisons. She, like other elite women charged with these types of crimes, was eventually released, and fined substantially, but exempted from the shame of a public *auto de fé*. And in this case, Acereto’s husband filed an appeal that succeeded in overturning her order for banishment (chap. 5).

A brief epilogue on Acereto’s fictional afterlife is explored in Alfonso Bonilla Naar’s 1970 novel *La pezuña del diablo* (The devil’s hoof), which was inspired primarily by popular Inquisition histories by late nineteenth-century Hispanist José Toribio Medina and Colombian scholar Manuel Tejado Fernández. It is perhaps surprising for a literary study that these modern adaptations of the Inquisition’s archival fictions are discussed only in an epilogue, especially given the multiple works of fiction that feature doña Lorenzana’s story (see Fernando Soto Aparicio, *Camino que anda* [1980]; Emilia Ruiz Barrachina, *Calamari* [1998]; Jairo Restrepo Galeano, *La marca de la ausencia* [2013]).

We learn that Bonilla Naar’s prizewinning novel painted its two protagonists as stereotypes: an unfettered, sexually malevolent doña Lorenzana, and a corrupt inquisitor on a sadistic hunt for witches. Sexual intrigue and torture scenes sold the fictional versions of *La pezuña del diablo*, caricatures that Díaz Burgos laments have kept Acereto “trapped within the same inquisitorial and patriarchal parameters” (234) that judged her in the seventeenth century. As a historian, I likewise find myself more entranced with the complexities of personalities I meet in the archive than the poorly informed fantasies of much modern fiction. Yet, it would be fascinating to know more about how fictional representations of women before the Inquisition depict female agency and how Colombians’ popular legends of love magic and a notorious Inquisition have evolved. Nonetheless, Díaz Burgos’s close reading and discourse analysis of the Inquisition trial provides us with a careful and nuanced reading of Acereto’s rhetorical strategies, her shifting positionality, and the complex path that accused heretics took through Inquisition judicial procedures.

The only real critique of this book is that it might have done more to explore the relationship between agency and archival power (see, e.g., Michel Rolf-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* [Beacon, 1995]; Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* [University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016]). Thanks to doña Lorenzana's financial resources and her family's need to maintain its honor and expunge her guilt from the record, this trial transcript was carefully copied, sent to the Suprema for appeal, and now sits in an air-conditioned archive in Madrid, its folios available in stunning, high-resolution images for the whole world to read. Thus, even this trial, rich as it is, has been wrapped in a glittering package of an appeal, re-forming the narrative with Acereto as the only person worthy of our attention. Meanwhile, across the ocean, another five women and one man were tried by the Inquisition for their traffic in love magic, four of them (enslaved or otherwise lacking access to the respect due to a don or doña) facing public shame and physical punishment in Cartagena de Indias's first public *auto de fé*. Díaz Burgos summarizes their stories through what survives—local tribunals' annual reports to their supervisors in Madrid (the *relaciones de causas de fe*)—but the production of this historicity earns less attention. Indeed, the moments where the story shifts away from the entitled doña are the most intriguing parts of Díaz Burgos's analysis. In chapter 4, we glimpse how Acereto used enslaved black servants' relative freedom of movement to extend her reach for desired materials beyond the spaces where she could maintain her reputation as a *mujer recojida*. To complete a ritual invocation to Santa Marta, Acereto sent her enslaved teacher Juan Lorenzo to another town, along with her domestic slave, Catalina Tolosa, as a witness (or spy) to ensure Lorenzo completed the task as promised. But Tolosa reportedly fell asleep during the nighttime ritual and thus was unable to provide eyewitness testimony when called before the Inquisitors. Díaz Burgos suggests that this was a strategy for Catalina (and Acereto) to distance themselves from an enslaved man who could serve as an easier scapegoat for the Inquisition to prosecute (185). But "falling asleep" could also be seen as a provocation, a way for Tolosa to take advantage of the distance from coercion to rest (as she wished) rather than simply do what she was bid. There is a great richness in the networks that made "traffic in knowledge" about erotic magic possible and the power dynamics that made these networks so fragile.

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