Ana María Díaz Burgos, *Tráfico de saberes. Agencia femenina, hechicería e inquisición en Cartagena de Indias (1610–1614)*, Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2020, 263pp. ISBN 9788491921202. Price 24€

In the Introduction to his classic *Inheriting Power*, Giovanni Levi mentioned that one of his aims as a microhistorian was to tell "the many relevant things that take place when nothing seems to be happening".[1] Ana María Díaz Burgos traces in her book not just the events happening underneath the historical surface, but also the many ways in which early modern societies operated. This book reveals how empires were not just built through the establishment of institutions—religious, economic, political—, but also, and specially, through a myriad cultural and social interactions and processes often overlooked by historiography or reduced to mere anecdote. *Tráfico de saberes* follows the inquisitorial trial of Lorenzana de Acereto in Cartagena de Indias, in the Colombian Caribbean coast, between 1610 and 1614. Acereto's was one of the first processes started by the newly established Inquisition in the city and she was accused and condemned for "sorcery and superstition" after conducting spells and prayers with the alleged intention of murdering her husband to live freely with her lover. She was condemned to public humiliation, a 4,000 *ducados* fine, and two years of exile from the city. Although her sentence was eventually suspended, the minute record of her case remains as an extraordinary source for an unorthodox history of Cartagena in the early seventeenth century.

Constructed as a microhistory, the book evolves around the story of Acereto to analyze the social fabric of Cartagena and the different levels in which a woman of creole elite could exercise agency. Although it does not use unpublished documentation, by adopting a microhistorical perspective, the author manages to tell an innovative story of the trial and the circumstances surrounding it. This book falls within a renewal of the social history of urban spaces in Latin America, emphasizing the transgression of traditional social and racial boundaries, along with new reflections on how individuals self-represented *vis a vis* institutions of government.[2] *Tráfico de saberes* also participates in a new tendency for the understanding of court records as windows into the societies of the past beyond the institutional and juridical framework.[3] Díaz Burgos

1 Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power. The Story of an Exorcist* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), xvi.

2 Joanne Rappaport, *The Disappearing Mestizo. Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada* (Durham, Duke University Press: 2014).

3 Bianca Premo, "Lo extrajudicial. Between Court and Community in the Spanish Empire", in *The uses of justice in global perspective, 1600–1900*, ed. Griet Vermeesch (London: Routledge, 2019), 183–197.

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offers thus another example for a new history of colonial Latin America with attention to social, racial and gender diversity and an innovative methodological approach.

The book is organized in five chapters, each devoted to a different episode of Acereto's trial and trajectory. However, there are some topics that appear across the book and define the general argument and value of *Tráfico de saberes*. The first—and most relevant—of them is the definition of agency as "situational" described as "invariably contextual, contingent and circumstantial" (51).[4] With this definition in mind, the reader can understand the choices made by Acereto considering her social context and personal circumstances. Therefore, Acereto managed to create "undercover relations" (105) with people outside her social circle, including slaves and indigenous women to pursuit her own interest but also to define her own defense strategy in court. The existence of those networks redefined the very spaces in which the episodes judged in the trial took place. The analysis of that redefinition is another of the highlights of the book, because it allows for a reconfiguration of the sacred and the profane and the actual flexibility of norms and rules otherwise perceived as standardized. Acereto used a convent, the courthouse, the jail, and even liminal spaces as the windows and balconies of her own house for her interest in the creation of her social networks, therefore "reappropriating socio-spatial normativity, expanding her agency and exercising power over other" (189). Díaz Burgos does an extraordinary, sharp and imaginative use of the sources to build her argument on the redefinition of spaces.

The microanalysis chosen by the author opens the door for thinking how power was enacted and extended in colonial societies. Therefore, by tracing the creation of undercover networks, the author discovered that some places—for example the villages of Tolú, San Agustín and Tubará (162)—were not even included in official cartography but they already existed for the participants in clandestine activities. To make those spaces surface, the historian needs to investigate the details of the witnesses' depositions and trace the links between the different actors. This proves how many times institutions of justice and power fell behind the offenders in collecting the information and creating the links between peoples, places, and materials. In addition, this book also shows the importance of the Inquisition archive—and court records in general—and its relevance for a closer understanding of early modern societies beyond their institutional significance.

4 All translations from the original Spanish are my own. I have translated *agencia* as "agency" based on the context, although the term in Spanish does not have the same meaning.

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Tráfico de saberes is a highly relevant book for scholars and students interested in the daily lives of imperial societies and the different ways in which people interacted in an early modern urban environment. It will also be useful for readers attracted to the study of witchcraft and sorcery, as it includes picturesque and detailed descriptions of rituals, prayers and materials used in those practices. Díaz Burgos clearly made a great effort to write a very enjoyable story, making this book a very appealing read for undergraduate students and even the general public. Overall, this book is a refreshing example of how one can successfully address traditional problems with new questions and methodological approaches.

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