

THE MEDICAL REFORMATION: HEALING, HERESY, AND INQUISITION
IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN

AN ABSTRACT

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

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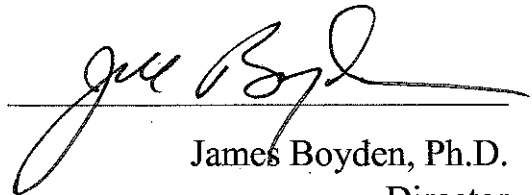
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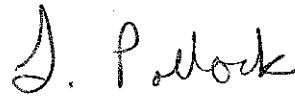


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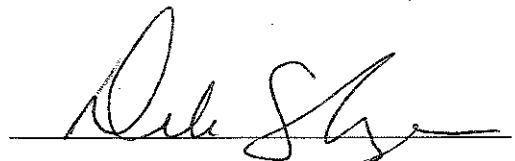
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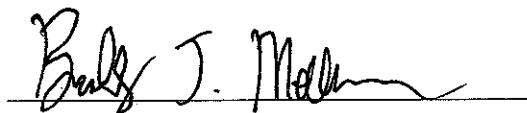
ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the persecution of medical heresies during the confessional era in Spain, arguing that the widespread arrest and punishment of popular healers, charismatics, alchemists, and ethnic-minority practitioners constituted an important element of the Habsburg acculturation program. This initiative depended upon the cultivation of an ideology of religio-medical rationalism, implemented through the machinery of a sprawling and increasingly complex inquisitorial bureaucracy. The project offers a new perspective on the social history of premodern medicine, and also comments on larger themes in Spanish imperial history such as the limits of confessional discipline and the reform of popular Catholicism.

As this dissertation demonstrates, religio-medical rationalism was implemented through a robust institutional effort to curb superstitious healing in Castile and throughout the empire. During the reigns of the Habsburg monarchs, the crown developed an inquisitorial system that partnered with established Church and state institutions in an effort to regulate healing beliefs and practices. Unlike other Habsburg initiatives that were limited by local privileges, the Inquisition had unique jurisdictional powers that allowed it to act unilaterally in a growing empire. Through a detailed examination of the extant documentation from the Castilian imperial heartland, along with comparative regional samples, this dissertation examines the Inquisition's efforts against heterodox healers in the context of the crown's larger acculturation project. By examining the records of trials for superstitious healing, this dissertation assesses the ways in which scholastic knowledge was used *in situ* to make judgments regarding real-world healers and their practices. It shows that, despite concerted efforts, persecution had limits. Unlike polemicists, inquisitors were forced to weigh intellectual imperatives against the needs of communities where religious healing was in high demand.

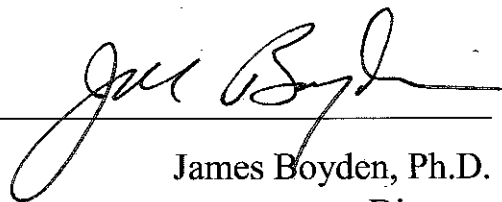
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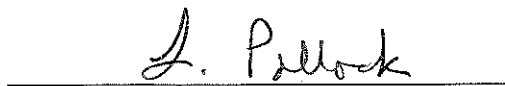


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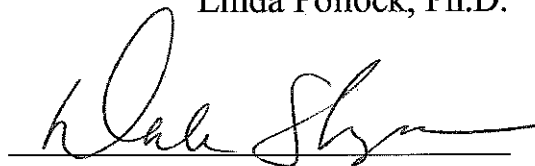
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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgments | ii |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 1 – Charlatans, Vagrants, and Drunks? Psalmsaying, Deviance, and the Institutional Response to Religio-Medical Healers | 12 |
| Chapter 2 – Midwives and Sorceresses: Medical and Inquisitorial Responses to the Subversive Female Healer..... | 58 |
| Chapter 3 – Verifying the Saint and Licensing the Shaman: Healing, Sanctity, and the Reform of Proof Regimes in the Late-Sixteenth Century..... | 117 |
| Chapter 4 – Medical and Magical “Secrets:” Inquisitorial Responses to Alchemy and Empiricism..... | 173 |
| Conclusion – Seventeenth Century Superstition and Baroque Uncertainty | 208 |
| Appendices..... | 219 |
| Bibliography..... | 226 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| A.H.N. | Archivo Histórico Nacional |
| A.D.C. | Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca |
| A.M.T. | Archivo Municipal de Toledo |
| A.R.C.P. | Archivo del Real Convento de Predicadores |
| BN | Biblioteca Nacional de España |
| INQ | Inquisición (Inquisition) |
| fol. | Folio(s) |
| cap. | Capítulo (chapter) |
| leg. | Legajo (file) |
| lib. | Libro (book) |
| no. | Numero (number) |
| tit. | Título (title) |
| pet. | Petición (petition) |
| v. | Verso (reverse) |

Introduction

In 1530, University of Alcalá Professor Pedro Ciruelo advised readers to avoid superstitions like “snakes and vipers,” but he recognized they were difficult to discern in practical circumstances because they were “hidden, overlapped, and veiled by forms of sanctity and goodness.”¹ Ciruelo published these words in his *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, one of the most important Spanish contributions to the growing chorus of voices throughout Europe that was alarmed by the presence of superstition and called for authorities to take action against it. For these authorities, superstition was not only a moral offense but also a metaphysical threat that invited demonic agency into the world to pervert true Christianity. In certain times and places, these concerns translated into large-scale witch hunts, but they more commonly resulted in more mundane vigilance and judicial activity by civil, ecclesiastical, and (in Spain) inquisitorial authorities. Despite the shared concern, there was widespread disagreement on what exactly constituted superstition and how it could be identified. The problems of defining superstition entailed making fundamental distinctions about the reach and limits of divine (and conversely demonic) power; such distinctions penetrated to the very heart of the theological crisis of the Reformation era. Some Protestant reformers were skeptical of any direct invocation or manifestation of numinous power, and they denounced Catholic sacraments and rituals as superstitious acts. Alternately, Catholic authorities sought intellectual justifications for traditional beliefs and more secure boundaries between the divine and the demonic.

¹ Pedro Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Valladolid: Maxtor, 2005 [1530]), 5-6. “encubiertas y solapadas o empaliadas so velo y manera de alguna santidad y bondad.”

In Spain, eradicating superstition became one of the pillars of Catholic reform. By the mid-sixteenth century, the Spanish Inquisition had grown into to a large, complex, and sophisticated bureaucracy that adjudicated against superstition as systematically as any institution in Europe. Occasional flares of concern over diabolical witchcraft in the Basque Country, Catalonia, and the alpine regions of Aragon were akin to those on the continent, but these were relatively rare and isolated occurrences. In much of Spain, concerns about superstition centered upon more mundane practices such as divination, love magic, and especially healing.

The sixteenth century marked an important shift in Spanish society's approach to superstitious healing. The purported connection between demonism and preternatural cures became ever more firmly established in sixteenth-century logic, providing the basis for widespread persecution. Confessors' manuals began to warn priests about the dangers of allowing unorthodox healing practices, diocesan synods providing a legal framework for the ecclesiastical hierarchy to act against them, and secular law codes became more explicit about the boundaries between licit and illicit healing. Most important, though, was the influence of the Spanish Inquisition. As a joint project of the Church and the Spanish Crown, the Inquisition became a powerful instrument for the propagation of an imperial and Catholic form of religio-medical authority. This dissertation contends that trials for "superstitious healing" offer an essential site of investigation as a space where theory met practice, helping us understand how scholastic discourses of medicine and theology were received, adapted, and challenged by ordinary men and women.

The primary documentary base for this study consists of inquisitorial trial dossiers from the inquisitorial tribunals of Toledo and Cuenca in central Castile. Although much has

disappeared over the centuries, these inquisitorial tribunals are exceptional since they are among the few courts where a sizable body of complete trial dossiers has been preserved. A thorough (although not entirely comprehensive) search of these records has produced a database of over a hundred cases that involve healers. Among these cases, I have chosen twenty-three representative trials for analysis in this dissertation.² While central Spain had its own unique dynamics, these trials are also indicative of larger historical trends. Regional sampling has shown that similar patterns of persecution occurred in the sixteenth century throughout Castile, Aragon, and the Crown of Navarre. By the late sixteenth century, the scope of persecution increased as Habsburg imperial authority imposed inquisitorial authority in Sicily, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, the Canary Islands, Mexico, Lima, and Cartagena, not to mention the parallel efforts by the Papal and Portuguese Inquisitions in Italy, Portugal, South America, and India. In short, the persecution of superstitious healing was a globalized (and globalizing) phenomenon.

As this dissertation shows, healers who were accused of superstition were a diverse group. The healers analyzed here drew upon multiple traditions and displayed various levels of professionalism. María López, for instance, arrested in 1637 and again in 1650, was a midwife who deployed a diverse arsenal of practices to combat disease and ensure successful births, including herbs, incense, prayers, and rituals. Her case was typical of female healers who had sophisticated healing knowledge but were also suspected of sorcery. Other healers claimed the power to cure using just a blessing or their touch. Some, like Francisco Goidos, were vagabonds and drunks who blessed the sick in search of alms. Others were holy men whose reputation for sanctity won them fame and followers. Bartólome López, for instance, was a rural hermit who was arrested by the Inquisition after he attracted a throng of followers who pleaded for his

² A list of trials examined can be found in Appendix 1.

healing touch. Another healer, arrested in 1611, had a very different approach to healing.

Alfonso Medrano was a sword-fighting alchemist who distilled medicines at the court of Philip III and allegedly invoked demons. Although singled out for a very specific crime – a demonic pact – the healers arrested by the Inquisition represent a wide cross-section of early modern Spain's pluralistic world of vernacular medical practitioners. Inquisition records indicate that these individuals freely, and often creatively, deployed cures that could be described as natural, religious, or magical, although as we will see, these were unstable designations that were vigorously contested at every turn.

Trials for superstitious healing are significant because they are emblematic of larger changes in the structure of Spanish society. Spain's evolution from fifteenth- to sixteenth-century forms was marked by the development of large bureaucracies and a new intellectual culture that prioritized the reform of Christianity and espoused more rigorous epistemological norms. The Habsburg monarchy's management of supranational institutions such as the Protomedicato (the royal medical licensing board) and the Inquisition required the codification of principles and procedures that would enable far-flung authorities to mete out justice consistently. Both institutions included judicial branches and courts where judges provided arbitration on specific cases. The intellectual issues involved in these trials could be complex. Technically, the cures of healers were *heretical* – not simply immoral or medically suspect – because inquisitors suspected that they were actualized through demonic agency. Making such a ruling necessitated the establishment of a category of deviance bounded by the norms of Catholic theology, natural philosophy, medicine, and morality.

These were not necessarily new issues in the sixteenth century – were one to trace these intellectual threads back into the Middle Ages, it would become clear that there is a long history

of thinkers tussling with the problem of understanding cures that seemed to have a religious and/or occult provenance. Compared to sixteenth-century writers, however, medieval theorists tended to be more sprawling and eclectic in their approaches, perhaps an intellectual reflection of the inherent political and cultural fragmentation of their era. In the Mediterranean cultural sphere, prolific thinkers such as Ramón Llull and Arnau de Vilanova approached enigmatic questions by attempting to stretch Christian ontology in a number of directions so that it could incorporate alchemy, hermetic magic, Arabic science, and Neoplatonism to account for mysterious cures. As we will see in Chapter Four, some of these eclectic traditions would continue to resonate into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the general trend was towards the narrowing of orthodoxy. As the Habsburg kings patched together an empire, political and intellectual forces necessitated a more coherent medical phenomenology. By the sixteenth century, Christian (i.e. Thomist) Aristotelianism provided the most promising system for an all-encompassing natural philosophy. Healing techniques that combined religious, magical, and medical elements, however, comprised stubborn paradoxes that were difficult to synthesize within this system.

Spaniards contributed little to the debates over superstition that raged in Germany and in France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but a series of witch hunts in the Basque Country in the early decades of the sixteenth century precipitated a robust intellectual and legal response to superstition in the Peninsula beginning in the 1520's. One of the preachers who witnessed the Basque hunts, Martín de Castañega, published Europe's first vernacular demonology in 1529. A year later, this discourse moved to the Castilian center with the contribution of Pedro Ciruelo, a prominent professor at the University of Alcalá. Despite their demonological orientation, these tracts were not typical witch-hunting manuals. They had more to say about healing than about

witches' covens. They considered – in great depth – the merits of healing talismans, amulets, relics, prayers, and the healing touch of saintly individuals. In part, these apprehensions reflected the day-to-day concerns of the preachers and prelates who were their target audience. The maintenance of health was a universal concern and popular culture included a gamut of practices that theologians considered questionable. Superstitious healing, however, also constituted a significant intellectual problem that generated sustained commentary that extended beyond simple pastoral concerns.

A persistent challenge to orthodox theology and natural philosophy in the sixteenth century was the possibility of healing effects caused by “natural magic.” Although the term is something of an oxymoron when considered from the vantage of the twenty-first century, early modern people used it to describe actions that had hidden (or occult) causes. For some, occult healing activities constituted an exciting area of research. In their investigations of the extraordinary cures of Spanish folk healers called *saludadores*, for instance, physicians and theologians considered whether the hidden cause of their healing virtue could be explained by their humoral complexion, the substances contained in their saliva, or the psychological effect of their treatments. Many authorities, however, abhorred occult causation and sought to maintain philosophical systems in which causes and effects were rationally explained and understood. For some of these theorists, demonology provided a useful mechanism to coherently describe mysterious cures. Ciruelo, for instance, argued for an expansive role of demons in describing a range of popular healing procedures and rituals. Catholic theorists could not, however, demonize all extraordinary cures. Deeply-rooted traditions held that God occasionally sent saintly individuals who possessed miraculous healing power. Establishing stable criteria to differentiate between holy and demonic cures, then, became a quest that spurred significant intellectual

production. To answer these questions, both natural philosophers and theologians increasingly relied on the authority of academic medicine for epistemological cues to better understand allegedly superstitious healing.

In addition to posing an intellectual challenge, superstitious healing also constituted a problem for institutions. As this dissertation argues, the management of healing played a significant role in the Spanish imperial project. Rationality and the establishment of consistent proof regimes were central components of imperial strength at a crucial moment when Spain came to see itself as the standard-bearer of a Catholic civilization that could be extended across the globe. The imposition of religio-medical rationalism, however, did not always fulfill the purported goal of purifying popular religion and holding healers to high standards. For theorists like Ciruelo, a rational understanding of healing involved the demonization of many common healing activities, and judges sometimes used demonological logic to unfairly punish women and ethnic minorities.

Any study that relies predominantly on the records of regulatory institutions runs the risk of generating a purely top-down model of historical change. The Inquisition produced a tremendous amount of archival documentation – a boon for historians – but these records have obvious limitations. Inquisitorial trial dossiers record interactions that were the result of particularly stilted power differentials. When their words were recorded, healers were often being held in secret prisons and threatened with torture. Trial documents nonetheless show that healers shaped their own narrative in sophisticated and creative ways. In addition to the voices of inquisitors and healers, trials also documented the perspectives of clergy, lawyers, magistrates, patients, and witnesses. When read critically, trial documents constitute a rich source for understanding the dynamics of medicine, healing, and belief at a local level.

My approach to this topic would not be possible without the groundwork laid by a generation of scholars who have woven together the threads of religio-medical rationalism. David Gentilcore, in particular, showed how Inquisition and Protomedicato records can be rich sources for the examination of the intellectual, religious, and medical lives of sixteenth-century men and women.³ Gentilcore's studies centered upon the healing geography of early modern Naples, a viceroyalty of the Spanish empire. Unlike fellow subjects of the Spanish crown in Sicily and Sardinia, Neapolitans escaped the grasp of the Spanish Inquisition by petitioning the Pope to institute an independent Papal Inquisition. Nonetheless, developments in Naples paralleled those of other areas of the Spanish Empire. As Gentilcore showed, healing was deeply integrated into Neapolitan religious culture. In times of need, people relied upon religious devotions to bring physical relief. The cult of the saints, for instance, was almost entirely centered upon supplications for divine healing. Underlying this religio-medical culture, however, was a persistent concern that misguided rituals might invite demonic meddling. Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, such concerns resulted in a multitude of inquisitorial trials for superstitious healing, which Gentilcore explored as rich sources of religious and medical history. Now, nearly two decades since the publication of his *Healers and Healing*, his central point still stands – reforming impulses, which he called “Tridentine,” strongly influenced (and in turn were influenced by) medical cultures.

Early modern Spain, however, presents a culture and chronology distinct from Gentilcore's Naples. As historians such as María Luz López Terrada have shown, the pluralistic

³ David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998); Gentilcore, “The Church, the Devil, and the Healing Activities of Living Saints in the Kingdom of Naples after the Council of Trent,” in *Medicine and the Reformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham (New York: Routledge, 1993), 134-155.

world of healing in Spain was tremendously diverse and varied even across Spanish regions.⁴ Categories of early modern Spanish healers – including the *ensalmadores* (psalmsayers) and *saludadores* studied in this dissertation – were distinctly Iberian and they did not directly correspond to healers found in southern Italy. Also, Spanish reform programs followed a trajectory distinct from the Tridentine model developed by Gentilcore. As this dissertation demonstrates, Spanish reform developed in three distinct phases. First, centralized reform initiatives began when the Inquisition and the Protomedicato were implemented in the late fifteenth century (earlier than in Naples) which led to an initial wave of trials against superstitious healers occurred in the 1520s-1560s. Then, in the Tridentine decades of the late-sixteenth century, persecution of superstitious healers nearly ceased in Spain. Philip II's government focused instead on the repression of *conversos*, *moriscos*, Protestants, and other religious deviants. I describe these decades as a moment of reconfiguration in policies towards both the holy and the demonic. Finally, in the early-seventeenth century, another Basque witch panic gave rise to a heightened intellectual and legal response to superstition, initiating the most active phase of trials against healers.

In the past decade or so, developments in the historiography of early modern superstition have opened new avenues for the study of Spanish Inquisition trials against healers.⁵ Argentine scholar Alejandro Campagne, for instance, has been prolific in describing, in incredible detail,

⁴ María Luz López Terrada, "Medical Pluralism in the Iberian Kingdoms: The Control of Extra-Academic Practitioners in Valencia," *Medical History Supplement* 29 (2010): 7-25; López Terrada, "Como saludador por barras de fuego entrando": la representación de las prácticas médicas extraacadémicas en el Teatro del Siglo de Oro," *Estudis: Revista de Historia Moderna* 38 (2012): 33-53.

⁵ For a sophisticated synthesis that encompasses all of Europe see Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250-1750*. On the fifteenth century see Michael Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Bailey, "A Late-Medieval Crisis of Superstition?" *Speculum* 84, no. 3 (2009): 633-661; Bailey, "Concern over Superstition in Late Medieval Europe," *Past and Present* 199, no. 3 (2008): 115-133; Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006): 383-404.

the development of Spanish anti-superstition literature and its intellectual reach.⁶ Following scholars such as Stuart Clark, he has shown how early modern Spanish demonology raised thorny metaphysical and epistemological issues that were central to the developments of early modern philosophy. In his analyses, Campagne has emphasized the important role that medicine played in Spanish demonology, calling it “the heart of the discourse.”⁷ Andrew Keitt has extended these insights in his studies of Spanish mysticism, examining the tensions between theology, natural philosophy, and medicine in the seventeenth century.⁸ His work has highlighted the unique conceptual problems that emerged when the human body became a “body of evidence” for the discernment of demons and the establishment of truth.⁹

Although Inquisition trials for magic and superstition have been studied extensively to write histories of witchcraft, they remain mostly untapped sources for understanding how early modern Spaniards conceptualized healing practices. By examining trial records for superstitious healing, this dissertation assesses the ways in which medicine, theology, and natural philosophy were appropriated and used *in situ* to make judgements regarding healers. The goals of this project are twofold: first, to analyze archival sources to offer textured accounts of early modern

⁶ Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus, Homo Superstitiosus: El discurso antisupersticioso en la España de los siglos XV a XVIII* (Madrid: Miño y Dávila, 2002); Campagne, “El sanador, el párroco y el inquisidor: Los saludadores y las fronteras de lo sobrenatural en la España del barroco,” *Studia histórica. Historia Moderna* 29 (2011): 306-41; Campagne, “Charismatic Healers on Iberian Soil: An Autopsy of a Mythical Complex of Early Modern Spain,” *Folklore* 118, no. 1 (2007): 44-64; Campagne, “Witchcraft and the Sense-of-the-Impossible in Spain: Some Reflections based on the Literature of Superstition (1500-1800),” *Harvard Theological Review* 96, no. 1 (2003): 25-62; Campagne, “Medicina y religion en el discurso antisupersticioso español de los siglos XVI a XVIII: Un combate por la hegemonía,” *Dynamis* 20 (2000) 417-456.

⁷ Campagne, *Homo Catholicus, Homo Superstitiosus*, 231-292.

⁸ Andrew Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred: Imposture, Inquisition, and the Boundaries of the Supernatural in Golden Ages Spain* (Boston: Brill, 2005); Keitt, “The Devil in the Old World: Anti-Superstition Literature, Medical Humanism, and Preternatural Philosophy in Early Modern Spain,” in *Angels, Demons, and the New World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 15-39; Keitt, “The Miraculous Body of Evidence: Visionary Experience, Medical Discourse, and the Inquisition in Seventeenth-Century Spain,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36 (2005): 77-96; Keitt, “Religious Enthusiasm, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Disenchantment of the World,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 2 (2004): 231-250.

⁹ Keitt, “The Miraculous Body of Evidence,” 77.

healing, and second, to explore the shifting cultural space in which healers worked in the sixteenth century as a consequence of the evolution of early modern institutions and modes of thought. Each chapter tells a piece of this story by focusing on a distinct type of healer. Chapter One presents an in-depth examination of psalmsaying healers called *ensalmadores* and the institutions that shaped their roles as socially marginal medical practitioners. It begins with a literary analysis of an *ensalmador* in the picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes* and then looks at how public health officials and inquisitors attempted to curtail deviance practiced by these healers. Chapter Two focuses on how demonological discourses changed social perceptions of midwives and female healers. Chapter Three examines healing along the axis of sanctity, comparing and contrasting the miraculous cures of saintly healers with those of a subcategory of popular healers called *saludadores* who utilized many of the same practices and symbols as saints, although they did so illicitly in the minds of many theologians who commented on their practices. Chapter Four studies trials against men who were in possession of allegedly heretical books of “secrets” – manuscript compendia of alchemical, empirical, and magical knowledge used for healing purposes. I examine how these men were participating in alternatives to the scholastic discourse and the perceived threat that they posed to orthodoxy. Finally, the conclusion projects these trends into the seventeenth century, examining how baroque uncertainties made the project of religio-medical rationalization – as it was constructed – increasingly untenable.

Chapter 1

Charlatans, Vagrants, and Drunks? Psalmsaying, Deviance, and the Institutional Response to Religio-Medical Healers

In March 1535, a healer named Francisco Goidos was publicly condemned in an inquisitorial *auto de fe*, given forty lashes, and paraded around the city of Toledo on an ass.¹⁰ He wore a noose around his neck and was followed by a town crier who proclaimed his wrongdoing. Goidos was an “*ensalmador*” – someone who cured illnesses and lesions by performing a ritual that included prayers based upon the psalms. Apparently, Goidos had a predilection for drinking wine and an uncouthness when discussing religious matters. The Inquisition had been investigating him for two years, an investigation that had been initiated by neighbors who had reported Goidos to the tribunal for sacrilege and blasphemy. He allegedly said, among other things, that the Christian prophets were liars and that judgment day would not proceed as forecast in the Bible. While investigating these outbursts, inquisitors became concerned about how Goidos’ blaspheming might affect his healing.

The Inquisition forced Goidos to produce written versions of his *ensalmos* (prayers) which were subjected to close inspection. They interviewed several of Goidos’ acquaintances, asking about his religious sensibilities, the nature of his cures, and his reputation in town. During

¹⁰ A.H.N., INQ 203, exp. 10.

Goidos' detention, they called him to an *audiencia* during which they inquired into his ancestry, his beliefs, and his procedures as a healer. One inquisitor surmised that Goidos was nothing but a madman and a drunk, and recommended further inquiries into his mental state (*que se haga diligencia si el dicho Francisco Goidos es hombre loco y fuera de su juicio*). Other Inquisition officials took Goidos' cures more seriously. After a thorough investigation, the prosecuting attorney formally accused Goidos of heresy and the use of prohibited words, and upon reviewing the charge, the court's senior inquisitors convicted him, ruling that he must appear in the *auto de fé* and relinquish his *oficio* as a healer (“*no use más del oficio de ensalmador ni ensalme a personas de alguna manera*”).

What did inquisitors mean when they referred to Goidos' vocation as an *oficio*/office? Though these healers were often seen as marginal members of society – mendicant laymen who gave blessings in search of their next meal or drink – their occupation was indeed an *oficio* in the sense that it occupied a semi-legitimate role in the pluralistic world of early modern Spanish medicine. Often, *ensalmadores* provided rudimentary medical care along with their religious services. They were popular in many disadvantaged communities where any relief from illness was welcome, especially if it came at a low price. The office of the *ensalmador*, however, that was relatively new. Charms, enchantments, and a wide range of healing prayers, of course, can be traced back to Christian antiquity, but the *ensalmador* – as a culturally-recognized category – only emerged around the beginning of the sixteenth century. The earliest records show that they were, at times, even licensed and extended formal legitimacy by religious and government officials. For instance, the 1477 foundational charter of the state-run medical regulatory agency the *Real Protomedicao* included the provision that *ensalmadores* – like apothecaries, surgeons,

and physicians – could apply for licenses that affirmed their legal practice and recognized status.¹¹

As this chapter examines, however, attitudes and procedures regarding *ensalmadores* changed significantly in the sixteenth century. Goidos' shift in status from a semi-legitimate healer to a condemned heretic reflects a contemporary shift in legal and cultural attitudes towards healers. In the decades following its inception, the Protomedicato revoked its recognition of *ensalmadores* after officials in Madrid and Valladolid began receiving complaints questioning the legitimacy of healing with *ensalmos* and reporting the abuses of predatory licensing officials who charged for their seal of approval. Anti-vagrancy initiatives limited the movement of mendicant healers and access to lodging in hospitals. Erasmian religious reformers chided *ensalmadores* who preyed upon the credulous. Influenced by continental scholastics, however, reform initiatives shifted when Spaniard jurists and theologians also began contributing to demonological literature that condemned verbal healing formulae as heresy. Five years before the Goidos trial, for instance, the professor of theology at the nearby University of Alcalá, Pedro Ciruelo, published a widely circulated anti-superstition polemic entitled *Reprobación de las supersticiones* (1530) that declared the alleged healing powers of *ensalmadores* to have no basis in nature and, if effective at all, likely to be the result of a demonic pact.

Despite the evidence that they played a significant role early modern medicine and culture, *ensalmadores* have only been afforded scant historiographical attention. They were completely overlooked by the foundational twentieth-century studies of Spanish medicine, and

¹¹ *Archivo General de Simancas*, Catálogo XIII, vol. I, no. 74, fol. 362. This and many other foundational documents of the *Protomedicato* are reproduced in Rafael Muñoz Garrido and Carmen Muñiz Fernández, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española: siglos XIII-XIX* (Salamanca: Instituto de Historia de la Medicina Española, Universidad de Salamanca, 1969).

more recent studies of the social history of Spanish medicine afford them only brief glances.¹²

This chapter, then, serves as the first sustained study of *ensalmadores* in early modern Spain. It examines their socio-cultural role as marginal medical practitioners and introduces the institutions that regulated and punished them.

Definitions

The practice of healing with *ensalmos* was, in many ways, an outgrowth of Catholic blessings. According to Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 dictionary *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, an *ensalmo* was: "a certain way of curing with prayers; sometimes alone, other times applied together with other remedies."¹³ Defining the verb *ensalmar*, he wrote:

For one, it sometimes means to treat a head wound, for when it is necessary to put a bandage on the head, *ensalmadores* tend to give a benediction first and then make crosses over the injured or wounded part. They are called *ensalmos* because they are often made of verses of the psalmbook, from which the first letter of words, full, or partial verses are taken to make amulets for various illnesses.¹⁴

Covarrubias' definition is useful for being so inclusive. It includes multiple elements – oral benedictions, the physical ritual of making crosses, the scriptural provenance of the formulae, and the production of written *ensalmos* to be used in protective amulets. In practice, these elements could exist alone, or used in several possible combinations. As such, the *ensalmo* could

¹² María Luz López Terrada, "Las prácticas médicas extraacadémicas en la ciudad de Valencia durante los siglos XVI y XVII," *Dynamis: Acta Hispanica ad Medicinae Scientiarumque. Historiam Illustrandam* 22 (2002), 103; Carolin Schmitz, "Los enfermos en la España barroca (1600-1740) y el pluralismo médico: espacios, estrategias y actitudes" (PhD diss., University of Valencia, 2016), 94-100.

¹³ Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (Madrid, 1611). "Cierta modo de curar con oraciones; unas veces solas, otras aplicando juntamente algunos remedios."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, "Ensalmar a una, a veces significa descabrarle, porque tiene necesidad de que le aten alguna venda a la cabeza, de las cuales suelen usar los ensalmadores, bendiciéndolas primero y haciendo con ellas ciertas cruces sobre la parte llagada o herida. Dijéronse ensalmos porque de ordinario usan de versos del Salterio y dellos con las letras iniciativas de letra por verso o por parte, hacen unas sortijas, para diversas enfermedades. Todo esto ha de pasar por la censura de los dichos señores y lo demás es todo superstición."

have multiple meanings depending on the type of *ensalmo* used, the *ensalmador* who performed them, and the social context of the ceremony.

Healing, Psalmsaying, and Deviance in *Lazarillo de Tormes*

Before entering into legal issues provoked by the practices of *ensalmadores*, it will be useful to first illustrate the cultural space that they moved within. Sixteenth-century healers were products of a unique hybridization of religious and medical cultural expectations within a certain (usually lower-class) social milieu. The line between genuine healing and charlatanism was porous, and the activity often attracted Spain's most marginalized individuals. This constellation of social and religious alterity is perhaps nowhere more famously illustrated than in the 1554 picaresque novella *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which prominently features an *ensalmador* among its cast of destitute characters and wily tricksters.

As a work of fiction, *Lazarillo de Tormes*'s characterization of healing depends upon literary tropes and audience expectations and as such it retains a degree of separation from the flesh-and-blood healers whose lives will be analyzed in greater detail below, but a brief foray into literary analysis can be useful for establishing the language and cultural vocabulary that was available for talking about healing and deviance within the context of sixteenth-century Catholic reform. The book, by an anonymous author, is known for the realism of its depiction of Renaissance Spain's urban underworld, and it was revolutionary in this regard. *Lazarillo* is seen as the archetype of the picaresque genre that surveyed the Spanish cultural milieu through a first-person fictional narrative told from the perspective of a member of the popular classes. The protagonist of the story, Lázaro (sometimes called by his diminutive *Lazarillo*, "little Lázaro"), was a youth from the Castilian region of Salamanca who moved among vagabonds and petty thieves. Each chapter of the novella recounts Lázaro's experiences while working as a servant to

a series of masters – a blind man, a priest, a squire, a friar, a pardoner, a chaplain, a bailiff, and an archpriest. In addition to providing amusement, *Lazarillo* offered a biting social critique that exposed hypocrisy at all levels of society. One of the most memorable characters in the book was Lázaro’s first master (and putative mentor), the blind man who made his living as a traveling *ensalmador*.

The story is told from the perspective of Lázaro himself who sketches a multifaceted portrait of marginality by relating a series of episodes beginning with his unfortunate upbringing. He describes how he was “literally born on the river Tormes” in the mill of his father, a dishonest man named Tomé whose life fell into a downward spiral that caused him to abandon Lázaro and his family while the boy was still young. Tomé stole from his clients, and once caught and brought to justice, he found himself so desperate and shamed that he decided to undertake religious crusade in the imperial “armada against the Moors” to make money and pay for his sins.¹⁵ He took up the position of a lowly servant – as a groom for a noble cavalryman – and perished in his undertaking.¹⁶ To support her family, Lázaro’s now widowed mother, Antona, went to the city of Salamanca to undertake menial labor cooking for university students and laundering at stables. There, she met an enslaved black stableman with the Arabic-sounding

¹⁵ Lázaro’s mother later says that he died “glorifying the faith in Los Gelves.” Most scholars agree that this refers to the Spanish military expedition led by García de Toledo in 1510 that attacked fortifications along the Barbary Coast and attempted to establish an imperial presence in Djerba, an island off of modern Tunisia. Alternately, Marcel Bataillon posits that Antona is referring to a later voyage led by Hugo de Moncada in 1520, bringing the reference chronologically closer to the likely date of the book’s composition. *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes*, ed. Aldo Ruffinatto (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 2001), 117, n. 50.

¹⁶ Groomsman, or *acemilero*, was a lowly position that was often reserved for *moriscos* and other slaves. In a phrase left suggestively ambiguous, Lázaro says that “*se hizo cierta armada contra moros, entre los cuales fue mi padre*,” which can be read as meaning that his father was either among the crusaders *or* that he was among the Moors. The cultural link between alterity, deviance, and moorishness was strong in contemporary society, and it is made explicit in the description of Antona’s next lover.

name of Zayde with whom she had a relationship that produced a half-brother for Lázaro.¹⁷ Zayde stole from his master to provide for the family until he was caught and punished harshly by flogging and scalding with oil, while Lázaro's mother received a hundred lashes as an abettor of Zayde's crimes.¹⁸ Driven to desperation, Antona found work at an inn where she suffered "a thousand indignities," and when a blind guest of the inn asked if he could take Lázaro as an assistant and guide, promising to treat him like a son, his mother was in no position to refuse.

Lázaro depicts his blind master living on the margins of society as an *ensalmador* who dragged Lázaro along as he wandered through Castile eking out a menial existence by begging and performing religious healing services. Lázaro describes him as someone who was both loathsome and shrewd, who spoke the language of the streets and knew countless scams.¹⁹ For a penny he would perform *ensalmos* on demand – or at least the beginning of an *ensalmo* – until the patron walked away and Lázaro would pull the blind man's cape signaling that he could begin calling for the next benefactor. Lázaro quickly learned the means and morals of this lifestyle, and found countless ways to pilfer from his master in turn. Knowing that the blind man counted all of his coins, Lázaro would receive the penny from the donor then quickly exchange it for a half-penny that he kept in his mouth, effectively swiping half of the profit.

¹⁷ Zayde's Arabic name suggests that he was either captured on the Barbary Coast or was sold by Muslim traders. On contemporary Mediterranean slavery see Robert C. Davis, *Holy War and Human Bondage: Tales of Christian-Muslim Slavery in the Early-Modern Mediterranean* (Santa Barbara, CA.: Praeger/ABC-CLIO, 2009).

¹⁸ "Al triste de mi padrastro le açotaron y pringaron, y a mi madre pusieron pena por justicia, sobre el acostumbrado centenario, que en casa del sobredicho comendador no entrasse, ni al lastimado Zayde en la suya acogiesse," 20. Quotes and page numbers will be from the edition edited by Francisco Rico (Madrid: Catedra, 1990); translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

¹⁹ Lázaro describes the blind man's manner of speaking as *jerigonza*, which Covarrubias defines as "the language that the blind use to understand one another;" or more broadly, the term could mean street slang used by vagabonds as Villalón makes clear in *Gramática castellana* (1558); see *Lazarillo de Tormes*, ed. Francisco Rico, 23, n. 46.

From Lázaro's viewpoint, the performance of *ensalmos* was an act of cunning, one that the blind man performed with great skill. In an extended passage, Lázaro the narrator details the blind man's practices:

Know [says Lázaro] that God never created a man so astute and wise since he created the world. In his office he was an eagle. He knew over a hundred prayers by heart. His voice was so low and powerful that he could shake a church when he prayed; and while doing so he put on a good countenance, so humble and devout, without any of the unseemly gestures or sideways glances that the others were apt to make. He used this, and a thousand other tricks, to make money.²⁰

Clearly, Lázaro resents his master and sees him as a charlatan, but he also has a certain admiration for his skills. The *ensalmo* was, like many other elements of popular Catholicism, performative, and the blind man was a deft performer in Lázaro's eyes. He admires the conviction in his countenance, voice, and gestures, which was, in some ways, as important as the efficacy of the cures. The performance, though, was utterly fraudulent, a deceit born of vice.

Regarding the blind man's clientele and his specific healing capacities, Lázaro continues [following the previous passage]:

He knew how to say *ensalmos* for multiple and diverse effects: for barren women, for those who were giving birth, and for unhappily married wives so that their husbands would love them. He gave prognostications for pregnant women who desired to know whether they carried a son or daughter. ...

With this he gained a following, mostly women, who believed everything he said. And through this type of artifice he benefitted greatly, making more money in a month than a

²⁰ Here is the full passage in the original Spanish, which I break into three sections for analysis: "Sepa que desde que Dios crió el mundo, ninguno formó más astuto ni sagaz: en su oficio era un águila; ciento y tantas oraciones sabía de coro; un tono bajo, reposado y muy sonable, que hacía resonar la iglesia donde rezaba; un rostro humilde y devoto, que con muy buen continente ponía cuando rezaba, sin hacer gestos ni visages con boca ni ojos, como otros suelen hacer. Allende desto, tenía otras mil formas y maneras para sacar el dinero. Decía saber oraciones para muchos y diversos efectos: para mujeres que no parían; para las que estaban de parto; para las que eran malcasadas, que sus maridos las quisiesen bien. Echaba pronósticos las preñadas: si traía hijo o hija. Pues en caso de medicina decía que Galeno no supo la mitad que él para muela, desmayos, males de madre. Finalmente, nadie le decía padecer alguna pasión que luego no le decía:

– Haced esto, hareís estotro, cosed tal hierba, tomad la raíz.

Con esto andábase todo el mundo tras él, especialmente mujeres, que cuanto les decía creían. Déstas sacaba él grandes provechos con las artes que digo, y ganaba más en un mes que cien ciegos en un año," 26-27.

hundred blind men in a year.

Here, the blind man's choice to focus his ministrations upon women is intended to underline the deceptive nature of his cures. The relative lack of female access to power limited women's avenues of redress if they suspected duplicity. This was especially true in moments of vulnerability – during pregnancy, childbirth, or marital quarrels – when women sought medical and social support outside of professional male-dominated channels. There is also more than a hint of misogyny in this passage, with Lázaro parroting a common cultural attitude that females were overly credulous and thus susceptible to misplace their trust and participate in superstitious beliefs.

In addition to his religious performance, Lázaro suggests that the blind man also provided care that can be recognized as more traditionally medical:

When speaking of medicine, [the blind man] would say that Galen never knew half as much as he for toothaches, fainting, or feminine maladies. Finally, when someone complained to him of some pain he would immediately say to them: “Do this, do that, take this herb, take that root.”

The blind man's claim that he knew more than Galen was obvious hyperbole, but this passage does demonstrate that the *ensalmador* straddled the boundaries between religion and medicine, and his healing sometimes extended beyond prayer to include natural remedies. Later in the novella, after leaving the blind man, Lázaro himself needed healing after being struck on the head by a subsequent abusive master. This time, after returning to consciousness, Lázaro found his head covered with oils and unguents, and an elderly *ensalmadera* (a female *ensalmador*) came to remove his bandages and to heal the wound.²¹ This time, the treatment is depicted as a

²¹ “A esta hora entró una vieja que ensalmaba, y los vecinos; y comiéndanme a quitar trapos de la cabeza y curar el garrotazo,” 70.

common form of healing, without the implication of malfeasance. The impoverished Lázaro was not being deceived, since he knew the tricks of *ensalmadores*, but in this case the *ensalmadera* is, without irony, portrayed as a healthcare provider.²²

Moralizing and Vice in *Lazarillo* and Beyond

What is the reader supposed to make of the blind *ensalmador*? What point was the anonymous author trying to put forward? There is no mention here of demons nor any stance on whether *ensalmos* were divinely inspired or depraved. Instead, the blind man's performance of the *ensalmo* was portrayed as vulgar artifice, a crass gesture in the eyes of the author. While *ensalmos* themselves are portrayed as dubious, implications of heresy are left aside and the author's focus is on the moral failings of the practitioner. This attitude is characteristic of a certain humanistic strand of sixteenth-century moral discourse that condemned superstition as a vice.

A constant point of contention in the critical scholarship on *Lazarillo* has centered upon the degree to which the novella was influenced by the great humanist moralizer Erasmus of Rotterdam. Erasmus himself reveled in the mockery of psalmsayers in his 1511 *In Praise of Folly* (*Moriae Encomium*) – perhaps the sixteenth century's most famous satire – in which Folly personified details her fondness for those simpletons whom she enchants:

Now who could be more foolish – rather, who could be happier – than those who assure themselves that they will have the very ultimate felicity because they have recited daily those seven little verses from the holy psalms? ... Such absurdities are so foolish that even I am most ashamed of them, but still they are approved not only by the common

²² Similarly, in the *entremés* (theatrical interlude) attributed to Cervantes called *Los mirones* a blind man explains that his mother sent him to an *ensalmadera* “por ahorrar del dotor” (to spare the expense of a physician); John Slater and María Luz López Terrada, “Scenes of Mediation: Staging Medicine in the Spanish Interludes” *Social History of Medicine* 24, no. 2 (2011), 234.

people but even by learned teachers of religion.²³

This attitude reflects in lighthearted form Erasmus' more sober theological work that pointed to psalmsaying as a form of religious vanity, characteristic of the superficial mechanical piety that he despised. The genius of Erasmus, though, was in his delicacy. He looked upon the poor and the uneducated with compassion, and he made distinctions between those who, for lack of knowledge, said psalms with pure faith and those who used them as charms and enchantments.²⁴ This attitude sidesteps questions about whether the rituals that characterized popular Catholicism were legitimate forms of Christian worship, and instead critiques them as sins of excess. Erasmus' moralistic critique of superstition had theological precedents in the writings of church fathers such as Jerome, but it contrasted with the prevailing Thomist-scholastic approach that preferred to evaluate superstition through a rationalistic and metaphysical lens.²⁵

First published in 1554, banned in 1559, and re-released in a censored 1573 edition, *Lazarillo* was a controversial work that appeared during a significant period of political and intellectual change as the generation of Spanish Erasmians was dying out and being replaced by a generation whose reform efforts were cultivated in opposition to a very real threat of Protestant Reformation. While the Council of Trent (1545-1563) was setting an international Catholic agenda for Counter-Reformation, the Monarchy's government in Madrid was also formulating a coordinated response to religio-political disturbances. Under the leadership of Philip II, who acceded to the throne in 1556, the Spanish state immediately deployed a more activist program of censorship. Under the direction of the Inquisition's Supreme Council, a Spanish Index of

²³ Desiderius Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly*, trans. Clarence H. Miller (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 65.

²⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, *A Book Called in Latin Enchiridion militis christiani, and in English The Manual of the Christian Knight* (London: Methuen & Co., 1905), 48.

²⁵ James Tracy, *Erasmus: The Growth of a Mind* (Geneva: Droz, 1972), 95-96; Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 37.

Prohibited Books was published in 1559, which banned thousands of works including *Lazarillo* and most of Erasmus' writing. After protests, *Lazarillo* was allowed to re-emerge with controversial sections expurgated. Censorship mostly focused on the book's anti-clerical jabs, but interestingly the episode with the blind *ensalmador* was left intact in the expurgated edition. The largest excision from the book was the deletion of a chapter that presented a different type of false purveyor of miracles.

The deleted chapter of *Lazarillo* follows Lázaro's sojourn with the *ensalmador*, and it tells the story of his experiences with a new wandering master, a priest who sold papal bulls of indulgence. He too was viewed with suspicion when he entered towns promising to save souls in exchange for coins, but he devised an ingenious and devious scheme to build confidence and increase sales. The bull-seller staged a scene in which a seemingly righteous challenger charged into the sanctuary while the priest was delivering a fiery sermon. The challenger proclaimed that the priest was a greedy fraud, and for a moment his argument swayed the crowd. Seemingly out of desperation, the priest called for a sign from God to affirm his righteousness, and the challenger fell to the ground and began convulsing as if he had been stricken down from above. The crowd gasped, and the bull-selling priest – in complete control of the situation – began a quiet and somber prayer that healed the man. Sharing the perspective of his assistant Lázaro, however, the reader knows that the entire performance was artifice, planned in advance by the priest and the 'challenger' who split the enormous profits garnered from selling bulls to the awestruck populace.

Why was this episode banned while the tale of the blind *ensalmador* remained? Both passages depicted false miracles and warned against gullibility and superstition. The second, though, had more toxic implications since the false miracles were performed by a priest. The

bull-seller's deceptions called into doubt the reliability of the institutional Church and the types of piety enacted on its stage. This episode also presents a powerful critique of the economy of grace and the sale of bulls of indulgences – a practice so controversial that it was one of the principal sparks of the Lutheran Reformation. The tale of the blind *ensalmador*, in contrast, was open to a more ambivalent set of readings. While it could provoke questioning of orthodox benedictions and the nature of healing grace, in its condemnation of immorality and excessive lay enthusiasm the account of spurious healing could also be read as an endorsement of the official ideology. Juxtaposing the two sections, however, shows how anti-superstition polemic opened a difficult dialogue concerning popular religion. In the context of sixteenth-century reform, the Church intended to eliminate questionable forms of devotion, but it needed to do so in a way that did not tear down the edifice of Catholicism as a whole.

Healers, deviance, Social Initiatives in Toledo

The picture of healers as socially marginalized individuals and sometimes moral deviants comes into greater focus when we depart from literary texts and examine archival records from municipal institutions. As texts written for legal and administrative purposes, municipal records do not offer the narrative detail of a novel, but they do present a composite portrait of a life seen through the lenses of a range of contemporaries. Fortunately for the researcher, central Castile had a relatively sophisticated bureaucracy and steadfast archivists who preserved a sizable corpus of notarial records and trial dossiers that documented the activities healers and the perceptions of their contemporaries. An examination of these records demonstrates how the growing power of the early modern state served to further define and restrict their activities.

Records from criminal lawsuits are often particularly revelatory. Trials against healers were conducted by men educated in law and/or theology, and in addition to their voices, trial

proceedings record the thoughts and opinions of the accused and of neighbors and witnesses, offering a sense of the social meanings that were attached to healers and their practices. The region of Toledo preserved a particularly rich set of trial documents largely because Toledo's civil government acted as a corporate entity that held legal jurisdiction over the city and its hinterland without the oversight of a noble lord. In 1246, the city extended its jurisdiction by paying Ferdinand III, king of Castile and León, to annex the adjacent mountainous section of the La Mancha region.²⁶ To administer law in the *montes*, it created a magistracy called the *fiel de juzgado* that oversaw criminal and civil litigation in the region, holding trials and also hearing appeals from the courts of village magistrates (*alcaldes*). The office was something of an anomaly in early modern Spain. Not only did the office of the *fiel de juzgado* standardize the recording of transcripts for trials in the region – which were still conducted orally and undocumented in most of the country – it also created a permanent archive for trial registers. Typically, upper-level magistrates (*corregidores*) were responsible for their own papers, and after they finished their terms and submitted their records for the mandatory process of judicial review, many discarded them or took them home, which explains why most municipal and seigneurial court records have been lost to subsequent researchers. Over eight thousand trial documents, however, have survived from Toledo's *fiel de juzgado*, providing an exceptional glance into everyday criminality in early modern Spain.²⁷

The healing activities of *ensalmadores* usually fell outside the jurisdiction of the *fiel de juzgado*, but these healers do appear when they were implicated in criminal cases. For instance,

²⁶ Richard L. Kagan, *Lawsuits and Litigants in Castile, 1500-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 81.

²⁷ On the court and its functioning see Richard L. Kagan *Lawsuits and Litigants in Castile, 1500-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), esp. ch. 4; Scott K. Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Alfredo Rodríguez González, *Justicia y criminalidad en Toledo y sus montes en la edad moderna* (Toledo: Ayuntamiento de Toledo, 2009).

the link between healing and deviance is demonstrated in proceedings brought against individuals such as Marco Antonio de Contreras and Feliciano Sanchez, Aragonese men who were arrested on criminal charges in the village of Pulgar in 1611.²⁸ Like the blind man in *Lazarillo*, the duo were marginalized individuals who travelled through Toledo performing religious *ensalmos* in exchange for money. They were staying in the town's hospital – a common refuge for vagabonds – and they aroused suspicion for transporting a goat and a lamb that were “scandalously” mistreated. According to the court's description, Antonio “said prayers and recited saints' lives for those who paid for them, *as is customary*.”²⁹ The two men claimed that they had been given the livestock as payment for prayers that they had offered for local shepherds, but Pulgar's priest assumed that they were stolen. The animals were taken from the Aragonese and they were placed in prison. The case, however, ended without a formal judgment, the defendants released after Antonio petitioned the judge to discharge the case because “he was poor and had a small child and a crippled wife.”³⁰

These were typical lives of healers arrested in Toledo, a land of economic contrasts where the poor were attracted to activities like psalmsaying as an alternative source of income. In *Lazarillo*, Lázaro and the blind man left Salamanca for Toledo because, as the blind man said, it was a wealthier area and “The rich miser gives more than the charitable beggar.”³¹ Indeed, as seat of the archbishopric Toledo was traditionally a cultural and spiritual capital of Castile. Charles V often resided there with his imperial court, and although the administrative capital was

²⁸ A.M.T., 6350/4424 (note that the case was previously catalogued as 576/55 prior to the Archive's recent renovation and reorganization); the case is cited in Alfredo Rodríguez González, “Los límites de la persecución: heterodoxia y procesos judiciales,” in *Religión y heterodoxias en el mundo hispánico: siglos XIV-XVIII*, ed. Ricardo Izquierdo Benito and Fernando Martínez Gil (Madrid: Sílex, 2011), 77.

²⁹ “es rezador y reza oraciones y vidas de santos y devociones por quien se las paga como es uso y costumbre,” A.M.T., 6350/4424, 6; emphasis mine.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Lazarillo de Tormes*, 27.

moved to nearby Madrid by Philip II in 1561, Toledo continued to be a wealthy and important urban center on the Castilian plateau. The structure of society, though, left many Toledans impoverished, with the vast majority at the bottom of the social pyramid laboring for long hours for low pay. In the sixteenth century, population increases and several waves of migration to Toledo made the poor more concentrated and visible, and the problem was exacerbated by periodic plagues and famines. In 1558, when the city was in the depths of one of its periods of disaster, parish poor lists were drawn up to determine how many persons were in need of public assistance. They show that 11,105 people – nearly twenty percent of the city’s population – were considered to be in a state of poverty.³²

At the time, a vigorous debate was in progress over how society and government should treat the poor. In Castile, laws against vagrancy had been sporadically enforced since at least the mid-fourteenth century, but in the 1520’s the issue became a central concern in Spain and throughout Europe.³³ One of the most influential contributors to the discourse was the humanist (and one of the alleged authors of *Lazarillo de Tormes*), Juan Luis Vives. Vives was born into a *converso* family in Valencia, but to avoid inquisitorial persecution³⁴ he lived his life in exile in Paris, England, and eventually the Habsburg Netherlands where welfare reform was being carried out in the 1520’s. Vives’ 1526 treatise, *De subventionem pauperum*, crystallized and articulated many of the issues at stake in Bruges, and his work became an important point of

³² Linda Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 113-114.

³³ See Robert Jutte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); *Health Care and Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Europe*, ed. Ole Peter Grell et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999) Maureen Flynn, *Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain 1400-1700* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

³⁴ Vives’ father was executed by the Valencian inquisition in 1525; see Miguel de la Pinta Lorente and José María de Palacio, *Procesos inquisitoriales contra la familia judía de Juan Luis Vives* (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1964).

reference when the issue occupied Castilian reformers in the following decades.³⁵ Vives argued that inordinate numbers of beggars posed a threat to the social order and public health, and he was one of the first to offer a comprehensive program for dealing with them. He divided beggars into three groups: the impotent, the able bodied, and foreigners (those who were not from the town). He suggested that beggars be convened in a public square where they would be registered and interrogated. Those who claimed a legitimate infirmity – like the blind *ensalmador* in *Lazarillo* – would be inspected by a doctor, and if approved, would receive public care in a hospital. Able bodied beggars, though, were objects of scorn in Vives’ eyes. He recommended that they be forced into labor or, if foreigners, expelled.

Many of Vives’ principles were translated into legislation in 1540 when, following an increase in poverty brought on by a disastrous drought and crop failure, Emperor Charles V promulgated a new poor law in the crown of Castile. Issued by Cardinal Juan de Tavera, Inquisitor General and Archbishop of Toledo, the law established a licensing system that allowed the so-called deserving poor – the lame, the one armed, the palsied and the aged – to beg in their home cities. All others were to find jobs. Mendicant friars also needed a begging license, and the only people who were exempt were the blind and pilgrims on their way to Santiago.³⁶ Feigned paupers and vagabonds were to be punished. The enforcement of this law is described in *Lazarillo* when the narrator says that “since there was a shortage of grain in the region that year, the city council decreed that all paupers from outside should leave town under the threat of flogging. The law went into effect, and, four days after the proclamation, I saw a procession of

³⁵ A Latin/English critical edition has been published as *De subventionem pauperum* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

³⁶ Linda Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo*, 20.

paupers being flogged in the Cuatro Caminos [Toledo's central square]."³⁷ Lázaro looked upon the event with horror and was dissuaded from begging.

Castile's mendicant orders were staunchly opposed to the new legislation, and the Poor Law's most prominent enemy was the Dominican friar and University of Salamanca professor Domingo de Soto. In a 1545 treatise entitled *Deliberación en la causa de los pobres*, Soto argued that the line between the deserving and underserving poor was an artificial one.³⁸ Government should not have the authority to decide who should receive charity, especially because public resources were insufficient to provide for those in need. His argument rested upon the Christian principle of almsgiving, and much of his work explored the theological imperative to provide for the poor. In his opinion, charitable giving should be a personal and voluntary act that bestowed grace upon the giver regardless of the moral state of the receiver. Additionally, denying beggars was cruel and it could lead them to greater vice. Like his contemporaries, Soto questioned the personal morality of vagabonds, but he advocated for their freedom of movement. He argued that the poor should be free to move, comparing them to ants "that have to search for the richest part of the plant." Expelling vagabonds was an ineffective solution, he thought, because it simply shifted the problem from one place to another, usually from cities to smaller towns and villages where they could cause more damage.³⁹

Soto's caveats remained influential, but the main currents of Castilian thought and policy tended to follow the Vives paradigm of distinguishing between the deserving poor and the

³⁷ *Lazarillo de Tormes*, 93; On this passage as it relates to contemporary debates on poverty see Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Espiritualidad y literatura en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Alfaguera, 1968), 115-137; also see Anne J. Cruz, *Discourses of Poverty: Social Reform and the Picaresque Novel in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

³⁸ Domingo de Soto, *Deliberación en la causa de los pobres* (Salamanca, 1545).

³⁹ Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo*, 24-27.

vagabonds. Soto's principal intellectual opponent was the Benedictine abbot of San Vicente, Salamanca, Juan de Robles, who vilified vagabonds and emphasized that they unjustly absorbed charity that should be given to the weak and the infirm. In 1552, this approach led to Philip II's pragmatic that ordered vagabonds to be subjected to service as oarsmen in the king's galleys, although this law seems to have been seldom enforced. Complaints about the increasing number of vagabonds led to an overhaul of the Poor Law in 1565 that reformed licensing provisions and created a new governmental position, the *alguacil de vagabundos*, whose function was to see that vagabonds were to be brought to justice.⁴⁰

By the second half of the sixteenth century, efforts at poor relief concentrated upon the consolidation and provisioning of hospitals.⁴¹ Premodern hospitals were usually small institutions run by religious confraternities and their purpose was to house and shelter the most vulnerable populations. They provided a bed, warmth, and food to pilgrims, the sick, and the infirm. The quality of their care and provisions, though, varied widely. Medical care was often only a secondary concern and some hospitals even explicitly rejected the sick due to lack of resources. The 1563 constitution of Santísima Trinidad Hospital in Medina del Campo, for instance, mandated that paupers would be received but the sick would only be admitted with a gift of silver or gold that would fund their care.⁴² There was a perception held by church and state officials alike, though, that the hospital system was inadequate, inefficient, and that funds were being misappropriated.

⁴⁰ *El gran debate sobre los pobres en el siglo XVI. Domingo de Soto y Juan de Robles, 1545*, ed. Félix Santolaria Sierra (Barcelona: Ariel, 2003).

⁴¹ On hospitals see John Arrizabalaga, "Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Castile: An Overview," in *Health Care and Poor Relief in Counter-Reformation Europe*, ed. Ole Peter Grell et al. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 151-176; Anastasio Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores en la Castilla del siglo XVI* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1993), 83-91.

⁴² The full hospital constitution is reproduced in Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores*, 107-126.

Reformers sought to improve the system of social and medical assistance by merging the hospitals into one or two larger institutions per city. The reform process relied upon partnerships between church and crown. Clergymen petitioned for reform at the Council of Trent, and in 1567 Pope Pius V instructed Spanish bishops to oversee the charitable activities of confraternities and to make efforts to centralize the administration of hospitals. The crown had long been aware of abuses in hospital administration – throughout the sixteenth century the Castilian *cortes* presented a steady stream of petitions to the monarch detailing problems and recommending consolidation – although administrators delayed reform until the 1580’s when Philip II’s government put in motion a program to audit the finances of hospitals and to reduce their number in the major Castilian cities.⁴³

Judicial sources offer a more fine-grained lens to view both the gritty conditions of Castilian hospitals and the ways in which healers moved through them. Marco Antonio de Contreras and Feliciano Sanchez, the suspected goat thieves described above, were staying in a hospital. And in another case from the *montes* from 1632, three *saludadores* engaged in violent dispute in a hospital that ended in two of them, Lázaro Gómez and Luís Ponte, murdering their companion.⁴⁴ Perhaps the most colorful example of a healer tried for deviant behavior while staying a hospital, though, can be found in the Inquisition trial of Alonso García de Quiñones, arrested by the Toledo tribunal in 1607 for “dishonest words.”⁴⁵

Alonso was a stationer (*papelero*) by trade, but took up the life of a wandering *saludador*. Witnesses described him as a poor vagrant and at the time he was sleeping at the hospital in the

⁴³ Michele Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II’s Spain: Shared Interests, Competing Authorities* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 159.

⁴⁴ A.M.T., 6336/4091.

⁴⁵ A.H.N., INQ 70, exp. 40.

town of La Guardia. Garcia asserted that he had a God-given power to heal and, like many *saludadores*, he claimed that his healing grace was confirmed by the fact that he could enter into a burning oven without suffering injury. Part of his activity as a *saludador* consisted of distributing wooden sticks that would act as talismans to ward off illnesses caused by the evil eye. Presumably these sticks would act like contact relics that assumed power by merely being in contact with his holy person. Additionally, he also reputedly resuscitated a sick ox while in La Guardia with prayers and by burning herbal incense. His healing, though, only played a minor role in the Inquisition's case against him. The act that led to his arrest occurred in the hospital where the warden found him in bed with a prostitute and another man. When the town's magistrate was called, Alonso was defiant, saying that it was "not such a bad sin to be with a woman if you pay her." Local inquisitors, however, did not agree with his assessment of the situation, and they arrested and convicted him for superstitious healing, fornication, and especially for his false proclamation on the nature of sin. His punishment was to participate in an *auto de fé* in which his offenses were announced by a town crier, and he was banished from the archbishopric of Toledo for a span of four years.

Philip II's reform program intended to keep such undeserving and unsavory individuals out of hospitals. His administration's approach, which was laid out by advocates such as Miguel Giginta, melded hospital reform with prohibitions on begging by creating general hospitals that would pool resources and house both the sick and the deserving poor while turning away undeserving vagabonds. The system was often put under stress, though, by the boom and bust cycle of the pre-modern agrarian economy. In the city of Toledo, a series of bad harvests led to renewed concern about the number of poor people in the city and during the famine of 1585 thousands of starving peasants converged on the city. The city council suspected that the

problem was exacerbated by vagrants from the northern hill country beyond Toledo, “paupers from Oviedo and Asturias, Galicia and the Mountains of Santander who regularly descend on this city...and those of Zamora and Toro.”⁴⁶ At the time, public begging was forbidden in the city, and many of the economic refugees landed in Toledo’s hospital. Reformer Miguel Giginta proclaimed the project a great success. He said that when he had first come to the city there had been over a thousand beggars, but since the opening of the hospital, “the greater part of the poor has left this city and the others have taken a master or other means of sustaining themselves; those who are confined [to the hospital] do not amount to more than 330.”⁴⁷ The hospital, though, was chronically underfunded and the banishment of vagabonds often just shifted them from one locality to another, as Soto had foreseen. This was certainly the case for vagabond healers who appear in records from the villages surrounding Toledo.

Medical Regulation and the Growing Influence of the *Real Protomedicato*

Another criminal case from the Toledan *montes* – that of Benito de Palomares – demonstrates how travelling *ensalmadores* attracted disdain as illegal medical practitioners.⁴⁸ Benito was from Galicia and witnesses who testified in his trial called him a *forastero* – an outlander. In spring 1611, Benito was performing cures in a village within Toledo’s jurisdiction called Yebenes. His practices, however, raised the ire of the town’s established healing professionals. One day, he was healing in the house of Gaspar García who was sick. According to a female witness who was in the house, Benito’s cures were a combination of natural and religious medicine. He placed a poultice on Garcia – a common remedy used for practically any

⁴⁶ Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo*, 139; Casey, *Early Modern Spain: A Social History*, 126.

⁴⁷ A.M.T., *Petición de Giginta*, 17 May 1581; cited in Linda Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo*, 142.

⁴⁸ A.M.T., 6424/6610.

sixteenth-century infirmity – and he also pronounced benedictions. While Benito was performing the *ensalmo*, three men came to the house to put a stop to his cures – a doctor, a surgeon, and an apothecary, representing all three branches of legitimate medicine.⁴⁹

The confrontation between the *ensalmador* and the town's legitimate healers became unruly, spilled out onto the street, and came to the attention of the municipal bailiffs. Both Benito and the surgeon – a thirty-seven-year-old man named Gabriel Guerrero – were arrested for disturbing the peace. The local magistrate instigated an investigation, but the case was passed on to the *fiel de juzgado* and several witnesses were questioned including each of the men involved in the altercation. The witnesses, predictably, were more sympathetic to the local professionals than to the foreign *ensalmador*. One woman called Benito's healing words *feas* (ugly). The doctor, surgeon, and apothecary all emphasized that Benito was healing without a license and thus illegally. In the end, the judge levied fines on both Gabriel and Benito, although Benito's was larger.

The medical practitioners of Yébenes might have gained more traction with their licensing complaint if, instead of initiating a physical confrontation, they had brought the case before another institution, the *Real Tribunal del Protomedicato*.⁵⁰ The Protomedicato was an administrative body, established by the crown, which grew in the sixteenth century to become

⁴⁹ On the provisioning of licensed physicians to small towns and their practice see Mikel Astrain Gallart, "La práctica médica en el medio rural castellano. El Memorial de Vicente Crespo (1785)," *Dynamis: Acta Hispanica ad Medicinae Scientiarumque Historiam Illustrandam* 22 (2002), 461-472.

⁵⁰ A growing body of literature in the past twenty years has enriched our understanding of the Protomedicato: See the 1996 volume of *Dynamis*, which collects several important and foundational studies, María Luz López Terrada and Álgar Martínez Vidal eds., "El Tribunal del Real Protomedicato en la monarquía hispánica, 1593-1808," *Dynamis: Acta Hispanica ad Medicinae Scientiarumque Historiam Illustrandam* 16 (1996): 17-259; The most comprehensive study of its legal and institutional structure is María Soledad Campos Díez, *El Real Tribunal del Protomedicato Castellano (Siglos XVI-XIX)* (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 1999); for an accessible and high-quality study in English focusing on the reign of Philip II see Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II's Spain*, 15-41.

Spain's highest and most powerful authority in the world of medicine. Its duties ranged from the reform of medical education in the universities to the demarcation of professional boundaries and the licensing of medical practitioners. It also acted as a supreme legal tribunal where medical disputes could be settled and illicit practitioners like Benito could be punished, disciplined, or fined.

When Isabel and Ferdinand created the Protomedicato in Castile in 1477, the Spanish monarchy gained a degree of control over medicine that was unprecedented in Europe. In France, England, Germany, and Italy, the late-medieval professionalization process was mostly driven by urban guilds and colleges of physicians where university-trained practitioners formed corporate bodies and negotiated with municipalities for the legal control of the medical professions.⁵¹ In Castile, however, guilds held little power and medical regulation mostly rested in the hands of local municipal or seigneurial authorities in conjunction with the crown. The earliest royal attempt to exert control over the medical professions came during the reigns of thirteenth-century kings Ferdinand III (r. 1217-1252) and Alfonso X (r. 1252-1284), whose law codes included provisions for local governments to examine and approve physicians and surgeons. The modern tribunal, though, had its origins in the fifteenth century when Juan II (r. 1406-1454) established the first examination and licensing board with the power to impose penalties upon unlicensed practitioners. By a 1477 royal decree, Isabel and Ferdinand expanded and consolidated this

⁵¹ For England see Margaret Pelling and Frances White, *Medical Conflict in Early Modern London: Patronage, Physicians, and Irregular Practitioners, 1550-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (New York: Longman, 1998); Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Harold Cook, *The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in Stuart London* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). For Germany see Mary Lindemann, *Health and Healing in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). For France, see: Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1997). For Italy see Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy*; Nancy Siraisi, *Medicine and the Italian Universities, 1250-1600* (Boston: Brill, 2001); Carlo Cipolla, *Public Health and the Medical Profession in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); and Katherine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

power by founding the *Real Tribunal del Protomedicato*, which established a bureaucratic structure and centralized office for the administration of public health in Castile that would continue, with only minor changes, until its abolition in 1822.

In the sixteenth century, the Protomedicato came to play an important role in the crown's imperial project. Charles V (r. 1516-1556) used medical regulation to expand royal authority in dependent kingdoms throughout the empire by installing *protomédicos* (chief medical officers) who negotiated with local powers to oversee licensing and regulation. In Iberia, *protomédicos* were installed in Valencia and Navarre in the 1520's. In the following decade, Charles appointed *protomédicos* in Milan, Parma, Sicily, and Naples.⁵² As with most areas of royal administration, his son Philip II strengthened and reorganized the Protomedicato. He extended its authority to the New World by establishing the institution in Peru in 1568 and in Mexico in 1570.⁵³ He extended its power in Iberia when he annexed Portugal in 1580 and he also managed in the same year to establish the office in Aragon, which had been resisting the crown's medical authority for decades, envisioning the Protomedicato as a Castilian intrusion.⁵⁴

The Protomedicato's power was theoretically general and absolute in all of these realms, but in practice there were many remote municipalities that remained untouched by crown regulation and many others that resisted the centralizing efforts of the state. Records from the *cortes* – Castile's representative body – show that local authorities constantly petitioned and

⁵² Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy*; Gentilcore, "'All That Pertains to Medicine': Protomedici and Protomedicati in Early Modern Italy," *Medical History* 38, no. 2 (1994): 121–42; Gentilcore, "Figurations and State Authority in Early Modern Italy: The Case of the Siense Protomedicato," *Canadian Journal of History* 34, no. 3 (1999): 359.

⁵³ John Tate Lanning and John J. TePaske, *The Royal Protomedicato: The Regulation of the Medical Professions in the Spanish Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985); Sherry Fields, *Pestilence and Headcolds: Encountering Illness in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁵⁴ Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II's Spain*, 16-29; Campos-Díez, *El Real Tribunal del protomedicato castellano*, 25-83.

complained that the crown's intrusions were unjust or burdensome.⁵⁵ The overall effect of these day-to-day negotiations of power, though, as historian Michele Clouse argues, was an augmentation of both local and royal medical authority in a political system where the crown came to co-opt the towns as a basic unit of territorial administration.⁵⁶ This process of centralization was contentious in Castile and even more so in other realms of the Monarchy. It was especially complicated in areas like Navarre and Aragon where fierce localism disposed people towards seeing the Protomedicato as an office imposed by a foreign monarchy.⁵⁷ Over the *longue durée*, however, the institution eventually came to oversee medicine with a considerable amount of authority. Philip II's Protomedicato was a potent regulatory force throughout the empire, and its power only grew in the hands of his successors.

Recent work in the social history of medicine has made clear that notwithstanding the many centralizing and professionalizing efforts made by the Protomedicato and allied institutions, the early modern medical marketplace remained highly pluralistic.⁵⁸ A diverse array of practitioners continued to take part in the provision of healthcare although their status shifted and some, like *ensalmadores*, were pushed from legitimacy to deviance. The 1477 foundational pragmatic empowered *alcaldes examinadores mayores* to “inspect and license physicians, surgeons, *ensalmadores*, apothecaries, spicers and herbalists, and other persons, who fully or partially use these offices.”⁵⁹ Legally, this framework explicitly recommended the licensing of

⁵⁵ Many of these petitions have been reproduced Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*.

⁵⁶ Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II's Spain*, ch.1; Clouse's insight here builds upon the work of historians like Helen Nader, *Liberty in Absolutist Spain: The Habsburg Sale of Towns* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

⁵⁷ Julio Sánchez Álvarez, *El Protomedicato Navarro y las cofradías sanitarias de San Cosme y San Damián: el control social de las profesiones sanitarias en Navarra (1496-1829)* (Pamplona: Goverino de Navarra, Departamento de Salud, 2010).

⁵⁸ López Terrada, “Medical Pluralism in the Iberian Kingdoms,” 7–25.

⁵⁹ *Archivo General de Simancas*, Lib. 3, tit. 16, ley 1; Reyes Católicos en Madrid, 30-III-1477, reproduced in Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*, 21-22.

ensalmadores, and it also allowed early examiners to take a broad view of “surgeons,” “spicers,” and “herbalists.” In addition to university-trained surgeons, the early Protomedicato also issued licenses to blood-letters, bone-setters, hernia-repairers, midwives, and removers of stones and cataracts. The provision allowing the licensing of spicers and herbalists opened the way to the legitimization of women and *moriscos* who participated in the sale of pharmacopeia at Spanish marketplaces.

Some, however, thought that such broad regulatory authority granted too much power to the Protomedicato. Municipal authorities, in particular, felt that the regulations comprised a royal intrusion upon the ancient rights of towns. In the first half of the sixteenth century, municipal councils submitted a series of petitions to the *cortes* complaining of intrusions and other dubious practices by Protomedicato examiners. Allegedly, they profited on their positions by selling licenses to “unqualified healers” and inappropriately levying fines on “spicers, midwives, and *ensalmaderas*” [i.e. female *ensalmadores*].⁶⁰ University-trained professionals also advocated for the narrowing of licensing to exclude *ensalmadores* and empiric healers, sometimes leading to unlikely local coalitions. Guilds, for instance, tended to resent the Protomedicato as usurpers of authority, but this was not universally true. The Navarrese guild of Saints Cosme and Damian in Pamplona welcomed the Protomedicato and petitioned it to adopt stricter guidelines for the education, training, and licensing of practitioners.⁶¹ In response to local petitions, a 1523 royal decree restricted Protomedicato officers to examine only “physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, and barber-surgeons,” and “under no circumstances” were the examiners to license “bonesetters,

⁶⁰ Cortes de Valladolid, 1523, pet. 99. Similar complaints were included in several petitions, including “1528 Cortes de Madrid, pet. 124,” and “1548 Cortes de Valladolid, pet. 119;” in Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina Española*, 24-28.

⁶¹ Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II's Spain*, 24.

midwives, and spice traders.”⁶² Successive declarations by Philip II in 1552, 1563, 1588, and 1593 reinforced this limitation, legally excluding *ensalmadores* and other unofficial healers.⁶³ Eventually, the commitment to exclude *ensalmadores* became so deeply entrenched in the ethos of the Protomedicato that the oath sworn by incoming presidents included a clause promising not to offer a licensing examination to an *ensalmador*.⁶⁴

The hardening of attitudes towards popular healers among Protomedicato officials at court was driven by elite court physicians who were drawn there by royal patronage. These men, who represented the highest rung of Spain’s medical hierarchy, typically were unequivocal in their disdain towards lower-level empirics and religio-medical practitioners. The individual who perhaps most forcefully articulated the case for medical professionalization and the delegitimization of popular healers was the physician Enrique Jorje Enríquez. Enríquez was born in Portugal and he began his academic career as professor of medicine at the University of Coimbra, but he later moved to Castile and taught at the University of Salamanca. In addition to his academic posts, he also served as personal physician to the Duke of Alba and he also is thought to have played a role in political diplomacy, having accompanied the Bishop of Coimbra as part of the delegation that negotiated Philip II’s annexation of Portugal. Enríquez’s most influential publication was entitled *Retrato del perfecto medico*.⁶⁵ This work had a dual purpose of describing the professional, intellectual, and moral norms of the ideal physician while also

⁶² Ibid., 25.

⁶³ Carlos I y Doña Juana en Valladolid, 1523, pet. 46; Madrid, 1552, pet. 8; in Rafael Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*, 38-45.

⁶⁴ Archivo General de Simancas, *Gracia y Justicia*, leg. 989, fol. 831, cited in Campos Díez, *El Real Tribunal del Protomedicato Castellano*, 240.

⁶⁵ The work was completed in 1582, but not published until 1595; Enrique Jorje Enríquez, *Retrato del perfecto medico* (Salamanca, 1595).

defending the profession against empirics and other popular healers.⁶⁶ Enríquez's ideal of the "perfect doctor" was quite lofty. He recommended that physicians be proficient in not only Latin but also Greek and Arabic. These languages were necessary, he argued, so that the physician could consult the authoritative sources for medical theory along with other important studies in history, geography, mathematics, philosophy, metaphysics, logic, dialectics, rhetoric, and astrology. Being informed in theory, he said, served as the basis for effective experience as a practitioner, which was also indispensable. Practical knowledge alone, though, would not suffice. He spoke gravely of the "great error" and "foolishness" of consulting "those dirty, rapacious, boasting old women, shameless rosemary sellers, and those who feign the ability to heal by examining urine, defrauding the masses."⁶⁷ He did not only blame the healers, though, but also pointed his finger towards weak laws and a lack of enforcement. He complained that popular healers were a "plague upon the country" who lived without fear of justice.⁶⁸ The Protomedicato, he remarked, were specifically responsible for being too lax and "freely giving license to two thousand idiots to cure in the kingdom."⁶⁹

It would be interesting to test Enríquez's allegations against the archival records of the Protomedicato, but unfortunately most of them were lost in a conflagration at the *Archivo General de la Administración* in Alcalá de Henares in 1939 so we do not have the day-to-day records of enforcement. The only archival records that have survived from the Protomedicato,

⁶⁶ On Enríquez's contribution to the genre of prescriptive medical writing, see María Estela González de Fauve, "Ciencia y prácticas. La imagen del médico 'perfecto' en tres autores españoles (Siglos XIV-XVII)," *Estudios de Historia de España* XII (2010): 227-243.

⁶⁷ Enrique Jorje Enríquez, *Retrato del perfecto médico*, 107; "Unas viejezuelas, parleras, suzias, colmilluda, romeronas, criadas en el meido de toda devergüença, las quales fingen que saben curar todas las enfermedades, que todas las conocen de la orina, y con estos enbaymientos sacan dineros y piezas del vulgo [...]."

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 108; "Que me haze que aya leyes, no se executando, que me haze hablar de la justicia, si su execucion se ponen en olvido, y lo peor es ... dan a entender ser hechizeras veo las vivir sin recelo de justicia, siendo la pestilencia de la Republica."

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

then, are those that involved other crown institutions such as *stautes* and procedures that required approval by the Council of Castile and legal cases that reached royal courts of appeal for adjudication. Among the most revealing of these records are appeals cases brought by empiric healers who sought special licenses (*licencias reglamentarias*) that allowed them to circumvent regulations. Although Enríquez complained that Protomedicato regulation was so loose that it allowed “two thousand idiots” to practice freely,⁷⁰ his call for greater enforcement was partially heeded when the Protomedicato issued a pragmatic in 1593 that increased the fine for practicing medicine without a license from 3,000 to 6,000 maravedís.⁷¹ Reflexively, though, this legislation resulted in a surge in appeals cases by empiric healers seeking the *licencias reglamentarias* that Enríquez hated so much. Historian Anastasio Rojo Vega has combed through the appeals records from the Chancillería of Valladolid to reveal that special licenses were conceded to a diverse cast of characters. A bonesetter, a tooth puller, a woman who specialized in curing female maladies, “a master in curing scrofula,” and even a *saludador* all received them.⁷² It was more common for appeals by religious healers, though, to be flatly rejected, as was the case for the seventy-year-old man from the island of Mallorca who claimed to “have the curing grace of God.”⁷³

Archival records also indicate that professionalization initiatives were difficult to implement and could sometimes have unforeseen consequences. An appeal by an empiric surgeon named Francisco Martínez in 1602, for instance, complained that new restrictions inadvertently allowed the healing market to be infiltrated by *ensalmadores*. His petition was a

⁷⁰ Enrique Jorje Enríquez, *Retrato del perfecto médico*, 107.

⁷¹ Campos Díez, *El Real Tribunal del Protomedicato Castellano*, 72-83.

⁷² Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores en la Castilla del siglo XVI* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1993), 39-49.

⁷³ After the Bourbon reforms of the 18th century, the Protomedicato was brought more directly under the supervision of the crown, generating a set of records that have been preserved in the archive of the Royal Palace. This case can be found in the Archivo General del Palacio Real de Madrid, *Sección Administrativa*, Leg. 689.

response to another Protomedicato statute introduced during Philip II's reign that further updated regulations upon medical practitioners to bring them closer to the image of Enríquez's "*perfecto medico*." This 1593 regulation specified that surgical licensing be restricted to those who were trained in Latin, thereby excluding the *romancistas* who were unable to consult the corpus of Latin theoretical texts. Martinez argued that these surgeons – even if they lacked in formal education – were preferable to *ensalmadores* who had increased their share of the medical marketplace in their absence. He characterized the *ensalmadores* as “pernicious” and said that in addition to being ineffective they also impeded those who could provide proper medical care.⁷⁴

The Protomedicato intended to guard its jurisdiction to oversee and punish *ensalmadores*, although these activities clearly overlapped with the legal prerogatives of the Inquisition. When the two institutions are analyzed alongside one another, interesting parallels and occasional conflicts can be discerned. Both the Protomedicato and the Inquisition were founded in the 1470's and were consolidated during the reign of Philip II during the following century. Both were centralized and bureaucratized tribunals that came to supersede the activities of local civil and ecclesiastical courts. Both sought to clarify the boundaries between medicine, magic, and religion. By their nature, *ensalmadores* did not easily fit into one or another of the established categories, and at times this caused conflict. In a pointed passage, the Protomedicato's compilation of statutes indicated that the institution respected the Inquisition's jurisdiction over the magical activities of doctors, but simultaneously maintained that the Inquisition's privileges did not supersede those of the Protomedicato in cases involving the use of *ensalmos* or in instances when medications were distributed along with magical cures.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Cortes de Valladolid, 20-VII- 1602, reproduced in Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*, 54.

⁷⁵ Don Miguel Eugenio Muñoz, *Recopilación de las leyes, pragmáticas reales, decretos, y acuerdos del Real Protomedicato* (1751), 355-356.

Inquisitorial Persecution and the Catholic State

While the Spanish Inquisition developed in parallel with the Protomedicato, it was built upon a more firmly established base. When Isabel and Ferdinand deployed the first Spanish inquisitors in 1478, there were already a well-established inquisitorial model, process, and methodology that had been developed over the previous centuries. Essentially, the crown co-opted a department of the Catholic Church which had adapted certain elements of Roman legal procedure and had been active, in spurts, since the twelfth century. While its methods were old, however, the Spanish Inquisition's combination of religious and state power was radically new. It assumed broad powers and legal jurisdictions that had previously been exercised haphazardly by municipal, seigneurial, and ecclesiastical authorities. Unlike the medieval inquisitions which were deployed across regions in response to specific heterodox groups – Cathars, Waldensians, Hussites, witches – the Spanish Inquisition was a national effort that quickly developed a broad mission. The initial goal of Isabel and Ferdinand's Inquisition was to act against cryptojudaism among *conversos*, but the inherited legal structure empowered Spanish inquisitors to act against heresy in general and it soon departed from earlier inquisitions by aggressively redefining a number of healing activities as heretical.

This extensive new reach of the Spanish Inquisition arose from a particular set of political conditions of the late-fifteenth century. Isabel and Ferdinand assumed the thrones of Castile and Aragon in the 1470's in unusual circumstances that allowed them to secure additional royal sway over religious policy. Leveraging the political clout of their marriage, they gained unprecedented powers to name bishops and other ecclesiastical authorities who helped them consolidate their claims against hostile nobles. In negotiations with Pope Sixtus IV, the young monarchs also managed to wrest a bull that gave them the power to appoint inquisitors to discover and punish

crypto-Jews and thereby uphold the religious hierarchy that was supposed to ensure Christian dominance in the Peninsula. As with their ecclesiastical privileges, the pope yielded this license to the monarchs in recognition of their status as crusaders who had inherited religiously and ethnically heterogeneous kingdoms. From the outset, Isabel and Ferdinand's inquisitorial structure that reflected their vision of unified governance across the realms of Castile and Aragon. They established a Supreme Council, headed by their confessor Tomás de Torquemada, that oversaw and coordinated the activities of inquisitorial tribunals in Seville, Córdoba, Jaén, Ávila, Medina del Campo, Segovia, Sigüenza, Toledo, Valladolid, Valencia, Barcelona, and Zaragoza (with more to be added later).⁷⁶

This new Spanish Inquisition consolidated powers against heresy that had previously been distributed among other institutions. In Castile, where medieval inquisitors had never arrived, both civil and ecclesiastical authorities traditionally held jurisdiction over magic and superstition, and crimes in these categories received an increasing amount of attention in both types of courts in the waning years of the Middle Ages. In most villages, it was secular courts that tended to deal with criminal cases involving sorcery and other forms of allegedly harmful magic. Royal judges also acted against illicit magic, especially at court where learned conjurers, diviners, and astrologers were thought to be especially pernicious.⁷⁷ Ecclesiastical tribunals had overlapping powers but were more active against superstition, especially the sacrilegious misuse

⁷⁶ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) ; Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition in Spain Vol. 1* (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 11-17.

⁷⁷ Criminal codes against sorcery were in place as early as Alonso X's *Siete Partidas* of 1251-65, and they were expanded in Enrique III's *Ordenanzas Reales* of 1370 and Juan I's *Novísima Recopilación* of 1387. See Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 180-83.

of religious symbols, rituals, and prayers.⁷⁸ Jurisdictional boundaries between these courts collapsed in the late Middle Ages, ultimately to be subsumed, almost entirely, by the Inquisition.

A catalyst for the expansion of inquisitorial jurisdiction was the adoption of a broad theoretical category of heresy which would include a wide range of magical and superstitious crimes. In order to define healing invocations and rituals as heresy, inquisitors could lean upon a deep Christian intellectual tradition. According to medieval canon law, formal heresy encompassed those acts committed by baptized Christians who, in one way or another, turned their backs upon God. The Inquisition – commissioned as a special court to act against heresy – gained jurisdiction over healers through the idea of the demonic pact, which created a mechanism for describing how women and men formed a relationship with demons and utilized demonic agency to cure.

Torquemada's Inquisition reinvigorated medieval inquisitorial jurisprudence. For instance, his manual, which was distributed to Inquisitors in an attempted to standardize procedure, was based upon the fourteenth-century *Directorium inquisitorum* penned by the Barcelona-based inquisitor Nicholas Eymeric, Inquisitor General of the Papal Inquisition that functioned there at the time. During his tenure, Eymeric instigated several high-profile trials in response to a perceived rise in alchemy, necromancy, sorcery, and forms of learned divination in the courts and cloisters throughout Europe in the early-fourteenth century.⁷⁹ In the 1370's he oversaw the execution of the Jewish alchemist Raymund de Tarrega for, among other things, having written a book entitled *De invocatione demonum* that described how demons could be

⁷⁸ A study of Spanish (particularly Aragonese) jurisdictional boundaries with regards to magic and witchcraft can be found in *Ponzoña en los ojos: brujería y superstición en Aragón en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Turner, 2004).

⁷⁹ See Michael Bailey's excellent study of late-medieval superstition, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies*, esp. ch. 2; "Superstition in the Court and Cloister," which contextualizes Eymeric in a wider intellectual and political landscape.

forced to perform good works such as healing.⁸⁰ Eymeric's manual was organized by "questions" in inquisitorial method and the forty-second and forty-third questions of the work focus on magic and demonic invocations respectively.⁸¹ His thinking on demonic invocations reflected the dialectical structure of contemporary scholastic thought. Words that commanded spiritual forces, in his mind, were necessarily demonic. They aped and inverted proper forms of devotion to God (*latria*) and the saints (*dulia*), and inserted demons as mediators of prayers.⁸²

From its foundation, then, the Spanish Inquisition had the legal authority to act against healers because their words and rituals might constitute demonic invocation, but early records indicate that inquisitors of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were more interested in ritual healing practices that might betray forms of unorthodoxy. *Converso* healing practices received special scrutiny as potential evidence that individuals were maintaining Jewish ritual cycles and/or were not properly devoted to orthodox Christian healing mediated through clerical blessings and saintly devotion. One popular *converso* healing ritual that emerges in early inquisitorial records was the so-called "ceremony of the drops," a divinatory technique in which a healer would interpret the spattering pattern of olive oil dropped into a hot frying pan to foretell the success of a cure. Often, this technique included the recital of verbal formulae that drew upon the Kabbalistic tradition, such as in the case of the Zaragoza *conversa* Isabel de Bello who reportedly threw drops of oil into a pan and said words over them in 1486 when her children

⁸⁰ Raphael Patai, *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 185.

⁸¹ Questions 42 and 43 are edited and translated in Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 196-202.

⁸² Eymeric's manual and his ideas continued to have a significant impact on Spanish inquisitorial jurisprudence into the sixteenth century. Although later Inquisitor Generals such as Tomás de Torquemada and Fernando de Valdés wrote their own procedural manuals, Eymeric's *Directorium inquisitorum* continued to be influential during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was edited and reprinted by Francisco Peña in 1578 and it went through five additional editions in the following three decades. See Robin Vose, "Introduction to Inquisitorial Manuals," *Hesburgh Libraries of Notre Dame, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections* (University of Notre Dame, 2010), online at http://www.library.nd.edu/rarebooks/digital_projects/inquisition/collections/RBSC-INQ:COLLECTION/essays/RBSC-INQ:ESSAY_InquisitorialManuals.

were sick. Likewise, Donosa Besante, wife of Antón Ruiz of Teruel, was accused in 1486 of making *las gotillas* while murmuring the Hebrew names of God, “*Saday, Adonai*.”⁸³

During the early years of the sixteenth century, inquisitorial concern over *converso* healing began to bleed into and overlap with fears about Christian heterodoxy more generally. In Castile, trials for superstitious healing were relatively infrequent during the early decades of Spanish inquisitorial persecution, but they grew more numerous by the mid-sixteenth century as the Inquisition gradually adopted a broader mission of imposing ideological conformity upon the Spanish populace. One early Castilian trial investigating the healing activities of a man of *converso* ancestry named Alonso de Ayora was held in Cuenca in 1517.⁸⁴ Alonso was sixty-seven years old and trial records refer to him as a *beato del monte* – a rural holy man who took personal religious vows but was not formally attached to a religious order. He acted as a spiritual guide who reportedly cured a man of hemorrhoids by blessing him with the sign of the cross and recommending a regimen of prayer and fasting. After interviewing witnesses, inquisitors arrested Alonso and subjected him to an extensive inquiry into his ancestry and the nature of his cures. Cuenca inquisitors suspected that Alonso’s healing blessings might have constituted demonic heresy, but they could find nothing unorthodox in his prayers. It was likely a harrowing experience, but the inquisition ultimately suspended the case and Alonso escaped his brush with the inquisition relatively unscathed.

By mid-century, the Inquisition became more active in investigating Old Christian *ensalmadores* and a more vivid picture begins to emerge of their activities. Francisco Diaz, arrested in 1549, was a laborer in the village of Temblique who was known among his neighbors

⁸³ David Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 192.

⁸⁴ A.D.C., leg. 62, exp. 899.

for his use of *ensalmos* to cure skin abrasions and lesions.⁸⁵ He said that he learned the practice of saying *ensalmos* from his father, who was widely considered to be a good and god-fearing man, and he described his prayer, which was conserved in trial documents, as “*tan bueno como el evangelio* [as good as the Gospel].” Essentially, the *ensalmo* consisted of the story of the crucifixion in verse which he ended with the words: “for the love of the five wounds that He received on the holy cross/ I put faith in God and Our Lady that this abrasion or lesion will be healed.”⁸⁶ Diaz saw no problem with these techniques, but the inquisitorial prosecutor, a man named Bachelor Pedro Ortiz, disagreed. In his accusation, Ortiz argued that *ensalmos* were forbidden and that Diaz was a “swindler” who used “superstitious things.”⁸⁷ He said that he should be given a harsh sentence in order to stand as an example for others. The presiding inquisitors did not adopt quite so harsh an attitude, but they did condemn his actions. After examining the case, inquisitors censured Diaz’s *ensalmos* and ordered him to stop using them under the penalty of forty lashes. They also ordered that he pay four gold ducats to cover court costs.

Variations of this type of *ensalmo* can be found in a 1550’s inquisitorial inquiry into a pair of female healers in the village of Mondéjar.⁸⁸ One of them was woman in her forties named Catalina, wife of a laborer, who was known among her neighbors to cure diseases called “*secas*” and “*landres*” using a specialized *ensalmo*. Both terms, *secas* and *landres*, referred to growths or swelling of the glands that might have been caused by a number of infectious diseases. It was a type of infirmity that pre-modern Europeans commonly treated with religio-medical techniques,

⁸⁵ A.H.N., INQ 85, exp. 6.

⁸⁶ Ibid. “por amor de cinco llagas que recibió en el santo árbol de la cruz y confío en dios y en nuestra señora que sanara esta quebranza o lesión.”

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ A.H.N., INQ 87, exp. 10 (María Gómez) and A.H.N., INQ 84, exp. 2 (Catalina de Mondejar); the Gómez trial will be discussed in Chapter 2 below.

closely related to the “scrofula” that was ritually cured by saints, English and French kings, and quite a few Spanish vagabonds. Catalina’s healing technique comprised of a blessing using the sign of the cross and the following words which, like Diaz’s, recited a biblical story, although hers was apocryphal:

| | |
|--|---|
| The gracia del Padre | The grace of the Father |
| la gracia del Espíritu Santo | the grace of the Holy Spirit |
| Estábase San Pedro | There was St. Peter |
| en las puertas de Galilea. | at the port of Galilee |
| Por allí pasó Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. | And Our Lord Jesus Christ passed by |
| ¿Qué haces Pedro? | What are you doing Peter? |
| Señor, secas y landres me quieren matar. | Lord, these <i>secas</i> and <i>landres</i> are killing me. |
| Pon tus dedos cinco | Make a five with your fingers |
| y tu mano plana, | and put your hand flat |
| la seca será seca | the <i>seca</i> will be dry |
| y tú serás sano | and you will be healed |
| dijo Dios | God said |
| Amen. ⁸⁹ | Amen. |

According to her testimony, she was neither Jew nor Moor and she used this exact same prayer, which she took to be holy, every time. Inquisitors, though, thought that the unorthodox and nonstandard nature of Catalina’s *ensalmo* was ample evidence that she had crossed the bounds of Christian propriety. They did not directly accuse her of a demonic pact, but they did declare her healing words to be “dirty, ugly, and superstitious.” They decided that she should

⁸⁹ A.H.N., INQ 84, exp. 2.

perform a public ritual in which she would be proclaimed a sinner as she walked through the town's *plaza mayor* in penitential garb carrying a lighted candle.

Pedro Ciruelo: Views from the University

The mid-century uptick in the number of inquisitorial trials against *ensalmadores* was driven in part by the intellectual and pastoral agenda set at Spanish universities. The theorist who commented most extensively and cogently on *ensalmadores* was the University of Alcalá professor Pedro Ciruelo in his 1530 work *Reprobación de las supersticiones*. At the time, Alcalá was a creative and productive intellectual center in the Castilian heartland. After its foundation in 1499, royal favor allowed the university to attract premier talent in its first few decades, which made it a rival of the prestigious and long-established university of Salamanca. The university's founding was a project of the vigorous crusading cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, Archbishop of Toledo, and at times Inquisitor General, Chancellor of Castile, and regent during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabel, who sought a new academic hub in New Castile. In the academic milieu of Alcalá, Ciruelo was a gifted polymath. He had quickly risen from his Aragonese homeland to receive his doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris. He specialized in Thomist theology, but also developed interests in mathematics, physics, metaphysics, music, and medicine. During the early part of his career his intellectual production focused on mathematical theory – arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy⁹⁰ – but after arriving in Alcalá he became a rigorous defender of orthodoxy, publishing several works in the vernacular that were intended

⁹⁰ While in Paris he published *Tractatus arithmeticae practicae* (1495); editions of Bradwardine's *Arithmetica speculativa* and *Geometria speculativa* (1495) and Sacrobosco's *Tractatus de Sphaera* (published 1494, 1498, and 1515, and 1499, 1505, and 1508 with a modified title); after arriving at Alcalá he synthesized his ideas on mathematics and music in his *Cursus quattuor mathematicarum atrium liberalium* (1516). An excellent study of Ciruelo's *ourve* can be found in Roberto Alberes Alberes, "El humanismo científico de Pedro Ciruelo," in *La Universidad Complutense cisneriana: impulse filosófico, científico y literario, siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. Luis Jiménez Moreno et al. (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1996), 187-188.

for wider audiences. In 1519 Ciruelo wrote an influential confessor's manual, *Arte de bien confesar*. and he also published a religio-medical polemic called *Hexameron theologal sobre el regimiento medicinal contra la pestilencia*, in which he argued that medicine and Catholic devotion were mutually reinforcing practices to be relied upon in times of plague. In 1527 he attended the *junta* in Valladolid that evaluated the orthodoxy of Erasmus' thought, which he condemned.⁹¹ The work that brought him the most fame and longevity, though, was his 1530 *Reprobación de las supersticiones*.

Ciruelo's *Reprobación* was the work of a sophisticated, though alarmist, academic theologian. It was an unrelenting attack on superstitions, and it proceeded by analyzing superstitions on both moral and metaphysical grounds. Ciruelo condemned each category of superstition in succession, from necromancy to divination, conjuring, and love magic. He was particularly concerned, though, with superstitious healing. In his theoretical sections he highlighted ritualized healing as an exemplar of how demonic agency could lurk behind seemingly helpful actions, and later in the work he devoted two separate chapters to healers, first examining *ensalmadores* and then practitioners who claimed to heal through divine grace called *saludadores* (who will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3).

As Ciruelo explained in his introduction, he saw the *Reprobación* as an extension of his earlier work on moral theology. His 1519 book, *Arte de bien confesar*, was a confessor's manual that systematically analyzed sins that violated each of the Ten Commandments. The work was originally intended for pastoral use in Ciruelo's native city of Daroca, located south of Zaragoza in Aragon, but it circulated widely in Spain and was reprinted several times in the

⁹¹ Lu Ann Homza, "Erasmus as Hero or Heretic? Spanish Humanism and the Valladolid Conference of 1527," *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 78-118.

sixteenth century. An unbound copy reportedly sold for just ten *maravedies* in mid-sixteenth century Toledo, making it accessible for just about anyone.⁹² Ciruelo's emphasis on the primacy of the Decalogue was typical of contemporary ethics: by the late Middle Ages, as John Bossy has noted, the Ten Commandments displaced the Seven Deadly Sins as the predominant moral paradigm for theologians throughout Europe.⁹³ Highlighting superstition as a form of idolatry and a crime against God, Ciruelo catalogued it as a violation of the first commandment. This was a customary approach within the genre. Two centuries earlier, for instance, Pedro de Cuellar's 1325 catechism included a number of superstitious practices such as divination, sortilege, and demonic invocations in his list of practices prohibited by the first commandment.⁹⁴ Ciruelo's condemnations of superstition were far more extensive and sophisticated. He categorized superstitions among several different classes, ranging from direct necromantic invocations to indirect and "vain ceremonies" such as healing with prayers.

First in *Arte de bien confessar*, and then more extensively in *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, Ciruelo enhanced the depth and complexity of his moral argument against superstition by placing it within a metaphysical framework. In this approach, Catholic dogma was buttressed by a universalizing metaphysics that looked to nature as an unchanging guide to licit behavior. Practices that were unnatural were suspect of otherworldly (and likely demonic) causes. As Ciruelo self-effacingly says in his introduction, such an approach was not original to him, but was the product of a long line of Christian thinkers, among whom he highlights

⁹² Patrick J. O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2013), 40.

⁹³ John Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into the Ten Commandments," in Edmund Leites, ed., *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 214-234.

⁹⁴ Alejandro Campagne *Homo Catholicus. Homo Superstitiosus*, 78.

Augustine, Thomas of Aquinas, and the fifteenth-century Parisians William of Auvergne and Jean Gerson.⁹⁵

Augustine was indeed fundamental in the creation of the Christian concept of superstition.⁹⁶ He wrote his *City of God* in the fifth century when church fathers were attempting to consolidate Christian doctrine against a backdrop of late-antique theological pluralism, and he used the Latin term *superstitio* very differently than his pagan forbearers. While writers such as Cicero defined *superstitio* as excessive fear of the gods, Augustine introduced a metaphysical dimension, characterizing superstition as any vain practice that meant to produce an effect that could not be produced through nature. Thus, he considered practices such as healing spells, the wearing of protective amulets, and divinatory rituals to be symbolic actions that could only be transformed into real action through a demonic pact.

In his chapter on *ensalmos*, Ciruelo attempted to create clear distinctions between natural and superstitious cures. He interpreted disease providentially, describing it as scourge sent by the hand of God to punish the sins of man. At the same time, though, he was adamant that man had the responsibility to do all within his power to utilize the cures provided by nature. Here, he was commenting on contemporary Reformation-era debates regarding free will and the nature of Christian obligation in a providential and largely predestined universe. As he had in his earlier work on plagues, he attempted to strike a balance between resigned Christian piety and an active use of medicine to combat disease. He argued that Christians should put their hope in divine mercy through devotional practices and prayers to the Virgin and the saints. But he also felt that divine supplication should be complemented by natural medicine and the recourse to experts,

⁹⁵ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 6.

⁹⁶ See Dale Martin, *Inventing Superstition: From the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

whether they be university-trained physicians, apothecaries, and surgeons, or simply wise old empirics.

Often making use of medicalized language, Ciruelo characterized *ensalmos* as vain and superstitious cures that secretly functioned through diabolic power. Technically, his argument rested upon the principles of natural philosophy. The substance of a word, he said, had no natural virtue to heal because it is merely “a bit of air that man emits from his mouth, which is not a natural medicine that could be used to cure any illness because it does not have the virtue to purge cholera like rhubarb does, nor can it purge phlegm like agaric can.”⁹⁷ While this may seem self-evident, Ciruelo was navigating an intellectual landscape that was full of pitfalls. Among his ideological opponents were the Neoplatonists, the Aristotelian realists of Padua, and other thinkers on the edges of Renaissance natural philosophy who allowed the possibility of “natural magic” that afforded words the possibility of conveying power through some natural and occult virtue to affect a result.⁹⁸ Ciruelo, a creative though conventional scholastic nominalist, dismissed the idea of natural magic without much consideration.

A somewhat greater challenge was to attend to the ideas at the intellectual mainstream – Catholic orthodoxy, which held that words could indeed make alterations to nature in certain circumstances. Several theological nuances, however, left room for contention about specific practices. Most Europeans, according to historians of popular culture, believed and acted as though divine power was “grafted into” holy words, rituals, and objects.⁹⁹ Theologians, in

⁹⁷ Ibid., 70. “un poco de aire que el hombre echa de su boca, que no es medicina natural para sanar alguna enfermedad, porque ni tiene virtud para purgar la cólera, como el reubarbo, ni la flema como el agárico.”

⁹⁸ The classic study on the role of magic in renaissance natural philosophy remains Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1923-1958).

⁹⁹ In her vast and sophisticated *oeuvre*, Catherine Walker Bynum has delved deeply into the materiality of Christian divinity in the later Middle Ages, see *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991); Walker Bynum, “Bleeding Hosts and their Contact Relics in Late Medieval Northern Germany,” *The Medieval History Journal* 7, no. 2 (2004): 227–241; Walker Bynum

contrast, bristled at what they regarded as the pagan idea of an enchanted universe where divine energy could be invested into any object or verbal formula, but they also found it difficult to deny that divinity manifested itself in *some* words and actions. Before the Reformation, nearly all Western theologians agreed that the words uttered during the sacraments by ordained priests conferred sacrality, and most would recognize similar sacred energies in exorcisms and other sacramentals. Following Church tradition, Ciruelo maintained that the seven sacraments indeed occupied a privileged metaphysical category that allowed words like “ego te baptizo” or “ego te absolvo” to reliably impart supernatural virtue to miraculous effect when uttered by an ordained priest in prescribed contexts. The sacraments, though, were a special case. They were seven long-established exceptions, and Catholic authorities maintained their position on this issue through sixteenth-century controversies and during Tridentine reform. Luther and Calvin both chose to eliminate or curtail the sacramental system, accusing the Catholic Church itself of religious vanity for its claim that ordained clerics had any special role in imparting divine grace. In contrast, Ciruelo held strongly to the Catholic Church’s authoritative claim, denying that a common *ensalmador* would know any miraculous supernatural words that were not already acknowledged by the Church.

While reform of the sacramental system was not up for debate within the Catholic establishment, the status and ontology of non-sacramental Christian miracles were hotly contested. Tradition held that, at times, the utterance of holy words by saintly individuals might indeed be the catalyst for miraculous events. Many Catholic reformers, even after Erasmus fell out of favor, felt that there were a profusion of false miracles and a widespread abuse of

Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and beyond (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011).

credulity. As a nominalist who relied on a strict interpretation of natural philosophy, Ciruelo was quite reform-minded on this issue. Biblical evidence provided overwhelming support for the existence of frequent healing miracles, and Ciruelo even pointed to several examples of effective healing prayers, such as when Saint Peter told a lame man to walk in the name of Christ,¹⁰⁰ but he historicized these miracles, arguing that they served an evangelical purpose for the early church but had ceased after the patristic era. His position here was very close to the Calvinist doctrine of the cessation of miracles, and although he backed away from this claim in other sections of the book in which he allowed the occasional modern miracle, his position was restrictive compared to the Catholic establishment. With such a narrow framework for miracles, Ciruelo concluded that *ensalmadores* were, without a doubt, idolaters who disobey the first commandment by worshipping demons.

Conclusion

In the middle decades of the sixteenth century, the Castilian Inquisition was operating at the peak of its power, but inquisitorial persecution of superstitious healing was only just beginning. As this chapter has shown, medico-religious healing was deeply entrenched in Spanish society and the authoritative response to healers was eclectic and generally uncoordinated for much of the sixteenth century. The shift in the status of *ensalmadores* from individuals occupying a recognized and semi-legitimate *oficio* to condemned heretics was a process that occurred slowly and developed on multiple fronts, but the increasing reach and bureaucratic sophistication of the Spanish crown did make real and verifiable changes in the administrative structure and organization of healing. Public health officials – including hospital

¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, Ciruelo's paragraph in which he provided specific quotations of Biblical healing prayers was redacted by editors of the 1538 Salamanca edition; *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, ed. Maxtor, 73 n.1.

administrators and Protomedicato officials – sought new ways to license, regulate, and litigate against deviant *ensalmadores*. Working in parallel, the crown-directed Inquisition expanded its jurisdiction to include the persecution of religio-medical deviance. As the cases examined in this chapter have shown, however, sixteenth-century inquisitors did not confidently enforce their jurisdiction over *ensalmadores*. Trial records show that inquisitors avoided the use of demonology to describe the healing activities of Goidos in 1533, Díaz in 1549, and Mondéjar in 1552, preferring instead to describe their practices as “forbidden,” “ugly,” “dirty,” or “superstitious.” As the following chapter shows, another group of healers – female *hechiceras* (sorceresses) who were thought to invoke magic in their cures – provoked a very different response. Culturally, female healers were more likely to be considered malevolent, and a series of witch hunts provoked a heightened response to alleged female magic.

Chapter 2 – Midwives and Sorceresses: Medical and Inquisitorial Responses to the Subversive Female Healer

Daughter, loved and cherished by your old father, don't despair,
even though pain and sickness torture you so. ... You tell me what's wrong and I'll see you cured,
because we won't be short of medicines, doctors or servants to restore you to good health,
whether it's a matter of herbs, stones or words, or what's hidden in animal bodies.

- *La Celestina*, by Fernando de Rojas (1499)¹

Many healers tried by the Spanish Inquisition drew upon a wider and more eclectic set of rituals and techniques than the *ensalmadores* and *saludadores* described in Chapter One. Healing magic – categorized as *hechicería* by Spanish inquisitors – encompassed a range of practices that included ritualized actions and verbal invocations alongside the application of standard Galenic medical remedies. These cures were sometimes offered in conjunction with other occult services such as divination, love magic, and even the willful command of demons to achieve specific ends. Though old and destitute female practitioners of healing magic bore resemblance to the women persecuted throughout Europe as witches, the idea of a nefarious cult of witches never

¹ Fernando de Rojas, *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (La Celestina)*, trans. Peter Bush (New York: Penguin, 2010 [1499]), 187.

gained much traction in Castile. These healers more closely fit the Mediterranean mold of sorceresses, go-betweens, and diviners whose cures grew out of oral traditions that combined empiric midwifery and Galenic medicine with folklore and magic. In the eyes of inquisitors, healing magic was potential evidence of demonism and heresy, and they subjected these practitioners to intense scrutiny and sometimes to harsh punishments. As a legal matter, however, these cases were complex, requiring judges to navigate a thicket of philosophy, medicine, and jurisprudence as they sought to define the proper practice of religion and medicine in relation to magic.

Female Healers: Cultural Tropes and Literary Representations

The idea of the subversive female healer was a deeply embedded trope in sixteenth-century Spanish culture. Perhaps the most widely read work of fifteenth-century Spanish literature was Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina*. The work was famous in its own time – and still is today – for its rich themes and deeply textured depiction of urban Castile, presumably modeled on Rojas's own Salamanca. The story is one of forbidden love and the title character Celestina was the proprietress of a brothel at the edge of town whose principal role is that of a *medianera*, a procuress or go-between, who facilitated the sexual liaison of a young couple. Nevertheless, she also dabbled in healing and the magical arts. In the words of her associate Lucrecia, Celestina “sells perfume for veils and coifs, makes mercury potions and plies some thirty trades. She knows a lot about herbs, cures children and some still dub her the old precious stones lady.”² She was depicted as having a sophisticated knowledge of pharmacology and a vast collection of herbs. Her store of medicaments rivaled that of a well-stocked apothecary – a recent study has

² Ibid., 46.

identified mentions of 86 vegetable and 70 animal substances.³ She also offered a miscellany of obstetrical knowledge – she mended maidenheads and examined a young woman who suffered from *mal de madre* (hysteria), an episode that she devilishly used as an opportunity for seduction.⁴

Albeit a literary representation, *La Celestina* reflects a culture in which feminine healing was often thought to be enveloped within other forms of illicit activity. Literary scholars Michael Solomon and Jean Dangler argue that *La Celestina* should be considered a piece of misogynist literature that was part of a larger discourse that sought to discredit female healers.⁵ Comparing *La Celestina* to contemporaneous works such as Jaume Roig's *Spill* and Francisco Delicado's *La Lozana Andaluza*, they showed that the image of the magic-wielding and sexually-deviant female healer echoed throughout Spanish literature. They linked this trend to the nascent professionalization of medicine and to the establishment of a culture that excluded women from legitimate healing practices. In Dangler's words, "Rojas tries to show that in the hands of women, traditional healing practices such as herbal remedies, the use of amulets and charms, and the invocation of otherwise pious prayers, become disruptive, demonic, and heretical."⁶

³ See Paloma Moral de Calatrava, "Magic or Science? What 'Old Women Lapidaries' Knew in the Age of Celestina," *La Chónica* 36, no. 1 (2007): 203-235; Manuel Pardo de Santayana et al., "Naturaleza a través de la botánica y zoología en la literatura renacentista española: la Celestina," *Asclepio* 63 (2011): 249-292; Guillermo Folch Jou et al., "La Celestina: ¿hechicera o boticaria?" in *La Celestina y su contorno social: actas del I Congreso Internacional Sobre la Celestina*, ed. Manuel Criado de Val (Barcelona: Hispam, 1977), 163-167; Félix Martí-Ibáñez, "The Medico-Pharmaceutical Arts of *La Celestina*: A Study of a Fifteenth-Century Spanish Sorceress and Dealer in Love," *International Record of Medicine and General Practice Clinics* 169, no. 4 (1956): 233-249.

⁴ Jean Dangler analyzes this episode in "Transgendered Sex and Healing in Celestina," *Celestinesca* 25, no. 1-2 (2001): 69-81.

⁵ Michael Solomon, "Women Healers and the Power to Disease in Late Medieval Spain," in *Women Healers and Physicians: Climbing a Long Hill* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 79-92; Jean Dangler, *Mediating Fictions: Literature, Women Healers, and the Go-Between in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2001).

⁶ Dangler, *Mediating Fictions*, 89.

In Francisco Delicado's sixteenth-century *La lozana andaluza*, these themes are woven together more extensively and with greater complexity.⁷ Classified as picaresque or proto-picaresque by literary scholars, the novel told the story of a young *conversa* woman from Andalusia who traveled to Rome where she engaged in prostitution, the sale of cosmetics, and various healing activities. When asked to describe her healing activities, Lozana replied:

I know how to say *ensalmos*, commend myself to the saints, and make the sign of the cross over someone who has been bewitched by the evil eye, for I was taught by an old *saludadora* who was as good a practitioner as I am now. I know how to cure acute indigestion; I can cure worms; I know how to charm tertian fevers away; I have remedies for the quartan fever and for *mal de madre*; I know how to cure tongue-tied fools and less than fools as well; I know how to restore kidneys and take away their pain; I can treat the reproductive organs of women and of men; I know how to cure deafness, and I can interpret dreams; I know how to read the bumps on a forehead and the palm of a hand and predict the future.⁸

Like many of the women arrested by the Inquisition, Lozana used a variety of treatments that incorporated Catholic words and rituals along with divination and magic. The author's presentation of her healing, however, is morally ambivalent, which has led scholars to several readings of the text. Jean Dangler's feminist reading sees Delicado's syphilitic prostitute as a warning against female healers in general. Meghan McInnis-Domínguez, however, challenges this thesis by emphasizing that Lozana's cures were not necessarily portrayed in a negative light. Lozana's healing was usually effective and even the envy of a legitimate doctor and surgeon.

⁷ Francisco Delicado, *Retrato de la lozana andaluza* (1528).

⁸ Yo sé ensalmar y encomendar y santiguar cuando alguno esta aojado, que una vieja me vezó, que era saludadera y buena como yo. Sé quitar ahítos, sé para lombrices, sé encantar la terciana, sé remedio para la cuartana y para el mal de la madre. Sé cortar frenillos de bobos y no bobos, sé hacer que no duelan los riñones y sanar las renes, y sé medicar la natura de la mujer y la del hombre; sé sanar la sordera y sé ensolver sueños; sé conocer en la frente la fisionomía y la quiromancia en la mano, y pronosticar. See Meghan McInnis-Dominguez, "Diagnosing Empire: Refiguring Disease in the Early Modern Hispanic Empire" (PhD Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2006), 169.

McInnis-Domínguez therefore prefers a meta-reading that sees the story as a transgressive challenge to accepted notions of alterity and as a critique of a diseased Spanish body politic.⁹

This chapter examines the role of female healers – so often depicted in the literature of the period – using other types of texts, archival, legal, and medical. I argue that part of the modernizing project of the sixteenth century involved the establishment of clearer boundaries, for example between men and women, professionals and empirics, religion and superstition, medicine and magic. Owing to the influence of the Protomedicato and the Inquisition, the trajectory of sixteenth-century medicine was toward a narrowing of acceptable practitioners and a consolidation of theoretical and legal approaches to female healers.

Centers, Peripheries, and the Expansion of Inquisitorial Authority: Witchcraft in Navarre and the Case of Martín de Castañega

It was in the mid-sixteenth century that cultural attitudes likening female healers to the demonic became more deeply entrenched in legal and bureaucratic structures. This was, in part, due to the imperial advance of the Spanish crown and its desire to maintain religio-medical control over newly conquered territories. This section will examine this process through the eyes of the Franciscan preacher and inquisitorial officer Martín de Castañega. Castañega was from the *Rioja* region, which was something of a borderland in Spain's magical geography.¹⁰ For centuries it had constituted the northern frontier of the Crown of Castile, which bordered the Kingdom of Navarre. Although Castile and Navarre shared many cultural characteristics, the Navarrese were considerably more concerned with the threat of witchcraft than their Castilian

⁹ Meghan McInnis-Domínguez, "The Diseasing Healer: Franciscio Delicado's Infectious *La Lozana andaluza*," *eHumanistia* 17 (2011): 311-333.

¹⁰ On Spain's "magical geography" see Gustav Henningsen, "The Database of the Spanish Inquisition," in *Vorträge zur Justizforschung: Geschichte und Theorie*, eds. Heinz Mohnhaupt and Dieter Simon (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann), 72.

counterparts. Both secular and inquisitorial courts were active against alleged witches in the early decades of the sixteenth century, and Navarre remained a center of Spanish witch beliefs and witch hunting until the Inquisition eventually put an end to witch hunts after the dramatic and well-documented mass-denunciations that were concentrated around the village of Zugarramurdi in 1609-1614.¹¹

Before the witch hunts of the sixteenth century, the Basque territory was already embroiled in the extirpation of heresy and magic. Over 80 people were burned as heretics in the 1440's due to their affiliation with the Franciscan friar Alfonso de Mella's spiritualist movement.¹² In 1466, Enrique IV of Castile issued an ordinance to the justices of the Basque province of Gipuzkoa that tasked them with the persecution of witches who devoted themselves to the devil. In regard to Navarre, an important snapshot of local beliefs in the final third of the fifteenth century can be found in Pamplona canon Martín de Arlés y Andosilla's *Tractatus de superstitionibus*, which rejected continental radical demonology.¹³ Unfortunately, the exact date of this tract is unknown. It was printed for the first time in Lyon in 1510, though most scholars agree that it was probably written decades earlier in Pamplona. Like many thinkers of his generation, Arlés only discussed witchcraft as an element of his larger attack on improper beliefs and rituals. His approach drew upon the canon law tradition and the authority of the medieval *Canon Episcopi*, which stated that witches did not corporally fly to a sabbat and that claims that they did were manifestations of dreamlike delusions and fantasies. The central focus of Arlés's text, however, was on more simple religious errors such as the local practice of hammering

¹¹ On the Zugarramurdi episode see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition, 1609-1614* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1980).

¹² Iñaki Bazán Díaz, *Los herejes de Durango y la búsqueda de la Edad del Espíritu Santo en el siglo XV* (Durango: Museo de Arte e Historia de Durango, 2007).

¹³ The work has recently been translated into Spanish as: Martín de Arles y Andosilla, *De superstitionibus*, trans. by Félix Tomás López Gurpegui (Madrid: Cultiva, 2011).

needles into a tree to relieve headaches or women ringing a bell with their belts in order to ensure a successful childbirth.

The Castilian conquest of Navarre changed how witchcraft and other magical crimes were punished there. Superstition was traditionally considered a pastoral concern and ecclesiastics were usually the first to intervene to correct superstitious behavior, although trials could also be brought in municipal courts. The earliest Rioja Inquisition tribunal was installed in Osma but was then moved to the town of Calahorra, at the border of Navarre, in 1491. In 1499, the tribunal made further incursions into the Castilian-Navarrese borderlands by moving its seat to Durango. Disputes over royal succession in the Crown of Navarre allowed King Ferdinand to assert his claim to the throne and invade on behalf of Castile and Aragon in 1512. The territory was permanently incorporated into the Spanish crown after Charles I suppressed rebellions there in the 1520s. Beginning in 1513, Spanish inquisitors were dispatched throughout Navarre, initially acting in nonpermanent tribunals. In time, Navarre was incorporated into a large inquisitorial district that was administered from Calahorra (and later Logroño) and included territory in *la Rioja*, Cantabria, and large parts of Burgos and Soria.¹⁴ Upon arrival in Navarre, Spanish inquisitors found a mountainous and isolated district where syncretic folk beliefs lay closer to the surface than in central Castile.

Documentation from two secular trials for *hechicería* in the Basque region in the early decades of the sixteenth century has survived and has been closely examined by historian Iñaki Bazán Díaz. Both trials featured women who acted as midwives and healers.¹⁵ The first was held

¹⁴ Iñaki Reguera, "La Inquisición en el País Vasco. El periodo fundacional," *Clio & Crimen* 2 (2005): 237-255.

¹⁵ Iñaki Bazán Díaz, "El tratado de Fray Martín de Castañega como remedio contra la superstición y la brujería en la diócesis de Calahorra y La Calzada: ¿un discurso al margen del contexto histórico (1441-1529)," *eHumanista* 26 (2014): 25-28.

in the village of Aramayona against María Pérez, whom neighbors accused of using sorcery to damage the harvest. Some witnesses testified that babies often died when Pérez attended their births. Even more dramatic was the trial of Mariana de Otaola who was accused of being a “sorceress, enchantress, and witch,” “killing babies, and making men and women sick,” distributing love potions, “taking the offices of doctors and curing sicknesses that she did not know how to cure,” “diabolically making people lose their lives and properties,” and “many and diverse other sorceries and enchantments.”¹⁶ Both women faced unsympathetic local courts, but since these were secular trials, they were able to appeal to the higher power of the crown at the *Real Chancillería* in Valladolid where they were pardoned.

The Inquisition performed its earliest investigations into witchcraft in the village of Amboto, near Durango, in the year 1500. Although the documentation from these early trials remains sketchy, most historians agree that in 1507 inquisitors likely tried and executed members of an alleged conventicle of demonic witches.¹⁷ Whatever happened in Amboto, what is certain is that it provoked the *corregidor* of the Castilian-dominated Basque territory to launch a broader inquiry into witchcraft in the region which resulted in the arrest, trial, and execution of a woman named María de San Juan de Garonda from the town of Munguía. Like many of her

¹⁶ “hera echizera publica e secreta y encantadora y jorguina [sic] e avia fecho muchos e diversos echizos a muchas personas del dicho valle e fuera del, matando criaturas y enfermando onbres e mujeres e matando con ponçonna e cosas veninosas e sacando de noche criaturas de las camas de cabo sus madres para las aver de matar e echizando e dando yerba de bienquerençias a onbres e mujeres enamoradas para que se quisiesen bien, tomando ofiçios de medicas e curando henfermedades no lo sabiendo curar e avia fecho perder a muchas e diversas maneras de echizos e encantamientos, faziendo creer a las gentes lo que no hera verdad,” 12 Jan, 1517, *Real Ejecutoria del pleito contra Mariana de Otaola, vecina de Oquendo (Álava), acusada de hechicera y bruja*, trans. by Iñaki Bazán Díaz, “El tratado de Fray Martín de Castañega como remedio contra la superstición,” 44-45.

¹⁷ The nineteenth-century polemicist J.A. Llorente alleged that the Inquisition executed 30 witches in 1507, (*Histoire critique de la Inquisition d’Espagne*, [Paris, 1817], II, 453-454), and although the figure has been often cited by historians, it is difficult to substantiate. Circumstantial evidence and oblique literary references suggest that witch trials (and probably several executions) did occur in Amboto at that time, but the quantity and nature of these trials remain uncertain. The most in-depth study of the episode is Iñaki Bazán Díaz, “Superstición y brujería en el Duranguesado a fines de la Edad Media: ¿Amboto 1507?,” *Clio & Crimen* 8 (2011) 191-224.

contemporaries who were tried for *hechicería*, María was a midwife and healer who dabbled in love magic, divination, the distribution of abortifacients, and according to testimony, she had a reputation among her neighbors as a sorceress and a witch. She was first interrogated by secular authorities, but the case was then transferred to the Inquisition. In the eyes of the zealous prosecuting attorney, María's actions were evidence that she was a demon-worshipping heretic. The presiding inquisitor – a man named Juan de Frías who had also presided over the Amboto trials – found her guilty and recommended that she be relaxed to secular authorities for execution.¹⁸

In the 1520s, a spate of Navarrese witch hunts provoked the Supreme Council of the Inquisition to begin formulating a clearer set of policies regarding magical crimes. Around 1525, secular courts in Roncesvalles, Valcarlos, Burguete, Ituren, and Tudela conducted witch hunts and executed several, possibly dozens, of individuals.¹⁹ In 1526, the Suprema convened a special committee of prominent theologians, including the future Inquisitor General Fernando de Valdés, to clarify the Inquisition's official stance on witchcraft. The documentation from this proceeding shows that there were a range of approaches among Spain's prominent churchmen and that their opinions were relatively divided.²⁰ Even on the most fundamental issue – whether witchcraft was a reality or merely a product of the imagination – there were stark differences. The junta began by voting on whether they believed that witches flew at night and they voted by a six to four margin (with Valdés in the minority) that witches really flew, but the division on this issue

¹⁸ Iñaki Bazán Díaz, "Superstición y brujería en el Duranguésado a fines de la Edad Media: ¿Amboto 1507?," 218-221.

¹⁹ It is unclear whether the Inquisition had any role in these trials. Scant (and potentially apocryphal) documentation also make it difficult to count a precise number of executions. See Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus. Homo Superstitiosus*, 467; Florenciao Idoate, *La brujería en Navarra y sus documentos* (Pamplona: Institución Príncipe de Viana - CSIC, 1978).

²⁰ Documents from these proceedings have been edited and translated in LuAnn Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: An Anthology of Sources*, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 153-163.

pushed the council away from recommending severe persecution and punishment. The most zealous member of the committee was the Sorbonne-educated theologian Luis Coronel whose views were characteristic of continental thinkers who saw witchcraft as a dire threat.²¹ Coronel said that witches “must be completely destroyed. And for the killing of infants, etc. [sic], with damages, a secular judge may punish them with a suitable penalty.”²² The bishops in attendance, by contrast, preferred a more pastorally driven response that sought to identify sinners and reconcile them to the Church through ecclesiastical methods rather than to turn them over to secular jurisdictions.²³ Several attendees raised questions regarding the legitimacy of evidence, the validity of confessions extracted through torture, and the possibility that crimes might simply be (potentially demonic) delusions.²⁴

Fernando de Valdés was afforded the final opinion on each issue and he struck a tone, balanced between skepticism and credulity, that would come to characterize the Inquisition’s policies in later decades:

In the trials seen so far, the matter is not proven in such a way that one can conclude either that the witches really committed these crimes or only fantasized that they do. As a result, the inquisitors must be ordered to work more diligently to ascertain the truth, inquiring into the preparations the witches made in order to perform their *maleficia* and the circumstances surrounding it all [...].

[...] If the inquisitors find that the witches really do commit these crimes, then the inquisitors must consider the pact made with the Devil, in which the witches deny the Christian Faith or [implicitly] cast aside what they promised in the holy sacrament of baptism by adoring the Devil, offering him prayers for things that depend solely upon the

²¹ After studying at the Sorbonne, Coronel lived in the Habsburg Low Countries where he held benefices and gained inquisitorial experience in Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp under papal Inquisitor General Frans van Hulst. There, he became an associate of Prince Charles of Habsburg and he later served in the Spanish court and worked as secretary to Inquisitor General Alonso Manrique. See James K. Farge, *Biographical Register of Paris Doctors of Theology, 1500-1536* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980), 114-116.

²² Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: An Anthology of Sources*, 156.

²³ Attending bishops included the Bishop of Guadix, the Bishop-elect of Granada, the Bishop of Mondoñedo. The humanist and royal preacher Antonio de Guevara, who was named Bishop of Guadix three years later in 1529, voted with the ecclesiastics.

²⁴ Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: An Anthology of Sources*, 159-160.

power of God.²⁵

Valdés was confident that proper investigation would reveal the truth. He urged inquisitors to examine the actions of the accused and to issue appropriate penalties:

The penalty should be given according to the acts they carried out to achieve their will and wicked purpose, such as making unguents, looking for toads, taking toads and skinning them – or anointing themselves, or other things of this sort – or the methods they used to attract others to their opinion in order to become witches, or the speeches they pronounced to achieve that persuasion.²⁶

He further advised inquisitors to inquire into sabbats and the intentions of witches who allegedly attended them, but highlighted the threat of demonic delusion, especially since:

What they said or did after they were anointed or in the presence or company of the Demon should not be entirely trustworthy, either about themselves or others. And if it cannot be verified through other sufficient proofs, signs, or presumptions, then in such a case they may be punished at least for imagination or intention, if it is clear from their confession that they had such.²⁷

To combat the threat of witchcraft, the panel unanimously urged the deployment of preachers and the intensification of pastoral efforts, especially in Navarre. Several recommended that new Franciscan and Dominican monasteries be established in order to increase the number of qualified preachers who would reinforce orthodoxy. Luis Coronel pointed blame at the nonresident Cardinal-Bishop of Pamplona, and the Bishop-elect of Granada suggested that if the Bishop of Pamplona did not successfully reform his district, the Pope should grant Charles I the

²⁵ Ibid., 157.

²⁶ Ibid., 158.

²⁷ Ibid., 160.

power to sequester the Cardinal's funds in order to employ "preachers and learned people of upright life."²⁸

Many committee members recommended ritual and sacramental acts such as the performance of alms, fasts, and the sprinkling of holy water. Valdés emphasized how the cross should be used as a talisman to ward off demonic interference:

Everyone reputed to be involved in witchcraft should be obliged to carry around, day and night, a very obvious sign of the cross, at least for some time; since the Demon is an enemy of the cross and flees from it. And if one of them should be found without his cross, whether by day or night, he should be seriously punished. It also seems just to oblige these people to confess frequently and to hear Mass every day, at least for some time. It also would be good to build some oratory or hermitage with a great big cross in the location where the witches are said to go [to meet the Devil]. And crosses may be placed along the roads and other places where it is most often reported that these people speak to one another.²⁹

Overall, Valdés and his colleagues shared the view that demonic witchcraft was a serious threat and that the Church should deploy the tools at its disposal to combat it. Their contradictory messages about some aspects of the crime, however, resulted in an uneven initial response by individual priests and inquisitors.

Martín de Castañega

One of the men sent to proselytize Navarre was the Franciscan Martín de Castañega who worked as an inquisitorial preacher, likely issuing "edicts of faiths" and exhorting individuals to come forth and testify against superstitious crimes. In 1529, the Bishop of Calahorra, Alonso de Castilla, commissioned Castañega to write his *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* as part

²⁸ Ibid., 162.

²⁹ Ibid., 163.

of an ecclesiastically driven pastoral response to the Navarrese witch panic.³⁰ Little is known about Castañega's background, although the work's introductory material contains some clues. Castañega describes himself as a preacher who composed the work for the "common good," writing in the Castilian vernacular so that it would be accessible to all clergymen as an aid in correcting superstitious beliefs and diabolic practices that had been discovered in the bishopric. Bishop Castilla added a preface that introduced Castañega as a "theologian and philosopher of great subtlety, and a preacher of the Holy Office assigned by His Majesty."³¹ Castañega did not act as a judge, but he did have access behind the Inquisition's veil of secrecy, consulting on cases and witnessing investigations. His *Tratado* contains various instances in which he described this first-hand experience. In the text, he described how he had known and seen people who had been either burned or reconciled for superstitious crimes. He highlighted the case of a small old man who admitted to being convinced by the devil to turn away from God and the faith. He said that he had spoken with this man and heard his deposition in which he admitted his errors.³² Such experiences lent a local perspective to Castañega's zealous, albeit intellectually idiosyncratic, tract.

Demons and Binary Logic

The first half of the book concentrated on the threat of witchcraft, and Castañega's exposition of the topic was driven by contemporary demonological logic. His argument rested upon the idea that the world was densely populated by demons whose goal was to invert true

³⁰ The bishop explains the situation in his introduction to the work; Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 11-12.

³¹ Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 12; "muy artizado teólogo y filósofo, y predicador para el dicho Santo Oficio por su majestad señalado."

³² Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 57; "con los cuales hablé y platiqué, y oí sus dichos y deposiciones."

Christianity. Binary logic provided the theoretical backbone of this line of reasoning. This approach had been elaborated by fifteenth-century scholastic writers such as Nider and Krämer who expounded upon the many implications that proceeded from the idea of a demonically inverted church, and in doing so invented many dark and bizarre elements that would come to characterize early modern beliefs about witchcraft.³³ Castañega did little to add to this literature, which was already vast by the time when he penned his tract, but in a series of brief chapters he elucidated its basic assumptions. He described how “there are two churches in the world, one Catholic, and the other diabolic.” While the Catholic faithful partook in sacraments, those devoted to the diabolic church conversely participated in what he called “excraments.” Catholic sacraments were simple, pure, and self-evident. They involved the consecration of common items such as bread, water, wine, and oil, accompanied by clear and holy words. Diabolic excraments were the opposite, consisting of occult unguents and powders made of obscure animal parts and activated by dark rhythmic words. Demons, therefore, were hostile agents who imitated the true Church, establishing an alternate, corrupted version of it.

Echoing texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Castañega described in exquisite detail the horrific depravity of the diabolic church.³⁴ He painted a vision of a black sabbat over which demons presided while witches worshipped. Instead of partaking in the symbolic sacrifice of the Eucharist in which bread and wine transubstantiated into the flesh and blood of Christ, they carried out the real sacrifice and consumption of small children. Castañega acknowledged that some readers might find such an extreme anti-vision difficult to believe, but assured them that it

³³ On late-medieval demonology see Norman Cohen, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom* (London: Chatto-Heinemann); Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies*.

³⁴ The *Malleus Maleficarum* is not among the many texts that Castañega cites, although, through textual analysis, Lu Ann Homza makes a convincing argument that he likely consulted the famed witch hunting treatise; *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 204-205.

was true, saying that “although this seems to defy reason, and many might not believe it, the devil procures all possible modes and manners to offend.”³⁵

Like those of many of his contemporaries, Castañega’s description of witchcraft was highly sexualized.³⁶ The binary of good-evil was easily overlaid upon gendered antipodes of male-female and cerebral-corporal, which supposedly rendered women more susceptible to the snares of the diabolical church. Since the Catholic Church held that God ordained men to administer the sacraments, Castañega thought it was natural that the devil would designate women to administer the sacraments. He recalled the story of Genesis 3:1-6, in which the devil chose to tempt Eve rather than Adam, arguing that women were more easily deceived. Likewise, he used other gendered stereotypes to support his argument – that females were overly curious, vindictive, subject to ire, and, being more loose-tongued than men, more likely to pass on occult knowledge. He also portrayed women as being more inclined to indulge in carnal vice, and he explained how demons preyed upon this weakness to gain access to their souls. As incubi or succubae, demons assumed the male or female form to copulate with women and men. Castañega noted that women who were old and impoverished were particularly susceptible to such crimes since they were ignored by men and were therefore more likely to turn to demons to meet their sexual needs. Envisioning such actions being performed at the sabbat, theorists like Castañega arrived at the ultimate inversion of Christianity in which witches simultaneously upended moral, sexual, and religious norms.

³⁵ Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 86; “Aunque esto parezca cosa fuera de razón, y muchos no lo puedan creer, crean que el demonio procura todos los modos y maneras a él posibles para ofender.”

³⁶ Chapter V was entitled, “Por qué destos ministros diabólicos hay más mujeres que hombres,” 63-65.

Eclectic Theories of Healing

The second half of Castañega's treatise departed from the dark vision of diabolical witchcraft and instead focused upon a range of extra-liturgical practices – many of which were related to healing – that were often portrayed as crossing the boundary into superstition. With this shift in subject matter, Castañega made a radical departure in his argumentation and application of logic. While the chapters dealing with witchcraft were characterized by a rigid application of the binary logic and formulaic expressions of late-medieval demonology, the second half of the treatise was more conspicuously the work of a rural preacher whose proximity to local religious practices necessitated a pragmatic approach. While firmly condemning sorcery and divination, he was careful to make distinctions between rituals that were superstitious and others that were merely extra-liturgical. Drawing upon an eclectic mix of theories, he described the divisions between true and false relics, acceptable and unacceptable amulets, approved and unapproved exorcisms, and licit and illicit conjurations for lifting spells and expelling rainclouds. As these chapters show, it was difficult to demonize practices that were engrained in the everyday lives of ordinary people, especially if they provided their users with physical and spiritual relief. In order to justify his opinions, Castañega garnered varied insights from theology, natural philosophy, and medicine, though he deployed his arguments with little intellectual consistency.³⁷

After a discussion of the healing activities of *saludadores* and of royal thaumaturgy (which will be examined more closely in the next chapter), Castañega turned his attention to the evil eye, which was believed to cause a range of illnesses, especially among small children. Ideas

³⁷ See María Tausiet, "Religión, ciencia, y superstición en Pedro Ciruelo y Martín de Castañega," *Revista de Historia Jerónimo Zurita* 65-66 (1992), 143-144.

surrounding the evil eye – or fascination as it was called among academics – were held broadly across Europe and the Mediterranean world, and the concept arose in many of the Inquisition trials for *hechicería* against women. Castañega’s approach to the topic demonstrates the ways in which theories of medicine, theology, and natural philosophy were connected in Renaissance academic discourse and could be deployed creatively according to one’s rhetorical and political goals. Several of Castañega’s contemporaries interpreted the evil eye as a manifestation of demonic energies, but Castañega used the lens of medicine and natural philosophy to support his view in a chapter entitled “That the evil eye is a natural thing and not sorcery.”³⁸ He explained how one of the body’s “natural virtues” was to expel impurities and that the “most subtle” of these impurities escaped through the eye. Elderly women, he said, were especially likely to have this *ponçoña* (poison) in their gaze because they had ceased to purge impurities through menstruation and instead expelled them through their eyes. He advised older women to avoid looking children, especially small children, in the eye since they were delicate and unable to resist the effects of the evil eye. Castañega’s naturalization of the evil eye allowed him to condemn allegedly malicious elderly women without recourse to demonology. It was a mistake, he said, to think that sicknesses caused by the evil eye proceeded from witches since it was a natural process. In the case that one suspected that his or her child had been affected by the evil eye, he advised readers to avoid recourse to old *santigueras* (women who cured with blessings and the sign of the cross) and *hechiceras* (women who cured with sorcery). Instead, he advised the use incense and other aromatic natural remedies. This approach presented a softer alternative to the demonic rhetoric that he had used in the first half of the work. He was no friend of the

³⁸ Chapter xiiii, “Que el aojar es cosa natural y no hechicería.”

elderly female healers who practiced their trades in the Castilian-Basque borderlands, but he did not encourage their categorization as witches in practical circumstances.

In the following chapter, Castañega focused on distinguishing between approved and superstitious amulets and relics. Similarly, he warned against demonism while also allowing leeway for popular religiosity. The practice of wearing amulets that contained slips of paper with prayers, divine names, biblical phrases, and symbols (usually crosses) extended throughout Christendom, and it had analogs in Jewish and Islamic traditions.³⁹ Amulets had multiple uses, but they were generally thought to have protective and healing properties. Many reformers worried that wearing them might be evidence of magical and superstitious forms of piety. Luther and other Protestants denounced the practice, but Castañega followed the tradition of Aquinas and the scholastic theologians who maintained that amulets were permissible if they contained only approved prayers, crosses, and fragments of scripture. Castañega was even more accommodating in regards to the use of contact relics for healing purposes. For example, he said that it was permissible to take water that had been used to clean the chalice or relics and either drink it or sprinkle it on sick livestock. His argument, however, was not that these practices were necessarily efficacious but that they were didactically important for reinforcing a system of belief. He recognized that demonology and popular piety were often two sides of the same coin, and he argued that the use of relics should be permitted so as not to undermine belief in demons. Since it was proper to believe that demons often responded to superstitious practices, it was good for “simple and devout” people to believe that angels and saints would likewise respond to properly used amulets and relics.

³⁹ On *morisco* amulets see Esther Fernández Medina, “La magia morisca entre el Cristianismo y el Islam” (PhD Diss., Universidad de Granada, 2014), 80-82, 293-295; An online artifact image database of Islamic-Andalucian amulets by Sebastian Gaspariño can be found at <http://www.amuletosdealandalus.com/BAmuletos.html>.

Continuing his discussion of the nature of disease and healing, Castañega then devoted a chapter to the “experimental and empirical cures” of doctors. He argued that it was licit to use talismans and other non-standard remedies in cases where traditional medicines were ineffective. For instance, he advocated wearing the root of a peony to help with epilepsy, or making a pendant that held live crickets, locusts, or spiders to combat the quartan fever. These types of remedies could function in two ways, he explained. One possibility was that they simply acted as a placebo that improved a patient’s health if he or she had a strong imagination. Although Castañega acknowledged that such psychological cures were rather superficial, he did not think that they should be banned. For Castañega, natural philosophy served as a hermeneutic for differentiating between licit and illicit cures. Curing with a placebo was acceptable since an individual’s imagination was part of his or her nature, making such cures – even if they were as silly as hanging an acorn around the neck – natural in a sense. Another possibility, he said, was that some talismans had occult properties that were natural but were so deeply hidden that man did not understand them. Occult natural cures were licit in his mind, although he warned that they were often the province of the superstitious and the vain. On the other hand, cures that relied on words and ceremonies were plainly superstitious. For example, Castañega said that the popular remedy for curing an injured back – which included tearing apart a piece of wicker or straw and then pronouncing an incantation while putting it back together – was superstitious because it did not rely on any natural process and was therefore evidence of a demonic pact. Despite his best efforts at categorization here, Castañega’s differentiation between occult, psychological, superstitious, and empirical cures sometimes lacked clarity and intellectual consistency.

Back to the Center – Pedro Ciruelo and the Development of Demonology as an Epistemological Tool

A year after the publication of Castañega's treatise, intellectual production on questions of witchcraft and superstition moved to the Castilian center with the publication of Pedro Ciruelo's *Reprobación de las supersticiones*.⁴⁰ At a time of intense national scrutiny, Ciruelo's goal, like Castañega's, was to make sense of the confounding aspects of superstition and witchcraft in order to allow prelates, judges, and pastors to better navigate this cloudy terrain. As shown in Chapter One, Ciruelo was an accomplished metaphysician. His work was more extensive than Castañega's and it employed a more consistent theoretical framework when discussing superstition. In addition to offering a pastoral treatise, though, Ciruelo also shaped the *Reprobación* as a philosophical meditation and an exercise in demonological epistemology.

Instead of expounding upon witchcraft as a form of dark anti-Christian inversion, Ciruelo was more interested in detailing the ways in which popular superstitions were sins against natural law, which he thought perfectly aligned with divine law. With this approach, he avoided the more lurid imaginative landscapes of demonic sabbats employed by Castañega. This is demonstrated in his brief mention of *brujas* and *xorguinas* (the Castilian words for witches), in which he addressed the controversial question of whether witches corporally flew to the sabbat or simply went in their imaginations:

The things that *bruxas* and *xorguinas* do are so marvelous that they cannot be rationalized by any natural cause; some of them, for instance, anoint themselves with unguents and say certain words and jump out the chimney or through a window and go through the air to faraway places and rapidly return to say what happened there. Others, after anointing themselves and saying those words fall to the ground as if they were dead, cold, and senseless; although they burn or cut them, they do not feel it, and after two or three hours they spring up and speak about the many places where they had gone. Others of them fall,

⁴⁰ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*.

and although they lose all of their other senses, they speak of the marvelous secrets of the sciences that they never learned, and they make marvelous declarations based upon scripture, and they scare even the most learned philosophers and theologians. And if you ask these learned men the cause of these marvelous effects, they cannot find plausible natural causes; it must be said then that the causes are spiritual, supernatural, and these are angels and demons.⁴¹

Instead of plunging into the depths of the dialectics of good and evil in the abstract, Ciruelo's thought was more directly propelled by natural philosophy, and in this analysis, gender played a more ambivalent role.

Ciruelo did not dwell upon feminine witchcraft, nor did he consider it to be a distinct category of superstitious practice. Instead, he categorized witchcraft as a form of intentional and illicit magic that belonged conceptually alongside masculine necromancy. He traced a deep genealogy of these types of practices from ancient origins – Zoroastrians in Persia, Balaam of the Old Testament, the New Testament's magi who followed stars to the Epiphany – to contemporary Spain. The same constellation of beliefs that prevailed in Persia continued in Spain, he said, especially in Salamanca and Toledo, although diligent work by prelates and princes had eradicated them from many of Spain's principal cities.⁴²

Overall, Ciruelo divided superstitions into four principal categories, necromancy, divination, *ensalmos*, and *hechicería*, and he systematically explained how each were attempts to

⁴¹ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 22; “Las cosas que hacen las bruxas o xorguinas son tan maravillosas, que no se puede dar razón dellas por causas naturales; que algunas dellas se untan con unos unguentos y dicen ciertas palabras y saltan por la chimenea del hogar o por una ventana y van por el aire, y en breve tiempo van a tierras muy lexos y tornan presto diciendo las cosas que allá pasan. Otras destas, en acabándose de untar y decir aquellas palabras, se caen en tierra como muertas, frías y sin sentido alguno; aunque las quemen o asierren, no lo sienten, y dende a dos o tres horas se levantan muy ligeramente y dicen muchas cosas de otras tierras y lugares adonde dicen que han ido. Otras destas que caen, aunque pierdan todos los otros sentidos, quédales la lengua suelta y hablan maravillosos secretos de las ciencias, que nunca aprendieron, y de las Santas Escripturas dan declaraciones maravillosas, de que se espantan aun los muy grandes sabios filósofos y teólogos. Y preguntados los sabios de las casas destos maravillosos efectos, no hallan para ellos causas naturales que los pueden hacer; pues es necesario decir que las causas dellos sean espirituales, sobrenaturales; y estos son los ángeles buenos o malos.”

⁴² Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 35.

circumvent or supersede the laws of nature. The latter two categories dealt, in large part, with health and healing practices. Ciruelo did not cite Castañega, but the sequence and content of the *Reprobación* indicate that Ciruelo likely consulted his predecessor and may have seen his work as a corrective to Castañega's *Tratado*.⁴³ A significant difference between the two men's approaches was that Ciruelo employed a simplified and more rigid epistemology. Although both men utilized natural philosophy as an essential hermeneutic, Ciruelo avoided recourse to occult and psychological causes, and instead attempted to firmly characterize causes as either natural, divine, or demonic.

In regard to the evil eye, Ciruelo maintained that some individuals might indeed transmit physical maladies through natural means, although he relied less upon occult processes such as "subtle rays of impurities" than Castañega did. In fact, he avoided offering an explanatory mechanism altogether and instead tried to downplay the effects of the gaze and instead focus on the "much greater" (more empirically provable) potential of breath and sweat for transmitting disease. The victims, in his eyes, were delicate children or weak adults, but he was relatively open on the topic of who had the power to transmit maladies – men and women, the healthy and the sick, those with leprosy, the plague, or old women with bad physical complexions. His approach here more closely resembled a precocious germ theory than Renaissance occultism. If all natural possibilities were exhausted, however, he maintained that the evil eye could also be the result of *hechicería* or diabolic *maleficia*. In any case, he warned, Christians should only seek the natural remedies of learned doctors and perform approved spiritual devotions, and should "avoid like fire" the temptation to be cured through vain *hechicerías*. Going to see a *desojadora* (a woman who reversed the effects of the evil eye) or others who used counter-magic, he said,

⁴³ Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance*, 199-200.

could also be a mortal sin. The only individuals who could directly counteract demons were the Church's approved exorcists, who should be consulted as a last resort. If someone claimed to heal a man or beast through ceremonies, it was likely that their cures functioned through the secret operation of the Devil whose preternatural abilities allowed followers to remove poisons or to provide medicines leading to a rapid cure.⁴⁴

On the subject of amulets, Ciruelo was again more rigid than Castañega. As he explained, a common type of amulets called *nóminas* – written words or prayers – were often worn by men and women to heal a variety of maladies including tertian and quartan fevers, mouth ulcers, warts, and sores. In addition to healing, *nóminas* were used preventatively to promote health and fecundity (i.e. by women during childbirth) and in livestock, trees, and vines. Ciruelo associated them closely with *ensalmos*, but argued that they were “even more dangerous for the conscience” because they offered additional opportunities for religious vanities and superstitious accretions corresponding to the type of material used to make them, their color, or numerological beliefs related to their use. Instead of allowing the possibility of a placebo effect, Ciruelo declared unconditionally that the use of *nóminas* as talismans was a form of superstition created by the Devil in order to ensnare the souls of men. His reasoning, in keeping with his overarching epistemology, was that written talismans were not medicines and had no natural effect and they functioned therefore through a vain demand that God perform a miracle or, more likely, through the secret operation of the Devil.⁴⁵

Ciruelo's position on *nóminas* echoed some of the controversial opinions of his generation of reformers – both Catholic Erasmians and Protestant dissenters – and he was careful

⁴⁴ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 87-89.

⁴⁵ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 74-85.

to modulate his message and delicately navigate the areas in which his opinion might conflict with traditionalists. He was aware that Aquinas, among other prominent theologians, explicitly permitted the carrying of *nóminas*, but he maintained that there was a difference between texts carried for reading and those carried as talismans. For instance, he did allow the carrying of approved prayers or scripture, but he said that they should only be in the form of a readable page or miniature book. If individuals carried texts that were sewn together or hidden, they were sinful because they had no natural virtue. He was critical of vulgar traditions – “among the hundred thousand *nóminas* and *ensalmos*” Ciruelo said, “hardly any can be found that are without error”⁴⁶ – but he was careful to avoid condemning devout prayers altogether. The sick should pray, he said, and so should their doctors and caretakers, but only because prayers inspired faith and virtue in the heart. Words themselves, whether written or spoken, lacked a functional power to heal. Ciruelo urged his readers to put their faith instead in medicine.

With this approach, Ciruelo advocated a close collaboration between religious and medical authorities. Unlike earlier clerical commenters who looked at the medical establishment with suspicion and as rivals in the care of the flock, he saw them as partners in a religio-medical alliance.⁴⁷ He harnessed scriptural support for this position by paraphrasing Ecclesiasticus 38:4, 6-7, which he quoted as saying “God created medicines from the earth, and a sensible person will not hesitate to use them; He revealed them to physicians so that they can care for the sick in their time of need; and, because of this, any sick person should go to a physician to be cured.”⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 82.

⁴⁷ See Campagne, “Medicina y religión en el discurso antisupersticioso español de los siglos XVI a XVIII: un combate por la hegemonía,” 417–56.

⁴⁸ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 68.

Ensalmos, he said, were sinful because they sought recourse outside of the recognized channels of natural medicine and Christian devotion.

Ciruelo was similarly skeptical in his approach to relics and healing rituals. “In these times, there is much uncertainty with regard to saints’ relics,” he wrote. He discouraged individuals from carrying them, reminding readers that “what they say about the splinter or timber of the boat can really occur” (i.e. that false relics can easily be manufactured out of common items). Instead of keeping relics at home for personal devotions, he urged people to deposit them in churches or “honest places” and to pray directly to the saints.⁴⁹ He also warned against profane healing rituals, such as “measuring ribbon” and “taking the light from the head” – which readers would have understood as household practices involving healing prayers that were recited while tying ribbons around the patient or holding a glass of water over his or her head.⁵⁰

Unlike Castañega, a provincial preacher who focused mostly on the superstitions of the laity, Ciruelo took aim at corruption within the ranks of the Church and relentlessly rebuked the clergy for their part in permitting and perpetuating vulgar errors.⁵¹ He condemned them, for instance, for using numerologically-based prayer cycles, excommunicating locusts, and conjuring clouds. He criticized the vainglory of priests who performed dramatic public exorcisms and speculated that some of them practiced necromancy. Some priests and judges, Ciruelo said, complacently allowed vain rituals and even covered up the sins of those who healed with *ensalmos* and *nóminas*. He recommended that confessors be the *avant garde* of reform:

⁴⁹ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 80-81.

⁵⁰ “*medir la cinta*” and “*sacar la luz de la cabeza*” – many variations on these types of rituals can be found in inquisitorial trials against healers.

⁵¹ Lu Ann Homza contrasts their approaches to clerical errors in *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance*, 192-193.

Although the Church permits and covers up the errors among the common people and also conceals the aforementioned errors of using *ensalmos* and *nóminas* and other vain prayers; these things do not cease to be sins, and although they are permitted by ecclesiastic and secular judges, they should not be permitted by confessors. The reason for this is: because the exterior judges in common tribunals should not squeeze the common people, nor should they give punishments for small mistakes; and therefore the task should be left for the privacy of the confessional. So that confessors correct them and give penances for them, because confessors should not let any improper act remain hidden nor be left unpunished without a proper penance. Yet I will say that confessors should distinguish those who are ignorant and unlettered and have erred in the superstition of *ensalmos* and *nóminas* due to an ignorance that might excuse or assuage their sin. Yet once they are advised and corrected by wise theologians and prelates, if they continue to use *ensalmos* and *nóminas*, their ignorance will not be excused.⁵²

Here, Ciruelo was prescient in his recommendations for how reformatory interventions might unfold. He recognized that many of his contemporaries considered this type of healing to be relatively benign, and that it was not a high priority for judges, and that it was therefore best suited to be handled by confessors. His leniency towards *nóminas* and his recommendation that confessors take charge of reprimanding *nóminas*, however, was somewhat probationary. At the time that Ciruelo wrote, most reform efforts against healing superstitions were carried out through confessors, but as decades passed and didactic campaigns continued, Spanish authorities grew more willing to see these superstitions as evidence of demonic heresy.

Female Healers and the Inquisition in Castile – Sixteenth Century

⁵² Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 81; “Que así como la Iglesia permite y disimula algunos otros yerros en el pueblo común de los vulgares, así también disimula en los yerros que dicho habemos del uso de ensalmos y nóminas y en algunas oraciones vanas; mas pro eso no dexan de ser pecados, y aunque los permiten los jueces eclesiásticos y seglares de la Iglesia de Dios, mas no los han de permitir los confesores. La razón de esta regla es: porque los jueces exteriores de las comunes audiencias no han de estrechar mucho al pueblo común, ni deben castigarlo sobre todas las cosillas mal hechas; y así muchas dellas han de dexar para la audiencia secreta de los confesores, que ellos las corrijan y den penitencias por ellas, porque los confesores ninguna cosa mal hecha deben disimular ni dexar sin reprehensión y penitencia saludable. Y aun digo: que en la audiencia secreta de los confesores se debe hacer diferencia entre los que han errado en la superstición de ensalmos y nóminas, porque a las personas sin letras la ignorancia las excusa o alivia el pecado. Esto es verdad antes que ellos sean avisados y corregidos por los sabios teólogos y prelados, porque después de ser avisados, si aún porfían en querer usar de ensalmos y nóminas, no los excusará la ignorancia.”

One of the earliest examples of inquisitorial persecution of Old Christian magical healing in Castile was the case of a woman named Costanza Alfonso from the village of Argamasilla, arrested in 1513 by the Toledo tribunal.⁵³ She was initially brought in for questioning in the village of Almodóvar del Campo by the inquisitor Alfonso Suriana who asked her to confess all that she had said and done that was against the Catholic faith. At first, she maintained that she had done nothing wrong, but did know how to say *ensalmos* to cure hemorrhoids, shingles, and other infirmities.⁵⁴ She was then asked to recite one of them, which the scribe recorded: “Jesus Christ was born/ Jesus Christ died / Jesus Christ rose from the dead / Jesus Christ was put on the cross / for our sins/ as this is true / these hemorrhoids will be cured.”⁵⁵ Upon further questioning, though, it was apparent that Constanza was not a typical *ensalmadora* of the sort depicted in the previous chapter. She was also a midwife, and words were only one component of her healing services. She used sympathetic magic, applied unguents, and utilized religious relics for healing purposes.

To cure hemorrhoids, Constanza took three live frogs, sequentially placing each of them on the affected area, while blessing the other two in the name of the Virgin. She then impaled the frogs, placed them on the east side of a corral, and said that “as these frogs dry, so will the hemorrhoids.” To cure shingles and mange, she said her *ensalmo*, pierced the sores with a needle, and treated the wound for nine consecutive days with her words and an unguent she made of ashes and dust. Sometimes, she also applied the religious relics that she had collected over the years. She reported that when her own son was sick, a white-robed friar from Rome had

⁵³ A.H.N., INQ 82, exp. 4. Other brief commentaries on this case can be found in Sebastián Cirac Estopañan, *Los procesos de hechicerías en la Inquisición de Castilla la Nueva: Tribunales de Toledo y Cuenca* (Madrid: Diana, 1942), 99-100, and Julio Caro Baroja, *Vidas mágicas e Inquisición Vol. II* (Madrid: Taurus, 1967), 12.

⁵⁴ A.H.N., INQ 82, exp. 4. “sabe ensalmar las almorranas e la rosa del monte e la colibrilla e el usagre”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* “Ihesu christo naçio/ Ihesu christo murió/ Ihesu christo resuçito/ Ihesu christo se puso en la cruz por nosotros pecadores salvar/ a sy como esto es verdad/ a sy sanen estas almorranas que quiero curar.”

given her various relics including (allegedly) bread from the Last Supper, a piece of the true cross, and some of Christ's beard hairs. When questioned by the Inquisition she was forthcoming about her healing practices and claimed that they were approved by her confessor, though the tribunal showed no mercy and sentenced her to a hundred lashes and banishment from Toledo.

In another case, the Toledo Inquisition investigated the healing activities of a woman named María Gómez in 1553.⁵⁶ In addition to being an *ensalmadora*, Inquisitors described her as a *desojadora* – meaning that she undid the effects of the evil eye – and an *encantadora de bestias perdidas* (enchantress of lost animals). Her trial mostly focused on her healing. Her neighbors reported that she was known to diagnose illnesses simply by looking people in the face. She also had a reputation for blessings that cured children whose health was affected by the evil eye. These blessings included the recitation of her *ensalmo* and the prayer of *novenas*, specifically nine Hail Marys and nine Our Fathers on nine consecutive days. Though *novenas* were considered orthodox, and they were widely used for healing, some theologians took issue with their mechanical and numerological efficiency.⁵⁷ Similarly, the Mondejar inquisitors found María's *ensalmos* to be “vain and superstitious,” and had her publicly disgraced in a penitential *Auto de Fe* in May of 1553.

It is telling that Toledo inquisitors punished Constanza Alfonso and María Gómez harshly, but did not invoke demons or a demonic pact. At the time, there was sufficient theological precedent in the European Catholic tradition to see demons as the active agents in invocations and magical healing techniques, but in the first half of the sixteenth century, demonology was not yet deeply embedded in jurisprudence nor systematically applied in

⁵⁶ A.H.N., INQ 87, exp. 10.

⁵⁷ Fourteenth-century theologian Jean Gerson, for instance, warned against the superstitious uses of *novenas*; see Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 131.

inquisitorial courts. By mid-century, however, this had begun to change. The threat of superstition, witchcraft, and magic became a more present element of public discourse in the wake of the Inquisition's aggressive response to accusations of witchcraft and superstition in the Basque Country after the Spanish conquest of Navarre. Although witch panics were local phenomena, they had repercussions that reverberated in institutions and ideologies throughout the kingdom.

The 1557 case of Catalina de Doyague is representative of mid-century trials of female healers in Toledo and it makes an interesting counterpoint to the earlier cases of Constanza Alfonso and María Gómez. Intent is difficult to discern in these cases and Catalina's methods may well have been more nefarious than her predecessors', but what is certain is that both her neighbors and the local authorities saw her healing activities in a darker light. Catalina de Doyague was arrested in the village of Cebreros in 1557 when neighbors became upset and suspected that her ability to heal was related to an ability to cause harm.⁵⁸ The Toledo Inquisition began investigating her for *hechicería* at the behest of Cebreros' parish priest who took testimony from local witnesses and sent it to the tribunal. Shortly thereafter, she was summoned to the main office of the tribunal where she was arrested and jailed. The inquisitorial prosecutor accused her of being a "heretical apostate against the Catholic faith or at least very suspicious of being a deceitful *hechicera* who invoked demons."⁵⁹

Like many of the women accused of *hechicería* by the Inquisition, Catalina was a midwife and a healer. Her religio-medical cures included the use of herbal remedies – she concocted healing poultices using incense and herbs that she mashed into a paste using butter,

⁵⁸ A.H.N., INQ 85, exp. 9.

⁵⁹ Ibid.; "la acuso por herege apostate de nuestra santa fe catolica o a lo menos muy sospechosa de ello, hechicera embaucadora con invocación de demonios."

water, and wine and then applied to people's chests. At times, her role as a healer led to conflicts. She quarreled with neighbors whom she thought owed her money, and boasted that they would not be cured without her help. Trial testimony reveals that magic and sorcery were often enmeshed with discourse about health and disease in the village. Some alleged that Catalina's threats implied that she herself was the author of their suffering. They pointed to occasions in which people fell ill after merely being touched by her. Catalina herself participated in this discourse. She diagnosed some illnesses as the result of sorcery and specialized in reversing harmful magic. She also dabbled in love magic and taught women rituals and incantations to maintain relationships and to bring back wayward lovers.⁶⁰ One witness accused her of boasting that she drew magical circles and commanded demons. In the end, the Toledo Inquisition found her guilty of "harming Christians and having taught, said, and done sorcery with demonic invocations." She was forced to participate in an *Auto de Fe* and permanently banished from the village of Cebreros.

Superstition and Midwifery

In Castilian Inquisition trials, many of the women arrested for sorcery were midwives who offered their services alongside a suite of other religio-medical and/or magical services. Some, like Constanza Alfonso,⁶¹ oriented themselves towards generalized medical practice, delivering babies while also using their skills to alleviate burns, lesions, and a range of illnesses. Other midwives, like Catalina de Doyague,⁶² had wider magical expertise. They, like Celestina, facilitated sexual liaisons and used so-called love magic to "*ligar*" (bind) and "*desligar*" (unbind) couples. They used divination to answer questions about relationships and fertility

⁶⁰ Her incantation is preserved in the trial documents and is transcribed in Julio Caro Baroja, *Vidas mágicas*, 31.

⁶¹ A.H.N., INQ 82, exp. 4.

⁶² A.H.N., INQ 84, exp. 2.

(among other things) and administered abortifacients to terminate unwanted pregnancies.⁶³ A widespread practice among midwives was the fabrication of protective talismans and amulets that were meant to guard a baby from the effects of the evil eye. Sometimes they were accused of casting the evil eye themselves. All in all, sexuality and reproduction were often delicate topics that provoked interpersonal conflicts, misgivings, and accusations of (potentially diabolical) malfeasance.

Before describing the activities of midwives tried for *hechicería* in Spain any further, it is useful to take a step back to analyze how these women fit into the larger European picture. Witchcraft and midwifery were deeply entrenched in European cultural discourse and many of the early modern reform movements took aim at superstitious practices related to midwifery. Prayers and devotion were encouraged during the dangerous moments of childbirth, but reformers worried that these moments were ripe for religious corruption. A common concern among the clergy was that proper devotions could be twisted into improper superstition. The extension of demonological discourse also encouraged growing speculation that religion itself could be inverted for more sinister means.

The use of demonology to describe the alleged maleficent activities of midwives had classical and medieval roots, but a high-scholastic synthesis began to crystallize in the theological texts of the fifteenth century. Johann Nider's *Formicarius* (1436-1438), for instance, contended that witches killed babies as part of nocturnal satanic rituals. This mythology surrounding the witches' sabbat was then extended to its horrific logical conclusion in Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum*. Kramer's approach to the topic was singularly severe and

⁶³ On the relationship between witchcraft, midwifery, and abortion, see María Tausiet Carlés, "Comadronas-brujas en Aragón en la edad moderna: mito y realidad," *Manuscrits* 15 (1997): 377-392.

highly, even obsessively, focused on the sexual-reproductive aspects of witchcraft. He went so far as to say:

No one does more harm to the Catholic Faith than midwives. For when they do not kill children, then, as if for some other purpose, they take them out of the room and, raising them up in the air, offer them to devils.⁶⁴

As a consequence of systematic misogyny and continuing speculation about the reality of the witches' sabbat, this type of rhetoric linking witchcraft to infanticide had a ring of truth for later reformers. It would continue to influence the extensive European literature on demonology and witch-hunting for the next two centuries.

A point of contention among historians is the degree to which this discourse translated into real-world accusations and trials. In an influential 1990 article in *Social History of Medicine*, David Harley argued that the midwife-witch was nothing more than a myth, and that the idea rarely provoked formal trials for witchcraft.⁶⁵ Scouring English records, he could only find one witchcraft trial that focused upon a professional midwife. He also offered a sophisticated reading of the growing historiography of witch hunts in Scotland, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain to show that professional midwives comprised only a small proportion of the early modern women tried and convicted for witchcraft.

When examining the Inquisitions of the Catholic South, Harley acknowledged that the magical geography there was somewhat different than in Northern Europe. He noted that Catholic inquisitors were eager to monitor popular medical superstitions and secure repentance, and he granted that midwives were occasionally investigated for sorcery, but maintained that

⁶⁴ Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (London: Pushkin Press, 1948 [1486]), part 1, question XI.

⁶⁵ David Hartley, "Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch," *Social History of Medicine* 3 (1990): 1-26.

inquisitors “were not misled by the supposed authority of the *Malleus*.”⁶⁶ For Harley, the healers tried by the Mediterranean Inquisitions did not fit his model of the midwife-witch since they were initially investigated for dabbling in magic and abuse of the sacramentals instead of infanticide and participation in witches’ sabbats. He did, however, speculate that demonology might have had a disproportionate influence in Spanish America, where inquisitors sometimes lumped together midwives and other indigenous healers as witches and tools of the Devil. Nevertheless, he used the documentation from cases of midwives tried for magic and incantations to show that inquisitors in New Spain often dismissed accusations of witchcraft as “mere superstition,” which he used to underline his hypothesis that early modern midwives were rarely prosecuted as witches.⁶⁷

Harley’s article had important implications that counteracted persistent errors in thinking about early modern witches and midwives. His research offered a corrective to an exaggerated history of the midwife-witch that was co-opted by twentieth-century scholars who utilized it in certain modes of feminist polemic. Within this framework, early modern witch hunts were considered a breaking point that served to disempower women in general and female healers in particular. The point of departure for this line of thinking was the work of early twentieth-century historians such as Margaret Murray who radically reimagined witch hunts as a singular effort by the male Christian hierarchy to annihilate the healing and fertility rites of a more authentic and egalitarian medieval culture in the European countryside that remained connected to its pagan Indo-European roots. Later in the century, this idea was appropriated by second-wave feminist historians who saw witch hunts as an important point of entry into gender history.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 9-10.

At their most polemical, these scholars decried witch hunts as a gynocide that claimed the lives of “millions of women.”⁶⁸ This approach was then imposed upon the social history of medicine when Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English used the history of the witch hunts as an explanatory model for the relative lack of feminine power in contemporary medicine. In their influential pamphlet *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers*, Ehrenreich and English argued that witch hunts amounted to an assault on female sexuality through the persecution of women with knowledge of contraception, abortion, and childbirth. They saw this as a critical juncture in the patriarchal take-over of obstetrics, which demoted women to mere auxiliary positions in medicine such as nursing.⁶⁹

Further research, however, showed that Ehrenreich and English’s interpretations were flimsy and utilized only paltry primary source data.⁷⁰ The argument upon which they build their conclusions – that the witch hunt was essentially a “woman hunt” – was complicated and contextualized when more extensive empirical studies were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. One of the leaders in this work was the historian of Scottish witch hunts, Christina Larner, whose systematic investigation of trial documents led her to the pithy conclusion that “witchcraft was a sex-related rather than a sex-specific crime.”⁷¹ This approach neither precluded further feminist interpretations nor denied that misogyny was a fundamental element in early modern culture that fueled witch hunting. Instead, it permitted a subtler analysis of the ways in which gender shaped

⁶⁸ Current estimates range from 20,000 to 50,000. This sort of polemic was first crafted in the 1970’s, but it still had an influential champion in Anne Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1994).

⁶⁹ Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (Oyster Bay, NY: Glass Mountain Pamphlets, 1970); Also see Claudia Opitz-Belakhal, “Witchcraft studies from the Perspective of Women’s and Gender History: A report on Recent Research,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4 (2009): 90-99.

⁷⁰ They admit as much in the introduction to the 2010 edition of their work, but maintain the validity of their overall argument.

⁷¹ Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-Hunt in Scotland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 93.

the dynamics of local trials. It also allowed for a better understanding of male witches and a greater appreciation for the complex intellectual, medical, and cultural motivations behind witch hunting. Harley's article then transferred this insight to the history of medicine, thereby demonstrating that the midwife-witch imagined by Ehrenreich and English was, in large part, a "myth of martyrs" that had distorted the real history of midwifery and women's health care.⁷²

In a more recent article, historian Monica Green revisited the Ehrenreich and English thesis. She credited Harley for "soundly demolishing" the idea that midwives were a central target of witch hunters though many of the myths surrounding the thesis still influence research.⁷³ As she noted, the history of women's healthcare and medical practice in pre-modern Europe is "neither a story of women's unfettered control over knowledge of their bodies nor of deliberate male attempts to eradicate that control."⁷⁴ Although women served as the primary caregivers during regular childbirths, male physicians and surgeons still claimed a near-monopoly on learned expertise and regularly intervened in complicated births. In fact, of the 250 printed texts on women's medicine published in Europe prior to 1700, only five were written by female midwives. Thus, for Green, the major contest in pre-modern medicine was not between men and women *per se* but rather between learned and empirical medicine. The growing power of learned and professionalized medicine was gendered, of course, since women were excluded from universities and most avenues for learning Latin.⁷⁵ Midwifery, however, did not play as central a role in the history of women's healthcare as Ehrenreich and English had assumed. Many issues related to women's health – gynecology, menstrual dysfunctions, infertility – were

⁷² Harley, "Historians as Demonologists," 20-21. See also Opitz-Belakhal, "Witchcraft Studies from the Perspective of Women's and Gender History: A Report on Recent Research;" Monica H. Green, "Gendering the History of Women's Healthcare," *Gender & History* 20 no. 3 (2008): 487-518.

⁷³ Green, "Gendering the History of Women's Healthcare," 490.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 493.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 495.

treated by both women and men and by learned practitioners and empirics alike. Midwifery was only slowly and sporadically professionalized, and the assertion of male obstetrical expertise did not directly correspond with witch hunting.

In light of these and other recent developments in the history of women's health and healthcare, it is worthwhile to revisit Harley's article on the midwife-witch. Though still widely cited and held in high regard, Harley's perspective was a product of the political and intellectual conditions of its time, conditions that have shifted in the decades since its publication. His goal was to correct the Ehrenreich-English thesis through an analysis grounded in textual study and empirical data, but a closer look reveals that his evidence did not support his conclusions as overwhelmingly as he asserted. As Harley would have it, the relationship between witchcraft and midwifery was nothing more than a myth or chimera, a literary tale born in the *Malleus Maleficarum* and propagated by its followers. He accused modern historians of following pre-modern demonologists in granting too much explanatory power to Heinrich Kramer's passage on the midwife-witch, which led them to the false conclusion that midwives were a central target of witch hunts. As Harley meticulously documented, the passage in question (quoted above), was a rhetorical trope among witch hunters that did not betray personal experience but instead resulted from a string of literary citations that often led back to Kramer's original polemic. Harley himself, however, might be accused of making the same mistake. If, as he contended, the passage only served as a minor citation in works by subsequent churchmen, what were the actual concerns voiced in the vast early modern literature on witchcraft and demonology? A more extensive survey of this literature would show that, while it is undeniable that Kramer's idea of the flying midwife-witch who offered newborns to the devil continued to provoke fear in some writers, many saw this type of witchcraft as only one part of a larger complex of beliefs and

practices that courted demonic powers. This was especially true for Spanish authors, who were more interested in penning reproaches to superstition in general than in publishing specific condemnations of diabolical witchcraft. As demonstrated above, sixteenth-century Spanish demonologist Martín de Castañega's formulaic descriptions of witchcraft sat awkwardly alongside his longer and richer denunciations of the everyday superstitions that he witnessed as a countryside preacher.

Leaving Harley's intertextual studies aside, his analysis of trial documentation also had serious shortcomings. He searched a vast range of primary sources for cases of professional midwives who were accused of the most heinous acts of witchcraft, but in doing so he created a category so narrow that it is unsurprising that only a few documented cases surfaced, even in a survey of the historiography of several European countries and their New World colonies. He did note that English "cunning folk" were accused of sorcery (but not witchcraft), and that female German healers described as "medica" or "Ärtzin" (but not necessarily midwives) were accused of witchcraft. He also acknowledged the case of Mrs. Pepper of Newcastle upon Tyne, who was identified as a midwife and accused as a witch, but dismissed the case because it was not midwifery that led to her persecution but rather "failed magical medicine." This case resembles those of the large number of female midwives tried by Catholic inquisitions for sorcery and ignored by Harley because the accused did not commit demonic infanticide and thus did not qualify as midwife-witches by his definition. Furthermore, he verified fourteen cases of identifiable midwives tried for witchcraft in Scotland, but he discounted these since there were over 3,000 known witchcraft trials in the country. Harley did at least recognize some continental cases, which he saw as outliers, in which the association between demonism and midwifery had dramatic results. In 1587, for instance, the licensed midwife Walpurga Haussmannin of Dillingen

confessed under torture to fornication with the Devil, apostasy, cannibalism, and the killing of forty-three unbaptized infants, often with the help of her demonic salve. Even more lurid was the 1679 case of the La Voisin poisoning and abortion group in Paris which allegedly collected the remains of 2,500 infants for diabolical purposes.⁷⁶ In his eagerness to dismiss such examples as either outliers or outside of his narrow definition of the midwife-witch, Harley effectively combatted the facile narrative of the midwife-witch of the Ehrenreich and English thesis, but he also obscured the connections between magic, medicine, deviance, and childbirth that existed in early modern Europe.

Harley was reluctant to blur the lines between witchcraft and sorcery and between midwifery and empiric medicine, but in early modern Europe these lines *were* inherently blurry. When discussing English midwives, he highlighted the important nuance that both licensed and unlicensed midwives were often respected members of their communities and that their close ties to local officials and ecclesiastics may have protected them from witchcraft accusations. It is unclear, though, how representative these respected midwives were, given that midwifery was often considered to be a body of knowledge rather than a formal trade or profession. As later research on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England by Margaret Pelling showed, it is often difficult to determine who should and should not be considered a midwife.⁷⁷ Using psychoanalytic theory to investigate the role of individual and collective fears in accusations of witchcraft in early modern Germany, Lyndal Roper examined how concerns about fertility led to accusations that elderly midwives, lying-in maids, and healers were witches.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷⁷ Pelling, *The Common Lot*, 155-175 and 179-202.

⁷⁸ Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

While Spain presents a different set of social and cultural circumstances, many cases there likewise involved anxieties surrounding childbirth and infancy. Although he did not analyze data from the Peninsula, Harley did mention the passage in *La Celestina* in which Pármeno's mother is described as both a witch and a midwife, which he conjectured was a mere literary formulation unlikely to have led to any prosecutions before the Inquisition. Here he envisioned a flow of knowledge that originated in works like the *Malleus Maleficarum* but bore little relation to the situation on the ground. In doing so, Harley missed the ways in which (proto-) picaresque literature such as *La Celestina* and *La Lozana Andaluza* reflected aspects of social reality. In fact, close examination of Inquisition documentation reveals that problems involving fertility and childbirth were often linked to *hechicería*. As Ana Conde has shown in her systematic study of *hechicería* in the Inquisition tribunal of Cuenca, midwives accounted for twelve of the twenty-nine cases brought against women in the region during the sixteenth century.⁷⁹ María Tausiet likewise has investigated Aragonese Inquisition cases that targeted midwives, and has also documented cases in which the distribution of abortifacients played a role in *hechicería* trials and in which women, under torture, confessed to demonic infanticide.⁸⁰ In Castile, the myth of the witches' sabbat circulated in some forms of discourse, but it not produce trials against the prototypical midwife-witch that Harley had envisioned. Magic, healing, and childbirth were nonetheless culturally intertwined there in both popular and learned circles.

Magic and Demons in Spanish Obstetric Texts

⁷⁹ Ana Conde, "La répression de la sorcellerie par le tribunal inquisitorial de Cuenca (fin du XVe siècle - XVIIIe siècle)," (Thèse de doctorat, Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 97.

⁸⁰ Tausiet Carlés, "Comadronas-brujas en Aragón en la edad moderna: mito y realidad," 384, 386; also see Medina, "La magia morisca entre el Cristianismo y el Islam," 245-298.

An analysis of contemporary obstetrical texts offers insight into the competing discourses available to medical doctors who discussed the relationship between magic, witchcraft, and midwifery. Damian Carbón, for instance, was a Mallorcan doctor who, in 1541, published the first work on obstetrics written in Castilian Spanish. His book, entitled *Libro del arte delas Comadres o madrinas y del regimiento delas preñadas y paridas y delos niños*, was a comprehensive manual on fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and the care of infants. Following the standard pre-modern division of labor, Carbón explained that physicians were responsible for understanding the nature of medical disorders and providing cures, but that they should delegate the physical labor of manipulating bodies, “*cosas feas*” (ugly things) in his words, to surgeons and other auxiliaries.⁸¹ For reasons of decency, he recommended that assistance in childbirth be left to female midwives. In a chapter dedicated to the “conditions that a midwife should have in order to be good and sufficient” he stipulated three essential qualities that these women should possess. First, a midwife should be experienced in her art. Second, she should be clever and adaptable. Third, she should be moderate and have good morals – she should “not be fantastic, nor quarrelsome,” should be a good Christian, and should “avoid sortilege, superstition, augury, and the like, because they are abhorrent to the Holy Church.”⁸²

In a later chapter on how to have a good birth, he admonished expectant mothers to be careful of magical interference and to avoid having elderly women in the birthing room besides their mothers, mothers-in-law, and close family friends. He also instructed those present at a birth to avoid “gestures with the head, mouth, or hands.”⁸³ The reason for this, he said, was to guard against sorcery. He then cited an example from Ovid in which Alcmene, wife of

⁸¹ Damián Carbón, *Libro del arte delas Comadres o madrinas y del regimiento delas preñadas y paridas y delos niños* (Mallorca, 1541), x(v)-xi.

⁸² *Ibid.*, xii-xii(v).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, “guárdense de viejas extrañas que no sean madre y suegra o su muy propincua,” fol. xxxviii.

Amphitryon and mother of Heracles, was in labor but could not give birth due to the interference of Juno Luciana, goddess of childbirth, who crouched with her hands wrapped around her knees and recited enchantments. Once Juno Luciana's enchantments were broken, Alcmene gave birth without any problem. Carbón recognized that this was just a fable, but he warned that such enchantments continued to occur:

Believe me that I have seen an elderly midwife who looked to the sky, moved her mouth a thousand times, and said who knows what words; a woman who is recognized in this city as a known heretic who had confessed many errors and *hechicerías*.⁸⁴

To counteract “superstitions and sortilege,” he recommended what he regarded as proper Catholic devotions. He goaded readers to put their faith in Christ and the Virgin and to invoke Saint Margaret, patron of childbirth. He also recommended placing relics on the belly of the woman giving birth.

During the following century, there would be vigorous debates in Spain and in Europe about the validity of so-called occult properties and the possibility that unknown effects might be the result of demonic interference. Carbón, however, saw no problem with encouraging religious, occult, and medical remedies as part of a seamless package. Within the system of ideas relating to occult properties, the use of stones played a prominent role. He encouraged women to remove any jewelry containing precious stones since it could slow the process of childbirth. An exception to this rule, however, was the emerald, which, when tied to the inside of the left leg, would facilitate a quick and easy birth. Carbón also recommended placing a feather from the left wing of an eagle or vulture under the left foot and tying a concoction made of the heart of a

⁸⁴ Ibid., “Creeme que vi una comadre vieja: la qual su cabeça mirando el cielo: mil vezes abriendo la boca decía no sé qué palabras y la he visto en esta ciudad por herética inquirir: y ella confessar mil errores y hechizerías,” fol. xxxviii.

living chicken, basil root, and other herbs to the top of the knee. Having listed these and several other procedures that he claimed possessed “manifest or occult virtue,” he also included several more traditional medical recipes for topical unguents made of roots, barks, flowers, and other substances available to apothecaries.⁸⁵ Carbón’s text reflects the types of beliefs and activities that were widely extant in Castilian society and were omnipresent in Inquisition trials against *hechicería*. He did not mention the idea of the demonic witch, although later obstetrical texts did.

A very different approach to sorcery and witchcraft can be found in a later work of obstetrics by Francisco Núñez, a native of Toledo and graduate of the University of Alcalá de Henares. His book, entitled *Libro del parto humano*, included much of the information provided by Carbón. It was a standard guide to pregnancy and childbirth, with a focus on the various complications that might occur during the process.⁸⁶ The book is notable for its illustrations and wide circulation, and also for its alarmist views about witches. Towards the end, Núñez included a chapter entitled “Remedies against witches, and all types of vermin that harm children.” The chapter was replete with demonological tropes surrounding witches – sabbats, night flight, shapeshifting, sex with demons, demonic pacts – and as a part of a work on obstetrics, it was particularly concerned with the harm that witches allegedly inflicted upon newborns. Núñez warned against women who “sucked the blood of children, killed them, and suffocated them for use in diabolic arts.”⁸⁷ Núñez assured his readers that these were not merely fabulous tales but real concerns. He said that he himself had visited a convent where he spoke with nuns who had a strange and frightening experience that they attributed to witchcraft. The nuns told him that they had heard a loud noise in a room where the convent housed an infant, and they later found that

⁸⁵ Ibid., xxxviii-xxxviii(v).

⁸⁶ Francisco Núñez, *Libro del parto humano* (1580). The work went through six subsequent editions, including four reprints that bound it together with Jerónimo de Ayala’s *Principios de cirugía*. I have consulted the 1624 edition.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 88.

the child had been moved from her location and was bleeding from her tongue. For these sorts of situations, Núñez recommended a range of both religious and occult remedies to deflect witches and their mischief. Among his suggestions was the use of crucifixes and prayers, rue and garlic, talismans made from the tongue of a dragon or serpent, and feeding the child the brains of a vulture or the meat of a wolf.⁸⁸

Núñez's anti-witch rhetoric built upon discursive traditions that had been developing in Spain for about a half-century by the time of his book's 1580 publication. Spanish writers were not major players in the high-scholastic debates regarding witchcraft and demonology that burgeoned in central Europe in the fifteenth century, but instead imported demonological discourse and laid it atop the earlier cultural attitudes towards sorcery and magic seen in texts like *La Celestina* and *La Lozana Andaluza*.⁸⁹ Núñez cited the comprehensive theological work on the extirpation of heresy by the inquisitor Diego de Simancas entitled *De catholicis institutionibus*.⁹⁰ It should also be noted that, in other works, Nuñez expressed his concerns regarding the excesses of feminine sexuality in a works such as *Tractado del vso de las mugeres, y como sea dañoso, y como provechoso, y que cosas se ayan de hazer para la tentacion de la carne, y del sueño y vaños* (1572).⁹¹ As the title suggests, this book delivered advice on healthy sexual activity from a decidedly masculine perspective, instructing men on the "use of women"

⁸⁸ Ibid., 88-89.

⁸⁹ On fifteenth-century Spanish demonology see Constanza Cavallero, *Los demonios interiores de España: El Obispo Lope de Barrientos en los albores de la demonología moderna (Castilla, siglo XV)* (Buenos Aires: Prometo, 2011); Cavallero, *Los enemigos del fin del mundo: Judíos, herejes y demonios en el Fortalitium fidei de Alonso de Espina (Castilla, siglo XV)* (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2016).

⁹⁰ Diego, de Simancas, *De catholicis institutionibus* (Alcalá de Henares, 1569); see Kimberly Lynn, *Between Court and Confessional: The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 88-139.

⁹¹ Francisco Nuñez, *Tractado del vso de las mugeres, y como sea dañoso, y como provechoso, y que cosas se ayan de hazer para la tentacion de la carne, y del sueño y vaños*; the work was originally published as part of Nuñez's *Tratado de medicina* (1569), republished by itself in 1572, and then edited and included again in his *Regimiento y aviso de sanidad de todos los géneros de alimentos y del regimiento de ello* (1586); it has been transcribed by Jean Dangler and is available online at http://parnaseo.uv.es/Lemir/Textos/Trat_mugeres/mugeres2.html.

for sex and exhorting them to be moderate despite women's "insatiable appetite."⁹² Núñez's misogynist views concerning witchcraft can be seen as part of a demonological discourse that was prevalent in intellectual circles by the mid-sixteenth century.

Medical Regulation

Beyond the opinions of obstetric specialists, the disqualification of female healers as witches and sorceresses had a growing influence among prominent physicians more generally, many of whom influenced royal policy in the sixteenth century. One of the most outspoken critics of female healers, for instance, was the prominent court physician to King Ferdinand and later Charles V, Francisco López de Villalobos (1473-1549). Perhaps more than any other figure of his time, López de Villalobos bridged the gap between popular and academic medical cultures. In addition to serving as court physician, Villalobos was also a renowned poet, satirist, and, like many of his Renaissance contemporaries, an active epistolary writer.⁹³ Villalobos was born Jewish, both the son and grandson of physicians, and was part of the so-called "generation of '92" who decided to convert to Christianity instead of facing expulsion. He was an astute student of medicine and a prolific writer, and not long after graduating from the University of Salamanca he published one of Europe's earliest works on syphilis. He continued to publish on a diverse range of topics, which contributed to an upward career trajectory that landed him a job as personal physician in the household the Duke of Alba and, in 1509, head of royal court physicians under Ferdinand. In addition to his academic work, he also wrote poetic verses which

⁹² See Danger, *Mediating Fictions*, 175.

⁹³ On the life of Villalobos, see: Jon Arrizabalaga, "Francisco López de Villalobos (c.1473-c.1549), médico cortesano," *Dynamis* 22 (2002): 29-58; Juan Riera Palmero, Cristina Riera Cliement, "Francisco López de Villalobos (1474-1549), un médico y poeta judeoconverso del renacimiento castellano," *Llull: Revista de la Sociedad Española de Historia de las Ciencias y de las Técnicas* 36, no. 78 (2013): 359-386; Anastasio Rojo Vega, "Francisco López de Villalobos, médico real (1473-1549)," *Brigecio* 3 (1993): 175-186; Beth Tremallo, "Irony and Self-Knowledge in Francisco López de Villalobos" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1990).

would have circulated alongside works such as *Coplas de Comadres*, *La Celestina*, and *La Lozana Andaluza*, and his attitude towards female healers was similar to the literary stereotype. In one of the letters that he wrote later in life, he succinctly encapsulated his attitude, complaining that the eclectic array of female healers were often dangerous sorceresses who displaced real medicine. Instead of consulting him or his peers, he said, even elite members of court were duped by taking the advice of “the witch of the patio, the *beata*-sorceress at the hospital, the *saludadora* of Santiago, and the deranged man who would use rat shit to cure a stitch in the side.”⁹⁴

Villalobos experienced first-hand how the Inquisition could be used as a weapon in medical rivalries. His rapid rise from obscurity to royal favor provoked a jealousy among his peers that was tinged with anti-Semitism. Rumors circulated that his success could be attributed to demonic assistance, and he was arrested by the Inquisition of Córdoba and held for 80 days under charges of magic and necromancy.⁹⁵ After this incident, he relied on humorous self-deprecation, along with his powerful connections, to evade further inquisitorial interference. In many ways, his life reflects the changing patterns of persecution in the early sixteenth century. By the latter half of his life, the intensive persecution against *conversos* had waned somewhat and charges of demonic superstition was more commonly leveled against the types of superstitious healers whom he had satirized in his letter.

The views of Villalobos were shared by his colleagues at court who used the Protomedicato to augment the power of physicians in relation to popular female healers. In the early phase of their ambitious regulatory regime, Protomedicato examiners used a broad

⁹⁴ See Anastasio Rojo Vega, *Sanadores y enfermos*, 39.

⁹⁵ This, at least, is how Villalobos would later characterize the sequence events in letters. The inquisitorial records from his arrest have seemingly not survived.

interpretation of their powers to undertake the licensing of female healers. In addition to the explicit call to license the full-time medical professions – physicians, surgeons, *ensalmadores*, apothecaries, spicers, and herbalists – the institution’s foundational legislation of 1477 stipulated that “other persons, who fully or partially use these offices, or any other auxiliary office, *both men and women*, of any status” should be licensed.⁹⁶ As shown in the previous chapter, the Protomedicato encountered a range of problems when it tried to exercise its authority over these “auxiliary offices,” which eventually led to 1523 legislation that curtailed royal medical licensing to the strictly male triad of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries.

The 1523 decree notwithstanding, the Protomedicato continued to license midwives and other female healers, but in a more restricted capacity. Some Protomedicato officials failed to comply with the 1523 restrictions and they continued to extend licenses to female midwives for a fee, which elicited allegations of fraud. One petition to the *Chancillería de Valladolid* in 1548 complained of the “great extortions and vexations and excesses” committed by Protomedicato officials who “give titles to midwives and *ensalmadores* and people of such manner, putting all of their efforts in making money this way.”⁹⁷ Similar complaints arrived at the *Chancillería* throughout the sixteenth century, but Protomedicato officers continued to examine women and grant them special licenses (*licencias reglamentarias*) to practice. In 1573, for instance, a midwife from Salamanca named Elvira de Guevara was examined and granted a license by Doctor Roque de Mercado from Medina del Campo.⁹⁸ The examination, which has been preserved in notarial documents, demonstrates that Guevara was required to have a sophisticated

⁹⁶ *Archivo General de Simancas*, Lib. 3, tit. 16, ley 1; Reyes Católicos en Madrid, 30-III-1477, reproduced in Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*, 21-22 (emphasis mine).

⁹⁷ Cortes de Valladolid, pet. 119, reproduced in Muñoz Garrido, *Fuentes legales de la medicina española*, 28.

⁹⁸ Archivo Histórico Provincial de Valladolid, protocolos, leg. 6.102, fol. 77; the exam has been transcribed and reproduced in Anastasio Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores*, 46.

knowledge of obstetrics and the composition of herbal simples. The exam proceeded by asking Guevara to explain how she would handle several problems that could occur during childbirth. In the case of a miscarriage, she said that she would place poultices composed of oregano, eggs, oil, rue, and chamomile on the belly and hip while guiding the fetus. The doctor also asked Guevara how she would treat *mal de madre*. She replied that she would massage the area just below the belly button, and she also utilized Galenic terminology to describe the types of poultices she would use depending on the heat of her patient's complexion.

Other sixteenth-century licensing petitions indicate that women specialized in an array of empirical procedures, often in conjunction with midwifery. In 1573, for instance, a woman named María Hernández requested a license in Valladolid to act as an “*algebrista*, bonesetter of legs and arms.” A few years later, she (or perhaps someone else with the same name), sought to expand her practice into the realm of midwifery “to the end of being able to perform the position of midwife and bonesetter and to use poultices and plasters and to correct dislocations.”⁹⁹ One uniquely detailed licensing petition records the empirical cures of Catalina de Castresana from the Basque region of Álava who presented herself for royal arbitration in Valladolid in 1553.¹⁰⁰ Catalina was a widow who attended to “infirmities of women” and also specialized in curing illnesses thought to be related to humoral imbalances, jaundice and *mal de bazo* (a bad spleen). She made poultices from fish, grease, wax, honey, and oil. She also used herbs, identified by historian Anastasio Rojo Vega as:

⁹⁹ *Archivo Histórico Provincial de Valladolid*, Protocolos, Leg. 583, fol. 32, “para efectos de poder usar el oficio de comadre y de algebrista y ecahr bizmas y curar desconcertados;” see Clouse, *Medicine, Government and Public Health in Philip II's Spain*, 89; Juan Ribera Palmero, *Cirujanos, urólogos y algebristas del renacimiento y barroco* (Valladolid: Secretario de Publicaciones de la Universidad, 1990), 106; Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores*, 44.

¹⁰⁰ Anastasio Rojo Vega, “Catalina de Castresana: curandera alavesa del siglo XVI,” *Cuadernos vascos de historia de la medicina* 1 (1992): 181-87.

Mecurials [*Mercurialis annua*], recommended by Dioscorides for semi-magical ends [to divine the sex of a fetus] and also considered to be good for dropsy and swelling of the belly; mugwort, used to induce labor and to eliminate uterine obstructions and inflammations; and ceterach, which was prescribed for jaundice and inflammation of the spleen.¹⁰¹

Catalina also used tonics made of filings of silver and steel. She was illiterate, but her remedies matched those used by physicians. Her examiner, Dr. Mercado, recognized the authority behind her techniques, and granted her a license to practice.¹⁰²

Laws established in 1576 by the government of Philip II more completely separated midwifery from male-dominated professions. In the case that midwives applied for the special licenses, the law decreed that they would be examined by a panel of three midwives instead of the Protomedicato's medical physician. Since the extension of these licenses was relatively rare, the control of midwifery devolved to local powers – municipal governments, parish churches, or colleges of physicians, depending on the district.¹⁰³ In the Archbishopric of Toledo, midwives undertook spiritual responsibilities in some circumstances. Under synod-approved regulations, prelates instructed “approved midwives” to assume the spiritual role of baptizing infants if there was a possibility that a newborn could die before it could be baptized by a priest.¹⁰⁴ The procedural mechanism for ecclesiastical approval of midwives remains unclear and more research will be needed to show how the local control of midwifery worked in practice. Most female healers, though, performed without any professional oversight. Many more of them appear in Inquisition records than in the archives of any other regulatory body.

¹⁰¹ Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores*, 42.

¹⁰² The license has been partially transcribed and reproduced in Rojo Vega, “Catalina de Castresana: curandera alavesa del siglo XVI,” 86-87.

¹⁰³ For overview of the regulation of midwifery in Spain see Teresa Ortiz, “From Hegemony to Subordination: Midwives in Early Modern Spain,” in *The Art of Midwifery: Early Midwives in Europe*, ed. Hilary Marland (New York: Routledge, 1993), 95-114.

¹⁰⁴ These instructions can be found in *Constituciones synodales del arzobispado de Toledo* (1601), 43.

Inquisitorial Persecution and Praxis – Seventeenth Century

English historian Alexandra Walsham has noted that a close examination of the timeline of European witchcraft trials complicates traditional notions of Weberian disenchantment. While historians once propagated a smooth narrative of progressive early modern cultural change that linked the Reformation, the decline of magic, and the “disenchantment of the world,” this notion has largely been overturned. Walsham suggested it is thus more fruitful to think in terms of messy generational shifts and “cycles of sacralization and resacralization, disenchantment and re-enchantment” in order “to counteract the liabilities and dangers of a narrative that emphasizes a linear path of development.”¹⁰⁵

Castilian trials largely fit the trajectory sketched by Walsham. In Toledo, trials for superstitious healing nearly drew to a halt in the years following the Council of Trent. Although the caseload of the Inquisition as a whole only slowly declined after mid-century, sorcery was a relatively low priority during much of the reign of Philip II (1556-1598). Then, around 1610, the Toledo tribunal entered a new phase of persecution, responding to a historical moment when cultural battles about the numinous were particularly acute.¹⁰⁶ Although the Inquisition, as an institution, initiated fewer total trials compared to the sixteenth-century peak, it was far more concerned with superstition. From roughly 1610 to 1660, the Inquisition’s persecution of midwives and other female healers reached its greatest extent.

The statistical distribution of cases tried by the Toledo tribunal have been compiled by Jean Paul Dedieu:

¹⁰⁵ Alexandra Walsham, “The Reformation and the ‘Disenchantment of the World’ Reassessed,” *The Historical Journal* 51 (2008): 549.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Keitt, “Religious Enthusiasm, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Disenchantment of the World,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 2 (2004): 231-250.

| | 15 th Century | 16 th Century | | 17 th Century | 18 th – 19 th Century | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | Before 1560 | After 1560 | | | |
| Judaism | 242 99.18% | 347 15.00% | 159 8.85% | 926 38.25% | 129 29.32% | 1,803 24.99% |
| Islam | — | 218 9.42% | 178 9.91% | 162 6.69% | 1 0.23% | 559 7.75% |
| Protestantism | — | 28 1.21% | 135 7.51% | 52 2.15% | 2 0.45% | 217 3.01% |
| <i>Alumbrados</i> | — | 19 0.82% | 3 0.17% | 12 0.50% | 3 0.68% | 37 0.51% |
| Other Heretics | 2 0.82% | — | 4 0.22% | 8 0.33% | 4 0.90% | 18 0.25% |
| Blasphemy | — | 1,068 46.15% | 849 47.25% | 576 23.79% | 92 20.91% | 2,585 35.82% |
| Solicitation | — | 2 0.09% | 46 2.56% | 77 3.18% | 62 14.09% | 187 2.59% |
| Bigamy | — | 83 3.59% | 77 4.28% | 112 4.63% | 37 8.41% | 309 4.28% |
| <i>Contra el Santo Oficio</i> | — | 437 18.89% | 272 15.14% | 149 6.15% | 25 5.68% | 883 12.24% |
| <i>Hechicería</i> | — | 51 2.20% | 18 1.00% | 248 10.24% | 56 12.73% | 373 5.17% |
| Miscellaneous | — | 61 2.64% | 56 3.12% | 99 4.09% | 29 6.59% | 245 3.40% |
| TOTAL | 244 100% | 2,314 100% | 1,797 100% | 2,421 100% | 440 100% | 7,216 100% |

Figure 1: Distribution of Inquisitorial Crimes, Tribunal of Toledo¹⁰⁷

This trend in sorcery persecution – declining in the late years of the sixteenth century only to reemerge with a vengeance in the seventeenth century – is largely consistent with European norms. Though many European regions saw a series of small witch panics in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, preoccupation with witchcraft faded into the background as the Reformation prompted both Catholics and Protestants to focus on other more immediate concerns. Why witchcraft resurfaced as a serious concern in the seventeenth century is debatable,

¹⁰⁷ Reproduced from data published by Jean Pierre Dedieu, “Les causes de la foi de l’Inquisition de Tolède (1483-1820): Essai statistique,” *Mélanges de la casa de Velázquez* 14 (1978): 148.

complex, and varied by region. In many places, the seventeenth-century peak of witch hunting coincided with a time of war, financial insecurity, and confessional strife that exacerbated many social and cultural tensions.¹⁰⁸ Spain is often seen as an outlier in the history of European witch hunting due to a lack of large-scale witch panics and executions, but Spanish authorities nonetheless devoted considerable judicial energy towards the persecution of *hechicería* (which often included healing) according to patterns that largely match those of their European neighbors.

Like the process that played out in Spain in the early decades of the sixteenth century, the seventeenth-century inquisitorial upsurge in persecution of feminine sorcery can be seen as a phenomenon that radiated from the North and affected the Pyrenees more forcefully than other parts of Iberia. In 1609-1610, a continental-style witch panic swept Navarre and led to hundreds of accusations – mostly of children and teenagers – and a strong judicial response. In the Basque villages around Zugarramurdi, inquisitors elicited confessions of heretical depravity – sometimes using torture – which led to the Logroño *Auto de fe* where ten witches were burned (five of them in effigy after having died in prison).¹⁰⁹ In French Navarre, the same witch panic escalated even further and provoked the burning of eighty suspected witches.¹¹⁰ Another large witch hunt echoing those elsewhere on the Continent broke out in Catalonia in 1616-1622. It followed many of the same patterns as the large continental hunts and resulted in dozens of executions.¹¹¹ In

¹⁰⁸ On the chronology of witch hunting see Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Longman, 1997), 185-191.

¹⁰⁹ Detailed studies of these witch hunts and internal debates that they provoked can be found in Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*; Henningsen, *The Salazar Documents*.

¹¹⁰ The judge Pierre de Lancre recounted his experiences of these trials in two books, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612) and *L'incrédulité et mescréance du sortilège plainement convaincue* (1622).

¹¹¹ Knutsen, *Servants of Satan and Masters of Demons*; Juan Blázquez Miguel, *La Inquisición en Cataluña: el tribunal del Santo Oficio de Barcelona, 1487-1820* (Toledo: Editorial Arcano, 1990). On how witch hunting in Catalonia related to trials for *hechicería* see Doris Moreno Martínez, "Magical Lives: Daily Practices and Intellectual Discourses in Enchanted Catalonia during the Early Modern Era," in *Everyday Magic in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Kathryn Edwards (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 11-33.

Toledo, by contrast, the “comprehensive concept of witchcraft,” with all of its attendant demonic depravity and witches’ covens, was limited to only a handful of the 248 inquisitorial *hechicería* trials held in the seventeenth century.¹¹² A close examination of full trial dossiers from Toledo shows that cases were more often against healers.

In 1617, for instance, the Toledo Inquisition investigated a group of alleged sorceresses in the western part of the district in the towns of Talarrubias and Puebla de Alcocér (present-day Badajoz).¹¹³ Allegations centered upon the healing activities of Isabel Hernández and her “consorts,” many of whom were midwives. Investigations uncovered that healers in the area had developed and taught techniques deemed superstitious by the prosecutor, and inquisitors examined several deponents who described the circumstances of these cures. Beatriz González, for example, testified that she had once called a local midwife named Elvira Díaz to heal her young daughter who was sick, presumably from the evil eye. Díaz anointed the girl with three drops of oil, lit incense of rue and culantro, and said a healing prayer. González said that her daughter immediately felt better and that it seemed to be an “extraordinary cure.” She also reported that similar cures were relatively widespread in the village. “After suffering from many difficult childbirths,” González said, “she contacted a Portuguese midwife named Catalina Rodríguez who said that she did not know much of these things...but brought a young woman named María who applied candlewax and blessed her three times and said some words that she did not understand but seemed suspicious.”¹¹⁴ These cures were not limited to women, though,

¹¹² The most comprehensive study of these trials remains Sebastián Cirac Estopañán, *Los procesos de hechicerías en la Inquisición de Castilla la Nueva: tribunals de Toledo y Cuenca* (Madrid: Diana, 1942).

¹¹³ A.H.N., INQ 88, exp. 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. “declara que habiendole sucedido muchas veces malos partos tuvo noticia que Catalina Rodriguez Portuguesa comadre en esta dicha villa de puebla sabia mucho de estos achaques vino con ella y aunque se escuso diciendo no sabia nada dijo que la trujese una muchacha que se llamase maría y que asi pase una usada de cero y aspada se la paso a esta declarante por tres veces diciendo palabras que esta declarante no pudo entender lo qual también le parece sospechosa.”

she said. When her husband suffered from a skin infection called *la rosa del monte*,¹¹⁵ a local barber applied an unguent and pronounced a similar healing prayer. Inquisitors then interviewed the barber who recited his healing prayer and said that he had indeed used it four or five times. Inquisitors warned the barber that “these words are superstitious and they should henceforth not be used nor taught to anyone at all.”¹¹⁶ After a thorough investigation, authorities suspended their activities without any official trial or punishment beyond the directive to discontinue such healing practices.

Inquisitors tended to be stricter with healers who employed magical substances along with their prayers and rituals. For instance, the 1622 case of Josefa Carranza involved the healing activities of one of Madrid’s most notorious sorceresses.¹¹⁷ The trial began with a denunciation by a disgruntled neighbor who accused her of being among

the women who destroy the republic deceiving and stealing money by offering their evil arts to ignorant people and, even worse, attaching themselves to honorable and well-born people with a cloak of sanctity, healing the evil eye and other illnesses with blessings and with words, resulting these days in a great risk of bewitchment or murder for those who rebuke the things that they do; and it is also feared that over time if those people who live from these evil arts are not taught [these practices] will continue, both among honorable and well-born persons and simple women.¹¹⁸

This accusation prompted a lengthy investigation that included dozens of interviews. Some held Josefa in high regard, but other neighbors accused her of using healing as a pretense to enter

¹¹⁵ *La rosa del monte* was an infirmity that was often treated ritually. It appears in several cases including the Constanza Alfonso trial described above. See José Manuel Pedrosa, “El conjuro de la rosa y la curación de la erisipela: Poesía, magia y medicina popular en España y América,” *Asclepio* 45, no. 2 (1993): 127-142.

¹¹⁶ A.H.N., INQ 88, exp. 4. “son palabras supersticiosas a protesta de aqu’i adelante no usalas ni enseñarlas a persona ninguna.”

¹¹⁷ A.H.N., INQ 83, exp. 10.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*; “Las quales mujeres destruyen la republica engañando y llevando dineros por ejercitar sus malos artes a muchas personas ignorantes y lo que peor pegandose las a personas honradas y bien nacidas con color y capa de santidad y de que santigua y cura con palabras de mal de ojo y de otras enfermedades y en la ocasión de hoy hay gran riesgo de que no hechiese o mate a algunos personas con quien ha tomado ejercia por la haber reprendido algunas cosas de este cayó y también se teme con el tiempo y conversación continua no enseñan a las personas con quien vive estas malas artes que son personas honrados y bien nacidos que como a mujeres simples.”

houses and to offer more illicit services such as love magic and arranging clandestine trysts. One witness alleged that she tried to sell him a spell that could be used to kill for the high price of eight *reales*. Her cures, he said, “mixed the sacred and the profane.”¹¹⁹ Inquisitors then arrested Carranza and found even more damning evidence when they searched her house. In addition to devotional items and written prayers, they also found human-shaped wax figurines with pins in them, a human skull, the heart of a lamb, frogs (both dead and alive), a collection of powders, a ribbon with three knots, charred pots that seemed to be used for making potions, and written invocations used for ending quarrels and attracting men. After the investigation, inquisitors formally accused Carranza of being a “heretic or at least gravely suspicious of superstition, *hechicera*, with an explicit pact with the devil who she invoked for deception and other things illicit and dishonest.”¹²⁰ The tribunal condemned her and ordered that she process through the streets of Toledo dressed in penitential garb with a candle in her hands, a noose around her neck, and a sign that indicated that she was a *hechicera* and an invoker of demons. On another day, she was to receive a hundred lashes and thereafter be exiled from the district for ten years.

A Berber woman from Tunisia named Isabel de la Cruz suffered a similar fate in Madrid in 1648.¹²¹ According to Catalina de Valdemoro (a trial witness) Isabel was renowned for her ability to heal illnesses caused by *hechicería*. Catalina said that she sought Isabel’s assistance for her husband Francisco – a coach maker who worked at the queen’s royal stables – who had endured illness for over a year and a half and could not be cured despite seeking remedies from doctors including royal court physicians. Catalina suspected that the illness was caused by sorcery performed by her husband’s former lover, and she said that she believed that Isabel had a

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ A.H.N. INQ 84, 9.

license from the Inquisition to cure with herbs. After Isabel confirmed the illness was likely due to sorcery, Catalina said that she paid her eight *reales* to acquire necessary healing supplies including a turtle and an eel. A week later, Isabel visited the sick Francisco, measured his body with a ribbon, and fumigated his bedroom with rosemary and seven grains of salt while saying “I have faith in God, and the Holy Trinity, and the Virgin of *Soledad* that you will be well soon.”¹²² The next morning she brought the man to *campo de moro* (a field outside of Madrid) where she performed a ritual that involved tying twine to a tree (which Isabel later said symbolized the spurned woman), burying an egg, and instructing Francisco to pass over the site seven times to free him of the enchantment. In the following weeks, Isabel continued to visit Francisco – whose illness had not improved – trying various other rituals (for additional payments) that included saying *ensalmos*, tying knots in ropes, burning one of his shirts, and leaving a tail of a lizard to dry. Although these cures were purely based in ritual, Isabel later testified in her *audiencia* that she also knew how to cure with herbs and powders, which she initially learned from a Moorish slave. For a particularly successful cure, she said, she put a combination of egg and rosewater on a man’s temples and instructed him to eat fried turtle and butter. At first, she maintained that these were the only types of cures that she performed, but she later confessed to the rituals that she used to cure illness caused by their nature. After her confession, the Inquisition concluded that she “had mixed holy prayers with satanic invocations to acquire her desired effects, had made a pact with him, and she was presumed to have gone to the devil to give him the adoration that should be given to God.”¹²³ As a punishment she was forced to participate in an *auto de fe*,

¹²² Ibid. “yo espero en Dios y en la santísima trinidad y la virge de la soledad que a de estar muy presto bueno.”

¹²³ Ibid., “meclando en los oraciones santas invocando al demonio para conseguir los efectos que prendía y hecho pacto con el, y que era de presumir haber ido al dar al demonio la adoración que se debe a dios nuestro señor.”

ride topless on a mule while a crier described her crimes, receive a hundred lashes, and be banished from Madrid for a span of six years.

Another female healer whose cures drew speculation about demonic involvement was María López, arrested in 1637 and again in 1650.¹²⁴ López lived in the small village of Escalona on the outskirts of Toledo, and she developed a reputation for treating neighbors for various ailments. Her cures, as she described them, drew upon a range of traditions, utilizing herbs, powders, incense, and poultices along with prayers and rituals. As part of her services as a midwife, she anointed the mother and child with oil during birth, lit incense, and prayed a *salve*. For ocular issues, she cut three pieces of rue, dedicated them to the holy trinity, soaked them overnight, and used them the next day to wash the eyes of the sufferer. She also described similar remedies for stomach pains, impotence, menstrual aches, and parasites. When asked where she had learned these remedies she replied that she had heard a doctor speak about herbs more than twenty years earlier and that she had heard the rest from a group of gypsy women, also many years before.¹²⁵ Some patients however, were unhappy with the results of María's ministrations, and denounced her to the parish priest. One deponent described how a baby had died within a day of visiting López. Another reported that there was a murmur among villagers that she was a sorceress whose cures were primarily oriented towards undoing spells and healing illnesses caused by the evil eye.¹²⁶

Too often, the Inquisition is described as a monolithic institution, but a closer look at full legal dossiers shows that the various individuals participating in superstition trials interpreted the issues at stake differently, depending upon their status and their role in the events in question.

¹²⁴ A.H.N., INQ 89, exp. 15.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 67-70.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

When the López case reached the Toledo Inquisition in 1650 (after her first trial was suspended), legal arguments were drawn out and the facts were shaped by the categories provided by scholastic thought. As was standard in inquisitorial procedure, the legal issues were first teased out and articulated by the prosecuting attorney. In superstition trials, these attorneys were the individuals who most zealously applied demonology to account for cures. In his formal accusation of María López, the prosecuting attorney, Don Diego de Alaíca, categorized her as “a sorceress and superstitious heretic with a demonic pact, having committed and perpetrated many grave offenses with both her words and actions.” He listed each of her remedies as evidence of diabolical involvement.

Inquisitorial procedure, however, allowed space for dissenting opinions. After the reading of Alaíca’s accusation, López had the opportunity to respond, item by item, and she argued that each of her cures had been performed in good faith. Then, in the final stage of the trial, the court appointed López a legal advocate named Juan Diaz to help her frame her defense. This too is incongruent with traditional notions of Spanish inquisitors as wielders of arbitrary power, and instead indicates that Inquisition tribunals could be venues of dynamic intellectual debate. The quality of the defense, however, was variable and the provision to provide counsel was not always implemented. The trial transcript shows that Juan Diaz was only addressed as *licenciado*, indicating that he was trained at a university but, unlike the inquisitors, did not hold an advanced degree that merited the title of *Doctor*. Nonetheless, Diaz assisted the healer in creating a philosophically sound argument that revolved around the naturalness of her cures. Part of the process was to pose a series of questions to several character witnesses including:

- 1) Did the witness know López?
- 2) Did the witness consider her to be a good Christian?

- 3) Did the witness know whether López was a woman with a sound reputation, is not a *hechicera* nor has the reputation of being one; did he or she know whether she cured since the year 1637, and if she had complied with the orders of the Holy Office, curing only with natural and permitted medicines?
- 4) Did she reject requests to perform illicit cures, even if asked?
- 5) How did the witness come to know these things?

As designed, the defenses' handpicked witnesses affirmed that López was a good Christian and her cures were "natural and permitted." One friend replied that "she had not performed any cure that I know about, and if she had, it was for *males de madre* or stomach pains with ordinary and natural medicine.¹²⁷ The second witness likewise confirmed that "if she had done any cures they were for very ordinary infirmities such as stomach pains and ordinary female ills, which she performed with natural medicines employing poultices and herbs."¹²⁸ This language, classifying cures as either natural or demonic, rings through many Inquisition trials for superstitious healing.¹²⁹ Despite her strong defense, though, inquisitors insisted that López deserved punishment as a repeat offender and her 1650 trial resulted in her exile from the cities of Toledo and Madrid and the surrounding area for four years.

¹²⁷ Ibid. "no ha hecho cura que este declara haya sabido y si ha hecho algunas han sido de males de madre o de estomago y esto con medicinas ordinarias y naturales."

¹²⁸ Ibid. "y que si acaso a hecho algunas curas han sido en males muy de ordinarios como son dolores de estómago o enfermedades de mujeres ordinarias y lo ha hecho con medicinas naturales de emplastos y otras yerbas."

¹²⁹ Jonathan Seitz has shown that a similar set of issues were at stake in witchcraft trials in the Venetian Inquisition; "Natural or Supernatural? Witchcraft, Inquisition and Views of Nature at the Dawn of the Scientific Revolution" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2006); Seitz, "'The Root Is Hidden and the Material Uncertain': The Challenges of Prosecuting Witchcraft in Early Modern Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2009): 102–33; and Seitz, *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Early Modern Venice* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Conclusion

Although these seventeenth-century cases occurred more than a century after the publication of *La Celestina*, they demonstrate cultural continuity among popular healers in early modern Spain despite shifting intellectual discourses. Healers continued to occupy similar social stations and offer a diverse array of medical, magical, and obstetric services. They also continued to employ similar combinations of herbs, powders, incense, prayers and rituals. There was a significant change, however, in the ways in which trial participants appropriated and deployed the learned discourses that had developed in Spain by the seventeenth century. Although witch hunts were uncommon, especially in Castile, inquisitorial prosecutors more readily used demonology, routinely describing simple magic and religio-medical cures as evidence of heretical demonic pacts. Defendants (and defense attorneys) however, also grew more adept at recognizing that judgments often depended upon ambiguous metaphysical determinations. The next chapter analyzes these metaphysical issues further, exploring how the process of making distinctions between natural, preternatural, and supernatural cures comprised core debates within the Spanish Counter-Reformation.

Chapter 3

Verifying the Saint and Licensing the Shaman: Healing, Sanctity, and the Reform of Proof Regimes in the Late-Sixteenth Century

On the ninth of October 1581, the renowned friar Luís Beltrán (sometimes spelled Bertrán or Bertrand) died in the infirmary of the Dominican convent in the Mediterranean coastal city of Valencia where he had lived most of his life. Within weeks, a coalition of supporters had formed to clamor for his canonization. Leaders of the Dominican order, as well as local and royal government officials, began submitting petitions to Archbishop Juan de Ribera (himself a future saint) to initiate an official inquest to gather evidence of Beltrán's sanctity to be presented to Vatican officials in Rome. In many ways, Beltrán was an ideal candidate for sainthood. Not only had he lived an exemplary life that included teaching, missionary work in the Indies, and caring for the sick, but he also practiced a heroic asceticism and was reported to have performed many miracles. Archbishop Ribera granted the petitions and opened an investigation, assisted by an auxiliary bishop named Espinosa and by the Dominican Vicente Justiniano Antist who would become Beltrán's first and most important biographer. In November, the committee began receiving a stream of 113 of Beltrán's friends, colleagues, and admirers at the Archbishop's Palace. They came forward to attest to Beltrán's devout life and provided exuberant accounts of Beltrán's extraordinary deeds.¹ Their testimony reveals an active culture of the miraculous in

¹ The inquest began with a November 29 petition from the city. The manuscripts generated by the proceedings are conserved in Valencia at the *Archivo del Real Convento de Predicadores* (hereafter A.R.C.P.), *legajo* 73. For the occasion of the quadricentennial of Beltrán's death, the document was edited and partially reproduced as *Procesos*

early modern Valencia, where many residents saw manifestations of the sacred in everyday life. They described Beltrán as a font of divine grace who manifested the full range of Catholic miracles both during his life and after his death. Reportedly, he had prophetic visions, discerned spirits, and saw holy visions while in religious ecstasy; his blessings stopped fires, calmed storms, and multiplied loaves of bread. People described how they saw lights and heard music at the moment of his death, and how afterwards his body remained uncorrupted and emitted a sweet odor.

Of the many miracles that Beltrán performed, the overwhelming majority were cures. This was not unusual for saintly individuals – recent statistical surveys of the tens of thousands of miracles documented in canonization proceedings from the twelfth century to the present have shown that healing miracles predominate in all eras, often at a preponderance hovering around 90%.² Witnesses spoke of how Beltrán cured infirmities as diverse as deafness, fevers, wounds, stomach pains, asthma, and most commonly, skin infections. During his life, Beltrán performed these cures with his touch, a prayer, and his blessing. When he died, he became even more prolific healer, joining the ranks of heavenly intercessors to whom individuals directed petitions for divine intervention in moments of need. As his fame grew, petitioners credited him for cures that occurred throughout the Catholic world. The most powerful locus of his healing grace, though, remained his holy body, entombed at his shrine in Valencia. Sick and injured pilgrims traveled to his tomb to anoint themselves with the oil that dripped from the lamps that illuminated the shrine and to leave ex-votos to attest to his effective intercession. Perhaps Beltrán’s greatest act of healing came generations after his death, during the 1647 plague, when

informativos de la beatificación y canonización de San Luís Bertrán, Adolfo Robles Sierra O.P. and Miguel Llop Catalá O.P. eds. (Valencia: Provincia Dominicana de Aragón, 1983).

² Jacalyn Duffin, *Medical Miracles: Doctors, Saints, and Healing in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 72-73.

his remains were brought out of his shrine and processed through the streets in a gesture that reportedly put an end to the scourge.³ Beltrán's intervention during the plague rallied his supporters, leading to his canonization in 1671.

Trial records necessarily focus our attention on deviants, but as the Beltrán case underscores, benedictions for the sick remained acceptable and even encouraged throughout the sixteenth century. Although inquisitorial and Tridentine reformers sought to circumscribe and increasingly monitor the use of superstitious cures, cultural space remained open for earnest healers who worked within the prescriptions of the religio-medical establishment. While Beltrán's feats made him perhaps the most prolific religious healer in late-sixteenth-century Spain, there were many others who performed similar feats. Early modern Catholics considered God's healing powers to be abundant, and they sought to access those powers in a variety of ways. In some ways, the stories of these individuals are timeless – early modern Spanish healers can be connected to a long line of Christian charismatics who can be traced back to antiquity – but while healing with divine grace was certainly not new in the sixteenth century, it underwent fundamental change during the “medical reformation.”

As shown in Chapter 1, the Protomedicato and Inquisition grew as parallel institutions that put a greater emphasis upon licensing and regulating healers while also controlling and punishing deviants. Any consensus that might have emerged in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries regarding the proper approach to religio-medical healers, however, was challenged by the international crisis of the Reformation. In Spain, Counter-Reformation mandates sometimes placed local clergy in the contradictory position of intensifying religious sensibilities while also

³ This miracle, along with many others, were described in the seventeenth-century hagiography by Vicente Saborit, *Historia de la vida, virtudes y milagros del Beato Luis Bertran, de la Orden de Predicadores* (Valencia, 1651), Book 3 “De los milagros que por su intercesión obró Dios después de su santa Muerte.”

limiting overzealousness and superstition. When placed in this context, Beltrán's miracles appear within a different light. Saints are often studied in isolation, but this chapter examines how saints' curative miracles occurred within a wider backdrop of religious healing. The rich documentation that has survived from canonization processes, Inquisition tribunals, and municipal governments attests to the emergence of new institutional frameworks and new epistemological regimes to verify the activity of a group of religio-medical healers that extended far beyond a small number of exemplary individuals

In response to Reformation-era challenges, authoritative institutions were tasked with new directives to determine the validity of religious cures, whether good or bad, holy or demonic. Each institution, though, approached the question through distinct epistemological lenses. As a presumptive saint, Beltrán's extraordinary cures were subjected to a highly systematic and legalistic process of validation by papal canonization committees. At the same time, his sanctity was authenticated in a parallel local process. His cult was promoted and maintained by a nexus of exuberant individuals and institutions such as the municipal and royal governments, episcopal and inquisitorial administrations, and the religious orders. These same institutions were also responsible for overseeing and regulating Spain's larger body of charismatic healers. Their standards of proof for holy healing were not as rigid as those of the papal canonization committees, relying instead upon legal procedures that were oriented towards overseeing religious healing and making sure that it was exercised licitly – without recourse to magical and demonic forces. Inevitably though, accusations of malicious healing led to investigations in which these institutions were tasked with determining the validity of charismatic healing.

With a focus on sanctity, then, this chapter examines the intellectual and institutional response to individuals who claimed to heal through divine grace, both aspiring saints and humble laypeople. It begins with a narrow focus on the miraculous healing of Luís Beltrán and the metaphysical and epistemological disputes that arose in the course of assessing its veracity. From there, inquiry is expanded outward towards healing practices that drew upon a progressively wider and looser set of Catholic and folk symbols and were embodied in the shamanistic holy men called *saludadores*. In both cases, the focus will be on the institutions that encountered them and the criteria that were used for determining the validity of their cures.

Healing, Miracles, Canonization

Between Beltrán's death in 1581 and his canonization in 1671, Catholic intellectuals substantially revised their conceptualization of miraculous healing. Challenges to traditional healing miracles sprung from both Reformation-era polemicists who cast doubt upon whether miracles continued to occur (after the apostolic era) and natural philosophers who saw them as metaphysically dubious. After the Council of Trent, the Church responded to these challenges by attempting to coordinate a response that was measured, consistent, and centralized. Its stance was to reaffirm the orthodox Thomist doctrine of miracles and to maintain, even encourage, popular beliefs regarding the healing power of heavenly intercessors, albeit under a more watchful eye.⁴ The Council of Trent dictated that all miracles must receive an episcopal investigation by a committee comprised of three educated clerics.

An important element of the Counter-Reformation response to the critique of miracles was an intellectual program that worked to solidify their theoretical base – orthodox scholastic

⁴ See Lorraine Daston's now classic article, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (1991): 93-124.

ontology based upon Aristotelian principles. Within this paradigm, miracles were rare and singular occurrences in which God directly intervened to produce effects that were above or beyond the regular order of nature. As soon as this doctrine was formed, though, writers exhibited continuous restlessness about the inherent uncertainty in drawing the boundaries between natural and supernatural causes. Unexplainable marvels spurred both anxiety and curiosity, and they were met with sustained investigation throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern era as case studies for distinguishing the boundaries of theology and natural philosophy.⁵

To resolve what seemed to be paradoxes concerning miracles, some thinkers experimented with alternative epistemologies for determining the boundaries of the natural. During the Renaissance, a resurgence of Platonist thought expanded the possibility that seemingly miraculous events might have occult causes, although most mainstream sixteenth-century theologians explored the problem through the lens of a renovated Thomist Aristotelianism. The Roman Curia's response was generally more reactionary than innovative, but Canonization reform provided the Church with an opportunity for sophisticated engagement with contemporary natural philosophy. As historian Peter Burke wrote, the Protestant critiques "shook the doctrine concerning the cult of the saints to its core," which caused the Church to suspend canonizations and reformulate its canonization procedure.⁶ This overhaul was spearheaded by the *Sacra Rituum Congregatio* or, the Holy Congregation of Rites, created by Pope Sixtus V in 1588 to supervise Catholic ceremonial procedure and oversee the centralized

⁵ Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2001).

⁶ Peter Burke, "How to Become a Counter-Reformation Saint," reprinted in *The Counter Reformation: Essential Readings*, ed. David Luebke (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 1999) 129-142.

juridical reform of canonization.⁷ The most significant canonization reforms, however, occurred during the pontificate of Urban VIII (1623-1644) who instituted new procedural mechanisms that were meant to maintain strict standards. One important addition was the establishment of the office of the *promotor fidei* (commonly known as the “devil’s advocate”) whose job was to raise all reasonable doubts regarding alleged miracles.

Part of Urban VIII’s program for the reform of canonization procedures caused an amplification of the role that medical testimony played in evaluating claims of miracles.⁸ The longstanding papal policy was to maintain skepticism and proper judicial procedure in proving the veracity of the miracles, and as early as the thirteenth century, officials began seeking additional evidence by soliciting the expert testimony of medical physicians in the discernment of miraculous cures.⁹ Academic medicine offered a powerful tool for clerics attempting to judge the truth claims of alleged miraculous cures by presenting a seemingly objective epistemology that largely operated outside of the parameters of the endlessly contentious theological debates. Medicine held the promise of ascertaining whether cures were the result of natural processes, and in the seventeenth century, when many theological disputes stymied to the point of impasse, clerics became more fascinated than ever by the potential that medicine held for resolving metaphysical issues. In what Andrew Keitt has labeled “medical fideism,” there was a tendency to latch on to medical theory to salvage elements of traditional Catholicism such as miracles.¹⁰

⁷ Duffin, *Medical Miracles*, 12.

⁸ See Fernando Vidal, “Miracles, Science, and Testimony in Post-Tridentine Saint-Making,” *Science in Context* 20, no. 3 (2007): 481-508; Gianna Pomata, “Malpighi and the Holy Body: Medical Experts and Miraculous Evidence in Seventeenth-Century Italy,” *Renaissance Studies* 21, no. 4 (2007): 568-86; David Gentilcore, “Contesting Illness in Early Modern Naples: *Mirocolati*, Physicians, and the Congregation of Rites,” *Past and Present* 148 (1995): 117-148.

⁹ Aviad M. Kleinberg, “Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages,” *Viator* 20 (1989): 183-205.

¹⁰ Andrew Keitt, “The Miraculous Body of Evidence.”

Following this line of reasoning, lawyers working for the Congregation of Rites looked to medical doctors as important arbiters for the veracity of healing miracles. If doctors could not establish natural causes for extraordinary cures, they asserted, miraculous causation must be considered. Guided by these new directives, canonization investigative committees sought medical expertise from prominent physicians like Paolo Zacchia, who regularly consulted on cases. Between 1621 and 1651, Zacchia published his opinions on medical testimony in his nine-volume summa *Quaestiones medico-legales*,¹¹ which synthesized medical and legal theory with a subtlety that has garnered him the reputation as the father of modern forensic medicine.¹²

While the Congregation of Rites added considerable nuance regarding the legal status of miracles, it entirely sidestepped making any pronouncement on the fraught issues surrounding the subset of miracles performed during the lives of holy men and women. The central focus of the commission was to use beatification and canonization as tools for regulating cults that had formed around the legacy of a saintly man or woman who had already died. The process had two parts. First, it was necessary to show that candidates exhibited Christian virtue to a “heroic” degree, and second, the candidate’s cult must have displayed a durable *fama*, or holy reputation.¹³ Technically, miracles only obliquely contributed to the juridical process. They were considered the consequence of sanctity, not proof of it. In practice, though, miracles had always been considered important signs that the candidate was a reliable heavenly intercessor who could maintain a *fama* that would make him or her worthy of perpetual devotion. At the moment of canonization, the Congregation of Rites customarily published a list of officially approved miracles, but these were nearly always miracles that occurred after the death of the saint.

¹¹ Paolo Zacchia, *Quaestiones medico-legales* (1621-1651).

¹² Jackalyn Duffin, *Medical Miracles*, 21-24; Gentilcore, “Contesting Illness in Early Modern Naples,” 132.

¹³ Vidal, “Miracles, Science, and Post-Tridentine Saint-Making, 484; Gentilcore, *Healing and Healers*, 165.

Zacchaia justified the decision to exclude living miracles by proclaiming that living miracles alone were not sufficient evidence for sanctity – true saints would continue to perform miracles after death.¹⁴

The Congregation's stance on the issue was scrupulous, but it was largely incongruent with the common understanding that saints typically performed a great number of miracles while they were still alive. A rich hagiographic tradition established the many ways that saints could and did work miracles while living; saints stopped calamities, brought rain, levitated, and healed. Metaphysically, these *in vita* miracles were no different from their *post mortem* counterparts within the dominant Thomist intellectual framework. The Congregation's decision to ignore *in vita* miracles can only be explained in relation to the wider ambivalence that the Church had towards ostensible miracle-working men and women during their lives. Living miracle-workers were problematic as they elicited concern among clergy who were worried that they might become foci of heterodoxy. As such, the Tridentine decision to maintain traditional beliefs concerning the cult of the saints left the Church in the awkward position of promoting saints as religious exempla while also discouraging behavior deemed to be vain outward displays of sanctity despite its resemblance to the actions of acknowledged saints.¹⁵

In Beltrán's case, the Church can be seen gradually distancing itself from his *in vita* healing miracles between his death in 1581 and his canonization in 1671. Archbishop Ribera's commission questioned witnesses and enthusiastically chronicled the many miracles that he performed while alive, both during the locally generated inquest that followed Beltrán's death in

¹⁴ “Qua mobrem miracula in vita facta non sunt necessariò probanda, sed sufficit tantum constare de sanctis post mortem,” Paolo Zacchia, *Questionum medico-legalium*, vol. 1, 282.

¹⁵ On Italy, see David Gentilcore, “The Church, the Devil, and the Healing Activities of Living Saints in the Kingdom of Naples after the Council of Trent,” 134-155; *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra D'Otranto* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992): 171-176.

1581 and again in the more official inquest solicited by the Congregation of Rites in 1595. His living miracles were prominent in the minds of his biographers and followers for whom his death but marked a transition in a continuum of healing miracles.¹⁶ They were considered valid evidence of sanctity by the procurators who assembled the case for Beltrán's 1608 beatification, but they did not count among the "official" miracles endorsed by the Congregation of Rites in his 1671 canonization.

As historian Lara Mary Diefenderfer has shown using archival sources from the Secret Archive of the Vatican, healing miracles performed during the lives of potential saints remained a vibrant element of local beatification inquests, even while the Roman Curia and Congregation of Rites assumed a more cautious stance towards these occurrences.¹⁷ Dioceses within the Spanish Empire submitted seventy-nine cases for individuals to receive "honors of the altars," the first step towards beatification, between 1588 (the year the Congregation of Rites was formed) and 1700 (the end of the Habsburg dynasty).¹⁸ Many of these potential saints were prolific healers and, as Diefenderfer demonstrated, academic medicine served as an important hermeneutic during their inquests. In the Madrid cases that she studied, witnesses regularly employed a vernacular "medical fideism" by attempting to bolster their miraculous claims with narratives of physicians who confirmed the seriousness of the illnesses and the impossibility of a natural cure, thereby serving as proof that divine intervention had played a role.¹⁹

¹⁶ Beltrán's first biography was written by his follower Vicente Justiano Antist, *Verdadera relación de la vida y muerte de Padre Fray Luis Bertran, de benaventurada memoria*, (Valencia, 1582).

¹⁷ Lara Mary Diefenderfer, "Making and Unmaking Saints in Seventeenth-Century Madrid," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 2003).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

A full examination of the 113 post-mortem depositions that testified to Luis Beltrán's many healing miracles is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is worthwhile to take a closer look at one of the more dramatic among them – the 1577 cure of Esperanza Asensi's scrofula tumors. I do not choose to highlight this particular miracle because it is somehow representative of the dozens of healing miracles Beltrán allegedly performed while he was alive. Most of these miracles were more subtle – cures effected by Beltrán's words and blessings, offered in private moments after mass, in homes, and beside hospital beds. Esperanza's cure, in contrast, was a spectacular performance that had many witnesses. I choose it because it had an important role in the creation of Beltrán's cult. The account was retold in Beltrán's biographies and it played a role in his 1608 beatification. This cure was also nearly identical to a healing procedure commonly offered by *saludadores*.

The earliest written accounts of Esperanza's miraculous cure date from the 1581 testimony of two eyewitnesses, Juan Campos and Baltasar Vargallo, which was largely corroborated by Esperanza herself in 1595.²⁰ The men described how during the Lenten season of 1577, Beltrán was preaching in the village of Moncada outside of Valencia when Campos invited him to his home to have a meal and discuss religious matters. After eating, Juan's wife Angela told Beltrán that her eighteen-year-old niece Esperanza was in the house and that she suffered from lesions on her neck due to scrofula. It was an affliction that she had borne for over nine years and she had even traveled to be healed by the King of France whose royal touch was widely believed to cure scrofula, but her condition persisted.²¹ Medicine had only made her

²⁰ The men's testimonies are reprinted in *Procesos informativos*, 68-9, 73-4; Esperanza Assensi's testimony can be found in A.R.C.P., leg. 71, 196.

²¹ Scrofula (*lamparones* in Spanish) was a common early modern disease characterized by lesions and glandular swelling, likely due to a bacterial infection such as tuberculosis. The classic work on royal healing is Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Monarchy and Miracles in France and England*, trans. J. E. Anderson (New York: Dorset Press, 1961 [1923]).

worse, and Angela implored Beltrán to give the girl a healing blessing. At first, Beltrán humbly refused, saying that the girl should instead go to Zaragoza where he knew of a healer who specialized in this infirmity, but Angela was persistent in her pleas and Beltrán finally conceded. He called Esperanza forward and asked her to remove her bandages, and when she did so she revealed pus-filled wounds so infected that they released a fetid odor reportedly so foul that even Esperanza herself could not stand it. Nonetheless, Beltrán said a blessing, made a sign of the cross over the girl, and proceeded to lick Esperanza's lesions with his tongue, cleaning them until all the infected matter had been removed. Reportedly, the onlookers were stunned and they cried out with devotion, but Beltrán simply took a moment to recompose himself and then returned to his theological discussion. A week later Beltrán was back in Moncada, and they asked him to return to see the girl, but he said it was unnecessary and within days Esperanza's lesions were gone.²²

Beltrán's curing technique was certainly remarkable but it was not unprecedented. Curing by prayers and holy touch was ubiquitous in hagiographical literature, and even Beltrán's peculiar act of licking wounds was a recurrent trope. The medieval *acta sanctorum* were filled with instances where saliva acted as a contact relic that transmitted divine grace. Seventh-century Irish Saint Monnu, for instance, cured Saint Mochua by licking him from head to foot.²³ Church father St. Severinus cured leprosy with his saliva, and Ethiopian Saint Raudan spat into holy water and forwarded the liquid to a sick man who was cured by this potion.²⁴ Beltrán's miracle, however, was an important part of his cult during its formative years, although it faded in later hagiographies and was absent from his 1671 canonization proclamation.

²² Juan, Baltasar, and Esperanza all recounted a similar version of this narrative in their testimonies.

²³ C. Grant Loomis, "Hagiological Healing," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 8 (1940): 636.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 637.

Saints are usually discussed in a separate category, but I argue that healing grace was wielded by such a wide segment of healers in early modern Spain that thaumaturgy should be recognized as a significant element of the seventeenth century's social history of medicine. Since the Congregation of Rites did little to qualify whether these types of healing miracles could be considered legitimate, it is unsurprising that bishops, to say nothing of regular clergy, often approached these issues within a context of ambiguity. Much of the theoretical and juridical innovation for judging healing miracles of living people did not come from Rome but instead arose in a parallel process that occurred anti-superstition discourse as well as inquisitorial, municipal, and medical tribunals.

***Saludadores* in the Sixteenth-Century**

As Chapter 1 demonstrated, a close reading of archival documents shows that healing with grace was not limited to a handful of saints but also was wielded by (often vagabond) religio-medical healers who cured in towns and villages across Spain. While Chapter 1 focused on *ensalmadores*, this chapter examines another category of popular healer called *saludadores*, who performed cures that even more closely resembled saintly healing. Like mystics, *beatos*, and the other proletarian holy men and women who populated the fringes of the early modern Catholic world, *saludadores* were admired for their talents but often suspected of fraud. Their role was to act as channels of grace. Their bodies (and by extension their saliva) were thought to be powerful sources of divine healing. Their relationship with the Church, however, was precarious – they generated suspicion among the religious elite and scorn among most theorists.

People turned to them alongside and sometimes in competition with more regular and Catholic modes of access to the divine.²⁵

Perceived similarities between *saludadores* and saints, of course, were not entirely coincidental. Self-fashioned *saludadores* worked within a vernacular religious culture that allowed for a wider range of conduits to the sacred than was generally approved by theologians. According to historian Fabián Alejandro Campagne, the relationship between saints and *saludadores* was “mimetic.”²⁶ Saints typically acted as intercessors, and Spaniards regularly sought saintly intercession through vows, offerings, masses, and prayers. *Saludadores* managed to insinuate themselves into this matrix of beliefs by acting as intermediaries who specialized in praying to certain saints. By doing so, they connected themselves with a conduit of divine grace that flowed from God to the saint to the healing *saludador*. Some of the more daring *saludadores* even assumed attributes of specific saints and acted as if they were living avatars of blessed personae. Since many *saludadores* specialized in the healing of rabies, they most commonly mimicked the attributes of Saint Catherine and Saint Quiteria who specialized in curing that ailment.²⁷ Historian María Tausiet has even documented an instance in which a *saludador*'s

²⁵ For an interesting examination of the competition and coexistence of clerical and magical healing in Italy see Mary O’Neil, “*Sacerdote ovvero strione: Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in 16th Century Italy*” in Steven L. Kaplan ed. *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), 53-84.

²⁶ Fabián Alejandro Campagne, “El sanador, el párroco y el inquisidor: los saludadores y las fronteras de lo sobrenatural en la España del barroco,” *Studia Historica: Historia Moderna* 29 (2011): 329.

²⁷ On vows to saints and the ways in which popular traditions linked saints to specific illnesses, see William Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), and more recently, Idem., “Pueblo to Señor: Intercession in Sixteenth-Century Spain,” in *A Linking of Heaven and Earth: Studies in Religious and Cultural History in Honor of Carlos M.N. Eire*, edited by Emily Michelson, Scott Taylor, and Mary Noll Venables (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

body bore tangible evidence of his claimed saintly connection in the form of a stigmata underneath his tongue in the shape of Catherine's Wheel.²⁸

In a 2007 article in *Folklore*, Campagne traced some of the cultural origins of *saludador* beliefs.²⁹ As he explained, *saludadores* were uniquely Iberian, but drew upon wider folk and religious traditions from throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Some elements of *saludador* mythology can be found throughout early modern European folklore. For instance, popular beliefs analogous to those that recognized special circumstances surrounding the birth of a *saludador*, such as being born on Holy Friday or as a mother's seventh consecutive son, can be found throughout Europe. There are also functional analogues to *saludadores* to be found in other lands, such as the Italian *sanpolari* who healed bites by poisonous animals, English cunning-men who healed and performed various magical functions, and Greek *anastenaria* who claimed the ability to walk on hot coals when possessed by the spirit of Saint Constantine.³⁰

Pedro Ciruelo's *Arte de bien confesar* was among the earliest printed works to refer to Spanish *saludadores*, and his *Reprobación* offered the early-sixteenth century's richest written characterization of them.³¹ According to Ciruelo, "the principal occupation of *saludadores* is to heal, or protect, men, animals, and cattle from rabies," and that "they heal with saliva from their mouth and with their breath, saying certain words," although sometimes "when they heal the cattle and beasts of a whole village or town they do not go to each of them with their hand,

²⁸ María Tausiet, "Healing Virtue: Saludadores versus Witches in Early Modern Spain," *Medical History. Supplement* no. 29 (2009): 50.

²⁹ See Alejandro Campagne, "Charismatic Healers on Iberian Soil: An Autopsy of a Mythical Complex of Early Modern Spain" *Folklore* 118 (April 2007): 44-64.

³⁰ *Sanpolari* traditions date back to at least the Middle Ages; the *anastenaria* were first documented in the nineteenth century although they claim a tradition that goes back to the seventeenth. *Ibid.*, 54-55.

³¹ Pedro Ciruelo, *Arte de bien confesar: y de bien oyr confesiones* (1501); *Reprobación de las supersticiones* (1530).

breath, or saliva, but merely look at them and bless them from afar by saying certain words.”³²

Ciruelo also described *saludadores* as practitioners of divinatory magic, saying that “often they divine secret things;” they know “things that have occurred to people, and things that will occur.”³³ Some *saludadores*, according to Ciruelo, had – or at least feigned to have – the extraordinary ability to withstand extreme heat. He said that they “take a hot coal or red-hot iron in their hand for a while; others wash their hands in boiling water or oil; others measure bars of hot iron by walking barefoot on them; others walk into a burning oven.”³⁴

Subsequent writers continued to portray *saludadores* as illicit healers, diviners, and firemasters, although the mythical construct of the *saludador* accumulated new attributes during the following century. Antonio de Torquemada’s *Jardín de flores curiosas*, for instance, attributed to *saludadores* the gift of second sight.³⁵ Martín del Río added that the seventh of consecutively born male siblings were destined to become *saludadores*.³⁶ The most extensive seventeenth-century treatment of *saludadores* was put forward by Gaspar Navarro’s *Tribunal de superstición ladina*, in which he ridiculed *saludadores* and those who believed in them. His text relied heavily on Ciruelo, reproducing extended sections verbatim, but it also expounded upon the newer elements of the *saludador* construct. Navarro was the first to write about the widespread belief that *saludadores* could act as witchfinders, saying that “ignorant and foolish

³² Pedro Ciruelo, *Reprovación de las supersticiones y hechizarias*, ed. Alva V. Ebersole (Valencia: Albatros Hispanofilia, 1978), 100-101, “el hecho de los saludadores principalmente se emplea en querer sanar, o preservar los hombres y bestias y ganados del mal de rabia;” “sanar con su saliva de la boca y con su aliento: diciendo ciertas palabras;” “quando saludan los ganados y bestias de todo un pueblo o concejo: no llegan a todos de su saliva: sino de lexos los miran y santiguan diziendoles ciertas palabras.”

³³ Ibid, “muchas vezes adivinan algunas cosas secretas” “y tambien de los acaecimientos ya passados sobre algunas personas y aun de cosas de que les han da acaecer.”

³⁴ Ibid, 101, “Algunos saludadores toman un carbon o hierro encendido en la mano y lo tienen por un rato. Otros se lavan las manos en agua, o azeite hirviendo. Otros miden a pies descalcos una barra de hierro ardiendo y andan sobre ella. Otros entran en un horno encendido y fuerte.”

³⁵ Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardín de flores Curiosas* (Salamanca, 1570).

³⁶ Martín del Río, *Disquisitionum magicarum* (1599); see Fabián Alejandro Campagne, “Charismatic Healers on Iberian Soil: An Autopsy of a Mythical Complex of Early Modern Spain,” *Folklore*, 118 (2007), 45.

people have called *saludadores* to certain locations to tell them who were witches.”³⁷ His attitude was similarly dismissive towards the belief that seventh sons became *saludadores*. He recalled laughing when he heard about an expectant mother who held the belief.

Despite the admonitions of authoritative writers, archival records indicate that *saludadores* were often tolerated by local authorities, and sometimes even considered an essential component of public health systems. Municipal governments throughout Spain were charged with making sure that health care professionals were available to their constituents. This usually entailed the contracting of university-educated physicians who were paid a salary to remain in residence in the municipality in order to provide reliable services at a reasonable cost. Towns typically recruited physicians by sending a representative to Salamanca or one of the other university towns where they spoke to professors of medicine or other notable physicians who would then recommend newly minted physicians whose residency they had overseen.³⁸ Documentation is beginning to emerge that demonstrates that many towns put their faith not just in contracted physicians but in *saludadores* as well. Short-term arrangements were negotiated when government authorities believed that the religious healing techniques of a *saludador* were necessary – when communities were stricken by plague, an outbreak of rabies, or an epidemic among livestock, for instance – although some municipalities valued *saludadores* enough to maintain the office indefinitely. One early set of references comes from fifteenth-century Madrid, when it was still just a small Castilian outpost. In 1495, Madrid’s municipal government paid a *saludador* from nearby Getafe a *cahiz* of wheat (equal to about twelve *fanegas*/English

³⁷ Regarding the reaction to a woman who expected her seventh son: “y dezia a la gente simple, y vulgar, que deseava parir el séptimo hijo: porque tendría gracia de Saludador, y todo esto lo oia yo decir, y me reia de todo ello,” Gaspar Navarro, *Tribunal de supersticion ladina* (1631), 90v. On the connections between *saludadores* and witches see María Tausiet, “Healing Virtue: Saludadores versus Witches in Early Modern Spain.”

³⁸ Anastasio Rojo Vega, *Enfermos y sanadores en la Castilla del siglo XVI*, 19-26.

bushels) in exchange for his willingness to come to Madrid to heal whenever needed.³⁹ Three decades later, in 1514, the same council was still without a resident *saludador*, and they decided to commit even more resources to lure one from another *pueblo*. The council made an offer to Juan García of Alcobendas to relocate in Madrid and offer his services free of charge to its residents in exchange for 500 maravedís that they would pay as either a salary or to rent a house for him to live in.⁴⁰ Similar references have been found in municipal archives throughout Iberia. This documentation has not yet received systematic enough examination to identify broad geographic or temporal patterns in the data concerning the contracting of *saludadores*, but the phenomenon seems to have extended relatively evenly across Iberia (and is found in Latin America as well).⁴¹ Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century references are more numerous than earlier ones although this may be due to the gradual improvement in record keeping.

Natural-Philosophical, Theological, and Demonological Responses to the “Divine” Healing of *saludadores*

The prevalence of religio-medical healing in the sixteenth century reflected a popular culture in which divine grace was perceived to be abundant, active, and to have had a real

³⁹ José Manuel Castellanos, *El Madrid de los reyes católicos* (Madrid: Avapiés, 1988), 67.

⁴⁰ *Libro de acuerdos del concejo madrileño*, Vol. V, 290, Madrid 24–7–1514, cited in Alejandro Peris Barrio, “Los saludadores,” *Revista de folklore* 339 (2009), 76. “Acordaron los dichos señores, que porque en esta villa no hay saludador y se daba salario al de Alcobendas y se avía d’enbiar por él cada vez quera necesario y se viene a bevir a esta dicha villa, Juan García, saludador, el qual no pide, salvo que la dicha le dé una casa en que more e sela pague que le davan e dieron para el alquiler de la dicha casa, 500 maravedís por un año.”

⁴¹ For Murcia see José Andrés Prieto Prieto, “El Concejo de Palomares del Campo en el tránsito del siglo XVI al XVII” (PhD diss., Universidad de Murcia, 2003), 310; Antonio Peñafiel Ramon, “Cara y cruz de la medicina murciana del seecientos: pervivencia del saludador,” *Murgetana* 71 (1987): 73-81; for Navarre (Viana) see J.C.L. Mendiola, “Religiosidad popular en Viana,” *Cuadernos de Etnología y Etnografía de Navarra* 37, no. 80 (2005): 179–212; for the Basque Country (Alava) see Gerardo López de Guereñu, “Brujas y saludadores,” in *Homenaje a Don José Miguel de Barandiarán*, Tomo II (Bilbao: Diputación de Vizcaya, 1966), 163-188; on Portuguese *saludadores* see Francisco Bethencourt, *O imaginário da magia: Feiticeiras, saludadores e nigromantes no século XVI* (Lisbon: Projecto Universidade Aberta, 1987); Timothy Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine and the Inquisition: The Repression of Magical Healing in Portugal during the Enlightenment* (Boston: Brill, 2005); for Mexico, see Noemi Quezada, *Enfermedad y maleficio: el curandero en el México colonial* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, 1989).

presence in ritual performance, but clergy often complained that a misunderstanding of healing grace resulted in abuse and superstition. The development of a proper understanding of divine healing, then, involved theological nuances that struck to the heart of fundamental Reformation-era debates. The sixteenth century's most consistent and coherent analysis of the healing activities of *saludadores* was offered by Pedro Ciruelo in his *Reprobación de las supersticiones*. Ciruelo caustically reproached *saludadores*, depicting them as drunken swindlers, but nonetheless he could not entirely rule out the possibility that some of them might authentically heal through divine grace.⁴² He thought that *saludadores* wrongfully disguised themselves by exploiting the accepted beliefs and symbols of the cult of the saints. He pointed to *saludadores'* habit of distributing bread that they had chewed, and he disdainfully remarked how people held on to these morsels as if they were relics. Regarding the stigmata that some *saludadores* bore, he accused them of making these marks themselves in order to “feign sanctity” and deceive the “simple folk who believe them to be saints and think that they have a special virtue to heal the sick.”⁴³

Medicine played an important role in Ciruelo's demonological schema. He considered the cures of *saludadores* to be outside of the course of natural medicine, which necessarily implied that they were “sorcerers or ministers of the devil” who were fantastically deluded and had made a demonic pact. He argued that there was no reason to believe that they had any supernatural abilities, and he accused them of being “liars and tricksters,” when they tried to prove their sanctity through a trial by fire in which they handled red-hot metal and walked on hot coals. Medicine, he said, had a natural virtue that affected individuals differently depending on their

⁴² Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 120.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 96.

complexion – warm or cold, choleric or phlegmatic – and it also must have different effects on humans as on animals. To claim that the touch and saliva of *saludadores* had either a natural (or supernatural) effect on all people and animals equally, Ciruelo thought, was absurd.

In addition to using medical theory as a heuristic device, Ciruelo also rhetorically employed licit medicine as a virtuous alternative to superstitious cures. He followed his chapter on *saludadores* with a list of thirty-four (mostly herbal) medical remedies for poison and rabies.⁴⁴ These remedies, he said, were taken from Pliny, Dioscorides, and other authorities. They were simple, accessible, and employed mostly household items such as garlic, onions, parsley, oil, vinegar, oil, or ashes.⁴⁵ [See Appendix 2 - Pedro Ciruelo's Natural remedies against rabies and venom] His suggestions were not intended to undermine the authority of academic medicine, he said, but instead intended for the simple and poor people who were outside of the cities and towns and therefore unable to find a professional physician. For Ciruelo, these medical cures were entirely congruent with the Catholic faith. In addition to natural remedies, he also recommended prayers, masses, offerings, and devout prayers to Saint Catherine and Saint Quiteria.⁴⁶

Amidst his criticisms, though, Ciruelo stumbled when he confronted the question of how to differentiate the *saludadores'* superstitious healing from the practices of saints who healed through divine grace. Ciruelo was a methodical thinker and he was troubled by the difficult prospect of weighing the long Catholic tradition of saintly healing on the rationalistic scale that perceived demons lurking beneath most thaumaturgic claims. He fleetingly considered (to the embarrassment of later editors) the solution that most Protestants would come to adopt – that the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 100-101.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 95.

healing miracles of Jesus and the apostles were used to convert unbelievers and that these miracles had subsequently ceased as they were no longer needed in modern times.⁴⁷ Ciruelo, however, did leave open the possibility of an occasional legitimate healer, but he maintained that these were:

simple and good men who happen to have a special grace from God to heal with devotion, laying on of the hand and praying good prayers. Yet the world contains very few of these men, and because of this their prelates and judges should examine them well to see who is who, and not allow just any person who so wishes to walk around and cure as a *saludador* or an *ensalmador*.⁴⁸

Authorities who allowed *saludadores* to practice without thorough examination, Ciruelo warned, were guilty of mortal sin for condoning actions that “robbed people’s goods and damned their souls.”⁴⁹

Like Ciruelo, the prominent Salamanca professor Francisco de Vitoria warned that demons were active in the world, but he was also aware that the misattribution of demonic agency could have adverse intellectual and legal consequences. In a 1540 lecture at the University of Salamanca, Vitoria warned against “the ignorant and those of little subtlety who condemn any rare act as a marvel attributable to demonic power.”⁵⁰ Vitoria and his colleagues warned that the world contained many preternatural processes that there were not necessarily signs of underlying demonic forces. The prototypical example was magnetism, which Vitoria

⁴⁷ Ibid., 72-73; see also, the later edition Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, ed. Pedro Antonio Iofreu, (Barcelona, 1628).

⁴⁸ Ibid., 98, “hombres simples y Buenos, que, por ventura, tienen alguna gracia especial de Dios para sanar con buena devoción, poniendo la mano y rezando buenas oraciones Mas éstos hay muy pocos en el mundo, y por eso los prelates y los jueces suyos, los deben bien examinar para ver cuáles son de unos y cuáles de los otros, y no dexar así andar a quienquiera saludando y ensalmando.”

⁴⁹ Ibid., 98.

⁵⁰ Vitoria’s address circulated in manuscript form and was eventually published posthumously as part of his collected writings, *Relectiones Theologicae* (Salamanca, 1557); it has been edited and translated into Spanish as *Sobre la magia*, by Luis Frayle Delgado (Salamanca: San Esteban, 2006), 65.

presented as an unexplainable force that was not a likely indicator of demonic activity. Likewise, he pointed to astral forces, which were widely acknowledged to cause real effects although they were poorly understood and seemed hidden from human understanding. Vitoria also observed that healers might simply employ herbs that had marvelous but entirely natural effects, and he noted, citing Pliny, that many powerful herbal remedies were once considered magical before they came to be recognized as legitimate in the eyes of academic medicine.

Another notion that disquieted Vitoria was the resemblance between demonic and divine cures. Despite theological insistence that miracles were rare, scriptural evidence supported the idea that God occasionally sent servants with divine healing powers. As Paul wrote in his first letter to the Corinthians, healing was one of the seven charismatic graces (together with evangelism, prophecy, eloquence, wisdom, contentment, and the discernment of spirits).⁵¹ Scholastic thought characterized it as a *gratia gratis data non gratum faciens* – grace that did not affect the salvation of the receiver, but was freely granted in order to edify the believers who witnessed it.⁵² Theologically, such cures were considered miracles, albeit of a lower degree. According to Thomas Aquinas, miracles could be described as belonging to three classes depending on whether they functioned above nature, against nature, or outside nature.⁵³ The resurrection of a dead person exemplified a *miraculum supra naturam*, levitation, a *miraculum contra naturam*, and a sudden unexpected healing, a *miraculum prater naturam*.⁵⁴ Since both

⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 12: 9-11.

⁵² On the thirteenth-century construction of this theological category, see Ayelet Even-Ezra, “The Conceptualization of Charisma in the Early Thirteenth Century,” *Viator* 44, no. 1 (2013): 151-168.

⁵³ See Lorraine Daston, “Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe,” esp. 96-7.

⁵⁴ Examples provided by the physician and frequent Vatican consultant Paolo Zacchia, *Quaestiones Medico-legales* (1651) as cited in Fernando Vidal, “Miracles, Science, and Testimony in Post-Tridentine Saint Making,” 483.

demonic and miraculous healing, then, could be considered preternatural – outside the ordinary course of nature – discernment between the two was a difficult endeavor.

Amidst so many possibilities, Vitoria was somewhat exasperated when his discussion turned to interpreting the cures performed by *saludadores*, writing that “I do not see clearly what to think or say about them.”⁵⁵ For these healers, nearly all explanatory mechanisms were on the table. He thought that many were simply impostors whose cures had no effect whatsoever, but he also acknowledged that some of them truly possessed healing powers. The origin of these powers, however, was difficult to identify. He thought that demonic agency was the most likely explanation, but admitted that demons’ benevolent counterparts – angels – would work through the same mechanisms. There was also the possibility that God might directly confer miraculous cures. Earlier writers such as Ciruelo had suggested that distinctions could be drawn along moral grounds, but Vitoria, in contrast, argued that the moral state of an individual had no bearing on his or her ability to receive divine grace. He cited the biblical example of Balaam who received the grace of prophecy despite being a wicked man.⁵⁶ According to Vitoria, then, demonic magic and divine grace could not be differentiated by the effects that they produced nor by the moral state of the practitioner. The only evaluative criterion he offered was to examine how a healer conducted himself. Magicians acted independently, frequently, and whenever they wanted. Divine healing, in contrast, was rare. It depended upon the will of God and the intervention of angels.

Natural Philosophy

⁵⁵ Vitoria, *Sobre la magia*, 89. Also see Fabián Alejandro Campagne “Entre el milagro y el pacto diabólico: Saludadores y reyes taumaturgos en la España moderna,” 247-71.

⁵⁶ Numbers: 22-24.

Martín de Castañega assessed the cures of *saludadores* very differently in his *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*.⁵⁷ In a somewhat unconventional assertion for a demonological treatise, Martín de Castañega employed natural philosophy to argue that the origin of their healing power was licit and not superstitious. As examined in Chapter 2, Castañega was a firebrand against witches but relatively sympathetic towards popular religio-medical practice. As he had done with the evil eye (see Chapter 2 above), his approach towards *saludadores* was to evade contentious theological territory through naturalization. He argued that the ritual cures of *saludadores* functioned through processes that were occult but did not rely on supernatural powers. To illustrate this point, he compared their healing to various common examples of what contemporary commentators called “marvels.” These were occurrences that were assumed to function naturally but relied on mechanisms that were not yet understood. They often tested the boundaries of natural philosophy and, as historians such as Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park have shown, they functioned as convenient markers of the boundaries of the natural order for medieval and early modern thinkers.⁵⁸ Castañega included several phenomena in this category, including magnetism and static electricity, the healing power of several items including unicorn horns and gemstones, and the wide-ranging astrological effects of the stars.⁵⁹

Castañega noted the similarity between spiritual and marvelous phenomena, and he cautioned his readers not to confuse the two. Sometimes, he warned, evil individuals could obfuscate the proper boundaries between the marvelous, the magical, and the spiritual for personal gain. He related a personal anecdote of such a case in which a woman used a lodestone

⁵⁷ Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (1529).

⁵⁸ Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (Cambridge, MA: Zone Books, 2001).

⁵⁹ Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 96.

to deceive “simple women who did not understand its true [magnetic] properties.” She told these women that she had the ability to win the exclusive devotion of husbands and suitors. To do so, she performed a ceremony that included prayers and conjurations and culminated with a needle that mysteriously jumped towards a magnet in her hands. On the surface, it seemed that she derived her capabilities from the religious power of her prayers and a form of sympathetic magic in which the stone and needle symbolized romantic attraction. All of this, as Castañega demonstrated, was an elaborate ruse, and his message to readers was to practice careful discernment. Some phenomena might seem to harness magical or spiritual power – whether divine or demonic – but it was important to search for natural causes, even if they were not initially apparent.

Like the mysterious attraction of the lodestone, Castañega presented the healing power of *saludadores* as another case of a natural marvel erroneously identified. As he explained, *saludadores* used their saliva to cure wounds, infections, and lethal snakebites without applying any other medication. Many attributed their abilities to divine miracles, but Castañega cautioned against this interpretation, reminding readers that Catholic doctrine advised great care concerning miracles. According to Catholic theologians, he said:

we should never call something a miracle which could be produced naturally (although by means hidden to us); because a miracle is a work that nature does not have the virtue to produce, and we should not designate something a miracle unless the lack of natural explanation makes it necessary.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Ibid., 97; “Lo cual es contra los doctores católicos, que nunca jamás habemos de decir que sea milagro cosa que naturalmente (aunque por virtudes a nosotros ocultas) se puede producir; porque el milagro es obra que la virtud natural no tiene fuerzas para la obra ni lo hemos de otorgar si no fuéremos constreñidos por necesidad, faltando la potencia y virtud natural.”

In order to arrive at his desired natural explanation for the activity of *saludadores*, Castañega harnessed the rhetoric of natural philosophy and academic medicine. He proposed that *saludadores*' abilities might derive from a special complexion of the four humors that would be balanced in a way that would produce a natural but hidden quality in their breath and saliva that would act as a medicine. For him, the ability to heal was exceptional, but did not necessitate demonic or divine assistance. He said, "it seems that this virtue could be possessed by both the unfaithful and the faithful, and can reside in those who are bad and good; because [healing] is not a moral virtue that requires a good and virtuous man, but a natural virtue that is born in the natural complexion of the body."⁶¹ As such, he warned, people should not be deceived into thinking that *saludadores* possessed any special sanctity since anyone, "even a moor," could possess a natural healing complexion.

In the following chapter, Castañega extended his argument concerning the nature and rationality of divine healing to discuss the popular belief – which he firmly rejected – that the King of France possessed the ability to heal scrofula by laying on of the hands. As with his approach to witches (described in Chapter 2), Castañega's interest in and opinion on royal thaumaturgy reflected the specific historical context of his vantage point from the Navarrese-Castilian borderland of the 1520's. Castile had no native tradition of a thaumaturgical monarchy, although the custom did extend to the court of Navarre in the fifteenth century when Charles II (r.1349-1387) and Charles III (r. 1387-1425) claimed the healing touch by virtue of their French Capetian bloodline.⁶² In 1525, French and Navarrese troops invaded Spanish Navarre in a final,

⁶¹ Ibid., 98; "parece que así puede estar esta tal virtud en los infieles como en los fieles, y en los malos como en los buenos; porque (como está dicho) no es virtud moral que al hombre hace ser bueno y virtuoso, sino que es virtud natural que nace de la complexión natural del cuerpo."

⁶² Fabián Alejandro Campagne, "Entre el milagro y el pacto diabólico: saludadores y reyes taumaturgos en España Moderna," in *Ciencia, poder, e ideología: El saber y el hacer en la evolución de la medicina española (Siglos XIV-XVIII)*, ed. María González de Fauve, (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia de España, 2001), 272.

and ultimately unsuccessful, effort to maintain Navarre's independence from the Spanish Crown. Concurrently, Hispano-French hostilities were also playing out in the Italian wars; in June 1525 Francis I of France was captured at Pavia and brought back to Spain as a prisoner. Reportedly, Spaniards flocked to him to be cured when he landed in Barcelona. The President of the Parliament of Paris, de Selve, reported that the king "saw so many sufferers from the scrofula...with great hopes of being cured, thronging round the king, greater than any crowds that ever pressed round him in France."⁶³ For Castañega, the idea that the hostile French King would be endowed with a miraculous power was a scandalous proposition.

Castañega argued that the ability to heal, dependent upon one's natural complexion, was not something that kings could inherit by virtue of office. If a prince did not heal before becoming king, it was not possible that he could acquire the ability after his coronation. Again, Castañega ruled out the possibility of a miracle, arguing that God only gave such abilities to individuals, whom he sorted into three categories. First were those saints who exhibited such merit and personal sanctity that God gave them the ability to perform miracles. Among this group, he numbered Saint Martin, Saint Nicholas, and many others who might display such grace, regardless of their status or office. Second were those preachers who were granted miracles in testimony to the true faith. In such a case, it did not matter whether the preacher was saintly or a sinner, since he or she was simply a conduit for a divine message. He warned, however, that as Christ said in Matthew 7:22 "many will tell me that they have performed many virtues and marvels in my name, and I will say that I never knew them."⁶⁴ Castañega's third category was related to the second, and it included those who were granted miracles in order to

⁶³ Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Monarchy and Miracles in France and England* (New York: Dorset Press, 1961), 179.

⁶⁴ Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 108.

convert infidels. None of these categories, he argued, included someone who could inherit the virtue to perform miracles along with the royal scepter.

Although the chapter mostly focused on the healing claims of the King of France, he also considered the hypothetical healing claims of two other rulers – the Pope and the King of England. He thought that of all the rulers, the Pope probably had the most legitimate claim to miraculously cure since he was the successor of Saint Peter, a man who reportedly performed so many miracles that even his shadow healed the sick. Castañega maintained, however, that there was not any reason to believe that contemporary Popes had any such power. The claims of the Kings of England were even weaker in Castañega’s mind. He asserted that their thaumaturgic power was focused in a ring that they wore, which could have no power beyond the natural qualities of the metal it was made of.

The Aragonese physician Alonso López de Corella developed Castañega’s natural-philosophical approach to *saludadores* even further in his sixteenth-century tract *Secretos de philosophia, astrologia y medicina*.⁶⁵ In this “book of secrets,” López de Corella used the subject of *saludadores* as a point of entry into contemporary debates about the mysterious workings of unseen natural forces. His approach largely followed the same line of thinking as Castañega before him, using the natural philosophical discourse of occult causes to naturalize the cures of *saludadores*. López de Corella, however, turned to astrology for an explanatory mechanism. He suggested that astral forces affected an individual’s physical composition, and by “having had

⁶⁵ Alonso López de Corella, *Secretos de philosophia, astrologia y medicina y de las quatro mathematicas ciencias, collegidos de muchos y diversos auctores, y divididos en cinco quinquagenas de preguntas* (1547).

such a fortuitous birth, [*saludadores*] are endowed with many properties” that granted them the power to heal.⁶⁶

Likewise, the historian and humanist Pedro de Mexía’s *Silva de varia lección* compiled and popularized a range of natural philosophical theories, and his approach to *saludadores* was to naturalize their cures. Like Castañega, he compared the marvelous healing forces of *saludadores* to the damaging power of the evil eye:

Another marvelous thing is the qualities or properties that some men have, some good some bad. Notoriously, there are people who have poison in their eyes, and by looking at something intensively, through visual rays, infect or inflict considerable damage, which we call casting the evil eye [...]. And, on the contrary, God instilled virtue in some individuals; and it is taken for certain that in some individuals there is a beneficial property and natural virtue against the poison of rabid dogs, we call these individuals *saludadores*.⁶⁷

For Mexía, the healing power of *saludadores* was natural, but was instilled in them directly by God rather than through the intermediary of mysterious astral forces.

The most influential Spanish natural philosopher to examine the question of *saludadores* was the Renaissance humanist Alonso de Torquemada. Torquemada, a native of León, had spent time in Italy working for Spanish diplomats in Rome. His immensely popular book, *Jardin de flores curiosas*, was a dialogical miscellany that remarked on a wide range of themes related to natural history and natural philosophy, including an extended commentary on *saludadores*.⁶⁸ He too expressed a belief in their healing power, but his rhetorical approach distanced the author

⁶⁶ Ibid., LXVI r. – LXVI v.; Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo catholicus, Homo superstitiosus*, 254.

⁶⁷ Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección* (1543), quoted in Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo catholicus. Homo superstitiosus*, 255.

⁶⁸ Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardin de flores curiosas* (1570); the tract underwent several early modern editions, nine in Spanish, eight in Italian, five in French, two in English, and two in German. See José Pardo Tomás, “Diablos y diabluras en la literatura de secretos,” in *El diablo en la edad moderna*, ed. María Tausiet, James Amelang (Madrid: Marcel Pons, 2004), 297-325. I cite the pagination of the 2012 edition, *Jardin de flores curiosas*, ed. Enrique Suárez Figaredo, *Lemir* 16 (2012): 605-834.

from his opinions by putting them in the mouths of characters in dialogues (although one of them – Antonio – was clearly meant to be his voice). He stated that their beneficial effects were undeniable, and “it seemed that they have a particular grace or gift from God to cure the bites of rabid dogs,” but he also recognized that they provoked scorn among the educated classes, remarking that “their stupid and crude and poorly-composed words...provoke laughter among those who hear them.”⁶⁹ One of Antonio’s textual interlocutors, a man named Bernardo, suggested that the cures of *saludadores* were not made possible through grace, but instead it was the work of the Devil that helped them achieve their miracles. Antonio countered that while some *saludadores* might be charlatans, there were others who truly had a “particular grace.” He bolstered this claim with a sophisticated reading of natural history citing classical sources ranging from Pliny to Plutarch to Isadore of Nicea that recorded historical instances in which people possessed a preternatural ability to damage or cure. For Antonio, these sources proved that God provided many and diverse types of people with marvelous abilities (including the King of France).

Torquemada also divulged a unique personal anecdote about his father’s encounter with a *saludador*:

I want to tell you about my father’s encounter with a *saludador*: when he was a young man and was on a long journey, a rough looking mastiff appeared and before he could get away from it [the dog] bit his leg; and if it was not for the boot he was wearing, which was thick, worse would have befallen him, but [the bite] still managed to penetrate to his flesh and draw a drop of blood or two. My father did not think much of it, and thus continued walking for three or four more days; and one morning while passing a village he noticed the church bell ringing so he dismounted his horse and entered the mass, and upon exiting he encountered a laborer who told him: “Tell me, sir, has a dog bitten you?” My father, who already almost had forgotten the episode responded to him: “A dog approached me a few days ago and tried to bite me; but why do you ask?” The laborer laughed and said to him: I ask you because God has brought you here so that you do not

⁶⁹ Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardin de flores curiosas*, 741.

lose your life; because I am a *saludador*, and that dog that drew blood from your leg was rabid, and if nine days pass after its bite there will be no remedy. And to prove that I am telling the truth, [I know that] the dog had such and such marks,” saying the same ones that my father had seen, which left him more than a little astonished. Then the *saludador* said: “If you want to reassure yourself it would be worthwhile to stop in this village for the day,” and the *saludador* brought him to his house and blessed him and his food. After eating, the *saludador* turned to him again and that afternoon told him: “You need to be patient if you want to be healthy; I will need to prick you three times in the nose and each time will draw blood.” My father, who was extremely terrified, told him that he would do everything the man wanted him to do, and so the *saludador*, in presence of others from the village, pricked him three times with the sharp point of a knife, and each time he drew a bit of blood he put on a separate plate, and afterwards he told [the father] to wash himself with a bit of blessed wine; and while [the *saludador*] talked for a half hour, everyone looked at the blood that was on the plates, which he had left in their presence, and they found a squirming worm to emerge from each one; and then the *saludador* told [the father]: “Sir, by the grace of God you are cured; and you can see here all the damage that the dog had done to you. And be assured that while misfortune struck you with rabies, it was not God’s plan for you to succumb to it.” My father thanked him as best as he could, and then left that place. And although it seems to me that everything that this *saludador* did could be due to the grace that he had, what he said about the color of the dog leaves me with the suspicion that he was not entirely on a righteous path.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ “Os quiero decir que a mi padre le aconteció con un saludador; y fue que, siendo mozo, yendo un camino largo salió a él un mastín tan dañado, que antes que pudiese apartarle de sí le mordió en una pierna; y si no fuera la bota que llevaba calzada, que era gruesa, se la pasara toda; pero todavía llegó a tocarle en la carne y le sacó una gota o dos de sangre. Mi padre no hizo caso dello, y así, caminó tres o cuatro días; y una mañana pasando por una aldea vio que tañían a misa, y apeándose del caballo entró en la iglesia, y ya que se quería salir, un labrador se llegó a él y le dijo: ‘Decidme, señor: ¿a vos os ha mordido algún perro?’ Mi padre, que ya casi lo tenía olvidado, le respondió: ‘Un perro salió a mí pocos días ha y me quiso morder; pero, ¿por qué lo preguntáis?’ El labrador se rió y le dijo: ‘Pregúntooslo porque Dios os ha traído por aquí para que no perdáis la vida; porque yo soy saludador y ese perro que decís que os sacó sangre de la pierna estaba rabiando, de manera que si pasarades de los nueve días no teníades remedio ninguno. Y para que entendáis que digo verdad, el perro tenía tales y tales señales,’ diciendo las mismas que mi padre había visto, de que no quedó poco maravillado. Y el saludador le tronó a decir: ‘Si queréis aseguraros conviene que por hoy os detengáis en este pueblo’, y así le llevó a su casa y le saludó, y todo lo que comieron. Y después de comer lo tornó a saludar otra vez, y a la tarde le dijo: ‘Vos habéis de tener paciencia si queréis ir sano; que yo tengo de daros en las narices tres picadas que de cada una dellas ha de salir sangre’. Mi padre, que estaba con grandísimo temor, le dijo que hiciese todo lo que quisiese, y así, el saludador, en presencia de los más vecinos del lugar, le picó tres veces con una punta muy aguda de un cuchillo, y de cada picada cogió una poca de sangre y la puso de por sí en un plato, y después le hizo lavar con un poco de vino saludado; y deteniéndose todos hablando cuanto media hora, miraron la sangre que estaba en el plato, que no la habían quitado de su presencia, y hallaron en cada una, así como estaban apartadas, un gusano vivo bullendo; y entonces el saludador le dijo: ‘Señor: por la gracia de Dios vos sois sano; que veis aquí todo el daño que el perro os había hecho. Y tened por cierto que vos rabiárades si vuestra ventura, o, por mejor decir, Dios no os guiara por este camino’. Mi padre le dio las gracias lo mejor que supo, y otro día se partió de allí. Y aunque todo lo que este saludador hizo me parecía que pudo ser por la gracia que tenía, en cuanto a decir la color del perro no puedo dejar de tener alguna sospecha de que no iba en todo por el camino derecho.” Ibid., 741; Fabián Alejandro Campagne analyzes this passage in *Homo catholicus, Homo superstitiosus*, 255-256.

Torquemada's evocative story articulated a rich vision of how *saludadores* functioned. Although he believed in the possibility that divine grace might grant them efficacy, his closing left doubt about the true nature of his father's cure.

Medical Theory and Court Physicians

The career and writings of Cristóbal de Vega (1510-1573) – one of the most prominent physicians of mid-century Spain – exemplify the difficulty that medical doctors faced in consolidating their authority against popular healers while also respecting Catholic orthodoxy. De Vega was a professor of medicine at the University of Alcalá de Henares and he also worked as a royal physician at the court of Philip II where he attended to the sickly prince Don Carlos. His religio-medical sensibilities were tested in this role when he was part of the team that cared for Don Carlos during a famous incident in which the prince suffered an infection after falling down a staircase and wounding the back of his head.⁷¹ After the infection spread to the prince's face and upper torso, Vega and his team were open to desperate measures. The celebrated Flemish anatomist Andrés Vesalius – who was also employed as a court physician at the time – suggested that the team should perform a full perforation (trepanation) of the skull, but this drastic procedure was abandoned once the team started to drill and they determined that there was no damage to the skull or its interior. They also briefly allowed a *morisco* healer named Pinerete to join the medical team and apply his special ointment that had won him acclaim throughout Spain, but the balm only made the infection worse. Finally, when it seemed that all hope was lost, the Spanish people were mobilized to undertake religious responses. Solemn

⁷¹ The following account relies upon L.J. Andrew Villalon, "Putting Don Carlos Together Again: Treatment of a Head Injury in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 2 (1995): 347-365.

processions occurred throughout the country, and in Alcalá, where the prince was, the Franciscan friars undertook a special procession to the royal bedchamber where they presented Carlos with the remains of a fifteenth-century member of the order, Diego de Alcalá, for whom they had long hoped to win sainthood. Shortly thereafter, the prince made a remarkable recovery. In response, the crown joined a chorus that clamored for the friar's canonization, and in 1564 Pope Pius IV sent a delegation to Alcalá to collect testimony of eyewitnesses of the Franciscan's role in the prince's allegedly miraculous recovery. Despite the popular enthusiasm regarding the late friar's involvement, the medical team had mixed opinions regarding the nature of the cure owing to the implication that their interventions were not to be credited. In the end, de Vega sided with those who thought that a miracle had occurred, telling the investigating committee that he "had heard it said that two or three of the physicians did not hold [the cure] to be a miracle," but that "these physicians were saying this in order to make their role in the cure seem greater!"⁷²

This anecdote might make it seem that de Vega allowed for a broad interpretation of the role of divine grace in healing, but his writings offer a more nuanced view of his ideas surrounding the relationship between religion and medicine, and he was unequivocal in his rejection of *saludadores*. As a theorist, de Vega dedicated himself to reintroducing and reinterpreting the Greek classics. His first publication was a translation of Hippocrates' *Prognosticorum* (1551), which he followed by commentaries on Galenic texts on fevers (1553) and urology (1554). His largest and most influential work, *De arte medendi* (1561), was a systematic treatise on all aspects of Galenic medicine, enriched by his own clinical perspectives. In this work, de Vega's comprehensive approach led him to discuss several controversial issues

⁷² *Proceso de Beatificación y Canonización de S. Diego de Alcalá* (1567), Vatican Library MS 7009, 416-19, quoted in Andrew Villalon, "The 1562 Head Injury of Don Carlos: A Conflict of Medicine and Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Mediterranean Studies* 22, no. 2 (2014): 119.

within medicine that overlapped with religion and the occult – alchemy, astrology, the evil eye, talismans, and amulets.⁷³ In his examination of these phenomena, he allowed space for miracles and the divine, but his approach was largely to either naturalize them or reject them altogether.

The issue of *saludadores* emerged when de Vega discussed the health impact of mental affectations, the sixth of Galen's *res non naturales*.⁷⁴ The core question, for de Vega, was whether a *saludador* could have such a profound effect upon the mental state of an individual that it could cause a dramatic shift in his or her health. He conceptualized the validity of *saludadores*' cures as being closely related to the intellectual issues at stake concerning the casting of the evil eye. In both instances, de Vega rejected the claim that hidden mechanisms located in the gaze might cause significant effects (ignoring contemporary arguments that the power of *saludadores* was located in their saliva or touch). His conclusion was that neither *saludadores*, nor anyone else for that matter, could affect the health of others using only their gaze. In addition to his rejection of the medical and natural-philosophical grounds of their cures, he also opined that *saludadores* were "ignorant, scoundrels, and drunks" who were "full of superstition, falsity, and foreign to the Catholic religion."⁷⁵ He argued that their cures, if effective at all, were the result of demonic pacts.

A similar attitude can be found in the work of the royal surgeon Juan Fragoso who emphasized the demonic nature of *saludadores*, their poor moral character, and their tendencies

⁷³ Justo Hernández, "La magia natural en el *Liber de arte medendi* de Cristóbal de Vega (1510-1573)," *Fortunate* 25 (2014): 213-218; Andrew Keitt, "The Devil in the Old World: Anti-Superstition Literature, Medical Humanism, and Preternatural Philosophy in Early Modern Spain," in *Angels, Demons, and the New World*, eds. Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 30-31.

⁷⁴ The others being: air, food and drink, exercise and rest, sleep and wakefulness, secretion and excretion.

⁷⁵ Cristóbal de Vega, *Liber de arte medendi* (Lyon, 1564), 384. See Justo Hernández, "La magia natural en el *Liber de arte medendi* de Cristóbal de Vega (1510-1573)," *Fortunate* 25 (2014): 213-218; Andrew Keitt, "The Devil in the Old World," 30-31.

towards drunkenness. Fragoso even mentioned Pedro Ciruelo himself, demonstrating the interchange between anti-superstition discourse and academic medicine:

Master Ciruelo proves that folk healers are superstitious and the ministers of Satan, falsely claiming the ability to heal in order to fool the common folk. If by chance these people perform some prodigious or marvelous thing it must be attributed to a pact with the devil, because these are men of bad character and for the most part drunkards.⁷⁶

How did this complex body of thought influence society? Vega, Fragoso, and Vitoria were prominent thinkers, but their Latin texts had a limited and specialized readership. Castañega wrote in the vernacular, but his treatise was relatively obscure. Only the opinions of Ciruelo and Torquemada had wide readership in vernacular Castilian Spanish. The ideas expressed in these works only gained currency and power through the much larger network of clergy, lawyers, magistrates, sufferers, healers, and witnesses. Archival texts offer a more textured portrait of the social and cultural roles of religio-medical healers. Municipal records and trial documents offer an important glimpse into local intellectual dynamics and the ways in which scholastic natural philosophy was appropriated by and imposed upon ordinary Spaniards.

Bartólome López – A rural healer in Philip II’s Court

Local dynamics of religio-medical healing are revealed in the Inquisition’s mid-century case against Bartólome López, a charismatic healer who attracted crowds of sick people to his home to be cured in the 1550s and 1560s.⁷⁷ López lived in a small village called Fuente de Pedro Naharro, which was located to the east of the mountains of Toledo in the expansive plains of La Mancha between Madrid and Cuenca. At the time of his arrest, he was thirty-six years old and he attended to two flocks of sheep (which he assured the inquisitors were unattended in his absence

⁷⁶ Quoted in Keitt, “The Devil in the Old World,” 28; also see Martín Ferreira, *El humanismo médico en la universidad de Alcalá (Siglo XVI)* (Alcalá de Henares, 1995), 29.

⁷⁷ A.H.N., INQ 89, exp. 9.

and were reliant upon his swift return). He said that he had begun performing his healing ritual as a teenager, but at first he only did it in secret for a few selected people. Then, in his twenties, he gained local renown when he began “publicly blessing the sick,” and many people came to him to be cured.⁷⁸ In 1567, his reputation spread to the court in Madrid where Philip II’s treasurer Melchor de Herrera heard of his cures and inquired about his services. According to López, a messenger arrived at his home in Fuente de Naharro with a mount and a letter from the bishop of Cuenca that said he was to go to Madrid to heal Herrera’s son (although López did add the caveat that he was illiterate and thus uncertain about the precise contents of the letter). López said that there was not a payment promised, but the offer of transportation and shelter if he would agree to come to Madrid. López said that he complied and, after arriving, his blessing “removed the boy’s pain.”⁷⁹ Soon thereafter, word of his cure spread in Madrid and it brought him a certain degree of fame among local residents. He said that in the four or five days after he performed his cure in the Herrera household, crowds of people would gather around him as he walked through the streets. They would proclaim “¡gracia tiene!” (“he has grace!”) and plead for his healing touch. It was this notoriety that attracted the attention of the Inquisition, and he was detained at court in the administrative headquarters of the *Suprema*. Inquisitorial officials interrogated him on October 1, 1567, and Fernando Valdés, the Inquisitor General himself, attended.

At the *audiencia*, inquisitors noted that despite his penchant for offering blessings his religious education was somewhat rudimentary; court records indicate that his signing of the cross was poor and that he was incapable of saying the creed or the *salve regina*. Inquisitors

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

opened questioning, as they usually did, by asking the defendant whether he knew or presumed the reason why he was being examined. López replied that he suspected it was because of “the thing he did.” When inquisitors asked him to clarify, the notary (who recorded López’s response in the third person) reported that he said:

What he does for all people who go to him – whether they are men, women, children, young or old, of any quality or condition, married, single, clerics, monks and nuns, anyone in the world with any sickness – is put his hand on them, on the part that is sick, and he blesses them and says that they will be healed with the help of God. Sometimes many sick people come to him at once, and in those cases, when he did not have the opportunity to touch all of them, he simply would go to a door or somewhere he could see all of them and offer a general blessing, and he would say “in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, Amen Jesus.” The sick people would then say that they feel better. He [López] understood that God healed them through his mercy, and it was not due to [López’s personal] sanctity at all.⁸⁰

When asked for additional information about his methods and the types of illnesses he cured he said:

He used generally [the same blessing] on all infirmities and on any condition, whether they be sick, injured, burned, or lame, but he told people not to send those *encogido por fuego* or insane because his benediction never healed these people.⁸¹

Asked if he knew the names of any of the people who he touched, blessed, and healed he said:

He had touched many people in these lands, and although he touched and blessed many whose names he did not know, in Fuente de Pedro Naharro there was a man named Delgado who was injured on both sides and [López] blessed him and he was cured with no other medicine other than the help of God. Another resident of Fuente de Pedro

⁸⁰ Ibid., “Preguntado es lo que hace, dijo que lo que hace es que a todas las personas, hombres y mujeres, niños, mocos, y viejos, de qualquier qualidad o condición que sean casados, solteros, clérigos, frayles, y monjas, y quantas gentes hay por ese mando que a el vengan digiendole que tienen alguna enfermedad en alguna para este que declarante les pone la mano, en la parte donde tienen la enfermedad, y les bendice y dice este que con ayuda de dios sanaran y que avezes quando vienen mucha gente con enfermedades, como este no los que de tocar a todos se pone a una puerta o en otra parte donde los pueda ver a todas y los santiguar, diciendo nombre del padre y del hijo y del espíritu sancto amen Jesus. Y los enfermos dicen que [llevaban] mejoría quando este los toca o los bendize, y que este entiende que dios les da salud por su misericordia y que este no es para santidad ninguna.”

⁸¹ Ibid., “dijo que esto usa generalmente en todas las enfermedades de qualquier condición que sean asi de enfermos, como de heridos, y quebrados, y de qualesquier dolores y ni envio encogido por fuego o de loco, que a estos nunca los vio sanos, aunque los a tocado y bendecido.”

Naharro was named Osuna and he had a one-year-old girl who was said to be blind in both eyes, and he touched her and blessed her and with the help of God the girl could see with both eyes.⁸²

During his years of healing, López had several encounters with authorities that illustrate the ways in which contemporary institutions attempted to manage and regulate religious healers. Inquisitors asked whether he had a license from the Protomedicato or a prelate, and he said that he did not, but he did have contact with other government and ecclesiastical institutions. The first authority he had contact with, according to his deposition, was his local confessor whose advice was to only cure with a simple blessing that included the sign of the cross and the invocation of the trinity. When asked what the origin of his benediction was he said:

At first, he only used his touch to heal, but when he told his confessors that he had this healing grace with the touch of his hand, they told him that when he touched the sick he should say a blessing by making a cross with his right hand, saying: in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and that is how [López] proceeded to heal.⁸³

Later, around 1561, López faced investigation by the Inquisition of Cuenca. Inquisitorial agents took his deposition in Fuente de Pedro Naharro and then took him to the city of Cuenca to be detained. For seven or eight days, he said, they kept him in Cuenca, although he was free to walk the city streets during those days. Then they freed him, “without giving him any penalty nor punishment nor any prohibition whatsoever other than ‘*que fuese con Dios.*’”⁸⁴

⁸² Ibid., “dijo que por esta tierra aunque a tocado y bendecido muchos no sabe como se llama mas que en el dicho lugar de la Fuente Pedro Naharro estado un hombre que se llama delgado y estaba quebrado de ambas partes y este le toco y le bendijo y sin otra medicina ninguna con la ayuda de dios sano, y que otro vecino del dicho lugar de fuente navarro que se llama Osuna que tiene una niña de un año, que decían sus padres que estaba ciega de entre ambos ojos, y este la toco y bendijo y con la ayuda de dios la dicha niña ve muy bien de entra ambos ojos.”

⁸³ Ibid., “dice que con solo tocar sanaba sin vendecir, dijo que diciendo este a sus confesores como tenía esta gracia de curar con tocar con la mano le dijeron que quando tocase bendijese haciendo una cruz con la mano derecha, diciendo en nombre del padre y del hijo y del spritu sancto, y asi los santigua.”

⁸⁴ Ibid., “sin le dar pena ni castigo ni prohibición alguna ni decirse otra cosa mas de que fuese con dios.”

López had less luck with the episcopal authorities of Cuenca. A few weeks after being released by the Cuenca Inquisition he was called before the bishop, Don Pedro de Castro, who asked him to explain his healing techniques. Then he waited for three days while the bishop called a junta of *letrados* (learned men), and after this consultation, Castro ordered that López discontinue healing or face excommunication. López said that he complied with this mandate until Bishop Castro's death (which occurred shortly thereafter in August 1561). At that time, he consulted new confessors – Franciscans whose names he said he had forgotten – in the town of Villanueva de los Infantes. The Franciscans, according to Bartólome, encouraged him to begin healing again, and he did.

Perhaps the most rigid opposition that López had confronted was a brush with secular justice in 1567. He had gone to cure a pregnant woman who was sick in the nearby village of Uclés but he was detained by the governor there.⁸⁵ He said that the governor held him in prison for twenty-four days, took his confession, and then ordered him to stop healing. The court issued him a fine of three *maravedís* and told him that his fine would increase to twenty thousand *maravedís* if he continued to heal. When the Madrid inquisitors asked him why he continued to heal after that encounter, he said that he believed that the order to stop healing was contingent upon a ruling by the Bishop of Cuenca (who at that time would have been Bernardo Fresneda, a Franciscan). López said that he instead received approbation when the messenger of his courtier patron Herrera presented him with a letter from the Bishop that ordered him to go to Madrid to heal the treasurer's son. The details of this letter, in López's account, were somewhat murky. Since he was illiterate, López said that he could not personally read the letter so he had to have

⁸⁵ Both Uclés and Fuente de Pedro Naharro were administered by the Order of Santiago, which by that time had been incorporated into the Spanish crown.

the local notary read it to him. He was also unable to recall where that letter was located, but he presumed that the village alcalde might be able to provide it.

After López's 1567 deposition at the Suprema in Madrid, the Inquisition released him without a formal penance or punishment, but the tribunal mandated that Bartólome must cease using his healing touch and benediction. He was also banished from court and instructed to return directly to Fuente de Pedro Naharro. If he disobeyed he would be punished more rigorously and receive up to two hundred lashes. López's mixed response from authorities and relatively light sentence can be attributed to a few important factors. First, he avoided censure by using a simple healing blessing. He made only the sign of the cross and invocation of the trinity and thus evaded many of the theological pitfalls and presumptions of demonic interference that tripped up contemporary healers when they used *ensalmos*, magic, relics, or invocations. Second, he explicitly stated that he "understood that God healed them through his mercy, and it was not due to [López's] sanctity at all." Likely, he understood that individuals who claimed false sanctity were liable to be accused of vanity, imposture, or even demonic delusion.⁸⁶ Third, his ability to attract Franciscan allies helped him deflect criticism. Although only briefly mentioned in his deposition, Bartólome's trip to Villanueva de los Infantes – which occurred around the time of Bishop Castro's death – was an ambitious journey that afforded him the opportunity to connect with an order that tended to support mystical and affective forms of Catholic religiosity. While López's story about his letter of permission from the new Franciscan Bishop Bernardo Fresneda was potentially dubious, it is not inconceivable that Fresneda might have helped him. Fresneda was Philip II's confessor before being appointed to the Cuenca see, and thus may have

⁸⁶ See Andrew Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred: Imposture, Inquisition, and the Boundaries of the Supernatural in Golden Age Spain* (Boston: Brill, 2005).

been well-acquainted with Melchor de Herrera. Finally, a lack of coordination between institutions certainly prolonged his healing career. The trial documents indicate a range of authorities who were active in regulating religious healing – including the bishopric, two tribunals of the Inquisition, secular judges, parish confessors, and religious orders – but contradictory attitudes and overlapping jurisdictions sometimes made it difficult to mete out justice consistently when it came to religious healers.

Licensing Regimes

As the López case demonstrates, sixteenth-century judges and prelates attempted to conform to Pedro Ciruelo’s recommendation to examine healers to see “who is who” and to “not allow just any person who so wishes to walk around and cure as a *saludador* or an *ensalmador*,”⁸⁷ but the lack of clear principles regarding miraculous healing made it difficult for religious officials to achieve consistency or certainty. After López’s brush with the Suprema in 1567, trials against *ensalmadores* and *saludadores* in the Toledo tribunal of the Inquisition ceased for a span of several decades. This local chronology – reflecting a relative paucity of trials between 1567 and 1610 – largely corresponded with the hiatus in canonizations as the Roman Catholic Church reformulated its approach to verifying the numinous. In the early-seventeenth century, new consensus began to emerge regarding the verification of healing by grace. The same strategies that the Roman Church utilized for the reinterpretation of the healing activities of potential saints like Luís Beltrán – including medicalization and bureaucratic verification – were mirrored by local Spanish authorities who tightened their regulatory network and placed a greater emphasis on the licensing of *saludadores*.

⁸⁷ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 98.

Licensing procedures can be found in ecclesial prescriptive literature such as the periodic mission statements published after diocesan synods (called *constituciones sinodales*) that advised bishoprics to use licensing as part of their parish-level reproach of superstition:

We decree that no person shall cure with *ensalmos* that have not been seen and examined first by us or our representatives; nor shall they use enchantments, divinations, augury, *hechicerías*, or any superstition or juridical astrology, under the threat of punishment. And under the same threats, no one should seek consultations to know the future, nor to find things that are stolen, lost, or hidden. And under the same threats of punishment, *we decree that saludadores will not be permitted without our license, or that of our representative, and [these licenses] will not be given without an exam.*⁸⁸

As this decree implies, the diocesan authorities assumed the responsibility to examine and license *saludadores*. These certificates of approval were valuable for travelling *saludadores* who used them to establish legitimacy, earn the trust of their patients, and acquire municipal contracts. This was the case in the village of Enguerra where municipal records indicate that in 1631 the office of the *saludador* was held by a woman named Josefa Media who carried a license from the Archbishop of Valencia.⁸⁹

Oftentimes, *saludadores* carried multiple licenses that they accumulated as they moved through different regions and jurisdictions, each one adding prestige and legal protection, but criminal records reveal that vagabond *saludadores* sometimes used licenses to perpetuate delinquency. One seventeenth-century Toledo municipal trial recorded the life of a vagabond *saludador* named Juan de Ródenas who arrived in Horcajo, a small village in the *montes* of Toledo, on *Viernes Santo* (Holy Friday) of 1618 to render his healing services during the most

⁸⁸ This decree is from Cuenca, although similar wording appears in *constituciones sinodales* throughout Spain in the early-seventeenth century; *Constituciones sinodales del obispado de Cuenca de 1626*, lib. V, tit. V (emphasis mine); cited in Prieto Prieto, “El Concejo de Palomares del Campo en el tránsito del siglo XVI al XVII,” 311; for Aragón see Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los ojos*, 139.

⁸⁹ María Luz López Terrada, “The Control of Extra-Academic Practitioners in Valencia,” 16.

sacred days of the Christian calendar.⁹⁰ He brought his wife, daughter, a goat, and a meager collection of goods, and stayed at an inn with several other travelers. He also reportedly carried licenses and papers that certified that he had indeed cured cases of rabies by the grace of God. Ródenas found several clients, but while he was off treating them his wife met another woman at the inn who was wearing a special Easter headdress woven with golden thread. That night, the woman reported the headdress missing. The town's sheriff searched the belongings of the *saludador* and his wife and found the stolen goods. The magistrate convicted them as thieves and banished them from the village.

Not all seventeenth-century *saludadores*, however, were delinquents. A uniquely rich set of documents from the city of Valencia indicate that the municipal office of the *saludador* was closely regulated there and even held a degree of prestige.⁹¹ Officially approved *saludadores* were granted the privilege of adorning their houses and their clothing with the city's coat of arms, visually demonstrating that their religious cures were performed with the endorsement of the town council. The council, however, did not grant this privilege freely. Aspirant *saludadores* were first required to pass an examination administered publicly and in the presence of the council. In the 1620's, the council hired a *saludador* named Domingo Moreno to perform these evaluations. Council records indicate that in addition to healing Moreno was also a needle maker, and perhaps this is no coincidence. The resistance to extreme heat was commonly recognized as

⁹⁰ A.M.T., 6252/1544.

⁹¹ *Archivo Histórico Municipal de Valencia*, Manual de Concells 155-A. These records were uncovered by the Valencian physician and historian of medicine, José Rodrigo Pertegás (1854-1930), and published in "Los 'saludadores' valencianos en el siglo XVII," *Revista Valenciana de Ciencias Médicas* 8 (1906): 219-20. The case has been recently reintroduced to a scholarly audience by María Luz Lopez Terrada in "El pluralismo médico en la Valencia foral: un ejemplo de curanderismo," *Estudis. Revista de Historia Moderna* 20 (1994): 167-181; "Las practicas extraacadémicas en la ciudad de Valencia durante los siglos XVI y XVII," *Dynamis* 22 (2002): 118-119, and in English as "Medical Pluralism in the Iberian Kingdoms: The control of Extra-Academic Practitioners in Valencia," 16.

an identifying marker of a true *saludador*, and as a needle maker, Moreno would have been familiar with hot metals, perfectly suiting him for his role as “examiner of *saludadores*.” The test – which rested upon the epistemological principals of the medieval “trial by fire” for the verification of divine will – consisted of extinguishing a red-hot bar of metal and a rail of glowing silver with the tongue and providing sworn testimony that the candidate had indeed cured people bitten by rabid dogs.⁹² In 1629, a Basque healer named Joan Sans de Ayala passed the test and proved that he had both the expertise and the divine grace to heal. He was not paid a salary, but was permitted to display the city’s arms and be counted among its *saludadores*.⁹³ Although its records are sparse, this Valencian licensing regime continued – with tacit royal approval – until at least 1661, as evidenced by a petition sent to the Council of the Crown of Aragón for the city to retain a salaried *saludador*.⁹⁴

Licensing systems, however, had defects. Archival records indicate instances in which multiple institutions – the crown, municipal authorities, and the Inquisition – all claimed the same licensing responsibility. Their responses towards *saludadores* were often uneven due to a lack of consistent epistemological principles to determine true from false practitioners. Each authority judged *saludadores* by its own principles, which varied greatly, and this problem was compounded by early modern Spain’s complex legal system where justice was administered in multiple overlapping jurisdictions among which there was little formal coordination. The result was a bureaucratized but imperfect system of verification.

⁹² See Robert Bartlett, *Trial by Fire and Water: The Medieval Judicial Ordeal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

⁹³ “Per ço elegixen y nomenen al dit Joan sans de Ayala en saludador de la present ciutat sens salari algu y que puga tenir en sa casa y portar en si les armes de la present ciutat pera quell tinguen y reputen per saludador de la dita ciutat;” José Rodrigo Pertegás, “Los ‘saludadors’ valencianos en el siglo XVII,” 219.

⁹⁴ Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Consejo de Aragón, Legajo 0909, no. 14.

For example, licensing disputes were at the center of the Inquisition trial against Pablo Botella, a Valencian *saludador* who healed hernias and fractures through the use of divine grace, his saliva, and the intercession of the Virgin.⁹⁵ He carried a license that was issued by the crown, signed by a cleric who worked as lawyer for the royal council (*presbítero abogado de los reales consejos*), which gave him the right to heal in Valencia as long as he abided by specific guidelines. First, if he cured a woman, he must “practice honestly and without indecent actions.” Second, he “should not use actions nor words beyond those expressed in the examination, and that he should never declare that his cures came from sanctity, but that they are dependent upon the will of God.” And third, “he should not receive monetary compensation for his cures.” Presumably this was an authentic license, but the Valencia tribunal of the Inquisition suspected Botella of sorcery, bringing his case within their jurisdiction. After examining him, inquisitors found his cures to be vain, superstitious, and likely the result of a demonic pact, and they sentenced him to the harsh punishment of four years of banishment and two hundred lashes.

Another roadblock in authorities’ attempts to create a consistent licensing regime was the common practice of forging licenses. The 1706 inquisition case of Toledo *saludador* Andrés Valdés offers one example of how a false license could be acquired.⁹⁶ Valdés was an itinerant *saludador* from Zamora who claimed to have God-given grace although he seems to have attracted controversy wherever he went. He was arrested once in Jaén in a dispute with another *saludador*, and he later had his license (which he claimed to be valid) confiscated by authorities in Madrid. Soon after he began healing in Toledo, he was challenged by a cleric who asked him to prove his credentials, and he turned to deceit to avoid further censure. He contacted a man –

⁹⁵ A.H.N., INQ. 973, exp. 1. A brief examination of this trial is included in Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, “Influencia de la Inquisición sobre diversos aspectos de la medicina y farmacia en España” (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1974).

⁹⁶ A.H.N., INQ 97, exp. 1.

likely a notary or someone with access to a notary's office – who sold him a false inquisitorial license. The license was a convincing fake, complete with an official seal and forged signatures, although when presented to Toledo's inquisitors it was quickly recognized as a fraud, landing Valdés in the Holy Office's secret prison. The presiding inquisitors, however, did not deem the offense particularly egregious, and he was released within a couple of weeks without a formal sentencing.⁹⁷

Intellectual and Legal Challenges in the Seventeenth Century – The Case of Don Ambrosio de Montes

An exceptionally well-documented case of a healer who was subject to multiple rounds of learned scrutiny in the mid-seventeenth century was that of Don Ambrosio de Montes, a man who managed to contest the boundaries of the natural and the demonic in a particularly creative fashion.⁹⁸ Montes was a nobleman by birth, the son of a soldier and *hijo de algo* named Don Benito de Montes and his wife Doña María Nieta. The couple was well-connected, but unable to provide a wealthy upbringing for their four sons, and they sent Montes to live in Madrid where he spent most of his life as an unassuming servant in the households of prominent members of the royal court.⁹⁹ At the time of his arrest in 1648, inquisitors described him as being around sixty years old, greying, missing teeth, and wearing glasses and a simple brown robe. He had spent much of the 1630s and 1640s as a peripatetic healer who travelled throughout central

⁹⁷ Another interesting example of forgery can be found in María Tausiet, "Healing Virtue: Saludadores versus Witches in Early Modern Spain," 50.

⁹⁸ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12.

⁹⁹ Montes first served his uncle Jerónimo de Orduña, a respected tutor who had among his students the pages of Philip II and Philip III. At this time, Montes received a primary education, learning to read and write at a local monastery in Madrid. Sometime around the year 1605, Montes' uncle died, and at the age of fourteen he went to live as a servant in the extended household of the prominent nobleman Alfonso Ramírez de Prado who a member of Philip III's royal council and a confidant of the king's favorite – and at times *de facto* head of state – the Duke of Lerma.

Spain, often drawing large crowds to witness his benedictions, which he used to cure infirmities ranging from chest pains and tooth aches to scrofula.

Montes' first experience with healing came in the 1630's when a friend and fellow servant named Pedro de Castro told him that he had scrofula and intended to go to France where he could be cured by the "royal touch" of King Louis XIII. Before leaving, however, Castro wanted to seek any help that he could receive locally. Following a pan-European popular tradition, he sought the intervention of a man born as his mother's seventh consecutive son, a particularly rare occurrence that was thought to endow the individual with special gifts including the ability to heal. As Montes related in his testimony, he then went to his mother who confirmed that he was indeed her seventh son, although most of his brothers had died at a young age. Montes returned to his friend and offered his assistance, and the following Sunday he went to mass, took communion, and then successfully healed Castro's scrofula by touching him and using the same words that the king of France used: "I touch you, and may God heal you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁰

Montes' first episode in a long series of judicial entanglements came in 1646 when he was stopped by the local priest in the town of Ledesma and then ordered to go to nearby Salamanca to be examined by the inquisitorial authorities.¹⁰¹ Montes presented testimonies to the inquisitor that vouched for his abilities to heal scrofula, chest pains, and side pains, but the court ordered him to discontinue healing. Montes, however, was able to exploit jurisdictional discrepancies. When he returned to Madrid, he obtained with an audience an episcopal court run by a sympathetic vicar. The vicar, Alonso de Morales Ballester, conducted an inquiry that

¹⁰⁰ Events as related by Montes in his trial testimony, A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no. 1, 38-47v.

¹⁰¹ Salamanca was under the jurisdiction of the Valladolid Inquisition tribunal – the inquisitor happened to be visiting at the time.

included meeting with four local theological consultants, both friars and ordinary priests. This junta pronounced that Montes' healing truly proceeded from grace, and the court issued him a license (which has been preserved in the trial documents) to heal those with an "urgent necessity" by touching them and invoking the Holy Trinity so long as he did not ask for a payment. Two years later, however, this decision was overturned when Montes was brought once again before an ecclesiastical court in Alcalá de Henares and subjected to an examination by a panel of experts that included professors of canon law and Thomistic theology from the university. This panel suspected Montes of an implicit demonic pact and recommended that the matter be transferred to the Toledo Inquisition where Montes was prosecuted in his first full trial.

Montes benefitted from an advocate who assisted him in navigating the complex theological landscape regarding healing and superstition. After meeting with his lawyer, Montes described to the court how his ability to heal derived from *gratia gratis data*. By deploying this term, Montes garnered legitimacy by forcing the court to consider the possibility that he possessed charismatic grace as it was described in scripture and codified by theologians. In a somewhat unorthodox move, he described it as a "natural grace." As described above, healing through *gratia gratis data* was usually categorized as a miracle of the third degree, functioning outside the ordinary bounds of nature (*prater naturam*). The true origin of preternatural cures was, however, hidden from human knowledge by definition. By characterizing his cures as simultaneously functioning through nature and grace, Montes and his advocate were not exactly playing by the rules set by scholastic theology, but they recognized that the final verdict would rest upon the discernment of preternatural causes, and they were attempting to avert an interpretation that implicated him in a demonic pact.

Next, the defense called seven character witnesses, including two clergymen, a fellow servant, two other working class acquaintances, and his former masters Don Mathias de Bayasala and his wife.¹⁰² All seven indicated that they did not think Montes to have either an implicit or explicit demonic pact. Don Mathias said that he believed this was true because he thought of Montes as a simple and straightforward man, and also added that he had seen Montes' written testimonials that he kept. Others mentioned how Montes performed his healing openly and publicly, indicating that he had nothing to hide. Two witnesses, Sra. Bayasala and a servant named Miguel Malo, affirmed that they believed that the healing derived from Montes' "natural grace," and Sra. Bayasala avowed that he "only used formal words" in his healing ceremonies. As handpicked friends of Montes, the objectivity of these witnesses can certainly be disputed, but their statements contribute to a sense that charismatic healing was considered mundane, and even "natural" among many different types of people in early modern Spain.

Montes' continued engagement with the Inquisition resulted in an atypically robust set of written opinions by *calificadores*, and a close reading of these statements reveal their consideration of the well-developed literature that had emerged by the mid-seventeenth century. Most opinions were relatively brief, but one *calificador* submitted an extended report that expounded upon his intellectual position and cited his sources.¹⁰³ As was standard, he framed the issue within Aquinas' order of causes, and he proceeded cautiously, saying that it was a very difficult matter to know whether occult causes were true, false, demonic, or divine, noting the likelihood of error and deceit when discerning them. His analysis began with a nod to Ciruelo's foundational text and proceeded through a consideration of the multiple strands of inquiry that

¹⁰² Bayasala was vice-chancellor in the King's Supreme Council of the Crown of Aragon and also a knight in the Order of Santiago.

¹⁰³ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12.

had developed in the century following its publication. He reflected at length upon the nature of divine cures and the experiential evidence of such cures in the lives of saints. He revisited the Pauline scripture on charismatic grace and Vitoria's opinions concerning the workings of this grace within the scholastic system. He also looked to the pastoral responsibilities towards healers described in Martín de Azpilcueta's confessor's manual and the natural-philosophical problems raised by Royal University of Mexico professor Alonso de la Vera Cruz.¹⁰⁴ The author who had the most influence on his thought, however, was Martín del Rio.

Martín del Rio was a Flemish-born Spaniard who wrote the 1599-1600 treatise *Disquisitiones magicae*, a thousand-page tome that went through more than twenty editions and is widely recognized as the most influential work of seventeenth-century demonology. The work represents a pinnacle of the genre, drawing upon an impressive array of ancient, medieval, and early modern textual authorities and offering one of the most thorough expositions of the philosophical and legal problems within demonology. His work epitomized early modern demonology at its most expansive and confident. It espoused a rigid application of logic without the caveats and doubts displayed by Vitoria. Del Rio demanded a rationalistic alignment of cause and effect and instead of allowing for occult causation he argued for an expansive role of the demonic. He systematically attempted to dismantle alternate forms of preternatural causation (the power of stars, signs, words, the imagination), and dismissed most forms of divine intervention in order to create a void that could only be filled by demons.¹⁰⁵ In doing so, he frequently

¹⁰⁴ Martín de Azpilcueta y Navarro, *Manual de confesores y penitentes* (1556); Alonso de Vera Cruz, *Physica speculatio* (1569).

¹⁰⁵ Jan Machielsen, "Thinking with Montaigne: Evidence, Skepticism and Meaning in Early Modern Demonology," *French History* 25, no. 4 (2011), 441-442.

returned to superstitious healing as a heuristic for differentiating the natural from the preternatural and as a didactic tool for explaining the insidious role of demons.

Specifically, the *calificador* cited the Del Rio section entitled “Can wounds and diseases be treated simply by touch, sight, voice, breath, kiss, or binding with a linen cloth?”¹⁰⁶ Del Rio’s goal in this section was to present a reading of preternatural cures, offering a step-by-step explanation of how they surpassed natural causation and should instead be considered demonic or (very occasionally) born of divine grace. He was entering a debate that depended upon proper knowledge of medical and natural-philosophical processes, and he argued that his opponents were misreading physical properties:

No matter how much they differ in detail, apologists for superstition have this argument in common: spirits trickle from the heart through the arteries and burst out through the sight of the person doing the looking, or the mouth of the person talking, or the pores of the person touching. Then, having been emitted by the more powerful will of the person who is seeing, speaking, or touching, they insinuate themselves into the arteries of the person being seen, listening, or being touched, and from there search out his heart and effectively penetrate it.¹⁰⁷

Del Rio was adamant that such an account was fundamentally flawed, relying too heavily upon unseen natural physical processes. He admitted that both words and sight may have real effects by stirring the humors and might cause joy, fear, or sadness, but if dramatic and instantaneous swings in health occur, he argued, they must be attributed to demons.¹⁰⁸

Moving from the theoretical to the practical, Del Rio pointed to “various kinds of cures that occur with astonishing frequency.” Among these were the cures carried out by Spanish soldiers in the Low Countries during the Dutch Wars who reportedly healed atrocious wounds

¹⁰⁶ Martín Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae*, Book I, Ch. 3, question 4.

¹⁰⁷ I quote from the abridged English translation edited by P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Investigations into Magic* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 45.

¹⁰⁸ Martín Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, 46-47.

merely by breathing on them, kissing them, or binding them up with linen cloth. He noted that such healing was a pan-European phenomenon, “known in Spain as the ‘art of the *Saludadores*’; in Italy, as ‘the art of the Gentiles’ or ‘of Saint Catherine’ or ‘of Saint Paul’; in Belgium, as ‘the art of the sons of Good Friday.’” Regarding the healing soldiers, he supported the condemnation that had recently been issued by the Bishop of Ypres, Pierre Simons (in office 1584-1605), arguing that it was wrong to expect miraculous cures directly from God and that these battlefield cures were likely indications of a demonic pact. Here, he vehemently refuted the thinking of the natural philosophers who sought to entirely naturalize such effects by arguing that healing virtue might be born into the complexion of certain individuals, giving them natural healing powers like those of herbs and minerals. If a human did indeed heal through touch, Del Rio proposed, it could only be a miraculous gift granted through *gratia gratis data*. Regarding *saludadores*, he objected to most of their cures, but conceded that they should not be absolutely and indiscriminately condemned due to the scriptural tradition of men who did indeed possess charismatic grace. Continuing this line of reasoning, he submitted that Flemish healers born on Good Friday or as their mother’s seventh consecutive son might indeed be granted healing grace: “for it is not unlikely that, because of the fearfulness attached to Good Friday, the holiness of its mystery, and the honor of the matrimonial estate, God has granted the cure.” He maintained, however, that such an ability would be miraculous and not natural.¹⁰⁹

In Toledo, Inquisitorial policy did not demand that the prosecution would consummately prove or disprove demonic pacts. During the sentencing phase of seventeenth-century trials, inquisitors utilized standard Suprema-provided boilerplate language that allowed them to artfully evade any absolute decision. In Montes’ case, they said that he “committed many great crimes

¹⁰⁹ Martín Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, 50.

and offenses that made him *suspect of an explicit or implicit demonic pact*.”¹¹⁰ Inquisitors used this same phrase, that an individual was “suspect of a demonic pact,” in almost every *hechicería* case in the seventeenth century. Under the threat of torture (which may or may not have been applied – the record is unclear), Montes confessed that he had committed errors, but he was not forced to admit a demonic pact. Using this procedure, the Inquisition reconciled Montes as a penitent who would be punished and re-admitted to the Church, but he was not explicitly pronounced a demonic heretic. After the trial, Montes appeared in an *auto de fe* where he publicly confessed his sins, and he was then banished from Toledo for a span of eight years.

Of all the healers arrested by the Toledo Inquisition, Montes was among the most obstinate. Despite the mandate and punishment he received in 1647, Montes immediately resumed healing. He went to Salamanca where he found another ecclesiastical judge who issued him a license to heal. He even had the audacity to treat an inquisitorial officer who suffered from urinary pains. The officer, who was interviewed in the second trial, reported that he was under the impression that Montes had a valid license. This episode led to a second trial in 1649, which would be followed by further trials in 1652 and 1658.¹¹¹ In each subsequent trial, Montes grew increasingly intractable. When asked why he continued to heal despite the Inquisition’s admonitions, he said that “God ordered him and that is why he did it and continued.”¹¹² One of his defense attorneys offered another possibility, that “when he was given the sentence in Toledo, Don Ambrosio de Montes was out of his mind and completely crazy ... and he did not have the capacity to appreciate or understand what was ordered.”¹¹³

¹¹⁰ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no.1.

¹¹¹ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no. 2, 3, and 4.

¹¹² A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no. 3. “dixo que poque dios le mando aquello primero por eso lo a hecho y continuado.”

¹¹³ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no. 2, 66v. “quando le dio sentencia en Toledo el dicho Don Ambrosio de Montes estaba fuera de su juicio natural y totalmente loco ... y no tenia capacidad para apreciación ni entender lo que se le

In each trial, inquisitors continued to return to the question of whether Montes' cures were the result of *gratia gratis data* or a demonic pact, but the task of discernment remained problematic. As a *calificador* said in the final trial:

This subject is very difficult one – as is the subject of revelations, apparitions, raptures, and ecstasies – because the cause is occult and we cannot know if it comes from God or the Devil, true or false; as we have seen, brilliant men seem foolish when they (following the expositions of authorities) discern whether it is true that cures are a supernatural gift and *gratia gratis data* with miraculous effects, as has been demonstrated in the legends of saints.... It is true that God has given supernatural [gifts] to many in His Church (as authorities say for purposes of evangelization, especially if it is done habitually), as he did for the other graces of which Saint Paul referred, whose grace frequently is found in singularly virtuous people.¹¹⁴

The same *calificador* thought that the folk explanation – that Montes' healing power was the result of his fortuitous birth as a seventh son – was vain and superstitious. After thorough theological considerations, he decided that Montes was an imposter and likely party to a demonic pact. The presiding inquisitors agreed with the *calificador*'s assessment, but they decided not to simply banish Montes in this fourth trial, seeing that he would probably disobey orders and continue to heal. Instead, they gave him two hundred lashes and sent him for confinement in a local convent where he was to live indefinitely under the charge of a learned friar who would disabuse him of his errors. He died there two years later at the age of sixty-eight.¹¹⁵

mandaba.” On madness in Inquisitorial trials see Sara Nalle, *Mad for God: Bartolomé Sánchez, the Secret Messiah of Cardenete* (Charlottesville: London University Press of Virginia, 2001); Dale Shuger, *Don Quixote in the Archives: Madness and Literature in Early Modern Spain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹¹⁴ A.H.N., Inq. 91, exp. 12, no. 4, 49. “materia muy dificultosa es la destacado sujeto, lo mismo sucede en materia de revelaciones, apariciones, raptos, estasis, y causa como oculta no podemos conocer si es de dios o del demonio, verdadera o falsa como lo experimentamos haciendo tontos ingenios averiguados ser así cierto es según la inteligencia de los exposiciones, *sonites sui curationis et donum supernaturale, et gracia gratis data*; cuyos efectos milagroso experimentamos con esta de la leyenda de los santos....Es constante haber esta en tal sobrenatural y darla Dios a muchisimos en su iglesia (y segun el sentir de doctos, solamente catolice con esa, especialmente si es habitual) como las demás gracias que refiere St Pablo en el la citado, cuya gracia es frecuentemente se halla en personas virtuosos, y de singular virtud.”

¹¹⁵ A.H.N., INQ 91, exp. 12, no. 4, 52v.

Conclusion

As the Montes case shows, the theoretical approaches outlined by Ciruelo, Castañega, Vitoria (and others) a century earlier grew more nuanced, but the essential problem of whether the cures of *saludadores* were true or false, demonic or divine, endured. During the eighteenth century, the Benedictine thinker Benito Feijó took an even stronger stance against the possibility of thaumaturgical healing,¹¹⁶ but the issue was not resolved by enlightenment thinking. Instead, Spanish authorities relied on the machinations of bureaucracy and an imperfect licensing system. The diminishing role of miraculous healing in Spanish society (and perhaps “disenchantment” more generally) was a protracted and contingent process that relied upon the accumulated judgements of local actors who appropriated the imprecise norms of the larger imperial system.

This chapter has also drawn attention to a gap. The second half of the sixteenth century was a point of inflection in the history of sanctity and it was also a period of reconfiguration of inquisitorial policies towards superstition. The inquisitorial tribunal of Toledo investigated few *hechicería* trials during the latter decades of the sixteenth century and instead focused on Protestantism, Islam, blasphemy, and “crimes against the Holy Office.” Trials against sorceresses, *ensalmadores*, and *saludadores* virtually stopped for several decades before they resumed in large numbers in the seventeenth century. During these decades, the handful of *hechicería* trials conducted in Castile focused instead on a small number of high-profile healers who performed occult magic and esoteric cures. Although they were few, these trials were revelatory of another culture of medicine and healing. A close examination of these trials in

¹¹⁶ Benito Jerónimo Feijó y Montenegro, *Teatro critico universal o discursos varios en todo género de materias, para desengaño de errores comunes*, tomo III (Madrid, 1729), 1-18.

Chapter 4 reveals a burgeoning culture of esoteric empiricism at the turn of the seventeenth century. It highlights the circulation of illicit manuscripts and the ongoing problems that emerged when inquisitors attempted to make distinctions between science, magic, and religion.

Chapter 4 – Medical and Magical “Secrets”

“Do not procure to know that what should not be known and is above your capacity, and do not scrutinize the occult, desiring to know what is out of reach.”¹

- Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, Chapter xxiii

In 1611, the prosecuting attorney of the Toledo tribunal of the Inquisition accused Diego Alfonso de Medrano, a distiller of alchemical medicines, of having a demonic pact. In the eyes of the prosecutor, Medrano was a:

heretic, apostate, relapse, impenitent, obstinate, incorrigible, pertinacious, excommunicated, perjurer, blasphemer, astrologer, sortilege, auger, sorcerer, superstitious, necromancer, enchanter, geomantic diviner, planetary diviner, insolent, audacious, liar, fascinator, scandalous, profaner of the sacred scripture, who had an expressed and explicit pact with demons; he dealt with them and communicated with them familiarly, feigned to be a knowledgeable expert in obtaining secrets and natural virtues in order to cure and heal grave illnesses, mixing and introducing some true and certain things in order to better deflect his errors of having demonically concocted superstitions and vain medicines.²

The prosecutor’s phrase – that Medrano used *secrets* and natural virtues to heal and to cover up his demonic pact – is significant and needs to be unpacked. At the time, the term secret had ancient and medieval connotations of esoteric wisdom and hidden knowledge. Those who

¹ Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (1529), a commentary on Ecclesiasticus 3: 21-25. “No procuren de saber cosas que no cumple saber y que sobrepujan su capacidad ni sean curiosas en escudriñar cosas ocultas deseando saber lo que naturalmente no se alcanza.”

² A.H.N., INQ. 91, exp. 4. “hereje, apóstata, manifiesto relapso, impenitente, obstinado, incorregible, pertinaz, excomulgado, perjurero, blasfemo, judiciario, sortilego, agorero, hechicero, supersticioso, nigromántico, encantador, geomántico, planetario, insolente, audaz, embustero, embelesador, escandaloso, profanador de la Sagrada Escritura, hombre que tiene pacto expreso e implícito con los demonios, y los trata y comunica familiarmente fingiéndose muy experto y entendido en alcanzar secretos y virtudes naturales para curar y sanar graves enfermedades, mezclando e ingiriendo algunas cosas ciertas y verdaderas para poder mejor sembrar sus errores, siendo inventadas semejantes supersticiones y vanas medicinas por el demonio.”

claimed to read the book of nature embarked on the exploration of God's deepest revelations, and if they were not careful – in the eyes of inquisitors – they might traverse into forbidden or even demonic territory.

In the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, Castilian inquisitors targeted several of these seekers of medical secrets. Unlike most of the healers arrested by the Toledo tribunal (common sorceresses and charismatics), they were literate men (usually) who scoured medical and hermetic texts for secrets that they hoped to manipulate to achieve spectacular cures. Often, they were eclectic thinkers who combined old and new systems of knowledge. Inquisitors paid close attention to the books that they possessed, and trial documents indicate that they drew their ideas from a diverse range of texts including medical compendia, books of secrets, magical grimoires, and written prayers. Ten years earlier in nearby Cuenca, for example, Simon López was arrested with a recipe book that contained herbal remedies alongside esoteric symbols and incantations. Ten years before that, in 1590, the priest Jaime Manobel invited suspicion for, among other things, being in possession of a “monstrous codex”³ of superstition, medicine, astrology, and magic which contained recipes to treat dandruff, swelling of the legs, burns, hemorrhoids, ulcers, carbuncles, stomach pains and lice. Textual traditions of secrets had deep roots that stretched back to Greco-Roman antiquity, but the transmission and perception of esoteric knowledge underwent an important shift in the early modern period. There was a rapid expansion of available texts and ideas, but at the same time, anti-superstition initiatives energized moral and political exigence to separate legitimate medicine from illicit and heretical practices. Using inquisitorial trial documentation – including the “books of secrets” that were

³ This evocative phrase, along with a short description of the case can be found in Sebastian Cirac Estopañan, *Los Procesos de Hechicerías en la Inquisición de Castilla la Nueva, (Tribunales de Toledo y Cuenca)* (Madrid, 1942), 23.

sometimes confiscated and bound within trial dossiers – this chapter examines the inquisitorial persecution of learned healers and reconstructs cultural traditions in which they were participating.

Diego Alfonso de Medrano: Magic, Alchemy, and the Distillation of Medicines at Court

Diego Alfonso de Medrano was among the most notorious alchemists tried by the Toledo Inquisition, and his trial demonstrates the difficulties faced by the Inquisition in its effort to separate medical empiricism and the occult at the turn of the seventeenth century. Medrano was a well-connected nobleman from the Riojano capital of Logroño where he had begun his experiments in alchemical medicine. Although trial documents do not reveal where he studied or learned his trade, his approach to making medicines was erudite and steeped in literary alchemical traditions that relied upon a language coded in esoteric emblems, symbols, and allegories to unlock medical secrets. Following this tradition, Medrano's alchemical medicine was interrelated with astrology and magic.

Medrano's 1611 trial was his second encounter with the Inquisition. Prior to his arrest in Madrid, he had already been convicted of *hechicería* in his native Logroño. Unfortunately, the full trial dossiers for that trial have disappeared, but an extant summary (*relación de causa*) can be found in the records of the Suprema.⁴ He was convicted of:

having made many sigils of different metals and many clay and wax figurines of men and women, all pertaining to Santa Maria; and he also made magic circles, invoked demons, and also had baptized the lodestone in company of certain priests including his brother; he had many prohibited books, notebooks, and papers written in his own hand about sciences and forbidden arts, particularly those pertaining to magic, judicial astrology, necromancy, geomancy, sorcery, and diabolical enchantments that have been judged by

⁴ A.H.N. INQ L.835, fol. 244-5 and 264.

calificadores as heretical.⁵

The summary sent to the Suprema also reported that Logroño inquisitors submitted Medrano to torture, both the rack and garrote, forcing him to admit that he had made the sigils, practiced judicial astrology, and possessed forbidden books. After a lengthy trial that included fifty-five deponents, the Inquisition condemned him as a heretic and sentenced him to a harsh punishment – banishment and ten years in the galleys (which for many was a death sentence).⁶ Years later, when Toledo inquisitors wrote to their Riojan counterparts for information about that trial, an inquisitorial familiar hyperbolically replied that “in the field of sorcery, lies, and demonic dealings [Medrano] must be the most notable delinquent in the entire kingdom.”⁷

Medrano ended up serving just five years rowing in the King’s galleys. Around 1606, when he was in Madrid waiting for his next assignment, the Inquisition “with much clemency” decided to commute his galley sentence in exchange for more years of banishment. Soon thereafter (in defiance of his exile), he made his residence in Madrid where he established himself as a practitioner of alchemical medicine and associated with some of the most prominent physicians, apothecaries, and distillers in the capital.

Documentation from Medrano’s trial reveals that he worked on the fringes of a vibrant culture of alchemical medicine that thrived at the Habsburg court.⁸ One prominent deponent who

⁵ Ibid., 264. “de haber hecho muchos siglos de diferentes metales y muchos figures de hombres y mujeres de barro y de cera todo pertenece a la santa maria, y de haber hecho cercos conjuros, invocaciones de demonios y haber bautizado la calamita o piedra iman en compañía de ciertos sacerdotes y uno dellos su hermano y de que tenía muchos libros projibidos y cartapacios y papeles escritos de su propio mano de ciencias y artes prohibido y en particular pertenecientes a la arte mágica, astrología judiciaria y a la nigromancia y de la geomancia, y a muchos hechicerías y diabólicas encantamientos que por los calificadores fueron calificados por heréticos.”

⁶ A.H.N., INQ. 91, exp. 4, 4. “por mucha piedad fue condenado a galeras por diez años y desterrado de mucha parte del reino.”

⁷ A.H.N., INQ. 91, exp. 4, 4. “fue castigado por la inquisición de Logroño y en materia de hechizos, tratos y embustes con el demonio es el más notable delincente que debe de haber en el reino.”

⁸ On alchemy at court see María del Mar Rey Bueno, *Los señores del fuego: destiladores y espagíricos en la corte de los Austrias* (Madrid: Corona Borealis, 2002); Miguel López Pérez, *Asclepio renovado: alquimia y medicina en*

testified on Medrano's behalf was Valerio Forte, Philip III's chief distiller (*destilador mayor*). Forte's family played a key role in the institutionalization of medicinal alchemy in Madrid. His father was the Neapolitan natural philosopher Giovanni Vincenzo Forte whom Philip II had brought to court to oversee the construction of an immense distillation laboratory at El Escorial. Like many Renaissance princes, the Spanish Habsburgs occasionally hired alchemists who sought to transmute base metals into gold, but the crown's primary interest in alchemy was the production of medicinal quintessences. Philip II's alchemical laboratory at El Escorial was one-of-a-kind – its library gathered a vast bibliography of alchemical texts (especially Pseudo-Lull) and its equipment included the twenty-foot tall still called the *torre filosofal* (philosophical tower) that produced up to two hundred pounds of medicinal water per day.⁹ After his father Giovanni Vincenzo returned to Italy in 1591, Valerio was put in charge of the laboratory and under Philip III he oversaw the transfer of alchemical operations to the *Real Botica* (Royal Pharmacy) at the palace of Aranjuez, which historian William Eamon has called “the greatest pharmaceutical laboratory in the world.”¹⁰ The new position of the chief distiller – which Valerio occupied – oversaw two assistants and answered to the king's team of royal physicians. When Valerio retired, the position stayed in the Forte family until 1679.¹¹

When questioned by Medrano's defense advocate in the latter stage of the trial Valerio Forte indicated that he had lent a book on astrology to Medrano for use in his role as tutor to the Duke of Infantado, further establishing Medrano's connections among the noble and scientific

la España moderna (1500-1700) (Madrid: Ediciones Corona Borealis, 2003); William Eamon, “Masters of Fire: Italian Alchemists in the Court of Philip II,” in *Chymia: Science and Nature in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Miguel López Pérez et. al. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), 138-156.

⁹ Jose Manuel Loring Palacios, “Aportación de los destiladores de El Escorial a la fabricación de quintaesencias: materia vegetal empleada en dichas técnicas y un tratado anónimo de destilación (s.XVI) en el ámbito escorialense,” in *La ciencia en el Monasterio del Escorial: Actas del Simposium* (Madrid: Escorial Estudios Superiores, 1992), 597.

¹⁰ William Eamon, “Masters of Fire: Italian Alchemists in the Court of Philip II,” 152

¹¹ Mar Rey Bueno, “Los Destiladores Reales de los Austrias Españoles (1564-1700),” *Azogue* 5 (2007): 108-129.

elite at court, many of whom were Italian. At the time of his arrest, Medrano was also patronized by the Italian-Spanish Duke of Fernandina Pedro de Toledo Osorio. Medrano's wife – a wealthy Sicilian noblewoman – also may have helped him establish connections with the Italian alchemists at Aranjuez. Aside from Forte, two other distillers testified on his behalf and so did Doña Luis Navarro – wife of one of the distillers at the *Real Botica*. He also had medical professionals vouch for him including an apothecary and a prominent physician named Doctor Lara who practiced on San Bernardo Street.¹²

In a written statement submitted to inquisitors, Medrano unleashed a diatribe defending his reputation and disparaging his enemies (whose biased testimony, he insisted, could not be trusted).¹³ Although the prosecutor described him as a *converso* – which added an additional level of suspicion regarding his magical practices – Medrano was adamant that he was an Old Christian from a distinguished noble lineage. His enemies included “anyone from Logroño” and especially his “mortal enemy” Juan de Ibañez whom he accused of committing adultery with his wife.¹⁴ The imbroglio with Ibañez had resulted in a bloody swordfight and criminal charges against Medrano at the Valladolid chancery where a judge ruled that he be banished from the capital.¹⁵ The sentence left him estranged from his wife and longing to return to his prominent role in Madrid. Medrano claimed that the President of the Council of Castile, Pedro de Galeas, arranged for him to receive royal permission to come back to court, but his enemies seized upon

¹² Statements by character witnesses (*abonos*) begin on A.H.N. INQ. 91, exp. 4, 77. Also see Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 68.

¹³ Medrano's full statement has been transcribed by Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 57-60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

¹⁵ Records of this lawsuit have not been preserved, although the archive of the *Real Audiencia y Chancillería* does preserve the writ of enforcement from a separate case brought against him by the cleric Juan de Cabezón Bustamante; A.R.C.V. *Registro de Ejecutorias* 1940/57.

his arrival as an opportunity for extortion, taking his papers and demanding a large payment (that he could not produce) or else face denunciation to authorities.¹⁶

The Inquisition arrested Medrano in February of 1611. The inquisitorial familiar who arrested him, Pedro García, later recalled that when he confronted Medrano in the staircase at the home of the Duke of Infantado, Medrano turned white and had a guilty look on his face. Upon searching him, Garcia found an empty glass phial and the book *Las cien conclusiones y forma de saber de la verdadera destreza fundada en la ciencia* (a work on swordsmanship) by Luís Pacheco de Narváez, indicating that Medrano was likely preparing for a confrontation with his adversaries.¹⁷ García proceeded to arrest Medrano and take him to be incarcerated in Inquisition's prison where he would remain until his formal trial in July.¹⁸

Trial documents include an inventory of the books (and other items) found in Medrano's possession:¹⁹

*Chronografía y repartio de los tiempos*²⁰

A paper entitled "Roles and properties of Balsam"

A printed booklet entitled *Virtudes y propiedades de la quinta esencia*

A letter from Doña Constanza de San Vitores

Some licenses for curing with medicine²¹

¹⁶ Medrano was a somewhat unreliable narrator and there is no corroborating evidence he truly received this permission, although he did carry (seemingly authentic) royal licenses that granted him permission to distill medicines.

¹⁷ Luís Pacheco Navárez, *Las cien conclusiones y forma de saber de la verdadera destreza fundada en la ciencia* (1608).

¹⁸ A.H.N. INQ. 91, exp. 4, 8-9; Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 62.

¹⁹ A.H.N. INQ. 91, exp. 4, 1-6. This list is transcribed in Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 69-72; it re-presented here below, translated and annotated (with some minor corrections).

²⁰ Jerónimo de Chaves, *Chronografía o repertorio de los tiempos* (Sevilla, 1548), broadly a study of meteorological phenomena, notable for its discussion of the Ptolemaic model of the universe and references to cities in the New World by their latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates.

²¹ It is unclear how Medrano obtained these licenses. Historian Mar Rey Bueno has suggested the possibility that Medrano's obtained his licenses through an acquaintanceship with a fellow alchemist who was the nephew of the

A book entitled *Amicus medicorum magistri* by Joannnis Ganniveti²²

Another one entitled *Della summa de secreti Universali in omina materia*²³

Other booklet entitled “Compendia de la nauraleza”

Other booklet entitled “Souverainete contre toutes las maladies”²⁴

A quarto-sized sheet of paper that begins with some prayers to staunch blood flow

Another on precious stones, three pages

Another entitled *Evomni thesaurus*

Another entitled *Il rigimientto de la peste*²⁵

Another which begins *Comentari Vitrioli*

A round alabaster stone

A box with papers full of powders

A lodestone

Another box of powders

Two documents that are licenses to distill waters

Another document of the same

A round box with something that looks like white lead or corrosive sublimate (*albayalde o solimán*)

A paper of saltpeter (*salitre*)

A notebook which begins *Vitriolium*

Another notebook, bound with papers with various powders and medical things

A large box of powders wrapped in papers

royal court physician Juan Gómez de Sanabria, president of the Real Tribunal del Protomedicato; see Mar Rey Bueno, *Inferno: Historia de una biblioteca maldita* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2008).

²² Johannes Gannivetus, *Amicus medicorum* (Lyon, 1496), a treatise on astrological medicine.

²³ Timotheo Rossello, *Della summa de secreti universali in ogni materia* (Venice, 1565).

²⁴ Antoine du Moulin, trans., *Souverainetés contre toutes maladies*, (Lyon, 1582), a translation of excerpts from Marcellus Empiricus' *De medicamentis*, a guidebook of pharmacological preparations.

²⁵ This could be any of a number of Italian plague treatises that circulated in the early-seventeenth century. For contemporary views in Spain see Miguel Martínez de Levia, *Remedios Preservativos y curativos para el tiempo de la peste y otras curiosas experiencias* (Madrid, 1597); Alexandra Parma Cook and Noble David Cook, *The Plague Files: Crisis Management in Sixteenth-Century Seville* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009). Inquisitors later noted that a handwritten prayer was copied into the book.

During Medrano's months of imprisonment, the Inquisition accumulated evidence to prove that his practice of medicinal distillation involved illicit and demonic activities. One early statement was from an apothecary who confessed that Medrano gave him various pieces of contraband to hide while he was imprisoned, including papers, a woman's hair, and a medallion that had symbols and characters on it.²⁶ In late March and early May, Inquisitors sent samples of Medrano's confiscated texts to three separate monasteries for censure. One package was dated March 23 and sent to San Pedro Mártir in Toledo, the second was sent to Fray Hernando de Tobar in San Bernardo on May 2, and the third was sent to Estevan de Oxeda and Rodrigo Nino on May 9. The dossier includes censures offered by the first two monasteries that condemned Medrano's texts as heretical (the third from Fathers Estevan de Oxeda and Rodrigo Nino was either lost or never received).

Both censures condemned Medrano's texts. The first was relatively short, saying that Medrano's writings "speak of sigils and contain much superstition."²⁷ According to the San Pedro Mártir friar who wrote it, one of Medrano's papers "contained an *ensalmo* that seems to indicate an implicit pact with the devil."²⁸ The second censure by Hernando de Tobar was much longer and more detailed.²⁹ Tobar began with an assessment of Medrano's recipes – which he thought to be superstitious – but he also said that theologians should defer to physicians for assessment of their medical properties:

First, all of the large and small notebooks found here (except for two very small ones which I will speak about in particular) seem to be medical recipes judging by what they say and how they look; and I believe and suspect that many of them are false and feigned and do not pertain to the medical arts, and my opinion – speaking about all of them in

²⁶ Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 62.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 73. "tratan de sigilos y tienen mucho de superstición."

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 73. "contiene un ensalmo que parece se funda en un pacto implícito con el demonio."

²⁹ A.H.N. INQ 91, exp. 4, 16-21; I quote from the full censure transcribed in Sagrario Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 241-248.

general – is that learned physicians will examine better than theologians whether or not they have medical faculties because if neither the simples of which these recipes are composed nor their mixture nor composition have natural virtues to heal infirmities for which there are applied it would be clear that they could not obtain [that natural virtue] by artifice nor by the artifice by which they are composed but instead by the devil who is inventor of such vain and superstitious medicines, as Saint Augustine said in *de Doctrina Cristiana*.³⁰

As this passage shows, Tobar’s method for the discernment of superstition was closely aligned with the consensus of most mainstream anti-superstition writers. If medicines produced effects that seemed to cross a threshold of what could have been produced by their natural properties, they necessarily must have been demonic. Also – like many of his theological contemporaries – he placed his trust in academic medicine for the provision of epistemological criteria for the discernment of what constituted “natural” healing properties.

Tobar then turned his attention to a large notebook entitled *Experiencias diversas de medicina y cirugía* (Diverse Trials in Medicine and Surgery), which he thought contained an especially egregious doctrinal error. On a page sewn into the end of the notebook he reported finding the following idea:

That man was created of 8 substances, 1st the stars, the first material, 2nd water from the sea, 3rd the rocks of the earth, 4th the clouds of the sky, 5th the winds, 6th the sun, 7th the moon, 8th by the divine work of God to form man in his image and blow the breath of life on his face.³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 241. “Primeramente todos los cuadernos que aquí hay grandes y pequeños excepto dos muy pequeños que hablaré en particular parece que son recetas de medicina según lo que suenan y dicen y creo o sospecho que muchas de ellas son falsas y fingidas y no son del arte médica, y me parece hablando en general de todas, que los médicos sabios examinarán mejor que los teólogos si son o no son de la facultad médica porque si los simples de que se componen estas recetas ni su mixtura y composición tienen virtud natural para remedio de las enfermedades a que son aplicadas cosa llana es que no la pueden adquirir ni tomar del artificio ni del artifice que las compuso y ordenó, sino de la operación del demonio que es el inventor de semejantes medicinas vanas y supersticiosas y así dijo San Agustín Lib. 2 de *Doctrina Cristiana*.

³¹ Ibid., 242. “el hombre fue criado de 8 sustancias, la 1^a de los astros, de primera materia, la 2^a del agua del mar, la 3^a de las piedras de la tierra, la 4^a de las nubes del cielo, la 5^a de los vientos, la 6^a del sol, 7^a de la Luna, 8^a por la obra divina de Dios de formararlo a su semejanza y soplar en su cara influencia de vida.”

He concluded that this pronouncement regarding the composition of the human body was “erroneous and heretical because it expressly contradicted Sacred Scripture.”³² He also reported that in the same notebook he also found another recipe that said, in contrast, that “man was made of three substances that are body, soul and spirit,” which he thought was also erroneous and heretical because it contradicted teachings of the Council of Nicaea that said that man consisted only of body and soul.³³ Nevertheless – Tobar asserted – possession of these heretical texts did not necessarily make Medrano a heretic because, he said, “I have suspicion that this miserable prisoner does not uphold or know or understand that this doctrine is contrary and repugnant to the Catholic faith, and if this is true he is not a heretic.”³⁴

Tobar reserved stronger condemnation for a second item from Medrano’s inventory – a small notebook that he said contained:

geomancy and judicial astrology [for divining] births, questions, and judgments made by points, lines, and figures in order to discover and know secrets and the occult things that depend on the will of God and on free will of man, whether good or bad, from the future or the past or the present.³⁵

For Tobar, this notebook made Medrano “vehemently suspicious” of a demonic pact, since he evidently used this book to obtain knowledge that could only have been derived from the cunning of demons rather than any natural knowledge.

³² Ibid, 242. “Esta doctrina o receta es errónea y herética porque expresamente contradice a la Santa Escritura.” He cited Genesis 2:7, “formavit igitur dominus deus hominem de limo terre.”

³³ Ibid., 242. “Luego pone otra receta y dice que el hombre consta de tres sustancias que son cuerpo, anima y espíritu.”

³⁴ Ibid., 242. “tengo sospecha que este miserable reo no le consta ni sabe ni entiende que esta doctrina es contraria y repugnante a la fe católica y siendo así ni es hereje.”

³⁵ Ibid., 243. “lo que este contiene y trata es geomancia y arte judiciaria de nacimientos, interrogaciones, juicios hechos por puntos líneas y figuras para descubrir y saber cosas ocultas y secretas que dependen de la voluntad de Dios o del libre albedrío del hombre así de sucesos buenos o malos, o de lo futuro como de lo pasado y presente.”

The final item that Tobar indicated as evidence of demonic heresy was a four-page document that he described as being “in such bad shape that they can barely be read in certain places due to bleeding ink, fading, and torn pages.”³⁶ The document described a form of lapidary magic that instructed how to engrave words and symbols into stones to produce miracles. The words and names in these practices allegedly derived from an esoteric reading of the Old Testament, but Tobar noted that many of them did not belong to any known language. The belief that stones might produce miracles, he thought, constituted geomancy, which was cause for vehement suspicion of heresy. Additionally, he alleged that prayers included in these pages (which were supposed to activate the stones) were likely demonic invocations.³⁷

After receiving Tobar’s censure, the Inquisition’s prosecuting attorney Doctor Juan Rincón composed the “publication” that formally accused Medrano of heresy based upon thirty-one allegations. Most of the allegations related to the heretical statements that Tobar uncovered in his censure. Rincón also accused Medrano of:

finding and forging certain sigils and medallions of silver and other metals by night, [upon which] secretly with observations of the planets, extraordinary figures, letters, and characters [he put] unknown names of demons and other significant superstitions that he had foresworn and abjured; yet the accused prisoner had reiterated and returned to make the same seals, sigils, and medallions with the same figures, letters, and characters, and one in particular that was found in his possession had on one part a figure with a crown, a knight on a flying eagle with a scepter in one hand and three arrows in the other, and on another part a rectangle in the form of a chess board divided into squares upon which was written certain letters in Arabic and Hebrew and other hidden characters and names of demons and certain words of Sacred Scripture around the outside, and he always had this medallion in his possession and while he was in jail he spoke of the effects that [the medallions] had, and because of this the accused prisoner has been and is a heretic for having made and used such sigils and medallions.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid., 244. “harto mal tratadas que penas se pueden leer todas por estar en algunas partes la letra consumida y gastada y el papel rotpido.”

³⁷ Ibid., 244-247.

³⁸ Ibid., 229-230. “Infundía y forjaba ciertos sellos sigilos y medallas de plata y diferentes metales de noche y secretamente con observaciones de los planetas, con extraordinarias figuras, letras y caracteres estaban incomprendidos nombres de demonios y otras significaciones supersticiosas y habiéndolas anatematizado y abjurado

Furthermore, Rincón accused Medrano of possessing several papers that contained various forbidden symbols and formulas that “mixed the sacred and the profane.”³⁹ One of them contained an *ensalmo*, which Rincón alleged was a sign of an implicit demonic pact. Among Rincón’s conclusions was that Medrano:

has been and is a great liar, enchanter, and *hechicero* who has had and has the custom and office of going from place to place getting money by deceiving the ignorant, selling drugs, stones, waters, and other mixed and fallacious medicines and deceptively feigning to make simples and compounds for prodigious healing effects and protections from grave diseases, all against his majesty’s laws and pragmatics, making recipes and curing without being examined nor having license or learning for it.⁴⁰

As Rincón’s accusations demonstrate, the Inquisition saw Medrano as a charlatan who reprehensibly mixed medical practices with deceptive (and demonic) magic and religious invocations.

After inquisitors read Rincón’s formal accusations to him, Medrano had the opportunity to present his defense. In response to the charge that he had misused astrology and created illicit sigils, he said that he had not engaged in such practices since he left Logroño. He argued that doing so was unthinkable since he no longer even had the necessary astrological texts. Instead, he attempted to shift the blame to the royal math tutor – a man named Carmona – whom he

después acá el dicho reo acusado ha reiterado y vuelto a hacer los mismos ellos sigilos y medallas con las mismas figuras letras y caracteres y en especial se halló en su poder uno que por la una parte tiene una figura con corona, caballera en una águila volando, en la una mano un cetro y en la otra tres saetas y en la otra parte un cuadrángulo en forma de ajedrez dividido en casas y en ellas escrito ciertas letras en arábigo y hebreo y otras caracteres incógnitos y nombres de demonios y alrededor puestas y abiertas ciertas palabras de la Sagrada Escritura, la cual medalla siempre ha traído consigo y otras muchas que después que estuvo preso ha hecho diciéndoles los efectos que tienen, por lo cual el dicho reo acusado ha sido y es hereje en haber hecho y usado de los dichos sigilos y medallas.”

³⁹ Ibid., 235.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 235-236. “ha sido y es tan gran embustero, embelesador y hechicero que ha tenido y tiene por trato y oficio andar por los lugares sacando dineros, engañando a la gente de poco saber, vendiendo drogas, piedras, aguas y otras medicinas sofisticadas y mezcladas engañosamente fingiendo ser simples y compuestos para efectos prodigiosos de sanidad, preservaciones de graves enfermedades todo contra leyes y pragmáticas de su majestad, haciendo recetas y curando sin ser examinado ni tener ciencia ni licencia para ello.”

accused of being an idle meddler who had the books to perform judicial astrology. Medrono also dismissed the accusation that he had performed lapidary magic:

In regards to the prosecutor's accusation about the precious stones with names [written on them], I never had them in my possession until [a man named] Vargas showed me them and left them for me, but I have not been able to use them – although I have wanted to – because I do not understand them and because I am not a lapidary nor do I know how to sculpt the names...⁴¹

He had spoken about the stones, he added, with the cantor from the royal chapel who agreed that they were not superstitious.

It was Medrano's response to the final accusation – about whether man was made of three substances (or more) – that elicited important revelations into his intellectual approach as a healer and alchemical distiller. Medrano maintained that the statements he made in his notebooks about the three substances of man – body, mind, and soul – was really an alchemical cipher. As a structure of knowledge, alchemy was intentionally enigmatic, and Medrano described how it was necessary to pull back multiple layers of meaning in order to arrive at true knowledge about the quintessence that could be used to transmute metals and produce medicines. Any description in his notebooks about the composition of Homo (man), he said, truly referred to the Philosophers Stone, and “body, mind, and spirit” stood for the sulfur, mercury, and salt. This new triad of sulfur, mercury, and salt, however, was itself a cipher. The true substances that made the Philosopher's Stone, he said, were gold, antimony, and quicksilver. Calling the three substances body, mind, and spirit – according to Medrano – was a convention used by many authors, and he named a wide range of authorities to bolster this argument:

⁴¹ Ibid., 237. “Lo que el fiscal me acusa de las piedras preciosas con los nombres yo jamás las tuve en mi poder ni vi hasta que Vargas me las enseñó y dejó y no he podido yo usar de ellas aunque hubiera querido porque no lo entendía y porque yo no era lapidario ni sé cómo se han de esculpir los nombres...”

All of the books by the philosophers agree that the stone consists of body, soul, and spirit, which is composed of the said minerals, gold, antimony, and mercury or quicksilver, reduced in liquors in order to unite and mix them, and the authors of this are, Ramon Llull, Johannes de Rupescissa, Arnau de Vilanova, Morieno,⁴² Albertus Magnus, Avicenna, Al-Razi, Aristotle (*De Perfecto magisterio*),⁴³ Joanes and Saalo Olando,⁴⁴ and the authors get those three substances from the authors of *Teatrum Chemicum*, *Turba Philosophorum*, *Margarita preciosa*, and Roger Bacon; Johannes Anglicus and Andreas Libavius the doctor put certain hieroglyphics on the Philosopher's Stone of body, soul, and spirit, painting a crowned king, and Geber the philosopher speaks of this; all of them write in a way that is veiled and covered under diverse names.⁴⁵

In this discussion, Medrano also mentioned a technique that he found in a contemporary book of secrets by Isabella Cortese that substituted lead for antimony.⁴⁶ He then elaborated even further, describing the eight alchemical operations and the substances (including medicines) that they produced.⁴⁷ The final goal, of course, was to arrive at the final substance “with the property to transmute metals and human bodies.”⁴⁸ These operations, Medrano explained, also had esoteric names, which the Inquisition wrongfully interpreted as being a heretical statement about the composition of the human body. All of this, Medrano said, “explains the two ciphers of the

⁴² Morieno is a somewhat enigmatic figure in the history of alchemy. In 1559, Gulielum Guiliard published a book in Paris entitled *De transfiguratione metallorum, et occulta, summagu antiquorum Philosophorum medicina, Libellus, nusquam hactenus in lucem editus* by Morienus Romanus, who he described as “the Hermit of Jerusalem.” According to Guiliard, the text was prepared for the Umyyad prince Kalid (d. 704) and translated from Arabic by Robertus Castrensis in 1182. Guiliard's text was translated into English and edited by Lee Stavenhagen, *A Testament of Alchemy* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1974).

⁴³ A thirteenth-century work misattributed to Aristotle.

⁴⁴ This is the only unidentifiable author that Medrano refers to, possibly due to an imprecise transcription by the Inquisition's notary.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 238. “todos los libros de los filósofos concordan con que el lapis consta de cuerpo, ánima y espíritu, que se compone de los dichos minerales, oro, antimonio y azogue o argento vivo llamado mercurio, reducidos en licuores para poderlos unir y mezclar, autores de esto son Raimundo Lulio, Joanes de Rupescissa, Arnaldo de Villanova, Morieno, Alberto Magno, Avicena, Rasis, Aristóteles, de perfecto magisterio, Joanes y Saalo Olando, y los autores que tratan los tres cuerpos del Theatrum Chemicum y la turba philosophorum y margarita preciosa, Rogerio Bacon, Joanes Anlicus y Angreas Libabius médico, pone ciertos hieroglíficos del lapis philosophorum de cuerpo y ánima y espíritu pintando un rey coronado, y Geber filósofo lo trata y todos lo escriben velado y encubierto debajo de diversos nombres.

⁴⁶ On Cortese see Meredith Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*

⁴⁷ Muñoz Calvo notes that most alchemical writers only included seven: calcination, solution, separation, conjunction, putrefaction, coagulation, and confection of the stone; see Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 76.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 240. “con propiedad de transmutar los metales y los cuerpos humanos.”

Philosopher's Stone under the name of 'man' and not 'man' as in human, which only consists of body and soul."⁴⁹

The final stage of the trial included Medrano's defense and sentencing. The strategy of Medrano and his advocate was to bolster his respectability. They submitted a set of questions to a character witnesses that focused on Medrano's noble lineage (and therefore lack of Jewish heritage) and his connections with Madrid's scientific elite (especially Valerio Forte).⁵⁰ Despite the efforts of Medrano's influential friends, inquisitors condemned Medrano and punished him with a fine of thirty thousand maravedís, two hundred lashes, and perpetual reclusion in a hospital or monastery.⁵¹

“The Polemic of Spanish Science,” Alchemical Medicine, and the Circulation of Secrets

The Medrano case presents an extraordinary example of alchemical healing and inquisitorial intervention during the early-seventeenth century. The case was unearthed by Sagrario Muñoz Calvo in his 1977 book *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, but I argue that it is worth revisiting. Much has changed in the historiography of early modern Spanish medicine in the past four decades, and it is now pertinent to ask new questions of the case. In addition to his discussion Medrano, Muñoz Calvo's research examined a vast number of inquisitorial trials against alchemists, astrologers, and many others who worked on the fringes of Spain's early modern scientific cultures. He argued that such cases comprised a patent example of the Inquisition's negative influence on early modern science and provided concrete evidence for why Spain trailed its European neighbors in innovation during the Scientific Revolution.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 240.

⁵⁰ A.H.N. INQ. 91, exp. 4, 77.

⁵¹ Ibid., 90.

While Muñoz Calvo's archival work remains extremely valuable, his thesis should be updated for the twenty-first century.

Muñoz Calvo's work was an engagement with the so-called "polemic of Spanish science" which had framed and polarized most twentieth-century debates regarding the history of science and medicine. At the center of this polemic was the assumption that Spanish science was backwards and delayed in comparison with its European neighbors, largely due to the stultifying influence of repressive Catholicism. The roots of polemic can be traced back as far back as the seventeenth century when *novatores* (the proponents of chemical medicine) complained that Spanish medicine suffered due to the intransigence of Galenist traditionalists, but it grew more antagonistic in the eighteenth century when Spain came to be seen as an anti-modern foil in the eyes of some Europeans and became even more Manichean in the nineteenth century, when it was co-opted for debates between Spanish liberals and conservatives. In the past decade or so, however, scholars of Spanish science and medicine have made a concerted effort to move "beyond the black legend."⁵² Case studies like the trial of Alonso Medrano can be useful for charting new historiographical territory and testing emerging macro-narratives.

One pillar of the black legend polemic of Spanish medicine was the idea that the influence of dogmatic Catholicism during the reign of Philip II prevented Spaniards from

⁵² Víctor Navarro Brotóns and William Eamon, eds, *Más allá de la Leyenda Negra: España y la revolución científica = Beyond the Black Legend: Spain and the Scientific Revolution* (Valencia: Universitat de València, Instituto de Historia de la Ciencia y Documentación López Piñero, 2007); also see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Iberian Science in the Renaissance: Ignored How Much Longer?" *Perspectives on Science* 12, no. 1 (2004): 86-124; William Eamon, "The Difference that Made Spain, The Difference that Spain Made," in *Medical Cultures of the Early Modern Spanish Empire*, ed. John Slater et al. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 231-244; John Slater and María Luz López Terrada, "Being Beyond: The Black Legend and How We Got Over It," *History of Science* (2017): 1-19.

adopting Paracelsian chemical medicine. As historian Allen Debus notoriously asserted in his article “Paracelsus and the Delayed Scientific Revolution in Spain: A Legacy of Philip II”:

With the attempt to prevent the importation of suspected foreign literature, the decline of universities, and an inherent resistance to innovation, it is not surprising that there were few Spanish followers of Paracelsus in this period.

He concluded that:

It seems certain that Philip II’s effort to maintain Spain as a Roman Catholic country affected the development of Spanish science.⁵³

Somewhat ironically, Debus rested his argument upon earlier research by José María López Piñero, who was perhaps the twentieth century’s greatest defender of Spanish science and medicine.⁵⁴ Over the course of a productive career, López Piñero worked tirelessly to rehabilitate Spain’s role in the larger European Scientific Revolution; he charted the diffusion of early modern Spanish science in Europe, examined the imperial discoveries of the New World, and he was a champion of the idea that Spanish *novatores* of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries were among Europe’s most sophisticated medical theorists. López Piñero’s paradigm, however, was built upon the idea that the *novatores* revitalized Spanish medicine after a period of “collapse and decadence” which ruined “the advanced position achieved by Spanish science during the sixteenth century.”⁵⁵ This overarching narrative proved fruitful for spurring new research into Spanish medicine at the turn of the eighteenth century, but it also reinforced traditional notions of Habsburg decline and Bourbon renewal that too often portrayed the reigns

⁵³ Allen Debus, "Paracelsus and the delayed scientific revolution in Spain: A legacy of Philip II," in *Reading the Book of Nature: The other Side of the Scientific Revolution* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1998), 149, 160.

⁵⁴ José María López Piñero, "Química y medicina en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII. La influencia de Paracelso," *Cuadernos de Historia de la Medicina Española* 11 (1972): 17-54.

⁵⁵ Quoted in José Pardo Tomás and Álvaro Martínez Vidal, “Medicine and the Spanish *Novator* Movement: Ancients vs. Moderns, and Beyond,” in *Más allá de la Leyenda Negra*, 324.

of Philip II and Philip III as a morality play in which obscurantist religious forces stifled curiosity and innovation.

Newer research has made a strong historiographical push to rehabilitate the reign of Philip II as a moment of scientific flourishing in Spain. Historians such as Miguel López Pérez and Mar Rey Bueno have pushed to overturn the thesis that Philip II was somehow responsible for delaying the Scientific Revolution by turning Spanish thought inward and away from Paracelsus.⁵⁶ While it is true that Spanish writers engaged less with Paracelsus than some of their European counterparts, López Pérez has shown that he was not unknown among Spanish medical theorists. Royal surgeon Juan Frago discussed Paracelsus in his popular work *Cirurgia Universal*, and López Pérez has found references to Paracelsus in several other Spanish works published during the reign of Philip II.⁵⁷ As López Pérez's work makes clear, it is somewhat unfair to use Paracelsus as a shibboleth for the judgment of a writer's participation in "modernity." As several historians have noted, Paracelsianism has served as a historiographical emblem that has sometimes outweighed the influence of Paracelsus the thinker.⁵⁸ Perhaps – as López Pérez has argued – Paracelsian thought was never particularly influential in Spain because the Peninsula already had a deeply entrenched culture of alchemy and distillation due to the legacy of medieval thinkers such as Arnold of Villanova, (pseudo) Ramón Llull, and Johannes de

⁵⁶ Miguel López Pérez, "Spanish Paracelsus Revisited and Decontaminated," *Azogue* 7 (2013): 339-365; Mar Rey Bueno, "If They Are Not Pages That Cure, They Are Pages That Teach To Cure: The Diffusion of Chemical Remedies in Early Modern Spain," in *Bridging Traditions: Alchemy, Chemistry, and Paracelsian Practices in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Karen Hunger Parshall et al. (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2015), 133-158; Rey Bueno, "Los Paracelsistas Españoles: medicina química en la España moderna," in *Más allá de la Leyenda Negra: España y la revolución científica*, ed. Victor Navarro Brotóns and William Eamon (Valencia: Instituto de Historia de la Ciencia y Documentación, 2007), 41-56.

⁵⁷ López Pérez, "Spanish Paracelsus Revisited and Decontaminated," 360.

⁵⁸ Pamela H. Smith, "Paracelsus as Emblem," *Bulletin for the History of Medicine* 68 (1994): 314-22; Stephen Pumfrey, "The Spagyric Art; or the Impossible Work of Separating Pure from Impure Paracelsianism: A Historiographical Analysis," in Ole Peter Grell, ed., *Paracelsus: The Man and His Reputation, His Ideas and Their Transformation* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 21- 51.

Rupescissa.⁵⁹ This newer research has shown that the reign of Philip II was, if anything, a boon for alchemy and medicinal distillation. Mar Rey Bueno has argued that the reputation of sixteenth-century Spanish medicine should be revived in the same way that López Piñero rehabilitated the seventeenth-century *novatores*.

This line of research has been extremely productive in recovering positive developments sixteenth-century science and medicine, but it also risks reproducing the dialectics of the centuries-old “polemic of Spanish science.” The *leyenda rosada* (rose legend), of course, distort our understanding of early modern Spain as much as the black legend. One of the most important accomplishments of recent historiography has been to integrate Spain into larger European narratives and to show that Spain was not so different from its neighbors, but historians must also be careful not to simply reproduce the whiggish positivism that has plagued historians of English science.

The most exciting research recent research on Spanish science and medicine has been produced by historians who have worked to complicate notions of progressivism and regressivism through careful examination of scientific and medical cultures that involved political struggles, internal contradictions, and competing trajectories. José Pardo Tomás, for instance, has shown that the effect of inquisitorial censorship on Spanish science was real but often oblique and ineffective.⁶⁰ Returning to the example of alchemical medicine, María Luz López Terrada, for instance, has examined the fascinating example of Llorenç Coçar who held Europe’s first academic post dedicated to chemical medicine at the University of Valencia

⁵⁹ López Pérez, “Spanish Paracelsus Revisited and Decontaminated,” 365.

⁶⁰ José Pardo Tomás, “Censura inquisitorial y lectura de libros científicos: una propuesta de replanteamiento.” *Revista electrónica de Historia Moderna* 4, no. 9 (2003): 1-18.

(called “The Chair of *Remediis secretis*”).⁶¹ Philip II named Coçar the Protomedico of the Kingdom of Valencia but he (and his medical theories) experienced constant turmoil and conflict.

Albeit a single case study, an examination of the Medrano trial confirms and contextualizes recent insights into the history of Spanish science, medicine, and alchemy at the turn of the seventeenth century. One phenomenon that the case highlights is the diffusion of alchemical ideas among diverse interpersonal networks. Testimony taken from Medrano and his supporters offer first-hand accounts of the interpersonal networks of medical empiricism in Philip III’s Madrid. In particular, the case presents an extraordinary example of Spanish alchemical knowledge and the production of distilled medicines. As Medrano revealed in his *audencia*, his expertise drew upon a deep body of medieval hermetic literature from the Peninsula (Pseudo-Llull, Rupescissa, Vilanova), the broader Mediterranean (Morieno, Avicenna, Al-Razi, Geber, Pseudo-Aristotle), and Northern Europe (Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Johannes Anglicus, Geber, *Teatrum Chemicum*, *Turba Philosophorum*, *Margarita preciosa*). He also indicated that he was aware of the work of his contemporary, Andreas Libavius, who was among the most important seventeenth-century alchemical writers in Europe. The trial’s extended discussion of the composition of the human body also demonstrate that (like Libavius) his views were aligned with European Paracelsians who saw sulfur, salt, and mercury as the *tria prima*.⁶²

Another development highlighted by the Medrano trial is the circulation of “books of secrets.” In the mid-sixteenth century, there was a rapid proliferation of these so-called books of

⁶¹ The Making of Chemical Medicines in Valencia during the Sixteenth Century: Llorenç Coçar

⁶² See Bruce Moran, *Andreas Libavius and the Transformation of Alchemy: Separating Chemical Cultures with Polemical Fire* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2007).

secrets, which became popular throughout Europe. The works dealt with an array of prescriptions, recipes, and advice concerning medicine and other practical arts. The genre was not entirely new, but had its roots in Hellenistic culture in works such as the pseudo-Aristotelian *secretum secretorum* and the Hermetic corpus. In the Middle Ages, interest in both practical and occult secrets was sustained by great polymaths such as Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, and pseudo-Llull who produced their own books of secrets. New editions of classical and medieval books of secrets were published during the Renaissance, but they waned in popularity, supplanted by new books of secrets that made quite different claims. As historian Isabelle Pantin has noted, sixteenth-century books of secrets “did not profess to transmit the treasure of a very ancient wisdom, but to disclose the discoveries recently made by resourceful practitioners (alchemists, natural magicians, pharmacists, and empirical doctors) who dedicated their lives to the great ‘hunt’ after the secrets of nature, travelling, inquiring and making experiments without respite.”⁶³ Medrano consulted at least two of these recently published books of secrets - Timotheo Rossello’s *Della summa de’secreti universali* and *The Secrets of Lady Isabella Cortese*.

The study of books of secrets provides one of the most promising avenues for “going beyond the black legend.” Until relatively recently, the early modern fascination with secrets had mostly been overlooked by modern historians. In 1994, however, William Eamon brought these works to historians’ attention with the publication of his monumental work, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, in which he argued that the body of empirical knowledge presented in books of secrets provided a basis, and even a methodological model, for the new Baconian science of

⁶³ Isabelle Pantin, “John Hester’s translations of Leonardo Fioravanti: The Literary Career of a London Distiller,” in *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 159.

the seventeenth century.⁶⁴ At the center of Eamon's narrative was the physician and alchemist Girolamo Ruscelli, a self-styled professor of secrets who lived and worked in Spanish-controlled Naples. His book of secrets, published under the pseudonym Alessio Piemontese in 1555, advertised itself as a very useful work that included remedies unknown to doctors, recipes for cosmetics used by the Turks, exotic perfumes and oils, dyeing techniques, tricks of the metalworking trades, and alchemical secrets. It was an enormous success, republished in more than a hundred early modern editions, including translations into French, German, Dutch, English, Spanish, Polish and Latin.⁶⁵ Twelve years later, in 1567, Ruscelli published a new book carrying his own name, in which he revealed that the secrets of Alessio were actually discovered experimentally in an "academy of secrets" that he had helped found in Naples, which Eamon argued can be seen as an important predecessor to later scientific societies.⁶⁶

A close reading of Spanish authors of books of secrets shows that their goals and sensibilities largely matched their counterparts in Italy. Alonso López de Corella's *Secretos de philosophia, astrologia y medicina* was a wide-ranging divulgation of natural philosophy and practical knowledge that drew from Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, Aristotle, Seneca, Pliny, the Bible, and many other sources. Paraphrasing the Book of Wisdom 7:2, he praised the attainment of knowledge saying that "compared to science, all the world's riches are but a fistful of sand."⁶⁷ López de Corella's search for knowledge led him to pursue natural explanations for occult

⁶⁴ William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 140. On the translation of Piemontese into Spanish see Mar Rey Bueno, "Primeras ediciones en castellano de los libros secretos de Alejo Piamontes," *Pecia Complutense* 2 (2005): 26-35.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 134-167; also see William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Books, 2010).

⁶⁷ Alonso López de Corella, *Secretos de philosophia, astrologia y medicina y de las quatro mathematicas ciencias. collegidos de muchos y diversos auctores, y divididos en cinco quinquagenas de preguntas* (1547), ii.

processes that other writers would have described as demonic.⁶⁸ As shown in Chapter 3, he preferred to see the cures of *saludadores* as natural, deriving from a unique physical complexion endowed to them by the position of the stars at their birth. Likewise, he doubted that any preternatural force was behind a popular trick performed by *ensalmadores* who separated a reed in half and claimed to join it back together using prayer.⁶⁹ He argued that natural vapors caused this mysterious attraction and that *ensalmadores* who claimed that their prayers had the virtue to mend reeds (and to heal) were guilty of superstition. Regarding alchemy, he subscribed to the theory that all metals were made of sulfur and quicksilver and that these elements could be manipulated to change the composition of a metal, but he said that he was skeptical of alchemists who claimed that they had successfully created gold.⁷⁰

While Italian professors of secrets have received the most attention, Eamon's most recent work has placed them within a larger Circum-Mediterranean cultural sphere that included Barcelona, Madrid, and Valencia along with Naples, Rome, and Venice. In a recent article Eamon focused on Italian alchemists drawn to Philip II's court, especially Leonardo Fioravanti who came from Naples to benefit the king with his "new way of healing."⁷¹ Fioravanti's story offered a window into the intrigues and controversies surrounding the production of alchemical medicine in Madrid. As evidenced by Philip II's invitation, alchemical medicine had strong supporters at court, but Fioravanti was ultimately pushed away from court by Protomedicato officials who blocked him from practicing and pushed him back to Italy after a single year because he did not have the requisite degree from a Spanish university. Eamon's article

⁶⁸ On the relationship between Spanish books of secrets and demonology see José Pardo Tomás, "Diablos y Diablaturas" in *El Diablo en la edad moderna*, ed. María Tausiet et al. (Madrid: Marcel Pons, 2004), 297-323.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, xxi(v).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, xxi(v).

⁷¹ Eamon, "Masters of Fire: Italian Alchemists in the Court of Philip II," 143.

illuminates the competing factions in the Spanish medical community in Madrid. The Medrano case offers another perspective into the same Italo-Hispanic medical community studied by Eamon. Medrano's ally Valerio Forte was the son of Giovanni Vincenzo Forte, who Philip II appointed to replace Fioravanti.

By focusing on medical secrets and their practitioners, Madrid may be seen to more closely resemble cities like London that have traditionally been seen as the progenitors of the Scientific Revolution. Historians of English science have been particularly productive in using books of secrets to investigate a broader landscape of early modern science, perhaps most notably in the 2007 book, *The Jewel House*, which used a 1594 English book of secrets by the same name by Hugh Plat as a point of entry into a panoramic examination of experimenters, instrument makers, and medical practitioners in Elizabethan London.⁷² While a study of equal scope has not yet been performed in Spain, sixteenth-century Madrid can likewise be seen as a magnet for empirical practitioners. These practitioners, however, need to be placed in their specific cultural context, a context that included Counter-Reformation Catholicism and the Inquisition. One way of approaching the relationship between empiricism and religion – which has only received sparse historiographical attention⁷³ – is to study the use of recipe books and grimoires.

Recipe Books and Grimoires

⁷² Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁷³ The historian who has done the most work in this area is Monserrat Cabré; see Cabré "Las prácticas de la salud en el ámbito doméstico: las recetas como textos de mujeres (s. XIV-XVII)," in *La mujer en la ciencia: historia de una desigualdad* (Lincom: Europa, 2011), 25-41; Cabré, "Keeping Beauty Secrets in Early Modern Iberia," in *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800*, ed. Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 167-191.

Unlike printed books of secrets that were written by elite doctors and humanists, manuscript recipe books more closely reflect the empirical knowledge of society more generally. They were also intended for private use, evading the rigorous inquisitorial and state censorship procedures to which printed books of secrets had to adhere. Some of Medrano's notebooks would likely have belonged to this category, but they were not preserved in his trial dossier. Others have survived and they were often diverse compilations that combined practical, medical, and magical knowledge. Some – which could be referred to as grimoires – reflect attempts to compile ancient esoteric knowledge. Overall, early modern recipe books comprise a unique source for understanding how healing knowledge was collected, shared, and transferred.

Before turning to the recipe books deemed illicit by the Inquisition, it is useful to first examine a more typical example, described in the catalog of the *Biblioteca Nacional de España* as “Recipes and Listings for Stews, Jams, Scents, Waters, Cosmetics, Tanning Oil for Gloves, Unguents, and Medicines for Many Illnesses.”⁷⁴ It dates from the early-seventeenth century and was the work of a few hands, perhaps belonging to a family of urban artisans. In addition to the items listed in the title, the book also presented two *ensalmos*. One is entitled “A Prayer to Saint Anthony Against Worms” – a standard formulaic prayer in Latin⁷⁵ – and it was accompanied by a sad note documenting that “my sister Francisca Março died on August twenty third, the day of San Ceferino, after getting sick on August nineteenth, the day of San Luís Obispo, 1615.”⁷⁶ The other *ensalmo* is much stranger.⁷⁷ It was prefaced with a fantastical tale of miraculous provenance. According to the text, highway robbers stopped a man who was traveling from

⁷⁴ BN, MSS 6058, “Recetas y memorias para guisados, confituras, olores, aguas, afeites, adobos de guantes, üngentos y medicinas para muchas enfermedades.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 117v.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 115(v)-116.

Barcelona to Monserrat and decapitated him on December 14, 1611. Then, four days later a gentleman found the head and it asked to be taken to Barcelona to see a confessor. The gentleman complied, and after returning to Barcelona the head confessed and died. Upon searching his (the head's) doublet, the gentleman found a prayer:

God my savior of the world, save me Holy Mary, preserve my life against all of my enemies, pray for me and for all sinners, for your precious son, I commend my soul and my body, queen of angels, crown of virtues, help me in my final hour go to dwell in paradise⁷⁸

The prayer is then followed by a description of “all of the virtues” that he who carries this prayer will enjoy:

You will not die by heart disease or by rabies, nor will you suffer an ignoble death on the battlefield but instead you will vanquish your enemies; and if any person happens to be possessed by demons, put [the prayer] on his head and he will immediately be free; and if anyone is in labor, doing the same will make her give birth; and you can be certain that forty days before you die you will see the face of Our Mother the Virgin; and it is approved by the Inquisition and it was found in the sepulcher of Jesus, pulled out of some linens.⁷⁹

While it is possible that the inquisitors may have approved of the *ensalmo*, they probably would not have accepted the extraordinary tale or the boastful claims about its use. The presence of the *ensalmo*, however, does offer an insight into the ways in which early modern recipe books integrated religious and magical healing alongside medicine and empirical practices.

⁷⁸ Ibid. “Dios mio Salvador del mundo salvame santa maria, avidame sobre todos los enemigos, ruega por mi y por todos los pecadores a tu precioso hijo encomiendo mi anima y mi cuerpo, reina de los angeles corona de virtudes ayudame en mi postrimera hora para que vaya a la morada del paraíso.”

⁷⁹ Ibid. “No morira de mal de corazón ni mal de rabia ni súpitamente ni en batalla sino antes seara vencedor de sus enemigos y si algunas personas estuvieren en demoniada pongansela en la cabeza y al punto sera libre y si alguna estuviere de paro haciendo lo mismo paría luego y tengan por cierto que cuarenta días antes de mueran verán la cara de la virgen nuestra señora esta aprobada por a inquisicion y fue hallada en el santo sepulcro de jesus halen en unos paños penetrables.”

A somewhat more heterodox approach to healing recipes can be found in the manuscript carried by a man named Simon Pedro López who was investigated by the Cuenca tribunal of the Inquisition in 1600.⁸⁰ After he was denounced by one of his neighbors, the Inquisition arrested López and confiscated his recipe book. The handwritten book has been preserved in the trial dossier. It contained mostly herbal remedies and practical instructions. To cure a wound, for instance, it instructs that “the extract of a *siempreviva*⁸¹ spread on a fresh wound closes and heals it; the same is true for the extract made of the stems of carnations.”⁸² It also contained Celestine remedies for women – herbs recommended to mend maidenheads, make breasts firmer, and to cure *mal de madre*. Interestingly, it also mentioned a trans-Atlantic product – tobacco – saying that that “it is marvelous” when taken through the nose to purge the head of phlegm. Other remedies included religious and magical elements. One was a simple *ensalmo*. Another consisted of words that were to be carried around the neck as an amulet. Another recipe assured the reader that powders made of laurel, “drunk in white wine before going to bed makes you dream things that are true and good.”⁸³ The pages that concerned inquisitors the most, however, contained a long invocation with strange symbols (perhaps in cipher). Censures written by consultants opined that this was clear evidence of superstition, but presiding inquisitors were content with confiscating the recipe book and warning López to avoid vain prayers. They dismissed him from the tribunal and released him from prison without further punishment.

⁸⁰ A.D.C., leg. 351, no. 4992.

⁸¹ Helichrysum flower.

⁸² A.D.C., leg. 35, no. 4992. “El zumo de la siempreviva echado sobre la herida fresca suelda y sana y lo mismo hace el zumo de las ojas de aquellas ramas que llevan claveles.”

⁸³ Ibid., “laurel, hecho y tomado en vino blanco quando se va a acostar hace soñar cosas ciertas y verdaderas.”

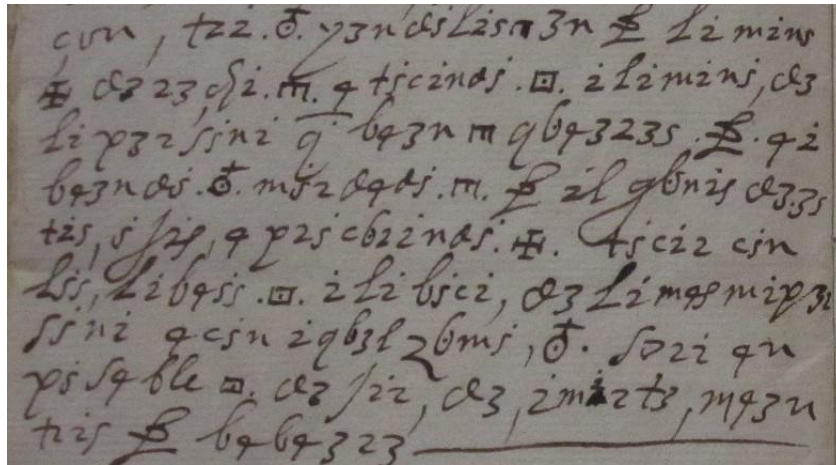


Figure 1. Characters and symbols in recipe book

by Simon Pedro López (1600); A.D.C., leg. 35, no. 4992.

In 1590, inquisitors of the Toledo tribunal of the Inquisition uncovered another illicit recipe book that was even more suspicious than the one carried by López. In the words of one inquisitor, an eighteen-year-old cleric named Jaime Manobel:

had and carried with him a handwritten book that contained many false and superstitious and pernicious things, sorcery and demonic invocations and many things for bad, dishonest, and stupid effects that mix profane, diabolical, and superstitious things and words that are prohibited by the *Catalog* of this Holy Office.⁸⁴

Manobel was from the village of Sariñera in Aragón, but was lodging in Madrid in 1590. He was a card player and a frequenter of taverns. It was at Madrid's Paredes Tavern that a carpenter named Francisco Leal learned of Manobel's reputation as a healer. Francisco believed that he had been hexed – leaving him unable to have relations with his wife – so he contacted Manobel who agreed to perform a ritual to help him.⁸⁵ On the night of the vespers of San Juan (midsummer's eve), the two of them went to El Escorial where Francisco's friend Antón

⁸⁴ A.H.N. INQ 90, exp. 6.

⁸⁵ The following narrative is based on the inquisitorial summary of the case (*relación de causa*) published in *Procesos en la Inquisición de Toledo: 1575-1610: Manuscrito de Halle*, ed. Julio Sierra (Madrid: Trotta, 2005).

Sánchez worked at the infirmary of San Lorenzo el Real. Sánchez provided them with holy water from that evening's mass and a friar's stole. They then went into a field and Manobel drew a large magic circle using a spike and instructed Francisco to lay in the middle. Manobel dripped wax on him, told him to pray three Creeds and then instructed him to mount and dismount a horse three times and climb up and down a tree three times. Meanwhile Manobel wore a surplice and the stole, held a lit candle, and sprinkled holy water. Afterwards he gave the candle to Francisco and instructed him to chew the candle until he consumed it.

The next day, Antón Sánchez (who had provided the stole) regretted his role in facilitating this suspicious ritual and confessed his actions to the prior of his monastery who then alerted the inquisitorial authorities. The bailiff, Pedro López, found the two men in a tavern (the *Meson del Torre*) in the village. López later reported that after locking them in a jail cell he noticed that Manobel was hiding a small book so he confiscated it. During his trial Manobel confessed that he had stolen the book from a friar in Zaragoza, but he denied knowledge of any of the magic that it contained.⁸⁶ The book – which has been preserved in the trial dossier – is forty pages long, octavo sized, and it contains a wide range of medicinal recipes, astrology, invocations, and various kinds of magic. Among the items found in the book were recipes and instructions including:

- to soften wounds in twenty-four hours
- to combat lice
- against hemorrhoids
- remedy against problems with the spleen and kidney
- a table of magical symbols
- to put something in a rock
- to get fire out of saltpeter

⁸⁶ A.H.N. INQ 90, exp. 6.

- the Tetragrammaton
- for a woman who loves a man
- a wheel of fortune
- for a woman who lost a man that she loves
- Astrological table
- to prevent the *amigas* of clerics from leaving the church
- for the memory
- to stop nose bleeds
- invocation of demons
- invocation of Uriel⁸⁷

Muñoz Calvo's study of the book counted forty-three unique herbal ingredients and thirteen of animal origin mentioned in the text.⁸⁸ He also noted that some paragraphs were copied from one of the most famous medieval grimoires – Albertus Magnus's *Book of Secrets*.⁸⁹

The friar who censured the book opined that it contained many great errors, superstitions, and demonic invocations. He also noted, however, that many of the items in the book “related to medicine without mixing with any *hechicería* or superstition.”⁹⁰ Inquisitors subjected Manobel to multiple rounds of torture in an attempt to force a confession of diabolic necromancy, but Manobel insisted that the book was stolen and he knew little of the contents. They nonetheless concluded that he was “highly suspicious of a demonic pact” and they sentenced him to two years of banishment.

Another case that features an herbalist, a bawdy *ensalmo*, and an illicit grimoire is the 1668 trial of José Rodríguez.⁹¹ Rodríguez was a sixty-year-old friar from Valencia who was

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Muñoz Calvo, *Inquisición y ciencia en la España moderna*, 121-122.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 119. A modern edition of this text has been published based upon copies that circulated in the sixteenth century as *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus of the Virtues of Herbs, Stones, and Certain Beasts; Also a Book of Marvels of the World*, ed. Michael R. Best and Frank Brightman (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 2004).

⁹⁰ A.H.N. INQ 90, exp. 6.

⁹¹ A.H.N. INQ 94, exp. 13; an examination of this trial can be found in Carolin Schmitz and María Luz López Terrada, *Josep Rodríguez, herbolari valencià, i els seus pacients de la ribera del Tajo. Les cultures mèdiques en el món rural barroc*,” *Afers* 82 (2015): 523-550.

invited to the Villarejo de Salvanés (a Castilian town southeast of Madrid) due to his reputation for spectacular success as a healer. According to Don Damian de Mayorga, the physician who denounced him to the inquisition, Rodríguez arrived in the town “with the applause of local clerics” to cure individuals who were desperately ill.⁹² Mayorga said that these individuals were “without hope for any natural cure,” and that this was not only his opinion but that of other important doctors including royal physicians and doctors from the University of Alcalá. Upon arrival, Mayorga accompanied Rodríguez into the forest to gather herbs, but he noticed that Rodríguez lacked discernment and knowledge of the herbs he was picking. He also reported that he had a paper with him that had illegible characters on it and he was not sure if it was in Hebrew or Greek or Chaldean. According to Mayorga and other witness including the local surgeon, Rodríguez attended to four people in the village and his cures raised significant suspicion among onlookers. He used various herbal unguents and teas, but he also employed religious and magical cures. One cure involved touching a man’s heart with a brass ring with a white stone in it (which prompted rumors that the ring housed a demonic familiar). Another cure involved applying an *ensalmo* written on a piece of paper. He also allegedly declared that another man had been hexed and that the cause could be traced back to a wax head with needles in it. One witness said that he had heard Rodríguez say that his herbal remedies were activated by words and that “the *Clavicula of Solomon* contained many admirable things and that it was often used in Rome.”⁹³ Another witness said that Rodríguez offered to perform love magic to help him gain the favor of a woman. After gathering evidence the Inquisition sent a bailiff to inquire about Rodríguez’s medical licenses and Rodríguez responded that he had left them in

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid. The *Clavicula of Solomon* was one of the most notorious and widely circulating magical grimoires.

Valencia. Inquisitors then decided to arrest Rodríguez. Inquisitorial correspondence included in the case indicates that inquisitors requested a search of his belongings, especially his books, papers, and clothing to see if they could find the *Clavicula of Solomon* and books of necromancy. These items were not recovered, but inquisitors did find the *ensalmo* that Rodríguez used to cure.

The *ensalmo* used by Rodríguez, which has been preserved in the trial dossier, closely resembles the format of the one found in BN, MSS 6058 and discussed above. It was a prayer to St. Isabel, St. Matilda, and St. Brigit, and it is framed by claims of miraculous provenance and effectiveness. A note found above the prayer says that “it was found in the Holy Sepulcher of Our Lord Jesus Christ; His Holiness has it written in his oratory and the king (Lord protect him) has it [etched] on a silver plate.”⁹⁴ A note after the prayer says that:

whoever carries this page will be free of the devil, and will not die a bad death, and women in labor will be without any danger; any household that has it will not suffer visions nor any other sad thing; forty days before your death you will see Our Holy Virgin; this [*ensalmo*] has been approved by different superiors and tribunals of the Holy Inquisition in the Kingdom of Spain⁹⁵

After confiscating this *ensalmo* and other pieces of evidence, the Inquisition sought the legal opinion of several *calificadores* including Juan de Cabezon, Chair of Theology at the University of Alcalá. The theologians reported that they could make no pronouncements about Rodríguez’s herbal remedies but other evidence indicated “formal superstition.”

⁹⁴ Ibid. “que fue hallada en el Sto. Sepulcro de nuestro señor Jesuchristo, la qual tiene su santidad escrita en su oratorio y el rey (que nuestro señor guarde) en una lamina de plata.”

⁹⁵ Ibid. “Qualquier persona que consigo trajere esta relación, será libre del demonio, no moría mala muerte, y la mujer que estuviere de parto trayendo consigo esta relación parirá sin peligro alguno, en la casa donde estuviere no habrá visión ninguna ni cosa triste. Quarenta días antes de su muerte vera a la virgen santísima señora nuestra.”

In his *audiencia* and defense, Rodríguez argued that his herbal medicine was legitimate and that he had learned it from his brother who was a chair of medicine at the University of Valencia. He thought that his denunciation had arisen from professional jealousy and that his arrest was the result of “false testimony given by barbers, surgeons, and physicians who wished him ill because he cures with herbs; and they say he has a pact but he does not have a pact, only with the Holy Virgin of Rosario.”⁹⁶ The prosecuting attorney, however, disagreed and charged him with formal heresy. The lengthy accusation included thirty-one items of wrongdoing, generally arguing that Rodríguez used herbal medicine to hide his demonic pact. The trial ended with “a grave reprehension and a warning to stop healing all illness and to stop using all medicines while he was without approval from the Protomedicato; banishment from this city, Valencia, Madrid, Villarejo [de Salvanés], and Estremera and six leagues from them for a period of two years.”⁹⁷

Conclusion

In 1631, the Aragonese priest Gaspar Navarro published an anti-superstition demonology with an opening chapter entitled “Wisdom makes men happy, and thus everyone wants it; but although it is natural to want to know, it is not Christian to want to know everything.”⁹⁸ For Navarro, curiosity was neither innocent nor virtuous. Paraphrasing Ecclesiasticus 3:21-25 he warned readers: “do not go looking or scrutinizing the secrets of things that are beyond your

⁹⁶ Ibid. “que esta preso por testigos falsos, que le quieren mal que son barbaros, cirujanos, y médicos y otros tales porque hace cura con yerbas y que dicen que este tiene pacto y que este no tiene pacto sino en la virgen santísima de rosario.”

⁹⁷ Ibid. “sea gravemente reprehendido, advertido y conminado privar de curar de todos enfermedades y de usar de medicamento alguno para ellas mientras no estuviere aprobado por el protomedicato; y desterrado de esta ciudad y de Valencia y de Madrid, Villajero y Estremera y seis leguas entorno por espacio de dos años.”

⁹⁸ Gaspar Navarro, *Tribunal de las supersticiones ladinas* (1631), “Que la sabidura haze los hombres felices, y asi la desean todos; pero aunque es natural el deseo de saber, no es Cristiano el querer saberlo todo.”

reach.”⁹⁹ Those who wanted to know everything, he said, “searched for the diabolical arts.”¹⁰⁰ Navarro probably would have considered the men studied in this chapter to be among those who “want to know too much.” What this chapter has shown, though, is that inquisitorial activity against them did not constitute the frontal assault on science imagined by the “polemic of Spanish science.” On questions regarding medicines and herbs, inquisitors tended to recognize that they did not have the expertise to pass judgement and thus deferred to academic physicians. In a broader sense, inquisitors may have contributed to a culture that discouraged men who tried to “know too much,” but trial documents indicate that their enforcement focused on *ensalmos* and doctrinal errors more than science or “secrets of nature.” The inquisitorial goal of creating clearer distinctions between religion, science, and medicine was a fraught endeavor that never achieved the pure conceptual categories envisioned by demonological polemicists

⁹⁹ Ibid., 3v. “No andas buscando ni escudriñando los secretos de las cosas, que son mas altos que tu ingenio”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 3v. “buscan los artes diabolicos.”

Conclusion:

Seventeenth-Century Superstition and Baroque Uncertainties

In Vicente Espinel's 1618 semi-autobiographical novel *Vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón*, the title character – after announcing his intention to both “delight and instruct” the reader – described his “grace to cure with *ensalmos*.” He put on nutria-fur gloves and large spectacles like a doctor and:

All the ordinary people of this Court and surrounding towns come to me with babies sick from the evil eye, with damsels who are obstructed, or with wounds on the head or other parts of the body, and with a thousand other sicknesses, with desire to get better; I cure them with such sweetness, softness, and good fortune, that of all who come to my hands no more than half die, which is good in my opinion, because they don't say a word, and those who improve sing my praises, although they're liable to fall sick again, because they all go on without a remedy... all or most of them who come to me are the poor and needy, and by the power of confection that I make with tutty and verdigris and other simples, and with the grace of my hands, after five or six times they leave with an office of their own, with which they earn a living honorably, praising God and his saints with many devout prayers that they learn without being able to read.¹

After this preface, the first chapter opens with a scene in which he performs an *ensalmo*, only to be interrupted by an incredulous courtier:

¹ Vicente Espinel, *Vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón*, (Geneva: Editions Feni, 1973 [1618]), 16-17. “ toda la gente ordinaria de esta Corte, y de los pueblos circunvecinos acuden a mi con criaturas enfermas de mal de ojo, con doncellas opiladas, o con heridas de cabeza, y de otras partes del cuerpo, y con otras mil enfermedades, con deseo de cobrar salud; pero curo con tal dulzura, suavidad y ventura, que de cuantos vienen a mis manos no se mueren mas de la mitad, que es en lo que estriba mi buena opinión: porque estos no hablan palabra, y los que sanan dicen, mil alabanzas de mi, aunque quedan perdigados para la recaída, que todos vuelan sin remedio. Mas la gente que más bendiciones me echa es la que curo de la vista corporal, porque como la mayor parte son pobres y necesitados, con la fuerza de cierta confección que yo sé hacer de atútia, y cardenillo y otros simples, y con la gracia de mis manos, a cinco o seis veces que vienen a ellas los dejo con oficio, con que ganan la vida muy honradamente, alabando a Dios y a sus Santos con muchas oraciones devotas, que aprenden sin poderlas leer.”

A few days ago, as I was standing with my eyes raised humbly towards heaven, my countenance serene and grave, and my hands on a white handkerchief which covered the ears of the sick man, over whom I was pronouncing, with great solemnity, the worlds of the *ensalmo*, when a certain courtier passed and said: “I cannot stand the tricks of these scoundrels.”²

After being interrupted, Marcos continued his *ensalmo*, and then proceeded to decry the arrogance of courtiers and discuss the importance of patience. At first glance, the passage seems to be characteristic of the picaresque anti-hero, an exemplar of vice like the characters of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, but in Espinel’s presentation the *ensalmador* defies easy categorization. On one hand, Marcos’ cures were fraudulent, as he humorously made clear, but he also seemed to offer more sympathy towards impoverished *ensalmadores* than the courtiers who scolded them. Nor was Marcos a rascal like some *pícaros*; after this episode, Marcos spent much of the novel as a didactic voice of moral rectitude. Because of its mixed messages, interpretation of the episode has proved problematic for literary scholars.³ I would argue, however, that it reflects the larger ambiguity and contradictory tendencies that characterized attitudes towards religious-medical healing in the seventeenth century. For Espinel, *ensalmos* were duplicitous but were to be viewed with tolerance. Anti-superstition writers went to ever greater lengths to prove they were evil, but could not entirely disentangle them from acceptable religious practices. As a legal issue, inquisitors’ intense efforts to verify the sacred continued to face impasses until they slowly gave up the effort in the latter part of the seventeenth century.

Expansion of Inquisitorial Activity and the Deepening of Intellectual Traditions

² Ibid., 17. “Estando pocos días há con los ojos altos y humildes al cielo, el rostro sereno y grave, las manos sobre un muy blanco lenzuelo en los oídos del enfermo, y pronunciando con mucho silencio las palabras del ensalmo, pasó cierto cortesano, y dijo: No puedo sufrir los embelecios de estos embusteros.”

³ Beatriz Carolina Peña, “El ensalmador falso y los hidalgos burlados: la picaresca en la Vida del escudero Marcos de Obregón de Vicente Espinel,” *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 80, no. 4 (2003): 401-419.

The pattern of seventeenth-century inquisitorial persecution of superstitious practices can be characterized by a rapid expansion in the early decades followed by a slow and steady decline. In the early decades of the century, the concern about superstition became more amplified than at any other time in Spanish history, resulting in increased inquisitorial activity. In the Basque Country in 1610-11, fear of the demonic famously spiraled into the largest witch hunt in Spanish history.⁴ Witch-hunting fervor never reached central Castile, but this study has found that Toledo inquisitors held at least twenty-six trials against superstitious healers in the seventeenth century. As shown in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, these trials were characterized by heightened judicial sophistication and increased intellectual input, although inquisitors did not necessarily achieve a greater degree of certainty about their verdicts. Inquisitors increasingly relied on an imperfect system of licensing to manage to manage healers. Another verifiable trend in seventeenth century trials was the increasing input of medical expertise. Inquisitors became more willing to defer to academic medicine as a hermeneutic for determining the validity of cures. There was also an increased participation of doctors, surgeons, and apothecaries who denounced healers and served as witnesses. This tendency seems to align with the conclusions of Timothy Walker who argued that doctors actively used the Inquisition to eliminate healers from the medical marketplace in eighteenth-century Portugal.⁵

Heightened concern about demons in the early-seventeenth century spurred the publication of new anti-superstition treatises which tended to build upon and deepen the arguments of previous authors. Many returned to the ideas published by Ciruelo a century earlier, as evidenced by new editions and commentaries. Pedro Antonio Iofreu, the royal attorney at the

⁴ Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate*.

⁵ Timothy Walker, *Doctors, Folk Medicine and the Inquisition*.

Real Audiencia de Cataluña in Barcelona, for instance, released an edition of the *Reprobación* that included extensive notes and commentary.⁶ In 1622, Francisco Pérez Carrillo, who worked as the king's chaplain and administrator of Madrid's *Hospitales reales de los desamparados*, wrote an unpublished anti-superstition tract that was highly derivative of Ciruelo's text. Like Ciruelo, Pérez Carrillo framed the issue of superstition using metaphysical categories and he maintained that it was sinful to "look for cures outside of the course of nature."⁷

Other early seventeenth-century texts took a much more aggressive stance towards witchcraft and superstition than Ciruelo. In 1613, immediately following the Basque trials, the Andalusian jurist Francisco Torreblanca Villalpando obtained a license to publish a massive nine-hundred-page anti-superstition treatise entitled *Epitomes delictorum in quibus aperta vel occulta inuocatio daemonis interuenit* which described the diabolical plots of witches, *ensalmadores*, *saludadores*, and others.⁸ Torreblanca rejected the tradition of the *Canon episcopi* and instead argued that a range of demonic effects (including the transvection of witches to the sabbat) were real and not simply imagined. This stance, however, contradicted the moderate approach towards witchcraft that the inquisitorial Suprema adopted to put an end to the Basque trials, and the book's publication was delayed for five years while factions at the Council of Castile debated its merit.⁹

Gaspar Navarro's 1631 text, *Tribunal de superstición ladina*, was the last substantial demonology published in Spain. Like Torreblanca, Navarro argued that demons were endowed

⁶ Pedro Ciruelo, *Tratado en el qual se prepruevan todas las supersticiones y hechizeras: Muy util y necesario a todos los buenos Christianos zelosos de su salvación*, ed. Pedro Antonio Ioferu (Barcelona, 1628).

⁷ BN, MSS/4294; Francisco Pérez Carrillo, *Reprobaciones católicas contra las vanas supersticiones y arte diabólica de la necromancia, brujas, trasgos, adivancias, seños, desafíos, enslamos, nóminas, mal de ojo o facinación, exorcistas y sacadores de demonios* (1622). "pecan todos los que buscan remedios fuera del curso natural."

⁸ Francisco Torreblanca Villalpando, *Epitomes delictorum in quibus aperta vel occulta inuocatio daemonis interuenit* (1618).

⁹ Campagne, *Homo Catholicus. Homo Superstitiosus*, 508-12.

with broad powers and that Christians must constantly remain vigilant against them.¹⁰ His reproach of *ensalmadores* and *saludadores* was extensive and – as historian Fabián Alejandro Campagne has noted – he also put much less trust in academic medicine compared to his peers.¹¹ Although he did not reject medicine altogether, he emphasized the providential nature of disease and the relative unimportance of doctors: “when you are cured of a disease, you should not attribute your health to doctors, nor to medicine, but instead to God, for he is the one who cures all of our diseases.”¹² He also maintained that medicine had no effect against illnesses caused by hexes and he recommended exorcism instead:

In this section we will discuss whether natural things have virtue against demons: and it is certain and proven that they cannot, nor do they have power against them... As such all natural things, in so much as they are natural, are vain remedies and ineffective against the Devil and his evils.¹³

This debate about the relative effectiveness of medicine vs. religious remedies remained unsettled in the seventeenth century and it occasionally surfaced in Inquisition trials held in Toledo. In 1620, for instance, the tribunal investigated a cleric named Juan García Fernandez who interpreted disease as being the result of magic, and used both natural remedies and exorcism to heal them.¹⁴ The prosecutor accused him of “using unauthorized exorcisms” and also “using medicinal drinks, poultices, oils, syrups, unguents without consulting doctors and applying them without distinction, under the pretense of hexes even though they were illnesses with known symptoms.”¹⁵ In his *audiencia*, Juan argued that he did so because “doctors deny

¹⁰ Navarro, *Tribunal de superstición ladina*.

¹¹ Campagne, “Medicina y religión en el discurso antisupersticioso español de los siglos XVI a XVIII,” 440-44.

¹² *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 66v.

¹⁴ A.N.N., INQ 89, exp. 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, “ha usado y usa de diferentes bebidas emplastos aceites jarabes, y unciones que sin consulta de médicos ha aplicado a los enfermos curando a todos sin distinción con nombre y socolor de hechizos siendo y teniendo las enfermedades sus accidentes conocidos.”

hexes.”¹⁶ He cited the Italian author Giovan Battista Codronchi who had, like Navarro, argued that preternatural illnesses were outside of the sphere of medicine and should be instead handled by exorcism.¹⁷ Juan also said (in a later written statement) that Christ had left the Church with doctors and medicines in the form of clerical authority. He said that he had only used exorcisms that he had learned in Girolamo Menghi’s *Flagellum daemonum*,¹⁸ and he pointed to a specific papal bull that permitted exorcism. Although the prosecutor had sided with academic medicine in this case, the presiding inquisitors were swayed by Juan’s arguments and the case was dismissed without punishment.

Similarly, questions regarding the differentiation between permitted prayers and illicit *ensalmos* also persisted in the seventeenth century. Portuguese inquisitor and bishop of Evora Manuel do Valle de Moura attempted to resolve these issues in his *De incantationibus seu ensalmis*,¹⁹ Europe’s most extensive work on the subject, but Moura’s text reflected the confused and conflicted response of Catholic theologians to a wide range of popular customs that supposedly had specific apotropaic effects.²⁰ Moura’s rigorous approach systematically deconstructed arguments in favor of *ensalmos*, but in doing so he contradicted many of his contemporaries and approached the demonization of all lay prayers and rituals.

A Defense of *Ensalmos* “Against those who, with Ignorance and Malice, use them as Superstitions”

The expansion of reform efforts and the ongoing legal persecution of healing prayers caused conservative proponents of traditional devotions to feel threatened and come to the

¹⁶ Ibid., “médicos niegan los hechizos.”

¹⁷ Giovan Battista Codronchi, *De morbis veneficis, ac veneficiis* (1618).

¹⁸ Girolamo Menghi, *Flagellum daemonum* (1587).

¹⁹ Manuel do Valle de Moura, *De incantationibus seu ensalmis* (1620).

²⁰ See Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 227.

defense of *ensalmadores*. One of the most passionate defenders of charismatic healing was a naval officer, Capitán Juan Suárez de Gamboa, who penned a 1625 pamphlet that passionately argued in favor of the use of *ensalmos*. As a military man – not an ecclesiastic or an intellectual – Suárez was a rather unlikely character to have composed such a spirited defense of *ensalmos*. He was born in the Basque Country, but spent much of his life in New Spain, in Puebla de los Angeles outside of Mexico City. While in Mexico, he became a proponent of affective and charismatic forms of lay piety, which thrived in many corners of the Catholic world but were especially common in Mexico where ecclesiastical and inquisitorial controls were looser than in peninsular Spain.²¹ In a scene reminiscent of *Lazarillo*, Suárez’s self-righteousness embroiled him in a power struggle in Puebla when he denounced the sale of crusade bulls. His fulminations led to his arrest by local officials, but he escaped and fled to Spain disguised as a monk.²² When he arrived in Madrid he took up the pen, vehemently inveighing against corruption in the Church and defending charismatic religiosity.²³

In 1625, Suárez wrote a pamphlet defending the use of healing *ensalmos* entitled *Advertencias y Oracion de intercession y rogativa de salud del santo Fr. Luis Beltran, contra la ignorancia o malicia con que usan de supersticiones y hechizos, con nombre de ensalmo y palabras malsonantes y torpes* [A preface and prayer of intercession and rogation for health of Saint Luís Beltrán, against the ignorance and malice of those who use, for superstition and

²¹ See Nora Jaffary, *False Mystics: Deviant Orthodoxy in Colonial Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

²² María V. Jordán, “Desde los campos de León a Nueva España: espiritualidad transatlántica en una obra de Juan Suárez de Gamboa, 1625,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 18, no. 1 (2009): 135, n. 5.

²³ Juan Suárez de Gamboa, *Tres cosas son las que obligan a crédito los avisos que piden remedio de daños grandes* (Madrid, 1621); *Advertencias de daños que se siguen así para el Real intresse de su Magd.* (1621); *Tratado de consideraciones católicas en alabanza y reverencia del santísimo sacramento* (Madrid, 1624); *Tratado de la virtud santa en sabia y humilde labradora* (Madrid, 1625).

sorcery, uncouth and stupid words under the guise of *ensalmos*].²⁴ The text was written shortly after Beltrán's beatification and it is easy to see why Suárez would have had an affinity for him. Like Suárez, Beltrán was a trans-Atlantic figure who was a proponent of using affective spirituality in service of Tridentine Catholicism.

In his introduction and conclusion, Suárez attempted to outline the criteria that, in his opinion, separated righteous and superstitious *ensalmos*. The correct approach, according to Suárez, was to supplicate God and to use *ensalmos* in conjunction with natural medicines, while the opposite – demanding miracles and expecting *ensalmos* to be efficacious on their own – were signs of superstition. The only words that had immediate efficacy, according to standard orthodoxy, were those of the holy sacraments, pronounced by consecrated priests. It was important to remember, Suárez reminded his readers, to recite *ensalmos* as Luís Beltrán taught – with confidence, in a loud and clear voice, and to avoid any ignorant or malicious words that might lead to demonic deceptions. It was safest to use words prescribed in the pamphlet, since they had been proven by Beltrán's cures in the Indies, and since Beltrán was in heaven, he could act as an intercessor to augment the healing power of the prayer.

The body of the pamphlet consisted of two *ensalmos*. The first was an extended prayer that invoked the names of several saints and “eleven thousand virgins,”²⁵ asking them to extend divine grace to cure the relevant illness, wound, corruption, or humoral imbalance. Second was a short, single-line prayer that was intended to cure maladies of the heart (“*mal de coração*”). Suárez then concluded the pamphlet with personal testimony of cures that he had witnessed and recipes for salves and poultices that he had learned from a surgeon to use in conjunction with

²⁴ The example that I have consulted is at the *Biblioteca Nacional de España*, R/9791 (4).

²⁵ Presumably the eleven thousand virgins associated with St. Ursula. The Ursuline order, founded in 1535 by Angela Merici, expanded rapidly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

ensalmos for various types of wounds. These remedies consisted of standard ingredients such as olive oil, sugar, and rosemary. By following his advice, Suárez assured his reader, one might seek to heal without resorting to the superstitions prohibited by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

“El juicio en esta materia de *ensalmos* es tan incierto y dudoso [Judgment in this matter of *ensalmos* is uncertain and full of doubt]”

In order to publish his defense of *ensalmos*, Suárez de Gamboa needed the standard licenses from both secular and religious officials. Suárez received their stamp of approval, but at the same time, clandestine manuscript *ensalmos* circulated in central Castile without the same oversight. One such “book” (octavo-sized and consisting of four pages) was intercepted by a Don Miguel Ayala in 1625 and sent to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition for censure.²⁶ The friar charged with examining the *ensalmo*, an Augustinian named Diego de Campo, expressed frustration with the matter, saying that “El juicio en esta materia de *ensalmos* es tan incierto y dudoso [Judgment in this matter of *ensalmos* is very uncertain and full of doubt].” The words the booklet prescribed were themselves good, he said, but they might be full of lies in practice. The difference between good and evil *ensalmos* depended upon the interior motivations of the woman or man who pronounced them and the will of God, which were realms that inquisitors could never truly know.

²⁶ AHN, INQ. fol. 4467, exp. 28. The censure is briefly mentioned in Patricia Manning, *Voicing Dissent in Seventeenth-Century Spain: Inquisition, Social Criticism and Theology in the Case of El Criticón* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 6.

Baroque Uncertainties and the Tapering of Superstition Trials

By the late-seventeenth century, the inquisitorial caseload declined as inquisitors realized their impasse and put less effort into knowing the unknowable. María de la Cruz, for instance, healed using a ritual that included signing the cross, invoking the Holy Trinity, and lighting incense in 1693.²⁷ She was also accused of more malignant forms of magic, including interference in the sexual lives of a young couple. A doctor and an apothecary's apprentice denounced her to the Inquisition, arguing that her cures surpassed the bounds of nature. The inquisitorial censure, however, refused to rule out the possibility that God may have given her *gracia gratis data* to cure the evil eye. Unable to determine the true nature of her cures, the Inquisition released her without punishment, simply telling her to stop healing. In the eighteenth century, the same healing methods persisted in popular culture, but Inquisition cases against them were almost always suspended before reaching the sentencing phase. When Leonarda Avila came before inquisitors in 1787 for practices resembling those of María de la Cruz they called her healing "ridiculous," "completely useless," and they sent a letter to her parish priest, telling him to provide her with better instruction in the faith.²⁸

While about half of the forty-eight healing trials examined from the seventeenth century resulted in condemnation and punishment, nearly all the thirty-eight trials examined from the eighteenth century were inconclusive and/or suspended before inquisitors reached a verdict. Although Spain is rarely discussed as a progenitor of "enlightened" philosophies, trial documentation reflects the adoption of skepticism as a philosophical priority. While leading theorists of the early seventeenth century called for the use of demology as an intellectual

²⁷ A.H.N. INQ 84, exp. 12.

²⁸ A.H.N. INQ 82, exp. 15.

mechanism to provide the rational alignment of cause and effect, this position was largely abandoned by the end of the seventeenth century.

Appendix 1 – Inquisition Cases Examined

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Case Number</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1513 | Constanza Alfonso | A.H.N. INQ 82, exp. 4 |
| 1517 | Alonso de Ayora | A.D.C. leg. 62, exp. 899 |
| 1533 | Francisco de Goidos | A.H.N. INQ 203, exp. 10 |
| 1549 | Francisco Díaz | A.H.N. INQ 85, exp. 6 |
| 1552 | Catalina de Mondejar | A.H.N. INQ 84, exp. 2 |
| 1553 | María Gómez | A.H.N. INQ 87, exp. 10 |
| 1553 | María de Ayala | A.H.N. INQ 82, exp. 17 |
| 1557 | Catalina de Doyague | A.H.N. INQ 85, exp. 9 |
| 1567 | Bartolomé López | A.H.N. INQ 89, exp. 9 |
| 1590 | Jaime Manobel | A.H.N. INQ 90, exp. 6 |
| 1600 | Simon Pedro López | A.D.C. leg. 351, exp. 4755 |
| 1609 | Alonso de Quiñones | A.H.N. INQ 70, exp. 40 |
| 1611 | Diego Alfonso de Medrano | A.H.N. INQ 91, exp. 4 |
| 1617 | Isabel Hernández | A.H.N. INQ 88, exp. 4 |
| 1622 | Josefa Carranza | A.H.N. INQ 83, exp. 10 |
| 1637-1650 | María López | A.H.N. INQ 89, exp. 15 |
| 1648 | Isabel de la Cruz | A.H.N. INQ 84, exp. 9 |
| 1648-1658 | Ambrosio de Montes | A.H.N. INQ 91, exp. 12 |
| 1668 | José Rodríguez | A.H.N. INQ 94, exp. 13 |
| 1693 | María de la Cruz | A.H.N. INQ 84, exp. 12 |
| 1704 | Andrés Valdés | A.H.N. INQ 97, exp. 1 |
| 1727 | Pablo Botella | A.H.N. INQ 973, exp. 1 |
| 1787 | Leonarda Avila | A.H.N. INQ 82, exp. 15 |

Appendix 2

Pedro Ciruelo's Natural remedies against rabies and venom¹

(Remedios naturales contra la rabia y ponçoña)

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| The very first and more natural is: to kill the rabid dog who bit the man and to spread his blood over the bite; and that is how you remove the venom. And this same remedy works on wounds inflicted by the poisoned arrow of a crossbowman. | Dog's blood | El primero y más natural es: que maten al perro rabioso que mordió al hombre, y con la sangre dél unten la mordedura; y, ansí, se le quita ponçoña. Y este mesmo remedio vale para la herida de saeta enherbolada de yerba de balletero. | Sangre de perro |
| If you do not find dog's blood, take some of its fur, burn it, and spread the ashes over the bite. | Dog's fur | Si no pudieren haber la sangre del perro, tomen de sus pelos dél y quémenlos, y de aquellos polvos echen en la mordedura. | Los pelos del perro |
| Drinking warm honey is very good to remedy rabies and a poisoned heart, which is caused by a rabid dog. | Honey | Item, la miel caliente bebida es muy Buena para remediar la rabia y ponçoña del coraçón, que se causa de perro rabioso. | Miel |
| Lard, urgently eaten, works as a remedy that defends the heart against the venom. | Lard | Item, la manteca de ganado, comída luego de presto, aprovecha como atríaca contra la ponçoña que defiende el coraçón. | Manteca |
| Fresh cheese put over the bite of a dog, a scorpion or other beast, it is very beneficial as you can remove the venom and the sign is that afterwards the bruise stops. | Fresh cheese | Item, el queso fresco recién hecho puesto sobre la mordedura del perro o de alacrán o de otra mala bestia, aprovecha mucho porque saca afuera la ponçoña; y la señal es que luego se para cárdena. | Queso fresco |
| It is good to quickly kill a pet bird, a gelding, hen, or a chicken, and while still warm, rub it over the bite will remove the venom out. | Dead bird | Item, es bueno matar de presto una ave de casa, capon o gallina o pollo, y, ansí, caliente, pónganla sobre la mordedura mudándola muchas veces, | Ave muerta |

¹ Ciruelo, *Reprobación de las supersticiones*, 99-101.

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| | | que atrae la ponçoña hacia fuera. | |
| You can do the same with the pluck of ram's lungs, a male or an ox, you should use them warm to make use of the juice. | Lungs | Esto mismo se puede hacer con los livianos de la asadura del carnero o macho o buey; hanlos de poner calientes como salen de la res. | Livianos |
| When someone happens to have eaten or drunk anything poisonous, quickly give him pork fat or the thick part from the lard and eat it raw; that is a good remedy. | Raw lard | Cuando alguno hobiere comido o bebido alguna cosa ponçoñosa, acorránle presto con manteca del puerco o con el lardo de su tocino, y cómallo ansí crudo; y es muy buen remedio. | Tocino crudo |
| Mashed garlic is beneficial when applied to a venomous bite; and if the patient drinks its juice with some wine it will be beneficial, because this prevents the venom to get to the heart. And this drink is also beneficial for the one who is stricken with pestilence. | Garlic | Los ajos majados y puestos sobre la mordedura ponçoñosa aprovechan bien; y aun sí bebiese el paciente el çumo dellos con vino le hará provecho, porque derrama la ponçoña que no vaya al corazón. Y esta bebida también aprovecha al que está herido de pestilencia. | Ajo |
| Cut freshly onions mashed with salt and rue and put them over the rabid dog bite as a poultice, they are very healthy. Use the mashed collard greens without the roots, put the mashed leaves alone as a poultice over the poisoned bite, and they heal it. | Onions | Las cebollas de presto majadas con sal y ruda y puestas por emplasto sobre la mordedura del can rabioso, son muy saludables. Las coles majadas sin los tronchos, sino solas las hojas majadas puestas por emplasto sobre la mordedura ponçoñosa, la sanan. | Cebollas. |
| The green fennel or its mashed roots made as a poultice put over the bite is very beneficial and along with this drinking some wine with the fennel seed it is a good remedy against every venom. | Fennel | El hinojo verde o sus raíces majado y hecho emplasto sobre la mordedura aprovecha mucho; y junto con esto bebiendo en vino la grana del mesmo hinojo es buen remedio contra toda ponçoña. | Hinojo |

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| The same is true for the parsley when it is mashed with salt and used as a poultice over the bite of a rabid dog; and its seeds drunk in wine is beneficial for scorpion's bite. | Parsley | Lo mesmo hace el perejil hacienda dél emplasto majado con sal y puesto sobre la mordedura del perro rabioso; y la grana dél bebida en vino aprovecha contra la mordedura de los alacranes. | Perejil |
| Mashed mint sprayed with wine makes a good poultice to place over the bites of poisoned animals. | Mint tea. | El poleo majado y rociado con vino, es buen emplasto sobre las mordeduras de animales ponçoñosos. | Poleo. |
| Mashed sage eases the pain of venomous bites. | Sage. | La salvia majada y puesta sobre las mordeduras ponçoñosas, quita el dolor dellas. | Salvia. |
| Mint is singular remedy against the bite of a rabid dog and even against the scorpion's sting as well. You should smash it with salt and oil and a little bit of vinegar and put it over the ulcer; and the juice when drunk is also good for the heart. | Mint. | La yerbabuena es cosa muy singular contra la mordedura del can rabioso, y aun contra la del alacrán. Hanla de majar con sal y aceite y un poco de vinagre y ponerla sobre la llaga; y aún aprovechará el çumo della bebido para el coraçón. | Yerba-buena |
| Raw and mashed leeks put over the poisoned bite they heal it, and the same for the mashed radishes put over the bite as a poultice. | Radishes | Los puerros crudos, majados y puestos sobre toda mordedura ponçoñosa, la sanan; y lo mesmo hacen los rábanos majados y hecho emplasto sobre la mordedura. | Rábanos |
| Some physicians say as well, that roasted and mashed or chewed wheat grains put over the bite of a rabid dog are very beneficial. | Wheat | Dicen también algunos médicos, que los granos del trigo tostados y majados o mascados puestos sobre la mordedura del perro rabioso, aprovechan mucho. | Trigo |
| They also say that boiled bran in rue juice and put over bites from and other poisoned animals is very good. | Bran | También dicen que los salvados del trigo cocidos en çumo de ruda y puestos sobre las mordeduras de víboras y de otros animales ponçoñosos, son muy buenos. | Salvados |

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| Beans, cracked in half and put them over the fresh wound stops the bleeding; the same procedure is beneficial for the bites from dogs or scorpions, etc. | Beans | Habas partidas por medio en luengo puestas sobre la herida reciente, restañan la sangre; y de la mesma manera puestas aprovechan en la mordedura del perro rabioso o del alacrán, etc. | Habas |
| Vine or vineyard ashes are very good to make a poultice with rue juice and oil for poisoned bites. | Ash | Ceniza de parras o vides es muy Buena para hacer della emplasto con çumo de ruda y aceite, para las mordeduras ponçoñasas. | Ceniza |
| Vinegar is a medicine that, when put on the body between the heart and the bite from a dog, a scorpion, or a spider, and it is necessary to apply it very often. | Vinegar | El vinagre es cosa medicinal puesto por defuera en el cuerpo entre el coraçón y la mordedura ponçoñosa de perro o alacrán o de araña; y hace de hacer este lavatorio a menudo. | Vinagre |
| Halzelnuts or walnuts eaten on an empty stomach with dried figs and leaves of rue is a good medicine for pestilence times, and it useful as well for those who are poisoned. | Hazelnuts | Avellanas o nueces comidas en ayunas con higos pasos y con hojas de ruda, así como es Buena medicina en tiempo de pestilencia, así también aprovecha a los que están emponçoñados. | Avellanas |
| Mashed cypress leaves are a good poultice for all bites from rabid dogs and other poisonous animals. | Cypress | Las hojas del ciprés majadas es buen emplasto para todas las mordeduras ponçoñasas de perros y de otros animales venenosos. | Ciprés |
| Drinking the juice from ash tree leaves is very good against the poison from the snakes and they even flee from their shadow. | Ash tree | El çumo de las hojas del fresno bebido es Bueno contra la ponçoña de las culebras, y aun ellas huyen de su sombra. | Fresno |
| Fig tree milk is good for spread over the scorpion's bites and if you smash the matured green fig with the leaves and the vinegar, it is a good poultice to put over the bite from a rabid dog. | Fig tree | La leche de la higuera es buena para untar las picaduras de los alacranes; e sí majan sus higos verdes por madurar con las hojas y con vinagre, es un buen emplasto para sobre la mordedura del perro rabioso. | Higuera |

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| If you spread laurel oil over the poisoned bites or stings it is very beneficial for alleviation. | Laurel | Si con el aceite del laurel untan las mordeduras o picaduras ponçoñosas, aprovecha mucho para las desenconar. | Laurel |
| Mashed blackberry bush leaves are a very good poultice to put over any poisoned bite or sting, and if the leaves are not green, boil them dry, mashed them and make a poultice with them. | Blackberry bush | Las hojas del moral majadas son buen emplasto para poner sobre toda mordedura o picadura ponçoñosa; y sí no las hay verdes, cuézanlas secas y májenlas y hagan emplasto dellas. | Moral |
| Green quinces are incompatible with venom; they could be chewed or mashed; even their juice put over the poisoned bite is very beneficial. | Quince | Los membrillos verdes son contrarios a toda ponçoña, luego ellos mascados o machacados; y aun el çumo dellos puesto sobre la mordedura ponçoñosa aprovecha bien. | Membrillos |
| Citron seed drunk with wine, honey, and warm water is very good against every venom and if you spread it, ant it is is very beneficial as a drink. The weight of one <i>real</i> is enough. | Citron | La simiente de la cidra bebida con vino y miel y agua que esté tibio, es buena contra toda ponçoña; y aun untar con ello aprovecha bien para la beber. Abasta peso de un real de la simiente. | Cidra |
| Drinking citron crust juice is very beneficial for the viper's bite and mashed and made poultice over the sting is good, the crust from the same citron. | Citron crusts | Item, el çumo de las casca o corteza de la cidra bebido aprovecha contra la picadura de la víbora; y ella majada y hecha emplasto sobre la picadura es buena, digo la corteza de la misma cidra. | Sus costras |
| Juniper oil is very good to drink it and spread it over the poisoned wounds in times of pestilence. | Juniper | El aceite de enebro es muy bueno para beberlo y para untar con él las heridas ponçoñosas, y en tiempo de pestilencia. | Enebro |
| Mashed walnuts with salt, rue, garlic and honey is a good poultice over the rabid dog bite; even walnuts, chewed during a fast, then spread over the bite is very beneficial, because men' saliva during a fast is medicinal. | Walnuts | Las nueces majadas con sal y ruda y ajos y miel, es un buen emplasto para la mordedura del perro rabioso; y aun solas nueces mascadas en ayunas y con | Nueces |

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| | | ellas untada la mordedura aprovecha bien, porque la saliva del hombre ayuno es cosa medicinal. | |
| Olive oil is proven [to be effective] against any venom if they drink it after being wounded. | Oil | El aceite olio de olive es cosa muy probada para contra cualquiera ponçoña que hayan dado al hombre, sí luego lo beben sobre ella. | Aceite |

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