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The Devil in Cartagena: Slavery, religion and resistance in seventeenth-century Caribbean Colombia

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The Devil in Cartagena: Slavery, Religion and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century
Caribbean Colombia

Daniel James Dawson

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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FACULTY COMMITTEE:

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my fellow graduate students in the JMU history program. Special thanks to our ever fearless graduate representatives, Rachel Carey and Trevor Cooper, and to Joshua Goodall, Mike MacInnis, Nathan Ray, Scott Merrifield, Brian David, Pake Davis, Blake Bergstrom and Craig Schaefer. The fact that I am able to call the ten of you my friends has in and of itself made coming to JMU worth it.

They are friends of mine

They are friends of mine

And they've got something

It's so hard to find¹

¹ "Friends of Mine" (a song by the Zombies, off the album *Odessey and Oracle*, 1968).

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role of religion in African communities in seventeenth-century Caribbean Colombia, and the tensions between the system of racial and religious hierarchy imposed by the Catholic Church and Spanish authorities and the everyday religious life of free and enslaved Africans and their descendants. It will examine interactions between African religion and Christianity and African resistance to Spanish-Catholic authority. It will examine Spanish-Catholic thought on African spirituality, and investigate the relationship between African subjects and Catholic authorities in the Spanish Atlantic. It explores the goals of Catholic authorities in relation to African subjects, and the various methods they employed in order to Christianize Africans living under Spanish rule. Drawing on trial transcripts from the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition, it will examine everyday African religious life and the relationship between Africans and Christianity in Colombia and the Spanish Caribbean. It will use the Inquisition trials of African religious practitioners to demonstrate how African ritual knowledge spread throughout the Spanish Atlantic world, and the role that the Inquisition played in inadvertently promoting this spread. It will also examine the ways in which African defendants drew on both their own religious traditions and Christian ideas to subvert authority and work within Spanish society. Furthermore, it will examine Spanish anxieties about African religious practices, and the connection between such practices and a general fear of African insurrection connected to the Spanish wars against *palenques*, cities of free Africans who had escaped slavery. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to examine the relationship between everyday African religious life and Spanish-Catholic

authority and hierarchy in early colonial Caribbean Colombia. As a result, it seeks to provide a thorough understanding of power dynamics between Spanish and African communities in the Americas, and the role that African communities in Caribbean Colombia played in the social and cultural development of the Atlantic World

Introduction

In the seventeenth century, tens of thousands of Africans, forcibly removed from their homelands, arrived in the port city of Cartagena de Indias in the Spanish American colony in upper South America known as the New Kingdom of Granada.² Enslaved and taken to the New World by European slavers, these men and women would face a life of servitude working for white, mostly Spanish slaveholders on plantations, in silver and gold mines, and as household workers. In spite of the hardships they faced, African men and women in New Granada formed kinship, business, community and religious ties. A significant portion of enslaved Africans in New Granada would eventually leave the shackles of slavery through acts of either legal or extralegal manumission. Free black populations, both within and outside of major cities like Cartagena, would have kept their ties with their enslaved compatriots. Despite the fact that Africans in any given part of New Granada would have hailed from numerous areas in West and West-Central Africa and belonged to a variety of different cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, a distinct African community existed in Caribbean locales such as seventeenth-century Cartagena.

² New Granada corresponds, roughly, to modern-day Colombia, Venezuela and Panama. While it is located geographically in South America, for the purposes of this research Cartagena and its surrounding areas will be considered a part of the Spanish Caribbean. Before its independence from Spain, the Caribbean coast of New Granada interacted more easily and frequently with the Caribbean islands than the South American interior. It is for this reason that the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition had jurisdiction not only over New Granada but also Spain's Caribbean holdings. See Ernesto Bassi, "Beyond Compartmentalized Atlantics: A Case for Embracing the Atlantic from Spanish American Shores," *History Compass* 12, no. 9 (2014): 704-716; Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); and Pablo F. Gómez, "Transatlantic Meanings: African Rituals and Material Culture in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean," in *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic*, eds. Akinwumi Ogundiran and Paula Sanders (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 127-131.

Over time, this community would also grow to include men and women of African descent born in the New World.³ Nevertheless, while well-defined African communities existed in New Granada, such communities did not exist in a vacuum. Indeed, Africans interacted daily with white society, whether in matters of work, trade, law or religion. In doing so, the African inhabitants of New Granada came into contact – and, frequently, conflict – with Spanish-Catholic authority and hierarchy. The social and cultural norms and regulations that Spanish authorities sought to impose frequently conflicted with African women and men’s cultural expressions and religious practices.

This thesis will examine religious practices in African communities in seventeenth-century Caribbean Colombia, and the tensions between the system of racial and religious hierarchy imposed by the Catholic Church and Spanish authorities and everyday actions, particularly in religious life, of free and enslaved Africans and their descendants. Chapter One will explain the role of slavery in early colonial Colombia, the system of racial and religious hierarchy imposed by the Catholic Church, Spanish-Catholic perceptions of African religious life in the early colonial era, and the foundations of the Catholic Inquisition in Cartagena as well as its role in enforcing social and racial hierarchy. Ultimately, this chapter will examine Church officials’ motivations for Christianizing Africans in the New World, the methods by which they sought to do so, and the role of the Cartagena Inquisition in Christianizing Africans in New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean.

Chapter Two will examine African religious practices in Caribbean Colombia, as well as the relationship between Africans and Christianity in New Granada. It will

³ This would include two major groups: *negros criollos*, or people of complete African ancestry, and *mulatos*, people of mixed ancestry.

demonstrate how religious ideas in African communities spread throughout Cartagena, the viceroyalty of New Granada, and the Spanish Caribbean more widely. In addition, it will examine the role of the Inquisition in facilitating the spread of African religious knowledge through its forced movement of African defendants to and from various locales under its jurisdiction, in the process contributing to the emergence of Cartagena as a central hub of African religious practitioners.

Chapter Three will demonstrate how black defendants invoked elements of *both* Christianity and traditional African religions in their testimonies before the Inquisition Tribunal, and how they used the opportunity to testify as a form of resistance to the established Spanish-Catholic hierarchy and authority. It will focus chiefly on the theme of diabolism, examining how Africans used the image and concept of the Devil and demons in their testimonies. By examining this Christian trope within the context of African testimonies, this chapter will demonstrate how blacks in the early modern Caribbean navigated between African and Christian religious worldviews. This chapter will examine these testimonies in the context of the wars between the Spanish and black *palenque* communities on the outskirts of Spanish society in Caribbean Colombia. It will demonstrate how the Inquisition played into Spanish fears of uncontrollable black communities that the *palenques*, in their view, exemplified. The thesis will conclude by examining the place that African religious practice and resistance to Spanish hierarchy and authority played in the emergence of the Spanish Atlantic world during the seventeenth century.

Chapter 1

Pursuing a Christianizing Mission: Catholic Authorities and African Subjects in Early

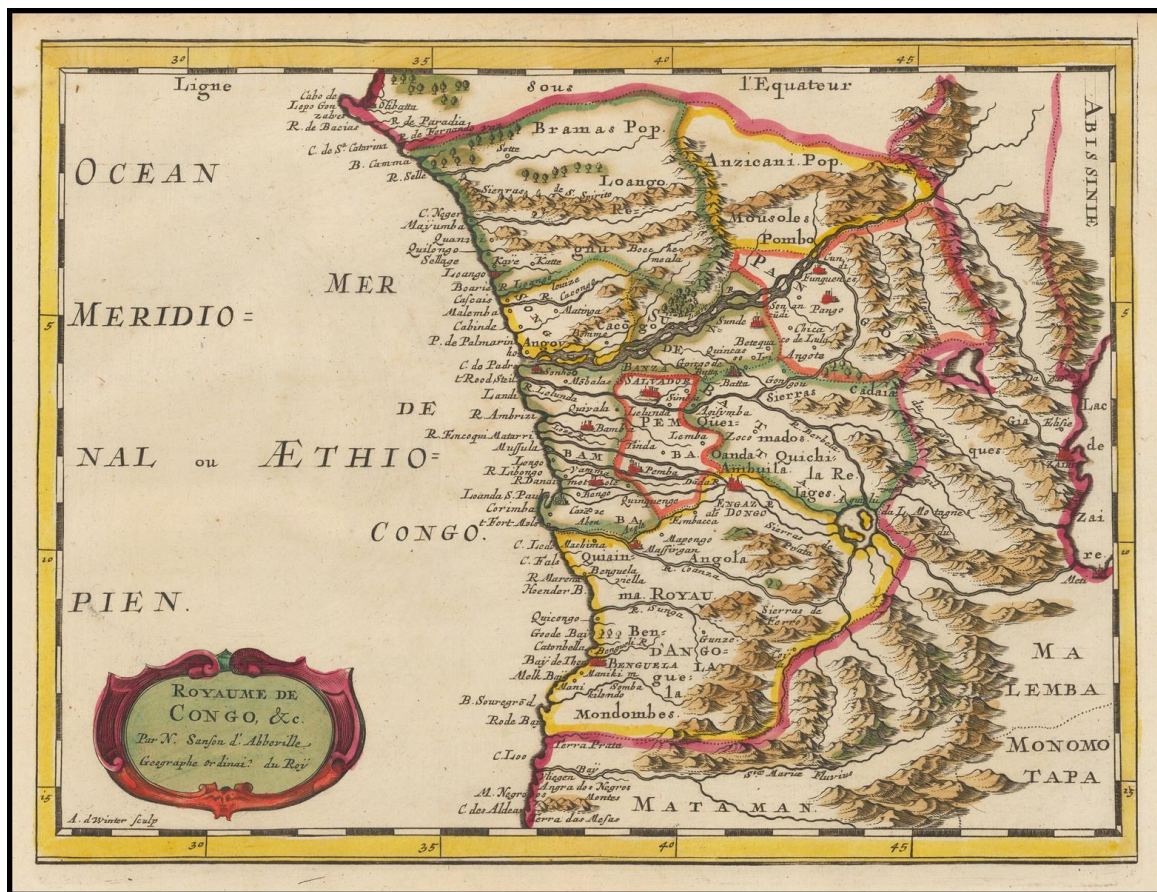
Colonial New Granada



Map 1. Jan Jansson, *Terra Firma et Novum Regnum Granatense et Popayan*. Seventeenth-century map of the New Kingdom of Granada. Published in Amsterdam, 1635.



Map 2. Jan Jansson, *Guinea*. Known as Guinea to most Europeans, West Africa was a major source of enslaved Africans to slaveholders in Spanish America. Modern-day Benin, Ghana and southern Nigeria were among the regions most frequently used by slave traders. Published in Amsterdam, 1640.



Map 3. Nicolas Sanson, *Royaume de Congo*. Seventeenth-century French map of Angola, Congo and Gabon. West-Central Africa was, by the mid-seventeenth century, the primary region from which slave traders brought enslaved Africans to Spanish America.

Published in Paris, 1657.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, thousands of enslaved Africans arrived on a regular basis to the port city of Cartagena de Indias. Packed into cramped cells to await sale to the Spanish inhabitants of the city, these men and women suffered immeasurable cruelty and were subject to horrific physical and medical conditions. Some Spaniards, primarily priests living in Cartagena, took pity on these enslaved Africans and sought to tend to them as best as they knew how – by providing medical care and preaching Catholic doctrine to them. Soon enough, Catholic authorities recognized that enslaved Africans under its jurisdiction were not receiving adequate religious instruction from slaveholders. In Cartagena, the center of African slavery in Spain's American territories during the seventeenth century, a Catholic movement seeking to Christianize Africans emerged. In some ways, this movement was built on a genuine desire of certain Catholic clergymen who saw themselves as tasked with saving the souls of an oppressed, downtrodden and mistreated group. In other ways, however, this movement was part of a larger movement to control and regulate the lives of both free and enslaved Africans living under Spanish jurisdiction. By Christianizing Africans and attempting to strip them of their traditional religious and cultural values, Spanish-Catholic authorities in colonial New Granada sought to undermine the perceived instability of African populations, which they viewed as unruly, barbaric and uncivilized. Ultimately, Catholic Christianization of Africans in New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean was a project motivated by a desire to impose order and Spanish-Catholic hierarchy on a non-Spanish population. Christianization, in the minds of Spanish-Catholic authorities, would help to prevent slave insurrection, and promote order by, in their view, improving relations between enslaved Africans and slaveholders. Nevertheless, Africans would defy

Christianization efforts and continue religious and cultural practices from their homelands, leading inevitably to clashes between Spanish authorities and African practitioners.

This chapter will examine the mechanisms by which Spanish Catholic authorities sought to impose their idea of order on Africans in colonial New Granada, and Cartagena de Indias in particular. In order to do so, it will first examine the slave trade to Cartagena and the origins of enslaved Africans in New Granada, the conditions in which they lived, and their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. It will also examine seventeenth-century Catholic thinking on Africans, their culture and their humanity. In doing so, we can begin to understand Africans in colonial New Granada both as they actually existed and as Spanish authorities saw them.

Spanish-Catholic authorities in the early modern Atlantic world viewed their foremost role in regards to Africans living under their jurisdiction as one of Christianization. Church officials took a multi-pronged approach in its Christianizing mission towards Africans, and this chapter will examine the two major strategies employed by Catholic authorities in seventeenth-century New Granada. First, it will examine the work of Catholic priests who sought to minister to Africans, provide them with charitable relief, and educate them in Christian doctrine in order to secure conversions. Second, it will examine the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena, and its more forceful approach to Christianization. In examining both, this chapter will seek to understand the role that the Cartagena Inquisition played in the Catholic Church's larger Christianizing mission towards the African population of Spanish America and the Caribbean. Through Inquisition trials of Africans accused of *hechicería* (sorcery) and

brujería (witchcraft), Church officials sought to reeducate and Christianize Africans it saw as involved in diabolic, illegitimate religious activities. Despite such efforts, Catholic authorities fundamentally misunderstood African culture and religious beliefs, in the end failing to provide for the spiritual and medical needs of many Africans under its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, with these Christianization efforts in full swing, Africans continued to provide for their own needs through cultural expressions and religious practices that provided practical, spiritual and medical benefits.

The Origins of Africans in the Seventeenth-Century Spanish Atlantic World

The port city of Cartagena de Indias was one of the largest destinations of ships transporting enslaved Africans who would be distributed and sold across colonial Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, Panama, Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile and Argentina.⁴ Although the precise number is not known, hundreds of thousands of enslaved people were transported from Africa to Cartagena over the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, before slavery was formally abolished in Colombia in the early nineteenth century. Indeed, according to Spanish regulations, contracted merchants carrying shipments of enslaved people were required to pass through Cartagena, although

⁴ For overviews of slavery and the slave trade to and within Spanish America, see Linda A. Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2007); Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974); Herbert S. Klein and Ben Vinson, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007); Colin Palmer, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700-1739* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981); and Rachel Sarah O'Toole, "As Historical Subjects: The African Diaspora in Colonial Latin American History," *History Compass* 11, no. 12 (2013): 1094-1110.

they were free to sail to other ports to sell them off afterwards.⁵ By the seventeenth century, by one contemporary estimate, around 3,600 to 8,400 enslaved Africans arrived in Cartagena each year.⁶ Recent research by David Wheat provides a somewhat smaller figure, estimating that upwards of 74,000 enslaved Africans arrived in Cartagena between 1573 and 1640.⁷ While these captives eventually spread far and wide by way of the internal slave trade, many stayed in New Granada and, particularly, Cartagena and nearby towns. These enslaved people labored on *haciendas* (plantations), as domestic workers in households, and in the gold, silver and emerald mines of colonial Colombia.⁸ The mining system in New Granada, which was centered on the rich gold-mining provinces of Chocó, Popayán and Antioquia, demanded a great deal of labor, and as such Spanish elites relied on heavy imports of enslaved Africans to meet this need.⁹

These enslaved peoples originated in a number of locales in Africa, although the available sources present problems with precise determinations. The question of where exactly in Africa slaves in the Americas originated is complicated to answer, as ethnic identities noted in shipping records often reflected the African port from which an

⁵ William D. Phillips, Jr. "Slavery in the Atlantic Islands and the Early Modern Spanish Atlantic World," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, Volume 3: AD 1420-AD 1804*, eds. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 335.

⁶ Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale*, 65.

⁷ David Wheat, "The First Great Waves: African Provenance Zones for the Transatlantic Slave Trade to Cartagena de Indias, 1570-1640," *Journal of African History* 52 (2011): 2. Other important studies on the slave trade to Cartagena include Jorge Palacios Preciado, *La Trata de Negros por Cartagena de Indias*, (Tunja: Imprenta de la Universidad Pedagogia y Tecnologica de Colombia, 1973); Enriqueta Vila Vilar, *Hispanoamerica y El Comercio de Esclavos: Los Asientos Portugueses*, (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1977); and Germán Peralta Rivera, *El Comercio Negrero en América Latina (1595-1640)* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Federico Villareal-Editorial Universitaria, 2005) and Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale*.

⁸ Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale* 5; David L. Chandler, *Health and Slavery in Colonial Colombia* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1981), 1.

⁹ James Ferguson King, "Negro Slavery in New Granada," in *Greater America: Essays in Honor of Herbert Eugene Bolton*, eds. Adele Ogden and Engel Sluiter (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1945), 298-300.

enslaved person disembarked from, rather than where they were originally captured. The fact that enslaved people, once they arrived in America, were bought, sold, traded, at times escaped and recaptured, and otherwise transported throughout the Americas complicates this picture. Further compounding this is the fact that enslaved Africans were often smuggled in illegally by traders looking to avoid the burdensome taxes imposed by the Spanish crown.¹⁰ Therefore, it is difficult and oftentimes not possible to determine the precise ethnic, cultural or national origin of any given African tried by the Inquisition. While many African defendants were marked as belonging to a specific nationality by their surname, such as Caravalí, Congo, Angola, or Arará (Dahomean), it cannot be verified whether that is truly where the person was from, or if that simply was the location of the port where their slave ship disembarked.¹¹ Nevertheless, by identifying the general regions where Africans in early colonial New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean originated, we gain an understanding of which religious, medical and cultural traditions many of them would have drawn from in everyday life.

The seventeenth century marked the height of the Portuguese slave trade to Spanish America, due to Portugal's monopoly on Spanish *asientos*, or contracts authorizing the shipment of enslaved people to Spanish-controlled ports in the Americas.¹² The Portuguese dominance of the *asiento* system is notable for this research as it reveals, at least on a general scale, the origin of the majority of enslaved Africans in seventeenth-century Spanish America. Portuguese merchants and slavers had exclusive

¹⁰ Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale*, 144.

¹¹ There is always the possibility, as well, that Spanish officials might have recorded inaccurate ethnic markers out of ignorance, or that

¹² Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale*, 2, 18-19; Phillips, "Slavery in the Atlantic Islands," 335.

access to the West African coast per the Treaty of Tordesillas, the 1494 agreement between the Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms that divided up rights for colonial access to Africa, Asia and the Americas.¹³ A majority of recorded Portuguese slave voyages were from Angola and lower Guinea, although in the early seventeenth century there was a notable shift away from Guinea and towards Angola.¹⁴ Alonso de Sandoval, a Jesuit priest living in Cartagena in the early seventeenth century, noted that most enslaved Africans that came to the city originated in several ports in the West African Basin, the Cabo Verde and São Tomé islands off the coast of West Africa, and the port of Luanda on the northwest coast of Angola.¹⁵ Modern scholarship has also confirmed such origins, such as Wheat's study that details the origins of the slave voyages to Cartagena de Indias in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He demonstrates that slave traders took enslaved Africans to Cartagena in several "waves" of the transatlantic slave trade from 1570 through 1640, with the voyages originating in Upper and Lower Guinea and Angola.¹⁶ Additionally, Phillip D. Curtin's extensive analysis of Atlantic slave trade figures confirms Guinea and Angola as major areas of supply for the Portuguese slave voyages to Spanish America.¹⁷ The most recent data compiled in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database also supports this conclusion. Out of 426 recorded slave voyages to

¹³ "Treaty between Spain and Portugal concluded at Tordesillas; June 7, 1494," in *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and its Dependencies to 1648*, ed. and trans. Frances Gardiner Davenport (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1917), 86-93.

¹⁴ Phillip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 109; James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 26; Minchin and Newsom, *From Capture to Sale*, 4.

¹⁵ Alonso de Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery: Selections From De Instauranda Aethiopia Salute*, ed. and trans. Nicole Von Germeten, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2008), 50.

¹⁶ Wheat, "The First Great Waves," 1.

¹⁷ Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, 109

Cartagena in the seventeenth century, 172 originated in West Africa and 205 in West-Central Africa, with 49 originating from unknown ports in Africa. With 112 recorded voyages, the port of Luanda in Angola beats out any other single port in Africa by a wide margin for slave voyages to Cartagena during the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Finally, recent genetic and linguistic research of slave-descended communities in northern Colombia has confirmed a Congolese origin for at least some of the slaves who lived in and around Cartagena.¹⁹ While the precise origin of any given enslaved African brought before the Cartagena Inquisition in the seventeenth century is nearly always indeterminable, scholars have identified the general originating trends of Cartagena's African population as such.

Living Conditions Under Enslavement and the Need for Healing in African Communities

Once they arrived in Cartagena from West or West-Central Africa, enslaved Africans faced a host of difficult circumstances. Living conditions for enslaved people in colonial New Granada were harsh due to a number of factors, perhaps the most severe being the presence of diseases in Cartagena. As a major port city, Cartagena saw the coming and going of a variety of groups including merchants, slavers, pirates, bureaucrats, priests and dignitaries, not to mention enslaved Africans. Such a situation compounded the general unsanitary conditions common in a seventeenth-century city,

¹⁸ Voyages Database. 2013. *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. <http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/D7ifQ3fw>. See Appendix 1.

¹⁹ Naser Ansari-Pour, Yves Moñino, Constanza Duque, Natalia Gallego, Gabriel Bedoya, Mark G. Thomand and Neil Bradman, "Palenque de San Basilio in Colombia: genetic data support an oral history of a paternal ancestry in Congo," *The Royal Society* 283, no 1827 (2016): 1.

making Cartagena ripe for disease. As the lowest members of the social hierarchy and a group of people treated as chattel by slavers and slaveholders, enslaved Africans were especially susceptible to disease and had significantly limited access to medical treatments.²⁰

The physical conditions in which enslaved Africans found themselves is an especially important variable to consider in a discussion of the ritual practices of Africans in New Granada. Some of the most prominent cases of Africans tried by the Inquisition were men and women charged with *hechicería*, *brujería* or *sortilegio* for practicing healing rituals. Africans almost certainly invoked such healing rituals at least in part to deal with the physical tolls and health complications brought upon by their enslavement. From the start of their enslavement, Africans faced harsh conditions, and enslaved Africans would have a long-standing need for healing given their experience on the

²⁰ There is a wide literature on health and medicine as they related to slavery in the Americas and the Atlantic world, and recent years have seen an uptick in such studies. Among the first and most important studies of health and slavery is Kenneth Kiple, *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), which traces the flow of disease from West Africa to the Caribbean through the forced movement of enslaved Africans. For wider studies of health and medicine in the context of colonial Atlantic slave societies, see Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Richard Sheridan, *Doctors and Slaves: A Medical and Demographic History of Slavery in the British West Indies, 1680-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Juanita de Barros, Steven Palmer and David Wright, eds., *Health and Medicine in the Circum-Caribbean, 1800-1968* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); and Londa L. Schiebinger, *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017). For slavery and reproductive issues, see Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017) and Katherine Paugh, *The Politics of Reproduction: Race, Medicine, and Fertility in the Age of Abolition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). For health and slavery in the United States, see Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002) and Marli Frances Weiner, *Sex, Sickness, and Slavery: Illness in the Antebellum South* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2012). For colonial Colombia in particular see David L. Chandler, *Health and Slavery in Colonial Colombia* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1981). For the history of African medical practitioners in Cartagena and the Spanish Caribbean more widely during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries see Pablo F. Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Middle Passage. Indeed, medical issues were so common among newly arrived slaves that slave merchants often guaranteed a thirty-day “trial period” in which enslaved Africans who developed health issues could be brought back for treatment.²¹ However, considering the fact that enslaved people were often far removed from their point of sale, it is likely that many merchants were never taken up on this guarantee in the first place. It is almost assured, anyway, that this was simply a sales tactic and not an exercise born out of legitimate concern for slaves’ health. Slaveholders were content to keep enslaved people healthy enough to labor, if it was economically viable, but typically nothing further. Merchants and slaveholders often provided for medical services for the most severely ill slaves and those at risk of spreading epidemics, but this accounted for a very small percentage of their total expenditures.²² The only major initiative to treat enslaved people suffering from illness was the establishment of hospitals throughout Cartagena, but in reality these served more as quarantine quarters in order to prevent contagions from killing off entire populations of enslaved people and spreading to free populations.²³ Some Catholic priests also provided care for the sick, but the amount of enslaved Africans requiring treatment dwarfed their efforts.²⁴ Each time a new shipment of enslaved Africans arrived in Cartagena, the risk of disease and epidemics increased. This, of course, was not a great enough motivation to end the importation of enslaved Africans, which would have cut into the slave traders’ and holders’ desire for profit and exploitable labor. Any attempts on their part to treat or prevent disease were meant to guard their

²¹ Chandler, *Health and Slavery*, 102-103.

²² Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 235.

²³ Jane Landers, “The African Landscape of Seventeenth-Century Cartagena and Its Hinterlands,” in *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade*, eds. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Matt D. Childs and James Sidbury (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 149.

²⁴ John K. Thornton, “On the Trail of Voodoo: African Christianity in Africa and the Americas,” *The Americas* 44, no. 3 (1988): 272.

own profits, and not born out of any humanitarian desire to improve slaves' wellbeing. Often, responsibility for healing and the relief of suffering fell into the hands of enslaved Africans themselves, and this is where African religion and ritual practices came into play.

It is clear, then, that although conditions on the mainland were better than in the Middle Passage, the necessity for healing among enslaved Africans would not disappear after African disembarked from slave ships. Merchants inhumanely packed enslaved Africans retained in Cartagena for resale into holding pens that facilitated spread of disease.²⁵ Those sent into the interior did not have it much better. Travel to the interior areas where most mines and plantations were located was dangerous and full of health hazards due to mountainous terrain, valleys and rivers – all of which enslaved Africans traversed by foot, and often in chains. Injuries were common, food was scarce and disease spread easily.²⁶ Even after the journey to the interior, the conditions in New Granada on plantations and in the mines were still a harsh reality for the majority of enslaved Africans. Although typically associated with the Middle Passage, epidemic diseases were common among enslaved populations within New Granada. Outbreaks of smallpox, dysentery, measles, typhoid and typhus ravaged enslaved communities. Diphtheria, yellow fever, leprosy, syphilis and malaria were present as well, though they took fewer lives. Enslaved Africans also faced a change in climate, making them more prone to illness, and had to deal with the threat of poisonous plants, insects and animals. Work on the mines was arduous, and enslaved Africans were forced to labor for long hours with little rest. On plantations, enslaved Africans labored day and night working in

²⁵ Chandler, *Health and Slavery*, 97.

²⁶ Chandler, *Health and Slavery*, 106-107, 113, 119.

the fields, on dangerous sugar mills and raising cattle. Just as it was on the Middle Passage and during the march into the interior, enslaved Africans were often malnourished and received meager rations, leading to illnesses such as scurvy and niacin deficiency and, ultimately, starvation.²⁷ Slaveholders packed enslaved Africans into dirty, unsanitary housing situations, forcing them to labor for long hours and face malnourishment, disease and death.

The seventeenth-century Jesuit priest Alonso de Sandoval provides evidence of the wretched conditions in which enslaved Africans in Cartagena lived in his 1627 book *De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute (On Restoring Salvation to the Ethiopians)*, also published under the title *Treatise on Slavery*.²⁸ Sandoval claimed that so many enslaved Africans were sick and disease-ridden when they arrived in Cartagena that slavers would go “off to isolated places” to bury dead enslaved Africans *en masse* so that their diseases would not spread to Cartagena’s inhabitants. He also claimed that living enslaved Africans were disproportionately diseased, saying “so many of them are always so sick” that it could overwhelm missionaries such as himself who ministered to them. Sandoval placed the blame for the staggering level of illness among enslaved Africans on the neglect of slaveholders. According to Sandoval, slaveholders cared little whether their slaves were sick or healthy, and so made no effort to offer them medical care.²⁹

Sandoval also described the starvation and thirst enslaved Africans experienced in Cartagena. He wrote that Africans arriving to port were “very thirsty when they leave the slave ships” and that “their insides have been burned by the salt water.” He claimed that

²⁷ Chandler, *Health and Slavery*, 123-131, 133-136, 141, 149, 155, 165, 170-171.

²⁸ For an explanation of the different published editions of Sandoval’s book, see Nicole Von Germeten’s introduction in Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, xxix-xxx.

²⁹ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 100-101.

slaveholders “forced” Africans “to drink salt water” because they did not care to remember to provide enslaved Africans with fresh water, and they would be too terrified to request it. According to Sandoval, enslaved Africans were then “left to die of thirst,” with most of the those who died from thirst being “women and children.”³⁰ Later, Sandoval wrote that “most” Africans who arrived in Cartagena were already dying of thirst as soon as they left the slave ships.³¹ While Sandoval’s account may include exaggerations by the author, it is clear that widespread hunger, thirst and disease were present in enslaved communities in colonial New Granada. Given such conditions, it is no small wonder that enslaved Africans would turn to ritualistic practices brought from their homelands in order to address their dire need for remedies and healing. Even if they managed to attain manumission, freed Africans would be at a disadvantage in colonial New Granada when it came to obtaining medical care, due to the social restrictions they faced due to Spanish ideas on racial hierarchy. The use of healing rituals was one method by which Africans in New Granada were able to address their physical and medical needs.

Alonso de Sandoval and Spanish-Catholic Perceptions of African Subjects

Sandoval was no abolitionist, nor did he advocate for the liberation of Africans from slavery. In fact, he devoted significant portions of his book to justifying slavery and the rights of slaveholders to own human chattel.³² He did this, in part, to assure Catholic

³⁰ Ibid, 96.

³¹ Ibid, 126.

³² Ibid, 49-55. For more on Sandoval’s views on race, see Marcio Paulo Cenci, “African Slavery and Salvation in the *De Instauranda Aethiopum Salute* of Alonso de Sandoval S.J. (1577-1652),” *Patristica et Mediaevalia* 36 (2015): 75-89 and Juliana Beatriz Almeida de Souza, “Las Casas, Alonso de Sandoval and the defense of black slavery,” *TOPOI* 7, no. 12 (2006): 25-59.

authorities that his work was not heretical, so that it would be published and propagated to priests working in areas with large populations of enslaved Africans. However, he also did so because Sandoval genuinely took the typical stance of a white seventeenth-century Spaniard: blacks were inferior to whites, and their place in the social hierarchy was to serve their superiors. While he never took issue with the institution of slavery and went to great lengths to justify its existence, Sandoval nevertheless criticized the actions of European slaveholders and slave traders. Though he did not view the institution of slavery itself as inherently evil, Sandoval acknowledged many of the evils in the actual practice of slavery in the Americas, lamenting the mistreatment of enslaved Africans by slaveholders and the horrid conditions those Africans lived in. While Sandoval criticized slaveholders and their actions, his writings offer us a picture of Catholic thinking in regards to enslaved Africans in seventeenth-century Spanish America.³³

While Sandoval argued that slaves were obligated to serve their masters, he also argued that masters were also obligated to care for their slaves and address their physical and medical needs.³⁴ Sandoval was of the opinion that slavery could be a benign, even beneficial, institution, but the ways in which slaveholders in New Granada practiced it required serious reforms. First among these was greater education and proselytization of Christianity among Africans in New Granada, which Sandoval believed the Society of Jesus was best equipped to do. Second was a shift in how the Spanish treated Africans in

³³ My argument here is that Sandoval's thinking on slavery and the Catholic role in regards to enslaved Africans was more or less mainstream, at least amongst seventeenth-century Catholic authorities. The facts that numerous Catholic officials from New Granada endorsed Sandoval's book and that the Archbishop of Seville issued an edict ordering priests to minister to enslaved Africans in 1614 support this assertion.

³⁴ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 74-78. Note that while I typically use the term "slaveholder" instead of "master" and "enslaved person" rather than "slave," in certain cases when discussing Sandoval's opinions on the relationship between enslaved people and slaveholders, and the system of slavery itself, I will retain the language of "master" and "slave" as this is the language Sandoval himself used.

general. While Africans were inferior to Europeans in Sandoval's view, they deserved still to be treated as "men" rather than as animals; indeed, Sandoval castigated some slaveholders for treating enslaved Africans worse than the animals they owned.³⁵

Sandoval pointed out that enslaved Africans "sustain the Spanish through their hard work, sweat, and industry," and "make the Spanish rich," but in return, the Spanish mistreated and "abandon them."³⁶ Despite his support for the institution of slavery, Sandoval argued that enslaved persons living under Catholic authority deserved a degree of respect and did not deserve to live and die in squalor.

While Sandoval had ulterior motives for publishing his book, his writings reveal a great deal to us about the nature of slavery in New Granada, as well as about the ethnic makeup of enslaved Africans who came through Cartagena. Sandoval wrote that

There are four principal ports of origin for the black slaves who come to the port of Cartagena de Indias, which is the primary destination for slaves in the entire world. Slaves come here from the Guinean rivers and ports of the mainland, the island of Cape Verde, Sao Tome Island, and the port of Luanda or Angola as well as from some other unknown lands in both western and eastern Ethiopia.³⁷

He went on to describe various ethnic or national groupings for Africans in Cartagena, including Wolofs, Berbers, Mandingas, Fulos, Brans, Balantas, Biafaras, Nalus, Biojoes, Zapes, Caravalis, Ardas, Lucumis, Congos and Angolans.³⁸ As previously discussed, there are numerous issues in assigning ethnic markers to individual enslaved Africans in seventeenth-century Cartagena. Sandoval recognized this even in the seventeenth

³⁵ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 70.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 43-44. Sandoval frequently uses the term "Ethiopia" to refer to the whole of Africa.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 44-49.

century, writing about the group of Africans known as Caravali, saying that in one region of West Africa there were “forty or fifty towns made up of many different castes and black nations that are called Caravalis,” despite the fact that these people were not in actuality of Caravali descent.³⁹ Sandoval explained that slavers captured African men and women from the said towns and sold them as slaves alongside the Caravali. Due to this, the Spanish began to “incorrectly label them as Caravali.”⁴⁰ In spite of such ethnic confusion on the part of Europeans, Sandoval’s documentation of African ethnic groupings present in colonial Cartagena provides a picture, if somewhat distorted, of which African languages and cultural practices were present in the city.

Sandoval had a practical purpose in describing the ethnic origins of enslaved Africans brought to Cartagena. He and other Jesuits ministered directly to Africans and provided them with Catholic rites, as well as served as translators for Africans with little or no knowledge of Spanish before the Inquisition Tribunal.⁴¹ Sandoval highlighted these various African ethnicities and characteristics associated with them, such as tattoos and scarification, so that other Catholic ministers could identify what African language any given enslaved person was speaking and obtain the necessary translators.⁴² While Sandoval’s work, in part, sought to relieve the physical and mental suffering of enslaved Africans, his larger goal was their Christianization. Sandoval’s thinking and approach to

³⁹ Von Germeten identifies the Caravalis as Igbo people from coastal Nigeria. Rosanne Adderley has argued that “Caravali” referred not to an ethnic designation but rather to enslaved Africans who disembarked from the port of Calabar in southeastern Nigeria, and could belong to a number of ethnic groups. See Rosanne Marion Adderley, *“New Negroes From Africa”: Slave Trade Abolition and Free African Settlement in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean*, (Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 2006), 97-98.

⁴⁰ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 15.

⁴¹ Andrew Redden, “The Problem of Witchcraft, Slavery and Jesuits in Seventeenth-century New Granada,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90, no. 2 (2013): 230-231.

⁴² Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 102-105.

his African ministry was very much in line with Spanish-Catholic ideas about race, caste and the social hierarchy present in Spanish America.

The Cartagena Inquisition and Spanish-Catholic Hierarchy

In 1610, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition established an Office of the Holy Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias. This was the final Inquisition office established in Spain's American colonies, following Offices established in Mexico City and Lima, Peru in 1569.⁴³ The Cartagena Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition represented a very real and tangible expression of the Catholic Spanish hierarchy that governed the society of seventeenth century Spanish America. The society that Africans taken from Angola, Congo and the Guinea basin were thrust into by the mechanism of enslavement was a complex world of social interaction based on a strict hierarchy established by Church officials and the Spanish Crown, both of whom worked to enforce Catholic authority. Spanish society was stratified along many lines, the most important of which were race, caste and gender. The differences between *raza* (race) and *casta* (caste) are complex, but can be summarized as follows. *Raza* followed the medieval Iberian logic of *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity), or the presence or absence of Jewish or Muslim ancestry in an individual. *Casta*, on the other hand, was a spectrum determined by the amount of white, European heritage in one's lineage.⁴⁴ The outline of colonial era

⁴³ Robin Vose, "Beyond Spain: Inquisition History in a Global Context," *History Compass* 11, no. 4 (2013): 321. There were no official Inquisition offices in Portuguese America, but the Portuguese Inquisition entrusted ecclesiastical authorities in Pernambuco, Brazil, with inquisitorial powers, and cases could be transferred to the Lisbon Tribunal if need be. See James E. Wadsworth, "In the Name of the Inquisition: The Portuguese Inquisition and Delegated Authority in Colonial Pernambuco, Brazil," *The Americas* 61, no. 1 (2004): 19-52; Vose, "Beyond Spain," 320; and James H. Sweet, *Domingos Alvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

⁴⁴ My characterization of *raza* and *casta* in Spanish American society follows that outlined by Laura Lewis, whose work revolves around the Inquisition in New Spain (Mexico). See Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors:*

Spanish hierarchy does not follow a strict top-to-bottom approach, but generally fell as follows: white Christian Europeans were squarely at the top, *mestizos* (those of mixed white and Indian ancestry), Indians, blacks, *mulatos* (mixed African and European), and *zambos* (mixed Indian and African) below them, and practicing Jews, Protestants and Muslims at the very bottom.⁴⁵ *Conversos*, or “New Christians,” people of Jewish or Muslim (though typically Jewish) ancestry, but who had converted to Catholicism, occupied a sort of gray zone in the Spanish-Catholic hierarchy. They had access to the same privileges as other Catholic Europeans, but frequently came under suspicion of being false Christians, and could have their entire lives upended if brought up on related Inquisition charges. The intersecting issues of race and religion in early modern Iberian-Catholic thought formed just one facet of the complex system of hierarchy that the Inquisition sought to impose.

Further complicating the picture of Spanish hierarchy in America is the issue of gender. On one level at least, gender is simpler than *raza* and *casta*: in general, men always had a higher status than women in the social hierarchy. However, *raza* and *casta* complicated this, as, for example, white women were higher than black men, but female

Power, Witchcraft and Caste in Colonial Mexico (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 22-24. See also Maria Elena Martinex, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵ The terms *mulato* and *mulata* refer to individuals with mixed white and black ancestry. While the term (derived from the Spanish word *mulo*, meaning mule) is archaic and has heavily racist connotations, I have chosen to use it in this research for several reasons. First is its presence in the primary source records I utilize. The use of terms such as *mulato*, *mestizo*, and *zambo*, while they are archaic, makes the discussion of Spanish American hierarchy much simpler as these were the terms employed by the Spanish empire in their records when discussing mixed-race individuals. Additionally, the vast majority of scholars in the secondary literature on race in colonial Latin America use these terms, for the above reason. In order to keep this research consistent with the primary sources and in dialogue with the secondary literature, I believe the use of these terms is warranted, despite their problematic natures.

enslaved Africans were lower than male ones.⁴⁶ Women were generally considered less reasonable and more prone to fickle behavior than men were, and in need of male authority to guard their honor by way of limiting sexual expression.⁴⁷ The gendered aspect of colonial Spanish hierarchy is present in the Inquisition trials of African women, as they were more likely to face trial and sentencing than men were.⁴⁸ In one case, a group of five enslaved Africans – four women and a man – faced charges of witchcraft. The man was set free after refusing to testify, while the Tribunal tried, convicted, and sentenced the women.⁴⁹ Another series of cases, that of a supposed witches' coven led by the free black *curandera* Paula de Eguiluz, involved trials of numerous women, but only one man.⁵⁰ A complex system of hierarchy based on race, religion, caste and gender, then, permeated the very fabric of life for all residents of Cartagena de Indias, and the surrounding province of New Granada, in the seventeenth century. Through the Inquisition trials of African women and men accused of *brujería* and *hechicería*, we can see just how authorities imposed this hierarchy, and how African beliefs and actions pushed back against it.

⁴⁶ Sarah L. Franklin, *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), 126.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 61. For a detailed study of women's lives, the expression of female sexuality, and the limiting factors of the patriarchal Spanish hierarchy in colonial Cartagena, see Nicole Von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends: Sex, Race and Honor in Colonial Cartagena de Indias* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2013).

⁴⁸ See for example Anna María Splendiani, José Enrique Sánchez Bohórquez and Emma Cecilia Luque de Salazar, eds., *Cincuenta Años de Inquisición en el Tribunal de Cartagena de Indias, 1610-1660*, Vol. 2, (Santafé de Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 1997), 297-326. Out of 31 cases presented, only eight tried were men. The rest consisted of enslaved African women, *negras horras* (free black women), free and enslaved *mulata* and *mestiza* women, and two white women.

⁴⁹ Heather Rachelle White, "Between the Devil and the Inquisition: African Slaves and the Witchcraft Trials in Cartagena de Indias," *The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History* 8, no. 2 (2005): 1, 11-12.

⁵⁰ See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, Chapters 6 and 7. These cases will be explored in further detail in Chapter 3.

In the early seventeenth century, Cartagena de Indias was among the most cosmopolitan cities in the Americas. As a major trading hub, its inhabitants included Spaniards, Portuguese, Frenchmen, Italians, and Jews, as well as indigenous Americans, free and enslaved blacks, and numerous people of mixed heritage. The establishment of the Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena was likely as a response to the perceived presence of Jews in the city, who were the primary targets of the Inquisition. A general fear of the influence of foreigners contributed to this anxiety about a Jewish presence. Spanish authorities generally associated the Portuguese with Jewishness, and the Inquisition tried many Portuguese on suspicion of being secret Jews or Judaizers.⁵¹ By the 1630s, witchcraft trials (which were typically held against blacks, *zambos* and *mulatos*) were on more or less equal footing with trials for other crimes of faith. The system by which the Inquisition prosecuted crimes was complex and therefore deserves some attention, as this information will be imperative to understanding its trials of African religious practitioners as well as its overarching institutional goals.

The Cartagena Inquisition functioned more or less under the same assumptions that guided the Spanish Inquisition more broadly. Inquisitors in Cartagena followed the structure established by the Supreme Council of the Inquisition, and would have followed procedural conventions laid out in manuals approved by the Vatican.⁵² Once established in a city, an Inquisition Office would, theoretically, be open to hearing accusations and

⁵¹ Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1908), 460; Jonathan Schorsch, *Swimming the Christian Atlantic: Judeoconvertos, Afroiberians and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2009), 125; Ricardo Escobar Quevedo, "The Inquisition and Judaizers in Spanish America (1569-1649): Cartagena in an Era of Networking," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 224, no. 1 (2007): 47-59.

⁵² Martin Austin Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition: The World of the Censors in Early Mexico* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 40-42.

denunciations against individuals living in the vicinity.⁵³ Oftentimes, it is not particularly clear where accusations originated when studying documents from the Cartagena Inquisition, especially considering the fact that the identities of accusers were generally kept secret and are not mentioned in the trial transcripts. The most common exception to this rule was when a person accused of crimes made accusations themselves against others. The free black woman Paula de Eguiluz, for example, named numerous other women from Cartagena and the nearby town of Tolú as witches when the Inquisition brought her to trial for witchcraft and sorcery in the 1630s.⁵⁴ Typically, it seems, Inquisition officials sought out individuals involved in religious crimes who might have information about other practitioners that would come out during their trials. Though further research is needed into the exact mechanisms by which the Inquisition gathered such information, it is clear from the number of trial transcripts still available that Church officials had enough eyes and ears in the areas under the Cartagena Inquisition's jurisdiction to identify potential subjects for prosecution. Once identified, Inquisitors were vested with absolute power to detain, arrest, imprison and try these subjects.⁵⁵

After their arrest, defendants would be held in the secret prisons of the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition for a period of time that could range from a few days to months, depending on the details of their trials. Once the Tribunal was ready to hear a defendant's case, he or she would be brought before it to have the accusations against them read. The Tribunal would have consisted of two Inquisitors, a jurist or lawyer and a theologian, as

⁵³ For more details on how denunciations and accusations functioned under the Inquisition, see Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1997), 174-177.

⁵⁴ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 89-90, 122-129.

⁵⁵ John F. Chuchiak IV, "The Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Spain (Mexico): An Introductory Study," in *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. John F. Chuchiak IV (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 15.

well as a prosecuting attorney. In many cases, the defendant would also be provided council from a defense attorney, though these attorneys were limited in what aid they could provide their clients. In reality, their role as far as the Inquisition was concerned was to prepare the defendant to confess to and repent of their crimes.⁵⁶ After the Tribunal read the list of accusations, the defendant would be given a chance to respond to them; typically, if the defendant denied the charges they would be returned to the secret prisons to be tried again at a later date. Once the defendant admitted to and repented for their alleged crimes, the Tribunal would hand down a sentence in accordance with Inquisition regulations. In spite of the heavy-handed nature of the Inquisition and the limitations placed on defendants standing trial, in most cases defendants would be allowed to give testimony in any trial, whether or not they confessed to the charges against them. Due to this, trial records of African defendants tried by the Cartagena Inquisition provide an important picture of African religious life in the early modern Spanish Atlantic world.⁵⁷

Although its primary purpose was to stamp out heresy, Protestantism, Judaism and witchcraft, the overarching goal of the Inquisition was to impose order. For this reason, the Cartagena Tribunal addressed criminal, civil and bureaucratic infractions, in addition to crimes against the faith. Several cases demonstrate this. For example, the Inquisition tried the enslaved African Pedro de Angola, a *bozal* (unacculturated African)

⁵⁶ Oftentimes, African men and women tried by the Inquisition in Cartagena were even more vulnerable to influence by officials or misunderstandings in their testimonies due to language barriers. Africans without a sufficient grasp on Spanish had to have their testimonies translated, typically by Catholic priests who had experience ministering to African populations in the New World.

⁵⁷ For further information on the prosecutorial procedures of the Inquisition and its general structure, see Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, Ch. 7-9; Chuchiak, "Inquisition in New Spain," 1-54; Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 1, 107-122; and Fermina Álvarez Alonso, *La Inquisición en Cartagena de Indias Durante el Siglo XVII* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1999).

held by one Captain Antonio Núñez de Gramajo, for assaulting another enslaved person, and sentenced him to public shaming, lashes and galley service.⁵⁸ The priest Juan Francisco Guitarte faced trial for infractions including incorrectly rendering baptism services to infants.⁵⁹ Likewise, the Holy Office prosecuted Dominican friar Diego Márquez for authoring a book criticizing the actions of the Inquisition.⁶⁰ These cases are notable by the fact that they were considered *procesos criminales* (criminal trials), rather than *procesos de fe* (trials of faith), the latter category being that which accusations of heresy, witchcraft, Judaism and Protestantism alike would fall under. While the Inquisition in Spain focused almost exclusively on crimes of faith, the Inquisition in Spanish America included other crimes in its proceedings, as Spanish authorities had less firmly established regular civil and criminal courts in the colonies.⁶¹ In addition to criminal prosecutions, the Cartagena Inquisition oversaw civil disputes that occurred in territories under its jurisdiction. For example, in 1627 it initiated proceedings brought by the Cartagena Municipal Council against the city's governor Francisco de Rurga due to a dispute over jurisdiction.⁶² In another case from 1628, the Inquisition brought proceedings against Lorenzo de Cabrera, the governor of Cuba, for publicly making false

⁵⁸ Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Inquisición 1616, exp. 10, "Proceso criminal contra Pedro de Angola," (Madrid, Spain, 1627), folios 3, 32.

⁵⁹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 290.

⁶⁰ AHN, Inquisición 1617, exp. 6, "Proceso criminal contra fray Diego Márquez y otros," (Madrid, Spain): 1668-1670, folios 5-7.

⁶¹ The Spanish Inquisition, aimed at purifying Catholic society of heretical and non-Christian elements, was essentially an extension of two fifteenth century events: the Spanish *Reconquista* (the Christian kingdoms' war of conquest against Muslim territory) and the Crown's expulsion of Spain's Jewish population. See Helen Rawlings, *The Spanish Inquisition* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006) and Adolfo Kuznitzky, *Spanish Attitudes Toward Judaism: Strains of Anti-Semitism from the Inquisition to Franco and the Holocaust* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2014). For a contemporary account, see Stephen Dugdale, *A Narrative of Unheard of Popish Cruelties Towards Protestants Beyond Seas: or, A New Account of the Bloody Spanish Inquisition, Published as a Caveat to Protestants* (London, 1680).

⁶² AHN, Inquisición 1597, exp. no. 19, "Competencias entre el Tribunal de la Inquisición de Cartagena de Indias y el Cabildo Municipal de Cartagena" (Madrid, Spain, 1627), folio 1.

statements.⁶³ The Inquisition in Spanish America, and in particular in Cartagena de Indias, had a wider application than its European predecessor did. In conducting criminal, civil and religious trials, the Holy Office of the Inquisition sought to impose order based on the colonial Catholic-Spanish hierarchy in the religious and secular realms, as well as in both private and public life.⁶⁴ This desire for order on the part of Catholic authorities in Spanish America frequently clashed with African beliefs and practices, most prominently in the cases of popular healers of African descent, who this study will examine at length in its latter chapters.

Conclusion: The Inquisition as a Tool of Christianization

The mission of the Catholic Church in the Americas at the start of Spanish colonization was, largely, to Christianize its non-Christian population – chiefly, indigenous Americans. The introduction of enslaved Africans to the Spanish territories expanded the mission of Catholic authorities. Church officials viewed Africans as rational beings, capable of accepting Christianity. Sandoval argued forcefully that Africans were *gente de razón*, writing that they were not “beasts” nor should they “be considered infants,” but rather Christians ought to treat Africans as “adult men” in need of baptism and religious instruction.⁶⁵ Sandoval argued that Africans “possess free

⁶³ AHN, Inquisición 1597, exp. no. 20, “Competencias entre el Tribunal de la Inquisición de Cartagena de Indias y el Gobernador de Cuba” (Madrid, Spain, 1628), folio 2, r1-r9.

⁶⁴ For a study of the Inquisition as a force of order in another part of Catholic-Iberian America, see James E. Wadsworth, *Agents of Orthodoxy: Honor, Status and the Inquisition in Colonial Pernambuco, Brazil* (Lanhan, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007).

⁶⁵ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 109. Church officials did not consider American Indians, on the other hand, as *gente de razon*. For this reason, by the seventeenth century the Inquisition Offices in the Americas rarely brought Indians to trial. In Mexico, ecclesiastical authorities charged with inquisitorial powers by the Supreme Council brought Nahua religious leaders to trial for crimes such as heresy, blasphemy and witchcraft in the early-to-mid-1500s. However, by the time the Inquisition established the official Mexican

will...like any other human being,” supporting his claim with the fact that Africans engaged in warfare, marriage and trade just as Europeans did.⁶⁶ Indeed, Catholic authorities viewed Africa as a region where Christianity had once been common. It is true that certain regions in Africa, such as modern-day Ethiopia, had been home to significant populations of Christians for hundreds of years by Sandoval’s time. Unable to differentiate Africans in general from these limited pockets of African Christians, many Spanish Catholics viewed Africans as a people exposed to Christianity in the past but later led astray by the Devil. Sandoval exemplified this way of thinking when he wrote that Ethiopians and other groups of Africans had “been Christian since ancient times” but had “degenerated” since, Sandoval claimed, they “have no priests.”⁶⁷ Sandoval demonstrated a common line of thinking among Spanish Catholic authorities in the seventeenth century, who viewed Africans as a people deceived by the Devil to abandon Christianity long ago. In addition, he emphasized the necessity, in his view, of priests such as himself in the task of Christianizing Africans under Spanish jurisdiction in the Americas.

As the Catholic logic of the seventeenth century positioned Africans as rational humans who had fallen away from the Christian faith, it also negated the history and legitimacy of traditional African religious beliefs. Catholic authorities and thinkers viewed African religious practices as sorcery, witchcraft and devil-worship. As Vicente

Tribunal in 1569, such trials became rare if nonexistent in an Inquisitorial context, though Church authorities continued to combat what they saw as religious offenses in indigenous communities through other means. See Richard E. Greenleaf, “The Mexican Inquisition and the Indians: Sources for the Ethnohistorian,” *The Americas* 34, no. 3 (1978): 315-344; Serge Gruzinski, *Man-gods in the Mexican Highlands: Indian Power and Colonial Society, 1520-1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989); and Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁶⁶ Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 110.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 87.

Imperial, a Jesuit *predicador* from Bogotá wrote in his endorsement of Sandoval's book, "the devil...uses his craftiness and schemes to impede the conversion of men," arguing that Satan stood in the way of Africans learning the truth of the Christian faith. Imperial believed that the mission of Church officials in regards to enslaved Africans was "to free them from the ugly blackness of sin."⁶⁸ Even those most sympathetic to the plight of enslaved Africans, such as Sandoval, shared this anti-African mindset that mitigated African culture and relegated African religion to the realm of sin and evil. In a letter to the head of the Society of Jesus, Sandoval wrote that Africans could "be washed clean by the purity and whiteness of Christ's blood."⁶⁹ Sandoval characterized all African religious practices as inspired by the Devil, arguing that African religious practitioners drew power from offering sacrifices to demons and used "witchcraft and concoctions to kill people whenever they please."⁷⁰ Sandoval wrote that in the port town of Cacheu in modern-day Guinea-Bissau, many Africans had been "successfully baptized," but despite their baptisms, "these black Christians have little knowledge of Christianity and interact with gentiles." Sandoval argued that because of this lack of religious education and interaction with non-Christian Africans, African Christians would "easily return" to non-Catholic rites and rituals, or traditional African religion. He claimed the phenomenon was especially prominent among traditional African religious practitioners whom he called "*gabazones*, or sorcerers." Writing of the religious activities of *gabazones*, Sandoval claimed their rituals involved performing "prophesies and spells they learned from Satan."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 31-32.

⁷¹ Ibid, 25.

Clearly, seventeenth-century Spanish Catholics considered traditional African religion only with disdain. Spanish Catholics associated both traditional West African religious practices and Islam, which by the seventeenth century had a significant following in West Africa, with devilry. While Catholic authorities in Spanish territories such as New Granada viewed Africans as possessing some degree of rational thinking, they simultaneously viewed them as a fallen people who the Devil had led astray from the Christian faith. Nevertheless, this did not mean that Africans were unsalvageable in the view of the colonial Spanish Church.

Sandoval clearly viewed Africans as a people who Catholic authorities such as himself could convert to Christianity and worked towards this goal. Writing of Angolans, he describes them as a “docile” and easily Christianizable people because “they do not worship idols” and “believe in a god in the sky.”⁷² Other Catholic priests operating in Spanish America shared Sandoval’s views. Vicente Imperial, for example, argued that Catholics should “set their minds to instructing” Africans so that they could enjoy the “spiritual succor” other Catholics had access to.⁷³ Antonio Agustín, Rector of the College of Cartagena and *calificador* (theological officer) of the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition, wrote that enslaved Africans were “capable of receiving” the holy sacraments and were “in great need of salvation.”⁷⁴ In 1614, the Archbishop of Seville issued an edict ordering Catholic priests to “find the black slaves in your districts” so that they could baptize and instruct the enslaved Africans in “the Christian Doctrine.” Priests who failed to follow through with the Archbishop’s edict faced excommunication, evidence

⁷² Sandoval, *Treatise on Slavery*, 42.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 5.

that high-level Catholic authorities in Spain saw the Christianization of enslaved Africans not only as achievable, but also as a priority in their ministries.⁷⁵ Sandoval and other Catholic priests in Cartagena attempted to Christianize enslaved Africans through ministry, charity, education and baptism. However, this was not the only way in which Church officials sought to bring Africans under its spiritual fold. The Holy Office of the Inquisition played a fundamental role in the attempts to Christianize Africans living in Spanish America in the seventeenth century.

Ultimately, the role the Catholic Church played in the lives of enslaved Africans in colonial New Granada was one of a Christianizing force. As Asunción Lavrin has pointed out when speaking of the Spanish Inquisition more widely, Inquisitorial law was understood by Church officials as “necessarily intolerant for the benefit of higher ends: the salvation of Christian souls.”⁷⁶ When dealing with the African population under their jurisdiction, the mindset of Cartagena Inquisition officials fit into this larger mission of Church officials. The Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena played an enormous part in the Catholic Christianizing mission towards Africans in Spanish America, seen in the work of Sandoval. By bringing African men and women accused of *brujería* and *hechicería* to trial, the Tribunal sought to uncover the leaders of the African religious communities in Cartagena, as well as New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean as a whole. Unsanctioned religious activity, whether it was Protestant Christianity, Judaism, or traditional African religious practices, would have been a major concern for Inquisition officials in Cartagena. Nevertheless, a major difference in the tactics the

⁷⁵ Ibid, 159-160.

⁷⁶ Asunción Lavrin, “Foreword,” in *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: A Documentary History*, ed. and trans. John F. Chuchiak IV (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), xiii.

Inquisition used against Jews and Protestants and those it used when dealing with African religious practitioners existed.

Catholic officials in Spanish America saw Protestants and, especially, Jews as religious populations completely incompatible with Catholicism, and the only death sentences handed out by the Cartagena Tribunal were for these offenses. On the other hand, the majority of Africans convicted by the Tribunal in Cartagena were given the least severe form of punishment doled out by the Inquisition, *abjuraciones de levi*. There were three levels of sentences the Inquisition enforced: *abjuraciones de levi*, *abjuraciones de vehementi* and *abjuraciones de violenta sospecha*. The type of sentence given was dependent on the severity of the crime committed, similar to how our own legal system distinguishes between infractions, misdemeanors and felonies. Typically, the Cartagena Tribunal punished Africans convicted of participating in witchcraft and sorcery by sentencing them to public shaming, lashes, banishment from the place where their offenses took place, reeducation and public service such as work in the Cartagena city hospitals. While the Inquisition displayed zero tolerance for non-Catholic religious practices, the punishments it gave to African religious practitioners were of a much different caliber than those it gave to other religious offenders. While the Tribunal did not hesitate to use torture and corporal punishment against convicted African religious practitioners, it also sought to reeducate them with Catholic teachings and, most significantly, to keep them under its supervision. Catholic priests who ran the city hospitals, for example, would have overseen African *curanderos* (popular healers) sentenced to work in them. In any case, Africans brought to trial in Cartagena from the vast reaches of the Spanish Caribbean and New Granada would have found themselves in

much closer proximity to one of the centers of Spanish-Catholic authority in Spanish America.

By placing African religious practitioners under its auspices, dissuading the practice of African religion, and encouraging African conversion to Catholicism through a number of means, the Cartagena Inquisition sought to Christianize Africans under its jurisdiction. The role that the Inquisition played in regards to Africans in colonial Spanish America was one that fit squarely into a larger effort on the part of Spanish and Catholic authorities of Christianization and forced assimilation of enslaved Africans into Spanish cultural and social norms. By pursuing a Christianizing mission in Cartagena, as well as the wider jurisdictions of New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean in their entirety, Catholic authorities sought to impose their version of social and religious order. Nevertheless, in spite of the charitable works of priests such as Sandoval, authoritarian Christianization failed to account for much of the immediate social, medical and physical needs of Africans. This failure was inevitable, given the fundamental misunderstanding of African peoples, cultures and religions held by Spanish-Catholic authorities. This inability on the part of Church officials to provide for the needs of its African subjects contributed, in part, to the continuation of African religious expression, as well as more direct African resistance to Spanish rule.

Chapter 2

To the City from the Coasts: Early Modern Afro-Colombian Religious Life and Inter-Caribbean African Ritual Knowledge Transmission



Map 4. Jan Jansson, *Insulae Americanae in Oceano Septentrionali*. Seventeenth-century map of the West Indies. Includes Spain’s Caribbean territories, as well as the Caribbean coast of New Granada. Published in Amsterdam, c. 1650.

In 1654, an enslaved Angolan woman named Isabel was brought from Spanish Jamaica to Cartagena de Indias to face Inquisitorial trial on charges of acting as a “sorceress and divineress.” Eight witnesses stood before the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias and accused Isabel of working with a snake demon and using “herbs, waters, stones and other things” in divination and sorcery rituals.⁷⁷ In her first trial, she claimed that she learned these rituals from a fugitive slave she lived with in the mountains of Jamaica after fleeing after having been physically abused by her slaveholder. She admitted that the stories of her performing rituals were true, and that she had completed them using gourds, sticks and stones, as was taught to her by the fugitive slave. This use of herbs, gourds and sticks in her rituals is a common theme found in cases of black *curanderos* in Cartagena and its Caribbean surroundings. Her claim that she learned such rituals from another enslaved African connects Isabel to the wider tradition of African-based *curanderismo* found in the seventeenth-century Spanish Caribbean. However, Isabel also claimed that the rituals she learned included prayers to God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and incorporated the use of a silver crucifix.⁷⁸ As no other witnesses testified to having seen Isabel engage in Christian practices, Isabel’s claims were unverifiable, at least in the Inquisition’s eyes. Meanwhile, she fully admitted to and had multiple witnesses claiming to have witnessed her participation in *hechicería* rituals, likely based in African religious practices. After conferring on her case, the Tribunal found her guilty of divination, and sentenced her to ten public lashes and banished her from Jamaica for six years.⁷⁹ The sentence of the Tribunal was

⁷⁷ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 408.

⁷⁸ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 409.

⁷⁹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 409. It is notable that, while accused of being an *hechicera* (sorceress), Isabel’s official sentence convicted her of being a *sortilega* (fortune teller or diviner).

consistent within the context of the broader Spanish American Inquisition when adjudicating suspected cases of *hechicería* and *brujería*. Isabel's sentence, like that given to many other *negros* and *mulatos* convicted of crimes against the faith, was an *abjuración de levi*, the lightest form of punishment the Inquisition gave.⁸⁰ Rather than sentence her to death, prison or extreme torture, Isabel was reprimanded, sentenced to physical punishment, and prevented from returning to the place where she had originally learned her rituals. This was likely an attempt to draw Isabel closer to Catholic-Spanish religious and cultural hierarchy, which was much more firmly established in Cartagena than Jamaica. Jamaica was a contested – and highly profitable – island whose control changed hands between Spain and England during the seventeenth century.⁸¹ Cartagena was much more firmly under Spanish control, heavily fortified and well-guarded. The Cartagena Tribunal, in taking this course of action in the sentencing of Isabel as well as many other enslaved and free Africans and *mulatos* convicted of *brujería*, *hechicería*, and *sortilegio*, attempted to enforce Catholic doctrine and Spanish authority and order by refashioning what they understood as religious imperfection among Africans.⁸² In addition, the Tribunal seemingly sought to sow discord among the community of African religious practitioners by displacing its members.

⁸⁰ There were three levels of sentences the Inquisition enforced: *abjuraciones de levi*, *abjuraciones de vehementi* and *abjuraciones de violenta sospecha*. The type of sentence given was dependent on the severity of the crime committed, not dissimilar to how our own legal system distinguishes between infractions, misdemeanors and felonies. For more on the structure of Inquisition sentencing, see Fernández Giménez, *La Sentencia Inquisitorial*, 171-174.

⁸¹ Isabel's trial, in 1654, happened just before the English takeover of Jamaica in 1655. See Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Conquest of Jamaica: Oliver Cromwell's Bid For Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

⁸² I will, for the purposes of this study, use the terms "African" and "African-descended" people, as well as "people of color" interchangeably, noting that "people of color" can also be used to refer to other non-whites (not of African descent) in other contexts. I will also use the descriptive terms "black" and "African" in reference to specific subgroups (ie, "black religious practitioners"). For simplicity's sake, these terms will be used interchangeably to refer to people of African descent in the Americas, whether *negro* or *mulato* and/or *bozal* or *ladino*.

Isabel was far from the only person of African descent removed from a Caribbean locale and transplanted to Cartagena for trial, only to be kept there, or otherwise removed from their place of residence, for an extended period after conviction. Enslaved Africans and free blacks from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and all along the Caribbean coast of New Granada (as well as, to a lesser extent, its interior regions) arrived in Cartagena to face a litany of charges including heresy, blasphemy, sorcery, witchcraft, divination and herbalism. As Africans and their descendants traced their lineages back to the Old World and ostensibly received a Christian education, the Inquisition considered them to be *gente de razón*, or rational people under its jurisdiction.⁸³ Church officials viewed *hechicería* and *brujería* as grave crimes against the faith, but they considered those Africans who engaged in these practices as redeemable. The Inquisition, through its trials and sentencing of these people, attempted to reform many black ritual practitioners into devout Catholics. Inquisitorial prosecution, then, was not only a judicial tool but also an instructional one, albeit a form of instruction that sought to maintain Catholic religious orthodoxy and Spanish authority. A key strategy that the Inquisition used in this campaign was to require convicts either to remain in Cartagena or otherwise not return to the areas where they resided and had learned or practiced their arts. This would, on the surface, keep them closer to oversight of the Inquisition, with the hope that this would make them less likely to reoffend – and if they did, the Tribunal would be close by to try them again. Even if authorities did not keep a convict within the city limits of Cartagena,

⁸³ This is clear from the fact that the Inquisition tried Africans, just as they did people of European descent. This is contrast to indigenous Americans (*indios*), who were not tried by the Cartagena Inquisition, as they were not considered *gente de razón*.

they would be cut off from the surroundings in which they committed their “crimes.” The Inquisition’s logic was clear. Nevertheless, its actions had unintended consequences.

People of color, both enslaved and free, had a relatively high level of freedom of movement and association in seventeenth-century Cartagena, as compared to other colonial slave societies in the Americas. While the harsh realities of slavery, including abuse, exploitation and death, cannot be overlooked, it is still the case that throughout Cartagena *negros* and *mulatos* were able to travel, work and associate with others, including other people of African descent. This relative freedom coupled with the Holy Office’s insistence on trying black ritual practitioners from around the Caribbean in its courts turned seventeenth-century Cartagena into a nexus of African religious and ritual knowledge. This chapter will examine the religious lives of Africans in the seventeenth-century Caribbean, with a focus on Cartagena and its surrounding areas along the coast of New Granada, though it will also factor in the interior regions of New Granada when necessary. It will demonstrate how enslaved and free Africans in and around Cartagena engaged in rituals and religious rites drawn from their African cultural heritage. Furthermore, it will show how Cartagena served as a Caribbean focal point for African religious experiences and practices, in part due to its role as a major slave trading entrepôt and in part due to the actions of the Inquisition, which meant to stamp out these very practices.

In order to properly examine the transference of African religious knowledge in the seventeenth-century Spanish Caribbean, we must first establish what sort of religious environment existed in this time and place among Africans. This will be a complex task that involves taking into account Africans’ traditional religious practices as well as their

relationship with Christianity. In order to avoid overcomplicating this discussion, it will focus primarily on the religious landscape of Africans in Cartagena, though it will not exclude the rest of the Spanish Caribbean and New Granada when necessary.

Throughout Spanish and Portuguese America, Africans, forcibly taken in droves from their homelands to serve as forced labor, continued the religious and cultural practices of their homelands. This was particularly apparent in areas with large concentrations of Africans, such as colonial Brazil, Haiti and Colombia.⁸⁴ New Granada, and in particular the port city of Cartagena de Indias and its surrounding areas on the northern coast, was a major hub of the slave trade, and home to a huge population of Africans, both enslaved and free.⁸⁵ There, of course, is no one singular African religion or culture, as Africa consists of numerous nations, ethnic groups, and religious and cultural traditions. The vast majority of Africans taken to Spanish and Portuguese America did, however, share some common cultural, linguistic and religious ties, as most of them came from West and West-Central Africa. Africans living and laboring in New Granada commonly observed religious rites, rituals and other cultural practices from African traditions and cultural groups such as Yoruba, Akan, Bantu and Vodun. Understanding the origins of the African population of colonial Colombia is crucial, then, to

⁸⁴ The literature has focused much more heavily on Brazil, Haiti and other Caribbean locales. Apart from a handful of Colombian historians, and some recent works from the United States, the social, cultural and religious lives of New Granada's Africans has received comparatively less study.

⁸⁵ Free blacks (*negros horros* or *negros libres*), although outnumbered by enslaved Africans, were relatively common in Spanish America compared to Anglo-America. Church policy considered manumission a gracious act, and it was not unheard of for slaveholders to set enslaved persons free for this reason. Additionally, enslaved Africans in New Granada had the legal right to purchase their own freedom, and many enslaved Africans held side jobs or worked over religious holidays and in order to save enough money to buy their freedom from their slaveholder. See William F. Sharp, "Manumission, *Libres*, and Black Resistance: The Colombian Chocó 1680-1810," in *Slavery and Race Relations in Latin America*, ed. Robert Brent Toplin, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 95.

understanding what religious and cultural backgrounds they likely drew from when conducting ritual practices.

The thousands of Africans who resided in Cartagena originated from a number of locales in Africa, although the available sources present problems with precise determinations. Documentary sources reveal that the majority of enslaved Africans in Spanish America originated in West and West-Central Africa, including the regions of Guinea, Angola and Congo.⁸⁶ It is unsurprising, then, that the African populations of Spanish America, including Cartagena and the wider Spanish Caribbean, would derive religious practices from these traditions. Despite the difficulties in assigning specific ethnic identities, and therefore cultural and religious practices, to specific groups of slaves in one or another locale in the Americas, understanding the religious cultures from which they likely drew, is essential to understanding the African rituals, beliefs and practices described by the African men and women brought to trial by the Inquisition. The majority of Guinean, Angolan and Congolese slaves in Spanish America belonged to a huge variety of ethnic groups, including Wolof, Yoruba, Fon and Yombe, among others. When taken to the Americas, these African men and women brought with them distinct languages, cultures, and religious practices. It is hard to say with certainty, however, what specific traditions and practices were present in any single enslaved community but we can see elements of specific practices that can be traced to particular origins. Charles Henry Lea, a nineteenth century historian of witchcraft and the

⁸⁶ In the colonial period, the term "Guinea," also called the "Slave Coast," referred to a large stretch of West Africa along the Atlantic coast, a region that includes the modern day countries of Ghana, Benin, Senegal, Togo, Liberia and the eastern portions of Nigeria, among others. See Wheat, "The First Great Waves," 1-22.

Inquisition, characterizes the religion of Africans in New Granada as “Obeah,” though this is a broad term referring to African religious practices in the Americas, particularly the Caribbean, based on the cosmology and healing arts of Bantu culture.⁸⁷ Yoruba religion, practiced by many enslaved people taken from the Slave Coast in West Africa, is among the best-preserved African traditions in the Americas.⁸⁸ Similarly, the West African Vodun religion, centered in Benin, was likely the basis of beliefs of many enslaved Africans brought to the Americas from West Africa. Though the specifics vary, Obeah, Vodun and Yoruba religion, as well as traditions from West Central African areas like Angola and Congo, all share certain common features, such as large pantheons of deities and, importantly, emphases on healing.⁸⁹ In the New World, Africans drew from these traditions to provide healing in a physical sense, both in their own communities and to others. In New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean, African popular healers, or *curanderos*, frequently used healing rituals and crafted potions in their efforts to relieve the physical ailments of other Africans, as well as white Spanish clients. Crucially, much of traditional African religious practice does not distinguish between medicine and magic.⁹⁰ This is important, as African *curanderos* were well known in and around

⁸⁷ Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, 463; Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, eds., *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 472-473. For more on the concept, history and problems of “Obeah,” see Jerome Handler, “Slave Medicine and Obeah in Barbados, ca. 1650 to 1834,” *New West Indies* 74 (2000): 57-90; Jerome Handler and Kenneth Bilby, “Obeah: Healing and Protection in West Indian Slave Life,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 38 (2004): 153-183; Diana Paton and Maarit Forde, eds., *Obeah and Other Powers: The Politics of Caribbean Religion and Healing* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Kelly Wisecup, “Knowing Obeah,” *Atlantic Studies* 10, no. 3 (2013): 406-425; and Walter C. Rucker, “‘Earth from a Dead Negro’s Grave’: Ritual Technologies and Mortuary Realms in the Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast Diaspora,” in Rebecca Shumway and Trevor Getz, eds., *Slavery and Its Legacy in Ghana and the Diaspora* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2017): 58-80.

⁸⁸ Asante and Mazama, *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, 738-739. See also Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, eds., *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁸⁹ Asante and Mazama, *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, 472-473, 691-694, 738-739.

⁹⁰ Geoffrey Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1962), 113. This is

Cartagena, and the Inquisition brought several notable healers to trial on charges of witchcraft and sorcery. Additionally, much of West and West Central African religious practice incorporates the sacrifice of animals and use of sacred plants and herbs.⁹¹ The animal and plant life Africans found in the Americas was similar enough to what they knew back home that they were able to successfully recreate rituals that were, if not identical to those in Africa, derived from them and were close enough in nature that they can be considered a recreation of African practice in a new setting.⁹² This focus on sacred use of plants, herbs and animals is present in the Inquisition testimonies of such African healers.

Additionally, a common feature of the religious philosophy of many West African peoples is the overlap between the physical and the spiritual worlds. The spirit world, and by extension spiritual beings, are accessible to humans through the process of rituals and divinations, which are used to both predict the future and identify evil agents in the physical world.⁹³ A ritual specialist in Bantu, Yoruba or Vodun traditions would, then, see him or herself as having access to a spiritual world that could provide material benefits, such as healing. This conception, common among the traditions Africans in New Granada would be most familiar with, stands in contrast to the Christian theology that governed religious and social life in Spanish America. In Christian cosmology (or, at

true of most systems of healing in the seventeenth century, whether African, American or European. The delineation between magic and medicine, and the modern, scientific understanding of medicine in the Western mold, would not come into being until later. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the African traditions which New World African *curanderos* would draw from saw medicine and healing as occurring within a magical context.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Isichei, *The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 271.

⁹² Manuel Barcia, *West African Warfare in Bahia and Cuba: Soldier Slaves in the Atlantic World, 1807-1844* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 84.

⁹³ William C. Van Norman, *Shade Grown Slavery: The Lives of Slaves on Coffee Plantations in Cuba* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2013), 94-95.

least, the Catholic variety present in the colonial era) a defined spiritual and physical world both exist, just as in West African traditions. However, the divide is much starker. God is entirely separate from Man, and humans cannot truly “know” God. God’s thoughts, desires and motivations exist on an entirely divine plane, inaccessible to humans. But in African cosmology, this is not so. Humans and gods have the same motivations and desires; humans and deities can act in similar ways, with similar motivations, and humans have the capability to fully understand those deities.⁹⁴ While overlap between African and Christian (as well as indigenous American) beliefs certainly occurred in colonial Spanish America, it is important to note these key distinctions.

These are, of course, generalizations, as there is no one “African” religion, and even within distinct traditions such as Yoruba religion or Vodun there are bound to be variations. Nevertheless, there are certainly common themes among the different rituals and religious traditions brought by enslaved Africans to the Americas, including to New Granada. In everyday life, these African rituals sometimes found acceptance even among Cartagena’s European population, who at times sought out African healers for their own purposes. For example, in 1647 and 1648 Don Fray Cristóbal Pérez de Lazarraga, the Bishop of Cartagena, hired noted *curandera* (and convicted *bruja*) Paula de Eguiluz to provide medical treatments.⁹⁵ Paula had a long history of working for wealthy white clients, demonstrated by Inquisition charges brought against her in 1632 based on accusations from several wealthy white women who had employed her for services in “love magic.”⁹⁶ Paula, however, was but one of many African healers working in

⁹⁴ Van Norman, *Shade Grown Slavery*, 97.

⁹⁵ Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, 167-173.

⁹⁶ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 88-92.

Cartagena and the surrounding areas, many of whom would go on to provide services to white clients. Despite Church prohibitions on such practices, in everyday life many white Spaniards, even elites, were willing to forgo such regulations and tap into the sphere of African healing magic that existed in their world. In the end, many Europeans viewed African healing practices as being effective in the treatment of medical ailments. The Inquisition, on the other hand, did not care whether these practices were effective or not. Instead, it saw such activities as a stain on Spanish-Catholic society and a threat to Spanish authority, hierarchy and order. Thus, the Tribunal brought African *curanderos* to trial on charges of witchcraft, sorcery and divination, in an attempt to stamp out such practices from Catholic society and transform Africans into Christian subjects. In this way, African religious practice clashed with European normalizing tendencies, and any official sanction of such practices did not exist. When brought before the Inquisition, any *curandero* convicted of performing African healing rituals or other forbidden practices faced only condemnation.

While Spanish Catholic authorities deemed the religious practices of Africans to be *hechicería* and *brujería*, African testimonies of ritual activities quite often recall healing practices, ritual dances and divinations rooted in African cultural and religious traditions.⁹⁷ African religious practices provided African men and women in New Granada significant social benefits, wherein public rituals and shared healing experiences

⁹⁷ *Brujería* and *hechicería* are often used interchangeably, but there is a key distinction, at least in the context of seventeenth century Inquisition trials. *Brujería* refers to witchcraft practiced in a group or coven, usually one whose members had made a pact with the Devil or another spiritual being. *Hechicería* refers to magic done by an individual, usually involving divination rituals, fetish objects, and the use of natural sources, especially plants and animals. Other terms of note include *sortilegio*, which refers to divination on its own, and *yerbatería*, which refers to healing rituals and medicine based in the use of herbs and herbal potions. For more on the distinction between the two, see Diana Luz Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, Brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: Un Duelo de Imaginarios* (Bogota: Editorial Universidad Nacional, 1994), 86-90.

solidified fictive kinship bonds and allowed Africans to both subvert Catholic European authority and forge their own, distinctively African culture in the streets of Cartagena and on the mines and plantations of New Granada and the wider circum-Caribbean. At the same time, Inquisition officials viewed such African practices as both a challenge to Spanish hierarchy and as intolerable under Church doctrine. In these ways, African religion, healing and ritual practices represented a very real confrontation with the wider Catholic European hierarchy that governed the society of Spanish America in the seventeenth century.

Clearly, then, Africans in seventeenth-century Cartagena, and Spanish territories more widely, typically had a strained relationship with Christianity. Despite the efforts of a few priests in Cartagena who worked to minister to its African population, most would probably have a passing, at best, understanding of Christianity.⁹⁸ Africans from the region of Congo would possibly have had a better understanding of Christianity, as there was already a Christian missionary presence in that area by the seventeenth century. Congo was a minority supplier of enslaved Africans to Cartagena in the seventeenth century, however; the majority of enslaved Africans were taken from Guinea and Angola. Some knowledge of Christianity among newly arrived enslaved Africans in Cartagena may have existed, then, but certainly would have been limited and likely of second-hand nature. The total number of newly arrived Africans with any knowledge of Christianity would almost certainly have been very low. The vast majority of exposure to Christian

⁹⁸ San Pedro Claver and Alonso de Sandoval were the two most prominent priests to minister to Africans in seventeenth-century Cartagena. See John K. Thornton, "On the Trail of Voodoo," 261-278 and Anna María Splendiani and Tulio Aristizábal Giraldo, eds. and trans., *Proceso de Beatificación y Canonización de San Pedro Claver* (Santafé de Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2002).

beliefs and practices among Africans during the seventeenth century would have occurred in the New World.⁹⁹

This exposure to Christianity took on a limited, albeit at times tangible, nature. For example, many Africans living in Cartagena received baptism rites. Sebastian Botafogo, an elderly enslaved Angolan man, testified to having been baptized and confirmed as a Christian during his Inquisition trial for witchcraft.¹⁰⁰ An enslaved Guinean man, Sebastian Bran, testified to the Tribunal that he had been baptized in the Cape Verde islands before his arrival in Cartagena.¹⁰¹ While baptisms, then, certainly occurred among Africans in Cartagena, a baptism alone was not necessarily enough to impart Christian religious and ritual knowledge. Despite the fact that Church officials viewed the Christianization of Africans as a necessity, very few Africans in New Granada received direct ministry from Christian clergy. This occurred to some extent in the city, as the careers of Pedro Claver and Alonso de Sandoval show, but the majority of enslaved Africans in the viceroyalty would receive little, if any, Christian education. Church officials' resources were simply stretched too thin to provide such services to the enslaved population on a wide scale, and so the responsibility often fell upon the shoulders of slaveholders, who routinely skirted it. Slaveholders on both rural plantations and in the cities may have allowed for enslaved Africans to gather for Sunday services, but this likely was more for show than a sincere attempt at spreading Christianity among

⁹⁹ Another subset of enslaved Africans were those who lived in Europe prior to coming to America. These men and women would likely have had greater exposure to Christianity, though their numbers would have been relatively small compared to those enslaved persons who came directly from Africa.

¹⁰⁰ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 402-404.

¹⁰¹ David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 226.

Africans.¹⁰² With the exception of a few priests, the majority of Spaniards in New Granada likely did not view Africans, whether *bozal* or *ladino*, as possessing sufficient character to truly comprehend Christian doctrine and theology. Even if a slaveholder did view Africans as having the wherewithal to comprehend Christianity, they likely would have thought that the job of priests and clergymen, and not their responsibility. The prospects for Christian education among Africans in New Granada, then, were grim. Nevertheless, Africans in Cartagena and the Spanish Caribbean more widely found ways to pick up, absorb and incorporate Christian beliefs and rituals into their own religious and healing practices.

Isabel, the enslaved girl from Jamaica whose case was examined at the start of this chapter, was but one of many Africans in Cartagena who claimed to incorporate elements of Christianity into their religious practices. A number of African religious practitioners living in the Spanish Caribbean, and tried by the Inquisition during the seventeenth century, recounted using Christian prayers and symbols in their own ritual activities. One such African was the *curandero*, or African ritual healer, Mateo Arará, an enslaved *negro* man born in West Africa that spent much of his life in New Granada.¹⁰³ Mateo Arará was consulted as a medical expert by slaveholders, and treated enslaved Africans in the mining region of Mompox, a few days inland from Cartagena.¹⁰⁴ When brought to trial by the Inquisition in 1652 on charges of *hechicería*, Mateo described herbalist and divination practices that he claimed he learned from his uncle in his African

¹⁰² See the previous discussion in Chapter 1 on Sandoval's accounts of the limited Christianization efforts by slaveholders.

¹⁰³ Mateo's surname, Arará, suggests his origin was in the Kingdom of Dahomey, modern day Benin. See Barcia, *West African Warfare*, 13.

¹⁰⁴ Landers, "The African Landscape," 152.

homeland.¹⁰⁵ While he initially claimed he was nothing but a Christian, Mateo went on to describe participating in ritual practices that bear striking similarity to the common features of West African religious practice, and Mateo is unique in that he directly claims he learned his rituals on the mainland of Africa. Despite this, he also recounted using practices at least partially inspired by Christianity.

Mateo's healing rituals involved the use of a number of tools crafted from natural elements. For instance, he filled gourds with herbal powders and created an *esterita* (small mat) from palm leaves. The mat itself was a divination tool, which Mateo used to identify the healing properties of certain herbs. His ritual consisted of soaking the *esterita* in chicken's blood and placing herbs inside of it, after which the mat would react by moving itself. Mateo claimed he could tell whether these herbs were medically useful or not depending on its movement.¹⁰⁶ Mateo used these ritual methods in treating the illnesses of other enslaved Africans, which he was contracted by other slaveholders to do. He traveled to gold mines in Mompox and Morocí, where he blessed enslaved Africans with an *escobita* (small broom) that had a small gourd attached to it. He also provided two drinks that supposedly cured sick enslaved Africans, one made out of honeyed water cooked with slices of bark from a fruit tree, and the other out of water boiled with herbs. According to his testimony, while in Mompox and Morocí Mateo healed a number of infirm enslaved people as well as two priests.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ For an analysis of Mateo Arará's Inquisition trial, and the defense strategies he employed, see Kathryn Joy McKnight, "En su tierra lo aprendió: An African *Curandero*'s Defense before the Cartagena Inquisition," *Colonial Latin American Review* 12, no. 1 (2003): 63-84. On his medicinal and ritual practices, see Gómez, "Transatlantic Meanings," 125-142.

¹⁰⁶ Gómez, "Transatlantic Meanings," 131-132.

¹⁰⁷ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 335.

Such practices were common among African *curanderos* and likely originated primarily in traditional African religion, but Mateo's rituals also included Christian hallmarks. Mateo testified that he at times attached a cross to his *escobita*, likely to increase its power as a divining rod.¹⁰⁸ While how much stock Mateo put into the Christian faith cannot really be known, he clearly saw the Christian cross as a powerful spiritual and curative tool.¹⁰⁹ In addition, Mateo claimed that in order to heal he invoked "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit" and prayed to God and the Virgin Mary to bless his rituals.¹¹⁰ Mateo was far from the only African religious practitioner to incorporate Christian elements into his rituals. Domingo López, a free black *curandero*, faced the Cartagena Inquisition in 1651 for allegedly "using divinations to reveal thefts and curing the sick with herbs and diabolic arts."¹¹¹ Domingo confessed that he had cured "snake bites and poison," but claimed that his healing powers came, at least in part, through the Christian God. During the trial he described his healing rituals, testifying that before healing the sick he would "cast three crosses" on them, and recited a prayer as follows: "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, God our Lord, give me grace to let me heal."¹¹² Just like Mateo, Domingo made use of the Christian cross as an instrument of healing in a religious ritual. Similar to Isabel, he incorporated prayers to the Christian God, in this case in order to gain access to healing powers. Clearly, then, at least some African religious practitioners considered the use of Christian symbolism and prayers to the Christian God as powerful tools that could be used

¹⁰⁸ McKnight, "En su tierra," 69-73.

¹⁰⁹ For further discussion of African use, and refashioning of, the Christian cross as a powerful religious and healing symbol in the New World see Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, 115-116, 121-123, 172, 180.

¹¹⁰ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 336.

¹¹¹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 305.

¹¹² Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 3, 305.

effectively in acts of healing and purification. It is possible, as with any such defense testimony, that these allusions to Christianity were fabrications on the part of African defendants, who were attempting to paint their activities as based in Christianity in order to avoid punishment by the Inquisition. Even so, such allusions attest to the fact that Africans in the early modern Spanish Caribbean had a complex relationship with Christianity. While formal Christian education was rarely available for Africans in New Granada, and the Spanish Caribbean more widely, clearly certain Africans gained enough knowledge of Christian practices to either incorporate them into their own religious rituals, or at least pretend they did so when testifying before the Inquisition. Despite the fact that Catholic authorities were hostile towards their practices, African *curanderos* still sought to appropriate elements of Christianity for their own purposes.¹¹³

Despite such limited uses of Christian elements in the ritual practices of African *curanderos*, such practices hearken back heavily to religious practices from the African mainland, including West African regions like Benin, Nigeria and Ghana and West-Central Africa, principally Angola and Congo.¹¹⁴ Several cases illustrate the connections between traditional African religious rituals and those rituals described by African defendants before the Cartagena Inquisition. One notable case is that of Barbara Gómez,

¹¹³ The debate over whether African religious practices in the New World constituted religious syncretism, as well as the debate as to when syncretism began, enjoys vast treatment. For two of the most important works, see John K. Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Formation of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), which largely upholds syncretization theory, and Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, which largely challenges it. In the case of New Granada, María Cristina Navarrete has proposed such a view, arguing that cases of *brujería* brought before the Inquisition in Cartagena represent a African syncretization between traditional beliefs and popular (ie everyday) Christianity. See María Cristina Navarrete, *Prácticas Religiosas de los Negros en la Colonia: Cartagena, Siglo XVII* (Santiago de Cali: Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad del Valle, 1995), 123-125. The implications of this debate in relation to the cases I discuss will be dealt with more thoroughly in Chapter 3.

¹¹⁴ The vast majority of Africans in the Spanish Caribbean by the seventeenth century were of either Angolan or West African origin. See David Wheat, "The First Great Waves."

an enslaved woman of African descent. Barbara was born in Portugal and lived in Spain for some time, before being sold to one Don Francisco de la Guerra who took her to the coastal Caribbean New Granadan town Tolú, a few days south of Cartagena. Two other women accused Barbara of “being a divineress and sorceress,” and the Holy Office brought her to trial in 1633.¹¹⁵ She faced ten hearings before the Tribunal, during the majority of which she maintained her innocence. She admitted to practicing *suerte de las habas*, a divination ritual that consisted of casting beans to tell the future, but denied that such a ritual constituted a crime, and adamantly denied any connection between the ritual and devilry.¹¹⁶ In her eighth, ninth and tenth hearings, however, Barbara changed her story. She described how, after performing the *suerte de las habas* divination while living in Cádiz, the Devil had come into her bed and “known her carnally three times,” remarking that she would become his servant. She described continuing a sexual relationship with the Devil for six months, despite being physically harmed by his sexual acts and physique and becoming repulsed by his scent of “sulfur and rats.” Additionally, she claimed the Devil gifted her a garment that he had the ability to manifest himself in. In her tenth hearing, which the scribe notes Gómez gave of her own volition, she described an even more complex and fantastical encounter with the Devil. After arriving in New Granada, Barbara claimed that Don Francisco’s niece requested her help in becoming a witch. Barbara gave her word that she would give the girl the help that she desired.¹¹⁷ She performed a ritual consisting of applying an unguent of bone marrow and

¹¹⁵ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 307. Barbara’s case was part of the wave of Cartagena *brujería* cases during the 1630s, and will also be examined (from a different angle) in Chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 307. For a description of the *suerte de las habas* divination ritual as it was practiced in seventeenth century Cartagena, see Navarrete, *Prácticas Religiosas*, 54.

¹¹⁷ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 308.

brains to the girl, that when sprinkled with wine summoned the Devil in the form of a flying goat. The Devil then took them by air to “*la fuente de la Jara*,” a spring that lay near a tree, where a coven of witches had gathered.¹¹⁸ Barbara presented Francisco’s niece to Satan to be “his” and promised she would do as he ordered, to which the niece agreed. Satan sat upon a throne made out of stone and proceeded to give the girl a series of orders, which she followed. She kneeled to him and renounced God, the Virgin Mary and her own baptism, made the mark of the cross in the dirt with her left foot then erased it with her backside, and finally embraced and kissed the Devil in his goat form. After the ceremony was complete, the Devil and all the women feasted on cakes and human flesh and performed a dance with rattles and *dufes*, Moorish tambourines. They then entered a church and blasphemed the Blessed Sacrament, set fire to the grave of a Christian blacksmith, and danced once again using the man’s bones as instruments before returning home. After the initiation of Francisco de Guerra’s niece into the service of the Devil, Barbara Gómez claimed the two returned to the witches’ gatherings multiple times over the course of several months, where they participated in other rituals, including drinking children’s blood.¹¹⁹

After her confession, Barbara renounced her sins and begged for forgiveness from the Tribunal and reentry into the Catholic faith. For her crimes, the Office sentenced her to public shaming, in which she was required to wear the “habit of reconciliation” and *sambenito* cap signifying her punishment by the Inquisition, as well as an emblem marking her as a witch.¹²⁰ This comes as little surprise, as her testimony before the

¹¹⁸ It is unclear where exactly *la Fuente de la Jara* refers to. It may be a reference to a location along the Magdalena River, the major waterway connecting Cartagena to the interior of Colombia.

¹¹⁹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 309.

¹²⁰ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 309-310.

Inquisition seem almost tailor made to offend Catholic sensibilities. She copulated with Satan himself, gave her master's niece to him as a servant, convened with other witches, performed rituals involving human flesh and bones, danced with Muslim instruments, engaged in cannibalism, desecrated the grave of a Christian, and committed blasphemy. If Gómez's goal was to escape punishment by the Inquisition, hers was a terrible strategy. But it seems this was not her goal at all, if one considers the fact that Barbara made her confession while she was already in the midst of *de facto* punishment by the Inquisition. She was held in captivity in the jail of the Holy Office, likely in horrid conditions, despite her repeated affirmations that the divination rituals she performed did not constitute a crime. And though the documents make no mention one way or the other, it is entirely possible Barbara was subjected to torture while held by the Holy Office. In any case, she found herself in a crushing situation, and in order to combat it concocted a narrative of the perfect crime against Catholic Spanish society. Her final punishment, public shaming and branding as a witch, seems to pale in comparison to what she likely went through while held as a prisoner of the Inquisition, especially considering the fact that she was most likely already known as a practitioner of so-called witchcraft among her social circles.¹²¹

Barbara Gómez knew well how to craft a perfect narrative that directly clashed with the norms and standards of Catholic Spanish society. She was born in Lisbon and had traveled to Spain and spent time in Cádiz before coming to New Granada. Barbara was, then, well versed in Iberian culture and fully acculturated, or *ladina*. Her testimony

¹²¹ Gómez was an acquaintance of Paula de Eguiluz, and her social circle likely consisted of other women who engaged in religious and cultural practices the Inquisition would deem witchcraft or sorcery. See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 109.

incorporated not only Satanic themes, blasphemy, and fornication, clear slights against Catholicism, but also placed the Moorish *dufes* into a supposed ritual. Barbara would have been well aware of Spanish disdain for Islam at this time, and the high price anyone revealed to be a Muslim would pay in front of the Inquisition.¹²² Additionally, her descriptions of a group of African women dancing and performing music were contrary to colonial Spanish norms. Public dance and music performed by African women was scorned by Spanish society, and in Cartagena authorities cracked down on African dancing and drumming rituals through city ordinances.¹²³ Her supposed actions and the rituals Gómez had been involved in were completely contrary to the norms established by Spanish society and social hierarchy. At the same time, Gómez turned her trial on its head by pinning blame for her supposed blasphemous and Satanic actions on the desires of a young white girl, the picture of innocence in European Catholic society.¹²⁴ She had performed witchcraft and was in league with the Devil and other witches, yes – but her master’s white, European niece wanted in on the action too. Gómez’s testimony, then, clashed with European norms and patriarchal Spanish ideals of white female innocence.¹²⁵

¹²² It is possible even that Gómez was of North African Muslim descent, considering she was a black woman born in an area of the Iberian peninsula with a long history of Muslim control, stretching back to the medieval caliphate of Al-Andalus.

¹²³ Landers, “The African Landscape,” 151. Nicole Von Germeten has argued that such public drumming and dancing rituals were just one of many ways that African women challenged European cultural norms in Cartagena, alongside with how they dressed, interacted with men and asserted their sexuality. See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9.

¹²⁴ There is no information in the available court records on what came of the niece of Gómez’s slaveholder, and it appears the Tribunal never tried her for any crimes. Whether another secular or ecclesiastical court tried her, or if legal authorities never pursued the accusations Gómez made against her, is not known. For more on the colonial Spanish concept of young, virginal white women as the ideal of honor and purity, see Franklin, *Women and Slavery*, chapter 1.

¹²⁵ My argument here follows a similar one made by James Sweet when analyzing the case of Domingos João Pereira, who, being commanded by his slaveholder to use a divination ritual to find the culprit of a theft, placed the blame for it on his slaveholder’s son. Sweet argues this demonstrates how enslaved

Barbara Gómez's testimony seems tailor-made to offend a Christian audience, and invoked an image of Satanic evil seemingly lifted out of Christian ideals and theology. It demands to be questioned, then, what connections such a narrative, crafted by a woman of African descent born in Portugal, had to African religion and ritual practice. Barbara was not, however, totally isolated from her African heritage. She had likely lived among other African slaves and would be familiar with their African-born healing rituals and religious practices. Although clouded by the Inquisition's method of documentation, bits and pieces of African traditions are apparent in her testimony. Other *negra* and *mulata* women in Cartagena, for example, performed the *suerte de las habas* ritual, which itself recalls the use of plants in African divination rituals.¹²⁶ Her description of drinking the blood of children evokes a more extreme version of the blood rituals involving animals that African *curanderos* practiced, and the drinking of a child's blood is a common trait attributed to witches in both West African and European folklore.¹²⁷ The appearance of the Devil in the form of a goat certainly has connections with Christian representations of demonic evil, but Barbara's connection of ritual and animal further recalls the animal sacrifices found in African traditions. Finally, Gómez may well have lifted the dancing ritual that her testimony culminates in from her knowledge of African tradition, as ritualistic dances and drumming patterns are a common hallmark of West African religious rites, divination rituals and cultural celebrations performed by enslaved Africans in the Americas.¹²⁸ Though masked by

Africans such as Domingos used religious practices to resist slave society, even when they were under white control. See James H. Sweet, "'Not a Thing for White Men to See': Central African Divination in Seventeenth-Century Brazil," in *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery*, eds. José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 145.

¹²⁶ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 37.

¹²⁷ Redden "The Problem of Witchcraft," 244.

¹²⁸ Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, 148, 202, 208.

Christian themes, the testimony given by Barbara Gómez to the Cartagena Inquisition clearly contained aspects derived from an African culture she would have been as familiar with as she was with Iberian norms and customs.

Another case, this time involving the testimony of a man, further reveals the parallels between Inquisition testimonies of enslaved women like Barbara Gómez and African traditional practices. The Cartagena Tribunal, in 1652, tried Mateo Arará, the noted Cartagena *curandero* discussed at length above. Although the court charged Mateo with *hechicería* as he was considered a solo practitioner of sorcery, while Barbara was convicted of *brujería* since her actions took place in a group setting, their testimonies follow a strikingly similar trajectory. In the early hearings of Mateo's trial he maintained his innocence, and even pledged his fidelity to the Christian faith. He claimed in his first hearing that his healing techniques were not taught to him but were inherent abilities that he possessed, and in his second that he had attached a cross to his *escobita*, a divining rod, in order to affirm his Christian status, as noted previously. As his trial went on, however Mateo, like Barbara, changed his story, although in a slightly different manner. Rather than placing his actions in the context of a Satanic witches' coven, Mateo claimed that he had learned his healing practices in his African homeland, from his uncle who was a court healer in place recorded as Soo. He described traveling to a river called Magdalena alongside his uncle, where he underwent an initiation ritual, made a pact with his gods and promised to use his new powers only for good, after which a mule emerged from the depths and pulled him into the river.¹²⁹ Once the mule returned him to the shore, Mateo

¹²⁹ The name of the river in Africa named by Mateo displays striking resemblance to the Magdalena River in Colombia; whether this was a conscious decision on Mateo's part, an error on the part of a scribe or translator, or pure coincidence is unknown.

and his uncle gathered his new divining objects and healing tools and departed.¹³⁰ While different from Barbara's account in some crucial regards, her and Mateo's testimonies contain some significant parallels. Both travel to a source of water, for Mateo a river and Barbara a spring, where they participate in initiation rituals designed to bestow powers on a young individual. In his testimony, Mateo plays the role of initiate, and his uncle the mediator between him and the supernatural; in Barbara's account, she is the mediator while her master's niece is the initiate. In both cases, the ritual involves a powerful being, taking the form of a domesticated animal, that plays a vital role in completing the ritual. Although both Arará and Gómez invoked Christian traditions over the course of their hearings, African religious features are visible when reading their accounts. Mateo directly connected his healing powers to African traditions, while Barbara couched common African practices in Christian concepts of devilry and witchcraft. A comparison of the two accounts, however, further reveals how Africans in Spanish America presented non-European traditions and connected African practices to their actions in the New World.

African *curanderos* like Mateo Arará, typically tried for *hechicería*, were one of two major groups brought on trial by the Inquisition. The second consisted of those tried for *brujería*, or witchcraft, such as Barbara Gómez. In the vast majority of cases, those tried for *brujería* were women – *esclavas*, *negras horras*, and *mulatas*. In a few cases, *curanderas* were tried for *brujería*, and charges of *brujería* and *hechicería* were not mutually exclusive, as seen in the case of Paula de Eguiluz, who will be examined later. However, the majority of Africans tried on charges of *hechicería* seem to have been

¹³⁰ Splendiani, *et al.*, vol 3, 336. See also McKnight, ““En su tierra,”” 69-75.

curanderos who practiced healing magic and rituals on their own. Those tried for *brujería*, on the other hand, were typically accused of engaging in group ritual practices. While usually framed as diabolic gatherings, in fact the group practices described by African women accused of *brujería* often allude to African religious gatherings that provided social benefits for the free and enslaved Africans of Cartagena.¹³¹ Despite these distinctions within the context of Inquisitorial trial, in every case we can find elements of African religious practices. This becomes especially important when we turn to examine the impact of the Inquisition on the religious landscape of Cartagena and its surrounding regions in seventeenth century Caribbean New Granada.

As stated before, the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition presided not only over New Granada, but the greater Spanish Caribbean as well. Not only would Cartagena fall under its auspice, but the entireties of modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and various other Caribbean islands. As such, the Holy Office brought to trial defendants from all of these locations, including defendants of African descent, both enslaved and free. African men and women – *mulatos* and *negros* alike – were typically brought up on charges of *hechicería*, *brujería*, and *sortilegio*.¹³² While such trials occurred at a steady rate throughout the seventeenth century, at least two significant waves of charges against black religious practitioners occurred within the span of less than thirty years in the middle of the seventeenth century. The first sought to uncover a supposed witches' coven, allegedly led

¹³¹ For more on these *brujería* trials, see White, “Between the Devil and the Inquisition,” 1-15.

¹³² Other charges of crimes against the faith, like *herejía* and *blasfemia*, occurred but at a significantly lower rate.

by the free black *curandera* Paula de Eguiluz, from 1632 through 1635.¹³³ While Paula was born in Santo Domingo and lived in Havana at the time of her first trial before the Holy Office for *brujería* in 1624, she remained in Cartagena for some time after.¹³⁴ That year, the Tribunal sentenced her to public shaming, two hundred lashes and one year's service in Cartagena's city hospitals.¹³⁵ For whatever reason, perhaps because she was able to establish a local network among black and white clients in Cartagena who sought her healing services, Paula remained in Cartagena long after her sentence expired, selling potions and offering curative remedies for a price. The Inquisition, however, clearly instigated her stay in Cartagena. It was the Inquisition who brought the young woman, recently freed from slavery in 1624, to New Granada's major port city. It was the Inquisition who sentenced her to a year's work in the Cartagena hospitals, putting an onus on Paula to remain in the city. Paula de Eguiluz was far from the only black *caribeña* who the Inquisition would bring to Cartagena. The Inquisition had a habit of drawing in African religious practitioners from all over the Spanish Caribbean, as well as the coastal and interior areas of New Granada, to the bustling world of African religious practice that took place on the streets and in the homes and hospitals of Cartagena de Indias.

¹³³ This case will be examined in more detail in Chapter 3. For significant treatments of Paula de Eguiluz and her alleged coven, see Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, ch. 6 and 7; Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Performing double-edged stories: the three trials of Paula de Eguiluz," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, no. 2 (2016): 154- 174; Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y Reconstrucción de Identidades Entre los Africanos y sus Descendientes en la Nueva Granada, Siglo XVII* (Bogota: Imprenta Nacional de Colombia, 2005), 599-615; and Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, chapter 7. For a brief analysis, transcription and translation of de Eguiluz's first trial, see Sara Vicuña Guengerich, ed. and trans., "The First Trial of Paula de Eguiluz, Accused of Witchcraft and Reconciled with the Church, 1624," in *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives From the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550-1812*, edited by Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo Garofalo (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009), 178-193.

¹³⁴ Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, 167.

¹³⁵ Sara Vicuña Guengerich, "The Witchcraft Trials of Paula de Eguiluz," in Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo Garofalo, eds., *Afro-Latino Voices, Shorter Edition: Translations of Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic Narratives* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2015), 118.

The second significant wave of Inquisitorial trials against black religious practitioners occurred from 1655 through 1659. At least eighteen practitioners, consisting of two *mulato* and three *negro* men and ten *mulata* and three *negra* women, found themselves standing trial before the Holy Office on charges of sorcery, divination and herbalism. The majority of them, similar to Paula de Eguiluz, hailed from Havana, though amongst their ranks were also inhabitants of Bayamo, Cuba; Santo Domingo; Tunja, New Granada; Panama; and Merida, Venezuela. Unlike Paula's alleged coven, which consisted mainly of women who lived in Cartagena and the nearby town of Tolú, this series of trials consisted for the most part of defendants hailing from outside Cartagena, mainly from locales in the Spanish Caribbean although some came from the mainland of Spanish America. Each of these defendants was accused of or admitted to taking part in practices not unlike those we have seen among other African religious practitioners brought to trial by the Cartagena Inquisition. Examining these cases lends significant insight into both the ritual activities of Africans in New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean, as well as the strategies, and impact, of the Cartagena Inquisition in combating such activities.

Juana de Estupiñan was a free *mulata* woman who lived in Tunja, a town deep in the New Granadan interior not far from Bogotá, finding work as a washerwoman. In October of 1656, the Holy Office brought her to trial after twenty-six witnesses, ten *mestizo* men and sixteen *negra* and *mulata* women, allegedly accused her of being a "witch, sorceress and herbalist." According to the witnesses, Juana had caused illnesses and killed others through the use of various items including herbs and powders, and had

incorporated birds and snakes into her rituals.¹³⁶ Juana at first claimed that these actions were not hers but the work of an “Indian,” though she later admitted to them and was found guilty by the Tribunal in December.¹³⁷

Juana came from deep in the New Granadan interior to be tried by the Inquisition for her ritual practices. Whether her practices were truly malevolent in nature, or if she was a simple washerwoman who practiced *curanderismo* on the side and got swept up in Inquisitorial fervor, we will never know. Her attempt to place the blame for her charges on an unknown Indian suggests that some of the ritual knowledge practiced by Africans in New Granada may have come from contact between them and indigenous Americans deep within the interior. On the other hand, if Juana was familiar with the mistreatment Indians suffered at the hands of the Spanish, this could also represent an attempt to pass blame on to a member of another disadvantaged group. Whatever the particulars of Juana’s case were, it represents something far more significant for our purposes. While not a *caribeña*, Juana resided far from the Inquisition’s center in Cartagena. Despite this, the Holy Office found it necessary to summon her for trial, given the accusations levied against her by the twenty-six witnesses. The connections between Cartagena and the rest of the Spanish Caribbean were much stronger than between Cartagena and the interior of the Spanish American mainland. Despite this, Juana, along with other black religious practitioners hailing from mainland South America such as Laureana del Basto from Merida, Venezuela, Domingo Congo from Caracas and Madalena de Salazar Arroyo, also from Tunja, were all summoned by and brought to trial before the Inquisition in Cartagena. If the Holy Office was willing to summon black religious practitioners from

¹³⁶ AHN Inquisición, L.1022, 28r. See also Newson and Minchin, *From Capture to Sale*, 251.

¹³⁷ AHN Inquisición, L.1022, 29v-29r.

that far within the New Granadan interior, they would have had no issue summoning black ritual practitioners from the wider Caribbean, as will be demonstrated.

Between 1655 and 1659, the Cartagena Holy Office summoned eight *mulata* women and one *negro* man from Havana, Cuba, one *mulato* man from Bayamo, Cuba and a *mulato* man and *negra* woman from Santo Domingo for trial on charges of *hechicería*, *sortilegio* and *yerbatería*, in addition to those brought in from a number of locations on the mainland. Among the *caribeñas* was Maria de Tapia, a free *mulata* from Havana whom the Inquisition charged with *hechicería* and tried in July of 1655. The Tribunal found her guilty and sentenced her to undergo public shaming in the streets of Cartagena and publicly denounce her actions and, furthermore, to remain within Cartagena and not return to Havana for a period of at least two years.¹³⁸ The Inquisition also banished Ana Ramirez, another *mulata* woman from Havana convicted of being a “sorceress,” from returning to Havana for two years, though she was also exiled from the Cartagena city limits.¹³⁹ Several other black religious practitioners faced exile from Cartagena for their alleged crimes against the faith. The Tribunal barred Madalena de Salazar, a Spanish *negra* woman of Muslim descent convicted of “sorcery,” from returning either to Cartagena or to her home in Tunja. The enslaved *negro* Domingo Congo, another convicted “sorcerer,” faced a sentence of exile from both Cartagena and his home city of Caracas. The Inquisition kept others still within the city. The Holy Office found Felipe Angola, an enslaved black *cartagenero*, guilty of being a “deceitful sorcerer” and sentenced him to religious reeducation in Cartagena’s Santo Domingo

¹³⁸ AHN Inquisición, L.1022, 17v.

¹³⁹ Splendiani, *et al.*, vol 3, 322.

convent.¹⁴⁰ *Caribeños* were also sentenced to stay within the city for at least some time. In 1655 the Inquisition convicted Juana de Torres, a *negra* woman from Santo Domingo, of being a “sorceress and divineress,” and exiled her from Santo Domingo. Four years later, the Inquisition convicted Antonio Garcia, a *mulato* man from Bayamo, Cuba, of being a “diviner and sorcerer” and sentenced him to two years work in the city’s hospitals, to be followed by two years exile from both Bayamo and Cartagena.¹⁴¹ As demonstrated by Antonio Garcia’s sentence, the punishments handed down by the Inquisition were at times ambiguous. Antonio, for example, could be formally set for exile from the city, while at the same time sentenced to work in the city’s hospitals. Other convicts, such as Madalena de Salazar, were exiled both from their hometown and from Cartagena. Under such circumstances, it is hard to say what one might do, and the records kept by the Inquisition give no indication where those exiled from both their place of residence and from Cartagena wound up.

The Tribunal’s sentences seem to have been weaving chaos among the African religious practitioners of New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean. With some exiled from the city, others trapped within it, and most convicts barred from returning to where they came from, the Inquisition seems to have been intentionally sowing discord in the lives of those African men and women considered by them to be peddlers of sorcery, herbalism and fortune telling. Inquisition officials were in all likelihood seeking to break down and diminish the influence of black religious practitioners who operated under its jurisdiction by spreading leading practitioners to various locations. Nevertheless, in Inquisition somewhat ironically invited those very practitioners into its own city limits,

¹⁴⁰ Splendiani, *et al.*, vol 3, 324.

¹⁴¹ Splendiani, *et al.*, vol 3, 317.

with many of them remaining after their convictions. Paula de Eguiluz, for example, remained in the city long after her conviction in 1632, and was active there as a *curandera* well into the 1650s. The city of Cartagena, particularly during the forty-year span between 1620 and 1660, would have been bustling with African religious practitioners from all over the Spanish Caribbean and the northern South American mainland. Many would face exile from Cartagena once their trial was done, but many others were forced to stay within the city, often sentenced to work in the hospitals or required to undergo religious reeducation in the convents. Even those who were sentenced to exile from Cartagena would, by necessity, remain in the city during the duration of their trials, which could drag on for months at a time. Though authorities often housed defendants in the Holy Office's secret dungeons, Nicole Von Germeten has demonstrated how Africans restricted to the secret dungeons maintained a very real, if limited, freedom of association among themselves, and even may have maintained contact with those on the outside.¹⁴² And although the secret dungeons housed most defendants, others still remained within Cartagena's convents while awaiting trial, perhaps to deal with overcrowding of the dungeons.¹⁴³

The remaining records left by the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition give us a look into who these men and women were. For most, we have only a scant description of them, what charges they faced and their sentences after conviction. A few others, particularly popular *curanderos* like Paula de Eguiluz, Mateo Arará and Domingo López, have had more detailed Inquisition trial transcripts survive. For these men and women, we can gain a greater understanding of the types of religious practices that Africans in

¹⁴² See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, chapter 7.

¹⁴³ Splendiani, *et al.*, vol 3, 317.

Cartagena employed. In a few exceptional cases, we can even trace the career paths followed by African *curanderos* after the completion of their sentences. The noted *curandera* Paula de Eguiluz, for example, remained in Cartagena after her trials and found work advising the city's bishops and inquisitors on medical matters, for which she was paid handsomely.¹⁴⁴ Paula flouted the Inquisition's sentence by wearing extravagant clothing as she traveled the city, attended by servants of her own, to administer curative treatments to members of the city elite.¹⁴⁵ Though her case is an exception and further research is needed into the post-trial lives of Cartagena's African *curanderos*, it offers us a glimpse into the lives and careers of such ritual practitioners in seventeenth-century Cartagena. While we cannot know for sure, it is certainly within the realm of possibility that minor African *curanderos* studied in this chapter, such as Domingo Congo, Madalena de Salazar, Antonio Garcia and Juana de Estupiñan, may have had similar, though likely more unassuming, post-trial careers either in Cartagena or in other areas along the coast of Caribbean New Granada. The established contact between free and enslaved Africans living in Caribbean towns and cities with the self-liberated *palenquero* blacks living in maroon communities opens up the possibility that those *curanderos* exiled from both their hometowns and Cartagena may have fled to one of the numerous *palenques* in the area. In any case, it becomes clear that seventeenth-century Cartagena de Indias and the areas within its vicinity were hotbeds of African religious practices, brought in from across the Caribbean as well as from the South American interior.

An analysis of the words and actions of Africans who stood trial before the Cartagena Inquisition reveals that transmission of ritual knowledge between Africans

¹⁴⁴ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 123.

¹⁴⁵ Pablo Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*, 166.

living in the Spanish Caribbean and New Granada was commonplace in the seventeenth century. People of color living in Cartagena de Indias in the seventeenth century enjoyed access to a relatively high level of freedom of association and movement, at least when compared to slave societies in the Americas in other areas and, especially, in later eras. Black ritual practitioners living in Cartagena would have had opportunities to teach or sell knowledge of healing arts and divination practices to other Africans living in the area. African ritual practitioners brought into Cartagena by the Inquisition, including those forced to remain in or near the city after their trials, would undoubtedly have partaken in such activities. While one might expect that living so close to the seat of the Spanish Caribbean Inquisition would discourage such behavior, in the case of Paula de Eguiluz it clearly did not. From this we can extrapolate that others may have done the same, and it is well known that Paula at least had other African apprentices and servants who participated in ritual activities as well. Clearly, the transmission of African ritual knowledge within seventeenth century Cartagena was a fact of life. Transmission from outside of Cartagena into the city played a major role as well.

We have seen already how the actions of the Inquisition in Cartagena contributed to African religious knowledge transmission in the city. Yet other factors were at play as well, particularly the existence of *palenques*, or “runaway” slave communities, within the vicinity of Cartagena. Attacks by *palenqueros* against the city were common throughout the seventeenth century, and at least thirteen *palenque* communities were acknowledged by Spanish authorities.¹⁴⁶ It is highly probable that many other *palenques* existed along the rivers and coasts and within the jungles of New Granada, though the thirteen

¹⁴⁶ Sandra Beatriz Sanchez Lopez, “Miedo, rumor y rebelión: la conspiración esclava de 1693 en Cartagena de Indias,” *Historia Critica* 31 (2006): 81-82.

acknowledged by the Spanish were likely the most populous and prominent. Contact between Africans living in Cartagena and nearby towns with *palenqueros* is not outside the realm of possibility, and ritual knowledge transmission likely occurred between city dwellers and those who made their life in the *palenques*. Although the evidence is scant, contact between African religious practitioners tried by the Inquisition and *palenqueros* exists in a few cases. Isabel, the enslaved girl whose story opened this chapter, claimed that a *palenquero* taught her knowledge of African ritual practices. While her experience occurred in Jamaica, it goes to show that contact between city or town-dwelling Africans and *palenqueros* occurred in seventeenth-century Spanish American territories. The case of Sebastian Botafogo, a fifty-year old enslaved Angolan who lived in Rio de la Hacha to the northwest of Cartagena, demonstrates this in the case of New Granada. Sebastian faced charges of being a *brujo* before the Tribunal in 1635. Like many others such as Mateo Arará and Barbara Gómez, Sebastian at first claimed to be a pious Christian, but then went on to describe how an African *palenquero* taught him how to perform ritual magic.¹⁴⁷ Mateo, Isabel and Sebastian, then, all fall into a common tradition of African-derived *curanderismo* in which an apprentice gains ritual knowledge from an older African practitioner who fell outside of the realms of establish Spanish authority. Clearly, then, transmission of religious and ritual knowledge between Africans living in seventeenth-century Spanish America took place.

Africans throughout the Spanish Caribbean in the seventeenth century partook in religious and ritual practices clearly derived from African traditional religion. At times, these same practitioners incorporated elements of Christianity, including Christian

¹⁴⁷ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 402-404.

prayers and symbols such as the cross, which were viewed as being imbued with power. In spite of this, African religious practices in the seventeenth century Caribbean should not be viewed simply as religious “syncretization.” Rather, Africans in the Spanish Caribbean took part in a long, complex cultural process that saw interactions between separate religious spheres, in particular African, European and Indigenous American. African religious practices in the Spanish Caribbean represented active cultural survival. Cultural transference was not passive but a proactive process instigated by the actions of Africans in the Spanish Caribbean and the wider Atlantic world. Ritual and healing practitioners of African descent used religious rites originating in African traditional religion to provide tangible benefits to their health, social lives and income. These practices, however, went against the religious ordinances established by the Catholic Church and upheld by the Cartagena Inquisition. The Inquisition sought to create discord among African religious practitioners in order to discourage those practices it viewed as “sorcery” and “witchcraft,” and to promote Christianity among the African population of Spain’s American and Caribbean territories. By putting prominent *curanderos* on trial and publicly sentencing them, the Inquisition sought to make it clear to the African religious community in Cartagena that such practices would not be tolerated, and would be punished if discovered. Furthermore, the Inquisition sought to physically break up the community of African healers in and around Cartagena by displacing convicted *curanderos*. By exiling some from the city, forcing others to work in city hospitals under the auspice of Catholic priests, and in many cases requiring them not to return to the location in which they learned their healing arts, the Inquisition attempted to create tumult and confusion among African *curanderos* living under its jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, Cartagena de Indias grew to become home to a vibrant community of African religious practitioners between 1620 and 1660, in part due to the unintended consequences of the Inquisition's methods. By drawing in African religious practitioners from throughout the Caribbean, along the coast of northern South America, and from the interior reaches of New Granada, the Inquisition unintentionally contributed to the creation of conditions necessary for a vibrant African religious community in and around Cartagena. Many of these religious practitioners would be abandoned by the Inquisition after their trials, effectively banished from both their places of residence and from Cartagena, likely resulting in many taking up residence in the heavily African populated towns along the coast. Still others remained in Cartagena for many years, staking out long careers as medical experts for the city hospitals and wealthy, elite clients. No matter how long they stayed, though, they all at times found themselves wound up in the complicated world of African religious practice that was Cartagena de Indias.

Chapter 3

Threads of Resistance: Sex, Race and Diabolism in the Cartagena Inquisition

Trials

In 1633, Inquisitorial authorities imprisoned the enslaved woman Lucía Biáfara in the secret dungeons of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cartagena de Indias. Housing defendants in these prisons for days, even weeks, as they awaited trial before the Inquisition Tribunal was common practice at the time. An unnamed witness had accused Lucía of committing *brujería*, or witchcraft, and Cartagena’s inquisitors demanded that she answer to these accusations. She obliged, telling the Tribunal that she and three others had gone to a field to meet with Satan, who took the form of a goat sitting upon an altar. The goat commanded her to “renounce God and his Saints” and her Christian baptism, which she did. His witch servants then gave Lucía a demon named Tongo to be her companion; she thanked the Dark Lord by dancing with him and the other witches and kissing him upon his backside. This so pleased the Devil that he began jumping up and down and “fired off a gust of sulphurous wind” upon her, after which all in attendance ate an unsalted stew of human flesh. Following the feast and dance, the candles lighting the ceremony went out and Lucía and Tongo gathered together and he “knew her from her rear opening,” resulting in him “spilling a thing like hot candle wax” inside of her.¹⁴⁸ Each woman was given such a companion, and Lucía’s testimony implies they all engaged in such sexual acts with their respective demon. After these acts they each returned home, demon companions in tow, but gathered again in the following weeks to feast on the flesh and blood of infants.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ “...se juntaron las brujas cada una con su diablo y la dicha Lucía Biáfara con su diablo Tongo, el cual la conoció por el vaso trasero, derramándole una cosa como candela,” the term here, “el vaso trasero,” literally “the rear opening,” refers to sodomy. See citation below.

¹⁴⁹ Splendiani, et. al., *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 304. The majority of trial documents consulted for this study are found in volumes two and three of this four-volume work, which provides transcriptions of documents from the Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid regarding the Inquisition trials held in Cartagena from 1610 to 1660. All translations for this source are my own.

A story such as Lucía's gruesome testimony must appear strange, fantastic and unbelievable. Yet in seventeenth-century Cartagena, it was hardly out of the ordinary. The records of the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition hold accounts of numerous testimonies of free and enslaved Africans who claimed to have worshipped the Devil and engaged with devils and demons in cannibalism, sex and human sacrifice. In return for their worship and sacrifices, the Devil gifted these men and women with personal demon companions, ritual knowledge, and supernatural powers such as flight. These testimonies are much more than simply scandalous tales of murder and debauchery, however. The stories in the Cartagena testimonies parallel common tropes found in witch trials in Europe, with African women such as Lucía appropriating European thoughts and norms in their own stories.¹⁵⁰ At the same time, such stories also convey information about African social and cultural practices present in early modern New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean. A thorough examination of these testimonies, and the occurrence of diabolism in colonial Colombia and the wider Caribbean world, reveals a great deal about the nature of colonial Spanish American society and encounters between Africans and Europeans in the New World.

¹⁵⁰ The process of submitting to the Devil, engaging in sexual acts with a demonic familiar, and being bestowed with magical powers in return is found in witch trials throughout Europe in the early modern period. For more on similar witch trials in the European tradition, see Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614)* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 1980); Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York, NY: Viking, 1996); María Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los Ojos: Brujería y Superstición en Aragón en el Siglo XVI* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2000), Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Gunnar W. Knutsen, *Servants of Satan and Masters of Demons: The Spanish Inquisition's Trials for Superstition, Valencia and Barcelona, 1478-1700* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010). Von Germeten has suggested that the Cartagena trials have the most in common with the seventeenth-century Basque witch trials, though she rightly points out that the names of most the demon familiars named by African women in the Cartagena trials resemble names in African languages, rather than traditional European names for demons, and therefore the Cartagena testimonies represent a melding of separate worldviews. See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 108.

This chapter aims to place the alleged devil-worship practiced by Africans in the Spanish Caribbean, specifically Cartagena de Indias and its surrounding areas in New Granada, in the wider context of Atlantic history. It will examine the idea of the Devil and malevolent spirits in both European and African religious thought and the context in which the Inquisition in Cartagena and its witchcraft trials of African defendants took place. This will also necessitate an examination of the wider context of African-European relations in seventeenth-century Cartagena. Key to this discussion will be placing the witchcraft trials of Africans in the context of the ongoing *palenque* wars between Spanish settlers and self-liberated African which occurred throughout the seventeenth century.¹⁵¹ By examining diabolist testimonies of African defendants, and the role that such diabolism played in European-African interactions in the wider context of African-European relations and conflict, we can gain a greater understanding of the multifaceted, multiethnic world of seventeenth century New Granada. By looking, specifically, at African invocations of devils and demons we can gain significant insight into how both African and European worldviews functioned in the Spanish Atlantic. Even the most acculturated Africans in the seventeenth century were fundamentally removed from Spanish society by systematic factors. Most Africans in New Granada and the Caribbean were enslaved, and free Africans still faced a tremendous amount of discrimination and oppression leading, in part, to the clashes between Catholic authorities and African life illustrated by the Cartagena Inquisition trials.

¹⁵¹ The need for an examination of the Cartagena witchcraft trials in the context of the *palenque* wars has been suggested by Andrew Redden, although he focuses on the Palenque de Limón while I will focus on the Sierra Maria Palenque. See Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft," 241-242, 248.

Despite the efforts of priests in Cartagena who worked to minister to its African population, many would have had a passing, at best, understanding of Christianity.¹⁵² Indeed, many Africans tried by the Inquisition likely learned more about Christian tenets from their trial proceedings than anywhere else in their lives. A study of African diabolism in seventeenth-century Cartagena can reveal African understandings of and resistance to Christian authority, as well as their dedication to African social, cultural and religious mores. Through this examination of alleged devil worship and contact with demons on the part of Africans and their descendants in Cartagena, we will see that Africans in New Granada participated in a subtle, but active, form of resistance to Spanish-Catholic society. Furthermore, this resistance, and Spanish authorities' understanding of it, must be examined within the context of the long series of *palenque* wars that preceded, overlapped with and continued after the most prominent witchcraft trials in Cartagena. Both the *palenque* wars and the Inquisition's witchcraft trials reveal not only Spanish tactics of social control used against Africans, but also reveal Spanish anxieties about unmanageable and uncontrollable black populations that would last long after the colonial period.¹⁵³ By examining the Inquisition's attempts to control and Christianize African subjects alongside the Spanish military's campaigns to pacify and control *palenqueros* we can come to a greater understanding of African-European interactions and conflict in seventeenth-century New Granada.

¹⁵² Africans from the region of Congo would possibly have had a better understanding of Christianity, as there was a Christian missionary presence in that area by the seventeenth century. Congo was a minority supplier of enslaved Africans to Cartagena in the seventeenth century, however; the majority were taken from Guinea and Angola. See Wheat, "The First Great Waves," 1-22 and Thornton, "On the Trail of Voodoo."

¹⁵³ This is apparent, for example, in the fear of *pardocracia* (black rule) that gripped Colombian leaders such as Simón Bolívar in the revolutionary and early national periods. See Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 165-167.

A number of academic works examine the role of diabolism and the theme or image of the Devil and demons in the colonial and early modern Iberian worlds. Fernando Cervantes' *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* examines the phenomenon in Mexico, while Andrew Redden's *Diabolism in Colonial Peru, 1560-1750* does the same for Peru and the Andean region of South America. These studies tend to focus on diabolism as an aspect of relations between Europeans and Indigenous Americans, devoting only a small amount of time to Africans and the issue of slavery.¹⁵⁴ Redden's article "Vipers Under the Altar Cloths: Satanic and Angelic Forms in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," examines diabolism in New Granada, but with a focus on how ideas about angels and demons played into power struggles between Jesuit missionaries and indigenous Americans.¹⁵⁵ Few studies focus primarily on African invocations of Satanic themes and imagery in New Granada, although there are several good studies of Africans and the accusations of "witchcraft" against them. Diana Ceballos Gómez's *Hechicería, Brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: Un Duelo de Imaginarios* focuses on European intellectual conceptions of evil, and the processes by which they were transplanted onto Africans and indigenous peoples through charges of sorcery, witchcraft and herbalism.¹⁵⁶ Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo's *Brujería y Reconstrucción de Identidades Entre Los Africanos y sus Descendientes en la Nueva*

¹⁵⁴ Cervantes spends only a handful of pages discussing Africans, while Redden devotes significantly more space to the topic (likely because African slavery was much more prevalent in Peru than Mexico.) In both cases, however, Africans are not the main focus of the study. See Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005) and Andrew Redden, *Diabolism in Colonial Peru, 1560-1750* (London: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁵⁵ Andrew Redden, "Vipers Under the Altar Cloths: Satanic and Angelic Forms in Seventeenth-Century New Granada," in Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden, eds., *Angels, Demons and the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 146-167.

¹⁵⁶ Ceballos Gómez, *Hechicería, Brujería, e Inquisición en el Nuevo Reino de Granada*.

Granada, Siglo XVII argues that Africans described African rituals and gatherings in their Inquisition testimonies, and used their trials as a means to sow fear and discord in Spanish society.¹⁵⁷ Nicole Von Germeten makes a similar argument to Maya Restrepo, with an added layer of gendered analysis that considers African women's use of sexuality in a patriarchal society.¹⁵⁸ María Cristina Navarrete, in *Prácticas Religiosas de los Negros en la Colonia: Cartagena, Siglo XVII* similarly examines the religious lives of blacks in New Granada, arguing that Africans melded their own practices with Christianity through a process of syncretization.¹⁵⁹

Another scholar whose work is of great import to this study is Maria Tausiet, who examines magic, witchcraft and devil worship – and prosecution of it by Inquisitorial and other authorities – in sixteenth-century Spain. While her works lie outside the scope of this paper geographically and by century, her arguments are essential to any analysis of diabolism in the Spanish New World. Indeed, the Inquisitors who tried Africans for witchcraft and devil-worship in Cartagena in many ways followed the same methods and operated under the same assumptions as Inquisitors in Spain. Inquisitors throughout the early modern Spanish world, both Old and New, operated under a shared set of assumptions and based their questioning, trials, sentencing and punishments on templates laid out by Inquisitorial authorities.¹⁶⁰ Seventeenth-century Spanish Inquisitors in Cartagena inherited ideas about the enforcement of religious law and Inquisitorial methods from their predecessors in sixteenth century Spain, and Inquisitors in both Spain

¹⁵⁷ Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y Reconstrucción de Identidades Entre Africanos*.

¹⁵⁸ Von Germeten's study focuses on women, gender and sexuality in general in colonial Cartagena, with only a few chapters that address African women and the Inquisition. See Nicole Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, chapters 6, 7 and 8.

¹⁵⁹ Navarrete, *Prácticas Religiosas*.

¹⁶⁰ For a good overview of how Inquisitorial trial and sentencing worked under Spanish authority, see Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los Ojos*, 75-123.

and the Americas were trained according to a common Inquisitorial tradition that had developed over the course of the Spanish Inquisition's existence beginning in the late fifteenth century.

Tausiet's studies *Ponzoña en los Ojos: Brujería y Superstición en Aragón en el Siglo XVI* and *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens* focus on witchcraft and magic in sixteenth-century Aragon and Zaragoza, respectively. She examines the three levels of authority – Inquisitorial, secular and ecclesiastical – that persecuted witchcraft in early modern Spain. Perhaps her most important line of thinking, which appears in both works, is her examination of the activities of supposed witches, sorcerers and healers as a form of popular magic that had “no real boundary” with popular religion. Witchcraft was a form of popular magic that melded with popular religion, yet was opposed by official religious channels that considered it either heresy or superstition.¹⁶¹ Witchcraft, in Tausiet's view, had roots in beliefs that preceded Christianization, and yet adapted aspects of Christian belief for practical purposes. This is readily apparent in Inquisition trials in which witchcraft practitioners found themselves under an orthodox Christian authority and had their testimonies molded to fit Inquisitorial expectations. This is a phenomenon that we will observe occurring yet again in the cases of Africans who faced Inquisitorial trial in seventeenth-century Cartagena. In addition, Tausiet examines how practitioners of magic and witchcraft, both through their otherworldly practices and their testimonies before the courts, worked to undermine the social hierarchy of the time.¹⁶² Inquisitors in both sixteenth-century Spain and

¹⁶¹ Maria Tausiet, *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens*, trans. Susannah Howe, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4; Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los Ojos*, 21.

¹⁶² Tausiet, *Urban Magic*, 7.

seventeenth-century New Granada recognized this challenge to the social order as they brought alleged sorcerers, healers and witches to trial. In addition, such Inquisitors were working within a common tradition established by earlier Inquisitorial authorities, going back to the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition in the late fifteenth century. While the functions and actions of the Inquisition in seventeenth-century Cartagena varied in many respects from earlier Inquisitions, it nevertheless operated under the same assumptions that defined the mission of the Spanish Inquisition more widely – that is, to enforce Catholic doctrine and purity of the faith.

Returning to the New World, the best study of diabolism and devilry in New Granada is Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez's *Rostros y Rastrros del Demonio en la Nueva Granada: Indios, Negros, Judios, Mujeres y Otras Huestes de Satanás*.¹⁶³ This sweeping study, covering the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, examines the demonization of marginalized groups in colonial Colombian society, as well as resistance among such groups to the Spanish-Catholic hierarchy. However, being such a broad study that covers numerous social groups, its treatment of each is not as extensive as it could be if they were each given their own studies, and the majority of cases it discusses involving Africans are pre-Inquisition trials from the late sixteenth century.¹⁶⁴ Most important in relation to this study are Borja Gómez's claims that Africans appropriated the figure of Satan for their own protection and self-preservation, and that ideas about devils and demons represent a "point of convergence" between African and Christian

¹⁶³ Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, *Rostros y Rastrros del Demonio en la Nueva Granada: Indios, Negros, Judios, Mujeres y Otras Huestes de Satanás* (Bogotá: Editorial Ariel, 1998).

¹⁶⁴ This is not a slight at the scholarship of Gómez's work, as it is very well done. Part two of the book, *Demonio, Negros y Resistencia (The Devil, Blacks and Resistance)* is of particular importance to this study. See Borja Gómez, *Rostros y Rastrros*, 103-171.

societies.¹⁶⁵ No study to date, however, has examined Africans' use of diabolism and Satanic imagery in the Cartagena Inquisition trials as a matter in and of itself. This study aims to do just that. With a focus on the a series of witchcraft prosecutions against African defendants enacted by Cartagena's Inquisitorial officials in the 1620s and 1630s, it will consider the trial testimonies of African men and women before the Cartagena tribunal in order to examine the appropriation of Satanic themes as resistance and a survival mechanism among Africans in Spanish American slave society.¹⁶⁶

In order to understand African use of the image and theme of the Devil, we must first define diabolism and the idea of devils and demons in both the European and African contexts. Diabolism, for the purposes of this study, will refer to dealings with or worship of the Devil or demons, and in particular activities of witchcraft or initiations

¹⁶⁵ Borja Gómez, *Rostros y Rastros*, 143.

¹⁶⁶ For more on the witchcraft trials in Cartagena, see Kathryn Joy McKnight, "'En su tierra,'" 63-84 and "Performing double-edged stories," 154- 174; White, "Between the Devil and the Inquisition," 1-15; and Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft." For more on relations between Jesuits and the African population of New Granada, see Ronald J. Morgan, "Jesuit Confessors, African Slaves and the Practice of Confession in Seventeenth-Century Cartagena," in *Penitence in the Age of Reformations*, eds. Katherine J. Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000): 222-239. In addition to the aforementioned studies on diabolism in Peru and Mexico, see Iris Gareis, ed., *Entidades Maléficas y Conceptos del Mal en las Religiones Latinoamericanas (Evil Entities and Concepts of Evil in Latin American Religions)* (Aachen: Shaker Verlag, 2008) and Fernando Cervantes and Andrew Redden, eds., *Angels, Demons and the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) for discussions on Spain, Mexico, Peru and New Granada. For Brazil, see Laura de Mello e Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil*, trans. Diane Grosklaus Whitty (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). For the Protestant world, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Protestant Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). For studies on the general idea and image of Satan in European thought, see Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984) and Morgan A. Matos, "The Satanic Phenomenon: Medieval Representations of Satan," (master's thesis, Rollins College, 2011). For an important study of African transculturation in the Iberian Atlantic world, see Sweet, *Recreating Africa*. Finally, there is an extensive scholarship surrounding the role of Africans and their descendants in the creation of the societies of Latin America and the Caribbean. See Thornton, *Africa and Africans*; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); Ogundiran and Saunders, *Materialities of Ritual in the Black Atlantic*; David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*; and Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*.

into witch covens that required invocation of the Devil to complete.¹⁶⁷ It is important that we understand exactly what we mean by “the Devil,” however. In the modern imagination, “the Devil” typically refers to the ultimate embodiment of evil, the Christian figure of Satan. In modern Christian theology, multiple Biblical figures are typically condensed into the person of Satan. The serpent in the Garden of Eden, the Accuser in the book of Job, Lucifer as mentioned by the prophet Isaiah, the Tempter who Christ faces in the wilderness – all are considered to be the same being.¹⁶⁸ This was not necessarily the case in all medieval and early modern European thought, however. The concept and idea of the Devil has undergone redefinition and reinterpretation from antiquity to the present.¹⁶⁹ Early modern Spanish concepts of the Devil did not see him as an omnipotent being, but rather as a force of evil whose actions could be influenced by the use of magic.¹⁷⁰ The distinction between the Devil/Satan/Lucifer and devils (or demons) was not necessarily, then, totally clear-cut.¹⁷¹ Medieval Catholic thought varied; the Fourth Lateran Council equated the Devil with the serpent of Eden, and yet seems to suggest that both the Devil and other demons derive from the same source.¹⁷² Both Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas, two of the most important theologians in Catholicism, characterized the Devil as first among many demons, all of who embody the idea and

¹⁶⁷ *Collins English Dictionary*, s.v. “diabolism,”

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/diabolism>.

¹⁶⁸ Genesis 3, Job 1, Isaiah 14:12 and Matthew 4:1-11.

¹⁶⁹ Russell, *Lucifer*, 303.

¹⁷⁰ Gareis, *Entidades Maléficas*, 14.

¹⁷¹ Throughout this study, I will use the terms Satan, Lucifer and the Devil (capitalized) interchangeably to refer to the same figure, that of the major figure of evil in Christian thought. When referring to primary sources, I will follow the name used for this figure (translated to English) in the particular case I am discussing. Additionally, I will use the terms demons, devils, (lowercase) and evil or malevolent spirits mostly interchangeably, again attempting to follow the primary sources when I refer to them.

¹⁷² “Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215,” *Fordham University Medieval Sourcebook*. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp>.

characteristics of evil.¹⁷³ The purpose of this research, of course, is not to go into every detail of the Devil in Christian thought; such a subject is much too vast and already has filled multiple volumes of texts.¹⁷⁴ It is important, though, that we understand what constituted the Devil (and, by extension, devils and demons) was an adaptable idea in early modern European thought. Early modern Europeans saw the Devil as a singular figure of evil, but not necessarily an omnipotent one, who acted alongside other evil forces and could be influenced by human actions. This adaptability comes significantly into display when one considers interactions between Europeans and Africans in Spanish America.

It is essential to examine African ideas on evil and malevolent spirits, as well, in order to fully understand the aforementioned interactions.¹⁷⁵ In African religious thought, evil is a real but incorporeal force, the source of which can range from malevolent spirits and ancestor ghosts to natural forces.¹⁷⁶ Malevolent spirits roughly akin to devils or demons in the Christian imagination exist within African cosmology; however, evil is not concentrated into a singular figure such as Satan. The two systems, early modern Catholic Christianity and West African religion, are not so different, then, when it comes to the adaptability of evil spirits. They differ, however, in that evil within the African

¹⁷³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1.63-64; Saint Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London, England: Penguin Books, 1972), Book 14, Chapter 3.

¹⁷⁴ See, among others, Russell, *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994) and Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, as previously emphasized in Chapter 2, my entire discussion of African concepts of good, evil and spirituality will be, out of necessity, gross generalizations. I am not attempting to suggest that every cultural or religious group within Africa follows a uniform belief system; rather, I hope to emphasize the commonalities between African cosmologies and religious systems, particularly as they apply to the areas of West and Western Central Africa (Guinea, Congo and Angola) from where the majority of Africans in New Granada originated.

¹⁷⁶ Gwinyai H. Muzorewa, *The Origins and Development of African Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 15; Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, 60.

mindset is fundamentally a question of *doing*. Spirits can be malevolent, beneficial or benign, depending on what actions they take, and a spirit can be either good or evil in different situations. This is completely different from the Christian view, in which angels are wholly good, and Satan and demons are totally evil.¹⁷⁷ The Inquisition trials of African and African-descended men and women, which include testimonies and confessions regarding the Devil and demons, are therefore crucial to understanding African understandings of evil in the New World. In addition, these cases illuminate the interactions between African and European ideas about spirituality, morality and religion in Spanish America.

One such case, on the early edge of the witchcraft prosecutions of 1620-1635, was that of Paula de Eguiluz, a formerly enslaved African woman who had recently been freed. In 1624, Paula faced her first trial in the Cartagena Inquisition for charges of witchcraft. She worked in Havana, Cuba as a potionmaker and *curandera*, or popular folk healer, and was accused of making a pact with the Devil and killing an infant by sucking all of its blood out through its navel.¹⁷⁸ Paula responded to this by claiming that she had simply inspected the sick infant and, finding its belly swollen, applied a warm cloth “infused with lavender and rosemary” to its navel in an attempt to cure it.¹⁷⁹ It seems that, due to unfortunate circumstances beyond Paula’s control, the infant later died from its illness, leading to rumors that she had killed it and the subsequent accusations against her

¹⁷⁷ It is worth noting that, in classic Christian theology, the Devil and demons were once angels, who rebelled against God and therefore became evil. The possibility of good spirits turning evil is present in Christian thought, then; however, spirits cannot switch between good and evil in the way that spirits in the African imagination can.

¹⁷⁸ “The First Trial of Paula de Eguiluz, Accused of Witchcraft and Reconciled with the Church, 1624,” ed. and trans. Sara Vicuña Guengerich, in *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives From the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550-1812*, eds. Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo Garofolo (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009): 183.

¹⁷⁹ “First Trial of Paula de Eguiluz,” 187.

of *brujería* and diabolism. Despite her professions of innocence, the Inquisition Tribunal decided to keep her in its secret prisons without ruling on her case, presumably indefinitely. After eleven days in her prison cell, Paula requested a new hearing, in order to tell the Tribunal a story she had “remembered.” She claimed that, after being beaten by her slaveholder, the Devil had come to her as a disembodied voice following an outburst where she exclaimed in frustration that she wished for “all the devils” to “take” her soul. The voice told her that he would “come every time you need me” so long as she promised him an offering of food; only after she agreed to this promise did Paula claim she realized she had been speaking to the Devil. Later in the day, Paula hurt her tooth while snacking on a bit of sugarcane. Having supposedly forgotten her earlier promise to the Devil, she tossed away the sugarcane and cursed it, saying “may the devil take you,” after which the sweet disappeared and she remembered her promise. Following these events, the Devil appeared to her once again, this time in the form of a woman dressed in a long skirt, and Paula offered her soul to him in exchange for his promise to give her “everything she needed.”¹⁸⁰ In the testimony she gave, Paula positioned herself as a passive, rather than active, participant in the events. Rather than actively seeking out evil, evil forces appeared and pursued her. While in the end she received benefits from this encounter in the form of supernatural healing powers, Paula at no time claimed to consciously enter a pact with the Devil, but rather was deceived into one. In constructing her testimony this way, Paula followed a strategy that challenged Spanish conceptions of evil, which will be examined in more detail in light of several other case studies.

¹⁸⁰ “First Trial of Paula de Eguiluz,” 191.

Paula repented her alleged pact with the Devil and begged the Tribunal for a “merciful punishment” in light of her crimes against the faith.¹⁸¹ The Tribunal sentenced her to public shaming, two hundred lashes and one year’s service in Cartagena’s city hospitals.¹⁸² However, this was far from the last time that Paula would face the Cartagena Inquisition, and present stories involving devils, demons and diabolism. Between 1632 and 1635, Paula became embroiled in a series of Inquisitorial witchcraft prosecutions in Cartagena, in which the Holy Office brought a significant group of free and enslaved Africans, mostly women, on trial for witchcraft and sorcery at a much higher rate than it had before.¹⁸³ All of these women testified to meeting the Devil in one form or another, speaking to him and entering a pact, and in most cases gaining a *compañero*, a demon companion. A free African woman, Angelina de Nava de Guinea, claimed that she knew another woman who was a witch, who brought her on an excursion where she danced with a group of witches before Lucifer. This woman acted as Angelina’s *madrina*, or patroness, and, taking Angelina by the hand, brought her to Lucifer’s “majestic throne” and presented her to him, saying “here I have a disciple that wants to be yours.” Lucifer told Angelina that she would have to “renounce God and his saints and the Virgin Mary,” and promised that he would be a more powerful Lord to her than Jesus Christ. Angelina followed suit, renounced God and then danced alongside Lucifer and her *madrina* and kissed Lucifer’s backside, after which he expelled the requisite “gust of sulfurous wind” upon her. Angelina, Lucifer and the other witches then ate unsalted stewed meat together,

¹⁸¹ “First Trial of Paula de Eguiluz,” 193.

¹⁸² Sara Vicuña Guengerich, “The Witchcraft Trials of Paula de Eguiluz,” in Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo Garofalo, eds., *Afro-Latino Voices, Shorter Edition: Translations of Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic Narratives* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2015), 118.

¹⁸³ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 107.

and Lucifer gifted her with a *compañero*, or demon companion, named Escudero. Completing the ritual, the candles lighting the ceremony went out, and Escudero took Angelina and “knew her by her natural opening, spilling in her a very hot semen.”¹⁸⁴

Angelina’s story follows much of the same trajectory as many other testimonies given in the 1630s witchcraft trials. Alongside other witches, she met with Satan, promised herself to him, renounced God, danced and kissed Satan’s backside, and was gifted a demon companion whom she engaged in a sexual act with under cover of darkness. Hers is akin to the testimony of Lucía Biáfara, given at the start of this chapter, who engaged in similar actions, albeit with minor differences. In Lucía’s testimony, Satan took the form of a goat, and she engaged in sodomy with her *compañero*, while Angelina did not specify the form that Satan took and engaged in vaginal intercourse with her *compañero*. Other testimonies also contain seemingly small differences. Juana de Ortensio, a free black woman, testified to partaking in the same type of ritual with Lucifer. However, during the sexual act with her *compañero* Ñagá, he “put her on all fours, knowing her by her natural opening and spilling a cold semen.”¹⁸⁵ Likewise, another free African woman named Catalina de Otavio testified that, after participating in the standard ritual with the goat-Lucifer, her demon “knew her from both the front and the back by the natural opening, spilling something very cold.” This encounter allegedly caused Catalina to become so ill that she had to spend three months in bed.¹⁸⁶ Examining these same cases, Nicole Von Germeten has argued that these women drew upon their

¹⁸⁴ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 304-305; “se juntó su diablo Escudero y la conoció por el vaso natural, derramándole un semen muy caliente.” The term here, “vaso natural,” literally “natural opening,” refers to vaginal intercourse.

¹⁸⁵ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 310.

¹⁸⁶ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 302.

real-life sexual experiences with human men, often negative ones, but inserted them into the context of diabolic rituals.¹⁸⁷ This seems to be a probable explanation for the situation. Von Germeten also posits that Paula de Eguiluz was the mastermind behind these testimonies, coaching other women held in the secret prisons of the Inquisition to give testimonies that would satiate the demands of the Inquisitors. While it is possible that Paula had some influence on the testimonies of others, this interpretation seems less likely due to several reasons that further case studies help to illustrate.

The idea that the women on trial in the 1630s witchcraft prosecutions repeated testimonies prescribed by one woman, Paula, is unlikely given the variations within them. Some of these variations, such as in the cases of Lucía Biáfara, Juana de Ortensio and Catalina de Otavio are small enough to fit such an interpretation. Two cases, however, shed doubt on it. Juliana de Ariza, a *mulata* woman, testified to renouncing “God and the Holy Virgin...and all the saints of Heaven” and performing ritual dancing with a *madrina*, other witches and the Devil (again in the form of a goat). Rather than engaging in sex with a *compañero*, however, the Devil himself “knew her from the front and the back openings, to which she did not agree.”¹⁸⁸ This is one of the only cases in which an accused *bruja* explicitly testifies to being raped by an evil spirit, rather than engaging in seemingly consensual intercourse. While other women describe negative consequences to their sexual experiences, none other than Juliana go so far as to say that they did not give their consent. Framing this encounter as against her will may very well have been an effort on Juliana’s part to garner sympathy from the Tribunal, or at the very least to distance herself from culpability in the supposed acts of witchcraft. In any case, Juliana’s

¹⁸⁷ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 127-128.

¹⁸⁸ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol.2, 422.

testimony demonstrates a significant enough variation from the norm that it supports the assertion that not all these women's testimonies were shaped by the same source, but were instead influenced by a variety of complex, and at times competing, factors.

Another significant variation is the testimony of Barbara Gómez, an enslaved woman of African descent born in Lisbon, Portugal, whose case was also examined in Chapter 2. As described earlier, she recounted how, after performing a divination ritual, the Devil came into her bed and “knew her carnally three times,” promising to make her his servant. She continued a sexual relationship with the Devil for six months, despite being physically harmed by his sexual acts and physique and becoming repulsed by his scent of “sulfur and rats.” Additionally, she claimed the Devil gifted her a garment that he had to ability to manifest himself in. Barbara then was sold to a new slaveholder in Tolú, just south of Cartagena, where she took on the role of *madrina* and initiated the slaveholder's niece into a coven of witches and service to the Devil.¹⁸⁹ The cases of Barbara Gómez and Juliana de Ariza, while taking place in the same series of prosecutions as Paula de Eguiluz, simply stray much too far from the testimonial norm for it to be likely that these were coached testimonies. The presence of these cases chip away at any interpretation gives Paula control over the testimonies of other accused *brujas*.

Two more cases weaken demonstrate this. First is that of the *curandero* Diego López, the only male tried in the 1630s prosecutions, and Paula de Eguiluz's chief rival and competitor.¹⁹⁰ When brought to trial, Diego gives a strikingly similar story to the

¹⁸⁹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 307-308.

¹⁹⁰ Diego and Paula were both involved in the business of popular healing and potionmaking, and were bitter enemies that vied over the same clients in Cartagena. See Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 103.

women supposedly coached by Paula. The Devil gave him a *compañero* named Tararira, who was “dressed like an Indian” and appeared in the form of a “dwarf-man.” Diego danced with Tararira, kissed the backside of the goat-formed Devil, and ate unsalted rice with his new *compañero*. After this, the candles went out and Tararira “took [Diego] and knew him one time by his back opening,” which Diego “liked more than if he had been with a woman.”¹⁹¹ Diego, then, follows the formula Paula’s supposed adherents did in their testimonies, with the added twist of making it a homosexual experience, and an enjoyable one at that. Out of all the defendants in these trials, however, Diego was the one person who Paula certainly would not be able to coach; indeed, he used his trial testimony to berate her in an attempt to drive away her business competition.¹⁹² This, coupled with his testimony’s variations from the standard formula, make his case a significant dent in the Paula-centric narrative of the Cartagena diabolists.

The final case against Paula de Eguiluz’s role as mastermind of the 1630s witch craze is that of the enslaved Guinean woman Polonia. In her testimony, Polonia claimed to have participated in a witches coven, where her and other *brujas* danced with the Devil and ate corn cakes, plantains and meat. Following this, the Devil took the form of a goat and “knew [Polonia] and the other witches carnally from behind.”¹⁹³ Polonia’s is similar to those of the women supposedly coached by Paula in that she engages in dancing rituals, feasting and sexual acts with the Devil. Polonia’s trial, however, took place in 1622, well before the 1630s prosecutions were in full swing, and two years before Paula would be tried for the first time. The cases of Juliana de Ariza, Barbara Gómez, Diego

¹⁹¹ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 349.

¹⁹² Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 120-121.

¹⁹³ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 222.

López, and Polonia all offer significant evidence to contradict the theory that Paula de Eguiluz was the sole progenitor of the testimonies given by the alleged *brujas* tried in Cartagena in the early 1630s.

All of these cases, however, do share certain common themes: the presence of the Devil and lesser demons, blasphemies against God and other holy figures in the Catholic pantheon, dancing rituals, eating unsalted or uncooked food, and sexual acts under the cover of darkness. In the early modern European mindset, particularly of the Catholic Spanish variety, extramarital sex was associated with evil, Satan and devil worship.¹⁹⁴ The African women and men brought to trial before the Cartagena Inquisition played into such beliefs. Yet, at the same time, they crafted their own stories and inserted unique variations, likely drawn from their own life experiences, into formulaic testimonies. The idea that one woman was the brains behind all of the given testimonies effectively removes the agency of each individual actor in telling their own story. Nevertheless, Von Germeten's interpretation is not completely off base, and is in fact in line with the events of the Inquisition's prosecutions of alleged African witches in more ways than not. Paula de Eguiluz was a powerful and influential *bruja* in Cartagena, and certainly held sway over many of her contemporaries. It is likely that she could have influenced some – but certainly not all – of the diabolist testimonies that appear in the 1630s witchcraft trials. Nevertheless, numerous other complex factors were at play in these testimonies. Africans who stood before the Cartagena Tribunal crafted stories that played off of their own lived experiences as well as their knowledge of African social, cultural and religious rituals in addition to their knowledge of Christianity. At the same time, the Inquisition itself

¹⁹⁴ Walter Stevens, "Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex and the Crisis of Belief," in Mary E. Wiesner-Hanks, ed., *Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 41-50.

influenced these testimonies by molding them to their own expectations – the Inquisitors wanted to hear sordid tales of death, debauchery and devil worship, and African defendants delivered. In spite of this, African women and men tried for *brujería* used what little leeway they possessed before the Inquisition to assert their agency by crafting stories that could benefit them in various ways. Diego López, for example, used his testimony to undermine his business rival Paula de Eguluz. Juana de Ortensio, Catalina de Otavio and Juliana de Ariza drew from negative sexual experiences in their testimonies, the Inquisition perhaps their only option for reckoning with sexual abuse in some sort of official channel. While any benefit for these defendants were tenuous and limited, they were very much real. Although they did not outright resist slavery and racial oppression in the way that the warriors of Colombian *palenques* did, these defendants asserted their agency and resisted the rigid hierarchies of Spanish authority that the Inquisition took part in enforcing.

Understanding both the African and European influences on these testimonies is essential to understanding the threads of resistance present in the seventeenth-century Cartagena witch trials. European conceptions of the Devil and evil spirits were clearly influential on the testimonies given by Africans and African-descended defendants in the Cartagena trials. The association of the Devil with sexuality is a major aspect of the European religious tradition. Additionally, the image of Satan in the form of a goat has a long history in European ideas about the Devil and is clearly present within much of the descriptions given by Africans in the Cartagena trials.¹⁹⁵ Nearly every defendant testified to committing blasphemy by renouncing God, Jesus Christ, the Saints and/or the Virgin

¹⁹⁵ Matos, “The Satanic Phenomenon,” 11, 21.

Mary, actions clearly seen as evil in the Catholic mindset. Furthermore, these renunciations were an integral part of the defendant's pact with Satan in the testimonies, as in each case the Devil demands the blasphemies in return for something, typically a demonic companion or supernatural powers. Finally, murder, particularly of children, is a common theme in the testimonies. Polonia, for example, confessed to flying to different parts of the country with the Devil in order to find children to suck blood from, and "named in particular some children she and her companions killed."¹⁹⁶ Barbara Gómez also confessed to having "sucked the blood from a child," as well as eating human flesh in a ritual ceremony.¹⁹⁷ Lucía Biáfara testified that she had sucked the blood from a "little black baby," who died from blood loss.¹⁹⁸ From sex to blasphemy to the murder of children, the picture of evil in the Cartagena witch trials clearly mirrors European ideas and images associated with Satan, demons and devil worship. However, traces of African religious cosmology are also present if one looks close enough.

There are two ways in which African religious themes and tropes are present within the testimonies of diabolism and witchcraft in the Cartagena Inquisition. The first are signifiers of African influence on direct aspects of the testimonies. Common among nearly all of these testimonies are dancing rituals, typically involving a group of witches dancing with or in the presence of demons and the Devil. Ritualistic dances and drumming patterns are a common hallmark of West African religious rites, divination rituals and cultural celebrations performed both in Africa and by African slaves in the Americas.¹⁹⁹ Other scholars, such as Andrew Redden and Nicole Von Germeten, have

¹⁹⁶ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 222.

¹⁹⁷ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 309.

¹⁹⁸ Splendiani, et al, *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 304.

¹⁹⁹ Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, 148, 202, 208.

connected the ritualistic dances Africans described in their Inquisition proceedings to African social and religious dancing rituals performed in New Granada that Spanish authorities attempted to hinder. Von Germeten, for example, has argued that African and African-descended women based their descriptions of these dances on real life experiences at dancing rituals with other Africans.²⁰⁰ The common situation of feasting on specific foods during the supposed satanic rituals is possibly a further instance of Africans drawing from their personal social and religious experiences to craft testimonies for the Inquisition. Dancing and feasting, therefore, provide the most direct evidence that African men and women drew on African traditions when they confessed to taking part in diabolism when tried by the Holy Office.²⁰¹

The second instance of African religious thought showing up in diabolism confessions is the conception of evil present within the testimonies. In nearly every instance, the African defendants confess not to doing evil but, rather, having evil done to them. Paula de Eguiluz's first confession is a prime example of this. She enters into an "explicit pact with the Devil" seemingly by accident, by making a promise to a disembodied voice and then, after having forgotten her promise, accidentally fulfilling it and therefore solidifying the pact.²⁰² In the later witchcraft trials of the 1630s, the defendants still place the originations of the most evil actions on others, particularly

²⁰⁰ Redden, "The Problem of Witchcraft," 240; Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 140.

²⁰¹ Borja Gómez argues that the devils mentioned in trials of Africans were actually *orishas*, gods in the Yoruba religion, who were misidentified and recorded as demons by Christian *escribanos* (Spanish court scribes). He cites witchcraft cases of *bozales* to back up this assertion. While such an argument may hold for *bozales*, it seems less likely in the cases of *ladinos*, Africans who had lived in and were at least somewhat familiar with Spanish society. *Ladina* women like Paula de Eguiluz, Lucía Biáfara and Barbara Gómez were familiar enough with Christian terminology and ideas about evil to identify the spirits they interacted with as demons and Lucifer. See Borja Gómez, *Rostros y Rastros*, 168.

²⁰² "Procesos de fe de Paula de Eguiluz," 1635/1636, AHN, Inquisición 1620, Exp. 10, folios 53r-54v.

malevolent spirits. While most of the defendants blaspheme God and the Saints, they do so after being commanded to by the Devil. Likewise, every time a defendant performs a sexual act with a demon, they are the passive recipient of sexual penetration, rather than an active instigator of it.²⁰³ Even in the cases of African defendants testifying to having murdered and sucked the blood from children, they often qualify these actions as something they were commanded to do by Satan or demons that exerted powerful influence over them.²⁰⁴ In fact, the very act of sucking the life out of children recalls African beliefs that using witchcraft to commit murder involved sucking a person's soul from their body.²⁰⁵ In case after case of African and African-descendant testimony before the Cartagena Inquisition, evil is something that is performed by malevolent spirits on the defendants.

It is also important to note that African men and women likely framed themselves as passive actors in their testimonies as part of an attempt to appear innocent, or at least less guilty, before the Tribunal. However, this does not necessarily preclude them from framing their experiences with evil within a framework they would be most familiar with, that of African based cosmologies. Such a scenario seems incredibly likely, given the fact that Catholic religious education provided to Africans in New Granada, as well as Spanish America more widely, was generally poor.²⁰⁶ The cases of Africans performing evil acts at the behest of demons and the Devil, then, represents a connection between

²⁰³ One could explain this as being due to the fact that most of the defendants were women, and therefore would be automatically considered the passive sexual actor due to Catholic-Spanish views on sexual relations. However, recall that Diego López was also the passive actor in his sexual experience, despite the fact that he was a man.

²⁰⁴ Redden "The Problem of Witchcraft," 237.

²⁰⁵ Redden "The Problem of Witchcraft," 244.

²⁰⁶ Iris Gareis, "Merging Magical Traditions: Sorcery and Witchcraft in Spanish and Portuguese America," in Brian P. Levack, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 423.

New World diabolism and African religious thought. One could argue that the instances of devils commanding Africans to perform evil acts such as renouncing God and sucking the life out of children fall into the Christian concept of temptation. Rather than viewing Africans as passive actors in situations where evil spirits are in control, one might say that they were succumbing to the Devil's temptation to sin. However, in the trial testimonies of these African men and women, they typically seem to describe their interactions with the Devil and demons not as experiences of temptation, but rather as of control. The Devil exerts powerful influence on the defendants and, while caught up in a whirlwind of ritual dancing, feasting and sex, they enter into a trance-like state where they follow the Devil's every whim. In these testimonies, evil is something that originates with evil spirits and not with humans. Despite framing themselves as passive actors in diabolistic rituals and practices, African and African-descended men and women in Cartagena were far from passive actors in Spanish American society.

The Inquisition largely forced African women and men into a corner when brought before the Tribunal to testify. Certain themes and tropes were expected; indeed, Inquisitors working from specific outlines laid out in inquisitorial manuals would expect nothing less.²⁰⁷ In part for this reason, demons and the Devil in the Christian mold appear throughout African testimonies. However, aspects of these testimonies also work to subvert Christian hierarchical assumptions. Often, the demons described by enslaved Africans and free blacks have more in common, on an underlying, fundamental level, with evil spirits in African traditions, albeit hidden under the trappings of European

²⁰⁷ Inquisitors in Cartagena would have based their trial structure and questioning on specific Inquisition manuals approved by the Catholic Church. For more on this topic, see Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition*, 40-42 and Tausiet, *Ponzoña en los Ojos*, 113.

demonism. Further, Africans at times used tales of devils and demons for their own gain when under the duress of Inquisitorial trial. Diego López, for example, used his tale of demonic relations to strike at his rival and foe, Paula de Eguiluz. And although sentenced to prison time, Paula herself came out of her third and final trial quite well. She leveraged her skills as a healer and magician to have her sentenced reduced to allow her to take paid positions as a medical advisor to powerful members of New Granadan society, including clergymen.²⁰⁸ It seems probable, then, that Paula actually used her Inquisition trial as an opportunity to forge connections with powerful people in white society for her own means.

The similarities in such testimonies demonstrate another facet of African communities in early modern New Granada. There are many similarities in the testimonies, in part due to the fact that African defendants were appropriating European and Catholic ideas as well as attempting to adhere to the expectations of Inquisition officials. At the same time, these testimonies demonstrate ways of thinking and action common to Africans in New Granada. In many ways, it is clear that these testimonies are constructed stories that were not literally true but instead conformed to Inquisitorial expectations about witchcraft and diabolism.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, elements of African cultural and social practices, and the everyday life experiences of African defendants, also made their way into these testimonies. By constructing stories about their alleged experiences with witchcraft and devil-worship, African defendants before the Cartagena Inquisition Tribunal were able to confront Spanish authorities with the realities of their lives under Catholic-Spanish hierarchy. Additionally, they tapped into wider shared

²⁰⁸ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 123.

²⁰⁹ See McKnight, "Performing double-edged stories," 155-157.

experiences with other Africans living under Spanish rule, demonstrating the impact of a common African community. While this community had its own fractures and infighting, such as the rivalry between Paula de Eguiluz and Diego Lopez, it nevertheless stood in stark contrast to the secular and religious authorities of Spanish society.²¹⁰

Enslaved and free Africans in Cartagena de Indias, and New Granada more widely, were not simply passive actors in a hierarchical system of exploitation enforced by the Inquisition and Church officials. Yes, they were exploited by white slaveholders and, even when free, denied their independence to a large extent; however, they also exerted this independence in numerous ways. This can be seen in the Inquisition trials discussed in this chapter, which demonstrate the ability of African defendants to construct narratives that both worked within Catholic frameworks and simultaneously challenged Spanish authority. Additionally, this can be seen through the actions of African *curanderos*, or popular folk healers. African *curanderos* used their skills as healers and potionmakers to carve out relative economic independence, and eventually the most successful *curanderos* found employment in white society. Furthermore, in addition to the challenges to Spanish authority and hierarchy present in Inquisition testimonies and the work of African folk healers, many enslaved Africans directly resisted the confines of New Granadan slave society. African men and women known as *cimarrones* to the Spanish fled captivity and joined together to form independent city-states, or *palenques*, in the wilderness and jungles of the Colombian interior.²¹¹ These

²¹⁰ For another study of the relationship between the Inquisition and community formation among subaltern peoples, see Martha Few, *Women Who Live Evil Lives: Gender, Religion, and the Politics of Power in Colonial Guatemala, 1650-1750* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2002).

²¹¹ Bernd Reiter, "Palenque de San Basilio: Citizenship and Republican Traditions of a Maroon Village in Colombia," *Journal of Civil Society* 11, no. 4 (2015): 333-347. For further information on later *palenques*

communities came in direct contact with Spanish military might and engaged in guerilla warfare against Spanish armies.²¹² The Spanish wiped many of these settlements out, but others survived and eventually negotiated a *de facto* independence from Spanish rule. The modern-day town of Palenque de San Basilio in northern Colombia, for example, is the contemporary descendant of one of these communities, proving that the legacy of resistance to slavery in Colombia is still alive.²¹³ Just as the actions of *palenqueros* represented direct resistance to Spanish society, African invocations of diabolism and Satanic themes are yet another element in the picture of African resistance to slavery in Spanish America. Only by examining the context of the *palenque* wars in seventeenth-century New Granada can the actions of the Cartagena Inquisition, and the diabolist testimonies of Africans who stood before its Tribunal, be truly understood.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Spanish settlers in and around Cartagena were subject to attacks and raids carried out by bands of *palenquero* warriors who lived far outside the reach of Spanish authority. The most famous of these was the formidable *palenque* nestled in the recesses of the Sierra Maria mountains south of Cartagena. The legendary Guinean *cimarrón* Benkos Biohó, who descended from African royalty and

in nineteenth-century Colombia, see Anthony McFarlane, "'Cimarrones' and 'Palenques': Runaways and Resistance in Colonial Colombia," *Slavery & Abolition* 6, no. 3 (1985): 131-151. For an analysis of the role of gender in Colombian *palenques*, see Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Gendered Declarations: Testimonies of Three Captured Maroon Women, Cartagena de Indias, 1634," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 499-528.

²¹² Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Santa Fe 212, "Expediente sobre debelación de los negros alzados de los palenques de Sierra María y las competencias de jurisdicción suscitadas entre la ciudad de Cartagena, el sargento mayor de la misma, el teniente general y asesor de guerra y el gobernador y capitán general," (Seville, Spain, 1693-1695); AGI, Santa Fe 213, "Expediente sobre pacificación y reducción de los negros fugitivos y fortificados en los palenques de Sierra María," (1686-1693); for more on the wars between *palenques* and the Spanish, see Kathryn Joy McKnight, "Confronted Rituals: Spanish Colonial and Angolan 'Maroon' Executions in Cartagena de Indias (1634)," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 5, no. 3 (2004).

²¹³ Reiter, "Palenque de San Basilio," 335-338.

escaped slavery after leading a rebellion of thirty enslaved men and women, founded the Sierra Maria *palenque* around 1600. Attempts by the Spanish military to subdue the *palenque* were so costly and ineffective that the government eventually struck a deal with King Biohó that ensured legal freedom for him and his subjects. However, the Spanish reneged on their deal, captured Biohó, and put him to death in 1619.²¹⁴ After the Spanish betrayal of their king, the *palenqueros* doubled down on raiding and a prolonged war between the Spanish military and the free Africans of the Sierra Maria continued in force until the 1690s. Following a brutal military campaign in 1696, the town was finally pacified and then incorporated into Spanish control, under the name San Basilio, in the early eighteenth century. Spanish authorities guaranteed freedom to the *palenque*'s inhabitants under the condition that no new escaped Africans would be allowed in, and a Spanish priest set up post in the town to attend to it.²¹⁵ In spite of its eventual pacification and incorporation into New Granada's jurisdiction, for the greater part of the seventeenth century the presence of this seemingly untamable and indestructible *palenque* struck fear into the hearts of Spanish colonists, settlers, government officials and civilians.²¹⁶ It is no small coincidence that the Sierra Maria Mountains in which the *palenqueros* based their

²¹⁴ Omar H. Ali, "Benkos Biohó: African Maroon Leadership in New Granada," in Mark Meuwese and Jeffrey A. Fortin, eds., *Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World* (Leiden: BRILL, 2013): 263.

²¹⁵ Aquiles Escalante, "Palenques in Colombia," in Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979): 79. For more on the Sierra Maria *palenque* and others in colonial Colombia, see Roberto Arranzola, *Palenque: Primer Pueblo Libre de America* (Cartagena: Ediciones Hernandez, 1970), María del Carmen Borrego Pla, *Palenques de Negros en Cartagena de Indias a Fines del Siglo XVII* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1973) and María Cristina Navarette, *Cimarrones y Palenques en el Siglo XVII* (Cali: Universidad del Valle, 2003). For the political legacy of the Sierra Maria *palenque* see Reiter's examination of San Basilio, its modern descendant; Reiter, "Palenque de San Basilio," 333-347.

²¹⁶ For a case study illustrating Spanish fears of *palenque* conspiracy and takeover in Cartagena, see Sanchez López, "Miedo, rumor y rebelión," 77-99.

operations lies just south of Cartagena and Tolú, the two areas the majority of Africans tried in the 1630s witchcraft prosecutions lived.

Spanish fear of an uncontrollable African population was exemplified by their dealings with and brutal military campaign against the Sierra Maria *palenque*. However, Spanish efforts to control the African population of New Granada – both enslaved and free – took many other forms as well. While Spanish authorities struggled to contain and control the Sierra Maria *palenqueros* for well over ninety years, the arm of Spanish authority that was the Inquisition had much more ready access to the affairs of Africans living in and near Cartagena. Two characteristics of the majority of African defendants in the 1630s witchcraft trials are especially important in this regard. First, most were from areas near Cartagena, with a large contingent from the town of Tolú. This proximity to the Sierra Maria *palenque* is no coincidence, as Spanish authorities were suspicious of possible interactions between Africans under their jurisdiction and those living in the *palenques*.²¹⁷ Next, most of the Africans brought to trial were *libres* (free people of color), and those who were enslaved were ones who would have had extensive interaction with free Africans. Spanish authorities would have been especially wary of *libres*, and enslaved Africans that associated with them, as having possible connections to or sympathies for *palenqueros*. Spanish authorities would have been aware, for example, that Africans, *libres* and *esclavos* alike, living in Spanish towns and cities maintained contact and communication with Africans living in *palenques*.²¹⁸ Through Inquisitorial trial, Spanish authorities could crack down on and control what they viewed as

²¹⁷ Sanchez López, “Miedo, rumor y rebelión,” 85, 90-95.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 95. More research is needed into whether Spanish officials had direct evidence of connections between *palenqueros* and African communities in the cities and rural areas under Spanish control, but it is clear that at the very least they had suspicions of such activities.

unacceptable activities occurring within African populations under their jurisdiction, and keep those Africans they viewed as vulnerable to crossing over to the *palenques* in check. As Maria Tausiet has observed, early modern Spanish authorities saw clandestine activities such as sorcery and magic as a “hidden threat to the social order.”²¹⁹ By cracking down on African ritual activities, Spanish authorities in Cartagena could regain some semblance of control over both urban and rural black ritual practitioners. In doing so, the Inquisitors sought to defend Catholic-Spanish social and religious hierarchy against what they perceived as an out of control African population. Through persecution of the supposed African witch covens operating under the cover of darkness in the fields outside Tolú and the backstreets of Cartagena, Inquisitorial authorities were attempting to accomplish what secular political and military authorities could not.

There is much debate among academics as to whether the testimonies of Africans before the Cartagena Inquisition represent a form of resistance to the European, Catholic order imposed by the Spanish. Some, such as Jaime Borja Gómez, characterize it as a direct form of resistance; others, like María Cristina Navarette, suggest these Africans were not directly resisting but rather were engaged in a process of syncretization between African and Christian cultures. The reality of the situation seems to be something much different, at least in the cases of diabolism examined in this chapter. Africans who invoked the image and idea of Satan when testifying before the Inquisition were straddling the line between two worlds and two cosmologies. On the one hand, they were playing into the game that the Inquisitors forced them into. Over the course of their trials and after communicating with other Africans charged with *brujería* and *hechicería*, they

²¹⁹ Tausiet, *Urban Magic*, 7.

learned how to craft testimonies, laden with Christian themes and tropes that played into Inquisitors' expectations. On the other hand, though, they invoked African traditions and ideas about devils, magic and evil. By using Christian themes to mask their traditional African beliefs and practices, Africans indeed resisted the Catholic-Spanish hierarchy of New Granada. This was not a direct form of resistance, but instead a subtle one. At the same time, these actions must not be mistaken for assimilation or syncretization, though they may seem that way on a superficial level. The very act of holding on to African beliefs within a society that forbade, at least officially, any belief system other than Catholicism can certainly be qualified as resistance. Even a black *curandera* like Paula de Eguiluz rising through the ranks to work for prominent members of white society was not assimilation, but rather resistance, as her actions cut at the very heart of official Spanish ideas of racial hierarchy. Yet at the same time that Africans resisted Spanish hierarchy and Catholicism, they participated in something much larger than themselves: the creation of the Atlantic world.²²⁰

The diabolism described by Africans and African-descended peoples in the trials of the Cartagena Office of the Inquisition represent a piece of the society and culture of the wider Atlantic world as it came into form in the early modern era. This is not to say that Africans were assimilated into Spanish American society, as they certainly were not. In colonial Spanish America, different social groups existed within certain spheres based on the Catholic-Spanish hierarchical ordering of society.²²¹ African and European spheres

²²⁰ My argument here is indebted to David Wheat, who has argued that Africans, both free and enslaved, were just as important as Europeans in shaping colonial Caribbean society and culture, filling a variety of economic, domestic, social, military and agricultural roles, and acting at times as "substitute colonizers" for Europeans. I hope to have expanded on this idea by bringing in the role of the diabolism and the Cartagena Inquisition, and African reactions to it, into the discussion of African contributions to the creation of Atlantic society. See Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean*, 255-257.

²²¹ For further discussion on the system of hierarchy in colonial Spanish America, see Chapters 1 and 2.

were separate, yet they interacted with each other frequently in daily life. In official capacities, however, they were more rigidly separated. For instance, Spanish law did not permit marriage between whites and blacks, or allow Africans positions of power or authority in public institutions.²²² Religious instruction for Africans was severely limited. Enslaved Africans were treated and viewed as human chattel by white slaveholders, and free Africans faced no lack of discrimination. However, Africans created and defined their own spheres within this racist, hierarchical society, and their spheres interacted with European spheres. African popular healers often sold their products and services to white clients, and enslaved Africans, including Paula de Eguiluz, engaged in sexual relationships with white slaveholders.²²³ In the case of the Cartagena Inquisition, Africans appropriated Christian themes, tropes and ideas about Satan, devils and demons when crafting their testimonies. At the same time, they worked within the framework of African cosmologies and incorporated their own experiences with African-based rituals and religious practices into these testimonies. These trials saw the meeting of two separate societal spheres – African and European – interacting within the context of official actions on the part of Church authorities. Africans were separated from the European social sphere by way of slavery, systematic discrimination and lack of education. This oppression led to resistance to Catholic-Spanish rule, in both direct forms such as *palenques* that waged war against the Spanish, and indirect forms such as the continued use of African religious and social rituals despite official sanctions against these actions. The Cartagena Inquisition trials, then, functioned as among the first true

²²² Obviously, this did not prevent couplings between whites and blacks, evidenced by the large population of mixed-race men and women of African descent, but such offspring were in nearly every instance the products of extramarital relations.

²²³ Von Germeten, *Violent Delights*, 104.

efforts on the part of Church officials to solidify and enforce Christian belief among Africans in New Granada and much of the Spanish Caribbean. By playing into the Inquisitors demands while at the same time retaining African culture and religious views, Africans contributed to the creation of a new, multi-pronged trans-Atlantic society that emerged in Cartagena, and throughout Spanish America and the Caribbean.

Conclusion

Black Caribbeans, Spanish Anxieties and the Emergence of the Atlantic World

On April 30, 1693, panic struck the city of Cartagena de Indias. For years, Spanish authorities had waged military campaigns against *palenques* - communities of self-liberated Africans who had escaped slavery and forged their own societies in the wilderness of New Granada, outside of Spanish control. Spanish military operations based in Cartagena had eradicated many *palenques*, but others still stood. In turn, bands of *palenquero* warriors conducted raids on Spanish settlements to obtain food, supplies and livestock. In Cartagena itself, concerns about a possible *palenquero* attack permeated the city's white population. Many saw themselves as defenseless against a large-scale attack on Cartagena, as Spanish military forces were spread thin throughout the viceroyalty due to campaigns against the *palenques*. This fear came to a head on April 30, when a monk named Joseph Sánchez reported that he had it on good authority that five African inhabitants of the city, one free and four enslaved, were working alongside *palenqueros* to enact a wide-scale attack on the city that would overthrow Spanish society and liberate the enslaved people held in the city. Hysteria spread through the city after this report, with Spaniards at all level of society becoming convinced that an attack was imminent. In response, the city government passed emergency measures reinforcing the city guard and clamping down on freedom of movement and association among its African inhabitants, who in general were looked on with suspicion as possible accomplices to the supposed plot. It is impossible to confirm whether this supposed *palenque* conspiracy was genuine, or if it was simply the fever dream of paranoid Spanish authorities. Nevertheless, the chaos that rocked the city and the response by officials demonstrates that the possibility of an insurrection of enslaved Africans allied

with *palenquero* warriors was a very real fear in the minds of Cartagena's white population in the late seventeenth century.²²⁴

This fear was nothing new. Anxieties among the Spanish population in New Granada about activities of Africans were apparent throughout the seventeenth century. Spanish fears of *palenquero* rebellion can be traced back to Benkos Biohó, an enslaved West African who liberated himself and founded the first New Granadan *palenque* in 1599 alongside other enslaved Africans who had escaped captivity, including his wife and children. After fourteen years of war between Biohó's forces and the Spanish military, the two sides negotiated a peace settlement – which the Spanish later broke, executing Biohó in a bid to extinguish the flame of slave resistance.²²⁵ The struggle between the Spanish military and African *palenques* was far from over, and was simply one part of a larger desire among the Spanish to pacify and regulate African populations in the Spanish Atlantic world. Exactly how to control and maintain Africans was a major question that Spanish authorities grappled with on a day-to-day basis, one they attempted to solve through military, legal and religious approaches. The Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, established in Cartagena in 1610, was one tool by which Spanish authorities sought to Christianize, pacify and control men and women of African descent, both free and enslaved, living under Spanish rule. Spanish anxieties about religious activities in African communities, tried as “witchcraft,” “divination” and “sorcery” by the Inquisition, directly correlated to a wider desire to control African populations. These

²²⁴ For a more thorough account of the 1693 slave conspiracy crisis in Cartagena, of which I am paraphrasing here, see Sanchez Lopez, “Miedo, rumor y rebelión.”

²²⁵ Ali, “Benkos Biohó,” 263-264.

anxieties came to a head in April of 1693, but were a longstanding feature of race relations in colonial New Granada.

In spite of these fears and the efforts of Spanish authorities to impose control over its African subjects, religion and culture in African communities thrived during the seventeenth century. Furthermore, daily interactions between blacks and whites were a common feature of New Granadan society. In the cities especially, people of European and African descent lived and worked alongside each other. In general, race relations in New Granada were more fluid than the hierarchy dictated by Spanish authorities. As Inquisition records examined in this work demonstrate, white Spaniards contracted African religious practitioners to provide medical services. Even after being convicted of religious crimes by the Inquisition, many African healers worked in city hospitals, attending to white patients and overseen by white priests. This is not to say that whites viewed Africans as their equals, but it does show that the strict hierarchies imposed by Spanish authorities often stood in contrast to everyday activities among both white and black populations in New Granada.

Ultimately, religious activities and ideas among Africans clashed with Spanish-Catholic values. Catholic authorities viewed Africans as a sinful, fallen people whose religious lives were under the influence of Satan. Nevertheless, Catholic authorities in Spanish America viewed Africans as a population of people that could, and should, be converted to Christianity. The Inquisition Tribunal, in its trials of African defendants for religious crimes, was perhaps the most proactive and forceful branch of religious regulation of African life in colonial New Granada. Nevertheless, the actions of the Inquisition had unintended consequences, more often than not stemming from the

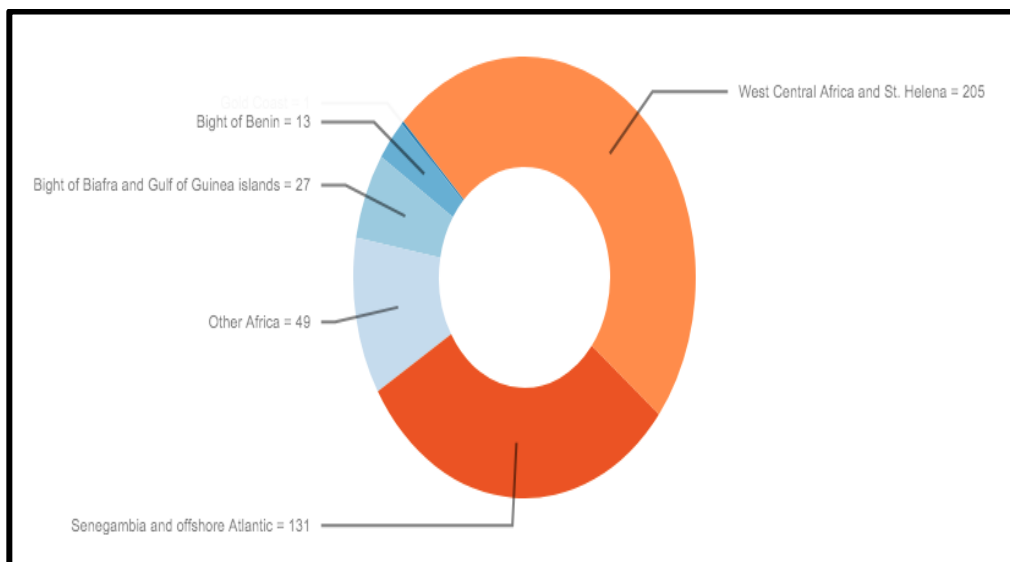
fundamental misunderstandings inherent to Spanish-Catholic assumptions about the nature of African religious life. By displacing African people from various locales and bringing them into Cartagena, the Inquisition inadvertently contributed to the spread of African religious knowledge and the emergence of Cartagena as a center of African religious practice in the New World. Furthermore, the Inquisition trials themselves presented opportunities for Africans to gain new understandings of Christian thought, allowing them to simultaneously accept elements of Christianity and push back against Christian authority.

The clash between the Spanish-Catholic hierarchy and the everyday religious, social and cultural lives of black Caribbeans demonstrates the active role both free and enslaved Africans took in the creation of the Atlantic world. Through both resistance and appropriation, people of African descent in Cartagena and throughout the seventeenth-century Caribbean contributed to the creation of a new, multi-layered Atlantic society. While separate spheres of this society – white and black, Christian and non-Christian – existed, these spheres interacted on a day-to-day basis. More research is needed into the ideological, cultural, medical and material influences Africans had on the development of societies in the Spanish Atlantic world. While Spanish authorities sought to enforce an established hierarchy that placed white, Catholic Spaniards above all others, in reality people flouted this hierarchy. Black men and women in seventeenth-century New Granada continued to seek physical and material benefits through religious and medical practices derived from African traditions. Many white Spaniards continued to seek out services from black religious practitioners in the face of the Inquisition's actions. Furthermore, African subjects labored in the cities, working in hospitals, assisting

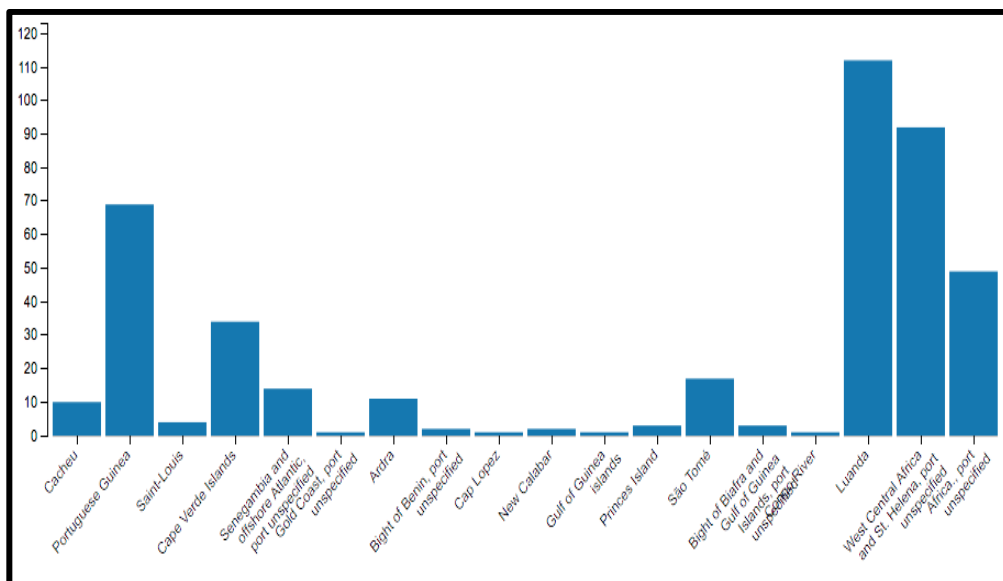
notaries and clergy, and constructing churches, merchant houses and government buildings. In doing so, they interacted with and played a crucial role in forging Spanish American society. The extent of the role that they played in this process, and the legacy of this role in the history of the societies of the Atlantic world, deserves further scholarly attention.

The precise connections between Africans living under Spanish rule in New Granada and those self-liberated Africans living among Colombia's *palenques* also deserve further research. In many ways, Spanish anxieties surrounding these communities of free Africans shaped their response to the activities of Africans living under their jurisdiction. Therefore, more research into the connections between *palenqueros* and other African subjects, as well as the conflicts between *palenqueros* and Spanish authorities is necessary to uncover the workings of race relations in the early modern Spanish Atlantic world. Nevertheless, it is clear that Spanish authorities' anxieties over an uncontrollable African population led, at least in part, to persecution of perceived African elements of society that ultimately backfired. The persecution of African religious practice in colonial New Granada spurred Africans to resist Spanish hierarchy, both directly and indirectly, but also inadvertently contributed to making Cartagena into a center of African religion, culture and resistance. African religious traditions carried on by men and women would later more fully incorporate elements of Christianity and indigenous religious practices, evolving into fully syncretized New World religions. The lives of African religious and medical practitioners living in seventeenth-century New Granada and the Spanish Caribbean would play a tremendous role in the development of later cultural and religious practices that formed in the Spanish Atlantic world.

Appendix 1 African Origins of Slave Voyages to Cartagena de Indias, 1600-1699²²⁶



Origin by African region.



Origin by African port(s) of departure.

²²⁶ Data and charts generated by the Voyages website. Voyages Database, 2013. *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. <http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/D7ifQ3fw>.

Appendix 2
Inquisition Trial Record of Lucía Biáfara (1633)²²⁷

The eleventh case was **Lucía Biáfara**, slave of Aná de Ávila, resident of the city of Tolú, who...was brought to [the Holy Office] to be examined...[She] appeared and a twenty-five year old witness testified that she was a witch, attending the covens and in all of them the rituals and ceremonies that they usually do.

With this information she was taken and rounded up in these prisons [of the Holy Office]. In the first trial she declared that five years ago another black woman persuaded her to be a witch, because being one would give her luck and, understanding she would have it, she said that she would.

And one Friday night with three other people that she named, they went to a field, to a certain place that she named, where they met with a goat on top of an altar. The patroness that brought her talked with the goat and told him that here she had brought him another companion, to which there was an answer that to be his companion there had to be a renunciation of God and his Saints and of the baptism and the chrism that she had received and that had given her to God to save her and give her the glory and many blessings in this life. And Lucía Biáfara so easily made the renunciation, according to and of the aforementioned manner, and with that proceeded to the sect of the witches. Finishing [the initiation], they gave her a devil called Tongo as a companion, marked her with the mark of the coven on the beginning of her right arm, and then danced around the goat and as they turned around they kissed his backside. The goat was very happy with this, jumping up and exposing his backside and the defendant confessed that she kissed it

²²⁷ Splendiani, et al., *Cincuenta Años*, vol. 2, 304. Translations and editing are my own.

and as she was kissing it he fired off a gust of sulphurous wind. Then they ate a stew of human meat cooked without salt, only with water. The candles that the devil had given them for the dancing went out, and the witches all gathered with their demons and Lucía Biáfara with her demon Tongo. He knew her from her rear opening, spilling a thing like hot candle wax in her, and with this finished they each returned to their homes.

And having declared the part [of the country] and the place in which they made the gatherings and the people that attended them and the nights of the week, [Lucía] confessed to having sucked the blood of a little black baby, who died of the blood-sucking and she dug it up and brought it to the coven to eat, this done by the advice of her demon Tongo, who was following her and killed it. And having said that she did not have anything more to say, the accusation was put on her, to which she responded taking an oath that everything contained in it [her testimony] was true, whereupon the trial was accepted for probation. The witness was publicly revealed, who responded under oath that everything confessed in the deposition and everything referred to in the confessions was all true.²²⁸ Having been asked questions and re-questioned to their [the Inquisitors'] satisfaction, the case was concluded definitively, which was judged in consultation that it would finish with an *auto de fe*, [in which Lucía would wear] the emblem of the witch and the habit of reconciliation, and in this she heard hear her sentence and was accepted to reconciliation.

And the said *auto* was finished and she wore the *sambenito*.

And so it was done.

²²⁸ In Inquisition trials, the identity of a witness accusing a defendant was kept secret until the very end of the trial. Often, defendants had no knowledge who had accused them, or what the details of the charges against them were.

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