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Storytelling, Legal Procedure, and Narrative Construction in Spanish Inquisitorial Records

Abstract:

This article will look at two specific cases from the Spanish National Historical Archives and examine how narratives are constructed within the framework of the Inquisition's religious and legal interrogation techniques. The first example deals with witness accounts of a dentist charged with blasphemy and how these build a story around the exact event of the crime in question. In the overall narrative, control is transferred from the accused to the institution by a movement away from personal and professional discourse into the religious and legal discourses dominated by the Inquisition. The second focuses on testimony from an investigation provoked by the use of opium by an Inquisitorial prisoner, in an effort to resist pain under torture. As an event, the opium use spawns narratives that exceed the bounds of ordinary questioning in terms of religious and legal subject matter. In the exchanges examined for this second case, one form of discourse (medical) displaces the others (religious and legal), and spawn narrative digressions that create forays into others discourses, whether military or centred on geopolitics.

Keywords: story, event, narrative, Inquisition, medicine, opium, dentist, Spain

1. Introduction

This investigation is part of continuing research that explores the relationship between storytelling and specialized discourses related to medicine and criminality as they appear in

early-modern Spanish texts, both literary and non-literary. It is therefore important to note that this study is written from the perspective of a literature researcher whose expertise in narrative technique, for the most part, has been derived from studying examples of prose fiction from sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain. Comparative analyses of prose fiction can be used to reach broad conclusions about the narrative techniques therein, but such conclusions often require numerous examples for support, as well as the study of intertextual relationships. In contrast, this particular study will look at two cases that encompass a number of texts that are factual accounts, not intended or understood —by us or contemporary readers— as fiction. Those whose narrative voices appear in these texts do not consciously see themselves as authors. At the same time, they produce narratives that can be subjected to a literary analysis that identifies and tracks 1) the discourses employed, 2) who controls these discourses, and 3) how knowledge of subject matter and its limits dictate the level of control over a given narrative. Instead of using a broad survey of Inquisition interrogations or an intertextual approach, this study will place select narratives extracted from the two cases in a broader socio-historical context as a means of drawing its conclusions.

2. A preliminary note on the Spanish Inquisition and narrative

Historians are aware of the Spanish Inquisition as a rich source of personal stories recorded in a careful fashion, thanks to the thoroughly bureaucratic nature of this institution. These narratives are personal and focus on very particular events because they consist of stories told within the legal framework of a particular form of interrogation: questions directed towards obtaining a confession for a religious crime.

Historians and literary scholars with a historical focus tend to ground their views on the Inquisition in the historical record. Unfortunately, among non-specialists, awareness of the Spanish Inquisition's place in history has been heavily shaped by representations in movies

and television, well-known sources being the ‘Spanish Inquisition’ sketch from the comedy group Monty Python’s Flying Circus, or a ‘song-and-dance sendup’ in comedian Mel Brooks’s film *History of the World: Part I* (Manning 2009, p. 1). To sweep aside any lingering misconceptions, or simply supply essential missing information, it is important to include context that does not wholly focus on torture and fanaticism, and examples separate from the comic exaggeration that often accompanies representation of those elements. The Inquisition existed as a medieval institution in Europe for centuries before it gained fame as the ‘Spanish Inquisition’. Its official presence in Spain was announced through a papal bull issued by Pope Sixtus VI in 1478, a foundational document requested by the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. The express purpose of the Spanish Inquisition was to prosecute heresy, but its other uses and ulterior motives have been heavily debated by historians. Henry Kamen (1998), in his *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* addresses a political climate and actions that are difficult to separate from what was ostensibly a purely religious organization.

In seeking to stabilise their power in Castile and Aragon, the [Catholic] monarch inevitably had to make alliances with great nobles and prelates, and at the same time attempt to eliminate social conflict in regions where the presences of Muslims and Jews appeared to be an unsettling factor. There was one region in particular, Andalucia, where social dissidence seemed to be an immediate cause of instability and called for a concentrated peacekeeping effort. It was where they first paid serious attention to calls being made for the introduction of a special court to inquire into the heresy of Christians of Jewish origin. When that court, the Inquisition, eventually came into existence in the year 1478, it received the full backing of both monarchs, but as events turned out it failed to bring about social tranquillity, and the machinery of the Inquisition served only to intensify and deepen the shadow of conflict over Spain. (pp. 11-12)

This current study does not intend to enter the debate about the exact multiple motives behind the formation of the Spanish Inquisition, and certainly it should not be read as an apology for a ‘peacekeeping effort’ that would cause so much pain, distress, and death over the following centuries. Instead, the quotation above has been provided to demonstrate that, when looking at the institution, we must consider narrative structures of one sort of another, beginning with the narrative of a developing national identity. For more than seven hundred years, the Iberian Peninsula was home to three major religions, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Over time, the Christian-dominated kingdoms came to occupy more and more territory. With a royal edict issued in 1492, all of what we call ‘Spain’ today—at the time, an amalgam of recently joined kingdoms—was officially Christian. This national historical narrative is populated by many powerful Christian leaders who feared that recent converts to Christianity might be heretics in disguise. This public fear of pervasive heresy in Spain, whatever its underlying motives may have been, made the Inquisition a lasting and powerful institution, surviving into the nineteenth century. Within that broader national narrative are situated thousands of personal stories that are a reflection of that greater context, and themselves cannot always be explained purely in terms of a religious-legal prosecution. Depending upon how much the discourses contained within each narrative aligned with the Spanish Inquisition’s express purpose of prosecuting religious crimes, the degree to which these separate narratives are controlled by the story-tellers and interrogators can vary. The following contrasting cases have been chosen to demonstrate this variance.

3. The Case of the Blaspheming Dentist

The first narrative to be examined in this study involves a specific event of blasphemy. As Javier Villa-Flores (2006) writes,

Because punishing blasphemy was necessary for the well-being of the Christian community, theologians and moralist encouraged the faithful to denounce transgressors. In the Forth Lateran Council (1214), Pope Julius III mandated that Christians denounce blasphemers. He even decreed punishments for those who refused to make a denunciation to the ecclesiastic authorities. (p. 15)

In the Spanish National Historical Archives, there is a *proceso* (an inquisitorial trial) from 1625 listed as ‘Trial of Faith for Lorenzo Ruiz, tooth-puller [dentist] by profession, resident of Madrid, born in Alexandre de Capalla, accused of scandalous words’.¹ According to one witness, the ‘scandalous words’ were the following: ‘I swear to God that what I say is more true than the Gospels’ [‘Voto a Dios que lo que digo es más verdad que los evangelios’] (Fol. 3r). This is the event, an utterance, that landed the dentist Lorenzo Ruiz in prison, and the focus here will be on the accounts that form the narrative that led to this specific point. These reflect shifting discourses that move from professional matters, to personal matters, to religious matters, and finally to criminal matters, at which point the ‘scandalous words’ became the key event in the series. We may use the term ‘narrative’, not only in a modern sense, but also from the contemporary perspective of the Inquisition, who used the exact word ‘narrativa’. Below is the witness statement from the official who made the arrest.

Juan Martínez de Piqueras, resident in the town of Zaholejas, bishopric of Cuenca, and member of the Holy Office of Inquisition [...] I declare that today, the tenth of the current month of October of 1625, there was a man [...] eating in the tavern of this Royal Seat of Aranjuez, who was speaking about some tools for pulling teeth and for surgery that some people had taken from him from his mule that he had
[‘polido’??? (verb is illegible)] in said location. And one of those present answered him

¹ Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición, ‘Proceso de fe de Lorenzo Ruiz’, 208, Exp. 49, 1625. Full description from the PARES (Portal de Archivos Españoles [website: <http://pares.mcu.es>]) system is: ‘Proceso de fe de Lorenzo Ruiz, de oficio sacamuelas, residente en Madrid, natural de Alexandre de Capalla, por palabras escandalosas’.

by saying that the tools easily could have fallen from the aforementioned mule. The aforementioned [dentist] said that it was an impossible thing, and that what he said [about the tools being stolen] was to be more truthful than the Gospels, and this being heard resulted in a great scandal among those present as this was a heretical proposition. [...] I ask and beseech and if necessary demand, that Your Worship as governor of this Royal Seat, so protective of God's honour, order that the aforementioned [dentist] be arrested and that his goods, whichever are found, be [confiscated???], and that there be an investigation of the content of this narrative. And this being done, confirming that the information contained within is true and certain, that it be sent with the prisoner to the Lord Inquisitors of Toledo to whom pertains the knowledge of this case so that he [the dentist] can be punished in conformity with his guilt [...] (Fol. 2r).²

Within the text cited above is an embedded narrative in which the discourse is initially professional. But this discourse turns increasingly personal as the verification of facts turns into a dispute. The spark for this argument is named in Juan Martínez de Piqueras' account of how, '...one of those present answered [the dentist] by saying that the tools easily could have fallen from the aforementioned mule' as cited above. According to another witness whose testimony had been gathered for this trial,

[...when he] received notice that a mule, which had gone missing from the aforementioned dentist, had appeared, the witness asked him if what was on top of the mule had also appeared, and [the dentist] responded that 'no, I swear by Christ that

² 'Juan Martínez de Piqueras vecino de la villa de Zaholejas, obispado de Cuenca familiar del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición [...] Digo que hoy viernes diez del presente mes de octubre del mil y seiscientos y veinte y cinco años, estando un hombre [...] comiendo en el mesón de este Real Sitio de Aranjuez tratando de unas herramientas de sacar muelas y de cirugía que se las habían quitado por mano de encima de una mula que había [polido???] en dicho sitio, replicándole uno de los que estaban presentes, que fácilmente se podían haber caído de la dicha mula. El dicho dijo que era cosa imposible y que lo que decía, será mas verdad que el evangelio, de que resultó en oírlo grande escándalo en los presentes por ser proposición herética. [...]a] Vuestra Merced como gobernador que es de este sitio real, y tan celoso de la honra de Dios pido y suplico y, si necesario es, requiero mande prender al susodicho y se erastarle [???] los bienes que se le hallaren y hacer información al tenor de esta narrativa y hecha constando ser cierta y verdadera remitirla con el preso a los señores [...]' Another case presented by Piqueras, involving the illegal copying of a vernacular Bible in 1614, is documented in Palencia (2004), p. 45-46.

whoever found the mule will pay', and speaking on this subject he said that they were some tools of his trade that were quite valuable [...] (Fol. 5r)³

The dentist wishes to steer the conversation towards the topic of the stolen tools, keeping his profession and his livelihood as the dominant subject matter, and in this way maintain a professional discourse. Unfortunately for him, the suggestions from the witnesses present at the scene introduce personal perspectives that necessitate the dentist's own personal defence. Indirectly, those surrounding him are accusing him of being a liar or a fool. The value of the tools, of primary importance to the dentist, is secondary relative to the importance of who is in possession of the facts, and the dentist loses control of the narrative as the witnesses join in and provide their own accounts of what might have happened. The dentist's control is further relinquished when the story not only turns into a conversation, but a dispute that requires support in order to be won. It is clear that he takes a great misstep in his attempt to win the argument and wrest back control of the narrative, so that the story that is being jointly constructed by those present contains the event of the theft of his tools.

Sadly for the dentist, his defence results in complete abandonment of control, shifting the discourse from the professional, into the personal, then to the religious. This shift occurs at the exact moment (event) of blasphemy, and the trial documents clearly describe the event. The first witness cited above in this study testifies that, upon hearing the dentist's heretical oath, 'le reprehendió severamente' ['he severely reprimanded him'], while the dentist responded that he had sworn 'por encarecimiento' ['for exaggeration'] (Fol. 3r). Here we must recall Martínez de Piqueras statement, cited above, that '[the scandalous words] being heard resulted in a great scandal among those present as this was a heretical proposition'. When the word 'heresy' is introduced into conversation, the discourse is now personal and

³ '[...] habiendo venido noticia este testigo de que una mula que se le había perdido al dicho sacamuelas había aparecido le pregunto si había aparecido también lo que estaba encima y le dijo que no, que 'Votado a Cristo que se lo había de pagar quién había hallado la mula y tratando de ello que faltaba decía que eran unas herramientas de su oficio de mucha estima [...]'

religious, and both the dentist's profession and the facts behind his missing tools become irrelevant. The initial implied accusation that the dentist is either a fool or a liar is also replaced by an explicit accusation of heresy, which has legal ramifications, and in this way introduces a legal discourse that is simultaneously religion-based. The dentist's awareness of this change in discourse is reflected in his emotional reaction, as another witness testifies: 'the aforementioned dentist became upset and changed expression [???], showing signs, it seemed, that he regretted what he had said. [And he responded to another witness who reprimanded him]: "Your worship may know what he is saying, and it may be that I do not know what I myself am saying [...]"' (Fol. 3r).⁴ The dentist is unable to verbally qualify the event in any way that changes the endpoint of this section of narrative, namely his arrest. In the context of these archival documents, the narrative is in the hands of the Inquisitors at trial, and they decide how the narrative finally ends. The record states that 'he was reprimanded and they [the inquisitors] ordered that he be [returned ???] whatever goods had been confiscated from him' (Fol. 8r).⁵ As Henry Charles Lea (1906) writes in volume 3 of *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*,

Of the minor inflictions, the most nearly universal was the reprimand. It is naturally absent from the severer sentences of reconciliation and relaxation but, with these exceptions, scarce any defendant escaped it, no matter how groundless the accusation was proved to be, or how plainly his innocence was manifested. The freedom with which it was administered is evidenced in a phrase of frequent occurrence in the reports of the Toledo tribunal — 'as no offence was proved, he was reprimanded and warned for the future'. (p. 121)

⁴ '[...] el dicho sacamuélas turbó y le mudo de cosa[cará???] dando muestras al parecer de que haberle pesado de que había dicho [...] y respondida que [...]: " Podía ser que Vuestra Merced sepa lo que se dice y yo no sepa lo que me digo..."'.

⁵ '... fue reprehendido y mandaron se le [des????envargue?] en qualesquier bienes que le se han embargado...'

Leas's description of the context what would have surrounded Lorenzo's Ruiz's sentence suggests that he was effectively found 'not guilty'. According to Lea, with notable exceptions, 'No record was made of reprimands, beyond the fact of their utterance', the dentist's story in relation to the commission of any religious crime, ends here (p. 122). In this way, the story ends here for us as modern investigators, also.

4. The Case of the Drugged Prisoner

The second part of this study has its basis in a specific event that was not a religious crime itself, but rather what occurred after a prisoner had been accused and imprisoned. In 1645, Damían Díaz de Lucena, a Portuguese merchant descended from Jewish converts was accused of being part of a *complicidad*. According to the use of the word at the time, this was an association of people of similar descent who were supposedly exploiting their family and business connections when forming a subversive heretical organization (González de Caldas, 2001 p. 131). As part of standard judicial procedure at the time, Díaz de Lucena was repeatedly tortured to extract a confession; and at some point between sessions of torture, it was discovered that he was using opium to resist the pain.

The presence of the *complicidad* in Seville cannot be isolated from a narrative of lingering anti-Semitism and anti-convert sentiment that first took on a national dimension in the fifteenth century through the monarch's 'attempt to eliminate social conflict in regions where the presences of Muslims and Jews appeared to be an unsettling factor' (Kamen pp. 11-12). For descendants of Jews, the 'social conflict' after 1492 arose from accusations that these descendants were judaizers, still secretly practicing their parents' religion, which had been made officially illegal that year. As Kamen writes, 'The large number of judaizing cases with which the Inquisition dealt in the early years of the sixteenth century marked the end of the generation of ex-Jews who had direct acquaintance with the Mosaic law taught before 1492

[...] For the rest of the sixteenth century, Spain was, with few exceptions, no longer conscious of a judaizing problem. By the 1540's conversos had virtually disappeared from the Inquisition trials' (p. 351). What is important to consider, however is that before then, many Jews had fled to Portugal in the decades before that time. This happened most *circa* 1492, but then later the decrease of prosecution in Spain was met with its inverse in Portugal. 'The presence of a native Inquisition was one of the factors provoking a mass emigration of Portuguese New Christians back into Spain, which for many of them had been the land of their birth' (p. 351). This back-and-forth flight and influx of descendants of Jewish converts continued to the time of Damían Díaz de Lucena's trial. Keeping this historical context in mind, we can visualize a number of narrative frames that begin as a product of a narrative of nation formation and religious persecution that stretched over 160 years (1480's to 1645), and subsequently lead to the particular narrative of how Díaz de Lucena and his supposed co-conspirators were imprisoned. A letter from inquisitors in reference to the imprisonment of Díaz de Lucena's brother, Diego Díaz Báez, exemplifies how Lucena's particular case sits within a much larger narrative. The letter also reminds us of possible ulterior motives, sometimes financial, that could make the prosecution and conviction of judaizers an urgent matter "And finding ourselves in front of new *complicidades* [judaizing plots] of Portuguese from Seville and Cádiz, of equal importance with regards to the spiritual good of those cities and what comes to be of lesser temporal interest for the exchequer". (González de Caldas, 2001, p. 131).⁶

Before continuing this study, it is important not to allow the tragedy of Díaz de Lucena's torture to become buried beneath dry layers of academic discourse. As horrifying as torture is to us today, it was considered normal by law-enforcement officials from the time period, both secular and ecclesiastic. This early-modern perspective is exemplified by the full

⁶ "Y hallándonos hoy con las nuevas complicidades de portugueses de Sevilla y Cádiz de la misma importancia por lo que toda a su bien espiritual y por lo que viene a ser menos de tan grande interés temporal del fisco".

title of *The Book of Evidence and Torture, Which Contains All the Criminal Practice and Method of Indicatively Substantiating a Trial, Resulting Either in Conviction or Absolution* [*Libro de indicios y tormentos: Que contiene toda la práctica criminal, y modo de sustanciar el proceso indicativamente, hasta descubrir el delito y delincuente, y ponerle en estado de condenarle, o absolverle*]. While interrogators certainly wished to keep their subjects alive in order to extract a confession, avoiding permanent physical damage was not their primary concern. When speaking of the various methods that prisoners employ to resist torture, Quevedo y Hoyos (1632) writes in *The Book of Evidence and Torture* that, despite what classical authorities said about a natural aversion to sustained torment, the instinct for self-preservation may override this. On some occasions, prisoners ‘deny their guilt, encouraged by advice that their friends usually give them, telling them it is all one and the same, confessing and forfeiting one’s life, and so the prisoners suffer from broken arms and pain when they worry about how to stay alive...’ (Fol. 95v).⁷

The case of the drugged prisoner involves two cases embedded in a single wider narrative of religious prosecution in Seville, and two separate courts within the Inquisition. Within the overall narrative of Díaz de Lucena’s imprisonment we find the narrative of the warden’s assistant, Diego Carmago, who is accused of allowing Díaz de Lucena access to the opium. But the trial for Carmago only occurred after the Supreme Council of the Inquisition demanded further investigation, and sent the solicitor Juan de Morales to find out exactly what had happened. This was because the officials directly responsible for trying Díaz de Lucena completed their preliminary investigation and ‘decided to designate the affair ended, despite its seriousness, ‘finding the matter unable to be proved’ (González de Caldas, 2001, p. 134).⁸ At the same time, these embedded narratives and the Council’s investigation of the

⁷ ‘niegan animados de algunos consejos que les suelen dar sus amigos, advirtiéndoles que es todo uno, confesar y perder la vida, y que unos sufren los brazos quebrados, y los dolores de cuando se curan por conservarla...’

⁸ ‘decidieron dar por terminado el asunto, a pesar de su gravedad, ‘hallando improbable la materia’. No complació esta solución en la Suprema [...]’

tribunal's investigation of what occurred to the prisoner are all nested within a greater narrative on a national level, one of eliminating threats against religious purity.

It was important —from the perspective of the Supreme Council— that this overarching narrative, moving forward in time, not be impeded by medical means. In practical, non-narrative terms, the Inquisition's effectiveness as an institution required that torture remain painful. From a literary studies perspective, we may say that both the Supreme Council and the tribunal (the inquisitors on the scene of the interrogation) had been left with an incomplete narrative. In the previous case of the blaspheming dentist, incompleteness itself was not a problem since it did not prevent a satisfactory ending —from the Inquisition's point of view— of the narrative of prosecution. The loss of the dentist's tools, and their importance to his livelihood, were strongly connected to his utterance of 'scandalous words', but the truth of how he lost his tools was irrelevant to either his prosecution or his defence. Below we will see how the medically-reliant discourse that informs the narrative of Díaz de Lucena's resistance to torture and drug use is all too relevant. Unless the Supreme Council could determine how the prisoner obtained the opium, combatting heresy through the extraction of confessions would continue to be compromised. It was not only the specific example of Díaz de Lucena that caused concern for the institution. He was, after all, part of a *complicidad*, meaning that he was joined by family, family friends, and business colleagues in a conspiracy. Two heads of family that were imprisoned as a part of the *complicidad* died in prison, but the rest 'ended up with penance imposed upon them, without their goods being confiscated, although they were fined with heavy sums ['resultaron penitenciados sin confiscación de bienes, pero fueron multados con fuertes sumas'] (González de Caldas, 2001, p. 138). But this was only a partial victory for the prosecution. If opium use continued in the prisons, and resistance to torture persisted, the Inquisition's efforts to stamp out heresy would face a serious challenge.

Let us now return to the more specific and reduced narrative frame of Díaz de Lucena's imprisonment and drug use. According to both the torturer and the Inquisition surgeon, before the prisoner was discovered with a swollen purple tongue and slurred speech, one of the co-accused named Enrique Jorge de Acosta had withstood torture by secretly taking something to dull the pain (González de Caldas, 2001, p. 133). Some activity in the prison was impeding the Inquisition's standard procedure of inflicting pain to extract a confession. The warden's assistant, Diego Camargo was interrogated about his involvement in giving Díaz de Lucena access to opium; and so the narrative embedded within the framework of religious-legal prosecution turned into, or was subsumed into, a narrative almost exclusively reliant upon a medical discourse.

The first expert witness on the record was an apothecary named Andrés Rodríguez, who testified that he been in this profession for a total of 42 years. After being questioned about different drugs, including opium and how it is, 'corrected' ['corregido'] or diluted with other ingredients, Rodríguez gave his answers and explained that,

although there is no particular order that prevents one from dispensing opium in the apothecary's shop without doctors' permission, it is never dispensed without a prescription from them, except to Moors [North African Muslims] who in the presence of the same apothecaries take it, because in Barbary they use it as commonly as they do tobacco in Spain' (Fol. 2v).⁹

⁹ '[...] aunque no ay orden particular para excusar el darse en la botica el opio sin la de los médicos nunca se da sin recepta de ellos, salvo a los moros que en presencia de los mismos boticarios le toman, porque en Berbería lo usan los moros tan familiarmente como en España el tabaco'. Archivo Histórico Nacional, 'Proceso criminal de Diego Camargo', Inquisición, 2061, Exp. 9. Full description from the PARES (Portal de Archivos Españoles [website: <http://pares.mcu.es>]) system is: 'Contiene información sobre el suministro del opio a algunos presos de la Inquisición de Sevilla, a petición del obispo de Plasencia, Inquisidor General y señores del Consejo al Inquisidor de Sevilla, Agustín de Villavicencio. Se pide declaración al boticario de Sevilla, Andrés Rodríguez, sobre las propiedades de ciertas hierbas, como el opio, para adormecer las carnes de manera que queden insensibles. El dicho boticario declara que en pequeñas cantidades hace recetas con opio y aporta una pequeña muestra de opio que el inquisidor pone con los autos. Contiene otras declaraciones de un médico y del alcaide de las cárceles, Vicente Moyx, que declara sobre su ayudante Diego Camargo. Se investiga si este dio opio al preso Damián Díaz de Lucena'.

At this point in the narrative, within the immediate frame of the trial and expert witness statements, the solicitor Juan de Morales was attempting to pinpoint the occasion (in terms of timeline within the narrative), if not the exact moment, when the drug was dispensed. If he were able to track down a prescription, then the solicitor could trace the person indirectly responsible for the providing the opium. The problem with constructing this timeline of the narrative, from dispensing to ingestion, lies with the possibility, implied by the apothecary Rodríguez's testimony, that the opium could be dispensed without a prescription to a galley slave. This possibility is reinforced by another expert witness's testimony, a doctor who

said that doctors rarely prescribe opium by itself, to be taken orally, and that apothecaries should not dispense it without a doctor's prescription because of the risk misusing such mediation. But it is understood that they will give it to whomever asks for it in exchange for money, because he [the doctor] knows that when there are galleys on the river in Seville, opium gets sold in great quantities to the Moorish and Turkish slaves of these ships. (Fols. 9v-10r)¹⁰

The remaining expert witness —whose testimony appears after the apothecary's but before the doctor's— is Alonso Travieso, the surgeon who inspected Damián Díaz de Lucena's tortured body and found the prisoner's tongue swollen and purple, his speech slurred. '[The surgeon] said that in all the time of exercising his profession, although he has healed many people maimed by torture, he has not seen any of them who had taken opium' (Fol. 7v).¹¹ Unwittingly, and to the benefit of the solicitor's investigation, the surgeon's testimony aided in cementing the piece of the narrative initially put in place by the apothecary Rodríguez, because the surgeon stated that the effects he witnessed were those of opium which is sold in

¹⁰ 'Dijo que los médicos raras veces le recetan solo, para tomar por la boca, y que los boticarios no debían darlo sin receta de ellos por el riesgo de usar mal del tal medicamento. Pero se entiende que a qualquiera que se lo pidiere se lo darán por su dinero, porque sabe que cuando hay galeras en el río de Sevilla, se lo venden a los esclavos turcos y moros de ellas en mucha cantidad [...]'

¹¹ 'Dijo que en todo el dicho tiempo de ejercicio de su oficio aunque ha curado a muchos estropeados de tormentos no reconoció en ellos que hubiesen tomado opio [...]'

the apothecary's shops. And yet, although the solicitor Juan de Morales accumulated knowledge about the availability of opium, he was still left to speculate about how it made its way into the prisoner's cell. The historian González de Caldas writes,

If doctors and apothecaries were interrogated under oath, it would be possible to get to the truth, if indeed they had not been accomplices in the affair, given that both professions were well situated among Portuguese converts. The official did not dare confide in the Tribunal about his investigation, fearing that if it came to know the circumstances, it would ruin the entire business. The solicitor sent his report to the Supreme Council, and a month later, the warden's assistant Diego Camargo was sacked. He was replaced by Fernando Negrete. In May, the warden Vicente Moix was being prosecuted. We do not know when the process began, and neither if in its inception the solicitors' suspicions [about the source of the opium] were made explicit by the solicitor, Juan de Morales, before the Council'. (p. 137)¹²

Just like the solicitor himself, as students of narrative we are left to speculate upon exactly what happened within the narrative frame of Díaz de Lucena's drug use at the hands of the Inquisition. The inquisitors of the tribunal had been satisfied despite the lack of information, but for the Supreme Council this lack was symptomatic of a greater problem, itself part of a greater narrative that was inseparable from the Inquisition's *raison d'être*. This inseparability between the framed narratives made the story of acquiring of opium impossible to dismiss. In this way, the Supreme Council could be said to have a greater consciousness of narrative frames than the members of the tribunal.

¹² 'Si se interrogaba bajo juramento a médicos y boticarios, era posible que se llegase a la verdad, si es que no habían sido cómplices de los hechos, ya que, en ambas profesiones estaban bien situados los portugueses conversos. El ministro [royal solicitor Juan de Morales] no se atrevió a confiarle sus pesquisas al Tribunal temiendo que, si llegaban a conocer, se desbarataría todo el negocio. El fiscal envió su informe a la Suprema, y un mes después, el ayudante del alcaide, Diego Camargo era cesado. Fue sustituido por Fernando Negrete. En mayo se estaba siguiendo una causa contra Vicente Moix, el alcaide. Ignoramos cuándo comenzó el procedimiento, y si en su origen estuvieron las sospechas explicitadas por el fiscal, Juan de Morales, antes el consejo [...]'

For the Council, the use of drugs to resist torture was not an event in isolation, but rather embedded within and connected to a narrative of corrupt behaviour within the Inquisitorial prison system (González de Caldas, 2001, p. 127). The Council sought to control the course of this narrative, eliminating corruption because —if the events contained within continued— it would adversely affect the progress of a greater narrative in which the entire institution lay embedded, namely the fight against heresy in Spain. This fight in turn was part of a geopolitical-religious narrative of Spain as a defender of the Catholic faith, not only against heretics, but against infidels as well. From a modern historian's perspective, a narrative constructed by Henry Kamen characterises the years 1559-1614 as the Inquisition's 'period of activity against Protestants and Moriscos [descendants of Muslim converts] and the seventeenth century as 'when most of those tried were neither of Jewish nor of Moorish origin'. (p. 247). He also indicates that 'The Spanish Inquisition took no active part in the decision to expel [the Moriscos in 1609], which was arrived at exclusively by a small group of court politicians. It continued, however to act with severity against Moriscos accused of offenses against religion, and after 1609 those still in its cells were given the unenviable choice of punishment or exile' (p. 174). Decades after the expulsion of the last vestiges of non-Christians from Spain, in the year (1645) that Damían Díaz de Lucena found himself in prison, the overall religious fervour tied to a desire for war had died down. Nevertheless, Spain's sprawling empire and competition over trade in the Mediterranean meant that the Ottoman Empire (personified as the 'Great Turk' ['Gran Turco']) was still considered a dangerous adversary, and the battle lines could still be drawn using religion. A series of such battles began in 1645, when a Turkish surprise attack sparked off the 24-year 'War of Candia' or 'Cretan War'. Cosmescu (2015, p. 181) argues that at this point in history, in practical terms, France had replaced Spain as 'Defender of the Faith' although,

In the first year of the war, Venice still feared Turkey as a worthy sea power, and called upon the Christian West, getting attention only from the Holy See, Malta, Tuscany and the Spanish of Naples. These countries were still tied to the old Christian ideal of common defence against the Turks, and also by their basic geopolitical situation—being already in a state of almost permanent quasi-war with the unruly Barbary pirates, and thus with their nominal Ottoman overlords. (p. 181)

It is this ‘permanent quasi-war’ that creates a frame around both Inquisitorial practice in Spain and the less religious, more geopolitical-military battles in the Mediterranean, battles whose initial religious importance had waned compared to the previous century. This geopolitical-military framing is reflected in the testimony of the medical experts who cite the ‘Moorish’ galley-slaves, who would not be present in Seville were it not for the ‘permanent quasi-war’ that brought the galleys to the city. The ships’ presence, in turn, brings opium to Seville, which makes the substance accessible to prisoners who wish to resist torture in an effort to avoid being convicted of a religious crime. The event that is Díaz de Lucena’s opium use is contained within a number of larger framing narratives, for which the Inquisition must increasingly cede control as the frames expand outward, despite an overarching narrative frame of combatting enemy religions that pose a threat to the nation.

4. Conclusions

In his study of the medieval inquisitors of Languedoc, James Given (1989) reminds us that ‘The inquisitors [...] conceived of their activity not so much as punitive but as corrective, an effort to reconcile sinners with the church.’ (p. 353). Since its beginning in the Middle Ages, there was long tradition of the Inquisition using all means at its disposal to control a narrative that chronologically moves forward from crime, to accusation, to imprisonment, to trial, and

finally conviction, with the ultimate aim of reconciliation of ‘sinners with the church’. Given (1989) also writes that,

The success the inquisitors enjoyed in ferreting out heretics is eloquent testimony to just how effective these medieval techniques [of psychological insight and use of documentation] could be when wielded with enthusiasm and determination. The inquisitors were not, however, limited to the facts. Their investigatory techniques allowed them to create their own, tailor-made realities. Through their interrogation procedures, the inquisitors could make manifest the ideas, fears, and fantasies that had previously resided only in their own minds. In a sense, they could make these phantasms objectively real. (p. 351)

In the two cases studied here, of the blaspheming dentist and of the drugged prisoner, no such ‘tailor-made’ reality was employed as a means of controlling a narrative of religious-legal prosecution. Nor was evidence discarded by the prosecution, as could sometimes occur when the Inquisition faced relinquishing control of a narrative because the discourse required to fashion a narrative lay outside the institution’s area of expertise.

Examples of this lack of authority are cited in H el ene Trop e’s two-part study (2010) on madness and Inquisitorial subjects. In her study, she confirms that ‘when it seemed to them absolutely essential to punish a heretic, or even worse, a political opponent, annihilating and destroying his good name, the inquisitors knew how to find a way to turn a blind eye to that exculpatory circumstance which was madness’ (p. 484).¹³ Returning to our case of the dentist Lorenzo Ruiz, there was no need for the Inquisition to ‘tailor-make a reality’ or ‘turn a blind eye to exculpatory circumstances’. This is because the narrative constructed by the witness statements themselves aligned perfectly with what the inquisitors in order to obtain a conviction. Reliance on medical discourse in the trial proceedings was negligible, as the trade

¹³ ‘[...] cuando les parec a imprescindible castigar a un hereje, o peor a n, a un oponente pol tico, aniquilando y destruyendo su buen nombre, los inquisidores sab an encontrar la manera de hacer caso omiso de aquella circunstancia eximente de culpa que era la locura’.

and tools in question did not have any effect on the utterance of ‘scandalous words’ other than to provoke them by the loss of valuable tools. As the narrative was constructed by the exchanges of parties present at the scene of the crime of blasphemy, the discourse in the testimonies became increasingly personal instead of professional and medical.

The second case presents the opposite situation, as the Supreme Council’s investigation required that medical discourse become a foundational aspect of determining the origin of the opium that led to the prisoner’s ability to withstand torture. For the solicitor Juan de Morales, no amount of ‘tailor-making a reality’ would have taken him any closer to the truth of the situation, namely the exact circumstances that led to the acquisition of the opium. Neither could Morales regain control of the greater narrative of religious-legal prosecution by ‘turning a blind eye to exculpatory circumstances,’ ignoring medical opinion. While the opinion of the medical experts, that opium was easily obtainable and did not always require a prescription, did not stand in the way of prosecuting the responsible party, the information still presented a problem because it was insufficient. To sum up, the case of the blaspheming dentist resulted in a successful conviction, albeit it in its most minimum form (a reprimand), because the narrative frames and types of discourse were managed in an agreeable way by both inquisitors and witnesses alike. The case of the drugged prisoner, while itself not a trial for heresy, still resulted in a frustrated effort to combat heresy on a larger scale because the narrative frames and types of discourse far exceeded the bounds of control established by the Inquisition.

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