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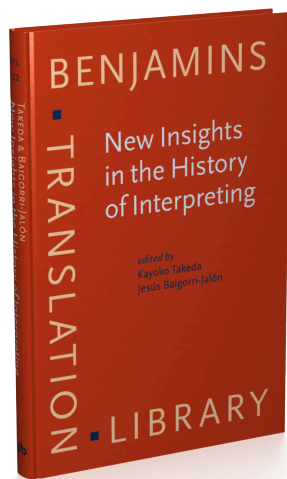
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Interpreting for the Inquisition

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One of the singularities of the Spanish Inquisition was its multilingualism. This chapter looks at mediation in this institution, which carried out its activities throughout practically the whole of the Spanish Empire over three and a half centuries (1478–1834). After the initial delimitation of the historical, geographical and social areas in which it was active, the most common situations in which interpreters were needed are presented, together with the most relevant aspects of their work, including references to the regulations that governed their interventions. Although this is a first approach to this area of the history of linguistic mediation, we can conclude that the Inquisition involved a considerable amount of interpreting, most of which was of a legal nature.

Keywords: Spanish Inquisition, multilingualism, appointment of interpreters, court interpreting

1. Introduction

The Spanish Inquisition, fostered by the Catholic Monarchs (Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon), was established in 1478 by a Papal Bull issued by Pope Sixtus V and was abolished in 1834 by Decree of the Spanish Regent María Cristina de Borbón. During its three and a half centuries' existence, it carried out a significant amount of inter-linguistic activity in which, although translation and *calificación* – here understood as the drafting of a report in Spanish based on the contents of an original text written in a different language – were frequent, interpreting was the most common mode.¹

Although many of the Inquisition's trials were brought against Spanish speakers (for example, both San Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa de Jesús), in our

1. In essence, the *calificación* consisted of examining statements made by the accused and suspicious written texts, and issuing a judgment on them as to whether or not they contained heretic propositions. The *calificadores* had to be theologians (cf. López Vela 1989).

opinion, as we shall see shortly, multilingualism was one of the defining characteristics of the Inquisition's activities and the work of interpreters was crucial. However, and despite the fact that, as we shall see, every word in the Inquisition had to be rendered in Castilian, the language of the Empire (cf. Pym 2000: 134–142), the presence of interpreters barely warrants a mention in the major works written on the history of the Inquisition. We could cite three examples to illustrate this fact: (1) Juan Antonio Llorente – who, as secretary to the tribunal of Madrid between 1789 and 1791, in his own words, “had an in-depth knowledge of the Inquisition system” – uses the word interpreter seven times in his *Historia Crítica de la Inquisición en España* (1835–1836, 3: 62; 4: 271, 298, 310; 5: 163; 6: 109, 134), always alluding to someone who explained the meaning of the Holy Scriptures; (2) Henry Charles Lea, in his *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, includes “interpreter” once to refer to the case of an accused in the tribunal of Granada, Jaques Curtancion, in which the *Suprema* (the Inquisition) had detected in 1559 “that the ratification of the confession of the accused had been made in the presence of only one interpreter, when the rules required two” (1906–1907, 2: 182); and (3) Henry Kamen, in *The Spanish Inquisition* (1968: 28), refers to the Jewish interpreter (in allusion to Luis de Torres, who spoke Spanish, Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabic) who accompanied Columbus on his first voyage to America.

Neither have interpreting history scholars, with a few exceptions (cf. Alonso 2012: 54–58), given this subject the attention it deserves. Hence, the main objective of this chapter is to offer a first approach, in the form of a succinct overview, to the role of interpreters in the Inquisition's activities. We will start by delineating the spheres in which interpreters were necessary and the situations in which they most commonly intervened, including references to the regulations that governed their interventions. We will then analyze their status within the official hierarchy of the Inquisition and, finally, propose a classification of interpreters therein. For the benefit of readers who are not familiar with this subject matter, we will start by offering a brief explanation of the composition of the Spanish Inquisition and the crimes it pursued. As Llorente (1835–1836, 1: 4) points out, this institution “was not a new creation of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, but rather a reformed, extended version of the pre-existing Inquisition, that had operated since the 13th century” and gradually adapted many of the old customs to its needs (cf. Kamen 1968: 140).

The Supreme and General Inquisition, the *Suprema*, was headed by the Council, presided over by the Inquisitor General and it constituted one of the 15 Councils of Spanish central administration in the 16th century. Together with the Councils of State and War, the *Suprema's* jurisdiction stretched throughout the Monarchy (Escudero 1995: 730–741). Below it in the hierarchy lay the local or district tribunals, which numbered 21 at the height of the Inquisition: Seville, Cordoba, Cuenca, Granada, Llerena, the Canary Islands (Canaries), Murcia,

Toledo, Valladolid, Santiago and Madrid (also known as the Corte tribunal), administered by the Secretariat of Castile; and Barcelona, Saragossa, Logroño, Valencia, Majorca, Sicily, Sardinia, Mexico, Lima and Cartagena de Indias, administered by the Secretariat of Aragon (cf. Lea 1906–1907, 1:541). Two of these tribunals were created in the 17th century: Cartagena de Indias, in 1610, and Madrid, hitherto under the auspices of the tribunal of Toledo. Philip II's attempts to introduce such tribunals in Milan, Naples and Flanders failed due to the opposition of their respective populations.

The tribunals, made up of one, two or even three Inquisitors (cf. Galván Rodríguez 2010: 1031), also had at their service *fiscales* (prosecutors), notaries, secretaries, commissioners, familiars (lay servants of the Holy Office) and some twenty other officials (cf. Lea 1906–1907, 2:233–272; Kamen 1968: 137–161). In towns and villages that lay distant from the seat of the tribunal, and with the assistance of the notaries, who recorded the minutes of the proceedings, the commissioners carried out spontaneous conversions, visited ships, if they lived in sea-ports, dealt with examinations into *limpieza* or purity of blood (*vide infra*), executed the tribunal's orders and commissions, received information regarding matters of faith and forwarded it to the relevant tribunal (Castañeda Delgado and Hernández Aparicio 1989: 50–52).

Initially, the Inquisition basically persecuted heresy, i.e. errors in matters of faith. But by the early 16th century, based on the premise that any erroneous idea in religion was tantamount to heresy, the Inquisition had managed to obtain jurisdiction in almost all crimes. So in addition to the initial errors of Judaism and Mohammedanism, bigamy, blasphemy, usury, sodomy, mysticism, solicitation in the confessional, witchcraft, sorcery, magic, superstition and idolatry, among others, which naturally included Protestantism, were also considered. The long lists of facts, rites and ceremonies that identified the different heresies for which people could be denounced were stipulated in the edicts (cf. Llorente 1835–1836, 1:240–249; 2:250–255; 3:46–52, 112–115; Lea 1906–1907, 3:231–476; 4:1–335; Kamen 1968: 197–213). We should mention that the Inquisition only pursued Christians, as heresy could only be committed by those who had been duly christened. Consequently, only those Jews, Moors, Indian² or African slaves who had converted to Christianity were pursued. Protestants (such as Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Huguenots and Anabaptists) were assumed to have been baptized.

As this work is a first approach to this subject, secondary sources have been given more weight than primary ones (archives). Said secondary sources include

2. The term “Indian,” used in this chapter, is taken directly from the sources. It applies to various native peoples in the Spanish colonial Empire who were identified by the first explorers as people from India, the intended destination of the early voyages.

those that deal with the Inquisition as a whole, deemed relevant for an understanding of the essence of the institution, and those that study a district tribunal or a particular sphere of the Inquisition's activities. As for primary sources, the Inquisition section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN, Inquisición) in Madrid is the main depository of Inquisition documents. Then there are those that house the documentation pertaining to a district tribunal, such as the Archivo del Museo Canario (AMC, Inquisición), home to the documentation regarding the tribunal of the Canaries.

Generally speaking, the documentation created by the Inquisition is widely dispersed (cf. Galende 2001: 496–497; Betancor Pérez 2006: 2032–2035, 2011). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the documents kept in the manuscript section of the British Library (BL, Ms), of which we consulted the Egertons 457 and 458 (*Diccionarios de las leyes de la Inquisición*, A–F y G–X), presumably copied in Toledo during the first half of the 17th century (Llamas 1975: 105).³ Although the regulations governing interpreters' interventions are also found in the AHN, Inquisición, lib. 1278, fols. 60r–60v, 76v (*Segundo tomo de la recopilación de instrucciones, concordias y cartas acordadas*, 1783), given that we do not have details of the original source from which the two documents took their information, we have chosen the Egertons, as they are older.

Other abbreviations used in this chapter include the following: BN = Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid); leg. = legajo (folder); lib. = libro (book); exp. = expediente (file); fol. = folio; r = *recto*; v = *verso*. The names of the accused and of the interpreters have been left in the form in which they appear in the original documents, often “deformed” by the scribe, who would annotate them as he heard them.

2. Spheres of the Inquisition's activities in which interpreting was required

When the Inquisition was set up, the Spanish Monarchy comprised the Crown of Aragon (made up of the Kingdoms of Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia, together with the Balearic Islands, Sicily and Sardinia, to which Naples and the Duchy

3. The British Library, originally part of the British Museum, became a separate entity in 1973. When the Museum was created in 1759, various collections were brought together and the original owners' names were retained in the manuscripts' shelfmarks. The Egertons are named after Francis Egerton (1756–1829), the Eighth Earl of Bridgewater, and are made up of documents either bought during his lifetime or with money inherited from his estate. The history of the manuscript collections from Spain dating from before 1800 in the BL can be found at: <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelplang/spanish/hispcoll/hispmansblspanish/hisman.html>. For the contents of these holdings, see Gayangos (1976) and Llamas (1975).

of Milan were subsequently added) and the Crown of Castile (comprising the remaining mainland territories except Portugal and the Kingdom of Granada, in Muslim hands until 1492, and the Canaries, finally conquered in 1496). Thus, the Christian, Jewish and Muslim cultures and religions lived alongside one another on the Iberian Peninsula, and Castilian, Arabic, Catalan, Basque (*Euskera*) and Galician were spoken. Outside the Iberian Peninsula, Italian was spoken to the east, and the original indigenous Canary Island languages, Arabic and Berber, were spoken in the mid-Atlantic. In short, there was a difficult scenario to control without the use of integrating elements, the Catholic faith and the Castilian language, and an institution with the necessary power and jurisdiction – the Inquisition. Shortly afterwards, the picture became even more complex: the conquest of the New World introduced the cultures and languages of the indigenous Americans and the slaves traded from Africa; in Europe, under Charles I (Charles V when he became Emperor), the Flemish culture and language were incorporated (1520), and in the Pacific, under Philip II (1571), those of the Philippines. Finally, when the ideas of the Lutheran Reformation started to constitute a threat to the Catholic faith, the Inquisition had to communicate, throughout the Spanish territory, with speakers of almost all the European languages.

2.1 Jews

When the peaceful co-existence of Christians, Moors and Jews of Medieval Spain started to break down towards the end of the *Reconquista* (i.e. when Christians recovered the territory that had initially been invaded by Muslims in 711, culminating in the fall of Granada in 1492), the Jews were the first to suffer persecution and were forced to convert to Catholicism. However, most of them continued to observe their Jewish rites in secret and it was to test if they had really converted to Christianity that the Inquisition was set up (cf. Kamen 1968: 2–22). Although the Catholic Monarchs expelled them from Spain in 1492, Jewish practices were pursued by the Inquisition right up until its abolition and throughout the Spanish colonial Empire. For our purposes, however, the Jews, as Spanish speakers, are not relevant. In the 124 trials of Jews between 1483 and 1527 transcribed and edited by Haim Beinart in *Records of the Spanish Inquisition in Ciudad Real* (1974–1985) not once was an interpreter needed. (Further information on Jews and the Inquisition in Lea 1906–1907, 3).

2.2 *Moriscos*

However, interpreters were needed by the other persecuted group: the *Moriscos*. When the *Reconquista* came to an end with the fall of Granada, Isabella and Ferdinand had undertaken to treat the Moors as free subjects and started to evangelize them. The process, however, was so slow that in 1499 it became mandatory for them to convert to Christianity. The subsequent persecution of the *Moriscos* finally led to their expulsion, decreed in 1609. In the area governed by the Crown of Castile, these impositions gave rise to rebellions, particularly in 1501 and 1568 in Alpujarras (Granada), after which the *Moriscos* dispersed throughout the lands of Castile. In 1526, Charles V banned the use of Arabic, Moorish names and clothing, a ban that Philip II reiterated in 1567. Nevertheless, they reached a *Concordia* (agreement) in the Crown of Aragon, under which they were given 40 years to receive instruction in the Catholic faith (Kamen 1968: 118–123).

But the *Moriscos* did not give up their customs, religion or language: a century after the end of the *Reconquista*, many still did not speak Castilian. The *Morisco* Jesuit Ignacio de las Casas, who acted as an Arabic interpreter in the Valencia tribunal between March 1602 and December 1603, divided them into four groups, depending on their level of cultural integration: those from Castile were more hispanicized and had barely retained their knowledge of Arabic; those from Aragon, who had also lost their command of Arabic but were less integrated than their counterparts in Castile; and those from Granada and Valencia, who were most closely linked to Muslim civilization. Those from Valencia understood neither Castilian nor Valencian (El Alaoui 1998: 11).

A study of the *Moriscos* tried in the tribunal of Valencia between 1565 and 1609 (i.e. in the period between the end of the above-mentioned *Concordia* and their expulsion) reveals that interpreters participated in 46 Inquisition trials, namely: Jerónimo de Mur (in 9 trials); Joan Baptista Cabreizo (2); Ignacio de las Casas (10); Jaime Prats (5); Sebastián Camacho (10); Miguel Joan Baneros (3); Francisco Rivas (6); and Nofre Cosme Auginat (1) (Labarta 1982: 102–114).

Records show that some 900 trials against *Moriscos* from Aragon were held in the tribunal of Saragossa – the capital of the Kingdom of Aragon – from 1568 to 1609 (García-Arenal 2010: 58), and it can reasonably be assumed that interpreters participated in many of them. In any case, 409 of those brought to trial were accused of owning books in Arabic, and since translations or textual *calificaciones* of these books were always required during the trial, as occurred in Valencia (Labarta 1982), there was clearly a great deal of translation-related activity to be done. We will focus later on the tribunal of Granada, of which only *relaciones de causas* (summaries of the trials that the local tribunals sent to the *Suprema* every year) rather than full records of trials against *Moriscos* have survived.

As we have mentioned, *Moriscos* were also tried in the Canaries, the conquest of which had started in 1402 but was at its height from 1478 to 1496 (cf. Sarmiento-Pérez 2008, 2011), although most of them originated from the capture of slaves along the neighboring Barbary Coast. Apart from suffering the prohibitions passed by Charles V and Philip II for those living on the Spanish mainland, neither could they travel freely to Africa: fleeing to the Barbary Coast was the main charge in 150 of the 253 trials for Mohammedanism recorded for the Canaries (Fajardo Spínola 2003a: 91, 94). As far as the need for linguistic mediation is concerned, Ronquillo Rubio (1991: 105), referring to the first 20 years of the Inquisition (1505–1526), states that “the presence of interpreters, on two occasions, can be explained by the number of *Moriscos* on the islands.” (For more information on the *Moriscos*, see Lea 1906–1907, 3: 317–410; Kamen 1968: 104–116).

2.3 Speakers of other languages in the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily

Before we cross the Atlantic, let us look at the use of other languages that had some kind of repercussion on the activity of the Inquisition, although to a lesser extent. In the Basque Provinces and Navarre, particularly in isolated mountainous regions where only *Euskera* (Basque) was spoken, and where cases of witchcraft, superstition and sorcery were commonplace, inquisitors needed interpreters to communicate with the witches brought to trial. In 1531, the Council of the Inquisition recommended that the inquisitors of Calahorra use people who spoke *Euskera* in witchcraft cases, giving rise to the custom of appointing interpreters for the interrogations (Reguera Acedo 1989: 164–165, 2012: 244). In a different context and one century later, during the processing of the genealogical information of Tristán de Ziriza, a candidate (*pretendiente*) for the post of Secretary to the Council, in the Navarre town of Burguete in 1613, the *alguacil* (constable) and familiar of the Holy Office Pedro de Vergara interpreted for two non-Castilian speaking witnesses who used Larrondo (a dialect of *Euskera*) (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1363).

As far as Catalan is concerned, we know that problems arose, at least during the mandate of Inquisitor General Diego de Espinosa (1567–1571). As the annual correspondence between the tribunals of the jurisdiction of Aragon and the *Suprema* shows, the tribunal of Barcelona was reprehended in 1568 for not holding trials in Castilian and was ordered in the future not to hold them in Latin or in Catalan. Some years later, in 1574, the same tribunal sent a statement about a witch in Catalan, and the *Suprema* demanded a translation. And when it sent more proceedings in Catalan the following year, they were returned unread (Monter 1992: 91).

On the other northern corner of the Iberian Peninsula, the accused tended to make their depositions in Galician, although their statements were subsequently recorded in Castilian Spanish. The transfer from vernacular to official language and back again was, thus, constant. This probably explains why, when the tribunal of Galicia was given a seat in 1574, it was decided to appoint someone who knew the area and its people well (Contreras 1982: 62, 579).

In general, the *Suprema* demanded that reports and testimonies be sent in Castilian. Thus, in 1577, it complained that the annual report of trials held in Palermo, the seat of the Sicilian tribunal, included some statements “in Sicilian language,” and sent them back (Monter 1992: 91). This fact is corroborated in the copy of the trial in Palermo in 1616–1617 against Sebastian Chine, a German accused of Lutheran heresy, as we will see below, sent to the *Suprema* in 1618: “This copy has been taken and translated from the Italian language into Spanish in the original trial that has taken place in the Holy Office of the Inquisition of the Kingdom of Sicily ...” (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1747, exp. 7, fol. 70r).

To date, we have no proof of the use of Portuguese (Portugal and Spain shared the same kings from 1580 to 1640, but they had separate Inquisition jurisdictions). As far as Latin is concerned, it was of course the language of the Church (and of educated people, inside and outside Spain). We have already seen that the tribunal of Catalonia also held trials in Latin. In addition, Latin had to be used once in the tribunal of Lima, in 1717–1721, in the hearings against French sailor Francisco Petrel, because no one understood what he was saying in his own language (Medina 1887, 2: 239–240). On other occasions, written records were also often submitted to the tribunals in Latin: for example, in the trial held between 1524 and 1531 in the Canaries and Seville against the German-Flemish Jácome de Monteverde, seven of the documents presented by his wife in his defense were in Latin (Sarmiento-Pérez 2015: 40–42).

2.4 Indigenous populations

As it moved across the Atlantic, the first place in which the Inquisition came across indigenous people who ignored Spanish was in the Canaries, where there were still some 6,000 (approximately a quarter of the total population) at the beginning of the 16th century. Inquisitors treated them benignly and flexibly, and generally just reprimanded them, ordering them to learn in the following three months the mandatory prayers they had not yet learnt (Lobo Cabrera 1983: 67–70). In any case, we have not found any mention of interpreters intervening in any of the Inquisition’s interrogations of Canary islanders.

When the Inquisition arrived in the New World, it first encountered the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica. Before Philip II established a formal tribunal in the city of Mexico in 1571 – with jurisdiction over New Spain, i.e. from California to Central America and the Philippines – and forbade the Inquisition from trying Indians, Franciscans and Dominicans carried out Inquisition functions from the end of the Conquest in 1521.⁴ Just as in the case of the Jews and the Moors, the massive conversions of the Indians turned out to be quite inconsistent: the initial fascination with Christianity that led thousands of Indians to request baptism, gave rise to disappointment among the newly-converted when they realized that the members of the religious orders did not practice what they preached. The priests of their original religions seized this opportunity to return to their deities, that is, idolatry and sorcery in the eyes of the Catholic establishment, with priests and followers consequently suffering the rigors of the Inquisition (González Obregón 1910: VI–VII).

Thus, the first bishop of the city of Mexico, friar Juan de Zumárraga, appointed Apostolic Inquisitor of New Spain in 1535, tried 23 Indians between 1536 and 1543, almost all of whom belonged to the pre-Hispanic elites, including the renowned *cacique* don Carlos Chichimecatecotl. Most were accused of idolatry and sorcery and they all needed interpreters. The 23 trials studied by Buelna Serrano (2009) and the 13 of those trials we have analyzed – transcribed and edited by González Obregón (1912) – show that apart from the four interpreters Zumárraga used on a regular basis during the period studied (Agustín de Rodas and Pedro de Vargas, in 1536; Alonso Mateos, in 1537–1540 and Juan González, in 1539), some thirty interpreters, including Spaniards and Indians, were needed.⁵

Despite the fact that between three and seven interpreters mediated in the trials, in those we have analyzed the only case in which we can confirm relay interpreting was used is the one for idolatry against the Indians Tacatetl and Tanixtetl in 1536: the testimonies of two witnesses in Otomí were first interpreted into

4. The Philippines were conquered between 1565 and 1571, and Philip II assigned them to the tribunal of Mexico, which was then the usual route of communication with that part of the world. In 1583 the first commissioner for Manila was appointed and he sent his cases to Mexico (Medina 1899b: 12–15).

5. Father Diego Díaz, friar Bernardino de Sahagún, friar Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, friar Alonso de Molina, father Juan González, father Alonso González, friar Alonso de Santiago, friar Francisco Jiménez, friar Francisco de Lintorne, Álvaro de Zamora, Tomás de Rigoles, Alonso Mateos, Agustín de Rodas, Pedro, Álvaro, friar Pedro, Pedro de Molina, Luis Jiménez, Francisco López, Diego, Luis de León, Antonio Ortiz, Juan – and three Otomí Indians – Miguel, Marcos and Diego.

Nahuatl by the *naguatato* Miguel and then into Castilian by father Diego Díaz, “interpreter and *naguatato*.”⁶ A total of seven interpreters participated: four from Nahuatl and three from Otomí (González Obregón 1912:7–9). In all likelihood, that was a frequent occurrence in many other trials.

Besides, apart from the fact that not everybody intervened in the same stages of the trial, the high number of interpreters was probably due to other reasons, such as the lack of full command of the other language or the use of different codes for the same concept: for example, the snake was the personification of the devil for Spaniards, while local peoples from New Spain considered it as one of the strongest fertility symbols (cf. Buelna Serrano 2009:24).

The death at the stake of *cacique* Don Carlos in 1539 led Emperor Charles V to ban the application of the death penalty to Indians for questions relating to the Christian faith, and in 1571, Philip II also banned the Inquisition from bringing them to trial. Since these dictates did not prevent natives from participating in the activities of the Inquisition as witnesses, denouncers, informers, etc., interpreters were still needed. An illustrative example is father Diego Díaz, who interpreted in a trial in 1536, as we have seen. A few years later, between 1542 and 1547, this perverse cleric was tried for concubinage with various local women, sexual intercourse with his own daughter and killing an Indian. In the witnesses’ depositions recorded in the village of Ocoytuco in February 1542, eighteen Indian women testified through father González (González Obregón 1912:237–238).

However, the ban on trying natives did not include *mestizos* (offspring of a Spaniard-American and an American Indian). In the tribunal of Lima, as late as 1773, in the trial against the *mestiza* Lorenza Vilches “for ... formal idolatry with an express pact with the devil,” the four witnesses who testified against her in the village of Santísima Trinidad de Guancayo needed an interpreter for Aymara. And then the accused herself testified through father Baltasar López, in all nine hearings, in the abjuration, in the final warnings and in the imprisonment notice (AHN, Inquisición, lib. 1656, exp. 4, fols. 1r–4v, 12r).

Although we have no direct evidence regarding the Philippines, we do have indications that interpreters of the Tagalog language participated in trials for solicitation in the confessional, such as the one held in 1613 against father Francisco Sánchez de Santa María for solicitation with 23 Tagalog-speaking native women, who in all likelihood denounced and testified during the trial in their mother tongue (cf. Medina 1899b:42–43).

6. From *nahuatlato*, *naguatlato*, literally a speaker of Nahuatl, the main language spoken in the Aztec region. The term was coined by Spaniards to refer to the interpreter (*lengua*) of that language in the Indian courts (*Audiencias Indianas*) (cf. Alonso and Payàs 2008).

2.5 African slaves

Unlike the Indians, African slaves remained under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, as it was understood that they should have assimilated the Catholic doctrine sufficiently from their masters (Millar Carvacho 1998, 3: 285; Splendiani et al. 1997, 1: 220–221). From the 16th century on, Spain exported slaves who already lived in Spain to America but a number of circumstances, including the reduction of the indigenous population at the beginning of the 17th century as a result of the smallpox epidemic, led to slaves being shipped directly from Africa. The port of Cartagena de Indias, thanks to its favorable location, played a predominant role as the place in which slaves were received and distributed, destined mainly for agricultural, husbandry and mining work, domestic service and other similar tasks (Navarrete 1995: 75).

A study covering the first fifty years (1610–1660) of the Cartagena de Indias tribunal, based on the *relaciones de causas* – as the full documentation pertaining to that tribunal has been lost – reveals that the accused included some 70 African slaves.⁷ Although some of them were originally from Spain or Portugal, and others had been born on the American continent, at least seven required interpretation from an African language (Caravali, Folupo, Arara, Biafara, Mandinga or Cacheo). The most common crimes were sorcery and witchcraft and, related to the latter, even anthropophagy; this custom, however, was not imported from Africa but rather stemmed from Caribbean tribes (Splendiani et al. 1997, 1: 140, 221).

The slaves who arrived in Cartagena spoke more than seventy languages, given that they came from many different places and tribal groups in Africa. Depending on their command of Spanish, they were classified into three groups: *bozales*, with no knowledge of Spanish at all; *medias lenguas*, who spoke it fairly well, and *ladinos*, who spoke it well. Jesuits Pedro Claver and, above all, Alonso de Sandoval – who dedicated much of their lives to the training and catechesis of the unfortunate slaves – developed a strategy to provide them with interpreters in order to facilitate their communication in so many languages. To start with, many of the African slaves, although from different castes, belonged to the “evil sect of Mohammed” and they understood one another in Arabic. At the same time, some *ladinos* spoke several languages, as did some *bozales* who, although they did not speak Spanish, spoke several African languages, so communication was possible as long as the right combinations were used (Sandoval 1987: 136–137, 273, 373).

7. Its jurisdiction covered the territories of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, the Windward Islands and the provinces dependent on the court of Santo Domingo (with the dioceses of Santo Domingo, Santafé, Cartagena, Panamá, Santa Marta, Puerto Rico, Popayán, Caracas and Santiago de Cuba) (Splendiani et al. 1997: 1, 112).

Moreover, Claver also spoke several African languages and trained interpreters in the Jesuit school. These were the interpreters, almost always together with father Claver himself, who mediated in the Inquisition's activities: for example, in the trial against María Cacheo in 1628, who "with plants had killed and eaten her daughter Elenilla and eaten another son called Juanillo," or in the trial against Antón Carabalí, who "gave [out] powder and plants and cast or advised on many superstitious spells that led men to love and take women dishonestly" (Splendiani et al. 1997, 2: 281–284). African slaves were also tried in other tribunals (cf. Medina 1887, 2).

2.6 Protestants

Now we turn to the Inquisition's activity that required the largest number of interpreters, involving many European languages: Protestantism. When in 1520 Pope Leo X condemned as heretical many of the propositions made by Luther and other Protestant reformers, the Inquisitor General took it on himself to prevent the new doctrine from spreading into the Spanish territory. To this end, he ordered that those who tried to introduce it, by bringing in books, speaking, writing or preaching in accordance with the Reformation and its Church, should be severely punished. Catalogues of banned books soon started to appear and were periodically updated, and around 1571 the prohibition was extended to include paintings (pictures, stamps, medals and similar objects) that might go against the Catholic faith (cf. Llorente 1835–1836, 3: 1–45; Lea 1906–1907, 3: 411–548; Kamen 1968: 209–213).

Although the study of relations between Spain and the countries where the Protestant Reformation took hold exceeds the scope of this study, it is worth noting that colonies of European traders had grown up in Spanish port cities since the early 15th century. Examples include Flemings in the Mediterranean ports trading in wheat, salt, wine, oils and alum, and, at the end of the century, Flemings and Germans in the Canaries, drawn by the sugar trade (Lobo Cabrera 1995: 26–27). Subsequently, relations with England were very intense, particularly due to the wine trade. Ports along Spain's northern coast, not far from the border with France, experienced a similar situation. According to Splendiani et al. (1997, 1: 152), around 1650 there were between 12,000 and 15,000 foreigners residing in Spanish ports, including merchants, factors, sales agents and the like. Many Europeans lived also in inland areas, as attested, for instance, by the frequent spontaneous conversions in the tribunal of Madrid, which we will see below. Generally speaking, the situation was very similar in the Spanish colonies in America and the Philippines.

According to Lea (1906–1907, 3:421), the first foreigner to be tried in Spain was the German Blay Esteve in the tribunal of Valencia in 1524. In the Canaries, the Germans Hans Parfat and the above-mentioned Jácome de Monteverde were tried in 1525 (Fajardo Spínola 2003a: 121–124). From then on, an immense amount of interpreter-mediated inquisitorial activity against Protestants took place.

3. Common situations in which interpreters intervened

Given the special jurisdiction of the Inquisition to investigate the facts denounced, prove the charges brought against the accused and deal out the punishments, its main activity was that of conducting trials (cf. Betancor Pérez 2011, 2:551). However, as we shall see, the Inquisition also carried out a considerable number of other activities requiring interpreters. We shall now outline the most common among them: district, ship and jail visits and spontaneous conversions.

3.1 District visits

Inquisitors' visits to different places within their districts to receive information and denunciations constituted one of the pillars of inquisitorial activity. Originally, these visits took place three times a year, but this was later reduced to one four-month long visit each year. The first step was the proclamation that the edict would be read in the villages and hamlets close to the place the Inquisitor was going to visit, so that the inhabitants would attend the reading and proceed to denounce themselves or other people. Initially, they were called Edicts of Grace, as heretics were invited to repent and to request absolution with no public penitence. From 1500 onwards, they were called Edicts of Faith (in the Kingdom of Aragon, Edicts of Grace survived longer, given the more benevolent treatment of the *Moriscos*), as they imposed the precept of denunciation in a period of six days of those people known to have said or done something against the Catholic faith or the Inquisition (cf. Llorente 1835–1836, 1:41–42; Lea 1906–1907, 2:91–101, 457–464). All Catholics were under the obligation to denounce and there was no valid excuse for non-compliance: it was the case even if the denunciation entailed the risk of death; and it extended to children denouncing their parents, and husbands and wives denouncing their spouses (Gacto 2005, 1:429).

In accordance with the information we have compiled thus far, we will focus on the visits to places with a large population of *Moriscos*, where interpreters normally intervened at least in the reading of the edict and the subsequent testimonies of those who either denounced other people or practiced self-denunciations. In

the tribunal of Granada, the edict was first read in the local church or cathedral on a Sunday for Spanish speakers and the following day in Arabic, through an interpreter, for the *Moriscos*. The interpreter also intervened in the numerous testimonies in Arabic, as attested by a remark made by an Inquisitor to the *Suprema* in 1561, reporting that, in order to be able to hold two hearings, two interpreters were needed. García Chacón and Sebastián Merino interpreted in those visits; evidence of the former's intervention exists for visits in 1561, 1573, 1581 and 1585 (García Fuentes 2006: 15, 16, 122, 273).

A well documented example from the Valencia tribunal is the 1574 inquisitorial visit to Carlet, where, once the Edict of Grace had been read, 47 *Morisco* women testified between June 16 and 19, all through Noffre Ervas, "an interpreter ... designated and chosen by the Inquisitor ... as these new Christians did not speak or understand *Aljamía* [the language of the Christians] and because he understood and spoke Arabic very well" (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 556/22, fols. 1251r–1292v).

Interpreters also took part in *Moriscos'* testimonies in the Canaries, in significantly fewer cases: for instance, when the Inquisition visited Lanzarote in 1510, Juana, who had been baptized 20 years earlier, declared through her daughter because she still did not speak Castilian (AMC, Inquisición, CXVII-8).

3.2 Ship visits

The main way in which the ideas of the Protestant Reformation were introduced into Spain was by sea, given the trade relations with European nations and the countless pirates and privateers that stalked the coasts of the Spanish Empire. So the Inquisition was ordered to monitor and control ships, and orders were given to visit foreign and Spanish vessels, and to examine people and goods in them (BL, Ms, Egerton 458, 550r–550v).

The task was undertaken by the commissioners, who had to be accompanied by an interpreter, when necessary. Thus, ordinances for Andalusian ports in 1590 stipulated "that to make a visit, the commissioner, the *alguacil*, the notary, the familiar, interpreter and guard must all necessarily be present" (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 3646, n° 8). And an instruction sent to the commissioners at the ports along the Spanish northern coast in 1634 established that "if the ship were from a foreign country whose language is not understood, they are to take a reliable interpreter" (in Guiard y Larrauri 1972, 1:290). Instructions to commissioners were sent even to the Philippines in 1583 (Medina 1899: 170–186).

The procedure started with the interrogation of the captain and officers, following a pre-established questionnaire: if heretics, or suspected heretics, were found, they were to be arrested. The vessel was then searched and if any banned or dubious books were found, they were confiscated (cf. Fajardo Spínola 2003b: 92).

Interpreters' tasks were not limited to linguistic mediation and the examination of foreign books. Records from the tribunal of Seville reveal that as soon as any ship docked in the bay of Cadiz, "the Holy Office's guard alerted the interpreter on duty so that he could prepare the wherewithal to visit it" (BN, Ms 718, fol. 50r).

Some information from the tribunal of the Canaries illustrates the interpreters' activity: for the 1570–1798 period, some 110 visits have been recorded, in which 55 interpreters took part, some of them on as many as 18 occasions. These figures would, however, be lower than the real numbers, as many of the minutes of ship visits have disappeared (Fajardo Spínola 2003b: 28, 2004).

In the context of the Inquisition's visits, it is worth adding that Inquisitors also visited secret jails (in which prisoners were kept in solitary confinement) every fortnight to see how the prisoners were treated. Examples of mediation during those visits are found in the tribunal of the Canaries, where Flemish trader Lorenzo Quesquier interpreted several times in 1596–1597 (AMC, Col. Bute, vol. X, 1ª serie, fols. 115r, 119r, 123v).

Finally, Inquisition visits also included those in which an Inquisitor inspected district tribunals, as in royal justice courts (*Audiencias Reales*) (cf. Álamo Martell 2011). Although interpreters were not used in those visits, sometimes related issues arose: for example, in the report of a 1650 visit to the tribunal of Mexico, it was recorded that an interpreter had been appointed without following the proper procedures (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1736, nº 5, fol. 305r).

3.3 Spontaneous conversions

To enable foreigners to change their heretic status and integrate in mainstream Spanish society, the Inquisition introduced at the beginning of the 17th century the "spontaneous conversion" process, also called *reducción*, by means of which a heretic – normally a Protestant – converted to Catholicism, by "spontaneously" addressing the commissioner or Inquisitor, either in writing or in person, and declaring his or her desire to repent. Except for those cases that took place at the seat of the tribunal, where the Inquisitor took charge, *reducciones* were carried out by commissioners, almost always with an interpreter:

Should the person who appears to be reconciled not speak the Spanish language, the commissioner must choose a subject of sufficient probity, intelligence and reliability who understands his/her language to serve as an interpreter in this act; in the first place, this person's appointment, acceptance thereof, undertaking to perform the job well and swearing to secrecy will be recorded in writing.

(AHN, Inquisición, leg. 3592, nº 25, 29)

The procedure was simple and the relevant files consisted of two or three folios. In the main hearing, an interpreter was designated where necessary and the person who had spontaneously converted to Catholicism answered the set interrogation. Converts would then ratify their deposition, usually absolved *ad cautelam* (provisionally, until the procedure was officially completed) and entrusted to a priest for instruction, sacramental confession and to be given the Eucharist (Fajardo Spínola 1996: 180–181). If s/he was under the age of 25, a *curador* (guardian) was named to advise her/him, and the interpreter mediated in the designation of the *curador* and in the young person's ratification. In large places, the *curador* tended to be a minister or collaborator of the Holy Office who was familiar with the language of the person testifying, but in small ones, it tended to be the interpreter who had mediated in the testimony: for example, the Irish Catholic merchant Juan Mead, who interpreted for Gerónimo Grayling, an Englishman, in the Canaries in 1741, was subsequently responsible for instructing him (AMC, Inquisición, CXXXVII-23).

Although *reducciones* were carried out throughout the Empire, including the Philippines (cf. Medina 1899b: 49–52), those “reduced” tended to vary: in coastal areas they were mainly sailors, traders or merchants, and generally English; but, for example, in the tribunal of Madrid they were diplomats or members of the army, and tended to be German speakers. Some figures give us an idea of the number of *reducciones* and, consequently, of the interpreters who took part in these hearings: of the 617 brought to trial in Madrid, most of the 597 Lutherans absolved had been “reduced” (Carrasco Pérez de Abreu 2008: 95), while in the Canaries, some 330 foreigners were “reduced” in the 17th and 18th centuries (Fajardo Spínola 1996: 289–298).

Occasionally, the interpreter took part in the *reducción* of someone who was dying or had been sentenced to death. And, as dictated by the Church for such occasions, if the confessor did not understand the language of the dying person, mediation in the sacramental confession was possible (Echarri 1799: 290). This happened in Tenerife in 1811, when the Irish trader Patricio Forstall, who had interpreted in the *reducción* of two North American prisoners who had killed a member of a religious order and the execution of whose death sentence was imminent, also did so for their confession (AMC, Inquisición, LXXXVIII-24).

3.4 Trials

Many of the Inquisition's trials started with denunciations during district or ship visits. Although the intricate details of the Inquisition procedure exceed the scope of this chapter, it is worth mentioning that it included elements from Canon and Roman law and was governed by the principle that the accused had to prove

their innocence and purge themselves of guilt by recanting. Before testifying, the accused had to swear to tell the truth (Seifert 1999: 21, 27–29). A trial started with the denunciation of an individual, either through self-denunciation or through the accusation presented by the prosecutor. It consisted briefly of the following stages: denunciation, summons or calling and interrogation of witnesses, *calificación*, prison order and seizure of property, hearings with the accused, charges, torture (where appropriate), accusation, defense, oral and written proposals, publication of evidence, the accused's response to publication, votes, and proclamation, notification and execution of sentence (cf. Llorente 1835, 2: 89–127; Betancor Pérez 2011, 2: 551–558).

The interpreter could be needed at practically all the stages, as not only the accused but also the denouncers or witnesses might not be familiar with Spanish. There had to be a minimum of three “admonishing hearings” with the accused present, but there were normally significantly more. Witnesses included those that testified against the accused and those that did so in his/her favor. The prosecutor's accusation was read out to the accused, who had to plead to each of the charges presented.

At the same time, the accused had to communicate with his/her defense lawyer, who had to present the defense's case; likewise, all testimonies, carefully transcribed, were read to both the denouncer and each of the witnesses and also to the accused so that they could ratify, or not, the contents of their statements. Finally, the interpreter could also be needed when the sentence was read to the accused and s/he was given the final warnings, particularly the one which bound her/him to secrecy regarding everything s/he had seen and heard from the moment they were arrested by the Holy Office.

To illustrate these points, we will give brief examples of the intervention of interpreters in three trials held in different places and for different types of charges: one against *Morisco* Maria Aldamis, for Mohammedanism, held in Valencia in 1602–1604; another one against the *cacique* of Tetzco, Don Carlos, for idolatry and dogmatic heresy in Mexico in 1539, and the last one against the German Sebastian Chine, for Lutheran heresy in Sicily in 1616–1617.

3.4.1 *The Morisco Maria Aldamis*

The trial (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 550, exp. 11) originated in the report presented (in Valencian) by an *alguacil*, who, when seizing goods in the *Morisco* woman's house, found a copy of the Koran. The prosecutor presented the relevant accusation, based on that report. Two interpreters took part in the seven hearings with the accused, who spoke only Arabic. Joan Baptista Cabrerizo participated in the 1st and 3rd, and Jesuit Ignacio de las Casas, in the 4th, 5th and 6th. No mention of the interpreter is made in the 2nd and 7th hearings. A sentence of torture was

dictated in the 5th hearing, in order for the prisoner to confess “fully the truth of all that has been testified to ... through Father Ignacio de las Casas, the interpreter.” Once the torture session was over, and despite the fact that the accused had not confessed that she was guilty, she was condemned to attend an *auto de fe* as a penitent, abjure *de vehementi* (because of a graver crime); and receive one hundred lashings the next day in the city’s streets.

3.4.2 *The Mexican cacique of Tetzco*

Unlike the trial we have just described, the one held against the *cacique* of Tetzco (in González Obregón 2009) started with a denunciation presented by an Indian through three interpreters: Friar Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, friar Alonso de Molina and friar Bernardino [de Sahagún]. Subsequently, in 20 of the interrogations of 23 witnesses who testified against the accused, father Juan González interpreted 17 times, friar Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo once and the Indian Pedro, twice. Father Juan González also mediated during the seizing of Don Carlos’s property, in the act during which said property was handed over to the Governor and, subsequently, in the first hearing with the accused, during which friars Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo and Bernardino also interpreted. Álvaro de Zamora and Alonso Mateos mediated during the ratification of the witnesses’ statements. And once the sentence had been handed down, father Juan González, acting as interpreter, proclaimed throughout the city that the next day everyone was to attend the public *auto de fe* in the Plaza de México. And he interpreted once again when the sentence was read to Don Carlos, who responded, also through interpreters, that he accepted it in penance for his sins (González Obregón 2009: 102–103). He died at the stake.

As far as proclaiming news is concerned, it is worth mentioning that proclamations and edicts were also interpreted in indigenous languages in the royal justice system in the *Juicios de residencia* (investigation and report on the conduct of all royal officials when their period of service in the place where they had “resided” had come to an end) (cf. Sarmiento-Pérez 2008: 126–127, 251).

3.4.3 *The German Sebastian Chine*

Finally, in the case of Sebastian Chine (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1747, exp. 7), denounced by his mother-in law for not allowing his wife to go to mass, forcing her to work on Holy Days of Obligation and saying that the saints were not venerated in his homeland, no interpreter was needed for the denunciation or for the witnesses’ depositions (they were Italian). But interpreters were present at all the 19 hearings in the presence of the accused, except for one, the 16th, although no reason was given for the absence of an interpreter. Initially, the German Bernardo Longo was the interpreter chosen, but as of the 13th hearing, given the complex

nature of the trial at that stage, another interpreter – Adolfo Ray Ligno, a German soldier in the Viceroy's guard – was sent for and the confessions and corresponding replies were read through both interpreters. The two of them participated in eight of the remaining hearings. The prosecutor presented 23 charges. Things became particularly tense when the German contradicted his earlier testimony (that he was a Catholic and a good Christian, etc.) “with supreme arrogance and lack of composure,” and went so far as to claim that Christ was a beast and that he had slept with more than twelve whores (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1747, exp. 7, fols. 68r–68v). We should remember here that the Inquisition required declarations to be recorded “in the same tone and the very same words, no matter how indecent or improper they might be, and without altering them in any way” (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 3592, n° 25, 5). Given the intransigence of the accused, three theologians, together with the interpreters, tried to “reduce” him. But it proved to be impossible and the German was sentenced to go to an *auto de fe* wearing the *sambenito* (emblem) of relaxation and was subsequently handed over to secular justice to be burnt at the stake.

3.4.4 *More than one interpreter at a time*

It is worth pointing out that the general recommendation of the Inquisition was that, where possible, two interpreters should be present when the accused and witnesses were questioned to avoid uncertainties that might arise and to ensure the best possible guarantee of justice (BL, Ms, Egerton 457, fol. 284v). We have already seen that in 1559, the *Suprema* required the presence of two interpreters in the Granada tribunal for the ratification of an accused's confession. However, apart from cases in the tribunal of Mexico dealing with trials against Indians, and Cartagena de Indias against Africans, the trials we have consulted show that this recommendation was not followed in most cases, and that only one interpreter took part. With the exception of particularly complex cases, such as that of the tribunal of Sicily, where several interpreters took part in the same trial, that was due to the fact that each interpreter participated at a different stage of the trial.

In other procedures, such as ship visits or *reducciones*, only one interpreter took part. In some cases, the Inquisition expressly rejected the intervention of two, as occurred in the Canaries in 1715: for the *reducción* of Catalina Crosse, the commissioner designated Bernardo Valois and Diego Roche as interpreters; after the initial formalities had been completed, and once notified by the prosecutor, the Inquisitor let it be known that no more than one interpreter should be appointed in either this or other affairs (AMC, Inquisición, CVIII-19, fols. 4r, 7r, 8r).

Finally, under the jurisdiction of the *Leyes de Indias* (Laws of the Indies), it was established as of 1537 that if an Indian had to appear before one of the royal courts, two interpreters could be present: one appointed by the tribunal

and another that the Indian could bring with him/her, “because this will make it possible to discover the truth about everything” (*Recopilación de Leyes*, volume I, book II, title 29, law XII, folio 275). Likewise, the *Reglamentos* (Regulations) of Lima and Charcas stipulated that two interpreters participate in Indians’ statements during *Juicios de residencia* to avoid any distortions in the declarations (cf. Sarmiento-Pérez 2008: 126–127).

4. Status, requisites, categories and appointment of interpreters

4.1 Status and requisites

While Buelna Serrano (2009: 242–243) includes four interpreters as regular officials for the Apostolic Inquisition in Mexico, Ronquillo Rubio (1991: 105), referring to the Inquisition in the Canaries, states that “some people gave their services to the tribunal although they were not officials, ... according to their trades and aptitudes, as in the case of doctors and interpreters.” Labarta (1982: 102) comes closer to the truth on this question when, referring to the tribunal de Valencia, she states that:

the Arabic translator and interpreter did not appear in the official hierarchy of the Holy Office, because the composition of its staff, determined in advance and similar for all districts, did not take into account the specific requirements of the different tribunals.

Indeed, although regulations stipulated that when the accused or witness was not familiar with the Spanish language, an interpreter was to be present, none were included in the official staff of the Holy Office. So on those occasions where an interpreter was needed, attempts were made to ensure that the person chosen was acceptable to all parties concerned (BL, Ms, Egerton 457, fols. 134r, 517r). The interpreter’s status was thus that of an ancillary collaborator rather than an official member of the Inquisition’s staff.

As for the requisites for acting as an interpreter, in any trial, once it had been proved that the accused or witness did not understand Spanish, the Secretary had to record this fact and the interpreter then had to swear that he/she would tell the truth and was sworn to secrecy (BL, Ms, Egerton 457, fols. 134r, 160v). It is also worth underlining the fact that secrecy was one of the most important ways in which the Inquisition achieved its goals, so witnesses, the Inquisitors themselves, victims returning to their everyday lives and even people from outside the tribunal were all bound to secrecy and to not asking any questions about what happened within the Inquisition (Galván Rodríguez 2001: 9–10).

4.2 Categories and appointment

As a result of our perusal of the documentation to date, we would suggest that interpreters working in the Inquisition be classified in three different categories:

1. Occasional interpreters, who were appointed for a specific situation. The only requisite they needed was that of commanding the two languages in question. The countless examples we could cite include the illustrious painter *El Greco*, appointed in 1582 for the trial against his fellow countryman: “In the morning hearing of the Inquisition of Toledo ... before the Inquisitors ..., Dominicó Teotocópoli, from the city of Candía, a painter, entered the tribunal ..., who promised to interpret well and faithfully” (in Andrés 1988: 180).
2. Regular interpreters, who worked with the tribunals over a period of time. Depending on where they worked, they were members of religious orders, traders (generally foreigners), consuls, book-sellers, indigenous people, African slaves, or others. We have already referred to some of them in relation to the tribunals of Valencia, the Canaries, Mexico or Cartagena de Indias.
3. Official interpreters. District tribunals could also use the services of official interpreters, for whom specific requisites were laid down and who were expressly appointed. It was the candidate (*pretendiente*) who began the process by submitting an application. Apart from an understanding of and experience in languages, they had to prove the purity of their blood (*limpieza de sangre*): that they were Old Christians and, therefore, not descendants from Jews or Muslims; they were not in any way influenced by Luther’s “sect” or followers; they had never been sentenced by the Holy Office; they lived an honest life; and they even had to demonstrate that their parents had never worked in any trade that was considered to be low.⁸ Moreover, candidates should be comfortably well-off, as they had to finance the processing of their genealogical information. If the district’s Inquisitor accepted the genealogy provided, a number of witnesses (between eight and twelve, although there could be more) had to be interrogated in the town of the candidate’s origin to prove that it was correct. Once the questionnaire was returned to the tribunal, and the Inquisitor was satisfied, the procedural costs were settled and the genealogical information was sent to the *Suprema* for final approval.

8. In the Canaries, Franciscan friar Miguel Pérez y Fonte was turned down for an official post as an English interpreter in 1788 because his father had been a cobbler (AMC, Inquisición, leg. CXVII-24).

Let us look at two examples. In 1699, in Lima, Jesuit Juan de Figueredo Buendía, who came from the Peruvian village of Guancaballica [Huancavelica], applied to be appointed interpreter of Quechua (AHN, Inquisición, leg. 1249, exp. 4). As his maternal grandparents were Spanish (his grandfather was from Almodóvar del Campo and his grandmother from Almadén del Azogue [Ciudad Real]), sixteen witnesses were examined in the first village and fifteen in the second to check his family history and purity of blood. The expenses came to 880 *reales* and 17 *maravedis* of old silver.

At the end of 1756, in the Canaries, Roberto de la Hanty, who came from Carrick-on-Suir in County Tipperary, Ireland, but who had lived for twenty-eight years in Puerto de Santa Cruz (Tenerife), where he was a Lieutenant Colonel in the militia, applied to be appointed as an interpreter of English and Irish (AMC, Inquisición, leg. LXXXVII-1). In this case, it was not necessary to go to Ireland because there were enough Irish – old and renowned Christians – who confirmed his family history in Puerto de Santa Cruz or the neighboring villages. The cost came to 1,104 *reales de vellon*.

We have not yet been able to draw any accurate conclusions regarding the consideration received by interpreters. However, although they were unpaid collaborators, at least official interpreters enjoyed a number of privileges and exemptions, as we can deduce from German engineer and printer Enrico Martínez's application in 1598 to be appointed as a German and Flemish interpreter in Mexico (González Obregón 1914: 531).

5. Provisional conclusions

During the period in which the Inquisition was in place, interpreters were called upon to offer their services throughout the Spanish Empire as, although the trials were held in the district tribunal seats, certain activities were carried out by the commissioners outside their headquarters. From the research carried out to date, we can conclude that there were several thousand interpreters from all different walks of life: from respectable members of religious orders to Indian or African slaves, including traders, sailors, artists, consuls and even children who helped their parents. Among the members of religious orders, many interpreters were Jesuits as their special vote of obedience to the Pope meant that they could be transferred to wherever the Church needed them, including other countries, which gave them the chance to learn foreign languages (Carrasco Pérez de Abreu 2008: 69).

Although attempts were made to ensure that interpreters for *reducciones* were members of religious orders or Catholics of good standing, this was not the case

for trials, ship visits, district visits or other procedures. There is little we can say regarding the quality of the interpreting provided, which must have been variable, because reporters tended in their records to unify the language used by participants, reformulating the depositions in their own homogeneous style (cf. Fajardo Spínola 1996: 133; Splendiani et al. 1997, 2: 216).

To date we have only found records of intentional, systematic training of interpreters in Cartagena de Indias, among Africans, and, to a degree, in Mexico with the indigenous population: Indian interpreters for the Apostolic Inquisition must have learnt their Spanish from the first missionaries to arrive in Mexico during the Conquest, as in the case of friar Alonso de Molina, or a few years later, as in that of friars Bernardino de Sahagún, Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, and others (cf. Pym 2000: 142–163). Foreign traders who acted as interpreters included those who had come to Spain in their youth expressly to learn Castilian, together with the secrets of the profession, as was the case of the Fleming Lorenzo Quesquier, who did so at his uncle's house in Gran Canaria (Lobo Cabrera 1995: 51).

The activities of the Inquisition were, by their very nature, trial-related, so most of the interpreters' work could be considered as court interpreting. In this sense, apart from the strict imposition of secrecy by the Inquisition, their work was similar to that of interpreters working in court cases and other civil law procedures within the Spanish administration. Regulations governing their activity, like those governing the Inquisition's activities in general, were scattered in various pieces of legislation rather than compiled in systematic documents (cf. Galván Rodríguez 2001: 23–24).

As we pointed out at the beginning, this chapter is intended to provide a preliminary approach and a succinct overview; hence many of the gaps. Some of the omissions correspond to a conscious intention to avoid an excess of cross references in order to comply with the length of this text. Moreover, our reflections on the Inquisition may well be somewhat biased, given our focus on interpreters and their work. We hope to remedy at least some of the deficiencies in an upcoming monographic volume. In any case, we hope this chapter makes a small contribution to the research on the history of interpreting, particularly to the one focused on Antiquity and the *Ancien Régime* (1469–1812) (Thieme, Hermann and Glässer 1956; Pöchhacker 2000: 10–11; 2004: 9–10, 159–160; Hermann 2002; Baigorri and Alonso 2002, 2007; Sarmiento-Pérez 2008, 2011; Payàs and Alonso 2009; Payàs 2010; Alonso, Baigorri and Fernández 2012; Payàs and Zavala 2012; Pohling 2013). Besides we have wished to pay tribute to the countless interpreters of an institution that, as Lea says (1906–1907, 1:v), “exercised no small influence on the fate of Spain and even indirectly on the civilized world.”

Translated from Spanish by Heather Adams

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