

Chapter 5

Divination and marginalised women on stage

In the Spanish theatre of the 16th and 17th centuries, the character of the diviner is usually male. Female fortune tellers are oftentimes palm reading gipsy women or the mythological heroes of the Calderonian theatre. On the Spanish stage we very rarely find the type of marginalised women who are capable of reading body signs and interpret the outward appearance of others as Francisco Delicado's *Lozana Andaluza* or the female rogue Justina do.¹ There are some 'daughters' of Celestina, who, unlike Rojas' matchmaker, also practise palmistry like *El encanto es la hermosura y el hechizo sin hechizo*, begun in 1654 by Agustín de Salazar y Torres and then finished and published by his pupil Juan de Vera y Tassis.² The go-between herself characterises chiromancy as fraud:

por mentir a lo gitano
a todos la mano tomo,
y me voy por ella, como
por la palma de la mano;³

[for lying like a gipsy
everyone's hand I take,
and I go for her, like
through the palm of the hand;]

We do not have historical documentation about the knowledge of women like the aforementioned in Spain,⁴ but the case of Antonia la Ferrarese, prosecuted by the Florentine Inquisition in 1567, recorded by Castelli (2006, 511), is interesting in this context. When she arrived at Florence, this illiterate woman carried a placard with her which said: "Signori, in questa città una donna astrologa guardandovi alla phinosomia et alla mano saprà dire del passato et del avvenire in parte. Sto alloggiato allo albergo al canto del Giglio"⁵ [Ladies and Gentlemen, in this city a woman astrologer looking at your phinosomy and hand will be able to tell you about the past and partly the future. I'm staying at the hotel close to the Lily]. Asked about her knowledge by the Inquisitors, she says that she learned this practice from her

1 See the chapter on pimps and sorceresses in Di Pinto's (2016, 34–40) article on marginal characters in the Golden Age scene in which there is no mention of divinatory practices.

2 See Lara Alberola (2010, 131).

3 Salazar y Torres, *El encanto es la hermosura y el hechizo sin hechizo*, ed. O'Connor (1994, 26).

4 For divination in early modern Germany see Coy (2020).

5 Text cited in Prosperi (1986, 120–121) and Castelli (2006, 511 and 519).

first husband and chose the term ‘astrology’ because, according to her, people do not know what ‘phinosomia’ is: “Che ho detto di sopra quello ne ho imparato et ho facto dire astrologia perché ci sono di molte persone che non intendono che uol dire phisionomia”⁶ [That I said before what I learned about it and I said astrology because there are many people who do not understand that it means phisionomy].

1 Female diviners in 17th century France: The *affaire des poisons*

The so-called *affaire des poisons*, the most intriguing scandal of the France of the *Ancien Régime*, in which members of the high nobility were involved,⁷ provides us with reliable documentation about the knowledge of divinatory practices of women of lower social background. During the investigations and trials from 1675 onwards, many marginalised women were arrested, interrogated and even tortured, women who were engaged in precisely the same businesses as Celestina and Lozana.⁸ The most famous of them, Catherine Deshayes, called *La Voisin*, was arrested in March 1679 and executed in February of the following year. The

⁶ See the transcript of the interrogation (Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Nunz. 842. Costituito, 5 aprile 1567) *apud* Castelli (2006, 511 and 519–520).

⁷ I will not go into the details of the case of the poisons and will refer instead to the historiographic studies by Nass (1898), Funck-Brentano (1900), Mongrédien (1953), Mossiker (1969), Petitfils (1977), Lebigre (2001), Chautant (2002), Mollenauer (2002) and (2007), Somerset (2006) as well as Quétel (2010).

⁸ Funck-Brentano (1900, 104–105) characterises the persecuted “witches” in the context of the *affaire de poisons* like this: “A la magie noire ou blanche les sorcières joignent la médecine et la pharmacie. Elles ont des drogueries avec des fioles innombrables: sirops, juleps, onguents, baumes, émollients d’une variété infinie [. . .] Le plus souvent aussi la sorcière était sage-femme, mais, de même que, dans ce monde étrange, sous la droguiste se cachait l’empoisonneuse, que l’alchimiste était doublé du faux-monnaieur, derrière la sage-femme apparaissait la faiseuse d’anges.” [The witches combine black or white magic with medicine and pharmacy. They have dispensaries with innumerable vials: syrups, potions, ointments, balms, softeners of an infinite variety. Most often the witch was also a midwife, but, likewise, in this strange world behind the pharmacist was hidden the poisoner, the alchemist was doubled by the counterfeiter, behind the midwife appeared the abortionist]. Chautant (2002, 119) notes with regard to *La Voisin*: “Mais elle ne cantonnait pas dans les seuls domaines de la chiromancie et de la physionomie. Il lui arrivait parfois de mettre à profit ses talents de guérisseuse” [But she was not confined to the fields of palmistry and physiognomy alone. Sometimes she was perfectly capable of using her healing skills].

immense documentation generated by the case of the poisons contains valuable information about the skills of the fortune-tellers.⁹ Not only *La Voisin*,¹⁰ but also other women of the same ilk (*La Vigoureux*,¹¹ *La Bosse*,¹² etc.) admit in the interrogations that they are committed to palmistry and physiognomy, although Lebigre suspects that they call with the “nom pompeux de ‘physionomie’ l’art de percevoir les désirs, les tensions, les espoirs que trahissent les visages et les attitudes” (2001, 85) [pompous name of *physiognomy* the art of perceiving the desires, tensions, spirits which are revealed in faces and attitudes]. The French historian is surely not wrong with her interpretation of these women’s abilities. However, we also have evidence of a handwritten treatise that belonged to *La Voisin* and was probably compiled by herself:¹³

En prétendant que le fond de son art était la physionomie, la Voisin disait vrai. Elle en avait fait une étude approfondie. Nous trouvons sur ce sujet mille et une notes dans son dossier et un Traité de physionomie appuyé sur six inébranlables colonnes: 1^{re} la sympathie entre l’esprit et le corps; 2^o les rapports entre les animaux raisonnables et irraisonnables; 3^o la diversité de l’un et de l’autre sexe; 4^o la diversité des nations; 5^o le tempérament des corps; 6^o la diversité de l’âge; et ne pas s’appuyer sur un seul signe, car souvent les hommes sont attaqués de quelque défaut que la force de leur esprit, avec le secours de la grâce, peut assurément vaincre. Quand la comtesse de Beaufort de Canillac vint consulter la devineresse, “la dame lui ayant voulu donner sa main sans se démasquer, elle lui dit qu’elle ne se connaissait point aux physionomies de velours, et sur cela la dame ayant ôté son masque”. La Voisin avoua qu’elle lisait bien plus sur les visages que dans les lignes de la main, “étant assez difficile de cacher une passion ou une inquiétude considérable”. Elle n’était pas seulement physionomiste mais finement psychologue et c’est par là qu’elle donnait un fondement à sa sorcellerie. (Funck-Brentano 1900, 121–122)¹⁴

⁹ The documents preserved in the Bastille were published in the 19th century in 19 volumes by Ravaisson (1866–1904)

¹⁰ There is more documentation on *La Voisin*’s palmistry in Ravaisson (1866–1904, V, 260, 266, 275, 319, 337, 370, 469, 481, 502 y VI, 54); physiognomy is only mentioned in Ravaisson (1866–1904, V, 281 and 457).

¹¹ On the palmistry skills of *La Vigoureux* see Ravaisson (1866–1904, V, 160, 172, 215, 217, 220, y 429).

¹² On *La Bosse* and palmistry see Ravaisson (1866–1904, V, 234 y 284)

¹³ See *Annexe 6* in Chautant (2002, 306–314), which reproduces the *Traicté de physionomie* del Ms 10, 357, fol. 665–673 of the *Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal*.

¹⁴ On this point also cf. Funck-Brentano (1900, 120): “La Voisin raconta très ingénument à La Reynie les débuts de sa carrière. À présent son mari ne faisait plus rien. Il avait été marchand joaillier, puis boutiquier sur le Pont-Marie. Il avait perdu ses boutiques et alors, voyant son époux ruiné, ‘elle s’était attachée à cultiver la science que Dieu lui avait donnée’. – ‘C’est la chiromancie et la physionomie, dit-elle, que j’ai apprises dès l’âge de neuf ans’.” [*La Voisin* told *La Reynie* very ingeniously about the beginning of her career. At present her husband was no longer doing anything. He had been a jewellery merchant, then a shopkeeper on the Pont-

[By claiming that the basis of her art was physiognomy, *La Voisin* was telling the truth. She had made a thorough study of it. We find a thousand and one notes on this subject in her file and a Treatise on Physiognomy based on six solid columns: 1st the harmony between the mind and the body; 2nd the relations between reasonable and unreasonable animals; 3rd the diversity of the sexes; 4th the diversity of nations; 5th the temperament of bodies; 6th the diversity of age; and do not rely on a single sign, for often men are beset by a certain defect which the strength of their spirit, with the help of gracefulness, can overcome. When the Countess de Beaufort de Canillac came to consult the soothsayer, “the lady having wanted to show her hand without unveiling herself, she told her that she did not at all know about velvet physiognomy, and that at that point the lady had removed her veil”. *La Voisin* confessed that she read much more out of faces than out of the lines of the hand, it “being rather difficult to hide a major passion or anxiety”. She was not only a physiognomist but also a fine psychologist, and it was through this that her sorcery had a strong foothold.]

As opposed to “magicians” like *La Bosse*, who were illiterate,¹⁵ we know of others who read and owned libraries: According to Chautant, *La Voisin* ‘was interested in alchemy, owned twenty-five works of occult science’¹⁶ and ‘kept a skeleton at home’ (2002, 115) in order to know how many bones the human body had. In a letter to abbot Nicaise we read of “une Duval, qui a été arrêtée pour cause de magie, dont on dit qu’elle tient école et en avait une grande bibliothèque”¹⁷ [a Duval, who was arrested for magic and who was said to have a school equipped with a large library]. *La Vigoureux* was interrogated on January 4th, 1679 and answered the question “Si elle-même ne se mêle pas aussi de deviner?” [Does she herself not meddle with divination?] thus: “—À la vérité, elle s’en est mêlée quelquefois, et elle a même eu quelques livres de chiromancie dont elle se servait comme elle pouvait”¹⁸ [To tell the truth, she has meddled with it a few times, and she even had a few books of chiromancy that

Marie. He had lost his shops, and then, seeing her husband ruined, “she had set out to cultivate the science that God had given her”. — “It’s palmistry and physiognomy,” she says, “that I learned at the age of nine”].

15 See Chautant (2002, 121).

16 The French researcher emphasises, moreover, the role of the printing press for the spread of occultism: “L’importance donnée aux ouvrages et aux manuels révéla le rôle de l’imprimerie ainsi que l’essor de la diffusion des livres dans le domaine de la magie. L’édition contribua, dans une certaine mesure, à la popularité de l’occultisme” Chautant (2002, 1215) [The importance given to books and manuals revealed the role of the printing press as well as the rise in the diffusion of books in the field of magic. Publishing contributed, to some extent, to the popularity of occultism].

17 À l’abbé Nicaise. *Ce 14 mars 1680, apud Ravaisson* (1866–1905, VI, 191). On this particular aspect, also see Chautant (2002, 115).

18 *Interrogatoire de La Vigoureux. L’an 1679, le 4 janvier, à Vincennes, apud Ravaisson* (1866–1905, V, 158–159). On this point also see Chautant (2002, 115).

she used as best she could]. In the same interrogation, *La Vigoureux* said that she did not know whether *La Bosse* was also involved in divining: “bien est vrai qu’elle regardait souvent dans la mains des gens, et qu’elle leur disait ce que lui venait dans l’esprit” (Ravaisson 1866–1905, V, 158–159) [It is true that she often looked at people’s hands and told them what came into her mind]. Historical documentation reveals that there were women who were seriously pursuing the study of the occult arts, while others, curiously enough those who do not have access to book culture, pretend to have the same knowledge.

The Bastille documents also tell us of men who knew about the occult arts¹⁹ such as Lesage, one of *La Voisin’s* collaborators, of whom Madame Dufontet, a friend of the Duke of Luxembourg, says that “he was knowledgeable in the physiognomy of the hand”. In the same interrogation, Lesage himself says that he “vint lui demander si elle voulait qu’il lui regardât dans la main, parce qu’il s’y connaissait, et en physionomie, disant qu’il savait sur cela des merveilles, et que les femmes étaient quelquefois curieuses”²⁰ [he came and asked her if she wanted him to read her hand, because he knew how to do it, and that he knew wonders about physiognomy, and that women were sometimes curious to know]. This account clarifies, on the one hand, how suspicious characters like Lesage entered the houses of the nobility; and, on the other hand, it informs us about the female clientele of these individuals.

19 A certain Gobert Ferrandinier is interrogated because he had tried to hide a bag full of forbidden books and manuscripts, among them the studies of palmistry of sieur de Peruchio and of Indagine: “Qui, il a un livre de Peruchio, le livre de Roussille, et le livre d’Indagine, et plusieurs manuscrits dont aucuns sont de sa main, et ce sont de ces secrets et des fables qui lui ont été donnés et desquels il ne s’est jamais servi”. Interrogation of Gobert. May 7, 1679, in Vincennes, apud Ravaisson (1866–1905, V, 358–359) [He has a book by Peruchio, the book by Roussille, and the book by Indagine, and several manuscripts, none of which by his hand, and these are secrets and fables that were given to him and which he has never used]. Also see Chautant (2002, 144). Abbot Lefranc – being asked “S’il se mêle pas de curiosité?” [if he meddles with curiosities] – admits: “Il se mêle de les savoir et de les enseigner, et depuis a dit qu’il ne se mêle point de les démonter ni de les pratiquer. Il sait la néomance [sic], la chiromancie, la physionomie”, *Interrogatoire de l’abbé Lefranc. Du 9 juillet 1680, à Vincennes, apud* Ravaisson (1866–1905, V, 240) [He meddles in knowing and teaching them, and later he said that he does not at all meddle in showing or practising them. He knows neomance [sic], palmistry, physiognomy].

20 *Inerrogatoire de Madame Dufontet. Du28 janvier 1680, à Vincennes, apud* Ravaisson (1866–1905, VI, 112–113).

2 La Voisin – a real soothsayer on the scene in *La Devineresse* (1679)

Catherine Deshayes, called *La Voisin*, immortalised as Madame Jobin²¹ in the comedy *La Devineresse* (1679),²² written in collaboration by Thomas Corneille (1625–1709) and Donneau de Visé (1638–1710).²³ As the authors remember in the prologue to the reader (“Au lecteur”) of the printed edition, the play premiered on 19 November 1679 at the Théâtre Guénégaude, had an immense success: “Le succès de cette Comédie a esté si grand, qu’il s’en est peu veu de semblables. On y a couru, & on y court encor tous les jours en foule”²⁴ [The success of this comedy was so great that you seldom saw anything comparable. People came in droves and still do]. The comedy rotates around Madame Jobin, who deceives a whole series of people with her tricks until the Marquis, a skeptical character, exposes her to the entire eyes of the world. At the very beginning of the play, the Marquis tries to convince the widow he wants to marry that Madame Jobin is a cheater:

LE MARQUIS. [. . .] Il est vray, Madame, que vous m’auriez épargné ce deguisement, si vous donniez moins dans les artifices de vostre Devineresse, qui ne vous dit toutes les fadaises qui vous font peur, que pour attraper vostre Argent.

21 “La devineresse, qui est le principal personnage de la pièce, n’était autre que la Voisin, de qui Corneille et Visé déformèrent légèrement le nom en appelant leur devineresse Mme Jobin. On trouve dans la comédie l’écho des réponses que la sorcière fit devant les commissaires de la Chambre ardente, ce qui indique l’intervention de Nicolas de La Reynie. Le principal compère de la Voisin s’appelait Du Buisson, celui de Mme Jobin s’appelle Du Clos. Les pratiques sont les mêmes, mais ridiculisées par les auteurs, qui font de leur Mme Jobin une simple intrigante qui n’a d’autre préoccupation que d’attraper les écus des bonnes gens. Par le fond du caractère, nous sommes donc loin de la terrible devineresse de la Villeneuve-sur-Gravois.” (Funck-Brentano 1900, 303) [La devineresse, who is the main character of the play, was none other than *La Voisin*, whose name Cornelius and Aimee slightly distorted when they called their soothsayer *Mrs. Jobin*. We find in the comedy the echo of the declarations that the sorceress made in front of the commissioners of the *Chambre ardente*, which points to an intervention on the part of Nicolas de La Reynie. *La Voisin’s* main companion’s name was Du Buisson, while that of *Mrs. Jobin’s* is Du Clos. The practices are the same, but ridiculed by the authors, who make their *Mrs Jobin* a mere schemer whose only concern is to snatch some coins off righteous people. At the core of the character, we are thus far away from the terrible diviner of Villeneuve-sur-Gravois].

22 The play was first published by Yarrow (1971) and, more recently, by Prest (2007). On *La Devineresse*, also see the studies by Paige (2000), Steinberger (2003), Poirson (2004), Clarke (2006), Prest (2007), Rudall (2010), Brooks (2014) and Gernert (2017a).

23 On this author see Vincent (1987).

24 Cf. *La Devineresse*, ed. Prest (2007, 30).

LA COMTESSE. Vous me croyez donc sa Dupe?

LE MARQUIS. Est-ce que vous ne luy donnez rien?

LA COMTESSE. Il faut bien que chacun vive de son Mestier.

LE MARQUIS. Le mestier est beau de parler au Diable, selon vous s'entend, Madame; car je ne suis pas persuadé que le Diable se communique aisément. A dire vray, j'admire la plûpart des Femmes. Elles ont une délicatesse d'esprit admirable; ce n'est qu'en les pratiquant qu'on en peut avoir, & elles ont le foible de courir tout ce qu'il y a de Devins.

LA COMTESSE. Ce sont tous Fourbes?

LE MARQUIS. Fourbes de Profession, qui ne sçavent rien, & qui éblouissent les Crédules.²⁵

[MARQUIS. . . . It is true, Madam, that you would have spared me this disguise, if you had given less heed to the artifices of your Soothsayer, who only tells you all the nonsense that frightens you, to seize your money.

COUNTESS. You think I'm her dupe?

MARQUIS. Aren't you giving him anything?

COUNTESS. Everyone has to live off his profession.

MARQUIS. It is beautiful to speak to the Devil, according to you, Madam; for I am not persuaded that the Devil communicates himself easily. To tell you the truth, I admire most women. They have an admirable delicacy of spirit; just by relating to them you'll be a beneficiary of this, and they have a weakness for running to all kinds of fortune tellers.

COUNTESS. Are they all swindlers?

MARQUIS. Professional swindlers, who know nothing, and who cheat the gullible.]

The audience has been aware of the fact that Madame Jobin is an imposter since the opening scene.²⁶

Like her historical model, the protagonist of the dramatic adaptation practices chiromancy²⁷ and physiognomy. In the second act, she reads the lines in

²⁵ Cf. *La Devineresse* I. 5, ed. Prest (2007, 38–39).

²⁶ As Wörsdörfer correctly observes, “wird die Hauptfigur in *La Devineresse* also gerade nicht durch ihre magische Kompetenz etabliert, sondern von vornherein als schauspielernde Betrügerin gebrandmarkt und entlarvt” (2019, 238) [the main character in *La Devineresse* is not established by her magical competence, but is branded and exposed as an acting fraud from the start].

²⁷ Cf. *La Devineresse* I. 6, ed. Prest (2007, 41): “MME JOBIN [. . .] je n'aiderois pas qu'on dist dans le Monde que je me mesle de plus que de regarder dans la main” [MME JOBIN . . . I wouldn't want people to spread the news that I'm involved in anything other than reading palms].

the hand of a marquess who accuses her of cheating on people and wants to put her to the test:

MME JOBIN. Il me faudroit plus d'adresse pour cela que pour leur dire la verité.

LA MARQUISE. Voyons si vous pourrez me la dire. Voila ma main.

MME JOBIN. Toutes les lignes marquent beaucoup de bonheur.

LA MARQUISE. Passons, cela est general.

MME JOBIN. Vous estes Veuve, & parmy beaucoup d'Amans que vous avez, il y en a un qui vous touche plus que les autres, quoy qu'il soit le plus jaloux. [. . .]

LA MARQUISE. C'est quelque chose que cela.

MME JOBIN. Il est absent depuis quelque temps, & vous l'avez assez maltraité pour craindre que l'éloignement ne vous le dérobe.

LA MARQUISE. Cela peut estre.²⁸

[MME JOBIN. I would need more skill for that than to tell them the truth.

MARQUESS. Let's see if you can tell me. Here's my hand.

MME JOBIN. All lines show plenty of bliss

MARQUESS. Anyway, this is general.

MME JOBIN. You are a widow, and among the many lovers you have, there is one who touches you more than the others, no matter how jealous he may be.

MARQUESS. That's something.

MME JOBIN. He's been out of town for some time, and you've treated him badly enough to fear that being away from you might take him away from you.

MARQUESS. That may be.]

The fortune teller knows her customer's circumstances from the outset and pretends to read this information from the lines of her hand, a trick of which the audience is fully aware.

On another occasion in the third act, Mme Jobin asks the countess to remove her mask, because it is her face rather than her hands that provides her with information: "Je m'arreste plus aux traits du visage qu'aux lignes des mains"²⁹ [I am more interested in the features of the face than in the lines of

²⁸ *La Devineresse* II, 10, ed. Prest (2007, 74).

²⁹ *La Devineresse* III, 4, ed. Prest (2007, 95). Clarke (2006, 227) compares this scene with what *La Vigoureux* allegedly said to Madame Poulailon.

the hand]. Although Madame Jobin knows about physiognomy and chiromancy and other practices that could be considered effective in the 17th century, what the piece highlights is the ingenuity of the deceptions and the naivety of her clients. In spite of the fact that the protagonist is a character of utmost modernity, she uses magical objects like a mirror or an enchanted sword that do not have to do with real accusations³⁰ but come from the literary imaginary, in the former case from the Calderonian comedy *El astrólogo fingido* (1623–1625).³¹ In this context, it should be remembered that Thomas Corneille wrote an adaptation of this comedy under the title of *Le feint astrologue* (1651). *La Devineresse* is, like Calderón's early comedy, a play of entertainment that is characterised, as Folger rightly points out by “una aparente o presunta falta de profundidad filosófica” (2017, 97) [an apparent or alleged lack of philosophical depth]. Rodríguez-Gallego (2017, 234) shows by the example of this comedy that Calderón “no era, o no era únicamente, ese autor serio, grave y ceñudo solo amigo de tragedias sangrientas, dramas filosóficos y autos sacramentales, sino también uno de los más hábiles constructores de universos lúdicos y de ingeniosos enredos” [was not, or was not only, that serious, serious and somber author who was only a friend of bloody tragedies, philosophical dramas and *autos sacramentales*, but also one of the most skilful builders of playful universes and ingenious entanglements]. It probably was this “funny” Calderón who may have influenced *La Devineresse* in the playful approach to the fictionalization of a fortune teller. The two French authors do not care much about alerting their audience to the danger of the magic arts. Their comedy premiered the same year as theologian Jean Baptiste Thiers published his *Traité des superstitions* which shows that the papal bulls

30 See Yarrow in the introduction to his critical edition (1971, XVI-XVII): “La façon dont les auteurs ont traité leur sujet est intéressante. Ils ont écarté tout le côté criminel, sacrilège, macabre et répugnant des véritables devineresses. Mme Jobin ne s’occupe pas d’avortements, ne vend pas des poisons, ne fait pas célébrer de messes noires; le diable qu’elle fait paraître à ses clients est un *bon diable* en chair et en os [. . .] Mme Voisin a donc été transformée en fourbe, en une espèce de Mascarille ou de Scapin; aussi ingénieuse que les valets de Molière, elle n’est guère plus méchante”. [The way the authors treated their subject is interesting. They dismissed the entire criminal, sacrilegious, macabre and repulsive side of true fortune tellers. Mrs. Jobin does not do abortions, does not sell poisons, does not celebrate black masses; the devil she makes her clients see is a good devil in the flesh. . . . Mme Voisin has thus been transformed into a deceiver, into a kind of Mascarille or Scapin; as ingenious as Molière’s valets, she is not much more wicked]. Also see Brooks (2014, 275): “Fausse enchanteresse, magicienne frauduleuse, elle n’est pas dotées des sinistres caractéristiques de la Voisin, celles d’être bel et bien une meurtrière, une avorteuse, une empoisonneuse, une diseuse de messes noires [. . .]”. [False enchanter, fraudulent magician, she is not endowed with the sinister characteristics of La Voisin, those of being a murderer, an abortionist, a poisoner, a celebrator of black masses . . .].

31 See Gernert (2017a, 257).

against the magical arts by Sixtus V (*Coeli et Terrae Creator Deus*, 1586), Gregory XV (*Omnipotentis Dei*, 1623) or Urban VIII (*Inscrutabilis iudiciorum*, 1631) were not able to eradicate divinatory practices:

Le Concile Provincial de Toulouse en 1590 ordonne que l'on punisse rigoureusement selon les Canons de l'Église tous les sorciers, soit ecclésiastiques, soit laïques; et que l'on avertisse souvent le peuple de ne pas se servir de leur art, de ne pas leur demander des remèdes dans les maladies et de ne pas consulter les trompeuses divinations des diseurs d'horoscopes. Il ordonne aussi ensuite aux confesseurs et aux prédicateurs, de déraciner des esprits des fidèles par fréquentes exhortation et par de bonnes raisons, les vaines pratiques qui se sont introduites dans l'Église par l'ignorance et la simplicité des hommes, pour chasser les maladies d'une manière superstitieuse. (Thiers 1697, 50–51)³²

[The Provincial Council of Toulouse in 1590 orders that all sorcerers, both ecclesiastical and lay, be rigorously punished according to the Canons of the Church; and that the people be often warned not to use their art, not to ask them for cures for illnesses and not to consult the deceptive divinations of the horoscope tellers. It also orders confessors and preachers to uproot from the minds of the faithful, by frequent exhortation and with good reasoning, the vain practices which have entered the Church through ignorance and the simplicity of men, in order to drive out diseases with superstition.]

These warnings are not reflected in the comedy, which is a long way distant from the clearly dogmatic intention of many of Calderon's works.

³² See for Thiers' anti-superstitious treatise Cameron (2010, 287–290).