

MAKING THE INQUISITION DISAPPEAR. VICE-ROYAL POLITICS AGAINST THE TRIBUNAL OF LIMA (1761-1813)

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Resumen: El artículo reinterpreta la decadencia de la Inquisición de Lima en el contexto de la política regalista, incluyendo actos ceremoniales y cuestiones de protocolo que hasta el momento no han sido tomados en consideración por los investigadores de la materia. La disminución de la autoridad de la Inquisición en el Perú se debió a problemas económicos y a la falta de apoyo de parte del rey y su alter ego, el virrey, los cuales redujeron las competencias del Santo Oficio. Había que poner en práctica la voluntad real de disminuir la influencia política y social de la Inquisición. Sin embargo, el rey y el virrey no podían reducir la autoridad del Santo Oficio por medio de simples actos administrativos o la promulgación de leyes. Era necesario mostrar públicamente la devaluación de la Inquisición para que fuera conocida en la sociedad. En este sentido, actos simbólicos, rumores o incluso insultos eran tan cruciales como leyes o decisiones ejecutivas para rebajar el poder de la Inquisición y hacerla casi desaparecer.

Palabras clave: Inquisición, Perú, Regalismo, Siglo XVIII, comunicación simbólica

Abstract: The article reinterprets the decline of the Inquisition of Lima in the context of royalist politics, including ceremonial acts and questions of protocol that so far have not been taken into consideration by scholars in this way. The decline of the Inquisition in Peru was due to economic problems and lack of support from the king and his alter ego, the viceroy, who subsequently reduced the competencies of the Holy Office. However, the royal will to diminish the influence that the Inquisition had on politics and society had to be imposed. The king and the viceroy could not reduce the authority of the Holy Office by mere administrative acts or laws. They had to communicate this publicly in order to make the devaluation of the Inquisition known within society. In this regard, symbolic acts, rumours or even insults were as crucial as laws or executive decisions in order to combat the Inquisition and make it almost disappear.

Keywords: Inquisition, Peru, Regalism, 18th Century, Symbolic Communication

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1. INTRODUCTION: SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION IN EARLY MODERN HISTORY

The day after Christmas 1763 something unprecedented scandalised the Holy Office of Lima and prompted deep concern among the inquisitors. Like every year on this day, the viceroy, who from 1761 had been Manuel de Amat y Junient, formally received the Inquisition at his palace. When the inquisitor and the officials arrived, neither the halberd-bearers showed their arms nor the cavalry any form of deference – as they used to do on this occasion, nor did anyone of the viceroy's entourage come out to receive them at the stairway. At the reception room, the viceroy did not approach in order to conduct the inquisitor personally to his chair. Instead he was waiting next to his chair in the reception room while the inquisitor and the officials entered. As Amat became aware of the chief justice of the Inquisition, who was upholding a bar during his entry, he shouted three times 'Lower the bar!' until the latter lowered it. Furthermore, the presence of two seats for the two inquisitors perturbed the delegation. Normally, one chair stood at the right hand side and one at the left of the viceroy; now they were located at the left. In addition, it was a truly negligent act to put two chairs together, as one inquisitor had died just that year and a successor was still to be named, therefore one chair had to remain empty. The remaining inquisitor chose the chair closest to the Viceroy, but he was aware that he was sitting further away from him than in previous years. After the ceremony, which consisted of a speech held by the inquisitor, the viceroy didn't move from his seat and during the walk-out of the Inquisition the guards and

the cavalry in the courtyard again ignored the delegation.¹

This incident was of great symbolic importance and what in the eyes of the contemporary observer may look like the mere absence of only a veneer of politeness, was a severe blow to the Inquisition of Lima and contributed to the decline of its authority. In early modern society, authority was intimately connected with display. It had to be constituted and affirmed publicly due to the respect and attention one received during ceremonies, and vice versa. If one didn't receive the due deference, his authority was called into question. Thus, symbolic acts such as coronations or receptions served to manifest public order and the distribution of power and prestige within society.² For the Inquisition in America it was particularly important to demonstrate its status publicly because it claimed pre-eminence within society as an institution which held papal as well as royal power and jurisdiction. Thus, from the very beginning of the Inquisition in America, ceremonies like *auto's-da-fe* or receptions were a battlefield where these claims were established and also

1 Letter of the Inquisition of Perú to the *Suprema* (Superior) Inquisition in Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN), Inquisición (Inq), legajo (leg) 2210, número 23.

2 See in general: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, 'Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne. Begriffe, Thesen, Forschungsperspektiven', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 31 (2004), 489-527, 507-509. For Spanish-America: Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image. The culture and politics of viceregal power in colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 12 and 155; Adolfo Polo y La Borda Ramos, 'Identidad y poder en los conflictos por las preeminencias en el siglo XVII', *Historia*, 31 (2007), 7-42, 9; Jaime Valenzuela Márquez, *Las liturgias del poder. Celebraciones públicas y estrategias persuasivas en Chile colonial (1609-1709)* (Santiago de Chile: LOM, 2002), 332.

contested by other institutions like viceroy, Audiencia, Archbishop or Cabildo.³

Concerning the Christmas reception in 1763 the ceremony served to question the status of an institution, due to the mere fact that the viceroy deliberately disrespected the well-known performance and publicly expressed in this way a lack of deference towards the rank of the Holy Office.⁴ The Inquisition of Lima, alarmed by this dismissive conduct of the viceroy, informed the supreme inquisitor in Madrid and asked for help in this precarious situation. It hoped that the *Suprema* would inform the king on the next occasion who indeed, was the only one able to pressure the viceroy to respect the status of the Inquisition. But just here, in the role of the King of Spain, Charles III, and his attitude towards the Inquisition, was the problem.

2. INQUISITION AND GOVERNANCE IN 18TH CENTURY

Whilst a traditional historiographical view conceived the Inquisition as a kind of Church's executive organ or a kind of secret police to control society in service of the absolutist Monarchy, recent scholarship points out the problematic relationship between the Inquisition and Crown or Church. More than

an institution which fostered "state's" power, it was an obstacle which pursued its own interest against the other representatives of the colonial state.⁵ In addition, the relationship between the Inquisition and the crowns representatives had always been full of tensions, and ministers of the Audiencias or viceroys hardly tried to reduce its authority, it was especially true during the reign of Charles III when attacks on the Inquisition were launched. Now, regalism prevailed, which can be considered as a real ideology of governance, whose aim it was to strengthen the power of the monarch and his administration.⁶ The main objective was to restrict the autonomy and privileges of corporate bodies and to foster the influence of royal bureaucracy. Since primarily the Church and the Inquisition acted autonomously, royalist ministers tried to put this autonomy down and to subjugate them under the jurisdiction and mandate of the royal authorities.⁷

The reforms of Charles III restricted the Inquisition in some important areas. A *Real Cédula* (royal order) from 16 June 1768 limited its competencies in censorship. In order to prohibit a book, the Inquisition now required previous authorisation by the king. Authors, who were Spaniards, had to be heard first, and if the Inquisition thought that, not the whole book, but only some passages were to be considered dangerous, the author could expurgate this. Finally, the Holy Office should only prohibit books regarding superstition, matters of dogma and good use of religion and Christian moral. A second royal order from 5 February 1770 limited the jurisdictional competencies of the Inquisition to cases

3 Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, 107-116 and 150; Alejandra B. Osorio, *Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru's South Sea Metropolis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 111-112; A. Victoria González de Caldas, *El poder y su imagen* (Sevilla: Universidad, 2001), 235-236; Manuel Peña Díaz, "Ceremonias y fiestas inquisitoriales", ed. by Jaqueline Vasallo; Manuel Peña Díaz (Córdoba/Argentina: Editorial Brujas, 2015), 83-99, 98-99.

4 Alejandro Cañete points out the very ritualized character of the receptions by the viceroy where "every gesture being measured carefully [...] where the relations between the viceroy and the Holy Office were acted out on the public stage"; Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, 153.

5 Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, 108-117.

6 Gabriel B. Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance, and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759-1808*, second edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7.

7 Paquette, *Enlightenment*, 61-74.

of apostasy and heresy, but without specifying which cases really belonged to the Inquisition, for what reason it created many disputes with the royal law.⁸

But the Crown also needed the Inquisition and tried to make use of its surveillance abilities – and here lies one of the big contradictions of Spanish Enlightenment reforms. On the one hand, the reformers tried to foster Enlightenment with changes in the education system, the foundation of economic societies, the liberalisation of book trade or the promotion of newspapers and reading. It also tried to diminish the influence of the Church, which was perceived to be an obstacle to the reform projects. On the other hand, the state feared some consequences of Enlightenment, like secret societies or the postulates of authors who were especially critical towards monarchy and religion, such as Voltaire and Montesquieu.⁹ At this point the Crown drew in on the Inquisition, which, at this time, was the unique instrument for detecting prohibited books and to seek out secret societies. Secret societies were seen to be a threat to public order and religion because, as they evaded control by the very nature of their secrecy, these organisations could originate subversive movements or provide a place to permit heresy. Hence, Church and state had a common interest to act against them. First by papal bulls of 1738 and 1751, and in 1751 by

royal decree the Inquisition was instructed to persecute masonry.¹⁰

To trace back to the reception of the Inquisition of Lima by the viceroy in 1763, this happened in a climate of great tension between Crown and Church, when ministers like Aranda and Campomanes within the Council of Castile were trying hard to restrict the influence of the Inquisition.¹¹ These tensions also affected the Inquisition in Lima, which hoped to get support from the king against an antagonistic viceroy. But the king shared the same opinion as his royalist reformers, and the *Suprema* in Madrid knew this very well, wherefore – in response to the Tribunal of Lima – its only advice was to keep calm and tolerate the infringement.

3. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE INQUISITION'S AUTHORITY IN THE ERA OF VICEROY AMAT (1761-1776)

The Status Claims of the Inquisition

The years from 1735 to 1739 had meant a period of great activity within the Peruvian Inquisition. Then, due to economic problems, corruption and personal quarrels within the institution, it was paralysed and the activity almost completely ceased. The internal quarrels couldn't be concealed and soon, not only the public of Lima, but also the Supreme Inquisition in Madrid became aware of the problems. As accurate and reliable information regarding the problems of the Peruvian Inquisition was hard to come by for the inquisitors in Madrid, they decided to send a visitor to Lima, the Inquisitor of Valencia,

8 Antonio Álvarez Morales, *Inquisición e Ilustración (1700-1834)* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1982), 103-104.

9 Teófanos Egido, "Contradicciones gubernamentales", in *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*, vol. 1, ed. by Bartolomé Escandell Boet; Joaquín Pérez Villanueva (Madrid: Centro de Estudios inquisitoriales, 1984), 1312-1317, 1317. For the case of the Peruvian Inquisition: Pedro M. Guibovich Pérez, La literatura francesa en el Virreinato peruano: Comercio legal y contrabando en el periodo tardío colonial, *Historia*, 31 (2007), 85-105, 104.

10 José A. Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería e inquisición en Latinoamérica durante el siglo XVIII* (Caracas: Universidad Católica, 1973), 6-15.

11 Álvarez Morales, *Inquisición e Ilustración*, 102-103.

Pedro Antonio de Arenaza. It was ambitious to reform the Holy Office there, but he confronted the with a fine spun network of influences and dependencies, which linked the Inquisition of Lima to local society. To reform it and to remove corrupt officials would have supposed a confrontation with influential circles in the viceroyalty. But the *Suprema* didn't want to endanger its relationship with the local people and consequently removed the visitor in 1749 without concluding his mission.¹²

However the troubles continued during the 1750's and ended only after new inquisitors had replaced the old ones. From then on the Holy Office tried to re-establish its former activities. In 1761 it proclaimed that after such a long time of inactivity, the inquisitors have determined some causes secretly, due to the character of the accused and the nature of their crimes, and because of the finalization and voting of three other cases, whose communication to the public could proceed, they decided to celebrate a particular *auto-da-fé* on 6 April 1761. The *Señor* Inquisitor Fiscal notified he most Excellent *Señor* Viceroy of this kingdom, and his Excellence, with the inborn love that he professes to the Holy Office and to the common good, and because so much depends on the conservation of the purity of our sacred religion, celebrated the *auto-da-fé* with considerate expressions of courtesy to the Holy Office, offering of the troops of infantry and cavalry what was necessary and everything else that could contribute to the most respectable splendour and dignity of the performance.

12 René Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición de Lima. Signos de su decadencia. 1726-1750* (Santiago de Chile: Dibam, 2004), 145-158.

The climate and the ruinous conditions of the chapel of the Inquisition forced them to celebrate the *auto-da-fé* in the hall of the *audiencia* with the doors open, where all members of the Holy Office were present 'who formed a respectable concourse, which joined many other people of the most distinguished quality [...] and out of the hall concurred an innumerable number of people of all the classes.'¹³

Such accounts of *auto-da-fés* on behalf of the Inquisition were common in 17th and 18th century and not only as panegyric descriptions, but also as engravings or paintings.¹⁴ The related description was printed in Lima at the instance of the Holy Office in 1761. It is a demonstration of the approval of the Inquisitions by society, with soldiers and authorities present and people watching from outside. Furthermore, the Inquisition showed that its apparatus still worked and that everyone had to fear its power, just as it had been some twenty years before, since the Holy Office was able to execute even more severe sentences like in the case of the French Francisco Moyen, who – after spending ten years arrested under the Holy Office, was condemned, whilst wearing the *Sambenito*, to ten years of prison and perpetual expulsion from the Indies. He, furthermore, had to go through the streets of Lima and proclaim his

13 Translation of the author from: Inquisition of Lima, *Relación del auto particular de FEE, celebrado en el Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Lima el día 6 de abril de 1761* (Lima: Imprenta nueva de los niños huérfanos, 1761). Quoted by José Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Lima (1569-1820)*, vol. 2 (Santiago de Chile. Fondo histórico y bibliográfico, 1956), 321-322.

14 See for this general purpose of representations of *auto-da-fés*: Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition. A historical Revision* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 206-213.

own sentence. Additionally, he lost half of his property.¹⁵

With the *ceremony* the Inquisition had tried to go as public as possible and the original plan, disturbed by the climate, was even to celebrate a public *auto-da-fé*. This would have been a singular case in the whole Spanish Empire because during the second half of the 18th century, public *auto-da-fés* were no longer celebrated. Anyway we have to be wary with the description given by the Inquisition, which may reflect the wishes of the Inquisition and the image they wanted to adopt in society more than a reality. It's unlikely that the Inquisition of Lima would have been able to execute a public *auto-da-fé* in 1761. The measure adopted to celebrate it in the hall of the *audiencia* was, for sure, the less prestigious one, far behind a public *auto-da-fé* and even behind one celebrated in a church.

Furthermore, not all corporations were willing to give the inquisitors the chance to represent their claims of superiority publicly. When Amat arrived in Lima in 1761, soon after the *auto-da-fé*, the city and all secular and ecclesiastical authorities gave a solemn reception to the new viceroy – but in the account of the ceremony the Inquisition doesn't appear.¹⁶ The organisation of a *recibimiento* of a new viceroy was gestured by the Cabildo,¹⁷ which wasn't willing to give any pre-eminence to

the Inquisition. But the inquisitors saw their corresponding place on the right and the left hand side of the viceroy, a position they usually held during the Christmas receptions or even in public processions which were gestured by the inquisition. If conflict about questions of rank aroused, the solution was to stay away from the ceremony in order to maintain the claims as the inquisitors did in 1761. In the same way the Archbishop and the dignities of the Cathedral refused to take part in the 1763's *auto-da-fé*, because in their eyes the places they were assigned to by the Inquisition didn't respect the dignity of their position.¹⁸

Also we don't know if the description really reflects the true ceremony because these descriptions very often were used to construct an image of charismatic authority which the Inquisition in reality already had lost.¹⁹ It is doubtful, for example, whether the viceroy, José Antonio Manso de Velasco really held great respect for the proceedings. Maybe the description was understood also as a piece of advice for his successor, Manuel Amat, and the Inquisition not only wanted to show him what they expected from him, but also to demonstrate their authority, power and acceptance within society. However things did not remain the same. Soon after the new Viceroy Amat and his officials started their first attacks on the Inquisition.

Restriction of the Inquisition's Competencies

Amat was a true royalist who tried to reduce the influence of the Church. He pronounced

15 Letter to the Suprema, 1761, AHN, Inq, leg. 2209, doc 10, fols. 126v-127v. For his trial see: Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *Francisco Moyén or the Inquisition as it was in South America* (London: Henry Sotheran, 1969), 108-172.

16 Summery about what was supposed to be done for the entry of the viceroy in: Alfredo Saenz-Rico Urbina, *El Virrey Amat. Precisiones sobre la vida y la obra de Don Manuel de Amat y Junyent* (Barcelona: Ayuntamiento, 1967), 157-158.

17 Rafael Ramos Sosa, *Arte festivo en Lima virreinal (siglos XVI-XVII)* (Sevilla: Tecnographic, 1992, 32.

18 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición de Lima. Signos de su decadencia*, 70-71. Also in 1600 the archbishop refused to take part in an *auto-da-fé* because he wasn't willing to accept the subordinate place assigned to him in the ceremony. Osorio, *Inventing Lima*, 112.

19 Peña Díaz, 'Ceremonias y fiestas inquisitoriales', 94.

his position towards the Inquisition in the memoir, which gave account of his administration in Peru: 'Always the clerks try to extend their faculties, to bite and to amputate those who correspond to the royal jurisdiction [...] and [to revise] this cause is the particular responsibility the viceroys who immediately represent the royal person'.²⁰ With a Viceroy who was critical to this extend towards the Church's jurisdiction; it is not surprising that soon serious tensions with the Inquisition arose. Amat just wasn't willing to accept its autonomous status and its claim for prevalence in all cases of justice. The first signs of his disrespectful conduct with the Inquisition are two letters from 1763. In the first, from 14 January, the Inquisition of Lima asked the *Suprema* for help in its relationship with the new viceroy. The *Suprema* now wrote on 21 May directly to Amat, requesting protection for the Holy Office and summiting an offer to collaborate with the royal authorities in jurisdiction-matters.²¹

This offer seems to be the answer to the royalist positions of Amat, who tried to heavily restrict the competencies of the Inquisition in his domain. His actions were encouraged by a *Real Cédula* from 18. July 1763 which cut off the superiority of the Inquisition in jurisdiction. So far, the inquisitors could order the royal authorities to commit them a case, if they considered it to be their domain. Now the royal tribunals were assured in their autonomy and were allowed to continue

cases until the competition was resolved.²² This order was questioned by the Holy Office of Lima, which alleged errors in the proceeding due to the fact that the royal order ran via the viceroy and not via the *Suprema* and the Indian Council. Consequently, it was valid, in the eyes of the Inquisition of Lima, only for Castile but not for America, and it wouldn't refuse its right to take away cases from the royal tribunals. In fact, since the 1770's it hadn't used this privilege any more. From then on the Holy Office tried to avoid competencies with the royal jurisdiction, because it was obvious that in cases of disagreement king and viceroy would act always against them and limit their jurisdiction. The only case where conflict still could arise was bigamy, because here the competencies were mixed between the Inquisition and the *Audiencia*. This conflict, finally, was resolved by a royal order in 1788, it is no surprise that from then on bigamy was considered a competence of the royal courts.²³

In 1763 the competence of the Inquisition in book controlling was also limited. Amat ordered, following royal instructions, that books which the Holy Office wanted to censor should be examined by Catholic authors first.²⁴ But Amat went further and simply ignored the rights of the Holy Office. This happened in 1768, when a forbidden book of a French Jansenist author, with the title *Anales de la Compañía*, circulated in Lima. As it criticised the pope, the Jesuits and the saints, the Inquisition tried to obtain the book, but they clashed with the royal administration. The book was introduced in the

20 „Siempre los Eclesiasticos procuran estender sus facultades, morder y cercenar las que corresponden al fuero Real [...] y esta causa se / halla encargado estrechamente à los Virreyes que inmediatamente representan la Real persona [...]”. Manuel de Amat y Junient, *Memoria de gobierno*, ed. by Vicente Rodríguez Casado; Florentino Pérez Embid (Sevilla: EEHA, 1947), 8.

21 AHN, Inq, leg. 1026.

22 *Novísima recopilación de las leyes de España* (Madrid: s. n., 1805), Libro II, Título VII, Ley IX, 267.

23 René Millar Carvacho, *Inquisición y sociedad en el Virreinato peruano* (Santiago de Chile: Universidad Católica, 1998), 212-213,

24 Amat y Junient, *Memoria de gobierno*, XLIV.

vicerealty in the private package of a book agent and given to the *Oidor* (judge) of the *Real Audiencia* Pedro Echévez, who passed it to José Perfecto de Salas, assessor of the viceroy. When he was asked by the inquisitors about the book, the answer had to be much more shocking for the Holy Office than the precedent: now even the viceroy himself held the book. When the Inquisition tried to obtain it, he refused to give it out, citing his faculties as viceroy.²⁵ Finally, in 1770 the Tribunal of Lima received advice from the *Suprema* to permit from then on the circulation of Jansenist writings, because these, as the *Suprema* emphasized, already had a lot of support at the court.²⁶ In 1772, a conflict arose because of the examination of 165 boxes of books in the harbour. The Inquisition's power to examine these books was defied by Amat, who sent them to the rector of the university to be examined. The Inquisition did not want to lose its 'power and authority' in this case and demanded their own examiners.²⁷ As the viceroy didn't concede, the Inquisition didn't know how to react and asked the *Suprema* for help. It replied with the repetitive advice which seems to be a constant during the last years of the Inquisition of Lima: not to undertake new endeavors and to observe and inform the *Suprema* about the further development of the affair.²⁸

Another dispute between the Inquisition and Amat emerged as a result of the jurisdiction about state officials. In 1771 the Holy Office of Lima imprisoned the magistrate of Cuenca, Francisco Téllez Valdeparés, because of bigamy and Judaism. The content of the case

was clearly within the competencies of the Inquisition, and the viceroy couldn't do much for his subordinated official. Nevertheless, he observed the proceedings of the Inquisition with suspicion. In a letter he complained about the arrest of the chief magistrate and demanded a moderate proceeding of the Inquisition. The intromission of the viceroy in the arcane practice of the Inquisition's proceedings was received with anger and in a letter to the *Suprema* the inquisitors defend themselves and the measures they had adopted against the chief magistrate.²⁹ The *Suprema* agreed with the Tribunal of Lima, but also demanded a more moderate proceeding in similar acts³⁰ – whereby it finally confirmed the complaint of the viceroy.

Like in the case of the chief magistrate of Cuenca, in which the competency of the Inquisition was not questionable, the Viceroy tried to obstruct the proceedings of the Inquisition in another case of its jurisdiction. In 1775 the Holy Office wanted to arrest the frenchman Diego de la Granja, accused of freemasonry who should have been sentenced as a heretic. But the viceroy acted more quickly, took La Granja into prison and sent him with the battleship San Julián to Spain. There, La Granja was first imprisoned, but soon he was granted liberty due to an order of the Indian Council. Afterwards La Granja attempted to return to Lima with another boat, which the *Suprema* tried to prevent.³¹ The arrest by the viceroy and his almost immediate release on his arrival in Cádiz led to the conclusion that Amat did not really want to imprison La Granja, rather he tried to ensure his safety. As a result the viceroy could also demonstrate

25 AHN, Inq, leg. 2210, doc 21.

26 René Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima, vol. 3 (1697-1820)* (Madrid: Deimos, 1998), 433.

27 "potestad y autoridad de la iglesia." Letter to the *Suprema*, 5. 3. 1773, AHN, Inq, leg. 1654, doc. 2.

28 Letter, 10. 9. 1773, AHN, Inq, leg. 1026.

29 Letter, 3. 1. 1772, AHN, Inq, leg. 2211, carta 1772.

30 Letter, 12. 11. 1770, AHN, Inq, leg 1026.

31 About his case: Ferrer Benimeli, *Masonería e inquisición*, 29-37.

the superiority of his jurisdiction against the Holy Office. The Inquisition probably realised what the viceroy was really trying to do, and no complaints about his conduct are recorded. The *Suprema* only ordered to detain La Granja in Cadiz, but he was just about to return to Lima. From this point in time, his whereabouts remain unknown.

The related quarrels about competence and proceedings have a practical dimension. They were about how to define an appropriate proceeding in lawsuits affecting royal officials, who may examine books in the customs, censor books or judge cases of bigamy. Besides this practical dimension, the quarrels have a highly symbolic character, which relegate to the background their very content. Every conflict between the viceroy and the Inquisition led to controversy about the Inquisition's rank within society and how much authority belonged to it. Therefore, every time the viceroy contradicted the Inquisition, it meant also a symbolic subjugation of the Holy Office under his mandate. As a consequence, Millar Carvacho stated a loss of prestige of the Holy Office during this time due to the restriction of its juridical competencies.³²

Public Humiliation of the Inquisition

The claims of superiority of the Inquisition in legal matters were questioned by the Royal Order of 1763. This dispute lasted until 1789, when the *Suprema* advised the Inquisition of Lima to observe the order. The response of the Tribunal of Lima to this advice was a disenchanted letter to the *Suprema*, in which the inquisitors express acceptance of the order, but alleging that with this they are losing what for them was a 'immemorial

possession' – that is: jurisdictional pre-eminence.³³ Between 1763 and 1789 however the dispute was open and the viceroys had to work hard in order to assert the royal authority. From 1763 onwards Amat tried to reduce the Inquisition's claims, demonstrating his superiority and that the Holy Office had to obey him. This, legally, was problematic due to the fact that it was not covered by the legislation, which the inquisitors had rightly perceived. The Inquisition had to obey the viceroy and other royal orders only if this were sent via the *Suprema*. Therefore, as legal means to reduce the Holy Office were restricted, Amat tried to undermine its authority by alternative measures and he resorted to the symbolic sphere in order to combat the Inquisition in public.³⁴

Amat's attacks started with the flagrant Christmas reception of 1763, which was a turning point for the Inquisition. With this ceremony the viceroy not only claimed superiority, he publicly humiliated the inquisitors and demonstrated disregard of their rank and function. We do not know what the immediate impact of this act was. It seems, this was the first time that the Inquisition was publicly humbled. Due to the subrogate character of his office the viceroy – different from the king in Madrid – had only little competencies to change public ceremonies in order to use it as a political arm.³⁵ If he did so the affected corporations could protest at the court and

33 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 132-133.

34 Millar Carvacho also refers to discussions about questions of etiquette between the Inquisition and the royal lawyers, but the last case to which he refers dates from 1762, later, he says that there are no more references to important conflicts about etiquettes. Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 134.

35 Juan Carlos Caravaglia, 'El teatro del poder: Ceremonias, tensiones y conflictos en el Estado colonial', *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani"*. Tercera Serie, 14 (1996), 11.

32 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 150.

demanded a royal order to the viceroy to obey an ancient ceremony. The Inquisition of Lima thus asked via the *Suprema* for the observance of the reception protocol, because if this act was not reprimanded by the king or by a public correction of the viceroy's conduct, it had to become obvious to everyone that the Inquisition had lost the support of the king. Due to the public character of honour and status an offence – in order to be valid – needed a witness, and vice versa: an offence without witness wasn't even conceived as an offence.³⁶ If news about the Christmas reception disseminated in Lima, the Inquisition would suffer a hard loss of its prestige and its claim of pre-eminence could no longer be publicly maintained. Thus, the inquisitors in their letter to the *Suprema* explained what they thought to do: to prevent the occurrence from becoming public, to keep it secret and, therefore, not to protest publicly against the unworthy actuation of the viceroy.³⁷

As the inquisitors did not want to renounce their pre-eminence, the only solution for the Holy Office was to disappear from public view. Once they didn't emerge in public ceremonies, no one could question its rank there. But the viceroy wanted to see the inquisitors in public to humiliate them again and break their claims. In 1767 Amat called for the inquisitors to visit his residence, where they should participate in a ceremony in order to express sympathy because of the death of María Barbara de Portugal, the mother of the king. But the Inquisition refused to do so, while the viceroy tried to convince and to pressure them, alleging that by this ceremony, an institution which was so much favoured

by the king, should use this occasion and demonstrate its loyalty to the monarch. The inquisitors had valid reasons for their resistance, because in reality the order of Amat was a subtle attempt to subjugate them under his mandate. The inquisitors, of course, protested against this act which, in their eyes, was something which had never occurred before.³⁸

Two years later, when the Inquisition became aware of the circulation of the two forbidden volumes of the *Anales de la Compañía*, which were in circulation in Lima, the inquisitors tried to get the book from the viceroy. But Amat not only refused to do so, he attempted to tarnish the Inquisition as he ranted in his literary circles, calling us sometimes stuffed scarecrows, sometimes scoundrels, and if it crossed our mind to go to him and to ask for the books, he would use his powers, he would banish us and send us in registered consignment together with the Jesuits, implying that the demand of these books was only because they are against these [the Jesuits].³⁹

Amat did not show any respect towards the Holy Office, and more, as he even ridiculed and blemished it, a fact, which surely went beyond the private circle of the viceroy and was soon known among the people of Lima. Given the fact that no legal or coercive faculties laid in their hands against the omnipotent figure of the viceroy, the inquisitors were looking for a different way in order to accomplish

38 Manuel de Amat y Junient, *Memoria de gobierno*, 109.

39 "mas no haciendo verificadorore, y glosadore que el virrey en sus tertulias despotricaba contra nosotros, ya tratándonos de monigotes, ya de bribones, y que fuemos a pedirle los libros, que usaria de sus facultades, nos estrañaria, remitiria en partida de registros, con los Jesuitas, dando a entender, que el recoger dichos libros era solo por ser contra estos; [...]". Letter to the *Suprema* from 6. 9. 1768, AHN, Inq, leg. 2210, doc 21.

36 Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honor and Social Status', in *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. by J. G. Peristian (Chicago: University Press, 1966), 19-77; Polo y La Borda, 'Identidad', 35.

37 AHN, Inq, leg. 2210, número 3.

their purpose, appealing to the conscience and religious feelings of the viceroy. To this end, they contacted his confessor, which they had unsuccessfully attempted once before, after Amat had read Montesquieu's *L'Esprit de lois*. Unfortunately, also now the way to the viceregal conscience was closed for the Inquisition, and the only fruit of the intervention of the confessor was that Amat replied, he would 'take use of the good of that work and despise the bad things'.⁴⁰ The viceroy's indifference towards the Inquisition's demands is obvious.

In 1769 the Holy Office of Lima received a royal order via the viceroy which commanded them to participate in the reception of the crusade bull and to help the royal officials in the publication of it. Again the inquisitors complained in a letter to the *Suprema*, dated 13 September 1769, about this imposition. Firstly, they protested that once more the order was sent to them by the viceroy without passing the *Suprema*, and secondly because until now they had not participated in any way in the publication or reception of the bull, which was a matter of the secular authorities. The *Suprema* and the Council of Crusade resolved the conflict diplomatically, annotating that the Royal order was sent by mistake to Lima, as the scribe had put it in the wrong sheets.⁴¹

During the 1770's the Inquisition nearly disappeared from public – and if the Inquisition couldn't demonstrate its authority in public, it simply had lost it. Probably it even stopped celebrating *auto-da-fés*. Although documentation is incomplete, it seems that the last *auto-da-fé* could have been celebrated on first September in 1773 – far away from the eyes of

the public in the Inquisition's own facilities.⁴² December 3, 1776 the Inquisition again didn't appear in the account of the entry of the new viceroy Manuel de Guirior.⁴³ All that was left for them was to hope that the new viceroy or a new king in Spain would give them support again in order to re-establish their claim of autonomy and superiority within society.

4. THE THREAT OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

A New Chance for the Inquisition

The historical occurrences of the 1780s brought a new chance for the Inquisition of Peru to retain some of its lost influence. The US-American independence caused some distrust within the Spanish administration regarding the ideas of enlightenment. When before the handling of freemasonry and the circulation of forbidden books was rather lax, now the state's authorities had become more anxious and looked with concern into the clandestine spaces of society. The panorama changed definitively with the outbreak of the French Revolution. From then on, revolution fear spread over Europe and America and also reached Peru.⁴⁴ The Inquisition could be useful again for the state, not so much in preserving the purity of faith, but more as an instrument of control for the state's security as no other institution of the Spanish Empire was better prepared and had greater experience in detecting conspiracies and controlling

⁴² Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal*, 327.

⁴³ John Preston Moore, *The Cabildo in Peru under the Bourbons. A study in the decline and resurgence of local government in the Audiencia of Lima 1700-1824* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1966), 95.

⁴⁴ For the impact of the French Revolution in Peru see: Claudia Rosas Lauro, *Del trono a la guillotina. El impacto de la Revolución Francesa en el Perú (1789-1808)* (Lima: IFEA, 2006), 156-222.

⁴⁰ AHN, Inq, leg. 2210, doc 21.

⁴¹ AHN, Inq, leg. 2211, carta 1765.

books.⁴⁵ Though, the question was how or even if the Inquisition was able to exercise these functions, and in this case, if it could retain some of its lost authority.

Besides these macro-political changes, a more immediate event seemed to better the precarious situation of the Inquisition of Lima. In 1781 the new Viceroy Agustín de Jáuregui y Aldecoa asked for an inquisitor to become his confessor. However, the Holy Office rejected this honour because it was forbidden to inquisitors to act as confessors.⁴⁶ The mere fact that a Viceroy wanted to have an inquisitor to guide his soul meant certain estimation towards the Holy Office – a striking difference to the conduct of Viceroy Amat.

The first appearance of the Inquisition of Lima as an instrument of state control happened in the time Jáuregui's successor as viceroy, who since 1785 was Teodoro de Croix. In 1781 José Baquijano y Carrillo had published a Praise to the new Viceroy Jáuregui, which he had held before at the University of Lima. This Praise was composed with a lot of books forbidden in the Spanish Empire, but in Lima no one was bothered by this. But the book made it to Spain and the Council of Indies and even the king were annoyed by the fact that in Lima, a great deal of forbidden books seemingly circulated freely and without any problem. They demanded measures to secure that in a future prohibited books could not enter the Viceroyalty. A royal order was given in 1785 which required the prevention of the circulation of books deemed to be dangerous

for state or religion, such as Montesquieu, Machiavelli or the Encyclopaedists. The viceroy, probably worried because of this admonition, took the initiative and called the Inquisition to take measures in order to control more tightly the entry of books.⁴⁷

So far, books had been controlled only by an officer of the Holy Office, who took the register of merchandise and checked if there was a forbidden book on the list. This procedure led to contraband, because the list, delivered at the customs, did not reflect in every case the true content of the merchandise. The Inquisition of Lima agreed that a reform was necessary, but alleged that the lists were not the problem, but the private items of the passengers, which were not controlled and therefore an easy way to introduce forbidden books.⁴⁸ The dispute between the Inquisition and the royal authorities continued for some time, and in the end they agreed in 1786 that from then on, two officials, one from the Inquisition and one to be named by the viceroy, had to control the merchandise at the port. From then on the private luggage of the passengers also should be controlled. The *Suprema* agreed with this proceeding, but wondered why the initiative for the control of books came from the viceroy and not from the Inquisition. In addition, they requested that the Tribunal of Lima ensure that the official of the viceroy took into account only political books prohibited by the state and not religious books, prohibited by the Church. The latter were an exclusive commission of the Inquisition. Nevertheless, the officials chosen for the control of religious books were not to be trusted at all. The first examiner was

45 See the suggestions of the Spanish Ambassador in France, the Count of Fernán Núñez quoted by: Miguel Jiménez Monteserín, 'Inquisición y Revolución Francesa (1788-1808)', *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*, 1305-1312, 1310-1311.

46 Letter to inform the *Suprema*, 28. 4. 1781. AHN, Inq, leg. 1026.

47 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 434.

48 Pedro M. Guibovich Pérez, *Censura, libros e inquisición en el Perú colonial, 1570-1754* (Sevilla: CSIC, 2003), 101-103.

Fray Diego de Cisneros, who was accused of reading Montesquieu and Voltaire and deputising positions of the Jansenists.⁴⁹

In the years after 1785, when the Inquisition was seriously encouraged by Viceroy Croix to re-adopt the control of books, their capacity to do so seemed to be quite weak or its interest in the matter was limited, perhaps due to the long years of undermining its book controlling activities during the mandate of Viceroy Amat. Anyway the royal authorities preferred to control the books of their interest themselves, maybe because they distrusted their capacity to examine books about political matters in French, or because of their general disinclination to return power into the hands of an institution which for such a long time had been combated.

But the *Suprema* guarded its authority jealously and was very cautious not to lose the faculty of book control, when the viceroy took an incident at the customs of Lima in 1787 as a pretext to demonstrate the inability of the Inquisition's control and to pronounce its own measures. The viceroy was disliked because the official of the Inquisition exceeded his duty and handed over to his royal counterpart, a Colonel, a box with books without previous examination. The viceroy thereupon informed the *Suprema* who, in a letter to the Tribunal of Lima, was very displeased that it 'had given place to the viceroy to be obliged to order the examination of so many forbidden books circulating in this city, as he supposes in his edict, and to take measures to avoid their introduction'. The *Suprema* insisted that the Tribunal of Lima had to examine the boxes with the books as soon as possible and with examiners of well-known intelligence,

because the control of religious books was its exclusive authority.⁵⁰

The hunt for forbidden books was not limited to the customs, by royal order, but also commercial libraries and even private ones had to be examined.⁵¹ This renewed interest in the control of books brought about some success, besides the aforementioned problems and the impossibility of preventing entry and circulation of forbidden books in Lima. At least, when the Inquisition for the first time was abolished in 1813, the crowd of people who entered its offices and plundered its archive found a small library full of forbidden books – clear and tangible testimony of the Inquisition's activity.⁵²

The control over books prompted also an increase of the Inquisition's juridical activity. From 1785 onwards we find accusations due

50 “[...] se había excedido en haber entregado al coronel don Francisco Vélez un cajón de libros antes de reconocerlos [...]”. “[...] que el Tribunal hubiese dado lugar a que el virrey se viese precisado a mandar reconocer tantos libros prohibidos como supone en su edicto corren en esa ciudad, y Reino, y a tomar providencia para evitar su introducción. Hubiese parecido bien al comisario la que se ha acordado de recoger en la Aduana los cajones de libros, y que se reconocieran por los comisarios del santo Oficio, suponiendo que el comisionado del virrey solo debería de los prohibidos por Estado o Gobierno, y no puede ni debe retener, por ser su conocimiento privativo al Tribunal. [...] se haga los reconocimientos de los cajones, a la mayor brevedad, por revisores de conocida inteligencia”. Letter of the *Suprema* to the Inquisition of Lima, 12. 1. 1788, AHN, Inq, leg. 1026.

51 Notice of the Inquisition of Lima, 6. 10. 1802, that they fulfilled a royal order, sent to them via the *Suprema*, 7. 4. 1802. AHN, Inq, leg. 2218, exp 2.

52 William Bennett Stevenson, *Twenty Years Residence in South America*, vol. I (London: Hurst, Robinson, and Co., 1825), 269; Inventario hecho en las cajas y oficinas del extinguido Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Lima, [...], año 1813. Transcript by Percy Vargas Valencia, Lima 1972, <http://www.congreso.gob.pe/museo/inquisicion/inventario.pdf>

49 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 435.

to the possession of prohibited books.⁵³ But besides this, the general weakness and the loss of influence of the Inquisition nevertheless subsisted. Of all these accusations, only very few were proven, and even those received very modest punishment in order not to displease the public. In 1793, for example, Manuel Lorenzo de Vidaurre y Encalada, who admitted at the Inquisition to possession of forbidden books and to having committed his soul to the devil, was sent to confession; to recite the rosary, to devote himself to religious reading and to take spiritual guidance. But Vidaurre in no way respected these sanctions, without consequence for him, though the Inquisition knew perfectly well about his lifestyle and transgressions. He was cited again in 1801 and 1803, and in 1804 finally the Holy Office handed down the sentence that he should observe the commitments and to carry this out he had to stay in Lima where he had to present himself twice weekly at the Holy Office in order to render account of his conduct.⁵⁴

Others openly confronted the Tribunal and refused to proceed with the imposed lawsuit. This was the case of Manuel Gijón y León, Count of Casa Gijón, who was accused by the Inquisition of Lima because of the possession of prohibited books and heretical propositions. He was ordered to travel from his Ecuadorian dominions to the capital of the region. Don Manuel confronted the Tribunal, but it seems that in the end, he feared its power so he tried to escape to Spain and took the way via Brazil and the Antilles, where he

died during his journey in Jamaica in 1794.⁵⁵ Maybe due to his long absence in Europe and his residence in Ecuador he did not know how weak the Tribunal of Lima was in sentencing severe crimes. The inquisitors simply thought that the journey from Ecuador to Lima would be too much for an old man and they, therefore, guessed that the Count of Gijón would never go to Lima. In that case they asked the *Suprema* what to do. Even if Gijón went to Lima the inquisitors did not want to arrest him and proposed a very modest punishment to the *Suprema*.⁵⁶ Before his flight Gijón sent a last letter to the Inquisition, containing hard criticism. Citing as an example the heretics of Geneva, Gijón wishes with ironic tone to have not just a holy tribunal of faith which prevent the infection of heresy, but also one to keep all the obligations of the unique and true religion, starting with corrupt ecclesiastics.⁵⁷

Inversion of Fear

These words of the Count of Gijón are much more measured in comparison to the critique of the Inquisition by the Mexican Franciscan Friar Joseph Eguía y Lumbe, who in a Sermon of the year 1734 called *La justicia divina y la injusticia en México* [The divine justice and the injustice in Mexico], applied harsh words against the Holy Office: 'there would be no weight or measure, no rule or order or fear of God, his Church and the king, but it's only for fear of who is ruling' [...]. You have to fear the Inquisition because this can take away your money and your life and burnish your body. The Holy Office of the Inquisition is to be feared, and you have to do what the law

53 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 436.

54 Guillermo Lohmann Villena, 'Manuel Lorenzo de Vidaurre y la inquisición de Lima. Notas sobre la evolución de las ideas políticas en el virreinato peruano a principios del siglo XIX', *Revista de Estudios políticos*, 52 (1952), 199-216.

55 Marcelin Defourneaux, 'Un ilustrado quiteño: don Manuel Gijón y León, primer conde de Casa Gijón (1717-1794)', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 24 (1967), 1237-1297, 1280-1292.

56 Letter, 18. 5. 1790, AHN, Inq, leg. 1654, doc. 3.

57 Defourneaux, 'Un ilustrado quiteño', 1290.

requires. 'Or if you have heard that your father, your mother, your children have committed anything against the predications of the edicts of the Holy Office then denounce them, accuse them, be without father and mother and children, and even yourself, if you think that there are witnesses who could denounce you, detest you and denounce you.'⁵⁸

Recently, the function of fear in ensuring the functioning of the Inquisition has been questioned. The majority of the people collaborated and denounced not because of fear, but because they shared the values which the Inquisition claimed to defend, and because they wanted to take part in its prestige.⁵⁹ At least among a minority like the Mexican friar, however, the Inquisition may have provoked a feeling of uncertainty, insecurity and fear. But even the ability to provoke fear had a function for the Inquisition. The horrific ceremonies of the *auto-da-fé*, the secrecy and the intransigency of its proceedings, the coercive means such as prison, torture, and severe punishment, the omnipotent power of an institution which seemed to be unlimited, or only limited by the king, augmented the respect people felt towards the Holy Office.

In the last decades of the 18th century, the Tribunal of Lima was far away from being

58 "pero ni hay peso ni hay medida, ni hay regal ni hay orden [...], [ni] temor a Dios, a su Yglesia, ni al rey y sólo miedo q quien manda" [...] "puede quitarte el dinero, [...] la vida y quemar tu cuerpo [...]. A el Santo Tribunal de la Ynquisición se teme, o has lo que manda la ley, o ¿has oýdo decir que tus padres, tu muger, tus hijos han incurrido en algo de lo que resan los edictos de este Santo Tribunal? Pues denúncialos, acúsalos, quédate sin padre e hijos, sin muger y hasta tú mismo, si crees que hay testigos que te pueden delatar: aborrécete y delátate." María Águeda Méndez, *Secretos del Oficio. Avatares de la Inquisición novohispana* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2001), 78.

59 José Martínez Millán, *La Inquisición española* (Madrid: Alianza, 2007), 223.

respected in this way. Despite taking advantage of the more favourable situation after the French Revolution in order to restore its old reputation, competence and activity, the situation worsened further because of the absolute inadequacy of its personal from the 1780's onwards. It was publicly known that the Inquisitor Zalduegui, who had started his ecclesiastical career as a mere chaplain, got his post as inquisitor fiscal not because of his academic merits, but because of bribery. He also was thought to be interested in commerce and lucrative heritages and not in his office's duty. Even his university degree was false. Truth or not, these and other rumours about the members of the Holy Office circulated in Lima. The inhabitants could not take people like Zalduegui seriously, and the office he held was severely damaged. The 23 September 1792 a placard was posted next to the Cathedral with the following text: 'To the public. Whoever seeks a post as shopkeeper or persecutor of the Inquisition, go to the office of secretary Don Fernando Piélago, without prejudice, who has them for sale, thanks to the influence of his friends and relatives at the Court. There were many more publicly known cases of officials of the Tribunal who held their posts because of bribery and whose aptitude for office was doubtful. For example Gaspar de Orué, who followed his cousin in office, 'a person of voracious voice, in ill health, scarcely attending to his duties, with bad loans, and scarcely knew how to write' or what was told about José Arezcurenaga who had given his office to one of his sons who was of 'of rough conduct'. These accusations finally reached the *Suprema*, whose inquiries brought to light that they were true, both relative to corruption and regarding the aptitude of the Inquisition's staff.'⁶⁰

60 This information originates of a letter of Pedro de Amaran, 20. 7. 1793. The name surely is a pseudonym in

One very practical side of the inadequacy of the Inquisition's officials was their absence from office even during the period of service. The bishop of Trujillo noticed, during a stay at the capital, that the officials of the Holy Office could hardly exercise their duties effectively, because in too many cases he had seen them to be occupied with other obligations.⁶¹ In the end the Suprema asked the inquisitors of Lima about the qualities of their subordinates. These, subsequently, gave her an account of the quality of their personal. What they related was not very complimentary for the Inquisition's officials. A lot were ill, others often absent, the constable even clumsy, the general receptor lazy, the procurator did not have much talent, and another had too much ignorance.⁶² But maybe the *Suprema* in this case set a fox to keep the geese, because the inquisitors who had to report the information, Sobrino, Zaluegui and Abarca, may not have been much better in carrying out their duty as their subordinates. When the viceroy became aware of these circumstances he did not hesitate to make use of this knowledge; demanding the observance of their duties to the ministers of the Holy Office. The inquisitors, piqued by this reproach, promised to pass the complaints of the viceroy to their officials, but they affirmed that they always carry out their duty, with the only exception of attending mass.⁶³

These cases of corruption and personal inadequacy for office were highly significant at the end of 18th century, much more so than

similar cases would have been thirty years before. The learned elites of the Enlightenment demonstrated their status by moral authority whilst they discredited baroque display.⁶⁴ Especially here in questions of morality and learning, the Inquisition failed totally. In face of the public disdain of the Inquisition, the royal judges of the *Audiencia* did not see any more necessity to respect the rights of the Inquisition. Moreover, they continued in the tradition of the time of Amat, but now they confronted even the very own competencies of the Inquisition: the *causas de fe* (cases related to faith). In 1791 the *Audiencia* of Quito did not want to give the case of the French Pedro Flor de Condamine to the commissary of the Holy Office, in spite of the fact that Condamine was accused of heretical sentences. By this time the Inquisition became clearly aware that the situation was desperate. It complained that they did not receive any help from the *Suprema* who always insisted that the Tribunal of Lima remained silent, and the *Suprema* never reported the disputes to the king. Furthermore experience had shown them repeatedly that in disputes over competencies with the royal justice they always come off badly.⁶⁵

This also happened with respect to the military judges. In 1793 the soldier José Corrales profaned the Holy Cross, having struck a crucifix with a dagger. The clear authority of the Inquisition in this case was questioned by the general commander of arms, who pointed to the *fuero militar* (privilege of military jurisdiction) in order to prevent the Inquisition from taking the case.⁶⁶ However not only did the royal justice or the military questioned

order to be protected from the Inquisition of Lima. See: Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal*, 335-336.

61 Letter from 1796 to Cardenal Lorenzana. Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal*, 336.

62 Information to the *Suprema*, 22. 9. 1801, AHN, Inq, leg. 1654, doc 4.

63 Answer to a letter from the viceroy from 18. 8. 1802, AHN, Inq, leg. 2218, exp 2.

64 Voekel, Alone before God, 138-140.

65 Letter to the *Suprema* from 5. 12. 1791, cited by: Millar Carvacho, *Inquisición y sociedad*, 216.

66 Letter to the *Suprema*, AHN, Inq, leg. 1026.

the jurisdiction of the Holy Office, but even the Bishop of Quito and the Archbishop of Lima did so.⁶⁷

The sphere of action of the Holy Office by this time was limited to the capital and was reduced to a small number of jurisdictions: prohibited books, cases of faith between the clergy, superstition, and solicitation. The *Audiencia* of Quito disturbed the commissary of the Holy office in the few cases in which he tried to proceed, and in the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which nominally was under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Lima, the royal authorities simply refused to obey the mandates from Lima. When the commissary of the Inquisition, José Román y Cavazelas, wanted to examine the library of the deceased Bishop of Buenos Aires, Manuel de Azamor y Ramírez, in order to take away the prohibited books, the viceroy, Pedro Mello de Portugal, forbade him to do so. The Inquisition of Lima was fully aware that without royal order they would not get the books, and sent this information to the *Suprema*, refraining from any other actions in this case.⁶⁸ In 1804 José Arbite was accused because it was said that he denied the existence of God, hell and the saints. The order of the inquisitor fiscal to take him to prison was not carried out, because the royal authorities of Buenos Aires again refused to obey the Inquisition.⁶⁹ When in 1804 a lot of denunciations against supposed freemasons reached the commissary of Buenos Aires, Cayetano José María de Roo, he asked the bishop and the viceroy for help, because he himself did not see any more possibility of action – but they themselves did

not act either, as the commissary related in a desperate letter to the inquisitors of Lima.⁷⁰

In the 1760's it was only the viceroy who had confronted publicly the Inquisition. But by this time it was becoming obvious that the institution had lost the royal and viceregal support and protection, and even other royal authorities confronted it openly without reverse, even common people started to ridicule Holy Office, and at this point the story turns around. At all times people had to venerate the Inquisition in public acts and had to fear its secret movements, now the Inquisition had to fear the people in the few cases it took part in public performances. When in April 1793 the Inquisition was ordered by the state authorities to participate in a public act of state and Church to pray to God for the good luck of the Spanish armies engaged in the war with France, the inquisitors looked first in old papers to see if this requirement had precedent and was covered by law, but as they did not find any example of the participation of the Inquisition in such prayers, they wanted to boycott it – and now the Inquisition referred to the very reason why – ‘as these acts are celebrated for some time with the viceroy and the officials of the Royal *Audiencia*, whenever we participated in these acts, improprieties occurred and these gave place to the public to criticise and to ridicule us because of our defaulting’⁷¹

67 Millar Carvacho, *Inquisición y sociedad*, 215.

68 Letter, 7. 3. 1797, AHN, Inq, leg. 2217, doc 24.

69 Toribio Medina, *Historia del Tribunal*, 333.

70 AHN, Inq, leg. 1654, doc. 3.

71 “no hemos hallado exemplar, de haberse hecho en ellas las expresadas rogativas; y las omitimos, así por esto, como por que hace tiempo se practicaron en la Iglesia catedral con asistencia de Virrey, y real Audiencia, y en el día si pasásemos a celebrarlas, parecerían intempestivas, y darían mérito a que el público criticase nuestra morosidad, por lo que creemos sea de la aprobación de V. A. Nuestra determinación” Letter to the *Suprema*, AHN, Inq, leg. 2216, doc 4.

The Inquisition had continuously tried to avoid occasions where its rank in society could be questioned publicly, so in 1761, they did not participate in the reception of the new viceroy Amat, or when they later refused the orders of the viceroy to attend the obsequies of the deceased mother of the king in the viceroy's house, nor did they participate in the reception of the crusade bull. In the 1760s or 1770s only the viceroy and his high ministers could afford to go against the Holy Office. People still feared or respected it but when it was publicly perceived that the royal authorities confronted the Holy Office and denied them deference without consequence, and when later the cases of corruption and the total incompetence of the Inquisition's officials became known, people lost respect for the institution. Secrecy had come to an end and what people saw was nothing which in any way could claim respect or provoke even fear – on the contrary, by the end of the century, when the inquisitors participated in public acts, instead of respect they earned scorn. So finally, the inquisitors began to fear the people.

People of Lima did not turn away from the Inquisition, because it lost its juridical competence, but because it had lost prestige in society. Previously it had been an honour to be an official or related to the Holy Office. Now, the loss of prestige directly affected these honorary posts, due to the fact that the very reason to hold these was to bolster the reputation of a family within society. When membership of the Holy Office lost public recognition, the position lost its attraction and progressively a large number of posts remained vacant. In addition to serious economic problems, the low estimation of the Holy Office also affected the other remunerated and formerly prestigious posts, such as commissaries or even inquisitors. Since they lacked both secure

income and status, vacancies increased and willingness to take these posts progressively dwindled. This meant that the network of commissaries and *familiares* (relatives) became quite porous at the end of the century and in vast territories of its domain the Holy Office lacked representation.⁷²

As consequence of its loss of reputation, denunciations, the most important source of information for the Holy Office diminished because its officials were seen unworthy of defending the values the Inquisition sought to sustain. In the last decades of the 18th century denunciation occurred almost entirely because of personal struggles between two parties, but not because of true conviction in order to preserve the norms of religion or morality. To conclude, when the state authorities turned back on the Inquisition because of the threat of the French Revolution, the Tribunal of Lima had almost lost its former ability of control and remained mostly inactive. Other tribunals like that of Logroño and, to a lower degree, that of Mexico regained some of its lost reputation and activity by this time. During the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars these tribunals were conceived as necessary to uphold the social and political order, so people willingly collaborated by denunciation, which was widely practiced, or by becoming a *familiar* of the inquisition which still was seen as an honour.⁷³ It's a question for further investigation to compare these cases with that of the Peruvian Tribunal

72 Millar Carvacho, *La Inquisición en Lima*, 76-80.

73 Mariana Torres Arce, 'Represión y control inquisitorial a finales del siglo XVIII. El caso del Tribunal de Logroño', *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo*, 13 (2005), 253-296, 257-258; Richard E. Greenleaf, 'The Mexican Inquisition and the Enlightenment 1763-1805', *New Mexico Historical Review*, 41 (1966), 181-196; Gabriel Torres Puga, *Los últimos años de la Inquisición en la Nueva España* (Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2004).

in order to explain why one tribunal declined whilst other could remain active. Were maybe the attacks of viceroy Amat on the prestige of the Tribunal of Lima so successful that it never could regain its once lost public status and, thus, lacked the respect and collaboration of the people which was necessary to fulfil its surveillance practice?.

Epilogue: Profanation of the Arcane

One of the last defendants called by the Inquisition of Lima was the Englishman William Bennett Stevenson, who lived for twenty years in South America and left a description of his experiences. There he describes his citation to the Holy Office in 1812 because of a dispute he had with a friar named Bustamente about superstition. When he entered the hall of the Tribunal he crossed the path of five Franciscan friars whose hoods hung over their faces. They marched solemnly behind their leader, a grave old friar, with their arms folded, their hands hidden in their sleeves and the cords round their necks. Stevenson instead of being impressed by this procession in the scanty light of the hall could not help but smile, with the idea in his mind 'that such a procession at midnight would have disturbed a whole town in England, and raised a band of warriors to slay them.'⁷⁴ Also, the interrogation by the inquisitors did not inspire any respect, despite the great effort expended to impress and provoke fear in him:

I knew the inquisitors, but how changed they appeared from previous encounters! The puny, swarthy Abarca, in the centre, scarcely half filling his chair of state, the fat monster Zalduegui on his left, his corpulent paunch being oppressed by the arms of his chair and breathing through his nostrils like

an over-fed porpoise, the fiscal, Sobrino, on his right, knitting his black eyebrows, and striving to produce in his expressionless face a semblance of wisdom'.⁷⁵

During the following interrogation the solemnity and mystery of the behaviour of the inquisitors clashed with its impact on Stevenson, who was by no way affected and refused not only to be sworn in when he was told to do so, but also behaved in a deviant manner. For Stevenson the whole act had novelistic aspects and the main function of the Inquisition's procedures, to intimidate him, failed completely. As a result the inquisitors were becoming aware that its attempt to command respect and fear in order to make the accused person collaborate, no longer worked, they decided to switch from the symbolic ceremonial level to the discursive-argumentative in order to explain to Stevenson that by law he had to fear the influence of the Inquisition. However, as the Inquisition was unable to explain its movements or thinking because secrecy is part of its process, this had to happen outside the Tribunal. Subsequently, they let Stevenson go and Fiscal Sobrino invited him to come to his house the next day. There he explained to him that he requested this interview because he could not speak openly on the seat of judgment. He wanted to advise him that everyone 'here is subject to the tribunal of the Faith, you, as well as all men who live in the dominions of his Catholic Majesty; you must, therefore shape your course accordingly'.⁷⁶

The Inquisition had lost its ability to evoke respect through the symbolic representation of its power and the inquisitor Sobrino tried to recover some of it using simply legal

74 Stevenson, *Twenty Years Residence*, 264.

75 Stevenson, *Twenty Years Residence*, 264.

76 Stevenson, *Twenty Years Residence*, 261-266.

arguments. Maybe we can see here also a clash between the visual-symbolic culture of baroque as it remained in the representation of the Inquisition, and the rational-argumentative culture of the Enlightenment, which can be seen in the private talk.⁷⁷

In the last years of the Tribunals existence the number of trials diminished notably, and many processes were never finished. The lost prestige, the hostility of the royal authorities and the public hostility towards them, as well as the fear of appearing in public may have condemned the Inquisition to do what the *Suprema* again and again had advised them to do: to tolerate the infringements, to observe them and to inform the *Suprema*. That the Inquisition still observed people and collected the obtained information in its secret archive is witnessed by Stevenson, who took part in the plundering of the offices of the Tribunal when the Inquisition first was abolished by decision of the *Cortes* of Cádiz in 1813. The crowd also entered the most secret part, the archive of the Holy Office, where Stevenson could find 'shelves of papers, containing the written cases of those who had been accused or tried; and here I read the name of many a friend, who little imagined that his conduct had been scrutinized by the holy tribunal, or that his name had been recorded in such an awful place. Some, who were present, discovered their own names on the rack and pocketed the papers.'⁷⁸

The plundering of the Tribunal can be seen as a symbolic act too. The crowd entered the office, whose mystery and secrecy could invoke fear and a feeling of insecurity because

it bore all the documents of the constant and secret surveillance by the Inquisition. When the archive was opened the mystery dissolved and consequently the Inquisition had lost the last of its arcane roles.

77 Valenzuela Márquez, *Las liturgias del poder*, 140-141; Pamela Voekel, *Alone Before God. The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 47-51.

78 Stevenson, *Twenty Years Residence*, 269.