

DOCUMENT THEMES

African/Afro-Latin American Peoples; Crime; Ethnicity;  
European-Mestizo Peoples; Family; Gender; Gossip and Communication; Honor;  
Illness/Disease/Injury/Medicine; Inquisition; Insults; Marriage; Popular Culture;  
Religion; Sexuality; Town Life; Violence; Witchcraft; Women.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Cook and Cook 1991.  
Gilmore 1987.  
Johnson and Rivera 1998.  
Lavrín 1989.  
Perry 1990.  
Ruggiero 1993.

CHAPTER

7



The Spiritual and Physical Ecstasies of  
a Sixteenth-Century *Beata*: Marina de  
San Miguel Confesses Before the  
Mexican Inquisition

(Mexico, 1598)

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INTRODUCTION

By 1521, when Hernán Cortés conquered the Aztec Empire, the Inquisition was already well established in Spain. It was transferred to the newly colonized land as an ad hoc institution under the guidance of missionary friars and, later, Mexico's archbishop. This rather informal arrangement was replaced, in 1571, by an officially constituted Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, based in Mexico City and with ostensible authority over the whole of New Spain.<sup>1</sup>

The document presented here is taken from one of the less common types of Mexican Inquisition trials, a major heresy case.<sup>2</sup> The Mexican tribunal spent much more time enforcing socioreligious norms than attacking heresy and crypto-Judaism. About 11 percent of trials dealt with heresy; the remainder investigated less serious crimes such as bigamy, witchcraft, superstition, and blasphemy. In 1598, however, the Holy Office of Mexico received information about an alleged group of *alumbrados*, heretics whose religious beliefs emphasized mental prayer and denigrated the authority of the Church. The Mexican group apparently believed that the Day of Judgment would soon come and that the group's members would be selected to found a New Jerusalem on earth. Among the group denounced was a religious woman called Marina de San Miguel, apparently of some importance within the group because of her mystical visions, which others believed to be revelations from God. Marina was imprisoned in November 1598. Her confessions, presented here, were taken between that date and January 1599.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Inquisition functioned as a sort of police force, the confessions were not taken in the same way that a modern statement might be taken from the accused in a criminal case. A person was imprisoned and investigated in response to a denunciation. In contrast to modern police arrests, those arrested were not informed of the charges against them. Rather, the suspect was urged to con-

fess whatever he or she might have done that was worthy of punishment by the Holy Office. The inquisitor's questions, the confessant's testimony, and any other events that transpired were recorded by a notary, who was instructed to record testimony in a complete and accurate manner.

Notaries were professionals who carried out their task carefully and, for the most part, conscientiously. Readers will note, however, that these are not verbatim transcripts as are modern court transcripts. Notaries transcribed testimony in the third person ("she said that . . ."). They very occasionally summarized rather than transcribed, particularly in the sections of the case that followed set formulas. For example, when a suspect was asked to recite the catechism, the notary did not record the words the suspect said, but simply said that the suspect had said it well, or poorly, or had said sections of it, or could not recite it. Within these limitations, however, the documents followed the suspect's testimony very closely, and are remarkably personal and reminiscent of speech. Moreover, such records are detailed. Every attempt was made to elicit a truthful, complete, and remorseful confession from the individual, for such a confession would "discharge the conscience" and bring the suspect to penitence, and thus to God's forgiveness. Questions were often open-ended, and suspects were usually allowed to speak without interruption and at great length. Only after the confession(s) of the suspect were judged complete was an actual accusation created. This would contain the charges alleged by those who denounced the suspect as well as any information the suspect had willingly confessed. At this point, the actual trial began, and the suspect responded to the particular charges contained in the accusation with the assistance of legal counsel appointed by the court.

Historians now use Inquisition documents as a way to access the experience of individuals who might otherwise be absent from documentation. In the case of Mexico, the Inquisition section of the National Archive offers one of the most complete bodies of documentation for the sixteenth century. The information contained in this case provides a very rare glimpse into the life of a sixteenth-century woman whose life deviated dramatically, in many ways, from the standard picture of Spanish American women in colonial times. I have rendered the original text of Marina's confessions into English as faithfully as possible. However, because the document is almost totally unpunctuated, I have added a certain amount of punctuation. In addition, I have removed the repetitive use of the term *said*, as in "the said witness said that the said man accompanied her to the said house." Though the literal translation conveys very well the legalistic character of this document, the accretion of so many *said*s impairs readability.

Marina de San Miguel confessed nine times. Because of the length and detail of her confessions, I have found it necessary to edit some material. The confessions still yield a great deal of information about Marina's life, particularly in regard to her spiritual and sexual activities. Readers will want to consider the circumstances of the document's production and how they affect its usefulness; the strategies used by both Marina and her interlocutor in their unequal encounter; the credibility of Marina's testimony; and how that testimony changes over time.

Readers will also no doubt want to know Marina's fate. In the auto de fe of March 25, 1601, a gagged and haltered Marina was paraded naked to the waist upon a mule. After abjuring her errors, Marina received one hundred lashes. She was also

sentenced to a fine of 100 pesos and to ten years' reclusion in the plague hospital, where, evidently, she became very ill. The remainder of her story eludes us.

## THE DOCUMENT

### 7.1 First Confession

In the city of Mexico, Friday, November 20, 1598. The Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered that a woman be brought before him from one of the secret prisons of this Holy Office. Being present, she swore an oath *en forma devida de derecho* under which she promised to tell the truth here in this audience and in all the others that might be held until the determination of her case, and to keep secret everything that she might see or believe or that might be talked about with her or that might happen concerning this her case.

She was asked what her name is, where she was born, how old she is, what her profession is,<sup>4</sup> and when she was arrested.

She answered that she is Marina de San Miguel, a *natural* of the city of Córdoba in the kingdoms of Castile; that she is fifty-three years old and is a *beata*<sup>5</sup> of the Order of Saint Dominic; and that she occupies herself in needlework<sup>6</sup> and in teaching girls to do the same. She was arrested last Saturday, which was the fourteenth of the present month, and placed in one of the secret prisons of this Holy Office. And she declared her genealogy in the following form:

#### Parents

- **Gonzalo Abril**, *natural* of La Granja, next to Fuente Ovejuna in the diocese of Córdoba, blacksmith (*herrador*), who died in Puebla de los Ángeles.
- **María González de Escalorán**, from Córdoba, who died in this city of Mexico and who had no profession.

#### Paternal Grandparents

- **Juan Abril**, resident and *natural* of La Granja, farmer (*labrador*), deceased.
- **Marina Atín**, his wife, resident of the said place, deceased.

#### Maternal Grandparents

- **Hernán Gil**, resident and *natural* of Córdoba, saddler (*albadero*), deceased.
- **Catalina Rodríguez de Escalona**, his wife, resident and *natural* [of Córdoba], already dead, who had no profession, other than raising her children.

#### Father's Siblings<sup>7</sup>

- **Sebastián Abril**, who was an army officer (*alférez*) in Italy and got married in Fuente Ovejuna to doña Mayor de Castillejos, and who has children; one

is called Pedro Alonso Romero and the daughter doña Lucrecia Romero, and the others she doesn't remember, nor their ages, and they were rich farming people, and she doesn't know whether they are dead.

- **Bartolomé Abril**, resident of La Granja, farmer, married, and she doesn't know whom he married nor whether he has children, only that he lived in La Granja, and she does not know whether he might be dead.
- **Pedro Abril**, who went to Italy, and they said that he was a military field officer (*maese de campo*), and she does not know what became of him, nor whether he got married, and she has no other uncles or aunts on her father's side.

#### Mother's Siblings

- **Doctor Hernando de Escalona**, physician, resident of the city of Lerida in Catalonia, where he married doña Thomasia, and she knows that he had children, one of whom was called doña Catalina, and she does not know whether they are dead.
- **Martín de Córdoba**, merchant (*mercader*) in Medina del Campo, where he got married, and she does not know to whom; and she heard that he had a daughter, whose name she does not remember, nor does she know whether they're dead.
- **Victoria Gil**, married in Córdoba to Juan de Baratorno, and they have children, whose names she does not remember, nor [does she know] whether they are dead.
- **Ana de los Ángeles**, *doncella*, who went to Lerida with the said Doctor Hernando de Escalona.
- **Isabel de Escalona**, *doncella*, who left with the said, her sister. And she has no more uncles and aunts on her mother's side.

#### Siblings

- **Juan Abril**, who died in Peru, single, blacksmith, who left no children.
- **Luisa de Los Ángeles**, *doncella*, who died in Mexico in the house of this woman. And she had no more siblings.

#### Husband and Children

This confessant has never been married nor had children and is a *doncella* and has taken a vow of chastity.

She was asked what caste and parentage are her parents and grandparents and the others, transverse and collateral, whom she has named, and if they or any one of them or this confessant have been imprisoned, given penitence, reconciled, or condemned by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

She said that they are *cristianos viejos*, and that none of them has ever been imprisoned, given penitence, reconciled, or condemned by the Holy Office, and that this is the first time that she has been imprisoned by it.

She was asked whether she is a Christian, baptized and confirmed, and if she hears mass, confesses, and receives communion at the times ordered by the Holy Mother Church.<sup>8</sup>

She said that she is a Christian baptized and confirmed by the grace of God, and that she was confirmed in this city by a bishop, friar of the Order of Saint Dominic, called Diego de San Francisco. She said that she confesses and receives communion at all the times ordered by the Holy Mother Church, and that the last time she confessed was Sunday the eighth in the church of Saint Dominic with fray Honorato Navarro, and she received communion.

She made the sign of the cross and said the Our Father, Hail Mary, *Credo*, *Salve Regina*, the Ten Commandments, and Fourteen Articles well in Spanish.<sup>9</sup>

She was asked whether she knows how to read and write and whether she has studied any subjects.

She said that she knows how to read and write and she has not studied any subject, and that her brother taught her the alphabet and how to make letters; and she learned writing from a book that her brother gave her, and without more teaching, by her own work and industry, she learned to read and write.

She was asked for the story of her life.

She said that she was born in the city of Córdoba [in Spain] in the house of her parents, where she was raised until they died,<sup>10</sup> and she was left at nineteen years, and while they lived she occupied her time in working for and serving them. And at the age of three, she came with her parents to this land in a fleet whose commander she cannot remember, as she was so young. Once arrived in this city of Mexico, they lived in the street of San Agustín for nine years. And having made some money<sup>11</sup> they returned to the city of Córdoba where her father spent lavishly, in such a way that they came to poverty, and [so] returned to this city of Mexico in the fleet of General Pedro Meléndez. When her mother died here, her father married again to a widow, Leonor Arias, and because her father wanted to get married the confessant went to the *colegio de las niñas* (girl's residential school), where she spent four years. After her father got married, he found his wife with a man and killed him, though his wife recovered from her wounds. For this reason her father went away to Peru.<sup>12</sup> And so she left the school and went to live at the school, "I mean at San Pablo,"<sup>13</sup> with Mariá de Acosta, wife of Diego Rodríguez, a tanner (*curtidor*). And she lived there two years, and after that she took her sister out of the said school and together they took a little house in the street of San Agustín. There they lived for seven or ten years on their sewing and from teaching girls. While they were living there their father came back and surrendered to the *cárcel de corte*. He was exiled and went to Puebla, where he died, leaving the confessant with her sister. And later the confessant went to the house of Juan Núñez, accountant, *vecino* of this city,<sup>14</sup> where she was for ten months. After that she rented a house across from his until she bought the house where she currently lives, which she bought from some Indians for 200 pesos. After that she spent 300 pesos on it, using 200 pesos she inherited from her father and what she earned by the needle



and from teaching girls. And for thirteen years she has lived there, until she was brought before this Holy Office. And she has associated all this time with very honored, good-living people, both religious and secular.

She was asked what goods she has in order that they may be sequestered, so that she will not lose them.<sup>15</sup>

She said that the house is hers, and the white clothing that she has in it, and that she has no other treasures as can be seen in her strongboxes. And then she said that she remembered that she has a nephew in her house. He is Alonso Gutiérrez de Castro who is a tailor of jackets (*jubetero*) and son of her first cousin on her mother's side, who is a native of Córdoba where her nephew was born. He lives in her house, and anything he claims to be his is his, because she takes him for a man of good conscience. And she remembers that Alonso Gutiérrez de Castro made some repairs in the house at his expense, making a gift of it as her nephew. Then she said that she did not spend 300 pesos repairing her house, but only 100. And she does not really know how much it was because money comes and goes. And her nephew made the other repairs, making her a gift of the money that he spent, as she has said. He has lived in her house for two years and four months.<sup>16</sup>

She was asked if she knows, presumes, or suspects the cause for her arrest and imprisonment in the prisons of this Holy Office.

She said that she presumes and suspects that the cause of her imprisonment must be that four years ago a secular youth called Luis de Zárate came to visit her. And she does not know where he lives, only that he was sent to her by Gregorio López,<sup>17</sup> who died in the Holy Faith, and who was her spiritual brother. . . . She was with Luis, talking about spiritual things, and about hell, and he said that there was no hell and no devils, and that men<sup>18</sup> were the devils and hell. And she, feeling uncomfortable about this, said to him, "What are you saying, that there is no hell?" Luis de Zárate said that men through their sins were hell. Another day she fell ill in her bed, and lost her senses. This illness lasted three months, and then she came to her senses and, being well, sent to speak with the Lord Inquisitor Doctor Loboguerrero and with fray Gonzalo de Illescas of the Order of Saint Dominic, telling all that had passed with Luis de Zárate, and how she had been sick with this illness. The inquisitor said that with her illness she must have imagined it. And she says that she wants to go over her memory so that she can tell the truth about everything that she might remember.

With this the audience ceased, because it was past eleven. The above was read and she approved it and signed it. And she was ordered to return to her cell, very admonished to examine her memory as she has offered to do.

[signed] Marina de San Miguel  
Pedro de Manozca, *escribano*

### 7.2 Second Confession

In the city of Mexico, Monday, November 23, 1598, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his afternoon audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel, *beata*, be brought before him. And when she was present, she was told to

say anything she had remembered in her case, and the truth, by the oath that she made [in her first audience].

She said that she has remembered that Juan López de Zárate, "I mean Luis de Zárate," said to her that on the day of justice the flesh will be renewed, and that there will be a New Jerusalem on earth, which was an opinion that Gregorio López held. And [Luis] wanted to know when the day [of justice] would be. And he asked the confessant to entrust it to God, so that [the date] would be revealed [to her]. And this is what she has remembered.

She was told that in this Holy Office it is not customary to seize any person without sufficient evidence of having done, said, or committed, or seen done, said, or committed by others, any thing that may be or appear to be against our Holy Catholic Faith; against the evangelical law that the Holy Mother Roman Catholic Church holds, preaches, follows, and teaches; or against the lawful and free exercise of the Holy Office. Therefore, if she has been imprisoned, she must believe that evidence of a fault of this nature has been presented against her. So for reverence of God our Lord and of his blessed and glorious mother our Lady the Virgin Mary, she is admonished and charged to examine her memory and say and confess the whole truth of anything about which she feels guilty or knows of other people, whoever they are, without covering up things about herself or about others, and without giving false testimony about herself or about others. Because if she does this [tells the truth] she will discharge her conscience as a Catholic Christian, and she will save her soul, and her case will be dispatched with all the brevity and mercy possible, as the Holy Office is accustomed to use with good and truthful confessants.<sup>19</sup>

And being given to understand this admonition she said that she doesn't remember anything else about what she has said. And with that the audience ceased and this was read to her, which she approved and signed. And heavily admonished that she examine her memory she was ordered to return to her cell.

[signed] Marina de San Miguel

It passed before me Pedro de Manozca

### 7.3 Third Confession

In the city of Mexico, Tuesday, November 24, 1598. The Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his afternoon audience ordered Marina de San Miguel to be brought from her cell.

And when she was present she was told that if she has remembered anything in her case to say it, and the truth, under the oath she made.

She said that what she has remembered is that in the course of her life some spiritual things have happened to her, which she has talked about to some people. And she believes that they have been the cause of her imprisonment, because they were scandalized by what she told them. And the things that happened are these. Well, since her childhood she has had an exercise of mental prayer, in which she always felt great gifts from our Lord. And eight years ago on Palm Sunday,

during the night, when she was sleeping (because she goes to bed with a desire to love and serve God) she was awakened and felt and then said she saw with her interior eyes<sup>20</sup> Christ crucified. And he came so close to her that it seemed to her that the body of Christ our Redeemer and her body were united, and appeared not two bodies but one. And at the same moment she felt in her hands and in her feet the burning of fire.<sup>21</sup> In her feet it began in the soles and moved to the other part, and in the hands, on the contrary, the fire began on top of the hand and then passed to the palm. And in her heart, in the same manner as happened with the said burning, she felt an intense interior pain that reached down into her bones. The pain lasted from midnight, when she saw (as she has said) the figure of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, until the dawn. And she could not sleep because the pain was so great that she wanted to cry out, but did not because she did not want to reveal the cause. And two whole years she had the pain from time to time, some days more than others. And the fire and pain in her heart have lasted until today, so that her heart seems wounded. Thus every time she remembers the vision her heart and her left arm tremble.

And thus while I was writing this she began to shake, and raised her hands and lifted her eyes to heaven and then lowered them, smiling and saying many loving words to our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . She remained in a trance, hands down, inclining her head to the left side. . . . And in the same trance she tried with great force to free her hands, and she could not, even though she used much force. Once her hands were untied she opened them and said, "My sweet Jesus, stretch out thy hand; because thou art so good everyone loves thee."<sup>22</sup> And she returned to being in a trance, with her arms open and raised and her eyes and face lifted to heaven, and her mouth a little open as though laughing, and her body inclined toward the right side. Later she put her hands together again with her fingers crossed and seemed as though sleeping.

And the Lord Inquisitor ordered that until the trance stopped no one speak nor say anything, and that I the secretary be on the lookout and write down whatever might succeed.

And then she opened her eyes and began to shake and get up from the bench on which she was seated, saying, "My love, help me God, how strongly you have given me this."<sup>23</sup> And among these words she said to the Lord Inquisitor that when she is given these trances, she should be shaken vigorously to awaken her from her deep dream. Then she returned to being as though sleeping. The inquisitor called her by her name and she did not respond, nor the second time. And the third time she opened her eyes and made faces, and made signs with her hands to her mouth. And then she returned again to being as though asleep. And with a tremble she moaned to herself, without saying anything other than seeming to mumble.<sup>24</sup> And the Lord Inquisitor ordered me, the secretary, to call her, because she was next to me, but she did not respond. The trance lasted for near a half hour, and having called her and pulled her right arm two or three times, she woke up with much happiness, saying that we should pull hard so that she could stretch her senses and pull them away from God. Then she asked God license, to permit that, "this little body return to earth," and that her imagination not be so uplifted. And then, beginning to say, "Sweet Jesus, love of my soul,"

she returned to being transported, and then asked again that we pull on her arm. She said she would try to pay attention but that she wanted to show the gifts that our Lord has given her even after she was imprisoned.

And returning to full presence in herself, she said that on Palm Saturday shortly after dark she lay down on her bed. Being awake adoring God, she heard an interior voice that said, "Make the betrothals." And then she saw, internally, our Redeemer Jesus Christ in the form of a youth dressed in white. He grasped her hand, and then the vision disappeared. And she understood that this had been a betrothal, which the wisdom of God had given her to understand. And she was left with an interior rapture, and did not return to herself until the morning of Easter Sunday. . . .

And with this it appeared that she might go into another trance, and the Lord Inquisitor ordered her to be attentive. . . . And because it was already close to six, the audience ceased, and having been read the above, she approved it and signed it.

And heavily admonished that she go and reexamine her memory, she was ordered to be taken to her cell. . . .

[signatures]

#### 7.4 Fourth Confession

In the city of Mexico, Wednesday, November 25, 1598, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought before him from her cell. And when she was present she was told that if she had remembered anything, she should say it, and the truth, under the oath that she swore. . . .

She said that four years ago her interior body was enraptured another time, and she found herself in a place which was purgatory, which was told to her by the youth to whom she was betrothed. . . . In that place she saw many people walking, like human bodies, because God shows things in accordance with the understanding of man. And some of the bodies were in the middle of fires, and others were in holes like wells, which were full of something black which seemed to be boiling tar. Some of them were in it up to their waists, others up to their chests, and others so far that only the tops of their heads could be seen. And others she saw in a lake of bubbling, boiling water, in the same way, and they were quiet and peaceful. And what astonished her most was that they did not take up space, which she didn't understand. And in the same place she saw streets, and in them some priests in vestments, and others with their dalmatics (*dalmáticas*), and these were the priests who say masses for souls. And the holy water that they throw in churches reaches the souls. And the youth dressed in white, whom she takes for Christ our Redeemer, told her that the souls feel very refreshed by masses and holy water. And he wanted to give her some grace, allowing her to bless the souls; and so she did it, and the souls that were already ready to be freed from their pains went to heaven. And there were many saved, because she was carried through all the streets three times, and afterward she found herself very tired. And she heard, internally,



that in very clear voices the souls said these words: "Maiden of God, have mercy,"<sup>25</sup> asking her to hurry and bless them, and at the same time they cried out to her, "Our Redemptress." This gave her pain, because she did not like that they called her by the name that belongs to our Redeemer Jesus Christ. And she told this to Friar Andrés de la Cruz, a discalced brother of the Order of Lord Saint Francis, who went to *la China*. He told her that this could be understood as God's using her as the means for removing souls from the pains of purgatory. . . .

She said that about a week before she saw purgatory, she was enraptured by our Redeemer Jesus Christ in the form of the youth, except that instead of being dressed in white he was dressed in purple. And he took her "interior man" to a place in which she saw three large jars, all the same, made out of white and gold metal. And Christ our Redeemer said to her, daughter, this is the inn where they say the bride was taken and made drunk with the wine of love. . . . And she remembers that the drink left her so drunk with the love of God, and the strength of her "interior man" was so great that it seemed he flew to heaven.

She says that after she was imprisoned in this Inquisition God gave her many mercies, and gave her in her cell so much company that she sees internally in her presence many circles of angels and saints, who appear as if in a sketch, in such a way that in one moment she sees them clearly and resplendently; and then they cover themselves, so that she sees only some things, as if they are in shadow. . . .

She said that yesterday she was very afflicted because she could not discover what to say, nor how to begin.<sup>26</sup> Between eleven and twelve in the morning our Redeemer Jesus Christ appeared to her in her cell, glorious as they paint him in the resurrection, and seated on the sun with much brilliance. . . .

She was told that she already knows how she was admonished in the last audience. . . . Therefore now for the second time she is admonished in the same way. . . .

She said that with all her heart and her will, if she knew what was against her she would say it; and she said that she will reexamine her memory.

And with this, because it was close to twelve, the audience ceased. And having been read it, she approved it and signed it. And admonished to reexamine her memory she was ordered to return to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.5 Fifth Confession

In the city of Mexico, Friday, November 27, 1598, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought from her cell. And when she was present she was told that the *alcaide* said that she was asking for an audience; and that she should say why she asked for it, and tell the truth under the oath that she has already sworn.

She said that she asked for the audience to tell and declare something of which it seems the Mother of God has reminded her. That is that for nine years she has eaten meat on all prohibited days, with license of a physician and of the *provisor*. And she has reexamined her memory about the things she was told to reexamine, and the Lord did not enlighten her about them.

She was told that she already knows how she was admonished . . . and with this she was admonished for the third and final time.

She said that she asks for the love of God that the accusation be delayed so that she may reexamine her memory.

With this the audience ceased and having been read it she approved and signed. And admonished to reexamine her memory as she has offered to do, she was ordered to return to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.6a Sixth Confession

In the city of Mexico, Monday, January 25, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought from her cell. And when she was present she was told that the *alcaide* said that she asks for an audience, and that she should declare why she wanted it, and tell the truth under the oath she has made.

She said that it's like this. . . . She has been condemned to hell, because for fifteen years she has had a sensual temptation of the flesh, which makes her perform dishonest acts with her own hands on her shameful parts. She came to pollution<sup>27</sup> saying dishonest words that provoke lust, calling by their dishonest names many dirty and lascivious things. She was tempted to this by the devil, who appeared to her internally in the form of an Angel of Light, who told her that she should do these things, because they were no sin. This was to make her abandon her scruples. And the devil appeared to her in the form of Christ our Redeemer, in such a way that she might uncover her breasts and have carnal union with him. And thus, for fifteen years, she has had carnal union occasionally from month to month, or every two months. And if it had been more she would accuse herself of that too, because she is only trying to save her soul, with no regard to honor or the world. And the carnal act that the devil as Angel of Light and in the form of Christ had with her was the same as if she had had it with a man. And he kissed her, and she enjoyed it, and she felt a great ardor in her whole body, with particular delight and pleasure. And the contact with herself, and the pollutions, were more frequent than what she had with the devil. And the devil told her when she resisted him, "This will make you abandon your scruples" . . . and he wouldn't let her confess. And thus for fifteen years she received communion twice each week and sometimes three times, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays, and on Easter. And she felt a great hunger for the holy sacrament, and wanted to receive it, though she had not confessed the said sins. And she did not confess them because the demon told her not to have scruples, and that she should not confess because of them. And also, because sometimes she imagined that this was the work of the devil and did not want her confessor to know that she treated with the devil.

She said that for about twenty years she had a relationship with Juan Núñez, accountant (*balanzario*), as a spiritual brother. And this relationship lasted until about six years ago. And he talked to her about God, and about loving him, and about resignation to his will. And while they were talking like this he kissed and hugged

her, and put his tongue in her mouth, and felt her breasts and shameful parts, saying, "All of this is earth." And once he put his finger in her shameful parts, and he said it was just to see whether she was a *doncella*. And now she remembers that this happened twice. And three times Juan Núñez showed her his shameful parts and made her touch them, and she touching them came to pollution. And she doesn't know whether he did. And he told her that all of these things were earth, and could be done if they were not done with an evil intention or will. And about twelve or thirteen years ago, she was dressed and lying on her bed when Juan Núñez arrived and hugged her. And after hugging her he threw himself upon her. She resisted and got up from the bed and said to him, "Brother, what you did makes me afraid." And he said, "Sister, you resisted strongly. I did it only to tempt you." And he never again made this demonstration. And in the twenty years that she knew Juan Núñez she saw him once each week. Kissing her and putting his tongue in her mouth, and hugging her and touching her breasts he did commonly; but touching her shameful parts was not ordinary. And about ten years ago Juan Núñez asked her to show him her shameful parts, and she consented, believing that he wanted to see whether she was a *doncella*. And thus she took a candle in her hands and raised her chemise, being seated on a cushion. And he saw her shameful parts, and did nothing but smile. And later, they talked about spiritual things, talking about the love of God, with the will to always love him and one's neighbour. And she had a bad suspicion about Juan Núñez, because he told her that he did not esteem penances, like fasts, disciplines, and hair shirts. Because he esteemed loving God more; and thus he told her not to believe in penances, but only in love, because penance without love is worth nothing, and for now this is what she remembers happened with Juan Núñez.

She said that from her relationship with Juan Núñez she learned the custom of kissing and hugging, and thus she kissed and hugged Alonso Gutiérrez whom she has said is her nephew. She has no family relation with him, other than that he is her spiritual son. And he hugged and kissed her with purity of conscience as when two children kiss. And he said to her, "Mother, I love you very much in the Lord." And she responded to him, "God make you holy and pure of heart." And she never had any sensual delight with him; and she does not know whether Alonso Gutiérrez had with her.

And because the hour was over, the audience ceased, and having been read this, she approved it and signed it. And admonished to go on reexamining her memory for the afternoon audience, she was taken to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.6b Sixth Confession (continued)

In the city of Mexico, Monday, January 25, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his afternoon audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought from her cell. And when she was present she was told to continue with whatever else she had to say, and to tell the truth under the oath that she had already sworn.

She said that as a weak and miserable woman, she allowed herself to be tricked by the devil for the whole time that she had the dishonest relationship with him. And thus from shame she did not confess. And she received communion in a state of sin. And she has nothing else to say.

And later she asked that the interview end until tomorrow, as she wishes to reexamine her memory to say what she knows and to discharge her conscience. With this the audience ceased and having been read this she approved it and signed. And admonished to reexamine her memory, as she has offered, in order to proceed with all purity and truth, she was ordered to return to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.7a Seventh Confession

In the city of Mexico, Tuesday, January 26, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought before him. And when she was present she was told that if she has remembered anything in her case she should declare it, and the truth, under the oath she has sworn.

She said that she believed that the devil was our Redeemer Jesus Christ when he appeared to her in that form, and he offered her his heart and soul, saying that they should trade hearts and souls so that she could become more perfect in her heart. And afterward it became clear that this offering had been made to the devil. And she saw this clearly fifteen days ago, because he showed himself to her in his demonic figure. She saw him with her bodily eyes, and with him many demons with snouts and ugly bodies and *guirnalda*s<sup>28</sup> with silver and brilliance, sticking out their tongues and breathing fire, though only a little. And they lifted her with her bed three or four times each day, and she was very afflicted and asked the *alcaide* to send her a confessor because the demons were taking her. And being lifted by these evil spirits, she heard a proclamation that said, "This is the justice that is ordered to be given to Marina de San Miguel, *beata*: That she be taken to hell for hiding her sins from her confessor and treating with the devil and receiving the holy sacrament so many times as she has said in such a bad state." And wanting to defend herself she said that she was not sure that it was the devil, nor that she was receiving communion in mortal sin; and that as an evil one he had tricked her. And they [the demons] responded that they had won her in fair battle and that there was no remedy for it, because the sentence had been handed down in the tribunal of God. And that even should she confess in the Holy Office, it was already too late and the confession would not be valid. And she did not confess these things when she first came before this tribunal because she did not know as she does now that they were all illusions of the devil, and she has nothing more to say.

She was asked who was the demon with whom she had a relationship for fifteen years, and of what legion.

She said that he was called Satan, and that he was of the legion of seraphim. . . . The other two they called Barrabus and Beelzebub pursued and tricked her. But the one with whom she had carnal contact was Satan.



She was asked how—having said in yesterday's afternoon audience that as a weak and miserable woman she allowed herself to be tricked by the devil for the whole time that she has said she had the dishonest relationship with him, and having said that out of shame she didn't confess it, and received communion in a state of sin—now she says that she did not know for certain that it was the devil, nor that she was receiving communion with any fear of mortal sin. See the contradiction there and assent in the truth.

She said that she neither wanted to lie in discharging her conscience nor to avoid telling the truth. And thus she asks and begs our Lady the Virgin Mary to light up her understanding. And the truth is, that she, as a bad woman, wanted to appear holy without being so, and she received communion to appear so. And she has no more to say.

She was told to satisfy the question, and if she knew for fifteen years that the love and relationship she had was with the devil, and whether she knew that she received communion in a bad state.

She said that she did not know until she came to the Holy Office, as she has said, but that she felt certain scruples and suspicions about whether it was the devil or not, and shame made her too uncomfortable to confess it, and also [she avoided confessing] so her confessor would not know that she treated with the devil. . . . And she spoke badly in saying that she clearly knew that she had been tricked by the devil and that she had received communion in a bad state.

She was asked how she could ignore that the things she has declared, being so dirty, obscene, and dishonest, could be anything but from the devil. And thus it can be clearly seen that she is hiding from the path of truth, and that after she determined to confess these things, later she regretted it, and this gives birth to her contradictions. Such that when she lived with the intent of appearing holy, without being so, and having a suspicion that these things were demonic, and not confessing them out of shame, she could not possibly fail to believe that she was receiving communion in mortal sin. Nor can one presume that she did not clearly know that her own acts and dishonest touchings, which brought her so many times to pollution, were very grave sins, which must be confessed if one is to avoid knowingly receiving communion in a bad state.

She said that it is true that she knew that all the carnal and obscene things she has confessed, the union with the devil and having carnal copulation with him as well as her own dishonest acts with which she came to pollution, were bad and grave sins. But as a weak and miserable woman she fell into them, and for discomfort and shame she did not confess them. Because as she was held holy, she wanted to hide her weaknesses. And thus she received communion knowing that she was in mortal sin. And she ratifies this now, and it is the truth, and the devil made her wander into these contradictions.

She was asked what other things happened with Juan Núñez, *balanzario*, and Alonso Gutiérrez. And that as she has decided to proceed with purity, she should tell the whole truth, because as she had no shame in offending our Redeemer Jesus Christ, she should not have it in confessing her sins, which is the principal remedy for the salvation of her soul. And moreover, from today on she should abandon raptures and illusions, as the devil cannot counsel any good thing. And thus in no way should she give him credit, nor should she despair of the mercy

of God, because as grave and enormous as her sins are, his mercy is much greater. And thus if he is served to not take her in such a bad state, and to bring her before this holy tribunal, she should have great confidence that it is so she might come to know her misery and misfortunes and beg him with a true heart to use with her his accustomed mercy, giving her strength to defend herself from the snares of the enemy in whose trap<sup>29</sup> she was for so long.

She said that she has said what happened with Juan Núñez and Alonso Gutiérrez, and that if any other thing had happened she would say it, because she must give account to God.

She was asked if she knew that the kisses and hugs that she gave to Juan Núñez and Alonso Gutiérrez could not be given without sinning mortally, because she gave them delighting in them, and because with her contacts with Juan Núñez she came to pollution the times that she has declared.

She said that she didn't believe that she sinned mortally in these things, because she had no intention of doing them to enjoy them, but rather did them because she was melancholy. She did them with pure love and clean intention, because as Saint Augustine says, the sin is in the bad intention and will. And once Juan Núñez told her this, and that the things that he did were earth, and that he did not do them with the intention of sinning with her, but for mortification; and she took this to heart and believed it until now . . . and he embraced her and gave her so many kisses and hugs with a fire so spiritual that he seemed like an angel. And when he came to her shameful parts and to her breasts and legs he said, "Unless you become as children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven," and, "To the pure all things are pure." He said this to mean that as children with purity of heart and sincerity kiss each other and touch their shameful parts, he with the same sincerity did these things without dirty or obscene words. And later he returned to talking about very beautiful affairs of God, like a man drunk with his love, so inflamed that his ears and face were the color of *grana*.

She was asked how she could have good intentions when she enjoyed the touching, hugging, and kissing and came to pollution. Because even if the first time she thought it good, it cannot be excused because of the danger it put her in. And her own touchings of her shameful parts are sin; and seeing that she came to an act so abominable, one must punish it severely and believe that even the first time she sinned mortally, because of what followed, when she returned to the pollutions and enjoyed them, not only with the kisses which under some pretext can be reduced to good intention without attributing them to evil; but with an act as lascivious as putting the tongue in the mouth, which cannot appear anything but carnality. And even more, having contacts so dishonest in the shameful parts, and having so little shame, born of the greatest misery that has ever been seen or heard or come to human understanding, as to take a candle to look at them [her genitals]. From which it is clearly seen that things went farther and that she went along with similar things, acts, and occasions. It is impossible that things went no farther than what she has declared, and thus she is admonished to tell the truth so that it may be seen that she is telling the truth and repents her past life.

She said that she has told the truth and that nothing more happened with Juan Núñez, and that she did not know at the time that it was a sin, because the



relationship<sup>30</sup> was holy and good. And she never had the goal of offending God with her will and intention. Neither did anything more happen with Alonso Gutiérrez, and she remembers now that twice when she kissed Alonso Gutiérrez it gave her the desire to have him touch her breasts, but she did not tell him, nor did he do it. And last night the demons told her that she is condemned for having spoken against Juan Núñez and defaming him; because the things that she told about him here in the tribunal of the Inquisition should have been [told] in a confessional.

And because it was very close to twelve the audience ceased, and having been read she approved it and signed. And admonished to go reexamining her memory, she was taken to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.7b Seventh Confession (continued)

In the city of Mexico, Tuesday, January 26, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his afternoon audience ordered that Marina de San Miguel be brought from her cell. And when she was present she was told that the *alcaide* said she had asked for an audience, and that she should declare the reason, and the truth, under the oath she swore.

She said that she asked for [the audience] to say that at the age of sixteen she took a vow of chastity in the Mercedarian monastery in the city of Seville, on our Lady's day in September,<sup>31</sup> and thus she has broken her vow with all her obscene, carnal, and dishonest acts, and at the same time she has concealed the existence of the vow in her sacramental confessions. And she doesn't remember anything else, and for this reason she asked for this audience.

She was asked if she has felt bad about anything related to our Holy Catholic Faith or if she has had any doubts about it.

She said that she has never felt bad about the faith, although she has had certain temptations about it, wondering if there is a heaven, and if it is true that there was a Mother of God and Jesus Christ her son; but she never consented with her deliberate reason in thinking that they did not exist, although she had some lukewarmness in believing it, which she attributed to the devil and confessed to her confessor. And what she [also] thought was that God could remove those condemned to hell from there, and lift them to glory; and she received much comfort in not seeing souls condemned. This lasted until she learned that the church holds the contrary, because in hell there is no redemption, and with this she was sure. But from time to time temptations came to her about whether or not condemned souls could be saved, even though she did not allow herself to believe the contrary of what the Holy Mother Roman Catholic Church holds.

She was asked what she felt about the sacraments of penance and communion.

She said that she felt very good about them.

She was asked if she knew that to receive the sacrament of penance, one must feel pain for and repent one's sins, and have a firm purpose of not returning to

them; and that confession must be complete, without hiding any sin or circumstance which might aggravate or change their substance and kind.

She said that she knew this and she knows that all the requisites contained in the question are necessary to achieve the sacrament of penance.

She was asked if she knew that the consecrated host was the true body of our Redeemer Jesus Christ; and that to receive such a high sacrament great purity and cleanness of conscience are necessary.

She said that she knew this and she knows very clearly the contents of the question.

She was asked if she knew all the above-said, how has she used the sacraments so poorly, using them when she was in mortal sin, and adding sin to sin, hiding them so as not to lose her reputation with her confessors; coming to eat the bread of the angels so many and diverse times that it seems she could not commit sins so entrenched<sup>32</sup> if she had the beliefs that she says she has and had about the sacraments.

She said that she firmly believed and believes that the body of our Redeemer Jesus Christ is in the consecrated Host, but as a sinner and a weak woman she dared to take the sacraments with a bad conscience, and not because she doubted them.

She was asked if she has believed that our redeemer and saviour Jesus Christ could do anything that might be evil or imperfect.

She said no.

She was asked what moved her to say that when she had carnal copulation with the devil who appeared as an angel of light and as our Redeemer, she believed that it was with His Divine Majesty, a thing which shocks and offends the ears even to think about it.

She said that when the devil had carnal copulation with her in the form of Christ, later she imagined that it was Christ, and then when she came to her senses she realized that as such a friend of virgins and of purity, Christ our Redeemer would find impossible a dishonest act or any imperfect thing, and thus she believes that it was the devil. And from shame she did not confess it to her confessors (as she has said) so they would not know that she had been involved with the devil, and every time that the devil came to her, evilly putting himself in the form of Christ, she had doubts about whether it was Christ or the devil. But considering that Christ could not sin, she saw clearly that it was the devil, from which she received much pain and affliction; and when the said vision took a long time to come and have carnal copulation with her, she was happy and said to herself, "It is not coming," and gave thanks to God.

She was asked if she saw the devil with her bodily eyes the times that he appeared to her in the form that she has declared, and what they talked about, aside from having copulation.

She said that she did not see him with her exterior eyes, but rather that she was enraptured in such a way that she saw him in the form that she has declared, stuck to and united with her performing the carnal act, in such a way that she felt it in the way she has said, as if she were with a man. And she came to pollution as she could come with him [a man], without feeling on top of her any corporeal thing, other than that without being [corporeal] he [the devil] used force

to have carnal copulation with her. And thus she had it, without being able to resist it. And at the same time she remembers that when (as she has said) she touched herself dishonestly, the same devil forced her to do it; and thus she did it many times against her will.

She said she has not lied in all that she has said about lights that she has seen and things that have happened to her, but that the devil made them appear to her to trick her, even though he never told her he was Christ our Redeemer, other than that she saw his figure and the other lights that she has declared. And she only stretched her story in saying that when she woke up with Christ she saw his form, because she did not see it, but rather, enraptured, internally heard an interior speech which said, "Make the betrothal," without seeing who spoke. And at the same time she stretched the truth when she said that when she saw purgatory she saw the figure of Christ, because she did not, only a body in the form of a youth, without being able to make out his face perfectly. And the trances that she has had have been with the aid of the devil. And she faked much of what happened, and thus she faked here in the tribunal, and made a demonstration of how she was enraptured, doing the same thing that she is accustomed to do in her house. For this she begs mercy, and subjects herself to the correction of this Holy Office.

She was asked which things in particular concerning the love of God Juan Núñez talked about with her, and who was the person who taught him these things, and which persons other than Juan Núñez and Alonso Gutiérrez have spoken with her about prayer and the love of God.

She said that Juan Núñez talked to her about mystical theology and God's Union,<sup>33</sup> and gave her a book. . . . And because Juan Núñez is so well read, he knows many things about prayer and contemplation, and he gave her account of them, which in particular she does not remember. And Juan Núñez was the first who taught her the road of love of God and his union. And she has talked about these things, about devotion to the love of God and his union, with friars of all orders except the Mercedarian. And with Alonso Gutiérrez she has not spoken anything other than what she has declared.

She was asked if, with any of the persons with whom she talked of the union and love of God, she had hugs, kisses, dishonest touches, and pollutions, of the type that she has declared having with Juan Núñez, saying that because he had no intent and will to offend God, it was no sin.

She said that the contents of the question never happened with anyone but Juan Núñez.

She was asked to say whether she truly saw the things she has declared, lights and visions, because it appears to be her fabrication, especially because she said that she was enraptured and taken to purgatory where she was taken through many streets, and that when she returned to herself she was very tired from so much walking, but she did not walk corporeally, but only in spirit, as she has said and declared.

She said that she felt much fatigue when she returned to herself, and she does not know what occasioned it, only that God must have permitted it. With this the audience ceased and having read it she approved and signed.

[signatures]

### 7.8 Eighth Confession

In the city of Mexico, Wednesday, January 27, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor in his afternoon audience ordered Marina de San Miguel to be brought from her cell. And when she was present she was told that if she has remembered anything she should say it, and the truth, under the oath she made.

She said that what she has remembered is that when she was talking about devotion to the love and union of God with a friar of the Order of the blessed Saint Dominic called fray Juan Baptista Gazete, who is now in *la China*, they hugged and kissed the times that he came to her house, for the two years that they knew each other. She does not remember the times, other than that it wasn't ordinary but only every fifteen days, about eight years ago. And although he brought a companion, he didn't see the kisses, because they gave them cautiously. And she does not remember if there were any alterations,<sup>34</sup> but she remembers well that there were no dishonest words, only the hugs and kisses. And if the said friar had alterations, they were not apparent.

She was asked whether fray Juan Baptista Gazete told her that they could kiss and hug in the manner that she was taught by Juan Núñez, having good intentions.

She said he did not tell her whether it was good or bad.

She was asked if when she thought about whether heaven existed, and whether it was true that the Mother of God and her precious son existed, if she ever came to the point of doubting it, or whether she believed it, even in a lukewarm fashion.

She said that she did not doubt the said things, other than that it was a temptation she had, and some lukewarmness in belief, until she came to her senses, and afterward she believed it firmly.

She was asked how many times she had the lukewarmness in believing, and how she could avoid having doubts.

She said that it befell her only once, and that if she had any doubt, [it was when] she was enraptured by this temptation without being in her senses, but coming back to her senses she believed firmly in all the said things.

She was asked to say and declare if she believed that it was Christ our Redeemer the times that she had carnal copulation with the devil appearing in the form of Christ, because—aside from having said that she believed it (although later she said no)—considering that our Redeemer is the highest good and such a friend of cleanness and of virgins, she must have known clearly that it was the devil. But all the times she had the copulation with the devil in the form of Christ she doubted whether it was the devil or not, from which doubts one can infer that she did not believe as firmly as she ought to have that such things could not possibly be from Christ. In this she should urgently discharge her conscience.

She said that the thought whether it was Christ or the devil came to her memory without her wanting it; and thus she was tempted in this by the devil, but when she returned to her senses she firmly believed that it was his work, and not Christ's, because he is the highest good and a friend of cleanliness and chastity.

She was asked whether when she believed that God could take someone out of hell, she thought it was with his absolute potency, or his ordinary.



She said that she thought that he could do it with his absolute potency, because for God nothing is impossible. And afterward she learned that the Church says that in hell there is no redemption; and thus for this reason she stopped believing that God would take anyone out [of hell], not because he could not, but because of what the Church says, and the Catholic faith, and because she knows that if a seraph comes and says things against what the Church says, one must not believe it but rather throw him out as a bad spirit.

She was told that she answers very well. . . .

And with this the audience ended, and having been read it she approved and signed. And admonished to reexamine her memory she was ordered taken to her cell.

[signatures]

### 7.9 Ninth Confession

In the city of Mexico, Friday, January 28, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor *licenciado* don Alonso de Peralta in his morning audience ordered Marina de San Miguel to be brought before him. And when she was present she was told that the *alcaide* said she had asked for an audience, and that she should declare why she wanted it, and the truth, under the oath that she swore.

She said that she asked for it to say and manifest that the other day for shame she did not say that she had a friendship with a certain *beata*, who died two years ago, who also had made a vow of chastity. And commonly when they would see one another they would kiss and hug, and put their hands on their breasts. And she remembers that with the kisses, hugs, and touching on the breasts she came to pollution ten or twelve times. And she doesn't know whether the *beata* felt it, nor what effect these things had on her. And she [Marina] knowing these things were sins, determined to confess them, although later she did not confess them to her confessors because it seemed to her that she had not sinned mortally because she had no intention of doing so. And although sometimes she had a scruple, shame made her not confess [the sins], and at the same time receive the Holy Sacrament.

She was asked if in the hugs, kisses, and touches any amorous or dishonest words were said.

She said that amorous words were said, and that she said to the other woman, "Mother of my soul and of my life," but no dishonest ones.

She was asked, if she didn't take these things for sins, as she had no desire and will to come to pollution, why she had a scruple.

She said that because she felt that this was a weakness, it gave her a scruple about whether it was a sin or not. And afterward she looked on the bright side<sup>35</sup> and decided to believe that it was no sin; and this removed all her scruples, and she lived in great peace with herself.

She was asked how she could quiet her conscience, not having talked about her scruples with anyone who might enlighten her, especially as she had formed

them, and knowing clearly that what obliged her not to confess them was shame; and not confessing them was not looking on the bright side, but rather on the dark side, because in doubt one must incline to the more secure side. From which one infers that she did not sin out of ignorance, but out of malice. And thus she is admonished on behalf of God our Lord to discharge her conscience, making a clear and pure confession so that one sees that she proceeds with purity and procures the remedy of her soul.

She said that she refers to what she has confessed, and that she remembers that the devil, about fifteen or sixteen years ago, incited her to take a mirror, being alone, and to look at her shameful parts, which she did eight or ten times, six with interior touchings, and two times she had pollution, and the other times there was no touching. And she did not confess these things because she did not do them with the motive of offending God, but rather before she gave thanks for having created the said things, and putting them in order for the increase of creatures. And thus the lewd things she sees in little animals serve to remind her of God and to give him thanks for having put everything in such order.

She was asked how she could ignore sinning in the said things when she says she did them incited by the devil, *by the devil*,<sup>36</sup> aside from which she knows that in such things one sins mortally by seeing them; even without touches so lewd and dishonest, with which she came to pollution voluntarily. Because at the point when she determined to have the said touches, she decided also to have the pollutions which followed from them.

She said that she says clearly that she believed she did not offend God in these things, although she knew that she sinned with her sight and with all the other things that she did (as she has confessed), but as she had no intention of offending God nor did she consent to it, and she spoke poorly in saying that the devil tempted her, because she didn't know whether it was he, or nature itself.

She was asked if she knew that she offended God in the said things, that she say and declare how she could have good intentions and not give consent; when she delighted in her shameful parts she put it in execution, taking a mirror to look at them, from which came the temptation of the flesh and the putting into execution. Things so abominable and lewd, that even the devil himself would be offended by them. . . .

She said that it is true that she consented in these things and put them into execution, but she did not believe that she offended God because she did not have the intention of offending him.

She was asked if these things of hers are evil and offend God, and she put them in execution, how could she believe that she did not offend him because she had no will to offend him. Well, it is an impossible case. On one hand she consents in a sin and put it into action, offending our Lord gravely; and on the other hand she had no intention of offending him.

She said that she always based herself on the interior will, with which she determined not to consent to the said things even though she put them into play.

She was asked, if she were to go to bed with a man and have carnal union with him, if she would sin mortally, even though she might not consent with her interior will.



She said that she would sin, because she clearly sees the danger in something declared to be against God.

She was asked, if thus she would sin, what difference is there in the case between the proposed case, and what she has done, which one cannot deny is a thing against what God has ordered; rather the sin she has committed is worse, because it is against nature, and the danger [in it] can be seen clearly as with the touches, kisses, and hugs [with which] she came so many times to pollution.

She said that then she was in bestiality, and now through the questions that have been put to her it is clear how blind she has been.

And admonished that she still go reexamining her memory and discharge her conscience, she was ordered taken to her cell.

[signatures]

In the city of Mexico, Tuesday, Day of the Purification of our Lady, February 2, 1599, the Lord Inquisitor in his afternoon audience ordered Marina de San Miguel brought before him. And once present she was told that if she has remembered anything in her case she should say it, and the truth, under the oath that she has made.

She said no.

She was told that she should understand that the *promotor fiscal* of this Holy Office wants to pose the accusation, and that before it is posed she would be best off to say and confess the whole truth as she has been admonished, because thus there will be more room to use with her mercy . . .

She said she had no more to say.

## NOTES

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1. New Spain included modern-day Mexico, large parts of Central America, parts of what is now the southwestern United States, and the Philippines. I say "ostensible" authority because it was virtually impossible to police such a large and diverse area.
2. This document can be found in Mexico City in the Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo Inquisición, Vol. 210, Exp. 3, ff. 307-430. The confessions translated here are found in folios 347r-72v.
3. There are few studies in English of colonial Spanish American women's encounters with the Inquisition. The suggestions for further reading I have listed at the end of the document will provide an introduction to the Inquisition in colonial Mexico and to inquisitorial investigations of religious women in Europe for those interested in pursuing this subject further.
4. Literally, "qué oficio tiene," or "what office she holds," the standard formulation, in the sixteenth century, for the question "What does she do?"
5. A *beata* was a semireligious woman who devoted her life to God. *Beatas* generally wore habits and lived chastely, either in communities or in private homes. Unlike nuns, *beatas* were not obliged to take solemn vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; nor were they

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- obliged to follow a rule. Many did take simple vows, allying themselves with one of the religious orders. Marina allied herself with the Order of Saint Dominic, an important order in Spanish America.
6. Literally, in "working" (*labrar*), which when used by women refers to work with the needle.
  7. Literally, uncles and aunts, siblings of father.
  8. In the sixteenth century, Catholics were to attend mass on Sundays and holy days. Though holy days varied from region to region, there generally were about fifty. Confession and communion were obligatory only at Easter; but many people, particularly women, received communion much more frequently than that.
  9. Literally, in "romance," as opposed to Latin.
  10. That is, in the house of her parents, not in Córdoba. As we will see, they changed their house several times.
  11. Literally, having gained something to eat (*ganado de comer*).
  12. Marina's testimony does not make clear whether her father and his wife remained together after the adultery and murder.
  13. Here the notary has transcribed the testimony verbatim as Marina corrected herself.
  14. Juan Núñez de León was accountant of the Royal Treasury, a wealthy and important man. He too was tried and disciplined by the Inquisition (AGN 210, Exp. 2).
  15. A suspect's goods were often sequestered for the duration of the trial; any fines levied could be taken from the sale of the sequestered goods.
  16. This apparently rambling and irrelevant information shows that Marina was clearly thinking forward to what might occur when bailiffs went to her home to seize her property. She was anticipating that Gutiérrez would be able to keep his property—and perhaps some of hers, if he claimed it—out of the hands of the Holy Office. By detailing his spending on her house, she was presumably attempting to cast it as an encumbered asset that the bailiffs could not with impunity seize.
  17. Gregorio López was arguably sixteenth-century Mexico's most famous mystic and was regarded by many contemporaries as a saint.
  18. Literally men (*hombres*), but here used in its "universal" sense to include all people.
  19. This was a standard admonition given to overcome confessants' reticence.
  20. That is, not physically, but in a vision.
  21. Literally, "cauterios de fuego", or "cauterization."
  22. Here Marina was using the familiar form of address, expressing intimacy.
  23. "Que fuertemente me ha dado esto."
  24. Literally, to speak through her teeth (*hablar entre dientes*).
  25. Literally, give alms (*hazed limosna*).
  26. Literally, to have light where to begin (*tener lumbre por donde empezar*).
  27. That is, experienced orgasm.
  28. *Guirnalidas* were flowers and fragrant herbs woven into a garland to adorn the head. The sense here is that "with silver and brilliance" they dramatize the grotesqueness of the demons.
  29. Literally, lasso (*lazo*).
  30. "Trato", which could mean either the relationship or the discussion.
  31. The Catholic Church classified vows as either solemn or simple. The former was public and made with formal clerical intervention and ceremony, the latter was private and sometimes unwitnessed and unrecorded. Marina's vow of chastity would have been a "simple" vow but nevertheless seems to have been publicly made. She claimed that she made the vow in the convent of La Merced in Sevilla, which suggests that it was witnessed and "accepted" by a superior. This vow, therefore, went beyond a personal promise; it was a binding obligation to God that she had clearly breached.
  32. Literally, so germinated (*tan germinados*).
  33. Presumably Marina and Juan were discussing the union of God in the Trinity, a favorite theme of mystical devotion, rather than their own mystical union with God, also a topic of interest to mystics.
  34. That is, arousal.
  35. Literally, at the better part (*a la mayor parte*).
  36. Emphasis and repetition in original.