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Examining Acts of Faith and Acts of Space in the Mexican Inquisition: Creating a Virtual World of the 17th Century Palace of the Holy Office for the *Digital Auto de Fe of 1601 Project*

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Examining Acts of Faith and Acts of Space in the Mexican Inquisition: Creating a Virtual World of the 17th Century Palace of the Holy Office for the *Digital Auto de Fe of 1601 Project*

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"Which is better? To believe and say you do not believe, or not to believe and say you believe?"

Words of Mariana Núñez de Carvajal,
Crypto-Jewish woman sentenced to be
burned at the stake after an *auto de fe* in
Mexico City on March 25, 1601.



**Figure 1: Doña Mariana
Núñez de Carvajal**

In February 1596, twenty-two year old Mariana Núñez de Carvajal suffered a complete nervous breakdown during her ordeal and participation in an Inquisition trial (fig. 1). The young woman's forced presence at an *auto de fe* in Mexico City led to her precarious mental state. Declared by the Inquisitors' as too mentally unstable to stand trial at the time, she still found herself forced to bear witness to the burning at the stake of her mother, brother and sisters.¹

Mariana did not escape the scrutiny of the Mexican Holy Office for long. By the early spring of 1601, the 26 year old woman found herself imprisoned in the *cárcel perpétua* of the Inquisition. By the end of March, Mariana herself would succumb to the flames. Although according to one of her captors' she "died well in the Spirit of Christ," her forced disavowal of her Jewish beliefs and customs, and the role that early modern religious intolerance played in the long and tortuous path that eventually lead her to the stake, even after her reported sincere conversion to Catholicism, is just one of the most poignant examples of the violent clash of religions that made up the religious, political and social milieu of colonial Latin America.

What makes the story of Mariana's eventual demise even more tragic is the very humiliating and punitive nature of the public act of faith she was forced to endure. Viewed by modern humanist scholars variably as either a didactic theatre of punishment and reprehension, or an

¹ For a complete study of the fate of Mariana's family see Martin Cohen, *The Martyr: Luis de Carvajal, a Secret Jew in Sixteenth Century Mexico*, University of New Mexico Press, 1973, pp. 211-226

attempted mimicking of the ultimate divine judgment of Christ over the damned sinners, what all can agree on is the fact that the Inquisition's many *autos de fe* had as their purpose the use, manipulation and redirection of public space for the purpose of not only sentencing and punishing convicted heretics, but also as offering up the very human suffering and pain of the victims as clear warnings to all present to avoid the sins and temptations of falling into heresy. As Michel Foucault so aptly wrote in his own seminal study on the nature of crime and public punishment, "the guilty person is only one of the targets of punishment. For punishment is directed above all at others, at all the potential guilty..."²

The bizarre spectacle that would take place on the date of the *Auto de fe*, included many paradoxical sights, sounds, and smells. From indigenous and *casta* vendors selling food and other trinkets at concession stands among the crowds of people who thronged along the main thoroughfare of the city, to the solemn religious processions of the highest ranking clergy and political elite, the ceremonies of the *auto de fe* exhibited and exemplified the paradoxical circumstances of a segregated multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural colonial society. The event itself became imbued with ritual, political and social signs and symbols that served to reinforce the colonial religious, social, racial and political hierarchies.

The innovative use of digital technology in this project focuses on a multidisciplinary recreation of the historical built space of the Mexican Inquisition palace, and the virtual re-creation of the setting, sounds, sights, and events related to the public celebration of one of the better documented general autos de fe in New Spain: the *auto de fe* of 1601. By combining the interdisciplinary skills of historians, architects, costume designers, illustrators, digital animators and computer programmers, this project uses software for architectural modeling and acoustic simulation in combination with historical, visual and textual primary source records, as well as archaeological evidence, in order to re-construct as best as possible, the setting, events, and public pageantry of this awe-inspiring event.

The *auto de fe*, or "act of faith," in English, served as the most elaborate public spectacle in what was otherwise the most private and secretive actions of an Inquisitorial Tribunal. Although most previous scholars have identified these *autos de fe* as ostensibly a form of religious ritual, more recent scholarship in the humanities has begun to understand that the Spanish Inquisition's *auto de fe* ceremonies served not only religious, but also political, cultural and didactic purposes.³ Combining the politics of both the secular and the religious, as well as

² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, Reprint, Vintage Books, 1977, Part 2, Chapter 2, pages 108.

³ For the major historiography on the *Auto de Fe* see Francisco Bethencourt, "The Auto de Fe: Ritual and Imagery." *Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* Vol. 55 (1992): 155-168; Alejandro Caneque, "Theater of

imbuing the ceremony with hierarchical and political messages concerning the nature and structure of social and racial hierarchies, the inquisitorial *auto de fe* served not only to warn the Catholic faithful of the dangers of heresy, but it also served to delineate the proper hierarchical social and cultural spaces of what the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown believed were the ideal nature of the proper order of Spanish colonial society.

CREATING A VIRTUAL WORLD OF 17TH CENTURY MEXICO CITY TO STUDY THE MEXICAN INQUISITION AND ITS LIVED HUMAN EXPERIENCES

"We understand that the past did not happen in 2D and that it cannot be effectively studied or taught as a series of disconnected static images"

Donald H. Sanders (2008).

Using historical simulations and virtual reality to teach is not a new concept, however, it is only recently emerging as a viable way to teach history.⁴ Recently, groups have used historical documents to create historically accurate simulations, immersive environments and virtual worlds to provide historically accurate information to students and to draw interest.⁵ The idea for the Digital Auto de Fe project came out of a Master's thesis by Justin Duncan that focused on the spatial representation of power by the Inquisition.⁶ The project has attempted to answer several simple, but very difficult to assess historical questions if only the methods of traditional humanities research and textual analysis are used. Only by re-creating the events, scenes, sights and sounds of the auto de fe held in Mexico City on March 25, 1601, in a real time 3-D virtual world, can the viewer (scholar/ student) come to appreciate the awe inspiring and frightening process of organized public fear created by an Inquisitorial auto de fe.

Power: Writing and Representing the Auto de Fe in Colonial Mexico" *The Americas* Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jan. 1996): 321-343; as well as Maureen Flynn, "Mimesis of the Last Judgment." *Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 22, No. 2 (1991): 281-297.

⁴ See Jeremiah B. McCall, *Gaming the Past: Using Video Games to Teach Secondary History* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

⁵ For just a few of the recent similar projects see 1). <http://loki.stockton.edu/~games/PoxFinal/Pox.html>: *Pox in the City* is a digital role-playing game for the history of Medicine; <https://vpcp.chass.ncsu.edu/>: This VR project recreates the experience of hearing the English Dean of the Cathedral John Donne's sermon for *Gunpowder Day* (November 5th, 1622) in St. Paul's in London; <https://www.evl.uic.edu/aei/papers/cgaharlem.pdf>: The *Virtual Harlem project* allows for a single player avatar that is capable of moving freely around the city with an immersive experience of how the city looked in 1920; and finally <http://hvwc.etc.ucla.edu/>: UCLA's *Romelab* is a multi-disciplinary research group whose work uses the physical and virtual city of Rome as a point of departure to study the interrelationship between historical phenomena and the spaces and places of the ancient city.

⁶Justin Duncan, "Performing Theaters of Power: the Holy Office of the Inquisition's General Autos De Fe in Spain and Spanish America and the Visual and Physical Representation of Inquisitorial Power, 1481-1736" (2014). MSU Graduate Theses. 1170. <https://bearworks.missouristate.edu/theses/1170>.

To date, most of the efforts in the re-creation of what scholars have termed “Virtual Worlds (VW)”, or “Virtual Cultural Heritage” (VCH) have been directed mostly towards accurate representations of historic structures, cultural objects or artifacts.⁷ In most historical uses of virtual reality technology little attention is paid to how human actors, and human institutions interacted with the built environment. Similarly, little time is spent in examining how the human aspects of daily life shaped the cultural heritage or built environments under study. The virtual reconstruction of the life of the buildings, objects or artifacts, and their “human story” have remained intangible for the most part, though these life stories and human aspects of the (re)built historical environments are what many call the “‘intangible heritage’ to which contemporary people can actually relate.”⁸

Digital historical models of buildings and spaces can only offer us a glimpse at one aspect of the past (a snapshot in time) albeit a glimpse with some sense of precision with the use of new technologies in combination with historical archival and archaeological and architectural methods of accurate re-construction. The human usage of the spaces of the built environments of the past, and the human attitudes and cultural traditions which occurred in relationship to or within these built historical structures is far more difficult to re-create than the physical manifestations of historic buildings, cities, states, etc. The human element of historical actors of the past and their recreations and research into their interactions with the historically recreated space continues to be a gap in current research. As scholars have lamented, these so-called Virtual Heritage Environments (VHE) or Virtual Worlds “suffer from the lack of ‘thematic interactivity’ due to the limited cultural content and engaging modules largely used in photorealistic video gaming systems.”⁹

This first phase of this joint international research project, *The Digital Auto de Fe of New Spain in 1601*, has focused on researching and integrating the human aspect of the real lives and experiences of a specific group of people who encountered the repressive apparatus of the Mexican Inquisition, either as accused heretics, officials of the Holy Office, or spectators of the general public at a major public event of punishment known as an *auto de fe*. This phase of the project focuses on the interactions of these historical personages with the built environment of the 17th century palace of the Mexican Inquisition and the relationships of the historical actors with the functions of the institution of the Inquisition, and their interactions and experiences

⁷ See Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem, Gehan Selim, Sabah Mushatat, Abdulaziz Almogren, “Virtual Platforms for Heritage Preservation in the Middle East: The Case of Medieval Cairo,” in *Archnet-IJAR*, Volume 11 - Issue 3 - November 2017 - (28-41).

⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁹ Gamal Abdelmonem, “Virtual Platforms for Heritage Preservation,” 28-29.

within, outside and around the re-created ritual, cultural, and judicial space of an inquisitorial Palace.

A major goal of this project is to de-mystify the institution of the Inquisition. The project will provide access to the general public for the first time to a vast amount of information about the structure, organization, and day to day activities of the Inquisition. The project also recreates in detail the major buildings and architectural features of the streets along the processional route. First among these historical recreations of the cultural heritage of 17th century Mexico City is the virtual reality re-construction of the Mexican Inquisition palace and its developmental stages, bringing the architecture of Mexico City in 1601 alive for the interactive viewer, offering both students and scholars alike the rare opportunity to experience a major 17th century city in its splendor. The project uses a team of architectural historians to help with the recreation and design of historically accurate buildings, built environments and offers an intensively researched focus on the utility and usage flows of these buildings by real historical actors.

Another goal of the project is to accurately portray the relationship between clothing, social status and caste identity. The dress and costumes of the time period represented the power and authority that each person held with their social and racial position.¹⁰ Each type of dress and accessory held a specific meaning and either portrayed the status or power of the wearer, or the lack thereof. Many groups of people participated in the ceremony, from the poor to wealthy and powerful. Clothing and costumes served as important and essential means in Mexican society of distinguishing social groups from one another. Therefore, not only will the project recreate the dress of the time period, but there will be an array of information on the specific symbolism of the clothing and designs used by the characters (fig. 2).

¹⁰ Royal sumptuary laws prohibited certain *castas* from wearing various types of textiles. For an example of the role of the Inquisition in policing these laws see Martha Sandoval Villegas, "Indecencia, vanidad y derroche en algunos trajes novohispanos de fines del siglo XVII: conceptualización del mal a través de la indumentaria", en Erik Velásquez García (ed.), *Estética del mal, memorias del coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte*. UNAM, 2013, pp. 49-83.



Figure 2: The Viceroy of New Spain, Gaspar de Zuñiga y Acevedo
 (Character created by MSU Student Ledis Molina)

The project aims to show era specific clothing for each participant in the ceremony, as well as the clothing of the general populace that witnessed the event along the street. Each character is fully interactive and their dress, race, caste and social status are explained in detail. The racial and social make-up of Mexico City in 1601 will be proportionately portrayed in the final virtual world based on the available census and population documents known as *padrones*. In this manner, the relative number and ethnic identities of characters and by-standers will represent an approximated view of the varied racial and *casta* make-up of Mexico City in the early 17th century (fig. 3).



Figure 3: Concept Art for the initial facial design of the African Slave, Juan Mozambique, assistant of the Chief Jailor of the Mexican Inquisition, tried for illegally taking secret notes to the prisoners and processed in the auto de fe of 1601
 (Concept art designed by Michaela Šimonová, Comenius University of Bratislava-Slovak Republic)

Illustration and design work involving several of the major characters used in the virtual world have already been illustrated and mocked up by the graphic artists Dave Gibbon, Ledis Molina and Andrea Flores Navarrete. Michaela Šimonová and a separate team from the Comenius University of Bratislava in conjunction with MSU honors student artists including Sarah Powell are currently in the process of aiding in the creation of more concept art and designs for further digital characters in various stages of the developmental process (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Digital Conversion of the Concept Art for the design of the African Slave, Juan Mozambique, assistant of the Chief Jailor of the Mexican Inquisition, created by Ledis Molina based on Michaela Šimonová's original drawing (Concept art designed by Michaela Šimonová, Comenius University of Bratislava-Slovak Republic)

Spanish language transcription, translation and analysis of the original archival primary sources of the Mexican Inquisition form the core of the historical documentation for this project. One of the largest and most complete surviving archives of any Inquisition Tribunal, the Mexican Inquisitions' surviving documentation from Mexico, and a significant number of its original sources found in private libraries and museum collections in the United States, such as the in the Conway Collection at the Helmrich Center for American Research of the Gilcrease Museum and Collections in Tulsa, Oklahoma, offer a very intimate and minutely documented look at the past of this repressive institution and its historical actors, officials, and in many cases its victims. One such case, discussed below, will be the trial transcripts of the case against a Flemish sailor and one-timed privateer: Guillermo Enríquez (fig. 5).

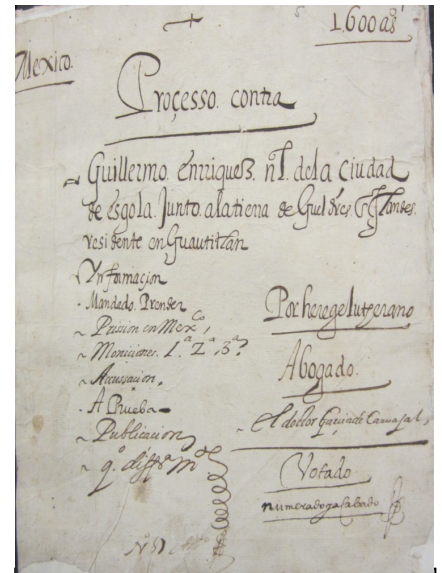


Figure 5: Inquisition Trial against Guillermo Enríquez, native of Flanders for Heresy, Conway Collection, Manuscript 8, Helmrich Center for American Research, Gilcrease Museum

VIRTUAL REALITY RE-CREATION OF THE PALACE OF THE MEXICAN INQUISITION

In the execution of these goals, this project focused in the first phase on the central *traza*, or grid plan of the 17th century Mexican capital city in general, and more specifically upon the plaza of Santo Domingo with its centrally located palace complex of the Inquisition, which once held the tribunal of the Holy Office (see fig. 6). In order to study more than just the built environment, this project investigated and incorporated numerous levels of historical, cultural, archaeological and architectural methods, sources and interpretations in order to offer a historically supported virtual recreation of the cultural heritage of 17th century Mexico City.

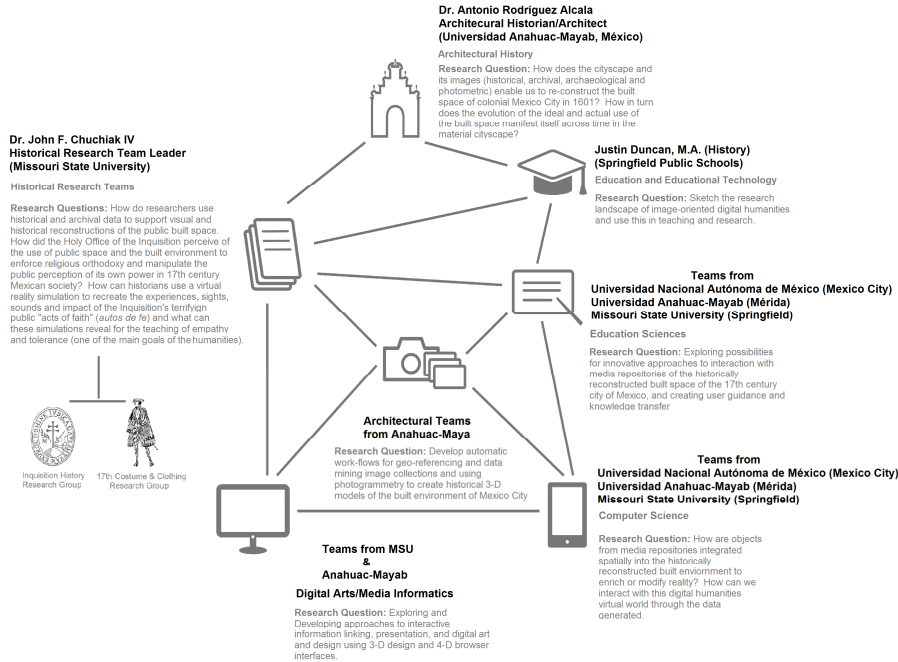


Figure 6: Plaza de Santo Domingo in Mexico City, with view toward the Palace of the Mexican Inquisition as it appeared circa 1655 (Virtual Recreation of Dulce Martinez Roldan)

In 2016, after extensive preliminary work on the themes, and initial digital character designs, an opportunity arose in the Honors College at Missouri State University to expand its international partnerships with the Universidad Anahuac Mayab in Mérida, Yucatán Mexico. A specialized research exchange program created in 2017 between the two institutions launched the second phase of this project under the co-direction of Dr. Antonio Rodriguez Alcala, a professor of Architecture and Virtual Cultural Heritage reconstruction from the Anahuac-Mayab who now serves as chief Architectural consultant; and Dr. John F. Chuchiak IV (professor of Colonial Latin American History) as chief historical consultant, in conjunction with the historian and Springfield Public School teacher, Justin Duncan.

With the international collaborative research agreement in place, the Honors College and the School of Architecture at Anahuac Mayab began a fruitful research and student exchange program focusing on the expansion of the second phase of this project. Incorporating at this stage intensive research from students of architecture from Merida, Mexico, and Honors Students from MSU in the fields of History, Language, Linguistics, Art and Design, as well several other disciplines, this interdisciplinary international working group began the recreation of the 17th century palace of the Mexican inquisition. As the project has developed, a much larger

international interdisciplinary research team has evolved, with students and concept artists also from the Comenius University of Bratislava, who have added their own skills, talents and expertise to the project, after the Fulbright Research fellowship at MSU of Dr. Milan Kovac, whose students have also joined the various research teams (Figure 7).



The symbiosis of research fields and disciplinary methods has been applied in this case in a research project whose main purpose is to bring back to life some of key elements of the development of the institution known as the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Through the combination and interactions between the humanities and information technologies, the virtual historical reconstruction of two of its most representative spaces has been the focus on this phase of the ongoing project: The Second Audience Chamber of the Mexican Inquisition tribunal; and the Secret Archive and Library room of the Holy Office. The richness of the historical subject and its documentations allows the integration of research outcomes from several of the sub-disciplines (using historical documentation, virtual architectural and artistic reconstruction, virtual museum spaces, and the study of the evolution of the built environment) all in the same project (fig. 7).



Figure 7: Interior central patio of the Mexican Inquisition Palace circa 1655: Second Research Season at MSU-2018
(Virtual Recreation of Dulce Martinez Roldan)

Due to the nature of the available information and surviving inventories which contain descriptions of equipment, furniture, provisions of elements, the flow of historical human actors and their user flows within the palace structure, it has been possible to engage in the creation of a historically documented and visually enriched historical virtual world. The integration of the digital technology and its methods and sources then became the next step by moving this 2-D historical documentation into the digital realm of 3-Dimensions. In the first instance, the reconstruction phase began with the use of two-dimensional drawing software to recreate the architectural plans of the inquisitorial spaces within the Mexican Inquisition palace based on a 1655 plan of the architect Diego López Murillo which exists in the collections of the National Mexican Archives in Mexico City (*Archivo General de la Nación*-image code 04229F-fig. 8).

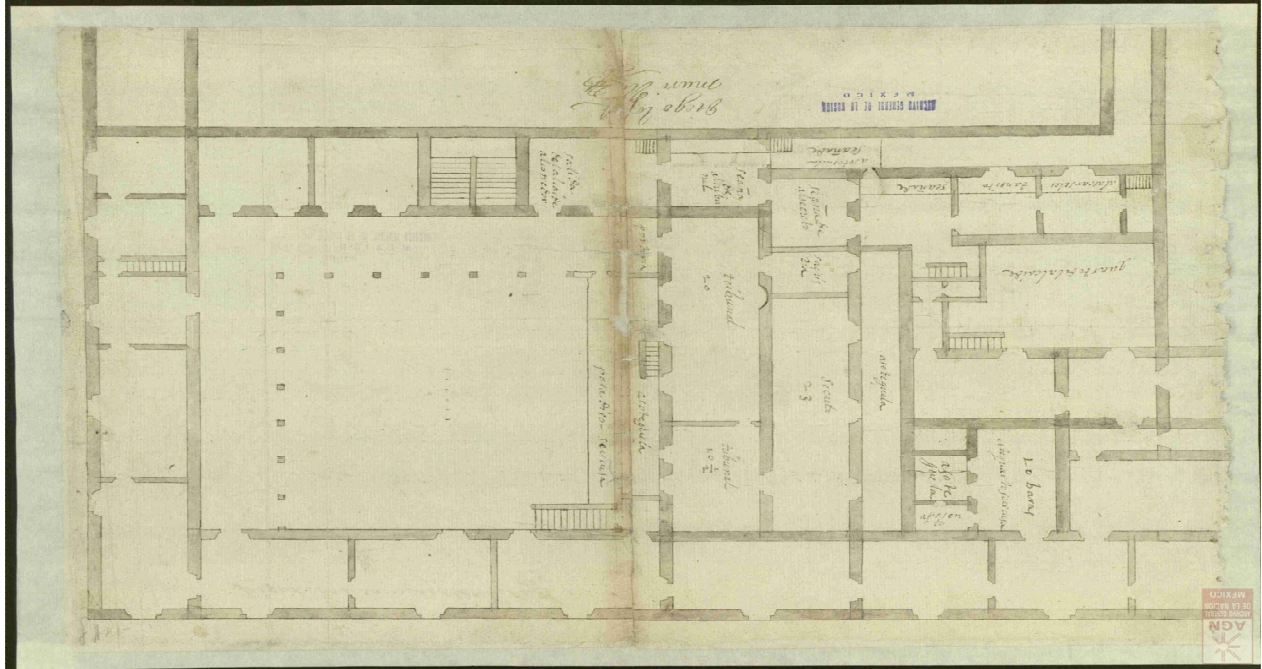


Figure 8: Map and Plan of the interior of the Palace of the Mexican Inquisition, ca. 1655

Subsequently, the team modeled the interiors based on the typical architectural typologies of the time, using the standard types of masonry walls, wooden coffered ceilings, and wooden doors, among others aspects of the built space. Within the model, a rigorous system of notation of source documentation and a reconstruction method for the historical recreated spaces was maintained leading to the utilization of a uniform system of codes to document evidence and sources of historical, architectural, or archaeological information for the creation of historical reconstructions (see fig. 9-source codes for the historical reconstruction).

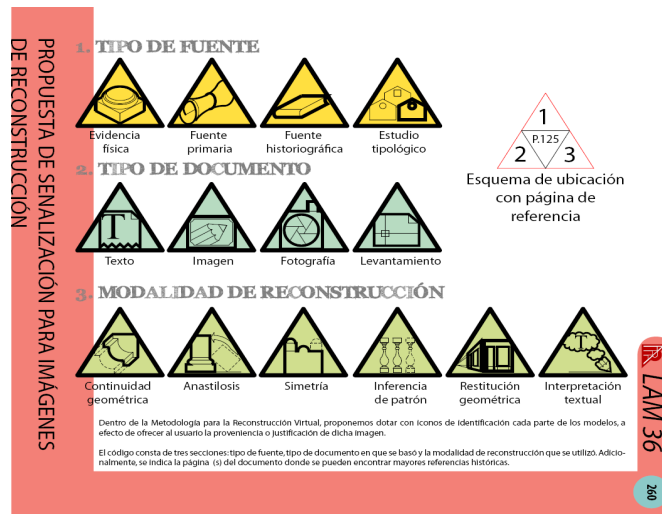


Figure 9: Historical, Textual and Architectural Source Codes for Reconstructions

The placement phase of the integration of art assets of the virtual world was rigidly regulated by historical documentation which included detailed inventories, descriptions and visitation records of the Mexican Tribunal, all of which indicated with great precision the location of each official, their equipment and accoutrements, as well as the placement of their specific furniture, cultural materials, etc. Environmental elements such as the placement of Inquisition trial files on the shelves of the Secret Archive, for instance, were incorporated by taking into account the greater veracity in the characters involved and historical descriptions of the organization and layout of the Secret Archives of the Inquisition (fig. 10).



Figure 10: Preliminary version of the *Sala del Secreto*, or the Secret Archives of the Mexican Inquisition

(Virtual Recreation of Antonio Rodríguez Alcalá
with material and cultural objects designed by María del Carmen Rodríguez Viesca)

The environmental conditions were also emulated with care, since many of the interior rooms were dark interior spaces without windows, they remained totally occluded from natural lighting, and required the creation and placement of candles, lamps and other historically accurate materials and means of lighting in order to provide the historically rebuilt space with the physical and ambient characteristics of the actual surroundings (fig. 11). The necessary privacy and secrecy demanded in the audience chambers of the Mexican Inquisition required the use of re-created lighting based on the use of candles and other torches mounted on chandeliers which when incorporated offered a more realistic re-creation, impressing upon the viewer the fear and terror that a suspect might experience when brought into one of the darker and dimly lit smaller audience chambers of the Inquisition.



Figure 11: Preliminary version of the *Sala de la Audiencia “de los retratos”* of the Mexican Inquisition with ambient lighting as the chambers would have appeared to the observer in the 17th century
 (Virtual Recreation of Antonio Rodríguez Alcalá with material and cultural objects designed by María del Carmen Rodríguez Viesca)

The contrast between the darkness of the Inquisition tribunal’s interior chambers and the light and open patio plan of the main entrance areas and even the patio of the secret prison section of the palace, is stark, and a reminder that inquisitorial imprisonment was meant more for the holding of prisoners during the duration of their trials, than for long-term imprisonment as a form of punishment (fig. 12).



Figure 12: Interior courtyard of the Secret Prisons of the Mexican Inquisition-First Research Season at MSU-2017
 (Virtual Recreation of Dulce Martínez Roldán)

THE CONSTRUCTION AND STRUCTURE OF THE PALACE OF THE INQUISITION, THE SCENE OF THE TRIALS AGAINST MARIANA NÚÑEZ DE CARVAJAL AND GUILLERMO ENRÍQUEZ

The Palace of the Inquisition of Mexico, headquarters of the Tribunal of the Holy Office, which conducted the trials against Mariana Núñez de Carvajal and the Flemish sailor William Heinrichs (*Guillermo Enríquez*) between 1598 and 1600, was the scene where this and many hundreds of other cases of heresy were carried out during practically the entire colonial period in the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The Mexican Inquisition's character as the guardian institution of the orthodoxy of the Catholic faith provided from the beginning an image of "lordship" in its palace's construction,¹¹ and at the same time the buildings which housed the tribunal displayed the power and undisputed authority of the Holy Office.

Few architectural genres of the colonial era throughout the world demanded as much care and attention in the arrangement of their functional partitions and spaces as a Court Palace of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Due to the unusual nature of its architectural program, since it was simultaneously a court, archives, Catholic parish, a dwelling space for functionaries, a place of torture and a prison all at the same time, its multifunctional nature gave these architectural complexes a remarkable complexity, emanating in the first instance from the needs of the institution that it housed.

Without any close or recent references, and with no field experience in the particular conditions of the settlement where it would be built, the first Palace of the Mexican Inquisition had an uncertain start. Unlike the mendicant religious orders, whose practice dictated the best disposition of spaces for their convents, the Tribunal of the Holy Office, gradually increasing its presence and relevance in the society of New Spain, modified, created or adapted the scenarios of its initial buildings as greater capacity, increased functionality, and expanded institutional needs required, always seeking to display greater sumptuousness as much as possible in its construction, and its decorative equipment.

The baroque palatial architecture of Mexico City in general, of which there are still notable examples extant today such as the *Palace of the Counts of San Mateo Valparaíso* or the *Palace of Iturbide*, can offer us a closer look at the architectural reality of the first version of the Mexican Inquisition Palace. The earliest structure no doubt contained a similar architectural structure to other surviving examples with central interior patios framed by columned corridors with bays of rooms along the perimeter to which different functions could be assigned. Other secondary courtyards, with more specific functions, connected to the main one by means of

¹¹ Francisco Santos Zertuche, *Señorío, dinero y arquitectura. El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, México: El Colegio de México, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco, 2000:13

narrow passages. Also, the pre-eminence of the treatment of the corners, and cornices where alcoves or main offices with greater interior and exterior ornamentation could be located, were also usual in these stately mansions, and so it was also for the Palace of the Inquisition. The plastic-expressive parts of the interiors, with moldings and *chiluca* gray reliefs combined with the red *tezontle* stone work completed the image typical of a baroque building of this type.

The combination of the natural and built environment, with a basic architectural program could not ignore, did however leave the possibility of the evolution of the existing structures as needed, which resulted in a dynamic and constantly evolving building that changed gradually from the moment the Holy Office was established in the continent to its final abolition in 1820.

In terms of the chronology of the built space of the Palace of the Inquisition, Spanish Crown authorized the creation of the first Court of the Holy Office in New Spain by Royal Decree of January 25, 1569,¹² naming Dr. Pedro de Moya Contreras became the first Inquisitor of New Spain. When Moya settled in Mexico City, he occupied and rented a prominent house near the convent of the Dominicans, the land of which had been granted to the Dominican order in 1526 by the wealthy Guerrero family. The house and structures there which would serve as the incipient palace of the Inquisition were so new and comfortable "that others could not be found in the city so purposefully"¹³

When this house and grounds eventually became transferred under the control of the Inquisition, and after having made the necessary adaptations to the original structure, the new Palace of the Holy Office had a Hearing Room, a Chamber of the Secret, "which cost a lot of money," a chapel, a formal courtroom, and residential rooms for two inquisitors, a suite for the prison warden and a place for the porter and doorman. As for the prisons or jails, it is known that by the end of October of that same year twelve cells had already been authorized and created.

By the time of the installation of the court, the houses were owned by Juan Velázquez de Salazar, a town councilmen of New Spain, who at that time was residing in Madrid, whose agent in Mexico City had them rented out to the new Holy Office by order of the viceroy for a period of two years.¹⁴ The asking price for the eventual purchase of the property required the straight sum of thirty thousand pesos in cash, and they had a lien on them of a little more, but

¹² See John F. Chuchiak, *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012): 81-91.

¹³ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2011: 50

¹⁴ De la Maza, *El Palacio de la Inquisición* (Escuela Nacional de Medicina), 2ª edición, México: UNAM, 1951:10

the new tribunal did not make an offer on the property, hoping instead to consult with their superior, the Inquisitor General in order to request his advice and the proper funds for the purchase.

It is noteworthy that in 1555 the famous map now known as the Uppsala Map (currently in Sweden) was drawn up, just 30 years after the Conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan by Hernán Cortés. Basically the property that the tribunal of the Holy Office occupied in the plaza de Santo Domingo must have been a two-story house with an annex attached to it at a lower height, where the prisons were probably located. On the Uppsala Map, we can clearly see the Convent of Santo Domingo, the first seat of the Court, and the smaller building to which the tribunal moved shortly afterwards on the opposite side of the street.



Figure 13. Fragment of the Uppsala Map (1555), where it is possible to appreciate the initial house where the Court was installed, east of the Convent of Santo Domingo.¹⁵

The decision of the location of the seat of the Inquisition court was not casual: the inquisitors settled in a strategic area, since on the one side of their building existed the old Customs House of the City, where all merchandise that entered into the colony passed, and its proximity enabled the Inquisitors to constantly check if any objects that they considered heretical or suspicious had entered into of left the city, especially prohibited books¹⁶. On the

¹⁵ Map source: Tenochtitlán, 1521. World Digital Library. Library of the Congress, U.S.A. Retrieved from <https://www.wdl.org/es/item/503/>

¹⁶ Palace of the School of Medicine, UNAM. Guide for professors (PDF document). Retrieved from <http://pem.facmed.unam.mx/index.php/publicaciones/descarga/summary/2-folletos/3-guia-para-profesores>

other side of the street, the Convent and Church of Santo Domingo, run by the Dominican Order, a religious order clearly affiliated with the Inquisition since its original inception in the middle ages in Spain.

By 1577, the lease of the house and its rents increased incrementally until it reached more than 700 pesos a year, almost double what was paid at the beginning just a few years before.¹⁷ The Spanish Monarch, for this reason, asked the Viceroy Don Martin Enriquez de Almanza for a report on the situation of the lease, and in May of that year the Crown sent a Royal Order granting a fiscal contribution toward the purchase of the buildings, based on their valuation made in Madrid, which amounted to about 50,000 pesos for the purchase price, but the remaining amount of the asking price for the property the Mexican Inquisition could not afford. At the same time, another property, the houses of Ortuño de Ibarra went out to auction for the smaller sum of twenty thousand pesos; and the Inquisitors were told by the Viceroy to buy it for him paying the full amount that he offered and he excused himself for any more aid; and after the intervention of the Archbishop, the Inquisitors finally bought these houses, offering to pay the final price in installments in a letter dated October 1577.¹⁸ The Archbishop at the time was none other than Pedro Moya Contreras, the first Inquisitor of New Spain (1570-1574). The new inquisitors made the prosecutor move there to these houses, claiming that they had the 16,000 pesos of common gold to pay the first installment on February 15, 1578, but then the owner later complained, stating that they had forced him to sell his property. Regardless of the conflict, the final purchase of these houses became ineffective because the Tribunal instead purchased their original rented property from Velázquez de Salazar by a property deed granted in Madrid on July 14, 1578.¹⁹ Nevertheless the major construction campaigns on the palace would not occur until the arrival of a zealous and motivated new Inquisitor: Alonso de Peralta y Robles,

ALONSO DE PERALTA AND REFORMS AND WORK ON THE INQUISITION'S PALACE: BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION CAMPAIGNS, 1596-1610

The new Inquisitor, Alonso de Peralta, arrived at the port of San Juan de Ulúa in 1594,²⁰ and he would play a transcendental role in the history of both the institution and the

¹⁷ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2011: 110

¹⁸ De la Maza, *El Palacio de la Inquisición* (Escuela Nacional de Medicina), 2ª edición, México: UNAM, 1951:10

¹⁹ Zertuche, *El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, 2000:49-53.

²⁰ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 108

construction projects on the property.²¹ A man with renaissance interests, Peralta took an active role not only in the funding and donations for construction projects, but he also took an active role in their designs and implementation. Just like his mentor Inquisitor General Gaspar de Quiroga, Peralta patronized the arts, and engaged in a massive building campaign to give more prestige and public display to the Palace of the Inquisition, which he completed paying for during his reign.²²

As interim inquisitor in 1591, Peralta had witnessed the dilapidated state of the palace of the Inquisition of Seville in the fortress at Triana. Although he reported on this to the Inquisitor General in his visitation report, the repairs and work on the palace at Seville did not begin in earnest until 1601.²³

Once in charge in Mexico, Alonso de Peralta had no obstacles in his way to enact his own building campaign as well as find new and innovative ways of acquiring funding for the *obras*. After the final purchase of the buildings and lands of the Tribunal, which had been rented since the inception of the Mexican Inquisition, Peralta's first order of business was to set about repairing the buildings and properties, as well as the interior of the palace itself, which he saw in terrible shape.²⁴

Very shortly after the arrival of Peralta, on the eve of the *Auto de Fe General* of 1596 the inquisitors agreed that in order "for



Figure 14: Don Alonso de Peralta y Robles, Inquisitor of New Spain

²¹ In the years following the founding of the Inquisition, construction work continued to be carried out with later reforms and adaptations, including enlargements and the subsequent occupying of adjoining properties. The culmination of these works was reached little more than a century and a half later, when the inquisitorial houses were transformed into a formal substantial enclosed Palace structure (Zertuche, 2000: 39).

²² See John F. Chuchiak, "'Born to be an Inquisitor'- Don Alonso de Peralta y Robles and the Inquisitorial Tribunal of New Spain: A Case Study in the Background, Motivations, Actions and Career of the first Creole Inquisitor in the New World, 1594-1610" in *Beyond Index and Auto de Fe: New Directions in Spanish Inquisition Studies*, in *Colonial Latin American Review*, (in press).

²³The Tribunal of Seville did not embark upon any major repairs of the palace there until 1601. From 1601-1605, the Inquisitor General Juan de Zuñiga Flores authorized the works and more than 64,379 maravedis were spent to begin the repairs. See *La hacienda de la Inquisición 1478-1700*, p. 285.

²⁴ See *Carta del Inquisidor Lic. Don Alonso de Peralta sobre el estado de los edificios de este tribunal*, AGN, Inquisición, Vol., 223. It was finally under Peralta's direction, and no doubt based on his own illicit acquisition of funds, that the Mexican tribunal was able to finally collect enough funding to pay for the final purchase of the property and buildings where the Mexican Tribunal sat.

edification and public example” that the reconciled who previously had been deposited in various convents throughout the city to fulfil their sentences, should all be brought together under the watchful eye of the Inquisitors. In order to achieve this goal, they decided to buy a house near the Inquisition palace which could serve as a perpetual jail.²⁵

Shortly after the purchase of the building, the Inquisitors began to complain that prisoners could easily communicate through the thin mud walls that divided their prison cells, which made it possible for them to talk among themselves, something the Inquisition prohibited in their perpetual prisons, and they also complained that these dungeons were very humid.²⁶

Nevertheless, the inadequacy of these new prisons became obvious as prisoners and others found ways to get around their mandatory isolation and the forced seclusion of the prisoners. For instance, among those reconciled in this *General Auto de fe* of 1596, one of the penitents, Baltasar de Viana, who lived next door to the prisons of the Holy Office, spoke through the walls with some prisoners, for this infraction he received a sentence of exile for a year.²⁷ Similarly four natives broke into the grounds at night through the stables of the Tribunal and stole the saddle and harnesses of the horses of the Inquisitor Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero, as well as the swords of his African slaves, proving that these premises were not secure. Similarly, in the auto de fe of 1601, one of the condemned was the African slave of the prison’s warden, named Juan de Mozambique, who had entered into the prisons unobserved taking and passing notes and messages between prisoners. All of this made it clear to the inquisitors that they had to fortify these premises, and make the prisons more isolated.

The building, fortification and expansion of a perpetual prison for the tribunal’s prisoners served as one of the first major additions to the Inquisition palace which occurred at the behest and direction of Inquisitor Alonso de Peralta. According to later observers this new prison complex built in 1598 was:

A “very spacious house” that was bought to serve as a "perpetual prison" that gave name to a street. In this house the sentenced persons served out their sentences, in the sight of the inquisitors and under the care of a Warden who took them to Mass "every

²⁵ *Carta del tribunal a la Suprema, 10 de noviembre de 1596*, cited in Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 118.

²⁶ *Carta del tribunal a la Suprema, 22 de febrero, 1597* cited in Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 140

²⁷ *Ibid*, 140.

Sunday and festivity", and made them confess and take communion at "Eastertime and the appointed days of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother "... This prison was built in the late sixteenth century, while inquisitor D. Alonso de Peralta served, to whom the Holy Office also owed a chapel -in which were several paintings: San Ildefonso, on the major altar, and portraits of San Pedro and San Pablo, Santo Domingo and San Pedro Mártir, in the collateral altars²⁸



Figure 15: 3-D Re-creation of the Cloistered Enclosure of the Secret and Perpetual Prisons of the Tribunal of New Spain, circa 1609.

Some of the first evidence of what scholars have called Peralta's obstinate cruelty appeared during these building campaigns, as Peralta dealt with any opposition or resistance to his plans harshly. Anyone who resisted his great building campaign felt the full force of his wrath. Similarly, as the people of New Spain quickly learned attacks against Peralta's clients, and close *criados* were also dealt with harshly. For instance, a law student Diego de Porrás Villerias, who refused three orders by the Holy Office to bring two cart-loads of lime for the *obras* of the secret prisons which they were building, was dealt with very harshly when he made fun of and ridiculed the *Alcaide*, Juan de Leon Plaza, who went to inquire about the lime for the laborers.²⁹ In return, Peralta in defense of his friend and supporter, ordered the arrest of Porrás for "disobedience" and had him sentenced to a fine of 100 pesos (which went toward the *obras*) and with one year of exile from Mexico City.³⁰

²⁸ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 172-175.

²⁹See *Proceso contra Diego de Porrás Villerias, estudiante de leyes, por desobediente al mandato del Santo Oficio (no quiso mandar pronto cal al Santo Oficio)*, México City, 1598. AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 183, Exp. 1, 20 folios.

³⁰ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 137.

These actions did not serve as the only time that Peralta used his powers as inquisitor to punish slights given to his jailer and the father of one of his most important *criados*, Diego de Leon Plaza. He also arrested and harshly sentenced Sebastian de la Peña, a reconciled Portuguese merchant, to 200 lashes and a public appearance at an auto de fe for having “placed his hands upon the jailer of the perpetual prison [Juan de Leon Plaza] dishonoring him, and for lying about him on many occasions and for having taken from him his sword, in an attempt to kill him.”³¹

Nevertheless, the Inquisitors also attempted by means of their construction campaigns to alleviate the sufferings and difficulties faced by their prisoners. According to the Acts of the Town Council of Mexico City in May of 1598, the Inquisitors had gone to the Viceroy to request that the city help the Tribunal to create a waterline intake into the building “for benefit and health of the prisoners and patients.”³² The petition was approved, and by July of that same year the Town Council ordered that the town provide the Tribunals workmen with the necessary stone “for the tubing for the conduit and water pipes of the Inquisition.”³³

Between 1596 and 1609 Alonso de Peralta made many important reforms to the Palace, and many contemporary and later observers stated that in effect he had basically rebuilt the edifice.³⁴ Peralta later added a chapel and altars dedicated to the Archbishop of Seville, and after his appointment as Archbishop of Charcas (in Bolivia), he continued to send resources to the Palace for its later construction campaigns.

It is also noteworthy that the Inquisition contributed two significant elements to the repertoire of what historical architects call ephemeral or impermanent architecture in Mexico City:

- The assembly of the necessary elements for the celebration of the public *autos de fe* (Acts of Faith), the so-called “theater staging” or “*tablados*,” which served as formal wooden structures with bleachers where the city’s populace sat during these public displays of sentencing and punishment, in which a hierarchical protocol governed the seating arrangements.

³¹ Ibid., 137-138.

³² See *Actas de Cabildo de la Ciudad de México*, 6 de julio de 1598.

³³ See *Actas de Cabildo de la Ciudad de México*, 6 de julio de 1598.

³⁴ De la Maza, *El Palacio de la Inquisición* (Escuela Nacional de Medicina), 2ª edición, México: UNAM, 1951:15.

- Funerary burial monuments, or temporary painted wooden structures (called *túmulos*) such as those the Holy Office ordered built by Alonso de Peralta for the funeral of King Philip II, creator of the Holy Office in the Americas,³⁵ that took place inside the Santo Domingo church in April 1599; and later those of Philip III in 1621.³⁶

The preparations of the wooden staging for the various *autos de fe*, especially for the large 1601 Auto de fe, were the subject of careful planning which included the formal making of architectural plans of the project. The vast majority of the pieces the craftsmen, carpenters and painters prepared inside the houses of the Inquisition, so that the whole structure could later be transported easily to their final destination in the main plaza three blocks away. The stake on which the condemned were to be burned, on the other hand, was made of masonry topped with four large posts upon which they had fastened large metal rings near the top, and the secular authorities or "secular arm" of the city, (Mexico City's Mayor) was notified that he had to provide the firewood, town criers and the executioners for the solemn day of punishment on the Monday after the *auto de fe*.

In spite of the improvements sustained by Peralta, in 1605 the flooding of the lagoon of the city left the houses of the court so ruinous that they were about to abandon them. One can calculate how the prisons would be when the same inquisitors expressed that it was "a great compassion to see what the prisoners suffered."³⁷ A meeting of master builders was convened on the basis of the danger of imminent collapse of the walls of the Tribunal's structure and the patio arcades.³⁸ The forced reparations suggested by the master builders did not conclude until 1606.

The colonial cartography of Mexico City is a valuable source of information about the Palace and its stages of construction. For instance, in the map of Juan Gómez de Trasmonte, published in the 1628, we can observe the first recorded image of the building of the Inquisition palace, fifty-seven years after the Court was established. In this document we can note that the palace buildings at the corner had been constructed to a higher point with the addition of a second level, with the main entrance doorway in the middle of the main façade which opened onto the Plaza of Santo Domingo.

The extensive nature of the works of repair of the building, conducted mostly by local master builders or stone masons, eventually led to the necessity of the creation of the position

³⁵ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 144-146.

³⁶ Zertuche, *El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, 2000: 100.

³⁷ Medina, *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*, 2000: 178.

³⁸ Zertuche, *El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, 2000: 94.

of the Master Builder of Construction Works of the Holy Office. Bartolomé Bernal served as the first Master Builder of the Holy Office, after having an interview and audience with the Inquisitors in July 1638. From that date until 1649, Bernal carried out several modest works and repairs, the last one being the project for the wooden staging and stands of the Auto de fe of 1649.³⁹

Nevertheless, during the period from 1642 to 1649, the increasing persecution of the suspected Judaizers in New Spain created the urgent need to have new prison cells, which made it necessary for some new prisons to be improvised. But, as the Inquisition ordered the arrest of more and more prisoners, other prisons had to be built hastily, which had serious consequences in regards to the inability to maintain the secret and isolation required for the prisoners during their trials. At this point, the Holy Office solved some of these problems by renting the so-called "*Casas de Picazo*," located in front of the church of *La Encarnación*.

After the visitation of the Auditing Inquisitor Juan Sáenz de Mañozca to the properties, he informed the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Madrid, sending a report dated the 25 of February of 1650 in which he stated:

I have come by many reports and relations that the Royal Treasury Office of the Inquisition is in a laborious state, and that they are spending and consuming vast amounts of monies in buildings, construction, and in other jobs; and that the loans they have made they have given to poorly provisioned ranches, with insufficient mortgages; and that the confiscations of the prisoners have been gradually lost, and they have not taken enough care in the collection of these confiscated estates; and that the creditors of the prisoners are not only not paid but their requests for payment are not even heard, about which there have been many complaints ...⁴⁰

It is clear that the inquisitors, the lesser ministers and their relatives had liberally attributed large loans based on the assets sequestered, to the detriment of the improvements and maintenance of the Palace and its construction works. Desiring to remedy this situation, in the mid-seventeenth century, various improvement projects were planned, especially as a result of the periodic "*visitas*" (or audits) conducted by the Auditing Inquisitor Pedro de Medina Rico from 1654 to 1663.⁴¹ Dating from this time period, the architectural plan of 1655 made by Diego Lopez Murillo, is the oldest known plan of the interior of the Mexican Inquisition palace, and judging by the annotations made on that plan, the proposal of various construction works

³⁹ Zertuche, *El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, 2000: 102.

⁴⁰ Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571-1700*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015: 47.

⁴¹ For a detailed discussion of this visitation and its impact on the renewed construction campaigns see Chuchiak, *The Inquisition in New Spain*, 2012: 128-129.

was made which aimed at improving the circulations and flows of spaces within the tribunal, especially those that went to/from the tribunal's prisons.

In this plan, changes made to the initial proposal are also reflected because the location of some of the proposed spaces the Inquisitors considered defective. For instance the Archive of the Secret initially had been proposed to be re-located to the eastern side of the complex, but this would have reduced its seclusion and privacy: so it was relocated to the center of the building, directly behind the Audience Chambers of the Tribunal.⁴² The lighting and ventilation issues there were also resolved by the creation of "azotehuelas", small open patios, strategically located for proper ventilation and air circulation.

Diego de los Santos y Ávila presented the project for the construction of the new prisons in 1657. He contemplated not so much the total demolition of the old ones, but rather the addition of new ones, improving upon the existing ones. Just like the tribunals, the new prisons were organized around a central courtyard with corridors, including two levels of prison cells. They also included new stables and rooms for the guards and even the inquisitors, since functionally they were not grouped apart from the main structures. The infamous "torture chamber" must have also occupied part of these new cells.

In summary, by that time the Inquisition's buildings and grounds occupied more than half of the street known as *La Perpetua*, almost the entirety of the street of the Sepulchers of Santo Domingo, as well as a good part of the street known as the *Calle de las Cocheras*. It is necessary to mention that on this last street a small alley divided the structure from the building of the women's prison, known as the Penitential Prison, which subsequently dominated a large portion of the rest of this city block.⁴³

Likewise, the confraternity of the Saint Inquisitor Pedro Arbués or Pedro Mártir, reinstated by Medina Rico, asked the inquisitors formally in July 1659 for permission to build a chapel there on their premises as well since:

The courts of the Holy Office, such as the Royal Chancery and Audiencias, have always had chapels where the judges and ministers prayed and took communal mass before entering their hearings and the courts of the Holy Office have always had and have built chapels because in them they must also celebrate some particular acts of faith and thus it is general, or almost such, to have very large chapels in the Holy Office's palaces with doorways open to the streets.⁴⁴

⁴² AGN, *Real Fisco de la Inquisición*, vol. 27, exp. 2, f. 110.

⁴³ De la Maza, *El Palacio de la Inquisición*, 1951:20.

⁴⁴ AGN, *Inquisición*, 584, 89, cited in De la Maza, 1945: 20.

The Inquisitors apparently had already been notified in advance of this request, since shortly after granting the license for the said chapel on August 11, they presented the plans made by their Master Builder Diego de los Santos y Ávila for the said project which they had commissioned as early as February 14, 1659. The chapel's projected location would be the main front corner of the property. However, this new chapel apparently was not made, despite having the plans and initial work put out for bidding. In any case, thereafter, the presence of professional architects in the works of the Inquisition becomes increasingly clear.

The new prison in Mexico City was concluded in 1646, in which the rear patio abutted up against the said "Perpetual Prisons," on the street of the same name, though the work had been delayed due to economic problems. Between 1680 and 1695, Juan Montero, the Master Builder of the Holy Office, undertook some repair work in these houses annexed to the Tribunal (in the first houses that they had occupied), in order to make it a new home for the *beatas* (lay sisters).⁴⁵

Finally, about 1690, Diego Correa painted the large Screenfold painting of the Counts of Moctezuma, giving a magnificent overview of the city, in which we can see a much larger Palace of the Inquisition with a more majestic appearance, with thick bared windows on the balconies and crowned by a prominent crenellated cornice all around with a constructed upper level added. After this formative period, during the 18th century, the celebrated architect Pedro de Arrieta entered onto the scene, taking the art and reconstruction campaigns of the Holy Office's palace to the cusps of what architects call the "Inquisitorial Baroque."⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the architectural development of this period will be treated in the future phases of this project.

THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE BUILT SPACE AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE PALACE WITH THE USAGE FLOW OF THE INQUISITION TRIBUNAL

Like any other building, the architectural program of the Palace of the Inquisition before Pedro de Arrieta's reforms of its spatial layout and plan in the 18th century, contemplated the following elements in order to fulfil its inquisitorial mission through the purposeful arrangement of the built spaces of the structure (table 1):

⁴⁵ INBA, 2016.

⁴⁶ Zertuche, *El Palacio de la Inquisición de México, 1571-1820*, 2000: 86; Berlin, 1944: 32

Table 1: Functional Spaces Needed for the Activities of an Inquisition Tribunal

Spaces	Activities	Equipment and Furnishings	Personnel or Officials	Circulation and Access
Tribunal Audience Chambers*	Conduct judicial proceedings and hear mass in private chapel	Desks, chairs, and altarpiece	Major Officials: Inquisitors, Prosecuting Attorney, Accountants, Receivers, Messengers	Restricted access only for major officials and prison warden for conducting of inmates / witnesses.
Chamber of the Secret*	General Secret Archive of the Tribunal	Desks, chairs, bookstands, strong boxes with cash and goods	Notary of the Secret	Highly restricted access only for notary and inquisitors
Perpetual Prisons*	Encarceration of the prisoners	Cells, fountain, stables for mules and horses with access to the street	Prison Warden (<i>Alcaide</i>), Jailers, Slaves and Servants	Restricted access, only accessible by passing through the checkpoint of the room and quarters of the prison warden.
Torture Chamber	Torture by means of the rack and waterboarding	Torture instruments, table and chairs for the inquisitors and notary	Prison Warden, Notary, Inquisitor, Torturer	Restricted Access by contiguous with the cells of the prison and accessible by warden's quarters in basement level.
Chapel	Catholic Masas, Spiritual exercises, funerary rites, etc.	Altar, altarpiece, benches, liturgical equipment	Chaplain	Attached to the courts, with projected construction for the confraternity of San Pedro Martyr on the corner.
Offices	Diverse administrative activities	Office furniture	Secretaries, Consultants, Qualifiers, Commissioners, Scribes, Constables, Interpreters, etc.	Public spaces accessible from the street, or from the principal patio
Residential apartments of the inquisitors	Personal residence	Basic domestic furnishings	Inquisitors, slaves & servants	Restricted access on the second floor, with the possibility of inside or outside access.
Prison Warden's Quarters	Personal residence	Basic domestic furnishings	Prison Warden (<i>Alcaide</i>)	Access restricted, strategically located at the entrance of the prisons cells & above torture chamber
Supporting Equipment	Refectory, cellar or cooling room for conservation of wine and food	Kitchen, furniture for dining room, shelves for wine and food	Lesser Officials: Doorman, Watchmen, Dispenser, domestic servants, Medic, barber, etc.	Semi-private, with possibility of access by all ranking officers, as well as accessible for the taking of food to the prisoners
Autos de Fe	Theaters or staging (tablados) for public events, for both indoors or outdoors	Wooden stocks, benches and seating for authorities, pillory for executions	Prison Warden (<i>Alcaide</i>), Chief Constable (<i>Alguacil Mayor</i>), Dean of the Cathedral Chapter and other ecclesiastical and secular invited guests	Restricted access used only for procession of reconciled and authorities during the general public <i>autos de fe</i> for the spectators witnessing the event.

* Key Spaces for the Tribunal's Functions

It is through this architectural program of necessary Inquisitorial functions that the architectural plan for the palace was decided, based on a central courtyard with colonnaded arches with a perimeter of corridors and various rooms. The corridors did not run around the entire courtyard, but instead they only covered the northern and western sides, since the courtyard located to the eastern side required greater restriction in access.

The main courtyard served as the first checkpoint of the entire premises, since, there the new defendants were admitted, handed over to the Chief Constable, and taken to Prison warden who checked them into their separate prison cells. These initial functions of the arrest and handing over of the prison to the constables and jailers clearly exemplifies the functional flows evident in the structural usage flows of the building as a series of checkpoints, and a gradual increase in isolation of the prisoner. The massive wooden doorway and entrance to the palace served as the first physical barrier. As the large wooden doors closed behind the prisoner, he or she faced the second virtual barrier or checkpoint: the main patio; and from which was not possible to avoid as the entranceway led directly into the facing patio.

Fig. 16. Analysis of spatial connectivity of the Palace of the Inquisition (Space Syntax Software, University College of London, architectural plan based on Diego Lopez Murillo, 1655, AGN MX).

Running an analysis of the spatial syntax of the palace (Fig. 16) we can observe a pre-eminence of connectivity with this main courtyard, a connectivity that nevertheless is quickly cut off after the arrival at the tribunal's audience chambers. Behind these courtrooms lay the Chamber of the Secret; and from that point on access and connectivity remained drastically reduced due to the fact that on the eastern side were the cells of the prisoners and the rooms of the senior officers, which required greater privacy. It is noteworthy that a clear line of connectivity (the red tone of the graph) is drawn from the main entranceway to the large altar

within the first Tribunal audience chamber, once passing under the covered patio that preceded it.

Intuitively, for greater recognition and organization of the built spaces, these could be arranged in "functional pairs": a first pair of which is formed by the tribunal's three audience chambers and the Chamber and Archive of the Secret, with an intrinsic and necessary spatial and functional relationship existing between this pair. The second functional pair comprised the Living Quarters of the Prison Warden and his staff, and the secret prisons themselves which can be considered a functional pair due to the need of the Warden to control the prisons and their prisoners.

The private quarters of the Inquisitors also served as spaces that required privacy in their access but flexibility in their exit. In the plans themselves even these private entrances and exits are recognized as being configured and granted for access only by specific designated officials: such as "the entrance of Inquisitor Mañozca", or "Inquisitor Estrada's corridor", etc. Other spaces of a more public nature also existed in relation to the bays and chambers which opened into the square main patio, which served as offices for the lesser officials of the tribunal and which even probably contained a chapel on the main corner, where the great project for the chapel of the confraternity of San Pedro Mártir had been initially proposed.

A BRIEF CASE STUDY IN THE USER FLOWS OF THE PALACE OF THE INQUISITION IN A TYPICAL INQUISITION CASE: THE CASE OF THE FLEMISH SAILOR WILLIAM HEINRICHS (GUILLERMO ENRIQUEZ)

The period from 1596-1610 witnessed an increase flow of Inquisitorial prisoners into the palace and its prisons, and these increases in prisoners and the processing of their cases, necessitated the expansion of the prisons, and the reorientation of the spaces and usage of the interior chambers of the palace.

From the initial audience with the suspected heretic, inquisitors engaged in a process of open negotiation with the accused, offering them leniency and mercy in exchange for his or her confession. At every stage in a defendant's trial, "the inquisitors attempted to hamper the legal defense and set up traps and other tricks in order to elicit or even trick a confession out of the suspect."⁴⁷ In all of these audiences with the inquisitors, an attempted negotiation occurred with the accused heretic. The earlier a defendant confessed in the trial proceedings, the more mercy the inquisitors offered the accused and the lesser the punishment in the ultimate sentence.

⁴⁷ See John F. Chuchiak, "Negotiating Penance: Inquisitors' Interactions and Negotiations with the accused in Inquisition Trials" in Gretchen Starr-LeBeau, and Charles H. Parker, eds, *Judging Faith, Punishing Sin: Inquisitions and Consistories in the Early Modern World*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 215-228.

The entire process of these multiple interrogations was designed to disorient the accused heretic and make him or her suspect that the inquisitors had much more information and evidence than they actually had. As we will see below, the very nature of the Inquisition Palace's design and construction played a part in the isolation of the prisoner and the inquisitors' domination over the prisoner's access to information and their perceptions, further playing into their sense of isolation and despair.

Examining just one case here serves as a good illustration of how the Inquisitors utilized the very layout and structure of the Palace to aid them in their interrogations of an accused heretic. A good example of the typical prisoner movements and flow within the palace during the length of their inquisitorial trial is the case against the Flemish sailor and one-time privateer, William Heinrich, known by the inquisitors as Guillermo Enriquez.⁴⁸

Based on the extensive and complete documentation of his trial, we can cross-reference this information with the architectural schematic of the palace based on the architectural plan of the Master Builder Lopez Murillo dated from 1655, since many of the architectural features of the palace existed in the same layout during the earlier period of Enriquez's trial in 1601. Although repairs and alterations were made from 1600-1655, the basic spatial layout preserved the optimal location of the key spaces of the Tribunal (Courtrooms, Chamber of the Secret and the Prisons).

In this case, the arresting officers of the Inquisition took the Flemish sailor Guillermo Enriquez by surprise, arresting him on Saturday, January 1, 1601. Implicated in earlier testimonies by several of his Flemish shipmates, unbeknownst to Enriquez, his colleagues had already testified against him as early as 1598. After his arrest, the familiar Pedro de Fonseca took him quickly to the Plaza of Santo Domingo and ushered him through the main doorway of the Inquisition palace. Shortly after his arrival, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the arresting officer presented him to the Chief Constable in the main courtyard. Within minutes, the disoriented Enriquez found himself handed over to the Prison Warden, Juan de Leon Plaza, and taken to his prison cell through the corridors on the north side of the patio (Fig. 17).

⁴⁸ See for further information about the case *Inquisition Trial against Guillermo Enriquez, native of Flanders for Heresy*, Manuscript 8, Conway Collection, Helmrich Center for American Research, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 54 folios.

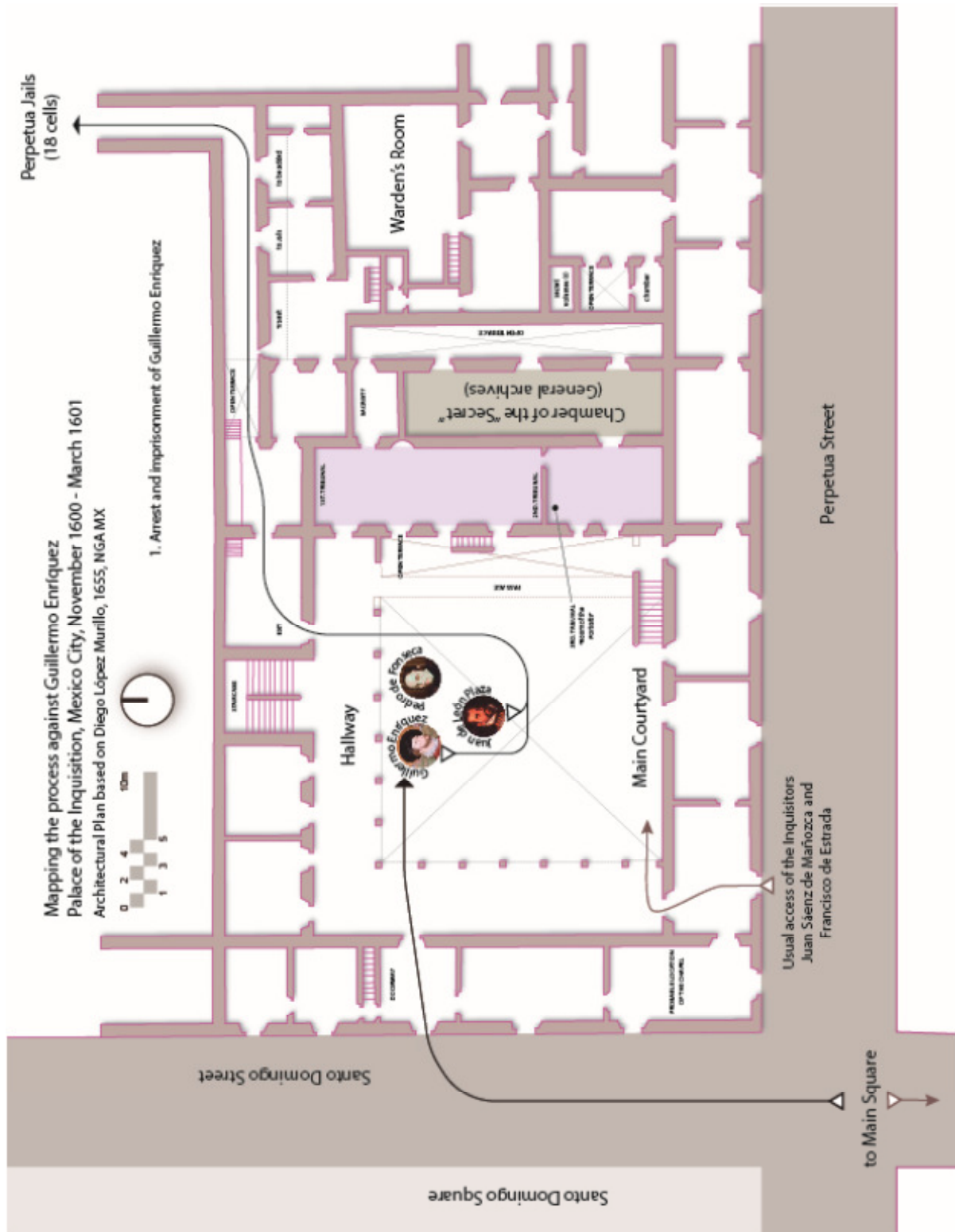


Figure 17: Arrest and imprisonment of Guillermo Enriquez in the Palace of the Inquisition CDMX, 1600

From his prison cell, Enriquez is taken time and again through the same back corridor from the prisons, through the back of the palace to the open covered patio in front of the tribunal's courtrooms, from which he would be ushered into the dimly lit smaller of the three audience chambers where he would be interrogated by the Inquisitors. From his first through his fifth audiences with the Inquisitors he was taken invariably from his prison cell to the courtroom and then vice versa back again without stepping onto the patio again. The only difference between each of his audiences being the presence of various prosecutors, defenders and secret witnesses who observed him and testified concerning his case behind screened doors from where the prisoner was unable to observe their identity (Fig. 18).

After the Fifth Hearing in his case, and his failure to cooperate with the Inquisitors attempt to gain his confession, the inquisitors hold a vote and consultation of the faith on February 16, 1601, in which the jury decides to order Enriquez to be interrogated again, but this time under the administration of torture.⁴⁹ Although our modern sensibilities view the use of torture as abhorrent, in the minds of the inquisitors (and most other contemporary criminal courts of the period), the use of torture remained justified in order to achieve full proof of the accused heretic's crime.

⁴⁹ See *Votos en la Sentencia de Interrogación con tormento en el proceso en contra de Guillermo Enríquez, de Flandes, por hereje luterano, 16 de febrero, 1601*, in *Inquisition Trial against Guillermo Enríquez, native of Flanders for Heresy, Manuscript 8, Conway Collection, Helmrich Center for American Research, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 54 folios.*

Several days later, on February 21, 1601, Enriquez is once again taken from his prison to the Courtroom where he is notified of this decision, and from there, after hearing the sentence of questioning under torture, the jailer quickly took him to the Torture Chamber in the basement below the Prison Warden’s chambers. There at around 8 o’clock in the morning he was tortured and interrogated using the rack with the torture session ending around 9 o’clock.⁵⁰ After the torture session, the jailer then took Enriquez to a holding cell near this room before later returning him to his own cell (fig. 19).

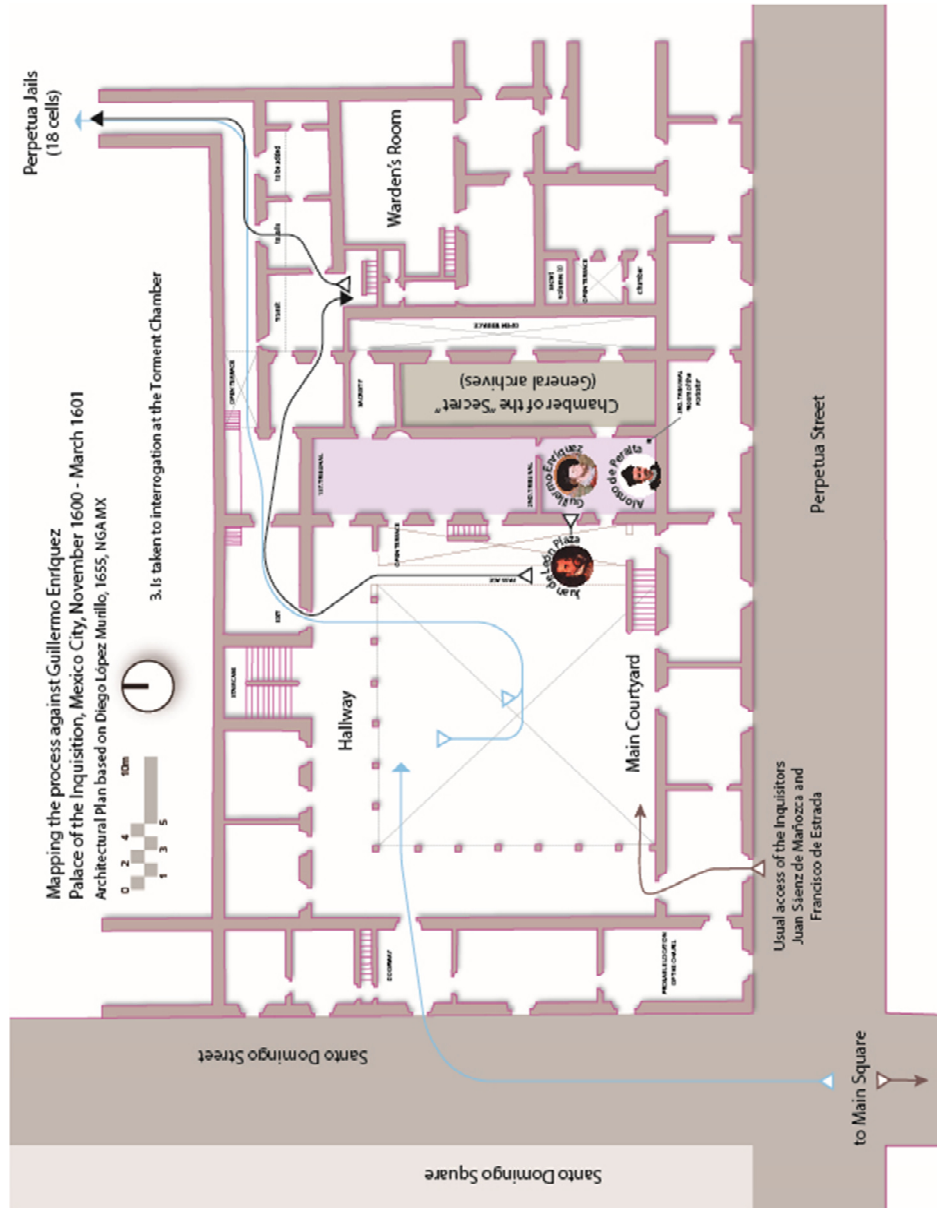


Figure 19: Enriquez is taken to the Torture Chamber for interrogation under Torture.

⁵⁰ *Interrogación del reo Guillermo Enriquez con tormento, 21 de febrero, 1601, in Inquisition Trial against Guillermo Enriquez, native of Flanders for Heresy, Manuscript 8, Conway Collection, Helmrich Center for American Research, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 54 folios.*

A week later on February 28, 2601, he is again taken to the Courtroom to ratify his statements made under torture. The inquisitor Alonso de Peralta once again calls a vote and consultation of the faith which decides upon the definitive sentence in the case of heresy against Guillermo Enriquez. The defendant is not notified of the sentence, and will not discover the final sentence and conclusion of his case until he is processed publically in the *auto de fe* of March 25, 1601. Not knowing his sentence, Enriquez was a short time later taken from his cell to the public central plaza of Mexico City where he heard and came to know the final sentence of his case, after which he was once again returned to his cell.⁵¹ Finally, the following day after his public humiliation on March 26, 1601, after swearing to secrecy and denying having received any communication heard in the jails, Guillermo Enriquez is released from the prisons (Fig. 20).

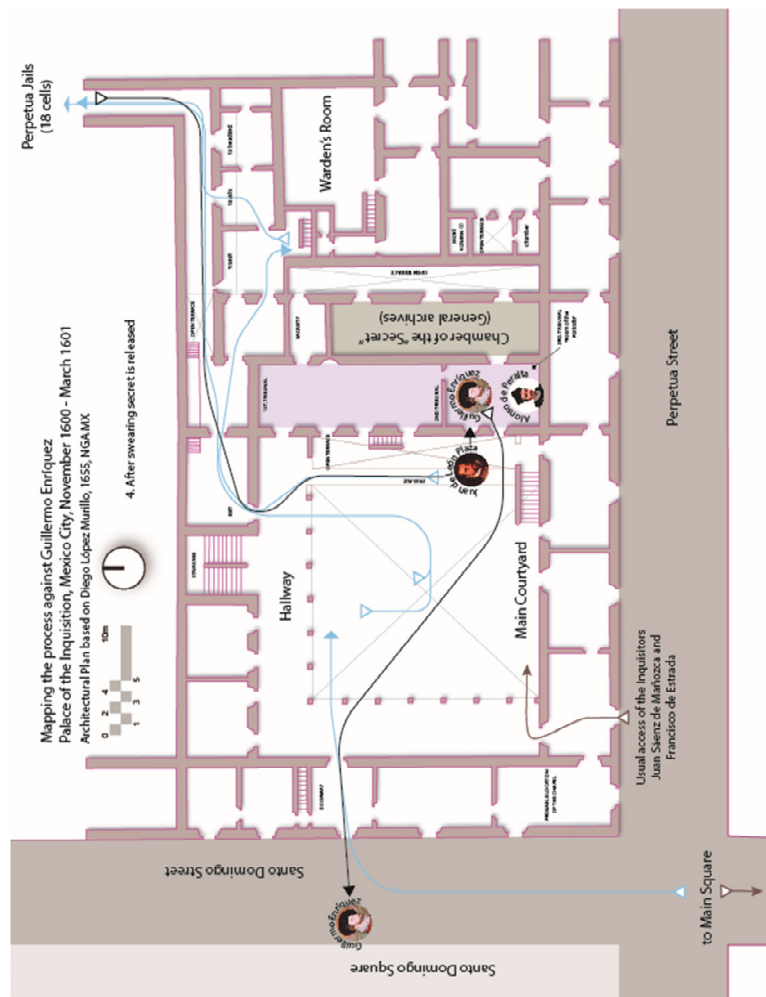


Figure 20: Liberation of Guillermo Enríquez on March 26, 1601.

⁵¹ The public reading of his sentence in this case occurred at the major Auto de fe of 1601 held on March 25, 1601. See "List of the Penitents Processed in the General Auto de Fe of March 25, 1601" published in John F. Chuchiak and Justin Duncan, *Theaters of Punishment: The Mexican General Auto de Fe of 1601*, Book Manuscript in Press, Penn State Latin American Originals Series, 2019: 83-84.

From the analysis of the movements that the prisoner Guillermo Enriquez made in the palace throughout his trial, the clarity of the different areas and spaces involved in isolating an inquisition prisoner is evident. At first, an entry and brief pause in the main courtyard, which functioned as an antechamber and an intimidating presence for everyone who first stepped into it. The monumentality of the patio courtyard, and the dark recesses of the covered corridors to the sides of the entrances first impressed on the prisoner the austere and forbidding nature of the tribunal. These initial perceptions were quickly followed by a rapid imprisonment in secret prisons with the ushering of the prisoner through a long passageway that isolated and grew narrower along the back of the building, leaving behind the open spaces of the first institutional environment related to the courtyard. As the jailers led the prisoners along an ever narrowing corridor which passed through several heavily wooden and locked doorways, the forbidding environment of the initial perceptions of the prisoner, turned darker and more desperate as the passageways narrowed and grew more enclosed by high walls, creating dark and forbidding spaces.

Fluctuating and repetitive movements from the prisoner's cell through these doors and forbidding corridors and narrow passageways back out into the covered patio before one of the various Audience Halls followed in subsequent audiences. The courtroom spaces themselves exhibited furnishings, tapestries, portraits and wall hangings of great presence and sumptuousness, giving the appearance of power, while at the same time setting an appropriate theme of fear, which must have all achieved the desired effect on the accused (see *audiencia de los retratos* below-fig. 21).



Figure 21: Virtual reconstruction of the 3rd Audience Chamber of the Tribunal, also called the “Chamber of the Portraits”

The bright light of the courtyards and covered patios would have caused the prisoner's eyes to grow accustomed to the exterior light, which quickly led the prisoner to feel disoriented upon being taken directly into the darkness of the tribunal's dimly lit windowless courtroom chambers. The purposeful effect of the occlusion of light in these inner chambers served to cause fear and dread in the prisoners, all of which aided the inquisitors ultimate goal of forcing a confession.

Such was the typical sequence of movements of an accused prisoner in a trial for heresy within the Mexican Inquisition's palace. It is worth mentioning that the degree of habitability and functionality achieved by this basic building scheme had reached an optimum point of equilibrium in its use such that the later architect Pedro de Arrieta, in his great renovation of the Palace in 1733, retained the original locations and even the basic constructions of the Tribunal's courtrooms and the Chamber of the Secret, key spaces in these types of Inquisitorial buildings.

CONCLUSION: THE PEDAGOGICAL AND ULTIMATE RESEARCH GOALS OF THE PROJECT

The targeted audience for the "*Digital Auto de Fe Project*" is envisioned to attract more than just scholars and advanced researchers, though they will also serve as a major audience for the final virtual world simulation. The principal reason for this project is to educate the public specifically about the Inquisition's *auto de fe*, as well as to illustrate several other aspects of life in colonial Mexico. Professors and Teachers worldwide teach courses on the Inquisition and this project seeks to increase the instructors' and student knowledge through the use of this virtual learning tool. The interactive approach allows the teacher to show the simulation in class as whole group, as an individual class assignment, or assign the simulation to be watched and interacted with at home. Also, in addition resources will be provided for the teacher and student to assess understanding and learning objectives.

As a virtual world of Mexico City in 1601, the project offers advanced research scholars the ability to engage with the simulation as a research tool. Scholars of both the Inquisition and of colonial Mexico will find in the materials and re-constructions of the built environment, as well as the representation of the social, racial and ethnic backgrounds and costumes of the characters, a wealth of information for research purposes. The linked primary sources, images, maps, and other historical documents and archaeological artifacts will also offer the advanced scholar with a virtual museum filled with materials both textual and physical to work with and utilize in their research and pedagogical pursuits.

It is also worth noting the need for more and deeper architectural studies of the inquisitorial genre of palaces throughout the Iberian colonial world, since a comparative approach can offer an interesting research perspective to compare the "constitutions" or

inquisitorial regulations in the various world regions where these tribunals existed, and the resulting architectural structures and their development based on their optimal performance of the inquisitorial functions. By studying the comparative patterns of structural design of the Inquisition Palace genre of construction, it may be possible to note subtle variations in the activities and goals of various regional tribunals. It is a final goal of the working research group to attempt to establish future comparative - typological studies that could allow for a contrast of case studies throughout the different latitudes where the global presence of the Inquisition took root.

For the case of Mexico, the open-planned and categorical character of the colonial style palaces in New Spain remained a permanent reference for the population of the Kingdom. In the case of the Palace of the Mexican Inquisition, the imposing structure served as an inevitable landmark given its monumental presence in one of the most important public squares of the city, adding its weighty form to other large scale public buildings that gave evidence to the ecclesiastical and secular hierarchy of the colonial state. The spaces of the Mexican Inquisition Palace, in its arrangement, setting, specific design, decoration and careful and controlled usage, served its purpose bluntly, in its various facets of judging, controlling, managing, and in short, making its presence felt in the society of New Spain and in all places where it existed and dominated the Catholic Church in its capacity as chief guardian of the Catholic Faith.

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