

## EVERYDAY LIFE'S SECULARIZATION, JUAN JOSE LOPEZ VIDAURRI'S PERSECUTION BY THE INQUISITION IN NEW SPAIN, 1795-1800

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**ABSTRACT:** In this paper we intend to show that Tribunal del Santo Oficio (Inquisition)'s jurisdiction went far beyond the crimes against the catholic faith and its attributes, not limiting itself to accuse, arrest, judge and condemn heretics. Juan Jose Lopez Vidaurri's case allows us to investigate the persecution and punishment of a large group of French liberalism followers, those who were interested in the enlightened ideas and who had turned their everyday lifestyle towards a new conception of the world. Education and the habit of reading provided them with the necessary tools for the society's secularization. The emphasis is on the fine line that separates religion from politics, the way in which "vassals" were undermining the power of institutions and the new actors/players who held power in the age of enlightenment.

**Keywords:** Secularization. Inquisition. Education. Enlightenment.

### LA SECULARIZACIÓN DE LA COTIDIANIDAD, LA PERSECUCIÓN DE JUAN JOSÉ LÓPEZ VIDAURRI POR LA INQUISICIÓN NOVOHISPANA, 1795-1800

**RESUMEN:** En este trabajo queremos demostrar que la jurisdicción del Tribunal del Santo Oficio fue mucho más allá de los delitos contra la fe católica, que sus atributos no se limitaron a culpar, detener, juzgar y condenar a los herejes. El caso de Juan José López Vidaurri permite indagar la persecución y castigo a un amplio grupo de seguidores del liberalismo francés, aquellos que se habían interesado en las ideas ilustradas y quienes habían transformado su estilo de vida cotidiana e impulsaban una nueva concepción del mundo. La educación y el hábito de lectura les proporcionaron las herramientas indispensables para la secularización de la sociedad. Se hace énfasis en la línea tenue que separaba a la religión de la política, la manera en que "vasallos" fueron minando al poder de las instituciones y los nuevos actores que detentaban el poder en la era de la ilustración.

**Palabras clave:** Secularización. Inquisición. Educación. Ilustración.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0102-4698154320>

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According to historiography dedicated to the study of the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, New Spain's society was deep into an atmosphere of fear<sup>1</sup> generated by political and economic changes, and especially by enlightenment ideas. Fear grew because of the French revolution. Historians have made important contributions on this subject and have opened new lines of research analyzing the breakdown of obedience of new Spaniards, the influence of written culture, the space of public opinion, the role of foreigners living in New Spain and the so called "pro-French people" (LANGUE, 1989; IBARRA, 1997, 2003; TORRES PUGA, 2010, 2012; GÓMEZ, 1986). These researches have emphasized the role of the "Real Tribunal del Santo Oficio" in extending useful life of the old regime.

The story of Juan José López Vidaurri is meaningful because of his profile and personal trajectory, as it is for the documentary treasure generated by the judicial process against him between 1795 and 1800. His life's journey gathers the appropriate conditions for an analysis in two levels each one complementing the other. On one hand, the political history of that period, which has been widely studied, particularly conspiracies in Mexico City (CASTAÑEDA, 1989). On the other hand, it reveals innovations and inertias facing a new life model with a critical mentality that separates itself from traditional practices and breaks the role life models of some European countries and even from North America. We could consider that both dimensions are the result of changes at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the sphere of absolute monarchy, class society and economic liberalism.

Who was Juan José López Vidaurri? Which were the charges pressed against him and the crimes he committed? In what sense his presence in Guarisamey, Durango, broke through the different orders of mining society and promoted a huge change in everyday life? How far did the Tribunal del Santo Oficio go, through its processes, to become a vehicle to expand enlightenment and in favor of New Spain society's secularization?

## **BUILDING A NEW IDENTITY<sup>2</sup>**

Juan José López Vidaurri saw the light for the first time (1753) in Lambeyeque, in the bishopric of Trujillo, in the kingdom of Peru. He was part of a wealthy family, involved in agricultural and commercial activities.<sup>3</sup> According to Juan José, his lineage was Spanish, tied with the principal families, with honorable employment and, as many of his contemporaries, said that his family was formed with "old Christians" that had never been accused by the inquisition.

He signaled that, among his relatives, there were important merchants, military and clergymen; his elder brother was a priest and had two nun sisters. (MAZZEO DE VIVÓ, 2011).

One of Lopez Vidaurri's most distinguished attributes was his education. He learned the basic things at home but later on he was instructed by Professor Manuel Gutiérrez. He continued his studies in philosophy under the Franciscan Eusebio López, who probably also taught him the basics in Latin. As many other intellectuals of his time, he learned French with the help of Antonio Galmace's grammar book (GALMACE, 1745; BRUÑA, 2001), which was made to help all those people interested in "perfectly dominating the language without a teacher's help". Besides, he also received help from his father and a servant from Arequipa, who taught him how to speak French. To complete his academic formation, he declared to be a reading fan (PERALTA, 1997).

Juan José stayed by his parent's side until he was 18 years old (1771). During that time, he behaved as a good son and obeyed them in everything. That same year he was put in charge of family estate and he did so until 1775; so far it is not known where the estate was located. Later on, he became involved in commerce, including slave trade that made him travel to Panama (ACUÑA, 2001). This activity generated a good income and allowed him to establish himself in Lima (1780), where he dedicated his efforts to introduce merchandise from Castile to the local markets of Cuzco and Arequipa.

Because of his frequent traveling to Arequipa, he made an "illicit" friendship with the daughter of Francisco Abril, a local merchant. Although he did not pretend to form a family, he gave his "word of marriage" and had to marry María Concepción Abril y Pacheco (LÓPEZ BELTRÁN, 1996). Years later, Juan José declared he "did not recognize such obligation". His activities were interrupted by an indigenous uprising, led by Túpac Amaru in 1780,<sup>4</sup> who called several towns to destroy the subjugation of the conquerors. Although his economy was affected by the uprising, Vidaurri managed to continue his business and extended it to the markets of La Paz, Potosí and Tucuman, combining offshore genders with the trade for mules, so important for mining activities (RIVERA, 1995-1996). Taking advantage of his commercial route, his uncle Antonio Vidaurri entrusted him with the collection of credits used to acquire merchandises by his intermediaries. Even though the data we have found is quite confusing, it seems that, with this business, Juan Jose went to bankruptcy. His economic crisis was so deep, that he decided to give all up and move somewhere else in order to acquire "his own wealth".<sup>5</sup>

In 1791, Juan Jose's life enters a winding road. He sought refuge for a few days in Lima in order to travel to the land of "opportunities", meaning New Spain. On August, his friend and captain of a vessel called Elizalde, F. Goyca, provided him with means to travel to Guayaquil. Later on he continued overland to Cartagena de Indias,<sup>6</sup> where he spent more than eight months due to a "serious illness". In order to survive, he did "several tasks", received support from Mr. Muriana and charity of the convent of our Lady of Candelaria de la Popa.

When he got enough money to continue his journey, he took a boat to La Habana, called "Mala Bruma", whose captain was Francisco Irigoyen. On board he transformed himself, leaving behind his family and decided to become another man. He changed his name, choosing "Juan Miguel Berrogaray", keeping his first name, probably the one he used more, and adopted the last name of a distant relative of his father. We are not sure but we can suppose he abandoned the devotion to the Patron Saint of New Spain Jose, to become devoted to the most important archangel, the one called Prince of Celestial Spirits.<sup>7</sup> He wanted to bury his past deep down, tore apart all his personal documents, made up that he had been born in Valle del Baztán, in the kingdom of Navarra, Spain, and that he had spent his early years in the province of Bayona, France, where he had some relatives. With this change of personality, he intended to get protection and recommendations from European countrymen.<sup>8</sup>

When he got off the ship in La Habana, he established a series of relations with distinguished people, particularly with Basques (ÁLVAREZ, 2011). Mr. Chavez offered his friendship and gave him a recommendation letter for Juan Bautista Fagoaga, one of the main mining entrepreneurs in New Spain.<sup>9</sup> Mr. José de la Fuente protected him and gave him money for his journey to Veracruz. And so, in July 1793, López Vidaurri in his role as Berrogaray set foot in New Spain. With no delay, he traveled to Mexico City to meet Juan Bautista Fagoaga who noticed that he was ill and ordered Juan Marcos de Rada to take care of him and to send him to the town of Tlalnepantla to rest and get well. Once he recovered his health, Berrogaray went to the mines of Sombrerete, in Zacatecas, where he worked from January to march 1794.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that mister Fagoaga recognized his abilities and gave him a bigger responsibility: to be in charge of the administration of mines and haciendas in Nuestra Señora de la Consolidación de Aguas Calientes de Guarisamey, Durango. There, he would share the business with Francisco Xavier Aguirre, a merchant from Guadalajara.<sup>11</sup>

## A NAVARRO STORYTELLER

In 1761, the mining town of Guarisamey began the exploration of mines, particularly those called Basís and Sapioris. The prosperity attracted big crowds –more than two thousand people- but few years later, 1778, the mines decayed.<sup>12</sup> It was until 1785 when Felipe Díaz, New Vizcayas' governor, informed of the flourishing state of the mines that produced, in one and a half years, the fabulous amount of 264 golden marks and 48 620 silver marks (approximately half a million pesos). At the time there were 200 mines in the reales of San Dimas, Tayoltita, Gavilanes and Las Ventanas. The author of this inform recommended backing this new area in order to obtain a great wealth (GERHARD, 1996). As soon as he arrived, Berrogaray introduced some changes in the enterprises' administration to make it much more profitable.

Berrogaray was a follower of the theoretical principles of economic liberalism, suppressed corporative privileges and imposed a new enterprise rationality. He took away the right of “partidos”<sup>13</sup> from mining workers; in other words, the payment was exclusively through the salary, and with this change, workers stopped receiving minerals as part of their income (FLORES CLAIR, 1986). It is worth remembering that this kind of decision generated protests; years before (1766), workers in Real del Monte went on strike against Pedro Romero de Terreros because he tried to abolish the “partido”.<sup>14</sup>

As Guarisamey lacked enough manpower, Berrogaray wanted to take advantage of working time and, to prevent nonattendance, he agreed with the manager of the cockfight plaza that there would be no fights on working days and they would take place only on Saturday evenings and holidays.<sup>15</sup> He exaggerated a bit with the fulfillment of working hours and days and was even accused of limiting public holidays and especially holy festivities because he did not want to interrupt the labors. Therefore, workers held him responsible for not attending their religious obligations because they had to go to work.<sup>16</sup>

Other important change he introduced was to restructure the finances of the company. To the new manager, the products of mines and haciendas, as all other by-products, belonged to the “masters”, that is, the partners Fagoaga and Aguirre. He discovered that Patricio Angulo, the store manager, made some disloyal business in his own benefit. He bought the ore and refined it in the haciendas of Manuel Fernando Zambrano, a fierce competitor, and later he sold them and received big profits. For his business, Angulo used funds that were part of the enterprise's liquid assets and the net

earnings went to his own pockets. He also benefited with the sale of clothes and shoes: he hired a shoemaker and a dressmaker, gave them raw material and then sold the merchandise to the workers. A careful scrutiny of the store's accounting showed serious lacks in the merchandise, for example, silk stockings, that were not in the account of any father or even less in the husband of "a lady".<sup>17</sup>

As a whole we can say that mining workers, Patricio Angulo, Manuel Fernando Zambrano, the shoe maker and all those that had received before any benefit in the shadow of the owners, saw their interests deeply affected. This clientele network became a powerful enemy to the new administrator, as we shall see further on.

Besides affecting the working sphere, Berrogaray's presence disturbed several other spaces of the miner town's sociability. The documents let us know that Guarisamey had few gathering places other than the churches and chapels, so the neighbors went to Ramon Regato's store, at Real de San Dimas, almost always on Saturday afternoon, to chat, drink and hang out. They tried to make some kind of "tertulia", like the ones being held in other cities. Most of the attendance was of the male gender, although in a few occasions there were some females. In big terms, it is easy to imagine that the talk went around several subjects, but often laid on history, politics, religion and women. These matters came out during the judicial process against the administrator.

Those who attended the "tertulia" asked Berrogaray to tell them about the uprising in Peru because, being part of it, he surely knew a lot of details of this bloody event. To surprise the listeners, he narrated exhaustively every stage of the movement and even linked it to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay. He rose to the occasion to add his own fictions, making people believe that he had fled justice from the kingdom of Peru, running away from his homeland because the indigenous were chasing him, and because of a wealthy fraud against the Real Hacienda. This chronicle helped create an image of an "insurrect", an outlaw and even made believe he had a bigger collaboration and was one of the driving forces of such movement.

In 1794, the most talked about subject was, no doubt, the French Revolution. Miners knew that the Frenchmen had sent the kings to the guillotine and had read in the *Gazeta de México*, the year before, the dramatic last will here King Louis XVI had expressed his feelings and asked for forgiveness to everyone surrounding him. He admitted in front of God and of men, that he "was innocent of the crimes" he was charged with.<sup>18</sup> With all these knowledge, his academic formation and his admiration of that kingdom, the inhabitants of Guarisamey gave him the nickname of Juan Miguel, the "Frenchman".<sup>19</sup>

As for ecclesiastic matters, Berrogaray had a certain preference and tried to show off as a scholar in religious aspects. Several times he arouse forceful controversies in front of various religious men, encouraged a competition of knowledge where he challenged his opponents to demonstrate the deep knowledge he had and tried to subdue his opponents, no matter the hierarchy they had. These discussions included the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, which caused prosecution and charge or heresy to many people. He often cited passages of Saint Agustin's work. His admiration for this saint was so big that some believed he was a former Augustinian friar who had left the order behind (PÉREZ, 2014).

His peculiar opinion of women got him the nickname of "The Jew". As mentioned before, he had left a wife in Arequipa and in the mining town he lived as a single man. He had a very relaxed judgement about the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment that forbids impure acts, including dirty desires, thoughts, conversations and sexual activity outside marriage.<sup>20</sup> In several occasions, Berrogaray manifested his rejection to ecclesiastical marriage; he was heard saying that "he did not get married because he could not do it with everyone" and that women were like "shirts", meaning he had to change them every day to get a clean one.

We want to emphasize that people surrounding Berrogaray asked him to make descriptions on distant places like Europe and South America. They were intrigued to know how life was like in such locations and wanted to know about their habits and traditions. The traveler, through his experience and "what he had learned from books", built his stories through a mixture of his own livings, the opinion of writers, feelings, misadventures, without worrying if the stories were truth or not. However, he never thought that these tales filled with emotions, feelings and fiction, would condemn him in time to come.

## THE CONFINEMENT

A little after a year of his arrival in Guarisamey, on March 1795, Juan Miguel Berrogaray was detained by order of the Santo Oficio. His capture was due to a threat to the monarchy's political situation. On March 30<sup>th</sup> 1793, King Charles IV of Spain declared war on France, "its possessions and inhabitants". He explained that, up to that moment, the Spanish crown had shown it's neutrality before disorder and anarchy. But the murder of the French sovereigns "had horrified the Spaniards" and the army's hostilities in the frontier had driven to the declaration of war.<sup>21</sup> In New Spain, on December 10<sup>th</sup> 1794, a decree was issued to send French residents to prison and the

confiscation of their goods (LANGUE, 1989). Repressive actions had taken their first victims with the capture of some Frenchmen and other foreigners, but royal authorities seized the opportunity to go after some Spaniards and creoles that showed some sympathy to enlightenment ideas and applauded the new forms of republican government. In those days, there was a disproportionate atmosphere of conspiracy, the population was in constant fear and the authorities proceeded to remove the “seeds of evil” from the readers interested in science, literature, and art, those that spread their knowledge through several means and had a lifestyle that emulated the civilizing process.

It is possible that due to these facts, the case of Berrogaray would take a very deep course. A couple of letters from Guarisamey’s clergyman accused him of possessing a forbidden book: *El Desengaño del hombre*, of being French and of having proclaimed several “scandalous propositions”, reckless, contrary to “our religion” and to the “sovereignty of our majesty”. At the moment of his detention, a French book was confiscated; according to Berrogaray, he had acquired it in Lima. It was an anonymous book about a man who had a “magic wand” and used it to guess where some objects were found. Although the subject was a superstition, inquisitors did not show much interest in finding out if what was said of him was true or not or even less on the books’ content. There was a possibility that it could be a forbidden book, but the inquisitors had certain limitations to present a bigger complaint because they could not understand French.

According to his declarations, it is possible to point out that we find a true coincidence between Berrogaray’s thought and that of the Swiss author James Philip Puglia, the author of *El desengaño del hombre*. In the text he attacked the despotic and aristocratic form of government, he bowed for freedom, independence and democracy; he supported France and was a believer of the republican system. Without further speculation, it is possible that Berrogaray had read that book because, on his own texts and in his defense, he repeats the idea of the separation between the political and the religious items, ideas that match one of Puglia’s book conclusions. This author wrote

the spiritual government has absolutely nothing to do with the temporal, and if the clerics with religious influence seek to interfere in them, I assure you that it is the biggest enforcement that free people can tolerate, and, no doubt, need the fastest and religious punishment.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the five hearings held during October 1795 in front of the Inquisitor, Antonio Bergosa y Jordan,<sup>23</sup> Juan Miguel Berrogaray became, again, Juan José Lopez Vidaurri. When asked why he had been detained, he showed a lot of security because he

imagined his faults were far from being considered crimes against the faith. He believed that they were all slander planned by his enemies, with whom he had had a series of personal problems, particularly with Patricio Angulo, Medrano and father Ignacio Güereña. The prisoner recognized there was a group colluded to promote “issues against him”. His suspicion turned out to be true: his adversaries had accomplished the complaint.

Vidaurri explicitly explained the reason of his problems with each of these three characters. As we have said before, Angulo and Medrano had been fired from the enterprise, which had caused them a big resentment. The case of Güereña was different: it was a matter of rivalry of power that generated several conflict. The enmity grew and included debates on theology and even the way workers were being charged with alms and religious services. In Vidaurri’s vision, the worst incident was a violent confrontation when, one day, Güereña turned up at the mine’s store, accompanied by Miguel Ledezma and demanded Luis Gonzalez, who was in charge, the money to pay a burial and, as he did not receive the money immediately, he smacked Gonzalez, threatened him with a knife and, to prevent him from running away, Ledezma kept an eye on the door and drew his sword. Vidaurri denounced this embarrassing incident to Durango’s Provisor, Cosío, and so Güereña was admonished.<sup>24</sup>

Later on, October 1794, a new dispute took place. Vidaurri was at the Hacienda de Guadalupe, accompanied by Luis González, when they saw two people moving a package. Vidaurri thought they were burglars and had them detained, but then Angulo showed up, pleaded for them and father Güereña backed the plea. The priest promised to turn them in next day if they were set free. The promise was not fulfilled and Luis Gonzalez found out that another guy belonging to this group, Martin Rosales, had thought of fleeing with money obtained at the Hacienda. Gonzalez tried to stop Rosales, who was accompanied by Ruelas and a woman, but his effort was in vain, he got “caught with a rope and received a kick on his throat”. But Vidaurri stopped the aggressors from fleeing. Immediately, Güereña appeared, all men were detained by the authorities and the priest took care of the woman and put her in a trust house.

Vidaurri asked the priest to let the woman go free but Güereña answered it was impossible and suspected the woman was Vidaurri’s mistress and had a sinful friendship with her, although the latter denied it. Güereña spread word that the miner had intended to bribe him with a watch in exchange of her freedom. These were the causes of the discontent between both of them.

The interrogation soon changed ways. To the inquisitors, the most important matter was to find out who his partners in crime were and expected him to reveal his relations, influences and political and religious ideas. Therefore they demanded him to give information on people he had met, on those who had protected him through his journey. He answered that in Cartagena he had met Francisco Bustamante, a “montañés” merchant, who supplied him with some money and lodged him at “Los Relevos”, a house attended by a widower and two old maids. When he was in Cuba, he approached a circle of liberal ideas. Vidaurri described that one day, walking in the streets of La Habana, he found José Baquíjano, the son of Count of Vista Florida and forefather of the Peruvian independence; years before he had met him in Lima and knew that he was a professor at the University of San Carlos. Baquíjano was waiting for a ship to travel to Spain. Seeing that Vidaurri was so poor, he often invited him to have lunch at home and gave him money to cover his needs. In those days, he was lodged at Santa Clara’s convent.<sup>25</sup>

In La Habana he also visited other important merchants, founders of the Merchant’s Guild, Juan Francisco Oviden and Pedro Francisco Marco and asked them for help to go to Veracruz; they recommended him to have an interview with Angel Michaus to get his support. He gave him a recommendation for Juan Bautista Fagoaga. The most interesting matter was his detailed description of the social gatherings in the coffee shops of La Habana and even described the suit he used to attend them, saying that it had flounce made of “listed cloth and a three cornered hat”. In those places there was a swarm of French officers and he heard them say that they wanted freedom to get rid of the yoke of monarchy, which was full of vices. They did not aspire licentiousness because they coexisted with non-believers, Jews and other sects. And he also said that Voltaire’s books had permission to be made public. The inquisitors insisted that he enjoyed José de la Fuente’s protection, but the detainee kept quiet.

## THE CHARGES

The Tribunal del Santo Oficio commissioned a priest, Ildefonso Pérez Contreras, to gather all the required information. Therefore, he questioned 39 people, all of them residents of mining towns and cellmates of the accused. Each one expressed the opinions that seemed more reprehensible. For example they said that he “spoke without a brake” in front of “all kind of people”,

he disrespected “distinguished people and ecclesiastics”, when he talked he just criticized, he was “very lustful” and when he spoke of women, it was “very glibly”. He was so dishonest with his words that he made listeners very uncomfortable; there was often someone who dared reprehend him and tell him to shut up and even threatened to stab him if he repeated what he was saying. In spite of what people felt, Vidaurri continued chatting even if listeners would feel outraged and shocked, but he had the gift of seduction that gained him a few followers that were eager to hear what he had to say.

All witnesses agreed he was a passionate fan of the Frenchmen. At different times, they heard him say that the French were “better” compared to the Spaniards and that he would raise his sword against the Spaniards to defend France. When the news from the war were in favor of the French, he was happy and if they were losing, he thought the kings were tyrants and celebrated the execution of the king and queen, defended the republic instead of the monarchy. He recommended the adoption of the Assembly as a form of government, preached that the monarchs were like anyone, possessed authority because “people had given it to them” and their wealth was product of excessive tributes from their subjects. As for the king of Spain, he assured he was a usurper of American territories and that he would soon lose the “Americas”.

Regarding the “propositions” on religion, there is a mayor controversy in the interpretation. Some listeners were convinced that he defended the catholic dogma and even someone warned that people should not be driven away by “vague voices” and that he was a “learned man”. Instead others pointed out that he was a bad Christian and many of his expressions were of a true “non-believer”. He refuted the mystery of Holy Mary saying that she “had been conceived as any other creature”. He never attended mass, only in some celebrations, but he arrived too late, almost when the service was over. Father Güereña said that he never confessed himself and did not allow the workers to fulfill their “religious obligations”, ate meat on fast days, believed that fornication was not a sin, neighbors say women went in and out of his house all the time; there was word that he had locked a married woman for several days. As a matter of fact, the only woman that gave her testimony, remembered how gallant the accused was. When he accompanied her to mass, he would go in front of her, opening way so she would walk comfortably. Others, instead, thought that his perversion had no limits, saying for example that a slave woman did not want to get in bed with him because there

was another woman lying there; but the most lustful thing he said was that “pleasure” was very short and it would be desirable that it “lasted the same time as a rosary of 15 mysteries”.<sup>26</sup>

Once he gathered all the witnesses’ testimonies, the defense attorney, Manuel Hidalgo y Costilla, brother of the future “Padre de la Patria”, was in charge of presenting the indictment arguments. His strategy followed two paths: on one hand he rejected the witnesses and, on the other, he introduced a theoretical-legal discussion of the main charges. According to Hidalgo, the motions had been expressed at the mining towns of San Dimas, Gavilanes, San Vicente and Guarisamey, most of the witnesses were mining workers and merchants; others disliked the accused and a few more considered the words of Vidaurri with “malice”. A good part of the witnesses knew about his “propositions” only “by hearsay” because they were never present when they were pronounced; very few had direct talks and some more were “fake” witnesses.

In order to refute other charges, Manuel Hidalgo argued that the principle of having the kings receive their authority from the people and therefore could be removed, had a precedent in the “law of nations” used by the romans. According to Hidalgo, there were two kinds of kings: the elected ones and those of inheritance. The king of Spain had been named by his predecessor. Therefore, the trial had begun sustained on a false idea and demonstrated his ignorance, but he was not in favor of the “regicide” and nonetheless this ideas came from Rousseau’s *Social Contract*. He made it clear that the propositions “were not reckless” and there were not enough to consider him heretic. The lawyer qualified the crimes as the accused “lightness and carelessness” because he had made believe he was someone else and had told a series of lies on his trip from Peru to New Spain. It is worth signaling that the inquisitors and defending lawyer, Manuel Hidalgo, had read and knew “with certain mastery” the enlightenment thought, because his own profession demanded that knowledge in order to be able to identify those “poisonous ideas”.

As the process continued and the imputations were each time more delicate, Vidaurri, with the help of his lawyer, tried to make a convincing speech about his innocence. In general terms, he exposed that many of his words were “misinterpreted”, others were attributed to him even if he had not said them, countless testimonies were fake and, in many cases, the conversations were a joke or rascals, or just to spend time. He recognized his inclination towards the Frenchmen, but condemned them for guillotining the kings and explained that, when he talked about the uprising, it was not his way of thinking

but only a repetition of what he had heard from French soldiers. In a similar way, the expression of “losing the Americas” had been said by the “Bostonians”. He swore that he would never raise his sword against Spain because he was willing to give his last drop of blood to protect his fatherland. Although he justified the substitution of sovereigns, he reminded that history had other examples of kings that had been judged and punished by the people, among them Charles I from England and Scotland, who was decapitated in 1649.<sup>27</sup>

Vidaurre thought it was unfair that people believed he was not a good Christian because he always defended the catholic religion and Mary’s Conception, that he prayed in Latin every day before going to bed and first thing in the morning, that his bedside book was father Ripalda’s Catechism,<sup>28</sup> he knew by heart the 15 mysteries and had never committed heresy. He recognized he had eaten meat because he was ill but on that occasion he invited his accuser, father Güereña, and both had chicken for dinner. About this same matter, he remembered that on Easter Sunday he had shared a cow’s head with several workers, but he had not committed any fault because the fast had ended. To help the church, on Saturday evening, when the workers received their payment, he allowed the priest to put a plate to collect alms for “the souls in purgatory”, he established the expenses of the oil of his Lord’s lamp and donated 50 pesos to make arrangements to the temple caused by the rain.

It was widely known that women went in and out of the hacienda because they were workers’ spouses. He said that, upon his arrival, he was attended by three women but, to avoid gossip, they were substituted by men. Regarding the slave, he told that her mother, a laundry woman at the hacienda, asked him to buy her so they would not be separated; he agreed and calculated that, in three years, the mother could pay the price of the freedom, but in a few weeks, he realized that the slave abused his “pantry”, gathered with “scum” and had an illicit friendship with a miner. That was the reason why he decided to undo the deal, and later on he found out that the slave had spread the rumor that she had rejected being his mistress. As for the “married woman”, she was Josefa Ugarte and had an ethic good fame; her father “Sainz de Rosas” and her husband asked him to receive her in his house, the neighbors noticed that he opened way when she walked but he did it as a “political gift” and therefore it was a lie that he had an “illicit relation with her”.

He admitted that in some conversations, some non-honest words were said; for example father Güereña repeated that there were no other sins than those of flesh and bone, and Patricio Angulo

said that if “in the sixth commandment there was no reduction, Our Father would well fill the sky with straw”. In a delicate way, he admitted his lack of chastity saying he was too fragile to fulfill the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. However, because of the position he held, he was forced to be moderate and take care of his fame. He fornicated without making a scandal, although he knew he was doing wrong, but it was very difficult for him to observe this precept. He tried to demonstrate that he lived with as much honesty as he could, he lived far away from common men, who on holidays went to the store to drink alcohol, then to a house to eat something, and later on they attended a cock fight, then on to a fandango and played chance until dawn. And then passed from the indecent play table to the sacred altar, as father Güereña did.<sup>29</sup>

## THE SENTENCE

The public prosecutor, Bernardo de Prado y Ovejero fulfilled the duty to gather all the proofs to instruct the trial based on the interrogation of the accused, the charges made by the witnesses, the writings of his defense attorney and Vidaurri’s own. Bernardo de Prado wrote an extensive document of 58 chapters, in which he broke down each of the felonies committed by Vidaurri. The summary included the attacks to the throne and the religion, his ideological influences and his “lustful conduct”.

Bernardo de Prado tried to demonstrate that the prisoner was a mortal enemy to religion and state, meaning he had committed a crime of high treason, attempted against the sovereign’s life and in consequence against the empire. The prosecutor added that, through his words, he conspired and encouraged sedition; Vidaurri had the will to extend the seed of destruction, to impose anarchy and to arouse rebellion through the “poison coming out of his fetid lips”. He was an evil man, represented a big danger and could transmit bad things to the rest of the society. He specified that, in defending those that had cut the kings’ throat and subjugated the people with a republic, he attacked the religion. He explained conclusively that sovereignty did not lay on the people: God had given authority to the monarchs, and therefore Vidaurri was against divine will and reduced in rank royal power, hated “love and obedience to the kings”, and in doing so, he betrayed and broke the legitimate power. The prosecutor found it unbearable that a fugitive from Peru and a simple mine’s administrator assumed the role of an obsequious politician who intended to give his opinion in matters beyond his competence and

promoted “freedom of conscience” so that people would live on free will. All of these ideas were hideous, belonged to the heretics and libertines that “wanted to live without law and without God”.

The prosecutor high lined that the accused was a traitor to Spain’s throne, was more inclined to the Frenchmen –who had committed “regicide” and were fighting the Spanish monarchy. In every conversation he had pronounced many insults, like saying that the enrichment of the kings was a product of high taxes, that they had no right over the American territories and that the sovereignty lay on the people. Bernardo de Prado made it clear that Americans should be grateful to the king for all the “benefits and love” he had given them; he had a legitimate right on the territories because of the conquest and the spread of catholic faith in them. Concerning the French republic, he thought that the Assembly was tumultuous, bloodthirsty and directed by fierce Jacobins and “sans-culottes”. He warned that Vidaurri pretended to be very religious and used the Holy Writings to justify his “Jacobin spirit”. He reported that substituting the monarchy for a republic was not a political mistake, but an abjuration to the catholic dogma.

For the prosecutor, the sources that had influenced him had been the “fetid” philosophers Voltaire and Rousseau. Their ideas on freedom, the power of people, the decapitation of kings, and the rebellion against the legitimate authority had emanated from *The Social Contract*. Therefore, Vidaurri was a supporter of libertine philosophers. In spite of the church’s proscription of the enlightenment texts because they were a compound of sedition and dogmatized the people’s sovereignty, there were a few followers. In fact, the philosophers had become some kind of new ministers, demanding obedience, frightening people with their proposals and demanding tribute to be surrendered to them. The prosecutor knew *The Social Contract* very well, and so could identify Vidaurri’s judgements on monarchical despotism, spreading the idea of equality, trying to disrupt the order between sovereigns and people, prescribing the subordination of royal authority over those who were forced to obey it, destroying the monarchy and excluding the Spaniards from American territories.<sup>30</sup> In short, the prisoner demonstrated disobedience, impiety and disloyalty.

His attacks against the catholic religion were considered the worst. The list was long: the accused had said that the nun’s vows ought to be loosened up, he had bought a slave for his concupiscence, had concubines, believed in free fornication and said that he would do it even with father Güereña, “had he not been so ugly”. On Bernardo de

Prado's point of view, the conduct and language used by the criminal attempted against the essential principals of Christian dogma. In fact, Vidaurri was a man without shame, he had lost the fear of God and the respect to men; he had learnt that religion forbade polygamy, so it was a heresy when he said that he could change women every day as if they were clean shirts, following the moor's habits. He had outraged the parishioners with his impertinent way of defending his mistress; in conclusion he was a harmful member of the "Christian Republic".

On January 1796, Bernardo de Prado y Ovejero accused Vidaurri with the crimes of lese majesty, for being heretic, usurper, committing perjury, uprising, infused with pestilent philosophy, enemy of the king, among others. He suspected the criminal mas so smart as to give fake testimonies and so recommended to put him under torment until he confessed the true, his accomplices and intentions [...] and swore he had not proceeded maliciously in this accusation".<sup>31</sup>

More than a year later, on March 1797, at San Fernando's Apostolic College, in Mexico City, during the night's prayer, there was a secret ceremony: in front of the tribunal's members and selected guests, prisoner number 12 was called in order to read him his sentence. He was told that the decision was to have mercy on some of the causes, because a lot of punishment had been accumulated. Vidaurri was condemned, as a heretic, to perpetual exile from New Spain, to 40 days of prayers at San Fernando's College; Fridays should be dedicated to penitential psalms, and Saturdays to the Virgin Mary's holy Rosary and during the next three years he would have to confess on all "three Easters". Finally the prisoner should be delivered to be judged by the Inquisition of Peru.

Vidaurri was convinced of his innocence; all guilt was a product of his enemies' slanders, who had colluded to defeat him. During the ceremony he was rebellious and undisciplined, he refused to kneel; instead of showing some repent for his crimes, he appealed for absolution and caused a formidable scandal. The guards had to take part to subdue the prisoner and they dominated him finally after they managed to shackle him.

He was immediately taken to his cell and was held captive for more than two years. Vidaurri kept fighting to prove his innocence, wrote several appeals to the Tribunal to explain he was the most faithful vassal and love the king of Spain; he was a spiritual man who only looked for justice, knew and professed the catholic doctrine much better than many priests. His faith was unbreakable. During his confinement of several months, he was allowed to study the Holy Writings and

the hagiography of his favorite celestial intercessors. Repeatedly he debated on the theological principles with the magistrates Jerónimo Camp and Ramón Casaus,<sup>32</sup> who agreed that he was quite “arrogant” and despised the tribunal’s authority. Vidaurri insisted that, if he had committed any crime, it was not against the faith, so the Inquisition had no jurisdiction to judge and even less to condemn him as a heretic.<sup>33</sup>

He insisted that there were two spheres: the spiritual and that of men. He complained that throughout the trial, he had suffered defamation, had been handcuffed in public, giving him a “huge shame” and was forced to wear a green robe, like a “sambenito”. His honor was broken, hurting his dignity, identity, prestige, respect, good name and flawless conduct. In several letters he made clear that his knowledge did not come from Voltaire and Rousseau, whom he had not even read, but from French authors such as Jacques Bégigne Bossuet – a priest dedicated to defend the divine origin of power-, Jacinto Montargo – clergyman author of a *Diccionario Apostolico*- and Luis Apolinar de la Tour du Pin, bishop of Auch, -prosecuted and exiled in Spain because of the French revolution.<sup>34</sup> These arguments draw us a picture of a reader dedicated to devotion and religious faith; but at the same time we find a man who knew well the books written by the most distinguished enlightened French thinkers. The inquisitors did not notice that in one of his writings he had referred to a passage on “regicide” that can be found in the conclusion of Voltaire’s *Candide ou l’optimism*. “Eglon, king of the Moabites, was assassinated by Ehud; Absalom was hung by the hair of his head, and pierced through with three darts; King Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, was killed by Baasha; King Elah by Zimri”.<sup>35</sup>

Vidaurri’s efforts had certain positive effects, he became an uncomfortable prisoner; all the political threats that had taken him to prison had vanished. The Tribunal reconsidered his cause, diminished his condemnation as heretic and decided to set him free as soon as he landed in Guayaquil. On January 1799, the prisoner was taken to the port of Acapulco to deport him. Bureaucracy and lack of funds helped him to remain 15 more months in New Spain.

In Acapulco he had a great life and possessed a little fortune in gold dust that he had accumulated during his labor as a miner. We could speculate that he had the means to bribe the guardians, to flee or to change his personality once more. However he put himself to demonstrate that he was a model Christian who fulfilled the religious precepts and pretended to be absolved of any suspicion, clean his honor because he had been blamed on fake accusations. He was only an erudite who “spoke without a brake”.

It is known that, in 1800, Juan José López Vidaurri finally parted to Guayaquil. He wrote a letter showing gratitude for the treatment he had received from the authorities in Acapulco. During his stay in New Spain he had tried to carry on a secularized way of life, following the example set by Europeans, but the traditional practices and values had kept him from doing it.<sup>36</sup>

## THE ENDING

Vidaurri's experience allows us to suggest some reflections about New Spain's society at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. First of all, the existence of a public that demanded information, which was avid to hear stories that instructed them and enlivened their moments of leisure, let them have a good time and took them to reflect on their social situation. Each of the witnesses emphasized certain matters, and this permits us to detect a cultural cross over. From their own point of view, each of them gave more importance to religious, political or sexual matters. The foreigner had fresh news, knowledge, values, feelings and ways of understanding life in a different way. His conversation seduced listeners and therefore people asked him to keep on telling stories.

The mining town's habits were modified; a new manager, with a high level of power, imposed different working conditions that increased social conflicts. He promoted a new working discipline, a bigger profitability reducing the productive costs and putting into order the enterprise's administration. But he soon found obstacles to his modern plans, both from the workers and from the institutions, from the government and the church. The smugness in the productive efficiency perturbed the social habits.

This case illustrates the existence of non-written rules that separated the matters that were allowed from those that had to be kept silent. Miners possessed a social protocol for conversation where the speaker had to take into account the tone he used, the listeners, the time he had known them, trust, social hierarchy, gender, age, feelings, meanings among others. For some people, Vidaurri tore apart public peace and listeners were uncomfortable because of his language and even threatened to attack him. The public was very diverse and a conversation could have different meanings, but we know very little about its interpretations, only on those subjects that were denounced. It is possible that, at a certain moment, people had fun with his ideas and it is possible that they changed their behavior, but in front of the authorities they became cautious and had to become attached to what was accepted as common sense. Could it be possible that Vidaurri was

able to see the strong wind that would outcome because of his words?

We can ponder that Vidaurri became a strong competitor for the priests; his preparation and the way he expressed his ideas gained him some followers, who admired him for being well versed. In this case he planted the seed of evil because he supplanted ecclesiastical authority; he was well versed on religion and understood Muslims, Jews and Catholics alike. He recognized the existence of the others at the same level without pretending one was better than the other, until the Inquisition summited him and forced him to swear obedience to Catholicism.

Vidaurri was an avid reader but, in spite of the many interrogations he was engaged in, he only gave some hints on his favorite authors and books. He was passionate for history which allowed him to make some comparisons between past and present; his favorite subject was the execution of kings, especially Louis 16<sup>th</sup>. But we also find out that he had some interest on fiction, like that text about the magic wand to find lost objects, and also on readings of bigger transcendence as theology. The books were a tool that allowed him to build a broader world view, with a cultural background and foundation that helped him make his life and work more efficient. Although conversations were only intended to help time go by, they had a big influence on his listeners' ways of thinking, feeling and loving.

The Inquisition fulfilled its commitment, tried to wipe out the secularized thought via the most traditional means: fear, censorship, repression and excommunication. However, Vidaurri can be considered as part of the cultural intermediaries who, through their social practice, ultimately, undermined the old regime's power and secularized everyday life. Through a more progressive thinking, they claimed bigger spaces of expression, education and culture. Their struggle was an example to demand justice to one of the institutions that had failed to comply their parishioners.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup>To understand the fear caused by the feeling of insecurity, see: Jean Delumeau (2002)
- <sup>2</sup>To deepen the concept of cultural identity, see: Molano (2008).
- <sup>3</sup>Archivo General de la Nación (en adelante AGN), Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8, fjs. 1-4v.
- <sup>4</sup>See, among others, Brading (1992), Piel (1992), O'Phelan Godoy (1992), Serov (1992).
- <sup>5</sup>AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8, fjs, 5-8.
- <sup>6</sup>It looks like Vidaurri followed the road of cacao. See Valle Pavón (2010).
- <sup>7</sup><[http://www.corazones.org/santos/miguel\\_arcangel.htm](http://www.corazones.org/santos/miguel_arcangel.htm)>.
- <sup>8</sup>AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8. fj.12.
- <sup>9</sup>There are several studies on the Fagoaga family. See: Javier Sanchiz (2000).
- <sup>10</sup>For a very complete study on mining in Zacatecas, see: Frédérique Langué (1999).
- <sup>11</sup>AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8. fj.14.
- <sup>12</sup>*Gazeta de México*, Tom. II, núm. 19, martes 10 de octubre de 1786, p. 214.
- <sup>13</sup>AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1377, exp. 2, fj. 319
- <sup>14</sup>Entre otros, véase a Doris M. Ladd (1992).
- <sup>15</sup>AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1364, exp. 1, fj. 80v.

- <sup>16</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1377, exp. 2, fj. 315.
- <sup>17</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1364, exp. 1, fjs. 75.
- <sup>18</sup> “Testamento de Luis XVI” en *Gazeta de México*, T. V, núm. 33, 14 de mayo de 1793, p. 315.
- <sup>19</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1314, exp. 26, 1798, fjs. 1-82.
- <sup>20</sup> <<http://www.aciprensa.com/Catecismo/mandam6.htm>>.
- <sup>21</sup> “Bando”, *Gazeta de México*, Tomo V, núm. 39, 22 de junio de 1793, pp. 362-364.
- <sup>22</sup> We know there are previous editions but we could not look them up.
- <sup>23</sup> For a biography of this inquisitor, see: Brian R. Hamnett (2009).
- <sup>24</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8, 1795, fjs. 1-261. From this moment on, the Tribunal commissioned Vicente Simón González de Casío, Capitular Vicar, to investigate Ignacio Güereña’s behavior. Testimonies were convincing, showing that the priest had a messy life, did not fulfill his duties as minister, often played cards, and got drunk, caused scandal and fights. In spite of all, he was protected by high religious authorities.
- <sup>25</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1314, exp. 26, 1798, fjs. 1-82.
- <sup>26</sup> It is estimated that the equivalence is one hour and fifteen minutes. See: <<http://www.giga.com/~jemadero/lea/tema13.html>>.
- <sup>27</sup> G.K. Chesterton, *Pequeña historia de Inglaterra*, Libro dot.com: <<http://www.librodot.com>>.
- <sup>28</sup> There are several studies on Jeronimo Martínez de Ripalda’s catechism, a classical since 16<sup>th</sup> century. See for example: Gonzalbo Aizpuru (1989).
- <sup>29</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1327, exp. 8, 1795, fjs. 1-261.
- <sup>30</sup> On March 20, 1829, the request came true: a law to expel Spaniards from Mexico was published. See: <<http://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Textos/2ImpDictadura/1829LSEE.html>>.
- <sup>31</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1340, exp. 1, 1799, fjs. 10-14.
- <sup>32</sup> Ramón Casaus y Torres Dominic, doctor in theology by the Real y Pontificia Universidad de México, en AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1094, exp. 4, 1792, fjs. 270.
- <sup>33</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1358, exp. 2, fjs. 1-161.
- <sup>34</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1314, exp. 26. 1798, fjs. 1-82.
- <sup>35</sup> <<http://st1.gatovolador.net/res/Candido.pdf>>, pp. 58-59
- <sup>36</sup> AGN, Inquisición, vol. 1386, exp. 18. 1799, fjs. 345-363.

**Submission:** 11/09/2015

**Approbation:** 01/04/2016

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