



INSTITUTE OF
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH

SCHOOL OF
ADVANCED STUDY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Institute of Historical Research

Wohl Library

American Magic

Historical Sources of
Witchcraft and Magic the IHR
Library's American collections
and beyond

Michael Townsend

history.ac.uk/library-digital



Overview

- General Introduction to the IHR and its library.
- Relevant Sources and how to find them.
- Case Study



Definitions

- What is Magic?
- What is a primary and secondary source?



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The IHR

- One of the member Institutes of the School of Advanced Study (www.sas.ac.uk) part of the University of London.
- Founded in 1921 by the historian of Tudor politics, A. F. Pollard.
- Mission to promote and facilitate the study of history by providing institutional support and services.



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Our Collections

- Published primary sources for the histories of Western Europe, European colonial empires and North and South America.
- There is a small general section in the library's general religious history collection under shelf mark ER.858 (Magic, Witchcraft and the response of the Church)
- Other works on magic and witchcraft can be found in the relevant geographic collection.



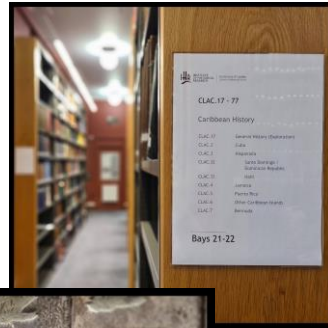
Library Email: ihr.library@sas.ac.uk
Library Telephone: 020 7862 8760



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Latin American, the Caribbean and the Southern US collections



- From the 16th century to the present day.
- Published primary sources complemented by reference works, periodicals and works on historiography.
- Strengths include the history of the colonial period in the Caribbean and Latin America and the colonial and Antebellum period in the US South.

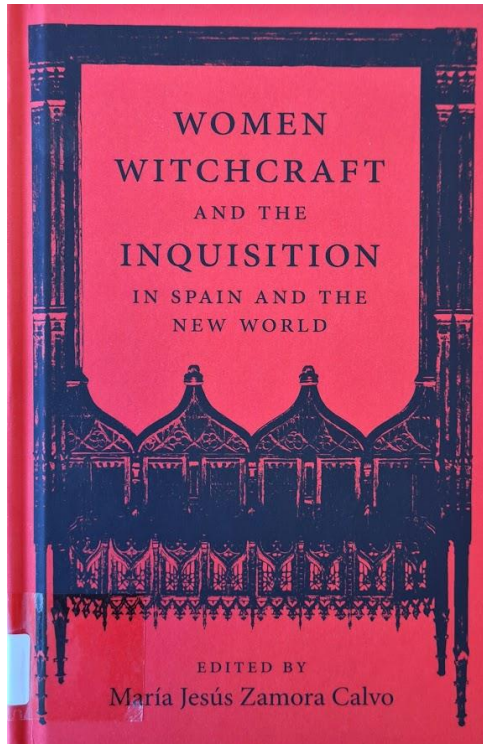
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Explicit Works

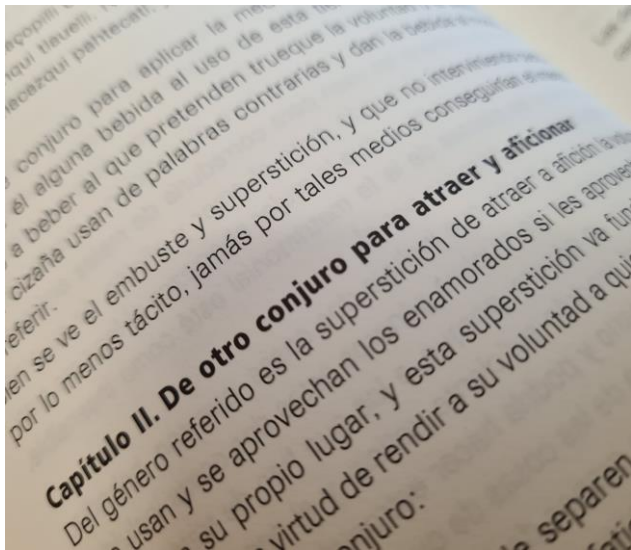


- The library has several works specifically about witchcraft and magic in North and South America.
- Titles are added to the collections all the time.
- Recent acquisitions include:
 - *Santería enthroned: art, ritual and innovation in an Afro-Cuban religion.*
 - *Voodoo: an African American religion*
 - *Tráfico de saberes: agencia femenina, hechicería e Inquisición en Cartegena de Indias (1610-1614)*

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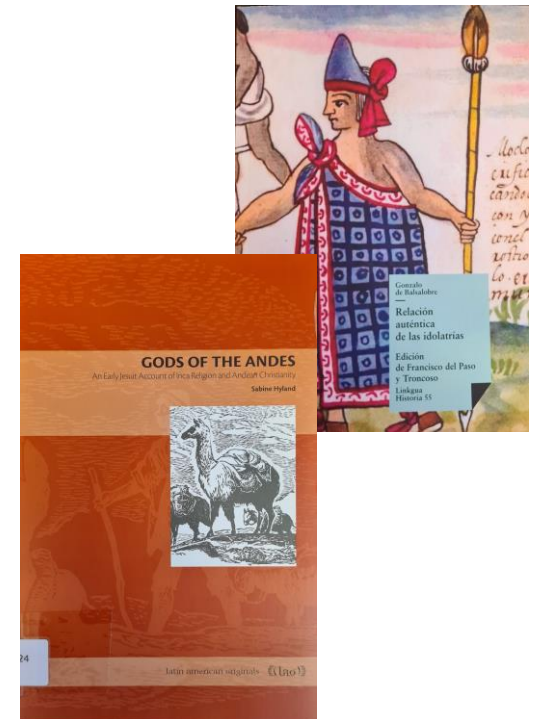
Surveys of Indigenous Religions



Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón.

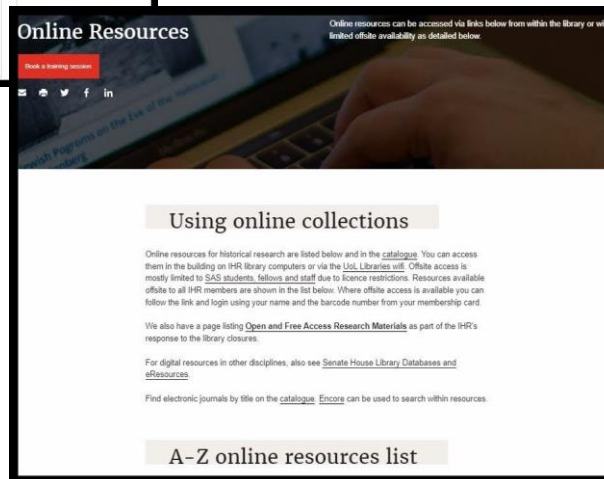
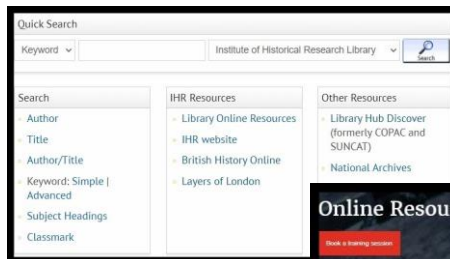
*Tratado de las supersticiones y
costumbres gentílicas*

- Accounts written in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- Mainly covers Mexico and Central America and Peru.
- Surveys religious practices and how magic continued to be used in hunting, agriculture, fortune-telling, etc.





Finding Works in the Library

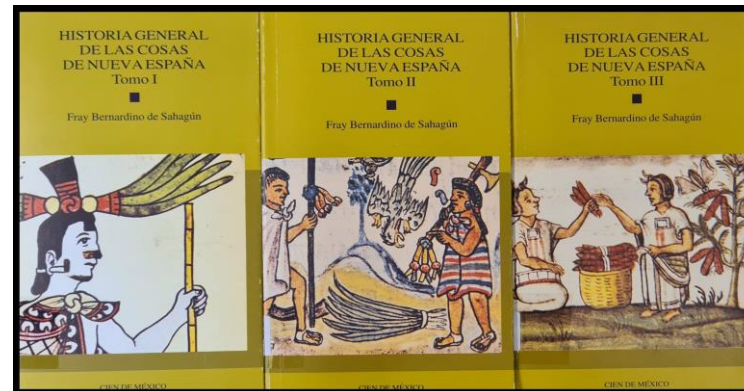
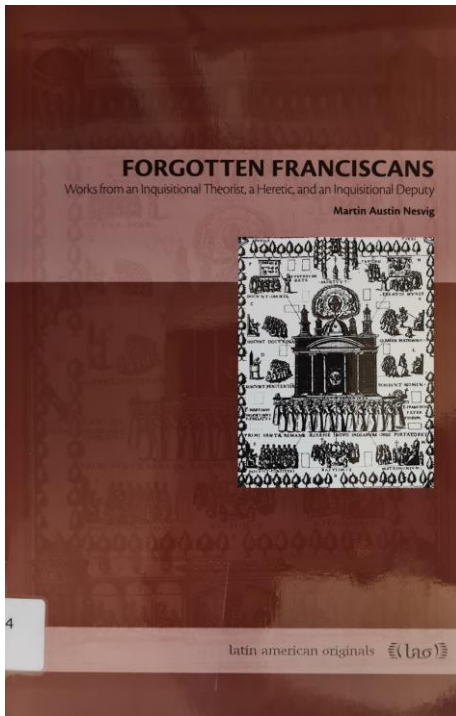


- Online Catalogue:
<https://catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk/search~S10/>
- Example:
 - A subject search with the term 'Magic'
 - Produces 65 results.
 - One of these is: Magicians, South Carolina
 - This refers to the work, *A documented history of Gullah Jack Pritchard and the Denmark Vesey slave insurrection of 1822.*



Implicit Sources

Included within this anthology of texts is a translation of 'Witness statements in Celaya about witchcraft' (1614) by the Franciscan missionary and Inquisition *comisario* Diego Muñoz (c. 1550–c. 1626)

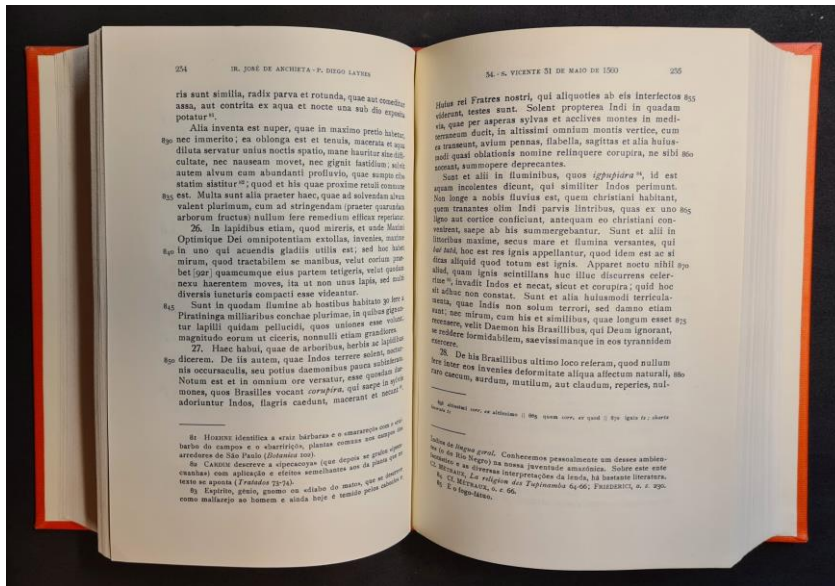


Bernardino de Sahagún. *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*



Church Sources

- Bishops' and Archbishops' visitations.
- Published Inquisition records.
- Missionary writing; texts produced by the Jesuits were particularly numerous.



Account from May 1560 in *Monumenta Missionum Societatis Iesu: Monumenta Brasilliae*, volume 3 (1558-1563)

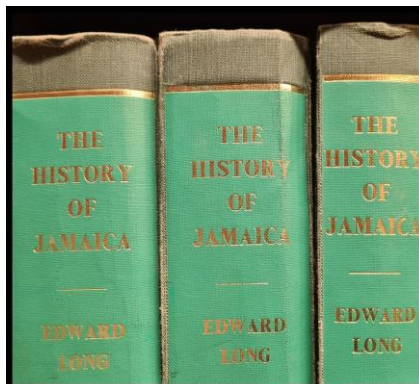
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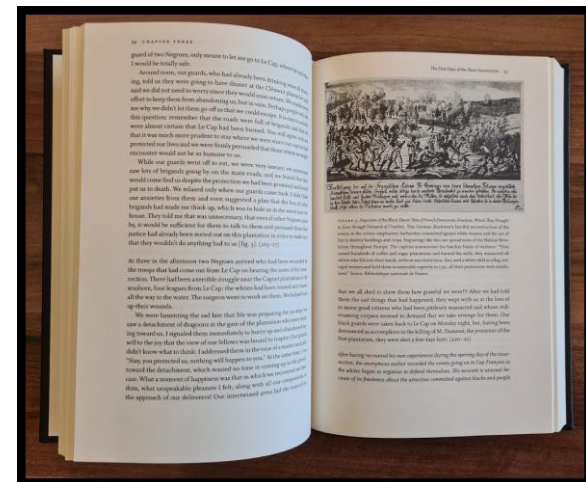
Secular Sources

(2) every person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using or pretending to use any subtle craft or device, by palmistry, obeah, or any such like superstitious means, to deceive and impose on any of His Majesty's subjects;

From the 1897 Vagrancy Act in *Laws of Barbados*, vol. 3



Modern edition of
Edward Long's *History of Jamaica*

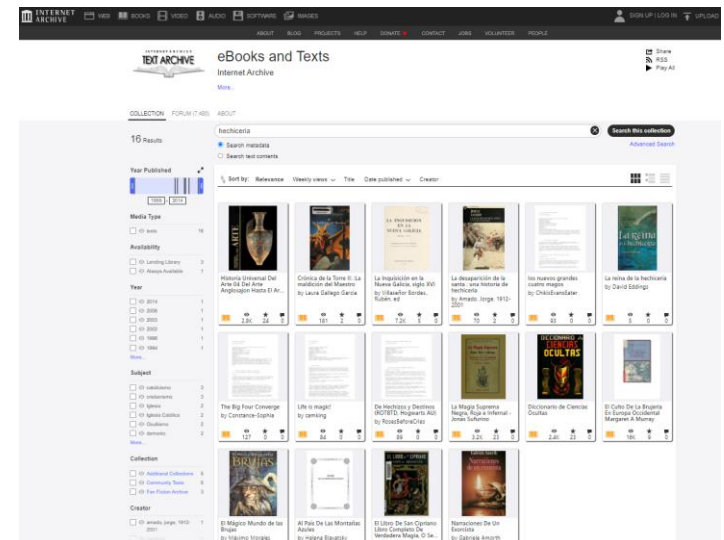


Translation of *La revolution de Saint-Domingue* in *Facing racial revolution: eyewitness accounts of the Haitian Insurrection*



Beyond the Collection (1)

- **Finding Aids**
 - [WorldCat](#)
 - [JISC Library Hub](#)
 - General online bibliographies such as the [BBIH](#)
- **Online Collections**
 - [Internet Archive](#) / [Hathi Trust](#) / [Google Books](#)
 - [DOAB](#) and [DOAJ](#)
 - Open Access publications via publishers such as [Brill](#)





Beyond the Collection (2)

- Specialist Bibliographies
 - [The Witchcraft Bibliography Project](#)
- Research Projects
 - [Obeah Histories](#)
- Digital Libraries
 - [Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes](#)
 - [Digital Occult Library](#)
 - [Biblioteca Digital Mexicana](#)
- Bibliographies in specialist secondary monographs

REAL BIBLIOTECA

Bernardino de Sahagún, Códices matritenses de la Real Biblioteca (Madrid), II-3280

INICIO / BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN, CÓDICES MATRITENSES DE LA REAL BIBLIOTECA (MADRID), II-3280



1558-1585, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún

Los *Códices matritenses* (en adelante CM), depositados en la Real Biblioteca y en la Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, ambas de Madrid, reúnen los manuscritos tempranos de la magna investigación etnográfica que condujo fray Bernardino de Sahagún en la Nueva España, y que culminó con la *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* y el *Códice florentino* (CF).

Los que aquí reproducimos son los CM completos, 303 folios o 617 imágenes, que custodia la Real Biblioteca. Charles E. Dibble, traductor de Sahagún y especialista en su obra, los describe así: D. Los manuscritos matritenses constan de los siguientes apartados: 1. Primeros Memoriales. 2. Segundos Memoriales (o primer manuscrito de Tlatelolco). 3. Memoriales con Escolios. 4. Manuscrito de Tlatelolco o Memoriales a tres columnas y 5. Memoriales en castellano.D

FICHA

FECHA DE CREACIÓN

1558-1585

LUGAR

México, Hidalgo, Tlatelolco;
España: Madrid

PERIODO

1500 d.C. - 1599 d.C.

TIPO DE ARTÍCULO

Código

INSTITUCIÓN

Real Biblioteca

OTROS DOCUMENTOS

From the Biblioteca Digital Mexicana



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Summary

Find Explicit
Sources



Search
within
Implicit
Sources



Search
beyond a
collection

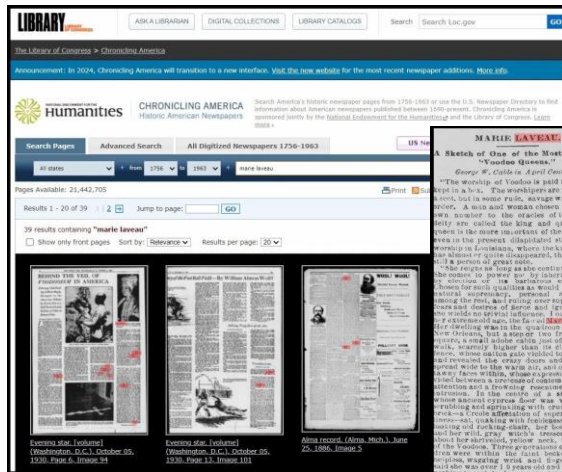
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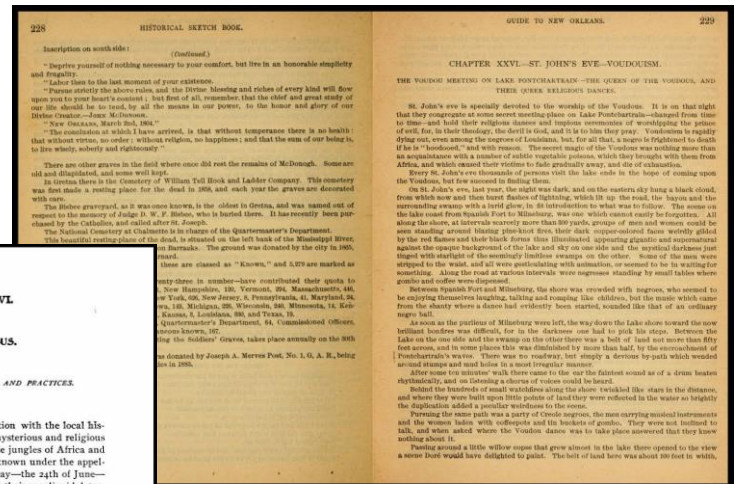
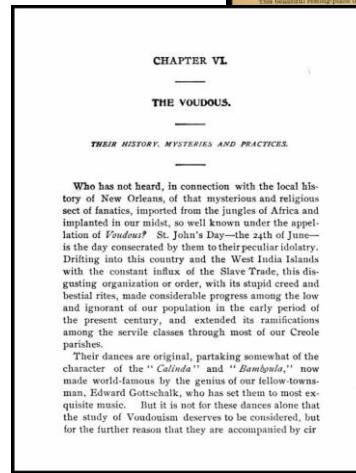
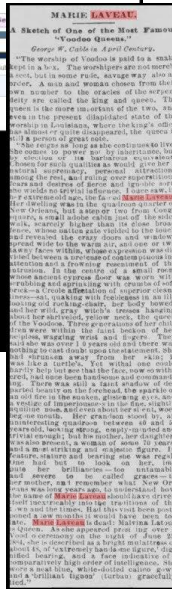
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Case Study: Marie Laveau in the Sources



Search for “Marie Laveau” in the Library of Congress’ online newspaper archive, [Chronicling America](#) with an article from the *Savannah Morning News*, 27th April 1886



Pages from *New Orleans as it was* by Henry C. Castellanos and *Historical sketch book and guide to New Orleans* by William Coleman, accessed by Google Books and the Internet Archive respectively.

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Case Study: Marie Laveau in the Sources

The screenshot shows a digital archive interface for the Federal Writers Project. The left sidebar contains a list of document thumbnails, with the second one (labeled '2') selected and highlighted in blue. The main content area displays a list of 19 numbered entries, each describing a different source. The entries are as follows:

- 10 White miscellaneous songs from various locations. Original.
- 11 Negro "pseudo science" (cures, sayings and superstitions) collected in New Orleans includes birthing, religious experience, resurrection, haunted mirror, spirits and witch-riding. Unpublished
- 12 Unusual words and phrases (Houma). Original.
- 13 Poems, songs similes and salutations from New Orleans. Original
- 14 Animal husbandry (how to care for animals) and farm folklore. Unpublished
- 15 Negro narratives about divining the future, dream interpretation, treasure hunting, horoscopes and palmistry. New Orleans unpublished.
- 16 Folk medicine from various areas and ethnic groups. New Orleans unpublished.
- 17 Domestic lore including household hints, recipes and predictions. Items are from Natchitoches, Plaquemines, Avoyelles, Tangipahoa and Delta Parishes. Collected by Antony and Huguenot. Unpublished original.
- 18 Negro tales from New Orleans includes plantation stories, children's stories, animal tales and jokes. Collected by Posey, Wright, Lemelle, McKinney and Huguenot. Unpublished.
- 19 Ex-slave tales and interviews including a poem "A Voice From the Tombs" by Watts, a Lafon Old Folks Home spelling bee, songs, Marie Laveau stories and several un-attributed manuscripts. Interviewees are Spotfore, Reed, Jackson, Dietz, (White), Stewart, Gordon, Verreth, Bell, Banjo, Cornelius, Patterson, Brown, Johnson, Flowers, Hite, Kelly, George, Wall, Parcanses, Ashley, Turner (2), Doby (2), Stafford, Lewis (2), Fletcher, Harris, Gray, Waters, Wilson, Broomfield, Love, Brundy and Genevr, Hunter, Web, CeBuiew, John, Smith, Butler, Woodrich, Barber, Prim, Sienette, Moss and Russell. Interviewers include McElwee, Arguedas, Wallace, Breaux, McKinney, Michinard, Posey Arguedas and Burke. Unpublished Original.

[Federal Writers
Project Inventory
\(Louisiana\)](#)
Northwestern State
University, Louisiana



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