

IB History HL

History Internal Assessment

How 'mad' was Juana I of Castile?

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1

¹ Classic Vision, *Joanna I of Castile, in Spanish Juana I of Castilla, 1479 -1555, Known as Joanna the Mad or Juana La Loca, beside the Corpse of Her Husband Philip.* Classic Vision, *Joanna I of Castile, in Spanish Juana I of Castilla, 1479 -1555, Known as Joanna the Mad or Juana La Loca, beside the Corpse of Her Husband Philip.*



Table of Contents

<i>Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Source</i>	3
<i>Section 2: Investigation</i>	5
<i>Section 3: Reflection</i>	9
<i>Bibliography</i>	10



Section 1: Identification and Evaluation of Source

Appropriate Question
for Investigation

This investigation will explore the question How 'mad' was Juana I of Castile (1479-1555).

The primary source I have selected is the manuscript *Clause of the will of the Catholic Queen* in 1504. It is relevant to the investigation as it established Juana as the sole legitimate heir to the throne while Phillip would only serve as her counsel. The second source I have selected is the book *Juana the Mad* written by the historian Bethany Aram in 2005. It is relevant to the investigation as it's an overall study on *Juana I* and it's a modern interpretation from the gender perspective.

Appropriate sources selected. Relevance is present -could be further developed

The first source I have selected for detailed analysis came from the Spanish Royal Archive, signed by the Queen 3 days before her death in 1504. Being an account from the birth mother

V-O and the Queen of Castile, the **origin** of this source is valuable as it's a strong endorsement towards Juana's competency an achieving ruler. However, the **origin** has its limitation as Isabel has her interest to praise Juana as she was her only option to be the heir, after the death of three L-O Castilian heirs, if she wanted to keep the kingship within her line of lineage. The **purpose** of this source is for Isabel to publicly endorse Juana as the legitimate successor to the throne at the final

Not clear how it shows this

stage of her life and it's valuable because it shows the level of urgency Isabel felt towards making Juana the Queen. However, this **purpose** also has its limitation as Isabel was unlike to say anything negative as she didn't want to degenerate the crown image. The value of the **content** was that "fidelity, loyalty, obedience, reverence"² was proven as the personal image that Isabel's reign was trying to build for Juana and how the contemporaries perceived her. The limitation of the **content** was that as almost all of Isabel's instructions, especially how Juana should be the ruler, were not followed after her death, it provides limited use for us to understand what happened.

L-P

Not clear why this is a value

L-C

The second source I have selected is the academic book *Juana the Mad: Sovereignty and Dynasty in Renaissance Europe*, written by Professor Aram in 2005. The **origin** of the book has its value as Bethany Aram is a professor of Spanish history at the Institute of International Studies at Spain and has written four books and numerous articles in Spanish history. However, the **origin** has its limitation as Aram has only written two books in English thus some expression Speculation. might be slightly distorted. The value of the **purpose** is it's a book providing a revised view endorsing Juana's political competency from the gender perspective and Aram was among the

V-O

² Gaspar de Gricio, "Clausula Del Testamento de La Reyna Católica, (Clause of the Will of the Catholic Queen)."

V-P

first historians to do that. The limitation of its **purpose** was that Aram was too ideologically driven that she started to over diminish the role her male relatives played on her for the sake of her arguments. The **content** is valuable because it provided a strong explanation for Juana's seemingly insane behaviors, such as Aram argued Juana's action of moving the coffin all over Andalusia has nothing to do with the renaissance notion of '*madness*' but instead was claiming the lands for her son³. The **content** on the other hand has its limitation as the book did not provide the view that was accepted by most people originally.

Perhaps
L-P.

V-C

Invalid

Word Count: 576

³ Aram, *Juana the Mad*.

Context provided. Could be clearer on the arguments for her confinement

Section 2: Investigation

Juana I of Castile, also known historically as *Juana la Loca*, was officially Queen of Castile from 1504 and Queen of Aragon from 1516 to 1555. She was made to be the “proprietary queen” after the death of three Castilian heirs, and Phillip, whom she married for the establishment of a double alliance where she was the “lesser half”⁴. During her reign, despite being the legitimate ruling monarch, she was more of a Queen in name while her son Charles who ruled jointly with her was the one in authority. Juana’s life is more characterized by her title of ‘*madness*’, which was alleged to her by her tantrums, self-starvation, and even what appeared to be religious indifference behavior over the forty-six years of imprisonment. Although the existing sources did not exclude the chance of her having some degree of necrophilia, but not to the extent that matches her reputation. The current understanding of Juana I of Castile’s near-mythical ‘*madness*’ was as distorted and exaggerated by her contemporary sources and artworks for the sake of political appeals by the male emperor around her and as she fits surprisingly well to the “self-abnegating femininity”.

Argument made

Juana was pulled out of her crown and imprisoned by her male relatives, despite being endorsed by Isabella as her legitimate heir to the crown, for her ‘*madness*’ and thus incompetency to rule the empire that was alleged by her husband and son. In Queen Isabella’s testament 3 days before her death, she presented Juana as Isabel’s universal heiress, Philip as king consort, and obey Fernando “according to God’s commandment”⁵, and this is an endorsement towards Juana’s competency. However, she was referred to as “sick’ (enferma), “Weak” (Flaca), or “indisposed” (indispuest) by contemporaries⁶ and Fernando asserted she “in no way wants to occupy herself with or undertake any business of ruling or government or other things”, and “it would be the destruction and loss of these kingdoms due to her illness and passions” even if the queen wished to exercise authority⁷. In the *letter to de Veyre*, the royal chronicler Cortez stated that “the illness that is such that the said Queen Juana our Lady cannot govern”⁸. Considering Ferdinand and Charles was the one in power, their justifications for

⁴ Aram.

⁵ Gaspar de Gricio, “Clausula Del Testamento de La Reyna Católica, (Clause of the Will of the Catholic Queen).”

⁶ Alonso de Santa Cruz, the chronicler of the Catholic Kings, “Doctores Soto y Julián al Rey Fernando (Doctos Soto and Julian to King Fernando).”

⁷ Lorenzo de Padilla, “Crónica de Felipe I (Chronicle of Felipe I).”

⁸ Aram, *Juana the Mad*; Alonso de Santa Cruz, the chronicler of the Catholic Kings, “Doctores Soto y Julián al Rey Fernando (Doctos Soto and Julian to King Fernando).”

throwing Juana out of the crown, presented above, might be highly polluted. Even Phillip himself has criticized and invalidated *Monica testimony* where the servant gave a lengthy account of “the accidents, passions, and impediments that overcame the queen, and had her outsider her free will”, which served as the primary reason for Ferdinand’s taking over⁹. Thus, while there are reasons presented by Juana’s male relatives for her ‘*madness*’ and having her secluded, it seems like even the contemporaries (at least the royal family) had a consensus that those evidences were invalid and designed to smear the image of Juana.

Contemporary arguments provided.

Limited evaluation shown

Historically, there also are some historians who believed that Juana was genuinely ‘*mad*’. The main modern explanation that argued for her ‘*madness*’ is she having a hereditary mental illness, which begins with her grandmother, Isabella of Portugal, and ends with her great-grandson, Prince Don Carlos. Ludwig Pfandl psychologically diagnosed Juana’s mental condition as “*demencia precoz o esquizofrenia*”¹⁰. However, Townsend Miller argued that the hereditary theory seemingly minimized or passed over completely the mental health of Juana’s mother, Queen Isabella, whose strength of character and as an emperor was elevated to the extent to romanticized as a saintly figure¹¹, and none of Juana’s decedents got the same near-mystical status of the ‘*madness*’ label by the history. Rosa Montero even argued Juana’s situation is a “*post-partum psychosis A.*” that occurs after each woman had given birth multiple times, especially considering Juana has given birth to six children during a span of only eight years¹². Nevertheless, we need to beware that although the terms of *madnses*, *insanity*, and *locura* are synonymous nowadays, the original Spanish term of *locura* has a meaning that is not restricted to the strictly clinical sense as in English¹³. As the hereditary theory could not be completely proven and the lack of documentation during the vital stages of Juana’s life¹⁴ seems unlikely to allow a psychological diagnosis, Juana’s madness, at least on a clinical level, should not be acknowledged.

Counter-Perspective

Perspective

Some evaluation

Noticing that there is some evidence for Juana having a level of ‘*madness*’, there are some more recent historians arguing that Juana was indeed much more competent than what’s

⁹ Aram, “Juana ‘the Mad’s’ Signature: The Problem of Invoking Royal Authority, 1505- 1507.”

¹⁰ Pfandl and Villaverde, *Juana la loca*.

¹¹ Miller, *Henry IV of Castile, 1425-1474*.

¹² Rosa, *Juana La Loca y Felipe El Hermoso: Ni Loca Ni Hermoso. (Juana La Loca and Felipe El Hermoso: Neither Crazy nor Beautiful)*.

¹³ Poeta, “The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World.”

¹⁴ Prawdoin, *The Mad Queen of Spain*.

described by the royal chroniclers and got manipulated by her male relatives. Historians such as Poeta and Miller argued that Juana held a “superior intellect, keen chronological memory and remarkable lucidity”¹⁵ and was passionately loyal to Spain¹⁶. It is also presented that the procurators rushed to Burgos, begged the queen for instructions and beseeching her to assume personal control of her kingdom after Cortes’ declaration¹⁷ and Juana was able to decisively attempt to reclaim her patrimonial lands and revenues from Philip’s supporters within three months of his death. These tasks are already almost impossible for a ‘normal’ 16th-century woman to accomplish, and thus there’s no way that Juana was ‘mad’ and at the same time achieve this. Historians also argued that the sources where the legend came from are highly polluted¹⁸. Evidence of her madness, such as the *letter to de Veyre*, emerged in the context of a struggle between Philip and Ferdinand¹⁹. Both King Fernando and Philip were able to position themselves to power under the absence of Juana, thus it’s very applicable and lucrative for them to control and select the image of Juana that got published to legitimate and bolster their respective rightfulness to the crown. Moreover, the chronicle which was a proponent source of the later accusation of Juana’s madness was written by an anonymous person who is a Flemish in Philip’s court and very much reminiscent of the infamous diary Philip and Fernando used to label his wife mad, which also disappeared nowadays²⁰. Considering Juana’s economic dependency as Phillip controlled Juana’s expenditures alongside the role of Spanish personnel and methodically isolated her²¹, what she has accomplished and how she confronted the manipulation of her male relatives was already very impressive and should not be categorized as ‘mad’.

Normal is a difficult term

Some evaluation

How much of her ‘mad women’ image is a constructed literature figure is another topic of disputation. Aram argued that “through the centuries Juana has provided a stereotypical model of passionate, self-abnegating femineity”²² and Poeta pointed out her story ranging from “a woman consumed with jealous rages, paranoia, suicidal urges and a tendency toward necrophilia to

¹⁵ Poeta, “The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World.”

¹⁶ Miller, *Henry IV of Castile, 1425-1474*.

¹⁷ Aram, *Juana the Mad*.

¹⁸ Miller, *Henry IV of Castile, 1425-1474*; Aram, “Juana ‘the Mad’s’ Signature: The Problem of Invoking Royal Authority, 1505- 1507.”

¹⁹ Aram, “Juana ‘the Mad’s’ Signature: The Problem of Invoking Royal Authority, 1505- 1507.”

²⁰ Miller, *Henry IV of Castile, 1425-1474*.

²¹ Aram, *Juana the Mad*.

²² Aram.

‘Santa Juana, la Martir’s elevated to near-mystical status’²³ seems to “fit in well with the modern historical drama and prose”²⁴. It’s hard for some authors to resist the temptation of overindulging in the legend at the expense of historical accuracy. Some artworks do respect the empirical evidence with reasonable poetic license, such as Tamayo y Baus’s *La Locura de amor drama* in 1855; others either went entirely “feminism” where they believe Juanan’s abuse was directly attributable to an unscrupulous group of “conspiring males” that does not consider a female ruler could rule a kingdom by herself (even Isabel was only able to be the Queen because of the alliance with her husband as the Dual Monarchs), or artistical as Juana as a “martyr” who was torn between competing for socio-political and religious ideologies. The fourth category, also the most prevalent one among today’s literature, is those artworks that were heavily influenced by Spanish romanticism that were exposing Juana’s legendary necrophilia, superstitious practices, and jealous hallucinations²⁵. Ultimately, according to Miller and Prawdin, “it was precisely the insidious nature and utter brutality of her mistreatment which, ironically, provoked Juana’s transcendence to that near-mystical status”²⁶. It is nearly undoubtful that the perception of Juana’s ‘*madness*’ was more or less exaggerated throughout history and got delayed into the stereotypical character under in the Spanish romanticism literature, where later historians used as sources and thus only reinforced these misunderstandings.

The concept of *madness* has twisted and distorted itself over the course of history, which also made a clear justification more difficult. As Gioconda Belli argues that it’s more precise if we refer to her as “*Juana the passionate*” instead of calling her “*Juana the Mad*”²⁷. Most of the contemporary evidence arguing for Juana’s madness were heavily polluted and could never be perceived as strong evidence with any clinical *madness* under today’s framework, what she has accomplished was never possible for someone who’s ‘*mad*’, and the Spanish Romanticism Literature further distorted Juana’s figure and raised her into today’s near-mythical figure of ‘*madness*’ – and this should be corrected.

Strong argument
reached.

Word Count: 1234

²³ Poeta, “The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World.”

²⁴ Aram, *Juana the Mad*.

²⁵ Poeta, “The Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian World.”

²⁶ Miller, *Henry IV of Castile, 1425-1474*; Prawdin, *The Mad Queen of Spain*.

²⁷ Aram, “Juana ‘the Mad’s’ Signature: The Problem of Invoking Royal Authority, 1505- 1507.”

Section 3: Reflection

The most prominent challenges most historians faced when investigating the events focusing on the specific royal family members at the early modern states period would be the insufficiency of the primary accounts on the specific person of investigation. In this case, for *Juana, the Mad*, comparing to the vast number of studies that have been done by historians in the 500 years time-lapse between now and then on her life, the numbers of the primary accounts those initial historians based their analysis on was scarily insufficient. These accounts were also largely consisted of official chronicles as these are the most survived. However, these primary sources were heavily censored and skewed to enhance the royal image. While there are other accounts of the incident from the civilian level, their credibility is doubted as even the contemporary ones on the street would only get their information through rumors. Thus, as the later historians usually base their research on their predecessors' works, which are inconclusive and without firm evidence, the deviation through the ranks of interpretation is expected to exist at a considerable level.

This is not always the case.

This is a better idea

Why this is a challenge is explained. But it is short on detail

I have encountered all the challenges mentioned above, as Juana fits surprisingly well into the modern drama and prose where her image got further distorted in the Spanish Romanticism literature, starting at the period only decades after her death. These artworks, complying with the historians, are predominantly exaggerated elaboration based on a very limited amount of chronicler's accounts that even contradict themselves between different reigns, while none of them was strong enough to prove the others wrong.

Impartiality and volume are confused.

This is the first time I have ever assembled complete historical research on my own and I learned valuable insights about historians' common methodologies and challenges that come along. The methods that historians and I used for such topics were looking through the primary accounts such as the royal chronicles and the rumors on the streets at the time. Specifically, I looked up for translated version and found some of the chroniclers were unnamed and from Phillip's court, I doubt some of them to be highly polluted. I also looked up academic works and the literature/arts that are revolving around Juana. Through cross-referencing, I found Juana was more competent than what's being described by the royal chroniclers and tried to extract the information that's unpolluted by the author's ideologies of their time.

Some general methods employed but too descriptive

Word Count: 390

Not quite in the correct format. But a range of sources used.

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