

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

May 3, 2018

Zitella Wiles
via the FOI website

Dear Zitella Wiles,

regarding your Freedom of Information request titled “strappado” we collected the following information:

The strappado, also known as corda, is a form of torture wherein the victim’s hands are tied behind his or her back and suspended by a rope attached to the wrists, typically resulting in dislocated shoulders. Weights may be added to the body to intensify the effect and increase the pain. This kind of torture would generally not last more than an hour, without rest, as it would likely result in death. Other names for strappado include “reverse hanging”, “Palestinian hanging” (although it is not used by the Palestinian Authority) and il tormento della corda. Historically, it was used by the medieval Inquisition and many governments, such as the civil law court (1543–1798) of the Order of St. John at the Castellania in Valletta, Malta. The proper strappado causes permanent visible damage. Pain and resistance are different from person to person, generally due to the weight of the person himself/herself or the weight attached. It is not, as Samuel Johnson erroneously entered in his dictionary, a “chastisement by blows”.

Sincerely,

John Smith
FOI Manager