

10-11-2019

## **Manufacturing Sin on the Frontier of Heresy. Bishops, Franciscans and the Inquisition in Cuba during the Long Sixteenth Century, 1511 - 1611.**

Leonardo Falcon  
lfalc007@fiu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd>



Part of the [European History Commons](#), [History of Religion Commons](#), [Latin American History Commons](#), and the [Social History Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Falcon, Leonardo, "Manufacturing Sin on the Frontier of Heresy. Bishops, Franciscans and the Inquisition in Cuba during the Long Sixteenth Century, 1511 - 1611." (2019). *FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 4299.

<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/etd/4299>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by the University Graduate School at FIU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of FIU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [dcc@fiu.edu](mailto:dcc@fiu.edu).

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

MANUFACTURING SIN ON THE FRONTIER OF HERESY:  
BISHOPS, FRANCISCANS, AND THE INQUISITION IN CUBA  
DURING THE LONG SIXTEENTH CENTURY, 1511 – 1611

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

Leonardo Falcón

2019

To: Dean John F. Stack, Jr.  
Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs

This dissertation, written by Leonardo Falcón, and entitled Manufacturing Sin on the Frontier of Heresy: Bishops, Franciscans, and the Inquisition in Cuba During the Long Sixteenth Century, 1511 – 1611, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

---

Noble D. Cook

---

Aurora Morcillo

---

Ana M. Bidegain

---

Sherry Johnson, Major Professor

Date of Defense: October 11, 2019.

The dissertation of Leonardo Falcón is approved.

---

Dean John F. Stack, Jr.  
Steven J. Green School of International & Public Affairs

---

Andrés G. Gil  
Vice President for Research and Economic  
Development and Dean of the  
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2019

© Copyright 2019 by Leonardo Falcón

All rights reserved

DEDICATION

To God, my family, and my husband:

for everything.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation has been possible thanks to the support of numerous individuals to whom I owe much gratitude and respect. I am forever indebted for your patience and guidance but above all, for inspiring me. First, I want to thank all the members of my committee. Each one of you have contributed to both my academic and my personal life in ways you do not realize. Each one of you have been there when I needed you the most. I am deeply honored that you are a part of this project. Dr. Ana María Bidegain's commitment to the study of the Catholic Church in Latin America and of its role among society has been a seminal scholarship to follow. Your ability to observe and analyze the Church institutional contributions is remarkably balanced. Thank you for so many years of dedication, for your unquestionable commitment to the study of religion and society, and for your fidelity to your roots.

It is no secret that graduate students can easily become overwhelmed with academic engagements and tasks. We have the tendency to undermine family and social life in favor of scholastic activities and soon find ourselves lost and in despair. It is because of professors like Dr. Aurora Morcillo that we are able to put our life into perspective and reclaim our direction. Your dedication to your family, career, and students, always knowing how to prioritize each one of them distinctively, has inspired me to do the same. Your responsibility towards bringing the discipline of history to the next level its commendable and stimulating. Above all, your ability to perceive the emotional and academic needs of others and your willingness to uplift their spirit while emphasizing their duties is unrivaled. You taught me to enjoy history without losing sight of my surroundings

and to see the discipline as part of my life. This is a lesson I will hold dearly for the remainder of my career.

When I talk about Dr. David Cook, I describe him as a gentleman and a scholar; a combination difficult to find and worth matching. Among your many qualities as a historian I envy your remarkable capacity to remember dates, events, names, and processes combined with an impressive ability to analyze them impartially. Your contributions to our discipline are beyond compare and irreplaceable. Your display of humility when you teach, and the unique level of compassion you show when correcting your students are learning experiences on their own. Your teachings and qualities are further enhanced by Mrs. Cook's knowledge and research abilities. Sasha not only compliments your academic abilities but enhances your capacity to demonstrate them. She is an admirable scholar and an indelible pillar to whom I also owe my gratitude. I count her in my committee even if unofficially.

For almost twenty years I have been inspired and guided by a mentor whom I consider a friend; Dr. Sherry Johnson. Under your guidance I (re)learned Cuban history. During my years as an M.A. student at the Latin American and Caribbean Center, when I decided to focus on Cuba, you accepted to be a part of my thesis committee, even though you were on a research assignment in Europe. We communicated through email and because of your thorough revisions and outstanding writing abilities my thesis was comprehensible. Because of you I came back to academia nine years later. Of those who are honored to be your students, I am the one who took the longest to comeback for the Ph.D., but I did it because of you! I am beyond privileged to be among your last students. Your passion for colonial Cuban history gave birth to mine. Your emphasis on research

and documenting my arguments with detailed evidence are the foundations of my work. Your uncompromising dedication to academic honesty has formed my scholastic character. Your patience brought me here. You will always be Dr. Johnson.

Other professors who are not part of my dissertation committee have left deep marks through my years as a student. Dr. Alicia Re-Cruz, from the University of North Texas opened the doors of academia and held them open for me when I could barely speak English. You opened my eyes to different ways of learning and made me fall in love with Latin America. You taught me that if I am passionate about my future, I can overcome any obstacles in the present. Without Dr. Uva de Aragón my love for everything-Cuban would be insignificant. You showed me that loving the island from the distance makes it more painful but also more durable. Through other Cuban scholars such as Drs. Lisandro Perez, Marifeli Pérez-Stable, Damián Fernández, Ruth Behar, Carlos Álvarez, and Jorge Duany, I have learned to be a Cuban scholar.

This journey could have not been successful without the support of my family: my mother, Mirtha Triana, my stepfather Roberto Avila, my siblings, Elio R. Avila, Frank Hernandez, and Yoani Falcón. Each one of you has helped me conclude this stage of my life. You make me proud and your example encourages me to never give up. As migrants we arrived with nothing and we have achieved all that we need. We are honest, hardworking, and reliable individuals but above all we are a loving and cohesive family. I hope that my path inspires my nephews Alejandro and Thiago and my niece Sophia towards success and that my sacrifice as the first one in the family to migrate to the United States and receive a doctorate degree will be fruitful beyond current generations.



Additionally, important are those friends who have become family over the last years: Ricardo Pelegrín, Micah Oelze, Oren Okhovat, Gloria Lopera, Judith Mancilla, Jason Daniel, and Stephanie Chancy. Their contributions are equally appreciated. Other professors who have been influential in my years as student deserve mentioning and have earned my gratitude: Drs. Astrid Arrarás, Eduardo Gamarra, José Miguel Cruz, Gwyn Davies, Jenna Gibbs, Okezi Otovo, Victor Uribe, and Kirsten Wood. Your classes and/or support have been crucial. Their role has been complimented by the love and help provided by our departments' staff: Liesl Picard, Aymee Correa, Sebastian Arcos, Paola Salavarría, Luis del Pino, Emily Correras, and Maria Ferrer-Young.

Besides the individual assistance I have enjoyed and truly appreciate, I am immensely grateful for the institutional support and trust I have received from numerous entities. First and foremost, I must thank Florida International University and its University Graduate School; School of International and Public Affairs; Kimberly Green Latin American and Caribbean Center; Cuban Research Institute, and History Department. Without your continual moral and financial support this project could have never been completed. Additionally, I want to thank the Tinker Foundation for its financial support, pivotal for conducting research in two different occasions and in three different countries. Ultimately, I am extremely grateful and blessed because of the support I have received from the Academy of American Franciscan History. The Dissertation Fellowship provided during the last year of my doctorate studies has brought this phase of the project to a successful completion. Your commitment continues and it transcends into my teaching and scholastic career. Therefore, it is extremely appreciated. The support of each of the abovementioned institutions is invaluable.

I also must thank the efforts of archivists and librarians in Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Chile, and in the U.S. where I pursued most of my research. I thank the employees at the National Historical Archive in Madrid, the General Archive of Indies in Seville, the General Archive of the Nation in Mexico City, the Regional Archive and Library in Veracruz, the Cuban National Archive and the History Institute in Havana. I also want to thank the individuals who helped me at the Library of Congress, the Florida International University Library, the University of Miami Library, and the University of Florida Special Collections in Gainesville. In particular, I want to thank Dr. Linda Arnold whose incredible archival contributions from the General Archive of the Nation in Mexico City guided me through history and helped me locate valuable information that, otherwise, would have been extremely difficult to find. Because of her this dissertation exists.

Finally, I thank my husband, Oscar Atehortua. You gave me hope, love, stability, and a place to call home when I most needed them. You have shown me your devotion to our marriage through your dedication and support during my years as a student. Our time together coincided with my time writing the dissertation. You did not give up. You have endured my long nights and endless days without doubting that I would finish and without complaining about my distance from you while I was immersed in my writings. You have enjoyed my achievements and suffered with my frustrations. You trusted me even when you did not understand. Because of the past years our present is stronger, our future is brighter, and our marriage is happier.

I humbly and deeply thank you all.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION  
MANUFACTURING SIN ON THE FRONTIER OF HERESY:  
BISHOPS, FRANCISCANS, AND THE INQUISITION IN CUBA  
DURING THE LONG SIXTEENTH CENTURY, 1511 – 1611

by

Leonardo Falcón

Florida International University, 2019

Miami, Florida

Professor Sherry Johnson, Major Professor

**ABSTRACT:** This dissertation examines the history of the Inquisition in the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba paying special attention to its leadership amid the series of reformations undertaken by the Spanish empire on both sides of the Atlantic. Through the long sixteenth century (1511 – 1611) bishops, Franciscan friars, and other government officials employed or manipulated the Inquisition in Cuba to satisfy the needs of the Spanish Empire or their personal agendas, respectively. Some clergy rightfully used the inquisitorial practices as mandated to uphold the Christian morality of the colonial society. Others, conveniently, fabricated crimes against members of the community to cover up their own wrongdoings. They used their privileges as officers of the Inquisition to protect themselves against grave accusations, to intimidate their accusers, and to prevent being prosecuted for crimes they committed. Other functionaries filed charges, arrested, and tried prominent or wealthy individuals either employing the Inquisition's

legitimate mechanisms or exaggerating the charges they fabricated to gain notoriety and advance through the ranks of the Holy Office.

Concurrently, the business of manufacturing sin in Cuba – that is charging people with fabricated and/or exaggerated religious crimes – evolved into a useful imperial tool. When inquisition personnel brought charges against those who violated, contradicted or were accused of disrespecting Catholic doctrine, it had the potential for grave consequences. Establishing (or attempting to establish) Inquisition Tribunals near contested areas, such as the frontier regions, and sending Inquisition delegates to religious underrepresented regions such as the missions and the frontier towns, served, if not as a barrier, at least as a deterrent to heretical individuals who challenged Spain's Catholic hegemony. Along with fortifications and armed military posts, the Inquisition developed the systemic function of upholding the Catholicity of the Spanish Empire, and of protecting the colonial outskirts from foreign threats and infiltrations. The protective role of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Diocese of Cuba went hand in hand with the defensive strategies of the Spanish empire throughout its frontiers of heresy.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Introduction.....	1
Historiographical Considerations.....	10
On the Inquisition in Cuba.....	10
On Colonial Society.....	17
On the Church in Cuba. ....	18
On Bigamy.....	20
Chapter I: Protection from Diabolical Influence: Initial Requests for an Inquisition Tribunal and Early Use of Inquisitorial Powers. ....	
i – The Spanish Inquisition arrival in the Caribbean. ....	31
ii – Initial Request for a Tribunal.....	36
iii – Church, Inquisition, and Patronato. ....	43
iv – Initial stages of the Church in the Caribbean.....	48
v – The Clergy and the Inquisition as Guardians of the Faith. ....	53
vi – Initial Religious Organization of the Indies.....	60
Chapter II: Protection from Prosecution: Uses and Abuses of Inquisitorial Powers.....	
i – The Franciscans and the Powers of <i>Omnimoda</i> .....	68
ii – The First Resident Bishop: Ramírez de Salamanca.....	74
iii – The Bishop’s Abuses of Powers.....	81
iv – Others’ Abuses of Power. ....	90
v – New Bishop, Same Abuses. ....	96
vi – Same Bishop, New Imperial Orders. ....	104
vii – The First Episcopal Visitation. ....	111
Chapter III: Protection from Heretical Attacks and Moral Disorders: The Preemptive use of the Inquisition as an Imperial Shield.....	
i – Preventing the Expansion of Protestantism: The Council of Trent. ....	116
ii – Religious Reforms in Spanish America.....	125
iii – The Formal Establishment of the Inquisition in the New World. ....	130

Chapter IV: Protection from Moral Disorders: The Application of the Tridentine Canons to the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba. ....	138
i – The State of the Diocese. ....	138
ii – La Florida and the Crown’s Heretical Enemies. ....	143
iii – Bishop Castillo and the Organization of the Diocese. ....	147
iv – Responses to Castillo’s Tridentine Reforms. ....	158
v – The Nefarious Sin. ....	161
vi – Drastic Measures Against Heretics. ....	165
 Chapter V: Delinquency and Blasphemy: The Official Establishment of the Inquisition in Cuba. ....	 168
i – The Inquisition and Trans-Colonial Bigamy: The Case Against Petronila Ruiz... 168	
ii – The Inquisition and Trans-Atlantic Polygamy: The Case Against Pedro de la Muza. ....	175
iii – Other Cases Against the Holy Faith. ....	179
iv – Calls for Additional Tribunals. ....	182
v – Strengthening the Catholic Presence in Cuba. ....	188
vi – Bishop Juan de las Cabezas y Altamirano. ....	190
vii – Requests for a Commissary of the Inquisition in Havana. ....	196
viii – Fr. Francisco Carranco, O.F.M. First Commissary of the Inquisition in Havana. ....	201
 Chapter VI: Protection from Depravity: Carranco and the Inquisition on the Spanish Frontier of Heresy. ....	 211
i – Establishing His Position. ....	211
ii – Strengthening His Powers. ....	215
iii – Extending His Jurisdiction. ....	218
iv – Expanding Canonical Definitions. ....	224
v – Challenging Powers. ....	234
vi – Increasing the Caseload. ....	242
vii – The Third Inquisition Tribunal in the Americas. ....	247
 Epilogue. ....	 249
 Conclusion. ....	 254

Abbreviations .....	258
Bibliography .....	259
VITA .....	277

## **Introduction.**

Numerous studies focus on the establishment and development of Spanish institutions in Cuba, and specifically on Havana, and their contributions to the defense of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> As detailed in the historiographical considerations below, there are no substantial academic works on the history of the Inquisition in Cuba. No author has, as far as the literature shows, addressed the role of the Holy Office or of its host institution, the Catholic Church, within the Spanish Empire's strategies of defending its frontier against European foreigners and their heretical ideologies. The participation of the Diocese of Cuba, which gradually included the neighboring Abbey of Jamaica and the satellite province of La Florida, in the imperial defensive plans evolved slowly over a period of one hundred years (1511 – 1611).<sup>2</sup> The relationship developed amid a chain of internal struggles between local authorities who used and abused Inquisitorial powers while the diocese underwent several religious reorganizations. The defensive character of the diocese was ultimately fueled by the appearance of Protestantism in Europe and its infiltration in both the Caribbean and in the vast region north of the Spanish settlement of San Agustín de la Florida.

---

<sup>1</sup> Among the most significant contributions on this topic is Paul Hoffman. *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean, 1535 – 1585. Precedent, Patrimonialism, and Royal Parsimony.* (LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> While the actual name of the original diocese was Nuestra Señora de la Asunción de Baracoa (the name of the town where it was first established in 1517) in 1522 it changed to Diocese of Santiago de Cuba or Diocese of Cuba. See chapter 1 section 6 of this dissertation. The years of 1511 – 1611 were selected as they mark the beginning of the Spanish colonization of Cuba and the departure from the island of the first commissary of the Inquisition assigned to it.



Manufacturing sin – that is charging people with fabricated and/or exaggerated religious crimes – began with the use of the powers, privileges, and methods of the Inquisitors for personal gain. It quickly became a systemic protective stratagem against foreign interlopers. This defensive role of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Cuba went hand in hand with the Spanish imperial military strategies for the Greater Caribbean and is the central thesis of this dissertation. What started as a traditional Inquisitorial action in the Roman Catholic world became a preemptive administrative exercise to deter intruders and to defend Catholic hegemony. Bishops and Franciscan friars serving the Church and the crown in Cuba were key agents in this development.

Future work based on this dissertation will expand to focus primarily on the Franciscan network of Inquisition and missions in the Greater Caribbean. The resulting monograph will particularly center on the Franciscan friar, Fr. Francisco Carranco, who officially brought the Holy Office to Cuba through his post as first Commissary of the Inquisition. His actions in Veracruz, Havana, and St. Augustine in Florida, covered in chapters five and six and his tendency to manufacture sin will be thoroughly investigated and documented. Concurrently, the lives of people with whom he interacted will be reconstructed to produce a much-needed history, not from above or from below but from the middle of the Inquisition in Cuba and its role in colonial society. It will be a history at the level of friars, nuns, and lay persons as they interacted with the Inquisition.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See the Historiographical Considerations section as it expands on this topic.

The already mentioned lack of historiography and the need to demonstrate the connection between individuals' actions and historical processes guide this dissertation. Therefore, it begins with the foundational period of the colony of Cuba in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The first chapter focuses on the establishment of the Church as part of the Spanish governmental apparatus on the island. That analysis serves as the preamble to the initial inquisitorial activities of manufacturing sin undertaken by the first friars and bishops working in Cuba. The final chapter covers the most significant increase in Inquisition activities on the island found in Spanish, Mexican, and Cuban archives. This overabundance of heresy had less to do with the moral cleansing of the island than with a combination of personal and imperial plans, as narrated in this dissertation.

Chapter one is based on the premise that in order for the Inquisition to work properly it needed a fully functional society that supported its role and needed its presence. That was not the case during the early years of the conquest and colonization of the Indies. The chapter also shows that, prior to the official establishment of the Inquisition in the New World, Church and Inquisition were and must be studied and understood as one religious unit. While some individuals were empowered to act as inquisition agents and enjoyed certain degree of autonomy, they were still hierarchically and canonically under the office of a bishop. He was the highest-ranking religious authority of a jurisdiction even though personnel under his authority did not always responded to his direction and control. Because of tradition and canons, the men holding

the episcopal office were exempted from the jurisdiction of the inquisition agents.<sup>4</sup> Even after the formal creation of the tribunals, addressed in a subsequent chapter, both the Church and the Inquisition responded directly and independent of each other to the Spanish monarch. As such, they had to abide by the imperial plans.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Church and Inquisition as the religious branch of the Spanish Empire and because of *Patronato Regio* formed an intricate part of the Spanish government apparatus both, in the metropolis and, by extension, in the colonies, and were analyzed as such.<sup>6</sup>

The Spanish Crown, supported by Rome, empowered the clergy to act on their behalf in the colonies. Chapter two offers an analysis of a Papal Brief and the Spanish imperial orders that placed religious personnel, particularly the mendicant orders, atop the administrative apparatus of the colonies. These mandates set the stage for the religious reorganization of the colonies, the struggles over jurisdictions, the abuses of inquisitorial powers, and the consequent manufacturing of sin that marked the first century of colonial society in Cuba and continued thereafter. While distance from the

---

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Rubial García, eds. *La Iglesia en el México Colonial. Seminario de historia política y económica de la iglesia en México*. (México: Instituto de investigaciones históricas de México, Universidad Autónoma de México, 2013), 32-37. The Manual for the inquisition, which dictated it's the inquisition personnel's duties and rights will be addressed as it fits the narrative.

<sup>5</sup> The Inquisition never had jurisdiction to judge bishops as they were canonically superior to the head of the tribunals. Per Canon Law, the inquisition acted by delegation of the ordinary of the diocese, the Bishop. See Ángel Alcalá, "Herejía y Jerarquía. La polémica sobre el Tribunal de la Inquisición como desacato y usurpación de la jurisdicción episcopal." In José Antonio Escudero. Ed. *Perfiles Jurídicos de la Inquisición Española*. (Madrid, España. Instituto de Historia de la Inquisición. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1989), 61. This canonical distinction will be addressed in several chapters.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed explanation of the historical origins of the Inquisition and the use of the Church as an arm of the Spanish Empire see chapter 3. For an explanation of *Patronato Regio* see chapter 1.

center of power allowed for some degree of autonomy – and chaos – in the administration of the colony, the abuses of power and the disregard for imperial orders demanded the direct intervention of the emperor and of his council. His Majesty's new orders prevented the unnecessary use of inquisitorial powers and, at least temporarily, stopped the fabrication of crimes. The emperor's direct mandates to the bishop of Cuba shifted the prelate's attention to his ministerial duties resulting in the first Episcopal Visitation of the island.

The Holy Roman and Spanish Emperor Charles V was tackling significant battles in Europe that affected his colonial policies. Chapter three addresses the emergence of Protestantism which both Rome and Spain opposed adamantly. The resulting measures to halt the spread of dissenting ideologies that directly challenged Spanish and Catholic hegemony unleashed a series of reforms that reverberated through Europe and across the Atlantic. The Council of Trent and its Counter-Reformation impetus thoroughly reorganized the Catholic Church, officialized the sacraments – which were used as a weapon – and declared an open war against Protestantism. In Spain a meeting was called to address the division of the Christian world that consequently challenged its possessions. The Junta of 1568 ordered the foundation of Inquisition Tribunals in the Americas to, officially, manufacture sins against the enemies of the faith in order to protect Spanish subjects and territories in the New World from the spread of Protestantism.

The formal establishment of the Holy Office in the New World was not sufficient to counteract the incursion of heretics into the Spanish Caribbean and the surrounding areas. In chapter four it becomes clearer that military and fortification endeavors had to

go hand in hand with a strong and intransigent religious presence to buffer the enemy. These efforts ought to be accompanied by drastic actions throughout the colonies at risk. During the second half of the sixteenth century San Agustín and Havana became the focus of religious and military actions aiming at strengthening the Spanish presence in the region to protect peoples, territories, and treasures alike. A deep revamping of both military and religious strategies resulted in the elimination of most intruding Protestants. Working together the Crown and Church developed a structured defensive plan and the complete organization of the Diocese of Cuba through a comprehensive Canonical Visitation. Yet, internally there were disagreements and opposition to the efforts of bringing order to the colony and resistance to the bishops' role in it. Once again, the business of manufacturing sin, this time against one of the prelates, became part of the locals' strategies. The response included invoking the Episcopal powers of Ordinary Inquisitors and excommunicating those who attempted to tarnish his reputation.

Despite the transatlantic efforts to curtail Protestantism and administrative chaos, disarray in Cuba continued. The symbiotic relationship between ecclesiastical and civilian powers which should have created a stronger form of government responsible for effectively administering the colony was not working. Chapter five addresses the strengthening of the Mexican Inquisition Tribunal, which had jurisdiction over Cuba and the Caribbean to bring much-needed social order and orthodoxy to the island. The tribunal autonomy and supremacy over secular powers became obvious in a series of trials involving individuals in Mexico and on the island. The cohesive nature of the Greater Caribbean was a reality under the powerful authority of the Holy Office in Mexico. Yet, it was insufficient to counteract local disorder and the reappearance of

Protestant interlopers. Strong religious and secular personnel were sent to Cuba and the calls for more Inquisition tribunals in the New World echoed throughout the colonies. If colonists were to buffer intruders and protect their religion, manufacturing sin had to be assumed as an official policy. Hence, the local authorities in Cuba requested the presence of an official inquisition representative and the first Commissariat of the Inquisition on the island was created.

The arrival of the Franciscan friar, Father Francisco Carranco, in Havana in 1605 as the first Commissary of the Inquisition marked the formal establishment of the Holy Office in the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba. Chapter six documents his effective role on the island as well as his propensity to overstepping boundaries and manufacturing sin. Prior to his post in Cuba, Carranco held a similar office in Veracruz. In both port cities, the Franciscan friar was renowned for his religious zeal, his strict adherence to the Canons of the Council of Trent, and his rigorous application of the guidelines issued by the Inquisition. Carranco lived and served the Franciscans and the Church during a period of significant changes in the circum-Caribbean and excelled in expanding his office beyond the assigned boundaries. His tenure in Cuba coincided with the division of the island into two administrative centers, the beginning of the golden age of the Florida missions, and ultimately with the establishment of the third and final Inquisition Tribunal in the Americas. All of those administrative changes responded with the official arrival of Protestantism in the New World with the establishment of the Protestant English settlement of Jamestown in 1607. Carranco's years in Cuba were also filled with constant battles with the local authorities and with an exorbitant increase in the number of Inquisition cases and accusations. All of this was the result of his attempts to justify the

creation of a tribunal in Cuba under his authority. He envisioned a tribunal on the largest of the Antilles with jurisdiction over San Agustín and Jamaica as the most effective weapon against Protestantism.

Carranco's ambitious tribunal in Cuba did not become a reality. The third branch of the Holy Office was indeed established in the Caribbean, but in another port city, Cartagena de Indias. As a result, the Church in the New World consolidated and reinforced its presence and mission in the Americas, as it had done in the Iberian Peninsula, always responding to both internal and external political and religious factors. The Church transformed its original commission of establishing and expanding Christendom into the New World by converting the natives to Christianity, to consolidating the Empire's possession by upholding the religious orthodoxy of the population, and to finally policing and defending Catholicism as the official religion of the Empire it served. Each transformation period coincided with the early and overlapping stages of the Spanish Empire in the New World.<sup>7</sup> Regardless of any changes

---

<sup>7</sup> There is a periodization for the study of the Catholic Church in the Americas established by Dr. Enrique D. Dussel, widely used by church historians, which divides the development of the Church into five periods. See Enrique D. Dussel. *Historia de la iglesia en América Latina: medio milenio de coloniaje y liberación (1492 – 1992)*. Eight Edition. (Madrid-México: Esquila Misional, 1992). Of those only three periods are important for this study which is the first of its kind that includes the Church in Cuba in those processes. The first one, 1492 – 1519, is characterized by the evangelization of the Caribbean, mostly of Santo Domingo and the establishment of the first dioceses in the region. The second period, 1519 – 1551, is defined by the expansion into the mainland and foundation of missions through New Spain and Peru. This period analyzed in chapter I of this dissertation as it is the time when the organization of the Church in Cuba begins. The third phase, 1551 – 1620, is exemplified by the complete organization and consolidation (*afianzamiento*) of the Catholic Church in the New World. This is the most important period, as it pertains to this study, as this is the phase when the three Inquisition tribunals are established in the New World (1569, 1570, 1610) and the first commissary of the Holy Office, Francisco Carranco, is assigned to the island in 1605.

in the Church mission throughout those complex and uncertain years there was a permanent and continuous two-fold task on both sides of the Atlantic which went hand in hand with the Spanish Imperial strategies of defending the colonies physically and spiritually.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Much has been written about the Inquisition on both sides of the Atlantic (refer to the historiographical considerations section of this dissertation) but little has been done on the focus of this research; the Inquisition Cuba.



## **Historiographical Considerations.**

### **On the Inquisition in Cuba.**

The historiography of the Catholic Church in Cuba and its dependent institutions is scarce, limited, and most of it outdated. Typical of the historiography of Cuba in general, the few scholars who have produced a functional history of the island have done so limiting their scope and sacrificing numerous aspects of Cuban society and its institutions. According to Dr. Sherry Johnson “if society is analyzed at all, it is subsumed by the transcendental importance of politics and the economy, and with few exceptions, Cuban historiography has been held hostage to studies of sugar, slavery, colonialism and dependence.”<sup>9</sup> The historiography of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cuba is in a worse state, antiquated and based on inadequate primary sources in spite of the existence of scattered documents that wait to be exploited by intrepid researchers. There is no significant academic work on the role of this institution on the island. Therefore, most secondary literature used for this dissertation pertains to other regions and as such, are addressed in this historiographical essay. There are few exceptions which are thoroughly cited and duly noted.<sup>10</sup>

In the preface to the latest edition of *The Spanish Inquisition, A Historical Revision*, renowned Inquisition historian Henry Kamen refers to the extensive historiography within and outside of academia about this religious institution. He

---

<sup>9</sup> Sherry Johnson. *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba*. (Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2001), 1.

<sup>10</sup> In order to reconstruct the role of the Church and its agents during the period covered in this work the author had to borrow from works focused on the Church and the Inquisition elsewhere throughout the Spanish Empire.

mentions popular histories, novels and essays and highlights the importance of the ongoing debates about different approaches to studying the Inquisition as well as the diverse interpretations of its functions.<sup>11</sup> Asunción Lavrín introducing a seminal work on the inquisition in New Spain indicates that “the Spanish Inquisition re-created itself in the Americas in only three locations, but its influence in shaping the religious culture of Spanish America belied the small number of offices in such a vast territory.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the Spanish Inquisition and its role in the Americas have been amply covered, however, there is not one academic work about the Inquisition in Cuba.

Those who have addressed the Holy Office on the island have done so in passing mentioning its disagreements with the local authorities while others have limited their work to compiling a list of records housed at different archives. At most, the analysis of the inquisition in Cuba has been relegated to folktales and footnotes with cursory analysis and dismissal of its sociopolitical and religious role. There are two publications that directly refer to the Inquisition in Cuba. One is anthropologist Fernando Ortiz’s *Historia de una pelea cubana contra los demonios* which is characterized as a semi-historic and folkloric work on the idea of demonology with colorful and extravagant episodes about a fight in the villa of Remedios.<sup>13</sup> Ortiz relies mostly on the works on the Holy Office

---

<sup>11</sup> Henry Kamen. *The Spanish Inquisition. A Historical Revision*. Fourth Edition. (New Haven: CT: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Asunción Lavrín. Introduction to John F. Chuchiack IV. *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536 – 1820. A Documented History*. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012), xiii.

<sup>13</sup> Fernando Ortiz. *Historia de una Pelea Cubana Contra los Demonios*. (Madrid: Ediciones ERRE, S.I. 1973). Cited by Gerardo Enrique Chávez Espíngola. “Imaginario popular. Mitología Cubana: Posesión satánica, historia y fantasiario popular”, *Cubarte- El Portal de la Cultura Cubana*. [www.cubarte.cult.cu/periodico](http://www.cubarte.cult.cu/periodico), agosto de 2011, Accessed on July 9, 2018.

tribunals in Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Cartagena de Indias written by Inquisition historian José Toribio Medina. Ortiz dedicates a handful of pages to the Inquisition as a religious institution, perpetuating numerous mistakes along with the myth of an uneventful and relatively modest institution.<sup>14</sup> The second work is an article turned into a booklet and published in 2001 by Cuban journalist Tania Chappi. The brief work summarizes a few inquisitorial events and individuals, echoing a legendary tale previously mentioned by Fernando Ortiz in the work cited above about a group of *amujerados*<sup>15</sup> allegedly burned by the Inquisition in Havana.<sup>16</sup> Many others who write about early colonial Cuba or about the Inquisition in the New World have simply and completely overlooked this institution's role in the island's historical processes, or have repeated the abovementioned references.<sup>17</sup>

The state of this historiography is baffling since the history of the Church and of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the New World are intricately entwined and have been thoroughly documented elsewhere. Both institutions were pivotal in the creation of the infrastructure of colonial society and critical in the administration of justice. The latter was particularly noticeable at a time and place when no tribunal existed such as the early years of European colonization of the Americas (1492 – 1569) and on the island of

---

<sup>14</sup> Ortiz, *Historia*, 373.

<sup>15</sup> The closest translation is effeminate men.

<sup>16</sup> Tania Chappi. *Demonios en La Habana. Episodios de la Inquisición en Cuba*. (La Habana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, Ediciones Boloña. 2001). The case is mentioned by Ortiz, *Historia*, 374, and perpetuated in Cuban lore, however, there is not reference to the sources from used by Ortiz.

<sup>17</sup> See also Levi Marrero. *Cuba Economía y Sociedad*. Vol. V. (España: Editorial Playor, S.A. 1976).

Cuba, respectively. Church and Inquisition at such time and place cannot be separated. Both institutions were embodied in one office/person. In the absence of an Inquisition Tribunal, and in addition to his ministerial duties, it was the highest-ranking clergyman, normally the bishop of the diocese or his appointee, who assumed the functions and powers of the Holy Office.<sup>18</sup> He accused, tried, and ordered punishment of those deemed criminals in an all-encompassing display of administration of justice. In addition, as an ecclesiastic tribunal, the Holy Office of the Inquisition was led by members of the clergy who, because of the nature of their vows, responded primarily to the Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup>

The abovementioned duality of roles is thoroughly documented by Toribio Medina in his seminal work *La primitiva inquisición americana*.<sup>20</sup> In this work, Medina covered the inquisitorial activities that took place in the New World between the arrival of the Europeans in 1492 and the official establishment of the Holy Office in 1569. In prior works Medina had included those years as he wrote the first histories of the three Inquisition Tribunals created in the New World: Lima, Mexico, and Cartagena.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, realizing the importance of initial decades as the formative period of the

---

<sup>18</sup> The exception to this rule is addressed in section 2.1 of this dissertation.

<sup>19</sup> Additionally, in the Spanish Empire, and because of *Patronato Regio*, the Church and the State formed a cohesive unit. This is addressed in section 1.3 of this dissertation.

<sup>20</sup> José Toribio Medina. *La primitiva inquisición americana (1493-1569): estudio histórico*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1914.

<sup>21</sup> José Toribio Medina. *Historia del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Lima, 1569 – 1820*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Gutenberg, 1887); *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Cartagena de las Indias*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1899); *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1905).

Church, the Inquisition, and the colonial society in the Americas, he produced a separate volume, *Primitiva*, which is more than an analytical study of the Inquisition. It is an extremely valuable compilation of primary sources related to the Holy Office which are extensively used during the first chapters of this work. Unfortunately, because some documents are cited in an unfamiliar style, they have been cited in this dissertation through Medina's work as secondary sources.

Medina's work was foundational to others who have studied this institution in the Americas. The works of Richard Greenleaf rely on Medina and a plethora of other primary sources as they focus on the Franciscan friar and first bishop of Mexico, Juan de Zumárraga. They analyze how this clergyman was able to lead both his diocese and inquisitorial practices in unison to impose and defend the Catholic religion in New Spain.<sup>22</sup> This early modality of Inquisition in the New World, in addition to *Primitiva*, was also termed Episcopal or Apostolic for its direct association to the office of the bishop which also held the title of Ordinary Inquisitor. Similarly, in Cuba the first bishops used their combination of titles and powers not only to uphold Catholicism but also for their personal gain.<sup>23</sup>

As documented by numerous other authors the Inquisition was active in the New World since the arrival of the first religious personnel. They employed inquisitorial

---

<sup>22</sup> Richard Greenleaf. *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536 – 1543*. (Dissertation, 1957). See also by the same author "Not a Man of Contradiction: Zumárraga as Protector and Inquisitor of the Indigenous People of Central Mexico." *Hispanic Research Journal-Iberian and Latin American Studies* 13, no. 1 (n.d): 26-40, and *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969).

<sup>23</sup> See chapters 1- 4 of this dissertation.

practices as they tried and punished the natives for their idolatry and polygamist practices.<sup>24</sup> They acted based on a Papal Brief known as *Omnímota*. The document granted the friars, particularly the Franciscans, the authority to promote and keep the Catholic faith in the absence of a bishop. It authorized the first friars who arrived in the Indies to preside over pseudo-ecclesiastical tribunals and even condemn several Indians to death by fire.<sup>25</sup> Most of the events of this proto or apostolic inquisition were recorded by the chroniclers – such as Las Casas – and are included in the narrative of the conquest and considered ethnohistorical accounts of the early colonial period.

In addition to primary sources, they were the basis of a history of the Inquisition published by Juan Antonio Llorente in the beginning of the nineteenth century. His work is considered the first documented account of the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>26</sup> Llorente pioneered the study of the Holy Office and as its functionary he had access to – and took with him when he fled to France – countless documents. Nevertheless, typical of the discipline of history at the time, he limited his work to narrating chronologically the story of the Inquisition in Spain – and to a lesser extent the New World – and those who led it. In addition, and because of his preference for the French and aversion to the Church he

---

<sup>24</sup> In the case of Cuba this is covered in chapter 1 and was used by Fr. Bartolomé De Las Casas to request an increase in religious personnel with inquisitorial powers in the Caribbean.

<sup>25</sup> See in chapter 1 Bartolomé de Las Casas. *Memorial de remedios para las Indias, 1516*. In Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso. *Obras Escogidas*. Vol. 5. (Biblioteca de Autores Españoles. Colección Rivadeneyba. Real Academia Española, 1958).

<sup>26</sup> Juan Antonio Llorente. *Historia crítica de la Inquisición de España*. Vol. 1 – 4, basado en los diez tomos de la edición original de 1822. (Madrid: Hiperión, 1980).

served, he indiscriminately disparaged the institution. In spite of this flaw, his work served as inspiration and documentation to others who have studied the institution.<sup>27</sup>

The Holy Office, in either its primitive modality or its fully functional state, was led by individuals who had to conform to certain parameters and characteristics. Such guidelines for the religious leadership were established by both the Church and the Crown. These men strictly followed a series of ideological mandates and had to abide by the precepts established by the higher authorities. The academic works of Solange Alberro, Marin Nesvig, Kimberly Lynn, and Sara T. Nalle, among others, provided a solid basis for the understanding of the ideology of the time and personal characteristics of the religious leadership.<sup>28</sup> In particular, these works were extremely useful to reconstruct the precepts that modified the attitudes of those in charge of policing the orthodoxy of Spanish society and defending it against foreign intruders.

---

<sup>27</sup> For a contemporary in-depth study of the Spanish Inquisition see the cited work of Henry Kamen. Among the most prominent historians of the Inquisition was also Henry Charles Lea whose multivolume work was considered, for years, to be the most comprehensive study about it. Henry Charles Lea. *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*. (New York: Russell & Russell. Vols 1-3, 1955). Although his contributions have been appreciated and used by most Inquisition scholars, Lea, similar to Llorente, has been criticized for his anticatholic sentiments and his works on the subject are characterized as opinionated and biased. John O'Brien M. "Henry Charles Lea: The Historian as Reformer," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1967): 104-13. Edward Potts Cheyney. "On the Life and Works of Henry Charles Lea," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 50, no. 202 (1911): V-Xli.

<sup>28</sup> Solange Alberro. *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571 – 1700*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988); Martin Nesvig. *Forgotten Franciscans: writings from an Inquisitional theorist, a heretic, and an Inquisitional deputy*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), *Ideology and Inquisition: The world of the Censors in Early Mexico*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Kimberly Lynn. *Between Court and Confessional. The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Nalle, Sara T. "Inquisitors, Priests, and the People during the Catholic Reformation in Spain." *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Volume XVIII, Winter 1987, 557 – 587.

## On Colonial Society.

Multiple works were consulted to reconstruct the early Cuban society of the long sixteenth century. They were studies penned by Henry Kamen, Asuncion Lavrín, Ida Altman and David Wheat, Irene Wright, and Alejandro De La Fuente. Their foundational works offer detailed and well-documented accounts of the cultural traditions and socioeconomic and political developments that took place in Spain, New Spain, and Cuba, respectively, between 1511 and 1611.<sup>29</sup> They provided the background to contextualize the events that occurred on the island and were key to understanding and establishing the framework in which Cuba, and particularly Havana, evolved as an economic and defensive post. Additionally, several works on piracy, *Rescates* (ransom), and fortifications complimented the reconstruction of the events that shaped early colonial Cuba.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Henry Kamen. *Spain, 1469 – 1714. A Society in Conflict*. Second Edition. (New York: Longman, 1990) and *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*. (New Haven: CT. Yale University Press, 1993); Asuncion Lavrín, Ed. *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); Ida Altman and David Wheat. Eds. *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World in the Long Sixteenth Century*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019); Irene Wright. *Historia documentada de San Cristóbal de la Habana en la primera mitad del siglo XVII*. (La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1930), *The Early History of Cuba, 1492 – 1586. Written from Original Sources*. (New York: McMillan, 1916); and Alejandro de la Fuente, César García de Pino, and Bernardo Iglesias. *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Cesar García del Pino. *El Corso en Cuba. Siglo XVII. Causas y consecuencias*. (La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 2001); Francisco M. Mota. *Piratas y corsarios en las costas de Cuba*. (La Habana: Editorial Gente Nueva, 1997); Saturnino Ullivarri. *Piratas y corsarios en Cuba*. (Spain: Editorial Renacimiento, 2004) Reprint from Cuban first edition of 1931; and Irene Wright. “Rescates: with Special Reference to Cuba, 1599-1610.” *Hispanic American Historical Review*. 1920. 3, 3: 333 -361.



## **On the Church in Cuba.**

As mentioned earlier, the available historiography of the Catholic Church in Cuba is scant.<sup>31</sup> This is the result of a combination between trends across the social sciences, i.e. the obsession with Marxism as an analytical tool for social processes, and its coincidence with the political history of Cuba. The secularism and Marxism of the twentieth century both in Cuba and abroad, produced a literature either dismissive or overly critical of the Church and its role in Cuban history. Not until recent changes in Cuban politics took place was there a realization for the need to revisit the history of the Catholic Church and its dependent institutions in Cuba. The new literature ought to be a balanced account that will study this religious entity neither through an apologetic interpretation of its history and role as before nor as an empire or global colonialist institution but as a regional or local entity.

In Cuban historiography of the Catholic Church a history from the middle is necessary. This will combine the traditional history from above with social history and/or from below. This type of analysis is needed in order to revisit the role of regular and secular priests as well as friars (not ordained) and nuns. They, not bishops and other high-ranking officials were the link between the Church hierarchy, the secular leadership, and

---

<sup>31</sup> A series of outstanding works have emerged in recent years which are in consonance with current trends in the discipline of history, however, they are about the nineteenth and twentieth century. See the works of Consolación Ferenández Mellén. *Iglesia y Poder en la Habana. Juan José Díaz de Espada, un obispo ilustrado, (1800 – 1832)*. (Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco, Servicio Editorial, 2014). Along with Juan Bosco Amores Carredano she leads a group of scholars at the Universidad del País Vasco, who have undertaken a revisionist study of the Catholic Church in Cuba but only during the nineteenth century. This revisionist group acknowledges the previous works on the subject, however, they have returned to the original primary sources to produce a more accurate interpretation of history.

the laity. As such, they were the most active agents in Cuban religious history, however, they have been overlooked. In light of that need, this dissertation has focused on some of them, pioneering this type of contribution to Cuban historiography.<sup>32</sup>

Based on the above statements and on the ideological affiliation of the author, the historiography of the Catholic Church in Cuba can be loosely divided into two schools of thought. The traditional dividing line, however, has been blurred by the recent historiographical contributions, which places some authors right in the middle.<sup>33</sup> The first group classifies the Church as a strong and influential institution and is represented by the traditional works of Ismael Testé, Msgr. Ramón Suárez Polcari, Juan Martín Leiseca, among others.<sup>34</sup> These works are extremely important, especially the oldest ones, because they offer detailed historical data that can be used as primary sources.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately,

---

<sup>32</sup> Additional research and analysis of this sector of society will be conducted towards the completion of a monograph.

<sup>33</sup> See the work of Edelberto Leiva Lajara. *La orden dominica en La Habana. Convento y sociedad (1578-1842)*. (La Habana, Ediciones Boloña, 2007); Arelis Rivero Cabrera, “Missionaries and Moralization for the Franciscan Province of Santa Elena: The Dilemma of an Exported Reform,” in *The Americas*, Vol. 61:4 (April, 2005), 673-700; y *La orden de San Francisco en la sociedad colonial cubana: 1531-1842*. Tesis doctoral inédita, Universidad de Zaragoza, 2009. The latter was published as *Commitment Beyond Rules: Franciscans in Colonial Cuba 1531 – 1842*. (California: The Academy of American Franciscan History, 2017).

<sup>34</sup> Ismael Testé. *Historia Eclesiástica de Cuba*. Vol. 3. (Burgos: Tipografía de la Editorial “Monte Carmelo”, 1973); Monseñor Ramón Suárez Polcari. *Historia de la iglesia católica en Cuba*. Vol. 1. Miami, FL: Ediciones Universal, 2003; Juan Martín Leiseca. *Apuntes para la Historia Eclesiástica de Cuba*. (La Habana: Talleres Tipográficos de Carasa y Cia., 1938). There are other works equally important such as those from Salvador Larrúa-Guedes. *Historia de la Orden de Predicadores en Cuba*. (Colombia: Provincia San Luis Beltrán, 1998), *Historia de la Florida Colonial Hispana. Tomo I, 1500 -1616*. (Miami: España Florida Foundation 500 years, 2010) and several other works by the same author that compliment Cuban historiography.

<sup>35</sup> Msgr. Polcari’s two volumes rely heavily on the multivolume work of Testé, but it contains more commentaries, some analytical statements, and it benefited from recent research. In addition, it benefitted from Polcari’s full access to the Cuban archives because of his position as Bishop. Therefore, Polcari’s work will be used instead of Testé’s. It is important to add that

some of them, lack the analytical academic approach found in the authors of the second group, who classify the role of the Church as generally uninfluential and dismissive. The term “generally” points to the fact that for these authors the Church was influential in some instances or aspects but weak in others. This group is composed of some authors such as Manuel Fernández Santalices, Teresa Fernández Soneira, Cesar García Pons, and Rigoberto Segreo and his students.<sup>36</sup> Their work is complimented by the more contemporary academic studies produced by the revisionist authors previously mentioned.

### **On Bigamy.**

Throughout the history of western society, one of the most private decisions individuals face in life is marriage. Paradoxically, it has been one of the most publicly discussed and legislated.<sup>37</sup> The New World was not an exception. From the onset of the colonization of the Americas, both civil and religious authorities have regulated the validity of a marriage based on issues such as the number of spouses a person is allowed to have and the social, economic and ethnic background of the person one is allowed to marry. They have also regulated the legal process to end such marriage. Marriage was

---

neither contains appropriate citations. Most of their work, however, has been validated in the revisionist literature of the last decades which has been based on primary sources.

<sup>36</sup> Manuel Fernández Santalices. *Las Antiguas Iglesias De La Habana: Tiempo, Vida y Semblante*. (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1997), Teresa Fernández Soneira. *Cuba: Historia De La Educación Católica, 1582-1961*. Vol. I – II. (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1997); Rigoberto Segreo Ricardo. *Iglesia y Nación en Cuba, 1868 – 1898*. (Santiago de Cuba, 2010) which cursory mentions the initial years of the Church in Cuba, but whose other contributions, not available in the United States have addressed them more in-depth.

<sup>37</sup> Lavrín, *Sexuality and Marriage*, see the introduction for a discussion on this issue.

understood and defended as the indissoluble sacramental union between one man and one woman.<sup>38</sup> Divorce was not an option. Therefore, if an individual chose to marry a second time while the first spouse still lived, he/she committed the crime of bigamy.

Bigamy was a crime prosecuted by the Spanish Inquisition tribunals throughout the Spanish Empire during colonial times. Hence, because this dissertation only covers the long sixteenth century (1511 – 1611), this historiographical consideration focuses on the evolution and definition of marriage as stated in the Canons of the Council of Trent, on the previous and consequent socio-religious understanding of bigamy, and on the role of the Inquisition in the prosecution of this crime. Starting in chapter three this dissertation uses bigamy as an example of a common crime prosecuted by the Inquisition. This work claims that the increase in the practice of bigamy was the undesired result of the Council's emphasis on the sacrament of marriage, and that the intensity of the prosecution of bigamists was a result of the Post-Tridentine zeal and obsession with policing the Catholic orthodoxy and morality of the population. Because the focus of those chapters is on the prosecution of bigamy by the ecclesiastic and not by the civil tribunals, the historiography of bigamy analyzed here only applies to and follows the trends of the historiography of the Inquisition.

Similar to the historiography of the Inquisition, studies about bigamy have been fashioned by numerous factors such as the historians' access to Inquisition records, the sociopolitical and religious events and philosophies at the time the work was produced

---

<sup>38</sup> The broad definition of marriage as a sacrament has not changed since it was issued during the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563). For a more comprehensive definition of it see Canon Laws, Title (Session) VII. <http://www.thecounciloftrent.com/ch7.htm>.

and, needless to say, the ideology to which the historian is affiliated. In general, this literature was originally divided along the lines of non-Catholics versus Catholics and within this, it was shaped by liberal versus conservative points of view. For non-Catholics and to a certain extent liberal Catholics accounts, the Inquisition was the cruelest and most powerful institution that ever existed and its prosecutorial practices, real or fictitious, have fueled the so-called Black Legend.

On the other extreme of the spectrum some literature was produced that justified the acts of the Inquisition as part of the tribunal's mission to maintain the religious orthodoxy of the Catholic Church and of the mandates of the Spanish Crown. Still, several monographs have been published in the last three decades that analyze the Inquisition, the society it policed, and the crimes it prosecuted, from the social, religious, gender and legal perspectives following the methodological trend of the discipline of history. Those are at the core of this study.<sup>39</sup>

Bigamy was not always considered a serious crime in western society. In *Temas de Derecho Penal*, Lola Aniyar claims that in times of *el Derecho Clásico*, bigamy does not even appear. Since marriage lasted as long as there was a will to keep it, bigamy, in the worst-case scenario was understood as *estupro*, a type of rape, for men and as adultery for women, and punishment was slight to none. It is with the arrival of Christianity and the development of its Canon Laws that multiple concurrent marriages

---

<sup>39</sup> The greatest example of how academia has changed its views regarding the Spanish Inquisition can be found in the already cited work of Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, which is a revision of his own work. From the first edition of the book in 1965, in which Kamen was critical of both the Church and the Inquisition along the lines of the Black Legend views, to the fourth edition in 2014, in which the author claims that the Inquisition was not as horrendous or as strong and influential as commonly thought, Kamen has traveled from one extreme to the other.

were penalized, and the perpetrators were either excommunicated or forced to return to their original spouse. Yet even then, the arguments in the bigamy trials and the trials themselves were simple, and most of the time they centered on matters of primogeniture and inheritance.<sup>40</sup>

There was a lack of emphasis on the criminal nature of bigamy prior to the Council of Trent. This was associated with the views people had about marriage as well as to the Catholic Church's lack of interest or its inability to enforce its own rules on marriage. Henry Kamen's *The Phoenix and the Flame* offers an extensive and extremely useful description of Spanish society prior to Trent. Of special importance is chapter six, which focuses on marriage and sexuality. According to Kamen, the pre-Tridentine attitudes of Spaniards towards marriage and sex greatly differ from the rigid decrees eventually issued and imposed by the Council. Sexual relations between consenting adults was a common practice, prostitution was necessary and not considered a sin, and marriage did not take place within a church nor was it a sacrament performed by a priest. Furthermore, "unsacramental marriage" was the norm.<sup>41</sup> The verbal promise of marriage, *verba de futuro*, was considered the actual marriage, which was sealed by the sexual act, and these not always followed that order.<sup>42</sup>

Catholic legislation, however, changed in the sixteenth century with the conclusion of the Council of Trent and the codification of Christianity. In *The Separation*

---

<sup>40</sup> Dra. Lola Aniyar de Castro. *Los Delitos de Bigamia y Adulterio*. Maracaibo: Imprenta de la Universidad de Zulia, 1970), 9-93.

<sup>41</sup> Kamen. *The Phoenix*, 281.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

*of Spouses*, Juraj Kamas analyzes the debates surrounding Section VII of the Tridentine Canons, the section or canon about marriage. He claims that the theologians in charge of defining marriage, in an effort to validate their proposals and to defend the sacramentality and indissoluble nature of marriage draw their conclusions from both, biblical and popular traditions.<sup>43</sup> Yet this latter part contradicts Kamen's study previously mentioned, which claims and demonstrates that "the labor of Catholic reformers in the field of sexual morality was so intense that it is valid to ask whether they were merely curing deficiencies or attempting something more: to introduce new ideas."<sup>44</sup> Kamen implies that the sacramentality of marriage was neither understood nor promoted and even less enforced, and therefore, neither was bigamy.

Kamen's work does demonstrate, however, that the discussions about Section VII were a clear statement against the loose definitions of marriage and the attacks on celibacy promoted by the rapidly growing dissenting teachings of Luther and Calvin and their Protestant followers. Their "unorthodox" ideas did not assign to marriage the sacramental strength and biblical infallibility Rome and its Church claimed. Instead, they considered marriage as "merely a natural institution, worldly affair, even among Christians" and as such belong under the jurisdiction of civil magistrates. They added that celibacy was a Roman imposition.<sup>45</sup> So, the emphasis of Trent on marriage and celibacy

---

<sup>43</sup> Juraj Kamas. *The Separation of the Spouses with the Bond Remaining. Historical and Canonical Study with Pastoral Applications*. (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1997), 117 – 121.

<sup>44</sup> Kamen, *The Phoenix*, 285.

<sup>45</sup> Kamas, *The Separation*, 117 – 121.

was more a counter-Protestantism or counter-Reformation stance than a legitimization of traditions. In addition, the strong pronouncements of the Council against the dissolution of marriage and the prohibition of divorce, was also a response to the affairs of King Henry VIII and his attempt to redefine marriage, a fact not addressed by Kamas in his work.

The emphasis the Counter Reformation placed on altering the attitudes and practices of society and the subsequent rules and regulations issued were not well received. They were widely opposed and very difficult to enforce. Not only they were against ingrained traditions, but for a rural, mostly poor and uneducated society the application of those new rules were illogical and impractical. Similar stances were adopted in the New World. Opposition was so widespread both within the church and among the laity, that over a hundred years after Trent, the Spanish courts were still dealing with the issues of sacramental marriage or lack thereof.<sup>46</sup> Yet, the Inquisition had taken the edicts seriously and on both sides of the Atlantic increased its persecution and prosecution of bigamists.

A pioneer work to address bigamy in New Spain was that of Richard Boyer written in 1995. Not only did he study and dissect the records of the Inquisition but, consistent with the trends of the discipline of history at the time, he produced the first social history of the Inquisition in New Spain. Boyer's ability to reconstruct the *Lives of the Bigamists* offers a history from below of both *inquisidores* and *procesados* as well as New Spain's society of the time. He claims that all of those who participated in any

---

<sup>46</sup> Kamen, *The Phoenix*, 285.



capacity in the trials as well as the institution itself were affected by the timing in which the Inquisition was officially established in the New World. Boyer reminds the readers that the formal establishment of the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1571 in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, was a post-Tridentine event. As such, it arrived loaded with the Council mission and impetus of consolidating “the dogmas and moral teachings of the Counter-Reformation.”<sup>47</sup> Among the dogmas to be upheld by the first tribunal of *ultramar* was the sanctity of the sacrament of marriage and within a year of the tribunal foundation the *Inquisidor General*, Pedro Moya de Contreras had already prosecuted forty four cases of bigamy. In total, the tribunal in New Spain prosecuted almost three thousand cases, but the majority of them happened within the first one hundred years of its official establishment.<sup>48</sup>

Along the same lines and a year later, in 1996, Stephen Haliczzer wrote another social history of the Inquisition. While the book is about a different crime prosecuted by the Holy Office, that of solicitation, his work is relevant to this dissertation as it borrows from his argument and applies it to bigamy and to the increment in Inquisition cases and zeal. Haliczzer convincingly argued that the increase in the number of people tried by the Inquisition was, paradoxically, the fault of the Church.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, by empowering the Inquisition to persecute and prosecute those who violated its own rules, the Church

---

<sup>47</sup> Richard Boyer. *Lives of the Bigamists. Marriage, Family and Community in Colonial Mexico*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* see table in page 7.

<sup>49</sup> For a complete discussion on this see Stephen Haliczzer. *Sexuality in the Confessional, A Sacrament Profaned*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

intended to maintain religious orthodoxy. Yet the emphasis placed by Trent on the sacraments backfired. As the Church promoted marriage as an indissoluble sacrament the number of people who desired to marry to abide by the new rules and live *como Dios manda* increased. The problem was that many of them were already married, hence, the number of men and women committing and accused of bigamy multiplied.

The literature on bigamy in New Spain traditionally focused on men. They were the largest group accused since men were the majority of people who crossed the Atlantic to settle in the New World and there, they found new wives. Yet as the field of women's studies made its way into history, and the interest on writing histories from below increased, so did the number of works on the Inquisition of women. In 1999 Mary Giles wrote a book titled exactly that, *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*. In it she dedicated chapter ten to studying the cases of eleven women accused of bigamy by the Holy Office. Of these eleven, she chose three that represented the general reasons that led the rest to commit bigamy. One had been abandoned by her husband and twenty years later decided to remarry, thinking her husband had died. The second one had been forced by her abductor into marrying him. After managing to escape she had her marriage annulled and married the man she wanted. The third, falsified documents to prove that the marriage into which she had been forced at a younger age, had never happened; then married her lover. Regardless of the validity of the reasons why they effected their own divorce, these women were denounced as bigamists and had to face the Inquisition. Some of them were successful in their fight as they were able to convince the tribunals of the validity of their acts because they, apparently, knew the laws and used them in their favor. By studying how these women got involved with a second husband and then faced

the Inquisition and won, she argues that, contrary to common beliefs, a significant number of women took control of their life, and through their incisive agency were able to counterplot and succeed within the system.<sup>50</sup>

In 2003, Estrella Figueras Vallés dedicated an entire volume to the study of the prosecution of women for bigamy solely in New Spain. Her analysis encompasses pre-Columbian as well as colonial practices of bigamy and shows that prior to Trent, women were not as widely and officially prosecuted as they were after the Council. She determines that the majority of these women entered into the second marriage by their own decision, knowing it was against the laws and were willing to challenge the establishment to gain not only economic solvency, but what had been denied to them during the first marriage: love. According to Figueras Vallés, these women were seen not only as sinners but as destructive to the social and moral order. While the number of women prosecuted for bigamy was less than that of men, the penalties imposed on them were as stringent. People found guilty of bigamy could face exile, confiscation of properties, being marked in the forehead with a cross (branded as an animal), being publicly chastised, and even imprisoned. But this punishment varied according to *casta* or social class. Lower class and creole women received harsher punishment than their rich and Spanish counterparts.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Mary E. Giles. *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), particularly chapter 10.

<sup>51</sup> Estrella Figueras Vallés. *Pervirtiendo el Orden del Santo Matrimonio. Bígamas en México, Siglo XVI-XVII*. (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2003), 33.

Sara McDougall in *Bigamy and Christian Identity in Late Medieval Champagne*, a book about bigamy, but unrelated to New Spain poses the questions most people ask: With such risks, why commit bigamy? Even without such risks, why marry when already married to a living spouse? What was there to gain in remarriage? The answers she found for the people tried by the Inquisition in the Diocese of Troyes prior to the Council of Trent, are numerous but similar and applicable to post Tridentine Spanish colonial America. For some bigamists it was easier to practice self-divorce, a conscious decision to escape from an unwanted and often imposed spouse. Bigamy as a *de facto* divorce was an easier solution since the annulment of the first marriage through the proper legal channels was unattainable because of the obstacles placed by the Church. MacDougal disagrees with other authors who blame this on a failed Christianization of the laity and the Church's failure to instill the ideal of monogamous marriage as the laity had a much more fluid perspective of marriage and the acceptability of divorce.<sup>52</sup> For her it was the opposite and that further supports her arguments. These men and women running away from the previous marriage still wanted to abide by societal rules and therefore remarried even if they faced prosecution and punishment. They wanted to be married by a priest to legitimize their union as sanctioned by society, at least while the truth remained undiscovered.

Other authors cited in this dissertation, Noble David Cook and Alexandra Parma Cook, have found that some of the people committed the crime of bigamy because of

---

<sup>52</sup> Sara McDougall. *Bigamy and Christian Identity in Late Medieval Champagne*. Philadelphia: PA. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), particularly chapter 4.

“good faith and truthful ignorance.”<sup>53</sup> In cases such as the one analyzed in their book and the one covered in chapter four of this work, there was an honest belief about the death of the first spouse which allowed the presumed widow/er to remarry. The Cooks and MacDougal agree that distance from the first marriage, economic stability, and legitimization of children contributed to the decisions to remarry. They also agree that because of that distance the majority of bigamists never faced prosecution as the truth never had the opportunity to emerge and hence, the actual number of bigamists was much larger and will remain unknown.

As noted in this historiographical consideration, because of the direct relationship between Inquisition and bigamy the literature on the latter follows the academic trends of the former. Still, while there has been an increase in the number of academic works and in the depth and scope of analysis of bigamy as it relates to social and gender history, one area of bigamy and Inquisition remains unstudied, that is, the prosecution of individuals who married without receiving the proper dispensation from their religious vows, which is one of the cases studied in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

---

<sup>53</sup> Noble David Cook and Alexandra Parma Cook. *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance. A Case of Transatlantic Bigamy*. (Durham: NC. Duke University Press, 1991).

## **Chapter I: Protection from Diabolical Influence: Initial Requests for an Inquisition Tribunal and Early Use of Inquisitorial Powers.**

### **i – The Spanish Inquisition arrival in the Caribbean.**

The Inquisition was formally created in Europe in the thirteenth century as a judicial ecclesiastical branch of the Roman Catholic Church. It was established to support the Church efforts and guide its personnel in suppressing the spread of heresy through Europe. Although directly under the Roman Pontiff's authority, the early tribunals had certain autonomy to conform to the needs of each individual Catholic kingdom and its respective bishops and monarchs. The authorities, however, expected every tribunal to act uniformly and in consistency with the Vatican mandates and objectives. In 1478, at the request of the Iberian monarchs Isabel of Castilla (1451 – 1504) and Fernando of Aragón (1452 – 1517), Pope Sixtus IV (1414 – 1484), approved a new regional variation of the Inquisition subsequently known as the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>54</sup>

The Spanish Inquisition was created by the Papal Bull *Exigit Sinceras Devotionis Affectus* and was filled with unique policies benefiting the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon.<sup>55</sup> This Inquisition differed from the other ones in Europe because it granted the

---

<sup>54</sup> For an in-depth study of the Spanish Inquisition see Henry Kamen. *The Spanish Inquisition. A Historical Revision*. Fourth Edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Among the most prominent historians of the Inquisition was also Henry Charles Lea whose multivolume work was considered, for years, to be the most comprehensive study about it. Henry Charles Lea. *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*. (New York: Russell & Russell. Vols 1-3, 1955). Although his contributions have been appreciated and used by most Inquisition scholars, Lea has been criticized for his anticatholic sentiments and his works on the subject are characterized as opinionated and biased. John O'Brien M. "Henry Charles Lea: The Historian as Reformer," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1967): 104-13. Edward Potts Cheyney. "On the Life and Works of Henry Charles Lea," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 50, no. 202 (1911): V-Xli.

<sup>55</sup> See the introductory chapter of Joseph Pérez. *The Spanish Inquisition*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

Spanish monarchs Isabel and Fernando and their descendants, authority over a judicial branch that could act independently from Rome. This autonomy was unique to Spain and was foundational to the mixing of politics and religion that characterized thereafter the Spanish Empire. Under this Bull, the monarchs could, and did, establish tribunals, appoint their personnel, and dictate how and who was to be the target of judicial procedures. The Bull allowed the monarchs to criminalize religious beliefs and practices, turning the Inquisition Tribunals into a Crown's "legal tribunal, directed by a royal council."<sup>56</sup> This is not to say that other tribunals, ecclesiastic and civil, ceased to exist; on the contrary, they remained active prosecuting numerous other crimes, but this observation serves to reinforce the idea of the profound impact and authority of the Inquisition Tribunals through Spanish territories.

As an official appendix of the Catholic Church, the Holy Office was initially housed within, supported, and governed by it. It eventually became an independent and financially self-sufficient judicial body serving state and religious purposes, yet, it never lost its ideological connection to the Church through the canonical affiliation of its members. Also prior to becoming autonomous and as a part of the Spanish administrative system, the Inquisition and the Church served the needs of the Spanish crown as a unified organization. This religious body was a key component of the governing apparatus as it consolidated, grew, and exerted its hegemony over most of the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>57</sup> Later,

---

<sup>56</sup> A.D. Wright. *Catholicism and Spanish Society Under the Reign of Philip II, 1555 – 1598, and Philip III, 1598 – 1621*. Studies on Religion and Society, Volume 27. (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 161-162.

<sup>57</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, Introduction.

the representatives of the Spanish monarchs who traveled across the Atlantic after 1492, used the policies and practices of this religious institution to promote and enforce the ideology and the political strategies of Spain in the New World.<sup>58</sup>

Like most other governmental entities within the Spanish government, the Church and the Inquisition paralleled the Spaniards' stages of settlement and colonization in the Americas.<sup>59</sup> Both arrived first in the Caribbean islands and after a few years were transferred to the American mainland with the rest of the colonial institutions. Yet, while the administrative functions of the Church were immediately formalized by the foundation of religious districts, parishes, churches, monasteries, and convents, no Inquisition Tribunal was created in the New World during the first seven decades of colonization. Neither the secular nor the religious authorities in Spain deemed the new territories ready for a formal Inquisition or considered there was a social need for such a tribunal.<sup>60</sup>

During the initial stages of conquest and colonization of the Americas, most inquisitorial and church activities were basic and arbitrary, but useful. They were limited to preserving and enforcing the Catholicism of the Spanish subjects who migrated across the Atlantic. Additionally, the religious authorities in the colonies employed the Holy

---

<sup>58</sup> Wright, *Catholicism*, 161 – 162.

<sup>59</sup> For an examination of the early stages of conquest and colonization of the New World see James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz. *Early Latin America: a history of colonial Spanish America and Brazil*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson. *Colonial Latin America*. Tenth Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>60</sup> For a comprehensive study on this period see Francisco Morales Padrón. *Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de América*. (Madrid: Editorial Credos, 1990).



Office and its methods for multiple purposes sometimes serving the needs of the crown and others their personal gain. The absence of strong and well-established administrative structures and the lack of overseeing personnel in the New World allowed for such a discretionary and at times illicit application of inquisitorial powers and methods.

Therefore, upon arriving in the New World, the clergy used and abused the Inquisition privileges intrinsic to their status and office. Along with the inquisitorial practices they had learned through their religious training in Europe, the friars and bishops living in the Indies employed and manipulated their inquisitorial authority to substitute for the lack of order in the region. Some used the Holy Office to prosecute and to censure those who deviated from or refused the teachings of the Church. Others abused the powers and privileges of the Inquisition to shield their wrongdoings or to promote personal gain. To do so, they manufactured sins and applied the fabricated crimes onto those whom they considered to be enemies of the faith or obstacles to their plans. Despite using inquisitorial powers and practices, no official inquisition existed to formalize any accusations legitimate or not.

The absence of a formal tribunal of the Holy Office did not exempt these appointed officials from following its rules. They were expected to abide by the same procedures dictated by and for the tribunals in Spain. The nature of the New World, however, permitted the religious leadership some degree of flexibility and deviation from the established prosecutorial practices given the population of the region and distance from the metropolis.<sup>61</sup> This modality of inquisition remained active, sufficient, and

---

<sup>61</sup> The most documented example of this is the case of the Bishop of New Spain, Juan de Zumárraga. See Richard Greenleaf. *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536 – 1543*.

effective in the Americas until formal tribunals were founded. These kinds of inquisitorial practices were additionally useful to impose the Europeans' religious traditions onto the newly conquered natives.<sup>62</sup>

The incipient colonial society of the early years of contact did not immediately require, nor was it ready for, the engagement of a full-fledged Inquisition Tribunal. The appearance of Protestantism in Europe and the threat of its transatlantic expansion, however, directly challenged Spanish hegemony in the Caribbean colonies. Consequently, this affected the process of consolidation of Spanish Catholicism in the region and demanded additional religious personnel and policies in the Caribbean. The sporadic presence of Protestants early during the Caribbean cycle forced and accelerated changes to both the nature of the outermost colonies and the perceived role of the Church and the Inquisition within them.

When necessary, the Spanish colonies, particularly in the port cities of the Caribbean, took the additional role of defensive posts boosting an increase in a military environment. All members of the Spanish bureaucracy, including the religious personnel, were required to defend the Spanish realms at any cost against the infiltration of foreign individuals and their dissenting and destabilizing ideologies.<sup>63</sup> While inquisitorial

---

Dissertation, 1957. See also "Not a Man of Contradiction: Zumárraga as Protector and Inquisitor of the Indigenous People of Central Mexico." *Hispanic Research Journal-Iberian and Latin American Studies* 13, no. 1 (n.d): 26-40 and Martin Nesvig. *Ideology and Inquisition: The world of the Censors in Early Mexico*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 104 - 133.

<sup>62</sup> For a more expansive study on this period, place, and individuals see the subsequent work of Richard E. Greenleaf. *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 1 - 6.

<sup>63</sup> Carrie Gibson. *Empire's Crossroads. A History of the Caribbean from Columbus to the Present Day*. (New York: Grove Press, 2014). See particularly Chapter 3, "Pirates and Protestants."

practices were used to repel foreigners, it took decades before the growth and consolidation of the Spanish society in the Americas allowed for the official use of the Inquisition as the defender of the faith. The Holy Office gradually grew in light of imminent foreign threats. It experienced a systematic and lengthy process that paralleled the growth of Protestantism in the region, which ultimately called for the universal participation, willingly or not, of the crown's administrators and subjects.

## **ii – Initial Request for a Tribunal.**

The Spanish society established in the New World was deeply religious and utterly committed to promoting the “territorial expressions” of its Catholicism.<sup>64</sup> Parishes and dioceses were established “concurrently with villages and towns” and “parishioner and *vecino* constituted an indivisible identity” for the new colonists.<sup>65</sup> The religious and civil authorities who formed robust alliances to administer the colonies represented continuity and sustainability of both spiritual and secular traditions. The new society, as the old, relied on their leadership for guidance and safety. The *transcendental – spiritual*

---

<sup>64</sup> Lyle N. McAlister. *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492 – 1700*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 18. While McAlister's claim in this section of his book refers to the reestablishment of Catholicism during the early Reconquista the same ideas apply during the foundational period of the Spanish American colonies. Since the conquest of the New World took place after and was an extension of the Reconquista (followed by the expulsion of the Jews and Moors) I have adapted McAlister idea about Catholic militancy and applied to the colonization of the Caribbean and specifically of Cuba.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. *Vecino* denotes more than the English equivalent of neighbor. It was considered a status in the colonial period as the *vecino* became part of the local community through paying taxes and not just by residing in the place. Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 23.<sup>a</sup> ed., [versión 23.2 en línea]. Available at <https://dle.rae.es>. Accessed on May 20, 2019.

– nature of the religious personnel, more than the secular, offered the ultimate “protection to the common folk.”<sup>66</sup>

Friars and bishops became de facto soldiers of the faith and guarantors of peace on the American “frontiers of heresy.”<sup>67</sup> They built a solid society with the necessary infrastructure to eventually host, as they deemed necessary, a formal Inquisition Tribunal. Therefore, as early as 1516, Fr. Bartolomé de Las Casas, the *encomendero*-turned priest-turned defender of the Indians pioneered the call for a Holy Office Tribunal. Realizing the importance of the Inquisition for the enforcement and defense of the faith in the Caribbean, he appealed to the authorities in Spain with his request. He wrote a letter to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436 – 1517), Grand Inquisitor, Regent of the Kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón, and trusted advisor of the Spanish monarchs asking for more personnel with inquisitorial powers in the Indies.<sup>68</sup>

Fr. Bartolomé Las Casas was concerned with the spiritual well-being of the natives and was alarmed by the proliferation of heresy in the islands. He deemed the Holy Inquisition greatly needed “so that where the faith is newly planted, like in these lands, no person would sow the discordance of heresy.”<sup>69</sup> Although the first missionaries in the

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. *My emphasis.*

<sup>67</sup> William E. Monter. *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily.* (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History. New York: NY. Cambridge University Press, 1990).

<sup>68</sup> Bartolomé De Las Casas. *Memorial de remedios para las Indias, 1516.* In Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso. *Obras Escogidas.* Vol. 5. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles. Madrid: Colección Rivadeneyba. Real Academia Española, 1958), 15.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. “*Y así mismo suplico a vuestra reverendísima Señoría por Dios, en todo lo es puesto por su señalado ministro, que mande enviar a aquellas islas e Indias la Santa Inquisición, de la cual creo yo que hay muy gran necesidad, porque donde nuevamente se ha de plantar la fe, como en*

Caribbean islands had taken matters into their hands to halt the proliferation of heresy and to control rebellious behaviors, their number, powers, and efforts were not enough to control the spread of religious heterodoxy among both Spaniards and natives.<sup>70</sup> They used the Inquisition to rid the islands of unwanted sacrilege. While two heretics – Las Casas does not specify who or the specific nature of the accusations – had already been identified, tried, and burned, still fourteen others were awaiting trial.

Las Casas insisted on the need for Inquisition personnel to protect the Indians from diabolic influences because they were “simple-minded people prompt to believing in anything.”<sup>71</sup> He was concerned that malign persons would lead the Indians into

---

*aquellas tierras, no haya quizás quien siembre alguna pésima cizaña de herejía, pues ya allá se han hallado y han quemado dos herejes, y por ventura quedan más de catorce, y aquellos indios, como son gente simple y que luego creen, podría ser que alguna maligna y diabólica persona los trajese a su dañada doctrina y herética pravedad. Porque puede ser que muchos herejes se hayan huído de estos reinos y, pensando de salvarse, se hubiesen pasado allá. Y la persona a quien tal cargo Vuestra Reverendísima Señoría diere, sea muy cristiana y celosa de nuestra fe y a quien allá no puedan con barras de oro cegar.”* Further research is needed to confirm Las Casas’ claim about the number of individuals and where the alleged actions took place. Las Casas could be making reference to the burning of several Indians in the islands. In 1512 he had witnessed the execution at the stake of the Taino Cacique Hatuey in Cuba and had already denounced similar other cases. Burning at the stake was reserved for heretics; hence, Las Casas’ claim might be accurate. Lawrence A. Clayton. *Bartolomé de Las Casas a Biography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69 -81. Chapter four is dedicated to Las Casas’ conversion in which Clayton vividly describes the abuses and harsh punishments carried out by some Spaniards against the Natives. He recounts Hatuey’s conversation with a Franciscan priest, where the Cacique refuses to convert to Christianity to go to heaven because Christians were evil, and he did not want to go to a place with them. Clayton also describes the horrific massacre of Indians that took place in Cuba while Las Casas was visiting which was a turning point in his conversion.

<sup>70</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned reference by Las Casas there are numerous others who have written about burning rebellious Indians. For a brief history of Hatuey see History of the Cuban Nation. *The Rebellion of Hatuey*. Available at <http://cubahistory.org/en/spanish-settlement/rebellion-of-hatuey.html> Accessed on May 27, 2019. See also María Rodríguez et al. *Hatuey*. (Miami: Dade County Board of Public Instruction, 1975).

<sup>71</sup> Las Casas, *Memorial*, 15.

corrupted doctrine and perverted sacrilege. He informed the Cardinal about many heretics who, to save their lives, had escaped to the New World and settled on the islands. His recommendations concluded with the petition that the personnel chosen to lead the Inquisition in the Indies had to be very Christian and zealous in the Catholic faith, so they would not be blinded – or bribed – by gold or other riches.<sup>72</sup> The avarice of the colonists, the availability of resources, and the critical absence of order were conducive for the corruption alluded to by Las Casas.

Although Fr. Las Casas was famous for his hyperbolic descriptions and commentaries about the situation in the Indies, he was also well-known for his good intentions and integrity. Therefore, Cisneros trusted the friar's observations and accepted his recommendations. The Cardinal was a fervent defender of the Inquisition and part of his plans – and legacy – was the consolidation of the Holy Office in the kingdoms of Castilla and Aragón. Nevertheless, his position as regent of the kingdoms and General Inquisitor had made him fully aware of the sociopolitical and religious problems facing the Spanish crowns and the Church not only within his realms but also throughout Europe.<sup>73</sup>

Cardinal Cisneros was especially concerned with the growing opposition to the Holy Office within the Castilian, Aragonese, and other European courts.<sup>74</sup> He was careful

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> León Lopetegui and Félix Zubillaga. Eds. *Historia de la iglesia en la América Española desde el descubrimiento hasta los comienzos del siglo XIX*. (Madrid: España. Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1965). 25-33.

<sup>74</sup> For a discussion on the opposition to the Inquisition and the negotiations to diminish its powers particularly undertaken by members of the Jewish communities in Castile and Aragon and their supporters see Pérez, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 59 – 61.

to promote the additional expansion of the Inquisition and its transatlantic transfer not to aggravate the relationship with other European powers or with the nobles who would ultimately support him in his administrative strategies. He knew that even the Vatican hierarchy opposed increasing the number of tribunals because of their constant confrontations with radical members of the Inquisition who promoted the reformation of the Roman Curia.<sup>75</sup> Regardless of his apex position within the Spanish administrative political apparatus, Cisneros was a Catholic and a priest. His strongest fidelity was to the Pope and the Church he served. Antagonizing either one was not only inappropriate but also could have grave eschatological consequences.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, and regardless of Las Casas' claims, Cisneros realized that Spanish society in the Indies could not support a formal tribunal. The new colonies did not have the administrative infrastructure nor religious personnel needed for its functioning. They even lacked demarcated territories necessary for an effective ecclesiastic administration since the process of exploration and conquest was still ongoing. At most, the settlements in the Indies were emerging, disorganized overseas posts, struggling to achieve the status of villas.<sup>77</sup> They were fragile and volatile, and it was common for them to be constantly

---

<sup>75</sup> For a biography of Cardinal Cisneros as it pertains to the Inquisition see William Walsh. *Personajes de la Inquisición*. (Madrid: Espasa – Calpe, 1963).

<sup>76</sup> For a monograph on the state of the Church and the consequences suffered by his critics see Donald Weinstein. *Savonarola, the Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Prophet*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> Within the Spanish administrative charts, a villa was a royally chartered settlement which was self-sufficient and therefore had certain privileges and rights to self-government. A villa was larger than a *pueblo* or *real de minas* but had not acquired the status of a city. See Ophelia Marquez and Lillian Ramos Navarro Wold. *Compilation of Colonial Spanish Terms and Document Related Phrases*. Second Edition. (Midway City: Society of Hispanic Historical and

relocated or just completely disbanded shortly after their foundation.<sup>78</sup> They were not conducive to the foundation of a tribunal.

An additional obstacle to the establishment of an Inquisition Tribunal was the absence of longstanding, willing, and able personnel to serve and lead it. The men who accompanied the first settlers lacked the necessary knowledge and expertise of legal matters and the experience in litigation required for a functioning ecclesiastic court. The first friars traveling to the New World did so as missionaries with undetermined territorial districts, uncertain permanency, and a basic education – if any. There were no bishops present or even enough religious orders' provinces established to regulate the legal processes of an Inquisition. Similarly, the Spanish settlers' future was uncertain, and the secular administrators had no demarcated areas of responsibilities. Therefore, Cisneros opted to establish a primitive form of Inquisition, similar to the Roman judicial body of the thirteenth century, known as an Episcopal or Apostolic Inquisition. This was an Inquisition placed under the care and direction of either a bishop, an abbot, or the local superior of a religious order. In their absence, this basic form of Inquisition could be led by one of their duly appointed delegates.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, regardless of the legality of this

---

Ancestral Research, 1998) Available at <http://www.somosprimos.com/spanishterms/spanishterms.htm> Accessed on August 7, 2019.

<sup>78</sup> For an overview of the establishment – or attempts to establish – and disappearance of the first European settlements in the New World based on the archaeological records see Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath. *First encounters: Spanish explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press: Florida Museum of Natural History, 1989).

<sup>79</sup> Joaquín Pérez Villanueva, Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, and Angel Alcalá. Eds. *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*. Vol. II. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1984). 662 – 663.



delegation, the appointment of lower clergy to perform high-ranking officials' duties was the source of systematic conflicts.

Cisneros' compromised Inquisition of the colonies was far simpler, more flexible, and institutionally more practical than its counterpart in the metropolis. It did not rely on professional judges, prosecutors, and the customary entourage of church bureaucrats of the Inquisition tribunals in Spain. Therefore, legal arguments and unnecessary prosecutorial delays were limited, and so were the financial responsibilities and pursuits. This Apostolic Inquisition relied solely on the decisions and interests, ethical or not, of the highest-ranking officer of an ecclesiastic territory, canonically termed "the Ordinary," so designated because of the nature of his office.

"Ordinary" is one of the numerous titles affixed to the Office of the Bishop or by his prerogative, to his delegates. The term is derived from Canon Law and Church traditions, and it refers to the jurisdictional, ministerial, and judicial rights of these prelates over a specific territory. The title was employed in contemporary legal documents to highlight the functions, including that of *Inquisidor Ordinario* (Ordinary Inquisitor), of the highest ecclesiastic authority of a specified region. It also indicated his hierarchical superiority over all other religious officials and his exempted status from secular control. Cisneros granted all those rights and privileges onto the men he appointed as bishops over the newly claimed lands in the Indies, even if they were not physically present in their assigned territory.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Also for an overview on the rights and privileges of an Ordinary in his jurisdiction see the Catholic Encyclopedia available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11284b.htm> Accessed on October, 10 2015. For a complete and exhaustive explanation of the judicial powers of the Ordinary of a Diocese see the decrees of the Council of Trent which officialized, detailed, and published what had been traditionally accepted by previous Church councils and decrees. See

With this endowment, Cisneros officially opened the door to the institution that for the following three centuries regulated, one way or another licitly or not, the communal morals of Spanish subjects in the Americas.<sup>81</sup> The Inquisition was to function as the judicial body in charge of controlling, repelling, and eliminating those who did not meet the confessionalization of the Spanish Empire instituted by Isabel and Fernando and followed by their heirs.<sup>82</sup> Confessionalization “refers to the process of making Protestant or Catholic state religions more uniform and dominant so as to create a unified group ethos.”<sup>83</sup> This was a useful tool to solidify the Spanish monarchs’ absolutism transferred to the New World.

### **iii – Church, Inquisition, and *Patronato*.**

For the subsequent five decades after its inception in the New World this proto-Inquisition did not change. Its administration and use remained associated directly and

---

Tridentine Canons, Section XXIV, Chapter VI, 213. The Council of Trent, The canons and decrees of the sacred and oecumenical Council of Trent, Translated by J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 53-67. Available at <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct07.html> Accessed on October, 10 2015.

<sup>81</sup> There is a reference to an earlier arrival of the Inquisition claimed by José Toribio Medina in the introductory chapter of *La Primitiva Inquisición Americana*. Medina cited and transcribed a Bull issued by Pope Alexander VI in 1493 approving the request from the Spanish monarchs Isabel and Fernando to name the Benedictine friar Bernardo Guil as superior of twelve friars who should accompany Columbus in his second trip. According to the Bull Fr. Guil received the same powers of an Inquisitor, yet, he did not receive the title of Inquisitor. José Toribio Medina. *La primitiva inquisición americana (1493-1569): estudio histórico*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1914).

<sup>82</sup> For an extensive discussion on this concept and an analysis of the seminal works on confessionalization see Consuelo Maqueda Abreu. “Felipe II y la Inquisición. El apoyo real al Santo Oficio.” *Revista de la Inquisición*. No. 7. 1998. 225 – 267. Copy of the article in possession of this author.

<sup>83</sup> Kristen Block. *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean. Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit*. (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2012), 8.

fully to the office of the bishop and to his needs, and not to an independent Inquisitor or to the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Spain. Therefore, its finances and personnel assignments depended on the fiscal discretion, possibilities, and agenda of the Ordinary of each territory, and as such they controlled it. Since the development of the Church depended on the solvency of the locals, the growth and functionality of the Episcopal Inquisition in the Indies paralleled those of the colonies' ecclesiastic territories. Its effectiveness and expansion were the result of colonial progress, or lack thereof.<sup>84</sup>

Because of the nature of this dependency, the Church and the Inquisition in the Spanish Empire, prior to the establishment of formal tribunals in the Americas, must be studied and understood as one unit. The Inquisition was fully and intrinsically an ecclesiastic tribunal with legal enforcing abilities which acted within and according to the needs and possibilities of the Church. As the religious arm of the Spanish Empire, Inquisition and Church, formed an intricate branch of the imperial administrative apparatus with multiple social and political purposes and ramifications. Without Church there was no Inquisition and without Inquisition there was no Catholic social order. The Church promoted the religiosity of the colonial subjects, and the Inquisition guaranteed the Catholic exclusivity of the Spanish empire.<sup>85</sup>

The permeating presence and influence of the Catholic Church was so paramount that it is considered “undoubtedly the single most important institution in colonial Latin

---

<sup>84</sup> For an overview of the direct relationship between the development of the Church and of the civil society see Justo González. *Story of Christianity*. Vol. 1. (New York: HarperOne, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> Solange Alberro. *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571 – 1700*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), Introduction.

America ... The Church controlled all aspects of life from birth, through marriage, until death.”<sup>86</sup> It fashioned and regulated – or attempted to – peoples’ behaviors and attitudes as well as their philosophical stances and rejected prosecuted and punished those who deviated from its mandates. For that purpose, the Church built and owned all religious institutions, organizations, establishments, and structures. It managed most of the social infrastructure of the realms including but not limited to hospitals, schools, cemeteries, and even jails, and all the personnel associated with these institutions depended on the Church.

The church buildings were the venue to administer the sacraments that governed the Catholic morals and the life of the emerging Spanish society in the early modern Caribbean. The other facilities were used to educate, heal, imprison or bury the population. The Apostolic Inquisition, which relied on the capabilities of the secular and religious powers, was the omnipresent body in charge of policing the adherence to the moral principles proposed by the Church and supported by the Crown. All religious authorities intermingled with the secular to administer the colonies. The privilege to act, legislate and govern within, and sometimes above, the secular government, however, was granted onto the Catholic Church – and by extension to the Inquisition – in the New World by a series of papal decrees eventually known as *Patronato Real Indiano*.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> This excerpt comes from John F. Schwaller’s *The Church in Colonial Latin America*, a bibliographical essay <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0180.xml> accessed on August 24, 2017. It is a summary from the introduction to his book *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*. (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

<sup>87</sup> For a discussion of *Patronato Real* from the legal perspective see Matthew C. Mirow. *Latin American Law: A History of Private Law and Institutions in Spanish America*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004). For a specific explanation on *Patronato Regio Indiano* see

Consolidated in several phases between 1493 and 1523, *Patronato* gave the Spanish crown the power to select Bishops, to establish dioceses, and to erect monasteries in the Americas as they deemed these territories ownerless or vacant. In particular, the Bull *Universalis Ecclesiae Regimen*<sup>88</sup> of 1508 issued by Pope Julius II gave the Spanish monarchs the rights to establish all branches, institutions and dignitaries of the Catholic Church in the New World. Adding to their royal right to appoint civil authorities and territories, *Patronato* granted the Spanish monarchs total control of its colonies in the Indies.<sup>89</sup>

*Patronato* also gave the Spanish Crown the right to intervene in the nontheological decision making affairs of the Catholic Church. It empowered the monarchs to decide when and where new bishoprics could be erected, select the men to lead them as well as to remove them. The Crown paid for the Church's physical and spiritual expansion, and in return, the Church created new and loyal Catholic subjects. The religious leadership selected by the Crown included those who led and administered the Holy Office. They would ensure that all individuals under the crown's dominions would abide by the intertwined laws that governed society. They were to increase the number of good and faithful Catholics, which guaranteed the salvation of countless souls.

---

chapters 7 – 10 of Alberto de la Hera. Ed. *Iglesia y Corona en la América Española*. (Colección Iglesia Católica en el Nuevo Mundo. Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), 175-189.

<sup>88</sup> The closest translation is Government of the Universal Church.

<sup>89</sup> Mirow, *Latin American Law*, 175-189.

Consequently, the Church acquired a substantial number of potential defenders of the realms and additional funds for the Crown's coffers.<sup>90</sup>

Through *Patronato* the Catholic Church of the Spanish kingdoms and all the institutions it housed within it became a two-fold branch of proselytizing and enforcement. Both the secular and the religious authorities worked closely – although not always in agreement – to police and maintain the religious orthodoxy and political cohesiveness of the emerging empire.<sup>91</sup> This symbiotic relationship between ecclesiastical and civilian powers created a *sui generis* form of administration characteristic only of the Spanish government. These administrative bodies were responsible for legislating for the colonies as a single entity in which religious and secular laws were indistinguishable from each other. Crime and sin, within the Spanish realms were equally understood and likewise regulated. At every stage of its development in the New World, the Inquisition was in charge of enforcing the guidelines issued by the Church and the state and enjoyed *fueros* (privileges) and powers belonging to both. Feared by all, this semi-autonomous institution attempted to control the actions and thoughts of every subject within the Spanish Empire and to reject its enemies.

Because of the overlapping nature of the religious and secular powers in the Spanish Empire, the Church grew with and within its lay counterpart: the civil government. It, too, was affected by the constant reforms and reorganizations designed

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Antonio Rubial García, eds. *La Iglesia en el México Colonial. Seminario de historia política y económica de la iglesia en México*. (México: Instituto de investigaciones históricas de México, UNAM, 2013), 32-37.

by the metropolis for the civil institutions in the colonies. Those reforms were as much a response to population increase on both sides of the Atlantic as they were a reaction to the proliferation of foreign individuals and ideas within and around the Spanish borders.<sup>92</sup> Yet, unlike other institutions, such as the military or the judiciary, the nature of the Inquisition prevented its immediate and formal transfer as a tribunal to the New World. Its insertion and growth in the Americas were, therefore, gradual and responded to the needs and progress of the colonial regime.

#### **iv – Initial stages of the Church in the Caribbean.**

For the Inquisition to thrive it had to be needed, enabled, and nourished by and within a mature society committed to its functions. That was not the case during the early Caribbean Cycle (1492 – 1519). The highly unstable region was not conducive to the creation of an efficient and formal Inquisition Tribunal. Lack of religious personnel and infrastructure were among the chief obstacles that prevented its transatlantic transfer. As a result, the first decades of the Spanish Caribbean cycle are considered in the religious historiography to be a period of orphanage of the Antillean Church (“*un periodo de orfandad de la iglesia antillana*”).<sup>93</sup> The activities of the Church during this time were limited to providing the Spaniards with sacraments and attempting to convert (evangelize) the natives. There were no bishops present and the region was

---

<sup>92</sup> For a discussion of the reforms in the metropolis see José García Oro. *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos*. Madrid. Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. (España: Instituto Jerónimo Zurita, 1971). See also Leonardo Falcón. *Isabel, Cisneros and their Reformation*. Historiographical Essay for Imperial Spain Class written for Dr. N. David Cook. (Miami: Florida International University, December 7, 2014).

<sup>93</sup> Esteban Mira Caballos. "Iglesia y evangelización en las indias durante el gobierno de Nicolás de Ovando (1502-1509)" *Hispania Sacra*, Volumen 53 # 108, (30 de diciembre del 2001).

administratively first under the Archbishop of Seville and later under the Patriarch of the Indies, which in most cases were the same person resident in Spain.<sup>94</sup>

An Inquisition Tribunal also needed a permanent population of Catholic subjects to regulate. The absence of precious metals resulted in few prosperous settlements and the search for richer areas created a highly transient population in the Caribbean. The constant movement of peoples left a reduced number of Spaniards permanently residing in the few stable settlements. Additionally, the exploitation of the natives and the diseases introduced by the European resulted in an elusive and rapidly dwindling native population. Both groups were difficult, if not impossible to control. Therefore, developing stable communities with sound and functional infrastructures became the focus of the administration as it was key to attract and maintain a stable population. The creation of permanent, attractive villages in the Caribbean, with all the proper European institutions available to the colonists became more than a prerequisite to establish the Inquisition. It was a necessity for the sustainability of Spanish colonial society.

The initial years of the long sixteenth century were marked by explorations and surveys of the islands accompanied by uncertainties and violent acts of conquest.<sup>95</sup> The first religious individuals who arrived were tasked with accompanying the Spanish explorers as they ventured into uncharted territories. They reported to the authorities the islands' condition and recorded suitable places for possible permanent Spanish

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. See also Ismael Testé. *Historia Eclesiástica de Cuba*. (Burgos: Tipografía de la Editorial "Monte Carmelo," 1971). Tomo I, 53-54.

<sup>95</sup> The idea of a long sixteenth century comes from Ida Altman and David Wheat. Eds. *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World in the Long Sixteenth Century*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).



settlements. They also documented the numbers and traditions of the inhabitants of the islands that would be under their spiritual care.

Upon subsequent orders from the crown, and after realizing the need for strong structures, the colonial authorities initiated the construction of sound temples appropriate for worshipping. In the city of Santo Domingo, the center of the primate – first – diocese of the New World, the building that served as cathedral since 1498 was a simple chapel made of straw. Still in 1511 when the city was officially made the episcopal see, the building was “so small that on the day of the patron saint it could not house half of the town.”<sup>96</sup> After negotiations between the newly-appointed bishop of Hispaniola, the Franciscan friar Francisco García de Padilla (? – 1515), and the king, Fernando of Aragón, concluded in 1512, a new church was commissioned. The Cathedral’s walls and basement were made of stone and the roof of wood. With the increase in the Spanish population on the island, the local authorities deemed the building unworthy and unsafe, ordered its demolition, and built a significantly larger building that could house more people and offer better protection. The building was so large and expensive that its completion took until 1546, when the diocese was elevated to the rank of Archdiocese.<sup>97</sup>

The buildings had the secondary function of safeguarding the Church’s possessions and when necessary, the people. Both needed protection from inclement

---

<sup>96</sup> *Memorial por el Almirante Don Diego Colón*. Cited in Johannes Meir et al. *Historia General de la Iglesia en América Latina. Volumen IV. El Caribe*. (Quintana Roo: Universidad de Quintana Roo Ediciones Sigueme, 1995.), 27.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* 27 – 28. Similarly, in other areas of the Caribbean churches were built as provisional houses of worship and later replaced to offer refuge to the population and to safeguard valued religious items and documents. See section IV.III of this dissertation as it applies to Cuba.

weather and from the constant and rising menace of pirates. The new churches had adjacent living quarters that went through similar developments in response to changes in the Spanish colonial society in the Indies. Those buildings eventually housed the Inquisition and its officials in charge of protecting and upholding Catholicism and of defending the Spanish Empire from foreign interferences.

From the onset of the Europeans' settlements in the New World, the Caribbean islands were the theater for showcasing Spanish power and defending its possessions against competing foreign interlopers. The region was the first point of contact and the outer frontier of the Spanish territories in *ultramar*.<sup>98</sup> It was an area formed by scattered, isolated, and barely fortified settlements that were soon highly contested by Spain's European enemies. Regardless of its incipiency, the Caribbean had to be defended as a cohesive unit. Cuba, as the largest of the islands, and Havana with its strategic port, rapidly developed not only into a safe haven for the Spanish ships transporting valuable cargo to the metropolis, but also into a bastion against their predators. Cuba, as a Diocese, became the administrative epicenter of a religious network that would protect

---

<sup>98</sup> For the purpose of this work I understand frontier as a combination of several definitions. The Spanish frontier in the New World must be seen as an institution and not a place, both fixed or movable, expanding and contracting according to the needs and fortunes of the Spanish Empire. In this context, the frontier is "an overlapping zone [for the purpose of this work I see the frontier as an entity] of political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, military and imperial influence." David Webber. *The Spanish Frontier in North America: The Brief Edition*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1 – 12. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1np7gn.5>. Frontier is also "a region in which no culture, group, or government can claim effective control or hegemony over other. In that regard, contact often involves conflict, a sometimes multisided struggle with an undetermined outcome." In Gregory H. Nobles. *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest*. (New York: Hill and Wang, A Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), xii. In the context of the Spanish Empire, specifically during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the Caribbean and the northern region of La Florida, San Augustine constituted the contested frontier in the Atlantic front.

and defend the region from unorthodox ideological infiltrations and settlements on the island and eventually on its satellite territories of Jamaica and Florida.<sup>99</sup>

Encountered by the Christopher Columbus during his first voyage, Cuba – initially called Fernandina and mistaken as the mainland and not as an island – was recorded in the Admiral’s travels accounts and bypassed. The island was overlooked as the Spaniards’ efforts to find lucrative items of trade focused on the neighboring island later named Hispaniola. The subsequent European migration to the Indies and the search for additional wealth resulted in the eventual exploration and settlement of the larger of the Antilles after 1510. The foundation of villas moved westward of the initial settlement of Baracoa, granting more importance to Havana after 1519 in its northern and current location.<sup>100</sup> From that moment forward, Havana became a convenient stopping place for the Spanish ships and the center of attention of the Crown and its enemies.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> For a traditional history of the Church in Cuba see Mons. Ramón Suárez Polcari. *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en Cuba*. Vols. I and II. (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2003). Although he does not address the defensive role of the Church, he documents its development in a chronological and descriptive manner. Polcari also offers biographical vignettes of bishops and other influential personalities of the church as well as historical information on the religious orders and institutions that have contributed to the development of the Catholic Church on the island.

<sup>100</sup> For a detailed description of the progression of Spanish settlements in Cuba during the early decades of the sixteenth century see Irene A. Wright. *The Early History of Cuba, 1492 – 1586. Written from Original Sources*. (NY: McMillan, 1916), Book I, 1 – 97.

<sup>101</sup> This dissertation follows the trend in the historiography of Cuba, unofficially called *habanerismo*, that equates and applies the analysis of events in Havana to the rest of Cuba. Therefore, this study arbitrarily uses Havana to refer to the developments on the island. While other cities in the eastern section of Cuba (Santiago and Bayamo) were of great importance during the first decades after the Europeans’ arrival, Havana soon gained transatlantic importance because of its geography. The initial stages of development of Havana during the sixteenth century and its importance have been covered by Alejandro de la Fuente, Cesar Garcia del Pino and Bernardo Iglesias Delgado. *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). While the book refers cursory to the Church and to its leadership it fails to recognize the pivotal part they played in the formation of Cuban society

Although occupied by a myriad of native groups, the Spaniards conveniently perceived the Caribbean as available, and as such, claimed it in the name of their monarchs and of the religion they professed.<sup>102</sup> They read a document called the *Requerimiento* (requirement) formalizing their territorial entitlements. The document was as much a political decree and military declaration as it was a religious enforcing edict. This was repeated through the islands as the obligatory ceremony to be observed prior to town founding. According to the document, God's anointed monarchs were the new lords of the land and a Spanish version of Catholicism was the infallible law by which all subjects, regardless if they understood the *Requerimiento* or not, were to obey.<sup>103</sup>

#### **v – The Clergy and the Inquisition as Guardians of the Faith.**

The first clergymen who arrived in Cuba were members of the Mercedarian, Franciscan, and Dominican orders. They joined the early expeditions as keepers of the faith and defenders of Catholicism. Their respective superiors sent a limited number of friars as missionaries to guarantee and to legitimize the Catholic nature of the Spanish enterprise. These Mendicant friars provided the newly settled Spaniards with a religious infrastructure aimed at satisfying their spiritual needs and guaranteed the continuity of

---

or its influential role in the defense of the colony and the region. For an overview of the foundation sequence of the first villas in Cuba see Wright, *Early History*, Ch. VI.

<sup>102</sup> For a comprehensive history of the early years colonization of the Americas see Francisco Morales Padrón. *Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de América*. (Madrid: Editorial Credos, 1990).

<sup>103</sup> For an explanation of the process by ritual and process by which Spain claimed ownership of the New World See. Patricia Seed. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492 – 1640*. (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

their traditions. The clergy also focused on the evangelization of the natives as mandated by the leadership of the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown.<sup>104</sup>

The incoming clergy was immersed in evangelization zeal and practices. Back in Spain these individuals and/or their tutors had been aggressive allies of the monarchs Isabel and Fernando as they expelled the Jews from their territories and enforced Catholicism as the official religion of the newly-unified kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. Consequently, they were familiar with a militant Church and a relentless Inquisition in charge of enforcing and policing the religious and ethical orthodoxy of the crown's subjects. In particular, the Catholic Monarchs placed the Franciscan friars in charge of bringing inquisitorial powers to the New World to control the religious practices of the incoming Spaniards and to stamp out the non-Christian traditions of the natives.<sup>105</sup> The friars were entrusted by the monarchs with avoiding, at all costs, the infiltration of non-Catholic individuals into the realms and controlling the proliferation of any suspicious practices.<sup>106</sup>

The leading religious personnel sent to the colonies traveled with extraordinary powers and were ordered to exercise them. They were instrumental in implementing the laws that controlled migration and protected the territories from foreign infiltration.

---

<sup>104</sup> There are historical discordances about which religious order arrived in Cuba first. To be consistent with traditional historiography this work follows the chronology used by Polcari. *Historia*, Tomo I.

<sup>105</sup> See the Introduction of Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz. Eds. *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), xi.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* ix.

Before Columbus' second voyage to the New World (1493), he met with Isabel and Fernando in Barcelona to brief them on his recent achievements and to present his intended plans. They also discussed the religious affiliation of the future colonists and their loyalty to the monarchs' policies. Once the meeting, concluded the sovereigns issued a series of strict directives regulating migration to the New World.<sup>107</sup> Among them was a mandatory license, which everyone attempting to travel across the Atlantic, either temporarily or permanently, had to obtain. Any person who intended a passage to the Indies was to be scrutinized, usually by members of the Inquisition, and their Catholic fidelity had to be certified.

The measure was aimed specifically at controlling the movement of non-Catholics living within Spanish realms and preventing their transfer to the new colonies. It was based on two edicts previously issued by the Supreme Tribunal of the Inquisition in Spain, which penalized any ship captain who transported *conversos*, Jews who had converted to Catholicism, without a permit. While the rule endorsed and proclaimed by the monarchs fined the perpetrators with a considerable amount of money, the ordinance that followed in 1502, prepared and published by the General Inquisitor Diego de Deza (1444 – 1523), was far more severe. It included the fine earlier levied by the monarchs and added the confiscation of properties that belonged to those who transported non-Catholics to the New World. More transcendental yet, anyone who violated the mandate

---

<sup>107</sup> Auke P. Jacobs. *Los movimientos migratorios entre Castilla e Hispanoamérica durante el reinado de Felipe III, 1598 – 1621*. (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1995), 21. There is no exact date for the proclamation of these regulations. While the book is specifically on the policies of Philip III, the introduction offers a historical overview of the travel regulations dating to the Spanish Monarchs Isabel and Fernando, which includes those regulations mentioned in this paragraph.

would be excommunicated. A year later Isabel and Fernando formalized the licensing process by founding the *Casa de Contratación* (House of Trade) in Seville and entrusting its officials, normally members of a religious order, with examining and authenticating the Catholic background of every possible migrant. The permit was cautiously issued, approved and double-checked by the rulers' designee, most likely a religious dignitary.<sup>108</sup>

The extreme preoccupation with upholding the staunch Catholicism of their subjects was archetypical of Isabel and Fernando's empire-building strategies. Upon the union through marriage of their respective kingdoms, Castilla and Aragón, the monarchs' policies and realms were solidified under the seal of their version of Catholicism. They saw their authority as divinely ordained and their agency as providential. Their obsession with consolidating and governing one state under one religion had been epitomized in 1478 by the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition. Thereafter, they understood religion as intrinsic to most of their decisions at the national and international levels. Catholicism guided their Reconquista efforts and propelled the subsequent expulsion of the Jews from their kingdoms in 1492. That same year, Catholicism sailed with Columbus and his men to the territories they encountered. In 1496, Queen Isabel encouraged and supported Cardinal Cisneros in a thorough reformation of the Spanish clergy, particularly of the Franciscans, Mercedarians, and Hieronymites who became key in the evangelization and government of the American colonies.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Falcón, *Isabel and Cisneros*, 2014.

Isabel and Fernando's extreme adherence and promotion of Catholicism was rewarded by Rome in 1493 with the title of *Rexes Catholicissimus* (Most Catholic Monarchs), which was inherited by the heirs to their throne.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, the unique relationship between Church and state facilitated by the already mentioned *Patronato Regio Indiano* had granted the monarchs with extra privileges and responsibilities towards "their" Church in the Americas.<sup>111</sup> Among those responsibilities was to recommend the erection of ecclesiastical provinces and/or dioceses in the Indies and the selection of the men who would lead them, which they initiated in 1493. That year they recommended the creation of one archdiocese and two dioceses in Hispaniola and assigned their respective bishops. Nevertheless, the lack of organization of the enterprise of the Indies, the monarchs' involvement with local issues, and Isabel's illness postponed the monarch's church building plans.<sup>112</sup>

The death of Pope Alexander VI in 1503, who had supported the Catholic Monarchs' endeavors, further delayed the religious organization of the Indies. The new Pope, Julius II, a vociferous enemy of Alexander, initially refused to honor the privileges of *Patronato* and prohibited the erection of a new diocese in the Indies. Yet, after intense negotiations with the Spanish monarchs, he allowed his version of religious organization for the Spanish possessions. On November 15, 1504 – eleven days prior to Queen

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> See the explanation of *Patronato* in the cited work of Mirow. *Latin American Law*.

<sup>112</sup> Eduardo Torres-Cuevas and Edelberto Leyva Lajara. *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en Cuba: la iglesia en las patrias de los criollos, 1516-1789*. Vol. I. (La Habana: Editorial Boloña de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad, 2007), 65.



Isabel's death - he created the Ecclesiastical Province of the Indies under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Seville.<sup>113</sup> The province was founded to formalize the collection of potential revenues and to give the religious personnel traveling to the Indies the legal authority to evangelize the natives.<sup>114</sup> While the Papal concession recognized the territorial division defined by the Treaty of Tordesillas, it did not allow the Spanish crown to receive any tithes collected by the Church.<sup>115</sup>

The religious district also served to highlight the function of the Church as guardian of the faith and defender of the realms. The men in charge of the diocese, who held the title, privilege, and responsibilities of Inquisitors, were entrusted with doublechecking the Catholic authenticity of those who entered and remained in the new colonies. The religious personnel in the Indies served as a second checkpoint in case anyone bypassed the scrutiny of their counterpart in Seville and received authority to decide their permanency in the colonies.

The laws established by the Spanish crown in the early years of colonization provided for some negotiation regarding the Catholic background of travelers to the Indies. New Christians and people who professed other religions were allowed to travel provided they met certain conditions, mostly merchants not seeking permanent relocation. By 1511, however, the laws had changed and had become more rigorous. No

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> John Frederick Schwaller. *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America. From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*. (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 47.

<sup>115</sup> *Boletín de la Real Academia de Historia*. Número XX, (Madrid, 1892), 267 -270; see also Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 65.

conversos, nor those who professed non-Catholic beliefs, nor anyone accused by the Inquisition were permitted to travel to the New World. Not even the grandchildren of those condemned by the Inquisition could receive the clearance to cross the Atlantic. Yet, if any member of an excluded category managed to receive the traveling permit to reside in the Indies they could not hold any public office.<sup>116</sup> Even though the Royal Cédula was specific as to who could travel to the Indies and those in charge of enforcing the rules were zealous, there were still a significant number of loopholes and extralegal ways to obtain the permit.<sup>117</sup>

Numerous unwanted and unauthorized travelers found alternative routes to making the transatlantic journey and settling in the Indies. A petition from the civil authorities of Santo Domingo to King Fernando II of Aragón to expel the conversos from the island exposed the failure of the Spanish migration policy. In 1512, the island dignitaries asked the monarch and his council to enforce the prohibition of passage to all non-Catholics. They included in the list of those whom they wanted banned from traveling all individuals who were even suspected of heresy and their descendants. The petitioners were specific that conversos and their offspring had to be excluded from the New World clearly demonstrating the unwelcome and disturbing presence of non-Catholics in the Caribbean. The reformed Hieronymites sent years later by Cardinal

---

<sup>116</sup> *Cédula Real de la Reina Doña Juana dirigida a los oficiales de la Casa de Contratación. Burgos, 5 de octubre de 1511.* Colección de Documentos Inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar. Segunda Serie publicada por la Real Academia de la Historia. Tomo # 5, I. De los Documentos Legislativos. (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico Sucesores de Rivadeneyba. Impresores de la Real Casa, 1890), CXXIV.

<sup>117</sup> AGI, Patronato, 174, R. 4. *Monjes Jerónimos: viaje a la Española y estado de la isla.* 20 de enero de 1517. See also Auke, *Los Movimientos*, 29.

Cisneros as governors of Hispaniola were even more alarmed at the presence of heretics in the Caribbean and demanded the establishment of an Inquisition Tribunal on the island.<sup>118</sup> Hence, Las Casas' comments on the existence of heretics in the Indies and the application of inquisitorial practices in the islands was likely credible. Therefore, his petition was deemed necessary and accepted by the authorities.

#### **vi – Initial Religious Organization of the Indies.**

At the time Las Casas wrote his recommendations to Cisneros to send Inquisition personnel to the new colonies, only parts of the Caribbean – some of the islands, a coastal section of the Yucatan Peninsula and a segment of the Darien region – had been explored and settled by the Spaniards. According to one of Las Casas' contemporaries, the chronicler and advisor to the Spanish Crown, Pedro Martyr de Anglería, in 1516 there were five bishoprics already founded - at least on paper - in the region that would eventually become the circum-Caribbean. There were two in Santo Domingo (Hispaniola), a third in San Juan (Puerto Rico), another in Santiago de Cuba, and the fifth in the region of Darien.<sup>119</sup> Some of the dioceses were founded in 1511 and confirmed in

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> His last name is also spelled Anghiera, Pietro Martire d'. *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*. edited by Edmundo O'Gorman (Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Bibliófilos, 1989). Most authors, however, have dated the foundation of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba at different dates between 1511 and 1518 because of the several Papal Bulls issued in this regard. Most historians agree with a 1517 date. See Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 92-99; Salvador Larrúa-Guedes. *Historia de la Orden de Predicadores en Cuba*. (Colombia: Provincia San Luis Beltrán, 1998), 58-66; Johannes Meier, "La Historia de las Diócesis de Santo Domingo, Concepción de la Vega, San Juan de Puerto Rico y Santiago de Cuba desde su inicio hasta la mitad del siglo XVII." In Enrique D. Dussel. *Historia General De La Iglesia En América Latina*. Vol. IV. (México: Universidad de Quintana Roo. Ediciones Sígueme y Comisión de Estudios de Historia de la Iglesia en Latinoamérica (CEHILA), 1995), 22-26.

1516, but the evangelization of the natives and the enforcement of Catholicism had begun with the arrival of the first religious men.<sup>120</sup> Each of the dioceses established had a bishop assigned who was both, pastor and inquisitor, however, most of them remained in Spain since there were no resources to support the bishop and the entourage of functionaries that usually accompanied him.<sup>121</sup>

From the moment of the dioceses' foundation, regardless of the presence or absence of its assigned bishops, the Catholic Church and the Inquisition were pillars of the colonies. They played a significant role in the processes of establishment, expansion, consolidation, administration, and defense of the Spanish Empire in the circum-Caribbean. Yet, the distance from the metropolis caused serious impediments to the effective functioning of the colonies and affected the desired sociopolitical stability of the region. Corruption and mismanagement of funds, abuses of power and the lax application of the rules were rampant. The chaos had to be addressed and while the geographic distance from Spain was impossible to change, reforms to address the administration of the territories was unavoidable. Hence, the civil authorities in the metropolis in conjunction with the religious leadership, were continuously engaged in the administrative reorganization of the colonies, particularly to reinforce the local Church.

Notwithstanding the imperial efforts, the development of the colonies was slow. The Inquisition and its host the Catholic Church, like most Spanish institutions transferred across the Atlantic during the sixteenth century grew according to the needs

---

<sup>120</sup> Some historians claim that the first diocese in the Americas was established in San Juan, Puerto Rico. See chapter 1 of Cristina Campo Lacasa. *Historia de la Iglesia en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1977).

<sup>121</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 75.

and potential of the local population. They too were affected by the numerous instabilities of the period aggravated by the natural hazards of the region. The constant movement of people, the devastation caused by diseases and weather-related phenomena, multiple acts of violence, lack of resources, and the absence of laborers were among the numerous obstacles encountered by the Spaniards in their attempts to create a stable society in the Caribbean. Hence, the institutional development of both Church and Inquisition on the islands was delayed as the new settlers tackled the challenges of the period.

Significantly, the first decades of colonization of the Americas and the establishing of Catholicism in the New World coincided with and were affected by profound changes in Europe. The emergence of Lutheran Protestantism (1517) and the Anglican schism (1534) directly challenged the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>122</sup> The efforts to confront Protestantism and the renovation of Catholicism presented in Trent resulted in a socioreligious and political movement labeled the Counter-Reformation. Among the chief renovation strategies were the creation of new religious orders, the reinforcement of daily sacramental practices, the cult of saints and relics, and a strict obedience to the mandates of the Church and its leadership.<sup>123</sup>

The changes in mentality, attitudes, and actions that developed henceforth resonated throughout the Christian world. The new understanding of Catholic theology

---

<sup>122</sup> To counteract the dissenting attitudes promoted by these factions and to correct its own internal issues, the Catholic Church ultimately organized the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563). This council was the most comprehensive reorganization the Roman Church had undertaken. For the sake of chronology, it will be addressed shortly.

<sup>123</sup> For a study of the Church mentality and attitude post reformation see Robert Bireley, S.J. “Early Modern Catholicism as a Response to the Changing World of the Long Sixteenth Century.” *Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 95, no. 2, (2009): VI-239.

proposed by Church theologians and reformers produced a complete transformation of religious practices. The new and at-times-extreme religiosity promoted by the initial stages of the Counter-Reformation movement permeated Spanish culture and created a society deeply marked by the practice of outward Catholicism. The Holy Office of the Inquisition and the religious orders involved with it, initially the Dominicans and the Franciscans and later the Jesuits, received comprehensive powers to impose and police the adherence to Catholic doctrine throughout the Spanish territories. They were ordered to eradicate any indication of Protestantism at whatever cost.<sup>124</sup> The newly emphasized changes to traditional Catholicism had to be publicly enforced and utterly embraced as the Spanish imperial unifying ethos. The Church and the state of the Spanish empire were reinvented to cope with and to counteract the emergence of new ideology-wielding powers that defied their status quo.

The Spaniards who sailed across the Atlantic transferred a Church, a state, and a leadership weary, vigilant, and intolerant of sociopolitical and religious factionalism. They had the mission of establishing, developing, and defending a purely Catholic society in the New World.<sup>125</sup> Additionally, the Spanish model of Church and Inquisition

---

<sup>124</sup> Doris Moreno. "Los jesuitas, la Inquisición y la frontera espiritual de 1559", *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. Vol. 92:5, (2015), 655-675. The introductory paragraph to Moreno's essay masterfully illustrates this ideology: *En las décadas centrales del siglo XVI se produjeron hechos decisivos que han permitido a la historiografía hablar de una fractura, un viraje en la historia de España, el paso de la España erasmista de Carlos V a la contrarreformista de Felipe II, con el humo de las hogueras de los condenados por luteranos en Seville y Valladolid de fondo.* (During the central decades of the sixteenth century there were decisive facts that show, historiographically, a fracture or turn in the history of Spain, it was the movement from an Erasmist Spain of Charles V into a counter reformist Spain of Felipe II, with the smoke of the Lutherans condemned in Seville and Valladolid in the background) Translated by the author.

<sup>125</sup> The notion of creating or inventing a purely Catholic kingdom in the New World is attributed to the religious orders, especially the millennialist Franciscan friars, as well as to the Renaissance

had been heavily influenced by the crown's internal and external policies and actions during the previous years of the *Reconquista*.<sup>126</sup> Both institutions had been instrumental in retaking territories and imposing the Catholic hegemony in the region promoted by the monarchs. They adhered to, promoted, and enforced the crown's policies designed not only to control the religiosity of their subjects but also to support and emphasize Spain's role among the other European monarchies as defender of the Catholic faith.

Consequently, the ideology of the political and religious leadership of the sixteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic affected the consolidation of the Church in Cuba. The first missionaries who settled on the island were militant and eager to evangelize the natives and to uphold the Catholicism of the newly-conquered subjects. This was comparable with other places such as Hispaniola and the territories that would become New Spain after 1535. During this period, all the colonies in the New World were equally undeveloped as they were in the preliminary stages of European-style urban and social growth, and therefore, were not ready for an Inquisition Tribunal.

In Cuba, the evangelization process began in 1510, however, the Catholic Church was formally established seven years later.<sup>127</sup> The first diocese was founded by Pope Leo

---

philosophes of the sixteenth century. "No colonial empire in modern times was built upon so extensive a philosophical and theological foundation as that empire the Spaniards created for themselves in the New World." See John Leddy Phelan. *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 1; and Julia McClure. *The Franciscan Invention of the New World*. Coventry: University of Warwick Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

<sup>126</sup> Frank Moya Pons. *Historia Colonial de Santo Domingo*. Segunda Edición. (Santiago: Colección "Estudios," 1979), 38.

<sup>127</sup> Pedro Agustín Morell de Santa Cruz. Introducción de Francisco de Paula Coronado y Álvaro. *Historia de la isla y catedral de cuba*. (La Habana: Imprenta "Cuba intelectual," 1929), 25.

X with the Bull *Super Specula Militantis Ecclesia* issued on February 11, 1517, at the request of the Spanish Emperor Charles I.<sup>128</sup> Even the name of the Bull, *Upon the Watchtower of the Militant Church*, was a proclamation of the mandate for the local leadership. They were to convert the natives and to watch over the adherence of the population to the Christian precepts. The diocese was “canonically erected” in the first Spanish settlement of Baracoa and named *Nuestra Señora de la Asunción*.<sup>129</sup> It was *sufraganea* (subordinate) to the Archbishopric of Seville until the ecclesiastic reorganization of 1546. At that time, the diocese became nominally subsidiary to the Metropolitan Diocese of Santo Domingo in Hispaniola. In 1522, just five years after its foundation, the Cuban diocese’s headquarters were moved from Baracoa to Santiago de Cuba because the strategic location of the latter offered better living and mobility conditions. Santiago also had the potential of being better guarded. The name was changed to Diocese of Santiago de Cuba, referred in the documents sometime just as Diocese of Cuba.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> See a copy of the Bull in Latin at *Episcopologio de La Iglesia Católica en Cuba. Bula de Erección de la primera diócesis*. Available at <http://webdept.fiu.edu/~mirandas/obispos/superspecula.htm> accessed on September 3, 2016.

<sup>129</sup> Morell de Santa Cruz, *Historia*, 25. An institution, jurisdiction, or organization of the Catholic Church is not legitimate until it is officially established, or Canonically Erected, by a decree either from the Vatican or from the Ordinary of the local diocese. Only then it is entitled to all the privileges and responsibilities of its specific rank. See Chapter III: The Imperial Church of Hans Küng. *The Catholic Church: A Short History*. Translated by John Bowden. (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2001).

<sup>130</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 129. The diocese remained canonically under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Santo Domingo until it became an independent Archdiocese in 1803.



Traditional historiography catalogues the first decades of Cuban history after the Europeans' settled as a period of a slow gestation of colonial society. Historians cite the lack of precious metals on the island and the conquest of Mexico and Peru as causing an exodus of most of the civilians and religious personnel towards those regions leaving Cuba depopulated. The exodus was aggravated by lack of finances and the constant raids by pirates and corsairs which further delayed Cuban colonial society's growth and prosperity. Cuba's economic and population growth halted. As a result, the Catholic Church on the island grew at a slower rate when compared to the Church expansion in the mainland colonies.<sup>131</sup> The protracted progress of colonial institutions did not mean that the island was vacated or that the construction of the colony was abandoned by the crown or its subjects.

Sources researched for this dissertation uncover and demonstrate a different reality.<sup>132</sup> Indeed the island lacked the population boom and the financial resources emerging in the newly-acquired territories of mainland America. Nevertheless, the population and the colonial officers, both religious and secular, residing in Cuba were as functional as those in other regions of the New World at the time. They were engaged in

---

<sup>131</sup> Other authors have studied the subsequent years of the history of Cuba and have defined the island (and the region) based on the above-mentioned raids and exodus as backwards, unstable, depopulated and abandoned, and have dismissed the importance of the region favoring the study of the rest of the New World. See Polcari. *Historia*, 47.

<sup>132</sup> Revisionist works such as Alejandro de la Fuente's *Havana in and the Atlantic* counteracts this claim demonstrating the existence of a vibrant society with an equally booming economy. There is also a group of academics led by Dr. Ida Altman from the University of Florida, previously cited, who is revisiting the archives to prove that the area was neither backwards nor irrelevant. See Altman, *The Spanish Caribbean*.

the establishment and development of a permanent society by building the corresponding institutions that supported imperial growth.

Compared to other dioceses, especially those in Spain, Cuba was a “*diocesis no deseada*” (diocese not desired). This was clearly noted by the refusal and/or procrastination of several bishops to reside on the island during the first three decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>133</sup> Yet this absenteeism or lack of interest from the Catholic hierarchy was not problem just in Cuba. Until the later reforms of the 1540s, none of the New World dioceses were self-sufficient or financially solvent as they were subordinate to the Archdiocese of Seville and therefore not highly desired posts. They were considered missions and most of the money collected, through taxes and tributes, was funneled through Seville and destined to the royal coffers. Little money remained in the colonies and the revolving leadership of the colonies was prompt to seize whatever they could and return to Spain. Not until the creation of the Ecclesiastic Provinces of the New World (1546), did the desirability of the American dioceses change. Once the financial relationship with Seville changed, a percentage of the collections remained in the territories and the Dioceses of the Americas became financially self-sufficient. They gained autonomy and therefore, were desired by Spanish prelates. Still, those dioceses on the outskirts of the Spanish empire were considered frontier territories and were not as desired as those within or near urban settings.

---

<sup>133</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 104.

## **Chapter II: Protection from Prosecution: Uses and Abuses of Inquisitorial Powers.**

### **i – The Franciscans and the Powers of *Omnimoda*.**

Like the rest of the colonies during the second decade of the sixteenth century the Church in Cuba entered into a process of socioreligious consolidation. This involved the construction of Church buildings and monasteries, the organization of the upper clergy, and encouraging colonialists and creoles both females and males to enter religious life at the local convents. These steps signaled the Church permanency and interest in the region as well as the initial stages of a functional religious infrastructure. The Catholic Church in the colonies mirrored its organization in Europe, however, there was one difference. Free from the disruptions and divisions promoted by Protestantism in Europe – or so they thought – the authorities envisioned the construction of a purely Catholic Church in a New World.<sup>134</sup>

The civil leadership in the metropolis carefully selected the clergy who were to lead these processes. The Spanish King and Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, fully supported the advancement of Catholicism in the New World and allowed for some degree of autonomy of the leadership in the Indies. He also promoted the construction of embellished buildings worthy of worshiping God but that were also strong enough to house and protect the local population from danger when necessary.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> As mentioned earlier, this period coincided with the rise of Protestantism in Europa. The Spanish Crown aimed at *building* a Church in the New World free from its perceived heretic influence. See Rubial García, *La Iglesia*, 21 – 29.

<sup>135</sup> Academia de la Historia de Cuba. *Papeles existentes en el Archivo General de Indias relativos a Cuba y muy particularmente a La Habana*. Vol. 1. Ordenados y con introducción de Joaquín de Llaverías. (La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1931), 12.

The Diocese of Santiago de Cuba had been properly established in 1517 preceding by thirteen years its counterpart in New Spain.<sup>136</sup> The personnel suitable to run the first diocese of Cuba were duly appointed and their salaries determined. The bishop and the men who would support him in his pastoral and leadership duties were to be paid from the mandatory tithes collected from the *vecinos* of Santiago. The mandate denotes the existence of a sufficient number of wealthy individuals who could pay for this. It also indicates their ability – albeit not necessarily their willingness – to contribute monetarily to the growth of the Church. In exchange, the inhabitants of Cuba received spiritual care and guidance, as well as protection from sinful influences.<sup>137</sup> Yet, the diocese remained acephalous (without leadership). No bishop had traveled to or settled on the island, and therefore the Church had remained under the care of Franciscan and Dominican missionary friars.

These two mendicant orders had been officially in charge of the evangelization of the natives as well as providing the Spaniards in the New World with spiritual care since 1522. That year Pope Adriano VI in the Pontifical Brief *Exponi nobis fecisti* gave his Apostolic authority to the friars to act on his behalf when necessary in matters of evangelization. The mandate was also known as *Omnímoda* or all-embracing because of the degree of – and unusual – powers given to the friars.<sup>138</sup> The decree granted onto

---

<sup>136</sup> Nesvig, *Ideology*, 93.

<sup>137</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 99.

<sup>138</sup> Pedro Torres. *La Bula Omnímoda de Adriano VI (9 mayo 1522) y su aplicación durante el primer siglo de las misiones de Indias*. (Madrid: Ediciones Jura, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Santo Toribio de Mongrovejo, 1948), 70.

mendicant missionaries in the colonies all the privileges of a bishop – in absentia – needed to make Catholicism the official religion of the new lands. The friars could also function as judges in all ecclesiastical matters including those pertaining to the Inquisition. The only exceptions to the powers of the friars were conferring religious orders (ordaining lectors, deacons, and priests) or consecrating bishops. The intentions of the Pope were to help Emperor Charles V, his close friend, political ally, and former pupil, in the affairs of the New World. *Omnímoda* facilitated the friars' missionary role and extended Papal authority into the affairs of the Church in the Spanish colonies.<sup>139</sup> The pontifical and canonical mission and nature of the brief and its imperial support made it unchallengeable.<sup>140</sup>

*Omnímoda* opened the doors of the Americas to all mendicant missionaries.<sup>141</sup> The brief granted open permission to all friars to travel to the New World and to manage the evangelization efforts of the Spanish crown. *Omnímoda*, however, gave preferential rights and powers to the Franciscan friars as requested by the Emperor. The leadership of the Seraphic Order (another name for the Franciscans) was required officially to accept in writing the offer from Adriano and Charles. They were also instructed to order all Franciscan friars, brothers and priests, and their local superiors traveling to the colonies to accept under holy obedience their commitment to the evangelization of all infidels.

---

<sup>139</sup> Charles E. Nowell. "La Bula Omnímoda de Adriano VI. Pedro Torres." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 30, No. 1 (1950): 96.

<sup>140</sup> Torres, *Omnímoda*, 114.

<sup>141</sup> For an analysis of the role of mendicant orders in the construction of the Spanish American colonies both spiritually and architecturally see Karen Melvin. *Building Colonial Cities of God: Mendicant Orders and Urban Culture in New Spain*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

Upon signing, the Franciscans received full authority to proceed *in utroque foro* (in any jurisdiction).<sup>142</sup> Because the brief did not establish any territorial limits, it unofficially and perhaps unintentionally interfered with the regional domain of the Dominican friars, which at the time was mostly the Caribbean. While *Omnímoda* granted pastoral privileges to the Franciscans it set the stage for future jurisdictional conflicts between the Seraphic friars and both the Dominicans and the secular clergy.

The brief's influence transcended the initial objectives of Adriano and Charles. It was carried to the Americas by a group of Franciscan friars who were eventually known as the Twelve Apostles of Mexico. These friars spearheaded and sponsored the expansion of the Franciscan missionary network throughout the Viceroyalty of New Spain and beyond.<sup>143</sup> They brought to the Indies an apocalyptic and millennialist movement that expected the end of the old Christian era and envisioned the creation of the biblical New Jerusalem in the Americas. They envisaged a new millennium that would see the second coming of Christ and would end suffering and sin.<sup>144</sup> Their version of Catholicism sanctioned by the religiosity and confessionalism of the Spanish monarchy and reinforced by the nascent Protestantism affected the evangelization idealism and the religious zeal of the Franciscan and other mendicant friars thereafter.

---

<sup>142</sup> Torres, *Omnímoda*, 73; see also Nesvig, *Ideology*, 105.

<sup>143</sup> Torres, *Omnímoda*, 80 – 81; See also Robert Ricard. *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: an essay on the apostolate and the evangelizing methods of the mendicant orders in New Spain, 1523-1572*. Translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 21.

<sup>144</sup> See the cited work of Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom*.

Franciscan and Dominican friars eagerly fulfilled the ministerial commission of *Omnímoda* of safeguarding and increasing the Catholicity of the new Spanish possessions. Simultaneously, both orders led the defense of the natives against the cruelty inflicted by some Europeans. Both of these endeavors increasingly alarmed the friars. In 1524, a group of Franciscans wrote a letter to their superiors in Spain expressing their concern for the shortage of religious personnel to serve the needs of the growing Spanish population. In the letter, they also highlighted their growing preoccupation for the wellbeing of the Cuban Indians and the rising rate of suicide among them. The Franciscans requested more friars capable of preaching the commandments of the Catholic religion to Spaniards and natives alike. The friars specifically requested that the new clergy had to help in consoling the Indians because many of them “hung themselves because of their despair.”<sup>145</sup> The friars’ petition clearly demonstrated their growing interest in the welfare of those individuals entrusted to their care and their preoccupation for the rapid demise of the natives. They joined similar demands led by Bartolomé de Las Casas and other Dominican friars in the Caribbean who were involved in several legal battles on both sides of the Atlantic in defense of the Indians.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Contratación, 5090, L. 6, ff. 3-3v. *Real Cédula al Padre General de la Orden de San Francisco, Vitoria, 20 de febrero de 1524*. Royal Cedula to the Father General of the Order of Saint Francis.

<sup>146</sup> The work of Bartolome De Las Casas and other Dominicans in the defense of the natives has received ample attention in academia, therefore, it will be addressed in this work only cursorily. For a comprehensive study of Las Casas and his efforts in favor of the native see Daniel Castro. *Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé De Las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) and Lewis Hanke. *In defense of the Indians. All Mankind is One; a Study of the Disputation between Bartolomé De Las Casas and Juan Ginés De Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians*. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

The same year, 1524, because of the Franciscan and Dominican demands on behalf of the natives, the Crown issued a series of ordinances protecting the Indians.<sup>147</sup> According to the new rules, the Spaniards could no longer use the natives as forced labor to extract gold nor to participate in the *encomienda* system. Both the natives who worked in the extraction of gold and the Spanish monarch were granted partial ownership of the minerals obtained. The Franciscan friar Pedro Mexía who had been in charge of implementing the new labor system in Hispaniola was ordered to travel to Cuba to oversee its execution.<sup>148</sup>

Mexía was entrusted with ensuring that the Spaniards abided by the rules and that the natives were not abused. As part of his role, the friar had to denounce those individuals who did not follow the instructions and were known to enslave or abuse the natives. Mexía also was asked to inform the Crown about those Europeans who failed to divide the gold according to the mandate. This policing role of the Church personnel conflicted with the responsibilities and the financial interests of the secular authorities who complained to the emperor and his council and demanded that Mexía should stop meddling in their affairs. To their dismay, the Crown upheld the functions and powers of the friar. Even more disappointing to the *encomenderos* who complained was the order

---

<sup>147</sup> Also in 1524, Hernán Cortés, validating the efficiency of the mendicants' work in the Americas requested more friars to take over the evangelization of the natives and suggested that all bishops named for the New World be members of religious orders. *Carta de Hernán Cortes al Rey*. AGI, Patronato, 16, N.1, R. 3, 15 de octubre de 1524.

<sup>148</sup> Ramiro Guerra. *Manual de Historia de Cuba. Desde su descubrimiento hasta 1868*. (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro. Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1971), 57.



the Council gave to the governor of Cuba, Gonzalo de Guzmán, to bring any further discordance to the local religious authority, that is, to the Bishop of the Diocese.<sup>149</sup>

While the confrontation between religious and secular authorities in Cuba was and would subsequently be common in matters of jurisdictional powers, this was the first instance in which decision-making powers shifted from the metropolis to the island. The Council's decision was a reflection of administrative changes on both sides of the Atlantic. The crown's recognition of the bishop's authority signaled an increase in the importance of the local religious leadership in legal matters. The decision also implied that the Church in Cuba was shifting from a missionary enterprise with temporary or superficial ties to the island to a permanent local institution at the service of the growing resident population.

## **ii – The First Resident Bishop: Ramírez de Salamanca.**

Along with empowering the local religious authorities, the crown reinforced the construction of religious buildings and the strengthening of the diocese. In the early days of 1528, the existing modest cathedral of Santiago de Cuba, which was constructed of wood and prone to fire because of the constant use of candles, was destroyed by a fire.<sup>150</sup> The emperor interpreted the catastrophe as an opportunity to display the success of his empire. He issued a revalidation of a 1523 Papal Bull that ordered the construction of the original Cathedral. Charles gave specific orders to build a grandiose and sound structure

---

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. The bishop was Miguel Ramírez de Salamanca who will be introduced shortly.

<sup>150</sup> Academia, *Papeles*, Vol. 1, 25.

made of stone, like those in the metropolis. He also granted the plots of the adjacent land to the officials who would serve in the cathedral.<sup>151</sup>

The orders for Cuba paralleled similar mandates for the imperial authorities through the realms. They were instructed to finance the construction of large churches and monasteries where needed to honor and worship Catholic saints.<sup>152</sup> The buildings were also to house the religious personnel in a dignified manner to demonstrate the importance of the clergy in the everyday life of his subjects. The emperor also encouraged the locals to support financially the needs of the clergy.<sup>153</sup> For the construction of the cathedral of Santiago and the initial salary of the priests assigned to serve in it, the emperor dedicated half of the tithes collected for the preceding bishop, the Flemish Jan De Witte (1475 – 1540). Since the prelate never traveled to the island, those funds, so the emperor hoped, should have been kept and saved by the locals. The builders were instructed to use the Cathedral design commissioned by De Witte.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> For the 1523 Cédula see AGI, Indiferente, 420, L.9, Fs. 210V - 211R. *Erección de la Catedral de Santiago de Cuba*. For the Emperor's orders of 1528 see AGI, Indiferente, 421, L.12, Fs. 294R – 294V. *Solares para los canónigos y clérigos de Santiago de Cuba*.

<sup>152</sup> Rubial, *La Iglesia*, Introducción.

<sup>153</sup> David A. Brading. *La Nueva España, Patria y Religión*. (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica Sección de Obras de Historia, 2015), 95.

<sup>154</sup> Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar. Tomo 4, De La Isla De Cuba, Part II. (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico Sucesores de Rivadeneira, Impresores de la Real Casa, 1888). *Real cédula ordenando que de las rentas de Sede vacante, desde 4 de Abril de 1525 en que renunció D. Fr. Juan de Ubite (Wite), hasta 1.º de Enero de 1527, en que fué presentado el P. Fr. Miguel Ramírez, acudan los oficiales reales con la mitad para fábrica y ornamentos de la iglesia de Santiago*. 30 de junio de 1528, Doc. 113, 43. Available at Ilmc.com through FIU Library online: <http://www.llmc.com.ezproxy.fiu.edu/docDisplay5.aspx?set=38001&volume=0004&part=001> accessed on May 13, 2019. (The collection will be cited hereafter as CDIRD, Tomo #, Part #, collection page number, and specific document information).

The Emperor was aware of the intensifying importance of Cuba within his Caribbean possessions and his policies demonstrated so. Nevertheless, he needed support from the religious leadership to implement his plans. While friars had embraced the full powers granted by *Omnímoda* and accepted its command to evangelize in the Indies, the Church hierarchy's response had been less than cooperative. The emperor was tired of bishops refusing to move to the Indies. He needed a strong man who, unquestionably, would spearhead his plans to expand the presence and influence of the Catholic Church on the island. He searched for an individual who would not only be supportive of his strategies for expansion in the Americas but also loyal to his role of keeper and defender of the Catholic faith.<sup>155</sup> In 1527, he asked his personal preacher, the Dominican friar Miguel Ramírez de Salamanca, to take over the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba, which had been canonically vacant for some time and had never been physically occupied by a bishop.<sup>156</sup> Even though Ramírez was the third bishop assigned to Cuba, he was the first to reside in the diocese.

Ramírez possessed the characteristics of the religious leader Charles desired in a new bishop. He was ambitious, energetic, and inflexible. He had a strong personality and was willing and able to undertake any mission. Ramírez de Salamanca was also a member of a prominent, old Christian family, trusted by the courts and knowledgeable of the political tensions and diplomatic maneuvering of the Emperor. Destined to occupy a

---

<sup>155</sup> The title had been granted to the emperor by the pope for his battles against the “infidel” Ottoman Empire. See James Reston Jr. *Defenders of the Faith: Charles V, Suleyman the Magnificent and the Battle for Europe, 1520 – 1536*. (NY: Penguin Press, 2009).

<sup>156</sup> CDIRD, Tomo 4, Part II, Doc.113, 43.

leadership position, Ramírez had been sent by his family to study in Salamanca, the most prestigious and important university of Spain. There he became a Dominican friar and was trained by the most formidable and conservative theologians of the realms to serve at the highest religious and political ranks.<sup>157</sup>

In addition to his close relationship to the Emperor and his impeccable religious education, Ramírez was familiar with the Caribbean, its residents, and their needs. At the time he was selected bishop of Cuba he was already serving as the Abbot of Jamaica. Formally established in 1504 as the religious jurisdiction of the island, the Abbey was confirmed in 1511. The island kept that canonical designation – Abbey and not diocese – because of its small population and limited financial resources. Ramírez had been the first high-ranking official assigned to the Abbey who actually lived in Jamaica, although only for a year and a half. Upon his transfer to Cuba in 1528, he requested from the Emperor to keep his titles and authority over the Abbey. Charles accepted turning Ramírez into the first and only man who held both titles: Bishop of Cuba and Abbot of Jamaica. The Abbey became part of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba for the remainder of its Spanish colonial life and never became a Catholic Diocese.<sup>158</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> For a brief biographical sketch of Bishop Miguel Ramírez see Francisco Morales Padrón. *Jamaica Española*. (Seville: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Seville, 1952). For a general description of the theologians who studied and taught at San Esteban de Salamanca and this university's importance as the cradle of religious leaders who were sent to the New World, see Nesvig's *Ideology and Inquisition* chapter 4 "The Salamanca Connection."

<sup>158</sup> Jamaica was the only Abbey in the Spanish possessions in the New World. Not to be confused with the actual building or monastery, an Abbey is a religious jurisdiction which ranks canonically under a Diocese. Its head, the Abbot, has similar powers to a bishop. There are three levels or degrees, the highest being a Mitered Abbot. In that case he has the same rights and responsibilities of a bishop, except he cannot confer the priesthood or consecrate other abbots or bishops. For an extended explanation of the canonical rights and duties of an Abbot see the Catholic Encyclopedia <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01015c.htm>. See Padron, *Jamaica*, 168-

With the merging of jurisdictions, both the office of the Bishop and the diocese attained religious importance and political power within the region. Because of his qualifications and prominent level of confidentiality among the Emperor's circle, Ramírez was also the first bishop who received authority from the Crown to intervene in all legal matters in both Cuba and Jamaica. His judicial powers were extended over the civil and religious fora to dispense justice across the two islands. Immediately after his selection, the Emperor ordered the bishop to serve as judge in all litigations within his diocese, particularly a problematic situation involving the governor of Cuba, Gonzalo Nuño de Guzmán.<sup>159</sup>

Serving the crown as the highest-ranking political official on the island since 1526, Guzmán had been increasingly involved in numerous legal and at times violent battles with Spaniards and Indians alike. He oversaw the distribution of the natives through the controversial *encomiendas*, which earned him the envy and praise of his friends and the criticism and hate of his foes. Several royal officials had filed several charges against Guzmán, which Ramírez was ordered to investigate. Chief among the charges was Guzmán's blatant abuse of power by showing preference towards himself and his close allies in the distribution of *encomiendas*. The officials also accused him of taking advantage of the wealth produced by the *encomiendas* and not sending adequate amounts of money to the crown. Guzmán was also accused of brutal and constant abuses of the Indians, which had resulted in numerous revolts and Indian deaths. Additional

---

169 and Francis J. Osborne, S.J. *History of the Catholic Church in Jamaica*. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1988). XII, 532.

<sup>159</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 104.

charges levied against the governor were nepotism and misappropriation of funds.<sup>160</sup> This was a great opportunity for Ramírez to exercise his newly assigned regional powers and to demonstrate his intentions, abilities, and fidelity to the royal plans. It was the first time the diocese would serve its legal function as an ecclesiastic tribunal.

The extent and inclusiveness of Ramírez's judicial hegemony along with his personal ambitions were his demise. In an unexpected turn of events, the bishop sided with the governor and unleashed his fury against anyone who implicated or even implied that the governor's actions constituted a crime. Even worse was Ramírez's condemnation of those who implied his complicity by suggesting his favoritism for the governor. Some local officials who had originally launched the investigation against Guzmán felt the bishop's ire. Among them were the Royal Treasurer Lope de Hurtado and the previous Governor Manuel de Rojas, who had escalated the accusations and informed the Council of the Indies of the events. Ramírez, making use of his title as Ordinary Inquisitor of the Diocese, threatened anyone who participated or supported such accusations with excommunication, regardless of where they lived.<sup>161</sup>

In an unprecedented decision, the Council of the Indies reverted the case back to the regional legal authorities of the Audiencia de Santo Domingo in Hispaniola. The Audiencia realized that the situation was out of control, but it was still a local matter, and so it ordered those involved to bring the issues to an end on their own before demanding external intervention. The bishop and most of the royal officials in Cuba who did not

---

<sup>160</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 147, 150 - 167. *Carta del Cabildo de Santiago a S.M.*, 2 de septiembre de 1530.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

support governor Guzmán were notorious for their constant involvement in public arguments. As the authorities attempted to put an end to the disagreements, the community and council meetings often turned into public and physical fights. Many of the violent quarrels took place at or quickly moved to the prelate's residence who was normally at the center of the quarrel. Even though this behavior was disconcerting and scandalous, the Audiencia ruled it had to be resolved among the locals. Unhappy with the lack of resolution, the Cabildo of Santiago appealed the decision.<sup>162</sup>

A fight between colonial officials ranked low in imperial priorities, but it was duly noticed by Charles' government. The Council and the Emperor were involved in numerous affairs through the empire, which were ordered according to their relevance. In the New World, the conquest of Mexico and the expansion into additional regions demanded the administration of the colonies to refocus their economic strategies. This implied that new directives had to be developed by the Council concerning the enslavement of the natives and the collection of wealth. In addition, Charles had to deal with other pressing problems in the Caribbean regarding the Columbus family claims in Santo Domingo and the slave trade to and throughout the Caribbean.<sup>163</sup> Charles was also dealing with financial problems through the empire and was negotiating significant loans to fund his imperial plans.<sup>164</sup> These and the preoccupation with the dangers Protestantism and the Ottoman empire represented to the Holy Roman Empire were pivotal in the

---

<sup>162</sup> Guerra, *Manual*, 52.

<sup>163</sup> Hugh Thomas. *El Imperio Español de Carlos V, (1522 – 1558)*. Translated by Carmen Martínez Gimeno and Jesús Cuéllar. España: Editorial Planeta, 2014, 131-141.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* 176 – 185.

emperor's agenda. Still Charles' council addressed the situation in Cuba and insisted that the problem be solved locally at once.

The Council's ruling was significant. It meant more for the island and its people more than an instance of royal recognition of their ability to solve public disorders and minor legal issues. It denoted the Emperor's increasing efforts to grant more autonomy and decision-making power to the New World institutions and to the officials who represented him. It was also an indication of the growing influence and functionality of the local emerging society. Most important, the council's decision confirmed the presence in the region of qualified individuals capable of dealing with legal matters who could eventually become part of a formal judicial branch. It was an early and practical precedent for the development of an Inquisition Tribunal in the region that could effectively deal with local matters.

### **iii – The Bishop's Abuses of Powers.**

Invoking his episcopal fueros as the Bishop of the Diocese and the initial mandate by the emperor to deal with the accusations against Guzmán, Ramírez retook leadership in the proceedings. He claimed precedence over the civil judicial authorities and reissued threatening decrees against those who dared to implicate him in the matters. The Cabildo of Santiago de Cuba, tired of the bishop's despotism and lack of intention to solve the matter rightfully, sent another letter to the Audiencia de Santo Domingo demanding a prompt and definitive intervention. They reinstated the accusations of abusing their



power for their convenience against Ramírez and Guzmán, and denounced the numerous threats received from both men.<sup>165</sup>

The Cabildo demanded the removal of both the bishop and the governor. The grievance was elevated to the Bishop of Puerto Rico and Apostolic Inquisitor Alonso Mansó who ruled in support of Ramírez, his former classmate from Salamanca and brother in the episcopate. He warned the members of the Cabildo of Santiago, the rest of the accusers, and even the Audiencia of Santo Domingo to recuse themselves from the matters and withdraw the allegations against Ramírez under penalty of excommunication.<sup>166</sup>

Neither the Cabildo nor the representatives of the Audiencia, who were attempting to resolve the matter, seemed compelled by the inquisitor's orders or even intimidated by his superficial and unsubstantiated threats. Not satisfied with Mansó's response and infuriated by his biased decision, they wrote a letter, this time directly to the Emperor, detailing the political instability of the island. They reported the open animosity between the religious and secular government officials on the island, the proliferation of Indian revolts, and expressed their concern with the impoverished condition of the local treasury. The Cabildo blamed the unconcealed mismanagement of funds benefiting the Governor, his close friends, and his relatives as the main cause for the financial deficits in

---

<sup>165</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 194, 296 - 302. *Carta del licenciado Vadillo á la Emperatriz, participando haber fenecido la residencia de Gonzalo de Guzmán y cuentas de tesoreros. Confirma el juicio que del Gobernador y del Obispo tenían formado los oficiales reales y el regimiento de Santiago. Da noticias de las poblaciones de la isla. La carta está decretada en el Consejo de Indias. 24 de septiembre de 1532.*

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

the royal coffers. All this misgovernment, they claimed, seriously aggravated the already noticeable discontent of the residents.<sup>167</sup>

The Cabildo expressed its additional frustrations and anger because of the disrespectful treatment they received from Ramírez and Guzmán. They were the men supposed to bring peace and order to the colony, however, they were involved in scandals, corruption, and abuses of power. The Emperor supported the initial decision to have the matter solved by the local authorities as indicated by his Council, adding that a local representative from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo should visit the island and assess the situation. In 1531 he ordered the Audiencia to send one of his magistrates, Juan de Vadillo, to conduct a thorough investigation, send his findings to the Audiencia and the Council, and above all to appease the men involved.<sup>168</sup> The situation in Santiago was out of control and needed the intervention of regional authorities who outranked the locals, not even the involvement of the regional inquisitor had been successful.

Everyone involved in deciding who should administer justice over this matter or charged with putting an end to the controversy represented a different entity, yet, they were expected to rule according to imperial goals. Nevertheless, the entanglement of

---

<sup>167</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 179, 261 - 267. *Carta de los oficiales reales á S. M. dándole gracias por haber hecho justicia á la isla con el envío del licenciado Vadillo; acabó éste la residencia de Gonzalo de Guzmán, á que se atienen y está tomando las cuentas atrasadas. Las rentas se han acrecentado mucho con el descubrimiento de buenas minas. Se acrecentarán más si trabajan las del cobre y se pone persona que cobre derechos en la Habana, excelente puerto adonde van acudiendo navíos. Se creen en el deber de informar contra el proceder del Obispo en Cuba y Jamaica y de rogar no se dé crédito á lo que escribe en su favor y en el de Gonzalo Guzmán, 6 de mayo de 1532.* See also a reference to this in CDIRD, Tomo VI, Part III, Doc. 318, 21. *Sentencia de apelación en el juicio de residencia de Gonzalo de Guzmán, 20 de junio de 1533.*

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

administrative jurisdictions characteristic of the Spanish empire, the blurred demarcation among officers' responsibilities, and their personal interests prevented such a decision. While the two bishops represented the Catholic Church and the Inquisition at the imperial levels, they were also friends and former classmates with financial ties to their respective dioceses. Therefore, the one favored the other. The Audiencia and the Cabildo represented the local and regional *vecinos*, ranked below the regional governing authorities who responded to the Crown's ordinances. The solution was to employ a third party with no local interests and directly subordinated to the crown. Vadillo was a man knowledgeable of the laws and as the representative of the Audiencia was sworn to impartiality.

Bishop Ramírez, aware of the impending investigation employed for the first time his titles and powers as Ordinary Inquisitor. In a failed and counterproductive attempt to stop witnesses from testifying, he issued excommunication threats to anyone who persisted in the accusations against him and the governor. He stated in his orders that those involved in the investigation would be destroyed by the fire of the Inquisition. Even though Ramírez formalized the excommunication throughout his territory, the Audiencia did not budge and stood behind its representative who had begun mobilizing the locals to support his endeavors and, if necessary, rally against Ramírez and Guzmán.<sup>169</sup>

Vadillo, with the backing of the Audiencia, conducted a successful investigation. He filed eighty-four charges against Guzmán, recommending his immediate removal. He, however, filed no charges only complaints against Ramírez stating that he had failed to

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

proceed as judge, as mandated by the Emperor. Vadillo included in his report that Ramírez had abandoned his duties Bishop of Cuba and Abbot of Jamaica. He blamed the bishop's actions – or lack thereof – on the government of his jurisdictions as the cause of the revolts through both islands under his spiritual care.<sup>170</sup> Vadillo refrained from recommending any sanctions against Ramírez because his secular legislative position ranked below the ecclesiastic rank of the Bishop. Yet, Vadillo's report sufficed to reproach Ramírez's actions and to get the attention of the Council. Regardless of the absence of charges, Ramírez still issued orders of excommunication and arrest in the name of the Holy Office against Vadillo.<sup>171</sup>

On September 13, 1533, the Emperor dramatically intervened in the problem. He issued a Cédula acknowledging the complains and reports from the Audiencia of Santo Domingo and the Cabildo of Santiago de Cuba against Bishop Ramírez and Governor Guzmán. Charles expressed his concern with the mismanagement of the scarce resources of the Island and their abuses of power. He, however, found most aggravating – and probably disillusioning – the Bishop's act of insubordination and disregard for his imperial authority, which he directly addressed in the Cédula.<sup>172</sup>

The emperor was astonished by Ramírez's blatant disregard for the secular government. He was also probably infuriated by the prelate's contempt for the powers of

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Lopetegui, *Historia*, 280.

<sup>172</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 207, 317 - 318. *Real cédula al Gobernador mandando hacer información de los agravios que el Obispo ha hecho á los vecinos. Dada en Monzón. 13 de septiembre de 1533.*

the Audiencia when he stated that he “had no judge other than the Holy Father or the Archbishop of Seville, his superior.”<sup>173</sup> The emperor also criticized Ramírez for overstepping the judicial authority he enjoyed as granted as entitled by his office and rank and reminded the bishop that they had been granted as his imperial discretion. Not only did Ramírez excommunicate all witnesses and prosecutors involved but he also deprived them of the possibility to appeal his decision by claiming that there was no higher power that could overturn it. Charles withdrew his support for the Bishop and ordered the Audiencia de Santo Domingo to act on his behalf and administer justice according to the offenses committed by the Bishop. He added that any priest in the Indies could issue a statement lifting every excommunication order issued by Ramírez.<sup>174</sup>

Ramírez and Guzmán knowing the consequences of the emperor’s indignation responded by running away from Cuba, first to Jamaica and later to Spain. The bishop, to avoid being detained by the local authorities, used the excuse of having to go to Spain to receive his episcopal consecration. Once in the metropolis, Ramírez relying on their close relationship appealed personally to the Emperor asking Charles to absolve him and Guzmán from all accusations. Guzmán also used his family ties and years of service to the crown to successfully appeal to the Emperor to clear his record. The exoneration permitted him to return to Cuba and resume his post.<sup>175</sup> The Emperor and his council

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Arcadio Ríos. *Hechos y Personajes de la Historia de Cuba. Recopilación Bibliográfica.* (La Habana: Editorial Infoiima, 2015). Online versión EcuRed. Accessed May 2, 2019. [https://www.ecured.cu/Gonzalo\\_Nu%C3%B1o\\_de\\_Guzm%C3%A1n](https://www.ecured.cu/Gonzalo_Nu%C3%B1o_de_Guzm%C3%A1n)

were not as lenient with the Bishop. Although they granted him pardon from the accusations, Charles removed him from office and sent him to a Dominican convent in Valladolid where he remained until his death in 1535.<sup>176</sup>

The significance of Ramírez's actions and the harsh response from Charles cannot be underestimated. The bishop betrayed both the trust of the Emperor and the responsibilities of his office. He had been handpicked by Charles because of their friendship but also because of his reputation and his solid religious education. The corrupting influence of the Indies, however, overpowered the prelate's qualities and avarice blinded his sense of loyalty. Las Casas' desired qualifications for a man with inquisitorial powers to serve in the Caribbean was correct. The gold and riches of the Indies was enough to delude the morals of any virtuous man and to divert him from the path of righteousness.<sup>177</sup> The Emperor's disappointment was noticeable by the severity of his dictamen. The bishop had undermined the royal mandates and, more significant, affected the Emperor's plans.

The influential but controversial Ramírez left the Diocese of Santiago in complete disarray. There were insufficient funds to continue the construction of the cathedral and the adjacent headquarters as mandated by the Emperor. With no living quarters for the clergy, only fourteen secular priests remained on the island to serve the religious needs of the incipient and scattered villages. Ramírez also left the diocese filled with a

---

<sup>176</sup> Guerra, *Manual*, 59; and Reinerio Lebró Martínez. *Episcopologio*. (Miami: Ediciones Hispamerican Books, 1985), 11.

<sup>177</sup> Las Casas, *Memorial*, 15

discontented population and numerous Indian rebellions around the island.<sup>178</sup>

Nevertheless, the mendicant friars had made some organizational progress. The Franciscans, with whom Ramírez had been in a constant battle since his arrival in Cuba, had finally initiated the construction of a convent, which the bishop had opposed from the beginning.<sup>179</sup> The Dominicans, whom he favored as they were members of the same order, had negotiated the foundation of a convent in Santiago de Cuba and even though it had been approved, it was delayed because of the legal battles between Ramírez and Guzmán. There were other friars preaching through the few existing Spanish settlements and others working with the natives.<sup>180</sup>

Ramírez's tenure in Cuba also left a trail of unresolved inquisitorial charges against several of his accusers and their potential witnesses. Among them was Juan de Millan, "an original settler of the island and one of the few good men who knows everything about the bishop and Gonzalo de Guzmán."<sup>181</sup> Millan was a member of the Cabildo de Santiago and a resident of the villa since its foundation. He had been

---

<sup>178</sup> Polcari, *Historia*, Vol. I. 48 -53.

<sup>179</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 182, 270 - 274. *Carta del Cabildo de Santiago á S. M. participando ocurrencias. Piden rebaja de los derechos que cobran por el oro, del quinto al diezmo, auxilio para abrir caminos y maestros de fundición de cobre. Avisan que el obispo va á España con mucho dinero, interesado en que no se dicte sentencia contra Gonzalo de Guzmán. Deja la Catedral sin acabar y se opone á que los frailes de San Francisco funden convento. Lleva excesivos derechos de entierro y misas y no ha querido aceptar el arancel que le ordenó la Audiencia de Santo Domingo, 5 de julio de 1532.*

<sup>180</sup> Polcari, *Historia*, Vol. I. 48 -53.

<sup>181</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 298 – 301. *Carta del Licenciado Vadillo á la Emperatriz, participando haber fenecido la residencia de Gonzalo de Guzmán 7 cuentas de tesoreros. Confirma el juicio que del Gobernador 7 del Obispo tenían formado los oficiales reales 7 el regimiento de Santiago. Da noticias de las poblaciones de la isla. 24 de septiembre de 1532.*

recommended by the Cabildo to serve as witness against Ramírez and Guzmán in the mismanagement case. Prior to his escape from the island, the bishop had given orders for Millan's arrest in the name of the Holy Office. There were other five *vecinos* whom Ramírez accused of heresy. They had been detained with the help of some allied clergy, excommunicated, and threatened with burning at the stake.<sup>182</sup>

The scandal created by the arrest of their *vecinos* under fabricated charges had provoked additional discontent among the city officials who publicly expressed their indignation with the actions of the now-absent bishop. They knew the men incarcerated were innocent but had been unable to prove it or to do anything in their favor other than to complain to the Audiencia. The cases never proceeded because there had never been real signs of heresy, yet the men remained under arrest. The accusations had been manufactured by the bishop as ways to prevent the men from testifying against him. Before escaping from the island and afraid of the consequences of his false accusations, Ramírez had burned what he claimed having as evidence of heresy against the *vecinos*.<sup>183</sup> The authorities eventually released and cleared them of all accusations. Nevertheless, the precedent of an Inquisition representative manufacturing sin had been established on the island. The Inquisition in Cuba had become an instrument to attain personal gain and to exert control over the population.

---

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.



#### **iv – Others’ Abuses of Power.**

The relief felt by the *vecinos* of Santiago upon the departure of the despotic bishop was short lived. Upon clearing the charges against himself, Guzmán returned to Cuba to reclaim his titles and exercise his powers as governor. He also took a plan for revenge against his enemies to the island, which included using his secular powers as well as the Holy Office to destroy them. The governor, however, lacked inquisitorial powers and therefore had to rely on someone who did. He allied himself with Diego Lopez, the Dean of the Cathedral of Santiago, who enjoyed bishop-like powers albeit temporarily, while he oversaw the diocese during the absence of Ramírez.<sup>184</sup> The news of the bishop’s removal by the emperor had not reached the island, and therefore his delegation orders were considered valid. Guzmán’s main target was His Majesty’s treasurer, Lope de Hurtado, who “seems to have been that very rare creature which the king assuredly needed in his business: an honest man.”<sup>185</sup> Hurtado’s honesty in his office and to the crown was repaid by a long and painful legal process of fabricated charges and manufactured sins.

Lope de Hurtado had served as treasurer of the colony since 1526 and was trusted and admired by the *vecinos* of Santiago. From the beginning of his tenure, he had been writing to the Emperor informing him about several of his representatives in Cuba embezzling the royal funds. His claims, however, seem to have gone unattended as no action had been taken to correct the misappropriation of funds; not even when he

---

<sup>184</sup> CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 261, 422. *Carta de Leonor de Medina, mujer de Lope Hurtado, al Emperador, en queja de las persecuciones de su marido*, 20 de febrero de 1537.

<sup>185</sup> Wright, *Early History*, 118.

informed His Majesty of the dangerous situation in which he was involved for being an honest official. Hurtado had been arrested by Governor Guzmán upon his return. In collaboration with the Dean of Cathedral, the governor had devised a plot to have false witnesses testify against Hurtado accusing him of heresy.<sup>186</sup>

The entire Hurtado family was affected by fabricated accusations and vengeful persecution. Hurtado's wife, Leonor de Medina, wrote to the Emperor informing him that in the absence of secular charges, the governor had resorted to have her husband arrested by Inquisition officials on charges of heresy. She also denounced the atrocities committed against them by the representatives of the Holy Office and by the governor's envoy. They had confiscated the Hurtado family properties and dishonored their reputation. They also burned all of Lope de Hurtado's documents they found upon searching his house and office, including several letters he had written to the emperor with information of the events in the island, and did not have time to send because of the arrest.<sup>187</sup>

The governor and the Dean had been involved in government and educated in canon laws respectively to understand the legal procedures that preceded a trial and were necessary to convict an accused. They also knew that allegations of heresy had to be substantiated; otherwise serious charges could be filed against false accusers, especially if

---

<sup>186</sup> CDRID, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 263, 423 - 426, *Carta de Gonzalo de Guzmán á la Emperatriz, dando cuenta de haber entregado el mando; prisión de Lope Hurtado; combate con un corsario; asuntos varios de gobierno*, 8 de abril de 1537.

<sup>187</sup> "su hacienda y la mía han tomado y deshonrado ambos. Las cartas, traslados, y avisos de mi marido para V.M., todo lo han tomado y quemado." CDIRD, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 261, 422. *Carta de Leonor de Medina, mujer de Lope Hurtado, al Emperador, en queja de las persecuciones de su marido*, 20 de febrero de 1537.

they were high-ranking members of the government and or the church.<sup>188</sup> In preparation for the litigations in the Lope de Hurtado case, Guzmán sent communication to the crown informing them of his version of the matter. He offered detailed justifications for the arrest and sequestration of Lope de Hurtado's family properties foreseeing questioning from the Council about the legality of his actions and, therefore, exonerating himself from the decision-making process. The Governor stated in the letter that everything had been meticulously investigated and legally ordered by the Dean using his temporary powers of Ordinary Inquisitor of the diocese.<sup>189</sup>

Amid preparations for the Lope de Hurtado's trial Guzmán received an urgent communication from the Council of the Indies that changed the implementation of his wicked plans. He had been replaced and was to cease his involvement immediately in any affairs related to the government of the island. He also learned that Bishop Ramírez had been suspended from the government of the Diocese. The new leadership of the island, Governor Hernando de Soto and Bishop Diego de Sarmiento, were in route and would arrive shortly.<sup>190</sup> The removal of powers meant that Guzmán and his ally, the Dean of the Cathedral, had slim chances to fulfill their revenge against Lope de Hurtado and had to

---

<sup>188</sup> John F. Chuchiack IV. *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536 – 1820. A Documented History*. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012).

<sup>189</sup> CDRID, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 263, 423 - 426, *Carta de Gonzalo de Guzmán á la Emperatriz, dando cuenta de haber entregado el mando; prisión de Lope Hurtado; combate con un corsario; asuntos varios de gobierno*, 8 de abril de 1537.

<sup>190</sup> CDRID, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 264, 426 – 431, *Carta del Consejo de la ciudad dando cuenta de haberse cumplido la provisión que mandaba cesar la jurisdicción del Almirante, dejando las varas Gonzalo de Guzmán y los alguaciles, y tomándolas los alcaldes; piden licencia para llevar negros á la isla y suplir con ellos la disminución de los indios*, 10 de abril de 1537.

eliminate all evidence of wrongdoing. They had to dispose of anything that could be used against them before the newly-appointed men arrived.

They decided that it was best to make Lope de Hurtado disappear from Santiago de Cuba as soon as possible. The two, however, did not intend to give up Guzmán's plans for revenge and agreed to keep the charges they had manufactured against the treasurer. In a separate letter, Leonor de Medina informed the Emperor that since the powers of governor had been removed from Guzmán, the Dean, functioning as the highest-ranking Inquisition officer of the island, had taken the lead in the process and sent her husband to Castilla as a prisoner of the Holy Office under charges of heresy. They had informed Lope de Hurtado that he would be jailed in Castilla at least for seven months without access to legal resources to appeal their decision.<sup>191</sup> Once again, the severity of the situation called for royal intervention.

Lope de Hurtado wrote a separate letter to the Emperor informing him about the injustices perpetrated against him, the resulting hardships imposed onto his family, and the decisions he had been forced to make. Hurtado reiterated what his wife had told the emperor. Indeed, the Dean had dropped the old accusations and had threatened him with initiating a more serious trial against him, but not in Cuba. The honest treasurer was being sent to the Inquisition Tribunal in Seville where he was to face another corpus of fabricated charges. The plans for Hurtado, however, changed constantly and a day after

---

<sup>191</sup> The letter is referred as *Carta de Leonor de Medina al Emperador*, 19 de marzo de 1537, in Medina, *Primitiva*, 239, citing the CDRID collection, page 422, however, the letter is not included in that collection.

receiving that information his persecutors told him that he was just being deported. They told him that he was being sent to Spain where he would be set free.<sup>192</sup>

Hurtado was afraid that the change of plan was part of a new scheme to execute him offshore and to dispose of all evidences. Following the advice of a group of friends he decided to escape from his captors. He informed the Emperor of his hopes that the new men assigned to the island, Sarmiento and De Soto, would analyze his case honestly, and finding no fault would exonerate him of the false charges. He had spent a considerable amount of money in his defense and his properties had been confiscated. He could not risk bringing more hardship onto his family and needed the relief of fairness.<sup>193</sup>

Risking his life, Hurtado succeeded in escaping from Santiago, first to Havana and later to Santo Domingo. The battle with the Inquisition, however, continued. Between August and December of 1538 Lope de Hurtado wrote additional letters to the Emperor and his Council informing them of what transpired after his escape. He had made it to Hispaniola where he appealed to the Inquisition authorities there and in Puerto Rico. The Inquisition, nevertheless, detained him for four months on orders from the Dean of Santiago de Cuba. He claimed to have received “an unsigned letter” accusing the treasurer of killing a man in the Church in Santiago.<sup>194</sup> The overarching control of the Holy Office, regardless of its inchoate state in the New World, and its powerful network of officers was strengthening through the circum-Caribbean and grasped beyond Cuba.

---

<sup>192</sup> CDRID, Tomo IV, Part II, Doc. 268, 439. *Carta de Lope Hurtado al Consejo de Indias tratando de la persecución que sufre*, 8 de mayo de 1537.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

The treasurer's reliance on justice, his innocence, and his perseverance ultimately paid off and the illegitimacy of the charges fabricated against him was exposed. He appealed to the Inquisition officers in Hispaniola pointing to the suspicious nature of the charges. After analyzing the case, the Inquisition authorities realizing that not enough evidence had been presented, and based on the irregularity, lack of clarity, and nature of the charges released Hurtado. An unsigned note was not enough support to conduct a trial and even less to charge a man of Hurtado's rank and reputation with murder. They found no evidence of heresy either. Upon his release, Lope de Hurtado requested permission to return to Cuba in the company of two slaves for his protection. He asked to be reunited with his wife and demanded the devolution of all his properties and money, as well as to be reinstated as the Treasurer of His Majesty in Cuba. The authorities agreed to all conditions, and Hurtado was fully vindicated. In addition to his properties, he was entrusted with all the surviving documents pertaining to his office that had been rescued and safeguarded by the Council of Santiago.<sup>195</sup>

The news of the resolution of Hurtado's case traveled across Atlantic and reached the royal family and the Council of the Indies. As part of the restoration of the treasurer's reputation and status, the Spanish Queen Isabel of Portugal, who served as regent of the kingdoms during her husband's absence, issued a Cédula on August of 1538 clearing Lope de Hurtado of all charges. The queen was specific in her orders that all charges and suspicions of wrongdoing and of heresy should be removed from Hurtado's family as

---

<sup>195</sup> CDRID, Tomo VI, Part III, Doc. 326, 26 - 27. *Cartas de Hernando de Castro y Gonzalo Hernández con relación de ocurrencias*, 27 de mayo de 1538.

well. She added that because no fault had been found, he was entitled to receiving his complete salary from the date he had been unjustly detained as if he had never been absent from his post on the island. Upon receiving news of Lope de Hurtado's return and the absolution from the charges, the Dean fearful of the serious repercussions of the illegal nature of his actions could have, escaped to Spain. The emperor revalidated the Cédula issued by his wife a year later and restated his trust in Lope de Hurtado in his office as treasurer.<sup>196</sup> Justice had been served, at least temporarily as upon the arrival of the new Bishop the business of manufacturing sin in Cuba was back to normal.

**v – New Bishop, Same Abuses.**

Similar to his predecessor the new bishop of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba, Diego de Sarmiento, promptly claimed the rights and privileges associated with his titles of Apostolic Inquisitor.<sup>197</sup> According to Church Canons and traditions, the Bishop was responsible for the spiritual care of all the inhabitants of his territory. He was responsible for defending, propagating, and upholding the religious orthodoxy of the crown's subjects, and for applying the rules and regulations established by the Roman Catholic laws. The Bishop held all ecclesiastic titles and sacraments to their fullness as granted by the Church Canons and traditions, as well as to his Apostolic Succession and the nature of his office. As such, the prelate had authority over all teaching, legislative, judicial,

---

<sup>196</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, 1121, L.2, F 116. *Real Cédula de D<sup>a</sup> Isabel a los oficiales de la Isla Fernandina llamada Cuba, ordenándoles que si Lope Hurtado, tesorero de esa Isla está dado por libre de los delitos de que fué acusado, o está dado en fiado y alzado el secuestro de sus bienes, y sirve el oficio de tesorero de esa Isla, le acudan con el salario del tiempo que estuvo ausente; que tomen su carta de pago con la cual y con esta Cédula se les recibirá en cuenta lo que pagaren, 9 de agosto de 1538.*

<sup>197</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 109.

coercive, and administrative local powers and was exempted from civil legislation. He was ordinarily accountable only to the Pope, and, because of *Patronato*, to the Spanish monarch(s). The bishop was also entitled to a high percentage of the tithes collected in his diocese. He was to receive all the rental proceedings from any lands and buildings owned by the diocese, which was considered property of his office. In addition, monasteries and other religious houses and communities were obligated to pay the bishop some form of tribute.<sup>198</sup> The income from tithes was in addition to the salary subvention he would receive from the Spanish government as the result of the stipulations of *Patronato*.

Sarmiento arrived in Cuba in June of 1538 after the emperor directly ordered him to embark for the island at once. He had been reprimanded for his unjustified delay taking possession of the diocese and given an ultimatum to travel to Cuba or face grave consequences. He was offered a salary of one thousand ducats per year and the promise that the crown would pay any deficit between his share of the tithes and his salary.<sup>199</sup> For four years the Diocese of Santiago had been vacant and therefore, the Emperor trusted that the money assigned to the Office of the Bishop had been accumulating and

---

<sup>198</sup> The superiority of the Bishop of a territory was embraced as tradition since the beginning of Christianity. These powers and privileges were publicly accepted as the law of the Roman Empire by the Edict of Milan in 313 and ratified in the Church Canons of every council thereafter. The role and authority of the Ordinary of a Diocese was codified into Catholic Law during the Council of Trent. The canons and decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent, Trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 53-67. Available at <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct07.html> Specifically in regards to a bishop's powers see Sess. V, VI, VII, XIV, XIX, and XXIV. See also Christopher M. Bellitto. *A History of the Twenty-One Church Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II*. (NY: Paulist Press, 2002).

<sup>199</sup> Wright, *Early History*, 169; and Medina, *Primitiva*, 241.



safeguarded. That was not the case. The faithful and honest treasurer Lope de Hurtado informed the Emperor that embezzlement of the island's finances continued: "for the eleven years I have served as treasurer of the island I have seen the revenue of His Majesty stolen."<sup>200</sup> In addition, and regardless of the increase in Spanish settlements through the island, the economic solvency of Santiago's residents was still insufficient to support financially highly paid officials. Santiago was a village of about two hundred Spaniards. Twelve of them were merchants and less than thirty owned property in the regions from where taxes could derive.<sup>201</sup> Other than relying on voluntary donations from the locals, the ability of the government of Santiago to fulfill the promise of a full salary for the new Bishop was uncertain. Sarmiento's salary had to come directly from the metropolis or from extralegal dealings.

Like Ramírez, Sarmiento was an ambitious, ill-tempered, and unscrupulous man, whose tenure in Cuba was marked by self-serving plans and illicit activities. Also, like his predecessor, he did not hesitate to flaunt his numerous titles and make use of his leadership position for his personal gain, stopping at nothing to attain his goals. Being the Bishop of the Diocese granted him the power to conduct illegal activities and his title of Ordinary Inquisitor shielded him from local authorities' inquiries. Even the men whom he favored in his dealings criticized him and were dissatisfied with the bishop's actions. They were displeased with Sarmiento's uneven and self-serving distribution of lands and of the disproportionate allotment Indians entrusted to him by the nature of his office of

---

<sup>200</sup> "Once años ha que soy tesorero de la isla y siempre he visto hurtar la hacienda de V.M." *Carta de Lope de Hurtado a Carlos V en 1539*. Cited in Guerra, *Manual*, 75.

<sup>201</sup> Wright, *Early History*, 190.

*visitador de indios*, which also favored the prelate.<sup>202</sup> Sarmiento was also notorious and criticized for his disdain and mistreatment of the natives under his care, of his household slaves, and of anyone who ranked below him on the social scale. He used and abused anyone, regardless of rank, to fulfill his insatiable avarice.<sup>203</sup>

A difference between the two bishops, however, was Sarmiento's unconcealed attraction for married women. Soon after arriving in Santiago he was accused of being romantically involved with two of the villa's most prominent women. The affair scandalized the *vecinos* and caused the departure from the island of the families in question. When confronted by the local authorities about the matter Sarmiento denied it. As he would subsequently do with other accusations, he dismissed any attempt to escalate the accusations as futile and relied on the privileges and exemptions associated to his title of Ordinary Inquisitor of the diocese to prevent any further actions against him. He reminded those who questioned his actions that his title, conferred by the Archbishop of Seville, placed him above any local authority and therefore, he was beyond the reach of any judicial proceedings. He continually used the same justifications to intimidate and discredit anyone who questioned his powers or challenged his actions.<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> Although this translates as "visitor of Indians," the position entitled the supervision and distribution of the natives assigned to the *encomiendas*.

<sup>203</sup> CDRID, Tomo VI, Part III, Doc. 327, 27. *Carta de Lope de Hurtado con noticias del vecindario de Santiago, del Obispo y del Adelantado*, 17 de julio de 1538.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. "*Entró en la diócesis bravo, envanecido por el título de inquisidor que le había otorgado el Cardenal don Alonso Manrique; y luego pretendió hacerse dueño de todo, hasta de las mujeres que son de buen parecer, por manera que ha esta causa se han ido de la ciudad dos casados.*"

Sarmiento's attraction to illicit activities and his corrupt approach to governing the diocese extended as well to the emperor's finances. The bishop openly made use of the imperial funds for self-compensation, claiming that it was money owed to him and that he was entitled to it. Lope de Hurtado immediately informed the Council of the Indies of the situation openly accusing the bishop of stealing money from the tithes corresponding to the emperor. He informed the council that any attempt to compensate the bishop further from the local tithes was not only unnecessary but an overpayment for his duties. He explained that in addition to stealing, the bishop was profiting from merchandise he imported and sold as if he were a merchant sanctioned by the crown.<sup>205</sup>

Hurtado's accusations were met by the bishop's anger and exacerbated by threats of Inquisition actions. Hurtado's honesty and the fidelity to his office contrasted with the bishop's deceptive connivance, and it did not fit within the corrupt administration of Sarmiento. As had happened during the Ramírez and Guzmán government, the treasurer became an obstacle and a target. Sarmiento using his inquisitorial powers reopened the case previously manufactured by his predecessors against the treasurer. His vengeance was merciless giving the treasurer and his wife the only options of abandoning the island or suffering the burning consequences of an Inquisition trial. Tired of fighting the numerous and consecutive corrupt administrations of the island, Lope de Hurtado and his wife returned to Spain leaving the Emperor's coffers to the unscrupulous bishop.<sup>206</sup> Free

---

<sup>205</sup> CDRID, Tomo VI, Part III, Doc. 336, 46 – 47. *Carta de Lope Hurtado noticiando su llegada y denunciando abusos del Obispo; gastos del Gobernador de la Florida*, 20 de enero de 1539.

<sup>206</sup> Medina, *Primitiva*, 242 – 243.

from the scrutiny of Hurtado's responsible office Sarmiento continued his embezzlement and misgovernment of the diocese.

The bishop's stealing was overshadowed by his unbecoming conduct which brought Santiago into constant civil unrest. The villa became the site of daily scandals, which rapidly escalated into violence normally within the confines of the bishop's residence. Anyone who walked past Sarmiento's dwellings could either hear people screaming for help or the bishop yelling insults at one his "enemies." The *vecinos* could also witness neighbors confronting the bishop's guard armed with makeshift weapons or simple household tools. Letters of excommunication written by the bishop or his delegates were nailed on people's doors and read in the main plaza almost every day. The readings were usually followed by the arrest of the person named in the document. The unlucky accused were paraded through Santiago's main plaza by the Inquisition personnel appointed by Sarmiento. After being ridiculed and scorned by a public reading of charges, they were thrown into a precarious jail specifically built by the bishop to hold his adversaries whom he had turned into heretics. Any trials that followed were a mockery of ecclesiastic justice.<sup>207</sup> There is no evidence of actual convictions or sentences carried out, but nonetheless, the trials were the culmination of manufactured sins turned into convenient prosecutions.

The members of the cabildo were outraged and alarmed, and the *vecinos* were worried and frightened by the bishop's unpredictable behavior. The people of Santiago

---

<sup>207</sup> Medina and Torres-Cuevas offer numerous examples of violence, misappropriation of funds, and other misuse of Sarmiento's Inquisitorial powers in the works cited. For the abovementioned cited and additional instances see Medina transcribed several letters found at the AGI see Medina, *Primitiva*, 243 – 262; Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 109 – 112.

did not know who the next victim of Sarmiento's fabricated charges would be. Being an honest man from an old Christian family did not prevent the bishop from tarnishing a name and accusing entire families of heresy. Not even his servants escaped his ire or the common threats to burn people in the holy pyre – which according to the evidence never happened. Only allegiance to the bishop's plans and participation in his misdeeds guaranteed the locals' safety.<sup>208</sup>

The numerous letters written to the emperor by the members of the Cabildo of Santiago de Cuba and other officials were vivid descriptions of the chaos in the city. They informed the council of instances as surreal as Sarmiento's literal attempt to kill the man who served temporarily as treasurer of Santiago. They also described the bishop's public beating of the former treasurer, Lope de Hurtado, and ordering his arrest "in the name of the Inquisition" for refusing to sign some dubious documents. Other letters document Sarmiento's daily character assassination and charges of heresy in the main plaza of Santiago of those who dared to denounce him. Using his title of Ordinary Inquisitor, Sarmiento ultimately accused the recently appointed governor, Juan de Avila of being a thief and his wife, the prominent and extremely rich Guiomar, of being a witch and of other "public sins."<sup>209</sup>

The local authorities unsuccessfully tried to control the prelate who flaunting his powers as Ordinary Inquisitor and relying on the distance from his superiors completely

---

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. See also Emilio Bacardí y Moreau. *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba. Tomo I.* (Barcelona: Tipografía de Carbonell y Esteve, 1908), 101 – 103. For a recent study on Guiomar de Guzmán see Shannon Lalor, "Two Doñas. Aristocratic Women and Power in Colonial Cuba," in Altman, *The Spanish Caribbean*, 91 – 111.

disregarded the Emperor's secular representatives. Yet, Bishop Sarmiento's corrupt authoritarianism was no match for the omnipresence of Charles' powers. On October 1541, the emperor issued orders removing, immediately and indefinitely, all Inquisitorial powers from the bishop. He forbade Sarmiento from using the powers of the Holy Office unless directed by the Grand Inquisitor in extraordinary occasions. Charles directed Sarmiento to limit his actions to those proper of the pastor of a diocese without interfering in any legal matters whatsoever, unless they pertained to ecclesiastic issues. Sarmiento was to care only for the spiritual wellbeing of his flock by administering the sacraments.<sup>210</sup>

The emperor's orders extended to the rest of the religious personnel in the diocese. He instructed the bishop's delegates and other religious officials not to use in actions of words any powers related to the Holy Office. He reprimanded the local authorities who had either allowed or overlooked Sarmiento's wrongdoings and demanded the prompt restoration of order through the island. Charles asked the members of the Cabildo for a detailed list describing every instance in which Sarmiento or any other government official had overstepped their powers, paying particular attention to events in which the threats of Inquisition action was used. The Cabildo complied and thanked the Emperor for his responsiveness and for putting an end to the chaos created by the unruly bishop.<sup>211</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> Medina, *Primitiva*, 258 – 259.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

## **vi – Same Bishop, New Imperial Orders.**

Considering the territorial extension under his rule, the multitude of titles he held, and the responsibilities and the challenges Charles faced during his reign, he gave considerable attention to Cuba. The Spanish kingdoms, even though consolidated during the prior years, had autonomous governing bodies with specific interests, which not always aligned with the Emperor's. Similarly, all other kingdoms under his domain had a level of self-rule that affected Charles' ability to govern. The lack of a centralized administration made it difficult to concentrate the necessary finances and personnel to support the sociopolitical and religious strategies of the empire. Nevertheless, the Emperor was careful not to impose a one-man-plan on the policies of his kingdoms. Instead, Charles' governing strategy was to rely on local nobles and officials with whom he shared family ties or economic interests to govern efficiently and faithfully on his behalf. He also depended on members of his most intimate circle of advisers to carry on his plans professionally and firmly.<sup>212</sup> Those were his expectations from the men he had sent to Cuba, yet, they had been a complete disappointment.

Charles' imperial enterprise was costly, and he had to protect the two main sources of income for his empire: loans from European financial houses and the exploitation of American resources. He ran the empire on a constant deficit mostly because of his involvement in the Pan-European affairs of his Holy Roman Empire. In addition, the expenses of his itinerant government far surpassed any tributes collected.

---

<sup>212</sup> Henry Kamen. *Spain, 1469 – 1714. A Society in Conflict*. Second Edition. (NY: Longman, 1990), 81-82. See also Ramon Carande. *Carlos V y sus banqueros*. 3 Volumes. (Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1965 – 1967).

Between 1520 and 1556, Charles borrowed significant amounts and repaid them at an average interest of 32%, which was excessive and rendered the loans inefficient.<sup>213</sup> Three quarters of all imperial revenues were used by Charles to pay annuities on his debts. The insufficient funds collected from his domains in Europe were subsidized with the precious minerals and other resources “gathered” from the Americas.<sup>214</sup> Every ducat counted, and the organized administration of each colony signified the efficient collection of the revenues the Emperor so desperately needed. The strategic importance of the leadership of the island was pivotal for his imperial plans.

Cuba was gradually gaining importance within Charles’ network of financial resources, particularly after the conquest of the native empires of the mainland. The men he had assigned to Cuba were meticulously to oversee the production, collection, and safekeeping of his wealth, which had not been the case. The Emperor could not allow anyone to embezzle his funds or to overlook those who did. Therefore, since the religious administration of Cuba had not conformed to his plans, Charles had no other option than to order them to focus solely on their apostolic mission. The new orders implied an ultimatum to refrain from using the Inquisition to shield their actions.<sup>215</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>214</sup> Louise L. Cripps. *The Spanish Caribbean. From Columbus to Castro*. (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1979), 82-83.

<sup>215</sup> CDRID, Tomo VI, Part III, Doc. 392, 164 – 170. *El cabildo participa que se ofrecen dificultades en la fundición del cobre; pide fundidores y baja en la contribución del oro. Hay inquietud por falta de noticias de la Florida. El Obispo está muy sentido de que le hayan suspendido el cargo de Inquisidor, y ellos contentos. Su proceder. El Alcalde mayor se quiere ir.*



The Emperor was determined to enforce his powers and presence and to correct Sarmiento's misdeeds holding him accountable for his actions. The prelate was to remain in Cuba, however, he was to place his emphasis on the primary responsibilities of his religious office. His inquisitor's powers were not to be used, and he was to focus on his role as pastor of the diocese and reclaim his unattended commission. Among his duties was supervising and fomenting the growth of the dioceses both physical and spiritually. Hence, the emperor ordered Sarmiento to start an apostolic visitation immediately or to delegate it throughout the territory under his jurisdiction. This was to be repeated every year for the remainder of his tenure.<sup>216</sup>

Charles' removal of Sarmiento's inquisitorial powers resulted in the first apostolic visitation of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba. These periodic *visitas* were ordered by Rome and were aimed at establishing a permanent pastoral presence by administering the sacraments to the faithful.<sup>217</sup> Sarmiento was specifically ordered to conduct said *visita* prioritizing his obligations as a minister of the church. It was to be inclusive of Indians, blacks, and Spaniards as mandated by the ecclesiastic and secular laws that governed his office.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> As mentioned earlier, these mandates had been traditionally stipulated in the Church but were made official by the Council of Trent. The Council of Trent, Sess. XXXIV, De ref., Ch. iii.

<sup>218</sup> Council of Trent, Session VII, 63. The cited work of Torres-Cuevas state that the issue of the evangelization of the New World was not addressed at the Council of Trent because no New World bishop participated in the Council. The authors claim that the New World "problem" (am assuming they refer to the evangelization of the natives) was addressed directly by the Council of the Indies and the Spanish monarch(s). Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 123. As an example of a renowned visitation see José Antonio Benito. Ed. *Libro de visitas de Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo (1593-1605)*. (Lima: PUCP, 2006).

The Emperor's orders to Sarmiento to conform to the pastoral duties of his office and refrain from using his titles to shield his unbecoming conduct were not unique. They were in consonance with the universal call within the Catholic Church for a reformation to purge the inappropriate and corrupt behavior of the clergy and the spiritual maladies they caused. The reform was "demanded by anyone of virtue and learning" ... and "it was promoted to a great extent by the Inquisition, acting with the utmost severity."<sup>219</sup> Additionally, as Protestantism spread through the Christian world, the Vatican had no option but to listen to the radical ideas proposed by the Inquisition and other reformers to mend the transgressions against the laws of Christ and of His Church.<sup>220</sup> The personnel of the Holy Office of the Inquisition before, during, and after the reforms, played a leading role because of their triple duties as theologians, judges, and enforcers.

Since the final decades of the fifteenth century, a large segment of the lower clergy through Europe, particularly in Spain, had advocated for a comprehensive reformation of the Catholic Church.<sup>221</sup> Under the leadership of Inquisition advocates, they demanded a *reformatio in capite et in membris* (reformation of the head and members). The corrupted hierarchy was in no position to lead a reformation of the entire body of the Church. "Directing the sinner's will was an arduous process and the Church

---

<sup>219</sup> John Lynch. *Spain Under the Hapsburgs. Volume I: Empire and Absolutism, 1516. – 1598.* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1964), 58.

<sup>220</sup> Council of Trent, *Pope Paul III Opening Statement. The Bull of Induction.* Section I.

<sup>221</sup> Lower clergy commonly refers to parish priests, friars and monks, not to the hierarchy. The continual relationship of the Spanish Reformation started by Isabel and Cisneros is documented in the previously cited unpublished work by this author.

had to convince the faithful that the leadership had the moral authority to do so.”<sup>222</sup> The ability of the Church to succeed in such a comprehensive reform rested on the clergy’s capacity and willingness, particularly at the higher levels, to lead such reform by example. The reformation initiatives were spearheaded by Charles in his role of Holy Roman Emperor. After decades of encouragement and negotiations, the Vatican finally called for a comprehensive reform of the Catholic Church, which resulted in the Council of Trent. Yet, before the Council began, Charles’ biggest challenge in promoting the reformation was to generate those changes among his own Catholic hierarchy in Spain and the colonies. The bishop of Cuba was not an exception.

The Diocese of Santiago de Cuba was in a serious state of ministerial abandonment. Be it because of financial difficulties, the dangers of traveling through the island or just because of lack of interest and blatant misconduct, no bishop had conducted the customary apostolic visitation. Sarmiento, under the direct orders of the emperor was the first.<sup>223</sup> The bishop, who was already enraged because of his countless troubles and confrontations with the *vecinos* and local authorities, was less than eager to travel through the island. Sarmiento, however, would not dare to further contradict or disappoint the emperor.

Along with conducting the apostolic visitation he had been given more specific orders. He was to watch over the wellbeing of the natives, report on their living conditions and status, and establish measures to amend any wrongdoings committed

---

<sup>222</sup> Katherine Crawford. *European Sexualities, 1400 -1800*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 85.

<sup>223</sup> Polcari, *Historia*, Vol. I, 56.

against them. The time of the mandate correlates with the intense discussions among colonists, particularly of *encomenderos*, in Cuba about the application of New Laws of 1542. The new policies stipulated the abolition of the *encomiendas*. It is obvious that the specific orders given to Sarmiento about the caring for and reporting on the state of natives were related to the New Laws. Even though the bishop was one of the laws' strongest opponents because of his financial interests, he had no alternative than to set aside his aversion and commence the *visita*.<sup>224</sup>

Sarmiento had not shown much preference for the Indians since his arrival nor had he protected them from the *encomenderos*' mistreatment. On the contrary, his role of *visitador de indios*, which had placed him in charge of distributing the natives through the *encomiendas* had been the source of numerous scandals since his arrival. Nevertheless, and regardless of his feelings or thoughts about the natives, Sarmiento was commissioned by his role as the religious leader of the diocese to provide for the natives and by the emperor to report on their status. While there is no evidence of his protection for the Indians, the bishop indeed reported on the living conditions of the natives, but not immediately as ordered.

Typical of Sarmiento, he procrastinated in fulfilling his mandate. In a letter dated on July 25, 1544, the bishop responded to the authorities who questioned him, and even had withdrawn his salary, for not conducting the apostolic visitation to the diocese. He had failed to report on "the state of the island, on the Indians and Spaniards both in the

---

<sup>224</sup> For an overview of the laws see Lewis Hanke *Introduction to Historia de las Indias*. Vol. 1 (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951), XXXVIII.

temporal as in the spiritual.”<sup>225</sup> The bishop blamed his failure to conduct the survey of his diocese immediately on the difficulties of moving through the coastal region of the island in small boats. The waters around the area were dangerous and plagued with enemies of the crown.<sup>226</sup> He added that in 1540, he had traveled to Bayamo to start a *visita*, however, a revolt involving Indians and blacks had taken place forcing his return to Santiago. The situation was extremely dangerous. The rebellion had left numerous people dead and the rebels had taken the locals’ wives and burned the town; hence there were no people left to visit.<sup>227</sup> A year later, after most rebels had been captured and/or killed by the authorities, Sarmiento initiated his apostolic visitation, starting at the head of his diocese, the city of Santiago de Cuba.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>225</sup> “*del estado de la Isla e indios y españoles, así en lo temporal como en lo espiritual*” author’s translation. Testé, *Historia* Vol. I, 77 cites a document containing this letter and Sarmiento’s visit as “Colección Muñoz, tomo XCII-F-111,” however, he does not mention any more details about it or where such collection is located.

<sup>226</sup> While Sarmiento does not specifically mention the presence of pirates other reports of the time and secondary literature confirm their presence around the island and numerous attacks on the coastal towns. See introduction Cesar García del Pino. *El Corso en Cuba. Siglo XVII. Causas y consecuencias*. (La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 2001). Also Francisco M. Mota. *Piratas y corsarios en las costas de Cuba*. (La Habana: Editorial Gente Nueva, 1997), 12-20. Saturnino Ullivarri. *Piratas y corsarios en Cuba*. (España: Editorial Renacimiento, 2004), 72. Reprint from Cuban first edition of 1931.

<sup>227</sup> Testé, *Historia* Vol. 1, 79. Torres-Cuevas and Leyva, however, differ in their opinion and blame Sarmiento’s lack of interest and abhorrence for Cuba for not conducting the visitation. See pages Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 99-115. Towards the end of Testé’s examination of Sarmiento’s tenure in Cuba and of the documents he researched on the bishop, he agrees with the other authors about Sarmiento’s “love for money.” Teste, however, also blames the civilian government for not providing the bishop with what he needed and for competing with him over finances. Testé, *Historia*, Vol. I, 85-87.

<sup>228</sup> Testé, *Historia* Vol. I, 78.

## **vii – The First Episcopal Visitation.**

The bishop's report was comprehensive and useful. It became the foundation from which the metropolitan and colonial leadership built a properly functioning religious network in Cuba. Sarmiento detailed the state of the buildings; the population of each village and the clergy who served them; the amount of money spent in improvements; and the funds needed for the proper operation of the diocese. He reported that the cathedral of Santiago was still unfinished, except for a spacious sacristy built of stone. He requested fifteen hundred pesos for the completion of the church. He listed as the cathedral's assets a series of gold and silver religious utensils and several priestly vestments, which he had donated to substitute for the previous "which were deplorable."<sup>229</sup>

Sarmiento lamented the extreme poverty in which the clergy lived. This lack of resources, the bishop claimed, discouraged any religious personnel he tried to recruit from going to the island. In addition, poverty and extreme living conditions had forced many others to abandon the island, regardless of his efforts to retain them and the fact that he was paying with his personal funds for most of the missionaries' expenses. Therefore, Sarmiento claimed, he lacked the necessary personnel to fulfill his role among the population of the city. There were only three priests helping him manage the diocese and administering the sacraments. Sarmiento was specific in his description of one of the priests who helped him. The man was a mestizo – named in another source as Miguel de Velazquez – the son of a Spaniard and an Indian, and a relative of the former governor of

---

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

Cuba, Diego Velazquez.<sup>230</sup> Sarmiento mentioned that this priest had studied in Seville and Alcalá de Henares, taught music and grammar, and always accompanied him during his apostolic visits.<sup>231</sup>

In the absence of secular priests, the bishop was supported in his missionary work among the Indians and blacks by three Franciscan friars who travelled around the diocese accompanied by natives. The bishop and the friars met with the Indians and blacks on every feast day at the Franciscan monastery where they were taught the Christian doctrine for an hour and a half. Sarmiento noted that the blacks were more receptive to the Catholic faith than the Indians.<sup>232</sup> The inclusion of the locals as active agents in the evangelization project was a key element in the Christianization and conquest of the Americas. Similarly, this was an essential component of the Spanish settlement of Cuba, its effective colonization, and the subsequent growth of the Catholic Church on the island.<sup>233</sup>

Sarmiento reported on the people living in or around each of the villas he visited and classified them according to their race and social status. The statistics shown in figure one below, however, were filled with irregularities. They were, therefore, not an

---

<sup>230</sup> Polcari, Vol. I, 57. He is listed as the first “Cuban priest.”

<sup>231</sup> Ibid and Testé, *Historia* Vol. I, 78.

<sup>232</sup> Testé, *Historia* Vol. I. 79.

<sup>233</sup> No academic work has been found on the role of Indians and blacks in Cuba as cultural/religious brokers. For studies on the subject in other regions of the New World see Claudia Brosseder. Ed. *The Power of Huacas: Change and Resistance in the Andean World of Colonial Peru*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), Alida C. Metcalf. *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), and Kenneth Mills. *Idolatry and its enemies: colonial Andean religion and extirpation, 1640-1750*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

accurate account of the population of the island. The data only reflected the number of households he was able to access and/or of which he had knowledge. Additionally, Sarmiento mentioned in the report that all the men he counted were married and had families. He did not include in his report women or children, and only mentioned servants in La Savana, leaving out this category in other settlements. The number of Indians and blacks seemed disproportionately large in comparison to the number of Spaniards, and the clergy serving the diocese was not included.<sup>234</sup>

	Spaniards	Indians	Blacks and/or foreigners
Bayamo	30	400	200
Puerto Príncipe	14	235	160
Trinidad*	-	-	-
La Savana**	10	80	120
Sancti Spíritus	18	58	14 blacks, 50 enslaved Indians
La Habana	40	120	200
<b>Total</b>	112	893	744
* Did not find Spaniards and does not indicate the number of Indians. <sup>235</sup>			
** In addition to 10 “servants.”			

**Fig. 1. Number of people reported by Bishop Diego de Sarmiento during the apostolic visit he conducted in 1544.**

Contemporary surveys of the population in mainland America further confirm the inaccuracy of Sarmiento’s report. Typical of the time, the population census only reported heads of households or families and not the number of individuals. The population of Mexico City, for example, was reported in 1574 as 2000 families or 15,000 people, Puebla had approximately 500 families or 3,750 inhabitants, and there were in

<sup>234</sup> Table reproduced in Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 112. Translated by the author.

<sup>235</sup> The bishop claims that Trinidad had been abandoned. Testé, *Historia* Vol. I, 82.



Veracruz about 200 hundred families or 1,500 individuals. The religious personnel serving the population were not counted nor reported.<sup>236</sup> Following the methodology used by the above survey, the population of Cuba may be calculated at approximately 2,000 Spaniards, 7,000 Indians, and 5,000 blacks. In the case of Cuba, Sarmiento did indicate a total of twenty members of the clergy (not necessarily priests) living on the island.

The approximately fourteen thousand individuals living in Cuba were certainly a challenge to the missionary work of the twenty men attempting to support, promote, and regulate Catholicism among the population. Most of the parish buildings on the island in spite of the numerous difficulties mentioned by the bishop, were made of stone, and those in Santiago, Bayamo, and Havana had hospitals adjacent to the church.<sup>237</sup> Nevertheless, the Church in Cuba still needed to grow to adjust to the increase in population and to support the expansion of the colonial society's infrastructure.

On July 25, 1544, less than three months after starting, the bishop completed the apostolic visitation. He remained in Havana to avoid the authorities in Santiago for his previous misconduct or, most likely, to embark for Spain as soon as possible. Months later, in January of 1545, along with the summary of his visita, he made known to his superior his presence in Spain, where he remained until his death two years later.

Sarmiento never returned to his diocese even though his presence was requested in several letters by the authorities in Cuba.<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>236</sup> Herbert E. Bolton and Thomas M. Marshall. *The Colonization of North America, 1492 – 1783*. (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1920), 63. Further research is needed to determine the number of clergymen serving the population and of nuns living in the region.

<sup>237</sup> Lopetegui, *Historia*, 472.

<sup>238</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 113.

Similar to his predecessor Sarmiento left a trail of wrongdoings and unsolved, unsubstantiated Inquisition accusations which he used as means of revenge or to cover up his misdeeds. Unlike Ramírez, Sarmiento's extreme misuse of powers as Ordinary Inquisitor, had caused the emperor to suspend his inquisitorial powers. In doing so, Charles forced Sarmiento to focus on his apostolic mission as Bishop of the Diocese, which made him record for the first time the state of the diocese, and of the island. Sarmiento reported a developing society demanding permanent clergy willing to overcome the internal and external challenges they constantly faced and capable of leading the Spanish growth. He documented the need to better organize and strengthen the Church in Cuba in order to fulfill its twofold commission of evangelizing the locals and repelling foreign heretical intruders.

### **Chapter III: Protection from Heretical Attacks and Moral Disorders: The Preemptive use of the Inquisition as an Imperial Shield.**

#### **i – Preventing the Expansion of Protestantism: The Council of Trent.**

By the time Sarmiento left Cuba in 1545, quarrels between Spain and its neighbors had intensified in their nature and their focus had changed, affecting the American colonies. The other European powers' search for new sources of income had expanded and their attention had shifted to the Spanish possessions in the New World. England, France, and the Netherlands aimed at establishing their own colonies, by whatever means, directly challenging to Iberian settlements. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Spain's competitors had resorted to creative ways of implicitly challenging and pillaging the Most Catholic Empire.<sup>239</sup> Besides pursuing the customary and direct wars in Europe, they had engaged third parties to raid the Spanish settlements in the Americas and their ships. The competition for resources combined with the thirst for political hegemony and territorial expansion had become a transatlantic menace embodied by acts of piracy through the Spanish Caribbean colonies. In response, the Spanish administration was forced to develop new tactics to counteract their enemies' new maneuvers and modalities.

Pirates – all variations of their kind – sailed and plundered throughout the islands, and eventually reached the coastal regions of the Spanish American mainland, causing physical and ideological havoc. They did so on behalf of and to the benefit of Spain's

---

<sup>239</sup> For a substantial analysis of how piracy affected the Spanish Empire in the New World refer to Kris Lane. *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas 1500-1750*. (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

European adversaries who received substantial portions of the booty and gained a feared notoriety. They brought the communal distress inspired by real and imagined acts of destruction, theft, and violence associated with piracy elsewhere. Yet, in the New World, traditional piracy and European warfare had a new weapon in their arsenal against Spain. It was not as deadly but more divisive and had proved extremely damaging to the Old-World regime. Regardless of their national or religious affiliation and in spite of sponsorship, pirates circumnavigated the islands carrying a secondary and invisible weapon. It was as dangerous to Spanish stability as pirates' traditional armaments. The new weapon was Protestantism.

All Spanish subjects and possessions were at risk. Colonial settlements in the Americas and ships in transit became the targets of the prowling of their enemies. The religious orthodoxy of the crown subjects was at also at stake. The Caribbean frontier faced an increase in the number, frequency, and severity of attacks by foreign ships and their heretical crews. By 1546, pirates and corsairs, the maritime enemies of the Spanish crown and of the Catholic faith, had attacked and plundered settlements in Cuba at least seven times. The Spanish vessels sacked and sunk were countless.<sup>240</sup> The seafaring men of the foreign menacing fleets often interacted, by will or by force, with Spanish settlers. Pirates and corsairs rapidly became known for their anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic sentiments as much as for their violence and greed. Spanish subjects on the islands

---

<sup>240</sup> Ullivarri, *Piratas*, 72.

resented the men who threatened their lives and insulted their religion and soon labeled them *piratas* (pirates) or *corsarios luteranos* (Lutheran corsairs).<sup>241</sup>

Pirates, regardless of their religious affiliation, became interchangeably classified as Lutherans and arbitrarily considered to be foreigners by Spaniards. They were all heretics who did not belong within the Spanish model of faithful subjects neither in the Old nor in the New World. Their presence had to be avoided or eliminated and anyone associated with these sects had to be barred from participating in the imperial plans. In Spain, Protestants were rejected by a combination of secular and religious forces; however, the Holy Office had been the most effective weapon for the removal of foreign Lutherans. They were mercilessly executed throughout the numerous Inquisition districts in the Spanish kingdoms, particularly in the frontier regions.<sup>242</sup>

The pyres of the Inquisition and a series of strict policies demanding proven Catholic background made Spain fairly successful in preventing Protestants from entering its realm. The empire had accomplished the task in the metropolis by employing more than a dozen fully staffed and effectively functional Inquisition Tribunals. Their work was assisted by hundreds of satellite offices operated by thousands of trained, militant, and capable religious and secular individuals. The entire apparatus was under the direction of an extremely powerful Council of the Supreme Inquisition led by the watchful eye of a zealous Grand Inquisitor. This multilevel and complex institution was

---

<sup>241</sup> John Latimer. *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 3. In the previous and subsequent pages, Latimer offers a very useful discussion on the origins, use, and interchangeability of the terms.

<sup>242</sup> Monter, *Frontiers*, 233.

self-sufficient and responded to the common interests of the Spanish Empire and the Catholic Church.<sup>243</sup> Any ideology or individual who dissented from the mandates of this intolerant trifecta was either barred, expelled, or destroyed by the Inquisition.

Protestants were considered heretics and their eternal damnation had been secured by general and all-inclusive excommunication orders issued by Rome and ratified by Catholic bishops worldwide. They were perceived as a threat to Christendom and as such were persecuted and prosecuted in most European realms faithful to the Vatican doctrines. Nevertheless, Protestantism was growing fast in its number of followers, strengthening its territorial grips and expanding its influence elsewhere. This novel form of Christianity appealed to many. The common folk was attracted to the freedom and emphasis on the individual offered by the new religion and rejected the theological errors of the Roman Catholic Church as well as its impositions in economic and social matters. In addition, the political leadership that embraced Protestantism did so because of the possibilities to gain political and financial independence from Rome.

In addition, the multinational efforts led by the Holy Roman Emperor, which led to the Council of Trent and the Counter-Reformation thereafter, had unplanned consequences. The extreme persecutions and the political tensions among European kingdoms forced the exodus of Protestants. Members of some Protestant groups were migrating to the New World to save themselves from the grip of the Inquisition fueled by the post-Tridentine militancy of Roman Catholicism. Protestantism was no longer

---

<sup>243</sup> For a simplified but accurate overview of the hierarchical organization, structure, functioning, and finances of the Spanish Inquisition see chapter 2 of Helen Rawlings. *The Spanish Inquisition*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 21-44.

contained within the European borders. It had changed from being the ideological shadow threatening the theological and political stability of Catholicism in the Old World into a tangible danger to Spain's possessions in the new one.

Spain's rival powers had developed a parasitic dependency on her American colonies. The competing monarchies needed resources for the sustenance of their Old-World endeavors and lands for their intended expansion into the Americas. Their incursions in the New World forced Spaniards to change their protective strategies to defend the colonies against the combination of piracy and Protestantism or any other form of invasions in or around their settlements. The crown ordered the establishment of a network of fortifications that required religious personnel and churches as well as soldiers and armaments.

The plan to tackle the physical and spiritual threats to Spain in the New World during the second half of the sixteenth century was all-inclusive. It called for the construction of numerous forts through the circum-Caribbean, the reorganization of the Catholic Church, and ultimately the foundation of two Inquisition Tribunals for the Americas. It was a secular and religious reform of the New World that created one common stronghold initially mobilized against Protestant pirates and later turned into a barrier against anything non-Catholic. This unique entanglement of forces was exclusive to Spain and pivotal for the safety of individuals and institutions in the Americas.

Protecting the colonies at all levels against the predatory seafarers was vital for the socioeconomic, political, and religious stability of the whole Spanish empire.<sup>244</sup>

The crown mandated the construction and/or the reinforcement of its defensive posts through the Caribbean. Since pirates did not limit their attacks to burning and looting but also to desecrating churches, holy artifacts, and religious buildings as an external expression of their anti-Catholicism, defending the religious frontier was extremely necessary.<sup>245</sup> The dual character of the pirates' menace required the strengthening of the Spanish institution most notorious for its two-fold mission of protecting the people physically and spiritually, the Catholic Church. While the need for well-built churches had been thoroughly documented by the religious and secular authorities, the scant funds available were prioritized for the construction of the forts.<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, the clergy was crucial in the reforms. They were called to participate actively in the application to the Americas of the religious reorganization of the Catholic Church worldwide.

---

<sup>244</sup> In addition to the already cited work of Kris Lane, see Mark G. Hanna. *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570 – 1740*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

<sup>245</sup> There are several works on the construction of buildings dedicated to the military defense of Cuba but few on the increment in the construction of churches. The only study found that intertwines the two types of buildings, which highlights the parallel importance of the Church and the military and their respective ideologies is Irene Wright's cited work *The Early History of Cuba*. For the period covered in this section see Book III, Chapter XIII: First Forts and Armadas (1537 – 1549), 215. Hence, the references to fort buildings will be sporadic as needed.

<sup>246</sup> Tamara Blanes Martín. *Las Fortificaciones del Caribe*. (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2001).



The attempts to address the numerous problems affecting the Church, particularly the Lutheran and Anglican schisms, predated the Council of Trent. Calls for the cardinals to convene had been issued in 1537 and 1539 by Pope Paul III and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. The constant European wars and the lack of interest in self reformation by the cardinals, however, delayed the meeting. Finally, on December of 1545, the most comprehensive and influential – and longest – council in the history of the Roman Catholic Church opened in the city of Trent. It lasted until 1563 and addressed every aspect of Catholic theology, doctrine, moral, and traditions.<sup>247</sup>

During the opening session of the Council, Pope Paul III blamed Protestantism for the state of the Church. He made its followers responsible for the schisms, dissensions and heresies spreading throughout the Christendom. He called the political and religious leadership “to lay aside their jealousies, to unite in alliance, and with combined zeal and forces to succor the Christian commonweal, which was now reduced to the greatest and most urgent danger.”<sup>248</sup> For the next eighteen years, the Church leadership met, intermittently, to analyze the situation of the Church and attempt its complete reformation. They also compiled and revised the Canons issued by previous councils and included them into the new body of laws that codified and regulated the life of the Catholic laity and clergy alike.

The resulting documents, the Tridentine Canons, contained a series of legislative edicts, dogmas, and mandates that distinctively and unquestionably defined the Catholic

---

<sup>247</sup> See Bellitto’s cited work. See also Joseph Francis Kelly. *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church. A History*. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009).

<sup>248</sup> The Council of Trent. *Pope Paul III Opening Statement. The Bull of Induction*. Session I.

Church. They legally separated its membership from any dissenting opinion, action, individual, or group by proclaiming them anathema and therefore, were excluded from the Body of Christ.<sup>249</sup> The decrees of the Council of Trent became the law of the land, and anyone who transgressed them or even questioned them was to be held accountable. The council even produced a book of Roman Catechism for the indoctrination of all Catholics. The Pope ordered the immediate translation of the text into all possible languages, however, the publication of the Castilian edition of the Catechism and its distribution were forbidden by Philip II and by the Spanish Inquisition. While the Spanish leadership acknowledged the importance of the Roman Catechism as an educational and evangelization tool, they doubted its effectiveness as a weapon to confront heresy. Fighting Protestantism was the king and the Inquisition officials' main concern and the new book did little to that end.<sup>250</sup>

Among the numerous weapons of exclusion contained in the official Canons and included in the new Roman Catechism published in the 1560s was the officialization of the seven sacraments of the Church. Full participation in them was more than encouraged; it was mandatory. The sacraments were defined as the Christians' way of life and their only means of salvation. This implied the ultimate condemnation of all non-Catholics as they were excluded from the sacramental life of the Church. Additional

---

<sup>249</sup> Ibid. This term literally means suspended. It is a major excommunication solemnly issued by the highest Catholic authorities, usually the Pope. See the Catholic Encyclopedia, New Advent. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01455e.htm> accessed on 4/3/2016.

<sup>250</sup> It would take another two centuries for the text to be available to the Spanish population. Pedro Rodríguez. *El Catecismo Romano ante Felipe II y la Inquisición española. Los problemas de la introducción en España del Catecismo del Concilio de Trento*. (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A., 1998).

sections of the Tridentine edicts prohibited any possible deviation from the mandates of the Church and proscribed any statements, actions, or attitudes that violated or even doubted the validity of the sacraments and of the Canons. The numerous rules that criminalized and penalized the individuals who diverged from the Church's laws became the basis for the prosecutorial practices of the Inquisition Tribunals. The new laws of the Church granted all ecclesiastic tribunals and their leadership authority to interpret the Canons – not the dogmas – and the prerogative, as guardians of the faith, to enforce them at will thereafter.<sup>251</sup>

The council also officialized the ancient traditions that granted the Bishops of the Church supremacy over their jurisdictions. The new canons legitimized the Apostolic Succession and validity of their office by linking the Bishop's authority, both temporal and eternal, directly to the powers given by Christ to his twelve disciples.<sup>252</sup> Therefore, Trent granted authority to the bishops to dispense justice and to forgive crimes, which eventually evolved into the bishop's inalienable ability to fully judge within his jurisdiction(s). Furthermore, all throughout the Canons the figure and role of the Bishop was held as the maximum authority within his diocese. Even though the Pope was recognized and upheld as the Supreme Pontiff he was, as the Bishop of Rome, he was one among equals. This distinction stressed even more the importance and supremacy of local

---

<sup>251</sup> The Council of Trent, Section XXIV, Chapter VI, 213.

<sup>252</sup> For a contemporary explanation of the powers of the office of the Bishop, which were upheld by the Council of Trent see Thomas F. O'Meara. "Divine Grace and Human Nature as Sources for the Universal Magisterium of Bishops." *Theological Studies*, Vol. 64, no. 4 (December 2003): 683-706.

Bishops above any other officer of the Church.<sup>253</sup> This also implied that bishops could delegate some or all of their functions to those they deemed suitable.

Arbitrarily, the ecclesiastical authorities, and in the case of Spain, the Catholic monarchs transferred some of that power to the higher officers of the Inquisition. They placed the inquisitors and its delegates in charge of policing and enforcing the Tridentine counterreformation laws. They gave the tribunals the necessary powers and resources to carry out their mission, which ultimately caused jurisdictional conflicts between Bishops and Inquisitors. Regardless of potential conflicts, the success of the counterreformation rested on the creation or expansion of an extensive network of Inquisition Tribunals staffed by qualified personnel. Within a decade after the initial sessions of the council had concluded, numerous Inquisition tribunals were established throughout Europe and several more were added to the fourteen existing district tribunals of the Spanish kingdoms.<sup>254</sup>

## **ii – Religious Reforms in Spanish America.**

The reformation proposed by the Council of Trent reinforced the ongoing ecclesiastical reorganization of the Spanish colonies in the New World. Even though the need for reforms and their application were accelerated by the advancement of piracy, Protestantism, and non-Spanish settlements, they were not new. They were a continuation

---

<sup>253</sup> Ibid; The Council of Trent, Section XXIV, Chapter VI, 213.

<sup>254</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, Introduction. See also Sara T. Nalle. “Inquisitors, Priests, and the People during the Catholic Reformation in Spain.” *Sixteenth Century Journal*, Volume XVIII, (Winter 1987): 557 – 587.

of the religious reforms taking place within the Catholic Church in Spain since the unification of the kingdoms.

The reorganization of the Church had been initiated, as previously mentioned, by Cardinal Cisneros and Queen Isabel. They were continued by Fernando de Valdés (1483 – 1568), who in 1546, shifted the focus of the reforms from the metropolis to the New World. He separated the ecclesiastical province of the West Indies from the Archdiocese of Seville and established three new provinces with administrative centers in Mexico City, Santo Domingo, and Lima. While the dioceses in the Caribbean were autonomous, they remained subordinate to the prelate of Santo Domingo for grave issues, particularly if they involved the Ordinary of the diocese or a high-ranking ecclesiastical dignitary.

Fernando de Valdés served in the same capacity as his mentor, Cardinal Cisneros, as Archbishop of Seville and General Inquisitor (1546 – 1566). His reforms, therefore, combined both Church and Inquisition and their personnel. His career started in 1516 as legal aid to the Cardinal during his tenure in Seville. He rose to prominence after Cisneros' death by serving first as advisor to Emperor Charles V (1500 – 1558) and later to his son Philip II (1527 – 1598). He represented both monarchs in several diplomatic posts through Europe, followed by a tenure as Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Tribunal of the Inquisition. During his time in the Tribunal, he wrote the new Manual for Inquisitors which was used until the abolition of the Holy Office in 1813. He also published the infamous List of Forbidden Books utilized for more than two centuries by the Spanish Inquisition across the empire.<sup>255</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> José Luis González Novalín. “Reformas de las leyes: competencia y actividades del Santo Oficio durante la presidencia del inquisidor general don Fernando de Valdés (1517 – 1566).” In

His extreme practices were feared by all, even by men of similar ecclesiastical rank. He broke the rules and established precedent within the Inquisition protocols by ordering the arrest and prosecution of another reformer, the Archbishop of Toledo Bartolomé de Carranza, on the charges of heresy. Although the charges lacked basis and were dropped, this episode resonated through the empire and the fear of the Inquisition increased at all levels. His reforms, which he implemented with the full support of the crown, reinforced the absolute powers of the Holy Office over the Spanish population, the censorship of countless books and authors, and the establishment of numerous Tribunals including the mandate, one year before his death in 1568, to formally establish the Inquisition in the New World.<sup>256</sup>

This combination of reforms increased the already existing challenges faced by the colonial administrators. They lacked not only the necessary funds but also men willing and capable of undertaking those tasks through such large domains and variety of people. To succeed in securing their arms, the crown had to create new administrative structures in the colonies and place trusted and qualified individuals in charge of leading them. Churchmen, particularly those educated and familiar with the laws of the empire, the judicial processes, and the policing practices of ecclesiastic tribunals were key to the reorganization of the New World.

The success in restructuring and protecting the administration of the colonies and keeping order among them depended on revamping and reinforcing the powers and

---

*Inquisición española: nueva visión, nuevos horizontes*, Vol. 193, (1980), 217 – 239. See also José Luis González Novalín. *El Inquisidor General Don Fernando de Valdés (1483 – 1568), su vida y obra*. (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2008).

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

resources of the state and of the Church. Faced by rising discontent and rebellion against imperial authority in the New World, the Spanish crown formalized its royal claims and control over the Americas by establishing the Viceroyalties of New Spain in 1535 and of Peru in 1542.<sup>257</sup> To strengthen the powers of the administrative personnel in the two viceroyalties, there were significant reorganizations of the local religious jurisdictions, which included the creation of more Ecclesiastic Tribunals and secular *Audiencias* that extended the imperial networks from the main urban areas.<sup>258</sup> Yet, it was not enough. The empire was in an acute state of crisis on both sides of the Atlantic that required the imperial administrators' attention and the development of deeper reforms.

In the metropolis, the affairs of the crown could not be more grave. Philip II's personal and political difficulties had gradually worsened and by 1568 were intolerable. The death of three consecutive wives and of his eldest son, the inheritance of an extensive empire increasingly in debt, and the European wars that affected even his kingdoms had brought the king and his empire to the brink of ruin.<sup>259</sup> With the support of his multiple councils and advisers, he tackled as many issues as he was capable although achieving minor success. Notwithstanding, Philip's chief concern was the defense of Catholicism as

---

<sup>257</sup> For an analysis of the development of Spanish institutions and formalizing royal control in New Spain see Ethelia Ruiz Medrano. *Reshaping New Spain: Government and Private Interest in the Colonial Bureaucracy*. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2006). For a study of the formation of the Viceroyalty of Perú see Juan Günther Doering and Guillermo Lohmann Villena. *Lima*. (Madrid: Colecciones MAPFRE. 1992).

<sup>258</sup> Lopetegui, *History*, 128 -137.

<sup>259</sup> For a study of these circumstances, particularly focused on the secular and ecclesiastic crisis in the Americas and the consequent call for reform of 1568 see Demetrio Ramos. "La crisis indiana y la Junta Magna de 1568." *Anuario de Historia de América Latina*., Vol. 23, 1, (diciembre 1986), 1-62.

expressed in a message to Pope Pius V, “rather than suffer the least injury to religion and the service of God, I would lose all my states and a hundred lives if I had them, for I do not intend to rule over heretics.”<sup>260</sup> Protestantism remained a problem and neither Philip nor his father, Charles V, had been able to control its spread.

The turmoil in the New World was a combination of multiple issues that affected the religious and secular life of Philip’s subjects as well as the authorities’ ability to control them. On the civilian side, there were serious problems with the defense of imperial ports and of the treasure fleets. This was aggravated by the local authorities’ inability or unwillingness to control piracy and all the illegal activities it entailed. The collection of revenues and tithes was disastrous, and the clergymen in charge had failed, deliberately or not, to implement necessary reforms to regulate its ineffectiveness. The overabundance of unruly, uneducated, and unauthorized clergy, many of them foreigners, who, through their personal and at times convenient interpretation of the gospels throughout the Americas, caused divergent and unorthodox religious opinions and practices. The locals were either scandalized or inspired by the clergy’s unsuitable lifestyle, and while the former were prompt to denounce them, the latter were quick to imitate them. Heresy, blasphemy, and unchristian behavior flourished in the Americas faster than the Tridentine Catholic virtues, seriously affecting the Christian morality of the colonists.<sup>261</sup>

---

<sup>260</sup> Andrew Pettegree. *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 214.

<sup>261</sup> There are numerous authors who have addressed these issues and are cited through this work. For a summary of the problems as it fits into this section see the cited work of Demetrio Ramos.



### iii – The Formal Establishment of the Inquisition in the New World.

Grave problems call for extreme solutions. In July of 1568, Philip and the Council of the Indies, following the recommendation of several members of the clergy from the Americas, called for a meeting (*Junta Magna*) of the king's most trusted advisors. They were to address all the issues affecting the empire and issue radical and effective recommendations to solve them. The *Junta* agreed; only one institution could bring order to both civilian and religious life in the Indies.<sup>262</sup> In 1569, the crown issued a Royal Cédula calling for a complete reformation of the colonies in the Indies and recommending the establishment of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in America.<sup>263</sup> The advice of the *Junta* was accepted – there was no other alternative given – and the official foundation of Inquisition Tribunals in the capital cities of Lima and in Mexico in 1570 and 1571 respectively took place.

Their new tribunals' jurisdiction was assigned according to their geographic location. The Tribunal in Lima controlled the southern regions of the Americas and the one in Mexico City was in charge of the northern sections of the New World. Additionally, the territories in the Caribbean and the Philippines also fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico making it the largest in the empire.

---

<sup>262</sup> Ibid. For an extensive work on Philip's imperial plans see Geoffrey Parker. *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

<sup>263</sup> *Real Cédula del Rey Felipe II para la fundación de los tribunales del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición y sus Ministros, en Madrid, 23 de enero de 1569*. In *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias: mandadas imprimir y publicar por la Majestad Católica del rey Don Carlos II, nuestro señor, título XIX, "De los Tribunales del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición y sus Ministros," ley 1, folio 91*, Madrid: Imprenta de Julián Paredes, 1681. Cited in Churchiak, *The Inquisition*, 81.

Each tribunal was staffed with two inquisitors and an entourage of judges, sheriffs and other supporting paid and unpaid religious and secular officials similar to the tribunals in Spain. They were to be financially self-sustainable, although there were initial funds provided by the Council of the Indies for their support.<sup>264</sup> Most importantly, to avoid future confrontations among the religious authorities and to exert total control over the population – except for the highest-ranking religious and secular functionaries – the tribunals were granted jurisdiction above all other authorities and matters.<sup>265</sup>

The Inquisition transferred to the Americas was the result of over four hundred years of experience in Europe. In spite of its responsibilities of upholding and policing the rigid religious orthodoxy of Catholicism and the dogmatic stances of the Church, the Inquisition was, contrary to popular beliefs, anything but monolithic. Four centuries of existence and practices serving the sociopolitical and religious agendas of the governing elites had granted it with an enduring ability to mutate that was more than surprising; it was essential for its success. For almost a century, the Spanish branch established in the colonies had taken additional characteristics that differentiated it from the European tribunals. The administrative and theological nuances of the Spanish Inquisition secured its primary place within the imperial government. Its intermingled institutional status

---

<sup>264</sup> For the document establishing the Tribunal in Mexico see Archivo General de la Nación, México (AGN), Inq. Año, 1570. Vol. 1519, Exp. 2. fs. 41r-47r. *Instrucciones del ilustre señor Cardenal Don Diego Espinosa, Inquisidor General, para el establecimiento de la Inquisición en la Nueva España*. For a documentary history of the first two tribunals see respectively José Toribio Medina. *Historia del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Lima, 1569 – 1820*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Gutenberg, 1887); and José Toribio Medina. *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1905).

<sup>265</sup> Ramos, *Crisis*, 24 – 25.

within the Spanish secular government guaranteed its permanence, prominence, and pervasiveness.

Threatened by many, despised by most, and dreaded by all, the Inquisition relied on its resilience as a convenient institution of social control for its subsistence. It constantly changed its practices and procedures according to the traditions of the region where new tribunals were established. Its target population fluctuated in response to the public need to maintain social order. Its understanding of sin and crime as well as its application and intensity of punishment varied as theologians revisited the Church doctrine and reinterpreted its Traditions. The Inquisition learned how to be useful and dependable.

The American tribunals of Lima and Mexico differed from their counterparts in Spain as they were established after and as a consequence of the Council of Trent. The individuals who participated in any capacity in the affairs of the Holy Office as well as the institution itself were affected by the timing in which the Inquisition was officially established in the New World. They were also influenced by the prevalent ideologies of the time. As post-Tridentine tribunals they were loaded with the Council's "mission and impetus of consolidating the dogmas and moral teachings of the Counter-Reformation."<sup>266</sup> While the basic premises of Catholicism remained unchanged, the Tridentine revisions of theological stances and religious practices gave the Church a new institutional impetus and its members a new role.

---

<sup>266</sup> Richard Boyer. *Lives of the Bigamists. Marriage, Family and Community in Colonial Mexico.* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 16.

Catholic life and legislation drastically changed in the sixteenth century after the conclusion of Trent and the publication of its edicts. The codification of Catholicism and its practices were utterly transformed, consequently changing the role of the clergy and of the laity alike. The people (the term traditionally applied to the lay population) were encouraged to increase their sporadic attendance to mass and traditional rituals and to make their Catholicism more explicit. Religious ceremonies became public and mandatory points of reunion as they were an expression of faith and community life. Religious and secular authorities were called upon to promote and to enforce the sacramental life of the people. The role of the parish priest changed from being a participant in peoples' life stages and a distant administrator of rites of passage to a communal spiritual leader and an enforcer of social morals. The Church hierarchy and the Inquisition received additional authority and recognition to promote a renovation or renewal of everyday life, which had Catholic sacramental practices at its center.<sup>267</sup>

The new canons of Trent created an unwavering militant and powerful institution that unexpectedly backfired. Indeed, by empowering the Inquisition Tribunals to persecute and prosecute those who violated its own rules, the Church intended to maintain religious orthodoxy among its members and declare and defend the Catholic nature of Christianity. One of the main ideas behind promoting the sacraments was to turn people into good Christians and while in the Americas the phrase mostly referred or was applied to the Indians, it required the Spaniard to be a pristine example of Christian

---

<sup>267</sup> For a complete discussion on this see Stephen Haliczer. *Sexuality in the Confessional, A Sacrament Profaned*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

values. Yet, the emphasis placed by Trent on the infallibility and use of the sacraments had unintended consequences. As the Church promoted marriage as an indissoluble sacrament, for example, the number of people who desired to marry to abide by the new rules and live *como Dios manda* (as mandated by God) increased. The problem was that many of them were already married, hence, the number of men and women committing and accused of bigamy multiplied. The increase in the number of people tried by the Inquisition was, paradoxically, the fault of the Church.<sup>268</sup> Additionally, the emphasis on the authority of the Inquisition above all matters and the quasi-infallible power of the inquisitors was unreservedly conducive and encouraging of sin.

For the American colonists, observance of the stringent Catholicism promoted by the council was extremely challenging, and so was the enforcement of the post-Tridentine rules for the colonial authorities. Distance from Europe and from its social norms along with the permissiveness associated to the Americas undermined the Spaniards' adherence to the Church codes of conduct. Once again, Las Casas' fear and premonition about the blinding influence of the New World had become a reality. New individual goals and different forms of attaining them such as slavery, first of the natives and later of imported Africans, had somehow transformed the Catholic mores of the Spanish society of the Old World into a New World of religious and moral relativism. Commandments such as "thou shall not kill" or "thou shall not steal" developed a new applicable and convenient

---

<sup>268</sup> Ibid. Although Haliczzer's work is specific to the crime of solicitation (the inappropriate use of the confessional by the priest to request sexual favors or make unwanted sexual advances), his conclusions have multiple applications. The emphasis on the sacramental life of the people and on the enforcing powers of the Inquisition resulted on abuses on the reception and administration of the sacraments. It was also a prime cause for the inquisition personnel to charge people indiscriminately with canonically licit and real crimes or to blatantly fabricate charges.

meaning. This laxity of obedience, however, did not mean a complete irreligiosity of the population nor a complete abhorrence of Catholicism. It meant the development of a selective (some call it hypocritical) Christianity, which had to be addressed by the religious and secular authorities.<sup>269</sup> Additionally, the territorial extension of the tribunals and the characteristics and traditions of the population – residents, indigenes, slaves, and transients – distinguished the American tribunals from those in Europe and limited their ability, not their assumed mandate, to enforce the rules.

Nevertheless, there were some similarities between the old and the new tribunals that enabled, in a sui-generis manner, the application of the post-Tridentine edicts. Like the administrative structure of the Spanish metropolis, the dividing lines between ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions in colonial America were blurred as a consequence of *Patronato Regio*. Equally, the boundaries among the respective religious and civil laws governing the new territories, were unclear. This comingling of jurisdictions allowed the Spanish monarchs effectively to promote, enforced by the newly established Inquisition Tribunals and the recently reinforced Catholic administration, their ideal of a transatlantic society ingrained in Catholic laws. Therefore, when religious regulations were applied by an Ecclesiastic or Inquisition Tribunal, they served the secondary function of a policy of social control and an instrument of civil justice. After all, “the Inquisition and the defense of Catholic orthodoxy remained essential for the survival of Spain and its worldwide empire, both at home and abroad.”<sup>270</sup> As such, when bigamy, adultery, blasphemy and

---

<sup>269</sup> See Kristen Block. *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean. Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 3 – 4.

<sup>270</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 4.

solicitation charges were formulated against an individual by a religious tribunal, the social morals of imperial Spain were also upheld in court.<sup>271</sup>

For the Spanish secular and ecclesiastical jurists and the imperial administrators of the sixteenth century, there was no law above God's and only one act of transgression violated them: heresy. Sins, particularly unorthodoxy, were crimes that affected human and divine laws alike, and the Church and its clergymen had the moral duty to defend Spanish subjects against those transgressors. Therefore, heretical accusations were utterly grave and similarly punished. Only the Inquisition had the authority to rule in those instances as it based its body of jurisprudence from both the civil and the religious canons.<sup>272</sup> Consequently, the dual role attributed to the officers of the Inquisition in the New World as arbiters of the faith and imperial agents of justice was justified, even more when the laws were applied to foreign heretics. The twofold ability to administer the laws, as well as the successful application of the reforms mandated by Trent and supported by the Spanish crown, rested on the financial and human resources of each specific territory. So was also the case with the willingness of the locals to accept any kind of reforms imposed from the metropolis.

In spite of the severity of the orders to enforce the Tridentine Counter-Reformation some American colonies were unable or unwilling to implement the changes and to accept the new modality of the old Inquisition. The independence found or forged

---

<sup>271</sup> See the cited work of Richard Boyer. For a specific case study on bigamy in the New World see the cited work of Alexandra Parma Cook and Noble David Cook. *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance*.

<sup>272</sup> Perez Villanueva, *Historia*, 574 – 575.

in the new territories made religious and secular individuals reject their subjugation to the rigidity of the motherland. Many clergymen even migrated to the colonies because of the liberties they encountered there allowed them to live a different life.<sup>273</sup> In Cuba, this was further aggravated by the lack of steady religious leadership and the social and economic conditions of the island. The unique case of Cuba and its subordinate province of La Florida will be discussed in the following chapters.

---

<sup>273</sup> Medina, *Historia inquisición México*, 11.



## **Chapter IV: Protection from Moral Disorders: The Application of the Tridentine Canons to the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba.**

### **i – The State of the Diocese.**

Between 1545 and 1567 the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba was either vacant or occupied only for short periods. Some of the bishops either resigned or died within a brief time of their appointment while others were reassigned to another diocese rendering their contributions to the island's religious development to a minimum. Similarly, the civilian government saw an endless circulation of governors that did little to stabilize the island. They nevertheless promoted and supported the fortification of the main cities in response to the threatening presence of pirates and possible foreign attacks. Yet, not until 1586, did the colonial authorities begin the construction of stone forts which provided a more effective protection the locals.<sup>274</sup>

The two bishops who followed Diego de Sarmiento's resignation in 1544, Hernando de Uranga (1550 – 1555)<sup>275</sup> and Bernardino de Villalpando (1561 – 1564), attempted to fulfill their duties with some degree of success.<sup>276</sup> They struggled to work among the population and tried to conduct more surveys to document the state of island.

---

<sup>274</sup> See the cited work of Irene Wright, *The Early History of Cuba; Guerra, Manual*, 78-86; and Raúl Eduardo Chao. *Colonial Cuba. Episodes from Four Hundred Years of Spanish Domination*. (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2014), 143 – 144.

<sup>275</sup> The Bishop is listed in all secondary sources as Fernando, however, his actual name, according to the documents in Portal de Archivos Españoles was Hernando. His last name is also spelled in some documents as Urango. This could be the reasons why there is scarce information about his tenure in Cuba. See AGI, Contratación, Justicia 860, and AGI, Contratación, Justicia 860 # 3. *Pleito Fiscal Herederos de María de Izaguirre*.

<sup>276</sup> Uranga died in Santiago and Villalpando was assigned to the Diocese of Guatemala. Polcari, *Historia*, 57 – 58.

They wanted to identify any deficiencies in the spiritual care of the population and the administration of the dioceses, so any problems could be corrected.<sup>277</sup> Even though the bishops still held the traditional title of Ordinary Inquisitor and there is no indication of them being forbidden to use it, there is no record of Inquisitorial activities on the island for the following three decades.

The reasons for such a prolonged hiatus in inquisitorial events in Cuba at the time are unclear. The absence of records could be the result of the combination of changes of government in the metropolis (from Charles V to his son Philip II in 1565) along with the administrative readjustments of the colonies. Perhaps the removal of Inquisition powers issued by Charles against Bishop Sarmiento tempered subsequent bishops' actions and made them reluctant to pursue Inquisition cases or to use the powers of the Holy Office. Maybe the lack of stable leadership mentioned above affected the prosecution, real or fabricated, of heretics on the island.<sup>278</sup>

The official foundation of the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico could be another explanation for the lack of Inquisition episodes in Cuba at the time. The establishment of the Holy Office was preceded by decades of extreme abuses of their inquisitorial powers by the bishops and other clergymen in the Americas. The men had committed flagrant violations of religious and civil codes resulting in unnecessary and excessive punishments of individuals whose crimes had been fabricated for their personal gains. Other religious authorities had overextended their jurisdictional powers and created

---

<sup>277</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 146.

<sup>278</sup> Additional archival research is needed to corroborate this.

serious confrontations with other ecclesiastical and/or secular authorities. Therefore, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition directed the bishops in the Americas to act “with moderation and temperance” and show “mercy and kindness” in matters of inquisition. The local bishops were instructed to refrain from overusing their powers and exaggerating their judgements.<sup>279</sup> The orders from the Supreme Council called for the transferal of authority over matters of heresy and faith from the Ordinary of the Diocese to the newly-founded Inquisition Tribunal. Since the island had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Mexican court and the prosecution of cases had been centralized under their authority, the local leadership might have found it counterproductive to disobey the Supreme Council or just excessively onerous and useless to forward Cuban cases to New Spain.<sup>280</sup>

With the exception of placing the island under the jurisdiction of the Mexican Tribunal, the establishment of the Holy Office in the Indies had no other specifications for Cuba. The foundational documents gave specific procedural orders, assigned the number of leading clergymen to Lima and Mexico, and granted the tribunals with several auxiliary personnel. The instructions assigned many Familiars (secular informants) and Commissaries (district delegates) to support the tribunals’ work, but they were to be

---

<sup>279</sup> *Con moderación y templanza, benignidad y misericordia.* Pérez Villanueva, *Historia*, 637.

<sup>280</sup> Not even in the Mexican archives consulted are inquisition records from Cuba for this period. The first record of the Inquisition pertaining to Cuba in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico is a petition from a *vecina* to the Mexican authorities to review a decision by the local authorities. AGN, Inq. Año 1531, Vol. 42, Exp. 10, fs. 2. *Certificado de la apelación de María Casilda Rodríguez ante el Ilm. Dr. Juan del Castillo Obispo de la Isla de Cuba contra la sentencia del provisor. Bayamo. Cuba.*

appointed only in the cities with an *Audiencia* (Civil Tribunals) and in some large American dioceses. There were 104 commissaries assigned to the dioceses of Mexico, Tlaxcala, Guadalajara, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Antequera, Michoacan, Chiapas, Yucatan, and Manila. Similarly, there were instructions to recruit sixty-one Familiars for the territories of New Spain to help the work of the commissaries and of the Tribunal.<sup>281</sup> None of the Caribbean islands were included in the distribution list.

The personnel assignment for the Mexican Inquisition was puzzling and it seems contradictory to the stated purpose of the American tribunal. With this new distribution, the Supreme Council sought to maximizing its control over the orthodoxy of Catholic practices of “old Christians and foreigners” alike in the Americas.<sup>282</sup> This mandate to extend the Inquisition network also increased the overarching functions of the institution among the colonial officers and their administration of the Indies, as well as relieving the obstacles related to territorial extension. Yet, the distribution of Familiars and Commissaries was not helpful to the Supreme Council mandate to “control the foreign infiltration and the written penetration of ideologies as one of the most immediate priorities of the Indies” particularly in the port cities of the Caribbean.<sup>283</sup> The council’s orders and the consequent lack of personnel assigned to the island of Cuba is directly responsible for the noticeable absence of inquisitorial events and records.

An additional and more pragmatical explanation for this absence could be the reliance on conventional defensive methods to rid the American frontiers of its heretical

---

<sup>281</sup> Pérez Villanueva, *Historia*, 640.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.* 645.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

problems, that is, the construction of forts and the militarization of Cuba. By 1555, anchoring in Havana had become customary because it was convenient. The resulting increase in attacks from the enemies of the crown was a constant menace; therefore, protection and defense became a priority.<sup>284</sup> The entire island was deeply affected by the constant raids of corsairs and pirates who threatened to burn the scant religious buildings existing on the island if their ransom demands were not met. They specifically targeted the cities of Havana, Bayamo and Santiago because of their population size and relative wealth of their inhabitants. Even though the religious and civil authorities were forced to pay the ransom demanded, on numerous occasions the buildings were still sacked and burnt to the ground, and numerous people were killed.<sup>285</sup>

As a result, the attention of the authorities in the metropolis and on the island shifted, and so did their resources. They focused on overhauling the armed defenses of desirable locations such as Havana because of its vulnerability. They also expanded the secular colonial mechanisms for maintaining social order in an attempt to control the resident and transient population's extralegal activities. In addition to the threats of destruction posed by piracy, the valuable cargo of the ships arriving in the harbor had prompted illegal trading with pirates and among the population. The consequent increase in the locals' wealth, real or perceived, had created additional unlawful and profitable activities such as *rescates* (the kidnapping and ransom of wealthy people), in and around

---

<sup>284</sup> Guerra, *Manual*, 79.

<sup>285</sup> See the cited work of Irene Wright, *The Early History of Cuba*.

Havana. Local neighbors and even priests were sometimes involved in all these schemes.<sup>286</sup>

The situation of the island was so demoralizing that it prompted actions from the authorities, yet, it was so dangerous that the bishops refused to conduct their mandatory apostolic visitation or even travel through the cities. As a result, the records about missionary work, the construction of churches, and of the development of the Church in Cuba, similar to the accounts of Inquisition records, are also scarce.<sup>287</sup> This does not mean the island was abandoned or that there was a lack of religious activities. It represents a change in priorities and a different allocation of resources as demonstrated by other significant events taking place at the time. They point to a continued increase in the activities related to the defense of the Caribbean against intrusive ideologies and foreigners.

## **ii – La Florida and the Crown’s Heretical Enemies.**

The territorial connection of Cuba and La Florida had been established during the early years of colonization, however, their administrative relationship grew stronger as both territories faced off the same European enemies. The decades-old competition between European powers for the colonization of the New World and the menace of

---

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Testé, *Historia* Vol. I, 89, states that it was under Bishop Villalpando that conversations and efforts about a mission system in Florida under the direction of the Diocese of Cuba were initiated. This is to be further studied because the records available are minimal. Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 114, mentions that Villalpando was the antithesis of Sarmiento, classifies his confrontation with the corsairs as positive and efficient, and concluded that he was one of the few bishops from this period whose tenure in Cuba lacked accusations of corruption and embezzlement.

heretical dissent combined with the French Huguenots' arrival. Their settlement threatened King Philip II's grand strategy to consolidate the global empire he had inherited from his father under the Catholic religion.<sup>288</sup> To defend "his" American territories and subjects from French non-Catholic interference, the king contracted one of his most trusted and faithful military strategists and asked him to expel the French and save the Indians from foreign heretical influence.

On March 1565, the king gave, orders to remove any foreigners usurping his territories in La Florida to Captain-General of the Indies Fleet, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. Philip's command was to destroy the enemies of the holy faith. Menéndez was ordered to eliminate any vestiges of heresy from Spanish territories by whatever means. In consonance with traditional Spanish policies, the mandate issued by Philip entangled religious and secular peoples and powers. The contract given to Menéndez "plainly charged him with a missionary as well as a military responsibility."<sup>289</sup> Philip was specific in his instructions to Menéndez that the men who accompanied him, which included

---

<sup>288</sup> For a concise but thorough study of the Europeans' attempts to settle in Florida see Margaret F. Pickett and Dwayne W. Pickett. *The European Struggles to Settle North America. Colonization Attempts by England, France, and Spain, 1521 – 1608*. (Jefferson: McFarland & Co. Publishers, 2011); see also Paul E. Hoffman. *Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean, 1535-1585: Precedent, Patrimonialism, and Royal Parsimony* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980); and the same author's *A New Andalusia and a Way to the Orient: the American Southeast during the Sixteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004). For an exhaustive examination of the Spanish colonization of Florida during this period see c). For specific analysis of the conquest and colonization of Florida from the religious perspective see Michael V. Gannon. *The Cross in the Sand. The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513 – 1870*. (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1993); For a study of the Spanish defense of Florida see Verne E. Chatelain. *The Defense of Spanish Florida, 1565 – 1763*. (Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington D.C., 1941).

<sup>289</sup> Gannon, *The Cross*, 21.

soldiers and clergymen, were to prioritize the salvation of the natives' lives and souls. As mandated by the king, the men were constantly reminded that they were going to La Florida for the service and honor of God and not for their personal gain.<sup>290</sup>

The Huguenots' massacre, the destruction of Fort Caroline, and the expulsion of any remaining French that followed the Menéndez expedition resonated on both sides of the Atlantic. His actions gave the Spanish king a victory of religious and secular magnitude. Menéndez's success in Florida benefitted Philip's geopolitical program of building an unchallengeable Catholic empire, and the obliteration of his enemies was a necessary tool to accomplish the mission. This was a clear instance in which colonists were tasked with defending the physical and spiritual territorial hegemony of the Spanish empire from heretical interventions. It was also the episode that solidified the political nexus of Florida and Cuba as a cohesive, functional unit for the future defense of the Spanish American frontier in the northeastern region of the empire.<sup>291</sup>

Menéndez offered the king a plan for the protection of what he considered most valuable. It was a threefold tactical proposal to protect the Spanish treasure fleets in transit to the metropolis and the ports that housed them, and to eliminate or significantly reduce the seafaring enemies of the crown who coveted its cargo. The initiative provided for the improvement of the defensive infrastructure of the Caribbean ports by reinforcing the existing fortifications and strengthening the garrisons. The plan called for the creation of a heavily armed maritime force that would accompany the ships between ports.

---

<sup>290</sup> Ibid. 23 – 24.

<sup>291</sup> Guerra, *Manual*, 82.



Menéndez topped his defensive strategy with the formation of a permanent maritime Caribbean fleet equipped with enough resources, armaments and humans, to search for and eliminate pirates of any kind.<sup>292</sup>

The development of this massive defensive plan for the Caribbean grew and strengthened during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. This was the period when the prowling and destruction of Spain's colonies became more detrimental to the imperial dominions and the presence of heretical interlopers increased alarmingly.<sup>293</sup> The growing importance of the plan and the allocation of resources for the defense of the Caribbean paralleled, not coincidentally, the establishment and strengthening of the Inquisition Tribunal on the colonial mainland. It also coincided with the application of the Counter-Reformation Tridentine decrees which mandated complete reorganization of each diocese, its clergy, and the laity.

While the religious fortification of the island had temporarily taken a secondary role within the imperial plans it was by no means abandoned. The work of the new religious leadership in Cuba continued and missionary work under the auspices of the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans expanded through the island and into Florida. The clergy was adamant to contribute to the consolidation of a defensive network that could protect the population both physically and spiritually. They assumed their place among a

---

<sup>292</sup> McAlister, *Portugal and Spain*, 431. For an in-depth examination of the strategies for the protection of the Caribbean see Paul E. Hoffman. *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean, 1535-1585: Precedent, Patrimonialism, and Royal Parsimony*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980).

<sup>293</sup> The merging of the Portuguese to the Spanish crown and the growth of Protestant influence in the Netherlands, which was part of the Spanish empire and moved through it, account for the increase of non-Spanish, non-Catholic individuals in the Americas.

cadre of Spanish secular officials whose responsibility entailed the conservation of Spanish traditions as well as the rejection of anything that could challenge it. The type of leaders needed for this task, like Menéndez de Avilés, had to be unreservedly loyal to the crown's plans. As men of the cloth additionally they had to carry an unyielding desire to uphold the purity of the religion they had sworn to promote. Both religious and secular leaders were tasked with containing the infiltration of Protestant enemies by building a defensive multifaceted and effective defensive system. Their place in the imperial strategy was equally important.

### **iii – Bishop Castillo and the Organization of the Diocese.**

A man who encompassed those qualifications was Juan del Castillo (? – 1593). Although he was assigned to the diocese in 1564, he arrived in Cuba and took charge of the district in 1567.<sup>294</sup> The new bishop not only supported but led and encouraged the application of the king's ordinances and the mandates the Church. Following the decrees and impetus of Trent and of the *Junta* of 1568, and in spite of the dangers associated with traveling through the island, Castillo completed a thorough Apostolic visitation of his diocese and sent a useful report of its condition to his superiors. Making use of the full extent of his office and powers as a post-Tridentine Bishop and Ordinary Inquisitor, the

---

<sup>294</sup> The data about Castillo's assignment to Cuba is contradicting, some say 1564 other 1566. His biographical information prior to arriving in Cuba is scarce. See Salvador Miranda. *Episcopologio Cubano*. Available at <http://webdept.fiu.edu/~mirandas/obispos/bio-c.htm#Castillo> accessed on May 3, 2019. For a biographical vignette on the bishop (particularly after he departed from Cuba) see Narciso Fernández Serrano. "Don Juan Del Castillo, obispo de Cuba y abad de Cabañas. Sus actuaciones en Rotura," *Revista de estudios extremeños*, Vol. 33, # 3, 1977. Available at [https://www.dip-badajoz.es/cultura/ceex/reex\\_digital/reex\\_XXXIII/1977/T.%20XXXIII%20n.%203%201977%20sept.-dic/RV10644.pdf](https://www.dip-badajoz.es/cultura/ceex/reex_digital/reex_XXXIII/1977/T.%20XXXIII%20n.%203%201977%20sept.-dic/RV10644.pdf) accessed on May 3, 2019.

prelate assumed the reformation *in capite et in membris* of his diocese accompanied by severe penalties for those who opposed it.<sup>295</sup>

Castillo's visitation, which lasted eight months (August 1569 – April 1570), surpassed the mandates of the Council of Trent and the orders of the king. He produced an in-depth report about the island's physical, demographic, and financial condition. The prelate documented the religious practices and morality (or lack thereof) of its inhabitants and included within his report detailed recommendations to correct the chaos. It was the most comprehensive visitation completed on the island and the first attempt to reform the clergy and laity living in the diocese. Castillo placed significant emphasis on the state of the evangelization of the natives and focused on fostering a diocese conducive to administering the sacraments to Spaniards, Indians, and blacks alike.<sup>296</sup>

The prelate did not limit his report to a meticulous list of needs of the Church and of the sins of the population. Instead, Castillo offered practical solutions and enlisted the local authorities' support to remedy and to mend the physical and spiritual maladies of the island. His *visita* clearly demonstrates the Church's twofold institutional mission of protecting and defending the colonies physically and spiritually along with his personal interest in governing his diocese. A thorough analysis of this visitation record

---

<sup>295</sup> AGI, Patronato, 177. N.I., R.24. *Testimonio de la visita que hizo a su diócesis don Juan del Castillo, obispo de Cuba, en 1570 y capítulos que propuso en su visita. Acompaña una exposición suya en la que expresa su deseo de renunciar al obispado, retirarse a España y cerrarse en una pobre celda*. There is a second versión of his *visita* located at the Archivo Nacional de Cuba (ANC), Donativos y Remisiones. Legajo 209, Signatura 395. A third copy cited as AGI, Santo Domingo, 2231, is available at the University of Florida Stetson Collection. The copy has notations from the secretary of Bishop Juan de Las Cabezas Altamirano's visitation to Florida (addressed in upcoming chapter).

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*

demonstrates not only the bishop's commitment to his ministerial duties but also the unified attempts of the religious and secular leadership to fortify the spiritual and civil life in Cuba as one consolidated weapon against foreign intrusions.

Bishop Castillo summarized the extreme disorder of his diocese into four areas. The diocese was marked by a chronic deficiency of funds because of prior mismanagement of the Church finances and the detrimental effects of piracy. He indirectly chided the previous administrations approaches as irresponsible and ineffective. There was a noticeable lack of appropriate spaces for worship and of adequate areas to store safely the religious items and valuables to prevent theft and damage. The diocese suffered from a complete disorganization of the clergy, which was aggravated by their lax morality and unauthorized itinerance (clergymen living in or moving throughout a specific territory without the proper permission from the Ordinary) which in turn affected the sacramental life of their flock. There was a complete absence of parish books, therefore, there was no accountability on the sacramental life of parishioners or on anything related to Church activities and finances.<sup>297</sup>

Castillo was a pragmatic man who actively sought solutions to problems. He reported to King Philip II's council on the impoverished state of the island but instead of requesting funds from the crown to replenish the local coffers, he identified local resources readily available that could solve the problem. He informed the council of the existence of several wills left by prominent and wealthy individuals from his diocese who had named the Church as beneficiary which had not been honored. The amounts were

---

<sup>297</sup> ANC, Donativos y Remisiones. Legajo 209, Signatura 395.

significant and could remedy some of the financial problems affecting his diocese, particularly the construction of solid buildings to store safely large church property and to serve as centers of worship. He issued a direct request to the local authorities to enforce the bequest of the deceased parishioners and to distribute properly the designated properties and money.<sup>298</sup>

The bishop issued specific instructions to remedy the lack of appropriate storage for church property. He wanted to avoid the deterioration and theft of documents and other valuables. Castillo ordered the administrator (*mayordomo*) of the Cathedral of Santiago to construct a stone chest (*arca de piedra*) near the baptismal fountain where small but important religious items used for worship could be secured. The prelate commissioned the local blacksmith to build a safety box composed of an iron bar and a lock large enough to secure the baptismal chapel doors where the contents of the chest would be kept.<sup>299</sup>

Castillo mandated a comprehensive census of the town of Santiago to compensate for the absence of parish records which had been lost to fires or to destructive acts of piracy. He ordered the local notaries to create a series of three-volume books to record baptisms, marriages, and confirmations. The books were to be kept safely in the stone chest in the chapel. He subsequently issued a call to all parishioners to appear in person at the Church to register in detail all family members and the precise information about every sacrament each one had received. The heads of the families were to provide the

---

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid.

names of their spouses, living or dead, the respective dates of marriage, the names of any children living or dead, their baptism and confirmation dates as well as the names of their godparents. The *vecinos* were also ordered to provide the names of their deceased family members and the date of their death. The bishop asked the notaries to create a fourth book to record the information on the deceased. Anyone who owned property destined for the burial of their family members was compelled to bring the title of the lot to the notaries within thirty days or all undocumented (empty) burial sites would be confiscated. The notaries were to witness and officially affix their seal to all the declarations provided and keep the record book with the others in the chapel. The refusal or failure to appear or to give the requested information would result in excommunication.<sup>300</sup>

The bishop organized a massive fundraising campaign aiming at collecting necessary support for the completion of several capital projects. He asked the neighbors for their financial support and labor to build a factory with an oven to make clay tiles for the roof of the cathedral and to contribute with other construction materials for other projects. More expensive items such as the three stone or marble lecterns required for the church rituals would be financed with taxes levied on business transactions and collected by the civil authorities or from the royal coffers. The local authorities were ordered to redesign and or widen the streets to facilitate the passage of religious and funeral processions. The bishop, as usual, affixed to his mandate the excommunication of those who refused to cooperate.<sup>301</sup>

---

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

Because the lack of financial transparency and misappropriation scandals of the prior administrations, Castillo demanded economic accountability of the church finances. He ordered the cathedral sacristan to start a ledger that would record all sources of income collected by the church, including the masses for the dead, the chaplaincies (sponsorships), the donations for feasts and saint days, sacramental stipends, and any other collection or contribution received. The ledger also had to include the dates and times in which sponsored masses were said or sung and the name of the priest in charge of fulfilling those requests. The record book was to be kept at the sacristy at all times for availability and safekeeping.<sup>302</sup>

Castillo was clearly dedicated to implement, and was familiar with, the mandates and definitions of the Council of Trent. He ordered his flock to follow the same rules of prayer, fasting, and abstinence proper of Lent as was customary in Spain and now mandated by Trent. In consonance with the liturgical reformation of the council and its emphasis on public display of religious adherence, Castillo ordered that all feast days of observance, particularly those honoring the Virgin Mary and the saints, were to be kept and celebrated with appropriate and dignifying rituals and penitence. His regulations applied to all who had been baptized regardless of social conditions, under pain of excommunication. He, however, showed compassion for the sick and elderly by exempting them from the any rigorous practices that could further affect their condition.<sup>303</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

The reformation and reorganization of the clergy was among the priorities of Trent and it was one of Castillo's main concern. The council had ordered that priests abandon mundane and inappropriate behavior and focus their efforts on their ministerial duties and sacred commission of their holy orders. They were to become honorable administrators of the sacraments and lead by their example. Facing a large number of unauthorized clergymen in the diocese who were engaged in illicit activities, he cited and demanded the application of the Tridentine orders and guidelines for clerical reorganization. Using his powers of Ordinary Inquisitor, he mandated the civil authorities to support his endeavors by enforcing his regulations and arresting those who refused to comply.<sup>304</sup>

He published strict guidelines applicable to all members of the clergy, secular and religious. All men claiming clergy status were required to produce their license to travel to the Indies within thirty days of arriving in Cuba. The official secular license was to be accompanied by the specific mandate and credentials from their superiors certifying them as ministers and/or members of their respective religious orders. Castillo removed all priestly faculties from those who did not follow the process and forbade them from saying mass or administering any sacrament in his diocese. He paid specific attention to controlling the fugitive clergy, particularly foreigners, who had fled to the island to live a libertine life unbecoming of their ecclesiastical state. He extended his orders to those who

---

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.



had not proven their clerical status as they committed graver sins that scandalized the population and damaged the Catholic faith.<sup>305</sup>

He immediately and drastically addressed the problem of clergy impersonators. These men contributed to the social disorder of the island caused by the lack of application of secular and spiritual guidelines and the ignorance of religious dogmas among the population. The unruly and undocumented clergy were known for taking advantage of the population and committing crimes such as usury, solicitation, and false administration of the sacraments; all illicit acts were persecuted by the Inquisition. They had found an opportunistic niche among the island population because of the complete disorganization, lack of enforcement of imperial orders, and the lax prosecution of criminal activities by civil and religious authorities. This was rampant chaos typical of the previous unscrupulous administrations which also benefited from social anarchy and criminal mayhem, which Castillo intended to stop. He ordered the renegade clergy to present the appropriate documentation to him or his delegates within thirty days of his proclamation and ordered the impersonators to immediately cease their activities. All violators were threatened with excommunication and incarceration.<sup>306</sup>

The bishop's severe penalties applied to perpetrators and facilitators alike. His regulations extended to the clergy who disobeyed either the canons or his ordinances as well as to those who aided and/or abetted or failed to report the violations. He issued excommunication orders to any ship captain or any other person who allowed any

---

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

clergyman or impostor to travel to the island without proper certification from the authorities. Castillo was even more specific in mandating that only members of the Franciscan order were allowed in Santiago as they were the only ones who had, legally, erected a priory. Those who permitted any undocumented priests to disembark or knew about them and did nothing to prevent their illegal entrance to the island or their subsequent illicit activities were subjected to the same penalty. Any suspicion of illegal activities by the clergy had to be reported. The same sentence was stipulated for those who allowed any clergyman to abandon the island without the bishop's written permission.<sup>307</sup>

Castillo also addressed the discipline and adherence to ministerial duties of the licit clergy. He ordered the priests legally incardinated (canonically enlisted) through the diocese to say early morning mass every Sunday and feast days at every chapel or church in the diocese. He specifically ordered weekly masses at the chapels built in the Indian villages and if there were no chapels one was to be constructed with the support of the local community and authorities. After their early mass duties, priests were ordered to help in the administration of sacraments at other parishes and at the cathedral during feast days where large congregations were expected. All clergy was obligated to observe the recitation of daily prayers as stipulated within the canons of their specific institution and mandated by the Council of Trent.<sup>308</sup>

---

<sup>307</sup> Ibid.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

In Cuba, as in the rest of the empire, if the Church were to succeed in the implementation of Trent, the reforms had to apply to all segments of society. Most important, the reforms had to be centered on the sacramental life of the peoples. Therefore, the Catholic indoctrination of the Spaniards, natives, and blacks, free and enslaved, was among Castillo's mandates. All members of the clergy working in the city and in the Indian villages were to prioritize teaching the Christian doctrine to the natives. They had to teach the benefits of the seven sacraments as ordered and defined in the Tridentine canons. The clergymen allowed to preach were to deliver their sermons in a clear and simple manner for the better understanding of the Natives and for the benefit of their souls. In the same item of his reform, Castillo ordered "all residents Spaniards and Indians alike" (*a todos los vecinos asi españoles como indios*) to attend mass and to bring their children to church every Sunday and on feast days so they too could learn the Christian doctrine as decreed and mandated by the Council of Trent. His mandates included the enslaved population. Castillo devised a weekly routine for slave plantations so every slave could attend mass at least once a month without leaving the sites unattended. They were instructed to wear their best garments. Castillo ordered the slave owners to allow their slaves to attend mass and other religious functions and forbade them from forcing the slaves to work on feast days. Since the morality of his flock was part of his reforms, Castillo added that all couples living together without having received the sacrament of marriage were to refrain from cohabitation until the sacrament had been legally celebrated by the religious authorities.<sup>309</sup>

---

<sup>309</sup> The bishop cited the exact Tridentine canons, IV and VII, where the mandate to evangelize the infidels was found.

His orders, which even regulated the procedures about the sale of real estate, relied on the unconditional support of the civil authorities. The bishop charged them with meticulously keeping records of all economic transactions in the diocese and developing an accounting system for the collection of tithes and fines. The task was monumental since Castillo had developed a system of fines associated with the violation of his rules, which was both lucrative and onerous. The money collected was for the construction of churches and other capital projects envisioned by Castillo. Every transaction had to be witnessed by one of his delegates who would accompany the money until it was deposited into a trusted location, usually the bishop's residence.<sup>310</sup>

Castillo's comprehensive *visita* yielded valuable information and his orders complimented those given by the crown. He was in full consonance with the imperial strategy of his king and the universal mandates of the Church for safeguarding Catholicism. He was aware that if the universal reforms were to be successfully implemented, they had to rely on an effective administrative infrastructure, and consequently he intended to create one. Additionally important for the bishop was the institutional consolidation of the Church within the incipient colonial society of the island, which would guarantee the sacramental life of his flock as mandated by the Council of Trent. Therefore, he deemed accountability and record-keeping crucial for that purpose. Most important to his plan was the reformation of those under his care. Either secular or religious, every individual on the island had to follow his directives in order to strengthen the morale of the entire society. His plan was to solidify the counter-reformist

---

<sup>310</sup> ANC, Donativos y Remisiones. Legajo 209, Signatura 395.

identity of Spanish society in Cuba, which coincided with the physical fortification of the island. Both, ultimately, hoped to repel any foreign intrusion.

#### **iv – Responses to Castillo’s Tridentine Reforms.**

The government officials interested in the implementation of the imperial strategy in Cuba embraced Castillo’s reform. They cooperated with the bishop’s requirements, placing his demands at the same level of priority as the fortification of the island and the consolidation of the new defensive system envisioned by the crown.<sup>311</sup> In 1570, while Castillo was conducting the apostolic *visita*, Philip II had ordered his governors “to see to it that able-bodied *vecinos* of American port towns had at hand horses and arms according to their means and that they muster every four months for review and inspection.”<sup>312</sup> The empire was increasingly under attack by heretical forces and the political and religious hegemony and stability of Spain in the New World was at stake. The circum-Caribbean cities were a main target and they had to be protected by the locals.<sup>313</sup> The binary defensive system, religious-secular, had been activated and if it were to succeed, it required mutual collaboration of its respective authorities.

Regardless of the endorsement and support received by some, there was opportunistic resistance to the bishop’s plans. The radical and inclusive nature of Castillo’s reformation and his obsession with accountability were met with adamant opposition by other civil authorities. Some of the high-ranking functionaries criticized the

---

<sup>311</sup> Lopetegui, *Historia*, 474 – 475.

<sup>312</sup> *Recopilación de de leyes de los reynos de las Indias. Ley 19.* Cited in McAlister, *Spain and Portugal*, 433.

<sup>313</sup> Pickett, *European Struggle*, 68 – 116.

bishop's actions and strongly recommended him to be lenient in enforcing his penalties. They asked the bishop to lessen the amounts charged for transgressions or to change the scope of his reforms. Others, who acted in concert with the renegade clergymen in extralegal activities, blatantly refused Castillo's authority and complained directly to the Council of the Indies.<sup>314</sup>

Relying upon the time-honored, and until now, effective tactic of manufacturing sins they brought charges against the bishop. The discontented leaders accused the honorable Castillo of stealing from the Church and of bringing discordance and unrest to the island. In response, the bishop, who grew tired of the tendency towards illicit activities of his accusers, filed numerous accounts of wrongdoings against them. The accusations ranged from stealing to participating in illegal activities with the pirates. The tensions between them escalated to the Council of the Indies and culminated with the "traditional" excommunication orders issued by the bishop against his accusers before resigning from the diocese in 1579.<sup>315</sup> Once again the pattern of fabricated accusations against innocent individuals emerged and the Ordinary's powers of excommunication were flaunted. Yet, this time the bishop was within his right to use his powers not only to defend his reputation and punish the culprits, but also to protect the reforms he had unleashed in support of the Crown's strategies.

The next two decades were filled with a succession of revolving secular functionaries in Cuba. They fought the authoritarian new bishop, the Observant

---

<sup>314</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 149 – 150.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*

Franciscan Friar Antonio Diaz de Salcedo (? – 1603) in his attempts to continue with the Tridentine reforms. There were no considerable changes to the ecclesiastic organization of the island. There was also little evidence that the plan to improve the morality of the clergy and the laity launched by Castillo was fully implemented or if it was, that it was effective. The constant unauthorized influx of clergy continued, and their inappropriate behavior increased as they traveled throughout the island “spending money gambling and doing things unworthy of men of the cloth.”<sup>316</sup> In addition, the population of the island continued their moral disarray and apathy demonstrated by their lack of participation in the religious projects of the prelate.<sup>317</sup>

Bishop Salcedo continued with the financial organization of the diocese. He improved the collection of tithes to support the construction of religious and military buildings, to remedy the destructive effect of an earthquake that destroyed the cathedral in Santiago, and to pay his own salary. He also followed the trend of his predecessors of excommunicating anyone who dared to accuse him of wrongdoing.<sup>318</sup> Also similar to some of the previous prelates, Salcedo was notorious for his drastic temperament, promptness to ire, and abuse of power. He acted, according to one of the functionaries he excommunicated as if he were a “wolf instead of a pastor of souls who should be punished and removed from his office on the island so that people can live a Christian life.” The bishop and the secular authorities accused each other of stealing from the

---

<sup>316</sup> *Jugando muchos dineros y haciendo otras cosas no dignas de su hábito*. Lopetegui, *Historia*, 475.

<sup>317</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 151 – 152.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* Lopetegui, *Historia*, 475 and Polcari, *Historia*, 63 – 68.

king's coffers and exceeding the prerogatives of their respective offices to their benefits.<sup>319</sup> The traditional tendency to manufacture sin and employ excommunication continued.

#### **v – The Nefarious Sin.**

The exchange of accusations this time went beyond the customary petty charges and included manufactured sins of the gravest nature. On November 2, 1594, bishop Salcedo wrote a lengthy appeal letter to the Audiencia de Santo Domingo regarding an accusation that his enemies had levied against him directed towards the innermost core of his Christian principles and behavior.<sup>320</sup> Salcedo had been accused of committing the nefarious sin of sodomy. He demanded a deeper investigation into the origins of the accusation and the intentions behind it regardless of his knowing it had been purposely invented to damage his honor.<sup>321</sup> He asked the Audiencia to organize a manhunt to find his accuser, captain Gerónimo de Rojas y Avellaneda, who had escaped from the island to avoid punishment for his misdeeds. Even though the bishop had been cleared of the severe charge of sodomy, he wanted Rojas to apologize and to retract his accusation publicly in the main plaza of Santiago de Cuba. The bishop asked the Audiencia for a harsher punishment for Rojas' ill-intentioned crime, in addition to the aforementioned

---

<sup>319</sup> Lopetegui, *Historia*, 475 claims that this was said about Bishop Castillo, yet, Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 151 states it was about bishop Salcedo. The latter seems more possible since the statement was issued on August 3, 1590 during Salcedo's tenure. See Jacobo De La Pezuela y Lobo. *Historia de la Isla de Cuba*. (Madrid: Carlos Bailly-Bailliere, 1868), Vol. I, 306.

<sup>320</sup> AGI. Santo Domingo, Legajo 150, Ramo I. *Correspondencia del Obispo de Santiago de Cuba al Consejo de Indias*, 2 de noviembre de 1594.

<sup>321</sup> De La Fuente, *Havana*, 218. De La Fuente cites other functionaries of the time saying that it was the "style of the land to mistreat prelates" and that it was gossipy and ill intentioned.



apology and the six-year sentence in the galleys that he had received but had not served because of his escape.<sup>322</sup>

Sodomy was considered a serious crime against nature and therefore severely outlawed. The heinous act was persecuted at all levels of colonial society and harshly punished with secular and religious sentences. This was particularly more acute in the Caribbean amid the post-Tridentine counter-reformation efforts to curtail any sin associated to foreign influences. Numerous foreigners – non-Spanish Protestant – were charged with sodomy, tried, and executed so as to prevent others from following such wicked and alien behavior.<sup>323</sup> In this region, the Church faced more intensively the lax theological and practical interpretation of the sacraments promoted by Protestantism because of the constant influx of pirates. In this chaotic and transient society where bishop Salcedo lived “physical love was only legitimate as an expression of conjugal love, achieved through the sacrament of matrimony.”<sup>324</sup> Extralegal sexual acts were

---

<sup>322</sup> AGI. Santo Domingo, Legajo 150, Ramo I. *Correspondencia del Obispo de Santiago de Cuba al Consejo de Indias*, 2 de noviembre de 1594.

<sup>323</sup> See Federico Garza Carvajal. *Butterflies will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico*. Austin; TX: University of Texas Press, 2003; Pete Sigal. *Infamous Desires: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*. Chicago; IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003; Cristian Berco. *Jerarquías Sexuales, estatus público. Masculinidad, sodomía y Sociedad en la España del Siglo de Oro*. (Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2009). For issues about sexual practices regulated by the Inquisition see Javier Pérez Escohotado. *Sexo e Inquisición en España*. (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1998).

<sup>324</sup> The literature on the subject is abundant. For a concise explanation on the historical-theological evolution of this type of sin, its interpretation by the authorities, and the penalties it carried, particularly in early colonial times see Asuncion Lavrín, Ed. *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. Lincoln; NE: University of Nebraska Press. 1992, 53.

interpreted and prosecuted as a combination of religious unorthodoxy (sin) and a violation against the public order (crime).<sup>325</sup>

An act of sodomy was also a devastating social disorder. The crime was placed atop a hierarchy of despicable sexual acts such as bestiality, adultery, fornication, rape, and incest. It counteracted the natural and biblical justification for marriage which was considered the cradle of morality and social stability. The accusation against Salcedo was additionally aggravated because of his ecclesiastical position, yet, it was that same position that protected him from further investigations or charges. While the accusation of nefarious sin was indeed a scandalous and damaging allegation, it had no long-lasting repercussions for the bishop.<sup>326</sup> Regardless of the severity of the act, the nefarious sin had different connotations when it involved members of the clergy, particularly a prelate. As leaders and enforcers of social morality to charge a bishop with such a serious crime would only create more disarray. Hence, the ecclesiastical tribunal responsible for doing so in the case of Salcedo's alleged nefarious sin, the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico failed or decided not to open an investigation.<sup>327</sup>

In addition to being a forbidden sexual act, sodomy was despised by society. The crime was perceived as the most aberrant behavior, and as such carried a social stigma graver than the rest. Consequently, the authorities were careful not to accuse or make

---

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. 51.

<sup>326</sup> Noemi Quesada et al. Eds. *Inquisición Novohispana*. México D.F: México; Universidad Autónoma de México. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas. Vol. II. 2000. For a specific discussion about this see the chapter titled *Casos de Sodomía Ante la Inquisición de México en los Siglos XVII y XVIII*, 57.

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

public any accusation of sodomy against prominent members of the clergy. It was customary that the Church would hide and/or destroy anything (or anyone) that could negatively impact its perceived ethical or political leadership, or that of one of its members.<sup>328</sup> While there is no indication of Salcedo's involvement in acts of sodomy, there is no proof of the contrary either. The institution he served protected him from prosecution regardless of the veracity – or lack thereof – of the accusations.<sup>329</sup> There is not even evidence of a secular trial, and even though the bishop made references to it in the letter, he could have been referring to the trial against his accuser. Although bishops were not officially exempted from accusations of this kind, there were protections associated with their office and ecclesiastic rank. Their role as bishops unofficially granted them some legal exemptions and extralegal privileges, and therefore there are no indications or evidence of Inquisition charges filed against Salcedo.<sup>330</sup>

Through the remainder of Salcedo's time in Cuba the exchange of accusations with the secular authorities and several *vecinos* continued, and so did the list of excommunications issued by the bishop. Three consecutive governors as well as their respective second men in command were excommunicated. Also during his time, the reorganization of the Church continued and even though Salcedo demanded financial accountability, the diocese's economic shortfall continued. The deficit was so severe that

---

<sup>328</sup> Quesada, *Inquisición*, 57. The majority of the processes for sodomy against members of the clergy filed at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico are inconclusive or incomplete. Of the cases researched for the cited work only one was finished because of the death of the accused. See AGN, *Inquisición*, vol. 1373, exp 14, fs. 173 - 205.

<sup>329</sup> Quesada, *Inquisición*, 57.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

Salcedo and his functionaries could not receive the salaries owed. He continued to use his inquisitorial powers in an attempt to bring moral control to no avail. The *vecinos* remained engaged in illicit activities with pirates even though the secular government increased the persecution of seafaring Protestants and their collaborators.<sup>331</sup>

#### **vi – Drastic Measures Against Heretics.**

As Havana grew in importance within the Caribbean and fortifications expanded around its port, the eastern side of the island remained less guarded. Pirates, knowing the defensive disadvantages of Santiago and Bayamo and the willingness of their inhabitants to trade with them, turned the area into a convenient point of commerce.<sup>332</sup> The daily extralegal economic relationship between heretical pirates and *vecinos* exposed the latter to unorthodox beliefs and practices therefore demanding the intervention of the religious and civilian authorities at unison to bring back social order. In March of 1586, the governor of the island, Gabriel de Lujan (? - ?), launched an offensive attack against French and English interlopers. Most pirates and corsairs were killed and those who were arrested faced a certain and humiliating death. Bishop Salcedo demanded that the men be processed by his delegates through an Inquisition trial. The bishop wanted to guarantee a fair legal process and punishment so the men would not be executed *en masse*. He also intended for their punishment to serve as an example of social control as well as a preventive measure to fend off other heretics.<sup>333</sup>

---

<sup>331</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 151 – 152.

<sup>332</sup> García del Pino, *El Corso*, 6; See also Olga Portuondo Zuñiga. *El Departamento Oriental en documentos, Tomo I, 1510 – 1799*. (Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012), 19.

<sup>333</sup> Ullivarri, *Piratas*, 145 – 146.

In an act of flagrant disobedience against the bishop's orders, the civil authorities decided to follow their own military procedures. Ordered by the lieutenant governor of Bayamo, Santiago, and Baracoa, Gómez de Rojas Manrique, they organized a massive execution of all captured pirates. Taking them secretly one at the time out of their cells in the middle of the night, the guards hung the heretical enemies of the people and the adversaries of their faith and kept their bodies exposed as a warning to others. The authorities considered them "foreigners who knew too much and too well the Cuban cost, ports, and rivers and therefore it was convenient to effect justice."<sup>334</sup> Only two pirates who were too sick to face justice were pardoned along with a young man who served them as a *grumete*, a sailor's apprentice. The bishop ordered his delegate, Luis de Salas, to find the men responsible for interfering with his duties as Ordinary of the Holy Office who had blatantly disobeyed his orders and excommunicated them.<sup>335</sup>

Bishop Salcedo continued with his attempts to boost the Christian morality of the people of the island without success. There were not enough religious personnel to help him in the implementation of his plans nor sufficient willingness in the population to stop interacting with pirates and corsairs. He ultimately moved his residency to Havana in fear of the increase in pirate activity where the ongoing fortifications provided a sense of protection. He remained there until 1597 when he was transferred to the Bishopric of

---

<sup>334</sup> Ibid. 146.

<sup>335</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional. (AHN), Inquisición, Legajo 1616, Exp. 1. *Proceso criminal contra Gómez de Rojas Manrique, vecino, teniente de gobernador y capitán general de San Salvador del Bayamo (sic) (Cuba), Santiago (sic) y Baracoa (Cuba), por ejecutar a unos franceses luteranos y ser impediendo del Santo Oficio. Fue denunciado, por Luis de Salas, provisor de la isla de Cuba, y condenado con excomuniación mayor, 30 de abril de 1586.*

Nicaragua.<sup>336</sup> Although the Council of the Indies selected two consecutive bishops for Cuba they never took over the diocese. One of them died and the other one resigned even before moving to the island. The diocese remained vacant until 1602, and while the number of priests and other religious personnel grew in response to the population boom, there were no significant changes in the organization of the church in Cuba.<sup>337</sup> There was, however, an increment in the Inquisition activities of the Mexican Tribunal in cases related to Cuba which ultimately affected people who either lived or were born on the island.

---

<sup>336</sup> The Royal Orders issued on December 20, 1592 officially granted Havana all the privileges of the gubernatorial see of the island. Both, the religious and the secular authorities who had unofficially established their residences in the city since the middle of the century did so officially after the *Cédula*. See Julio Le Riverend Brusone. *La Habana Espacio y Vida*. (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992), 71.

<sup>337</sup> Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 152. For an extensive analysis of the growth of Havana see the cited work of Alejandro de la Fuente specifically chapter 4 “Urban Growth.”

## **Chapter V: Delinquency and Blasphemy: The Official Establishment of the Inquisition in Cuba.**

### **i – The Inquisition and Trans-Colonial Bigamy: The Case Against Petronila Ruiz.**

The population growth of Cuba in the last decades of the sixteenth century resulted in an upsurge in the crimes people committed. Consequently, the Inquisition attempts to reinforce and regulate communal morality across the colonies also increased. As people moved through New Spain's jurisdictions the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico City was forced to expand even more its network of commissaries and informants. Numerous regulations were issued and the clergy was called upon to educate their flock and become satellite officers of the Inquisition. Still, the number of Holy Office officials and their efforts were not enough to control the extensive territory within the Mexican Tribunal boundaries. Social and moral disorder were constantly on the rise and the authorities were determined to stop the resulting chaos.

Bigamy was among the most common offences committed through the colonial territories and its religious and social repercussions demanded detailed attention and rigorous actions. Even though in most instances bigamy was the result of a lack of communication, misleading information, or ignorance, the authorities worked diligently but unsuccessfully to stop people from committing the sin. The failure of their preventive actions, which included educating the people about the sacrament of marriage and encouraging them to participate in the life of the Church, was corrected with increasing the persecution and prosecution of the transgressors. Because the crime was considered a violation of the sacrament of marriage, which was heavily promoted and guarded by the

Council of Trent, eradicating such misconduct was a priority for the colonial religious authorities.

The laws related to bigamy, the procedures for its prosecution and the penalties associated with it had been immediately developed by the ecclesiastic tribunals with the Decree of Tametsy after the culmination of the Council in 1563. With this decree, the Church declared that both the preaching and practice of bigamy was heresy, blasphemy, and perjury all at once.<sup>338</sup> The concept of bigamy was even extended to those unmarried individuals who having professed within a religious order, or in the specific case of men after receiving holy orders, would abandon the life of “service to God” and married. It was also applied to those who without abandoning their vows married clandestinely, as well as to priests living in concubinage. In other words, the concepts of marriage and bigamy once applied to nuns and priests acquired a literal as well as figurative meaning, and the rules should therefore apply to both men and women, lay and religious. The authority to enforce such rules was given to the Inquisition.<sup>339</sup>

As a result of the rapid changes in demographics caused by transatlantic and intercolonial migration, the Mexican Tribunal consolidated its policing powers beyond the mainland frontiers. The Holy Office functionaries were charged with administering the entire region as a cohesive ecclesiastic unit, and people within their jurisdiction – from the Caribbean to the Philippines – were subjected to their authority. In January of

---

<sup>338</sup> John Witte Jr. *The Western Case of Monogamy Over Polygamy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press: 2015), 154 – 155.

<sup>339</sup> Regardless of the pronouncements of the Council of Trent on bigamy, there is no literature on the prosecution of either priests or nuns who married and were charged with bigamy.



1580, twenty-five-year-old Petronila Ruiz was accused by the authorities of Taxco, New Spain, of the grave crime of bigamy. She was a woman from Havana who had migrated to the silver mines of Taxco where she had managed to amass a sizable fortune. A man named Francisco de Aguilar filed the charges against her. He accused her of not being a “good Christian woman” who had violated the sacrament of marriage.<sup>340</sup> He claimed to have witnesses who could confirm that he was Petronila’s husband. The alleged witnesses had informed Aguilar that she had married another man, Luis de Medina. In November of that same year, after preliminary investigations had been conducted and the case had been elevated to the Tribunal in Mexico, they issued orders to arrest Petronila and to keep her safe and secure. They commissioned a thorough investigation of the case while Petronila was to remain detained and her properties sequestered.<sup>341</sup>

The Inquisition authorities in Mexico City sent a commissary to the mines of Taxco to conduct the investigation. They granted him with supreme authority and decision-making powers over the case. The commissary was to find out if the two marriages had taken place under the Church canons and to investigate if the clergymen who had administered the sacrament of marriage had acted accordingly. If bigamy had been committed for certain, he was to find Petronila and apprehend her regardless of where she was, even if she was hiding in a “sacred or strongly protected place.” The Tribunal ordered, under threat of excommunication, that the local secular and religious

---

<sup>340</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1581. Vol. 134, Exp. 10, fs. 51. *Proceso contra Petronila Ruiz, mujer de Luis de Medina, sastre, natural de la Habana y residente en Taxco. Guadalajara.* The documents name the accused also as Petrona. The file contains sixty-five pages not all of them numbered or in chronological order.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

authorities cooperate with the commissary to find and arrest the criminal. Petronila's dignity was to be respected, nevertheless, and she should be permitted to make necessary arrangements for her household affairs. She should also be allowed to be dressed in an attire proper of a woman of her class. In February of 1581, after the investigators had accumulated sufficient evidence to prove that, indeed, she had been married two times, Petronila Ruiz was arrested and placed in a cell in Taxco. Her second husband provided the initial five hundred pesos to pay for her food and care as well as to secure her defense.<sup>342</sup>

The effectiveness of the Inquisition network and its capacity to compel people across the colonies to participate in its legal procedures became immediately evident. Witnesses summoned for questioning promptly complied and others spontaneously approached the tribunal because they needed their "conscience to be clean." As inferred from the various testimonies collected by the commissary, Petronila's husband had been presumed dead for at least two years. Rumors were that he had perished during a fire on board a ship where he had been sent as a prisoner in 1579. Petronila, who had cohabitated with another man for some time after her husband's disappearance, had married him. She had done so at the request of the local priest who demanded an end to their sinful behavior.<sup>343</sup>

One of the witnesses, a Portuguese mariner, confirmed part of the story. He had heard of the investigation and wanted to help. While in Veracruz during the early days of

---

<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

1579, he met several men who had survived a fire onboard a ship. They had been sentenced to work in the galleons for crimes they had committed. The fire broke out as they were enroute to one of the islands. Some of the men, he learned, had succumbed immediately because of the fire while others had died later because of the wounds caused by the disaster. The survivors had been rescued by some locals who were taking care of them and brought them back to health. Among the survivors he remembered a very talkative, short man, who claimed to be from the mines in Taxco and went by the name of Aguilar. The Portuguese sailor had not seen him until the day before his testimony. He confirmed that the man who claimed to be Petronila's first husband and the one he had met in Veracruz were the same.<sup>344</sup>

Aguilar had survived the ordeal and after a long and perilous journey he wanted to be reunited with his wife. It seems that, after recovering from the fire, Aguilar traveled to Spain and then returned to New Spain with his mother and other family members. While he was traveling to Taxco, six weeks before filing the charges, he encountered a neighbor at a nearby town. Aguilar told his neighbor that he was a free man and was inquiring for the whereabouts of his wife. The neighbor, who was not named in the documents, had informed him of Petronila's marriage to their mutual friend Luis de Medina. The man was willing to testify to the authorities that Francisco de Aguilar was Petronila's first husband.<sup>345</sup>

---

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

Aguilar's testimony further complicated the case. The information he provided also demonstrates the severity of an accusation of bigamy and how common it was. He informed the investigators that he knew Luis de Medina and his family from Spain. He reported that Medina was an immoral individual who had deceived many people. According to Aguilar, Medina was a bigamist who was also married in Spain. He told the commissary that coincidentally while he was at the *Casa de Contratación* in Seville, he had encountered Medina's wife who, along with other women of their family, was processing the required permits for passage to America. Aguilar added that the women had subsequently traveled to New Spain and were staying in the port city of Tampico awaiting news from Medina to be reunited with him.<sup>346</sup>

Aguilar knew and followed Inquisitorial procedures. He filed charges against his wife at a local court and secured witnesses to support his claims. To discredit the Christianity of the man who had betrayed him, he accused him of a serious crime. Aguilar asked the Inquisition officers to keep all this information secret until both transgressors had been arrested and faced "holy justice." He declared in a separate letter that while he was imprisoned, he had received news that Medina and Petronila had an affair even though they knew he was alive. This indicated the intentional commission of the crime. According to one of his alleged witnesses, Medina was heard telling Petronila numerous times that if he (Aguilar) "died or were taken by the devil they would

---

<sup>346</sup> There is no archival evidence at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico that charges were filed against Luis de Medina or even about the existence of a first wife. According to scholarship on the subject, it was common to falsely accuse individuals of bigamy with the Inquisition with the hope of bringing shame and dishonor or to aggravate concurrent charges. Almost half of the accusations were false. See Dolores Encijo Rojas. "Inquisición, bigamia y bigamos en Nueva España." In Quesada et al. Eds. *Inquisición Novohispana*. 70.

marry.”<sup>347</sup> The witness also told Aguilar that shortly after the news of his alleged demise reached the town, Petronila Ruiz and Luis de Medina were married.

The accusation was serious, and the evidence indicated that Petronila had unquestionably committed a crime. She had married Medina while Aguilar was still alive which constituted bigamy, yet, she was “an honest and good Christian woman” who claimed ignorance of it as her defense.<sup>348</sup> After two years of investigations in Taxco she was taken to the Tribunal in Mexico to be formally interrogated. When questioned by the authorities why she had married while her first husband was still living, Petronila replied that she was unaware that Aguilar was still alive. Ruiz confirmed to the authorities that indeed, her first husband had been arrested years earlier and sent to the galleys to serve a long sentence. Two years later she was informed by friends that he had died in a devastating fire. The priests who were interviewed by the Inquisition officials confirmed that such rumors had reached Taxco. They also stated that Petronila had followed the procedures mandated by the Church for a widow to re-marry. She had obtained and presented all necessary documents which were deemed in order, and as such, she had entered licitly into the sacrament of matrimony for the second time. The neighbors who testified on her behalf also corroborated her story and her good Christian behavior.<sup>349</sup>

---

<sup>347</sup> *Si se muere o se lo lleva el diablo nos casamos*. AGN: Inq. Año: 1581. Vol. 134, Exp. 10, fs. 51. *Proceso contra Petronila Ruiz, mujer de Luis de Medina, sastre, natural de la Habana y residente en Taxco. Guadalajara.*

<sup>348</sup> See the cited work of Cook and Cook about transatlantic bigamy in early modern imperial Spain, its causes and consequences.

<sup>349</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1581. Vol. 134, Exp. 10, fs. 51. *Proceso contra Petronila Ruiz, mujer de Luis de Medina, sastre, natural de la Habana y residente en Taxco. Guadalajara.*

Petronila Ruiz had unknowingly committed the crime of bigamy and the tribunal agreed with her defense. Upon proving her innocence, the Holy Office ordered Petronila's immediate release and the devolution of any property confiscated. Yet, while lack of intention exonerated her from a guilty verdict and a harsh sentence, it did not save her from additional tribulations. The case was transferred to the Ecclesiastic Tribunal of the diocese where she lived for the Ordinary of the Diocese to decide over the validity of her second or of her first marriage.<sup>350</sup> There is no evidence of a final resolution for her marital status, but the records show that her ordeal continued. Seven years later, in June of 1589, Petronila was still fighting with the Mexican Tribunal, demanding the devolution of two hundred and forty pesos they owed her.

## **ii – The Inquisition and Trans-Atlantic Polygamy: The Case Against Pedro de la Muza.**

The Counter-Reformation emphasis placed on altering the attitudes and practices of society and the subsequent rules and regulations issued were not well received. They were widely opposed or overlooked and were very difficult to enforce. Not only did they go against ingrained traditions, but for those living in the New World, far from the metropolis' emphatic Catholicism, the application of those new rules were illogical and impractical.<sup>351</sup> Yet, the Inquisition had taken the edicts seriously and on both sides of the Atlantic increased its persecution and prosecution of bigamists and polygamists.

---

<sup>350</sup> The records for the ecclesiastic trial might be at the diocesan archives of Guadalajara, which had jurisdiction over the case, however, they have not been researched.

<sup>351</sup> Opposition to the persecution of bigamy was so widespread both, within the church and among the laity, that over a hundred years after Trent, the Spanish courts were still dealing with the issues of sacramental marriage or lack thereof. Although Kamen refers to Catalonia's mostly rural society, the same applies to the New World because of its distance from the centers of

The presence and influence of the Mexican Tribunal across the New World continued growing and the fear of its practices augmented. The year Petronila requested the devolution of her money, another case of bigamy involving an individual in Cuba was filed at the Mexican Tribunal. This time the accused was a man named Pedro de la Muza born in Vizcaya. After living for many years in Guadalajara, New Spain, he had been sent to serve as a soldier in Havana. On February 13, 1589, de la Muza was accused in Mexico by his father in law who claimed knowing him since he was a child. They were both from the same town in Bilbao, and their families had traveled together to America. He said that de la Muza was married to his daughter, Francisca del Oro, with whom he had four children. He had left them in Guadalajara two years earlier upon being sent to Cuba where he was a soldier. The news had recently arrived from Havana that he had married another woman in that city with whom he had a child. The accuser claimed that he had to denounce de la Muza to keep his conscience clean.<sup>352</sup>

Witnesses were called to give testimony about the case. Several neighbors who knew the family from Bilbao testified about Pedro and Francisca being married in Spain, traveling together and having children in Guadalajara. Francisca was well known in the town for being a pious woman who was very active in charitable endeavors. She was a seamstress also known as *La Corcovada* because of a visible physical deformity (a hunchback) caused by her occupation. One of the people who testified mentioned that

---

power. See Henry Arthur Francis Kamen. *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993), 285.

<sup>352</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1589. Vol. 138, Exp. 1, fs. 23. *Proceso contra Pedro de la Muza, Vizcaino residente que había sido de Guadalajara y México, soldado que se fue a La Habana, por bigamo, Guadalajara.*

news about Pedro's marriage in Havana were public gossip during a communal religious celebration of Ash Wednesday which had shamed Francisca.<sup>353</sup>

The testimony of a woman named Maria de Esquivel aggravated the charges against de la Muza. She claimed and showed documents proving that she was also married to the accused. The matrimony had taken place in Mexico City two years earlier, but they had no children. Esquivel was asked to describe her husband and if he had mentioned any previous marriage. She said that he was a tall man with mostly black and some gray hair who had a scar on his forehead and another one in two of his fingers that he had since he lived in Bilbao. The alleged wife claimed he had entered into the marriage as a single man and not as a widower. The godparents of the wedding supported Francisca's statements and provided the name of the priest who had performed the matrimony. De la Muza's second marriage had been sanctioned by a local priest after the required documentation was provided and deemed legitimate.<sup>354</sup> If proven, the charges were to be upgraded to polygamy which was even graver.

Colonists knew the severity of bigamy and the damage it did to all individuals involved. They empathized with the victims and rejected the perpetrators. Neighbors and family members willingly identified and accused bigamists with the Inquisition in hopes to remove these criminals from communal life. They expected that bigamists (or polygamists) would be punished according to the severity of their crime. They understood that bigamy directly affected marriage as the basis of social order by rebelling

---

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.



against Christian morality and therefore expected swift and unwavering actions from the authorities.<sup>355</sup> The Holy Office was receptive to the locals' claims and promptly acted to remedy the disorder.

After corroborating the charges, the Holy Office extended its reach across the Caribbean to protect the region against ethical disarray and contacted the authorities in Cuba. The inquisition ordered de la Muza's arrest and transfer to Veracruz. A letter written to the Governor of Cuba, Gabriel de Lujan, informed him of the situation and demanded his collaboration. The Tribunal deputized Lujan as an agent of the Inquisition (*algualcil*) and gave him all powers to act on their behalf. The Inquisitors also mandated that de la Muza's property, which should not be much because he was not a rich man, be sold to cover any expenses related to his arrest, imprisonment, and transportation. If anything remained, it was to be sent on the same ship with the detained.<sup>356</sup> By granting such power to the Cuban governor, the Tribunal legitimized its powers over the Caribbean population and the civilian functionaries, as well as its autonomy from the local bishop.<sup>357</sup> The trans-colonial nature of this case established the tribunal as the agency in charge of bringing order to the circum-Caribbean. The Mexican Tribunal's authority over the region was established, and the local leadership was obliged to comply.

---

<sup>355</sup> Lola Aniyar de Castro. *Los Delitos de Bigamia y Adulterio*. (Maracaibo: Imprenta de la Universidad de Zulia, 1970).

<sup>356</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1589. Vol. 138, Exp. 1, fs. 23. *Proceso contra Pedro de la Muza, Vizcaino residente que había sido de Guadalajara y México, soldado que se fue a La Habana, por bigamo, Guadalajara*.

<sup>357</sup> There is no evidence of communication with Bishop Salcedo about this matter.

The governor of Cuba immediately delegated the orders. Within hours of receiving the letter, de la Muza was under arrest and placed at the local jail. On April 30 of 1589, de la Muza was shackled, put on a ship by the Cuban authorities, and sent to Mexico. The man faced serious charges. If a second illicit marriage was considered a despicable sin that corrupted the sacrament and a grave crime against moral order, serial bigamy complicated the matter and guaranteed a harsher sentence. He was to face the Inquisition punishment, his family's ire, public shame and rejection, and total dishonor. Death was a sensible solution. About twenty miles before arriving to the port of Tampico, de la Muza surreptitiously managed to escape from the cell where he was kept and jumped into the Caribbean Sea. His body was never found. The ship captain reported to the Commissary of the Inquisition in Veracruz that the bigamist had preferred to die rather than face the Inquisition.<sup>358</sup>

### **iii – Other Cases Against the Holy Faith.**

Regardless of the well-founded fear of the Inquisition and its actions across the empire, social disorder in the colonies continued. Petronila Ruiz and Pedro de la Muza were only two of many who were judged by the Inquisition. Numerous other peoples were accused and tried for a multiplicity of charges across the tribunal territory. In Cuba the number of sinners accused was also increasing. In April of 1590, Father Luis de Salas, Bishop Salcedo's delegate sent a letter to the Mexican tribunal informing them of several individuals charged with various crimes who were being sent to Veracruz to be

---

<sup>358</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1589. Vol. 138, Exp. 1, fs. 23. *Proceso contra Pedro de la Muza, Vizcaino residente que había sido de Guadalajara y México, soldado que se fue a La Habana, por bigamo, Guadalajara.*

placed under the Inquisition care. While he was not specific on the charges, he did name the three persons he was sending to the tribunal along with a man who had been serving a sentence in Cuba per orders of the Mexican Tribunal and was being returned to Mexico.<sup>359</sup> He was acting as commissary, delegated by the bishop of the diocese and not by the Inquisition officers in New Spain.

The Mexican Tribunal maintained close communication with the secular authorities in Cuba particularly about those individuals it had sent as prisoners to the island. In 1596 they requested that a Portuguese man named Juan Mendez accused of being a Judaizer be taken back to Mexico. It seems the man had been processed for additional charges in Havana, yet, in the absence of a tribunal on the island he was to be transferred to Mexico. He was a man who claimed adherence to Catholicism but either practiced – or was accused of practicing – Judaism in secret. He had betrayed “the holy Catholic faith” and “offended the holy mother Roman Catholic Church” and was therefore an enemy of the people.<sup>360</sup> There is no evidence of what kind of actions were

---

<sup>359</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1590. Vol. 1603, Exp. 102, fs. 2. *Fray Luis de las provincias de Cuba. El comisario de Cuba remite preso a Francisco Riviera Luna y su proceso al Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de México.* It seems the document is the cover letter for the case, however, the rest is missing. There is an error in the document, the last name Salas is mistaken by “las.” The actual name was Luis de Salas who served for over twenty-five years as delegate (*provisor*) for the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba.

<sup>360</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1596. Vol. 209, Exp. 1A, fs. 6. *Proceso contra Juan Mendez, Portugues, confitero, por judaizante, (Fragmento) Habana.* The persecution of Jewish peoples and/or their descendants by the Spanish Inquisition has been amply studied. Among them see Alfonso Toros. *Los judíos en la Nueva España.* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993); Seymour Liebman. *The Inquisitors and the Jews in The New World: Summaries of Procesos: 1500 – 1810, and bibliographical guide.* (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1974); and Eva Uchmany de la Peña. *La vida entre el judaísmo y el cristianismo en la Nueva España, 1580 – 1606.* (Mexico: Archivo General de la Nación, 1992).

taken by the authorities in Havana because there are no other documents. Yet, as the century was coming to a close, so was the grip of the Mexican Tribunal over the island and its attempts to repel the enemies of the empire from the frontier territories.

By 1598 the increasing presence of Protestants permanently living in Cuba was a concern for the Mexican Tribunal. They ordered the Cuban authorities to find and apprehend a Flemish man named Humberto “Tonelero” who was known for following the teachings of the “damned Calvin,” which contradicted the teachings of the Holy Mother Catholic Church. He was a known associate of another Flemish man named Pedro Pedro who had been sentenced to the galleys in Cuba for the same heretical crime.<sup>361</sup> In a separate document they ordered the arrest of seven Lutherans who were living in the port of Havana and had been heard making statements against the sacraments and the clergy. They described the men in detail adding that they were young mariners all from the City of Lubeck in *Alemania la Baxa*.<sup>362</sup> Upon detention, the men were to be taken to the port of Veracruz and turned over to the local commissary of the Inquisition, Fr. Francisco Carranco.<sup>363</sup>

---

<sup>361</sup> The Mexican Inquisitor referred to Calvin as *El maldito Calvin*. AGN: Inq. Año: 1598. Vol. 165, Exp. 7, fs. 69. *Proceso contra Alberto de Meyo, Natural de Villa Hedo en Flandes, Tonelero en la calle Tacuba, en México, fue preso en la Habana. México*. Pedro Pedro’s case will be discussed shortly.

<sup>362</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1598. Vol. 1564, Exp. 11, fs. 2. *Mandamiento de prisión contra Huberto Tonelero. (Autos sobre el mandamiento a Tonelero vecino de Alemania que llega en una flota a la Habana y declaraciones de dicho proceso. Havana.*

<sup>363</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1598. Vol. 165, Exp. 7, fs. 69. *Proceso contra Alberto de Meyo, Natural de Villa Hedo en Flandes, Tonelero en la calle Tacuba, en México, fue preso en la Habana. México.*

The increment in the number of cases relative to Cuba was indicative of the need for another tribunal in the Caribbean. Fully sanctioned by the local authorities and supported by the crown, the calls to increase the Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Americas therefore continued to rise.<sup>364</sup> Since 1568 when the Junta Magna reorganized the administration of the colonies, the Church and the Inquisition had strengthened their role as the imperial bodies in charge of policing the implementation of the crown's strategies. Their institutional growth had been continually encouraged by the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic. "To improve religious observance the Junta advocated appointing bishops born on the American continent and the creation of four new tribunals of the Inquisition" to protect the New World from foreign interlopers and their deviant ideas.<sup>365</sup> While only two of the tribunals were established at the time, the need for additional ones remained a necessity. Additionally, the colonies had attained the necessary development and population growth to demand and support more tribunals.

#### **iv – Calls for Additional Tribunals.**

Overt and official communication among the American civil and religious leadership and the Council of the Indies about creating more tribunals in the Americas had been taking place since 1576.<sup>366</sup> In 1577, the Viceroy of Peru, Francisco de Toledo complained to the Council of the Indies about how exhausted his subjects were because of traveling such long distances when requested, either as witnesses or accused, by the

---

<sup>364</sup> For an examination of Philip II's support for the Inquisition see the cited work of Maqueda.

<sup>365</sup> Parker, *The Grand Strategy*, 9.

<sup>366</sup> José Toribio Medina. *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Cartagena de las Indias*. (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1899), 36.

tribunal in Lima. He also described the dangers his people faced when traveling and the unnecessary expenses they incurred taking a trip which, he added, was most times in vain. The Viceroy proposed the establishment of two new tribunals in the new kingdom, one in Quito and the other one in La Plata, led by the bishop of each diocese and two of the local judges. This would limit the number of new Inquisition employees as well as the salaries to be paid. Toledo recommended that the Council of the Indies instruct the Inquisition personnel only to send to the tribunals those individuals whose crimes were considered grave, adding that they should handle all minor cases at the local level.<sup>367</sup> Both, his complaints and recommendations, indicated the need to increase the Inquisition presence in the Americas to control religious unorthodoxy, as well as to reorganize the institution to handle more efficiently the extensive territories and the population growth in the region.

Similar concerns were expressed by other religious authorities through the colonies. They increasingly named the presence of non-Catholics as a reason to establish new tribunals. They also complained about their inability to visit their dioceses efficiently because of their territorial extension, citing this as the main cause for the rapid emergence of religious dissidence and unorthodoxy through the Americas. By 1579, the authorities of the island of Hispaniola were also requesting a new Tribunal for Santo Domingo and reiterated the petition in 1585.<sup>368</sup> They were supported by the members of the Inquisition

---

<sup>367</sup> Ibid. “*cuán vejados estaban sus vasallos del Perú, porque siendo tan vasto el distrito del Tribunal se les llamaba á Lima, ya como testigos ó como reos.*”

<sup>368</sup> AGI. SD, 868, L.3, F.122R-122V. *Real Cédula al arzobispo de Santo Domingo, para que envíe relación informando si conviene que haya en la isla española tribunal de la inquisición, de*

Tribunal in Mexico City, which in 1594, requested the creation of an independent Tribunal in that Caribbean port city.<sup>369</sup> In all three instances, the reasons given to establish a new tribunal were the same: the port cities of the Caribbean were constantly visited by “pirates and corsairs, English and French, all Protestants, which demanded from the King and his Council the defense of the holy Catholic faith.”<sup>370</sup> In May of 1594, the religious authorities wrote directly to King Philip II, reminding him that the Council of the Indies had already recommended the establishment of a new Tribunal in the island of Hispaniola since March of the same year (1594).<sup>371</sup>

The Council of the Indies and the colonial authorities complained to the King that pirates’ and corsairs’ constant and increasing raids on the port cities were devastating the colonies. They hurt them economically and were destabilizing to the social and moral order of the inhabitants. They added that the constant kidnapping of prominent individuals and the request for astronomical ransom to free them had become so common that it was impossible for the authorities to rescue them. Their inability to act contributed to their failure to keep order.<sup>372</sup> They claimed that the presence of an Inquisition Tribunal

---

*qué personas y cómo se podría proveer la costa sin que fuese a cargo de la Real Hacienda, y mientras tanto él como inquisidor ordinario ponga cuidado en remediar los daños que haya.*

<sup>369</sup> Medina. *Historia*, 1899, 36.

<sup>370</sup> AGI. SD, 868, L.3, F.122R-122V. *Real Cédula al arzobispo de Santo Domingo, para que envíe relación informando si conviene que haya en la isla española tribunal de la inquisición, de qué personas y cómo se podría proveer la costa sin que fuese a cargo de la Real Hacienda, y mientras tanto él como inquisidor ordinario ponga cuidado en remediar los daños que haya.*

<sup>371</sup> Medina. *Historia*, 1899, 43.

<sup>372</sup> Irene A. Wright “Rescates: with special reference to Cuba, 1599-1610.” *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Vol 3, #3:(1920), 333-361.

in the Caribbean would serve not only as a deterrent to pirates and corsairs but also to raise the Catholic morality of the local population and to keep the number of foreigners – Protestants – to a minimum.<sup>373</sup>

On the eve of the seventeenth century the frustration with the lack of a decision to establish new tribunals in the Americas was evident in the correspondence sent from the Indies to Madrid. More Bishops representing several dioceses in the New World became active in the discussions. Each one of them voiced their concerns for the social and religious disarray as well as the lack of religious personnel in their respective dioceses. In 1599 the Archbishop of Santa Fé de Bogotá, Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero, who had been the Inquisitor in Mexico City (1593-1598), wrote to the Council of the Indies requesting the establishment of a tribunal in Bogotá. Lobo Guerrero reminded the Council that the discussions to establish the tribunal in his diocese had started years before with no resolution, but that the tribunal was extremely necessary as the population continued to grow and heresy and religious ignorance was rampant through the realm.<sup>374</sup>

He gave extensive reasons, similar to those expressed by Toledo from Lima and placed an emphasis on his qualifications as previous Inquisitor. Lobo Guerrero even noted that establishing a tribunal in Bogotá with jurisdiction over Cartagena, Santa Marta, Popayán, Venezuela, and Quito would relieve some of the burden from the Lima tribunal. Lobo Guerrero recommended that the salary structure be similar to that of the tribunals in Lima and Mexico and if necessary the money could come from additional taxes levied on

---

<sup>373</sup> Medina, *Historia*, 1899, 43.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.* 41.



the “*indios vacos*” (the Indians who were not part on any *encomienda* and paid tribute directly to the crown).<sup>375</sup> Two Inquisition tribunals, one in Mexico and the other one in Lima, were insufficient to oversee the large population and the extensive territories conquered by the Spaniards in the Americas. The resulting loopholes had additionally allowed for the infiltration of unorthodox peoples and practices that contradicted the imperial strategies of the Spanish crown. More tribunals in the Indies had to be a priority if the crown wanted to keep total control of the colonies.

The failure to establish a third tribunal was not because of an absence of interest from the authorities or because of a lack of need for its existence. It was because the changes in the metropolis’ goals and administration had, temporarily delayed reaching any decision regarding a new tribunal. The twilight years of the sixteenth century coincided with the demise of Philip II’s reign. Decades of political struggles and countless wars to highlight Spain’s Catholic hegemony over Europe and the Indies had depleted the imperial coffers. Sickness spanning several years had exhausted the king’s health. In September of 1598, aware of his impending death (which happened on the 13<sup>th</sup> of that month) the King praised God for giving him such an extensive empire and lamented arriving at the end of his life without a son capable of governing the realms.<sup>376</sup> Yet the kingdoms the monarch claimed to possess were in a grave economic situation and political turmoil, and what his son was inheriting was far from governable and doomed if

---

<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> “*Dios, que me ha dado tantos reinos, me ha negado un hijo que los sepa gobernar.*” Ernesto Aramís Álvarez Blanco. *Felipe III y La Dorada Cuba entre 1598 y 1609*. Buenos Aires; Argentina. Librosenred. 2014, 12.

severe improvements to the administration of the empire, particularly in the colonies, were not undertaken.

The dying king's concern had as much to do with his son's perceived lack of interest in government as it did with the future of his grand strategy. If he wanted to remain a powerful monarch Philip III had to maintain the worldwide possessions and the imperial monopoly on commerce in the Indies which financially supported Spanish global endeavors. In addition and above all, the young king was to perpetuate his father's lifelong goal of upholding and defending the purity of Catholicism and preventing the spread of heresy through his kingdoms.<sup>377</sup> The continuity and success of Philip II's plans rested, upon his death, not on the twenty-year-old Philip III's willingness to reign but in his ability to do so according to imperial traditions.<sup>378</sup>

The Grand Strategy relied on unquestionable support for and from imperial institutional growth in the Caribbean. Philip II plans for the expansion of the religious and secular organizations in the colonies had been key for his transatlantic strategy. The strengthened colonies, in return, served as protectors of the crown's plans and subjects which were pillars of his government. The colonies had to be fortified and their role

---

<sup>377</sup> Paul Allen. *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598 – 1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy*. New Haven; CT: Yale University Press. 2000. Introduction.

<sup>378</sup> Much has been written about the similarities and differences between Philip II and Philip III as individuals and as monarchs. For an examination of the transition between kings, the new approaches to the crisis in Europe (particularly with the Lower Countries, England, and France) which led to changes in government strategies see the above-mentioned Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica*; Alvarez Blanco, *Felipe III y la Dorada*; as well as chapters eight and nine of J. H. Elliott. *Imperial Spain, 1469 – 1716*. London; England: Penguin Books. 2002, 285 – 333. For their respective Catholic policies and imperial practices see A.D. Wright. *Catholicism and Spanish Society under the Reign of Philip II, 1555 – 1598, and Philip III, 1598 – 1621*. Lewiston; NY: The Edwin Mellen Press. 1991.

within the imperial plans embraced by rulers and subjects alike in an all-encompassing alliance of agency. Philip II expected the continuity of his imperial enterprise.

The new king's approach to government was, to say the least, less autocratic than his father's. He delegated functions and actions to trusted individuals on both sides of the Atlantic, and in the absence of funds to continue his father's wars, he entered, at least temporarily, into peace agreements with his enemies and discontented territories.<sup>379</sup> His Council of the Indies, which included people who formerly served in the New World, listened to the colonists' requests and began a process of **restructuring** and consolidation of the administration of the colonies. They gave the locals an unprecedented degree of autonomy and granted pivotal concessions to improve their functioning.<sup>380</sup>

#### **v – Strengthening the Catholic Presence in Cuba.**

The secular authorities in Cuba had joined in the growing requests for the consolidation and growth of the colonies' religious institutions. The Catholic hierarchy was known for its contributions to local government and for its pivotal role within imperial plans and therefore needed support. Less than a year after Philip II's death, on July 27, 1599, the Cabildo of Havana wrote to the new king expressing the need to strengthen the Catholic presence in that city to protect its people. The letter contained a series of requests to make Havana not only the official headquarters of the diocese but

---

<sup>379</sup> For a study on Philip III's international politics regarding peace among European powers see Allen, *Pax Hispanica*.

<sup>380</sup> Álvarez Blanco, *Felipe III y la Dorada*, 111.

also the much-needed stronghold of Catholicism to fight the proliferation of Protestantism in the Caribbean.<sup>381</sup>

The Cabildo asked Philip III to name a new prelate for the diocese which had been vacant since Bishop Salcedo's transfer to Nicaragua in 1597. They asked for the seat of the diocese to be moved to Havana citing the growing importance of that city which bishops and governors had made their residence for at least thirty years. They claimed that Havana was the place where most official business was conducted and therefore it had to be protected. They added that the current cathedral in Santiago was abandoned, impoverished, and along with the city faced constant fires caused by pirates' and corsairs' invasions.<sup>382</sup> It is clear in the statements that its location was obsolete and useless to the needs of the colony.

Lastly, the Cabildo requested the most effective tool to maintain social order and to defend the colony against Protestantism. They asked the king to send more Inquisition personnel to Havana to protect the city and its inhabitants from the increasing enemies of the holy faith and of his majesty's empire. There were no officials of the Inquisition in Havana and the city was plagued with heresy. People committed grave crimes on a daily

---

<sup>381</sup> AGI, Patronato, 183, r. 23, n.º 1. *Expediente solicitando traslado de la catedral de Santiago de Cuba a la ciudad de La Habana, 1599 – 1605*. The Cabildo's request to move the cathedral to Havana as well as the subsequent petitions and (illicit) actions from the following bishops to move the cathedral were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, the prelates continued living in that city since it was considered the capital of the island. In 1625 the Council of the Indies ordered that the local authorities should decide where the cathedral should be. No decision was made until 1787 when Havana was erected a separate diocese (San Cristobal de la Habana) from Santiago. For an analysis on these debates at the regional level see Carlos Rodriguez Souquet. *El concilio provincial dominicano (1622 – 1623). Un aporte para la historia de las Antillas y Venezuela*. (Quintana Roo; México. Siglo veintiuno editores. 2003), 69 – 70.

<sup>382</sup> AGI, Patronato, 183, r. 23, n.º 1. *Expediente solicitando traslado de la catedral de Santiago de Cuba a la ciudad de La Habana, 1599 – 1605*.

basis which could not be confronted by the actions of a single priest who acted as bishop delegate (*Provisor*) with no additional personnel to support his work.<sup>383</sup>

The Cabildo's requests and recommendations were seconded by several administrators both religious and secular. The chancellor of the **Diocese** felt that having the **cathedral** in Havana, along with a new bishop, and sufficient Inquisition officials was more conducive to an effective defense of the city to "stop and repress the blasphemy and crimes committed by the dispirited people who arrive among the tumultuous fleets." He described the already existing fortifications and highlighted how a strong religious presence would complement the defensive system of the port city. To complete the unanimous support for the Cabildo's petition, the Governor of Cuba, Juan Maldonado Barnuevo, referred to the same issues and offered the same justifications and so did the Ecclesiastical council.<sup>384</sup>

#### **vi – Bishop Juan de las Cabezas y Altamirano.**

The demands for the island were partially fulfilled. While no resolution was given to moving the episcopal see to Havana a new bishop was assigned to Cuba. On January 11, 1602 the Dominican Friar, Juan de las Cabezas y Altamirano was presented to Pope Clement VIII as new bishop of the diocese of Santiago de Cuba.<sup>385</sup> Aside from his

---

<sup>383</sup> Ibid. The Cabildo referred to Fr. Luis de Salas who functioned as delegate commissary of the Inquisition.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid: "*para refrenar y compescer* (old castillian word meaning to repress, still used in Portuguese) *los delitos blasfemias y otras cosas que se hacen y cometen por muchas gentes desalmadas que vienen en el bullicio de las flotas.*"

<sup>385</sup> Although another man, the Franciscan friar Bartolomé de la Plaza had been selected for that post in 1597, there is no evidence he ever accepted the bishopric. Torres-Cuevas, *Historia*, 152.

qualifications, his appointment was the product of Philip III's administration efforts to promote people with experience in the administration of the colonies to leadership positions in the region. Altamirano arrived in Cuba in 1603 after serving in the neighboring Hispaniola as Provincial of the Dominican Friars and as professor of Theology and Canon Law from 1592 until 1601. During the first years of his tenure as bishop of Cuba, Altamirano attempted to curtail the problems with *rescates* and with the circulation of Protestants through his diocese by increasing the presence of religious personnel in Cuba, Jamaica and Florida. As part of his strategy, he also conducted Canonic visits through all his territories as mandated by the Council of Trent. He enlisted the collaboration of the local civil authorities to organize his diocese and developed a network of trusted individuals who were, like him, loyal to God and to the King.<sup>386</sup>

Another key member of the imperial defensive network against Protestantism and social chaos in Cuba was the new governor of the island, Pedro de Valdés. Having served under the leadership of his father-in-law Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in the conquest of Florida, Valdés had proven instrumental in the campaign both at sea and on land and had shown ample bravery and loyalty to God and the King. After fighting against English and French pirates and corsairs across the Caribbean, he was captured and sent to a jail in England where he learned a great deal about the crown's enemy, their language, culture, and purpose. Those years added to his contempt for the English which fueled his tenure as governor and made it one of his chief goals to rid the Cuban coasts of Protestant

---

<sup>386</sup> While Altamirano is mentioned in numerous works, the most complete biographical information comes from Fr. Victor Francis O'Daniel, O.P. The Right Rev. Juan de Las Cabezas de Altamirano: The First Bishop to Visit the Present Territory of the United States (1562-1615). *The Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 2, No. 4 (January 1917), 400 – 414.

pirates. He was appointed governor in 1600 and within two years was already in Cuba working tirelessly on its fortifications to secure the Caribbean Sea solely for Spanish domain and the island's cities only for Spaniards.<sup>387</sup>

He wrote on several occasions to King Philip III and to the Council of the Indies demanding support to eradicate foreigners. Upon his arrival in Cuba he promised the king a detailed list of all non-Spanish individuals living on the island. He claimed that two thirds of the population of Havana was Portuguese, which had increased steadily and rapidly since the merging of the Portuguese and the Spanish crowns in 1580.<sup>388</sup> He expressed his concern with transient Flemish, French, and English merchants and traders who were heretic enemies of the King and “inspired horrors in the Catholic colonists of Cuba.”<sup>389</sup> He, along with the local authorities, was worried about what damage they could cause to the order and the Christian morality of the population if swift action was not taken to eradicate their presence. They were “Protestants, Calvinists, and Lutherans, who distributed heretical books translated into Spanish, thereby jeopardizing the souls, especially of the rustics, particularly the Indians and the blacks, barbarous peoples, among whom they did the proselyting.”<sup>390</sup> The Governor described the dealings between

---

<sup>387</sup> Irene A. Wright. *Historia documentada de San Cristóbal de la Habana en la primera mitad del siglo XVII*. La Habana; Cuba: Imprenta “El Siglo XX.” 1930, 1-7.

<sup>388</sup> This is a collection of the governor's letters compiled by Ismael Sarmiento Ramírez and Aroa Huerta Quintana. “Una Mirada a la Isla de Cuba En Tiempos Del Gobernador Pedro de Valdés, a Través de Sus Cartas Al Rey (1602 – 1608).” *Caravelle*, Vol 106, 99-120. 2016.

<sup>389</sup> Valdés to King Philip III, cited in Wright, *Rescates*, 338 – 339. See also *El Obispo Fr. Juan De Las Cabezas Altamirano al Consejo de Indias, 2 de junio de 1604*. Cited in Cesar García del Pino. “El Obispo Cabezas, Silvestre Balboa y los contrabandistas de Manzanilla.” *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí*. N0 2, (Mayo – Agosto, 1975), 13 – 54.

<sup>390</sup> Valdés to King Philip III, cited in Wright, *Rescates*, 338 – 339.

the heretics and “his most Catholic majesty's subjects in Cuba” as more than business relations. They were known for “eating and drinking and sleeping together.”<sup>391</sup>

Furthermore, in the absence of physicians, the locals took their sick to the pirates to be treated and, he continued, both the civil and religious authorities were heavily involved with the pirates, “more than one priest was implicated, and they were slower than their flocks to reform.”<sup>392</sup> The Cuban administrators, Valdés and Altamirano, were clear in their demands and actions. Foreigners were the enemy and the root of disorder and as such they had to be eliminated in a concerted effort.

While the governor focused on building fortresses and increasing the Spanish military presence in Cuba, the new bishop concentrated on building the religious infrastructure of the island. He relied on the local clergy – regardless of its scant number and limited resources – to bring the diocese out of chaos. He extended Fr. Luis de Salas’s status as Provisor and enlisted him in his call for the complete intuitional reorganization of his territory.<sup>393</sup> In his first letter to Philip III, the bishop expressed the need to strengthen the Catholicism of the population and its adherence to the mandates of the Church through Trent as a solution to the moral and social disarray of the island. Altamirano was particularly alarmed about the locals’ relationship with Protestant pirates which went as far as making them godparents for their children. He asked the king to

---

<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> O’Daniel, *Altamirano*, 410.



send his armada to support his efforts to rid the coasts of Cuba from the enemies' heretical presence.<sup>394</sup>

The clergy who allowed such a preposterous relationship with the enemy had to be corrected, and if necessary, replaced. Altamirano's reforms therefore, required increasing the number of well-prepared religious personnel of his diocese. He requested friars from several religious orders to establish convents through the island and initiated the establishment of the first two seminaries for the formation of local priests. The bishop ordered extensive renovations for the local hospital and staffed it with religious and civilian healthcare personnel. Altamirano requested the construction of female convents and asked their superiors to send nuns to Havana. He streamlined the collection of tithes, encouraged transparency and financial accountability, and called upon his clergy to apply the mandates of Trent.<sup>395</sup> He was an energetic and honest man who through his actions was "perhaps the greatest exponent of Havana's civic growth during the first half of the seventeenth century."<sup>396</sup> While he encountered some opposition to his plans, the bishop did not abandon his project. In the absence, inability, or unwillingness of the locals' cooperation he called upon the neighboring religious authorities in Mexico to support his endeavors.

As a theologian and as an administrator Altamirano was aware of the mission of the Holy Office and of the changes its formal institutional presence could bring to a

---

<sup>394</sup> AGI: Santo Domingo, 150. *Carta del Obispo Cabezas Altamirano a Felipe III*, La Habana, 23 de septiembre de 1603. Cited in Álvarez Blanco, *Felipe III y la Dorada*, 181.

<sup>395</sup> O'Daniel, *Altamirano*, 410.

<sup>396</sup> Wright, *San Cristobal*, 29.

diocese. The prelate knew that, like his predecessors, he was the Ordinary Inquisitor of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba and was conscious of all the powers that office entailed. Unlike the previous bishops, however, he despised abusing those powers.<sup>397</sup> Altamirano also realized that he could not singlehandedly bring the necessary institutional changes to control the chaos that reigned through his territory. As the highest dignitary of the Catholic Church in Cuba, Altamirano did not hesitate to request from the Mexican authorities the immediate presence of official Inquisition personnel in his diocese.<sup>398</sup>

Altamirano's previous post in Hispaniola coincided with the requests for an Inquisition Tribunal for that island. He was knowledgeable of what was needed for a tribunal to be approved as well as why it had not become a reality in Hispaniola. A tribunal ought to be built from below. The foundation of a tribunal rested on the sociopolitical needs for its existence backed by the financial resources to support it and it had to be staffed with reliable and capable personnel to guide it. While Hispaniola did not meet those requirements, the island of Cuba was reaching that point. The population growth, the presence of pirates and Protestants, and the consequent increase in crimes demanded order. The financial support could be derived from the profitable enterprises of the port and if necessary from the local's rapidly growing wealth resulting from their licit and extralegal endeavors. More significant, the Council of the Indies was receptive to the local authorities' call for additional religious and civilian personnel for the city's

---

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Reference to Altamirano's request is in AGN. Inq. Año 1605, vol. 1578, Exp. 137, fs. 1. *Sobre la postulación de Francisco Carranco.*

protection. After all Havana was the “key to the Indies where your majesty’s treasures are secured” and it needed special attention and defense.<sup>399</sup>

### **vii – Requests for a Commissary of the Inquisition in Havana.**

Havana was, according to Altamirano, ready to receive the Inquisition personnel adequate for a port city. He wrote to the Holy Office authorities in Mexico requesting the presence in “the City of San Cristobal de la Habana of a Commissary and other ministers the Holy Office has in other port cities.”<sup>400</sup> Altamirano could have been thinking either about Santo Domingo in Hispaniola or Veracruz in New Spain as they were both busy ports in the Caribbean. The bishop, however, was most likely referring to the latter because of its parallel developments and its similarity with the city of Havana.<sup>401</sup>

In spite of the economic and demographic resemblance between Havana and Veracruz, in terms of Inquisition personnel, Havana was at a considerable disadvantage. At the time Altamirano made his request to Mexico, Veracruz had one of the forty-two Commissariats active through New Spain while Cuba had none. Altamirano’s jurisdiction encompassed Cuba, Jamaica and Florida, and he had no dedicated Inquisition personnel. Yet, the Commissariat of Veracruz which included the namesake city and the

---

<sup>399</sup> *Carta del Gobernador Pedro de Valdés al Rey el 22 de septiembre de 1603*. Cited in Isabelo Macías Domínguez. *Cuba en la primera mitad de siglo XVII*. (Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1978), 1. See the subsequent pages about the rapid economic and demographic growth of the island.

<sup>400</sup> “*Para que en la villa de San Cristoval de la havana huviesse comisario y los demas ministros quel santo officio acostumbratener en los pueblos que son puertos de mar.*” AGN, Inq, Año 1605, Vol. 1578, Exp. 137, fs, 1. *Sobre la postulación de Francisco Carranco*.

<sup>401</sup> For a comparison of the characteristics of the two cities at the time see Bernardo García Díaz and Sergio Guerra Vilaboy. Eds. *La Habana/Veracruz Veracruz/La Habana. Las dos orillas*. (Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 2002), 23 – 36.

neighboring region of Puebla de los Angeles had fourteen sub-commissariats and some of them even had lieutenant Commissaries and sub-Commissaries in addition to other supporting inquisition personnel.<sup>402</sup> Occasionally there were several Commissaries acting within the City of Veracruz alone while in the Diocese of Cuba there was no official commissary, only a bishop's delegate or a friar who still acted, unsupervised, under the auspices of the *Omnímada* Brief of 1522.<sup>403</sup> Most probably, Altamirano specifically requested a Commissary knowing their overabundance in nearby Veracruz and their effective supportive work.

The Office of Commissary had been added to the entourage of Inquisition functionaries in Castilla and Aragón in the 1550s. It was founded when the Supreme Council of the Holy Office leadership deemed this form of subdelegate functionaries necessary to deal with population control and to counteract heresy. Particularly, commissaries were tasked with supporting the work of the tribunals in preventing the expansion of Protestantism into the Spanish empire. They were to expand and strengthen the Inquisition presence beyond the towns and cities where there was a tribunal by

---

<sup>402</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 24.

<sup>403</sup> José Manuel López Mora. *Inquisición de Veracruz. Catálogo de documentos Novohispanos en el AGN. Estudio preliminar y notas.* (Veracruz: Colección Rescate, Universidad Veracruzana, 2009). An analysis of this work shows different Commissaries working in Veracruz at the same time. At the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico there is mention of an accusation letter sent from Cuba in 1602 to the Mexican Tribunal by a friar, however, the file is out of service because of its conservation state. See AGN, Inq. Año 1602, vol.256, Exp. 7, Fs. 1. *Denuncia que hace Fray Miguel de Estela contra Manuel Tavares, reconciliado que se quitó el Sambenito. Habana.*

encouraging and supervising the participation of familiars and other civilians in the social cleansing and preventing efforts of the Holy Office.<sup>404</sup>

Commissaries were key agents in the judicial system and were the Holy Office's presence on the outskirts of the tribunals' jurisdictions. They were most likely the people's only interaction with the Inquisition and were often mistaken by the population as Inquisitors. At the time of Altamirano's request there had been an increase in population in the Indies which intensified the need to maintain control over the incoming waves of migration. The arriving population was not only difficult to control but their Catholic orthodoxy was impossible to prove. Consequently, there was an explosion of commissariats throughout the Viceroyalty of New Spain and its satellite districts to aid in maintaining the desired control, particularly in the ports of entry.<sup>405</sup>

The large number of Commissariats established in the New World was partially responsible for the increasing clashes between local authorities. Conflicts over jurisdiction and privileges were common, especially when commissaries were assigned to cities where the Ordinary kept his residence and many times with his own Ecclesiastic Tribunal. The new commissaries, often appointed without the Ordinary's approval, "fractured" the diocesan structure and added new levels of bureaucracy to an already complicated and unclear judicial system. In the absence of an Ordinary or under his

---

<sup>404</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the functions of the Office of the Commissariat and of the Commissaries see Pedro Miranda Ojeda. *The commissioner of the Inquisition of New Spain, xvi-xvii centuries*, 2010. Available at [revistacoatepec.uaemex.mx/article/download/202/197](http://revistacoatepec.uaemex.mx/article/download/202/197). Dr. Miranda Ojeda has numerous articles analyzing the role of the Commissaries in New Spain; See also the cited work of Sara T. Nalle.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

orders, some commissaries acted as Ordinary Inquisitors within their jurisdiction and a few even had their own personnel and mini tribunal with *calificadores* and *alguaciles* (qualifiers and sheriffs) to handle minor cases.<sup>406</sup>

This office was reserved for a priest, either a regular (member of a religious order) or secular (diocesan). Being a Commissary of the Inquisition was an unpaid service to the main Tribunal. Therefore, a commissary was usually a well-established and financially-solvent diocesan priest, or the superior of a religious order whose access to monetary support from his order would allow for his work. The position was needed by the Institution but undesired by those with ambitions or “destined” to hierarchical prominence within the religious administration. Even though it was the lowest ranking office for the clergy within the Inquisition structure, the office of the Commissary was still regarded by some as an opportunity to reach a higher and paid post such as that of a regional Inquisitor or judge.<sup>407</sup>

In exceptional cases and based on family ties, some Commissaries made it onto the Supreme Council of the Inquisition in Spain. In the absence of nepotism, the other commissaries relied on their religious prominence and zeal for promotion. Most importantly, their advancement was directly related to their agency. They were evaluated on their willingness and ability to identify as many transgressors as possible and by the financial contributions resulting from the property sequestration they initiated. The more

---

<sup>406</sup> Ibid. Also Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 20.

<sup>407</sup> For additional information about the Commissariats also Kimberly Lynn. *Between Court and Confessional. The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

cases a commissary sent to his tribunal, the more his name was heard by his superiors, hence the better chances he had to ascend through the ranks of the ecclesiastical judicial system. If the case had the potential for the confiscation of wealth, such as with prominent individuals, the name recognition increased. Finally, while commissaries were valued because of their contributions and effectiveness, their office was certainly low in the scale of real power and decision making (see figure 2).<sup>408</sup>

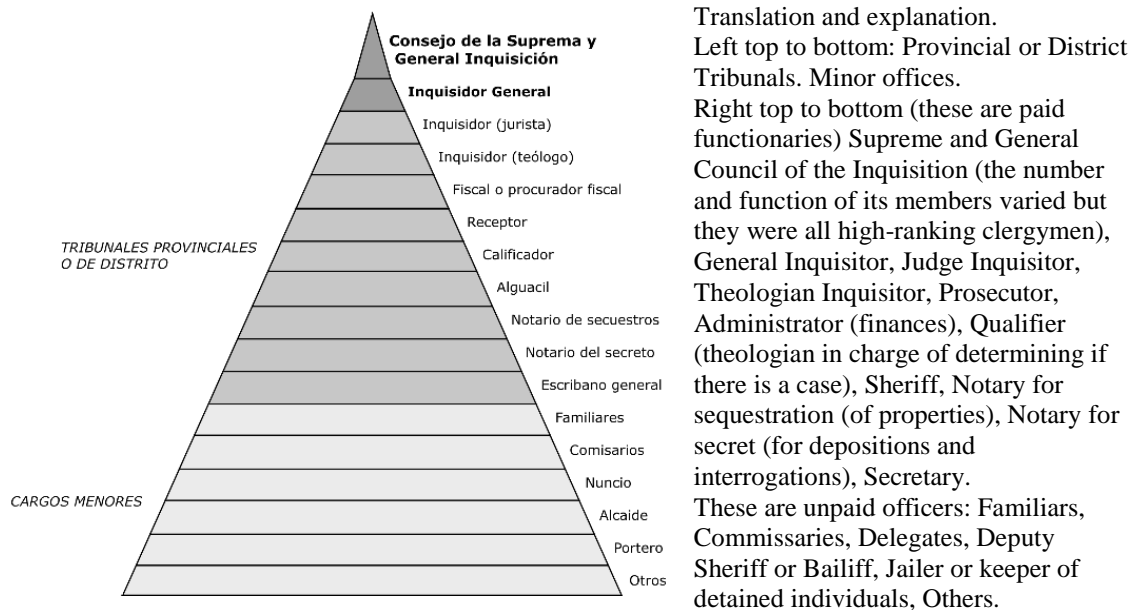


Fig. 2. This image illustrates the ranking system within the inquisition apparatus. The office of Commissary, held by a member of the clergy, ranked below that of a *familiar*, which was held by a lay person. This is an indication of how low a commissary was in the jurisdictional structure and how limited his powers were. Image source: <https://www.lahistoriaconmapas.com/europa/espana/la-inquisicion-en-espana-y-europa/> several other sources use the pyramid.

The men selected for the office of Commissary of the Holy Office were scrutinized for their qualifications both spiritual and intellectual. Among the requirements

<sup>408</sup> Ibid.

were a confirmed unblemished Old Christian background – no Jewish or Muslim blood – as well as no known relatives convicted by the Inquisition. Most of them “shared the same profile: they had university studies, perhaps at the Great University of Salamanca, and other times in one of the six prestigious major colleges (*colegios mayores*) in Osuna, Seville, Cordoba, Granada, and most often in Lima and Mexico City...most of them had the terminal degree of Doctor or Licentiate.”<sup>409</sup> During this period the men who entered the ranks of the Holy Office were expected to live the euphoria typical of post-Tridentine Catholicism and counterreformation.<sup>410</sup> Eradicating heresy and promoting the sacraments was their highest commission; exactly the type of functionary needed for the city of Havana.

**viii – Fr. Francisco Carranco, O.F.M. First Commissary of the Inquisition in Havana.**

Altamirano requested a functionary who would fulfill the socioreligious needs of the largest city of his diocese. Presented with such request, the Tribunal of the Inquisition in Mexico City chose a priest who embodied the qualifications and abilities necessary for the post. His name was Francisco Carranco. He was a Franciscan friar who at the time of his selection lived in Veracruz where he served his order as the Guardian of the one of the Franciscan convents. Carranco’s life was a display of faithfulness to Catholic doctrine. He possessed the required characteristics of a religious agent of imperial plans. He was loyal to the king and willing to serve as ordered. In addition, Carranco had

---

<sup>409</sup> Alberro. *Inquisición*, 31.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*



demonstrated a constant willingness to fulfill the mandates of the Holy Mother Church and the religious order he served.<sup>411</sup>

Carranco's biographical information available/found in the archives is miniscule and incomplete. Yet, a fragment of a deposition regarding his family background provides a glimpse into it and helps in the reconstruction of his early life and religious formation. Francisco Carranco (not his family name) was born in the region of Guadalcanal in the Kingdom of Seville (probably in the 1560s). His town was home to several Franciscan convents and was a cradle of Franciscan theological reforms and millenarian movements since the early fifteenth century.<sup>412</sup> Typical of the time, Carranco joined the Order as an adolescent. As a novice he was molded by reformed Franciscans who influenced his attitudes and actions as a friar, a priest, a missionary, and ultimately as an officer of the Inquisition. He was a member of an old Christian family who had migrated to the New World in the 1580s when Francisco was already in the order. His brother was a renowned member of the military and a *familiar* of the Inquisition in Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico.<sup>413</sup>

---

<sup>411</sup> AGI, Inq. Año: 1595. Vol. 200 1ra parte, Exp. 4, fs. 6. *Información de que Fray Francisco de Carranco, Franciscano, es hermano de padre y madre de Cristóbal Yáñez familiar en Puebla.*

<sup>412</sup> Salvador Hernández González. "La Provincia Franciscana de Los Ángeles y sus conventos de la sierra norte Sevillana." *Asociacion Cultural Benalixa Guadalcanal*. Blog of the historian of the City. Available at <https://guadalcanalfundacionbenalixa.blogspot.com/2014/04/la-provincia-franciscana-de-los-angeles.html> Accessed on March 21, 2019.

<sup>413</sup> This fragment of the proceedings found at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico is the only biographical information for Carranco. Future research will be conducted at several archives in Spain to complete his biographical information. AGI, Inq. Año: 1595. Vol. 200 1ra parte, Exp. 4, fs. 6. *Información de que Fray Francisco de Carranco, Franciscano, es hermano de padre y madre de Cristóbal Yáñez familiar en Puebla.*

Fr. Francisco Carranco had been a functionary of the Inquisition for over ten years. In 1595, he was nominated to serve as one of the commissaries of the Inquisition in Veracruz, the city where he was already the guardian or superior of a Franciscan Priory. For that reason, or perhaps because his last name was different from his family's, he had to prove his Old Catholic roots following the common background check of the time.<sup>414</sup> Over twenty people testified during his *limpieza de sangre* proceedings filed before the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico City. Several of the witnesses were lay persons from his hometown of Guadalcanal who, at the time, were living in Veracruz and Puebla. Others were Franciscan friars from Veracruz. They all swore to Carranco's faithfulness and ability to perform as officer of the Inquisition.<sup>415</sup>

In addition to his Catholic background and good morals, Carranco matched the desired profile for an Inquisition functionary in Havana. He belonged to a generation of priests instructed immediately after the Council of Trent who received the standardized education newly demanded for the clergy by the Council. They studied either at regional houses of study (the equivalent of a seminary but specific to an order) or at universities where they received up-to-date instructions on canon laws, philosophy, homiletics, and above all, sacramental theology. He was, therefore, knowledgeable of the laws of the Church and of its mission. As such, he could support Altamirano's efforts to enforce the Tridentine mandates onto the population of Havana.

---

<sup>414</sup> It was and still is common for a person who entered a religious order to change his/her name.

<sup>415</sup> AGI, Inq. Año: 1595. Vol. 200 1ra parte, Exp. 4, fs. 6. *Información de que Fray Francisco de Carranco, Franciscano, es hermano de padre y madre de Cristóbal Yáñez familiar en Puebla.*

As a product of the Counter-Reformation, Carranco could be extremely helpful and committed to the imperial goals for the Caribbean. He would be actively engaged in the persecution and removal of any Protestants living in the diocese where he worked and in preventing others from entering. In particular, his post at the port city of Veracruz was key for curtailing the proliferation of unorthodoxy through the infiltration of printed works of dubious reputation. Inquisition functionaries were in charge of examining the cargo of the arriving ships in search of such prohibited literature. They were to destroy such literature and take appropriate actions against those who carried it.<sup>416</sup> His experience in Veracruz provided him with the institutional strength and support of a long line of Franciscan Commissaries of the Holy Office.<sup>417</sup>

As a member of the Franciscan Order, Carranco's transition into his new post in Havana should be easily accomplished. He would have no problems with his transfer to Cuba or with his insertion, as the highest Inquisition officer for the island, within its growing but still struggling society. Bound by his vow of obedience to the Seraphic Constitution and rules and empowered by his vocation as a missionary priest, Carranco was driven to succeed. His religious formation (education) grounded him in the Franciscan principles of embracing poverty and enduring any hardships associated to their mission in favor of constructing the kingdom of God and with the ultimate goal of achieving evangelical perfection. He enjoyed not only the prestige of his religious

---

<sup>416</sup> See the already cited work of Nesvig, *Ideology and Inquisition* which offers a detailed examination of the Franciscan friars role in the Inquisition, particularly to the contributions of the Commissaries in censorship. He mentions Carranco as one of them in pages 239 – 240.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid. 212.

institution but also the education, zeal, and charisma of the Seraphic Friars centered on their primordial mandate to rebuild Christ's Church.<sup>418</sup>

Most significant were Carranco's ties to the order in New Spain. Franciscans arrived in the region with the first Spaniards and played a substantial role not only in the evangelization of the natives but also in the establishment and preservation of religious orthodoxy. They were pivotal in the development and strengthening of the Viceroyalty institutions and administration. Carranco was, therefore, part of a strong and influential network of friars committed to serving the Church, the Empire, and the Inquisition.<sup>419</sup> Hence, he also enjoyed the support and institutional history of a strong and active network of Inquisition agents that endowed him with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed.<sup>420</sup> This was essential for Carranco's insertion and performance in his new post as well as to empower him to undertake new challenges.

---

<sup>418</sup> According to traditional hagiography Jesus appeared to St. Francis and told him "Francis, go and repair my house which, as you see, is falling into ruin." The mandate incorporated, along with living in and embracing poverty as a sacrificial path to sanctity, within the Franciscan Constitution and Rule. See General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friar Minor. OFM General Curia, 2016, available at [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org) accessed on April 2, 2019. For a synthesis of Francis' conversion which included his embrace of poverty and his commission to his followers to - do the same see John W. Coakley. "The Conversion of St. Francis and the Writing of Christian Biography, 1228-1263." *Franciscan Studies* 78 (2014): 27-71. See also Michael W. Blastic. *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>419</sup> The literature on the subject is extensive. One of its greatest exponents is Fr. Francisco Morales, O.F.M. For a comprehensive study on the history and role of the Order of Saint Francis in the New World see Antolín Abad Pérez. *Los Franciscanos en América*. (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992). For a specific study on the Franciscan evangelization tradition in Mexico see the cited work of Robert Picard and Juan Meseguer Fernández. "Contenido Misionológico de la Obediencia e Instrucción de Fray Francisco de los Ángeles a los Doce Apóstoles de México." *The Americas*, Vol 11, issue: 3 (October 1955), 473-500.

<sup>420</sup> See the cited works of Phelan and McClure as well as Martin Nesvig. *The Forgotten Franciscans. Writings from an Inquisitional Theorist, a Heretic, and an Inquisitional Deputy*. University Park; PA: Pennsylvania State University Press. 2011, 4-6.

The Franciscan linked system of convents and friars to which he belonged extended beyond New Spain's borders. It included the monastery in Havana and its satellite missions in Florida which had been taken over by the Franciscans after the Jesuits' attempts to evangelize the Natives had been abandoned.<sup>421</sup> Carranco was assigned as Guardian (superior) of the convent and as Commissary of the Inquisition in the city of Havana which elevated his rank and influence and increased his ability to interact across the region. He could interfere in matters of concern to both the order and the Inquisition because of his dual role. As the guardian of the Franciscan Convent he was entitled to mediate in the affairs of his order in Havana and in Florida and as the functionary of the Holy Office he enjoyed numerous privileges that placed him above some of the local authorities and therefore, out of their jurisdictional reach.

Carranco was the first official functionary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Cuba. As such he was sworn to abide by the rules and regulations established by its Supreme Council. Years earlier, when the Council of Trent was defining the laws to be followed by Catholics throughout Christendom, the Spanish crown through the General Inquisitor Fernando de Valdés issued a series of rules and regulations that governed the legal rights, duties, and actions of the Inquisition and of its agents throughout the Spanish realms. Published in 1561, the *Instrucciones del Inquisidor* (Inquisitor's Instructions)

---

<sup>421</sup> For a most recent history of the history of the Franciscans in Cuba see Arelis Rivero Cabrera. *Commitment Beyond Rules: Franciscans in Colonial Cuba 1531 – 1842*. (California: The Academy of American Franciscan History, 2017), 34-36. For the Franciscans in Florida see the cited works of Geiger and Gannon.

contained eighty-one articles stipulating how an Inquisition was to proceed and how its officials were to behave.<sup>422</sup>

The *Instructions* were precise in offering step-by-step procedural orders for the entirety of the process. From qualifying and classifying a crime to be prosecuted, to the process of detention of an accused, to the methods for administering punishment and absolution, the instructions addressed every single aspect of an Inquisition process. In addition, the *Instructions* determined the qualifications for a man to be considered for an office of the Inquisition as well as his duties and responsibilities.<sup>423</sup>

In the introduction, Valdés strongly addressed the mandate for his personnel to follow his instructions.<sup>424</sup> He deemed them necessary even though they had already been established by the Holy Office in Rome, because “in several of the Inquisitions, these procedures have not been followed nor guarded and they should be.” Valdés wanted to ensure that from that moment onward there would be no discrepancies in procedures and that his officers complied with it for the safeguarding of the “Holy Catholic Faith.”<sup>425</sup> The *Instructions* were handed to every individual – civilian or religious – who occupied any position within the Inquisition bureaucracy.<sup>426</sup>

---

<sup>422</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1561. Vol. 1480, Exp. 1. fs. 1-12. *Instrucciones del Inquisidor Fernando de Valdés*.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

<sup>424</sup> Valdés’ instructions were based on the original developed and issued in 1376 by Nicolas Eymerich. *Directorium Inquisitorum*. Traducción José Antonio Fortea Cucurull. (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, S.L. 2.

<sup>425</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 59.

<sup>426</sup> See figure 1.

The prospective officers had to read the instructions and sign an oath in front of other Officers of the Inquisition.<sup>427</sup> The Oath was specific as to what they could and could not do and was explicit about their expected behavior as representatives of the Holy Office. They swore to secrecy of all procedures and information in front of God and of “His Holy Cross” and to be a good and faithful minister of the Holy Office. They were to reveal to their respective tribunal every type of heresy they encountered either by witness or by information related to them. The officers were required to use their property if necessary, to fund the discovery of crimes and to “proceed against all of those delinquents, accomplices, and their co-conspirators.”<sup>428</sup>

Carranco was required to follow the organizational structure of the Inquisition. He had to recognize and obey the Lord Inquisitors as his legitimate superiors and judges. He had to conform and comply with all of the instructions, privileges, and exemptions, both Royal and Apostolic, and any other immunities granted to the Holy Office. The document he signed demanded that he should maintain a good correspondence with all of the ecclesiastical and temporal justices and their ministers, and to respect them and revere them with all due reason. The oath ended with a promise to comply with the help of God, “and if I do not do so, May He make a claim against me, Amen!”<sup>429</sup> This pledge, which was placed within the functionary’s file and kept at the Inquisition Tribunal, made Carranco’s appointment as the first Inquisition functionary to Cuba official and held him

---

<sup>427</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1561. Vol. 1480, Exp. 1. fs. 1-12. *Instrucciones del Inquisidor Fernando de Valdés*.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

accountable to the authorities in the event he failed to abide by any of the procedures to which he affirmed allegiance.

Prior to his relocation to Cuba, Carranco had already been involved in an Inquisition case related to the island.<sup>430</sup> In 1604 the Commissary informed his superiors in Mexico and Seville about the transfer of a Flemish prisoner named Pedro Pedro from Havana to Spain.<sup>431</sup> The man had been tried for Lutheranism in Mexico in 1598.<sup>432</sup> In 1603, he had been sent to Havana to serve his sentence but had escaped upon arrival. The document forwarded by Carranco included his comments on the case and the transcripts of the interrogation of seven witnesses who confirmed Pedro's escape. The men interviewed by the local authorities in Havana described the consequent year-long, citywide manhunt ordered by the Governor of Cuba, Valdés, who offered a reward of one hundred *reales* to whomever captured the heretic. The compensation was to be paid by the Captain of the *Nao* (ship) who had transferred the prisoner to Havana and from whom he had escaped. All the witnesses mentioned the collaboration of the authorities in the recapture of the Flemish and his placement in a highly secured local prison. The deportation from the island to Seville had been initiated by the Procurator of the Diocese,

---

<sup>430</sup> AGN: Inq. Año: 1598. Vol. 165, Exp. 7, fs. 69. *Proceso contra Alberto de Meyo, Natural de Villa Hedo en Flandes, Tonelero en la calle Tacuba, en México, fue preso en la Habana. México.* The case was addressed in a previous chapter and it is related to the one that follows against Pedro Pedro.

<sup>431</sup> AGN, Inq. Año: 1604. Vol. 368 1ra Parte, Exp. 75, fs. 282A - 289. *Denuncia contra Pedro Pedro por haberse huido en la Habana y lo volvieron a prender. Fue llevado a las galeras a donde iba condenado por el Santo Oficio.*

<sup>432</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1598. Vol.165, Exp. 2, fs. 114. *Proceso contra Pedro Pedro, natural de Argon de Flandes, por Luterano. San Juan de Ulúa.*



Luis de Salas, who served unofficially as Commissary of the Inquisition in Havana, delegated by the local Bishop, Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano.<sup>433</sup>

The Inquisition focus on persecuting, prosecuting, and eliminating Protestants was common of the post-Tridentine militancy of the Catholic Church through the Spanish Empire. It was its mean to uphold, guarantee, and safeguard the religious orthodoxy of its subjects. Heretics had to be removed “so that they do not infect the faithful with their contagion because putrescent meat must be cast out. The sheep with mange must be repelled from the flock and destroyed.”<sup>434</sup> The infiltration of non-Catholic ideologies was perceived dangerous to the Spanish Crown and preventing it became for some more than a duty, a lifestyle.

In the Caribbean, the outskirts of Spanish Catholicism, eradicating Protestants served the additional preemptive function of impeding their access to the mainland colonies. Capturing and deporting one heretic from Havana was more than an act of safeguarding the orthodoxy of Spanish religion, a warning to Protestants to stay away from the colonies. The government of the island, therefore, did not spare its limited resources to find and deport Pedro Pedro and the authorities’ level of collaboration with the Inquisition officials across the Caribbean was overly efficient. Soon after Carranco’s arrival in Havana, the nature of this interaction and collaboration would change as the authorities involved in the Flemish affair would be entangled, most of them as accused, in Carranco’s inquisitorial crusade.

---

<sup>433</sup> AGN, Inq. Año: 1604. Vol. 368 1ra Parte, Exp. 75, fs. 282A - 289. *Denuncia contra Pedro Pedro por haberse huido en la Habana y lo volvieron a prender. Fue llevado a las galeras a donde iba condenado por el Santo Oficio.*

<sup>434</sup> *Decretum*, causa 24. Cited by Nesvig, *Ideology*, 1.

## **Chapter VI: Protection from Depravity: Carranco and the Inquisition on the Spanish Frontier of Heresy.**

### **i – Establishing His Position.**

In the latter months of 1605, Carranco was appointed as the first Commissary of the Inquisition for Havana. In December of the year prior to traveling to the island, he gave his replacement, the Franciscan Friar Balthazar Morales, detailed instructions about the responsibilities of his position and role. As Commissary of the Inquisition in the port of San Juan de Ulúa in Veracruz, Morales was to lead with decorum, communicate with determination, and act with a firm hand. As the functionary in charge of censorship of incoming literature, he should demand from the secular authorities to be the first to board the newly-anchored ships to conduct a thorough inspection of the cargo. Carranco instructed Morales to search the vessels, interview the sailors, and confiscate any suspicious literature. He was to burn at once any book printed in Holland or Zeeland.<sup>435</sup> Specifying the provenance of the books directly associated the people from the Low Countries to heresy and hence the need to reject their presence which had increased during the previous years.

Carranco was delegating the instructions he had received from the Inquisition authorities in Spain, which he was also to follow in his new post. He was ordered to throw any unorthodox book into the fire “because they can endure for centuries and infect those who come after their publication. And while the voices of heretics can only fill a

---

<sup>435</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1605. Vol. 1566, Exp. 8, fs. 2. *Instrucciones de Fray Francisco Carranco para Fray Baltazar de Morales.*

city, books can pass from region to region, from kingdom to kingdom.”<sup>436</sup> The letter to Morales showcased Carranco’s experience as an officer of the Inquisition as well as his comprehensive knowledge of Holy Office personnel behavior and responsibilities in a port city. The directives were also an indication of his authoritarian tendencies and leadership capacity, his intolerance for those who disrespected the office of the Commissary, and his intransigence of unorthodox religious practices.<sup>437</sup> Upon instructing his friar brother, Carranco was ready to exercise his old responsibilities in a new territory.

His appointment pleased bishop Altamirano. The prelate wrote to the authorities in Mexico thanking them for accepting his requests and for supporting his efforts to fight the enemies of the faith. He felt relieved that additional religious personnel would serve the spiritual needs of his flock and would aid in correcting the depravity rampant throughout the city. Altamirano, who was in Florida conducting a Canonical Visit when Carranco arrived in Havana, continued by praising the Franciscan friar’s expertise and knowledge of Canon laws and Inquisition rubrics as shown by the many years he had served as Commissary in Veracruz. He also acknowledged Carranco’s well known

---

<sup>436</sup> Diego de Simancas, *De catholicis institutionibus*. Cited by Nesvig, *Ideology*, 1.

<sup>437</sup> During Carranco’s time as Commissary in Veracruz, he participated in numerous searches at the port, confiscating and destroying numerous books, however, in certain occasions he allowed for lax searches. See Nesvig, *Ideology*, 239-240. See also a record in which Carranco permitted the passage of numerous recently printed books of unknown reputation, including *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. AGN, Inq. Año 1605. Vol. 275, Exp. 13, fs. 309 f y v. *Sobre la visita de los navíos en San Juan de Ulúa*, 23 de septiembre de 1605. Three years earlier Carranco had reported preventing the devil from entering the kingdom of New Spain. AGN, Inq. Año 1602. Vol. 452, Exp. 69, fs. 293-294v. *Noticia del Antecristo en la Nueva Veracruz*.

Christian virtues and expressed his confidence that the new Commissary would be of great help and benefit to his people.<sup>438</sup>

Altamirano's relief and excitement was linked to Carranco's dual functions. His enthusiasm had as much to do with the help he expected to receive from Carranco as a Franciscan friar as with his role as Commissary of the Inquisition for the port city. His duties as a friar/priest implied serving the spiritual needs of the population and contributing to the revamping the Christian morals of the locals. He was to participate and to lead the spiritual life of his flock and to encourage their sacramental practices. As an Inquisition officer, Carranco was to deter, if not control and avoid, the problems caused by heretic pirates and the infamous *rescates* in which the majority of the population, including members of the clergy, was involved.

*Rescates* was still fresh in the bishop's memory. Only two years earlier, in 1604, Altamirano had been one of the pirates' countless victims. When the Bishop visited the town of Bayamo, on the eastern side of the island, he and other clergymen were taken prisoner by a French pirate who demanded an exorbitant amount of money as ransom. After spending several months captive aboard the pirate ship, a group of prominent *vecinos* produced the requested money. Once the bishop had been safely rescued, the residents of the town organized an attack on the pirates killing their leader.<sup>439</sup> The

---

<sup>438</sup> AGN, Inq, Año 1605, vol. 1578, Exp. 137, fs, 1. *Sobre la postulación de Francisco Carranco.*

<sup>439</sup> The event is well known in Cuban history and literature as it was the basis for what is considered the first poem written on the island called *Espejo de Paciencia*. There are numerous works on these events. For a comprehensive recent analysis of the subject see Graciella Cruz-Taura. *Espejo de Paciencia y Silvestre de Balboa en la Historia de Cuba. Estudio Edición Crítica de Espejo de Paciencia y edicion documental.* Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2009.

episode reverberated through the island and prompted the authorities to increase their war against piracy and corruption.

As the official representative of the Inquisition in Havana, Carranco joined forces against the disorder that permeated colonial society in Cuba and the surrounding waters. He was a key agent amid the ongoing counterreformation efforts of the Spanish empire on the Atlantic frontier of heresy. As a warden of the faith and protector of the faithful, he was to fight the heretical anticatholic propositions of Protestantism which preyed and grew, particularly, on the ignorant, uneducated, and deprived colonists. The Commissary along with the bishop and the governor engaged in a massive process of social transformation which relied on the application and acceptance among the population – willingly or not – of the mandates of Trent. The sacraments and the religious norms fostered and enshrined by and within metropolitan society had to become the law of the colonies and Cuba was no exception.

The Council's impetus in repelling – and despising – Protestantism resonated across the Atlantic and fighting against it was a priority in the Caribbean. The call to fight dissidence was reflected on the ideology and discourse of the time. Books, pamphlets and edicts justifying the sociohistorical reasons for the existence of the Inquisition encouraged the elimination of Protestants by any means. Regardless of how extreme the measures were, their aim to protect the realms from Protestant infiltration were deemed as mandated by divine providence and needed by the empire.<sup>440</sup> The imperial personnel

---

<sup>440</sup> For an example of books published at the time which condemned Protestants, classified them as enemies of the state, and condone their persecution by the Holy Office see Ludovico Páramo. *De origine e progressu Officii Sanctae Inquisitionis*. (Madrid, 1598).

were to abide by the orders of Trent and the population was to respect the authorities' efforts in forming a defensive circuit along the Caribbean frontier.

## **ii – Strengthening His Powers.**

Carranco traveled to the city of Havana sometime during the first trimester of 1606 and was expeditious in his office upon arrival. During the first week of April he sent the first (as far as the archival record shows) set of letters to the Inquisition authorities in Mexico. He summarized a series of complaints previously filed under the jurisdiction of the local bishops who preceded his appointment adding that many of those cases had not been concluded. He requested permission to reopen some of them. Carranco also expressed the “extreme need” for more Inquisition personnel in Havana and requested that the Mexican Tribunal appoint four additional familiars.<sup>441</sup> He asked that one of them should live among the military (*gente de guerra*) as they needed particular order. Carranco also asked for one constable (*alguacil*), and two more notaries to support his work. He recommended several candidates for the posts who already lived in Havana and others from Veracruz who had experience working with the Inquisition. The friar described the city as crowded and busy, with problems of all kinds. Most particularly, he reiterated, the nature of Havana and its problems as a port city required more officers of the Inquisition to safeguard the Catholic faith “from the large transient

---

<sup>441</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1606. Vol. 1573, Exp. 14, fs 3. *Carta del Comisario de la Habana, Fray Francisco Carranco a los inquisidores dando relacion de asuntos tocantes al Tribunal de anos anteriores. La Habana.* The letter contains annotations about when the letters were received by the tribunal in Mexico and in some of the documents there is a note stating that there was a response sent. Few of the files at the archive contained the mentioned response.

population that constantly roams the streets of the city.”<sup>442</sup> Bringing order to such convoluted society required additional personnel.

Carranco’s request for additional functionaries immediately after his arrival suggests his agency and intentions. The promptness of the demand also demonstrates his early realization for the need of an Inquisition Tribunal in Havana as a calculated strategy. He was conscious that the effectiveness of his office depended on its swift actions and on the extent and willingness of the personnel at his disposal. He also knew that the creation of a tribunal was not a task easily decided. Tribunals were established by Royal Decrees after lengthy discussions at the Council of the Indies where arguments in favor and against them were debated. Carranco arrived in Havana amid active and lengthy discussions in Spain and in the colonies about establishing a Tribunal in the Caribbean. No decision had been announced and the city desperately needed it. Hoping that Havana would be considered for a third New World Tribunal because of its strategic position and the festering presence of Protestants, without delay Carranco launched a busy career as Commissary of the port city.

There were several prerequisites necessary for the establishment and functioning of a new Tribunal. The authorities required enough evidence that a tribunal was needed to maintain social order as demonstrated by the level of ideological dissidence and/or criminal activity in the region. The new tribunal was also expected to be or had the potential to be financially self-sufficient by identifying possible sources of income either from the local or the imperial administration. They required experienced personnel,

---

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

knowledgeable of both Canon and Civil laws and procedures, to serve in the Tribunal. The men selected would prosecute heretics, blasphemers, bigamists, and those guilty of other acts of immorality as defined by Catholic Canons and, therefore, were to know the definitions and the required punishments for them. They had to abide by strict procedures and rubrics similar to those followed by the civil and criminal judges, which entailed a high level of education. Additionally, to function properly, the tribunal depended on a network of reliable informants, *familiares*, and other allies who would identify and denounce unorthodox behaviors and acts. These individuals were an extension of the Inquisition functionaries and an additional and effective deterrent, particularly in remote places.<sup>443</sup> Hence, Fr. Francisco Carranco wasted no time and requested support from his superiors in Mexico.

Carranco had to justify his petition. He started by documenting a caseload sufficiently large that would prevent his work as agent of the inquisition. The cases had to be grave enough to merit sending additional skilled personnel to Havana. A significant number of accusations, particularly if they had the potential for scandal, was a good beginning. Between April 20 and 24, Carranco wrote nine accusations. Seven of them were propositions of heresy and witchcraft and suspicions of Judaism.<sup>444</sup> The accused were people living in Havana and the charges matched the type of crimes that could be

---

<sup>443</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 26-28.

<sup>444</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1606. Vol. 1566, Exp. 10, fs 20. (CAJAS). *Cartas con distintos asuntos de Fray Francisco Carranco. Una de ellas en contra del Gobernador de la Florida*. In the letter Carranco mentions having separate sets of testimonies about these accusations but they are not found in the records.



possibly filed based on the Church Canons and on the Manual of Inquisitors.<sup>445</sup> They were, therefore, in full accord to his duties as Commissary and with the needs of the city.

### **iii – Extending His Jurisdiction.**

Two of the accused differed from the rest. Carranco expected the nature of this claims to merit the attention of the Tribunal in Mexico and reinforce his petition. He accused two men living in St. Augustine in Florida. This crown colony was under the direct control of Madrid for civil matters because of *Patronato Regio Indiano* and not under “nearby” Cuba or Mexico. Religiously, however, the colony was under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba and of its respective bishop, at the time Fray Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano.<sup>446</sup> This became Carranco’s first manufactured sin beyond his territorial jurisdiction as he was only designated as Commissary for the city of Havana and not the satellite colony of St. Augustine. Further significant was the prominence of one of the men involved in his claims, the governor of Florida, Pedro de Ybarra. This constituted Carranco’s first attempt to implicate a high-ranking functionary of the Spanish Empire in his array of accused. Ybarra’s importance increased the profile of a potential case. Along with Ybarra, Carranco filed charges against a Frenchman whose name was not revealed in the document.<sup>447</sup>

---

<sup>445</sup> For the jurisdiction of the Inquisition in New Spain over Crimes against the Faith between 1536 and 1820 see the table compiled by Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 6. Because of its relevance the table is reproduced as an appendix.

<sup>446</sup> See Gannon, *The Cross*, 46.

<sup>447</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1606. Vol. 1566, Exp. 10, fs 20. (CAJAS). *Cartas con distintos asuntos de Fray Francisco Carranco. Una de ellas en contra del Gobernador de la Florida.*

The accusation against Ybarra fell within the realm of omission more than commission, yet it was still punishable. He denounced the Governor for failing to arrest the Frenchman for making blasphemous statements in public that scandalized the Indians. The Frenchman had been heard in the streets stating that only God, and not the cross or the religious images should be venerated. Carranco quoted Ybarra's refusal to detain the Frenchman because "he lived by only two laws, favoring his friends and persecuting his enemies."<sup>448</sup> Both statements, according to the Commissary, contradicted the laws of the Church and rejected the decrees of the king. He made other serious accusations against Ybarra, including the practice of sorcery and issuing heretical statements against the Virgin Mary. Carranco based his accusations on a letter he received from Father Francisco de Pareja, the Guardian of the Franciscans in St. Augustine. According to Fr. Pareja, both Ybarra and his heretic friend were also known for reading books of dubious religious orthodoxy.<sup>449</sup> Aside from the gravity of the accusations issued in the document, the letter showed that at the time of his arrival in Cuba, Carranco already participated and benefitted from an Inquisition system of informants imbedded within the Franciscan evangelization network. In addition, he was trusted by the leadership of his order enough to make him a participant of such serious accusations against important individuals. This kind of support was crucial to entrench his powers and expand his reach as a potential Inquisitor.

---

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

The document proved the claims of the colonial authorities regarding the close association between the locals and the foreigners. It was a type of relationship that permeated all sectors of society and broke the boundaries of religion or nationality which were so important for the Spanish imperial identity and plans. The document also demonstrates a lack of extreme Catholicism, or of the version desired by the crown, among the population, including the authorities. It also showed a degree of disregard for the secular and religious norms espoused throughout the empire accompanied by a lack of interest in pursuing the evangelical perfection promoted by the Council of Trent.

Carranco's reference to the lax attitude of the leadership in matters of faith and their unwillingness to apply the laws of the empire was even graver. He blamed the absence of Inquisition personnel, the territorial extension of the diocese, the distance between Havana and St. Augustine, and between the two with Mexico City as the obstacles for enforcing the authority of the Holy Office. He recognized that in the case of St. Augustine this was even more difficult since his authority was limited to Havana as stated in his credentials. The remedy, he claimed, was to extend the territorial jurisdiction of his Commissariat to incorporate St. Augustine.<sup>450</sup>

The letter is the first instance in which Carranco, at least in writing, challenged the local authorities. Along with the governor of Florida, Carranco mentioned the Bishop Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano, challenging his functions and jurisdiction – or lack thereof – as *Inquisidor Ordinario*. More than questioning the bishop's authority, he blatantly accused Altamirano of not enforcing the mandates of the Inquisition and of the

---

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

crown and failing to prosecute or at least reprimand governor Ybarra because the two “had a very close relationship.”<sup>451</sup>

The commissary reinforced his claims with additional complains. He stated that since the time he arrived in Havana from Veracruz, Altamirano added to every document he signed every one of his titles including that of Ordinary Inquisitor, which did not happen before. Carranco claimed that Altamirano, who was at the time in Florida conducting a canonical visitation, was interfering in Inquisition matters in St. Augustine. The bishop visited some of the ships anchored there and ordered the disposal and/or safeguarding of some heretical books, which was part of his role as commissary and not of the bishop’s. Carranco also complained about the lack of support he was receiving from the local authorities who in several instances demanded to see his credentials and prevented him from doing his work.<sup>452</sup>

The Commissary used his momentum to disclose secret communications he had sent to the Supreme Council of the Holy Office in Seville. With the alleged letter, not only had Carranco overstepped the responsibilities of his rank but bypassed his superiors’ discretion. He went as far as questioning the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of Mexico over the colony in Florida. In his opinion, St. Augustine would be better served under him than from the Tribunals in New Spain or in Seville. He referred to another letter he had sent earlier to the Tribunal in Mexico asking for credentials specifically stating his Inquisitorial powers over both Havana and St. Augustine, so he could perform better as

---

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

Commissary. Towards the end of the letter he lowered his tone and lulled his superiors, stating that, regardless of his suggestions, he would accept whatever the authorities decided.<sup>453</sup> Carranco's alleged communication with the Supreme Tribunal was an additional indication of his ulterior motives to establish a new Inquisition Tribunal in Havana under his direction and charging an imperial functionary reinforced the need for it.

The accusations levied against governor Ybarra and bishop Altamirano were just the beginning of a parade of manufactured sins and/or exaggerated charges filed by Carranco against high-profile individuals. Typical of the agents of the Inquisition, Carranco targeted people of sociopolitical and economic importance as subjects of his investigations.<sup>454</sup> A guilty verdict of an important person would guarantee a considerable financial reward if property was thereafter sequestered. In addition, cases filed against influential or socially-visible people had better chances of being heard by the Tribunals because of their prominence or potential for scandal. The allegations against Ybarra and Altamirano initiated Carranco's pattern of overstepping his boundaries, and while this could have negative consequences, it was a risk worth taking, since it guaranteed his name being recognized at the Mexican Tribunal. Despite his claims and requests

---

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> While Inquisition Tribunals and their dependencies received some subvention from the imperial coffers, they were expected to be financially self-sufficient. The main source of revenue was the confiscated properties and wealth of high-profile individuals. See Chuchiack, *Inquisition*, 26-29. The Inquisition was also a career for some of its officials who amassed significant wealth from properties confiscated. For an in-depth study of careerism within the Inquisition apparatus see the cited work of Kimberly Lynn.

Carranco never had jurisdiction over Florida.<sup>455</sup> Nevertheless, he seized every opportunity to try and to push the boundaries of his office because his dual post in Havana presented him with some of those chances.

Carranco's combined role as Guardian of the Franciscan Friars and Commissary of the Holy Office in Havana turned him into a regional administrative agent with extraordinary powers. While the Inquisition office did not grant him jurisdiction over Florida, his membership and rank within the Franciscan Order did, and his superiors used this confluence of powers. Not long after accusing Ybarra, Carranco was sent – sometime between April and May of 1606 – to St. Augustine by the regional Franciscan superior to mediate a conflict over jurisdictions between the members of his order and the governor of Florida.<sup>456</sup> He was welcomed at the port by the other man he had accused, Altamirano who was still in Florida conducting his canonical visit.<sup>457</sup> The three men were able to successfully solve the issues at hand. Carranco made use of his powers by removing some friars from St. Augustine, forbidding others from interacting with the Governor, and threatening those who failed to abide by his orders with excommunication. His

---

<sup>455</sup> Carranco's request of authority over La Florida was never fulfilled. According to two scholars who have addressed the history of the Inquisition in Cuba there were numerous attempts to establish a tribunal in Florida. Further research is needed to support or refute such claims. See Eugenio A. Alonso López. *Mohínas de la Inquisición*. Available at <http://www.kislakfoundation.org/prize/200201.html>. Accessed November 3, 2015 (and several times thereafter); See also Salvador Larrúa-Guedes. *Historia de la Florida Colonial Hispana. Tomo I, 1500 -1616*. (Miami: España Florida Foundation 500 years, 2010), 241 – 243, 273 – 277.

<sup>456</sup> Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M. *The Franciscan Conquest of Florida (1573 – 1618)*. Authorized facsimile of the original book produced in 1969 by University Microfilm. Ann Arbor, Michigan based on Fr. Geiger's dissertation. The Catholic University of America, Washington DC. 1937, 206.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.* 213.

resolute abilities as mediator added to his rising profile and made the governor trust the friar in future conflicts.<sup>458</sup> Carranco and Altamirano returned to Havana on the same ship, arriving during the early days of October of 1606.<sup>459</sup>

#### **iv – Expanding Canonical Definitions.**

Within days of his return, Carranco sent a new batch of accusations to the Tribunal in Mexico. The crimes alleged by the Commissary were common crimes such as bigamy, witchcraft, blasphemy, and solicitation. One of the accusations, however, went beyond the traditional caseload. On October 17, Carranco wrote to the Tribunal in Mexico City mentioning the arrest of a woman, Magdalena de Cárdenas. He had detained her at the request of *General de Carreras* Alonso de Chávez Galindo, the captain of the ship on which she had traveled from Veracruz to Havana. Carranco stated in the letter that Chavez knew that Magdalena was married in Tabasco, New Spain, but also knew her as a professed nun from the Convent of La Pasión, in Seville.<sup>460</sup> During the next two years Carranco directed a transatlantic investigation (Veracruz, Havana, and Seville) to uncover the truth about Magdalena's status. As a result, Magdalena was forced to spend

---

<sup>458</sup> Ibid. 216-222.

<sup>459</sup> Altamirano wrote to the king on October 8, 1606, informing him of his return with Carranco. AGI, Santo Domingo, 150. Copy in possession of the author obtained from the John Batterson Stetson Collection from the University of Florida. Cited as AI. 54-3-1.

<sup>460</sup> AGN, Inq. Año 1606. Vol. 283 2da parte, f. 551. *Carranco contra una mujer que se llama magdalena de cardenas casose siendo monja profesa*. There is a second set of documents filed in 1608 at the AGN which was produced in Seville and sent to Mexico thereafter. AGN, Inq. Año: 1608. Vol. 283, Exp. 116, fs. 550 A 584. *Denuncia contra Doña Magdalena de Cardenas, por haberse casado siendo monja profesa. Seville*.

the same amount of time and a considerable sum of money fighting those charges while remaining detained in Havana.<sup>461</sup>

Not much can be inferred about Magdalena de Cardenas' life from the scant documents that is not contradictory. The exception is that she was born in the *Collación de Santa Ana*, in the neighborhood of Triana, in the city of Seville, Spain, around 1584.<sup>462</sup> At the time, Seville was a rapidly-growing multicultural city serving as the port of exit and return to and from the New World.<sup>463</sup> It was a city of dualities and contradictions where opulence embraced extreme poverty through its overcrowded and narrow streets, where the architectural extravagance and solemnity of large churches and monasteries

---

<sup>461</sup> Magdalena's case will be expanded for future publication in a monograph upon further research at Mexican and Spanish archives. The information about her included in this section has been condensed from an academic paper submitted for one of my classes with Dr. Aurora Morcillo which focused on journeys and individual transformations across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and into the Caribbean. The paper was titled *On the Outskirts of her Empire*, and it is available upon request. A portion of her file was incorrectly filed and the documents are not organized sequentially.

<sup>462</sup> The information about Magdalena is inferred and compiled from the one letter dictated by her found in the AGN, Inq. (Unknown specific the date when it was written but it was received in México on November 13, 1607), Vol. 283, 2da parte., foja(s) 552 – 553. *Carta de Magdalena de Cárdenas al Tribunal del Santo Oficio in México*. The information also comes from the testimonies obtained in Seville from her mother where she claims that Magdalena left Triana about four years before 1607 at the age of nineteenth. Testimonio de María Hernández, 20 de junio de 1607, AGN, Inq. Vol. 283, 2da parte.

<sup>463</sup> This description is partially derived from a documentary produced by the *Ayuntamiento de Seville* in 2006. Directed by Paco Robles. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHj82b\\_jukc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHj82b_jukc) For academic works on Seville at the time see Alexandra Parma Cook, "The Women of Early Modern Triana: Life, Death and Survival Stategies in Seville's Maritime District." in Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell, eds. *Women in Port. Gendering Communities, Economic and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*. (Brill, Leiden and Boston, 2012), 41-68. The initial pages present a vibrant manufacturing and shipping section of Seville in the period 1570 -1610 and the role of women, based on notarial documents, who play a significant part in the dynamic transatlantic economy. See also Noble David Cook, "Sevilla: ¿una ciudad proto-industrial a base de la economía atlántica?." in Enriqueta Vila Vilar and Jaime J. Lacueva Muñoz. Eds. *Mirando las dos orillas: intercambios mercantiles, sociales y culturales entre Andalucía y América*. (Sevilla: Fundación Buenas Letras, 2012).



met with the permissiveness of numerous and sometimes dilapidated brothels and other ill-reputed establishments. It was a society divided between *pícaros* and nobles, between religious and atheists, all of whom went to Seville to escape to the New World and live there the life that pleased them.<sup>464</sup>

Magdalena grew up in such a cosmopolitan, seemingly progressive, and tolerant environment, which was also part of the somber Catholic Spain of King Philip II.<sup>465</sup> She was raised within very rigid roles and long-established moral codes upheld for clergy and laity alike and enforced by families, Church, and Inquisition. As a child she was surrounded by rumors and realities about a Holy Office that policed the Catholic morality of her city with a tribunal of its own that was able and willing to go to the extremes to rid the streets from poisonous deviants.<sup>466</sup> She lived in a time when “the Inquisition and the defense of Catholic orthodoxy remained essential for the survival of Spain and its worldwide empire, both at home and abroad.”<sup>467</sup> This was a time when the crown could not permit heretics to enter into the Spanish kingdoms and “to avoid this it should favor

---

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

<sup>465</sup> See the cited work of Kamen, *Spain, 1469 – 1714. A Society in Conflict*.

<sup>466</sup> When eliminating heretics, the Inquisitor was compared to a surgeon that had to remove, at whatever extent, the putrefied sections of a sick body to save someone’s life: “The Inquisitor used the rack and the stake to rid the body politic of bad believers.” See Margaret Mott. “The Rule of Faith over Reason: The Role of the Inquisition in Iberia and New Spain.” *Journal of Church and State* 40. No. 1 (1998): 57 – 81.

<sup>467</sup> Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 4.

the Holy Inquisition.”<sup>468</sup> This was the nation, the city and the society that she intended to escape when she traveled to the New World.

During her formative years Magdalena received the appropriate education of a woman of her rank; that is a middle to upper class woman.<sup>469</sup> From an early age Magdalena was taught at home, at Church, and through social convention that regardless of her socioeconomic status, she was inferior to men and as such Magdalena learned to obey the decisions made by others *for her own benefit*. She learned that there were only two honorable possibilities in life for a woman like her: either enter into a marriage or into a convent. Both paths strictly were strictly controlled by the Church and both led to a life of enclosure.<sup>470</sup> Born and raised after the Council of Trent, Magdalena received the intensity of the newly promulgated rules. “Restrictions of self-expression by women became more stringent after the Council of Trent set firmly in place tenets that promoted obedience, humility, and service as ideals for women.”<sup>471</sup> A nun or a wife were the

---

<sup>468</sup> Instructions given by King Charles V of Spain to his son Philip II, 1543. Cited in Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 4.

<sup>469</sup> Her family status is obvious in the testimonies obtained from the Inquisition records. AGN, Inq. Año: 1608. Vol. 283, Exp. 116, fs. 550 A 584. *Denuncia contra Doña Magdalena de Cárdenas, por haberse casado siendo monja profesa. Seville.*

<sup>470</sup> For an in-depth study of women role in Spanish society, especially in Seville at this time see Mary Elizabeth Perry. *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*. Princeton: NJ. Princeton University Press. 1990. See also the above cited work of Alexandra Parma Cook and Elisabeth Balancy, *Violencia civil en la Andalucía moderna (SS. XVI-XVII). Familiares de la Inquisición y bandrías locales*. (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1999).

<sup>471</sup> Mary E. Giles. Ed. *Women in the Inquisition. Spain and the New World*. Baltimore; MD. The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1999, 10.

choices in life prescribed for women within the Catholic society of the Spanish empire. Being from a city full of contradictions, however, Magdalena chose to be both.<sup>472</sup>

It is unknown if becoming a nun had been her decision or if she had been forced into it as it was customary. Regardless of the reason, leaving the convent in order to get married after professing as a member of a religious order was a daunting proposition, but it was her own. This was a grave risk and especially dangerous since she was escaping without the proper and almost impossible-to-obtain permission from the ecclesiastical authorities. Leaving the convent implied breaking the rules. It also signified abandoning the known and safe surroundings not only of the convent walls but also of her beloved Triana. To start anew, Magdalena had to disappear from the city of her birth. As painful as it was, such was the need of her journey. Away from the cradle of strict Catholic morals, far from the metropolis that was expanding into an unknown New World, Magdalena thought she could live the life she actually wanted and chose. By crossing the Atlantic, Magdalena sought to reinvent herself. Little did she know that even across the

---

<sup>472</sup> This statement (and conclusions) depart from the idea that she was indeed the accused nun. Regardless of her denial, the statement from Fr. Moreno (and others) point otherwise. While he said that he did not know of any nun or novice who had ran away from the monastery of La Pasión, he also claimed that he had a niece named Catalina who was a nun in said monastery. He stated that because he had not been the confessor for the monastery for more than five years he had not seen or know about her. In addition, according to one of the testimonies taken in Havana, Fr. Moreno was the uncle of one of the witnesses, Francisca Moreno, who also testified earlier in Havana that Magdalena had used the name Catalina while she was a nun at La Pasión in Seville. Adriano de Eraso, Magdalena's attorney, later interviewed several nuns at the Monastery of La Pasión who testified not knowing the woman and that no nun had ever ran away from the convent since its foundation. Naturally, accepting the escaped would have damaged the monastery's reputation and if known, no reputable family would allow one of its members to enter the convent. The economic loss and the dubious prestige for the convent of La Pasión would have been beyond repair. See the testimonies Fr. Pedro Moreno, María Hernández, the nuns of La Pasión, and Ana (illegible) on June 16 and 20, 1607. AGN, Inq. Año 1608, Vol. 283, 2da parte.

immense expanse of the ocean, on the outskirts of the Spanish empire, a zealous Inquisitor would attempt to put an end to her defiance.

Magdalena's case was unusual and full of procedural irregularities from its beginning.<sup>473</sup> Indeed, she had arrived in Havana from Veracruz, but in March, seven months before Carranco wrote the letter.<sup>474</sup> She had remained imprisoned in Havana, without the Commissary informing the Tribunal in Mexico about her case. Magdalena had been detained by Carranco as requested by general Chávez Galindo, but neither the Commissary nor the general, had the authority to order nor to carry out her detention. According to the Instructions for Inquisitors only theological qualifiers (*calificadores*) could decide if an arrest was warranted.<sup>475</sup> Not only was Magdalena arrested without the proper procedures, but after her detention, Carranco left for Florida where he remained for several months. He left Magdalena in Havana in a legal limbo, imprisoned in the private home of a trusted *familiar* because there “was no convent or honorable brother

---

<sup>473</sup> The uniqueness of this case merits some coverage and analysis as it is central to understanding Carranco's ad lib interpretation and application of the laws, which reflects on his aspirations for a higher post within the Inquisition. Ad Lib is short for Latin *ad libitum* literally meaning according to pleasure or spontaneous.

<sup>474</sup> This is inferred from a letter mentioning Chavez's *nao* arrival in Havana in March. <http://biblio.juridicas.unam.mx/libros/1/163/12.pdf>  
As well as the letter accusing Magdalena in which Carranco mentions that it happened before he left for Florida and for that reason he left another Franciscan friar, Fr. Andres Bravo, in charge of investigating the matter. AGN, Inq. Año 1606. Vol. 283 2da parte, f. 551. *Carranco contra una mujer que se llama magdalena de cardenas casose siendo monja profesa.*

<sup>475</sup> Valdés, Instrucciones, Article 1. Reproduced in Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 59 and Nesvig, *Ideology*, 71. For an extensive discussion on the legal evolution of *Calificadores* and their roles within the Inquisition apparatus see Nesvig, 70 – 74 and Chuchiack, *The Inquisition*, 20.

that would keep her because of her mischievous acts.<sup>476</sup> This was not only inappropriate, but also unnecessary, inhumane, and ultimately illegal.<sup>477</sup>

Further aggravating the irregularities of the case was the nature of the actual charges. The alleged crime committed by Magdalena was to be married while being a professed nun.<sup>478</sup> This was not a crime specifically listed in Canon Laws nor was it included or defined in the Inquisitor's Manual. Independently neither status (nun or married) was a crime, however, living simultaneously under both was considered a violation of civil code. They were conflictive statuses as they were mutually exclusive. A woman of religious profession (becoming a nun), unless annulled by a canonic dispensation from the local bishop and/or the superior of the order, prevented a woman from getting married. Conversely, a married woman could not become a nun unless she was a widow. Violations like these were usually overlooked or easily resolved.

Nowhere in the Canons nor the caseload consulted was a charge or case such as Magdalena's found. There is one case dating to 1553 of a runaway Benedictine nun who was captured attempting to escape to the New World. The woman, Isabel de Chávez, was thereafter held in a convent in Seville and then transferred to the monastery from where

---

<sup>476</sup> “*como no uvo convento donde tenerla reclusa...ni uvo hombre honrado que la quisiese tener en su casa por sus travesuras.*” AGI, Inq. Año 1608. Vol. 283 1ra parte. Exp. 9, fs. 51 – 52. *El Comisario de la Habana avisa como se embarcó Dona Magdalena de Cárdenas y como recibió la carta de ese Santo Oficio.*

<sup>477</sup> Carranco's violation of procedural practices pertaining to an arrest will be repeated later, but because the people arrested were members of the clergy it would have graver consequences. The case will be discussed after Magdalena's for the sake of chronology.

<sup>478</sup> The document has the accusation as *casose siendo monja profesa.*

she had escaped.<sup>479</sup> Another case pertains to a nun taken by the authorities from a convent in 1500, to question her about an alleged marriage. The nun was given the options of leaving the convent and returning to her alleged husband or staying at the convent and remain a nun.<sup>480</sup> In neither case were the nuns arrested or charged with a crime before the Inquisition. One woman was returned to her convent and the other one given the option to choose, which were the usual procedures and outcome for this sort of cases.<sup>481</sup> While other instances might have existed, they were probably hidden from public knowledge to safeguard the reputation of either the person or the convent. Magdalena's case as a runaway married nun gained notoriety as part of Carranco's plan and it was his most notorious case of manufactured sin.

The only way to legally explain Magdalena's detention, charges, and subsequent ordeal is Carranco's ad lib interpretation of Canon Law. It was a conscious and

---

<sup>479</sup> AGI, Indiferente, 424, L.22, f. 511R. 1553-9-6. "*Real cédula a Juan Martínez Silíceo, arzobispo de Toledo, primado, y del Consejo del Emperador, pidiéndole haga trasladar a Isabel de Chaves, monja profesada de la Orden de San Bernardo, del monasterio de San Clemente de Sevilla al monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Piedad de Vallecas, donde vivía antes de su frustrada huída a Indias.* Royal decree to Juan Martínez Silíceo, Archbishop of Toledo, Primate, and to the Emperor's Council, asking them to transfer Isabel de Chaves, professed Nun of the Order of Saint Bernard, from the Monastery of San Clemente in Seville to the Monastery of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad in Vallecas, where she used to live before her failed attempt to runaway to the Indies.

<sup>480</sup> Archivo de Simancas, RGS, leg,150003,268, 1500-3-24. "*Cumplimiento de la carta inserta, fechada en Sevilla, a 11 de febrero de 1500, por la que se mandaba sacar del monasterio de Santa Clara de Zafra a María de Carbajal para alegar si estaba casada con Francisco Villalobos o si quería seguir de monja.*" In accordance to the attached letter, dated in Seville on February 11, 1500, which ordered to remove Maria de Carbajal from the Monastery of Santa Clara in Zafra, to testify if she was married to Francisco Villalobos or if she wanted to remain a nun.

<sup>481</sup> For a discussion on this see Linda Elizabeth Mitchell. *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*. New York: Garland Pub, 1999.

premeditated attempt to create a highly visible case or to establish a legal precedent. Section IX of the Canons issued by the Council of Trent addressed the issue of members of the clergy, secular (diocesan) or regular (members of religious orders), who married without receiving dispensation. The Canon considered them as violating the sacrament of marriage and therefore, as “anathema.”<sup>482</sup> Nuns, however, were not clergy, and the term “regulars” in Canon Law was only applied to friars and monks.<sup>483</sup>

Even so Carranco, by interpretation or by analogy, extended this classification to a female religious person. Since Canon X of the Council of Trent assigned cases regarding marriage irregularities to ecclesiastical tribunals, Carranco should have done so instead charging Magdalena with a crime he had fabricated.<sup>484</sup> Filing charges with the Inquisition Tribunal was different from an ecclesiastical one and would have more serious consequences and severe punishment. This is not to say that nuns were exempted from Canon Laws. On the contrary, all people lay and religious alike were subjected to

---

<sup>482</sup> The Council of Trent, Canon IX, Session 24, 196. “If any one saith, that clerics constituted in sacred orders, or Regulars, who have solemnly professed chastity, are able to contract marriage, and that being contracted it is valid, notwithstanding the ecclesiastical law, or vow; and that the contrary is nothing else than to condemn marriage; and, that all who do not feel that they have the gift of chastity, even though they have made a vow thereof, may contract marriage; let him be anathema”

<sup>483</sup> There is an extensive discussion about this in the Catholic Encyclopedia *New Advent* which highlights all the laws excluding nuns from the concept of regulars. The Apostolical constitutions about the cloister of regulars, and notably the exclusion of women, are all posterior to the Council of Trent. As regards the entrance of women, we have to quote: Regularium", 24 Oct. 1566, and "Decet", 16 July, 1570, both of St. Pius V; "Ubi Gratiae", 13 June, 1575, of Gregory XIII; "Nullus", section 18, of Clement VIII, 25 June 1599; Concerning the egress of religious, the reader may refer to the following constitutions: "Ad Romanum spectat", sections 20 and 21, 21 Oct., 1588, of Sixtus V; "Decretum illud", 10 March, 1601, of Clement VIII (on the question of journeys to Rome); also the decree "Nullus omnino", 25 June, 1599, of Clement VIII (for Italy).

<sup>484</sup> “If any one saith, that matrimonial causes do not belong to ecclesiastical judges; let him be anathema,” Waterworth, *Trent*, 1848, Canon X, Session 24, 197.

the laws of the Church. In the literature consulted, however, there was no precedent on which to base Magdalena's prosecution. This, and Magdalena's economic status brought additional significance and public attention to Magdalena's case as planned by Carranco.

The Commissary did follow procedure by ordering an investigation regarding the case, which as expected produced contradicting testimonies. Several people interviewed in Havana, including those who "housed" Magdalena, testified that she had been a nun in Seville. Some described, in detail, the circumstances under which they met her, and others rendered an account of her religious profession ceremony in Seville and the celebrations that followed. Some witnesses interviewed in Veracruz declared that she was married in Tabasco to a man from Nueva Granada named Antonio de Guevara. The third group of witnesses, which included members of her family and the nuns of La Pasion, were interviewed in Seville. They affirmed, with striking similarity in their statements, that she had never been a nun.<sup>485</sup>

Magdalena probably knew the Inquisition procedures well or was being counseled appropriately. She hired an attorney instead of relying on the one who would be assigned by the Inquisition Tribunal for her defense. His name was Adriano de Eraso who worked as an Assistant Attorney at the ecclesiastic tribunal in Seville. Eraso presented her case before the Grand Inquisitor, Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara in that city and within a few months produced a verdict from the Cardinal attesting to Magdalena's innocence.

---

<sup>485</sup> As stated before this information about Magdalena has been summarized from numerous letters and testimonies of her case in AGN, Inq. Año 1608, Vol. 283, 2da parte, signatura 12113, fs 51, 119 (out of order), 551-553. The documents are incorrectly catalogued within other cases and some of them were within other documents. The archive personnel were informed and they said would correct this.



Magdalena's attorney sent it to Havana immediately. For unknown reasons, however, the Mexican Tribunal did not order Magdalena's release and instructed Carranco to keep her in a safe place in Havana, which he did. After two years of struggles, four thousand ducats spent, and through the intervention she requested from the Governor of Havana, Magdalena was put on a ship and sent back to Veracruz.<sup>486</sup>

Although this research departs from the premise that Magdalena was in fact a runaway nun who married in Tabasco, finding the truth requires additional research and availability of documents. Yet, the truth about Magdalena's civil status is of less relevance than the fact that Magdalena's case represents extraordinary practices and extreme procedures. As such Magdalena was used by Carranco in an attempt to advance his career and his goal of establishing a new Tribunal in Havana with him at the top. As the Inquisitor he could bring social order to the region and tackle more serious problems such as the infiltration of Protestants which ranked higher at the imperial levels than a married runaway nun.

#### **v – Challenging Powers.**

In order to gain more attention, Carranco constantly complained in his letters about the lack of responses his cases received from the inquisitors at the Mexican Tribunal. He finally got the attention he wanted when he decided to accuse Luis de Salas, the Procurator of Havana, of some serious charges. In addition to his prominent position, the man was a very close and trusted friend of Bishop Altamirano's who had served the

---

<sup>486</sup> AGI, Inq. Año 1608. Vol. 283 1ra parte. Exp. 9, fs. 51 – 52. *El Comisario de la Habana avisa como se embarcó Dona Magdalena de Cárdenas y como recibió la carta de ese Santo Oficio.* Additional research and analysis of the case will be completed in the near future.

Church in Cuba for over thirty years.<sup>487</sup> The case was among the few of Carranco's accusations that culminated in a complete trial at the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico. It was so notorious that it even reached the Supreme Tribunal of the Inquisition in Seville in several letters penned by Bishop Altamirano. The case supported Carranco's contentions with the tribunals and the local authorities in Havana that he was the highest Inquisition authority in the city. This claim was vehemently rejected by Bishop Altamirano whose jurisdictional rights Carranco was challenging.

On March 13, 1608, the case opened at the Inquisition Tribunal in Mexico City. Carranco filed charges against the Procurator of Havana and three high-ranking priests for not accepting his appointment as Commissary. His chief complaint was that these priests, ordered by Bishop Altamirano, were waging a campaign to diminish his authority and power over the population.<sup>488</sup> He added that they were responsible for his inability to file more cases. Carranco accused the men of convincing witnesses not to testify against some of the people he had accused and of scandalizing the local population by

---

<sup>487</sup> This case has been mentioned by other authors such as Graciela Cruz-Taura in the work cited. It is cursory listed by Eugenio Alonso in *Mohínas*. Both Cruz-Taura and Alonso approach the case from a different perspective and do not have Carranco as the center of their investigations. Cruz-Taura focuses on Altamirano at the center of *Espejo de Paciencia*, a poem about his capture and rescue while Alonso compiled a list of inquisition events briefly passing over Altamirano and Carranco's period.

<sup>488</sup> Carranco had sent several letters to the Tribunal complaining about individuals' disrespect of his authority but none received the attention of this one. See AGI, Inq. Año 1607. Vol. 1566, Exp. 15, fs. 2. *Carta de Fray Francisco de Carranco ante el Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de sobajar su autoridad como comisario a Juan de Cervantes. Habana, Cuba. (Acusación de Fr. Francisco Carranco contra Juan de Servantes por faltarle al respeto)*. Letter from Carranco accusing Juan de Servantes of disrespecting him. He also complained about the authorities interfering with his role of commissary AGI, Inq. Año 1607. Vol. 467 1ra parte, Exp. 38, fs. 164 – 176. *Carta del comisario de la Habana avisando que los oficiales reales hacen las visitas a los navíos antes que él, y avisando que hay enemigos en la costa*. Letter from the commissary of Havana informing that the royal officers visit the ships before him and informing that there are enemies in the coast.

undermining the decisions of the Inquisition Tribunal. He detailed the story – or his version – of how the Procurator, an informant, and an attorney had legally challenged his position filing formal complaints against him and how he had no other recourse than excommunicate them.<sup>489</sup>

Carranco made reference to other pieces of communication between him and the Mexican Tribunal that predate the official legal case. He, allegedly, had informed the authorities in Mexico about the problems he had with the priests and had requested instructions on how to proceed.<sup>490</sup> It is obvious the Tribunal never received such letters and even worse, they had never ordered the arrest of the priests. The Inquisition officials were puzzled by Carranco's actions and demanded an explanation about his procedures. He accepted his responsibility in ordering the arrest without permission but justified his actions using previous communication from the Tribunal.<sup>491</sup> As the Commissary of the Inquisition, he felt the responsibility of detaining these men and sending them to the Tribunal.

---

<sup>489</sup> AGI, Inq. Año 1608. Vol. 282, Exp. 4, 5 y 6, fs. 1-147. *Proceso contra Luis de Salas, Provisor de la Habana, el licenciado Celaya y Zaldívar y Pedro de Lara Maeda, clérigos presbíteros, por haber hecho notificaciones al Comisario del Santo Oficio en La Habana para que no ejerza su comisaria (Mandato de Papa Pulo V. Impreso por orden de Fray Bartolomé de Ledesma en casa de Pablo Ocharte) Habana.*

<sup>490</sup> Those letters have not been found in the archives yet, but Carranco's summary sheds light on the evolution of the case.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid. fs 211- 213. "*que V. Sa me manda que si pasaren adelante en el impedir ejercicio de mi oficio...y en tan grave delito como es notifficarme que cesse en el ejercicio de todo mi oficio mande prenderlos e ymbiarlos presos y a muy buen recado...*" Because your honor has ordered that anyone preventing my role, particularly in a case as serious as ordering me to stop it, I should arrest them and send them (to the Tribunal).

Regardless of his interpretation of his commission, Carranco knew he was acting beyond his legal prerogatives. He ordered the arrests while Bishop Altamirano was absent from Cuba conducting a Canonical Visit in Jamaica. He knew that, otherwise, the Bishop would have prevented the arrest. He was also aware that the civil authorities would not cooperate with him in detaining such high-ranking ecclesiastic officials as the arrest was conducted in secret. He told the tribunal that the men had been arrested covertly at night. They had been transferred in a small boat, also at night, without the consent of the guards, who, because of this “oversight,” had been arrested by the governor of Havana.<sup>492</sup>

During the process, the Inquisitor in Mexico requested information from all the people involved in the case, which included Bishop Altamirano. While he was central to the case, he was never formally accused by Carranco or by the Tribunal. Doing so would have been a violation of Canon Laws as well as a transgression of the Inquisition judicial powers and hierarchical order. The Bishop was a member of the Royal Council. He responded directly to the monarch, whom he had already informed of the jurisdictional debates and of the illegal arrests. Altamirano also held the title of Ordinary Inquisitor for the entire diocese, and as such responded directly to the Supreme Tribunal in Seville. In the Bishop’s written testimony, he reminded the Mexican tribunal about all these hierarchical protocols and of the gravity of violating them. Afterwards, he turned on to

---

<sup>492</sup> Ibid. “*se le despacho una canoa de noche, que por averla dexado salir por el puerto los soldados questavan de posta los tiene oy pressos el governador.*” They were sent in a canoe at night and because the guards stationed at the port let the boat pass, they have been arrested by the Governor.

blaming Carranco's overstepping of boundaries and his illegal actions as the root of the chaos.<sup>493</sup>

In the letter, Altamirano detailed the escalation of events. He told the Mexican Inquisitor that from the day of Carranco's arrival, he acted as if he was the Inquisitor of Cuba, in a complete disregard for his legal authority as Bishop of the Diocese. He accused Carranco of usurping all of his responsibilities and rights as Inquisitor and that upon his arrival from Veracruz he had informed the Procurator Luis de Salas that he would take the title of Inquisitor from the Bishop.<sup>494</sup> Furthermore, Carranco had even tried to take over his jurisdiction in Florida and Jamaica. The Bishop reminded the Tribunal that his office was above theirs and cited both Canon Laws and tradition as the sources of his legal superiority. He added that the authority of the Inquisition Tribunal rested upon the delegation of the Bishops and not otherwise. Altamirano stated that the Inquisitors should remember that the Bishops' authority above all persons and institutions came "from our consecration, oath, and particular profession, which we bishops know as pontifices of the Church of God and successors of the Apostles as it was determined by the Holy Council of Trent."<sup>495</sup> No one in that Tribunal nor in his Diocese, the Bishop reiterated, was above his office.

---

<sup>493</sup> Ibid. 212.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid. "avia notificado al Procurator de la Havana el beneficiado Luys de Salas que nos quitase el titulo de Inquisidor" Upon his arrival he notified the Procurator of Havana, the benefited Luis de Salas, to take away our title of Inquisitor.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid. 217. "es consedida en razon de nuestra consagracion y juramento y profession particular la cual sabemos de la fe los obispos como pontifises en la iglesia de Dios y susesores de los apostoles como esta determinado en el sancto consilio de Trento."

Altamirano challenged Carranco and the Tribunal to produce a document to justify Carranco's authority over his diocese. He wanted to see anything that would carry greater legal strength than the Royal Decree in which the King of Spain had named him *Inquisidor Ordinario* for the Island of Cuba, Florida and Jamaica. He went on to enumerate with dates and names of witnesses, all the instances in which Carranco had attempted to or had interfered with his duties and rights as Inquisitor. He constantly reminded the Mexican Tribunal of their failure to produce any document, other than a letter introducing Carranco's credentials and assignment, which would supersede his authority as Ordinary.<sup>496</sup> Altamirano's statements were a display of his knowledge of Canon Laws and litigation practices as well as an illustration of the hierarchical and judicial protocols governing ecclesiastic jurisdictions.

The Bishop's role as the highest authority over a Diocese was undisputable and Carranco knew it. He, however, challenged Altamirano's title, functions, and power before the Inquisition Tribunal as a way of reinforcing his own role as an agent of the Inquisition. He managed to gain the support of the Tribunal in Mexico – although temporarily – and added a large number of supporters for his case among the Inquisition personnel. Yet, in Cuba both the civil and religious authorities, including the governor and the entire Council of Havana sided with Bishop Altamirano and expressed their discontent with the Commissary in numerous letters to the Mexican Tribunal. Carranco claimed that the letters were not from the Cabildo.<sup>497</sup>

---

<sup>496</sup> Ibid. 216 – 219.

<sup>497</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1608, Vol. 282, Exp. 5, fs. 226 – 227. *Cartas para el Santo Oficio de los Cabildos Eclesiástico y Seglar de La Habana, escritas en Favor del Provisor Salas. Avisa el Comisario no ser de los Cabildos.*

The case lasted for three months and was filled with contradictions and incendiary mutual attacks. The charges against the Procurator and the other priests were dismissed. The Mexican Tribunal ruled that the clergymen were acting under the directions of their superior. They returned the men to Havana and ordered them to resume their administrative and ministerial duties. The validity of Carranco's assignment as Commissary in Havana and his actions as such, as far as the case record shows, were upheld because he remained in Havana at least until 1611 as Commissary of the Holy Office.<sup>498</sup>

The Bishop, however, was not satisfied with the verdict. He continued writing letters to the King of Spain requesting an intervention. In July of 1608 Altamirano wrote a letter to the Mexican Tribunal filing charges against Carranco, requesting his incarceration for the illegal arrests of the Procurator and the other priests, among many other excesses.<sup>499</sup> The Bishop was right about the illegality of Carranco's action. The same had occurred with Magdalena's arrest. Only the qualifiers, who were experts on civil and canon laws, could approve an arrest after reviewing the allegations. Carranco, however, was never arrested.<sup>500</sup>

---

<sup>498</sup> Cruz-Taura, *Espejo*, 26.

<sup>499</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1609, Vol. 288, Exp. 80, fs. 399 - 403. *Mandamiento del Obispo de la Habana en que manda sea preso el comisario de dicha Isla, Fray Francisco Carranco. Habana*. While copies of the letters from the Bishop as well as Carranco's response are in my possession, additional research at other archives is necessary to complete this case. The case might have not proceeded because the Bishop was assigned to the Diocese of Guatemala a few months after he filed the complaint against Carranco. AGN. Inq. Año 1610. vol. 292, signatura 12122, Exp. 7, fs. 23-29. *Cartas de Fray Juan Cabezas de Altamirano, Obispo de Cuba Electo de Guatemala*.

<sup>500</sup> The order to arrest Carranco was never enforced because Altamirano had already left Cuba when it arrived – if it arrived – and the new Bishop did not enforce it. This is inferred from Carranco's last known letter. AGN. Inq. Año 1611. Vol. 292, Exp. 5, fs. 19-20. *Carta del*

There is no evidence in the records or an explanation in the secondary sources of why the Supreme Tribunal in Seville, the Spanish King, or the Mexican Tribunal did not respond to Altamirano's letters. The most likely explanation is that the same year, 1608, in which the quarrel between the Commissary and the Bishop was "solved," the Council of the Indies recommended to establish a new Inquisition Tribunal in the city of Santo Domingo in Hispaniola. It had to be established in the Caribbean, the Council wrote to Philip III, because of the king's "obligation to augment and conserve our holy religion and Catholic faith in the Indies...endangered by so many smugglers who introduce heresy to the islands."<sup>501</sup> The members of the trusted administrative body recommended the number of employees and their respective salaries. They insisted that a well-established and well-staffed tribunal was the most effective weapon for the defense of the islands. The Inquisition, they continued, would rid the region from the pestilence and contagion the enemies of the faith represented.<sup>502</sup> Even though the King approved it (as evidenced by a side notation on the document) and a Royal Decree was issued, the Tribunal in Santo Domingo never became a reality.<sup>503</sup> That decision could have been influenced by the dispute between Altamirano and Carranco or made in order to end the disagreements and the arguments about jurisdictions common to the region.

---

*comisario de Veracruz avisando de la salida de la flota y carta de Fray Francisco Carranco de la Habana.*

<sup>501</sup> AGI, SD. 1. *Del Consejo de Indias a su Majestad el Rey, 10 de noviembre de 1607.*

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Medina, *Inquisición Cartagena*, 34.



## vi – Increasing the Caseload.

Regardless of the reasons, there was still hope for Carranco's plans for an Inquisition Tribunal in Havana. His authority as Commissary for the city had been confirmed from Mexico and there was still no tribunal created in Santo Domingo. If he was to succeed he needed to increase the number and significance of his caseload. Carranco had to demonstrate the permissiveness associated to the New World and the ill-behaved actions of the population residing in the city. He needed a case representing the cultural attitudes of the period and the social disorder rampant in Havana. The early seventeenth century was marked by a tepid reception or disregard for the rigid interpretation of traditions and religious orthodoxy. There was significant contempt for the authorities' conceptualization of heresy combined with an acceptance or at least toleration of non-Catholic beliefs and practices.<sup>504</sup> Be it because of the nature of the New World or because of a decline in the Inquisition's policing role, there was an obvious absence of order and an indifference towards imperial policies.<sup>505</sup> The result was social chaos needing the correction only a local tribunal led by an active Inquisitor could bring.

---

<sup>504</sup> For the most comprehensive study on the subject see Stuart B. Schwartz. *All Can Be Saved. Religion, Tolerance, and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*. (New Haven; CT: Yale University Press, 2008). See particularly the introduction.

<sup>505</sup> See the work of Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi, Eds. *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods*. DeKalb; IL: Northern Illinois University Press. 1986. The authors claim that between 1596 and 1700 the Inquisition became decadent and bureaucratic where enforcement of the law was low in its institutional priority. See the analysis and review of this work and others who claim the same in Jordi Vidal-Robert. *War and Inquisition: Social Control in the Spanish Empire*. The paper was presented as part of his dissertation: *Historical Institutions and their Legacy: The Spanish Inquisition's Motivations and Impact on Spanish Economic Development*. Boston University, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2013.

Carranco sent a case that combined an actual crime with high profile individuals to the Mexican authorities on August 31, 1609. In it, he accused Domingo de Muñoz, the secretary of the new governor of Havana Gazpar Ruiz de Pereda, of bigamy.<sup>506</sup> Muñoz had arrived with the governor from Spain in June of 1608.<sup>507</sup> During the trip he fell seriously ill and summoned his friends for a confession and last will. Afraid of dying he dictated his testament to those who accompanied him on what seemed to be his last moments. He wanted his possessions to go to his wife and his only daughter whom he had left in Spain. Upon arriving in Havana Muñoz's health improved and he incorporated into his new job as secretary of the Governor and entered the thriving colonial life of the city of Havana where he married a creole woman from a prominent family.<sup>508</sup>

Less than a year had passed when Muñoz's permissive life took a turn for the worse. His wife in Spain had heard the news of his second marriage and had arrived in the port of Havana with ecclesiastical documents proving that she was his legitimate wife. She went directly to the Inquisition representative and accused her husband of bigamy. After close inspection of the documents, Carranco asked the lieutenant governor Pedro Valdivieso to find and detain Domingo Muñoz to be interrogated for bigamy. After interviewing Muñoz, it became clear that his marriage to the second wife had taken place

---

<sup>506</sup> The file is completely out of order. The accusation letter is preceded by the grievance against the Lieutenant General of Cuba, Pedro de Valdivieso. AGN. Inq. Año 1609. Vol. 285, Exp. 79, fs. 386 - 397. *Noticia en contra del licenciado Valdivieso, Teniente de la Habana, en razón de haber conocido contra un casado dos veces, habiendo prevenido la causa el Comisario. Habana.*

<sup>507</sup> Guerra, *Manual*, 101.

<sup>508</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1609. Vol. 285, Exp. 79, fs. 386 - 397. *Noticia en contra del licenciado Valdivieso, Teniente de la Habana, en razón de haber conocido contra un casado dos veces, habiendo prevenido la causa el Comisario. Habana.*

under the false pretense of being a widower. Using his skills and powers as the secretary of the governor, he had created a false will that showed his wife had died in Spain. The document freed him to enter into a second marriage.<sup>509</sup>

Carranco's use of strong vocabulary in the letter demonstrates frustration and disappointment as well as his intention to highlight the seriousness of the case. Muñoz had abused his powers, deceived his friends, and betrayed his family. Yet, marrying two times and falsifying documents was just the beginning of what can only be characterized as a string of conniving acts of treachery. Knowing the consequences of his actions Muñoz persuaded his first wife to help him conceive and enact a plan that could free him from the accusations from the Inquisition or at least diminish the consequences of his acts. Taking advantage of his status, he hired a ship to take him and his wife from Havana harbor into the nearby port called Puerto Escondido. There he placed his wife's clothes and belongings around the shore as if she had drowned.<sup>510</sup>

Muñoz's plan backfired. The port authorities of Havana had noticed an unlicensed ship exiting the harbor and followed it. They witnessed the theatrical staging of Muñoz's wife and arrested the culprits who were taken back to Havana to face the authorities. Aware of the matter, Carranco asked Valdivieso to transfer the case to his jurisdiction to initiate an Inquisition trial. The lieutenant governor refused claiming the case belonged to the civil authorities. The refusal fueled the ire of the Commissary who complained to the governor of Havana and to the Mexican authorities. Valdivieso justified his refusal using

---

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

his authority as the second highest secular authority of the island and an experienced attorney in Inquisition cases. Along with his qualifications, he listed a long line of high-ranking family members who had served the crown as Inquisition, Church, and military functionaries.<sup>511</sup>

The case against Muñoz had been easy to build, difficult to prosecute, and impossible to bring to conclusion. The evidence was strong and there were many witnesses and documents attesting to the crimes committed by the governor's secretary. Muñoz's first and second wife proved the bigamy case. The falsification of the will was obvious by the first wife's presence in Havana. The attempt to claim her death for a second time had been witnessed by the port authorities. Yet, the authorities were not cooperating either because of the actual jurisdiction over the case or because of the recent quarrel between Carranco and the local ecclesiastical authorities. Ultimately aggravating the prosecution of the case was the escape of Muñoz and his first wife from the local jail two days after the arrest. They were never found.<sup>512</sup> Typical of Carranco, he blamed the local authorities for his failure to bring order to the city.<sup>513</sup>

Frustrated and scared, Carranco penned a manifesto of his innocence. A month after Muñoz's escape, on October of 1609, he wrote to the Mexican Tribunal justifying the failure to send the prisoner and informing them of the state of his affairs in Havana. He was under serious scrutiny from the local authorities who additionally refused to work

---

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1609. Vol. 473, Exp. 20, fs. 156. *Cartas de la Habana referentes a la fuga de Domingo Muñoz, por bigamo. Habana.*

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

with him. Carranco relaunched his attacks against Altamirano accusing him of spearheading a consorted plan to dispossess him of his Inquisitorial faculties and arrest him. He claimed that only the governor was impartial. He claimed that Ruiz de Pereda had asked the *Provisor* Luis de Salas not to enforce the orders against his arrest and to wait for Altamirano's return – the Bishop was in Jamaica conducting a canonical visit – to resume the case against the Commissary.<sup>514</sup> Altamirano did not have time to fulfill his prosecution of Carranco. Upon his return from Jamaica he received communication from the Council of the Indies of being transferred to serve as Bishop of Guatemala. A year later he left Cuba for his new post.<sup>515</sup>

Altamirano's departure brought new hope to Carranco's ambitions. In the absence of the ordinary of the diocese he was the highest Inquisition authority not just in the city but in the entire diocese. He continued working in Havana searching for criminals and cases that would increase his visibility with the tribunal in Mexico and influence a decision from the Council favoring a tribunal for that port city. He accused several individuals of bigamy, blasphemy, sorcery and witchcraft.<sup>516</sup> Regardless of his

---

<sup>514</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1609. Vol. 285, Exp. 80, fs. 399 – 403. *Sobre el mandamiento del Obispo de la Habana en que manda sea preso el comisario de dicha Isla, Fray Francisco Carranco. Habana.*

<sup>515</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1610. Vol. 292, Exp. 7, fs. 23 – 29. *Cartas de Fray Juan Cabezas de Altamirano, Obispo de Cuba Electo de Guatemala.*

<sup>516</sup> The following are just two examples of the communication Carranco sent to the tribunal in 1610. AGN. Inq. Año 1610. Vol. 288, Exp. 7, f. 68. *Cartas del Santo Oficio al comisario de Puebla refiriéndose a Pedro de Irala, Francisco Enríquez, Simón Rodríguez, Melchor de Lossada, Francisco Rincón y Pedro Sánchez Carrasco, Diego Pizarra, Juan de Soto Mayor, Pedro Martínez de Castro, Diego González Calderón. Estas cartas tienen sus anexos respectivos entre otros una instrucción de la Bula de la Santa Cruzada y dudas que se ofrecen en el puerto de la Habana. México.* AGN. Inq. Año 1610. Vol. 474, Exp. 19, fs. 417 – 424. *Cartas del comisario*

demonstrated zeal and agency and of the prominence and number of his caseload, the first decade of the seventeenth century was coming to a close and Carranco did not get his tribunal.

### **vii – The Third Inquisition Tribunal in the Americas.**

That same year, 1610, a new Tribunal was finally established in the Caribbean. Despite the local authorities' requests and the previous decree, it was not in Santo Domingo. The tribunal was not in Havana either as desired by Carranco. Instead, a third - and last – Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition was founded in Cartagena de Indias in the kingdom of New Granada.<sup>517</sup> Afterwards Carranco stopped manufacturing sin. There were only two more letters written by the commissary from Havana after 1610. One of the letters was sent to the Supreme Tribunal of the Inquisition in Seville complaining about the inconvenience that would bring to the people and the authorities of Havana for the island being placed under the jurisdiction of Cartagena.<sup>518</sup>

The second was sent to the Tribunal in Mexico. It was Carranco's response to the authorities after being recalled to Veracruz to serve as Commissary in that port city once again. On May 5, 1611, Carranco wrote his last letter from Cuba. He thanked the

---

*de la Habana sin interés particular y en una de ellas refiriéndose a Fray Juan de Soto, Franciscano, que va preso a Canarias. Habana.*

<sup>517</sup> Neither Toribio Medina, nor other historians have given an explanation of why the decision was made. Perhaps future research will reveal the reasons. See AGN. Inq. Año 1611. Vol. 1568C, Exp. 366, f. 2. *Rey Felipe III Creación del tribunal de la inquisición en Cartagena, Santiago de Cuba, y que se nombre de este a Matheo Salcedo y Juan Mañozca. Carta hecha por el Rey y contestada por el Santo Oficio de Cuba.*

<sup>518</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1611. Vol. 292, Exp. 31, f. 144 - 145. *Carta de Fray Francisco Carranco, comisario de la Habana, refiriéndose a los inconvenientes de que la Habana dependa de la jurisdicción de Cartagena.*

Tribunal for reassigning him to Veracruz and expressed his gratitude to the Inquisitor for being the “only man in the kingdom who appreciated and remembered him.”<sup>519</sup> He prayed that God would grant him strength and health to continue serving Him as a Friar and a Commissary. Carranco informed the authorities in Mexico that he had not been able to return to Veracruz because his replacement had not arrived in Havana. He also told them that he could not leave sooner because he was so poor that he could not “even purchase an umbrella to protect himself against inclement weather” traveling back.<sup>520</sup> He cursorily communicated the arrival of an order issued by Altamirano for his arrest, but that the new Bishop who was no longer in Havana, had not enforced it. Carranco ended the letter stating his intentions to abandon Havana for Veracruz on the next ship.<sup>521</sup>

---

<sup>519</sup> AGN. Inq. Año 1611. Vol. 292, Exp. 5, f. 19-20. *Carta del comisario de Veracruz avisando de la salida de la flota y carta de Fray Francisco Carranco de la Habana*

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

## **Epilogue.**

Carranco's work in Cuba had ended. Through the first decade of the seventeenth century his role and influence as Commissary of the Inquisition, accepted or not by the authorities, had expanded rapidly from Veracruz into the greater Caribbean region. Besides producing an exhaustive caseload in both cities, Carranco also mediated in a Florida jurisdictional conflict. It is unknown but probable that in his dual role as Commissary of the Inquisition and Guardian of the Franciscan convent in Havana he also had some participation in the establishment of the Franciscan missions in Florida. He was recognized by his superiors as diligent and reliable and was perceived as an active and efficient agent of the Inquisition in the Caribbean. Carranco was also trusted within the Franciscan network in the region and navigated through it effortlessly.

Carranco's years in Cuba coincided with a period of reorganization of the Church throughout the Spanish Empire. This was especially important in the circum-Caribbean, following the deaths of Philip II of Spain in 1598 and Elizabeth I of England in 1603. The reorganization included establishing new dioceses, allowing new religious provinces, and (most meaningful for this research and for Carranco's intentions and actions), the creation of a new Inquisition Tribunal in one of the port cities of the region. The King and Council additionally recognized – and Carranco used – the political prominence of Havana at this crucial time. The city was made a Captaincy General in 1607, which made it the prime location for the new Tribunal Carranco so much sought to establish. He knew the time was right to shine as Commissary and to seek ascension through the ranks of the Inquisition because he was aware of the discussions about creating new tribunals in



the New World and above all, of the dual role of the Inquisition as enforcer of orthodoxy and defender of the realms.

Not coincidentally, the measures to amplify and strengthen the Catholic presence and influence in the region were a direct result of non-Spanish presence in the region. The challenge to Spanish hegemony was epitomized by the establishment of the English Protestant colony of Jamestown in 1607. Its proximity to St. Augustine, which depended directly upon Havana, made the island the ideal place to fight the infiltration of Protestantism into the colonies. The foreign settlement was dangerously close and threatened Spain's supremacy in the Americas.<sup>522</sup>

At the same time, Cuba and its dependencies underwent a political reorganization that divided the island into two administrative regions.<sup>523</sup> The division increased Havana's defensive capabilities as it narrowed its administrative focus and concentrated its limited resources on the port city instead of the entire island. Cuba, as the administrative epicenter of the circum-Caribbean, was crucial to the Spanish Empire and correspondingly turned into a stronghold of protection on all fronts. Havana housed in its bay the crown's treasure ships until their departure towards Spain, and as such it had to

---

<sup>522</sup> While Jamestown is considered the first permanent English settlement in the region it was not the first attempt. See Karen O. Kupperman. *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Second Edition. 2007. French Huguenots had also attempted to settle in the region. See John T. McGrath. *The French in Early Florida: in the eye of the hurricane*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. 2000. In 1603 five hundred English and French men had disembarked in Jamaica in attempt to settle and had taken some Spanish ships. The following year the governor of Cuba, Pedro de Valdés, received news of an unidentified enemy building a town (*poblado*) in the Bay of San Carlos, in Florida. Both territories part of the Diocese of Cuba. See Irene A. Wright. *Historia documentada*, 41.

<sup>523</sup> Hortensia Pichardo. *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*. Tomo I. La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales. 1973, 141.

be totally fortified.<sup>524</sup> Yet, its defense from the religious perspective has not been studied. This dissertation is the first to do so.

The Spanish monarch Philip III and the Council of the Indies agreed with the local authorities' recommendations to strengthen the Caribbean. They perceived the region not only as the Empire's military ultimate line of defense but also as the rampart to safeguard the ideological and religious integrity of the Spanish American realms. The Diocese of Santiago de Cuba and its satellite territory of St. Augustine in Florida formed the easternmost Spanish frontier of the New World, the perfect place to combat heresy. Hence, these colonies were particularly important for the overall imperial religious initiatives and efforts to protect all Spanish possessions. The defensive role of the Church in the Caribbean went, therefore, hand in hand with that of the military.

Increasing the religious personnel and establishing an Inquisition Tribunal in the Caribbean was as necessary as the construction of forts and the increase in Spanish military presence. Even the religious and civilian authorities in Cuba requested the establishment of the Inquisition on the island as necessary to fight "those heretic enemies against whom there is no civil or religious recourse."<sup>525</sup> Carranco's assignment as

---

<sup>524</sup> There have been highly specialized and outstanding academic works that analyze the Caribbean, especially Cuba, and its complex and vital role within the Empire's plans during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The pivotal work already cited of Paul Hoffman thoroughly documented how Cuba grew rapidly both in population and importance as a defensive post within the region. There is however, no work on the role of the Inquisition or of the Church in the defense of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean.

<sup>525</sup> "*Contra estos herejes enemigos no aprovechaba rigor de justicia seglar ni eclesiástica.*" Fragment of a letter sent by the governor of Cuba, Pedro de Valdés, cited by Irene A. Wright. She also mentions similar requests from the Bishop of Cuba, Juan de las Cabezas Altamirano but does not provide further source. Wright, *Historia Documentada*, 1930, footnote 4.

Commissary of the Inquisition for the Diocese of Cuba was part of that increase in religious personnel for the defense of the region. He is mentioned in minor remarks and annotations in the historiography of the topic, yet, this research indicates that his role during these crucial historical moments was more significant than attributed and has been overlooked and underappreciated. Therefore, his life and participation in the circum-Caribbean as an active agent of the Inquisition and of the Church merits further research towards a subsequent monograph.

As a member of the Spanish imperial administration, Carranco learned to navigate the murky waters of jurisdictional boundaries. He was astute enough to manipulate and to negotiate legal precepts and processes to the benefit of his office. His life was grounded in serving the Church, the Order and the empire, and his goals propelled and justified his actions. Most times his cases relied on Canon Laws and were within the Instructions and Manual of the Inquisitors. As such, they were within his prerogatives and legal authority as Commissary. Yet, at other times, Carranco's charges were exaggerations of his functions and premeditated transgressions of his legal boundaries. In both instances his actions were consciously undertaken towards the pursue of his goal: establishing an Inquisition Tribunal in Havana to defend the frontier from heresy.

Every one of his actions were a consequence of his life as a Franciscan friar. He was dedicated to the growth of Catholicism and to the search for evangelical perfection. By targeting visible people and manufacturing sin by implicating them and by quarreling over jurisdictions, he attempted to establish himself as a powerful figure in the region. His mission was to safeguard the Catholicity of the King's subjects and to prevent heretics from infiltrating the colonies. For that, he tried to surpass the local authorities,

making even more obvious his aspirations to a higher office within the Inquisition apparatus. His emphasis on the importance of a permanent inquisitor post in Havana was demonstrated in the first and last letters he wrote from Cuba. In the first one he requested Inquisition personnel to aid his endeavors. In the last one, he complained about the establishment of the new Inquisition Tribunal in Cartagena.

Although his efforts to have that tribunal in Cuba were unsuccessful, the study of his actions and of the trail of cases he left behind serves as a point of departure to document the history of the Inquisition in Cuba. They are also key to reevaluate the role of the Inquisition and of its agents in the greater Caribbean. Carranco's life and caseload help the reconstruction of the lives of peoples residing in or passing through Havana in the early seventeenth century. Furthermore, this study begs for a reassessment of Inquisition networks, particularly as they fought heresy in the American borderlands, to produce a more accurate historical interpretation of life in the outskirts of the Spanish Empire. Finally, this work, serves as a point of departure to study the Inquisition and the Franciscan Order as transatlantic agents of the Spanish Empire within the circum-Caribbean context.

## **Conclusion.**

Over a period of one hundred years the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba went through drastic changes. The religious jurisdiction that eventually incorporated the Abbey of Jamaica and the frontier garrison of St. Augustine in Florida went from being an undesirable diocese to becoming a pivotal territory within the Spanish Empire's defense strategy. Not only the geographic location of the island and the safety provided by the harbor in Havana granted the diocese some privileges and status, but also the religious and secular personnel assigned to the island, responding to internal and external causes, became key agents of that change. All the changes were accelerated by the appearance of Protestantism in Europe and were consolidated by its threatening presence in the Caribbean.

During the initial decades of the European settlement in the Indies, the island lacked the appeal of the American mainland. Its economic and population growth were stagnant. The limited clergy living, licitly or not, in the scattered small towns contributed more to social chaos than to order. The corruptive power of the Indies, caused by its distance from the metropolis, the promise of unregulated economies, the readily available Indian labor, and the possibility of riches, blinded the virtuous and encouraged the unscrupulous to act upon avarice and greed. Affected by the looting by pirates – who rightfully or not were associated with Protestantism – the island became a nest for illegal activities and disorder. Soon, there was the need for an institution to keep social order and to uphold the Christian values desired and promoted by the Catholic Monarchs and their descendants: the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Nevertheless, the infrastructure of

the island and its incipient society were not conducive to the foundation of a tribunal and instead, an Apostolic or Episcopal modality of the Inquisition was established.

Empowered by the Crown and by Rome, mendicant friars took charge of the affairs of the Holy Office. Their zeal soon clashed with the local authorities, yet, their commission was to evangelize the infidels and to repeal heterodoxy which they successfully accomplished regardless of severe opposition. Conversely, the religious leadership, using the Inquisitorial powers associated to their office, used and abused their *fueros* by manufacturing sin to protect themselves from the legal consequences of their wrongdoings. Bishop after bishop became involved in scandalous acts unbecoming of their office until the crown intervened and ordered the prelates to refrain from unnecessarily using their inquisitorial powers and demanded that they focus on their ministerial duties. The Church shifted its attention, and a series of reforms were implemented which encouraged changes in attitudes and promoted Christian virtues and order.

At the imperial level the administration was fighting a divisive new ideology, Protestantism. Officials chose to counteract its heretical propositions through sweeping theological reforms issued during the Council of Trent, which promoted the outward practice of Catholicism epitomized by a strict sacramental life. New rules were issued across the empire to promote the imperial strategy of solidifying Catholicism as the only religion of the empire. In the New World the crown ordered the creation of two Inquisition tribunals to regulate the Christian morals of the population and to protect the colonies from the poisonous heresy proposed by Protestantism. The business of manufacturing sin was officialized, however, not in Cuba. The island, notwithstanding,

went through its own religious reformation promoted by its prelates who faced opposition and disregard for the changes they proposed.

Cuba, however, was not autonomous. The island had been placed under the jurisdiction of the Mexican Tribunal which immediately unleashed the trans-colonial prosecution of those who did not conform to the religious orthodoxy promoted by the empire. Regardless of the Tribunal's zeal and its overreaching powers, their actions were insufficient to curtail the dissolute lifestyle of the islanders and even less to buffer the increasing and imminent threats of Protestantism. The local authorities demanded reinforcements to fight the internal and external forces that destabilized colonial society. The island's main port was to be fortified and the religious personnel increased. Additionally, they requested and received the first official Commissary of the Inquisition. His presence would serve as a deterrent to foreign interlopers and his actions to maintain the locals' orthodoxy.

Fr. Francisco Carranco, the Franciscan friar who brought the Inquisition officially to Havana embodied the necessary characteristics of an active agent of the Holy Office. Within weeks he had developed a reputation of intransigence, of overstepping the boundaries of his office, and of manufacturing sin. He indiscriminately filed charges against anyone, regardless of status or geographic location, whom he suspected of violating the sacred Canons issued by the Council and the precepts of the Church. His caseload increased to numbers never reached before or after his tenure in Cuba. The commissary had one goal with his prolific caseload and exaggeration of charges. He wanted to justify the creation of an Inquisition Tribunal in Havana, with jurisdiction over

Jamaica, but most important, over St. Augustine with himself as Inquisitor. From there he could curtail the spread of heresy and the commission of sins.

His timing could not be better. During the time he spent manufacturing sin in Cuba, the island split its administrative districts into two and had become a stronger military power. More significant St. Augustine had become a frontier post and so had the diocese. The establishment of the English Protestant settlement of Jamestown in 1607 had made the possibility of Protestant interference a reality. Now more than ever was his desired tribunal in the Caribbean needed. Indeed, one was established, but not within his jurisdiction. The creation of the Tribunal in Cartagena de Indias confirmed the role of the Inquisition as a deterrent against Protestantism, however, it was far enough from Jamestown not to interfere with its growth. Be it because of a more amicable relationship between the Spanish and English crown, or because of the inability of the Spaniards to keep the English abreast, the location of the new tribunal was clearly far from an act of confrontation.

Although Carranco failed in his gamble for the new tribunal he, nonetheless, opened the door to the Inquisition to act formally in Cuba. In addition, the business of manufacturing sin, which had been previously used by individuals as a tool for personal gain, had become part of the imperial defensive strategy for its frontier. The Diocese of Santiago de Cuba during the first decade of the seventeenth century was no longer undesired nor underestimated. Its role within the imperial plans grew stronger. Even after Carranco and others who attempted to halt the growth of Protestantism and the proliferation of heresy by manufacturing sin were gone, the role of the diocese as a defensive rampart on the frontier of heresy continued.



## **Abbreviations**

AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional (SPAIN)
AHUH	Archivo Histórico de la Universidad de la Habana (CUBA)
AGI	Archivo General de Indias (SPAIN)
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación (MEXICO)
ANC	Archivo Nacional de Cuba (CUBA)
ANCH	Archivo Nacional de Chile (CHILE)
BNC	Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba (CUBA)
BNM	Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (SPAIN)
BNSC	Biblioteca Nacional de Santiago de Chile (CHILE)

Bibliography

Manuscript Sources

**Cuba**

Havana

Archivo del Arzobispo de la Habana

Archivo Nacional de Cuba

Asuntos Políticos

Audiencia de Santo Domingo

Correspondencia del Capitán General

Donativos y Remisiones

Escribanía de Gobierno

Gobierno General

Protocolos Notariales

Instituto de Historia

**Chile**

Santiago de Chile

Archivo Nacional de Chile

Biblioteca Americana José Toribio Medina

Biblioteca Nacional de Santiago

**Mexico**

Ciudad de México

Archivo General de la Nación

Biblioteca de la Universidad Autónoma de México

Biblioteca Franciscana

Veracruz

Archivo Regional

Archivo y Biblioteca Históricos

Biblioteca y Museo Castillo San Juan de Ulua

**Spain**

Madrid

Archivo Histórico Nacional

Inquisición

Diversos

Seville

Archivo General de Indias

Audiencia de Santo Domingo

Consejo de la Inquisición

Contratación

Indiferente General

Ultramar

**United States**

Gainesville, Florida

University of Florida

P. K. Yonge Library Special Collections

Stetson Collection (microfilm)

Miami, Florida

Florida International University

Green Library,

Levi Marrero Collection

University of Miami,

Otto G. Richter Library

Cuban Collection

Washington, DC

Library of Congress

Manuscript Division:

Domingo del Monte Collection

Online Archival Collections

Ministerio de Cultura, Portal de Archivos Españoles [PARES] < pares.mcu.es >

University of Florida, Digital Resources Online

Printed Primary Sources:

Academia de la Historia de Cuba. *Papeles existentes en el Archivo General de Indias relativos a Cuba y muy particularmente a La Habana*. Vol. 1. Ordenados y con introducción de Joaquín de Llaverías. La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1931.

Archivo General de Indias, *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de hispano-américa*. 15 vol. Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, 1927-32.

Colección de Documentos Inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar. Segunda Serie publicada por la Real Academia de la Historia. Tomo # 5, I. De los Documentos Legislativos. Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico Sucesores de Rivadeneyba. Impresores de la Real Casa, 1890.

Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organización de las Antiguas Posesiones Españolas de Ultramar. Tomo 4, De La Isla De Cuba, II, and Tomo VI, Part III. Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, Impresores de la Real Casa, 1888.

Hortensia Pichardo. *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*. Tomo I. La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973.

José Manuel López Mora. *Inquisición de Veracruz. Catálogo de documentos Novohispanos en el AGN. Estudio preliminar y notas*. Veracruz: Colección Rescate, Universidad Veracruzana, 2009.

Levi Marrero. *Cuba, Economía y sociedad*, 15 vols. VIII: 262-67. Madrid: Playor, SA, 1972-1988.

Olga Portuondo Zúñiga. *El Departamento Oriental en documentos, Tomo I, 1510 – 1799*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012.

#### Books and Articles

Abad Pérez, Antolín. *Los Franciscanos en América*. Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992.

Alberro, Solange. *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571 – 1700*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988.

Alonso, Eugenio. *Mohínas de la Inquisición*. Kislak Foundation, 2001. Available at <http://www.kislakfoundation.org/prize/200201.html>  
Accessed November 3, 2015.

Altman, Ida and Wheat, David. Eds. *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World in the Long Sixteenth Century*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

Allen, Paul. *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598 – 1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Álvarez Blanco, Ernesto Aramís. *Felipe III y La Dorada Cuba entre 1598 y 1609*. Buenos Aires: Librosenred, 2014.

Anghiera, Pietro Martire d'. *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*. Edited by Edmundo O'Gorman Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Bibliófilos, 1989.

Aniyar de Castro, Lola. *Los Delitos de Bigamia y Adulterio*. Maracaibo: Imprenta de la Universidad de Zulia, 1970.

Aranda Doncel, Juan. *Cuatro siglos de presencia del los franciscanos en Estepa. Actas del I Simposio*. Ayuntamiento Estepa, Estepa, 2007.

Ayuntamiento de Sevilla, Documental producido en 2006. Directed by Paco Robles. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHj82b\\_jukc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHj82b_jukc) Accessed on November 6, 2015.

Bacardí y Moreau, Emilio. *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba*. Tomo I. Barcelona: Tipografía de Carbonell y Esteve, 1908.

Bellitto, Christopher M. *A History of the Twenty-One Church Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II*. New York: Paulist Press, 2002.

- Bireley, S.J., Robert. "Early Modern Catholicism as a Response to the Changing World of the Long Sixteenth Century." *Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 95, no. 2, (2009): VI-239.
- Blanes Martín, Tamara. *Las Fortificaciones del Caribe*. La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2001.
- Blastic, Michael W. *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Block, Kristen. *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean. Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2012.
- Bolton, Herbert E. and Marshall, Thomas M. *The Colonization of North America, 1492 – 1783*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920.
- Boyer, Richard. *Lives of the Bigamists. Marriage, Family, and Community in Colonial Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001.
- Brading, David A. *La Nueva España, Patria y Religión*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica Sección de Obras de Historia, 2015.
- Burkholder, Mark A. and Lyman L. Johnson. *Colonial Latin America*. Tenth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018
- Campo, Lacasa Cristina. *Historia de la Iglesia en Puerto Rico*. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1977.
- Carande, Ramón. *Carlos V y sus banqueros*. 3 Volumes. Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios y Publicaciones, 1965 – 1967.
- Catholic Encyclopedia. Available at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11284b.htm>  
Accessed on October 10, 2015.
- Castro, Daniel. *Another Face of Empire: Bartolomé De Las Casas, Indigenous Rights, and Ecclesiastical Imperialism*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2007.
- Chao, Raúl Eduardo. *Colonial Cuba. Episodes from Four Hundred Years of Spanish Domination*. Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2014.
- Chappi, Tania. *Demonios en La Habana. Episodios de la Inquisición en Cuba*. La Habana: Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, Ediciones Boloña, 2001.

- Chatelain, Verne E. *The Defense of Spanish Florida, 1565 – 1763*. Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington D.C., 1941.
- Chávez Espíngola, Gerardo Enrique. “Imaginario popular. Mitología Cubana: Posesión satánica, historia y fantasiario popular.” *Cubarte- El Portal de la Cultura Cubana*. Available at [www.cubarte.cult.cu/periodico](http://www.cubarte.cult.cu/periodico) Accessed November 5, 2015, Last edited August 2011.
- Cheyney, Edward Potts. "On the Life and Works of Henry Charles Lea," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 50, no. 202 (1911): V-Xli.
- Chuchiack IV, John F. *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536 – 1820. A Documented History*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2012.
- Coakley, John W. “The Conversion of St. Francis and the Writing of Christian Biography, 1228 – 1263.” *Franciscan Studies*, Vol. 78 (2014): 27 – 71.
- Crawford, Katherine. *European Sexualities, 1400 -1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Cripps, Louise L. *The Spanish Caribbean. From Columbus to Castro*. Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1979.
- Cruz-Taura, Graciella. *Espejo de Paciencia y Silvestre de Balboa en la Historia de Cuba. Estudio Edición Crítica de Espejo de Paciencia y edición documental*. Madrid: Iberoamericana; Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2009
- Cook, Noble David. “Sevilla: ¿una ciudad proto-industrial a base de la economía atlántica?.” In Enriqueta Vila Vilar and Jaime J. Lacueva Muñoz. Eds. *Mirando las dos orillas: intercambios mercantiles, sociales y culturales entre Andalucía y América*. (Sevilla: Fundación Buenas Letras, 2012).
- De la Fuente, Alejandro, César García del Pino, and Bernardo Iglesias Delgado. *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- De la Hera, Alberto. Ed. *Iglesia y Corona en la América Española*. Colección Iglesia Católica en el Nuevo Mundo. Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992.
- De la Pezuela y Lobo, Jacobo. *Historia de la Isla de Cuba*. Madrid: Carlos Bailly-Bailliere. Vol. I, 1868.

- De las Casas, Bartolomé. *Memorial de remedios para las Indias, 1516*. In Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso. *Obras Escogidas*. Vol. 5. Biblioteca de Autores Españoles. Colección Rivadeneyba. Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1958.
- Elliott, J. H. *Imperial Spain, 1469 – 1716*. London: Penguin Books, 2002
- Enciso Rojas, Dolores, “Matrimonio, bigamia y vida cotidiana en Nueva España,” In *Dimensión Antropológica*, Vol. 17, (septiembre-diciembre, 1999), 101-122. Available at: <http://www.dimensionantropologica.inah.gob.mx/?p=1186> accessed on May 3, 2017.
- Eymerich, Nicolas. *Directorium Inquisitorum*. 1376. Translated by José Antonio Fortea Cucurull. Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, S.L., 2006.
- Falcón, Leonardo. *Isabel, Cisneros, and their Reformation*. Historiographical Essay for Imperial Spain Class written for Dr. N. David Cook. Miami: Florida International University, December 7, 2014.
- Fernández Serrano, Narciso. “Don Juan Del Castillo, obispo de Cuba y abad de Cabañas. Sus actuaciones en Rotura,” *Revista de estudios extremeños*, Vol. 33, # 3, 1977. Available at [https://www.dip-badajoz.es/cultura/ceex/reex\\_digital/reex\\_XXXIII/1977/T.%20XXXIII%20n.%203%201977%20sept.-dic/RV10644.pdf](https://www.dip-badajoz.es/cultura/ceex/reex_digital/reex_XXXIII/1977/T.%20XXXIII%20n.%203%201977%20sept.-dic/RV10644.pdf) Accessed on May 3, 2019.
- Federico Garza Carvajal. *Butterflies will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003
- Gannon, Michael V. *The Cross in the Sand. The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513 – 1870*. Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1993.
- García del Pino, César. *El Corso en Cuba. Siglo XVII. Causas y consecuencias*. La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “El Obispo Cabezas, Silvestre Balboa y los contrabandistas de Manzanilla.” *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí*. No. 2, (Mayo – Agosto, 1975), 13 – 54.
- García Díaz, Bernardo and Sergio Guerra Vilaboy. Eds. *La Habana/Veracruz Veracruz/La Habana. Las dos orillas*. Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 2002.
- García Oro, José. *Cisneros y la reforma del clero español en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos*. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Instituto Jerónimo Zurita, 1971.



- General Constitutions General Statutes of the Order of Friar Minor. OFM General Curia, 2016, available at [www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org) accessed on April 2, 2019.
- Gibson, Carrie. *Empire's Crossroads. A History of the Caribbean from Columbus to the Present Day*. New York: Grove Press, 2014.
- Giles, Mary E. Ed. *Women in the Inquisition. Spain and the New World*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1999.
- González, Justo. *Story of Christianity. The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Vol. 1. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.
- González Novalín, José Luis. "Reformas de las leyes: competencia y actividades del Santo Oficio durante la presidencia del inquisidor general don Fernando de Valdés (1517 – 1566)." In *Inquisición española: nueva visión, nuevos horizontes*, Vol. 193, (1980), 217 – 239.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *El Inquisidor General Don Fernando de Valdés (1483 – 1568), su vida y obra*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2008.
- Greenleaf, Richard. *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536 – 1543*. Dissertation, 1957. Copy in the possession of the author.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Not a Man of Contradiction: Zumárraga as Protector and Inquisitor of the Indigenous People of Central Mexico." *Hispanic Research Journal-Iberian and Latin American Studies* 13, no. 1 (n.d): 26-40.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969.
- Geiger, O.F.M., Maynard J. *The Franciscan Conquest of Florida (1573 – 1618)*. Authorized facsimile of the original book produced in 1969 by University Microfilm. Ann Arbor, Michigan based on Fr. Geiger's dissertation. Washington DC: The Catholic University of America, 1937.
- Guerra, Ramiro. *Manual de Historia de Cuba. Desde su descubrimiento hasta 1868*. La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro. Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1971.
- Günther Doering, Juan and Lohmann Villena, Guillermo. *Lima*. Madrid: Colecciones MAPFRE. 1992.
- Haliczer, Stephen. *Sexuality in the Confessional, A Sacrament Profaned*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

- Hall, Marcia B. and Cooper Tracy Elizabeth. *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013
- Hanke, Lewis. *In defense of the Indians. All Mankind is One; a Study of the Disputation between Bartolomé De Las Casas and Juan Ginés De Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Introduction to Historia de las Indias*. Vol. 1. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951.
- Hernández González, Salvador. “La Provincia Franciscana de Los Ángeles y sus conventos de la sierra norte sevillana.” *Asociación Cultural Benalixa Guadalcanal*. Blog of the historian of the City. Available at <https://guadalcanalfundacionbenalixa.blogspot.com/2014/04/la-provincia-franciscana-de-los-angeles.html> Accessed on March 21, 2019.
- Henningsen, Gustav and John Tedeschi. Eds. *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe. Studies on Sources and Methods*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986.
- History of the Cuban Nation. *The Rebellion of Hatuey*. Available at <http://cubahistory.org/en/spanish-settlement/rebellion-of-hatuey.html> Accessed on May 27, 2019.
- Hoffman, Paul E. *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean, 1535-1585: Precedent, Patrimonialism, and Royal Parsimony*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.
- Jacobs, Auke P. *Los movimientos migratorios entre Castilla e Hispanoamérica durante el reinado de Felipe III, 1598 – 1621*. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 1995.
- Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition. A Historical Revision*. Fourth Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Phoenix and the Flame: Catalonia and the Counter Reformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Spain, 1469 – 1714. A Society in Conflict*. Second Edition. New York: Longman. 1990.
- Kelly, Joseph Francis. *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church. A History*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009.

- Kupperman, Karen O. *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony*. Second Edition. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007.
- Küng, Hans. *The Catholic Church: A Short History*. Translated by John Bowden. (New York: A Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2001.
- Lane, Kris. *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas 1500-1750*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998.
- Larrúa-Guedes, Salvador. *Historia de la Orden de Predicadores en Cuba*. Colombia: Provincia San Luis Beltrán, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Historia de la Florida Colonial Hispana. Tomo I, 1500 -1616*. Miami: España Florida Foundation 500 years, 2010.
- Latimer, John. *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Lavrín, Asunción. Ed. *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1992
- Le Riverend Brusone, Julio. *La Habana Espacio y Vida*. Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992.
- Lea, Henry Charles. *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*. New York: Russell & Russell. Vols 1-3, 1955.
- Lebróc Martínez, Reinerio. *Episcopologio Cubano*. Miami: Ediciones Hispamerican Books, 1985.
- León and Zubillaga, Félix. Eds. *Historia de la iglesia en la América Española desde el descubrimiento hasta los comienzos del siglo XIX*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1965.
- Liebman, Seymour. *The Inquisitors and the Jews in The New World: Summaries of Procesos: 1500 – 1810, and bibliographical guide*. Miami: University of Miami Press, 1974.
- Lockhart, James and Stuart B. Schwartz. *Early Latin America: a history of colonial Spanish America and Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Lopetegui, León and Félix Zubillaga. Eds. *Historia de la iglesia en la América Española desde el descubrimiento hasta los comienzos del siglo XIX*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1965.

- López Mora, José Manuel. *Inquisición de Veracruz. Catálogo de documentos Novohispanos en el AGN. Estudio preliminar y notas*. Veracruz: Colección Rescate, Universidad Veracruzana, 2009.
- Lynn, Kimberly. *Between Court and Confessional. The Politics of Spanish Inquisitors*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Lynch, John. *Spain Under the Hapsburgs. Volume I: Empire and Absolutism, 1516 – 1598*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1964.
- Lyon, Eugene. *The Enterprise of Florida. Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the Spanish Conquest of 1565 – 1568*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1983.
- Macías Domínguez, Isabelo. *Cuba en la primera mitad de siglo XVII*. Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1978.
- Martire D'Anghiera, Pietro. *Décadas del Nuevo Mundo*. Edited by Edmundo O'Gorman Santo Domingo: Sociedad Dominicana de Bibliófilos, 1989.
- Marquez, Ophelia and Lillian Ramos Navarro Wold. *Compilation of Colonial Spanish Terms and Document Related Phrases*. Second Edition. (Midway City: Society of Hispanic Historical and Ancestral Research, 1998) Available at <http://www.somosprimos.com/spanishterms/spanishterms.htm> Accessed on August 7, 2019.
- Maqueda Abreu, Consuelo. “Felipe II y la Inquisición. El apoyo real al Santo Oficio.” *Revista de la Inquisición*. No. 7. 1998, 225 – 267.
- Marrero, Levi. *Cuba Economía y Sociedad*. Vol. V. España: Editorial Playor, S.A., 1976.
- McAlister, Lyle N. *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492 – 1700*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- McClure, Julia. *The Franciscan Invention of the New World*. Coventry: University of Warwick, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.
- McGrath, John T. *The French in Early Florida: in the eye of the hurricane*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000.
- Meseguer Fernández, Juan. “Contenido Misionológico de la Obediencia e Instrucción de Fray Francisco de los Ángeles a los Doce Apóstoles de México.” *The Americas* Vol 11, issue: 3, (October 1955), 473 – 500.
- Medina, José Toribio. *Historia del Tribunal de la Inquisición de Lima, 1569 – 1820*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Gutenberg, 1887.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición de Cartagena de las Indias*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1899.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en México*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1905.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *La primitiva inquisición americana (1493-1569): estudio histórico*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1914.
- Meier, Johannes. "La Historia de las Diócesis de Santo Domingo, Concepción de la Vega, San Juan de Puerto Rico y Santiago de Cuba desde su inicio hasta la mitad del siglo XVII." In Enrique D. Dussel. Ed. *Historia General De La Iglesia En América Latina*. Vol. IV. (México: Universidad de Quintana Roo. Ediciones Sígueme y Comisión de Estudios de Historia de la Iglesia en Latinoamérica (CEHILA), 1995.
- Melvin, Karen. *Building Colonial Cities of God: Mendicant Orders and Urban Culture in New Spain*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012.
- Mitchell, Linda Elizabeth. *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*. New York: Garland, 1999.
- Mira Caballos, Esteban. "Iglesia y evangelización en las indias durante el gobierno de Nicolás de Ovando (1502-1509)" *Hispania Sacra*. Vol. 53 # 108, 30 de diciembre del 2001.
- Miranda, Salvador. *Episcopologio Cubano*. Available at <http://webdept.fiu.edu/~mirandas/obispos/bio-c.htm#Castillo> Accessed on May 3, 2019.
- Miranda Ojeda, Pedro. *The commissioner of the Inquisition of New Spain, xvi-xvii centuries*, 2010. Available at [revistacoatepec.uaemex.mx/article/download/202/197](http://revistacoatepec.uaemex.mx/article/download/202/197) Accessed on September 3, 2015.
- Mirow, Matthew C. *Latin American Law: A History of Private Law and Institutions in Spanish America*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004.
- Milanich, Jerald T. and Susan Milbrath. *First encounters: Spanish explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press: Florida Museum of Natural History, 1989.

- Monter, William E. *Frontiers of Heresy: The Spanish Inquisition from the Basque Lands to Sicily*. Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Morales Padrón, Francisco. *Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de América*. Madrid: Editorial Cremos, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Jamaica Española*. Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1952.
- Morell de Santa Cruz, Pedro Agustín. Introducción de Francisco de Paula Coronado y Álvaro. *Historia de la isla y catedral de Cuba*. La Habana: Imprenta "Cuba intelectual," 1929.
- Moreno, Doris. "Los jesuitas, la Inquisición y la frontera espiritual de 1559." *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*. Vol. 92:5, (2015), 655-675.
- Mota, Francisco M. *Piratas y corsarios en las costas de Cuba*. La Habana: Editorial Gente Nueva, 1997.
- Margaret Mott. "The Rule of Faith over Reason: The Role of the Inquisition in Iberia and New Spain." In *Journal of Church and State* 40. No. 1 (1998): 57 – 81.
- Moya Pons, Frank. *Historia Colonial de Santo Domingo*. Segunda Edición. (Santiago: Colección "Estudios," 1979.
- Nalle, Sara T. "Inquisitors, Priests, and the People during the Catholic Reformation in Spain." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 18, no 4 (Winter 1987): 557 – 587.
- Nesvig, Martin. *Forgotten Franciscans: writings from an Inquisitional theorist, a heretic, and an Inquisitional deputy*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ideology and Inquisition: The world of the Censors in Early Mexico*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Nobles, Gregory H. *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest*. New York: Hill and Wang, A Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997.
- Nowell, Charles E. "La Bula Omnímoda de Adriano VI. Pedro Torres." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*. 30, No. 1 (1950): 96.
- O'Brien, John. "Henry Charles Lea: The Historian as Reformer," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1967): 104-13.

- O'Meara, Thomas F. "Divine Grace and Human Nature as Sources for the Universal Magisterium of Bishops." *Theological Studies*, Vol. 64, no. 4 (December 2003): 683-706.
- Ortiz, Fernando. *Historia de una Pelea Cubana Contra los Demonios*. Madrid, España: Ediciones ERRE, S.I., 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Brujas e Inquisidores (Defensa Póstuma de un Inquisidor Cubano)*. Con nueva introducción de José Antonio Matos Arévalos. La Habana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2003.
- Osborne, S.J., Francis J. *History of the Catholic Church in Jamaica*. Chicago: Loyola University Press. 1988.
- O'Daniel, O.P., Victor Francis. "The Right Rev. Juan de Las Cabezas de Altamirano: The First Bishop to Visit the Present Territory of the United States (1562-1615)." *The Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 2, No. 4 (Jan. 1917): 400-414.
- Páramo, Ludovico. *De origine e progressu Officii Sanctae Inquisitionis*. Madrid, 1598.
- Parker, Geoffrey. *The Grand Strategy of Philip II*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Parma Cook, Alexandra and Cook, Noble David. *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance. A Case of Transatlantic Bigamy*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991.
- Parma Cook, Alexandra. "The Women of Early Modern Triana: Life, Death and Survival Strategies in Seville's Maritime District." In Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbel, eds. *Women in Port. Gendering Communities, Economic and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800*. (Brill, Leiden and Boston, 2012), 41-68.
- Pérez, Joaquín Villanueva, Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, and Angel Alcalá. Eds. *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*. Vol. II. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1984.
- Pérez, Joseph. *The Spanish Inquisition*. Translated by Janet Lloyd. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Perry, Mary Elizabeth and Anne J. Cruz. Eds. *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Perry, Mary Elizabeth. *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

- Pettegree, Andrew. *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.
- Phelan, John Leddy. *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- Pichardo, Hortensia. *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*. Tomo I. La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1973.
- Pickett, Margaret F. and Dwayne Pickett W. *The European Struggles to Settle North America. Colonization Attempts by England, France, and Spain, 1521 – 1608*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co. Publishers, 2011.
- Portuondo Zúñiga, Olga. *El Departamento Oriental en documentos, Tomo I, 1510 – 1799*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2012
- Quesada, Noemi et al. Eds. *Inquisición Novohispana*. Vol. II. México, D.F: Universidad Autónoma de México. Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 2000.
- Ramos, Demetrio. “La crisis indiana y la Junta Magna de 1568.” *Anuario de Historia de América Latina.*, Vol. 23, 1, (diciembre 1986), 1-62
- Rawlings, Helen. *The Spanish Inquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Real Academia Española. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 23.<sup>a</sup> ed., [versión 23.2 en línea]. Available at <https://dle.rae.es>. Accessed on May 20, 2019.
- Reston Jr, James. *Defenders of the Faith: Charles V, Suleyman the Magnificent and the Battle for Europe, 1520 – 1536*. New York: Penguin Press, 2009.
- Ricard, Robert. *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: an essay on the apostolate and the evangelizing methods of the mendicant orders in New Spain, 1523-1572*. Translated by Lesley Byrd Simpson. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Ríos, Arcadio. *Hechos y Personajes de la Historia de Cuba. Recopilación Bibliográfica*. La Habana: Editorial Infoiima, 2015. Online versión EcuRed. Available at [https://www.ecured.cu/Gonzalo\\_Nu%C3%B1o\\_de\\_Guzm%C3%A1n](https://www.ecured.cu/Gonzalo_Nu%C3%B1o_de_Guzm%C3%A1n) Accessed May 2, 2019.
- Rivero Cabrera, Arelis. *Commitment Beyond Rules: Franciscans in Colonial Cuba 1531 – 1842*. California: The Academy of American Franciscan History, 2017.
- Rodríguez, María et al. *Hatuey*. (Miami: Dade County Board of Public Instruction, 1975



- Rodríguez, Pedro. *El Catecismo Romano ante Felipe II y la Inquisición española. Los problemas de la introducción en España del Catecismo del Concilio de Trento*. Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, S.A. 1998.
- Rodríguez Souquet, Carlos. *El concilio provincial dominicano (1622 – 1623). Un aporte para la historia de las Antillas y Venezuela*. Quintana Roo: Siglo veintiuno editores, 2003.
- Rubial García, Antonio. Ed. *La Iglesia en el México Colonial. Seminario de historia política y económica de la iglesia en México*. México: Instituto de investigaciones históricas de México, UNAM, 2013.
- Ruiz Medrano, Ethelia. *Reshaping New Spain: Government and Private Interest in the Colonial Bureaucracy*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado. 2006.
- Sarmiento Ramírez, Ismael and Huerta Quintana, Aroa. “Una Mirada a la Isla de Cuba En Tiempos Del Gobernador Pedro de Valdés, a Través de Sus Cartas Al Rey (1602 – 1608).” *Caravelle*. Vol 106 (2016): 99-120.
- Schwaller, John F. *The Church in Colonial Latin America*, a bibliographical essay <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0180.xml> Accessed on August 24, 2017.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America: From Conquest to Revolution and Beyond*. New York: New York University Press, 2011.
- Schwartz, Stuart B. *All Can Be Saved. Religion, Tolerance, and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Seed, Patricia. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492 – 1640*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Sigal, Pete. *Infamous Desires: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Suárez Polcari, Mons. Ramón. *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en Cuba*. Vols. I of II. Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2003.
- Testé, Ismael. *Historia Eclesiástica de Cuba*. Tomo I of VII. Burgos: Tipografía de la Editorial “Monte Carmelo,” 1971.
- Thomas, Hugh. *El Imperio Español de Carlos V, (1522 – 1558)*. Translated by Carmen Martínez Gimeno and Jesús Cuéllar. España: Editorial Planeta, 2014.

- Tridentine Canons. The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent. Translated by J. Waterworth. London: Dolman, 1848. Available at <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct07.html> Accessed October 10, 2015.
- Toros, Alfonso. *Los judíos en la Nueva España*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.
- Torres, Pedro. *La Bula Omnímoda de Adriano VI (9 mayo 1522) y su aplicación durante el primer siglo de las misiones de Indias*. Madrid: Ediciones Jura, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Santo Toribio de Mongrovejo, 1948.
- Torres-Cuevas, Eduardo and Leiva Lajara, Edelberto. *Historia de la Iglesia Católica en Cuba: la iglesia en las patrias de los criollos, 1516-1789*. Vol. I. La Habana: Editorial Boloña de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad, 2007.
- Uchmany de la Peña, Eva. *La vida entre el judaísmo y el cristianismo en la Nueva España, 1580 – 1606*. México: Archivo General de la Nación, 1992.
- Ullivarri, Saturnino. *Piratas y corsarios en Cuba*. España: Editorial Renacimiento, 2004. Reprint from Cuban first edition of 1931.
- Villanueva, Joaquín Pérez, Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, and Angel Alcalá. Eds. *Historia de la Inquisición en España y América*. Vol. I, II, III. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1984.
- Vidal-Robert, Jordi. *War and Inquisition: Social Control in the Spanish Empire*. The paper was presented as part of his dissertation: *Historical Institutions and their Legacy: The Spanish Inquisition's Motivations and Impact on Spanish Economic Development*. Boston University, ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2013.
- Veitia de Linage, José. *Norte de la contratación de las Indias occidentales (The Rule of Trade to the [West] Indies)*, Sevilla, 1672. 98-108.  
<http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/bernard-moses/the-establishment-of-spanish-rule-in-america-an-introduction-to-the-history-and-hci/page-4-the-establishment-of-spanish-rule-in-america-an-introduction-to-the-history-and-hci.shtml>
- Walsh, William. *Personajes de la Inquisición*. Madrid: Espasa – Calpe, 1963.
- Webber, David. *The Spanish Frontier in North America: The Brief Edition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Weinstein, Donald. *Savonarola, the Rise and Fall of a Renaissance Prophet*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

- Witte Jr., John. *The Western Case of Monogamy Over Polygamy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Wright, A.D. *Catholicism and Spanish Society Under the Reign of Philip II, 1555 – 1598, and Philip III, 1598 – 1621*. Studies on Religion and Society, Volume 27. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1991.
- Wright, Irene A. “Rescates: with special reference to Cuba, 1599-1610.” *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Vol. 3, (1920): 333 – 361.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Historia documentada de San Cristóbal de la Habana en la primera mitad del siglo XVII*. La Habana: Imprenta El Siglo XX, 1930.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Early History of Cuba, 1492 – 1586. Written from Original Sources*. New York: McMillan, 1916.

## VITA

### LEONARDO FALCON

Born, Havana, Cuba.

1988 - 1993	Religious Studies San Juan de Letrán and Seminario San Carlos y San Ambrosio Havana, Cuba
1998 - 2000	B.A. Anthropology University of North Texas Denton, Texas
2000 - 2002	M.A. Latin American Studies
2014 - 2019	Doctoral Student and Teaching Assistant, History
2016 - 2019	Doctoral Candidate Florida International University Miami, Florida
2019 - Present	Instructor of History and Latin American Studies Coordinator of Latin American Studies Program Nassau Community College Garden City, New York

### AWARDS

- 2019 – Dissertation Fellowship. Academy of American Franciscan (\$15,000.00)
- Spring and Summer 2019 – Dissertation Year Fellowship (\$16, 600.00).
- Fall 2018 – Spring 2019 Graduate Grant (\$5,000.00)
- Summer 2018, Cuban Research Institute Research Fellowship. (\$2,000.00).
- Spring 2017 First Prize at Tri-University Student Conference (University of Miami – Florida - Atlantic University – Florida International University), (\$500.00).
- Summer 2016, Tinker Foundation Research Traveling Grant, (\$580.00)
- Summer 2015, Tinker Foundation Research Traveling Grant, (\$2,500.00).
- Fall 2014 – Spring 2015 Graduate Grant (\$5,000.00).

### MEMBERSHIPS

The Conference of Latin American History.  
American Historical Association.  
American Society of Church History.  
Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies.  
Florida Historical Society.  
American Anthropological Association.  
American Folklore Society. Phi Beta Kappa.

## LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Spanish: Native.

English: Near native.

Portuguese: Advanced.

Latin: Read.

Paleography: Intermediate.

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

"Edward Kenney, Cuban Nationalism and the Establishment of the Episcopal Church in Cuba," in *Global Protestant Missions: Politics, Reform and Communication, 1730s-1920s*.

SERIES: Studies in World Christianity and Interreligious Relations, by Jeanna M. Gibbs, Ed. Routledge Press, 2019.

Review of Celia Cussen's *Black Saint of the Americas. The Life and After Life of Martin De Porres*. "The Journal for Ecclesiastic History," UK.

Volume 68 / [Issue 3](#) / July 2017 <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022046917000094>

Forthcoming: *Inquisition in the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba*. (Tentative title) Tibesar Lecture and Colloquium on Culture and Religion in La Florida. San Agustin, FL. October 26-28, 2018. Berkeley, California: The Academy of American Franciscan History.

*The Inquisition in the Diocese of Santiago de Cuba*.

Tibesar Lecture and Colloquium on Culture and Religion in La Florida.

Flagler College. San Agustin, FL. October 26-28, 2018.

*Fabricating Buildings and Manufacturing Sin: The Inquisition and the Catholic Church in the Circum Caribbean between 1604 and 1614*.

South Eastern Council for Latin American Studies (SECOLAS)

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN., March 10, 2018.

*The Catholic Church in Cuba as a Sociopolitical Agent 1492 – 1898; 1898 – 1959; 1959 – Present*.

Lecture Series: Summer Institute.

Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, Summer 2017.

*Manufacturing Sin. The Inquisition in Cuba and Florida, 1604-1614*.

Tri-University Students Conference.

Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida, April 2017. Winner of First prize.

*Relocating Cultures. Histories of Folklorists who have made South Florida Home*.

Panel Chair.

American Folklore Society Annual Meeting.

Miami, Florida, October 2016.