Good Catholics, Bad Acts: Sacrilege, Blasphemy and Lived Religion in the Early Modern Spanish Empire

By
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Acceptance Page

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Abstract

Histories of the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often view it as a militant champion of Catholic orthodoxy, where the Spanish Inquisition eradicated all erroneous behaviors and beliefs. Thousands of cases of sacrilege and blasphemy complicate this story. This dissertation offers a more complex and varied portrait of religion across the Spanish empire. It shows that theological treatises and official ceremonies admitted religion flourished in "grey" areas between doctrine and everyday practice. Drawing from dozens of inquisitorial cases in Spain and the Viceroyalty of Mexico, my study locates blaspheming against God, physically attacking sacred images and objects, and acts of desecration against the Host within intensely personal religious experiences. Acts such as yelling insults at God, slashing sacred images with a knife, or desecrating the Host reveal a cosmology in which humans interacted with divine powers through a range of behaviors that mixed the orthodox and the heterodox in everyday religious practice.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The history of Spanish religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often pertains to Spain as a champion of Catholicism and religious orthodoxy. The infamous Inquisition's persecution of suspect behaviors and beliefs and the Spanish Church's refutation and rebuttal of the Protestant doctrines speak volumes about the history of Catholicism in Spain. Similarly, the missionary zeal, which relied on papal approval, justified the conquest and colonization of the Americas as a means to bring Catholicism to the New World. However, alongside the orthodoxy in beliefs and the orthopraxis in ritual, many other currents of religion existed that challenge the assumption of whether religion in Spain did in fact conform to the image of a strict adherence to orthodoxy. In short, it seems that the answer to this is "no," as is demonstrated by examining cases of blasphemy and sacrilege that did not contradict, and, in fact, were motivated by the same faith that informed church teachings. These actions substitute the imagined zealous orthodoxy for one that proposes an alternative picture of lived religion in the Spanish domains. Even among the champions of Catholicism, acts of sacrilege and blasphemy that unambiguously contradicted Church teachings and seem incongruous with early modern piety coexisted with more familiar elements of Spain's religious history.

With a concentration on the mid-sixteenth through the seventeenth centuries, my dissertation examines acts that seemed impious or even heretical by many standards of religiosity but which were prevalent across the Spanish Empire. Even with the staunch

Catholicism of many Spaniards, people that verbally lashed out against the sacred, mistreated sacred images, and even abused the Host, considered themselves to be good and faithful Catholics. For example, between 1550 and 1700, the Inquisition tried 12,117 cases for blasphemy—more than a quarter of all inquisitorial trials in Spain. These cases represent only a specifically defined verbal offense, leaving numerous cases of sacrilege grouped into the 13,424 cases for offenses such as superstition, Lutheranism, and "various heresies."[1]

Despite the fact that records of these actions come down to us because witnesses denounced the perpetrators to the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition, most of their friends and neighbors would also consider them good Catholics. Despite the preaching and works of theological authors and commentators, for many of the faithful no clear line existed between acceptable and unacceptable religious practices. The frequency with which these acts –very often egregious violations of the faith that coexisted alongside of participation in the sacraments, processions, and other sanctioned acts of veneration— make them indispensable to an understanding of the lived religion of early modern Spain and Mexico.

Expanding the study of religion beyond the rituals and sacraments raises a number of important questions. Why did ostensibly good Catholics blaspheme or commit acts of sacrilege to interact with the divine? How did early modern men and women see their relationship with the supernatural? How can we make sense of the internal logic that informed the ways in which they lived their religion? Briefly stated, my dissertation will argue that the lived religious experience of early modern Catholics across the Spanish

[1] Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi eds. *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 114.

world involved interactions with divine forces that went far beyond the sacraments and rituals supervised by the church. Acts considered sacrilegious or blasphemous formed part of a spectrum of behaviors and practices men and women used to manage their relationships with the divine. The underlying beliefs promoted by the Church that emphasized the place of the spoken word in acts of devotion, the role of sacred images and objects, and the centrality of the Host in the faithful's connection with God drove acts of veneration as well as acts of aggression.

For example, in 1642 the tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition heard the case of a soldier named Juan de Solís for supposed acts of sacrilege that included striking an image of the Virgin Mary with his sword, stepping on a rosary, and publicly blaspheming. At a first glance, individuals like Solís, who came to the attention of the Inquisition for disrespecting the Catholic faith, might seem to be impious or even heretical by many standards of religiosity prevalent within the Spanish empire. However, Juan de Solís was not unique, or even especially unusual in some of the ways he expressed and experienced his faith. Despite the degree to which the Catholic Church placed importance on outward signs, utterances, and actions as indicators of the purity of the faith, even devout Catholics in Spain's domains across the world frequently committed acts of sacrilege and blasphemy as a part of how they lived their faith.[2]

Actions perceived by some of the clergy as mistreatment of religious images and relics were not necessarily an indication of heresy, heterodoxy, or impiety. Nevertheless, despite the devotion of many early modern Spanish, certain categories of speech and acts that appeared hostile to God and the saints, or were otherwise deemed disrespectful to the faith, represented only one facet of early modern religiosity. While the range of actions

[2] John O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2013), 17-18.

against the sacred, whether through words or actions against objects, makes the viability of a single explanation highly unlikely, looking at the range of language, gestures, and words used in the interactions with the divine offers insights into how the heterodox and orthodox coexisted in the ways that the Spanish lived their religion. Moreover, this broader perspective on what constituted early modern religiosity speaks to the extent to which everyday religious practice in the Spanish empire diverged from the Church's ideal of Catholic devotion.

Religion in the early modern Spanish world was a complex mix of the political and the spiritual and of the local with the national and international. At the highest echelon of the church, the religious mission of the Spanish church variously coincided and conflicted with the spiritual and political ideas of the papacy, the politics of the Spanish crown, and the churches of other European powers. Within the Spanish church, the various religious orders contended with the cathedral chapters and other powerful members of the clergy for control over various lands, church benefices, and important offices, as well as for royal favors. Among the lower levels of the clergy and among the laity, many parishes struggled to maintain autonomy over the local churches, local forms of religious practices, and the dedication to local saints, even as others sought to adhere to the commands of their superior bishops.

As a result of this complexity, it is no surprise that the existing scholarship presents numerous approaches, and almost as many disagreements, in the analysis and understanding of early modern religion. Although the role of the Spanish Inquisition in shaping religion in Spain has long been an important facet of the scholarship on religious history in the Spanish world, so too have works on the confluence of politics and faith,

the place of the Spanish crown in religious affairs, the legacy of Spain's Jewish and Islamic past on the faith, and the way that the faith interacted with ideas about gender. A great deal of scholarship has also been done on the often intensely local nature of Spanish religion and the importance of local variations in attitudes about the institutional church, the sacraments, religious relics, shrines, and pilgrimages. However, the current scholarship has not fully developed another way to assess and analyze religion in the early modern Spanish world, namely, the role of sacrilegious acts and blasphemous oaths in lived religion.

The focus on the lived religious experience brings to light, and possibly helps to resolve, some of the ongoing disagreements in the existing scholarship. The concept of lived religion has become a key idea in scholarship of the history of religion, as well as in religious studies and anthropology, with the scholar of religion and religious history, Robert Orsi, as one of the key theorists and pioneers of this concept. In particular, lived religion as a concept makes possible a more nuanced analysis of actions in ways that give us greater access to the unspoken, quotidian realities of religious practice.

This approach expands the scope of what constitutes religion beyond the participation in the sanctioned sacraments, prayers, processions, etc. Lived religion includes the totality of the people's values, ethical convictions, and cosmology.[3] In particular, it includes all aspects of the webs of connections between humans and the divine that, despite the supernatural and sacred nature of these relationships, had all too familiar elements of hopes, fears, love, misunderstanding, and disappointment.[4] From this

[3] Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), xvii.
[4] Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religions Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

perspective, attacks on sacred objects and images of holy figures were part of a spectrum of actions through which the faithful sought to engage in and control these relationships in order to procure divine protection and improve their position in the afterlife. The sacraments, prayers for the deceased family members, and votive offerings made before sacred images functioned alongside the sacrilegious and heterodox as a way to participate in these relationships.

The anthropologist William A. Christian Jr.'s study of local variations in shrines, pilgrimages, and devotions to the saints and the historian Carlos Eire's scholarship on local variations of religion practiced by the majority of the faithful offer a focus on local religion as a way to avoid artificial dichotomies. They stress that, as practiced, Catholicism did not have clear distinctions between "popular," "local," or "lay" religion, on the one hand, and "elite," "universal," and "clerical" on the other. They characterized variations in local religious devotions and practices of the larger religious culture of Catholicism, itself constituted by a collection of locally interpreted rituals intimately bound to canon law's respect for the accumulation of customary practice.[5] Approaches that examine the lived religion of the early modern world allow for complexity and nuance of religious beliefs often lost by the use of categories that did not reflect the messy reality of religious experience for most early modern men and women.

As lived religion did not represent a coherent creed at odds with the faith espoused by the Catholic Church's hierarchy, but rather a fragmented collection of beliefs and practices derived from tradition and a pragmatic response to quotidian

[5] William A. Christian, "Catholicisms" in *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico,* ed. by Martin Austin Nesvig (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2006); Carlos M. N. Eire, "The Concept of Popular Religion" in *Local Religion in Colonial Mexico,* ed. Martin Austin Nesvig (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2006).

realties, it is also visible through its connection to material culture. As the scholar of religion Jennifer Scheper Hughes's work on the history of a crucifix in Totolapan, Mexico, demonstrates, we can gain access to multiple aspects of faith through an object. The way that different groups venerated and used the Cristo Aparecido (Christ Appeared) of her study reflect the multitude and ever changing ways that different components of the faithful, from recently converted Indian converts to Spanish clergy, envisioned the divine and the place of the material within those relationships. An image of Christ crucified, the Cristo Aparecido was simultaneously an image of Christ for veneration, a powerful protector against disease, and Christ embodied. The miraculous Cristo Aparecido protected the mestizos of Totolapan and represented the place of images in the religiosity of frontier areas of Mexico and of the Mexican missionaries determined to spread the Catholic faith. The strong local devotion surrounding the crucifix reflected at once the success of missionary efforts to implant the new faith on a conquered people as well as the ability of the new Christians to appropriate the power of objects of devotion to their own religious practices. The struggle that ensued over physical possession of the image, in which Augustinian friars "stole" the Cristo Aparecido from Totolapan and relocated it to Mexico City, betrayed a broader concern of church authorities across the Catholic world: The determination to reign in local devotions by transferring them to the cities, where clergy could more easily exert their control.[6]

Treating an image as something to venerate or worship, to regard as an object of art and inspiration, or as a source religious power and authority to be coveted all, reflect different facets of lived religion. The history of the Cristo Aparecido, like the history of

[6] Jennifer Scheper Hughes, *Biography of a Mexican Crucifix: Lived Religion and Local Faith from the Conquest to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); William A. Christian Jr., *Apparitions in late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton University Press, 1981).

sacrilegious acts, presents an engagement between humanity and the divine that does not fit many expectations of how religion is supposed to look or what religious people are supposed to do. Nevertheless, the theft of the Cristo, like swearing at the Virgin Mary, made sense to the participants of the actions.

My dissertation therefore seeks to demonstrated that the study of religion from the perspective of lived experience offers a better opportunity to achieve what historian Brad Gregory refers to as "seeing things their way": Trying to understand the religious beliefs of individuals in the past on their own terms and, when possible, examining their actions as rational responses to their understanding of faith.[7] Lived religion allows us to see speech and actions that otherwise appear outside orthodox practice as part of a rational and coherent faith. It makes it possible to include all aspects of the webs of connections between humans and the divine that, despite the supernatural and sacred nature of these relationships, had all too familiar elements of hopes, fears, love, misunderstanding, and disappointment. The rationality of a wide variety of acts and behaviors become evident if the category of religion includes attacks on sacred objects and images of holy figures as part of a spectrum of actions through which the faithful sought to engage in and control these relationships in order to procure divine protection and improve their position in the afterlife. For early modern Catholics, the sacraments, prayers for the deceased family members, and votive offerings made before sacred images functioned alongside of the sacrilegious and heterodox as a way to participate in these relationships.

Thus, blasphemy and sacrilege as an aspect of religion cannot be reduced simply as a remnant of traditional religion that predates the Counter Reformation or as indicative

[7] Brad S. Gregory, "Can We 'See Things Their Way'? Should We Try?" in *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion*, ed. Alister Chapman, John Coffey, and Brad S. Gregory (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 24.

of the relative failure of the Council of Trent, an ecumenical council that met in twenty-five sessions from 1545 until 1563, in changing the practice of the Catholic faith. [8] Instead, those acts illustrate that while the church could reform clerical discipline and enforce a degree of orthodoxy concerning participation in acts of faith directly under the supervision of the clergy, theologians and clerical elites could not impose uniformity on the way that people spoke about the divine or the way that sacred images and objects functioned as a point of contact with the saints.

Lived religion also helps us to rethink and reframe the debate over different kinds of religious experiences as distinct and oppositional forms of piety. The fact that people from all social orders and regions crossed boundaries and pushed the limits of what constituted proper Christian practice warns against the use of elite religion as something separate from, and opposed to, popular religion. In addition, the uncertainty about the propriety of using some religious texts, certain rituals, prayers, and acts of veneration, even among the clergy, highlights that variations in the lived religious experience existed among the clergy as well as the laity. In essence, as historians such as Euan Cameron and Eamon Duffy have argued, much of the lived religious experience of people across early modern Europe existed in this grey area between the acceptable and unacceptable.[9] My research seeks to add to the work of Cameron and others to show that boundaries

[8] Formally opened on December 13, 1545 by Pope Paul III at the encouragement of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, The Council of Trent sought to address the issues raised by Martin Luther's break from the church, Henry VIII's proclamation that he was the supreme head of the English church, and other issues of church governance and doctrine. The council issued edicts that alternated between those that pertained to the organization and structure of the church, and those that dealt with official doctrine and theology. See John O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2013), 56-60.

[9] Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 50-51; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 214-215.

separating magic, superstition, and religion, like boundaries between institutional religion and everyday religious practice, were permeable and in constant flux.

In order to address these problems, I examine several dozen inquisitorial cases on blasphemy and sacrilege drawn from the tribunals in Spain and Nueva España (present day Mexico and Central America). For example, the sacrilegious use of images allows us access to the range of words, gestures, and actions before the religious images and objects.

The records left by the Spanish Inquisition do not explicitly describe sacrilege in the language of the history of lived religion and religiosity. The Spanish monarchs created the Holy Office with the intent that it would investigate and eliminate heresies. The expansion of its jurisdiction to include sacrilegious behaviors and practices explicitly framed interrogations to discover a possible association with heresy, not to expose the place of sacrilege in a lived religious experience. Nevertheless, the Inquisition pursued investigations of all manners of sacrilege, and its documents not only offer a record of how some people lived their religion. As modern scholars seek to do, the inquisitors wanted to know exactly what people did, where they obtained their ideas, any other people involved in their actions, and other aspects pertaining to the way that people lived their faith. In the process, the inquisitors often explain why certain acts transcended the acceptable, with the contrast making visible the difference between the Catholic faith as envisioned by religious authorities and the reality of lived religious experienced.

For this project, it is necessary to approach the records as a dialogue between different cultures. As the historian Carlo Ginzburg has pioneered, we can borrow from anthropology and treat the trial documents as a kind of anthropologist's field notes as

these records essentially rephrase fundamentally alien beliefs into a language intelligible to the clergy (and to us).[10] In their attempt to decipher the heterodox words and actions of men and women brought before the tribunals and to root out potential origins of heretical ideas, the inquisitor acts as an anthropologist investigating a foreign religious culture. For this reason, they can make them intelligible to a modern reader. It is in this cultural gap between the hierarchical church, represented by its theologians and inquisitors, and the ordinary faithful that we can obtain a better understanding of lived religion.

Taken together, this information from the Inquisition's records offers insights into the limits of the Catholic Church's attempts to reform the everyday, or the lived, religion among the vast majority of men and women. In addition, these cases also facilitate an understanding of how men and women saw religious art, not with regard to aesthetics or content. Rather, as art historian Michael Baxandall states, "a society's visual practices are…not all or even mostly represented in verbal records," making the context, actions, and other aspects of how people connected with sacred images invisible. In other words, trials for sacrilegious acts can reveal some aspects about how the defendants saw their actions in relationship to their understanding of the faith. By interpreting actions in the context of the "sacred gaze," we can see a visible manifestation of an individual's religious beliefs. Ultimately what a person did with a given image or object became a medium through which their faith was made manifest. Their actions complemented verbal expression of faith and the recital of prayers and other verbal expressions of devotion. As art historian and religious scholar David Morgan succinctly states, "for it is

[10] Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 11.

almost certainly true that people spend far more time each day being religious than they do merely reciting creedal propositions."[11]

Cases of sacrilege and blasphemy can also provide insights into the relationship between religious heterodoxy and race, ethnicity, and gender. The long history of Spain's interaction with Iberia's Muslims and Jews and their converted descendants and the long legacy of ascribing moral and religious weakness to women predisposed many Old Christians to view the practices of *conversos*, as Christians of Jewish descent were known, *moriscos*, or Christians of Muslim descent, and women as suspect and inclined toward the heterodox. The association of certain groups with the heterodox only grew in the sixteenth century as the Spanish found their Indian subjects wanting in a complete understanding of the Catholic faith and its practices. Closer to home the advent of the Protestant Reformation made potentially suspect most other European nations —the French in particular— fostering a close association between heterodoxy and those who hailed from abroad.

However, th*e géneros de gente*, or socio-racial categories for different kinds of people, did not function as imagined in social ideals or Spanish law. The various tiers of categorization based on social status (i.e. *ricos hombres* [magnates]*, hidalgos* [lower nobles]*, pecheros* [tax payers or commoners]), based on ethno-religious background (i.e. *Cristiano Viejo* [old Christian], *converso*, *moro* [Moor]), or the numerous classifications of racial mixtures (i.e. *español* [Spanish]*, indio* [Indian]*, negro* [black]*, mestizo, mulato, loro* [originally children of Christian-Muslim unions]*,* etc.) were far from fixed or absolute. The terminologies did not capture the cultural and religious influences that

[11] David Morgan, *Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 8.

affected how people lived their faith nor did they preclude the mixing and sharing of ideas between ostensibly different *géneros* .[12] Sacrilegious acts and blasphemous words provide us with a view of greater commonality, or the commonness of diverse forms of religious expression, than they do of lived religious experience dictated by race, ethnicity, or gender.

In some contexts, like that of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the relationship between Christian images and religiosity is complicated by the violent iconoclasm of their introduction. Almost from the outset, the Spanish smashed Indian "idols," such as the *xemi* or *ixiptla* of indigenous beliefs and replaced them with Christian images and crosses, often among the very idols being destroyed.[13] Moreover, the conflation of new images of the Virgin Mary, Christ, and the cross, and the new names and concepts of the divine, God, mother of God, Jesus as God, and Son of God, complicate interpretation of sacrilege.[14] This conflation intensified under the guidance of the second bishop of Mexico, Alonso de Montúfar, who encouraged syncretism and obfuscation of pre-Columbian deities such as Mother of Gods Toci-Tonantzin with the Virgin Mary as portrayed in the miraculous appearance of an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe.[15]

It is necessary to be careful to avoid conflation of acts of sacrilege like that committed by the soldier Juan de Solís in the Philippines discussed above, and those of the indigenous people in parts of New Spain, who in the seventeenth century seized and

[12] Robert C. Schwaller, *Géneros de Gente in Early Colonial Mexico: Defining Racial Difference* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 17-31.
[13] Serge Gruzinski, *Images At War: Mexico from Columbus to Blade Runner (1492-2019)* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 35-37.
[14] Gruzinski, 66.
[15] Gruzinski, 96, 99-101.

destroyed sacred objects as part of resistance to Spanish missionaries.[16] Likewise, as I will discuss in later chapters, it is necessary to be cognizant of the fact that African slaves at times intentionally blasphemed or committed acts of sacrilege in order to escape the brutality of their owners to the relatively more lenient treatment of the Inquisition. As I hope to demonstrate, race, ethnicity, and gender alone do not explain the reasons behind the sacrilegious and blasphemous acts discussed in this dissertation; rather, the lived religious experience reflects more shared commonalities than differences among racial, ethnic, and regional divisions.

Examining cases of sacrilege and blasphemy can also provide insights into the relationship between religious heterodoxy and race, ethnicity, and gender. Just as race, ethnicity, and gender shaped the expressions of piety through different models of religiosity, racial categories and gender norms also shaped the contours of daily life, defining how the faithful spent their days, the spaces they could use, and the kinds of occupations in which they participated. Expectations about acceptable behavior intersected with the realities of daily life to create differences in expressions of religiosity. Although it is not a primary focus of this dissertation, a consideration of these elements helps to reveal the commonalities of the lived religious experience throughout Spain and its empire and where they differ.

In order to provide the context to examine these issues, the first chapter establishes what the clerical elites and theologians prescribed and how they made sense of practices in order to establish commonalities between the prescribed ideal of early

[16] Cynthia Radding, "Cultural Boundaries Between Adaptation and Defiance: The Mission Communities of Northwestern New Spain" in *Spiritual Encounters: Interactions Between Christianity and Native Religions in Colonial America*, eds. by Nicholas Griffiths and Fernando Cervantes (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 125-126.

modern religion and how it was practiced. I therefore analyze the "grey zones" where the relationship between practice and dogma is unclear. As theologians and clerics sought to explain and categorize actions and define errors and prescribe proper practice, the struggle of theologians to sort and explain can help us to get at something in lived religion that is otherwise obscured, namely, the common assumptions that underscored practices on either side of acceptability.

Early modern Spanish religious writers and theologians like Pedro Ciruelo (1470-1548) and Martín de Castañega (1511-1551) offered detailed information about the theological underpinnings of their critiques of practices they deemed superstitious, while offering the same level of detail about why other prayers and rituals were in keeping with the faith. Through literature such as confessor's manuals, treatises on witchcraft and the veneration of the saints, and works intended to guide the spiritual lives of laymen, it is possible to examine the impulses that underpin the orthodox and heterodox interaction with the sacred.

Although many theologians and other clerical critics of unusual and heterodox practices condemned them as "superstitious," no clear consensus existed as to what constituted the dividing line between good practices and superstitions.[17] Nevertheless, accepting the grey area and the tension between those practices deemed appropriate and good and those that clearly transcended the boundaries of even the most tolerant clergy is useful for understanding the full range of practices that made up early modern Catholicism. By delving more fully into this grey area, we can see the underlying beliefs and ideas that the faithful held in common with theologians and formed the points of departure of the orthodox and heterodox in lived religion.

[17] Cameron, 19.

Examining the confessors' manuals also helps us to rethink and reframe the debate over classifying religion in terms of "popular," "local," "lay" or other categories that immediately invoke their opposite. Instead of the binary distinctions, "elite" vs. its opposite "popular," or "lay" invoking "clerical" as its opposite, etc., my reading will try to follow the advice of Carlos Eire, who suggests that approaches to the lived religion of the early modern world should reflect the complexity and nuance of religious beliefs, rather than trying to force them into easy categorization.[18]

The second chapter will examine the place of blasphemy in lived religion. As language that simultaneously acknowledged and challenged God's power, blasphemous speech allowed people to demonstrate bravado, social dominance, and aggressiveness through their willingness to challenge God. However, as an aspect of lived religion, blasphemy could serve as a public rejection of the dictates of religious authorities and from adherence to prescribed standards of morality.

This chapter will examine the place of blasphemous speech as a part of interacting with and experiencing the divine. As the work of Maureen Flynn demonstrates, blasphemy was in many ways an integral aspect of reacting to chance perceived as under the control of divine forces, albeit one that could result in prosecution by the Holy Office.[19] In a predominantly oral culture, such as early modern Spain, blasphemy represented the invocation of the sacred as a reaction to life's events or as an expression

[18] Eire, "The Concept of Popular Religion," 13-14.
[19] Maureen Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Past & Present* no. 149 (November 1, 1995): 34, 50-53; Maureen Flynn, "Taming Angers Daughter: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain" *Renaissance Quarterly* 51 no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 869.

of emotion. As such, individuals often used blasphemous speech in language intended to display anger, demonstrate resistance to authority, or imply doubts about doctrine.[20]

Blasphemy, specifically denials of God or insults against the Virgin Mary and the saints, provided an opportunity to challenge the role of the divine on life's misfortunes and to question God's will. It offered the speaker the ability to imagine the reassertion of control over forces perceived to be against the blasphemer, and thus provided "one of the few escapes into fantasy that remained in the psychic life of adults in this period of authoritarian religion."[21] Despite the efforts of the institutional church in the wake of Trent and the enforcement of these dictates by the Holy Office, lashing out at the divine was a fairly common response to anger and frustration. Most commonly, this lashing out in anger took the form of blasphemous oaths.

While the historian David Nash has described blasphemy as "a species of flawed social interaction transgressing norms of manners and acceptable behavior," the number of cases suggests that blasphemous speech was prevalent although not accepted.[22] In fact, blasphemy was one of the most common offenses that brought suspects before the tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, between 1540 and 1700 cases for blasphemy and *proposiciones*, or statements that disagreed with church doctrine or practice or that might reveal blasphemous, impious, or heretical ideas, represented 51% of cases in Galicia and 44% of cases in

[20] Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 21.
[21] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 34, 50-53.
[22] David Nash, *Blasphemy in the Christian World: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6-7.

Toledo and accounted for nearly one-third of all cases in Castile during the same period.[23]

Chapter three examines sacrilege against sacred images as well as objects, such as rosaries, crucifixes, and saintly relics. It is telling that the faithful attacked and damaged sacred images, especially as it contradicted the widely held belief that material offerings to images and statues of the saints were efficacious when asking for divine intercession or to offer thanks for miracles already received.[24] However, whether in veneration or sacrilege, through the sacred objects and images of holy figures, the faithful sought to engage in and control relationships with spiritual forces in order to help themselves and their families and improve their position in the afterlife. The orthodox sacraments, prayers for deceased family members, and votive offerings made before sacred images functioned alongside the sacrilegious and heterodox as a way to participate in these relationships.

Cases of attacks against images are an especially useful means to understand lived religion in the latter half of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Before the sixteenth century, sacrilegious attacks on images in the Iberian Peninsula were more often interpreted as anti-Christian actions by Jews, Muslims, or converts who secretly retained their previous faiths.[25] Although those suspicions continued in the sixteenth century against suspected crypt-Jews and Muslims, in the wake of the Council of Trent and the Protestant Reformation, the Inquisition was especially concerned with any

[23] Francisco Bethencourt, *The Inquisition: A Global History, 1478-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 338. *Proposiciones* first came under the jurisdiction of the tribunals of the Holy Office with the ascension Fernando de Valdés to the position of Inquisitor-general in 1547.
[24] Megan Holmes, *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 5.
[25] Felipe Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia: Política y poética de la imagen sagrada en la España del cuatrocientos* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2007).

mistreatment of images that might be indicative of the iconoclastic tendencies characteristic of many reformed Protestant sects. For the Holy Office, disrespect to images was tantamount to denying the validity of reverence for images as a legitimate part of venerating the cult of the saints, something indicative of Protestant reformers such as Andreas Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Calvin.[26] As a result, although some infractions received a relatively lenient sentence if the defendant convinced the inquisitors that their misdeeds resulted from some loss of reason or simple mistake, rather than any contradiction to orthodox beliefs and church law, incidents involving images did result in convictions for heresy and typically received harsh penalties.[27]

Unlike religious offenses such as heresy, sacrilege did not necessarily imply a radical deviation from the official teachings of the Church. Instead, cases of disrespecting a sacred image and abusing relics allow for a closer study of how people interpreted the function of objects in their relationship to spiritual forces. Although it is important to examine how the Inquisition, as enforcer of orthodoxy and orthopraxis, questioned and assessed actions such as the destruction of crosses and disrespect to images of the Virgin Mary, it is first essential to examine how those directly involved in the alleged acts of sacrilege explained and defended their actions.

As David Morgan argues, one of the primary ways in which people use physical objects such as images and objects in acting on their beliefs is as a means to communicate with the divine, helping to make God or another heavenly intercessor available.[28] That is

[26] Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi trans., *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser and Eck on sacred Images: Three Treatises in Translation* (Toronto: The Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1991), 3.
[27] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 260-261.
[28] Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, 59.

not to say that the use is only to placate or plead with spiritual forces. Interaction with religious imagery and objects in a disrespectful manner indicates their expression of extreme displeasure with their circumstances, while expressing their sincere belief that God and the saints had let them down or turned from them. Aggression served to simultaneously convey their disappointment with the supernatural while confirming their belief in the divine and its power to alter human affairs. Moreover, interaction with the material culture of religion carries messages of belief between people of the same culture. Shared practices of viewing imbued objects with common assumptions and associations that made lashing out at them a means to convey messages of discontent and frustration to God as well as to human observers.[29]

Although religious reformers of the Counter Reformation era sought to instill uniformity in aspects of the faith, such as participation in the sacraments, the religious authorities, concerned with *fides et mores*, or doctrine and public practices, wanted to reform and enforce greater uniformity and orthodoxy in what people did rather than what they believed.[30] However, the treatment of religious art and sacred images illustrates a disparity between Tridentine corporate religious behavior and the religious actions of individuals. Ultimately, I will argue that whether the clergy and society at large deemed an individual's religious acts completely orthodox, or heterodox and offensive, ostensibly sacrilegious interactions with sacred images and objects were central to the way that many people lived their religion and illustrate the limits of control of church authorities in the Spanish empire.

[29] Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze*, 3, 9.
[30] O'Malley, 17-18.

The fourth and final chapter turns from sacrilege against images and objects to sacrilege against the consecrated Host, denounced by church authorities as an attack against the sacrament of the Eucharist. This egregious act of sacrilege represented an attack on the physical form of the divine. From the twelfth century, stories of desecration of the consecrated host featured in European lore. Along with killing Christian babies and raping Christian women, stories of Jews desecrating the flesh of Christ circulated to underscore the threat of tolerating such an alien people.[31] However, incidents of attacks or other kinds of sacrilege or desecration of the host offer some of the most poignant examples of sacrilege as a part of interaction with the divine. After all, according to doctrine, the sacred images and objects were only representatives or reminders to the spiritual power they represented; the consecrated host *was* Christ. There is no doubt that despite the spiritual importance of the consecrated host, the lived religious experience also included sacrilege towards it. The theologian Martín de Castañega hints at this kind of practice through his contrast of taking the sacrament *"pan bendito"* (holy bread) in contrast to the *"execramentos"* (words and acts that intentionally mocked or inverted the sacraments) of the diabolical church.[32] While I find it unlikely that significant evidence of a diabolical church will emerge, sacrilege that physically attacks God speak to a desire to connect with spiritual forces by attacking, and, perhaps, punishing the physical body of Jesus.

This suggests that, the Council of Trent's role in the Counter Reformation in the Spanish empire should be reexamined. The work of historians on Trent, its

[31] David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 203.
[32] Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1997), 46-48.

implementation, and influence of the faith in throughout the Catholic world underscores that the Council had an important and lasting influence on religion, however, exactly what it influenced and how that was manifest is more complicated., The competition and conflicting views between secular and religious authorities on the acceptance and implementation of the Tridentine decrees are one part of the difficulty in understanding the legacy of Trent and its inclusion in the history of Catholicism. Nevertheless, in lands in which the secular and religious powers were in accord on Trent,, such as the domains of the Spanish Empire, the Council's success or failure, and how it shaped religiosity remains enigmatic. [33]

How effectively the Spanish instituted the edicts of Trent and the Counter Reformation and the ensuing result on Catholicism is a point of contention among some historians. Espousing the view that Trent significantly shaped religion in Spain, Sara Nalle argues that, with the the Spanish Inquisition as ally to disseminate and help enforce the edicts of Trent, the church succeeded in altering religious practice. Catholicism developed from its medieval form that included magic and superstition with more acceptable practices to a form of Catholicism in which the Tridentine faith became the

[33] For example, in some German territories local clergy resisted the implementation of reforms to protect their traditional privileges backed by parishioners that wanted the reinstatement of their old priest with whom they could relate because he drank to excess and kept concubines. While in others, otherwise strongly Catholic secular powers resisted Tridentine reforms to further dynastic interests. See Marc Forster, *The Counter Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 156-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992); Steven Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (Yale University Press: New Haven, l973). Felix F. Strauss, "The Effect of the Council of Trent on the Episcopal Tenure of Duke Ernst of Bavaria, Archbishop-Confirmed of Salzburg in 1554", *The Journal of Modern History* 32 no. 2 (June 1960). Similarly, although France never officially accepted the Tridentine decrees, the historiography shows that Trent did shape French religious history even as Gallican clergy resisted interference from Rome. See Thomas I. Crimando, "Two French Views of the Council of Trent," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 no. 2 (Summer 1988); Jonathan Powis, "Gallican Liberties and the Politics of Later Sixteenth-Century France," *The Historical Journal* 26 no. 3 (September 1983); J. Michael Hayden and Greenshields, Malcolm R., "The Clergy of Early Seventeenth-Century France: Self-Perception and Society's Perception," *French Historical Studies* 18 no. 1 (Spring 1993).

norm.[34] She highlights the leadership of Inquisitor-general Fernando de Valdés (1483-1568), who expanded the role of the Holy Office to include assuming responsibility for enforcing the edicts of the Council of Trent. The Inquisition served the church in enforcing tenets of orthodoxy such as the proper veneration of saints and respectful treatment of sacred images. Nalle posits that the visitations of the inquisition's officials disseminated the new standards of religious practice and behavior even as the public punishments for transgressions both ,instructed the faithful in the Tridentine religion at the same time that it discouraged continuations of unacceptable, medieval practices.[35]

On the other hand, Henry Kamen draws a different conclusion. He argues that although the Tridentine reforms played a role in shaping some aspects of religiosity, for most of the faithful it remained largely unchanged from late medieval religion. Although he finds that religious reforms might have brought changes in the some of the communal aspects of religion, the faith otherwise remained unchanged. Kamen finds that the increased attention to memorial masses for the dead, a transition of the pre-Tridentine mass from a chaotic, noisy, social affair to one that emphasized quiet contemplation, and an increase in devotions to the rosary and Marian cults represented a superficial change in the faith.[36] Ultimately, while Kamen finds that the reforms did have some influence on how people experienced religion, Trent "had always been a myth, an ideal to which the church aspired but to which the Catholic people paid little more than lip-service."[37]

By taking a broad view that encompasses all of the facets of the lived religious experience, it is possible to reconcile the opposing views on the Council of Trent's

[34] Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500-1650* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), xiii.
[35] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 46-51.
[36] Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame*, 114-115, 147.
[37] Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame,* 430.

influence on religion. While the cases of Catholics denigrating sacred images and objects, slashing them with a knife, or even using a saintly image in a cushion, demonstrate that at least some part of the religious culture had not fully integrated Tridentine teaching, nothing precludes sacrilege against sacred images coexisting with orthodox practices. Viewed as expressions of the faithful's cosmology and the ways they managed complicated relationships with the saints and spiritual world, substantial changes in religious practices did not need to eliminate or replace other heterodox aspects of the lived religion in Mexico and the Spanish empire.

The general increase in knowledge of the four most important prayers, the Ten Commandments, making the sign of the Cross, and other elements of the faith did not reduce the faithful's need to have an alternative recourse to the saints and supernatural.[38] Similarly, participation in the sacraments or in clerically supervised religious confraternities made priests increasingly important mediators between man and the divine. However, they did not entirely replace or eliminate heterodox practices. In a universe in which the spiritual and the mundane were in frequent contact, the religious practices promoted by the church assumed an important, but unique, place in how the faithful experienced the webs of connections between humans and the divine.

The diversity of views expressed among the cases of sacrilege in inquisitorial trials supports yet another argument about the efficacy of the Tridentine decrees: Many people throughout the Iberian Atlantic continued to harbor serious doubts about aspects of orthodox teachings. This variety of religious ideas may be the legacy of what is termed the culture of *convivencia,* or coexistence of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religions in medieval Iberia, which led to the acceptance of the claim that "*cada uno se puede salvar*

[38] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 93, 99.

en su ley" (each person could be saved through their own faith).[39] It is almost certainly true that this undercurrent of religious toleration among the parts of the population that had long been exposed to Jewish and Islamic culture had an influence on numerous aspects of religion.[40] Moreover, even in parts of Tridentine Spain with a heavy clerical presence, potentially heretical syncretic forgeries that combined Christian and Muslim theologies informed beliefs and the rituals that served as part of a discourse in which early modern Spaniards recreated its communal memory and its place in the Spanish empire and Christendom more broadly.[41]

Ultimately, I hope to demonstrate that looking at lived religion in the Spanish world allows us to gain insight into the relationship between beliefs and practices from the middle of the sixteenth century through the seventeenth century, a century and a half in which Spanish Catholicism took on many of its modern trappings. The zeal for religious reform and uniformity that began in 1545 with the start of the Council of Trent, gained momentum and support with Phillip II's and the Spanish Church's full endorsement and lasted through seventeenth century, when the ecclesiastical authorities began to shift their energies and attention onto other issues. The emphasis on orthodox speech and veneration of images during the Tridentine era makes the roughly 150 years of blasphemy and sacrilege particularly revealing. Whether or not Tridentine reformers had success in altering Spanish religion from its medieval form to the modern, clerical reforms did change religiosity. Looking at the patterns of religious behavior during the

[39] The relatively peaceful coexistence of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities through much of the medieval era is commonly rendered in Spanish as *convivencia.* Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (Yale University Press, 2008), 1.
[40] Schwartz, 2-4.
[41] A. Katie Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 28-31, 47.

years of the most intensive reform movements can reveal how the faithful absorbed the new messages about practice and piety, regardless of whether the practices matched with intent.

Chapter 1 - Belief in the Grey: Lived Religion in the Spaces Between Practice and Dogma

Early modern Spain was unquestionably Catholic, both before and after the Counter Reformation; however, what being Catholic meant was a point of ongoing conflict and dispute. The degree to which the faithful participated in the sacraments and expressed communal acts of devotion, the role of the institutional church, and what it considered the appropriate means for managing unseen forces varied widely. Nevertheless, throughout Spain's domains religion was simultaneously intensely personal as well as social, with the practices of the faithful pertaining as much to the salvation of the soul as to identifying with and participating in the local community.

In some regards, the ways that communities observed, or failed to observe, some of the most universal elements of early modern Catholicism highlight the interaction of communal identity, communal faith, and personal salvation. Although the sacraments always had an important place in the interaction between the faithful and the divine, prior to the reforms enacted after the Council of Trent ended in 1563, Catholicism was not centered on celebration of the sacraments. Marriages might involve a priest to bless the union or to act as a witness, but the act of copulation, rather than clerical participation, made it official.[42] Similarly, early modern Catholics performed rites such as baptism in the home, despite the admonition of the clergy, more as a ritual of welcoming the child into the community than as a sacrament. Moreover, even when a priest administered the

[42] Henry Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame*: *Catalonia and the Counter Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 6, 277; John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 21.

sacraments, their sacred character was diminished, as they were not necessarily administered within the confines of a church.[43]

In this chapter, I will discuss the "grey zone" between rigid orthodoxy and heresy in which so many people lived their Catholicism. Of particular interest is the vague and sometimes problematic separation between what educated clerics deemed acceptable practices and beliefs and the beliefs and practices of many of the faithful. As the late-medieval French theologian Jean Gerson admitted, sometimes there were religious practices that were "in between, neither good nor bad in themselves."[44] This grey zone can be seen in communal aspects of religiosity, as embodied by the confraternities, in the recourse to divine aid for profit and love, or against natural disasters and illness from base superstition. Taken together, these aspects of religion demonstrate the breadth of theological debates and uncertainty about the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable practice.

These examples of belief in the "grey" illustrate, that at least in some areas of faith, no clear demarcation divided many common features of the lived religion from the dogmatic faith. This space between the clearly acceptable and orthodox and the blatantly heretical make acts that included blasphemous speech and sacrilege against sacred images and objects more understandable as a manifestation of religious experience. These acts existed in-between, and some-times beyond, the clerically sanctioned use of prayer and inclusion of sacred objects and images in venerating the divine and seeking its aid. Like, the recourse to acts that religious scholars deemed as magic or superstition,

[43] Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame*, 116-117.
[44] Jean Gerson, *De Directione Cordis*, quoted in Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, 50–51.

blasphemy or sacrilege lay somewhere along a spectrum that held that some kinds of words or actions could, and did, interact with the divine.

Local Religion and the Limits of Reform

The inconsistent or ineffectual application of the sacraments in early modern Spanish religion was exacerbated by the state of the clergy and the common recourse to "magical" or "superstitious" acts. In many places, recourse to fortunetellers or diviners to predict the future, and sorcerers to perform spells for health or entice lovers, coexisted with the more orthodox practices approved by the Church.[45] As Catholic reformers such as Erasmus and countless Protestants noted, common practices condoned by the clergy, such as ringing bells or firing cannons to deter approaching storm clouds closely could nonetheless be described as superstitious.

Making the distinction between the practices consistent with dogma and "magic" more tenuous was the frequent absence of qualified clergy. In the smaller cities and towns throughout Spain, beneficed priests neglected their pastoral duties, opting not to live in their own dioceses for years at a time, preferring to live in larger cosmopolitan cities such as Toledo or Barcelona. Outside of the larger population centers, priests were not always available to provide services to the communities. Multiple rural villages might share a single beneficed priest so that the faithful had to travel long distances to confess or hear mass or wait for weeks for the priest to visit their village.[46] For example, the *Relaciones topográficas,* surveys of the various Spanish territories ordered by Phillip II, reveal the insufficiency of clerical presence to ensure adherence to Trent, not only in

[45] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 29.
[46] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 6.

distant lands, but also in areas close to the heart of the empire, such as the archbishopric of Toledo.

The cities of the archpriests, regional church authorities responsible to the archbishop for oversight of a number of parishes, had the largest presence of ecclesiastical authority outside of Toledo. Illecas, a town of around 4,000 residents eighteen miles from Toledo, had under the archpriest an ecclesiastical prosecutor, a parish priest, or *cura*, and nine beneficed assistant priests.[47] Talavera, a city with over 8,000 residents thirty-six miles from Toledo, had in addition to the archpriest, the dean of the collegiate church, a theologian, and a preceptor who was responsible for the oversight of the priests in prayer service, as well as twelve prebends. Two representatives of ecclesiastical justice also resided in the city. Under the authority of Talavera's collegiate church were fifty-seven lower priests, eleven of them *curas* and forty-six simple priests.[48]

Although both cities had representatives of ecclesiastical justice and important members of the church hierarchy, they lacked the enormous presence of church authority to enforce clerical quality and behavior. In Illecas, the priest directly responsible for the oversight of the lowest orders of secular clergy, the *cura*, was obliged to oversee both of the city's two parish churches. Moreover, although the *Relaciones topográficas* for Illecas do not specify all of the lower ranking clergy and simple priests serving in the city, they reference six chapels where clergy received private endowments to recite masses for the souls of the dead in purgatory.[49] The priests employed to recite such masses, while technically under the authority of the *cura*, did not work directly for him,

[47] Viñas Mey, Carmelo and Ramón Paz, eds., *Relaciones Histórico-Geográfico-Estadísticas de los Pueblos de España Hechas por Iniciativa de Felipe II: Reino de Toledo* (Madrid, 1951), 495-497.
[48] Mey, 460, 462.
[49] Mey, 497.

and their private incomes made them invulnerable to the fines stipulated by the church constitution for violations of moral and behavioral standards. In Talavera, the forty-six parish priests posed a similar problem. *Curas* were often from local families and took religious vows to advance their social standing rather than for a sense of religious vocation.[50]

In smaller communities, the church was even more limited in its ability to supervise the clergy. The town of Yébenes, a town of 2,400 in the mountains eighteen miles south of Toledo, had no resident representatives of the archbishop, no regular clergy, and in the sole parish church of Santa María, only a single beneficed priest.[51] Casarrubios del Monte, a town with 2,500 residents, a *cura* and two beneficed priests served in the two parish churches. However, the majority of the clergy in Casarrubios served in privately funded chapels. The *Relaciones topográficas* specify the rents from lands and vineyards left to pay the priests to say masses on behalf of the souls of the families of the noble benefactors. The priests in charge of the chapels were not only independent of the local *cura*; they had access to incomes far superior to even the beneficed clergy of the area.[52]

The archbishopric of Toledo typically had only a few priests and no representatives of ecclesiastical authority in smaller communities, diminishing Toledo's ability to supervise their clergy. Burujón, a town of six hundred had one *cura* and an assistant while Cerralbo, a village with a round one hundred residents, had only one priest.[53] In the village of San Silvestre, the *cura*'s response in the *Relaciones topográficas*

[50] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 81-82.
[51] Mey, 782, 786.
[52] Mey, 262-263.
[53] Mey, 139-140, 300-301.

indicated that he was independent of financial control from the archbishopric because of his poverty rather than an ample benefice. The priest, who was the only clergyman serving a population of around one hundred and fifty residents, claimed that his benefice provided only a small fraction of the expenses of his parish. Despite specific prohibitions against preaching clergy accepting alms, he stated that his church survived on the charity of the village.[54] The uneven distribution of the clergy and members of the church hierarchy severely impeded the oversight of the behavior of the clergy after Trent. Even when present, throughout much of the sixteenth century village priests often lacked sufficient education in theology to make distinctions between practices as to their relationship to the powers of the natural world, spiritual power, or preternatural power.

Nevertheless, the efforts of the reformers did have some success in implementing the Council of Trent's edicts on the sacraments. The most widely observed sacrament before the reforms, the Eucharist, took on a new importance and solemnity. For example, the loud and social mass common in many places became one of silence even as the erection of rails and screens physically removed the faithful from the priest and reinforced their role as passive observers.[55] Likewise, the Tridentine decree asserting that dedicated masses to help souls in purgatory encouraged an increase in the number of masses recited, as well as an expansion of its importance in the religious experience of the faithful.[56]

Nevertheless, many people in Spain continued to treat certain sacraments as only one facet of religiosity and, at best, they observed them sporadically. In rural Catalonia,

[54] Mey, 406; Gaspar de Quiroga, *Constituciones Sinodales Hechas por Don Gaspar de Quiroga Arçobispo de Toledo* (Toledo, 1583), 41.
[55] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 121.
[56] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 181,186.

long after the passage of Tridentine reforms, ostensibly devout Catholics continued to get married outside of the church. Baptisms also continued to be more a matter of communal faith than of sacramental faith and were performed against Tridentine edicts in the faithful's homes. At the same time, recourse to cloud conjurers, sorcerers, and magicians persisted, despite condemnation from religious officials.[57]

The specific contours and variations in religious practice had an important function in creating a communal identity and defining some aspects of communal relationships. In the first half of the sixteenth century, the rites associated with the sacramental aspect of religion such, as baptism, marriage, and even hearing mass, were as important as social functions and community builders because they were in expressions of piety and seeking salvation.[58] One of the issues that preoccupied the reform minded clergy in the latter part of the sixteenth century was the festive atmosphere often present in the church during the celebration of the mass. Although the faithful typically paid a great deal of attention and devotion to the Elevation of the Host, throughout the remainder of the mass the congregants would socialize. Many of the men would neglect to even go into the church, and those that did not opt to go to the local tavern would gamble and socialize at the threshold of the church with the doors open so they were able to hear the priest.[59]

However, the participation in the communal act of faith was not only a matter of socialization. In the Spanish kingdoms that had a long history with distinct and separate communities based on religion, the communal aspect of the faith informed communal identity. In particular, the inclusion of local festivals and holidays into the liturgical

[57] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 83-85.
[58] Bossy,17-19, 22-24, 27-28; Kamen, *Phoenix*, 9-10, 111, 129.
[59] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 118-120.

calendar, communal shrines, pilgrimages, and other acts of devotion to the locally important saints served multiple functions. Localized forms of Catholicism not only shaped how people viewed themselves and their relationship to the wider Christian world, they also shaped how people viewed their relationship to the divine.[60] The religious culture of pilgrimages to shrines and devotions to local saints appealed to all social orders, from landless farmers to the local nobility, permitting a sense of common cause or common identity among an otherwise fragmented society.[61] As William A. Christian, Jr. reminds us, Catholicism as practiced was actually a collection of locally derived customs, rituals, and practices. Even with the Tridentine movement to establish more uniformity in custom and ritual, canon law respected the accumulation of customary practice and gave it legitimacy as a part of the broad body of the church.[62]

For example, in the city of Granada, changes in its religious practices had less to do with the reforms of the council of Trent than with the alteration of the city's identity from the last bastion of Islamic rule in Spain to a city with an ancient Christian history. Central to that transformation were the lead books (*plomos),* saintly relics, and apocryphal gospels' forgeries unearthed in the Torre Turpiana and the Sacromonte on the outskirts of the city of Granada. Despite the fact that many decades later authorities in Rome declared the *plomos* and other relics forgeries, they allowed *Granadinos* to invent a history that connected their city to the earliest Christians in Spain. The artifacts, and the rituals that evolved to venerate them, served as part of a discourse in which early modern *Granadinos* recreated its communal memory and its place in Spain and Christendom.[63]

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[60] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 82.
[61] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 147.
[62] Christian, "Catholicisms," 260.
[63] Harris, xi–xiv.

Perhaps the most important of the artifacts, the *plomos* containing stories of St. Cecilio and other early saints written in a variation of Arabic script, which were discovered during excavations, represented a theology that combined elements of Islam and Christianity.[64] The texts made possible the inclusion of the years of Islamic rule into a narrative of the eventual triumph of Christianity. The *plomos* portrayed St. Cecilio and his followers as Arab Christians who brought Christianity to the city of Iliberis, the predecessor to Granada. With the *plomos* as sources, early modern historians wrote works that served a didactic function celebrating the power of the city's patron saints, affirming the legitimacy of the city's Christian institutions as successors to their ancient counter parts, and incorporating the religious importance of the Sacromonte and the Torre Turpiana into Spain's imperial religious mission.[65]

The association of Christian Granada with the mythical past of Iliberis resulted in religious rituals that reinforced the association of the saints of the Torre and Sacromonte with the redemption of the city from Islamic rule. The ceremony of the *Toma*, literally the "taking," performed each year on January 6 to commemorate the Christians takeover of the city from the last Muslim king by Isabella and Ferdinand in 1492, assumed a new dimension with the discovery of the lead artifacts. Performance of the rituals of the *Toma* on the octave of St. Stephen, whose false relics were unearthed on the Sacromonte, allowed his cult to imbue a sense of communal cohesion to Christian *Granadinos* and associate the military victory with the power of the saint.[66]

The popularity of pilgrimages and the devotion of religious confraternities to the relics of Sacromonte helped to transform the religious identity of Granada. Although the

[64] Harris, 28–31, 47.
[65] Harris, 47, 65–67, 82–85.
[66] Harris, 89–90, 102-105.

Muslim and Morisco population of Granada had long considered the Sacromonte to be a place of spiritual and supernatural power, the forged relics helped to transform the site into an integral aspect of Granada's sacred geography.[67] Through the adoption of the cult into a local devotion, Granadinos integrated into the broader community of Christian Spain.[68]

This kind of religiosity as communal identity shaped the contours of religion throughout Spain and its empire. Just as Granada's saints and the rituals of veneration functioned as a means to incorporate Granada into Christian history and celebrate the powerful and protective relationship of the city's patron saints with the people, regionally and locally celebrated saints flourished across the Spanish world. The veneration of the cult of the saints with ties to a village or region had as much to do with seeking the saints help in divine intercession as with reinforcing how a community saw its self, its history, and its relationship with God. As emblematic of a community's history, identity, and ties to God, localized cults were resilient and often defied the efforts of reformers that wanted to promote more universally venerated saints or bring rituals of veneration under more institutional control.[69]

The reforms initiated by the Council of Trent did have some influence on the religious landscape. While the enthusiasm of the faithful for local saints did not diminish, some national devotions expanded their reach. Dedication to the Virgin Mary in Spain's territories reflected her popularity as a divine aid whose various manifestations could be invoked for any number of causes. Marian shrines had a great deal of popularity before Tridentine reforms, particularly in areas south of the Tagus River where Christians

[67] Harris, 117–119.
[68] Harris, 119–123, 137, 140,145- 147.
[69] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 131.

removed saints' relics, making images of the Virgin a common locus for religious devotion.[70] However, after the Council of Trent, support from religious orders, such as the Dominicans and the Jesuits, boosted the Virgin Mary's popularity as a benefactor for help with such diverse problems as illness, pests and weather that threatened crops, the dangers of traveling, and fighting the Turks.[71] By associating the various intercessions, with the recorded apparitions of the Virgin Mary, her national cult of sainthood developed into a proliferation of separate devotions.

The devotions to the Virgin Mary took on a local character that bound Mary's identity as an intercessor and protector integrated into the identity and history of a specific community. As such, in Galicia, where the absence of men who worked as fishermen or sought fortune in the Americas meant that women had a greater degree of economic independence, social influence, and local authority than in most other parts of Spain, the Virgin Mary that Gallegos venerated reflected strength.[72] Rather than emphasize her role as a submissive healing mother and wife, Galicians venerated a Virgin Mary that was independent, powerful, and, at times, vengeful.[73]

In contrast, the Marian cults of Seville glorified the depiction of these women as passive, compassionate and willing martyrs. As concern for disorder in the city grew during the course of the sixteenth century, the depictions of these saints became increasingly of subservience, asexuality, and sacrifice.[74] In sixteenth century Seville, a city where, as in Galicia, many men were absent because of their role in commerce as

[70] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 123, 126-127.
[71] Kamen, *Phoenix,* 147-149.
[72] Allyson Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain : The Peasants of Galicia* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21.
[73] Poska, 191-194.
[74] Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 31-43.

well as in the conquest and colonization of the Americas, officials associated the maintenance of traditional gender roles with civil order. Maintaining strict control over the mobility and public life of women was paramount for ensuring a sense of calm in the rapidly changing city. Local elites believed in the ideologies of gender and honor and considered submissive women who were kept sheltered and under the control of men as symbolic of order. In contrast, women who engaged in a public life independent of male supervision represented a threat to stability.[75] For both secular and religious authorities in Seville, the symbolic roles of women served as standards that they could use to measure social disorder.

Regardless of which saints or specific incarnations of the Virgin Mary a village or community venerated, the manifestations of devotion typically reflected recourse to divine protection that supplemented the spiritual benefits derived from the sacraments. In addition, since communal devotions were independent of the direct involvement or leadership of the Church, they provided an alternative form of worship that did not require the participation or direction of a priest. That is not to say that the clergy had no place in the various communal vows (*votos*) made to the saints as part of asking for divine aid or as thanks for aid rendered, or both. Rather, the early modern faithful made processions to hermitages, shrines, or chapels dedicated to a specific spiritual intercessor, observed of a saint's day through abstaining from work, or participated in the feasts or fasts promised to honor the saints protection, without explicit direction from the Church. Even as the Counter Reformation put increased emphasis on the preeminence and

[75] Perry, 2–5.

leadership of the universal Church, the faithful made promises to their beloved saints on their own initiative.[76]

One aspect of the communal aspect of early modern religion was that it favored an unmediated interaction with the spiritual world. Bishops and higher-ranking clergy did maintain a monopoly on absolving a community unable to fulfill a vow, either commuting the indefinite promise or absolving a lapsed community of its sin.[77] Church officials also tried to promote proper behavior and the spiritual obligations of feasts dedicated to saints, as well as other religious feast days mandated by the liturgical calendar.[78] Additionally, although villages and towns often built shrines and chapels as part of a vow, clergy had to be present, at least occasionally to see to the spiritual needs of the faithful. While a layman might see to the physical upkeep of a shrine or chapel, the community needed the parish priest, a permanent chaplain (*capellán*) or an itinerant clergyman who could be hired, to say special masses in honor of the saint as part of the community's vow.[79] Nevertheless, despite the continued importance of priests in the communal religiosity surrounding locally favored saints, like personal vows made to a saintly intercessor, the communal expressions of devotion represented a religiosity that often did not require the clergy and sometimes took leadership of acts of devotion from the parish, and the parish priest, and put it in the hands of broader community.

That independence from the Church offered by locally focused devotions made the risk of error and excess a priority of the Tridentine reforms in Spain. Reforms in the organization of the church allowed the religious hierarchy to establish greater control

[76] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 29-31, 57, 71-72.
[77] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 31.
[78] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 174.
[79] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, 70-73, 107.

over religion at the local level. The edicts of faith issued by the council made no changes or innovations to official church doctrine or the fundamental beliefs of Catholicism. Instead, the edicts concerning doctrine served to repudiate and rebut the doctrines espoused by Protestant reformers and clarified the belief system of the universal Catholic Church. The edicts of doctrine reasserted that Christ ordained the celebration of the seven holy sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, the taking of holy orders, and marriage, and pronounced that those denying the sacraments are "anathema."[80]

Local clergy had the responsibility to ensure that the laity adhered to the Tridentine religion. Bishops were to ensure that their priests resided in churches to "rule and keep in uprightness of life and of morals those subject to them."[81] Visitations by prelates and other agents of the bishops had the responsibility to observe the behavior of laymen and "correct the excesses of their subjects."[82] Violations against the church's rules committed in public were subject to public punishments that exposed the guilty party as a sinner and served as didactic lessons about what constituted a sin according to the Tridentine faith. Through a strictly regulated clergy, church elites tried to reform both the religious practices and morality of their laity, with mixed results.

Though established to eradicate heresy, the Spanish Inquisition also aided in both spreading the Tridentine message and enforcing the faith. In particular, *curas* and the *comisiario,* appointed to carry out the order of the inquisitors, served as local agents of the Holy Office, and as such combined the interests of the Church hierarchy with that of

[80] H. J. Schroeder trans., *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Binghamton and New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1960), 51.
[81] Nalle, *God in La Mancha,* 81–82.
[82] Nalle, *God in La Mancha,* 49.

the Inquisition, effectively bringing active propagation of the Tridentine decrees into the villages.[83] In addition to enforcing morality and orthodoxy as defined by Trent, the visitations of the tribunals served to disseminate the new standards of religious practice and the importance of the sacraments. The punishments issued by the Holy Office for violations acted as both a deterrent and a didactic device of instruction in Tridentine religion by the increased dedication to hearing mass, confession, and baptism in the church.[84]

Cofradías

Both before and after the Council of Trent, the aspect of religiosity that best demonstrated the coexisting spiritual and social facets of the collective faith of early modern Catholicism was the religious brotherhood or *cofradía.*[85] Religious brotherhoods were not unique to Spanish territories. Throughout Europe, the medieval and early modern periods witnessed the popularity of men and women gather together to spread a Christ like devotion to peace and charity as brothers and sisters in Christ.[86] Although clerical brotherhoods did exist, lay people formed the majority of religious confraternities in the Spanish empire. Moreover, even when clerics joined lay *cofradías,* the organizations' rules often limited the number of clergymen that could be members.

Although priests played a role in the devotions of *cofradías* as members or by performing special masses or officiating funerals, the emphasis on lay membership and

[83] Sara T. Nalle, "Inquisitors, Priests, and the People During the Catholic Reformation in Spain," *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 18 no. 4 (Winter 1987): 559-560, 573-578.
[84] Nalle, *God in La Mancha,* 56-61, 171-199.
[85] While I will be addressing religious confraternities throughout the Spanish kingdoms, to avoid confusion I will use *cofradía* and avoid the words used in other Iberian languages (such as *confraria* in Catalan, *confraría* in Gallego).
[86] Bossy, 58.

leadership ensured that the brotherhood remained an organization able to work toward members' salvation, and interact with unseen divine powers, independent of the Church hierarchy. In many ways, the degree to which religious brotherhoods shaped, or even controlled, communal religiosity created tensions with the Church. While *cofradías* did not challenge doctrine, at times they indirectly challenged authority in church governance and provided a lay dominated outlet for devotion. Brotherhoods could replace the authority of clerics through their initiative organizing liturgical celebrations and their charge of the upkeep of chapels and shrines, even within churches, that attracted religious processions and special masses. This was especially true of "craft confraternities" affiliated with individual artisanal professions, such as those in Barcelona, in which clergy took no part.[87]

As voluntary associations dedicated to a particular saint or pious work, confraternities had devotional components as well as social components that informed each other and overlapped. The oldest confraternities formed among members of the same profession. Especially in large cities, membership in religious brotherhoods overlapped with membership in trade or professional guilds such that weavers, carters, and coopers would each have separate *cofradía* dedicated to a patron saint. In more agrarian, rural areas where herding or farming predominated, the confraternities established were organized less by trade than by a common pledge to an act of devotion such as charity or veneration of a favored saint.[88] Regardless of where a confraternity existed, it formed a kind of religious community unbounded by the geographic confines of the parish. In many ways, the confraternity provided an alternative sense of common

[87] Luis R. Corteguera, *For the Common Good: Popular Politics in Barcelona, 1580–1640* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 34–36.
[88] Kamen, *Phoenix,* 165.

identity that conflated the secular and the religious and simultaneously influenced how people interacted with each other as well as the divine.

Figure 1 Image of the Virgen de la Estrella in chapel funded by the Cofradía de los laneros (wool carders), 1543. Primate Cathedral of Saint Mary of Toledo. Toledo, Spain.

The religious confraternity fulfilled several overlapping functions that were both social and spiritual. Membership in *cofradías* let the faithful access a communal pool of good works and pious merit that rendered the most pious of humanity as additional allies in achieving salvation. Along with the favored saints, the human companions of a

confraternity helped to take on the burden of collective responsibility for making reparations for sins.[89]

Cofradías also had another function as a means of expressing religious devotion. Since the members generally adopted a patron saint when they formed a brotherhood, they generally assumed a responsibility for all manner of devotions to their patron. The establishment of dedicated chapels and shrines, altars within the parish church, and special masses, whether part of a specific vow or not, played a significant role in the devotions of early modern brotherhoods. A significant portion of the wealth controlled by the brotherhood, went to maintaining chapels, buying oil and wax to light the patron saint's images, and hiring clergy to say commemorative masses in honor of the chosen saint. Money collected from donations, rents on corporately owned properties, entry fees and membership dues, among others sources of income, made possible many of the *cofradía*'s collective devotions.[90]

The members' identification with the brotherhood's patron saint also fostered a general sense of common cause, even if *cofradías* occasionally upset social order. One of the principal ways in which members honored their patron saints was through feasts, frequently opened to non-members as a part of the pious obligations to distribute charity. Secular and clerical critics condemned these celebrations that for their tendency to developed into irreligious drunkenness and violence.[91] Across early modern Europe the

[89] Maureen Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 25, no. 1 Spring 1989: 54–57.
[90] Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 58-60.
[91] Kamen, Phoenix, 165-166; Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 65-66.

association of religious brotherhoods with excessive feasts and drunkenness led Martin Luther to categorize them as clubs dedicated to eating and drinking.[92]

The reputation of drunkenness and debauchery that surrounded the celebrations of religious brotherhoods even shaped church constitutions like that of the city of Toledo in 1583. The new constitution of Toledo, authored by the archbishop and inquisitor general Gaspar de Quiroga in accordance with the decrees of Trent, required that in order to control "excesses" in religious celebrations and processions, priests display details of behaviors of *cofradías* that could not be absolved. To help control the behavior of the laity, the church made licenses necessary in order to form new *cofradías.*[93]

Nevertheless, corporate religiosity did help promote the ideal of peace between members. Organizations had strict rules that members have positive relationships to be eligible to participate in the collective acts such as pilgrimages and feasts. In addition to the rules about exchanging harsh words, swearing, or even brandishing weapons, the common identification of venerating the same saint's relic or sacred image reminded members of the *cofradía*'s purpose and collective piety discouraging aggression and fostering peaceful coexistence among members.[94] The common oaths that members took as part of voluntarily joining a confraternity, the anonymity created by the masks and hooded garments worn for ritual procession, and the shared sense of purpose in venerating the same saint fostered a shared sense of spiritual kinship.[95]

Not only did confraternities provide members with an extended spiritual family, they functioned as benevolent societies, helping members with funeral expenses and

[92] O'Malley, 46.
[93] Mey, 560-565; Quiroga, 14, 49.
[94] Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 64-65.
[95] Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 53, 66.

providing charity to the broader community. In addition to charity in the form of feasts, *cofradías* often gave alms to the poor, established hospitals, and supported orphaned children.[96] For the poor members of a brotherhood charity took the form of distribution of some of the *cofradía*'s accumulated wealth as distribution of money at funerals or on holidays. In addition, the brotherhoods also expressed their charity by allowing poor members access to the corporately controlled property at reduced, even below market rents.[97]

The ability to control large amounts of property, and utilize that wealth as part of expressing their religiosity, created an atmosphere in which the brotherhoods exercised a great deal of independence from the church. Since religious brotherhoods operated as Church recognized pious institutions, they could accumulate a large amount of property, while enjoying some of the privileges of churches such as exemptions from some taxes and tributes. As long as the proceeds from properties went to the spiritual wellbeing of members in the form of money for clerical services and acts of charity, the Church could not interfere with or seize a confraternity's corporately held property.[98] The unfettered control of resources dedicated toward charity, religious festivals, processions, and other acts of devotion did more than simply give *cofradías* independence from the clergy. It let them exercise enough influence over the religiosity of communities that some priests felt that the laity treated them as inferiors.[99]

The fear of immorality and carnality of excessive celebrations, concerns that unsupervised lay led rituals and processions cultivated erroneous practices, and the need

[96] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 165; O'Malley, 46.
[97] Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 59-60.
[98] Flynn, "Rituals of Solidarity in Castilian Confraternities," 58.
[99] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 166-167.

to reassert the spiritual primacy of the priestly orders made controlling the brotherhoods an important facet of realizing Tridentine reforms. Not that Church and confraternity automatically clashed. Communal identification with a saint or saints to whom they had made vows and the *cofradías* important role in directing how communities made manifest acts of piety such as feasts, giving alms, and conducting processions did not remove the central role of the clergy and the parish church from religion in early modern Spain. However, the array of rituals and other acts of piety did strike reformers as threatening clerically observed and controlled access to the divine. The importance of lay leadership and initiative in venerating important local holy sites, important saints, and celebrating holidays in managing relationships with divine forces and trying to secure spiritual protection underscored the importance of the limiting independence, and more important, redirecting religiosity to the clerically administered sacraments.

While many expressions of piety put the relationship between person and God directly in the hands of the faithful, free from direct control by priestly intermediaries, they did not diminish the power or importance of sacramental religion. The communal nature of early modern religion did not preclude the sacraments prior to the reforms of the Counter Reformation. However, receiving the sacraments became an increasingly important aspect of how the faithful interacted with the divine and sought God's protection. The clerical elites elevated the importance of articles of faith, such as penance and sacramental marriage, as a means to bring communal religiosity under greater control of the Church, as well as to reinforce the universal reach of the Catholic Church and the goals of the Council of Trent.

The reception to the reforms pertaining to the sacraments is indicative of the complexity of religion in Spain. On the one hand, the reformers did manage to find success in emphasizing the centrality of the seven sacraments in the religious lives of Spanish Catholics. Sacraments such as confession, required at least once a year, enjoyed more widespread participation in the decades after the reforms. A growth in the importance of confession speaks to the increased stress placed on the sacramental aspects of Tridentine religion. Not only was confession required in order to take communion, confession required that the faithful to have some knowledge about what constituted a sin, in order to confess it, as well as actually going to see the priest.[100] The importance of confessional booths, an Italian import popularized in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, further illustrates the emphasis on the obligation to perform sacraments in a location under the direct control and supervision of the clergy.[101]

On the other hand, the form that sacraments took continued to reflect aspects of communal identity and communal piety. At least in some parts of Spain, the Church's goal of asserting the directives of the Universal Church over the local met with resistance. Although a somewhat chaotic and noisy affair, in Catalonia, the sacrament of the Eucharist played an important part in piety. Nevertheless, despite the Tridentine reforms that standardized the liturgy, in many locations the traditional local variations remained in place. Even decades after the Council of Trent, and Phillip II's order that priests use the Tridentine approved Roman missal, many churches in Catalonia continued to use the long established Tarragona rite, a five-hundred-year-old liturgy that in

[100] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 129-131.
[101] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 124.

Catalonia that differed from those in France, Rome, and the rest of Spain.[102] The embrace of the universal sacrament in a distinctly local, and unpermitted, form highlights the ongoing tension and dialogue between the various aspects of religiosity.

Likewise, masses, even when they adhered to the Roman missal, had an element of communal religiosity much like that demonstrated by participation in communal vows to patron saints or through the religious brotherhoods. As an outgrowth of Tridentine teaching on the soul and the afterlife, masses dedicated for souls of the dead enjoyed great popularity into the seventeenth century. Hiring a priest to recite masses as well as providing for candles, wax, oil, and other items to honor and pray for the deceased represented a considerable expense. Providing the resources for a priest to say a number of anniversary masses or various cycles of masses for departed family, fellow members of *cofradías,* or even strangers, reflects the coexistence of communally controlled acts of faith alongside the embrace of the Tridentine promotion of sacramental religion.

Even within one perspective of how people experienced their religion, in this case, the sacraments, it is possible to see that the complex nature of religion makes analysis of categories difficult. Was the retention of the Tarragona rite something reflecting sacramental faith or communal identity? Is the loyalty to a local rite a variation of vows and devotions to a local saint? Does the popularity of anniversary masses funded by the laity reflect the ongoing effort of the faithful to find avenues of religious expression not directed by the clergy or do the masses represent the acceptance of greater clerical control in acts of faith? Or is it both? In some ways these rhetorical questions bring to light the difficulty in understanding how some actions fit into the broader experience of religion, especially practices that straddled a line between accepted acts of

[102] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 93, 95, 102-103.

faith, early modern medical science, and magic, defying easy categorization for early moderns and moderns alike.

Superstition and Faith

The relationship between superstition and faith raise similar questions. In Pedro Ciruelo's *Reprovación de las supersticiones y hechizerías*, the theologian offers an unequivocal condemnation of having recourse to conjurers, exorcists, or other magic users to banish the demons and other diabolical forces behind storms that bring hail and flooding rains.[103] Ciruelo makes clear that the belief that demons are behind fierce storms denies the natural causes of storms, a natural course put in place by God, and that while God might punish sinners by occasionally allowing demons to move storms, any attempt to find protection through recourse to magic or exorcism was outside of the natural order and, therefore, a sin. This recommendation was not unique among sixteenth century Spanish theologians. The Franciscan friar, Martín de Castañega, follows his criticism of conjurers that claim to change hailstones into water; something that would violate the understood tenants of natural philosophy, with a reminder of how good Catholics should seek protection from storms.[104]

Rather than rely on what Ciruelo deems a superstitious banishment of demons through rituals of exorcism, or as described by Castañega, a conjurer's recitation of the mass or words form the sacrament read from virgin parchment, both theologians offer an

[103] Pedro Ciruelo, *Pedro Ciruelo's A Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft : Very Necessary and Useful for All Good Christians Zealous for Their Salvation* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), 293-295.
[104] Castañega, 166-167, 183-184.

unusually detailed explanation of a Church approved ritual of supplication to God for protection from storms.[105] As the treatises make clear, storms occur naturally, rendering conjuration, exorcisms, and other practices that engage preternatural forces ineffective and misguided. Only God could allow the supernatural alteration of a natural force, and only prayer, especially prayer made more effective though harnessing the spiritual power of holy objects, could beseech God's aid. The complicated act of prayer and supplication described involved the priests donning their vestments, speaking the opening words of the Canon of the Eucharist, lighting the Pascal candle, reciting the gospels, and beseeching the saints through their relics or sacred images. Ciruelo adds that the faithful should not perform the ritual outside or direct it at the storm. The elaborate demonstration of devotion should be done only within the confines of the church.[106]

In the ways that theological authors and theologians, such as Ciruelo and Castañega, address one issue, the danger they perceive in the perceived superstitions and recourse to magic for protection from severe thunderstorms, it is possible to see several elements of the lived religion of early modern Europe. Of course, no one example can capture the complexity of religious experience that combined participation in the sacraments, rituals, and prayers approved by the Church alongside people's values, cosmology, and means of connecting with the divine independent of the clergy.[107] Nevertheless, the treatment of protection from storms reveals that both theologians and common believers viewed the world as a place potentially touched by demonic forces and dark magic that could be protected by utilizing sacred images and relics to gain access to the power of the saints.

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[105] Castañega, 167.
[106] Ciruelo, 296-297.
[107] Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 2.

The condemnations and advice in the treatises about how good Catholics should deal with dangerous weather also bring attention to the benefits and risks of relying on the classifications used by theologians as a means to enhance our own understanding of early modern religion. Among the many types of categories used, the description of certain practices as either religious or superstitious that made clear distinctions between the natural, preternatural, and supernatural in causes for storms, and the remedies for them as either legitimate applications of natural remedies, such as ringing bells or firing cannons, or illegitimate superstitious acts such as exorcism, obscure the degree to which actual practices cut across categories or blended acceptable and unacceptable characteristics.

Indeed, as further examples will illustrate, the lived experience of many people involved actions that mixed and conflated types of categories described by Ciruelo and Castañega. Furthermore, no consensus existed even among the well-educated clerics and theologians that wrote treatises that described and defined what was superstitious, supernatural, fraudulent, etc. The line separating an approved ritual that helped access divine power and mercy from a misguided superstition or an act of outright fraud depended on too many variables to make agreement on issues, such as determining what acts constitute casting spells or the role of intentionality in the sinfulness of mixing prayers with medicines, difficult to achieve. While it is useful to be mindful of which categories an individual theologian or scholar referenced and how they differentiated and defined the various categories, over reliance on categories can interfere from a close examination of the practices from which one can infer beliefs.

Having said that, it should be mentioned that even the problematic categories used to describe early modern religious practices can be useful. While scholars need to be wary of accepting categories that divide the religious from the non-religious, which define what constituted religion from a singular point of view, the way classifications are described allows us to view some of the ideas that had currency in the early modern world. Even if many Catholics did not live their faith in ways that make theologians' classifications a useful means through which modern scholars can define lived religious experiences, we can see in the classification and categorization some of the broader concepts in circulation that speak to how the faithful described their interactions with the divine.

For example, we can see in theological treatises, in both the condemnation and prescribed actions, the authors confirming very real beliefs and concerns about the interaction between a person and the natural world with the preternatural and the supernatural. In addition, the treatises take for granted that this relationship could be two sided, with man having an active part in engaging spiritual forces. For example, certain words had, at least potentially, the power to act on the physical world. As I will more thoroughly develop below, people employed sacred words and prayers on their own and alongside of "natural" remedies. Someone might deal with illness or storms with recourse to mystical healer or storm conjurer after failing to resolve their problems thought a visit to a priest, in preference to a the less efficacious prayers of a priest, or utilize both to maximize the effectiveness. The powers of the natural world, clerical power, and other supernatural powers could coexist, making those powers, according to theologians like Ciruelo and Castañega, something that through ignorance, superstition, and diabolical

influences, were subject to abuse. Ultimately, theological treatises' advice about storms reveals that a great deal of religious experience fell into a grey area between the kinds of acts Ciruelo and Castañega deemed sinful and superstitious violations of God's natural order, and the carefully supervised ritual detailed by Ciruelo.

In the literature written by clergy and theologians, we gain access to some of the grey area that existed between the rituals and practices authored by the church and the kinds of practices that comprised the lived religious experience of lay and clergy alike. The fact that theologians needed to parse out the, often subtle, nuances between the acceptable and unacceptable reveals that the faithful did not act within a well-defined set of right and wrong. For many people, clerical and lay, the way that they interacted with God and the saints in ways reflected church dogma, but were not defined by it. Theologians approached the question of whether or not a given act was "Christian" from a perspective that held a clear distinction between the natural and unnatural, the Christian, and diabolical. For many, the lived religious experience held no such distinctions and defy easy categorizations.

That is not to say that the educated clergy came by their distinctions easily or unanimously. Most theologians were born and raised among the people whose practices they critiqued. What differentiated the authors from the others was an academic perspective, and formal university educations that informed how they made sense of the world and the common religious practices that coexisted with the practices of their youth.[108] For educated clerics and other scholars, the application of formal systems of logic and reason offered a way to fit all possible actions into theories about the

[108] Cameron, 3.

boundaries of the natural, the preternatural, and the supernatural.[109] Recourse to the three orders of causalities and the orders interacted provided a means through which scholars discerned the underlying metaphysics of practices and decided on how they should be classified and categorized.

One of the advantages to acknowledging the categories of the early modern theologians and scholars, but not letting them dictate our interpretation of what acts constituted a facet of religious experience, is that it allows us to see how the prevailing concepts of metaphysics allowed for multiple understandings of how holiness and divine attributes interacted with natural properties. As the historian Matthew Milner argues in his work on a remedy for horses in early modern England, even common people understood that prevailing idea that objects had various qualities that included natural or inherent qualities as well as qualities imbued by intentionality and volition.[110] A practice that took advantage of some natural quality, even one that was invisible or occult, had very different implications than a practice that sought to invoke spiritual or divine power.

Milner's explanation about the use of holy oats, how they were made holy, why the oats were efficacious, and how the remedy coexisted with others as part of a broad body of knowledge and widespread practices reflects the limits of early modern categories. In the case of the holy oats, the question around what made the oats an effective medicine fundamentally different from other oats reflect the triple order of causality and how the bearing that the categorization of the three orders have on other classifications. Whether or not the healing property in the oats was a part of the natural

[109] Fabián Alejandro Campagne, "Witchcraft and the Sense-of-the-Impossible in Early Modern Spain: Some Reflections Based on the Literature of Superstition (ca.1500-1800)," *The Harvard Theological Review* 96, no. 1 (2003): 30-31.
[110] Matthew Milner, "The Physics of Holy Oats: Vernacular Knowledge, Qualities, and Remedy in Fifteenth-Century England," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43, no. 2 (2013): 223-228.

order, perhaps and occult quality made manifest through intestinally manipulating latent qualities, has a direct bearing on whether the use of the oats was an aspect of the natural order of medicine or science, or an aspect of something outside of natural and therefore something magical, or religious. Or, if the oats had a healing power completely independent of any ritual involved in their application, whether their use was superstitious rather than religious.

However, as Milner's example illustrates, separating the natural qualities of specific objects from the spiritual or magical involves resolving the effect of the "intentionality" of speech and passions from inherent qualities.[111] Discussing what was or was not "religion" by the standards of theologians neglects the recourse to speech along with the supernatural power of God to change the inherent qualities of objects that made otherwise ordinary items potentially effective medicines. The metaphysics espoused by the theologians might help us understand why they differentiated between the medical and religious but adherence to their terminology cuts us off from practices at the heart of lived religion. Just as Milner points out for late medieval and early modern England, medicine, science, and religion overlapped and coexisted in Spain. The cooperation and the tension between medicine, science, and religion as distinct are evident despite the tendency of theologians to use classifications that treated them separately.

The writings of theologians make clear that they typically viewed healing as a result of natural characteristics of people or objects rather than miraculously originating directly from divine power. Although some objects or medicines in conjunction with prayers might cure the infirm, it was first and foremost the properties of the objects or medicines, albeit a property that might be hidden, that healed the sick. The Aristotelian

[111] Milner, 225.

metaphysics that formed the basis of their condemnation of "superstitious" healing practices, taught that all objects had a mix of intrinsic qualities that naturally made some objects efficacious in treating the sick or countering a poison. Whether a medicine or remedy worked because it restored a humoral balance or because a physician unlocked hidden healing properties through compounding and mixing substances, it was the properties within the medicine that healed, not a divine or spiritual force.[112]

Ciruelo advocated seeking out natural remedies for illness, citing Scripture to highlight that God created medicine and allowed mankind the knowledge to use them. While not denying the place of prayer, Ciruelo argues first for natural remedies for physical ailments.[113] Thus, when he denigrates "fake physicians" that claim to cure rabies or poisonings, and instead recommends pig fat, crushed garlic, and a poultice of green fennel along with fennel seed infused wine, among many other cures, he is emphasizing that licit medicine relies on natural properties rather than the dangerous and sinful recourse to "magic."[114]

Castañega offers a different assessment of healers, though he is still in accord with Ciruelo that most cures result from natural properties consistent with the divinely ordained laws of nature. He is willing to accept the healing power inherent in some people, arguing that just as some objects have hidden properties that allow them to alter humors or counteract venoms, some people's very complexions give them the ability to heal. He compared the invisible, but natural, properties of some healers to the unseen magnetic properties of a lodestone, a naturally magnetic stone that bares no visible sign

[112] Milner, 223, 225.
[113] Ciruelo, 199-200.
[114] Ciruelo, 259-261.

of its ability to attract ferrous metals.[115] Rather than discount healers as enchanters, or claim something as miraculous when it can occur within nature, he argues that some property inherent in the healers themselves result from natural causes and not from something supernatural.[116]

Castañega also condoned doctors that prescribed medicines that might appear to be illicit due exotic ingredients, such as live crickets, grasshoppers, and spiders, but did not violate church law.[117] Like the argument that the curative effects of medicines result from inherent properties, he desired to prove that healers fit within and helped to demonstrate God's rational, reasoned creation. His incredulity about the "mixture of words and ceremonies" employed to make healing more effective serves to diminish the power of the supernatural and preternatural and redirect the practices of believers to those ordained and supported by the Catholic Church as logical expressions of God's will.[118] A person's will could only be altered through divine mercy, not the manipulations of man.

However, the theologians did not rule out the possibility of divine interventions of God and the saints, only that interventions such as miraculous cures were rare. Divine mercy, delivered as a result of prayers from the sufficiently pious and humble, could result in miraculous cures. However, in the case of illness Ciruelo cites the biblical passage that the faithful should not "be negligent when you are sick," making the point that the sick should see a doctor for a natural cure, but adds that sick should also "pray to the Lord, and he will cure you."[119]

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[115] Castañega, 95.
[116] Castañega, 95-97.
[117] Castañega, 123-124.
[118] Castañega, 124.
[119] Ciruelo, 202.

Nevertheless, Ciruelo and Castañega referenced recourse to the saints and prayers as legitimate means to aid the faithful with protections and healing. They offered this suggestion as a means to request mercy from God for those that have already tried natural medicines. Even as he condemned those that resorted to demonically inspired superstition for healing, Castañega argues that as a practice good Catholics "seek aid from the saints so that God may supply what natural powers lack."[120] He adds that God might look favorably on the faithful that wore textual amulets (*nóminas)* to aid in their devotions. Though their explanation of the metaphysics separates the healing provided from the natural medicinal qualities of an object from the healing provided by God's power, the suggestion that the two operate in tandem conflates the medical and religious, making clear differentiation a matter of devotional intent rather than one of logic and reason.

Although the early modern period saw a proliferation of ideas consistent with Ciruelo's Thomists/Aristotelian conception of the spiritual and the physical worlds, others existed.[121] For example, in *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, the renowned sixteenth century French jurist and political writer Jean Bodin was highly critical of people who dismissed witches, arguing that denying the power of witches to influence the word denies the power of spiritual forces without sound evidence. Bodin thought of a denial of the existence of witches as a denial of the principles of metaphysics and the very existence in God.[122] He approaches the supposed powers efficacy of spells and other enchantments of everyday people deluded in thinking their actions were appropriate and actual witches that received power from Satan. He speaks to the power of spells over the

[120] Castañega, 124 (*piden favor a los santos para que Dios tenga por bien de suplir lo que por ellos o por la virtud natural falta*).
[121] Cameron, 9.
[122] Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches,* Randy A. Scott Trans. (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1995), 46.

natural world through examples of tying the codpiece-string, something he characterizes as a commonly practiced means to prevent newly married couples from copulating.[123]

Bodin adds that flying witches were not the products of spiritually induced illusions and that lycanthropy was real as "a just judgment from God permits them [witches] to loses their human shape."[124] Although his was only one voice speaking on the threat of witches his consentient application of logic managed to be influential in the hunt for witches in Europe while implying that those who disagreed were simply ignorant and lacked the erudition to reconcile the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman teachings to understand the true nature of human-spirit interactions [125]

Bodin's interpretation of spells such as the codpiece-string or the belief in lycanthropy allow an in depth understanding of his application of metaphysics to supposed acts of witchcraft. However, categorizing practices in terms such as "maleficent art," or defending the scientific veracity of these actions, fails to provide any insight into how these acts functioned in the lived religious experience of early modern people. As important and insightful as it is to read Bodin's detailed defense of magical acts as genuine threats consistent with natural law, it eliminates the supposedly magical from the collection of beliefs operative in the broader culture. Even though compared to other Aristotelians Bodin drew less of a distinction between the natural and supernatural, he still fails to help us understand the place of the heterodox alongside of the orthodox in lived religion.

Aristotelians such as Ciruelo approached the division of the superstitious from ostensibly proper forms of worship, as well as the divide between the natural and the

[123] Bodin, 98-99.
[124] Bodin, 116-117, 127-128.
[125] Cameron, 9.

supernatural, more distinctly than Bodin. As part of the general principles he outlines as informing his critiques and recommendations, Ciruelo makes clear that spiritual creatures of God, angels and demons, exist beyond the everyday visible and corporeal realties.[126] However, even acts and events that appear out of the ordinary or marvelous have natural causes, even if most men cannot comprehend them. Because of this, he gives little efficacy to witches, denying that they command supernatural powers. For Ciruelo, the misguided beliefs and misunderstandings about what constitutes natural causes and how they can be influenced constitute a contributing factor in practices he deems as vain superstitions.[127]

The diminishment of the powers wielded by witches does not mean that Ciruelo is in opposition to other authors. Ciruelo and Castañega both agree that witches do occasionally fly. Castañega states that sometimes witches only seem to fly during demonically inspired deep hallucinatory dream like states (*como en grave y pesado sueño*); on other occasions witches fly to distant lands and seas (*se van a tierras y mares y partes remotas*) to take part in diabolical acts.[128] Ciruelo concurs, stating that witches sometimes traveled through the air for malevolent purposes and other times they are possessed by the Devil who plants false memories and images of having flown out of their houses for at Satan's bidding.[129]

Despite the agreement among Spanish theologians such as Ciruelo and Castañega and a French author like Bodin, their various positions indicate that the exact way that the natural and the supernatural interacted was a matter of debate. While the ability of spirits

[126] Ciruelo, 81.
[127] Ciruelo, 81-83
[128] Castañega, 70-71.
[129] Ciruelo, 116-117.

to act on men's senses or attempt to influence events was broadly accepted, exactly how and when a spirit, in particular a demon, could act on something physical and bring about a noticeable change or disease was not. Neither was the ability of demons to act on Christians and counter their ability to receive the sacraments.

For example, for the scholastic follower of Thomas Aquinas and an Aristotelian Heinrich Kramer, one of the authors of the infamous *Malleus maleficarum* (usually translated as *The Hammer of Witches*), the apparent fluctuation in a man's sexual prowess and fertility and the often unstable nature of sexual identity could not be reconciled with an understanding of sacraments such as marriage as demonstrable with empirically verifiable evidence in accordance with Church teachings.[130] Thus, while the mystical joining of visible man and woman through marriage was invisible, the occasions of impotence, infertility, or male same-sex attraction that left a marriage unconsummated was visible. Although most theologians of the era denied that Satan had the ability to physically interact with Christians, widely held beliefs allowed that the devil could operate through mortal intermediaries, such as witches, or act on the senses, creating illusions of missing genitals.[131] As a result, witches served as the explanation for the incongruity between the church's teachings about marriage as a holy bond joining man and woman and the unreliability of the male body that refuted the existence of the bond.[132]

The scholar of Renaissance literature Walter Stephen has argued that Heinrich Kramer harbored profound spiritual doubts as a result of visible signs of the failure of the

[130] Walter Stephens, "Witches Who Steal Penises: Impotence and Illusion in Malleus Maleficarum," *Journal of Medieval & Early Modern Studies* 28, no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 495-496.
[131] Stephens, 498-500, 506.
[132] Stephens, 500-511.

sacraments such as impotence. Kramer desperately needed witches to account for the discrepancy and to validate the reality of God and his power.[133] Although Stephen's argument is innovative, the need for witches to justify and prove the metaphysics of the sacraments and the power of Satan and his agents imposes a system of logic on the belief systems of the faithful. Not only does it seem unlikely that without inventing witches Kramer would have been an atheist; but for many of the faithful religious experience included tensions between rational aspects of belief, such as Aristotelian logic, and ineffable aspects of the faith.

It was not only different interpretations among Aristotelians that offered different conceptions about the physical and the spiritual. Bodin's attacks on his critics reveal that people like the Italian physician, astrologer, and professor at the University of Padua Pietro d'Abano viewed illness solely from the perspective of Galenic medicine, accepting that heavenly bodies or other natural causes produced diseases, but not witches.[134] Similarly, Bodin attacked the writer Florentine humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola for believing that magic practices, such as utilizing the natural occult properties of herbs, metals, animals, and other things, were only an application of physics.[135]

For Bodin, someone like d'Abano or Mirandola was at best gullible and too willing to believe in Galenic medicine or other studies of the physical world. He argued that a purely physical or medical explanation for accounts of witchcraft could not stand up to testing those ideas against the metaphysics of Aristotle, or that various kinds of divination could reveal the future. D'Abano's apparent reluctance to seek an explanation of witchcraft based on natural means, while dismissing the supernatural as a cause, must

[133] Stephens, 517.
[134] Bodin, 37.
[135] Bodin, 44, 85.

have seemed the height of folly. For Bodin it was obvious that "each science has its own principles and foundations which are different from one another."[136] Recognizing the classifications operative in Bodin's critique of his contemporaries reflects that they were dependent on a belief in, and willingness to ascribe a phenomenon to one of the three causalities of natural, supernatural, and preternatural.

Regardless of the specific understandings of the natural, supernatural, and preternatural, the treatment of issues, such as protection from storms or cures for illness, offered by theologians indirectly reveals everyday practices and the ideas underpinning them. For example, in an era of frequently deadly illness and epidemic outbreaks of disease, harnessing spiritual power for healing was an ongoing preoccupation. For clerics that viewed most diseases as something natural, recourse to any kind of spiritual or supernatural remedy risked crossing a line into the realm of the superstitious. Similarly, Castañega prescribed a ritual, one reminiscent of that described by Ciruelo, with lighted candles, relics, and singing the *Salve Regina* to properly ask for divine aid against hail storms.[137]

In addition to Ciruelo's prescribed ritual for storms, Casteñega makes clear that the faithful should look to the divine as well as the natural for assistance. Although he is critical of the "superstitious" practice of using exorcisms to drive away something natural, such as pests like locusts and vine grubs, Ciruelo does recommend a detailed spiritual remedy. In addition to the natural remedies that included clearing up weeds and debris and smearing unguents of tallow "from a male bear" on the plants, he suggests supplication to a saint that specialized in agricultural issues, St. Gregory, the Italian

[136] Bodin, 44.
[137] Castañega, 131, 183.

bishop whose pious pleas to God helped drive away a plague of pestilent insects.[138] Ciruelo also recommended blessing the vulnerable areas with the cross and holy water. If the priests performing the blessings happen to have the water used to wash the saint's bones, then it should be added to the holy water, presumably to enhance the spiritual power and quality of grace in the holy water.[139]

By themselves, theological condemnations do not offer unequivocal evidence that a given practice took place. Nevertheless, in the often-detailed explanations of why they viewed certain practices as part of witchcraft, or at the very least erroneous, it is possible to see several features of early modern beliefs that must be included to fully understand how people lived their religion. Although often considered as somehow distinct from other aspects of interactions with the supernatural, something "magical" rather than religious, the invocation of special words, wearing talismans and protective amulets, and consulting healers existed alongside of recourse to the prayers approved by theologians.

The opinion of the authors on the place of prayer in treating illness complicates the validity of how the spiritual interacted with the physical and reveals one facet of the grey area in which many of the faithful operated. Ciruelo opines that prayers by "devout clergymen," and commending oneself to God and the saints are also valid, spiritual, means to deal with afflictions such as illness.[140] However, the treatises reflect a blurring of the lines between prayer and other verbal means to bring about healing. Ciruelo labels anyone who would bring about healing through words alone as an enchanter, at least potentially.

[138] Ciruelo, 309.
[139] Ciruelo, 307-309.
[140] Ciruelo, 200-201.

Although when Ciruelo acknowledges that the saints could heal through words alone, since converting Jews and infidels required demonstrable miracles to prove the legitimacy and power of the faith, he acknowledges the possibility of healing through verbal means. However, he did indicate that the gifts of healing granted to the saints are not shared in common by ordinary Christians and that attempts to heals as the saints did violates Church law. [141] In addition, he makes clear that enchanters blaspheme by claiming that holy words have more power than they do, suggesting that God could be dishonest with the power of sanctified language. For Ciruelo, enchanters also make use of words not recognized by the Church as having power. [142]

Moreover, the authors viewed that mixing natural remedies with prayer was fraught with problems. Castañega finds fault with doctors that employ methods that exceeded natural law or follow the methods advanced by non-Christian "infidels," physicians such as Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna, asking for supernatural aid to render natural remedies effective.[143] Ciruelo, too, condemns prayer as well as formulaic recitation of otherwise Christian words as unnatural and, therefore, part of casting enchantments or spells. For those people that through ignorance of the sinfulness of unnatural remedies, or who seek to appropriate divine power through inclusion of prayers to render effective natural remedies he applies the label "superstitious" regardless of the motive, emphasizing that resorting to even legitimate prayers to gain benefit from the natural properties of medicine is a sin.[144]

[141] Ciruelo, 209-210.
[142] Ciruelo, 202, 206.
[143] Castañega, 124.
[144] Ciruelo, 207.

The misgivings of theologians reveal aspects of how many people lived their faith in the face of illness and injury. In the criticisms of what they saw as contemporary misguided practices, the theological explanations to describe the difference between the illicit and licit uses of divine assistance in matters of health, and in recommended acts, we can see a lived religious experience in which both the natural and supernatural had a place in helping the sick and injured recover. However, we can also see that the separation of natural from spiritual or divine was far from clearly defined, was inconsistently interpreted, and often combined in ways that mixed sacred and profane elements in actions with the divine that overlapped with theologians' conception of witchcraft and superstition.[145]

For many of the faithful, the strict separation between objects and medicines that God had imbued with healing properties, and the divine powers of God and the saintly intercessors did not exist. Although mixing the natural and supernatural struck educated theologians as an attempt to perform witchcraft or sorcery by utilizing divine power to distort the natural, or by employing the natural to sully the divine, it is clear that for many clergy and laity, the power of the supernatural was a part of enhancing or activating the occult abilities hidden within the natural. Defining the formulaic or ritualistic use of religious language or symbols with other symbols, numbers, and words thought to have power does not demand a separate treatment from other aspects of early modern religious healing.

The disagreements, albeit often subtle, that persisted even between intellectuals and clerics, blurred the distinctions between categories. No consensus existed about the boundary between the categories of the causalities, both what constituted the natural,

[145] Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*, 11.

preternatural, and supernatural, as well as how they interacted with each other. Likewise, no clear consensus existed about which invocations of divine aid constituted an act of piety and devotion and which erred by mixing the trappings of Catholic devotion with natural remedies or occult powers. The difficultly classifying the causalities renders even more difficult interpreting acts such as exercising a storm or dosing a horse with holy oats as an act of medicine, magic, superstition, or religion.

Although the categories and labels used by contemporaries have faults as a means in which to interpret actions, they do offer a several benefits for understanding the complexity of the lived religious experience. First, the fact that common practice needed to be parsed out in order to separate legitimate uses of medicines and prayers from practices that veered into magic indicates that early modern people believed in magical forces. Although the willingness to attribute causal relationships to magical powers ranged from Bodin's general acceptance to Ciruelo's incredulity, the reality of magic and its ability to interact with other forces was not in doubt. Milner refers to the uses of labels, such as "magic," as a polemic intended to discredit certain practices and the ideas behind them as irrational.[146] While this is evident in the range of ways that Castañega, Ciruelo, and Bodin parse out the line separating the magical from the natural or divine, the subtle differences that delineate one from another is suggestive of both the belief in magic and its uneasy coexistence with other forces.

As a category, magic serves as a reminder that however fine the line that separated practices, boundaries did exist. These boundaries between acceptable religious practices, the utilization of natural properties, and those actions deemed magic were especially relevant for the authors approaching the matter with the goal of correcting and

[146] Milner, 234.

informing the faithful. Unlike Bodin, who as a secular theologian and demonologist was more concerned with proving the dangers of neglecting witchcraft and disseminating the proper means of prosecuting witches, clerical authors had a different purpose in writing. Educated members of the church, such as Ciruelo and Castañega, wrote to admonish and inform the secular clergy and laity who engaged in practices the authors deemed to be intertwined with magic. Their categorization reminds us that magic or other powers thought to originate from the demonic or preternatural was something easily conflated with powers that came from natural properties or the divine.

Paying attention to the categories used by early modern authors also points out that intentionality in actions did matter. Not only did intentions have the potential to affect the qualities of objects or medicines, such as the way that saying a *paternoster* functioned as part of turning regular oats into holy oats useful for treating a sick horse, intentions could change the category of a church approved practice or ritual into something that was deemed superstitious or magical.[147] Similarly, Castañega judges the same actions taken to bring about a cure against illness differently based on suppositions of intent. The application of both medicine and prayer are within approved orthodoxy provided that the prayer was not intended to render the healing power of medications more effective.[148] As a result, keeping in mind the categories used by early modern authors allows us to see why certain actions fell within acceptability while these authors reacted to others as transgression.

The most important and useful aspect of the otherwise problematic categories used by early modern scholars is that they illustrate the range of activities that needed

[147] Milner, 219, 225.
[148] Castañega, 124.

some kind of label, explanation, and judgment to be rendered intelligible within the framework of early modern Catholicism. Through authors parsing out the range of practices through which people tried to interact with unseen forces and manipulate the world around them, and the degree to which early modern men and women engaged with divine, spiritual, or other powers, we can see that even clerics and theologians had to find a way to make sense of what we might now see as "lived religion" in a manner that worked with their existing cosmologies. While some of the rituals and acts explained, such as exorcising pests and banishing storms, are more obvious variations on the processions, rituals, and other approved rites, some of the "magic" and "superstitions" described push the boundaries of what constitutes an act of religiosity.

Conclusion: Categories and the Ineffable

In some ways, the use of categories can narrow our field of focus and let us examine a single facet of the religious experience. While "superstitious" or "magic" are problematic in regard to understanding the myriad ways that the faithful sought to interact with the divine, an analysis of the term has its uses. Understanding the theological rationale behind definitions of superstition, and detailing how theologians, jurists, preachers, and canon lawyers understood specific beliefs and practices, offers an elite perspective on condemned practices and how they saw them in relation to orthodox religious ideology.[149] Moreover, the exercise in describing why an act of healing or banishing storms transcends the acceptable reveals the contours of dogma at work outside of more staid rituals and sacraments. It is a reminder that, even among theologically sophisticated

[149] Cameron, vii.

clerics, the lived religious experience overlaps with illness, bad weather and other threats to wellbeing.

A category imposed by a modern scholar can also have its uses in isolating aspects of religious practice for analysis. Thus, while participation in a religious confraternity can simultaneously be a part of communal identity, a way to honor a protector saint, a way to practice charity and Christian goodwill, or a means to assert lay dominance over sacred spaces, the recourse to a category can allow examination in relative isolation. For example, understanding how communities of faith shaped their identity, in particular a given village's place and importance within the wider Spanish or Christian world, is important. Singling out one element of the complex religious experience of belonging to a cofradía can shed light on how the processions, feasts, vows, etc. contribute to a sense of how people defined themselves by their faith as much as it does about their faith itself.

The problem is that examining something as complex as religion through categories that isolate and separate discrete segments of religiosity neglect the religious experience as it was lived. As much of the theological commentaries on superstition illustrate that ritual, prayer, medicine, and magic did not have, nor need to have, clear distinctions. Using medicine when sick, perfectly legitimate according to theologians, and trying prayer, always acceptable, both represented an effort to remedy an illness and hope to manage forces beyond control. By avoiding the kind of analysis implied through simple categories, the distinction that hoping for increased efficacy through combining medicine and prayer was superstitious becomes irrelevant. For the faithful, whether or not

they believed that prayer made the medicine work, the natural power of medicine and the divine power of prayer provided access to unseen powers.

Similarly, the recourse to cloud conjurers and other kinds of magic to banish demons and other diabolical forces behind storms did not exist independently of Church approved rituals of supplication to ask for divine protection. Looking at the actions of the faithful without a label lets us to consider actions as part of the more complex whole of religiosity. Although condemned by the Church, in a world filled with unseen dangers, there was no reason that seeking magical aid to dispel diabolical forces and asking a patron saint for protection had to be mutually exclusive. In addition, just as favored saints for protection developed out of experience so, too, did a trust in conjurers as effective against dark forces. Despite going against dogma, resisting unseen malevolent forces did not necessarily register as magic among many of the faithful. Rather, seen without categories, these kinds of acts of magic or superstition simply augmented the sacraments, processions, communal feats of the brotherhoods, and reverence to images as a way to interact with the divine.

Chapter 2 - Yelling at God: Blasphemy and Lived Religion

In 1631 the Spanish Inquisition brought a twenty-five-year-old weaver from Toledo before the tribunal to answer charges that he had blasphemed. The Inquisition tried Juan de Zaballos for making blasphemous statements in front of several neighbors.[150] In addition to threatening to burn down a chapel where a neighbor had made votive offerings to the Virgin, Juan uttered that he loved Satan more than God and that if the Devil came for him, he would go with the Devil.[151] In 1644, the Inquisitors summoned Pedro de Aparicio to appear before the Inquisition in Toledo for having blasphemed against the Virgin Mary. The testimony of several witnesses related that while bragging about his sexual exploits, Pedro said, that he would have sex with the Virgin Mary.[152] Not only did his words refute the doctrine of the sinfulness of fornication, they disparaged Mary's sexual purity.

These cases are not exceptional. The records of the Spanish Inquisition reveal that blasphemous speech was common among people of all regions, ages, and social standings. This should not suggest that the early modern Spanish society was irreligious. Blasphemous speech uttered in public spaces was not necessarily an indication of heresy, heterodoxy, or impiety. Rather, in a predominantly oral culture, such as early modern Spain, blasphemy represented the invocation of the sacred as a reaction to life's events or

[150] The names of the accused are spelled as they are labeled in the archives due to the inconsistency of orthographic conventions within the trial documents. Also, except where it was necessary to separate words that were frequently combined in the original documents, I have attempted to maintain the spelling of the Spanish as it appears in the records of the Spanish Inquisition
[151] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo 33, Exp.35.
[152] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo 31, Exp.33.

as an expression of emotion. As such, individuals often used blasphemous speech in language intended to display anger, demonstrate resistance to authority, or imply doubts about doctrine.[153]

These cases also reflect that speech that invoked the divine, whether as an ostensible denial of God, a challenge to the authority of divine forces, or some kind of slander against the saints played an important role in how the faithful managed the realities of daily life by gaining access to the supernatural. In many ways, the means of spoken communication via prayers, vows, and other spoken acts of devotion was like communication made possible by the established beliefs and traditions of mystical communications as the faithful sought direct contact with the divine. Mystics took advantage of, and manipulated conventions, albeit conventions of speech rather than ritualized devotions, to reach God and the saints.[154]

Early modern mystics developed practices of prayer and devotional language that allowed for the experience of mystical space in which they could achieve some direct communication with God and the saints.[155] The two-way nature of the contact made possible through the practices and speech acts of the mystical practitioners made it more than simple communication, it was a conversation. Mystical discourse depended on how the devout uttered speech, as well as what they uttered. Expectations of the kinds of speech that elicited a type response set the parameters of interaction between humans and the divine. Mystics altered their language based on specific context, changing what was

[153] Schwartz, 21.
[154] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable, Volume One: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Michael B. Smith trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 160-164.
[155] Certeau, 160.

said, and in what situations, as a result of expected reciprocal relationships.[156] Speakers in communication with the divine manipulated their relationships through mystic speech and subtle alterations of conventions that simultaneously allowed and limited change. Through speech, mystics sought to use accepted, standard, aspects of devotional language to control some aspects of their relationships with spiritual powers.

Blasphemy, likewise, functioned as a speech act that represented an interjection or manipulation of conventions between humans and the divine. Like a mystical utterance, the act of saying the words, not the specific words by themselves, formed the basis of trying to manipulate relationships with the divine. The acts of blaspheming as an intervention when other parts of communication have failed make the frequently repeated phrases and expressions more intelligible as part of a discourse of blasphemy. This helps to explain why anger at the perceived failure of God and the saints to deliver on a promise or respond to other kinds of communication resulted in recourse to offensive speech. Blasphemies directed at divine powers served to humanize the sacred, making the divine more accessible for petitions and expressions of discontent.[157]

Predominately oral cultures invest a great deal of authority and power in the spoken word. This is evident in the importance placed on sworn oaths, such as oaths of loyalty to secular authorities that in the absence of regular recourse to written documents, formed legally binding contracts.[158] The importance placed on eyewitness testimony and confession in criminal proceedings also underscores the legal implications of speech.[159]

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[156] Certeau, 162.
[157] Schwartz, 21.
[158] Alain Cabantous, *Blasphemy: Impious Speech in the West from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 5-6.
[159] Edward Peters, *Torture: Expanded Edition* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 46, 56-57.

The power accorded to speech is also evident in its use to influence the spiritual and physical state of an individual through the practice of "talking cures," in which physicians attempted to employ rhetoric to talk people into good health, and in widely practiced formulaic prayers thought to bring benefits solely through the act of speaking sacred words aloud.[160] Moreover, speech offered the possibility of allowing humans to transcend the mundane world and reach God, who made manifest his power through the spoken word, with prayers and praising the Lord. Blasphemous speech represented the inverse.[161]

Blasphemy, like oaths, healing incantations, and prayer, obtained power when spoken aloud.[162] In the early modern period, scholastic theologians held that language reflected the relationship of the speaker to God and the divinely ordained order of the universe. The intellect of the speaker created speech, which symbolically reflected the mentality and morality contained within the speaker's mind. Even more revealing was impulsive speech that exposed the true characteristics of the soul.[163] Thus, blasphemy associated with expressions of discontentment with life's situations represented rebellion against the divine order and providence and represented a challenged to God's manifest will.[164]

The frequency with which the Spanish Inquisition tried blasphemy cases is indicative of the role of this kind of speech in social interactions. Although the historian David Nash has described blasphemy as "a species of flawed social interaction transgressing norms of manners and acceptable behavior," the number of cases suggests

[160] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 37.
[161] Cabantous, 5-6.
[162] Cabantous, 6.
[163] Cabantous, 34.
[164] Flynn, "Taming Angers Daughter: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain," 869.

that blasphemous speech was common, if not always accepted.[165] In addition, the work of other scholars demonstrates that blasphemy was in many ways an integral aspect of social interaction, albeit one that could result in prosecution by the Holy Office. In fact, the violation of certain social norms, by invoking the sacred to express is what made blasphemy an important aspect of socialization in early modern Spain.

Recently, historians of the Iberian world have examined the role of blasphemous speech in early modern Spanish culture. Maureen Flynn describes blasphemy as a reaction to anger in which blasphemy, specifically denials of God or insults against the Virgin Mary and the saints, provided an opportunity to challenge the role of the divine on life's misfortunes, and question God's will. She adds that blasphemy offered the speaker the ability to imagine the reassertion of control over forces perceived to be against the blasphemer, and thus, provided "one of the few escapes into fantasy that remained in the psychic life of adults in this period of authoritarian religion."[166] Stuart Schwartz argues that blasphemy reflected, in part, ways in which early modern Spanish expressed doubts over doctrinal purity. In his work on the legacy of the centuries of coexistence among Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Iberian peninsula, he states that doubts over Christianity as the only path to salvation led to a degree of uncertainty about other aspects of orthodox doctrine.[167] He demonstrates that the misgivings of some Christians about the Church's doctrines manifested in expressions at odds with the teachings of the Church hierarchy. These included refutations of doctrines concerning sin and salvation,

[165] Nash, 6-7.
[166] Maureen Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 34, 50-53.
[167] Schwartz, 2-3.

as well as blasphemous jokes about the Church and the sexuality of Christ and the saints.[168]

Without denying the validity of these interpretations, my chapter approaches blasphemy from the perspective of the everyday religious experience for men and women across the early modern Spanish world. Based on inquisitorial trials involving accusations of blasphemy, I will argue that by examining these acts as communications between a person and the divine, it is possible to see them as more than challenges to religious authority or anti-Catholic sentiments. The cases examined in this chapter betray a desire for a close relationship with divinity that will guarantee rewards which was central to the lived religion of early modern Catholics.

The Spanish Inquisition and Blasphemy

The large number of cases of blasphemy that came before the Inquisition –12,117 cases between 1550 and 1700, according to Henningsen and Tedeschi— reflect blasphemy's pervasiveness in the culture of the early modern Spanish world.[169] Individuals regularly risked offending their communities, or denunciation to the Inquisition by their speech acts. These included a broad range of statements, such as taking the Lord's name in vain, denying the power of God, swearing against the saints, condemning people and objects to the devil, challenging the authority of the clergy or the efficacy of the sacraments, and numerous other speech acts perceived as conflicting with Church doctrine.[170] For the

[168] Schwartz, 21.
[169] Henningsen and Tedeschi, *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, 114.
[170] Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition,* 40, 260; Nalle, *God in La Mancha,* 61-62.

Inquisition and the clergy, blasphemy represented a potential threat to the Church as it represented the potential for heresy or, at least, impiety.

At its inception, the Spanish Inquisition did not necessarily have jurisdiction over cases of blasphemy, unless it was directly associated with a defined heresy.[171] However, with the ascension of Fernando de Valdés to the position of inquisitor general in 1547, the Inquisition began to make a sustained effort to investigate the beliefs and practices of Old Christians.[172] Under his leadership, the Holy Office assumed responsibility for monitoring the behavior and morality of the laity, as well as the clergy. This shift in the activities of the Inquisition coincided with the early years of the Council of Trent. In the Tridentine reforms, Valdés saw an expanded role for an Inquisition that appeared to have effectively eliminated Jewish, Protestant, and *alumbrado* heretics from Spain. Valdés took up the challenge of instituting the goals of the reformers at Trent by investigating the moral offenses of both the laity and lower levels of the clergy that included clerical concubines, bigamy, sodomy, as well as blasphemous speech.[173] The redirection of inquisitorial energy highlighted the importance of speech in a largely oral culture.

By associating morality with the practice of the orthodox faith, the inquisitors defended the expansion of their jurisdiction with the logic that no one who adhered to the true faith would utter scandalous words or exhibit moral failings. Thus, certain types of speech, *parablas escandalosas*, and *proposiciones* (scandalous words and propositions), as well as language that disagreed with church doctrine or practice or that might reveal

[171] Schwartz, 19.
[172] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 57.
[173] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 61, 64.

blasphemous, impious, or heretical ideas, came to the attention of the tribunals of the Holy Office.[174]

The Holy Office's belief that speech was a manifestation of pre-existing categories of beliefs drove its policies pertaining to blasphemous acts.[175] This understanding of the relationship between speech and faith served as one of the Spanish Inquisition's guiding principles. The Holy Office followed the fourteenth-century inquisitorial guide by Inquisitor Nicolás Eymerich, in which he asserted that any statement made against the faith be taken literally, as a basis for its pursuit of blasphemers.[176]

Inquisitors also pursued blasphemy due to the widely held belief that blasphemy was a crime that put the entire community at risk. Not only did verbal attacks at God reveal a propensity for heresy and immorality, early modern Spanish thought that acts of blasphemy risked retribution from divine powers in the form of natural disasters, such as disease and floods. In addition, the inquisitors also sought out blasphemers in order to maintain social order. Inquisitors considered words offensive to God a cause of social unrest, due to the community's fear of God's wrath or from the offense caused by impious words among the devout. This is exemplified in works such as Pedro Juan Berenguer y Morales's *Universal Explicación de los Mysterios de Nuestra Santa Fe* (Universal explanation of the mysteries of our holy faith), a book published in 1629 in which the author claimed that blasphemers are worse than murderers and thieves, and that blasphemy brought the wrath of God in the form of famines, plagues, and the breakdown

[174] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 60-61.
[175] Maureen Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 34, 40-41.
[176] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 35-36.

of social order.[177] Morales added that those who heard blasphemies and did not respond shared in the guilt.[178] As Henry Kamen has indicated, among the offenses that the tribunals investigated, the cases taken most seriously were those directed against God or one's neighbors as they "disturbed the peace of the community."[179]

The perceived danger posed by blasphemous speech made it one of the most common offenses that brought suspects before the tribunals of the Spanish Inquisition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, between 1540 and 1700, cases for blasphemy and *proposiciones* represented 51% of cases in Galicia and 44% of cases in Toledo, and accounted for nearly one-third of all cases in Castile during the same period.[180] The number of cases for verbal offenses during this period, which constituted the largest category of cases tried by the Holy Office, indicates the importance authorities placed on regulating speech considered impious or harmful to the community.

Blasphemous Utterances as an Interaction with the Divine

Blasphemous utterances were, at their root, a type of interaction with the divine. As Brad Gregory reminds us, the religious beliefs of the men and women we study is something we need to try to interpret, as they themselves would understand them. [181] However, for cases of blasphemy, explaining how their religious convictions shaped their actions is

[177] Pedro Juan Berenguer y Morales, *Universal Explicación de los Mysterios de Nuestra Santa Fe*, (Madrid, 1629), (*EI ladron ofende a Dios en sus possessions… el homicida a los póbres criados de Dios mas el blasfemo hace injuria, y ofende a Dios en su persona. Ademas de esto la injuria que hacen los pecadores a Dios en sus pecados, de principal intento no es ofender sino de retudida; porque el deshonesto no tiene por principal intento ofender a Dios*).
[178] Pedro Juan Berenguer y Morales.
[179] Henry Kamen, *Inquisition*, 260-261.
[180] Francisco Bethencourt, 338.
[181] Brad S. Gregory, "Can We 'See Things Their Way'? Should We Try?," 31-37.

somewhat problematic since a literal interpretation of their words, such as claims that they deny God or love the devil, does not necessarily reflect their beliefs and attitudes in an accurate manner. Though the cases are, at their core, acts that invoke the divine, deciphering the records from the tribunals requires attention to the meanings of words and the intent of the author in using them.[182] Accepting speech acts that attacked, criticized, or denied spiritual forces as part of a complex matrix of beliefs and practices, we can read the records of the speech contextually, to see them as an "intervention" that intersected both the mundane and sacred.[183]

The most frequently recorded blasphemies centered on the themes of defying the power of God and the saints with a few even going so far as to deny the very existence of God. Other profanations derided the efficacy of the saints and their images, denigrated the cross or, like Juan de Zaballos' blasphemies, threatened to destroy sacred objects and professed a preference for Satan over God. Even in explicit exclamations that invoked the sexuality of the Virgin Mary, the power of the statement was located in its appeal to divine powers. Although the influence and even performance of gender norms might be operative in blasphemous statements, they remained at their center a form of interaction with the divine.

Examined in context, one of the most common sentiments expressed in blasphemous oaths, the rejections of God's power, do not read as evidence of widespread impiety or disbelief. The variants such as *niego de Dios* (I deny God), *reniego de Dios* (I reject God), and *pese de Dios* (may God regret it) nearly always occur in the context of negative actions and frustrations. The repetitive, almost ritualistic blasphemies of

[182] Skinner, "Is it still possible to interpret texts?," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 89:3 (June 2008), 648.
[183] Skinner, "Is it still possible to interpret texts?," 653.

rejection and negation recall the functions of oaths and words of power condemned by theologians as magical or superstitious. When men and women repeated words to evoke some kind of effect or power, they transformed otherwise innocuous word into something with properties akin to that of spells or curses. The context and repetition, rather than the words themselves, altered their nature. For example, words uttered for healing, especially those repeated at intervals with occult significance, become sinful enchantments.[184] Likewise, the common belief that repeating the holy words of mass could convert hailstones into water rendered otherwise holy words into something ignorant and sinful. Out of context, the repeating of the words of mass become *"conjuros supersticiosos*" (superstitious spells) worthy of disdain and condemnation.[185]

However, context also makes some ritualistic repetition of words an acceptable means to call on God's power and represent an act of devotion. In particular, one can see a stark contrast in the sinful words of enchanters with the proper recourse to the power of the recitation of words pertaining to the seven sacraments.[186] The power of the spoken words of baptism, absolution, extreme unction, etc. is integral to the sacrament itself. However, not all of the ritualized words pertained to the sacraments, and therefore fell under the purview of the clergy. All Catholics had recourse to frequent recitation of the Creed, calling on the name of Jesus, and praying the Lord's Prayer and the Ave Maria as acts of devotion and continued affirmations of the faith.[187]

It is therefore necessary to underscore that the spoken word therefore had an important place in lived religion as it not only allowed men and women to actively

[184] Ciruelo, 202-203.
[185] Castañega, 167.
[186] Ciruelo, 206.
[187] Castañega, 200.

participate with unseen forces, it was the primary means by which they did so. In the case of utterances, such as calling on Jesus or reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Ave Maria, the literal meaning of the words is less important than what speech act theorists call the "illocutionary act," in other words, an act performed in saying something. In this sense, blasphemies may be understood essentially as an attempt to elicit spiritual intercession on the behalf of the faithful.[188] Sacred words made contact with other worldly powers possible for everyone without the need for clerical intercession. Words, whether as "prayers," "charms," or "spells," were integral to accessing the occult powers of supernatural beings.[189]

This illocutionary dimension of the spoken word had great significance beyond religion. The legal code that for centuries formed the basis for much of Spanish law, the *Siete Partidas*, devoted several sections to legalities of speech. The legality of oaths, speaking ill against the king, and even a legal definition of what speech was and an enumeration of its types codified the importance of the spoken word.[190] Nevertheless, the law also makes clear that no clear distinction existed between the secular legalities and the religious legalities of speech. As an aspect of the lived religious experience, blasphemy highlights the power of speech as something that conflated the secular and the religious. In particular, blasphemies that reflected common phrases of disbelief that speech functioned in a manner that allowed Catholics to participate in a religiosity that was both pragmatic and mystical and incorporated a litigious relationship with the divine.

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[188] James Tully, "The pen is a mighty sword: Quentin Skinner's analysis of politics," in Tully, ed., *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988) 8-9.
[189] María Tausiet, *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.
[190] *Siete Partidas,* II.IV, II. XIII, III. XI.

Broadly speaking, blasphemies fell into two categories. One category included statements that were offensive to the faith, but came from a place of ignorance rather than a heartfelt rejection or challenge of God, the saints, or the Church, and were judged less severely. The other category represented a genuine rejection of the doctrines about God, the Virgin Mary, and the saints in a manner that indicated heretical beliefs or apostasy. As the Dominican theologian Luis de Torres stated in his treatise on sins of speech, there were two ways to blaspheme. One was when one not only said something against God but also felt it in the heart; the other, when one spoke against God and the saints without understanding or truly feeling what one was saying.[191] In other words, one type of blasphemy, the most severe, involved the knowledge that an utterance was offensive. Moreover, a heartfelt desire to wound or offend God exacerbated the seriousness of the offense. In the other, ostensibly lesser offense, the offender did not understand the gravity of the injury. Neither did the speaker have a heartfelt desire to attack God, reducing the severity of the offense.[192] The addition of intent to an examination of the specific words uttered complicated blasphemy cases brought before the Inquisition.

From a legal perspective, blasphemy was both a secular and religious offense.[193] The law in Spain through much of the late medieval and early modern era made explicit that speaking ill of God, the Virgin Mary, or the saints was a punishable offense. That range of possible punishments depended on social hierarchy and repetition of offenses, not the type of blasphemy. Although the law stated the nobles had higher expectations

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[191] "*... Ay dos maneras de blasphemia La primera es, quando no solo pronuncia con la boca algunas affreta, o injuria contra Dios, sino que también se siente en el Coraçón, que tal injuria, o affrenta conuiene a Dios ... Otra manera de blasphemia ay , en la qual pronuncia el hombre algunas affrenta, o injuria cōtra Dios, o los santos, sin que sienta no entieda que conuiene a Dios a que lo que dize*"; Luis de Torres, 164.
[192] Luis de Torres, 164.
[193] Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico*, (Tuscon: The University of Arizona Press, 2006), 12-13.

regarding their speech, knights and nobles primarily faced the loss of revenues and land for blaspheming, rather than the punishments such as branding, cleaving of the tongue, or cutting of a hand stipulated for repeat offenders of the lower social orders.[194] The revised law in the *Nueva Recopilación de Leyes de Castilla* (New compilation of the laws of Castile]) of 1567, still included blasphemy in the law code, adding a mandate for a specific punishment without reference to status. Anyone that blasphemed in the royal court was subject to punishments of 100 lashes.[195]

While blasphemous statements ran the gamut from insults that labeled St. Anne an "old whore" (*una vieja puta*) to sexually explicit statements, such as boasting about having sex with the Virgin Mary, many blasphemies were variants on expressions of disbelief.[196] However, these disrespectful and irreverent words, although offensive, were not generally thought to truly challenge the Church's dogma or the articles of faith. While statements that denied God, such as *niego de Dios*, or challenged God's attributes, such as *Dios no es justo* or *Dios no es poderoso* (God is not just or powerful), did, in fact, represent utterances that some theologians considered heretical blasphemies.[197] In addition, the 1567 *Nueva Recopilación* differentiated between the severities of heresies in criminal law and mandated harsher punishments for heretical blasphemies in a way that

[194] Siete Partidas, VII. XXVIII.
[195] *Nueva Recopilación,* 8. 4. 2. "Allende de las dichas penas ordenamos, que qualquier que blasfemare de Dios, ti de la Virgen Maria en nuestra Corte, ó cinco leguas en derredor, que por esse mismo hecho le corten la lengua, i le den cien azotes publicamente por justicia; i si fuera de nuestra Corte blasfemare en qualquier Lugar de nuestros Reinos; cortenle la lengua, i pierda la mitad de sus bienes, la mitad dellos para el que 10 acusare, la otra mitad para la Camara; i Nos no entendernos remitir esta pena por suplicacion de persona algunas," quoted in Antonio M. García-Molina Riquelme, *El régimen de penas y penitencias en el Tribunal de la Inquisición de México* (Mexico DF: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México,1999), 245. https://biblio.juridicas.unam.mx/bjv/id/3476.
[196] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo 31, Exp. 33; AGN, Inq., vol. 335, exp.12 ("diciendo que era [Santa Ana] una vieja puta.
[197] Luis de Torres, *Veyntiquatro discursos sobre los pecados de la lengua, y como se ditinguen y de la gravedad de cada uno de ellos*, (Barcelona: Sebastian de Cormellas, 1607), 166.

the legal codes such as the thirteenth century *Siete Partidas* did not.[198]

Nevertheless, the Inquisition tended to mandate lesser punishments for offensive statements that did not accompany more serious and persistent heresies. The social standing and racial classification of the defendant functioned alongside the context of when and where the accused blasphemed to determine the punishment. If inquisitors considered the defendant of sufficient quality in regard to reputation and status, the defendant was not a habitual re-offender, and the offensive utterance could be put in a context of conflict or drunkenness to mitigate the severity of the sin, the condemned faced fines en lieu of banishment, public whippings, or gallery service. Anger, drunkenness, extreme melancholy, or even offensive humor, could be reasons for interpreting an otherwise potentially heretical blasphemy as the result of the loss of reason or self-control rather than a deliberate attempt to question dogma.[199]

A typical example is the case of Diego de Almódovar, whose angry outburst in which he denied God resulted only in a mild punishment. Common punishments for blasphemy included having one's goods confiscated, imprisonment, and the humiliation of wearing the penitential garment, the *sambenito.* More severe punishments included service in the king's galleys, flogging, having the tongue cleaved or cut out entirely, branding the lips, and banishment. The fact that Almodóvar's lineage was free from Jewish ancestry and that he was blaspheming in a fit of anger sufficed to make the potentially heretical act appear merely offensive.[200] His anger over losing at gambling and hearing that his wife was unfaithful clearly sufficed as mitigating factors. The

[198] García-Molina Riquelme, 246.
[199] García-Molina Riquelme, 248.
[200] "Trial of Diego de Almódovar, Penanced for Blasphemy, 1545," in *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: an Anthology of Sources* ed. Lu Ann Homza (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co., 2006), 166–167.

inquisitors sentenced Diego to face public shaming and clerical scrutiny, rather than send him to the galleys, banish him from his village, or give him lashes with a whip.[201] He had to stand before the congregation during mass marked as a penitent by going without shoes, kneeling only when the priest raised the host, and holding a lit candle. Following the mass, Almódovar had to give the candle to the priest, who recited the mass, who would then send it to the tribunal in Toledo as proof that the sentence had been carried out as ordered.[202]

Based on the context, the Inquisition categorized Almodóvar's denial of God and his power as simple rather than heretical blasphemies. The words might be offensive to God but not indicative of heretical beliefs.[203] The fact that the Inquisition judged statements denying God, which would certainly contradict the core teachings of Catholicism, under the less severe category of simple blasphemy suggests that these expressions could be treated as rhetorical devices rather than true expressions of disbelief.

Depending on how it was used, and by whom, the spoken word represented an important tool in reinforcing or testing social norms and boundaries. Aggressive language reflected manipulations of social hierarchies and demonstrated changes in those relationships based on the choice of insults.[204] Historian Cheryl English Martin shows that in colonial Northern Mexico, the multi-ethnic and multi-racial character of society contributed to the development of a lexicon of popular insults through which personal

[201] Homza, 167.
[202] Homza, 167.
[203] John F. Chuchiak, ed. *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: A Documentary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 205.
[204] Cheryl English Martin, "Popular Speech and Social Order in Northern Mexico, 1650-1830," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, No. 2 (April 1990), 305-308.

grievances could be aired within the context of social and racial hierarchies. Men and women chose insults laden with particular racial or sexual meanings based on their own social/racial position in relation to the social/racial position of the subject of their words.[205] Although Catholic men and women were always in an inferior position to spiritual forces, the faithful also had a script with which they could engage with the divine.

The speech used against divine forces also recalls what historian Scott Taylor has called the "rhetoric of honor" and makes visible some of the ways that blasphemy functioned as a part of the lived religious experience. Although Taylor is examining the contentious, often violent, conflicts that surrounded challenges to honor in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain, the way men and women used language used stock insults as part of the gradual escalation of conflicts is similar to the use of blasphemies. Men and women chose the words and gestures that accompanied a disagreement that were laden with meaning about their status, the status of their opponent, and the insult that seemed most pertinent to damaging their opponent's reputation.[206]

That is not to say that bystanders took the slanderous words of the arguing rivals at face value. Rather, as a part of a prelude to violence, preferred insults such as "cuckold," "traitor," "heretic," "vagabond," and "sodomite" formed part of a language that fit part of a "script" that made possible the expression of hostility that made recourse to insults part of the ritual.[207] Exchanges of hyperbolic slander let rivals channel conflicts in a way that either forestalled physical conflict, or, at least, minimized the most

[205] Cheryl English Martin, 319, 321.
[206] Scott Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 21, 42.
[207] Taylor, 62.

egregious acts of violence and social disorder. The power of the words was, in large part, a function of context.

The repetitive, formulaic blasphemous utterances that denigrated God and the saints had a similar function. Like fights among men and women, angry grievances with divine forces revolved around perceived slights or breaches of implicit contracts with the spiritual world. Similarly, as indicated by the classification of denying God as a simple blasphemy, observers understood statements such as *niego de Dios* (I deny God) as comparable to calling an opponent "*hijo de puta*" (son of a whore or son of a bitch). Broadly speaking, observers would not have believed that someone truly denied God or was actually the son of a prostitute.

Thus, when in 1540 the velvet weaver, Alonso de Carrance, denounced himself to the Inquisition for uttering "*y dyze que nyego de dyos y de los santos y de mi padre y mi* madre" (and says "I deny God and the saints and my father and my mother"), his denials were not necessarily taken in their literal sense.[208] The blasphemous denial of divine powers may be possible, though unlikely for a sixteenth century Catholic. More likely, the fact that he came forward to the Inquisition to expunge the guilt he felt over his use of that formed part of a common formulaic expression of anger directed at the divine.[209] Moreover, the veracity of his denial of his own mother and father seems implausible, highlighting his statement as one of hyperbolic rhetoric as opposed to a claim of disbelief.

[208] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo 33, Exp. 17.
[209] Carrance declared that saying "these words bit my conscience and grieved me … of which I acuse myself and asked to make penitence with mercy "*estas palabras me ____ mordyó la concynecyas* [sic] *y me pesó … de lo qual yo me acuso y le mando hacer…. penítencya con misercordia*."

Nevertheless, hyperbolic figure of speech or not, Carrance's words did put him at odds with the Inquisition. Since beliefs remained hidden from the observation of religious authorities, in many ways the church wanted to ensure adherence to orthodox doctrine in behavior and speech, as proxies for belief.

For some theologians, belief was not something internal and separate from outward signs, as they held that refraining from utterances and actions out of line with church teaching equated to orthodox belief and the purity of the faith.[210] Many in religious authorities argued that no one who adhered to the true faith would utter scandalous words. As with other violations of speech, such as scandalous words and propositions, language that suggested immorality or disagreed with some aspects of church doctrine or practice or that might reveal impious ideas, the specific words, not the intent, were what was important.[211] The logic that speech reflected one's inner self and that no one who adhered to the true faith would utter scandalous words stressed an assessment of guilt based on a literal understanding of the blasphemy.[212]

Theologians agreed that speech was potentially dangerous. The Dominican Luis de Torres repeatedly referred to the tongue as a fishhook (*anzuelo*) that might catch Leviathan or the devil. The threat of that the Christian as metaphorical fisherman might catch something dangerous and beyond control that the only way for the Christian to be safe was to be silent. Torres makes several allusions to God gaging the faithful or tying down their tongues to maintain silence and protect them from demonic forces.[213] The threat of falling prey to the predation of speech is likened to geese and cranes carrying

[210] John O'Malley, 17-18.
[211] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 60-61.
[212] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 66
[213] Luis de Torres, 152-155.

stones in their mouths as they crossed the Taurus Mountains to avoid honking that would attract the attention of eagles.[214] He adds, that death is in the hands of the tongue (*la muerte está en las manos de la lengua*).[215]

The kinds of punishments often handed down suggest that the Holy Office did take intent into consideration. Torres is clear that blasphemy was a severe sin that men carried with them to the grave. He says that those allowing blasphemy to go unchallenged are not children of God. Men and women that do blaspheme deserve to have their lips cauterized or they should be stoned to death. Moreover, the severity of the sin was increased if blasphemy was paired with heretical ideas.[216]

Nevertheless, the severity of oaths differed based on the speaker. The qualitative sinfulness of a given offensive utterances depended, in part, on the knowledge of the man or woman. According to de Torre, the blasphemy of those ignorant of the faith is less severe than those spoken by a Christian.[217] The suggestion that the penitent must confess the exact gravity of their blasphemies during confession underscores how an assessment of understanding and ignorance factored into degrees of guilt and contrition that ultimately contributed to Inquisitorial decisions about sentences.[218]

The recourse to offensive speech reflects the complexity of the lived religious experience. Despite their potentially grave nature, offensive utterances toward God and the saints represented an option for the faithful to communicate their feelings to the divine and their fellow man. Although blasphemous speech was one of any number of options for communicating, it was clearly common enough to receive frequent treatments

[214] Luis de Torres, 156.
[215] Luis de Torres, 157.
[216] Luis de Torres, 170, 178-179.
[217] Luis de Torres, 166.
[218] Luis de Torres, 167.

by theologians and jurists. For both clerical and secular authors, this category of speech represented a problem sufficiently common and pervasive to warrant extensive development in legal codes and theological treatises. However, the laws and clerical writings, as well as how the Holy Office treated blasphemy in practice, suggest inquisitors and other authorities understood the need to approach this type of speech with nuance. The range of options for dealing with blasphemy, and the relative leniency that was sometimes shown, is indicative of an understanding among early modern men and women about what this kind of speech actually meant and how it fit into the complex relationships between man and God.

For early modern men and women, religion included multiple, overlapping webs of connections between humans and the divine. Despite the supernatural and sacred nature of these relationships, they had elements of hopes, fears, love, misunderstanding, and disappointment that mimicked human relationships. Through the veneration of sacred objects and images, vows, and prayers, the faithful sought to engage in and control these relationships in order to protect themselves, families and communities. Appeals to the saints to act as divine benefactors in this world also included hope that the saints could act as advocates to help the faithful's position in the afterlife. However, sacraments, prayers for the deceased family members, and votive offerings made before sacred images functioned alongside of blasphemy as a way to participate in these relationships.[219]

Just as with the human community, slander and offensive statements offered a way to fight back against perceived slights and breaches of the sacred compacts. Simple blasphemy, in the form of denials of God or rejecting saints, offered the same benefits as

[219] Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth,* 2.

insulting rivals by calling them thieves and whores. Although the anger precipitating blasphemy was an expression of discontentment with life's situations and rebellion against the divine order, slandering God shows that the relationship was not one sided.[220] Blasphemy offered a stock of phrases, albeit somewhat ritualized in their format, that the frustrated believer could draw on to defend their position against their superiors, God and the saints.

As the examples already referenced suggest, anger loomed large as part of blasphemous speech. Of course, it is possible that anger was simply used as an excuse for blasphemy. Since the Inquisition was interested in the motivations behind an action and whether it was an indication of an underlying heresy, disrespectful speech, though taken seriously, could have mitigating circumstances. Anger, like insanity, illness, extreme youth, and drunkenness, suggested to the Inquisitors that a defendant was not fully in control of his or her own actions when they committed an offense, lessening the severity of the crime.[221]

Such considerations are evident in the example I briefly mentioned in the introduction to the dissertation of Juan de Solís, a Spanish soldier stationed in the Philippines on the island of Jolo, whose case was brought before the Inquisition of Mexico in 1642 for blasphemous oaths uttered the previous year.[222] One witness overheard Solís reject God and the saints (*negar de Dios y los santos*). Other witnesses reported that Solís had also committed acts of physical sacrilege against an image of the

[220] Maureen Flynn, "Taming Angers Daughter: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain," 869.
[221] Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition,* 195.
[222] The tribunal of the Holy Office in Mexico City in 1571 had jurisdiction over an area that included all of Spain's mainland possessions in North America, except Panama, as well as the Philippines.

Virgin Mary and a tabletop crucifix.[223] He initially claimed that the destruction of the sacred images had been in response to a servant for failing to extinguish votive candles he had lit in honor of the Virgin Mary.[224] Upon returning to his house, Solís explained, he saw that the candles had started to burn the candleholder, constructed with bamboo and reeds, and could have potentially started a larger fire. He then claimed that in the attempt to hit his servant for his carelessness, he accidentally hit the image of the Virgin Mary, which he immediately picked up.[225] When asked if he had ever condemned holy images or the saints to the Devil, he denied it.

After several of the witnesses against him, including the servant he blamed for initiating the incident, testified that his violent outburst was a result of his losses at games of chance, Solís blamed his outburst on tricks of the Devil.[226] He admitted that whenever he lit candles to the Virgin, he lost while gambling, but that he would not fall for the tricks Devil, since everything he has he would offer to the Virgin.[227]

Solís clearly intended his acts of piety, in particular lighting candles to the Virgin, to communicate with spiritual powers and yield him rewards. Luck at the gaming table functioned for him as a proxy for divine favor, secured through the Virgin Mary's intercession on his behalf. The outburst, directed not only at Mary, but also at relics of other saints, demonstrated his anger that the spiritual forces of God and the saints could not deliver the benefits and protection from bad luck and evil influences. Like apparitions and other manifestations that disclosed the presence of an operative saint and what the

[223] AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14.
[224] AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14, "con la espada en su baina".
[225] AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14.
[226] AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14.
[227] AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14: "*Parece me quiere coger por aquí el demonio, que siempre [que] mando encender las candelas, pierdo en el juego. Pero no me ha de coger por aquí [el demonio, que todo lo que yo tengo y ha de ser de la Virgen*."

saint wanted from the faithful, winning at games of chance revealed Mary's presence and acceptance of Solís's devotion. He screamed at divinity because his acts of faith brought demonic attention without the attendant aid he expected from the saints.

Feelings of betrayal and disappointment elicited harsh responses. In Toledo, Miguel de Campos came before the Inquisition for blasphemies related to several disappointments. Campos's first offensive utterance, like Solís's, came from losses while gambling. He told the Inquisitors that he lost four *relaes* playing a game causing him to exclaim that he did not believe in God (*no creo en Dios*).[228] Campos also unleashed his verbal wrath on cats, invoking God's name to condemn all cats after one had eaten Campos's meat.

In 1620, in the village of Temecula, Mexico, a man named Joan Barrera overheard another man, the Spaniard Francisco Palomino, swearing by "God's grandson."[229] Palomino also stated that he was pursued by the Devil, likely meaning it literally as he added "in visible form" (*en forma visible*). The description from witnesses added that Palomino was angry (*enojado y enfadado*) and that he repeated his assertions several times "*con cólera*."[230] While the addition of a description of *cólera* carried a connotation of an imbalance in the humors precipitating a blind rage or fury, it was also indicative of a highly emotional state.

Although, in attempting to make sense of blasphemy as part of a lived religious experience, it is useful to consider how various forms of acting out against the divine functioned to express anger and dissatisfaction, we are still forced to speculate exactly why they chose to lash out at supposedly benevolent divine forces instead of Satan or

[228] AHN, Sección de la Inqusición de Toledo, Legajo. 33, exp 10.
[229] AGN Indiferente Virreinal, Caja 5090, exp. 6, 1623 (*jurando por el nieto de Dios*).
[230] AGN, Inq. vol. 30, exp. 12.

other men. Some possible explanations rest in the rhetoric of social conflicts and the speech acts of mystical practices. Despite the seeming disparity between the kinds of speech acts taking place, both serve to create a kind of space in which to interact with others. Among men and women, the rhetoric and ritual of hyperbolic slander created a space for conflicts, often acting as a proxy for physical violence and social disorder. The speech acts of blasphemy, like those of mystics, created a space for interaction and conversation with divine forces. Moreover, when the communication, or perhaps conversation, appeared one sided, blasphemous speech acts offer a different manner in which to address God and the saints.

Gendered Blasphemy and the Performance of Masculinity

Blasphemy also functioned as a rhetorical device in the performance of masculinity. As language that simultaneously acknowledged and challenged God's power, blasphemous speech allowed people to demonstrate bravado, social dominance, and aggressiveness through their willingness to challenge God. Moreover, blasphemy could serve as a public rejection of the dictates of both secular and religious authorities and a refusal to submit to prescribed standards of morality.

Blasphemy also had a function in the performance of masculinity in lands that lacked the dangerous frontier characteristics of colonial Mexico. Inflammatory speech acts need to be seen in the context of early modern Spain, which although culturally similar to colonial Mexico, require a different analysis to understand how blasphemy functioned to perform masculinity.

As Judith Butler has argued, gender is not a fixed identity, but one that is "tenuously constituted" in time through acts that publicly reenact culturally specific gender norms and values.[231] Thus, the specific way in which men demonstrated their masculinity in Spain, and their audience's understanding of gender roles in a particular context, cannot necessarily be understood as identical to their contemporaries in the dangerous frontier of colonial Mexico. As Butler notes, gender is a "shared experienced" between an individual and those around them that must be repeatedly performed or jeopardize its "reified status" and risk some form of sanction from the community.[232] Thus, the ways in which blasphemy functioned in the performance of masculinity in early modern Spain must be understood, both in the context of the discourses on masculinity and the cultural assumptions specific to that time and place.

That is not to say that blasphemy was not used to express anger. Rather, individuals could use blasphemy to express emotions while demonstrating gender specific behaviors. Blasphemy offered a rhetorical device for men to demonstrate their dominance over others, sexual prowess, and defiance of authority. As Javier Villa-Flores shows in his study of blasphemy in colonial era Mexico, soldiers, sailors, and muleteers frequently resorted to blasphemous speech acts in order to assert their masculinity.[233] Villa-Flores argues that, in the dangerous and militarized environment of the Mexican colony, men regularly resorted to blasphemy during violent confrontations with other men, as an expression of bravery among soldiers, to assert their sexual prowess, and to

[231] Judith Butler, "Perfromative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40 no. 4 (December 1988): 519-520, 525-526.
[232] Butler, 520, 525.
[233] Villa-Flores, 38-40.

express homosocial relationships among those whose trades exposed them to the dangers of travel and took them away from home for long periods of time.[234]

However, the Inquisition's increased prosecution of Old Christians for blasphemy represented more than an emphasis placed on the threat of divine retribution over blasphemous speech. The expansion of blasphemy trials was also an aspect of the attempts of secular and religious authorities to control what they viewed as misguided or uncontrolled excesses of masculinity in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries numerous religious and secular authors composed works designed to control perceived excesses in the behavior of some men in order to improve morality and improve Spain's fortunes.[235] Many of the behaviors that authorities sought to curb, such as the idealization of sexual exploits and overly aggressive behaviors, intersected with the prevalence of blasphemous statements pertaining to sex and morality and those used during violent confrontations. While the advice they offered about appropriate standards of conduct reflected attitudes of class, as well as gender, most of the critiques of Spanish masculinity echoed similar concerns.[236]

A catalyst for the reexamination of masculinity was the decline in Spanish fortunes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The defeat of the Spanish Armada, the inability to defeat the Dutch rebels in the Low Countries, and repeated financial troubles created an environment in which contemporary authors attempted to rectify Spain's decline by commenting on what they saw as the problem, a crisis in

[234] Villa-Flores, 52-53, 59, 68.
[235] For more on early modern Spanish ideals of masculinity see Edward Behrend-Martínez, "'Taming Don Juan': Limiting Masculine Sexuality in Counter-Reformation Spain," *Gender & History* 24 no. 2 (August 2012); Elizabeth Lehfeldt, "Ideal Men: Masculinity and Decline in Seventeenth-Century Spain" *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 no. 2 (June 1, 2008); Scott Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
[236] Elizabeth Lehfeldt, "Ideal Men: Masculinity and Decline in Seventeenth-Century Spain" *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 466.

Spanish masculinity.[237] For the *arbitristas,* the writers who wrote commentaries on Spain's decline, the problems with Spanish men included idleness, vanity, a lack of self-discipline, and immoderation. These behaviors were associated with feminine characteristics and made the men that practiced them womanly. The authors also criticized the sexual promiscuity of many Spanish men, something commonly connected with masculinity, as betraying a weakness of the flesh, and therefore, effeminizing.[238]

Many authors also condemned men's obsession with reputation and honor as a cause of violence, confrontation, and social discord. Influenced by the Tridentine emphasis on doctrines that emphasized self discipline, humility, and the perfection of morality, Christian moralist writers espoused a new discourse of Spanish masculinity that encouraged men to forgive slights to reputation and honor, humble themselves to avoid anger engendered by pride, and prioritize concern for one's neighbor over self-interest.[239] Others took a more extreme position by advocating that men should strive to emulate Christ, ignoring all concern for social hierarchy and accepting all slights against their reputation without regard to the social station of the offender and avoiding any action that might create disharmony within his community.[240]

However, as Edward Behrend-Martínez has found, some men challenged the discourse of masculinity espoused by seventeenth century moralists and *arbitristas*, or proponents of reform projects, that characterized the masculine ideal as hard working, virtuous, and humble in contrast to men viewed as lascivious, vain, and quick to anger. [241]

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[237] Lehfeldt, 465-466.
[238] Lehfeldt, 467-469, 472-473, 478-479.
[239] Taylor, 106-108.
[240] Taylor, 108-109.
[241] Edward Behrend-Martínez, "'Taming Don Juan': Limiting Masculine Sexuality in Counter-Reformation Spain," *Gender & History* 24 no. 2 (August 2012), 344, 345.

Despite the efforts of secular and religious authorities to promote a new discourse of masculinity as a remedy for Spain's problems and to improve morality, many Spanish men continued to perform gender in a manner consistent with the expectations of their communities. As such, hyper sexuality and confrontations over reputation did not cease to be effective methods for demonstrating masculinity despite efforts to promote new standards of masculine behavior. Moreover, men who rejected the elite's ideals of masculine behavior ideas about the proper behavior furthered their masculine identity by overtly defying the power of the elites to redefine masculinity.[242] By using blasphemous speech in conjunction with displays of sexual prowess and aggressiveness, men displayed their continued adherence to an alternative discourse of masculinity while dramatically rejecting the efforts of the Church and state to effeminize their behaviors.

As the cases of Juan de Zaballos and Pedro de Aparicio will illustrate, although blasphemy alone did not constitute an act of masculinity, the way in which they used it helped these men promote and defend their masculine identity. Through adding blasphemous language to their speech, Zaballos and Aparicio projected a sense of social dominance by inverting the power of sacred language that acknowledged the power of the God while publically demonstrating their disregard for the potential of divine wrath. At the same time their blasphemies demonstrated a public rejection of the elite's discourse on masculinity and asserted their superiority in social contexts that threatened their masculinity.

[242] Behrend-Martínez, 347.

The Case of Pedro de Aparicio

In 1644 Pedro de Aparicio was arrested while travelling to the coast to serve in the king's galleys. Although he was a soldier of some rank (*tiente del capitán de caballos*), his testimony mentioned that he had been present in the royal prison in Madrid. His trial records show that he had never before been brought before the tribunals of the Inquisition, suggesting that he was likely a criminal condemned to galley service as the consequence of a conviction for a secular crime.[243]

Although the trial records do not record why Aparicio was in the prison in Madrid, while there three witnesses accused him of having blasphemed against the Virgin Mary. The testimony of the prisoners Gonzalo de Villaverde, Manuel de Cuenca, and Antonio Xadrague related that, upon seeing a woman he knew, Aparicio said that he had slept with her many times (*haber dormido con muchas veces con ella*). He added that he had sinned carnally with many women and that he wanted to fornicate with all of the women in the world. When his companions warned Aparicio about his words, he reportedly said, that if the Virgin Mary was in front of him he would have sex with her ("*que si La Virjen María se me pussiera delante avia de pecar con ella*) or that the Virgin would also have sex [with Aparicio];" "*Boto a Dios que si La Virjen María se pusiera delante tamvién la fornicara*").[244]

This overt display of sexuality provides a clear insight into the way blasphemous speech acts operated as a performance of masculinity. Several elements help explain why Aparicio added a blasphemous remark to speech that, on its own, constituted gendered rhetoric. The setting in which the speech was uttered, that of a male dominated prison

[243]AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 31, Exp.33; Kamen, 201.
[244]AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 31, Exp.33.

environment, the competitiveness of male homo-social interaction in which men might seek to out brag or upstage their companions, Pedro de Aparicio's occupation as a soldier, and the impending journey to the galleys all need to be examined in order to fully understand blasphemy in the production of masculinity.

One aspect of Aparicio's use of blasphemy is the need to assert his superior masculinity over his fellow prisoners. The male dominated environment of the prison, along with the frequency of potentially violent confrontations among criminals necessitated the projection of machismo, in order to establish a reputation among fellow prisoners that deterred victimization by fellow inmates. In the harsh conditions and close quarters of a prison the interaction among early modern Spanish men often involved cruel practical jokes, violent conflict, and frequently, forced sodomy. [245] Cristian Berco notes that one of the ways in which men displayed their masculinity was by idealizing the sexual penetration of those weaker than oneself.[246] The importance placed on being the penetrator instead of the penetrated reveals the threat of prison rapes to what Butler calls the reified status of masculinity. Thus, in an all-male environment like the prison, performing masculinity through bragging about sex served to create a reputation for machismo that helped avoid predation and emasculation by others.

As one of the most essential defining characteristics of Spanish masculinity, sexuality also played an important role in male homosociality. Men's relationships often reflected a sense of competition and one-upmanship. Blasphemy often played a part in this interaction, especially among groups such as soldiers, sailors and prisoners. Aggressive male sociability made use of the bravado suggested by blasphemous speech

[245] Villa-Flores, 68.
[246] Cristian Berco, "Producing Patriarchy: Male Sodomy and Gender in Early Modern Spain," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17 no. 3 (September 1, 2008): 358.

to prove dominance and foster a sense of solidarity.[247] In addition, groups of men often joked about the penetrated, whether women or men, derisively illustrating the difference between the masculine and the effeminized targets of sexual jokes.[248] Sexually explicit speech, such as Aparicio's provided an opportunity to outdo his companions while speaking in a manner that defined their group as distinct from others.

As a soldier, Aparicio likely also used blasphemy when confronted with potentially deadly situations. Although there is no indication that he felt in immediate danger while in the prison, Aparicio's galley service, which had an extremely high mortality rate among rowers and was feared as much as any punishment, made the prospect of an impending death very real.[249] The potential for a sudden death, without the benefit of confession or extreme unction, created an atmosphere that prized bravado and defiance of the consequences of battle. As Alain Cabantous noted, "the violence of a bloody end either under the sword's blows or heavenly justice striking you down foreclosed all preparations for a righteous death."[250] Although stating his willingness to have sex with the Virgin Mary was not directly related to the dangers facing Aparicio, the prospect of serving on the galleys carried with it the potential for a quick and violent death. Therefore, Aparicio's blasphemy conforms to the speech used by men in the face of imminent danger.

In his study on secular and religious efforts to control male sexuality in counter-reformation Spain, Edward Behrend-Martínez argues that many men performed masculinity in ways that challenged Church and state authorities. These men "performed

[247] Taylor, 140-150; Villa-Flores, 59, 75.
[248] Berco, 362.
[249] Kamen, 201.
[250] Cabantous, 86.

masculinity through rebelliousness rather than through the household," and, like Pedro de Aparicio, are characterized as "either malcontents within the institutions of Church or marriage, or they were young single men, economically and politically disenfranchised."[251] Read this way, Aparicio's sexually explicit blasphemy represents an expression of masculinity that bolstered his reputation for machismo through sexuality, while at the same time performing masculinity by defying the social and moral norms espoused by secular and religious institutions.

Aparicio's case illustrates several facets of the function of blasphemy in the performance of masculinity in a hostile male dominated environment. As he had limited recourse to perform his masculinity, Aparicio resorted to speech to establish his dominance over his fellow prisoners. His blasphemy, which utilized the ubiquitous knowledge of the celebrated sexual purity of the Virgin, implied a reference to the orthodox teaching of Mary's sexual purity and then suggested that he was capable of violating that purity. Through the invocation of sex with the Virgin Mary, he emphasized that his sexual superiority was so great that he would have sex with the mother of God, in effect indicating the sexual subordination of his fellow inmates. In addition, his blasphemy allowed him to demonstrate his refusal to adhere to the admonitions of his fellow inmates or to the standards of masculinity espoused by the elites. However, blasphemy also served as an element of masculine performance in less hostile male dominated situations.

[251] Behrend-Martínez, 344.

The Case of Juan de Zaballos

The case of Juan de Zaballos offers a different view of blasphemy as an act of constructing masculinity. Far different from Pedro de Aparicio, the context in which Zaballos uttered his blasphemous words was not in a hyper-masculine environment. Aparicio was a soldier with other men in a Madrid prison; a social context conducive to speech acts that asserted power, virility, defiance of social norms, and sexual prowess. By contrast, Zaballos was in an argument with his mother in law Catalina Álbarez in the city of Toledo.[252] Instead of using speech acts to emphasize masculinity among peers, a close reading of the trial reveals Zaballos committed blasphemy to defend and recover his manhood in the eyes of his community.

Although the records of the trial present conflicting narratives, with Zaballos offering an alternative narrative of events than those presented by the witnesses, both reveal the ways in which blasphemy played into creating a masculine image. The accusations against Zaballos stated that when arguing about some crosses that his mother in law, Catalina Álbarez, had given to him, he swore that he had burned them (*votaba a Dios las abía quemado)*. Witnesses testified that Zaballos also swore he would burn the chapel where Álbarez had made votive offerings to the Virgin Mary as well as God (*voto a Dios que aún al sagrario queme y al mismo Dios padre)*. When warned to be careful about his words, Zaballos reportedly said that he refused to follow God's commandments and that if the Devil came for him it would be better for Zaballos to give his soul to the Devil, and that he loved the Devil more than God (*si el diablo tiene mucha gana de llebarme mayor la tengo y de darle mi alma… quiere más al diablo que a Dios*).[253]

[252]AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.
[253] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.

Although the witnesses related Zaballos's words with slightly different phrasing and included different details, they were consistent about the nature of his blasphemy and the context in which he spoke them. Additionally, the five witnesses agreed that Zaballos was a bad Christian who regularly used such impious and offensive speech.[254]

Zaballos's testimony to the inquisitors offers a different account of what transpired. He claimed that he made his impious statements after the two town officials, the *corregidor* and the *alcalde mayor*, told him that he had to leave his home.[255] He claimed that while fighting with his wife because he had not brought home food, several neighboring women gathered, alerted by the shouting. While they continued to argue, the *corregidor* and the *alcalde mayor* passed by at the same time and stopped to investigate the cause of the shouting. After investigating the conflict, the *corregidor* ordered Zaballos to leave his home within three days.[256] Despite the fact that the officials ordered him to leave his home within three days, Zaballos returned to his house.

The trial transcripts do not reveal why the *corregidor* ordered Zaballos to leave his home. However, in the testimony, the threat to Zaballos's masculinity is clear. The public argument with his wife over a lack of food represented a challenge to Zaballos's ability to provide for his family, a central component of masculinity in all discourses of masculine attributes. The audience of neighborhood women and the interference of the town officials likely compounded the emasculation. Not only was Zaballos's inability to provide food for his wife publicly exposed, but also his inability to control his property in the face of powerful secular elites. The multifaceted threat to Zaballos's masculine image

[254] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.
[255]AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35; The Corregidor served as a royal official typically with administrative and judicial functions. The alcalde mayor functioned as a municipal official whose duties varied depending on location.
[256] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.

and identity helps to explain his dramatic use of blasphemous speech to defend his masculinity and reassert control.

Zaballos's public humiliation at his removal from his house by the order of the town officials would have clearly been an affront to his honor and masculinity. As Scott Taylor describes, men based their social identity and honor and reputation, in part, on issues of control of their property and the defense of their status in the community. [257] Taylor adds "above all, men needed to be seen performing these roles effectively before their neighbors."[258] Thus, for Juan de Zaballos, defying the town officials was an important facet of defending his masculinity. One of Zaballos's blasphemies speaks directly to his need not only to demonstrate his defiance of the officials' orders, but also to do so in a way that emphasized his assertion of control. He told the inquisitors that he swore to God that, even if ordered by Saint Peter and Saint John, he would not move from the house in which he had grown up.[259] Through the invocation of the sacred, swearing to heaven and naming specific saints, Zaballos essentially acknowledged the divine power that he should obey, then placed himself above that power. In so doing, he asserted a status superior to the *alcalde mayor* and *corregidor*, making clear that if he was not bound to adhere to the God-given-authority of the saints then he was not obliged to obey the secular authorities, placing himself above the powers of the patriarchal state.

In a later interrogation, Zaballos admitted that while angrily arguing with his mother-in-law he said that he had burned the crosses she had given him but denied the other accusations.[260] The blasphemies directed at his mother-in-law can also be seen as an

[257] Taylor, 103-104, 110-111.
[258] Taylor, 104.
[259] Taylor, 104.
[260] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.

assertion of control over the females in Zaballos's family. In highly patriarchal early modern Spain, a public argument between Zaballos and his mother-in-law could have been construed as a threat to Zaballos's masculinity.[261] To assert his dominance in front of witnesses, Zaballos employed the rhetorical power of religious devotion. By claiming he had burned Álbarez's crosses and saying that he would burn down the chapel in which she had made votive offerings to the Virgin Mary, Zaballos publicly demonstrated his willingness to defile sacred items in order to ensure dominance over the women in his family.

The audience for his dispute likely influenced the choice of words Zaballos uttered. Among those present were his twenty-four year old neighbor, Gerónimo de Sepulveda, and his fifteen-year-old wife Petronila de Páramo, and a sixteen-year-old servant, Mariana de Arburuz.[262] For Zaballos, at twenty-five years of age, being publicly shamed by arguing with his wife, his mother-in-law, and ordered to leave his home by the secular authorities in front of those that he likely viewed as social inferiors would have constituted a threat to his reputation in the community. Moreover, rather than accept being reprimanded for his speech by those younger than Zaballos, his additional claims that he refused God's commandments and that if the Devil came for him it would be better for Zaballos to give his soul to the Devil, suggest that he escalated his blasphemy

[261] For more on patriarchy in Spain see Edward Behrend-Martínez, "'Taming Don Juan': Limiting Masculine Sexuality in Counter-Reformation Spain," *Gender & History* 24 no. 2 (August 2012); Cristian Berco, "Producing Patriarchy: Male Sodomy and Gender in Early Modern Spain," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17 no. 3 (September 1, 2008); Cristian Berco, "Social Control and Its Limits: Sodomy, Local Sexual Economies, and Inquisitors During Spain's Golden Age." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 36, no. 2 (July 1, 2005); Elizabeth Lehfeldt, "Ideal Men: Masculinity and Decline in Seventeenth-Century Spain" *Renaissance Quarterly* 61 no. 2 (June 1, 2008); Allyson Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Scott Taylor, *Honor and Violence in Golden Age Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[262] AHN, Sección de la Inquisición de Toledo, Legajo, 33, Exp.35.

to prove that he would not be silenced or chastised by inferiors. In so doing, Zaballos used blasphemous speech as a performance of what Javier Villa-Flores calls the language of "negative reciprocity" and "confrontation," by using blasphemous rhetoric to demonstrate his superiority over those Zaballos considered beneath his status and in defiance of authorities that usurped his dominance over his own household.[263]

While the words Zaballos uttered can certainly be read as a reaction to anger as described by Maureen Flynn, or as a rejection of the dictates of authority as described by Stuart Schwartz, they simultaneously fit into speech as an act of manhood. On the one hand, Zaballos's served to bolster a masculinity under threat by using language that put him in a position of dominance over the divine, and thus over the town officials, his mother-in-law, and his neighbors. On the other hand, his blasphemies, in the context of a public confrontation, demonstrated his refusal to adhere to the Christian moralist discourse of masculinity that celebrated humility, and placing the interests of communal harmony ahead of concerns about reputation and status. The very fact that the witnesses all described him as a man who regularly used such language suggests that Zaballos understood blasphemy to be an aspect of a culturally recognized, albeit proscribed, language of masculinity.

Other Cases

While the cases of Juan de Zaballos and Pedro Aparicio illustrate how blasphemy operated in performing gender roles in the setting of a prison or while in a public conflict, other cases demonstrate that blasphemy also constituted gender performance in other

[263] Villa-Flores, 39.

contexts. For example, in 1545, a resident of Aboler, a small village under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Toledo, went before a tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition to respond to charges of blasphemy. Diego de Almodóvar admitted to the judges hearing his case that on multiple occasions when he was angry over losing at games of chance he had blasphemed by saying "I deny so and so" and I don't believe in so and so." [264] Moreover, after learning that rumors that his wife had had a sexual relationship with a priest were unfounded, he uttered statements such as "I deny God."[265]

Almodóvar's admission that he had blasphemed multiple times while gambling can clearly be interpreted through what Maureen Flynn calls the "play of anger" as well as through an aspect of male homosocial relationships. Flynn argues that blasphemy against God at the gaming table might have been a subconscious rejection of God's control over chance.[266] She adds that situations like gambling afforded the opportunity for the players to "face their transcendental hosts squarely and question their goodwill."[267] However, gaming itself was a component of male gender identity as it offered an opportunity for men to gather, typically without women, and compete against each other. Not only did gambling allow men to demonstrate their triumph in competition with their companions, it allowed men to perform their masculinity even in defeat.[268] As Butler has indicated, the failure to perform expected gender roles as understood by a particular audience puts gender identity at risk. As such, blaspheming against the divine in the face of defeat at the gaming table afforded men the chance to display their

[264] "Trial of Diego de Almódovar, Penanced for Blasphemy, 1545," In Lu Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614: an Anthology of Sources* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co., 2006), 166–167.
[265] Homza, 167.
[266] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 49-52.
[267] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 52.
[268] Taylor, 141, 148-149.

aggression and independence from God's authority in order to assert one aspect of their masculinity even as the loss diminished another. [269]

The blasphemy Aldómovar admitted to saying over the false rumors of his wife's affair with a priest is similar to blasphemy at the gaming table, an assertion of belligerence and a challenge or protest against things that God allowed to occur. In a culture that valued the spoken word, including gossip, being cuckolded, particularly by a priest, would certainly have diminished Almodóvar's masculinity in the eyes of his community. Moreover, as the affair was deemed not to have happened, the blasphemy functioned as it did at the gaming table, a response to events outside of one's control and the desire to engage in risk and test oneself against others. Additionally, as the community typically viewed blasphemous statements as a threat to the community as a whole, Almodóvar's blasphemy indicates a reaction to the community gossip that made him appear a cuckolded. Without recourse to retaliation against an individual, he lashed out against the community at large.

A case involving a woman's confrontation with a man in the churchyard involving blasphemy uttered during a dispute offers a different perspective on the performance of masculinity. In 1543, a thirty-two year old woman from the village of San Juan de los Caballeros, Catalina Díaz, when angry at offensive words said to her by Juan de Acanda, ignored warnings not to confront him saying "for if God Himself ordered me, I wouldn't listen."[270] While a woman aggressively confronting a man in public defied the

[269] Villa-Flores, 96.
[270] "Trial of Catalina Díaz, Wife of Juan Bercevil, for Blasphemy. Penanced May 17, 1543", In Homza, *The Spanish Inquisition, 1478-1614*, 164–165.

idealized behavior for women, it reflects what Scott Taylor describes as the "rhetoric of honor."[271]

Taylor uses women's application of the rhetoric of honor to demonstrate that many early modern women did not conform to the prescribed gender roles promoted by secular and clerical elites. He demonstrates that in confrontations, women used various linguistic strategies to defend their honor, such as attacking a women's sexual purity or a man's control over his wife and household. The use of blasphemy to express outrage and the public display of the need to avenge a perceived slight can be interpreted as another linguistic strategy women used in defense of their honor.

There is also a more direct appropriation of masculinity in Catalina Díaz's blasphemous oath. Díaz's blasphemy permitted her to subvert gendered behavior expectations. By saying that she would not listen to God, Díaz put herself above the hierarchical relationship between humans and God, thus allowing her to act outside of the constraints of the patriarchal hierarchy of early modern Spain. As with other publicly displayed rhetorical strategies used defending their honor, women subverted expectations of the gender norm considered essential to maintain female honor, vergüenza, or a sense of shame. [272] Thus as Taylor writes, that although many women did internalize the sense of shame held to be appropriate, the demands of daily life made participation in society a necessity and, therefore, they needed rhetorical tools to defend their place in the community. In this case, blasphemy needs to be included as one such rhetorical tool.

[271] Taylor, 104-106.
[272] Taylor, 188–192.

Conclusion

Blasphemy functioned as a part of communication with divine forces. However, blasphemy was one sided, unlike the interactions made possible through apparitions and miraculous speaking images, signs of a two-way, albeit unbalanced, conversation between men and women and the saints. With speech coming from divine powers, the various manifestations disclosed the identity of the operative saint and what the saint wanted from the faithful.[273] Apparitions in the form of miraculously speaking images represented an immediate kind of contact with spiritual forces and the celebration of speaking images reflected the possibility of a two-sided encounter and that embodied a type of dialogue between the faithful and the divine.[274] Unlike the cryptic answers about what a given saint expected in relationship with their believers, the speaking more directly answers the believers' specific questions. In contrast, though still part of communication, blasphemous speech acts are less focused and lack the opportunity for a divine response.

Rather than a conversation, blasphemy might be better described as communication. It might be a part of an exchange in which God or the saints initiated contact by means of some slight or source of frustration. Offensive language, then, functions as the reply. Additionally, blasphemy against God might have been a rejection of God's control over chance. Men and women speaking in ways that affronted afforded the divine allowed the faithful the opportunity to invoke a response from an otherwise silent divinity.[275] Whether blasphemy elicits a response or is spoken due to a perceived

[273] William A. Christian, Jr., Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain, 6-7.
[274] Luis R. Corteguera, "Talking Images in the Spanish Empire: Vision and Action," *Visual Resources* 25, 1-2 (March-June, 2009), 55.
[275] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 49-52.

silence, it forms one facet of communication with God.

Moreover, it is also necessary to address the place of blasphemy in situations that lacked hostility and emotional volatility. In short, how does our understanding of blasphemy change when we take into consideration that anger was not always a central issue in cases of blasphemy? While anger was often implicated in acts of disrespectful speech against the sacred, the case of Agustina Ruiz, brought before the Inquisition for failing to complete her confession that she masturbated to fantasies involving holy figures, might offer a way to look at how other emotions beyond anger shaped some of the heterodox in lived religious practice.[276]

Sexualizing the saints was not intended to be sinful. Instead, it was partly an emotional response to devotion, a result of replacing concepts derived from the eroticized language frequently associated with female mystics used to describe religious experiences with the ideas derived from the vernacular language of sex. The details Agustina revealed about her sexual fantasies that involved familiar icons of religious devotion are indicative of a misplaced religious devotion that fell outside of Catholic ideals rather than any intentional deviance from what she considered to be the orthodox faith.

Nevertheless, her case illustrates how the faithful experienced their faith in spaces, mental, linguistic, or physical, of their own creation. The personalized experience of religiosity, a lived religious experience that revolved around a relationship between the faithful and the divine that was shaped as much by the individual as by the Church, came dangerously close to the line where the unusual but orthodox became the dangerous and

[276] Zeb Tortorici, "Masturbation, Salvation, and Desire: Connecting Sexuality and Religiosity in Colonial Mexico," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 2007), 355-356.

heterodox.[277] The mix of acceptable and unacceptable sentiments of devotion in cases, such as Agustina's, reflect the contours of lived religion that remain obscured because they take place in spaces that are not visible.

In studying the lived religion of the early modern Spanish empire, a consideration of the importance of speech in metaphorically creating sacred spaces helps make understandable behaviors that otherwise seem heterodox and sacrilegious. Theology and law offer necessary contexts to understand the broader implications of blasphemy, but they often fail to capture the full meaning of such actions. Even in examples when blasphemy responded to motivations that did not seem religious—such as boasting about a person's sexual prowess, asserting masculinity in the face of a direct challenge, or subverting women's gender stereotypes—the choice of words cannot be understood without taking into consideration the individual's relationship to the divine. If, as Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni have argued, exceptional cases can offer "clues to or traces of a hidden reality," then acts of blasphemy offer traces of an everyday religiosity that is otherwise hidden in the historical record.[278]

[277] Tortorici, 366-368.
[278] Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, "The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace," in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero*, trans. Eren Branch (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 8.

Chapter 3 - Sacred Images, Objects, and Sacrilege: The Misuse of Images and Objects and Lived Religion in the Spanish Empire

In November 1653, the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition heard testimony against Francisca Campuzano of Sultepec, Mexico for making a cushion out of material that had images of saints painted on it.[279] Compared to many of the cases for heretical statements and outrageous blasphemies that the Inquisition tried, the allegations against Campuzano may seem relatively innocuous. However, for the religious authorities, her offense represented a slight against the cult of the saints and their holy images. Rather than looking upon an image of the saints to contemplate their holiness, thinking about them as role models of piety, or keeping them in mind while praying in order to gain their assistance as spiritual intercessors, Campuzano turned the saints into a common item. As a part of a cushion, the saints would be treated in an overly familiar manner or worse, sat upon. These actions debased the saints and denied them the reverence due to the holy men and women chosen to act as vehicles for God's power and mercy. Cases like Campuzano's raise questions about the discrepancy between expected and actual ways that early modern Catholics lived their religion.

Francisca Campuzano's is one of dozens of cases of disrespect toward sacred images investigated by the Inquisition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that,

[279] AGN, Inq. vol. 437, exp. 21.

taken together, raise questions about the discrepancy between the church's expectations and the actual way that early modern Catholics lived their religion.

The records of the tribunal of the Inquisition in Mexico offer an opportunity to examine the various ways sacred art functioned in religious experience.[280] As art historian, Michael Baxandall, states, "a society's visual practices are …not all or even mostly represented in verbal records, making the context, actions, and other aspects of how people connected with sacred images invisible.[281] The highly bureaucratic and standardized procedures of the inquisitors make it possible to see trends that might explain why so many people mocked, spit on, whipped, stabbed, and even shot sacred images and objects. We can learn about their faith by trying to unpack how the supposed offender saw it. As art historian David Morgan argues, "seeing is the framework of analysis" rather than the object or image.[282] Whether the viewer saw the holy object or sacred image as something positive, like a saintly benefactor that the faithful might want close at hand, or as negative, as the saintly benefactor that failed to deliver divine favor, the way the faithful saw the item mattered more than the object itself.

What a person did with a given image or object, which becomes a medium through which the abstraction of faith is made manifest, complements verbal expression of faith and the recital of prayers and creeds.[283] As Morgan succinctly states, "for it is almost certainly true that people spend far more time each day being religious than they do merely reciting creedal propositions."[284] The way people interacted with religious art

[280] Bethencourt, 70-71.
[281] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy; A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 109.
[282] David Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 3.
[283] Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 3, 8.
[284] Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 8.

speaks to how early moderns saw the objects that demarcated sacred space, made God's power and mercy available for intercession through physical acts of veneration and offerings, and helped render the divine intelligible and tangible.[285] This is especially visible in the ways in which many interacted with religious material culture such as crucifixes, relics, and sacred images.

The goals of the religious reformers of the Counter Reformation, as articulated in the Council of Trent's decrees from 1563, ensured that objects, relics, and sacred images and other aspects of materiality had an important role in the Catholic faith. As observable manifestations of piety, interactions with sacred images and objects functioned as an essential aspect of how individuals lived their faith. Although religious reformers of the Counter Reformation era sought to instill uniformity in aspects of the faith such as the participation in the sacraments, the religious authorities, concerned with *fides et mores*, or doctrine and public practices, wanted to reform and enforce greater uniformity and orthodoxy in what people did rather than what they believed.[286] However, the treatment of religious art and sacred images illustrates a disparity between Tridentine corporate religious behavior and the religious actions of individuals. Ultimately, I will argue that whether the clergy and society at large deemed an individual's religious acts completely orthodox, or heterodox and offensive, ostensibly sacrilegious interactions with sacred art were central to the way that many people lived their religion and illustrate the limits of control of church authorities in the Spanish empire.

[285] David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
[286] O'Malley, 18.

The Inquisition's tribunal in Mexico had a jurisdiction that initially included Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Philippines.[287] The tribunals of the Holy Office established in the New World operated under the same rules as their counterparts in Spain and were answerable to the *Suprema,* the Inquisition's royal council in Madrid. However, unlike the tribunals in Spain, those in the New World covered a much larger area and more racially diverse population.[288] As a result, its records offer a wide range of cases from which to examine the sacrilegious use of images and objects.[289]

Rather than examine cases individually, making a case study which can be very effective and informative as to the religious experience of an individual, this chapter examines cases collectively. In particular, it looks at 90 cases from the establishment of the Tribunal of the Inquisition in Mexico in 1570 to the end of the seventeenth century, in order to look for broad trends and themes in religiosity. These cases were not unique to Mexico, with the tribunal of Toledo trying 32 and images and the tribunal of Cuenca, Spain hearing 18 cases of sacrilege against sacred objects and images between 1550 and

[287] Bethencourt, 70.

[288] Although the pope had granted extraordinary powers to the Franciscans and Dominicans to operate inquisitorial tribunals, earlier inquisitions in Mexico were distinct entities from the Holy Office in Spain. Included in the powers conferred on the clergy was the right to act as an ecclesiastical judge through a bull issued in 1522, the *Omnímoda.* These powers were further enhanced with the edicts in 1523 that specifically charged the clergy to target Jews and blasphemers. See Richard E Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 7.

[289] Although the Holy Office in the New World was not supposed to try cases involving Native Americans, all other categories within the racial caste system were subject to the Inquisition (i.e. black, mulato, mestizo, castizo, Spanish, etc.). However, the Inquisition largely focused on the potential heresies of its Castilian colonists and foreigners such as Portuguese *converso* merchants. See James Lockhart, *Early Latin America : A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Javier Villa-Flores, "Wandering Swindlers: Imposture, Style, and the Inquisition's Pedagogy of Fear in Colonial Mexico," *Colonial Latin American Review* 17, no. 2 (December 2008): 251-272.

1700. However, the tribunal for New Spain allows us to examine a larger number collectively, better revealing patters in the variations of sacrilegious acts.[290]

The records of sacrilege against sacred images and objects pertain to a wide variety of acts, including offenses related to treating the sacred in an overly familiar manner, acts of apparent neglect, overt physical violence, and verbal insults and disparagement. Despite the wide range of actions that led to denunciations and brought the defendants to the attention of the Inquisition, at the broadest level all of the actions share one fundamental element; a perceived lack of reverence for objects considered sacred.

Categories of sacrilegious acts

As considered here, sacrilegious acts against sacred images fall into three broad categories. The first category, consisting of forty-six cases, represents actions of consciously lashing out, often with physical violence and virulent speech, against a sacred image or other religious object. A second category includes nineteen different acts of sacrilege with apparently neutral intent. This group represents actions that were neither a willful challenge to the divine, like the first, nor actions that represented the misplaced enthusiasm and religious excess of the third. Rather they reflect various degrees of carelessness, disinterest, or obliviousness in the physical representations of God and the saints. The nine examples of the last category include actions that involve an interaction

[290] Vicente Vignau y Ballester, *Catálogo de las causas contra la fe seguidas ante el tribunal de Santo oficio de la inquisición de Toledo, y de las informaciones genealógicas de los pretendientes á oficios del mismo: con un apéndice, en que se detallan los fondos existentes en este archivo de los demás tribunales de España, Italia y América* (Madrid: Tip. de la Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, 1903), 307-313; Archivo Diocesano de Cuenca.

with the objects that reflect an excessive or misplaced act of devotion. They appear to express love and veneration for the images and the saints they represent, but with a zeal that transcended what religious authorities deemed acceptable treatment for the sacred. Hence, the cases break down as follows:

Conscious lashing out: 46 cases
Neutral: 19 cases
Excessive devotion: 9 cases
Unknown motivations: 16 cases

As will be discussed below, some of the examples are open to different interpretations or include actions that conflate the categories. In addition, in the remaining sixteen cases, some of the terminology –*desacato (*defiance)*, por burlarse de las imágenes* (disdain of images)*, falta de respeto* (disrespect)– is vague about the exact nature of the offense, whether verbal or physical, intentional or accidental. Nevertheless, the categorization allows for an examination of similar actions and their place in lived religion.

Between 1570 and 1698, forty-six cases from Mexico were for actions and utterances that were in some way a deliberate rejection of the words and displays of veneration central to the external and public facets of religion. That is not to say that the individuals that committed these acts lacked faith, rejected the cult of the saints or took issue with the validity of sacred images. Rather, the sacrilegious treatment often represented feelings of despair, anger, or disappointment either directed towards a saint that failed to deliver on expected spiritual aid or as an expression of challenge to God's will. However, regardless of the motive, for some, lived religion involved acting out tensions with the divine.

Although several other cases were likely related to speech denying or disparaging images of saints or objects such as crucifixes, at least nineteen dealt with very explicit words that represented enough of a challenge and offense to religious images and objects

that the Holy Office investigated. The nineteen do not include examples of blasphemous speech uttered in addition to physical violence against images, nor do they include threats to commit violence, but are limited to speech acts that belittled or condemned the veneration of sacred images or denied their efficacy. Some, like Pedro de Valenzuela and Andres de Villalobos, were denounced for vague accusations of speaking against images.[291] Others, such as the case of "un chino" (a Chinese man)[292] named Marcos, involved joking about or otherwise making fun of images, something benign compared to some other words spoken about images though still a challenge to the reverence due God and the saints.[293]

Other comments took a much more aggressive tone. In Mexico City, a doctor named Sebastián de Trujillo attributed the veneration of images to idolatry and the influence of the Devil. Similarly, in Zacatecas, Pedro de Olarte referred to images intended to bring good fortune during childbirth as idols.[294] In the city of Texcoco, Jácome Vasalle referred to St. Ann as an "old whore" and called the cross a "lump of wood."[295] Thus, utterances that the Devil was behind some images, that the images of the Virgin Mary and Christ were merely sticks, and that people should not venerate images formed one aspect of a lived religion in which speech hostile to sacred images coexisted with words of praise.[296]

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[291] AGN, Inq. vol. 283, exp. 107 ("por decir contra las imágenes"); AGN, Inq. vol. 283, exp. 10 ("por haber dicho contra las imágenes").
[292] The use of "chino" could refer to a designation of someone of mixed race in the Spanish system that delineated a racial hierarchy among the mixed race population of the colonies (*casta*) or someone of Asian origin, likely from the Spanish Philippines.
[293] AGN, Inq. vol. 312, exp. 45 ("por burlarse de las imágenes").
[294] AGN, Inq. vol. 318, exp. 5I ("viendo un nacimiento dijo que qué ídolos eran esos").
[295] AGN, Inq. vol. 520, exp. 6 ("por haber dicho que detrás de unas imágenes estaba el diablo"); AGN Inq. vol. 335, exp.12 ("diciendo que era [Santa Ana] una vieja puta y que la cruz era un pedazo de palo").
[296]AGN, Inq., vol. 520, exp. 6; AGN, Inq. vol. 322, exp. 43 ("decir su imagen [la Virgen] y la de Cristo unos palos"); AGN, Inq.vol. 467, exp. 58 ("por decir que no había porque adorar a las imágenes").

Violence against sacred art and objects also formed an aspect of some people's religious experience that very overtly and consciously rejected the physical interactions associated with deference and veneration and seemed to challenge the divine. The intended and accepted behaviors toward the holy images included acts of offering thanks or demonstrating respect and devotion, such as lighting candles before images, bowing and taking off their hats, and even adorning them with fine cloth, precious metals, and jewels. Actions such as whipping, slashing, or even shooting a firearm at images stand in contrast to interactions with the images of saints and other objects that showed due reverence and supplication in asking for divine intercession. Over thirty cases involved some degree of violence or physical hostility, though the degree of actual violence and potential for inflicting harm on an image varied with the particular action.[297] Nevertheless, they all represented an inversion of expected behaviors.

The disparity between demonstrations of deference and thanksgiving are more apparent when juxtaposed with cases like that of Diego Díaz, a clothing merchant from Cholua, Mexico. Díaz's wife, Isabel Maxía, denounced her husband to the Holy Office in Mexico for throwing his shoe at an image of a saint because her husband Diego was "angry and enraged " and "lost his mind."[298] Although throwing a shoe was an act offensive to the sacred, it was much milder than the acts of Diego Malpica, who was accused of destroying a crucifix with a club, Jerónimo del Valle, accused of spitting on the shadow of the cross, or Alonso López Ramírez who fired an arquebus into St. Peters's

[297] A vivid description of the range of acts that characterized the respectful, reverential actions performed towards sacred images and objects is described in detail by one of the fiercest opponents to images, Andreas Karlstadt. See Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi, eds. *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser and Eck on sacred Images: Three Treatises in Translation* (Toronto: Dovehouse Editions Inc., The Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1991), 19-22.
[298] AGN, Inq. vol. 435, exp. 177 ("con enojo y cólera") and ("Le parece tenía falta de juicio").

beard.[299] A miner who resided at the mine in Sultepeque, Alonso de Carvajal, combined a display of violence with an act of great disrespect by both whipping and spitting on a crucifix.[300] The presence of hostility and anger as aspects of expressing and living religion resulted in people throwing shoes at images of saints, spitting on the shadow of the cross or the cross itself, and attacking crucifixes and other objects of devotion with clubs or slashing them with knives.

The anger and hostility directed toward religious objects and images of saints suggests that despite the clergy's teachings on the Tridentine messages, representations of divine power offered targets to confront the divine and express anger at God's will. In a way, the same images that focused attention on the saints and their position as advocates for the faithful or as symbols of divine power functioned as points of contact to take expressions of dissatisfaction and frustration to God and the saints. These acts functioned in the same way as blasphemous speech that resulted from losses at gambling, serving to assert independence from the need for divine favor and fortune.[301] Historian Maureen Flynn, looking at how religious offenses served to bolster the morale of early modern gamblers when they lost, argues that blasphemy against God at the gaming table might have been a subconscious rejection of God's control over chance, adding that games of chance allowed players to "face their transcendental hosts squarely and question their goodwill."[302] Much like blasphemy, these acts of sacrilege functioned as expressions of

[299] AGN, Inq.vol. 312, exp. 20; AGN, Inq. vol. 435, exp. 40 ("porque saliendo de la escuela y pasando junto a una cruz, escupió la sombra que hacia en el suelo"); AGN, Inq. vol. 298, exp. 3 ("disparó un arcabuz contra las barbas de San Pedro").
[300] AGN, Inq. vol. 1487, exp. 1 ("porque azotaba y escupía un crucifijo").
[301] Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech,* 96.
[302] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain," 49-52.

displeasure and discontent with life's situations directed at the saintly benefactors that disappointed them.[303]

The deliberate nature and conscious lashing out through the aggressive language and violent actions that represent an aspect of lived religion characterized by negative interactions with the sacred is made all the more visible in contrast to more neutral actions. In this case, neutral acts against the sacred, while deemed by clergy, neighbors, or family to slight the saints or lack sufficient reverence for the divine, although deemed offensive, were not challenges against the physical representations of God and the saints. Therefore, in many of the cases where an individual broke an image or a crucifix, it was a matter of carelessness or inattentiveness in the presence of an image rather than hostility toward what the image represented.

The descriptions are very telling with indications that something was broken (*haber roto un Cristo*), as opposed to something was broken with a club (*haber roto un Cristo con un palo*). In the cases like that of Francisco Manzano, accused of breaking plaster images that he had made, the care with which he approached his work seems to the have been the issue rather than his feelings about sacred images.[304] Phrasing that neglected to mention the specific way the accused damaged a sacred image or object, such as mentioning slashing with a knife or whipping, suggested that although the authorities considered the accused responsible, they were not including phrasing indicative of a conscious or deliberate act in the description of the accusation. Moreover, the absence of a weapon or mention of punching, stomping, or kicking indicates that the damage resulted from the accused's carelessness, not hostility.

[303] Flynn, "Taming Angers Daughter: New Treatment for Emotional Problems in Renaissance Spain," 869.
[304] AGN, Inq. vol. 308, exp. 20 (por haber roto unas imágenes de yeso que había hecho").

This carelessness rather than anger can be seen even in more extreme cases, such as that of Francisco Marín, denounced in 1614 for breaking the fingers of a statue of Christ within a church. Marín, the mayor's deputy (*teniente de alcalde)* in the town of Tingüindín*,* was attempting to apprehend a fugitive that had taken refuge in a church and was clinging to a statue of Christ.[305] Despite the fact that Marín was not actively attacking the image of Christ and was trying to perform the duties of his office, for the religious authorities it was the fugitive and not Marín that demonstrated the proper deference before a sacred image. For the church, the fugitive, regardless of his supposed crimes, behaved correctly before the image of Christ. The Christ, like any other sacred image or religious object, made the otherwise invisible and abstract accessible and tangible and offered a point of contact with the divine. As such, seeking succor with the image, as with the crucifix, rosary, or holy images that focused attention on the sacrifice and protection of Christ, met with clerical approval while demonstrating that Marín did not always see the image of Christ in those terms. At least in the instance in which he was trying to capture a fugitive, Marín did not see the space within the church and the image of Christ as part of his relationship with God and the saints. Instead, in that moment he saw the sacred objects and holy sanctuary as obstacles to overcome in pursuit of a fugitive. The same statue that would have otherwise served as a reminder of the saints as role models for pious behavior, or functioned as a means to venerate the saints and ask them to intercede with God on behalf of the faithful, lost their importance in the faith and became part of the mundane world.[306]

[305] AGN, Inq., vol. 303, exp. 9 ("porque forcejeando con un preso que se había retraído en la iglesia, le rompió los dedos al Cristo de que se había abrazado el reo").
[306] Mangrum*,* 51.

Not only had Marín violated the church as a place of sanctuary, which was by itself an act of sacrilege, by not acting humbly or showing other physical manifestations that he revered the image of Christ, he had also neglected to show deference to a symbol of God's presence. In fact, the prisoner, seeking refuge as a supplicant to the image of Christ acted with more appropriate behaviors of devotion than Marín.[307] Instead, Marín demonstrated that his lived religious experience involved a complex relationship between the mundane and the divine. While absorbed in secular concerns, Marín did not automatically and consistently demonstrate deference and humility before a sacred image.

Similarly, cases such as Gonzalo Pérez, accused of having in his house an image of the resurrection that he neglected or otherwise mistreated, and Gonzalo Gutiérrez Gil charged with having a crucifix in his kitchen that he neglected and allowed to be damaged by smoke, indicate that while these men did not always act in a way that demonstrated an acknowledgement and reverence for the sacred, neither did they attack it.[308] Both men had visible reminders of Christ in their homes and never attacked, disparaged, or otherwise disrespected the images. With cases such as those of Pérez, Gil, and Marín, there is nothing to indicate that these men held heterodox beliefs or were irreligious. Nor is there any indication that they were particularly pious. Instead, their cases speak to the limitations of the church in changing how these men saw representations of the sacred. Despite the church's continued emphasis on the importance of sacred images and objects and the respect they were due as representations of the

[307] Francisco Marin.
[308] AGN Inq, vol. 478, exp. 82 (Por haber dejado en la cocina de una casa un Cristo muy maltratado y ahumado"); AGN Inq. vol. 369, exp. 1 ("por haber hallado en un aposento de su casa una imagen de la resurrección maltratada").

divine, in daily life these items became part of the background rather than connections to the saints and reminders of God's power.

Although much fewer in numbers, in the cases of apparent acts of zeal that transcended the acceptable and became sacrilegious, carelessness in the presence of the saints and divine power represented by images was not the problem. Instead of failing to differentiate between acceptable actions before the sacred and the profane, the accused in these cases acted with extreme and unacceptable actions of reverence that crossed a line into the disrespect of familiarity. The types of offenses involved illustrate that for some of the faithful, putting an image next to one's body, or even lying naked with a cross across one's back in a manner reminiscent of Christ formed one way to express devotion and reach out to God. These acts were a logical fulfillment of the teaching that sacred images and objects offered a way to get closer to the divine.[309]

Fewer than ten of the cases involved these kinds of inappropriate uses of the sacred in a way that shows there was a divergence between the expectations of the church and the faithful about the appropriate manner to celebrate the cult of images. In addition to Francisca Campuzano, who made a cushion out of material that had images of saints painted on it, Isidro Suárez used a cloth with an image of the Virgin Mary as an under garment.[310] While for the faithful wanting to keep an image of a saint or the Virgin close to the body or as a part of one's furnishings could suggest an intense devotion or some hidden sentiment, it also suggests that people like Campuzano and Suárez did not see the cult of images in the same way as the hierarchical church.

[309] AGN, Inq, vol. 604, exp. 33 ("por estar desnudo con la cruz a cuestas").
[310] AGN, vol. 437, exp. 21; AGN, Inq. vol. 452, exp. 56 ("por tener de sudadero un lienzo en que estaba pintada una imagen de Nra. Sra.").

Nevertheless, for the church, these actions likely suggested that the "misguided" faithful were using the sacred with the "lasciviousness" and "superstition" explicitly condemned in the edict on sacred images.[311] The religious enthusiasm of people like Campuzano and Suárez might have been construed as desiring to diminish the Virgin and the saints. Acts that expressed a desire to have an intimate and even physical connection with the items helped make the saints present, but also put them in a position unbecoming to vehicles for God's power. Sitting on a saint's images, wearing a holy image as an undergarment, or keeping their images in a manner that was overly familiar lacked the performance of devotion and reverence required when interacting with divine intercessors.

Regardless of the categorization of the cases, the cases collectively reflect the importance of interactions with sacred art in the lived religion of Mexican Catholics despite the efforts by church authorities to reform religiosity. By taking a broad view of religion to see how people lived their faith, it becomes clear that sacrilege reflects the nature of the faithful's relationships with the divine, as well as revealing aspects of their cosmology. Episodes of intentionally lashing out at an image or inappropriate acts of devotion show that many of the faithful had a complex and sometimes contentious relationship with the saints.

These relationships were complicated by acceptance of the miraculous potential of sacred images. An important part of the religious lore that spanned all of Christian Europe was the miraculous apparition. Collections of these miracles circulated throughout Europe as early as the thirteenth century in works such as *Speculum Historíale* and *Miracles de la Sainte Vierge*, to which Spanish authors added distinctly

[311] Schroeder, 216.

Spanish miracles into the corpus of miraculous apparitions.[312] These accounts described spiritual manifestations that took several forms. Many apparitions left a sign (*signum, señal, senyal*) on religious images, which included bleeding, sweating, or shedding tears.[313] These legends of supernatural contact through the medium of sacred images reinforced the physical nature of two-way communication with otherwise unseen forces.

Artwork from the fifteenth through the seventeenth century demonstrates the continued belief of a physical connection between spiritual powers and the faithful through sacred images. Multiple engravings and paintings depict Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) kneeling before images the Virgin Mary receiving a stream of her breast milk. Although these works of art are laden with meaning about Mary as a motherly provider, the holiness of St. Bernard, and statements about divine forces protecting and providing for men and women, also speak to sacred images as loci where humans physically interact with the divine. Although images of St. Bernard and the lactating Virgin existed outside of Spain, artists like the Dutch born Juan de Roelas (1570-1625) and the Spaniard Alonso Cano (1601-1667) painted such paintings in Spain.

Maria Lactans (Figure 1) is at once a perfect display of venerating the cult of the saints and an act of private devotion. In the painting, St. Bernard has lit a candle before the image of the Virgin Mary and is kneeling in prayer. In contrast, in Alonso Cano's *The Miraculous Lactation of St. Bernard* (Figure), arguably one of the most famous versions of St. Bernard and the Virgin, the act of devotion has moved into a church. In this painting, the saint stands before an altar dedicated to a statue of the Virgin and the Christ child. Despite the differences in artistic style and content, both paintings reflect the

312 William Christian, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5.

313 Christian, *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, 8.

confluence of ordinary devotion to the cult of the Virgin and a physical miraculous sign connecting man to the divine.

Figure 1 Unknown Artist. Maria Lactans, 1460.

As mentioned above, the web of relationships between humans and the spiritual powers personified by the saints was neither simple nor static.[314] As people formed bonds with the saints, they were subject to disappointment, anger, and misunderstandings as much as hope and expectations of protection and assistance. Yet yelling insults and disparaging an image, slashing it with a knife, or pressing it against one's naked flesh demonstrated a fundamental belief that humans *could* interact with sacred figures. Thus, it reflects a cosmology in which an interaction with the saints was a reality. When early modern Catholics engaged with the objects that depicted the saints, in any manner, the attention given to the image allowed the saints to assume a very real presence whether good, bad, or indifferent.

Even the acts of negligence or seemingly neutral intent illuminate the lived religion of early modern Catholics. Like attacks on sacred images or zealous efforts to physically connect with images, a failure to show deference to a sacred image or object highlights a facet of the complicated relationship between humans and the saints. In this case, it shows that people did not always actively engage with the spiritual and supernatural. As important as sacred images and objects were for facilitating connections and communications with spiritual intercessors, it was the attention given to the sacred art that allowed it to serve its function. When men such as Gonzalo Perez and Gonzalo Gutierrez Gil obtained and displayed an object such as a crucifix or sacred image in their houses, they took an active role in the networks between the human and the spiritual.[315] However, when the need for the relationships declined, they ignored or neglected them. While the cases of lashing out or over zealousness illustrate that theirs was a cosmos in

[314] Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 2.
[315] AGN, Inq. Vol. 478, exp. 82; AGN, Inq. Vol. 368, exp. 1.

which the saints were present and potentially available for communication, the neutral actions suggest that the spiritual world was more or less present based on the actions of the faithful.

Of course, in all of these cases the categorizations used as a means to make sense and analyze the cases are somewhat subjective. There are admittedly other ways to see the actions. Lashing out at images in anger and disappointment can also be indicative of strong feelings. For example, when the solider Juan de Solís slashed at an image of the Virgin Mary and stomped on a rosary and saintly relics, Solís revealed during his trial that he had lost his temper after he lost at gambling *after* repeatedly lighting candles before an image of Mary to bring luck.[316] As violent as his outburst was, it could be construed as a result of an excess of devotion to Mary and a fervent belief in the intercession of the saints. Similarly, many of the aggressive interactions with crucifixes involved whipping (*azotar*), something that could carry connotations of alleged Jewish attacks against representations of Christ, but could also reflect a pious emulation of Christ's suffering.

It is important to note that sacrilegious acts against sacred images were not the only acts that speak to the complicated relationships between human and divine in lived religion. Agustina Ruiz, brought before the Inquisition for failing to complete her confession that she masturbated to fantasies involving holy figures including Jesus and the Virgin Mary, is indicative of the complicated relationships between the faithful and the spiritual within the faith as lived.[317] Agustina's sexualizing of the saints was not

[316] AGN, Inq.vol. 413, exp. 14 ("tiró con la espada un golpe a un altarcillo y retablo de la Virgen del Rossario").
[317] Zeb Tortorici, "Masturbation, Salvation, and Desire: Connecting Sexuality and Religiosity in Colonial Mexico." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 355-356.

intended to be sinful. Instead, her acts are indicative of a misplaced religious devotion rather than any intentional deviance from what she considered to be the orthodox faith.

Figure 2 Alonso Cano, San Bernardo y la Virgen (St. Bernard and the Virgin), c. 1657-1660, oil on panel. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

The details Agustina revealed showed that her sexual fantasies involved familiar icons of religious devotion, which she sexualized, in part, through misunderstood religious

language. Her conflation of the sensual language of religious mystics with the sexual and erotic highlights that in relationships between humans and their saintly intercessors, the unusual but orthodox could easily become dangerous and heterodox.[318]

In the wake of the Protestant Reformation, clerical reformers were especially cognizant of how Catholics made use of sacred images. Clerical elites included the treatment of sacred images and holy objects in their efforts to correct perceived errors in the practice of the faith. The Spanish church and the Spanish Inquisition were also concerned with any mistreatment of images, which they considered behaviors that might be indicative of the iconoclastic tendencies characteristic of many reformed Protestant sects. Disrespect to images was tantamount to denying the validity of reverence for images as a legitimate part of venerating the cult of the saints, as reflected in the arguments of Protestant reformers, such as Andreas Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Calvin.[319] However, for the Catholic Church, any mistreatment of sacred images, regardless of motivation, deserved punishment.[320]

The edicts of the Council of Trent explicitly mandated that the clergy instruct the laity in the proper ways to honor relics and images. They were to teach "the legitimate use of images" in petitioning the saints in order to "invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help for obtaining benefits from God, through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."[321] The Church's profession that the veneration of images and relics was an essential aspect of the Catholic faith included language that clarified potential for significant ramifications for any disrespect shown to these objects. As the decree

[318] Tortorici, 366-368.
[319] Mangrum, 3.
[320] Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition,* 260-261.
[321] Schroeder, 215-216.

explained, images of "Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints are to be placed and retained especially in the churches" and that the images are not venerated as they contain any divinity but "because the honor that is shown to them is referred to the prototypes they represent."[322]

What is most significant about the Tridentine decrees, and is reflected in the Inquisition's concern about any disrespect toward images, is its emphasis on *fides et mores*, or doctrine and public practices. Control of the public expression of faith assumed that controlling such outward gestures equated to controlling the purity of the faith.[323] For the faithful, whether clerical or lay, a clear distinction between the physical and the spiritual did not exist. Neither did a distinction between action and belief. Thus, it follows that the church wanted to reform and ensure adherence to doctrine in behavior and speech toward all manner of sacred objects, equating acceptable acts of veneration and deference with orthodox belief. As the decree pertaining to the veneration of relics and sacred images makes clear, it is not belief per se but public expressions, teachings, or actions that fail to revere the spiritual power represented by the physical that was "contrary to these decrees" and makes one "anathema."[324] For the church, interactions with sacred objects reflected a central facet of Catholic religiosity and pointed to the practical nature of the Tridentine teachings.

[322] Schroeder, 216.
[323] O'Malley, 17-18.
[324] Schroeder, 214.

Conclusion

The cases of sacrilege against sacred images and objects examined here demonstrate that, by one measure, the Tridentine goals of uniformity in religious belief and practice remained unrealized. Although the Spanish church and the Inquisition participated in disseminating and enforcing orthodoxy, the heterodox and the orthodox continued to coexist in the religion of the Spanish empire. Sacrilege against images not only offers direct evidence about the degree to which a specific edict from the Council of Trent was obeyed and enforced, it was a physical manifestation of religious belief that some aspects of the people's cosmology and relationships to the supernatural proved resistant to reform. However, that does not mean that the programs of Trent and the Counter Reformation failed. As parts of complicated networks that connected the human and the divine, sacred art as part of the lived religion coexisted with the prayers, sacraments, and other aspects of the faith more easily brought into line by the church. This aspect of lived religion makes necessary a more nuanced assessment of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth century that expands the metrics by which we measure changes in religiosity in the Spanish empire.

The range of actions that came to the attention of the Holy Office indicate that throughout the Counter Reformation, people in the Spanish empire had a relationship with sacred images that was sometimes at odds with that taught by the church, calling into question Trent's effectiveness. While the faithful received and internalized the message of the importance of images and understood that they provided a link with the spiritual forces represented, many of the faithful used sacred images and objects in a

manner removed from what the church permitted. As such, the great variety of prescribed and orthodox uses of sacred images and objects had to coexist with uses that were potentially sacrilegious, making religious art an integral part of how early modern Catholics lived their religion.

From this perspective, it is possible to reconsider the importance of Trent as a part of the Counter Reformation in the Spanish empire. The volume of scholarship on Trent and religion in Catholic domains speaks to its significance, although the exact nature of that significance is often difficult to ascertain. While differences in how secular powers and the local clergy received the edicts present one obstacle for assessing the legacy of Trent, even in lands in which the secular and religious elites embraced Trent, such as Spanish lands like Mexico, the relative success or failure is hard to assess. [325]

The efficacy of the Spanish religious authorities in instituting the reforms of Trent and the Counter Reformation and what effects the reforms had on religiosity is a point of contention among historians. Disagreement among historians about whether or not the Church was able to successfully implement the edicts of Trent and the degree to which the edicts altered the religious landscape is understandable given the variables in how scholars define success or failure in a religious reform movement that spanned centuries

[325] For example, in some German territories local clergy resisted the implementation of reforms to protect their traditional privileges backed by parishioners that wanted the reinstatement of their old priest with whom they could relate because he drank to excess and kept concubines. While in others, otherwise strongly Catholic secular powers resisted Tridentine reforms to further dynastic interests. See Marc Forster, *The Counter Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 156-1720* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992); Felix F. Strauss, "The Effect of the Council of Trent on the Episcopal Tenure of Duke Ernst of Bavaria, Archbishop-Confirmed of Salzburg in 1554", *The Journal of Modern History* 32 no. 2 (June 1960). Similarly, although France never officially accepted the Tridentine decrees, the historiography shows that Trent did shape French religious history even as Gallican clergy resisted interference from Rome. See Thomas I. Crimando, "Two French Views of the Council of Trent," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19 no. 2 (Summer 1988); Jonathan Powis, "Gallican Liberties and the Politics of Later Sixteenth-Century France," *The Historical Journal* 26 no. 3 (September 1983); J. Michael Hayden and Greenshields, Malcolm R., "The Clergy of Early Seventeenth-Century France: Self-Perception and Society's Perception," *French Historical Studies* 18 no. 1 (Spring 1993).

and covered the diverse Spanish domains ranging from remote rural regions to dense urban centers, and spanning three continents. However, since there is little debate that the Spanish clerical elites were among the first to champion Tridentine reforms, sacrilege against sacred images and objects presents a new metric by which we can assess Trent in Spain's' empire, or at least find a nuanced place between the scholars arguing for genuine religious reform versus those that see a continuation of medieval piety.

On one side of the debate, Sara Nalle sees the church effectively altering religious practices from the superstitious and magical elements that characterized late medieval Catholicism in Spain to practices in line with the Tridentine faith.[326] With the Spanish Inquisition as aid to the church in spreading the word about orthodox practice and belief, and who's publicly staged punishments warned against transgressions even as it publicized them. The threat of being denounced to the Holy Office encouraged vigilance of behavior, of oneself and one's neighbors. Nalle presents an image of Catholicism in Spain successfully transformed. As such, Nalle measures the success of the reform through a widespread change in compliance in practices such as annual confession, attendance at mass, and donations for masses said for souls in purgatory.[327]

In contrast, Henry Kamen argues that although the Tridentine reforms did influence some practices, for most men and women religion did not changed from its late medieval form. He does acknowledge the influence of the edicts of Trent on the increased attention to memorial masses for the dead, the transition from the pre-Tridentine chaotic, noisy, and highly social mass from a chaotic, noisy, to a mass that emphasized quiet contemplation, and an increase in devotions to the rosary and Marian cults. Nevertheless,

[326] Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500-1650* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), xiii.
[327] Nalle, 46-51.

for Kamen, these changes represented a superficial change in the faith.[328] For Kamen, although the reforms did alter the outward appearance of religion, Tridentine reform was more of a "myth" than a reality.[329] Including the acts of sacrilege against sacred images and objects into the lived religious experience of men and women in Spain and its empire, it is possible to reconcile to offer a more nuance view on the Council of Trent's influence on religion.

Yet another way in which cases of sacrilege provide important perspective on early modern religion that reflected the ways in which every day religious practices remained resistant to the efforts of the religious hierarchy to enact change. In a manner similar to practices with sacred images and objects, devotions to local shrines and pilgrimage sites reflected the expectation of the reality of interaction with the saints. The sacred history of a community and devotions to saints as the local benefactors made them both more likely to assist and more likely to disappoint. Although the particular saints venerated by a given community changed over time, and the Tridentine guidelines for recognizing and authenticating new relics certainly influenced devotions to saints, the way specific communities experienced the faith remained intensely local.[330] Similarly, cases of sacrilege suggest that ordinary believers may have understood their actions as consistent with what everyone did. Understanding sacrilege as a part of an intensely personal religious experience allows for a better explanation of why religious changes during the Counter Reformation did not eliminate practices, such as the heterodox and sacrilegious treatment of sacred images.

[328] Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame*, 114-115, 147.
[329] Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame,* 430.
[330] Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century*, 137.

In short, what did religion in the Spanish empire look like during the Counter Reformation? From the evidence examined here, it is clear that religion was far from uniform. The church's efforts to correct erroneous beliefs and excessive practices through the imposition of uniformity in ritual and practices did not succeed in eliminating the variety of lived religion. As viable, interactive entities, a believer could access, manipulate, or even punish, supernatural powers. Whether by referring to the cross as "a lump of wood", slashing at an image of the Virgin Mary with a sword, lying naked with the cross, or making cushions from images of the saints, early modern Mexican Catholics exemplified the manner through which humans conducted relationships with sacred figures.[331]

The examples of sacrilege against sacred images and objects reflect a cosmology in which an interaction with divine powers did not diminish the potential of priestly intercession through rituals like the sacraments. When early modern Catholics engaged with the objects that depicted the saints, in any manner, the attention given to the image allowed the saints to assume a very real presence whether good, bad, or indifferent. Nevertheless, although the exact limits of acceptable practices involving sacred images and objects remained an issue of some debate and contention among the Catholic Church hierarchy, the most egregious acts against images clearly transcended the limits of the Tridentine faith.

Ultimately, in the lived religion of late sixteenth and seventeenth century Mexico, much like other parts of the Spanish empire, sacrilegious acts against sacred images coexisted with orthodox prayers and sacraments. The expected reverence for all manner of objects that represented the power of the divine served as avenues through which

[331]AGN, Inq. vol. 604, exp. 33; AGN, Inq., vol. 413, exp. 14; AGN, Inq. vol. 520, exp. 6.

excesses of feelings for God and the saints, whether anger and defiance or an overzealous adoration, were expressed. At the same time, those that ignored or otherwise neglected to make sufficient gestures of humility and acknowledgement of the divine reflected an affront to Christ and the saints symbolically present in the sacred images and objects.

While the actions of people before sacred images and objects offers a way to access the otherwise unrecorded and inaccessible, they also suggest other avenues of inquiry to explore how people lived their religion and their relationships to the divine. Lived religion, while certainly influenced by Trent, existed independent of the supervision of the clergy and outside of the confines of the church. Taken together with other performances of faith, such as participation in celebrating feasts and observing fasts, uttering blasphemous oaths, making pilgrimages, and participating in religious confraternities (*cofradías*), we can see how lived religion shaped and was shaped by the expected religious behaviors espoused by the church during the Counter Reformation.

Chapter 4 - Attacking God Himself: Sacrilege Against the Host

Of all of the things deemed sacred by the Catholic Church, nothing held more importance than the consecrated Host or *pan bendito*. The Host formed a central node of Catholic religiosity where the symbolic power of the Eucharist as a recreation of Christ's sacrifice, and of God incarnate, met the divine miracle of transubstantiation. Witnessing the ritual of consecration, and especially the Elevation of the Host during Mass, symbolically united the congregants into a community bound by belief. The consecration of the bread was the apex of the Eucharist ritual that functioned as a potent symbol of a shared faith and included prayers to concerns both secular and spiritual, lay and clerical authorities, and the souls of the living and the dead.[332] As historian Carlos Eire has stated, teaching that the consecrated Host was physically present made it the "*locus divinitatis*: the ultimate materialization of the divine."[333] The Dominican theologian Luis de Granada referred to it as the way that God is received physically and men are moved through him through love and obedience to God's will (*Porque éste es aquel altíssimo Sacramento en el qual Dios es recibido corporalmente, I no para que él se mude en los hombres, sino para que los hombres se muden en él por amor y confomidad de voluntad*)."[334] Even without direct participation, reverence for the Eucharist, and especially the consecrated Host, featured largely in the lived religious experience of early modern Spaniards.

[332] Bossy, 67-68.
[333] Carlos Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), 28.
[334] Luis de Granada, *Obras del venerable P. Maestro Fr Luis de Granada*, 57.

The reverence for the Host was manifest in nearly every facet of life for Catholics in the Spanish world. Rhythms of life revolved around the liturgical calendar, with different masses based on season, different religious processions, and various holidays dedicated to the Eucharist helping to order the year. In addition, laws and social relationships were likewise shaped and reflect the importance of the Host. The Spanish monarchs made laws and established rituals of state to protect the sanctity of the Eucharist and establish a reputation of piety. Lay brotherhoods dedicated to the Eucharist helped establish social norms, staged processions, and put on religiously themed plays that gave laymen an important place in the expression of religiosity. However, the passion and devotions shown to the Eucharist were not all demonstrated through actions that were in keeping with orthodoxy or orthopraxy.

As a part of individual piety and interaction with God, the Host offered the faithful powerful ways to interact with divinity, both orthodox and heterodox. Receiving the Host in communion, the faithful participated in the greatest of all Christian charities, literally embodying Christ's sacrifice. Nevertheless, as a font of God's physical presence and power on earth, the host could be subjected to misuse or outright abuse. Incidents of attacks or other kinds of sacrilege or desecration of the host occurred with less frequency than other varieties of sacrilege, such as attacking images. This is likely due to both the difficulty of accessing the wafer after consecration, as well as the reverence many Catholics had for the Host. However, attacks or acts of disrespect against the Host did occur and they offer some of the most poignant examples of sacrilege as a part of interaction with the divine. After all, according to doctrine, the sacred images and objects were only representatives or reminders to the spiritual power they represented; the

consecrated host *was* Christ. The incidents of sacrilege often take on a different form and reveal an alternative way in which the faithful engaged with the host and with God.

The ubiquity of the Host, viewed in the mass, kept in the thoughts and devotions of the faithful, included in the laws and symbols of the monarchs, and integral to the teachings of the clergy, also made it a central element in interactions with the divine that transcended the norms of the faith. As a both a symbol and a miraculous embodiment of God, the Host brought access to God and divine power to the faithful. Although access to the sacrament was limited, and its control was an ongoing source of concern for the church, the faithful *did* have access to it, whether physically, visually, or symbolically. Catholics used Hosts for acts of magic, attacked them directly in moments of anger, and misused them to appropriate the power and authority of the clergy to manage interactions with God.

The consecrated Eucharist shared some features with other material points of contact between the profane world and the power of divine forces and saintly protectors. Whether in the form of images of saints, relics, crucifixes, sacramental, or the host, a physical object exist as a medium through which the God acts on the faithful. Regardless of the actual species of use, the faithful interacted with the Host through a consistent internal logic. Whether the Host was part of an orthodox and approved ritual use or act of veneration, something well meaning but superstitious, misguided, or otherwise heterodox, or as a target of hostility, defacement or otherwise sacrilegious attack, beliefs and practices pertaining to the Host informed the relationship of the faithful to the physical side of spiritual forces.

Quantifying the acts of sacrilege against the Host is challenging, to say the least. Unlike the offenses that were primarily verbal in nature, propositions and blasphemy, the Inquisition did not investigate and try sacrilege as an easily compiled body of cases. Sacrilege of any kind, against a sacred image, sacred object, or the Host could have been looked at as something indicative of "Lutheranism" (i.e. attacking the cult of the saints or saintly images), or crypto-Judaism (i.e. spitting on a cross or abusing a Host).

However, the legalistic nature of the Holy Office made the specific categories employed by the inquisitors subject to criteria internal to the Inquisition itself.[335] This suggests that most of the cases of sacrilege against the Host can be included in the category of cases of "various heresies" established by the historians Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen in their exhaustive catalogue of *relaciones de causas* (summaries of inquisitorial trials) that cover over 44,000 cases between 1540 and 1700. Those labeled as "various heresies" add up to 3,018, or 6.8%, indicating the relative rarity of these offenses.[336] More specifically, even in a relatively small sample, like that of the Mexican tribunal, between 1568 and 1691 there were 19 separate cases involving sacrilege against the Host. Though this suggests that these kinds of offenses were rare, they are an important indicator that the lived religious experience included sacrilege against the Host. The Host and its many uses, and misuses, underscore the mix of the culture of early modern Spain and its empire, the belief systems in operation, and how these found outlets and expression through rituals.

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[335] See Jessica J. Fowler, "Assembling Alumbradismo: The Evolution of a Heretical Construct," in *After Conversion: Iberia and the Emergence of Modernity*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
[336] Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen, "Forty-Four Thousand Cases of the Spanish Inquisition (1540-1700): Analysis of a Historical Data Bank," in *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: Studies on Sources and Methods*, eds. Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (Dekalb, Il: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 114.

Spain's monarchs legitimized their reigns, in part, through historical connections to their imperial ancestors through which they claimed the Eucharist as having a special connection to their dynastic line. Ancestors of the Habsburg line such as Rudolf I, who claimed a special connection to the Eucharist after a vision in 1264, gave the later Spanish Habsburg kings an enhanced status as hereditary defenders of one of the most sacred emblems of Christianity.[337] With the ascension to the throne of Charles V, the king added to his ancestors' reputation as defenders of the Catholic faith, vowing to the Eucharist before battles and mandating the display of the Eucharist in a monstrance before royal processions.[338] Even during processions bearing the Host for the purpose of offering Last Rites, the defense of the Eucharist held so much importance that both Charles V and Phillip II knelt when in its presence, underscoring that even when in transit to give succor to the dying, the explicit connection as defenders of the Host that the Spanish monarchs cultivated as emblematic of the Habsburg dynasty remained strong.[339]

Through the seventeenth century the tendency of officially linking the Spanish crown to the Eucharist became more pronounced in the reign of Philip III as the king promoted the association between the centrality of administrative control in Madrid with greater control of Eucharistic devotion. This connection was made even more explicit by Philip VI when he integrated rogations, or days of fasting a prayer in which processions feature prominently, to royal ceremonies.[340] An account of a public procession from 1626 comments on Philip IV standing as an example of faith and devotion to the holy

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[337] Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendant of Aeneas: The Hapsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 208.
[338] Tanner, 214.
[339] Carlos Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory: The art and craft of dying in sixteenth-century Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 31.
[340] María José del Río Barredo, *Madrid, Urbs Regia. La capital ceremonial de la Monarquía Católica* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000), 174.

sacrament of the house of Austria ("*exemplo de Fe, y deuoción al Santíssimo Sacramento tan propio en la casa de Austria*.")[341]

Acts of sacrilege, like that of the merchant Reinaldo de Peralta who, in 1624, attacked a host during the mass, gave the kings a stage through which they could ceremoniously display their place as defenders of the Eucharist.[342] A grievous act of sacrilege against the Host not only had to be severely punished, it had to be counteracted. Philip IV, like the other Habsburg monarchs, staged public ceremonies intended to placate an angry God and demonstrate his defense of the sacrament. In the case of Reinaldo de Peralta, the king and his court ordered an *auto de fe*, an octave of sermons by the court's best preachers and, a formal procession around the Church of San Felipe, where the offense took place.[343]

The importance of the Host for the Spanish sense of social order and civic identity in particular is evident from its inclusion in the medieval legal codes that formed the basis of Spanish law, from the medieval into the early modern period. Included in the thirteenth-century legal code, the *Siete Partidas*, are descriptions about the specific details about what should go into making the Host, only unleavened wheat flour and water, as well as the intersection of legalities and dogma regarding the Host.[344] Specific sections of the law elaborate on the requirement that in addition to the wafer, a priest must have water and wine at hand before celebrating the Eucharist, how and why the Host should be divided, and the materials that should be used for the chalice and their

[341] José Simón Díaz, ed., *Relaciones breves de actos públicos celebrados en Madrid de 1541 a 1650*, (Madrid: Instituo de Esudios Madrileños, 1982), 355.
[342] María José del Río Barredo, 178.
[343] María José del Río Barredo, 178-179.
[344] *Siete Partidas,* I.IV.

cloth coverings.[345] Although Spanish law did not have any kind of division between the sacred and profane, the inclusion of legal provisions into facets of ritual and devotion that are ecclesiastical matters indicates that regulating the creation, treatment, and rituals of the Host had an importance that went beyond salvation, they concerned the scope of authority and power of the Spanish crown over temporal and spiritual matters. As with matters of ritual, regulating the legalities of the Host reinforced the Eucharist as a distinct concern of the royal family and illustrates that maintaining spiritual order was considered essential for political and legal order.

The legalities further codified social order through proximity allowed and deference owed to the Host, reinforcing the privileges of the clergy, while supporting the ability of social elites, and especially the crown, to use violence in service of Eucharistic devotion. In many ways, the fact that the crown made Eucharistic devotion a central concern in asserting itself as the defender of the faith and the increasingly elaborate Eucharistic processions celebrated in Madrid helped to reinforce its presence as a center of administration for all constituent components of the Spanish kingdoms, functioned to make the Host a central facet of identity common to the diverse peoples ostensibly united under the crown.[346] The protection of the Host was an integral aspect of religious order, which bolstered political and legal order for the Spanish crown.

As part of the public, or better said communal aspect of Catholic religiosity and social order, the devotion to the Host became a central aspect for the religious brotherhoods. The coexisting spiritual and social facets of the public or collective faith of early modern Catholicism were the religious brotherhoods or *cofradías* that formed as

[345] *Siete Partidas,* (I.IV.LII, LV, LVI, LVII).
[346] Río Barredo, 182.

demonstrations of faith to a particular saint. Since the brotherhoods were voluntary associations that vowed their dedication to a particular saint or pious work, confraternities functioned as both social and devotional organizations whose social and religious aspects were inextricably linked .[347] In the case of the Eucharist, the common practices of existing confraternities helped to shape the celebration of the feast of Corpus Christi and the public processions that emerged and the feast gained in popularity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[348]

As with the *cofradías* dedicated to a specific saint, brotherhoods organized around the Eucharist also had another function as a means of expressing religious devotion as they assumed a responsibility for all manner of devotions. A significant portion of the resources at the brotherhood's disposal went to buying oil and wax in order to keep the Eucharist well lit. The desire to be physically close to the host, as well as have a place as a participant in the celebration of the mass, made the provision of torches and high quality, brightly burning candles a common act of religious brotherhoods. By providing better light with which the faithful could see the host, the brotherhoods combined a communal act of charity with a symbolic proximity to the host.[349] It formed a distinct religious community that participated in communal pool of good works that surrounded the Host.

In particular, brotherhoods brought to life the *autos sacramentales*, short plays that celebrated Christ's sacrifice as embodied and recreated through the mystery of the Eucharist. Authors of this genre of devotional theatre used a wide variety of themes to tell

[347] Kamen, *Phoenix, 165*.
[348] Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in late medieval culture* (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press), 233.
[349] Duffy, 96.

allegorical stories intended to educate audiences about the Eucharist as it was celebrated. For example, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz used story about the sacrifice of Hermengild, a martyred Catholic Visigoth king whose sacrifice saved his people from the Arian heresy, as a stand-in for Christ crucified, linking the ideas of Eucharistic devotion and salvation through sacrifice.[350] Sacramental works like those by playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681), made explicit the idea that "Christ's bloody sacrifice and humanity are present in the Host (*ser cruento sacrifico Christo allí humananado y muerto es aquí en la Ostia*)."[351] The "*Divino Sacramento*" (divine sacrament), which was the "*Mysterio de los Mysterios*" (mystery of mysteries) celebrated "primarily in Spain."[352] Performances that reinforced the Host's combination of the Crucified Christ's humanity and divinity offered actors and audience an additional manner of realizing closeness and connection to the Host.

These *cofradías* also tended to fund brining the Host to the sick and dying, presumably hiring clergy to say the mass and transport the Eucharist.[353] The physical presence of God in the consecrated Host made it an essential part of a dying Catholic's last rites. Processions bearing the last communion, the *viaticum,* with which the faithful took God with them into death, grew increasingly complex during the Middle Ages and included torches and incense.[354] Both the expense and importance of these processions for the faithful is attested to in the growth in specific requests in wills for confraternities to participate in the processions.[355]

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[350] Amy Fuller, *Between Two Worlds: The autos sacramentals of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2015), 22-23.
[351] Barca, *El Año Santo de Roma*, 189.
[352] Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *El Verdadero Dios Pan,* (1670), 44.
[353] Rubin, 235.
[354] Rubin, 78.
[355] Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, 133-138.

Even in death, physical proximity to the Host translated into spiritual benefits. Last wills and testaments from Madrid reflect that among the provisions for the deceased, the positioning of burial in the church ranked highly as a priority. The faithful wanted to be interred close to the Eucharist, especially near the altar.[356] The conflation of collective devotion, and public and private religiosity is especially visible in this act. The religious brotherhood collectively provided for the host to be carried through the streets, drawing public devotion along its way. This addition of public observance and veneration added a public and communal dimension to the service funded by the *cofradías* as the hired clergy escorted the Host to the terminally ill for their personal, private communion with God.

Procession to the sick and dying, though sharing features with other, planned processions, were spontaneous and did not have all of the social implications of the annual Corpus Christi procession. In the planned formal processions, the devotional aspects of the Host mix freely with public displays of piety, and of prestige. The clergy maintained control of the consecrated host but the confraternities competed among themselves, and with other elements of secular society, to provide the vessels in which the host was kept, a moving canopy to cover the Host and attendant priests, as well as lights, bells, and other ornamentations and trappings for the processions. The various secular elites and confraternities vied for primacy in the order of marching in the processions, and especially of proximity to the Host, with the procession reflecting social divisions in prestige and social standing. In addition, various social elites vied to control

[356] Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, 99.

the route, marking some spaces as more important in the sacred space of a given locale.[357]

The celebration of Corpus Christi featured prominently in the annual cycle or religious rituals that doubled as a means to reinforce and recreate a civic identity and history. Corporate participation through the religious brotherhoods and civic authorities told a narrative of, and made physical, various groups and their place in the religious history of a community. Likewise, marking out specific places as part of a town or village as important cites by including them along the procession routes made explicitly the connections between local history in the form of important landmarks and the spiritual identity and wellbeing of the community. Routes that followed roads through which the king or other notables entered into a community offered a spiritual connection between two places while routs that followed the boundary of a town, manor, or parish decidedly demarcated the spiritual connection into a distinct "us" and "them" as part of the larger narrative about how communities saw the intersection of social standing, faith, and history. Even as processions between sacred cites functioned as physical manifestations of the links of ecclesiastical authority and patronage between institutions, the order of the processions mirrored an idealized social order.[358]

An additional ritual included in the celebration of feast, the Corpus Christi dramas, reinforced these narratives. These plays told biblical tales of salvation and communal solidarity typically centered on the miracle of the Eucharist.[359] The themes for the plays were also drawn from other aspects of both the Old and New testaments and

[357] Rubin, 245, 248, 258-260.
[358] Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 39.
[359] Philip M Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 81.

related stories of creation, the fall of man, the birth and ministry of Jesus, and the second coming and Judgment day. From the latter part of the sixteenth century, Corpus Christi plays were also popular vehicle for the promotion of Tridentine values.[360]

Much like the participation in the processions, the *cofradías* vied with one another to perform and fund the dramas and local elites and councils often had to help negotiations and between various trade guilds and religious confraternities over rights and obligations regarding the funding, constructing the sets, and performing, the plays.[361] The number of *autos sacramentales* a community performed and the degree to which the community contributed to produce them varied, as did and the complexity and sophistication of the works, the plays functioned in tandem with the processions. The *autos sacramentales* acted in concert with the processions to create a statement about secular affairs as framed by rituals of veneration to the most important focal point of Catholicism.[362]

Although one of many processions in the annual cycle, Corpus Christi processions and dramas were among the most popular and well attended events in which the community ritualistically expressed and maintained the realities of communal historical memory, secular social hierarchies and displays of privilege with its communal expression of piety. The Church promoted the annual celebration of the Host, complete with public processions, as a participatory spectacle that reminded the viewers of Christ's sacrifice that also asserted the spiritual authority of the Church and refuted Protestant "heresies."[363] As a communal part of religious experience, most of the faithful interacted

[360] Soergel, 91.
[361] Rubin, 281.
[362] Rubin, 271.
[363] Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 79.

with the host when they took communion at the Easter mass or, more commonly, when they viewed the elevated host during weekly celebrations of mass or in religious processions for holy days such as Corpus Christi.[364]

Reverence for physical presence of God in the Eucharist had great continuity from the medieval era through the era of the Counter Reformation. If anything, it increased in importance, as the sacraments were even more important in Catholicism in the wake of Trent.[365] Session XIII of the Council of Trent confirmed the miraculous conversion of bread into flesh and asserted that "our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the species of those sensible things" and that host was a "visible form of an invisible grace."[366] In other words, it was a tangible point of contact with divine power and the miraculous.

This was a development in religiosity that began to develop in the Middle Ages and reached its full potential in the era of the Counter Reformation program and the Council of Trent. Medieval religious observance was not centered on the sacraments, with penance the only one of the seven sacraments that the Church emphasized.[367] Catholics generally took communion only once a year, after the requisite annual confession.[368] In addition to irregular clerical residence, which made access to the sacrament problematic, both the clergy and the laity had objections to overly frequent communion. Although religious were encouraged to take communion frequently, many in the clergy objected to laymen having so much access to the consecrated Host. For the laity, unfamiliarity with frequent communion, coupled with impiety, led to resistance to

[364] Bossy, 68, 74-75, 115.
[365] O'Malley, 255.
[366] Schroeder, 74.
[367] Kamen, *Phoenix,* 116.
[368] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 7.

daily communion.[369] With the aid of the Spanish Inquisition, the ecclesiastical elites attempted to transform religious practices that critics condemned as medieval, with a blend of magic, superstitions, and more orthodox forms of religious devotion, to practices that conformed to the Tridentine edicts that outlined the Catholic faith.[370] Under the leadership of Inquisitor-general Fernando de Valdés, the Spanish Inquisition assumed responsibility for enforcing the goals of the reformers at Trent. In effect, the Holy Office became an ally of the church in enforcing aspects of orthodoxy such as regular confession and communion.

Nevertheless, the advent of the Counter-Reformation launched in refutation of the supposed heresies promulgated by Luther and other reformers witnessed an increase in the importance that the Church placed on the Host. A widely observed sacrament before the Protestant reformation, the Eucharist, took on a new importance and solemnity in Catholic theology giving it an unprecedented centrality in orthodoxy and orthopraxis. In many places in Spain the social aspects of the mass as a place of meeting and sociability became one of quiet reverence.[371] Likewise, the Tridentine decree that dedicated masses relieved the souls of the dead lingering in purgatory encouraged an increase in the number of masses recited as well as an expansion of its importance in the religious experience of the faithful.[372]

Equally important, despite some resistance to frequent lay communion, some religious encouraged it as a regular part of the faith. The Jesuits made regular confession

[369] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 122-123.
[370] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, xiii.
[371] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 121.
[372] Nalle, *God in La Mancha*, 181, 186.

and communion an integral part of their missionary efforts. [373] Likewise, spreading the message of Tridentine faith and morality among the laity also required the aid of the Holy Office. As with its control of the clergy, Toledo had the infrastructure to disseminate the faith of the counter-reformation and bring the laity under their supervision. The constitution of Toledo required the laity to confess and take communion, and that the clergy send lists of all who had received the sacraments to the vicar general.[374] This kind of religious obligation, enforced by the combined efforts of the ecclesiastical authorities and the Holy Office made regular communion, at least annually if not more, a frequent part of the religious experience.

As a focus for devotion the Host was an integral part of devotional actions, both individually and communally. Although relics, images, and other objects also provide a locus for acts of devotion, public and private, the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the most potent symbol of Catholic Christendom. In contrast to any other sacred object, the Host simultaneously represented Christ's sacrifice, the ability for mundane matter to become divine, and the real presence of Christ.[375] Through the Eucharistic ritual of the mass the priest changed bread and wine into body and blood, defining a relationship between the material and spiritual worlds.[376] The Host, and to a lesser degree the wine, made an immaterial God physical and present. In addition, as a manifestation of priestly power to turn a ritual into a miraculous transformation, the Host reflected the authority and power of the clergy to bring about God's presence and control the laity's access to the divine presence.

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[373] Kamen, *Phoenix*, 122.
[374] Quiroga, *Constituciones Sinodales Hechas por Don Gaspar de Quiroga Arçobispo de Toledo* 13.
[375] Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 37.
[376] Wandel, 2.

Moreover, unlike the relics and images, the Host combined a potent symbol and locus of devotion with a sacrament –a Church designated vehicle for salvation. The consecrated wafer combined an intimate point of contact with God, and shared devotion that united the community, and as a part of public veneration in one object laden with overlapping spiritual and symbolic power. The consecrated Host allowed early modern Catholics to publicly define and recreate the community of the faithful while giving them an opportunity to assert or improve their place in it. As a public aspect of worship, having the right to carry the canopy over the Host, be near it in processions, or even simply participate in public processions let Catholics demonstrate, and vie for, social status and prestige through the competition over proximity to the Host. The display of social hierarchy underscored the centrality of the Eucharist to the spiritual wellbeing of the

Figure 3 Claudio Coello, *Adoración de la Sagrada Forma* (Adoration of the sacred form), c. 1685 1690. Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial.

community, calling attention to the fact that devotion and acts of faith went well beyond the private side of personal salvation. Along with the private devotions of the sacraments observing the Host during the celebration of mass and receiving communion,

participating in or observing the processions that define the spiritual landscape and the performance of Corpus Christi dramas comprised a public dimension to devotions.

This public dimension of veneration is also evident in the practice of seeking succor from the onset of storms. The theologian Martín de Casteñega advised that at the approach of a storm the bells should sound to summon "all the people to gather in the church" (*que se ayunte el pueblo en la Iglesia, o los que buenamente pudieren)* to witness the reverential opening of the reliquary and placement of the Host into the chalice in the center of the candlelit alter as a prelude to prayers and a procession to banish the storm.[377] The theologian Pedro Ciruelo also affirmed the importance of public involvement in the ritual protection from storms. He recommends that the priests don clerical garb, particular surplices and stoles, and go to the altar where the "Blessed Sacrament is kept" and that any relics in the church's possession should be placed near the Host. After the candles are lit and relics arranged alongside the Host, the priests were to recite prayers from the missal.

Although the Host is a central element in the rituals and prayers described, priestly powers and the recourse to the Host were not by themselves sufficient. Ciruelo's instructions include that after the priests enter the church "all the principal people should follow them."[378] Moreover, the Host alone was not sufficient but the tabernacle had to be opened so that the vessel with the Host "can be seen."[379] The collective, public reverence

[377] Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*, 183. (*Cuando tienen temor de algunas nube o tempestad que parece que arma, allende que tienen buena costumbre de tañer las campanas, hagan señal con una campana para que se ayunte el pueblo en la Iglesia, o los que buenamente pudieren…. Y abra el cura el relicario, y saque con mucho acatamiento y reverencia el Sacramento, y póngalo con la copa o arquillo en que esta, en medio del altar, sobre los corporales, con muchas candelas encendidas*).
[378] Ciruelo, 296.
[379] Ciruelo, 296.

for the Host for communal protection and expression of piety operated alongside the private devotion and spiritual benefits of private devotion.

The Intersection of the Material and the Spiritual

In some ways the consecrated Eucharist functioned like other material points of contact between the profane world and the power of God and access to salvation. As discussed in the previous chapter, images and sacred objects go beyond functioning as reminders of the saintly and holy or as focal points for prayer. The Council of Trent clarified the Church's official position about "the legitimate use of images" as part of petitioning the saints in order to obtain divine aid and protection and that the veneration of images and relics was an essential aspect of the Catholic faith. [380] However, despite the fact that the Church emphasized that the images are not venerated because they contain any divinity but "because the honor that is shown to them is referred to the prototypes they represent," at almost every level of lay and clerical practice, images took on a role beyond mere representations.[381] The behaviors widely associated with images, such as lighting candles before images, bowing and taking off of hats, and even adorning them with fine cloth, precious metals, and jewels reflect the need of the faithful to interact with the image as a locus of the saint's power.[382] In addition, the connection between the seemingly sudden and miraculous appearance of images and divine apparitions, or of sacred images and

[380] Schroeder, 216.
[381] Schroeder, 214.
[382] Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi, trans., *A Reformation Debate*: Karlstadt, Emser and Eck on sacred Images: Three Treatises in Translation (Toronto: Dovehouse, 1991), 23-24.

miraculous speech, further conflates the image of the saintly figure depicted and the manifestation and projection of divine power into the mundane and material world.[383]

The belief of a physical component of God's grace and spiritual power, made manifest in sacred images and objects, is made even more obvious in the logical extension of the power of the sacraments to the physical components through which the faithful ready themselves for participation in the sacraments or through which sacramental grace is conferred. Holy water, the chrism, incense and other material objects operate symbolically and physically to connect the spiritual and material. As part of a system of symbols through which the faithful understand and interact with the abstract and invisible world of divine power and spiritual salvation, sacred images, sacramental, and the consecrated Host all underscore the physical in lived religion.

As a connection between God and man, the lived religious experience was made more intimate and offered more means of expressing devotion than through words alone. Pilgrimage to a venerated image's shrine, staging elaborate processions with well-dressed and resplendent images, and vying to be near or just see a holy relic made "doing" religion possible. While dialogue with God and an interior spirituality that gave rise to religious ecstasies certainly had a corporeal aspect that physical kind of religiosity was not available to everyone and denied the more active engagement with the spiritual.

The ability to take action and be physically engaged, regardless of how the Church judged the action, made the divine more accessible than through prayers or other intangible means available in everyday lived religion. On the one hand, the breadth of options for material access to divinity made demonstrations of veneration, acts of "good

[383] William A. Christian, Jr., Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain, 5; Luis Corteguera, "Talking Images in the Spanish Empire," 55.

works", and supplication a physical reality easily accessed for the both the laity and clergy. On the other hand, the tangible, material media of spiritual presence personalized God, making material points of contact between the profane world and the power of divine forces familiar objects through which faithful Catholics communicated anger and frustration with a physically and spiritually present God.

Nevertheless, the Host is in very important ways fundamentally different than any other sacred object. Sacred images, even if they are imbued with some sacred power through their role as representations, or simulacra, of a saintly figure are *only* representations of the saint. Even saintly relics that came from the body of a holy person blessed with God's favor and able to access his power, were human remains, no matter how holy and blessed the saint in question or how miraculous the demonstrations of the relic. The fragment of bone from a saint's body or vial of blood or Mary's breast milk had power absorbed from the person, power given by God because the saint exemplified devotion and piety, capable of miraculous manifestations, but ultimately still corporeal.[384] Likewise, sacramentals, making the sign of the cross or using holy water, no matter how much they should be respected as part of signifying and transmitting God's grace, were still only a medium and a symbol. They signified the grace of God, and they allowed it to be present, since they functioned as a vehicle to transmit that grace to men and women.[385] However, for the faithful, no matter how important they were, none of these venerated things, unlike the Host, was God.

The fact that Catholics revered the consecrated Host as God made physical and immediately present makes all of the practices using the Eucharist distinct from the other

[384] Bynum, 125-126, 132.
[385] Bynum, 145.

material exempla of divine power. As Mary Rubin highlights in her study of the Eucharist and the feast of Corpus Christi, the meaning or meanings of an object are always present, delimiting the way it is used. Although any object of material religion can be a symbol with varied and, depending on the person, competing meanings, within a given culture symbols derive their multiple meanings from preexisting ideas and related systems of making sense of the world. [386] For the faithful Catholic, the various significances of the Host originate with its centrality as Christ incarnate, as a vehicle for the direct transmission of God's grace onto humanity, as the only way in which Catholics could literally take Christ into themselves and achieve the ultimate physical and spiritual connection to divinity.

The "range of uses" of which Rubin speaks, "inscribed before the use actually takes place" is a useful way to examine the heterodox and sacrilegious acts committed on the Host. [387] The range of possibilities is limited by meaning, (i.e. the Host as God, transmission of power, physical proximity to Christ, etc.) but becomes visible through context. Thus, a host elevated by the priest, received by a communicant, carried in procession, or employed to banish demonic forces, have slight variances in meaning that, in turn, gives rise to possible interpretations of acts of sacrilege. Interpretations of acts of sacrilege against the Host not only illuminate the difference between sacred images and objects and the Host, they also provide a nuanced understanding of how Catholics interacted with God made material.

We can see some of this in the case of the Spanish priest Benito Ferrer. In 1624, the Holy Office sentenced Ferrer, a Catalan Franciscan, to death for taking a consecrated

[386] Rubin, 3-8.
[387] Rubin, 3.

Host from a priest during its elevation in the Mass, and stomping on it.[388] Ferrer was variously described by contemporaries as Jewish by way of his mother (*Hebreo por vía materna*) and as of the Jewish caste by way of his mother (*por parte de madre era de casta de hebreos*).[389] Nevertheless, the fact that Ferrer took holy orders in two different religious orders, first as a Dominican and later as a Franciscan, makes the label of Jew or Hebrew an inaccurate label after the fact of his act of sacrilege. Although of Jewish heritage, Ferrer was a *converso* and therefore a Christian.

His actual religious beliefs notwithstanding, Ferrer's *converso* status might have had a significant influence on his actions with the Host. More significantly, it very likely altered the way in which observers of his actions perceived it. Ferrer's association with a Jewish lineage might have been the reason for his ouster from not one, but two religious orders. Not only that but after leaving the holy orders, Ferrer spent more than a decade without confessing or hearing mass, wandering as a vagabond. Despite being out of the religious orders, Ferrer traveled through France, the Low Countries, Ireland, and Naples begging for alms. The Catalan monk ultimately returned to Spain as an itinerant mendicant, and, after asking alms of a vicar, he was arrested for posing as a priest without being one. [390]

While in custody, Benito Ferrer heard the celebration of mass in the jail's chapel, and, overcome with anger and frustration, snatched the host from the priest's hands at the moment of elevation and stomped it into the ground.[391] The nature of Ferrer's

[388] Antonio de Leon Pinelo, *Anales de Madrid: desde el año 447 al de 1658* (Madrid: Instituto deded Estudios Madrileños, 1971), 260.
[389] Antonio de Leon Pinelo; Hugo Albert Rennert, *The Life of Lope de Vega, 1562-1635* (Glasgow, Philadelphi: Gowans and Gray, 1904), 260-262.
[390] Hugo Albert Rennert, 309.
[391] Pinelo, 260.

sacrilegious act precludes any explanation of some kind of accidental damage of the host. Ferrer's decision to desecrate the Host at the moment of elevation, to the great astonishment of onlookers (*con asombro de quantos asistían al santo sacrificio)*, had a very definite meaning.[392] Or, perhaps, making sense of such a blatant and public act of sacrilege, it is better to say that Ferrer's action should be understood as something with multiple, overlapping meanings.

Repeatedly cast out from both the Dominican and discalced Franciscan monastic orders, and forbidden from serving as a priest, on one level Ferrer's attack on the Host was simultaneously an attack on the clergy. In consecrating the Host not only did the priest transform the wafer into the body of Christ, the Church also simultaneously reinforced the exalted position and power of the priesthood. The celebration of Mass underscored that only ordained priests had the right, and the unique knowledge of the holy words, to make God physically present. Moreover, the ritual encouraged the faithful to rely more heavily on the clergy, as the only legitimate possessors of the consecrated Host, for their spiritual needs.[393] Rather than express his frustration and anger with the ecclesiastical authority by bodily attacking the priest, Benito Ferrer instead denied the celebrant of his most important function, the consecration of the sacred Host at its elevation.

Ferrer's taking the Host from the priest during the mass and stomping on it in front of onlookers also reflects the public dimension of worship. In Ferrer's case, the interaction is not one of veneration or is a type of veneration inverted. Nevertheless, Ferrer's chosen moment of lashing out has much of the same characteristics of the public

[392] Pinelo, 260.
[393] Bossy, 68.

worship of the Host seen in processions or protection rituals. Like a procession, public sacrilege reflected a relationship between the faithful, the Church in the person of the officiating priest, and the community observing the interaction. The sacrilegious stomping on the Host asserted Ferrer's importance through physical proximity, appropriated the authority reserved to the clergy, and asserted his position to the onlookers. While clearly an act of aggression and anger, his public attack on the Host took some of its meaning through public observation.

This kind of public display in which the sacrilege interrupts the celebration of the Mass is also evident in an Inquisition case from 1698. In that case Francisco Fernández Salgado grabbed the missal off of the altar and struck it after he knocked the Host to floor. Since Salgado struck the Host in the chapel of the convent of Santa Magdalena, Salgado's audience likely differed from that of Ferrer and was comprised of monastics.[394] Despite the difference in audiences, Salgado, like Ferrer, illustrates that interaction with the Host was often a shared experience. Interaction with the Eucharist obtained part of its meaning based on who observed it. Whether in veneration or desecration the spiritual center of the early modern Catholicism was something that was inherently communal even though it also functioned as the nexus of personal salvation.

One of the most common themes in misuse of a consecrated Host is in an act that transcended the acts accepted as veneration into those practices deemed magic or superstition. The conflation of practices in which the clergy carried the host in their visits to pray for the gravely ill and dying with the Host itself as a source of healing power is a recurring issue. Instructions about the proper manner in which to take the consecrated Host to the sick are included in the *Siete Partidas*, with details about carrying it in clean

[394] AHN, Legajo 5323, exp. 28.

vestments, great reverence, and with a ringing bell to give the faithful the warning to humble themselves before the host.[395] An edict from the Council of Trent specifically referenced bringing the Host to the sick, as the spiritual comfort and succor offered through the sacraments, affirming the continuation of the practice into the Counter Reformation.[396]

Nevertheless, rituals and practices that strictly adhered to church law coexisted with non-canonical practices the church tolerated in accord with local or parochial traditions; practices that went too far ultimately raised the ire of clerical elites. Saying an incantation over a Eucharist, especially a *paternoster*, or inscribing words in Latin on a Host combined its inherent power with the power of prayer or mystical words to cure illness or break a fever. [397] Although theologians critiqued these kinds of practices as superstitious, particularly if a layman proffered the consecrated Host, taking it with words and prayers did not differ so much from the rituals of healing and protection performed by priests that were of ambiguous acceptability but generally tolerated.

The perceived efficacy of some healing rituals and magic using the consecrated Host were not by themselves egregious and violent acts of sacrilege, but they do help make sense of them. Rituals that went beyond spoken invocations while taking the Host involved more elaborate preparations that went beyond a superstitious misapplication of otherwise acceptable beliefs and practices ventured into an area in which practices became involved with spells of witchcraft and sorcery. This kind of sacrilege is apparent in a 1679 case from the tribunal in Mexico when Fray Francisco de Celaya denounced

[395] Siete Partidas, (I. IV. Law LXI).
[396] Schroeder, 77.
[397] Rubin, 335, 338.

two women for dividing up a Host, mixing it with wine and water, and giving to sick people, presumably for miraculous healing or apotropaic powers.[398]

Mixing together the blessed bread, wine, and water had more to do with altering their material properties to make effective remedies rather than reflect acceptable sacramental practice. Martín de Castañega's treatise on superstitions hints at this kind of practice through his contrast of taking the sacraments such as the bread of the Eucharist *"pan bendito"* (holy bread) in contrast to the *"execramentos"* (words and acts that intentionally mocked or inverted the sacraments) of the diabolical church.[399] Castañega characterized many of these acts as corruptions of otherwise valid prayers, rituals, and sacred objects.

Employing the Eucharist in magical practices, such as swearing on a consecrated Host as part of a spell to find lost treasure and keeping bits of Host to incorporate into love potions intended to win the affections of lovers or curse rivals, enjoyed popularity among the early modern faithful, even as authors such as Casteñega condemned the practices.[400] He deemed these acts more sinful in that they misappropriate holy words and objects reserved only for orthodox practices, such as the Host, for acts intended to bring gain to the practitioner rather than worship God. The more sacred the misused object, the greater the sin.[401]

In the 1679 case of the two women who divided up a Host and mixed it with wine and water to give to sick people, although as women, handling and dispersing the Host violated the venerated treatment of the Eucharist due to the corporeal presence of Christ,

[398] AGN, Inq. vol. 520, exp. 25.
[399] Castañega, 46-48.
[400] Tausiet, 36.152.
[401] Casteñega, 51.

giving the host to the sick was in some ways like the rituals of the church. [402] However, the ritualistic dividing of the wafer and the mixing with wine for miraculous healing or apotropaic powers was more similar to a spell or charm than to either the protective display of the Host or the proper sacrament of communion. Moreover, the accusation references that the women had done this repeatedly, meaning that they had often cut a consecrated host into parts and utilized it in a mystical cure.

Healing rituals utilizing the Host, however much the church condemned them as superstitious, magical, and sacrilegious, featured frequently as a part of religiosity. Utilizing the spiritual power of holy words or sacred items in practices intended to provide physical aid and comfort or financial benefit, or even aid in loved and relationships, was a common aspect of early modern belief. For many practitioners, lay as well as clerical, no line demarcated the legitimate invocation of God's power from the use of spiritually empowered materials, such as a consecrated Host, for rituals to aid the faithful. Like words that had a spiritual power as when recited as a prayer, such as saying the *paternoster*, could function as part of oats into holy oats, a medicine useful for treating horses, religious materials such as alter stones, holy oil, and holy candles had a spiritual power available for manipulation through ritual practices.[403]

Dividing a host into three parts, like sacrilege in the case from Mexico, reflects the conflation of the power of the real body of Christ for spiritual salvation, and the Eucharist's inherent spiritual power of the physical presence of Jesus. The sacrilegious act of dividing a consecrated host into three parts, a ritual imitation of the ritual of mass, is indicative of the belief that the spiritual power inherent within the Host was applicable

[402] AGN, Inq. vol. 520, exp. 25.
[403] Tausiet, 3-4, 144; Milner, 219, 225.

to transform ordinary materials into magical cures. The material reality of the Eucharist as simultaneously both bread and Christ shape a number of acts of sacrilege related to the faithful's efforts to appropriate the body of Christ for their own.

One variety of sacrilegious offense that often related to accusations of magic or otherwise using the power inherent in the Host for heterodox purposes involved communicants holding on to the Host by not swallowing the Eucharist they received from the priest during communion. In 1614, the Inquisition heard an accusation levied against an unnamed woman from the Mexican village of Celaya for removing the host from her mouth and keeping it.[404] In 1629, Geronimo Pinto came before the Inquisition for spreading stories that another woman had taken the Host she received at communion and put it in a handkerchief.[405] Although holding the Eucharist in place of taking it during communion was frequently associated with superstitious or magical practices, the simple fact that the communicant did not actually receive the Host made it transcend accepted practice.

Saving the Eucharist, rather than eating it in order to receive communion is directly connected to rituals and practices deemed "superstitious" or "magical" by the institutional church. As a powerful ingredient in magic, saving the consecrated Host was among the only means by which laymen and laywomen could obtain it. Like the healing women from Mexico, whether or not they considered their healing rituals to be magic or medicine, spell casters would have had the easiest recourse to the Eucharist from attending, but not receiving, communion. For example, Jusepa Ainda from Zaragoza had notoriety as a practitioner of love magic. Although her spell for making a man love and

[404] AGN, Inq. vol. 308, exp. 2.
[405] AGN, Inq. vol. 1570 A, exp. 136.

support a woman involved the use of pubic hair and an artichoke, she was also accused of keeping a consecrated Host that she had removed from her mouth and stored in a tobacco tin.[406] Although the clergy represented a significant portion of the early modern Spanish practitioners of magic, and could obtain consecrated hosts with relative ease, lay spell casters had to resort to more creative methods.

Another example from the tribunal in Mexico speaks to the power and mystery of the consecrated Host as the actual flesh of Christ rather than a simple piece of bread.[407] The actual material of the Host was therefore unlike the pigments, wood, stone, or, metals of almost all other sacred objects. Although some relics were derived from the bodily remains or body fluids of saints, most objects of veneration, no matter how holy, were ultimately nothing more than physical, visual representations of divine grace and spiritual power, not the things themselves.[408] Even the few images that had miraculously spoken to the faithful or remains of the saints that exhibit miraculous properties did not have the spiritual power of the consecrated Host.[409] The incorruptible remains and mystical voices did not fundamentally alter the nature of sacred images and objects. They remained representations and reminders of saintly behavior and sacred power, assessed by Thomas Aquinas to be due a lesser veneration, *dulia.* The Eucharist, in contrast, was due *latria* or the veneration owed to God.[410]

The difference between the Eucharist and other material loci of the faithful and the divine is evident in the almost contradictory ritual and norms that surround looking upon the Host as opposed to sacred images. For example, the *Siete Partidas* is explicit

[406] Tausiet, 140-141.
[407] AGN, Inq. vol. 273, exp.17 1604.
[408] Bynum, 120-125.
[409] For more on miraculous speaking images see Luis Corteguera, "Talking Images."
[410] Bynum, 50-51.

that Christians must kneel and pray at the approach of the Host in the street when on the way to the home of a dying communicant. After the procession passed, the faithful had to follow in an impromptu procession to the end of the street. Simply paying reverence was considered incomplete, and failing to kneel or otherwise show a physical demonstration of humility in the presence of the physical body of Christ was sinful and subject to punishment.[411] In contrast, the law required Jews and Muslims humble themselves like Christians or leave the street.[412] Gazing on the Eucharist en route to the home of the dying was discouraged, or at least so laden with meaning that even Charles V and Phillip II earned reputations for prostrating themselves in mud at the passage of the Host.[413]

The discouragement of Christians maintaining a direct view of the Host while in procession, along with the entire body of laws detailing how the faithful could and could not look at Christ's body in the street, stands in contrast with the importance of sight as a means of interaction during the mass. Whatever the expectation of kneeling in humility and prayer at the elevation, seeing the consecrated Host took on a level of importance for the faithful to the extent that, in some ways, it functioned as a sacrament in its own right.[414] Often loud and chaotic as people socialized, the highlight and center point of the mass was the Elevation of the Host. It had so much importance that Christians who attended mass in larger cathedrals moved from altar to altar to in order to repeatedly witness the elevation, rather than hear the entirety of any one service. Even after the reforms of the Council of Trent, when the loud and social mass was replaced by one of

[411] Siete Partidas, (I. IV. Law LXII).
[412] Siete Partidas, (I. IV. Law LXIII).
[413] Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory*, 31.
[414] Rubin, 63.

silence and the erection of rails and screens physically removed the faithful from the priest, the role of observers remained one of passively waiting to gaze upon the Host.[415]

Thus, the importance of the Host went far beyond its purpose in receiving communion. The importance of the Host's visibility is demonstrated by the addition of screens or curtains that temporarily, and ritually, deprived congregants of their view of the Eucharist only to be rewarded by seeing it again when elevated, a visible metaphor of the sacrifice celebrated in the mass.[416] Especially for men and women that had not recently confessed, had eaten, had sexual intercourse, or any other act that might make them burdened with sin and unable to receive Christ's body, seeing the miracle of the Eucharist had similar functions to receiving communion.[417] Simply gazing upon the consecrated Host established a form of connection between humans and God, and the reaction to violations of the importance of the visual interaction underscores its quasi-sacramental status.

The Counter Reformation placed a renewed emphasis on regularly receiving communion, although without disabusing the faithful of importance of gazing on the Eucharist. In fact, as a refutation of Protestant critiques of communion as a sacrament and the doctrines of transubstantiation, the visible aspect of the Host took on a new importance as part of Catholic propaganda that was supported by both secular and clerical authorities.[418] A visible connection, especially when the priest elevated the Host during the mass, had the effect of allowing the faithful to enter into a kind of exchange with God. Interacting with God made flesh required that the parishioners look directly at

[415] Henry Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame*, 116-117, 121.
[416] Duffy, 101.
[417] Rubin, 63-66.
[418] Soergel, 2-4.

the Host while kneeling or otherwise putting themselves into a posture of humility and reverence.[419]

Visual practices regarding the Eucharist have some importance differences with the visual practices of other sacred images. Gazing the representations of divine aid and power, in whatever form, helped demarcate sacred space and helped render the divine intelligible, as something tangible and available for intercession. However, what the faithful saw, how they interpreted a visual interaction depended on the sacred object in question. As indicated by the importance of observing the processions for storm protections, Corpus Christi, and the elevation of the Eucharist during the celebration of Mass, the collective gaze featured greatly in worship.

With sacred images the viewer saw, at least in part, a visual discourse in which the faithful take part in an ongoing interpretation and imagining of a saint, the Virgin Mary, or Christ. Independent of the medium in which it was created, the faithful read in the sacred image the aspects and attributes of Jesus, Mary, a given saint, etc., that made them recognizable as subjects of veneration.[420] Aesthetics aside, sacred images have recourse to certain iconography that speaks to the Christians understanding and expectations of Christ and the saints. On the other hand, the Host did not have an iconography. Rather, its visual meaning came from what it was, the miraculously transformed body of Christ.

The significance of looking at the Host as Christ made possible acts of sacrilege through an averted gaze. A case from the Mexican tribunal heard in 1620 relates to a sacrilegious aversion of looking at the Host. In March of that year, the tribunal heard

[419] Rubin, 155.
[420] David Morgan, *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 21-22, 38.

testimony that Francisco Sequera averted his gaze from the elevated Eucharist.[421] The language of Francisco Sequera's case suggested that he had also turned away on several other occasions (*todas las veces que alsaban* [sic] *la hostia*), specifically in order to avoid looking on the consecrated Host (*por no ber* [sic] *el santo sacramento*). Adding a significant insult and deliberateness with which Sequera offended, he was also accused of spitting at the moment of elevation.[422]

However, Sequera was Portuguese, potentially altering the nature of his supposed sacrilege and its implication on lived religion. Philip II's ascension to the throne of Portugal in 1580 and the establishment of Portugal's own fiercely anti-Semitic Inquisition prompted Jewish and *converso* refugees to flee the country. As foreigners and potential heretics, the new Portuguese arrivals quickly came to the attention of the Holy Office across the Spanish world, since Portuguese *conversos* were closer to their Jewish roots.[423] Portuguese with Jewish origins became so pronounced that for many Spaniards "Portuguese" became synonymous with New Christian. In addition to being suspected of dubious loyalty to the crown, their potentially heretical beliefs made them suspect in the eyes of Spanish settlers and inquisitors.[424]

Similarly, a case in Guatemala against "Fulano" (so-and-so) Velázquez for closing his eyes at the Elevation of the Host was also indicative of an act of sacrilegious disrespect.[425] One possible understanding of the charge is that like Sequera, Velázquez averted his gaze because he was a "Judaizer" or crypto-Jew who wanted to disrespect

[421] AGN, Inq. vol. 328, exp. 8.
[422] AGN, Inq. vol. 328, exp. 8.
[423] Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, 224–225.
[424] Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Colonial Origins of the Civilized World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 32–33.
[425] AGN, Inq. vol. 474, Exp. 12.

Christ. Although an accusation or assumption of *converso* status is possible, the degradation of the case's document unfortunately renders all but the margins illegible. The use of the name Fulano, a filler name often used in lieu of a real name, might suggest that the accusation assumed the possibility of his Jewish origins. In his dictionary, Covarrubias, makes clear that the name, the Castilian variant of the Hebrew "Fulen," is a signal of disrespect for someone of little regard or social standing.[426] Be that as it may, for many early modern Spanish Catholics, the anti-Semitic tropes about the *conversos* or crypto-Jews about willful disrespect to the any number of Christian symbols or loci of divine power, especially the Host, made averted gazes part of willful *converso* aggression.

However, another explanation existed for an aversion to looking at the elevated Host that fit within the expectation of the miraculous presence of God. The presence of the Host featured into physical reaction of those witnessing its elevation, even if their interaction was only visible. This presence has implications far beyond the potential acts of what the Church deemed malevolent Jews or crypto-Jews. Catholics experienced the Host as a point of exchange and interaction with the divine. However, unlike sacred images that only represented idealizations of holy figures, in accordance with Catholic dogma the consecrated Host was Jesus and therefore God. Whether through the reception of communion, a visual interaction, or something intimate and physical, acts of sacrilege are closely related to the heterodox and aid in an understanding about how the faithful treated the presence of the divine in the Host.

As far as a visual interaction, the averted gaze attributed to Sequera and Velázquez could speak to a sign of intentional disrespect as much as a sign of the power

[426] Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española.*

manifest in the Host. A case in 1695, against two clerics from Coyoacán, Mexico that reference some kind of involuntary shaking or seizing (*temblores en el cuerpo*) at the elevation of the Host make more evident reactions indicative of an interaction with the divine. The observation of brothers Don Juan Florido and Don Pedro de Sossa having tremors in the presence of the Host violated expectations of how the faithful should react to the presence of God in the Host and raised suspicions about their faith.[427]

Catholics gazed reverentially at all manner of sacred objects, but none more than the Host. Being neglectful in the presence of a crucifix or a sacred image could, and did, bring unwanted attention for the Inquisition and raise questions about one's devotion to the cult of images or respect for the cross. However, indications of disrespect against other types of sacred objects were not codified into law. Failing to kneel or humble oneself before the Eucharist in procession, and neglecting to follow it, gazing on it reverentially, was a crime in secular legal codes in addition to any violations under ecclesiastical or inquisitorial jurisdiction.

The suspicion of anyone that did not participate in the communal act of gazing on the Host speaks to the overlapping meaning that the Host obtained as part of a manifestation of the community's interaction of social and religious hierarchy and religious identity as well as the spiritual power inherently present in the Eucharist. Disrespecting the Host by failing to gaze at the elevation challenged the sacrament's place as the commonly held central point of religiosity. But more than serve as an affront to the shared, public dimension of worship, it suggested the activity of malevolent spiritual forces. An inability or unwillingness to look at the Host might be a sign of the

[427] AGN, Inq. vol. 530, Exp. 12.

presence the devil or Demonic possession. The shaking or seizing of Florido and Sossa suggested revulsion in the presence of sacred objects.[428]

Figure 4 Isidoro Arredondo, Santa Clara ahuyentando a los infieles con la Eucaristía (Santa Clara scaring the infidels with the Eucharist), 1693. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

[428] Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 26.

Demonic reaction to the real presence of God in the Host relates to its various miraculous functions. In the case of signs of revulsion such as shaking or body tremors, the Host had the effect of disturbing satanic spiritual forces making it a common tool used in exorcising demons from possessed demoniacs. Despite the lack of a standardized ritual for exorcising demons, employing the Eucharist was a rational weapon in the exorcist's arsenal. Along with invocations of the name of Christ and the saints, exorcists used the Host to verify the presence of a demonic spirit and force it to identify itself. After identifying the entity, forcing the demoniac to eat the Eucharist helped in the process of forcefully expelling it from its victim.[429] Although many aspects of the practice of exorcism and the discernment between genuine possession and illness or fraud remained contentious, the Eucharist enjoyed legitimacy and coexisted with a broad range of practices to drive out demons.

Conclusion

In the form of the consecrated Host, in particular, the rituals, beliefs, and practices that surrounded it, many aspects of early modern Catholicism as a system of belief and as a collection of rituals become evident. Similarly, the veneration of the Host and its celebrations reflect an idealized vision of society demonstrating as envisioned by social and clerical elites. However, the lived religious experienced as practiced and as a system of belief becomes more complicated and more nuanced when considering the acts of

[429] Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 65.

disrespect and aggression against the Eucharist that appear to contradict the idea of Eucharistic veneration as a central and common element of the faith. The distinction between orthodox veneration of the Host vs. heterodox sacrilege looks more like an artificial construct when viewed in the context of sacrilege as a manifestation of lived religion. The full complexity and depth of religious experience is made intelligible by looking at the unusual, especially that which pertained to the physical presence of the divine.

When Fulano Velázquez and Francisco Sequera averted their gaze from the Host or Juan Florido and Pedro de Sossa shook at its elevation they violated a number of norms concerning the Host. Even more so, when Benito Ferrer and Reinaldo de Peralta physically attacked the Host, taking it from a priest and stomping on it, they went beyond an act that merely transgressed norms or offended, they committed actions that required a response from the community at large to pacify an angry God. In all of these cases, however, the faithful expressed variants in how Catholics could experience a direct contact with spiritual forces. Although through approved acts of veneration, or through actions deemed disrespectful or insulting, it is possible to better understand the lived religious experience, the acts of sacrilege offer insights into religiosity that go beyond a construct of religion divided into strict categories.

Religious expression pertaining to the cult of the Eucharist permeated the culture of Spain and the empire, making it a part of the broader culture. As a result, the expected conventions, such as those about how one should and should not look upon the consecrated Host, informed all kinds of behaviors and actions. Given the fact that the Host was omnipresent in terms of observance in the mass, in the dedications of the

religious brotherhoods, in the liturgical calendar, and in processions, among other ways, yet physically removed from the laity, vision was among the primary methods of interaction. Disrespectful aversion of the gaze, or, conversely, overly familiar gaze as the Host passed in procession, gave some semblance of control over how the faithful could interact. These kinds of acts remind us that the constraints of religiosity as prescribed by the clerical elites helped to give rise to other expressions.

These "other" expressions are all that much more important when considering cases of physical violence directed at the Eucharist. All of the public veneration of the Host, beginning with the strong association of the Habsburg monarchs as defenders of the Eucharist down to the devotions funded by the *cofradías*, put the transformed body of Christ into daily life while keeping it firmly in the control of the priests. Even with Tridentine encouragement of more frequent communion, the requisite confession deterred mass participation. As a result, the majority of Catholics continued to be constantly reminded of the miraculous powers of salvation and spiritual aid embedded in the Eucharist, while lacking a means to access it. The lack of access meant that however offensive and grievous the act, Benito Ferrer and Reinaldo de Peralta's wrestling the Host from a priest and stomping on it was, at least in part, an assertion of their ability to control how they interacted with Christ made present.

Conclusion

This project was born out of a question about behaviors and practices that struck me as incompatible with what I understood about Catholicism in the early modern Spanish world. The first time I encountered Juan Zaballos's colorful remarks about the Virgin Mary, a blasphemous oath both shocking and amusing, I began to wonder why a Spanish Catholic, living within reach of the Inquisition, would publicly utter such words. This discovery prompted inquiries into the other kinds words and actions covered here, which like Zaballos's words, did not seem to belong in the religion of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain as I understood it.

In my first years as a graduate student, my initial exposure to religiosity in Spain was through works such as Richard Kagan's *Lucrecia's Dreams*, Henry Kamen's *The Spanish Inquisition*, and Lu Ann Homza's *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance*, all of which introduced me to the concept that both the definition and practice of religious conformity were subject to contest and negotiation. However, these works did not yield any easy answers about how to reconcile the range of blasphemous speech and sacrilegious acts that coexisted with other aspects of religion. To juxtapose what I initially framed as "bad behavior" with Tridentine reforms, zealous devotion to the cult of the saints, pilgrimages to holy shrines, acts of charity, and a fervent belief and participation in the sacraments, raised questions about what I thought I knew about religion during these centuries of religious reform and counter reform.

Trying to make sense of the disconnect between the two, apparently opposite, views of Spanish religiosity offers new ways for historians and other scholars to look at the development of early modern religion in Europe and its American colonies, as well as how we approach studying the history of religion in general. The inclusion of sacrilege and blasphemy as part of a wide range of practices that constitute the lived religious experience form an image of religion in the Spanish empire that will, hopefully, both complicate and add nuance to early modern Spanish Catholicism. In its broadest sense, these chapters complicate the idea that Spain and its dominions were, on the whole, at the forefront of Tridentine religious reform and a militantly orthodox faith. Perhaps more importantly for the history of religion in Europe and the Americas, my dissertation offers new ways to understand what Tridentine Catholicism looked like as lived. A way of understanding that does not argue that reforms failed, but rather, that those reforms accommodated a broad range of religious practices.

Carlos Eire has categorized the religious upheaval that followed in the wake of Luther as neither the Reformation, with an emphasis on the capital letter, nor the Counter Reformation, but as multiple, overlapping reformations.[430] The lived religious aspect of the sacrilegious, can in many ways, fit within this reconceptualization and provide a way to access a given part of religious reform in a time and place. For example, among all of the various theological and ecumenical debates that flourished across post-reformation Western Europe, Eire posits that most were debates of exclusion, defining who did not belong within a community of believers with inclusion largely measured by the rejection of other beliefs. He adds that central to this notion of who constituted the community of believers was not a single religious doctrine, but rather a paradigm shift that

[430] Eire, *Reformations,* xi.

fundamentally altered how those of the western Christian tradition viewed their relationship of the sacred and the material. To a greater or lesser degree, Protestants desacralized the worlds in which they lived and increasingly viewed the divine as distinct and separated from the material world. In short, various Protestant groups defined themselves based on distance from the divine presence in the material. In contrast, Tridentine Catholic belief and practices were largely centered on a refutation of Protestant desacralizing, and Catholics became even more invested in the presence of the sacred in the material world.[431] The very turning point in how Protestants viewed the relationship between human and the divine functioned as a rallying point for Catholics of all kinds.

Thus, the desire to physically interact with divinity through some physical dimension, whether sound, sight, or touch, underscored Catholic religiosity. The acceptability of the words or actions is not relevant for understanding and tracking the engagement with the divine through the physical.

Including acts that are otherwise outside of, or abhorrent to, accepted religious practice provides us with a method to address two persistent questions in the historiography of Reformation studies and the early modern world: to what extent did the doctrines of Trent find their way into practice among the majority of the laity, and how can we better explain the secularization of the western world? That is not to say that adding a focus in the lived religious dimension of sacrilege and blasphemy to the history of religion will automatically provide answers to where and when Tridentine reforms were accepted, the degree to which Protestant doctrines spread, or the exact relationship of religious fragmentation to the emergence of religious skepticism; rather, sacrilege and

[431] Eire, *Reformations*, 744, 748-749, 754.

blasphemy expand the types of lived religious experience through which we can see when, where, and how, men and women tried to have an interaction with the divine.

Moreover, it suggests a way to get at the degree to which the faithful adopted changes in religious practices in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the Counter Reformation. Examining the sacrilegious and forbidden reveals not only what a given confessional community believed and practiced, but also what was tolerated. Although the detailed record keeping of the Spanish Inquisition makes it somewhat unique as an evidence base for the range of unusual actions that formed part of how men and women experienced their interaction with the divine, punishments against religious transgressions are one method for looking beyond the literature of the religious reformers and counter reformers or the rhetoric of religious polemicists.

There is another aspect of religious history to which the cases analyzed here can offer insights: the emotive aspects of religiosity. As strong feelings factors into the majority of cases investigated here, acts of sacrilege and blasphemy speak to the possibility of these actions revealing what the historian, Susan C. Karant-Nunn, refers to as "communities of emotion."[432] As historians of emotion have argued, culture plays a role in shaping emotion and emotional responses. How a given group of people perceives and reacts to events in their lives has not necessarily remained constant and understanding the shared norms in acting on feelings, such as anger, can speak to the means and institutions through which societies regulate how emotions are displayed.[433]

The anger at work in so many of the cases of blasphemy reveals that these kinds of speech acts constituted a sort of emotive norm to the extent that the sixteenth-century

[432] Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.
[433] Karant-Nunn, 4-5.

Spanish writer, Fray Luis de Granada, lamented that Catholics regularly blasphemed at the slightest provocation.[434] Likewise, the anger that men such as the soldier stationed in the Philippines, Juan de Solís, expressed as the cause for his slashing an image of the Virgin, and the "*enojo y cólera*" that made the clothing merchant, Diego Díaz, throw his shoe at the image of a saint, allow us access to patterns of feeling in the early modern Spanish world. Even the sacrilege spawned by an excess of positive emotions toward the material connections to the divine demonstrates that these acts are not only a means to gain access to otherwise invisible relationships with the divine, they also allow us to view patterns of expressing emotion.[435]

The history of the lived religion religious experience of the Spanish empire offers us something beyond a reevaluation of early modern Catholicism and its range of expressions and practices. Blasphemy and sacrilege, or any other manifestation of lived religion that falls outside of the rubrics of faith established by the organs of control such as the Church hierarchy or the Inquisition, provide access to an aspect of faith that defies categorization or codification. Likewise, lived religious beliefs, and their associated practices, resist an easy inclusion into the history of religion in the Western world, either as ecclesiastical history or histories that seek to explain religious reformation and the gradual movement toward modernity. To borrow from Robert Orsi, this reminds us that many aspects of religion, past and present, are part of "practices and imaginaries for which there is no name," rendering them "illegible."[436] He adds that the difficulty in seeing such practices as legible has protected them from "various officialdoms local or

[434] Flynn, "Blasphemy and the Play of Anger in Sixteenth-Century Spain", 30-31.
[435] AGN, Inq. vol. 435, exp. 177; AGN, Inq. vol. 413, exp. 14.
[436] Robert Orsi, *History and Presence*, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2016), 250.

foreign, and to all the laws and technologies that have been developed to control the gods and the practices associated with them."[437]

As one of the pioneers of lived religion as a concept, Orsi asserts that the divine never ceased to be present in people's experiences. As such, history can, and should, allow for the forces of the supernatural and divine to have agency. That is not to say that historians have to believe in God, Satan, or that some other supernatural forces exist, much less that they played an active role in human affairs. Rather, we need to be mindful that the subjects of our inquiries lived without a clear demarcation between the divine as either wholly present or entirely absent, images of the faith as either symbolic representations of the spiritual or as something spiritual itself, or in a world neatly divided into the natural and supernatural.[438]

Investigating swearing at God, attacking sacred images, and desecrating the consecrated Host as a function of belief and a need to interact with spiritual forces avoids the pitfalls of religious history highlighted by Brad Gregory. The emphasis on framing analysis of religious history, and how people's actions reflect their beliefs about their relationship with the divine is matched with an exhortation to not reduce religion to "nothing more than power relations, social relationships, psychological phenomena, cultural constructions, symbolic systems, and so forth."[439] Despite the fact that religion is inextricable from the aforementioned power relations, social relationships, psychological phenomena, cultural constructions, etc., all of those elements are still a part of, or another way to examine, what is ultimately people's values, ethical convictions, and cosmology.

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[437] Orsi, *History and Presence*, 250.
[438] Orsi, *History and Presence*, 4.
[439] Brad S. Gregory, "Historians' Metaphysical Beliefs and the Writing of Confessional Histories." *Fides et Historia* 43, no. 2 (September 2011): 11.

Considering acts of sacrilege and blasphemy that unambiguously contradicted Church teachings as another aspect of lived religion allows that Catholic men and women, even those who behaved in ways that might strike a modern reader as decidedly un-Catholic, lived in a world that allowed for the real presence of divine forces. For Catholics in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain and its empire, prayers, a crucifix, a rosary, an image of a saint, and especially the Host, contained, or at least could contain, spiritual power. Allowing that when the faithful blasphemed or lashed out at sacred objects, they were attempting to interact with spiritual forces establishes any historical analysis of their actions and beliefs in a manner that maintains consistency with Catholic metaphysics. Even if the vast majority of Catholics would not have articulated their belief in divine presences and the reality of the miraculous in terms of its metaphysics, as historians we need to be mindful to contextualize our scholarship on our subjects' action with regard to the world as they understood it. If we hope to understand lived religion of our subjects, we need to include the totality of their beliefs and actions.

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