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5-1-2015

## Trent: What happened at the council... and what happened across the atlantic

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### Recommended Citation

Melvin, Karen. "Trent: What Happened at the Council...and what Happened Across the Atlantic." *Boundary 2* vol. 42, Duke University Press, Durham, 2015. 195-209 <https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-2866763>

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*Trent: What Happened at the Council...and what happened across the Atlantic*

The Council of Trent looms large in the history of Catholicism during the early modern era. Rare is the work that does not refer to it or its effects, which is why it is surprisingly that there is so little English-language scholarship about how the council itself: how it functioned or why it produced what it did. Or at least this was the case until the recent publication of John W. O'Malley's *Trent: What Happened at the Council*, which steps into this void and, impressively, goes a long way toward filling it. But why exactly does Trent matter so much to the history of this era? What exactly did it do, and why did it take place as it did? To address these questions, I begin with O'Malley's work, what it does, and what it adds to our knowledge of Trent. I then explore the more specific issue of how we should make sense of an event that was, in O'Malley's telling, "Eurocentric," at a time when one of the church's defining features was its expansion outside of Europe. How did Trent matter outside of Europe? As an example, I turn to New Spain and how the council's decrees (and silences) played out in attempts to implement a reform agenda that included extending episcopal authority over regular orders.

First and foremost, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* is a narrative. It unfolds chronologically, beginning with the debates over calling the council, continuing through each of its three sessions (1545-1547, 1551-1552, 1562-1563), and concluding with its aftermath. The council proceeded in fits and starts, with some shared moments of heady optimism but longer stretches of widespread skepticism. From the start, it was marked by competing interests and weighed down by cumbersome procedures. Debates over some issues were heated and seemingly interminable, with one scribe's sense of futility at capturing it all summed up in the minutes:

“different opinions were expressed by different people” (Varia varii dixerunt).<sup>1</sup>

This narrative is geared to engage the interests of a broad audience. O’Malley explains that his goal is “to provide an introduction to the council that will be accessible to the general reader and perhaps helpful even to the professional historian and theologian.”<sup>2</sup> He thus weaves a story in which we see individuals working and politicking and hear voices commenting on the proceedings. For instance, we see the bishop of La Cava, angry at having been called “a knave or a fool”, grabbing his detractor’s beard and shaking him violently.<sup>3</sup> We hear the lament of a Cardinal clearly disappointed in what the council had accomplished in its opening sessions: “We thought you'd give us a bouncing baby boy, but you produced a crippled little girl.”<sup>4</sup>

But *Trent: What Happened at the Council* is far more than an antiquarian collection of names and dates punctuated by entertaining anecdotes. This is fine scholarship. O’Malley has brought together an extensive set of sources, forging though the council’s decrees and the records of proceedings (the latter published between 1901-2001 in a run of twenty volumes) and engaging a secondary literature that includes recent scholarship and, of course, the classic works of Hubert Jedin, whose history of Trent (1951-76) O’Malley described as “one of the greatest and most lasting monuments of historical scholarship produced since World War II.”<sup>5</sup> Whereas Jedin’s four volumes (only the first two translated into English) revel in details, O’Malley’s volume weighs in at a slim 250 pages and takes a wider-angled perspective. O’Malley is the first to realize the enormity of the task of boiling down so complex a topic into a highly accessible format, cautioning his readers, “I gambol blithely through minefields. Omission and simplification are inevitable.”<sup>6</sup> Such modest protestations notwithstanding, he has succeeded in providing a narrative with an underlying structure that illustrates not only what the council did but why. As he explains, “I lay out the context in which the council took place, the problems it

faced, the solutions it adopted. I provide a framework for understanding the council as a single though extraordinarily complex event. The council has an internal logic of sorts that configured its seemingly scattered and uncoordinated elements. Once that logic is grasped, the many and seemingly discrete decisions the council took can be seen to fit into a general coherent pattern.<sup>7</sup>

What is that internal logic? Most of it can be grouped around what I see as five interrelated points. First, the council came about in response to the challenges presented by Martin Luther, the former Augustinian whose critiques “set the agenda” for Trent.<sup>8</sup> The council’s members focused on three of his claims in particular: justification was God’s work rather than the result of human agency—the idea captured in the phrase “justification by faith alone” (*sola fides*); biblical authority supported the existence of only two, not seven, sacraments; the church was corrupt and in need of reform.

Second, the impetus to call the council came from the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope, who agreed it was needed to counter Luther but who disagreed how that challenge should be met. Pope Paul III wanted a short meeting to condemn heretics and clarify doctrine. Charles V, who was facing a rebellion of Protestant princes and wanted political stability, sought reconciliation with Lutherans. Rather than doctrine, he thought the council should focus on reform. Long after these two men were gone from the scene, the twin pillars of reform and doctrine dominated the council, which alternated agenda items between them though all three sessions. It did so, however, within a scope that limited doctrine to conflicting Catholic and Protestant issues and reform to the institutional church’s offices of the papacy, episcopacy, and pastorate. The council had little to say, for example, about regular orders of men or women other than in relation to episcopal authority.

Third, papal authority and threats to it from conciliarism (the idea that councils hold

authority over the pope) remained a charged issue throughout Trent and effectively took action on some issues off the table. Papal fear of conciliarism had delayed the calling of a council to deal with Luther, despite calls for one as early as 1522 from the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire. Once the council finally convened, it avoided the issue of papal authority altogether, even at the expense of not responding to some of Lutherans' harshest critiques.

Fourth, the council's structure and composition gave prominence to certain voices. The pope, although never actually present at the council, wielded control through his appointed legates, who ran sessions and determined agendas. The regular flow of directives from popes to legates prompted the Venetian envoy to remark that the Holy Spirit did not descend on the council from heaven but arrived in the mailbag from Rome.<sup>9</sup> Also influential were the secular rulers who sent envoys (whose importance is often forgotten) and determined the delegations from their territories. For example, French kings balked at a council in rival German lands and did not send a significant delegation until midway through the third session. Such considerations, along with the heavy expense of maintaining delegates, challenges of travel, and leering about what the council could accomplish (or what the pope would allow it to accomplish), limited the number of attendees to a small percentage of invitees. The council opened with only seventeen bishops and five heads of Mendicant orders; the number of voting members was fewer than one hundred during the first two sessions; peak attendance averaged only two hundred during the third session. Furthermore, the delegates did not evenly represent Catholic lands, with their composition heavily favoring the Mediterranean, especially Italy. For example, during the third session, O'Malley counts 195 Italian, 31 Spanish, 27 French, 8 Greek, 3 Dutch, 3 Portuguese, 3 Hungarian, 3 Irish, 3 Polish, 2 German, 1 Czech, and 1 Croatian representatives.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, O'Malley situates the council's theological debates and internal rivalries within the

context of international politics, so that his narrative provides “as much a political as a theological and ecclesiastical story.”<sup>11</sup> The council took place against the backdrop of warring Catholic and Lutheran princes, no less intense rivalries among Catholic princes, and looming threats from the Turks. For example, Europe’s power rivalries are central to O’Malley’s explanation for why the council dragged on over three decades. The council’s first session had come to a close after legates announced a sickness—possibly indicating the arrival of the plague—had been reported in Trent and asked the delegation to vote on leaving the city. Was the epidemic real or were legates maneuvering to move the council from German lands into Bologna in the Papal States? Was Pope Paul III, anxious about how much influence Charles V would wield if he were victorious in his war against Lutherans (currently going well), trying to shift the balance of power? The delegation split largely along “national” lines, with the majority Italian bishops approving the move against the protests of delegates from Spanish and Hapsburg lands. Those protestors, following Charles’s instructions, refused to move, and an atrophied council lingered in Bologna until the pope sent everyone home, without having officially ended or suspended the council. Without the move, O’Malley concludes, Trent could have come to a speedy conclusion.<sup>12</sup>

O’Malley’s internal logic allows readers to see how and why “what happened at the council” happened as it did. The multiple interests pulling in multiple directions fostered inertia and meant action typically depended on compromise. Substantive results were so difficult to achieve that, as O’Malley notes, fewer than half of the council’s twenty-five sessions produced degrees of substance.<sup>13</sup> Rather than a single definitive statement on each major issue, the council produced multiple decrees, its progress spread piecemeal across the decades.

On the issue of reform, the most significant decrees centered on the pastoral role of bishops

and priests. Bishops' job descriptions were redefined and fleshed out with the care of souls as their primary responsibility. Preaching was to be their principal duty, and they were exhorted to lead their pastorate by example. Because levels of education varied among priests, Trent also took steps to ensure priests were prepared to assume this caritative role, calling for each diocese to establish lectureships to instruct them, and, more famously, to create seminaries that would offer free education to candidates for the priesthood. But "the defining element"<sup>14</sup> of reform was a residence requirement that established the norm of one diocese per bishop and one parish per pastor and instructed these officials to live in their parish or see. A residency requirement ran counter against many churchmen's financial interests. It also raised the "untouchable issue"<sup>15</sup> of papal authority because the pope's power to give dispensations that would allow one man to hold multiple benefices (an expedient widely used to reward favored individuals and to provide salaries for essential members of the Roman curia) would undermine any of the council's regulations. Reformers, especially from the Spanish faction, fought to declare episcopal residence a law of God (*jus divinum*), which would preclude these dispensations. The Italian faction saw this as an attack on papal authority, and the resulting impasse almost brought Trent to a close, until midway through the third session, when a new papal legate, Giovanni Morone, engineered a compromise by shifting residence from an issue of *jus divinum* to one of bishops' personal conscience.

O'Malley makes the case that Trent's most significant contribution to doctrine was its decrees on justification.<sup>16</sup> The council's solution to the question of how one was saved—it was God's work but human agency contributed—was not as cut as dried as might be assumed, especially since some theologians, especially Augustinians, did not think that human agency played a role. Another important effect of Trent's doctrinal decrees was that the church that

emerged from the council was more sacramental in nature. The council defined the Mass as a true sacrifice (not just a commemoration) and standardized (even if it did not require) the Roman Rite. It also confirmed there were indeed seven sacraments and defined some of their characteristics. For example, it established that all the faithful were to confess and take Communion at least once a year and, addressing a point of debate, affirmed the benefits of taking them more frequently. Still, much about doctrine was left unsaid, in some instances because time ran out. Decrees on indulgences, Purgatory, and images were packed into the council's last days without real discussion; work on a new missal and breviary was postponed and tasked to the papacy. In other instances, the silence came from attempts to dodge controversy. Decrees affirming Latin versions of the liturgy and Bible neither explicitly permitted nor outlawed versions in the vernacular; decrees affirming that Communion bread and wine contained the same Real Presence left unresolved questions about whether the laity could accept both forms.

O'Malley's interpretation of the council gives its decrees the context needed to understand them beyond simple face value, historicizes dogma (which can easily appear as timeless), and, perhaps most importantly, distinguishes between what was the work of the council and what were later interpretations of its decrees. He leaves his readers with a picture of a council that, despite the many challenges it faced and the limits to its accomplishments, put an indelible stamp on Catholicism. It may not have achieved its goal of reconciling with Lutherans, but it did reconcile Catholics.<sup>17</sup> It may not have resolved many pressing issues within the church, but it "influenced to greater or lesser degrees all aspects of ecclesiastical life and of the moral climate of Europe."<sup>18</sup> It may have left unfinished business, but institutions in Rome continued its work through a papacy willing to tackle reform; a Congregation of the Council, established in 1564 as the official interpreter of Trent's reform decrees; and a Congregation of Rites, established in

1588 to handle liturgical matters. Furthermore, the Catechism, Profession of Faith, and Index of Prohibited Books produced in the council's aftermath were important interpretations of the council and "can with some justice be called Tridentine".<sup>19</sup> In addition to what was happening in Rome, new vehicles were created to bring the council's norms to localities, including the annual synods that the council decreed each bishop should convoke and Carlo Borromeo's *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Acts of the Church of Milan), a practical "how-to" manual for implementing what was decided at Trent, which circulated widely and influenced prelates throughout the Catholic world.<sup>20</sup> For O'Malley, the distinctions between the closely related phenomena of the council, its successor institutions, and its points of implementation are important to debunking the myth (still alive and well, he notes) that blurs these phenomena into something called "Trent". By separating what the council actually decreed and the life those decrees took on afterward, he puts the council in its proper perspective. For instance, rather than the ubiquitous source of reform or the authority on orthodoxy, it served as one source and one authority. He concludes that, "Trent was, therefore, pervasively influential, but, even so, it was not Catholicism, nor did it intend to be."<sup>21</sup>

What "Trent" actually looked like in practice differed by location. Indeed, whether or not the council's decrees were even enacted depended on the approval of secular rulers, which occurred at varying speed, such as Phillip II's Spanish territories in 1564 and France in 1615. (Although in the former case, the king was careful to ensure that royal authority would not be compromised by the implementation of the council's decrees, and in the latter case, the Estates General, and not the crown, approved them.) How frequently synods met, what they decided when they did meet, how the *Acta* was interpreted depended on individuals, traditions, and circumstances at local levels. "Its enactments," O'Malley notes, "surely did not pass pure into the church or into the

world at large. They were mediated by the hearts, minds, ambitions, and fears of the human beings responsible for making them operative, popes, other rulers great and small, bishops, preachers, theologians, even painters and their patrons, and many others besides.”<sup>22</sup> Although O’Malley does not follow the story of “Trent” into its many local implementations—what most scholarship on Trent to this point has done—his interpretation allows for better analysis of those local stories, helping avoid the dangerous assumptions that the council was *the* source of reform or that it provided definitive judgements on issues.

An assumption O’Malley seems to make about the council is that its influence was predominantly contained within Europe. In O’Malley’s interpretation, the council was a European affair, with European participants and an “exclusively Eurocentric focus.”<sup>23</sup> His rationale is that the council never addressed missions. The omission of this issue might seem odd given that the council met during a massive push to spread Christianity across the globe, when Mendicants and Jesuits were establishing new missions in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. It also took place during a particularly optimistic phase about the potential of these missions. For example, Franciscans in New Spain believed they were forming the most perfect form of Christianity yet attained, one that heralded the Apocalypse.<sup>24</sup> But O’Malley makes clear why the council, with its circumscribed focus on reform and doctrine, did not concern itself with missions. Furthermore, he notes that because Trent was primarily concerned with the “institutional” church, its effects within the orders running these missions would have been limited over and above the effects of geographical distance. “For Jesuits working in distant Lima or even in Manila it was still palpable, but how palpable, for instance, for those working in Nagasaki or Beijing?”<sup>25</sup>

In making this assumption, O’Malley underestimates the usefulness of his work in

understanding Trent's local implementations outside of Europe. The key step is considering nonmissionary and more "institutional" forms of Catholicism outside of Europe. O'Malley's identification of the church outside Europe as missionary best fits the period when the council was meeting. Even as the council was concluding, however, the situation was changing in parts of the Americas. One of the first places to establish a church with deep local roots and goals beyond native evangelization was New Spain. By the 1570s, major demographic and cultural changes had created urban centers where large, sometimes majority, segments of the population consisted of Europeans, their descendants, people of mixed race, and acculturated Indians. Silver mining, large-scale agriculture, and new industry created wealth that funded Catholic projects, such as construction of churches and convents, endowment of benefices, and sponsorship of elaborate feast day celebrations. In 1571 a tribunal of the Inquisition was established in Mexico City to police the behaviors of non-Indian populations. (Indians were explicitly excluded from its jurisdiction.) The Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian orders, which had arrived decades earlier to work in missions, responded to this changing society and turned more of their attention to urban populations. They were joined in these urban occupations by Jesuits, Discalced Carmelites, and Mercedarians. These regular orders established independent provinces and opened novitiates to train priests, who were now, more often than not, creoles (people of European descent who were born in the Americas). The secular branch of the church, headed in Mexico City since 1542, when it became an archdiocese, was strengthening its own hierarchies. Fueled by an influx of creole priests and buttressed by royal decrees, it began taking over some of the Mendicants' *doctrinas* (proto-parishes that were meant to be turned over once their Indian residents had been Christianized). Although ministering to Indians and, especially in places outside cities, missionizing were still crucial parts of Catholic labors, they were but one part of a

broader and increasingly home-run program.<sup>26</sup>

Not surprisingly, Trent helped shape these Catholic institutions and practices. Two provincial councils met in its immediate aftermath, the Second Mexican Provincial Council (1565) and Third Mexican Provincial Council (1585), and both sought to codify how Tridentine decrees would apply to the Archbishopric of Mexico and its suffragan bishoprics.<sup>27</sup> One of the Inquisition's charges was to ensure that works on the Index of Prohibited Books did not circulate. There were new efforts to found seminaries, even if they had little immediate payoff. (It took until the 1640s and the arrival of Bishop Juan de Palafox y Mendoza to establish a seminary in Puebla; Mexico City's did not open its doors until 1690; and even though Guatemala founded one in 1603, it remained poorly funded through the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup>) Elsewhere Simon Ditchfield has demonstrated the circulation of Borromeo's *Acta* around the globe, including its influence on prelates in Mexico.<sup>29</sup> William B. Taylor, in his study of parish priests, found that "most of the council's provisions were widely adopted in New Spain.... They influenced colonial practice—in the extensive authority of bishops, in sacramental practices, in the ways in which laity and clergy were separated, in injunctions on virtuous, exemplary behavior, and in the standard metaphors for the duties of parish priests."<sup>30</sup>

To delve deeper into questions of how Trent was mattered in New Spain and to explore how O'Malley's interpretation of Trent can help make sense of its global effects, I examine an issue of particular concern in New Spain: episcopal authority and regular orders. While limiting bishops to one see and priests to one parish may have been the major topic on the council's reform agenda, residency was a less pressing issue in New Spain than the inherent conflict between Trent's decrees privileging diocesan structures and Mendicant orders' special papal privileges. Trent's decrees had established that bishops had the right to supervise regular clergy's

pastoral work but, but the council, in an effort to avoid issues that raised the specter of papal authority, had not commented on what to do about papal exemptions from episcopal oversight. The question took on additional dimensions in New Spain because Mendicant missionaries arrived not only with their customary exemptions but with unique papal dispensations that essentially allowed them to function like parish priests, except without episcopal oversight. For example, the bull *Omnimoda* (1522) had granted Mendicants the right to administer all sacraments as well as to perform some acts that normally required a bishop, if a bishop was absent or more than two days' journey away.<sup>31</sup>

In the council's immediate wake, the main question regarding episcopal authority was how to handle these unique privileges. Successive popes issued a string of contradictory decrees allowing and then disallowing Mendicant privileges that conflicted with Trent. The Spanish crown, thanks to its *patronato real* (special papal privileges, including the right to appoint bishops and collect tithes), also weighed in on the question. In an example of how Phillip II took care that Trent-inspired reforms would not compromise royal authority, in 1568 he issued a royal cedula ordering the implementation of Pius V's brief that effectively countermanded Trent's decrees, allowing that "the friars of the Mendicant orders can administer the Holy Sacraments in all Indian towns according to and in the manner that they did before the Holy Council of Trent."<sup>32</sup> Just a few years later, however, he switched course with the *Ordenanza del Patronazgo* (1574), which sought to bring Mendicants under stronger crown control by subjecting them to more ecclesiastical authority and pushing them to turn over their doctrinas to secular clergy. The Third Provincial Council also attempted to sort through the maze of decrees, rulings, and privileges on the subject and debated whether or not the relevant Tridentine decrees on the subject were a good fit for New Spain's current situation. Opinions at the Council did not always

fall neatly along clear regular/secular lines, either. The Bishop of Oaxaca, Pedro de Feria, sent memorials strongly advocating for Mendicant privileges, while the Jesuit Provincial, Juan de Plaza, as well as bishops who were also members of Mendicant orders supported subjecting Mendicants to greater episcopal authority. In the end, the council ended up unequivocally rejecting Mendicant privileges and requested that the Mendicants turn over half of their doctrinas to secular clergy.<sup>33</sup>

Such questions about whether Mendicants should administer doctrinas and what aspects of Mendicants' work in doctrinas bishops could supervise continued over the next two centuries, but they were increasingly accompanied by a new set of issues: wrangling over the privileges Mendicants held in support of their traditional urban ministries. Could bishops require them to preach at parish events, regulate the hours they opened their church doors, or determine which friars were allowed to offer confession? In short, how much authority did bishops have over regular clergy in the roles that they had established for themselves in medieval Europe?

To illustrate how O'Malley's interpretation of the Council of Trent can help make sense of the debates surrounding these questions, I offer the example of a conflict that took place in Valladolid (now Morelia), an important city about a week's journey west of Mexico City and the seat of the Bishopric of Michoacán. At first glance, the feud that Bishop of Michoacán Dr. Don Juan Joseph de Escalona y Calatayud (1729-1737) waged with Discalced Carmelites in his diocese might seem to be been personally motivated.<sup>34</sup> After all, not one but two friars from this order had preached "scandalous" sermons against him in his own cathedral. But far more was at stake than the bishop's honor, and the wave of litigation that followed in the wake of these sermons reveals a Tridentine bishop seeking to expand episcopal authority over regular orders. His efforts focused on three areas: punishing friars, granting friars permission to preach and

confess, ensuring friars participated in public processions, and inspecting confraternities. Placed in the larger context of similar attempts by his fellow bishops reveals the early eighteenth century as a time when prelates in New Spain made significant inroads in their quest to implement visions of Tridentine church where the bishop, and his principal duty of caring for souls, was at the center of a reformed church.

The impetus for Bishop Escalona's offensive against privileges of regular clergy was the second of the two sermons criticizing him, Fr. Joseph de Jesús María's sermon during Advent in 1732. Escalona pursued Fr. Joseph's punishment with unusual vigor. Within a week of the sermon, he had determined the preacher guilty and ordered his superior, Fr. Miguel de la Santísima Trinidad, to punish Fr. Joseph publicly. Although Fr. Miguel agreed that Fr. Joseph had committed an "enormous offense" and should be punished, he reserved for himself the sole right to determine that punishment. The bishop refused to relinquish his right to punish the preacher and declared himself Fr. Joseph's new judge, but the Carmelites were a step ahead of him. When armed men arrived to arrest Fr. Joseph, he was already gone, having been sentenced to ten years banishment from Michoacán. A furious Bishop Escalona not only ordered Fr. Joseph's return but demanded that Fr. Miguel be removed from office for disobedience.<sup>35</sup>

By insisting on his rights to punish Fr. Joseph, Bishop Escalona was treading a fine line. Regular orders had the legal right to discipline their own members, and the privilege was difficult to overturn, even in the most serious of cases, such as in 1789 when an allegedly drunk Mercedarian stabbed and killed his prelate in Mexico City.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, similar cases of friars using the pulpit in quarrels with secular clergy make clear that Bishop Escalona's response to the two Carmelite sermons—to take matters into his own hands—was not the only way to impose punishment from outside the order. For example, when two Augustinian friars preached

questionable sermons in Mexico City, the Inquisition quickly intervened. Bishop Escalona offered no explanation for his course of action with Fr. Joseph, but the actions he took in its wake suggest a likely possibility: he saw an opportunity to extend episcopal authority over regular orders.

The bishop began pushing his right to regulate Mendicant preachers and confessors. The same day that he demanded Fr. Joseph's return and Fr. Miguel's ouster from office, Bishop Escalona announced that he was to begin his episcopal visitation of Valladolid and wrote to the Carmelites inquiring if all their licenses to preach and confess were current. These licenses from the bishop allowed priests from regular orders to preach in any church outside their order's churches or to offer confession. This licensing requirement began in medieval Europe amid conflict about the orders' independence in these activities, and Trent's decrees further supported the bishops' rights to require licenses. But the council's unwillingness to confront issues of papal authority left open the question of whether priests could be excluded from these requirements if they had papal dispensations. In New Spain, the Third Provincial Council had confirmed that friars did indeed need these licenses, but regular clergy responded by citing papal bulls and royal orders that they claimed allowed them to work without such licenses. During the seventeenth century, a number of conflicts broke out over this issues, most notably Bishop of Puebla Juan de Palafox y Mendoza's quarrel with the Jesuits, which exploded in 1647 when they refused his order to present their licenses on the grounds that they had papal authorization to work anywhere in the world.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the question of whether or not regular clergy needed these licenses had become a moot point as regular clergy generally accepted their necessity. So when Bishop Escalona demanded to examine the licenses of the Valladolid

Carmelites, they never questioned whether or not the licenses were needed. Instead, the issue was whether a bishop had the power to make them renew licenses that had not expired. The Carmelites argued that as long as licenses were current, they did not require revalidation from new prelates nor could they be revoked without just cause. The friars therefore refused to submit to new examinations, prompting Bishop Escalona to revoke all their licenses. A few months later during his inspection of the city of Salvatierra, he did the same thing to Carmelites there. Notably, neither Escalona nor his fellow bishops who engaged in similar battles attacked friars' capacities to serve as preachers or confessors, and, given the great need for these services, it is doubtful that the bishop wanted to exclude friars from this work. Instead, bishops like Escalona were seeking to establish greater control over regular clergy, and their strategy was to push the primacy of Trent's statutes over papal dispensations.

A final point of conflict between Carmelites and the bishop reveals a similar battle between conflicting Tridentine statutes and special papal privileges. It began in the nearby cities of Salvatierra and Celaya when the bishop ordered the Carmelites to show him the account books of each convent's Confraternity of the Scapular. Escalona's claim to see the books was based on Tridentine episcopal supremacy and bishops' right to inspect lay organizations in regular churches. That the bishop had the right to inspect some lay organizations was not a point of contention, but the Carmelites argued these particular groups were different. The Confraternity of the Scapular, they claimed, was "one and the same Body as the principal Order,"<sup>41</sup> so closely tied to the order and its traditions that it remained solely under the order's jurisdiction. Its special privileges had been confirmed in various papal bulls, they told Escalona, and if he was going to inspect it, he needed special permission from the pope. Mendicant orders had long hosted such organizations with these special exemptions from episcopal oversight, but bishops were now

challenging these exemptions. After Bishop Escalona remained firm in his demands to inspect the confraternity's books, the Carmelite prelates responded by extinguishing these two branches of the confraternity. Escalona then informed the priors only he had the right to extinguish the groups and stepped in to oversee them, ordering all dues and investment income be given to the his local.

Trent's favoring of episcopal authority but unwillingness to confront papal dispensations created the space for conflict on each of the three issues between Bishop Escalona and the Discalced Carmelites. But where and why they took place, as well as how they were resolved, depended, as O'Malley reminds us, on local circumstances and the groups and individuals involved. In New Spain, the king and his more local officials played crucial roles in these resolutions. As the monarchy came to prefer more easily controlled secular clergy, bishops became more likely to instigate new battles and more likely to emerge victorious from them. The example of Bishop Escalona and the Discalced Carmelites reveals the extent of this royal support. Throughout the four years of wrangling, all parties involved repeatedly appealed to New Spain's highest court, the Audencia, which repeatedly championed the bishop's cause. The Carmelites responded by appealing to Madrid, and in 1736 the king issued an order addressing each point of contention. The king's determinations offered few statements of direct support for either side, but they were hardly neutral, and their lack of support for the Carmelites against Escalona's innovations speaks volumes. The king did not refute Escalona's claims to possess the right to punish friars and simply declared that Fr. Joseph, whose imprudent sermon opened the conflict, had been sufficiently punished by his prelates. On the issue of licenses to preach and confess and inspections of confraternities, the king did not attempt to undo any of Escalona's actions and declared that the bishop and friars were to follow the determinations of Trent. While

the Council of Trent may not have been willing to comment on the points where their decrees and papal privileges ran counter to each other, the Spanish monarchy was. In these early eighteenth-century efforts to bolster episcopal authority, it became the arbiter of one of Trent's great silences.

Whatever tensions still remained between Escalona and friars, they came to a definitive end in 1737, when the bishop died of dysentery. But, with at least tacit, if not direct, royal support, other bishops' encroachments on regular privileges continued. Reviews of licenses to preach and confess became standard practice, as did inspections of orders' special confraternities, despite their increasingly impotent papal dispensations. It may have taken almost two centuries, but Tridentine reform was significantly reshaping the institutional church in New Spain. Moreover, it was doing so in ways that not unlike what was happening in parts of Europe, where bishops and regulars struggled over many of the same issues.<sup>44</sup> How exactly what happened in New Spain fits with what happened in Spain, France, Poland, or other parts of Catholic Europe is a question that still needs an answer, but it is a question that, thanks to O'Malley study of Trent, which has so eloquently reminded us of the council's context, achievements, and implications, can now be asked.

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<sup>1</sup> John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Harvard, Belknap Press, 2013), 81.

<sup>2</sup> O'Malley, 11.

<sup>3</sup> O'Malley, 109.

<sup>4</sup> O'Malley, 99.

<sup>5</sup> John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 13. Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*. Trans. Ernest Graf. (B. Herder Book Co., 1957, 1961).

- <sup>6</sup> O'Malley, 11.
- <sup>7</sup> O'Malley, 11-12.
- <sup>8</sup> O'Malley, 12.
- <sup>9</sup> O'Malley, 9.
- <sup>10</sup> O'Malley, 6.
- <sup>11</sup> O'Malley, 7.
- <sup>12</sup> O'Malley, 126.
- <sup>13</sup> O'Malley, 248.
- <sup>14</sup> O'Malley, 100.
- <sup>15</sup> O'Malley, 22.
- <sup>16</sup> O'Malley, 107.
- <sup>17</sup> O'Malley, 250.
- <sup>18</sup> O'Malley, 273.
- <sup>19</sup> O'Malley, 267.
- <sup>20</sup> Simon Ditchfield, "Tridentine Catholicism" in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Ashgate, 2013), 21.
- <sup>21</sup> O'Malley, 274.
- <sup>22</sup> O'Malley, 275.
- <sup>23</sup> O'Malley, 274.
- <sup>24</sup> John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World* (University of California Press, 1970).
- <sup>25</sup> O'Malley, 274.
- <sup>26</sup> Karen Melvin, *Building Colonial Cities of God: Mendicant Orders and Urban Culture in New Spain* (Stanford University Press, 2012); Stafford Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras: Catholic Reform and Royal Power in New Spain, 1571-1591* (University of California Press, 1987); John Schwaller, *The Church and Clergy in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
- <sup>27</sup> Luis Martínez Ferrer, ed. *Decretos del Concilio Tercero Provincial Mexicano (1585)* (El Colegio de Michoacán, 2009); Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*.
- <sup>28</sup> Poole, *Pedro Moya de Contreras*, 132; Adriaan C. van Oss, *Catholic Colonialism: A Parish History of Guatemala* (Cambridge, 1986), 130.

- <sup>29</sup> Ditchfield “Tridentine Catholicism” 22-23; Simon Ditchfield, “San Carlo Borromeo in the Construction of Roman Catholicism as a World Religion” *Studia Borromaica* 25 (2011): 3-23.
- <sup>30</sup> William B. Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 157.
- <sup>31</sup> Robert C. Padden “The Ordenanza del Patronazgo of 1574: An Interpretative Essay” in John F. Schwaller, *The Church in Colonial Latin America* (SR Books, 2000), 31.
- <sup>32</sup> Recopilacion de leyes de los reynos de las Indias, Libro I, tit. XIV, ley 47; “para que los Religiosos de las Ordenes Mendicantes puedan administrar los Santos Sacramentos en todos los Pueblos de Indios, segun y de la forma que lo hazian antes del Santo Concilio de Trento.”
- <sup>33</sup> Poole, *Moya de Contreras*, 132-147.
- <sup>34</sup> A version of this case study appears in Melvin, *Building Colonial Cities of God*, 171-181.
- <sup>35</sup> Information on the case comes from the following sources: Archivo General de las Indias (AGI) México 1058 “Memorial Adjustado de el Expediente, que en el Real, Y Supremo Consejo de las Indias, sala de Gobierno, se sigue entre partes, el Reverendo Obispo de Mechoacan Y Los Religiosos Carmelitas descalzos de aquel obispado”; Archivo Histórico de la Casa de Morelos (AHCM) Diocesano, Gobierno, Siglo XVIII, Religiosos, Carmelitas, caja 212 exp. 12; Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia (BNAH) Fondo Vicente Lira vol. 20 “Libro donde sea puntan los diffinitorios”; Centro de Estudios de Historia de México Carso (Carso), Fondo DCCXXVIII “Libro de las Cosas Notables....”
- <sup>36</sup> Bancroft Library Mexican Manuscripts 85:2 *Escrito presentado por la Sagrada Provincia de Nuestra Señora de la Merced*.
- <sup>37</sup> Biblioteca Nacional (BN) Archivo Franciscano (AF) caja 106 exp. 1461 and caja 138 exp. 1710.
- <sup>38</sup> Archivo Provincial, Provincia Agustiniiana de San Nicolás de Tolentino de Michoacán (AHPAM) Libro C-03-01-06. The resolution was made between 1700 and 1703.
- <sup>39</sup> Archivo Histórico del Arzobispado de México (AHAM) L10A-10.
- <sup>40</sup> Robles, vol. II, p. 277; Carso Fondo CDXXVIII; AHCM Diocesano, Gobierno, Procesos Legales, Cofradías, caja 925, exp. 29; “obligado a nras cofradías a salir por sí sólas y sin el concurso de la santa comunidad.”
- <sup>41</sup> AGI México 1058 f 29; “un mismo Cuerpo con la principal Religion.”
- <sup>42</sup> AGI México 716; AHCM Diocesano, Justicia, Procesos Contenciosos, Cofradías, caja 580,

exp. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Inspections are recorded in episocpal records and the confraternities' records. See Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de San Alberto de los Carmelitas Descalzos (AHPCD) carps 1812, 1821, 1841; AHAM Libros de visita L10A/10, L10A/11, Caja 30CL Libro 3.

<sup>44</sup> For example, Robin Briggs, "The Sins of the People: Auricular Confession and the Imposition of Social Norms" in *Communities of Belief: Cultural and Social Tension in Early Modern France* (Clarendon Press, 1989), 351-52.