5-12-2024

Diplomacy and the Dead: Authenticating the Sacred in Early Modern Spain

Caroline Barraco
Syracuse University

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers two case studies from the transnational Spanish relic trade at the turn of the seventeenth century. The first study is that of Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas, a Spanish ambassador active at the end of the sixteenth century who was a conduit for antique and medieval relics for elite collectors within Spain. The second is of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, was a Spanish noblewoman who traveled to England at the beginning of the seventeenth century and retrieved, prepared, and transported the bodies of Catholic martyrs back to Spain as new relics. These case studies reveal how the movement of relics can be used to map early modern networks of social and political power and to uncover connections between secular and religious networks. In addition, they demonstrate the role of relics in debates about the nature of authenticity and the construction of shared religious and national identities in the Counter-Reformation.

DIPLOMACY AND THE DEAD:
AUTHENTICATING THE SACRED IN EARLY MODERN SPAIN

by

Caroline Barraco

B.A., University of Iowa, 2016

Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in History

Syracuse University
May 2024

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the support of far more people than I can fit on this page. First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Brian Brege, for his invaluable expertise and advice on all stages of this project and for the time he invested in helping me to grow as a historian and individual. I am also grateful to the members of my committee, Dr. Samantha Herrick, Dr. Mackenzie Cooley, and Dr. Sally Cornelison, who have contributed feedback, additional sources, and research assistance, to the other Syracuse faculty who have offered their insight, and to Christina Cleason for her expert problem-solving.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to fellow graduate students who have generously shared their knowledge and experience while providing essential community and commiseration, including Caleb Fouts, Cameron Kline, Jessica Hogbin, Ian Glazman-Schillinger, Sofia Gabaldon, Peter Roy, Emma Waney, Jenny Paszik, and others. And of course, to my friends outside of history who have been endlessly supportive while hearing more about dead saints than they ever wished to know, including Cait, Jenna, Jesse, Christopher, Colin, Calynn, and Audrey.

The archivists at the Archivo General de Palacio (AGP), the Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), the Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza in Toledo (AHN), the Real Biblioteca del Palacio Real de Madrid (RBP), and the Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid (ARCM), where the research for this project was completed, also deserve recognition for their assistance during the research phase. This goes especially for the archivists at the Archivo General de Simancas, whose collections comprise the majority of material for this project, for their guidance and suggestions for additional directions for research. This thesis also received financial support from the Syracuse University History Department, Roscoe Martin Fund, and the Center for European Studies.

Contents

Introduction

In 1808, in the early days of what would be the Peninsular War, a contingent of troops from Napolean Bonaparte's French Empire raided the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo at the Escorial palace complex in the remote countryside outside of Madrid. El Escorial had recently been the site of a conspiracy in which the pro-French Crown Prince Ferdinand had plotted a coup against his father, Charles IV of Spain. Ferdinand was arrested, but the Tumult of Aranjuez, a popular uprising to the south, soon convinced the broadly unpopular Charles IV to abdicate in favor of Ferdinand. Bonaparte used this unrest to seize the crown for his brother and sent his troops into the heart of Spain, where they plundered the country's cultural treasures, including those at San Lorenzo.

When they entered the monastery's basilica, the French were confronted with the greatest examples of baroque ecclesiastical architecture in Iberia. On either side of the high altar, life-size cenotaphs of Philip II and his family knelt in worship, facing the altarpiece by Federico Zuccaro and the gilt and marble tabernacle designed by the basilica's lead architect Juan de Herrera. Amongst these other fineries sat two cabinets filled with busts of saints in gold and silver. Once, when the monastery was new, the saints' relics contained within these reliquaries would have been the true treasure. But for the anti-clerical French troops, generations removed from the veneration of saints, the relics were only bones and dust. They seized as much precious metal as they could carry and departed, leaving the collection to slide into disarray and disrepair.

Where had this vast collection of relics come from, and why were they important enough to Philip II to make the centerpiece of his greatest architectural achievement? Though the modern reader may associate relics with the high Middle Ages and the localized, idiosyncratic nature of pre-Reformation Catholicism, they continued to feature in the devotional culture of

early modern Catholics. However, at the same time that the Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo was under construction, the role of relics was shifting. After centuries of anxieties about relic forgery and fraud, and theological attacks by Protestant reformers, both skeptics and supporters began to apply new tests of authenticity to relics. Similarly, in Iberia specifically, the Spanish Hapsburgs and their government apparatus began to use relics to support their own political legitimacy and their growing imperial project. This thesis explores the Spanish relic trade at the turn of the seventeenth century; its participants' changing approaches to authenticating their relics; and the intersection of relics, national identity, and empire.

Venerating and Authenticating the Relic

Saints and their relics held a unique position in the medieval and early modern world and dominated the Catholic imagination of that period. Relics are objects associated with saints that serve as sites of veneration and sanctity. It is a broad category, comprising objects ranging from the body parts of a saint to pieces of their clothing to more tangential items like paintings made of a saint after death.[1] The Catholic Church defines three classes of relics, categorized by their degree of distance from the saint: First class relics are the bodily remains of a saint, most commonly heads, arms, and teeth; second class relics are items that were in contact with the body of the saint, particularly Bibles, funerary shrouds, and clothing; and third class relics are items that made contact with the burial place or first class relics of a saint, such as a rosary touched to a saint's casket. The third class can also include a more ambiguous set of items, which

[1] As art historian John Dillenberger has written, the distinction between relic, icon, and image in premodern Christianity is ambiguous and a subject of constant debate, and these distinctions became even muddier during the proliferation of Christian sects that occurred in the Reformation. See John Dillenberger, *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13-15.

are those associated with the miraculous presence of the saint, such as icons with miraculous properties.[2]

In premodern Europe, relics were believed to possess the capacity for miracles and have since early Christianity been sites of pilgrimage for those seeking healing and intercession. Meditating on a relic could act as an indulgence and reduce one's time in purgatory, and relics were used in a number of earthly ways as well, including as guarantors of oaths, part of medical treatments, or protection against natural disasters and disease.[3] Relics also possessed a kind of autonomy and were capable of removing themselves from unworthy owners, intervening in wars, or demonstrating their opinions on matters of law and justice. Possessing relics meant that one also possessed the vast intercessory powers of the saints and could call upon all of these diverse powers when needed, assuming one was judged sufficiently virtuous by the saint.[4] The veneration of relics was so central to Catholic devotion that churches are required to have a relic in the cornerstone or altar, and the Eucharist was also considered to be a relic as transubstantiation transforms the bread into a part of Jesus's body. The relationship between saint and relic could also be circular—while the canonization of a saint could legitimize their relics as sites for miracles, the purported miraculous powers of a holy person's body could also be used as

---

[2] Though the relics considered in this thesis are of the first two classes, third-class relics present a rich avenue for further research as Church doctrine allowed them to be openly sold, unlike first- and second-class relics. Art historians of the Italian Renaissance have produced a rich body of scholarship on miraculous images and their function as or distinction from bodily relics. See, for example: Megan Holmes, *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 2013, and Kirsten Noreen, "The splendori celesti of the San Sisto Icon (Rome): Intercession, Embellishment, and Female Agency," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 67 (2022): 90-128.
[3] For a detailed study of all the uses and powers of relics, see Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). Saints' bodies were also far from the only corpses to have ritualized uses in the medieval world, and many of these other rituals bled into ceremonies and practices for specific relics.
[4] For a consideration of the supposed autonomy and ambiguous consciousness of saints' relics and images in the Italian context, see Richard C. Trexler, "Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 9 (1972): 7-41.

evidence for their canonization.[5] The value of and competition for holy relics prior to the Reformation has been written about extensively, particularly in Patrick Geary's seminal article, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics" and 1991's *Furta Sacra*, and Charles Freeman's more recent *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*.[6] Due to their miraculous abilities and central role in early modern Catholic devotion, relics became spiritual capital that kings, popes, and other social elites competed to collect. This phenomenon persisted long after the medieval high point of relic veneration—in one story from eighteenth century Otranto, a doctor purportedly saved the bloody rags leftover from treating a nun with stigmata in the hopes they would become relics.[7]

By the sixteenth century, though, the role of saints' relics was contentious, heterogenous, and in the midst of the foundational shift. In 1543, John Calvin published perhaps his most famous work, the fiery *Treatise on Relics*. As Calvin alludes to, while anxieties about forged relics were on the minds of Tridentine-era faithful, they were hardly new. He quotes St. Augustine's discussion of the forged relics of early Christian martyrs in the opening of his treatise, saying, "…even then abuses and deceits were practiced, by making simple folks believe that bones, picked up any where, were bones of saints. Since the origin of this abuse is so ancient, there can be no doubt that it has greatly increased during a long interval of years, particularly as the world has been much corrupted since that age, and has continued to deteriorate

---

[5] For a full overview of the development and use of relics in premodern Christianity, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[6] Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Patrick Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 169-92, and *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[7] David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 189.

until it has arrived at its present condition."[8] And indeed, in the long medieval age between Augustine's writing and Calvin's, the forgery of relics had proliferated as Catholicism spread through Europe, as had concerns about these fakes.

Anxieties about authenticating saints' relics appear in medieval sources as diverse as literature, personal letters, and legal documents. Scholars of English literature have dissected in depth the character of the Pardoner in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Pardoners, then hired by the Catholic Church to provide indulgences and favors in exchange for charitable donations, were a controversial profession long before the Reformation. In Chaucer's work, the character of the Pardoner is described as being adorned in false relics, and carrying with him a container of pig bones that he attempts to sell as legitimate saints' relics to the faithful on their pilgrimage route.[9] Even on the Italian Peninsula, the heart and center of power of the Catholic Church, stories of false relics and anxieties about unscrupulous dealers proliferated. In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the character of Fra Cipolla, who is often compared to Chaucer's Pardoner, attempts to present a peacock feather as a feather from the wings of the archangel Gabriel.[10] Even the medieval elite could be taken in by fakes. As the art historian Marguerite Keane showed in her close examination of Blanche of Navarre's 1396 will, the will's detailed provenance and description for the queen's relics were likely driven by earlier accusations that relics in her vast collection were forgeries.[11] At the time of Calvin's writing, however, this issue

---

[8] John Calvin, *A Treatise on Relics, Translated from the French Original With An Introductory Dissertation on the Miraculous Images, as Well as Other Superstitions, of the Roman Catholic and Russo-Greek Churches*, trans. Count Valerian Krasinski (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co., 1870), 162.
[9] See Robyn Malo, "The Pardoner's Relics (And Why They Matter the Most)," *The Chaucer Review* 43, no. 1 (2008): 82-102.
[10] Jonathan Usher, "Frate Cipolla's "Ars Praedicandi" or a "Récit du discours" in Boccaccio," *The Modern Language Review* 88, no. 2 (April 1993): 322.
[11] Marguerite Keane, "Most beautiful and next best: value in the collection of a medieval queen," *Journal of Medieval History* 34, no. 4 (2008): 360-373.

seemed even more pressing for Protestant and Catholics alike as hundreds of medieval relics—the real, the faked, and the unverifiable—were entering the market as the Protestant Reformation(s) spread and dispersed church and private collections.

Though reforms through the medieval period had attempted to centralize the canonization process and snuff out the veneration of local saints, these rulings were haphazardly enforced and in practice, numerous cults sprang up to venerate uncanonized or unconfirmed saints. In response to the criticism of Protestants like Calvin, in addition to internal Catholic reformers, the Church called the Council of Trent in 1545 to address a range of doctrinal issues including the veneration of relics. The Twenty-Fifth Session of the Council upheld the veneration of saints and relics but imposed new restrictions on canonization and authentication.[12] The resulting decrees reiterated the papacy's sole authority to canonize saints and standardized processes for investigating and authenticating saints and their relics according to empirical methods of analysis.[13] While these Tridentine regulations attempted to regulate the canonization process, worship of a number of unofficial saints persisted in smaller Catholic communities and many lay Catholics also continued to venerate those who they perceived as saintly, whether or not that individual made it through the Church's canonization process. The result was a conflicted marketplace of relics, each with varying levels of recognition, where the authenticity and value of each had to be

---

[12] For a full overview of the Council of Trent, its major decrees, and its aftermath, see: John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[13] The full scope of these methods has been studied extensively and is beyond the purview of this thesis, however of particular interest is the introduction of standardized autopsies for candidates for canonization. Doctrine dictated that saintly bodies had objective markers of sainthood that varied according to gender, including changes to the structures of women's hearts that mimicked the shape of the crucifix. For a full exploration of this use of autopsies, see Brad Bouley, *Pious Postmortems: Anatomy and the Creation of Early Modern Saints,* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017) and Katharine Park, "The Life of the Corpse: Division and Dissection in Late Medieval Europe," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 50, no. 1 (January 1995): 111-32.

constantly negotiated in the face of new ecclesiastical pressures and regulations. Alongside this, the Protestant Reformation(s) and the religious conflicts that swept across Europe in the preceding two centuries had displaced a number of relics and produced a new group of Reformation martyrs whose remains also circulated through exile and local Catholic communities despite their lack of official canonization.[14]

These criticisms around the veneration of saints, forged and ahistorical saints, and deficiencies of the canonization process caused a sixty-five-year pause in the canonization of new Catholic saints, beginning in 1523. By the time canonizations resumed in 1588, after Trent, the character of the canonization process and those canonized had changed. From 1588 to 1767, only fifty-five new saints were canonized, reflecting the increased regulation and scrutiny of the post-Tridentine canonization process. As Peter Burke describes in his classic article, "How to Become a Counter-Reformation Saint," the authority to canonize sat firmly with the papacy in Rome, but international politics within the Church still weighed heavily. The Spanish Hapsburgs, as major Catholic patrons, applied their influence to see seventeen Spaniards canonized, second only to the Italians with twenty-six. Likewise, representatives of the Counter-Reformation project were more likely to be successful, including founders and missionaries of Counter-Reformation orders like the Jesuits. The process was also easier for men than women, who were more likely to have demonstrated their spirituality actively in the world rather than privately in the cloister and also more likely to be martyred.[15] While, of course, local cults continued to

---

[14] For a discussion of the multiple intersecting Reformations, see: Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations: Third Edition* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021).

[15] Peter Burke, "How to Become a Counter-Reformation Saint," in *The Counter-Reformation: The Essential Readings*, ed. David M. Luebke (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 129-142. For more on the financial pressure the Spanish Hapsburgs exerted on the canonization process, see: Eduardo Ángel Cruz, "How to Finance a Counter-Reformation Saint: the Alms for the Canonisation of Isidore Agricola and Ferdinand III, 1592-1688," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 74, no. 4 (October 2023): 753-773.

spring up around unofficial saints or those said to have the "odor of sanctity," this pause and subsequent slower pace of canonizations also tightened the availability for newly-produced relics validated by the papacy.

By the late sixteenth century when the first Tridentine generation was amassing their own relic collections, there was no more room for Chaucer or Boccaccio's gentle humor about relic forgeries. Conflict with Protestantism had deeply polarized attitudes and made the veneration of saints and relics an article of faith. For the pious Catholics of this generation who were taking part in the Counter-Reformation centralization project, validating relics and their power was validating the faith itself. This generation invested heavily in authenticating saints and relics, including sponsoring ecclesiastical histories and pilgrimage guides, and engaging in large-scale documentation and cataloguing to refute Protestant challenges.

The Counter-Reformation drive to prove the truth of saints coincided with larger epistemological debates about veracity and fact-making that would accelerate through the eighteenth century. Here at the beginning of the Enlightenment, learned society debated how to reconcile contradictions between observable reality and theology, and how to determine the authority of evidence. Galileo Galilei entered the debate with 1615's "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina," his defense of Copernicus in which he asserted that God had provided humanity two books, the Bible and the Book of Nature, and as scripture had been created for fallible humans to understand, when the two books conflicted it was the Book of Nature that contained the ultimate truth.[16] Many scholars have pointed to Francis Bacon, father of empiricism, and his successors in the Royal Society of London, as the founders of new, scientific methods of truth-making based on observable evidence, experimentation, and testimony.

---

[16] Galileo Galilei, "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina," in *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, ed. Stillman Drake (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1957), 173-216.

However, as Steven Shapin and Peter Dear have shown, the validity of evidence often rested in the positionality of the observer. Shapin's *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* particularly demonstrates how the credibility of scientific evidence in the seventeenth century rested on an implicit code of honor among Christian gentleman, whose evidence was thought to be objective because of their financial and social independence.[17] In order to assert the veracity of saints and relics, then, the pious Catholic in this thesis use all available tools, including documentation, materiality, and the social position of themselves and their correspondents.

Categorizing and Collecting Relics

One of the difficulties of researching the relic collections of the early modern world is the tendency of individuals to divorce objects from their provenance documents in storage or to collapse multiple objects into one category or group in records. In part, this reflects the difficulty of categorizing relics—do they belong in the same category as fine art?[18] Jewelry and other artisan metalwork? Scientific curiosities? Other devotional objects like Bibles, crosses, and prayer books? Studies of early modern possessions have largely relied on inventories produced for taxation, lawsuits, and wills or estates, but these legal documents often omit the details of these very individual objects, making it difficult to track a specific piece across time and collections. The 1616 and 1618 inventories of Don Juan de Idiáquez y Olazábal's estate, for

---

[17] Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Peter Dear, "Totus in Verba: Rhetoric and Authority in the Early Royal Society," *Isis* 76, no. 2 (June 1985): 144-161.

[18] Art historian Cynthia Hahn has written extensively on the relationship between relics, their reliquaries, and artistic practice and collection. See Cynthia Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect: Enshrining the Sacred Object* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017) and *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400 – Circa 1204* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012).

example, mention “a carved ark with some relics inside” and “another [reliquary] of St. George.”[19] When a physical description of the relic or its container is given, the name of the saints(s) are not, and when the inventories do name the saints whose relics Idiáquez owned, they fail to give visual details sufficient for a historian to match the listing to any extant objects. In Philip II’s own collection, perhaps the most extensive and well-researched in Europe, provenance documents were kept in a floor-to-ceiling filing cabinet next to the reliquary cabinet. Such was the value of these documents in the post-Tridentine world that the cabinet could be opened both from the front, by the monks of San Lorenzo in their church, and from the back, which opened into Philip II’s private apartments. Despite this emphasis on provenance, the documents did not always clearly identify the relic they matched, and in the wake of Napolean’s army’s looting of the monastery in 1808 scholars have spent decades attempting to reconstruct the collection.[20]

The figure of Philip II presents a second challenge for the study of Iberian relics specifically, as his desire for relics and the El Escorial collection looms so large that it has occupied the lion’s share of scholarly attention. Spanish veneration of relics was detailed most notably by William Christian’s *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. In this book, Christian establishes the persistence of local relic cults in sixteenth-century Spain and attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the number, location, and provenance of these relics.[21] His work

---

[19] Ana Peña Fernández, “Approximación al Estudio de los Inventarios de Bienes de Don Juan de Idiáquez en la Villa de San Sebastián y Lugares de Gipuzkoa,” *Boletín de estudios históricos sobre San Sebastián*, no. 55 (2022): 270-1.

[20] Henry Kamen, *The Escorial: Art and Power in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 238-40.

[21] William Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 126-46. Another, better known example of these encyclopedic projects was the Relaciones Geográficas, imperial surveys of Spanish colonial holdings in the Americas. See: Howard F. Cline, “The Relaciones Geograficas of the Spanish Indies, 1577-1586,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (August 1964): 341-74. This categorization impulse also drove the construction of race in the Spanish empire. Mackenzie Cooley, *The Perfection of Nature: Animals, Breeding, and Race in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

draws particularly on the surveys conducted at the behest of Philip II. The devout king had spent his life collecting relics at his monastery and palace El Escorial—in his last days, he even insisted on orchestrating the moment of his own death so that he was looking upon the icons and relics of his most favored saints. Over the past fifteen years, scholars have begun to consider Philip II's interest in relics as not just a mark of his deep Catholic devotion, but also as an attempt to consolidate his sovereignty over what was an unprecedented territorial expanse for the period.[22] Maintaining control of this enormous territory was a constant struggle for both Philip II and his son, and both exploited the rhetorical connection between relics and localities to bolster their legitimacy.

It is difficult to find works concerning the relic trade in early modern Spain that do not center the person of the king, but as monarch he is an extraordinary example. Most personal relic collections of the period were likely small, comprising a few items in a home altar or reliquary casket. However, it is these individual collectors who formed the nodes of the network that eventually led back to El Escorial. Though the work of uncovering these collections in the archives and documenting their connections is immense, it is a key avenue for understanding the function and structure of Spanish networks beyond the court in Valladolid and Madrid. This thesis attempts to overcome these documentary and historiographical issues by making use of a wide variety of sources including diplomatic correspondence, personal letters, memoirs, and wills and inventories, in addition to considering the relics and reliquaries themselves as objects of art. Though Philip II and his collection inevitably play a significant role in these case studies,

---

[22] Guy Lazure, "Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II's Relic Collection at the Escorial," *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 58-93. For more on the transnational movement of relics and reliquaries see: Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith: Relics and Reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela*, trans. J.A. Underwood (Secaucus: The Wellfleet Press, 1986).

it also attempts to escape the long shadow of the Escorial by focusing on actors outside of Spain and the variety of connections they exploited to collect, evaluate, and disperse relics.

Despite the unmatched scale of Philip II's collection, it remains a useful exemplar rather than an outlier. Other Spanish nobles copied the example of the king in constructing their own collections, and over the course of the post-Tridentine century, they began to emphasize quantity and documentation over personal relationships with or hopes for the intercessory potential of any one relic. That these collections and the custom-built reliquary cabinets or boxes commissioned for them recall the kunstkammern and wunderkammern of the 17th and 18th centuries, the predecessors to the modern museum, is no coincidence. Julius von Schlosser, the early 20th century art historian and forefather of the history of collecting, located the origins of the wunderkammern in medieval church collections of sacred antiquities, art, and relics. In his 1908 study of early wunderkammern, he argues that these church collections originated on the Italian Peninsula, where churches acted as repositories of Imperial Roman material culture, but the phenomenon quickly spread and became entwined with the desire to preserve national heritages for access by the public.[23] As he writes: "These ecclesiastical treasures were a faithful reflection of medieval man's penchant for all things fabulous, his constant search for significant *content*, particularly the strange, the wonderful, and the foreign."[24] The growing relic collections of Iberian nobility therefore look back to the origins of collecting at the same time as they anticipate the comparative cabinets of curiosity and natural history collections of the next two centuries.

Like cabinets of curiosity, relic collections served as sites of investigation, comparison, and identity formation, and should be considered alongside these more diverse collections as part

[23] Julius von Schlosser, *Art and Curiosity Cabinets of the Late Renaissance*, trans. Jonathan Blower (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2021), 67-75.
[24] Von Schlosser, *Art and Curiosity Cabinets*, 69.

of the history of collecting and material culture. Many recent historians have discussed how the Spanish made meaning through object collection and trade, especially imported objects from Asia and the Americas, including Paula Findlen in *Early Modern Things*, Marcy Norton in *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*, and Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall in *Collecting Across Cultures*.[25] In one particularly relevant article from 2019, art historian Kate Holohan examines a Mesoamerican jade religious figure which appeared in the 1598 inventory of Philip II's New World collections where it was desacralized, reimagined as a medical object, and subsequently lost.[26] Though relics almost always came from within European Christendom rather than farther flung locales, placing these disparate objects in conversation still brought together different national Catholicisms, histories, and artistic traditions. Part of the aim of this thesis is to set the relic trade alongside the circulation of other commodities and luxury goods in the history of material culture, a comparison that has often been obscured by relics' devotional nature.

Crusade, Legitimacy, and Relics in Sixteenth Century Spain

Relics and their potential as proof of political legitimacy was especially important in Spain because of its recent consolidation under Christian rule. Up through the middle of the fifteenth century, the Iberian Peninsula was a multireligious society, with a succession of Islamic dynasties and later, disparate city-states ruling the southern part of the landmass. Philip II's grandparents, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, had conquered the last Muslim

---

[25] Paula Findlen, ed., *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 2013), Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), and Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, ed., *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

[26] Kate Holohan, "Mesoamerican Idols, Spanish Medicine: Jade in the Collection of Philip II," in *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, ed. Suzanna Ivanic et. al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 229-245.

polity on the peninsula, the Emirate of Granada, by the beginning of the century, leaving large Jewish and Muslim minorities subject to an increasingly intolerant Catholic Monarchy with ever stronger pressure to convert. In 1492 act marking the end of the political period of the Reconquista, Ferdinand and Isabella issued the Alhambra Decree, expelling all Jews within Castile and Aragon from the kingdoms.[27] This was followed by increasing restrictions on Muslims and the descendants of Muslim converts, who came to be a new ethno-religious category, *morisco*.

Despite these restrictions, Moriscos became a prominent group in the areas around Granada and the mountains of Andalusia, once the center of Islamic culture and influence on the Peninsula. As successive Spanish monarchs attempted to impose both Catholicism and a more general Christian European culture on religious minorities, particularly through the powers of the Inquisition, Moriscos rebelled against royal authority and in turn, the monarchy imposed additionally harsh restrictions. This self-reinforcing cycle culminated in the Rebellion of the Alpujarras in 1568, when Morisco communities along the southern coast erupted in popular revolt after a rumored invasion/liberation by the Ottoman Empire failed to materialize. In the aftermath, Philip II expelled the Morisco population from Andalusia, resettling displaced communities through the rest of Spain and turning their former land over to Christian settlers. Predictably, rather than ending interfaith conflict, this resettlement spread and inflamed paranoia about Morisco converts and their supposed Ottoman sympathies through the north and west. Philip II never resolved this internal conflict, and Philip III would undertake a systematic

[27] Various attempts have been made to quantify the pre-1492 Jewish population in Spain and the impact of the Alhambra Decree. Notably, Henry Kamen argues for a number in the high five figures, or about 1-1.5% of the population of Castile and Aragon, though other estimates run between 100-400,000. Henry Kamen, "The Mediterranean and the Expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492," *Past & Present* 119, no. 1 (May 1988): 30-37.

expulsion of Moriscos from all of Spain between 1609 and 1614 as the fourth generation of monarchs to use expulsion as a tool to eliminate what they saw as a corruption of Spain's national and religious unity.[28]

In addition to military and economic strategies, the Spanish Hapsburgs used rhetoric and history to suppress religious and cultural minorities and assert its sovereignty over its Andalusian holdings. Relics formed an important piece of this strategy, as the existence of relics in these newly reconquered lands could be used to assert that they had a historical Christian lineage that was merely being restored, not created. Numerous saints' bodies, clothes, and writings were "discovered" in Andalusia over the fifteenth and into the sixteenth centuries, and these relics were written into ecclesiastical histories that positioned Granada and its surroundings as historically Christian. This explosion of new discoveries intersected with two kinds of literature very attractive to Spanish Catholics during the Counter-Reformation. First were the reports returning to Spain from the Americas of the discovery of indigenous objects of devotion and treasure in the form of precious metals and gems that colonizers were seizing from the burial grounds of Latin America.[29] Second was the explosion of popular hagiographies, or vidas, and the interest in the saints that these hagiographies engendered. Together these narratives, along with growth of Christian migration to the lands of former Muslim polities in Andalusia, created popular fervor for sacred treasure hunting. Numerous Spaniards explored the rural hills outside of Granada, Sevilla, and other southern centers in search of the remains of saints. Many of these stories, which often involved descending into symbolically potent subterranean spaces, echoed

---

[28] For more on the conversion, labelling, repression, and expulsion of Muslims and their descendants in Spain, see: Henry Charles Lea, *The Moriscos: Their conversion and expulsion* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968) and Mercedes García-Arenal Rodriquez and Gerard A. Wiegers, ed., *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[29] See Christopher Heaney, *Empires of the Dead: Inca Mummies and the Peruvian Ancestors of American Anthropology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

the hagiographical story of St. Helena's discovery of the True Cross in a similar landscape outside of Jerusalem.

In one particularly notorious episode from March 1595, treasure hunters exploring the hills outside the city of Granada in the Andalusia region of Spain unearthed a miraculous discovery that challenged the known history of the Iberian Peninsula. Over the next few years, as successive treasure hunters visited the site and performed additional excavations, the full scope of the discovery was revealed. Hidden within the hillsides' ancient cave system was a set of relics—supposedly the burned bodies of twelve of Spain's earliest martyrs, including St. Cecelio, Granada's first bishop—and lead tablets purporting to be an early medieval Christian history of the city. These lead books claimed to be written by early Granadino Christians in a mix of Arabic, Latin, and Solomonic script and contained the words of the Virgin Mary to Saint Peter, in which she professed admiration for Arabic cultural traditions and language and implored him to evangelize to Iberian Arab communities.[30]

This discovery sparked immediate celebration by Granada's Christian population, and immediate skepticism from ecclesiastical scholars, especially those in Rome. Granadinos celebrated with parades and public displays of veneration across the city, even though the relics had not yet been authenticated by either the Spanish church or the papacy. While both Granadino ecclesiastical authorities and Philip II championed the tablets, debate over their veracity raged within ecclesiastical and scholarly circles for the next century. Intriguingly, while the lead tablets were declared forgeries by papal authorities in 1683, the martyrs' relics were separated from the tablets, legitimated, and continue to be venerated in Granada to this day. Examining the debate over the lead books and their accompanying bodily relics demonstrates how narratives of

[30] For a comprehensive history of the discovery, reception, and cultural context of the lead books, see: Elizabeth Drayson, *The Lead Books of Granada* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

discovery and rhetorical appeals to the early Christianity of late antiquity were central to the legitimization of Christian rule over the full expanse of the Iberian Peninsula. The reception of the bodily relics versus the tablets also shows how relics were uniquely valuable to the Reconquista project and impervious to many of the criticisms that dogged historical artifacts like the lead tablets.

Granada's past as the last Muslim stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula was a key factor to the tablets' reception. In her 2007 book *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain*, A. Katie Harris argues that it is only within the city's local context that the tablets are legible and compelling. Unlike earlier scholars, who emphasized the lead books either as emblems of a triumphant Christian majority or of a resistant Muslim minority, Harris views the initial forgery and later reception of the lead books as an attempt to devise a shared past that would serve to unite the two dominant religious traditions of the city.[31] In fact, because of the use of Arabic in the text, local morisco scholars were brought in to assist diocesan authorities in translating the message. The language itself forced collaboration between Christians and Muslim descendants. However, this collaboration also fed the skepticism of papal authorities, who argued that even if the tablets were authentic, the morisco translators and their conclusions were untrustworthy.[32]

Though Granada's multireligious past may have served to make the tablets' narrative appealing, Catholic chroniclers swiftly dropped the more Islamic aspects of their theological arguments in order to better reconcile them into ecclesiastical histories. The comprehensive

---

[31] A. Katie Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: inventing a city's past in early modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) 48.
[32] A. Katie Harris, "Material and Textual Forgery in the Lead Books of Granada," in *Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800*, ed. Walter Stephens et. al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), 220.

history that most closely followed the discovery of the lead books and exemplifies their appeal to the local Christian community was Francisco Bermuidez de Pedraza's *Historia eclesiàstica de Granada*, published in 1638. Pedraza, a local Granadino jurist and historian, was committed to the project of constructing an unbroken Christian heritage for the region. He fully accepts the lead books and their contents as both evidence of a previous, robust Christian community in the region and as evidence of divine approval for the Reconquista. In this period, historians could imagine objects as willful actors, where holy relics could act on their own desires to be owned by Christian communities. Pedraza uses the lead books almost as the protagonist of his history, beginning with their creation in the pre-Umayyad Granada he imagined, continuing with their long period of hiding during the Islamic suppression of Christianity, and finally their triumphant discovery in 1595.[33] In Pedraza's chronicle, the finding of the lead books during a period of Christian rule was proof both of the books' holiness and the validity of Granada's Christian identity. The eventual rejection of the lead tablets rested in large part on new methods of linguistic and scientific examination that emerged under the banner of "antiquarianism."[34]

Generational Conflict

By 1615, the world of Philip II and Elizabeth I had become that of Philip III and James I, Clement VIII had ascended to the papacy and broken the Holy See's long allegiance with Spain,

[33] Pedraza even asserts that it was the influence of the books that finally led to the successful reconquest of the city. Francisco Bermudez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiastica: Principios, y progressos de la ciudad, y re catolica de Granada: Corona de su poderoso Reyno, y excelencias de su corona* (1639; reprint, with a fore-word by Ignacio Henares Cuellar, Granada: Editorial don Quijote, 1989), pt. 3, chap. 38, fol. 15. For more extensive analysis of Pedraza and comparative histories from Granadino writers, see A. Katie Harris, "Forging History: The Plomos of the Sacromonte of Granada in Francisco Bermudez de Pedraza's Historia Eclesiastica," *The Sixteenth-Century Journal* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 945-966.

[34] For more on the techniques used to contest the lead tablets, see: Harris, "Material and Textual Forgery in the Lead Books of Granada," 225-236.

the great Counter-Reformation orders of the Jesuits and the Capuchins had become firmly ensconced in the fabric of the Catholic world, and the decades-long Council of Trent had finally adjourned and issued the decrees that would be foundations of Church doctrine in the new century. Many of the figures in this thesis are of that Tridentine generation, standing on a receding shoreline as they watch the dawn of a new era. Their younger counterparts had come of age when the doctrines of Trent were firmly settled and were influenced by the humanist and antiquarian thinkers emerging from the Italian peninsula. The conflicts that exploded at the turn of the seventeenth century were as much generational as they were doctrinal, imperial, and national.[35]

Relics did not lose their appeal with this new generation, but once again they took on new meaning to match the age and their possessors had to answer new challenges and match new tastes. Instead of being seen wholly as embodied saints with their own autonomy and desires, relics became primarily commodities and tokens of power to be traded, collected, and studied. In the context of this work, "commodity" is used to mean that relics held value beyond the spiritual, that there were hierarchies of value within the general category of "relic," and that this value was negotiated within an imagined marketplace where relics could be exchanged. This thesis examines two case studies to demonstrate first the changing nature of authenticity in the early modern Iberian relic trade, and the use of relics in constructing a Spanish national identity and supporting the Hapsburg Monarchy's burgeoning global empire.

---

[35] That the end of the sixteenth century should be considered a turning point in Catholic devotion is not an idea relevant only to the Spanish Empire. In her study of Catholicism in Eastern and Central Europe, Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin convincingly argues for this as the era where the Tridentine reforms of the mid-sixteenth century truly took hold across the Catholic world. Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe, 1592-1648: Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

First, it examines Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas, ambassador to the Holy Roman Empire at the end of the sixteenth century, and his authentication and use of two relics that passed through his hands. Second, it considers the life of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, a pious Spanish Catholic noblewoman in London in the first years of the seventeenth century, and her use of the relics of English Catholic martyrs to solicit rhetorical and monetary support for the re-Catholicization of England. Together these case studies demonstrate how Iberian relics were authenticated, valued, and incorporated into the Spanish imperial project at the turn of the seventeenth century.

Chapter 1: Sealed with My Seal

On October 2nd, 1593, Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas, the Spanish ambassador to the Holy Roman Empire, sat at his desk in Vienna writing a frustrated letter to Philip II's secretary of state about a secretive mission to extract a valuable object from the Spanish Netherlands amid the simmering conflict of the Eighty Years' War. The mission was proving far more difficult and expensive than expected, and the ambassador's pocketbook—and patience—were wearing thin. As he wrote: "His Majesty should know I no longer have even an inch of land in which to bury myself…As I have told Don Juan Idiáquez, to serve the greatest and best king that has ever lived in the world, I have sold everything I earned in the past from serving others who were not such."[36]

The object at the center of this missive was not a weapon of war, or a new technology, or even a valuable cache of precious metals to help bolster the Spanish Hapsburg's finances in the face of ongoing Dutch rebellions. It was instead an artifact of much more spiritual power: the head of the medieval saint Laurence. San Clemente's letter, now held in the Council of State collection at the Archivo General de Simancas, is the last in a series of communications describing this strange episode, which had begun in August of that year when an Augustinian friar named Balthasar Delgado had volunteered to travel to the Spanish Netherlands and attempt to seize the head for the Spanish king from the abbey where it was stored. Along with the king and the current and former secretaries of state, numerous other influential figures took part in this

[36] "Sepa V.M. que ya no me queda ni aun un palmo detierra en que enterrar me…he dicho al señor Don Juan Jdiaquez por servir al mayor y mejor Rey que ha havido en el mundo he vendido todo lo que ganaron mis passados sirviendo a ótros que no heran tales." Guillén de San Clemente to Don Martin de Idiáquez, October 2, 1593, Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Consejo de Estado, Legajo 700, Folio 115.

effort, including Archduke Ernest of Austria; Juan Ruiz de Velasco y Val San Martín, the king's valet; Pope Clement VIII; and several electors of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Role of Relics in (Re)Constructing Spanish Diplomatic Networks

Over his extensive career, Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas utilized relics to strengthen the Spanish Empire's diplomatic networks across Europe. Best remembered for his role as Spanish ambassador to the court of Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, San Clemente's life remains largely unstudied in both English and Spanish, with the only major edited collection of his correspondence appearing in 1892.[37] What current scholarship exists has emerged from Central European academies. Yet his movements, both in his personal travels and in his role as ambassador, exemplify the scope of Spanish Hapsburg influence and the extent of their geographic network at the turn of the seventeenth century. Born in Barcelona into a purportedly converso family, he first caught royal attention as a soldier under the command of Don Juan of Austria during the suppression of the Rebellion of the Alpujarras in 1570 before taking military posts with Spanish fleet in the Mediterranean, Flanders, and Italy. After entering the diplomatic service, he held several posts across the Italian peninsula before his appointment as an envoy to the court of Rudolf II. For the rest of his life, he continued to crisscross the breadth of Europe, spending long periods in Prague, Austria, and Poland with regular return trips to Spain and Italy,

[37] Juan María Nepomuceno Jordán de Urríes y Ruiz de Arana, *Correspondencia inédita de Don Guillén de San Clemente, embajador en Alemania de los reyes Don Felipe II y III, sobre la intervención de España en los sucesos de Polonia y Hungría, 1581-1608* (Zaragoza: Establecimiento Tipográfico de La Derecha, San Miguel, 12, 1892). This volume of correspondence focuses only on San Clemente's attempt to intervene in the 1587 Polish succession on behalf of Archduke Maximilian, which was unsuccessful. However, this represents only a fraction of his activities as an ambassador and courtier.

including as part of the household of Philip III's bride the Archduchess Margaret of Austria.[38] Through these travels he built personal relationships with many of the noble Catholic families of Europe and patronage relationships with several Catholic orders, most particularly the Jesuits. These networks make San Clemente an ideal nexus point in the relic trade, able to pass objects back and forth between far-flung participants who could not, for reasons of distance or proprietary, make contact directly.

Art, scientific curiosities, and religious objects like relics traveled across Spanish Hapsburg diplomatic networks with figures such as San Clemente, feeding the collections of the royal family and nobility. The movement of cultural and artistic objects within diplomatic networks is not a new area of study. In particular, the practice of diplomatic gift-giving has received special attention in recent years particularly from art historians, including work by Barbara Karl and Sinem Arcak Casale.[39] However these works have focused largely on official gifts between monarchs or between formal diplomats, and less attention has been paid to the more numerous objects that flowed from diplomats to others in their social sphere. As demonstrated by the examples in this thesis, these diplomatic objects are especially useful for engaging with wielders of soft power in the royal courts, including women, members of royal households, and members of the Church bureaucracy. Through the movement of relics, we can

---

[38] The most complete modern consideration of San Clemente's life and impact as Spanish ambassador is Javier Arienza Arienza, "La historia de Guillén de San Clemente, un embajador hispano en el corazón de Europa entre los años 1581 y 1608," *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* 45, no. 1 (2017): 73-98.

[39] Much of the historiography on ambassadors, gift-giving, and collecting emerges from the world of the New Diplomatic History and its emphasis on the role of early modern ambassadors, emissaries, and other agents of diplomacy as circulators of material culture and artistic and cultural tastemakers. See: Barbara Karl, "Objects of Prestige and Spoils of War: Ottoman Objects in the Hapsburg Networks of Gift-Giving in the Sixteenth Century," in *Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Euraisa*¸ ed. Zoltán Biedermann et. al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 119-149. Sinem Arcak Casale, *Gifts in the Age of Empire: Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange, 1500–1639* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2023).

examine this broader, informal network of power, which included not only diplomats but also elites in court, religious, and learned scientific and humanist circles.

The movement of small gifts or tokens of favor like relics also helps to reveal the essential role of agents of the diplomatic apparatus below the ambassadors themselves. These agents often had ambiguous or intermittent relationships with the Hapsburg court, acting at times on instruction and at times, on their own principles. This category often includes women inside and outside of the ambassador's household, priests, and sympathetic exiles, all of whom could circulate in social spaces closed to the ambassador himself. Though often neglected as a subject of study, these agents formed a central piece of the early modern diplomatic apparatus.[40] San Clemente kept his own stable of agents across his area of responsibility. These informal agents often had agendas of their own, both ideological and political. Further in his letter recounting the frustrating attempts of Baltasar Delgado to recover the head of St. Laurence from a German abbey, he wrote:

> Father Fray Baltasar Delgado must be a very good man and very eager to please his Majesty in the matter of the Relics, but is very convinced that this is the first business that the King our Lord has, and that in order to get the head of St. Laurence Archduke Ernest must go to the Abbey where it is and attack everyone if necessary.[41]

---

[40] In her article on Lady Ann Fanshawe, wife of the English ambassador to Madrid during the reign of Philip IV, Laura Oliván Santaliestra writes at length of this gap in scholarship, noting that limiting diplomatic history to official institutions ignores the indispensable and multifaceted diplomatic work of women in the early modern world, where public/private and official/informal boundaries were not yet clearly defined. Laura Oliván Santaliestra, "Lady Anne Fanshawe, Ambassadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664-1666)," in *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500*, ed. Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James (London: Routledge, 2016), 69.

[41] "El Padre fray Balthassar Delgado deue ser un muy buen hombre y muy desseosso de dar gusto a su M. en lo de las Reliquias, mas muy persuadido deque este es el primer negocio que el Rey ñro. señor tiene, y que á sacar la cabeza de St. Laurenzio deue de yr el Archiduque Ernesto ala Abadia donde ella esta y a puñarsse con todo el mundo si fuere menester." San Clemente to Idiáquez, AGS, Consejo de Estado, L. 700, F. 115.

In this passage we see the pressures often placed upon ambassadors in their mediating position between agent and crown, subject to the expectations of their rulers and the individual wills of their agents. Theological and ideological concerns had to be balanced with political realities, often to the dismay of both these parties. The memory of the wholesale destruction of relics and icons in the Iconoclastic Fury of the mid-sixteenth century surely weighed on Delgado, as it did on many pious Catholics of this generation, driving his aggressive rhetoric. San Clemente's protest at the expense of Fray Delgado's expedition ("[he] is very convinced that this is the first business that the King our Lord has"), was directed at the king as much as at the friar, reminding him of the vast expenditures of the crown in this period.[42] In this case, San Clemente also pushed back against pressure from Don Juan de Idiáquez y Olazábal, a member of the Spanish nobility, occasionally an ambassador himself to Genoa and Venice, and such a voracious collector of relics and devotional objects that the Tuscan ambassador to Madrid would later write of him, "Don Juan Idiáquez is so circumspect and reserved a minister that we will find it difficult to get him to take anything at all, unless it is an object of devotion to ornament his chapel."[43] As noted earlier, at the time of his death, Idiáquez possessed a large collection of his own relics, and as this quote demonstrates, even after Philip III tightened restrictions on Spanish diplomatic gift-giving, relics and devotional objects remained an exception that continued to travel these networks between Spanish diplomats, their confidantes at home, and their foreign counterparts.

Investigating the basic assertion in San Clemente's letter and later accounts of Delgado's expedition that the head relic was "from Germany" reveals the difficulty of locating and

---

[42] Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 345-9.

[43] Edward L. Goldberg, "Artistic Relations Between the Medici and the Spanish Courts, 1587-1621: Part I," *The Burlington Magazine* 138, no. 1115 (February 1996): 106. Cited from July 11th, 1598, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato 4926, 257.

authenticating relics in the religious turmoil of the sixteenth century. Based on location and affiliation with St. Laurence, the likeliest candidates for the abbey where the head was purported to be are St. Lorenz Basilica in Kempton, Bavaria, which would be looted in 1632 during the Thirty Years' War, or the Church of St. Lorenz in Nuremberg, Bavaria, but I have been unable to locate records of either of these churches claiming possession of a head of St. Laurence at the time of this writing and both were beyond the borders of the Spanish Netherlands. It appears that there may have been some confusion even within the group attempting to retrieve the relic about its actual point of origin and current location. In a letter the previous month to Philip II, San Clemente wrote again about the expense of Fray Delgado's attempts to track down this relic, which were proving slower and more difficult than expected, saying, "I have had news a few days ago from the Baron de Reder that this relic is in Germany, he didn't tell me that Your Majesty is looking for it now."[44] The involvement of the Baron de Reder, a Dutch title, implies that San Clemente and his network expected the relic to be in Flanders but were thwarted. Clearly the frustration extended to everyone involved, given the oblique reference to Philip's impatience for this relic of the Escorial's patron saint.

It is unclear whether Fray Delgado succeeded in smuggling this head of St. Laurence out of Germany. One account from 1597, four years after San Clemente's letter, places him at a translation ceremony at El Escorial, watching the relics he retrieved from contested lands be placed into safekeeping in the monastery's reliquary cabinets.[45] Another year later still, he was the subject of a much shorter letter to Philip II from Pedro de Mendoza, Count of Binasco and

---

[44] "…yo tuve noticia pocos días ha por vía del Baron de Reder de que esta Reliquia estava en Alemania, no me dixo que el V.M. la procurasse agora…" Guillén de San Clemente to Philip II via Don Martin de Idiáquez, September 11, 1593, AGS, Consejo de Estado, Legajo 700, Folio 113.
[45] Gregorio de Andrés, "Los cinco retratos reales de la Biblioteca de El Escorial," *Archivo Español de Arte* 40, no. 160 (October 1967): 360.

ambassador to Genoa, informing the king that Delgado successfully arrived in Italy bearing "relics from Germany."[46] He also appears briefly in a 1659 biography of Philip II, republished in 1863, where he is credited as one of the faithful who brought relics to El Escorial from countries where "the heretics debase and despise them."[47] Unfortunately, all of these accounts are vague on which relics, precisely, were in motion at that moment. Further research into the surviving relic inventories from El Escorial is necessary to attempt to reconstruct Fray Delgado's contributions to the collection.

Despite lack of available information on Fray Delgado's journey across Europe, another contemporary account provides an example of the arduous undertaking and the ceremonies that awaited relics arriving in Spain. The Jesuit priest Miguel Hernández undertook similar travels in 1583-1587 to retrieve the relics of St. Leocadia from the Spanish Netherlands. Leocadia, one of the martyrs of the fourth century Diocletian Persecution, had lived in Toledo where a basilica was erected over her grave. Her relics were later removed from Spain to Flanders during the eleventh century, when Christian sites were under threat of destruction from the Muslim Umayyad Caliphate which then controlled the majority of the Iberian Peninsula.[48] Hernández produced an extensive account of the saint's hagiography, the history of her relics, and his own journey, which was published in 1591 as *Vida, martyrio y translacion de la gloriosa virgen y*

---

[46] "Carta de Pedro de Mendoza, conde de Binasco, embajador en Génova, a Felipe II, rey de España, dando cuenta de la llegada a dicho lugar de fray Baltasar Delgado, portador de las reliquias que se traen de Alemania para Su Majestad," February 21, 1598, AGS, Consejo de Estado, L. 1429, F. 191.
[47] "Las reliquias que junto en este Templo se trajeron de diversas provincias donde los Herejes las envilecian y menospreciaban." Baltasar Porreño, *Dichos y Hechos del Señor Rey Don Felipe II, El Prudente: Potentísimo y glorioso Monarca de las Españas y de las Indias* (Valladolid: Imprenta de Don Juan de la Cuesta, 1863), 208.
[48] Kevin Knight, "Leocadia, Saint," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Charles G. Herbermann, et. al. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907-1912). Accessed digitally 10/11/2023: https://catholicism.en-academic.com/18136/Saint_Leocadia

martyr Santa Leocadia.[49] Like Delgado, he traveled from the site of the saint's relics at the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Ghislain in present-day Belgium, to Italy, then on to Spain. Hernández's route and the length of time the circuit took closely mirror Delgado's journey, suggesting that that, if Delgado was successful in extracting the head of St. Laurence from the abbey where it resided, it is likely one of the relics from Pedro de Mendoza's 1598 letter and the 1597 date for the translation ceremony at El Escorial may be an inaccuracy.

Unlike Delgado's relics, the relics of St. Leocadia that Hernández retrieved were not taken to El Escorial but were instead returned to the saint's original home in Toledo. However, Philip II did not let them slip through his fingers entirely. He personally presided over the ceremony and insisted that his heir, Philip III, take part in the ceremony as a pallbearer—despite the fact that the then-nine-year-old prince was not tall enough to reach the poles of the litter supporting the reliquary casket. Seeing this, the king "ordered him to take hold of one of the cord tassels, which had been placed for this purpose on one arm of the litter."[50] The king also requested a bone from the saint for the collection at El Escorial and received both a femur and a symbolic key to the Toledo reliquary casket. Philip III and Empress María of Austria, also in attendance, both received their own tokens of smaller bones.[51] Philip II was not able to attend the

---

[49] The most extensive study of this account was recently published by Arantza Mayo as part of a comparative study of early modern Spanish representations of St. Leocadia. As I have only been able to access portions of the original document myself at this time, I have also relied on the significant quotes available in this article. Any translations (and any resultant inaccuracies) are my own. Arantza Mayo, "Leocadia's Miraculous Veil: Witness and Testimony in Hernández, Lope de Vega, Valdivielso and Calderón" in "The Fabric of Saintly Proof: Leocadia of Toledo from Orrente to Calderón," by Peter Cherry and Arantza Mayo, *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 93, no. 7-8 (2016): 1339-70.

[50] "Y porque el principe nuestro señor no podia llegar con sus ombros (a las andas que llevaban el arca), le mando su Magestad, que asiesse de las borlas de vn cordón, que para este effeto se puso en vn braço de las andas." Miguel Hernández. *Vida, martyrio y translacion de la gloriosa virgen y martyr Santa Leocadia* (Toledo: por Pedro Rodriguez, impressor y mercader de libros, 1591), 244.

[51] Mayo, "Leocadia's Miraculous Veil," 1345. Mayo notes this as a display of hierarchy, as the monarch receives the largest bone in the body, his son and heir a smaller but still recognizable bone (a rib), and the empress an uncategorized "small bone."

ceremony at El Escorial that included the translation of Fray Delgado's relics, as the king was disabled by gout at the end of his life, but Philip III attended in his stead and it is likely that the ceremony would have followed a similar choreography.

San Clemente's attempt to retrieve the head of St. Laurence for his monarch was far from the only time he used saint's relics and informal agents to further his diplomatic goals. Another one of his documents, a short certification he provided for a relic gift from 1599, now held in the Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza in Toledo, illustrates the complex character of this trade. In it, San Clemente gifted a tooth of St. Leonard to the Spanish noblewoman Juana de Velasco, then Duchess of Gandía. [52] He wrote:

> I, Don Guillen de San Clemente, Commander of Moratalla, counsel to the King Our Lord and his ambassador to Germany, profess that in the year 1593, while residing in the city of Prague in the court of the Emperor Rudolf II, the lord Duke Maximilian of Bavaria sent to me a jawbone of the glorious St. Leonardo with some teeth and molars in it, and with a testimony written in his hand and sealed with his seal, in which he affirmed that said relic was removed from where for many years the said saint was venerated. One of these teeth or molars I have given in the city of Milan today, the sixth of January, the day of the Epiphany in the year 1599, to the esteemed Lady Juana de Velasco, Duchess of Gandía and senior lady-in-waiting to the Queen, Our Lady.

This short certification, comprising only half a page in its entirety, demonstrates the particular political connections that relic gifts represented. There is a six-year gap between when

[52] "Digo yo Don Guillen de San Clemente, Commendador de Moratalla, del consejo del Rey, nro senor y su Embaxador en Alemana vs que en el ano Mil y quinientos y noventa y tres, residiendo yo en la Ciudad de Praga en la Corte del Emperador Rudolpho segundo, me embio el senor Duque Maximiliano de Baviera, una quixada del glorioso San Leonardo con algunos dienties y muelas con ella, y con un testimonio firmado de su mano, y sellado con su sello. En el qual affirmaua que dicha reliquia fue sacada de parte, donde muchos anos fue venerada por la del dicho Santo. Uno de los quales dientes o muela he dado yo en la Ciudad de Milan hoy a seis de henero dia dela epiphania del ano Mil y quinientos noventa y nueve ala Ju.na. y Ese.ma senora Dona Juana de Velasco Duquessa de Gandia y Camarera mayor de la Ryna nra. Senora." Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas to the Duchess of Gandía, January 6, 1599, AHN, Colección del Archivo de los Duques de Osuna, CP. 67, D. 11.

San Clemente received this relic and when he partitioned a piece of it for the Duchess of Gandía. The timing of the gift can be explained by two events, the first of which is Maximilian I's elevation to the dukedom.

Maximilian had not, in fact, been a duke when he originally gifted the jawbone to San Clemente. His father abdicated the seat in 1597, four years after the original exchange. It is unclear to what degree Maximilian I explicitly directed San Clemente's relic gift to Juana de Velasco, but the value of this political connection is clear—a young German duke would have looked for any avenue to gain favor with a Hapsburg queen. Throughout his life, Maximilian I would have a contentious relationship with the dynasty, often resisting the seemingly-unstoppable weight of Hapsburg influence on Bavarian affairs, and he may have calculated that the new, Austrian-born queen would be amenable to interceding with the Spanish branch of the dynasty.[53] Though he was only a young man at the time of this letter, with nearly the whole of his dukedom ahead of him, Maximilian I was already well-versed in the political use of relics and would continue to use them in his lifelong campaign against Protestantism. His grandfather, Albrecht V, had sponsored elaborate pilgrimages to both shrines within Bavaria and abroad to Rome when the practice seemed to be floundering.[54] In 1623, with Spanish support, Maximilian would wrest the Palatinate electoral dignity from the hands of his distant Protestant cousin Frederick V and set about re-Catholicizing his seized territories.[55] As one propaganda tactic, he sponsored the Jesuit historian and hagiographer Matthias Rader's production of *Bavaria sancta,*

---

[53] After the queen's death, two marriages would tie Maximilian I to her family—his sister first married the queen's brother, then-Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, and Maximilian himself would later marry his niece via this union, Maria Anna of Austria.
[54] Philip M. Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 161-62.
[55] Howard Louthan, "*Imagining Christian Origins:* Catholic Visions of a Holy Past in Central Europe," in *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, ed. Katherine Van Liere et. al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 154-55.

a multi-volume, encyclopedic history of the duchy's saints, pilgrimage sites, and relics. Following examples from elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, particularly that of Bohemia, he also translated relics to and established shrines in the portions of Upper Austria he claimed from Frederick V.[56] With the full arc of his life laid out, his relic gift to a Spanish Hapsburg courtier through San Clemente is an early example of political tactics that the Counter-Reformation duke would refine over his career.

The second event that explains the timing of this gift is Juana de Velasco's own elevation to a new position of power. The duchess was not a new figure in the Spanish court, or to San Clemente. She was by marriage a member of the prominent Borja family, the Spanish branch of the now-infamous Italian lineage, and her husband's uncle had been San Clemente's predecessor as ambassador to the court of Rudolf II.[57] She had for a decade served in the households of the princesses Isabel Clara Eugenia and Catalina Micaela. However, in 1598 she was appointed to the service of the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, who had wed Philip III by proxy marriage on November 13th, 1598. At the writing of this certification, both she and San Clemente were part of the future queen's entourage on her tour of Northern Italy that would culminate with her meeting her husband in Spain in April 1599.[58]

---

[56] Howard Louthan, "Tongues, Toes, and Bones: Remembering Saints in Early Modern Bohemia," *Past & Present* 206, no. 5 (January 2010): 167-83.

[57] Vojtěch Kroužil, "Juan de Borja en la corte de Rodolfo II y el asunto de la pacificación de los Países Bajos (1577-1579)," in *Encuentro de hispanistas: Setkání hispanistů*, ed. Athena Alchazidu and Petr Stehlík (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2013), 47-55.

[58] It is unclear exactly when the Duchess of Gandia joined the new queen's traveling party, but she is reported to be part of the procession entering Milan on November 11th, 1598. The queen herself also received relic gifts on this trip to celebrate her marriage, including a relic of Mary Magdalene gifted to her in Pavia, Italy. Johann Rainer, "Tú, Austria feliz, cásate. La boda de Margarita, princesa de Austria Interior, con el rey Felipe III de España. 1598/99," *Investigaciones históricas: Época moderna y contemporánea*, no. 25 (2005), 43-44.

As a senior member of the household, the Duchess of Gandía would hold an influential position once the new queen reached the Hapsburg court, and as a devout Catholic from a strong Catholic lineage, she was an ideal person to intercede for foreign Catholic nobles who wished to sway Spanish opinion. While no personal writings of the duchess have been located to explain her relationship with the new queen, historian Vanessa de Cruz Medina's work has shed light on the complex power structures of ladies-in-waiting within the sixteenth-century Spanish Hapsburg court, as well as these women's roles as collectors of antiquities, art, and curiosities. Medina's work on the prior generation of ladies-in-waiting shows that the duchess would have kept rooms near the queen, with her physical location inside the household demonstrating her seniority, and she likely would have displayed her collections within these rooms where they were viewable by the other female members of the household.[59] Indeed, looking forward into the next century, the duchess's activities under her lady's son, Philip IV, would show that she was amenable to acting as an agent for a foreign power though, unfortunately for Maximilian, few of her documented activities were on behalf of her Bavarian contact. Though her position of influence under Margaret of Austria was brief—she was ousted by the Duke of Lerma in favor of his wife just a year later—she returned to court as the camarera mayor for Philip IV's wife, Elizabeth of Bourbon. There she made use of the extensive Italian network she constructed through her Borja family ties, corresponding with luminaries including popes, nuncios, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, sometimes on behalf of the queen and sometimes for her own ends.[60]

---

[59] Vanessa de Cruz Medina, "Ladies-in-Waiting at the Spanish Hapsburg Palaces and Convents, the Alcázar and the Descalzas Reales (1570-1603): Spaces and representations of identity and agency," in *Representing Women's Political Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World*, ed. Jeremy Roe, et. al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), 146-168.

[60] Alejandra Franganillo Álvarez, "Female Agents at the Royal Palace of Madrid: Political Interests, Favors and Gifts (ca. 1598-1640)," *Culture & History Digital Journal* 11, no. 1 (June 2022): 5.

The particular choice of saint may also have been calculated to reinforce rhetorical ties between Counter-Reformation Bavaria and Spain. Though popular in Bavaria, especially amongst farmers in the mountain regions, the Frankish St. Leonard of Noblac's last resting place is actually in the west of France. In 1599 the small village of Noblac and Leonard's shrine had become a stop on the French leg of the Camino de Santiago, the pilgrimage way that leads to the reliquary of St. James in Santiago de Compostela and perhaps the second most popular pilgrimage site in Europe after Rome itself.

A piece of a saint beloved to the Bavarians, whose main shrine lay along the path that would take a traveler to one of the most holy sites in Spain, seems to carry another layer of meaning as a gift from a Bavarian duke to a Spanish noblewoman. St. Leonard's prestige also increased in the post-Tridentine world, as he was one of the select saints of the late Middle Ages whose validity and worship was approved by the papacy and whose feast day continued to be recognized. His relics remained popular through the seventeenth century, and in fact, one of the duchess's relatives on the Velasco side would make his own gift of the saint's supposed cranium to the Church of St. Leonard in Zoutleeuw, Belgium (then part of the rebellious Spanish Netherlands) in 1616 as part of an effort to reinforce Counter-Reformation Catholicism in the disputed Low Countries.[61]

Though the political power of this relic gift and the connections it forged between far-flung elites is clear, San Clemente's recounting of its credentials reflects the growing concerns about false relics in the late sixteenth century. With the gift coming just a few short years after the discovery of and controversy surrounding the lead tablets of Granada, this notorious episode

---

[61] A full description of this relic gift, its political significance, and the state-sponsored ceremonies surrounding its translation to Zoutleeuw can be found in Ruben Suykerbuyk, *The Matter of Piety: Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard and Religious Material Culture in the Low Countries (c. 1450-1620)* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 297-319.

was surely on his mind as he penned his certification. Though he goes to great lengths to profess the authenticity and lineage of this relic, all of the issues of legitimacy that emerging Church policy attempted to correct and that would be attacked by new schools of humanists and antiquarians are apparent in the methods he uses. The note concludes, in fact, by highlighting one major issue of authentication in the early modern world—the lack of reliable documentation: "And because I dropped the testimony of the Duke in the Danube river, and although I removed it, it was so erased and worn by the water that I cannot make a copy of it, I wanted to give this letter signed by my hand and sealed with my seal, which demonstrates that everything I say is true. Made in Milan the day and year written above."[62]

The authenticity of St. Leonard's tooth relied first and most importantly on the implicit authority of and trust between members of the nobility—the existence of the duke's letter was verified by San Clemente's authority and honor as a courtier, and the veracity of his claims about the origins of the jawbone itself were verified by the authority and honor of his title. There are multiple claims to nobility, and Steven Shapin's bonds of Christian gentlemen, in this letter. San Clemente holds his own titles, but he is also working as a representative of the Spanish Hapsburgs, and by naming Maximilian I, he invokes the absent duke's own nobility and honor, which is impossible to question from afar. If Juana de Velasco was suspicious of the relic's authenticity, she was similarly prevented from contesting it on multiple axes. Questioning the honor of a nobleman was resolvable only through violence or legal action, both very public and high-stakes undertakings for all parties.

---

[62] "Y porque el testimonio del senor duque se me cayo en el Rio de Danubio y aunque sacado del fue tan borrado y gastado dela agua, que no se puedo sacar copia del, he querido yo dar esta fui firmada de mi mano, y sellada con mi sello, por la qual parezca que es verdad todo lo que arriva digo, hecha en Milan el dia y ano arriva escrito." San Clemente to the Duchess of Gandía, AHN, Colección del Archivo de los Duques de Osuna, CP. 67, D. 11.

Assuming that San Clemente's description of the duke's letter is accurate, a second problem of authenticity emerges. The sanctity and efficacy of this relic is confirmed by a self-reinforcing, circular cycle of worship and the weight of memory. The relic was authentic because it was taken from a shrine where the faithful had worshipped it for many years, and—implicitly—because it has been worshipped, it must be holy.[63] How the body came to be in that place, the relationship of the saint's life story to the body's geographical location, and the chain of ownership—none of it weighs as heavily as the accumulation of worship. San Clemente implies that the original provenance supplied by the duke was more extensive, but the fragility of documentation in the early modern period means it is lost to us. Something as simple as a stumble by a river erased whatever historical details this tooth might have held, and the distance and logistics of correspondence make it difficult or impossible to replace.[64] As the sixteenth century came to a close, this would change, as empirical analysis and antiquarian study won out as the preferred methods of asserting authenticity.

Conclusion

Don Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas's transnational relic-trading activities exemplify the interconnected world in which he lived. The anxieties about the authenticity of

[63] Which shrine Maximilian I claimed to have received the tooth from remains unclear. St. Leonard's main pilgrimage site, his tomb in Noblac, claims to have a fully intact skull. The likeliest candidate is Leonard's shrine in Inchenhofen, Bavaria, the most popular site of devotion to the saint in the Holy Roman Empire, with over 4000 miracles reported in its records. Maximilian I is connected to this site as his ancestor Louis II, also Duke of Bavaria, established and is buried at the nearby Fürstenfeld Abbey, whose monks were patrons of the Inchenhofen shrine. However, whether the Inchenhofen shrine ever claimed to possess a jawbone from Leonard is unknown. Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150-1400* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 43-45.

[64] One also wonders if San Clemente might have found it embarrassing to alert Maximilian I to the fact that he had lost these important documents in such a preventable way and therefore avoided attempting to acquire a replacement copy.

relics that roil just under the surface of his note to the Duchess of Gandia are the same anxieties playing out across Catholic Europe after the Tridentine Reforms, and the varieties of proof that he calls upon to authenticate his gift are responses to emerging epistemological challenges to previously authoritative knowledge structures. As relics moved into the seventeenth century, these challenges would redouble, and pious Catholics began to incorporate new methods of empirical analysis and antiquarian study to answer them.

San Clemente's career in relics also makes visible the vast and diverse connections he drew upon on behalf of the Spanish crown. In the stories of just two relics that passed through his hands, we have encountered duchesses, ambassadors, queens, friars, electors, and state officials acting from Madrid to Prague. The seventeenth century diplomatic, collector, and religious networks were in fact all specialized nodes of a broader network of learned elites in the Spanish Hapsburg world. Between these nodes, information and objects, including relics, freely flowed, building social connections across widely dispersed individuals and reinforcing the political power of their owners. By following these objects through their long lives, we can map how individuals in seemingly disparate spheres collaborated, competed, and debated.

Chapter 2: Two Fine Sheets

On December 31st, 1612, another Spaniard abroad, Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza, penned an extraordinary letter to her patron, cousin, and spiritual confidant, don Rodrigo Calderón, describing her retrieval and preparation of the body of a recently executed English Catholic priest. As she begins her account of the execution, she writes that her servant "was standing underneath the gallows with two fine sheets of purest white which I had given him to try to dip in the blood."[65] She goes on to detail her servants' attempts to retrieve the priest's body, their encounter with other relic hunters, and her eventual reception of and preparation of the remains. As Carvajal's forethought with the two sheets suggests, this was not her first time producing and transporting the relics of English martyrs, nor was it Calderón's first time receiving such an account from her—or such a relic. He was only one link in her network of Spanish nobility and courtiers who received relics in exchange for implicitly-negotiated material resources and political support for Carvajal's cause of the re-Catholicization of England through intervention by the Spanish Hapsburgs.

This chapter demonstrates how this account, and Carvajal's relic creation activities more broadly, can be seen in the larger context of a commodified marketplace where relics held not only religious meaning, but also political and nationalistic currency to be traded on. In addition, it contextualizes Carvajal's position in this trade as a woman and a member of the Spanish nobility, who attempted to participate in political and religious causes while still upholding expectations of behavior for her gender and class. Constrained by these gendered expectations for elite female piety, Carvajal exploited the commodified trade in relics to promote her and her

---

[65] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Rodrigo Calderón, December 31st, 1612, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, ed. Glyn Redworth (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012), v.2, 293. Translations of Carvajal's letters are by Redworth and David McGrath from this collection.

patrons' political and religious interests. As a person who sat at the intersection of several groups of conflicting interests—the English Catholic community, the Society of Jesus, and multiple competing alliances of courtiers within the Spanish court most particularly—she also reveals how issues of authenticity and political legitimacy expanded beyond the Spanish Hapsburgs' official agents.

Spaniards on the English Mission

Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza occupies a unique role within the world of early modern Iberia as a Spanish noblewoman, missionary, and Catholic mystic. Carvajal's religious formation steeped her in both a devout and zealous Catholicism and a Catholicism that was at its heart intertwined with Spanish identity and the claim of the Spanish Hapsburgs to be the "most Catholic monarchy."[66] After being orphaned at a young age, she spent four years being raised alongside Philip II's daughters Isabella Eugenia and Catherine Michaela within Juana of Austria's palace at the Descalzes Reales convent, under the care of a great-aunt who was in the princesses' household. As Magdalena Sánchez argued in her 2015 article, "Where Palace and Convent Met: The Descalzas Reales in Madrid," scholarship on women and political power in the Spanish Hapsburg court has not fully considered "how much the convent also functioned as an extension of the Spanish court and the degree to which the Habsburg women in the Descalzas were able to bring elements of the court into the convent."[67] Juana had established the convent in 1559 after being widowed and kept her primary residence there for the rest of her life. The

[66] Though modern conceptions of "nation" and "nationality" had yet to solidify in the seventeenth century, Carvajal writes of a Spanish identity that clearly transcends allegiance to the monarchy or to one kingdom within the Spanish Hapsburg dynasty's many crowns. Her belief that the Spanish are the most Catholic of peoples is intertwined with her religious activism, as this chapter will further demonstrate.
[67] Magdalena Sánchez, "Where Palace and Convent Met: The Descalzas Reales in Madrid," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 54.

convent attracted both noble novitiates and visitors who wished to confer with the succession of royal women who kept residence there, and both the dowries of these well-born novitiates and the expected gifts from visitors included hundreds of relics. Though it is unlikely Carvajal had significant contact with Juana, who died soon after Carvajal arrived at the convent, it is clear that the princess's particular spiritual interpretations were influential.[68] Thanks to its patron and occupants, the relics at the Descalzes Reales had a uniquely political role even in a world where gifts of relics and their resultant meanings and obligations were well-understood. Though she was a child during her time in the convent, Carvajal's time there likely shaped her understanding of relics and relic gifts as powerful political tools, and as tools appropriate for use by women. By the end of the sixteenth century, the relic collection at the Descalzes Reales would be one of the few rivals to the Escorial collection.

Later, Carvajal was placed into the care of her uncle, who introduced her to extreme devotion via mortification of the flesh and the sanctity of martyrdom. When composing her spiritual autobiographies under the guidance of the Jesuits, she would recall her uncle as "a relentless exterminator of public and scandalous sins" who taught her to "meditate on the seven blood-sheddings of Christ our Lord, which are the circumcision, the agony at the Garden of Gethsemane, the scourging at the pillar, the coronation with thorns, the way of the cross, the crucifixion, and the piercing of his heart."[69] This fascination with holy pain reappears in Carvajal's later letters in the stories of the martyrs whose relics she preserves. These formative spiritual experiences introduced Carvajal to both the ideal of martyrdom and the central role of

---

[68] Glyn Redworth, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 13-6.
[69] Luisa Carvajal, *Autobiography*, in *The Life and Writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, trans. Anne J. Cruz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 130-1.

relics in Spanish Catholicism, but also to political power of martyrs' relics as a specific subcategory.

Carvajal's relationship with the Society of Jesus is another facet of her life that is likely rooted in her childhood experiences at the Descalzes Reales. Juana of Austria was a major patron of the Jesuits and was admitted to their order in 1554 under the male pseudonym "Mateo Sánchez" in recognition of her patronage, though this fact would not become known until long after her death and continues to be cloaked in some mystery, making it unlikely that Carvajal ever knew of it herself.[70] Carvajal would, in the course of her own affiliation with the Jesuits, occasionally earn the nickname "Jesuitess" or "She-Jesuit," but was never herself admitted to the order.[71] Once she reached the age of majority, Carvajal assumed control of her inheritance after a series of legal battles with her siblings and moved first to a house near the Jesuit headquarters in Madrid, then later to the Royal English College of St. Alban in Valladolid, a Jesuit seminary where English men were trained as priests to be sent back to England as missionaries.[72] Here she undertook additional religious education and became more intwined with a network of Jesuits and Benedictines devoted to an active, interventionist approach to the re-Catholicization of England.

During her early adulthood, especially during the lengthy and alienating legal disputes with her siblings, Carvajal appeared uncertain in her religious direction. She resisted both marriage and taking holy orders, but dedicated herself to a life of simplicity and poverty in line with that of many religious orders. While Carvajal longed for martyrdom, the Spanish image of female piety had strict boundaries, as demonstrated by one popular literary and artistic genre for

---

[70] Hugo Rahner, *St. Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women* (London: Herder & Herder, 1960), 56.
[71] Kathryn Marshalek, "Luisa de Carvajal in Anglo-Spanish Contexts, 1605–14," *Renaissance Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Fall 2022): 901.
[72] Redworth, *The She-Apostle*, 66-70.

women of the period: the *vidas*, or the lives of saints. These spiritual biographies were intended to educate girls and women on the proper mode of female piety, which was inward-focused, passive, and receptive. Female saints are often portrayed as confined or cloistered, in silent prayer, and focused only on God rather than worldly affairs.[73] This was the model available to Carvajal, which she ultimately rejected in her active participation in Catholic causes and explicit desire for martyrdom. Refusing to adhere to the understood model of female piety, however, left her in a tenuous position where she continuously had to balance performing gendered expectations with her more masculine-coded religious activism. Over the course of her life, she faced pressure from numerous sources—including Calderón—to retreat from her activities in the English Catholic community and take holy orders. Though she was involved in many facets of the English Catholic community, including proselytizing, distributing monetary support to recusants, and producing banned literature, the retrieval and preservation of the relics of martyrs became one of her key activities in part because she could assert that it was a female-oriented activity. In a 1611 letter to her cousin, the marchioness of Caracena, she compares herself shrouding the body of a recent martyr to the women who prepared Jesus's body for burial.[74] Funerary preparations were also often performed by the women of the household, adding to the idea that this was an expected and appropriate activity for Carvajal's gender and station.

---

[73] Mindy Nancarrow, "The 17th-Century Spanish 'Vida': Producing Sanctity with Words and Images," *Woman's Art Journal* 25, no. 1 (2004): 32-38. This ideal of a passive, receptive female sanctity was heavily influenced by Tridentine regulations for female religious communities and would continue to accelerate through the seventeenth century, appearing also in accounts of pre-Reformation female martyrs. For more on the difficulties of post-Tridentine sainthood for women, and the aesthetics of representations of female sainthood, see Helen Hills, "Demure Transgression: Portraying Female 'Saints' in Post-Tridentine Italy," *Early Modern Women* 3 (Fall 2008): 153-207.

[74] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to the marchioness of Caracena, May 10th, 1611, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v.2, 159.

Under the tutelage of the Jesuits, it seems, she found a cause that would allow her to both escape the two life paths expected of Spanish noblewomen of this period and an opportunity to pursue the martyrdom that so viscerally appealed to her. Because of their connections to many wealthy and influential women in the early modern world, the Jesuits have been portrayed by both their contemporaries and some modern historians as manipulators who took advantage of lesser-educated, weaker women in order to access their wealth and political patronage. Though Carvajal did turn over much of her inheritance to the Society of Jesus, it is also clear from her letters that she chooses to hold herself separate from them. In one later letter to Calderón, she speaks of rumors that the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbott, wished to have her arrested, because he believed her to be a "Jesuitess." Her tone in this letter is dismissive of both the possibility of arrest and the accusation.[75] In Spain, as in England, the Society of Jesus held a precarious position in national politics. Much work has been done on the English perception of Catholics of all nationalities as crypto-Spanish, particularly in Albert Loomie's *The Spanish Elizabethans*, but this perception did not extend into Spain itself.[76] As an order headed in Rome, the Jesuits' loyalties were often viewed by those outside of Rome as divided and suspicious.[77] Their tendency to defy the Spanish Hapsburgs' demands that the exile community in Spain cease their English mission was another contributing factor to this image. The Royal English College of St. Alban was the target of local protests in Valladolid throughout its operations under the Jesuits, as the population saw it as a potential hotbed of English or Roman spies despite royal visits from both Philip II and Philip III. In the eighteenth century these tensions boiled over and

---

[75] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Rodrigo Calderón, September 24, 1613, in in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v.2, 335.
[76] Albert Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963).
[77] For more on Spain's relations with Rome in the early modern world, see: Thomas Dandelet, *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

the Society of Jesus was expelled from Spain and the library at St. Alban's seized.[78] While uneasy toleration persisted in Carvajal's lifetime, the perception of the Jesuits as a foreign order may have come into too much conflict with her deep Spanish loyalties for her to fully identify herself as a part of it.

Carvajal relocated to Jacobean London in 1605 to work for the re-Catholicization of England, one of the only places in seventeenth century Europe where it was still possible to be martyred for the Catholic faith. In her spiritual autobiographies, she describes this as the culmination of her intense and lifelong desire for martyrdom. There she occupied a politically and socially delicate position, keeping houses immediately next to both the Spanish embassy and the ambassador of the Spanish Netherlands. These locations kept her within the sphere of protection offered by her home country's representatives, but outside of their control, in much the same way that her gender protected her in some circumstances while baring her from undertaking other activities that martyred male missionaries. The year 1605 was a delicate moment in English-Spanish diplomacy. After decades of intermittent conflict, relations were thawing after the deaths of Philip II and Elizabeth I and the ascension of Philip III and James I. This growing warmth did not extend to tolerance towards native Catholics in England, however. Under both Elizabeth and James, lay recusants were punished with fines and property seizure. The English authorities framed priests as agents of a foreign prince, the Pope, and their resistance to the state as treason punishable by execution. Carvajal was brought into the country by a group of returning English Jesuits, whom she had spent time with at the English College at Valladolid. Carvajal had become, by this point, deeply involved with the Society of Jesus,

[78] For an overview of the expulsion of the Jesuits and insights into the literature of St. Alban's, see Marta Revilla-Rivas, "Inventorying St. Alban's College Library in 1767: The Process and its Records," *British Catholic History* 35, no. 2 (2020): 169-89.

including donating to them her entire inheritance. Soon after her arrival, several of her friends and acquaintances were executed or imprisoned after accusations of taking part in the Gunpowder Plot, a Catholic conspiracy to blow up Parliament and James I with it.[79] Newly arrived and speaking little or no English, Carvajal was not part of this conspiracy, but the experience reverberates through her obsession with the executions of Catholics and the accounts she sent to her Spanish correspondents.

Fascination with martyrdom was not unique to Carvajal (though her devotion to the idea was unique in its intensity) or to the Spanish. On the English side, martyrology remained a popular category of literature, with John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (also known as Foxe's Book of Martyrs) second in popularity only to the Bible amongst English Protestants. Though the book gives a history of the English church from the earliest Christian martyrs, its last chapter on the reign of Mary Tudor and the Marian burnings is perhaps its most vivid and influential. The memorialization and imagery of martyrs, ironically, united Catholics and Protestants in England even as they continued to create martyrs of each other. Some scholars of literature have even argued that martyrology, and Foxe's Book of Martyrs especially, constitutes one of the last bastions of medieval and Catholic culture in England.[80] Carvajal's assertion that executed Catholic priests were holy martyrs, and her insistence that martyrdom conferred sainthood despite the recent decrees of the Council of Trent to the contrary, shows an evolution of her tactics from importation of Catholic materials to utilization of a typology whose power was acknowledged by her opponents as well as her compatriots.

---

[79] The true veracity and scope of the Plot remains a hotly debated topic today, and it is unclear how many of those eventually imprisoned or executed as participants were truly involved. For the full story of the Gunpowder Plot and its reverberations through the political world of Jacobean London, see Antonia Fraser, *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).
[80] Alice Dailey, *The English Martyr: From Reformation to Revolution* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 53-97.

Rags to Relics

Despite the advocacy, political intervention, and direct action of native and foreign pious Catholics in England, the material conditions of England's Reformation made reconstituting a national Catholic piety there exceptionally difficult. While Henry VIII's break with the papacy had been largely utilitarian, rather than based on a deeply-felt Protestant theology—the king himself would continue to observe a number of Catholic practices throughout his lifetime, including upholding the doctrine of transubstantiation—his son Edward VI was staunchly Protestant and accelerated the physical and theological transformation of English churches.[81] His short reign, along with the subsequent reversals and attendant destruction of spaces and objects of worship by Mary I and Elizabeth I, decimated Catholic material culture and infrastructure. In particular, the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII and the dissolution of the chantries under Edward VI saw relics and reliquaries lost, destroyed, or sold off en masse alongside vestments, chalices, icons, and stained glass.[82] The best chance at revitalizing English Catholicism came with the unexpected ascension of Mary Tudor to the throne in 1553, and Spanish Catholics in particular celebrated her 1556 marriage to Philip II. However, on the English side, the match was poorly received, with widespread public fear about Spanish conquest of the country. When Mary died childless in 1558 Philip lost all claim to the throne and with it, the ability to perpetuate the Marian Restoration. Elizabeth I swiftly reversed England's religious

[81] See A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (State College: Penn State University Press, 1991), Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2002).
[82] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

allegiances once again, which included deconstructing Marian churches and Catholic literature.[83] Many foreign Catholics in England, including Carvajal, were involved in efforts to replace this lost material culture and she began her career in England by taking part in importing Catholic literature into the country. Though she does not frame it as such in her letters, her efforts to create relics of executed clergy can also be seen as an attempt to replace England's lost historical relics.

The English Reformation altered the storage and movement of existing relics within the English Catholic community and also shaped how new relics were produced. Without safe churches and monasteries to store them, existing relics moved into the hands of devout lay Catholics who hid them in homes or other private properties and took them along when they left England on migratory journeys through exile communities. The threat of seizure by authorities and the lack of stable housing for relics changed the material form of relics and reliquaries. As art historian Andrea de Meo Arbore has explored, these external pressures caused English Catholics to prioritize relics that were small enough to be concealable and portable, instead of the larger, heavier reliquaries that had graced pre-Reformation places of worship.[84] The most highly valued Pre-Reformation relics were large, often entire limbs or bodies, and displayed in heavy, ornate housings decorated with precious metals, gemstones, or exotic woods, aesthetics that made them easily visible to an entire congregation in the candle- or lamp-lit setting of a church. After the English Reformation, many relics were divided into smaller pieces that could be housed in a locket or small boxes and hidden within a private home or on one's person. These

---

[83] See Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and Harry Kelsey, *Philip of Spain, King of England: The Forgotten Sovereign* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012).

[84] Andrea de Meo Arbore, "Change and Continuity in the Display of Relics in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: The English Catholic Community in a Broader Context," in *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*, ed. James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer, and Anna Harnden (London: British Museum, 2015), 183-4.

aesthetic requirements are once again at odds with Carvajal's preparation of the bodies of English martyrs and reinforce the idea that she was not creating relics with the English Catholic community in mind as eventual recipients. Carvajal preserved entire limbs, first by wrapping them in clean linen and then by sealing the body parts in airtight lead caskets until the flesh was sufficiently mummified. Three key factors likely influenced her process—convenience, spiritual rhetoric, and attractiveness to her intended recipients.

On the subject of convenience, much of the more gruesome work had already been done for Carvajal by the English authorities. Execution method in this period was based on the crime committed, and for treason, most English Catholic priests were drawn and quartered. Their heads were placed on pikes—likely impossible to retrieve, even by the most devoted—but the divided limbs were buried. By the time they reached her home, the martyrs were already in four pieces for Carvajal to work with. At this point, her spiritual beliefs about the treatment of holy flesh came into play as she worked to preserve the remains before decay set in. Based on her own accounting of her process in the December 31st letter and others, we know that she emphasized the preservation of as much flesh as possible. This went against new scientific processes for preservation, such as embalming. Finally, however, Carvajal's choice to preserve intact limbs suggests a desire to align with the practical usages for relics in and aesthetic preferences of the Spanish market. Unlike in England, relics transported to Spain had stable housing within a Catholic community, whether that was in a church, monastery, or abbey or one of the many private collections of noble families.

The relationship between dead bodies and the living in the early modern world was quite different from in the modern one. Carvajal's familiarity with working with the dead was not unusual for her time, as the dead were often kept at home until the funeral and burial. In

Carvajal's English circles, the practice of sitting up with the body was still popular across sects, though it faced opposition from Protestant ecclesiastical leaders who interpreted the practice as a site of continued Catholic superstition and would slowly fade in intensity and frequency over the course of the seventeenth century.[85] Contemporary observers recall friends and family members praying, playing games, and chatting around the body, and a social atmosphere replete with food and drink.[86] While Carvajal's specific skill in long-term preservation may have been unusual, especially in the era before widespread use of and trust in embalming, her comfort with bodies and general knowledge of warding off decay was not. Likewise, the ritual use and veneration of particular bodies was not new, though many practices had declined after the high Middle Ages.[87] What is interesting about Carvajal is not that she possessed the knowledge to preserve and transport bodies competently, but the practical and political choices she made about their preservation and dispersal.

Turning once more to the December 31st, 1612 letter, Carvajal vividly outlines the execution of John Almond, the English Catholic priest accused of treason:

> Our servant saw this as he was standing underneath the gallows with two fine sheets of purest white which I had given him to try to dip in the blood, should he get the chance. He gave one to the executioner to blindfold those happy eyes…And in that way my meager care and attention was amply rewarded, as in any case he who had taken the sheets with him was unable to get to his blood.[88]

---

[85] Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 105-7.
[86] Francis Tate, "Of the Antiquity, Variety and Ceremonies of Funerals in England," in *A Collection of Curious Discourses by Eminent Antiquarians upon several Heads in our English Antiquities*, ed. Thomas Hearne (London: W and J. Richardson, 1771), v. 1, 122. Wellcome Collection, accessed digitally, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ucjawzsv.
[87] For a comprehensive exploration of preservation and veneration practices relating to holy, noble, or otherwise notable bodies in the European Middle Ages, see Romedio Scmitz-Esser, *The Corpse in the Middle Ages: Embalming, Cremating, and the Cultural Construction of the Dead Body*, trans. Albrecht Classen and Carolin Radtke (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2020). Particularly interesting is Scmitz-Esser's discussion of the positionality of those charged with the preparation of bodies, pg. 263-73.
[88] Carvajal to Calderón, December 31st, 1612, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v.2, 293.

This passage demonstrates that Carvajal's production of relics was active and proactive, not passive and receptive. She did not merely retrieve bodies produced by the English authorities but went to lengths to create additional relics acceptable to the Spanish market. She commands her servant to attempt to retrieve Almond's blood, but when that does not work, the fact that these cloths touched Almond's eyes also suffices for relic production. The two fine cloths substitute for the original rags, producing more pleasing items. There is a hierarchy of value in these relics, where dramatic, visible bodily remains are prized, but where contact and aesthetics also matter. Carvajal's account also acts to authenticate the items received by Calderón, drawing a direct and unbroken line from the gallows, to her house, to his eventual possession, adding to the value of the relics.

Carvajal's ability to authenticate her relics also clearly adds to their value, though her methods of authentication are very different from those of Guillén de San Clemente in Chapter One. As a woman, and one with an ambiguous social position at that, she would be viewed as a dependent (to utilize Steven Shapin's framework once again) and therefore unable to give truly objective evidence or access the code of gentlemanly honor that validated men's testimony. Instead, she relies on what we might think of as provenance documentation, giving an unbroken record of the relic's existence from the gallows to her home to transport. Her repeated naming of or allusion to male collaborators, such as the unnamed and possibly fictional Englishmen who taught her funerary preservation techniques, is likely also an attempt to utilize their positions to reinforce the authenticity of her objects.

As the letter continues, Carvajal's servants must compete with other relic hunters for possession of Almond's remains:

> God bestowed even further favor and compassion upon me, since he left it to me to give a resting place to this holy body by beating off the others who tried and who had made up their minds to die rather than leave him any longer in such an unworthy place. They only avoided my people by a whisker, which would have been very dangerous. If they did not realize we were friends, they could have killed each other with their pistols, and, even if they had known, they might have become carried away by excessive devotion to the martyr.[89]

The identity of this other group attempting to retrieve Almond's body is unknown, but the tone of the letter demonstrates this was not an uncommon experience. While Carvajal assigns the danger of this near miss to the fact that the group "might have become carried away by excessive devotion to the martyr" this "devotion" is clearly connected to the spiritual, political, and indirectly, monetary value of the relics. The desire to possess the body overruled Catholic brotherhood and the ostensibly shared goal of re-Catholicization. This demonstrates that while there were multiple groups working for a Catholic England during this period, their aims did not all exactly align. Flemish, Dutch, and French Catholics all operated within English Catholic communities in Jacobean London, with agendas that connected a Catholic England to the power of their home countries.

Though Carvajal's goal to protect the bodies of martyrs from further degradations at the hands of English authorities likely matched that of her competitors, the path that these relics traveled once they left her house in Spitalfields did not. Carvajal's relic transportation network reveals the central contradiction between her nationalistic beliefs and her work on behalf of a supposedly English or universal Catholic community. Few of the relics mentioned in her letters reentered the English Catholic community within her lifetime, and most were explicitly intended for Spanish receivers. Throughout her letters, the bodies of English martyrs leave Jacobean

---

[89] Ibid.

London via Spanish connections, whether those are the couriers of Rodrigo Calderón, the elite Spanish visitors of the ambassador of Spain, or Carvajal's own brother. The Spanish focus of Carvajal's relic network is at odds with the origins of these bodies and with her stated goals—despite being English martyrs, she does not attempt to move them into the English Catholic exile network, and she also does not disperse them into the wider transnational Catholic community. Instead, she offers them to her countrymen, and receives in return monetary support and the promotion of the English Catholic cause to the Spanish court.

In a 2012 article, historian Glyn Redworth uses the French sociologist Marcel Mauss' explanation of the phenomenon of gift-giving to examine Carvajal's gifts of relics to her friends, patrons, and confidants. While Mauss asserts that the expectation of reciprocity between giver and recipient is essential to gift-giving, Redworth argues that the gift of holy relics implies a three-way relationship (between the giver, the receiver, and God) and therefore there is no expectation of direct reciprocity between giver and receiver.[90] However, in examining Carvajal's framing of her relic gifts, we see that she is aware of the value of her gifts and the reciprocity that this value ought to provoke. In a previous letter to Calderón, she details the extensive time and labor that relic preservation requires in the same paragraph as she reassures him that she "shall do as your lordship orders by continuing to collect fine relics."[91] In the next paragraph, she implies that if he wishes to continue benefiting from this burdensome activity he should exert his political connections on her behalf, by suggesting that his own patron, the Duke of Lerma, may wish to receive some relics in exchange for monetary support for Carvajal and her community.

---

[90] Glyn Redworth, "God's Gift? Sacred Relics, Gift Giving, and Luisa de Carvajal's Preparation of the Holy During the Long Reformation," *Nuncius* 27 (2012): 285-6.
[91] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Rodrigo Calderón, July, 1612, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v.2, 219.

The business of relic production was an expensive one. Carvajal's cost estimates in various letters—including retrieval, the required supplies, and wrapping and dressing of bodies—range from five to seven hundred *reales*, or more than half of her monthly income. Though she had sworn herself to a life of poverty, she also had numerous other expenses, including rent and payment to the servants who assisted in retrieving and preparing the martyrs' bodies. Patronage from the Duke of Lerma could alleviate many of these crippling costs. However, extending this offer to the duke via Calderón was not only a financial decision. First, she was also advancing Calderón's interests by offering her friend this valuable commodity to present to his own patron and main supporter in court. She was aware that her position in England was tenuous—her repeated provocation of English authorities, and the embarrassment of her imprisonment, had earned rebuke from the Spanish ambassador and eventually the crown. Calderón himself had offered her leadership of an abbey he purchased as an enticement for her to return to Spain and cease her activities in England. This offer of relics was a demonstration of her value in England to Calderón's ambitions and more widely, the Spanish monarchy's goal of becoming a Catholic empire.

Relics of post-Reformation English martyrs already occupied the imaginations of the Spanish elite, igniting popular anger towards the English monarchy. Carvajal herself, early in her time in England, had participated in promoting the story of "Garnet's Straw." This was supposedly a relic of Henry Garnet, the leader of the English Jesuits who had been executed in May 1606 for his apparent role in the Gunpowder Plot. A witness recounted that they had plucked a piece of straw from the site of the execution and on it, Garnet's face appeared in a splatter of blood. This relic made it into the hands of the Spanish ambassador, who showed it before James I's Privy Council as well as numerous Spanish visitors, and vivid images of the

relic proliferated across both Catholic and Protestant literature.[92] Carvajal viewed the straw and promoted its authenticity to her correspondents, including correcting later versions of the story that circulated in print. Her account reinforced Garnet's holiness and, by extension, the righteousness of his cause, and she manipulated her presentation of the relic based on her audience. In her initial telling, she verifies the authenticity of the relic but offers an ambivalent reaction to its artistic qualities, saying that one had to squint to make out Garnet's face on the wheat.[93] Later, perhaps in reaction to the obvious appetite particularly of her female correspondents for stories of the miraculous, she asserts more clarity and drama in her narrative. She offered Garnet's ring to one friend particularly taken with the story in 1607, reemphasizing that "he was truly a saint, even when he was alive."[94] Throughout these recountings, Carvajal's disdain for the idea that Spain would tolerate a Protestant England is evident. The relics she produced publicized the continued persecution of Catholics in England and advertised for Spanish intervention.

Carvajal does not just assert the connection between her Catholicism, her interest in martyrdom, and her devotion to Spain in her letters. She also professed this to her English confidants. In a 1611 letter, she recounts a conversation with the Benedictine monk John Roberts while the latter was imprisoned and awaiting execution after defying legislation against performing Catholic Mass. While visiting the monk and another imprisoned Catholic, she recalls prostrating herself before them and says:

---

[92] For example, see the frontispiece for the anonymous *A True and Perfect Relation of the whole proceedings against the late most barbarous Traitors, Garnet, a Jesuite, and his confederats* (London: Robert Barker, 1606).
[93] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Magdalena de San Jerónimo, December 5th, 1606, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v. 1, 201-2.
[94] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Leonor de Quirós, August 31st, 1607, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v. 1, 275.

> I wanted to show in person, although being a very pale imitation of what it should be, the just and great esteem in which my nation holds the lofty state and profession of martyrdom, and perhaps increase the heroic resolve of their spirits, which were even further from feelings of presumption and vainglory than from the feelings of horror that naturally arise from the death they are made to picture when the sentence is passed.[95]

Here Carvajal reassures the to-be martyrs that she and her nation, unlike the English, understand that martyrdom is a glorious end and that the joy of their communion with God will overcome the natural fear of execution. The connection between martyrdom, the promotion of the Catholic faith, and Spanish nationhood recurs throughout Carvajal's letters, but this is one of the most explicit examples. In this quote, she appears to be speaking not only *as* a Spaniard, but *for* the Spaniards, in her proclamation of support from the nation as a whole for the English martyrs. Notably, she could not have imagined that this opinion was genuinely shared across her countrymen. Setting aside the ambiguous status of martyrdom in Catholic theology, Spanish support for the English Catholic cause was also often complicated and reluctant. This quote is not an objective account of Spanish sentiments, but instead representative of Carvajal's idealized, imperial Spanish monarchy and her hopes for more proactive involvement in the re-Catholicization of England. It also reemphasizes the power of martyrs in Carvajal's eyes, not only as spiritual intercessors, but as inducements for Spanish intervention.

Underneath the repeated motif of holy martyrdom in Carvajal's letters also lies an implicit crusading rhetoric, one that she may have also taken from her influential time under the theological tutelage of the Jesuits. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, a Jesuit priest and chronicler of secular and saints' lives from a generation before Carvajal, sometimes called the "creator of modern

---

[95] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to the marchioness of Caracena, April 16th, 1611, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v.2, 151.

hagiography," had already written extensively about the re-Catholicization of England through the lens of the Crusades.[96] Most famously, in 1589's *Tratado de la tribulación*, he wrote about the failure of the Spanish Armada, and his view that such failures did not show that the campaign to re-Catholicize England was against God's wishes, but rather that failures were necessary to perfect the piety and resolve of individuals. He places the re-Catholicization of England as the next step in a process of holy crusade that included the late medieval Crusades to the Holy Land and the Reconquista.[97] Though Ribadeneyra was not at Valladolid, he did visit England in the 1550's and is likely that Carvajal personally encountered his writing, either while she was in Spain through his most well-distributed work, his 1572 biography of Ignatius of Loyola, or through her English confessor, Henry Walpole, who translated Ribadeneyra's biography of Loyola into English.[98]

This idea of crusade appears in how Carvajal carefully frames the John Roberts episode based on the political position of the recipients of her letters. The letter previously quoted above was sent to the marchioness of Caracena, the same friend to whom Carvajal had previously sent Henry Garnet's ring. In this letter she emphasizes the spiritually ecstatic dimensions of the experience. It is couched within other discussions of Carvajal's envy that the marchioness is able to regular take communion, a sacrament not readily available in England, and searches of her

---

[96] Jodi Blinkoff, "The Many 'Lives' of Pedro de Ribadeneyra," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 182.

[97] Sam Zeno Conedera, SJ, "Not Invincible: Pedro de Ribadeneyra and the Spanish Armada" (Conference paper, Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting 2024, Chicago, IL, March 22, 2024).

[98] Anna J. Cruz, *The Life and Writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 10. Ribadeneyra's writing might have been especially appealing to Carvajal given her rejection of the professed religious life and the enclosure it required of women after Trent, as his writings deemphasize obedience as a key trait of piety. In fact, in the early seventeenth century, he completed an approving spiritual biography of another Spanish Catholic noblewoman who, like Carvajal, rejected the cloister but lived a celibate and ascetic life. This biography was never published, so it is unlikely Carvajal read it, but its existence demonstrates Ribadeneyra's unconventional approach to women who chose individual religious lives after Trent. See Blinkoff, "Many 'Lives'," 185-188, and *Related Lives: Confessors and their Female Penitents, 1450*–1750 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32–45.

house by English authorities. These domestic concerns directed to a female recipient may be a way of reiterating the oppression of English Catholics and the justifications for Carvajal's work there. On the same day she composed this letter, she also wrote a letter to the marchioness's husband, the marquis of Caracena, where she also recounts her meeting with Roberts but in very different terms, emphasizing external action rather than internal contemplation. Here, she mentions the marquis's role in the dispersal of the morisco population from the former Emirate of Granada after the 1568 Rebellion of the Alpujarras, drawing an implicit connection between this successful reconquest and the one she imagines in England. Similarly, in her letter to the marchioness she had not spoken of Roberts' remains, but in the letter to the marquis, her role in their retrieval and preservation is revealed.

Another Benedictine, acquainted with Roberts, intended to retrieve the body from the execution site and requested her permission to use her house to hide the remains.[99] Though he goes unnamed in the letter, this Benedictine was Maurus Scott, who would be arrested for his retrieval of Roberts' remains and eventually martyred himself, and it is unclear how he and Carvajal became acquainted.[100] Carvajal used her funds to hire a coach to bring Roberts' remains from the execution site at Tyburn to her home and despite Scott's arrest and the loss of part of the body, the rest of his party managed to bring most of the remains to her house.

This letter from 1611 is the first account of Luisa's involvement in the retrieval of bodies, although it is unknown whether Roberts was in fact the first priest whose body she directly participated in turning into relics. She had certainly produced other sorts of martyr relics—for example, by bribing executioners to hand over bits of clothing worn by martyrs—beginning early

---

[99] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to the marquis of Caracena, April 16th, 1611, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v. 2, 157.
[100] Bede Camm, *A Benedictine Martyr in England: being the life and times of the venerable servant of God, Dom John Roberts* (London: Bliss, Sands, & Co, 1897).

in her time in England.[101] The way that she offers her account to the marquis in this letter does demonstrate both her hesitation and her lack of control over this retrieval. She elides the actual preparation of the body, instead saying, "I managed to get some pieces from the father to whom they belonged, although I could not get as much as I wanted of the holy relics from him. One of these days they will take them away, and it is best not to say where […] This information is for your excellency alone, and for my cousin and your daughters, so that no Englishman or Fleming should learn of this."[102] As with her letter to the marchioness, in this letter, religious sentiment and national identity collapse into each other. Roberts' relics must be protected from the English and the Flemings, who are taken to be Protestant as a matter of course. Though Carvajal's collaborators in the Roberts episode are Englishmen—Scott was Essex-born and Cambridge-educated before his conversion—this framing places their Englishness into question. Subtly, Carvajal implies that to be Catholic and to be English are incompatible. In her next paragraph, she compliments the marquis on his suppression of Morisco dissidents in the south of Spain. As he confronts "heretical" elements within Spain, she confronts the hereticism of England, both dangerous elements that threaten the stability of the most Catholic monarchy.

As with the 1612 letter to Rodrigo Calderón, this passage shows Carvajal offering up her access to this most unusual commodity to a male figure capable of interceding in court politics on her behalf. While it is certainly true that the Hapsburg court cannot be reduced to passive women and active men, Carvajal's continued engagement specifically with the men in her circle demonstrates her awareness that their ability to procure funds and privileges for her was likely much more direct than that of her female correspondents, as does her rhetorical strategy of

---

[101] Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza to Mother Mariana de San José, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, v. 2, 56.
[102] Carvajal to the marquis of Caracena, April 16th, 1611, in *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*, 157.

connecting the suppression of southern Moriscos with the re-Catholicization of England. She is also careful to skirt the issue of actually offering these relics directly to the marquis in a way that is not apparent in the later letter of 1612. In part, this may be because she was early in her career as a producer of relics and her network for moving these items back to the continent may not have been established, though by this period she was regularly participating in the circulation of smaller, secondary relics and Catholic literature banned by English censors which likely moved through many of the same groups. In part she was likely also obfuscating her control of this body. As Scott had arranged this retrieval, Roberts' remains did travel to the English College in Douai. Whether or not Carvajal did manage to retain control of some of the relics is unknown, as the body was lost during the French Revolution. Looking from this letter to her more confident one of 1612, her confidence in making explicit political connections and requests grows as does her ability to negotiate for material support.

Conclusion

The letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza offer a window into a sophisticated transnational marketplace for relics that included hierarchies of value and competing networks of circulation. Her framing of these holy gifts to her friends and patrons also demonstrates that the participants in this marketplace were aware of the spiritual and political capital offered by these objects and implicitly negotiated compensation for them. Once relics traveled from their place of production to recipients, they could be used to further recipients' multifaceted nationalistic goals. While Carvajal does see these relics as advertisements for the cause of the re-Catholicization of England, she imagines that this re-Catholicization will come under the banner of the Spanish monarchy. While the story of the relic trade can be told as one of Protestant and Catholic

division, Carvajal's negotiations demonstrate that it is also an inter-Catholic debate where divisions between Spanish, English, and Roman Catholic communities emerge.

After her own death in 1614, brought on by a long illness after a second imprisonment, Carvajal's own remains were sent to the convent of the Incarnation in Madrid. Calderón had hoped to claim them for the convent he owned and had once offered to her, but this was not to be. Philip III intervened to seize them for the convent of the Incarnation on behalf of Maria de San José, Carvajal's longtime friend but also a political rival of Calderón and the Duke of Lerma. The woman who had once written that if she was not martyred in England, she did not deserve to be buried, ironically achieved this aim. Though she was never canonized, her body (absent one finger taken by a friend) now sits in the in the convent's reliquary room—never martyred, never buried, and at the end, once more a tool for courtly politics.

Epilogue

As this thesis's two chapters have shown, the period surrounding the year 1600 was a transformative time for saints' relics in Spain. The edicts of the Council of Trent, which had concluded in the mid-sixteenth century, were now in full force across the Catholic world. the Jesuits, perhaps the most influential of the Tridentine-era orders, had expanded from Europe to the Americas, Asia, and the Spanish Pacific, and with their expansion had come new demand for relics to support the foundation of churches in lands that had no native Catholic martyrs. Critiques from Protestants and reformed Catholics, including the famous *Treatise on Relics* by John Calvin, led to new scrutiny from collectors as they attempted to validate and document the authenticity of their collections. At the same time, hundreds of relics that had previously had stable housing in the Catholic churches of the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Netherlands, and England entered the collector's marketplace as the Reformation(s) forced the closure of churches and the dispersal of these local ecclesiastical relic repositories into private hands and the open collectors' market.

In the Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, amongst the papers of the Marquesses of Perales del Rio is a collection of certificates of authenticity for relics dating from the eighteenth century. The majority of these certifications were sent from Cardinal Luis Antonio Belluga y Moncada, a favorite of Philip V, to Antonia de Velasco, then Marchioness of Perales del Río and one of Juana de Velasco's distant descendants to authenticate a large shipment of relics and related devotional objects she received from him in 1742.[103] These documents demonstrate how many of the trends

[103] *Memoria de las reliquias pertenecientes a Antonia de Velasco, marquesa de Perales del Río y autentificaciones de las reliquias*. May 14, 1720 to July 30, 1744, AHN, Colección del Marquesado de Perales del Río, C. 25, D. 142-53.

that emerged during the life of Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas and Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza coalesced after their lifetimes and changed the materiality and rhetoric of documents asserting the authenticity of relics.

Continuing the trend begun by Philip II, the sheer scale and variety of items that the marchioness received from Cardinal Belluga demonstrates how the character of Spanish relic collections had changed. Instead of owning a few relics—perhaps centered around the patron saint of their profession, hometown, or area requiring intercession—early modern relic collectors adopted a desire for quantity and comparison that would later come to characterize eighteenth and nineteenth century cabinets of curiosity, predecessors of modern museum collections. Among the items the marchioness received are eighteen small crosses from Jerusalem, two hundred small saints' medallions, and eight dozen rosaries from Jerusalem with accompanying indulgences from Rome. For each of the first-degree relics in the shipment, the most valuable of the included items, the cardinal carefully notes in the inventory when the relic is "con su autentica," a fascinating synecdoche.[104] In addition to the certificates for the relics sent by Belluga, the folio of documents also includes certifications for relics the marchioness added to her collection later, in the late 1740's and early 1750's. Despite the different origin points for these documents, their material qualities and format are similar.

Unlike the certification of authenticity that Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas provided to Juana de Velasco to accompany his relic gift, or the descriptions of provenance that Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza wove into her letters home to her Spanish correspondents, these later certificates exhibit an understanding of standardization and replicability as markers of authenticity. Each certificate is pre-printed on a half-size sheet, with spaces left for the author to

---

[104] *Memoria de las reliquias*, June 13, 1742, AHN, Colección del Marquesado de Perales del Río, C. 25, D. 143.

fill in the details of the particular relic under scrutiny. Some of the relics originate outside of Spain, coming from the broader transnational Catholic marketplace as evidenced by certificates signed by curates from Rome.

The transition from the handwritten documentation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the printed documentation of the eighteenth reflects the expansion of print in the Iberian Peninsula, but in addition to this technological development, it shows a shift in what kinds of evidence were considered appropriate and authoritative. While San Clemente relied on the value of individual authority, with a certificate signed "por su propia mano" and sealed with his personal seal, by the eighteenth century the value of institutional authority was paramount. The replicability of these mass-produced certifications and their decoration with the printed seals of their authors or motifs of their points of origin locate their authority in the power of the institution of the Catholic Church, rather than any one individual.

The language of these later certifications also demonstrates how their authority rests in the Church itself. The printed text is largely in Latin, with the handwritten details added by the relevant ecclesiastical official in a mix of Latin, Spanish, and Italian. As discussed in the Introduction regarding the lead tablets of Granada, the use of Latin in the early modern world connected a material object to early Christianity and the imagined world and prestige of Ancient Rome.[105] Though the authors of these certifications largely note the details of each item in the vernacular, likely for the benefit of recipients more fluent in the vernacular than Latin, the structure of the certifications is in Latin to evoke the memory of that language as the lingua franca of royal courts, the law, and the church. As with the lead tablets that accompanied the

[105] For more on the conflicted identity of early modern Latin as both the language of Catholicism and the language of a cross-confessional learned network, see: Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

martyrs' relics found in Granada, the linguistic, material, and historical components of these documents serve as markers of authenticity as much as the text itself does. While the lead tablets failed, these later documents succeeded.

Guillén de San Clemente y Centellas and Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza acted as nodes in the Spanish relic trade at a moment when medieval markers of authenticity were being renegotiated for the post-Reformation, post-Tridentine world. As they transferred saints' relics from outside of the empire into Spanish hands, both navigated these changing requirements while asserting the value, rhetorical purpose, and political power of their relics. In Chapter One, San Clemente relied on multiple claims of nobility and personal authority to assert his relics' authenticity while using these objects to build diplomatic ties between Spaniards and individuals or locales in Bavaria, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Spanish Netherlands. In Chapter Two, Carvajal used her personal relationship with her relics to assert their unassailable provenance while also exchanging these relics for material support and using them as proof of the righteousness of her campaign to re-Catholicize England and incorporate it into the Spanish empire. Though these two agents traded in very different kinds of relics and were separated by gender, location, and relationship to Spain's official diplomatic apparatus, together they demonstrate the breadth of strategies early modern Spaniards used to assert authenticity and the role of relics in building a Spanish national identity and imperial network.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

A True and Perfect Relation of the whole proceedings against the late most barbarous Traitors, Garnet, a Jesuite, and his confederats. London: Robert Barker, 1606.

Calvin, John. *A Treatise on Relics, Translated from the French Original With An Introductory Dissertation on the Miraculous Images, as Well as Other Superstitions, of the Roman Catholic and Russo-Greek Churches*. Translated by Count Valerian Krasinski. Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co., 1870.

Carvajal y Mendoza, Luisa de. *The Letters of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*. Edited by Glyn Redworth et al. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

--------- *Autobiography*. In *The Life and Writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza*. Translated by Anne J. Cruz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.

Colección del Archivo de los Duques de Osuna. Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza. Toledo, Spain.

Colección del Consejo de Estado. Archivo General de Simancas. Valladolid, Spain.

Colección del Marquesado de Perales del Río. Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza. Toledo, Spain.

Galilei, Galileo. "Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina." In *Discoveries and Opinions of Galileo*, edited by Stillman Drake, 173-216. New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1957.

Hernández, Miguel. *Vida, martyrio y translacion de la gloriosa virgen y martyr Santa Leocadia*. Toledo: por Pedro Rodriguez, impressor y mercader de libros, 1591.

Pedraza, Francisco Bermudez de. *Historia eclesiastica: Principios, y progressos de la ciudad, y re catolica de Granada: Corona de su poderoso Reyno, y excelencias de su corona* (1639; reprint, with a fore-word by Ignacio Henares Cuellar, Granada: Editorial don Quijote, 1989), pt. 3, chap. 38, fol. 15

Tate, Francis. "Of the Antiquity, Variety and Ceremonies of Funerals in England." In *A Collection of Curious Discourses by Eminent Antiquarians upon several Heads in our English Antiquities*. Edited by Thomas Hearne. London: W and J. Richardson, 1771. Wellcome Collection, accessed digitally, https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ucjawzsv.

Secondary Sources

Andrés, Gregorio de. "Los cinco retratos reales de la Biblioteca de El Escorial." *Archivo Español de Arte* 40, no. 160 (October 1967): 359-60.

Arienza Arienza, Javier. "La historia de Guillén de San Clemente, un embajador hispano en el corazón de Europa entre los años 1581 y 1608." *Ibero-Americana Pragensia* 45, no. 1 (2017): 73-98.

Bartlett, Robert. *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.

Bleichmar, Daniela and Peter C. Mancall, ed. *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Blinkoff, Jodi. "The Many 'Lives' of Pedro de Ribadeneyra." *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 180-96.

------- *Related Lives: Confessors and their Female Penitents, 1450–1750*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

Bouley, Brad. Pious *Postmortems: Anatomy and the Creation of Early Modern Saints*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Brown, Peter. *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

Burke, Peter. "How to Become a Counter-Reformation Saint." In *The Counter-Reformation: The Essential* Readings, edited by David M. Luebke, 129-42. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1999.

------ *The Art of Conversation.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Camm, Bede. *A Benedictine Martyr in England: being the life and times of the venerable servant of God, Dom John Roberts*. London: Bliss, Sands, & Co, 1897.

Casale, Sinem Arcak. *Gifts in the Age of Empire: Ottoman-Safavid Cultural Exchange, 1500–1639*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2023.

Cassidy-Welch, Megan. *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150-1400*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Christian, William. *Local Religion in Sixteenth Century Spain*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Cline, Howard F. "The Relaciones Geograficas of the Spanish Indies, 1577-1586." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 44, no. 3 (August 1964): 341-74.

Conedera, Sam Zeno. "Not Invincible: Pedro de Ribadeneyra and the Spanish Armada." Paper presented at Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting 2024, Chicago, IL, March 22, 2024.

Cooley, Mackenzie. *The Perfection of Nature: Animals, Breeding, and Race in the Renaissance.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022.

Cruz, Anna J. *The Life and Writings of Luisa de Carvajal y Mendoza.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014.

Cruz, Eduardo Ángel. "How to Finance a Counter-Reformation Saint: the Alms for the Canonisation of Isidore Agricola and Ferdinand III, 1592-1688." *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 74, no. 4 (October 2023): 753-773.

Cruz Medina, Vanessa de. “LADIES-IN-WAITING AT THE SPANISH HABSBURG PALACES AND CONVENTS, THE ALCÁZAR AND THE DESCALZAS REALES (1570–1603): Spaces and representations of identity and agency.” In *Representing Women’s Political Identity in the Early Modern Iberian World*, edited by Jeremy Roe, et. al., 146-168. Abingdon: Routledge, 2021.

Dailey, Alice. *The English Martyr: From Reformation to Revolution.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

Dandelet, Thomas. *Spanish Rome, 1500-1700.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Dear, Peter. “Totus in Verba: Rhetoric and Authority in the Early Royal Society.” *Isis* 76, no. 2 (June 1985): 144-161.

Dickens, A.G. *The English Reformation*. State College: Penn State University Press, 1991.

Dillenberger, John. *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-Century Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Duffy, Eamon. *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

------ *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Drayson, Elizabeth. *The Lead Books of Granada*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Findlen, Paula, ed. *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*. London: Routledge, 2013.

Franganillo Álvarez, Alejandra. “Female Agents at the Royal Palace of Madrid: Political Interests, Favors and Gifts (ca. 1598-1640).” *Culture & History Digital Journal* 11, no. 1 (June 2022): 1-11.

Fraser, Antonia. *Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Freeman, Charles. *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.

Garcia-Arenal, Mercedes and Fernando Rodriguez Mediano. *The Orient in Spain: Converted Muslims*: *The Forged Lead Books of Granada*, *and the Rise of Orientalism*. Translated by Consuelo Lopez-Morillas. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

----- and Gerard A. Wiegers, ed. *The Expulsion of the Moriscos from Spain: A Mediterranean Diaspora.* Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Gauthier, Marie-Madeleine. *Highways of the Faith: Relics and Reliquaries from Jerusalem to Compostela.* Translated by J.A. Underwood. Secaucus: The Wellfleet Press, 1986.

Geary, Patrick. “Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics.” *In The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Edited by Arjun Appadurai. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

------ *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Gentilcore, David. *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

Gittings, Clare. *Death, Burial, and the Individual in Early Modern England*. London: Croom Helm, 1984.

Goldberg, Edward L. "Artistic Relations Between the Medici and the Spanish Courts, 1587-1621: Part I." *The Burlington Magazine* 138, no. 1115 (February 1996): 105-114.

Hahn, Cynthia. *The Reliquary Effect: Enshrining the Sacred Object*. London: Reaktion Books, 2017.

------*Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400 – Circa 1204*. State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.

Haigh, Christopher. *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Harris, A. Katie. *From Muslim to Christian Granada: inventing a city's past in early modern Spain*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

------"Forging History: The Plomos of the Sacromonte of Granada in Francisco Bermudez de Pedraza's Historia Eclesiastica." *The Sixteenth-Century* Journal 30, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 945-966.

------"Material and Textual Forgery in the Lead Books of Granada." *In Literary Forgery in Early Modern Europe, 1450–1800,* edited by Walter Stephens and Earle A. Havens, 225-236. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019.

Heaney, Christopher. *Empires of the Dead: Inca Mummies and the Peruvian Ancestors of American Anthropology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023.

Hills, Helen. "Demure Transgression: Portraying Female 'Saints' in Post-Tridentine Italy." *Early Modern Women* 3 (Fall 2008): 153-207.

Holmes, Megan. *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013.

Holohan, Kate. "Mesoamerican Idols, Spanish Medicine: Jade in the Collection of Philip II." In *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, edited by Suzanna Ivanic, Mary Laven, and Andrew Morrall, 229-245. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019.

Jordán de Urríes y Ruiz de Arana, Juan María Nepomuceno. *Correspondencia inédita de Don Guillén de San Clemente, embajador en Alemania de los reyes Don Felipe II y III, sobre la intervención de España en los sucesos de Polonia y Hungría, 1581-1608*. Zaragoza: Establecimiento Tipográfico de La Derecha, San Miguel, 12, 1892.

Kamen, Henry. *The Escorial: Art and Power in the Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

------"The Mediterranean and the Expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492." *Past & Present* 119, no. 1 (May 1988): 30-55.

Karl, Barbara. "Objects of Prestige and Spoils of War: Ottoman Objects in the Hapsburg Networks of Gift-Giving in the Sixteenth Century." *In Global Gifts: The Material Culture of Diplomacy in Early Modern Euraisa¸* edited by Zoltán Biedermann et. al., 119-149. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Keane, Marguerite. "Most beautiful and next best: value in the collection of a medieval queen." *Journal of Medieval History* 34, no. 4 (2008): 360-373.

Kelsey, Harry. *Philip of Spain, King of England: The Forgotten Sovereign*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.

Knight, Kevin. "Leocadia, Saint." In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Edited by Charles G. Herbermann, et. al. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907-1912.

Kroužil, Vojtěch. "Juan de Borja en la corte de Rodolfo II y el asunto de la pacificación de los Países Bajos (1577-1579)." In *Encuentro de hispanistas: Setkání hispanistů*, edited by Athena Alchazidu and Petr Stehlík, 45-55. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2013.

Lazure, Guy. "Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II's Relic Collection at the Escorial." *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 58-93.

Lea, Henry Charles. *The Moriscos: Their conversion and expulsion*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Lindberg, Carter. *The European Reformations: Third Edition.* Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2021.

Loomie, Albert. *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1963.

Louthan, Howard. "Tongues, Toes, and Bones: Remembering Saints in Early Modern Bohemia." *Past & Present* 206, no. 5 (January 2010): 167-83.

------"*Imagining Christian Origins*: Catholic Visions of a Holy Past in Central Europe." In *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World*, edited by Katherine Van Liere, Simon Ditchfield, and Howard Louthan, 145-64. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2002.

Malo, Robyn. "The Pardoner's Relics (And Why They Matter the Most)." *The Chaucer Review* 43, no. 1 (2008): 82-102.

Marshalek, Kathryn. "Luisa de Carvajal in Anglo-Spanish Contexts, 1605–14." *Renaissance Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Fall 2022): 882-916.

Mayo, Arantza. "Leocadia's Miraculous Veil: Witness and Testimony in Hernández, Lope de Vega, Valdivielso and Calderón." In "The Fabric of Saintly Proof: Leocadia of Toledo from Orrente to Calderón," by Peter Cherry and Arantza Mayo. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 93, no. 7-8 (2016): 1339-70.

Meo Arbore, Andrea de. "Change and Continuity in the Display of Relics in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: The English Catholic Community in a Broader Context." In *Matter of Faith: An Interdisciplinary Study of Relics and Relic Veneration in the Medieval Period*. Edited by James Robinson, Lloyd de Beer, and Anna Harnden. London: British Museum, 2015.

Nancarrow, Mindy. "The 17th-Century Spanish 'Vida': Producing Sanctity with Words and Images." *Woman's Art Journal* 25, no. 1 (2004): 32-38.

Noreen, Kirsten. "The splendori celesti of the San Sisto Icon (Rome): Intercession, Embellishment, and Female Agency." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 67 (2022): 90-128.

Norton, Marcy. *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Ó hAnnracháin, Tadhg. *Catholic Europe, 1592-1648: Centre and Peripheries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

O'Malley, John W. *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Parker, Geoffrey. *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Park, Katharine. "The Life of the Corpse: Division and Dissection in Late Medieval Europe." *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 50, no. 1 (January 1995): 111-32.

Peña Fernández, Ana. "APROXIMACIÓN AL ESTUDIO DE LOS INVENTARIOS DE BIENES DE DON JUAN DE IDIÁQUEZ EN LA VILLA DE SAN SEBASTIÁN Y LUGARES DE GIPUZKOA." *Boletín de estudios históricos sobre San Sebastián*, no. 55 (2022): 261-305.

Porreño, Baltasar. *Dichos y Hechos del Señor Rey Don Felipe II, El Prudente: Potentísimo y glorioso Monarca de las Españas y de las Indias*. Valladolid: Imprenta de Don Juan de la Cuesta, 1863.

Rahner, Hugo. *St. Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women*. London: Herder & Herder, 1960.

Rainer, Johann. "Tú, Austria feliz, cásate. La boda de Margarita, princesa de Austria Interior, con el rey Felipe III de España. 1598/99." *Investigaciones históricas: Época moderna y contemporánea*, no. 25 (2005): 31-54.

Redworth, Glyn. "God's Gift? Sacred Relics, Gift Giving, and Luisa de Carvajal's Preparation of the Holy During the Long Reformation." *Nuncius* 27 (2012): 270-288.

---------*The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Revilla-Rivas, Marta. "Inventorying St. Alban's College Library in 1767: The Process and its Records." *British Catholic History* 35, no. 2 (2020): 169-89.

Santaliestra, Laura Oliván. “Lady Anne Fanshawe, Ambassadress of England at the Court of Madrid (1664-1666).” In *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500*, edited by Glenda Sluga and Carolyn James, 68-85. London: Routledge, 2016.

Sánchez, Magdalena. “Where Palace and Convent Met: The Descalzas Reales in Madrid.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 53-82.

Scmitz-Esser, Romedio. *The Corpse in the Middle Ages: Embalming, Cremating, and the Cultural Construction of the Dead Body*. Translated by Albrecht Classen and Carolin Radtke. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2020.

Shapin, Steven. *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Soergel, Philip M. *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Suykerbuyk, Ruben. *The Matter of Piety: Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard and Religious Material Culture in the Low Countries (c. 1450-1620)*. Leiden: Brill, 2020.

Trexler, Richard C. “Florentine Religious Experience: The Sacred Image.” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 9 (1972): 7-41.

Usher, Jonathan. “Frate Cipolla's "Ars Praedicandi" or a "Récit du discours" in Boccaccio.” *The Modern Language Review* 88, no. 2 (April 1993): 321-336.

von Schlosser, Julius. *Art and Curiosity Cabinets of the Late Renaissance*. Translated by Jonathan Blower. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2021.

Vita

Caroline Barraco received her B.A. in History and English and a professional certification in Museum Studies from the University of Iowa in 2016. Prior to beginning her graduate studies at Syracuse University, she worked in historical archives, higher education policy, and management consulting. Her interests include early modern Catholicism, diplomacy in the Spanish Empire, and the history and use of saints' relics.