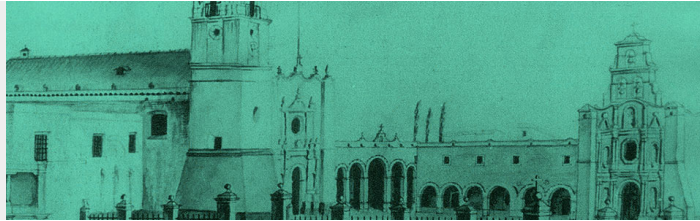


THE GACHUPINA DE LOS REMEDIOS AND CAPUCHINS IMAGINED IN THE RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHICAL ORDER IN NEW SPAIN, 1808-1813

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Abstract

Early in the 19th century, Doña Ana de Iraeta, a member of one of the most important mercantile families in New Spain, vindicated the “representation of sanctity” constructed by the Capuchin religious order centuries before as she sought to have friars from that Order found a first convent in the region of Los Remedios in New Spain. The justifications that Iraeta presented to defend the establishment of the convent included the idea that the friars' arrival in New Spain would help restore the Monarchical order after the outbreak of the Independence wars in America. This article analyses the scope of the representations surrounding the Capuchin tradition that worked to generate a kind of mythology of the Capuchins, though it proved impossible for the friars to found a convent on Mexican soil until the first decade of the 20th century.

The *Order of Friars Minor Capuchin*, founded in Italy in the first quarter of the 16th century as the offshoot of the Franciscan order that adhered most strictly to the Rule of Saint Francis, has been little studied by contemporary historiography. The causes, consequences and peculiarities of the emergence and consolidation of this religious order, which still exists today, await specialized lines of research focused on their elucidation. As a contribution to that exercise, this article seeks to forge a connection between the construction of the Capuchin tradition undertaken by the friars in the 16th century through their cultural practices, and the importance that this tradition would come to achieve in New Spain, a territory where they were unable to found convents in the Viceregal period, though they were known through the sporadic presence of friars in the area and the reading of their works that arrived steadily in New Spain.

We consider that the Mexican case presents an interesting scenario of the transoceanic importation of Capuchin books. In contrast to the history of Colombia and Venezuela, where Capuchin missionaries established their first convents in the Americas and were able to work uninterruptedly, the presence of Capuchin friars in Mexico during the *Ancien Régime* consisted of only short stays during which their principal activity was to collect alms to support the missions they maintained elsewhere.

To the best of our knowledge, the first petition that strongly supported the Capuchin Order's desire to establish convents in Mexico dates to the 19th century. We know that in 1811 Doña Ana María de Iraeta, widow of the regent of the *Real Audiencia* of Mexico, Don Cosme de Mier y Trespalacios, petitioned for Pontifical and royal permission for the Capuchins to found a seminary for missionaries at “the *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* sanctuary” (now located in Naucalpan, Estado de México,

Mexico]. The objective of her missive was to provide the Capuchins with the opportunity to "make conquests among the gentile Peoples" ((Archivo General de la Nación, AGN (Mexico), *Clero regular y secular*, Vol. 85, Exp. 1. Hereinafter, all transcriptions pertain to this file, unless otherwise indicated.)). According to the records available, the convent gained approval in late 1811 or early 1812, and Doña María was named to defray the costs of construction and the transatlantic passage of twenty Spanish Capuchin friars. However, we also learn that in June 1813 she petitioned the official responsible for ecclesiastical affairs (*fiscal del eclesiástico regular*) for a report on the advances in the procedures (*trámites*) required to found the convent, for her efforts were stymied from May 30 1812 to August 27 1813 due to the absence of Ferdinand VII and, very likely, because the Council of the Regency (*Consejo de Regencia*) showed little interest in the matter, having more pressing issues to attend to at the time, especially the French incursions into Spain.

To understand Iraeta's initiative it is important to take into account her family background, her marriage to Cosme de Mier, the state of New Spain during the French invasion, and the onset of the wars of independence in 1810. Ana de Iraeta was born in 1768 or 1769; the third daughter of a Basque father, Francisco Ignacio de Iraeta, and Doña María Josefa Ganuza, a descendant of Pedro de Ganuza, a merchant from Navarre. Francisco Ignacio de Iraeta participated in transoceanic mercantile activities from his youth and had developed commercial ties that embraced the Philippines, Mexico and Cadiz. He had lived in Mexico City since 1758, where he forged excellent relations with members of the Mexican Consulate. His marriage to Josefa Ganuza assured the expansion of his business interests, for he became Pedro de Ganuza's second cosignatory. Diverse events resulted in Francisco de Iraeta eventually emerging as a leading merchant in New Spain, as he merged his business ventures with those of the Ganuza family. With the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767, Pedro de Ganuza's eldest son, a priest of that order named Pedro José, was forced to emigrate to Bologna. Just two years later, Ganuza died of pneumonia, and a few months after that his daughter Josefa (wife of Francisco de Iraeta) also passed away, apparently during childbirth or puerperium after giving birth to their third daughter, Ana María de Iraeta. By 1770, Francisco had amassed an enormous fortune, as he had partnered with his mother-in-law, was named executor of the maternal inheritance of her three daughters and also administrator of paternal inheritance of the Jesuit Pedro José (Torales, García, Yuste 1985; Torales 2005). Moreover, he was an honourable member of the "Royal Bascongada Society of Friends of the Nation" (*Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País*, RSBAP), a standing that made it possible for him to arrange strategic marriage alliances for his two eldest daughters: thus, Rosa de Iraeta was wed to Isidro Antonio de Icaza, a leading cacao merchant with contacts in the *Audiencias* of Quito and Santa Fe and member of the RSBAP; while Margarita, his second daughter, married Gabriel de Iturbe, a nephew of Francisco de Iraeta, who resided at the time in Anzuola, Guipúzcoa (Torales 2001).

As the youngest daughter, Ana María stayed home to care for her father until his death in 1797. Then, availing herself of part of her father's inheritance, she wed Cosme de Mier y Trespalacios, a member of the Asturian nobility, judge (*oidor*), regent of the *Real Audiencia* of Mexico and, last but not least, a

gentleman of the *Real Orden Española de Carlos III* (Martínez 2004). In addition to those oligarchical antecedents, Mier y Trespalacios was responsible for the establishment of the Congregation of Our Lady of Covadonga in Mexico in 1785, a project planned since 1732-1733 (Fernández 1997).

Though we have no knowledge of Ana María's activities during her almost thirty years of life as a single woman, aside from tending to her father's needs, given the relationship between the RSBAP and the *Colegio de San Ignacio de Loyola Vizcaínas de México* (Torales 2001), a school devoted to educating girls of Basque origin, it is highly probable that Ana María was educated there and had become at least somewhat familiar with the vicissitudes of the politics that by 1808 were shaking the very foundations of Spanish power as a consequence of the French invasion.

In 1809 a group of educated women in Mexico City took to the streets to collect donations in support of the war effort against the French, monies that were immediately sent to Spain. In the same vein, they sponsored the celebration of a novena for St. Joseph, the patron saint of New Spain since the 16th century (Cuadriello 1994), beseeching him to buttress the Spanish cause in that war. Ana de Iraeta was among the women who promoted that action, together with others who had similar ties to the RSBAP (Torales 2001) ((A clarification: in her text, María Cristina Torales refers to San José as the patron saint of Mexico City, but in reality he was the patron saint of all New Spain; on the patron saints of the principal cities of New Spain, see Ragon 2002.)). It seems that they went did indeed go from door-to-door and, moreover, organized and mobilized themselves to contact other economically advantaged women by letter, imploring them to make voluntary donations for "the temporary relief" of those affected in Spain (Landavazo 2001).

A year later, after Father Miguel Hidalgo's troops had surrounded the capital, Ana Iraeta (by then Mier's widow) was leading a women's movement called *Patriotas Marianas*, whose primary purpose was to safeguard the image of the *Virgen de los Remedios* (protectress of the Royalist army) to counteract the, divine and symbolic, banners of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* raised by rebel forces. Their organization had some 2,500 members who worked in the propaganda effort by distributing leaflets procuring loyalty to Spain, aided the families of Royalist soldiers, and continued collecting funds for the war effort, even after the Royalist army's defeat at the battle of Monte de las Cruces (Arrom 1984).

Several historians have examined the political representation and social imaginary surrounding the images of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* and the *Virgen de Guadalupe* in the context of Mexico's independence wars (see Miranda 2001; Taylor 2007, among others). While the former was always considered of Spanish origin (which explains why it was also called *La Gachupina*) ((The mythology surrounding Mexico's *Virgen de los Remedios* holds that she belonged to Hernán Cortés, but that after the *Noche Triste* he decided to conceal her until the indigenous cacique, Juan Tovar, found her in 1540 in Otomcapulco, jurisdiction of Tacuba; see Ramos G. 1996.)), the *Guadalupeana* image represented the union of Creoles and Indians and their struggle to consolidate the Mexican nation. Hence, during the Viceregal period, the Indigenous Virgin painted on a cotton tunic vied with the

Spanish Virgin adorned in glimmering crown and dress, transforming both into a kind of theomachy, as Fernando Benitez observed (1995).

Against this background, Ana de Iraeta's defence of the image of the *Virgen de los Remedios* can be seen as a response to factors both religious and political. As an educated woman of high socioeconomic status and widow of Cosme de Mier, her political influence reached into the highest echelons of the viceregal elite. On February 18 1811, Francisco Xavier Venegas, Viceroy of New Spain, issued an edict (*bando*) in which he accepted the proposals of the Prior of the Convent of San Jerónimo and Ana de Iraeta to proclaim the *Virgen de los Remedios* "Protectress of the armies of the kingdom of New Spain, with the title of *Generalísima*". He also ordered that public demonstrations be held to show devotion to the image, but with no "entertainment, ostentation or luxury" (Venegas 1990:279). Those public outpourings of devotion gave thanks to the Virgin for her support of Spanish forces from the wars of Conquest up to the fortunate retreat of the rebel armies from Mexico City towards the *Bajío* after their victory at Monte de las Cruces (González 1911).

As mentioned above, in 1813, Ana María moved to reinitiate the process of establishing the Capuchin Order at the sanctuary of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*. "In the absence and captivity" of King Ferdinand VII, the Council of the Regency sent a *Real Cédula* to the new Viceroy, Félix María Calleja, who had been appointed to the position earlier that year, confirming that it was granting Ana permission to pursue the foundation. However, it seems that Iraeta encountered great difficulty when she attempted to persuade institutions, both Spanish and Viceregal, to support her project. It was clearly due to the insistence of Mier's widow that officials deigned to review the documents in the earlier petition, delivered years before, but it seems that some of the original records concerning that process had been lost, so in 1813 Ana María sent the Supreme Government copies of all the documents that since 1809 had moved her to take such an interest in the sanctuary of *Los Remedios*. Thanks to her persistence, a substantial dossier of records exists which sheds light on the many social problems that the area's people were experiencing, and elucidates the imaginary that led Doña Ana to associate the Capuchin Order with the *Virgen de los Remedios* and her staunch Spanish patriotism.

In 1809, during Pedro de Garibay's term as Viceroy, a dispute arose between an "Indian" named Juan Pedro and the chaplain (*bachiller*) of the temple of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*, Don Lorenzo Guerrero. Juan Pedro's trade was extracting *pulque* (the sap of the maguey plant) in the jurisdiction of Tacuba, to which the town of Los Remedios belonged. Though previous Viceroys had placed restrictions and taxes on the sale and consumption of *pulque* in the city in the second half of the 18th century (Viqueira 2001; Güemes 1831), there was a loophole in the law in that it did not stipulate precisely "the distance to be maintained between Churches and *pulque* outlets [though] reason dictates it should be such that from the Church one cannot hear the bothersome and perhaps obscene [*sic*] noise that emanates therewith" ((AGN (Mexico), *Clero regular y secular*, Vol. 85, Exp. 2. Hereinafter, all transcriptions pertain to this file, unless otherwise indicated.)). The chaplain accused

Juan Pedro of selling *pulque* in an annex to the *Los Remedios* temple in violation of the order that *pulque* stands be located in the street and not in annexes or locales. It seems that the *alcalde ordinario* proceeded to order that not only Juan Pedro, but all *pulqueros* (*pulque* vendors) in the region were to cease selling the drink; a measure that only served to complicate the situation even more.

However, the documentation reveals that Lorenzo Guerrero now sought any pretext to impede Juan Pedro's activities, despite the fact that before the conflict began the chaplain had not opposed the sale of *pulque* but, indeed, had visited the outlet and Juan Pedro's house, "and offered his protection and even support with, it is said, a few *reales* (coins)".

But this dispute involved two underlying problems. The first was that the town of Los Remedios had for some time been dissatisfied with the ministry of the priest Guerrero, who during his eight years as chaplain of the sanctuary had shown a complete lack of interest in maintaining the site, had continually failed to fulfil the obligation to celebrate mass and hear confessions, and had committed numerous other "excesses". Second, the region was plagued by a scarcity of water, for the sanctuary was built in the highlands west of modern-day Naucalpan. In 1616, clay piping was installed to carry water from San Francisco Chimalpa to Los Remedios, but with little success, so other methods were tried. In 1765, an aqueduct was erected, but it also failed and was left standing as a simple architectural monument (Jos 2004).

In those circumstances, drinking *pulque* compensated, to a degree, the lack of drinking water; but magueys were an important resource for Los Remedios in other ways; indeed, almost no part of the plant was wasted. A legacy of pre-Hispanic times, during the Viceroyalty magueys provided material for the thread, string and rope that were used to fashion clothing and footwear; its thorns functioned as fasteners in the manner of nails or tacks; its shoots or leaves were processed to make *amatl* (a kind of parchment on which codices were written); and, when dried, other parts were used as fuel for bonfires, etc. Finally, the two drinks made from the juice of the maguey –*aguamiel* (a sweet, unfermented drink) and *pulque* (the fermented beverage)– were held in high regard as well for their medicinal properties (Ramírez 2004). Thus, it was no coincidence that a syncretism should arise between *Mayahuel* (the Mexica goddess of maguey) and the *Virgen de los Remedios* (Torre 2009; Hall 2004).

Due to the scale of the conflict between Chaplain Guerrero and Juan Pedro, the latter stopped selling *pulque* "and turned to construction work to make a living", but residents soon approached the *alcalde* to protest the "illegality of Chaplain Guerrero's charges", arguing that "under the pretext of religious zeal he seeks to discharge the violence of his fury, and subject a poor Indian to the rigour of his capriciousness". They alleged that the priest had never concerned himself with the decorum of the sanctuary, but "now that he no longer merits grace and favour, he holds it scandalous and contrary to the dignity of the temple; something he never judged before [despite] the time he has served as chaplain".

Meanwhile, *pulque* vendors in Los Remedios contended that selling the drink was legal in all localities:

as the royal rights imposed upon it satisfy [Your Majesty], as it is a useful, regional drink, especially for the Indians and working people, and as for this reason it is not banned in any place, much less there, where the scarcity and lack of Water make it most necessary; thus, it has been permitted in those arid, desert places so that they may be settled and have inhabitants landl so that the sanctuary be cared for not only by those who make and erect their homes or huts there, but also by those who plant Magueys, that can have no other purpose, nor can this product be considered for sale elsewhere, for its short [shelf-life] makes it little apt for export to other locales.

This argument is revealing because those merchants argue that maguey cultivation and *pulque* production were allowed (perhaps in excess) in the area as a stimulus to keep people from emigrating due to the lack of water, and to assure the safekeeping of the sanctuary of the *Virgen de los Remedios*. In this sense, local *pulque* vendors defended themselves by holding that while they did produce *pulque*, they took great care to avoid any "offensive irreverence to the Sacred", for they venerated the Virgin with sincere devotion. Thus, Chaplain Guerrero's arguments were unfounded, for the townspeople strove to forestall any scandal that might perturb the tranquillity of Los Remedios,

unequivocal proof is that no excesses or crimes are reflected in complaints to the Authorities or Judges who would be informed of them; it is surprising that not even the Warden of the Jail (bachiller penitenciario) himself has knowledge of such after eight years in that position, nor does he confess having dissimulated them, nor having abandoned his post or the obligations entrusted to him, according to the clauses of the chaplaincy he serves.

All these aspects seemed to favour the residents, and when the verdict was handed down it stipulated that Lorenzo Guerrero was to be deposed from his position as Chaplain and handed over to the civil authorities (*fiscal*). However, it appears that part of the legal costs involved in bringing him to trial had to be borne by the residents of Los Remedios. Upon learning of this, the people claimed they had no money to defray such expenses, and complained that the situation of the sanctuary had not improved despite the intervention of the civil authorities. The result was that three months after the verdict Guerrero was still to be found meandering around the temple, while "the other priest, Don Joaquín Iglesias, comes to minister" ((Here, "to cure" may refer to becoming inebriated.)) but, in the words of Father Francisco Méndez Prieto, "he cannot attend to all there is to do, so the Holy Virgin is left abandoned".

Ana de Iraeta presented this case as proof that Los Remedios was plagued by at least three

problems that had gone unresolved in the previous ten years. The first was excessive *pulque* consumption and the number of permits that the government granted to keep existing taverns operating and open new ones. The second, derived from the first, was that while two schools had been founded at her expense (probably around 1810), attendance was irregular, at best. The third issue was that Chaplain Guerrero and other priests who came to the sanctuary neglected the spiritual needs of the people and, worse yet, ignored their obligations under the terms of the founding of the Los Remedios Chaplaincy.

In her zeal to pursue the Capuchin convent, Iraeta presented a copy of a manuscript that laid out the norms of that Chaplaincy. According to that document, the key date was March 16 1692, when Don Francisco Fernández Marmolejo and his wife, Doña Francisca de Souza, succeeded in establishing a chaplaincy for lay clergy at the sanctuary, alleging that the site was in a state of dishonour and neglect. To create the chaplaincy, Marmolejo and de Souza first organized a board (*Patronato*) that provided for the sustenance of the chaplains. They also had an alcove built for the image of the Virgin, which connected to other rooms where the priests and sacristans chosen as chaplains had their quarters. The idea was that “the Chaplains be supported by that Chaplaincy”.

The Priest Chaplain was required to “know the language [and] be capable of confessing the Indians, or at least have the authorization to confess men and women of any ilk”, and to organize the celebrations, novenas and dressings of the Virgen de Los Remedios. He would be supported financially by the Board and have decent lodgings, as long as he lived in the “Hermitage and Sanctuary of Our Lady of Los Remedios”. However, he was prohibited from serving as chaplain in any other place at the same time “because our intention is that he have no obligation to any other chaplaincy than this”, nor could he act simultaneously as vicar and sacristan. Finally,

if the Priest fails to abide by these Lay [provisions] either having died, or having failed to fulfil the conditions of his obligation [...], or due to any other event that results in Mass not being said, or personal assistance not being provided upon request, the Board may at its sole discretion appoint an Interim [chaplain] to serve, though only for a short time, while it searches for a person with the qualities required for this foundation [...]. We beseech the Board to observe this condition for thus is our will.

Undoubtedly, then, around 1810 Ana de Iraeta was on the Board of Our Lady of Los Remedios, and so was interested in the sanctuary and in promoting the establishment of the Capuchin convent to control the religious and social problems that impeded worship of her sacred image. Also, it is highly likely that only members of the Board could have had access to the 1692 documentation on the founding of the chaplaincy and used it as a legislative tool.

Now, why might the idea of introducing the Capuchin Order, specifically, into Los Remedios have occurred to Iraeta? We know that in the viceregal period the Virgen de los Remedios was often

carried in pilgrimages to Mexico City to celebrate festive occasions, make supplications, or carry out penitential practices. On May 11 1810, a procession of several days' duration was organized to carry the image from the town of Los Remedios to the Metropolitan Cathedral to implore God to intervene in the calamities that the Spanish were suffering on the Iberian Peninsula. The Virgin was paraded through the city amidst novenas and choruses of liturgies. However, when the procession came to an end, returning the image to its sanctuary was impossible because on May 14 lightning from a violent thunderstorm had struck and damaged the domes of the temple to Our Lady of los Remedios. On May 24th, the *Real Audiencia* ordered that during restoration of the chapel the image would circulate through all the parishes and convents of the city. On May 31, the peregrination with the image of the Virgin began its visits to religious sites, and so the *Gachupina* remained in the heart of New Spain for seventy days (González 1911).

The Virgin was offered lodgings in many places, among them the Capuchin convent, from June 18 to 21. Perhaps it was there that Ana de Iraeta first learned of the possible emigration of Capuchin friars to New Spain as one consequence of the French invasion. Though what the scale of that migration is unknown to us, we do know that some of those Capuchin friars arrived in America with no intention of ever returning to Spain. Such was the case of Friar Manuel María de Sanlúcar who, on August 16 1811, petitioned the customs office in Mexico for permission to recover the nine boxes of books he had brought with him, together with the permit required to read them. The Mexican Inquisition inspected the boxes and compiled an inventory of the contents of the first six. Though we have no idea why the list of the seventh box was left incomplete and no follow-up was done on the other two, it is hard to believe that Friar Manuel María intended to return to Spain given that the unfinished list contains the titles of 112 books ((AGN (Mexico), *Inquisición*, Vol. 1452, fs. 23-25v.)). It is inconceivable that any Capuchin missionary or oblate would travel with such baggage if he had no intention of taking up permanent residence at his new destination.

It is also important to note that the Capuchin Order could hardly be characterized as maintaining a secularized worldview, for well into the early decades of the 19th century its members were content with ancient knowledge while disdaining historical development and its associated cultural evolution. Such ultra-conservative postures had been adopted to make of the members of the Order "living models" capable of stemming the influx of the new ideas that were flooding 19th-century Spanish-America. Proof of this is that in 1812 the Capuchin Rafael de Vélez wrote a detailed analysis of over 200 pages on the Enlightenment and the French Revolution; a work that would be reprinted several times in both Spain and America. In his view, French philosophers had immolated France only to "fructify the plans of their abominable philosophy [by destroying] the religion of Jesus Christ" and the monarchies (Vélez 1813, 9).

According to Vélez, due to the "fickle character of the French [and] their love of novelty", those philosophers were adorning vignettes and stamps with "obscene and amatory" images (ibid, 25) in

order to increase their popularity and assure that the "poisoned books" they printed would be read in towns, villages and cities to inflame the people against their sovereigns, against religion, and against the ministers of its sanctuaries (*Ibidem* 26). This venom, he affirmed, was penetrating into Spain through language,

for our children do not know the catechism, but are speaking in French", while women were practicing a "Frenchified devotion" (ibid.:58) that incorporated terms in that language into their conversations. Having thus revealed the evil webs of French philosophy, of freedom of the press, of anti-clericalism and of anti-monarchical ideas, Vélez felt justified in raising on high Spanish Christianity and uttering political diatribes such as this: "the philosophers are your enemies, he who is bereft of religion has no motherland, respects no laws, and obeys no authority [...] the declared enemy of God is also that of men [...] Spaniards, neither the French nor their philosophy shall ever subjugate us! (Ibidem 211, 213; italics in the original).

Thus, the anachronic culture that the Capuchins developed from the very beginnings of their Order (and reiterated in their affiliation with primitive Franciscanism) up to the early 19th century, constituted an important bastion that allowed Spanish conservatism to sink its roots ever deeper, all the while transforming normal ecclesiastical sermons into discourses that were openly civic and political (Herrejón 2003). The patriotic reactions stimulated by Vélez' works can be read in the text of his follower (*adicionador*), Matías de Vinuesa, who in his Prologue to the 1813 edition of the *Preservativo contra la irreligion* wrote:

I would first stretch my neck before the blade of the sword and, fearless, present my chest to the cruel steel, than to allow our cherished religion to be defiled and the luminous torch of the faith to be darkened by the pestiferous vapours spewed by incendiary books that under the specious banners of freedom, reform and enlightenment, and under the gilded flowers of an Asiatic eloquence, conceal the infernal venom that so much harm wreaks upon unwary mortals. I am, then, willing to shed the last drop of my blood to defend Religion; but be it known that this would incessantly implore God's vengeance upon the philosophers of the day [...] (Vélez 1813:IX) ((Years later, this same Capuchin, Rafael de Vélez, as bishop of Ceuta, published his *Apología del Altar y del Trono* in three volumes (1818-1825). There, he railed against the laws of secularization, the reforms of the regular clergy, and other precepts of the Constitution of Cadiz.)).

Capuchin conservatism became so profoundly opposed to 19th-century liberalism that, in the words of Manuel Revuelta (1973), the General Minister of the Franciscan Order of Solchaga "opened fire" against anti-clerical dispositions when he wrote his impressions of the religious policy that was being debated in Spain at that time under the title, *Observación respetuosa* (Solchaga 1820). The circulation of the Capuchin General Minister's text created a scandal among liberals, and was impugned by José Joaquín de Clararrosa, a deserter from the Franciscan order, who wrote his

opinions on the conservative judgments regarding the community of 'those of the long beards' (Clararrosa 1820) ((As bishop of Santiago, Vélez' opposition to the 19th-century prohibition on wearing religious habits in public was more than evident. In 1836, a *real decreto* ordered him to remove his Capuchin habit, but Vélez ignored the edict and was exiled from the city of Mahón, in Menorca. Apparently after a period of confinement, he shaved off his beard and removed his Capuchin habit in 1838. See Fuente 1859, 1868; also, Aldama D.S., Alcaráz M.A. 1865.)).

Perhaps it was that proximity to the Capuchin monks and the circulation of conservative treatises like that of the Capuchin Vélez that led Ana María to insist that this Order was especially well-suited to taking charge of the temple in Los Remedios, at least from 1811 to 1813. Basing the need for reforms at the sanctuary on the 1692 norms of the chaplaincy, she offered to defray the costs of bringing twenty Spanish Capuchins to New Spain and of building a school and seminary for those Capuchin missionaries. This did not mean that she sought the disappearance of the chaplaincy; rather, she wanted the friars to be allowed to celebrate mass in the Church of Los Remedios, to establish missions in the area to "propagate faith in Jesus Christ as the Jesuits had done in other times" ((AGN (Mexico), *Clero regular y secular*, Vol. 85, Exp. 2.)), and to practice the sacrament of confession. It is not clear how Iraeta obtained permission for the Capuchins who might arrive in the town to confess, since one of the peculiarities of that Order was, precisely, its prohibition of that particular sacrament.

Another of Iraeta's petitions was that the alcove of the Virgin be made available for the "specific functions of the Friars", and that inside the temple they should have "a Tribune over the Presbytery beside the book of the Gospel, similar to the way in which the collegiate of Our Lady of Guadalupe had recognized the Capuchin Nuns". Moreover, responding to the region's problem of water scarcity, she promised that if the Capuchin convent project came to fruition, she would ensure that "the water so sorely wanting will be introduced for the benefit of the Sanctuary, the Neighbourhood, and the Clergy".

From a report dated March 30 1813, we learn that the local council (*ayuntamiento*) of Tacuba found certain aspects of the proposed Capuchin convent "inconvenient". Its members argued that although Ana de Iraeta was willing to pay for the transportation of the first Capuchins, "it could transpire that no funds would be available to bring others, so that after just a few years the Convent could well be left empty and abandoned". They also noted that it was doubtful that the friars would be able to take possession of the alcove of the Virgin because the Board had no right to cede control over it and, even if it did, such a measure would be incompatible "with the observances of the Capuchin Institute". On the question of the special tribune that Iraeta desired for the friars inside the temple, the council observed that if both the Capuchins and the Board had equal rights to celebrate mass, the situation could easily set off disputes over the hours and days when the priests from the respective sectors could practice their ministries.

On June 3 1813, Mier's widow sent a petition to the council in response to its objections, arguing that the Capuchin convent "would open a Novitiate that would receive those who wish to embrace this

Institute, and thus perpetuate it and carry it forward". Also, she promised to build a "Church for the Clergy for their celebrations, provide [sic] a Tribune and access to the Sanctuary so on those days when it is not occupied by the celebrations of the Board and others on the council, they could celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of Mass and all other exercises of their ministry". She went on to insist that it was not only the residents of Los Remedios who worshipped the Virgin, but "all the inhabitants of these Dominions", since she "forgives us, and has forgiven us, for the space of almost three centuries", since the arrival of the Spanish in America. Therefore, it was necessary to venerate the sanctuary as a manifestation of gratitude, even in the troubled times they were living, when

many priests, neglecting the sacred obligations of their ministry, have taken a side and, rising up as [actors?], of the Insurrection many have died in the Campaign and [one] can hardly trust those who survive these wretched times [for there is] a terrible shortage in the number of Priests required to fulfil the attentions of the Ministry in this America, and only slowly and with great difficulty is this being remedied.

This desolate panorama was also reflected in the low number of students who were attending the town's schools (*colegios*), where the religious orders "refuse to admit applicants because they are suspicious of their conduct and genuine vocation; or because their income is insufficient to sustain a larger number of Individuals". Hence, in Ana Iraeta's view, the Capuchins represented the ideal solution to all their problems, for they knew how to proselytize in the style of the Jesuits, their institution required few expenditures to sustain itself and, moreover,

in this kingdom, no one has seen the Capuchin Clergy and confound them with another Religion that the masses cannot distinguish, and novelty inclines itself to and works efficaciously [sic] upon our weak spirits, even more when such a useful, austere and fruitful institution as the one professed by these Friars [is present] [plus] the foundation would include not only the twenty that Sra. Iraeta offers to bring at her own expense, but also all others who reside in this city, and perhaps still others like the fugitives from Frances' tyranny who have sought shelter [sic] in diverse places in the Kingdom (italics added).

Against this background, the social imaginary surrounding the Capuchin friar became consolidated on the basis of the novelties that his physical representation offered: his pointed habit and long beard that, in and of themselves, symbolized the austerity and penitential attitude that New Spain so sorely needed ensconced as it was in the wars of the early 19th century. On the other hand, this document also shows that the case of the Capuchin friar Manuel María de Sanlúcar, mentioned above, was not an isolated one. Specific research on New Spain as a refuge for Capuchin clergy fleeing from the French invasion could help formulate a record of this migration, identify the years during which it took place, and pinpoint the destinations chosen.

On June 6 1813, Ana María de Iraeta received the resolution giving her permission to initiate the procedures required to establish the convent she intended to build. However, documents dated June 14 and 16 inform us of the causes that frustrated the Capuchin convent project. In addition to the fact that the transatlantic bureaucracy stipulated an exasperating number of requirements, it seems that a *Real Orden* of March 4 1813 decreed that the regular clergy from the Iberian Peninsula would work on "re-establishing and rebuilding [*sic*] the Convents or Churches that have been abandoned or ruined by the French occupation". According to this document, Ana María was not aware of the existence of this *Real Orden*, for the *fiscal* had not brought it to her attention earlier since "he did not consider [*sic*] at the time that it had any relevance" to the foundation she was pursuing.

In that context, and given that "in this America [...] we have suffered no tragedy" such as that of Spain, and despite the fact that Ana María's foundation was "tremendously advantageous", circumstances in the metropolis meant that the beneficent woman's objectives "could not be fulfilled for now".

We do not know if Ana María made any other attempt to establish the convent, nor if her political actions in favour of the Royalist side continued after 1813, when she had reached the age of forty-five. Many aspects of this woman's life remain to be studied because, while we lack the date and year of her death and information on her possible descendants, what is clear is that other relatives of Francisco Ignacio de Iraeta, joined by kinship to the Icaza and Iturbe families, supported the Royalist faction throughout the war though, at its end, they became the new politicians and entrepreneurs of Independent Mexico (Kicza 2007).

One hundred years after Ana María de Iraeta's initiative, the first convent for Capuchin monks in Mexico finally became a reality. Curiously (or perhaps not) it was founded on the precise spot that Cosme de Mier's widow would have wanted. The Capuchin Order became established in Mexico between 1907 and 1911 with clergy from the Capuchin province of Catalonia. This first foundation in Mexico was achieved thanks to the then Archbishop of Mexico, Próspero María Alarcón y Sánchez de la Barquera (Mazin 1999), who took to heart a suggestion from the Capuchin Cardenal Vives y Tuto. Upon their arrival, the friars lived in the Convent of Nuestra Señora del Pocito, located at a church affiliated with the Sanctuary of Guadalupe, but around 1910 the project to build a church and convent of their own begin to take shape in Naucalpan under the title: Nuestra Señora de los Remedios (Zudaire 1999).

Biography

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