



Between the Cloister and the World: The Franciscan Third Order of Colonial Querétaro

Brian C. Belanger

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BETWEEN THE CLOISTER AND THE WORLD: THE FRANCISCAN THIRD ORDER OF COLONIAL QUERÉTARO

“**T**he womb of the Province” is how one eighteenth-century resident described Querétaro, for within that city the Franciscans of the Province of San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán supported not only the friary of Santiago el Grande with its Spanish and Indian parishes, but also the pioneering College of Santa Cruz, the convents of Santa Clara and Santa Rosa de Viterbo for women, the seminary of the Province, the mission church of San Sebastián, and the friary and shrine of Nuestra Señora de Pueblito.¹ The city additionally served as the seat of the Provincial chapter. Friars and nuns at these various foundations directed over twenty associations of laity organized into confraternities, or *cofradías*. Poised delicately between those who were professed Franciscans (male and female, of the First and Second Orders, respectively), and the lay confraternities affiliated with the monasteries, was the Third Order, an institute which has defied classification.

The Third Order of Saint Francis—in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth—has been more typically identified with the confraternity rather than as a separate institute of Franciscan penitents who occupy a “middle position between the cloister and the world.”² There may be justification for this lack of distinction in some locales, but it is precisely this problem of definition which plagued the institution at colonial Querétaro and which had a clear effect on its activities and development. The relationship of the Third Order with the local friars and the choice of charitable projects by the leaders

¹ Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Mexico 2712.

² Marion Habig, O.F.M., “Catholic Leadership toward Social Progress—The Third Order” in *The Franciscan Educational Conference*, vol. 17, no. 17 (November 1935), 126. Habig laments the lack of attention paid to the Third Order as a separate and viable Franciscan institute.

of the Third Order need to be analyzed in light of this problem. The fatal decline of the Third Order soon after Mexico's Independence from Spain may be linked as much to this struggle for definition as it was to political suppression, or, as suggested by studies using similar documentation for France, to a decline in popular religious belief.³

The first confraternities in Querétaro date to 1598 and 1605, the point at which the city is considered to have been fully stabilized. The Provincial, Fray Miguel López, officially organized these confraternities based initially on endowments which technically the mendicant friars could not accept directly. Soon thereafter López encouraged additional donations of livestock and cash and arranged for religious statues to be sent from Spain. Constitutions for confraternal governance were penned locally, reflecting ethnic divisions in those articles on membership, and the local pastoral economy in those articles on finance.⁴ As with every confraternity of New Spain, nominal membership fees helped subsidize funerals, feasts, and weekly Masses; members were expected to visit the sick and participate in cult functions. The city grew to become the third most populous of the viceroyalty and its economy gave way in the eighteenth century to more commercial interests, but the essence of devotional activity and corporal works of mercy remained unchanged for the confraternity throughout the entire colonial period.⁵

In contrast, the first official for the Third Order, said to have been composed by Cardinal Ugolino and Saint Francis in 1221, is not extant. In 1289 Pope Nicholas IV, himself a Franciscan, reorganized the primitive Rule in order to give a uniform and more legal character to the institute. The Rule regulates external means of achieving holiness, such as poverty and simplicity, and internal means, such as prayer and the reception of the sacra-

³ David A. Brading in "Tridentine Catholicism and Enlightened Despotism in Bourbon Mexico," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 15 (1983), 1-22, notes how little is known about Spanish lay associations of the colonial period and their disintegration in the nineteenth century. This point is furthered by John K. Chance and William B. Taylor in "Cofradías and Cargos: An Historical Perspective on the Mesoamerican Civil-Religious Hierarchy," *American Ethnologist*, 12 (February 1985), 1-26, who caution that since the post-independent lay association is not related to its colonial predecessor the one should not be used to study the other. For France, the most widely cited work on this era is perhaps Maurice Agulhon, *Pénitents et Francs-Maçons de l'ancienne Provence* (Paris: Librairie Fayard, 1968).

⁴ Archivo Franciscano de la Provincia de Michoacán (Hereafter AFPM), Serie Q-1, legajos 3-28. Padre José Luis Soto, O.F.M. of the Academy of American Franciscan History expertly reorganized this valuable archive, located within the Franciscan friary in Celaya, Guanajuato; documents from all Franciscan institutes of the Province of Michoacán are collected here. The document numbers used in these citations, however, pre-date this reorganization. See also: Archivo General de la Nación (Hereafter AGN), Bienes Nacionales, legajo 944, exp. 3, ff. 48-89.

⁵ For a general discussion of colonial Querétaro see John Super, *La vida en Querétaro durante la colonia* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1973).

ments. While members, or tertiaries, do not take vows, after a year's novitiate they pledge the observance of a Franciscan spirit of life. The aim is the sanctification of members and the practice of social virtues of charity, justice, and peacefulness. The only works specified by the Rule are the visitation of the sick and burial of the dead, works also specified by the confraternities.⁶

In order to become a tertiary in colonial America one had to be of Spanish blood. The background of all potential candidates was scrutinized for information on general character as well. After a year of novitiate training, a member was professed and granted the right to wear the habit. Though there were numerous individual tertiaries in New Spain since its foundation, no chapter was canonically recognized until that of Puebla in 1614.⁷ In Querétaro the Third Order held its first meeting in 1634, nearly one hundred years after the settlement of the city and more than thirty years after the establishment of the city's first confraternities.

An eighteen man governing board, or *Mesa*, headed by a *Hermano Mayor*, directed the Querétaro chapter. The *Hermano Mayor* served only a one year term after which he automatically served a like term as *Coadjutor*, or special advisor, which gave continuity to the organization. Other prominent offices included a council of six advisors, a treasurer, secretary, master of novices, collector of dues, and master of ceremonies. There were eighteen parallel positions of authority for women, including *Hermana Mayor*, who governed the women's branch of the Order, but it was the male *Mesa* which conducted all business and provided the women's branch with funds. In addition, an *alternativa* was observed, whereby one year the *Hermano Mayor* was a layman and the next a secular cleric.⁸

At the southern end of the cemetery grounds of the Franciscan convent of Santiago el Grande de Querétaro stood the Third Order chapel, an independent structure dedicated to their patron San Luis de Francia. Inside, the much venerated statue of Jesús Nazareno stood behind glass in a jewel-

⁶ Habig, pp. 125-127. This Rule remained intact until its revision by Leo XIII in 1883. The exact origin of the first Rule may not be so easily determined, as suggested in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. (New York, 1912), XIV, 641-642.

⁷ A.J.R. Russell-Wood, "Prestige, Power, and Piety in Colonial Brazil: The Third Orders of Salvador." *HAHR* 69 (February 1989), 61-89; and Juan B. Iguiniz, *Breve Historia de la Tercera Orden Franciscana en la Provincia del Santo Evangelio de México desde sus Orígenes hasta Nuestros Días* (México: Editorial Patria, 1951). Eighteen percent of the population of Querétaro for 1778 is identified as Spanish or creole and would thus have been eligible for membership (Super, p. 273).

⁸ AFPM, "Libro Quarto." The *alternativa* was suspended from 1728 to 1743 during a dispute over governance of Santa Rosa de Viterbo, a cloister of Third Order women.

adorned case; the congregation looked upon the image as a "source of meditation upon the Passion of Our Lord, who took up the Cross and freed us from our guilt and sin." One tertiary worried that an image too often processed through the streets would become less venerated over time. Thus they did not allow the Jesús Nazareno to leave the chapel but twice a year, unless, in the event of grave crisis or epidemic, this "divine physician" was called upon to intercede. On such occasions tertiaries were required to accompany the image while performing acts of penitence or else were required to carry lanterns to light the way.⁹

A revered saint as a special intercessor is typical of all lay confraternities. In this, and in almost every other respect as well, the Third Order at Querétaro in the seventeenth century was similar to the *cofradías* of Spaniards in the parish. Along with the *cofradías* the Third Order paid yearly fees to the friars on a quarterly basis; contributing on the whole no more than, and at times less than, the Spanish brotherhoods. Amounts from the Third Order were not even significantly higher than those donated by the Indian *cofradías*.¹⁰ Likewise, though their constitutions, printed in Mexico City at various times throughout the seventeenth century, were for use throughout New Spain and were quite elaborate when compared to the *cofradías*, the cults which they observed at Querétaro did not set them apart: they celebrated anniversary masses for the dead, gave attendance at burials, cared for the sick, and supported masses on feast days. For the first one hundred years of the Third Order's history at Querétaro, then, it functioned as a pious union of laity not unlike any other.

It was during the episcopacy of Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas (1681-1698) when newly introduced licensing restrictions on confraternities forced a more precise definition of the Third Order as well as all *cofradías* in the archdiocese. Several episcopal visitations challenged and reinvigorated lay groups, and their financial contributions to the convent from 1690 through 1710 far exceeded expectations.¹¹

By 1730, however, the Mesa openly discussed a crisis in attendance at cult functions. While they could not immediately identify a reason for such a crisis, especially given the Order's self proclaimed elite, and illustrious, membership, the financial ramifications of this apathy were clear to officials, who showed concern over the frequency of unpaid dues, unpaid fees for habits, and defaults on paying interest on liens. The collector of dues was

⁹ AFPM, Serie O-3, legajo 3, exp. 28.

¹⁰ AFPM, L Serie I-1, nos. 6-17: "Libros de ingresos y egresos del convento de San Francisco."

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ff. 109-111.

instructed on 11 April 1744 to tell tertiaries in arrears to pay within six days or lose all privileges of membership, including indulgences and the right to be buried in the chapel. Individuals in default on liens were threatened with legal action. Also, anyone who had joined the Dominican Third Order or that of the recently arrived Augustinians was told of the inherent incompatibility of belonging to two Orders and was expelled if he or she did not pledge exclusively to the Franciscan group.¹²

Dwindling funds during this period made it difficult to fulfill sacramental and charitable obligations. Masses for the deceased were held only biweekly instead of every Monday, and in 1743 the Third Order gave the friars of el Grande only 50 pesos, less than a third of what they had pledged.¹³ Curiously, however, the 1730s and 1740s saw considerable physical improvement to the chapel. The retablo of the chapel was completely rebuilt by the master craftsman Pedro de Rojas and a new organ was purchased. Since funds for these improvements were not forthcoming from the membership in general, wealthy benefactors paid, stating that their intent was to attract members back to cult functions.¹⁴ The question arises from this activity as to whether general apathy among tertiaries stemmed from the fact that a few wealthy individuals began to dominate the Third Order, or if these wealthy few made conspicuous donations only after the crisis began and in a genuine attempt to remedy the situation. Ironically, the same evidence which points so conclusively to this general lack of interest in Third Order functions also describes the growing phenomenon of non-members illicitly donning the habit, and of true members adorning the habit with the latest bedaubed fashions. Rules for the reception and wearing of the habit were precise; its purpose was "to show penitence, virtue, and good example," not "mere adornment."¹⁵ Yet, so many were wearing the habit that officers of the Third Order began to stop persons in the street and ask for their license, something granted only by the Mesa itself. Because the use of the habit had become so defiled, the Mesa was forced to ask those tertiaries who truly were professed to refrain from wearing it. A uniform design was newly specified to which no other adornment could be added and which could be worn only by "persons known to us, who are Spanish, and of virtue."¹⁶

¹² AFPM, "Libro Cuarto": February 1742, and April through September 1744. Membership in several *cofradías* at once was never considered incompatible for there was no sense of religious Order.

¹³ AFPM, Serie O-3, legajo 8, exps. 1-11.

¹⁴ AFPM, "Libro Cuarto" and Mina Ramírez Montes, *Pedro de Rojas y su taller de escultura en Querétaro* (Querétaro: Secretaría de Cultura, 1988).

¹⁵ AFPM, Serie F, legajo 1, exp. 11.

¹⁶ AFPM, "Libro Cuarto": September 1737, July 1739, and November 1752. Dominicans had a similar problem with their Third Order: AGN, Inquisición, vol. 953, exp. 9.

The Hermano Mayor in 1741, concerned by the continued state of apathy, created two new positions, the “diputados de fiestas,” who personally delivered printed invitations for Third Order functions to the most important civic and religious leaders of Querétaro. Friars at el Grande told the Mesa to stop the practice for they considered it elitist and coercive. Third Order officials ignored this criticism, stating that their institution was accountable to the Provincial only. Friars had also claimed ownership rights over the contents of the Third Order chapel, specifically the candles, but the Provincial as arbiter decided in favor of the Third Order.¹⁷ While such disputes may have been of minimal immediate consequence, the implication is that the Third Order affirmed its autonomy from the local friary.

An ordained friar served as *Comisario Visitador* of the Third Order, a position which entailed the spiritual and temporal direction of both individual tertiaries and of the institution. He attended all meetings, conducted rites and exercises, visited the sick, and administered the sacraments.¹⁸ This post was not considered a full time commitment and the friar who served as Visitador was expected to fulfill other duties at the convent as well. Time constraints did not ever allow the Visitador to devote as much energy to penitentes as they might have wished. In 1730 they asked the Provincial for the right to choose a Visitador, “someone to whom we are endeared,” to serve full time. They promised to provide such a friar with twelve pesos a month for his food and personal needs above the usual payments for feast days, sermons, and masses. They also promised to build him a residence, give him another six pesos per month for chocolate and present him with a new habit each year.

The request for a full time Visitador was granted in 1731, but the Provincial retained the right to appoint him.¹⁹ When the post became vacant in 1748 the Provincial, Felipe Velasco, named a Visitador who was expected to devote only a part of his time to the Third Order. The displeasure of tertiaries at this attack on their privileges, or “fueros,” was duly noted by the Mesa. They called upon the Comisario General, the highest ranking Franciscan official in the Americas, to mediate. His decision granted to the

¹⁷ AFPM, “Libro Cuarto”: 1753.

¹⁸ Biblioteca Nacional de San Agustín, Mexico City (hereafter BNSA). Colección La Fragua. “Libro de las Constituciones de Nuestra Sagrada Orden Tercera de Penitencia, 1721.” The Visitador of Tula/Mexico City specifically ordered this reprinting of the Rule in an effort to inspire greater zeal among penitentes.

¹⁹ AFPM, “Libro Cuarto”: 24 October 1729.

Third Order the right to nominate three candidates for the position of Visitador, from which the Provincial was obliged to choose one.²⁰

In 1749 Velasco inspected the account books and minutes of the Mesa meetings, replete with references to problems of attendance. For this decline in devotion he laid scathing blame on the officials themselves, citing their own laxity. He accused them of hypocritical behavior, because while they complained of the lack of attendance at functions, they themselves were absent. Who could blame the tertiaries for their disillusionment, asked the Provincial, when their leaders were themselves so weak?²¹

Concurrent with these disputes with the Third Order over issues of autonomy, Velasco actively promoted the establishment throughout the province of Confraternities of the Cordón; the Querétaro chapter was founded in 1750. This new institute admitted all races and castes, and yet so closely paralleled the Third Order in every other respect that it can hardly be seen as anything but a deliberate alternative. Members passed through a year's probation period, donned a distinctive habit, elected a governing board whose structure mirrored that of the Third Order, and performed rites and spiritual exercises which were nearly indistinguishable from the more exclusive Third Order. In the event of secularization of their parish—an ever present concern for the friars—the Cordón would not transfer to the secular clergy due to its affiliation with the Archconfraternity of the Cordón in Assisi. Velasco specified that the *guardián* of the convent serve as Director of this new confraternity, keeping it strictly under the guidance of the friars. He warned members of the Third Order not to interfere in Cordón affairs nor to dominate them in any way. The Provincial even scheduled spiritual exercises on alternating days so as to avoid direct contact.²²

Initially these two lay institutes shared the Third Order chapel. Eight years later, in 1758, Viceroy Revillagigedo issued a decree of secularization for Querétaro. According to the decree all Indian confraternities were forced to abandon the chapel they had maintained on the grounds of the Franciscan convent and transfer to the newly created secular parish.²³ The cacique Claudio Morales sued but failed to keep the chapel for the Indians, and they

²⁰ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación de la Escuela de Primeras Letras": 7 November 1801.

²¹ AFPM, "Libro Quarto": December 1749.

²² AFPM, "Libro de Constituciones y Asientos de los Hermanos de la Archicofradía del Cordón," ff. 1-28, 91-94; AFPM, Serie F, legajo 1, exp. 11; and Viceregal and Ecclesiastical Mexico Collection, Tulane University (hereafter VEMC), legajo 48, exp. 8.

²³ AFPM, Serie Q-2, legajo 212.

removed their few remaining devotional items in 1764.²⁴ The friars then reassigned the chapel to the Confraternity of the Cordón, elevating its status. During the next ten years it attracted almost one thousand new members, but it would still function under the shadow of the Third Order.²⁵

Secularization had some curiously beneficial effects for the Franciscan convent, despite the loss of twelve of its sixteen confraternities to the secular parish. The lay groups which remained associated with the friars were the Third Order, the Cordón, the Purísima, and San Benito de los Pardos. Though the number of confraternities actually decreased, allegiance to the Franciscan convent among the people of Querétaro continued to be strong. Father Antonio de la Vía, first vicar of the secular parish, complained of his congregation's continued attendance at Franciscan rites, stating: "The clock in the tower of San Francisco continues to guide this citizenry."²⁶

The Third Order, strengthened by the prominence it gained as a result of parochial secularization, underwent a period of renewal. The Mesa emphasized the need for corporal works of mercy and acted upon the commitment. When one member refused to take his turn at collecting alms for a meal sponsored each Sunday at the prison, that member was expelled. Tertiaries were so generous in funding these meals that they began to deliver the food in formal procession and to serve it on silver platters, a practice the Mesa eventually stopped out of fear that members were competing with one another to provide more and more lavish feasts. Tertiaries also began to serve a meal at the Hospital de la Concepción and increased the number of dowries granted. They started a weekly collection for the destitute and established a fund for memorial masses for the dead, a need which arose after the Confraternity of the Animas transferred to the secular parish.²⁷

The Mesa controlled a separate and distinct account for each of the three emerging charitable and devotional causes of the Third Order: one for meals for the poor, imprisoned, and infirm; one for dowries; and one for masses for the dead. A general treasury, meanwhile, continued to provide for all other sacramental, construction and investment projects. This division into nearly autonomous branches facilitated accounting and helped assure donors that contributions would be dispensed according to their intention.

At this point the use of the term "corporation" in place of "Venerable

²⁴ AGN, Bienes Nacionales, legajo 584, exp 3.

²⁵ AFPM, "Libro de Constituciones y Asientos de los Hermanos de la Archicofradía del Cordón," ff. 1-28.

²⁶ VEMC, legajo 57, exp. 17.

²⁷ AFPM, "Libro Quarto": December 1749 through December 1759.

Orden Tercera” becomes standard in the record. Accounts were complicated enough for the treasurer to insist upon having an assistant. Funds were invested in liens on properties and seemed secure enough for the Mesa to suspend the obligation of members to canvas the city for alms in support of their various devotions and charities.²⁸

The severity of drought, disease and vagrancy in Querétaro in the 1780s is well documented; 1786 was known as the “Year of Hunger.”²⁹ Father José María Carranza, Visitador of the Third Order, addressed tertiaries in 1788 at the annual feast of their patron. He extolled members for their generosity during those years of hardship by listing their many contributions to the poor of the city. Clothing, food, seed, medicines, and money were donated by tertiaries who also gave of their time to serving meals at the prison and hospital. These corporal works of mercy, noted Carranza, were nonetheless of inferior merit when compared to the spiritual works of mercy, or those endeavors aimed at the salvation of the soul rather than at the sustenance of the body. Corporal works when compared to spiritual works were, he said, “as the flesh is to the spirit; as the body is to the soul.”³⁰

Carranza thus exhorted the Third Order to focus attention on the spiritual needs of the youth of the city who, with alarming frequency, were being abandoned and forced to beg on the streets. If they were not taught to read, he warned, they would remain ignorant of Christian doctrine and would be on the path to drunkenness, crime, gambling, and even murder. Citing the efforts of several religious orders in Mexico City and of the Franciscans in San Luis Potosí, he proposed the establishment by the Third Order of a free primary school for the poor, regardless of race or ethnicity.³¹

According to Carranza, tertiaries would receive tangible benefits from a school. He promised that since members were clearly the most elite of the city and were dependent upon laborers to staff their homes, fields, and *obrajes*, a school would insure a supply of honest and industrious workers. Indian children also might be induced to reject their native languages in

²⁸ AGN, Cofradías y Archicofradías, vol. 6, ff. 12-19.

²⁹ Super, *La vida en Querétaro durante la colonia*; John M. Tutino, “Life and Labor on North Mexican Haciendas: The Querétaro-San Luis Potosí Region, 1775-1810,” in *El trabajo y los trabajadores*, Frost, Meyer, y Vázquez, (eds), (México: El Colegio de México, 1979); and Valentín Frías, *Leyendas y Tradiciones Queretanas* (La Escuela de Artes de San José, 1901).

³⁰ Joseph María Carranza, *Discurso sobre el establecimiento de una escuela pública gratuita de primeras letras y cristiana educación de los niños pobres* (México: Felipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1788), p. 7.

³¹ Carranza, pp. 18-36. The friar further suggested that the Third Order would fill the educational vacuum created when the Jesuits left twenty years earlier.

favor of Spanish, and the close personal contact of a poor orphan child with an elite family might foster in the child a spirit of loyalty. Carranza asked members if they did not feel obligated to help the popular classes who, he reminded them, provided the elite with its material needs.³²

The *ayuntamiento* of Querétaro, which included several tertiaries in any given year, also expressed concern for those youth of the city who "made no plans for the future."³³ Hence there can be little doubt that a school would receive full support from the city's elite. In March of 1788, one month after Carranza's address, the Mesa of the Third Order officially responded to the plea by voting to establish a free primary school. Donations were solicited for the new Escuela Gratuita de Niños Pobres, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Over forty individuals responded, including María Felipa de Zárate who donated a building located on Calle de Santa Clara for classes. The first teacher, Manuel Garay, accepted the competitive salary of 300 pesos per year plus housing. After the expenses of the first year, 4,400 pesos remained in the coffers.³⁴

Third Order officials structured the school so that it would operate as an accounting unit independent of their general treasury. In these first years, support for the school caused no strain to the Third Order's sacramental obligations or to its support of its various other charitable works. Miguel Rodríguez, treasurer, gave this sanguine account on the occasion of the school's fifth anniversary: "With our secure assets and our classroom building we will sustain the school in perpetuity"³⁵

A rise in enrollment to approximately 300 students rendered the donated classroom building almost immediately inadequate. The governing board initially proposed construction of a new building adjacent to their chapel—

³² Marc Venard, "Popular religion in the eighteenth century," in *Church and Society in Catholic Europe of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), discusses the shift toward education as a major vehicle of charity and the rise of teaching orders among the notables of eighteenth century Europe. Studies of eighteenth and early nineteenth century education in Mexico include Dorothy Tanck Estrada, *La educación ilustrada, 1786-1836*, 2^a ed. (México, El Colegio de México, 1979); Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, (ed.), *Ensayos sobre la historia de la educación en México* (México: El Colegio de México, 1981); and Pilar Foz y Foz, *La revolución pedagógica en Nueva España, 1754-1820* (Instituto Gonzalez Fernando de Oviedo, 1981), which discusses the arrival from Spain of the genesis of a teaching order of women. No comparable teaching order of men was found in colonial Mexico after the expulsion of the Jesuits.

³³ VEMC, "Ordenanza que para la división de la Muy Noble y Leal Ciudad de Santiago de Querétaro"; Tanck Estrada, pp. 168, 200-203; and Super, p. 101.

³⁴ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": April 1804; and "Libro Perteneciente a la Escuela Gratuita": accounts of 1800.

³⁵ AFPM, "Libro Perteneciente a la Escuela Gratuita." Support from the general treasury amounted to six percent of the total budget.

with a connecting door for visitations—but the friars did not wish to sacrifice another section of the monastery garden. A house on Calle San Agustín, only a few blocks away, was chosen instead. The Third Order already owned the property, but the school's directors would have to “purchase” it by transferring funds from the school's treasury into the general one. Fierce debate over the building actually led to the resignation of the highly influential Juan Fernando Domínguez, who objected to the purchase because of the poor condition of the building. His opinion eventually prevailed, and in the summer of 1799 the hermano mayor announced plans to construct an entirely new classroom building and residence for the teacher on property located across from the southern sector of the monastery garden.³⁶

In the same year the governing board of the Confraternity of the Cordón, following the lead of the Third Order, announced its decision to found another free primary school—this time for poor girls. Their goal was “to exile the laziness and abandon in which many girls now live and which we note with sadness.”³⁷ The salary for the female teacher was set at a third less than her counterpart at the Third Order school for boys. A rented classroom, books, and other utensils totalled a mere fraction of the operating costs at the boys' school. That the new school was an institution for girls reflects the Cordón's membership—the Cordón averaged over seventy percent female, whereas women comprised fifty percent of the Third Order.³⁸

This proposed school for girls did not actually open for another ten years,³⁹ and concern for the welfare of women was again addressed in 1801 by one of Querétaro's most illustrious citizens, Juan Antonio del Castillo y Llata, who offered 21,000 pesos to the Third Order for the establishment of a reformatory hospice for women. The Mesa chose not to accept the donation. In 1805 he repeated the offer; this time, however, he was informed that the Third Order wanted to establish a Drawing Academy. Castillo y Llata persisted, believing that the money could be used for both projects, but,

³⁶ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: November 1798, January 1799, August 1799. The site chosen at the corner of Calle Serafín and Calle de Jayme corresponds to the present corner of Pino Suarez with Juárez. Totally new construction for classrooms is unknown for an escuela pía, at least in Mexico City (Tanck Estrada, p. 216).

³⁷ AFPM, “Libro de Constituciones y Asientos de la Archicofradía del Cordón,” ff. 86-89. The Cordón pledged to economize on all charitable projects in order to assure funding for the school, much like the Third Order.

³⁸ AFPM, “Libro de Constituciones y Asientos de la Archicofradía del Cordón.”

³⁹ The Cordón had been continuously denied a license by royal officials despite the active intervention of the Corregidor Miguel Domínguez and the positive recommendation from the Viceroy in 1801. Finally, in October of 1812 the Cordón decided to open the school without a license: VEMC, legajo 48, exp. 8; and AFPM, L-1, Serie C-3, “Libro de Actas y Elecciones.”

again, the Third Order rejected the idea, explaining that such a reformatory hospice would be:

positively noxious to the Public . . . the utility of a reformatory is at best remote, indirect and of limited extension, as it is only for those of infamous extraction or of less than upright character . . . experience has shown that after a few days of confinement this class of woman is driven to even greater excess.⁴⁰

Conversely, a Drawing Academy would complement the Third Order's commitment to education as a means of deterring vagrancy and crime:

A drawing academy will proportion subsistence to many families who have no other means; . . . will encourage marriage, from which many flee for lack of funds; diminish robbery, gambling, prostitution and other vices; offer at night-time the useful and honest diversion which is drawing, necessary to our nature and lacking in this place; and eliminate nocturnal excesses.⁴¹

A drawing academy, it was felt, might also lead to Querétaro's becoming the seat of a new diocese. The lack of qualified designers for a cathedral was one reason why many believed the city had been bypassed for that honor. Designers, including the well known Francisco Tresguerras, had to be brought in by the Third Order to present plans for the redecoration of their chapel in the reformist neo-classical style.⁴² Certainly the founding of the Academy of San Carlos at Mexico City additionally convinced the elites of the Third Order that they too needed an academy.

The Mesa succeeded in convincing Castilla y Llata to use the entire donation for an academy and abandon his plan for a hospice. His election later that year to the post of Hermano Mayor of the Third Order paid tribute to his decision. With the endowment secure for the new Academia de Dibujo de San Fernando de Querétaro, the Mesa set out to fill the five hundred peso a year directorship. On the recommendation of the director of San Carlos in Mexico City they hired Vicente de la Cerda, who held classes on the second floor of the primary school for "anyone who wants to learn drawing, every day except Sundays and feasts, from evening prayer until nine o'clock." On the night of October 10, 1805, dignitaries celebrated the academy's gala opening and witnessed the unveiling of portraits of Fernando VII and of Castillo y Llata and his wife, Josefa Escandón.⁴³

⁴⁰ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 9 May 1805.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² AGI, Mexico 2603.

⁴³ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 6 June 1805 and 10 October 1805; and AGN, *Cofradías y Archicofradías*, vol. 6, ff. 12-19. Castillo y Llata himself administered the interest payments on the endowment. This was the academy's only source of income.

Without the support of this individual philanthropist the drawing academy would never have been established. All previous attempts at soliciting donations for this purpose had met with disappointing results; an appeal early in 1805 was answered by a mere seven individuals. Moreover, since undertaking construction of the new classroom building in 1801, financial difficulties became apparent. The Mesa had exhausted the school's resources and began to draw money out of general treasury. Between 1802 and 1805 the school ran a deficit of over 200 pesos per year, an amount the Mesa covered by reducing both the Third Order's dowry for orphan girls and its meal at the Hospital de la Concepción. A portion of interest payments received from the endowments of these two pious works were diverted into the coffers of the school. At the time it did not adversely affect the meal, because there was still enough money to supply bread to the poor at the hospital on a daily basis with even a small stipend for the youths who distributed it.⁴⁴

At a time when commitment to the school was becoming paramount, signs of internal division appeared. Internal dissent became apparent when one penitente, Prisca Sánchez, was threatened with expulsion. She was described as a humble woman who for twenty-five years had fed and housed friars on their way to the missions. However, she wore the ash gray habit in devotion to the friars of the missionary college of Santa Cruz and thus defied the Mesa, which had declared that all members must wear the blue habit of the province. Eventually the Provincial, called in to mediate, allowed her to wear her gray habit, but a faction had already petitioned for a separate chapter of the Third Order based at Santa Cruz. The Guardián of the college supported the idea even though there were proscriptions against having two Third Orders in any one locale.⁴⁵ A second chapter was never founded, however, but the division in the Order did not disappear. One tertiary complained of elite leaders who no longer participated in the Holy Thursday washing of the feet because they were "too busy, ill, or inconvenienced by the hour."⁴⁶

The Provincial, obviously concerned over the direction of the Third Order, revoked in 1801 the right of the Mesa to nominate candidates for the office of Visitador, a right guaranteed to them by the Comisario General forty years earlier. The Mesa protested loudly. Their main concern was for

⁴⁴ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": January through June 1801, 13 August 1803; AFPM, "Libro Pertenciente a la Escuela Gratuita": September 1801; and AGN, *Cofradías y Archicofradías*, vol. 6., ff. 10-11.

⁴⁵ AFPM, Serie D, legajo 4, exp. 15; and "Libro de Fundación": 22 May 1799.

⁴⁶ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": April 1798.

the autonomy of the primary school, since the Visitador by virtue of his position served as the school's director. Their fierce rhetoric must have intimidated the newly appointed Visitador who never attempted to carry out the duties of office. The Mesa demanded of the Provincial Council a renunciation of "all rights, past or future, regarding issues relative to our school," and threatened to bring the matter before the Crown if necessary.⁴⁷

The Provincial Council capitulated, promising not to intervene with the school, nor with "privileges of patronage which are enjoyed exclusively by the Venerable Third Order," a position which asserted the autonomy of the Third Order from the friars. When next the Mesa presented to the Provincial a list of three nominees for the position of Visitador, he labelled the candidates "not completely free of vice," and chose the third-ranked.⁴⁸

The number of students at the school increased yearly, so that by 1804 a third teacher was needed. In this year the spacious new classroom building opened, having cost in excess of 23,000 pesos. The elliptically shaped and domed main room had a seating capacity for six hundred students on benches which were graded in seven tiers, placed the length of the room on either side in the style of a choir. Along a balustraded upper tier were writing desks for an additional eighty-five students. More than a dozen other smaller classrooms and offices centered around an interior patio. The second floor, divided into one large room and several smaller ones, housed the drawing academy. A residence for the master teacher, with two bedrooms, a salon, kitchen, dining room, and patios, adjoined the building on its southern side.⁴⁹

In 1805, with 400 students enrolled, the governing board praised the staff for having inspired students to excel in reading, writing, arithmetic and catechism. Miguel Domínguez, the Corregidor, stated that of all the charities ever sponsored by the Third Order, "never has money been better spent" than on education.⁵⁰ Though the school did have noticeable financial difficulties, with interest on liens often unreceived, money out of the general treasury coupled with the donations of a very few individuals kept salaries paid and students supplied with materials. Already the schools drained a full fifty percent of the Third Order's total yearly budget, a significant increase

⁴⁷ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 7 November 1801.

⁴⁸ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 5 April 1804.

⁴⁹ A complete description of the structure, including drawings of the floor plan and the facade, are contained in Edmundo O'Gorman, "El catolicismo ilustrado en la Nueva España," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación*, XVIII (enero-marzo, 1947), 73-121.

⁵⁰ O'Gorman, p. 106. Miguel Domínguez and his wife Josefa, the later celebrated Corregidora, were tertiaries. Josefa was active as an officer both before and after the 1810 revolt.

from the six percent pledged when the primary school was founded. Five hundred pesos a year were needed for the salary of the master teacher alone, with a second teacher hired at a salary of 350 pesos. Classes benefitted from the addition of leaded ink wells, a railing for the staircase, and new work tables. Those students who showed greatest ability in the basic subjects shared fifty pesos in prize money offered at a public contest lasting three days. Donations from the community as a whole to support these projects, however, were nearly non-existent, in contrast to the first five years of its operation when an average of twenty-five individuals a year made donations.⁵¹

When the non-educational charities of the Third Order, such as the meal at the prison or the collection for the destitute, began also to suffer financially, the Mesa did not respond with monies out of the general treasury as it had done repeatedly for the schools. Twelve pesos per week were needed to feed the more than 300 prisoners. In 1804, when it became apparent that there were not sufficient funds in the endowment, the Mesa voted to provide food only once a month. The following year, citing "more pressing demands," they voted to provide the meal only once a year. The fund for the destitute likewise suffered when the Mesa voted to distribute whatever was collected on a pro rata basis according to how recipients "have been given money in the past, and not to add any more persons to our obligation, but rather reduce the number as they die."⁵²

With insurgency in the Bajío in 1810 came the suspension of elections to the Mesa. Accounts resume in 1815 when new elections were finally held. This report appears sanguine enough, for it displays a solvent yearly balance and the profession of thirty-seven new members. At this time they also tallied their most recent donations. Not one monetary gift had been directed toward the school, but several were given for masses for the dead and for the Calvary altar. New and substantial pious funds for the city's destitute were established over the next two years as well, but with the caveat, specified by the Mesa, that if interest payments were not forthcoming the Third Order could not be held responsible for maintaining the charitable project out of the general treasury.⁵³

Even though the accounts for 1815 appear relatively healthy, the Mesa approached the Crown in December of that year with a cry of near destitution. They requested a percentage of the tithe to support their educational

⁵¹ O'Gorman, pp. 101-105; AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": accounts of 1804 and 1805.

⁵² AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 7 February and 10 October 1805.

⁵³ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": October 1813, January 1815, September 1817, and November 1817.

programs, justifying the request with the argument that Querétaro's loyalty to the Crown through recent turmoils could be linked directly to values instilled in the citizenry by the schools. They claimed to have paid 18,711 pesos to the Consolidación de Vales Reales—the 1804 policy of disentailment of properties of pious funds.⁵⁴ In 1813 they had begun proceedings to recover these funds, but as of 1815 they had yet to receive a positive response. In the interim Alfonso González de Castillo, their agent in Mexico City, secured the license necessary for a lottery for the school and drawing academy, “toward the conservation of which the Third Order directed all its endeavors.” After several months, with fewer than half the lottery tickets sold, the Mesa cancelled the plan.⁵⁵

In the correspondence which ensued with royal officials at Mexico City between 1815 and 1818, the Mesa lodged complaints concerning the non-payment of interest on liens. According to their claims no interest had been paid to them since late August of 1812. Account books actually do show some income, but the Mesa's frustration stemmed from the inability to collect enough to fully fund the schools. Certain debtors did indeed have the money to pay, the Mesa wrote, but they used the rebellions as a pretext for default. Since by this time the Third Order depended on interest for a full ninety percent of its total income, they correctly perceived this as a serious situation.⁵⁶

Minimum yearly expenses at the schools amounted to 2500 pesos, with 600 pesos each for the master teacher and for the director of the drawing academy, 350 pesos for the second teacher, 300 pesos for the third teacher, and salaries for four other staff members. The recommendation of the Fiscal of Hacienda in 1818 was to combine positions and reduce salaries. The Fiscal delayed having to satisfy the Third Order's request for funding by then requesting additional information on finances and on the state of other schools in Querétaro.⁵⁷

Antagonism not infrequently marred the relationship between the Mesa and the teachers during this tense period. A policy concerning the hiring and dismissal of teachers had initially come from a reaction to problems with Manuel Garay, the first teacher at the boys' school. In 1798 the Mesa

⁵⁴ The Consolidación damaged confraternities and the Third Order by discouraging participation: “Members have resigned and many are resigning since finding out about this decree concerning the pious funds.” AGN, *Cofradías y Archicofradías*, vol. 6, exp. 1.

⁵⁵ O'Gorman, p. 110; AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 28 June 1817.

⁵⁶ O'Gorman, pp 108-120; AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: October 1813 and January 1815.

⁵⁷ O'Gorman, pp. 108, 119-120.

blamed him for a temporary fiscal shortage. They voted to remove him from his post and to attract a more highly qualified candidate through an increase in salary. At first Garay did not accept his dismissal and brought suit, but withdrew his case within a few months. This prompted the Third Order and the Cordón to explain to all prospective teachers that termination could occur at any time and for no stated reason. A teacher had to agree to the policy or would not be hired.⁵⁸

Preference in hiring was shown to Third Order members. Valentín Torres, a qualified local resident who had taught at the boys' school for nearly five years, resigned in 1805 because of complaints that he had never become a tertiary. Having tertiaries on the faculty was still not enough to ensure acceptable conduct. In 1811 a new teacher proceeded to raise "calumny," was fired, reinstated, and fired again the following year. His successor, José María Nieto, did not last even that long. Within six months he was fired for what his colleagues described as quibbling. In 1817 the Mesa received uncomplimentary reports about Vicente González, the new master teacher, who was warned "not even to breathe without first giving thought to being the perfect model for youth." A similar reprimand was handed down to Pedro Rincón who was later fired for his addiction to drink. Complaints of teachers who abused vacation were not infrequent. After an instance of fraud, the then cautious Mesa asked candidates for positions at the academy to draw in their presence. Conversely, teachers constantly nagged at school officials about books promised to them but never delivered. Catechisms were always in short supply despite endowments established for that purpose. In the midst of all of these problems, enrollment plummeted to under one hundred students.⁵⁹

During the 1818 to 1820 lull prior to independence the schools benefitted from the financial support of a small core of individual donors. This boost to the schools is best seen through the new progressive faculty. A surveyor, Mariano Gorráez, hired for his expertise in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, hydraulics, levelling, and logatithms, taught at the boys' school for three years. As master teacher the Mesa hired Juan Nepomuceno de Ulibarri, a graduate of the Royal and Pontifical University in Mexico City, trained in philosophy and theology. Under his direction enrollment increased from an abysmal 70 to 268 students in less than one year. Students

⁵⁸ AFPM, "Libro Perteneiente a la Escuela Gratuita": March and September 1799.

⁵⁹ AFPM, "Libro de Fundación": 10 October 1805, 31 January and 26 February 1812, and 23-28 June 1817.

“advanced quickly under the efficient methodology which is observed.”⁶⁰ In 1820 the royalist Provincial Manuel Agustín Gutiérrez spoke in Celaya on the need to renew the commitment to primary education. Only through education would the region’s “general disorder, laxity of custom, atrocious inhumanity, impious behavior, and crimes of all types” be routed out. Building on the metaphor of New Spain as a sea filled with “hurricanes of violent passions,” Gutiérrez promised that enlightened education would serve to convert those hurricanes into “soft breezes and tame silvered waves.”⁶¹

This conservative elite leadership of the Third Order envisioned a prominent role for its schools when Mexico became independent. Etchings were sent from the drawing academy to municipal authorities and even to Emperor Iturbide to demonstrate the great service their schools proffered toward “lawfulness and good governance . . . the schools are of incalculable benefit to Religion and to the State.” Despite considerable debt from physical damage caused by loyalist troops which had closed and occupied the schools, the Mesa sought their immediate reopening.⁶²

Disappointingly for the Third Order, Ulibarri, the successful master teacher, resigned in favor of a post with the Imperial government, and the surveyor had been lost in the skirmishes. It proved difficult to find replacements of their caliber. One new teacher was chosen for his “quiet and humble spirit,” and his knowledge of a style of penmanship in vogue at the time. A second teacher, reputedly a fine mathematician, was hired on the basis of his “honest and reserved” demeanor and the fact that his father, grandfather, and uncle had all served on the Mesa and had all bequeathed endowments.⁶³

Recognizing financial collapse, the treasurer of the Third Order in 1821 declared the accounts of the corporation undecipherable. Previous estimates put the amount owed to the Third Order in excess of 25,000 pesos, but the books were in disarray and the treasurer was unable to arrive at accurate figures. Officials admitted to panic at the sight of the accounts. When one tertiary approached the treasurer hoping to negotiate payment on his loan of 8000 pesos, the treasurer admitted to having no record of the original loan.

⁶⁰ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 18 April 1820 and 21 May 1821.

⁶¹ Manuel Agustín Gutiérrez, *Dos discursos sobre la mucha importancia de la buena educación y enseñanza de las primeras letras a los niños* (México: Juan Bautista de Arizpe, 1820), pp. 29, 42-43.

⁶² AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: July through October 1821, August 1822. All 245 engravings of the academy were stolen at this time.

⁶³ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 13 October 1821 and 1 August 1822.

The ayuntamiento itself owed 450 pesos. When approached by the treasurer in search of payment on this debt, the alcalde, Francisco de Olaciregui, thanked the schools for having prepared so many youths to serve as the “backbone of the State” in careers in government and the Church, but he refused to pay on the debt, urging the schools’ directors instead to “tighten your belts with the Crown of honor and glory worthy of those who serve the Patria.” Olaciregui had himself served as Hermano Mayor only the previous year.⁶⁴

Efforts by the Mesa to save funds for the schools included the postponement and even cancellation of what they began to identify as “secondary” functions, such as the meals for the poor and the imprisoned, dowries, and the sponsorship of processions and devotions. The Mesa even considered cancelling its Good Friday procession. Though one official suggested eliminating a teaching position, the Mesa instead voted to reduce the number of masses sponsored at the monastery.⁶⁵

Echoing methods described for the 1730s and 1740s to fund Third Order projects at that time of popular apathy, the Mesa once again instructed their legal representative to take action against debtors and instructed their collector of dues to tighten control over individuals who wore the habit without having paid for that right. As an added incentive the treasurer was promised a two and a half percent commission on all interest collected, but he met with no success.⁶⁶

The Hermano Mayor in 1825 sought to repair damages done to the chapel stemming from neglect and insurrection. Faced with near empty coffers he diverted toward the chapel certain funds which had been donated for the drawing academy by Castillo y Llata. Manuel Samaniego, nephew of Castillo y Llata, and himself a major contributor to the schools, examined the ledgers but could find no trace of a 2800 peso donation left by his uncle expressly for the academy. Samaniego questioned the Hermano Mayor, who, after admitting to an attempt to divert the funds, agreed to spend the money on lighting and new engravings for the academy. Samaniego in that year personally maintained the schools by paying the full salaries of the teachers and by supplying students with paper and charcoals. In 1827 the

⁶⁴ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 14 December 1821, 11 January 1826, and 27 February 1828.

⁶⁵ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: October through December 1825, January 1826, February 1827, and March 1828.

⁶⁶ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 22 October 1825, 11 January 1826, and 13 October 1827.

school was kept open only through the ayuntamiento which paid the 450 peso debt earlier refused to the Third Order.⁶⁷

The quality of education obviously suffered; it was said that students did not know how to read. When asked to account for his failings, José María Vázquez, the master teacher, blamed the “decline in the moral and political fiber of the times” on a lack of books. The Hermano Mayor agreed in principle but insisted upon one book being removed from the shelves—*Advantages of the Republican System*.⁶⁸ When the master teacher offered to hold an academic competition involving sixteen students the Mesa scoffed at this embarrassingly small number. And when they tried to limit his use of corporal punishment he protested so strongly that they were forced to recant. After this teacher’s dismissal the only person available, or willing, to accept the position was the same individual fired a decade earlier for his problem with alcohol.⁶⁹

In 1828 the Mesa heard a motion for the Third Order chapel to be closed. The structure was in such serious disrepair they feared someone might be injured. Apart from a roof which might collapse, sacred vessels were in deplorable condition, the wooden altar to Jesús Nazareno had become rotten, a simple glass lantern was all that was left to serve as the sanctuary lamp, and the silver crown of the Virgin had been stolen. Tertiaries transferred all remaining devotional items to storage in the choir of Santa Clara, suspended most works of mercy, reduced the size of the governing board, and abandoned the chapel. The primary school remained nominally in operation until the Reform and the drawing academy actually witnessed a rise in enrollment leading to the request for an assistant director in 1829. This institution survived as the Academia de Bellas Artes.⁷⁰

Leaders of the Third Order since the seventeenth century had been made increasingly aware of their unique position within the Franciscan fold. In 1725 Pope Benedict XIII declared it “a true order perfectly distinct from the confraternity.”⁷¹ The impending threat of secularization of the parish provided the opportunity to test and affirm their autonomy from local friars over

⁶⁷ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 9 November and 12 April 1826.

⁶⁸ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: 20 January and 10 May 1826.

⁶⁹ AFPM, “Libro de Fundación”: August through September 1817, March through April 1828.

⁷⁰ AFPM, “Libro de elecciones y capítulos”: October 1828. Information on the drawing academy in the later nineteenth century is given in Frías, *Leyendas y Tradiciones Queretanas*.

⁷¹ *Glorioso principio de la esclarecida Orden Tercera* (México: Viuda de Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, 1744); and Iguiniz, p. 11. The tertiaries at Santa Rosa de Viterbo constituted another aspect of Third Order life, that followed by *oblatas*, or *donadas*, who sought greater perfection through life in the cloister (Iguiniz, p. 55).

such issues as ownership of the chapel and nomination of a spiritual director, and insist upon their status as an institute answerable first to the Provincial. With the actual decree of secularization in 1758 the Third Order filled the leadership vacuum created by the transfer of the majority of confraternities. It was at only this point that conventual directories began to list the Third Order as an entity distinct from the confraternity.

Sixty years after the 1725 declaration of Benedict XIII a very different statement was issued. Juan Antonio Rodrigálvez, student of the reformist Archbishop Francisco Lorenzana (Mexico, 1766-1772), published his thesis on *cofradías*. In it he declared: “the tertiaries of today should call themselves *cofrades*, for they do not live together as a community of friars.”⁷² The Rule, of course, had never intended for tertiaries to live a cloistered life. Implicit in the combative assertion of Rodrigálvez is the political agenda of the Bourbon church aimed at the suppression of religious orders. His thesis might even lead one to the conclusion that the Third Order was indeed a separate and viable order worthy of attack.

The schools became for the Third Order of Querétaro its distinguishing characteristic, its means to solidify autonomy, and hence became its nearly exclusive endeavor. The shift during the course of a generation from an institution given to traditional devotions and corporal works of mercy to one which administered a school and drawing academy. This resulted in the exclusion of the majority of tertiaries financially or in terms of decision-making by a small core of leaders and benefactors. Schools on a scale such as displayed at Querétaro were a vehicle for the participation of the few. Other activities suffered. The Mesa even suspended the collection of alms, relying solely on interest from loans, and gave to the schools an ever increasing percentage of not only its general funds but also, as shown, those funds set aside for devotional and charitable works. Waning interest in the Third Order, then, and its fatal decline after independence cannot serve as a barometer of religious belief, but rather serve to illustrate how members of a social and charitable institution prior to independence were alienated by their own leaders from active and fruitful involvement in communal projects.

Saint Anselm College
Manchester, New Hampshire

BRIAN C. BELANGER

⁷² Juan Antonio Rodrigálvez *Tratado histórico-canónico de las cofradías de christianos* (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1785), pp. 73-74.