

CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL IMPACT OF THE DOMINICAN CONVENT OF SEGOVIA (SPAIN), 13TH-16TH C.

IMPACTO CULTURAL E INTELLECTUAL DEL CONVENTO DOMINICO DE SEGOVIA (ESPAÑA), SIGLOS XIII-XVI

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Abstract

The aim of the present work is to investigate the intellectual and cultural influence that the convent of Santa Cruz la Real of Segovia (Spain), belonging to the Order of Preachers, had in the local society during the first centuries of its history. For this purpose, we will analyze some aspects that we consider essential, such as the care of souls which was under the charge of the Segovian Dominican friars, the education inside the convent, the role played by the Inquisition, where Santa Cruz had a considerable prominence, and the regulation of the conventual way of life as a model for the society.

Keywords: *Dominican Order, Preachers, Black Friars, Mendicant Orders, intellectual life, Spanish Inquisition, Segovia, Middle Ages, Modern Age.*

Resumen

El objetivo del presente trabajo es investigar la influencia intelectual y cultural que el convento de Santa Cruz la Real de Segovia (España), perteneciente a la Orden de Predicadores, tuvo en la sociedad local durante los primeros siglos de su historia. Para ello analizaremos algunos aspectos que consideramos esenciales, como la cura de almas que estaba a cargo de los frailes dominicos segovianos, la educación en el interior del convento, el papel que jugó la Inquisición, donde Santa Cruz tuvo un considerable protagonismo, y la regulación del modo de vida conventual como modelo de sociedad.

Palabras clave: *Orden Dominicana, Predicadores, Frailes Negros, Órdenes Mendicantes, vida intelectual, Inquisición española, Segovia, Edad media, Edad Moderna.*

Cultural and intellectual history

The first question we should clarify is what we understand as *cultural history* and how it differs from *intellectual history*. We can define the former as the study of the behavior of human societies, including mentalities, rules and processes of social learning and also popular culture. Whereas the latter comprises the evolution of the different disciplines that integrate human knowledge and which assume a written form (Law, Music, Philosophy, Literature, Medicine, etc.), as well as the relationships between those sciences and society.¹

From this theoretical background, we will seek to analyze in this work how the influence of the convent of Santa Cruz la Real in Segovia was generated in these two areas during the first centuries of its history, from its establishment at the beginning of the 13th century, until the already started modern era. For this purpose, we will consider sources from different backgrounds, ranging from the earliest testimonies of the presence in Segovia of the Holy founder of the Preachers, Dominic of Guzmán, like Gerardo de Frachet's narrative from the mid-13th century to the minutes of the General Chapters of the Order, including the notarial protocols of the Provincial Archive or the Conventual Archive preserved in the National Historical Archive.

Growing importance of the Dominican convent of Segovia

I believe it is important to point out that the period under review comprises, in fact, two different stages regarding the historical development of the Segovian Dominicans. The convent was founded by Dominic of Guzmán himself during Christmas in 1218; since that moment and until the second half of the 15th century, we could speak about a period where the community lived in relative poverty, not free of difficulties, despite relying on the special protection of the Castilian monarchs from almost its foundation, hence its name of “Real”. However, the situation changed dramatically with the Catholic Kings, in the last quarter of the 15th century, and since Fray Tomás of Torquemada was appointed Prior of the convent and General Inquisitor. From that time on, and thanks to the close relationship with the monarchs and control over the Inquisition, a period of economic and social splendor started. It will be extended during the following centuries, until the beginning of the 19th century, where important refurbishing works were developed in the building that integrates the monumental area of the current architectural site.²

In my view, a clear indicator regarding the evolution of the importance of the convent of Santa Cruz during these centuries is the number of times that it hosted the celebration of the Provincial Chapters of the Order of Preachers in Spain. In the following tables we can verify that, even though its relevance was considered null during the Middle Ages, it became a place of reference in the 16th century:

¹ Burke, 2008; Paul, 1998.

² Larrañaga Zulueta, 2018.

PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS OF SPAIN, 13 th - 15 th C							
CONVENT	YEARS						TOTAL
Burgos	1241						1
Pamplona	1242						1
Palencia	1243	1249	1256				3
Salamanca	1244						1
Toledo	1250						1
Zaragoza	1257						1
León	1275						1
Estella	1281						1
Barcelona	1299						1
?	1390						1
Valladolid	Beginning 15 th C						1
Ciudad Real	1434						1
Córdoba	1464						1
Salamanca	1489						1
Toro	1493						1
Piedrahíta	1495						1
Ávila	1496						1

PROVINCIAL CHAPTERS OF SPAIN, 16 th C							
CONVENT	YEARS						TOTAL
Toledo	1500	1518	1543	1573			4
Jerez	1502						1
Peñafiel	1504						1
Burgos	1506	1525	1553	1591			4
Zamora	1508						1
Valladolid	1509	1523	1539	1569	1581		5
Salamanca	1510	1518	1522	1535	1551	1587	6
Sevilla	1511						1
Córdoba	1513						1
Toro	1516	1533	1565	1585			4
Avila	1526	1548	1577	1599			4
Segovia	1529	1550	1559	1595	1597		5
Piedrahita	1531	1561					2
Benavente	1537	1541	1545				3
Plasencia	1555	1557					2
Madrid	1563						1
Sta. M ^a Nieva	1571						1
Palencia	1575						1
Vitoria	1579						1
Ocaña	1593						1

Tables 1-2. Provincial chapters of Spain, 13th-16th C.

RIGHT CHOIR	LEFT CHOIR
Segovia	Palencia
Barcelona	Santarem
Zamora	Zaragoza
Lerida	Salamanca
Burgos	Compostela
Pamplona	Toledo
Coimbra	Mallorca
etc.	etc.

Table 3. Provincial chapters of Spain, 13th-16th C.

From tables 1-2 we can attest that, after the Dominican community of San Esteban in Salamanca, with the transformation of its university into a study-centre of note in Europe and at the same time the convent of Salamanca became its essential intellectual site, Santa Cruz ranks second in the 16th century together with the convent of San Pablo in Valladolid, another outstanding place due to the quality of its construction.³

The importance of Santa Cruz is reinforced if we assess the position assigned to the Segovian convent in the Provincial Chapters. The representatives of the different convents sat in the two choirs located in the center and on both sides of the nave of the convent church where the chapter was held. For being the most ancient of the Dominican institutions of the Iberian Peninsula, it held the first place in the right choir, while Palencia, the second in antiquity, held the first place in the left choir, and so forth, as we observe in the Table 3⁴.

With these data we can get an idea of the increasing significance of Santa Cruz in the context of the Order's historical development in the Iberian Peninsula. However, this importance at a local level should have been higher from the very beginning of the Dominican life in Segovia. This is certainly since the founding was carried out by Dominic of Guzmán himself, whose presence in the city in 1218 retains even today, more than eight hundred years after, a space in the civic memory.

The founder in Segovia

Dominic's visit in 1218 was included in different texts which inform us about the life of the Saint, a key figure also in the whole western medieval Christianity. In the work entitled *The Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preachers* (In Spanish, *Vidas de los Hermanos de la Orden de Predicadores*), written between 1265 and 1271 by Gerardo of Frachet, several miracles performed by Saint Dominic during his stay in Segovia are narrated. These stories show us how preaching and miracles are interlinked in the Order's collective memory and imagination, and they give us an idea of the cultural impact that the figure and activity of the Order's, and the convent's founder, caused in the local society:

³ Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I.

⁴ Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I, pp. 106-107.

“Por el tiempo en que Santo Domingo recibió una casa en Segovia, en España, sucedió que predicó un día extramuros de la ciudad, ante una multitud de gente que se había congregado. No se le ocultaba que el pueblo estaba atenazado por una gran tristeza a causa de la falta de lluvia. Estaba ya cerca la fiesta de la Natividad del señor y, por falta de lluvia, los labradores no habían comenzado aún a sembrar. Tras el exordio de su sermón, el hombre de Dios Domingo, divinamente inspirado, prorrumpió en estas palabras: *No os dejéis llevar por el terror, hermanos. Confíad en la misericordia de Dios, porque hoy, por la abundante lluvia que nos concederá el Señor, esta nuestra tristeza se transformará en gozo.* En verdad que en aquel momento no aparecía ningún signo de lluvia. La atmósfera se presentaba clara, resplandeciente por los rayos del sol, brillaba muy serena, sin que una sola nube ensombreciera el aire. Mientras continuaba el sermón que había comenzado, cayó tanta, y descargó con tal vehemencia la lluvia que, por las inundaciones, apenas podían dirigirse a la ciudad, esforzándose por alcanzar a toda prisa sus propias casas.

Por el mismo tiempo, como un día de fiesta el siervo de Dios, Domingo, quisiera exponer la palabra del Señor a los consejeros de dicha ciudad [de Segovia], y todos los congregados hubieran escuchado ya los documentos reales que les habían llegado por entonces, les dijo: *Hasta este momento, hermanos míos, habéis oído los edictos de un rey mortal. Ahora, pues, prestad atención a los mandatos del celeste e inmortal.* A estas palabras un cierto noble en la vana apreciación del siglo, embotado por los sentimientos según la carne, no solo tuvo en menos oír su sermón, sino que prorrumpió en expresiones de indignación diciendo: *¡Estaría bien que este charlatán nos retuviera durante el día con sus sermones, y nos impidiera la comida!* Dicho esto, el tal impetuoso dirigió el caballo que montaba hacia su casa, que estaba cerca. Se marchó murmurando. Santo Domingo le dijo: *He aquí que ahora os marcháis, pero antes de la vuelta de un año, vuestro propio caballo carecerá del jinete que ahora lo monta, y no podréis llegar a vuestro alcázar jalonado por torres y edificado con esmero, porque lo ocupará el asesino.* Todo lo cual aconteció después, y puso por completo de manifiesto que estas palabras fueron pronunciadas por mandato divino. Todavía no había transcurrido un año cuando, el mismo noble, y en el mismo lugar al que se dirigía cuando se pronunció la sentencia, fue atrocemente asesinado por sus enemigos, junto con su propio hijo y un sobrino. Escapaba entonces a toda prisa hacia la fortaleza que se había construido.”⁵

“During the time when Saint Dominic received a house in Segovia, in Spain, it happened that one day he preached outside the walls of the city, facing a large crowd of people who were there congregated. He was aware that the people were gripped with considerable sorrow due to the lack of rain. The Nativity Feast of Lord Jesus was already close, and because of the lack of rain, the farmers had not yet started to sow. Following the preamble of his sermon, the man of God, Dominic, divinely inspired, burst into these words: *Do not let yourselves be carried away by terror, Brethren. Trust in the mercy of God, because today, thanks to the heavy rain that the Lord will concede us, this our sadness will turn into joy. At that moment there was no sign of rain indeed.* The atmosphere was clear, glowing with the rays of the sun, shining serenely, without a single cloud shadowing the air. While he continued the sermon he had started, the rain fell so much, and dumped with such vehemence that, because of the floods, they could barely head to the city, struggling hastily to reach their own houses.

At that time, as in a feast day, the servant of God, Dominic, wanted to express the word of the Lord to the city councilors [of Segovia], and having all the assembled listened already to

⁵ Gómez García (OP), ed., 2011: pp. 686-687.

the royal documents that had reached them by that time, he said: *Until now, my brethren, you have heard the edicts of a mortal King. Now, thus, pay attention to the terms of the celestial and immortal.* To these words, a certain nobleman, within the futile appraisal of the century, blunted by the sentiments of his own flesh, not only had he heard his sermon, but bursting into indignation he expressed: *Oh dear, what if this chatterer retains us during the day with his sermons, and holds us back from our meals!* Having said that, this impetuous man directed the horse he was riding towards his house, which was nearby. He left murmuring. Saint Dominic said to him: *Behold, now you are leaving, but within a year, your own horse will lack the rider who now mounts it, and you will not reach your castle filled with towers and built with care, because it will be occupied by the assassin.* All of this happened later on and completely revealed that these words were pronounced by divine mandate. It was within less than a year when, the same nobleman, and in the same place where he was heading when the judgement was being pronounced, was atrociously killed by his enemies, together with his own son and a nephew. He was escaping then hurriedly towards the castle he had built for himself.”

G. Rodríguez mentions that between the 13th and 16th centuries, the Iberian Peninsula manifested in everyday reality a living presence due to the miraculous event, expressed in the popular religiousness and registered in several written testimonies. Moreover, F.J. Fernández Conde remarks that “in the new religious background of the central centuries of the Middle Ages, emerged a series of exceptional characters, considered at once as saints in the environments and social groups where they lived and therefore worthy of religious cult”⁶. In line with this “historical holiness”, a “virtual” one arose expressed in hagiographic documents of different nature, such as *passiones, vitae, translationes, miracula* or *legendae*, whose veracity had little or nothing to do with the real events, but they are sources of primary importance for a better knowledge of the social background of those characters.

Following both A. Vauchez and Fernández Conde, who affirm that these are different saints from those of the Late Antiquity, now characterized with more virtuous, human and familiar features and with a large catalogue of miracles of all types which could affect any social group.⁷ We can relate these features of the new sanctity with the development of a medieval Humanism initiated in the 12th century which continued until the 13th century, where the Franciscan spirituality became its utmost expression in the religious field and the court of King Alfonso X one of its achievements, as stated by H. Salvador Martínez.⁸

All these characteristics perfectly match the information that the sources about the saintly founder of the Dominicans in Segovia have transmitted to us. In the first text quoted above we can see how the fame that precedes Dominic is capable of assembling a crowd of people, with representatives from all social strata. He preaches in an open space, outside the walls and nearby the city. After giving the announcement of what would be happening that same day, he intervenes in the course of Nature and it starts to rain heavily on a day that had been cloudless until that moment. Consequently, he benefits the economy of the city and the surrounding countryside and transforms the ruling sadness into vital optimism, emotions that

⁶ Rodríguez, 2008; Fernández Conde, 2005: pp. 493-581;

⁷ Fernández Conde, 2005: pp. 493-581; Vauchez, 1999; Pérez-Embid Wamba, 2017: pp. 225-268.

⁸ Martínez Santamarta, 2016. For the study of the Franciscan thought, among the wide bibliography see Le Goff, 2003.

are expressly mentioned in the text. We should point out, moreover, that this narration resumes an ancient biblical tradition of the power over the rain and elements originally assigned to God, recalling the universal flood (Genesis, 7:11) or the prophecies of Isaiah (45:8). We can finally state that the faith of the people, assembled around the preacher, saves him from true and close misfortune.

The narration of the second of the miracles mentioned above is different. It bears a resemblance with the previous one, as it is performed, once again, in front of a large group of villagers, although among them, those who hold positions of political responsibility and who have just made several Royal Edicts public are now mentioned. One of those powerful locals makes a mockery of the saint and despises him openly. The malediction that Dominic uttered against him does not really flow from the saint but from God, who punishes the sinner by death. In contrast with the previous miracle, the lack of faith, this time of a nobleman, leads to his condemnation. The saint appears, once more, as a heavenly instrument and the punishment emphasizes furthermore the futility of the mundane materiality.

Dominican preaching, care of souls, and education in Segovia

As I mentioned above and as is reflected in these texts, the miraculous action is connected to his preaching, an essential activity for the care of the souls in an Order named “of Preachers”. Thus, the education of the one who speaks in public about the subject of faith is an essential part in the daily life of the friar. To this issue we will come back later, but we will add here that preaching, as the most relevant service of the Segovian Dominicans, is certified in the medieval and modern documentation.

The friars in Segovia usually preached from the pulpits of the parishes and in other convents and monasteries, earning twelve *reales* per sermon that were paid by who had the ownership of the sacred place. In 1256 and to avoid conflicts with the secular clergy, the Provincial Chapter of Spain ordered that the Priors should not take their friars to preach outside of the boundaries they were assigned, in order to avoid conflicts with the secular clergy. In 1275, the Provincial Chapter wanted to avoid messages which could be subversive, so they forbade the friars to scandalize the kings, princes and nobles with messages addressed to the people against the established order and that could encourage social division.⁹

Almost two hundred years after the arrival of Dominic of Guzmán to Segovia, the city was visited by another distinguished Dominican preacher who was perhaps one of the most influential preachers of his time: Vicente Ferrer. By the end of August or early September of 1411 he preached in the Hermitage of Cristo del Mercado and his presence had great social significance, to the extent that his activity is still today remembered in the city.

His listeners represent the entire social spectrum and, in fact, Ferrer organized the sermon thematically and structurally taking this fact into account. He connected sermons

⁹ On the conflicts between the secular clergy and the Mendicants in the 1st century of their existence, see Dossat, 1973. References to provincial chapters at Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I, pp. 38 y 52.

which had a thematic unit during consecutive days and in this way, he promoted loyalty within the audience. Ferrer also adjusted his message to the listening public by using understandable and familiar examples, related to rural and city lives. *Exempla* and *similitudines* are the most used resources to illustrate the message, make it understandable, strengthen its moral content and gain attention. It usually attacks superstition, popular beliefs and popular traditions which go against the Christian way of life, what we could synthesize as the lifestyle of Jesus Christ: in thinking, feeling and acting; in relation to God, with oneself and with others; in relation to justice and worship; in relation to the rich and the poor, with religious power and with political power; in relation to virtue and sin, with material and spiritual life, etc. Considering the importance of the Segovian Jewish quarter in the early 15th century, it is not surprising that his sermons had a considerable anti-Semitic content as well. We will come back to this last topic later on.

As we have just mentioned, the impact of preaching is amplified through the content and structure of the sermon. However, also the fact that there can be a great difference between the sermon that has been preserved to the one that was actually preached has to be considered. Moreover, we can consider other elements to measure it as well: the place where the Segovian preaching of Vicente Ferrer took place, the hermitage of Cristo del Mercado, would have been a crowded public space during the time a market was being held; the expectation raised in the city due to the arrival of the crowd accompanying St Vincent, who was highly motivated by his fame, even performing theatrical entrances in the city as a new Jesus Christ in Jerusalem. Likewise, this can be seen in the requests that people ask the preacher to speak of a certain subject (“to me it is said and begged that I preach and speak about the end of the world and the compromise of the Antichrist”), or in the reaction, of rejection occasionally, from the audience about his message, which has significant testimonies in other places. They all are, with no doubt, valuable means to measure their real transcendence in the popular mentality.¹⁰

Regarding the care of souls, there is another occupation performed by the friars that made them establish direct contact with people of any condition: that of the confessor. This we know due to its practice in Santa Cruz, as we can see in the accounting documentation of the Santa Cruz convent preserved in the national historical archive of Madrid, although we do not have personal testimonies which describe this activity in detail. The close relationship of the confessors with the regal policy, with the kings themselves, has been discussed by historiography¹¹, and there can be no doubt that, just like preaching, the influence of confession on the popular mentality must have been considerable during the period under discussion, due to its capability to guide consciences. The establishment of private chapels and chaplaincies in the convent, completed with donations, which we can find in the documentation preserved in the notarial protocols of the Provincial Archive of Segovia or in

¹⁰ Cátedra, 1994. On the social impact of sermons, see pp. 223-273; sermons preached in Segovia are number 7, 8, 13, and 14, pp. 337-353, and 407-423.

¹¹ Nieto Soria, 1993: pp. 140-150.

the National Historical Archive of Madrid, are highly likely to be strongly linked to the relationship between seculars and the convent of Santa Cruz through the confession, a sacrament which expresses special mutual filiation between the person who receives it and the one who renders it.

Regarding donations and what these represent in terms of social bonds, let us not forget, on the other hand, that begging was also considered a fundamental occupation in the mendicant orders and there is a clear trace in the Segovian conventual accounting books of the National Historical Archive about the amount collected by the almoner.¹²

A minor aspect of the care of souls was exorcism, as can be seen in some testimonies from the convent of Santa Cruz. It was certainly an occasional practice, though the one case we know from the beginning of the 17th century tells us that it had been previously performed there and, regarding its characteristics, it must have influenced in the popular mentality.

The one we have knowledge about took place on May the 10th in 1614, when an artisan went to Santa Cruz with his maid, who seemed possessed by the demon. The previous day, his wife and a Dominican friar found the servant lying in the floor with convulsions and decided to go to the local priest. The priest could not cure her affliction and he suggested that they go to the convent, where “exorcisms were practiced”. Apparently, the incident was solved by the “miraculous” intervention of the Virgen de la Guía who was worshipped in Santa Cruz, where we can find notarial testimony signed by several witnesses, including the bishop of the city¹³.

The intellectual activity of the Dominicans is closely related also to the care of souls. Let us remember that, in the last decade of his life, the fifth General Master of the Dominicans, Humberto of Romans (1194-1277), wrote a treaty about the training of the preacher which presented the guidelines for all the centers of the Order.¹⁴ For this reason, study was a considerably developed occupation in the convent of Santa Cruz, where there was an education center which was highly regarded in the Order during the Modern Age and which undoubtedly had a considerable effect in the life of the city.

The Chapters of the Province of Spain show us the prevailing goodwill since the 13th century to enable studying in a comprehensive way throughout the territory. Thus, in 1241, priors were warned not to avoid this commitment of the friars who were qualified, but to support it, and to the brethren who applied to that labor with diligence, all of which was emphasized in 1275. In 1242 the priors were asked not to employ the students in other occupations different from study and to supply the necessary books and materials to write. However, not all the subjects could be taught and Natural Sciences, Medicine and Civil Law were specifically forbidden.¹⁵

¹² On the offices of confessor and almsman among the Preachers, Lippini, 2013.

¹³ Egaña Casariego, 2008; and Fray José María (OP), 2010.

¹⁴ Romans, 2014.

¹⁵ Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I., pp. 18, 20 and 89.

In every convent there should be a doctor who managed the studies and was usually responsible for teaching Theology. It was mandatory for all the brethren, including the Prior, to assist to his daily class. The didactics of this subject were almost limited to the study of the Bible, should avoid abstract issues, unnecessary subtleties and dangerous novelties which could lead to confusion.¹⁶ This last characteristic proves the direct relationship and influence of the intellectual life of the convent in the city, which should be mainly materialized through an easy preaching and free from dogmatic errors.

Following all the above guidelines, a study whose names of the Magisters were known by the end of the 14th century, was established in an unspecified date in Santa Cruz:

“Coentui Segoviensi fratres Guterrium Vallisoletanum prodoctore assignamus. Item ad Theologiam fratres Laurentium Segoviensem, Alfonsum [sic] Ovetensem, Iohannem de Dominabus. Item ad Philosophiam fratres Iohannem de Bovatella, Iohannem de Sancto Michaele et fratrem Antonium Segobiensem, maiorem, qui legat eis. Item ad Logicam fratres Gonssalvum de Miranda, Turibium Matute et fratrem Petrum Segobiensem, qui legat eis. Item ad Gramaticam fratres Iohannem Tamachium. Alifonsum de Septempública, Rodericum Segobiensem, Ortega, Iohannem de la Trinidad, Nicholaum Sancto Nicholao. Fructum Minorem, Alifonsum de Sancto Nicholao, Segoviensem, et fratrem Fructum Segoviensem, qui legat eis. Item fratrem Iohannem, conversum, de Rrupefideli.”¹⁷

“We assign Brother Guterio of Valladolid to the convent of Segovia as Doctor. For Theology, Brethren Lorenzo of Segovia, Alfonso of Oviedo and Juan del Señor. For Philosophy, Brethren Juan of Bobadilla, Juan of San Miguel and Antonio of Segovia the Elder, who is lay Brother. For Logics, Brethren Gonzalo of Miranda, Toribio Matute and Pedro of Segovia, who is lay Brother. For Grammar, Brethren Juan Tamaquio, Alfonso of Sepulveda, Rodrigo of Segovia, Ortega, Juan of Trinity, Nicolás of Segovia, Lazaro of Segovia, Dominic of Saint Nicolas, Frutos the Minor, Alfonso of Saint Nicolas of Segovia and Brother Frutos who is lay. Likewise, Brother Juan of Peñafiel, converted.”

This list goes far beyond a mere anecdote, as we can see several names of the friars whose placename betrays their origin in the same city of Segovia or in other locations of Castile. Hence, it is possible to deduce that intellectual life of Santa Cruz had indeed an important positive impact in the intellectual development of the population as well: There were children of multiple social backgrounds approaching the convent who could achieve to progress inside and outside of the Order thanks to the teaching given by the Dominican friars.

In the Provincial Chapter held in Toro (Zamora) in 1493, several friars and professors, including some inquisitors were assigned to the study of Santa Cruz:

“Conventui Segoviensi assignamus hos fratres, videlicet, reverendum patrem fratrem Ioannem de Sancto Martino haereticae pravitatis inquisitorem et Praedicatorum Generalem, et frater Ferdinandum de Sancto Dominico inquisitorem et Praedicatorum Generalem et fratrem

¹⁶ Lippini, 2013: pp. 251-255.

¹⁷ Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I, pp. 110-111.

Didacum Magdaleno Praesentatum in Theologia et fratrem Alfonsum Garsia Praesentatum in Theologia, fratrem Petrum Barroso Praesentatum in Theologia. In Lectorem dicti conventus fratrem Alfonsum de Valisa et fratrem Thomam de Matienzo. Ad Philosophiam fratrem Ioannem Cruniensem, fratrem Aegidium Gallecum, fratrem Ludovicum Salmantinum, fratrem Ioannem de Cuellar, sacerdotes; fratrem Gregorium Salmantinum diaconum. Ad Logicam fratres Remigium de Sancto Dominico sacerdotem. Bartholomaeum Civitatensem sacerdotem, Ioannem Zamorensem subdiaconum, fratrem Petrum Salmantinum professum. Ad Grammaticam fratres Ioannem de Herrada, Ferdinandum Magdaleno, professos; de Lectore provideat eis Prior. Fratres Andream Segoviensem, Ferdinandum Vallisoletanum, Valentinum de Oliveto, laicos.”¹⁸

“We assigned these brethren to the convent of Segovia, namely, Juan of San Martín, inquisitor of the heresy and General Preacher. Fernando of Santo Domingo, inquisitor of the heresy and General Preacher. For Theology, Diego Magdaleno, Alfonso García and Pedro Barroso. Alfonso de Valisa and Tomás of Matienzo, lecturers. Juan of Clunia, Egidio Gallego, Luis of Salamanca, Juan of Cuellar, priests, and Gregorio of Salamanca, deacon, for Philosophy. For Logics, Remigio of Santo Domingo, Bartolomé de la Ciudad, priests, Juan of Zamora, subdeacon, Pedro of Salamanca, professed. For Grammar, Juan of Herrada, Fernando Magdaleno, professed. The Prior provides a Lecturer. Brethren Andrés of Segovia, Fernando of Valladolid, Valentín de Oliveto, laymen.”

Along with a more diverse geographical background, due to the higher importance of the Segovian convent within the context of the Order, we can yet see here several names related to nearby locations or with the same city. We will come back later to the relationship of the Segovian convent with the Inquisition mentioned in that text.

Regarding intellectual education, we know that in 1511 there were four general centres of study in the Province of Spain: the ones in Salamanca, Avila, Valladolid, and Seville. This category was achieved by the center of Segovia in 1600, obtaining then from the General Chapter of the Order the authorization to award with the master's degree and graduate. The most outstanding sector of the Segovian society attended the first diploma award in 1602 which the local historian Diego of Colmenares describes in 1637 as follows:

“La religión dominicana, en el capítulo general que celebró en Nápoles año 1599, decretó en favor de nuestro real convento de Santa Cruz, por la preeminencia de ser primitiva fundación de España de su mismo patriarca Santo Domingo, y por la observancia y estudios que siempre en ella se han profesado, que fuese universidad de su religión; y su prior diese grados de maestros a sus presentados. Confirmó este decreto el pontífice Clemente VIII por su bula plomada. Y en virtud de decreto y bula, domingo 27 de enero de 1602 años, frai Pedro de Orozco, prior presente, dio el primer grado de maestro al presentado frai Gabriel Rodriguez, hijo profeso del convento, asistiendo lo más granado de ambos estados eclesiástico y seglar de nuestra ciudad.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Hernández Martín (OP): 2015-2017, T. I, pp. 220-221.

¹⁹ Colmenares, 1847: T. III, pp. 261-262.

“The Dominican religion decreed, in the General Chapter held in Naples in 1599, in support of our Real Convent of Santa Cruz, for the pre-eminence of being the primeval Foundation of Spain of its same patriarch Saint Dominic, and for the compliance and studies always in it practiced, to be the university of its religion; and its prior to award degrees of master to its candidates. This decree was confirmed by the pontiff Clement VIII, by his Papal Bull. And under decree and Bull, in Sunday, January, 27th 1602, the friar Pedro of Orozco, attendant prior, awarded the first Master Degree to the candidate friar Gabriel Rodriguez, professed Son of the convent, with the assistance of the most selected attendees amongst both ecclesiastical and secular statements of our city.”

The text, in its last sentence, is very explicit regarding the imbrication of the convent with the local society. Colmenares establishes the date of the concession of the statute of a general centre of study for Santa Cruz in 1599, though there was very likely to be a dating error since we find the following announcement in the minutes of the General Chapter of the Order held in Naples in 1600, not in 1599:

“Concedimus in provincia Hispaniae, quod legitime promoti suscipere possint insignia magisterii a priore conventus S. Crucis Segoviensis, si erit ipse magister vel baccalaureus, sin autem recipiant a patre regente, si erit magister et nullus alius sit magister in conventu.”²⁰

“In the Province of Spain, we grant the nominations for teaching given by the prior of the convent of Santa Cruz of Segovia to be accepted as legitimate, when masters and bachelors are there present, and no other one could teach in that convent.”

Regarding the bull of Clement VIII mentioned by the chronicler Colmenares, we have not found any reference in the bull-collection of this Pope,²¹ though it is preserved within the documentation of the National Historical Archive in Madrid.

In close relationship with this intellectual development and the new statute of the convent as a centre of higher education, the 17th century was one of the most prosperous in the history of the Segovian convent and its great architectural works attest to this.²²

With regards to teaching, a mention should be made of the library of the convent, which without a doubt must have been the best in the city in the period which we are studying. Through the analysis of the preserved catalogue, we can present the Table 4, which summarizes its content. Due to the important number of existing volumes, it should have consisted in something more than the simple characteristic aumbry where the books were preserved and it must have possibly counted with its own space and a well-managed functioning:²³

²⁰ “Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica”, 1901: T. X, vol. 5, p. 395.

²¹ Laertii Cherubini (and others), 1962.

²² On the evolution of this Dominican center at the end of the Modern period and its position in relation to other local monasteries, see the excellent study by Barrio Gozalo, 1995.

²³ There are two copies of the catalog of the library of the Santa Cruz convent, made in the mid-19th century, during the expropriation of monastic goods promoted by the Minister Álvarez de Mendizábal: one in the archive of the Royal Academy of

TOPICS	NUMBER OF VOLUMES
Holy Scriptures and commentators	572
History	359
Canons	320
Theology	1216
Philosophy	305
Law	85
Miscellany	673
Moral	1437
Total	4967

Table 4. The library of the convent of Santa Cruz la Real in the Modern Era.

Santa Cruz la Real and the Inquisition

The role played by this convent in the development of the inquisitorial activity in Spain, was linked to the intellectual life of Santa Cruz, in general, and in the city of Segovia particularly. The excellent education in the humanities which we are describing made the takeover of the anti-heretical institution by the Dominicans possible. The position of the Segovian convent as one of the reference centers of the Inquisition and the presence of the general inquisitor, friar Tomás of Torquemada, as its prior, must have influenced in the popular mentality.²⁴ In the context of the evolution of an anti-Semitic policy generalized in the Medieval Christianity during the 14th and 15th centuries, and especially in the Spain of the second half of the 15th century²⁵, that situation, could have been received as positive or with satisfaction by people who would have been well indoctrinated against the alleged threat of heretic and Jewish influence. However, it would be perceived in a very negative way and with fear by another fraction of the population, as the convent and its friars represented a close and real danger. This must have been the case of certain minorities, including the Segovian Jewish community among them.

No testimonies which tell us about these positive or negative emotional impacts between the inhabitants of the city have survived; at least I do not know them. However, among the preserved documentation we can find notices such as the one below, which attest to the donation disposed by the Catholic Kings, upon request of friar Tomás, of possessions belonging to converted Jewish condemned to the stake in February 1489,²⁶ therefore, prior to the final expulsion of the Jewish in 1492 and in an increasingly hostile atmosphere. Can we question the tremendous impact that those events lead by the Dominicans would mean among the population, surrounded by macabre publicity and in such a theatrical way?

Fine Arts of San Fernando de Madrid and another in the Provincial Archive of Segovia. Both have been consulted for the preparation of this table. On the functioning of libraries in the Order of Preachers, see Lippini, 2013: pp. 85-93.

²⁴ For Torquemada's presence at this convent, see Larrañaga Zulueta, 2018: pp. 46-50.

²⁵ For a deep analysis of this historical process, see Monsalvo Antón, 1985.

²⁶ For the study of this social group and the Spanish Inquisition, see García Fernández, 2005.

“Don Fernando e Donna Isabel por la graçia de Dios rey e reyna de Castilla de Leon de Aragon, etc. Por quanto nos somos ynformados que en el Ofiçio de la Sancta Ynquisiçion que se fase e exerçita en la muy noble çibdat de Segouia y su obispado contra los culpantes en el crimen e delito de la heregia e apostasia por los deuotos padres inquisidores de aquella, fueron fallados culpantes en el dicho delito e crimen Garçia Gonçales Gualdras e Iohan de Cuellar, vesinos de la dicha çibdat, en los quales fue executada la justiçia porque fueron relaxados e entregados justa e canonicamente a nuestra justiçia real e ansy quemados publicamente por sus grandes delitos e exçesos e pertinansia d’ellos contra nuestra sancta fe catolica... Por ende, por faser bien limosna e merçed a vos los honestos e deuotos religiosos el monesterio, frayles e conuento de Santa Crus de la dicha çibdat de Segouia, e porque nos lo suplico e pidio por merçet ansy el deuoto padre fray Tomas de Torquemada, prior del dicho monesterio, nuestro confesor e del nuestro consejo e ynquisidor apostolico prinçipal e general contra los culpantes en el dicho delito de la heretica prauedad en todos nuestros reynos e sennorios, e en alguna remuneracion de lo mucho qu’el dicho padre prior ha seruido e sirue a Dios Nuestro Sennor en el dicho Ofiçio de la Santa Ynquisiçion.”²⁷

“Don Fernando and Doña Isabel, King and Queen of Castile – Leon and Aragon, etc, by the Grace of God, according to what we have been informed that in the Office of the Holy Inquisition which is developed and performed in the Most Noble city of Segovia and its Bishopric against the ones culprit in the crime and offence of heresy and apostasy by the devotee inquisitor fathers at that time, Garçia Gonçales Gualdras and Iohan of Cuellar, neighbours of the mentioned city, were found guilty in the referred offence and crime, and the law was executed because they were fairly and in a canonical way turned in to our royal justice and thereby publicly burnt for their mayor crimes and outrages and their pertinence against our Holy Catholic Faith (...) Hence, for almsgiving and for being at your mercy, the honest and religious devoted of the Monastery, friars and convent of Santa Cruz of the mentioned city of Segovia, and as the devoted Father Fray Thomas of Torquemada, prior of the aforementioned Monastery, our confessor and member of our Board and Mayor Apostolic Inquisitor plead and asked for Grace thereby and against those in general found guilty in the said offence of the heretical moderation in all of our kingdoms and estates, and in any compensation of everything that the mentioned Father Prior has served and serves God our Lord in the said Office of the Holy Inquisition.”

Regarding the responsibility of the Segovian Dominicans in the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, I would like to mention the use of images by the General Inquisitor and prior of the convent of Santa Cruz, Torquemada. In a magnificent exhibition held at the Prado Museum between October 2013 and February 2024, entitled “El Espejo Perdido: Judíos y Conversos en la España Medieval” (The Lost Mirror: Jews and Converts in Medieval Spain), an allusion to this matter was in a commentary on the painting that represents the crucified Christ made by Pedro Berruguete between 1493-1498. This painting was located in the Santo Domingo Cave of the convent and the art historian Francisco Egaña wrote an excellent article that I have referenced in the bibliography of this article. As stated in that exhibition at the Prado Museum, the Crucifixion of Christ was not only important for the meditation practices

²⁷ Archivo Histórico Nacional. Clero, Pergaminos, carpeta 1964, n. 12.

of the friars, but also focused the religious debate, as it was a key element in the anti-Jewish mentality, a people who were considered responsible for the death of Christ. On this matter and as is well known, there has existed an important historiographical debate.

The Dominicans of Segovia and their social relationships

I would like to raise one last point, regarding the influences between the Segovian convent and the city concerning personal relationships. Unlike other regular Orders which sought physical and spiritual isolation, mendicants were created for preaching and for a close interaction with the people, both in urban and rural environment, a characteristic which enabled a much higher reciprocal influence.

In order to analyze this last section, we should refer to what was decreed in the Provincial Chapters of Spain, that constitute a source of enormous richness to document the daily life of the friars, which we have mentioned several times in this work and that show as well how life was developed in the Segovian community. Aware of the influence that the presence and activity outside the walls of the convent had within the society which sheltered it, very different aspects were regulated, including the way of equipping themselves or the contact among genders were regulated. Let us see some of the mentioned rules.

In 1299 the friars were ordered to dress with humility, to respect the spirit of the Order and to not scandalize the population. In 1489 it was determined that they could not receive money, clothes, horse mounts, food or other possessions from the seculars. A new regulation was published in 1493 which specifically forbade linen clothes, symbol of richness, rule which was completed in 1500 when it was determined that the habit should be of some kind of woven cloth from the same region and could never be imported.

Concerning personal belongings, it was forbidden in 1299 that friars had money and this became reasserted in 1504. In addition to money, it was also forbidden to possess private belongings such as books, images, clothes, and other movable properties.

I think it is very interesting to emphasize that in 1502 it was ordered that no convent construct new buildings, but instead to maintain the existing ones. Let us remember that a few years earlier, the Convent of Santa Cruz itself had been completely demolished and a new one was built instead, by employing the prestigious architect of the period, Juan Guas. This construction comprises the monumental area of late Gothic style which still can be seen today. This tendency, common to many other Dominican centers in this period (such as Salamanca or Valladolid, to mention two of the closer ones), certainly describes a splendid time for the Dominicans during the transition of the Medieval to the Modern world. Regarding relationships with the female gender, the friars were asked in 1299 not to enter in the convents of nuns without a special license from the Prior.²⁸ In 1500, physical relationships with women were forbidden and they could not request sexual favors, neither verbally nor in

²⁸ Let us remember the scandal that, in the 13th century, affected the Dominican convent of Zamora and its relationship with the friars. See Linehan, 1997.

writing, nor in exchange for money. The introduction of women in the convent was punished by imprisonment and other sanctions established in the Constitutions of the Order.

Referring to the contact with seculars in general, it was determined in 1299 that when Friars visited their houses, they should always remain in public sight. Likewise, it was requested in 1299 that testimonies of secular people must not be admitted in the investigations which should be carried out due to the inappropriate behavior of any friar. In 1434 seculars were forbidden entry into the interior of the Convent to eat or sleep without the authorization of the Prior. Therefore, the presence of a doorman was determined as mandatory. It was established in 1489 that no child under the age of sixteen should enter the convent enclosure. That same year, the friars were not allowed to go to war against Muslims accompanying the nobles, or to attend the Royal Court to plead their own private cases or on behalf of the convent, unless it was expressly authorized. In 1504 it was ordered that no Friar eat or sleep in the city or in its surroundings. This demand had to be repeated during the following years, because eating and sleeping in the city was becoming a frequent practice.²⁹

A study of the abundant epigraphy of the convent of Santa Cruz, which has never been carried out, would add important light on the local social relations of the Segovian Dominicans.

Last considerations

Taking a promenade around the building of the old convent of Santa Cruz la Real will give us the chance of seeing several tombstones of the 16th and 17th centuries, which speak about the close relationship between the aforementioned friar community and the Segovian society, which dates back to earlier times. These are inscriptions alluding to local families whose devotion led them to donate lands or money and to be buried in the area surrounded by the Dominican walls. All these facts are closely related to the social networks built between religious people and the city over centuries, together with their related economic implications. We can likewise see them clearly through the study of the documentation preserved in different archives, especially in the National and Provincial Historical, all of which has a space that I allocated in the book published in 2018 upon the 80th anniversary of the foundation of the convent, quoted in footnote in this present work.

In this occasion I have tried to direct the attention towards another aspect which, from my point of view, is a key to obtain deeper understanding about the lives of the community of friars in Segovia. I shall state it now within the following question: How did the way in which the self-understanding of the Order influenced the local community? Its huge intellectual development, which lead to the creation of a centre of study in each convent and, thus, to control an institution of such an enormous international transcendence as was the Inquisition; its vocation of Christian poverty, always tempted by social advancement and by the attraction of mundane richness; the use of power not only in the political environment but also upon

²⁹ Hernández Martín (OP), 2015-2017: T. I, pp. 38, 52, 87, 89-90, 132, 135, 203-205, 207, 209-210, 233-234, 236, 260, 338-340, 368-369, 389, 416, 425.

consciences and mentalities; all of these are essential elements to answer the question. I think that, beyond any doubt, this influence was immensurable and operated mainly through the means I related in detail over the course of this work.

The matter at hand, however, does not finish there, and as important as that first question is, follows the next one: To what extent did secular local culture influence in the life of the Dominican community? We must think that cultural influences are, generally, reciprocal routes with movement going back and forth, so therefore, the way the Order understood its own idiosyncrasy and its activity was going to be affected by the Segovian society where it should be finally materialized. Hence, there was a constant obligation of rethinking and updating itself but reaffirming its original ideals. Intellectual and cultural developments are consequently, two key elements to understand the historical evolution of both communities, religious and secular, which are in constant interaction.

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