

Bullfighting, the Basque Clergy, and Tridentine Reform

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The post–Council of Trent court records for the diocese of Pamplona (northern Iberia) record numerous and ongoing incidents of clergy accused of running with and fighting bulls. Placed within the context of efforts to implement Tridentine and Catholic reform in the diocese, contemporaneous lay legal actions, and conflicting ideas of appropriate gendered behavior and professionalism of the clergy, these episodes illuminate how parishioners effectively used the court system and crafted accusations to promote local interests and punish unpopular priests.

INTRODUCTION

IN 1612, WHILE adoring the Eucharist during the Feast of Saint Roque, the parishioners of Beasain were nearly trampled when a drove of bulls charged through the front doors of their church, got briefly mixed up in the pews, blocked their view of the Host, and, finally, exited through a side entrance. To make matters worse, allegedly following closely behind were none other than two of their priests, Don Juan de Murua and Don Francisco de Plaza. Armed only with a long pole, Don Juan had “styled himself a cowboy,”¹ and with somewhat mixed results was now attempting to drive the animals toward the plaza for a bullfight. The parishioners were “left scandalized and frightened,”² but not so much that they couldn’t confront Don Juan about their

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¹ “Andubiesse echo baquero”: Archivo Diocesano de Pamplona (hereafter ADP), Tribunal Episcopal, C/473 N.16, n.p. All translations are my own, except where otherwise noted. I have maintained original spelling, though amended some punctuation and verb conjugation for clarity.

² “Quedaron escandalizados y espantados”: ADP, C/473 N.16, n.p.

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near-death experience. “Never in all our years have we known a priest to do such a thing!” the witnesses Juan Ochoagayz and Damián de Urtasabal scolded the priest.³ “Well, in that case, you would have been even more shocked if I had had my way and you had been here yesterday,” Don Juan reportedly replied, “I wanted to run them for the Assumption,⁴ but [my colleague] Don Pedro de Arza told me it would be a mortal sin to do so.”⁵ This excuse did not satisfy anyone, and the parishioners proceeded to have “words” with Don Juan, which eventually escalated to Don Juan offering to “remove [Damián’s] teeth” for him if he wouldn’t shut up.⁶

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, priests like Don Juan de Murua and Don Francisco de Plaza were in good company in the Basque parishes of the diocese of Pamplona.⁷ Among the many priestly crimes the bishops of Pamplona investigated following the reforming Council of Trent (1545–63), charges of bullfighting, by priests reportedly addicted to the practice, were surprisingly frequent. Throughout Navarre and neighboring Gipuzkoa, priests of all ranks allegedly abandoned their liturgical and pastoral duties, abused their parishioners, and contravened their superiors in order to pursue taurine celebrations in their own towns and elsewhere. Of course, they were not alone in these pursuits: bullfighting was wildly popular in early modern Iberia, and parishioners, priests, town councils, and occasionally even episcopal authorities came together from time to time to organize bullfights in honor of the saints or to commemorate other religious or civic festivals.⁸ Yet the church’s relationship

³ “No abia visto ni oydo en su tiempo que se hubiesse echo tal cosa ningun clerigo”: ADP, C/473 N.16, n.p.

⁴ Assumption falls on August 15, the day before the Feast of Saint Roque on August 16. The people of Beasain were particularly devoted to Saint Roque and reported that they traditionally observed the feast day with communal veneration of the Eucharist.

⁵ “Y asi lo respondieron a este testigo que el dia de antes que era dia de Nuestra Señora de la Asuncion los quiso corer sino le hubieran pidido el licenciado don Pedro de Arça beneficiado de la dicha villa y porque les respondió que era pecado mortale correrlos en dia de fiesta”: ADP, C/473 N.16, n.p.

⁶ “Merecía que le quitaran los dientes”: ADP, C/473 N.16, n.p. Both the defendant and the witnesses stated that each side had proceeded to insult one another with “palabras muy descompuestas y descomedidas” (“very rude and excessive words”), “palabras afrentojas” (“disgraceful words”), and “otras muy injuriosas palabras” (“other very injurious words”).

⁷ Throughout this article I will treat the Basque Country and Navarre as a cultural unit, referring to it broadly as the Basque Country. This responds to a growing recognition that much of central and parts of southern Navarre were monolingual Basque speaking or bilingual in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this way, I follow recent scholarship that has pushed for a linguistic-historical approach to studying the region. See Monteano, 173–92.

⁸ Ilundáin and Orduna, 50–56.

to bullfighting grew increasingly tense in the decades following the Council of Trent, and in the case of the diocese of Pamplona, bullfighting became a strategic focus in its program to reform and professionalize the lower clergy.

Strictures on bullfighting put priests, their ecclesiastical superiors, and their parishioners in a difficult position as the criminalization of priestly leisure became synonymous with the criminalization of clerical masculinity. Running with the bulls was the epitomic demonstration of Iberian masculinity, a performance of prowess, communal camaraderie, and commitment to civic ritual; it was also a categorical example of conduct unbecoming the clergy. That is, one of the most accessible mechanisms for demonstrating (and performing) masculinity for the Basque clergy was removed as an option and was condemned in a highly visible and catalytic way.⁹ As this process of pastoral correction unfurled, participating in bullfighting also emerged as special trap for priests: priests were reluctant to abandon traditional masculine behaviors, and bullfights—with the festivities that accompanied them—were an important forum for that behavior.

In this way, cases of priests who ran with the bulls are not just one more example of the many kinds of clerical recreation bishops identified as needing reform. Rather, bull-loving priests (*clérigos aficionados de los toros*) provided Basque parishioners with a mechanism for tapping into channels of Catholic reform and redirecting them for their own purposes by calling attention to unpopular priests in ways that ecclesiastical superiors could not ignore. Basque laity were remarkably well informed about the goals of reform, and frequently took a harder stance promoting certain aspects of reform than did diocesan officials. With reports of priests running with the bulls, stealing prized bulls, or brawling, came a wide variety of other grievances regarding haphazard and ineffective pastoral care. Aware that they were the bishop's eyes on the ground, parishioners combined their accusations in ways to make their agenda resonate with what they judged would most effectively draw the bishop's attention and strategically provoke legal action against their priests.

In other words, Basque parishioners leveled charges that their priests had been involved in bullfights, not as an afterthought, but as part of a calculated legal strategy to achieve reform on their own terms. Accusations of bullfighting pointed to evidence of general wrongdoing, and functioned as a way of informing the life of misbehaving priests. Bullfights were associated with licentiousness and excess in general, and it was expected that someone guilty of bullfighting would also be guilty of other crimes. In crafting this particular legal strategy,

⁹ Here I draw from Judith Butler's classic work on performative gender and gender as an identity that is constructed over time through acts and actions, as well as the rich work on medieval clerical masculinity, especially in its relation to competitive spaces. See Butler; J. A. McNamara; and the many excellent essays in Cullum and Lewis.

parishioners exploited these associations to the fullest, and guaranteed that the bishop would hear their broader complaints.

PRIESTS AND BULLS

In July 2019, over 1.3 million people participated in Pamplona's San Fermín festival, best known for its *encierro*, or running of the bulls. Popularized largely through the writings of Ernest Hemingway, this Navarrese religious festival is today mostly associated with nine days of parades, parties, hard drinking, bullfights, and injuries. Today, as in the sixteenth century, the running of the bulls is a means to an end:¹⁰ logistically, the bulls must be run from their pens outside of town into the central plaza where they are fought (and killed), and the entire process (today and in the past) is fraught with ethical controversy.¹¹ Shaped by a long history of pre-Christian sacrifices, Roman games, Spanish military training, and religious celebrations, the Iberian bullfights have been justified according to different rationales and associated with very different meanings throughout their history.¹² Since the medieval period, and certainly in the

¹⁰ Pamplona (like other early modern towns) fought the bulls in the central plaza, where people's windows and balconies served as bleachers. Today, to accommodate larger crowds (and for related safety and commercial reasons), bulls are fought in a designated bullfighting ring where tickets can be sold. However, the process of reaching the plaza or bullring is similar, if on a much larger scale. People run along beside the bulls, occasionally darting in front of them to show their bravery. Once they reach the main plaza, the bulls are penned to be fought later in the day. In the afternoon, the bulls are fought and killed. Currently, this ritual is assumed by professional bullfighters and involves a carefully choreographed set of acts and entrances. In the early modern period, however, the process was a little more indiscriminate, and at least in the smaller towns, was almost certainly performed by local men rather than professionals.

¹¹ The volume of blogging about the modern ethics of bullfighting is immense, and demonstrations against bullfighting as a sanctioned form of animal cruelty are well publicized. Depending on the current political climate in Spain, bullfighting is periodically banned, as it was in Catalonia in 2011 (though this was later partially overturned in 2016). The rationale in pro- and counter-bullfighting arguments range from debates about nationalism and cultural expression, to a strict understanding of animal ethics, in which animals cannot ethically be used for human entertainment (including acting, hunting, zoos, and sports). Much of the current ethical opposition is shaped by utilitarian ethics, as expressed most famously by philosopher Peter Singer. This is very different from the arguments raised in the sixteenth century, which focused on the harm to the human participants, rather than to the animals. On the Catalan ban, see Lorca; on utilitarian ethics and speciesism, and with a discussion of the inconsistency of utilitarianism in relation to bullfighting, see Singer, 204–07, 230–31.

¹² For instance, in the seventeenth century, Spanish observers fretted over the Moorish antecedents of Iberian bullfighting, and instead tried to associate it with the *Aeneid*. See Fuchs, 99–100.

early modern period, bullfighting was the capstone to festivals in honor of the saints, and often associated with specific vows to local saints.¹³ In the sixteenth century and during the Catholic Reformation, bullfighting came under the scrutiny of reform-minded prelates who sought to cultivate a more professional clergy and a more pious laity. Decrees emanating from the papacy and Spanish episcopate in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries attempted to outlaw the practice, or at least disassociate it from religious festivities.¹⁴

The first substantive post-Tridentine attempt in Spain to curb bullfighting with the express purpose of directing religious fervor into calmer and more focused channels occurred at the twenty-fourth Council of Toledo (1565–66).¹⁵ Though the bishop of Pamplona did not attend this council, the Council of Toledo made far-ranging decisions that deeply shaped the trajectory of reform for all dioceses in Spain.¹⁶ Controversial from the outset, it read portions of the Tridentine decrees pertaining to holding synods and to the necessity of clerical residency and, in its second session, published thirty-one articles relating to reforming Catholicism at the diocesan level and below. Among these, it forbade priests from participating in spectacles and it nullified any vows associated with fighting bulls in honor of the saints. In the third and final session of the council held in March 1566, it went further yet, ordering towns to change the days they ran the bulls so that they could not coincide with religious festivals.¹⁷

The Council of Toledo's stance on bullfighting predicted subsequent reforms. In 1567, directly through the papal bull *De Salute Gregis Dominici*, Pope Pius V (r. 1566–72) banned the practice entirely for all Catholics.¹⁸ The Council of Trent had forbidden dueling in its twenty-fifth session,¹⁹ and, in the 1567 bull, Pius clarified the overlap between duels of honor and bullfighting. The bull stated that “although the abominable use of the duel, introduced by the Devil to gain ruin of souls through the cruel death of bodies, was forbidden by a decree of the Council of Trent, up to now in many cities and places, so as to demonstrate their strength and courage at public and private

¹³ Christian, 162–63.

¹⁴ Pereda, 38–53; Shubert, 147–61.

¹⁵ Mansi, 538–70.

¹⁶ There were a series of councils held in 1565, in which the Spanish Crown was heavily involved. On the conflict this caused between King Philip II and Rome, see Kamen, 61–63.

¹⁷ See Mansi, 550–51, 567.

¹⁸ The full title of the bull is *Super Prohibitione Agitationis Taurorum & Ferarum, & Annulatione Votorum & Iuramentorum, Super Eisdem pro Tempore Interpositorum*, though it is usually referred to as *Salute Gregis*: <http://morris.law.yale.edu/record=b1257967>.

¹⁹ Schroeder, 251 (twenty-fifth session, Decree Concerning Reform, chapter 14, “Dueling is Punished with the Severest Penalties”).

spectacles, many individuals have not ceased engaging with bulls and other wild animals, frequently resulting in the death of men, in mutilation of body-parts and endangering souls.”²⁰ The burden of enforcing this very unpopular prohibition was placed in the hands “of each and every Christian prince,” whom, under “pain of ipso facto excommunication and anathema,” were ordered to “prohibit the carrying out of spectacles of this nature in their provinces, cities, lands, castles and places where spectacles of this kind are realized, where bull-fights and similar sports with other wild animals are permitted.”²¹ Bowing to reality, however, the papal bull also reminded priests and bishops that it was their responsibility to publicize the ban and to alert their superiors if anyone in their jurisdictions was ignoring it.²²

Anticipating various loopholes and exceptions, the bull forbade the use of bullfighting in its traditional martial training context and prohibited “military personnel and other persons from daring to join such spectacles, whether on foot or on horseback, to confront bulls or other animals.”²³ More importantly, it laid out explicit penalties for members of the clergy who not only condoned bullfighting among their flocks, but who also risked their own lives in “these cruel and base spectacles of the Devil and not of man.”²⁴ Any and all “churchmen, both regular and secular, with ecclesiastical benefices or constituted in Holy Orders,” were forbidden from participating in bullfights, under pain of excommunication.²⁵ Anyone who died in a bullfight (whether they were lay or religious) would be denied ecclesiastical burial.²⁶

²⁰ “Sane licet detestabilis Duellorum usus a diabolo introductus, ut cruenta corporum morte animarum etiam pernicie lucretur, ex decreto Concili Tridentini prohibitus fuerit, nihilominus adhuc inplerisque Civitatibus, & aliis locis, quamplurimi ad ostentationem virium suarem & audacie, in publicis privatisque spectaculis, cum Tauris, & aliis feris bestiis congregari no cessant, unde etiam hominum mortes, membrorum mutilationes, animarum que pericula frequenter oriuntur”: Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²¹ “Omnibus & singulis principibus Christianis . . . sub excommunicationis & anathematis poenis ipso facto incurrendis . . . prohibemus & interdicimus ne in suis Provinciis, Civitatibus, Terris, Oppidis & locis, huius modi spectacula, ubi Taurorum aliarumque; ferarum bestiarum agitationes exercentur, fieri permittat”: Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²² Pius V, fol. 449^v.

²³ “Militibus quoque ceterisque allis personis, ne cum Tauris & aliis bestiis in praefatis spectaculis, ipsi tam pedestres, quam equestres congregari audeant, interdicimus”: Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²⁴ “Cruenta turpia quod deamonum & non hominum spectacula abolerit”: Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²⁵ “Clericis quoque, tam Regularibus, quam secularibus beneficia ecclesiastica obtinentibus, vel in Sacris Ordinibus”: Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²⁶ Pius V, fol. 449^f.

Finally, recognizing that it was itself in direct contradiction of many important vows and religious devotions (and echoing the Council of Toledo's earlier decisions), the bull informed devotees that effective immediately it declared, "forever invalid, null and useless all obligations, oaths and vows made by persons, communities or groups of persons to this date, or which may be made in the future, related to bullfights, even though they may have erroneously thought that they were honoring the saints or giving greater splendor to ecclesiastical solemnities and festivities. Such festivities must be celebrated with divine praise, spiritual joy, and pious works and not with similar sports."²⁷ Both the Council of Toledo and the 1567 bull expanded upon the underlying Tridentine issue; that is, they sought to curb embarrassing priestly activities and professionalize the face of the Catholic Church and, in doing so, to strengthen the legitimacy of Catholicism amid the continuing threat of Protestantism. Catholics may have had the best intentions when they thought they were honoring the saints by fighting bulls on feast days but, as the papacy now impressed, these were at best distractions from true pious worship and, at worst, opportunities for full-scale demonic mischief.

Advisers to Pius expected pushback in Spain, and even before the bull was officially published in August 1567 they had reached out to the Spanish nuncio and prelates to prepare them, as well as to try to gauge reactions. Spanish prelates warned that the Spanish church, as well as the Spanish Crown, would do their best to ensure that the bull would never be published in Spain. The pope's own nuncio summarized the prevailing opinion in Spain, pointing out that "not a single saint has called it a sin . . . and if it were a sin, so many saintly pontiffs would not have permitted it [in honor of other saints]."²⁸ At the Spanish court, the Franciscan friar Antonio de Córdoba drew upon his close relationship with King Philip II (r. 1556–98) to head off publication of the bull by promoting his new book, *De Difficilibus Quaestionibus* (The difficult question, 1567), which further expanded upon why bullfighting could not constitute a sin and should not be outlawed. The papacy ordered the nuncio to reprimand the friar and suppress publication of his book.²⁹

²⁷ "Omnesque obligationes iuramenta & vota quibusuis personis, Universitate vel Collegio de huiusmodi Taurorum agitatione, etiam ut ipsi falso arbitrantur, in honorem Sanctorum, feu quarumuis ecclesiasticarum solennitatum, & festivitatum (que divinis laudibus spiritualibus gaudiis, piisque operibus, non huiusmodi ludis celebrari & honorari debent) hactenus factas & facta seu in futurum fienda (que & quas omnino prohibemus) castamus & annullamus": Pius V, fol. 449^f.

²⁸ Cardinal Alejandrino, papal nuncio, cited in Pereda, 43.

²⁹ Pereda, 42–43; Shubert, 148.

Ultimately, bowing to such pressure from the royal court, *De Salute Gregis Dominici* was never formally published in Spain. Nonetheless, the Spanish nuncio insisted in his correspondence with Rome that though he did not believe that the Spanish prelates had published the bull *in formaliter*, he understood “that it was something very publicly known everywhere” and that, moreover, authorities were taking steps to make bullfights “less dangerous.” This was no small matter, he remarked, “considering how seriously everyone takes [bullfighting].”³⁰

Pius’s bull carried the enforcement classification “ad perpetuam rei memoriam,” meaning that it technically was to be active until overridden by a subsequent bull. In 1575 and 1585, under pressure from King Philip II, Pius’s successor Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572–85) did nullify portions of the ban—but not the entire bull—allowing the laity but not clergy to participate. Moreover, when bullfights were held, authorities were to ensure that they did not coincide with feast days and that they were to do their utmost to prevent “disgraces.”³¹ However, this partial ban effectively meant that it was all the harder to enforce the prohibition among the clergy, who now had to steel themselves against the constant temptation to join in the bullfighting their flocks enthusiastically resumed (or continued).

TRIDENTINE REFORM IN THE DIOCESE OF PAMPLONA

Not long after the close of the last session of the Council of Trent, the diocese of Pamplona inaugurated a series of policies intended to introduce and enforce reformed Catholicism throughout the lowest reaches of its parish clergy. These continued the programs that had been in formation since the 1520s, though following the close of the council the diocese approached reform with clearer purpose and greater fervor. While visitation records for the diocese are incomplete until the eighteenth century, frequent references to visitors, so-called surprise visitations, and related mandates indicate that they occurred regularly in the post-Tridentine period. Without these records, the best glimpses into the diocese’s vision and program of reform come through synods and the diocesan court proceedings.³²

Called by Bishop-Cardinal Bernardo Rojas y Sandoval (1546–1618) and celebrated in 1590, the diocese’s first major post-Tridentine synod laid the

³⁰ Cited in Pereda, 44.

³¹ The 1585 repeal came through the bull *Exponi nobis*. Cited in Pereda, 44–45.

³² Reform of the clergy and of popular religious culture during the Counter-Reformation vis-à-vis the clergy have been studied extensively. See, among many others, Nalle; Kamen; Poska, 1998.

groundwork for years of reformed diocesan policies.³³ As Henry Kamen has established for elsewhere in Spain, synods were highly politicized, and internal pressures within the Spanish dioceses, as well as pressure from the Crown, made holding—let alone enforcing—synods difficult.³⁴ The diocese of Pamplona covered areas that were culturally and linguistically very different from the rest of Spain, yet politically—and particularly in terms of central church authority—Navarre was closely tied into and responsive to broader policy.³⁵ Moreover, the combined existence of unique Basque cultural traditions, a strong regional government, a very ambitious diocesan church, and particularly good record preservation, mean that the diocese of Pamplona is not a peripheral example of the implementation of reform in Iberia. Rather, it is exemplary of the direction reform took when implemented by an aggressively legal-minded diocese, working hand in hand with equally enthusiastic secular institutions.³⁶

The 1590 synod was firm in its positions and wide-ranging, reiterating much of what had been addressed at the council and, indeed, going further on certain issues (namely, the imperative of clerical residency). Some of the synod's most vivid (and idiosyncratic) language dealt with clerical misdemeanors and the imagined ways in which certain creative priests might seek to circumvent the decrees. Among many other things, the synod expressly forbade priests from participating in Basque festivities, bearing arms, donning traditional costume, and running with the bulls (or dressing like they might). Drinking with their parishioners—whether at home, in a tavern, or even in a shrine—was also condemned under no uncertain terms. Some priests had taken to cracking jokes and “dressing up to act out profane scenes” in front of their congregations;³⁷ whatever this entailed exactly was forbidden, as were the costumes and instruments that went along with it. Such things, even if they meant well, led “the laymen to esteem [the clergy] very little,” and must be avoided at all costs.³⁸

Moreover, the diocese was exceptionally interested in making sure not only that the synod's content would outline a general diocesan policy of reform, but also that these policies would be transparent and widely publicized and disseminated.

³³ After several abortive starts stemming from intense internal conflict between the diocese and the parish clergy, Pamplona only held her first synod decades after the close of Trent. For the 1590 synod, see Rojas y Sandoval.

³⁴ Kamen, 64.

³⁵ Representatives from the diocese of Pamplona were heavily involved (and present) at multiple sessions of the Council of Trent. See Goñi Gaztambide, 7–8, 25–28, 87–98, 117–29.

³⁶ The irony of the overlap of strong institutions and legal bodies, with a general fear of what lay in the Basque countryside, is usually discussed in the context of the witch-hunts. See, for example, Monter, 66–68.

³⁷ “[Que no] disfracen para hazer representaciones profanas”: Rojas y Sandoval, fol. 65^r.

³⁸ “Los legos los vienen a estimar [los clérigos] muy poco”: Rojas y Sandoval, fol. 65^r.

Thus, shortly after the conclusion of the synod, the entire constitution was printed and bound, and a copy sent to each parish in the diocese. While it is not likely that the average parishioner was actively seeking out these decrees and reading them—let alone caring much about their actual content—the cost and effort of dissemination speaks to the efforts of the diocese in calibrating reform to the peculiarities of rural Basque village life. However, the decrees were there, as was the signal that the diocese cared about what was going on at the parish level and sought a level of uniform respectability among its clergy. Equally important, parishioners in the diocese of Pamplona saw immediate advantage in a number of aspects of the reform program, especially as they pertained to redrawing a balance of power between them and their clergy.³⁹ Increasingly, through a process of positive reinforcement in the Diocesan court, litigious parishioners developed a good sense of the kinds of crimes the diocese was most interested in prosecuting, as well as the kind of language that helped lead to a guilty verdict.

Though certainly initially coached along by ecclesiastical lawyers (indeed, witness queries tended to be quite leading and repetitive), parishioners began adopting the language and attitude of Tridentine reform both in their complaints about their clergy and within their idealized visions of what the relationship between the laity and their clergy ought to resemble. Witnesses and litigants frequently justified their claims or made demands of the diocese based on an understanding of their rights as Christians with vague but strategic explanations based on “what the Holy Council of Trent says” (“cómo dice el Santo Concilio de Trento”). For example, the town council of Estella invoked the articles of Trent to argue that the town and not the local monastery should be in charge of organizing processions, on the grounds that the monks had been violating degrees concerning claustration. The bishop agreed, and ordered the monks to cede control to local authorities, enabling them to stay put within their monastery.⁴⁰ In Arzo, parishioners tried to use the decrees to dislodge a priest they disliked, on the grounds that Trent guaranteed them a priest who could “explain scripture to them . . . in the Basque language.”⁴¹ This was beside the point in Villava, where there were no parishioners to even hear the Mass, regardless of the language: the Villavans were so absolutely repulsed by their “loathsome” pastor Don Juan de Iribas that they fled his

³⁹ For a case study of a parish’s involvement in enforcing Tridentine reform, see Scott, 2016; and for similar findings on clerical misbehavior in Italy, see C. McNamara.

⁴⁰ ADP, C/61 N.20. The decrees concerning claustration and other orders pertaining to regular religious occurred during the twenty-fifth session at the Council of Trent.

⁴¹ “Señarle un evangelio [y] lo declare en bascuence”: ADP, C/466 N.25. With the help of Jesuit examiners, the bishop found their priest capable and sufficient in Basque, and ruled against the parish.

presence whenever he approached the front of the church to say Mass.⁴² The situation was complicated by ancient privileges in which the canons of Roncesvalles claimed the right to name parish priests in this small suburb of Pamplona. In perfect half-compliance with the new Tridentine reforms, the canons refused to relinquish their naming rights to either the bishop or the parish, but apparently attempted to name a native Villavan to fill the vacancy, according to diocesan precedents regarding the preference for appointing local priests first.⁴³ Separated from the close village life of Villava by some forty kilometers up in the Pyrenees, the canons clearly failed to appreciate the complexity of local politics, and accidentally named a son of one of the most quarrelsome families in the town. The town sued, alleging a more substantial portfolio of disqualifications than just being loathsome, including nepotism and simony.⁴⁴

A less serious but more representative example of how parishioners might try to coat their complaints with a Tridentine veneer occurred in Usurbil in 1591. In this year, the small village's priest, Don Juan Gómez Corta, failed to lead the members of his flock into better behavior via patient instruction, instead choosing to shame them into submission by embarrassing them in front of the rest of the congregation. The parishioners of Usurbil appear to have long harbored resentment against their priest in this matter, but the case that finally drew the diocese's attention involved a particularly ugly altercation in which Don Juan physically attacked a number of teenagers during Mass. Usurbil practiced a local tradition in which the youths came to Mass on Saint John the Baptist's Day in disguise "with their faces covered or otherwise [painted] in black."⁴⁵ Don Juan ostensibly had been trying to suppress this tradition, to no effect. Thus, when the youths came to Mass in their costumes and tried to approach

⁴² Don Juan de Iribas is roundly described as "odioso" throughout the trial: ADP, C/2 N.6.

⁴³ Later litigation over appointments sometimes cited "*Constituciones synodales*, chapter 3" as justification for appointing a local candidate first over a nonnative candidate, yet this chapter only dictates that priests reside in their villages and establish houses there. Nonetheless, in later litigated appointments, local priests were consistently chosen over outsiders. See the earlier volumes of Sales.

⁴⁴ This trial can barely be called post-Tridentine, beginning as it did in 1562 and falling among some of the very first trials for the bishop to hear as the diocese of Pamplona expanded its court and record keeping as the last sessions of the Council of Trent were underway. This trial, along with the others in the first few bundles (*legajos*), show parishioners and their lawyers working to get a feel for the kinds of incidents that merited diocesan involvement. Whether the alleged of nepotism and simony actually occurred, the parishioners (and their lawyers) launched an enthusiastic attempt to get the bishop to side with them over the canons. There was no verdict. See ADP, C/2 N.6.

⁴⁵ "Unos con reboço por el rostro otros sindos [pintados] de negro y disfrazados": ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

the altar to receive communion, Don Juan “fell to pieces,”⁴⁶ responded by publicly slandering them as “traitors, thieves, and the sons of traitorous thieves,”⁴⁷ and then proceeded to snatch one of their wooden swords and beat them around the church. He was slapped with a rapid and coherent group lawsuit brought by the mayor, city council, jurors, citizens of Usurbil, and the diocesan *fiscal* (the bishop’s prosecuting attorney), who claimed that contrary to Don Juan’s allegations, the Usurbilians were “sons of loyal people, none of whom had been noted as traitors.”⁴⁸ Moreover, they took advantage of the situation and used it as a tool to accuse their clearly unpopular priest on terms his superiors could not ignore: Don Juan, they alleged, had “sinned a great deal . . . [by] having illicit interactions and conversations with a local woman.”⁴⁹ Witnesses eagerly contributed statements about the public nature of the relationship, the scandal it was generating, and (by extension) the harm it was causing the spiritual wellbeing of the parish. Don Juan was admonished to “stay away from and not talk to the said [woman],”⁵⁰ but more importantly, “to take his [vocation more seriously] and not to be quarrelsome nor rude and not to insult anyone as his priestly vestments require.”⁵¹

Some strategies to evoke Tridentine sympathy regarding abusive pastoral care were more piecemeal: for instance, a lawsuit initiated by several beneficed clergy against one of their colleagues alleging general clerical misconduct offered parishioners of Deba an opportunity to introduce a number of unrelated complaints. On Christmas Day 1631, Don Pedro de Lizaola yelled at the sacristan for not having some ornamentation properly prepared. Another priest, named Don Francisco de Andonega, intervened, telling Don Pedro to “quiet down, and not to talk so loudly in the church.”⁵² Don Pedro responded by telling him “he didn’t need to quiet down, and in this way [the sacristan] would actually hear him.”⁵³ The altercation escalated quickly, with all three attacking each other and several parishioners joining in, and finally resulted with Don Francisco biting Don Pedro; Don Pedro then bled all over the church, which was a sacrilege and therefore became the immediate legal problem.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ “Se descompuso”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁴⁷ “Los llamo a todos de ladrones, traidores, e hijos de ladrones traidores”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁴⁸ “Siendo como son hijos [de] personas nobles y principales y muy leales sin que ninguno dellos aya sido notado de traidor”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁴⁹ “A deliquido muy gravemente . . . [porque] tiene tratos ilicitos y conversaciones desonestas con una mujer de la dicha tierra”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁵⁰ “Se aparte de tratar y comunicar con la dicha Mari Perez”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁵¹ “Tome mucho su estado y no de ocasion [ni] descompostura y ni trate mal de palabra a persona alguna principalmente estado revestido”: ADP, C/87 N.18, n.p.

⁵² “Calla, y no abla tan alto en la iglesia”: ADP, C/725 N.28, fol. 7^v.

⁵³ “Le respondio el que no tenia a que callar y que fuera mejor ufesa acudido a Martines”: ADP, C/725 N.28, fol. 7^v.

⁵⁴ ADP, C/725 N.28, fol. 8^r.

As the bishop's *fiscal* went about collecting evidence, he admitted a number of other complaints about Don Pedro, including claims that he had fathered several children with a local woman and mocked the secrecy of confession. Specifically, a man named Domingo de Yturbite reported that the previous July he had been so gravely ill that he had called for Don Pedro so he could administer the last rites. Don Pedro did so, but then Domingo recovered, only to discover that Don Pedro had been telling everyone about his confession: "[Don Pedro] got down on his knees and pretended to beat his chest and acted the buffoon and made fun of the things that [Domingo] had wanted to confess."⁵⁵ Domingo was deeply ashamed, and stated repeatedly that he "said the things that the sick tend to say," and according to what he thought he was supposed to do when dying.⁵⁶ That the accusations were first lodged by their priests shielded the parishioners from the trouble (and potential costs) of beginning their own lawsuit. Equally important was their apparent ambivalence about pursuing their complaints quickly; the crimes the parishioners alleged (the concubinage and mockery) occurred months and years earlier, while those introduced by the other priests (the tumult and sacrilege) occurred only a week before. Moreover, the witness statements were clearly split: the parishioners provided the most substantial testimony about only the two former crimes and the clergy largely refrained from commenting on the sexual escapades of their colleague.⁵⁷

In this way, complaints gradually became more complex.⁵⁸ In both first and second stage testimony, parishioners articulated a mix of violations of specific decrees, as well as more general dissatisfaction with how priests interacted with their parishioners, how they failed to fashion themselves as members apart, and, particularly, the degree to which they neglected to successfully remember "their priestly offices and, correspondent to this, treat others with humility and peace."⁵⁹ Pamplonese bishops were generally sympathetic to a wide range of complaints from parishioners, but they were also overworked: compared to neighboring dioceses, the diocese of

⁵⁵ "Y poniendose de rodillos enpeço a darse de golpes en los pechos diciendo y asiendo bofu y burlandose de las raçones que este testigo dixo": ADP, C/725 N.28, fol. 14^r.

⁵⁶ "Semejantes transes suelen azer los enfermos": ADP, C/725 N.28, fol. 14^r.

⁵⁷ ADP, C/725 N.28, fols. 6^r–14^r.

⁵⁸ The Basques' use of the court systems should be put into context with the contemporaneous expansion of late medieval and early modern courts and access to legal justice and within what has been termed as the "juridical revolution." See Kagan, 137–50; Smail, 29–88.

⁵⁹ These admonitions reappear repeatedly in the sentencing stages of the diocese's criminal proceedings. For example, in 1589, Don Martín de Ollobarren allegedly stabbed one of his parishioners in Legaria, and generally provided everyone with a bad example as he roamed around at night and played ball. Yet despite this, his punishment primarily focused on encouraging him to live more peacefully and to refrain from arguing with his parishioners; if he did not, he would face banishment. For the body-text quotation, see ADP, C/124 N.8, n.p.: "Acordandose que es sacerdote corresponda con sus obras a su officio siendo muy humilte y pacifico con todos."

Pamplona devoted much more of its attention to civil and criminal litigation. In the 1630s, for comparison, the neighboring diocese of Zaragoza heard on average two to three criminal cases each year, but handled around 250 matters pertaining to vicars and benefices every year; whereas in 1635, the diocese of Pamplona's Ecclesiastical Tribunal (including cases litigated by the bishop's prosecutor and pastorate) heard approximately 67 cases pertaining to benefices and licenses to say Mass and 131 other sorts of cases including criminal cases, matrimonial and cohabitation matters, testamentary quarrels, and disputes over payments.⁶⁰ As they fought for room on this busy docket, parishioners endeavored to present concrete examples of how priests were seriously embarrassing themselves or were physically harming them; without such evidence, cases were often shuffled aside and left pending for years to come.

Still, there was no shortage of these more exceptional transgressions, probably to both the horror and amusement of the bishop's legal team charged with investigating them. In the years following the 1590 synod, the diocese heard frequent cases of priests engaging in questionable behavior with their parishioners or failing to withdraw fully from the secular life. To cite a few examples, in Tafalla in 1594, Don Esteban Romeo and various other clergy were tried for their obsession with playing ball in "breeches and jerkins" and missing Mass to do so.⁶¹ Don Juan de Labayen beat up one of his parishioners in Biurrun in 1601 after being accused of rigging a cockfight; during the proceedings other parishioners came forward with similar stories of the harm they had suffered in (and by) Don Juan's hands.⁶² At the same time, Don Joan de Ochoa of Artabia scandalized his parishioners by being "restless and revolting" and falling down drunkenly three times on the way to say Mass.⁶³

The diocese's investigations were thorough, and when the evidence was substantive, the penalties swift and consistent with their goals to foster professionalism. Yet ultimately, their success rested in cooperation and coordination with the parishioners and people that were most familiar with (and most often a victim of) their priests' misbehavior. Keeping priests in their parishes—and making sure they acted like priests while they were there—quickly became the diocese's primary Tridentine project. Overlapping with the 1590 synod and following through the next century, the diocese handled hundreds of cases involving absent, violent, drunken, or simply fun-loving clergy. Through these cases,

⁶⁰ Archivo Histórico Diocesano de Zaragoza, esp. fols. 118^v (part 2)—2^r (part 3); Falcón and Motis; Sales, vols. 7, 9, 8, and 12.

⁶¹ "En calzas y jubon": ADP, C/144 N.3, n.p.

⁶² ADP, C/109 N.10.

⁶³ "Inquietoso y revoltoso": ADP, C/228 N.2, esp. fol. 7^r.

the program of reform radiated outward, enlisting the help of many other individuals who did not initially figure into the official program of reform.

GENDER AND THE RULES OF THE GAME

Priestly failings tended to concentrate around communal festivities, falling broadly within patterns of behavior that Scott Taylor calls “aggressive male sociability.”⁶⁴ Though parishioners reported a variety of pastoral scandals and general lapses in judgment year round, major feast days saw more than their fair share. Locally chosen priests were increasingly preferred following the 1590 synod, which meant better chances for continuous and attentive clerical residency. On the other hand, these policies also meant that priests were well acculturated into local traditions, and that they had a deep friend group with which to celebrate them.

Younger priests in their twenties, chaplains, and clerical students were overwhelmingly represented among the clergy charged with being too fanatical about playing ball or roaming around the streets at night drinking and singing with lay friends.⁶⁵ Similarly, it was these younger—and presumably less established—clerics who seem to have had more trouble affording and maintaining a proper clerical wardrobe.⁶⁶ They were also particularly prone to shedding or modifying their essential vestments in order to facilitate related activities such as dancing, sports, and, of course, bullfighting. For example, Don Luís de Echave got drunk at a running of the bulls in the beach town of Zarautz and allegedly “ran about inside the caves, only to come out of them very indecently, and provide [everyone] with the worst possible example.”⁶⁷ Don Miguel de Zabalegui, beneficed priest from Artaxoa, was prosecuted for indecency resulting from having rolled his alb up too far while playing ball.⁶⁸ Don Juan de Torres of Allo was reprimanded for marching in a procession wearing white

⁶⁴ The correlation between leisure and violence is well documented elsewhere in Iberia as well. In Castile, Taylor notes that violence particularly concentrated around feast days, and particularly those associated with bullfights: Taylor, 140–50. For a related discussion about “assert[ing] . . . masculinity in homosocial . . . sites,” see Dialetti, 2018, 337.

⁶⁵ A relevant comparison is cited by Nalle, 100, who finds that younger priests in Cuenca, especially those “ordained after Trent,” “were faulted more than their older counterparts for breaking their vows of celibacy and for gambling,” and that as many of one-fifth of the younger post-Tridentine clerics would at some point be cited for immoral conduct. On using courts to curtail disruptive masculinity, see Behrend-Martínez.

⁶⁶ For helpful definitions and drawings of vestments, see Miller, 247–52.

⁶⁷ “Corriendo por todas las cavernas y viniendo en ella con indecencia y dando mal exemplo a los seglares”: ADP, C/1021 N.16; cited repeatedly in witness testimony.

⁶⁸ ADP, C/547 N.9.

stockings and a layman's hat, the sight of which was apparently so ridiculous that it caused his parishioners to dissolve into fits of giggles.⁶⁹ Don Lázaro Ruiz de Celedón of Oteiza remembered to wear proper clerical attire, but did so while fighting a bull in Estella in 1634. Unfortunately, his robes may have slowed him down, and he was caught by a horn while trying to stab the bull. Dragged behind the bull, his alb was torn and ruined. Astonishingly, Don Lázaro was unhurt, and the subsequent trial focused more on the shame he had brought himself in exposing himself and having spoiled his priestly vestments.⁷⁰ In a world in which outward signs were key to indicating interior perfection and composure, enforcing reputable clerical garb was an understandably pressing issue for diocesan authorities intent on cultivating a professional lower clergy.

Moreover, all these failings (involving bulls or otherwise) were exacerbated by demographic and communal pressures in the Basque Country that at once accentuated and limited displays of masculinity; when parishioners reported (or concealed) these behaviors, they were implicitly expressing their own ideas about clerical masculinity. Basque gender dynamics have traditionally been stereotyped as matricentric, with households and extended families controlled by strong-willed and dominant matriarchs.⁷¹ While more serious historiography and anthropology rejects these tropes, these depictions do help remind historians to consider seriously some of the consequences of deep-rooted and complex familial strategies of dictating which children would inherit and reproduce the family legacy. These are particularly important when considered alongside historic Basque patterns of New World emigration, deep-sea fishing and whaling, and migratory animal husbandry that took many men out of the community and away for years at a time (or for life).⁷² Moreover, by the early seventeenth century, more and more Basque estates became entailed, with single designated sons or daughters inheriting the entire household and farmstead.⁷³ Unmarried siblings usually were allowed to remain at home and were provided for, but not in a capacity that would allow them to set up their own households. Celibate brothers and sons in this position were tagged for nonreproductive roles and, with few other options, many chose to emigrate or seek employment away from their villages.⁷⁴ Others entered the clergy with or without a preexisting call to the vocation.

⁶⁹ ADP, C/557 N.16.

⁷⁰ ADP, C/344 N.10.

⁷¹ On the myth of the Basque matriarchal thesis, see del Valle, 44–54; Hornilla; Ortiz and Mayr.

⁷² The classic works on this topic are Pescador; Aramburu; Douglass and Bilbao; Azcona.

⁷³ Usunáriz, 208.

⁷⁴ Though I have seen few direct documentary references to masculinity or masculine worth vis-à-vis the ability to financially provide for a family or to hold credit, decisions to emigrate for work likely speak to this. For work on credit and masculinity in early modern England, see Shepard, 2000.

In some key ways, the positions available for unmarried women allowed them to express themselves through more clearly established gender codes than did the concurrent positions available for unmarried men. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Basque Country, unmarried women could become *seroras*, or devout laywomen licensed by the diocese to care for local churches and shrines.⁷⁵ The *seroría* was prestigious, required a dowry, carried a stipend, and even offered a version of ecclesiastical immunity for women who chose this path. It was certainly not a dumping ground for excess women, but it did help alleviate a gender imbalance by providing a respectable place outside marriage and monasticism for young and older women alike. Though *seroras* could not be married at the time of appointment and were expected to remain chaste, the vocation was decidedly feminine and domestic, consisting largely of cleaning the church and maintaining vestments and liturgical items. The *seroría* encouraged female autonomy and celebrated the ways in which women were uniquely qualified to contribute to local religious life.

By contrast, corollary positions for celibate Basque males suppressed traditional demonstrations of masculinity, pressing them to express their masculinity in more subversive ways.⁷⁶ This was also true for the men who entered the clergy as parish priests or in minor orders. Apart from heading families and having sexual relationships, Basque males expressed masculinity through dress, hairstyle, participation in public festivals, hunting, playing ball, carrying weapons, and running with the bulls—all activities forbidden to the clergy and increasingly enforced following the 1590 synod.⁷⁷ Many Basque clergy chafed under these restrictions and seem to have had little problem allowing themselves exceptions to the rule, particularly regarding leisure activities and the lure of weapons. Surrounded by friends who had inherited households and living in the shadow of relatives who had emigrated to the New World and were now sending back remittances from their conquests in Peru, Mexico, the Philippines, and elsewhere, many young priests appear restless and bored.⁷⁸ Hunting, sports, and carrying swords and guns allowed the clergy brief

⁷⁵ Scott, 2020.

⁷⁶ For a comparison with early modern England on how young men asserted manhood by subverting official rites of violence, and how this might be better tolerated with younger men and those entering holy orders, see Shepard, 2003, 93–126.

⁷⁷ This is not unique to the Basque provinces, and it was an ongoing problem throughout the Middle Ages.

⁷⁸ For a comparison with Galicia, where masculine identity was tied to the ability to emigrate, see Poska, 2008.

moments to reclaim and express masculine identity. Less socially acceptable (but nonetheless common in the Pamplona records) were related aggressive and boisterous behaviors, such as carousing, heavy drinking, fighting, and, of course, rape and other sexual crimes.⁷⁹ The risks of participating in these activities and being caught likely added to the appeal. Being a priest could never truly be an ungendered role, as much as diocesan authorities and parishioners jointly might try to restrict modes of performing priestly gender identities.⁸⁰

The relationship between these masculine activities and honor is harder to track. As Androniki Dialeti has observed, male honor revolved around a “cultural construction of women’s defenders and enemies.” Defense and service to women was an essential component of elite honor and, in the early modern period, this definition was deftly appropriated by wider swaths of the male population who sought to confirm their own masculinity—priests were no exception.⁸¹ By definition, priests had honor, but not in the sense that other men did: priests could certainly lose honor but they were not supposed to defend it publicly, in the way other males were.⁸² They could embarrass themselves, and they certainly could involve themselves in dishonorable behavior, but they were expected to refrain from violent demonstrations to regain honor. Nonetheless, priests sometimes sought to protect their masculine honor by extension, particularly via honor disputes involving family members. For example, in 1628, the priest Don Miguel Marín was exiled from Mendigorria for attacking his former friend, Francisco Pérez. Pérez—who was married—had taken advantage of his friendship with Don Miguel to seduce and later “abduct” Don Miguel’s sister, Catalina, and stash her at the home of his cousin.⁸³

⁷⁹ I draw here upon Dialeti’s claim that one needs to look at the construction of male power as not just deriving from male-female relationships but also among male-male relationships: Dialeti, 2018. See also, Shepard, 2005, 284.

⁸⁰ Particularly for the medieval period, a variety of works grapple with the problem of whether priests (and the laity) viewed priests as ungendered, and the effect of this on priests’ own ideas of gender. Neal, 89–95, articulates this problem well, particularly through a discussion of how sexuality did not necessarily equate with masculinity. Similarly, for a later period, the Jesuits managed to cultivate a distinctive charismatic masculinity that was powerful enough to draw young men into a new exemplary and celibate form of manhood. See Strasser.

⁸¹ Dialeti, 2011, 4–5 (quotation on 4).

⁸² Disputes over honor allowed early modern Spaniards to debate truth (and attempt to establish their own preferred version of such). On how these disputes allowed Spaniards to “erase the reverse of honor: shame,” see Taylor, 155, and on men specifically, 100–56. On sex and the law in the early modern Basque Country, see Barahona.

⁸³ The *fiscal* uses the word *rapto*, which is laden with ambiguity. Literally and legally this refers to abduction, but practically speaking it often meant the woman had fled with a lover voluntarily, though without the permission of her family members. ADP, C/699 N.3, fol. 45^r.

Catalina refused to come home, citing abuse on the part of her brother and mother. About a week later, after performing a baptism and joining the procession that followed, Don Miguel spotted Pérez in the crowd. Removing a heavy wooden stick he had been carrying beneath his cassock, Don Miguel beat Pérez, while “shouting that each blow ‘was what honor felt like.’”⁸⁴ Pérez drew his sword on Don Miguel, and both were dragged off to jail by the constable and his men.⁸⁵ Existing in the liminal and tightly controlled world of the celibate while also living among friends and family, Don Miguel had tried to assert his masculine honor within his community, at least insofar as to control his sister’s sexuality. Don Miguel’s aggression landed him in the diocesan court, which ultimately exiled him into the secular world, meaning that his attempt to occupy both gendered and ungendered roles as a priest ultimately failed.

As Pamplona’s post-Tridentine diocesan court records attest, one of the diocese’s biggest unresolved problems was restraining and taming an active (and athletic) parish clergy during these years. Michelle Armstrong-Partida has examined clerical concubinage in late medieval Iberia as an expression of clerical masculinity, in which priests’ communities tacitly accepted or even encouraged domestic partnerships between their clergy and local women because they saw such behavior as befitting adult males.⁸⁶ In the early modern Basque Country, the diocese heard a case alleging concubinage twice a year or so; lost visitation records may have uncovered and suppressed far more incidents.⁸⁷ Whereas concubinage may have therefore been underreported by ambivalent parishioners or overlooked by overworked visitors, it was most likely to appear alongside collected other charges or when it finally reached a point where it became disruptive.

Specifically, allegations of bullfighting helped draw the bishop’s attention to standard and vague complaints about concubinage, even if neither charge had much substance. For instance, the diocese intervened in Peralta in 1617 after villagers complained that Don Matteo de Rabanera was causing more scandal than they could handle. All charges (even after they had been drawn up by the bishop’s *fiscal*) were rather vague, and witnesses provided little information about the nature of their complaints, other than that they were generally dissatisfied with Don Matteo’s behavior and service. The two main charges presented alleged that Don Matteo “had been having dishonest relations with a single

⁸⁴ “Diciendo aboçes ‘esta es la fuerça de la honor’”: ADP, C/699 N.3, fol. 1^r.

⁸⁵ ADP, C/699 N.3, fols. 1^r–7^r, 44–45^v.

⁸⁶ Similar patterns have been studied in medieval Italy and Catalonia, and celibacy and masculine identity has likewise been studied in the medieval English world. See Armstrong-Partida; Cossar; Thibodeaux.

⁸⁷ See Sales, esp. vols. 9, 11, and 12.

woman, entering and exiting her house, night and day, and causing much scandal.”⁸⁸ Additionally, and more substantively, parishioners reported that Don Matteo “contravening the synodal constitution, had been fighting bulls publicly, even though priests are not supposed to do such things, and he has also committed other crimes.”⁸⁹ Only one witness, named Baltasar de Zalduendo, actually testified to the effect that Don Matteo had been present at any bullfights and, even so, Don Matteo appeared to have kept “behind the barriers,”⁹⁰ even though the witness did spot him “poking at the bulls with a long [lance] that he was accustomed to carrying.”⁹¹ None of the other witnesses had anything to say about bullfighting; they instead limited their testimony to vague complaints about the scandal Don Matteo was causing with his girlfriend. Without more direct evidence, the bishop gave Don Matteo a standard admonition and relatively minor fine of three ducats, entreating him “to live with more honesty, and not to talk, interact, or communicate with the woman with whom he is said to have united himself.”⁹² Though the bullfighting charges were unproven and apparently added as part of a matter of form, the bishop also forbid him from “going to bullfights, because of the inconvenient things that might occur during such events.”⁹³

Aside from the few cases of concubinage, many of the diocese’s investigations into clerical misbehavior centered around inappropriate demonstrations of masculine prowess in sports, weaponry, and displays of honor, all of which appeared in various ways within the related charges of bullfighting. For instance, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, Navarre and Gipuzkoa saw heavy traffic of soldiers passing through their territory on the way to wars with France and the Netherlands; many of these regiments billeted in or nearby Basque villages. Contact with these soldiers seems to have awakened a desire in some priests to demonstrate their prowess with weaponry, and the diocese of Pamplona handled a number of bizarre trials in which priests picked fights with soldiers stationed in their communities. In Los Arcos in 1628, Don Martín de Torres was investigated for shunning the “dignity he was supposed to have as a priest and

⁸⁸ “Deonestamente trata con una muger soltera de dicho lugar y entra y sale en su cassa de noche y de dia caussando mucho escandalo”: ADP, C/676 N.28, fol. 1^r.

⁸⁹ “Que conbeniendo a la constitucion sinodal en las penas della a corrido toros publicamente siendo proibido a sacerdotes y acometido otros delictos”: ADP, C/676 N.28, fol. 1^r.

⁹⁰ “En las varreras”: ADP, C/676 N.28, n.p. in witness testimony.

⁹¹ “Andava con una [lanza] larga como dicho tiene y picando los toros”: ADP, C/676 N.28, n.p. in witness testimony.

⁹² “De aqui adelante viva con mucha onestidad y no abla, trata, ni comunique con la muger con quien es acusado de hazer de untejado”: ADP, C/676 N.28, n.p.

⁹³ “Por ningun cavo se sale en corridas de toros pues ademas de los ynconvinientes que pueden suceder da oassiona de devida”: ADP, C/676 N.28, n.p.

for being in the habit of wandering the streets at night in indecent clothing and armed with pistols and other dangerous weapons.⁹⁴ Don Martín wore his hair “long, like that of a soldier”⁹⁵ and was also famously “daring and volatile,”⁹⁶ and frequently started “arguments with many principal people” of the area.⁹⁷ More importantly, on one of these nocturnal rounds, he allegedly started a fight with the “cavalry officer, San Martín,” whom he stabbed in the face before onlookers intervened.⁹⁸ Similarly, the following year in Hernani, Don Juan de Alzega was investigated for violence and misconduct that largely resulted from an uncontrolled anger problem. He was “arrogant, volatile, and rowdy,”⁹⁹ and for “no reason he started a fight with a poor beggar named Petrierba who had arrived to town to plead for alms,” resulting in the man’s death four days later.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, “lacking in the modesty, composure, patience, and docility required of a priest, and as if he were instead a ruffian . . . he went out in public with a sword and sparred with a soldier who was passing through town with his regiment.”¹⁰¹ Don Juan was stripped of his benefice and exiled from the diocese.¹⁰²

These themes of gender, boredom, competition, and the close-knit nature of early modern Basque communities that characterize many of the trials involving clerical misbehavior are central to explaining the high frequency of investigations regarding priests and bullfights. This was certainly the case in 1600 in Estella, when Don Remiro de Unzue was charged with chasing a bull throughout the streets with a bull rod during the Saint John the Baptist festival.¹⁰³ As it

⁹⁴ “En menosprecio de la dignidad sacerdotal tiene descotumbre andar de noche con abito yndiziente y armas ofensibas llebando pistolas y otras armas ynpropias”: ADP, C/699 N.8, fol. 3^r.

⁹⁵ “Llebando como si fuera soldado el cuello muy largo”: ADP, C/699 N.8, fol. 3^r.

⁹⁶ “Arrojado y colerico”: ADP, C/699 N.8, fol. 3^r.

⁹⁷ “Pendientes con muchas personas principales”: ADP, C/699 N.8, fol. 3^r.

⁹⁸ “El alférez San Martín.” Don Martín spontaneously and voluntarily confessed to these crimes, a rarity in the diocesan trial records. He was sentenced to a small fine and a brief confinement in his parish church. ADP, C/699 N.8, esp. fols. 3^{r-v}, 63^{r-v} (quotation on 3^r).

⁹⁹ “Sobervivio, colerico y alborotado”: ADP, C/702 N.9, fol. 6^r.

¹⁰⁰ “Aviendo llegado a la dicha villa a pedir limosna un pobre de solemnidad llamado Petrierda sin ocasion bastante que para ello le diesse trabo pendenza con el”: ADP, C/702 N.9, fol. 6^r.

¹⁰¹ “Que como esta dicho desdeciendo a la modestia compostura paciencia y mansedumbre que el estado sacerdotal que tiene le obliga como si fuera un desuellacaras balentin salio . . . a la calle publica de la dicha villa con espada y rodela contra un soldado de las compañías que pasaron a la villa del pasaje”: ADP, C/702 N.9, fol. 6^r.

¹⁰² ADP, C/702 N.9, fol. 120^{r-v}.

¹⁰³ ADP, C/284 N.27.

turned out, Don Remiro and Don Bartolome de Muez had been eating dinner in their house with the door open, probably to watch the bulls run by, when the bulls ran into their house. The priests tried to fight the bulls off with their dinner utensils, which only served to anger the bulls further. The bulls then chased the two priests out of their house and around the plaza. Later, possibly because he was embarrassed by the first incident, or simply to get revenge on the bulls that had ruined his nice Saint John's Day dinner, Don Remiro interrupted Mass to again chase one of the bulls around town—though this time he was better armed with a bull rod instead of a napkin. Called later in front of the bishop's court and charged with generally providing a poor example for everyone, the two priests tried to excuse themselves on the grounds that they had left their door open in order to try to contravene and impede the running of the bulls. The bishop ordered them to, from there on out, "live more honestly and in a more withdrawn manner, as they are required to do as priests."¹⁰⁴ To assist them with this, they were slapped with penances, a fine, and exile for two years, "which will be doubled in the episcopal tower [if they disobey]."¹⁰⁵

Similarly, in 1639, the town of Zirauki decided to cancel their yearly bullfight due to the ongoing wars with France (which meant that there were not enough men around to safely corral the bulls).¹⁰⁶ The priest Don Martín de Liriarte got so upset that he would have to miss the bullfights that he decided to take matters into his own hands. Insisting that his parishioners were simply being cowards, he proceeded to pull down the bell-tower rope and attempted to lasso one of the town's communal stud bulls, and thus acquire it for a fight.¹⁰⁷ When his parishioner Joan Portal made fun of him and told him he was being an idiot, Don Martín responded by punching him in the face and telling him "to go with God."¹⁰⁸ Several other parishioners had to get involved and were only finally able to subdue Don Martín by knocking him out. Don Martín was banned from saying Mass or administering any of the sacraments until he requested and received absolution for his crimes. The sentence provided a cooling-off period for everyone involved, and it particularly emphasized that Don Martín needed to practice some personal introspection regarding his behavior around his parishioners.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ "De aquí adelante biva onesta y recogidamente pues sabe se obliga a ello el abido sacerdotal": ADP, C/284 N.27, fol. 31^r.

¹⁰⁵ "Después de como la a cumplido sopena cumplir la doblada en la torre episcopal": ADP, C/284 N.27, fol. 31^v.

¹⁰⁶ ADP, C/367 N.31.

¹⁰⁷ ADP, C/367 N.31, fol. 1^r.

¹⁰⁸ "Fuesse con dios": ADP, C/367 N.31, fol. 4^r.

¹⁰⁹ ADP, C/367 N.31.

TWO SIDES TO EVERY BULLFIGHT

Simple fistfights might not have attracted much immediate diocesan interest, especially as the bishop was faced with equal or graver crimes by clergy all over the diocese. However, in associating the abuse with more general disorderliness surrounding bullfighting—not to mention directly contravening synodal decrees as well as secular ordinances—parishioners were able to attract the bishop's attention and convince him to get involved quickly. The documentary records suggest that most parishioners did not really mind when their clergy sometimes drank, danced, ran with the bulls, and occasionally undressed themselves during these activities. However, parishioners did have a problem when their priests prevented them from accessing the sacraments, robbed them, put them in physical or spiritual danger, or assaulted them physically or sexually.

For instance, when Don Joan de Ozcariz came to Pamplona in 1631 to see the bulls, the town watch turned him over to the bishop after they caught him roaming the streets at night, armed with an illegal pistol.¹¹⁰ And in 1624, María Martín de Beasoayn complained to the bishop that the priest Don Martín de Berrio had rented a balcony from her to watch the bullfight, only to use this vantage to rob her house of most of its furniture.¹¹¹ In a much more disturbing incident, in 1639 in Alsasua, the fourteen-year-old María de Zuffiaure reported that she had been violently raped during the Saint Peter's Day bull celebrations by the twenty-eight-year-old chaplain and seminary student Martín de Galarza. Galarza had made a straw-filled doll (*dominguín*) for the festivities and had hung it outside his window. When Zuffiaure and her friends went to see the figure, Galarza separated her from her friends and dragged her into his house, where "he threw her to the floor with much force and violence, knew her carnally, and robbed her of her flower and virginity."¹¹² Zuffiaure testified that she lost her voice out of fright, and though she had tried to fight back by scratching Galarza's face, Galarza, twice her age, was too big and strong.¹¹³

In all these cases, the diocese acted swiftly, initiating charges, collecting witness statements, and making rulings (Galarza was eventually cleared of charges

¹¹⁰ ADP, C/718 N.25.

¹¹¹ Including "one comforter, four pillows, two mattresses, one rough colored blanket, one mattress cover, one feather bolster, one leather chair, one new candelabra, one chair upholstered in wool, one table, two Flemish table cloths, one pair of napkins, one pair of hand towels . . . four new bed sheets, one medium sized earthenware jar, four shirts." It is unclear how Don Martín managed to carry all this furniture out of the house without notice. ADP, C/682 N.3, fol. 2^f.

¹¹² "La derribo en el suelo y con mucha fuerça y biolencia la conocio carnalmente pribando la de su flor y birginidad": ADP, C/562 N.6, fol. 11^v.

¹¹³ ADP, C/562 N.6, fol. 11^{r-v}.

due to a technicality involving a question about whether the notary and witnesses had sufficiently been able to communicate with one another in Basque).¹¹⁴ However, more importantly, these trials emphasized the direct and rapid interest the diocese took in trials involving violence and misbehavior that occurred in the context of bullfights and related celebrations. From a strategic standpoint, such examples of diocesan interest set a precedent and helped train parishioners how to effectively utilize the post-Tridentine court system. As parishioners learned via positive reinforcement, one of the most efficient ways to attract the bishop's attention was to link larger crimes to smaller misdeeds. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Pamplonese bishops had their hands full, and even though monitoring and professionalizing the clergy was a priority, there was no shortage of priests that could use a bit of reforming (or major criminal correction). The many complaints parishioners might have about their priests thus had to be calculated to resonate with the obvious goals of the bishop's prosecuting team, and to catch their attention quickly. And as parishioners learned by observing successes and failures in neighboring communities, the bishop and his court showed exceptionally little leniency for priests who were accused of running with the bulls, attacking the laity, or otherwise disgracing themselves during the taurine festivals. Parishioners were quick to grasp this fact and, when they employed it correctly, redirected it for a wide range of purposes in disciplining, restraining, and professionalizing their clergy. As the bishop's legal team often learned after reviewing dozens of items of witness testimony, the principal charges of bullfighting were often fabricated or exaggerated; instead, priests were typically involved in a range of other less urgent but still problematic behavior.

Two lengthy cases—with opposing verdicts—demonstrate the ways in which parishioners accumulated grievances against their clergy and strategically linked them with accusations of excesses during bullfights. This is exactly how the priest Don Andrés Lanberto of Miranda de Arga wound up in diocesan court in 1628. After a tip from purportedly concerned parishioners, the *fiscal* began an investigation of Don Andrés for causing his parishioners to suffer spiritually as he traveled the countryside from one bullfight to the next.¹¹⁵ Moreover, as parishioners (helpfully) added, when he was home, he failed to “maintain the peace”¹¹⁶ and instead insisted on “having evil and vindictive

¹¹⁴ Martín de Galarza maintained his innocence throughout the trial, claiming, among other things, capital enmity with the parish priest, and also arguing that the matter could not be fairly tried since the witnesses only spoke Basque, and “ignored” any Castilian that was spoken to them: ADP, C/562 N.6.

¹¹⁵ ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^{r-v}.

¹¹⁶ “Procurar la paz y quietud”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^f.

intentions particularly in approaching business dealings [as if he were] going to war.”¹¹⁷ He had “offended important people in person and behind their backs with serious insults,”¹¹⁸ and he had “been very impolite in not removing his hat or greeting these people, but instead turning his back.”¹¹⁹ He also meddled in other people’s business and, most troubling, he recklessly repeated what his parishioners had told him in confession.¹²⁰

These charges formed the initial case against Don Andrés and, as is usual in such cases, they drew from both rumors and informal complaints against the priest. In diocesan criminal cases, pretrial discovery involved collecting a set of initial complaints—it was here that witnesses included complaints about bullfighting, often never to mention them again. If the *fiscal* felt that these initial complaints merited an investigation, they were compiled and condensed into formal charges, or points that the *fiscal* would seek to prove over the course of the trial. These charges were then followed up by formal witness testimony, in which witnesses were supposed to explain what they knew about the charges—or, essentially, to formally ratify their previous complaints about their priest. After having initially accused Don Andrés of bullfighting, these very parishioners provided conflicting second-stage testimony about Don Andrés’s bullfighting habits, and instead chose to focus more upon the other charges.

Augustina Garzez, for instance, testified that she had seen “Don Andrés threatening and quarrelling with the mayor Domingo Romeo Hipolito” and then laying his hands on him, but that she didn’t know anything else.¹²¹ Juan de Aroztegui testified that Don Andrés had involved himself in a business deal between Ysabel de Ychasso and Miguel Fidalgo, accomplishing nothing but creating discord. Four years ago, Juan de Berian had “approached [the priest] on his knees in confession,”¹²² but Don Andrés had instead yelled at him to “Get up, get up, I will never confess you under any circumstances!” and had instead moved down the line to confess someone else.¹²³ Juan had been too mortified

¹¹⁷ “Es de tan mala yntencion y bengatibo que a estorbado la composicion de algunos negocios y puesto en ellos mas guerra”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^r.

¹¹⁸ “En ausencia y en presencia a ofendido a personas principales con palabras graves”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^r.

¹¹⁹ “Que es muy descortes porque muchas vezes por no quitarse el bonete ni hazer cantería vuelve las espaldas a quien la debe hazer”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^r.

¹²⁰ ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 9^r.

¹²¹ “Que don Andres Lanberto rino y tubo palabras con Domingo Romeo Hipolito alcalde”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 12^r.

¹²² “Fue este testigo a confesarse con Don Andres Lanberto abiendosee puesto de rodillas”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 16^r.

¹²³ “Lebantasse, lebantasse que no quiere confesallo por ningun modo”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 16^r–17^r (quotation on 17^r).

to try to confess to Don Andrés again.¹²⁴ Domingo Romeo (the abused mayor) testified that Don Andrés had been giving people money so that they could travel to Pamplona to continue their lawsuits against one another, essentially fostering and bankrolling discord among his parishioners; when anyone confronted Don Andrés about this, he became violent and angry.¹²⁵ Multiple witnesses affirmed that Don Andrés had been spreading their secrets, which “had been confessed sacramentally, and which no one else should have known.”¹²⁶

Though absenting the parish to go to bullfights had formed the initial complaint, within the formal ratified testimony itself, bullfighting came up only later, as parishioners failed to point to any other instances in which Don Andrés had clearly and definitively violated canon law. After each witness described at length the social harm they had suffered through Don Andrés’s insults, untrustworthiness, or involvement in their business affairs, they provided a rote affirmation that Don Andrés had been traveling the countryside, following the bullfights. However, no one seemed particularly bothered about this—Francisco Lopez, for example, suggested that these travels went hand in hand with devotional activities, and that Don Andrés had been also attending Mass in each of the towns he visited.¹²⁷ Domingo Romeo provided a long list of the many bullfights he knew Don Andrés had attended “with the same liberty as a layperson,” but also did not elaborate further.¹²⁸ Bullfighting was an eye-catching charge, and the parishioners used it to create an opening for themselves in which they could level other complaints and make sure the *fiscal* would pursue their case.

Most telling, the bishop found all charges insufficiently proven, and ordered Don Andrés cleared with no penalties. As was often the situation in these types of cases, the criminal charges leveled against one person radiated outward to involve the better part of the local community. Priests were parts of their communities through and through, and early modern village life was particularly close—most people were related to one another in several different ways. In this case, Don Andrés appears to have run afoul by involving himself too deeply in his parishioners’ (and neighbors’) business affairs. When they confronted

¹²⁴ ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 16^r–17^r.

¹²⁵ ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 17^v–19^v.

¹²⁶ “Le abia confesado sacramentalmente por ningun modo se podía saber.” One witness elaborated further, saying that “even though she had confessed in the secret of confession, nonetheless, within a few days she had seen in it the eyes of her mother-in-law that her mother-in-law knew everything she had confessed.” For witness testimony, see ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 11^r–35^v (quotations on 20^v).

¹²⁷ ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 12^v–13^r.

¹²⁸ “Con la libertad que un lego.” For Domingo’s full testimony, see ADP, C/518 N.19, fols. 17^v–19^v (quotation on 19^v).

him—sometimes in the confessional it seems—he defended himself, often aggressively. Charges of wrongdoing were not as clear-cut as the parishioners might have hoped, and in order to enhance their poorly articulated complaints about Don Andrés, they added on the additional allegations about bullfighting, only to backtrack later in their notarized statements. The bishop appears to have seen through these tactics and, rather than intervening, he kicked the conflict back to the local level, admonishing everyone to avoid “false and calamitous” accusations, and to try to live together more harmoniously.¹²⁹

Five years later, the nearby town of Arguedas was struggling with their own priest over many of the same problems. Unlike Miranda de Arga’s lawsuit, which was launched by the bishop’s *fiscal*, charges against Arguedas’s vicar, Don Miguel de Busto, were initiated by the parishioner Juan de Tafalla. However, the bishop’s legal team judged Tafalla’s complaints serious enough to merit immediate attention, and the case was quickly transferred to the *fiscal*. The *fiscal* and Tafalla’s initial complaints were supported by an additional twenty-five secondary plaintiffs from the community who provided the preliminary evidence and supplemental witness testimony.¹³⁰

Like the Mirandans, the Arguedasans found themselves under the spiritual care of a priest who failed to fully separate his duties as pastor from those as member of the community. To make matters worse, as a native of Arguedas, Don Miguel de Busto was closely related to a number of the secular government leaders, including the mayor, who was his brother. This brother also had certain judicial responsibilities, and one of Don Miguel’s favorite pastimes was to follow his brother around to various audiences and tribunals, where “he would sit next to the mayor and [other] judges,”¹³¹ watching sentences be carried out and menacing the condemned “with rough words.”¹³² This legal voyeurism took up a considerable portion of Don Miguel’s time, to the point that several of his parishioners allegedly died without the sacraments during his absences.¹³³ As a “choleric and quarrelsome” individual,¹³⁴ Don Miguel purportedly used his familial connections to intimidate his parishioners, “whom he kept frightened, abusing them with insults and harsh words.”¹³⁵ The parishioners collectively attributed this abuse to the widespread belief that Don Miguel was unhappy

¹²⁹ “Falsa calumiosa”: ADP, C/518 N.19, fol. 189^r.

¹³⁰ ADP, C/342 N.17, fols. 1^r, 5^r.

¹³¹ “Y se azeria alado del alcalde y [otros] condenadores”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

¹³² “Palabras asperas”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

¹³³ ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

¹³⁴ “Colerico y ocasionado”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

¹³⁵ “Tiene atemorizados todos los vecinos tratando los muy mal con palabras asperas injuriosas”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

with his lot in life as priest, and “with the arrogance of the rich and with the rich friends he has to defend himself, is able to get away with his bad behavior.”¹³⁶

Discontented, Don Miguel reacted in familiar ways. Like his many clerical colleagues, Don Miguel flouted rules of traditional behavior and asserted his position in society by subverting codes of conduct and through disruptive masculinity.¹³⁷ Physically and symbolically rejecting his role as priest, Don Miguel frequently shed his clerical vestments and “contravening the synodal constitutions, [he was in the habit of] leaving the town without [spiritual] care in order to go hunting in the fields and badlands with an *harquebus*.”¹³⁸ Moreover, even when he was home, his behavior deviated from that expected of a priest. Counter-Reformation priests were supposed to offer advice to their parishioners and their conversations were supposed to be edifying and instructional. Yet Don Miguel’s method of conversing was widely regarded as vulgar and “harmful,” since he was the habit of “swearing with notable liberty against God and making other scandalous oaths.”¹³⁹

None of these complaints were particularly unusual for the time period but, more importantly, none of them were very specific. By themselves, none were very alarming, and alongside the diocese’s long docket, none were particularly urgent. Perhaps sensing this fact, the plaintiffs added on one more final complaint, after the previous ones: “when there is a running of the bulls, [Don Miguel] goes about on the streets carrying a large stick or a pole, and it is indecent to see a priest wander about like that.”¹⁴⁰ Don Miguel was not just failing as a priest in abstract and generalized ways, he was also actively defying and ignoring synodal and papal decrees which forbade such behavior.

Having arranged Juan de Tafalla’s and the twenty-five other plaintiffs’ complaints in five neat charges, the *fiscal* moved forward with the case, and the court next admitted direct notarized witness testimony in order to corroborate the charges. It is here—as in the earlier case in Miranda de Arga—that the true motives of the parishioners emerged. Principal complaints separated from secondary annoyances and, like the case from Miranda, evidence concerning

¹³⁶ “Esto lo hace provocado de la soberbia del rico y amigos que tiene para defenderse de qual quiera mal procedimiento”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^r.

¹³⁷ On how disorderly conduct could reinforce certain types of masculinity, see Shepard, 2003, 94.

¹³⁸ “Que el dicho acusado, contrabeniendo a las sinodales, [suele dejar] el pueblo sin servicio [espiritual] y seba acaça por los campos y bardenas con arcabuz”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^{r-v}.

¹³⁹ “En su modo de proceder y tratar debiendo deser en su conversación es danossa de tal suerte que escandaliza por que jura con notable libertad a dios y otros juramentos escandalosos”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^v.

¹⁴⁰ “Quando corren toros anda por las calles con un palo o bara muy larga en las manos de que causa indecencia ver un cura y sacerdote de aquel modo”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 10^v.

bullfighting dropped away in favor of the parishioners' real grievances—namely, that Don Miguel had been using his prestigious family connections and his power in the community to involve himself in other people's business and try to influence the administration of justice.

Though the parishioners of Arguedas may have had their own motives in alerting the bishop to Don Miguel's lackluster performance, they nonetheless eagerly explained their position and provided copious amounts of testimony. Domingo de Jurio affirmed that Don Miguel was "irascible in his manner of talking and dealing [with his parishioners], and he turns this anger against his neighbors and terrorizes them,"¹⁴¹ and that because of this, he, Domingo, "was afraid of him and his unpleasant ways and his harsh words."¹⁴² He also listed the many times he had seen the vicar leave town to go hunting in the badlands with his crossbow, but noted that he believed that this had only happened a few times in the current year. More importantly, he had seen him at court hearings with his brother two or three times that year, and Domingo believed that Don Miguel had swayed the proceedings with his presence by attempting "to mediate and participate in [the testimonies]," even though no one had asked him to do so.¹⁴³ More concretely, Domingo was also able to list several of his neighbors and family members who had allegedly died without care during Don Miguel's absences, as well as when he had been in town: "Sebastiana Mallen, wife of Miguel de Grana," reported Domingo, "died without receiving the most holy sacrament, as did one of [Domingo's] daughters who was only nine years old. . . . She received no sacrament from the said vicar. And even though this witness had seen the vicar, he shamelessly refused to provide the sacraments. [When asked] he had responded that the girl was perfectly angelic [*un angelçoto*] and didn't need any sacraments and so she died without receiving any."¹⁴⁴

Finally, responding to the query about bullfighting and "harmful conversations that offend,"¹⁴⁵ Domingo dwelled on various financial infelicities that had

¹⁴¹ "Que hera colerico en su modo de hablar y proceder y estanto esto que atemorizo con su colerico a los vecinos": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 12^v.

¹⁴² "Le tiene miedo y otros tallos malos y asperamente de palabras": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 12^v.

¹⁴³ "Y que estando en ellas ablaba terciando algunos [testimonios]": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 12^v.

¹⁴⁴ "Sebastiana Mallen mujer que fue de Miguel de Grana murio sin dalle el santissimo sacramento . . . tambien a este testigo se le murio una [hija] suya de hedad de nueve años. . . . Se abia dado ningun sacramento el dicho vicario. Aunque este testigo se lo abisto al dicho vicario que vivara sin selos podra dar. Y el respondio esta vecina es un angelçoto y no tiene necesidad de ningun sacramento y anssi murio sin recibir ninguno": ADP, C/342 N.17, fols. 12^v–13^r.

¹⁴⁵ "Conversaciones que hofende y sen aquellas danossas": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 13^r.

occurred under Don Miguel's supervision, but notably had very little to say about whether Don Miguel frequented bullfights. Instead, he related a rather convoluted sequence that ultimately boiled down to dissatisfaction with Don Miguel's stewardship of the church's ornamentation. Candles were often not lit in the church when they should have been, and there was never enough oil to replace them with lamps. The failure to keep the lamps lit coincided with several years of general hardship in the village, but Domingo still believed that the parishioners' donations should have amply covered the church's lighting. He approached Don Miguel about this discrepancy, but Don Miguel appeared to believe that Domingo was suggesting he was guilty of embezzlement. He turned and attacked Domingo "with very offensive words,"¹⁴⁶ accusing Domingo of meddling and told him "he didn't have the grounds to accuse him of embezzlement since he wasn't involved and he didn't serve God [as Don Miguel did]."¹⁴⁷ According to Domingo's telling, he had not originally accused Don Miguel of anything like embezzlement, but the altercation inspired him to investigate further. However, the man who was supposed to be in charge of the collection bag did not have it, leading Domingo to believe that Don Miguel in fact had it. The whole episode was messy, and Domingo ultimately concluded (generously) that Don Miguel had the bag because he did not trust anyone in the parish due to "his various enmities and enemies, and that [whatever had happened] it still looked very bad for the vicar to proceed as he did."¹⁴⁸ Only after recounting this sequence did Domingo turn to the primary part of the question concerning bullfighting: "And sometimes this witness had seen the said vicar running with some bull throughout the town, with a staff in his hands and not behind the bull as most people do."¹⁴⁹ Importantly, these episodes had occurred in Arguedas (meaning that Don Miguel had not had to absent himself). Moreover, Domingo was not able to recall any concrete incident and provided no details which could link rumor with specific event. The bullfighting was ultimately secondary, not just within Domingo's ratified testimony but, more importantly, within Don Miguel's ongoing problems with his parishioners and neighbors.

¹⁴⁶ "Palabras muy ofensivas": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 13^v.

¹⁴⁷ "Diciendo [que] no tenia la paridad para ser su [p]eculados ny execercia ny servir los dichos oficios": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 13^v.

¹⁴⁸ "Esto lo hizo el dicho vicario por enemistades y enemigas que tiene y lo qual parecia muy mal para un vicario andar en lo que andaba": ADP, C/342 N.17, fols. 13^v-14^r (quotation on 14^r).

¹⁴⁹ "Y que algunas bezes este testigo a visto al dicho vicario corriendo algun toro por el lugar ensogado llevar un baculo en las manos y no yr detras del toro como las mas gente": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^r.

Equally revealing, many of the witnesses presented by the *fiscal* to verify the content of the five charges provided ratified statements regarding only the first four charges. In fact, only Domingo and one other witness testified to having seen Don Miguel run with the bulls or attend a bullfight. Like the parishioners of Miranda de Arga, these witnesses provided ample details to support their statements, but failed to provide any confirmation whatsoever about the second part of the fifth charge of bullfighting, excusing themselves by stating merely that they “know not a thing about that.”¹⁵⁰ For example, Lucas de Azcona explained that he had observed numerous instances in which Don Miguel had publicly abused lay and religious people. These episodes caused Don Miguel “to lose everyone’s respect.”¹⁵¹ He had also seen Don Miguel “sitting next to his brother the mayor in audience three or four times, helping him and advising him on various things.”¹⁵² One of his friends had also told him that his daughter had died without the sacraments, though Azcona admitted “that he did not know whether this was the fault of [Don Miguel].”¹⁵³ He had also seen Don Miguel wandering around the fields “carrying an arquebus,”¹⁵⁴ but again, this could have had other explanations than hunting, such as protecting his brother’s sheep and other livestock. Finally, when asked the fifth and final question about whether he had seen Don Miguel run with the bulls, Azcona merely stated that he “knew nothing about that.”¹⁵⁵

Though it is possible that some of the witnesses may have been lying—or otherwise trying to downplay misbehavior they did not really care about—Azcona was a royal notary and it would have been a professional liability for him to perjure himself about something so straightforward. At least one incident of running with the bulls likely did occur, but it apparently caused no great scandal in the small village of Arguedas. Instead of trying to comb the witness statement for gaps or perjury, the simplest explanation for the imbalance in witness testimony vis-à-vis general misbehavior versus running with the bulls is that the latter’s inclusion was strategic on the part of the parishioners. In the evidence-gathering stage they submitted gossip and general annoyances. Aware that participating in the bullfights was forbidden for clergy, they added this flashy charge to their long list of grievances. The strategy worked,

¹⁵⁰ “No save cossa alguna de ella.” For witness testimony, see ADP, C/342 N.17, fols. 12^r–36^v.

¹⁵¹ “Le pierdan el respecto”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^v.

¹⁵² “A sentarse cabo el alcalde al dicho acusado en la audiencia por tres u quatro bezes que hermano del alcalde ayudando y advisingo en las cosas y pedimientos”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^v.

¹⁵³ “No save si fue esto por falta del vicario u no”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^v.

¹⁵⁴ “Llevando un arcabuz”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^v.

¹⁵⁵ “Que no save cossa alguna de ella”: ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 14^v.

and the allegation caught the *fiscal's* attention. He gathered all the grievances together, condensed them into five simple groups of charges, including bull-fighting, and remitted them back to the parishioners. When asked to submit official notarized witness statements, the parishioners chose either not to perjure themselves on more tenuous charges, or, more likely, chose to use this platform to expand on their principal grievances. Most men of their community did run with the bulls from time to time, so that Don Miguel had run with the bulls was not a serious problem in their eyes. Instead, and now with a direct line of communication to the bishop, they made sure that he was well aware of the problems that they themselves judged needed correction and punishment.

Perhaps most significantly, the Arguedasans' strategy paid off, and Don Miguel was found guilty on three of the five charges (including running with the bulls). As the bishop ruled, "considering that he wears the habit of a priest, he is required to provide good example to his parishioners."¹⁵⁶ Such a good example, the bishop specified, involved "not swearing scandalously, or in another other way,"¹⁵⁷ as well as maintaining basic decency, "particularly when they run bulls through the streets, [and when they do this] not going about in the streets with a pole or [creating] any other obstacle, since this is unbecoming and scandalous."¹⁵⁸ The hunting trips also must stop, since it was contributing to the "neglect of his church."¹⁵⁹ Don Miguel was ordered to pay a fine and to split court costs with the *fiscal*, though the bishop also stated that these would not actually be collected. Most importantly, Don Miguel was reminded that the bishop was acting with leniency in his sentence, and that if he did any of these things again, he would be punished with much severity.¹⁶⁰ Don Miguel then appealed the ruling, with no success.¹⁶¹

Of course, from the perspective of the Arguedasans, this ruling might have been a disappointment. The bishop evidently felt the charges of interfering with village justice and intimidation insufficiently proven, and Don Miguel was not ordered to desist following his brother around to the various audiences. Likewise, though the accusation that Don Miguel had not provided the sacraments to Sebastiana Mallen or to the little "angelçoto" was troubling (and, in

¹⁵⁶ "Considerando al abito sacerdotal que profesa procure dar exemplo a sus feligreses": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 67^v.

¹⁵⁷ "Ablar sin jurar juramentos escandalosos ni de otra manera": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 67^v.

¹⁵⁸ "Andar en la dicha villa con la decencia que se requiere en particular quando corren toros [y cuando hacen esto] sin andar por las calles con palo ni otros enbaraços que desdigan a su abito sin que cause escandalo": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 67^v.

¹⁵⁹ "Aciendo falta en su yglesia": ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 67^v.

¹⁶⁰ ADP, C/342 N.17, fol. 67^{r-v}.

¹⁶¹ ADP, C/342 N.17, fols. 68^r-78^v.

the second case, technically heretical), the bishop refrained from ruling on these cases, perhaps feeling that the admonition to better tend to his church and provide a better example to his parishioners covered these lapses. Yet from a pragmatic standpoint, the ruling was still helpful. It created a paper trail in order to track past (or continuous) misbehavior, and it called the bishop's attention to Don Miguel. If he misbehaved again—or continued to harass his parishioners—they would be able to more easily bring subsequent charges. Though Don Miguel was cleared on the parishioners' principal complaints, the accusation of running with the bulls had successfully helped propel the case through the administrative hurdles of post-Tridentine diocesan justice. It simultaneously helped solidify a minor conviction, all the while clearly and forcefully reminding Don Miguel that the bishop was interested in reforming the lower clergy, and would not hesitate to listen to lay grievances against their priests.

CONCLUSION

The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century diocesan court records for Pamplona document a wide range of clerical misbehavior and degrees of severity, as well as a consistent theme that there were always more cases than the bishop and his legal team could effectively handle. Recognizing this, parishioners proceeded strategically. The diocesan court system was Pamplona's primary mechanism for enacting reform and monitoring clerical misbehavior, and simply initiating proceedings (even if they did not reach a conviction stage) alerted and reminded parish clergy that the bishop was interested in the kinds of relationships they had with their parishioners. Yet at the same time, the court records demonstrate ongoing tensions that lay beneath the surface of simple accusations, prosecutions, and convictions. Many of the trials depended upon parishioners' eagerness and proactiveness to make complaints and initiate lawsuits. Diocesan prosecution of misbehaving Basque clergy in the post-Tridentine period thus reveals much about interactions between the parish and diocesan administrators and, more importantly, something of the role the parish took in using the court system to appropriate diocesan reform and mold it to their particular circumstances and concerns. In making strategic accusations that their priests were running with the bulls, parishioners guaranteed their other grievances were heard. As they did so, parishioners showed a willingness verging on enthusiasm to work within the newly expanded Tridentine litigation system.

Within this process, certain aspects of Tridentine reform emerged as more or less popular with localities. The frequency of cases involving priests who ran with, fought with, or otherwise interacted with bulls indicates that in many cases such behavior was tacitly accepted at the local level, if not actively

promoted or ignored for a period of time prior to the lawsuit. On the other hand, having lived beside their priests for decades as neighbors, family members, and business associates, parishioners developed a deeper and wider ranging set of grievances and complaints that did not fit as neatly within the program of reform. Accessing the court system—under the guise of introducing more direct criminal behavior—allowed parishioners a method of introducing complaints that otherwise might not have merited diocesan attention on a busy and packed legal docket.

All things considered, bullfighting may seem like an eccentricity and an outlier alongside more egregious crimes. Indeed, incidents of rape, violence, aggression, and absenteeism were serious enough in their own right to merit swift diocesan intervention. Yet bullfighting was associated with these other problems, which was made explicitly clear by the fact that when something went wrong during a running of the bulls, it tended to go spectacularly wrong. As bulls charged through communal adorations of the Eucharist or priests attempted to fight bulls with dinner napkins or seminary students took advantage of a party atmosphere to lure teenage girls into their houses, the true problem with priests involved in bullfights emerged. Bullfights themselves might be a problem insofar as papal directives and synods were concerned, but the real, practical reason bishops prosecuted priests for these activities was for the likelihood they would sin and commit crimes in other ways at the same time.

In this way, priests and bullfights exemplify an important facet of the ways in which reform played out in real time and responded to real issues. It shows how parishioners learned to sacrifice their acceptance of shared communal activities with their priests in favor of dealing with more serious problems, and it shows how they both voluntarily entered and were co-opted into the diocese's broader program of reform. Most importantly, it shows local awareness (learned and evolving) of the goals, processes, and intricacies of enacting Tridentine reform. Bullfights drew early modern people together for communal celebrations and veneration and, in the legal context, they drew parishioners together with diocesan officials for the larger goals of reform.

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