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Made flesh? Gender and doctrine in religious violence in twentieth-century Spain

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In 1947, a Swedish Protestant, Björn Hallström, undertook a clandestine journey through Spain, referred to repeatedly as ‘the land of the Inquisition’ where power was in the hands of the Jesuits.<sup>i</sup> A man whose explicit mission was evangelisation, he perceived ignorance as the main impediment to conversion, but superstition and official opposition—understood as the persecution of the word of God—were also significant obstacles. Spain was, readers were told, ‘the only country in Europe where the Bible is forbidden literature’. The Franco regime feared the word of God as ‘the beginning of enlightenment’, which had yet to reach Spain. Indulgences, impressions of ‘Saint Mary’s foot’, queues of well-dressed women and ‘high-ranking officers’ waiting to see a ‘miracle-working picture of Christ ... lying in a glass case’ all went to show that, in Spain, in 1947, ‘we are in the depths of the Middle Ages’.<sup>ii</sup>

The tropes of this, admittedly not very well informed, narrative account were those of ‘Black Spain’. References to superstition, obscurantism and intolerance served both to reveal the nature of Catholic Spain and to show the enormity of the struggle Spanish Protestants faced in spreading ‘the pure and clear word of God.’ The images Hallström conjured up were, though, familiar to many more than simply Protestant evangelists. The liturgical world of Baroque Spain formed a crucial part of the imagery of Black Spain and had been used as such by a long line of artists, from

Goya, though Regoyos and Verhaeren (1899) to Solana (1920) and Buñuel (1932).<sup>iii</sup> Holy Week was a crucial part of this representation, its images dominated by graphic representations of the bleeding, broken Christ.<sup>iv</sup> The literary and visual tropes of Black Spain are usually categorized in terms of light and dark, progress and superstition but they also contain a theological opposition, that between the body and the word.

This opposition had been played out in violent form during the massive iconoclasm of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-9. During the conflict, an outpouring of anticlerical violence claimed the lives of 4,184 priests and seminarians and 2,365 monks and brothers.<sup>v</sup> This full-scale religious violence erupted only amid the shattering conditions of civil war and was among the most murderous ever seen in Europe.<sup>vi</sup> Catholicism had become a definitional cleavage in the symbiotic struggle between right and left in Spain. The violence of the Civil War demonstrated just how deep the fault line of religion went by 1936 but it was no new phenomenon. Attacks on ecclesiastical property had been a feature of anticlerical riots since the turn of the twentieth century, notably the Barcelona Tragic Week of 1909 that left convents and churches burnt throughout the city. The proclamation of a secular democratic Republic in 1931 had led to another outbreak of church burning, most dramatically in Malaga where not a single church was left unsinged. A rapid process of political mobilization under the new Republic led to a hardening of attitudes, not least around religion, the defence of which became a badge of identity to the right. An ill-

conceived socialist rising in October 1934 led to a new outbreak of anticlerical violence, which was now directed at people as well as property.<sup>vii</sup>

Iconoclasm was an intrinsic part of these anticlerical assaults, considerably more common than murder or physical attack. During the Civil War, religious statues and buildings were singled out for attack and hidden liturgical objects—such as confessionals, relics, and even disinterred bodies—were taken out of the cloister to be displayed on the street.<sup>viii</sup> This juxtaposition of light and dark was not simply an echo of the Reformation. It is, rather, a contention of this paper that the forms of religious violence enacted in twentieth-century Spain reflected competing views of the incarnation. It is striking how, for example, anti-Catholic violence—widespread in the 1930s—was targeted against bodies, both real and unreal, people and statues, while Catholic violence against Protestants—which erupted at certain points in the 1940s and 50s—was directed against books, bibles, and the written word. This must reflect devotional differences: the Protestant insistence on the primacy of scripture contrasted sharply with Catholic practice around images, which were often touched, kissed, or clothed by the faithful.

There were also other differences. The anti-Catholic violence of the Civil War was widespread, affecting every area of Republican-held Spain outside the Basque Country. Its protagonists reflected the wider divisions of the war, with religion acting as a marker for the class-based divisions of left against right, poor against rich. Young, male workers, both rural and urban, were thus the principal agents of

iconoclasm, both during the civil war and earlier. A recent study shows a higher participation of 'rural middling sectors' in 1936 than was previously assumed but confirms popular anticlericalism as largely proletarian.<sup>ix</sup> In contrast, the anti-Protestant violence of the 1940s occurred within the context of a victorious National-Catholic regime. The assailants were invariably educated and committed young Catholics, often from families identified with the regime. The police investigation following an attack on the Protestant chapel in Figueres in March 1948, for example, identified the culprits as 'young members of Catholic Action, of extreme religiosity'.<sup>x</sup>

The starting point for many of the post-war attacks on Protestant chapels was the defence of the Virgin Mary. Devotion to Mary was the sharpest point of difference between Protestantism and Catholicism and the claim that Protestants 'do not believe in the Virgin' was heard time and time again in local anti-evangelical agitation. The actual point of attack was, though, the incarnate word in the shape of scripture. In Aguilas (Murcia), for example, on one day in 1940, 'a group of people, communicant members of the established Church' launched a violent assault on the local Protestant chapel, breaking down doors, defacing liturgical objects and, extraordinarily, 'trampling, shooting, and urinating on bibles, gospels and hymn-books'.<sup>xi</sup> Similarly, during an assault by Requetés on the chapel at Granollers in September 1947, the 'heretical library' was 'completely destroyed' while during the attack on the Methodist chapel in c/Ripoll, Barcelona on 11 October 1947 '[t]he pulpit, organ, notice-boards, pews, doors, windows, the harmonium, piano, Bibles

and hymn books were rendered quite useless. It was scandalous to see the large Bible from the pulpit torn into tiny fragments scattered on the ground.<sup>xii</sup>

It is clear that, in all these cases, the actions of the assailants were transgressive. These were not marginal, poor, or criminal elements yet they broke laws against trespass, assault, and damage to property, and offended against accepted social standards of behaviour. What is striking, however, is the religious transgression; they involve deliberate attacks on the word, including the word of God. To urinate on, or destroy, Bibles is clearly sacrilege yet the extremes of behaviour shown in Aguilas suggest that the perpetrators felt not only a temporary immunity from social convention but also a sense that Protestantism itself was a legitimate object of attack. For, in the 1940s, the Bible was neither a feared nor, despite some evangelical claims, a banned book in Spain.<sup>xiii</sup> What was under attack was the position the Word had in Protestant Christianity. The notion of the ‘incarnate word’ was entirely foreign to these Catholics who retained not only a bodily understanding of God made man but also an explicitly gendered, and bifurcated, understanding of this incarnation.

Although Christian churches shared a common scripture, language and history and so chose similar tropes and images in depicting their plight during periods of attack—notably that of the early ‘martyred’ or persecuted Church—there was a continued emphasis on difference, particularly the distinguishing theologies around the position of the Virgin Mary and ideas of Biblical authority. Devotion to the

Virgin was particularly important in demarking the essential difference between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the inferior position of the former. Perceived slights on the 'honour' of Mary could also be an occasion for anti-Protestant violence. Thus, the official account of the attack on the Brethren Hall in Linares in 1947 begins by describing how:

On June 24, about forty people entered the evangelical chapel ... talking out loud and smoking ... after ten minutes one of them pounded on a bench three times, and this served as a signal for all to rise and shout "Long live the most holy Virgin." Immediately they distributed themselves all over the chapel armed with clubs like those the police carry, iron rods and pistols. With these instruments, after making the sign of the cross, they broke the lights, chandelier, organ, wall clock, pulpit, bookcase and benches, and struck and wounded the defenceless and peaceful Christians ... Almost all present at the service were terribly beaten.<sup>xiv</sup>

This account was already embellished: the local Brethren missionary, Rachel Chesterman, had originally put the number of assailants at thirty, made no mention of smoking, talking or the sign of the cross, and was clear that some, including herself, had, 'in the Lord's goodness' not been hurt.<sup>xv</sup> Those who were protected were women; the protagonists were overwhelmingly male.



To those who are familiar with the religious violence of the Spanish Civil War—both much more extensive and more murderous—this may not come as a surprise, though it is interesting to see the same gendered patterns preserved in the inter-confessional violence of the 1940s. In the wake of the military coup of 18 July 1936 that ignited the Civil War, 6,492 priests and monks lost their lives, but only 296 religious sisters. These figures were established as early as 1961 and remain largely unaffected by subsequent research.<sup>xvi</sup> Yet, only recently has gender been employed as an analytical framework through which we might better understand not only the disparity in the number of victims, but also the nature of the violence, much of which was appallingly cruel.<sup>xvii</sup> Assaults on both religious personnel and religious images often took highly performative forms. Burlesques of processions and sacramental liturgies—including marriage—were common while statues, corpses and living bodies were assaulted, mutilated and ‘executed’.

Much of the violence had a sexual theme yet was rarely enacted by women, although they did have a much higher incidence of involvement in acts of iconoclasm than in violence against the person. They thus featured far less commonly than men in the lists of perpetrators as well as of victims. This remains the case even if we look at victims of sexual violence. Though sexual taunting and mockery seems to have been ubiquitous, sexual assault against nuns was rare: Father Montero’s original investigation did not find a single incidence of rape.<sup>xviii</sup>

In contrast, while male rape seems to have remained unthinkable, male victims were routinely subjected to sexual violence, from stripping to castration (both pre and post-mortem). In Murcia, for example, in September 1936, several bodies were seized by a mob after an execution. That of a local parish priest was ‘horribly profaned’ and ‘shamefully mutilated’ before being dragged around the city and hoisted onto the bell tower of his own church.<sup>xix</sup> In nearby Almería, a priest’s body was found, burnt, battered, and castrated while, in Valencia, a priest who refused to ‘marry’—invariably a euphemism for having sex—was castrated before being shot, while sexual taunting and humiliation appears to have been ubiquitous.<sup>xx</sup> Priests—the primary targets of the anticlerical assailants of the Civil War—were thus attacked as men even though they were singled out on account of their office. Clerical masculinity represented the power of the Church while their celibacy represented an affront to how Spanish men were supposed to live their lives. Hence the anticlerical concern with confession, given the priests’ abilities to pry into the sexual and domestic concerns of other men, simply by hearing their wives’ confessions.<sup>xxi</sup>

There are other clear social and cultural factors that served to protect women religious while singling out their male counterparts for attack. The nuns could themselves be the victims of the ‘seductions’ of the priest, enticed into their convents by the blandishments of an imaginary God and his all too human representative. Female virginity was valued and respected in 1930s Spain, unlike male virginity, which was often viewed with contempt, particularly in popular

culture. Crucially, perhaps, single women required protection: the 'brides of Christ' belonged to no man. It is, however, a contention of this article that this differential treatment meted out both to and by men and women reflects not only the gendered structures of Spanish society but also those of Catholic doctrine. The masculinity of the priests represented the fact of the incarnation, that defining moment in Christianity when God took human form. The idea of God made flesh, and the consequent embodiment of the divine in the person of Jesus Christ, not only distinguishes the Christian religion from other monotheistic faiths but also makes gender fundamental to both doctrinal and historical understandings of Christianity. Yet, despite being the central doctrine of Christianity, the incarnation has received surprisingly little attention from historians even though Catholic tradition from the Counter-Reformation continued to stress the bodily reality of the incarnation and the physical—and gendered—presence of Jesus and Mary in response to Protestantism's new emphasis on God as Word.

Nowhere did this Counter-Reformation insistence on the bodily reality of the incarnate God have a greater representational effect than in the Baroque Catholicism of southern Europe, particularly Spain. The Christological emphasis of the Reformation led to a flourishing of both devotions and representations centred on the Passion, throughout Catholic Europe, from Germany to Portugal.<sup>xxii</sup> The translation—originally by the Franciscans—of this Christological emphasis into the annual recreation of the Passion as the object of devotion on the streets of Spain every Holy Week not only ensured its survival but also meant that it assumed a

familiarity never attained by the formal, Eucharistic liturgies of the Mass. This enactment of Christ's suffering and death—the moment of redemption and so the fulfillment and ultimate understanding of the incarnation—continued through the centuries from the Counter-Reformation into the modern period. The Holy Week tradition thus maintained a surprisingly literal understanding of the sacrificial drama of the incarnation as outside historical time. Its immanence was attested to by its ritual recreation in the streets of Spanish cities every Passiontide.<sup>xxiii</sup> That not all accepted this understanding—or even the 'fact'—of the incarnation was increasingly evident with the emergence of competing political and religious traditions, particularly under the Second Republic (1931-6) when many of the processions fell foul of legislation prohibiting public displays of cult.

However, the Holy Week processions maintained an artistic tradition of acute physical representation into the modern period, even as iconographic traditions changed. Forged by sculptors known as *imageros*, the tradition of working in polychromed wood allowed a plasticity to these images that gave them a truly astonishing physicality.<sup>xxiv</sup> The undoubted masters of these techniques worked in the seventeenth century and their works—and the religious devotion they reflected—helped to construct the Baroque idiom that was to define Spanish Catholicism. The 'passional culture' of devotion to the suffering Christ was central to the tradition of the Baroque *imageros*, whose works provided graphic anatomical illustrations of Christ's human suffering precisely as a site of contemplation and worship.<sup>xxv</sup> They also thereby established the suffering Christ as

the receptacle of humanity, even though, in theological terms, he took his humanity from his mother.

The *Cristo yacente* of Gregorio Fernández (1576-1636) is a case in point. His images of the dead Christ, taken down from the cross—around fifteen of which were produced by his workshop—used ‘hyperreal’ techniques to convey the physical presence of the nude and suffering body with a range of materials including glass for the eyes, horn for the fingernails, and painted cork for the open wounds.<sup>xxvi</sup> Several of these statues remain as objects of living devotion, most famously the *Cristo yacente de El Pardo*, which is now housed in a glass ‘coffin’ donated in 1940 by General Franco, whose palace was nearby.<sup>xxvii</sup> That the incorrupt bodies of saints are customarily displayed in the same way again draws attention to the ‘reality’ of the body, even though this is made of polychromed wood rather than flesh, bone (and wax).

The hyper-reality of these images serves to establish them as *the* representation of the incarnation, testified to by the oozing, bleeding, suffering flesh. This is God made man, hence his nakedness as well as his wounds, seen not only in images of the dead Christ but also in the Ecce Homo and Christ of the Scourging—as well as its variant, Christ of the Column—and, most ubiquitously, in the crucifix. *Cristo de las llagas*, like its close counterpart, the Ecce Homo, display the wounded, suffering Christ, now naked but for a loincloth. Some of these sculptures, such as those crafted by Pedro de Mena, are clearly devotional, half-length sculptures to be seen

close up and so confront the pious viewer with the ‘fact’ of Christ’s whipping and the world’s redemption through his blood. The image is that of vulnerability: Spain, as art historians often remind us, has no tradition of the nude; Christ’s nakedness signifies his humanity and his humility. But it is also the most familiar nude in the Western world, both in and outside Spain. That it was created as such is shown by curious details such as Fernández’s *Ecce Homo*, which was found to have genitals under the carved loincloth that had hidden them from view since the image was created.<sup>xxviii</sup> The incarnation depended not only on Christ’s humanity but also on his sex.

It is hard not to associate these details with the sustained assault on the male bodies of priests during the anticlerical violence of the Spanish Civil War, when clerics were routinely stripped of their soutanes and some paraded through the streets. In Cheste (Valencia), pious women [*beatas*] were invited to watch as the parish priest’s clothes were torn off him, together with strips of flesh.<sup>xxix</sup> If these assaults were simply anticlerical—that is, an attack on the institutional power of the Church—then their object was the male body of the priest. But if the violence was, as the article argues, anti-religious, then its object was the male body as representing the incarnate God. The assault on religion played out in this modern, Catholic context targeted the physical body of the priest as a representation of the incarnate God, defined as the suffering Christ. It is clearly no coincidence that statues and images were also singled out for attack in a phenomenon referred to by ecclesiastical commentators as ‘the martyrdom of things’.<sup>xxx</sup> In this onslaught—which encompassed buildings, archives, and liturgical objects as well as images—neither

popular sentiment nor artistic merit could save these statues from the flames or the axe.<sup>xxxii</sup>

There is no systematic study of the iconoclasm of the Spanish Civil War and no catalogue of the architectural, artistic, and devotional works that were damaged or destroyed.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The ecclesiastical authorities—who compiled the records—stress the scale of the violence, which affected every diocese in Spain, but generally failed to itemize the objects destroyed. There is thus some anecdotal evidence suggesting that images of Christ were singled out for attack but no systematic proof. In Málaga, for example, twenty images belonging to local confraternities were destroyed: sixteen were of Christ, including a *Cristo de la columna*, and only three of the Virgin.<sup>xxxiii</sup> One of the Málaga images is recorded as having been burnt in the river and the ritual destruction or mutilation of statues was common. Just as with the murdered priests, images could be tortured, ritually humiliated, and/or paraded before they were destroyed. In Algeciras, mock processions were held with dismembered pieces of images; in Almeria, a statue of St Joseph was paraded round the streets ‘crowned’ with a spittoon.<sup>xxxiv</sup> There are numerous cases of statues being blinded, mutilated, or even ‘married’ even though they could not see, move, or have sex. In the city of Malaga in 1936, for example, at least two crucifixes by Pedro de Mena, including his *Cristo de la Buena Muerte*, were dismembered, one with axe blows. Another was hoisted up with rope in a mock hanging before being dragged through the streets while Mena’s *Cristo de la Misericordia*, an image of Jesus carrying the cross, was whipped before being paraded and, finally, burnt.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Such apparently extraordinary actions owe much to the Baroque tradition of hierophany: statues that moved, wept, or bled featured heavily in the local devotional traditions of southern Europe.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Holy Week images were ‘intended to be active, lifelike presences that would interact with humans and with one another’.<sup>xxxvii</sup> They did not merely represent the divine; they embodied it. The attacks on these ‘living’ images of Christ during the Civil War were both a denial of the images’ power and an affirmation of it. Their destruction proved their impotence even though the rituals that preceded this had confirmed their reality. As Mary Douglas has pointed out, ‘the Sacred can be engraved in the minds and hearts of worshippers [and non-worshippers] in more ways than one’. Indeed, many of these ‘mutilated’ images were subsequently saved: Málaga’s *Cristo mutilado* is among the most revered of Holy Week images while Madrid’s Christ of Miracles was the object of extraordinary devotion on Good Friday, 1939, a week after the city had fallen to Franco.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Iconoclasm is, at a very fundamental level, about coding and, specifically, recoding.<sup>xxxix</sup> The sacred becomes profane; what is revered is treated with contempt. A material use is found for metaphysical objects: vestments and altar cloths are remade as cushions, churches are used as prisons and warehouses, pews and polychrome statues become firewood. In Hontanares (Avila), the baptismal font was used as a cooking pot.<sup>xl</sup> There are, however, other kinds of codings already embedded in polysemous images—or, indeed, texts—that may also be reflected in



the performative act of iconoclasm. The central representation of the Christian incarnation is the crucified Christ. Although Christmas, the feast of the nativity, is the moment and celebration of the incarnation, the babe in the crib does not bear the same weight of symbolism as does the crucifix. They do, however, share the rhetoric of vulnerability. This may be why, when we look at Baroque statues of Christ crucified—whether painted, as in Diego Velázquez's *Cristo crucificado* (1632),<sup>xli</sup> or sculpted, like Juan Martínez Montañés's *Cristo de la clemencia* (1603-6) or Juan de Mesa's *Cristo crucificado* (c.1618-20)—and examine the male nude at its centre, we see what is actually an ambiguous gendering. Despite the astonishing anatomical accuracy of the skeletal structure and musculature, there is a definition to the waist and a curve to the hips that gives Christ as victim a distinctly feminine outline. Hence, his vulnerability and also his beauty, both of which are, in turn, accentuated by the absence of secondary sexual characteristics. Christ is always bearded but he has no body hair, not even, in the case of Fernández's *Ecce Homo*, on the pubis.<sup>xlii</sup>

This highly gendered depiction, that both insisted on the masculinity of the incarnate Christ and simultaneously denied it, was so embedded in Spanish Catholic culture as to have become invisible. But, during a period of Civil War and repression, when violence was ubiquitous throughout society, these understandings emerged in various ways, to be enacted through the popular rites of anticlerical violence. The sexual ambiguity of both Christ and the priest made their bodies—both real and unreal—the target and the site for this, highly ritualized, violence.

By these same token, these embedded codings may also provide the key as to why women were, at least to some extent, protected from this violence, though it should be noted that female images were hardly immune from violence.

For many centuries, Mary has been thought to have a central role in the Passion, though the scriptural authority for this is slight (John 19:26).<sup>xliii</sup> In Spain, the sorrowing mother is as familiar an image of Holy Week as is the suffering Christ and commonly inspires both devotion and affection, whether as Mary of Sorrows, of Anguish, of Pity or of Solitude. In marked contrast to most images of Christ, however, Mary is always fully clothed, the richness and weight of her robes drawing attention to the only parts of her body that can be seen, which are her face and her hands. Depictions of the *Angustias* or the *Piedad* did, it is true, retain a sense of the collapse of the swooning mother, common in earlier depictions of the crucifixion. But most modern representations of the sorrowing Mary show a controlled grief. Her suffering is depicted emotionally: she weeps rather than bleeds.<sup>xliv</sup> The redemption is thus achieved through the tears of the grieving Mary rather than the blood of the parturient one.

Representations of Mary, though increasingly central to post-1500 understandings of the redemption, were also increasingly likely to take unreal forms. Even in the Holy Week images—where the devotional emphasis is very much on the human suffering of a bereaved mother—the only anatomical detail of Mary that is ever revealed is her heart, which is pierced by either one or seven swords.<sup>xlv</sup> The

contrast with the intense physicality of the tortured body of Christ could not be stronger. Yet, if Christ's human body was the instrument of the redemption, his mother was the making of that instrument, for Christ took his humanity from her. This is the theological understanding that lies behind the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, systematically defined by Duns Scotus (d. 1308), vehemently espoused by the Jesuits, and finally promulgated as dogma by Pius IX in 1854.<sup>xlvi</sup> Mary, as essential to the task of the redemption, was conceived without original sin and so was fit to bear the body of Christ. She thus escaped mortality: her body was taken into heaven before she died, as confirmed in the dogmatic definition of the assumption by Pius XII in 1950.<sup>xlvii</sup> Taken together with popular traditions that insisted Jesus could refuse his mother nothing, the twentieth century saw a sharpening understanding of Mary as Co-Redeemer. She became integral to the salvation of the world through the incarnation, even as she was recreated as a divine rather than a human figure. For all the emphasis on emotional contact with Mary, the Immaculate Conception bore little relation to the young, human mother.

The doctrinal understandings of Mary that received official sanction in the Roman church from the 1850s, thus made her into not only the most popular icon in the Catholic world but also an increasingly unreal presence. Iconographically, the Immaculate Conception was depicted as both a young girl and a symbol of apocalypse; seen as envisaged by God at the beginning of time, she had stars about her head, was clothed in the sun, and stood on the moon (Revelation 12:1).<sup>xlviii</sup> In this guise, she travelled around the world appearing as Our Lady of Guadalupe in

1531 in the wake of the Catholic colonizers of New Spain.<sup>xlix</sup> This new apparition, the foundational myth of Catholic Mexico, transformed and translated the existing medieval cult of the Guadalupe image, situated in Extremadura, Spain.<sup>1</sup> The Mexican apparition legend broke the link between popular advocations of the Virgin and historical time, just as the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception had already done in theological terms. In contrast to the Spanish image, which was a wooden statue discovered by a shepherd after a miraculous revelation that showed where the Virgin had been hidden from the Arab invaders, in Mexico the Virgin revealed herself in what was presumably her chosen form. Imprinting her image on the visionary's cloak demonstrated the divine origins of both the apparition and its iconography.<sup>li</sup> The 'image's style—the way it looks' testified to its immanence and established its atemporality.<sup>lii</sup>

The Spanish Guadalupe is one of Europe's black madonnas; a clothed image, only Mary's face and right hand are visible, as is the face of the Christchild. The Mexican Guadalupe is lighter skinned and identified with the indigenous population. She is the woman of the apocaplyse, clothed in the sun's rays and standing on the moon, usually identified with the Immaculate Conception, occasionally with the Assumption. In many ways, the picture appears more human than her Spanish counterpart, whose heavily wrapped body and triangular shape deny any real sense of corporality.<sup>liii</sup> In contrast, the Mexican image is often identified as a Virgin of the Expectation—more familiarly known in Spain as Santa María de la O—who is shown pregnant. The pregnancy is not obvious but was signified, at least among indigenous Mexicans, by her girdle. She is thus very clearly a transitional image;

human in her pregnancy, divine in herself. Her pregnancy, like her immaculate conception, was intrinsic to her definition as *Thetókos* or 'God-bearer'.<sup>liv</sup> As in the Apocryphal *Book of James*, where the doubtful midwife, Salome, has her arm wither on contact with Mary's intact hymen, this birth denies rather than reaffirms her human status.<sup>lv</sup> The newly delivered Mary—free from both pain and blood—is indeed intact, her body still sealed.

By the modern period, understandings of Mary's virginity had become less visceral than in the Apocryphal gospels. As the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception developed and was spread around the world by both the Spanish monarchy and the Society of Jesus, the eclipse of Mary's humanity became complete. The suffering Christ was now the receptacle of human feeling: Mary was, in contrast, the symbol of conversion and divine power.

Mary Immaculate now became defined by a series of apparitions that began in Paris in 1830 and continued to transform modern Catholicism. The visions at La Salette (1846), Lourdes (1858), and Fatima (1917) combined apocalyptic messages and symbols with visions of young girls. Significantly, the seers were children and adolescents, a tendency that continues in apparitions down to the present day.<sup>lvi</sup> Our Lady of Lourdes and the Virgin of Fatima—with their slender forms, white robes, and young faces—became the most familiar, everyday images of Mary in the Catholic world. But the very familiarity of the plastic statuettes produced in their millions by promoters of her cult disguised the fact that Mary Immaculate had now become an entirely unreal, spectral presence. The drama of salvation in the modern

world—which depended explicitly on conversion and repentance—was revealed through a series of apparitions that demonstrated Mary’s lack of humanity by emphasizing her heavenly presence.

The apparitions at Fatima, and the apocalyptic ‘secrets’ that were revealed periodically by the seer, Lucia, marked a defining stage in this process.<sup>lvii</sup> The original vision had revealed the Russian Revolution as one of the sorrows and betrayals of the modern world and the devotion assumed a new, global, impetus during the 1940s, reworked by the logic of the Cold War. The period 1947-54 saw an unusually high level of spectacular religious phenomena, notably apparitions of the Virgin, which were taking place through western Catholic Europe at the rate of about 14 per year, four times more than was usual between 1930 and 1975.<sup>lviii</sup> The rapid popularisation of the Fatima cult was part of this phenomenon, with many subsequent apparitions following a similar pattern of revealed ‘secrets’ and the reparation of an unfaithful world.<sup>lix</sup> Indeed, at the blessing of the Pilgrim Statue, the bishop had prayed that ‘wherever the statue goes, may Mary herself always accompany it’.

This ‘International Pilgrim Virgin Statue’—a copy of the Fatima image blessed by the bishop of Leira—set out on a ‘world tour’ in 1947.<sup>lx</sup> It passed first through Spain, and in this national context—a mere nine years after the first, and largest scale, iconoclasm of a Civil War that the victorious Franco regime viewed as a crusade—clearly reasserted the power not only of the Virgin but also of the icon. Indeed, the journey was nothing short of triumphal. In Salamanca, ‘the parade of the faithful

past the image was constant'; in Seville in January 1948, its rapturous reception was described as in terms of apotheosis.<sup>lxi</sup> Everywhere, miracles were reported: healing miracles, conversions, and the image's constant accompanying by doves. The presence of the divine thus moved with the statue, testified to by the accompanying doves, and serving as 'a global message in a world under siege from unbelief'.<sup>lxii</sup> Inevitably, the Fatima tour led to pastoral letters on Marian devotion in almost every Spanish diocese, particularly those through which the image passed. In Seville, Cardinal Segura preached a sermon explaining how she had destroyed 'the new, seven-headed hydra that threatens civilisation'.<sup>lxiii</sup> Small wonder, perhaps, that visits of the Fatima image were associated in some places with attacks on Protestant chapels and the destruction of hymnals and bibles—the incarnate Word—as an assault on those 'who do not believe in the Virgin'.<sup>lxiv</sup>

In these incidents of inter-confessional violence—descriptions of which began this paper—the power of the Word was juxtaposed with the power of the Virgin. One was scriptural, the other miraculous: though both were transformative, at least to believers. Both also depended on particular understandings of the incarnation even as they rejected—or at least reworked—its original sense as God made flesh, the Christ embodied in a suffering, male body. In contrast, the largely intra-confessional violence of the 1930s—carried out by unbelieving but usually baptized Catholics against the clergy and images of their church—targeted the incarnate God through visceral attacks on the male body of the priest. It is striking that, during the religious violence of the 1940s, the physical understandings of the incarnation as

located in and played out on Christ's human body were lost. But despite the bloodletting of the previous decade, religious violence continued in Spain, albeit in a new guise. These new forms, however—with their juxtaposition of the Protestant Word and the Catholic Virgin—still revealed competing—and deeply gendered—understandings of Christian narratives of salvation.

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<sup>i</sup> Björn Hallström, *Secret Journey Through Spain* (Redhill: Lutterworth, 1948), 21-2.

<sup>ii</sup> *Ibid*, 32, 35, 43-4 at 44; from the 'glass case' it is clear that this is a Cristo yacente, discussed below.

<sup>iii</sup> Emile Verhaeren and Darío Regoyos, *España Negra* (Barcelona: Pedro Ortega, 1899); José Gutiérrez-Solana, *La España Negra* (Madrid: G. Hernández y Galo Saénz, 1920); Luis Buñuel, *Terre sans Pain* (France: Ramón Acín, 1933). See further: Mary Vincent, *Spain 1833-2002: People and State* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 82-5.

<sup>iv</sup> For example in the photographic work of José Ortiz Echagüe (*España Mística* (Madrid: private publication, 1943), Francisco Ontañón (*Los días iluminados: La Semana Santa en Andalucía*, text by Alfonso Grosso (Lumen: Barcelona, 1965) and Cristina García Roderó (*España Oculta* (Barcelona: Lunewerg, 1988).

<sup>v</sup> Antonio Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa en España 1936-1939* (Madrid: BAC, 1961); for minor revisions to Montero's data, Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *La persecución religiosa en España durante la Segunda República* (Madrid: Rialp 1990), 234-46.



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<sup>vi</sup> At least 2,000 and possibly up to 3,000 priests were killed in the French revolutionary Terrors; in Russia an estimated 8,000 church personnel were killed during the 1922 dechristianisation campaign. Nigel Aston, *Religion and Revolution in France, 1780-1804* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 181-3, 187-8; Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924* (London: Pimlico, 1996), 745-51.

<sup>vii</sup> José Alvarez Junco, 'El anticlericalismo en el movimiento obrero' in Germán Ojeda (ed.), *Octubre 1934. Cincuenta años para la reflexión* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1985), 283-300

<sup>viii</sup> See Bruce Lincoln, 'Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain, July 1936', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27:2 (1985), 241-60

<sup>ix</sup> Maria Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury: Popular Anticlerical Violence and Iconoclasm in Spain, 1931-1936* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), 74-120.

<sup>x</sup> Josep Clara, 'Represión, intolerancia y consolidación de los protestantes catalanes en la postguerra. El ejemplo de Girona', *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 17 (2001), 305.

<sup>xi</sup> As reconstructed by Juan Bautista Vilar, presumably from oral sources: *Un siglo de protestantismo en España: Águilas, Murcia, 1893-1979* (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1979), 121-2.

<sup>xii</sup> Both quoted *Religious Liberty in Peril: Documents illustrating the Condition of Protestants in Spain* ('Pro-Hispania', n.p. Août, 1948), Angus Library, Regent's Park College Oxford, Baptist World Alliance Archives (henceforth BWA) 1C 14(B) Folder II 6.

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<sup>xiii</sup> Catholics were, in fact, encouraged to read the scriptures by Leo XIII, *Proventissimus Deus* (1893). The Vulgate was translated into Spanish in 1825 while the 1940s saw the publications of the first direct Catholic translations, the Nacar-Colunga (1944) and the Bover-Cantera (1947), both published cheaply in Madrid by Editorial Católica.

<sup>xiv</sup> Typescript, 'Spanish Evangelical Christians Appeal to General Franco and to the Civilised World', BWA IC 14 (B) Folder 5. The account claimed to be by an eyewitness, though the 'chapel' was in fact the Brethren hall.

<sup>xv</sup> The University of Manchester, John Rylands University Library, Echoes of Service Papers, correspondence: Miss Chesterman to Mr Biffen, 25 June 1948.

<sup>xvi</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*; some double-counting has reduced the overall figure to 6,788 from Montero's original 6,832, while the number of female religious killed has been raised from 283 to 296.

<sup>xvii</sup> Mary Vincent, "'The Keys of the Kingdom": Religious Violence in the Spanish Civil War', in Chris Ealham and Michael Richards (eds), *The Splintering of Spain* (CUP, 2005), 68-92; Gregorio Rodríguez Sánchez, *El habito y la cruz: religiosas asesinadas en la Guerra civil española* (Madrid, Edibesa, 2006); Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, 100-121.

<sup>xviii</sup> In fact, 3 nuns were raped and murdered in Peralta de la Sal (Huesca) while a further 5 sisters were subjected to sexual assault before being killed in Riudarenes (Girona): Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: HarperPress: 2012), 236, 249-50.

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<sup>xix</sup> Archivo Nacional Histórico, Fondos Contemporáneos, Causa General (henceforth CG), legajo 1066, caja 1. In contrast, the body of a local right-wing politician, killed at the same time, had an ear removed.

<sup>xx</sup> CG legajo 1038, caja 1, ramo 7, estado 2; Vicente Cárcel Ortí, *Mártires valencianos del siglo XX* (Valencia: Edicep, 1998) 323.

<sup>xxi</sup> Vincent, “Keys of the Kingdom”, 78, 87; Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, 31-4; M<sup>a</sup> Pilar Salomón Chéliz, *Anticlericalismo en Aragón: protesta popular y movilización política* (Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2002), 101.

<sup>xxii</sup> William A. Christian Jr, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton University Press, 1981), 181-208; For the development of this, Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London: Reaktion, 1991).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Passional Culture: Emotion, Religion and Society in Southern Spain* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Isidro Moreno, *Cofradías y hermandades andaluzas: estructura, simbolismo e identidad* (Sevilla: Editoriales Andaluzas Unidas, 1985); Salvador Rodríguez Becerra, *Religión y fiesta: antropología de las creencias y rituales en Andalucía* (Sevilla: Signatura Demos, 2000).

<sup>xxiv</sup> Xavier Bray et al, *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700* (Yale UP for the National Gallery, 2009), 73-89, 128-69; William A. Christian Jr, ‘Images as Beings in Early Modern Spain’ in Ronda Kasl (ed.), *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* (Yale UP for Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2009), 75-99; Ángela Brachetti, *La Pasión de Cristo: representaciones religiosas en Andalucía* (Diputación de Málaga, 2007).

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<sup>xxv</sup> In Merback's words, when discussing similar, painted, representations of the two thieves, the 'rhetorical power' of these images depends 'on its oscillation between past and present, partaking of both but committed to neither', *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, 113-21 at 120.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Reproduced Bray et al, *The Sacred Made Real*, 164-9. This *cristo yacente* is now in the Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid,

[http://museoescultura.mcu.es/colecciones/imprescindibles/desc\\_12.html](http://museoescultura.mcu.es/colecciones/imprescindibles/desc_12.html). There is a larger photo at

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gregorio Fernández, Cristo yacente, 1627.jpg?uselang=es](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gregorio_Fernández,_Cristo_yacente,_1627.jpg?uselang=es)

<sup>xxvii</sup> The image was originally donated by Philip III,

[http://www.cristodelpardo.com/Capuchinos Cristo.html](http://www.cristodelpardo.com/Capuchinos_Cristo.html) For a larger photo

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santisimo Cristo de El Pardo2.jpg?uselang=es](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santisimo_Cristo_de_El_Pardo2.jpg?uselang=es)

<sup>xxviii</sup> Bray et al, *The Sacred Made Real*, 130-5.

<sup>xxix</sup> Cárcel Ortí and Fita Revert, *Mártires valencianos*, 265, 265-6.

<sup>xxx</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 627-55.

<sup>xxxi</sup> The bonfire in the area of Cartagena known as El Almarjal burnt for days, destroying statues by Francisco Salzillo (1707-83) and Juan Martínez Montañés (1568-1649), Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución religiosa*, 646.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Though see José Ramón Hernández Figueiredo, *Destrucción del patrimonio religioso en la II República 1936-9* (Madrid: BAC, 2009), 245-340 on the period between 16 February and 18 July 1936 and José Jiménez Guerrero, *La destrucción*

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*del patrimonio eclésiastico en la Guerra Civil: Málaga y su provincia* (Málaga: Arguval, 2011).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> All these images were of the *Soledad*, one with a *Cristo yacente*, CG legajo 1060, caja 1. The recent study by Jiménez Guerrero catalogues extensive losses of Holy Week objects, largely by value, *La destrucción del patrimonio eclésiastico*, 101-12.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Joaquín Arrarás and Carlos Saénz de Tejada, *Historia de la Cruzada* (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1939-42), vol. 1, tomo 3, 330; CG legajo 1164, caja 1.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Arrarás, *Historia de la Cruzada*, vol. 1, tomo 3, 331-41. Beheaded images included the *Virgen de la Esperanza*, among several others.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> See Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain; Moving Crucifixes in Modern Spain* (Princeton UP, 1992); *Divine Presence in Spain and Western Europe, 1500-1960* (Budapest: CEY Press, 2012), 45-96.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Christian, 'Images as Beings', 75; Easter Sunday processions in southern Spain often include an *encuentro* when an image of Mary meets her risen son. At that moment, those carrying the Virgin break into a run.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Michael Richards, "'Presenting Arms to the Blessed Sacrament": Civil War and Semana Santa in the City of Malaga, 1936-9' in Ealham and Richards (eds), *Splintering of Spain*; Mary Vincent, 'Expiation as Performative Rhetoric in National-Catholicism' in Michael J. Braddick (ed), *The Politics of Gesture: Historical Perspectives, Past and Present* Supplement 4 (2009), 235-56.

<sup>xxxix</sup> See further, Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm* (Chicago UP, 2000); Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion, 1997).

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<sup>xl</sup> Montero Moreno, *Historia de la persecución*, 644; for examples of religious items being reused to make clothing and stoke cooking fires, see Thomas, *The Faith and the Fury*, 113-14.

<sup>xli</sup> <http://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/galeria-on-line/galeria-on-line/obra/cristo-crucificado-1/>

<sup>xlii</sup> Bray et al, *Sacred Made Real*, 133.

<sup>xliii</sup> For the development of Marian cult, see Hilda Graef *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965).

<sup>xliv</sup> Bray et al, *Sacred Made Real*, 144-8 for *Dolorosas* by de Mena and José de Mora; Marina Warner, *Alone of All her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1975), 206-24; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin, 2012), 243-55, esp. 243-9; Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater' in Susan Rubin Sulieman (ed.), *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Harvard UP, 1986), 99-119.

<sup>xlv</sup> Simeon's prophecy to Mary, Luke 2:35. The 7 swords refer to the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

<sup>xlvi</sup> *Ineffabilis Deus* available at [http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs\\_pi09id.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/library/docs_pi09id.htm)

<sup>xlvii</sup> *Munificentissimus Deus*, available at [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_apc\\_19501101\\_munificentissimus-deus\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-xii_apc_19501101_munificentissimus-deus_en.html)

<sup>xlviii</sup> As painted by Velázquez: <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/diego-velazquez-the-immaculate-conception>.

<sup>xlix</sup> Rubin, *Mother of God*, 390-1; David Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition* (CUP, 2001).

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- <sup>l</sup> On the original cult, see Peter Linehan, 'The Beginnings of Santa María de Guadalupe and the Direction of 14<sup>th</sup>-Century Castile', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36:2 (1985), 284-304.
- <sup>li</sup> Brading, *Mexican Phoenix*; Patricia Barea Azcón, 'La iconografía de la Virgen de Guadalupe de México en España' *Archivo Español de Arte*, 80: 318 (2007), 186-98.
- <sup>lii</sup> Luisa Elena Alcalá, 'The Image and its Maker: The Problem of Authorship in Relation to Miraculous Images in Spanish America' in Kasl (ed.), *Sacred Spain*, 56-58, 61-63 at 58.
- <sup>liii</sup> These clothed Spanish images are usually a head and hands mounted on a frame or two crossed poles, Richard Trexler, 'Habiller et déshabiller les images: esquisse d'une analyse' in *L'image et la production de sacré* ed. Françoise Dunand et al (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1991), 195-231; for Castilian e.g.s, Antonio Cea Gutiérrez, *Religiosidad popular: imagenes vestideras* (Zamora: Caja España, 1992), 70-3.
- <sup>liv</sup> For example, in the Marian thought of John Henry Newman, Graeff, *Mary*, 112-13.
- <sup>lv</sup> Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 28-33
- <sup>lvi</sup> Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton UP, 1991); Thomas Kselman, *Miracles and Prophecies in 19<sup>th</sup>-century France* (Princeton UP, 1993)
- <sup>lvii</sup> Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, 67-91, 190-219; Jeffrey S. Bennett, *When the Sun Danced: Myth, Miracles and Modernity in Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Portugal* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).
- <sup>lviii</sup> Calculations by Christian: 'Religious apparitions', 67

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<sup>lix</sup> For example, Garabandel in northern Spain, Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, 124-56; Christian: 'Religious apparitions' and 'Holy People in Peasant Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15:1 (1973), 106-14

<sup>lx</sup> David Morgan, 'Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage: Fatima and Her Statues' in Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans (eds), *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 49-65. Pius XII crowned the international image in 1951.

<sup>lxi</sup> *Ecclesia* 31 May 1947; 17 Jan. 1948

<sup>lxii</sup> Morgan, 'Aura and the Inversion of Marian Pilgrimage', 57, 53; the 'miracle of the doves' was first observed in 1946

<sup>lxiii</sup> *Ecclesia* 17 Jan. 1948

<sup>lxiv</sup> As reported in several accounts, Mary Vincent, 'Ungodly Subjects: Protestants in National-Catholic Spain, 1936-53', forthcoming.