The cause of *luces* (lights) in Spain meant a purification, or “enlightening,” of the Catholic faith rather than its abolition. Thus, the Spanish Enlightenment is more Catholic than the standard image associated with France. While a number of Catholic (or at least non anti-Catholic) Enlightenments existed, the Spanish monarchy sponsored the predominant mode. Associated with “progress”, it focused on the educated elite of Spanish society. The Spanish monarchy found it in its interests to promote such progress in “science,” associated with the Benedictine monk Benito Jerónimo Feijoo (1676–1764), and in the growth of civility and economic productivity, particularly through the regalist program of increased political centralization advanced by the court lawyers in Madrid, especially under the monarchy of Charles III (1716–1788). Furthermore, this Enlightenment under Charles III coincided with many of the objectives of the Catholic movement known as Jansenism.

While in the 17th century Jansenism was a movement originating in the southern Netherlands and extending to France, which theologically affirmed the Catholic Church’s Augustinian tenets regarding the role of grace over that of good works in salvation, by the 18th century it had extended its reach to Spain and other parts of Catholic Europe and became more focused on political and legalistic matters involving the support of episcopal jurisdiction and authority at the expense of papal supremacy. As it became less linked to theological concerns it was condemned as pseudo-Calvinist and was declared heterodox in the bull *Unigenitus* (1713). The late or “second” Jansenism of the 18th century attracted the attention of Catholic princes such as the Bourbons of Spain who sought to extend their monarchical authority over church affairs (regalism).1 Starting in the early 18th century with the victory of the Bourbon dynasty in the War of Spanish

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1 The term “second Jansenism” is borrowed from the synthesis of William Doyle, *Jansenism: Catholic Resistance to Authority from the Reformation to the French*
Succession, regalism in the Spanish context became associated with a turn towards a more French or “Gallican” style of royal control over the church, a tendency that, over the course of the century, led to the confirmation of royal authority over the Spanish church in every possible political opportunity. Especially during the reign of Charles III (1759–1788), the efforts of regalism took on more Jansenist, or at least philo-Jansenist, traits in matters of religion, as seen in the revival of patristic theology over that of Jesuit moral theology, a drive to purify the Catholic faith from all that was considered “superstition,” and a push for greater independence of national churches, episcopacies, and secular, parish clergy at the expense of the Roman hierarchy. Oftentimes, then, the causes of Jansenism and regalism in Spain supported each other in a mutually beneficial relationship. Overall, however, the exact relationship is hard to pinpoint since the relationship developed gradually over the 18th century, constantly varied depending on the particular balance of interests at stake at any given moment, and led to unique coalitions of political and religious partners for each measure or act emanating from Madrid.

To date, most comprehensive studies of Enlightenment in Spain (and by extension its Catholic nature) have focused primarily, if not exclusively, on the predominant mode sponsored by the Spanish monarchy as “the Enlightenment” in Spain—an Enlightenment whose Catholicity proceeded indirectly from the fact that most agents

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Revolution (New York: 2000). See the annotated bibliography of the study for a great list of the secondary literature available on the subject.


3 William J. Callahan finds that the “Caroline Church” considered popular religious practices outside those of the church proper as something to suppress, or at best a necessary evil. William J. Callahan, Church, Politics, and Society in Spain, 1750–1874 (Cambridge, MA: 1984).