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Mexico in 1585: The Backdrop of the *Tercer Concilio Provincial*

Max Planck Institute for European Legal History
June 1, 2017
Vortragssaal, 18.00-19.30

Mexico City was the site of the Third Provincial Council meeting, held in 1585. The city was, of course, also the home to the viceregal government. In fact there were multiple institutions within the city that also had important roles in the civil and ecclesiastical governance of the region. This presentation will consider the many different elements that were of importance at the time that the prelates of the Mexican dioceses met in Mexico City. In particular, this presentation draws on the correspondence between the viceroys and the crown, along with letters written by royal court judges. These letters and reports provide a unique insight into the issues that confronted the highest levels of royal government. At the same time, the municipal council (*cabildo municipal*) of Mexico City kept records of its meetings, condensed in the institutional minutes (*actas*), which provide a very detailed view of life in the colony and of the pressing issues within the city. The cathedral chapter (*cabildo eclesiástico*) also kept records of its regular meetings that illustrate the life of the cathedral, while also providing glimpses into policy discussions that could have an impact within the archdiocese and eventually the ecclesiastical province of Mexico. Using these various sources, one can begin to observe the imperative issues that occupied these various groups at the time of the Third Provincial Council.

John F. Schwaller is Professor of History at the University of Albany and former President of SUNY Potsdam, both in New York. His research focuses on the history of the Catholic Church in colonial Latin America, the encounters between religious missionaries and Native Americans in central Mexico, as well as the study of the Aztecs and the Aztec language, Nahuatl.

He is the author of multiple articles and books, including *The History of the Catholic Church in Latin America* (New York University Press, 2011); *The First Letter from New Spain: The Lost Petition of Cortés and His Company, June 20, 1519*, with Helen Nader (University of Texas Press, 2014); and *Directorio para confesores of the Third Mexican Provincial Council of 1585*, with Stafford Poole (Oklahoma University Press, 2018, forthcoming).



This conference is part of the activities of the project *Knowledge of the pragmatici Presence and Significance of Pragmatic Normative Literature in Ibero-America in the late 16th and early 17th Centuries* of the SFB 1095 "Discourses of Weakness and Resource Regimes"