



STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

Jesuits and New Christians

The Contested Legacy of St. Ignatius

THOMAS M. COHEN

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

The Seminar is composed of a number of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

It concerns itself with topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially United States Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces through its publication, *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that it publishes.

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Thomas M. Cohen

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the first word . . .

Felons, fugitives, and persons of interest seldom contribute to the pages of STUDIES. But we too have a story to tell, and we should have a place to tell it. Sometimes the story isn't pretty, and there are no guarantees of happy endings. Here's one of those stories. It's pulp. It's film noir. All right, Lieutenant, take that searchlight out of my face and give me a cigarette. I'll spill everything. I'll leave out none of the details. Let's go back to the beginning. . . .

It was hot. Real hot. Hot enough to boil the olive in a martini. I was walking by the side of a blacktop road near Cornwall, New York. It's a town that has no glitz or glamour, like the Big Apple, but it will do for a retreat. It's just up the river from West Point and Bear Mountain. Only here, the single parade of the day takes place a half hour before dinner, when the cadets march lock step into the living room to do evening recon on the glassware. That's when the bears come out to chew over the follies of superiors long dead and those not yet appointed. Like I said, it's not always pretty. Fangs and claws can get ugly.

But back to my story. A cop car is sitting on a side street by the last row of houses before the road edges up toward Storm King Golf Course. (It might have been named after a hot-tempered provincial of times past. I don't know.) The cop leaning over the steering wheel gives me the fish eye. I thought she was just cooping out in the shade, so I kept going. Old rule; no eye contact. Cops and bears can feel threatened. A few yards further down the road, the cruiser slips up beside me and stops. A young cop rolls down the window. She's attractive, but that type always carries the whiff of danger on her perfume. (The nature of this journal precludes the descriptive material that Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, or Mickey Spillane would add at this point.) She said, "Sir." I didn't like the tone of her voice. She meant trouble. Big trouble. Bogart would have said "Dollface," but I took a look, a hard look, at the badge and gun. I said, "Officer." Good move. "Are you Tom?" she asked. I was about to say, "Hanks, Thumb, or Turkey?" but was smart enough to play it straight, until I knew her game. "No," I said, "I'm not."

Then she spilled the beans. I live in Boston. I know beans. "I'm looking for someone named Tom, and you fit the description." I felt better. No mention of a felony. Maybe I felt too good. I said, "Most people confuse me with Clint Eastwood." Big mistake. She didn't like the smart answer. Besides, she probably wasn't even born when Dirty Harry was cruising through San Francisco daring mugs, thugs, and misfits to "Make my day." No sign of a smile.

She said, "Where do you live?" "Jogues Retreat, at the top of the hill." She must have driven past the sign a thousand times, but seemed not to know that someone actually stayed there. Maybe she thought it was a wildlife refuge. More fish eye. "I see. All right. You can go." Then it hit me like a Hudson River shad across the back of the head. She might have been thinking about taking me in. Would they give me a nickel to call my lawyer? I had no lawyer. "If you see anyone who matches the description, be sure to let us know." I didn't know what the description was, but I told her I would. I wanted to appear cooperative. We parted friends, or at least we parted.

The trial separation didn't last long. A few hundred yards further down the road, I heard the scrape of gravel and the rumble of the Crown Vic slowing down behind me. It was her again. Lady Trouble. She wouldn't let go. She was a Rottweiler, and I was her chew toy. She rolled down the window on the passenger's side: "I really hate to bother you again, but I was not comfortable letting you go back there." The "letting you go" phrase caught my attention big time. I was right. She had thought about taking me in, somewhere. "You so fit the description of the man I'm looking for." Her use of the word "so" hit me. It was so campus; still, she had a gun. "I'll have to ask you," she said, "who are you staying with?" How do you explain a Jesuit villa or retreat house to a cop who may have a twitchy trigger finger? At last, I had an idea, my first since this whole thing started. "Would it help if I showed you some identification?" It dawned on me that she probably couldn't ask for it without cause, and I was only walking along a country road. She relaxed; "Yes, it would help a lot." My driver's license did the trick. I had my senior-citizen transit pass and Boston College ID in reserve, but didn't need them. She looked at the license, and then at me, then back at the plastic. "You're Richard Blake," she said. It hit her like a Hudson Valley thunderstorm in July. "Bingo! Twenty-five silver dollars and a big cigar for the lady in the blue suit with the 9 millimeter accessories!" I thought, but I had learned something from my Clint Eastwood remark: "Yes, Officer, I am." She was satisfied at last. From that instant we both knew our futures did not have room for each other. The cruiser pulled away and slipped out of sight. As the taillights faded into the distance, I thought, "Well, we'll always have Cornwall." She'll go off to round up the other usual suspects, and I, well, I'll get over it. Maybe not for a month, or not for a year, but I'll get over it.

There you have it. I still don't know who or what she was looking for, but it wasn't me. It was a day filled with those tiny events that make up that hill of beans we call life. Strangers, two little people, circling each other and their destiny. Does it mean anything in the greater scheme of things? Who's to say? An hour later, the sun is starting to sink into the tree tops like a scoop of ice cream melting down the front of my vest. The leaves don't draw a breath. A haze rises from the Hudson in the distance, floats across the railroad tracks, and clings to the riverbanks. A distant train whistle echoes through the hills. It was hot. Real hot. It's just another day. By this time the cadets had marched through the dining room and onto the porch. The olive in my glass is starting

to shrivel. The regiment settles in to the task at hand. They're quiet. Even the bears are calm this evening. My story unwinds in the silent, steamy late afternoon, without much interruption beyond, "Pass the cheese." They're amused. They laugh. For several days even the cook addresses me as "Tom." Cadets and bears can be tough. Real tough. One of them even said, "You'll probably put this story in writing someday." "Not a chance," I said. I lied.

My story had its comic moments in the telling, perhaps with a few Celtic embellishments, but it also stirred up several disquieting thoughts. Aside from being stopped for a broken tail light on a house car, I've never been questioned by the police before. Even though I knew my adventure was merely some silly bit of confusion that would be eventually straightened out, it's still not pleasant to be questioned by an official twice. It makes a person, however innocent, feel extremely vulnerable, and perhaps even violated. Should one take it seriously, as a personal affront, perhaps even resorting angrily to constitutional rights as an immediate reaction? Or resting secure in innocence, should one attempt to make a joke of the whole episode and engage in a pleasant conversation with the inquiring officer? Of course, one should be straightforward and respectful, but it's difficult to refrain from silly Clint Eastwood comments in the face of such absurdity. Yes, it's absurd, but unnerving at the same time.

In retrospect, my encounter with the local authorities generated more bemusement than outrage or fear. The officer was unfailingly polite and professional. She never left the car and never raised her voice. I was calm and equally polite, since I didn't feel particularly threatened. My pink complexion, blue eyes, and gray hair excluded me from the subconscious profiling that often taints interactions between police and potential persons of interest. My English is quite good, despite a tendency to slip into professorial pomposity on occasion. I could understand her questions easily and I could explain my residence and identity calmly and coherently. Most important of all, I carry a wallet full of documentation. With no previous bad experience in dealing with police, I was relaxed. I had no reason to be afraid or confrontational.

Clearly, many other people do not have these advantages in dealing with law-enforcement agents. Their involvement with officials can escalate very quickly from suspicion, to animosity, and even to violence. We read a great deal these days about the pernicious effects of the near-hysteria about aliens, legal or undocumented, that has infected our political dialogue. In some parts of the country, candidates for office have adopted the strategy of claiming they will do everything possible to protect our borders. Of course this is code. Does anyone actually fear that an armada of hostile Canadian herring fishermen will set sail from Antigonish and invade New Bedford, determined to take our jobs, sell drugs, corrupt our language, siphon our public resources, and destroy our American way of life?

Sadly the overheated political rhetoric has practical consequences, for police and for naturalized citizens, as well as undocumented aliens. Put the

framework of my story of dealing with the Cornwall policewoman in another context with a different cast of characters. Suppose that this exchange took place in a jurisdiction where the sheriff and police have been empowered to stop and demand identification from anyone they want, even an aging cleric on an afternoon walk, and they're rewarded for following policy aggressively. They fervently believe it's their patriotic duty. During the interrogation, it's clear that the two parties have only a halting knowledge of each other's language. The young detainee is terrified. The consequences for failing to produce the required documents on the spot can be catastrophic for him and his family. He and the police have a history of hostility, and both are frightened. One party is desperate; the other ready to use force at any apparent provocation, real or imagined. The possibilities for disaster become obvious.

Perhaps regarding anyone who looks or seems different as a potential enemy is somehow hot-wired into the human psyche from the days when our Cro-Magnon ancestors decided that anyone from another tribe must be considered a threat. And if it is a universal trait of our species, then we Jesuits cannot claim an exemption. In this issue of *STUDIES* Prof. Thomas Cohen recounts one such episode in the history of the Society. During the years of our Society's founding, Europe was going through a convulsion of anti-Semitism. After centuries of coexistence with the majority populations, Jews found themselves targeted for forced conversion, and subject to restricted freedoms. Expulsion or imprisonment loomed as constant threats for those who wanted to remain faithful to their traditions. In addition, after living for generations as Catholics, people of Jewish ancestry were considered suspect as well. In some regions, especially Spain and Portugal, the conflict brought tragic consequences.

As a Basque, a courtier, and a soldier, St. Ignatius of Loyola surely matured in that social context, yet for some reason, he rose above it. He felt a particular affection for the Jewish people. Not only did he long to spend his days in the Holy Land, but he even voiced a desire to share the heritage of Jesus. On a practical level, he saw no difficulty in admitting Jewish converts to the Society of Jesus. This position is truly astonishing when one considers his background. Others may have disagreed with his policy of inclusion, but they remained relatively quiet out of deference to the Founder. After his death, however, the controversy rose to the surface and could not be ignored. The element of paradox is striking. During these early years, Jesuits were bringing the Gospel to the indigenous peoples of North and South America, to South Asia and the Far East. While they were striving to establish local churches, they had to face the question of admitting these new Catholics to positions of responsibility, to orders, or even to membership in the Society itself. Yet while they were investigating these questions, a significant number of early Jesuits were determined to bar Europeans of Jewish ancestry from the Society. The controversy grew bitter. We can be grateful to Professor Cohen for helping us understand this complicated but fascinating chapter in our own early history.

a few second words . . .

The fall issue always brings several changes to our masthead. Four members of the Seminar have completed their three-year terms and are leaving the team. Gerry Cobb will move on from Seattle University to join the provincial staff as formation director of the Oregon Province. Tom Scirghi will continue teaching theology at Fordham University, and Tom Worcester will probably take on even more scholarly projects as a faculty member at Holy Cross. Michael Zampelli has been appointed rector at Santa Clara University, but I'm sure students and administration alike hope he will be able to continue his work with the theater program. It's been a great trip together, and I thank you personally for your counsel and friendship over the last three years. It may be presumptuous on my part, but on behalf of the entire U.S. Assistency, I'd also like to thank you for all your many contributions to this most important ministry of the Society in the United States.

Fall traditionally is the season for new beginnings in the academic world. Like our universities, colleges, and high schools, we always enjoy greeting a new freshman class. This year we welcome the three new members who have generously accepted the invitation to serve on the Seminar for the next three years.

Michael Barber of the Missouri Province is currently the interim dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Louis University. After completing his doctorate in philosophy at Yale, he became dean of the College of Philosophy and Letters at St. Louis University. His book *A Biography of Alfred Schutz* received the Ballard Award as the best book in phenomenology in 2007. *The Intentional Spectrum and Intersubjectivity: Phenomenology and the Pittsburgh Neo-Hegelians* is forthcoming.

Paul Janowiak of the Oregon Province currently teaches sacramental and liturgical theology at the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University. His writings include *The Holy Preaching: The Sacramentality of the Word in the Liturgical Assembly* (The Liturgical Press, 2000) and several articles. A graduate of the Graduate Theological Union, he also serves as vice-president of the Jungmann International Society of Jesuit Liturgists.

Thomas Stegman of the Wisconsin Province teaches New Testament at the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College. During this present year he holds the Francis C. Wade Chair in Theology at Marquette University. He completed his doctorate in Scripture at Emory University. His publications include *The Character of Jesus: The Linchpin to Paul's Argument in 2 Corinthians* (Pontifical Institute Press, 2005) and *Second Corinthians*, as part of the series entitled Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture from Baker Academic Press.

We're delighted to have these distinguished scholars joining us. With colleagues such as these joining the work, I'm confident that STUDIES will continue to provide the quality and variety of monographs that Jesuits and their collaborators in the United States and around the world expect from us, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

Richard A. Blake, S.J.

Editor

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Jesuits and New Christians

The Contested Legacy of St. Ignatius

In its earliest years, the Society of Jesus admitted members without regard to lineage, especially Jewish ancestry. Before long this policy of inclusivity led to a bitter division. Antonio Possevino urged Father General Mercurian to affirm the place of New Christians with a letter on unity within the Society. Benedetto Palmio was just as vehement in trying to persuade Father General Acquaviva to exclude New Christians. The debate took on new urgency as the Society spread to India and China.

I. The Founding Generation

St. Ignatius and the New Christians

The first Jesuits were committed in theory to admitting all qualified men, regardless of lineage. In practice, however, Jesuit unanimity concerning admissions was fragile.¹

¹This paper is a revised and expanded version of two articles: “Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the Society of Jesus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 199–214; and “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity in Antonio Possevino’s Appeal to Everard Mercurian (1576),” in *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica, Séculos XVI e XVII: Espiritualidade e cultura* (Porto: Universidade do Porto, 2004), 543–61. I would like to thank Robert Maryks and James Reites, S.J., for their comments.

The principle of ignoring lineage in admitting new members to the Society was enshrined in the Constitutions and upheld—with a handful of exceptions—throughout Ignatius’s life. Jesuits were among the most vocal and effective opponents of statutes of “purity of blood” (*limpieza de sangre*), which required that candidates for a wide range of civil and ecclesiastical positions throughout the Iberian world prove that they had no Jewish or Moorish ancestors. Christian descendants of Jews and Muslims were known as New Christians (in contrast to Old Christians, who were presumed to have no Jewish or Muslim ancestors). Opposition to *limpieza* among the first Jesuits was rooted in Ignatius’s insistence on inclusiveness and unity within the Society.² It was strengthened by the Jesuits’ pastoral ideals and above all by their concern that their mission work in Europe and throughout the Iberian empires proceed free of challenges to the validity of conversion. The unified opposition of the Jesuits to the *limpieza* statutes was threatened from many quarters, however, after the death of Ignatius. The most sustained threat came from Spain and Portugal in the form of opposition to the admission of New Christians to the Society. Since few men of Muslim descent sought to enter the Society, discrimination against New Christians focused on men of Jewish descent.³ In addition, Jesuits debated the admission of a wide range of other minorities throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

²The only book-length study of Ignatius’s ideas about Jews, Muslims, and New Christians is James W. Reites, “St. Ignatius and the People of the Book: An Historical-Theological Study of St. Ignatius of Loyola’s Spiritual Motivation in His Dealings with the Jews and Muslims” (Rome: Doctoral dissertation presented at the Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977). See also idem, “St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jews,” in *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS* 13, no. 4 (1981); Francisco de Borja Medina, “Ignacio de Loyola y la ‘limpieza de sangre,’” in *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo*, ed. Juan Plazaola (Bilbao: Mensajero, 1992); idem, “Ignacio de Loyola y los judíos,” in *Anuario del Instituto Ignacio de Loyola*, no. 4 (San Sebastián: Universidad de Deusto, 1997), 37–63; and Robert Aleksander Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010), 42–90.

³The most notable exception was Ignácio de Las Casas (1550–1603), a morisco from Granada who entered the Society in 1552 and served on numerous missions to moriscos, Muslims, Jews, and Christians in the Middle East and North Africa. See Youssef El Alaoui, *Jésuites, morisques et indiens: Étude comparative des méthodes d’évangélisation de la Compagnie de Jésus d’après les traités de José de Acosta (1588) et d’Ignacio de Las Casas (1605–7)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006); Francisco de Borja Medina, “La Compañía de Jesús y la minoría morisca (1545–1614),” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 57 (1988): 3–136; and *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, s.v. “Ignacio de Las Casas,” I: 687 f.

Antagonism towards New Christians was rooted both in the Iberian preoccupation with *limpieza* and in the contention that certain unalterable characteristics of the New Christians placed them in permanent conflict with the Society and with the Church as a whole. The nature of the animus against New Christians of many within the Society was summarized by the Portuguese Jesuit Manuel Rodrigues in a treatise in which the author argued for the exclusion of New Christians from admission to the Society, even if their orthodoxy was not suspect.

Although we may know all these men to be Christians and to be constant in the faith, surely the Society should hold them at a distance because of their character, for they stand opposed to the purity of true religion. They are children of this breed, enemies of the cross of Christ, restless, scheming, men who humble others that they themselves might be exalted. They seek the highest offices and wish to be called "rabbi."⁴

Ignatius had little or no contact with Jews or New Christians as a youth. Indeed, the Basque country in which he grew up was fiercely proud of its Old Christian heritage. Prior to 1492 Jews in Guipúzcoa, the province in which Ignatius was born and grew up, were obliged to wear clothing that distinguished them from Old Christians. During the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, the province passed ordinances prohibiting people who could not prove that they were of noble families—this group included not only descendants of Jews but also foreigners and other minorities—from settling in the region.⁵ Although Ignatius affirmed the Old Christian heritage of his family and his province when he was questioned by the Inquisition about his lineage and about his ties to the Spanish mystics known as *alumbrados*, he strongly opposed *limpieza* in theory and practice.⁶

The Spanish Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneira (1526–1611), one of Ignatius's most trusted companions, recounted three occasions on which Ignatius expressed his desire to be bound by blood to the Jewish people.

⁴"De baptizatis ex progenie Judæorum" (1593), *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, Inst. 186e, f. 337v, quoted in Borja Medina, "Ignacio de Loyola y la 'limpieza de sangre,'" 586.

⁵See José Luis Orella Unzué, "La Provincia de Guipúzcoa y el tema de lo judíos en tiempos del joven Iñigo de Loiola (1492–1528)," in *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo: Congreso internacional de historia* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 1992), 847–68, 855 ff.

⁶New Christians were prominent among the *alumbrados*, whose orthodoxy was suspect.

“One day when we were eating together in front of many people,” Ribadeneira recalled,

[Ignatius] said that he would hold it to be a special grace of our Lord to come from the lineage of the Jews. And he pursued the point, saying: “What, for a man to be able to be of the family of Christ our Lord and of our Lady the glorious Virgin Mary!” He spoke these words with such an expression and with so much feeling that tears came forth, and it was something that was widely noted.⁷

When the Spanish nobleman Pedro de Zárata objected, “saying, ‘Jew?,’ and spitting at this name,” Ignatius responded by giving him “so many reasons for this [point of view], that [Ignatius] truly persuaded him to wish to be of the lineage of the Jews.”⁸ Ignatius’s pastoral ideals and practices (including his ministry to the Jews of Rome from the time he began living there in 1538) demonstrate that, well before founding the Society, he had renounced the antipathy towards Jews that was common in the Basque country of his youth.

After the death of Ignatius in 1556, differences within the Society concerning the admission of New Christians hinged, like many other issues, on individual interpretations of Ignatius’s intentions.

Ignatius’s first sustained contact with a New Christian occurred when he moved to Paris, where he studied with Diego Laínez. Laínez, a descendant of Spanish Jews,

would become one of the most trusted companions of Ignatius and would serve as the second general of the Society. Ignatius’s friendship with Laínez strengthened his commitment to admitting New Christians to the Society. The Constitutions and the writings of Ignatius’s companions demonstrate, however, that Ignatius’s ideas about New Christians were rooted in a deeper commitment to equality within the Society and to Ignatius’s repeated affirmations of the Jewish heritage of all Christians.

Although Ignatius decided to include a question about lineage in the final version of the General Examen—the questionnaire given to prospective members of the Society—he affirmed in his words and in

⁷Ignatius of Loyola, *Monumenta Ignatiana: Scripta de Sancto Ignatio de Loyola*, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1904–18), I:398 f.

⁸Ibid., 399.

his actions that lineage was not to be a basis for exclusion.⁹ The secular clergy and most religious orders barred, by law or custom, the admission of New Christians.¹⁰ In contrast, under Ignatius, Laínez, and Francisco de Borja, the Jesuits became known throughout Europe as a haven for New Christians, including some of the most prominent members of the Society during the sixteenth century. This reputation was disturbing to many within and outside the Society.

During the Society's first five years, Ignatius appears to have discussed the New Christian question only with Laínez and other confidants who supported his policy of inclusion. The first member of the Society to directly confront Ignatius concerning this policy was Antonio Araoz, a distant cousin of Ignatius who was a leader of the dissident faction of Jesuits that emerged after Ignatius's death. The logic of Araoz's many appeals to Ignatius—which underscored the need to take into account anti-New Christian sentiment in Spain when making admissions decisions—was already apparent in a 1545 letter that addressed this subject. "Father," Araoz wrote, "until the Society is better known and better established in Castile, it seems wise to reconsider the policy of admitting New Christians, because for many people this [policy] alone is already a poison."¹¹ The following year Araoz wrote to Ignatius:

Regarding the admission of New Christians, it is no doubt a holy thing not to discriminate among persons, nor does the Lord permit us to do so; . . . nevertheless, for the common good, and in conformity with the temperament of the regions in which we find ourselves, it is well to consider this question, at least in order to examine [applicants] with more vigilance and rigor.¹²

During Araoz's service as provincial in Spain, he sought not simply to prompt a reconsideration of the New Christian question but to persuade

⁹The wording of the question—"Has [the applicant] come from a family long Christian [*christianos antiguos*] or one recently converted [*modernos*]"—departed from the standard terminology of the day, which distinguished between Old Christians (*cris-tianos viejos*) and New Christians (*cris-tianos nuevos*). See *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuits Sources, 1996), "General Examen," [36] (p. 31). The translation of the *Constitutions* is the work of George E. Ganss, originally published in 1970.

¹⁰See Reites, "Ignatius and the People of the Book," 163–68.

¹¹*Epistolæ mixtæ ex variis Europæ locis ab anno 1537 ad 1556 scriptæ*, 5 vols., vols. 12, 14, 17, 18, and 20 of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Madrid, 1898–1901), 1:241.

¹²*Ibid.*, 5:643 f.

Ignatius to exclude New Christians from the Society, taking the side of the archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez de Siliceo, in the latter's protracted struggle with Ignatius and the Society during the early 1550s. Siliceo, who in 1547 had introduced in Toledo some of the most rigorous purity-of-blood statutes in Spain, objected to the Society's policy of admitting New Christians and threatened to prohibit the Jesuits from administering the sacraments in his diocese. Ignatius's response was firm. In the instructions concerning the dispute that he sent to Francisco de Villanueva, rector of the new Jesuit college at Alcalá and a defender of the New Christians in the Society, Ignatius concluded as follows:

The continuation of our ministries of preaching and confessing is the first thing to be sought, in order that the divine service not be interrupted. There is no need to think about coming to an agreement with the archbishop or about accepting his designs and making our constitutions conform with his. Let him apply himself to understanding his own affairs.¹³

Throughout the remaining three years of his life, Ignatius provided a similarly firm response—a response that was rooted in the concrete ministries of the Society—to other efforts from within and outside the Society to amend the Constitutions and exclude New Christians. The Society ultimately compromised with Siliceo, agreeing to suspend the admission of New Christians in Spain and to submit to Siliceo's authority. The Society viewed these concessions, however, as temporary measures taken to restore peace with Siliceo. It had no intention of implementing the suspension. Moreover, Ignatius never contemplated amending the Constitutions, and he discouraged any discussion of the subject among his companions. The election of Laínez to succeed Ignatius as general ensured that New Christians would continue to be welcome in the Society.

Laínez, Borja, and a Papal Intervention

After the death of Ignatius in 1556, differences within the Society concerning the admission of New Christians hinged, like many other issues, on individual interpretations of Ignatius's intentions. A small group of Jesuits, led by Araoz, continued to call attention—quietly, for the time being—to the harm to the Society's ministries and reputation

¹³ *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Iesu fundatoris epistolæ et instructiones*, 12 vols., vols. 22, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 39, and 42 of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Madrid, 1903–11), 4:64.

that was allegedly caused by the prominence of New Christians in the Society. Laínez's response to this argument was as firm as Ignatius's had been. In an undated letter to Araoz written after Ignatius's death, Laínez invoked the memory of Ignatius in explaining his own position on the New Christian question.

In my view (and I believe it is the view shared throughout the Society), we cannot apply this remedy—that is, not admitting men of this kind into the Society—and even if we could, it would not be wise . . . for if you remember, Your Reverence wrote about this matter to Our Father [Ignatius], and at that time Our Father, having considered it and commended it to our Lord, resolved against [the advice of Araoz], and accordingly he placed this decision in the Constitutions that were approved in the last general congregation.¹⁴

The inviolability of the Constitutions' provisions concerning lineage was maintained throughout the generalates of Laínez (1556–65) and Borja (1565–72). Jesuits during these two generalates, however, increasingly made known their concerns about the prominence of New Christians in the Society.

The logical successor to Borja was Juan Alfonso de Polanco, a Spanish New Christian who had served as Ignatius's secretary. The expected election of a second general of Jewish descent provoked strong opposition among a small but vocal minority within the Society. This group, which was dominated by Portuguese Jesuits who were frequently at odds with their Spanish confreres, sought not only to prevent the election of Polanco but also to exclude New Christians from admission to the Society.

Polanco's opponents did not explicitly state that they rejected his candidacy because he was of Jewish descent. They did state, however, that after three Spanish generals, it was time for a change. Although national rivalries were a factor in the opposition to Polanco and were an important source of division in the Society as a whole throughout the sixteenth century, the true motives of Polanco's opponents were never in doubt, either within or outside the Society. The opposing faction convinced Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85) to decree that the Third General Congregation not elect a Spaniard to succeed Borja. Although the decree

¹⁴Laínez is referring to the First General Congregation in 1556, after the death of Ignatius. Laínez's letter to Araoz is cited in *Patris Petri de Ribadeneira Societatis Iesu sacerdotis Confessiones, epistolæ aliaque scripta inedita*, 2 vols., vols. 58 and 60 of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Madrid, 1920–1923), 2:50 f.

was subsequently withdrawn and the election was nominally a free one, the Society chose Everard Mercurian (1514–80), a Belgian, as its fourth general.¹⁵

The intervention of the Pope and the absence of strong leadership within the Society emboldened the opponents of the New Christians. It was to combat the increasingly bitter divisions that threatened the Society that Fr. Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) wrote a long memorial to Mercurian in 1576.¹⁶

II. Antonio Possevino and Mercurian

Unity within the Society

Possevino was born in Mantua and was almost certainly of Jewish descent.¹⁷ From 1573 to 1576 he served as secretary to Mercurian, about whom he wrote a laudatory biography.¹⁸ Possevino's memorial to Mercurian has no title or date.¹⁹ Its stated purpose was to urge Mercurian to write a "letter of unity" (*lettera di unione*) that would call attention to the growing divisions within the Society and would demand that those who foment these divisions desist from doing so. Possevino's appeal to

¹⁵On the election and the congregation as a whole, see John W. Padberg, "The Third General Congregation," in *The Mercurian Project: Forming Jesuit Culture, 1573–1580*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu/St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), 49–75.

¹⁶Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Congregationes 20/B, ff., 206–12 (hereafter Possevino, *Memorial*).

¹⁷No modern biography of Possevino exists. The most important scholarship on Possevino has been done by Fr. John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. For an analysis of Possevino's family background and of some of his principal writings on Jews and New Christians, see John Patrick Donnelly, "Antonio Possevino and Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry," in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 55 (1986): 3–31. Possevino was an accomplished and prolific writer (best known for his *Bibliotheca Selecta* [Rome, 1593]), and undertook a series of diplomatic missions in the papal service. See John Patrick Donnelly, "Antonio Possevino as Papal Mediator between Emperor Rudolf II and King Stephan Báthory," in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 69 (2000): 3–56; idem, "Antonio Possevino: From Secretary to Papal Legate in Sweden," in *Mercurian Project*, ed. McCoog, 323–49; and *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, s.v. "Antonio Possevino," by M. Scaduto, IV:3201 ff.

¹⁸See Donnelly, "From Secretary to Papal Legate," 323.

¹⁹The approximate date of composition of the memorial, which was written in Italian, can be inferred from the reference in the text to the recently concluded 1576 meeting in Rome of the procurators of the Spanish Assistancy. See Antonio Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Assistencia de España*, 7 vols. (Madrid, 1909), 3:8.

Mercurian was the most important effort during the generation after Ignatius's death to call attention to the need to rid the Society of lineage-based discrimination.

The memorial is a hybrid text: part personal letter, part learned exegesis, part polemic, part exhortation. It begins in the middle of a thought, as if this were the continuation rather than the beginning of Possevino's appeal to Mercurian, and perhaps the continuation of a conversation. Moreover, the memorial is written in code. It is directed, especially in its opening section, against an unnamed opponent whom Possevino calls "N." The identity of *N* has never been determined with certainty, but evidence in the text suggests that he was Benedetto Palmio, an Italian Jesuit who had been Possevino's mentor but whom Possevino describes as an inveterate enemy of the New Christians.²⁰

Explicitly, Possevino's memorial is about nationalism and, more specifically, about rivalries between Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits. Within his discussion of this theme, Possevino analyzes the problem of lineage, but at no point in the document does he make explicit reference to New Christians. Instead, Possevino writes of "tale persone" or "simile materia," and makes a series of similarly ambiguous references to the conflict over lineage.²¹ To understand the memorial it is necessary to examine the context in which Possevino wrote and to make distinctions—to the extent that it is possible to do—between his overlapping analyses of divisions based on national origin and lineage.

Possevino's opening reference to the conversations that the Spanish procurators had with Mercurian before they returned to Spain provides evidence about the context in which Possevino wrote the memorial. The procurators had protested the machinations that surrounded the election of the General three years earlier, that is, in 1576. Possevino writes that the procurators were satisfied with Mercurian's assurance that the effort to exclude Spanish candidates would not be repeated.

Implicit in Possevino's memorial is his understanding that Mercurian did not want to write the proposed letter of unity because it would reopen wounds caused by the Spanish-Portuguese rivalry over the generalate and other issues. But Possevino is interested in discussing those very problems—nation and lineage—that the Spanish procu-

²⁰Ibid. On Palmio, see *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, s.v. "Benedetto Palmio," by M. Zanfredini, 3:2962f.; and Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 131 f.

²¹Possevino, *Memorial*, 208v.-209r., 211r.

rators hoped had been resolved and about which *N* and others were stirring up animosities that most Jesuits thought needed to be soothed.

It was evident, and known to almost everyone in the Society and to the most important men of this court, that that person [*N*] was an adversary not of a few men but of an entire nation, and that this opposition needed to be totally uprooted . . . for if [discrimination] had not begun to be remedied, it could have caused irreparable schisms in the Society.²²

The prejudice to which Possevino refers could have caused schisms if unnamed Jesuits—most notably Mercurian, working with Possevino’s guidance—had not begun to address the problem. Gradually, however,

Obedience was a constant problem in the Society from the time of its founding, and would become an increasingly important source of conflict in the 1580s and 1590s.

it had become apparent to Possevino that the divisions within the Society were deeper and more intractable than he had previously thought. It was for this reason that Possevino called for a letter of unity that would clarify the question of nation and lineage

within the Society and ensure that the Spanish Jesuits would understand all aspects of their dealings with the Curia and remain persuaded that future elections would be transparent.

Possevino states his case unequivocally: Spanish Jesuits are faithful servants of the Society, and attacks on them constitute “the greatest obstacle before God that our order might face in these times” (206v). Possevino suggests that it is Mercurian’s sound judgment that has been most instrumental in eliminating at least some of the venom that *N* seeks to spread in the Society. It is notable that in his effort to isolate Palmio as the instigator of the New Christian problem, Possevino in the opening paragraphs of the memorial portrays discrimination against New Christians as one malevolent Italian’s export to Spain and Portugal. Throughout the rest of the memorial, however, Possevino portrays Palmio as the ally of a small group of Iberian Jesuits.

Mercurian had been inattentive to the growing divisions within the Society, and talk of discrimination against New Christians had been

²²Possevino, *Memorial*, 206r. Hereafter, when a series of quotations is taken from a single source, the page or paragraph reference number will be placed in parentheses following the quotation. This is the equivalent of “*ibid.*” followed by the reference numbers.

“perhaps too indulgently permitted.” Distinguishing between Old and New Christians is “like calling a convert a thief, or calling a convert descended from heretics a heretic. . . . The opinions that have been formed concerning this matter . . . have not been formed without passion” (206v). This is the first of the memorial’s references to passion, which Possevino places in opposition to the divinely inspired policy of non-discrimination that informed the Institute and shaped the words and actions of Ignatius, Laínez, and Borja. To be faithful to the letter and spirit of the Institute, Mercurian must write the proposed letter of unity.

Calling attention to Mercurian’s personal history concerning the question of Jesuit unity, Possevino notes that before being elected general, Mercurian had prayed for unity at the Third General Congregation, and had always sought to promote this unity, “and to bring nations together, and . . . finally, by divine grace, [Mercurian] felt no special love either for his own or for any other nation” (206v). In a peroration that Possevino places just before his detailed exposition of the themes that he wishes Mercurian to address in the letter, Possevino underscores the pastoral foundations of the problem.

God our Lord has always maintained in me an ardent desire that the entire Society depend truly and from within on Your Paternity (as is confirmed by the things that I have said and expressed publicly). And the more fully I have revealed to Your Paternity what I believe, the more I have wished to shed my blood in order that the Society might be united with you and within itself. And this has been the only consideration that moves me to wish that that letter of unity be written, and that some other remedies (which I will now explain to Your Paternity) be provided. (206v)

The Spanish Jesuits themselves had asked Possevino to arrange for what he now calls (for the first and only time in the memorial) a letter of edification. He portrays himself as a mere spokesman for Spaniards who want Mercurian to write this letter, which should address those who are fomenting divisions within the Society.

I believe that the aforementioned letter will be of universal consolation, that it will edify everyone, and that it will show that in the heart of [Mercurian] there is no other spirit than that of Father Ignatius and the other generals, and it will remove every threatening notion from the World. And so I hope that [the letter] will serve to ensure that the hearts of the Society allow themselves to be governed by the paternal providence of Your Paternity, without seeking evasive hu-

man remedies, as some men (driven by their passions) have sought, not without notable damage to fraternal charity. (207r)

Obedience was a constant problem in the Society from the time of its founding, and would become an increasingly important source of conflict in the 1580s and 1590s. Possevino notes that Mercurian has many times observed, verbally and in writing, that obedience must be rooted in the example set by the Jesuit superiors.

Whoever wants subordinates to be under the authority of their superiors must ensure that the superiors know and seek and possess the ability to care for their charges. . . . From this I infer that by divine grace the same precept applies to Your Paternity, if it is resolved that you shall make known your own spirit a little more clearly. (207r)

Possevino underscores that he is asking Mercurian simply to make more explicit an ethos of unity that the general has always sought to encourage within the Society. It is in this context that he refers explicitly, for the first time in the memorial, to the connection between divisions concerning nation and divisions concerning lineage. On the eve of their departure from Rome following the procurators' meeting of 1573, the Spanish procurators were still seeking to determine "*N*'s views concerning their nation, and their lineages" (207r).

Following the argument from Jesuit tradition and the authority of the general, Possevino turns to an argument to which he assigns even greater importance in making his case for a letter of unity: the need to avoid the perception that Mercurian and the Jesuit superiors are afraid of addressing directly the growing divisions within the Society. Possevino's first line of attack is that "it is the mark of the wise man to change his opinion for the better," and that, furthermore, Mercurian had resolved to counter the divisive words that *N* had addressed to the Spanish procurators.²³ Here Possevino links his argument against fear to his opening appeal to the Ignatian tradition of unity. He affirms that whether one looks to the Constitutions, or to "the example of past fathers general," or finally

to the disposition of Divine Providence manifested in Sacred Scripture, one cannot see how this fear can be borne within a Society whose Institute and freedom should even now be preserved with blood. [This Institute] permits no preference

²³No written record exists of what Palmio—if he was indeed *N*—said in addressing the procurators.

for lineage, or for human concerns (which are vestiges of paganism), or for its own honor, such as not allowing oneself to be touched by others or to greet them, as is the custom of some infidels about whom Father Alessandro Valignano has recently written to Your Paternity.²⁴

This passage constitutes one of the most powerful critiques of the concept of purity of blood to be found in the vast literature—contemporary and modern—on this subject. Moreover, Possevino here for the first time links debates about nation and lineage to debates about the Jesuit missionary enterprise. Illustrious lineage depends on Jesuit ideals, not on blood.

Possevino's argument brings together all the diverse strands of Jesuit opposition to the idea of purity of blood—from Scripture, to the Ignatian tradition, to the ongoing development of Jesuit pastoral ideals, and finally to the common humanity and intelligence of his contemporaries in the Society. The importance of the missionary experience to this argument cannot be overstated. Alessandro Valignano will figure throughout Possevino's exposition, and Possevino will return specifically to the proposition—powerfully advanced by Valignano in Asia—that conflicts over nation and lineage constitute a pagan survival that must be expunged from the Society. Possevino then affirms his belief that such conflicts will be resolved by prophetic action (especially action by Mercurian) and by divine grace in the context of the larger progress of the Society and of the Church.

By arguing that Ignatius's actions were the most important guide for understanding the Constitutions, Possevino sought to counter the attempts of Palmio and his allies to enlist Ignatius in their campaign against the New Christians.

Possevino now provides a detailed survey of the pastoral ideals and practices of the first Jesuits. The most striking characteristic of this survey is his portrayal of Ignatius as someone who had the courage to fight against some of the prevailing orthodoxies of his day in order to establish the Society and strengthen the universal Church. Possevino notes that Ignatius was a Basque who knew Spanish society from within and

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²⁴Possevino *Memorial*, 207r. In 1573 Mercurian named Valignano Visitor in Asia, where he served until his death in 1606.

that he was at one point in trouble with the Inquisition. Possevino discerns the workings of divine providence throughout Ignatius's ministry.

[Ignatius] was chosen by God to be a model and an ideal for all his successors. He knew better than anyone else what he wanted to say in his *Constitutions*. Our understanding of [the *Constitutions*] must thus be taken from Ignatius's actions, and from that wise strength that created this Society, amidst difficulties that were insurmountable by human means. This was a most wise and truly saintly man. He was an outsider in Rome, he had been in the Inquisition in Spain (although he was innocent), and he knew what a tempest in his own times had been stirred up against the Society [by the debate over lineage]. He nonetheless believed that the spirit of God did not make distinctions between people, and he believed more in Jesus Christ than in worldly caution, and he acted on this belief, so that it remained stamped on the souls of the Society, and he shaped the Society in such a way that nothing moved him to alter it, knowing that "what God has joined together, let no one separate."²⁵

Ignatius's contested legacy informed Jesuit debates about nation and lineage throughout the early-modern period. By arguing that Ignatius's actions were the most important guide for understanding the *Constitutions*, Possevino sought to counter the attempts of Palmio and his allies to enlist Ignatius in their campaign against the New Christians.

Turning his attention to Ignatius's successor, Possevino offers a moving tribute to Laínez. Ignatius had complete trust in Laínez, "without that vain fear" that plagues the Jesuit superiors of Possevino's day. Iberian New Christians had long served in the highest offices, both religious and secular, and Possevino asserts that no one questioned the effectiveness of their ministry, despite their well-known Jewish heritage. Possevino's reference to lineage in his portrait of the first Jesuits is explicit.

In this way God our Lord gave clear signs that, as has been said, there were ten persons [Ignatius and his companions] of diverse qualities, whether in terms of lineage, or experience, or other attributes, for the most serene eye of God makes no distinction among nations, persons, or qualities so that everyone might observe His precepts, and walk upright in His eyes. And the Society should preserve itself in the same state. (208v)

The first Jesuits—like the apostles of the primitive Church whom Possevino urges his confreres to emulate—were a diverse group in terms of national origin and lineage. Nowhere in Possevino's memorial are the dire consequences of abandoning the inclusive ethos of the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 207r; "[Q]uos Deus coniungit homo non sepat" (Matt. 19:6).

primitive Church more powerfully articulated. Once again, Possevino calls attention to the legacy of the first three generals, for whom “Divine Providence prepared . . . an example of the kinds of stones with which the Society should be constructed” (208r).

The Society had existed for less than forty years, yet the sense in Possevino’s memorial is of a chasm between the founding generation and the present one. The idea that the Society has fallen away from the purer ideals and practices of previous generations is a constant in Jesuit pastoral thought. And it is precisely at this point in the memorial, as he

turns to the generalate of Francisco de Borja, that Possevino directly criticizes Mercurian. This criticism reflects the tension in the memorial between Possevino’s hopeful appeals to Mercurian’s judgment and his apprehensions concerning the strength of Mercurian’s character, especially in comparison

With his assertion that Spanish confessors are unfit for ministry to those who need to confess their hatred towards their Spanish confreres, Possevino underscores the pastoral concerns underlying the memorial.

with that of Borja. Borja, like Ignatius and Laínez, had served in the court of Charles V and possessed a thoroughgoing knowledge of religion and politics in Spain. Possevino pointedly affirms that Borja never compromised his own pastoral ideals or those of the Society, as Mercurian risks doing, by permitting discrimination of any kind within the Society.

Possevino’s survey of the history of the Society through the generalate of Borja concludes with his recollection that some years earlier an Assistant in the Curia under Borja—presumably Mercurian himself—had come to Possevino to lament the gossip that was circulating within the Society concerning Borja’s shortcomings as an administrator, and particularly concerning Borja’s acceptance of the many colleges that had saddled the Society with financial obligations that it could not meet. Mercurian had, in fact, contributed to the “murmuratione” about Borja. Reflecting on the conflicts within the Society during this period, Possevino states that the problems that his unnamed companion correctly foresaw would result from the overextension of the Society were as nothing when compared with the problems that conflicts over nation and lineage could well precipitate.

Possevino again insists that distinctions be made on the basis of sins (“per peccati”) rather than lineage. It is in the context of this exploration of the implications of sin within the Society that Possevino turns to Paul, offering the first of a series of far-reaching pastoral recommendations to Mercurian. Those who harbor hatred towards Spaniards or New Christians (or both) in their hearts, Possevino suggests,

should do some spiritual exercises on charity, on loving one’s neighbor as oneself, and on the things that were said by Saint Paul to the Corinthians in the first chapter, and they should then make a good general confession with any father who is not a Spaniard, in order to make it more transparently. And in this way it is to be hoped that Divine light may be infused with greater clarity than has perhaps been seen until now, for [this light] is . . . “piercing until it divides soul from spirit. . . it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”²⁶

With his assertion that Spanish confessors are unfit for ministry to those who need to confess their hatred towards their Spanish confreres, Possevino underscores the pastoral concerns underlying the memorial, for he insists that confessions be made to men with whom the penitent can be honest.

The influence of Paul on Possevino is especially important in the context of Possevino’s insistence on the efficacy of conversion and on the need for self-examination. Here Possevino’s preoccupation with

Mercurian’s generalate, in Possevino’s view, is not the source of the divisions that exist within the Society, but it is the generalate during which anti-Spanish and anti-New Christian libels have for the first time been permitted to circulate widely.

lineage comes near to the surface, although, as noted above, the text never refers directly to New Christians. The theme of self-examination will figure prominently throughout Possevino’s many writings on the New Christian question. The memorial’s argument on behalf of the New Christians may be read as a confirmation

of Paul’s prophecy, in the lesson on the olive branch, that the Jews will be even more disposed to embrace Christianity than other non-Christians. Beginning with his reference to Corinthians and continuing throughout the rest of the memorial, Possevino will argue that, far from being a hin-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 208v. Possevino’s citation (“intuetur cor, et pertingit usque ad divisionem animæ ac spiritus, et discernit intentiones cordis”) is a revised version of Heb. 4:12.

drance to the Society, Jesuits of Jewish descent are among the Society's most effective members.

By way of evidence for this assertion, Possevino limits himself here to citing the important work of two Portuguese Jesuits (Manuel de Sá and Francisco Antonio) and of one Spaniard (Juan Maldonado). Later in the memorial Possevino will elaborate on the contributions of New Christians to the Society. His purpose is to advance the proposition that there are two spirits at work in the Society. One is God-given (here Possevino cites Ignatius's Rules for the Discernment of Spirits).²⁷ The other is produced by "schismatic spirits (dressed in whatever outer skin you wish, and driven by the secular spirit of the world), which seek to obscure the light of the truth and of God."²⁸

Possevino comes close to portraying the enemies of the New Christians as instruments of the devil. It is his first such stark characterization of the divisions within the Society. These divisions, Possevino implies, are a natural consequence of the work of the devil, who sows fear (and separation) rather than love (and unity).²⁹

Possevino offers a succinct summary of the arguments against writing the letter of unity:

Now, as far as I have been able to gather, there may be three possible causes for the fear of writing the letter of unity, namely: injury to the common good; [the concerns of] a few men from Portugal; and [the desire] not to continue the practice of admitting persons who bring dishonor upon the Society.³⁰

This passage—the text's most important summary of the New Christian problem—includes an implicit reference to impure blood. Though Possevino's language is indirect, his meaning is clear. His dismissive introduction to the list of impediments to writing the letter—"as far as I have been able to gather"—calls attention to the weakness of the claims of his opponents. More important, this new characterization of the causes of

²⁷See *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. with commentary by George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), nos. 313–327, 316–24, and 328–36.

²⁸Possevino, *Memorial*, 208v.

²⁹For a recent meditation on this theme, see William Sloane Coffin, *Credo* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004). The opposite of love, Coffin writes, is not hatred but fear.

³⁰Possevino, *Memorial*, 209r.

fear within the Society contains a subtle but important rhetorical shift. With his first reference to the Portuguese minority and with his dismissal of his opponents' concerns about the Society's honor, Possevino underscores his analysis of the true sources of the Society's honor and introduces a new argument; namely, that Mercurian cannot allow the future of the Society to be influenced by the petty prejudices of a few disgruntled Portuguese.

This argument will constitute an important element of Possevino's larger effort to isolate opponents of the New Christians, not only in terms of their small numbers, but also in terms of their commit-

Possevino declares that Jesuits who reject Paul's affirmation that "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek" are questioning—"perhaps inadvertently"—the efficacy of baptism, and "are creating a new species of Cathars."

ment to the spirit of the primitive Church that the Society is meant to embody and, finally, in terms of their fidelity to the Institute and to their Jesuit superiors. Possevino pointedly returns here to the example of Ignatius, who he says experienced "more pressing difficulties" concerning conflicts over

nation and lineage than those that Mercurian faces but wished never to turn away able men "or to permit that any defamatory libels be made, such as have been permitted to circulate both in writing and in hushed voices throughout the current generalate" (209r).

The last seven words ("in tutto il tempo di questo generalato") were added by Possevino himself to the apograph.³¹ The addition is important, for this passage contains the memorial's strongest criticism of Mercurian and reaffirms the analysis of the stages of development of the New Christian problem that has been implicit throughout the text. As we will see in Palmio's response to the memorial, Possevino does not address evidence of deep divisions that existed well before the generalate of Mercurian. The omission may have been a result of a lack of information about these divisions and especially about some of the texts that were circulating in the Jesuit Curia and the papal court. It is more likely, however, that the omission was intentional. In his effort to underscore the Ignatian tradition of inclusion, Possevino sought to place advocates of discrimination firmly outside the mainstream of the Society.

³¹See Donnelly, "Possevino and Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry," 5, n.16.

Although Possevino stops short of using the term “New Christian,” he provides a detailed survey of the contributions of individual New Christians to the Society.

The greatest fruits that have been gathered in Spain and in parts of the Indies have not been extracted without the work of such men [New Christians], and there are not lacking those [New Christians] in whom there are found today greater learning and virtue than in many others. And the mere hint or suggestion in Spain that such a distinction exists within the Society would be enough to remove the means of gathering fruit in more than half of Spain.³²

The references to the New Christians in this passage and in the ones that follow it are unmistakable. Here Possevino displays his characteristic concern with both pastoral ideals and practical realities. Apart from the damage to the spirit of the Society that it would cause, the attempt to distinguish between Old Christians and New Christians is a practical impossibility.

It is impossible to think about making this distinction in all Castile, Toledo, [and] Andalucía, in which provinces alone (not counting the Indies and the Province of Aragon, and the Spaniards scattered in many other provinces) there are more than a thousand men of the Society, and in the most important colleges, such as Alcalá, Salamanca, Cordoba, and others where many [New Christians] are always entering the Society.³³

The difficulty of accurately determining family lineages—especially those of New Christians—was a problem with which anyone possessing even a casual knowledge of the sixteenth-century Iberian world was familiar. In addition to pointing to the absurdity of trying to verify the lineages of several hundred potential New Christians among the Spanish Jesuits, Possevino notes the presence of many New Christians at the highest levels of the Spanish court. Though these men are silent now, he argues,

they could one day seek to bring about some kind of harm or division within the Society, for there is no doubt that they would be greatly offended—if only indi-

³²Possevino, *Memorial*, 209r.

³³*Ibid.* The question of new entrants into the Society was an important one in Spain during Mercurian’s generalate, for during these seven years the Spanish provinces increased their numbers by 44 percent (to 1,440 men), despite the fact that 127 Jesuits were sent to Mexico and Peru. See Francisco de Borja Medina, “Everard Mercurian and Spain: Some Burning Issues,” in *Mercurian Project*, ed. McCoog, 960.

rectly—by such a measure [lineage-based distinctions] in a Society which, while professing to be holy and to model itself after Jesus its leader, could ultimately be complicit in harming Jesus, and be a society of the World rather than of Jesus [societas Mundi, non Iesu].³⁴

Possevino on Obedience

This passage constitutes Possevino's first affirmation—in this document or anywhere else—that prejudice against New Christians will have practical consequences outside the Society as well as inside. Possevino's preoccupation with this prejudice remains in full view as he explains that opponents of the New Christians within the Society fall into three groups.

First, there are the Jesuits whom Possevino calls "villanazzi." These are men from poor, rural backgrounds. They are often despised by their confreres from elite families, and they seek to compensate, through lineage, for what they lack in virtue and talent. In directing attention to these men, Possevino underscores the sharp socioeconomic divisions that existed within the Society during the first generations. At the same time, he calls into question the claims of the *villanazi* to purity of blood. He suggests, not that they are of Jewish origin, but that if their lineages were to be examined, "there would be found more than four things—and perhaps in their own lifetimes—which would make them turn silent and grow red."³⁵ Possevino's tone here is consistent with the increasingly emotional and at times intemperate character of the language employed in the second half of the memorial.

The second group of Jesuits who oppose the New Christians are those men—for the most part Portuguese—who show signs of overweening ambition (because they believe that they have been deprived of offices in the Society on which their honor depends), or who reject the "eternal wisdom" of the Society concerning the unity of all men.³⁶ Possevino's attack on these men provides another powerful example of the Pauline orientation of the memorial. Possevino declares that Jesuits who reject Paul's affirmation that "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek" are questioning—"perhaps inadvertently"—the efficacy of baptism, and

³⁴Possevino, *Memorial*, 209v.

³⁵Ibid. See Cohen, "Nation, Lineage," 554.

³⁶The Portuguese Province contained a large number of Jesuits who were from noble families.

“are creating a new species of Cathars.”³⁷ The qualification is striking, for it leaves open the possibility that the questioning was not inadvertent. In an apparent acknowledgement of the vehemence of his own language, Possevino concludes by stating that he had not planned to issue this warning, and that he does not know how much good it will do.

The third group of opponents of the New Christians consists of men who simply lack humility. These are men whom Mercurian, Possevino notes, has frequently criticized. Here Possevino once again singles out the Portuguese, to whom he directs more attention than he directs to any of the other opponents of the New Christians. He focuses his pastoral concerns on both the Portuguese and Mercurian. The pernicious attitudes of the Portuguese towards New Christians have specific causes, and Possevino believes that Mercurian is ideally suited to correct the Portuguese on this matter.

The broad context for Possevino’s preoccupation with the Portuguese is his view of Mercurian as a man who lacks resolve and needs to be firmly prodded to stop acceding to the demands of a group of men who Possevino insists are in the minority even among the Portuguese themselves. The specific context is the abject apology of Mercurian to the Portuguese ambassador in Rome for having recently allowed the Jesuit New Christian Manuel de Sá to preach in the prestigious Chiesa di Sant’ Antonio dei Portoghesi. The apology appears to have been delivered at the request of Pedro Fonseca, the Portuguese Assistant, who intervened on behalf of the ambassador.

Possevino goes out of his way to explain and excuse the animus of some Portuguese towards the New Christians. The most notable example of this effort is his explanation of the transformation of Fr. Manuel Rodrigues, who was initially an ally of the New Christians but became one of their most bitter opponents. Possevino writes that the transformation was a result of Rodrigues’s decision “to accommodate himself to the disposition he had discovered to exist in *N*,” even though all the “best Fathers” reject any distinctions based on lineage and understand that those who make such distinctions are driven by “mere passion.”³⁸ Possevino then contrasts Rodrigues’s actions with the German Jesuit Anton Wink’s principled response to the New Christian question. Wink

³⁷ Possevino, *Memorial*, 209v. See Cohen, “Nation, Lineage,” 555.

³⁸ Possevino, *Memorial*, 210r. See Cohen, “Nation, Lineage,” 556. Possevino specifically cites Rodrigues’s previously warm relations with Fr. Alfonso Cipriano, a Jesuit New Christian who taught at Coimbra.

did not wish to serve in the position of Jesuit Visitor in Germany, which, like the Iberian world, had a significant New Christian population. He told Possevino: "Perhaps our Lord God wished that one who is righteous of heart and loves all men according to the spirit of Father Ignatius should not bring upon his soul the sin of being the instrument of any division or (to state it better) exclusion in Germany."³⁹ The support of Wink was especially important for Possevino because Wink had known Ignatius. Moreover, by invoking Wink, Possevino sought to disabuse Mercurian of the notion that the New Christian problem was confined to Spain and Portugal.

The most egregious sin for which Possevino holds the Portuguese accountable is their effort to prevent the election of Polanco as general after the death of Borja. Here Possevino returns to the conversational tone with which he opened the memorial.

But coming closer to the particulars of the matter of Portugal. First, it is a most certain premise, that ancient enmity and disunity of souls has existed between some of these men and the Castilians, and that NNN [some unnamed Portuguese] could not abide (whether due to their honor, or some other reason) that any government be in the hands of these Spaniards. (210r)

Possevino rarely makes such explicit reference to the Spanish-Portuguese rivalry. Again aware of his strong language, he is careful to emphasize the historicity of his account by citing the letters of the Jesuits in Asia who have been in the middle of the conflict over nationality, or lineage, or both. These include not only Rodrigues and Valignano but also Leão Henriques, Alessandro Reggio, and Bernardino Ferrari. The Italians are almost always found on the side of moderation and good sense, while the Portuguese are seen as fomenting divisions within the Society.

Leão Henriques was at the heart of the anti-Polanco intrigue. Possevino links this intrigue to the Spanish-led *memorialista* movement, which derived its name from the many memorials—mostly anonymous—that its members produced in an effort to accelerate the process of making the final profession of vows and to introduce a series of far-reaching administrative reforms. Many contemporaries viewed this group as having been composed primarily of New Christians, and some

³⁹Possevino, *Memorial*, 210r.

modern historians have shared this view.⁴⁰ Possevino asserts, however, that the group was made up of Old Christians who were driven by nationalism, by prejudice against New Christians, and by blind ambition and “passion.”⁴¹

Once again Possevino demonizes his enemies and underscores the unprecedented nature of the disobedience that is at the heart of the disputes over nationality and lineage (210r). He asserts that his unnamed antagonist, *N*, urged him to support the move against Polanco—and, by extension, against the New Christians—in the name of their shared homeland. Possevino recounts his response to this request—a request that lends increased weight to

For Possevino, the extent of the damage that the intrigues of the Portuguese have inflicted on the Society is known only by God.

the theory that *N* was Possevino’s fellow Italian, Benedetto Palmio—in the first person, a style of discourse that he rarely uses in the memorial. He recalls that he was so shocked

by the appeal from *N* that, “as a Christian, and one faithful to the Society,” after receiving a proposal that had been “neither heard nor imagined by me,” he went directly to Polanco to report it (210v). Possevino then provides a dramatic account of the confrontation between the Jesuits gathered for the Third General Congregation and of the small group of Portuguese dissidents, led by Henriques, who had convinced Pope Gregory XIII to issue the order prohibiting the Society from electing a Spanish successor to Borja.

⁴⁰Palmio was a vocal opponent of the *memorialistas*, whom he identified as New Christians (see below). Astrain’s hostility to the New Christians echoes that of the New Christians’ sixteenth-century opponents. Astrain offers no evidence to support his identification of the New Christians with the *memorialistas*, and Borja Medina sharply criticizes him for this omission. Maryks, however, presents strong evidence, based on an examination of Jesuit genealogies, that the *memorialista* movement was indeed dominated by New Christians. Like many other questions concerning the New Christians, the identity of the *memorialistas* is a theme that requires further research. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 125–28; Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, 3:593; and Borja Medina, “Precursores de Vieira: Jesuitas andaluces y castellanos a favor de los cristianos nuevos,” in *Actas do Terceiro centenário da morte do Padre António Vieira: Congresso Internacional* (Braga: Universidade Católica Portuguesa/Provincia Portuguesa da Companhia de Jesus, 1999), 1: 491–519, 494 f.

⁴¹Possevino, *Memorial*, 210r.

As the whole congregation was astonished, and everyone fixed their eyes on the Portuguese as the perpetrators of this deed, the aforementioned Father [Henriques], having now been touched in his conscience, knelt down publicly and asked for pardon, and said, "I am the cause of this." . . . But both in his own judgment and that of the congregation, he very clearly declared himself condemned. May it please God that he be absolved, and that there not follow from that occurrence some sad consequence. (210v)

For Possevino, the extent of the damage that the intrigues of the Portuguese have inflicted on the Society is known only by God. What can be known by men, however, is that the Society need not fear Henriques, and that Henriques instead should fear incurring the anger of his superiors.

The Pope's intervention and Henriques's dramatic confession provide the hinge on which Possevino's analysis of the stages of development of the New Christian problem within the Society turns. Years later, Palmio would provide an alternative chronology. For Possevino, the first Jesuits lived in a state of harmony with one another. Ignatius,

with his words and actions, bequeathed to future generations a principled policy of non-discrimination. Laínez maintained this policy. Then, an incipient anti-New Christian movement began to take root under Borja. The superiors of the Society, especially the superiors in Rome, censured his movement. After the death of Borja, however, came the Portuguese-led intervention in the 1573 election. Possevino argues that the divisions that this intervention reflected will continue to threaten to cause a schism within the Society if

Possevino sees the General as the only Jesuit who has the authority and breadth of vision—aided by men such as Possevino himself—to lead his fellow Jesuits in rising above what Possevino calls the "insubstantial shadows" of provincialism and prejudice in order to ensure that divisions over such matters as nation and lineage are healed before they become permanent sources of disunity and perhaps even lead to a schism within the Society.

Mercurian does not write a letter of unity or take some other comparably decisive action. Central to Possevino's argument is the contention that the Society must not adopt a policy of appeasing the Portuguese either concerning nationality or concerning lineage. Spain brings the same love and obedience to the Society as any other province. As for the New Christians, we have seen that Possevino believes that, in terms

of their virtue and dedication, they represent an elite group within the Society.⁴²

As has been noted, the memorial is written in code. Possevino's references to specific people and events are in most cases obscure, and in some cases indecipherable. At the end of the memorial, however, Possevino's references become more explicit, especially when he writes about the New Christian problem. He asserts that since the adjournment of the Third General Congregation, the Pope, the college of cardinals, and the European monarchies have come to understand the Society in a different way. As evidence of this change, he cites Valignano's experience bringing to India a group of Spanish missionaries, most of whom were New Christians, over the objections of Henriques and other unnamed Jesuits. "Aided by nothing more than the true spirit of the Society," Possevino writes, Valignano "overcame all those vain shadows, and showed . . . that the ruin of the Society would most certainly follow if it is allowed to live with these fears."⁴³

Possevino concludes his extended analysis of the machinations of his opponents with an exhortation to Mercurian that could not have failed to offend any Portuguese reader of his memorial. The problem with the Portuguese, Possevino asserts, is not that they are bad men, but that they are provincial and ignorant.

There is no doubt that the natural inclination [of the Portuguese], and the problems that they have not considered because they have never been outside that little country, would be greatly aided by the light that Your Paternity can direct towards them. In this matter may the medicine not be administered too late: and let others not make [the same errors] without the remedy of the unity that Your Paternity, by virtue of your office and authority, can most easily bring about not only by writing a letter but also by means of trusted people who are charged with this task. (211r)

This passage conveys better than any other the mixture of pastoral concern and disdain for his opponents that characterizes Possevino's memorial as a whole. Mercurian has a pastoral responsibility to instruct the Portuguese concerning the consequences—spiritual and practical—of their prejudices. This is an important message in the context of the *memorialista* movement and of Possevino's warnings about obedience.

⁴²See Cohen, "Nation, Lineage," 558.

⁴³Possevino, *Memorial*, 210v.

Possevino sees a fundamental pastoral purpose in the broad authority that is vested in the General by the Constitutions. In the case at hand, Possevino sees the General as the only Jesuit who has the authority and breadth of vision—aided by men such as Possevino himself—to lead his fellow Jesuits in rising above what Possevino calls the “insubstantial shadows” of provincialism and prejudice in order to ensure that divisions over such matters as nation and lineage are healed before they become permanent sources of disunity and perhaps even lead to a schism within the Society.

We have seen that Possevino argues that the first reason for the fear of circulating a letter of unity is the contested legacy of Ignatius concerning New Christians, and that the second reason is the wish to avoid antagonizing a small but powerful group of Portuguese Jesuits and their allies in Lisbon and Rome. The third and final reason is the fear of taking any positive action that might result in an increase in the numbers of New Christians who are admitted into the Society, something that Possevino insists is not being contemplated. Instead, admission should be evenhanded. Any other policy will result not only in the disturbances that may already be seen within the Society, but also in the driving away of potential allies to the side of the Protestants (something that Possevino says has already occurred in certain cases that he does not specify). Here Possevino returns to a theme on which he had touched in his brief reference to Valignano’s argument that discrimination based on lineage is a vestige of the ancient world that must be firmly rejected by Christians. Possevino underscores Mercurian’s understanding of the divisions “that the mere names ‘old’ and ‘new,’ as well as the wish to exclude those who were not legitimate members, were able to provoke in an old republic” (212v).

This passage contains the text’s only reference to differences between old and new members of a group. The reference, however, is not to Old and New Christians. Explicitly, Possevino’s words refer to the ancient world. Implicitly, they refer to the New Christians and to the Protestant threat to which Possevino had alluded in the preceding paragraph, for it is the Protestants who have become divided into an ever-greater multiplicity of sects, each one calling itself the most pure (212v).

Possevino concludes his appeal to Mercurian with a list of fourteen problems (“inconvenienti”) that writing the proposed pastoral letter would eliminate. Possevino’s preoccupation with discrimination against New Christians is central to his argument here. He notes that the proposed letter would eliminate the possibility that misguided Jesuits

“might one day suggest in a general congregation, through the king or through other people, that . . . they do not wish that a general be elected who is descended from heretics . . . or who has relatives of this kind, or some other undesirable characteristic” (212r).

The letter would also foreclose the possibility of a schism caused by those who might wish to broach the possibility of creating “distinct orders out of the single one that we now have, as has happened with other orders in which are found those who are observants, conventuals, and Capuchins . . . under the pretext and coloring of wishing to live according to the Institute of the Society interpreted and practiced by Father Ignatius, by whom there are many letters on this subject in Spain and in other places” (221r). The Society was among the few religious orders that had only one observance (the Dominicans and Carthusians had also remained unified), and Possevino believed that the Institute was under threat less than four decades after the founding of the Society.

The letter of unity would provide a much needed corrective to those who are preoccupied with lineage and who place their faith in “the old races of the Portuguese” but who finally, as Possevino stated earlier, are not as pure-blooded as they claim to be. Here Possevino refers not only to those Portuguese who might be of Jewish descent but also to those who may descend from slaves, from adulterous relationships, and from other such lineages. Possevino foresaw, with a clarity that few men of his generation possessed, that the effort to exclude New Christians would inevitably lead to the exclusion of other groups.

III. Benedetto Palmio and Acquaviva

Defense and Counterattack

Mercurian provided no public response to Possevino’s memorial, and the letter that Possevino requested was never written. Possevino’s memorial did provoke a response, however, from his unnamed opponent, Benedetto Palmio. Some time between 1584 and 1589, Palmio wrote a long, unsigned memorial to Mercurian’s successor, Claudio Acquaviva.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Robert Maryks has published the memorial in the original Italian as appendix I of *Jesuit Order* (hereafter cited as Palmio, *Memorial*, with paragraph numbers added by Maryks). In his excellent analysis of the memorial, Maryks identifies the author, probable dates of composition, and intended recipient of the memorial. Maryks writes that “[i]t is possible that [Palmio’s memorial] echoes” Possevino’s, and underscores the simi-

Possevino and Palmio employ the same language in addressing the problem of lineage in the Society. They refer to the same polarities—especially union and division, and love and hatred—and to the spirit of the Institute in general and of Ignatius in particular. Both men write of the work of the devil in sowing discord in the Society, and both accuse their opponents of aiding the devil by destroying the harmony that existed among the first Jesuits. The only exception to this use of a shared vocabulary is that whereas Possevino avoids referring to New Christians or lineage, Palmio refers explicitly to “New Christians,” “Old Christians,” and “neophytes” throughout his memorial, beginning with his assertion that “the multitude of neophytes from Spain” are the principal cause of the ills that afflict the Society.⁴⁵

Palmio, unlike Possevino, viewed Catholic orthodoxy of all New Christians as suspect. Referring to people of both Jewish and Moorish descent, Palmio writes that the Inquisition was introduced in Spain and Portugal because since the time of Ferdinand and Isabella “there have been found—and continue to be found—persons of terrible customs, both men and women, who under the name of Christians live according to the Jewish or Moorish [law]” (3). In the memorial, Palmio is concerned exclusively with men of Jewish descent.

The contested legacy of Ignatius is central to Palmio’s memorial. Palmio argues that he and his fellow Old Christian Assistants are responsible for maintaining “the purity of the Institute and the discipline that the good memory of Our Father Ignatius bequeathed to us” (7). Francisco de Borja, in contrast, admitted so many New Christians that Philip II called the Society “a synagogue of Jews” (5). In one of the few passages that offer evidence of Palmio’s views about how the religious practices of Jesuit New Christians differ from those of their Old Christian confreres, Palmio argues that the New Christians who were appointed by Francisco de Borja, “in comparison with those who were appointed by Father Ignatius, truly seemed to be men of another religion [i.e., another religious order], given to ceremonies and appearances. And they were closer to the monastic or Carthusian way of life than to the Institute of the Society” (7). Palmio’s accusation that the New Christians tend towards monasticism is at odds with the pastoral ideas

larities between Palmio’s memorial and the anti-New Christian memorials that Lorenzo Maggio, Paul Hoffaeus, and Manuel Rodrigues wrote in the 1580s while serving as Assistants under Acquaviva. See pp. 129–43, 129 ff.

⁴⁵Palmio, *Memorial*, 2.

and practices of his antagonists, including Polanco and Nadal (the latter famously declared about the Jesuits, “We are not monks!”). Palmio’s accusation is likewise at odds with the demonstrated commitment of New Christians to missionary work throughout the Spanish and Portuguese empires. This is a commitment that Possevino underscores.

Palmio’s memorial confirms that Possevino was incorrect when he argued that the Portuguese appeal to Pope Gregory XIII to intervene in the election of the fourth general had no precedent in the history of the Society. Palmio reveals to Acquaviva that the first such appeal occurred prior to the election of Borja (the first appeal of any kind was the memorial that Nicolás Bobadilla, one of Ignatius’s original companions, sent to Pope Paul IV following the election of Laínez).⁴⁶ Just before the Second General Congregation convened, “a little book full of complaints” was presented to Pope Pius IV.⁴⁷ Palmio’s unpublished autobiography contains additional information about this anonymous book. The book provided a list of New Christians in the Society, focusing on the men who served with Francisco de Borja, who was then vicar general of the Society.⁴⁸ The author called on the Pope to take steps to prevent the election of Borja as general, “in order that that faction of New Christians not move ahead, for its growth would cause damage and dissipation in the Society and would hold back the great good that God has mercifully sought to bring about through the Society” (9).

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The divergent chronologies of Palmio and Possevino—both begin with Ignatius—reveal an important difference between the memorials because they point to a fundamental difference concerning the origins of the divisions within the Society.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Bobadilla affirmed his respect for Laínez but wrote that Laínez was too much under the influence of Polanco and Nadal. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 90.

⁴⁷Palmio, *Memorial*, 9.

⁴⁸Palmio autobiography, in ARSI, Vitæ 164, f. 19r, cited by Maryks in Palmio, *Memorial*, n.45.

⁴⁹Maryks writes that “Palmio’s memorial is the only document that interprets the crisis after Loyola’s death in terms of the converso conflict” (*Jesuit Order*, 135 n.84).

Palmio's account of his own response to the anonymous little book must be read with caution. He says that he counseled against direct papal intervention in the Second General Congregation because he thought that Borja after his election would not continue to appoint New Christians as superiors. Equally important, Palmio affirms that when he served as a consultant under Ignatius, he opposed Ignatius's policy concerning New Christians but "I never revealed my mistrust [of the New Christians] to anyone."⁵⁰

Palmio writes that at an unspecified time—the internal evidence of the memorial suggests that it was after the death of Ignatius—unnamed Jesuit opponents of the New Christians sought to enlist him in their cause. Palmio says that he viewed these men as troublemakers and refused to join them out of deference to Laínez, whom he informed about the dissidents. Tellingly, Palmio does not report the response of Laínez to his comments, but Laínez's words and actions during his generalate—including the letter to Araoz cited above—indicate that he would have strongly opposed Palmio's interlocutors.

Palmio presents himself as an honest broker who sought only "transparency and simplicity" in addressing lineage in the Society (11). Now, at least twenty years later, Palmio says that the New Christians' opponents had "a good nose." And if some men had been listened to who spoke freely at the First Congregation in order to combat the evils in the Society, perhaps the things that we see [now] would not have happened" (12). Palmio regrets his defense of Laínez and especially the increasing prominence of New Christians during Laínez's generalate.

Palmio's chronology of the policy of the first Jesuits concerning New Christians contrasts sharply with that of Possevino, who insists that an unwritten rule prohibited the discussions of lineage that Palmio says were commonplace even during Ignatius's lifetime. The true extent of divisions concerning lineage among the first Jesuits may never be known. It is clear, however, that by the 1580s, when Palmio wrote his memorial, the taboo had long been broken.

Like Possevino, Palmio uses increasingly visceral language in the second half of his memorial. Both men employ the term "nation" to assign blame for the divisions in the Society to two distinct groups of people and to argue that within these groups, a small minority needs to be disciplined by the General. For Possevino, the group that requires dis-

⁵⁰Palmio, *Memorial*, 11.

cipline consists of Portuguese Jesuits and a few ill-advised Spanish and Italian confreres. For Palmio, the group consists of the New Christians who surrounded Borja and the “triumvirate”—probably consisting of Polanco, Nadal, and Laínez—that wielded its power arbitrarily (these men acted “not as fathers but as masters”).⁵¹

History Revisited

Although the first year of Laínez’s generalate was a time of heightened divisions, Palmio argues that the ascendancy of Borja and Borja’s ties to the New Christians were the key problem that the Jesuits faced during this period. Palmio writes:

And there was such open discussion of the opposition of one nation to another that it seemed that that early peace and unity for which the company had been admired throughout the world had been extinguished. And the first cause of our ills has been the multitude of neophytes from Spain, and their insolence, and the excessive trust that Fr. Francisco Borja has placed in them.⁵²

Palmio’s detailed account of the sins of individual New Christians includes a bitter attack on Francisco de Toledo, the first Jesuit cardinal.⁵³ Palmio seems to anticipate that such attacks leave him open to Possevino’s charge that he was an implacable enemy of all Spaniards. To refute this charge, he argues that his critics are driven—as Possevino argued that Palmio was driven—by “passion,” and that “the Old Christians and all the good Spaniards know and recognize well that we love them from our heart, and of this they are more than certain.”⁵⁴ Whereas Possevino’s memorial shifts seamlessly between his condemnations of discrimination on the basis of nation and lineage, Palmio draws clear distinctions between the two forms of discrimination, condemning the former and strongly endorsing the latter. Palmio insists, moreover, that Pope Gregory XIII and the papal court shared his animus against New Christians but not against Spaniards in general.

Although he never refers explicitly to Possevino, Palmio’s account of the proceedings of the Third General Congregation may be read as a

⁵¹The triumvirate to which Palmio referred may alternatively have consisted of Polanco, Nadal, and Cristóbal de Madrid. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 135.

⁵²Palmio, *Memorial*, 12.

⁵³“Palmio disparaged [Toledo’s] Jewish ancestry and called him a ‘monster’ in his autobiography.” See Maryks, in Palmio, *Memorial*, n.109.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 18, 22. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 138.

point-by-point rebuttal of Possevino's narrative of the same events. Possevino's villains are Palmio's heroes. For Possevino, Borja is an exemplary figure who was faithful to the Institute that Ignatius and Laínez bequeathed to the Society. For Palmio, Borja was a naïve leader who had been "deceived" by the New Christians with whom he ill-advisedly surrounded himself.⁵⁵

Possevino and Palmio provide conflicting assessments of several of their confreres within and outside the Society. Most notable among these are their accounts of the conduct of Leão Henriques at the Third General Congregation. For Possevino, Henriques is a traitorous instigator

Put differently, Possevino throughout his memorial portrayed his opponents as members of a marginal group that was at odds not only with the Society but also with the papacy.

of the anti-Polanco insurgency at the congregation. As Palmio sees it, however, Henriques is a loyal son of the Society who sought to promote peace by serving as a mere conduit for the demands of Cardinal Henrique of Portugal, King Sebastian, and King Philip

II that the Pope not permit a New Christian to succeed Borja.⁵⁶ Possevino's dramatic account of the congregation hinges on Henriques's abject apology to the assembled Jesuit electors. Palmio's account hinges instead on the humiliation of Polanco, who secretly withdrew from the assembly and with whom the pope was "little satisfied."⁵⁷

Palmio reports that he and Peter Canisius had been dispatched to Frascati for an audience with Pope Gregory XIII on the eve of the congregation, purportedly in order to speak with the Pope about matters pertaining to the death of the Cardinal of Augusta. Palmio took this opportunity to inform the Pope of the preponderance of Spanish electors at the congregation and of the likely election of Borja. The Pope told Palmio, "This is not good. The Spaniards will do as they please." Palmio writes that he tried to reassure the Pope: "And as I wished to excuse this development [namely, the large number of Spanish electors], His Holiness, laying his hand on my shoulder, spoke these words: 'There is no

⁵⁵ Palmio, *Memorial*, 21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23. The Pope's responses to Cardinal Henrique and to Philip II are in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano (Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 120 f., and Palmio, *Memorial*, n.204).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 25. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 138 f.

need that one nation should so raise itself up among us.”⁵⁸ Given Palmio’s revelations about his regrets concerning the generalates of Laínez and Borja, his account of his response to the Pope is not credible. The memorial makes clear that he was a devoted supporter of the Henriques faction and that his intervention was instrumental in shaping the Pope’s view of the congregation in general and of Polanco in particular. Possevino’s memorial provides no indication that he knew of this important audience with the Pope.

In his autobiography Palmio underscores the distinction between good and bad Spaniards in his account of the Third General Congregation:

The whole court was murmuring, seeing that only one nation took precedence in the Society. For this reason a great aversion was born, not for Spaniards, but for a certain kind of person newly led from Spain to these shores, very different from so many holy, modest, and wise Spaniards who were in Rome during the time of Ignatius and Laínez, and were loved and honored by all.⁵⁹

It is consistent with Palmio’s effort to refute Possevino’s accusations that he focuses his account of the congregation on the machinations surrounding the election of the successor to Borja. In his autobiography, however, Palmio writes that the Portuguese who appealed to the Pope sought to do more than prevent the election of Polanco. With the support of Cardinal Henrique and Philip II, they introduced a decree that would permanently exclude New Christians from the Society.

And they have not hidden their intention, but have openly proposed it and demanded with great insistence that the congregation take it up . . . and they have also sworn and publicly affirmed that they will have recourse to His Holiness if the congregation does not pursue it. And the Congregation did not pursue it, so they did [appeal to the Pope]. . . . they wanted a decree to be issued concerning the exclusion of neophytes. (n.205)

Palmio’s narrative is the only surviving account by a participant in the congregation that refers to this aspect of the proceedings.⁶⁰ If Palmio’s assertion that the electors openly discussed an exclusion decree is true, it is puzzling, at first glance, that Possevino—who was a vocal par-

⁵⁸Palmio, Memorial, 26. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 139.

⁵⁹Palmio autobiography, in ARSI, Vitæ 164, f.35r, quoted by Maryks in Palmio, *Memorial*, n.115.

⁶⁰See Padberg, “Third General Congregation,” 56.

ticipant in the congregation and in the ensuing debate about New Christians in the Society—did not mention this discussion in his memorial.⁶¹ Perhaps Palmio's account of the proceedings is false. The more likely explanation, however, is that Possevino, in his effort to convince Mercurian to write a letter of unity, decided to underscore the most dramatic

If Jesuits were to continue to question the suitability of fellow Europeans for admission to the Society, Possevino reasoned, how would they respond to requests to join from non-European converts and their descendants?

incident of the congregation—Henriques's apology—and to omit other plots against the New Christians lest the mere narration of these plots increase their legitimacy in the minds of his readers. Put differently, Possevino throughout his memorial portrayed his opponents as members of a

marginal group that was at odds not only with the Society but also with the papacy. He likely concluded that admitting that an exclusion decree was discussed in the congregation and in the papal court would undermine the arguments of the memorial in general and his effort to marginalize his opponents in particular.⁶²

Palmio's narrative improbably assigns responsibility to the New Christians for the congregation's debate concerning the lineage of the general. "The disturbances," he writes, "were created by the decree in their favor that some of these New Christians had proposed. By this decree they sought to ensure that no one could be excluded from the generalate solely because he was a New Christian." According to Palmio, the Portuguese introduced a counterproposal stipulating that New Christians were to be "perpetually excluded" from the generalate.⁶³ Even if the sequence of events in Palmio's narrative is accurate,

⁶¹Ribadeneira, who shared Possevino's views about discrimination within the Society, referred to the effort to block the election of Polanco in his unpublished "Historia de la Compañía de Jesús de las provincias de España y parte de las del Peru y Nueva España y Philipinas." See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 121.

⁶²As Mercurian's secretary, Possevino was aware of Mercurian's preemptive moves concerning New Christians during the first years of his generalate. Maryks argues that Mercurian adopted a "segregation policy" and "removed from Rome (and possibly from Italy or even Europe) almost all Spanish Jesuits, especially those who are accused in Palmio's memorial of being part of the converse lobby." (*Jesuit Order*, xxvi).

⁶³Palmio, *Memorial*, 29. See Maryks, *Jesuit Order*, 140 ff.

his contention that the Portuguese introduced their proposal in response to the aggressive tactics of the New Christians is not. It is evident from the accounts of both Palmio and Possevino that the anti-discriminatory proposal that Polanco and his confreres introduced was intended to blunt an effort that was well advanced and that enjoyed support at the highest levels of the Society and of the papal court.

In the end the congregation decided to table both proposals. Palmio's choice of words in explaining this decision is revealing. He writes that the decision neither to protect nor to discriminate against the New Christians was taken "in order to maintain peace and unity within the Congregation."⁶⁴ Implicit in this narrative is Palmio's understanding that the decision not to act was a temporary solution, and that the preservation of peace and unity would ultimately require the passage of a decree excluding New Christians from the Society as a whole.

Palmio did not have to wait long for this to happen. Mercurian died in 1580, and the Society elected Claudio Acquaviva to succeed him. In 1593, the Fifth General Congregation—the first that was convened when the Society did not need to elect a general—decreed that

in no case is anyone . . . of Hebrew or Saracen stock henceforth to be admitted to the Society. And if by error any such will have been admitted, he should be dismissed as soon as this impediment has been shown to exist.⁶⁵

Palmio was a participant in the congregation. Only the votes of the two dissenting participants (the great writer and missionary José de Acosta, and his Spanish confrere Francisco Arias) were recorded, but it may be assumed that Palmio voted in favor of the decree.⁶⁶ Possevino was not present at the congregation. The decree was revised in 1608 at the Sixth General Congregation, which limited investigations of individual lineages to five generations and made these investigations less intrusive. The debate leading up to the decree and the decree itself, however, played a decisive role in Jesuit debates concerning a series of

⁶⁴Palmio, *Memorial*, 29.

⁶⁵ See John W. Padberg, S.J., Martin D. O'Keefe, S.J., and John L. McCarthy, S.J., trans. and eds., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), Congregation 5, 204, d. 52.

⁶⁶ For a list of the sixty-four Jesuits who participated in the congregation and an account of the voting, see Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, 3:577, 593; see also Padberg, ed., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, 717.

other lineage-based exclusions in the missions that remained a source of division within the Society until the Suppression.⁶⁷

IV. Implications beyond Europe

India, the Society, and the Schools

The missionary experience was central to the argument against discrimination within the Society. As we have seen, Possevino, in addressing the New Christian question, also sought to address the larger problem of equality within the Society as it moved into new mission fields in Asia, Africa, and America. He drew on the personal experience of his fellow Jesuits, and had long conversations in Rome with Acosta and other returning missionaries. If Jesuits were to continue to question the suitability of fellow Europeans for admission to the Society, Possevino reasoned, how would they respond to requests to join from non-European converts and their descendants? Only a policy of inclusion would advance the missionary enterprise.

Like the debate about the admission of New Christians to the Society, the debate about the admission of Asians, Africans, and Amerindians gave rise to a sustained conflict between theory and practice. The two debates were different, however, in at least three important respects. First, the papacy, beginning in the early-sixteenth century, officially supported the ordination of non-European clergy. Second, the Portuguese Crown, which had campaigned against the admission of New Christians to the Society, sought—with varying degrees of insistence—to promote the development of the native clergy. Third, the Spanish monarchs did not share the commitment of their Portuguese counterparts to the ordination of native clergy. This commitment was stronger in theory than in practice, but it was an important factor in the fitful development of the native clergy, especially in Asia, before the nineteenth century.⁶⁸

⁶⁷For the mitigation of the ban against the admission of those of Jewish descent, see Padberg, ed., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, Congregation 6, d. 28 (pp. 231 f.). Through the years the decree was implemented with varying degrees of flexibility. It was not formally rescinded by the Society until the Twenty-ninth General Congregation in 1946 (see its d. 8, para. 2 [p. 625]).

⁶⁸It was the Crown that ultimately enforced the laws prohibiting discrimination against native clergy that most members of the church hierarchy in Portugal and

In *Exponi nobis*, the bull he sent to King Manuel I of Portugal in 1518, Pope Leo X directed that Africans and Indians be admitted to the clergy.⁶⁹ Although the Society would open two seminaries in Africa (in Angola and Kongo), it ordained only a handful of Africans before the Suppression.⁷⁰ Similarly, although the Society's college in Goa educated African students, these men were not admitted to the Society.

In America, the Jesuits never considered the question of ordaining indigenous people, despite the affirmation of Paul III, in *Sublimis Deus* (1537), of the spiritual capacities of the Indians. In Spanish America, Brazil, and New France, Jesuits spoke indigenous languages with most of their native converts. Few of these converts learned Spanish, Portuguese, or French. None studied Latin with the Jesuits, though Indians (especially Indian children) on Jesuit missions throughout America memorized Latin for singing during Mass.⁷¹ In Brazil, where the Society was the first religious order to establish a mission, the Jesuits struggled to find an adequate indigenous vocabulary with which to teach basic Christian beliefs and practices to the nomadic Indians. In contrast, the Jesuits were relative latecomers to Spanish America, arriving in 1568 in Peru and in 1572 in Mexico. By this time the church hierarchy in both viceroyalties had prohibited the ordination of Indians, blacks, and mestizos.⁷²

In Asia the Society, like the rest of the regular clergy, was more resistant than the secular clergy to native vocations. Jesuits throughout Asia as well as in Rome conducted a wide-ranging and frequently acrimonious debate about the desirability and feasibility of ordaining native clergy in Asia. Especially in the case of India, this debate was often inserted into a larger debate about miscegenation, which was famously encouraged by D. Affonso de Albuquerque, the first viceroy. Both Francis Xavier (1506–52) and Alessandro Valignano linked their opposition

throughout the empire had long resisted.

⁶⁹*Corpo diplomatico portuguez*, 6 vols. (Lisbon: Academia Real das Sciencias, 1862–1959), 2:15.

⁷⁰Charles R. Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion, 1440–1770* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 9 ff.

⁷¹The most important attempt to instruct native Americans in Latin during the colonial period was that of the Franciscans at the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco in Mexico. See David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 229–34.

⁷²See *ibid.*, 232; and Boxer, *Church Militant*, 15 f.

to the admission of Indians to the Society to their opposition to race mixture and their conviction that Indians were inferior to Europeans. The church that the first Jesuits sought to introduce in India was to be a replica of the European church. Xavier did not adopt in India the strategy of accommodation that his successors would adopt in China.

Writing to Ignatius from Cochin in 1549, Xavier declared that the Indians

generally speaking, as far as I have seen, are very barbarous and do not wish to know of anything that does not conform to their pagan customs. They have no inclination to understand anything of God or of their own salvation, and their natural strength has been ruined for every kind of virtue. They are remarkably fickle as a result of the many sins in which they have lived. They speak little or nothing of the truth. Those of the Society who are here endure great hardships working with those who are already Christians and with those who every day are becoming Christians.⁷³

During the same year, Ignatius responded to Xavier's reservations concerning the admission of Indian clergy.

Regarding the fear you show that it will not be possible to perpetuate the Society with the people of that country, because of the malice, etc., although I believe you do not speak without foundation, still it seems to me that one should not lose heart, and the means which present themselves to me to help and to remedy this evil, these I shall not fail to place before you.⁷⁴

Ignatius outlined five measures to strengthen Jesuit education in India, and underscored the need to open more colleges. In one of his last letters, Ignatius wrote that although students in India needed to be

⁷³See Francis Xavier, *Epistolæ S. Francisci Xaverii*, ed. George Schurhammer and Joseph Wicki (2 vols., Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1944 [rpt. 1996]), 2:22. For an excellent analysis of the racial thought of Xavier and his successors, see Ines G. Zupanov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India, 16th-17th Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005). On Jesuit policies concerning the native clergy, see Carlos Mercês de Melo, *The Recruitment and Formation of the Native Clergy in India, 16th-19th Century: An Historico-Canonical Study* (Lisbon: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955).

⁷⁴*Documenta Indica*, ed. Josef Wicki, 18 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1948–88) 1:512 ff., quoted in "Ignatius and Indian Jesuit Vocations," by John Correia-Afonso, in *Jesuits in India: In Historical Perspective*, ed. Teotónio R. de Souza and Charles J. Borges (Macau: Instituto Cultural de Macau/Xavier Center of Historical Research, 1992), 78.

more rigorously tested than Europeans because they were new to the faith, the more talented among them should be encouraged to enter the Society.

Writing on behalf of Ignatius in 1555, Polanco explained:

Of the children who are educated in the college of Goa, the cleverer and more firm of the Faith, and of a better moral character and a more pleasant appearance, may be admitted into the Society should they be inclined to do it; and although with more probations than others, for having come from unbelief, still they are not to be received less willingly than the old Christians if they should turn out to be good, rather it would seem with more joy.⁷⁵

Despite the misgivings about Indians in general and Indian students in particular that Xavier expressed in his 1549 letters to Ignatius, the Society that year was placed in charge of the Seminary of Santa Fé in Goa, which had been established in 1541 for the purpose of educating Asian and African boys.

The seminary under the Jesuits came to be known as the College of Saint Paul, and the Jesuits throughout Asia were known as "paulistas." The seminary's constitutions stipulated that in addition to admitting ten boys from Goa, the seminary was to admit eight boys from Abyssinia; six from Malabar, the Moluccas, China, Pegu, Sofala, Mozambique, and Madagascar; "and up to six from other nations in this region where there is a need and where [the students] might bring forth fruit."⁷⁶ The seminary was thus a genuinely international enterprise. No Europeans, mestiços (boys of mixed European and Asian descent), or castiços (Europeans born in Asia) were to be admitted.

Among the Jesuits charged with educating the boys was Nicolò Lancilotto, whose ambivalence about the ordination of native clergy in India reflected the larger divisions within the Society concerning this

Writing to Ignatius from Quilon in 1550, Lancilotto voiced his despair about the character of Indians and about the poor quality of the conversions that had been performed in India, including many that had been performed by Lancilotto himself during his first years in the mission.

⁷⁵*Documenta Indica*, 3:308, quoted in Correia-Afonso, "Ignatius and Indian Jesuit Vocations," 78.

⁷⁶*Documenta Indica*, 1:120.

issue. Lancilotto's early writings—some dating to before the seminary was formally entrusted to the Society—affirmed his confidence in the talents of his students. In a 1545 letter, Lancilotto lamented the lack of Jesuits to teach in India: "In this college there are about sixty boys, of whom eight compose in Latin according to the rules [of grammar] . . . and they have excellent minds, but no teacher who instructs them well, and who pushes them to speak Latin or to memorize anything."

The chronic lack of personnel was to become a common theme in letters of missionaries throughout the Iberian world. Nonetheless, Lancilotto affirmed that the Jesuits "are beginning to ask the boys to speak only in Latin and to learn some things by heart. I hope in our Lord that we will make do until some men arrive from Portugal who can [teach] perfectly" (40f). Writing to Ignatius the following year, Lancilotto reported that the seminary students were reading Terence, Virgil, Ovid, Cato, Jerome, and Erasmus, and he professed that "they have great talent" (145).

In 1548 Lancilotto was transferred to Quilon and succeeded as rector by the Portuguese Jesuit António Gomes, who would continue to lead the seminary when it was entrusted to the Society. According to a 1551 letter from Lancilotto to Ignatius, morale among the students was so low that some of the boys jumped over the walls and ran away from the seminary, and the rest, in a move that Lancilotto opposed, were dismissed by Gomes, who admitted several Portuguese boys to replace them (81). When Xavier returned to Goa in 1552, he banished Gomes to Diu and ultimately dismissed him from the Society. Xavier had no intention of ordaining Asian or African Jesuits. Nonetheless, he insisted that the Society follow to the letter the seminary's charter to educate non-European boys.⁷⁷

In the meantime Lancilotto's hopes for the training of native priests in India had faded. Writing to Ignatius from Quilon in 1550, Lancilotto voiced his despair about the character of Indians and about the poor quality of the conversions that had been performed in India, including many that had been performed by Lancilotto himself during his first years in the mission.⁷⁸ The following year, in a similarly despairing letter to Ignatius about the seminary students whom he had praised in

⁷⁷Melo, *Recruitment and Formation*, 79f.

⁷⁸See Charles R. Boxer, *Race Relations in the Portuguese Colonial Empire, 1415–1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 59–63.

1546 and from whom he had been separated for three years, Lancilotto wrote that “among them were many who were not only uncivilized but wild and incapable of all learning and virtue . . . and [they] could in no way be taught virtue and good manners, because they did not know our language and spoke only like parrots.”⁷⁹

The Jesuits’ growing concerns about the intellectual and spiritual capacities of their students, added to the Society’s self-imposed separation from both the Indian and Portuguese communities in Goa, created an unofficial ban on the admission of native clergy.⁸⁰ In comparison with the policies of other religious orders working in Portuguese India, the Society’s refusal to admit native clergy was striking. Between Xavier’s arrival in 1542 and the suppression of the Society in India in 1773, only one Indian—Pero Luís Bramane—rose to the priesthood in the Society. Pero Luís, who was ordained in 1560, was an effective pastor who pleaded with his superiors to admit more Indians to the Society, but his requests were not heeded, and Pero Luís himself was never permitted to take the fourth vow.⁸¹

Like previous Jesuit efforts to admit ethnic and racial minorities, the first efforts to establish a native clergy in China were both helped and hindered by the Jesuit superiors in Rome.

It was not until the generalate of Mercurian—during which, as we have seen, the Society was increasingly divided about the admission of New Christians—that the Society formally banned the admission not only of Indians but also of mestiços. Moreover, the Society placed a series of new restrictions on the admission of castiços.⁸² The Society’s policy caused widespread resentment among Indians, most notoriously in the case of the brahmin Mateus de Castro, bishop of Chrysopolis and

⁷⁹*Documenta Indica*, vol. 2: 1550–1553, 169, quoted in Melo, *Recruitment and Formation*, 79.

⁸⁰Like Jesuits in other missions in Asia and America, the Jesuits in India concluded that they could pursue their ministries most effectively by standing apart from Indian and Portuguese society. Zupanov writes that “Jesuits fashioned themselves into permanent strangers” (*Missionary Tropics*, 199).

⁸¹*Ibid.*, Epilogue.

⁸²For the text of Mercurian’s instructions on this issue, which were sent in 1579 to Ruy Vicente, provincial in Goa, see Melo, *Recruitment and Formation*, 166.

vicar-apostolic of Bijapur. Though he had studied at the Collegio Urbano and won praise from the Propaganda Fide in Rome, Castro was scorned, in part because of his race, by D. Afonso Mendes, the Jesuit patriarch of Ethiopia.⁸³

The Chinese Experiment

In China—the mission on which Xavier increasingly placed his hopes during the last years of his ministry—the Society conducted a sustained and moderately successful effort to ordain native clergy. Among the central points that the Jesuits in China addressed in connection with native clergy were questions about the advisability of compromising the identification of Christianity with European missionaries, divisions along generational and national lines, divisions between Jesuits at the court in Beijing and those in the mission field, and differences concerning the potential of Chinese priests to master Latin, honor vows of celibacy, and accept other key elements of the priestly vocation.⁸⁴

⁸³See Charles R. Boxer, “The Problem of the Native Clergy in the Portuguese and Spanish Empires from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Studies in Church History*, vol. 6: *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, ed. Geoffrey J. Cuming (London, 1970); rpt. in *Christianity and Missions, 1450–1800*, ed. J.S. Cummins (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1997), 99; and Melo, *Recruitment and Formation*, 154 and passim. Boxer, who rarely makes errors in translations, misrepresents Mendes’s views when he writes that Mendes called Castro a “bare-bottomed nigger.” The passage in question reads as follows: “Mathieu de Castro est un brahme, Mendez en est d’accord; il ajoute même que ses parents étaient ‘sénateurs’ (decuriones) en leur village. Mais que les vénérables cardinaux n’aillent pas s’y tromper; les brahmes et les sénateurs dont il s’agit ne sont point les grands et nobles personnages que l’on pourrait croire, tant s’en faut; ce ne sont en réalité que des Indiens fort quelconques (tenues Indi), des noirs en somme (necritantes), qui se parent les jours de fête à la portugaise mais qui vont quasi nus le reste du temps—je passe ici quatre lignes d’une ironie un peu grosse; Mathieu travaillait aux plantations de riz avec son frère aîné; et ce frère, enrichi maintenant et ennobli par l’épiscopat de son cadet, devait autrefois gagner sa vie à engraisser la volaille et la porter lui-même en ville pour l’exhiber sur les marchés.” See Theodore Ghesquière, *Mathieu de Castro, premier vicaire apostolique aux Indes* (Louvain, 1937), 32; Boxer quotes the reference to “necritantes” in “The Problem of the Native Clergy,” 99.

⁸⁴On these and other factors that contributed to the long delay in ordaining Chinese priests, see Nicolas Standaert, “Jesuits in China,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 169–85; idem, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 1: 635–1800 (Leiden, Brill, 2001); Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 142–51; George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1962); Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of*

The Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) was preoccupied with the problem of native clergy well before he arrived in China in 1582. Writing from Goa, where he spent almost four years en route to the China mission, Ricci strongly criticized his Portuguese confreres for their refusal to ordain Indian priests and for the humiliation to which Europeans routinely subjected Indians, both Christian and non-Christian.

No one has shown [the Indians] as much understanding as have our Fathers. It is for this reason that they have a special love for us. If now they are to be made to feel that even our Fathers are against them and do not want to enable them to hold their heads high and to make it possible for them to aspire to any office or benefice on a basis of equality with Europeans, as education enables them to do, I am very much afraid that they will come to hate us.⁸⁵

Ricci, like Ignatius and Possevino before him, insisted that intellectual and spiritual gifts be the principal criteria for admission to the Society, and that considerations of lineage be excluded. During the early years of the China mission, a small number of Chinese Christians—four or five in any given year—served the Society as lay brothers.⁸⁶ Ricci's missionary strategy focused on the accommodation of Chinese culture by the Society, on the focusing on the conversion of the Chinese elite, and on the use of Western science as a means of stimulating interest in Christianity.⁸⁷ It was not until after Ricci's death, however, that the Jesuits began the long process that would lead to the ordination of Chinese priests.

Like previous Jesuit efforts to admit ethnic and racial minorities, the first efforts to establish a native clergy in China were both helped and hindered by the Jesuit superiors in Rome. Also like previous efforts, the effort to ordain Chinese clergy was shaped in large part by national differences within the Society.

Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 262–66; and Boxer, "The Problem of the Native Clergy."

⁸⁵Ricci, *Opere storiche*, ed. Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, 2 vols. (Macerata: Girgetti, 1911–13), 2:20 f., quoted in Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 25.

⁸⁶Nicolas Standaert, "Number of Missionaries," in Standaert, ed., *Handbook*, 301.

⁸⁷Claudia von Collani, "Jesuits," in *ibid.*, 310. Liam Brockey has convincingly shown that not all the China Jesuits adopted Ricci's strategy, and that the Jesuits—especially Ricci's successors—did extensive mission work in rural areas with the assistance of Chinese laypeople. See *Journey to the East*, introduction and *passim*.

In 1613 Niccolò Longobardo (1565–1655), who succeeded Ricci as superior of the China mission, sent Nicholas Trigault (1577–1628) to Rome. Trigault’s main goal—in addition to stimulating interest in and obtaining material support for the China mission—was to persuade Acquaviva to establish a new province in China. In this way Trigault sought to remove the China mission from the jurisdiction of Portuguese Jesuits who opposed the Italians’ efforts to train native clergy and who were reluctant to divert resources to China from the more successful missions in Japan.⁸⁸ Once again, Jesuits who sought to make the Society as inclusive as possible faced the opposition of Portuguese members of the Society who remained preoccupied with questions of nation and lineage in establishing policies within the Society and in determining the criteria for admission.

In 1606 Acquaviva, citing the newness of the China mission, had ordered that no Chinese priests be ordained, but he appears to have changed his mind during the intervening years, for he granted Trigault’s request to establish a new province and did not hinder Trigault’s pursuit of the other goals of the mission. Upon arriving in Rome, Trigault quickly enlisted the help of the Jesuit cardinal Robert Bellarmine, chairman of the Holy Office and a former teacher of Ricci, in obtaining the permission of the Holy Office to ordain Chinese priests and to introduce a Chinese liturgy.⁸⁹ Trigault also obtained a dispensation from Pope Alexander VII that provided for the ordination of men who were not proficient in Latin. This dispensation was one of the key elements of the Jesuits’ proposal to ordain mature members of the *literati* class in China.

These promising concessions did not, however, produce the results for which Trigault and the Jesuits of the China mission hoped. Acquaviva died in 1615 before the new province had been formally established, and the Chinese liturgy was never introduced, although the decree that approved it was promulgated in China.⁹⁰ By the time Trigault returned to China, Christians were being persecuted, the survival of the mission was in doubt, and the Jesuits’ collaboration with Chinese within the Society remained limited to work with laypeople.

⁸⁸Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 171; on national and generational rivalries in the China mission, see Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 147–50.

⁸⁹Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 164; von Collani, “Jesuits,” 310.

⁹⁰Dunne, *Generation of Giants*, 165.

A small number of Chinese overcame the obstacles to ordination by studying in Europe. The first of these, Zheng Weixin (1633–73), known as Manuel de Siqueira, entered the Society in 1651, was ordained in Coimbra in 1664, and returned to China in 1668.⁹¹ Several other Chinese Jesuits were trained in Rome and Paris during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁹² Most

of the Chinese Jesuits, however, were literati who were ordained in China in accordance with the 1615 language dispensation.⁹³ Supported by the Jesuit general Giovanni Paolo Oliva (1664–81) and by King Pedro II of Portugal, the Italian Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta (1625–96) began an effort in the 1670s to train “literati of ripe age and virtue.”⁹⁴ By this

time the need to ordain literati and other qualified men, especially in areas that were not subject to Spanish or Portuguese rule, was also of vital concern to the papacy, which sought to address the failure of the religious orders in general and of the Jesuits in particular to train significant numbers of native clergy.⁹⁵

As the Jesuits of the China mission continued to be divided on this subject, the ordination in 1685 of the first Chinese bishop, Luo Wenzao of Nanjing, and the elevation in 1687 of Intorcetta to the post of vice-

Although the erratic behavior of one of these priests and a new wave of persecution of Chinese Christians limited the development of the native clergy in subsequent years, more than twenty Chinese priests entered the Society between 1688 and 1755, when the Society was suppressed in China.

⁹¹See Francis A. Rouleau, “The First Chinese Priest of the Society of Jesus: Emmanuel de Siqueira, 1633–1673 (Cheng Ma-no, Wei-hsin),” in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 28 (1959): 3–50. Chinese priests who entered other religious orders and the secular clergy studied in several cities in Europe—including the Collegio dei Cinesi in Naples—as well as in Manila and Siam.

⁹²Standaert, “Chinese Christians Going Abroad,” in Standaert, ed., *Handbook*, 449.

⁹³Standaert and John Witek, “Chinese Clergy,” in *ibid.*, 462f.

⁹⁴Intorcetta memorial (1674) to Fr. João Cardoso, provincial of Japan, quoted in Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 149.

⁹⁵Boxer, “Problem of the Native Clergy,” 101.

provincial, were especially important because these appointments enabled Intorcetta to begin to implement his plans to train Chinese priests. After receiving training in Macau, three Chinese priests entered the Society in 1688.⁹⁶ Although the erratic behavior of one of these priests and a new wave of persecution of Chinese Christians limited the development of the native clergy in subsequent years, more than twenty Chinese priests entered the Society between 1688 and 1755, when the Society was suppressed in China. These men made up about one-third of the fifty to seventy Jesuits working in China in 1755.⁹⁷

Only after the Suppression (1773–1814) did the national origins of members of the Society come to reflect the international character of the Society's pastoral ideals and practices. The Society has made a concerted effort, especially since 1945, to recruit men from a wide range of national, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. This effort is consistent with the attempt of the Catholic Church after Vatican II to promote the indigenous character of the Church throughout the world. Cardinal J. Paracattil underscored this effort—to which the changing composition of the clergy is contributing—in his address to the 1970 Synod in New Delhi.

The Catholic Church is neither Latin nor Greek nor Slav, but universal. Unless the Church can show herself Indian in India and Chinese in China and Japanese in Japan, she will never reveal her authentically Catholic character.⁹⁸

At the beginning of the twenty-first century and for the first time in the Society's history, its largest assistancy—the South Asia Assistancy—is to be found outside the United States and Europe.⁹⁹

⁹⁶Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 150 f.; Standaert and Witek, "Chinese Clergy," 463.

⁹⁷Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 151; Standaert and Witek, "Chinese Clergy," 463.

⁹⁸Quoted in Enrique Dussell, "Theologies of the 'Periphery' and the 'Centre': Encounter or Confrontation?" in *Different Theologies, Common Responsibility: Babel or Pentecost?* ed. V. Elizondo, C. Geffré, and G. Gutierrez (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1987) 88.

⁹⁹In 2004 there were 3,683 Jesuits in India and 3,309 in the United States. It is expected that this differential will continue to increase during the coming years. See *Supplementum Catalogorum Societatis Iesu, 2005* (Rome: General Curia of the Society of Jesus, 2004). By 2008 there were fewer than 3,000 Jesuits in the U.S. Assistancy.

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