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Kulturen des Christentums – Neue Zugänge zur Frühen Neuzeit | Cultures of Christianity – New Approaches to Early Modern History

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Volume 5

"Cultures of Christianity" is a platform supporting innovative research on the histories of Christianity in the early modern period. We are particularly interested in approaches inspired by cultural history which emphasise the interactions among diverse religious phenomena and their political, social, economic, intellectual, and media environments. We do not treat religion as a fixed entity. Rather, we see religious cultures as the result of dynamic processes of identity affirmation and demarcation—shaped by the practices of individuals, groups, and institutions. To understand this complexity, we will pay close attention to regional plurality, local autonomy, and heterogeneous forms of Christianity.
Chronologically, we understand our "early modern period" as a long epoch. We assume that many relevant phenomena had their roots in earlier periods and that early modern configurations of Christianity continued into the modern era. We are deeply interested in these continuities and will give them special attention. Geographically, our project is grounded in the recognition that Christianity became a decisively more global religion during the early modern period. Accordingly, we are excited to support research on all world regions as well as contributions to a global history of religious interdependence.

The Editors

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Giuanna Beeli / Lukas Camenzind / Nicolas Rogger /
Christian Windler (eds.)

Religious Orders and the "World"

Catholic Regular Clerics' Self-Positioning in Early Modern Societies

BÖHLAU

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Nicolas Rogger, Christian Windler

Introduction

The importance of religious orders in early modern Catholic societies is beyond dispute. In German-speaking historical research, even historians who held radically opposing positions in the controversies concerning the paradigm of confessionalization agreed on the social significance of the religious orders, although they drew diverging conclusions from this insight. Wolfgang Reinhard, for example, believed that the salience of religious orders, particularly in education and missions, "cannot be overestimated."[1] Reinhard saw the Jesuits in particular as pioneers of the practices of internalizing values and behavioral norms that he argued turned the Counter-Reformation into a major driver of modernization.[2] By contrast, Peter Hersche, one of Reinhard's harshest critics, considered the regular clergy as an "almost ideal-typical" embodiment of a baroque Catholic mentality, in which "leisure" in contemplation and "wastefulness" in building activities fostered the "intended backwardness" that Hersche viewed as characteristic of "baroque Catholicism."[3] Whether they deemed early modern Catholicism "modern" or "backward," both authors agreed that the traditional historiography of religious orders had not done justice to their social significance. Hersche commented in 2006: "There is hardly any area of religious life in which historical work and publications are as traditionalist as in this field."[4] Since then, individual areas of the history of religious orders in the early modern period have been developed into highly innovative fields of research, while Hersche's assessment still applies to others.

Accordingly, this volume is meant to identify innovative topics through a number of case studies and to bring the history of religious orders into dialogue with recent trends in the cultural and social history of early modern Catholicism. Bringing together

1 Wolfgang Reinhard, "Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?" in *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung: Wissenschaftliches Symposion der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 1993*, ed. idem and Heinz Schilling (Gütersloh: Aschendorff, 1995), 419–452, quotation: 442. – This introduction incorporates elements from unpublished working papers which were written in the context of the research project *Religious Observance and the "World": Regular Clerics' Practices of Self-Positioning in the Long Seventeenth Century*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2018 to 2023. Together with the authors of this introduction, Giuanna Beeli and Lukas Camenzind participated in their preparation.

2 Wolfgang Reinhard, "Gegenreformation als Modernisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68 (1977): 226–251.

3 Peter Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung: Europäische Gesellschaft und Kultur im Barockzeitalter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2006), vol. 1, 318.

4 Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung*, vol. 1, 325.

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innovative approaches in social, cultural, and political history, the contributions aim to shed new light on how regular clerics fashioned their role within early modern European societies. Entry into a religious order implied the acceptance of a specific way of life and was shaped as a profound break with any mundane commitments.[5] Yet, although members of religious orders claimed to renounce the sin-ridden "world" of the laity, they in fact remained tied to it through a myriad of interactions, as the chapters of this volume demonstrate.

The contributions focus mostly on communities that have not been the primary focus of interest until now: medieval monastic and mendicant orders and early modern reform orders other than the Jesuits. The communities that are explored represent different forms of monastic and religious organization, relationships with laypeople, secular subjects, and rulers, and relationships with the papacy. The chapters ask to what extent the specific role models of the orders pre-structured the interactions of their members with the world of the laity. They look at the constitutional foundations of the regulars' actions, at the social and political entanglements of the communities with local societies, the Roman Curia, and secular rulers, and at the communicative practices with which the members of the orders increased their symbolic capital based on their specific way of life as religious virtuosos and the resulting benefits for the salvation of the laity.

In the following, we will first offer a review of the existing literature and of possible perspectives of research with special attention to the interactions between religious orders and broader society. We will then present the five fields of research that are further explored in the chapters of this book: 1) Communicating Observance, 2) The Universal and the Particular, 3) Regular Clerics' Social Networks, 4) Regular Clerics in Confessional Contact Zones, and 5) Interactions between Male and Female Communities.

1. Religious Orders in the Early Modern Period: Perspectives of Research

The most innovative research on religious orders in early modern Catholic Europe has focused on female religious communities. For a generation, historians have used the category of gender to analyze the practices of everyday convent life, the disputes over the observance of the orders' rules and enclosure, and the family ties of women religious. Contrary to older historiographical narratives, convents were not just places of enclosure for young women whom their families could not marry off. Instead, recent work has demonstrated that they assumed key social, economic, and spiritual functions

5 The distinction by Max Weber of a "worldly" (*innerweltlich*) and an "otherworldly" (*außerweltlich*) asceticism builds on this perception of two separate spheres: Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, 2nd ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1976), 149–150.

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in Catholic societies. Nuns remained in contact with their families of origin, and with a pious and well-regulated way of life increased their families' capital of honor. Convents were important economic actors and made an essential contribution to the economy of salvation of Catholic societies.[6] Although certain geographic areas (in particular Italy and Spain) and figures (Teresa of Avila as the reformer of the Carmelite order[7]) have received privileged attention at the expense of others (for example, the German-speaking lands), research on female religious communities on the whole has been at the forefront of the most innovative trends in the cultural and social history of early modern Catholicism.

By comparison, male communities, which are the focus of this volume, have attracted less attention in recent times, though there are some notable exceptions. In particular, the interest in "entangled" and "connected histories" and in cultural contact zones[8] has made the activities of members of religious orders as missionaries outside Europe the subject of a dynamic field of research. Instead of pursuing the perspective of a history of expanding missions, more recent studies have shed light on "local Christianities" that emerged from interactions between local communities and missionaries. An early focus of such an approach has been on China,[9] where the reorientation of the research interest towards local forms of religion was followed by an opening beyond the courtly urban milieu

6 For example, P. Renée Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Sylvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Viking Press, 2003); Craig A. Monson, *Divas in the Convent: Nuns, Music, and Defiance in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Elizabeth Marjorie Plummer, *Stripping the Veil: Convent Reform, Protestant Nuns, and Female Devotional Life in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); Christine Schneider, *Kloster als Lebensform: Der Wiener Ursulinenkonvent in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Sharon T. Strocchia, *Forgotten Healers: Women and the Pursuit of Health in Late Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

7 Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Avila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); Elena Carrera, *Teresa of Avila's Autobiography: Authority, Power and the Self in Mid-Sixteenth Century Spain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

8 On the concept of the contact zone: Marie Luise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* (1991): 33–40.

9 Erik Zürcher, "The Lord of Heaven and the Demons: Strange Stories from a Late Ming Christian Manuscript," in *Religion und Philosophie in Ostasien: Festschrift für Hans Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Gert Naundorf, Karl-Heinz Pohl, and Hans Hermann Schmidt (Würzburg: Verlag Königshausen &

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of the male *literati* towards rural communities[10] and the female-dominated domestic sphere.[11] Similar developments have become evident in research on other territories where members of religious orders lived as missionaries in close interactions with locals.[12] In conjunction with research on local forms of Christianity within Europe,[13] these studies show how early modern Catholicism confronted, and was shaped by, cultural diversity and competing normative demands in multiple ways.[14] While research informed by the confessionalization paradigm had placed greater emphasis on the factors of standardization and unification, these more recent studies paint a new picture of Catholic diversity. Additional research on the immense variety of religious orders—many of them have barely been studied until now—could further develop this picture.

Indeed, innovative approaches to the social and cultural history of male religious communities within early modern Europe have been tested very unequally in different geographical contexts. While in German academia, research on religious orders has mostly been the domain of medievalists, in Italy and France it is firmly anchored in early modern studies.[15] Furthermore, as in scholarship on the non-European missions,

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Neumann, 1985), 359–375; Nicolas Standaert, *The Interweaving of Rituals: Funerals in the Cultural Exchange between China and Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

10 Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013); Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*: *Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

11 Nadine Amsler, *Jesuits and Matriarchs: Domestic Worship in Early Modern China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018).

12 Cf. on South Indian "tropical Catholicism," see Ines G. Županov, *Missionary Tropics: The Catholic Frontier in India (16th–17th Centuries)* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2005), e. g., 24–28, 269–270. On the Near East: Bernard Heyberger, *Les Chrétiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la Réforme catholique* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1994), 381–549. On new forms of female piety, see idem, *Hindiyya, Mystic and Criminal, 1720–1798: A Political and Religious Crisis in Lebanon* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2013).

13 On European "local Catholicisms," see the pioneering studies of William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981); Marc R. Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages: Religion and Reform in the Bishopric of Speyer, 1560–1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); and Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500–1650* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

14 See Christian Windler, *Missionaries in Persia: Cultural Diversity and Competing Norms in Global Catholicism*, trans. Pamela E. Selwyn (London: I.B. Tauris, 2024). Cf. Emich's considerations on the polycentricity of early modern Catholicism: Birgit Emich, "Uniformity and Polycentricity: The Early Modern Papacy between Promoting Unity and Handling Diversity," *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and eadem (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 33–53.

15 In France, historians like Bernard Dompnier and Dominique Dinet have constructed a solid basis, on which others have been building more recently. See, for example, Bernard Hours, *Des moines dans la cité: XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2016); Gilles Sinicropi, *'D'oraison et d'action': Les Carmes déchaux en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles* (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2013); Gregory Goudot, *Les origines et le monde: Réformes des réguliers, pouvoirs et société dans le diocèse de*

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the accessibility of the archives and the fact that the Society's own members are actively involved in research have contributed to a strong concentration on the Jesuits.[16] Putting a focus on the order's practices in a variety of sociocultural settings, Jesuit studies have contributed to placing the study of religious orders on a new methodological footing. However, the lack of comparative research has fed a tendency to insist on the specificity of a certain number of practices, such as the forms of accommodation,[17] the internalization of values and norms that contributed to the image of the Society of Jesus as a "modern" type of order,[18] and both the extent and limits of a duty of obedience anchored in individual conscience.[19]

Studies that have looked at members of other early modern reform orders suggest that such attributions require differentiation.[20] The practices of resistance anchored in the orientation of one's own life towards God were neither limited to the Jesuits nor to the male branches of religious orders, as research on the resistance of French Carmelite nuns to the Bull *Unigenitus* has shown.[21] Such practices remind us that the reform orders emerged from criticism of the official Church and grievances in the Christian communities. The founders and early leaders of several reform orders of the sixteenth

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Clermont (XVI^e–XVII^e siècles) (Paris: Champion, 2016); Ninon Maillard, *Réforme religieuse et droit: La traduction juridique et structurelle du retour à l'observance: le cas des Dominicains de France, 1629–1660* (Paris: Cerf, 2015); Bertrand Marceau, *Exercer l'autorité: L'abbé de Cîteaux et la direction de l'ordre cistercien en Europe (1584–1651)* (Paris: Champion, 2018). For a synthesis of research on Italy, see Flavio Rurale, *Monaci, frati, chierici: Gli ordini religiosi in età moderna* (Rome: Carocci, 2008).

16 For recent overviews of the history of the Society of Jesus, see Markus Friedrich, *The Jesuits: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2022); and Ines G. Županov, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). Recent monographs include, among others, Jenny Körber, *Innere Bilder – äussere Schau: Studien zum Mediendispositiv des frühneuzeitlichen Jesuitenordens* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024); and Camilla Russell, *Being a Jesuit in Renaissance Italy: Biographical Writing in the Early Global Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022).

17 See the illuminating criticism of the Jesuit use of this concept by Markus Friedrich, "Accommodation: A Twentieth-Century Theological Idea and Its Role in the Historiography of Catholic Missions," *Historical Interactions of Religious Cultures* 1 (2024): 146–170.

18 See Reinhard, "Gegenreformation als Modernisierung?" Cf. J. Michelle Molina, *To Overcome Oneself: The Jesuit Ethic and Spirit of Global Expansion, 1520–1767* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Becoming a New Self: Practices of Belief in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), esp. 67–95.

19 See Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). Cf. Fernanda Alfieri and Claudio Ferlan, eds., *Avventure dell'obbedienza nella Compagnia di Gesù: Teorie e prassi fra XVI e XIX secolo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012).

20 On "accommodation" as the pragmatic answer by missionaries of different orders to the competition between different normative systems, see Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*.

21 Cf. Françoise de Noirfontaine, "Les carmélites dans la résistance à l'*Unigenitus*," in *Carmes et carmélites en France du XVII^e siècle à nos jours: Actes du colloque de Lyon (25–26 septembre 1997)*, ed. Bernard Hours (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 378–403.

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century, who faced accusations of heresy[22] or even broke completely with the Roman Church (such as Bernardino Ochino, who was elected vicar general of the Capuchins in 1538 before defecting to Calvinist Geneva four years later[23]), have been extensively researched in this regard. Much less research, by contrast, has explored the question of how members of religious orders positioned themselves vis-à-vis ecclesiastical and secular authorities after the founding period.

Whatever their spiritual motivation, practices of resistance also had a foundation in the legal status of individual monasteries and orders in their relations with secular authorities as well as within the Catholic Church. Together with the rights of patronage that secular Catholic rulers asserted over the churches of their dominions, the privileges of the religious orders and of individual monasteries gave early modern Catholicism a composite and polycentric character. Not dissimilar in practice from particular law in secular "composite monarchies," these privileges meant that the agency of subaltern actors decisively shaped the practices of alignment with the *one* prince of the Church.[24] As part of the composite structures of early modern Catholicism, the religious orders formed autonomous communities with comparatively strong internal cohesion. They enjoyed different degrees of exemption from ordinary church jurisdiction and vigorously defended such privileges.[25]

At the same time, the centrifugal dynamics that were characteristic of early modern translocal organizations also developed in the religious orders. Research on the Society of Jesus is also the most advanced in the investigation of these processes: Contrary to older views, in their relationship with the order's superiors and the pope, the local communities of Jesuits were not simply the "extended arm of Rome."[26] Not only was

22 On Ignatius of Loyola, see Stefania Pastore, "Unwise Paths: Ignatius Loyola and the Years of Alcalá de Henares," in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence*, ed. Robert Aleksander Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 25–44; Sabina Pavone. "A Saint under Trial: Ignatius of Loyola between Alcalá and Rome," in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence*, ed. Robert Aleksander Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 45–65. On Teresa of Avila, see Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, 26–34, 40–66, 114–44.

23 See Michele Camaioni, *Il Vangelo e l'Anticristo: Bernardino Ochino tra francescanesimo ed eresia (1487–1547)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018).

24 On the notion of "composite Catholicism," see Christian Windler, "Early Modern Composite Catholicism from a Global Perspective: Catholic Missionaries and the English East India Company," *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 55–85.

25 Research on extra-European missions also provides revealing findings in this regard. See, for example, Giovanni Pizzorusso, "Le pape rouge et le pape noir: Aux origines des conflits entre la Congrégation 'de Propaganda fide' et la Compagnie de Jésus au XVII^{e} siècle," in *Les antijésuites: Discours, figures et lieux de l'antijésuitisme à l'époque moderne*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Catherine Maire (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), 539–561.

26 Markus Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms? Globale Verwaltung und Kommunikation im Jesuitenorden 1540–1773* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011). On the conflicts which shook the Society of Jesus and

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the disciplinary power of ecclesiastical institutions over the laity therefore limited, but the government of the apparently "most modern" religious order was also subject to the limits that were characteristic of early modern practices of rule over large distances and that have led to the departure from the paradigm of "absolutism" in research on secular monarchies.

While Massimo Firpo and Adriano Prosperi, for example, have postulated that, by the end of the sixteenth century, the diversity of different currents within Catholicism had been eradicated in the reaction of the papacy against the Reformation,[27] more recent studies suggest that the notion of a uniform Tridentine Catholicism is a myth created during the nineteenth-century conflicts between the Catholic Church and the new nation-states.[28] The functioning of curial congregations was marked by a huge gap between the papacy's claim to universal validity and the narrow limits of effective papal jurisdictional activity: In terms of the intensity of its jurisdictional activity, the post-Tridentine papacy was a largely Italian institution, and even in Italy, a lack of resources and the legal constitution of the Church conspired to limit the papacy's capacity to act outside the Papal States.[29]

Since the 1990s, studies on Catholic confessionalization have increasingly adopted a focus on local church life, which was then already well established in research on Protestantism. In this context, scholars highlighted the central role of Jesuits and Capuchins as mediators between the expectations of the faithful and the demands of the confessional church. Members of both orders responded to the needs of salvation as well as the physical healing of the faithful.[30] Jesuits and Capuchins also played a key role in mediating between the expectations of the faithful and ecclesiastical authorities in processes of canonization:[31] despite Roman efforts to legally standardize the process of canonization, in practice holiness continued, to a large extent, to be constituted locally

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the autonomy asserted by the French Jesuits, see Jean-Pascal Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics and Government under Tirso González (1687–1705)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

27 Massimo Firpo, *La presa di potere dell'Inquisizione romana, 1550–1553* (Bari: Laterza, 2014); Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessionari, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996).

28 See Hubert Wolf, "Trient und 'tridentinisch' im Katholizismus des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Das Konzil von Trient und die katholische Konfessionskultur (1563–2013)*, ed. Peter Walter and Günther Wassilowsky (Münster: Aschendorff, 2016), 67–82.

29 See Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *1664. Un anno della Chiesa universale: Saggio sull'italianità del papato in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2011).

30 On Jesuits, see Flavio Rurale, *I gesuiti a Milano: Religione e politica nel secondo Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992); Dominic Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie: Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563 bis 1614* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005). On the Capuchins in Freiburg im Breisgau and Hildesheim, see Hillard von Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Alltagskultur: Vergleichende Fallstudie am Beispiel Freiburgs und Hildesheims 1599–1750* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2002).

31 Daniel Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln: Katholische Reform und lokale Glaubenspraxis in der Eidgenossenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2017).

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through the practices of both the clergy *and* laity.[32] While important studies focus on the role of the Jesuits and, to a lesser degree, of the Capuchins in the formation of post-Tridentine cultures of piety, the role of the old orders in these processes has been addressed much less.[33] This is all the more surprising as many old monasteries visibly flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the communities rebuilding and lavishly refurbishing their churches and monasteries.[34]

Research on the wide variety of religious orders would further contribute to shedding light on the internal diversity of early modern Catholicism and the hybridity of early modern confessional cultures.[35] Considering the social and cultural aspects, Peter Hersche has proposed a typology of four regional Catholicisms: Mediterranean Catholicism, characterized by the claim to embody "pure" religion; the Catholicism of the German-speaking world, characterized by its proximity to Protestant areas; the special "classicist" case of France; and the minority Catholicisms.[36] Different forms of Catholicism developed in close interaction with specific political, social, and cultural conditions. As has been shown for Gallican Catholicism, regional ideas of churchmanship contributed to the development of a national consciousness.[37] At the same time, this political relevance of religion contributed to the internal fragmentation of French Catholicism, which also translated into conflicts between different religious orders.[38]

Contact zones between the spheres of influence of different powers were also places of interaction between different forms of Catholicism. The Swiss Confederacy and the Grisons, where the most important Catholic powers (France and the Habsburgs)

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32 Birgit Emich, Daniel Sidler, Samuel Weber, and Christian Windler, eds., *Making Saints in a "Glocal" Religion: Practices of Holiness in Early Modern Catholicism* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024).

33 See Petrus A. Bayer, *Konfessionalisierung im klösterlichen Umfeld: Die Entwicklung frühneuzeitlicher Religiosität in den Pfarreien des Stiftes Schlägl (1589–1665)* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2016).

34 Numerous examples of this building boom could be mentioned here: in the Swiss context, the Benedictine abbeys of Einsiedeln and St. Gallen and the Cistercian monastery of St. Urban were completely rebuilt, while grandiose construction activities at the Benedictine abbey of Muri were stopped by the French invasion of 1798.

35 See, for example, Hillard von Thiessen, "Konfessionelle Identitäten – hybride Praktiken: Katholische Konfessionalisierung im Konfliktraum des Fürstbistums Hildesheim (1650–1750)," in *Europäische Wahrnehmungen 1650–1850: Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Medienereignisse*, ed. Joachim Eibach and Horst Carl (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2008), 101–129. Cf. Günther Wassilowsky, "Was ist katholische Konfessionskultur?" *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 109 (2018): 402–412.

36 Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung*, 112–152.

37 See Alain Tallon, *Conscience nationale et sentiment religieux en France au XIV^e siècle: Essai sur la vision gallicane du monde* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002).

38 See Mita Choudhury, *The Wanton Jesuit and the Wayward Saint: A Tale of Sex, Religion, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century France* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015); Catherine Maire, *L'Église dans l'État: Politique et religion dans la France des Lumières* (Paris: Gallimard, 2019); Daniel J. Watkins, *Berruyer's Bible: Public Opinion and the Politics of Enlightenment Catholicism in France* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021).

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competed for influence, are good examples of these sorts of contact zones. Here the interactions between various secular rulers and religious orders can be observed in detail. As the cantons did not have any permanent diplomatic staff, members of religious orders also acted as representatives abroad and as agents of foreign influence within the cantons—alongside other translocally intertwined actors such as military entrepreneurs, merchants, and Protestant theologians educated at foreign universities.[39] In the Grisons and their subject territories, which were hotly contested between rival Catholic powers, the ecclesiastical entanglements mediated by members of religious orders, particularly Capuchins connected to Northern Italy, affected secular affairs and vice versa.[40] Studies on the Catholic Swiss cantons point in a similar direction. For example, the French ambassadors tried to thwart the establishment of the Jesuits in Solothurn because they feared the fathers would act as bearers of Habsburg influence. Once these efforts had failed, the French envoy attempted to win over the Jesuits with generous donations. In the Swiss context, connections between political influence and regionally specific religious practices also appear in the cult of saints:[41] The cult of Saint Louis was linked to relations with France, while the promotion of the cult of Carlo Borromeo was closely linked to Swiss-Milan relations.[42] Members of religious orders participated in the promotion of these cults according to their connections with foreign authorities.

The religious orders were significantly involved in the interactions between different regional Catholicisms, insofar as they were organized translocally and were active in different territories. Although they were committed to an "ideal of non-entanglement"[43] with the worldly sphere and to the exclusive service of God and His Church, obligations to competing secular rulers played a crucial role in practice. While such connections constituted an important source of patronage, they put under strain the cohesion of all those communities whose activities extended over the domains of rival secular

39 Recent publications have renewed the study of the Confederation's internal and external entanglements: Andreas Affolter, *Verhandeln mit Republiken: Die französisch–eidgenössischen Beziehungen im frühen 18. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau 2017); Sarah Rindlisbacher Thomi, *Botschafter des Protestantismus: Aussenpolitisches Handeln von Zürcher Stadtgeistliche im 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022); Philippe Rogger, *Geld, Krieg und Macht: Pensionsherren, Söldner und eidgenössische Politik in den Mailänderkriegen 1494–1516* (Baden: Hier und Jetzt Verlag, 2015); Nadir Weber, *Lokale Interessen und große Strategie: Das Fürstentum Neuchâtel und die politischen Beziehungen der Könige von Preußen (1707–1806)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015).

40 Philipp Zwyssig, *Täler voller Wunder: Eine katholische Verflechtungsgeschichte der Drei Bünde und des Veltlins (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)* (Affalterbach: Didymos, 2018).

41 Christian Windler, "'Allerchristlichste' und 'Katholische Könige.' Verflechtung und dynastische Propaganda in kirchlichen Räumen (Katholische Orte der Eidgenossenschaft, spätes 16. bis frühes 18. Jahrhundert)," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 33 (2006): 589–629.

42 See Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln*, 157–167.

43 Birgit Emich, Nicole Reinhardt, Hillard von Thiessen, and Christian Wieland, "Stand und Perspektiven der Patronageforschung. Zugleich eine Antwort auf Heiko Droste," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 32 (2005): 233–265, here 263–265.

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authorities. Despite its comparatively strong central government, in the seventeenth century, the Society of Jesus increasingly disintegrated into a juxtaposition of different provinces and "nations," which accepted greater dependence on secular rulers and interdependence in the "world."[44] For the Cistercian order, Bertrand Marceau has shown how the close connection with the French Crown strengthened the authority of the abbot general of Cîteaux (the mother abbey of the Cistercian order) in the sphere of influence of the king of France, while weakening it in other territories. Consequently, controversies that jeopardized the unity of the order, such as those concerning the practice of observance, remained unresolved for decades, stirring further conflicts.[45]

The connections between religious orders and secular authorities also had an impact on the government of the orders. In the case of the Cistercians, the close relationship between the abbot general and the French Crown strengthened its "monarchical" components at the expense of those that were community based.[46] In the Order of Preachers, which since the thirteenth century had provided the model for a community-based constitution,[47] the reforms of the seventeenth century equally strengthened the authority of the master general at the expense of the chapter general.[48] While this appears to be a promising line of investigation, so far it is mainly medievalists who have attempted to establish the history of the internal government of monasteries and religious orders—i. e., not the exercise of rule by monasteries—as part of a history of practices of rule.[49] Studies on the early modern period are scarce. In this respect, too,

44 See, in particular, Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms?*, 425–429; Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars*, 13–77. Similar processes have been observed in the Italian Congregation of Discalced Carmelites: Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*, 114–115, 178–181.

45 Marceau, *Exercer l'autorité*. On the relations of the Upper German Congregation with Cîteaux, see Kathrin Müller, *Zisterzienser und Barock: Die Kirchen der Oberdeutschen Kongregation im Spannungsfeld von Ordensidentität und lokaler Tradition* (St. Ottilien: Eos, 2016), 292–344. On the Cistercians in the Swiss cantons, see Lukas Camenzind, *Umstrittene Observanz: Die Zisterzienser im frühneuzeitlichen* Corpus helveticum (Cologne: Böhlau, 2025).

46 Marceau, *Exercer l'autorité*.

47 On the constitution of the Dominican order, see Florent Cygler, "*Nos ergo, qui et sub unius magistri obedientia et sub unius capituli regimine sumus, […].* Personnes d'autorité et autorité dans l'ordre des frères prêcheurs au Moyen Âge," in *Les personnes d'autorité en milieu régulier: Des origines de la vie régulière au XVIII^e siècle; Actes du septième colloque international du CERCOR, Strasbourg, 18–20 juin 2009*, ed. Jean-François Cottier, Daniel-Odon Hurel, and Benoît-Michel Tock (Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2012), 61–78.

48 Maillard, *Réforme religieuse et droit*, in particular 43–82, 96.

49 See Cottier, Hurel, and Tock, eds., *Les personnes d'autorité*. Cf. Léo Moulin, "*Sanior et major pars.* Note sur l'évolution des techniques électorales dans les ordres religieux du VI^e au XIII^e siècle," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 4th series, 35 (1958): 368–397, 491–521; Léo Moulin, "Les origines religieuses des techniques électorales et délibératives modernes," *Politix* 11, no. 43 (1998): 117–162.

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research on the Society of Jesus is at the forefront,[50] while other orders have received less attention.[51]

The existing work shows that the religious orders, in conjunction with other ecclesiastical and secular actors, participated in their own ways in the institution-building processes of the early modern period. This was characteristic of the activities of religious orders more generally: while they conceived of themselves as separate from the world of the laity, following their own normative system, they were in fact key actors within early modern Catholic societies. This is what the chapters of this book explore: the variety of interactions between members of religious orders and what they considered to be the sin-ridden worldly sphere that they claimed to renounce.

2. Religious Orders and the "World"

The present collective volume is meant as a contribution to a field of research that has received a very unequal degree of scholarly attention. While it also includes two contributions on the Jesuits, it mainly focuses on other early modern reform orders and on older monastic and mendicant orders, which fewer studies have considered to date. It also privileges geographical areas which have been less investigated, hence the (quasi-)absence of France and Italy. For the same reason, it considers only one aspect of the history of female communities: their relationships with members of male religious orders. The book is divided into five sections, discussed in turn in the following, which from different perspectives explore how regular clerics fashioned their role within early modern European societies.

50 While Hartmut Lehmann still characterized the Jesuit order as "a kind of absolutist rule in a supranational association of persons" (Hartmut Lehmann, *Das Zeitalter des Absolutismus: Gottesgnadentum und Kriegsnot* [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1980], 53), Markus Friedrich has shown how the attempt to bureaucratize the order's internal administration had to struggle with the limits typical of the early modern period (Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms?*, 334–340). On the controversies within the order over the practices of government, see Michela Catto, *La Compagnia divisa: Il dissenso nell'ordine gesuitico tra '500 e '600* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2009); Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars*. Cf. Fabian Fechner, *Entscheidungsprozesse vor Ort. Die Provinzkongregationen der Jesuiten in Paraguay (1608–1762)* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2015), 86–91, 127–142.

51 On the Capuchins, see Bernard Dompnier, "Humilité, égalité, fraternité. Le conflit du 'suffrage universel' chez les capucins du XVII^{e} siècle," in *Missions, vocations, dévotions: Pour une anthropologie historique du catholicisme moderne*, by idem (Lyon: LARHRA, 2016), 161–173. On the Discalced Carmelites, see Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*, 25–38.

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1) Communicating Observance

In early modern societies with their stratified social order, social relations were characterized by an ongoing struggle for status and rank. This inevitably led to irritating contradictions with Christian norms, even more so because the religious schism of the sixteenth century made a stricter adherence to these norms more imperative across all denominations.[52] The vicarious observance of religious precepts has formed a fundamental basis of legitimacy for Christian religious orders since their beginnings. From the perspective of the laity, religious communities' self-sanctification strategies have always been measured by the extent to which they were beneficial to the reconciliation of a sin-ridden "world" with an offended God. It was precisely the pointed disinterest in secular codes of honor—expressed in the humble renunciation of status and rank, the abandonment of the family of origin, and the invocation of a moral code anchored in the transcendent—that allowed religious orders to establish themselves as reliable mediators between this world and the hereafter.[53]

In the secular context, "observance" generally referred to the meeting of contractual obligations and was used as an argument for the validity of social and political claims. In the context of religious orders, it denoted a ritual practice of observing the order's Rule through contemplation and action, as a way to safeguard the access to divine grace and love.[54] In practice, through their ascetic self-negation and the ostentatious observance of religious norms, religious orders themselves generated a form of symbolic capital that underpinned both their social and ecclesiastical position as well as their

52 Berndt Hamm, "Normative Zentrierung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: Beobachtungen zu Religiosität, Theologie und Ikonologie," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 26 (1999): 163–202. An application of the concept of "normative centering" to the early modern period and an examination of the resulting ambiguities is provided by Hillard von Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität: Vom Umgang mit Werten und Normen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2021).

53 The considerations of Max Weber on "religious virtuosos" and Victor Turner's concept of liminality, which are touched on here, have still been only selectively tested on the early modern regular clergy.

54 While the series *Vita regularis*, edited by Gert Melville and Mirko Breitenstein, deals with various questions that are also addressed here, there exists no comparable publication series and research focus for the early modern period. See, by way of example, Gert Melville and James D. Mixson, eds., *Virtuosos of Faith: Monks, Nuns, Canons, and Friars as Elites of Medieval Culture* (Vienna: Lit-Verlag, 2020). The inherent ambiguity of "observance" as both compliance with rules and observation has recently been examined from a literary perspective in Maddalena Fingerle and Florian Mehltretter, eds., *Kreativität Im Schnittpunkt der Observanzen/Creatività e Osservanza: Italienische Literatur um 1600 zwischen Gegenreformation und Regelpoetik/Letteratura Italiana del Seicento tra Controriforma e normatività poetica* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023).

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internal hierarchization.[55] Accordingly, a meticulous "impression management"[56] has always been vital for religious orders, and even more so against the backdrop of the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. To convince the (un)faithful, secular protectors, and the church hierarchy of their special favor in heaven meant making this very favor a social reality. By their social status, regular clerics, who were devoted to a life of radical humility, paradoxically gained divine hints at their progress concerning their ultimate objective: the increase of God's glory.

Hence, on the one hand, the questions that form the starting point of the first section concern the practices of symbolic communication used by different religious orders to emphasize an image of observance.[57] On the other hand, the interest lies in the ways this reputation, specific to the orders' particular styles of honoring God and the saints, reverberated back into the "world" as it was appropriated by the orders' environments. Not only was the landscape of Catholic religious orders in the early modern period characterized by its diversity of lifestyles, the religious practice of one and the same religious community sometimes also differed considerably depending on context, province, and convent. Contrary to its alleged unambiguity, religious observance, like any other form of communication, was a reciprocal affair in which the orders had to respond to the perceptions, expectations, and needs of a heterogeneous audience to defend their position in society.[58] The contributions collected here each point in their own way to the significance that symbolic and performative communication had for the perception of religious orders, to the fact that the success of this communication always depended on whether it found a connection in a given environment, and to the reciprocal processes of adaptation and transformation that this necessarily entailed.

The chapters of Martin Elbel and Nicolas Rogger exemplify this line of questioning based on the efforts of the Franciscan Observants in the Bohemian Province and the

55 Surprisingly, there is still a lack of studies that apply Pierre Bourdieu's otherwise widely received work on the different forms of capital to early modern religious communities. A notable exception is Annette Kehnel, "Heilige Ökonomie: Ansätze zu einer systematisch vergleichenden Erforschung der Wirtschaftsorganisation mittelalterlicher Klöster und Orden," in *Mittelalterliche Orden und Klöster im Vergleich: Methodische Ansätze und Perspektiven*, ed. Gert Melville and Anne Müller (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2007), 269–320.

56 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956).

57 On the concept of symbolic communication, see Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne: Begriffe – Thesen – Forschungsperspektiven." *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004): 489–527.

58 In reference to Niklas Luhmann's concept of communication as a process of mutual stabilization of meaning between alter and ego, which has proven fruitful for the early modern period. See in particular the works of Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger. Rudolf Schlögl integrated additional elements of Luhmann's theory into his account of the early modern period. Cf. Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2014).

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Capuchins of the Swiss Province to position themselves in their respective contexts as the "true sons of St. Francis." Put under pressure by the appearance of the Capuchins, the Protestant Reformation, and the Tridentine spirit of reform, the Bohemian Franciscans adopted a tighter vow of poverty, marking a break with the province's tradition. Focusing on the meticulously regulated practice of mendicancy, Elbel elucidates the fundamental importance of face-to-face interaction for the mendicant orders in the materialization of their liminal state. For the mendicants to provide the laity with an authentic access to the sacred, they had to provoke all their senses and adapt their virtuous performance to the changing circumstances. Looking at obedience and patience as central elements of the Capuchins' "inner-worldly shamelessness"—the image of a transcendentally unbounded affective disposition, situating the mendicants in immediate proximity to the honor of God—Rogger for his part explores hitherto little-researched Franciscan virtues and their impact in practices of symbolic communication. While an ambiguous concept of obedience allowed the Capuchins to adapt their practice to the religious needs of their local environment and to their protectors' desire for distinction, the friars' surroundings also found ways to make use of the symbolic violence of Capuchin patience as a resource to contain social and political conflicts. By looking at the accusations of Machiavellianism against "foreign" Capuchins, Rogger indicates that, in parallel processes of communalization and universalization, it was the degree to which the lay world recognized itself in the mendicants' sacrifice that increasingly determined the boundaries of observance.

The notion of observance as a highly perspective- and context-dependent communication process is further underpinned by Silvia Mostaccio's study of the Jesuit missionaries in the Army of Flanders. In a process of mutual exchange, the military appropriated the spiritual and charitable services of the Jesuits, just as the self-image of the Jesuit missionaries changed due to their interaction with war and suffering. As the expectations towards the Jesuits changed, the fathers had to complement their work toward the salvation of souls with care for the bodies of the soldiers, both Catholic and Protestant. The insertion of the Jesuits into the context of the army was less a matter of strategic accommodation than of shifts in the hegemonic relationship between the missionaries and the missionized. This became evident not least in rituals of purification that were incomprehensible outside the army context, but which responded to the psychological sufferings of war-torn soldiers.

While the Franciscans, Capuchins, and Jesuits discussed in this section were concerned with distinguishing themselves from the "world" in a way that was both specific to their order and adapted to the needs of their environment, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, examined by Bernard Hours, were concerned precisely with transcending the boundary which existed between religious orders and the "world." Its founder went to great lengths to position his educational institution both outside the reach of ecclesiastical hierarchies and outside the lay world, with the aim of simultaneously shielding his teaching corps from the temptations emanating from both spheres and distinguish-

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ing it from its competitors. The success of the institution among laypeople, who were increasingly interested in a functional education, is testament to how cultural change affected the constitution and habitus of religious institutions, and how these in turn took part in these processes of change.

The contributions of this volume in general, and in this section in particular, show in a variety of ways how the religious orders and their lay surroundings negotiated and mutually appropriated different forms of religious observance. In this process, the way in which the "world" furnished itself with transcendental legitimacy often appeared to change in tandem with the self-images of the religious orders.

2) The Universal and the Particular

While the early modern papacy sought to underline its claim to universal authority on a symbolic level, its actual jurisdiction was limited not only by the lack of resources to enforce it, but also by the patronage rights of secular powers over the churches in their dominions, by the liberties of the local churches, and by the privileges of the religious orders. The resulting composite and polycentric structure of the early modern Catholic Church meant that religious orders were associated with different secular and ecclesiastical authorities, which competed for distinction within the *res publica Christiana*.[59] While some communities had their central government located far away from Rome, others (most prominently the Order of Saint Benedict) lacked a central authority altogether. Taking this institutional diversity seriously, this section centers around the notion that religious orders were much more than mere "agents of confessionalization" working towards the European and global spread of a homogeneous Catholicism centralized in Rome. With these chapters building on studies that have emphasized the universalizing tendencies of early modern Catholicism, as well as on those that have pointed to the local and regional dimensions of early modern devotional practice after Trent, the religious orders are examined as mediators between different symbolic systems of Catholicism and their respective stakeholders.[60]

59 Windler, "Early Modern Composite Catholicism."

60 The assumption of the universalization of Catholic piety was inherent in the confessionalization paradigm. A recent view on the universalizing tendencies of Catholic devotion has been put forward by Brian L. Larkin, "Beyond Guadalupe: The Eucharist, the Cult of Saints, and Local Religion in Eighteenth-Century Mexico City," *The Catholic Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (2018): 223–267. The credit for an influential wake-up call to decentralize the Catholic reform goes to Simon Ditchfield, "Decentering the Catholic Reformation: Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 101 (2010): 186–208. For an overview of recent scholarship on local religion, see Eugenio Menegon, "Local Religion in the Early Modern Period: Chinese Christianity as a Case Study," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 211–235.

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The Catholic reform on the whole can be understood as a process of interaction that was characterized by a tension-ridden dialectic of two dominant tendencies: the particularization of universal religious beliefs and practices, and the universalization of particular ones.[61] From this perspective, the local anchoring of devotional practices that aligned with the Church Universal and the containment of particular religious imagery contaminated with heterodox and magical influences represented only one aspect of the activities of religious orders as gatekeepers of a renewed Catholic belief system.[62] In addition to the creative adaptation of universal cults and devotional forms to local perceptions, the religious orders also played a decisive role when it came to imbuing local religiosity with an aura of Roman universality.[63] In doing so, they often acted in the interest of local communities and secular and ecclesiastical protectors. Meanwhile, the religious orders themselves endeavored to anchor their own religious symbols in the local contexts, as well as to provide them with universal legitimacy, and, ideally, global diffusion.[64] The results were localized forms of Catholic piety that blended elements from a variety of sources into ambiguous systems of symbols with their own logic.

As can be gathered from the chapters collected here, in the context of the composite structures of early modern Catholicism, the religious practice of the orders and their influence on the local churches were crucially shaped by the respective dynamics of

61 Having already been pointed out by Christian (Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*), the conceptual anchoring of this tension in research on the Catholic reform is not least owed to the seminal study of Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). However, such approaches have only selectively been applied to the history of religious orders. Deserving a mention here for demonstrating the limits of Roman centralism within the Society of Jesus is Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

62 Following Thiessen (Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität*, 56–70), Catholic confessionalization can be understood as a transformation in which heterodox magical practices were replaced by ecclesiastically sanctioned remedies, rather than as a planned ethical disciplining of the flock.

63 The cult of the Virgin of Loreto, propagated by various religious orders, is a case in point for the particularization of the universal in the European as well as the global context. See Karin Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto: Spreading Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); and Luisa Elena Alcalá Donegani, *Arte y localización de un culto global: La Virgen de Loreto en México* (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2022). A dual process of particularization and universalization can also be seen in the monarchical patronage of the Mother of God explored by Damien Tricoire, *Mit Gott Rechnen: Katholische Reform und Politisches Kalkül in Frankreich, Bayern und Polen-Litauen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013). Generally, the desire of early modern communities of faith for a universalization of the particular is best studied within the context of the veneration of saints, in which the religious orders played a major role. Cf. Emich, Sidler, Weber, and Windler, eds., *Making Saints*.

64 For a further discussion of these distinctions, drawing on the early modern veneration of saints, see Markus Friederich, "Comment: Saint-Making between the Local and the Global, the Particular and the Universal," in *Making Saints in a "Glocal" Religion: Practices of Holiness in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Birgit Emich, Daniel Sidler, Samuel Weber, and Christian Windler (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024), 431–440.

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religious competition, by social and political cleavages that intersected with them, and by different degrees of access to the symbolic resources of the papacy. Contrary to older assumptions, the papacy itself was thereby less interested in ensuring uniform orthopraxis on a global level than in reconciling the factual plurality with its claim to universality.[65] The self-concepts of the orders, which, like their religious practice, oscillated between the universal and the global and the particular and the local, played a significant part in determining how the orders positioned themselves.

In the case studied by Bruno Boute in his chapter on the Low Countries, the popular brown scapular, the fraternities associated with it, and the mendicant orders attending to them came under the heavy scrutiny of a Catholic puritanism that was taking shape within the secular clergy and the university landscape. Meanwhile, the Theatines in Naples, explored by Samuel Weber, "invented" a decidedly anti-popular blue scapular in order to align themselves with the quest for distinction of the pro-Spanish elites. As in the case of the clash between the Italian Capuchin missionaries and the regionally rooted Benedictine Abbey of Disentis (Philipp Zwyssig), the competing interests of religious orders in reshaping the religious field according to their own norms and ideals proved to be a dynamizing factor in the formation of local religion. The success of a particular salvation technology seemed to hinge on how it was tailored to the expectations of actors in the social space and to the structures emerging from their connected power struggles. In Naples, this favored the imposition of a cult run by the Theatines, which combined a universal Marian devotion tailored to the Spanish monarchy with the veneration of a local mystic. In the Alpine valleys of the Three Leagues, this led to a situation in which Benedictines and Capuchins simultaneously competed to be perceived as agents of Catholic reform and to supply the healing needs of the laity with quasi-magical practices.

The widely established fact that the religious order in the early modern period immediately affected the design of the political order (and vice versa) is further explored by the contributions to this section. While the Spanish viceroy stylized the entrenchment of a pro-Spanish cult of Mary in the Neapolitan devotional culture as the decisive success of his reign, the conflict surrounding the appointment of Capuchin friars as parish priests in the Alpine valleys was closely intertwined with the Franco-Spanish rivalry over influence in this strategically important region. The dispute over the processional edict of the Archbishop of Mechelen, directed against the baroque devotional practices of the mendicant orders, overlapped with local power struggles and conflicting interests at the courts of Brussels, Madrid, and Rome. From different vantage points, the studies brought together in this section illustrate how religious orders were entangled in the negotiation and naturalization of the political order, whereby they were frequently

65 Emich, "Uniformity and Polycentricity," 33–53.

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located at the very center of these power struggles, which were as much about symbolic power as they were about material gains.

All the religious institutions and secular actors discussed in this section identified themselves with and through the universal authority of the Roman Church. Participation in the Church's treasure of graces, the enjoyment of papal privileges, and the benefit of curial intercession in doctrinal disputes represented symbolic resources that contributed decisively to the shaping of local hierarchies. The ability of the orders to mobilize protection from the Roman Curia thereby depended both on the extent to which they were able to align their interests with those of the papacy and on their ability to mobilize influential advocates among the elite and the faithful. Contrary to what one would expect from a self-proclaimed institution with universal authority, the Roman Curia was forced to avoid unambiguous decisions even in the European context (Bruno Boute).[66] Meanwhile, a crafty marketing strategy allowed a local, aristocratic cult to be transformed into a popular, global cult (Samuel Weber). The papacy had to deal with the circumstances of often only being confronted with such new realities after the fact.

The varying modes of interaction with the papacy, dealt with in this section, corresponded to the orders' varying self-images. Markus Friedrich demonstrates in his contribution how the Jesuits experimented with and within various plastic and textual media to give visual and historiographical expression to their universal self-understanding and their global aspirations. In this context, it seems symptomatic of the local anchoring of religious practice in the early modern period that even the Jesuits had difficulties developing an abstract and universal understanding of space that transcended the global sum of "IHS" carved into the map and the pointillistic descriptions of local religious life. In their specific ways, the Jesuits, like the Benedictines, Carmelites, Capuchins, and Theatines discussed in this section, oscillated between universal aspirations and particular realities, thereby acting as mediators between competing symbolic orders.

3) Regular Clerics' Social Networks

According to the Rule of Saint Benedict, only the abbot was permitted to maintain relations beyond the monastery's walls. Inspired by such principles, religious orders have generally styled themselves as being divorced from the worldly demands of personal networks. The renunciation of secular ties and worldly obligations was considered a prerequisite for fostering one's true obedience to God, as it was meant to create space for the recognition of divine will. In reality, the religious orders depended on manifold local and translocal relationships with secular and ecclesiastical actors to fulfill their

66 On the Roman Curia's practice of avoiding decisions in controversial matters, cf. Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*, 269–278.

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religious mission and to assert their position within society.[67] Furthermore, individual members of religious orders often maintained their own connections beyond the walls of their convent. The orders considered the renunciation of worldly ties a condition for receiving divine love, and their environment likewise used it as a measurement to ensure itself of the credibility of the clergy as disinterested mediators to the sacred.[68] At the same time, however, a pronounced tolerance of ambiguity regarding the continuity of social networks within the religious and monastic life can be observed both within and outside early modern religious orders. While connections with people from outside the orders were indispensable for their material and social survival, outside actors were, for their part, interested in participating in the social and transcendental networks of the regular clergy.[69] The way in which the different communities dealt with this contradiction varied not only depending on the institutional and normative principles of the different orders, but also on the specific social, cultural, and political context. In any case, it was crucial to emphasize the moral legitimacy of any personal affections and ties, as the accusation of partiality could have cast doubt on the credibility of the clergy at every hierarchical level at any moment. Therefore, depending on varying normative expectations of the "world," the order, and the Church, different narrative strategies were brought into play.[70]

As the contributions to this section highlight, the birth families of the clergymen and their secular and ecclesiastical protectors indeed benefited from continued relationships. They could expect an increase in prestige and influence from the clerical careers of their sons and protégés and the orders as a whole.[71] Far from being isolated from the "world," the religious in turn generated access to material, social, and symbolic resources

67 While there are numerous studies on the interdependencies of medieval monasteries and on the economies of mendicant orders, research for the early modern period has mostly been focused on the networks of women's convents. See, for example, Marilyn Dunn and Saundra Lynn Weddle, eds., *Convent Networks in Early Modern Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

68 Gianvittorio Signorotto, "La 'Verità' e gli 'Interessi': Religiosi Milanesi nelle Legazioni alla Corte di Spagna," in *I Religiosi a Corte: Teologia, Politica e Diplomazia in Antico Regime*, ed. Flavio Rurale (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), 195–227. This promising line of research, which focuses on regular clerics as disinterested intermediaries in political-diplomatic relations, has proven fruitful in recent times. Cf. the case studies in Roberta Anderson and Charlotte Backerra, eds., *Confessional Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

69 The integration of regular clerics in gift-giving practices and micropolitics remains an important field for future research. Important preliminary work comes from Windler (Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*; Windler, "'Allerchristlichste' und 'Katholische Könige'") and the chapters gathered within this volume.

70 Religious orders were not only "normative overachievers" (Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität*, 280–292), but were themselves caught in normative conflicts, which they had to resolve.

71 Here, research on religious orders could benefit from approaches that have proven fruitful in the context of the secular clergy. Cf. Samuel Weber, *Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy: The Borromeo Brothers of Spanish Milan, 1620–1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

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through a variety of networks, which would have been denied to them had they avoided networking in the "world."

In examining a project to secure Thomist-Dominican influence on the control of knowledge at the Roman Curia, Andreea Badea reveals the wide range of networks in which the religious orders were involved. Through their ideological-theological positioning and a decidedly anti-Jesuit attitude, the Dominicans gained access to rigorist networks at the papal court. This enabled the order to secure a wealthy protector's heritage, which was just as beneficial to the long-term integration of the order into the curial bureaucracy as it was to the consolidation of its translocal network. The Casanatense Library, which lies at the center of Badea's analysis, was ultimately as much the product of social networks as it was instrumental for the expansion, recruitment, and consolidation of the Order of Preachers.

The life and career of Celestino Sfondrati, as traced by Giuanna Beeli, was marked by family interests and networks, which had led young Celestino to the imperial Benedictine abbey of St. Gallen. From a career perspective, the choice of this monastery initially seemed unusual for the descendant of a former papal family. Yet it helped the Sfondrati family secure proximity to the Habsburg sphere of influence and developed into a springboard to higher offices at the Roman Curia. In addition to his highly calculated interventions as a publicist, Sfondrati made use of a diversified network of relatives and ecclesiastical and secular actors in the Swiss Confederacy, Lombardy, and Rome, not only to stay informed, but also to maintain his own presence in multiple contexts. Sfondrati's example illustrates the necessity for early modern spiritual authorities to maintain loyalties in opposing camps, along with the importance of intermediaries to assist the clergy in the delicate task of managing relationships.

Jodi Bilinkoff's study on John of the Cross's numerous relationships with laywomen complements the section with insights into not only the spiritual and affective but also the material and pragmatic dimensions of spiritual care. Called to a strictly ascetic and chaste lifestyle, which required the greatest possible distance from women, the male disciple of Teresa of Avila and later saint nevertheless maintained numerous relationships with different types of women in his role as spiritual director and confessor. While not without controversy, these relationships ultimately served him not only in recruiting personnel and securing protection for new foundations, but also in protecting his memory as a saintly ascetic.

While the religious orders dedicated themselves to upholding religious norms on behalf of their environment, they were simultaneously dependent on a variety of social networks that allowed them to connect to the "world." The case studies presented here offer new perspectives on the social networks of early modern male religious orders, which have yet to be thoroughly explored. Further investigation of the variable ways in which these networks functioned depending on order and context promises to shed light on how the orders were integrated into local and translocal processes of exchange in an increasingly interconnected world.

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4) Regular Clerics in Confessional Contact Zones

As a result of the confessional division, Protestants and Catholics lived in close proximity to one another in many places. Confessional contact zones could at times be found in the immediate vicinity of Catholic monasteries. In the Swiss Confederacy, Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries held secular and spiritual rights (in particular, patronage rights over "heretical" parishes) in Protestant and bi-confessional territories. In such contexts, the monasteries not only participated to various degrees in attempts at conversion, but also had to develop creative strategies of coexistence with their enemies of faith.[72] The specific role monks and friars played within cross- and inter-confessional relations remains an important question, especially since the focus on phenomena of confessional ambiguity, dissimulation, and hybridity has called the idea of clear-cut confessional identities into question.[73] While earlier historiography expected religious orders to form and perpetuate homogenous confessional identities, research has not yet fully considered the fact that the religious orders themselves often had to find pragmatic solutions to deal with the confessional "other." Meanwhile, as the contributions to this section also demonstrate, the competition between the confessions and the reciprocal accusations of hypocrisy not only put pressure on the members of religious orders to perform their duties according to a certain moral standard; the proximity of the "heretic danger" could also be used as an argument to legitimize social and ecclesiastical privileges as well as ambiguous religious practices. Accordingly, this section aims to reassess the approaches that different monasteries and religious orders took with regard to their interactions with Protestant neighbors and to shed light on how they adapted their religious practices to the cultural grammar of confessional contact zones.[74] While the contributions focus on early modern Switzerland, their findings prove valuable for other confessional contact zones as well.

What becomes clear from the chapters collected here is that monasteries and religious orders were central actors when it came to drawing boundaries in the age of religious division: boundaries between the confessions, between corresponding territories, between

72 Cf. Camenzind, *Umstrittene Observanz*, 168–202.

73 Andreas Pietsch and Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, eds., *Konfessionelle Ambiguität: Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als Religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013); Thiessen, "Konfessionelle Identitäten"; Frauke Volkland, *Konfession und Selbstverständnis: Reformierte Rituale in der gemischtkonfessionellen Kleinstadt Bischofszell im 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005); and Kaspar von Greyerz, Manfred Jakubowski-Tiessen, Thomas Kaufmann, and Hartmut Lehmann, eds., *Interkonfessionalität – Transkonfessionalität – Binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität: Neue Forschungen zur Konfessionalisierungsthese* (Heidelberg: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003).

74 Valuable insights from a communication theory perspective stem from Daniela Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation: Religiöse Koexistenz und Politik in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft – Die Grafschaft Baden 1531–1712* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017). Promising for Britain is the study by Liam Temple, *The Capuchins, Transnational Catholicism, and Britain, 1580–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University, forthcoming).

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salvation and damnation, between the foreign and the familiar, between friend and foe. There is much to suggest that, by drawing these boundaries, religious orders played a decisive role in shaping individual and collective identities. That said, the geographical, normative, and emotional boundaries represented anything but insurmountable hurdles. Their very existence implied pathways to overcome them.[75] That these pathways were known to no one better than the religious experts themselves is demonstrated by Daniela Hacke, who studies the conversion of Swiss Capuchins to the Protestant faith in Zurich. Based on the politically conflictual and symbolically charged defection of members of a reform order, Hacke reminds us of the early modern need for confessional unambiguity, which seemed to be particularly prevalent in confessional contact zones. According to Hacke, in the precarious process of conversion, in which the identity of the converts was subjected to a thorough examination and reorganization, confessional boundaries were reinforced rather than blurred.

While Capuchins receptive to conversion could support their intentions with their exceptional knowledge in matters of faith, the Cistercians of Wettingen and St. Urban, examined by Lukas Camenzind, distinguished themselves through their own proficiency in divergent communicative codes. Here, too, conversion and apostasy led to conflicts between the abbeys and their Protestant neighbors. Yet it was very much in the former's interest to stylize themselves as Counter-Reformist champions while simultaneously maintaining close relationships with their "heretical" counterparts. Although amicable relations may have led to contradictory situations from a confessional perspective, they had an important stabilizing effect, not only for the monasteries themselves, but also for the precarious relationship between Catholics and Protestants.

The hypothesis that the landowning monasteries, in contrast to the Jesuits and Capuchins, pursued different paths in their relationships with their Protestant neighbors is reinforced by Thomas Fässler's examination of the Benedictines of Einsiedeln. Here, we can observe an astonishing will for a cross-denominational rapprochement in the age of enlightenment. While the monks had long been committed to convincing the faithful of the malicious deceptions of their "heretic" neighbors, in the eighteenth century, a lively exchange of books and ideas developed between learned Benedictines and Protestant ministers. Under the pretext of studying the enemy's arguments, monks obtained permission from Rome to read the forbidden books of their intellectual interlocutors. Once again, the religious showed an uncanny ability to juggle different registers and to reconcile their doctrinal differences with the contemporary emphasis on spiritual kinship.

75 Cf. Heike Bock, *Konversionen in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft: Zürich und Luzern im konfessionellen Vergleich* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2009); and Kim Siebenhüner, "Glaubenswechsel in der frühen Neuzeit: Chancen und Tendenzen einer historischen Konversionsforschung," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 34 (2007): 243–272.

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Whether they demarcated boundaries, stabilized them, or seemed to erode them by employing ambiguous or even contradictory registers, monks and friars proved to be innovative actors, particularly in confessional contact zones. Despite their claim to unambiguity, they did not blindly foster confessional alienation, but were, through their complex social embeddedness, at times even able to mediate between the denominations. In doing so, they not only pursued their own interests through a pragmatic approach to the confessional "other" but also oriented themselves to changing social expectations within confessional contact zones.

5) Interactions between Male and Female Communities

Male monasteries in charge of nunneries dispatched confessors, visitors, and administrators to carry out pastoral duties and to supervise the nuns. Such relationships reflected contemporary and religiously anchored gender roles. As was the case with laywomen, the honor of nuns had to be protected at all costs from public scandal—by men controlling women.[76] While family honor in the early modern period was measured not least by the ability of male family members to defend the honor of their female relatives and to secure advantageous marriage alliances, the purity of nuns and their role model as *sponsae Christi* was geared towards the unification of the "world" with its creator and the increase of His glory alone. Nevertheless, in their function as strongholds of chastity, where female honor was meant to be preserved from impious challenges and where the nuns continued to contribute to the augmentation of their family's dignity through their exemplary way of life and their vicarious prayers, convents played an integral role in the reproduction of the social order.[77] Their role as sacred domains of Catholic societies, which had to be protected from contamination for the good of collective salvation—but also in view of confessional polemics and persistent doubts within Catholicism—was reflected in the prescription of strict enclosure by the Council of Trent. Its implementation, however, proved to be anything but straightforward, since not only did some nuns resist their banishment from the public sphere, but they could at times also count on support from their local surroundings, which were accustomed to the sisters' presence and services.

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76 Trailblazing in her examination of the relationship between confessor and penitent was Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). Exemplary work in research on the honor of women religious has been done by Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); and Laven, *Virgins of Venice*.

77 As Baernstein (Baernstein, *A Convent Tale*) demonstrated, they were firmly integrated into family networks and strategies. On women's convents as "prayer factories," see Ulrike Strasser, "Bones of Contention: Cloistered Nuns, Decorated Relics, and the Contest over Women's Place in the Public Sphere of Counter-Reformation Munich," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 90 (1999): 255–288.

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For all these reasons, the supervision and care of female convents was both a source of symbolic power and a controversial and delicate task for male religious orders. Since the ruling families expected them to oversee the mystical marriage of their daughters to their heavenly bridegroom, scandal and unrest, sometimes strategically provoked by the nuns, could leave a lasting stain on the reputation of their male counterparts. Naturally, the stirring up of scandal would have been especially effective when the matter of pastoral care and the related claims to jurisdiction were contested between opposing factions, both within and outside the Church. Given that any contact with women was considered a potential source of temptation, some orders banned it outright, although they often had to give way to competing social and ecclesiastical expectations. While some orders opposed the practice of pastoral care in nunneries, thereby renewing an image of strict observance, others competed for the opportunity to assume the spiritual guidance of prestigious female convents, hoping to gain influence and prestige themselves. These dynamics, which have not been systematically researched to date, provided the nuns with additional sources of agency that allowed them to transcend the walls of their convents.

The complex and symbolically charged interactions between female and male communities provide us with a more accurate picture of how religious orders shared their religious work and how they positioned themselves in society more generally. It is precisely because of the gender-based differences in religious practice that these communities remained related to and dependent on each other in a variety of ways. Future research should consider the social significance of male and female orders in a more integrated fashion, since, like their religious practice, their models of masculinity and femininity were inherently linked and shaped by each other. The contributions to this section provide a glimpse of what such an undertaking might look like. They shed light on the interactions between male and female members of religious orders from different perspectives while nevertheless revealing common tendencies. Pastoral care in women's convents becomes recognizable as a precarious symbolic capital, which might be transformed into scandal and disgrace in the blink of an eye. This has led to a vast amount of normative reflection on various and competing gender roles. And finally, the contributions draw attention to the interdependent nature of the religious work of male and female religious orders.

Pastoral care in a nunnery could easily become a cause for scandal and social sanctions. All the more ingenious were the attempts in post-Tridentine Rome to strictly regulate the interactions between male and female religious, which Alessia Lirosi uncovers in her contribution. Here in particular, it was paramount to maintain the facade of a reformed church in which the profane was kept at a safe distance from the sacred. Yet it was precisely the overlapping and competing claims to jurisdiction within the Church, alongside the nunneries' insistence on ancestral privileges, that resulted in confusion. While the reformed orders were trusted to ensure observance in women's convents, due

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to the ambiguity of the task, only very few Jesuits (and their respective biographers) strove toward holiness along this path.

As Alison Weber shows us, Teresa of Avila viewed the agency of nuns, in a context in which they were supposed to be increasingly isolated from the "world," precisely within a close apostolic partnership between confessor and penitent. Spiritual friendship and intimacy were to ensure, at least according to her early writings, that the self-sanctification of the enclosed nuns reached outward through the heart and soul of their confessors. In her works, Teresa dealt at length with the issue of a spiritually fruitful partnership between her Discalced Carmelite nuns and their male visitors and confessors, albeit with decreasing optimism. The conflicts between the nuns and their male counterparts, but especially among the men themselves, about where the boundaries of pious friendship and love between religious women and men lay, were contemporary struggles over a symbolic and gendered order that could also have turned out differently.

The fact that early modern convents were integrated into extensive and male-dominated social networks, reaching far beyond their confessors and visitators, is illustrated by Michèle Steiner, based on three convents in Solothurn. In addition to the family of origin, clerical relatives, and their respective patronage networks, Steiner reveals the surrounding male religious houses as constitutive parts of the religious household of the convents. As part of a "working couple," in which the female and male religious divided their work according to gendered norms, women religious not only played a decisive role in shaping pastoral care through their specific skillset but also formed hubs for various material and immaterial transfers in early modern economies of property and status.

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Just as the nuns discussed here in the concluding section were interwoven with the "world" through a myriad of symbolic and material exchanges, the relationship between religious orders and secular society, as discussed in this volume, generally presented itself as a process of mutual osmosis. Acting as the interface between immanence and transcendence, the religious orders were charged with mediating between an observable, sinful "world" and a paradise that could only be glimpsed fleetingly. Through their unambiguous lifestyle, they were meant to (re)unite the two mutually exclusive spheres into a single entity. The extent to which their attempts at providing religious meaning and legitimacy resonated with their audience was largely determined by the perception and needs of a "world" whose religious and political order was continuously being negotiated. As the religious were actors who navigated between two fundamentally distinct normative orders, whose conflicts they promised to balance, it should come as no surprise that they themselves were constantly caught betwixt and between opposing demands: they had to reconcile the increase in the honor of their order with the observance of radical humility; they had to oscillate between the universal and the particular to hold their own; they were dependent on manifold social networks that they simulta-

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neously needed to renounce; they formed both the boundary and the border crossing to the confessional "other"; and they had to maintain the greatest possible distance from women while at the same time striving to sanctify them. As religious actors, working on the paradox was part of their job description. Rather than merely distinguishing between norms and practices, this volume aims to encourage further investigation into the diverse ways in which members of religious orders in different cultural contexts have dealt with these contradictions and have unfolded them in interaction with their environment, continuing to create new meaning along the way. Instead of labeling the religious orders as agents of either "backwardness" or "modernity," this volume makes a renewed plea for understanding them as creative participants in a wide range of processes of cultural transformation, whose inherent logics need to be reconstructed free of teleological distortions.

*

The chapters in this book are thoroughly revised versions of papers originally presented at an international conference that took place in Bern in 2023; the conference was intended to place the three Swiss case studies elaborated in the context of a research project based in Bern[78] into a larger European context. The book brings together chapters by authors from more than half a dozen countries. Several people helped us standardize the chapters before publication. A thunderous round of applause is due to Allison Silver Adelman for copyediting the contributions of an international group of scholars and to Bendicht Chervet for compiling the bibliography and the index. We thank the Swiss National Science Foundation for generously funding our research project in Bern from 2018 to 2023, as well as the conference in 2023. A special word of thanks is due to the participants in the 2023 conference for their inspiring papers, most of which are now part of the book you are about to read.

78 *Religious Observance and the "World": Regular Clerics' Practices of Self-Positioning in the Long Seventeenth Century*, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation.

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I Communicating Observance

Martin Elbel

Performances of Poverty

Franciscan Mendicancy as a Means of Communication in Early Modern Bohemia

1. Introduction

In the 1780s two notable authors published satirical books targeting religious orders.[1] Ignaz von Born conceived his *Monachologia* as the work of a keen naturalist who set off to explore the genus of monks. He meticulously described the appearance and behavior of all the species constituting the genus. When he came to the Franciscans and Capuchins, the naturalist observed a very peculiar form of behavior of these species while procuring food. He noted that a Franciscan "possesses a most wonderful art of transmuting little images, square bits of paper, amulets, and other similar trifles, into wine and meat." In a similar manner, a Capuchin "eats and drinks all that he can get; is silent the most part of the time, but has hardly any thought; whenever he gets hungry, he leaves his lair and goes out to beg his food."[2] Joseph Richter, the other author, took a different approach. He decided to create a fictional picture gallery in which each individual painting would represent a specific form of abuse perpetrated by religious orders. The entire gallery was disturbing and contained paintings that, instead of pleasing, would scandalize the visitor's eye. Among those paintings, there was one of particularly hideous appearance—one of those "paintings that are intrinsically slippery or contain objects that are too ugly that are almost always hung in dark corners where they do not easily catch the eye." The ugly picture in question depicted mendicant friars on their errands, begging for alms. Richter went as far as to liken them to vampires who drain blood from the ignorant poor folk.[3] According to him, the malicious allure of the mendicants lies in their cunning disguise. Poor, simple people stand little chance

1 This study was written as part of the EXPRO project of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic, no. 20-08389X, *Observance Reconsidered: Uses and Abuses of the Reform (Individuals, Institutions, Society)*.

2 Ignaz von Born, *Joannis Physiophili Specimen Monachologiae Methodo Linnaeana Tabulis Tribus Aeneis Illustratum, Cum Adnexis Thesibus e Pansophia p.p.p. Fast […] Quas Praeside […] Capistrano a Mulo Antonii […] Defendent P. Tiburtius a Vulnere Theresiae et P. Theodatus a Stigmatibus Francisci, Etc.* (Augsburg: Aloysius Merz, 1783), no pagination. For the English version, see Ignaz von Born, *Monachologia: Or, Handbook of the Natural History of Monks, Arranged According to the Linnaean System* (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1852), 57 and 60.

3 Joseph Richter, *Bildergalerie Klösterlicher Misbräuche: Eine Nöthige Beylage Zur Bildergalerie Katholischer Misbräuche* (Frankfurt and Leipzig: s.n., 1784), 251.

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of resisting the image of poverty the mendicants conveyed: "Unfortunately, for the common man, the [mendicant] habit still has so many dazzling features that he sees neither the full red cheeks nor the fat belly, but really believes to see in the person of the terminant a poor, meager beggar who collects the necessary sustenance for his equally poor confreres."[4] And if any doubts remain, the believers are eventually overwhelmed by the efficacy of the mendicant performances: "Apart from the secret magic of the cowl, the terminants also possess other tricks by which, under the title of the alms, they know how to steal from the faithful peasant eggs, lard, butter, wood, candles, wine, grain, fish, fruit, and so on. Many of them have brought the art of begging into a formal system."[5]

Both authors saw religious mendicancy as a particularly pitiful practice harmful to society.[6] They were annoyed by what they saw as mendicant hypocrisy and superstition. However, they seemed to be specifically frustrated by the fact that the whole mendicant system actually worked, and the believers were happily willing to donate their alms. Both von Born and Richter attributed the success of mendicancy to the deceitful appearance of the friars and their performative skills (or, as Erving Goffman would put it, their "personal front").[7] Their criticism suggests that begging for alms was an important interaction that went well beyond its purely economic function. Regular or occasional alms were indeed necessary for the sustenance of many religious institutions. That applied in particular to the two branches of the Friars Minor, the Franciscans and the Capuchins, as the Council of Trent explicitly confirmed that these two orders were not allowed to own any real property.[8] But mendicancy was a fragile ecosystem that worked only as far as the mendicants were able to convince the potential donors of their true poverty and their religious significance. Begging for alms thus played a crucial role in the communication strategies of mendicant orders. It enabled the friars to propagate their spirituality and traditions and thus to better position their respective orders in society. For the donors, almsgiving represented an opportunity to participate in the traditions of a respected religious order, as well as to get access to some of the popular devotions, especially sacramentals. Overall, mendicancy represented a frequent and regular social interaction accentuated by the exchange of goods and services. It was an important, albeit still poorly explored, form of a religious phenomenon in the premodern era.

4 Richter, *Bildergalerie Klösterlicher Misbräuche*, 251–252.

5 Richter, *Bildergalerie Klösterlicher Misbräuche*, 252–253.

6 For the broader context of these pamphlets, see Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 202; and Michael Printy, *Enlightenment and the Creation of German Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 156–157.

7 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956), 14.

8 Giuseppe Alberigo, Klaus Ganzer, and Alberto Melloni, eds., *The Oecumenical Councils of the Roman Catholic Church: From Trent to Vatican II (1545–1965)*, Conciliorum oecumenicorum generaliumque decreta: Editio critica, III. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 152.

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For scholars, it offers a whole range of approaches and topics to analyze—from the economic aspects, through the devotional practices, to the spatial and geographical dimensions, including the relationship between urban centers and the countryside. The functioning of religious mendicancy thus represents a relevant research question that this study aims to address.[9] It will focus on the performative aspects of this practice but will also take into account the context of revival of religious orders in the wake of the Reformation, together with their inner reform movements. The topic will be discussed using the example of the Bohemian Franciscan Province with occasional references to the practices of the related Capuchin Order in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

2. Reform

In 1603, Franciscus a Sosa, minister general of the Franciscan Order, visited Prague, marking the first time a high-ranking order representative had visited the Bohemian province since its founder, John of Capistrano. The highlight of his visit was the foundation of a new friary at the church of Our Lady of the Snows. Establishing the new friary resolved a rather embarrassing issue—there had been no Franciscan house in Prague for over a hundred and twenty years. The initial two efforts at founding an Observant Franciscan friary, first in 1460 and then in 1480, were short-lived due to the hostile attitude of local Hussite citizens. The absence of a friary in the capital of Bohemia (and, therefore, of the Lands of the Bohemian Crown) was a significant blow to the endeavors of the Bohemian Franciscan Province. The situation became even more alarming when Emperor Rudolph II relocated his court from Vienna to Prague in 1584. The fact that there was no Franciscan friary near the imperial residence was not only a hindrance to the Bohemian Franciscan operations but also immensely damaging to the entire order. The minister general's visit and direct involvement underlined the gravity of the situation.[10]

With the foundation of the Prague friary, the Bohemian Franciscans acquired a new power base from which they could more efficiently administer their province, which had been slowly recovering from the crisis caused by the spread of the Lutheran Reformation.

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9 This paper follows up my study on the practical aspects of religious mendicancy: Martin Elbel, "Early Modern Mendicancy: Franciscan Practice in the Bohemian Lands," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69, no. 1 (2018): 39–56. Further information about Franciscan begging can be found in case studies dedicated to individual friaries, although a systematic study on mendicant practices is still missing. More attention has been paid to the mendicant debates on poverty—see the two valuable volumes: Donald Prudlo, ed., *The Origin, Development, and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); and Heinz-Dieter Heimann et al., eds., *Gelobte Armut: Armutskonzepte der Franziskanischen Ordensfamilie vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012).

10 *Chronica Fratrum Minorum de Observancia Provinciae Bohemiae*, MS, Library of the National Museum in Prague, sign. VIII F 75, 369.

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The visit of the minister general in Prague also signaled the increasing interest of the order's headquarters in the affairs of the provinces north of the Alps. Consequently, the order's representatives took several steps to control those provinces more efficiently and to implement strict principles of religious life. The most important of these actions was the decision that all the Central European provinces, adhering to the Observant core of the Franciscan Order, would adopt the principles of a stricter fraction of the order—the Reformed (*Riformati*).[11] The reasons for the transformation are not entirely clear, but apparently, it was deemed that the Reformed Franciscan houses would cope better with the challenges of the confessionally mixed environment. Also, implementing a new structure with the newly Reformed provinces subdued to the control of the commissary general of the Cismontane family seemed to enable direct and more efficient control from the order's center. The order superiors dispatched several Reformed friars from Italy to trigger and facilitate the reform. They were supposed to settle in one of the houses of the Bohemian province, where they were to establish a model community based on the principles of the *Riforma*, which would inspire and instruct other friaries in the province. However, the attempt to implant the reform from the outside failed rather blatantly. The *Riformati* were handed over the friary in Olomouc, but—according to the complaints of the Bohemian friars—the Olomouc house became anything but a model of religious virtues. Instead, it became a hotbed of quarrels and scandals. We have no source reflecting the *Riformati*'s point of view. Still, it seems that the main issue was the attempt of the Italian friars to gain exemption from the authority of the Bohemian provincial minister and to answer directly to their Reformed superiors in Rome. The Bohemian friars, backed by the bishop of Olomouc, Cardinal von Dietrichstein, fought back. Eventually, the Italian friars left, and the Olomouc house was reincorporated into the province.[12]

Despite the conflict, the province repeatedly declared its obedience, goodwill, and intention to adopt the standards of the Reform. The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War, which ravaged the entire province, nonetheless hampered all these efforts. Despite that, several houses in the province gradually adopted the status of Reformed. At the provincial chapter in Brno in 1627, the representative of the province declared that the entire Bohemian province had been Reformed. It took several more years, however, to adopt the new statutes (based on the statutes of the Reformed Austrian province).

11 For an overview of the reform movements within the Franciscan (Observant) Order, see Heribert Holzapfel, *Manuale historiae ordinis fratrum minorum*, translated by Gallus Haselbeck (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1909), 289–315.

12 *Chronica Fratrum Minorum de Observancia Provinciae Bohemiae*, MS, Library of the National Museum in Prague, sign. VIII F 75, 351–353.

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Eventually, the Reformed status of the province was formally acknowledged by the breve of Pope Alexander VII in 1662.[13]

Apart from some partial modifications in the life of the friars and their houses, the Reform's overall impact was rather vague. Even the friars themselves seemed to have problems understanding the contents and meaning of the Reform. Severinus Wrbczansky, writing his comprehensive compendium of the province in 1746, complained that some of the friars failed to fully appreciate the benefits of the Reform. He wrote: "however, this Reform, which originated in Italy, does not consist, as some think, solely in the shaving of the beard, the shortening of the cloak, and the fitting of the little cloak or hood."[14] His explanation, nonetheless, remains characteristically vague when he claims that the real Reform resided in the exact observation of the Rule, the general constitutions, and the statutes of the province, "especially so that holy poverty may shine forth in the church, in the refectory, and in other places intended for the strict use of poverty."[15]

There are several reasons for this somewhat lukewarm reception. The first was that the Reform had lost some of its edge. For example, one of the things the Reformed friars criticized the old Observance for was the existence of apostolic syndics who accepted and managed (on behalf of the friars) monetary alms. Eventually, the Reformed friars (and the Capuchins, too) had to make concessions. By the time the Reform was implemented in the province, the existence of the apostolic syndics at the Reformed friaries had become a well-established practice.[16] The second reason seems to be that the original spirit of the Reform put substantial emphasis on contemplative aspects. Initially, it spread especially among smaller Franciscan houses away from busy city centers. Yet most of the houses of the Bohemian Province were located in major cities, including Prague, Breslau, Brno, Olomouc, Pilsen, and others. While some of the contemplative aspects had been strengthened with the introduction of the Reform (and three of the houses were designated as *domus recollectionis*), most of the friaries remained active in the urban environment. Last but not least, the change for the Reformed branch of

13 For the text of the breve, see Vigilius Greiderer, *Germania Franciscana, seu Chronicon Geographo-Historicum Ordinis S. P. Francisci in Germania*, Tomus I. *Germania Franciscana Orientali-Australis* (Innsbruck: Typis Joannis Thomae Nobilis de Trattnern, 1777), 597.

14 Severinus Wrbczansky, *Nucleus Minoriticus, seu Vera et Sincera Relatio Originis, et Progressus Provinciae Bohemiae, Conventuum, et Residentiarum, Fratrum, Et Sororum Sancti-Monialium, Ordin. Minor. S. P. Francisci Strict. Observ. Reform. in Provincia, sub Patrocinio Sancti Wenceslai Ducis et Martyris* (Prague: Typis Joannis Caroli Hrabae, 1746), 28.

15 Wrbczansky, *Nucleus Minoriticus*, 28.

16 A continual tradition of keeping apostolic syndics is documented starting in the second half of the seventeenth century. For the previous period, the written sources are rather scant. The office of the syndic, or "the spiritual father," was usually held by an influential (and well-off) local citizen who was often also a member of the city council. See Martin Elbel, *Beyond the Wall: Franciscan Friary in Early Modern Olomouc* (Rome: Viella, 2020), 93–98.

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the order clashed with the Bohemian province's very identity, which derived its origins directly from John of Capistrano, a leading figure of the (now abandoned) Observance.

Despite the delayed and somewhat unsure adoption of the Reform, the entire Bohemian Franciscan Province gradually implemented a thorough internal reform aimed at adherence to the principles of strict poverty. The main impetus was not the pressure from the order authorities; rather, it was sheer necessity. The friars were only slowly restoring the houses they had been forced to abandon in the wake of the Reformation. They tried to follow up with their previous successes of the fifteenth-century Observance, but soon they realized that they would be operating in a completely different environment. Apart from other changes brought by the confessional struggles and the post-Tridentine development of the Roman Catholic Church, the existence of new religious orders (and the reformed old ones) was particularly alarming. While the Jesuits could be troublesome due to their successful interactions with the society and the use of some typically "Franciscan" elements (e. g., the cult of the Name of Jesus and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary), the Capuchins represented a much more serious threat. Another group of Friars Minor claiming to be the true sons of St. Francis, especially in their observance of strict poverty, could seriously undermine the very legitimacy of the Franciscan (Observant or Reformed) existence. Although the previous local tradition often had a significant advantage over the newcomer orders, it was necessary to focus on what was essential about the Franciscan tradition. The need to keep up with the Capuchins in the strict observance of poverty, together with the claims that the Franciscans had been following this path well before the Capuchins even emerged, became one of the main factors that shaped Franciscan activities in the early modern period.[17]

Eventually, the Franciscans succeeded in their efforts and were apparently able to defend their position of the "true sons of St. Francis" and keep up with the Capuchins. Despite some concessions they had to make (most notably the use of the apostolic syndics), their communities became generally appreciated for their poverty.[18] This also had clear practical consequences that helped to continue with the recovery of old houses and the foundation of new ones. Often, when a foundation of a new monastery was contemplated—either by a nobleman on his estates or by inhabitants in their town—a Franciscan (or a Capuchin) house was a much more affordable option than one for the rather costly Jesuits or other religious orders. The difference in the overall value

17 Elbel, *Beyond the Wall*, 63–65.

18 Although the original *Riformati* criticized the Observants for keeping the apostolic syndics, in the early modern Bohemian Franciscan Province there did not seem to be any doubts about the topic and the syndics were used until the abolishment of religious mendicancy. Local Franciscan authors unanimously claimed that the existence of the syndics (or spiritual fathers) was in perfect accordance with the Rule of St. Francis. See, e. g., Jan Damasus Charvát, *Fractio Panis In Reflectionem Fratrum Minorum Neb: Lámánj Chléba K Požjwanj Bratrůw Menssých* (Uherská Skalice: J. A. Skarnycl, 1765), 434–437.

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of individual monasteries can be assessed based on the sources created during the reduction of religious institutions by Joseph II in the 1780s. The "useless" monasteries were to be closed down, their properties were confiscated and sold, and the profits were used to sponsor the creation of new parish churches. To ensure that no money was lost in the process, a commissary was sent to every monastery about to be closed down. His task was to inventory all the movable assets, including all extant Mass stipends. The dissolution was hardly profitable when it came to the Franciscan or Capuchin houses. For example, the total "value" of the assets of the Olomouc friary (one of the largest in the province, hosting about 50 friars) was a pitiful 11,683 guilders and 10 kreutzers. The sum was much smaller than in the case of other (non-mendicant) monasteries in the city, whose value was about 200,000 guilders. And it completely paled in comparison to the final cost gained by the (earlier) dissolution of the Jesuit college, which reached 800,000 guilders, not to mention the dissolution of a nearby wealthy Premonstratensian monastery with a value exceeding 1,400,000 guilders.[19]

But it was not only the initial costs that made the mendicants a more economical option. Unlike most other religious institutions, the Franciscans and the Capuchins did not require any regular source of income, although some noble founders might promise to give regular alms that would cover the basic needs of a certain number (usually twelve) friars. Instead, the local population shared the expenses (it seems it was the friars' responsibility to check that the town and the surrounding area could provide sufficient alms). Most of the Franciscan houses were thus directly dependent on alms from the believers. And although some of these alms could become more regular and permanent (usually based on some pious vow), most of the income consisted of alms that depended on the momentary goodwill of the donors. In the eighteenth century, the friars started keeping account books to register received alms and expenses. The regular biannual statements confirm that there was only a minimal surplus of resources.

Various state and ecclesiastical sources verify this adherence to strict poverty well into the eighteenth century, until the reforms of Joseph II. For example, when religious mendicancy was eventually abolished, it was stipulated that all the friars would receive an annual stipend from the state as a compensation. The stipend was set at the flat rate of 200 guilders per person and year. Prior to the reforms, however, the province authorities calculated that in order to secure the existence of each friary, its friars should be able to collect alms that would equal to 150 guilders per priest and 120 per lay brother—a

19 The evaluation of the Olomouc friary is based on *Inventarium über das Vermögen des aufgehobenen Franziskaner Klosters zu Ollmütz* (Oct. 20, 1785) located in Moravian Regional Archive Brno, B2: Moravian Gubernium, Ecclesiastical Department, sign. K 20/36, carton 101. For other institutions, see Tomáš Václav Bílek, *Statky a jmění: kollejí jesuitských, klášterů, kostelů, bratrstev a jiných ústavů v království Českém od císaře Josefa II. zrušených* [Estates and property of Jesuit colleges, monasteries, churches, brotherhoods and other institutions in the Kingdom of Bohemia dissolved by Emperor Joseph II] (Prague: František Bačkovský, 1893), 100–358.

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sum that many houses were struggling to reach. From the Franciscan point of view, the state stipend thus represented an exuberant luxury. This, together with the fact that they would be receiving regular, fixed installments was a serious blow to their way of life and their religious identity.[20]

3. Communicating Poverty

However, just the observance of strict poverty that the early modern friars had achieved did not suffice. It was also necessary that their poverty was clearly and constantly communicated to the public. As a mendicant order, the Franciscans had long been cultivating this strategy. Probably the most eloquent expression of this requirement can be found in a commentary on the Gospel of Luke by Bonaventure: "But the Lord wanted his disciples not only to be poor, but also to appear poor, and to call others to poverty by their actions rather than their words."[21] Of course, this strategy was considered important not only for the self-presentation of the order. After all, it was at the core of the entire Franciscan mission. Yet, we can often see practical reasons behind concerns about the public manifestation of poverty. The leaders of the early modern Bohemian province would eventually address all sorts of issues, ranging from the churches (simple architecture, modest altarpieces without excessive decorations), liturgy (prohibition to use organs or figurative music), and travel (no horses or carts), to the very appearance and behavior of the friars. Particular, even fastidious, attention was paid to the habit of the friars and the objects of everyday use (keys, pouches) that might endanger the overall image of poverty. In the course of time, we can observe that some of the rules and requirements were mitigated. This applies especially to liturgy and other devotions that gradually adopted more "Baroque" forms. However, there was one area where the display of poverty was essential and the rules had to be meticulously observed—the begging for alms.

Mendicancy constituted an essential part of the sustenance of the Franciscan houses and the Franciscan identity. Far from being a random, spontaneous activity, it was a precisely organized and meticulously observed enterprise. Each house had a detailed itinerary that prescribed when, where, and what could be collected. There were essentially two main types of mendicant activities (apart from cases in which the friars

20 The data are based on *Liber Ratiociniorum Conventus Olomucensis ad Sanctum Bernardinum, 1756–1785*, deposited in the Moravian Land Archive in Brno, E21 Franciscans of Dačice, book 10b. Only a few other account books survive. They are mostly located in the National Archive in Prague, Archive of the Bohemian Franciscan Province.

21 Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio, *Doctoris seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, *Tomus VII, Commentarius in Evangelium Lucae*, ed. Aloysius a Parma (Quaracchi: Ex typographia Colegii S. Bonaventurae, 1882), 255a.

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were approached by a donor). The first type was represented by short rounds carried out practically daily (on weekdays) around the city. During these walks, friars begged for items of immediate need or commodities more likely to be obtained in a city than in the countryside (frankincense, writing utensils, etc.). The second type consisted of longer trips (lasting several days), during which friars toured villages and towns within a certain distance from the friary (usually up to 50 km) and begged mostly for agricultural products needed for the long-term sustenance of their communities.

In particular, the longer mendicant tours had to be carefully planned and organized. The *circuli*, where the friars were to collect their alms, had to be negotiated not only among the individual houses of the province but also, even more importantly, with other mendicant orders in the vicinity. It had to be secured that visits to prospective benefactors would not collide with a visit of some other mendicant rivals. Thus, each friary possessed a detailed list of all the towns, villages, hamlets, and manors where the friars of the particular friary were allowed to beg. On average the list comprised three to four hundred settlements.[22] These were divided into several districts, usually delineated alongside the main roads running from the city. At the same time, it was also meticulously prescribed when each district was supposed to be visited (several times a year) and what particular kind of commodity (grains, poultry, vegetables, oil, flax) would be collected during each visit. Each district would then be toured by a pair of friars. Once the sacks became too heavy, the collected alms would be provisionally stored with friendly parish priests or other trustworthy people. From those places, the alms would be eventually transported to the friary. These countryside tours were extremely demanding. They lasted several days and had to be performed several times a year. During each trip, the friars had to walk long distances (one tour around a larger district could cover over 200 km), clad in clogs (later sandals), sometimes in bad weather, and often carrying heavy burdens. Despite these troubles, the friars collected an impressive amount of alms. For example, in 1773 the friars of the Olomouc house amassed (apart from other goods) almost 30,000 liters of grain, 3 tons of beef, and one ton of butter. These victuals fed 50 friars and some of the city's poor. Some of these victuals would be exchanged for other commodities like wood.[23]

Mendicant activities—both the short, everyday errands in the city and the longer tours in the countryside—were not only important for their contribution to the economy of each friary; they were also quintessential for the Franciscan identity and its communication with the society. Their relevance resulted from two major features: the reciprocal

22 See, for example, Jarmila Hlaváčková, "'V žebravém obvodu nám od představených určeném': Zdroje obživy a pastorační služba konventu františkánů v Dačicích v 17. a 18. století" ["In the mendicant circuit designated to us": Sources of livelihood and pastoral service of the Franciscan friary in Dačice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries], *Studia Theologica* 23, no. 1 (2021): 111–134; and Elbel, *Beyond the Wall*, 81.

23 For more, see Elbel, *Beyond the Wall*, 80–86.

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nature of alms and the performative nature of the begging ritual. The reciprocity of gifts is a factor that needs to be considered when discussing religious mendicancies.[24] Aside from the fact that Christian charity was meant to be a self-rewarding act, with donors contributing to their own salvation, there were many other benefits a donor could expect in return. Blessings and prayers would probably be the most common ones, while more open-handed donors could be rewarded with more tangible tokens of appreciation: small printed images of Franciscan saints, rosaries, and a whole range of apotropaic sacramentals (including the much sought-after *schedae Beati Salvatoris*, which were used against fever).[25] This exchange of goods and services was mutually beneficial, although it had an important added value for the friars. This religious interaction helped them spread their mission from their churches to the streets of their cities and beyond. It enabled them to establish and cultivate ties that could eventually become more permanent. Depending on the social status and, to a certain extent, economic conditions, there was a whole range of options. Individuals or communities could be encouraged to venerate Franciscan saints or even moved to make annual pilgrimages to Franciscan shrines. The more well-off sympathizers could sponsor the construction of a statue, painting, or altarpiece in the parish church. Families could establish the tradition of giving their children names of Franciscan saints: Francis and Anthony for boys and Claire and Rosa (of Viterbo) for girls were the most popular. The ultimate choice to strengthen ties with the order was joining the Franciscan family by entering the Third Order or sending a child to enter the First or the Second Order.[26]

4. Performativity

Our understanding of the mendicant practice is complicated by the fact that written sources related to begging are very rare, and those which exist tend to be rather vague. The normative sources from the archives of the Bohemian Franciscan Province were usually concerned only about the general organization of begging: the demarcation of the begging districts, the amount and nature of alms to be collected, and above all, the prohibition of accepting money. Handbooks edifying friars in the principles of

24 Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17.

25 The provincial minister of the Bohemian province Bernard Sannig even published an influential handbook of sacramentals for the use of Franciscan priests that would be reprinted in several other countries. Bernardus Sannig, *Rituale Franciscanum, Continens Varias Absolutiones, Benedictiones, Conjurationes, Exorcismos, Ritus, Ac Alias Caeremonias Ecclesiasticas, Ad Utilitatem Christi Fidelium et Praxim Sacerdotum, Maxime Ordinis S. Francisci Ex Variis Ritualibus Coordinatum. A Bernardo Sannig. Ord. S. Franc. Reform. Prov. Bohemiae S. Wenceslai D. et M. Sacerdote et Iterato Ministro Provinciali Dictae Provinciae* (Prague: Typis Joan. Nicolai Hampelii, 1685).

26 Elbel, "Early Modern Mendicancy," 42.

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religious life were mostly based on the interpretation of the Rule of St. Francis, and so they mostly discussed only such issues that were explicitly mentioned in the Rule (prohibition of monetary alms and the appearance of the habit). And narrative sources tend to mention extraordinary donations rather than small, everyday alms. We might expect that most of the rules and instructions regarding begging were passed on to younger friars during their first mendicant tours by their more experienced confreres who were accompanying and supervising them.

One of the very few written directives to the mendicant friars of other orders appeared in a handbook published by the Bohemian Capuchin Province for the needs of its friars. The *Rituale Capuchinorum* contained an entire, albeit a bit vague, chapter, *De Officio Eleemosynarii seu Circatoris*,[27] addressing the appointment of friars to the role of almoner or circator. In particular, it emphasized the necessity of selecting only such brothers who were mature, prudent, virtuous, and knowledgeable in spiritual matters. The designated friars were then instructed to behave modestly and prudently so that they would not provoke secular people to anger or disdain. They were asked to avoid any philosophical or theological debates. Instead, they were supposed to address people with a few simple and edifying words. Humility and simplicity were underscored as essential virtues. Most notably, the *Rituale* insisted that those to whom such an office was assigned should deeply impress upon themselves the words of the apostle: "Spectaculum facti sumus mundo, & angelis & hominibus" ("for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," KJV, 1 Cor 4:9). The choice of this Biblical verse was a poignant reminder of the performative nature of the mendicant begging. The mendicant friars presented to their audiences and potential donors an idealized image of their order "molded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented,"[28] while at the same time incorporating their performances into the broader narrative of Christian salvation.

The performative aspect of begging was of immense significance. It transformed the simple act of soliciting alms into a multifaceted phenomenon that extended beyond mere economic transactions. The mendicant practice was a constitutive element of Franciscan identity, and it played a key role in the order's self-presentation. It emanated an image of a religious community living in austere poverty and profound humility on the fringes of mainstream society.[29] Victor Turner analyzed the significance of voluntary marginalization, elucidating its role in the formation of what he termed "communitas." Turner argued that individuals or groups characterized by their liminality, outsider status, and structural inferiority occupied a unique position within society. They were

27 For the context of the Capuchin mendicant practice in Bohemia, see Marek Brčák, *Působení kapucínského řádu v Čechách a na Moravě 1599-1783* [Activities of the Capuchin Order in Bohemia and Moravia, 1599–1783] (Prague: Karolinum, 2022), 284–298.

28 Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 22–23.

29 See the contribution of Nicolas Rogger in this volume.

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perceived as being intimately connected to the divine and serving as conduits for more direct communion with the sacred. For Turner, the medieval mendicant orders—with their deliberate embracement of stringent poverty—were exactly such "aspirants to pure communitas."[30]

Hillard von Thiessen, using the example of the Capuchin Order, elaborated this concept and rightly emphasized the importance of the Capuchin institutionalized marginalization against the background of the stricter demand for adherence to religious norms in post-Reformation Europe.[31] While this institutionalized marginality could (and indeed did) continue to play its role in the long term, it nonetheless lost some of its full potential. However, during the process of begging, it could be substantially rejuvenated. While on the mendicant tour, especially on the longer one in the countryside, friars were practically (albeit temporarily) leaving the structures of the friary. At the same time, however, they remained outside the structures of the society. They were betwixt and between, experiencing a liminal (or perhaps, rather, liminoid) status and potentially getting very close to Turner's concept of communitas. Their quasi-liminal and semi-outsider status gave their performances urgency and persuasive power.

It is crucial to emphasize that donors were not merely passive spectators during these performances; by giving alms, they took an active part in the ritual. In essence, they became co-performers, assuming their own roles in the sacred interaction of religious begging. Through their charitable contributions, they became directly involved in the venerable Franciscan tradition or perhaps even in the ethos of original apostolic poverty. We can observe that the Franciscans employed a strategic approach here that we can trace in their other activities aimed at strengthening their connections with society. First, they accentuated the distinctive features, uniqueness, and even the exclusivity of their tradition. Subsequently, they invited the public to participate in this tradition. For example, people entering the main Franciscan archconfraternity were given an opportunity to obtain and wear the revered "cord of St. Francis." Those joining the Third Order even received the iconic sacred habit of the friars.[32] Thus, by combining strategic messaging with inclusive opportunities for participation, the Franciscans effectively cultivated strong ties with society.

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30 Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 144. See also Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 145–147.

31 Hillard von Thiessen, "Intendierte Randständigkeit und die 'Macht der Schwachen': Zur Wahrnehmung des erneuerten Armutsideals der Kapuziner in der Gesellschaft der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Gelobte Armut: Armutskonzepte der Franziskanischen Ordensfamilie vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart*, ed. Heinz-Dieter Heimann et al. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2012), 424–447, esp. 439.

32 Martin Elbel, "The Making of a Perfect Friar: Habit and Reform in the Franciscan Tradition," in *Friars, Nobles and Burghers: Sermons, Images and Prints; Studies of Culture and Society in Early Modern Europe – In Memoriam István György Tóth*, ed. Jaroslav Miller and Laszlo Kontler (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), 149–175.

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In the case of mendicancy, the efficacy of this communication strategy was even further enhanced by its simplicity, directness, and repetitiveness. Modern research has been increasingly focused on "the nonintellectual dimensions of what ritual does, that is, the emotive, physical, and even sensual aspects of ritual participation."[33] Franciscan begging indeed contained important aspects of physicality and created a multisensory experience. The performance involved sight, sound, touch, and even smell to create a profound and immersive encounter with the Franciscan tradition. Visually, the iconic brownish habit adorned with patches, the hempen cord tied around the waist, and the shaved tonsure served as visual markers, instantly recognizable symbols of the friars' commitment to poverty and humility. The rhythmic cadence of footsteps, amplified on cobbled streets by the distinctive clogs worn by approaching friars, provided an auditory backdrop to the unfolding scene, signaling their presence and movement within the community. The exchange of greetings, petitioning formulas, expressions of gratitude, and blessings added layers of sound, punctuating the interaction with moments of reverence and connection. Through touch, the act of almsgiving facilitated a tangible connection between donor and recipient, as alms passed from hand to hand, symbolizing the compassionate exchange of resources and support. And last but not least, the comments about the body odor of the friars made by some critics suggest there was also an olfactory dimension to the experience.[34] This physicality of the ritual, together with its clear structure and repetitive nature, turned begging into a particularly powerful form of communication that enabled the friars to successfully negotiate their position in society. It helped ensure that the Franciscan message was received and understood. As Richard Schechner has observed: "Rituals enhance clear communications because they are overdetermined, redundant, exaggerated, and repetitious. Ritual's insistent *metamessage* is, 'You get the message, don't you?!'"[35]

These performative utterances were deeply embedded in the Franciscan tradition. As a matter of fact, the begging friars were getting very close to the original (and in early modern research often neglected) ideal of the Franciscan tradition of preaching. Although formal preaching from the pulpit became one of the major tasks of the increasingly clericalized Order of Friars Minor, the original ideal promoted by Francis of Assisi was penitential preaching by example. According to this example, the friars were intended to wander from one place to another and, with their appearance and deeds rather than sermons, communicate the Gospel to society. They were meant to perform by following the example of Francis himself. As Antonio Attisani has observed, Francis' "theatricality consists of an incredible variety of poetic actions with the purpose

33 Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 73.

34 Von Born, *Monachologia*, chapter 4, no pagination.

35 Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2013), 65, emphasis in the original.

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of creating a communal experience of transformation."[36] Early Franciscan legends are indeed intensely visual. Most of their texts contain scenes that practically always depict acts performed by Francis of Assisi. And some of the most potent images presented by the legends communicate the ideals of apostolic poverty.

With the eventual institutionalization of the Order of Friars Minor, the importance of formal preaching increased at the expense of performative penitential preaching. The latter, however, never became entirely suppressed:

> It was an understanding and approach to preaching as performance that the brothers would continue to connect to Francis through memory, even while the order would develop institutionally more and more in the direction of formal clerical preaching with the fraternity's accelerating insertion into the pastoral structure of the church. The tension inherent between these two forms of preaching, formal and penitential, as well as their practical implications for the life of the brothers in terms of lifestyle and mission, would continue to be the source both for reform and renewal as well as for dissension and division for the Lesser Brothers through the centuries.[37]

Regular preaching from the pulpit was indeed an important everyday activity of the early modern Franciscans. Each house had several appointed preachers: two for weekdays (one for mornings, the other for afternoons) and two for Sundays and festivities (again for mornings and afternoons). On top of that, Franciscan preachers were often invited to deliver sermons in other churches.

However, the memory, and perhaps the experience, of the original ideal of penitential preaching by example was not completely lost. Friars were exposed and reminded of it while reading or listening to the early Franciscan texts. This also applies to probably the most influential of these texts, the *Legenda Minor*, a choir legend written by Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio for the use by the Franciscan communities during the octave of the feast of St. Francis. Together with the Rule and the Testament of St. Francis, this was one of the most important texts shaping the Franciscan tradition. As Timothy J. Johnson has emphasized:

> Choir *vitae* function as unique witnesses to a specific communal memory of a saint, whose life of virtue and miraculous deeds are recounted within the dynamics of liturgical prayer and the dominant cultic-cultural identity of the institution in question. Given their essential status

36 Antonio Attisani, "Franciscan Performance: A Theatre Lost and Found Again." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 25, no. 1 (2003): 48–60, here 48.

37 Michael W. Blastic, "Preaching in the Early Franciscan Movement," in *Franciscans and Preaching: Every Miracle from the Beginning of the World Came about through Words*, ed. Timothy J. Johnson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 15–40, here 40.

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> within worship, these particular hagiographical texts take on a level of iconicity that is not shared by non-liturgical documents.[38]

These texts were repeatedly read, listened to, remembered, and eventually emulated.

> Their privileged place in the religious community was underscored by the preaching that accompanied them. Since hagiographical texts offer models to be emulated, and the performative dimension of liturgical prayer offers a ritual context for the transformation for those at prayer, the choice of choir legend was decisive in the formation of Franciscan identity.[39]

This familiarity with the early Franciscan tradition was relevant not only for interaction with the rest of society. It also played an important role in the inner relations within the order. Already in the thirteenth century, the Order of Friars Minor had become increasingly clericalized, and in the following centuries, this tendency continued. In the early modern Bohemian province, priests and clerics constituted three-quarters of the entire community; only one-quarter consisted of lay brethren.[40] The whole administration of the order, provinces, and individual houses was in the hands of the (usually small group of) priests. Lay brethren were practically excluded from any decision making. Moreover, we can also observe a growing emphasis on hierarchy, expressed and followed in a similar manner to that found in other segments of society. The provincial chronicle manifests this quite significantly. When describing the affairs of the province and the involvement of individual friars, it follows the contemporary practice of using elaborate titles. Instead of using just a simple name (say, Frater Bernardus), it uses both name and surname. Moreover, in the overwhelming number of cases, it also includes more elaborate prefixes (*Admodum Reverendissimus Pater* or *Multum Venerandus Pater*) and all the honorary titles acquired by the respective friar (*Praedicator, Lector iubilatus, Scriptor Ordinis, Pater Provinciae,* etc.).[41]

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38 Timothy J. Johnson, "The Legenda Minor," in *A Companion to Bonaventure*, ed. Jay M. Hammond, Wayne J. A. Hellmann, and Jared Goff (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 435–451, here 436–437.

39 Johnson, "The Legenda Minor," 437.

40 The shift towards the clericalization of the order is also apparent in the economic affairs of the order. For example, in the case of the Olomouc friary, almost half of the house's income consisted of "donations" paid for the celebration of masses in the Franciscan church. The alms collected in the city and the countryside represented the rest of the income.

41 *Chronica Fratrum Minorum de Observancia Provinciae Bohemiae*, MS, Library of the National Museum in Prague, sign. VIII F 75, passim. The hierarchy within the order, precedence of the friars, and the use of titles was also discussed at length in provincial statutes. See *Statuta et Decreta Fratrum Minorum S. Patris Francisco Reformatorum Provinciae Bohemiae S. Wenceslai Ducis et Martyris in Capitulo Intermedio Anno 1673. Die 1. Maii in Conventu Nostro Bechinensi B: V: In Coelos Assumptae, Rite & Canonice Celebrato […]* (s.l.: s.n., 1674).

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Within the hierarchical structure of the early modern Franciscan Order, lay brethren and younger clerics occupied a relatively peripheral position. Nonetheless, their engagement in mendicant activities could elevate their standing to a certain degree. It seems that those friars who dedicated themselves to the mendicant service, often for several decades, were held in particular esteem by their communities.[42] Their good knowledge of their district and the people inhabiting the area, their personal ties (that had been cultivated for many years) to the most loyal donors, as well as their general experience and expertise in performing acts of begging, were among the most valuable assets of every friary. However, their importance went far beyond their economic contribution. Equally important was their pivotal role in preserving and perpetuating the original Franciscan legacy and communicating it to the broader public.

5. Conclusions

Begging, beyond its immediate economic function, served as an important means of communication, allowing the friars to effectively convey the values of their order to a wider audience. It provided a platform through which the friars could portray their order as a sacred community, living in strict poverty and intimately connected to the divine. The very act of almsgiving was a powerful ritual ensuring that the message the mendicants wanted to convey was delivered, received, and understood. The performative nature of begging, at the same time, gave the message remarkable urgency and potency. Moreover, mendicancy was a practice that exported the Franciscan mission from their friaries into the public space of the cities and the countryside, and eventually also to the households of the benefactors. Begging often helped to establish and cultivate firm and lasting relationships with individuals, communities, and institutions as it could inspire donors to engage in additional devotional practices facilitated by the friars, such as the *Via Crucis* devotion or joining the Third Order at a Franciscan friary. The performances of poverty enacted during begging campaigns held significant importance in shaping the identity of the friars, particularly for younger members of the order. By participating in this ritual, they sought to emulate the example set by their

42 Appreciation of their laborious mendicant service often appears in the necrologies written in the chronicles of the individual friaries. These often use epithets like *sedulus circator*, *exemplaris sacrae eleemosynae collector*, or *multis annis indefessus collector*. These examples were taken from *Protocollum Archivi Conventus Olomucensis*, *1745–1788*, in Moravian Land Archive in Brno, E 21: Franciscans of Dačice, book 10a, section L, pages 529–542. However, this appreciation did not promote them to the level of the most distinguished members of the province, whose eulogies usually emphasized organizational and scholarly achievements but omitted any mendicant experience. See, for example, the eulogy on Bernard Sannig in *Chronica Fratrum Minorum de Observancia Provinciae Bohemiae* in the National Museum in Prague, manuscripts, sign. VIII F 75, note attached to page 417.

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founding father, Francis of Assisi, thereby deepening their connection to the Franciscan spirituality. Additionally, the ritual of begging granted greater visibility and importance to lay brethren within the order. Overall, mendicancy was a significant and widespread activity that involved a substantial segment of early modern Roman Catholic society. Due to the reciprocal nature of almsgiving, with friars rewarding donors with blessings and other sacramentals, mendicancy needs to be understood as a vital form of religious interaction, intricately intertwined with various other devotional practices, including prayers, the veneration of saints, and pilgrimage.

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Nicolas Rogger

The Communal Life of Franciscan Humility

Medial Functions of Capuchin Observance in the Early Modern Swiss Confederacy (1580–1700)

1. Introduction: Social Position and Medial Functions

Capuchin humility sought to establish a gateway to the transcendent through radical self-humiliation. The Capuchin order's active and contemplative reproduction of the gospel, modeled after the exemplary *imitatio christi* of St. Francis of Assisi, was perceived as a particularly safe road to heaven in early modern Catholicism. The prestige of the Capuchin order in the early modern Swiss Confederacy was largely based on the order's success in portraying a transcendentally delimited religious habitus and in symbolically integrating its environment into its interplay with the sphere of the sacred.[1] Examining the social position of the order in the local communities and the specific reputation that underpinned it means illuminating the order's strategies of self-promotion as a community of "religious virtuosos" (Max Weber). It means describing the strategies by which the mendicants portrayed themselves as trustworthy mediators

1 Here, the convents of the order spread rapidly throughout the Catholic towns and villages following the introduction of the order in the 1580s with the intervention of the reform-oriented cardinal-bishop of Milan and soon to be canonized Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584). On the foundation of the first convents, see the still important work of Rainald Fischer, *Die Gründung der Schweizer Kapuzinerprovinz 1581–1589: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Katholischen Reform* (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1955). The present inquiry benefits greatly from the in-depth study by Hillard von Thiessen on the Capuchin convents in Freiburg im Breisgau and Hildesheim. See Hillard von Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Alltagskultur: Vergleichende Fallstudie am Beispiel Freiburgs und Hildesheims 1599–1750* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Wissenschaften, 2002). For important insight on the Capuchins in the early modern Swiss Confederacy, see also the more recent books of Daniel Sidler, Philipp Zwyssig, and Daniela Hacke: Daniel Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln: Katholische Reform und lokale Glaubenspraxis in der Eidgenossenschaft (1560–1790)* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2017); Philipp Zwyssig, *Täler voller Wunder: Eine katholische Verflechtungsgeschichte der Drei Bünde und des Veltlins (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)* (Affalterbach: Didymos, 2018), and Daniela Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation: Religiöse Koexistenz und Politik in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft (Die Grafschaft Baden 1531–1712)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017). On the early Capuchins and Ochino's flight across the Alps, see Michele Camaioni, *Il Vangelo e l'Anticristo: Bernardino Ochino tra Francescanesimo ed Eresia (1487–1547)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018). The study of the Capuchins in the Swiss cantons is greatly facilitated by the compilation of the Helvetia Sacra, vol. V/2, *Die Kapuziner und Kapuzinerinnen in der Schweiz* (Bern: Francke Verlag 1974).

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to the transcendent, able to effectively reconcile the sins and imperfections of their environment through vicarious and uncompromising adherence to religious norms.[2]

For the mendicants, this implied the demonstrative renunciation of secular concepts of honor and worldly entanglements and the publicly discernible observance of the order's Rule: a normative framework based on the Franciscan commandments of humility and poverty.[3] Capuchin self-positioning in social space (like all self-positioning) thus relied heavily on acts of symbolic communication in which the friars expressed their specific norms and values. In the early modern Swiss Confederacy, these practices of symbolic communication had to be tailored to a heterogeneous audience: lay people of both confessions, secular authorities, competing religious orders and secular clergy, the Church Universal and its local representatives, and, not least, God himself.[4] The social reciprocity of Capuchin humility—the web of expectations and obligations that spun between the order and its environment due to its specific lifestyle—can only be understood in relation to the order's success in credibly displaying the transcendental reciprocity of its self-loathing: the affective and wholesome exchange with the hereafter.[5] Finally, all the mentioned actors held specific symbolic, social, and material resources,

2 On the Capuchins as "normative overachievers," see Hillard von Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität: Vom Umgang mit Werten und Normen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2021), 280–292.

3 "Observance" is understood here, quite in line with contemporary understanding, as a ritual practice intended to reproduce transcendental structures. At the same time, I understand it as a medial phenomenon by which communication was structured, drawing on the systems-theoretical understanding of observation by Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).

4 On symbolic communication, see Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Symbolische Kommunikation in der Vormoderne: Begriffe – Thesen – Forschungsperspektiven," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 31 (2004): 489–527; and Gerd Althoff, *Die Macht der Rituale: Symbolik und Herrschaft im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: WBG Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2013). On the communication of humility, see Gerd Althoff, "Das Privileg der 'Deditio': Formen gütlicher Konfliktbeendigung in der mittelalterlichen Adelsgesellschaft," in *Nobilitas: Funktion und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa*, ed. Otto G. Oexle and Werner Paravicini (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 27–52. An important classic on the symbolic dimensions of self-representation is still Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956).

5 On the concept of reciprocity, see Alvin W. Gouldner, "The Norm of Reciprocity: A Preliminary Statement," *American Sociological Review* 25 (1960): 161–178. The present use is inspired by the classical theories on social gift exchange of Marcel Mauss, *Essai sur le don: Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950) and Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the norm of reciprocity in the context of humiliation, see William Ian Miller, *Humiliation: And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1993). The concept of honor is understood here as a communicative code, although there is also talk of the *symbolic capital of humility* as the institutionalized prestige of the Capuchin order. The literature on the concept of honor in the early modern period is too extensive for a meaningful selection to be presented here. Nevertheless, Marian Füssel and Gerd Schwerhoff can be mentioned as inspiring authors.

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which the order paradoxically depended upon even more, precisely because of its strict commandments of humility and poverty.

At the same time, the order's humility-based esteem and its changing social position must be looked at as a product of the self-observation of the local societies that sustained its convents.[6] The observable rise of the order within the social and religious hierarchies cannot solely be explained by the mendicants' actions, but has to be understood simultaneously as the outcome of the social desire to participate in the glory of God *through* the recognition of the virtue and otherworldly power of the Capuchin lifestyle. This desire was founded in the hope of balancing conflicts of norms between the secular and the divine through the mediation of an order of Catholic Reform which, due to its radical lifestyle, was perceived to be in immediate proximity to the religious substructure of the social order: the honor of God. The widespread recognition of the Capuchin order as an exemplary model of evangelical perfection tells us as much about the comparatively strict Rule observance of the mendicants as about the need of early modern Catholic communities to mark religious unambiguity in the wake of the contingencies caused by the pluralization of Christianity. In this perspective, the order's status correlated with its quality as a medium of social self-observation. The standing of the order reflected its capacity to represent the particular symbolic order of its environment and thus its ability to mark meaningful distinctions concerning the normative and religious identities of the societies supporting it.[7]

In order to approach the cultural impact of Capuchin humility in the early modern Swiss Confederacy, it seems thus helpful to ask about the medial functions of the order: the distinguishing, signifying, and mediating operations by means of which the order and its specific habitus found a connection in local, translocal, and transcendental communication processes. Coupled with this is the question of how the religious community was involved in the reproduction of the social order, shaping local and translocal economies of salvation and honor through the discernment credited to it.

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6 This conclusion arises when society is understood in a constructivist and communication-theory perspective as a communicative system that observes its own distinctions and reproduces them in communication. For this perspective on the early modern period, see Rudolf Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende: Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn: Konstanz University Press, 2014).

7 I follow a broad concept of media as described by Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende*, 36–39. Different perspectives on the role of media in transcendental relations are gathered in Carla Dauven-van Knippenberg, Cornelia Herberichs, and Christian Kiening, eds., *Medialität des Heils im späten Mittelalter* (Zurich: Chronos, 2009). I am further considering the local dimensions of religion, which studies on "local" and "regional Catholicisms" and "Christianities" have discussed in the wake of the debates on the confessionalization thesis. On the notion of "local religion," see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). On the distinction between European regional Catholicisms, see Peter Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung: Europäische Gesellschaft und Kultur im Barockzeitalter* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2006), 112–152.

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Media make differences visible, and shape as well as enable communication.[8] Social distinction, shame, honor, and divine grace—key categories of the early modern social order—were medially determined, since they were always a phenomenon of (self-)observation against the background of socially negotiated and internalized patterns of classification.[9] And it is here, I argue, where the medial functions of Capuchin "observance" and the translocal organization of the Capuchin order came into play: shaping communication and (self-)observation through the differences it rendered visible. By relating the social position of the order to the underlying medial functions of Capuchin humility, this chapter implicitly focuses on the reciprocal relationship between the religious practice of the order and the perception and changing cultural context of its audience. Between the introduction of the order in central Switzerland in the 1580s and the beginning of the eighteenth century, it can be concluded that the order's strategies of self-positioning and its quality as a medium of social self-observation were subject to continuous change. In the following, I propose to understand this change as a process of the communalization of Capuchin humility, in which the circle of those who could evaluate the order's humility—and thus its salvific efficacy—successively narrowed.[10]

2. The Humility Code

The prestige pursued by the Capuchin order can be thought of as a positive twist on that of the figure of the *ahmabul* famously portrayed by Pierre Bourdieu. With an *ahmabul*, a shameless and dishonorable person who does not fear the "gaze of others" (Jean-Paul Sartre), one is not allowed to have any exchange—not even a quarrel—in Kabyle society, if one is concerned about one's reputation.[11] Like an *ahmabul*, the Capuchins—denying their honor and self-worth—positioned themselves outside agonal honor exchanges and were granted freedom from inner worldly shame. Unlike the *ahmabul*, however, this Capuchin shamelessness legitimized itself through the attempt to approach a morally superior shame before God in accordance with the norm of reciprocity.[12] In the course

8 As is pertinently described by Schlögl, *Anwesende und Abwesende*, 29–47.

9 For an inverted perspective on the process of misrecognition (and thus recognition) of symbolic violence described by Bourdieu, focusing primarily on shame as pre-internalized self-evaluation and its social consequences, see Sighard Neckel, *Status und Scham: Zur symbolischen Reproduktion sozialer Ungleichheit* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus 1990).

10 Reminiscent of Blickle's concept of "Kommunalismus." With contributions on Catholic communities, see Peter Blickle and Johannes Kunisch, eds., *Kommunalisierung und Christianisierung: Voraussetzungen und Folgen der Reformation 1400–1600* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1989).

11 Bourdieu, *Outline*. The figure of the *ahmabul* has more recently been discussed in Maria-Sibylla Lotter, *Scham, Schuld, Verantwortung: Über die kulturellen Grundlagen der Moral* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012).

12 On shamelessness in the pre-modern era, see Katja Gvozdeva, ed., *Scham und Schamlosigkeit: Grenzverletzungen in Literatur und Kultur der Vormoderne* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011).

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of their religious life, the friars were to free themselves from all worldly vanities in order to transcendentally delimit their sense of shame and assimilate to the normative identity of the self-humiliating Son of God.[13] This was an attempt that demanded the discarding of any self-worth independent of God and in which the friars would gravitate to the ground with ecstatic joy—bending and writhing in the face of the infinite difference in value between themselves and God.

This institutionalized transgression of social norms by the order was at the root of its taboo, which became evident, in part, in the meticulous punishment of those who violated—or were accused of violating—the honor of the friars.[14] Throughout the seventeenth century, the rehabilitation of the order's honor in the face of the defamatory speeches and physical attacks of the Reformed neighbors constituted its own mode of communication at the Federal Diet (*Tagsatzung*). Here, the envoys of both confessions contended fiercely over moral and legal admissions—paradoxically renewing the religiously divided confederacy as an honor world.[15] For the reputation of Catholic magistrates, it could have real consequences to get into a dispute with reputable Capuchins: from broken windows and public humiliation to being voted out of office.[16] The discrediting of the seemingly defenseless friars, who occasionally were being pushed out of towns and villages by secular magistrates because of their agitating and defamatory sermons, was perceived as a gross violation of the norm of reciprocity and thus called into question the moral integrity of the *corpus christianum*. It directly affected the religious feelings within the commune, which could be tremendously useful in political infighting. At the same time, this meant that the symbolic and personal proximity to

13 On St. Francis' expropriation of social shame through the public exposure of his private parts, see the biographies of Dieter Berg, *Franziskus von Assisi: Der sanfte Rebell* (Ditzingen: Reclam, 2017); and Klaus Reblin, *Franziskus von Assisi: Der rebellische Bruder* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

14 Traceable in the council protocols and court records of all studied towns and villages. A compilation of cases can be found in: Staatsarchiv Nidwalden (hereafter StANW), C 1525, 664; Staatsarchiv Luzern (hereafter StALU), AKT 19E/184.

15 While the Capuchins were repeatedly pelted with stones by Bernese or Zurich subjects during their travels, the preaching of the mendicant friars in bi-confessional territories, which were jointly administered by the Catholic and the Protestant cantons, was in turn considered to be a violation of the peace treaties (*Landfriedensordnung*). These recurring disputes are documented in the *Amtliche Sammlung älterer eidgenössischer Abschiede* (EA). In particular: EA 4/2; 5/1; 5/2; 6/1; 6/2. On the Federal Diet as a center for communication and for interconfessional exchanges, see Andreas Würgler, *Die Tagsatzung der Eidgenossen: Politik, Kommunikation und Symbolik einer repräsentativen Institution im europäischen Kontext (1470–1798)* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2013). On the concept of "honor worlds," see Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Honor Code: How Moral Revolutions Happen* (New York: Norton, 2010).

16 Best illustrated in the countless disputes that the France-oriented Ammann Beat II. Zurlauben of Zug had to fight out with a variety of Capuchins, documented in the *Zurlaubiana.* For two exemplary cases, consult *Acta Helvetica – Zurlaubiana* (hereafter AH) 17/122, Gerichtsverhandlungen des Stadt und Amtrats, Mar. 16 and 19, 1635; and AH 134/175A, Notiz Beat II. Zurlauben, May 1650.

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the order and its material and social protection were efficient ways to legitimize social aspirations in religious terms. Entering into a material and symbolic exchange of gifts with the order offered the lay world the opportunity to share in the honor of the order.[17]

The willful sacrifice of status and rank in favor of a life of radical humility exposed the faithful to a deficit in reciprocity, since they were reassured of their state of grace through their inclusion in the *sacrum commercium* of the order.[18] Capuchin renunciation of the "world" thus followed the logic of gift exchange, which paradoxically led to the transfer of secular concepts of honor to the social structure of the order. The higher the social standing sacrificed by experiencing a "Franciscan epiphany," the higher the prestige in the "world" and apparently also the chances of assuming a high office. This was a social logic legitimized by the proximity to the Franciscan example and community-based elections, as well as by the argument that noble Capuchins, because of the extent of their sacrifice in secular honor and their knowledge of courtly manners, were particularly well suited to awaken piety among the laity in all spheres of society.[19] The fact that the mendicants produced a *nobilitas* of their own was noticeable in the Swiss province of the order, whose highest offices were initially dominated by nobles of Milanese descent (1589–1616), followed by nobles from the south of the Holy Roman Empire (1615–1668). Only after the hard-fought division of the province (1668) did they come permanently into the hands of the sons of Swiss patricians and magistrates.[20] The reputation of saintliness attributed to outstanding friars, whose status as thaumaturges was updated

17 On the religious legitimization of political claims to power in the early modern Swiss Confederacy using the example of the gift-giving practices of foreign envoys, see Christian Windler, "'Allerchristlichste' und 'Katholische Könige': Verflechtung und dynastische Propaganda in kirchlichen Räumen (Katholische Orte Der Eidgenossenschaft, spätes 16. bis frühes 18. Jahrhundert)," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 33 (2006): 585–629. Concise on the sharing of honor (and identity) is Appiah, *The Honor Code*, 61–65.

18 While the *sacrum commercium* initiated the *theosis* with Jesus' self-humiliating crossing of the border into this world, the Franciscan order claimed an inverted process with the transgression of Francis and his community into the hereafter. This process was heralded in the marriage of St. Francis to the *domina paupertas*, as described by Annette Kehnel, "Der freiwillige Arme ist ein potentiell Reicher: Eine Unterscheidung zwischen freiwilliger und unfreiwilliger Armut," in *In proposito paupertatis: Studien zum Armutsverständnis bei den mittelalterlichen Bettelorden*, eds. Gert Melville and eadem (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2001), 203–228.

19 Illustrated in the *vita* of the provincial Angelo (Visconti) of Milan (1561–1616) in Provinzarchiv der Schweizer Kapuziner, Lucerne (hereafter PAL), Ms 63 Exerpta Annalium 1613–1634, 12–16. On the general organization of the Capuchin order, see Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner*, 62–76.

20 In terms of its social structure, the Capuchin order thus did not differ fundamentally from other religious orders within the early modern Swiss Confederacy, whose leading positions were likewise distributed along the lines of the social power structures. The leading Swiss patrician families, however, only came to see the Capuchin order as a legitimate career option with its increasing communalization—a circumstance that must be attributed not least to the translocal organization of the order and the competition that went with it. For a comprehensive list of the provincials (and guardians) from 1583 to 1970 with references to literature and sources, Albert Bruckner and Brigitte Degler-Spengler, eds.

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in moments of "collective effervescence" (Émile Durkheim) during preaching tours or visitations, was distributed by and large according to this inverted "hierarchy of humility," in which the ongoing battles over the constitution of the province were nurtured.[21]

The justification of social inequality within a nominally egalitarian community bound to strict humility required a form of paradoxical communication within the order's self-description—daring the friars to "jump." In the annals, filled with descriptions of the lives of exemplary brothers, serving to internalize the humility code of the order, high-ranking Capuchins—who already deviated from the Franciscan ideal by assuming a position of power—were attributed seemingly opposing virtues.[22] They were stylized as particularly humble and obedient, so that their activism, which placed them outside the Rule of the order, could be legitimized by virtue of an advanced process of self-sanctification achieved through the divinely inspired internalization of Franciscan values.[23] Three undeniable signs of exemplary Capuchin humility were: parallels that could be drawn between the biography of an individual friar and the *vita* of St. Francis, general recognition by the faithful, and the successful enhancement of the order's standing in the surrounding communities. The order interpreted its prestige in the world not as its own merit but as a divine gift (and challenge), which indicated its success in increasing the glory of God through its humility. In practice, Capuchin humility thus presented itself as a popularity contest in that one had to try one's best to not be accused of *avaritia* and earthly ties.[24] Thus it was a common Capuchin theme to justify the assumption of positions of power in tears as submissive obedience to the "world," in which one had placed the increase of God's glory above one's self-sanctification. This hiding behind "popular opinion" resulted in an ambiguous concept of sanctity as depicted in the *vitae* as well as in disputes on the religious market.[25]

Helvetia Sacra vol. V/2: *Der Franziskusorden; Die Kapuziner und Kapuzinerinnen in der Schweiz* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1974), 52–119.

21 This "hierarchy of humility" was reflected in the miraculous events that accompanied general visits, such as that of Innocent of Caltagirone in 1646, or in the efforts of the local magistrate families to obtain long-distance blessings and the hospitalization of provincials and generals. For these practices in Lucerne, see StALU, AKT 19E/186; 188; 194; 195.

22 First observed by Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner*, 285–317.

23 Cf. Bernard Dompnier, "Tensions et conflits autour des missions chez les Capucins du XVII^{e} siècle," in *Missions, vocations, dévotions: Pour une Anthropologie Historique du Catholicisme Moderne*, ed. idem (Lyon: LARHRA, 2015), 139–160.

24 The order's sense of honor and the desired proximity to the Franciscan *vita* can be deduced from the numerous provincial annals: PAL, Ms 6–8; 63; 75; 115; 116; 120–123.

25 The descriptions of saintly brothers and their miracle-working abilities were qualified with an introductory "*protestatio*" in order to justify them within the regulations put in place by Urban VIII (Barberini) as mere speeches of the faithful. In pulpit disputes in Solothurn, the guardian tended to make the secular environment responsible for the order's rise to the center of religious and social life. PAL, Sch 1768.3, Solodorum Acta, 1601–1700.

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The ritualized habitus of the order was sharpened within the framework of these life stories, in which the spiritual merits of otherworldly patience, strict obedience to the Rule, self-sacrificing love of poverty, and deep devotion to Mary were demonstrated through the edifying examples of outstanding Capuchins, who were rewarded with an intimate contact with the sphere of the sacred. The countless miraculous events that the order brought about within the province through its prayers to St. Anthony, St. Francis, and the Virgin Mary and by means of efficacious sacramentals were documented as proof of the sanctity of the province, which integrated the communes that supported the order into a translocal community of salvation.[26] In the abundant paraenetic writings, an elaborate gesture of humility was formulated, with which the values of the order were to be carried into the world. The ostentatious poverty of the monastery buildings, the obligation to wear a rough and rugged habit, the duty of silence in the presence of secular authorities, the display of "dead eyes" in public, and specific behavior in the sacred space—where the friars had to humble themselves before the cross at predetermined and at times unconventional moments—were just some of the regulations intended to consolidate the order's performance as a community of religious virtuosos with an unwavering focus on the afterlife.[27]

3. Communalizing Capuchin Humility

That the perception of the local environment—rather than strict observance of the Rule—was decisive in determining what was to be considered sanctifying Capuchin humility became evident starting with the foundation of the first convents north of the Alps. Initially, the emerging province benefited from a system of "empowering interactions" with the local nuncios and Rome, through which it was able to adapt its religious practice to the needs and perceptions of the local communities and to develop its spiritual autonomy in the face of competing clergy, generating recurring

26 The general idea put forward within the order's self-description, that the order's "good works" in one place applied to all the communities supporting the province, also found a meaningful connection within the Swiss cantons in the context of the early convent foundations. They were attributed significant political alliance connotations, not only in light of the relations of the Catholic cantons and their leading families with Spanish-Milan and Rome, but especially with regard to the Catholic solidarity within the confederacy. What was even more decisive over time for the strengthening of the solidarity within the Catholic cantons, however, seemed to be the mutual welcoming and support of each other's brothers, who were continually circulating and socializing within the province. For details on the role of the Capuchins and their sacramentals in repressing magical practices and thus binding the laity to the resources of the Church, see Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner*, 411–449.

27 Abundant paraenetic writings, which unfortunately cannot be discussed in more detail here, provide a strikingly honest view on the ritualization of the Capuchin habitus. See my forthcoming doctoral dissertation and PAL, B 168 A; B 168 B; B 169, B 183, B 184, B 185; B 186.

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contradictions with the visitors of the order.[28] But this marked only the beginning of the process of communalization of Capuchin humility. Based on two modalities of honoring God in which the order specialized—obedience and patience—in the following I aim to exemplify specific medial functions of Capuchin humility and to outline how the quality of the order as a medium of social self-observation transformed over a century. The division of the province is then framed as a culmination point, in which the circle of those who decided on the observance of the order had already been drastically reduced, and when the order's potential as an integrating factor within the Swiss towns and villages possibly reached its climax.

3.1 Autonomy through (Dis-)Obedience: A Province Near and Far from Rome

To describe the Franciscan understanding of obedience, the early chroniclers of the Franciscan order referred to the metaphor of a marionette-like corps. This corps, characterized by its blind obedience, could become the bearer of extraworldly autonomy. The adoption of transcendental patterns of differentiation in unbroken obedience to the gospel and the Rule was ultimately aimed at overcoming the self in favor of the reception of the divine will, of which the Franciscan (and Capuchin) body was to become a mere instrument.[29] Thus the vow of obedience did give the friars something in return, both in transcendental and social terms. The heartfelt desire to die with the Rule near one's chest indicated to the community the divine graces to be expected.[30] However, the Franciscan concept of obedience (to God, the Church, the Rule, the order, and divine creation) was both universal and gradual, giving it a possibly contradictory nature.[31] This ambiguous concept of obedience, I argue, functioned as a resource for legitimization in the defense of the Capuchin order's social position.

The historically deducible Franciscan maxim *autonomy through obedience* became tangible in the Capuchins' interactions with the Roman Curia and the nuncios residing in Lucerne. The spiritual competences of the order and its perception as a vanguard of Catholic Reform after Trent always remained tied to its access to the *thesaurus*

28 André Holenstein, "Introduction: Empowering Interactions: Looking at Statebuilding from Below," in *Empowering Interactions: Political Cultures and the Emergence of the State in Europe, 1300–1900*, eds. Willem P. Blockmans, idem, and Jon Mathieu (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 1–31.

29 On the matter of obedience within religious orders, see Silvia Mostaccio, "Codificare l'Obbedienza: Le Fonti normative di Gesuiti, Oratoriani et Cappucini a fine Cinquecento," *Dimensioni e Problemi della Ricerca Storica* 1 (2005): 49–60; and Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits Between Obedience and Conscience During the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (Ashgate, 2016).

30 Cf. the example of Seraphin of Altstetten (†1629): PAL, Ms 116, 235.

31 With its commitment to the original Franciscan texts, the Capuchin order gave new meaning to the demand for obedience to divine creation that St. Francis had written down in his testament, but whose validity was disputed by the Papal Church because of its subversive and potentially self-empowering tendency.

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ecclesiae, which served both to objectify and extend the reconciliatory powers attributed to its lifestyle. Shortly after the introduction of the order north of the Alps and with the help of the papal envoys, local protectors achieved the extension of the convents' absolution privileges. Their intercession shielded the friars from the suspicion of Rule-violating ambition and was targeted at positioning the Capuchins alongside the Jesuits as specialists *in foro interno*.[32] The nuncios gladly offered their protection, as they sought to increase their own influence by means of the mendicant order and its image as a guarantor of confessional unambiguity. They used their wire to Rome to obtain dispensations from the Rule and spiritual privileges, and assigned prestigious reform projects to members of the order. Through these valuable resources for both the standing of the order and the distinction of individual friars, the nuncios sought to establish personal and institutional bonds to the emerging province. By participating in the reputation of the order within the local communities and its translocal network, in whose expansion they played a central role, the nuncios hoped to advance both their Roman agenda and their own career interests.[33] The controversial cause of Capuchin pastoral activity and the increasingly immodest placement of the order on the local religious markets were initially also supported by the Spanish-Milanese envoy Pompeo Della Croce (1527–1594), who hoped that the Milanese friars would help alienate the faithful from the (then excommunicated) French Crown of Henry IV.[34]

Although the provincial elite regularly demonstrated resistance to the interests of the nuncios by invoking the precedence of the Rule and the Constitutions—especially

32 On this subject, see the edited correspondence of Archbishop Carlo Borromeo with, among others, the Landammann of Nidwalden, Melchior Lussy, Walter Roll of Uri, and Pompeo Della Croce, the Spanish Milanese envoy in Eduard Wymann, "Aus der schweizerischen Correspondenz mit Cardinal Carl Borromeo, Erzbischof von Mailand," *Der Geschichtsfreund* 52 (1897): 263–305; 53 (1898), 1–100; 54 (1899), 1–225.

33 The nuncios activated their link to the pope nephews and cardinal protectors of the order as well as to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars as part of their general early strategy to "banquettare i cappuccini." Documented in the correspondence of the nuncios: Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (hereafter AAV), Segr. Stato, Svizzera, vol. 2–11; as well as in the edited documents of the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. See Vincenzo Criscuolo, ed., *I Cappuccini e la Congregazione Romana dei Vescovi e Regolari, vol. I–IX* (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1989–2004).

34 The nuncio instructed the Capuchins to publish the bull of excommunication and forbade them to hear the confessions of the Solothurn magistrates, who were symbolically and financially bound to France. However, the Milanese Capuchins themselves voiced pangs of conscience as well as the fear of being expelled from the city, and they ultimately circumvented the call. This episode is characteristic of the restraint of the early Italian Capuchins in Switzerland. They were more concerned with their reputation south of the Alps, which prevented them from entering political controversies. On the perception of the Capuchins and Jesuits as actors in the service of foreign powers, see Daniel Sidler, "'Habsburgische' Jesuiten und 'mailändische' Kapuziner? Reformorden in den Außenbeziehungen der katholischen Eidgenossenschaft (spätes 16. bis frühes 18. Jahrhundert)," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 65 (2015): 353–373.

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concerning the care of sister convents, which, although desired by their environment, they periodically rejected—the young province profited greatly from its "obedience" to the papal legation for its status on the religious market.[35] In turn, the friars served as valuable agents and informants. The provincial Angelo of Milan (1561–1616) and the famous convert Ludwig of Saxony (1554–1608) accompanied the papal envoys on visitations or took on diplomatic as well as pastoral and reform tasks in their name in a dynamic of mutual empowerment. Precisely because taking on these assignments often meant acting outside the narrow limits of the Rule, they indicated the advanced self-sanctification of the friars. The nuncios recommended loyal friars—who were not afraid to use their "spiritual weapons" for political means—in Rome, where they were granted audiences with influential cardinals in the context of the general chapters and thus could provide valuable intermediary services for local authorities.[36] It was only with the demise of the last Italian provincials around 1616, for which the nuncios tried in vain to compensate by recruiting additional Italian friars, and with particular emphasis during the Barberini pontificate and France's controversial politics during the Thirty Years' War, that substantive ruptures began to appear in the relationship between province and nunciature.

The nuncios complained that the Habsburg-dominated provincial leadership would defy their commands and that the Swiss Capuchins likewise were too deeply involved in local secular affairs.[37] Indeed, the increasing entanglement of the convents in local devotional and political cultures led to the emergence of what I understand as locally specific practices of resistance in the face of the Church and the "world." Especially "local" friars, who enjoyed considerable freedom from their audience, sought to renew their transcendental focus by addressing specific salvation concerns rooted in the political culture of their environment. The scandalous and violent refusal to hear the confessions from Swiss mercenaries departing in service to the French Crown—one such practice backed by the Habsburg-friendly provincials—brought about various citations to Rome. In 1636 and 1644, the provincial and Ludwig (von Wil) of Lucerne (1594–1663), the guardian of the convent in Lucerne, were accused of a lack of church obedience and political partiality by the nuncio and the cardinal protector—and brother of the pope—Antonio Barberini (1569–1646). In 1644, the plot was masterminded by the French ambassador, who exploited the desperation of the Barberini in the face of

35 The protection of the Capuchins repeatedly conflicted with the concerns expressed in the decrees the Council of Trent. This was the case when the nuncios supported the friars in disputes with the bishop of Basel concerning the hearing of Easter confessions in 1627/28. See the documentation in the episcopal archives: Archives de l'ancien Evêché de Bâle, Porrentruy (hereafter AAEB), A 30–33/1–2.

36 On the role of Capuchins in this system of "occasional diplomacy," which was used, among other things, for canonization requests, see Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln*, 407–448.

37 An exemplary rant of Girolamo Farnese can be found in AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, vol. 33, 33v, 12.7.1641 (Deciphered: 31.7.1641).

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the end of their pontificate, but who ultimately failed to conceal his involvement.[38] The Habsburg diplomatic network immediately went on to discredit the accusers in Madrid and Rome, while the local authorities in the cantons—surpassing factionist lines, albeit grudgingly—issued attestations confirming the exemplary humility, local esteem, and, ironically, the family and geographical affiliations of the friars, assuming a stance as guarantors of observance.[39]

In what we can call mechanisms of collective misrecognition, in which agreeing on a profound misunderstanding was the only way for the actors involved to save face, Swiss Capuchins time and again succeeded in exonerating themselves from accusations of a lack of obedience and political meddling, which had called into question the value of their spiritual services: a spectacle that could again be observed in the run-up to the division of the province and in the short-term suspension of the provincial in 1679.[40] These mechanisms were based both on the competing interests of foreign princes in the early modern Swiss Confederacy and on the increasing entanglement between the honor of the communes and the honor of the order. As Capuchin religious practice continued to be oriented towards its local environment, enhancing its quality as a medium of social self-observation, the "sanctity of the province" rapidly seemed to become a matter of worldly rule, responsible for the integrity of the communal self-worth.

For the image of the order to remain as both an authentic mediator to the sacred and to Rome, it was necessary to combine the advantageous jurisdictional distance to the curia with symbolic proximity.[41] In the second half of the seventeenth century, a movement to both universalize the spiritual privileges of the province in the face of the competition and to legitimize a highly localized religious practice can be observed. Invoking the Counter-Reformation saint Carlo Borromeo as their divinely ordained founder, the provincial elite sought tirelessly to be elevated to the status of a prefecture of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*.[42] The efforts, which set in at the height of confessional tensions, were met with varying degrees of resistance from the dioceses and nuncios, who accused the Capuchins of trying to endear themselves to the already Catholic

38 The controversy, especially concerning the striking and for him frustrating involvement of Antonio Barberini (sen.) , can be traced in PAL, Sch 3667.

39 Ibid.

40 AAV, Archivio della Nunziatura di Lucerna, vol. 49.

41 The nunciature overall thus remained an important source of protection, which had a continued impact on the social structure of the province.

42 In 1656, the then provincial Ludwig (von Wil) of Lucerne seemed for a short period to have succeeded, as he was granted the status as prefect in the context of the "Nicodemite Controversy" in Arth, which had sparked a civil war. Archivio storico della Congregazione de Propaganda fide, Rome (hereafter APF), Acta, vol. 25, 1656/77/5. Efforts to raise the province into the status of a prefecture intensified after the division of the province in 1668, since the new sister province of Anterior Austria, like the Franciscan province for that matter, had successfully acquired missionary privileges due to its geographical setting.

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laity.[43] Although the situation remained unclear well into the eighteenth century, these efforts were ultimately characteristic of the communalization of Capuchin humility. In this process, the religious practice was structurally coupled with the expectations of an environment in which the order had to defend its reputation as a powerful mediator to the transcendent by adapting communication strategies, ultimately deviating from the precepts of the Rule. The autonomy of the province—its ability to transcend not only secular norms but also the norms of the order—due to the self-image of the order remained tied to the symbolic resources of the papacy. The province seemed to gain increasingly universal access to these resources by virtue of its local prestige and the possibilities granted by an ambiguous concept of obedience. Communalization and universalization thus revealed themselves as two sides of the same coin.

3.2 Patience and Impatience: Balancing and Agitating Conflicts of Norms

Christian *patientia* demands endurance in bearing mundane suffering while maintaining trust in God as an expression of the superior validity of his will over profane affects. Its prototypical form consisted of the agonies and humiliations endured by Christ. Patience was thus a further modality of honoring God to which the Capuchin order subscribed with particular emphasis in the formation of its ritual habitus. It was an integral part within a transcendental exchange of Franciscan humility that was meant to leave an impact on the "world." According to St. Francis, *patientia* was the condition for living in peace as well as for peacemaking. The sufferings of Christ were to be reproduced in the Franciscan lifestyle and, by the same token, to have a reconciling effect between the "world" and God. Franciscan *patientia* was intended to implement the Christian demand for forgiveness of debtors and love for one's enemies—which John Bossy has identified as the very moral tradition of Christianity—without concessions.[44]

According to the *vitae* of Capuchin friars, patience was a *sine qua non* of Capuchin distinction. Precarious life situations were understood as challenges from heaven and thus as opportunities to display one's trust in God through long-suffering patience. Severe infirmities, embarrassing physical impairments, and incurable illnesses, as well as insults and degradations from fellow friars or laypeople, were all interpreted as temptations from God, sent to the friars on account of their craving for self-humiliation in Christian discipleship. A common motif was that exemplary friars on their deathbed, despite unbearable pain, faced death with ecstatic joy. Their serenity suggested the brothers' inner peace. They awaited the chance to come face to face with God, had their death announced in advance, or became miraculous signs in other ways, such as

43 The changing positions of the bishops of Basel, as well as those of the papal envoys and various Roman cardinals, can be traced in the archive of the Diocese of Basel. See AAEB, A 30–33/1–2.

44 Cf. John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

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their corpses smelling lovely, not decomposing, or performing miraculous healings.[45] *Patientia* was also said to have been one of the qualities with which the friars encouraged those around them, Catholics and Protestants alike, to "convert." Benefactors of the order were inspired by the spiritual guidance of the Capuchins and could acquire otherworldly patience themselves and subsequently die a "good death."[46] According to the order's self-description, the friars' desire to suffer was a prime mover for conversions of Protestants, who in it recognized the efficacy of extraworldly asceticism. In the Catholic context, the friars' patience is even said to have touched quarrelling parties to the point that they were able to lay aside their profane differences—at once ashamed and exalted.

It is important to note that in the annals, the act of peacemaking took place as an affective exchange with the hereafter, in which external actors were able to participate through the order. The annals do not provide much useful information about the social practice of peacemaking. To clarify the question of what lasting mark the order's self-image as peacemakers left on the actual practice of peacemaking, we must leave the order's internal perspective and transfer the transcendental logic of Capuchin *patientia* to the "world." It was the social reciprocity of Capuchin patience that both the order and external actors sought to instrumentalize in processes of peacemaking by using the shame- and trust-inducing effect of Capuchin self-negation to limit the conflicting parties' room for maneuver. However, in conflicts of interests, the friars operated within narrow margins. The demand for the order's mediation—as well as its occasional success—was ultimately rooted in its claimed exchange with the sphere of the sacred. This exchange served as a resource for religious legitimation, granting a plausible means to end conflicts of honor without a loss of face. The success of the Capuchins' mediation, nevertheless, was always conditioned by the recognition granted to the friars as trustworthy mediators to the transcendent in specific settings.

The "Capuchin Peace" between the two Catholic cantons of Obwalden and Nidwalden in 1618, which dealt with political and ceremonial precedence and participation rights, can be regarded as an almost archetypal example of Capuchin peacemaking. The peace charter affirmed that it was a work of "God of the Holy Spirit and not of men."[47] The celebration of the mass by the Capuchin Martin von Egelshofen (†1637), at that time guardian in Stans (Nidwalden), and the "unanimous" invocation of the Holy Spirit administered by him had brought about the highly improbable settlement with which all the dishonoring accusations and disgraceful speeches made in the conflict were to be considered absolved—with the help of Mary and St. Francis. Factually, the document confirmed the disadvantageous circumstances for Nidwalden that had already been decided earlier at the Federal Diet. The critical difference consisted in the intercession

45 Numerous examples can be found in PAL, Ms 63.

46 Philippe Ariès, *Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours* (Paris: Éditions Points, 2015).

47 EA, 5/2, 6: Vergleich zwischen Obwalden und Nidwalden, Ennetmoos, Feb. 15, 1618.

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of a Capuchin friar, who, crucially, was held in high esteem by the defeated party. Regardless of the setback, Friar Martin was still revered in Stans as the "messenger of the Prince of Peace Jesus Christ" when he died in 1637.[48] Referencing his intercession, the treaty could be stylized as the result of a transcendental exchange process which lent it its conciliatory character. The medial function of Capuchin humility was thus to credibly disguise the social mechanisms behind the settlement and to exalt both parties by virtue of their susceptibility to otherworldly *patientia* and their encounter with the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that the humble pleas of the friar did not exert a social effect.[49] However, the decisive factors are to be seen, on the one hand, in the fact that the outcome of the conflict was already known in advance and, on the other hand, in the normative identity of the Capuchin as the guardian in Stans—giving his intercession credit from the defeated party. If such ideal conditions were not in place, Capuchin intervention in political disputes came with a high risk. When the controversy broke out again in 1690, under different power structures, Obwalden proposed the guardian of Sarnen (Obwalden) and former provincial Januarius of Altdorf as mediator. The authorities of Stans, however, immediately accused the friar of partiality, thus protecting themselves from being forced to make concessions.[50] Januarius was never able to take on the role of peacemaker, for which the Capuchin thanked the heavens. After all, he was spared the loss of reputation inherent in both further accusations of political bias as well as failed peace negotiations. Less fortunate were Capuchins sent by the archbishop of Milan to the Swiss Confederacy as mediators in jurisdictional disputes south of the Alps, visitors denied by the French Crown or the Habsburgs because of their geographical and familiar background, or friars who endeavored to negotiate as "formal" envoys of the Swiss cantons in Rome.[51]

In order to build peace successfully, a Capuchin had to have multiple affiliations and complementary identities, as the example of the conflict between the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln and the government of Schwyz over dominion rights in Einsiedeln, which lasted from 1633 to 1645, seems to indicate.[52] The nuncio was ultimately forced to resort to local Capuchins from Schwyz, who were not only held in high esteem in

48 StANW, C 1525, 664, Nachruf auf P. Martin von Egelshofen 1637.

49 Ibid., A 1000/2, 117v–118v; 121r–122v; C 1025/3:75; 496.

50 Ibid., 497/498.

51 See the case of the Capuchin Dionisio of Milan. His case is documented in Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Lettere all'arcivescovo Federico Borromeo, vol. 254. On the fate of the Capuchin Pietro Paolo di Castello as "envoy" of the Swiss cantons in Rome, see Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln*, 432–441.

52 The main question was whether Schwyz was entitled to tax both the monastery and the people of Einsiedeln, which, from the point of view of the abbey and the nunciature, violated ecclesiastical immunity. The controversy can be traced in Klosterarchiv Einsiedeln (hereafter KAE), A.FO.17; A.PK.1; A.PK.7; A.NK–02.1; A.NK–02.8/9; A.NK–04.15/27/34; and under the signatures referenced in the footnotes that follow.

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the local context, but who also entertained a broad social network. Their practices of exerting political influence clearly exceeded the limits of observance. According to the future provincial Apollinaris (Jütz) of Schwyz, he would have ended up in prison if the messenger he used to send his letter as well as other documents from Schwyz to the abbot had been apprehended.[53] Ultimately, the end of the dispute, which was attributed to the exemplary humility of Friar Apollinaris and his companions in both the official charter and in individual certificates issued to the Capuchins, resulted from the spiraling costs and the futility of the abbot's attempts to wrest any satisfaction from the government in Schwyz.[54] The mediation of the Capuchins now served the abbot to withdraw from the conflict without satisfaction or loss of honor. Though the fact that the friars were able to act as mediators over an extended period—without accusations of a lack of observance casting doubt on their credibility—can be traced to their multiple affiliations. While their membership in the order substantiated their credibility as peacemakers, it was the mandate of the papal nuncio that shielded them from accusations of acting outside the Rule. Finally, the perception of the Capuchins as members of the community of Schwyz freed the friars from the suspicion of acting in the service of foreign powers, which granted them trust and freedom of action in the local context.

At the communal level, the reconciliatory function of Capuchin *patientia* was in part institutionalized within the framework of a sacramental penal practice. Based on the perception and self-image of the order as an immediate and depersonalized channel to God *in foro interno*, the honor of (minor) delinquents was rehabilitated through their confession and civil disputes could be settled. The friars moreover routinely acted as witnesses and advocates in criminal prosecutions, promoting consensus for urban and rural criminal justice, although their demands were only selectively considered. The friars' credibility as witnesses and examiners of conscience—grounded as much in the ostentatious humility and indifference of the order as in the communal need for unambiguity—made Capuchin convents popular venues for exorcisms, credible conversions, effective penance, and exoneration from accusations of the lack of catholicity or witchcraft. The friars, by virtue of their transcendental focus, were at times even trusted to observe and judge events in retrospect.[55]

53 KAE A.OK–3.73. Among other things, the friars were to join forces with the parish clergy and denounce "the acts of violence against Our Lady of Einsiedeln" in sermons and confessions.

54 These certificates were of course valuable documents, referencing the friars' emulation of the Franciscan example: KAE A.OK–04.2, Testimony issued by the dean of the Abbey of Einsiedeln, Father Wolfgang Weiss, for Friar Apollinaris, Aug. 7, 1646; A.OK–04.22, Testimony issued by the government of Schwyz on the achievements of Friar Apollinaris in the controversies with the Abbey of Einsiedeln, Oct. 13, 1646.

55 In the case of the death of the governor Urs von Arx, the Capuchins were commissioned by the city government to investigate whether the death might have been a suicide. StASO, RM 135, 1631, 431. These practices are documented in the council and court records. Cases in which the Capuchins were called upon in cases of suspected witchcraft can be found in AAEB, B 168/19–35, Criminalia.

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The flip side of the reconciling Capuchin *patientia* was to be seen in the growing impatience within the province brought about by progressive communalization. Through controversial homilies and sermons, the friars denounced the promiscuous lifestyle of their surroundings, the ongoing interconfessional exchange, and the venality of the leading families influenced by foreign money, as well as practices of purchasing votes. These practices of resistance in the Franciscan tradition actualized the moral authority of the friars by detaching the convents from local habits. Simultaneously, they questioned the self-image of their environment as pious Catholics, provoking significant conflicts of conscience. The order's influence on the laity's sense of shame made it a serious political factor, for local authorities as well as for foreign powers. Moreover, it can be seen as a driving force in the process of emotional alienation that was to lead to the great confessional conflict of seventeenth-century Switzerland: the First Villmerger War in 1656.[56] This war led to a process that was to elevate the quality of the order as a medium of social self-observation into a new sphere: the controversy which in 1668 led to the province's division into an Anterior Austrian and a Swiss Capuchin province.

3.3 "Machiavellian Brothers" and the Division of the Province

As soon as the war ended in favor of the Catholics, rumors began to spread about a heated altercation between the Capuchin friar Apollinaris (Jütz) of Schwyz and Colonel Peregrin Zwyer of Evebach (1597–1661), who was *Landammann* of Uri and the emperor's agent in the Swiss Confederacy, an altercation that allegedly had unfolded on the battlefield. The Capuchin was said to have begged the colonel to take more resolute action against the Protestants at the critical juncture of the war. Authorities from Schwyz and Zug subsequently accused Zwyer of having prevented a more decisive victory with his hesitant approach and blamed him for the substantial expenses of the war. Uri naturally defended its *Landammann* by instead blaming the modest triumph on drunken soldiers from Zug. Suspicions against the colonel hardened when a letter of protection from the Bernese general Sigismund von Erlach (1614–1699) for Zwyer's Castle Hilfikon came to light, which seemed to prove his treachery against his peers in faith. Apollinaris for his part promptly became a key witness in an inner-Catholic conflict, in which the question of Zwyer's culpability, as well as the distribution of the war expenses and the possible resumption of the civil war, were at stake. This gave the conflict cross-border significance.[57]

56 On the origins and effects of this war on the early modern Swiss Confederacy's self-understanding, see Thomas Lau, *"Stiefbrüder": Nation und Konfession in der Schweiz und Europa (1656–1712)* (Cologne: Böhlau 2008).

57 The Zwyer controversy occupies a considerable part of the documentation of the archive of the nunciature on the Capuchins in the seventeenth century. See AAV, Archivio della Nunziatura di Lucerna, vol. 49. The same applies to the sources of the administration in Schwyz. Staatsarchiv Schwyz (hereafter

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While the Madrid-oriented nuncio Federico Borromeo (1617–1673) at first appointed Apollinaris and the former provincial Ludwig (von Wil) of Lucerne to further investigate the incident, he soon accused the two Capuchins of maliciously slandering Zwyer. In agreement with the provincial leadership—with origins in the Empire—Borromeo instigated the citation of the two friars to the general of the order on visitation in France, intending to get rid of them in the longer term. In a smoke and mirrors operation—which the nuncio later tried to expose as a veiled conspiracy between the two friars and the government of Zug—Apollinaris and Ludwig were put under "arrest" in the convent in Zug. The action, instigated by authorities in Zug, sought to exonerate the vital witnesses both from a relocation and from the accusation of disobedience. For months the two friars stayed in the convent in Zug, which in the process became the nucleus of a separation movement.

With the evacuation of Zwyer to the imperial court and his eventual death in 1661, the Zwyer affair had turned into a Capuchin affair, with the ill will of Schwyz and Zug turning against the nuncio and a Capuchin provincial leadership that had been condemned as "Machiavellian" in striking manifestos. Accusing the "Zwyerian" provincial leadership of putting the interests of foreign princes before their religious mission and of systematically preventing the "local" Capuchins from assuming major provincial offices, they endeavored to convince their confederate allies of the necessity of separating the province from the convents in the empire.[58] In their exchange with the Roman Curia, Schwyz and Zug united in affirming that the "foreign" provincial elite, with the intention of vindicating the "heretic" Zwyer, had interfered in political proceedings with disgraceful sermons and, with their persecution of the locally esteemed friars Apollinaris and Ludwig, had caused a schism that could no longer be reconciled.[59] The provincial leadership was denied visits to Schwyz and Zug, and Borromeo was threatened that he would no longer be recognized as papal representative.[60] The cause was not dropped even when the nuncio—after numerous and tumultuous visitations and dispatches to Rome and Vienna—granted a general amnesty under pressure from the governments

StASZ), Akten 1, 602.001–602.019. Zwyer's correspondence with the imperial court, which shows his contacts with the "Habsburg" Capuchins, has been edited in Anselm Zurfluh, *Sebastian Peregrin Zwyer von Evebach: Eine sozio-kulturelle Biographie eines innerschweizerischen Kriegsmannes im Dienste der Habsburger während des Dreissigjährigen Krieges* (Zurich: Thesis, 1993–2002).

58 Documents on the division of the province are gathered in PAL, Sch 223, Divisio Austriaco.

59 StASZ, Akten 1, 602.004, Nr. 35.

60 On the perspective of the nuncio, see Samuel Weber, "Ein Verteidiger adliger 'Interessen' gegen republikanische 'Leidenschaften': Nuntius Federico Borromeo als Akteur im Zwyerhandel (1656–1659)," in *Beobachten, Vernetzen, Verhandeln: Diplomatische Akteure und politische Kulturen in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft*, eds. Philippe Rogger and Nadir Weber (Basel: Schwabe Basel, 2018), 45–67; cf. Samuel Weber, *Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy: The Borromeo Brothers of Milan, 1620–1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023). I thank the author for many illuminating conversations on the subject.

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of the Catholic cantons, which finally reintegrated Ludwig and Apollinaris into the province.

A division of the province, based on "national" and political entanglements, was acceptable neither to the provincial leadership, nor to the general leadership of the order or the papacy. Over the next few years, the governments of the cantons adopted changing positions, claiming in part that they did not want to interfere in the order's business. After all, the translocal connections to the Empire under the provincial leadership in Lucerne also offered advantages. Meanwhile, the Spanish-Milanese envoy cautioned the courts of Madrid and Vienna against the future inclination of the laity towards the French Crown—since the convents in Alsace were to remain part of the Swiss province of the order—and tried to mobilize resistance against a division in Rome.[61] While the French faction could hardly believe its good fortune at the persecution of Zwyer by local Capuchins, it too took on ambivalent attitudes towards a possible division of the province. The French ambassador for his part recognized the advantages of excluding Capuchins who were sympathetic to the Habsburgs, but he also emphasized that the affections of the Swiss Capuchins were the real concern.[62]

The division of the province came about in 1668, after the "local" and "Habsburg" Capuchins had jointly and in agreement with the emperor (not Spanish-Milan) and the governments of the Catholic cantons applied for it in Rome. It was not a lack of observance, but the preservation of observance in an extensive province of over sixty convents that formed its ultimate source of legitimization. As would be the case with the separation of the convents in Alsace enforced by the French Crown in 1721, the interest in consolidating political and religious boundaries prevailed over the interest in influencing the Swiss patronage markets by means of the mendicants. Within the Catholic cantons, the accusation of Machiavellianism—as the ultimate expression of distrust against regular clergy from foreign dominions—and the desire not only to protect "local" Capuchins from the loss of honor, but also to position them permanently at the top of the hierarchy of humility, had accelerated the communalization of the order significantly—a process that was closely linked to the gift-exchange logic of Capuchin humility. The sons of Swiss patricians finally took over the top of the provincial hierarchy and assured their communes and families of origin a share in the divine honor, as their "exemplary" humility reflected immediately back upon them.

61 Archivio di Stato, Milan, Atti di governo, Culto parte antica, vol. 1620.

62 AH 133/43, Jean de la Barde an Beat II. Zurlauben, Dec. 20, 1659. In the end, however, the separation did represent a victory for French interests, which also reflected the changing power structures.

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4. Conclusion

The communalization process of Capuchin humility analyzed in this chapter was closely linked to the social logic of the order's specific code of humility, which seemed to generate the greatest value where the willful abandonment of a privileged social position had a direct impact on this very same society, i. e., where the symbolic capital of humility had emerged from immediate self-observation. The medial functions of the ritualized Capuchin habitus and its inherent social (and transcendental) reciprocity harbored the potential to signify religious legitimacy and to relieve Catholic communities of their shame before the divine norm. Like the underlying practices of self-positioning, they transformed in osmosis with the expectations and needs of an environment whose perceptions they shaped through the distinctions they rendered visible. The history of the Swiss Capuchin province points to the central role of translocal religious orders in the negotiation of confessional, cultural, and political affiliations. As media of social self-observation, religious orders also played a significant part in the definition of the symbolic limits of society. The evolution of the Swiss Capuchin province from a translocal association of itinerant preachers to a local order of Catholic Reform points to the desire of Catholic communities in the early modern period to assure themselves of their own salvation. The communalization of Capuchin humility thus seemed to further the constitution of increasingly "self-sufficient" communities of salvation and honor.

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Silvia Mostaccio

A Clerical Hegemony?

Being a Missionary to the Armies: Echoes of the Jesuit *Missio Castrensis* at the Army of Flanders

1. Introduction: Jesuit Military Missions and Accommodation at the Very Core of Early Modern Europe

For early modern Europeans, confessional warfare was a near constant reality, and both Catholics and Protestants spilled rivers of ink to justify the just war against heretics. But these were nothing compared to the rivers of blood generated by the countless battles, massacres of civilians, plagues, and famines that accompanied the war.[1] Among the Europeans who shared this condition of uncertainty, violence, passion, and exhaustion were many Protestant pastors and many Catholic clergy. Some became directly involved in following the armies. The history of these men, besides being interesting in itself, is one of the possible vantage points for understanding a broader society, with its social, cultural, and religious tensions. This chapter therefore aims to take seriously the interactions between clerics and the military in the context of prolonged warfare, questioning the actions of regular clerics and the ways they adapted their practices to the context of life they shared with their contemporaries. More specifically, the chapter focuses on a specific group of clerics: the Jesuits active with the Spanish army in Flanders. Regarding this group of clerics regular, it is important to note that in contemporary sources they define themselves as "missionaries," not as military chaplains. From this perspective, the army becomes a mission context with its own specificities, but embedded in the broader framework of the Catholic missions of the time. This call to mission must be taken seriously because it defines a precise collective identity, a basic attitude and practical ways of behaving. It is evident that, following the Protestant Reformations, early modern Catholicism reconstructed itself in the articulation of

1 Geoffrey Parker, *Global Crisis. War, Climate Change & Catastrophe in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014); Enrique García Hernán and Davide Maffi, eds., *Guerra y sociedad en la monarquía hispánica: Política, estrategia y cultura en la Europa moderna (1500–1700)*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Laberinto, 2006); John Lynn, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Lauro Martines, *Furies: War in Europe, 1450–1700* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

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a double priority: the struggle against Protestantism and extra- and intra-European missionary expansion.[2]

In 2010, Simon Ditchfield wrote an important essay on the new orientations of the history of Catholic missions, specifically focusing on the relationships between missionaries, and the men and women who were the object of the mission (missionized). This sort of reflection would mark the end of a Roman-centric vision and foster a new awareness of the development of different Catholicisms, which would now characterize multiple geographic areas. In his article, Ditchfield clearly defined a program of work which was that of an entire generation of historians of Catholicism in the early modern age:

> I am determined to view Roman Catholic belief and practice in both the New and Old worlds on its own terms, and not simply as a mirror image of their normative Roman Catholic prototype. This approach makes it vital that we attempt to recover the capacity of the missionized to select and shape the religious ideology of the missionaries to their own ends. […] Wherever possible, one should eschew the word "influence" (A influenced B) and instead make use of the far richer palette of active verbs which give due recognition to the various ways in which B, rather than being simply acted upon, was also him/herself an active agent who might alternatively: copy, engage with, draw upon, appropriate, master, perpetuate, promote, transform, reduce, react to, learn from, distort, modify, misunderstand, assimilate, differentiate oneself from, elaborate, parody, simplify, exaggerate, emulate, tackle, resist, subvert or even openly contradict A.[3]

According to this view, the study of early modern Catholicism, and in particular the study of Catholic religious missions, required a relational and systemic approach, in which influences between missionaries and the missionized were reciprocal, albeit from unbalanced positions of power. Refusing to see the Catholic world as a set of spaces

2 Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 6, *Reform and Expansion 1500–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). As for religious missions in Europe, with the dual function of deepening the faith and combating the Reformation, see at least Louis Châtellier, *La religion des pauvres: Les missions rurales en Europe et la formation du catholicisme moderne, XVI^{e}–XIX^{e} siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1993); Bernard Vincent, "Missions intérieures," *Revue de Synthèse* 120 (1999): 474–477; Paolo Broggio, *Evangelizzare il mondo: Le missioni della Compagnia di Gesù tra Europa e America (secoli XVI–XVII)* (Rome: Carocci, 2004); Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004); Emanuele Colombo, "Identità e missione: Gesuiti italiani e missioni popolari tra Antica e Nuova Compagnia," *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo* 11, no. 2 (2014): 285–302; Bernard Dompnier, *Missions, vocations, dévotions: Pour une anthropologie historique du catholicisme moderne* (Lyon: LARHRA, 2015); and Claudio Ferlan, *The Jesuits: A Thematic History* (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2023).

3 Simon Ditchfield, "Decentering the Catholic Reformation: Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 101 (2010): 186–208, 201.

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in which schemes fixed in Rome were applied, Ditchfield insisted on the plurality of appropriations and the capacity of men and women to act locally.

Regarding more specifically Jesuit missionary activity, this general focus on the relational dimension has implied an increasing attention of historians to one of the basic operating characteristics of Jesuit missions: *accomodatio*.[4] Indeed, ever since the founding texts of the Society of Jesus—a religious order conceived by Ignatius of Loyola as a missionary one—the ability to adapt to different mission contexts was considered one of the Jesuit specificities par excellence. In order to act effectively *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, the Jesuit had to be able to adapt the theological truths and practices derived from them to the multiple realities of his mission, showing malleability and sensitivity to contexts.[5] These characteristics made the Society of Jesus one of the religious orders capable of missionary activity that adapted to local realities, as well as to specific geopolitical contexts, especially—but not exclusively—in regions that resisted European expansion.[6] However, the attention paid by historians to Jesuit accommodation has gradually been combined with an awareness of the relational dimension mentioned above. This has made it possible to question the agency of the missionaries alone, emphasizing the active role of the populations and specific social groups with which the Jesuits came into contact, and which forced them to adapt by redefining their identity and pastoral activity.[7] According to this interpretation, the Jesuit missionary frequently experienced the relativization of his spiritual and social hegemony, oscillating between the functions of leader, mere actor among others, and silent observer. Moreover, in contexts characterized by well-defined social rules and strong collective identities, the missionary often found himself in an "in-between status," which made him a man of the frontier, a sort of alien poised between different worlds, all of which were for some reason foreign to him.[8]

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4 Stefania Tutino, "Jesuit Accommodation, Dissimulation, Mental Reservation," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jesuits*, ed. Ines Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), with bibliography; Ines Županov and Paolo Aranha, "Accommodation, accommodement," in *Les Jésuites: Histoire et dictionnaire*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Benoist Pierre (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 2022), 427–430.

5 Tutino, "Jesuit Accommodation," 218–223.

6 Thomas Banchoff and José Casanova, eds., *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

7 See, for instance, Nicolas Standaert, "Le rôle de l'autre dans l'expérience missionnaire à partir de la Chine: l'identité jésuite façonnée par les Chinois," in *Tradition jésuite: Enseignement, spiritualité, mission*, ed. François-Xavier Dumortier et al. (Brussels: Lessius, 2002), 115–137.

8 Nicolas Standaert, *The Interweaving of Rituals: Funerals in the Cultural Exchange between China and Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci, 1552–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to Be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2011).

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In this chapter, the epistemological and historiographical choices made so far are mobilized to describe and interpret the activity of the Jesuits active in the mission to the military camps—the *missio castrensis*. This will be done by combining a range of information from normative sources—there were many rules concerning this particularly challenging mission—with "comments" (*observationes*) written by the missionaries themselves and preserved in correspondence with local or Roman superiors, as well as in a composite manuscript that formed part of the mission material that the fathers in charge of the artillery in the army of Flanders passed on to each other. To this material should also be added some of the books produced by the Jesuits of the *missio castrensis* to serve as missionary tools—in particular, manuals of devotion for the soldiers and the missionaries who accompanied them—as well as texts recounting the history of the *missio* and its specific features. The aim is to use these multiple sources to shed light on the dialectic between norms and practices, emphasizing the continual redefinition of missionary activity under pressure from the militaries and the context of war. The military is a heterogeneous category of missionized with a fairly well-defined identity. Every army reproduces and accentuates the social, economic, and cultural hierarchies of the society from which it comes. Moreover, some of the defining characteristics of an army—such as the value placed on obedience and respect for hierarchy—are clearly reflected in religious obedience to superiors. How did the missionaries renegotiate their identity as men and as religious, as well as their mission priorities, in their interactions with the military, who were so different from them and yet so close to them? What social and religious changes did these renegotiations reflect?

2. Parish Priests or Missionaries? The Manifestations of the "Spiritual Paternity" of Jesuit Chaplains between Ordinary and Extraordinary Pastoral Care

In 1587 the Jesuit *missio castrensis* was instituted in the army of Flanders (the Spanish army fighting against the "rebel Calvinists" of the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands between 1568 and 1648, during the Eighty Years' War).[9] This initiative was in response

9 On that mission, see various issues by Vincenzo Lavenia: Vincenzo Lavenia, *Dio in uniforme: Cappellani, catechesi cattolica e soldati in età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2017); Vincenzo Lavenia, "*Missiones Castrenses*: Jesuits and Soldiers between Pastoral Care and Violence. Introduction," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 4 (2017): 545–558; Vincenzo Lavenia, "In God's Fields: Military Chaplains and Soldiers in Flanders during the Eighty Years' War," in *Narrating War: Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Marco Mondini and Massimo Rospocher (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2013), 99–112; as well as Silvia Mostaccio, "Dieu à la guerre: Les émotions de Dieu et la guerre des Quatre-vingt ans aux Pays-Bas espagnols," in *Émotions de Dieu: Attributions et appropriations chrétiennes (XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle)*, ed. Chrystel Bernat and Frédéric Gabriel (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 205–229, in particular 207–218; and Silvia Mostaccio, "Spiritual Exercises: Obedience, Conscience, Conquest," in *The Oxford Handbook of*

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to the wishes of Alessandro Farnese, general of the Army of Flanders and governor of the Spanish Low Countries, who wanted to reform the military chaplaincy. From the point of view of the Society of Jesus, this mission was part of a broader project to support Catholic armies, which had begun with the French Wars of Religion, especially after Lepanto (1572).[10] The *missio* was active until the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. It was suspended during the Twelve Years' Truce, but was restored as soon as 1614 following the will of Archdukes Albert and Isabella and their general, Ambrogio Spinola. Its first superior was the Brussels Jesuit Thomas Sailly (1558–1623).[11]

In 1642, in Brussels, Charles de Mansfelt, vicar general of the apostolic delegate to the armies of Philip IV since 1631, published his *Castra Dei sive parochia, religio, et disciplina militum* (God's camp: parish, religion and military discipline).[12] It was an important book that summed up a ten-year experience of pastoral work with the Spanish army, the protagonist of the interminable "War of Flanders," as it was called at the time. As doctor of both laws from the University of Louvain, ecclesiastical adviser

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Jesuits, ed. Ines Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 75–104. Still important: Alfred Poncelet, "L'activité apostolique: Les aumôniers militaires," in *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas*, vol. 2 (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1927), 405–422; Xavier Rousseaux, "Sur tous les fronts: Les missions des jésuites aux Pays-Bas et Outre-mer," in *Les Jésuites belges 1542–1992: 450 ans de Compagnie de Jésus dans les provinces belgiques*, ed. Alain Deneef et al. (Brussels: Éditions AESM, 1992), 45–48; and Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, 1567–1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 171–172.

10 Gianclaudio Civale, *Guerrieri di Cristo: Inquisitori, gesuiti e soldati alla battaglia di Lepanto* (Milan: Unicopli, 2009; Ariane Boltanski, "Forger le 'soldat chrétien': L'encadrement catholique des troupes pontificales et royales en France en 1568–1569," *Revue Historique* 316, no. 669 (2014): 51–85; Lavenia, "In God's Fields."

11 In addition to the previous footnote, see Louis Brouwers, "Sailly, Thomas," in *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañia de Jesús: biográfico-temático*, vol. 4 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001), cols. 3463–3464; Walter Melion, "Allegory and Affective in Thomas Sailly, S. J.'s *Thesaurus precum et exercitiorum spiritualium* of 1609," in *Emotions, Art, and Christianity in the Transatlantic World, 1450–1800*, ed. Heather Graham and Lauren G. Kilroy-Ewbank (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 71–125. Books by Father Thomas Sailly addressed to military men: Thomas Sailly, *Guidon et pratique spirituelle du soldat chrestien. Reveu & augmenté pour l'armé de S.M. Catholique au Pays-Bas par le R.P. Thomas Sailly Prestre de la Compagnie de Jesus (*Antwerp: Imprimerie Plantinienne chez la veuve et Jan Monreto, 1590); Thomas Sailly, *Memorial testamentaire composé en faveur des soldats combattans sous l'Estandart de la crainte de Dieu. Par le R.P. Thomas Sailly de la Compaignie de Iesus. Partie premiere dediée à monseigneur Ambroise Spinola Marquis des Balbases, Chevalier de l'ordre de la Toison d'or, du conseil de Sa Maiesté Catholique, Capitaine General de son armée au Palatinat Inferieur, &c.* (Louvain: Henri Hastens Imprimeur de la Ville & Université, 1622); and Thomas Sailly, *Thesaurus litaniarum ac orationum sacer, cum suis adversus Sectarios Apologis Opera* (Brussels: ex officina Rutgeri Velpii, 1598).

12 Charles de Mansfelt, *Castra Dei sive parochia, religio, et disciplina militum* (Brussels: Bossuyt, 1642). On Mansfelt, see Paul Bergmans, "Mansfelt, Charles de," in *Biographie nationale*, vol. 13 (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1895), cols. 368–369.

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to the Provincial Council of Luxembourg, master of ceremonies at the court chapel under the Archdukes Albert and Isabella, and dean of Sainte Gudule in Brussels, Charles de Mansfelt was always concerned with ensuring that legal norms corresponded to the realities in the field. In the context of permanent warfare that characterized the Southern Netherlands at the time, this concern is reflected in his book *Castra Dei*. The Church had to be able to take care of the Catholic armies, as if they were a territorial unit (*parochia*) like any other. It is no coincidence that, in the first pages of the book, Mansfelt states: "A Christian parish is made up of citizens of heaven pilgrimaging on earth."[13] As peregrination towards heaven is a characteristic of every Christian community, the army—a community in perpetual peregrination from one battlefield to another—can also be considered a "parish" ("parochia"). For this reason, according to Mansfelt, the chaplains who accompany the armies should be considered "almost parish priests" ("quasi parochi").[14] This assertion finds its *raison d'ètre* in the function of the curates in the post-Tridentine Church and in the need to grant military chaplains the same privileges in order to ensure the effectiveness of the *cura animarum*, particularly with regard to the administration of the sacraments.[15] Thus, a few pages later, in writing a brief history of the *missio castrensis*, Mansfelt presents these chaplains in perpetual movement from one military district to another, entering the miserable huts of the soldiers without allowing themselves to be frightened by their extreme poverty.[16] The aim was obviously the salvation of souls, but seventy years after the start of the war, it was no longer possible to talk about souls and leave the bodies to one side. Although several religious orders took part in the military mission, it is clear to Mansfelt that the most accomplished experience was certainly that of the Jesuits, "truly Fathers, truly pious" ("vere Patres, vere Pii").[17] While he recalls the work of spiritual edification through preaching and, above all, through confession, Mansfelt insists particularly on the concrete commitment of the Jesuits, notably in the distribution of food: "I am a witness to this. We saw them distribute large cauldrons of meat to the poor every day. What am I saying, cauldrons? We have seen them push whole carts, loaded with food and drink," and neither their illness, nor that of the soldiers, nor the rigors of the climate stopped them.[18] In wartime the charitable paternity of these itinerant *quasi parochi*

13 "Parochia Christiana est peregrinantium in terris caeli autem civium." Mansfelt. Index rerum, in *Castra Dei*, 12.

14 Ibid., 58.

15 Silvia Mostaccio, "La mission militaire jésuite auprès de l'armée des Flandres pendant la guerre de Trente ans. Conversions et sacrements," in *Religion et piété au défi de la guerre de Trente ans*, ed. Bertrand Forclaz and Philippe Martin (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 183–202; in particular 193–197.

16 Mansfelt, *Castra Dei*, 57–60.

17 Mansfelt, *Castra Dei*, "De Militiae religiosis Clericis", 60–62, in particular 61.

18 "Testis sum. Vidimus ab illis cranium cacabos, & illos magnos & dietinos frequenter egenis dispensari. Quid cacabos dico? Currus esculentis & poculentis íntegros." Ibid., 61.

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manifested itself in the concrete form of a cauldron, pushed along the muddy paths of the camps. These changes of priority in the missionary context are part of the processes of accommodation to different missionary contexts evoked earlier; they should be analyzed as indicators of an adjustment in hegemonic relations between the secular and religious, between missionaries and the missionized. Moreover, Mansfelt's reference to the Jesuits of the *missio* and their decision to respond to the concrete emergencies caused by the war reveals the tension that lay at the heart of these men's actions: were they *quasi parochi* at the head of ordinary Catholic communities, or missionaries acting in the extraordinary context of war? This tension runs through all the sources relating to the *missio*. The *missio castrensis* was attached to the Jesuit College in Brussels, which kept its archives; today it is in these archives that one can find, among other things, a composite manuscript belonging to those in charge of the *missio castrensis* with the artillery of the army of Flanders.[19] This book provides an overview of the activities and the normative framework of the missionaries engaged with the military artillery between 1623 and 1640, after the resumption of the war at the end of the Twelve Years' Truce between Spain and the Dutch Republic (1609–1621). It was conceived to accompany Jesuits on their missions, enabling them to easily find all the information they needed to carry out their activities. This book consists of two complementary parts: the *Instructio Historica* and the *Observationes Officii*.[20]

The *Instructio* allowed the missionaries to have at hand copies of the documents with which the civil authorities had entrusted the mission to them (in particular Archduchess Isabella Clara Eugenia, daughter of Philip II and general governor of the Spanish Low Countries). Following this were copies of papal privileges and those of other authorities including, in particular, the castrensian vicar general of the Spanish Low Countries, Charles de Mansfelt. The privileges mainly concerned the administration of the sacraments—especially marriages. Important *dubia circa sacramenta* (doubts concerning the sacraments), drafted by the missionaries themselves and sent to the superiors of the Society of Jesus in Flanders or Rome, were also transcribed. The *Observationes* (comments, considerations), on the other hand, gathered the diaries of the events observed by the three Jesuits (Willelm van Aelst, Nicolas Joly, and Henri Jemblenne) who succeeded each other as leaders of the *missio*, from 1633 to 1640. Each of them wrote part of the diary for themselves and for present and future companions serving in the same mission. Interspersed with the diaries, one also finds the Jesuit

19 Archives Générales du Royaume, Brussels (hereafter AGR), Jésuites, Collège Bruxelles, n. 1971, *Instructio historica pro sacellano Artilleriae*. Up to now, many scholars have mentioned this text without really studying it. The paleographic and linguistic difficulties are quite substantial. With Alessandro Serra, we are currently preparing a critical edition and an English translation of this manuscript (Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, Boston College).

20 *Instructio Historica pro sacellano artilleriæ* (cc. 1r–13r) and the *Observationes Officij seu curæ pastoralis et earundem successus ab anno 1633 et deinceps* (cc. 14r–98v).

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Instructiones, summarizing the various instructions, written by the Jesuits responsible for the *missio*, from François Coster in the 1580s to Florent de Montmorency at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In recent years, several important studies on Jesuit military missions have been published, but the sources used were mainly concerned with the mission's duties and the discourses on them (manuals for missionaries, rules, manuals for soldiers, etc.). The manuscript book from the Jesuit college in Brussels allows for a complementary approach. Its very materiality, and the complementary nature of its two parts, tell the story of the mission in its concreteness, allowing one to circulate between the theory of the regulations and daily missionary practice—with its doubts, its inconsistencies, its clashes between civil and religious authorities—and between the sensibilities of the missionaries and those of the soldiers and their families, who accompanied them to war. Difficulties caused by the different relationships between military time and civil and liturgical time also emerge: in the alternation of the summer military campaigns and the winter months, Jesuits were assigned to other tasks, having to reintegrate into an ecclesiastical hierarchical system that was often harsher than the one they had become accustomed to during the months of military campaign.

3. The Mission, its Norms, its Context: Accommodating Religious Norms to Army Life

It will not be possible here to give a complete overview of the normative framework of the *missio castrensis*. I will just outline its main characteristics and tensions, particularly with regard to the identity of the missionary in the context of war and his priorities for action. This identity was originally constructed around the otherness of the missionary, focused on the *cura animarum* and on the spiritual conquest against the Protestants. The differences over time illustrate the gradual change in priorities, shaped by the reality in the field.

The first rules were drawn up by Provincial François Coster in 1588.[21] The provincial conceived this fairly brief text as an adaptation of the general rules of the Society of Jesus and, in fact, in the handwritten notebook that the missionaries carried with them, these *Ordinationes* were followed by extracts from the Jesuit Constitutions that deal

21 I refer here to the copy of the *Ordinationes* preserved in another small handwritten book belonging to the Castrensis' Jesuit missionaries: 'Ordinationes pro Missione Castrensi', in *Liber ordinationum et aliorum quae in Missione Societatis Jesu in Castris Regys observantur*, Brussels, AGR, Jésuites, Collège de Bruxelles, n. 1969, cc. 7–9.

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with the elements considered essential to Jesuit life.[22] In his premise, Coster is quite clear: the fathers will have to show creativity in choosing the means of their mission as "directors" of the souls of soldiers, without ever abandoning the "fundamental elements" ("essentialia") of the Society. Coster argues that they must not neglect the fundamental exercises of the Society, such as prayer, meditation, and personal examination. The identity of members of a congregation of regular priests is emphasized here. This dimension also inspires the subsequent paragraphs, where the provincial superior insists on the importance of avoiding any exceptional behavior: the rhythms of life, particularly as regards meals and sleeping times and places, must respect the usual rules and encourage mutual control among Jesuits. The temporalities of war seemed to disappear in favor of the difference between Sundays (devoted to mass and the teaching of Christian doctrine) and the other days, when the focus was on individuals, with spiritual conversations. Furthermore, the "pastoral care of the similar by the similar," so well described by Louis Châtellier, was at the heart of the approach, thanks to the instauration of the Congregations of the Blessed Sacrament, led by the Jesuits.[23] The invitation to creativity was quickly limited by several injunctions not to change anything in liturgical practices, or in the management of devout military people, without the authorization of superiors. One of the main concerns was money. The Jesuit missionaries would receive a salary like any other military chaplain: it was essential that they did not manage it for almsgiving or anything else, but instead entrusted it to their superiors. Nor would they keep any money entrusted to them by wounded or dying soldiers. All these clarifications are in keeping with a deeply spiritual mission. The physical sufferings of the soldiers occupy only a few lines in the text. There is a brief reference to visits to console the sick and wounded "with words and actions," but nothing more than that.

A few years later, the first provincial of the then autonomous Belgian province, Olivier Mannaerts, wrote new *Ordinationes* which, rather than insisting on practices by giving precise orders that would probably be impossible to respect, aimed to set out the general framework of the mission.[24] Once again, its spiritual dimension is emphasized, even though echoes of very concrete difficulties run silently through the text. Five years after the *missio* was founded, it became clear that it was impossible to regulate the concrete missionary action in a standardized way. The provincial therefore insisted that missionaries must never forget that they are being observed: this is a matter of "divine and apostolic honor" ("honor divinus et apostolicus").[25] There must have been many

22 "De obedientia; De oratione, missa, meditatione; De observatione regularum et de hora cubandi, surgendi, comendi, etc.; De victu et vestitu; Ab externis nil petendum sine facultate superioris; De poenitentiis." Ibid. A short four-page unnumbered fascicle was sewn between cc. 9 and 10.

23 Châtellier, *La religion des pauvres*; Mostaccio, "La mission militaire jésuite," 198–201.

24 Oliverius Manareus, August 27, 1592, 'Patres qui in Missione Castrensi versantur', in *Liber ordinationum*, cc. 10r–11v.

25 Ibid., c. 10r.

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slip-ups, and Mannaerts insisted that his companions should not behave like enemies in public. They had to remember that their mission was a spiritual one and that, if they wanted to succeed, they had to act like spiritual men: "For just as in nature the similar produces the similar, so if other people are to be made spiritual, missionaries must first be spiritual."[26] In the text, this spiritual attitude often becomes quite concrete: for example, eating with companions is no longer required, but the attitude to be maintained when eating with soldiers and their officers "at foreign tables" ("in mensis alienis") is emphasized instead. The Jesuits were to take care not to become drunk with either alcohol or words. Finally, following the example of Saint Paul, they were to be all things to all people, adapting to their interlocutors.

As mentioned above, after the Twelve Years' Truce the *missio castrensis* was reopened, and in 1623 Archduchess Isabella created a specific mission to the artillery: in the founding document, she emphasized the sacramental dimension of this mission, whose primary function was the celebration of mass and confessions.[27] The emphasis on these priorities can be explained by the broader project of the Archduchess and her then deceased husband, who promoted the Catholic mass, and devotion to the Holy Sacrament in particular, as a fundamental practice of Catholicism on the border with Protestant lands. It was no coincidence that the missionaries at the *missio castrensis* worked to spread the Holy Sacrament congregations among the military.[28]

A few years later, in 1626, Pope Urban VIII sent the Jesuits of the *missio* a fundamental brief, granting them ample privileges: they would be able to absolve men and women from all reserved cases and celebrate mass outside consecrated spaces using portable altars.[29] All this without having to submit to the authority of parish priests, or to the decrees of bishops or local synods. This papal pronouncement was particularly important because, since the 1580s, the Jesuits had been under recurrent pressure to limit their scope of action. Many bishops were not in favor of the privileges they were granted, as these privileges weakened the secular clergy's control over the beliefs and practices of Catholics.[30]

This freedom of action was supported by Charles de Mansfelt who, since his appointment as vicar general of the armies in 1631, theorized the role of the military missionary as the *quasi parochus* of an itinerant parish. As a good jurist, in doing so

26 "Nam ut in natura simile sibi generat simile, ita si quos spirituales efficere volent, spirituales ut sint in primis oportet." Ibid.

27 "Doña Isabel Clara Eugenia por la gracia de Dios Infanta de España," Brussels, Nov. 15, 1623, in *Instructio histórica*, c. 1r.

28 Mostaccio, "La mission militaire jésuite"; Marie-Hélène Froeschlé-Chopard, *Dieu pour tous et Dieu pour soi: Histoire des confréries et de leurs images à l'époque moderne* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 178–220.

29 [Urban VIII], Rome, Dec. 9, 1626, in *Instructio historica*, c. 1r., cc. 6r–8r.

30 Silvia Mostaccio, "Gerarchie dell'obbedienza e contrasti istituzionali nella Compagnia di Gesù all'epoca di Sisto V," *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo* 1 (2004): 109–127.

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he created a sort of equivalence between the parish priest's Tridentine jurisdiction and that of the missionaries by limiting conflicts between the secular clergy and the regular clergy assigned to the armies. At the same time, he tried to preserve the missionaries' freedom of action, so that they could adapt as effectively as possible to the context of their mission.

4. Rethinking Honor and Virility: The Missionary in the Army, his Affectivity, and his Pastoral Priorities

The *missio castrensis* was therefore shaped at the interface between the presumed normality of parish life and the dynamic exceptionality of war. To use Mansfelt's words, how can the missionaries be "truly fathers" in such a challenging context? And how can they ensure that this paternity is fruitful by generating good Catholics? While the spirit of conquest for the "true" faith remains an essential motivation, the sources allow us to follow the gradual adjustments of this conquering model to the reality of the mission. Once again, the differences between official discourses and practices, as well as the *jeux d'échelles* between general and particular cases, help us see the issues more clearly.

The idea of a spiritual conquest was central to the Jesuit narrative about the *missio castrensis*, proposed in 1640 in the famous *Imago primi saeculi*, printed in Antwerp.[31] The first five books, dealing with the Society's general history, were followed by a sixth book devoted to the Flandro-Belgian province and its missionary activities. In different spatial contexts the *missio hollandica*, the *missio castrensis*, and the *missio navalis* revealed to different publics the same concerns about participating in the reconquest of men and land threatened by the Calvinist heresy, as well as about supporting the Catholic armies. As far as the *missio castrensis* is concerned, the military victory over the enemies of the faith is the central element, even though the motto accompanying the emblem—"give me the souls and keep the rest for yourself" ("da mihi animas, coetera tolle tibi")—makes it clear that the Jesuit conquest is aimed at souls, leaving the bodies and the spoils of war to the military. This statement deals with the spiritual otherness of the Jesuit missionaries. I have analyzed various elements of this otherness elsewhere, in the interplay between warrior masculinity and the masculinity of the clerics working with the military.[32] Here,

31 *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu a prouincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp: ex officina Plantiniana Balthasaris Moreti, 1640), on the *missio castrensis*, 804–807. For an English translation, see John W. O'Malley, ed., *Art, Controversy, and the Jesuits: The Imago Primi Saeculi* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2015).

32 Silvia Mostaccio, "Sacerdotal Masculinity at War: Jesuit Military Chaplains at the Eighty Years' War," in *Masculinités Sacerdotales: Approches historiques (X^{ème}–XXI^{ème} siècles)*, ed. Jean-Pascal Gay, eadem, and Josselin Tricout (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 291–301; Mary Laven, ed., "Introduction to a Special Issue of the Journal of Jesuit Studies: 'The Jesuits and Gender: Body, Sexuality, and Emotions,'" *Journal*

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it will suffice to point out that, as mentioned earlier about the spiritual attitude, the issue of separation in the particularly difficult and challenging mission was fundamental. As noted above, François Coster insisted on common prayer, meals shared between Jesuits, and the obligation to return to one's tent at nightfall. In this way, the provincial underlined the importance of elements that we can also find in the *Imago primi saeculi*, particularly concerning the "chaste conversation" ("casta conversatio") that was to characterize every Jesuit in his mission. He must be like a swan: "moving water touches me, but it does not bath me or change my color."[33] A similar discourse was developed by Thomas Sailly in his *Mémorial Testamentaire*, published in 1622 shortly before his death. The first head of the *missio castrensis* summed up his vision of the priest involved with armies. Reviewing his long experience, Father Sailly proposed a gendered model. He sketched a portrait of the military chaplain as a profoundly masculine being, because he was able to maintain his freedom in the face of power—this is the "holy freedom" of the confessor in the face of army officers—and his self-control in the face of lust.[34] In fact, continence and chastity, the fruit of the missionary's self-control, enabled him to maintain his manhood and to be a model of military strength and virility (*vis militaris*) for the soldiers.[35] In contrast to this alternative and asserted virility was the inability to resist the sexual urges so common in the military, about which Sailly gave his opinion in a long chapter devoted to the most common sins in the army. On the sin of lust, the Jesuit made an explicit link between this and the loss of virility, which went hand in hand with the loss of the *vis militaris*. Faced with these excesses, the Jesuit missionary also became the living model of another possible kind of marriage for Sailly. In his writings, he developed a true nuptial spirituality between each Jesuit and the Virgin Mary, who became his spiritual spouse. In his mind, this relationship should have also become a model for soldiers who were far from their legitimate wives. In any case, the emotional and loving relationship with the Virgin Mary was put forward as proof of virility and made the Jesuit a married man like any other. In short, Sailly was able to grasp the challenges of his mission and respond in line with his religious priorities. Indeed, shortly after the publication of the *Mémorial*, we find an echo of this relationship in Father Thomas Sailly's funeral eulogy. It states that he always carried a pendant with the image of the Virgin Mary, whom he called "his Lady"—"with great tenderness, he called her My Wife" ("sua sponsa tenerissime appellabat"). The eulogy explains that

of Jesuit Studies 2 (2015): 545–557; Hervé Drévillon, "Du guerrier au militaire," in *Histoire de la virilité*, vol. 1: *L'invention de la virilité. De l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, ed. Georges Vigarello (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2011), 293–325.

33 "Tangor, non tingor, ab unda." "Casta conversatio," in *Imago primi saeculi*, 479.

34 Sailly, "Religieux et Prestres qui suivent l'armée", in *Memorial testamentaire*, 168–180.

35 Ibid., 201–205.

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Sailly frequently showed the image of his wife to young women and soldiers alike.[36] This image is reminder of the Jesuit as a married man, while several studies have highlighted the importance of marriage in the affirmation of early modern masculinity.[37] This nuptial development is also a relevant accommodation to the military context of the more general identity-focused discourse among Jesuits, who insisted on their status as soldiers of Christ, as well as of the Virgin Mary. One needs only go back to the earliest accounts of the founder of the Society to realize this. The chivalric link with the Virgin Mary is fundamental in the *Récit* dictated by Ignatius of Loyola at the end of his life and subsequently repeated in the first hagiographies, including the one created using emblems, published on the occasion of Ignatius' beatification in 1609.[38] Commissioned by General Claudio Acquaviva, this hagiography by Ribadeneira made up of text and images mobilized the best human resources of the Society of Jesus and its entourage: the *Acta* of Ignatius, his *Vita* by Pedro de Ribadeneira, and the iconographic reinterpretation by Peter Paul Rubens and Jean-Baptiste Barbé, culminating in the production of eighty-one engravings, accompanied by a Latin commentary. After emphasizing the Virgin's role in the change in Ignatius' attitude during his convalescence in the family home, the *Vita* of 1609 makes the relationship between the Virgin Mary and Ignatius the element of continuity between the different episodes of the conversion pilgrimage. Along the way to the Marian shrine of Montserrat, Ignatius has to question his reaction to a Moor chevalier's questioning of Mary's virginity. Helped by his mule, which resists him when he wants to set off in pursuit of the man who has doubted the Virgin's honor, Ignatius discovers a new way of reacting, one that involves distancing himself from the performative automatisms of the warrior masculinity that had been his, and instead controlling his impulses for vengeance and violence. It is no coincidence that the next engraving shows Ignatius kneeling and taking his vows of chastity: "During the same pilgrimage, moved by love and wishing to imitate the Virgin, he took the vow

36 Louis Brouwers, "L'Elogium du père Thomas Sailly S.I. (1553–1623) composé par le père Charles Scribani S.I.," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 48 (1979): 87–124; for the text, Scribani, *Elogium*, Ibid., 92–123; in particular, 106.

37 Will Fisher, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 155–187. See also Jean-Marie Le Gall, "La virilité des clercs," in *Histoire de la virilité*, ed. Georges Vigarello (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2011), 213–230.

38 On Ignatius of Loyola's lives, see John W. O'Malley, "The Many Lives of Ignatius of Loyola: Future Saint," in *Constructing a Saint Through Images: The 1609 Illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph University Press, 2008); see in particular images 8 and 9, which relate Ignatius' defense of the Virgin's honor in the face of a Moor doubting her virginity. On this subject, see also the comments in Ulrike Strasser, "The First Form of Grace: Ignatius of Loyola and the Reformation of Masculinity," in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 54–70; in particular 52 and 59–61.

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of chastity."[39] During this pilgrimage of body and spirit to Montserrat, the Virgin was evoked as an object of love and a model of life. Once in Montserrat, Ignatius offered her his sword, a gesture that underlined his definitive conversion into a "new knight of Christ" ("novus Christi eques").[40] Throughout this pilgrimage, Ignatius' spiritual relationship with the Virgin Mary challenged his behavior, as she was both his own lady, whose honor he protected in a new way, and a model to follow in his relationship with God. In his writings, Sailly had thus appropriated one of the leitmotifs of Jesuit spirituality—the chivalric bond with the Virgin—while at the same time emphasizing the nuptial dimension of this relationship with her. As mentioned above, this is a good example of his adaptation to the specific context of his mission. But Sailly had constructed his identity as a missionary in the army during the early stages of the war against the Calvinist rebels. His priorities reflected a very specific moment in the conflict, when the confessional dimension was still predominant. Starting in the 1630s, the centrality of this confrontation began to fade as the search for peace at all costs became a necessity for the vast majority of those involved. The new generations of Jesuit missionaries to the Army of Flanders were no exception. Their mission diaries and their correspondence with Rome bear witness to this. After years of military campaigns, sieges, plague, and famine, even the missionaries were tired, and their hierarchy between body and spirit, between Catholics and heretics, had indeed changed. The letters sent to Rome show that while up to a certain point only wounded Catholics on the battlefield were helped, things changed starting in the 1630s. In 1635, during the siege of Louvain by the French, the missionaries argued with the governor general, Cardinal Ferdinand of Austria. The French wounded, whether Catholic or Huguenot, could not be left to die.[41] The same was the case for the civilians who gathered in the countryside of the neighboring Protestant lands: hunger was everyone's obsession and everyone fell ill with the plague. The duty of charity took precedence over all other considerations. A few years later, in 1638, when the Spanish were fighting simultaneously in Artois against the French and in Brabant against the Dutch, the terrible battle of Kalloo, near Antwerp, was won by the Spanish. Some 2,500 of the enemy were killed in the battle or drowned while trying to escape, and some 3,500 Protestants were taken prisoner. In the surrounding prisons, conditions were desperate and epidemics of diarrhea broke out. After begging for food from the area's local inhabitants, Jesuits and other religious visited the prisoners: "We took care of the bodies, as if we had been born as brothers full

39 "In eodem itinere B. Virginis amore atque imitatione succensus voto se illi castitatis obstringit." *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loiolae, Societatis Iesu fundatoris* (Rome: 1609), op. cit., n. 9.

40 Ibid., n. 20.

41 "Labores in exercitibus Nostrorum," Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter ARSI), Flandr. Belg. 53, Anno 1635 Excerpta ex litteris annuis provinciae flandro–Belgicae, cc. 128r–135v; in particular cc. 130v–1v.

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of love, and not as enemies." And the missionaries specify that for some years now, "our Castrensis missionaries were ordered to care not only for souls, but also for bodies."[42]

The previous year, after a battle near Maubeuge, south of Mons, the fathers had also decided to bury corpses of Protestants abandoned by their companions. In a beautiful letter sent to Rome, they reflected on how this gesture, reminiscent of Tobias' *pietas* against the tyrant narrated in the Bible, was the best way to fight against the tyranny of war and the plague that oppressed all men.[43] Burial becomes humanity's revenge against the violence of death. The author of the *littera annua* of 1637 recalled that, faced with the horror of the corpses abandoned along the river, the charity of his companions, who decided to bury also their Protestant enemies, unearthed the common humanity of the soldiers who began to help them: "it is evident that in these camps, our Jesuits revived the memory of Tobias ("plane in his castris Tobiae memoriam Nostri resuscitarunt"). As with Tobias, prayer became action.

5. Multiple Readings of Liturgical Feasts: The Case of the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary

After the above few examples of how the normative framework and the discourses around the mission and the missionaries were adjusted to the practices on the ground, as well as to the changes in priorities between caring for the bodies or souls of soldiers, it is worth mentioning another interesting aspect of this accommodation here, which involves multiple pressures and power games between missionaries and the missionized, and between the religious involved in the military mission and their companions who were not. In this respect, Father Henri Jemblenne's mission diary (1636–1640) provides rather revealing observations of the practices. For example, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin—Candlemas—was celebrated in the depths of winter, when the need for light was the greatest and when misunderstandings between civilians and soldiers, and between religious and soldiers, were most evident.[44] Winter is not a military campaign season, and Henri Jemblenne had returned home with his companions. He was in Mechelen, a very important city in the ecclesiastical and military geography of the Spanish Low Countries. Since 1585, it had been the site of Europe's first military hospital.

42 "Tamquam si fratres amicissimos, non hostes nacti essemus curavimus corpora […] iussi Nostri sunt Castrenses non animorum tantum sed et corporum gerere curam." "Anno 1638 Excerpta ex litteris annuis provinciae flandro–Belgicae," ARSI, Flandr. Belg. 53, cc. 149v–55v; in particular c. 152r.

43 "Anno 1637 Excerpta ex litteris annuis provinciae flandro–Belgicae," *Ivi*, in particular c. 145rv. Cf. *Tobit*, 2: 3–8.

44 "Observationes," in *Instructio historica*, c. 34v.

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There, Jesuits helped secular priests with the pastoral care of sick people.[45] Mechelen was also home to a very important professed house of the Society of Jesus. Many artillery soldiers spent the winter months in town. In the Jesuit church of Saints Peter and Paul there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, considered to be the military chapel ("sacellum militare") by the soldiers and their chaplains. It was there, on the night of February 2, 1637, just a few months after his appointment as head of the *missio* for the artillery, that Henri Jemblenne decided to celebrate the Candlemas festivity, which was particularly important for his soldiers. He had asked people to spread the word and, by then, the chapel and church were packed with soldiers, their families, and the various people who shared the life of an early modern army—"those following the artillery" ("artilleriæ asseclas"). The mission journal also mentions the presence of several confessors, underlining the link between the purification of the Virgin and the purification of soldiers through confession. The ritual included blessing the candles during mass and then distributing them to the faithful. However, under pressure from the crowd, the other Jesuits began distributing candles without waiting for the end of the mass, even though Father Jemblenne had ordered his companions to distribute them outside the church and in the surrounding streets. Jemblenne admitted that they had lost control of the situation: the sexual promiscuity, the candle lights in the night, the shouting and all kinds of noise had led to a situation of "indecency" ("indecentia") and "insolence" ("insolentia"), for which the Jesuits external to the *missio* reproached the missionaries of the *castrensis*, writing to the father provincial and asking him to order them not to gather in the church of Saints Peter and Paul in the future. For his part, in his journal Jemblenne seemed to realize the profound distance that separated him from the men and women of his mission. The celebration he had experienced was no longer the one he knew, but it seemed to make sense to everyone else. No wonder: in the liturgical calendar, the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary is also the feast of Jesus' presentation in the Temple, where he was recognized by Anna and Simeon. Purification and the manifestation of the sacred come together, forty days after Christmas, with a double celebration of the masculine and feminine, which is more than just a simple inversion of Carnival and which allows for acts of collective purification.

The improprieties evoked by Father Jemblenne during the Feast of the Purification could be a trace of the agency of the military who, on certain occasions, were able to impose their devotional and existential priorities on the clergy who were supposed to supervise them. But the fragmentary history that is typical of subaltern groups often

45 Fanny Verslype, "L'hôpital royal de Malines (1585–1701), une machine à guérir? Contribution à l'histoire du service sanitaire de l'armée des Flandres dans les Pays-Bas espagnols" (unpublished Master's thesis, Université catholique de Louvain, 2018).

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requires a broader perspective, which allows the historian to understand the meaning of the trace through a comparative approach.[46]

For the soldiers and those who accompanied them, the Feast of the Purification was above all a moment of unconditional forgiveness. For centuries, this unconditional mercy has been one of the characteristics attributed to the Virgin Mary, who becomes the mediator between human beings and God. Sanctuaries dedicated to the Virgin of Mercy are also fairly numerous along the *Camino Español*, particularly in the more outlying areas: in the countryside of Flanders, in the Alpine valleys, and along the Apennines. Beyond the local specificities, the stories about these Madonnas, often miraculous, tell of a Virgin who is aware of the seriousness of the sins committed by human beings, but who reacts with a merciful justice that opens the way to forgiveness and resilience. She takes the side of the indefensible and imposes mercy by reminding her son that it was she who made his incarnation possible by making her female body available.[47] Through the Virgin of Mercy, another face of Christ is revealed, and another discourse on God is woven; the shrines dedicated to her become spaces where the faithful perform a feminized and empathetic relationship with the sacred.

Moreover, if we follow the wartime movements of the Flanders army, from the Spanish Low Countries to the Tyrol, from the Alpine valleys to the Kingdom of Naples, where many of the veterans of the Flanders wars lived, we soon realize the extent of these devotions: the anomie of war and the endemic and often gendered violence gave rise to a need for forgiveness through access to the sacred.

Born in Namur, Jemblenne could hardly have been aware of what the feast of Candlemas signified for the subjects of the king of Spain living in the Kingdom of Naples. And this was the case even though a few years later, in his *Atlas Marianus*, his companion Wilhelm Gumppenberg devoted a chapter to the miraculous image of Notre Dame of Montevergine in Benevent.[48] Montevergine, an important abbey in the region thanks to its miraculous image of Byzantine origin, would become the destination of two complementary pilgrimages: one in May—described in the *Atlas Marianus*—and another,

46 Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu–Muslim Riots in India Today," in *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986–1995*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 1–33. For the implications of history as a science of lived experience, attainable through fragments and connections, Carlo Ginzburg, "Microstoria: due o tre cose che so di lei," in *Il filo e le tracce: Vero, falso, finto* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2018), 241–269.

47 Silvia Mostaccio, "Donne e sacro in tempi difficili: Militanza e intercessione tra Fiandre e Italia spagnola in tempo di guerra (XVI–XVII secc)," in *Donne e sacro: Forme e immagini nel cristianesimo occidentale*, ed. Adelaide Ricci (Rome: Viella, 2021), 173–192.

48 Olivier Christin, Fabrice Flückiger, and Naïma Ghermani, eds., *Marie Mondialisée: L'Atlas Marianus de Wilhelm Gumppenberg et les topographies sacrées de l'époque moderne* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Alphil – Presses universitaires suisses, 2014); Nicolas Balzamo, Olivier Christin, and Fabrice Flückiger, eds., *L'Atlas Marianus de Wilhelm Gumppenberg* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Alphil – Presses universitaires suisses, 2015); as for Montevergine, see Ibid., II. 11, 230–235.

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rarely mentioned in devotional literature and religious history studies, the "juta de' femminielli"—the "ascent" of the *femminielli*. Since early modern times, the Neapolitan *femminiello* has been an indispensable figure in the sociocultural and religious balance of the city's popular neighborhoods—especially of the "Quartieri spagnoli": fully female in a male body, in everyday life he/she is entrusted with the care of small children and elderly people, and exercises his/her sexuality with men.[49] *Femminielli* also played an active part in rites of passage such as baptisms and weddings, where their uninhibited words and actions served as a reminder of the power of life. To this day, Our Lady of Montevergine—also known as "Mother Schiavona, who grants all and forgives all" ("Mamma Schiavona, che tutto concede e tutto perdona")—is the destination of one of Southern Italy's best-known pilgrimages. According to legend, the Virgin Mary protected two young gay men from frostbite when they were abandoned in a forest in the middle of winter. Since then, one day a year, the sanctuary and its surroundings welcome the *femminielli*—today more widely known as the LGBTQ+ community—with prayers, songs, and dances.

Jemblenne probably knew none of this, but his descriptions of Candlemas in the following years show his efforts to maintain control over collective devotional practices—the blessing and distribution of candles, music, obtaining specific papal indulgences for this feast—having clearly understood the importance of this moment for his soldiers and continuing to oppose his Jesuit confreres who were not part of the *missio castrensis*.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter on the Jesuit *missio castrensis* in the Army of Flanders was twofold. On the one hand, the aim was to show the adaptations necessary to live as a regular religious in the context of war and military action. For this group of missionaries, it was necessary to adapt not only their daily rhythm of life—such as shared meals and sacramental celebrations—but also their missionary priorities.

This leads to the second objective of the chapter, which was to highlight the different contexts in which the Jesuits of the *missio* were gradually forced to modify their hierarchy of action in order to achieve "the greater glory of God." For example, in their interactions with the men and women of the *missio*, they realized the urgency of caring for wounded or sick bodies, practicing a new and increasingly concrete form of charity. After years of war, being a true spiritual father came to mean caring for the bodies of others, whether

49 Giambattista Della Porta wrote about *femminielli* in his *De humana physiognomonia* (Naples: apud Josephum Cacchium, 1586); see Eugenio Zito and Paolo Valerio, eds., *Femminielli. Corpo, genere, cultura* (Naples: Libreria Dante & Descartes, 2019); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "Gender and Sexuality," in *The Construction of a Global World, 1400–1800 CE: Foundations*, ed. Jerry Bentley, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and eadem (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 133–156.

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Protestant or Catholic. The hierarchies between the spiritual and material dimensions were changing. Even the relationship to liturgical life was shifting, and certain feasts that were particularly important for the military and their entourage became priorities for the missionaries, even if this meant provoking angry reactions from Jesuits who were not part of the *missio*.

Finally, the missionary's self-understanding also evolved. This is the case, for example, with the importance of the conjugal dimension in the relationship between the missionary and the Virgin Mary, which Sailly theorized and performed for the missionized. This dimension was different from the chivalrous attitude towards the Virgin Mary that Ignatius of Loyola experienced and narrated. The missionary in the army presented himself as a truly married man, often with a picture of his wife around his neck.

While some four hundred Jesuits participated in the *missio castrensis* to change the military, the war—and the military itself—pushed them to change as well.

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Bernard Hours

Clerics or Lay Regulars?

The Brothers of the Christian Schools (1682–1725)

1. Introduction

In 1693, probably at the beginning of the year, Léonard de Sainte-Catherine, a Discalced Augustinian from the Petits-Pères convent in Paris, noted this information:

> Something very strange is happening in our neighborhood, in Vaugirard. Not long ago, a community of twenty men gathered there, dressed in ugly mantillas that fall halfway down their legs. They leave their house only in the morning, when they go two by two with admirable modesty to a chapel. When they arrived at the door, they stood between two hedges until their superior, who had passed through the middle, entered and beckoned them in […]. During Mass, they remained as if in ecstasy, some with their eyes fixed on the ground, others on heaven. There are no hours, no rosaries, no lip movements. They return to their homes in the same order. You never see them talking to each other. In the evening, they come out of their rooms and into their courtyard, where they make a kind of procession and several stations […]. They do not communicate with anyone […]. It is said that they only eat soup, which one of them brings from Paris every day. This is the general rumor about this community.[1]

What the friar did not know was that this bizarre community, whose name he ignored and which he could not characterize, was that of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes). It had been established since the summer of 1691 in the

1 "Il se passe dans notre voisinage une chose fort particulière, c'est à Vaugirard. Depuis fort peu de temps, il s'y est assemblé une communauté de vingt hommes revêtus de méchantes mantilles qui leur tombent jusqu'à mi-jambes. Ils ne sortent de leur maison que le matin, qu'ils vont deux à deux avec une modestie admirable à une chapelle. Quand ils sont arrivés à la porte, ils y restent rangés en deux haies jusqu'à ce que leur supérieur, ayant passé au milieu, entre dedans et leur fasse signe d'y entrer […] Pendant la messe, ils demeurent comme extasiés, les uns ayant les yeux fichés en terre, les autres au ciel. Ils sont sans Heures, chapelets, ni mouvements de lèvres. Ils s'en retournent dans leur maison dans le même ordre. On ne s'aperçoit jamais qu'ils se parlent. Sur le soir, ils sortent des chambres dans leur cour, et ils y font une manière de procession et plusieurs stations […] Ils ne communiquent avec personne […] On dit qu'ils ne mangent que de la soupe, qu'un d'eux vient quérir chaque jour à Paris. Voilà ce que le bruit commun répète de cette communauté." *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de plusieurs personnes illustres par leur piété et leur vertu*, B.n.F, ms.fr. 23968 f° 60, published with gaps in *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* 5, no. 2 (April 1911): 139–141, based on a publication by P. Chérot in *Études religieuses* 83 (May 1900): 543.

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village of Vaugirard, then on the outskirts of Paris, under the leadership of its founder, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle. Why are these men so fascinating? Their practices are clearly those of a religious community: they don't live in a cloister, but they don't communicate with anyone, and they abide by a set of rules. How can they be identified by an outside observer? By an easily recognizable habit. In fact, they don't have any real religious dress, and they don't wear cassocks, either long or short, just "ugly mantillas that fall halfway down their legs." Friar Léonard de Sainte-Catherine was not the only one to question the status of these men. In fact, it was the incomprehension caused by this ambiguity that had led their superior to move from the prestigious parish of Saint-Sulpice in Paris to Vaugirard, in a dilapidated house that he could rent at a good price. And yet, in spite of the difficulties this created for the new institute he founded, Jean-Baptiste de la Salle refused until his death to give it a status according to the norms of the time. The habit, the vows, and the question of the priesthood were the three characteristics of this "abnormality." This explains the ambiguity of the episcopate's view of the institute, at least during the first decades of its existence: as much as the educational skill of the brothers may have been attractive to prelates concerned about the pastoral effectiveness of popular schools, their institutional irregularity may have aroused their mistrust. But even after their official recognition by Rome in 1725, six years after the death of Jean-Baptiste, the brothers remained in an in-between position: neither clerics nor laymen.

2. The New Institute

Let's take a quick look at the stages leading up to Jean-Baptiste's move to Vaugirard.[2] Born in 1651 into the small group of related and allied families that controlled the city of Reims, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle initially embarked on a classic ecclesiastical career, beginning with a canonical prebend at the cathedral. In 1678, he met Adrien Nyel, who had been commissioned by a lady living in Rouen, of Reims origin, to establish small schools in her hometown. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle helped her to open the first one, and then gradually devoted himself entirely to this pious enterprise, to the point of resigning his canonry.

On June 24, 1681, he installed the masters he had recruited with Adrien Nyel in the family mansion where he lived with his younger brothers, who had been under his guardianship since the death of their parents at the beginning of the previous decade. A year later, he and his masters moved to a rented house in the Rue Neuve in Reims. Life there was organized according to daily rules he had drawn up himself, without submitting them to the bishop for approval. It seems that most of the early masters left

2 For all factual elements concerning the biography of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle and the first decades of the institute, refer to my book: *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle: Un mystique en action* (Paris: Salvator, 2019).

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the group at the time of this move, unwilling to join a form of religious community that did not explicitly state its name. Nevertheless, it was not long, probably before the end of 1684, that the members adopted the name "Brothers of the Christian Schools" ("Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes"). They held their first assembly in the spring of 1686 and elected their first superior, who soon died. He was replaced by Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, who remained in office until the spring of 1717.

In February 1688, Jean-Baptiste was invited to take charge of a school in the parish of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. Although he had opened a second school in the same parish, Rue du Bac, in January 1690, and had apparently received permission from the archbishop to set up his community in a house, the situation quickly became complicated. On the one hand, the Parisian schoolmasters sued the newcomers for disturbing their existing network. On the other hand, a misunderstanding arose between Jean-Baptiste de La Salle and Henri Baudrand, the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice. Not only did Baudrand demand that the young brothers serve as altar boys in the parish, but he also asked Jean-Baptiste to clothe them in the long mantle of secular clergymen and to abandon the modest habit he had been giving them to wear since the winter of 1684. These two reasons led Jean-Baptiste to remove the brothers from the—admittedly informal—tutelage of Saint-Sulpice and to move away a little, without, however, abandoning the schools opened in Paris, from which the masters were dismissed in July 1690. But before doing so, he took advantage of this questioning of the habit to clarify the status of the brothers in a text that has survived under the name of *Mémoire sur l'habit* (Memoir on the habit).

3. The *Mémoire sur l'habit*

What was the dress that shocked the curé of Saint-Sulpice and intrigued Léonard de Saint-Catherine? The first brothers had kept their ordinary garb, with the addition of a small collar that could suggest an element of ecclesiastical dress, but not only that. The winter of 1684 saw the adoption of what was to be the brothers' habit for a long time to come: a black cassock of coarse wool under a capote of the same fabric reaching halfway down the legs. The hat was described as having a wider brim than "the usual ones," and the shoes "have two large, strong, thick soles, like those worn by plowmen or those who work on large projects."[3] This dress gave the brothers an ecclesiastical appearance, but it was still atypical, as Jean-Baptiste's first official biographer, Canon Blain, wrote:

3 "Ceux du commun"; "de deux grosses semelles fortes et épaisses et telles que les portent les gens de charrue ou ceux qui travaillent aux gros ouvrages," Jean-Baptiste Blain, *La vie de Monsieur Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Instituteur des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, Rouen, Jean-Baptiste-Machuel, 1733, vol. 1, 238 and 241.

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"This poor and uniform dress […] by its figure and simplicity, distinguishes them from seculars, clerics and all other religious."[4]

That was why Jean-Baptiste didn't want to give it up. The memoir develops an argument to explain both the status of the brothers, whose specificity the habit manifests to the outside world, and its importance for the brothers to appropriate this status.[5] The penitential and ascetic dimension of the habit is not taken into account, which does not mean that it was of no interest to Jean-Baptiste. At most, he states that "it is proper to keep the teachers there with the regularity and modesty appropriate to their state and profession."[6]

In the society of the time, the habit was a marker of rank and status. The demands of the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice therefore touch on an essential issue, that of defining the status of the brothers: is it appropriate to make them wear an ecclesiastical habit if they are not clerics? Wouldn't that be a deception of appearance? But if they are not clerics, why don't they simply wear a lay garb in keeping with their rank and employment? Jean-Baptiste does not claim ambiguity, but in-betweenness, calmly stating: "It was better for them to have a garment that was neither ecclesiastical nor secular."[7] This man, from a family well established at the top of the social hierarchy of his city, in a prominent position in his diocese for almost twenty years, a member of the clergy and eminently aware of the value of the priesthood, never ceased to advocate obedience and submission. Yet he claimed the legitimacy of a position "outside the framework," incompatible with the distinctions between clergy and laity, between the sacred and the profane as established by the decrees of the Council of Trent and the triumphant Catholic Reformation, in whose wake he nevertheless found himself. He was not the first: Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac opened the breach with the Daughters of Charity (Filles de la Charité). But as far as men were concerned, he was a pioneer.

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4 "Cet habillement pauvre et uniforme […] par sa figure et par sa simplicité, les distingue des séculiers, des ecclésiastiques et de tous les autres religieux." Ibid., 238.

5 Cf. Un projet inachevé: le n° 5 des *Cahiers lasalliens*. Travaux et recherches du Frère Maurice au sujet du
"Mémoire sur l'Habit," in *Frère Maurice Hermans (1911–1987) et les origines de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, presented by Michel Sauvage f.s.c., *Cahiers lasalliens* 5 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1991), 243–317; Fr. Maurice-Auguste, *L'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à la recherche de son statut canonique: des origines (1679) à la bulle de Benoît XIII (1725)*, *Cahiers lasalliens* 11 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1962), 46–48, 51–54, 349–354.

6 Il "est propre pour y retenir les maîtres dans la régularité et la modestie convenable à leur état et à leur emploi." Fr. Maurice-Auguste, *L'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à la recherche de son statut canonique: des origines (1679) à la bulle de Benoît XIII (1725)*, *Cahiers lasalliens* 11 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1962), 351–352, [29].

7 "Il valait mieux qu'ils eussent un habit qui ne fût ni ecclésiastique ni séculier." Ibid., 351, [18].

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The *Mémoire* is clear: "Those who make up this community are all lay people."[8] Yet they are not laymen like others, for they form a "community" in which "we live with rules, with dependence for all things, without any property and in complete uniformity."[9] The brothers are therefore lay regulars. There is no mention of vows in the *Mémoire*. Jean-Baptiste's thinking on this subject was still maturing, but it is clear that he did not yet intend to base his community commitment on them. He therefore used another approach to explain the intermediate status of the brothers. The difficulty was not to admit that they were laity, but rather that they were not clerics, and this point is indicative of the evolution underway in the way regulars are represented: their way of life (community and regularity) now appears as a mark of differentiation that integrates them with the clergy. The brothers are not clerics: they "have no studies and will never study" and they do not exercise any liturgical function nor wear the surplice in the church.[10] Wearing the ecclesiastical habit would not be without risk: parish priests would require them to assist them in the liturgy and, finding themselves thus valorized, the brothers would be tempted to devote themselves to it to the detriment of their pupils: "The masters would make it a point of honor to wear the surplice in the parishes, to be there with the clergy and to exercise ecclesiastical functions."[11] The brothers themselves, he feared, would run the risk of assimilating with the clergy and forgetting their lay status and their educational vocation: "They would easily be tempted to study, to be tonsured, to advance in orders, to seek employment in the parishes."[12]

The *Mémoire* addresses another important point: the question of tonsure. It is tonsure that assimilates one to the clergy, and Jean-Baptiste knew this better than anyone, having been tonsured long before receiving the priesthood in order to gain access to the canonical prebend resigned by his uncle. If the brothers were tonsured, some of them might be tempted to seek ecclesiastical prebends, which would be incompatible with the spirit of poverty affirmed in the *Mémoire* and dangerous for community life.

In addition to justifying the brothers' intermediary status, the *Mémoire* focuses above all on developing the community dimension, materialized by the habit, which functions almost as a sacramental under Jean-Baptiste's pen. Indeed, as if endowed with a special blessing, which it is not, the habit is intended to help the brothers fully embrace the community dimension of their life. Its adoption has changed the meaning of their commitment: from masters, they have become brothers. Indeed, it is true, that

8 "Ceux qui composent cette communauté sont tous laïques." Ibid., 350.

9 "On vit avec Règles, avec dépendance pour toutes choses, sans aucune propriété et dans une entière uniformité." Ibid., 349, [2].

10 Ibid., 353, [47].

11 "Les maîtres se feraient un honneur de porter le surplis dans les paroisses, d'y être avec le clergé et d'y exercer des fonctions ecclésiastiques." Ibid., 353, [53–55].

12 "Ils auraient facilement la tentation d'étudier, d'être tonsurés, d'avancer dans les ordres, de chercher des emplois dans les paroisses." Ibid., 354, [58].

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> before this singular habit, people came to this community as to a man who kept schoolmasters as servants, without any idea of community. Many came to train and then to perform. Many asked for a salary, and many others believed they were greatly indebted to the fact that they were content with life and the habit. Since the habit was introduced, the only thing you can think of when you ask to join a community is that you're going to stay there for the rest of your life. You don't know what it's like to ask for a pledge, and you think you're lucky to be accepted. It's the habit alone that produces these effects.[13]

There's a grace in the habit because it places the brothers in a special status. It is like a doorway to another space, the community space, where the rules are no longer the same. To take the habit is to live differently, and therefore to adopt maxims different from those of the world, according to an expression common in the discourse of regulars at the time:

> Before the singular habit, when it came to observing the rules, many said they had no more obligation to observe the rules than people of the world, since they were not distinguished from them in any way. Since the singular habit, there doesn't seem to be any difficulty about this, as everyone considers themselves to be members of the community.[14]

The habit functions mainly in one direction: it attracts on one side but holds back on the other. The habit, then, also functions as a symbolic enclosure. The habit marks a brother's entry into the community, and although canonically he can always leave the community and the habit, he knows that to turn back would be tantamount to returning to the world and its maxims. For the habit, like an enclosure, protects him from the world:

> This peculiar habit makes the seculars look upon the members of this community as persons separated and withdrawn from the world, and it seems most appropriate that we should have

13 "Avant cet habit singulier, on venait dans cette communauté comme chez un homme qui tenait des maîtres d'école comme des domestiques, sans aucune idée de communauté. Plusieurs y venaient afin de se former et ensuite de se produire. Plusieurs demandaient des gages, et plusieurs autres croyaient qu'on leur était fort redevables de ce qu'ils se contentaient de la vie et de l'habit. Depuis cet habit, on n'a point d'autre idée lorsqu'on demande à y entrer que de venir dans une communauté pour y demeurer le reste de sa vie. On ne sait ce que c'est de demander des gages et on se croit fort heureux d'y être reçu. C'est l'habit seul qui produit ces effets." Ibid., 353, [43–44].

14 "Avant cet habit singulier, quand on parlait d'observer les règles, plusieurs disaient qu'ils n'avaient pas plus d'obligation d'observer des règles que des personnes du monde, puisqu'ils n'en étaient distingués en rien. Depuis l'habit singulier, il ne paraît pas qu'on se fasse difficulté là-dessus, tous se regardant comme personnes de communauté." Ibid., 352, [41–42].

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> this idea of them, so that they do not easily associate and communicate with the people of the world, and that they even have more restraint towards them.[15]

The main lesson of the *Mémoire* is therefore to highlight the brothers' community as a regular institute, distinct from the secular clergy, responding to a specific vocation of which the habit is the sign. With stability viewed as a guarantee of longevity,[16] it was therefore advisable not to change the habit adopted in Reims five years earlier. Jean-Baptiste thus achieves his objective in two ways: on the one hand, he justifies that the brothers should not be assimilated to the ecclesiastical personnel of the Saint-Sulpice parish, and on the other, he defends their specific vocation through the habit adapted to it. This is the thrust of the final paragraphs, which reject the secular cloak on pragmatic grounds of efficiency and security:

> The long coat would be very inconvenient for them in their work. With this habit, they couldn't move around among their pupils, nor easily tidy them up and keep them in order when they take them to church or when they're there. We've noticed that with this habit, most of the little children can be knocked from side to side when they're being tidied up.[17]

4. The Question of Priesthood

The refusal to be assimilated to the secular clergy is rooted both in the pedagogical concepts developed by Jean-Baptiste de La Salle and in the status he claims for the educational mission of teachers. Two points are decisive here: the rejection of Latin and the definition of an ecclesiastical ministry.

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15 "Cet habit singulier fait que les séculiers regardent ceux de cette communauté comme personnes séparées et retirées du monde, et il paraît fort à propos qu'on ait cette idée d'eux, afin qu'ils ne fréquentent pas facilement et ne communiquent pas trop aisément avec les personnes du siècle et qu'ils aient même plus de retenue à leur égard." Ibid., 352, [40].

16 Ibid., 351 [19–25]: "La plupart des désordres et dérèglements qui sont arrivés dans les communautés ne sont venus que d'une trop grande facilité à admettre les changements." [23] ("Most of the disorders and disturbances that have occurred in communities have only come from too great a willingness to admit change").

17 "Le long manteau leur serait fort incommode dans leur emploi. Ils ne pourraient, avec cet habit, se remuer au milieu de leurs écoliers, ni les ranger et tenir aisément en ordre quand ils les conduisent à l'église ou quand ils y sont. On a remarqué qu'avec cet habit on est en état de renverser la plupart des petits enfants de côté et d'autre, en voulant les ranger." Ibid., 354, [60–62].

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4.1 The Rejection of Latin

Traditionally, learning to read began with Latin, which was considered less difficult because all the letters were pronounced the same in all contexts and because the prayers, which introduced children not only to reading but also to piety, were recited in this language. What's more, schoolchildren were expected to assist the parish priest as altar boys. Therefore, the school would have failed in its mission of religious education if it did not teach the reading of Latin. Jean-Baptiste took the opposite view. The *Conduite des écoles* (The conduct of the schools), the result of a joint effort by Jean-Baptiste and the most experienced teachers, also provided for this study, but it came after the reading of French and lasted only six months out of the nearly four years needed for a perfect command of reading. This original and innovative approach in the French context[18] met with incomprehension, and even supporters of the Lasallian schools tried to persuade Jean-Baptiste to return to the most common methods of his time.

He then decided to write a memoir to justify his choice of French, just as he had written the *Mémoire sur l'habit* in response to pressure from the priest of Saint-Sulpice. This text is known to us only through Blain's transcription, which claims to give "the substance" of it: it is therefore a summary, not all the words of which may have been written by Jean-Baptiste, and this is undoubtedly why it has never been included in the corpus of his works, although some non-autographed letters have been. Nevertheless, it is—and rightly so—a major reference in any presentation of Lasallian pedagogy. The argument refers to pedagogical effectiveness, social usefulness, and pastoral effectiveness.

Pedagogical effectiveness: "French, being the natural language, is without comparison much easier to learn than Latin, for children who hear one and not the other. Consequently, it takes much less time to learn to read in French than in Latin."[19]

Social usefulness: "It is useless to spend a lot of time teaching people to read a language well, since they will never use it."[20]

And finally, pastoral effectiveness:

18 Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670) had already advocated teaching in the vernacular in elementary schools. It is not impossible that Jean-Baptiste de La Salle was at least indirectly aware of his pedagogical ideas, but there is no documentary proof of this; cf. Jean Antoine Caravolas, *Les Français et Jan Amos Comenius: Histoire d'une relation difficile (1631–2000)* (Paris: Champion, 2016), 288: "By the end of the [seventeenth] century, the name of Comenius had been largely forgotten in France."

19 "La langue française, étant la naturelle, est sans comparaison beaucoup plus facile à apprendre que la latine, à des enfants qui entendent l'une et qui n'entendent pas l'autre. Par conséquent, il faut beaucoup moins de temps pour apprendre à lire en français que pour apprendre à lire en latin." Blain, *La vie*, vol. 1, 375.

20 "Il est fort inutile de mettre un grand temps à apprendre à bien lire une langue à des personnes qui n'en feront jamais usage." Ibid.

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> Indeed, when we begin to teach young people to read in French, they at least know how to read well when they withdraw from the schools; knowing how to read well, they can teach themselves Christian doctrine, they can learn it from printed catechisms, they can sanctify Sundays and feasts by reading good books and prayers well done in the French language; instead of knowing only how to read in Latin, and very imperfectly at that, when they withdraw from the free Christian schools, they remain ignorant of the duties of Christianity all their life.[21]

Jean-Baptiste was so convinced of this that he absolutely forbade the use of Latin in the institute except for liturgical purposes—the very purposes for which he envisaged the rapid learning of Latin reading in schools. The short chapter 27 of the *Règles Communes* (Common rules), which should be read in conjunction with the memoir above, is entirely devoted to this exclusion of the Latin language:

> Brothers who have learned the Latin language will make no use of it as soon as they enter the Society, and will behave as if they did not know it: thus no brother will be allowed to teach the Latin language to anyone, either in the house or outside.
> No one will even be allowed to read a Latin book or say a single word of Latin without an absolute and indispensable necessity and by order of the brother director: for example, when there will be some occasion to speak to a foreigner who does not know the vulgar language and who does know Latin.
> There will be no purely Latin books in any of the houses of the Institute, other than office books. There will not even be any that can be used to learn the Latin language, and if there are any Latin books translated into the vulgar language, where the Latin is on one side and the vulgar on the other, they will not be allowed to be read (except in a public reading) except by those who are thirty years of age and in whom no affection for Latin is to be seen; and they will read only the vulgar.[22]

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21 "En effet, quand on commence à apprendre à lire à la jeunesse par le français, elle sait au moins le bien lire quand elle se retire des écoles; le sachant bien lire, elle peut s'instruire par elle-même de la doctrine chrétienne, elle peut l'apprendre dans les catéchismes imprimés, elle peut sanctifier les dimanches et les fêtes par la lecture des bons livres et par des prières bien faites en langue française; au lieu que ne sachant, en se retirant des Écoles chrétiennes et gratuites, que lire en latin, et très imparfaitement, elle demeure toute sa vie dans l'ignorance des devoirs du christianisme." Blain, *La vie*, vol. 1, 376.

22 "Les Frères qui auront appris la langue latine n'en feront aucun usage, dès qu'ils seront entrés dans la Société, et ils s'y comporteront comme s'ils ne la savaient pas: ainsi il ne sera pas permis à aucun Frère d'enseigner la langue latine à qui que ce soit, soit dans la maison soit dehors.
Il ne sera pas même permis à aucun de lire aucun livre latin ni de dire un seul mot de latin sans une nécessité absolue et indispensable et par ordre du Frère Directeur: lors par exemple qu'il se présentera quelque occasion de parler à un étranger qui ne saura pas la langue vulgaire et qui saura la latine.
Il n'y aura dans aucune des maisons de l'Institut aucun livre purement latin, sinon des livres d'offices. Il n'y en aura même aucun qui puisse servir à apprendre la langue latine, et s'il y en a de latins traduits en

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Curiously, the reasons for this categorical prohibition are not given, and Jean-Baptiste did not explain it elsewhere. One major reason is certainly the brothers' refusal of the priesthood. By banning the use of Latin, he was sure that none would be able to apply for holy orders, and he guaranteed that his institute would remain composed of lay people. Above all, he wanted to cut short any clerical temptations that a few Latin-speaking brothers might feel, whereas the schools require, as he liked to repeat, "a whole man." As the Institute declericalizes, so does reading, to use Brother Yves Poutet's expression.[23] Taken literally, the word is apt. However, it is important to avoid any confusion: while Latin was rejected in order to preserve the brothers' educational mission and because it was useless for children whose future lay primarily in the workshop or store, it was clearly planned that schoolchildren would also learn to serve mass—all they needed to do was know and understand the prayers.

4.2 Education as a Ministry

But why deny the brothers access to the priesthood? The answer is to be found in the colloquial expression of Jean-Baptiste: the school needs "a whole man" ("un homme tout entier"). It's not just a question of avoiding competition with the pastoral duties of the priest: the teacher is more than a teacher, he is an ecclesial minister. Jean-Baptiste uses the expression repeatedly, especially in his *Méditations*, to help the brothers understand the meaning and importance of the work they do every day.[24] He was not the first to do so: this is how Pierre Fourier characterized the work of the Sisters of Notre Dame (Sœurs de Notre-Dame) with their pupils. But Jean-Baptiste reminds us with fresh insistence of the need to "put yourselves in a position to do your ministry well," to "make yourselves worthy of your ministry," to "fulfill the duties of your ministry," and so on. Beyond exhortations, he defines the nature of this ministry and its source. Teachers are "ministers of God" (the most common expression), "ministers of Jesus Christ," "ministers of the New Testament," or "ministers of the Gospel," which they are to make known to their pupils. This ministry is clearly apostolic in nature: the brothers are also "ambassadors for Jesus Christ"[25] whose Gospel they proclaim, or "true co-operators

langue vulgaire où le latin soit d'un côté et le vulgaire de l'autre, il ne sera permis de les lire (excepté dans une lecture publique) qu'à ceux qui auront l'âge de trente ans et en qui on ne remarquera aucune affection pour le latin; et ils n'y liront que le vulgaire." "Règles communes des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes," *Cahiers lasalliens* 25 5 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, n.d.), 93–94.

23 Yves Poutet, *Genèse et caractéristiques de la pédagogie lasallienne* (Caen: Éditions Don Bosco, 1995), 168.

24 The quotations are given according to the Vocabulaire lasallien, vol. 4 (Paris: Frères des Écoles chrétiennes, 1986), "ministère," 214–226, "ministre," 216–218.

25 *Méditations pour le temps de la retraite*, anastatic reproduction of the original edition, *Cahiers lasalliens* 13 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1963), 16 and 45.

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with Jesus Christ."[26] They participate in his work of "redemption"[27] by working for the "salvation of children." As their mission is apostolic and involves the brothers in the work of salvation, Jean-Baptiste can tell them: "you will contribute to the good of the Church in your ministry."[28]

However, it is more difficult for him to situate the brothers' ministry among the canonical ecclesial ministries: on the one hand, it does not exist as such in the hierarchy of orders, and on the other hand, the brothers are laymen to whom the ecclesiology of the time does not recognize any "ministry" in the canonical sense of the term. It's hardly surprising, then, that when he applies this term or that of "minister" to the brothers, Jean-Baptiste does so in the various collections of the *Méditations*, and not in his more doctrinal texts, such as the *Devoirs d'un Chrétien* (Duties of a Christian) and his two *Abrégés*. Above all, he intends to train the brothers in a ministerial spirituality, because the nature of their work is apostolic. It is not his intention to claim for them a canonical status in the hierarchy of the Church. This is why he can resort to very different comparisons: sometimes, following the example of Pierre Fourier, he speaks of the brothers "as participating in the ministry of guardian angels,"[29] sometimes as participating "in the ministry of the holy Apostles and of the principal bishops,"[30] and sometimes he speaks of "an employment which approaches that of priests in its ministry."[31] This shows the degree of importance, even sacredness, which he attaches to the function of master. In any case, since they exercise an apostolic ministry "for the glory of God," it is inconceivable that the brothers should be remunerated by the parents of their pupils: Jean-Baptiste never uses the word in this context, but if we take this understanding to its logical conclusion, the remuneration of a brother in any form whatsoever, even a "pin," would be tantamount to simony. In his view, it is up to the Christian community to contribute to their upkeep (not their salary), and parents can only be asked to contribute to school supplies if they can afford it.

5. Vows

The demands of Jean-Baptiste de La Salle did not fit easily into the canonical models of the time. How could a permanent institute be formed with laymen; how could they be

26 Ibid., 19.

27 *Méditations sur les principales fêtes de l'année*, anastatic reproduction of the original edition, *Cahiers lasalliens* 12 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1962), 199.

28 "Vous contribuerez au bien de l'Église dans votre ministère." Ibid., 92.

29 "Comme participant au ministère des anges gardiens." *Méditations pour le temps de la retraite*, 31.

30 "Au ministère des saints Apôtres et des principaux évêques." Ibid., 37.

31 "Un emploi qui approche celui des prêtres par son ministère." *Méditations sur les principales fêtes de l'année*, 200.

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fixed without losing their lay status? The bond of community is in the vows, but what vows should a layman take without losing his lay status? This question was discussed as early as 1686, but it was not really answered until eight years later, after the death of Jean-Baptiste, it was raised again.

In the spring of 1686, the brothers were summoned to Reims for a retreat that had been decided on at a meeting the previous year. Jean-Baptiste had delivered "a very touching discourse" that could be likened to a sermon on the choice of life: "He gave them a vivid picture of man's natural inconstancy and of the necessity of fixing oneself to the good by bonds and commitments that are holy and pleasing to God."[32] This was not a command, but a suggestion, and it could not be otherwise: Jean-Baptiste had no legal authority to compel the brothers. A debate ensued, the content of which we will ignore here: according to early biographers, a consensus was quickly reached in favor of vows, without specifying their nature or form. There were, however, two points of disagreement: the appropriateness of taking a vow of chastity, on the one hand, and the choice between perpetual and temporary vows, on the other: "it was therefore decided that we would keep the vow of obedience for one year."[33]

This seems to have been the case until a new assembly was held in the spring of 1694 on the occasion of a general retreat. At that time the institute consisted of about thirty brothers, and it was at their request that the question of vows, especially the vow of obedience, was discussed. Jean-Baptiste is said to have urged them to be prudent: "He told them that a lifelong commitment was a sacrifice pleasing to God when supported by a firm resolution, that they should think it over carefully and do nothing lightly."[34] According to Canon Blain, he also insisted on the risks of the vow of chastity: "haste on this point exposes one to various repentances, sometimes to terrible sacrileges, at least to the request of shameful and odious dispensations."[35] Prudence may be motivated less by fear of perpetuity than by the traditional formula of the three vows of religion, symbolized by chastity alone.

On the other hand, unanimity was not a given from the outset, and there's nothing to prevent us from assuming that some brothers were quite content with simple, renewable, temporary vows, especially since this model of congregation was beginning to spread

32 "Il leur fit un vif portrait de l'inconstance naturelle à l'homme et de la nécessité où il était de se fixer au bien par des liens et des engagements saints et agréables à Dieu." François-Elie Maillefer, *La vie de M. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle […]*, édition comparée des manuscrits de 1723 et 1740, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1966), 74.

33 "Il fut donc résolu qu'on s'en tiendrait au vœu d'obéissance pour un an." Fr. Bernard, Conduite admirable de la Divine Providence en la personne du vénérable serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste de La Salle […], Cahiers lasalliens 4 (Rome: Maison Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1965), 73; Maillefer (1740), *La vie*, 75.

34 "Il leur dit qu'un engagement de toute la vie était un sacrifice bien agréable à Dieu quand il était soutenu d'une ferme résolution, qu'ils y devaient bien penser et ne rien faire à la légère." Maillefer, *La vie*, 114.

35 "La précipitation en ce point expose à divers repentirs, quelquefois à d'horribles sacrilèges, tout au moins à la demande de dispenses honteuses et odieuses." Blain, *La vie*, vol. 1, 343.

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at the same time, particularly among women. The assembly adopted an intermediate solution: Brothers who wished to do so and who had received permission from their superior could take perpetual vows of obedience, association, and stability. Chastity and poverty were not included. The others continued to take temporary vows of three years, renewed annually on the feast of the Trinity, each time for one year. On June 6, Jean-Baptiste and twelve other brothers pronounced their perpetual vows, which they dated and signed.

Did Jean-Baptiste intend to distinguish two categories of brothers within the institute by the perpetual vows, to which not all were admitted? One is tempted to think so when one considers that this first group of twelve constituted the electoral body that met to elect the superior the day after the profession of perpetual vows. What's more, the next General Chapter would not be convened until 1717 and would only bring together the directors, i. e., the brothers who had made their perpetual vows. It would seem, then, that the 1694 meeting was an occasion to create two categories of brothers within the still small society, one of which would be endowed with deliberative prerogatives, not for the sake of greater dignity but for the sake of greater stability within the society. The distinctions between the brothers were purely functional: either between school brothers and brothers in service, or between ordinary brothers and directors or visitors.

The vows expressed a direct commitment between a brother and God, without intermediaries or witnesses. They were simple, private vows. The canonical indetermination in which the Lasallian community lived at that time is more than enough to justify this. But it is perhaps too easy to explain everything in terms of this indetermination. The missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul did the same thing: "Although the superior, or someone on his behalf, is present and hears the words pronounced by the one making the vows, he says nothing and answers nothing; in a word, he does not accept them, as one does in an order."[36] On the other hand, several institutes with simple vows had adopted the practice of having vows received by the superior or his representative: the Frères Hospitaliers de Saint Jean de Dieu, the Religieuses de la Madeleine, the Filles de Saint-Joseph du faubourg Saint-Germain, etc.[37] This formula should therefore be seen as a conscious choice rather than a constraint: Jean-Baptiste did not intend to found a new religious order, a new "religion" as it was called at the time. The fact that the two vows of chastity and poverty were also rejected confirms this: the vow of chastity in particular was a case reserved to the Supreme Pontiff and therefore required canonical recognition. On the other hand, the commitment of the brothers remained private, and even perpetuity did not have the same character as if the vows had been made *coram*

36 "Bien que le supérieur ou quelqu' autre de sa part, soit présent et entende les paroles que prononce celui qui fait les vœux, il ne dit mot et ne répond rien; en un mot, il ne les accepte pas, comme on fait en une religion." Conference of November 7, 1659, quoted by Brother Maurice-Auguste, *Cahiers lasalliens* 2, 50, n. 7.

37 Ibid., 49, n. 3.

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ecclesiae, as solemn vows necessarily are. Even once the institute had received canonical recognition, it was still possible to leave the institute after taking perpetual vows: the breaking of a private vow made outside of any institutional and juridical framework was certainly gravely sinful, but no authority could sanction it other than spiritually. And recourse to the ordinary to obtain dispensation from simple vows was possible.

Absolute poverty was part of the commitment, expressed as an assumed risk and therefore as a non-determinant circumstance, but it did not constitute a vow. In the absence of a vow of poverty, the possession of property was tolerated, but not the enjoyment of property, so that it remained possible to go before a notary to buy, rent or sell, with the income from the property going entirely to the community. This intermediate status, similar to that of the Jesuits until they took solemn vows, suited the situation of some brothers very well. Jean-Baptiste himself retained personal property, contrary to what hagiographic tradition has long claimed.

6. What Kind of Reception Could be Expected for This Unusual Institute?

For over forty years, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, neither fully clerical nor truly lay, lived in a legal limbo deliberately maintained by their founder. Was this lack of legal status responsible for the relatively timid start-up of the institute during Jean-Baptiste's lifetime? By the time of his death on April 7, 1719, it had been established in some twenty towns[38] but had failed to establish itself in at least five others.[39] We know that the dynamism of a new congregation results as much from its interaction with its societal environment as from internal factors. It is therefore important to identify which interactions were favorable and which were not, in other words, to try to assess how the institute was viewed.

Called to Paris to take charge of the charitable schools in the parish of Saint-Sulpice, the brothers were quickly perceived as competitors by both the teachers of the network of schools under the supervision of the cantor of Notre-Dame, and by the guild of master writers (Corporation des maîtres-écrivains). They faced three waves of legal proceedings in 1690, 1698, and finally 1704–1706.[40] It was also the fear of potential competition with the charitable schools set up by Charles Démia that underpinned the opposition against their establishment in Lyon. In the face of attacks, the absence of a statute proved to be a factor of weakness: this is why, from the very first assaults in 1690, Jean-Baptiste is said to have requested from the Archbishop of Paris, François de Harlay, "the necessary permissions to give the house he occupied in the parish of

38 Alès, Avignon, Boulogne, Calais, Chartres, Darnétal, Dijon, Grenoble, Guise, Laon, Les Vans, Marseille, Mende, Moulins, Paris, Reims, Rethel, Rouen, Saint-Denis, Troyes, Versailles.

39 Brest, Le Puy, Lyon, Mâcon, Valréas.

40 Bernard Hours, *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle: Un mystique en action* (Paris: Salvator, 2019), 177–198.

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Saint-Sulpice a form of community."[41] Thus, in cities where a structured network of schools already existed, the brothers may have initially appeared as a disruptive element to the established order. On the other hand, communities that wanted to strengthen the established order sometimes called on them, which may mean that they were already enjoying a favorable reputation. The question for the historian is to understand the channels through which this reputation spread. Since *La conduite des écoles chrétiennes* (The conduct of Christian schools), a manual for teachers, was not printed until 1720, the day after Jean-Baptiste's death, we are forced to focus on the channel of personal interactions, of which we have only a very limited overview and which we are reduced to assuming without being able to identify the individuals who acted as vectors.

Apart from the text quoted at the beginning of this chapter, there are few direct testimonies that allow us to reconstruct the image of the brothers in their social environment. And it has to be said that the tone they set is not exactly a positive one. The testimonies give the impression of extreme severity, which seems to have been a recurring feature of the brothers' reputation. In fact, in 1702, the Archbishop of Paris opened an investigation into the institute following a complaint by two novices of physical abuse and a memorandum, probably written by the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice, which questioned the excessive penitential practices of Jean-Baptiste.[42] But the same memorandum simply recommended that the founder be dismissed in order to preserve the useful work he had begun and which it was essential to continue. The criticism of the institute was therefore not aimed at its pedagogical effectiveness. On the contrary, it was aimed at changing its management in order to take control of it: in the affair of 1702, the aim was to place the Parisian schools and the brothers who ran them under the control of the parish priest of Saint-Sulpice. The argument of excessive austerity concealed an institutional grievance: the autonomy of the institute from any hierarchy.

The annoyance of La Chétardie, head of the largest parish in Paris, was matched by that of several bishops who were all the more impatient with this autonomy because they knew of the brothers' excellent reputation as teachers. In the early days of the institute, before it was established in Paris, Monseigneur Le Tellier, Archbishop of Reims, had promised Jean-Baptiste his financial and pastoral support on the condition that he did not found a school outside the diocese.[43] Between 1712 and 1714, the institute underwent a serious crisis of governance, the key issue being its autonomy from episcopal authority.[44] Until his death, Jean-Baptiste de La Salle remained attached

41 "Les permissions nécessaires pour donner à la maison qu'il occupait sur la paroisse de Saint-Sulpice une forme de communauté." François-Elie Maillefer, ms. 1723, *CL* 6, 90, is the only one of the first three biographers to mention this approach.

42 I refer here to my analysis of this affair, cf. Hours, *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 377–401.

43 Two others were not interested in the institute: Pierre Clément (Périgueux) and Jean-Claude de la Poype de Vertrieux (Poitiers), despite their involvement in school issues.

44 Hours, *Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 412–430.

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to it as a necessary condition for its survival. But in these difficult circumstances, several of the oldest brothers declared themselves ready to accept a project that would completely modify the way the institute operated: in each of the cities where they were established, the brothers' schools would be placed under the superiority of a secular cleric appointed by the ordinary; the function of superior general would disappear, as would the centralized novitiate set up in Rouen since 1705, in favor of novitiates in each diocese. Some bishops, such as those of Laon, Chartres, and Troyes, had given their approval to this reorganization, and had also testified to the excellence of the schools. The danger of the institute breaking up became evident. The institute was saved by the refusal of Cardinal de Noailles to accept the reorganization, although his reasons remain unclear.[45] The proposed reform satisfied the bishops for at least two reasons. First, in the spirit of the Council of Trent, the royal declarations of 1657 and 1666 on the running of schools, and the edict of 1695 on episcopal authority, the reform strengthened the control of the bishop over his diocese. It also clarified the canonical status of the institute, which had been difficult to accept for a clergy strongly influenced by legal culture. Finally, some bishops undoubtedly saw it as an opportunity to intervene in the content of the teaching, especially with regard to the exclusive use of the French language, which was not unanimously accepted. In 1699, the previous bishop of Chartres had asked Jean-Baptiste to send him brothers, but he had also demanded that they conform to the traditional practice of learning to read in Latin. Jean-Baptiste categorically refused and drafted the above memorandum in order to cut short any such request.[46]

There were several reasons for this reluctance: lack of canonical status, autonomous governance, excessive austerity, and teaching in French. Nevertheless, with the exception of Reims, Jean-Baptiste never founded a school without being asked. So the institute was also viewed positively. By whom and why? When it is possible to analyze a foundation in detail, the first thing that emerges is that the bishops were more often than not content to give their approval. Only three of the sixteen prelates whose dioceses were involved took the initiative of soliciting Jean-Baptiste: Paul Godet des Marais (Chartres), who had been his fellow student at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in the early 1670s, François-Placide de Baudry de Piencourt (Mende), and François Chevalier de Saulx (Alès), who hoped to receive about thirty brothers, no doubt with the intention of granting them the status of a congregation under diocesan law. Cautiously, Jean-Baptiste sent only four. Their motivations were primarily religious: in Chartres, to have well-trained altar boys and to create a breeding ground for priestly vocations; in Alès and Mende, in the heart of Protestant regions and in the aftermath of the Camisards' revolt, to obtain

45 Ibid., 421–423.

46 Ibid., 521–528.

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"the means to make great progress in the families of our poor Catholics."[47] Alongside rather reserved bishops, various secular clerics also gave impetus to the institute's early developments: in Grenoble, Claude Canel, councilor-clerk at the Dauphiné Parliament and official, as well as Jean d'Yse de Saléon, future bishop of Digne and then Agen; Louis Aubery, vicar of the parish of Saint-Pierre in Moulins; Claude Gosse, parish priest of Saint-Martin in Noyon; Louis Deshayes, parish priest of Saint-Sauveur in Rouen; and M. Ponthon, parish priest in Calais. Last but not least, the role of the laity was not secondary: in Avignon, Marie-Anne de Siffredy and her husband, Jean-Pierre Madon de Châteaublanc, papal treasurer; in Dijon, Claude Rigoley, secretary to the States of the Duchy of Burgundy; and in Mende, Françoise de La Fage, sister of Canon Louis Martineau, promoter of the cathedral chapter, himself educated at Saint-Sulpice.

During the founder's lifetime, the expansion of the institute seems to have been mainly driven by two milieus. On the one hand, the ecclesiastical network of the Compagnie de Saint-Sulpice, with its lay offshoots of relatives and friends: its Paris seminary, where Jean-Baptiste began his ecclesiastical training, was the most important incubator for secular clergy and spread its priestly spirituality beyond its rank.[48] On the other hand, with probable intersections between the two, the *dévots*, lay and clerical, stemming directly or indirectly from the nebula of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement:[49] this network of associations, which began in Paris in the late 1620s and was established in at least thirty towns, brought together lay people and ecclesiastics in equal numbers with the aim of building a Christian social order. Without official recognition, it was officially dissolved in 1666, but survived in some towns. Its Lyon branch,[50] which was still active in the first third of the eighteenth century, was probably involved in the foundations in Grenoble and Avignon. For example, Marie-Anne de Siffredy learned "from a pious person in the city of Lyon that there was an institute of brothers in Paris dedicated to this work [the education of children]."[51] And when, at Jean-Baptiste's request, Brother Gérard Drolin stopped off in Avignon to gather further information about the possibility of establishing a school there, he met not only M. de Châteaublanc, but also "several pious people who were delighted to see him." At the same time, the Company's Lyon and Avignon branches were in close contact with each other. More broadly speaking, requests for Jean-Baptiste to set up a school came from social circles (high clergy,

47 Letter from François de Saulx to Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Jan. 28, 1708, quoted in Blain, *La vie*, vol. 2, 51–52.

48 Bernard Pitaud, *Saint-Sulpice et les séminaires sulpiciens de 1657 à 1700* (Paris: Salvator, 2018); Idem, *Saint-Sulpice et les séminaires sulpiciens entre 1700 et la Révolution* (Paris: Salvator, 2020). About the Sulpician ideal of priesthood: David Gilbert, *"Le grand secret de la vocation": Louis Tronson 1622–1700* (Paris: Champion, 2018).

49 Alain Tallon, *La Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement (1629–1677): Spiritualité et société* (Paris: Cerf, 1990).

50 Georges Guigue, *Les papiers des dévots de Lyon: Recueil de textes sur la Compagnie secrète du Saint-Sacrement, ses statuts, ses annales, la liste de ses membres* (Lyon: Librairie ancienne Veuve Blot, 1922).

51 Blain, *La vie*, vol. 1, 396.

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notables) in which networks of devout families, those that supplied recruitment for seminaries and even more so for monasteries and convents, often occupied a strategic place.[52] The Lasallian project appealed to these circles because the brothers' schools put children's society in order, auguring a better overall discipline of future society: this is how the devout conceived of "building Heaven on Earth."[53] The Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement and the Sulpician network are also linked to the itinerary of Jean-Baptiste himself. The devout ideology of the former is that of the environment in which Jean-Baptiste grew up in Reims. It inspired his decision to work for the conversion of society through elementary education, as it did others, such as Charles Démia, who belonged to the Lyon branch. Trained at Saint-Sulpice, Démia had retained contacts within the Sulpician network and knew that, although the brothers would remain lay people, the institute could not develop without the consent of the secular clergy: yet Saint-Sulpice was supplying a growing number of bishops and vicars general.

7. Conclusion

After Jean-Baptiste's death, his second successor, Brother Timothée, undertook to obtain the recognition of the institute by Rome and the monarchy, a process in which the founder had shown little interest, as if the institutionalization of his foundation had not seemed an urgent necessity. The royal letters patent were signed on September 28, 1724, and registered by the Rouen Parliament on March 2, 1725. On May 12, Brother Timothée had also registered the bull signed by the pope in February. This modified the system of vows. The vows of union and stability in the institute, on the one hand, and obedience to the body of the institute and its superiors, on the other, were no longer the only vows. The vows of chastity and poverty were added, as we have seen. The formula of the vows thus tended to assimilate the institute to a classical religious order, which does not seem to have been the founder's intention. At least a certain ambiguity remained, since the vows were still simple and the brothers were laymen. But the first effect of this regularization was undoubtedly to facilitate the expansion of the institute: on the eve of the Revolution, it was present in 116 cities and probably had about 3,000 students. This success testified to the suitability of the school education provided by the brothers to the expectations of an average bourgeoisie wanting "a better organized, more efficient and socially useful school."[54] Beyond this, however, the hybrid status of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as regular lay people dedicated to an unspoken

52 Dominique Dinet, *Vocation et fidélité: Le recrutement des réguliers dans les diocèses d'Auxerre, Langres et Dijon (XVII^e –XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris: Economica, 1998).

53 Jean-Pierre Gutton, *Dévots et société au XVII^e siècle: Construire le Ciel sur la Terre* (Paris: Belin, 2004).

54 François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire: L'alphabétisation des Français de Calvin à Jules Ferry* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1977), t. I, 92.

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ministry of the Church implicitly testified to a crack in the Tridentine system, which clearly distinguished between clerics and the "flock of the faithful." It was a paradoxical rift, born of the initiative of a priest nourished by a priestly ideal, founded on the great Tridentine principles.

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II The Universal and the Particular

Bruno Boute

"Those Who Join the Confraternities of the Scapular or the Rosary go to the Demons."

Carmelites and Catholic Puritanism in the Low Countries (1674–1682)

1. Introduction

In his *Natural History of Religion* of 1757, the Presbyterian-raised philosopher David Hume took a dim view of the Catholic use of the scapular.[1] On the axis contrasting "primitive" religion and polytheism with monotheism and reason as a superior foundation for religious belief, he squarely mapped similar techniques of self-improvement and related enchanted matters as perversions of true and evolved religion. In *The Thing About Religion*, David Morgan argues that Hume's philosophical and Protestant emphasis on religion as *belief*, rather than a dynamic web of ritual and other practices, objects, and human and non-human agencies, testifies to the spiritual and cognitive bias informing religious studies.[2] Understandings of Christianity as an "orthodoxic religion," in which cognition grounds religious practice and the sacralization of matter, are a case in point.[3] However, a series of cultural turns has allowed historians to take a salutary distance from similar asymmetric, Whiggish, and Eurocentric understandings of Christianities, including the Protestant Reformations themselves.[4] In the wake of new paths in Science Studies and knowledge history illuminating cognition from its

1 "Take two bits of cloth, say the *Roman Catholics*, about an inch or an inch and a half square, join them by the corners with two strings of pieces of tape about sixteen inches long, throw this over your head, and make one of the bits of cloth lie upon your breast, and the other upon your back, keeping them next to your skin; there is not a better secret for recommending yourself to that infinite being, who exists from eternity to eternity." David Hume, *Four Dissertations […] The Natural History of Religion* (London: A. Millar in the Strand, 1757) (https://davidhume.org/texts/n/full), 34. Research for this chapter was supported by the DFG-funded Research Group *Polycentricity and Plurality of Premodern Christianities* (Goethe University Frankfurt). It is part of my forthcoming habilitation, *Laboratories of Salvation: Roman Inquisition and Catholic Puritanism in the Low Countries 1660–1700*.

2 David Morgan, *The Thing about Religion: An Introduction to the Material Study of Religions* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 41–42.

3 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

4 A survey in Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich, "Introduction," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 7–31.

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materiality,[5] historians of religion are rediscovering the non-human agencies—objects, animals, landscapes, demons, angels, etcetera—that have shaped and extended religious experiences and communities but that had previously been marginalized in scholarship as mere products of human faith-driven agency or imagination.

This chapter seeks to materialize the history of Jansenism (or Catholic Puritanism). The assessment quoted in the title, that those who joined confraternities of the Rosary and the Scapular would "go to the demons," did not spring from Calvinist or enlightened pens doused in vitriol against all things Catholic. It stems from Carmelites seeking to mobilize Roman correspondents against the Hydra of Jansenism, and was *attributed* to fellow Catholics in the Spanish Netherlands who deemed similar material practices sacrilegious.[6] Yet, clamorous polemics over devotions of religious confraternities intersected with a plethora of other conflicts that exposed deep uncertainties about the narrow path to salvation:[7] conflicts on the European scene that intersected with iconic intra-Catholic clashes overseas. Ines Županov has situated the Malabar and Chinese Rites controversies in an epistemic and cultural shift towards rigoristic universalism that mounted an increasingly sustained assault on Jesuit particularist practices of accommodation as a missionary strategy.[8]

The case I wish to present here reveals that these connected controversies, including the epistemic, rigoristic-universalist turn in late-seventeenth-century Catholicism, were

5 Cf. Peter Becker and William Clark, eds., *Little Tools of Knowledge: Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001); William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien 1: Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980); Michel de Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques: Du système religieux à l'éthique des lumières (XVII^{e}-XVIII^{e} s.)," in *L'écriture de l'histoire*, ed. idem (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 152–214.

6 Michael of Saint Augustine OCarm (Mechelen) to Seraphin de Jésus-Marie OCarm (Rome), May 27, 1672, edited in Lucien Ceyssens and Sylvestre De Munter, *Sources relatives à l'histoire du jansénisme et de l'antijansénisme des années 1661–1672* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1968), 492–493.

7 On uncertainty and doubt as keys to baroque Catholicism, see Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ethan Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgment from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Stefania Tutino, *Uncertainty in Post-Reformation Catholicism: A History of Probabilism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Bruno Boute, Andreea Badea, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke, "A Product's Glamour: Credibility, or the Manufacture and Administration of Truth in Early Modern Catholicism," in *Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 7–38, specifically 12.

8 Ines G. Županov, "Religious Accommodation: Historicity, Teleology, Expansion," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreaa Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 125–154, specifically 128.

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deeply grounded in local and material religious ecologies.[9] The 1674 "procession edict" of the archbishop of Mechelen Alphons van Bergen (*1624, in office 1669–1689) sparked endless polemics with echoes in the courts of Brussels, Madrid, and Rome that only subsided with his death in 1689, when the fiercely anti-Jansenist Humbert-Guillaume de Precipiano (*1627, in office 1690–1711) took over the only remaining metropolitan seat of the Habsburg state in the Low Countries. The procession edict was widely considered by its opponents as a Jansenist attack on the (profoundly material) devotions propagated by the Mendicants in the towns and cities of a densely urbanized area. A closer analysis of this case, zooming in on the Carmelites, will reveal that this was not a clash between material and immaterial models of religion, however. This chapter will seek to symmetrically materialize Catholic Puritanism as well. It illustrates how scholarship has overemphasized the epistemic-ideological and "Jesuit" dimensions of intraconfessional controversies that shaped connected Catholicisms in the four corners of the early modern world. In other words, these epistemic-ideological shifts were also moved by (local, corporal) matter, adding substance to the notion that "materiality is agency."[10] After an anatomy of a conflict situated in the sacramental offensive launched by Catholics in the era of the Reformations, I will reconnect the affair with stakes and concerns that shed light on how belief systems materialize (or fail to do so). Following new directions in Science Studies,[11] these prove to be embedded in diverging and sometimes conflicting cycles of credibility that blur the lines between matter and belief.[12]

9 On local dimensions of theological polemics in France and Belgium, see Jean-Pascal Gay, *Morales en conflit: Théologie et polémique au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 2011); Bruno Boute, "Attritionnisme et contritionnisme entre la France, les Pays-Bas espagnols, et Rome: La censure romaine et le sacrement de pénitence," in *L'Inquisition romaine et la France: Juridiction, doctrine et pluralité des catholicismes européens à l'"âge tridentin,"* ed. Albert Burkhardt and Jean-Pascal Gay (Rome: École française de Rome, 2024), 193–223.

10 Simon Ditchfield and Linda Nolan, "Appropriation and Agency in the Making of Roman Catholicism as a World Religion," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 87–124, specifically 91.

11 The full argument for a methodological transfer appears in Boute, Badea, Cavarzere and Vanden Broecke, "A Product's Glamour."

12 On modernity as a *practice* of differentiation, see Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes: Essai d'anthropologie symétrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1999).

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2. *Kort Begryp*: A Short Understanding of the Foundations, Privileges, and Indulgences of the Confraternity of the Scapular 1674–1675[13]

This short booklet in Dutch rolled off printing presses in Antwerp and Brussels in 1674 and 1675; it continued to be reprinted well into the nineteenth century. It was a typical devotional guide for members of local confraternities, to be distributed together with the scapular to the faithful during Mendicant begging sprees.[14] Tales about the Carmelites' foundation by the Prophet Elia and his ostentatious carrying of the brown scapular a precocious nine centuries before the birth of Christ are likely to attract frowns from modern readers and seventeenth-century Bollandists alike.[15] By its content, however, this "book to be practiced" seems otherwise hardly polemical.[16] Originally a cloak or an apron donated by the Virgin to the saintly Carmelite Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, and worn by friars over their shoulders, the devotional brown scapular consisted of two rectangular pieces of cloth, wood, or laminated paper adorned with religious images, symbols, or texts that were connected by bands of cloth or leather, allowing lay devotees to carry them on a daily basis on their chests and backs underneath their worldly attire, "like a cross." The contact of the scapular with its bearer's skin was to instill not just the piety-fostering memory of Christ's yoke—his passion and death on the cross—but also was to put this yoke on the body itself.

The booklet enumerated the three privileges conveyed by the brown scapular to those wearing it: (1) the promise of a "good death"; (2) the Sabbatine Privilege of the soul being released from Purgatory on the Saturday following its transition to the afterlife; and (3) protection from earthly dangers, especially when demonic powers were involved.[17] Each of these privileges was then illustrated with tales about the miraculous workings of the scapular as a mediator of grace through Mary. This was followed by a detailed description of the religious exercises required from confraternity members in order to benefit from its apotropaic and redemptive agency. The scapular belonged to a collection of sacred objects (*sacramentalia*) donned by Mary or other saintly travelers from the Beyond to religious orders and redistributed for the benefit of ordinary believers, such

13 *Kort Begryp Van de Instellingen, Privilegien, ende Aflaeten Des Broederschaps Van Den H. Scapulier Onser Lieve Vrouwe des Berghs Carmeli, Behulpsaem in't leven, in de doodt, ende daer naer* (Antwerp: Knobbaert, 1675; Brussels: Cornelis De Vos, 1675).

14 During alms-begging tours, the recipient was also admitted to the merit of all good works and prayers performed by members of the Carmelite order. On the practice of alms-begging as constitutive for the Mendicant persona, cf. the contribution to this volume by Martin Elbel.

15 On the hagiographical strife between Jesuits and Carmelites, cf. the forthcoming habilitation by Andreea Badea (GU Frankfurt), *Festschreiben der Vergangenheit–Sicherung der Zukunft: Die Kurie und die Verwaltung der Geschichte im 17. Jahrhundert*.

16 Cf. Paolo Quattrone, "Books to be Practiced: Memory, the Power of the Visual, and the Success of Accounting," *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 34 (2009): 85–118.

17 *Kort Begryp*, 17, 21, 30.

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as the Rosary (to the Dominicans) or the Cord of St. Francis (to the Franciscans). While there are various "colors" of scapular,[18] prominent among them was the brown scapular distributed by the Carmelites.

At face value, the (re)printing of similar concise confraternity books merely responded to the cyclical depletion of storage. There was not a single reference to ongoing debates, and the prints do not appear in *Bibliotheca Janseniana*, a repertory of polemical literature in the Low Countries.[19] Yet their approbation by the Antwerp diocesan censor Van Eeden, dated November 12, 1674, suggests that these were not just reprints but fully fledged new editions, in order to include the confirmation of indulgences granted by Clement VII (1523–1534) and Paul V (1605–1621), as well as their extension to the deceased by the reigning Pontiff Clement X (1670–1676). In addition, it was difficult to ignore the circumstances. In 1673, an anonymous booklet had surfaced in Ghent under the title *Monita Salutaria Beatissimae Virginis ad cultores suos indiscretos* (Salutary warnings of the Virgin to her indiscrete worshippers), with Dutch and French translations quickly following suit.[20] In this text, the Virgin herself warned against the harmful, sacrilegious excesses committed by her devotees under the guise of privileges and indulgences. In the face of an appropriately scandalized, passive flock,[21] the book, which also circulated widely in France, sparked virulent pastoral wars from pulpits and printing presses. It was accordingly prohibited *donec corrigatur* ("pending correction") in June 1674 by the Holy Office via a placard of the Congregation of the Index.[22] Ghent had been the epicenter of intra-Catholic strife between parish clergy and Jesuits throughout the 1660s and early 1670s.[23] Related conflicts emerged, among other places,

18 See the contribution of Samuel Weber to this volume.

19 Léopold Willaert, *Bibliotheca Janseniana Belgica: Répertoire des imprimés concernant les controverses théologiques en relation avec le Jansénisme dans les Pays-Bas catholiques et le Pays de Liège aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles*, 4 vols. (Namur: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres, 1949).

20 Anonymous [Adam Widenfeldt], *Monita Salutaria B. V. Mariae ad cultores suos indiscretos* (Ghent: Typis Francisci D'Erckel, 1673). Cf. also idem: *[…]* Editio secunda correctior Iuxta Exemplar Gandavense (Louvain: Typis Adriani de Witte, 1673). Translations in Dutch and French: Anonymous [Adam Widenfeldt], *Heylsame Vermaningen Van de S. M. Maria Aen haer ondiscrete Dienaers* (Ghent: By François d'Erckel, 1673). Anonymous [Adam Widenfeldt], *Avis Salutaires De La Bien-Heureuse Vierge Marie, A Ses Devots Indiscrets. Fidelement traduit du Latin en François* (Lille: De L'Imprimerie de Nicolas de Rache, 1674).

21 On the passive role attributed to the public in clerical sources, cf. Bruno Boute, "'Que ceulx des Flandres se disoijent tant catholicques et ce neantmoings les hereticques mesmes ne scauroijent faire pir.' The Multiplicity of Catholicism and Roman Attitudes in the Correspondence of the Nunciature of Flanders under Paul V (1605–1621)," in *Die Außenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)*, ed. Alexander Koller (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2008), 457–592, specifically 478.

22 Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (hereafter ACDF), Sanctum Officium (hereafter SO) Stanza Storica (hereafter St.St.) O-3-a Nr. 1.

23 On Ghent as the capital of Jansenism, see Franciscus Simonis <Pseud.> [Aegidius Estrix], *Status, Origo, Et Scopus Reformationis Hoc Tempore Attentata In Belgio Circa Administrationem, Et Usum Sacramenti*

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in Louvain, where the symbiosis between local clergy and the university dominated by the secular clerics of the Faculty of Divinity provided a suitable ground for endemic clashes with the Jesuit college, the only religious house in town not incorporated in the university.[24]

Interestingly, the role of the Jesuits as the university's adversaries was frequently overtaken by the Mendicants, despite the latter's institutional involvement in academic power and authority over the two seats held by Blackfriars and Augustinians in the oligarchic Strict College of eight Regents in Divinity. With caution, there is some merit in viewing such local spats through the lens of familiar infighting between secular clergy and religious orders. The "bourgeois Church" of the Low Countries was a playground for old boy networks of graduates at all levels of hierarchy,[25] while the spectacular revitalization of Catholicism in the region was also grounded in a monastic wave at the beginning of the century. Against this polarized backdrop, printing devotional literature bolstering Marial cults[26] amounted to a firm statement—but also responded to Archbishop Alphons van Bergen's notorious procession edict promulgated two months before the censor's approbation.

3. The Anatomy of a Conflict: The Procession Edict of 1674

The edict of August 29, 1674, does not mention confraternities of the Scapular, the Rosary, or the Cord. With reference to the Provincial Councils of Mechelen of 1570 and 1607 and to the Council of Trent, the archbishop enjoined his clergy and the religious orders to abstain from an overly frequent involvement of the tremendous mystery of the Eucharist in extraordinary, "private" processions (*supplicationes*)—those that took place outside Corpus Christi and its Octave, and that were warranted neither by public necessity nor by acute threats to peace. Its "promiscuous" exposition, either in churches

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Poenitentiae Juncta Piorum Supplicatione Ad Clementem X. Pontificem Maximum Per Franciscum Simonis S.T.L (Mainz: Typis Ludovici Bourgeat, 1673).

24 Facts on the quick expansion of the Jesuit order, with roughly 40 houses in the 1640s, are given in Alfred Poncelet, *Histoire de la compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas: Établissement de la Compagnie de Jésus en Belgique et ses développements jusqu'à la fin du règne d'Albert et d'Isabelle*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1927–1928). For a comparative approach, see John Donnelly, "Padua, Louvain, and Paris: Three Case Studies of University-Jesuit Confrontation (1591–1596)," *Louvain Studies* 15 (1990): 38–52. Basic facts are given in Toon Quaghebeur, "L'écho européen du conflit entre les jésuites et l'Université de Louvain, 1586–1686," in *Gesuiti e università in Europa (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Bologna: CLUEB 2002), 145–150.

25 Cf. Bruno Boute, *Academic Interests and Catholic Confessionalisation: The Louvain Privileges of Nomination to Ecclesiastical Benefices* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), passim.

26 On the Marial Cult in the Low Countries, see Annick Delfosse, *La "Protectrice du Païs-Bas": Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009).

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or when translated in processions together with images of the Virgin, the Saints, or their relics, would only distract the flock from reverence due only to God (as He became flesh in the sacrament).[27] The measure mirrors the intensified exaltation of the consecrated host in churches and in processions that restored relations with the Divine in the face of heresy, and that advertised Catholic militancy against Reformations denying Christ's real presence in the "Sacrament of Miracle." The rekindled cult of the Eucharist, with rites of salutations and blessings, prayers in the context of the Forty Hours' devotion, and the exposition of the consecrated host, was a pivotal tool in the sacramental offensive launched by Catholics after the Council of Trent.[28]

Regional and local incentives in the last decades of the seventeenth century may have added to this sacramental fervor.[29] After several decades in which crypto-Protestantism had been largely marginalized in the South's towns and cities, the garrisoning of heretic soldiery by the Dutch Republic to shore up the once mighty *Ejército de Flandes* against French expansionism did not go unnoticed.[30] Processions were also a means to implore divine mercy, as God had tested (or punished) His obstinate people on Catholicism's frontier in many ways. After the brief respite of the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659), nearly continuous warfare was taking its toll, both demographically and in the sluggish rural economy, with large swathes of the Habsburg state in the Low Countries being permanently or temporarily lost to the Sun King. French culture, lifestyle, and fashion of the *Grand Siècle* achieved what French arms could not, resulting, alongside mercantilist restraints on the South's exports dictated by international politics, in the demand-driven demise of traditional luxury industries and other strongholds of the South's economic resilience during its protracted "Indian Summer" in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the midst of economic transformations that, by the 1670s, must already have been deeply felt in towns and cities,[31] urban elites that had embraced a revanchist, highly ideologized Catholicism and that had bet on Spanish might to recover their primacy over the North grew somewhat restless towards a composite *Monarquía* struggling

27 Pierre-François Xavier De Ram, *Synodicon Belgicum sive acta omnium ecclesiarum Belgii a celebrato concilio Tridentino usque ad concordatum anni 1801*, vol. 2 (Liège: Centre national de recherche d'histoire religieuse, 1996), 369–370.

28 Alexis Meunier, "Nécessités publiques ou dévotions des peuples: les polémiques autour de l'exposition fréquente du Saint Sacrement," in *Les cérémonies extraordinaires du Catholicisme baroque*, ed. Bernard Dompnier (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2009), 63–78.

29 On Catholic militancy in the Low Countries during and after the Dutch Revolt, see Judith Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520–1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

30 "Col pretesto d'una retta intentione sperava egli scusarsi, allegando essere stato necessario l'insistere nel culto de santi, quando per la vicinanza delle truppe Hollandesi il Paese era pieno di Calvinisti." Tanara commenting on the arguments of a friar who had attacked the archbishop in his preaching to Card. Barberini, secretary of the Holy Office, Dec. 21, 1675, ACDF, SO St.St. M-4-a, Nr. 3, fol. 510r–511r.

31 Cf. Bruno Blondé and Ilja Van Damme, "Retail Growth and Consumer Changes in a Declining Urban Economy: Antwerp (1650–1750)," *The Economic History Review* 63 (2010): 638–663.

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to retain its great power status in the North Sea area, not to mention its failure to grant them direct access to colonial trade.[32] Towards the broader public, the absence of "princes of the blood" from the Court of Brussels after Juan José de Austria (1656–1659) and the quick succession of Spanish grandees as governors-general must have raised the impression of a diminished stock put by the *Monarquía* in its Burgundian lands. The last outbreak of the plague in the 1660s had left the populations of the Low Countries scarred in their most remote areas, with the next excess mortality peak, from dysentery, occurring as early as 1675–1676.[33]

However, in an apologetic pastoral instruction of February 1, 1675, Archbishop van Bergen diligently pointed out that similar religious practices of disaster management were likely to become harmful when applied too freely and without immediate (public) cause—to the extent that he himself one day would be held accountable before the Supreme Judge for the resulting loss of souls. Interlaced with references to a vengeful Old Testament God, the First Commandment, and Israel's obstinate idolatry, this pastoral instruction mobilized a host of synodal decrees concerning the frequent exposition of the Sacrament in churches as well as its "frivolous" translation in processions. While some of them dated back to the fifteenth century and hailed from the Germanies, it also listed decrees of the Council of Trent, instructions of the iconic Saint Carlo Borromeo (*1538, in office as archbishop of Milan 1564–1584), and decrees of the Mechelen Provincial Councils (1570, 1584, 1607), before delving into numerous precedents involving the respective competences of the chapter of Saint Gudula in Brussels and his predecessors to license requests for processions with images of saints or the Virgin and those venting the *Venerabile*. Van Bergen's second concern—the irreverent mixture of images of the Saints, the Virgin, relics, and the Body of Christ in processions or supplications—equally listed, alongside the obligatory reference to the Milanese textbook, relevant synodal decrees and episcopal ordinations in Belgian and French dioceses, followed by a reference to Jean-Baptiste Thiers' *Traité de l'exposition du Saint-Sacrement* published in Paris in 1673.[34] Interestingly, there is the association of reverence for the Sacrament and of the performative power of the host itself with the rarity of its physical appearance, as observed by Alexis Meunier for France.[35] In this respect, van Bergen's pastoral instruction canvasses some commonplaces from the contemporary controversies over

32 Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806* (New York: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1995), 410–420.

33 In contrast, subsistence crises were rare and mild in the Low Countries. See the survey in Daniel Curtis, "Was Plague an Exclusively Urban Phenomenon? Plague Mortality in the Seventeenth Century Low Countries," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47 (2016): 139–170.

34 Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traité De L'Exposition Du St. Sacrement De l'Avtel Par M. Iean Baptiste Thiers, Bachelier en Theologie de la Faculté de Paris, & Curé de Chamrond* (Paris: chez Jean Dupuis, 1673).

35 Meunier, "Nécessités publiques ou "dévotions des peuples."

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frequent confession and communion raging in both France and the Habsburg Netherlands, pitting a (Jansenist or rigorist)[36] sacramental cycle of piety exalting sacramental *austerity* against a cycle of devotional piety advocated by the Jesuits, who saw *frequent* sacramental practice not as a quintessential culmination point of Christian perfection but rather as an *incentive* (among other devotional practices) for the wandering soul towards it.[37]

Van Bergen's pastoral instruction of 1675 reacted to conflicts on the ground from quarters that, initially, did not belong to clerical milieus: notably, the Brussels corporations and elites who insisted on carrying both the Venerable Sacrament and a statue of Brussels' heavenly patron, the Archangel Michael, in the yearly *Ommegang* that coincided with the Brussels Fair and the renewal of the magistrate. Their request was rebuffed, on van Bergen's instructions, by the collegiate chapter of Saint Gudula, which ruled that the annual procession had to take place with the *Venerabile*, but without the statue of "Saint" Michael. According to reports of the Internuncio of Flanders to Rome, the Brussels magistrate and corporations had protested with their feet on the sacred event organized on September 29, 1674, and appealed to Don Juan Domingo de Zuñiga y Fonseca, Count of Monterrey and Fuentes, Governor General of the Habsburg Netherlands (1670–1675). The latter obtained an indult, conspicuously dated August 29, 1674, from the Roman Congregation of Rites granting the chapter of Saint Gudula permission to organize, on Corpus Christi and its Octave, the feast of the Sacrament of Miracle, as well as to multiply the expositions of the Holy Sacrament the archbishop had sought to restrain with his edict. Armed with this indult, Monterrey scolded the archbishop for introducing "novelties" and pressured the canons into assenting to the request of the Brussels elites.[38]

All this contributed to the unfolding of a theater of pastoral civil war on quite recognizable lines that feature early modern Catholicisms as communities of (loosely regulated) conflict. The historian of Jansenism in the Low Countries Lucien Ceyssens (1903–2001) has described this episode in great detail through the lens of church–state relations. This is an account of Brussels statesmen, the *Consejo de Flandes y Borgoña*, and other gremia of the Spanish composite "Council Monarchy" adopting a broadly regalist stance. It stages the internuncios of Flanders, Ottavio Falconieri (1673–1674), Claudio Agretti (ad interim 1674–1675), and Sebastiano Antonio Tanara (1675–1687), observing with horror how the liberties of the Church were trampled upon. It depicts

36 Until the 1690s, "rigorist" remained a local and negatively connotated label (Dutch: *hoog-ghesinden*, "the high-minded") in polemics in the Low Countries. Jean-Louis Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 16.

37 Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques," 200–201.

38 Lucien Ceyssens, "La citation à Rome d'Alphonse de Berghes, archevêque de Malines (1679–1680)," in *Jansenistica: Studiën in verband met de Geschiedenis van het Jansenisme 2*, ed. idem (Mechelen: St Franciscus-Drukkerij 1953), 141 sqq.

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the retaliation from a besieged archbishop refusing to ordain or license as confessors or preachers members of the defiant Mendicant orders who, with reference to their exemption from diocesan jurisdiction, could rely on support from Brussels and Madrid statesmen, Tanara's habitual siding with the religious orders, and Roman brinkmanship. This is a story of brutal *Realpolitik* exposing the rawness of anti-Jansenist agitation against its own demons,[39] premised as Ceyssens' approach is on the (early modern) claim that anti-Jansenism preceded Jansenism, a mere phantom of politics hampering the interests of "true religion."[40]

For the purposes of this chapter, qualifications are in order. The files preserved in the archives of the Holy Office furnish both a workable chronology in this holy mess and a vantage point from which to observe the involvement of the Roman Curia as well as the religious orders, by—among others—an assembly of provincial superiors of mendicant orders and Jesuits at Louvain. The burning question of the corporality and hence materiality of the Archangel Michael provided a suitable gateway to the highest Tribunal of the Faith in February 1675 to obtain a verdict on whether or not an Archangel was merely a spirit and therefore could not be represented (or materialize) in images. For this year, reports of theological experts, deliberations, decrees, correspondence of the Brussels internuncio, and other materials concerned this question as well as the urgent need to rein in scandal-mongering clergy via the monitoring of overly vocal pulpits and buzzing printing offices.[41] The other materials date from 1679, when the Holy Office briefly resumed reviewing supplications submitted by the archbishop, the Augustinians, and the Carmelites related to the licensing of individual processions and expositions, and from 1682, when a frustrated archbishop denounced infringements against a papal brief of 1682 that was meant to settle the matter.[42]

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39 Cf. the assessment of Ceyssens' work in Jared Wicks, "Doctrine and Theology," in *Catholicism in Early Modern History 1500–1700: A Guide to Research*, ed. John W. O'Malley (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 227–251, specifically 244.

40 Lucien Ceyssens, "Que penser finalement de l'histoire du Jansénisme et de l'antijansénisme?," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 88 (1993): 108–130. An assessment appears in Boute, Badea, Cavarzere, and Vanden Broecke, "A Product's Glamour," 11.

41 Cf. the sermon (originally in Dutch and held in Mechelen) titled *Clypeus Sanctorum* and the pamphlet published in response: Anonymous, *T'Ontstelt Ghemoedt In Rust Ghestelt, Over de Verschillen op-gheresen ter occasie van het Decreet der Hooghw.sten Heere den Aerts-Bisschop van Mechelen, gegeven den 29. Augusti M.DC.LXXIV* (s.l.: s.n., 1675). In ACDF, SO St.St. M-4-a Nr. 3.

42 The letter of supplication in ACDF, SO St.St. M-4-a Nr. 3, fol. 546r. *Notulae ad Decretum Ill[ustrissi]mi D[omi]ni Archie[pisco]pi Mechliniensis. Datum Bruxellis die 29. Augusti 1674. et conclusum 14. Iunij eiusdem anni* (Cologne: apud Guilielmum Friessen, [1682]). The book would be prohibited by the Congregation of the Index at the request of the Holy Office. Cf. Andreea Badea and Thomas Brockman et al. *Repertorium zur Buchzensur: Indexkongregation 1607–1700* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2025, forthcoming).

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Information procured by the secretary of the Congregation of Rites Bernardo Casale to the assessor of the Holy Office Camillo Piazza on rulings concerning the combination of images of the Saints and the Sacrament of Miracle in processions highlights that, even in 1675–1677, other curial bodies had become a venue for the affair: the Congregations of Rites, of the Council (charged with the interpretation of the Council of Trent), and of the Consistory. The new Pope Innocent XI (1676–1689) suspended the decrees of these congregations and sought arbitration from a committee of his trusted secretary Agostino Favoriti[43] and two members of the Louvain "rigorist" deputation of 1677–1679 to the Holy See:[44] the secular cleric Franciscus Van Vianen (1615–1693), generally credited by Mendicants as one of van Bergen's puppet masters, and the Augustinian Christianus Lupus (1612–1681). As both were regents of the Faculty of Divinity, they seemed to bundle the entire spectrum of stakes in the affair, all to no avail, however. In 1679, after the above-mentioned stint of the Holy Office as a mediator, a special congregation of cardinals worked towards the papal brief of May 20, 1682, that was to settle the affair on lines exposing the material dimensions of this conflict.

Interestingly, this papal brief did not contain an authoritative *doctrinal* settlement of whether or not sacred "matter," when exposed (too) frequently in churches and in processions, and in combination with other sacred objects of lesser status (relics, images of saints and the Virgin) endowed with comparable protective and salutary powers, undermined or contrariwise bolstered the religious dispositions of ordinary believers. This assessment squares well with scholarship of the last two decades that has attracted attention to the striking vagueness and strategic ambiguity of Roman governance in European and overseas Catholicisms.[45] Innocent's brief was a highly pragmatic, down-to-earth settlement. It restricted processions advocated by the Mendicants in the public

43 On Favoriti, see Silvano Giordano, "Uomini e dinamiche di Curia durante il pontificato di Innocenzo XI," in *Innocenzo XI Odescalchi: Papa, politico, committente*, ed. Richard Bösel, Antonio Menniti Ippolito, Andrea Spiriti, Claudio Strinati and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome: Viella, 2014), 41–55; and the contributions to the same volume of Jean-Louis Quantin, "La censure romaine et la crise gallicane: les condamnations de livres dans le conflit entre Louis XIV et Innocent XI," 75–112; and Jean-Pascal Gay, "Affinités (s)électives: Innocent XI et Tirso González de Santalla; aspirations réformistes et idéologisation du catholicisme à la fin du XVII^{e} siècle," 113–143.

44 On Roman procedures in the examination of the moral propositions submitted by the Louvain deputation, cf. Jean-Louis Quantin, "Le Saint-Office et le probabilisme (1677–1679): contribution à l'histoire de la théologie morale à l'époque moderne," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome–Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines* 114 (2002): 876–960.

45 Cf. Christian Windler, *Missionaries in Persia: Cultural Diversity and Competing Norms in Global Catholicism*, trans. Pamela E. Selwyn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2024); Birgit Emich, "Uniformity and Polycentricity: The Early Modern Papacy Between Promoting Unity and Handling Diversity," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 33–53; Bruno Boute, "Saving Truth," in *Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 135–164.

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space to two occasions (Corpus Christi and its Octave, and another Sunday to be agreed upon with the archbishop); for all other occasions, processions of this type were to be held *within* the walls of convents and shielded from public view. This settlement was followed by the explicit mention that the brief could by no means be appropriated as a declaration in support of confraternity devotions at Mendicant churches. The same oscillation between hiding and showing powerful sacred matter emerged in the regulations on the exposition of the host within churches: the display of the Body of Christ in the monstrance (or ostensory) was to be restricted to Sundays and a number of holidays, on a single, appropriately ornated altar, with only one blessing following the devotional exercises of worshippers. All other consecrated hosts present were to be withdrawn from their gaze in ciboria during communion or in veiled tabernacles otherwise.[46] The last documents in the Holy Office file, from the summer of 1682, show that this settlement led to a frozen conflict between the archbishop and the religious orders, to be managed amidst mutual recriminations of transgression.

In several ways, the archives of the Carmelites in Rome allow us to connect these issues with other stakes. Firstly, there is the involvement of apotropaic relics and sacred images whose agency unfolded in local ecologies. The Carmelites assembled dozens of notarial acts signed by confraternity members (mainly of the Scapular, but also of the Rosary and the Cord) and of city magistrates across the Low Countries in support of their claim that salutary, old, and traditional religious customs were under threat from the "novelties" introduced in the procession edict.[47] This documentation showcases the agency not only of local sacred matter but also of ordinary believers and elites of the "deep (Habsburg) State" as tenacious defenders of the rich ritual life of the region's towns and cities.[48] Tellingly, the Carmelites had to rely on prepped testimonies to be completed by clergy from the Germanies, Bohemia, France, and the Iberian Peninsula. The incentives and dynamics of conflict in the Low Countries therefore prove to be just as local as they were (being) connected, in line with findings on the other "Jansenist" controversies in France or the Habsburg Netherlands over morality and its primary locus of production, the confessional.[49]

Secondly, the "Jansenisation" of the conflict merits further attention. For Ceyssens, the answer to the question of whether or not van Bergen *was* a Jansenist proved straightforward, considering Ceyssens' premises that Jansenism merely existed in the minds of its detractors and his correspondingly asymmetric, moralizing approach. As a consequence, he fails to capture the specificities of early modern modes of conflict as well as

46 De Ram, *Synodicon Belgicum 2*, 380–381.

47 *Lis cum archiepiscopo Mechliniensi*, Archivio Generale dell'Ordine Carmelitano, Rome (hereafter AGOC), II Flandro-Belgica 1674–1675.

48 Dozens of similar documents from towns and cities in Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, and the Prince-Bishopric of Liège in AGOC, II Flandro-Belgica Commune, box no. 2.

49 Gay, *Morales en conflit*; Boute, "Attritionnisme et contritionnisme."

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their hermeneutic potential. It may be more rewarding to investigate how van Bergen *became* a Jansenist[50] and how the affair at hand came to be associated with Jansenism, as it already had been in the first letters of supplication to the Holy Office in early 1675. By then, viewing the plurality of Catholicisms through this binary lens, with intended mobilizing effects towards the Roman Curia that had condemned Jansenism at several reprisals, had become commonplace. A more austere attitude to processions and other displays of devotion seems indeed to have developed in analogy to a more austere attitude to sacramental practice, both in the communion of the justified in the Eucharist and the locus of justification, confession. At face value, similar measures seem to herald modern, spiritualized, and less material understandings of religion.

From this perspective, Archbishop van Bergen's policy is to be situated in the epistemic, rigoristic-universalist turn in late seventeenth-century Catholicism. In two significant ways, however, this assessment must be revised. In many ways that go beyond analogies in an ideology-driven, rigoristic *Zeitgeist*, the struggle for domination over the confessionals will prove to be deeply entangled with the controversies over the harmful or salutary effects of sacred matter in processions and expositions. Secondly, the concerns informing van Bergen's and his allies' politics are quite remote from the features of the "real" or "superior" religion identified by Protestant, enlightened, or modern scholars, embedded as they were in bodily and material practices that call for symmetrical comparison rather than contrasting with the enchanted devotions advocated by confraternities of the Scapular.

4. Carmelites, the Scapular, and Catholic Puritanism

A second reading of the *Kort Begryp* makes it uncontestably clear that there is more than just an analogy between the desirability (or the harmful effects) of the frequency of sacramental practice and the frequency of displaying (or hiding) sacred matter. While also including indulgences for all Christians attending Carmelite churches on specific holidays, the booklet focused on the requirements to enjoy the three privileges conveyed by the scapular: (1) reception of the scapular from superiors of the order (or their delegates); (2) registering in a confraternity book; and (3) wearing the scapular day and night. Accessing the Sabbatine Privilege required, in addition, (1) fasting on Wednesdays and Saturdays (the days dedicated to the Virgin) on top of the regular fasting prescriptions of the Church; (2) the preservation of purity; and (3) reading litanies of the Holy Virgin included in the book.[51] For the present purposes, however, it is the second

50 Compare Steven Vanden Broecke, "How to be a Catholic Copernican in the Spanish Netherlands," in *Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 85–110.

51 *Kort Begryp*, 67.

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batch of spiritual graces mediated by the scapular that hold the most interest: the plenary indulgences *pro vivis et defunctis* granted to confraternity members of the Scapular upon the performance of specific religious practices on specific holidays. Alongside minor indulgences of a number of years or days in Purgatory, plenary indulgences were granted upon admission to the confraternity, on its principal holiday of July 16 commemorating the donation of the Scapular to St. Simon Stock, and on the Sundays of the confraternity's monthly procession.[52] In tandem with the cult of the Holy Sacrament open to all worshippers visiting the religious houses of the Carmelites, it is these processions that were targeted by the archbishop's edict of 1674.

Because of the relentless critique of Protestant reformations, it should be recalled that in Catholic lore, the gracious agency of indulgences could only be accessed *after* expiation of the eternal offense against God engendered by mortal sin via sacramental absolution. In other words, indulgences commuted the "satisfaction" or punishment that had to be undergone regardless, either on earth via the penance imposed by the confessor, or in Purgatory with respect to those absolved sins that had not yet sufficiently been "satisfied" during life.[53] In the *Kort Begryp*, the first privilege of the scapular promising a Christian death (i. e., after confession, extreme unction, and the viaticum) and corresponding miracle tales subscribed to this notion,[54] as did prescriptions to obtain indulgences on well-defined occasions, which was inextricably linked to previous sacramental confession (and communion).

The Fourth Lateran Council (1214) had decreed that a Christian (in the confessional age, an orthodox Catholic) had to take Holy Communion at least once a year on Easter and as a consequence had to confess previously, during Lent.[55] Mass attendance did

52 *Kort Begryp*, 54.

53 Cf. Elisabeth C. Tingle, *Indulgences after Luther: Pardons in Counter-Reformation France, 1520–1720* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Charles Caspers, "Indulgences in the Low Countries c.1300–c.1520," in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Robert Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 65–100; documentary evidence in Philippe Desmette, *Les brefs d'indulgence pour les confréries des diocèses de Cambrai et de Tournai aux XVII^e^ et XVIII^e^ siècles (A.S.V., Sec. Brev., Indulg. Perpetuae, 2-9)* (Rome: Institut historique belge de Rome, 2002).

54 *Kort Begryp*, 17.

55 Cf. Cathérine Vincent, "La pastorale de la pénitence du IVe concile du Latran: relecture des canons 21, 60 et 62," in *The Fourth Lateran Council: Institutional Reform and Spiritual Renewal: Proceedings of the Conference Marking the Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Council, organized by the Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche (Rome, Oct. 15–17, 2015)*, ed. Gert Melville and Johannes Helmrath (Affalterbach: Didymos, 2017), 143–162. On penance in late antiquity and the emergence of auricular confession as a centerpiece of Latin shaming practices, see Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe 600–1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). A particularly inspiring collection of essays appears in Bénédicte Sère and Jörg Wettlaufer, eds., *Shame between Punishment and Penance: The Social Usages of Shame in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times – La honte entre peine et pénitence: Les usages de la honte au Moyen Âge et au début de l'Époque moderne* (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2013).

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not necessarily imply taking the sacraments: quite to the contrary, in ordinary circumstances, confession and communion were largely restricted to specific religious feast days and time intervals in the liturgical calendar (the Advent being one of them, alongside Lent and Easter). Quite a few faithful saw their religious needs (or obligations) sufficiently fulfilled by the Easter prescription. As sinfulness, heresy, and divine mercy were a collective concern (in the face of a vengeful God chastising Israel with collective ordeals), confession was a public liturgical act, a controllable benchmark of confessional allegiance, and a guarantor of the *quietud del Estado*[56] that materialized in the open baroque confessionals of the Low Countries: the event was (to be) witnessed by an audience lining up to collectively fulfill its religious duties on Easter, the craft guild's patron saint's day, a confraternity's holiday, etcetera. Only the *sins* whispered to the confessor remained "occult"[57] and sealed by the secrecy of confession, without which liturgical self-humiliation in the confessional would be incompatible with the honor codes grounding early modern conviviality.[58] In recent scholarship, the confessional has been identified as a locus of negotiation between the faithful who had to turn into penitents and the clergy who depended on this transition to unfold the sacramental order of salvation,[59] rather than merely a disciplining tool in a dyadic power relation. As the Eucharist's obligatory passage point and Protestant reformers' red rag, confession, too, was at the forefront of the above-mentioned sacramental offensive in early modern Catholicism. In their attempts to appropriate Catholic renewal, different groupings involved this sacramental ordering in their conflicting, sometimes exclusivist machineries of salvation.

The above-mentioned testimonies from urban magistrates and confraternities, supplications to the Holy Office, and the correspondence of Belgian Carmelites in the Roman archives of the Carmelite Order shed some interesting light on this entanglement of

56 On "confessionalized" confession in Lutheran communities, see David Warren Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1988).

57 The main line of distinction is, indeed, whether the sin/crime was "occult" or provable in a court of law; cf. Jacques Chiffoleau, "Ecclesia de occultis non judicat: L'Église, le secret, l'occulte du XII^{e} au XV^{e} siècle," *Micrologus. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies (Revue de la Société internationale pour l'étude du Moyen Âge latin)* 14 (2006): 359–481.

58 Women were more inclined to submit themselves voluntarily to church discipline to carve out a female "honor code" in a male society; Herman Roodenburg, *Onder Censuur. De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578–1700* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1990). Interesting takes from other sources on the practice of confession in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Low Countries appear in Elwin Hofman, "A Wholesome Cure for the Wounded Soul: Confession, Emotions and Self in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Catholicism," *Journal of Religious History* 42 (2016): 222–241.

59 Cf. David W. Myers, *Poor Sinning Folk: Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Patrick J. O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2012).

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diverse religious practices, powerful objects, and human agents into a cyclical technology of salvation. The dozens of notarial instruments authenticating the declarations of town elites or local confraternities of the Cord, of the Rosary, and of the Scapular stressed the salutary nature of ancient religious customs and/or the scandal that arose (or would arise) from implementation of the archbishop's decree. This category of sources often failed to mention the sacramental dimension explicitly. In contrast, the prepped testimonies sent by the Belgian Carmelites to be certified by regular or secular clergy across the continent spotlighted the principal aim "that the confraternities dedicated to several saints and specifically to the Virgin aim to stimulate the populace to confess and to take Holy Communion, and [to undertake] other pious exercises."[60] While ordinary believers tended to generalize the benefits for the faith and the commonwealth derived from allegedly age-old processions (and exhibitions of the Consecrated Host) in a public, sacred topography, Belgian Carmelites saw confraternities attached to their houses of worship primarily as vehicles to lure members into the confessional and into the thus unfolding sacramental ordering of salvation. The extensive correspondence of Friar Michael of Saint Augustine, the author of mystical and devotional books propagating "Carmelite perfection" to believers of all states and conditions,[61] with the guardian of the Roman convent Seraphin de Jésus-Marie in the Archives of the Roman Carmel consistently connects the agency of the scapular, devotional practices in confraternities, and the salutary agency of frequent sacramental practice in the wake of the polemics arising from the *Monita Salutaria* starting in 1673.[62]

From all this, it can be inferred that the devotion of the scapular had been contested well *before* the archbishop issued his edict dismantling processions and exhibitions that proved quintessential in the assemblage of its protective and redemptive powers. Further research should establish whether there were connections with the actions undertaken by the Holy Office and local inquisitors against confraternities of the "Slaves of Mary" in Italy and the confiscation of related prints and objects (notably the "chains of Mary") in the 1660s, followed by continued repression from the Roman Inquisition throughout the 1670s, a suppression brief on December 15, 1673, of Pope Clement X,[63] and echoes

60 "Tertio institutae sunt variae confraternitates sub titulo diversorum sanctorum, et notanter B Virginis sub variis titulis pro exstimulando populo ad frequentiam sacrae poenitentiae et sacrae eucharistiae, aliaque pietatis exercitia." AGOC, II Flandro-Belgica Commune 4 Fasc. 3 1675.

61 E. g., Michael a S. Augustino, *Institutionum mysticarum libri quatuor, quibus anima ad apicem perfectionis, & ad praxim mysticae unionis per gradus deducitur* (Antwerp: typis Marcelli Parys, 1671).

62 "Si et ille [Monita Salutaria] sic toleretur […] refrigescet totaliter cultus Divae Virginis, confraternitates facescent, frequentationes sacramentorum et alia pia exercitia tollentur, ornatus templorum et sacrarum imaginum minuetur, indulgentiae spernentur, devotio erga Immaculatam Conceptionem evanescet etc., quia contra ista omnia iste libellus spargit semi na, […]." Michael of Saint Augustine OCarm to Séraphin de Jésus-Marie OCarm, Dec. 8, 1673, edited in Ceyssens, *Sources […] 1673–1676*, 96–99.

63 Documents in ACDF, SO St.St. O-3-e; see also Bruno Boute and Gian Luca D'Errico et al., *Systematisches Repertorium zur Buchzensur 1542–1700: Inquisition* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2020), 417–428.

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in Goa and the *Estado da India* in the early 1680s. These measures, which would briefly intersect with polemics involving the scapular by the end of the 1670s,[64] may possibly account for the low profile of the Roman Carmelites in the affair of the procession edict, at least from the perspective of the frustrated Michael of Saint Augustine. In order to focus their minds, he added tales of Reformed ministers accompanying Dutch troops lauding the archbishop's edict as a move towards their heretical creed. Another discursive strategy introduced a causal relationship between the renewed presence of heretics on its soil, Jansenism, and disasters visiting war-torn Belgium by way of divine punishment. From his letters emerges a political machine of Jansenists governing bishops and the parish clergy, via diocesan administrations manned by Louvainists who curtailed the friars' role as stormtroopers against heterodoxy by withdrawing their licenses to preach or to hear confessions.[65]

The reference to the university of Louvain and its old boy networks throwing around their weight adds additional hints about the stakes and concerns emerging in the entangled affair of the procession edict. In 1673, one year before its promulgation, the Louvain Divine (and ally of Van Vianen) Gommarus Huygens had published his *Methodus remittendi ac retinendi peccata* (Method to absolve or retain sins), in which the refusal and deferral of absolution in sacramental confession was operationalized into a feasible method that would significantly modify negotiations between penitent and confessor.[66] This became a pivotal moment in an arena of conflict that had profoundly changed since the end of the sixteenth century, when Douai parish rectors had battled with local Jesuits over the Jesuits' claims to hear confessions, and Louvain Divines had successfully countered integration of the Jesuits into the faculties of Theology and Arts because, in the words of one powerful don, they "suppressed the vindicative power of penance."[67] In France and the Low Countries, the decades between 1640 and 1660 had seen a merger of anti-Jesuitism (and lingering Catholic anti-monasticism), anti-probabilism, and an increasingly sustained assault on the casuistic method in moral

64 Anonymous, *Decret Dv Saint Office De Rome, Qui condamne & abolit comme un abus toutes les confrairies ou societez de l'Esclauage de la Mere de Dieu, Scapulaires des Carmes, & autres Cordons, Ceintures, &c. Et défend sous de griéues peines l'usage des Chaînes, Images, & Medailles qui portent les marques de l'Esclauage en tous les lieux qui loüent ou approuvent ces devotions* (Rome: De l'Imprimerie de la Reverendissimie Chambre Apostolique, 1678), ACDF, SO St.St. O-3-e, Nr. 3 [i], 638r. The apocryphal decree was proscribed by the Holy Office.

65 Among others, see Michael of Saint Augustine OCarm to Cardinal Bona, Oct. 20, 1674, edited in Ceyssens, *Sources 1773–1676*, 242–248.

66 Gommarus Huygens, *Methodus remittendi & retinendi peccata. […] Authore Gummaro Huygens Lyrano s.t.d. in Academia Lovaniensi. Editio secunda planior & tertio tractatu auctior* (Louvain: typis Hieronymi Nempaei, 1674).

67 On the *Controversia Duacensis*, see Poncelet, *Histoire de la compagnie de Jésus*. See also Boute, *Academic Interests*, passim and specifically 484.

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theology that had become mainstream after Trent.[68] Tellingly, the Carmelite files in Rome also list the *Errors that Flourish in Belgium, and Notably at the University of Louvain, From where They Spread to other Cities and Localities in Belgium*. These were submitted to the pope on Easter 1677 (upon the arrival of the rigorist deputation to Innocent XI), with synthesized testimonies from church officials decrying the odious rigor applied in the administration of the sacrament of penance, among others, via the refusal of absolution to penitents deemed unworthy.[69]

The "benign method" in the confessional propagated by many casuists (and identified primarily with the Jesuits) should be considered on par with the *modo soave* as a "Jesuit" missionary theory and practice in Asia, for several reasons. These increasingly came under scrutiny starting in the 1640s as well; in the eighteenth century, it would receive its better-known label of (illicit) accommodation, and related intra-Catholic rifts would henceforth be synthesized under the denominator of the Chinese and Malabar Rites Controversy,[70] which scholars have recently linked to missionary conflicts in the Americas[71] and in Catholic missions to Middle Eastern Christianities.[72] Obviously, the stress on the antiquity of religious customs and their salutary agency among the flock also carried a call to accommodate them, as well as branding the archbishop and his counselors as "novatores." The epistemic practice to differentiate between a religious and a non-religious (e. g., political or social) domain[73] also pops up in the connected controversies in the 1660s over whether or not Mass attendance in the parish, especially at Easter, was a "venerable custom" or a "matter of honesty" (the view of Mendicants),

68 On probabilism, which sought to functionalize uncertain yet probable (expert) opinions in casuistry, in moral counseling, and in the administration of the sacrament of penance in order to respond to rapidly diversifying circumstances, see Tutino, *Uncertainty in Post-Reformation Catholicism*. On the *histoire croisée* in a "Franco-Belgian" arena of doctrinal conflict, cf. Boute, "Attritionnisme et Contritionnisme."

69 *Errores qui passim grassantur in Belgio, et praesertim in academia Lovaniensi, ex qua derivant ad alias civitates et loca Belgii*, AGOC, II Flandro-Belgica Commune 4 Fasc. 4 1676–1677.

70 Christian Windler, "Early Modern Composite Catholicism from a Global Perspective: Catholic Missionaries and the English East India Company," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 55–85, specifically 59; Županov, "Religious Accommodation," 133. See also Markus Friedrich, "Accommodation: A Twentieth-Century Theological Idea and its Role in the Historiography of Catholic Missions," *History of the Interaction of Religious Cultures* 1 (2024): 146–170, on the use of the concept (absent from Jesuit sources of the seventeenth century) in modern scholarship to capture missionary practices applied by all religious orders.

71 Ines G. Županov and Pierre-Antoine Fabre, eds., *Rites Controversies in the Early Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

72 Cesare Santus, "L'adoration de Naamann: Pour une histoire croisée des querelles des rites," *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 116 (2021): 804–830; Windler, *Missionaries in Persia*, 19, 164.

73 Cf. Eugenio Menegon, "European and Chinese Controversies over Rituals: A Seventeenth-Century Genealogy of Chinese Religion," in *Devising Order: Socioreligious Models, Rituals, and the Performativity of Practice*, ed. Bruno Boute and Thomas Småberg (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 193–222.

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or an ecclesiastical or divine precept that carried serious consequences for the soul's salvation—the view nurtured by large sections of the South's parish clergy and diocesan administrations seeking to turn the parish into the center of religious life.[74]

Closer to the Carmelites' sacramental stakes in Europe, "rigorists" targeted the leanings of ("Jesuit," "laxist") casuistry towards incorporating diversity and the particular in the sacramental method in a much similar way as a general epistemic and cultural shift towards rigoristic universalism targeted the comparably tailored "Jesuit" missionary practices overseas in the Chinese and Malabar Rites Controversy. With respect to the Franco-Belgian area, it is helpful to bypass polemical ascriptions such as rigorism or Jansenism and instead use the concept of Catholic Puritanism to localize this highly fluid phenomenon. In order to avoid the centralizing effects of early modern inquisitorial and modern scholarly practices, it is rewarding not to ontologize Catholic Puritanism into a religious *movement*.[75] Building on Morgan's definition of religion, it should rather be understood, from an analytical point of view, as an a priori indefinable, borderless (and coreless), shifting web or flux of people, thought collectives,[76] practices, objects, and modes of transfer and publicity, in an evolving public sphere.[77] Apart from a transversal moral rigorism,[78] there is little risk in confounding Catholic Puritanism with Protestant counterparts. It was eminently Catholic because it was grounded in sacramental piety as well as in the exaltation of sacerdotal authority and hierarchy. Puritanism refers to the

74 Boute, "Attritionnisme et Contritionnisme." Spats along similar lines erupted in the Dutch Republic and in Ireland between secular clergy largely trained at Louvain colleges and Jesuit (or Mendicant) missionaries. Cf. Thomas O'Connor, *Irish Jansenists 1600–70: Religion and Politics in Flanders, France, Ireland and Rome* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008).

75 On the pitfalls of "movement" in scholarly accounts of religious change, read Katharina Ulrike Mersch, "Konfessionelles vor der Konfessionalisierung? Religiöse Vielfalt im spätmittelalterlichen West- und Mitteleuropa," in *Konfessionen auf dem Prüfstand*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2025, forthcoming); see also the scholarly debates over Robert Ian Moore's *Formation of a Persecuting Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987), surveyed, among others, in Deborah Shulevitz, "Historiography of Heresy: The Debate over 'Catharism' in Medieval Languedoc," *History Compass* 17 (2019): https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12513 (last accessed Jan. 25, 2025); and Peter Biller, "Goodbye to Catharism?" in *Cathars in Question*, ed. Antonio Sennis (York: York Medieval Press, 2016), 274–313. On quite similar inquisitorial practices modeling phenomena into a centralized "movement" in Palermo, read Marilena Modica, *Infetta dottrina: Inquisizione e Quietismo nel Seicento* (Rome: Viella, 2009), 138.

76 For a definition, see Andreea Badea, "Roman Censorship and the Shaping of Catholic Thought Collectives," in *Current Trends in the Historiography of Inquisitions: Themes and Comparisons*, ed. Irene Bueno, Vincenzo Lavenia, and Riccardo Parmeggiani (Rome: Viella, 2023), 347–363.

77 On the transformation of a religious public sphere as a eucharistic communion into a political space as an amalgamation of opinions, see Jean-Pascal Gay, "Ideologisation, Publicity, Politicisation, and the Regimes of Ecclesiality in Early Modern Catholicism," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 261–280, specifically 274.

78 Cf. the transconfessional approach in Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien*.

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aim to return to a purer Catholicism that could be retrieved in a paleo-Christian past; in the eighteenth century, radicalized instances took the shape of a counter-Church.[79]

For the purposes of this chapter, Catholic Puritanism fed into a prolific ecclesiastical erudition that did not fail to point out the alleged rigidity of paleo-Christian penance untainted by Jesuits or Mendicants.[80] The Ghent network around the diocesan censor Ignace Gillemans that had been involved in the circulation of the *Monita Salutaria* was also responsible for a re-edition of the *canones poenitentiales*, the medieval "tariff books" for the satisfaction of sins unearthed by Borromeo,[81] highlighting, in the eyes of milieus exalting the Milanese archbishop as their champion *avant la lettre*, the severity of tradition against deviations of contemporary "laxism."[82] In the Low Countries, Jean-Louis Quantin's "Promised Land of Rigorism,"[83] Catholic Puritanism was intertwined with contritionism, the view that in order to qualify for sacramental absolution, Christian atonement should transcend the fear of (eternal or temporal) punishment (the lower bar set by "attritionism") and include love for God and His Divine Justice ("dilectio, amor poenitens, amor beatificus, delectatio victrix"). It was on these premises or *Hypotheses* that Huygens had built in his *Methodus*. In this and other works, he developed and operationalized the epistemic possibility (as well as the pastoral necessity) of objectively ascertaining whether or not a penitent was contrite.[84] This "method of moral certainty," as it was labeled on Roman censorial desks,[85] was developed in tandem with the practice of (methodical) denial and deferral of sacramental absolution evolving more or less simultaneously into a marker of Catholic Puritanism in France and the Low Countries. On the penitent's side, alongside postponing confession out of (observable) scruples to accede to the tribunal of conscience prematurely (and to risk turning the sacrament into a sacrilegious mockery), fasting was encouraged as a practice of penance to be performed, in line with paleo-Christian models of (public) penance, *prior to* absolution,

79 De Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques," 204.

80 A scholarly analysis is given in Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*. In the context of the 1670s and 1680s, compare the Ghent edition of Giovanni Bona; Joannes Gropperus, *Praxis Poenitentialis Ecclesiae Primitivae compendiosè descripta Per Eminent[issimos] DD. Joannem Bona & Joannem Gropperum S.R.E. Cardinales In usum Confessariorum ac Poenitentium* (Ghent: Typis Francisci d'Ercle, 1673).

81 Carolus Borromeus; Ignatius Gillemans, *Canones Poenitentiales à Sancto Carolo Borromaeo Ex antiquis Poenitentialibus Collecti. Quibus praemittitur compendiosa Deductio in cognitionem originis, vigoris, & declinationis dictorum Canonum* (Ghent: Typis Francisci D'Ercle, 1672).

82 On the construed nature of Laxism, see Gay, *Morales en conflit*.

83 Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien*.

84 Gommarus Huygens (Praes.); Theodorus Witsenburgh (Resp.), *Theses Theologicae De Certitudine Morali quam habere debet Confessarius de dispositione Poenitentis, ut eum sepositâ iustâ necessitate licite absolvat […] Quas Praeside Eximio Viro Domino Ac Magistro Nostro Gummaro Huygens Lyrano Defendet Theodorus Witsenburgh Goudanus In Collegio Adriani VI. Pontificis 2. Martii 1685. horâ 5. post meridiem* (Louvain: Typis Guilielmi Stryckwant sub aurea Lampade, 1685).

85 Censorship report by Domenico Maria Pozzobonelli OP, ACDF, SO St.St. O-3-a Nr. 3 230r/v and 234r.

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rather than an (honorable) act in honor of the Virgin that would give access to the Sabbatine Privilege. Thus, it could become a controllable parameter of contrition for confessors of the "method of moral certainty," in sharp contrast to other bodily, cultural, and biological universals of shame (weeping and blushing) favored as a token of sufficient attrition by confessors of the benign method in Europe and overseas.[86] Again, the figure of Borromeo proved to be a highly versatile champion of contritionism one century after his death.[87] From Rome, Franciscus Van Vianen—a member of the rigorist deputation to Innocent XI generously (dis)credited by the Carmelites as the procession edict's evil mastermind—was engineering a reform of confession on "Borromean" lines as the only way out of the (equally engineered?) deadlock between the archbishop and the Mendicants.[88]

Yet the different modes of existence and the centrality of "Catholic Puritanism" and its dialectic Carmelite, Mendicant, or Jesuit counterparts can only be captured through the connected and localist lens applied by recent historians to missionary Catholicisms.[89] Scholarly assessments of the so-called "rigoristic turn" of late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Catholicism as rather muddled become more elucidating if one considers that rigoristic universalism was actually eminently (g)local. The web of practices, doctrinal programs, and human and non-human agencies described in the previous paragraph could locally take the form of a religious movement ("the faction") and stage a geographical or spiritual center (Ghent, Louvain), with "leaders" (Jansenius, Huygens, and Van Vianen) and "followers" in polemical writings emerging in connected pastoral civil wars "spreading" across the Habsburg State in the Low Countries.[90] In line with Gay's findings for France,[91] these conflicts were recurrently plugged into other bones of contention but remained—considering the agency and discourse of confraternity members, Brussels corporations, and town elites—grounded in their eminently local stakes on both sides of the polemical spectrum. In the affair of the procession

86 On the perks of attritionism when christening Indigenous shame practices, see Osvaldo F. Pardo, *The Origins of Mexican Catholicism: Nahua Rituals and Christian Sacraments in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

87 On confession in Borromean Milan, see Wietse De Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: Confession, Discipline, and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

88 Franciscus Van Vianen to his Louvain colleague Henricus Scaille, Apr. 15, 1679, edited in Ceyssens, *Sources […] 1673–1676*, 412–413, among others.

89 Cf. Nadine Amsler, Andreea Badea, Bernard Heyberger, and Christian Windler, eds., *Catholic Missionaries in Early Modern Asia: Patterns of Localization* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); Eugenio Menegon, "Local Religion in the Early Modern Period: Chinese Christianity as a Case Study," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 211–235.

90 On conflict as a hermeneutical category on top of a heuristic treasure trove, see Boute, *Academic Interests*; Tutino, *Uncertainty in Post-Reformation Catholicism*.

91 Gay, *Morales en conflit*, 490.

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edict, at stake were, among other things, the local powers of relics or sacred images, the concern about occupying the local public space, and the aim of shaping a hegemonic sacred topography. These interests were somewhat hidden by the synoptic, sacramental view "from nowhere" developed by Carmelites in their questionnaires, or conversely by rigoristic assaults against a generalized, sacrilegious "laxism." However, Huygens' *Methodus* aimed to localize contrition in order for the sacrament to take place. His apology in the *Theses de certitudine morali* testified to equally tailored, accommodating practices generating trust and sacerdotal authority towards reluctant penitents.[92]

Drawing on Certeau's identification of a sacramental vs. a devotional polarization in French Catholicism,[93] the affair of the procession edict fields two different, at face value mutually exclusive, roadmaps or technologies of salvation. Because of Man's inevitable relapse into sin, the timelines of these technologies of salvation are to be understood cyclically:[94] a *devotional* cycle of salvation, in which frequent confession (facilitated by indulgences commuting shameful medieval penance tariffs into honorable confraternity devotions) and communion were practically treated on par with other techniques of self-improvement (such as fasting in honor of the Virgin),[95] and a *sacramental* cycle of salvation in which any devotional practice was embedded in a bumpy pathway of semipublic penance (e. g., penitential fasting) towards a sacramental culmination of Christian perfection. Ubiquitous references to precedent, ancient custom, or antiquity from both sides of the polemical spectrum, as well as attempts to put pastoral technologies into practice (also by marginalizing competing technologies of salvation via the procession edict), points to the need to put these cycles to work locally in order to foster credibility, i. e., to bring them into a mode of existence that showcased the reality of the model (rather than a model of reality). These findings also underscore the corresponding methodological imperative for historians to localize related religious forms and formations. Drawing on the cycle of credibility used by anthropologists to understand the dynamics of the industrialized production of truth in the laboratories of modern Big Science,[96] these technologies of salvation can be localized in transferable (but quite less accumulative and more "restorative") cycles of credibility consisting of

92 Compare Županov's assessment that accommodation was practiced by all sides, Županov, "Religious Accommodation," 133.

93 De Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques."

94 On the coexistence of linear and cyclical times, see Alexandra Walsham, "Generations: Age, Ancestry, and Memory in the English Reformations," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 305–332.

95 On shame as both a biologic and cultural universal between sin and crime, see the various contributions to Sère and Wettlaufer, *Shame between Punishment and Penance*.

96 For conceptual and methodological backgrounds, cf. Bruno Latour and Steven Woolgar, "The Cycle of Credibility," in *Science in Context: Readings in the Sociology of Science*, ed. Barry Barnes and David Edge (Boston: MIT Press, 1982), 35–43.

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sin, absolution, and reconciliation with an offended God that should, or should not, be catalyzed by little pieces of cloth pressing the yoke of Christ onto early modern bodies.

5. From Bodily Practices to Emotional Things: Materializing Catholic Puritanism

In 1698, a booklet rolled from the printing presses with the title *Arglisten der Ketters* (Craftiness of the heretics).[97] True to its mission, it equipped the faithful with tools to identify false prophets who, as "wolves in sheep's clothes," went to great lengths to hide their demonic designs and lead the flock astray. The author generously mobilized examples of heretic treachery from late antiquity up to Luther and Calvin, but took aim at contemporary, hidden heretics *within* the folds of the Church who spread their venom by preaching charity, reform of penance, restraint in Marial devotion, and moral severity. In the address, ordinary believers were to undertake some of the responsibility to discern good shepherds from false ones in order to escape eternal damnation. Earlier versions by the Jesuit polemicist Gilles Estrix (1624–1694) had been published in Latin in 1677[98] and in French in 1681,[99] and were respectively destined for Roman curialists (against the Louvain rigorist deputation) and for French bishops (against an anti-Jesuit interpretation of the Roman condemnation of sixty-five "laxist" propositions). This chronology, and Jesuit involvement, warrant comparison with the incremental politicization of religious life in France and the corresponding transformation of a eucharistic common space into a political public space as an amalgamation of opinions.[100]

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97 Franciscus Simon <Pseud.> [Gilles Estrix], *Arglisten Oft Bedriegeryen Der Ketters, In Dry Deelen Voor-Ghestelt aen alle Recht-ghelovighe Seer nuttighe Verhandelingh voor dese tyden. Eerste Deel [-Derde Deel] […] In't Latyn beschreven, door Franciscus Simonis Licentiaet in beyde Rechten. Vertaelt door B. Vilster* (Ypres: Uyt de Druckerie van Joannes Baptiste Moerman […], 1698). A first (Dutch) version in Franciscus Simon <Pseud.> [Gilles Estrix], *De Oude Ketters In Haere Bedriegheryen Verresen op onse tegenwoordighe eeuwe. Ghetrocken uyt het derde deel vande Bedriegherijen der ketteren van den gheleerden Franciscus Simonis Licentiaet inde Godtheydt. Ende Verduytscht Door L.D.W. Wereldtsch Priester Gheboortigh van Leuven* (Ypres: By Anthoni de Backer, 1682).

98 Franciscus Simon <Pseud.> [Gilles Estrix], *Fravdibvs Haereticorum Ad Orthodoxos Tractatio Perutilis hoc tempore. Pars I.[-III] Per Franciscum Simonis S. TH. L.* (Mainz: Typis Ludovici Bourgeat, Academiae Typographi, 1677).

99 [Franciscus Simon] <Pseud.> [Gilles Estrix]; René Rapin (Transl.), *Les Artifices Des Hérétiques* (Paris: chez Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1681).

100 Gay, "Ideologisation, Publicity, Politicisation," 274. On modes of publicity and the emergence of a literary field in Lutheran/pietist Germany, see Martin Gierl, "The Triumph of Truth and Innocence: The Rules and Practices of Theological Polemics," in *Little Tools of Knowledge: Historical Essays on Academic and Bureaucratic Practices*, ed. Peter Becker and William Clark (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 35–66.

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For the present purposes, it is interesting to note that these editions not only listed recognizable doctrinal tokens of heterodoxy but were also interlaced with bodily markers, speech acts, and gendered practices to unmask the saintly life and personae of false prophets as a demonic fraud.[101] The new/old heretics speak softly, with honey-like voices; their heterodox beliefs, false ascetism, self-mortification, and ostentatious fasting speak through their meager bodies and pale complexions; their attire is unworldly (which in the 1677 edition may refer to the pedantic habitus of Louvain dons); and they seek to exploit the (bodily as well as mental) openness of women to demonic influences when penetrating religious communities as confessors. Recognizable (and controllable) signs, bodies, and gestures sided with increasingly elusive doctrinal *contents* as markers and producers of both orthodoxy and its diabolic opposite in the public sphere, a practice that modified the publicity of religious forms and beliefs from *within* early modern Catholicisms.[102]

Closely connected with embodiment, the performative crafting of a Mendicant *persona* on begging tours discussed elsewhere in this volume sheds light on another aspect of the materialization of cycles of credibility. By differentiating religious and economic fields, anti-Jesuit and anti-monastic literature[103] across confessional divides could target the illicit monetization of religious life in the "laxist" administration of sacraments (especially of penance) in exchange for alms or pious legations.[104] However, just as cycles

101 On the body as a mediator of (heterodox and radicalized) belief, cf. Elisabeth Fischer and Xenia von Tippelskirch, *Bodies in Early Modern Religious Dissent: Naked, Veiled, Vilified, Worshiped* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021). With respect to Jansenism, cf. the phenomenon of the *convulsionnaires* in the eighteenth century, in Brian E. Strayer, *Suffering Saints: Jansenists and Convulsionnaires in France, 1640–1799* (Eastborne: Sussex Academic Press, 2008).

102 "Le geste l'emporte sur le contenu. Il devient le signe plus sûr. À la fois, il pose et il 'dit' la croyance comme conduite." De Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques," 205. A localization in Roman censorship files appears in Bruno Boute, "Schreiben, Zensieren, Praktizieren. Die Aufklärung und der Geburt des praktizierenden Christens," in *Inquisitionen und Buchzensur im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, ed. Hubert Wolf (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 431–442.

103 Cf. the apocryphal Anonymous [Hieronim Zahorowski], *Monita Privata Societatis Jesu* (s.l. [Cracow]: s.n., 1612); contemporary translations in Dutch Anonymous, *De Secreten der Jesuiten ontdekt* (s.l.: s.n.[1677?]). On anti-Jesuitism in the Habsburg Low Countries, see Hendrik Callewier, "Anti-Jezuïtisme in de zuidelijke Nederlanden (1542–1773)," *Trajecta: Tijdschrift voor de geschiedenis van het katholieke leven in de Nederlanden* 16 (2007): 30–50. With respect to anti-monasticism, see, for instance, Anonymous, *D'Ontkapten Munnik, vertoonende naaktelijk De Hymelijke en Verborgen jaa bedriegelijke streeken, met welke Bedel-Munniken tegenwoordig de Wereld misleyden. Uyt het Frans vertaelt* (Amsterdam: By Jan Bouman, 1676) (translation of: Le Moine Sécularisé).

104 Cf. the proposition proscribed by a decree of the Holy Office on Nov. 7, 1690: "Parochianus potest suspiciari de mendicantibus, qui eleemosynis communibus vivunt, de imponenda nimis levi et incongrua poenitentia seu satisfactione ob quaestum seu lucrum subsidii temporalis." Proposition 2321, Heinrich Denzinger and Peter Hünermann, *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum: A Handbook of Symbols, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 491. The proposition was drawn from Bonaventura De La

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of credibility blur the lines between the social and epistemic dimensions of credibility in modern Big Science, so, too, does their materialization (via the allocation of resources) in religious forms prove concomitant to and indistinguishable from the performance of technologies of salvation. Reading the Mendicants' insistence on the necessity of their assistance to the parish clergy from this perspective, a demand for frequent sacramental practice from the flock was likely to overburden the parish infrastructure. This, then, turned the confraternities of the Scapular and related technologies of salvation into powerful machineries of credibility for the religious models fielded by the Carmelites and, in the process, turned the Carmelites into obligatory passage points of Catholic renewal. All this would happen at the expense of a parish infrastructure that was resourced by tithes financing a hybrid, monetized, and sacralized hierarchy of church offices and that competed with Mendicants for pious crowdfunding and legates. Technological cycles of salvation, as they unfolded locally, simultaneously proved to be managerial cycles of salvation generating supply and demand as much as trust and credibility.

Thirdly, matter mattered on both sides of the polemical spectrum. The mediation of the Carmelite technological and managerial cycle of salvation by two pieces of cloth that were objectified and nudged into action,[105] via religious exercises of devotees, as protective and redemptive agencies, has been extensively discussed in the previous paragraphs. Rigorist schemes were operationalized in a much similar way. In the Low Countries, they centered on an epistemic method that objectified a "thing" (emotion) and fixated a flux of both culturally and biologically mediated feelings into a definable, anterior, stable, and consequently objective contrition willed by divine grace and acting as a redemptive agency. Or this flux could be objectified into an insufficient disposition triggered by original sin and leading towards eternal damnation, via a sacrilegious multiplication of sin, if it went unrecognized in the confessional. In the *Methodus*, Huygens went to great lengths to field contrition as a *materia* to be considered on par with liturgical objects such as water in baptism, without which the sacrament could not take place.

6. Conclusion: Assembling and Dismantling Religious Matters

This chapter follows, via the entangled affair of the procession edict of 1674, the materialization of religious phenomena (in this case, Catholic Puritanism vs. the religiosity of confraternities) into "things" or "movements" as they take form locally and become embedded in local communities, precarious infrastructures, and the agency of matter.

Bassée OFMCap's parish-centric works from the first half of the seventeenth century. Cf. Hildebrand Van Hooglede, "Le P. Bonaventure le Pippre de la Bassée," *Études franciscaines* 48 (1936): 556–562.

105 On the definition of an actor or actant in Actor Network Theory as an agency nudged into action by other, often associated agencies, read Latour, *Reassembling the Social*.

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Conflict was treated as a hermeneutical category in its own right: two mutually irreconcilable models of salvation gained reality through dialectic cycles of devotional versus sacramental piety. Doctrinal referents (notably in the accusations of Jansenism) were omnipresent. Yet it is obvious that their role in the public field proved limited after the bruising 1640s and 1650s, when Roman bulls against five propositions ascribed to the Louvain Divine Cornelius Jansenius (*1585, in office as bishop of Ypres 1636–1638) had narrowly failed to trigger a crisis of infallibility in France and the Low Countries: as had the related controversies over divine grace at the beginning of the century, which had quickly internationalized after Louvain censures against the Jesuit Leonardus Lessius in 1587–1588.[106]

The episode under investigation localizes the practice observed by Certeau that aimed to move the enunciation and/or debate of disruptive doctrinal programs to liminal and private spheres and away from a public space under construction. Seen from this perspective, Roman governance in practice (if not in principle) privatized large realms of the faith as a cognitive empire despite their ongoing exclusivist and absolute claims.[107] Quite surprisingly, perhaps, authoritative settlement by the post-Tridentine papacy that vigorously reasserted its magisterium in doctrinal affairs was quite rare.[108] Decrees of the Roman Holy Office often aimed to keep clamorous polemics manageable (and marginal to Catholic unity) by restraining their publicity and modifying the dynamics of learned disputes, including the male honor codes grounding them,[109] in a much similar way as we saw the *Suprema* contain pastoral civil wars by monitoring pulpits and printing presses. As orthopraxy became an observable (and enforceable) token, indeed a substitute in the public space for its increasingly elusive doctrinal referent, myriad entanglements between practiced orthodoxy and indoctrinated practice disqualified any essentialist definition of Christianity as an "orthodoxic" religion grounded in cognition and spirituality.[110]

106 Edmond J.M Van Eijl, "La controverse Louvaniste autour de la grâce et du libre arbitre à la fin du XVI[e] siècle," in *L'Augustinisme à l'ancienne faculté de théologie à Louvain*, ed. Mathieu Lamberigts (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1994), 207–282; see also Paolo Broggio, *La Teologia e la Politica: Controversie dottrinali, Curia romana e Monarchia spagnola tra Cinque e Seicento* (Florence: Olschki, 2009); Boute, *Academic Interests*, 375–385.

107 De Certeau, "La formalité des pratiques."

108 Cf. Rudolf Schüssler, "Scholastic Approaches to Reasonable Disagreement," in *Making Truth in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, Marco Cavarzere, and Steven Vanden Broecke (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 41–62, specifically 45.

109 Gierl, "The Triumph of Truth and Innocence." A compatible line of approach is taken in a general assessment of Roman governance in Emich, "Uniformity and Polycentricity."

110 On the ongoing functionalization of absolute truth as a compelling and authoritative master narrative that was paradoxically grounded in similar governance practices, see Boute, Badea, Cavarzere, and Vanden Broecke, "A Product's Glamour."

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In conjunction with the symmetrical use of approaches from recent scholarship on Catholicisms overseas, cycles of credibility borrowed from Science Studies procure a potent lens to capture the bundling of people, objects, and practices as they materialized locally as "agencies" or "religious movements" (or the pure Church). However, religious phenomena such as Catholic Puritanism remain quite elusive; they had to be recognized, in turn, by specific "tokens," and, in most circumstances, failed to format into a unified agent on par with, say, the day-to-day functionalization of plural Catholicisms into a single, universalist agency and into a workable semblance of transcendental order. Several elements should be factored in, among others the obvious unwillingness of adherents to specific groupings to identify with polemical labels such as "rigorists," "Jansenists," or "laxists," and the alternating of episcopal authority between the "Jansenist" van Bergen, the anti-Jansenist Precipiano, and the "rigorist," parish-centric administration (1711–1716) of the General Vicar Aimé Ignace de Coriache following Precipiano's death. For the purposes of this chapter and by way of conclusion, it is possible to discern three additional agencies that visibly qualified, restrained, or unwound cycles of credibility and their concomitant materialization.

First, there is the agency of lay women and men that, through the cracks of clerical lore, kept bouncing back throughout the affair. Unsurprisingly for local voices, space was central to the discourse in the notarial instruments testifying to the support of confraternities and urban elites for the Carmelite cause, and notably for the occupation of *public* space. Processions to implore divine mercy over both confraternity members and the local community obviously required a public. To act and to *be seen acting as* a confraternity member carrying relics and images of saints or the Virgin together with the Sacrament of Miracle in disaster-averting processions amounted to the same thing from the point of view of many ordinary believers, judging by the ongoing polemics *after* the Innocentian settlement of 1682 on lines that exploited distinctions between "public" and "private" religion but that otherwise left the devotional programs advocated by the Carmelites largely intact. Moreover, while clerics and friars appropriated sacramental orderings and integrated them into more or less mutually exclusive technologies of salvation, there is no evidence that ordinary believers followed them en masse in this polarizing endeavor. Considering the findings on lay agency in the confessional in recent scholarship, many members of the flock probably built on this conflictual plurality to bend "the system" to their own soteriologies as well as to religious needs that were simultaneously state-sanctioned obligations. A local diversity of supply facilitated the faithful inhabiting timeless sacramental orderings in ways oscillating between pragmatism and subversivism.

Secondly, even within the ranks of the clergy, the dyadic lens of Jansenism against anti-Jansenism or secular against regular clergy obviously worked for contemporary polemicists, but did little justice to the plurality of religious forms in the region. Factions did not always unfold in the same manner and did not necessarily mobilize the entire clergy, in sharp contrast with the synoptic approach adopted by Michael of Saint

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Augustine in his correspondence with Séraphin de Jésus-Marie. In analogy, the above-described technological and managerial cycles of salvation did not unfold unambiguously in the same binary way if one considers individual clerical agency. On the one hand, there were the church officials supporting the Mendicants in their (prepped?) denunciation of the *Errores*. On the other hand, the Mendicants were not a unified block either, considering the frustrations voiced between local and Roman Carmelites.[111] Enter the Augustinian Christianus Lupus, who defended the orthodoxy of his Faculty of Divinity at Louvain and who, formerly associated with Jansenist sympathies in the 1650s, became a leading contritionist in the learned polemics with the Jesuit theologian Maximilian Le Dent in the later 1660s.[112] More or less simultaneously, however, Lupus sided with his Mendicant brethren in the Louvain controversies over the respective roles of parish churches and Mendicant houses. A former member of the rigorist deputation to Innocent XI, he authored a treatise on the exposition of the Sacrament of the Eucharist in their support in 1681.[113] Quite a few crossovers qualify the materialization of distinctive and dialectic salvation models outside the polemical writings in which they emerged, with the synoptic assessments of Carmelites proving to be as performative as they were descriptive. This applies to the synoptic lines on Catholic Puritanism as well, cautioning against its scholarly reification into a religious movement. A wide range of agencies did that epistemic work already on the ground. To capture the modes of existence of religious phenomena and movements, this work needs to be localized and connected rather than repeated.

Thirdly, the agency of another polycentric locality, the Roman Curia, in unwinding the materialization of distinct and potentially hegemonic machineries of salvation within the Church, needs to be taken into consideration, too, on par with the agency of the faithful in their negotiations with confessors and the diverse, multi-tiered agency of local clergy. A comparison with events in the contemporary affair of the Seven Articles of the Faith analyzed elsewhere may be elucidating. In 1680–1682, the Holy Office nipped in the bud the "rigorist" treatment of the penitent's ignorance of basic tenets of the faith as an additional ground for the refusal and deferral of absolution, among other reasons because this risked giving the "confessors of the method of moral certitude"

111 On the heterogeneity of the Jesuit order(ing), see among others Jean-Pascal Gay, *Jesuit Civil Wars: Theology, Politics and Government under Tirso González (1687–1705)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Paolo Quattrone, "Accounting for God: Accounting and Accountability Practices in the Society of Jesus (Italy, XVI–XVII Centuries)," *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 29 (2004): 647–683.

112 Cf. Boute, "Attritionnisme et Contritionnisme."

113 Christianus Lupus, *Dissertatio De Sanctissimi Sacramenti Publica Expositione Et de Sacris Processionibus In quibus circumfertur cum Sacris sanctorum Reliquiis & Imaginibus Venerabile Altaris Sacramentum Verbotenùs & integrè desumpta ex Scriniis Opt. Mem. Magistri, Eximii Viri P. Christiani Lupi Ord. S. Augustini, S. Th. Doctoris ac Professoris apud Lovanienses Regii & Primarii* (Liège: Typis Henrici Hoyoux, 1681).

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too much leeway.[114] In analogy, the absence of a ruling on whether or not the frequent, "promiscuous" exposition of the Body of Christ was harmful stopped Archbishop van Bergen and his supporters from claiming victory. Carmelite and Mendicant machines of devotional piety were not dismantled (except for the "Slaves of Mary") but were rather relativized: this was done through the calibrated alternation of, firstly, hiding and showing the host, and, secondly, respectively privatizing and publicizing confraternity processions behind convent walls and (on two yearly occasions) in the public space.

Similar spatial, legal-administrative solutions were not uncommon. They provided a way out of deadlocks without curial agencies having to commit a precarious infallibility to slippery doctrinal interventions. Instead, they established lines the transgression of which could be policed and amended locally and that modified the dynamics of polemics, including the material practices and honor codes grounding them, away from disruptive soteriological, ecclesiological, or sacramental controversies. In return, such measures triggered new appropriations from polemicists circulating apostolic authority on the ground to bolster their absolute and exclusivist programs. These moved into stronger, objective modes of existence precisely in theaters of conflict, notably in the synoptic and dialectical realities these produced.[115] In the affair of the procession edict, Carmelite correspondence with the Roman convent is a case in point. Fixating identities, roles, and conflicting religious programs, ongoing polemics necessitated either the unfolding of mediation channels on the ground (the cohesive "archetype" of early modern European conflict cultures) or renewed Roman interventions. This raises questions about the relationship between a hypothetical erosion of similar local mediation channels, the (archetypically "modern") partisan nature of the struggle,[116] and the circulation of apostolic authority as a pacifying agency of last resort.

However, this circulation of apostolic authority may have simultaneously bolstered and restrained conflicting soteriological cycles of credibility. In practice, measures aiming to neutralize and define a public space fortified the absoluteness of the claims of the *hoog-ghesinden* (high-minded) to represent *the* pure (or real) Church in all its severity from the wings, as much as it allowed their continued ostracization as Jansenists by Carmelites or Jesuits. Drawing on Stollberg-Rilinger's assessment of both the operationalizing and relativizing agency of princely tribunals in related legal conflicts

114 Boute, "Saving Truth."

115 On modern notions of "existence" and "objectivity," see John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 8–9.

116 An excellent introduction to the cohesive potential of early modern cultures of conflict (and their demise in the eighteenth century) appears in Harald De Ceulaer, "Guilds and Litigation," in *Individual, Corporate and Judicial Status in European Cities (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)*, ed. Marc Boone and Maarten Prak (Antwerp: Garant, 1996), 171–208. On the (counter-intuitive) relationship between different modes of conflict and cohesion, see Lewis Coser, *The Functions of Social Conflict* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001).

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on rank and precedence in civic or academic rites,[117] this raises the question of to what extent Roman governance *in practice* boosted a relativization and privatization in the long term not only of disruptive doctrinal contents but also of distinctive practices that needed to be kept from taking over a neutral public space, the eucharistic communion of a unified Church Militant. This is not entirely different from epistemic practices embedded in post-enlightenment scholarly cycles of credibility, requiring researchers, in line with Hume's approach, to investigate religion *in principle* from a "neutral" outside, by disenchanting the performativity of early modern ritual as symbolical communication at best; stripping sacred objects such as the brown scapular from their agency in the process; and operationalizing the invisible hands of society or culture as new and overwhelming agencies grounding religious phenomena from a secularist (but not less metaphysical) Beyond.

117 Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, "Rang vor Gericht. Zur Verrechtlichung sozialer Rangkonflikte in der frühen Neuzeit," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 28 (2001): 385–418.

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Samuel Weber

Forging and Exporting a Local Cult

The Neapolitan Theatines and the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception (1647–1800)

1. Introduction

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, the trickle of letters arriving at the General Curia of the Theatines in Rome turned into a stream.[1] Writing in from small towns and remote villages across Italy, simple priests and confessors requested in ever-growing numbers the faculty to bless a particular devotional object: the scapular of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.[2] Scapulars were miniature versions for the laity of the garment of the same name worn by monks as part of their religious habit. They consisted of two rectangular pieces of cloth, about an inch in size, with an image stitched onto them. Held together by a string, the scapular was worn over the shoulder so that one rectangle fell onto the wearer's chest and the other dangled down their back. The reasons that led Catholics to sport the small habit varied. It certainly helped that wearers were granted a slew of indulgences. More importantly, however, its aficionados swore by the scapular's capability to fend off attacks of the devil.[3] Such, in fact, was the power ascribed to these

1 Research toward this paper was conducted while I was the holder of a mobility grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation (grant # 200181), a *chercheur invité* at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and a *chercheur résident* at the École française de Rome. I wish to acknowledge the help of the following archivists and librarians: Fr. Juan Roberto Orqueida Guaglianone, C.R. of the Archivio Generale dei Teatini in Rome, Daniele Ponziani of the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Angela Tagliavia of the Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo, Vittoria Fiorelli of the Istituto Suor Orsola in Naples, and Clara Mazzetti of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze. Last but not least, I thank Nicolas Rogger and Christian Windler for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

2 I have systematically analyzed the letters from the eighteenth century, with the earliest surviving one being from 1758. Though the missives hailed from as far north as Trento and as far as south as Castiglione in Calabria, none of the surviving petitions was posted outside the Italian Peninsula. See Archivio Generale dei Teatini, Rome (hereafter AGT), R 370/I.a.

3 On the history of scapulars, which came in many shapes and forms, see Ulrich L. Lehner, *The Inner Life of Catholic Reform: From the Council of Trent to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 191–194, 212–214; Michael P. Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions: A Psychological Inquiry* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 114–131. For a pre-Vatican II iteration of the order's version of the history of the blue scapular, see Francesco Andreu, "L'abitino ceruleo dell'Immacolata," *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 10, no. 37 (1954): 97–114. For the more widespread brown scapular, see Bruno Boute's contribution to this volume.

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amulets that their appeal slowly but surely transcended the Italian Peninsula. By the end of the nineteenth century, the scapulars were regularly solicited from laypeople from much further afield: surviving letters in shaky handwriting attest to the desire of ordinary Catholics from Germany to the Americas to be endowed with one of these prized possessions.[4] The conclusion to be drawn from the reams of correspondence in the order's Roman archive seems incontrovertible: at the dawn of modernity, Catholics peppered around the world were clamoring for a Roman talisman to protect them from evil.

Contemporary Theatine publicists disputed that timeline. As the nineteenth century rambled on, they contradicted their own archive and antedated the scapular's global conquest to the eighteenth century. In popular and populist books, they argued that Catholics out in the peripheries had been eagerly awaiting the bounty that the Roman center bestowed on them since at least the turn of the eighteenth century. In booklets produced for the emerging Catholic mass market, they gave the impression that the *caput mundi* had been doting on a flock that was popular and non-European in its makeup since as early as the eighteenth century.[5]

As this essay will reveal, these colorful stories from the nineteenth century harked back to a long tradition of Theatine mythmaking. At first glance, the tale of a universally popular Theatine scapular sits at odds with what little we know about that elusive religious community. Founded in 1524, the order of Cajetan of Thiene (1480–1547, canonized 1671) and Gian Pietro Carafa (1476–1559), the future Pope Paul IV (r. 1555–1559), was born out of the same preoccupations with religious reform as the more famous Society of Jesus.[6] Shared origins notwithstanding, the Theatines proved no match for the globe-trotting Jesuits. Indeed, for much of the early modern period, they remained a minuscule order of a little over 1,000 members who were recruited

4 The letters are stored in several boxes, starting with AGT, R 370/I.b. As the nineteenth and twentieth centuries lay outside the purview of my research, I was unable to examine this part of the incoming correspondence systematically.

5 *Cenno storico sull'abitino ceruleo della B. Vergine Immacolata che si dispensa da' Chierici Regolari detti comunemente Teatini* (Rome: M. Perego Salvioni, 1835); *Origin of the Blue Scapular* (London: R. Washbourne, 1874). On the influence of these books on the devotion to the scapular in the nineteenth century, see Ann Taves, *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

6 The Theatine Order, officially known as the Congregation of Clerics Regular, remains woefully understudied. On the origins of the order, see Andrea Vanni, *"Fare diligente inquisitione": Gian Pietro Carafa e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini* (Rome: Viella, 2013). For a snapshot of the order in the mid-seventeenth century, see Marcella Campanelli, *I teatini* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1987). On the Neapolitan Theatines, see Francesco Andreu, "I teatini e la rivoluzione nel regno di Napoli (1647–1648)," *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 30, no. 100 (1974): 221–377, and the contributions to Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro, ed., *Sant'Andrea Avellino e i teatini nella Napoli del viceregno spagnolo* (Naples: D'Auria Editore, 2011).

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primarily from the leading aristocratic families of the Italian Peninsula.[7] While this afforded them excellent ties to Catholic Europe's ruling dynasties, their missions to ordinary people both in and outside of Europe remained few and far between. Yet, as the story of the scapular told here makes clear, from the eighteenth century onward, the order compensated for this lack of heft in the real world through stunning feats in the world of letters. Thanks to cheap prints, Theatine scholars fashioned their aristocratic order as a global enterprise with popular appeal well before that ideal became a reality.

This essay peels back the layers of Theatine mythmaking to show that the early modern origins of the scapular were neither universal nor popular but, on the contrary, deeply local and distinctly aristocratic. Reading evidence from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries against the grain, this piece unveils the beginnings of the scapular among a crop of hispanophile aristocrats in Spanish Naples and the Theatines' considerable effort in the eighteenth century to popularize and globalize what had begun life as a local cult of the Neapolitan nobility. It tells the backstory of what the archives and Theatine publications in the nineteenth century were wont to present as a cult that had come into the world already global and popular.

This reconstruction of the global journey of the scapular of the Immaculate Conception builds on several overlapping historiographies. One strand is work that has highlighted the tension between local religions and the Church Universal gnawing at Catholicism throughout the early modern period. Despite considerable efforts at homogenization in the wake of the Council of Trent (1545–1563), regional religious traditions continued to exercise a tenacious hold.[8] Political entities ranging from cities to world-spanning empires cleaved to their own cults.[9] Local churches defended their particularisms, and when they did enshrine universal cults into their repertoire, they of-

7 The membership lists of the Italian houses compiled in 1650 read like the who's who of the Italian aristocracy. See Campanelli, *I teatini*, 371–401.

8 The original formulation of the argument is William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981). Many others have since followed in Christian's footsteps. See at least two classics: Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas, and Miracles: The Counter-Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), and Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). For an overview of the most recent scholarship, especially on Chinese Catholicism, see Eugenio Menegon, "Local Religion in the Early Modern Period: Chinese Christianity as a Case Study," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 211–235. For a view stressing the unifying universalism of Catholic devotions, see Brian L. Larkin, "Beyond Guadalupe: The Eucharist, the Cult of Saints, and Local Religion in Eighteenth-Century Mexico City," *The Catholic Historical Review* 104, no. 2 (2018): 223–267.

9 Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Erin K. Rowe, *Saint and Nation: Santiago, Teresa of Avila, and Plural Identities in Early Modern Spain* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011).

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ten inflected them with their local religiosity.[10] At the same time, the Roman Curia with its vastly expanded deliberative bodies offered Catholics unprecedented opportunities to turn local devotions into universal cults.[11] As scholars working on the veneration of saints have shown, early modern Catholics were eager to see locals who had died in the odor of sanctity morph into global saints.[12] The same arguably held true of other Catholic devotions.

Another germane historiography is the literature that has centered the critical role of religious orders in the making of both local and universal devotions. Studies of internal and external missions have averred how regular clerics walked a fine line between meeting the religious expectations of the laity on the ground and complying with the exacting standards of the papacy and its institutions.[13] Embedded in local communities, regular clerics acted as handmaidens of civic religions.[14] Many wrote about them profusely. In the Spanish monarchy in particular, regular clerics churned out fantastical tales about earlier generations of Christians, heaping glory upon their *patria chica* and local elites.[15] While this put them on a collision course with the superiors of their order and the papacy, confrontation often bred integration. Once the initial

10 Karin Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto: Spreading Catholicism in the Early Modern World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019); Luisa Elena Alcalá Donegani, *Arte y localización de un culto global: La Virgen de Loreto en México* (Madrid: Abada Editores, 2022).

11 Philipp Zwyssig, *Täler voller Wunder: Eine katholische Verflechtungsgeschichte der Drei Bünde und des Veltlins (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)* (Affalterbach: Didymos, 2018); Daniel Sidler, *Heiligkeit aushandeln: Katholische Reform und lokale Glaubenspraxis in der Eidgenossenschaft (1560–1790)* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2017).

12 Birgit Emich, Daniel Sidler, Samuel Weber, and Christian Windler, eds., *Making Saints in a "Glocal" Religion: Practices of Holiness in Early Modern Catholicism* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024).

13 Dominik Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie: Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563 bis 1614* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005); Amos Megged, *Exporting the Catholic Reformation: Local Religion in Early-Colonial Mexico* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Christian Windler, *Missionaries in Persia: Cultural Diversity and Competing Norms in Global Catholicism*, trans. Pamela E. Selwyn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2024).

14 The term is borrowed from Nicholas Terpstra, who uses it to describe a communal religion based on shared rituals and practices that were designed to paper over cracks in the social fabric of Renaissance cities. See Nicholas Terpstra, "Civic Religion," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity,* ed. John H. Arnold (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 148–163. For case studies of the role of clerics regular in the making of civic religions, see Hillard von Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Alltagskultur: Vergleichende Fallstudie am Beispiel Freiburgs und Hildesheims 1599–1750* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Wissenschaften, 2002); Bernard Hours, *Des moines dans la cité: XVI^{e}–XVIII^{e} siècle* (Paris: Belin, 2016).

15 A. Katie Harris, *From Muslim to Christian Granada: Inventing a City's Past in Early Modern Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Drayson, *The Lead Books of Granada* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Katrina B. Olds, *Forging the Past: Invented Histories in Counter-Reformation Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

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pushback had been overcome, clerics regular often proved instrumental in securing the universal approval of local devotions in Rome.

A final historiographical strand relevant to this piece is the scholarship on the function of material objects in the making of global Catholicism. The paradigmatic object, widely studied by both historians and art historians, has been the Agnus Dei. These wax medals blessed by the pope that were shipped out of Rome through missionary networks have served as a lens through which to study the agency and local appropriation of devotional articles.[16] As Simon Ditchfield and Linda Nolan have argued, following the trajectory of these sacramentals allows historians to understand "actions made—both voluntarily and involuntarily—to particularise the universal."[17] While highly innovative, these studies of the exchange of material goods might unintentionally invalidate the important work that has been done elsewhere to undo the stubborn narrative of Roman centralism. With their focus on the Jesuits, these studies have repositioned Rome as the sole center of Catholicism, able to monger its trinkets to unwitting Catholics the world over. In this piece on the Theatines, I endeavor to retrace the opposite and arguably more common trajectory: that of how a local sacramental went global.[18] Specifically, I tell the story of how a savvy Theatine writer forged the blue scapular in response to the needs of the Neapolitan aristocracy in the middle decades of the seventeenth century and how his confrères subsequently plodded away at turning this local and socially exclusive devotion into a global cult with mass appeal. To do so, I adopt an eminently anthropological approach: with my eyes firmly set on the blue scapular, I retrace its itinerary to reconstruct the different meanings with which Catholics imbued

16 Anne Lepoittevin, "Picciolini, Picolini et Piccioli: La Fabrique Romaine des Agnus Dei (1563–1700)," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 183, no. 3 (2018): 87–117; Paul Nelles, "Devotion in Transit: Agnus Dei, Jesuit Missionaries, and Global Salvation in the Sixteenth Century," in *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Movement*, ed. idem and Rosa Salzberg (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023), 185–214. Similar questions have been asked of the relics of catacomb saints: Stéphane Baciocchi and Christophe Duhamelle, eds., *Reliques romaines: Invention et circulation des corps saints des catacombes à l'époque moderne* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2016).

17 Simon Ditchfield and Linda Nolan, "Appropriation and Agency in the Making of Roman Catholicism as a World Religion," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 87–124, 89. On the origin of the twin concepts of the "universal" and the "particular" in early modern Catholicism, see Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity, and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

18 For an attempt to universalize the particular, see the many local iterations of the cult of Our Lady of Loreto: Nicolas Balzamo, Olivier Christin, and Fabrice Flückiger, eds., *L'*Atlas Marianus *de Wilhelm Gumppenberg: Édition et traduction* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Alphil-Presses Universitaires Suisses, 2015).

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this devotional object as it trickled out of Naples and down the social hierarchy over the course of the eighteenth century.[19]

I unfurl my argument in two sections. In the first one, I show how the Theatine fabulist Francesco Maria Maggio (1612–1686) sired the blue scapular to respond to the expectations of a group of pro-Spanish aristocrats in Naples. Maggio contrived the scapular of the Immaculate Conception in the late 1640s in the face of the sudden popularity of the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel among the populace as it rose in a revolt against the elite cartel holding the Kingdom in a chokehold. Fiddling with the historical record, Maggio attributed the origins of the cult to a vision of Orsola Benincasa, a mystic entangled with the Spanish and local aristocracies who had passed away some thirty years earlier. The fruits of his labor were a local iteration of the cult of the Immaculate Conception of Mary that Habsburg governing circles had been pushing since the start of the century.

In the second section, I discuss how the Theatines struggled to export a cult crafted in response to a set of unique circumstances to other parts of the Catholic world. Starting in the 1660s, the cerulean scapular was scattered through elite networks within the Spanish monarchy. As the War of the Spanish Succession (1700–1714) got underway, precarious princes, ranging from the dukes of Savoy to the Habsburg pretender to the Spanish throne, adopted the scapular in hopes it would assist them in their quest for a royal crown. Parallel to this, Theatine missionaries portaged the local cult to Catholic Europe and Catholic communities in Asia while propagandists at home greatly exaggerated its reach. Tall though they were, these tales were convincing enough to prompt the Holy Office to take a closer look at the indulgences that the Theatines were handing out so liberally. The ensuing Inquisition trial risked undermining what the Theatines had begun to view as a devotional accoutrement that allowed their puny congregation to keep up with their competitors from other orders, who had long been doling out similar paraphernalia to the devout. To stave off that threat, Father Gaetano Grondana marshaled both the backing of Catholic sovereigns and imaginary Asian Catholics to convince Pope Clement XI Albani (r. 1700–1721) to have the scapular approved as a cult of the Church Universal. Following Grondana's exploit, the Theatines broadened the support base of the blue scapular. Employing cheap print to apprise Catholics of the miracles that the scapular wrought, Theatine prosateurs increasingly skirted over the cult's aristocratic, indeed anti-popular, genesis and molded it into a devotional practice for simple folks and women. In so doing, they laid the groundwork for the scapular's truly universal appeal in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

19 Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. idem (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3–63.

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2. Forging: How Father Maggio Invented the Blue Scapular

In the beginning, there was Father Maggio. The son of a lawyer from Palermo, Francesco Maria Maggio (1612–1686) started out as a Theatine missionary in the Caucasus, where he spent almost seven years, from 1636 through 1643. Upon his return to Italy, he embarked on a second career as a prolific writer. Between the 1640s and his passing in 1686, he published some seventy books, with an additional forty-five manuscripts never making it into print.[20] Today he is best remembered for his cutting-edge scholarship on Georgian, Armenian, and Turkish, the languages he picked up as a missionary. But his real hobbyhorse was the study and promotion of local cults in southern Italy. These included Marian cults in his native Sicily and the mainland *Mezzogiorno*, as well as the veneration of regional virtuosos associated with the Theatine Order, whose life stories and miracles he documented assiduously.

Maggio's pet among these aspiring saints was Orsola Benincasa (1547/1551–1618) from Naples. Benincasa's life story mirrors the profound shifts that female religiosity underwent in the age of the Counter-Reformation. The daughter of an impoverished military engineer, Orsola first attracted a following in Naples as a mystic. However, after a brush with the Inquisition, she renounced these histrionic forms of religious virtuosity and reinvented herself as the meek founder of a nunnery. From 1583 until her death in 1618, she led a reclusive life as the leader of a community of female religious on the edge of early modern Naples, a lifestyle that was more in keeping with Counter-Reformation ideas of female piety.[21] Maggio's first encounter with Orsola occurred in 1636, when he visited her grave in Naples before departing for the Caucasus. When he returned to the city in 1643, he vowed to record her life. He would spend the next few decades toiling on multiple *vitae* in both Latin and Italian, touting the merits of this local virtuosa in hopes of having her recognized as an official saint of the Church.[22]

Maggio's writings on Orsola Benincasa had two goals. The first pertained to the internal politics of his order and Maggio's role in it. In his writings, he positioned Benincasa as the founder of a community of female religious and highlighted the support she had received from Theatines in that endeavor. In so doing, he could make

20 Antonio Francesco Vezzosi, "Maggio, Francesco Maria," in *Scrittori de' Cherici Regolari, detti Teatini: Parte seconda* (Rome: Stamperia della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide, 1780), 4–25, 6–7; Francesco Andreu, "Maggio (François-Marie)," in AGT, mss. Sc. III (R 7), M 5.2.

21 On Benincasa, see Vittoria Fiorelli, *Una santa della città: Suor Orsola Benincasa e la devozione napoletana tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 2001), 15–60. On female saints in Counter-Reformation Catholicism, see Gabriella Zarri, "Female Sanctity, 1500–1660," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 3: *Reform and Expansion, 1500–1660*, ed. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 180–200.

22 On local saints in Naples, see Jean-Michel Sallmann, *Naples et ses saints à l'âge baroque* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994). As with so many other women with her profile, Benincasa was not elevated. While she was declared Venerable in 1793, her beatification case is still pending.

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an argument that was controversial within his own ranks: that Benincasa was the architect of the female branch that their relatively young order still lacked. While this intervention in the internal squabbles of the Clerics Regular was interesting as an intellectual pursuit, this framing of Benincasa also raised Maggio's profile. If Benincasa really was the founder of the female branch of the Theatines, it was incumbent on him to complete what she had left incomplete when she departed this world. As his books explained, Benincasa had spent the final years of her life devising plans to establish a *ritiro*, a hermitage located next to the original convent and meant to house particularly devout nuns living in strict enclosure and praying for the spiritual well-being of the world. Listing the failures of others before him, Maggio's book implied that it fell on him to make Benincasa's final wish come true.

The second goal of Maggio's literary production was to establish both Benincasa and the female communities that Maggio was set on completing as protectors of Spanish Naples. Much of Maggio's account of Benincasa's life fastens on the 1600s and 1610s. This was a period when members of the Lemos clan were sent in from Madrid to administer the Kingdom of Naples, which had been under the control of the Spanish Habsburgs since the sixteenth century. As close relatives of Philip III's minister-favorite, the Duke of Lerma (r. 1598–1618), the Lemos brothers actively recruited local families, luring them into the patronage networks of the crown to enlist their support for Spain's rule in Italy.[23] By foregrounding that particular juncture, Maggio espoused an ideal of close social collaboration between Castilian viceroys and local families.[24]

In Maggio's rendition, Benincasa was more than incidental to that project. The viceroys embraced her as a spiritual advisor, consulting her in much the same way that Renaissance princes in northern Italy had deferred to the living saints in their courts.[25] The local elite similarly wormed their way into Benincasa's favor. Visiting her shortly before her passing, the *eletti*, the elected representatives of the city of Naples, promoted Orsola Benincasa to "protectress of her *patria*."[26] While Spanish viceroys made Benincasa party to imperial rule, local aristocrats similarly tried to integrate

23 Isabel Enciso Alonso-Muñumer, *Nobleza, poder y mecenazgo en tiempos de Felipe III: Nápoles y el Conde de Lemos* (Madrid: Actas, 2007); Giuseppe Mrozek Eliszezynski, *Nobili inquieti: La lotta politica nel regno di Napoli al tempo dei ministri favoriti (1598–1665)* (Rome: Viella, 2023), 59–106.

24 For the rise and fall of this vision, see Samuel Weber, *Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy: The Borromeo Brothers of Spanish Milan, 1620–1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

25 On Renaissance living saints, see Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

26 Francesco Maria Maggio, *Compendioso ragguaglio della vita, morte, e monisteri della Venerabil Madre D. Orsola Benincasa, napoletana, fondatrice della congregazion teatina di sessantatre Vergini, dell'eremo teatino di trentatre Monache e di sette Converse, e del ritiramento di dodici sacerdoti de' Padri Cherici Regolari sotto Titolo della'Mmaculata Concezione* (Naples: Gio: Francesco Paci, 1669), 76. On the governance of Spanish Naples, see Giulio Sodano, "Governing the City," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 109–129.

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her into a broader vision of the Spanish Monarchy. Following her death, they vowed to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in her honor.[27] That choice was hardly a coincidence: in the early 1600s, the Immaculate Conception was fast becoming a trademark of the Spanish Habsburgs.[28] By connecting a local virtuosa to that dynastic cult, local elites sparked the social collaboration between themselves and imperial elites that was crucial to Spanish predominance in Italy. As we will see, this nostalgic view of the early decades of the seventeenth century was eloquent of the wish to renew that alliance in the face of the parlous state of Spanish rule in Italy at the time.

To reconcile his two goals, Maggio mustered the material side of Benincasa's religiosity. In his writings, he made much of a vision that Benincasa had allegedly experienced one year before her death. On February 2, 1617, the Day of the Purification, the Mother of God carrying Baby Jesus and a host of angels appeared to Orsola Benincasa. Mary was attired in the white tunic and blue mantle typical of contemporary depictions of the Virgin Immaculate. The angels soaring around her were brandishing scapulars. The Virgin Immaculate instructed Benincasa to found a hermitage with thirty-three virgins who would spend their time in strict enclosure, producing the scapular that would hitch them to the world for whose salvation they prayed. Those who would don the scapular would partake in the purity of the Virgin Immaculate and the chastity of the enclosed nuns who had produced them. The *abitino*, the small habit, would serve as a link between the nuns and those members of the laity who joined forces in entreating Mary to sate the Spanish monarchs with "health and prosperity, and the aggrandizement of the whole Catholic Monarchy."[29] Many harbored doubts about the veracity of the vision. For Maggio, however, it was simply too good a story not to be true: it impelled him to advance the completion of the *ritiro* and to establish it as a site of the production of the scapular to protect the monarchy.

Although he started working on that project as soon as he returned from the Caucasus in the early 1640s, it only got off the ground in 1656 when Benincasa was widely credited with having helped beat the bubonic plague. Throughout the 1660s, Maggio worked closely with successive viceroys to realize his dream. His main supporters were the

27 Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 92.

28 Rosilie Hernández, *Immaculate Conceptions: The Power of the Religious Imagination in Early Modern Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019); José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Gaetano Sabatini, eds., *La Inmaculada Concepción y la Monarquía Hispánica* (Madrid: FCE, Red Columnaria, 2019); Pablo González Tornel, ed., *Intacta María: Política y religiosidad en la España barroca* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 2018); Manfredi Merluzzi, Gaetano Sabatini, and Flavia Tudini, eds., *La Vergine contesa: Roma, l'Immacolata Concezione e l'universalismo della Monarchia Cattolica, secc. XVII–XIX* (Rome: Viella, 2022); Alessandra Anselmi, ed., *L'Immacolata nei rapporti tra l'Italia e la Spagna* (Rome: De Luca, 2009).

29 Maggio, *Compendioso ragguaglio*, in the section titled "Alla Serenissima D. Marianna d'Austria," n.p.

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Aragón brothers, who served as ambassadors and viceroys in Spanish Italy at the time.[30] The elder of the two, Pascual de Aragón (r. 1664–1666), prided himself on adding the finishing touches to a religious project that "was the greatest service" he could render the crown. His younger brother and successor, Pedro Antonio de Aragón (r. 1666–1671), treated the hermitage as "the most important matter of his government."[31] It was during his tenure that the *ritiro* was inaugurated with a mass for the monarchy and the immuring of the first nuns on February 2, 1668, the fiftieth anniversary of Benincasa's alleged vision of the scapular.

Once the *ritiro* was a reality, the scapular took Naples by storm. One year after the inauguration of the hermitage, in August 1669, the Theatine churches in Naples saw a rally in which the *abitini* from the new cloister took center stage.[32] During a mass officiated by none other than Maggio in San Paolo, the Theatines' main church in Naples, Viceroy Aragón was the first layperson to be furnished with the scapular. In an open embrace of the social collaboration for which Benincasa had purportedly stood, the Collateral Council and the *eletti* followed along until the entire civic elite had glommed on to the bauble of the moment. A few days later, it was the women's turn. In a separate ceremony in Santa Maria degli Angeli, Aragón's wife, Ana Fernández de Córdoba y Enríquez de Ribera, the Duchess of Feria, collected her scapular alongside "very many matrons" from Naples' leading families.[33] Tethered to the nuns in the *ritiro*, these elite wearers of the blue scapular formed a virtual community of pro-Spanish worthies who enjoyed the protection of Benincasa and the Virgin.

To understand the appeal of the blue scapular in the late 1660s, we need to wind back to the 1640s. Among the elite who took to the new talisman in such great numbers, memories were still fresh of the revolt that had shaken the very foundations of their power. Beginning in July 1647, the populace of Naples had risen against the nobility tied to Spain. The catalyst of the revolt was the hiking of indirect levies on fruit and other foods. But the root cause was the indiscriminate taxation of the population to inject money into the patronage networks that underwrote the enrichment of the noble families closest to Madrid.[34] As the people of Naples took on the social group that had

30 Diana Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes: Ceremonial y mecenazgo en la Italia española de la segunda mitad del siglo XVII* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2008).

31 All quotes on the Aragón brothers are ibid., 173. On the role of nuns in urban communities, see Michèle Steiner's chapter in this volume.

32 On the Theatine institutions in mid-century Naples, see Campanelli, *I teatini*, 37–56.

33 Francesco Maria Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio scritta da lui medesimo," libro quinto, capitolo settimo: Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo (hereafter BCP), ms. 3 Qq D 49, f. 240r; Giovanni Bagatta, *Vita della Ven. Serva di Dio Orsola Benincasa napolitana dell'Ordine de' Chier. Regolari. Fondatrice delle Vergini Teatine della Congregatione, & Eremo dell'Immacolata Concettione di Maria Vergine* (Rome: Francesco de' Lazari, 1696), 427–428.

34 On Naples, see Rosario Villari, *Un sogno di libertà: Napoli nel declino di un impero, 1585–1648* (Milan: Mondadori, 2012); and Mrozek Eliszezynski, *Nobili inquieti*, 169–225, who rightly insists on the divisions

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profited from the system of social collaboration set up by the Lemos brothers, they placed themselves under the protection of the Madonna del Carmine.[35] Widely known as *la Bruna* in the city, this twelfth-century icon was housed in the Carmine church in the Mercato neighborhood. While many venerated the Madonna in that church, the Carmelites who administered the shrine also handed out reproductions of the icon and, crucially, a brown scapular named after Our Lady of Mount Carmel.[36]

Much older than the blue scapular of the Theatines, the brown scapular emanated from a vision of the English Carmelite Simon Stock (1165–1265). Born at a time when the novel concept of purgatory was stoking fears of death, the scapular was retailed as a "ticket to heaven," sparing its wearers the detour through purgatory.[37] In Naples, the brown scapular began to gain traction in the late sixteenth century. Some historians have imputed this sudden proliferation to the Counter-Reformation project of reaffirming the concept of purgatory in the face of Protestant assaults on that idea.[38] However, given the absence of Protestant ideas in Naples at the time, it seems more likely that the brown scapular owed its popularity to the widespread belief that the *abitino* afforded protection from the harsh punishment that secular authorities regularly meted out to the poor.[39]

What is certain is that the insurgents of 1647 took to the brown scapular en masse. The first to make the plunge was their leader, Masaniello, a barefoot fishmonger with

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within that social group. On the legitimacy crisis in Spanish Italy more generally, see Weber, *Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy*, 18–98.

35 Peter Burke, "The Virgin of the Carmine and the Revolt of Masaniello," *Past & Present* 99, no. 1 (1983): 3–21. The Madonna del Carmine figured prominently on legal documents issued by the insurgents; see, for example, Giuseppe Donzelli, *Partenope liberata overo Racconto dell'Heroica risolutione fatta dal Popolo di Napoli per sottrarsi con tutto il Regno all'insopportabil Giogo delli Spagnuoli. Parta prima. Del dottor Gioseppe Donzelli, napolitano. Al Serenissimo, & Invittissimo Principe Henrico di Lorena, Duca di Guisa, Conte d'Ev, Pari di Francia, Difensore della libertà, DUCE della Serenissima Republica di Napoli, e Generalissimo delle sue Armi* (Naples: Per Ottavio Beltrano, 1647), 54; Tommaso De Santis, *Historia del tumulto di Napoli: Nella quale si contengono tutte le cose occorse nella Città, e Regno di Napoli, dal principio del governo del Duca d'Arcos, sin il dì 6 d'Aprile 1648. Alla Maestà Cattolica di Filippo IV* (Leiden: Nella Stamperia d'Elsevir, 1652), 117.

36 Irene Galandra Cooper, "Unlocking 'Pious Homes': Revealing Devotional Exchanges and Religious Materiality in Early Modern Naples," *Renaissance Studies* 33, no. 5 (2019): 832–853.

37 Carroll, *Catholic Cults and Devotions*, 114–131.

38 Galandra Cooper, "Unlocking 'Pious Homes'," 843. As late as 1858, an observer of the Neapolitan poor would note that the brown scapular was worn by "the most wicked people," and that readers should not be "surprised" to see it around the necks of "murderers." Francesco de Bourcard, "Le questue in Napoli," in *Usi e costumi di Napoli e contorni descritti e dipinti*, ed. idem, 2 vols. (Naples: G. Nobile, 1853–1858), II, 253–269, 257. The images depicting Neapolitans in the same book show an innkeeper and a watermelon vendor who both sport the scapular. See Bourcard, ed., *Usi e costumi*, II, plates preceding pp. 71 and 243, respectively. Accessible via the e-rara platform of the ETH Library Zurich: https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-22937 (last accessed July 12, 2024).

39 Giulio Sodano, *Il miracolo nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia dell'età moderna: Tra santi, Madonne, guaritrici e medici* (Naples: Guida, 2010), 100–101.

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a characteristic red hat: a contemporary painting (Fig. 1) features him at the center of the revolting masses, riding a horse while decked out in a brown scapular.[40] He was quickly imitated by the rest of the populace. As they took on their social betters, the rebels were convinced that the scapular would protect them from wounds inflicted by Spanish weaponry. Indeed, an assassination attempt with a harquebus on Masaniello himself was believed to have failed thanks to the scapular, which proved impenetrable to multiple shots fired at him.[41] So potent was this conceit that Neapolitans continued to revere the scapular as a supernatural weapon even after Masaniello had been killed while clad with his protective gear.[42] As one observer noted, there "was perhaps not a single person in the City and the Kingdom who was not wearing this miraculous little habit."[43] That enthusiasm continued unabated until Spanish troops quelled the revolt in April 1648.

This uprising in the name of the Madonna del Carmine put the city's religious orders on the spot. As the custodians of *la Bruna* and as mendicants, the Carmelites seemed to have aided and abetted the insurgents.[44] The Theatines and the Jesuits, meanwhile, sided with the pro-Spanish nobility. On the first night of the rebellion, the Theatines staged a procession on Via Toledo, the boulevard built by Spanish viceroys to link the Spanish Quarter to the viceregal palace. Contemporary observers noted that the Theatines had put on their "surplices […] (which is highly unusual for them)" to alert onlookers to the gravity of the situation as they implored divine aid and a quick return to the status quo

40 On Masaniello and the brown scapular, see Bartolommeo Capasso, *La casa e la famiglia di Masaniello: Ricordi della storia e della vita napolitana nel secolo XVII* (Naples: Francesco Giannini e figli, 1919), 141; and Aurelio Musi, *Masaniello: Il* masaniellismo *e la degradazione di un mito* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2019), 18. Capasso, *La casa*, 219, reproduces another contemporary painting by an anonymous artist that also features Masaniello wearing the brown scapular. According to Capasso (p. 151), the painting was part of the collection of the Rospigliosi family housed at its villa in Lamporecchio in 1919. I have not been able to locate the painting.

41 Donzelli, *Partenope liberata*, 31–33; Silvana D'Alessio, *Masaniello: The Life and Afterlife of a Neapolitan Revolutionary*, trans. Thomas V. Cohen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 120.

42 Representatives of the elite even sought to weaponize the popularity of the scapular. Handing out scapulars with the Madonna del Carmine on one side and a portrait of King Philip IV on the other, they promised those who wore them that they would go straight to paradise (which must have offered them little comfort when they were inevitably outed as "royalists" by the popular army and condemned to death by hanging). See De Santis, *Historia del tumulto di Napoli*, 410–411.

43 Donzelli, *Partenope liberata*, 136.

44 There is no systematic analysis of the role of the religious orders during the revolt. At least one Carmelite was part of the insurgence. See D'Alessio, *Masaniello*, 56. Moreover, Masaniello hid in the Carmelite convent. One contemporary observer mentions that the Carmelites, along with the Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Augustinians, to whom he refers as "the four mendicant religions [orders]," attended Masaniello's funeral. See Innocenzo Fuidoro, *Successi historici raccolti dalla sollevatione di Napoli dell'anno 1647*, ed. Anna Maria Giraldi and Marina Raffaeli (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1994), 373.

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Fig. 1 Domenico Gargiulo, *La rivolta di Masaniello*, after 1648, oil on canvas, 126 x 177 cm, Naples, Certosa e Museo Nazionale di San Martino. Courtesy of Fototeca e Laboratorio fotografico della Direzione regionale Musei Campania.

ante.[45] In a sermon, a Jesuit praised the farsighted governance of the Spanish viceroys.[46] The rebels would have none of it. They argued that not only had the Jesuits and the Theatines failed to support simple folk when the government upped indirect taxation, but now that ordinary Neapolitans had finally had enough, these religious were also coming out to bat for the elite. As one chronicler would later summarize the thinking of the popular movement, "The good fathers [the Jesuits] were applying themselves so vigorously not for the public good but for their particular interests": it was common knowledge that their "land and large possessions" were "exempt from taxes," which allowed them to turn "inestimable profits from those [levies] of the public, all while caring little whether or not such gains were appropriate for good and pious clerics regular ("religiosi")."[47] The Theatines were possibly even more wedded to the Spanish fiscal-military state than the Jesuits, with up to 25 percent of their income stemming

45 Donzelli, *Partenope liberata*, 14.

46 Alessandro Giraffi, *Le Rivolutioni di Napoli descritte dal Signor Alessandro Giraffi: Con pienissimo ragguaglio d'ogni successo, e trattati secreti, e palesi* (Venice: Per il Baba, 1647), 35–36.

47 De Santis, *Historia del tumulto di Napoli*, 56.

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from speculation on the monarchy's tax-farming schemes and government bonds.[48] When the religious orders in Naples had to pick a side, the Theatines knew where their loyalties lay.

As the revolt dragged on, the Theatines positioned themselves as vehement defenders of the viceroys and their aristocratic clients.[49] The routine denigration of that group's antagonist—the populace—continued even when the uprising had long been crushed. In the 1650s, Stefano Pepe, a prominent Theatine preacher, disparaged Masaniello as being "of a short body, ample ignorance, and robust impiety," qualities that stemmed from his low birth in a milieu prone to petty crime. The dynamics of the revolt themselves were rendered through references to Greek mythology: the populace was "a monster" who, "born from sordid earth and an ugly family like Antaeus," had dared to "take on the Hercules of Spain." "Made big by great ignorance and temerity," the ogre from the Mercato neighborhood had joined forces with "others, who were also titans, born from earth of the dirtiest sort," to "turn on Jupiter their monarch, but they are always struck by lightning from that heaven."[50] By railing against a feral underclass, Pepe cast the Theatines as the advocates of the well-born, pure-blooded aristocrats allied with Spanish royalty.

Playing to the same gallery as Pepe, Maggio recognized the value of Benincasa and her association with the Virgin Immaculate. Not only was this advocation a potent symbol of Habsburg power, but Mary's conception without the stain of original sin had long appealed to a nobility that prided itself on its pristine lineage.[51] In the Neapolitan context, the Virgin Immaculate therefore constituted the perfect antidote to the Madonna del

48 Income from this source plummeted after the revolt. Campanelli, *I teatini*, 42–46. The rest of the Theatines' income came from alms and donations. As in other provinces, the Neapolitan Theatines showed little interest in real estate and landholding. Ibid., 40–41, 49–53. Also see the edited reports of the Neapolitan houses from 1649 in ibid., 255–295.

49 On the close relationship between the Theatines and the local aristocracy, see Andreu, "I teatini," 233–234, 245–246, 267, 278, and Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno*, 371, 397–398. For a *longue durée* perspective, see the few hints in Elisa Novi Chavarria, "I Teatini e il 'governo delle anime' (secoli XVI–XVII)," in *Sant'Andrea Avellino e i teatini nella Napoli del viceregno spagnolo*, ed. Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro (Naples: D'Auria Editore, 2011), 273–286, 281–282.

50 All quotes are from Stefano Pepe, *Quaresimale: Con trè copiosissime Tavole; la prima de gl'Argomenti delle Prediche; la seconda delle cose notabili, e la terza della Sacra Scrittura* (Venice: Francesco Storti, 1658), 385. Musi, *Masaniello*, 67–70, offers a detailed analysis of this sermon.

51 Jean-Frédéric Schaub, "La mácula como recurso político en las sociedades ibéricas de la época moderna," in *La Inmaculada Concepción y la Monarquía Hispánica*, ed. José Javier Ruiz Ibáñez and Gaetano Sabatini (Madrid: FCE, Red Columnaria, 2019), 61–83; Estrella Ruiz-Gálvez Priego, "Du péché originel au péché des origines: Évolution et socialisation de la notion de *macula* (Espagne XIII^{e}–XVII^{e} siècles)," in *L'Immaculisme: Un imaginaire religieux dans sa projection sociale*, ed. eadem (Paris: Indigo, 2009), 98–126. For a more general discussion of "race" as a marker of noble distinction, see Jean-Frédéric Schaub and Silvia Sebastiani, *Race et histoire dans les sociétés occidentales (XV^{e}–XVIII^{e} siècle)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2021), 19–86.

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Carmine, now irredeemably sullied, in the aristocratic imagination, by her bond with the depraved populace. As early as 1647, the year the revolt broke out, Habsburg loyalists gathered in the church of Benincasa's nunnery to venerate a new wooden statue of the Immaculata to ward off the popular threat to their preeminence.[52] While Maggio's role in this particular devotion remains hazy, he did lead the charge on the formulation of the cult of the scapular of the Immaculate Conception, on which he seems to have started writing at the exact moment the populace put on the brown scapular of the Madonna del Carmine.[53] Deeply worried about the plebs turning the world upside down, Maggio seems to have devised the blue scapular as an alternative for hispanophile nobles desperate to put distance between themselves and the votaries of the brown scapular of the Carmine.

By the 1660s, the local aristocracy was lapping up this new religious offer. For the Aragón brothers, the cult aligned with their overall agenda. As viceroys of Naples, they were spearheading an ambitious program to shore up the monarchy's aristocratic support base in the wake of the revolt.[54] To do so, they endorsed a number of local religious communities and practices.[55] None, however, was closer to their hearts than the cult of the Immaculate Conception. Indeed, Pascual had been Spanish ambassador to Rome before being appointed viceroy of Naples, and in that capacity, he had proved instrumental in the partial recognition of the cult of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Alexander VII Chigi (r. 1655–1667).[56] As viceroy of Naples, he successfully expanded the right to celebrate the Iberian office and mass of the Immaculate Conception to Spanish Italy, including Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia.[57] As a member of the high nobility, he visibly understood the attractiveness of a cult insisting on genealogical purity for a nobility whose authority had been challenged by an underclass with no pedigree.

From the vantage point of the elite conglomerate at the top of the social pyramid, the blue scapular was a tangible expression of the belief in the inseverable ties with Spain. Excogitated in response to a local conflict, this piece of fabric could be placed in the service of an attempt to strengthen the bond between the viceroys and Spanish loyalists among the local nobility. Thanks to Maggio's nous, the representatives of the Spanish king had a sartorial gadget that was at once grounded in local society and yoked to the world-spanning empire of the Spanish monarchs. What materialized in the cerulean scapular was what William A. Christian has called "a kind of double consecration": "the

52 Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 98–99.

53 The official historiographer of the Theatines admits as much: Andreu, "L'abitino ceruleo," 113–114.

54 Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes*, 216–233.

55 Ibid., 368–418.

56 For an overview of these negotiations between Rome and Madrid, see Paolo Broggio, "'Diplomazia teologica' spagnola e Curia romana nella genesi della bolla 'Sollicitudo' di Alessandro VII (1661)," *Chronica nova* 42 (2016): 167–194.

57 Carrió-Invernizzi, *El gobierno de las imágenes*, 394.

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consecration of local religious objects by the attention of the king and the consecration of the king by the local religious powers."[58] In a city still reeling from the revolt, the blue scapular caught on because it welded together the Spanish royal family (represented by the viceroys) and their aristocratic subjects in Italy through a local riff on the pan-Hispanic cult of the Immaculate Conception.

While support for the scapular from pro-Spanish grandees was unequivocal, the same could not be said of Maggio's Theatines, other orders, or the ecclesiastical hierarchy. More than a few Theatines initially tried to keep Maggio's writings on Benincasa under wraps. After he had completed his first manuscript on the topic in 1645, Prepositus General Gregorio Carafa forced Maggio to hand over all the books to his office.[59] Not satisfied with the prepositus' action, other confrères intervened with the local and curial establishment to halt the publication of Maggio's book. In 1648, the Congregation of Rites leaned on Ascanio Filomarino, the archbishop of Naples (ab. 1641–1666), to seize any books on Benincasa that Maggio had printed under a false name in Palermo to circumvent an earlier proscription in Naples.[60] As a longtime opponent of both the Spanish viceroys and the cult of the Immaculate Conception, Filomarino had a field day. He gleefully wrote to Antonio Barberini, the prefect of the Holy Office, enjoining him to vet the book as thoroughly as possible.[61] Although Maggio was eventually able to publish a second edition in Rome in 1655, that one also quickly ended up on the Index of Forbidden Books.[62]

The reasons for this clampdown are not easy to discern. In private, a Theatine admitted that his confrères had taken issue with Maggio's characterization of Benincasa as a member of the Clerics Regular.[63] The official rationale, by contrast, invoked arcane procedures: Maggio had passed Benincasa off as a blessed before Rome had made a formal decision on her pending beatification case.[64] Similarly at odds with the new rules governing official sainthood was the fact that the book was, in the words of Filomarino, "full of miracles."[65] As a visibly embarrassed Theatine would put it in the eighteenth

58 Christian, *Local Religion*, 158.

59 Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio," libro secondo, capitolo secondo: BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 49, unfoliated.

60 Heinrich Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Literaturgeschichte; Zweiter Band, erste Abteilung* (Bonn: Verlag Max Cohen & Söhne, 1885), 224; Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 211–212; Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio": BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 49, 46r–v.

61 Filomarino to Barberini, June 13, 1648, reproduced in Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, appendice 7, 254. On Filomarino's stance on the Immaculate Conception, see Giuseppe Mrozek Eliszezynski, "Un silenzio non casuale: Il cardinale Ascanio Filomarino e il culto dell'Immacolata Concezione (1641–1666)," in *La Vergine contesa: Roma, l'Immacolata Concezione e l'universalismo della Monarchia Cattolica, secc. XVII–XIX*, ed. Manfredi Merluzzi, Gaetano Sabatini, and Flavia Tudini (Rome: Viella, 2022), 265–277.

62 Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 197–198.

63 Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio," libro secondo, capitolo secondo: BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 49, unfoliated.

64 Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher*, 224.

65 Filomarino to Barberini, June 13, 1648, quoted in Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, appendice 7, 254.

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century, Maggio simply had gotten "carried away by his ardent spirit of devotion and piety," rattling on about "miracles" on which only curial institutions could pronounce.[66]

It cannot be excluded that one of these dubious wonders was the vision and the story of the scapular. Its usefulness to Maggio's project of establishing the hermitage and earning the support of members of the laity who would wear the scapular was indisputable. But the vision stood on shaky foundations: the only proof for it was an affidavit that an early disciple of Benincasa's had sworn at the request of an equally partial Theatine hagiographer.[67] Such were the doubts about the vision that when Maggio eventually managed to publish the first volume of his hagiography in 1666, the part referring to the vision was left out.[68]

Undeterred, Maggio chose to double down. After showering the city's worthies with the scapular in 1668, he published a *Compendioso ragguaglio della vita, morte, e monisteri della venerabil Madre D. Orsola Benincasa*, which boasted the controversial details that the censors had refused to clear for public release in 1666.[69] As if to troll his gainsayers, Maggio opened the compendium with a frontispiece that depicted the Virgin Immaculate handing the scapular down to a kneeling Orsola and Cajetan, the cofounder of the Theatines (Fig. 2). This was an ingenious move. Not only did this validate the veracity of the vision, which was explained in exhaustive detail in the book, but by roping in Cajetan, Maggio ensured that Benincasa was anointed as the founder of the female branch of the Theatines and the scapular was consecrated as an emblem of Theatine spirituality. To silence his internal critics, Maggio made sure to dedicate the book to the queen regent of Spain, Mariana (1634–1696), and her son, Charles II (1661–1700), powerful earthly protectors whom his fellow Theatines would be reluctant to defy.[70]

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66 Vezzosi, "Maggio, Francesco Maria," 15.

67 The "racconto della visione che Orsola ebbe il 2 febbraio 1617 per la Fondazione dell'eremo che Anna Battimelli scrive dietro richiesta di Lorenzo Santacroce" is quoted in full in Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, appendice 6, 250–251. Francesco Andreu, a Theatine scholar who looked at the testimonies given during the informative process shortly after Benincasa's death, could not help but conclude that none of the eyewitnesses mentioned the scapular. The scapular only became a prominent feature in the interviews conducted for the apostolic process in the eighteenth century when the cult was, of course, well established. See Andreu, "L'abitino ceruleo," 100–102. Although he is very careful in his wording, Andreu clearly states that there is no written evidence of the scapular's use before Maggio popularized it. See Andreu, "L'abitino ceruleo," 113–114.

68 Vezzosi, "Maggio, Francesco Maria," 15; Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 212–213. The manuscript version is Francesco Maria Maggio, "Della Vita della Venerabil Madre Ursula Benincasa, napolitana, originale da Siena, Fondatrice della Congregatione dell'Eremo delle Vergini Teatine dell'Ordine del B. Gaetano": BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 54.

69 Like earlier books, this one was proscribed, too. See Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher*, 224. Since it took the authorities five years to hand down that verdict, many copies of the book have survived.

70 See Maggio, *Compendioso ragguaglio*, section titled "Alla Serenissima D. Marianna d'Austria," n.p.

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Fig. 2 Frontispiece of Francesco Maria Maggio, *Compendioso ragguaglio della vita, morte, e monisteri della Venerabil Madre D. Orsola Benincasa* […] (Naples: Gio: Francesco Paci, 1669).

As the internal opposition to Maggio crumbled, rival orders grew more strident. The Franciscans drummed up the support of Archbishop Innico Caracciolo (ab. 1667–1685) to argue that the Theatines had no serious track record of veneration to the Virgin Immaculate and that the blue scapular was a novelty made up to lure the devout away from Franciscan churches and "take all the alms" from that religious family.[71] The Carmelites' charges were even more serious. As Caracciolo griped, "with this scapular, as with other devotions it had invented, the Theatine Order wanted to take the bread out of the mouth of the Carmelites."[72] The Carmelites themselves similarly groused that the scapular was a "devotion that has once more been opportunistically invented" to bring grist to the mill of the Theatines.[73]

Not everyone shared these qualms about Maggio's "inventions." For the beneficiaries of such stories, the word "invention" did not denote outright forgeries. As Antonio Rubial García explains, "to 'invent' was not to fabricate falsehood, as it is for us, but to recount reality." Religious writers in the seventeenth century "placed greater emphasis on the moral teaching than the fact[s]," taking liberties to fill in gaps in the

71 Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio": BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 49, 238r–239r (quote at 238r).

72 Ibid., 238v.

73 Francesco Maria Maggio, *S. Gaetano a' piedi della Immacolata Signora, o vero Corona di dodici stelle, o Ragioni chiare risplendenti agli occhi di tutti* (Naples: Novello de Bonis, 1672), 87.

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historical record to retell the past as it ought to have been rather than as it really was.[74] Jesuits and Trinitarians who had a particularly creative way of dealing with holes in the historical record saw their inventions not just as fibs but as playing an essential part in manufacturing a usable past for their communities.[75] This historiographical mode was widespread in southern Italy as well: as Sara Cabibbo and Stefania Tutino have demonstrated, religious scriveners in Maggio's Palermo and Naples were no strangers to the "invention" of convenient religious truths tailored to the needs of influential interest groups.[76] Outside the field of religion, aristocratic families similarly liked to play fast and loose with the historical record, constructing progressively more "incredible genealogies" to advance their claims in an aristocratic society in which seniority was a bountiful fount of privilege.[77] By centering Benincasa and the Virgin Immaculate, Maggio knitted together these two complementary traditions: he hatched a local cult suffused with the genealogical thinking so dear to his audience. With his groveling tale, he secured the protection of Naples' hispanophile elite even when other religious orders questioned his bona fides. Betraying the composite nature of early modern Catholicism, Maggio played off ecclesiastical actors against entrenched secular powerholders to initiate a new devotion.[78]

With influential aristocrats caping for him, Maggio charged ahead. In January 1671, he and Viceroy Aragón journeyed to Rome to have the scapular recognized as a local cult. After their entreaties, Pope Clement X Altieri (r. 1670–1676) granted any Neapolitan garbed in the *abitino* a series of indulgences.[79] A few months later, in August, the Neapolitan Theatines celebrated the canonization of the cofounder of their order, Caje-

74 Antonio Rubial García, "St. Palafox: Metaphorical Images of Disputed Sainthood," in *Colonial Saints: Discovering the Holy in the Americas, 1500–1800*, ed. Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York: Routledge, 2003), 193–207, 193–194.

75 Olds, *Forging the Past*; A. Katie Harris, *The Stolen Bones of St. John of Matha: Forgery, Theft, and Sainthood in the Seventeenth Century* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2023), 57–105.

76 Sara Cabibbo, *Santa Rosalia tra terra e cielo: Storia, rituali, linguaggi di un culto barocco* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2004); Stefania Tutino, *A Fake Saint and the True Church: The Story of a Forgery in Seventeenth-Century Naples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

77 Roberto Bizzocchi, *Genealogie incredibili: Scritti di storia nell'Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

78 Christian Windler, "Early Modern Composite Catholicism from a Global Perspective," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and Birgit Emich (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 55–85.

79 Gaietà Rossell i Clivillers, "L'abitino ceruleo dell'Immacolata Concezione: Storia, rito di benedizione ed imposizione, fraternite e confraternita dell'immacolata famiglia secolare teatina" (unpublished manuscript, Rome: Chierici Regolari Teatini, 2001), 25. I was able to consult this manuscript in the AGT.

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tan of Thiene.[80] In an unmistakable sign that the internal opposition to Maggio had evaporated, the Theatines adopted the frontispiece of Maggio's book on Benincasa as the standard that was exhibited in Naples in celebration of Cajetan's elevation to the honors of the altar. Maggio had finally made it: not only had he established the hermitage, but his confrères had implicitly recognized Benincasa as the female counterpart of Cajetan. Most importantly, however, the blue scapular had become an integral part of the Theatine brand and a symbol of the civic religiosity they had long tried to infuse into the city. As Neapolitans feted Cajetan, they joined the first confraternity of the scapular, anchoring the new cult in the city.[81] What had started life as a cult to reinforce aristocratic supremacy was morphing into a mass phenomenon through which the former insurgents were reintegrated into a social order based on bloodlines.

Maggio was too much of a penman not to savor his victory in a new publication on the events. In a book ostensibly dedicated to Cajetan and the Virgin Immaculate, he claimed, with some justification, that the Immaculata "is today the principal protectress and patroness of this Kingdom."[82] Thanks to the scapular, the Virgin Immaculate, that symbol of the Spanish Habsburgs, was revered in a distinct Neapolitan way. More significantly, the novel devotion had potential for growth outside this imperial outpost. It may have been spawned by the social tensions marring Spanish Naples, but its very materiality meant that it could be readily transposed to other parts of the Catholic world as a Neapolitan contribution to the emerging pan-Hispanic cult of the Immaculate Conception.

3. Exporting: How Theatines Turned a Local and Aristocratic Devotion into a Global and Popular Cult

Though deeply rooted in its local context, the scapular had always been meant for exportation. From the earliest manuscript version of the vision, Maggio detailed how the angels carrying the blue scapular "went and came back from every part of the world, bringing aid and succor to all nations," which he construed as proof positive "that the devotion to this little habit would be spread and propagated everywhere."[83] Maggio played an active part in making that come to pass. As early as the 1650s, he gave the Discalced Carmelite Placido di Santa Teresa the permission to bless and distribute the

80 Marcella Campanelli, "Sant'Andrea Avellino e i Teatini a Napoli tra XVI e XVII secolo," in *Sant'Andrea Avellino e i Teatini nella Napoli del viceregno spagnolo: Arte, religione, società*, ed. Domenico Antonio D'Alessandro (Naples: D'Auria Editore, 2011), 195–224, 205.

81 Maggio, *S. Gaetano a' piedi della Immacolata Signora*, 122.

82 Ibid., 1.

83 Maggio, "Della Vita della Venerabil Madre Ursula Benincasa," libro II, capo secondo: BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 54, unfoliated.

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scapular in the Spanish Netherlands.[84] Once the papacy had recognized the devotion in 1671, Maggio's efforts intensified. Between December 1673 and January 1674, he traveled to Messina, a major city in his native Sicily, where he dispensed scapulars to both the secular and ecclesiastical elites in much the same way he had done with the Spanish viceroy and the *eletti* in Naples four years earlier.[85] Thanks to other Theatines, the scapular was introduced to Spanish Milan, where in 1688 Archbishop Federico Visconti (ab. 1682–1693) inaugurated an oratory in which the Virgin Immaculate was honored every Saturday by the members of a confraternity dedicated to the blue scapular.[86] Within Spanish Italy, then, the cult was quickly integrated into the repertoire, with Catholics vaunting it as a specifically Italian contribution to the Hispanic cult of the Immaculate Conception.

While the earliest cities to embrace the scapular were within the orbit of Spain, the cult slowly trickled down to other entities as well. By the end of the seventeenth century, Italian cities with looser ties to the Habsburgs emulated Naples, Messina, and Milan: Cremona, Brescia and Verona, Piacenza, Modena, Mantua, Bologna, and Genoa all welcomed it in their midst.[87] Theatine exporters also made forays into the Central European cities of Innsbruck, Prague, and Vienna.[88] In 1696, Munich saw the launch of a German booklet whose author, a Bavarian Theatine, hawked the scapular as a Neapolitan devotion that deserved to be better known outside that city. Benincasa, readers were told, had founded a civic religion in which the Virgin Immaculate protected "persons of high estate" ("hohe Stadts-Persohnen"), including "the Neapolitan Viceroy and Vicereine in addition to many other princely persons and the most distinguished [members] of the nobility."[89]

Before long, other "princely persons" espoused the scapular. When the War of the Spanish Succession broke out, a cluster of precarious sovereigns converted to its cause.

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84 Bagatta, *Vita della Ven. Serva di Dio Orsola Benincasa*, 428; Innocenzo Raffaello Savonarola, *Compendio della origine, propagazione, indulgenze, e grazie dell'abitino ceruleo della Immacolata Concezion di Maria, che si benedice con Autorità Apostolica da' PP. Cherici Regolari detti comunemente Teatini, cavato da' più copiosi di Roma, Parma, Torino, e Genova* (Naples/Urbino/Padua: Gio. Battista Conzatti [no year, but after 1712]), 7.

85 Maggio, "Vita del P. Fr. Maria Maggio": BCP, ms. 3 Qq D 49, 264r–265r.

86 Angelo Maria de Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio del Tesoro Celeste dell'Abitino dell'Immacolata Concezzione di Maria dato negl'ultimi secoli dall'istessa Vergine alla Ven. Serva di Dio Suor Orsola Benincasa Fondatrice delle Moniche Romite della Concezzione," Foligno, 1731: Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (hereafter ACDF), DF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 220v. This manuscript was never published. See Fiorelli, *Una santa della città*, 89.

87 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 5–7; *Cenno storico sull'abitino ceruleo*, 17–19.

88 De Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio": ACDF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 221r.

89 Johann Baptist Lerchenfeldt, *Marianische Versamblung under einem himmelblauen Scapulier der alleinig von der Erbsünd befreyten Tochter Adae, und jungfräulichen Mutter Iesu: Sicher nach einem geringen Fegfeuer das himmlische Hierusalem zu erlangen* (Munich: Johann Jäcklin, 1696), 13–14.

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In Italy, ruling dynasties whose royal status was in the balance extended their traditional devotion of the Virgin Immaculate to the scapular as they sought heavenly protection in their quest for a royal crown.[90] This was as true of the grand duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III Medici (1642–1723), as it was of the House of Savoy. The latter's regent, Duchess Anne Marie d'Orléans (1669–1728), chose to celebrate the highly significant lifting of the siege of Turin in 1706 by taking the scapular from the Theatines, with whom the Savoys had long had a privileged rapport.[91] The last thing that could be said of this initiative is that it was unhelpful: shortly after the embrace of the scapular, in 1712, the House of Savoy secured the crown of the Kingdom of Sicily (to be swapped out with Sardinia a few years later).

The scapular failed to work a similar miracle for its most famous acolyte. Charles of Habsburg (1685–1740) had been familiar with the little habit since his father, Emperor Leopold I (1640–1705), had received it during the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683.[92] As he pretended to the Spanish throne following the extinction of the Madrid Habsburgs in 1700, the Virgin Immaculate was a decisive asset to his military campaign. Upon entering Barcelona in 1706, Charles took the scapular from a Theatine, Pietro Cavalcanti, to celebrate his transient rule of Spain as the Habsburg successor of Charles II. Charles III may have been as enthusiastic a devotee of the scapular as the Savoys, but his luck ran out when the Bourbons crushed his royal ambitions.[93]

As Europe's precarious royals clamored for the scapular, Theatine authors claimed that it was taking the rest of the Catholic world by storm. In 1701, Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710) was entrusted with a papal mission to Asia to address the simmering controversies surrounding the Chinese and Malabar rites. As he set out to administer the growing diversity of Catholicism, he and his entourage wanted to "arm themselves" with the blue scapular.[94] They left Rome with the faculty of the prepositus general of the Theatines, Paolo Leonardelli, to bless the *abitini* and hand them out to the faithful along the way. According to Theatine lore, the delegation made it a point to meet Theatine missionaries stationed in Asia, who gladly acted as multipliers of the scapular in local communities. As one Theatine would later boast, the precious shield was making new converts in "Mingrelia, Iberia, Colchis, Persia, Armenia, Russia,

90 Robert Oresko, "The House of Savoy in Search for a Royal Crown in the Seventeenth Century," in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Reginald Hatton*, ed. Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 272–350; Toby Osborne, "The Surrogate War between the Savoys and the Medici: Sovereignty and Precedence in Early Modern Italy," *International History Review* 29, no. 1 (2007): 1–21.

91 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 6–7; De Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio": ACDF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 221v.

92 *Cenno storico sull'abitino ceruleo*, 20.

93 Manuscript titled "Si aggiungono alcuni progressi seguiti nel tempo, in cui è restata sospesa la Stampa di questo libretto", capitolo 9: AGT, R 370, unfoliated.

94 De Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio": ACDF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 221v.

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Transylvania, Goa, and Borneo, where our fathers have their missions."[95] In making this bold assertion, he conveniently glossed over the fact that the Theatine presence in these places was at best negligible and at worst nonexistent.[96]

As they staked a claim to widespread veneration, Theatines told the story of the scapular as one of flight, implicitly likening it to the Miraculous Flying House of Loreto, which their rivals, the Jesuits, had imparted to Catholics the world over in the seventeenth century.[97] A book by Giovanni Bagatta (1645–1702) recounted the tale of the scapular from Benincasa's vision up until its alleged conquest of the Catholic world. While it mostly rehashed Maggio's writings for the hagiographical part, the subsequent story of the scapular's diffusion was presented as a soaring motion that needed no external propulsion. Possibly preempting criticism of the self-aggrandizing narrative of others, Bagatta attributed the miraculous dispersal of the scapular to divine intervention: "the fame of such a devotion and such a treasure has flown not only to Naples and its Kingdom, but to many major cities of Italy, such as Milan, Venice, Genoa, to Spain, Flanders, Germany, Portugal, and other more distant provinces, even to where our order is not present."[98]

The Almighty may have been on the Theatines' side; the papacy was still on the fence. The Roman Curia balked at the fact that the cult had taken flight without papal approval. It finally lurched forward when another Theatine, Gaetano Maria Grondana, published a short overview of the indulgences attached to the scapular.[99] Grondana, based his explications on the brief that Maggio and Viceroy Aragón had obtained from Clement X in 1671 and extended those indulgences to the Church Universal. When the Holy Office began to pore over the booklet, this generous interpretation of the papal brief was not the only irregularity the cardinals picked up. In a trial that commenced in 1704, the inquisitors concluded that the Theatine had mixed and matched indulgences that had either fallen into abeyance or been granted to religious orders other than the Theatines and often enough only applied to regular clerics rather than laypeople, as the Theatine claimed.[100] The Holy Office had no time for Grondana's copying and pasting. The Inquisition is often seen as the epitome of Roman centralism. In this instance, however, the cardinals bolstered a vision of Catholicism as a pluralistic community of

95 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 8–9.

96 I thank Christian Windler for pointing this out to me. For an overview of the Theatine missions in Asia, see Annibale Spalla, "Le missioni teatine nelle Indie orientali nel sec. XVIII e le cause della loro fine," *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 27, no. 97 (1971): 1–76; *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 27, no. 98 (1971): 265–305; *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 29, no. 99 (1973): 3–37.

97 Vélez, *The Miraculous Flying House of Loreto*.

98 Bagatta, *Vita della Ven. Serva di Dio Orsola Benincasa*, 428.

99 The title was "Sucinto ragguaglio dell'abitino che si dispensa da' Padri Teatini ad onore dell'Immacolata Concezione di Maria Vergine Padrona e Titolare delle Vergini Teatine Romite fondate dalla Venerabile Suor Orsola Benincasa." I have been unable to locate an original version of this particular book.

100 Brief titled "Sopra l'Indulgenza de Padri Teatini," dated April 22, 1704: ACDF, S.O., St.st., H 3-m.

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faith in which local particularisms could not easily be translated to the global stage and the privileges of one order could not simply be passed on to other communities.[101]

For the Theatines, much was at stake. If they were not allowed to promote the scapular on a global scale, they stood to lose much symbolically and possibly economically in the sacred economy of the age.[102] Grondana's rebuttal of the charges against his order evinces as much: according to the papers of the Holy Office, he maintained that the scapular was for the Theatines what the rosary and the cord of St. Francis were for the Dominicans and the Franciscans, and that the Theatines should therefore be granted the right to distribute their devotional article of choice worldwide, like the other orders had been doing with theirs.[103]

As he mounted his order's defense, Grondana summoned both the royal backers and the worldwide mass base of the scapular that the order's publicists had written into existence. An instruction, quite possibly jotted down by a Florentine diplomat, encouraged the grand duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III, to "offer his efficacious and most powerful protection" to Father Grondana. To support the Theatine, the memorandum explained, Cosimo should reach out to Clement XI and urge the pope to grant "all the indulgences for the dead and the living for this scapular and whoever wears it after rightfully receiving it from the [Theatine] Order or any of its deputies."[104] It is not clear whether Cosimo followed through, though a letter he wrote to Grondana would suggest as much: "What I have done to obtain the indulgences for that devotion I owe to the honor of the Most Blessed Virgin and to the esteem [I have] of your institute."[105] In his own petition to Clement XI, Grondana adduced the requests for the scapular that had been pouring in from all over the world from "the peoples who are asking for it with great fervor." Given this growing demand, Grondana continued, the pontiff could not help but "comfort, with the extension of the brief [of Clement X to the Church Universal], the many souls who are as ravenous ('fameliche') for [the scapulars] as they

101 This tracks with Birgit Emich's argument that the early modern Church was not interested in uniformizing Catholic orthopraxy so much as in administering the growing diversity among Catholics. See Birgit Emich, "Uniformity and Polycentricity: The Early Modern Papacy between Promoting Unity and Handling Diversity," in *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities*, ed. Andreea Badea, Bruno Boute, and eadem (Cologne: Böhlau, 2023), 33–53.

102 A. Katie Harris, "Gift, Sale, and Theft: Juan de Ribera and the Sacred Economy of Relics in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Journal of Early Modern History* 18 (2014): 193–226, 198.

103 Brief "Sopra l'indulgenze dell'habitino" written by an anonymous "Mons.r Ill.mo Assessore": ACDF, S.O., St. st., H 3-m.

104 Note beginning with "Altezza Reale": AGT, R 370, unfoliated.

105 Cosimo III to Grondana, Florence, December 6, 1707: AGT, R 370, unfoliated. On Cosimo's relations with the Theatines and his support of the scapular, see Enrico Bini, "Cosimo III de' Medici granduca di Toscana e i chierici regolari teatini," *Regnum Dei: Collectanea Theatina* 55, no. 125 (1999): 155–178, 173–174.

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are deprived of them and unable to procure them."[106] Grondana's wish was granted. Overruling the Holy Office, Clement XI furnished the Theatines with the indulgences on two separate occasions, in 1710 and 1712.[107] Thanks to his aristocratic allies and his willingness to grossly exaggerate the extent of the cult, Grondana had turned the local Neapolitan cult of the scapular into one of the Church Universal.

This major win for the order entailed a massive campaign to popularize the cult. Its success hinged on the Theatines' ability to erase the cult's aristocratic, indeed anti-popular, origins. To do so, the order resorted to the production of cheap prints that familiarized an expanding reading public with the scapular.[108] In these publications, the devotion's genesis underwent a thorough revision. Granted, the booklets were still teeming with stories of kings and queens who had flaunted the scapular. But unlike in earlier writings, the invocation of "the most illustrious and notable persons of Europe"[109] scrambling for the *abitino* no longer served the purpose of proselytizing among the high and mighty. Rather, they were a marketing tool meant to foster a parasocial relationship between these elites and the intended audience in a bid to inveigle ordinary Catholics into emulating their social betters.

This reframing of the cult went hand in hand with motions to present the devotion as something accessible to everyone. These efforts were inextricably linked to the slow transformation of the cult of the Immaculate Conception itself. In the age of Enlightenment, as ideas of melioration gained traction, the cult edged away from being a plaything of a nobility obsessed with blood purity and was reborn as a devotion that reminded Christians of the corruption of humans and the resulting inability of men and women born with the stain of original sin to govern the world without God.[110] The scapular was at once a material reminder of that stark reality and a way to individually atone for these sins. In a typical passage, one popular text on the *abitino* suggested that the Virgin Immaculate had encouraged Orsola Benincasa to fling on the scapular in order to "sanctify and purify the faithful of every blame ('colpa')."[111]

106 Grondana to Clement XI, undated draft: AGT, R 370, unfoliated.

107 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 5, 10.

108 For an overview of the genre, see Mario Rosa, "L'Arsenal divoto': Libri e letture religiose nell'età moderna," in *Libri per tutti: Generi editoriali di larga circolazione tra antico regime ed età contemporanea*, ed. Lodovica Braida and Mario Infelise (Novara: De Agostini, 2016), 79–105.

109 Ignazio Lodovico Bianchi, *Divoto essercizio di nove giorni in onore di San Gaetano, Fondatore de' Chierici Regolari detti Teatini: Da praticarsi in nove Domeniche, o Feste, o Mercordì, o altri giorni avanti, o dopo la Festa del Santo. E una Divozione a. S. Andrea Cherico Regolare contro gli Accidenti Apoplettici, e Morte improvvisa. Con la Notizia dell'Abitino dell'Immacolata Concezione, che si dispensa da' Padri Teatini* (Rome: Per il Puccinelli, 1761), 71.

110 Daniele Menozzi, *Il potere delle devozioni: Pietà popolare e uso politico dei culti in età contemporanea* (Rome: Carocci, 2022), 27–61.

111 De Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio": ACDF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 219v.

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The embrace of the masses also shines through in a new section that was added to the publications: the leaflets now vaunted a chapter that expatiated on the miracles that the scapular had wrought. Handwritten notes in the Theatine archive suggest that the order collected these deeds, many of which later popped up in crisper, more dramatic versions in the various circulars printed and reprinted throughout the eighteenth century.[112] Like other booklets of this genre, the miracle accounts blended spiritual relief with entertainment in an attempt to appeal to new readers with shorter attention spans and a thirst for exciting plot twists.[113]

If the texts' form was telling enough, their content was even more revelatory of the intended readership: the miracle reports boasted a roster of *miraculés* with whom ordinary readers could easily relate. Indeed, the average protagonists of these stories were not bluebloods but ordinary young women. Consider, for instance, this story of a "maiden" ("fanciulla") from Rome. "Possessed by evil spirits," she was able to put an end to "that fury that was ripping apart her bosom" by placing "this most powerful shield of the little habit of the Immaculate Candor of Mary on her chest." Upon seeing this "celestial armor, the evil spirit, who could no longer stand nestling in the chest that this holy immaculate sign now covered," took flight one night, "freeing that suffering body," though not without tearing apart the scapular on his way out.[114] This close call with the devil, the author wants his readers to believe, precipitated a sudden conversion from what are probably allusions to a libertine lifestyle, a major concern of Catholic reforms directed at women at the time. In this and in many other similar stories, cheap thrills, combined with heavy sexual innuendo, were placed in the service of policing the sexuality of female readers.[115]

If consumers nevertheless found solace in these disciplinary narratives, this may well have been because the scapular also seemed to protect them from unwanted sexual advances. The lion's share of protagonists in these stories was made up of women at the mercy of more powerful men. One particularly striking vignette featured a girl forced to perform sartorial work for her stepfather, who was introduced as a member of the professional class ("un dottore").[116] As striking as the use of tropes from well-known fairy tales is the fact that this exploitation often had a sexual component. Story after story showcased impecunious young women performing domestic labor in the intimacy

112 File titled "Grazie ottenute dalla Vergine SS.a per mezzo del S. Abitino": AGT, R 370, unfoliated.

113 On the books of this genre, known as *devozioncelle*, and their intended audience, see Samuel Weber, "Father Pepe's House of Cards: Jesuits, Cheap Print, and Material Devotion in Eighteenth-Century Catholicism," *Journal of Modern History* 97, no. 2 (2025): 269–306.

114 De Orgio, "Succinto Raguaglio": ACDF, S.O., C.L. 1729–1732, 19, f. 222v.

115 On the origins of the project of disciplining female readers, see Xenia von Tippelskirch, *Sotto controllo: Letture femminili in Italia nella prima età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2011).

116 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 13.

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of the households of affluent men where sexual harassment and rape were rife.[117] In a typical tale, a "girl" was "possessed by the devil" and "felt how all of a sudden he pulled the strings of the holy scapular so that she almost suffocated." Though she was able to scare off the attacker "with the names of Mary and Cajetan, which she uttered in those anxious moments," the fight between her and the devil ripped her "preservative" asunder. After praying to the Virgin Immaculate, she woke up from what in the story is recounted as a nightmare and thankfully found herself dressed in a shiny new armor.[118] Was this a clumsy attempt to speak about the sexual violence that was a grim reality for the growing number of young women who found employment as servants in the households of the well-to-do? In the absence of direct evidence of how readers responded to these texts, this remains little more than an educated guess. What is undoubtedly true, however, is that these miracle collections, both in their form and content, helped recast the aristocratic scapular born in opposition to the revolting populace in Spanish Naples into a universal cult that appealed to poor men and especially women struggling to get by.

By the early nineteenth century, the scapular's flight around the globe was seemingly complete. A booklet published in 1835 narrated the history of the scapular as a beeline from Naples to world domination. According to its imaginative author, Theatine missionaries had hauled the scapular to the Caucasus, Persia, parts of India (Golconda, the Coromandel Coast, the Deccan Plateau), China, Sumatra and Borneo, the British Isles, and East-Central Europe (Transylvania, Poland, and Russia).[119] Confraternities had mushroomed from Portugal to Poland. Whether this world dominance came even close to reality is a matter of debate—the petitions in the Theatine archive cited at the beginning of this piece would suggest that true globalization was achieved only toward the end of the nineteenth century. What is undisputed, however, is that this booklet stood in a long tradition of pompous Theatine writing in which wishful thinking about the order's influence all too often trumped hard facts.

While the global reach of the cult was questionable, the same could not be said of its popular base. In Naples, where it had once been the toy of the aristocracy, the scapular had become firmly anchored in popular piety by the middle of the nineteenth century. A folkloristic tome on the "customs and traditions" of Naples from 1858 featured a portrait of a female street vendor of religious articles and booklets waiting for customers outside the Carmine church. While the text asserts that she exclusively sold the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the accompanying watercolor (Fig. 3) suggests that the blue scapular of the Immaculate Conception was also on sale. As well as the image, the snide remarks of the author indicate that sporting these sacramentals had by that time

117 On domestic workers, see Marina Caffiero, "Servi, serve e padroni a Roma nel Settecento," *Studi storici* 38, no. 3 (1997): 835–844.

118 Savonarola, *Compendio della origine*, 11–12.

119 *Cenno storico sull'abitino ceruleo*, 26.

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Fig. 3 Pasquale Mattei, *La questuante della Madonna del Carmine*, watercolor, from *Usi e costumi di Napoli e contorni descritti e dipinti*, ed. Francesco de Bourcard, 2 vols. (Naples: G. Nobile, 1853–1858), II, plate preceding p. 253. CC PDM 1.0. Courtesy of ETH Library Zurich, e-rara platform.

become a practice of "popolani" like the burly woman peddling them alongside the requisite devotional manuals.[120]

The publications of the Theatines distilled the same ideal. In the new story dished out in the nineteenth century, the social origins of the cult among Naples' aristocracy were papered over. A book for English-speaking Catholics from the 1870s limned Orsola Benincasa, who was in her sixties and the darling of the city's elite at the time of the alleged vision, as "a very virtuous and pious young girl," presumably much like the intended readers of the brochure.[121] This latest distortion was perhaps befitting of a cult that had started out as an outright forgery. It certainly shows that the scapular had followed a similar trajectory as Catholicism as a whole: the aristocratic faith of the Counter-Reformation had slowly given way to a more populist and accessible religiosity in which women played a salient role.[122]

120 Bourcard, "Le questue in Napoli," 257.

121 *Origin of the Blue Scapular*, 1.

122 This is borne out by the profile of saints canonized in the eighteenth century. See Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540–1770*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 140–143. More generally, see Marina Caffiero, "From the Late Baroque Mystical Explosion to the Social Apostolate, 1650–1850," in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri, trans. Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 176–204.

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To conclude, then, the strange career of the once-aristocratic scapular percolating outward and downward bears out Mario Rosa's astute observation that the quest for universalism that pulsed through much of eighteenth-century Catholicism was contingent on the popularization of the faith.[123] The Theatines had long prided themselves on the aristocratic panache of their congregation. But as this social biography of the scapular has shown, they too had to pivot to commoners as they turned a local cult into a global affair.

123 Rosa, "L'Arsenal divoto," 101.

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Philipp Zwyssig

Local Benedictines and Foreign Capuchins?

Mediators between Local Religion and Universal Catholicism (Grisons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)

1. Introduction

When Capuchins from the Italian order's province of Brescia arrived in the Surselva (Grisons)[1] around the middle of the seventeenth century, they found themselves in a cultural landscape that had grown over centuries and remained Catholic during the Reformation: They encountered established cults of saints that were closely linked to the history of the Disentis Benedictines. Furthermore, they met a political culture that, for historical reasons, was strongly influenced by the monastery as the center of the abbey's secular domination (called *Casa Dei* or *Cadi*). And they came into contact with a political municipality led by a magistrate which by familial networks was still closely intertwined with the Benedictine convent. In contrast to the native Benedictines, the Capuchins came from outside and with a clear mission: On behalf of the Bishop of Chur and the Roman *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, they had to ensure intensified pastoral care for the Catholics, thereby preventing a further spreading of the Reformation. Moreover, they were to provide an adjustment of the local ecclesiastical life and devotion to the doctrine applied in Roman Catholicism since the Council of Trent (1545–1563). This almost inevitably brought the Capuchin missionaries into conflict with the Benedictine abbey, which had exerted political and religious influence on the surrounding parishes for centuries.

This paper shows that the competitive situation between the two religious orders resulted from various overlapping "cleavages"[2] in which the Capuchins and Benedictines each took different positions: firstly, an inner-ecclesiastical cleavage regarding the ques-

1 Located in the west of the Three Leagues (Grisons).

2 The concept originates from political science. It attempts to explain the results of elections and the emergence of party systems on the basis of historically grown cultural and social, potentially conflictive differences. Thus, a cleavage is a historically determined cultural or social line that divides individuals within a society into groups with differing interests, resulting in political conflict among these groups. – Cf. Seymour Martin Lipset and Rokkan Stein, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 1–64; Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

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tion of the appointment of parish priests; secondly, a foreign policy cleavage concerning the direction of foreign alliances to France or the Spanish Duchy of Milan; and thirdly, a cultural cleavage facing the fact that the Benedictines were usually recruited from the local society, while the Capuchin missionaries came from Italy.

In order to understand the dynamics of these cleavages and the options for action for local society resulting from the conflict situation between the two religious orders, an analytical (and equally metaphorical) category from the field of economics is used by assuming the existence of a contested "market" of religious remedies for healing and salvation. Conceptually and methodologically, reference can be made to the sociology of religion.[3] For Peter L. Berger and Laurence R. Iannaccone, religions can be described as "markets" in which people behave according to the principle of utility maximization: they evaluate which religious supply brings them the most returns in terms of redemption, salvation, or dealing with contingency and everyday life.[4] Independent of these sociological approaches, scholars in early modern history have spoken of "religious markets" to refer to the variety of supply of salvation and healing—confessionally different as well as everyday magical and ecclesiastical supplies—that coexisted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[5] It has been noted that "early modern Catholicism in particular, with its broad range of pastoral care supported by different actors […] allowed the faithful a choice determined by purpose and context."[6] Thus, the market metaphor with its emphasis on the dynamics of supply and demand seemed to fit particularly well for understanding early modern Catholicism. Yet Hillard von Thiessen has rightly argued that the market metaphor suggests a form of freedom of choice tied to a modern, liberal understanding of economics and consumption and thus cannot be applied to the early modern period.[7] Indeed, it is hardly questioned that the Catholic Confessional Church, as an institution that thought itself to possess the unique truth, had ways and means to enforce its own supply of salvation even in the face of resistance. Nevertheless, market dynamics can also arise even in hierarchical

3 For more details, see Philipp Zwyssig, *Täler voller Wunder. Eine katholische Verflechtungsgeschichte der Drei Bünde und des Veltlins (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)* (Affalterbach: Didymos-Verlag, 2018), 297–301.

4 Peter L. Berger, "Ein Marktmodell zur Analyse ökumenischer Prozesse," *Internationales Jahrbuch für Religionssoziologie* 1 (1965): 235–249; Laurence R. Iannaccone, "Religious Markets and the Economics of Religion," *Social Compass* 39 (1992): 123–131.

5 Dominik Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie. Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563–1614* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2005), here 31–32; Christine Kooi, "Converts and Apostates: The Competition for Souls in Early Modern Holland," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 92 (2001): 195–214, here 203.

6 Jens Ivo Engels and Hillard von Thiessen, "Glauben: Begriffliche Annäherungen anhand von Beispielen aus der Frühen Neuzeit," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 28 (2001): 333–357, here 344.

7 Hillard von Thiessen, "Das Sterbebett als normative Schwelle: Der Mensch in der Frühen Neuzeit zwischen irdischer Normenkonkurrenz und göttlichem Gericht," *Historische Zeitschrift* 295 (2012): 625–659, here 633–634.

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and cartel-like systems such as Roman Catholicism, as can be analytically derived from Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the "religious field." Bourdieu assumes that people have an intrinsic interest in religiosity, for example to cope with precarious situations.[8] Religious specialists, in turn, take advantage of this religious need to acquire a position of power within society by making "goods of salvation" available to the laypeople while excluding other supplies and suppliers from the "religious field."[9] Since these religious specialists consequently occupy a position of power in the "religious field," different actors compete for this position, whereby "the religious interests of different groups or classes of laypersons [are] capable of imposing on the church more or less important concessions and compromises."[10] According to Bourdieu, this creates a dynamic that—under certain circumstances—can change the "religious field" and at once the church's supply of religious practices. While Bourdieu relates this dynamic of competition to the opposition between "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy," this chapter shows that similar mechanisms also took place within Roman Catholicism, giving rise to various religious cultures that can be understood as "Local Religions."[11] William A. Christian introduced this term into research debates to emphasize that religion is always practiced religion and that religious practices are always "tied to a specific place somewhere," whereby "religion-as-practice carries with it a conservative bias, a resistance to changes imposed on the terms of outsiders."[12]

In the following, the two religious orders that competed for the role of priests and mediators of salvation in the Surselva will be presented. Subsequently, it will be shown that the Benedictines and the Capuchins met each other as competitors both in ecclesiastical and political matters. In a next step, the self-positioning of the two religious orders, which is particularly evident in conflictive situations, is analyzed. It will be described in detail how the rivalry between the religious orders affected the devotional practices and the landscape of cults in the *Cadi*.

8 Pierre Bourdieu, "Eine Interpretation der Religion nach Max Weber," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Religion; Schriften zur Kultursoziologie*, vol. 5, ed. Franz Schultheis and Stephan Egger (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 7–29, here 11–17.

9 Pierre Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," trans. Jenny B. Burnside, Craig Calhoun, and Leah Florence, *Comparative Social Research* 13, no. 1 (1991): 1–44, here 7.

10 Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure," 74–75

11 William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, NJ: University Press, 1981); Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, & Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

12 Christian, *Local Religion*, 178.

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Fig. 1 Gabriel Hecht/Jacob Müller, Monasterium Disertinensis (St. Gallen 1702). ZB Zürich, Graphische Sammlung, STF XVII, 125. The baroque monastery complex, including the monastery church, was built between 1685 and 1704. The monastery saints Sigisbert and Placidus are depicted on the left and right. Digitized by ZB Zürich, Public Domain Mark, https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-47049

2. Historically Entangled: Benedictines in Disentis

The origins of the Benedictine monastery in Disentis go back to the eighth century. The twelfth-century founding legend, the so-called *Passio Placidi*, tells of the Frankish monk Sigisbert who settled in Disentis with the support of a Churraetian landowner called Placidus.[13] Placidus got into a conflict with *Praeses* Victor, the secular administrator in *Raetia Curiensis*, and was murdered, whereupon Sigisbert created a burial place and probably initiated Placidus' veneration as a martyr. By around 750, a monastery had developed under the direction of an abbot. Bishop Tello, son of *Praeses* Victor, donated extensive property between Sagogn and Trun to the monastery in 765, probably as a gesture of atonement.[14] In 806, Charlemagne withdrew the monastery property from

13 Iso Müller, "Die Passio S. Placidi (ca. 1200)," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1952): 161–180, 257–278.

14 Cf. Elsanne Gilomen-Schenkel and Iso Müller, "Disentis," in *Helvetia Sacra*, vol. III/1.1: *Frühe Klöster, die Benediktiner und Benediktinerinnen in der Schweiz* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1986): 474–516, here 474–477; Daniel Schönbächler, "Disentis," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from March 17, 2010, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011490/2010-03-17/ (last accessed Jan. 4, 2025).

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the control of the diocese and assigned it to the royal estate; Disentis became an imperial abbey.[15]

The Disentis abbot had secular jurisdiction over the monastery's dominion (called *Casa Dei* or *Cadi*), which in the thirteenth century encompassed the Valleys Urseren and Vorderrhein down to Obersaxen. In 1395 and 1424, the abbots of Disentis, as sovereigns of the *Cadi*, played a decisive role in the formation of the Grey League and in the alliance with the League of the Ten Jurisdictions in 1471.[16] By this time, the communities in the *Cadi* had already achieved a certain degree of political self-government: a municipality (*Gerichtsgemeinde*) was formed under the chairmanship of a *Landamman*.[17] Yet in ecclesiastical terms its influence grew in 1491, when nine parishes were incorporated into the abbey.[18] But as a result of the Reformation and the *Ilanz Articles* of 1524 and 1526, the rights of the abbey were diminished: in 1526, the right to nominate parish priests (*Präsentationsrecht*) passed to the parishes, and in 1536, the municipality of the *Cadi* claimed the right to elect the abbot, retaining this right until the intervention of the Apostolic Nunciature in 1623 and 1634.[19]

Due to its history in general and the developments of the sixteenth century in particular, the Disentis Abbey was strongly interwoven with local society—this was true of its prosopography as well: most of the convent members were recruited in the neighborhood, and in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries influential abbots arose from leading local families such as the Von Castelberg, de Medell, and Deflorin. Unsurprisingly, attempts to reform the monastery along the lines of the Council of Trent met with resistance from both the secular decision makers of the *Cadi* and the monks who had family ties with them. When Disentis joined the Swiss Benedictine Congregation in 1617, the magistrate of the *Cadi* protested vehemently against it and forbade the abbot—who was legally still the supreme ruler—to attend the congregation meetings, because the magistrate feared foreign ecclesiastical and political influence.[20] Indeed, a reform including the restoration of the abbot's election by the conventuals later only came about through pressure from the Apostolic Nunciature in Lucerne and under the governance of Abbot Augustin Stöcklin (1634–1641), who came from the Muri Abbey.

15 Cf. Albert Fischer, *Das Bistum Chur*, vol. 1: *Seine Geschichte von den Anfängen bis 1816* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2017), 37.

16 Cf. Gilomen-Schenkel and Müller, "Disentis," 477.

17 Cf. Adolf Collenberg, "Cadi," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from March 23, 2016, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/019352/2016-03-23/ (last accessed Jan. 4, 2025).

18 Cf. Gilomen-Schenkel and Müller, "Disentis," 478. – Incorporated parishes in 1491: Ems, Disentis, Brigels, Tavetsch, Somvix, Valendas, Fellers, Ruschein, and Ladir.

19 Cf. Gilomen-Schenkel and Müller, "Disentis," 479–480; Iso Müller, *Die Abtei Disentis 1634–1655* (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1952), 1; Albert Fischer, *Reformatio und Restitutio: Das Bistum Chur im Zeitalter der tridentinischen Glaubenserneuerung; Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Priesterausbildung und Patoralreform (1601–1661)* (Zurich: Chronos, 2000), 354.

20 Cf. Gilomen-Schenkel and Müller, "Disentis," 479.

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As a centuries-old ecclesiastical institution, the Benedictine abbey was not only a local political power factor, but above all an important religious center that shaped the cultic and cultural landscape of the *Cadi*. The mortal remains of the legendary founders Sigisbert and Placidus were kept in the monastery (Fig. 1).[21] The saint's vita *Passio Placidi* attests to a trans-regional pilgrimage cult as early as the twelfth century, at the center of which was the tomb of the two saints, "illuminated by miraculous signs."[22] At the place of the martyrdom to the east of the monastery, a chapel with a shaft leading down to the ground where Placidus is said to have been beheaded was built in the ninth century.[23] Later on, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the cult of the two monastery saints seemed to have lost some of its importance. Nevertheless, when Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), the Archbishop of Milan, visited the monastery in 1581, he felt compelled to initiate a revival of the saints' cult with a demonstrative veneration of the relics of the two patron saints of Disentis Abbey.[24] Later on, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, numerous devotees actually went on pilgrimage to Disentis on July 11 to celebrate the feast day of Placidus and Sigisbert, the patron saints of the *Cadi*, in the presence of the political elite of the *Cadi* and the Grey League.[25] In addition to this veneration of the monastery's saints, another worship of a saint was established, acting as a religious and social link between the ecclesiastical and secular elite of the *Cadi*: situated along the pilgrims' way to Santiago de Compostela, a confraternity of St. James was founded in Disentis probably around 1600, in which abbots and monks, but also bishops of Chur and members of notable families of the Grey League, were enrolled.[26]

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21 Cf. Regula Di Natale, *Das Kephalophoren-Wunder in churrätischen Viten: Placidus von Disentis – Gaudentius von Casaccia – Victor von Tomils – Eusebius vom Viktorsberg* (Chur: Kommissionsverlag Desertina, 2005), 43–75.

22 Müller, Passio, 170: "Exinde sacer ille locus tantis a domino signorum miraculis est illustratus, ut ipsi reges et principes eum summo honore dignum ducerent et de longinquis regionibus clarissimi viri et matrone confluerent […]."

23 There, the practice of holding one's head into the shaft while reciting prayers in the hope of a miraculous healing for headaches had become established; cf. Bischöfliches Archiv, Chur (hereafter BAC), 782.02 (unfol.): Visitation 1643, Disentis, 22.08.1643. – The present chapel was built around 1655 on the site of the previous building; cf. Notker Curti, "Alte Kapellen im Oberland," *Bündnerisches Monatsblatt 1915*, no. 12 (1915): 419–428, here 426–427; Erwin Poeschel, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Graubünden*, vol. 5: *Die Täler am Vorderrhein, II. Teil; Schams, Rheinwald, Avers, Münstertal, Bergell* (Basel: Verlag Birkhäuser A.G., 1943), 107–108.

24 Cf. "Viaggio del B. Carlo Borromeo, Cardinale di S. Prassede, Arcivescovo di Milano, fatto al Monastero di Tisitis, principal Comumnità delle Eccelse tre Leghe nel'anno 1581, Milano 1605," ed. Gion Cahannes, "Die Pilgerreise Carlo Borromeos nach Disentis im Jahr 1581," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 18 (1924): 136–165, here 141–155.

25 Cf. Iso Müller, *Die Abtei Disentis 1696–1742* (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1960), 528–532.

26 Staatsarchiv Graubünden (hereafter StAGR), QR 45/223: Archive of the parish Tujetsch, No. 10, List of all members of the confraternity of St. James, 1652–1749; Ursus Brunold and Adrian Collenberg, eds.,

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3. New Impetus from Outside: Capuchins of the Rhaetian Mission

In January 1621, a papal decree appointed the Capuchin Ignazio da Casigno (also called da Bergamo) as *superiore* of the Rhaetian Mission of the order's province of Brescia (Fig. 2).[27] Starting in 1622, the newly founded *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* coordinated the missionary activities in the Three Leagues, granting missionary faculties or dispensations and acting as a channel of communication between the Capuchin Order, the orders' provinces involved in the Rhaetian Mission,[28] and secular supporters.[29] The intention of the Rhaetian Mission, directed from Rome, was initially to re-Catholicize the communities and villages that had become Protestant (especially in the Lower Engadine and Prättigau). After this could not be accomplished at all, the strategy of the *Propaganda Fide*, from the 1630s/40s onward, shifted to strengthening Catholicism through an "inner mission," i. e., to taking care of the parishes that had remained Catholic.

The Capuchin missionaries operating in the Catholic Surselva came mainly from the orders' province of Brescia. In some places they took over the duties of ordinary parish priests. Furthermore, they were particularly active in the building of new churches and chapels, for which they raised funds from Italian dioceses.[30] From Italy, they also brought along a specific form of piety, especially new Marian devotions. These new cults were spread both through newly founded confraternities, and through printed texts, which the Capuchins translated from Italian into Rhaeto-Romance languages. The Capuchin missionaries therefore played a central role in the religious education of the Catholics in the sense of the Tridentine reformed Catholicism.

Berther-Chronik. Die Selbstwahrnehmung einer Bündner Notablenfamilie im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert (Chur: Kommissionsverlag Desertina, 2010), 114–116. – Cf. Iso Müller, "Bündner Fern-Wallfahrten des 16.–18. Jahrhunderts," *Bündner Monatsblatt* (1956): 15–27, here 21–22; Philipp Zwyssig, "'Wider aller Willen disen Altar auß der Kirkhen gethon': Pluralisierung und Konkurrenz auf dem Markt der Wunder in der Landschaft Disentis (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 109 (2015): 33–47.

27 Cf. Albert Frigg, *Die Mission der Kapuziner in den rätoromanischen und italienischen Talschaften Rätiens im 17. Jahrhundert (Quellen- und literarkritische Untersuchung und problemgeschichtliche Darstellung)* (Chur: Sprecher, Eggerling & Co, 1953), 58; Andreas Wendland, "Il missionario come politico—il politico come missionario: Missionari cappuccini e politica della controriforma in Valtellina e nel territorio delle Tre Leghe nel XVII secolo; Il programma di riconquista cattolica di Ignazio da Casnigo," *Archivio Storico Ticinese* 120 (1996): 199–218, here 202; Philipp Zwyssig, "Zwischen Pfarreiseelsorge und Gesandtendienst: Kapuzinermissionare in den Drei Bünden als Akteure der katholischen Reform (1621–1661)," *Helvetia Franciscana* 43, no. 1 (2014): 81–113, here 86–92.

28 The Province of Brescia was responsible for the mission in the Rhaeto-Romanic areas, the Helvetic Province for those in the German-speaking areas around Chur, and the Province of Milan for the mission in the Italian-speaking southern valleys (Misox and Calanca).

29 Cf. Zwyssig, *Täler*, 49–57, 70–74.

30 Cf. Zwyssig, *Täler*, 232–237.

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Fig. 2 Map of the Mission of the Capuchin Province of Brescia (Brescia/Rome 1712). The Rhaetian Mission (upper left corner) of the Capuchins of Brescia stood under the authority of the Roman Congregatio de Propaganda Fide. Provinzarchiv der Schweizer Kapuziner, Lucerne (PAL), U02 3.12. © PAL.

In the area ecclesiastically controlled by the Benedictines of Disentis, the Capuchin missionaries first appeared in Rueun, which for financial reasons had been (re)incorporated into Disentis Abbey in the early seventeenth century.[31] There, Capuchins served as priests from 1628 to 1644.[32] In 1637/38, a Capuchin took over the care of the parish of Tujetsch, which was being ravaged by the plague.[33] In 1648, the missionaries were called to the parish of Disentis, and in 1650 to the newly formed parish of Danis-Tavanasa.[34] In Sumvitg, the Capuchins temporarily took over the pastoral ministry in 1652, and operated as official parish priests starting in 1687.[35] How this came about and which ecclesiastical and political conflicts were connected with the administration of parishes by Capuchins will be explained in the following.

31 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1634–1655*, 216.

32 Christoph Willi, *Die Kapuziner-Mission im romanischen Teil Graubündens mit Einschluss des Puschlav* (Brienz: Pub. by author, 1960), 79–82.

33 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1634–1655*, 220.

34 Willi, *Kapuziner-Mission*, 32–43.

35 Willi, *Kapuziner-Mission*, 109–111.

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4. Ecclesiastical and Political Rivalry

Starting in the 1630s, the abbots of Disentis attempted to regain jurisdiction over the surrounding parishes, including the disposition of prebends and the right to appoint priests, in the sense of a Catholic Reformation and Restitution (*reformatio et restitutio*). In an agreement with the bishop in 1637, the abbey regained the *right of presentation* in the formerly incorporated parishes but had to accept the episcopal jurisdiction in pastoral matters as well as the bishops' investiture of parish priests nominated by the abbots.[36] The municipality of the *Cadi* strongly opposed this agreement, and on September 6, 1638, it achieved an alignment (*Komposition*) with the abbey, which guaranteed the parishes of the *Cadi* the right to elect their own priests.[37] After several attempts to reverse this agreement, the abbey definitively renounced the *right of presentation* in favor of the parishes on June 19, 1648, but in return received confirmation of the abbey's exemption, especially in matters of the abbot's free election by the convent and the admission of novices. Beyond that, the Benedictine convent only had the right to send friars to the parishes in times of crisis.[38] Seizing the opportunity, the parishioners of Disentis demanded that the bishop in Chur allow them to appoint a Capuchin as pastor in the same year, 1648.[39]

In view of the diminished influence in the surrounding parishes, the Benedictines almost inevitably had to perceive the Capuchins as unwelcome competitors, especially since the Capuchins, who were present in Disentis starting in 1648, also opposed a project of further autonomy for the abbey, which was taken up again in 1655.[40] The nuncio Federico Borromeo, in consultation with the Roman Curia, drafted a contract between the abbey and the diocese that provided the exemption of fourteen parishes from the diocese of Chur in creating a quasi-bishopric Disentis under the *superiorate* of the Disentis abbot—in return for the payment of 2,000 fl.[41] The abbey would thus have regained full autonomy. While the demanded sum had already been paid by the former *Landrichter*[42] Conradin von Castelberg (c. 1608–1659), who was closely aligned with the monastery, there emerged a powerful opposition from the bishop, the cathedral chapter in Chur, the secular clergy, the affected parishes, and also from the Capuchins. At the

36 Cf. Fischer, *Reformatio*, 354.

37 Cf. Iso Müller, "Die Abtei Disentis im Kampfe gegen die Cadi zu Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts," *Jahresbericht der Historisch-Antiquarischen Gesellschaft von Graubünden* 78 (1948): 52–120, here 105–108.

38 Cf. Fischer, *Reformatio*, 354.

39 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1634–1655*, 221. – On the one hand, the desire for Capuchins stemmed from the fact that they were seen as being particularly close to the people, and their religious practices were considered to be very effective. On the other hand, the Capuchins lived from alms and missionary funds, which placed little strain on the parish benefices.

40 Cf. Iso Müller, *Die Abtei Disentis 1655–1696* (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1955), 33.

41 Cf. Fischer, *Bistum Chur*, vol. 1, 248–251.

42 The highest office of the Grey League.

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Landsgemeinde on June 5, 1656, the *Domkustos* and former parish priest in Tujetsch, Dr. Matthias Schgier (1622–1687), called on the assembled people to demand that the abbot hand over the draft contract. Concerned due to the violent mood, the Apostolic Nunciature in Lucerne finally suspended the project and returned to the agreement of 1648: the Disentis Abbey itself obtained exemption from the episcopal jurisdiction,[43] but the surrounding parishes remained subject to the bishop, who decided in the last instance on the appointment of priests.[44]

It can be noted that in the conflict over the autonomy of Disentis Abbey and over the status of parishes once incorporated into it, the Disentis Benedictines—together with Conradin von Castelberg and the nuncio—stood on the one side, with the bishop, *Domkustos* Schgier, the parishes, and the Capuchins on the other side. This contrary positioning of the two religious orders was also explosive because it was linked to political struggles over the direction of foreign alliances of the *Cadi* and of the Three Leagues as a whole. Former *Landrichter* Conradin von Castelberg was a supporter of an alliance with the French king. Matthias Schgier, in turn, was considered a confidant of the Spanish-Milanese ambassador Casati in Chur.[45] In 1651, Schgier had ensured that Nicolaus Maissen (1621–1678), a Spanish ally, was elected as *Landrichter*, the highest political office of the Grey League, instead of Conradin von Castelberg. The Capuchins were said to have contributed to this by inciting their flocks. Due to their Italian origin, the missionaries were perceived as an extended arm of the Spanish-Milanese diplomacy.[46] Furthermore, the missionaries' action against the influence of the French client von Castelberg also stemmed from the fact that they saw the French alliance policy towards Protestants in the Three Leagues as endangering the Counter-Reformation thrust of their mission.[47] In 1647, Conradin von Castelberg, who worked towards a renewal of the alliance with France, therefore prevented the appointment of Capuchins to Disentis, because he feared the political influence of the Italian Capuchins.[48]

Years later, the question of the appointment of Capuchins as priests was still a political issue. When the parish of Sumvitg wanted to call Capuchins in 1680, the Disentis abbot sent the Benedictine Carli Decurtins (†1712) to the bishop in Chur to prevent this. The abbot's fear was that Matthias Schgier, with the help of the Capuchins, would stir up a rebellion against the municipal authorities of the *Cadi*, which from 1676–1678 had brought a criminal trial against Nicolaus Maissen and Schgier, the two exponents of the

43 Confirmation and benediction of the abbot were reserved for the Apostolic Nuncio.

44 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1655–1696*, 32–44; Fischer, *Reformatio*, 358–359.

45 Felici Maissen, "Domherr Dr. Mathias Sgier (1622–1687)," *Bünder Monatsblatt* (1952): 41–52, here 42.

46 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1634–1655*, 220; Müller, *Abtei 1655–1696*, 33.

47 Cf. Frigg, *Mission*, 158–166.

48 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1634–1655*, 220.

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Spanish party in the Grey League.[49] In 1678, even before the sentence (confiscation, banishment) came into force, Maissen was murdered—with indirect participation of the Benedictine Carli Decurtins, who was said to have provided the murderers with consecrated objects, thus placing the conspiracy against *Landrichter* Maissen under divine protection.[50] Schgier was arrested and later, having been accused of high treason, expelled from the Three Leagues by the episcopal court, despite trying to achieve his rehabilitation through his contacts with the Apostolic Nunciature in Lucerne and the Roman Curia.[51]

Such affairs show that ecclesiastical and political disputes in the *Cadi* were closely intertwined, and that the Disentis Benedictines and the Italian Capuchins acted as opponents. In this context, the opposition between the Capuchins and the Benedictines was often also portrayed and perceived as an opposition between foreign influences and local interests, as can be seen from a letter of 1713, allegedly written by the Bishop of Chur:

> That the Capuchins, who are foreigners and in no way feel connected with the interests of the country, […] who only recognize foreign superiors and therefore do not prevent others from starting terrible quarrels in the country, […] that these Capuchins occupy parochial offices in the country, is this not harmful for the fatherland?[52]

Against the background of such debates, the Disentis Benedictines tried to further emphasize the local tradition of their monastery and its great historical, cultural, and religious importance for the *Cadi*. How this affected the religious culture will be shown in the following.

5. Self-Positioning in the Role of Mediators

The Capuchin missionaries who served the churches and chapels in and around Disentis starting in 1648 understood their mission in the intensification of Catholic life. They claimed to be particularly close to the people and saw themselves as mediators between believers and the institutional church or, more generally, God. Moreover, they positioned themselves as agents of a reformed Roman Catholicism who were most attentive to the

49 Cf. in detail Aluis Maissen, "Die Prozesse gegen Landrichter Nikolais Maissen 1676–1678: Über die Rechtshilfe in der Kriminalgerichtsbarkeit," *Jahrbuch der Historischen Gesellschaft Graubünden* 136 (2006): 41–100.

50 Maissen, "Die Prozesse," 80.

51 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1655–1696*, 234–235.

52 Ulrich VII von Federspiel to Johannes von Castelberg, [Chur], 1713, quote in Müller, *Abtei 1696–1742*, 126.

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people's spiritual needs and better able to convey the salvation of the Church than other clerics. They did this by bringing new cults of saints from Italy, which very quickly became popular, as the following examples show.

Around 1660, the Capuchins built a chapel in Cavardiras (near Disentis), which they enlarged in 1689 and had consecrated in 1695 in the name of Saint Anthony of Padua, whose veneration as an order's own saint was allowed to be officially propagated starting in 1674.[53] Soon afterwards, the church in Cavardiras, a subsidiary of the Disentis parish church, established itself as a pilgrimage site for devotees from the surrounding villages, as numerous votive panels show. In addition, a chapel dedicated to Our Lady in Acletta (near Disentis) also developed into a local pilgrimage site during the time when the Capuchins served the parish of Disentis. There, an altarpiece depicting the Immaculate Conception was at the center of the devotion. The painting was made in the atelier of the Milanese artist Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (1609–1662) and probably reached Acletta in the 1670s via the Italian Capuchins.[54] Here once again, votive panels demonstrate that religious practices promising divine grace and miracles quickly became established around the newly introduced worship of saints (Fig. 3). Because these two foreign cults of saints were quickly accepted and propagated by circulating miracle stories, the Capuchins saw themselves strengthened in their role as popular mediators of salvation. They emphasized this role especially when they wanted to distinguish themselves from the Disentis Benedictines. When in 1715 the demand arose for the Capuchin missionaries in Disentis and Sumvitg to be replaced by secular clergy or Benedictines, the Capuchins replied that the ordinary people did not want Benedictines as priests because they were more interested in secular gain, i. e., in the use of the benefices, than in the salvation of the souls of the parishioners. Moreover, the Capuchins argued, the missionaries would be a good example to the secular clergy and the Benedictines as well.[55]

It is striking that the veneration of Our Lady in Acletta could clearly be perceived as being foreign, specifically as originating from the Spanish-Milanese area of influence—not only because the altarpiece came from Milan, but above all because the Spanish kings in the seventeenth century acted as promoters of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.[56] In the church of St. Anthony in Cavardiras as well, the Spanish-Milanese

53 Cf. Poeschel, *Kunstdenkmäler*, vol. 5, 117–119; Hans Batz, *Die Kirchen und Kapellen des Kantons Graubünden*, vol. 8 (Chur: Casanova, 2003), 41–43. On the appropriation of the saint by the Capuchins, see Hillard von Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner Zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Alltagskultur: Vergleichende Fallstudie am Beispiel Freiburgs und Hildesheims 1599–1750* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Wissenschaften, 2002, here 387–388.

54 Cf. Poeschel, *Kunstdenkmäler*, vol. 5, 111–116; Batz, *Kirchen*, 27–29.

55 Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1696–1742*, 126–127.

56 Cf. Paolo Broggio, La teologia e la politica: Controversie dottrinali, Curia romana e monarchia spagnola tra Cinque e Seicento (Florence: Olschki, 2009), 131–203; Adriano Prosperi, *Eresie e devozioni: La religione italiana in età moderna*, vol. 3: *Devozioni e Conversioni* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura,

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Fig. 3 Acletta (Disentis), Votive Panel, 1730. In the left corner is depicted an adaptation of the *Immaculate* by Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (1609–1662). The votive panel illustrates the pluralization of and competition between cults of saints. The newly venerated *Mary Immaculate* is portrayed as a large figure, while the Disentis patrons Placidus and Sigisbert can be seen kneeling in front of her, somewhat smaller. Photo © Philipp Zwyssig.

influence was evident, with an altarpiece there containing the following inscription: "O Hispanic offspring, fear of the infidels; new light Italy, pray for us" (see Fig. 4).[57] Probably also in view of the spreading of foreign Catholic forms of devotion by the Capuchins, the Disentis Benedictines endeavored for their part to promote the local area's specific veneration of the monastery's own saints. On July 11, 1672, the abbot and convent solemnly elevated the relics of Saint Adalgott (Fig. 5), an eleventh-century Disentis abbot buried in the monastery. A year earlier, the Benedictines had set out in search of the relics, which were only known to be embedded in a wall of the cloister.[58] When the tomb was discovered after a short search, an odorous smell emanated from it, which was interpreted as a sign of the holiness of the relics that had been found. With the permission of the bishop of Chur, the relics were removed from the tomb and, after the solemn translation in 1672, exhibited for veneration in the monastery's church.[59] The worship of Saint Adalgott itself was of older origin. According to the Disentis Abbey chronicles, Adalgott was "well honored by the people [and] several miraculous signs occurred"[60] around 1600, and in 1642 Abbot Josef Desax wrote that "the reputation for

2010), 415–447; Hillard von Thiessen, *Diplomatie und Patronage: Die spanisch-römischen Beziehungen 1605–1621 in akteurszentrierter Perspektive* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2010), 414–420.

57 "O Proles Hispaniae, Pavor infedelium, Nova lux Italiae, ora pro nobis." This is a verse from the "Officium S. Antonii" by Julian von Speyer (†1250). – Cf. Iso Müller, "Barocke Geistigkeit einer Benediktinerabtei," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 49 (1955): 257–287, here 279.

58 Cf. Iso Müller, "Das Grab des Abtes Adalgott," *Bündner Monatsblatt* (1960): 226–252.

59 Cf. Iso Müller, "Disentiser Reliquienübertragung in der Barockzeit," *Bündnerisches Monatsblatt* (1943): 206–223, here 210–211.

60 Stiftsarchiv Pfäfers (hereafter StiAPf), Cod. Fab. XXVI, 1628, fol. 168^{r}–172^{v}, here fol. 169^{r}.

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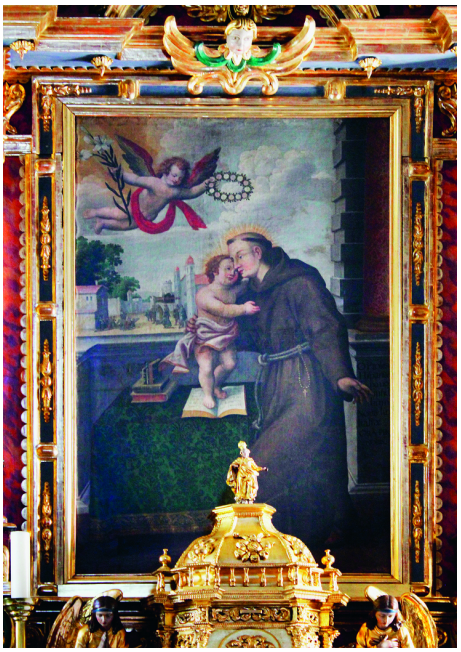

Fig. 4 Cavardiras (Disentis), S. Anthony Church, about 1690. St. Anthony points with his left hand to the pillar with the inscription "O Proles Hispaniae, Pavor infedelium, Nova lux Italiae, ora pro nobis." Photo © Philipp Zwyssig.

holiness, the veneration of the people [and] the miracles caused by the intercession of our blessed Adalgott continue and increase daily."[61] The *Proprium Sanctorum* of the diocese of Chur, published in 1646, in which Adalgott appears for the first time as a diocesan saint, reports of numerous votives made of wax that were deposited.[62] With the Elevation of 1672, obviously, the Disentis Abbey intended to promote a veneration of saints specific to the monastery by transforming a worship long practiced by the people into an official church-approved devotion.

At the same time, regarding religious and cultic matters, the abbot and the convent endeavored to demonstratively align themselves with the official Roman church. They did this, for example, by arranging a solemn Translation of Roman catacomb saints to the monastery church in 1671 and 1673—remarkably one year before and one year after the elevation of Saint Adalgott. It is also striking that both translations took place on July 11 and thus on the feast day of the monastery's patrons Placidus and Sigisbert. Here, the Benedictines clearly tried to integrate the new, explicitly Roman-centered veneration of saints into the local religious culture, while at the same time the catacomb saints were mediated to Disentis by official actors of the Roman church, namely by

61 Quote in Müller, "Das Grab," 248–249: "Caeterum adhuc fama sanctitatis, devotio populorum, operatio miraculorum per intercessionem nostri B[eati] Adelgotti in dies continuantur et crescunt."

62 [Johannes (VI.) Flugi von Aspermont], Proprium Sanctorum, antiquissimi Episcopatus Curiensis […], Hohenems 1646, 145–146 (October 03).

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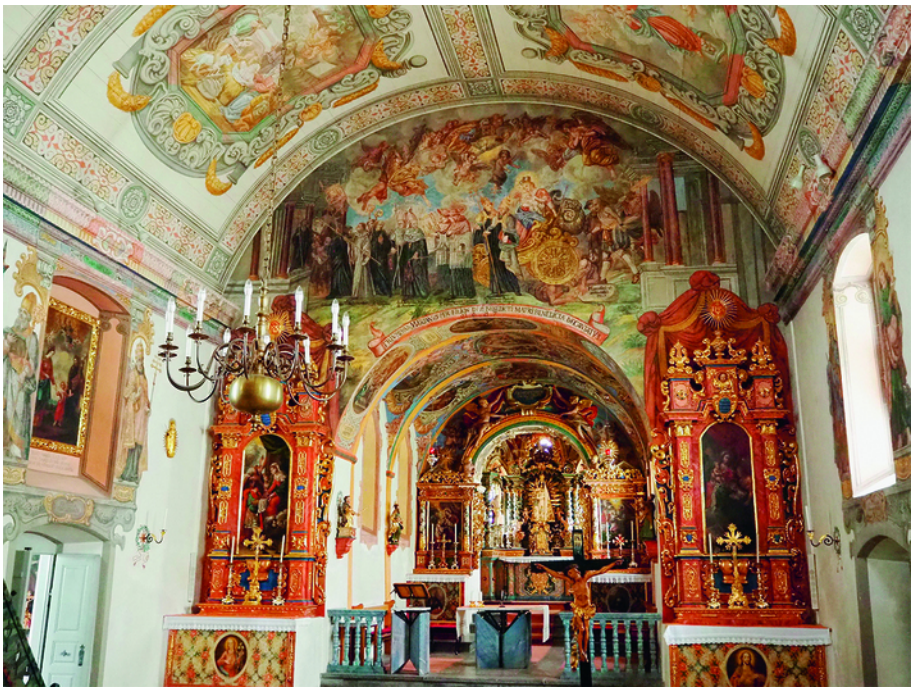

Fig. 5 Trun, Pilgrimage Church Our Lady of Light. The church, served by Benedictines from Disentis Abbey, was built in 1664 after a miraculous appearance of light and was enlarged in 1681–1684. On the choir arch are painted Benedictine orders' saints including the Disentis abbot Adalgott, as well as a Marian triumphal chariot rolling over "Haeretici et Schismatici." Photo © Philipp Zwyssig.

the secretary of the Lucerne nunciature (in 1671) and Alfonso Litta (1652–1679), the Milanese archbishop and cardinal (in 1673).[63] As with the above-mentioned project of the quasi-bishopric in 1655, the abbey demonstratively aligned itself with the Apostolic Nunciature in Lucerne and other important actors in Roman Catholicism. In demonstrating their own loyalty to the Roman Curia in cultic terms as well, the Benedictines positioned themselves as agents of the Tridentine reformed Papal Church. Furthermore, the Benedictines emphasized that they were capable of adapting Catholic life in the Surselva to post-Tridentine doctrine by educating the laypeople in corresponding forms of piety. With this intention, in 1705 they called the well-known Italian Jesuit Fulvio Fontana to Disentis for a popular mission (*Volksmission*). Over the course of a week, Fontana preached in the monastery's church, gave the papal blessing to the crowd,

63 Cf. Zacharias da Salò, *La glisch sin il candelier invidada. Ner tractats, cun ils quals allas treis Ligias ven dada d'enconoscher la s. cathol. cardienscha apost* (Cumbels 1685), part XII, 171–173; StAGR, A I 21, b03/44 (Mikrofilm), *Annalium M.S.S. Monasterÿ Disertinensis Ordinis S. Benedicti in superiori Rhaetia Confoederata Synopsis* (1709): 193.

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and distributed water that had been sanctified with the relics of the order's own saint Francis Xavier.[64] And probably at Fontana's suggestion, a collection of nineteen miracles attributed to the monastery's own saints was written.[65]

The Capuchins found themselves challenged by Fontana's popular mission in the monastery. They emphasized that "they would be true and apostolic missionaries just as well as this Friar Fulvius Fontana."[66] Proving this, the Capuchin Floriano da Brescia, who had been based in Disentis since 1697, founded the confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows (Mater Dolorosa) in the parish church,[67] as a later report by the Disentis abbot suggests:

> When the Jesuit Fr. Fontana left Disentis in 1705, Fr. Floriano wanted to emulate and even surpass him in spiritual successes; he obtained from the sculptor of the monastery, Johann Ritz, a statue of the Blessed Virgin of Sorrows, which he brought into the parish church and arrayed it with precious vestments; and immediately he made it known that through this statue the Blessed Virgin performs innumerable miracles and signs.[68]

To promote the worship of Our Lady of Sorrows, Floriano da Brescia published a fraternity book in the Rhaeto-Romance language consisting of a translation of the confraternity rules[69] written by the Servite Agostino Alevazoli, together with instructions for spiritual exercises, prayers, hymns, and a compilation of indulgences granted to confraternity members.[70] Illustrating what could be hoped for from the *Mater Dolorosa*, Friar Floriano compiled some miracle stories which, according to Alevazoli, were said to have occurred in Italy through the intercession of the *Mater Dolorosa*.[71] Whoever wears the confraternity's scapular, the confraternity book says, is under the "protective

64 Cf. Iso Müller, "Die grosse Volksmission in der Cadi 1705," *Bündner Monatsblatt* (1944): 178–194.

65 Iso Müller, "Das Disentiser Mirakelbuch," *Bündner Monatsblatt* (1944): 21–33.

66 Anonymous, *Von der Mission des R. P. Fulvii Fontana S. J. im Kloster Disentis gehalten im Jahre 1705 in mense Julio*, 45–46, quoted in Müller, *Abtei 1696–1742*, 122.

67 Floriano da Brescia, *Obligatiuns per ils Confrars e Sorurs della Compagnia dellas Tristezias de N[ossa] C[ara] Donna S. Maria […]* (Bonaduz 1707). – Cf. Guglielm Gadola, "Historia litterara dil sentiment religius, II. Capetel: Ils auturs caputschins. 3. P. Florianus da Brescia," *Ischi* 36 (1950): 65–94, here 68–75.

68 Klosterarchiv Disentis (hereafter KAD), ND, fol. 221, Quaerelae Abbatis Adalberti de Funs contra P. Florianum, [c. 1715]: "Anno 1705, cum P. Fontana Jesuita a Disertina discessisset, P. Florianus volens illum aemulari ac superare in fructu spirituali, sculpi procuravit a sculptore Mon[aste]ri, Joan[n]e Riz, statuam B[eata] V[irgo] dolorosae in ligno, quam in Ecclesiam parochialem introductem pretiosis vestibus exornavit; statimque divulgavit, per hanc statuam meritis B[eata] V[irgo] fieri miracula et signa innumera."

69 See Agostini Alevazoli, *La Reina de' Martiri compatita ne' suoi dolori* (Milano 1692), Cap. XXII, 360–392.

70 Floriano da Brescia, *Obligatiuns*.

71 Floriano da Brescia, *Obligatiuns*, 57–70: "Cap. X: Vegnen cau suenter entzacontas Miraclas, daventadas enten vertit dellas Dolurs de N[ossa] C[ara] Donna, pridas ora dal Codisch del P. M. Agostin Allevazoli."

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mantle" of the *Mater Dolorosa*; the scapular would be a "powerful medicine against all kinds of diseases," it would bring "speech to the dumb, sight to the blind, strength and health to the lame." All in all, the scapular, understood as a protective mantle, could convey "all kinds of wonderful graces […] which God makes happen through the intercession of Our Lady of Sorrows."[72] Establishing the Lady of Sorrows as a miracle-working heavenly patroness, Friar Floriano encouraged his flock to vow themselves to the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in case of illness or other emergencies, advising them to promise to visit the altar and donate a votive offering in return for the hoped-for grace or miracle.

The introduction of the miracle-promising cult of Our Lady of Sorrows by the Capuchins provoked a reaction from the Benedictines. Floriano da Brescia had removed the altar of the confraternity of St. James in order to place the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows[73] on a newly built altar. As already mentioned, the St. James confraternity was closely linked to the Disentis Abbey and the local elite. It is therefore not surprising that the Benedictine Justus Berther (1680–1736) commented on the removal of the altar with some irritation: "In 1707 and after Fr. Florian established the confraternity of Our Lady of Sorrows, he took this altar out of the church against everyone's will, in order to make this altar with pillars."[74] Furthermore, it had become apparent that of the miracles said to have occurred in Italy thanks to the intercession of the *Mater Dolorosa*, one in particular aroused great interest among the faithful in the Surselva. This miracle story told how a woman gave birth to a dead child who was brought back to life in a church dedicated to the *Mater Dolorosa* so that it could be baptized and buried in consecrated earth.[75] Influenced by this tale, similar miracles of revival occurred in Disentis: The first one is attested thanks to the testimony of Maria Bertera on August 24, 1707, shortly after the introduction of the cult of Our Lady of Sorrows.[76] While this first miracle took place in the house of the woman in childbirth, soon afterwards the newly built altar in the parish church of Disentis developed into the preferred place for the practices of short-term revival. The practice of exposing stillborn children in front of the altar eventually became so established that in 1715 "stillborn children were brought from everywhere and considered revived so that they could be baptized,"[77] as the Benedictine abbot critically noted. Indeed, female pilgrims with such concerns from the entire area of the Three Leagues, from Uri and even from Lombardy, can be

72 Floriano da Brescia, *Obligatiuns*, 69–70.

73 Created by the sculptor Johann Ritz (1666–1729) from Valais.

74 Brunold and Collenberg, *Berther-Chronik*, 114–115.

75 Floriano da Brescia, *Obligatiuns*, 63–64.

76 Felici Maissen, "Das Mirakelbuch von Disentis (1707)," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 61 (1965): 60–74, here 73.

77 KAD, ND, fol. 221: Quaerelae Abbatis Adalberti de Funs contra P. Florianum, [c. 1715]: "[…] quod infantes mortui in lucem editi undique afferntur ac reviscere dicuntur, ut baptizari possint […]."

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found in Disentis.[78] The Disentis parish church developed into a highly frequented place of pilgrimage, as evidenced by countless votive panels which—according to the Benedictine abbot—covered large parts of the church walls.[79]

The abbot and convent of Disentis regarded the described development of the cult of Mary in the Disentis parish church as misconceived piety. Abbot Adalbert Defuns (1696–1716) described it as "truly intolerable […] that stillborn children are brought from everywhere."[80] And his deputy (*Dekan*) Fr. Maurus Wenzin (†1745) tried to persuade the Apostolic Nunciature in Lucerne to act against the "deceptive miracles which are said to occur daily by the reawakening of children in the presence of a familiar female person."[81] Finally, in 1740, probably under pressure from the Disentis Abbey, the Bishop of Chur initiated an official investigation (or informative process) and issued strict procedures for the baptism of dead children. From then on, only a parochial priest was allowed to perform baptisms and only if there were clear signs of life; changes in the color of the skin or the warming of the dead body were no longer considered to be sufficient signs of a miraculous revival.[82]

In the case of the worship of Our Lady of Sorrows in Disentis, the Benedictines sharply distinguished themselves from the devotional practices spread by the Capuchins, whom they considered to be superstitious:

> It would be desirable for once that these Bergamo missionaries sent to us did not always make themselves great with the venerable name of apostolic missionaries. Every parish priest in his district does as much, and far better, than the apostolic men. They come to us from their poor mendicant monasteries with their empty baskets; they feed and fatten themselves with the fat of our meager little country and in return they leave our poor good-natured countryman gross stupidity, never to be eradicated superstition and ignorance similar to that Egyptian darkness […].[83]

78 KAD, ND, fol. 221: Quaerelae Abbatis Adalberti de Funs contra P. Florianum, [c. 1715]: "Sane Februario proximo elapso 4 tales infantes ex Lombardia fuerunt, e quibus unus a quadam femina in Ecclesia sub Missa P. Socii (nam P. Florianus aberat) baptizatus fuisse, cum maxima omnium admiratione." – Cf. Iso Müller, "Zur Taufe totgeborener Kinder im Bündnerland," *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 54 (1958): 15–27; Oskar Vasella, "Zur Taufe totgeborener Kinder in der Schweiz," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* 60 (1966): 1–75, here 57.

79 KAD, ND, fol. 221: "Hinc magnam Ecclesiae partem tabulis ejius miraculorum opplevit […]."

80 KAD, ND, fol. 221: Quaerelae Abbatis Adalberti de Funs contra P. Florianum, [c. 1715]: "Illud vero intollerabile videtur, quod infantes mortui in lucem editi undique afferntur ac reviscere dicuntur, ut baptizari possint […]."

81 Quoted in Müller, "Taufe," 22.

82 BAC, 733.03: Protocollum Officii, fol. 14^{v}–15^{r}. Actum coram Rev[erendissi]mo Officio […], Chur, 22.10.1740, ed. Vasella, "Taufe," 73–74.

83 Anonymous, *Von der Mission des R. P. Fulvii Fontana S. J. im Kloster Disentis gehalten im Jahre 1705 in mense Julio*, 45–46, quoted in Müller, *Abtei 1696–1742*, 123.

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Critically distanced from the missionary practices of the Capuchins, the Benedictines saw themselves as agents and promoters of post-Tridentine doctrine and devotion. Nevertheless, even the Benedictines could not ignore the fact that the people's demand was particularly great for those religious practices and cults that best met the everyday needs of healing and salvation, and that at the same time were seen as compatible with local religious perceptions of the world. The extent to which even the Benedictines took practices and conceptions of the local religion into account is particularly evident in conflicts in which the rivals of the Benedictines accused them of misconduct in ecclesiastical or devotional terms, as the following examples show.

In the context of the conflict referred to *Landrichter* Maissen (see above), the Benedictine abbot Adalbert II de Medell (1655–1696) was cited before the Apostolic Nuncio in 1678. Among other things, the abbot was accused of spreading the superstition among the people that he could find out the state of the soul of decedents by celebrating three masses for souls in purgatory at the altar of Mary in the monastery's church; if one of the burning candles went out during the ritual act, this would be interpreted as a sign that the soul had not (yet) found salvation.[84] Regarding the conflict-driven polemic of the matter, it is questionable whether this accusation is true in all details. Nevertheless, this affair unveils a local religious mentality or spiritual conception that ecclesiastical actors such as the Benedictines had to deal with. In any case, the concern for the salvation of deceased family members and stories about the return of unredeemed "poor souls" as ghosts (*Wiedergänger*) were in fact widespread in the Alpine region.[85] The belief in unredeemed souls wandering on earth in penance was to some extent at odds with the post-Tridentine doctrine of the afterlife, which, through purgatory, recognized a place for the punishment of sins that could be clearly located in the hereafter.[86] However, the Benedictines—and also the Capuchin missionaries—in their self-positioning as mediators of salvation, regarded ecclesiastical practices to find out the state of the soul in purgatory, to redeem the souls of family members, and to prevent the "return" of deceased (e. g., masses for the soul, use of apotropaic sacramentals, etc.) as expressions of a living ecclesiastical devotion rather than as superstitions to be suppressed.[87]

The Benedictine Carli Decurtins was well known for such practices, too. Together with the abbot Adalbert II de Medell, he was accused before the nuncio at the instigation of the parish priest of Trun in 1678. Decurtins was accused of naively believing in witches

84 KAD, ND, fol. 176: Testimonia excepta die 14. Maji A[nn]o 1678 a vobis infrascriptis in materia R[everendissi]mi P[atris] Abbatis Adalberti Monasterii Dis[ertinens]is, et R[everendissimi] P[atris] Caroli, here the testimony of Maria Baliel. – Cf. Müller, *Abtei 1696–1742*, 187.

85 For more details and literature, see Zwyssig, *Täler*, 129–130.

86 Cf. Gabriella Zarri, "Purgatorio 'particolare' e ritorno dei morti tra Riforma e Controriforma: L'area italiana," in *Libri di spirito. Editoria religiosa in volgare nei secoli XV–XVII*, by Gabriella Zarri (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier 2009), 25–60, here 52–60.

87 Cf. Zwyssig, *Täler*, 129–130.

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and incriminating his rivals of witchcraft—he was, as seen above, a rigorous enemy of *Landrichter* Maissen and the Capuchins. In fact, it is documented that Decurtins "healed" allegedly "bewitched" persons with relics or consecrated water and performed numerous exorcisms.[88] The belief in witchcraft, damage spells, and, relating thereto, apotropaic practices was widespread and based in a local religious perception of the world. What is interesting is that actors like the Benedictine Carli Decurtins—but also the Capuchin missionaries—in their role as mediators of salvation, integrated such religious mentalities into ecclesiastical practices, making them an integral part of the local religion in the Surselva. The example of Decurtins is a good illustration of this. He was chaplain of the pilgrimage church Our Lady of Light (*Maria Licht* or *Nossaduna dalla Glisch*) near Trun from 1679 to 1712. There, a pilgrimage was established after a miraculous light appearance in 1663.[89] Decurtins wrote several pilgrimage songs and other religious literature in the Rhaeto-Romance language and made Trun into a "religious center of the Surselva"[90] (Fig. 5). However, in the church of Our Lady of Light he performed religious practices that rarely corresponded to the post-Tridentine doctrine and devotion prescribed by the Roman Church. Hence a secular cleric complained about him to the Roman *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* with the following words:

> A certain Friar Carlo Curtin [sic], under the [false] appearance of piety and with a false understanding of sanctity, attracts a great crowd, after having built with alms a magnificent church under the title of Our Lady of Light, where [now] all these people go on pilgrimage; it is a scandal that among them are also heretics, and great sins are committed by the youth out of dishonor. […] the said Friar performs various comedies in this church, pretending to find out the state of the soul of the deceased, in order to redeem these souls with a few masses, but a greater quantity of alms; […] he is a famous soothsayer, because most of his predictions are said to come true; he distributes medicine, especially for abortion; he is a magician and hypocrite, who has seized with gifts the souls of his abbot and the bishop of Chur, who therefore supported him, and because these are princes of the Holy Roman Empire, no one dares to do anything against him […].[91]

88 Hubert Giger, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozesse in der Surselva* (Chur: Kommissionsverlag Desertina, 2001), 143–144.

89 Cf. Zwyssig, *Täler*, 62, 243, 283,

90 Iso Müller, "Zur surselvischen Barockliteratur im Lugnez und in der Cadi: 1670–1720," *Jahresbericht der Historisch-Antiquarischen Gesellschaft von Graubünden* 81 (1951): 3–65, here 12.

91 Provinzarchiv der Schweizer Kapuziner, Lucerne (hereafter PAL), APF vol. 3, fol. 232–234: Protocoll *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, 1712, Mai 2, No. 9 (including a summary of the letter from Anton Arpagaus, here fol. 233–234): "[…] un certo P[adre] Carlo Curtin Benedetto, sotto specie di devotione, e con falsa opinione di santità tira a sè gran concorso di gente, avendo colle limosine fabricato una sontuosissima chiesa, sotto l'invocatione della Madonna della Luce, dove vanno in visita e pellegrinaggio tutti quei popoli, con scandalo anche delli eretici medesimi per li peccati grandi di disonestà che si

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Filtering out the polemics of the quoted accusation reveals religious practices that were common at many other pilgrimage sites and in the "inner mission," too. It should be noted that Decurtins established the pilgrimage church of Trun as a place that was distinguished for a special sacred quality and therefore seemed predestined for contact with divine powers. The fact that many people visited such places hopefully intending to achieve the intervention of transcendent powers in their lives was at the heart of every site of pilgrimage. Moreover, although Decurtins' "fortune-telling" might seem strange, it was not so different from the Capuchins' practice of finding lost or stolen things with the help of St. Anthony of Padua.

The examples described indicate that both the Benedictines and the Capuchins positioned themselves as religious specialists who seemed to be able to convey salvation to people in the best possible way. Thereby, the two religious orders stood in mutual competition, which gave the laypeople unexpected opportunities to influence the supply of religious practices and the shaping of the cultic landscape.

6. Competition between Religious Orders as a Window of Opportunity for the Local Religion—A Conclusion

Both the Benedictines of Disentis Abbey and the Capuchins of the Rhaetian Mission saw themselves as agents of post-Tridentine Roman Catholicism, since they acted against heresy and superstition. Competing for the care and administration of the parishes in the *Cadi*, they each positioned themselves as popular mediators of salvation who were closer to the religious needs of laypeople than the clerics of the other religious order. Consequently, they tried to bind the laity to their order-specific piety through cults of saints promising divine grace and miracles (see Figs. 3, 4, and 5).

In people's everyday lives, this competition became noticeable in the increased supply of religious cults and practices for salvation and healing. In cases of illnesses, accidents, or natural disasters, the now numerous devotions to saints and other forms of piety promised help in seemingly hopeless situations. As a result, the various religious cults were increasingly measured by their usefulness: in a gradually competitive market of devotional practices, those that seemed most efficient for everyday life and salvation were the most successful. Therefore, the diverse factions within the church—here two religious orders, a traditional one and a reformed one—had to consider these religious

commettono dalla gioventù. Dice che il detto Padre fa nella chiesa medesima diverse commedie, che pretende sapere lo stato dell'anime dei defonti, e di sodisfare con poche Messe a gran numero di limosine, che prenda, che è famoso indovino, effettuandosi per lo più i suoi pronostici. Che distribuisce medicine, specialmente per aborti. Che è mago et ipocrita, che con regali si è cattivato l'animo del suo abbate e del vescovo di Coira, li quali perciò lo sostengono, e per essere Principe del Sacro Romano Imperio nessuno ardisce ricorrere per rimedio, […]."

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needs of the laypeople if they wanted to establish certain styles of piety against competing ones. In this sense, the laity had a far greater scope of action in shaping ecclesiastical cults than the traditional church history has presumed. The religious and cultural change in the *Cadi* from around 1650–1750, which was characterized by a pluralization of Catholic forms of devotion and by an increasing shift of ecclesial practices into everyday life, is therefore to be understood as the result of a dynamic balancing between the demand of the laity and the supply of ecclesiastical actors. And therefore, it can be explained that even such controversial but equally popular practices as the revival of stillborn children were able to find their place in the renewed Catholic cultic landscape with its universal forms of (Marian) worship.

The reason religious practices such as the revival of stillborn children met with such a great response is to be found in a religious perception of the world that was by no means determined only by the doctrine of the Catholic Church.[92] As in the entire Alpine region, numerous tales existed in the Three Leagues about unredeemed "poor souls" wandering on earth as part of a "raging army" or a "night crowd"[93] that terrified the living. Stillborn children were potential members of this fearsome and partly also death-bringing "raging army" because the baptism of dead bodies was ecclesiastically forbidden. Thus stillborn children had to be regarded as excluded from the Christian way of salvation.[94] Therefore, when laypeople in the Surselva made a special effort to enable stillborn children to be baptized through miraculous revival in front of the Statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in Disentis, they did so not only for the sake of these children's salvation, but at the same time in order to prevent potential harm to the living. The laity thus appropriated newly introduced, post-Tridentine cults like the worship of Our Lady of Sorrows for their spiritual needs, arising from the local religious perception of the world. The result was a local religion that can best be understood as an amalgam of renewed forms of Roman Catholic piety and perceptions firmly rooted in the everyday life of the Alpine valleys.

92 On the connection between the revival miracles and local religious mentalities, see Michael Prosser, "Erweckungstaufe: Säuglingssterblichkeit und Wallfahrt für tote Kinder in vormoderner Zeit," *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* (2003): 101–138.

93 See Dietrich Jecklin, *Volksthümliches aus Graubünden*, vol. 1 (Chur: Sprecher, Eggerling & Co, 1916), 1–3, 163–165.

94 Cf. Elisabeth Lobenwein, *Wallfahrt – Wunder – Wirtschaft: Die Wallfahrt nach Maria Luggau (Kärnten) in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Bochum: Winkler, 2013), 207–212; Michael Prosser, "Vorstellung über die Seelenexistenz ungetaufter Kinder in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit: Schriftdokumente zu Theorie und Praxis," in *Tod und Jenseits in der Schriftkultur der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Marion Kobelt-Groch (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008), 183–200.

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Markus Friedrich

Representing Jesuit Globality

Cartographic, Allegorical, and Textual Strategies for Putting the World on Paper in the Early Modern Society of Jesus

1. Introduction

The Society of Jesus is customarily considered a stellar example of early modern globalization.[1] The Jesuits' far-flung infrastructure enabled them to create and circulate enormous quantities of information about all known parts of the world, transforming them into crucial agents of global knowledge exchange. Often, the mobility of ideas and people coincided with the flow and transmission of goods, either from Europe to Asia, Africa, or America, or vice versa, in addition to making possible the transfer of Asian goods to the Americas or Africa and back. Jesuit strategies and infrastructures of reaching and connecting far-flung places were often based on trial and error, and much of the actual placement of Jesuits occurred according to happenstance and in accidental ways; nevertheless, there is no doubting the fact that in principle the Society of Jesus was founded with a clear commitment to global expansion. In many ways, the Jesuit order was among the first large (ecclesiastical) institutions of the sixteenth century founded with worldwide perspectives explicitly articulated. Put differently: the Society of Jesus, as evidenced as early as in its foundational texts, considered itself in a unique way to be universal and global, no matter how scattershot and improvised the implementation of that global agenda then practically proceeded.[2]

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1 This may have been a more widely shared phenomenon than is often assumed in the Middle Ages and the early modern period; see Luke Clossey, "Religious Expansion in Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism," in *Global Reformations: Transforming Early Modern Religions, Societies, and Cultures*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (London: Routledge, 2019), 13–30; Julia McClure, *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* (London: Routledge, 2016). I gratefully acknowledge the very thoughtful comments of Dr. Jenny Körber (Hamburg) on a previous version of this chapter. Her critical reading and numerous additional ideas have greatly improved the text. Simon Ditchfield (York) also added important considerations to another preliminary draft. Thanks also to the editors for honing my narrative. Many thanks to Selma Schiller for her excellent support in proofreading the chapter's footnotes. This paper also reflects intense debates among the Forschungsgruppe "Geistliche Intermedialität" concerning the role of media in early modern Christianity that is funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) – Research Unit 5138 Sacred Intermediality in the Early Modern Period – 435118611.

2 For a now-classic discussion of these points, see Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

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While the Jesuits' global activities and universal aspirations are well known and have been intensely studied in recent scholarship, researchers have much more rarely investigated how the Jesuits expressed or talked about their (claimed) globality. Few studies have focused explicitly on Jesuit representations of their own worldwide expansion. And yet, this is a far from trivial question, for "imagining the World" and "worldmaking" were by no means simple tasks.[3] As is widely acknowledged, imaginations and depictions of space are highly contextual and satiated with social, religious, cultural, or political meaning.[4] Social organizations especially need to devise suitable ways to imagine and structure the spaces they intend to penetrate, and their spatial self-descriptions are complex cultural products and hardly naturally given. Crafting languages—whether in words or images—to talk about space required much creative work. This was true especially when it came to imagining globality or the comprehensive coverage of the entire physical earth, since in an age before aeronautics there was no way at all to behold the actual globe in totality.[5] Seeing the entire globe in premodern Europe actually meant imagining or visualizing it in surrogate form. It was an artificial perspective, possible only by employing sophisticated mental operations and complex media strategies. The globe as a unified object of observation and a unified conceptual reference existed primarily on paper and in comparable media.[6]

Finding suitable ways of representing an institution's universal attitude and global presence, thus, was no simple thing. This also holds true for the Society of Jesus, despite—or, perhaps, rather because of—its impressively extended portfolio of interconnected global activities. In fact, religious depictions of global space in the early modern period have hitherto not been included very prominently in research on the history of geography, despite the indubitable impact of religious agents for the development of a modern spatial imagination.[7] Early modern worldmaking was often missionary and

3 Rachel Miller, "Imagining the World through St Francis Xavier Imagery: A Case Study in Quito," in *Profiling Saints: Images of Modern Sanctity in a Global World*, ed. Elisa Frei (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2023), 126–149. The literature on "worldmaking" is expanding; cf., e. g., Elizabeth Horodowich and Alexander Nagel, *Amerasia* (New York: Zone Books, 2023); Ayesha Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

4 Among the best works on this subject is still Jean-Marc Besse, *Les grandeurs de la Terre: Aspects du savoir géographique à la Renaissance* (Lyon: ENS Éditions, 2003).

5 Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). This important book also includes some remarks on the Jesuits (160–163). Further observations and examples appear in Denis Cosgrove, "Mapping the World," in *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, ed. James R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 65–116.

6 Giuseppe Marcocci, *The Globe on Paper: Writing Histories of the World in Renaissance Europe and the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

7 For a spirited argument about a distinctively religious history of early modern geography, see Ran Segev, "Spatial Evidence in a New World: Fray Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa's Geography," in *Evidence in the*

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religious to its core, and by no means only resulted from religious disillusion.[8] This chapter therefore will explore three media forms used by Jesuits to present their order's global aspirations and worldwide activities: maps, allegories, and texts. Each of these forms had their own advantages and challenges and provided their religious producers with particular spiritual potentials. The chapter also argues that the Jesuits' form of imagining and depicting their institution's global extension aligned well with a variant of activist and dynamic spirituality typically associated with their order.

By and large, the Jesuits relied on seemingly simple modes of imagining their own globality, preferring hands-on and practical perspectives over abstract and conceptual ones. More than twenty years ago, Steven Harris noted in an offhand remark that Jesuits imagined the spaces their institutions inhabited primarily as "pointillist collection[s]" of individual houses or regions.[9] While Harris' work in general has had an enormous impact on Jesuit studies, this particular remark remains underappreciated. Yet it allows for crucial insights into Jesuit spatial self-perception. As this chapter will argue by expanding on Harris' intuition, Jesuits often preferred to present their own globality via serial enumeration of countless individual localities that held special significance for the Society of Jesus. Jesuit space was primarily the sum total of all locations where Jesuits worked, missionized, and suffered. Other than that, global extension and worldwide coverage were conceptualized relatively little. As captured in Harris' notion of a pointillist spatial imagination, globality and worldwide extension were described by Jesuits primarily via an endless concatenation of locally grounded activities.

The Jesuits' pointillist understanding of their own institution's spatial logic was deeply ingrained into the order's most basic structural features. The order's administrative setup, and its closely related archival logic, were structured mostly territorially.[10] There were few institutionalized opportunities or requirements to think about how various regions of activity would compare to each other or could be integrated into a "larger picture." While Jesuits often did connect and compare episodes of European provenance with events and features elsewhere, and sometime even drew broader conclusions from putting local experiences into a geographically broader framework, such mental

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Age of the New Sciences, ed. James A.T. Lancaster and Richard Raiswell (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 209–227.

8 Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers*, 8–9, passim, but see also 14.

9 Steven Harris, "Mapping Jesuit Science: The Role of Travel in the Geography of Knowledge," in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 212–239, 218.

10 Markus Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms? Globale Verwaltung und Kommunikation im Jesuitenorden 1540–1773* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011); Markus Friedrich, "Archive und Verwaltung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa: Das Beispiel der Gesellschaft Jesu," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35 (2008): 369–403; Markus Friedrich, "Archives as Networks: The Geography of Record-Keeping in the Society of Jesus (1540–1773)," *Archival Science* 10, no. 3 (2010): 285–298.

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operations usually remained ad hoc and were not thoroughly institutionalized.[11] There was little in terms of abstract conceptualization of transregional or global extension. Explaining worldwide coverage as the sum total of serialized localities remained the primary form of imagining global outreach in Jesuit circles. This also shows in the media they employed to grasp, depict, and represent their own impressive global portfolio of activities.

2. Mapping Catholic Globality

Early modern spatial imagination is strongly connected to the era's vigorous cartographic culture.[12] The genres of globes, world maps, and atlases, in particular, came to exemplify the newly global perspectives of European geographers.[13] Maps proliferated from the Renaissance onward, and they helped to make the representation of spaces increasingly visual. At first sight, mapmaking was a powerful tool to overcome pointillist notions of space in favor of a more abstract and mathematical planar concept. Jesuit mapmakers appreciated the new cartographic representation of space and endorsed the unparalleled advantages of small-scale visualizations in the form of world maps when trying to cover the entire world. As the Jesuit cartographer Heinrich Scherer, for instance, wrote in 1702: "Nothing is ever presented as clearly and nothing will ever be perceived as easily as that which is submitted to faithful eyes for inspection, eyesight being the most noble of human senses. Long narratives and detailed deductions often help to obscure what is intrinsically plain and accessible, and make such matters rather intricate."[14] Hence, Scherer's maps, too, allowed a particularly easy and instantaneous grasp of the entire globe and of worldwide phenomena. Yet, as the following section demonstrates, Scherer also fell victim to some of the difficulties inherent in the new cartographic forms of displaying space. Alternative forms of depicting Jesuit space thus remained powerful, both in Scherer's work and within the Society of Jesus at large.

11 Markus Friedrich, "'Government in India and Japan is Different from Government in Europe': Asian Jesuits on Infrastructure, Administrative Space, and the Possibilities for a Global Management of Power," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4 (2017): 1–27.

12 David Woodward, ed., *The History of Cartography*, vol. 3: *Cartography of the European Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Matthey H. Edney, ed., *The History of Cartography*, vol. 4: *Cartography in the European Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020).

13 See, e. g., R.W. Shirley, *The Mapping of the World: Early Printed World Maps, 1472–1700* (London: Holland Press, 1983).

14 Heinrich Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica* (München: Rauch 1703), 35. Scherer obviously did not pay attention to the important fact that reading also implies eyesight. His juxtaposition is "reading" vs. "seeing," that is, "text" vs. "image/diagram."

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326 IMAGO PRIMI SÆCVLI SOC. IESV.

Societatis Missiones Indicæ.

Vnus non sufficit orbis.

Esse quid hoc dicam generosæ mentis? vtrumque
Hic puer amplexus expedit ante globum.
Dic puer, an toto pectus tibi latius orbe est,
Et minor est animo mundus vterque tuo?
Sic quondam Æmathio iuueni par non fuit orbis;
Et quò non potuit prælia, vota tulit.
Ille tamen victor Regnorum, ad flumina Gangis
Constitit, & magno victus ab orbe fuit.
Maior amor Gangem superans, pelagusque profundum,
Victor in extremis finibus orbis agit.
Illius in castris qui signa sequuntur IESV
(Ignauus tali quis velit esse duce?)
Quid mirum, Herculeas vltra ac freta vasta columnas,
Quærere & Eoos, quærere & Hesperios?
Diuus amor nullis arctatur finibus, illos
Ignecus Ignatij spiritus intus agit.
Exemplum ducis, atque animarum lucra decusque,
Et magno in terris fixa trophæa Deo,
Ingentes animos faciunt, quos expleat vnus
Qui dulci recreat numine corda Deus.

Fig. 1 Johannes Bolland, Jean de Tollenaer, and others, *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu: a prouincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp 1640), 326. © Creative Commons.

2.1 World Maps as Symbols for Religious Universality

World maps were powerful symbols, regardless of what geographical details they contained. They could, very easily, be imbued with enormous religious significance. The Jesuits took full advantage of this. The famous *Festschrift* for the Society's hundredth anniversary, the *Imago Primi Saeculi*, for instance, contained a powerful emblem featuring two hemispheres that symbolized "The Society's Indian Missions." It quoted the famous phrase "Unus non sufficit orbis" from Juvenal's Tenth Satire, usually associated with Alexander the Great.[15] The verses explicitly associate Jesus' militia with the ancient "victor Regnorum," who traveled the worlds until he reached the Ganges (Fig. 1). A variation of this emblem, again featuring the two-globes motive combined with the motto "unus non sufficit," appeared in another Jesuit's work, Jakob Bosch's *Symbolographia* from 1702 (Fig. 2).[16]

15 *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu* (Antwerpen: Moreti, 1640), 326.

16 Jacob Bosch, *Symbolographia sive de arte symbolica sermones septem* (Dillingen: Bencard, 1701), unpaginated (emblem CDLII). This emblem has been brought to my attention by Dr. Jenny Körber, who suggested comparing it with the two examples from the *Imago primi saeculi*.

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Fig. 2 Jacob Bosch, *Symbolographia sive de arte symbolica sermones septem* (Dillingen 1701). S nv/a Yge 18 (detail), urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11348886-3, Staatliche Bibliothek, Passau.

The world maps in the two emblems contain no further information specifically about Jesuits, missions, or religious items. They function figuratively, as visual symbols of globality. In Bosch's emblem, the maps only vaguely recall the actual continents' shapes, highlighting the purely symbolic function even further. In addition, Bosch's picture features a kind of firework or rocket, flying from one hemisphere—perhaps to be identified with Europe—to the other, carrying the light of faith with it.[17] In the *Imago*'s earlier version, by contrast, the two hemispheres were joined in the Christian faith by an amor standing between them and resting one arm on each of the globes, again symbolizing Christianity's grasp of the entire world. In both cases, it was the cartographic object, not any specific information it contained, that conveyed a message: the Catholic faith, especially as propagated by the Society of Jesus, was as world-encompassing and totalizing as cartography's unifying visual schema.

2.2 Heinrich Scherer S.J. and Missionary Cartography

In addition to their role as symbols and visual tokens of global and universal aspirations, world maps and globes were also employed by Jesuit mapmakers to present specific information about geographical phenomena, including about their own institution.

17 The *pictura* is explained as follows in Bosch, *Symbolographia sive de arte symbolica sermones septem, part II*, 32: "S. Franciscum Xaverium in Indias mittit. Geminus globus, e quorum altero in alterum flamma per papyraceum tubum transmittitur. L. UNUS NON SUFFICIT." In light of the discussion below in this paper, one wonders if the rocket might also carry an allusion to Luke 12:49, a key (and fire-based) metaphor of the Society's religious globalization.

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Heinrich Scherer S.J., who was quoted at the beginning of this chapter, provides one important example. Scherer was a prolific Jesuit geographer and cartographer. His masterpiece was the *Atlas Novus*.[18] Volume two of this multivolume work, which appeared in 1703, focused on the geography of Catholicism. As Scherer explained in the preface, his approach was meant to disentangle information about ecclesiastical and religious geography from political material—in effect, distinguishing religious from secular geography, and thereby highlighting the specific contribution of spiritual perspectives on the spatial imaginary.

Scherer published his global survey of the Catholic Church as a combination of text and maps. The book's text—around 350 pages—presents historical and contemporary information about the Church's constitutive territorial organizations, primarily the dioceses, archdioceses, and patriarchates.[19] Scherer thus endorsed the Church's territorial and institution-based understanding of ecclesiastic spaces. In his coverage of contemporary facts, Scherer tried to maintain a generally upbeat tone, diagnosing a steady expansion of Catholicism around the globe.[20] Yet it is hard to miss that his narrative often also had to admit rather explicitly that Catholic globality was more of a wish than an actual reality. Initial successes in globalizing Christianity were often only short-lived and were prone to being overturned: "Meanwhile, all hope of bringing these indigenous territories into the fold of Christ, spearheaded by the Portuguese so forcefully, has today entirely died out," as he noted with regard to the dismal record of missionary activities in "Guinea."[21]

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18 The best analysis of Scherer's *Atlas*, though from a different perspective, is now available in Rainald Becker, "Überseewissen in Süddeutschland: Gelehrte Publizistik und visuelle Praxis im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," in *Wissen und Wirtschaft: Expertenkulturen und Märkte vom 13. bis 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Marian Füssel et al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 243–276, here especially 262–268. See also Christian Sandler, "Ein bayerischer Jesuitengeograph," *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft München* 1 (1907): 1–40; Hanspeter Fischer, "Eine mitteleuropäische Jesuitenkarte Heinrich Scherers (1628–1704) von 1703," *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Augsburger Bistumsgeschichte* 47 (2013): 313–323.

19 Scherer gave his survey of Christianity's global extension a strong historical dimension, also carefully investigating the historical development of ecclesiastical territoriality. Insofar as Scherer's *Atlas* tried to map bygone eras of Christian history, it was part of the *geographia sacra historica*, a separate branch of early modern antiquarian scholarship; on this important tradition, see, e. g., Zur Shalev, *Sacred Words and Worlds: Geography, Religion, and Scholarship, 1550–1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Zur Shalev, "Early Modern Geographia Sacra in the Context of Early Modern Scholarship," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in Early Modern England, c. 1530–1700*, ed. Kevin Killeen, Helen Smith, and Rachel Willie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 196–208.

20 Catholic writers did often present extra-European conversions as a compensation for intra-European losses to Protestants; see, e. g., Frieder Ludwig, "Zur 'Verteidigung und Verbreitung des Glaubens': Das Wirken der Jesuiten in Übersee und seine Rezeption in den konfessionellen Auseinandersetzungen Europas," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 112 (2001): 44–64.

21 Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica*, 43.

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When visualized via cartographic means, missionary claims to global Christian advancement became even more ambivalent. Scherer completed his textual account of the Church's global territorial structure by providing several maps. To visualize Catholicism's global coverage, Scherer used continental as well as world maps that covered Catholic areas in white and non-Catholic areas in black. Scherer probably quite conventionally considered world maps depicting the entire globe to be powerful expressions of Roman universalism.[22] His cartography was clearly intended as optimistic visualizations of Catholicism's worldwide presence. Yet Scherer might have unintentionally fallen prey to the visual logic of his maps: When beholding his maps, one does not have to be particularly critical or anti-Catholic to come away with exactly the opposite impression. Most of the world is covered in black, indicating an absence of Christianity. Visualizing Catholicism's global extension by color-coding areas according to people's religious affiliations made the Church's missionary achievements look paltry and dismal (Figs 3 and 4).[23]

Things looked much different when Scherer turned from mapping Catholicism's global coverage to mapping his own religious institution's globality. In his *Atlas*, he included a second world map dedicated specifically to the Society of Jesus and its global presence. The map's title itself highlights Scherer's basic point about Jesuits and the world: "The Society of Jesus, spread through the entire world ("per mundum universum diffusa"), preaching Christ's gospel." Flanked by four portraits of important Jesuits—Ignatius in the lower left corner plus the founding fathers of the three continental missions in America (Josephus Anchieta, Brazil), Asia (Francis Xavier), and Africa (Andrés de Oviedo, Ethiopia)—this second, narrowly Jesuit-focused world map presents global spaces very differently. Instead of coloring large areas in black or white to indicate where Christians did and did not live, the Jesuits' global presence was mapped by highlighting their numerous missionary stations worldwide: all locations where Jesuit missionaries had established a presence were indicated by miniature "IHS" monograms surrounded by a circle of flames (Fig. 5).

Differing from the maps of Christianity's global presence based on regions and depicting black or white surfaces, the Jesuit-focused map relies on a pointillistic understanding of space as a network of interconnected locations: Jesuit houses in cities or settlements. It effectively and unambiguously highlights the order's fascinating achievements, without providing any occasion to think about what still remained to be done. Even Africa and North America, previously depicted (realistically) as completely black areas, now

22 Denis Cosgrove, "Globalism and Tolerance in Early Modern Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (2003): 852–870, here 860.

23 Also briefly mentioned in Christoph Nebgen, "Missionare als kulturelle und politische Grenzgänger in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Communio* 48 (2019): 179–188, here 179f. Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers*, 17, notes that the "world" in early modern representations emphatically transcended empires and their political boundaries.

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Fig. 3 Heinrich Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica sive status ecclesiastici Romano-catholici per orbem universum distributi succincta descriptio historico-geographica* (Munich 1703). 999/4Hist.pol.74#1, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11298432-4, Staatliche Bibliothek, Regensburg.

seemed to be positively integrated into the orbit of Catholicism by the network of Jesuit mission stations. Featured prominently in a work on the Church's global achievements in general, this Jesuit-focused map's visuality renders the order's contribution to missionary achievements in a particularly optimistic way, especially when set against the much more ambivalent depictions of the previous maps.

2.3 Jesuit Global Space as a Network of Locations

It is hard to tell whether Scherer's shift towards an optimistic form of depicting global Catholicism was intentional or not. What is clear, however, is the fact that Jesuits in general very strongly relied on a location-based understanding of their own organizational space. Scherer, thus, may simply have followed this deeply ingrained institutional preference.

Numerous other Jesuit maps, too, depicted their institution's geography as an aggregation of individual houses or establishments.[24] A map drawn in 1752 by José Antonio Villaseñor y Sanchez and produced by Roman map publisher Giovanni Petroschi

24 Further maps are discussed in Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms?*, 403–416.

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Fig. 4 Heinrich Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica sive status ecclesiastici Romano-catholici per orbem universum distributi succincta descriptio historico-geographica* (Munich 1703). 999/4Hist.pol.74#1, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11298432-4, Staatliche Bibliothek, Regensburg.

(1715–1766)—neither a Jesuit, but both drawing heavily on internal information and cooperating closely with the Society—depicted the Jesuit activities in northwestern Mexico and indicated the locations of dozens of Jesuit mission stations in the various subregions of Mexico with tiny symbols (Fig. 6).

Such maps could easily be integrated into the powerful language of early modern emblematic symbolism. The abovementioned formula of two hemispherical globes combined with pro-missionary text also existed with maps that followed this factual logic. The *Imago Primi Saeculi* contains a pertinent example, namely the emblem dedicated to illustrating that "the Society of Jesus, spread out over the entire globe, implements the prophecy of Malachi [1:11]: 'My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me.'"[25] This emblem's picture features two hemispherical world maps, similar to the "unus non sufficit" model. This time, however, the maps are also full of "IHS" crosses,

25 *Imago primi saeculis*, 318: "Societas IESU toto orbe diffusa implet prophetiam Malachiae. Ab ortu solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in Gentibus: & in omni loco safrificatur & offertur nomini meo oblatio munda. Malach. 1." I quote the New International Version. I have included a brief discussion of both emblems in Markus Friedrich, *The Jesuits: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022), 427–428.

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Fig. 5 Heinrich Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica sive status ecclesiastici Romano-catholici per orbem universum distributi succincta descriptio historico-geographica* (München 1703). 999/4Hist.pol.74#1, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11298432-4, Staatliche Bibliothek, Regensburg.

combining factual ecclesiastical cartography with the emblem's symbolic power (Fig. 7). The title of this emblem is echoed in yet another sophisticated world map of Jesuit activity, again produced by Petroschi (Fig. 8).[26]

Whether or not Petroschi's world map of Jesuit activities was primarily meant as an emblem is difficult to ascertain. On the one hand, its title clearly mirrors the *Imago*'s emblem's motto (and Scherer's title, too): "The Society of Jesus, diffused through the entire world preaches Christ's Gospel" (*Societas IESU per mundum universum diffusa praedicat Christi Evangelium*). On the other hand, and despite the titles' similarity, Petroschi's map is no simple copy of Scherer's or the *Imago*'s map. What makes Petroschi's map peculiar, and may make it transcend the role of an emblem, is the addition of a further layer of information: with clearly visible, though very delicate lines, he indicated the routes connecting the otherwise isolated and disjointed Jesuit hubs, emphasizing the actual connectedness of the Jesuit outposts via maritime and terrestrial infrastructure.

26 Petroschi was a major publisher of maps in mid-eighteenth-century Rome and Italy and cooperated frequently with the Jesuits; see, e. g., Mirela Altic, *Encounters in the New World: Jesuit Cartography of the Americas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022), ad indicem.

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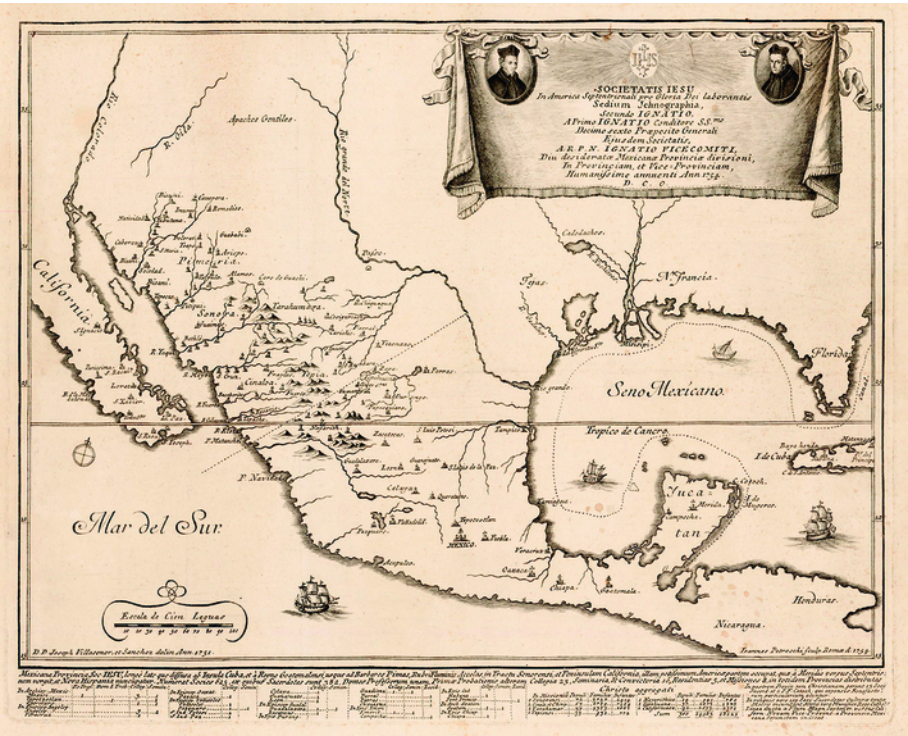

Fig. 6 *Societatis Iesu in America Septentrionali pro Gloria Dei laborantis Sedium Jchnographia […] Diu desideratae Mexicanae Provinciae divisioni, In Provinciam, et Vice=Provinciam, Humanissime annuenti Ann. 1754* (Rome 1754). © Stanford University.

Labeled "iter" or "via," these connecting lines clearly indicate that the Jesuits imagined their own worldwide organization as a network with spokes and hubs. Jesuit imaginations of global spaces thus relied not only on a pointillistic or additive concept of geography; they also were inherently dynamic insofar as they relied in strongly adaptive ways on the constant modeling of the movement between an endless series of individual locations. Several maps showcase this even further by adding a tabular list of distances or travel times between the locations.[27] Jesuit spaces, thus, were imagined strongly from a traveler's point of view, not as abstract planar surface-structures. What counted were the spatial relations and infrastructural connections between individual locations

27 On these, see Peter H. Meurer, "Zur Frühgeschichte der Entfernungsdreiecke," *Cartographica Helvetica* 24 (2001): 9–19. Illuminating context on related questions appears in James R. Akerman, ed., *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), and in James R. Akerman, "Finding our Way," in *Maps: Finding our Place in the World*, ed. idem (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 19–64.

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Fig. 7 Johannes Bolland, Jean de Tollenaer, and others, *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesu: a prouincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata* (Antwerp 1640), 318. © Creative Commons.

Fig. 8 Giovanni Petroschi, *Repraesentatio totius orbis terraquei cogniti*, [Rome 1745?]. © ARSI Hist Soc 17.

or bases. As, perhaps, befitting a literally globe-trotting group of itinerant religious activists, Jesuit space was a traveler's space.

Customized manuals translated this spatial imagination into concrete advice for how to get from place to place. A manuscript entitled *Reißbüechel* (Travel booklet) for Upper Germany lists distances and travel times between the various Southern German Jesuit houses in countless permutations.[28] Detailed information is provided on where to cross rivers and the manual assures readers that a steep ascent or traversing

28 Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (hereafter BSB), cgm 3310: Reißbüechel in der oberteuschen Provinz Societatis IESU.

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a dark forest was indeed the best way forward.[29] The booklet also provides advice on alternative routes, often in relation to seasonal conditions, highlighting once more the dynamic and necessarily adaptive nature of this kind of spatial imagination.[30] As the booklet contains numerous later additions and explications, it must have been in use for a considerable time, continually updated by Jesuits who had traveled parts of the itinerary and could improve the information. Significantly, in addition to information about travel, the *Reißbüechel* also includes information about postal deliveries, thus combining two major Jesuit forms of connection: the moving of people and the moving of letters.[31] Comparable books about travel times and distances were produced—and even published in print—elsewhere, too, for Jesuits by Jesuits.[32] A fascinating diagram from Switzerland even translated such information into visual form, thereby combining a traveler's perspective with cartography's impetus to create two-dimensional visualizations of spaces (Fig. 9).[33]

Much more rarely, by contrast, did Jesuits depict their own spaces as coherent areas or planar surfaces, delineated by more or less clearly defined boundaries. Nowhere in Jesuit legal or conceptual sources were boundaries ever conceptualized; boundary-drawing between jurisdictions was a fortiori not a major discursive concern for superiors. Only occasionally did Jesuit mapmakers visualize boundaries between Jesuit administrative entities with strong, colored lines.[34] A 1751 map of the Jesuit province of Quito in South America, for instance, created by Carolo Brentano (and, again, published by Petroschi), uses a continuous and curving light red line to demarcate the province from neighboring (Jesuit) territories (Fig. 10).

The truly abstract nature of such areal (Jesuit) spatial imagination emerges clearly from the fact that Brentano and Petroschi positioned part of their boundary line in the open sea, both on the Pacific and Caribbean shores of the province. A map of the German Assistency of the Society of Jesus, originally produced for internal usage in 1725 by the Cologne-based Jesuit, cartographer, and historian Frantz Hartzheim, and republished without major alterations in Augsburg by the firm Seutter several years

29 E. g., BSB, cgm 3310, 1r. See also "bei dem Zieglstattl denn berg hinauff," BSB, cgm 3310, 11v.

30 "Noch ein anderen necheren Weg wan die wasser klar seind nach Augspurg," BSB, cgm 3310, 4v. "Ein andern weeg von Regenspurg nach Straubing wan die Thonau ist aufgeloffen," BSB, cgm 3310, 16v.

31 BSB, cgm 3310, 75r-77r.

32 See the introduction and edition of a Spanish travel guide for Jesuits in Antonio López Ontiveros, "Caminos e itinerarios andaluces en 1755 según 'Luz y guía de caminantes jesuitas'," *Estudios Regionales* 25 (1989): 203–216. This small booklet also contains a table of distances and provides further details on specific itineraries.

33 Staatsarchiv Luzern, AKT 19I/1. Also reproduced in Dominik Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie: Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563–1614* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005), 53. I learned about this diagram from Dr. Daniel Sidler, whose comments on this piece I warmly acknowledge.

34 For additional examples, see, e. g., Altic, *Encounters in the New World*, plates 3 and 7. See also ibid., plates 21 to 24, for related phenomena.

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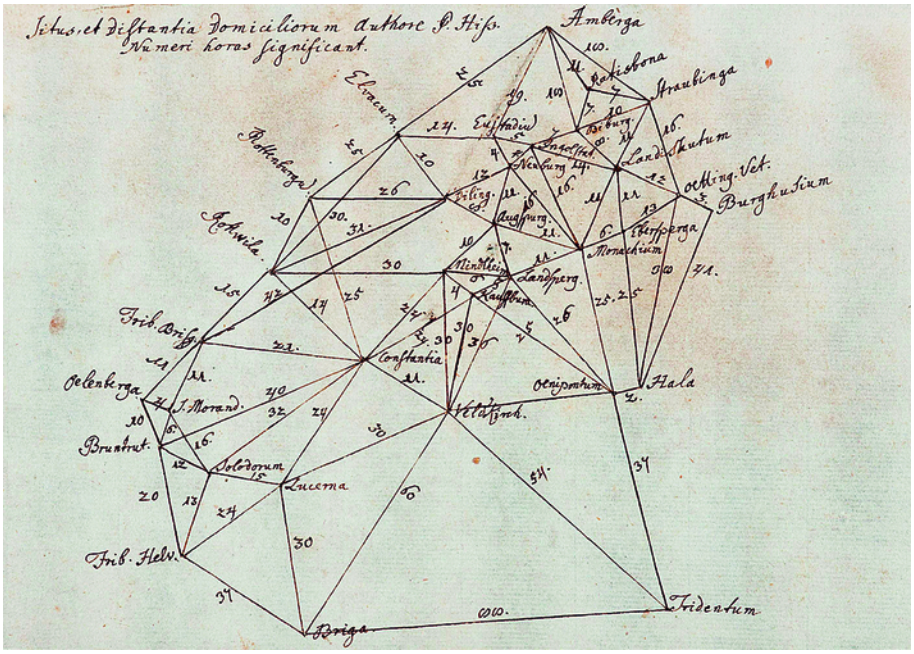

Fig. 9 Map as a diagram. © Staatsarchiv Luzern, AKT 19I/1.

later, distinguishes the eight provinces of the Assistency by color-coding the areas they covered (Fig. 11).[35]

The popularity of location-based instead of area-based depictions of Jesuit spaces confirms Harris' point about Jesuit spatial imagination primarily as a "pointillist collection" of local establishments. Integration of such regional clusters of Jesuit houses into larger spatial unities happened primarily through adding information about communication and travel connections. Although Jesuit thinkers were hardly incapable of imagining their own religious spaces in terms of surface areas with clear-cut boundaries, as also evidenced by Scherer's maps, this was certainly not their default option and most likely not even a prominent priority.

35 Bibliographical information on this map and its various versions can be found in Peter H. Meurer, "Mitteleuropäische Ordenskarten aus dem 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," *Cartographica Helvetica* 21 (2000): 23–34, 25f. On Hartzheim as cartographer more generally, see also Peter H. Meurer, "Die Kölner Jesuiten Franz und Hermann Joseph Hartzheim als Kartographen," *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 200 (1997): 107–133.

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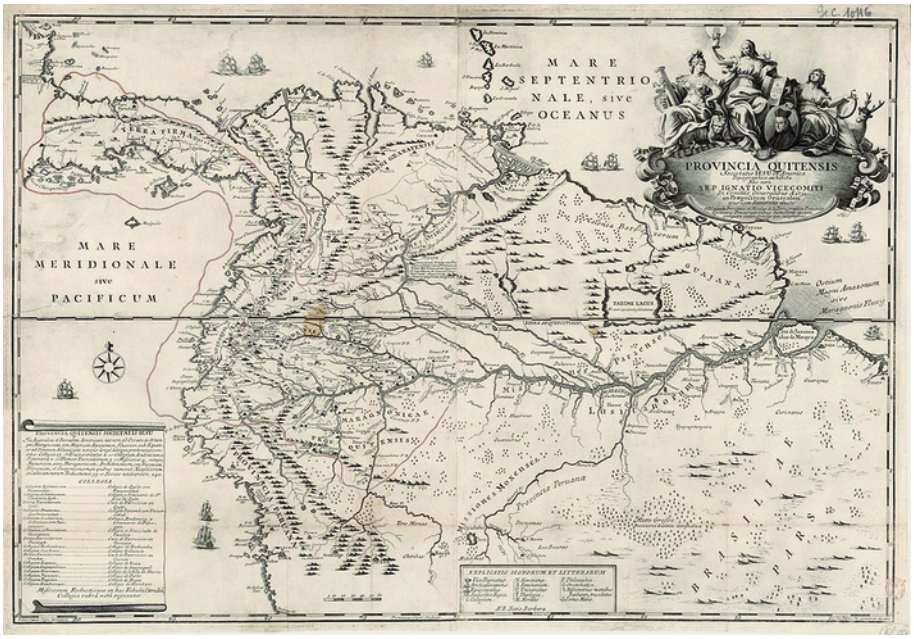

Fig. 10 Giovanni Petroschi, *Provincia Quitensis Societatis Iesu in America Topographice exhibita* (Rome 1751). BNF Paris.

3. Symbolizing Jesuit Globality: Allegories (and Maps)

In addition to maps, other visual forms also helped early modern Jesuits express and describe their own institution's globality. Well known, and frequently studied, are, for instance, arboreal or genealogical visualizations of Jesuit territorial expansion.[36] Even more prominent were allegories of the four known continents, which appear frequently in Jesuit imagery, especially in cartouches or in map margins or corners. Scherer's maps, for example, are full of allegorical figures, usually arranged in a meaningful way.[37] Allegorical depictions of the continents, in particular, were hugely popular in order to drive home messages of Christianity's global outreach. In fact, continental allegories seem to have been an invention of the early modern missionary era, emerging only in the late sixteenth century. They were clearly a product of an era newly self-aware about Europe's growing interest in, and engagement with, foreign places and peoples. In that

36 Miller, "Imagining the World," 125–130.

37 See, e. g., Chet van Duzer, "The Battle between Light and Darkness: Heinrich Scherer, Repraesentatio totius Africae, 1703," in *Frames that Speak: Cartouches on Early Modern Maps*, ed. idem (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 127–129.

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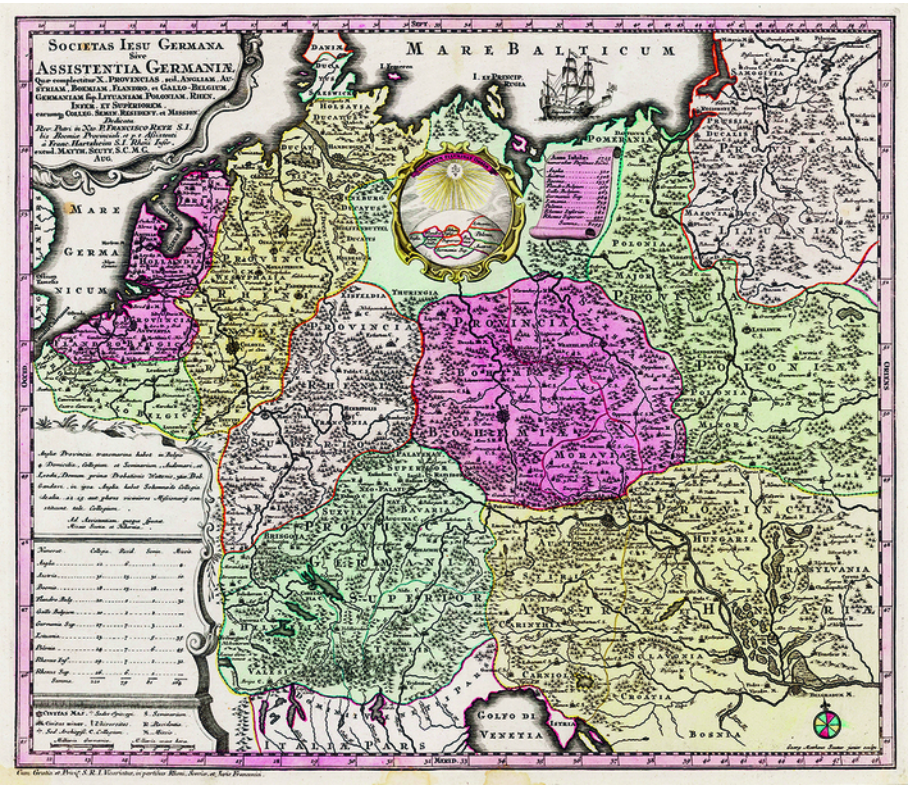

Fig. 11 Matthäus Seutter, *Societas Iesu Germana Sive Assistentia Germaniæ* (Augsburg [1741]). Map collection HAB.

regard, they mirrored atlases, also a genre if not invented, then clearly perfected and popularized at the end of the sixteenth century.[38]

By the eighteenth century, continental allegories had become very popular, and Jesuits, too, frequently relied on four-continent allegories when trying to highlight their institution's global framework of operations.[39] A well-known engraving by Matthaeus Greuter, for instance, dated 1616, depicts the first generation of Jesuits in a stylized vineyard, adoring a figure of the risen Christ on top of a fountain or *fons vitae* with seven streams pouring forth. The entire scene is framed by allegories of the four continents, though we see two persons representing *India occidentalis* and *India orientalis*, and eighteen allegories of individual nations representing Europe. At the bottom, we read

38 Marion Romberg, *Die Welt im Dienst der Konfessionen* (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2016), 19, 26–30, 137. Also see Maryanne Horowitz and Louise Arizzoli, eds., *Bodies and Maps: Early Modern Personifications of the Continents* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

39 Cf. also Romberg, *Die Welt im Dienst der Konfessionen*, 138–145.

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Fig. 12 Daniello Bartoli, *Historia della Compagnia di Giesu l'Asia […]*, vol. 1 (Rome [1653]). S nv/a Nm (b) 1-1, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11348602-9, Staatliche Bibliothek, Passau.

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Fig. 13 Andrea Pozzo, *The Triumph of St. Ignatius*, 1685–1694. Ceiling fresco. St. Ignazio, Rome. © Creative Commons.

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Fig. 14 Christoph Storer and Bartholomaeus Kilian, *Die Weltmission der Gesellschaft Jesu* [Dillingen 1664]. Thesis broadsheet. © Creative Commons.

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Christ's injunction "Ite et vos in vineam meam," underlining the missionary impetus of the engraving.[40] While slightly unusual regarding the details of how various continents and regions were allegorized, this depiction nevertheless expresses the Jesuits' connection between missionary calling and global outlook, as indicated by the gathering of all four continents. The frontispiece to Daniello Bartoli's 1653 *Historia della Compagnia di Giesù* carries this one step further. Under the heading "Affixed to heaven, but scattered throughout the earth" (*Coelo affixus, sed terris omnibus sparsis*), the engraving celebrates Jesuit globality (Fig. 12). The order's worldwide coverage is illustrated by a globe surrounded by allegories of the four continents. St. Ignatius of Loyola, sitting on a cloud above the scene, refracts the light of faith emanating from a sun held in his hand and featuring IHS on the globe.

The most famous Jesuit version of continental allegories, also including the motive of refracted light, appears in the order's Roman church of Sant'Ignazio in the ceiling painting (1685–1694) by the Jesuit lay brother Andrea Pozzo (Fig. 13). The enormous surface is populated by allegorical figures representing foreign places and continents. Pozzo integrated his order and its spiritual activities into this panorama. From Christ's side wound, a beam of light proceeds to Ignatius of Loyola's heart, from where it is refracted in four directions, making the Society's founder the primary transmitter of God's message to Asia, Africa, America, and Europe. Pozzo quotes Luke 12:49 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" ("ignem veni mittere in terram et quid volo si accendatur"), thereby appropriating a prominent Jesuit motto frequently associated with global missionary outreach. All the world's peoples are connected and integrated by listening to a uniform message—and being burned by a uniform fire—spreading globally through Jesuit activities.[41]

The visual schema of light emanating from Christ, refracting in Ignatius, and thereby being forwarded on to all continents, often via additional Jesuit intermediaries, was a very popular way of depicting the Jesuits' missionary globality. Often, it came to be combined with representations of globes or world maps, thus bringing together two major media for expressing globality. Perhaps the most articulate case is a large engraving from Dillingen created in 1664 by Christoph Storer and Bartholomaeus Kilian (Fig. 14).[42] In this single sheet, Ignatius's heart refracts Christ's light to several

40 For the vineyard metaphor and its importance in Jesuit contexts, see Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estoile, *Les ouvriers d'une vigne stérile: Les jésuites et la conversion des Indiens au Brésil* (Lisbon: Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, 2000).

41 Evonne Anita Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

42 The engraving has been introduced into scholarly discussion by Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke, *Das Thesenblatt im Hochbarock: Studien zu einer graphischen Gattung am Beispiel der Werke Bartholomäus Kilians* (Weißenhorn: Konrad, 1988), 256–260. For a recent discussion, see also Becker, "Überseewissen in Süddeutschland," 245–247.

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of his most important followers, including the missionaries Francis Xavier, Gaspar Barzaeus, and Andrés de Oviedo. Allegories of America and Africa are also present, ushered to the altar of Christianity by the Jesuit missionaries, including Francis Xavier counterfactually guiding a Native American.[43] As if this were not already enough Jesuit globality-related symbolism, Kilian and Storer added yet another element: in the center appears St. Aloysius Gonzaga, who directs a young boy to a world map, placed on an altar in the middle of the engraving. This is precisely the kind of factual map that Scherer or Petroschi had made: on an otherwise mostly empty depiction of the globe, locations of Jesuit presence were marked by tiny "IHS" logos. These "IHS" symbols, furthermore, were meant to be imprints of Ignatius' heart, which also bears a similar symbol. Storer and Kilian, too, quote Luke 12:49. They, too, thus conceived of Jesuit global outreach as literally branding the globe with the hot iron of an Ignatian imprint.

Significantly, the Jesuit-location-bearing world map in Kilian and Storer's engraving was cordiform. While not directly copied from any—identified—original, it nevertheless resembled what is today the most famous of several cordiform maps of the early modern period, a 1564 world map by the Flemish cartographer Abraham Ortelius.[44] Yet, while Ortelius' choice of a heart-shaped cartographic projection was deeply rooted in the heterodox Protestant religiosity of the Dutch "Family of Love," the Dillingen cordiform map is to be understood very differently: the motto identifies the world map as the "heart of Ignatius, the man who is highly esteemed" ("Cor viri desideriorum S. Ignatij de Loyola").[45] Since the globe literally *is* the heart of Ignatius, any visual representation of the globe must be cordiform.[46] Beholding the map is beholding Ignatius' heart and deepest ideas. Quite literally, then, the entire world as symbolized by the cordiform world map *is* the very heart of the Jesuit enterprise.

Combinations of continental allegories, maps, and Jesuit missionary history were not at all unique to the milieu of Dillingen University. Many of the same elements, including again the counterfactual pairing of Francis Xavier with a Native American, also appeared in the iconographic cycle of Innsbruck's Chapel of St. Francis in the local Jesuit church.[47] As Gauvin Alexander Bailey has recently described, there, too, outline

43 This is clearly an example of "Amerasian" imagination; see Horodowich and Nagel, *Amerasia*.

44 Recent additions to the large body of scholarship on these maps include Stephanie Shiflett, "Abraham Ortelius's Pulmonary Cordiform Map," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, no. 3 (2019): 143–161, and Stephanie Inverso, "Getting the Message of Ortelius' Heart-Shaped Map and Atlas," *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 12 (2023): 179–193.

45 The Latin phrase picks up on the Vulgate rendering of Dan 9:23, 10:11, and 10:19, where Daniel is addressed as "vir desideriorum" in his visions. Effectively, Ignatius and Daniel thus appear in parallel.

46 Appuhn-Radtke, *Das Thesenblatt im Hochbarock*, 258. This is also mentioned, but not further analyzed, in Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 84.

47 Additional depictions of Francis Xavier with figural allegories of the four continents are discussed in Rachel Miller, "From 'Apostle of Japan' to 'Apostle of All the Christian World': The Iconography of

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maps of India, Japan, the Moluccas, and China are integrated into a rich ensemble of visual media.[48] While worlds lay between the different media under discussion here—stucco ceilings and copper engravings—both the Dillingen print and the Innsbruck chapel project visions of global Jesuit extension by combining allegory and missionary hagiography with maps as a striking and effective way to grasp the entire globe.

A final allegorical engraving to be briefly discussed here is the frontispiece of Scherer's ecclesiastical atlas, *Geographia hierarchica*, for it combines many of the elements discussed so far in paradigmatic ways (Fig. 15).[49] Several allegorical representatives of the Catholic Church—monks, regular clerics, bishops, and even one representative of an Eastern Church (perhaps a Maronite)—carry a cartographic globe crowned by the cross and the Holy Ghost. They are assisted by a set of putti, all bearing ecclesiastical insignia. The scene is surrounded by cartouches carrying biblical passages highlighting the Church's missionary drive (John 14; Mark 16). Most importantly, a putto in the foreground, carrying the papal insignia of a tiara and St. Peter's keys, sends out two missionaries, one of them clearly a Jesuit, while other Jesuits seem to leave the scene towards the back. An abstract depiction of global space is, once again, paired with allegorical depictions of dynamic globe-trotting. In case one were inclined to see the six globe-bearing Catholic representatives as a nod to the six pious figures carrying the "Heart of Jesus loving the Sacred" in one of Anton Wierix's famous *Cor IESU* engravings, then Scherer's frontispiece would even combine the typically Jesuit understanding of global space as itinerant and dynamic, though total and world-encompassing, with the otherwise not explicitly mentioned topic of the Christian heart (Fig. 16).[50]

4. Textual Representations of (Global) Jesuit Space

Very different strategies were required when texts alone, without allegorical or cartographic visualization, were meant to illustrate and express Jesuit globality. Important as visual media were, perhaps the largest share of the Jesuit spatial imagination appeared in the form of written texts, including especially hagiography and historiography. In both fields, the Jesuits applied various formats to represent the world-spanning extension of

St. Francis Xavier and the Global Catholic Church," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 9, no. 3 (2022): 415–437. At least one of the cases she mentions also includes a cartographic representation of hemispherical space (ibid., p. 424f.)

48 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "Global Mission Iconography in the Jesuit Church in Innsbruck (1636–66)," *The Burlington Magazine* 162, no. 1409 (2020): 658–672.

49 Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica*, n.p. (frontispiece).

50 The parallel was suggested by Dr. Jenny Körber, who also helped me unravel the meaning of Scherer's frontispiece. On the Wierix series, though from a very different perspective, see Jenny Körber, *Innere Bilder – äußere Schau: Studien zum Mediendispositiv des frühneuzeitlichen Jesuitenordens* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024), 74–80.

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Fig. 15 Heinrich Scherer, *Geographia hierarchica sive status ecclesiastici Romano-catholici per orbem universum distributi succincta descriptio historico-geographica* (Munich 1703). Titlepage. 999/4Hist.pol.74#1, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11298432-4, Staatliche Bibliothek, Regensburg.

their activities and ambitions. The following pages present only a few select examples of the many ways in which Jesuit authors structured texts so that their readers might appreciate what it truly meant for the Society of Jesus to operate across the entire globe.

4.1 Global Sainthood: Matthias Tanner S.J. Collects and Orders Jesuit Martyrs

Matthias Tanner's well-known book of Jesuit martyrs (*Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem militans*; first edition 1675) explicitly covers events and biographies

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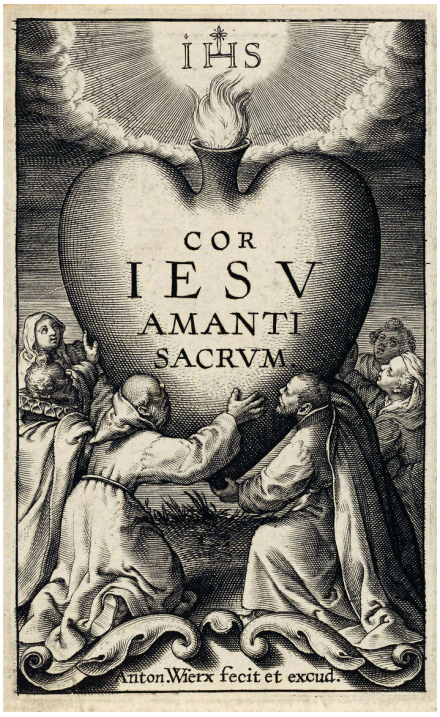

Fig. 16 Anton Wierix, *Cor IESU Amanti sacrum*, Antwerp late sixteenth century to early seventeenth century. Titlepage. © National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Digital Collection.

from "Europe, Africa, Asia, and America."[51] Right from the beginning, the book sets the individual Jesuits' heroic biographies into a global perspective—they all contributed to spreading the Christian faith "all over the globe."[52] As Tanner saw it, their lives manifested a unified experience of Jesuit suffering and sacrifice, gladly endured globally in comparable ways. His list of locations where brutalities against the Society had taken place includes, without any apparent need to differentiate, "France, Venice, Bohemia, Hungary, Livonia, Moravia, Belgium, Transylvania, England, Scotland, Switzerland, the Grisons, Japan, China, Ethiopia, Congo and others" in one sentence.

Tanner reduced concrete local experiences to nothing but variants of a coherent global pattern. From Tanner's spiritual point of view, it didn't really matter if a Jesuit had suffered persecution in England or Ethiopia; it also didn't really matter how a martyr had met his end, even though particularly brutal physical suffering often did attract

51 Matthias Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans, In Europa, Africa, Asia, Et America, Contra Gentiles, Mahometanos, Judaeos, Haereticos, Impios, Pro Deo, Fide Ecclesia, Pietate Sive Vita, Et Mors Eorum, Qui Ex Societate Jesu in causa Fidei, & Viirtutis propugnatae, violentâ morte toto Orbe sublati sunt* (Prague: Typis Universitatis Carolo Ferdinandeae, 1675).

52 This and the following quotations all come from Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans*, praefatio, no pagination.

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some sort of sensationalism.[53] Local Jesuit experiences were nothing but instantiations of universal values. Tanner clearly understood geographical distinctions and variations only as secondary and derivative: "What should I say about persecutions? No location, no province, no city whatsoever, where public or private persecution did not happen." The globe, the Jesuits, and Christian martyrdom became coextensive: "there is no part of the globe (*orbis*), where the Jesuits who went there did not shed their blood." Enumerating countless individual locations where Jesuits had been active was the preferred rhetorical tool to flesh out the abstract notion of "everywhere."[54] Even though the book is formally structured in four parts, each one dedicated to the martyrs of one continent, this approach consciously flattens individual and local events into stereotypical illustrations of universal patterns.[55]

To be sure, Tanner situated individual life stories by providing basic information about geography, political contexts, and ecological environments.[56] Yet, while Tanner took pains to highlight the specific circumstances of individual biographies, there is little sense of typically "Asian" (or "American" or "European") characteristics of Jesuit martyrdom. Only once and in passing, for instance, did he aggregate the many biographies of Jesuits martyred in the Americas into a slightly more general, abstract discussion: "Indeed, a specific method of acting, vastly different from that employed all over the rest of the world, needed to be employed here, a different approach to touch the minds of the Barbarians, who were not used to being exposed to humans. They first needed to be taught what it means to lead a human life, before they could imbibe the Christian faith."[57] This is followed by a few more lines about the Jesuits' American mode of proceeding. While this isolated passage about the need for special Jesuit protocols in one part of the world does indeed suggest that Tanner was interested in reflecting more abstractly and conceptually about the consequences of the Jesuits going global,

53 Karel Vanhaesebrouk, "The Spectacle of Dissection: Early Modern Theatricality and Anatomical Frenzy," in *Early Modern Knowledge Societies as Affective Economies*, ed. Inger Leemans and Anne Goldgar (London: Routledge, 2020), 251–275.

54 Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans*, praefatio, no pagination: "Quod ut tanto evidentius pateret [sc. ex omnibus simul Orbis regionibus venientes martyres], placuit in his mortibus Pugilum Christi recensendis, non annorum seriem & successionem, sed locorum diversitatem sectari."

55 Cf. Camilla Russell, *Being a Jesuit in Renaissance Italy: Biographical Writing in the Early Global Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), 115.

56 E. g., Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans*, 217, which provides a few details about what the "Moluccas" were.

57 Tanner, *Societas Jesu Usque Ad Sanguinis Et Vitae Profusionem Militans*, 435: "Verum alia prorsus hic a reliquis Mundis plagis agenda methodus ineunda Socijs fuit, diversa penitus barbarorum animos versandi ratio, qui omni humanis convictus insueti, docendi prius errant, quae agenda hominum vitae competent, quam institutione Christiana imbuerentur." This idea that the barbarian-ness of the Native Americans differentiated them categorically from Asian heathens clearly derived from his older confrère, José de Acosta.

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the passage's brevity also demonstrates that this was by no means his preferred way of thinking about the implications of making the entire world the Jesuits' home. Sorting the biographies according to four continents was hardly more than a convenient way of giving the book some internal structure; it had little further conceptual impact or purchase.

In Tanner's book, the worldwide-ness of the Society of Jesus was primarily manifested in an endless sequence of locally grounded biographies, all rich in contextual detail and ethnographic background, but demonstrating relatively little awareness of, or interest in, broader patterns or connections. Covering the globe meant de facto presenting a series of individual biographies, not dissimilar from the pointillist approach to Jesuit spaces discussed above. Globality emerged primarily not via strong conceptualizations of a distinctive transregional perspective or by specialized forms of describing the world-spanning nature of Jesuit activities, but rather by populating the entire world through the breathless enumeration of countless Jesuit biographies.

4.2 Scales of Historiography: From the Provincial to the Global

A comparable logic also applied in textual genres that approached the Society of Jesus from a more institutional angle. The rich corpus of early modern Jesuit self-historiography is a prime example. For various reasons not to be discussed here extensively, the Society of Jesus was particularly attentive to its own history. From early on, the Jesuits not only took unusual care to produce and store sources upon which future historians should rely; they also quickly started various large-scale projects to actually exploit these rich materials and produce authoritative accounts of their history.[58]

One key challenge of such projects was the appropriate choice of scale. What was the primary object of Jesuit historiography? In which agents did the order primarily manifest itself? At what level of abstraction was it best to observe the institution and its development? Jesuit auto-historiography essentially happened on three levels, applying three different scales: in addition to historical accounts of single locations, there were historical narratives about Jesuit regions or "provinces," as well as histories of the "entire Society." These three scales of Jesuit self-historiography closely mirror the order's overall organizational pattern, consisting of a sequence of hierarchical organizational structures. And yet, such a layered approach to history writing was not simply a given. It required, in fact, a dedicated and visionary act to develop and implement the two-pronged historiographical approach based on provincial and universal narratives.

58 Robert Danieluk, "'Ob communem fructum et consolationem': La genèse et les enjeux de l'historiographie de la Compagnie de Jésus," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 75 (2006): 29–62; Martín M. Morales, "The Restoration of the Society of Jesus and the Vagaries of Writing," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 952–973.

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That step was taken on September 26, 1598, when Father General Claudio Acquaviva announced that a complete history of the entire Society of Jesus would be produced in Rome.[59] There should be, he said, "an all-encompassing and continuous history" ("integram et continuam Societatis historiam") of the development and progress of the order worldwide. Quite explicitly, this new kind of Jesuit historiography was meant to transcend provincial or local approaches with a "universal" narrative of the entire order.[60] The outcome of this initiative was the eventual publication of six volumes of the *Historia Societatis Jesu* in seven books between 1615 and 1750, covering the historical development of the Society of Jesus from its beginning until the year 1625. It took five historians and 152 years of research to describe roughly eighty years of history. A final eighth tome was largely prepared for print, but never appeared before the destruction of the order in 1773. These are the volumes today collectively known as "Historia Societatis," and their authors are fairly famous: Niccolò Orlandini, Francesco Sacchini, Pierre Poussins, Joseph de Jouvency, and Giulio Cordara.[61]

Importantly, starting at the same time, a parallel series of historical works dealing with individual provinces appeared. At first, this was most likely the direct result of Acquaviva's universal history project, too. The general had asked all provincials to collect materials in their provinces according to a preconceived agenda. While explicitly asking only for provincial information and data, and not directly requiring provincial narratives or "histories," Acquaviva's restricted and circumscribed command nevertheless may

59 Dante Alberto Alcántara Bojorge, "El proyecto historiográfico de Claudio Acquaviva y la construcción de la historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Nueva Espana a principios del siglo XVII," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 40 (2009): 57–80. Alcántara Bojorge quotes Monumenta Mexicana vol VI, but there are many more surviving copies of the relevant letters. I've used Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu [hereafter: ARSI] Epp NN 113, 200f.

60 See Franciscus Orlandini and Nicola Sacchini, *Historia societatis Jesu*, Vol. I, (Rome: Zanetti, 1615), preface, fol. +2v: "Deinde certum videtur praeter commoditates alias universalis Historiae, quas apprime sapiens apud veteres Scriptor, et Historicorum quasi Philosophus exponit Polybius, multuo esse proclivius in ea labi, quae solum partem, aut provinciam complectatur. Quippe universalem ille ipse complexus rerum omnium & Provinciarum; notatio temporum, circumspectus locorum; collatio, & comparatio inter se molis totius unidique communit, & ab errore defendit. Cum vero suas ambae utilitates separatim habeant, necesse est absolutum quiddam, ac perfectum existat, cum (quod in hoc opere sit) in unum corpus miscentur."

61 There is, however, little specialized research on any of these important figures; see, e. g., Francesco Sacchini, *De ratione libros cum profectu legendis libellus*, ed. Iveta Nakládalov (Madrid: Seminario de Poética Europea del Renacimiento, 2008); Francesco Sacchini, *Exhortation and Advice for the Teachers of Young Students in Jesuit Schools*, ed. and transl. Claude Pavour and Cristiano Casalini (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Boston College, 2021); Mariano Nava Contreras, "El De regione et moribus canadiensium del Padre Jouvency y los Escritos de la Nueva Francia," *Praesentia* 12 (2011): 1–30; Michela Catto, "La soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù di Giulio Cesare Cordara e le critiche a un secolo dalla rinascita," in *La Compagnie de Jésus des anciens régimes au monde contemporain (XVIII^{e}–XX^{e} siècles)*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre, Patrick Goujon, and Martín María Morales (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2020), 543–554.

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have inspired more wide-ranging regional historiographical activities. Latin American provinces and missionary territories in particular stand out as prolific producers of narrative accounts starting in the seventeenth century.[62]

The rich corpus of province-based historical narratives originating in Latin America has few parallels elsewhere. Only the German-speaking lands produced a similarly plentiful and coherent body of province-based histories, but only in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century: Anton Socher described the history of Austria,[63] Ignaz Agricola and Franz Xaver Kropf published on Upper Germany,[64] Johann Schmidl discussed Bohemia,[65] and Friedrich Reiffenberg covered the Lower Rhenish province.[66] Elsewhere, nothing on the same scale seems to have existed.

Differences between the Latin American and the German histories abound. Acquaviva had only asked for building blocks for a Rome-based global perspective on Jesuit affairs, and Latin American authors professed to write in compliance with his request.[67] Hence, their texts are commonly understood today as part of a productive feedback loop or a "historiographical spiral," cooperatively connecting peripheries and the center.[68] The Germans, however, when writing more than a century later, wanted to provide an alternative to extant Roman historiographical narratives rather than providing materials for future accounts. Presented in part as reactions to the Roman general histories, the German provincial accounts highlighted differences between universal and regional perspectives. As Ignaz Agricola, author of the first volume on Upper Germany, said,

62 On Latin America, see Dante Alberto Alcántara Bojorge, "El proyecto historiográfico"; Dante Alberto Alcántara Bojorge, *Historias en tiempos de desolación: La memoria histórica de la Compañía de Jesus en México, siglos XVIII–XIX* (Tlaquepaque: ITESO, 2017).

63 Anton Socher, *Historia Provinciae Austriae Societatis Jesu. 1, Ab Exordio Societatis Ejusdem Ad Annum Christi M.D.XC* (Vienna: Kurzböck, 1740) (only one volume ever appeared).

64 Ignaz Agricola et al., *Historia Provinciae Societatis Iesu Germaniae Superioris*, 5 vols. (Augsburg: Georg Schlüter, 1727–1754).

65 Johann Schmidl, *Historia Societatis Jesu Provinciae Bohemiae*, 3 vols. (Prague: Schweiger, 1747–1754). Schmidl's volumes have a particularly complex prehistory, about which, see Antonín Podlaha, "Předchůdcové Schmidlovi v historiografii české provincie Tovaryšstva Ježíšova" [Schmidl's Predecessors in the Historiography of the Czech Province of the Society of Jesus], *Sborník historického kroužku* 8 (1899): 39–48. There exist several previous unpublished versions of this province's history.

66 Friedrich Reiffenberg, *Historia Societatis Iesu ad Rhenum Inferiorem Pars I.* (Cologne, 1764). Volume 2 remained in manuscript form, see Stadtarchiv Köln, 223/A637.

67 Francisco Javier Alegre, *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesus de Nueva España*, ed. Felix Zubillaga and Ernest Burrus (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1959), 39: "en fuerza de orden superior, emprendemos escribir."

68 Josefina Cargnel, "Historia particulares en las historia generales: Un acercamiento a la mirada sobre la región rioplatense desde las historia generales de la Compañía de Jesus," in *Historia Moderna: Actores, discursos y prácticas*, ed. Maria Luz González Mezquita (pub. by author, 2016), 139–145. Josefina Cargnel, "Diálogos e influencias entre las 'Historias Generales' de la Compañía de Jesús y la región rioplatense," *Illes i Imperis* 19 (2017): 35–55.

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his book was meant to cover "the special and particular things and all the houses of a Province" which had escaped the attention of the Rome-based "universal history of our order."[69] He felt a need to describe local affairs "minutatim," little by little, in the fullest detail. Friedrich Reiffenberg, writing in 1764, expressed this point in even sharper language, saying that special histories "heal many of the shortcomings which the others [sc. the universal histories] can hardly avoid."[70] Using a well-worn analogy, he expressed the categorial difference between universal and provincial histories by linking them to the parallel difference between "general maps," which only sketched the earth's general features, and "chorographical" maps, which were full of detail about regional geography, including the more obscure local minutiae.[71]

German Jesuits, writing provincial histories in the mid-eighteenth century, and probably reflecting broader tendencies towards regionalization within the Society of Jesus, thus positioned their texts as region-based alternatives to Rome-based historiographical worldmaking. By highlighting the peculiarities of regional perspectives, they ex negativo acknowledged that worldmaking, that is, capturing the entirety of the world's space, significantly differed from everyday life experiences. Writing the global meant creating artful inventions, based on condensing detail through abstraction.

4.3 Pointillism and its Remedies: Organizing the Structure of Jesuit Textual Self-Perception

Was the "general map" of a "universal history" of the entire Society of Jesus able to overcome the pointillistic, foundation-by-foundation approach of the Jesuits' standard spatial imagination? The basic organizing principle of the Roman universal history of the Society of Jesus was annalistic. The volumes were divided into "books," each dedicated to one year. Within that chronological structure, a predominantly geographical logic applied—in effect, the reader travels year after year through the numerous Jesuit regions, usually starting in Rome, then covering Italy and the rest of Europe, before moving to the mission territories. The material is presented within each year (or "book") in a sequence of numbered paragraphs identified in the margins, and usually labeled either for the region or location it covers or the individual Jesuit and his biography being addressed. Hence, the overall annalistic schema is fleshed out in ways closely resembling Tanner's biographical approach and mirroring a mental journey from one Jesuit location to the next, not dissimilar from the travel maps mentioned above. Most of the German provincial histories, too, apply such a chronological organization. Agricola's *History of Upper Germany*, for instance, is strictly annalistic, covering events year by year. So

69 Agricola et al., *Historia Provinciae Societatis Iesu Germaniae Superioris*, Vol. 1, fol. 3v (Dedicatio).

70 Reiffenberg, *Historia Societatis Iesu ad Rhenum Inferiorem*, Pars I, preface: "Multis haec incommodis medetur, quae ab illa abesse vix possunt."

71 Reiffenberg, *Historia Societatis Iesu ad Rhenum Inferiorem*, Pars I, preface.

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are Socher's *History of Austria* and Schmidl's volumes on Bohemia. Some variation occurs in Reiffenberg's late volume on Lower Germany, which has sections dedicated to more extended time periods, often covering four or five years per "book."[72] Within these annalistic sections, individual narratives again often follow a pattern of numbered paragraphs, each dedicated to one remarkable place, event, or Jesuit activity.

The dominant annalistic pattern prevented *longue durée* analytical assessments. It was so deeply ingrained in Roman Jesuit historiography that Jesuit historians felt the need to apologize profusely when occasionally breaking out of this constraint. Particularly revealing is one section on China and the China missions in *Historia Societatis Jesu pars quinta*, covering the year 1584 when Matteo Ricci succeeded in establishing the first Jesuit mission station on the Chinese mainland.[73] Running for seventeen pages, the passage is unusually substantial—the following remarks on Brazil and Mexico are presented together (!) on less than one page.[74] As is explained, the authors had

> found it necessary to explain the origins of our first house in China in Zhaoqing in detail and carefully. The dear reader may look benevolently upon us for including a few details of previous years, which we have done here only once and for the benefit of fuller and easier understanding, because elsewhere we do not easily transgress our annalistic structure.[75]

One prominent critic of a purely sequential and enumerative—or pointillistic—approach was Daniello Bartoli, author of a famous *Historia della Compagnia di Giesù* in the mid-seventeenth century. He thought that annalistic forms of presenting Jesuit history would rip apart longer arcs of historical developments.[76] Two generations later, in the early eighteenth century, Joseph de Jouvency S.J., who was responsible for the second part of volume five of the *Historia Societatis Jesu*, echoed Bartoli's dismissal of annalistic historiography: "There is a huge difference between annals and histories," Jouvency wrote, explaining further that

72 Cf., e. g., Reiffenberg, *Historia Societatis Iesu ad Rhenum Inferiorem*, 288–320 ("1592–96"), 321–363 (1596–1600).

73 *Historia Societatis Jesu*, V/1, 206–223.

74 *Historia Societatis Jesu*, V/1, 223–224.

75 *Historia Societatis Jesu*, V/1, 223: "Hactenus tantum necessariae morae traximus in enucleate, ac distincte repetendis originibus Sciauquinensis Domus, quam primam intra Regnum Sinarum Societas habuit: in quo si aliquot retro Annorum memorias coniunximus, boni consulere debebit aequus lector, id quod eius plenius commodiusque docendi causa innovatum hic semel a nobis est, alias non facile limites Annalis transgressuris."

76 Simon Ditchfield, "Historiae oculus Geographia: How to Write a Global History of the Jesuits According to Daniello Bartoli," in *Una curiosità generosa: Studi di storia moderna per Irene Fosi*, ed. Giuseppe Mrozek-Ellszezynski and Giovanni Pizzorusso (Rome: Viella, 2024), 231–247.

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> he who writes annals brings together events of one year as they happen and does not labor to connect them to each other or divide them from others. The writer of histories by contrast puts together something like a body out of diverse parts which come together to create one form or result [*exitum*], so that last things correspond to first ones, effects to causes, and counsel to actions.[77]

Jouvency, one of the most important Jesuit writers on historiographical methods and concepts, thought that historiography could serve as a tool to comprehend the order in its entirety only if individual events and agents were deeply and consciously connected.[78]

Bartoli and Jouvency, while sharing their dislike of annalistic presentation, drew very different conclusions from pondering the ancient question of how to balance chronology and geography when writing history.[79] Bartoli decided in favor of a strictly geographical—not annalistic-chronological—structure, in his case dedicating individual volumes to different world regions. The vice of such an approach, which fragmented global connections into geographical parts, was reframed by Bartoli as a distinctive merit: "When writing the history of the Society, such [global] unity of subject matter is not appropriate since the work undertaken by 'ours' is too various and diverse in nature."[80] Jouvency, by contrast, followed an entirely different organizational principle. The second part of volume five of the Roman *Historia* is structured neither chronologically nor geographically, but topically, with individual books covering separate Jesuit works and activities. Chronology is observed within each chapter but is not an overall organizing principle. This allowed for more continuous storytelling, Jouvency thought, avoiding the "break-up" of narratives "in the middle," which resulted from annalistic (and, though in different vein, also from geographical) models. While annalistic organization "separated things that belonged together not only by place but by argumentative logic," a topical arrangement kept together things that belonged together.[81]

Jouvency's thematic approach to representing Jesuit globality contradicted the order's basic setup and also went against the grain of its historiographical infrastructure. Indeed, preparatory work for Jouvency's volume had been undertaken much earlier according to the well-known chronological logic. There was even a (partial) narrative already available in a manuscript that Jouvency could have simply expanded upon. Yet, as he

77 *Historia Societatis Jesu pars quinta*, V/2, n.p.

78 On Jesuit history teaching, including Jouvency, see Paul Nelles, "Historia magistra antiquitatis: Cicero and Jesuit History Teaching," *Renaissance Studies* 13 (1999): 130–171.

79 For a recent exposition of this issue, see Ditchfield, "Historiae oculus Geographia."

80 Translation by Ditchfield, "Historiae oculus Geographia," 246.

81 *Historia Societatis Jesu*, V/2, fol. §ij^{r}: "Sic enim ad metam uno velut cursu non interrupta fertur oratio; quae si dispertiatur, interjectis rebus non loco tamen sed argumento plane disjunctis necesse est memoriam & attentionem legentis infringi; tum vero quaedam jam narrata repeti, ut eorum nexus cum iis quae narranda instant, intelligatur."

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chose to implement his new structure, he had to reorganize the available handwritten material and draft. This entailed the complete disassembling of previous extant annalistic manuscript narratives by virtually dissecting annalistically organized texts into topic-related fragments which then had to be recombined into the new thematically structured chapters. This was conceptually challenging and physically demanding. The underlying annalistically structured draft manuscript prepared in the seventeenth century still exists; it is barely readable today because of Jouvency's countless annotations and insertions with which he tried to refashion it. He had to extensively mark up the original narrative by inserting signs and references connecting individual paragraphs across various years that belonged to one of Jouvency's new topical items.[82]

Jouvency could have known about the enormous difficulties entailed in reworking chronological and geographical texts topically—the Roman Curia of the order had had similar experiences in the 1650s during a short-lived experiment with publishing *litterae annuae* for the entire Society of Jesus in thematic form.[83] Back then, the enormous efforts required for superimposing a topical framework on the order's basic geographical identity were unsustainable. Jouvency, too, quickly gave up his great ideas. What he had done for the second tome of volume five was not continued. When preparing a manuscript draft of volume six, he relied instead on the simplest structure of all, presenting province after province, starting in Italy before moving through Europe and then overseas.[84] He now even metaphorically applied the language of traveling from one region to the next in his tour d'horizon of the worldwide Jesuit order.[85] While still avoiding annalistic organization, this was a much less integrated and integrative approach than his topical structure.

Perhaps this was too much of a purely enumerative approach to representing the Society of Jesus. In any case, Jouvency's manuscript version did not go forward. When volume six finally appeared in print—only the first part of it actually went to the press before 1773—its author, Giulio Cordara, returned to the classic annalistic scheme, eventually undoing the various experiments initiated and partially implemented by Jouvency. A combination of chronological and geographical pointillism prevailed in the Jesuits' auto-historiography.

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82 Jouvency achieved this by rearranging Sacchini's underlying annalistic text by graphically marking it up; see ARSI, Hist Soc 88.

83 Markus Friedrich, "Circulating and Compiling the Litterae Annuae: Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 77 (2008): 1–39.

84 BSB, clm 773 and 774.

85 The *liber secundus* on Germany starts: "Ab Italia gradum facimus in Germaniam, Italiae vicinam," BSB, clm 774, p. 3. The section on Germany (first half of BSB, clm 774) basically only enumerates individual houses and recounts their development during the tenure of Father General Muzio Vitelleschi (gov. 1616–1646).

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5. Conclusion

Jesuits often depicted the spaces they covered and considered their own by applying a simple scheme: they enumerated individual events and biographies or local institutions, often making their order appear as endless additive enumeration of one item after another—a "pointillistic" approach to imagining spaces (Steven Harris). Even when using the most abstract and mathematical tools available at the time to represent spaces—small-scale world maps, globes, or atlases—they often tended to be only a backdrop for a more prominent pointillistic approach. While world maps or globes could become meaningful symbols of the Jesuits' universal aspirations in their own right and habitually provided the basis for most Jesuit auto-cartography, Jesuit mapmakers nevertheless preferred *describing* their global extension via additive series of relevant locations over *defining* or *delineating* it in abstract, mathematical, or areal forms. Jesuit spaces were captured more by what was in them (and how these items were connected) than by defining and calculating surfaces, borders, or areas. When they drew boundaries around their own jurisdictions, this was predominantly symbolic—Jesuit spaces were relationally characterized by the Jesuits who lived there, not as planar surfaces.

World maps, atlases, or globes, those artificial contraptions to represent the world on paper at a glance, had no direct equivalent in the realm of text-only forms of grasping the entire earth. Concerning texts, few narrative strategies and organizational templates existed that could be called genuinely global. Textual forms of abstraction akin to the diagrammatic compression of enormous spaces onto the small surfaces of book pages were not readily at hand for Jesuit writers. Authors who intended to tell of their order's universality had few options other than covering region after region, location after location. In the era's terminology, textual representations of space remained overwhelmingly "chorographical." Accordingly, most Jesuit attempts to present their institution's worldwide activities in textual form relied on additive and enumerative procedures of one kind or another. While Jesuit historians from Bartoli to Jouvency and beyond were keenly aware of the necessity to express the coherence of events across time and space, the entire world proved too large an object for developing a distinctively globe-covering narrative approach. Jesuit experiences, even when concerning all of the known world, were thus narrated primarily as local and situational.

The Jesuits' tools for imagining and depicting their own spaces afforded opportunities and created problems at the same time. They may have flattened regional differences between far-away experiences through serial enumeration, and they may have lacked in true transregional conceptual integration; yet this approach also realistically emphasized the dependence on infrastructure and travel. Moreover, it allowed for a relatively optimistic perspective on current affairs—every single inroad into hitherto uncharted or enemy territory, every single Jesuit who set foot in a new place, could be seen in absolute terms as a success, no matter his actual achievements—he transferred God and Ignatius' light and fire to a new location and thereby imprinted a new "IHS" symbol on

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the Jesuits' mental map of the world. Such an approach to space therefore lent itself to showcasing pastoral efforts and missionary activism.

There may have been a distinctive spiritual message implied in such spatial imaginations. In fact, much of early modern geographical imagination was deeply imbued with spiritual meaning. It has been correctly pointed out, for instance, that the new abstract mathematical concepts of space that made world maps and globes possible in the first place may have resonated with a type of contemplative, disentangled, and tolerant, though highly energetic form of spirituality, often associated with irenic proponents of transconfessional coexistence.[86] The Jesuits' location-based, relational, and dynamic understanding of space was just as spiritually charged, though in very different ways. It may have reflected, and perhaps actively promoted, an immersive, localized, interdependent, and strongly connected and activist variant of spirituality, not to mention it was also strongly pro-Catholic and proudly confessional.

Highlighting the Jesuits' understanding of space as localist and additive does not at all imply that the Jesuits were lacking in awareness of the increasingly universal or global dimension of their own and their contemporaries' activities. Quite to the contrary, the Society of Jesus is rightfully considered a prime user of globalizing practices. Jesuits covered the entire globe, and they knew it—proudly. And yet, while they acknowledged that worldwide coverage might require a truly universal form of comprehending and grasping the entire globe, this was more easily said than done. Creating visual, artistic, and textual forms that expressed a global perspective which was more than just the sum total of individual localized experiences proved challenging. While Jesuits conceptually appreciated the advantages of "Apollo's Eye"—an artificially created perspective that beheld the entire earth as if from far above at a single glance, as defined by Denis Cosgrove—they struggled to implement and imagine such a unique and unifying perspective.[87] From administrative structure to cartographic depictions to the textual organization of narrative accounts, the Jesuits, fully aware of the importance of locality and infrastructure, appreciated the advantages of a pointillistic, enumerative, and additive understanding of global spaces.

86 Cosgrove, "Globalism and Tolerance."

87 Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*; Friedrich, *Der lange Arm Roms?*, 50–54.

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III Regular Clerics' Social Networks

Andreea Badea

Powerful Networks

Girolamo Casanate and the Plans to Establish Dominican Catholicism in Rome

1. Introduction

On the eve of the Napoleonic Wars, the central positions responsible for the control of knowledge and faith at the curia, such as the office of *magister Sacri Palatii* and secretary of the Index, were in the hands of the Dominicans of the Biblioteca Casanatense, founded in 1701. This institution, which included a rich library and a college, was established by the prefect of the Congregation of the Index and the Vatican Library, Cardinal Girolamo Casanate (1620–1700), in the will he drew up on October 5, 1698. The establishment of the Casanatense was not a mere coincidence but rather a deliberate effort to assert the dominance of the *religio dominicana* within Roman Catholicism, a testament to the determination and commitment of its founders.

Undoubtedly, the staff of the Casanatense must have been highly qualified, and their strong networks within the Dominican Order and the curia are evident. However, this raises the question of how they rose from the Casanatense to senior curial positions within less than a century.

This development was not accidental, as this chapter will demonstrate. Rather, the establishment of the Casanatense represented a deliberate effort to strengthen the already highly influential *religio dominicana*, aiming to assert the order's dominance vis-à-vis its opponents and increase its institutional, doctrinal, and political influence in the long term. It could even be argued that the enduring goal of shaping Roman Catholicism in a distinctly Dominican way played a role in the initial preparations for the establishment of the institution. To substantiate this claim, this chapter will demonstrate how the principal actors involved in drafting the will deliberately planned to establish a meritocratic network with the Casanatense at its center.

It is widely acknowledged within modern elite and network research that a renewal of personnel is required to implement far-reaching reorganizations.[1] It is, therefore, of particular interest to observe how clearly and precisely the central actors in-

1 Birgit Emich, "Kulturform und Karrieretechnik: Moderne Patronage im Spiegel der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Moderne Patronage: Formen und Legitimationen personaler Verflechtung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jens Ivo Engels, Volkhard Huth, Robert Bernsee, and Volker Köhler (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2020), 139–163. I wish to thank Rebecca Wolpe and Allison Silver Adelman for the linguistic revision of this chapter.

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volved in the establishment of the Casanatense had this in mind when they established the Europe-wide acquisition of suitable candidates as the fundamental condition for the success of their long-term plan to cultivate a thoroughly Thomistic elite.

The argument presented herein is based on Casanate's will and, in particular, on various memoranda catalogued under Ms 5549 in the Biblioteca Casanatense that have, to date, received little scholarly attention.[2] The documents in question reveal powerful plans to transform the institution simultaneously into a library of censorship and an elite training center.[3] The evidence suggests that this institution, comprising a library and a college, was not merely a Thomistic reaction to the growing academization of Rome by other orders and individuals; rather, it was also intended to bolster Thomism as the dominant philosophical-theological orientation and the Order of Preachers as its principal administrators in their quest for supremacy. The Biblioteca Casanatense was to become an intellectual and ideological center of gravity, significantly influencing Roman control of faith and knowledge. Furthermore, this chapter will show that the architects of the testament had already considered realizing their plans by looking for strategies to make the library an attractive stepping stone for the careers of intellectually outstanding young Dominicans from all over Europe. The hand-picked scholars of the Casanatense thus quickly assumed central positions within the Roman authoritative bodies responsible for the control of faith and knowledge. Even if these positions had already been in the hands of the order prior to the establishment of the institution, a brief comparison with the prosopographical data of the Casanatense staff in the eighteenth century indicates how rapidly and effectively the library became a hub for the formation of an elite cadre, not only constituting an essential pillar in the Roman control of knowledge and faith but also extending its influence over the Alps and into the Dominican provinces of Western and Central Europe.

In the following, I will initially discuss the three men who formed an alliance based on their rigorist Thomistic attitudes and set a common objective to establish the institution, which was inherently complex from the outset. Secondly, I will address the will itself, first by contextualizing the efforts of these three men within the intellectual tendencies and theological necessities in Rome around 1700, second by presenting

2 Researchers have mainly focused on the regulations of the final will; cf. Margherita Palumbo, "La Casanatense, una biblioteca al servizio della 'sana dottrina'," in *A dieci anni dall'apertura dell'Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede: Storia e archivi dell'Inquisizione*, ed. Alejandro Cifres (Rome: Accademia dei Lincei, 2011), 462–466; Maria D'Angelo, *Il Cardinale Girolamo Casanate (1620–1700)* (Rome: Grafia, 1923); and Remy Coulon, "Le mouvement thomiste au XVII^{e} siècle: Le R. P. Antonin Cloche et le cardinal Casanate (I)," *Revue Thomiste* 19 (1911): 433–441; and Remy Coulon, "Le mouvement thomiste au XVII^{e} siècle: Suite, (II)," *Revue Thomiste* 19 (1911), especially 629–630.

3 On the importance of the Casanatense for Roman censorship, see Palumbo, "La Casanatense," 470–478.

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the provisions of the will, and third by discussing the personal considerations during the establishment of the institution. Finally, I will present an overview of the careers of the scholars of the Casanatense in the eighteenth century before drawing conclusions.

2. The Actors

It is not surprising that Casanate drew up his testament with the support of and in consultation with the General of the Dominican Order Antonin Cloche (1628–1720); indeed, it was necessary to discuss many financial and practical details in advance with the general.[4] However, Cloche was well aware of the importance of his order hosting the library, not only in the Roman or Catholic public sphere but also regarding the transconfessional *res publica literaria*, which is why he wanted his collaboration on the will to be the only mention on his epitaph alongside that concerning his involvement in the canonization of the Dominican Pope Pius V.[5] Domenico Ponsi, who published Cloche's *Vita* only one year after the author's death under the pseudonym Conrado Pio Mesfin, even went so far as to claim that the entire endeavor had been conceived by his former general.[6] In the documents accompanying the will, we also find several written statements that confirm at least an intensive involvement in the conceptual preparations.[7]

The role of Giulio Maria Bianchi (1626–1707)—then secretary of the Congregation of the Index and direct subordinate of its new prefect, Casanate—as a third party in drafting the will and in the long-term conception of the library and the associated college was unknown until now. Yet an examination of the handwriting in which some of the memoranda in Ms 5549 are written indicates his involvement, highlighting how much of the work on the will and, above all, on the reflections on the personnel to be recruited for the library and college can be traced back to him.[8] A comparison with digital copies of his handwriting, preserved in numerous documents in the archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, found that the handwriting, the use of particular and highly idiosyncratic abbreviations, and the syntax are identical and can,

4 On the institution's financial aspects, see Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome (hereafter B Cas), Ms 5549, fol. 105r–121v.

5 Conrado Pio Mesfin [Domenico Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre F. Antonino Cloche maestro generale del sacro ordine de' padri predicatori* (Benevento: Nella stamperia archivescovale, 1721), 52.

6 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 87.

7 See, for example, B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 57r–58r.

8 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 65r–74r.

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therefore, be attributed to Bianchi. Moreover, the autobiographical details given by the author of the memoranda correspond to those of the secretary.[9]

This discovery is particularly intriguing because, aside from these documents, there is no apparent evidence of a connection between the secretary and the cardinal beyond their shared roles within the Congregation of the Index. Bianchi's notes not only demonstrate that the three men worked very closely together on this matter, but also indicate their shared ideological and theological orientation, which I will briefly discuss in the following. To illustrate my argument, I will draw on Ludwick Fleck's theory, which was extended by Lorraine Daston, of a *thought and emotion collective* that identifies itself through participation in the same *thought style*.[10] This is all the more relevant in the case under study because the three authors of the testament, like many other Roman dignitaries of the time, shared a rigorist orientation, an austere lifestyle, and the public staging of a strict moral code that was encountered within the higher hierarchical Roman levels during the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[11]

2.1 The Starting Point

Girolamo Casanate, born in 1636 to a noble Catalan family based in Naples, pursued a career that started with the study of law and a mandatory apprenticeship with a Neapolitan nobleman. His career gained momentum when he moved to Rome in 1643, becoming one of the assistants to the future Innocent X, then Cardinal Giovanni Battista Pamphilj. In the years that followed, Casanate embarked on the legal career necessary to become a *Referendarius* of both signatures, a post that, in turn, laid the foundations for his appointment as inquisitor of Malta in 1658.[12] Having made a name for himself

9 Another indication of Bianchi's authorship is the use of the same Venetian dialect that recurs in both the memoranda and the diary of the secretary of the Index, such as the use of "el" instead of "il" for masculine definite articles. I would like to thank Marco Cavarzere for this insight.

10 Ludwik Fleck, *Entstehung und Entwicklung einer wissenschaftlichen Tatsache: Einführung in die Lehre vom Denkstil und Denkkollektiv*, ed. Lothar Schäfer and Thomas Schnelle (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980, first published in 1935), 54, 130–131. For Daston's reflections on *Denkkollektiv* and *Emotionskollektiv*, see Loraine Daston, "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10 (1995): 2–24.

11 See, for example, Antonella Barzazi, *Gli affanni dell'erudizione: Studi e organizzazione culturale degli ordini religiosi a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento* (Venice: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2004), 16. On the bureaucratization of the curia, the related rise of experts, and the gradual decline of family networks, see Maria Antonietta Visceglia, "Denominare e classificare: Familia e familiari del Papa nella lunga durata dell'età moderna," in *Offices et Papauté (XIV^{e}–XVII^{e} siècle): Charges, hommes, destins*, ed. Armand Jamme and Olivier Poncet (Rome: École Française de Rome 2005), 192–194; Birgit Emich, "Die Karriere des Staatssekretärs: Das Schicksal des Nepoten?" in *Offices et Papauté (XIV^{e}–XVII^{e} siècle): Charges, hommes, destins*, ed. Armand Jamme and Olivier Poncet (Rome: École française de Rome 2005), 349–351.

12 Cf. Archivio del Dicasterio per la Dottrina della Fede (hereafter ADDF), SO Juramenta 1656–1700, fol1. 29r–30v; B Cas, Ms 4494, No 6. See also Margherita Palumbo, "Casanate, Girolamo," in *Personen*

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during his stay there, he was appointed assessor of the Holy Office immediately after returning to Rome at the age of just 32.[13] Casanate quickly distinguished himself due to his vast knowledge and administrative skills. Although his interest in theology was general, and he could not be considered an expert, he adopted very clear positions early on; indeed, these are reflected in his reports to the Holy Office. For example, in 1665–1666 he was instrumental in banning laxist propositions, making no secret of his hostility to the Society of Jesus.[14] Only a few months after his elevation to the rank of cardinal in January 1673, he was appointed a member of the Holy Office. Admission to the Congregation for Rites and the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars quickly followed. In 1686, he was admitted to the Congregation of the Index by Innocent XI, and, in 1693, Innocent XII appointed him prefect of the Apostolic Library.[15] Much of this happened because Casanate identified with the rigorist faction of cardinals who had entered the Roman hierarchy from the entourage of Alexander VII and who increasingly populated the curia starting in the 1670s, strongly supported by the two Innocents.[16] These individuals, who actively participated in the bureaucratic reorganizations, were, beyond their origins, religious affiliations, intra-curial interests, and academic training, anti-French, anti-probabiliorist, and anti-laxist, all of which went hand in hand with a certain mildness and openness in dealing with Jansenism in these years and accorded very well with Dominican Thomism.[17] They were not linked by any of the

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und Profile 1542–1700, ed. Jyri Hasecker and Judith Schepers (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2020), 412. For a general overview of Roman career options, see Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Bari: Laterza, 1990), 73–75.

13 ADDF, SO Juramenta 1656–1700, fol. 189r.190v; ADDF, SO St.St. L-5-g, fol. 10r.

14 Lucien Ceyssens, "Casanate, Girolamo" in *Dizzionario Biografico degli Italiani* 21 (1978), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-casanate_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=CASANATE%2C%20Girolamo%2F (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024); Frans Ciappara, "Alessandro VII," in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol. 1, ed. Adriano Prosperi, John Tedeschi, and Vincenzo Lavenia (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 39.

15 On his entire career path, see Palumbo, "Casanate, Girolamo," S. 414. The appointment to the cardinalate took place on Jan. 16, 1673, cf. B Cas, Ms. 4494, no. 11; on July 19, the new assessor of the Holy Office, Federico Baldeschi Colonna, recorded Casanate's admission as a member of the Holy Office, cf. ADDF, SO Juramenta 1656–1700, fol. 313r.

16 Cf. Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista: Papi, nipoti e burocrazia curiale tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome: Viella, 1999); Antonio Menniti Ippolito, "Nepotisti e antinepotisti: Pietro Ottoboni, i 'conservatori' di curia e i pontefici Odescalchi e Pignatelli," *Studi Veneziani* 25 (1993): 233–248, with consideration of the bureaucratic and anti-nepotistic tendency of the Roman hierarchies in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.

17 Regarding Casanate's anti-French tendency, see Palumbo, "Casanate, Girolamo," 412–413; Pietro Stella, *Il Giansenismo in Italia*, vol. I (Zurich: Pas Verlag, 1966), 82, has already highlighted the link between the moderate attitude towards Jansenism and the harsh opposition against laxism and probabilism within the curial hierarchy. Cf. also Orietta Filippini, "Verso Roma locuta: Questioni teologiche, corte madrilena et Santa Sede alla metà del Seicento," *Roma moderna e contemporanea: Rivista interdisciplinare di storia* 9 (2001): 253. On the cultural significance of these currents and the long-term assertion of

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common patronage networks at the time but rather by their convictions, the factors motivating them to become part of the circles promoted by the two Innocents and their entourage. However, we can still speak of patronage because they largely shared the same ecclesiastical agenda and thought style. In the absence of a social framework and its corresponding staging, patronage might no longer be recognized as a culture in these cases, but it seems to have worked as a recruitment technique.[18] Thus, we might speak here of early precursors of the patronage of opinion (*Gesinnungspatronage*) observed among the emerging new administrations in the nineteenth century.[19] In any case, they belonged to the inner, trend-setting circles of a thought and emotional collective that had increasingly spread since the 1670s. Anti-Jesuit, rigorist men, who attracted attention less through traditional clientele and patronage networks than through their strict theological orientation and legal and bureaucratic skills, were increasingly gaining ground in the highest curial positions.[20] Despite differing interests, clerical networks, and factions within the Church, what united most of them was their clear support of the prerogatives of the Holy See, especially during the dispute over the regalia. At any rate, Casanate was one of the defenders of the rigorist *Propositiones* denounced by anti-Jansenists in 1679; he took a prominent stand against Jesuit mysticism, opposed the plans to canonize Robert Bellarmine, and advocated positions that seemed rather Jansenist or Quietist.[21] Notably, Cardinal Pier Matteo Petrucci, who faced accusations of Quietism, and Archbishop Jan van Neercassel of Utrecht owed their reprieves, among others, to Casanate's influence. Moreover, Casanate was one of the Inquisition cardinals who refrained from condemning the *Theatrum veritatis et iustitiae* (The theater of truth and justice), a work written by the recently deceased Cardinal Giovanni Battista de Luca that implemented what Innocent XI and De Luca envisaged as the bureaucratic normativity of the curia.[22]

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rigorist positions, see Jean-Pascal Gay, "Laxisme et Rigorisme: Théologies ou Cultures?" *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 2003 (87): 525–548, especially 539–544.

18 Emich, "Kulturform und Karrieretechnik," 153.

19 Robert Bernsee, *Moralische Erneuerung: Korruption und bürokratische Reformen in Bayern und Preußen, 1780–1820* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 113. In her recently published study on the foreign policy implications of Zurich in the seventeenth century, Sarah Rindlisbacher Thomi also argues for using the term "Gesinnungspatronage" already for the early modern period; cf. Sarah Rindlisbacher Thomi, *Botschafter des Protestantismus: Außenpolitisches Handeln von Züricher Stadtgeistlichen im 17. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022), 539.

20 Menniti Ippolito, "Nepotisti e antinepotisti," 233–248; Emile Appolis, *Le 'tiers parti' catholique au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard & Co, 1960), 20.

21 Ceyssens, "Casanate, Girolamo", https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-casanate_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=CASANATE%2C%20Girolamo%2F (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024); Barzazi, *Gli affani dell'erudizione*, 11.

22 On Casanate's role, see Palumbo, "Casanate, Girolamo," 412–413; for further discussion, see Giovanni Battista de Luca, *Theatrum Veritatis et Iustitiae, sive decisivi discursus permaterias, seu titulos distincti, et ad veritatem editi in forensibus controversiis Canoniciset Civilibus, in quibus in Urbe Advocatus pro una*

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2.2 The Infrastructure

General of the Dominican Order Antonin Cloche was definitely not part of Innocent XI's network, although his adherence to Thomism provided the basis for fruitful collaboration. His rise to the head of the Order of Preachers was challenging because of his origins.

Cloche, born in 1628 to a wealthy family near Toulouse, took his vows in 1644 in the same city and was ordained as a priest there in 1651. By this time, he had already served as a professor in the Dominican convent in Agen and as prior in several French convents. In 1666, he traveled to Rome to conduct negotiations for various provinces, after which he was elevated to provincial in Occitania in 1671. In 1675, the incumbent general of the order, Juan Tomás de Rocaberti, brought him to Rome as his socius, a special honor from the Roman point of view, especially considering that Rocaberti was one of the anti-Gallicanists in Rome who were loyal to the pope.[23] After being appointed archbishop of Valencia by the Spanish Crown, Rocaberti handed over the vacancy of the see to Cloche and insisted that he assume the order's leadership. The newly elected Pope Innocent XI, however, strongly objected, and the Frenchman became socius to the new general of the order, the Mexican-born Spaniard Antonio de Monroy, until he too was granted the archbishopric of Santiago de Compostela by Charles II in 1685.[24] During the General Chapter of 1686, the pope, now deeply involved in the regalia dispute, found it difficult to impose his will, mainly because Monroy and the voters supported Cloche, and a French legation exerted additional pressure.[25]

Due to the dispute with Louis XIV, the pope tried to keep the French away from the curia, hoping in this way to avoid the infiltration of Gallicanism. This was all the more

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partium scripsit, velconsultus respondit […] (Venice: Ex tipografia Balleoniana, 1714); on the importance of de Luca's books as a tool to implement a self-tailored bureaucratic normativity for his contemporaries as well as for modern research, see Andreea Badea, "Ein guter Hirte und Bürokrat oder: Was macht einen kompetenten Bischof aus? Elitenrekrutierung als Zweck der römischen Verwaltungsreform im späten 17. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 48 (2021): 287–288.

23 As archbishop he wrote the apologetic work *De Romani pontificis autoritate*, in which he defended the pope's infallibility and also emphasized his authority in temporal matters over other sovereigns; cf. Juan Tomás de Rocaberti, *De Romani Pontificis Authoritate tomus primus, complectens duos libros, quorum in primo de authoritate Romani Pontificis Infallibili extraConcilium agitur; in secundo illibata romanorum Pontificum in Fide Constantia a calumniantium telis vindicatur […]* (Valencia: In Palatio Archiepiscopali, Typis Jacobi de Bordazar y Artazu, 1691). The book was therefore banned on Dec. 20, 1695, by an arrêt of the Parlement of Paris. See also Jyri Hasecker, "Juan Tomás de Rocaberti," in *Personen und Profile 1542–1700*, ed. idem and Judith Schepers (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2020), 1366–1367.

24 On the pope's commitment to preventing Cloche's rise through the ranks, see Antoine Touron, *Histoire des hommes illustres de l'Ordre de saint Dominique, c'est-à-dire, des papes, des cardinaux, des prélats eminens en Science & en Sainteté, des célébres Docteurs & des autres grands Personnages […]*, vol. 6 (Paris: Chez Babuty & Quillau, 1749), 517.

25 Barzazi, *Gli affani dell'erudizione*, 18; cf. also Touron, *Histoire des hommes illustres*, 519–520.

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important because he had initiated the reform of theological education, especially in the mendicant orders, and expected the generals of the orders to cooperate closely in this matter.[26] In the end, Cloche was also one of the exponents of an increasingly strict and rigoristic Thomism, influenced by his two mentors.[27] However, in the years following his election as general of the order, he was not interested in pursuing a particularly pro-French policy. Instead, he concentrated on those aspects of ecclesiastical policy that were also important to the pope. Therefore, he undertook a severe revision of the curricula in the Dominican colleges, introducing an extension of the study program and obliging the lectors to undergo a more extended training period before they were allowed to teach.[28] He also ordered that Aquinas's *Summa Theologia* be reprinted in a handy duodecimo edition and distributed to every student. Starting in the 1680s, Dominican students were expected not only to engage intellectually with the *Summa* but also to memorize large sections of it.[29] However, in his methods Cloche also sought a return to Thomistic philosophy in the provinces, especially in his own country; he supported the academicization of his order, which had lost much of its profile. He therefore promoted the creation of Dominican colleges in Toulouse and Avignon, mainly as a defense against laxism.[30] Yet he also used his position to encourage the incorporation of Thomism in the Italian episcopal seminaries, while other religious orders that were committed to Thomism benefited from his support in various matters of religious policy.[31]

The importance he attributed to the institution for his theological and educational program is reflected not only in his supervision of the architectural work on the library, but also in the fact that he donated an oversized statue of Casanate to be placed in the library's main hall. The statue is the work of Pierre Le Gros (1666–1719), who was also responsible for the design of Pius V's sarcophagus in Santa Maria Maggiore on Cloche's behalf.[32]

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26 Barzazi, *Gli Affani dell'erudizione*, 16–18. For a general view of the endeavors to restructure the mendicant orders, see Maria Pia Donato, "Le doutes de l'Inquisiteur: Philosophie naturelle, censure et théologie à l'époque modern," *Annales HSS* 1 (2009): 30.

27 Cf. Touron, *Histoire des hommes illustres*, 519; Coulon, "Le mouvement thomiste au XVII^{e} siècle, I," 422–423; Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 83; Bernard Montagnes, "Le tricentennaire d'Antonin Cloche," *Archivium fratrum praedicatorum* 57 (1987): 249–250. On Cloche's difficult mission in light of the necessary reform of his order, the debates between France and the curia, and the theological disputes of the time, cf. Massimo Carlo Giannini, *I domenicani* (Bologna: Il Mulino 2016), 171–172.

28 Coulon, "Le mouvement thomiste au XVII^{e} siècle, I," 427–428.

29 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 84.

30 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 89.

31 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 84–85.

32 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 113.

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2.3 The Manpower

In contrast to Casanate and Cloche, little is known about Giulio Maria Bianchi, the secretary of the Congregation of the Index. He was probably born in Krakow in 1626, the son of a Venetian envoy.[33] He joined the Order of Preachers in 1641 and earned a theology degree, receiving the *laurea* in 1654.[34] Two years later, his name surfaced during the General Chapter of the Dominicans in Rome, where he was noted for his eloquence and the theses he formulated. Subsequently, he was appointed as an instructor at the Gymnasium St. Thomas in Naples, although he could not take up this post due to an outbreak of the plague in the city. He then taught for eight years in Castile, where he probably adopted a rigorist approach.[35] He later instructed his fellow friars of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the Dominicans' primary church in Rome. In any case, he swiftly gained recognition among his superiors. In 1664, he was even considered as a potential candidate for the position of bishop in Squillace and Forlì and for that of an archbishop of Urbino.[36] Although his name was repeatedly associated with episcopal nominations in the following years, he ultimately remained in the bureaucratic career typical of scholarly members of religious orders, working as a consultor for the Congregation of Indulgences and the Congregation of Rites and, starting in 1667, also for the Congregation of the Index.[37] While his involvement with the last was limited, he was frequently called upon by the Holy Office, eventually rising to the rank of qualificator in 1676 after several years of dedicated service.[38]

On April 15, 1684, he assumed the role of secretary of the Index, succeeding the Dominican Giacomo Ricci.[39] Simultaneously, he set his sights on an additional university career, expanding his involvement beyond the dicasteries of knowledge control. In 1687, Innocent XI (r. 1676–1689) appointed him chair of theology at the Sapienza, a sign of Bianchi's full support of the reform program spearheaded by the pope and Cloche and an indication that he had internalized his order's curricular guidelines.[40] As secretary of the Congregation of the Index, he also actively promoted a rigorist and Dominican theological and philosophical style of knowledge. He was successful in this respect

33 ADDF, SO St.St. Q-1-o, fol. 259v.

34 Hermann Schwedt in collaboration with Jyri Hasecker, Dominik Höink, and Judith Schepers, *Prosopographie von römischer Inquisition und Indexkongregation 1701–1813* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009), 169–170.

35 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 41v.

36 Giovanni Michele Cavalieri, *Galleria de sommi Pontefici, Patriarchi, Arcivesccvi e Vescovi dell'Ordine de Predicatori […] Con un Catalogo de Cardinali Domenicani*, vol. 2 (Benevento: Nella stamperia archivescovale, 1696), 142.

37 ADDF, Index Diari 7 (1665–1682), fol. 15r.

38 ADDF, SO Decreta 1676, fol. 210v; ADDF, SO St.St. Q-1-o, fol. 259v.

39 ADDF, Index Diari 6 (1655–1664), fol. 3v.

40 Schwedt, *Prosopographie*, 170.

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because he appointed censors who shared his views and opinions. Bianchi was the first secretary to succeed in taking from the hands of the cardinals the decision regarding the assignment of censorship reports and thus to decide for himself which expert of the congregation to entrust with such a task. However, he relied less on the appointed consultors of the congregation than on Dominicans and secular clerics of his choosing, who, during his tenure, were commissioned to compose memoranda (*opiniones*) with an above-average frequency.[41] This fact, however, is overlooked in the face of the extensive series of measures he took to relieve the cardinals and indirectly strengthen the position of the secretary, more or less tacitly but always well documented within the congregation and for later generations of secretaries. At the same time, however, it should be noted that he was the only secretary of the Congregation of the Index in more than one hundred years who did not advance in the curial or internal hierarchies of the order. Still, no other secretary of the eighteenth century held this office for such a lengthy period.[42]

3. The Testament

Casanate was well known beyond the borders of Rome as a patron and promoter of the sciences, and north of the Alps the founding of the Casanatense was widely regarded as an important milestone in the consolidation of scholarly knowledge in Roman Catholicism.[43] His library, consisting of twenty thousand volumes, was one of the largest private libraries in Rome.[44] However, it represented only a fraction of his wealth, which included extensive properties in Calabria and Naples and income that derived from Roman benefices. Casanate bequeathed the property he had inherited in southern Italy to his family, but the possessions acquired during his tenure and his library were designated to remain in Rome to support his ideological legacy.[45]

3.1 Circulating Knowledge in Papal Rome

To bring these intentions to fruition, a strong partner among the religious orders was needed. Although Casanate greatly admired the Benedictines of Saint Maur and cam-

41 I am currently preparing a book on Bianchi's role in the Congregation of the Index, which will also discuss his influence on the dicastery's censorship practices.

42 Schwedt, *Prosopographie 1701–1813*, CXXIV–CXXV.

43 D'Angelo, *Il Cardinale Girolamo Casanate*, 120.

44 Flavia Onofri, "Propaganda della dinastia Absburgo nei fondi della Biblioteca Casanatense," in *Los Habsburgos: Arte y propaganda en la colección de grabados de la Biblioteca Casanatense de Roma*, ed. Pablo González Tornel (Castellón de la Plana: Publicacions de la Universitat Jaume I, 2013), 51.

45 Archivio Generale dell'Ordine dei Predicatori, Rome, Ms. XI.3070/1.

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paigned for them to take over the reform of Montecassino, the Order was probably not strong enough in Rome to assume a responsibility such as the permanent management of the library.[46] It is therefore hardly surprising that Casanate chose the traditional "Order of the Inquisition," firstly because he could probably identify closely with the Dominicans in terms of theology and ideology and, secondly, because he had perhaps come into contact with members of the order on many occasions in the course of his congregational work. Given the role he assigned to Bianchi in the project's research and design, he must have had a close relationship with him for some time.

Casanate was not alone in contemplating the potential benefits of investing a portion of his wealth in creating a religiously affiliated educational establishment. During his era, several highly influential figures within the curia similarly recognized the necessity of such an initiative. The renowned scholar Giovanni Giustino Ciampini (1633–1698), who enjoyed the patronage of Christina of Sweden due to his work in the natural sciences, shared a similar vision. He intended to entrust his wealth to the Somaschi Fathers to establish an *Atheneum Romanum* that would attract young scholars from northern Europe to come to Rome to study various languages with Italian clerics.[47] However, Ciampini's ambitions suffered a setback because he had no stable and lasting connection to the Somascans. Indeed, it was too risky for them to take on the great responsibility of managing Ciampini's legacy and maintaining the seminary in the long term, especially because it was likely that they would also have needed to contribute their own chapter's financial resources in the long term. Therefore, they did not accept the inheritance.[48]

The situation differed in the case of the Dominicans. This was mainly because Cloche was actively involved in restructuring the dissemination of knowledge within the Dominican colleges, and he considered these reforms to be of fundamental importance not only in ensuring the intellectual quality of new generations of Dominican theologians, but also in leaving an essentially Thomistic mark on the theology and philosophy taught in Rome and beyond in the long term. In this respect, the fact that the Jesuits were increasingly successful in expanding their networks around the Collegio Romano and actively engaging in the education of young men certainly played a role.[49]

Nonetheless, it was not just the order that needed Casanate's financial support to revitalize its intellectual pursuits in Rome. In particular, the cardinal's collaboration with Censor Bianchi suggests that from the outset they also had the censorial dicasteries in mind and had developed a plan for how book censorship could benefit from this

46 Ceyssens, "Casanate, Girolamo," https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/girolamo-casanate_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=CASANATE%2C%20Girolamo%2F (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024).

47 Andreea Badea, "Ciampini, Giovanni Giustino," in *Personen und Profile 1542–1700*, ed. Jyri Hasecker and Judith Schepers (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2020), 463–464.

48 Ibid.

49 On the Jesuits' highly ambitious educational program, see Markus Friedrich, *Die Jesuiten: Aufstieg, Niedergang, Neubeginn* (Munich: Piper, 2016), 286–320.

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institution. In particular, the Congregation of the Index relied on having access to dangerous books that should be banned, so access to such an extensive library with additional financial resources would have been an important pillar of support. In addition, the papal court was one of early modern Europe's most formalized and organized courts. Yet its dignitaries depended on the investment of economic capital and worked primarily for symbolic capital.[50] Many of the dicasteries received no budget from the court's finances. The Inquisition was the only dicastery with property and jurisdiction in Conca.[51] Conversely, the Congregation of the Index had no independent funds and lacked the means to compensate its consultors or acquire books for evaluation. It depended mainly on external denunciations and books sent in by denunciators, a predicament that Bianchi sought to remedy in the first few years of his tenure. He tried to resolve this situation and give the Index a certain topicality that would reflect at least a fraction of the reality of the book trade by consulting, among others, book fair catalogues and additional sources from the German Empire and by recommending books from Protestant printing houses that should be banned directly, without having seen or examined them.[52]

Casanate's will was designed to facilitate Cloche's plans to maximize the number of students instructed in Thomism[53] and to tackle the difficulties that censorship bodies encountered in their efforts to remain up to date.

3.2 The Casanatense and its Management after 1701

The library's management committee, which remained active until 1884, consisted of the general of the Dominicans, the procurator general of the order, the prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the pope's highest theologian—the *magister Sacri Palatii*, the *commissarius* of the Holy Office, and the secretary of the Congregation of the Index.[54]

The composition of this committee imposed by the according stipulation in Casanate's testament underscores how vital it was, particularly for Casanate and Bianchi, to leverage the Casanatense as an opportunity to strengthen the order's already close connections

50 Hillard von Thiessen, "Diplomatie vom *type ancien*: Überlegungen zu einem Idealtypus des frühneuzeitlichen Gesandtschaftswesens," in *Akteure der Außenbeziehungen: Netzwerke und Interkulturalität im historischen Wandel*, ed. idem and Christian Windler (Cologne: Böhlau, 2010), 484–487.

51 Germano Maifreda, *The Business of the Roman Inquisition in the Early Modern Era* (Abington: Routledge, 2017), 26.

52 On the congregation's financial situation, see Jyri Hasecker, *Quellen zur päpstlichen Pressekontrolle in der Neuzeit (1487–1966)* (Paderborn: Schöningh 2017), 100; and cf. Andreea Badea, "Über Bücher richten? Die Indexkongregation und ihre Praktiken der Wissenskontrolle und Wissenssicherung am Rande gelehrter Diskurse," in *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit: Akteure – Verfahren – Artefakte*, ed. Arndt Brendecke (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015), 356–358.

53 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 88.

54 Palumbo, "La Casanatense," 462.

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with the censorial dicasteries. The inclusion of the prior of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the procurator general, and the general of the order was crucial because they were responsible for the long-term administration of the library and the college. Furthermore, they decided to construct the building on the grounds of the Santa Maria sopra Minerva convent, positioning the institution in proximity to the church and the general's seat. Architect Antonio Borioni initiated construction during the cardinal's lifetime, ensuring that the main library room could be directly accessed from the church's sacristy.[55] In this way, the library became part of the Dominican complex and, at the same time, was used for the control of knowledge; indeed, the cardinals of the Inquisition and occasionally the consultors and qualificators of both dicasteries held some of their meetings there.

Although the other three members of the governing body were members of the board by virtue of their function in the censorship dicasteries, it was stipulated that no one other than a Dominican could ever join; indeed, all three positions were firmly in the hands of the order.[56] The position of the magister Sacri Palatii traces its origins to St. Dominic, whom Pope Honorius III appointed as the first papal theologian in 1218. Subsequently, the office was granted to his order.[57]

Incorporating these three figures into the board of directors ensured that those in control of knowledge in the city and within the Universal Church had a say in its governance and thus ultimately controlled the knowledge within the Universal Church. The *commissarius* of the Holy Office was the only one within the dicastery with a comprehensive understanding of all Inquisition proceedings, and it was within his purview to determine whether proceedings should be initiated. Regarding book censorship, the *commissarius* decided which books the congregation would discuss.[58]

Nevertheless, control of the office had been firmly in the hands of the Dominicans since the papacy of Dominican Pope Pius V. Michele Ghislieri was appointed *commissarius* by Paul IV in 1551 and, as a cardinal, he became a central figure in the Holy Office. After being elected pope, he reinforced his affiliation with the congregation by adopting the title *inquisitore per eccellenza* and ensuring that his former position

55 Mesfin [Ponsi], *Vita del reverendissimo padre*, 113.

56 The fact that the order held such institutional influence within the curia was a subject of repeated criticism, most notably by the Jesuits, whose efforts to regain a foothold in the Congregations after their "golden age" in the mid-seventeenth century generally met with limited success. See, for example, Anonymous [Giambattista Faure], *Commentarium in bullam Pauli III licet ab initio, datam anno 1542 quâ romanam Inquisitionem constituit & ejus regimen non regularibus sed clero seculari commisit […] accessit appendix historico-theologica de proscriptione sub annum 1725 extortâ contrà duacenam academiam sanctae romanae sedi addictissimam* (s.l.: s.n.), 121.

57 Jyri Hasecker, "Ghislieri, Michele," *Personen und Profile 1542–1700*, ed. idem and Judith Schepers (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2020), 730; Andrea Del Col, "Commissario del Sant'Uffizio, Italia," in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol. 1, ed. Adriano Prosperi, John Tedeschi, and Vincenzo Lavenia (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 351.

58 Del Col, "Commissario," 351.

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of *commissarius* and that of the two Socii of the *commissarius* were permanently assigned to the Dominican Order. He even insisted that these three Dominicans always be selected from his home province, Lombardy.[59] In the Congregation of the Index, the counterpart to the *commissarius* was the secretary. Except for Conventual Antonio Posio, who passed away in 1581, all secretaries of the Congregation of the Index were consistently Dominicans. The will specified that the committee would be considered quorate if at least four members were present.[60]

3.3 Working on the Will and Setting the Course for the Casanatense

One of the committee's most crucial responsibilities was selecting staff to work in the library-college complex. The will explicitly stipulated that the Casanatense should employ two librarians, two professors, and six Doctors of Theology.[61] The committee was tasked with selecting two Dominicans with a substantial record of publications as librarians. They were required to open the library twice a day for three hours and whenever else was necessary, for example, when cardinals or other prominent visitors wished to use it. Extending the library's opening hours was significant because Casanate had obtained a papal breve that forbade anyone from removing books or manuscripts from the library under threat of excommunication.[62] This accorded it the same status as the Biblioteca Vaticana, where even cardinals needed a papal breve if they wanted to take books or manuscripts home.[63]

However, under the committee's oversight, the librarians' primary role was to acquire books and manuscripts. In the initial years of the institution's existence, they succeeded in buying up cardinal libraries in Rome. They traveled to Switzerland, the Holy Roman Empire, France, and the Netherlands to acquire rare manuscripts and books.[64] According to the will, they were also responsible for monitoring newly published books that were likely to be banned based on the place of printing, the author, or an initial assessment. Once procured, these books were to be submitted to the Congregation of the Index or, in the case of theological works, to the Inquisition, with the possibility of initiating censorship proceedings. Subsequently, the two congregations were to return the books to the Casanatense, where they would be retained as copies documenting the censorship process.[65]

59 Hasecker, "Ghislieri, Michele," 730.

60 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21v.

61 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21v.

62 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 22r.

63 For example, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Vat. lat. 7763, fol. 144r.

64 Luigi de Gregori, "Casanatense, Biblioteca," in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (1931), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/biblioteca-casanatense_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/ (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024).

65 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 24r.

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These books can be seen as the tangible equivalent of the *Bibliotheca Vulcano consacrata* concept proposed by Martin Mulsow, representing a Catholic collection of controversial or objectionable works—a repository for negative *memoria*. The Casanatense, in this sense, was intentionally designed as a countermeasure to the phenomenon Mulsow associates with precarious knowledge.[66] Its purpose was to preserve works that were otherwise prohibited and copies of which were deliberately and permanently destroyed.

However, because Casanate's library already contained books he had purchased with the intention of having them banned but he had failed to report them, the requirement that the librarians submit all the books to the censorship dicasteries was never implemented. This is confirmed by the fact that, soon after the cardinal died in 1701, Bianchi inadvertently included four books from the library in the proceedings of the Congregation of the Index because, as so often before, he had not received enough denunciations. Still, he had to follow papal orders because Clement XI expected the newly appointed consultors of the congregation to examine any books immediately.[67] However, Bianchi had previously selected books for censorship proceedings of the Congregation of the Index on his own initiative and without prior denunciation. For this purpose, he used fair catalogues—a practice that was not common before his time. Thus, in the end, it was not so important for the librarians to present all the books to the secretary or the commissary of the Holy Office immediately after purchase; indeed, they could help themselves at any time and keep their procedures running if books were lacking.

The preservation of potentially controversial knowledge was balanced by the dissemination of knowledge deemed true and authoritative. The two professors, the *cattedratici Casanatensi*, were responsible for instruction. These professors were to be chosen from the Italian provinces or "di qualunque natione, anche Oltramontani."[68] The library's governing committee accorded preference to theologians with doctorates or experienced lecturers. Appointing individuals who had previously served as *regens* in their local orders was also permissible. However, the will imposed restrictions on their theological orientation. Their writings had to be scrutinized to ensure they were not involved in "questioni metafisicali, e sottigliezze infruttuose," which also meant that Thomism molded them and they could be identified as rigorists.

Their primary duty was to deliver lectures based on Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* five days a week, twice a day, to students from the Sapienza and others interested in the subject. If they completed all three parts of the *Summa*, they were required to

66 Martin Mulsow, *Präkeres Wissen: Eine andere Ideengeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), 142–147.

67 Margherita Palumbo, "'Deve dire il Segretario che li sono stati accusati': Die vielfältigen Wege der Anzeige an die Indexkongregation," in *Praktiken der Frühen Neuzeit: Akteure – Verfahren – Artefakte*, ed. Arndt Brendecke (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015), 344–345.

68 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 13r.

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start from the beginning to ensure, like a perpetuum mobile, that all students heard all parts of the *Summa Theologica*.[69] They were advised to reference only

> some Commentator of the aforesaid *Summa*, who more strictly adheres to the word and the pure doctrine of the Holy Doctor, studiously avoiding metaphysical questions and niceties, which are superfluous and, in some part, distract from the teaching of solid theological conclusions.[70]

This is another reference to the rigorous expectations of the individuals behind the will.

Censorship and teaching were flanked by the active production of knowledge through refutations. This task was entrusted to the six scholars possessing doctorates, who were to search the book market for critical works and refute them. At this point, the programmatic tailoring of this institution to Thomism and the Order of Preachers came into play most clearly. Indeed, these men were expected to

> dedicate themselves solely to the service of God in the defense of sound doctrine, following the injunction of the Supreme Pontiff and other sacred and supreme Congregations, and under the urgencies of the Universal Church, by opposing in their studies not only heretics who seek to corrupt the doctrine of the Roman Church but also other innovators who attempt to introduce opinions and judgments not taught by the Holy Fathers nor understood in the past by the faithful.[71]

Although "heretics" were the main opponents, it is essential to note that there had been little engagement with controversial literature in Rome for some time. This reluctance to engage with controversial theological writings was not only due to the prohibition of such works beyond the immediate contact zones with Protestants, but also because the curia had long accepted the idea that the proclaimed universalism could only be fully realized within the confines of the denomination. As a result, the main targets were primarily the *novatori* from within.

The wording of the will becomes much more precise a few pages later. Indeed, these scholars were even to

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69 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 18r.

70 "qualche Commentatore della sudetta Somma, che più strettamente stia attacato alla lettera, et alla pura dottrina del Santo Dottore, fuggendo studiosamente le questioni, e sottigliezze metafisiche, che sono superflue, et in qualche parte distrattive dall'insegnamento delle solide conclusioni teologiche." B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 12r.

71 "debbano applicarsi solamente al servitio di Dio nella difesa della sana dottrina, secondo verrà loro ingiunto dal Sommo Pontefice, e da altre sacre, e supreme Congregationi, e secondo le urgenze della Chiesa universale opponendosi co'i loro studij non solamente agl'Eretici, che tentano corrompere la dottrina della Chiesa Romana, ma anche ad altri Novatori, che procrano introdurre opinioni, e sentenze non insegnate da' i Santi Padri né intese per l'addietro trà fedelli." B Cas, Ms 5549, fol.18r.

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> refute […] any new doctrine that might be scandalous to Catholics […] always founding itself in Sacred Scripture, in the traditions, in the universal consensus of the Holy Fathers, in the definitions of the Church, in the Councils and Constitutions of the Supreme Pontiffs, and in the ancient and universal practice of the Catholic Church, taking particular care to refute errors but not to introduce new doctrines; we can see only too clearly that this ambition to know more than what our elders have taught keeps the schools of the Catholics divided, greatly impeding the conversion of the heretics.[72]

In addition, it clearly and precisely attacks the Society of Jesus and its academic exponents in the Collegio Romano, demanding that the six theologians

> devote themselves to refuting the relaxed moral opinions that do so much damage to the Church; for if this relaxation is not curbed, piety will be weakened and the souls of the faithful will be lost. It is, therefore, necessary to walk the safest paths and to restrict as far as possible the abuse of probability and invincible ignorance, which have opened the way to making almost all sins licit, but with those ways and foundations that are more suitable for reviving piety and the true use and fruit of the Sacraments, especially that of Penance.[73]

It could hardly be stated more clearly that a theological center was also to be established here in opposition to the Collegio Romano, with particular focus on the revision and refutation of Jesuit publications.

However, defining the criteria for selecting the six scholars proved challenging. Initially, Casanate had proposed a composition that would always include an Italian, a Spaniard or Frenchman, a Dutchman or Belgian, an Irishman or Englishman, and a German or Pole.[74] These scholars were expected to be authors of significant works and experienced lecturers, and to hold doctorates from prominent universities such as Salamanca, Alcalá , Paris, or Louvain, or have served as regens within their respective

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72 "confutar […] qualche nuova dottrina, che potesse trà i Cattolici esser di scandalo, […] fondandosi sempre nella Sacra Scrittura, nelle traditioni, nel consenso universale di Santi Padri, nelle definitioni della Chiesa, ne'i Concilij, e Costitutioni de' Sommi Pontefici, e nella prattica antica, et universale della Chiesa Cattolica, ponendo particolar cura in confutare bensì gl'errori, mà non introdurre nuove dottrine; vedendosi pur troppo chiaramente, che quest'ambitione di voler sapere più di quello, che hanno insegnato i nostri maggiori, tiene divise le schuole de' Cattolici con grand impedimento alla conversione degl'Heretici." B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21r.

73 "dovranno applicare à confutare le opinioni morali rilassante, che fanno tanto danno alla Chiesa; perché se non si fa argine à questo rilassamento, s'intepidirà la pietà, e si perderanno le anime de' Fedeli. Percio conviene caminare per le vie più sicure, e ristringere quanto più si può l'abuso della probabilità , e della ignoranza invicibile, con le quali si è aperta la strada a fare leciti quasi tutti i peccati, mà con quei modi, e fondamenti più proprij per rilveare le pietà, ed il vero uso, e frutto de' i Sacramenti, e particolarmente quello della Penitenza." B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21r.

74 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 35v.

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orders. This is where Cloche and Bianchi intervened. Both knew the order much better and were unsure whether such rigid taxonomies could be maintained even in the short term. In particular, Bianchi played a significant role in adapting the selection criteria to the actual circumstances within the European provinces of the order, thereby ensuring that suitable candidates could be identified.

Bianchi discerned an inherent deficiency in the taxonomic foundation for selecting the six theologians, asserting that criteria deemed self-evident within the Roman context were not universally applicable.[75] He therefore advised Casanate to be less stringent about the doctorate requirement, especially considering that the criterion was not feasible in Spain. The universities of Alcalá and Salamanca rarely granted doctorates. Only those individuals for whom the prior had already earmarked a position were willing to undertake this costly endeavor. Such candidates, however, also had a reasonably secure episcopal career ahead of them, making them unlikely to be interested in Rome. Therefore, Bianchi concluded that the best Dominicans could not be obtained in Spain; indeed, in the interest of the internal peace of the order it was best not to entice them away.[76]

Consequently, it was necessary to turn to the Castilian convents and find well-trained theologians who had been teaching theology and philosophy in Valladolid, Segovia, or Avila for over twenty years. However, there would still be the issue of qualifications, so it would be appropriate to look in Spain only below the baccalaureate degree; indeed, all others would have far better future opportunities locally.[77] Spanish regents were not even considered because the title did not exist locally. The potential counterpart, a *ministro di provincia*, would only administer, be too old, and have no involvement in academic teaching. In general, the age of the candidates was a matter of great interest to Bianchi, who advocated selecting well-educated men who were not too old to anticipate a long career beyond the Casanatense.[78] Thus, he successfully advised Casanate to carefully consider bringing only Castilian theologians to Rome and to disregard the possibilities offered by Portugal, Aragon, and Andalusia.[79]

Bianchi also regarded the doctorate as an obstacle in Paris, where it incurred significant expenses without offering any increase in privileges.[80] Moreover, the few licensed Dominicans within the university would never agree to recruitment because their positions as lecturers held significant prestige locally and a position in Rome was unattractive

75 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 41r–47v.

76 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 42r.

77 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 42v.

78 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 41r–47v.

79 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 43r.

80 At this point, Bianchi emphasizes that even Jean Baptiste Gone did not have a title; B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 44r.

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to them.[81] Therefore, they would have to be sought elsewhere, but Toulouse was not an option considering that there were hardly any regular clerics left at the university due to the presence of the Jesuits. Even the secular clerics would read "secondo la loro dottrina." Consequently, they could not be relied upon to teach Dominican theology in line with the Roman pattern.[82] Presumably, Bianchi was making a point here that also concerned Cloche when he decided to support the establishment of a Dominican college in his native Toulouse.

Bianchi added that candidates from England, Ireland, and Scotland would need special attention because they generally lacked any degree. Although young men from these territories occasionally studied in Salamanca, Alcalá, or Paris, they could not stay long because the local authorities usually forced them to return.[83] The poverty of the Dominican Order on the island exacerbated the scarcity of opportunities. Therefore, the Order of Preachers in these three territories could not afford to send its members to Louvain. While they might be welcome there, they lacked the financial means to obtain academic degrees from that institution.[84]

Bianchi had no reservations about scholars from the Netherlands and Belgium, believing that the Dominicans in those regions met the requirements through their education at Louvain. Besides the Spanish universities, Louvain was the only one that Bianchi wholeheartedly recommended. One reason for this was the university's close ties to the Holy See.

However, Bianchi saw recruiting Polish and German Dominicans as more challenging. One issue with the Poles was their lack of mobility, which meant they had no opportunity to attend a reputable university. Furthermore, he noted that German Dominicans tended to be more educated when they had traveled to Spain for their studies. Nonetheless, many eventually came to the college at Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Those who pursued their education in Louvain or Cologne provided an excellent pool of potential candidates.[85]

Bianchi's considerations eventually led to the removal of the doctorate or the position of regens as prerequisites for candidacy stipulated in the will. Instead, the term "or similar qualifications" was used, broadening the geographical framework and not rigidly adhering to specific criteria, and thus allowing consideration of the respective priors' interests and preferences.[86] Polish Dominicans were no longer explicitly mentioned in the will, but were grouped with the German Dominicans, as were the Bohemian Dominicans. This change meant that future governing bodies would not have to search desperately, but could select candidates from a wider pool.

81 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 44r/v.

82 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 44v.

83 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 45r.

84 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 45v.

85 Regarding the financing of staff members, cf. B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 96r–102v.

86 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21r.

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Furthermore, Casanate's initial plan had envisioned that all ten scholars would receive salaries equivalent to those of the *compagni* serving the superior general. They were also to be provided with food, medicine, and clothing from the capital left by Casanate. Additionally, they would be assisted by the same number of *conversi* (lay brothers), who would serve as attendants and, if necessary, nurses, similar to the *compagni* serving the general of the order. This arrangement gave them the economic capital needed to emphasize their elevated symbolic value. However, Cloche and Bianchi also intervened in this aspect and made changes to ensure long-term financing for the project.[87] They considered the uncertainties that had previously derailed Ciampini's plan, leading the Somascans to decline his proposal.

Bianchi proposed a solution based on the practices of the Congregation of the Index. The ten scholars were no longer solely funded by Casanate's inheritance in this new arrangement. Just as the Congregation of the Index required consultants from the religious orders to reside in Rome and also obligated their respective orders to cover their maintenance expenses, this responsibility now shifted to the Order of the Preachers. As per Bianchi's recommendation, it was stipulated that the respective provinces of the order would be responsible for the substantial maintenance costs (equivalent to the *socius* of the order's general) of their designated members. Only their salaries would be paid from Casanate's inheritance, while additional expenses were to be borne by the provinces.[88]

Initially, Casanate and Cloche envisaged a closed cosmos in which the six doctors, officially now "theologians," would deal exclusively with the Confutationes. As will be shown, due to Bianchi this did not remain so, and the theologians were actively involved in the theological and ideological shaping of knowledge at the curia.[89]

Bianchi outlined the procedure they were required to follow, mirroring his working method in the Congregation of the Index. Accordingly, they were to convene monthly to establish a work agenda and determine to which books they wished to respond. Additionally, they were to meet five times a week, always in the morning. The chairmanship of each meeting rotated, and, at the beginning of each session, they were to appoint someone to take minutes. Their collective task was to evaluate books that criticized the Holy See and the pope, challenged Church history, or posed questions about Church discipline and morals. These expert opinions served as the basis for discussion during their meetings. The outcomes were then to be compiled by the person with the most elegant writing style, and the material subsequently assembled into book form. These books were to be published exclusively with the approval of the governing body and the imprimatur of the *magister Sacri Palatii* in Rome.[90] Although Bianchi had initially

87 On the finances and Casanate's rigidity, see B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 35r–49v and 65v/66r.

88 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 38r–39v.

89 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 46v–47r.

90 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 21r.

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proposed omitting the authors' names and publishing the works collectively, this idea did not prevail. However, he included a provision that allowed the governing body to decide under which name individual publications would appear. In practice, most of the numerous publications were attributed to their respective authors.

Bianchi laid the groundwork for further connections between the Casanatense, the Congregation of the Index, and the Inquisition by requesting that the theologians provide reports concerning the books they discussed. He recommended that the Congregation of the Index should also address the books discussed in the Casanatense, and the reports of the six scholars should be immediately taken as opinions in the proceedings of the congregation. To achieve this, he persuaded Casanate and Cloche to modify their original plan, which had restricted work outside the college and required attendance five days a week. Instead, the theologians' attendance was reduced to four days a week, allowing them time to help with the Roman censorship of books.[91] This proposal contradicted Casanate's plan of holding eight working sessions each week, but such an intensive schedule would have made it challenging to participate in congregational meetings.

Bianchi's suggestion allowed the theologians to engage in activities at the Casanatense and to attend evening appointments at the Congregation of the Index and the Inquisition, in addition to other similar activities. The restriction on work only applied to their involvement in universities and, in line with the Index consultants, to tasks within the convent. The final version explicitly encouraged the Congregation of the Index, the Congregation of Rites, and the Holy Office to admit theologians, as well as librarians and professors, as consultors or, in the case of the Inquisition, as qualificators.

4. Powerful Networks: The Theologians, *Cattedratici,* and Librarians of the Casanatense Pursuing Their Careers

The theological alignment of the first Dominicans in the Casanatense was unmistakable, all the more so considering that a number of them had identified themselves as Thomists even before the year 1700 and had made this position clear in their controversial writings. Among them were Giuseppe Tabaglio (1652–1715), the future *commissarius* of the Holy Office, as well as Gregorio Selleri (1654–1729) and the Aragonese Agostino Pipia (1660–1730), who served as secretaries of the Index after Bianchi's death.[92] In 1703,

91 B Cas, Ms 5549, fol. 46v–47r.

92 On Tabaglio, see Schwedt, *Prosopographie*, 1217–1220. Cf. also Stefano Tabacchi, "Pipia, Agostino," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 84, 2015, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/agostino-pipia_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024); Stefano Tabacchi, "Selleri, Gregorio," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 91, 2018, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gregorio-selleri_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ (last accessed Aug. 23, 2024).

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Tabaglio was appointed procurator general of his order and then *commissarius* of the Holy Office to immediately influence the recruitment of Casanatense personnel in both positions. Selleri, who had already worked very closely with Archbishop Antonio Pignatelli, later Innocent XII (1615–1700), during his time as professor of theology at the Collegio San Tommaso in Naples—and was called to Rome by Innocent XII following his election to serve as papal preacher and socius of the *magister Sacri Palatii*—was the first of the theologians of the Casanatense to become secretary of the Congregation of the Index in 1707. He handed over the office to Pipia when he assumed the post of *magister Sacri Palatii* in 1711 and, at the same time, became confessor to Clement XI. Following the inauguration of the Dominican Pope Benedict XIII, both were quickly elevated to the purple.[93]

Cloche probably suggested Antonine Massoulié (1632–1706) from Toulouse as *cattedratico* because he had already attracted attention as a clear anti-laxist and had written a Thomistic book in 1692. However, one of the six scholars presumably chosen by Cloche was Jacques Hyacinthe Serry (1659–1738), a Thomist who later adopted an anti-Jesuit stance. Serry was already known for his controversial theology through his book on the Congregatio de Auxiliis. He was appointed professor of theology in Pavia as early as 1702, from where he was to write against papal infallibility in the 1720s and 1730s, which is why his books occasionally ended up in the Index of Prohibited Books.[94]

Yet the controversial theological work and the hard, rigorist line that had been so important in their attitude also proved to be a disadvantage for these first Casanatense scholars: it was not only the highly prominent Serry who came into the Inquisition's crosshairs. Among the French, in particular, Cloche and his board members seem to have overshot their target, mainly as the Inquisition also targeted several others during their time at the Casanatense. This was the case, for example, regarding *cattedratico* Antonin Bardon, appointed in 1704, whose polemical debate with the Jesuit critique of

93 Schwedt, *Prosopographie*, 1151.

94 On Cloche's role, see Touron, *Histoire des hommes illustres*, 569; cf. also Antonin Massoulié, *Divus Thomas sui interpreres de divina motione in Ordine Superanturali, se de divinis auxiliis […]* (Rome: Typis & Sumptibus Iosephi Vannacij, 1693); and Anonymous [Jacques Hyacinthe Serry], *Theologia Supplex coram Clemente XII. Pont. Max. Clementinae Constitutionis Unigenitus Dei Filius &c.* […] (Cologne: s.n., 1736); Jacques Hyacinthe Serry, *De Romano Pontifice in ferendo de fide moribusque judicio, Falli et fallere nescio. Eodemque Conciliis Oecumenicis auctoritate potestate jurisdictione, superiori: dissertatio duplex* […] (Padua: Typis Seminarii 1732); Jacques Hyacinthe Serry, *Exercitationes historicae, criticae, polemicae, de Christo, ejusque Virgine Matre. Quibus Judaeorum errores, de promisso sibi liberatore, nova methodo refelluntur: Christianae religionis mysteria omnia, adcertam historiae fidem exiguntur, explicantur, defenduntur* (Venice: apud Joannem Malachinum, 1719). For the proceedings in the Congregation of the Index and the Holy Office, cf. ADDF, Index Prot. 80 (1735–1737), fol. 290r–325r; ADDF, SO CL 1722–1723, Nr. 1 and SO CL 1733–1734, Nr. 1.

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rigorism led to his book being banned in 1707.[95] Despite this, he remained in his post at the Collegio until 1726.[96]

Despite, or perhaps because of, such exceptions, the scholars of the Casanatense very quickly achieved a certain fame, and the library and the college served as a mark of quality for further careers. Most of the theologians may not have gone on to enjoy such illustrious careers as Pipia and Selleri, but it can be said that this office functioned very well as a springboard to higher posts, especially for the Italian Dominicans. As a matter of fact, seven out of the secretaries who administered the Congregation of the Index between Bianchi's death and the beginning of the Napoleonic wars were first members of the staff of the Casanatense. Additionally, many other scholars who had worked at the Casanatense, such as Niccolò Luigi Ridolfi (1675–1749) and Giuseppe Agostino Orsi (1692–1761), held influential roles in the Catholic Church, including the position of *magister Sacri Palatii*. Among the eight Magistri Sacri Palatii appointed by the popes until the flight of the court from Rome due to the Napoleonic Wars, six were employees of the Casanatense and had previously served as secretaries of the Index.[97]

However, not all the theologians, *cattedratici*, and librarians of the Casanatense had the same opportunities to settle in Rome, to work as consultors and qualificators for the three Congregations (Index, Rites, and Holy Office), or to attain other important positions, as was the case for most Italian Dominicans.[98] While Spaniards and Frenchmen either made a career in Rome or returned to their home countries as bishops, Englishmen and Irishmen found it particularly difficult to establish themselves in the city. Those who did not succeed, such as Peter Killikelly (1703–1783), who was appointed bishop of Kilmac-Duagh in 1744, usually remained in Rome in the Casanatense and established important scholarly careers, but were only very rarely called upon to serve as experts for the various congregations.[99] These scholars achieved the pinnacle of their careers with their posts in the Casanatense and remained in their positions until their deaths. The German, Polish, and Bohemian Dominicans left even fewer traces in Rome than in the library. They generally only remained in Rome for a very short time before being reappointed to higher positions in their home provinces. Even the Belgian Dominicans, who would

95 Anonymous [Antoine Bardon], *Francolinus Clerici Romani Paedagogus, Laxioris, in administrando Poenitentiae Sacramento, disciplinae Magister […]*. (Delft: Van-Rhin, 1706); ACDF, SO CL 1706–1707, No 7.

96 Alberto Guglielmotti, *Catalogo dei bibliotecari, cattedratici, e teologi del collegio Casanatense nel convento della Minerva dell'ordine dei Predicatori in Roma […].* (Rome: Tipografia delle Belle Arti, 1860), 22.

97 Guglielmotti, *Catalogo*, 60; and Schwedt, *Prosopographie*, CVI; CXXIV–CXXV.

98 On the very strong Italian influence of the curia, cf. Antonio Menniti Ippolito, "Italianità e universalità della Chiesa romana: Una breve riflessione," *Rechtsgeschichte – Legal History* 20 (2012): 375–376.

99 For example, Patrick Plunkett and Edmund Burke became important authors within the order. See Guglielmotti, *Catalogo*, 28–29 and 37–38.

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traditionally have been expected to have a stronger connection to the curia, did not make their way to Rome but rather returned to the Belgian colleges and convents.[100]

5. Conclusions

The three men involved in the conception of Casanate's will certainly had different interests in founding the Casanatense. However, they were united by the need for a comprehensive center of knowledge to teach and defend Thomism and refute the opponents of rigorous theology. This certainly had much to do with the ubiquitous struggle against laxism among Dominicans and in leading curial circles. However, it was also an efficient solution to the already established academic influence of the Jesuits in Rome. As Casanate, Cloche, and Bianchi had intended, the importance of this institution extended beyond its extensive book collections, primarily due to its outstanding staff. Many of these scholars rose rapidly in the Roman hierarchy, impacting Catholic knowledge and influencing the deliberative process in the censorial dicasteries.

The authors of the will carefully refined their selection process in light of this. In so doing, they exploited the existing Roman structures and specifically developed a method to build and strengthen new networks within the order by selecting committed and intellectually outstanding Thomists. They adopted a form of patronage freed from traditional criteria to acquire men who shared their convictions, theological and philosophical orientation, and moral and bureaucratic ideas. Through their work as teachers and authors, the Dominicans consolidated a thought collective that spread beyond the boundaries of the order. The networking of the Casanatense with the curial bureaucracy ensured that their thought style was anchored in the curial dicasteries and thus opened the door to the normative instruments and, via the foreign theologians, guaranteed dissemination to other Catholic centers.

Thanks to institutions such as the Casanatense, the Order of Preachers experienced a revival of its ideological and institutional influence within a multifaceted Catholicism, ensuring the long-term acceptance of Thomism and a rigorous interpretation of Catholicism within the Universal Church, even though all this took place against a backdrop of increasing social pluralization and secularization.

100 Guglielmotti, *Catalogo*, 27–58.

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Giuanna Beeli

Personal Networks and Practices of Self-Positioning of a Benedictine Abbot

Celestino Sfondrati as Prince-Abbot of St. Gallen (r. 1687–1696)

1. Introduction

Although the Rule of Saint Benedict disapproved of the nurturing of personal networks beyond the community of monks, the existence of these networks was crucial to their thriving. This chapter aims to summarize the findings of my PhD research by focusing on Celestino Sfondrati (1644–1696, r. 1687–1696), one of the most intriguing figures in the early modern history of the St. Gallen monastery.[1] Expanding on Sfondrati's practice of correspondence and personal relations, the chapter aims to display the impact of joining a religious order on family relations as well as the contribution of interpersonal relationships to the positioning of a community within the local and societal context.

Celestino Sfondrati came from a noble Lombard family that had even spawned a pope—Gregory XIV—albeit only briefly, in the late sixteenth century. His path from monastery pupil to cardinal began in 1656 when, at the age of twelve, he arrived in St. Gallen from Milan under his civil name, Luigi. He initially attended the monastery-run school in nearby Rorschach and in 1660 became a monk in the Benedictine monastery in St. Gallen. As such, he held offices inside and outside the monastery, but also made a name for himself as an erudite theologian and law professor. In 1686, Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi elevated him to the bishopric of Novara. Sfondrati delayed his departure for Italy and in the spring of 1687, after the death of Abbot Gallus Alt (1654–1687), he was elected prince-abbot of St. Gallen. In addition to secular and ecclesiastical governmental duties, Sfondrati continued to publish studies on virulent questions of current church politics and established a vast network of correspondence. Pope Innocent XII Pignatelli promoted Sfondrati to cardinal in the consistory of December 12, 1695.[2]

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1 This chapter draws upon research conducted for my dissertation, which was part of the research project "Religious Observance and the 'World': Regular Clerics' Practices of Self-Positioning in the Long Seventeenth Century" directed by Prof. Dr. Christian Windler and funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) from 2018 to 2022. Certain parts of this chapter are translations of passages from my dissertation manuscript "Das "welsche Äbtlin": Fürstabt Celestino Sfondrati (1644–1696) zwischen Mailand, St. Gallen und Rom".

2 For biographical references, see *Helvetia Sacra,* vol. III/1/2: *Frühe Klöster, die Benediktiner und Benediktinerinnen in der Schweiz* (Bern: Schwabe, 1986), 1335–1338 and Lorenz Hollenstein, "Cölestin Sfondrati,"

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2. Family Networks

Similarly to what Samuel Weber has pointed out in his study of the Borromeo family of Angera, the first part of my research demonstrates how later-born sons who had been set on a clerical career at a young age were embedded in and promoted the interests and strategies of their family of origin.[3] However, the House of Sfondrati is a family unit that placed an unusually strong emphasis on religious vocations for both female as well as male offspring, despite the fact that the entry into an order demanded a commitment to the ideal of non-involvement in secular and family affairs. Out of a total of at least nineteen Sfondrati women and twenty-one men, thirteen became nuns and nine regular clerics within six generations between 1550 and 1770.[4] Therefore, the following will explore the extent to which nuns and regular clerics combined the service to their community with the promotion of the interests of their family of origin, despite the community's efforts to undermine the social logics of entanglement.

As numerous studies on female communities, mainly in Italy, have already shown, the placement of daughters in convents by no means meant that they were shut away and forgotten.[5] In her groundbreaking study of the Sfondrati women in the convent of San Paolo in Milan, Renée Baernstein aptly described the constant tension between the monastic ideal of isolation and the important role in family politics to which the nuns were exposed with the juxtaposition of "dead to the world vs. taking interest in it."[6]

As secular careers within the Duchy of Milan, where the system of primogeniture had been established as a result of the Spanish dominion, were increasingly denied to Sfondrati sons born after the later Pope Gregory XIV, Niccolò Sfondrati (1535–1591, r. 1590–1591), they too were increasingly pushed towards ecclesiastical careers. While other noble families sent their sons after a good education straight to the Roman Curia

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in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from Dec. 18, 2012, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/021738/2012-12-18/ (last accessed Dec. 29, 2024).

3 Samuel Weber, *Aristocratic Power in the Spanish Monarchy: The Borromeo Brothers of Milan, 1620–1680* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

4 Scattered information in Gaia Riitano, "L'Archivio della Famiglia Sfondrati: Analisi, riordinamento, descrizione e studio dell'intero complesso archivistico della Famiglia" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università degli studi di Milano, 2006) and primary sources allowed me to add to the genealogical table published in P. Renée Baernstein, *A Convent Tale*: *A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (London: Routledge, 2002) and extend it to the seventeenth century.

5 To name just a few: Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Enclosed Lives and Broken Vows in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Viking Press, 2003); Alessia Lirosi, *I monasteri femminili a Roma tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome: Viella, 2012); Anne Conrad, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: Ursulinen und Jesuitinnen in der katholischen Reformbewegung des 16./17. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1991); Sylvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2007); and Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

6 Baernstein, *A Convent Tale*, 117.

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for further career steps as secular clerics, the Sfondrati sons were increasingly oriented towards the regular clergy after Niccolò's pontificate. Thus, in addition to Celestino, three of the five brothers were destined for church service. While the Sfondrati women across many generations were housed almost exclusively in the same institution—in the aforementioned convent of San Paolo in Milan—a diversification of religious affiliations can be discerned among the male clerics.

Since early modern women's convents were subject to much stricter enclosure regulations, the interests of the family of origin could be better promoted by having the Sfondrati nuns control the entire convent, which they could convert into a family institution. Male offspring, in contrast, were placed in different institutions: on the one hand, to ensure the salvation of the family as broadly as possible, and on the other, because different orders meant different career opportunities. The diversification of religious affiliations can also be explained by the fact that different orders, as part of the Catholic renewal and the associated stricter observance movement in the early and mid-seventeenth century, attempted to prevent an accumulation of power by prohibiting the admission of candidates related to existing order members. As a result, families felt compelled to send their children to different institutions. For example, in 1636 the Swiss Benedictine Congregation forbade the admission of junior clergy related to existing conventuals up to the fourth degree. The Benedictine Rule did not include this provision, and the promotion of male relatives in the same convent was common practice until the end of the sixteenth century. The new regulation of 1636 was introduced as a statute of the congregation in order to promote monastic discipline and prevent family patronage networks. While the monastery as an institution was thus part of the early modern patronage system, by means of which families could provide for some of their descendants and offer them opportunities for advancement that would otherwise have been denied to them, in the course of monastic and religious reforms of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the community attempted within its structures to undermine this system and not to reproduce it. A consequence of these conditions of admission was the distribution of family members among different monastic locations or even orders, a state of affairs that could turn out to be even more beneficial for broadening family ties in the early modern patronage system.[7] Considering that the House of Sfondrati had already passed its zenith after the all-too-short pontificate of Gregory XIV and the premature death of Celestino's father Valeriano, to secure the secular continuity of the

7 An exemplary instance of familial influence in the ecclesiastical sphere can be observed in the Zurlauben family, contemporaneous with Celestino Sfondrati. Around 1700, the Zurlauben family exercised control over the Benedictine monasteries of both Muri and Rheinau by securing the election of the two brothers, Plazidus and Gerold, respectively, as abbots. Cf. Dominik Sieber, "In der kirchlichen Etappe: Eigene Geistliche, fromme Geschenke und das Soldgeschäft der Zurlauben im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Soldgeschäfte, Klientelismus, Korruption in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz, André Holenstein, and Andreas Würgler (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016).

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family, alongside the dynastic reproduction through the firstborn's line, it was a top priority for Celestino's generation to attain a high ecclesiastical office if the house were to continue and flourish.[8]

Nevertheless, St. Gallen, located north of the Alps and without an apparent connection to the House of Sfondrati, was not the most obvious choice for the young Luigi. However, this choice could be interpreted as an attempt to emphasize the Spanish–Habsburg allegiance by establishing a presence in the Empire. Luigi's transfer to Eastern Switzerland, orchestrated by the hispanophile Carlo Carafa della Spina, who served as nuncio in Switzerland from 1652 to 1654, likely resulted from connections the Sfondrati family held within the Milanese elite.[9] As Celestino's father, who held the highly important and prestigious position of General Commissioner of the Lombard Army, had already died in 1645, only a year after Luigi's birth, the initiative for his transfer might have originated from his stepfather, Carlo Emanuele d'Este, who had long served the Habsburgs and eventually ended up as Spanish Ambassador to Vienna.[10] Furthermore, the Benedictine monastery of St. Gallen and its school enjoyed an excellent reputation beyond the country's borders.[11]

In a letter to Abbot Gallus, Sfondrati's mother, Paola Camilla, wrote that "her knowledge of the excellent observance" of the monastery had encouraged her to send her son there so that he could learn "manners appropriate to his birth" and tame his wild character.[12] Because the young Sfondrati showed "no desire for the clerical state" and "also knew no German," Abbot Gallus decided to place him not in the convent, but in the recently established monastery school in Rorschach.[13] Barely six months later, Abbot Gallus was able to report that Luigi, who on his arrival had been "more interested in arms than in religion," had undergone a transformation and was now almost a new

8 Contemporaries had already stated this; cf. Gregorio Leti, *Il nipotismo di Roma: Parte II* (n.p., 1667), 427–431.

9 Diary of Abbot Gallus Alt, August 15, 1656, Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen (hereafter StiASG), vol. 263, 301 f.

10 Cinzia Cremonini, "Carreras de distinción en tiempo de Carlos II: Carlos Manuel de Este, marqués de Borgomanero, entre Milán, Madrid y Viena," in *Vísperas de sucesión: Europa y la monarquía de Carlos II*, ed. Bernardo J. García García and Antonio Alvarez-Ossorio Alvariño (Madrid: Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2015), 183–208.

11 This can be determined, among other things, by the origin of the prince-abbots. Between 1500 and the dissolution of the monastery in 1805, while most of the prelates (eight) came from the territory of St. Gallen, five came from southern Germany and one each, from Lucerne, present-day Slovenia, and Italy. Cf. *Sankt-Galler Kantonsgeschichte*, vol. 3, *Frühe Neuzeit: Territorien, Wirtschaft* (St. Gallen: Niedermann Druck AG 2003), 62.

12 Paola Camilla Marliani to Ambassador Francesco Casati, Bellagio, August 30, 1656, StiASG, vol. 316, 306–308, here: 306 f.

13 Diary of Abbot Gallus Alt, August 15, 1656, StiASG, vol. 263, 301 f.

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man.[14] Three years later, Luigi relocated to St. Gallen, professed his vows and took on a new name: Celestino.[15]

As mentioned above, three of Celestino's remaining five brothers also pursued clerical careers. After Ercole, whose destiny as the firstborn was to continue the lineage and bring the secular arm of the family to prosperity, the second-born, Valeriano, became a Barnabite, taking the name Carlo Filippo. While the third-born, Francesco, followed a secular career, both the fourth son, Paolo, and the youngest Sfondrati scion, Giovanni Battista, joined the Jesuit order. While the youngest, Giovanni Battista, died relatively early,[16] the careers of the other two seemed promising. Celestino's mother proudly reported in April 1673 how Paolo had celebrated a mass in Como during Easter week, attended by more "nobles, whether knights or ladies" than had been seen for a long time, and, more importantly, how many people had come to confession the next day. Afterwards, he had been sent to the mission in Switzerland, where, in the eyes of his mother, great deeds were to be expected of him.[17] However, these expectations dissipated after Paolo died, in all likelihood, sometime between 1677 and 1684. The Barnabite Carlo Filippo became Bishop of Volterra in 1677, but died only three years later without the family being able to profit sufficiently from this position. In the ecclesiastical domain, now all the hopes of the Sfondrati family rested entirely on the advancement of Celestino.

In order for the strategy of bringing the later-born sons into a clerical career to benefit the progenitor of the family, the younger brothers had to renounce their share of the inheritance in the understanding of primogeniture. In return, the firstborn undertook to support the younger brothers financially in their careers until they had achieved financial independence.[18] If their ecclesiastical careers went well, the considerable investment could be paid off by the attainment of a high office, at best the cardinalate or even the pontificate, and the associated accumulation of capital.

Even before Celestino's profession in May 1660, Celestino's oldest brother, Ercole, tried to settle the inheritance, initially without success.[19] While the other brothers had already renounced their claim to inherit part of the family fortune when they entered the

14 Abbot Gallus Alt to Nuncio Carlo Carafa della Spina, St. Gallen, January 29, 1657, StiASG, vol. 316, 354.

15 Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch der Fürstlichen Benediktinerabtei der Heiligen Gallus und Otmar zu St. Gallen* (Einsiedeln, Selbstverlag des Stiftes 1929), 328–331.

16 January 1677; cf. Ercole II Sfondrati Conte della Riviera to Fidel von Thurn, Milan, January 19, 1677, StiASG, Family Archives von Thurn, C. Family von Thurn and Valsassina, rubric 50.

17 Paola Camilla Marliani to Celestino Sfondrati, Milan, April 18, 1673, StiASG, rubric 29, bundle 8.

18 Cf. Samuel Weber, "Pining for Stability: The Borromeo Family and the Crisis of the Spanish Monarchy, 1610–1680" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Universität Bern and Durham University, 2019), 278. See also Renata Ago, "Junge Adlige im Zeitalter des Absolutismus: Zwischen väterlicher Autorität und Freiheit," in *Geschichte der Jugend*, vol. 1: *Von der Antike bis zum Absolutismus*, ed. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1996), as well as Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children*: *Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

19 See the correspondence between Ercole Sfondrati and monastery officials, StiASG, vols. 316 and 317.

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order, a similar solution had to be found for Celestino. However, the monastery thwarted a quick settlement of the deal. Abbot Gallus seemed interested in maintaining Celestino's claim to his inheritance and, after Celestino became part of the Benedictine community, to take his place in any inheritance, as was customary in the Benedictine context.[20] By welcoming Celestino into their midst, a window of opportunity appeared to be opening for the retrieval of the lost dominions south of the Alps—medieval property rights in Massino on Lake Maggiore, which dated back to Emperor Charles III—through this establishment of new networks to the Sfondrati family.[21] Additionally, there was even the potential to expand influence by inheriting claims to the Sfondrati dominions on the shores of Lake Como.

Although the determination of a child to become a religious was initially a matter of family policy, the determining monastery could also, if necessary, fall back on these entanglements, which arose through the expansion of their community.[22] In the family archives of the von Thurn and Valsassina, there are some letters that indicate a regular correspondence between the long serving and powerful *Landshofmeister*, Fidel von Thurn, and Ercole Sfondrati or, after the latter's death, Ercole's widow Laura Caimi, henceforth Contessa della Riviera. In addition to furthering the secular interests on both ends, the correspondence was used repeatedly to exchange greetings, messages, and news for Celestino's attention. In this way, the family association seems to have found a channel to circumvent the commandment that Celestino cut all ties with his former life that the candidate agreed to by making his profession and entering a Benedictine monastery. Even during his time in Salzburg, where he earned a doctorate in theology and both laws in 1679 after a semester at the Benedictine University and subsequently took up a teaching position as professor of canon law until 1683, communication between Celestino and his family ran through von Thurn.

20 While such practices might seem strange to other religious orders, matters of inheritance were an important source of support for Benedictine communities. The prince-abbot himself wanted to oversee the negotiations regarding the new conventual, underscoring the significance of a favorable outcome in this matter for the monastery: Celestino Sfondrati to Paola Camilla Marliani, St. Gallen, May 8, 1660, BCCo, 22r.

21 In 1694, Sfondrati by then in the capacity of prince-abbot himself, traveled incognito to Milan to personally attend to this matter, albeit unsuccessfully. Cf. Peter Erhart, "Einleitung," in *Fürstabt Celestino Sfondrati von St. Gallen 1696 als Kardinal in Rom*, ed. idem (Cologne: Böhlau, 2019), 17.

22 Additionally, questions evolving around mercenary services were one of St. Gallen's main interests in Milan. The Sfondrati family was perfectly suited as brokers. Even later, when Celestino became abbot, the service of mercenaries in Milan was an important issue in which the whole family had a hand; cf. copy of letters from Celestino Sfondrati to Suor Agata d'Este in the Convent of San Paolo and to Contessa della Riviera, August 9, 1688, StiASG, vol. 241, 100 and 101.

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3. Practice of Correspondence

With the publication of the pamphlet *Regalia sacerdotia*, which appeared in 1684 under the pseudonym Eugenius Lombardus, Celestino Sfondrati made a name for himself as far as Rome, championing the position of the papacy in the dispute with the Gallican church.[23] In the aftermath of the publication, in the autumn of 1686 Pope Innocent XI offered Celestino the bishopric of Novara, which he himself had occupied before ascending the Apostolic See. However, it took a great deal of persuasion on the part of Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo, his distant relative Alderano Cybo as cardinal secretary of state, and Lorenzo Casoni, who was omnipresent in the Innocent Curia, for him to accept this dignity.[24] It was not until December 1686 that Celestino Sfondrati agreed, but he delayed his departure from St. Gallen, invoking health reasons and the precarious snow conditions on the Alpine passes. Before he could set out, Abbot Gallus, who had reigned since 1654, died in March 1687, whereupon Celestino was elected as his successor. Pope Innocent XI left Sfondrati free to choose between the two dignities. As Celestino recorded in his diary, he decided "after brief and vigorous prayer" for the "lesser" one.[25] However, he promised to the nuncio that he hoped that from St. Gallen he would be able to render important services to the Catholic religion and the pope nonetheless.[26]

Whether and how the family influenced this decision and responded to the delay tactics in accepting the bishopric of Novara remains unclear. For the family, an Italian bishopric would have been the second within the same generation.[27] However, the abbacy of St. Gallen, linked to a princely title within the Empire, was a position that could not be attained in this form on the Italian peninsula. Moreover, it provided a more direct connection to Vienna for the House of Sfondrati.

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23 Although the Prince-Abbey of St. Gallen under Abbot Gallus Alt and especially under his first minister, Lord Chamberlain Fidel von Thurn, had already taken an anti-French course in the 1670s, Celestino Sfondrati had felt compelled to initially publish the anti-French writing under a false name in order to keep negative repercussions and French resentment away from St. Gallen. Abbot Gallus had asked Sfondrati to refrain from publishing the treatise, which Sfondrati initially agreed to, before they decided to publish it under a pseudonym: Celestino Sfondrati to Abbot Gallus Alt, Rorschach, January 29, 1683, StiASG, vol. 319, 610 f.

24 Cf. mainly Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (hereafter AAV), Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692) and Segr. Stato, Particolari.

25 Diary of Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, April 22, 1687, StiASG, vol. 271, 23–24.

26 Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo to Cardinal Secretary of State Alderano Cybo, Lucerne, April 25, 1687, AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera 81 (1687), 146r: "Havendo communicato al P.D. Celestino Sfondrati la lettera colla quale V.Em.za s'è degnata esprimermi la mente della Santità di Nostro Signore circa la sua elezione all'Abbadia di St. Gallo, m'hà risposto, che avvalendosi della libertà benignamente concessali dalla Santità Sua, s'è determinato di permanere nel Governo della sudetta Abbadia, ove spera poter render rilevanti servizii alla Religione Cattolica, e professare una figlial divozione, ed ubidienza verso la Sede Apostolica, e la somma beneficenza di Sua Beatitudine."

27 After Carlo Filippo, who held the Bishopric of Volterra from 1677 to 1680.

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Without Sfondrati returning to the Italian peninsula, his work continued to be observed from afar. Celestino Sfondrati's exchange with Rome was extremely close and intense. On the one hand, there was the official, institutionalized channel of communication with Rome via the nunciature in Lucerne and, on the other, the direct line to the curia through personal connections. While the *nunziatura*'s importance for the Benedictines had diminished since the founding of the Swiss Benedictine Congregation, the significance of personal relationships became apparent especially during Sfondrati's reign. Parallel to the correspondence that ran through the nunciature, Sfondrati built up a close network with which he exchanged information with meticulous regularity and through which he sought direct contact with the curia. This began as a consequence of the highly regarded publication of 1684 in the form of a regular rapport with a leading representative of the Roman Curia apparatus: Giacomo Cantelmo, a fierce anti-Gallicanist. Immediately upon Cantelmo's taking up the nunciature in Switzerland in 1685, he sought contact with Father Celestino Sfondrati of St. Gallen. Throughout his tenure as nuncio and beyond, Cantelmo encouraged Sfondrati's authorial work and strove to ensure the continuous production of texts. To this end, the nuncio gave Father Sfondrati documented permission and a license to read titles that were on the index for the purpose of counter-argumentation.[28]

The idea of recruiting talented authors outside the Curia to pursue the interests of Rome and to promote their publications was not new. A central task of the nuncios' activity was to identify potentially useful subjects within the nunciature's territory as well as to establish and cultivate contacts with them. The Roman Curia was not only concerned with defending against attacks on the papacy, but also with making visible the broad support from which the papacy benefitted through the written material that had been produced away from the Roman "center" in support of the papacy. In the controversies concerning Gallicanism in particular, a strategy of members of the curia can be observed, whether on their own initiative or at the pontiff's behest, to win over authors far away from Rome to write against Gallicanism. Thus, during his nunciature, Giacomo Cantelmo not only promoted Sfondrati's writing activities; he also encouraged other congregational abbots to write and supported them in their plans to stand up for the pope and the universal claim of the Catholic Church through writing.[29] Therefore, Nuncio Cantelmo was regularly in contact with Celestino Sfondrati, by now judicial vicar (*Offizial*) at the Prince-Abbey of St. Gallen, exchanging news about Celestino's ongoing studies and suggesting new book projects. Cantelmo received support from Rome in the person of Lorenzo Casoni, a high-ranking official at the Roman Curia with a close personal relationship to the pope. To all appearances, Casoni and Cantelmo

28 StiASG, Urk. B3 D35a (located in StiASG, rubric 38, bundle 8).

29 E. g., the Prince-Abbot of Einsiedeln, Augustin II Reding. Cf. Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo to Lorenzo Casoni, Lucerne, January 10, 1686, AAV, Segr. Sato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 292r–293r.

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knew each other well, but one can only speculate as to why. In any case, they were united by common reformist and anti-Gallican positions, which kept them in lively exchange even after Giacomo Cantelmo's deployment to the nunciature in Lucerne, far away from Rome.[30]

In addition to reporting to each other on what was happening in their respective environments, with a particular focus on the developments coming from France, Casoni and Cantelmo mainly exchanged views on Sfondrati's writing. While Cantelmo acted as an editor, encouraging and moving Sfondrati to write, supplying Rome with drafts, and forwarding feedback and books currently under discussion in Rome to Sfondrati for inspiration, Casoni acted in the role of a publisher, editing and commenting extensively on the drafts he received from St. Gallen or Lucerne, arranging funding for any reprints or translations to be made in Rome, and publicizing the writings at the curia. Sfondrati was the author. At the same time, however, he was also a Benedictine monk and thus had to fulfill the orders given to him by his abbot. Holding the office of judicial vicar—the second-highest position after the abbot—since 1684, Sfondrati could not devote himself to writing as freely as his patrons would have liked. Cantelmo therefore wanted a position for his protégé in which he could devote himself entirely to work for the Holy See, or at least, to writing for it. To Casoni, the nuncio mentioned that Sfondrati should preferably take up a position at the Roman court—as professor of theology or canon law at La Sapienza University, or in an office of a congregation.[31] Lorenzo Casoni, who as *segretario della Cifra, delle Lettere latine e della Congregazione consistoriale* was in direct contact with the pope, must have actively supported this vision, because shortly after Cantelmo had expressed this wish, Pope Innocent XI appointed the Benedictine Celestino Sfondrati as bishop of Novara. The fact that Sfondrati never assumed the leadership of that diocese has already been mentioned above. With his election as prince-abbot of the monastery of St. Gallen, Sfondrati decided to remain in Switzerland. He made this decision despite Cantelmo having tried to convince him against it by listing all the advantages of a presence in Italy, or even better in Rome, before his election to the abbacy: the universal Church would benefit from it, since there would be more time to write. Moreover, the Italian environment would do Sfondrati good, as he could talk to many "virtuosi" to sharpen his ideas even further.[32]

30 See especially the countless witnesses in the AAV, Fondo Favoriti-Casoni and Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692).

31 Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo to Conte Lorenzo Casoni, Lucerne, September 11, 1686, AAV, Segr. Sato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 218r–219v. As Andreea Badea reveals, Innocent XI had the cathedra for theology at La Sapienza reserved for the erudite Dominican theologian and Secretary of the Index, Giulio Maria Bianchi. See Andreea Badea's chapter in this volume.

32 Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo to Celestino Sfondrati (copy), n. d., n. p., AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 251r–252r.

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Despite the newly elected abbot's pledge to persist in advancing the anti-Gallican cause whenever his duties permitted, as reiterated by the nuncio to the curia, aside from the publication of *Gallia Vindicata* in 1687, *Legatio Lavardini* in 1688, and two reprints of *Regale Sacerdotium*, there were no additional endeavors in this regard.[33] On the one hand, this was certainly due to the fact that the office of prince-abbot of St. Gallen was not only the head of the monastery, but also the ecclesiastical and secular ruler over a large subordinate territory, which was time-consuming and left Sfondrati little time to write. On the other hand, the decline in writing was certainly also related to changes within the curia and its new priorities in church politics and public discourse. Not only did Sfondrati's patron Giacomo Cantelmo have to leave Switzerland for Poland in 1687, shortly after Sfondrati's election as prince-abbot, to take up the post of extraordinary nuncio there, but two years later there was also a change of pontificate that reshaped public discourse. While the pontificate of Innocent XI Odescalchi was marked by conflict and confrontation with France, Alexander VIII Ottoboni sought to resolve the opposition by scaling back the anti-Gallican machinery. The absence of anti-Gallican textual production did not mean, however, that the position of the papacy and its advocates had fundamentally changed. The demands of the time, however, required different priorities.

Admittedly, Sfondrati's decision to remain in St. Gallen meant that he could not spend a few months in Rome, as had been planned, before taking possession of his designated bishopric. He thus missed the chance to personally meet important members of the curia and establish contacts that he could later maintain through correspondence. To make up for the missed opportunity to spend time in Rome, Sfondrati now had to find other ways to be present at the Roman Curia, and to learn what agenda the curia was pursuing while remaining in St. Gallen . Sfondrati's patron and friend at the curia, Lorenzo Casoni, had therefore advised him to appoint a reliable agent in Rome to work for Sfondrati's own interests and for those of St. Gallen. The proposed agent was Francesco Antonio Firmiani, about whom unfortunately little is known. Firmiani was under Casoni's protection and did not himself hold a high position at the curia, yet he moved with remarkable ease and confidence in the highest circles of Roman elite.[34]

33 Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo to Cardinal Secretary of State Alderano Cybo (copy), n. d., n. p., AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 317rv.

34 The deepest insight into the enigmatic figure of Firmiani comes from the reproduction of his self-description in the diary of St. Gallen's Father Jodok Müller, who resided in Rome during the Holy Year of 1700. According to Elisabeth Garms, who has researched the Firmian family from Trento, any kinship with this family can be ruled out. Firmiani, who served as an agent for St. Gallen from 1687 until his death in 1711, most likely belonged to the Firman family from the Italian Marche region, and was probably a nephew of the respected lawyer Giorgio Firman, active in Rome. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Ms. Garms for her research and insights. The diary of Jodok Müller (Klosterarchiv Einsiedeln, MSC901) will be published as part of an ongoing editorial project at the Stiftsarchiv St. Gallen.

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In his diary, Sfondrati justified Francesco Antonio Firmiani's involvement in various pending business matters, such as obtaining the confirmation bulls to confirm Sfondrati's election as the new head of the monastery, reaching an agreement in the conflict with the Bishop of Constance, and the union of the Pfäfers monastery with Einsiedeln, in which Firmiani was to play a mediating role.[35] The agent was to represent the interests of the Swiss Benedictines directly in Rome, without other official actors such as the nuncios intervening. In fact, however, it was mainly a matter of suggesting the presence of the geographically distant Prince-Abbot Sfondrati, in the culture of the face-to-face society of the early modern period at the curia, despite his physical absence, of keeping awareness of him alive and presenting him as a reliable partner.[36] Additionally, Firmiani's task was to keep Sfondrati closely informed about what was happening in Rome so that he had knowledge of the demands and priorities of the time.[37] Thus, an extensive correspondence developed between Sfondrati and Firmiani, in which they informed each other of events and developments on both sides of the Alps on a weekly basis and exchanged their assessments of them. In these assessments, Firmiani acted as a mouthpiece for Lorenzo Casoni, who also wrote his own letter to Sfondrati almost weekly, but additionally included his central statements in Firmiani's letters.

This correspondence was mediated by Sfondrati's sister-in-law, Laura Sfondrati, born Caimi, Contessa della Riviera, who was also in active correspondence with the brother of her deceased husband. The communication between the Contessa della Riviera and the prince-abbot of St. Gallen served not only to cultivate relations between the two of them and within the House of Sfondrati. The presence of the Contessa in Milan and Como—to a certain extent halfway between St. Gallen and Rome—also made it possible to establish and secure a correspondence network that went beyond the relationship of the two. The Contessa acted as a hub for correspondence to and from the Italian peninsula and its dominions.

The Contessa's position enabled her to liaise the flow of information from the Milan area to St. Gallen and vice-versa. Her central task was to ensure that all letters reached their destination by securing and monitoring the postal routes as best she could. The *ordinari*, the regular couriers, travelled between Rome and Milan, and Milan and Lindau, passing St. Gallen on their way. Delivery of letters on the St. Gallen–Rome route through these couriers took at least two weeks. Celestino Sfondrati trusted the connection handled by the Contessa della Riviera much more than the normal courier service between Rome and the nunciature in Lucerne, through which all mail directed to

35 Diary of Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, StiASG, vol. 271, 109 f.

36 E. g., Francesco Antonio Firmiani to Celestino Sfondrati, Rome, July 2, 1689, StiASG, vol. 245, no. 26.

37 At first Firmiani wrote the weekly reports himself; later he enclosed *avvisi* summarizing the events of the week in Rome in his letters.

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the Swiss cantons was otherwise handled.[38] Even though it was not possible to exercise control over the letter consignments on the way, the passage through Milan made it possible to regain control over the correspondences by means of a "trusted person" ("persona fidata") at the post office.[39]

The function of the Contessa della Riviera can thus best be characterized as that of a broker in an early modern patronage system, who on the one hand fulfilled an important function for Celestino Sfondrati and on the other, benefited her family through the connection with the family-prelate. Abbot Celestino acted as a political advisor to his sister-in-law on domestic matters, as he was very familiar with both ruling practices and the specific regional circumstances, although, as their correspondence suggests, the Contessa was also well versed in the mechanisms and strategies of the politics and administration of the Sfondrati dominions.[40] However, to legitimize her decisions, she sought advice from the socially higher-ranking and last surviving male representative of the generation of her deceased husband.

As the last living brother of this generation, Celestino bore a responsibility towards the family despite the renunciation of the "world" expected of him upon entering the Benedictine monastery in St. Gallen. References to the Contessa's incapacity as a woman proves to be a protective claim for both parties, aimed at meeting the normative expectations placed on her as a woman and on Celestino as a clergyman. While Celestino could circumvent his order's precept by referring to the precarious situation of his widowed sister-in-law, the Contessa's governance was socially legitimized by her rhetoric of humility.[41]

It was not uncommon for the Contessa to directly address explicit requests to the prince-abbot, whereby she emphasized their shared concern and obligation towards her children, that is, his nephews. She frequently highlighted that her primary concern was the well-being of her children—and consequently, the perpetuation of the Sfondrati lineage. She temporarily assumed a regent role, seeking assurance from her closest male

38 Instruction to Firmiani and Casoni to send letters via Contessa della Riviera and not via Lucerne: Celestino Sfondrati to Francesco Antonio Firmiani, St. Gallen, March 22, 1688, StiASG, vol. 241, no. 33. In their return letters, both Casoni and Firmiani confirmed that they would abide by this instruction and use the route via the Contessa: cf. April 10, 1688, StiASG, vol. 243, no. 94 and 95.

39 Contessa della Riviera to Celestino Sfondrati, Asso, November 9, 1690, StiASG, vol. 247, no. 44.

40 This is actually astonishing, considering that he had completed most of his education outside his home country.

41 A close relationship with one's *cognato* or *cognata*, brother- or sister-in-law, was not uncommon and especially present in such contexts of family dynasties. For a prominent case of "cognatismo," see Marina D'Amelia, "Nepotismo al femminile: Il caso di Olimpia Maidalchini Pamphilj," in *La nobiltà romana in età moderna: Profili istituzionali e pratiche sociali*, ed. Maria A. Visceglia, 2nd ed. (Roma: Carocci editore, 2002).

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relative, who, although excluded from the line of succession, was still involved in family matters.[42]

Conversely, the Contessa played an important role for Prince-Abbot Sfondrati as well. On the one hand she was his contact point for material desires that could not be satisfied in St. Gallen. The acquisition of books and paintings meant a gain in cultural capital for Sfondrati, and the provision of luxury goods such as chocolate or tobacco could also lead to his increased prestige if distributed to his allies. Through the Contessa's protection of St. Gallen subjects recommended by the prince-abbot, the latter extended his sphere of power towards the south. The Contessa also acted as an extended arm of the prince-abbot in courting important officials in the Lombard region. The most important and time-consuming function as her brother-in-law's broker, however, was the mediation of all correspondence between the St. Gallen and Italian regions, especially to the Roman Curia, whereby Celestino Sfondrati was informed in detail about the pope's agenda and was subsequently able to strategically align his government accordingly.

4. Self-Positioning Practices

The orientation towards the Roman agenda is exemplified by Sfondrati's approach to France in both of his functions, secular ruler and ecclesiastical prelate, which changed depending on the conjuncture in Rome. On the one hand, he and his envoys to the Diet of the Swiss Confederacy were always found on the Catholic side of the confessional fault line, but on the other, there were also political differences within this faction. Due to these differences, the prince-abbot repeatedly had to confess his loyalty to Rome. Factional divisions and the interests of competing foreign powers characterized the political culture and practice in early modern Switzerland in general. This can be seen in particular when looking at the orientation of the *Corpus helveticum* within the European power structure towards the end of the seventeenth century.

When the Palatinate War broke out in 1688, the Confederate towns found themselves, as they so often did, in a quandary. The question quickly arose as to what the war might mean for the Swiss Confederacy and how "the peace, security and freedom of the fatherland could be preserved and protected with all our strength."[43] Therefore,

42 Various studies on the role of women in early modern princely societies have demonstrated that guardianship was a gendered role instilled in women during their upbringing. They were trained for the role of future widows entrusted with ensuring the continuity of the family into the next generation. See Grace E. Coolidge, *Guardianship, Gender, and the Nobility in Early Modern Spain* (London: Routledge, 2016), as well as Magdalena S. Sánchez, *The Empress, the Queen, and the Nun*: *Women and Power at the Court of Philip III of Spain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

43 Amtliche Sammlung der ältern eidgenössischen Abschiede (hereafter EA) 6/1/2 (Lucerne: Meyer, 1839), Baden, October 10–16, 1688, no. 139 a, 233.

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an extraordinary session was convened, at which the Confederates declared that in principle they would "faithfully fulfil the duties of the hereditary alliance towards the emperor and the provisions of the perpetual peace and the previous alliances towards the king of France in return for due equality, and that they would continue to observe the traditional neutrality in the future."[44] The king and the emperor were represented at the session by one envoy each, both trying, on the one hand, to persuade the Confederates to cooperate, and on the other, to dissuade them from making concessions to the other side. The initial declaration of neutrality did not mean that there was no room for maneuvering to gain advantages for one's own side. While both quarreling powers declared from the outset their opposition to border violations of the Swiss Confederacy's core territory, a long process of negotiation was required regarding the dimension of neutrality in the conflict. The respective ambassadors had to negotiate which territories belonged to the Confederate neutrality, how the Confederate mercenary troops in both royal and imperial service could be deployed, and whether new troops could be raised. While the Confederates were able to invoke the already existing defensive capitulations with regard to the last two points, the neutral territory was not conclusively defined.[45]

The actual extent of neutrality, however, was not only a matter of negotiation vis-à-vis the outside powers; there were also differing opinions on the matter within the Swiss Confederacy. Although the fundamental declaration of neutrality was never up for debate, the Confederate cantons found it difficult to come to an agreement on its extent.[46] This was due to the different relationships and interests linking the individual cantons to the two warring parties. The question leading to the greatest disagreement was whether the Confederates should protect the Austrian possessions of Constance and on the High Rhine—Rheinfelden, Säckingen, Laufenburg, and Waldshut—with troops and, if necessary, actively defend them. While the imperial envoy promoted this plan, France tried to prevent the towns from being thus protected. As early as the beginning of November, a majority of the thirteen Protestant towns as well as Solothurn and Fribourg spoke out in favor of this military deployment. The majority of the Catholic cantons, led by Lucerne, however, were careful not to snub France. As Abbot Celestino Sfondrati informed his friend Lorenzo Casoni at the curia in Rome, Ambassador Tambonneau lured the Lucernese elite with the payment of outstanding pensions including interest, as well as free trading privileges in France.[47] Sfondrati himself strongly advocated the defense of the four towns and Constance—not least because his territory bordered the

44 EA 6/1/2, Baden, October 10–16, 1688, no. 139 c, 234.

45 EA 6/1/2, Baden, January 17–30, 1689, no. 145 d, 251.

46 Sfondrati reported to Rome: "Continoa pure in Bada l'Assemblea del corpo Elvetico, quale conforme al solito si trova diviso con discrepanze di pareri […]." Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Lorenzo Casoni, St. Gallen, November 1, 1688, AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 390rv.

47 Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Lorenzo Casoni, St. Gallen, November 15, 1688, AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 475r–476r.

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city on Lake Constance directly, but also because he feared that if Constance fell into the hands of France, it would become a gateway to the entire Swiss Confederacy. Thus, he made war preparations to protect his territory and detached a ninety-man force to Constance as early as November 9 to defend the city.[48]

In this, he was backed by his close friend at the Roman Curia, Lorenzo Casoni. For it was not only the Swiss Confederacy that felt threatened by the advance of the French troops. The territories south of the Alps and especially the Roman dominions were also afraid of an invasion, which is why the Roman Curia was extremely interested in the position of the Federal Diet. Abbot Sfondrati, who was represented at the Diet by his minister Fidel von Thurn, reported regularly to Lorenzo Casoni in Rome. Casoni assessed the disunity of the Federal Diet and the slowness of decision-making in the current situation as shameful. According to him, the main issue was not the defense of the city of Constance, but the defense of freedom. He rebuked Lucerne for not acting in the public interest but only looking out for its own advantage.[49] Both Casoni and Sfondrati were convinced that if Nuncio Cantelmo had still been present in the city, this open support for France would never have happened. Now, however, the French envoy was able to move around the city of Lucerne without opposition and to win people over to the French side.[50]

Despite all French efforts and Lucerne's resistance, Sfondrati was able to report to Rome on November 22 that, after fifty-seven sessions, the majority of the confederate towns had agreed on the extended neutrality and defense of Constance and the four Austrian towns on the High Rhine.[51] The positive course of the negotiations was a relief to the Roman Curia, as both Lorenzo Casoni and Sfondrati's agent, Francesco Antonio Firmiani, unanimously announced to Sfondrati. The prince-abbot of St. Gallen was given great credit for bringing about the decision of the Diet.[52]

Sfondrati had succeeded in preserving the Swiss Confederacy from falling under French influence mainly by maintaining personal networks in this area. Responsible for this was both the prince-abbot himself and Sfondrati's geographically more mobile lord chamberlain, first minister, and most important diplomat, Fidel von Thurn. He was able to advance the interests of the prince-abbey abroad in person and made an important

48 Diary of Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, November 6, 1688, StiASG, vol. 271, 156. See also Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Landshofmeister Fidel Baron von Thurn (copy), St. Gallen, November 7, 1688, StiASG, vol. 241, no. 115.

49 Lorenzo Casoni to Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, Rome, December 4, 1688, StiASG, vol. 243, no. 174.

50 Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Lorenzo Casoni, St. Gallen, November 8, 1688, AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 392rv.

51 Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Lorenzo Casoni, St. Gallen, November 22, 1688, AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV (1685–1692), 394rv.

52 Lorenzo Casoni to Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, Rome, December 11, 1688, StiASG, vol. 243, no. 173 and Francesco Antonio Firmiani to Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, Rome, December 11, 1688, StiASG, vol. 243, no. 175.

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contribution to the maintenance of secular correspondence for the establishment and consolidation of St. Gallen's political entanglements.[53] Indulging in *stabilitas loci* except in particularly important business, Sfondrati, on the other hand, diligently resorted to the practice of *politique par correspondance*.[54]

Even in purely formal terms, the Prince-Abbey of St. Gallen was part of a larger network of alliances, a network characterized both by its affiliation to the Swiss Confederacy and the Empire and by the conclusion of (and decision-making power over) various capitulations concerning military service, protection, and trade with third parties. The exchange with individual actors in these areas, which ran parallel to the correspondence between the estates, was due to the practice of multilevel communication ensuring that Prince-Abbot Sfondrati had a constant flow of information regarding the protection and promotion of his interests in a constantly changing environment. For a prince prelate, not only religious issues but also the well-being of all subjects under his rule had to be at the center of his concern. Thus, Sfondrati's correspondence habits were not limited exclusively to confederate exponents of the Catholic denomination.

In particular, Zurich's political weight as a senior member of the early modern Swiss Confederacy justified a reciprocal exchange with the major exponents of Protestant Zurich. Celestino Sfondrati certainly also profited from the new political course of Mayor Heinrich Escher, who had increasingly turned away from the "primacy of confessional politics" and oriented his actions more towards pragmatic and economic criteria.[55] Thus, these two men were united above all by their common dislike of France and its interference in Swiss politics; in mid-March 1688, this prompted Sfondrati to thank Mayor Escher effusively for his mission to Versailles, the aim of which was to curb France's expansionist drive in the course of the impending Palatinate War of Succession.[56]

In addition to his connections to Zurich, Sfondrati had several contacts among important Swiss individuals of the Catholic faith. Often, such relationships were cemented by

53 As the prince-abbot's first "diplomat," Fidel von Thurn built up an impressive network of correspondence partners that spanned the entire Swiss Confederacy, as well as northern Italy and southern Germany, the courts in Madrid, Paris, London, Innsbruck, and Vienna, and the curia in Rome, as evidenced by over 4,600 letters in the family archives. Cf. Paul Stärkle, "Fidel von Thurn im Lichte seines Familienarchivs, 1629–1719," *Neujahrsblatt* 95 (1955): 8.

54 On this concept, cf. the anthology by Jean Boutier, Sandro Landi, and Olivier Rouchon, eds., *Politique par correspondance*: *Les usages politiques de la lettre en Italie (XIV^e–XVIII^e siècle)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009).

55 Martin Lassner, "Heinrich Escher (vom Glas)," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from April 11, 2004, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/018056/2004-11-04/ (last accessed Dec. 29, 2024). See also Hans Camille Huber, *Bürgermeister Johann Heinrich Escher von Zürich (1626–1710) und die eidgenössische Politik im Zeitalter Ludwigs XIV* (Affoltern am Albis: J. Weiss, 1936).

56 Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to Mayor Heinrich Escher (copy), [March 16, 1688], StiASG, vol. 241, no. 30.

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marriage alliances.[57] In particular, the expansion of relations with Solothurn undertaken in the early 1670s came in handy for the prince-abbot.[58] After taking office, Sfondrati sought to restore the relationship with the French Crown via the French ambassade, which had resided in Solothurn since 1530. The rapprochement was to be mediated by one of Sfondrati's "più cari, e preciosi amici," Johann Viktor Besenval.[59] Since Besenval was considered one of the most important partisans of France in the Swiss Confederacy, it is not surprising that the newly elected prince-abbot turned to his address to get in touch with the French ambassador. Sfondrati sent the mail addressed to the ambassador to Besenval, who then had to present the letters to the French envoy. At the first contact, however, *Schultheiß* Besenval was expressly instructed to withhold Sfondrati's letter informing France of his election if he did not receive an assurance of a "decent" reply.[60] Besenval's role was particularly important because the ambassador, at the behest of the king, was to strictly refuse to enter into direct contact with *Landshofmeister* Fidel von Thurn, who was seen as France's worst enemy within the Swiss Confederacy.[61] In this situation, it was essential to have recourse to a mediator like Besenval to enter into discourse with the crown through this channel. Although Sfondrati did not see eye to eye with the French Crown on ecclesiastical matters, the prelate, who held secular

57 In a monastic-style ecclesiastical elective monarchy, unlike a secular principality, the ruler, committed to the ideal of non-involvement by his family, could not engage in such practices directly. Evidently, this responsibility was delegated to their leading secular officials. In other ecclesiastical elective monarchies such as in bishoprics and, most prominently and well researched, within the papacy, however, family involvement was certainly the case. There, the family of the respective ruling pope or bishop took on an important function in securing secular interests by means of the marriages of nephews and nieces. Regular clerics were prevented by the rule of detachment from the family of origin from promoting and placing family members too prominently, although a complete separation of interests could not always be achieved, as I show in my thesis. For the German space, see, e. g., Aloys Winterling, *Der Hof der Kurfürsten von Köln 1688–1794: Eine Fallstudie zur Bedeutung "absolutistischer" Hofhaltung* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1986); Daniel Büchel and Volker Reinhardt, eds., *Die Kreise der Nepoten*: *Neue Forschungen zu alten und neuen Eliten Roms in der frühen Neuzeit*; *Interdisziplinäre Forschungstagung 7. bis 10. März 1999, Istituto Svizzero di Roma* (Bern: Lang, 2001); or Ulrich Köchli, *Urban VIII. und die Barberini*: *Nepotismus als Strukturmerkmal päpstlicher Herrschaftsorganisation in der Vormoderne*, Päpste und Papsttum 46 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2017).

58 Fidel von Thurn's daughter Sibilla (1652–1730) married Baron Peter Joseph Besenval of Solothurn, bailiff of the County of Toggenburg (1693–1704). Cleopha (?) was married to Baron Sury de Bussy. Joseph (1649–1692), Fidel von Thurn's firstborn son, also married into the powerful Sury de Bussy family through his marriage to Elisabeth in 1673. Stärkle, "Fidel von Thurn im Lichte seines Familienarchivs, 1629–1719."

59 Abbot Celestino Sfondrati to *Schultheiß* Johann Viktor Besenval von Brunnstatt (copy), November 28, 1688, StiASG, vol. 241, no. 119.

60 Diary of Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, May 16 to June 8, 1687, StiASG, vol. 271, 47 f.

61 Louis XIV to Ambassador Antoine-Michel Tambonneau, Montmirel, June 3, 1687, Archives du Ministère des affaires étrangères, La Courneuve (hereafter MAE), 125CP (Suisse), 84 (P/7320), 212r–213r, here: 212r.

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power, had to have an interest in maintaining good relations with France, especially as not to prevent important trade relations in this realm.

However, the relationship between Celestino Sfondrati and Louis XIV needed a lot of repair, since Sfondrati had been one of Rome's sharpest tongued authors against Gallicanism during the reign of Innocent XI. Therefore, with Sfondrati paying respect to the changed reality that had arisen after his election to the prince-abbacy of St. Gallen, the treatise *Legatio Marchionis Lavardini* was published anonymously. Sfondrati's authorship can hardly be doubted, since the correspondence between him and Casoni in 1688 is dominated by the treatise to be published on Lavardin's legation in Rome. As the treatise's preface informs the reader, there were sound reasons for concealing the name of the author, the typographer, and the place of publication, despite the approval of the highest authority.[62] Casoni had advised Sfondrati to take this step because he suspected France might react violently to the work's publication. Although he anticipated France's irritation, he did not want Sfondrati's authorship to reflect negatively on his regency over the Prince-Abbey of St. Gallen.[63] Sfondrati's commitment to Rome had to be weighed even more heavily against the interests of the prince-abbey once he had taken up the position of prince-abbot. For this reason, after the successful publication of the *Legatio*, Sfondrati was reluctant to embark on a new anti-Gallican work. Also paying respect to the changed priorities in Rome after the death of Innocent XI, Sfondrati did not publish any new anti-Gallican treatises. The third, enlarged edition of *Gallia vindicata*, published in 1693, was therefore again published anonymously, so Sfondrati's name would no longer be associated with the publication and his carefully dissimulated attitude towards France would become apparent. While Sfondrati was reorienting his writing, he was also making political efforts to bring about a rapprochement in his role as prince-abbot. Not least thanks to the rapprochement mediated by Besenval, Celestino Sfondrati achieved the cardinalate less than nine years after being elected prince-abbot.[64]

5. Conclusion

Both the mechanisms of the papal court and the political realities of the early modern Swiss Confederacy demanded a high degree of flexibility from the actors who held

62 Cf. [Celestino Sfondrati], Legatio Marchionis Lavardini (St. Gallen, 1688).

63 Lorenzo Casoni to Abbot Celestino Sfondrati, Rome, February 28, 1688, AAV, Fondo Favoriti-Casoni 9, 4rv.

64 To his own surprise, Cardinal Forbin de Janson received the royal order to not oppose Sfondrati's promotion at all costs—primarily, though, not to jeopardize the promotion of the French candidate de La Grange. Cf. King Louis XIV to Cardinal Toussaint de Forbin Janson, Versailles, December 19, 1695, MAE, 109CP (Rome), 373 (P/8732), 236r–237r.

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stakes in both contexts. Sfondrati's practice of correspondence with and entertainment of broad personal networks allowed him to navigate power and politics.

His intimate connections to Rome—facilitated through familial networks—enabled Sfondrati to establish his position both locally and in relation to the curia. The negotiation processes within and beyond the confederate territories demonstrated that the Prince-Abbey of St. Gallen, under the leadership of Celestino Sfondrati, emerged and asserted itself as an autonomous actor within the Swiss Confederacy.

The described functions of the continuing interconnection between the House of Sfondrati and their scion who joined the Benedictine community in St. Gallen suggest that representatives of the family who turned to a religious career were also committed to the early modern logic of being subservient to the family and promoting its interests.

Despite his relatively short reign—Sfondrati presided over the monastery for barely nine years, from spring 1687 to winter 1695/1696—and the abbot's unique career, his abbacy lends itself to learning more about practices of self-positioning, both locally and translocally, through the activation of personal networks. Moreover, examining Celestino Sfondrati's journey to the cardinalate sheds light on the communication practices through which Benedictine clergy actively engaged in social negotiation processes and navigated between observance and secular affairs.

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Jodi Bilinkoff

Urban Networks of Gender and Piety

John of the Cross, OCD, and Laywomen

1. Introduction

During his beatification hearings, witnesses were questioned about John of the Cross' observance of his vow of chastity.[1] Baltasar de Jesús lauded his former prior as "most pure," even "celestial" in this regard, adding that John "was very prudent when it came to visiting women […]."[2] Bernabé de Jesús agreed, explaining that when friars walked out in public, John insisted that they stay close together to prevent women from passing between them.[3] Even when he dealt with his order's nuns, the degree of caution that he exercised was "excessive," Sebastián de San Hilarión declared.[4]

These tropes of hyper-modesty and avoidance of women found their way into John's earliest hagiographies, with traces still discernable in modern biographical treatments. From these one might conclude that the friar kept his interactions with women to a minimum. This assessment, moreover, aligns with John's rather gloomy reputation as a cheerless ascetic who shunned human contact in general.[5]

In fact, John of the Cross probably spent more time with and had more acquaintances among women than most male religious in early modern Spain. For one thing, he owed his career to a woman, the future St. Teresa of Avila, who initiated the Discalced

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1 Abbreviations: Actas y Declaraciones=San Juan de la Cruz, *Actas de gobierno y Declaraciones primeras de los testigos*, ed. Antonio Fortes (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2000); BMC=Biblioteca Mística Carmelitana: vols. 10–14: *Obras de San Juan de la Cruz, Doctor de la Iglesia*, ed. Silverio de Santa Teresa (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1929–1931); CW K&R=*The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991); CW Peers=*The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross*, ed., and trans. E. Allison Peers. London: Burns and Oates, 1935); Diccionario=*Diccionario de San Juan de la Cruz*, ed. Eulogio Pacho (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2009); OC JVR=San Juan de la Cruz, *Obras completas*, ed. José Vicente Rodríguez. 6th ed. (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 2009); Proc. Jaén=*Proceso de beatificación de San Juan de la Cruz: Proceso de Jaén, años 1627–1628*, ed. Juan del Arco Moya and José del Arco Moya (Córdoba: Publicaciones Obra Social y Cultural Cajasur, 2006).

2 BMC 14: 139, "en la castidad […] fué purísimo […] celestial, y era muy recatado en visitar mujeres […]."

3 BMC 14: 295–296.

4 Proc. Jaén, 182.

5 Even John's admirers acknowledge his love of solitude. See, for example, José Vicente Rodríguez and Federico Ruiz Salvador, eds., *God Speaks in the Night: The Life, Times, and Teaching of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Carmelite Studies, 1991), 2.

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Carmelite order when she founded a convent in her native city in 1562. Five years later, while opening a second house for women in Medina del Campo, she also looked for friars to establish the male branch of the order and to serve as chaplains to the nuns. There she met John and persuaded him to join the reform. He was twenty-five, newly ordained as a priest, and still pursuing university studies. Teresa was fifty-two and had spent more than thirty years in the religious life.[6]

It is not an exaggeration to say that the nun recruited, trained, and mentored John of the Cross. In the summer of 1568, Teresa brought the young friar with her to Valladolid, where workmen were completing construction on a new convent. She recalled how the delay presented "an opportunity to teach Father Fray John of the Cross about our way of proceeding, so that he might have a clear understanding of everything."[7] He would spend most of the 1570s in the service and company of the Founding Mother. In 1572, Teresa prevailed upon her superior to send John as vicar and confessor to the nuns at the large Calced Carmelite convent of la Encarnación in Avila to which she had been appointed prioress.[8] John received an intense apprenticeship in both spiritual direction and monastic administration, but, highly unusual for a male religious, at the hands of a woman and in a largely female *milieu*. He served as a spiritual guide to many Discalced Carmelite nuns until his death in 1591 at the age of forty-nine.

That John would spend so much time among his order's female religious was, after all, an integral part of his "job description."[9] Did he interact with laywomen as well? The challenge in answering this and other questions about his life derives from the lack of sources. Unlike Teresa, John never composed an autobiography. While he probably wrote hundreds of letters, most were lost or destroyed, by himself or others. Close examination of the roughly thirty extant letters, however, as well as the numerous oral testimonies recorded at beatification hearings by people who knew him personally, their written accounts, and his earliest biographies, reveal that John knew and had dealings with between thirty and forty laywomen. The use of these sorts of sources

6 For the biographical information that follows, see José Vicente Rodríguez, *San Juan de la Cruz: La biografía* (Madrid: San Pablo, 2012), chaps. 6, 10.

7 Teresa of Avila, "The Book of Her Foundations," 13:5, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1985), vol. 3, 162–163; Santa Teresa de Jesús, *Obras completas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios and Otger Steggink, 6th ed. (Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1979), 555: "havía lugar para informar al padre fray Juan de la Cruz toda nuestra manera de proceder, para que llevase bien entendidas todas las cosas […]."

8 Nicolás González y González, *San Juan de la Cruz en Avila* (Avila: Caja Central de Ahorros y Préstamos de Avila, 1973), 14–30. Famously, one of the house's nuns, Beatriz de Jesús, reported seeing Teresa and John levitating together. BMC 13: 360.

9 Rodríguez, *La biografía*, 487–510; Darcy Donohue, "Telling a Father's Life: John of the Cross's Female Biographers," in *Perspectives on Early Modern Women in Iberia and the Americas: Studies in Law, Society, Art, and Literature in Honor of Anne J. Cruz*, ed. Adrienne L. Martín and María Cristina Quintero (New York: Escribana Books, 2015), 367–380.

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Fig. 1 Teresa of Avila teaches John of the Cross the Discalced Carmelite "way of proceeding" (from: Gaspar de la Anunciación OCD, *Representacion de la Vida del Bienaventurado P.F. Juan de la Cruz Primer Carmelita Descalço […]* (Bruges, 1678), 65. Engraving by Gaspar Bouttats. Credit: Women of the Book Collection, Special Collections, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University).

raises important questions about reliability and interpretation to be sure. Most were produced by admirers who shared the goals of promoting John as a saintly exemplar, not of achieving journalistic "objectivity." Nevertheless, beatification testimonies in particular offer significant insights and provide fascinating windows into their society's values. When read critically and with care, they shed light not only on the person regarded as holy, but also his or her devotees. While the question-and-answer format may have been formulaic, the deponents' responses were extremely varied and deeply personal in nature. Each testimony, I suggest, contains within it something of the recalled experiences of women and men who interacted with John of the Cross, as individuals or as members of a community.[10]

In the first part of this chapter, I explore the nature of the relationships John of the Cross maintained with laywomen, primarily in the last twelve years of his life, 1579–1591,

10 I discuss the use of testimonies from John's beatification hearings in "Fathers, Friars, Sons, and Saint-Makers: John of the Cross and His Earliest *Discípulos*," in *Making Saints in a "Glocal" Religion: Practices of Holiness in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Birgit Emich, Daniel Sidler, Samuel Weber, and Christian Windler (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024). "[S]in embargo, esos testimonios están marcados en muchos casos por la veracidad que puede surgir de la memoria de una vida en común, del tejido lúcido y afectivo de la amistad." Rosa Rossi, *Juan de la Cruz: Silencio y creatividad* (Madrid: Trotta, 1996), 12. I examine the use of hagiographies in "First Friar, Problematic Friar: John of the Cross in His First Biographies," in *Reforming Reformation*, ed. Thomas F. Mayer (Aldershot: Routledge, 2012), 101–112.

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and in four Spanish cities: Baeza, Granada, Segovia, and Ubeda. For purposes of analysis, I have organized the women into three categories: patrons or benefactors (*patronas*), young unmarried women (*doncellas*), and devout laywomen (*beatas*), while acknowledging that these categories sometimes overlap. I have selected some examples from each category for further examination.[11] In the second part, I analyze the special case of doña Ana de Peñalosa, the best known of these laywomen because John composed and dedicated to her his final poem, "The Living Flame of Love" (*Llama de amor viva*).

2. *Patronas*

The other reason Ana de Peñalosa is known to posterity is because of her *largesse*; she endowed a Discalced Carmelite friary in her native city of Segovia in 1586. But she was not the first elite benefactress John had encountered—not even the first *segoviana* or the first one named Ana! Predictably, he was introduced to networks of wealthy patrons by Teresa of Avila. In March 1574, John accompanied her to Segovia to open a convent there. Teresa later recalled, "There was a lady there […] a good servant of God, and her calling had always been to be a nun. Thus, after the founding of the [convent], she and one of her daughters, who was living a devout life, entered it."[12]

Doña Ana de Jimena was the widow of Francisco Barros de Bracamonte, a landowner and member of Segovia's ruling oligarchy. She decided to donate a large portion of her inheritance to this new order and transform her status and identity by becoming a Discalced Carmelite nun, taking the name Ana de Jesús. Her daughter, María Barros de Bracamonte, made this fundamental life-change as well, adopting the name María de la Encarnación.[13]

Both mother and daughter spent the rest of their lives in Discalced Carmelite convents. During the 1580s their monastic careers put them into regular contact with John of the Cross, first in his role as spiritual guide, and then as a member of the order's governing council. That they had maintained cordial relations since that first meeting when the women were still privileged *señoras* is evident in the correspondence they exchanged near the end of the friar's life. In letters dated July 6, 1591, John assured Ana that "I will

11 The many types of relationships that were reciprocal, if not equal in power between male clerics and pious women, religious and lay, form the core of my book *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

12 "The Book of Her Foundations," 22:3–4, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 3, 204–205; Santa Teresa de Jesús, *Obras completas*, 577–578, "Estava allí una señora […] doña Ana de Jimena […] era muy sierva de Dios, y siempre su llamamiento havía sido para monja. Ansí en haciéndose el monasterio, entró ella y una hija suya de harto buena vida […]."

13 Diccionario, 66, 760. Francisco Javier Mosácula María, *Los regidores de la ciudad de Segovia, 1556–1665: Análisis socio-económico de una oligarquía urbana* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2006), 200–222, 302–318.

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neither forget nor neglect you, as you say, because truly I desire your good forever." To María he advised, "where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love […]."[14] Some twenty-five years later, the nun would repeat this quote during her testimony for John's beatification.[15]

Another propertied widow aided John and his Discalced Carmelite brothers in Baeza. Elvira Muñoz donated a farmstead outside the city that she had inherited from her late husband. On January 15, 1581, Elvira signed documents finalizing this transaction. John of the Cross, "rector of the said friary," offered his thanks to the donor for "her great gift and charity."[16] John had particular affection for this scenic property and would regularly go there for periods of rest and contemplation.[17]

He spent the final months of his life, September through December 1591, at the friary of San Miguel in Ubeda, suffering from erysipelas, a painful skin infection. Women from some of the city's elite families with whom he was acquainted hastened to offer him material assistance. Doña María de Molina provided cloths to serve as bandages, and she and her daughters, doña Catalina and doña Inés de Salazar, washed them "because of the devotion they had for the Saint."[18] Later they would come to treasure the soiled fabric as relics. Doña Catalina asked the invalid to petition God that she might enter a Discalced Carmelite convent. John assured her of his prayers and counseled patience, predicting that within three years the young woman would take the veil, "which happened just this way," she happily reported.[19] Doña Clara de Benavides, as well as members of the wealthy and well-connected Ortega Cabrío family into which she had married, was also devoted to John of the Cross. During his final illness, every day she filled a basket with food and other necessities for the patient, no doubt aided by her brother-in-law, Fernando de la Madre de Dios, then serving as the friary's assistant prior.[20]

We can now discern certain patterns among John's female benefactors. They were mature widows or married women, most belonging to urban oligarchies by birth or marriage or both. Often their daughters, sons, or nieces entered the Discalced Carmelite order, as did the pious widows themselves. Less clear is whether these women of means first approached John, looking for spiritual direction and an outlet for their charity, or if he sought out pious women and their patronage. In either case, his relationships with these *patronas* and their family members ultimately helped to increase the ranks of his new religious order.

14 CW K&R, 759–760; 760–761; OC JVR 1105–1107, "no la olvidaré ni quitaré de la cuenta que dice, porque de veras deseo su bien para siempre […] adonde no hay amor, ponga amor, y sacará amor […]."

15 BMC 14: 221.

16 Actas y Declaraciones, 62.

17 Actas y Declaraciones, 405–406.

18 Actas y Declaraciones, 409.

19 Actas y Declaraciones, 274; Diccionario, 225.

20 BMC 14: 72; Diccionario, 468–469.

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3. *Doncellas*

John of the Cross also had many acquaintances among the larger and generally younger cohort of unmarried women in several Spanish cities. We have already briefly met two of them, both daughters of benefactors. At the age of twenty-five, María Barros de Bracamonte accompanied her mother into the new Discalced Carmelite convent in Segovia. During John's final illness, the twenty-two-year-old Catalina de Salazar washed John's bandages and asked for his prayers. As the friar had predicted, several years later she became a nun at Ubeda's convent, adopting the name Catalina de San Alberto.

We might think of these *doncellas* as "pre-nuns." John counseled women who aspired to the religious life, most of them from privileged backgrounds. María de Machuca, for example, was born in Granada in 1563 to Francisco Machuca, a lawyer at the Royal Appeals Court (*Real Chancillería*) and the noblewoman Isabel de Haro. After her longtime confessor died, María began looking for a replacement. She turned her attention to the newly arrived Discalced Carmelites. A female cousin was considering joining the order, and one day María went along with her to visit the convent. There she met John, the community's chaplain. Hearing him preach and conversing with him about her doubts and dreams changed the direction of her life. Resolved now to become a nun herself, she entered the convent in October 1585, taking the name María de la Cruz in honor of her spiritual director.[21] Many years later, when she testified that "Our Lord gave him great effectiveness in encouraging virtues and immense grace and prudence in teaching souls how to come to Him," María may well have been alluding to aspects of her own relationship with John, both before and after taking vows.[22]

Another case involved the highest levels of Spanish society. Doña Yolanda de Salazar served as a lady-in-waiting to Maria of Austria, the sister of Philip II and wife of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II. After her husband's death, the widowed empress moved back to Madrid and took up residence at the storied Descalzas Reales convent. Doña Yolanda first met John in the summer of 1586 when he came to found a convent there. She recalled that whenever she confessed and received communion from him, "I felt a great benefit to my soul, for his words had great power and he spoke in a most lofty manner of the love of God and of prayer and contemplation."[23] John's personal intervention surely influenced Yolanda's decision to leave the court and enter this new convent, taking the name María de la Encarnación.

Some young upper-class women needed persuasion before they turned to the religious life, and John dedicated himself to their conversion. Early in his career, as chaplain of

21 Eulogio Pacho, "María de la Cruz (Machuca), discípula aventajada de San Juan de la Cruz," *El Monte Carmelo* 103 (1993): 45–70; Diccionario, 759–760.

22 BMC 14: 125, "le dió Nuestro Señor gran eficacia en persuadir las virtudes y gran gracia y prudencia en enseñar las almas que a él acudían […]."

23 CW Peers III: 328–329.

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la Encarnación in Avila, the friar also heard the confessions of lay people in that city, including a *doncella* "of great beauty and elegance." Ana María de Jesús testified that this unnamed woman was at first reluctant to unburden herself to "a man so holy." At last, she overcame her scruples and put herself under John's spiritual care. Eventually she underwent a complete change and "made a different life," undoubtedly taking vows as a nun.[24]

Angela de Alemán gained a certain fame within Discalced Carmelite circles and in her native Segovia. This "señora principal" dazzled the city's residents with her luxurious clothes and adornments. In 1589, John arrived in Segovia to assume supervision of his order's friary. Doña Angela met the new prior and began to confess to him. "So great was the change in her due to the way the saint treated and conversed with her, that she rejected all her fancy clothes and dressed herself in sackcloth […] and cut off her hair," declared María de San José, who before entering the convent had known her well. Angela now spent hours in intense prayer and mortification. The once stylish woman expressed a desire to become a Discalced Carmelite nun, but died before that could happen, perhaps due to her extreme penitential practices.[25]

Others were determined to become nuns, even without the approval of their families, and John was willing to intercede on their behalf. His efforts proved critical for at least three young women in Granada. María de la Cruz (Machuca) recalled an unnamed *doncella* who told John of her aspirations to take the veil but lacked funds for a dowry. He nevertheless encouraged her and proposed her for the convent. At first the prioress expressed her misgivings, but after John exclaimed, "Reverend Mother! Shall this soul's desires go to waste?" she relented and received the woman into the Discalced Carmelite community.[26]

Isabel de la Encarnación related two rather dramatic accounts. The first involved María de Herrera, a Granada native with a strong religious vocation, but whose parents had secured a papal dispensation so that she could marry a wealthy uncle. One morning, doña María slipped out of her house, walked straight to the Discalced Carmelite convent, and asked for the habit. Tensions erupted when her brother arrived and loudly ordered the nuns to hand over his sister. John of the Cross, there to celebrate mass, helped to secure the doors. He calmly finished the service and then went to escort the young fugitive into the cloister. Stricken by a strange fear or anxiety, however, she found that she could not move. After the friar approached her and said, "give me your hand, señora

24 BMC 14: 302.

25 BMC 14: 252–253, "y fué tan grande la mudanza que en ella el trato y comunicación del santo hizo, que se quitó las galas que traía, y puso un saco de sayal […] y recortó el cabello […]." "Fragmentos historiales para la vida […] Juan de la Cruz," Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS 8568, 9r-v.

26 BMC 14: 125.

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doña María, and let us go, the nuns await you," the mysterious paralysis left her, and she arose to begin her new life.[27]

The nun also recalled the bitter legal and emotional conflict that erupted when her sixteen-year-old sister, doña Agustina de Puebla Méndez, tried to join her at Granada's Discalced Carmelite convent around 1584. The younger woman made this decision despite "the disapproval of our mother and all her relatives." Five or six months after she took the habit as Agustina de San José, suddenly one morning Granada's royal governor arrived, bringing authorization to take her from the convent and return her home. Word was quickly sent to John of the Cross. He came immediately and began to calm these two women, sisters in blood and spirit. While neither sister provided details of the negotiations that followed, Isabel ended her testimony on a triumphant note: "And thus God was served, that with [John's] prudence, matters were resolved in such a way that my sister made her profession, and she still lives today in the convent in the city of Baeza."[28]

On the other end of the social scale, when John visited doña Ana de Peñalosa in Segovia, he would often spend time with the female servants in her household. Many years later, one of her maids testified that the friar would sit before them and speak of spiritual matters. John would read aloud to those who lacked literacy and leave books for those able to read.[29] Other deponents recalled how he spent hours discussing prayer with "a poor woman" in that city and in Granada regularly heard the confessions of "a *mulata* named Potenciana."[30]

While his willingness to serve the poor undoubtedly enhanced John's reputation for apostolic zeal and charity, it did not result in any new nuns for his order. This may help to explain why his relationships with *doncellas* centered on members of the urban elite classes who possessed the necessary resources. Of the twelve women discussed here, seven took vows at Discalced Carmelite convents. Beatification testimonies and other sources describe John venturing out to minister to privileged, young, unmarried women and these women coming to his friary to consult with him. They, in turn, reached out to female friends and family members to spread the word about the friar and his new order. In this early period in their history, the Discalced Carmelites needed both patronage and pipelines for vocations.

27 Proc. Jaén, 269, "'Deme vuestra merced la mano, señora doña María, y vamos, que aguardan las religiosas.'"

28 Proc. Jaén, 273, "Y así, fué Dios servido que, con su prudencia, se dispusieron las cosas de manera que mi hermana profesó, y hoy vive y está en el convento de la ciudad de Baeza."

29 BMC 14: 279.

30 BMC 14: 219.

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4. *Beatas*

Nevertheless, John also interacted with devout laywomen or *beatas*, most of whom were of humble origins and lacked the resources or even the inclination to become nuns. These women established their own informal networks based upon proximity, social bonds, and shared interests. John's willingness to offer spiritual counsel to one *beata* could lead to introductions to other pious women in her circle and, in turn, greater integration and acceptance by the urban community.

For example, around 1580, John met the wife of a farmworker named Teresa de Ibros in Baeza. Francisco del Espíritu Santo later testified that this woman "was commonly held to be a saint by everyone in that city […]." After John directed her regarding "matters of her soul," Teresa greatly "respected him and spoke about him as a spiritual and holy man."[31] Among those who listened was her friend Bernardina Martínez Robles. She too began to confess with John, adopted a more ascetic lifestyle, and eventually joined the Discalced Carmelites as a lay sister.[32] Other acquaintances included the sisters Justa and María de Paz, Juana de la Calancha, and María de Vilches, popularly known as Madre Peñuela. Justa de Paz recalled how Madre Peñuela flourished under John's guidance and "spoke of him as a very saintly man."[33]

As prior of his order's friary in Granada, John became chaplain of two nearby houses of *beatas*, or *beaterios*. According to an eighteenth-century chronicle, he developed fruitful spiritual relationships with a group of these pious women. Prominent among them was María de la Concepción, who by her death in 1626 had achieved a local reputation for sanctity.[34] Surely receiving this sort of publicity and endorsement by association proved beneficial to the Discalced Carmelites as they strove to establish themselves in Baeza, Granada, and other cities.

Getting to know some of these *beatas* may have even affected John personally. They were, after all, people of modest means, but with rich, even mystical inner lives, like himself. Once, in the middle of saying mass in Baeza, John reportedly became so absorbed in the mystery of the sacrament that he went into a trance-like state and started to return to the sacristy. Madre Peñuela, who could discern what was happening, plucked his sleeve and asked him quietly: "Who is going to finish the mass? Will the angels come and finish it?" John immediately snapped back to his senses and concluded

31 Actas y Declaraciones 414, "era tenida comúnmente por santa en toda la cuidad […] cosas de su alma […] respetábalo y hablaba de él como de varón espiritual y santo."

32 Manuel Morales Borrero, "El convento de Carmelitas Descalzas de la Encarnación, de Baeza (1599)," *Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Giennenses* 153, no. 2 (1994): 1058–1063.

33 BMC 14: 45–50, 52. For more on *beatas* and *beaterios*, see Rodríguez and Ruiz Salvador, eds., *God Speaks*, 218–219.

34 Eulogio Pacho, "Irradiación del sanjuanismo en Granada," in his *Estudios sanjuanistas: Estudios doctrinales y relacionales* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2000), 245–264.

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the service.[35] He corresponded with several of the women he had directed in Baeza after moving to Granada. In a letter from March 1582, John offered advice and comfort to María de Soto. "Would that you with your sisters lived here so that I could then in some way make you content," he wrote with regret, adding, "I trust in God that he will give you great happiness."[36]

5. Doña Ana de Peñalosa

John of the Cross wrote four major poems with accompanying commentaries. He dedicated the last, "The Living Flame of Love" to his *patrona* and penitent, Ana de Peñalosa. Scholars have wondered about this choice. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez observe that, given the climate of post-Tridentine conservatism, "it is surprising that John wrote this loftiest of his works for a laywoman."[37] As much as she might have absorbed from John's teachings, she "was incapable of penetrating the profound depths of [the poem's] verses," Eulogio Pacho insists.[38] John himself seems to have anticipated perplexity or even disapproval. When he declared in the Prologue, "there is no reason to marvel at God's granting such sublime and extraordinary gifts to souls he decides to favor," he may have been referring to both the poem's author and dedicatee.[39]

Who, then, was this "very noble and devout lady?"[40] Ana de Peñalosa y Mercado was born in Segovia around 1554. Her family on both sides belonged to the oligarchy that dominated the political and economic life of the then-flourishing city; she certainly would have had a very privileged upbringing. Around 1572, at the age of eighteen, her family arranged a brilliant match for her and she married Juan de Guevara, the scion of one of Segovia's oldest noble families. The next year Ana gave birth to a daughter, Mariana. At some point the family moved to the southern city of Granada. Soon afterwards, however, tragedy struck. Juan de Guevara died early in November 1579, probably of an illness, since he was first able to make a will.[41] Seven-year-old Mariana succumbed

35 BMC 14: 52.

36 CW K&R, 736–737; OC Rodríguez, 1077, "¡Ojalá vuestra merced con sus hermanas moraran en ella!, porque las pudiera yo en algo dar contento. Yo espero en Dios se le ha de dar harto grande." John was referring to María's biological sister, Ana, and their friend, Isabel de Soria. Diccionario, 1099–1100.

37 CW K&R, 633–634.

38 Juan de la Cruz, *Llama de amor viva: edición crítica*, ed. Eulogio Pacho (Burgos: El Monte Carmelo, 2014), 35, "ella era incapaz de penetrar en las profundadades de aquellos versos […]."

39 CW K&R, 638; OC Rodríguez, 1005, "Y no hay que maravillar que haga Dios tan altas y tan grandes mercedes y tan extrañas a las almas que él da en regalar […]."

40 CW K&R, 618. Rodríguez, *La biografía*, 436–438, 594–595. Actas y Declaraciones, 190–191.

41 Fortunato Antolín, *San Juan de la Cruz en Segovia: Apuntes históricos* (Segovia: Caja de Ahorros y Monte de Piedad de Segovia, 1990), 5–6.

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the following year, perhaps to the same disease. Thus, at the age of twenty-six Ana de Peñalosa was left a childless widow. She would never remarry.

After the burial of her husband and daughter in Segovia, Ana decided to leave the city of her birth. She went to Granada to live with her brother, Luis de Mercado, about ten years her senior, who since 1570 had held the position of judge of the Royal Appeals Court (*Real Chancillería*). She would later recall how she spent years in her private chapel due to her great sorrow as a widow and at the death of her only daughter.[42] Her exaggerated rhetoric in no way negates the reality of her grief and loneliness.

At the end of 1581, John of the Cross had his eyes on Granada as well. Plans had been underway to open a Discalced Carmelite convent in that city, hopefully inaugurated by the Founding Mother herself. Teresa would have to decline though, due to previous commitments and concerns about her health (she would die the following October, 1582). She therefore authorized Ana de Jesús (Lobera), one of her most trusted lieutenants, and John to undertake this task.[43]

The Granada foundation did not have an auspicious beginning. Mother Ana later recalled the archbishop's staunch refusal to give his permission. When she and a group of nuns at last departed on January 13, 1582, they were caught in a ferocious storm. They arrived in Granada only to receive more bad news: the man who had agreed to rent them his house had reneged on his promise. The archbishop would not shelter them either.[44]

At that dire moment, Ana de Peñalosa emerged as a heroine who single-handedly and spontaneously offered her home to the stranded nuns. Or so at least many standard studies of John of the Cross would suggest. An eyewitness account by Ana de Jesús complicates this narrative,

> Don Luis de Mercado said to the Lady Doña Ana de Peñalosa […] Sister, it would be good […] if you could see if they could stay here in our house, giving them a little space for themselves, until they find a place in which to lodge […] she began to cheer up […] and with great haste started to get their house ready and organize all that was necessary for a chapel and our accommodations […]. We arrived at three in the morning […] [and] found the saintly Lady at the front door, where she received us with much devotion and tears.[45]

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42 Madre Ana de Jesús, "Fundación del Convento de San Ioseph de Granada," appendix to María Pilar Manero Sorolla, "Ana de Jesús, cronista de la fundación del Carmen de Granada," *Filología* (Buenos Aires) 26, no. 1–2 (1993): 142.

43 Teresa of Avila, "The Book of Her Foundations," chap. 31, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1985), vol. 3, 286–307; *The Collected Letters of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2007), vol. 2, 465, 491–492.

44 Madre Ana de Jesús, "Fundación," 140–142.

45 Madre Ana de Jesús, "Fundación," 141–142, "dixo Don Luys de Mercado á la Señora Doña Ana de Peñalosa […] hermana, bueno sería […] que mirasse si podran apearse aqui en nuestra casa, dandoles

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According to Mother Ana, then, the key player in expediting the arrival of the nuns in Granada was Luis de Mercado, not his sister. This also makes perfect sense. By then he had been settled in the city for more than a decade and held a position that afforded him considerable prestige and influence.[46] This account also makes clear that while Luis treated his sister with kindness, he was the head of their shared household. He suggested to Ana that they shelter the nuns, not the other way around. Fortunately, the younger sibling was thrilled by this prospect. Housing this group of nuns meant greater domestic responsibilities but also relief, as evidenced by her joyful tears. These women could offer doña Ana consolation and prayers for the souls of her deceased loved ones. She would welcome their company as an antidote to her isolation. Most importantly, perhaps, organizing her home to fit the needs of contemplative nuns would be a project, something to keep her mind off her troubles and lift her from her melancholy.

On January 20, 1582, Mother Ana and her nuns finally arrived in Granada. Although expecting to shelter with the aristocratic siblings only briefly, their stay stretched on for seven months. While the long delay caused frustration and strained resources, it would profoundly change the lives of John of the Cross and Ana de Peñalosa. Now prior of Granada's Discalced Carmelite friary, he held primary responsibility for the spiritual care of the nuns.[47] John thus frequently took the steep walk down to doña Ana's residence; on those occasions he would hear her confession and converse with her as well as her guests. Over the next six years the two developed a close spiritual friendship, as many of their contemporaries noted.

Alonso de la Madre de Dios (Ardilla), for example, recalled that "a lady called Doña Ana de Peñalosa, [who] when she was living in Granada made her confessions to Father John of the Cross," adding that, "she loved him very much."[48] John likewise "had great reverence for her," according to Bernardo de la Virgen.[49] Ana de Jesús (González) once inadvertently walked in on the widow confessing to her spiritual director. The lay sister claimed to have glimpsed a remarkable sight: John, rapt in ecstasy, pledging his life to Christ while his penitent kneeled at his feet, "her face bathed in tears, like a second Mary Magdalene."[50] Ana de San Alberto shared an anecdote about the friar's uncanny ability to read the heart of his spiritual daughter:

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un pedaço, en que esten de por si, hasta que hallen un rincon en que meterse […] luego se començo á alentar […] y con grande priesa començo adereçar su casa, y á componer todo lo necessario para la Yglesia, y nuestro acomodamiento […] Llegamos […] á las tres de la mañana […] hallamos a la santa Señora á la puerta de la calle: donde nos recibio con mucha devocion y lagrimas."

46 Ibid., 143.

47 Gabriel Beltrán, "San Juan de la Cruz prior de Granada según el Libro de Protocolo de la comunidad," *San Juan de la Cruz* 8, no. 10 (1992): 211–217.

48 Actas y Declaraciones, 428.

49 Actas y Declaraciones, 368.

50 BMC 26: 370.

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> [John] once wrote some letters from [Caravaca] to Doña Ana de Peñalosa, which […] treated various matters concerning her soul and offered her consolation. After this there came a messenger from Granada […] bringing some letters for [John]; and what he had written to her was as it were an answer to all that she had asked him […].[51]

Lucas del Espíritu Santo served as infirmarian at the Ubeda friary during John's final illness. One of his duties was to copy the spiritual letters the sick man dictated from his bed. "And, among others, I remember that he wrote to doña Ana de Peñalosa, with whom he had a special correspondence."[52]

Around 1583, Ana and her brother sought John's advice on a matter of finance as well as faith. In his will, Juan de Guevara had stipulated that a portion of his estate be distributed and spent for the benefit of his soul.[53] They now solicited the friar's opinion about the best way to fulfill the nobleman's final wishes.

John's suggestion would please and serve the interests of everyone concerned. He recommended that Ana use her late husband's bequest to establish a Discalced Carmelite friary in Segovia. A new religious institution promised to increase the civic and sacred prestige of the siblings' native city and of the families involved. John recognized the importance of a friary in Segovia to the order's expansion. This plan may have proved the most meaningful to Ana de Peñalosa. This would be her biggest project yet, one that offered her the role of not only *patrona* but also *fundadora*. That is, she would now be the foundress of a religious house, the status achieved earlier by her fellow *segoviana* Ana de Jimena when the older woman had offered financial support to Teresa of Avila.[54]

Whatever the mix of motivations, doña Ana threw herself into this enterprise with gusto. While still living in Granada, she initiated the legal processes necessary to release the portion of her late husband's estate in fixed annual payments to the Discalced Carmelite friars.[55] After officials of the order secured permissions and located a suitable house in Segovia, doña Ana purchased it using her own funds.[56] Eventually she would also sell property in that city and Madrid to support the new foundation and donate

51 CW Peers, III: 348.

52 Proc. Jaén, 257, "a diferentes personas cartas espirituales […] me acuerdo que escribió a doña Ana de Peñalosa, con quien tenía particular correspondencia […]."

53 Fortunato Antolín, "Datos históricos sobre el Convento del Carmen Descalzo de Segovia," *El Monte Carmelo* 64, no. 2 (1956), 157–158. See also Rodríguez, *La biografía*, 595, fn. 8.

54 Several deponents called attention to her new status. María de San José (Machado), for example, referred to "la señora doña Ana de Peñalosa, fundadora del convento de los Padres Descalzos Carmelitas de esta ciudad." BMC 14: 231.

55 Rodríguez, *La biografía*, 595, fn. 7.

56 Antolín, *San Juan de la Cruz en Segovia*, 8–12.

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numerous vessels, vestments, and ornaments for use in its chapel.[57] While neither John nor Ana attended the official opening of Nuestra Señora del Carmen on May 3, 1586, their contemporaries understood the centrality of their relationship to its existence. Friar Lucas de San José would later testify that doña Ana de Peñalosa was "a very virtuous soul, and due to [John's] sanctity and his spiritual direction she was moved to build and found this friary of Discalced Carmelite friars in Segovia."[58]

In June 1588, John of the Cross was appointed prior of the Segovia friary. To observers this development may have seemed inevitable; after all, he had conceived the house's foundation and maintained close relations with its patrons.[59] Similarly, Ana's return to her native city the following year is often treated as a natural consequence of John's change of venue. Discalced Carmelite historian Federico Ruiz even narrates events in a somewhat romantic mode: "Following his trail and desiring to be with him, she left Granada, and also her residence at the court of Madrid, and came to live in Segovia."[60] It is worth noting, however, that Luis del Mercado had already departed for Madrid in 1587 to take up a position on the Royal Council. He left his sister, now a mature woman in her thirties, in charge of the household in Granada and of his daughter, Inés. That is, Ana, far from rushing to Segovia to join her spiritual director, stayed on in Granada for another year.

When Ana moved back to Segovia in 1589, she took Inés with her. The two women, pious widow and *doncella*, would live together in two small houses directly across from the friary until Inés married a cousin sometime after 1597. This proximity all but guaranteed continued contact between John and Ana, now frequently accompanied by her niece. The three would often meet at the friary for long and intense spiritual discussions; at other times, John would cross the road to visit the women in their home on the Eresma river.

This blissful situation would not last long, however. By 1590 John found himself at odds with other Discalced Carmelite leaders and embroiled in a bitter internecine conflict. Ending up on the losing side, on June 1, 1591, he was demoted and deprived of all offices. He received permission to leave Segovia for one of his order's remote "desert houses." In July, as John prepared to depart for La Peñuela, high in the Sierra Morena mountains, he met to say farewell to Ana.

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57 Rodríguez, *La biografía*, 597–599, reproduces an inventory of luxury items, as well as "un missal de los nuevos de los mejores que ay impresos." Gabriel Beltrán, "San Juan de la Cruz: Definidor y Consiliario General en Segovia, (1588–1591)," *El Monte Carmelo* 104 (1996): 436–438.

58 BMC 14: 284, "fué un alma muy virtuosa, y por su trato y santidad se movió a hacer y fundar este convento de Carmelitas Descalzos de Segovia […]."

59 Antolín, *San Juan de la Cruz en Segovia*, 9–12.

60 Rodríguez and Ruiz Salvador, eds., *God Speaks*, 323. José Vicente Rodríguez waxes a bit poetic as well, commenting that doña Ana "[…] se trasladó a la sombra de su padre espiritual […]," OC JVR, 773.

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Two well-informed Discalced Carmelites left accounts of the final words they spoke. María de la Encarnación, prioress of the Segovia convent, remembered Ana's regret at losing "the father of her soul." The widow asked John "how could he leave her all alone and when would she see him again?"[61] Bernabé de Jesús had lived with John in the Segovia friary. He claimed to have been present when Ana exclaimed, "Our Father, now you are going and leaving us," and questioned, "who is going to guide and teach my soul?" and "when will we see you again?"[62] These witnesses reported John's response using the same words, "hush, daughter, soon you will send for me, and you will see me." Enigmatic words, to be sure, but John's devotees interpreted them as prophetic. For, in mid-December, a mere five months after uttering them, John was dead, and Ana began planning how to send his body back to Segovia, where she could indeed see him again.[63]

Considering John's reported response alongside a comment he wrote one month later allows for an alternate interpretation, however. In the first of two extant letters he sent doña Ana from La Peñuela, dated August 19, 1591, John announces his safe arrival, describes his now simple life, and expresses his contentment. Then, quickly pivoting, he adds, "happy though all this makes me, I shall not fail to go whenever you wish."[64] What if Ana had made an agreement with her confessor that, in case of need, she could call upon him and he would return to Segovia? Then, in his parting remarks, a bit teasingly perhaps, John predicted that sooner rather than later Ana would find a reason to send for him. More pragmatic than providential, this reading expresses the expectation of a continued relationship. It illustrates the sense of obligation John felt toward the wealthy and well-born *patrona*, as well as his genuine affection for a spiritual daughter.

These last two letters, although brief, capture several aspects of John's relationship with Ana de Peñalosa. With solicitous care, he advises her to take care of the health of her body as well as her soul. He warns, "do not go confessing scruples, or first motions, or mere awareness of things upon which the soul has no wish to dwell"; these may have been frequent spiritual challenges for his penitent. Perhaps John also had in mind the "imaginings" that so often resulted in melancholy in women, as Teresa had taught and written. "Do not fail to pray whenever you can," he stresses with fatherly concern. In closing, John begs Ana to give his regards to the other members of this family who had supported him and his religious order for nearly ten years in two different cities. "Give my daughter Doña Inés my many greetings in the Lord," he adds and insists that he will

61 BMC 14: 218, "su confessor y padre de su alma […] cómo la dejaba tan sola y que cuando le había de volver de ver."

62 BMC 14: 295, "Padre nuestro, ahora se nos va y nos deja, ¿quién ha de tratar y enseñar mi alma?"

63 Ibid., "calle, hija, que presto enviará ella por mí y me verá […]."

64 CW Peers, III: 273; OC Rodríguez, 1108, "Mas, con darme tanto contento, no dejaré de ir cuando ella quisiere."

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always remember don Luis, "since he is so close to his sister, whom I always have in my memory."[65]

6. A Poem for a *Patrona*

The six years during which John and Ana coincided in Granada (1582–1588) proved crucial to the development of their multi-layered relationship, as patron and client, spiritual director and penitent, collaborators in the Discalced Carmelite reform. This period was also extraordinarily fruitful for the friar. He composed most of his commentaries and many of his poems, including "The Living Flame of Love." Scholars agree that John wrote this four-stanza poem in 1584 and its accompanying commentary between late 1585 and 1586. He dedicated both to doña Ana de Peñalosa. What motivated him to do this? The simple answer is the one John gave in the poem's Prologue: because she asked him to. An initial epigraph announces: "A commentary on the stanzas that treat of a very intimate and elevated union and transformation of the soul in God, written at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa by the author of the stanzas."[66]

John's readiness to comply with Ana's wishes is as convincing as it is comprehensible. After all, we have seen abundant evidence of the closeness of the relationship they had forged. Recall that it was precisely at this time that Ana asked John's advice regarding the bequest of her late husband. John quickly persuaded the noblewoman to found a Discalced Carmelite friary in Segovia; the new house opened in 1586. Naturally the friar would have remembered the generous hospitality the Peñalosa-Mercado siblings offered his order's nuns when they first arrived in Granada four years earlier. With sincere gratitude, as well as recognition of the deference due to a *patrona* of high social status, John of the Cross would have understood that he owed doña Ana de Peñalosa something in exchange.

This is not to suggest that he composed "Flame" reluctantly or resentfully. In an account written in 1630, Juan Evangelista, one of John's closest *discípulos*, made an intriguing statement. He recounted how his mentor had been very busy serving as both prior of the Granada friary and Vicar Provincial of Andalusia. Still, he reported, John

65 CW Peers III: 272–273, 275–276; OC Rodríguez, 1107–1108, 1109–1110, "no ande confesando escrúpulos, ni primeros movimientos, ni advertencias de cosas cuando el alma no quiere detenerse en ellas […] y no falte a la oración cuando se pudiere tener […] por ser él tan conjunto a su hermana, a quién yo siempre tengo en mi memoria […] [a] mi hija doña Inés dé muchas saludos en el Señor […]."

66 CW K&R, 638; OC Rodríguez, 1005, "Declaración de las canciones que tratan de la muy íntima y calificada unión y transformación del alma en Dios, a petición de la señora doña Ana de Peñalosa, por el mismo que las compuso."

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composed this poem "at the request of Doña Ana de Peñalosa, and this he wrote in a fortnight […]."[67]

However, considering this comment in the context of the Prologue offers a different perspective on the work's composition. John admits to doña Ana that he had delayed writing the poem's exposition "as you asked." He explains that,

> one speaks badly of the intimate depths of the spirit if one does not do so with a deeply recollected soul. Because of my want of such recollection, I have deferred this commentary until now […] [but] the Lord seems to have uncovered some knowledge and bestowed some fervor. This must be the result of your holy desire; perhaps since I have composed the stanzas for you, His Majesty wants me to explain them for you.[68]

In this formulation, God granted John the mystical "knowledge" and spiritual "fervor" necessary for the creative process. He attributes his regained "deeply recollected soul" to Ana and her "holy desire" for enlightenment. Having received this divine favor and a poetic muse, he at last found himself able to explicate "the intimate depths of the spirit," and with prodigious speed.

It is thus fascinating to consider the possibility that John of the Cross alluded to his relationship with Ana de Peñalosa in "Flame," that the commentary in particular carries echoes of their shared experience. Could analysis along these lines yield insights into John's authorial decisions? I propose two features of his exposition of "Flame" that call out for contextualization.

John commented on each of the poem's four stanzas, explicating the rich and evocative, if often obscure, images he had presented. In the third stanza he introduces a striking contrast: "O lamps of fire/in whose splendors/the deep caverns of feeling/once obscure and blind/now give forth, so rarely, so exquisitely/both warmth and light to their beloved!"[69]

Halfway through his gloss, John abruptly stops and changes direction: "O what an excellent place this is to warn souls on whom God bestows these delicate unctions that they should watch what they are doing, and into whose hands they are committing themselves, that they might not turn back!" He acknowledges that the role of the spiritual director "does not pertain to our subject," yet insists that this issue is so important that an interruption is warranted. A spiritual guide "besides being learned and discreet […]

67 CW Peers, III: 350; BMC 10: 341, "a petición de Da. Ana de Peñalosa, y lo escribió en quince días […]."

68 CW K&R, 638; OC JVR, 1005, "se habla mal en las entrañas del espíritu, si no es con entrañable espíritu. Y, por el poco que hay en mí, lo he diferido hasta ahora. Pero ahora que el Señor parece que ha abierto un poco la noticia y dado algún calor—debe ser por el santo deseo que vuestra merced tiene, que quizá, como hicieron para vuestra merced, querrá su Majestad que para vuestra merced se declaren […]."

69 CW K&R, 640; OC JVR, 1006–1007, "¡Oh lámparas de fuego/en cuyos resplandores/las profundas cavernas del sentido/que estaba oscuro y ciego/con extrañas primores/calor y luz dan junto a su querido!"

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should have experience," John declares, adding that without this quality, "directors will not succeed in leading the soul onward." They could even "cause great harm to a number of souls."[70]

While critics have noticed the long unusual "digression" that follows and pondered its function, no one, as far as I have found, has made a connection between it and the poem's dedicatee. John, a consummate spiritual director, wrote "Flame" for Ana de Peñalosa, his directee. It seems only natural that spiritual direction would be foremost on his mind, as would the desire to warn Ana of the dangers posed by inexperienced "blind guides." This relationship between author, reader, and subject matter may seem so obvious that commentators have not thought to mention it. Reversing the equation, however, we might ask: If John had not composed "Flame" for a cherished penitent, would he have devoted so much space to this topic?

What caused John to raise this issue at precisely this point in the commentary? He exclaims as if something had suddenly jogged his memory. Just before beginning the "digression," in fact, he had been discussing a passage from the Book of Esther. This is the other virtually unique feature of this poem. John's mastery of both books of scripture and frequent citation of biblical texts gained him the admiration of contemporaries as well as modern scholars. The Book of Esther, however, was not often cited or glossed by biblical scholars of his time. John references it eight times in his works, of which six occur in the commentary on "Flame."[71]

He does not deploy this text to commemorate Queen Esther as a heroic savior of the Hebrew people. He focuses, rather, on the figure of King Ahasuerus and his awesome wealth, majesty, and sexual power as a metaphor for God. The young maidens chosen by the monarch as his wives represent the soul's initiation for union with the divine: "For half of the year they were prepared by means of certain ointments of myrrh and other spices, and for the remaining half by other more precious ointments. After this they went to the king's bed," John observes. "Since these ointments are a more proximate preparation for union with God […] the desire for him becomes more refined and profound, and the desire for God is the preparation for union with him."[72] He uses

70 CW K&R, 683–85; OC JVR, 1039–1040, "¡Oh, qué buen lugar era éste para avisar a las almas que Dios llega a estas delicadas unciones, que mirren lo que hacen y en cuyas manos se ponen, porque no vuelvan atrás! Sino que es fuera del propósito […] porque ha menester ser sabio y discreto y experimentado […] no atinarán a encaminar al alma […] podríanla hacer tanto daño […]."

71 *Concordancias de los escritos de San Juan de la Cruz*, ed. Juan Luis Astigarraga, Agustí Borrell, and F. Javier Marcos de Lucas (Rome: Teresianum, 1990), 804. The other two citations are in the commentary on the "Spiritual Canticle" (*Cántico espiritual*), another poem replete with bridal imagery.

72 CW K&R, 683; OC JVR,1039, "el medio año se estaban disponiendo con ciertos ungüentos de mirra y otras especias, y el otro medio año con otros ungüentos más subidos; y después de esto iban al lecho del rey […] son ya más altos ungüentos de disposiciones para la union de Dios […] es el deseo más delicado y profundo, porque el deseo de Dios es disposición para unirse con Dios."

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versions of the verb "to prepare" ("disponer") a total of seven times in the paragraph preceding the "digression."

Let us return to the Prologue and its dedicatee. Sensing some apprehension about the demanding spiritual path before her, John allows "[…] it is true that what these and the other stanzas describe is all one state of transformation, and as such, one cannot pass beyond it." He assures Ana, however, that "with time and practice, love can grow deeper in quality […]."[73] Now, perhaps as he meditates upon the inordinate time and effort required to prepare those maidens for the transition from betrothed to brides, John's thoughts return to the spiritual daughter for whom he had composed the poem, and from there, to vexed reflections on spiritual direction in general. After all, questions regarding the appointment of confessors had plagued the Discalced Carmelite reform from its outset. The issue had fueled a conflict between Calced and Discalced Carmelites that resulted in John's brutal imprisonment from December 1577 to August 1578.[74] Viewed from this perspective, his impulse to interrupt the commentary on his poem to expound upon the challenges faced by spiritual directors and their directees seems entirely understandable. Recall that he once referred to Ana de Peñalosa as someone "I always have in my memory." Attending to this emotional bond promises to shed light on the creative processes by which John composed the last and, some have said, most transcendent of his remarkable poems.

6. Conclusion

John of the Cross was surely a contemplative, an ascetic, and a private man who deeply valued his solitude. However, these aspects of his personality and theology did not prevent him from developing meaningful relationships with women, including laywomen. The many imperatives facing the new Discalced Carmelite order—patronage, the recruitment of nuns, integration into urban communities throughout Castile and Andalusia—compelled John to reach out to women of various social groups. By providing guidance to mature women of the elite classes of cities such as Granada and Segovia, he helped to build networks of benefactors for his order's convents and friaries. He actively sought out *doncellas* in these locations as well, young women whom he aided in pursuing religious vocations, even if against the wishes of family members. The devout laywomen or *beatas* of cities such as Baeza and Granada used their own networks to broadcast John's virtues and endorse the Discalced Carmelite reform. Finally, John's special relationship with Ana de Peñalosa highlights his activities as a spiritual director,

73 CW K&R, 639; OC JVR, 1006, "Porque, aunque es verdad que lo que éstas y aquéllas dicen todo es un estado de transformación, y no se puede pasar de allí en cuanto tal, pero puede con el tiempo y ejercicio calificarse […] sustanciarse mucho más en el amor […]."

74 Rodríguez, *La biografía*, chaps. 12, 13.

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a skill for which he was widely acclaimed. Ironically, his death would bring about a reversal of roles, as the noblewoman took possession of the friar's body and attempted to control his cult.[75]

75 The acquisition (or some would say, robbery) of John's body by the Peñalosa-Mercado siblings and consequent legal battle between the friars of Ubeda and Segovia over this precious relic forms the core of a chapter in my book-in-progress on the life, afterlife, and memory of John of the Cross. Now see Jodi Bilinkoff, "A 'Prodigal Son' Remembers John of the Cross," in *Embodiment, Identity, and Gender in the Early Modern Age*, ed. Amy E. Leonard and David M. Whitford (London: Routledge, 2021), 48–58.

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IV Regular Clerics in Confessional Contact Zones

Daniela Hacke

Conversion of Capuchins in the Swiss Confessional Contact Zones

The Cases of Johannes Frey and Claudius Schobinger

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, research on conversion in historical scholarship has often been dedicated to examining intra-Christian conversion from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, thus closely interlocking the categories of "confession" and "conversion."[1] A prominent thrust of conversion research in this context has been aimed at criticizing the paradigm of confessionalization. Research has understood conversions as phenomena that destabilized the rigid political, social, and cultural boundaries of denominational communities by which believers were bound to their religious community. The boundaries between denominations—the contact zones where conversions were most likely to occur—were described as social spaces where religious life was dynamic but also precarious, allowing for social practices of mixing and ambiguity. These approaches emphasize more or less explicitly the resistances, ruptures, and frictions that occurred in processes of mediation of religious norms and values "from above" to "below" in territories of mixed confessionality.[2] In this line of interpretation, conversions were read as confessional practices on the border, as a result of which "multiple and contradictory identities" developed, and which, interpreted as phenomena of confessional indifference or transconfessionalism, seemed to contradict a successful homogenization of the subjects and the enforcement of confessional norms.[3] Multiple conversions, which have often been the subject of research, seem to confirm this phenomenon, as do studies

1 Ute Lotz-Heumann, Jan-Friedrich Mißfelder, and Matthias Pohlig, eds. *Konversion und Konfession in der Frühen Neuzeit: Systematische Fragestellungen* (Heidelberg: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007); Hillard von Thiessen, "Konfessionelle Identitäten—hybride Praktiken: Katholische Konfessionalisierung im Konfliktraum des Fürstbistums Hildesheim (1650–1750)," in *Europäische Wahrnehmungen 1650–1850: Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Medienereignisse (1650–1850)*, ed. Joachim Eibach and Carl Horst (Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2008), 101–129.

2 Duane Corpis, *Crossing the Boundaries of Belief: Geographies of Religious Conversion in Southern Germany, 1648–1800*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

3 Kim Siebenhüner, "Glaubenswechsel in der frühen Neuzeit: Chancen und Tendenzen einer historischen Konversionsforschung," in *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 34, no. 2 (2007): 243–272, p. 258. Kaspar von Greyerz, "Konfessionelle Indifferenz in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Konfessionelle Ambiguität: Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Andreas Pietsch and Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2013), 39–61. On the "century of ambiguity"

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on individuals who behaved in a confessionally ambiguous manner and apparently accepted the pastoral care offered by competing churches according to need and choice.[4]

This chapter, by contrast, uses the cases of the conversions of Capuchin clerics Johannes Frey and Claudius Schobinger from Catholicism to the Reformed faith in the Swiss Confederacy's confessional contact zones for re-evaluating existing research on intra-Christian conversions. This re-evaluation aims to address the dynamics and implications of confessional boundaries in early modern Europe. My chapter emphasizes the demand for confessional unambiguity, showing that conversions, while potentially leading to mixed identities, also required clear justifications and plausible reasons for changing faiths, thereby reinforcing confessional boundaries. In this perspective, individual conversions provide valuable insights into the processes of boundary-making and the negotiation of confessional identities in early modern Europe.

Individual cases always raise the question of representativeness. While the Capuchins in the Swiss Confederacy compiled catalogues of converts and recorded around 5,530 changes of faith to Catholicism from 1669 to 1681, there is a lack of comparable statistical data on the Reformed side.[5] In this respect, the two cases of the Capuchins Frey and Schobinger, which are the focus of this chapter, can hardly be assessed in quantitative terms. However, I formulate my arguments against the background of my book on communication and confession,[6] in which the core thesis of this contribution was developed on the basis of a broad corpus of sources. In analyzing a variety of cases that led to communication about confessional issues and/or conflicts, I have argued that confessional self-images and confessional uniqueness were sharpened especially in places where people of different faiths co-existed and confronted each other, for this took place in the encounters and thus in the network of relationships (*Beziehungsgefüge*) or the contact zones between Catholics and Reformed. The American historian Keith Luria has therefore called denominational differentiation processes "boundary work."[7] Like all social groups, Catholics and Protestants participated in the making of boundaries and thus defined who they were in such processes of boundary-making where they set themselves apart from others whom they perceived as different. The making of

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see Hillard von Thiessen, *Das Zeitalter der Ambiguität: Vom Umgang mit Werten und Normen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2021).

4 Martin Mulsow, "Mehrfachkonversionen, politische Religion und Opportunismus in 17. Jahrhundert: Ein Pladöyer für eine Indifferentismusforschung," in *Interkonfessionalität—Transkonfessionalität—binnenkonfessionelle Pluralität*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz et al. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), 132–150.

5 Franz Xaver Bischof. "Konversionen," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from October 30, 2008, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011453/2008-10-30/ (last accessed Oct. 20, 2023).

6 Daniela Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation: Religiöse Koexistenz und Politik in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft (Die Grafschaft Baden 1531–1712)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017).

7 Keith P. Luria, *Sacred Boundaries: Religious Coexistence and Conflict in Early Modern France* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), xxiii.

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confessional unambiguity therefore took place in different Swiss contact zones, such as bi-confessional territories and localities, like bi-confessional villages or churches used by both confessions (*simultaneum*) and, more abstractly, in situations in which Protestants and Catholics interacted through action or communication.

In the following, I briefly discuss the confessional–political spaces of the Swiss Confederacy (2.), introduce the Zurich conversion practice (3.), highlight the reaction of the Capuchin Order (4.), and analyze the communication and competition between the confessions (5.). Finally, I discuss the Capuchins with regard to precarious boundaries (6.).

2. Confessional–Political Spaces of the Swiss Confederacy

The Capuchin Johannes Frey (1598/1600–1669) came to Zurich in May 1634 with the wish to make the Reformed profession of faith. At the time of his conversion, Frey, who was about 34 years old, had already lived half his life as a Capuchin friar. The small town of Baden was located in the eponymous County of Baden, which was jointly administered by Reformed and Catholic cantons and in which, in addition to mono-confessional Reformed and Catholic congregations, a few mixed-confessional congregations came into being after the Reformation and Catholic Reform. The rules adopted as part of the peace treaty of 1531 after the battle of Kappel (*Zweiter Landfrieden*) explicitly allowed only conversions to the Catholic faith in the jointly governed subject lands or common dominions (*Gemeine Herrschaften*). For individuals, but also for entire congregations, this meant that Catholics in these common dominions could only change their faith if they disregarded these norms or left the *Gemeine Herrschaft*. For the Reformed and their congregations, the *Landfrieden* also meant the prohibition of any active conversion policy which, in contrast, the Capuchins were allowed to follow in the County of Baden. Reformed congregations in the common dominions could thus only renew themselves from within. This structural disadvantage was permanently undermined by the Reformed cantons, above all Zurich.[8]

While both Christian confessions enjoyed the same legal status in the parity-based imperial cities of the Holy Roman Empire, Catholic and Reformed subjects in the common dominions of the Swiss Confederacy lived under non-parity legal relationships. At the same time, however, the *Landfrieden* of 1531 created a normative framework for intra- and interconfessional cooperation, since it formulated ideas of law and order without clarifying the theological question of truth. The *Landfrieden* of 1531 had already

8 Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*, 2017.

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represented an attempt to legalize religious dissent and make it politically negotiable, like the Augsburg Religious Peace and the Edict of Nantes that followed it.[9]

From the perspective of the faithful, this proximity of different confessional–political spaces in the Swiss Confederacy opened up opportunities for action. The Capuchin friar Frey left the County of Baden and the Capuchin monastery of Baden for the Reformed city of Zurich, only about 25 km away, thus not only leaving behind the spatial and territorial boundaries of the bi-confessional County of Baden, but also entering a different confessional–political legal space: In sovereign and mono-confessional Zurich, the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle prevailed and the conditions of the *Landfrieden* were irrelevant. At the gates of the city, the powers of the Catholic Confederation ended. However, the Province of the Order and the Swiss Confederacy were by no means legally or geographically congruent and the members of the Capuchin Order were not subject to worldly law. This legal situation might have been one reason why the head of the order's province sought to hold strong in the interconfessional communications and meetings in order to dissuade Frey from his wish to convert to Protestantism.

3. The Precarious Situation of Transition, Or: Zurich's Conversion Practice

Contemporaries were not indifferent to the conversion motives of individuals. On the contrary, especially the procedures of actual conversion focused on the true motives of the convert. In Zurich in the seventeenth century, the examination and admission of proselytes, i. e., those persons who had newly turned to the Reformed faith, were taken over by the deputies of the *Examinatorenkonvent*, called also "Verordnete zur Lehr." This body, composed of secular and clerical representatives, drew up an expert opinion after a thorough examination of the persons willing to convert and made a recommendation. In Zurich, however, the council decided on the actual admission of proselytes. As a rule, it followed the recommendations of the examiners' convention.[10] In the seventeenth century, the instruction of candidates in the new faith went hand in hand with their examination. A thorough questioning and examination of conscience of the proselytes was a central concern of the Reformed conversion process. The desire to change religious confession had to be sincere, authentic, and lasting, and it also had to be communicated in a credible manner. Precisely here lay a problem; since converts' hearts could not be looked into, as contemporaries regretted (God alone had access to the

9 See, e. g., David Luebke et al., eds., *Conversion and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). See also, for the Netherlands, Christine Kooi, "Conversion in a Multiconfessional Society. The Dutch Republic," in *Konversion und Konfession*, ed. Lotz-Heumann, Mißfelder, and Pohlig, 271–285.

10 See Heike Bock, *Konversionen in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft: Zürich und Luzern im konfessionellen Vergleich* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2009).

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heart), a residual doubt always remained, despite elaborate conversion procedures and examination of the convert's conscience. Outward self-promotion and skillful rhetoric made it difficult to see the true motives of the convert. Sincerity, moreover, could not be communicated, since in the act of communication the sense of difference consisting of the distinction between information and message cannot be dissolved—after all, as Luhmann puts it, "one cannot say that one means what one says."[11] In this respect, an affirmation raises more doubts than it dispels.

In the context of the rhetoric of sincerity, life-world aspects, such as the proselyte's origins, previous lifestyle, and level of education, were therefore taken into account in early modern Zurich to assess the credibility and steadfastness of the convert. The deeds of proselytes were thus essential factors in the conversion process and served to verify their sincerity. The examination of former Catholic clerics was carried out with particular care, especially when they were meant to be entrusted with the confessional formation, education, and upbringing of Zurich's subjects as Reformed pastors after a successful change of faith and integration into the Reformed confessional landscape. Johannes Frey was certified by the Zurich *Examinatorenkonvent* to be of good origin, to have been well brought up by his parents, and, although he had entered the order at a young age, to have behaved "unclagbar" ("without complaint") within it. In the report of July 8, 1634, the city authorities were therefore recommended to place Johannes Frey under their protection.[12]

As long as Frey had not yet completed the change from one denominational community to a new one, he was in a precarious state, resulting from the uncertainty of the social transitional situation of conversion; clerical converts had already left their old denominational community when they arrived in Zurich, but had not yet formally confirmed this step by making a new confession. The process of conversion was thus somewhat uncertain, as its outcome was unpredictable. In this unstable social and emotional situation of transition, the members of the denominational community that the convert had left had the opportunity to promote reconsideration and to urge him to refrain from changing his faith. The very process of transition was a phase of intensive relations in various directions, not least with the denominational community the convert intended to leave. Not only for this reason is it necessary to consider whether the "break" often mentioned in conversion research adequately reflects the complex situation of the convert.

11 Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme: Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), 207.

12 Staatsarchiv Zürich (hereafter StAZH), E II 8, fols. 821–822: Acta ecclesiastica oder Beschreibung derjenigen Kirchensachen, welche sich in der Statt und Landschafft Zürich von Anno 1613 bis in Annum 1665 begeben.

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4. The Reaction of the Capuchin Order

While the transformation of a Catholic cleric into a man of Reformed faith was going on in Zurich, the Catholic side did not fail to fight for the lost soul. This task was carried out personally by the head of the order's province, the provincial. Accompanied by a friar, he went to Zurich. There he requested to speak with Frey. If the city of Zurich had accepted a proselyte and placed him under its protection, requests of this kind were first examined by the council. In Frey's case, the honorable council decided that the discussion with the Capuchin friar willing to convert should take place in the presence of three members of the town council and three representatives of the Reformed church.[13] The moment of the conversation was well chosen, because Johannes Frey had not yet made his Reformed confession of faith. Thus, at the time of the conversation, the fugitive Capuchin was in a process of transition: Johannes Frey was about to change his confessional allegiance.

Inclusion and exclusion in the social structures of both denominational groups were experienced simultaneously by the figure of the convert. The central theme of the conversation between Frey and the Capuchin Provincial was accordingly the transition from one denominational community to another and the consequences that a change of denomination entailed. In this conversation, which has survived in a transcript, the provincial emphasized the impossibility of the situation of transition. Since Frey, like every member of a religious order, had taken the monastic vow (*votum monasticum*) at his profession, he was bound for life to the promise he had given to God. By taking the monastic vow, the friar not only undertook to observe the Ten Commandments, but also to keep the commandments of obedience, chastity, and poverty.[14]

While the self-evidence of this medieval tradition came to its greatest crisis during the Reformation,[15] the life-long vow remained binding and breaking the vow was punished by excommunication. The Council of Trent emphasized the voluntary nature of the decision, but with a marked difference in terms of gender. While it insisted on the punishment that would be imposed on anyone who forced a female to enter a convent (*anathema*), the focus for male religious was elsewhere. The decree did not

13 Ibid., fol. 818.

14 Ibid., fol. 818.

15 Luther's sharp criticism of monastic vows in his *De votis monasticis iudicium* (1521) concerned the question of which vows were true vows. He concluded that monastic vows were not based on scripture and were basically for the sake of works' righteousness. Since for Luther there were no eternally binding vows, he absolved religious men and women from their vows. According to Luther, monks and nuns should have the right to leave the monastery at any time, which they subsequently did; cf. *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (hereafter TRE), vol. 18, 175–177 and vol. 12, 309–311. Monastic resignations increased starting in the middle of 1521, shortly before Luther's writing *Devotis monasticis iudicium* (1521) appeared. Cf. Bernhard Lohse, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer historischen Entwicklung und in ihrem systematischen Zusammenhang* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 158–164. Like Luther, the Swiss reformer John Calvin renounced the Catholic vows of monasticism; cf. TRE, vol. 12, p. 311.

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focus on the punishment of those who exercised the coercion, but rather on the personal responsibility of those who had become victims of the coercion. These people had to express their complaints about the compulsion imposed on them within a period of five years from the day of profession. In addition, the reasons had to be presented to their own superior and ordinary. However, if the regular cleric had taken off his habit of his own responsibility, then he had also forfeited his right to communicate his reasons for leaving the monastery to his superior. In this case, according to the *Decretum de regularibus et monialibus*, he was forced to return to the monastery and to be punished as an apostate.[16]

Thus, the Tridentine decree protected the voluntarily expressed consensus of novices—albeit with varying degrees of intensity—and, as a consequence, the cases of forced monastic entries became more frequent in the post-Tridentine era.[17] At the Roman Curia, these women and men could file lawsuits for a forced profession vow. Like the Tridentine norms, the historiography of forced monastic entries shows a striking gender specificity; so far, this history has been written predominantly from the perspective of female members of the order, while the narratives of male members have yet to be reconstructed.[18]

Johannes Frey provides an example of this: His conversion narrative was essentially based on the violation of the Tridentine decrees. In the conversation with the provincial of the Capuchin province, he argued that he had taken his vows as a minor and that it was therefore not a legitimate divine vow, but only a human vow. According to the Tridentine Decree on the Regulars and Nuns, falling below the minimum age did not fall into the category of *per vim et metum*. Frey could thus not conclusively claim that his entry into the Capuchin Order had been under the influence of violence and fear. However, falling below the minimum age for profession was certainly one of the reasons that regulars could give for leaving the monastery. Frey's claim that he was younger than sixteen when he made his profession as a novice was thus entirely in line with the dominant legal discourse. The Provincial contradicted this argumentation: Frey had already been seventeen years old when he entered the order.[19] The Capuchin Order had therefore applied canon law correctly. Nevertheless, he made Frey a generous offer:

16 Giuseppe Alberigi and Josef Wohlmuth, eds., *Dekrete der ökumenischen Konzilien*, vol. 3 (Munich: Schöningh, 2002), 782.

17 Jutta Sperling, *Convents and the Body Politic in Renaissance Venice: 1550–1630* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 4; as well as Gabriella Zarri, "Gender Religious Institutions and Social Discipline: The Reform of the Regular," in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Judith Brown and Robert C. Davis (London: Longman, 1998), 193–212, p. 204–208.

18 Schlotheuber, Eva. "*Per vim et metum:* Die bitteren Klagen der Mädchen und Frauen an der römischen Kurie über ein erzwungenes Prozessgelübde." In *Kirchlicher und religiöser Alltag im Spätmittelalter*: *Akten der internationalen Tagung in Weingarten, 4.–7. Oktober 2007*, edited by Andreas Meyer, Rekka Götting, and Sabine Fees, 165–176. Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2010.

19 StAZH, E II 8, fol. 820.

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although the provincial reminded him of the Last Judgment, before which he would have to answer in the end, he refrained from threatening the former member of his order with secular punishments; instead, he tried to win him back and assured him that he would experience "all grace" if he returned to them.[20] On the one hand, Frey quite obviously profited from the competition between the Catholic and Reformed parties for his soul. On the other hand, it was not entirely unusual that the return from the wrong faith was stylized as a "passed test of faith" ("bestandene Glaubensprüfung") and hardly led to any consequences.

The flight of Capuchin Frey from his convent in Baden was reflected in other media. Worth mentioning is an exchange of letters between the guardian of the Capuchin convent of Baden, Sebastian von Beroldingen, and the mayor and council of the city of Zurich of May 30, 1634. Von Beroldingen doubted the credibility of Frey's motives for conversion and attributed his flight from the Capuchin monastery to the friar's supposed insanity.[21] In his letters to the Council of Zurich, the Guardian did not regard Frey's departure from the monastery as an act of self-determined religious conviction, but rather described Frey as a person who was determined by his own unreasonableness or "stupidity" and by the seductive arts of the "evil enemy." The evil enemy here is undoubtedly the devil, who had misled Frey in his choice of denomination.[22] Frey's defamation was aimed at the theological foundations of the Reformed conversion policy in Zurich, in which conscience played a major role. A change of confession had to be theologically accepted in the Protestant confessions if it was justified by a need of one's conscience. Accordingly, the only way to deny the legitimacy of a conversion was not to accept it as a decision of conscience.[23] If the Reformed councilors followed von Beroldingen's argumentation, this would mean denying the Capuchin Frey the ability to make a decision of conscience because of his alleged weakness and stupidity, and his alleged seduction by the devil. Apparently, however, the Zurich council did not believe the words of the Guardian. Two weeks later, the Guardian wrote again to the mayor of the city of Zurich. In this letter of June 17, 1634, von Beroldingen no longer asked for Frey to be returned to the order, but only for his habit. Obviously, the Guardian of the Capuchin Order had given up hope that Frey would return to the monastic community. What remained was the attempt to gain possession of the monastic garments. Referring to the poverty of the mendicant order, von Beroldingen emphasized the value of the garments for the convent.[24]

20 Ibid., fol. 819.

21 StAZH, E II 8, fol. 824.

22 Ibid., fol. 824.

23 Heike Bock, "Pfarrer und Mönche in Gewissensnot: Eidgenössische Geistliche zwischen den Konfessionen," in *Konversion und Konfession*, ed. Lotz-Heumann, Mißfelder, and Pohlig, 353–392, here 390–391.

24 StAZH, E II 8, fol. 825.

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The letter of reply from the servants of the churches and the school of Zurich was dated June 20, 1634; it responds to both letters of the Guardian.[25] The writing addresses the situation of Frey's transition from the Catholic to the Reformed denomination. Although everyone involved knew that denominational boundaries were narrowly drawn—but nevertheless permeable—as zones of contact, the change of faith in the early modern period was conceived as a decision of conscience that was irrevocable. Zurich assured in its letter that neither Frey nor other Catholic subjects had been convinced to convert by a policy of active enticement by the Zurich councilmen, the servants of the churches and the school of Zurich, or by the inhabitants of the city. Frey was free to leave Zurich at any time.[26] Despite these various attempts to win the Capuchin back, Frey did not return to the monastery but remained in Zurich instead; he claimed to have found his true religion there.[27] It was precisely the bi-denominational religious landscape of the Swiss Confederacy that enabled him to take courses of action and find his own theological truth, which was explained, made plausible, and consolidated in conversations, and led to a new denominational affiliation.

After Frey had made an oral and a written profession of faith, he was allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper, an act that publicly demonstrated denominational affiliation to the new faith community. The convert's denominational affiliation was thus also established externally. In his revocation sermon in the Great Minster (*Großmünster*) in 1634, Frey made his change of denomination publicly plausible,[28] before he began work as pastor of Greifensee until his death in 1669.[29] Essential in his revocation sermon was the demarcation from the old and his identification with the new faith. This took place against the background of a concrete biographical situation. Revocation sermons thus contained not only a homiletical, but above all an autobiographical aspect. As far as we know from other revocation sermons and writings, the personal conversion story was described in such writings within a theological argumentation. Personal motives were theologically exaggerated.[30] Publicly held revocation sermons were accordingly propagandistic instruments of the first order, which have so far been underestimated in

25 Ibid., fol. 828.

26 In what follows, Zurich polemicized in the letter to the Guardian against the vows and the Catholic Church's command of chastity, taking up Zwingli's understanding of vows of perpetual chastity. In his writing *Ein früntlich bitt und ermanung* (1522), Zwingli detailed his anthropology.

27 StAZH, E II 8, fol. 819.

28 Ibid., fol. 820.

29 Rudolf Pfister, "Konfessionelles in der Schweiz des 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Gottesreich und Menschenreich: Max Staehelin zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. Max Geiger (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1969), 289–309, p. 299.

30 Revocation sermons have hardly been analyzed in more detail so far, but see Gesine Carl, "Catholic—Lutheran—Catholic: Strategies of Justification and Conceptions of Self in the Conversion Narrative of Johannes Ferdinand Franz Weinberger (1687–1690)," *The Medieval History Journal* 12, no. 2 (2010): 327–353.

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their controversial theological significance. They illustrate the form in which spiritual converts could be appropriated for the purpose of faith propaganda.

5. "The urge of conscience": The Capuchin Schobinger and the Competition between Denominations

The second clergyman under investigation, Claudius Schobinger (1642–1702), like Frey an escaped Capuchin friar, achieved some fame already in the early modern period. He was one of the most prominent converts among the Catholic clergy.[31] Even during his lifetime, German and Latin verses by the Zurich deacon Hans Heinrich Brennwald praised Schobinger's decision to convert to Protestantism with a slight gloating undertone.[32] Schobinger also made a name for himself because in the later years of his life he wrote two theological treatises that provide information about his changed religious self-understanding in the age of confessional pluralism.[33] In addition, he intervened in a confessional polemic that caused a stir beyond the borders of the Swiss Confederacy because it put the Catholic Church's dogma of transubstantiation to the test.[34] Archival documents reflect Schobinger's life and confessional process. In his conversion narrative, Schobinger focused on the intra-denominational plurality and the competition between denominations, implicitly emphasizing the religious choice that individuals possessed as a result of the breaking apart of Christian unity since the Reformation. In this way, he also emphasized the importance of one's own option of taking action.

Father Claudius Schobinger took flight on August 22, 1684, when he left the monastery in Baden at night "in bright moonlight," and went via Urdorf to the nearby city of Zurich. In the Great Minster (*Großmünster*), the man who had lived as a Capuchin for seventeen years declared his desire to convert to Protestantism; he emphasized that he had "[…] considered the Reformed religion to be the true one some time ago."[35] The examinations of candidates for a new faith were carried out with the aim of testing the authenticity of the decision to believe: A Capuchin like Schobinger who was willing to convert had to convincingly communicate his changed religious worldview. Like Frey, Schobinger

31 See Rudolf Pfister, "Konfessionelles in der Schweiz des 17. Jahrhunderts (Claudius Schobinger)," in *Gottesreich*, ed. Geiger, 299–309, and his *Kirchengeschichte der Schweiz*, vol. 2 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1974), 469; see also Bock, *Konversionen*, 259–61, 308–311.

32 Zentralbibliothek Zürich (hereafter ZBZ), Ms B 190, fol. 417r.

33 Schobinger's writings bear the title *Schriftmaeßige Waag- Schaale* […], Zürich 1695 and *Der Schlimme Alchymist* […], Zürich 1699.

34 Pfister, "Konfessionelles," 289–309.

35 Willy Brändly, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in Stadt und Land Luzern: Geschichte und Kultur* (Lucerne: Diebold Schilling Verlag, 1956), 145.

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did this in an oral examination. In his self-representation to the theological panel, Schobinger elevated his theological rapprochement with the Reformed confessional community to the central motive for his desire to convert. Without naming the motives for his entry into the order, the report thus concentrates on Schobinger's changed theological convictions. Apparently, the escaped Capuchin friar tried to create the impression that his new faith was the result of many years of reflection on theological writings that would have been available to him in the library of the Capuchin monastery in Baden.[36] Against this background, the decision to change faith did not appear as a spontaneous inspiration, but as the result of many years of thorough examination of the divergent theological doctrines of the competing churches. Schobinger thus implicitly addressed the process of forming his confessional consciousness, which was fed by reflection on theological content. Schobinger's conversion narrative before the Reformed examiners was oriented towards the fundamental confessional differences between the two churches. He attributed theological truth to the doctrines of the Reformed Church and in this way testified that his intention to convert was well founded, since it was based on proper theological understanding and knowledge.

Schobinger's rejection of the Catholic faith was exemplified, in particular, by his understanding of the Lord's Supper.[37] In agreement with the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli, Schobinger interpreted the Lord's Supper as a mere memorial meal, with the help of which the faithful were to remember Christ's passion. Schobinger, like Zwingli, denied the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; as signum, the sacrament only testified to God's saving action, but did not convey grace. According to the examiners, Schobinger justified his Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper with reference to Holy Scripture:

> Thus, it is also written in the Holy Gospel, the Lord did break the bread not the body, the apostles did break the bread not the body, the believers say, persevere in the breaking of the bread, not in the breaking of the body: Paul says that the bread we break, not the body we break is the commonwealth of the body of Christ.[38]

Schobinger thus not only articulated a Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper, but also referred to the *sola scriptura* principle in his theological reasoning and persuasion. His well-versed and erudite statements on the number of the sacraments, on the

36 ZBZ, MS B 276, 22. August 1684.

37 StAZH, E II 37: Acta ecclesiastica et scholastica in conventibus der HH. Examinatoren, unter Antistes Joh. Hch. Erni, fol. 359r.

38 "So steh auch im h. Evangelio, der herr habe das brot nit den leib gebrochen, die Apostel habind das brot nit den leib gebrochen, die glübigen sagind, verharret in dem brechen des brots nit im brächen des leibs: Paulus sagt, das brot, das wir brächen, nit der leib, den wir brächen ist die gemeinschafft des leibs christi." Ibid.

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"nature of beatific faith, and of good works, of the affection of merit and of salvation through faith, of purgatory etc." also convinced the examiners of his theological knowledge, which at the same time also proved the sincerity of his will to convert. Claudius Schobinger knew what he was doing when he converted to the Reformed faith. As a clergyman, he had—like Frey and other Catholic clergymen living in the proximity of the bi-confessional villages of the *Corpus helveticum*—accumulated knowledge about the Reformed confession. In invective and mocking speeches from the pulpit in bi-confessional villages in the *Grafschaft Baden*, Catholic and Reformed-Protestant clergymen used their familiarity with the other faith to provoke and offend preachers of the other denomination.[39] It could also be used, as these two cases show, to convince the Zurich authorities of the desire to convert. The former Capuchin friar Schobinger decided the Christian question of truth in the age of confessional pluralism in favor of the Reformed religion. He spoke of "knowledge" ("erkantnus"), "conscience" ("gewüsen"), and "truth" ("wahrheit") as the key terms that had moved him to change his faith.[40] Schobinger thus communicated his changed confessional self-understanding in a vocabulary that was oriented towards a pure conscience, religious knowledge, and the theological foundations of truth.

The religious question of conscience, which Schobinger made the fulcrum of his conversion narrative, is frequently found in the Protestant sources on conversion cases of the seventeenth century. It formally structured the discourse about the change of faith, and provided the justifications and explanations for the intention to convert. Clear conscience was the term used to describe the conformity of creed and belief that manifested itself in action. If the inner religious beliefs and insights had changed, but not yet the outward affiliation to a denomination, the people of the seventeenth century were in trouble with their conscience. Only conversion as a decision of conscience brought the inner and outer dimensions of faith back into harmony.[41] The discourse of conscience not only denoted a difference between inner and outer, faith and confession. Before the examiners of the panel of theologians, the discourse of conscience was also well placed, since a change of denomination in the Protestant confessions had to be accepted theologically. The Capuchin Schobinger was able to convince his examiners; persuaded by the sincerity of his reasons and his steadfastness in his new faith, the examiners recommended to the city authorities on August 25, 1684, that Claudius Schobinger be accepted in Zurich and that he be paid a salary.[42]

In the early modern period, inclusion into a new denominational community required the protection of the authorities in whose denominational legal sphere the convert

39 Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*, chap. 4: "Der Spott von der Kanzel: Geistliche und ihre Lästerpredigen."

40 Ibid.

41 Bock, "Pfarrer," 356.

42 In October 1684, Schobinger was also issued a "fürtrefliche Zeügnus," StAZH, E II 37, fol. 371r.

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entered, as well as successful social integration in the new place of life (marriage) and the possibility of gainful employment. Before integration into a new community could succeed, the convert first had to leave his old denominational community. This usually meant that social and family ties were cut. Since conversion was not a punctual event but a process of long duration, there was a period of time during which the person in question was marked as willing to convert but had not yet made the new profession of faith—Claudius Schobinger reached Zurich on August 2, 1684, and made his new profession of faith on October 17, 1684. I have described this phase in connection with the Capuchin Johannes Frey as a precarious state, as it illustrated the uncertainty of the social transitional situation of conversion. This very process of transition was a phase of intense relations in different directions, not least with the denominational community the convert intended to leave.

The contacts, and thus the relationship structures with members of the Catholic order, are particularly well documented in Schobinger's case; they are expressed in the communicative media, which make it possible to specify the view of this phenomenon. In addition to an oral conversation, several missives from the social environment of the Capuchin order, as well as on the part of Schobinger's Catholic family, bring up the situation of transition. In contrast to Schobinger himself, his fellow Capuchins and his family no longer addressed conversion in regard to conscience and theological truth, but with regard to the social and emotional loss that was associated with a change of faith. This emotional dimension is hardly developed in conversion research. Yet in Schobinger's case it is very prominent. In several missives, Schobinger is urged by the provincial with hot tears to return to the order in which he maintains close social and emotional ties.[43] The Mother Superior of the Capuchin Sisters' convent in Baden also addressed Claudius Schobinger several times during the conversion process, giving free rein to tears and emotions in order to emphasize Schobinger's social ties and affiliation with the Catholic denominational community.[44]

The emotional narrative takes up the most space in the letter of Wilhelm Schobinger, the father of Claudius Schobinger. This letter, dated October 1, 1684, reflects the conversion as a decision that spilled over into intra-family relations and shook the religious self-image of family members. Schobinger remembered his son's decisions as actions that had an impact on his emotional household, and also structured his writing according to his emotional dispositions. Memory and emotion were closely intertwined for Wilhelm Schobinger, who put emphasis on family relational structures, which occupy a large space in the letters of father and son. Although the decision to change denomination was

43 Brändly, *Geschichte*, 145. As an emotional narrative and social medium of communication, tears claimed their own place in Catholic confessional culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and confessional culture, and possessed a varying spectrum of meaning; see Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*, 347–348.

44 ZBZ, MS B 276, fol. 2r–v.

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an individual one, its effects, according to Schobinger's father, were far-reaching, as they would change the lives of individual family members: Schobinger's brother had revised his decision to enter the monastery (he now wanted to learn a trade), his mother was ill in bed, and his sister was plagued by suffering. Consequently, Wilhelm Schobinger asked his son to have mercy on himself and his family and to "turn back."[45] "Turning back" denoted a path that required religious introspection and a confessional return to the Catholic faith, which in the father's narrative logic was indebted to family ties. The language of emotions thus took on constitutive functions within the denominational competition, as it was used to promote the retention of denominational affiliations and the maintenance of denominational order.

Despite mentioning the prospect of a return to a life as a religious, Schobinger's father was unable to persuade him to turn back. In his answer to his father, the former Capuchin linked his decision to convert to a new religious self-design to salvation in his new faith.[46] In doing so, Schobinger tied his language of emotions to a theological discourse of freedom; he had rescued himself from the "Babylonian captivity," as he wrote in allusion to one of the major works of Martin Luther, namely his *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* (1520).

In the end, the attempt to appeal to the son's family and confessional ties in the language of emotions failed. On October 17, 1684, Claudius Schobinger made his extensive profession of faith, the *Confessio fidei domini Claudii Schobingeri*. The text comprises sixteen closely written pages.[47] In the volumes of the Zurich Examiners' Convention, his further transformation from a Catholic cleric into a Reformed pastor can be traced in detail. Together with theological re-education, this meant his preparation for the preaching ministry. On January 5, 1685, Schobinger's wish to be examined in theology and admitted to the sacred office of preaching was forwarded to the mayor.

The report prepared by the inspector just one day later may be read in the context of this career aspiration of Schobinger. In the report, Schobinger is described as a particularly pious, honest, and sincere Christian man who was also a diligent attender of Reformed services, an assiduous reader of the Holy Scriptures and "Reformed theological books," and who proved himself to be zealous, constant, and God-fearing in all his "trade and walk" on a daily basis.[48] Schobinger's examination followed on February 1, 1685, and on February 8, 1685, the former Capuchin friar preached his trial sermon. He was then ordained and admitted to the Zurich preaching profession.[49] This was the beginning of a long and successful career as a Reformed pastor. In 1686, he married

45 StAZH, E II 37, Abschrift des Schreibens, welches mein vilgeliebter Vatter an mich geschickt, fol. 413.

46 Ibid., fol. 414 and ZBZ, B 276, fol. 11–16.

47 The creed is available as a Latin text (copy) and as a German text (copy); cf. ZBZ, B 276, fol. 1–8 and 17–24.

48 StAZH, E I 9.3b, January 6, 1685.

49 ZBZ, Ms. 190, fol. 443v.

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the widow of the confectioner Heinrich Füssli, Esther Steinfels, and in February of the same year succeeded the pastor Esslinger at Oetenbach, a pastorate he was to retain until the end of his life in 1702.[50] Like Johannes Frey, Schobinger remained with his new faith until the end of his life. Everything indicates that the change of denomination for Johannes Frey and for Claudius Schobinger did not mean a social decline. On the contrary, Frey's and Schobinger's changes of faith read as examples of successful integration into a new confessional society. Both cases also emphasize the decision-making potential of religious men as religious, cultural, and political actors in the local and translocal contexts of the Swiss Confederacy.

6. Conclusion: Conversion and Precarious Boundaries

The Capuchins and their faith change discussed in this chapter have been addressed as objects of political negotiation. This experience provided options for action (*Handlungspotential*) to the two friars who became pivotal actors in the sharpening of confessional identities. Within the broader context of conversion in the Swiss Confederacy, it is difficult to assess the representativeness of the two Capuchins' cases. Although it seems that only a few converts actually remained in the society they integrated into, conversions of lay and ecclesiastical persons were nevertheless institutionally (Zurich) and financially (Lucerne) supported in the Swiss Confederacy. In both places attempts were made to keep the costs low; however, converts were still financed, for example, in their vocational training as an investment in the future.[51] Spiritual converts who made use of their options and married have been found to have had the best chances of integrating into the new denominational society.[52]

Clergymen, especially, have been found to have been prone towards conversion since as a result of their training and daily work, they came into constant contact with the opposing confessional denomination. Part of their task was to engage intensively with the relevant principles of faith in order to effectively and convincingly reject the other denomination.[53] Although their status as members of a Catholic "reform order" clearly distinguishes the Capuchins from other individuals, this pattern is also discernible in the two cases discussed in this chapter: the respective conversion decision was preceded by a preoccupation with the theological content of the Catholic and Reformed faith—here clerics certainly possessed an advantage over other believers. Before his conversion, Schobinger had intensively studied the Reformed faith in private for many years; Frey was aware that entering an order should be based on a freely expressed consensus.

50 StAZH, E I 30, 1686, StAZH, E I 30.156, 1688 and 1702.

51 Bock, *Konversionen*, chap. 4 and 5; on the costs, see 192–193.

52 Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*, 305; Bock, *Konversionen*, as well as Bock, "Pfarrer," 354.

53 Bock, *Konversionen*, 334.

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Both Capuchins also took advantage of the religious plurality and small size of the confessionally heterogeneous Swiss Confederacy, immigrating to nearby Zurich to convert to the Reformed faith. For the converting clerics, the change of faith meant an option for taking action and opened up a new perspective on life, but it also represented a disintegration from previous social associations such as their order. Due to their successful integration into the new denominational society, neither of the two cases discussed gave the impression that the drastic step of conversion including migration could be equated with an individual crisis; on the contrary, the change of faith was based on carefully prepared steps.

The theological reorientation was made plausible especially in communicative situations, namely, the communication between the converts and members of the Zurich Examiners' Convention, with representatives of the Capuchin order, and with individual family members. These communicative events were, as I have argued, contact zones where believers of the Catholic and Reformed faith met and where the emotional reclamation strategies of the denominational groups unfolded. Due to the uncertainty of the outcome, I have emphasized the fragility of denominational formation and its processuality. Thus, there was something unpredictable and contingent about the communicative events. Accordingly, conversions thematize the formation of social order in early modern societies in a state of bi-confessional plurality or even confessional fragility.

In the confrontation with the confessional counterpart, together with the (il)legitimacy of a conversion, the differing beliefs of the two Christian religions were negotiated. This led to an intensified confessional self-image but also increased the confessional perception of the other by the confessional counterpart. As mentioned, familiarity with the other faith was eased by the proximity of Catholic and Reformed-Protestant clergymen and, more generally, of Christian believers living in the proximity of the *Corpus helveticum*. On a day-to-day basis, the debate about the divergent theological doctrinal contents of the two denominations was part of a communicative practice, namely, talking about the phenomenon of conversion. Only a reconstruction of the communicative modes can bring to light the dynamic processes of rapprochement and differentiation between the two confessions in the Swiss Confederacy. In addition, the points of contact between the two confessional communities are made manifest by this communication. In this regard, the respect for confessional diversity called for in research does not exclude the fact that, despite inter- and transconfessional contacts, processes of confessional differentiation did exist. The two cases discussed in this chapter have demonstrated that there were individuals in the seventeenth-century Swiss

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Confederacy who felt the need to establish confessional unambiguity in confessionally and politically precarious situations.[54]

54 As I have argued elsewhere, maybe the early modern period was not as confessionally ambiguous after all; cf. Daniela Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*.

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Lukas Camenzind

Reconciling Religious Observance and Practices of "Good Correspondence"

Cistercians in the Bi-confessional Swiss Confederacy (1640–1700)

1. Introduction

In the seventeenth century, the benediction of a new abbot in the Cistercian monasteries of St. Urban and Wettingen was a big event.[1] Elaborate festivities and copious feasts accompanied the installation of the newly elected abbot, thus marking the beginning of his reign as spiritual leader of his religious community. While the monks invited ecclesiastical dignitaries and members of the ruling elite of the Swiss Confederacy and treated them to a three-day stay in their monastery, the papal nuncio, residing in Lucerne since the 1580s, was to be kept at a distance at all cost. Because of a deeply rooted aversion to outside intervention, an aversion that culminated in a decades-long conflict between the Cistercians and Rome, the local representative of the head of the Catholic Church was systematically excluded. In contrast, delegates of the Protestant cantons, who appeared in great numbers, were welcome guests.

When Ulrich Glutz-Ruchti was installed as abbot of St. Urban in 1688, twenty-five members of the Bernese city council, including the finance minister, attended the festivities, while Catholic Lucerne sent "only" nineteen delegates.[2] In 1677, the bailiff of the Bernese district of Aarwangen readily accepted an invitation to attend the benediction of Karl Dulliker in St. Urban, delighted about the opportunity to make the acquaintance of the abbot and to "assure" him of their "very good neighborhood."[3] Likewise, meetings and shared meals between the abbot of St. Urban and the Bernese *Schultheiß* were no rare event;[4] neither were visits of Bernese city councilors or bailiffs to the monastery,[5]

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1 This chapter is based on research conducted for my PhD thesis, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation from 2018 to 2022.

2 *Catalogus Aller Geist= vnd weltlichen Herren H, die auff des Hochwürdig HH Praelaten vnd Vicarij Generalis, H Ulrichen, Abbten des Hochlöbl Gottshauß S. Urban etc. Benedictions-Solennitet, den 22. Febru: 1688 daselbsten sich eingefunden* (Staatsarchiv Luzern [hereafter StALU], KU 1139).

3 *Landvogt* R. Steiger to abbot Karl Dulliker, Aarwangen, April 13, 1677: "in Ewer Hochwürden bekantschafft zu tretten, auch Selbige allerguter Nachparschafft mundtlich zeversicheren" (StALU, KU 512 A, fol. 417r).

4 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to ?, St. Urban, Jan. 10, 1658 (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 25r/v).

5 *Schultheiß* E. Willading to abbot Ulrich Glutz-Ruchti, Wangen, Oct. 15, 1698 (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 563r).

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or even occasions on which the abbot invited the *Schultheiß* to stay overnight in his monastery.[6]

At the same time, the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen eagerly engaged in reforming their order and in preserving the Catholic faith within the *Corpus helveticum*. Heavily involved in the affairs of the Cistercian order and known for his religious zeal, Edmund Schnyder of St. Urban sought to unify and consolidate the order, criticizing and opposing all those whom he considered to pose a threat to the uniformity and good reputation of the Cistercians. Accordingly, Schnyder supported the abbot general in fighting against the adherents of the so-called "strict observance"—those who wished to return to a more strict interpretation of the Rule and who were opposed to the consumption of meat—whom he slandered as "those French fish-eaters" who were to be "pulled out by force with the root."[7] Citing the danger emanating from the "heretics of Zurich," Schnyder acquired the domain of Herdern and Liebenfels in the bi-confessional Thurgau, a condominium of the Swiss cantons, to keep it from becoming a possession of Protestant landowners or—even worse—the city of Zurich.[8] For their part, the abbots of Wettingen acquired a mill, meadows, and cropland in villages close to their monastery in the County of Baden, to prevent them from "falling into Lutheran hands."[9]

Thus, the abbots styled themselves as Church reformers, as defenders of the Catholic faith, and as important players within the fragile confessional equilibrium of the Swiss Confederacy. But how did these opposing roles go together? How did the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen reconcile their role as defenders of the faith and superiors of a Catholic monastic community, with their close contacts to neighboring Protestant polities and players? How did they deal with confessional pluralism and the presence of Protestants in the vicinity of their monasteries and possessions? How did they position themselves within the bi-confessional Swiss Confederacy? What influence did

6 *Schultheiß* Hans Rudolf Willading to P. Bernhard Helmlin, Bern, April 8/18, 1646 (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 145r).

7 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Jean Tédenat, St. Urban, Feb. 6, 1660: "illi Gallicani Jchtyophagi […] viribus malum è radice tollatur" (StALU, KU 1025).

8 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to abbot Clément Dumont of Hauterive, St. Urban, March 11, 1654: "pour empecher quil ne vienne entre les mains des Haeretique[s] de Zurich" (Bibliothèque Cantonale et Universitaire Fribourg, L 1079/1/53).

9 "Damit sÿe nit entlichen in lutherische händt gerathe" (Staatsarchiv Aargau [hereafter StAAG], AA/3449i, 9, 64, 115, 148, quotation: 214).

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confessional contact zones have on the standing of the Swiss Cistercians within their order?[10]

2. "The most dangerous border of our beloved Catholic homeland"

Founded in 1194 and 1227, respectively, the Cistercian monasteries of St. Urban and Wettingen had developed close ties to the influential city-states of the Swiss Confederacy since the late middle ages.[11] While St. Urban was linked to Bern, Lucerne, and Solothurn by way of a *Burgrecht*—agreements between cities and individuals, monasteries or corporations granting privileges, protection, and market access[12]—Wettingen had similar connections to nearby Zurich. The monasteries held feudal and ecclesiastical rights within the territories of Bern, Lucerne, and Solothurn (St. Urban) as well as Zurich and the County of Baden (Wettingen). While the Reformation led to the extinction of the Swiss Cistercian monasteries situated within those territories that adhered to the new faith, St. Urban and Wettingen survived more or less unharmed. However, both monastic communities had to adapt to a new political and confessional reality. St. Urban, situated on Lucernese territory but owning large swaths of land in Bernese territories, came to stand immediately next to a confessional border, while Wettingen, located within a condominium of Protestant and Catholic territories alike, was surrounded by bi-confessional villages.

In the seventeenth century, the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen exercised manifold feudal rights in their Protestant surroundings. For instance, both monasteries exercised the right of patronage in a number of Protestant parishes. The abbot of Wettingen held the right to install priests in bi-confessional parishes where Catholics and Protestants

10 While confessional contact zones within the Swiss Confederacy as well as contacts between Protestants and Catholics in general have been studied in the past, the specific role of Catholic orders, especially that of the so-called old orders, remains a desideratum: See Ute Lotz-Heumann, Jan-Friedrich Mißfelder, and Matthias Pohlig, eds., *Konversion und Konfession in der Frühen Neuzeit: Systematische Fragestellungen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007); Daniela Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation: Religiöse Koexistenz und Politik in der Alten Eidgenossenschaft (die Grafschaft Baden 1531–1712)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2017); Thomas Lau, *"Stiefbrüder": Nation und Konfession in der Schweiz und in Europa (1656–1712)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2008).

11 For the history of the monasteries, see Josef Schmid, *Geschichte der Cisterzienser-Abtei St. Urban: Stiftung, Gründung und Aufstieg der Abtei St. Urban bis zum Jahre 1250* (Lucerne: Haag, 1930); Alois Häfliger, ed., *Sankt Urban 1194–1994: Ein ehemaliges Zisterzienserkloster* (Bern: Benteli, 1994); Hans Wicki, *Geschichte der Cisterzienser-Abtei St. Urban im Zeitalter der Reformation 1500–1550* (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1945); Anton Kottmann and Markus Hämmerle, *Die Zisterzienserabtei Wettingen: Geschichte des Klosters Wettingen und der Abtei Wettingen-Mehrerau* (Baden: Baden-Verlag, 1996).

12 See Heinrich Speich, *Burgrecht: Von der Einbürgerung zum politischen Bündnis im Spätmittelalter* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2019), 98–115.

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shared the same church. In a number of parishes, the abbot was required to support both a Catholic priest—usually a Cistercian monk—and a Protestant preacher. While the abbot of St. Urban sat in court in the Bernese villages of Langenthal, Roggwil, and Wynau,[13] the abbot of Wettingen did the same in several bi-confessional villages in the County of Baden.

In Langenthal, the situation was utterly remarkable: while the village was an integral part of the Protestant Canton of Bern, the abbots of St. Urban shared the low and middle jurisdiction with the local representative of the Bernese city-state, leading to a sort of dual power. The local court was typically composed of the *Landvogt* of Wangen and two monks from St. Urban, often the *cellerarius* as well as the secretary of the abbot. The *Ammann*, meant to deal with day-to-day affairs regarding the affairs of the monastery in Langenthal, was required to swear an oath or to vow his allegiance to the Bernese authorities and to the monastery of St. Urban, as were several other representatives of the village community.[14] Wettingen, equally lacking territorial sovereignty but concentrating a mix of manorial and judicial rights and privileges, sat at the center of a confessionally heterogeneous "monastic state," comprising the villages of Neuenhof, Staretswil, Killwangen, Spreitenbach, Dietikon, Bergdietikon, Schlieren, Wettingen, and Würenlos. The proximity of "heresy," of the confessional "Other," did not pose an immediate threat to the existence of the monasteries. Catholic and Protestant authorities alike continued to recognize the legitimacy of the rights and privileges of the Cistercians until the end of the Old Regime. In Langenthal, for example, Bern, intent on preserving the established order, promised to maintain and protect all the rights the monastery had enjoyed in its territories since the late Middle Ages.[15]

However, both monasteries were now part of a Catholic bulwark on the frontiers of "heresy"[16] meant to contain the spread of Protestantism. They were therefore under constant surveillance. Aided starting at the end of the sixteenth century by the newly established *nunziatura*, the Catholic cantons, especially Lucerne, intensified their hold over the monasteries, and closely observed the state of affairs of the monastic communities, fearing that financial difficulties or a lack of religious observance might enable the Protestant side to gain ground. For while St. Urban had always stayed Catholic, a

13 Paul Kasser, *Geschichte des Amtes und des Schlosses Aarwangen*, in *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern 19 (1908–1909)*, 55–446, 105.

14 *Twingrodel des Dorffs undt Grichts Langenthal: Inhaltendt die Twings- undt Nideren Grichts-Gerechtigkeiten, so ein Herr Abbt zu St. Urban daselbst hat. Revidiert und verglichen im Jahr 1669* (Staatsarchiv Bern [hereafter StABE], A I 196 Langenthal). StALU, KU 3003 Sch. Langenthal, Gericht, Teil 1, Fasz. Gericht Langenthal: Gerichtsbesatzung, Ernennung von Schätzern.

15 *Twingrodel des Dorffs undt Grichts Langenthal: Inhaltendt die Twings- undt Nideren Grichts-Gerechtigkeiten, so ein Herr Abbt zu St. Urban daselbst hat. Revidiert und verglichen im Jahr 1669* (StABE, A I 196 Langenthal).

16 Bertrand Forclaz, "La Suisse frontière de catholicité? Contre-Réforme et Réforme catholique dans le Corps helvétique," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 106 (2012): 567–583.

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majority of the monks in Wettingen had converted to Protestantism shortly after the Reformation. It was only because of intense efforts to recatholicize the monastery and its surroundings that Wettingen had remained a Cistercian abbey at all. A lack of religious observance therefore had the potential to provoke interventions of other members of the order and/or the secular and ecclesiastic authorities, if they feared that "heresy" might again prevail in Wettingen and thus nullify past efforts.

Religious observance—meaning the organization of everyday life according to the Rule of the order as well as the simultaneous dissociation from life outside of the monastery, the "world"—is understood here as a strategy, as a means of attaining and conserving a privileged position within society. Religious observance, as demanded by the Catholic Reform, was a resource that could be used variably by spiritual and temporal players to negotiate the role of religious orders and their monasteries in their political, social, and religious environment. However, observance within a religious order was neither a given nor static; it had to be defined, enforced, and then supervised at regular intervals. In addition, mechanisms and proceedings had to be developed to correct and realign monks, abbots, or entire monasteries in cases of non-observance of the order's Rule, as a perceived lack of observance could easily diminish their position within society and endanger their standing within bi-confessional Switzerland.[17]

Therefore, the abbots, intent on enforcing observance in their monasteries, were under pressure to prevent scandal and public attention—especially that of Protestants—at all cost. For instance, when word spread that three monks had escaped from Wettingen in November 1658 and fled to Zurich before traveling northward to Heidelberg, Abbot General Claude Vaussin and the papal nuncio were alarmed and infuriated. The nuncio was afraid that the monks would convert to Protestantism, which in turn could lead to public unrest.[18] The Catholic cantons were equally concerned: after the abbot of Wettingen apologized for the flight of the three monks to the delegates of the Catholic cantons at the Federal Diet in Baden, the Catholic cantons demanded an immediate visitation of the monastery by two other abbots to prevent further unrest and conflict.[19]

When Edmund Schnyder of St. Urban and the abbot of Bebenhausen finally visited the monastery, they criticized its state in harsh words, calling for immediate reform of the convent and observance of the Rule of the order. Regular discipline and obedience

17 See Lukas Camenzind, *Umstrittene Observanz: Die Zisterzienser im frühneuzeitlichen* Corpus helveticum (Cologne: Böhlau, 2025), 20–23, 52–79.

18 Nuncio Federico Borromeo to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Lucerne, Dec. 12, 1658 (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano [hereafter AAV], Segr. Stato Svizzera 52, fol. 589r). See Heike Bock, *Konversionen in der frühneuzeitlichen Eidgenossenschaft: Zürich und Luzern im konfessionellen Vergleich* (Epfendorf: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2009); Lotz-Heumann et al., *Konversion und Konfession*.

19 Anton Philipp von Segesser, *Die eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1649 bis 1680, Bd. 6, Abt. 1, II. Herrschafts- und Schirmortsangelegenheiten, Beilagen, Anhang und Register* (Lucerne, 1867) (hereafter EA), 1333, Nr. 383.

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were to be restored.[20] Among other things, they criticized the inadequate education of the novices, the monastery's school, the meager presence of the monks at mass, the exchange of gifts with nuns and the violation of strict enclosure in the nunneries that depended on Wettingen, their lack of respect for the vows of poverty and silence, "bacchanalia" during their spare time, and the general conduct of the monks. The monks, as "descendants of Christ," were to abstain from "imprudence," "foolish games," "obscene words," "worldly manners," and "infamous flaws."[21] The abbot of Wettingen, unable to resolve the situation, was ultimately forced to resign.

Conversely, the abbots and their allies utilized the proximity of Protestantism as an argument when quarreling with Catholic opponents and to position themselves within the Swiss Confederacy. For instance, when the city council of Lucerne questioned the hunting rights of the abbot of St. Urban in the vicinity of the monastery, Edmund Schnyder argued that questioning the rights and privileges of his monastery would inevitably endanger "income and rights of other monasteries, convents and hospitals, especially those among the neighboring acatholics," exposing them to "robbery with open doors."[22] Far more dramatic were the overstated warnings issued by the allies of Edmund Schnyder when he was summoned to Rome in 1651 and held captive for over a year for having disobeyed the orders of the papal nuncio and of the pope himself. Schnyder's allies, addressing the fears of their opponents south of the Alps, repeatedly warned the pope and contacts at the Roman Curia that the Bernese, taking advantage of Schnyder's absence, were planning to expropriate the monastery and occupy lands belonging to St. Urban—warnings that the nuncio rightly dismissed as rumors spread by the opponents of papal authority to enable Edmund Schnyder to return homewards.[23] Likewise, the danger of living in an outpost of Catholicism was frequently evoked in asking Catholic patrons for protection and assistance. Fearing the eruption of conflict in 1664 for reasons of religious strife in the Thurgau, Edmund Schnyder requested Solothurn to protect precious documents and the monastery's treasury, emphasizing

20 *Charta Visitationis Marisstellae per D. Edmundum 1659*, Wettingen, Feb. 4, 1659 (StAAG AA/2828/6, fol. 117r-120v).

21 "Porrò Religiosi et maximè Presbyteri, cum sint genus regium et sacerdotale à Chr[ist]o descendens, levitates vitae, scurriles iocos, obscaena verba, saeculares mores, velut infames naevos desistent" (Ibid., 117v).

22 *Jagbarkeit Einem Gotshauß St. Vrban zuogehörig* (n.d.), 13 f.: "alle Einkommen, vnd gerechtikeiten anderen gotshüseren, gestiften vnd spitalen, Fürnemmlich beÿ den Benachparten Vncatholischen in gefahr […] mit geöfneter thüren zur beraubung" (StALU, KU 205). See StALU, KU 3002, Sch. Pfaffnau, Gemeinde, Teil 2.

23 Nuncio Francesco Boccapaduli to Cardinal Secretary of State, Lucerne, July 25, 1651 (AAV, Segr. Stato Svizzera 43, fol. 240r); Nuncio Francesco Boccapaduli to Cardinal Secretary of State, Lucerne, Aug. 8, 1651 (ibid., fol. 265r/v); Nuncio Francesco Boccapaduli to Cardinal Secretary of State, Lucerne, March 31, 1652 (AAV, Arch. Nunz. Lucerna 13, fol. 3r/v).

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the fact that his monastery lay on "the most dangerous border of our beloved Catholic homeland."[24]

As mentioned above, the abbots of St. Urban expanded eastward by acquiring domains in the Thurgau, a condominium of the Swiss cantons characterized by its bi-confessional nature. In the seventeenth century, Catholic and Protestant cantons were competing to gain control of the over 130 lordships, whose increasingly impoverished owners, members of the local nobility, were willing to sell to the best buyer.[25] Because the Catholic cantons lacked the financial means to acquire and govern the mostly unprofitable lordships, they incited wealthy families and monasteries to help defend the Catholic cause[26]—a welcome occasion for many to position themselves as defenders of Catholicism. After the abbot of Muri had acquired the lordship of Klingenberg in 1651,[27] Edmund Schnyder took advantage of the situation and bought the lordship of Liebenfels in 1654, despite the opposition of Zurich but with the support of the Catholic cantons and the papal nuncio.[28] As Schnyder stated in a letter to the Catholic cantons praising his good services for the Catholic faith, he had done so in order to save the lordship from the "claws of the uncatholics."[29]

Edmund Schnyder and his successors not only succeeded in governing the lordship—comprising several hamlets, a village, and a castle—but also managed to enlarge and strengthen their outpost in the Thurgau. After Lucerne, intent on recatholicizing lordships inhabited by Protestants with the help of the Cistercians, had failed to prevent citizens of the Protestant city of Zurich from acquiring serveral lordships in the 1660s,[30] a new occasion arose. When the owner of the lordship of Herdern, inhabited by Catholics, died in 1669, the abbot of St. Gallen requested Edmund Schnyder to buy the lordship, calling him "a true zealot of our Catholic religion." As the abbot of St. Gallen stated, Schnyder would not only secure a divine reward, but also "praise and fame among all

24 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to *Schultheiß und Rat* of Solothurn, St. Urban, Aug. 14, 1664: "vnser Gottshauß aber an dem gefahrlichsten Gräntz orth [des] gantz lieben Catholischen Vatterlandt[s] sich befindet" (StASO St. Urbanschreiben Nr. 1, 211).

25 Bruno Giger, "Gerichtsherren, Gerichtsherrschaften, Gerichtsherrenstand im Thurgau vom Ausgang des Spätmittelalters bis in die frühe Neuzeit," *Thurgauer Beiträge zur Geschichte* 130 (1993): 5–216, 145.

26 Giger, "Gerichtsherren," 145. Shortly after 1700, a majority of the 132 lordships lay in the hands of monasteries, cathedral chapters, and other Catholic religious institutions (ibid., 22 f.).

27 Erich Trösch, "Klingenberg," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from August 22, 2007, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/008190/2007-08-20/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

28 StALU, URK 665/13353. The nuncio called the purchase an "opera così santa" and pushed the Catholic cantons to unanimously support the purchase of the lordship by the abbot of St. Urban: Nuncio Carlo Carafa della Spina to the Cardinal Secretary of State, Lucerne, March 5, 1654 (AAV, Segr. Stato, Svizzera 47, fol. 103r/v); ibid. to ibid., Lucerne, April 23, 1654 (ibid., fol. 172r)

29 [Abbot Edmund Schnyder] to the Six ruling Cantons in the Thurgau, St. Urban, June 5, 1659: "den ohnCatholischen vs den Klawen [gerissen]" (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 58r).

30 Giger, "Gerichtsherren," 122, 152; Joseph Amrhyn to abbot Edmund Schnyder, Lucerne, Sept. 30, 1669 (StALU, KU 3005, Sch. Landschaft Thurgau, Fasz. Betr. Erwerb der Herrschaft Wellenberg).

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Catholic souls."[31] Because of lengthy negotiations—which also involved the abbot of Wettingen, who tried to secure the lordship for himself, but had to step back for lack of funding[32]—it took over ten years until Karl Dulliker, Schnyder's successor, could acquire the lordship in 1683. From then on, the abbots of St. Urban not only understood themselves as heads of a monastery situated in the Lucernese hinterland, but also adorned themselves with the title *Herren zuo Liebenfels, Herderen vnd Schweickhoff*[33] and positioned themselves as important ecclesiastical dignitaries and influential actors intent on conserving and strengthening the Catholic faith within the Swiss Confederacy.

3. Choosing One's Allies: The Swiss Peasant War and the First Villmergen War

In the direct surroundings of their monasteries, the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen acted far more discreetly. Dependent on the temporal authorities to exercise and enforce their rights and privileges, good relations with Protestant and Catholic polities alike were of vital importance. This especially became apparent in the 1650s, when both monasteries were threatened by military conflicts. While the abbot of Wettingen, Bernhard Keller, tried to take advantage of his good relations with Zurich, Edmund Schnyder, the abbot of St. Urban, activated a network he had been constructing and maintaining since his election as abbot in 1640. Fluent in French thanks to his education in the County of Burgundy and known to be a "person with a strong attachment to France,"[34] Schnyder was a staunch supporter of the French Abbot General of the Cistercians and benefited from good relations with the French Ambassador in Solothurn and with the French court. Having lacked the support of Lucerne—whose council was divided into a pro-French and a pro-Spanish faction—during his conflicts with the *nunziatura* and the Roman Curia, Schnyder oriented himself and his monastery towards the "French" cantons of Bern (Protestant) and Solothurn (Catholic), creating a "security network" meant to counter-balance the ambivalent relations of St. Urban with Lucerne.

31 Abbot Gallus Alt of St. Gallen to abbot Edmund Schnyder, St. Gallen Abbey, Jan. 18, 1672: "beÿ Gott dem allmechtigen einen nit geringen verdienst, beÿ allen Catholischen Gemüetteren aber Lob vnd ruhm" (StALU, KU 3005, Sch. Herdern, Liebenfels: Kauf/Verkauf, Fasz. Herrschaft Herdern, Deren Kauf im Jahre 1683)

32 StAAG, AA/3449 i, 94.

33 A letter from the Lucernese councilor Rudolph Mohr to abbot Ulrich Dulliker was addressed in the following terms: "Dem HochWürdigen Hochwolgebohrene Herr vnd H[errn] Carolo Abbati des Lob[lichen] Gottshaus Sancti Vrbani, Herren zuo Liebenfels Herderen vnd Schweickhoff […] Meinem Gnädigen Herren" (StALU, KU 512 A, fol. 43v).

34 Ambassador Jean de la Barde to Comte de Brienne, [Solothurn], Dec. 11, 1654: "personnage fort affectionné à la France" (Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, La Courneuve [hereafter MAE], CP Suisse 34, fol. 292r–293v).

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This strategy paid off when war broke out in 1653. Provoked by a far-reaching agricultural crisis, population growth, indebtedness, and monetary policies, a peasant revolt emanating in the Lucernese Entlebuch valley rapidly spread to Bern, Solothurn, and Basel, threatening the rule of Catholic and Protestant authorities alike. In the vicinity of St. Urban, the rural population of the Bernese districts of Aarwangen and Wangen rose up against Bernese rule, while the inhabitants of the Willisau district protested against its Lucernese lords.[35] The ire of the peasants was not directed solely at the temporal authorities, but also at local holders of rights and privileges, which included the rich and influential monasteries of the old orders, i. e., the Benedictines and the Cistercians. While the inhabitants of Knutwil (Lucerne) demanded the surrender of documents regarding the jurisdiction of St. Urban in the village and refused to pay rent and tithes,[36] residents of nearby Pfaffnau (also Lucerne) occupied buildings belonging to the monastery, destroyed windows, stole objects of spiritual value, and threatened to attack the monks.[37] Farmers from the surrounding villages stole cattle belonging to St. Urban.[38]

Although heavily criticized by Catholic actors in Lucerne and Willisau for doing so, Edmund Schnyder reacted by sending precious documents and objects to Solothurn,[39] by inviting Bernese troops into his monastery as *salvaguardia*,[40] and by staying in close contact with the Bernese military command. Thus, when Catholics from the village of Pfaffnau set a guardhouse near St. Urban on fire, the local representative of Bernese authority, *Landvogt* Willading, threatened the villagers and declared that any action against St. Urban would be treated as an attack against Bernese authority.[41] Willading, who, referring to both his and Edmund Schnyder's social status, described himself as a "very humble and dedicated servant and neighbor" of the abbot, assured Schnyder

35 Hans Balsiger, "Der Oberaargau im schweizerischen Bauernkrieg 1653," *Jahrbuch des Oberaargaus* 46 (2003): 163–188; Andreas Suter, *Der schweizerische Bauernkrieg von 1653: Politische Sozialgeschichte – Sozialgeschichte eines politischen Ereignisses* (Tübingen: Bibliotheca-Academica-Verlag, 1997), 107, 399, 412.

36 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Sebastian Peregrin Zwyer, St. Urban, March 10, 1653 (Acta Helvetica – Zurlaubiana [hereafter AH] 150/75).

37 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Burghers and Commune of Willisau, St. Urban, March 8, 1653 (StALU, KU 512 Q, fol. 429–430).

38 Theodor von Liebenau, "Der luzernische Bauernkrieg vom Jahre 1653," *Jahrbuch für schweizerische Geschichte* 18 (1893): 230–331, 19 (1894): 72–320, 20 (1895): 2–233, here: 20 (1895), 91.

39 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to *Schultheiß und Rat* of Solothurn, St. Urban, March 11, 1653 (Staatsarchiv Solothurn [hereafter StASO], St. Urbanschreiben Nr. 1, 159–160).

40 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Burghers and Commune of Willisau, St. Urban, March 8, 1653 (StALU, KU 512 Q, 429–430).

41 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Christoph Byss in Solothurn, St. Urban, March 12, 1653 (StALU, KU 512 Q, fol. 411r).

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of the good will of the Bernese authorities towards the abbot and his monastery, and thanked Schnyder for his help.[42]

For the remainder of the so-called Peasant War, Schnyder relied on Bernese protection, while at the same time negotiating with the Catholic peasant leaders assembled at Willisau, who finally issued a letter of protection for the abbot and his monks.[43] This enabled Edmund Schnyder to ensure that religious life within the walls of his monastery could continue more or less unharmed, despite the fact that armed conflict was underway close by. In a letter addressed to Abbot General Claude Vaussin, Edmund Schnyder stressed the great danger emanating from the "peasant rebellion" ("rusticana rebellio") and praised himself because he and his monks had remained in the monastery, had "peacefully observed religious observance" ("quieteque religiosam observantiam servantibus"), and had survived the conflict thanks to divine providence.[44]

When the relations between Catholic and Protestant cantons deteriorated a few years later, leading to the eruption of the First Villmergen War provoked by the execution of Protestants in Schwyz,[45] the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen were once again forced to react. Edmund Schnyder corresponded with the city councils of Lucerne, Bern, and Solothurn and demanded protection for his monastery and its inhabitants. While Lucerne sent muskets, gunpowder, and soldiers to St. Urban,[46] Bern assured that a *salvaguardia* would protect the monastery in case of war.[47] Important documents, valuable objects, and several monks were sent to Solothurn.[48]

While Edmund Schnyder managed to protect his monastery once again—St. Urban survived the First Villmergen War of 1656 unharmed—the abbot Bernhard Keller of Wettingen failed to apply a similar strategy due to the much more fragile religious and political environment of his monastery. In December 1655, shortly before war broke out,

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42 Niklaus Willading to abbot Edmund Schnyder, Aarwangen, March 30, 1653: "Tres humble et dedié serviteur et Voisin" (StALU, KU 3006, Fasz. 1653. Luzernerischer Bauernkrieg. Schreiben u. Akten über den Bauernkrieg, besonders über die Stellung des Klosters St. Urban in demselben).

43 *Schein für Ihr Gnaden sampt einem wol Ehrwürdig Convent Jn St. Vrban welcher ihnen ertheilt zuo krefftigung, von den Vschüzen des Gantzen Ampts der freÿen Stat vnd Graffschaft Willisauw den 17 t Meÿ des 1653 Jrß* (StALU, KU 3006, Fasz. 1653. Luzernerischer Bauernkrieg).

44 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to Abbot General Claude Vaussin, St. Urban, July 15, 1653 (StALU, KU 1091).

45 Thomas Lau, "Erster Villmergerkrieg," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from January 22, 2014, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/008910/2014-01-22/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024); Lau, *"Stiefbrüder"*; Alois Rey, *Geschichte des Protestantismus in Arth bis zum Prozess von 1655* (Schwyz: Buchdruckerei E. Steiner, 1944).

46 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to the Councilors of war in Lucerne, St. Urban [ca. 1655/56] (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 114r); StALU, KU RP 72, fol. 14r.

47 *Schultheiß und Rat* of Bern to abbot Edmund Schnyder, Bern, Dec. 27, 1655 (StABE, A III 69, Bd. 18, 357).

48 This happened in 1653 during the so-called Swiss Peasants War, in 1656 during the First Villmergen War, and in 1664 during the so-called *Wigoltingerhandel* (StASO St. Urbanschreiben Nr. 1 und St. Urban Schreiben und Acta); StALU, KU 1540.

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thirty armed soldiers from Zurich abducted a Cistercian monk from his parish house in Dietikon. The soldiers accused the monk of instigating youngsters to set Zurich and a number of other villages belonging to Zurich on fire, threatened to destroy Dietikon and to cause a bloodbath, and imprisoned the monk in a dungeon in Zurich. Although Lucerne and the papal nuncio managed to negotiate with Zurich and have the monk set free,[49] the monastery seemed dangerously defenseless. In response, Bernhard Keller began to buy weapons and to prepare for war, styling himself as military leader. He took to removing his habit and wearing military attire, riding on a horse, visiting and commanding the guards, and equipping his monks with weapons and military gear.[50]

As the large land-holding monasteries of the old orders were known to keep large supplies of foodstuffs, they were targeted by Protestant and Catholic troops alike, who quite often lacked sufficient provisions and were left to fend for themselves. But whereas St. Urban was left unharmed, Wettingen sat at the epicenter of the acts of war and suffered considerable damage. Despite Keller's meticulous preparations, Wettingen was quickly overrun by troops from Zurich when war broke out in January 1656. The soldiers occupied the monastery and requisitioned foodstuffs and wine, emptying the supplies and carrying them off to Zurich.[51] After the Protestant troops lost the decisive battles and were forced to negotiate a peace treaty, surrendering Wettingen to the Catholics, over two hundred Catholic soldiers were billeted in the monastery. This made matters even worse. The monastery was forced to deliver its supplies to the Catholic cantons and to provide Catholic troops with accommodation, bread, wine, and meat. Keller complained about the theft of sheep, salt, and foodstuffs, destroyed windows and tables, broken tiles, and further damage.[52] For Wettingen and its monks, the end of the war proved to be as catastrophic as the war itself. The Catholic cantons refused to reimburse the monastery and to compensate for the damage, arguing that they had never explicitly ordered their troops to occupy the monastery and that the whole affair was a mere misunderstanding.[53]

At the end of the war, which had resulted in a defeat of the Protestant cantons, the situation of the two monasteries could not have been more different. Although

49 Note of Beat II. Zurlauben, Dec. 9, 1655 (AH 27/100); abbot Bernhard Keller to the Catholic protectors of the monastery, Wettingen, Dec. 17, 1655 (AH 127/147); nuncio Federico Borromeo to [Cardinal Rospigliosi], Lucerne, Dec. 23, 1655 (AAV, Segr. Stato Svizzera 48, fol. 532r-533v); nuncio Federico Borromeo to [Cardinal Rospigliosi], Lucerne, Dec. 23, 1655 (ibid., fol. 539r/v).

50 *Bricht wägen 2. Mönchen von Wettingen*, Sept. 13, 1659 (Staatsarchiv Zürich [hereafter StAZH], E I 9.3, Nr. 12).

51 Beat Jakob I. Zurlauben to Beat II. Zurlauben, Bremgarten, Jan. 17, 1656 (AH 130/179); Kaspar Dorer to Beat II. Zurlauben, Baden, Jan. 19, 1656 (AH 126/197).

52 Delegates of the Four Cantons assembled in Zug to Franz Heinrich Pfyffer, Zug, Feb. 7, 1656 (AH 128/124); StAAG, AA/3474/3; Stadtarchiv Baden, A 17.117.

53 *Schultheiß und Rat* of Lucerne to abbot Bernhard Keller, Lucerne, Feb. 21, 1656 (StAAG, AA/3474/3, fol. 3r); StAAG, AA/3474/3, fol. 7r, 9r.

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Catholics and Protestants had agreed on a demobilization, an amnesty, and a renewal of the status quo *ante*,[54] mutual mistrust and the fear of a repeated outbreak of war remained. The Catholic cantons advised the abbot of Wettingen to organize the defense of his monastery and to stock up on grain and ammunitions.[55] Keller was authorized to raise troops to defend the monastery and to buy ammunition.[56] Edmund Schnyder, on the other hand, had no such concerns, as his "security network" had remained intact. Intent on maintaining his alliance with Bern, Schnyder called upon Solothurn and other Catholic cantons to spare the Bernese and to force Zurich to pay for the cost of the war on its own. In 1656, in a letter addressed to the *Stadtschreiber* of Solothurn, Schnyder stated, "the Bernese are certainly not belligerent; the costs should be thrown upon the Zurichers."[57] In 1658, Schnyder wrote to Lucerne and recounted a meal he had had with *Schultheiß* Anton von Graffenried in nearby Langenthal, stating that the Bernese wished "nothing else than continual peace" and "weren't inclined to war at all."[58]

While Edmund Schnyder's position as abbot as well as the "security network" he had set up remained intact, Bernhard Keller's authority was severely damaged. Keller was accused of "military behavior" as well as excessive expenses for sabers, pistols, and horses, and had to defend himself against a growing lack of discipline within the monastery, resulting in the repeated flight of monks to Zurich.[59] Keller blamed the three-month-long presence of soldiers within the monastery as well as "conspirators" for the lack of religious observance and discipline.[60] Although Keller stated that the nuncio had allowed him and his monks to defend the monastery and the Catholic faith by military means and that his behavior had always been in accordance with the instructions of his superiors and of the temporal authorities,[61] he finally had to resign, as his reputation was severely damaged by internal strife and ongoing conflicts with the abbot of St. Urban.

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54 Lau, Art. *Erster Villmergerkrieg*, in *e-HLS*, consulted on Oct. 5, 2023.

55 EA 6, 1a, 441, Nr. 264. Conference of the Councilors of war of Lucerne, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Zug, Lucerne, Sept. 28, 1658.

56 Notes of Beat II. Zurlauben, April 19–June 6, 1656 (AH 125/17).

57 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to *Stadtschreiber* [Franz Haffner] in Solothurn, St. Urban, Jan. 15, 1656: "[d]ie Berner sindt gwiss nit kriegsch; Wirdt guot sin dz mann den kosten vf die zürcher werfe" (StASO, St. Urban Schreiben und Acta).

58 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to [*Schultheiß und Rat* of Lucerne], St. Urban, Jan. 10, 1658: "nichts anders […] als einen bestandhafften friden […] zum krieg [gar] nit geneigt" (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 25r/v, here: fol. 25r).

59 *Bricht wägen 2. Mönchen von Wettingen*, Zürich, Sept. 13, 1659 (StAZH, E I 9.3 Nr. 12).

60 Abbot Bernhard Keller to abbot Thomas Schwab of Salem, Wettingen, March 21, 1656 (Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe [hereafter GLAK], 98/2945, 8–9).

61 Abbot Bernhard Keller to abbot Thomas Schwab of Salem, Wettingen, March 24, 1656 (GLAK, 98/2945, 11–13).

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4. Conflicts, Confession, and Correspondence: Preserving Peace in a Bi-confessional Environment

As St. Urban and Wettingen held rights, privileges, and lands in Catholic as well as in Protestant territories, good relations with both Catholic and Protestant cantons were essential. Given the fragile confessional balance of the Swiss Confederacy, the abbots had to develop strategies in order to reconcile their contradictory roles as advocates of the Catholic reform and defenders of the Catholic faith, as well as neighbors and allies of Protestant city-states. For instance, while Edmund Schnyder styled himself as a zealous reformer of the Cistercian order and as a defender of the autonomy of the local Church against Roman attempts to centralize and uniform the Catholic Church when in contact with local Catholic actors, the religious component of his position disappeared almost entirely when he corresponded with Protestants—a strategy all Cistercian abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen applied.

The abbots of St. Urban maintained their good relations with Bern by making use of practices of "good correspondence," as did the abbots of Wettingen with regard to Zurich. In comparison, however, St. Urban was much closer to Bern than Wettingen to Zurich. Members of the Bernese city council were regularly present at the benediction ceremony of newly elected abbots in St. Urban, and the abbots of St. Urban frequently traveled to Bern where they were received according to their status as lords and members of the elite of the Swiss Confederacy. Despite the occasional strife, mainly for economic reasons or questions regarding the role of St. Urban as judicial authority in Bernese villages, both sides frequently evoked the necessity of maintaining "friendship" and "good neighborly relations." This was highly profitable for the Cistercians. For instance, most Catholic cantons enacted Mortmain laws in the seventeenth century, thereby ending the territorial expansion of monasteries and other ecclesiastical corporations. Lucerne, for example, made it almost impossible for St. Urban to acquire land within its territory.[62] In Bernese lands, however, the abbots of St. Urban continued to buy land and rights by activating personal contacts with members of the Bernese city council. Edmund Schnyder acquired large vineyards on the north shore of Lake Biel, while his successor Karl Dulliker bought a number of meadows near St. Urban and expanded the possessions Schnyder had acquired.[63]

62 Anne Marie Dubler, "Tote Hand," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from December 18, 2013, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/008975/2013-12-18/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024); StALU, URK 590/11825; as well as Waltraud Hörsch, "Dagmersellen," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from November 3, 2016, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/000664/2016-11-03/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

63 StALU, URK 643/12821, StALU, URK 643/12820, StALU, URK 643/12818, StALU, URK 656/13154, StALU, URK 654/13116, StALU, URK 658/13191; StALU, KU 3003 Sch. Bielersee, Verwaltung, Fasz. Bielersee, Liegenschaften.

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Throughout the seventeenth century, the abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen continually tried to prevent confessional conflict. While the potential for religious conflict was minimal for St. Urban—since the Reformation, the political boundaries corresponded exactly with the confessional borderlines—the situation was much more complicated for Wettingen. As the monastery was located in a bi-confessional environment with no clear boundaries, day-to-day conflicts between Protestants and Catholics occurred regularly. To prevent and settle religious strife, norms of coexistence were defined and stipulated by the so-called *Landfrieden* of 1529, 1531, and 1656, which were accepted by both Catholics and Protestants.[64]

Whereas the abbots of Wettingen did not hesitate to defend their economic interests against Zurich—e. g., the use of forests and rivers, the upkeep of Protestant preachers, rents, and tithes, and the jurisdictional competences of the abbots[65]—they reacted with great reserve when the confessional peace was threatened. This was often the case when Catholic priests or Protestant preachers paid by the monastery vilified or insulted members of the opposite confession.[66] For although the abbots of Wettingen were supposed to defend the Catholic cause in a region dominated by Protestant Zurich, they also had to ensure that relations with Zurich remained as strong as possible. At times, this provoked reactions within the Cistercian order and within the Church. Although monks from Wettingen had been present in a number of villages as priests since the Reformation, their activity in an environment where Protestants were constantly present was far from unanimously accepted. In 1639, the Secretary of State in Rome had criticized the fact that Protestants and Catholics used the same churches and, on certain occasions, even shared the sinecure.[67] In 1646, the abbots of Lucelle and St. Urban ordered the abbot of Wettingen to replace all the monks with secular clerics, citing numerous dangers the monks were exposed to in the parishes.[68] Possible contacts with women, confessional conflicts, and manifold dangers to the good reputation of the monastery and the order appeared as a threat to many within the Cistercian order.[69]

In the mid-1650s, Edmund Schnyder also tried to force Bernhard Keller, the abbot of Wettingen, to limit the presence of monks outside of the monastery by replacing them

64 Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*, 154–179; Hans Ulrich Bächtold, "Landfriedensbünde," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from November 20, 2014, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/009807/2014-11-20/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

65 Staatsarchiv Schwyz, A 366.

66 Hacke, *Konfession und Kommunikation*; Bock, *Konversionen*; Alfons Bugmann, *Zürich und die Abtei Wettingen zur Zeit der Reformation und Gegenreformation, 1519–1656* (Dietikon: Oscar Hummel, 1949).

67 Secretary of State in Rome to nuncio Girolamo Farnese, Rome, Aug. 6, 1639 (AAV, Segr. Stato Svizzera 33, fol. 14v).

68 GLAK, 98/2944, 469–471.

69 GLAK, 98/2944, 456–458.

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with secular clerics.[70] However, Keller refused to obey Schnyder's orders, stating that the presence of monks in the monastery's parishes was necessary to ensure the obedience of the peasantry.[71] In a short memorandum, Keller argued that the parishes were an integral part of the monastery, just like a monastic grange. As the abbot explained, the monk-priests were valuable intermediaries between the monastery and its subjects and were necessary to uphold the authority of the monastery in its lands. Whereas Keller described secular clerics as careless and prone to scandalous behavior, he praised the advantages of his monks, who were appreciated by Catholics and Protestants alike. In case of scandal, the abbot could easily recall a monk-priest, in contrast to secular priests. And, last but not least, Keller stated that the "heretics" ("haeretici") preferred the habit of the Cistercians over that of the secular clergy.[72]

In the seventeenth century, the parish of Würenlos seemed especially susceptible to confessional conflicts involving monks from Wettingen. While residing in Würenlos as a priest in the 1640s, Bernhard Keller had on numerous occasions been accused by the Protestant preacher Felix Tobler of insulting him as well as his parishioners. In 1648, Keller accused Tobler of "preaching lies" and criticized a Catholic man for letting his daughters marry Protestants, calling him and his daughters "damned and possessed by the devil with body and soul."[73] Officials in nearby Baden as well as Felix Tobler described Keller as posing a threat to religious coexistence and demanded that he be recalled to his monastery immediately.[74] The city council of Zurich addressed a letter to the abbot of Wettingen and criticized Keller, whom it accused of violating the *Landfrieden* and the rules of good neighborhood.[75] While Keller refused to acknowledge the accusations brought forth against him, the abbot of Wettingen, Nikolaus von Flüe, under pressure from Zurich, finally agreed to recall Keller to Wettingen.[76]

Reclamations against monks from Wettingen residing in Würenlos and insulting Protestants continued throughout the 1650s. The situation changed after the dramatic abduction of Ludwig Mittler in 1655, which, combined with the devastating effects of

70 See abbot Edmund Schnyder to abbot Bernhard Keller, St. Urban, Jan. 17, 1655 (StAAG, AA/2828/6, fol. 90r).

71 Abbot Bernhard Keller to abbot Edmund Schnyder, Wettingen, Jan. 9, 1655 (StAAG, AA/2828/6, fol. 87r-88v).

72 *Considerationes super Parochijs Mon[aste]rio Maristellano proximè adiacentibus* [ca. 1655] (StAAG, AA/2828/6, fol. 99r/v).

73 "Sÿn tochter […] seige verdambt, ja (Gott behütte vnß) deß Tüffels mit lÿb vnd Seel […] rede vnd predige die luginen" (StAZH, E I 10.5, Nr. 18).

74 StAZH, E I 10.5, Nr. 18.

75 *Bürgermeister und Rat* of Zurich to abbot Nikolaus von Flüe, Zurich, April 1, 1647 (StAZH, E I 10.5, Nr. 19).

76 Dominicus Willi, *Album Wettingense oder Verzeichnis der Mitglieder des exemten und consistorialen Stiftes Wettingen-Mehrerau S. Ord. Cisterc. 1227–1892* (Limburg an der Lahn: Pub. by the author, 1892), 66.

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the First Villmergen War, seems to have acted as a sort of warning. In April 1656, the abbot of Wettingen issued a countywide mandate reminding the clergy as well as his subjects of the stipulations of the *Landfrieden*. Henceforth, "schmütz, vnd schmach reden"—e. g., insults directed at members of the opposite confession—were forbidden; priests who violated the *Landfrieden* were to be relieved of their sinecure.[77]

A further dramatic event occurred in 1658, when Caspar Bochsler, a Protestant living on a property near Dietikon belonging to the city of Zurich, left his dwelling with his family and, with the alleged help of the abbot, fled to Catholic territory.[78] While the abbot of Wettingen repeatedly stated that he had no knowledge of the incident, it became known that Bochsler and his family had converted to Catholicism with the help of the parish priest of Dietikon—a Cistercian monk from Wettingen. This was a dangerous affair for the monastery, for by fleeing from their dwelling and converting to Catholicism, Bochsler and his family had violated the jurisdiction of Zurich and provoked the ire of the Zurich city council, although not explicitly violating the decrees of the *Landfrieden*, which allowed conversions "back" to the Catholic faith. Shortly after, four officers instructed by the city council of Zurich searched the surroundings of the monastery, found the family, and brought them back to Zurich by force.[79] Although both affairs ended relatively mildly, it became apparent that Zurich would not hesitate to resort to violence if necessary to ensure that its rights and the decrees of the *Landfrieden* were respected. From this moment on, the abbots of Wettingen tried to prevent similar incidents at all costs. The monks were instructed to protect the interests of their Catholic parishioners, while at the same time ensuring that the *Landfrieden* was respected.

5. Conserving the Status Quo: Tolerating and Encouraging Transconfessional Relations

A final question remains: How did the Cistercian order and Catholic secular and ecclesiastical authorities react to this close proximity between Catholic monasteries and Protestant polities? The sources at hand show that transconfessional relations were not only tolerated but in fact openly supported by the Catholic side, as they were necessary to guarantee the survival of the monasteries. Cistercian visitors examined St. Urban and Wettingen at regular intervals, meticulously inspecting the temporal and spiritual affairs of the monasteries and their members. The existence of close relations between the monks and Protestants, however, was never a subject of discussion, as long as they did not go beyond certain limits nor openly contradict the Rule of the order and as

77 StAAG, AA/3490/1, fol. 36r/v.

78 *Bürgermeister und Rat* of Zurich to abbot Bernhard Keller, Zurich, Nov. 6/16, 1658 (StAAG, AA/2828/10, fol. 32r).

79 StAAG, AA/2828/10, fol. 32r-43v.

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long as they served to conserve the status quo. The abbots acted accordingly. For instance, while the abbot of St. Urban had a vast network of Protestant contacts—mostly in Bern—at his disposal and frequently traveled to Bern, he strictly observed his order's rules concerning contacts with laypeople, forbidding attendance at weddings, fairs, or markets. When the *Landvogt* of Aarwangen invited Edmund Schnyder to his wedding in 1646, Schnyder politely refused by referring to his vocation and status as a Catholic clergyman. Sending his apologies, the abbot assured the local representative of Bernese authority of the importance of their "good neighborly relations" and included with his letter some fresh fish from the monastery's ponds.[80]

The abbots did not conceal the fact that they associated with Protestants; it was quite the contrary, as this was a regular topic of discussion when corresponding with Catholic counterparts. When word spread about conflicts within the monastery of Wettingen and the difficulties experienced by the abbot Marian Ryser in coping with his increasingly disobedient monks in 1675, the abbots of Salem and St. Urban as well as the Abbot General in Cîteaux decided to intervene. Edmund Schnyder, however, instructed to visit Wettingen, had to postpone the visitation, as he was to appear before the city council of Bern and settle a differend regarding his rights in Bernese lands. In several letters to the abbot of Salem, Schnyder explained why he couldn't act immediately and why it was important for him to travel to Bern first.[81] In 1658, two years after the First Villmergen War, which had pitted Catholics against Protestants, the abbot of St. Urban recounted in a letter addressed to the *Schultheiß* of Lucerne that he had been invited to have lunch with the *Schultheiß* of Bern, Anton von Graffenried, and another Bernese magistrate. He praised how "candid" and "friendly" he had been treated and how intent the Bernese were on maintaining good relations with their Catholic counterparts. Boasting about his privileged relationship with the Bernese *Schultheiß*, the abbot recounted his subsequent private encounter with von Graffenried during which they had discussed topics as sensitive as ongoing peace negotiations between Protestant and Catholic cantons, the question of who was to pay for reparations, and the renewal of the alliance with France.[82]

Recognizing the strategic importance of St. Urban and Wettingen, the Catholic authorities actively aided the abbots and their monasteries in defending their interests when dealing with Protestant cantons and ensured that age-old rights and privileges were preserved. Catholic and Protestant cantons alike defended the established order to uphold peace and lawfulness while opposing modifications.[83] For example, when

80 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to [Marquard Zehender], St. Urban, June 6, 1646 (StALU, KU 512 Q, fol. 371).

81 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to abbot Anselm Muotelsee, St. Urban, Aug. 15, 1675, Aug. 27, 1675 (GLAK, 98/2945, 199, 204).

82 Abbot Edmund Schnyder to [*Schultheiß* of Lucerne], St. Urban, Jan. 10, 1658 (StALU, KU 512 W, fol. 25r/v).

83 Karl Geiser, "Langenthal unter der Twingherrschaft des Klosters St. Urban." *Archiv des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Bern* 25, no. 2 (1920): 155–262.

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the abbot of St. Urban opposed the erection of an inn in the Bernese village of Murgenthal in 1655, addressing Bernese authorities to halt the project, *Schultheiß und Rat* of Bern complied with the abbot's wish and halted construction, assuring the abbot that Bern was, as always, "intent on opposing innovations against his rights."[84] When the abbots of St. Urban traveled to Bern shortly after their election to renew the *Burgrecht* of the monastery with the city of Bern, two members of the Lucerne council generally accompanied the abbot and were present during the ceremony.[85] Members of the Lucernese government dispatched to the *Tagsatzung* in Baden regularly made use of the presence of Bernese delegates to intercede on behalf of St. Urban, preferring face-to-face discussions to lengthy "official" negotiations from city council to city council.[86] The Catholic authorities emphasized the strategic position of St. Urban as an outpost of Catholicism, while at the same time taking advantage of the good relations between St. Urban and Bern. For instance, St. Urban was regularly chosen to host conferences of delegates from Lucerne, Fribourg, and Solothurn, as well as conferences between Fribourg and Bern.[87]

6. Conclusion

Religious observance was possible only if income was sufficient and the political circumstances were favorable. Therefore, the abbots were intent on establishing good relations with their Protestant neighbors and on avoiding confessional conflicts within the vicinity of their monasteries. This was no easy task. In fact, manifold interests and claims were in conflict with each other. On the one hand, the Catholic cantons and the abbots themselves regarded their monastery as a bulwark against Protestantism, as defender of the Catholic faith and as promoter of Catholic reform. On the other hand, the monasteries were dependent on the goodwill of the Protestant polities in their vicinity. Therefore, the abbots avoided conflicts due to religious questions at all cost. The presence of Cistercian monks in bi-confessional parishes was especially dangerous, as the risk of violating the *Landfrieden* was a constant threat. For this reason, Edmund

84 *Schultheiß und Rat* of Bern to abbot Edmund Schnyder, Bern, July 24, 1655: "wie geneigt wir syend, wider seine gerechtigkeiten nichts Jnnovieren zelassen" (StALU, KU 3003, Sch. Kanton Bern, Allgemein, Fasz. Wirtsrechte. Anstände mit der Regierung von Bern wegen der Wirtsrechte in Langenthal, Roggwÿl u. Murgenthal).

85 StABE, C I, a F. Wangen.

86 Prior Alberich Graf to *Schultheiß* Ulrich Dulliker, St. Urban, June 21, 1651 (StALU, KU 512 S, fol. 25); *Schultheiß* Ulrich Dulliker to Prior Alberich Graf, Lucerne, June 20, 1651 (StALU, KU 512 R, fol. 43); protocol of the city council of Lucerne, June 8, 1679 (StALU, RP Bd. 78, fol. 171r).

87 EA 6,1a, 20, 26, 496, 780.

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Schnyder and other abbots regularly demanded that the monks be replaced by secular clergymen.

The abbots of St. Urban and Wettingen reconciled these two opposing roles by adopting different registers when addressing Catholics versus Protestants. They highlighted the religious component of their role for Catholics and almost completely concealed it when dealing with Protestants. This communication strategy, well known to many including the Cistercian abbots, allowed all those involved to remain faithful to their respective normative framework and enabled the establishment of reliable and stable relations between Catholics and Protestants. By applying this strategy, the abbots of St. Urban not only managed to expand the possessions of the monastery east- and westward, but also constructed and maintained a security network, thus ensuring the survival of the monastery and its autonomy throughout the seventeenth century. The abbots of Wettingen, in contrast, failed to do so: they neither managed to keep their monastery from harm in the 1650s, nor did they manage to knit equally close ties to their Protestant neighbors.

Within the seventeenth-century Swiss Confederacy, characterized by the presence of two opposing confessional blocks, the monasteries of St. Urban and Wettingen had a stabilizing effect. Instead of inciting religions conflicts, as did the Capuchins and Jesuits, the Cistercians, well aware of their exposed and fragile situation, aimed to conserve the status quo, the precarious religious peace. They did so by fostering good relations with Protestants as well as by preventing religious conflicts within their vicinity. Thereby, with the help and in the interest of secular authorities, the Cistercians not only stabilized the established order, but also enabled both sides, Catholics and Protestants alike, to coexist more or less peacefully throughout the Old Regime.

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Thomas Fässler

Monks and Reformed Theologians as Friends?

Ecumenical Thawing between the Protestant Town of Zurich and the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln in the Eighteenth Century

1. Introduction: Zurich, Schwyz, and Einsiedeln

It is a history full of tension that connected the two neighbors Zurich and Schwyz in the Old Swiss Confederacy. Tensions between these two cantons not only existed starting with the Reformation, which divided them into different religious camps, but had already been established earlier. One might remember, for example, the Old Zurich War (1436–1450), when Zurich imposed a grain embargo on the people of Schwyz in order to put them under pressure and to induce them to give in politically.[1] Such experiences—together with an extensive range of other reasons—certainly contributed to the fact that it was inconceivable for the rural Schwyzers to join a religious reform movement that emanated from urban Zurich. The followers of this movement criticized much of the traditional, but in their eyes unbiblical and therefore to be rejected, forms of piety that were practiced in central Switzerland, not least the pilgrimage, for example, to the Marian shrine of Einsiedeln. Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) knew this pilgrimage from his own experience, as he had worked there as a village priest between 1516 and the end of 1518. He had been deliberately appointed to this office by the Benedictine monks who esteemed him as a humanist—as Leo Jud (1482–1542) did later on.[2]

The Benedictine abbey of Einsiedeln, founded in 934, also had a number of links with Zurich: for example, it not only had possessions in Zurich's dominion and in the city itself;[3] since the High Middle Ages, the abbot was also entitled to the *Burgrecht* of

1 Martin Illi, "Alter Zürichkrieg," in Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz, version from May 4, 2015, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/008877/2015-05-04/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

2 Johann B. Müller and Odilo Ringholz, "Diebold von Geroldseck, Pfleger des Gotteshauses Einsiedeln: Ein Bild aus der Zeit der schweizerischen Glaubensspaltung," *Mitteilungen des Historischen Vereins des Kantons Schwyz* (hereafter *MHVS*) 7 (1890): 31; Odilo Ringholz, *Wallfahrtsgeschichte Unserer Lieben Frau von Einsiedeln: Ein Beitrag zur Culturgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1896), 19–20; Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch der Fürstlichen Benediktinerabtei U.L. Frau von Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln: Selbstverlag des Stiftes, 1933), 261.

3 Paul Kläui, "Untersuchungen zur Gütergeschichte des Klosters Einsiedeln vom 10.–14. Jahrhundert," in *Festgabe Hans Nabholz zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1944), 78–120; Hagen Keller, *Kloster Einsiedeln im ottonischen Schwaben* (Freiburg im Breisgau: E. Albert, 1964), 13–47, 104–106; Paul Brändli, "Mittelalterliche Grenzstreitigkeiten im Alpenraum," *MHVS* 78 (1986): 71–81; Joachim Salzgeber, "Einsiedeln," in *Helvetia Sacra,* vol. 3/1.1 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1986), 522, 524–525; idem,

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Zurich. In the nineteenth century this gave rise to the right of honorary citizenship, which is still conferred on the current head of the monastery today.[4] In addition, since its foundation in 1130, the female Benedictine monastery of Fahr, located outside the city gates of Zurich, belonged to Einsiedeln and was ruled by its abbot.[5]

2. Reformation in the Sixteenth Century as a Turning Point

Not surprisingly, the Reformation of the 1520s also marked a break in the relationship between Zurich and the abbey of Einsiedeln, by far the most important shrine of central Catholic Switzerland.[6] Since then, their mutual relationship had been complex, not least because the relationship between the monks of Einsiedeln and Schwyz was not without tension. For the abbot, for example, the aforementioned *Burgrecht* offered the possibility to flee to the safety of Zurich's city walls in the event of disputes with Schwyz. Both parties were also interested in good cooperation for economic reasons: for example, the grain that the monastery bought in Thurgau, Breisgau, Baden, and Swabia was brought to Einsiedeln via Zurich.[7] For these reasons, both sides took a sober and pragmatic approach to the matter. This can be seen, for example, in the case of the Einsiedeln dominions in the Protestant areas of Zurich, of which Männedorf can be taken as a concrete example: In the tenth century, the monastery was given a *Hube*—a relatively minor possession—by Duchess Reginlinde (d. 958/9), to which a *Meierhof* as residence of the local administrator was later added. In 1494, in order to consolidate and increase their possessions and dominion, the monks acquired a considerable estate from the monastery of Pfäfers, as well as the tithes and other privileges and rights, for the proud sum of 4,000 guilders. Based on the tithes delivered in kind, the monastery's land holdings can be estimated at around fifty hectares. The Reformation did not affect these ownership rights and legal conditions: the Catholic Einsiedeln Abbey continued

"Landschenkungen an das Kloster Einsiedeln im 10 Jahrhundert," in *Festschrift zum tausendsten Todestag des seligen Abtes Gregor, des dritten Abtes von Einsiedeln 996–1996*, ed. Odo Lang (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag Erzabtei St. Ottilien, 1996), 243–266; Albert Hug, "Einsiedeln (Benediktinerabtei)," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from October 29, 2009, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/011491/2009-10-29/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

4 Odilo Ringholz, *Kurze chronologische Uebersicht der Geschichte des fürstlichen Benediktinerstiftes Unserer Lieben Frau von Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln: Selbstverlag des Stiftes, 1900), 53; Robert Hoppeler, "Zürichs Burgrecht mit dem Abt von Einsiedeln," *Der Geschichtsfreund* 82 (1927): 136, 151.

5 Joachim Salzgeber, "Fahr," in *Helvetia Sacra*, vol. 3/1.3 (Bern: Francke Verlag 1986), 1760.

6 Christian Sieber has called it the "Landesheiligtum der katholischen Innerschweiz." See Christian Sieber, "Adelskloster, Wallfahrtsort, Gerichtshof, Landesheiligtum—Einsiedeln und die Alte Eidgenossenschaft," *MHVS* (1996): 44, 49; Erwin Horat, "Der Tourismus," in *Die Geschichte des Kantons Schwyz* (Schwyz: Historischer Verein des Kantons Schwyz, 2012), 5: 172.

7 Christoph Baumgartner, "Die Sust zu Bäch," *MHVS* 100 (2008): 391.

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to receive the tithes from its *Gotteshausleute* (vassals), who now adhered to the new faith. In addition, based on proposals made by the authorities of Zurich, it appointed the Reformed minister there, paid him, and maintained part of the church building (the choir) and the rectory.[8] Of course, the monastery successfully tried to keep the points of contact with Zurich to a minimum, in order to maintain as much independence as possible, especially in economic terms, which was demonstrated, for example, by the fact that—in contrast to the inhabitants of the village—the monastery did not acquire grain at the Zurich grain market but rather through direct relationships in the regions where it was cultivated.

Far more polemical than the relations with the secular authorities were those with the Zurich clergy. Among the critics of Einsiedeln and its pilgrimage in the seventeenth century, the Zurich theologian Johann Heinrich Heidegger (1633–98) in particular stood out with his 1669 publication *Dissertatio synodalis adversus religiosas et votivas peregrinationes*.[9] The Benedictine monks of Einsiedeln did not let his criticism go unanswered. Abbot Augustin Reding von Biberegg (1625–1692), for example, tried to refute it with theological arguments. As a respected preacher and theologian—Pope Innocent XI (Benedetto Odescalchi, r. 1676–1689) honorably called him a "second Augustine" (in Latin "alter Augustinus")—he was personally commissioned by the pope during a visit to Rome to write, from his position in a Protestant frontier region, against the teachings of the Reformation.[10] The result was, among other writings, the eight-volume work *Oecumenici Tridentini Concilii Veritas Inextincta: Ne apice quidem laesa Ex Praesumptuosa Joannis Henrici Heideggeri Tigurini Anatome Historico-Theologica* (The unerased truth of the Ecumenical Council of Trent, not in the least damaged by the presumptuous historical-theological dissection of Johann Heidegger of Zurich), which to this day—like other works of his—awaits not only a modern edition, but also a translation and scholarly commentary.[11]

8 Joachim Salzgeber, "Die Besitzungen und Zehnten des Klosters Einsiedeln in Männedorf," *MHVS* 75 (1983): 151–153, 158.

9 Johann H. Heidegger, *Dissertatio synodalis adversus religiosas et votivas peregrinationes: In specie Hierosolymitanam, Romanam, Compostellensem, Lauretanam, ac inprimis Eremitanam Helvetiorum* (Zurich 1669).

10 Ringholz, *Wallfahrtsgeschichte Unserer Lieben Frau von Einsiedeln*, 358–359; Anja Buschow Oechslin and Werner Oechslin, *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Schwyz: Der Bezirk Einsiedeln I; Das Benediktinerkloster Einsiedeln*, (Bern: Birkhäuser, 2003), vol. 3/1: 118–119.

11 However, Reding's treatise against Gallicanism, published in 1687, which had been eagerly awaited by Nuncio Giacomo Cantelmo (1645–1702), seems not to have fulfilled the nuncio's expectations. In his correspondence, Cantelmo speaks of errors and omissions, so that he did not further promote the publication (see correspondence Cantelmo–Casoni, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Segr. Stato, Svizzera, Add. IV).

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3. Rapprochement in the Eighteenth Century

A century later, however, a remarkable rapprochement can be observed between Zurich ministers and Einsiedeln monks. This rapprochement will be the focus of this chapter, which traces its reasons, its effects, and its end. Basically, this rapprochement can be understood in the context of a more general ecumenical effort, marked by postulates of the Enlightenment. This new togetherness even allowed the Einsiedeln conventuals to act as intermediaries between Zurich and Schwyz in a protracted political dispute. This dispute broke out in 1766 along the border between their territories in the upper part of Lake Zurich, which in the following years was repeatedly a topic of discussion at the Federal Diet. Since the disputed piece of lake was a section of a heavily frequented trade route, the lucrative customs revenues, which both parties were not willing to forego, were the main reason for the dispute. In 1774, the Einsiedeln monastery was called upon to mediate in this dispute, which was not definitively settled until June 6–8, 1796, by an arbitration ruling of the Tagsatzung. Thus, it happened that in its walls the two parties to the dispute sat down at the same table. In 1776, for its generous hospitality the city of Zurich gave the monastery a 336-piece porcelain set, known as the "Einsiedler Service," which today is in the possession of the Swiss National Museum.[12]

3.1 The Ecumenical Idea of the Enlightenment

This anecdote in the history of relations between Zurich and Einsiedeln makes sense in the context of the 1770s, when several Einsiedeln monks and Zurich theologians, churchmen, and scholars were in contact with each other, and these relations sometimes even grew into close friendships. The motives for this exchange seem to have been manifold, although the foundation was undoubtedly the already mentioned ecumenical thinking of the Enlightenment: no longer did they want to fight each other in fruitless quarrels, but rather to emphasize what they had in common, or even to strive for a reunion of the two churches as an expression of unity in Christ. Other reasons for the lively correspondence were curiosity, intellectual interest in the theological positions of the other, and the desire to use the opportunity to present one's own convictions without engaging in polemics. Likewise, the conviction that together they could counteract those currents within the Enlightenment that opposed the Church, Christian revelation, and

12 Gerold Meyer von Knonau, ed., *Amtliche Sammlung der ältern Eidgenössischen Abschiede, vol. 8: Die Eidgenössischen Abschiede aus dem Zeitraume von 1778 bis 1798* (Zurich 1856), 229–232; Martin Styger, "Die Hafengüter bei Richterswil und die Staatsgrenze zwischen Schwyz und Zürich," *MHVS* 38 (1931): 15–19, 43, 45, 47; Rudolf Schnyder, "Das Einsiedler Service von 1775/76 aus der Zürcher Porzellanmanufaktur," *Kunst und Architektur in der Schweiz (K+A)* 48 (1997): 60–63; Samuel Wyder, "Eine bisher unbekannte Karte des oberen Teils des Zürichsees (um 1635) von Hans Conrad Gyger," *Cartographica Helvetica* 46 (2012): 46–48.

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religion much more effectively than they could alone may—as will be explained—have moved both sides to this closing of ranks. Nevertheless, anti-monastic Enlightenment polemics came from Zurich with no small degree of vehemence. As an example, the anonymous treatise *Reflexionen eines Schweizers über die Frage: Ob es der Catholischen Eidgenoßschaft nicht zuträglich wäre, die regularen Orden gänzlich aufheben, oder wenigstens einzuschränken*? (Reflections of a Swiss on the question: Whether it would not be beneficial for the Catholic Confederation to abolish the regular orders completely, or at least to restrict them) may be mentioned, which not only shot at the Einsiedeln monastery in particular, but also demanded, as a conclusion of the considerations made therein, that half of all monasteries in Switzerland be abolished.[13]

3.2 Interdenominational Friendships

A telling example of such a highly lively friendship between a Zurich citizen and a Einsiedeln monk is that between Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801) and Father Johannes Schreiber (1731–1805). The correspondence testifying to this close relationship is now in the Zurich Central Library, and even the oldest surviving letter, dated summer 1772, makes it clear that the Benedictine from Einsiedeln must have already been acquainted with the entire Lavater family.[14] In the letters that the two wrote to each other in the following months and years, they indeed exchanged views not only on theological topics, but also on private and family matters. For Lavater, Schreiber probably also wrote his treatise, *Kurze Berichtigung der katholischen Glaubenslehre zu Hebung alles unrichtigen Misverstandes zur Beförderung freundschäftlicher Erträglichkeit der sich so nahe verwandten reformirten und katholischen Glaubensgemeinen, von einem katholischen Ordensgeistlichen, P. Joan. Screiber, gegen einen Freund in Zürich gestellt* (Brief correction of the Catholic doctrine for the elimination of all incorrect misunderstanding for the promotion of friendly understanding between the so closely related Reformed and Catholic religious communities, by a Catholic religious, Fr. Joan. Screiber, for a friend in Zurich).[15] In this undated, unfortunately only incompletely preserved work, Father Schreiber presented in detail—as he did in other writings[16]—the Catholic understanding of the sacraments, tradition, veneration of the saints, the Bible, the use of images as well as of purgatory, etc. Schreiber seems to have answered the following provocative remark by the Zurich minister Johann Jakob Stolz (1753–1821), who was

13 Johann H. Heidegger, *Reflexionen eines Schweizers über die Frage: Ob es der Catholischen Eidgenoßschaft nicht zuträglich wäre, die regularen Orden gänzlich aufzuheben, oder wenigstens einzuschränken?* (Zurich 1769), 45.

14 Joachim Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater: Eine ökumenische Episode aus dem 18. Jahrhundert," *Maria Einsiedeln* 86, no. 1 (1981): 13.

15 Klosterarchiv Einsiedeln (hereafter KAE), EM 1624.

16 E. g., KAE, EM 9.

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active in Germany, in one of his works, which had been sent to Einsiedeln. In this writing—described by Schreiber as an "otherwise excellent reflection" ("sonst vortreffliche Betrachtung")—he read, as he quoted: "Whoever awakens from stupid bigotry in the Roman Church must awaken to unbelief and cannot escape it."[17]

The exchange of ideas on topics that were controversial between members of the two denominations was characteristic of ecumenical relationships such as those that the two theologians cultivated with each other. It is also consistent with the fact that at the end of 1778 Schreiber sent his friend in Zurich a manuscript for review, which he had only just completed and in which he wrote about the form and shape of the Church (e. g., its hierarchy, foundations, etc.).[18] How much Lavater appreciated Schreiber is evident, for example, in his decision to include Schreiber in his *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe* (Physiognomic fragments for the promotion of human knowledge and human love), in which he printed Schreiber's silhouette as an example of a "religious man" ("Religioser"). The characterization of the Einsiedeln monk amounts to a veritable eulogy:

> This man is one of the most honest, open-minded, cheerful, service-minded souls! […] How I love it, this strong pious innocence! This ideal of a monk! this whole man in his religious dress, which suits him so well! how I like to confide in him! how I would communicate with him without compulsion, without contradiction, I would confess to him!—How his mind, his science and his heart are in the best, most charitable harmony! […] you will not find a more faithful brotherly soul.[19]

Schreiber, of course, was not the only Catholic with whom Lavater was in personal contact, although it was precisely because of such close relations with Catholics that some Protestants suspected Lavater of being a crypto-Catholic.[20] Lavater also counted other monks in Einsiedeln among his circle of friends. Abbot Marian Müller (1724–80), for example, was one of them, even before his election as head of the Einsiedeln monastery.

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17 "Wer zumal bey der Römischen Kirche von dummer Bigotterie erwacht, der muß, wie izt die Umstände liegen, zum Unglauben erwachen, und kann per se nicht widerstehen," KAE, EM 1624, 1.

18 Zentralbibliothek Zürich (hereafter ZBZ), FA Lav Ms 526.170.

19 "Dieser Mann ist eine der redlichsten, freymüthigsten, heitersten, dienstfertigsten Seelen! […] Wie ich sie liebe, diese starke fromme Unschuld! dieses Mönchsideal! diesen ganzen Menschen in seinem so trefflich ihm stehenden Ordenskleide! die ich mich ihm so gern vertraue! wie so ohne Zwang, ohne Widerspruch ich mich ihm mittheilen, ich ihm beichten würde!—Wie sein Verstand, seine Wissenschaft und sein Herz in der besten gemeinnützigsten Harmonie sind! […] eine treuere Bruderseele findest du nicht," Johann C. Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe* (Leipzig, Winterthur, 1775), 260–261.

20 Hans Grassl, "Katholische Unionsprojekte des 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Folgen," in *Zwischen Polemik und Irenik: Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis der Konfessionen im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Georg Schwaiger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 49.

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The intention of the enlightened Zurich scholar and writer to dedicate his translation of the *Palingénésie philosophique* by Charles Bonnet (1720–93) to him in 1769 may be understood as an expression of this close bond.[21] After he had learned of the death of Abbot Nikolaus Imfeld (1694–1773), whom he also held in high esteem, he wrote in a letter of August 6, 1773, that the new head of the monastery should be an "enemy of all superstition, a friend of truth and light—fiery, courageous."[22] The fact that his friend Marian Müller emerged as abbot from this election certainly pleased him, as he personally traveled to Einsiedeln on August 17, 1773—only a few days after the election—to congratulate him on this honorable new task.[23] From the written testimonies of their friendship it is clear that it was carried by a common hope for confessional unity. This hope can be seen, for example, in one of the poems they wrote for each other, some of which were even published: Formulated to give thanks for Lavater's blessings on the occasion of his election as abbot, Müller prefaced this poem with Jesus' prayer for the unity of all who believe in Him (John 17.20 s.). The author not only vowed everlasting love to the addressee and affirmed endless friendship, but also expressed his most ardent wish that all prejudices would disappear forever.[24] The term "friendship" seems to have been used here and in other corresponding passages as an expression of a genuinely intimate relationship, close to the meaning commonly used today.

The high esteem that can be inferred from these lines was not only shown to Lavater by Müller; rather, in Einsiedeln—as the reformed Zurich pastor Leonhard Meister

21 Ulrich Im Hof, *Aufklärung in der Schweiz* (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1970), 79; Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater," 12; Oskar Köhler, "Die Aufklärung," in *Die Kirche im Zeitalter des Absolutismus und der Aufklärung*, Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, vol. 5, ed. Hubert Jedin (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1985), 397; Gisela Luginbühl-Weber, "[…] zu thun, […] was Sokrates getan hätte': Lavater, Mendelssohn und Bonnet über die Unsterblichkeit," in *Das Antlitz Gottes im Antlitz des Menschen: Zugänge zu Johann Kaspar Lavater*, ed. Karl Pestalozzi and Horst Weigelt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 122–125. He ultimately dedicated his translation, entitled *Philosophische Untersuchung der Beweise für das Christenthum* (Zurich 1769), to the German Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786): Laure Ognois, "'Der Himmel werde uns gnädig seyn und den Greuel der Verwüstung abwenden': Kontinuität religiösen Denkens über Krieg und Gewalt in der 'Sattelzeit'; Zürich und die Waadt in der Helvetik (1798–1803)," in *Krieg und Christentum: Religiöse Gewalttheorien in der Kriegserfahrung des Westens*, ed. Andreas Holzem, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009), 633–655, here 644.

22 "Feind alles Aberglaubens, ein Freünd der Wahrheit und des Lichts—feürig, muthig," ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 580.121.

23 Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater," 14.

24 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 519.253; Stefan Röllin, "Die Relativierung der konfessionellen Grenzen und Lebensformen im 18. Jahrhundert unter dem Einfluss von Pietismus und Aufklärung," in *Ökumenische Kirchengeschichte der Schweiz*, 2nd ed., ed. Rudolf Dellsperger, Lukas Schenker, and Lukas Vischer (Fribourg: Paulusverlag, 1998), 202; Johann C. Lavater, *Johann Caspar Lavater: Ausgewählte Werke in historisch-kritischer Ausgabe: Ergänzungsband: Bibliographie der Werke Lavaters*, no. 37/1–3, ed. Horst Weigelt (Zurich: NZZ Libro, 2001), 35.

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(1741–1811) put it—he is said to have been revered almost like a saint.[25] Lavater's great wish was to receive silhouettes of as many Einsiedeln monks as possible, including Abbot Marian Müller, for his aforementioned physiognomic studies, which he already possessed from Father Schreiber and from Johann Nepomuk Weber (1746–1810), who was also a friend of his. This request, however, was not fulfilled, probably not least because the abbot thought little of these studies and, more generally, of the idea of inferring the soul of people from facial features and body shapes. Like Müller , the Einsiedeln fathers Sebastian Imfeld (1763–1837) and Konrad Tanner (1752–1825) dismissed such convictions as foolish superstitions.[26]

Lavater was by no means the only Protestant with whom the Einsiedeln monks were in close contact; rather, they cultivated a friendly exchange with many other Reformed people, so that an impressive network emerges, for example with the future antistes Johann Jakob Hess (1741–1828) and with Johann Rudolf Schinz the Elder (1745–1790). In each case, as far as can be traced, the contact was initiated by the Protestant side. Often, the point of departure was a concrete request, for example in the field of history, whereby the monks were asked for information and source material.[27] In the late autumn of 1792, for example, the younger Johann Rudolf Schinz (1762–1829) approached Father Fintan Steinegger (1730–1809) with a question about the early history of the monastery, a subject he had already been studying intensively for some time.[28] Father Steinegger did not let himself be asked for long, since—as already mentioned—Schinz's father had already been in contact with several monks and had enjoyed great respect in the monastery, which he had often visited personally.[29] Eloquent testimony to this is a letter of recommendation from Abbot Marian Müller to the Regensburg Bishop Anton Ignaz von Fugger-Glött (1711–87) dated May 7, 1775, in which he described Schinz as a "man

25 Leonhard Meister, *Kleine Reisen durch einige Schweizer-Cantone. Ein Auszug aus zerstreuten Briefen und Tagregistern* (Basel 1782), 90.

26 Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntniß und Menschenliebe*, 261–262; Sebastian Imfeld and Konrad Tanner, *Geschichte der berühmtesten Heiligen Gottes, auf jeden Tag des Jahres: nebst Erklärung der höhern Feste der Kirche, mit moralischen Anmerkungen, zur Ehre der Religion, und Erbauung der frommen Gläubigen, aus ächten Quellen gesammelt und verfasset in dem Fürstlichen Gotteshause Einsiedeln* (Einsiedeln 1793), 80, 1203; Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater," 17; Christoph Friedrich and Antje Männetstätter, "Die Zürcher Arzt-Apotheker-Familie Lavater und Johann Wolfgang von Goethe," Gesnerus 55, nos. 1–2 (1998): 10. In 1776, Abbot Marian stated in his account book that Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (Physiognomic fragments), published the year before, were "a work of little value" ("ein werk von wenig nuzen"), which he nevertheless "had to subscribe to out of friendship" ("aus freündschaft [habe] praenumeriren müßen"), KAE, A.TP.21, 160.

27 Paul Kälin, "Die Aufklärung in Uri, Schwyz und Unterwalden im 18. Jahrhundert," *MHVS* 45 (1946): 19, 23.

28 ZBZ, Ms V 319.65.

29 ZBZ, Ms Car XV 164e. 6.

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extremely popular in our region because of his erudition and integrity."[30] An article published by Schinz at the beginning of 1784 in his *Beyträge zur nähern Kenntniß des Schweizerlandes* (Contributions to a closer knowledge of Switzerland) speaks of the high esteem in which he held the monks of Einsiedeln. In this article, he praised the "very good and comfortable school" ("sehr gute und bequeme Lehranstalt") of the Benedictine monks of Einsiedeln in Bellinzona, whose classes, he continued, could be attended free of charge in a newly constructed building, which was "comfortable and in accordance with modern taste."[31] Prince-Abbot Beat Küttel (1733–1808), Müller's successor as head of the Einsiedeln monastery from 1780, thanked Schinz for these words not only with an appreciative letter, in which he described him as a man of "general respect and best reputation" ("allgemeine[r] Achtung und beste[m] Ruf"), but also with an enclosed gold ducat.[32] This school of Einsiedeln in Ticino was at that time presided over by the above-mentioned Father Konrad Tanner, with whom Schinz also cultivated friendly relations. Thus, the Einsiedeln monk and future abbot wrote to him in the summer of 1786 from Ticino: "I am feeling, against you, all gratitude and friendship," as well as: "Let your noble soul not tire of further dedicating its trust and friendship to me."[33]

In the case of Johann Jakob Hess, also mentioned above, it was his interest in history that built the bridge with the Einsiedeln Abbey; for example, in the fall of 1790, the then librarian Father Sebastian Imfeld lent him a parchment manuscript to Zurich, after Father Konrad Tanner had already lent him the Einsiedeln Codex 326(1076)—a miscellaneous manuscript of various contents—in his capacity as librarian. In his accompanying letter, Imfeld said that it gave him pleasure "to render a service to an

30 "[…] wegen seiner Gelehrtheit, und Rechtschaffenheit in unser Gegend überaus beliebter Mann." The reason for this letter was Schinz's request to be able to visit the well-known, highly controversial miracle doctor Johann Joseph Gaßner (1727–1779), ZBZ, Ms Car XV 164f. 30. Gaßner also received a visit from Lavater in the summer of 1778: Hans Grassl, "Katholische Unionsprojekte des 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Folgen," 48–49.

31 "[…] bequem und nach dem modernen Geschmack"; Johann R. Schinz, "Die Graffschaft Bellinzona oder Bellenz," in *Beyträge zur nähern Kenntniß des Schweizerlandes. Zweytes Heft* (1784), 240–242. This higher educational institution in Bellinzona was run by the monks of Einsiedeln from 1675 to 1852. Originally it was run by Jesuits, but it was soon taken over by Einsiedeln at the request of the then nuncio, Odoardo Cibo (1619–1705), and the cantons that held the bailiwicks in Ticino: Gall Morel, "Geschichtliches über die Schule in Einsiedeln," in *Jahresbericht über die Erziehungsanstalt des Benediktiner-Stiftes Einsiedeln im Studienjahre 1854/55* (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1855), 27–28; Rudolf Henggeler, "Geschichte der Residenz und des Gymnasiums der Benediktiner von Einsiedeln in Bellenz," *MHVS* 27 (1918): 110; Rudolf Henggeler, "Abt Konrad Tanner von Einsiedeln," *MHVS* 33 (1925): 14, 16; Joachim Salzgeber, "Einsiedeln," in *Helvetia Sacra*, 3/1.1: 539.

32 ZBZ, Ms Car XV 164b. 12.

33 ZBZ, Ms Car XV 164f. 1, Brief 1: "Ich bin gantz Gefühl, gegen Sie, gantz Dankbarkeit und Freündschaft. Lassen Sie Ihre edle Seele nicht müde werden, mir ferner ihr Zutrauen und Freündschaft wiedmen."

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invaluable man."[34] A much closer friendship seems to have connected Hess with the above-mentioned Father Johannes Schreiber, who wrote to him in a letter of November 1777 that he "intended to love him eternally as his best friend."[35] Hess' contacts with Einsiedeln were not limited to written correspondence; he visited the monastery several times in person, the first time in the early summer of 1775, bringing with him one of his works. At least in Father Schreiber's eyes, this first personal encounter was of far too short a duration, as he wrote to his friend on June 8, 1775: "Your stay here was all too fleeting, all too short, for you to have been met according to your merits and according to my most gracious prince's and my sincere heart's desire."[36]

Existing relationships could also serve as a basis for establishing new contacts. For example, when the enlightened pastor of Reiden, Karl Josef Kopp (1741–1805), wanted to take a look at Lavater's library, it was Father Schreiber who established the connection between the two clergymen. Lavater in turn provided Schreiber with the address of the Zurich theologian Johannes Tobler (1732–1808).[37]

3.3 Exchange of Theological Ideas

As already illustrated by Hess' first visit to Einsiedeln, such relationships could also lead to an exchange of books.[38] In the summer of 1775, Schreiber did not wait long to read at least the aforementioned book, so that he wrote to his friend a short time later expressing his enthusiasm about it. In his letter, Schreiber revealed that even "the most gracious Prince [Abbot Marian Müller], who is capable of judging good writing," had "so eagerly requested to read" it.[39] This shows that the books that came into the monastery through contact with Zurich theologians and scholars were passed on among the monks, who—as can be assumed—probably also discussed their content with each other. This is consistent, for example, with Father Tanner's remark in a letter to Johann

34 "[…] einem unschätzbaren Mann einen Dienst zu erweisen," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181u, no. 277, no. 287, no. 319; KAE, GM 18, 111.

35 "[…] ewig als [s]einen besten Freünd zu lieben gedenke," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181g, no. 58; ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181u, no. 247.

36 "Ihr hiesiger Aufenthalt war ja allzu flüchtig allzu kurz, als das Ihnen nach Ihrem Verdienste und nach meines gnädigsten Fürstens und meinem aufrichtigen Herzenswunsche hatte begegnet werden können," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 144.

37 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 526.164; ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 526.170. On Kopp, see Waltraud Hörsch and Josef Bannwart, *Luzerner Pfarr- und Weltklerus 1700–1800: Ein biographisches Lexikon*, Luzerner historische Veröffentlichungen 33 (Lucerne: Rex-Verlag, 1997): 234.

38 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 580.122; Kälin, "Die Aufklärung in Uri, Schwyz und Unterwalden im 18. Jahrhundert," 31–2, 36, 42.

39 "[…] dass es auch 'der gnädigste Fürst, der eine gute Schrift zu beurtheilen im stande ist, so begierig zu lesen verlangt'" habe, ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 144.

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Jakob Hess of September 22, 1796, that he had often read to fellow monks from his "incomparable sermons."[40]

The giving and lending of books provided the basis for exchanges about one's own convictions. The letters indeed testify to an interest in the positions of the other, which were no longer condemned a priori as erroneous beliefs. Rather, in reasoned tolerance and mutual respect, sometimes even in sympathy and esteem, each sought to know and to understand the other better. To this end, the correspondents asked each other questions about their respective ideas of God and the Church, and explained their own views or sought to refute their counterparts, but without entering into any confessional polemics. Out of the experience of how enriching such an unagitated exchange could be and what possibilities it offered for clearing up misunderstandings about one's own doctrine, both sides tried to persuade others to adopt such an attitude of tolerance as well. However, the difficulty of this was shown, for example, by the fact that at the same time pilgrims passing through Zurich territory were loudly derided as "Einsiedeln fools"—an expression of how much the Swiss Confederacy had been characterized by intolerance and confessional demarcation for more than two centuries.[41]

According to the Roman Curia, the faithful were not to have access to such Protestant works, as they were considered "heretical." The Einsiedeln monks therefore attempted to obtain privileges from the Roman Inquisition that would allow them to possess and read them. They were certainly well advised, since the monastery's geographical location on the border between Protestant and Catholic territory meant that it could be assumed by different parties that the thoughts of the other side would be studied, if only to prepare counter-arguments. There was also good reason to believe that the close contact with the Zurich churchmen had not gone unnoticed, in particular by those who—not least because of any other tensions—could have accused the monks of disobedience to Roman norms, whether other monasteries, bishops, individual secular clergy, the nuncio, or other influential persons. For example, in 1771, in order to forestall such possible accusations and to prove his own orthodoxy, Abbot Nikolaus Imfeld

40 "[…] unvergleichlichen Predigten," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181ad, no. 110.

41 Jakob Werner, "Zürcher Besuch im Kloster Engelberg (1770ff.). Nach Aufzeichnungen von Pfarrer Rudolf Schinz," *Zürcher Taschenbuch* 33 (1910): 153; Markus Ries, "Vom freien Denken herausgefordert: Katholische Theologie zwischen Aufklärung und Romantik," in *Kirche im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Manfred Weitlauff (Regensburg: Pustet, 1998), 58–59; Christopher Spehr, *Aufklärung und Ökumene: Reunionsversuche zwischen Katholiken und Protestanten im deutschsprachigen Raum des späteren 18. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 411–412; Peter Hersche, *Muße und Verschwendung: Europäische Gesellschaft und Kultur im Barockzeitalter* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2006), 822. In this context, it must be remembered that the conflict between Protestants and Catholics had once again culminated in a war in 1712 (Zweiter Villmergerkrieg): Andreas Lindt, "Zum Verhältnis der Konfessionen in der Schweiz im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Zwischen Polemik und Irenik: Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis der Konfessionen im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Georg Schwaiger (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1977), 58–59.

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applied to the Roman Inquisition for the aforementioned privilege for his monastery to possess and read books from the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, which was granted in a document signed by six cardinals on July 4, 1771. However, this privilege was limited to a circle of seven monks, and even they were to be deprived of certain works, including those of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Charles Dumoulin (1500–1566), and Pietro Giannone (1687–1748). Only the monks mentioned by name—including Father Fintan Steinegger—were allowed to read Protestant works "secreto" ("in secret") "ad haereses et errores redarguendos et confutandos," i. e., "to refute and rebut heresies and errors." Interestingly, neither the later abbot Marian Müller nor Father Johannes Schreiber belonged to this select circle whose composition can be explained at least in part by their respective duties (e. g., as librarian, village priest, director of the printing office, "instructor of converts," etc.).[42]

The gradual extension of the above-mentioned privilege to other circles seems to be an after-the-fact legitimization of what had been customary for some time: When Abbot Beat asked the newly appointed nuncio in Lucerne, Giuseppe Vinci (1736–1795), for a renewal of the permission in 1785, the nuncio granted this privilege to him and to all those to whom the abbot would attest "an unshakable conscience on the basis of proven and tested intellectual capacity, piety, knowledge and zeal for the faith" ("tuta conscientia propter probate illorum ac perspecta ingenium, pietatem, scientiam ac zelum fidei"), but with continued restrictions on certain writings.[43] In the nuncio's letter of February 19, 1796, which renewed the privilege shortly before the end of the Ancien Régime, Abbot Beat was asked to keep the works in question well locked up ("sub clavi") so that they would not fall into the hands of unauthorized persons.[44] Even while in exile following the invasion of French revolutionary troops in 1798, on June 20, 1801, Abbot Beat obtained the renewal of the old privileges from Rome, including once again the "facultas pro lectione librorum prohibitorum."[45] The circle of readers was definitely opened on April 25, 1805, when Nuncio Fabrizio Sceberras Testaferrata (1757–1843) allowed the abbot and all his priest-monks, without exception, to read forbidden books.[46] This meant that any theologian in the Einsiedeln monastery who wished to adhere to the official Roman directives and who was interested in Protestant works was now free to read the relevant writings.

42 KAE, A.FA.9.

43 KAE, A.FA.10.

44 KAE, A.FA.11.

45 KAE, A.DA.7. The Roman letter was signed by Giuseppe Antonio Sala (1762–1839), a future cardinal and top diplomat.

46 KAE, A.FA.12.

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3.4 Convinced of Possessing the Truth

In spite of all the openness, however, it also becomes clear that the Einsiedeln monks understood themselves to be unwaveringly on the side of truth. This conviction is expressed, for example, in a passage of a work entitled *Einsiedlische Chronik, Oder Kurze Geschichte Des Fürstlichen Gottes-hauses Einsiedlen* (Einsiedeln chronicle, or short history of the princely house of God of Einsiedeln), which was published in 1783 with the collaboration of Father Fintan Steinegger:

> After Zwingli had already made a very large following for himself, in 1519 he began for the first time to publicly present his errors in the pulpit, and this—unfortunately!—with such regrettable success that in 1525 the city of Zurich, so pious and well Catholic-minded, abandoned the faith it had inherited from its godly forefathers.[47]

Even monks like Steinegger and Tanner, who were the most receptive to various concerns and ideas of the Enlightenment, could never have imagined accepting a doctrine other than that of the Catholic Church, and were even afraid of having taken steps here and there that contradicted this Catholic faith.[48] This question was existential in nature for them, since it was part of their basic conviction that the Catholic faith was the only way to eternal salvation. Thus, for example, in a book of edification on the saints, written together with Imfeld, Tanner exhorted the readers "to hold firmly to the holy Roman Church by an inviolable obedience, apart from which there is no hope of salvation."[49] Thus, the manifold ecumenical friendships by no means led to overlooking any differences for the sake of these relationships. The monks dealt with the tension that resulted from this in such a way that—as Father Schreiber wrote—they distinguished between dogmatic, civil, and personal tolerance: while the brother's error was to be hated, he himself was to be loved.[50]

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47 "Nachdem Zwingli sich nun schon einen sehr grossen Anhang gemacht hatte: so fing er im Jahre 1519. das Erstemahl an, seine Irrthümer öffentlich auf der Kanzel vorzutragen, und dies leider! mit einem so bedauernswürdigen Erfolge, dass im Jahre 1525. die umsonst so fromme und gut katholischgesinnte Stadt Zürich den Glauben, so sie von ihren gottseligen Vorältern ererbet hatte, verlassen." Marian Herzog and Fintan Steinegger, *Einsiedlische Chronik, Oder Kurze Geschichte Des Fürstlichen Gotteshauses Einsiedlen* (Einsiedeln 1783), 139.

48 Kälin, "Die Aufklärung in Uri, Schwyz und Unterwalden im 18. Jahrhundert," 28, 84, 152.

49 "[…] sich durch einen unverletzlichen Gehorsam fest an die heilige römische Kirche zu halten, außer welcher kein Heil zu hoffen ist." Imfeld und Tanner, *Geschichte der berühmtesten Heiligen Gottes, auf jeden Tag des Jahres; Nebst Erklärung der höhern Feste der Kirche, mit moralischen Anmerkungen, zur Ehre der Religion, und Erbauung der frommen Gläubigen, aus ächten Quellen gesammelt und verfasset in dem Fürstlichen Gotteshause Einsiedeln*, VII.

50 KAE, EM 1624, 71; KAE, EM 9, [5r–5v]; ibid., 94.

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3.5 Hope for the Reunification of the Churches

The contact with Zurich ministers was also motivated by the hope of reunification of the separated churches. The way to achieve this was also clear to the Einsiedeln monks: they could only imagine this reunification as the return of the Protestants to the bosom of the Catholic Church and under the primacy of the bishop of Rome.[51] In the summer of 1775, Schreiber saw few obstacles to such a reunification, at least in terms of faith and doctrine. Rather, he emphasized the bond existing by the same gospel, the same God, and the same Savior. Once all blinded prejudices, all "abominable intolerance, […] rehearsed pusillanimity, bitterness" ("abscheüliche Intoleranz, […] wiederwärthige Schmächsucht, Biterkeit") were overcome and all misunderstandings cleared out of the way, there would be—he believed—hardly anything left to separate Protestants and Catholics. In any case, he also found "nothing" in the works of Hess "that did not agree with the Catholic doctrinal concepts" ("nichts darin gefunden, welches mit den katholischen Lehrbegriffen nicht überein stimmte"). And this was not only the case with his works: "When I read the Zurich Catechism, our Lavater's writings, or other writings dealing with religion, I see that the Catholic believes everything that the Reformed does, I mean here the more recent writings […]."[52] Even when it comes to the doctrine of justification, people were basically of the same opinion, although they had not been aware of it for a long time.

However, the teachings of the two churches were still not completely indistinguishable. In any case, Father Schreiber also conceded that there were things that divided the two

51 Spehr, *Aufklärung und Ökumene*, 421.

52 "Wenn ich den Zürcherischen Cathechismus, unsers Lavaters Schriften, oder andere von der Religion handelnde Schriften durchlese, so sehe ich das der Katholik alles glaubet, was der Reformierte, ich meine hier die neüern Schriften." Literally, he wrote to Hess on June 8, 1775: "[…] by the way, your way of thinking completely agrees with mine—the same Gospel, the same God, the same Redeemer and only mediator between God and man, the same hope and expectation, the same truth, the same way, the same life, and the same rightness and sanctification to this life, in the basic truths the same religion, what a foundation to a sincere lasting friendship!—Friendship then, true sincere friendship—Christian love, toleration, impartial investigation of the truth, on which side it lies—disregard of all political intentions, all religious hatred, all prejudices of education and incorrect instruction, abhorrence of all separation, of all opinionation, etc.—and so then, it please God, full brotherly union" ("[…] übrigens stimmt Ihre Denkungsart mit der Meinigen ganz übereins—das nemliche Evangelium, den nemlichen Gott, den nemlichen Erlöser und einzigen Mitler zwischen Gott und den Menschen, die nemliche Hoffnung und errwartung, die nemliche wahrheit, eben den weg, eben das leben, und die nemliche Gerrechtigkeit und Heiligung zu diesem leben, in den Grundwahrheiten eben die Religion, welch ein Fundament zu einer aufrichtigen dauerhaften Freündschaft!—Freündschaft also, wahre aufrichtige Freündschaft—Christenliebe, Duldung, unpartheysche Nachforschung der wahrheit, auf welcher Seite sie lige—Hintansetzung aller politischen Absichten, alles Religionshasses, aller vorurtheile der Erziehung und unrichtigen Unterrichtung, Abscheü gegen alle Trennung, gegen alle Rechthabery etc.—und so dann geliebt es Gott, vollkomen Brudervereinigung"), ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 144.

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churches, for example, with regard to the understanding of the Church, the Eucharist, or confession: "Read our [writings], for example the Tridentine or Einsiedeln Catechism, […] and you will see that […] the Catholic still accepts some doctrines as revealed truths, which the Reformed rejects completely, and the Lutheran partially."[53] However, many of these divisive points—such as the doctrine of purgatory or the veneration of saints—were not to be counted among the unchangeable basic truths of Catholic doctrine. Rather they belonged—and here he agrees with other Benedictines of his time—to the debatable school opinions, whereby they would not stand in the way of a reunification. In view of such statements, the question arises, of course, whether an enthusiasm born of friendship did not push aside the appropriate theological understanding.[54] Be that as it may, Schreiber was not only enthusiastic about the *Algemeine Gedanken von der Trennung der Christen* (General thoughts about the division of Christians)[55] of Jakob Heinrich von Gerstenberg (1712–1776), but also spoke the following pathetic words:

> Any man who diligently confuses everything in order to maintain this unfortunate division is for me a monster—but he who loves the union, fights in his heart, and still works for it, he is an angel; in him Jesus Christ lives, and the spirit of love is in him.

And further: "Let us be far away from all controversies, and controversists, the rabble knows nothing but to make blind noise—to awaken strife where there is none."[56] He did not, however, make any specific suggestions about how this reunion might come about and how it should be structured. Both he and Abbot Marian, who would have had to give his approval for a printed word, must have known only too well that Rome

53 "Lesen Sie die unsrigen [Schriften], zum beyspiele den tridentinischen oder Einsiedlischen Katechismus, […] so werden Sie sehen, das […] der Katholik, noch einige Lehrsätze als geoffenbahrte Wahrheiten über dies noch annimmt, welche der Reformierte ganz, der Lutheraner zum Theile verwirft," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 144.

54 Hans Grassl, "Katholische Unionsprojekte des 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Folgen," 50; Spehr, *Aufklärung und Ökumene*, 414; Ulrich L. Lehner, *Enlightened Monks: The German Benedictines 1740–1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 217.

55 Jakob Heinrich von Gerstenberg, *Algemeine [sic!] Gedanken von der Trennung der Christen, in einer unpartheiischen Beleuchtung des catholischen Religions-Systems zur Beförderung der Toleranz und Begründung einer künftigen Wieder-Vereinigung, nach der Einsicht eines Christlichen Dio Genes* (Frankfurt am Main 1773).

56 "[E]in Mann, der alles mit Fleisse verwirret, um diese unglückselige Trennung zu unterhalten, der ist bey mir ein Ungeheüer—der aber die Vereinigung liebt, im Herzen kämpft, und noch dafür arbeitet, der ist ein Engel, in diesem lebt Jesus Christus, und der Geist der Liebe ist in ihm. […] Fort mit aller Controversien, und Controversisten, das Gesindel weis nichts als blinden Lermen zu machen—Streit zu erwecken wo keiner ist." ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 312.

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was not enthusiastic about such loudly expressed thoughts. Thus, for them, instead of an ecclesiastical reunification, the focus was above all on spiritual unity.[57]

There were important motives for the Einsiedeln monks to be in contact with Zurich theologians and scholars: not only to be able to explain one's own positions to the others, but perhaps even to be able to convince them of these positions, with the hope of a reunification of the churches. Furthermore, the aforementioned intention to join forces against the common enemy of the Radical Enlightenment and its criticism of divine revelation, or even religion as such, certainly played an important role. Such an "ecumenism of the counter-Enlightenment," such a spiritual alliance in defense of the Christian religion as well as of the divine revelation, would begin, as Schreiber wrote to Hess on November 21, 1776, with theologians like both of them:

> How much more noble would be the thought if righteous men, since so many free spirits are sharpening their poisonous keel to overthrow religion, would strive together to unite the members of religion, who are completely unanimous in the fundamental truths, for the benefit of religion. This undertaking, even if it were done only by private teachers, would nevertheless soon draw the heads of the Church and the State to the same intentions.[58]

And what about any inconvenience that one might find in ecumenical relations? These existed for the Einsiedeln monks as well: They explicitly warned the common people not to have too confidential contact with Protestants. Thus, Schreiber recommended that they "avoid heretical people after one or another admonition" ("ketzerischen Menschen […] nach einer oder andern Ermahnung ausweiche[n]"), while Tanner and Imfeld also warned their readers against too close contact with people of other faiths, because the "love of man could make his faults pleasant to me, and conceal their danger to me."[59]

57 Hans Grassl, "Katholische Unionsprojekte des 18. Jahrhunderts und ihre Folgen," 48; Spehr, *Aufklärung und Ökumene*, 171–175, 418.

58 "Um wie viell edler grossmüthiger würde der Gedanke seyn wen rechtschaffene Menner, da so vielle Freygeister die Religion zu stürzen ihren giftigen Kiel spitzen, sich gemeinschaftlich bestrebten, die Glieder der Religion, welche in der Grundwahrheiten vollkommen einstimmig sind, zum Vortheile der Religion zu vereinigen. Dieses unternemmen ob es gleich nur von Privatlehrern geschähe, würde dennoch die Heüpter der Kirche und des Staates gar bald auch zu gleichen Absichten nach sich ziehen," ZBZ, FA Hess 1741 181e, no. 312.

59 "Liebe zum Menschen mir seine Fehler angenehm machen, und ihre Gefahr mir vermänteln," KAE, EM 1624, 71; Imfeld und Tanner, *Geschichte der berühmtesten Heiligen Gottes, auf jeden Tag des Jahres*, 94.

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4. End of the Rapprochement: Renewed Estrangement

Such a danger was seen above all in the influence of the Enlightenment. After 1789, Einsiedeln attributed to the Enlightenment the decidedly rejected French Revolution, whose profound effects on society and politics would reveal its true face and its real goal: the annihilation of faith and the elimination of the Church. Thus the subsequent abbot Cölestin Müller (1772–1846), as well, said three decades later that the "flood of sin of the tiresome revolution"[60] had already been "prepared for a long time by the spreading of pernicious religion and its undermining principles" ("lange durch Ausstreüung verderblicher Religion und ihren unter-grabender Grundsätze vorbereitet").[61] The fact that on the Catholic side the anti-Enlightenment defense caused the "zealous spirit of the Baroque era" to flare up anew, which was directed against everything non-Catholic, i. e., also against Protestantism, was a great burden for ecumenical relations.[62] The situation was aggravated by the fact that the Enlightenment had taken hold much earlier and more pervasively in the Reformed regions of the Confederation, such as Zurich, than in the Catholic areas, so that contact with Protestants was seen as a possible gateway through which corrosive ideas and convictions could penetrate. Abbot Beat Küttel, who tried with all his might, starting in 1780, to protect the monastery from the Enlightenment, which he perceived as a destructive force, strongly restrained all those confreres who in the years before had shown themselves open to various aspects of the new way of thinking. This also included his setting clear limits on contact with Protestants, in order to prevent their possible influence on his confreres. This is also how the wish of Father Johannes Schreiber is to be understood, when he asked Lavater on December 29, 1780, to return all his letters to him. Accordingly, there is no evidence of any written exchange between them thereafter.[63] Other monks, in turn, turned away from their Protestant

60 StiBE, Cod. 1289(1394), 4v.

61 "Sündfluth der leidigen Revolution," KAE, A.LT.23, 5. By "religion," Müller probably means the philosophy of those Enlightenment thinkers who substituted human reason for God, thus giving their teachings the character of a religion.

62 Kälin, "Die Aufklärung in Uri, Schwyz und Unterwalden im 18. Jahrhundert," 89; Spehr, *Aufklärung und Ökumene*, 420.

63 Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater," 48. Schreiber wrote: "I am to demand all my manuscripts, and therefore I am also urged to ask for the one you have in your hands to be returned to me" ("[I]ch soll alle meine Manuscripte fordern, und darum bin ich gedrungen auch das, so Sie in Händen haben, mir wieder zurücke zu biten"), ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 526.172. The relationship between Lavater and Einsiedeln, however, never completely broke off; even after that, Lavater is documented to have visited the monastery several times, for example on May 23/24, 1782, with the German pedagogue Karl Johann Konrad Matthaei (1744–1830). Also at the end of July 1792 his name—together with that of his brother Diethelm (1743–1826)—can be read in the guest book of the monastery library. In addition, he, who came from a family of doctors and pharmacists, appears in the spring of 1798 in the account book of the monastery pharmacy as a supplier of goods, after Abbot Beat had already granted him a loan of 600 *louis d'or* at the end of 1785, KAE, A.HB. 74.3, 66; KAE, A.369/1, unpaginated; KAE,

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friends in disappointment, apparently because they no longer saw any enrichment in such contacts and rather regarded them as a dangerous aberration.

A particular test for the ecumenical contacts was the conversion of the Einsiedeln conventual Father Alois Jauch (born 1751) to the Reformed faith in the spring of 1797. Through too close contact with Protestant ideas—from the perspective of his confreres—exactly what they had always tried to protect the faithful from seemed to have happened to him: apostasy from the right path of salvation. Jauch had already attracted attention for some time as a confessor in the women's monastery of Fahr near Zurich with his non-conformist theological views. He was also said to have spread "heretical" books and teachings as priest of Eschenz on Lake Constance. The conversion, which against this background can only be understood as consistent, also embarrassed Lavater, since Jauch had taken refuge with him in Zurich. Lavater knew from his own family history how fraught such a conversion could be, for his brother Heinrich (1747–1808) had converted to the Catholic faith about two decades earlier.[64] Abbot Beat tried everything to persuade his brother to return to Einsiedeln, and he did not only approach Lavater. He also asked the mayor of Zurich, David von Wyss the Elder (1737–1815), as well as Antistes Hess for good persuasion, and even sent several confreres to Jauch in Zurich.[65] Jauch, however, did not change his mind. The fact that he finally even had himself ordained as a Reformed minister, married, and later went as a missionary of the Moravian community of Herrnhut to Russia, where he is said to have been buried in Katharinenstadt (today: Marx), caused a great stir throughout central Switzerland.[66]

The ecumenical relations between Einsiedeln and Zurich, however, had already cooled down again after a relatively short thaw, and this was to remain unchanged for the following decades. Of course, this did not exclude further contacts in the case of economically motivated interests with little ideological implications, but these contacts were professionally sober, without a friendly touch. When, for example, in the fall of

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XP.51, unpaginated; Friedrich and Mannetstätter, "Die Zürcher Arzt-Apotheker-Familie Lavater und Johann Wolfgang von Goethe," 9–10; Ursula Caflisch-Schnetzler and Conrad Ulrich, eds., *Johann Caspar Lavater: Ausgewählte Werke in historisch-kritischer Ausgabe; Ergänzungsband; Anna Barbara von Muralt (1727–1805)* (Zurich: NZZ Libro, 2011), 170.

64 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 568.108; Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch der Fürstlichen Benediktinerabtei U.L. Frau von Einsiedeln*, 445; Joachim Salzgeber, "Abt Marian Müller und Johann Caspar Lavater," 48.

65 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 568.108; ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 502.1; ZBZ, FA v. Wyss V 105.

66 ZBZ, FA Lav Ms 512.235; KAE, A.LT.23, 9–11; Rudolf Henggeler, *Professbuch der Fürstlichen Benediktinerarbtei U.L. Frau von Einsiedeln*, 446; Wernerkarl Kälin, "Die Chronik des Carl Franz Judas Thaddäus Brandenberg, Maler in Zug 1788," *Das alte Einsiedeln* 8 (1967); Stefan Röllin, "Pfarrer Karl Joseph Ringold (1737–1815): Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Reformkatholizismus und der Ökumene im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert," *Der Geschichtsfreund* 137 (1984): 244–245; Markus Ries, "Politische Utopie und Religiosität am Ende des Ancien Régime," in *1998: Das Ende von Religion, Politik und Gesellschaft? Eine Annäherung an das Jubiläumsjahr im Zeitraffer*, ed. Urban Fink and Hilmar Gernet (Solothurn: Vogt-Schild, 1997), 49–50.

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1792, Emperor Francis II (1768–1835) asked the monastery of Einsiedeln as a prince abbey—and thus as a member of the Empire—to support him financially in his fight against the French revolutionary troops, the monks, who lacked the necessary cash, did not hesitate to borrow it from the Zurich banking house Schulthess & Co. One of the bank owners, Caspar Schulthess (1709–1804), probably the richest Zurich citizen of his time, did not take the sum from his own coffers, but obtained it at a lower interest rate from third parties, primarily from the fund of the *Kaufmännisches Direktorium* in Zurich. He was not the only member of this fund; Johann Rudolf Schinz, a friend of the monastery, also acted as its *sensal*, and the monks demonstrably involved him in the transaction. As a security, the monastery deposited its tithes in three villages of Zurich (Stäfa, Männedorf, and Meilen), as attested by the bond issued on December 6.[67]

Alongside these sober matters, however, the once passionate ecumenical friendships were soon forgotten—something in which, of course, the Einsiedeln monks themselves had no small part; in the age of ultramontanism, they consciously endeavored to sweep this "misguided" section of the monastery's history under the carpet. Yet the noteworthy, fruitful friendships between Einsiedeln monks and Zurich theologians in the late eighteenth century had indeed existed.[68]

67 KAE, A.RP-01.19a, 111v; KAE, RP-02.24.30.40; KAE, A.CC.10, 228; Hans Conrad Peyer, *Von Handel und Bank im alten Zürich* (Zurich: Verlag Berichthaus, 1968), 138; Martin Lassner, "Johann Rudolf Schinz," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from August 8, 2011, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/029410/2011-08-08/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024); idem, "Hans Kaspar Schulthess," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from July 1, 2010, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/028467/2010-07-01/ (last accessed Dec. 30, 2024).

68 Markus Ries, "Politische Utopie und Religiosität am Ende des Ancien Régime," 59.

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V Interactions between Male and Female Communities

Alessia Lirosi

Occasion for Sin or Sanctification?

Nuns and Male Regular Clerics in Post-Tridentine Rome

1. Introduction

Starting in the late sixteenth century, the relationship between nuns and regular clerics was placed under a special control. Protestants had contested monastic life and abolished it wherever they came to power, considering it unnatural and a cause of inappropriate behavior and sexual promiscuity, especially between nuns and clerics who attended the nunneries. The Roman Church replied by emphasizing the importance of monastic vows and imposing strict enclosure on all kinds of nuns. But it also reacted by strengthening regulations on men who entered female monasteries.

In this scenario, new and extremely rigorous monastic institutions were founded in Rome, the city that Martin Luther had depicted as "corrupted Babylon."[1] These new nunneries were characterized by very severe rules, such as those of the Poor Clares, the Capuchin nuns, and the Discalced Carmelites. Among the few male persons allowed to enter the nunneries were confessors and spiritual directors belonging to different orders.

This chapter aims to examine the daily interactions between Roman nuns and male regular communities during the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, when enclosure was considered well established. First, the chapter will investigate the approach to the fear of friendships between clerics and nuns, not necessarily immoral but perhaps simply of mutual esteem and affection. Did the frequent contacts between the clerics and the sisters produce small or great concerns, thus altering the facade of perfection and discipline that the Catholic Church was anxious to support? Then, I will explore in more detail whether pastoral care for nuns contributed to clerics' careers as well as to their possible fame of holiness. This topic will be examined by focusing mainly on the

1 In 1700, there were about fifty-two female religious communities in Rome. For general perspectives, see Alessia Lirosi, *I monasteri femminili a Roma tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Rome: Viella, 2012); Marina Caffiero, "Il sistema dei monasteri femminili nella Roma barocca: Insediamenti territoriali, distribuzione per ordini religiosi, vecchie e nuove fondazioni," *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica* 2 (2008): 69–100. But see also Stefano Andretta, "Il governo dell'osservanza: poteri e monache dal Sacco alla fine del Seicento," in *Storia d'Italia: Annali XVI, Roma, la città del papa; Vita civile e religiosa dal giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al giubileo di papa Wojtyla*, ed. Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 397–427; Luigi Fiorani, "Monache e monasteri romani nell'età del quietismo," *Ricerche per la storia religiosa di Roma* 1 (1977): 63–111.

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case of two Jesuits, Antonio Baldinucci, who was proclaimed blessed in the nineteenth century, and Niccolò Zucchi.

2. Exempt or Non-Exempt Nunneries and Regular Clerics

The need for reforming male and female monastic life was an important issue addressed especially starting in the late Middle Ages. Attempts at reform were made in various communities, usually implemented by the chapters of the different religious orders, by local bishops, or by individual personalities across both religious men and women. This widely felt need had a surge with the Protestant attack on monastic life. The Council of Trent, convened in the mid-sixteenth century, hastily dealt with the problem in its penultimate session by issuing a decree titled *De regularibus et monialibus* (1563). This document was then specified by subsequent papal documents, mainly by the Bulls *Circa pastoralis* (Pope Pius V, 1566) and *Deo sacris virginibus* (Pope Gregory XIII, 1572). Actually, this long-term process produced the consequence of imposing solemn vows and strict enclosure on all kinds of nuns, even on those who had never followed it previously. Several communities were shut down because they did not accept such a change of use.

Another important provision was to place the control of nunneries under the authority of ordinary bishops who were at the head of the various local dioceses.[2] This diminished the vast power that the male (especially regular) clergy had gained over such communities—sometimes in cahoots with the interests of nuns' families—due to the fact that they were in charge of their spiritual care and of the administration of the sacraments. Consequently, the relationship between religious orders and bishops became increasingly complex.

In Rome, capital of the Papal States, the situation was even more complicated. Its ordinary bishop was, and still is, the pope. Therefore, the jurisdiction over Roman nuns belonged to him, at least ideally. But—considering the many commitments that the pontiff had in the curia or that were linked to his role as head of the universal Church—the Roman diocese was in practice governed by the cardinal vicar, who consequently was called to supervise all the churches, nunneries, and pious places in the Eternal City.[3]

2 See Canon VIII of the decree issued in Session XXI of the Council of Trent and, especially, Chapters V and IX of the *Decretum de regularibus et monialibus* issued in Session XXV.

3 This picture is confirmed by a treatise about the jurisdiction of the cardinal vicar of Rome, written at the beginning of the eighteenth century by Antonio Cuggiò, canon and secretary of the tribunal headed by the cardinal vicar. This treatise can also be considered a reliable source for reconstructing the Roman diocesan organization in the seventeenth century, although it had an important political scope, reaffirming the faculties that belonged to the vicariate: Nicola Antonio Cuggiò, *Della giurisdizione e prerogative del vicario di Roma. Opera del canonico Niccolò Antonio Cuggiò, segretario del tribunale di*

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The vicar had to control the economic and administrative management of the convents; but, above all, he was responsible for the enclosure as well as for the three monastic vows (obedience, poverty, and chastity) and for the implementation of the Tridentine legislation.

However, as elsewhere, not all Roman nunneries were under the direct jurisdiction of the vicar: some of them enjoyed exemption from his authority, either because they fell under a male religious order or because they were headed by a cardinal protector appointed ad hoc by the pope. A fundamental step was the Constitution *Inscrutabili Dei providentia* issued by Gregory XV in 1622. With this document the pontiff tried to strengthen the prerogatives of the cardinal vicar at the expense of the cardinal protectors and of the religious who supervised each nunnery: indeed they were considered to be an antagonistic and centrifugal power in opposition to the central authority embodied by the vicar and the pope himself. Thus the Constitution *Inscrutabili* specified that, even in the "exempt" nunneries, the vicar always had to attend the election of the abbess or prioress and to check on the accounts and administration. Finally, he had the faculty to determine whether to approve the nuns' confessors, who had been previously designated and proposed either by the cardinal protectors or by the male religious belonging to the same order as the sisters. The vicar could also remove such confessors from the job, whether they were regular or secular priests.

It is not always easy to know which communities fell under the jurisdiction of the vicar or of others, nor is it easy to reconstruct how these authorities alternated during the 1600s. It is possible to roughly outline the situation for the years 1624–1629 by reading the reports produced during the great apostolic visitation carried out under Pope Urban VIII and kept in the Vatican Apostolic Archive, although not all the nunneries then existing are registered. It seems that slightly more than half of them were subject to the authority of the cardinal vicar and that the others were distributed mostly among various cardinal protectors.[4]

A more complete panorama is instead available for the late seventeenth century in a document titled *I Monasteri de Monache di Roma*, also held in the Vatican Apostolic Archive.[5] The report has no date; nevertheless, we can assume that it refers to 1671.[6] A vast panorama appears: most of the Roman nunneries were under the supervision

sua Eminenza, ed. Domenico Rocciolo (Roma: Carocci, 2004). Cf., among others, Domenico Rocciolo, "La costruzione della città religiosa: strutture ecclesiastiche a Roma tra la metà del Cinquecento e l'Ottocento," in *Storia d'Italia. Annali XVI: Roma, la città del papa*, 367–393.

4 Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (hereafter AAV), Congr. Visita Ap., 3, *passim*.

5 AAV, Misc., Arm. VII, 37, fol. 469r–470v.

6 In 1671, the Roman community of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary (Visitandines) was founded and Cardinal Antonio Barberini died. As both are mentioned in the list, this document must have been written in 1671.

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of two cardinals, Francesco and Antonio Barberini, nephews of Pope Urban VIII Barberini (1568–1644).[7] Then the cardinal vicar followed.[8] Alongside their protection, however, the document indicates that the nunneries enjoyed the spiritual care of some specific orders: Sant'Ambrogio alla Massima enjoyed the spiritual care of the male Benedictines; the convents of Sant'Egidio, Santa Teresa, and Regina Coeli that of the Discalced Carmelites; Santa Caterina da Siena, Santi Domenico e Sisto, Santa Maria Maddalena al Quirinale, Santa Maria dell'Umiltà, and Santissima Annunziata ai Pantani were under the spiritual supervision of the Dominican friars; while the Friars Minor of the Observance oversaw Santa Margherita, San Lorenzo in Panisperna, San Cosimato, San Bernardino, Sant'Apollonia, Santa Croce in Montecitorio, and San Giacomo delle Muratte. Only the community of the Augustinian nuns of Santa Marta enjoyed the care of the new clerics regular, specially of those belonging to the Society of Jesus. For other nunneries, there is no description.[9]

In the seventeenth century, the relationships between the cardinal vicar and the cardinal protectors were riddled with conflicts, while the relationship between the cardinal vicar and the nunneries under the control of male orders seems to have been more peaceful. It seems that, in this case, the vicar was quite free to punish the nuns and those who frequented their parlors, to give entry and exit permits, to look over the nuns' dowries, and to explore the will of novices.[10] In these matters—still according to the *Inscrutabili*—the ordinary bishop (and, in Rome, the cardinal vicar) always had

7 Francesco (senior) and Antonio (junior) were the sons of Carlo Barberini, who was brother of Pope Urban VIII. Upon the death of Urban VIII, the new pontiff, Innocent X, took legal action against the Barberini family for embezzlement of public money. The Barberini fled to Paris, where they found a powerful protector in Cardinal Mazarin. When Pope Innocent X Pamphilj changed his mind, welcoming the Barberini back to Rome, the two cardinals regained the protection of various monasteries and, more generally, a role of great visibility in the religious and political context of the city.

8 At that time, the vicar was Paluzzo Paluzzi Altieri degli Albertoni and then Gaspare Carpegna, who took the office after the resigning of his predecessor in August 1671.

9 AAV, Misc., Arm. VII, 37, fol. 470r/v.

10 This was established since nuns did not necessarily choose their enclosed life voluntarily, but were sometimes pushed by their families to take religious vows. The measure was not enough to stem forced monasticism, however. The bibliography concerning this issue is wide; among recent contributions, see Francesca Medioli, "Diversi gradi di femminicidio: le monacazioni forzate in età moderna," in *Storie di genere: Il punto sulle donne: Differenza e dialogo*, ed. Giuliana Adamo (Rome: Castelvecchi, 2022), 73–83; Elizabeth Marjorie Plummer, *Stripping the Veil: Convent Reform, Protestant Nuns, and Female Devotional Life in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022); Susanna Mantioni, *Monacazioni forzate e spazi di auto–affermazione femminile: Norma e prassi nel Serenissimo Dominio di età moderna* (Rome: Sanpaolo Ed., 2017). But also: Francesca Terraccia, *In attesa di una scelta: Destini femminili ed educandati monastici nella Diocesi di Milano in età moderna* (Rome: Viella 2012); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *By Force and Fear: Taking and Breaking Monastic Vows in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011). Cf. Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life, 1450–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Penguin, 2002); Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks,

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to intervene *along with* the regular superiors of the nuns. Actually, these nunneries were not truly exempt from the jurisdiction of the vicariate: they simply entrusted the spiritual care to certain orders because their founding constitutions or other legislation established this. In other words, this specifically spiritual role did not limit the ordinary bishop's or the vicar's powers.

Therefore, Roman nuns were at the center of power games between the vicar, the male religious orders, and the cardinal protectors, but also between the various curial congregations that decreed on issues concerning convents and monasteries.[11] This interweaving of powers obviously provoked protests even among the nuns themselves, who often did not want to resign themselves to the role of passive recipients of the decisions of other people, but attempted to make their voices heard in matters that concerned them. When there were *two* authorities charged to control nuns' seclusion, the situation had to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. This was a way to tone down any conflict and reconcile all those involved. To cite an example, I will describe what happened in 1660 in the nunnery of Santissima Annunziata ai Pantani, which hosted neophyte nuns, i. e., women converted to Catholicism from another faith (Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism[12]). It was under the jurisdiction of a cardinal protector—at that time Benedetto Odescalchi (later Pope Innocent XI in 1676)—who was the same prelate who supervised the House of the Catechumens and the College of Neophytes, usually also entrusted to the spiritual care of Dominican friars. In 1660, the cardinal vicar—Marzio Ginetti—did not attend the election of the prioress, saying that Cardinal Protector Odescalchi had not wanted him to be there. The pope, Alexander VII, initially supported the vicar, following the *Inscrutabili* and because the vicar held the general competence on neophytes and conversions as well. But the nuns protested and sided with their protector: they specified that only he could take proper care of the affairs of their cloister, adequately explore novices' will, control the access to the parlor, provide to their daily needs, etc.; they added that Ginetti would have never been able to do so, since he had numerous other commitments relating to the management of the vicariate. Finally, in 1663 Cardinal Protector Odescalchi obtained a brief by the pontiff that confirmed his full and total jurisdiction over the monastery of the neophytes.[13]

Christianity and the Regulation of Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice (London: Routledge, 2000).

11 For example, the Congregation of the Apostolic Visitation and the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. On the organization of the papal curia across time, see Niccolò Del Re, *La Curia romana* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), mainly 359–361, 369–372.

12 The majority were Jewish women from the ghetto established in Rome in 1555. See Alessia Lirosi, "'Monacare le ebree': il monastero romano della Ss. Annunziata all'Arco dei Pantani. Una ricerca in corso," *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo* 10, no. 1 (2013): 147–180.

13 For more details on the conflict between Odescalchi and Ginetti, see Lirosi, "'Monacare le ebree'," 167–173.

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3. Within a Roman Female Cloister

Every day, a choir cloistered nun had to pray and sing the Divine Office in the choir room following the liturgy of the canonical hours.[14] But she also had to perform the daily mass, the reading of the scripture in the refectory, mental prayer, and spiritual exercises. Moreover, each nunnery could add other specific devotions, according to its own Rule, its constitutions,[15] or its founders' intentions.[16] In addition to prayer, nuns could spend time producing objects of devotion, food, medicines, and embroidery under the direction of a nun who was a master of the craft.

Equally important was receiving the Sacrament of Penance and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Council of Trent had stipulated these sacraments at least once a month for nuns.[17] At the same time, however, ecclesiastical authorities were concerned about the practice of receiving the Eucharist too often, as it might devalue the real presence of Jesus Christ in the bread according to the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was contested by the Protestants.

The Eucharistic rite was one of the occasions where contact occurred between nuns and a male celebrant. Thus in monastic constitutions and in spiritual handbooks written for nuns, the following recommendations commonly appear. First, the nuns had to approach the Eucharist wafer with a veiled face and a resigned attitude, to prevent their coming to the grate or to the window from becoming an opportunity to show off.

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14 As is well known, an important distinction existed between choir nuns and converse nuns. The first usually came from notable and wealthy families, paid a significant dowry to enter the convent, providing their own maintenance, and could hold the most important offices (as abbess, prioress, manager of expenditure, librarian, teacher of novices, door keeper, etc.); for this reason, they were required to be at least literate. In contrast, converse nuns were often illiterate and came from families of less wealth and status.

15 Constitutions were the specific norms of each individual nunnery that served to regulate a nuns' daily life in addition to the Rule of their order (for instance St. Augustine's Rule, Carmelite Rule, Franciscan Rule, etc.)

16 For instance, the Carmelites of San Giuseppe in via Capo le Case wore coarse tunics. The sisters of Santa Maria Regina Coeli in Trastevere had to repeat the antiphon *Regina Coeli* every four hours. The Constitutions of the community of Santissima Annunziata for the Blue Nuns stated that the nunnery had to be inhabited by thirty-three choir nuns and seven converse nuns. See AAV, Congr. Visita Ap., 5, fol. 168r–170r, especially fol. 169r; *Constitutioni per le Madri dell'Ordine della Santissima Annunziata dette le Celesti […] ristampate ad istanza delle Monache della Santissima Annunziata del medesimo Ordine fondato in Roma l'anno 1676* (Rome: per Giovan Giacomo Komarek boemo alla Fontana di Trevi, 1695), 18.

17 This was stated in the *Decretum de Regularibus et Monialibus*, canon X. For lay people, the Eucharist was ordered at least once a year: it was mandatory during the Easter period and its accomplishment was recorded by the parish priests in their *Liber Status Animarum* or Register of the "States of Souls." Cf. Fabrizio Credazzi, *Guida della Monaca religiosa. Che contiene il modo che devono tenere quelle che desiderano farsi Monache* (Rome: per Andrea Fei, 1622), 100–101.

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This was thought to preclude any dangerous consequences for themselves or for the male priests who walked up to them: "The sister who is vainly adorned on the day of communion, either in arranging the veil or in another way just for being seen, sins; and if her scope is bad, she sins mortally."[18] Second, it was prescribed that nuns should avoid going to the parlor on the day they had received the wafer, except for matters of crucial necessity.

Receiving the sacrament of penance, which Martin Luther had also bitterly contested, was pivotal. For the Counter-Reformation Church, this service increasingly became a privileged tool to scrutinize and shape the consciences of the faithful, making them internalize approved behaviors. Moreover, this task was gradually entrusted especially to the clerics regular arisen during the sixteenth century.

More than for the Eucharist, there was great concern regarding the sacrament of penance, as the frequent contact between priests and religious women for confession could provoke the rise of friendships perceived as too confidential, or even the crime called *sollicitatio ad turpia*. This was because confession took place in private between the penitent and the confessor, even though the space designated for the sacrament was the parlor room with metal grates and also curtains if necessary.[19] For this reason, the Roman Church blamed sisters who confessed their sins to the priest too frequently, especially if this was done lightly or for other purposes:

> The nun who frequently goes to the Confessor more for the pleasure of speaking than for the needs of her soul is committing a sin; and if [she goes] for bad affection, she sins mortally and even commits sacrilege.[20]
>
> It is still a great temptation for some other nuns, who never relent from past confessions, to be willing to make general confessions with all the extraordinary [confessors] who go to the Monastery, not understanding that this is Devil's work, who thereby tries to disturb and trouble them, to make them waste their time and to keep Confessors busy in vain, so that these ones cannot bear good fruit for other sisters.[21]

18 Giovan Pietro Barco, *Specchio religioso per le monache, posto in luce d'ordine dell'Illustriss. et Reverendiss. Sig. Card. Federico Borromeo Arcivescovo di Milano da Gio. Pietro Barco mantovano* (Milan: per Pietro Martire Locarni, 1609), 5 and 135.

19 *Sollicitatio ad turpia* in canon law defines the crime of making use of the sacrament of penance for the purpose of drawing others into sins of lust. This refers to the solicitation of a person to carnal sin, to be committed with himself or another, by any priest before, during, or immediately after sacramental confession. The Church legislation on this point is very severe, and numerous popes have denounced this crime vehemently, decreeing severe punishments. For secular women, the well-known Counter-Reformation confessional furniture was designed to prevent eye contact (which was considered extremely dangerous). For nuns, visual contact was instead hindered by grates.

20 Barco, *Specchio*, 131.

21 Barco, *Specchio*, 136.

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The administration of the sacrament of penance remained a large problem for male clergymen, as we will see below. The constitutions of certain nunneries did not help. For instance, those of the community Santa Maria Maddalena in via del Corso—which hosted former prostitutes converted to religious life and penitence—encouraged the nuns to confess their sins without any shame but also with no malice.[22] Moreover, the rules for the Carmelites of the monastery of Santissima Incarnazione ordered the nuns to take the sacrament of penance at least twice a week; not to do so could be considered gross negligence.[23]

Generally, Counter-Reformation religious treatises addressed to nuns proposed a model of the perfect sister who attended the sacraments and possessed strong virtues, calmness, and humility. Moreover, she had to be totally obedient to authorities and submit to clergymen. And, finally, she should not have too many supernatural visions or mystical occurrences.[24] Indeed, ecclesiastical authorities sometimes suspected that

22 *Constitutioni del Monasterio Delle Monache Convertite di S. Maria Maddalena di Roma, sotto la Regola di S. Agostino. Approvate, confirmate & accresciute dall'Illustriss. & R.mo Sig. Cardinale Aldobrandino Camerlengo della Santa Romana Chiesa, protettore* (Rome: appresso gli Stampatori Camerali, 1603), 25.

23 *Regola del Sacro Ordine della Beatissima Vergine Maria del Monte Carmelo et Constitutioni dell'antica osservanza regolare delle Monache del Monastero della Santissima Incarnatione del Verbo Divino, eretto et fondato nell'Alma Città di Roma dalla Gloriosa Memoria di N.S. Papa Urbano VIII* (Rome: s.n., 1658), 192–199. The Roman monastery of Santissima Incarnazione was established by Pope Urban VIII Barberini for hosting the nuns and widows belonging to his own family, as well as other nuns from aristocratic families. To implement the foundation, in 1639, the pontiff called his nieces—Sister Innocenza and Sister Maria Grazia Barberini—back to Rome. Both had taken their vows in the Florentine convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where the mystic Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi had lived and died (1566–1607). The nunnery founded by the pope followed the ancient Carmelite Rule in the version modified by Sister Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, who was beatified in 1626 by Urban VIII himself and later canonized by Clement IX Rospigliosi in 1669. Cf. Valentina Abbatelli, Alessia Lirosi, and Irene Palombo, *Un monastero di famiglia: Il Diario delle Barberine della SS. Incarnazione. Secc. XVII–XVIII* (Rome: Viella, 2016); and Stefano Possanzini, *Le Barberine: Il Monastero carmelitano dell'Incarnazione detto delle Barberine, 1639–1907* (Rome: Edizioni Carmelitane, 1990); as well as Luigi Cacciaglia, "L'archivio del monastero dell'Incarnazione detto delle Barberine (1639–1907)," in *Vite consacrate: Gli archivi delle organizzazioni religiose femminili*, ed. Enrico Angiolini (Modena: Mucchi Editore, 2007), 303–326.

24 Many studies have focused on such issues, as well as on books addressed to nuns and on monastic libraries. See, among others, Abigail Brundin, "On the Convent Threshold: Poetry for New Nuns in Early Modern Italy," *Renaissance Studies* 65 (2012): 1125–1165; Xenia von Tippelskirch, *Sotto controllo: Letture femminili in Italia nella prima età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2011); Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri, ed., *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia* (Rome: Laterza, 2009), especially the following contribution: Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, *"L'obbedienza femminile tra virtù domestiche e disciplina monastica,"* 269–283; Paola Donadi, *La regola e lo spirito: arte, cultura, quotidianità nei monasteri femminili* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2003); Carmela Compare, "Inventari di biblioteche monastiche femminili alla fine del XVI secolo," *Genesis Rivista della Società italiana delle storiche* 2, no. 2 (2003): 220–232; Roberto Rusconi, "Le biblioteche degli ordini religiosi in Italia intorno all'anno 1600 attraverso l'inchiesta della Congregazione dell'Indice: problemi e prospettive di una ricerca," in *Libri, biblioteche e cultura nell'Italia del Cinque e Seicento*, ed. Edoardo Barbieri and Danilo Zardin (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), 63–84; Gabriella Zarri,

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such phenomena could be caused by the devil or could be simply simulated by the nuns themselves.[25] The "army" deployed to control and verify such phenomena were, first of all, confessors and spiritual directors, who became increasingly crucial: these men had the pivotal task of pushing the sisters to write down and describe their own ecstasy in diaries and autobiographies, in order to discern the truth.[26]

4. The Men Allowed to Enter Nunneries

Priests, spiritual directors, and confessors were among the few men to have continuous contact with professed nuns, along with strictly necessary farmers, laborers, and artisans.[27] Unquestionably, they were an important element of the monastic microcosm. Each community had to have at least one ordinary confessor, who held office for three years for any cloister. In 1600, the curial Congregation of Bishops and Regulars suggested that this confessor be chosen among secular priests, although the diocesan bishop could also appoint regular clerics for this purpose, but only if there was a shortage of

ed., *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo, Studi e testi a stampa* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1996). Cf. Alberto Petrucciani, Valentina Sestini, and Federico Valacchi, *Libri, biblioteche e società: Studi per Rosa Marisa Borraccini* (Macerata: Università di Macerata, 2021), and some of the essays published in Concetta Bianca and Anna Scattigno, eds., *Scritture carismi istituzioni: Percorsi di vita religiosa in età moderna; Studi per Gabriella Zarri* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018).

25 On this issue, see Mattia Zangari, *Santità femminile e disturbi mentali fra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Rome: Laterza, 2022); Marina Caffiero and Alessia Lirosi, *Donne e Inquisizione* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2020); Horacio Sierra, *Sanctified Subversives: Nuns in Early Modern English and Spanish* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016); Clare Copeland and Jan Machielsen, ed., *Angels of Light? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill 2013); Marina Caffiero, "Dall'esplosione mistica tardo barocca all'apostolato sociale (1650–1850)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Laterza, 2009), 327–373; Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit. Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); and Gabriella Zarri, *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1991); but also see Rudolph Bell, *Holy Anorexia*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

26 Think, for example, of Teresa of Avila, who was suspected of being close to the *alumbrados* (considered to be "heretical" by the Roman Church) and whose mystical experiences were carefully examined and sifted through by the judges of the Inquisition.

27 In 1652, for example, the watchmaker Franco Santini was allowed to enter the seclusion of the Roman community of Santissima Concezione delle Farnesiane to repair the nuns' clock: Archivio di Stato, Rome (hereafter ASR), Clarisse cappuccine SS. Concezione ai Monti, b. 4966, dossier nr. 1, fol. not numbered.

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secular ones; in any case, he had to limit the choice to "qualified fathers, aged 45."[28] Extraordinary confessors were also accepted, depending on need, during Lent or other festivities of the liturgical year: in this case, they could also be regular fathers, but they had to work for the whole cloister and not for individual nuns.[29] During the Holy Year, the sisters had the power of appointing one preacher as they pleased, although his name had to be approved by the bishop: "When the nuns by virtue of the Jubilee have the faculty to elect their own confessor, they will be obliged to inform the ordinary, without whose license none is allowed to enter the monastery."[30]

Noteworthy is the opinion of the nuns of Tor de' Specchi about secular and regular clerics. This convent had been founded in the fifteenth century by Frances of Rome for hosting a community of oblates. After the Council of Trent these women were forced to follow the law of enclosure, although it was in some respects less strict.[31] In 1624, two secular priests were confessors at the nunnery at a cost of 300 *scudi* a year. However, the sisters complained that despite the priests being "very good men," they did not give them "the satisfaction they would have liked." The reason given is particularly interesting: the nuns considered the two priests to be paid employees and not really competent or qualified regarding questions related to the spirit and soul.[32] They added that they would prefer regular clerics both for the ordinary sermons and for the extraordinary ones that took place three or four times a year. Moreover, almost all the oblates chose clerics regular of the Mother of God (*Leonardini*), who resided at the church of Santa Maria in Portico in Rome and who had already been their confessors for five years. But some sisters added that, since these clerics regular were too few to suffice for their whole nunnery, it was better to opt for Barnabites living at the church of San Carlo ai Catinari or, even better, for priests of the Society of Jesus.[33] This case shows the nuns' attempts to actively intervene in the designation of those who were to take care of

28 The decision of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on the preference of secular priests is also reported by Andrea Matteo Monaco, *Istruttione per le Monache Claustrali. Cavata da' Sacri Canoni, Constitutioni Apostoliche, Decreti della Sacra Congregatione e da Dottori approvati* (Roma: appresso Francesco Moneta, 1641), 104. In 1661 the Congregation once again stated that confessors should be "not very young, with a childish face, nor people from whom one might fear any scandal:" AAV, Congregazione Vescovi e Regolari, Positiones Monialium, n.n. (settembre–novembre 1661), cited in Andretta, "Il governo dell'osservanza," 426.

29 Ibid. See also Canon X of *Decretum de regularibus et monialibus*.

30 Ibid., 105.

31 Frances of Rome (Francesca Romana) was a mystic, also notable for her charitable work. She became a Benedictine Oblate and founded a community of women who shared a common life without religious vows. She was canonized in 1608.

32 AAV, Congr. Visita Ap., 3, fol. 26r/v.

33 Ibid.

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their spiritual health; it also highlights the growing success of the new clerics regular as spiritual directors.[34]

Though applying different techniques, in general the clerics regular were capable of bringing confession and spiritual direction "if not to converge, at least to get closer,"[35] in order to reveal the internal dispositions of the individual as well as to push individuals to question themselves through personal meditation. The example of the Jesuits is the best known and studied. The special characteristics of their methods in directing consciences have been highlighted, mainly identified in their ability to construct a deep and long-lasting relationship with penitents, but also in their habit of including the sacrament of penance in the penitent's path of internal perfection, as well as in the use of general confession as a method to ponder one's life, mistakes, and faults.[36] Other clerics regular like the Barnabites and the Theatines tended to followed this trend as well.[37]

In Rome, the appointment of confessors—both ordinary and extraordinary—was theoretically up to the cardinal vicar even in exempt monasteries, although this rule was not always peacefully accepted. In these communities, the bishop generally gave the task to those who had been proposed by the cardinal protectors and by the regular superiors.

Actually, confessors were among the few men who had continuous contact with cloistered nuns. Therefore, it was not unusual for special ties to arise, as the following example might illustrate. In the second half of the seventeenth century, a group of nuns living in the Benedictine nunnery of Sant'Ambrogio wrote to the Roman Curia to denounce a young priest who had been protected by other sisters for years, including the abbess, who was the "godmother of the mother of the said cleric."[38] Consequently, the priest "had behaved with such audacity, that he poorly attends his job if at all […]

34 AAV, Congr. Visita Ap., 12, fol. 153r.

35 Mario Rosa, "Premessa," in *La direzione spirituale tra Medioevo ed età moderna: percorsi di ricerca e contesti specifici*, ed. Michela Catto (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004), 7–12, in particular 11.

36 See, among others, Moshe Sluhovsky, *Becoming a New Self: Practices of Belief in Early Modern Catholicism*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Gabriella Zarri, *Uomini e donne nella direzione spirituale. Secc. XIII–XVI* (Spoleto: Fondazione CISAM 2016); Adelisa Malena and Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, "La direzione spirituale delle donne in età moderna: percorsi di ricerca contemporanea," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo–germanico in Trento* 24 (1998): 439–460; Giovanni Filoramo, *Storia della direzione spirituale*, 3 vols. (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2006–2007), in particular vol. 1: *L'Età moderna*, ed. Gabriella Zarri, 2007; Michela Catto, ed., *La direzione spirituale tra Medioevo ed età moderna: percorsi di ricerca e contesti specifici* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004); Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), in particular 244–277, 485–507; Adriano Prosperi, "Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti: le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia," *Dimensioni e Problemi della Ricerca Storica* 2 (1994): 77–103; Patricia Ranft, "A Key to Counter Reformation Women's Activism: The Confessor-Spiritual Director," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 10, no. 2 (1994): 7–26.

37 I would like to thank Father Giancarlo Rocca, professor at the Gregorian University of Rome, for our exchange of opinions on this topic.

38 AAV, Misc., Arm. VII, 36, fol. 38r.

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and in addition he causes a great number of indecent scandals in this nunnery, so that it makes it impossible to report them all."[39] The nuns had already presented the problem several times to their cardinal protector, who had done nothing, probably in support of the abbess.

Usually, confessors carried out their pastoral duties at the confessional window or at the grille of the parlor. This rule, among others, was reaffirmed by the Congregation of the Apostolic Visitation in 1625, and infractions were severely punished:

> Confessors, both ordinary and extraordinary ones, cannot enter the cloister or the places where the nuns stay, for confessing or reconciling them, except in the case of dangerous illness, in compliance with the Apostolic Bulls; instead they must confess and reconcile them outside the aforesaid enclosure and places, or in the churches or in the other usual places approved or to be approved by the cardinal vicar; and, at the window of the place where they will confess or reconcile, there must be the usual perforated iron plate, which cannot be opened or moved, with a transparent veil affixed from the inside; [and this norm is imposed] to the aforementioned confessors under penalty of suspension of the sacrament of penance, for the first time, and of excommunication and inability to administer the sacrament of penance again, for the second time, by applying it ipso facto without further declaration, and [independently from] other punishments at the discretion [of the superior].[40]

As detailed in this passage, when regular priests transgressed the norms, the penalty was first suspension from office, and then even excommunication if the transgression was repeated. The reason for such rigor lies in the fact that before and after the Council of Trent the ecclesiastical authorities had identified the presence of male regulars who frequented the communities as confessors, preachers, and spiritual fathers as one of the main causes of the corruption of nuns.

Clerics were also allowed to enter the enclosure to give spiritual comfort to sick nuns. In such cases, all the healthy sisters had to withdraw so as not to be seen, except for two or three, generally the abbess and the *discrete*, in any case elderly nuns, who accompanied the priest to the room of the patient. But each community could strengthen this norm. For instance, in the very rigorous Roman Capuchin community named Corpus Christi, only the abbess and the *discrete*—adequately veiled to the waist—could accompany the ministers inside the enclosure; furthermore the abbess could never show her own hands and had to use a wand to indicate everything.[41] On the opposite end, among the problems that were noted in the Roman Augustine nunnery of Santa Marta in 1627 was

39 Ibid. In the nineteenth century in Sant'Ambrogio, a great scandal occurred about sexual abuses and *sollicitatio ad turpia* committed by some priests but linked to lesbian relationships among the nuns. See Hubert Wolf, *Die Nonnen von Sant'Ambrogio: Eine wahre Geschichte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2013).

40 Decreta (1625), in AAV, Misc., Arm VII, 115 A, dossier n. III, fol. 365r/v.

41 AAV, Congr. Visita Ap., 5, fol. 168r.

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the custom of the priest entering the nunnery (for whatever necessity) being escorted by just *one* nun and not by *two* of them.[42] In response to such practices, in the 1670s, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars wrote to Cardinal Barberini—at that time protector of the Roman cloister of Santissima Concezione—to dictate how confessors had to behave in giving extreme unction to terminally ill nuns: such clerics could indeed enter the nunnery and listen to the patients, but the cell door had to be left open and other sisters had to watch, although they had to keep a distance so they would not hear the words being spoken.[43]

The general legislation provided that not even the ordinary bishop and the other superior clergymen could enter the enclosure, except for strictly necessary cases. For example, in 1650 Bishop Scanaroli had to obtain a written license to be allowed to enter the community of Santissima Concezione to bless and consecrate the monastic cemetery.[44] In a document dated March 1628, Cardinal Francesco Barberini revoked all the licenses he or others had granted to enter a convent of repentant prostitutes whose protector he was; he then drew up a list of those to whom he did grant permission to access the convent, but specifying the occasions they were allowed to do so. Only the following clerics were admitted: the "spiritual prelate" Monsignor Ricciulli, and the fathers Giovanni Antonio Palini, Bartolomeo Oreggi, and Giambattista Scanaroli, but only in "cases pertaining to the visitation and interior enclosure, and if one of them has to hold chapter and hear the nuns' faults along with the father confessor. The auricular examination must be done at the grille."[45]

Another exception for letting clerics and bishops enter monastic walls was the so-called ecclesiastical visit to control the religious life of nuns inside nunneries, as mentioned in the quotation above. During such a visit they always had to enter accompanied by someone aged or with proven moral behavior. If the sisters, for some reason, refused to open the entrance portal and let the monastery inspected, "the bishop may break the doors and excommunicate them […] and to this purpose the bishop could invoke the secular arm," in other words, the police.[46]

However, the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars established that, even in the limited cases in which priests were admitted into the nunneries, they were all "obliged to speak briefly, and always avoid entering when there is no evident cause."[47] In turn, "the nun who deals with regulars without permission" has mortally sinned, "because

42 Ibid., 3, fol. 294v.

43 ASR, Clarisse cappuccine SS. Concezione ai Monti, b. 4966, dossier n. 1, fol. not numbered.

44 Ibid.

45 ASR, Camerale III, b. 1887, S. Maria Maddalena delle convertite, n. 18, fol. 187v–188r.

46 Monaco, *Instruttione*, 113–114.

47 Ibid., 15.

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she cooperates in their sin, which is mortal, as the sacred Congregation of Regulars has declared."[48]

Nevertheless, these rules were not always respected. For instance, in the community of Tor de' Specchi, only the chaplain and the doctor were allowed to enter the enclosure, and only in cases of strict necessity. But in 1624 someone complained that the confessors came inside "every day to celebrate the mass," even though it was forbidden; moreover, other clerics and even nuns' fathers and brothers came in, and "others who are not relatives [go] into the room downstairs to talk to the nuns."[49] In this convent the infractions were numerous: probably this was due to the fact that the sisters tolerated the enclosure imposed on them poorly, given that the order had been first established in the fifteenth century as one of oblates; only starting in the sixteenth century were they forced to respect the enclosure. Moreover, these women belonged to patrician families that rarely accepted commands contrary to the practices and privileges they had gained over time. We do not know who reported these non-observances to the papal curia, but there were nuns who blamed this laxity on the abbess, the seventy-year-old mother Benedetta Altieri. It is not clear whether behind the report was a concealed power conflict among the nuns within the community.

Ease of entry was also reported for other Roman nunneries, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century, when it raised the concern of the pontiffs who tried to remedy it, without, however, achieving any great success. In 1664, Pope Alexander VII Chigi once again tried to regulate the entry of superiors and confessors into monasteries with the Constitution *Felici Sacrarum Virginum*, reaffirming the primacy of the episcopal exercise.[50]

Other examples of troubles linked to confessors and preachers can be found reported in documents of that time, even problems that descended into violence. So it happened in 1648 in the nunnery of San Silvestro in Capite, inhabited by Poor Clares, due to one of the nuns' confessors, a priest named John Baptist. We do not know if he was a regular cleric, but the case is noteworthy because of its consequences. The carnival period was approaching, and the confessor tried to convince the nuns not to organize either recreation or theatrical representations. Some of the sisters agreed, but others complained. Such a violent discussion arose that "they came to blows and cut each other with knives, and one was slaughtered and thrown into the well, and another later died on the 15th of February, and the executioner was sent into the monastery to put to death the person who had committed the murder."[51]

48 Barco, *Specchio*, 99. He is referring to the session held by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on July 1, 1606.

49 AAV, Congr. Visita Ap., 3, fol. 258r, 264r/v. In principle, among male relatives and similar visitors, only boys under the age of five were allowed to cross the enclosure in Tor de' Specchi.

50 Bullarium Diplomatum et Privilegiorum, tomo XVII, Torino 1869, 307–311.

51 Giacinto Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, ed. Manlio Barberito, 2 vols. (Roma: Colombo, 1994), vol. 2, 521.

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The event is reported in a chronicle written in the seventeenth century.[52] It is, however, not easy to find such cases, given that the ecclesiastical hierarchies tried to conceal or hide them as much as possible, in order not to alter the facade of perfect sanctity they wanted to attribute to the nunneries in Rome, city of the popes and center of the Catholic world.[53]

5. Nuns, Spiritual Direction, and Reputation for Holiness: The Cases of Niccolò Zucchi and Antonio Baldinucci

The Counter-Reformation Church entrusted the spiritual direction of nuns specifically to the priests belonging to the new regular congregations that had arisen during the sixteenth century, as explained above. Some of them, in particular the Jesuits, placed the commitment to spiritual direction in general at the center of their apostolate.

Nevertheless, as did members of other orders, the Jesuits had a certain reluctance and embarrassment towards the task of the spiritual direction of nuns in particular. Although at the beginning, Ignatius of Loyola had been very interested in disciplining female religious life, in his constitutions he himself stated that Jesuits should not be confessors of nuns or other women, except for special and brief cases, given that the priests had to be ever ready to go anywhere in the world, wherever the Supreme Pontiff might send them.

Despite this reluctance on the part of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits gained great success among nuns, mainly for the proposition of the *Esercizi Spirituali* of Ignatius. Jesuit spiritual directors established a privileged relationship with women, and they ended up considering the reformation of nunneries as pivotal in the relaunch of the Roman faith. Moreover, their obedience to the pontiff pushed them to pay particular attention to female religiosity and female religious conditions in Rome: as the seat of the papacy, the city was an important laboratory of practices that were to become models for the whole Catholic world.

Here, I focus on two specific individuals: Niccolò Zucchi (1586–1670) and Antonio Baldinucci (1665–1717).[54] The first—Zucchi—is known as a mathematician, astronomer, and physician. He was the author of several essays on these topics. He was thus active in many fields of science, as were many learned people and Jesuits of his time.

52 The author was Giacinto Gigli (1594–1671), who was engaged in various city offices. From 1608 to 1670 he noted events that occurred in the city of Rome. His diary was published only in the twentieth century.

53 About silence being imposed on this and other controversial cases, see Alessia Lirosi, "The Daily Life of Nuns in Seventeenth Century Papal Rome: Prayers, Supernatural Events, Everyday Concerns and Violence," *The Journal of Religious History, Literature and Culture* 9, no. 1 (2023): 5–40.

54 Here I briefly outline some of my research findings; I intend to publish the full details and conclusions in a future essay.

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In 1616, he assembled a device to observe the stars that can be considered one of the first telescopes.[55] In 1625, he became a lecturer in mathematics and astronomy at the Collegio Romano—the renowned Jesuit school in Rome—and served as its provost from 1646 to 1649. He then worked at the papal curia, until becoming head of the Jesuits' Professed House in Rome in 1662, where he died in 1670. In 1626, Zucchi had already become a preacher, a role he held for twenty years, traveling to various cities in the papal states and evangelizing in the churches of the Society of Jesus as well as in other institutes, including nunneries.

These aspects are stressed in one of Zucchi's hagiographic biographies, written in 1682, twelve years after his death, by another Jesuit, Daniello Bartoli (1608–1685), who was also an astronomer.[56] The main intent of Bartoli was not to emphasize his companion's aptitude for science, but rather to highlight his commitment and the consequences of his "total effort in the office of preaching God's Word."[57] Indeed, "in addition to practicing the sciences, turning them into great utility for the spirit, he [Zucchi] had another particular and proper gift […]. This [gift] was that he managed to turn to very high feelings everyone who was contemptible and in low condition before

55 In 1623, Zucchi accompanied Cardinal Alessandro Orsini on a mission to the court of Emperor Ferdinand II in Prague, where he met Johannes Kepler, whom he later gave the telescope he had built. For a brief description of Zucchi's life, see Daniele Macuglia, "Zucchi, Niccolò," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (hereafter DBI), vol. 100 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 2020), 819–821. See also Adriano Amendola, "Cardinal Alessandro Orsini, the old Masters and the sciences," *Journal of the history of Collections Advance Access* (2015): 1–13; John W. O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, and T. Frank Kennedy et al., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

56 Bartoli was also the author of the monumental *Istoria della Compagnia di Gesù*, in 27 volumes (1650–1673). This was preceded by a biography of Ignatius of Loyola in five volumes: *Della vita e dell'istituto di Sant'Ignazio, fondatore della Compagnia di Gesù*. To complement this work, he also compiled a series of edifying biographies of members of the Society of Jesus. See Alberto Asor-Rosa, "Bartoli, Daniello," in *DBI*, vol. 6 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 1964), 563–571; and Federico Ottavis, "'Lo scrivere le vite de' santi uomini': Daniello Bartoli biografo della Compagnia di Gesù. La Vita di S. Francesco Borgia, nuovo Ignazio" (unpublished Master's thesis, Università degli Studi di Torino, 2018). Cf. Adriano Prosperi, *La vocazione: Storie di gesuiti tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2016); Miguel Gotor, *Santi stravaganti: Agiografia, ordini religiosi e censura ecclesiastica nella prima età moderna* (Rome: Aracne Editrice, 2012); Michela Catto, Isabella Gagliardi, and Rosa Maria Parrinello, ed., *Direzione spirituale e agiografia: Dalla biografia classica alle vite dei santi dell'età moderna* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2008); Simon Ditchfield, "Historia magistra sanctitatis? The Relationship between Historiography and Hagiography in Italy after the Council of Trent (1564–1742 ca.)," in *"Nunc alia tempora, alii mores": Storici e storia in età postridentina*, ed. Massimo Firpo (Florence: Olschki, 2005), 3–23.

57 Daniello Bartoli, *Della Vita del P. Nicolò Zucchi, della Compagnia di Gesù […] In due libri* (Roma: presso il Varese, 1682), 30.

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his eyes or in his mind."[58] While Bartoli described the specific task of preaching to nuns, controversial within the Society of Jesus and unpopular with most Jesuits, he insisted that, rather than being degraded by this activity, Zucchi had to be admired.[59] The biographer devoted three entire chapters to Zucchi's monastic preaching.[60] They point out that what distinguished Zucchi from the rest of his co-religionists was the particular care he addressed to the nunneries. Indeed "more than the others, in a special way, he cared about refreshing the sacred virgins in matters related to the soul, and also the other women who dedicated themselves by irrevocable donation to the divine service in the monasteries."[61] Taking care of nuns represented a reason for the priest's sanctification:

> Therefore it was God who, with explicit declaration and more than once, made him [Zucchi] understand that He would be happy if he would work with full commitment for it [pastoral care in nunneries, *cura monialium*]; and if he did that, He would reward him. And the superiors [of the Society of Jesus] allowed him to do it.[62]

Cura monialium, belittled by many, is presented by Bartoli as a means of spiritual growth for male clerics. He transforms it into a decisive element contributing to the construction and spreading of Zucchi's reputation of holiness. Indeed, "he would have never independently opted for it [preaching to nuns], since this particular office […] was not wanted in the Society [of Jesus]."[63]

Bartoli also dwells on stories about nuns who were disciplined or saved from temptation by Zucchi in several nunneries, including Santa Marta and Santa Maria in Campo Marzio in Rome. In addition, he describes the new vocations advocated by Zucchi. This confirms the role of confessors, and especially of Jesuits, in shaping the personality of the faithful. In a way, the edifying description found in Zucchi's *Vita* promoted the reputation of the entire Society of Jesus as well.

Zucchi's dedication to preaching to and providing pastoral care for nuns is also recorded by another writer from the Society of Jesus, Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani, in

58 Ibid., 43. A Jesuit from Parma, Orazio Smeraldi, described Zucchi in a text destined for internal reading in his order; Smeraldi sent this text to Bartoli in 1666. The manuscript is kept in Biblioteca Palatina, Parma (BPPr), Ms. Parmense 1414, Orazio Smeraldi, *Memorie de' padri e fratelli parmigiani che sono entrati e morti nella Compagnia di Giesù dal principio di essa Compagnia, cioè dall'anno 1540 sino all'anno 1666*, fol. 129r.

59 Bartoli, *Della Vita*, 58.

60 Ibid. Chapters 8, 9, and 10 of Book 1.

61 Ibid., 64–65.

62 Ibid., 67.

63 Ibid.

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his *Menologio di Pie Memorie* (Menology of pious memories), dated 1730.[64] This book can be seen as a compendium of notable Jesuits, but it probably uses the information reported by Bartoli and in the Jesuit vulgate. It states: "The main office of Father Niccolò Zucchi […] was to strive in a particular way to restore observance and to promote religious perfection in the monasteries."[65] It then reports some of the events already related by Bartoli.

Monastic manuscripts also confirm the role of Zucchi and the fame of his holiness. The chronicle of the Benedictines of Saint Cecilia in Trastevere, for example, underlines that he was the nuns' confessor and an "excellent preacher, who is considered an apostle and is held and acclaimed as a saint by everybody, [and] who brought no ordinary charity to our monastery." The chronicle also emphasizes his many-sided concern for nuns, citing several examples.[66]

Another Jesuit mentioned in the aforementioned manuscripts is Antonio Baldinucci. The chronicle of Santa Cecilia reports that in 1702 "Father Baldinucci […] gave the exercises to them for eight days producing great results, and the nuns remained eager to hear from him often, due to his great effectiveness and holiness."[67] Antonio Baldinucci was born in Florence in 1665; his father was Filippo Baldinucci, a famous member of the Crusca Academy, as well as a painter and historian of art. In 1681, Antonio joined the Society of Jesus. Because of his poor health, he was forced to forego being a member of one of the Jesuits' overseas missions. Instead, he was in charge of teaching grammar, and then focusing his apostolate on Italy and, above all, on organizing popular missions in the countryside. He died during one of these missions in Pofi, a village in the Papal States, in 1717. He was declared blessed by Pope Leo XIII in 1893.

In the context of his missionary work, Baldinucci supported the foundation of the Congregation of the Pious (female) Teachers by Rosa Venerini in Viterbo, a congregation composed of women who took simple vows and were allowed to move freely in society,

64 Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani, *Menologio di pie memorie d'alcuni Religiosi della Compagnia di Gesù raccolte dal Padre Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani della medesima Compagnia, e distribuite per quei giorni dell'anno, ne' quali morirono*, 4 vols. (Venezia, per Niccolò Pezzana, 1730).

65 Ibid., vol. 2, 147.

66 Alessia Lirosi, *Le cronache di Santa Cecilia: Un monastero femminile a Roma in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2009), 240. The number of convent chronicles that are being published is growing. See, for example, Marina Caffiero, "Le scritture della memoria femminile a Roma in età moderna: la produzione monastica," in *Memoria, famiglia, identità tra Italia e Europa nell'età moderna*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009), 235–268; Kate J.P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing About Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004).

67 Lirosi, *Le cronache*, 272.

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unlike cloistered nuns. The initial purpose of this congregation was to educate girls from rural settings, later focusing on girls from towns and cities.[68]

Father Baldinucci was also very attentive to the spiritual care of nuns. Yet, in contrast to the biography of Zucchi, Baldinucci's hagiographic biography—written by the Jesuit Francesco Maria Galluzzi—mentions his work in nunneries only briefly in the context of his missions in Rome and other parts of the Papal States. For instance, it describes cases in communities where the nuns had split into opposing factions or where lay people regularly came to chat with them in the parlor. But when the sisters "heard just a few words from the father, their souls changed so much that they wanted to confess to him"; they "begged him to let all the people know that, in the future, they no longer wanted the friendship of secular people, so that none should come to [visit] them anymore; indeed they showed themselves ready either to let the grates be walled up or to vow not to go there except in cases of specific need."[69] Other examples concern individual nuns living outside Rome who were considered particularly undisciplined or presumably "possessed by the devil" and who were "tamed" by Baldinucci.

Patrignani, too, in his aforementioned *Menologio*, mentions the work undertaken by Baldinucci in nunneries only briefly. He merely notes that Baldinucci's health did not benefit, in addition to his usual tasks, from "visiting hospitals, prisons, monasteries, or those of the religious that he was asked to reform."[70] Like Galluzzi, Patrignani preferred

68 Alberto Merola, "Baldinucci, Antonio," in *DBI*, vol. 5. (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 1963), 495; Bernadette Majorana, "Baldinucci, Antonio," in *Les Jésuites. Histoire et dictionnaire*, ed. Pierre Antoine Fabre and Pierre Benoist (Paris: Bouquins, 2022), 484–486; and Bernadette Majorana, "Lingua e stile nella predicazione dei gesuiti missionari in Italia (XVI–XVIII secolo)," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 45, no. 1 (2015): 133–151. See also Simona Negruzzo, "Rosa Venerini, santa," in *DBI*, vol. 98 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 2020), 521; Marina Caffiero, "Santità, territorio e istituzioni: le Maestre Pie tra centro e periferia (secoli XVII–XVIII)," in *Santi e culti del Lazio: istituzioni, società, devozioni*; *Atti del Convegno di studio, Roma, 2–4 maggio 1996*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano and Enzo Petrucci (Rome: Arbor Sapientiae Editore, 2000), 213–235; Giancarlo Rocca, "Maestre Pie Venerini," in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. 4 (Rome: Edizioni Paoline 1978), 835–840. For a more general approach, see David Salomoni, *Educating the Catholic People: Religious Orders and Their Schools in Early Modern Italy, 1500–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Alessia Lirosi, *Libere di sapere: Il diritto delle donne all'istruzione dal Cinquecento al mondo contemporaneo* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2015); and Angelo Bianchi and Giancarlo Rocca, ed., *L' educazione femminile tra Cinque e Settecento* (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola 2008).

69 Francesco Maria Galluzzi, *Vita del venerabile servo di Dio P. Antonio Baldinucci della Compagnia di Gesù Missionario* (Roma: Stamperia di S. Michele a Ripa, 1720), 45–46, 27, 178. Galluzzi (1671–1731) was another Jesuit strongly committed to social apostolate so much so that he earned the nickname of "Apostle of Rome." He was also a prolific author of hagiographic and ascetic texts, like Baldinucci's biography. See Manuela Belardini, "Galluzzi, Francesco Maria," in *DBI*, vol. 51 (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana Treccani, 1998), 763–764.

70 Patrignani, *Menologio*, vol. IV, 40.

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to focus on Baldinucci's commitment to men, children, and secular women during his missions.[71]

The spiritual care of female religious communities is given less value and attention in the canonization process of Baldinucci than it was given in Zucchi's hagiography. Thus, Zucchi appears to be an exception in a context in which pastoral care in nunneries was commonly perceived as not particularly relevant and certainly not of special merit for a future blessed or saint.

6. Conclusion

In the sixteenth century, monastic life was reformed, with strict enclosure imposed on all nuns. The reforms strengthened the regulations on those who entered female monasteries and put the relationships between nuns and regular clerics under special control. Those who were charged with monitoring nuns' obedience and adherence to norms concerning enclosure and monastic vows were mainly confessors and spiritual directors: they had to shape the consciences of nuns and help them internalize approved behaviors or change their non-compliant habits. Gradually, this task was specifically entrusted to the new clerics regular arisen since the fifteenth century.

Among these clerics, members of the Society of Jesus had great success in this new assignment, despite their having a certain reluctance, as those of other orders, toward the task of serving as nuns' confessors. This had to do with the inobservances and problems that not rarely involved male clerics working in nunneries. Female monastic communities were not always the places of peace, quiet, and mutual respect that reformers and ecclesiastical authorities desired. The task of preaching to nuns and bringing those who strayed back to the right path was generally considered less prestigious than work in the overseas missions. But there were some Jesuits—for example, Antonio Baldinucci and, especially, Niccolò Zucchi—who saw this assignment as an opportunity to test themselves and satisfy divine will. Nevertheless, the spiritual care of nuns seems to have held little importance in processes of sanctifying Jesuit fathers.

71 Ibid., 8–46. Cf. Bernadette Majorana, "L'altro martirio: Offerta di sé e edificazione fra i missionari interni dell'antica Compagnia di Gesù," *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 12 (2019): 155–182, and "La pauvreté visible: Réflexions sur le style missionnaire jésuite dans les Avvertimenti de Antonio Baldinucci (vers 1705)," in *Missions religieuses modernes: Notre lieu est le monde*, ed. Vincent Bernard and Pierre Antoine Fabre (Rome: École française de Rome, 2007), 361–380. Cf. also Massimo Cattaneo, *Convertire e disciplinare: Chiesa romana e religiosità popolare in età moderna* (Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, 2022).

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Alison Weber

The Challenge of Spiritual Friendship

Women and Men in the Discalced Carmelite Reform

1. Introduction: An Apostolate of Conversion *Intramuros*

Reform in the context of the female branch of the Discalced Carmelite Order, established by Teresa of Avila in 1562, is generally understood in terms of the founder's desire to return to the eremitic origins of the order through the observance of vows of silence, strict active and passive enclosure, and austerity in diet and dress. However, as Jodi Bilinkoff has observed in an important essay, Teresa's original charism was not only eremitic but apostolic. Having learned of the desecration of churches during the religious wars in France and the struggles of the missionary orders in the New World, and frustrated by women's exclusion from a role in defending a Church under attack, she imagined "an apostolate of prayer *intramuros*." Her determination to found convents "in poverty," that is, without endowments, was motivated not only by her admiration for monastic poverty, but also by the desire to free nuns from the obligation to chant intercessory prayers for patrons and their deceased kin, thus freeing them to pray for the Church, its priests, and missionaries.[1]

Teresa's apostolate of prayer can also be understood as an apostolate of *conversion*—defined as her desire for nuns to become agents of spiritual renewal for religious and laypersons of both sexes—especially for their own confessors. Teresa's idea of conversion shared aspects of what the Jesuits called "the help of souls" (consoling and encouraging the interlocutor in his or her spiritual journey) and *reformatio* (conversion of the heart *from* sin and *to* a life of service to God).[2] A crucial element of this apostolate was the reciprocal spiritual friendship between a nun and her confessor. There are well-known, if exceptional, precedents for such intimate relationships in the history of Chris-

1 Jodi Bilinkoff, "Teresa of Avila: Woman with a Mission," in *A Linking of Heaven and Earth: Essays in Honor of Carlos M. N. Eire*, ed. Emily Michelson, Scott Taylor, and Mary Noll Venables (Hants: Ashgate, 2012), 101–111; qtd. at 109. – I am grateful to Jodi Bilinkoff for her valuable comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this essay.

2 See John W. O'Malley, "Some Distinctive Characteristics of Jesuit Spirituality in the Sixteenth Century," in *Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History*, ed. idem (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 165–180. Teresa, like the Jesuits and the followers of Juan de Avila, believed that the conversion of indifferent Christians was desirable for persons of all classes.

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tianity.[3] Teresa's innovation lies in her attempt to provide an institutional framework in which they could be promoted and protected. In this essay I focus on three texts that reflect the challenges presented by these bold innovations. In *The Way of Perfection* (composed 1567), Teresa encourages nuns not to fear strong affection for their confessors, while describing the important mediating role of prioresses. In *On Making the Visitation* (composed 1575), Teresa stresses the importance of an amicable collaboration between the visitator (monastic inspector) and the prioress to maintain the spiritual health of the convent. The third text, *The Monastery of Melancholy* (composed 1582), a satire written by Teresa's confessor, Jerónimo Gracián, imagines a monastic community at war with itself after such collaborations had failed. Together these texts represent a growing awareness of the difficulty of protecting the spiritually intimate and reciprocally beneficial confessor–penitent relationships upon which the apostolate of conversion depended. Although there were many factors contributing to the internecine conflicts among Discalced Carmelites after Teresa's death in 1582, a critical role was played by fear of scandal, quarrels over the role of the prioress in monitoring relations between nuns and their confessors, and, in general, doubts about the ideal of a shared apostolate of conversion.

2. The Confessor as Soul Mate

In 1560, when Teresa first conceived a plan to found a reformed Carmelite convent in Avila, the notion that a pious woman and her confessor might form an apostolic partnership was not novel. Such relations had been celebrated in late medieval piety and in the early decades of the sixteenth century. In fact, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1536–1517; cardinal 1495–1517) supported the translation and publication of works by or about holy women, notably Catherine of Siena (1347–1330), the Dominican tertiary, canonized in 1461, who together with her confessor Raymond of Capua had worked to heal the Schism of 1378.[4] The spread of literacy and the availability of spiritual guides in the vernacular also encouraged the participation of women in the early years of the Society of Jesus and among the followers of the clerical reformer

3 Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors, Female Penitents, and Catholic Culture, 1450–1759* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); John W. Coakley, *Women, Men and Spiritual Power: Female Saints and Their Male Collaborators* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

4 Elizabeth Teresa Howe, "Cisneros and the Translation of Women's Spirituality," in *The Vernacular Spirit*, ed. Renata Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 283–295.

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John of Avila (1499–1569).[5] There were countercurrents, however, that reflected not only misogynistic attitudes about women's mental and emotional stability, but also anxieties regarding a spirituality that minimized social as well as gendered hierarchies and challenged men's magisterial privilege in the Church. Indeed, Teresa was aware that any effort to create a female apostolate, however circumscribed, would meet with suspicion if not condemnation from the post-Cisneros Spanish Church. Nevertheless, she was determined to find a way for nuns to practice a version of *reformatio*, nurtured by the confessor–penitent relationship, that would radiate outward to the larger Christian community. This, she realized, would require the protection of a strictly enclosed convent.

Teresa was undoubtedly aware that scandal could derail a female apostolate. Teresa herself had been the object of slander both before and after she entered the Convent of the Incarnation in Avila in 1535. Surprisingly, she does not omit these brushes with dishonor in her spiritual autobiography, *The Book of Her Life* (composed 1562–1565). In chapter 2, she describes how her relationship with a male cousin when they were adolescents imperiled her family's honor. In chapter 5, she confesses that an affectionate relationship with a village priest, although innocent (and spiritually beneficial for the priest), represented a grave occasion of sin. Finally, in chapter 7 she relates how, in the Convent of the Incarnation (where neither active nor passive enclosure was observed at the time), it was customary for nuns to entertain secular visitors in the locutory: "For many years I took part in this noxious form of recreation" with male visitors. While conversing with one person in particular, she saw "something that looked like a large toad" moving quickly toward her, a strange phenomenon that she interpreted as a warning from God that this was indeed a pernicious friendship (7.8.86).[6] Here, we find Teresa's most explicit denunciation of unenclosed convents: "True religious life is practiced so little that friars, or nuns […] must be more cautious and dissimulating in speaking about the friendship they desired to have with God than in speaking of other friendships and attachments that the devil arranges in monasteries" (7.5.85).[7] In each case, Teresa describes how authority figures had placed her in a situation in which she

5 Elizabeth Rhodes, "Ignatius, Women, and the *Leyenda de los santos*," in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality and Influence*, ed. Robert Aleksander Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 7–23. Although John of Avila is most famous for his reform of the secular clergy, he also engaged in an apostolate for women. See Rady Roldán-Figueroa, *The Ascetic Spirituality of John of Avila (1499–1569)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), esp. 91–116.

6 "The Book of Her Life," in vol. 1 of *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1987) (hereafter CW). "[F]ue muchos años los que tomaba esta recreación pestilencial" (7.7.51); "una cosa a manera de sapo grande" (7.8.51), Teresa de Jesús, *Obras completas*, ed. Tomás Álvarez, 10th ed. (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1998) (hereafter OC). Parenthetical numbers refer to chapter, section, and page.

7 "Usase tan poco el de la verdadera religion, que más ha de temer el fraile y la monja […] a los mismos de su casa, que a todos los demomios; y más cautela y disimuación ha de tener para hablar en la amistad

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might have fallen into sin. I suggest Teresa called attention to these events to emphasize the importance of enclosure for her controversial proposal to found a new convent based on the primitive Rule of the Carmelite Order.[8] At any rate, in the early years of the Discalced reform she was confident that strict enclosure would serve as a bulwark against scandal, making the convent a haven for the transformational spiritual friendships between nuns and confessors. These mutually reinforced conversions *intramuros*, it was Teresa's hope, would radiate outward, inspiring *reformatio* in the wider Christian community.

Where did this confidence come from? Teresa's support from a group of Dominicans who served as her confessors and advisors beginning in the late 1550s was probably a key factor.[9] These men, with various degrees of caution, were receptive to the possibility that the nun might be a new Catherine of Siena; any one of them could have given Teresa a copy of Raymond of Capua's *Leyenda maior*, a biography of the Italian saint, translated from Latin into Spanish in 1511.[10] In this book, Teresa would have read Raymond's moving account of his conversion realized through Catherine's prayers. Raymond, initially skeptical of Catherine's visions, had proposed a test: if Catherine's prayers evoked in him profound contrition for his sins, this would be proof that her actions were guided by the Holy Spirit. The following day, Raymond had a vision of God's tender mercy and wept so profusely that he feared his heart would break. Henceforth, Raymond became Catherine's devoted supporter and disciple.[11]

We find a similar description of a priest's conversion due a woman's prayers in Teresa's *Life*. Although in the prologue she declares that she writes in response to the command

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que desea tener con Dios, que en otras amistades y voluntades que el demonio ordena en los monasteries (OC 7.5.49).

8 The first Discalced convent, San José, inaugurated in Avila in 1562, observed active and passive enclosure, that is, nuns were not be allowed to leave the convent except in dire circumstances, and multiple barriers separated nuns from visitors. Notably, San José adopted enclosure four years before the publication of Pope Pius V's bull *circa pastoralis*; Alison Weber, "Locating Holiness in Early Modern Spain: Convents, Caves, and Houses," in *Attending to Early Modern Women: Structures and Subjectivities*, ed. Joan Hartman and Adele Seeff (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 50–74, esp. 52–54. On the controversy over founding "in poverty," see Jodi Bilinkoff, *The Avila of Saint Teresa: Religious Reform in a Sixteenth-Century City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), esp. 137–151.

9 Vicente Barrón (dates unknown), Pedro Ibáñez (d. 1565), García de Toledo (c. 1515–1590), and Domingo Báñez (1528–1604). For brief biographies, see Tomás Álvarez, ed. *Diccionario de Santa Teresa: doctrina e historia*, 2nd ed. (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2006) (hereafter DST). These four entries are anonymous.

10 In a report in defense of Teresa's spiritual favors written in 1562, Ibáñez draws explicit parallels between Teresa and Catherine as victims of uncomprehending clerics; Alison Weber, "Remodeling a Saint: Teresa of Avila Reads Catherine of Siena," in *Women of the Book: Material Texts and the Spiritual Lives of Early Modern Women, 1450–1800*, ed. Kelsey Champagne, Earle Havens, and Erin Rowe (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, forthcoming).

11 Coakley, *Women, Men and Spiritual Power*, 170–192.

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of several confessors, a particular addressee emerges as Teresa's ideal intimate reader.[12] In chapter 34, Teresa recounts how, after conversing in church with a priest whom she knew slightly, she was seized by the desire to make him a more fervent servant of God:

> I considered the wonderful talents and gifts he had for doing much good were he to give himself totally to God. I've experienced this for some years: as soon as I see a person who greatly pleases me, with longings I sometimes cannot bear, I want to see him give himself totally to God […]. So I said to His Majesty: "Lord, You must not deny me this favor; see how this individual is fit to be our friend." (34:7–8.296–297)[13]

Indeed, Teresa states that her desire was answered when Christ appeared to her in a vision telling her "that He was always present in conversations like these and how much He is pleased when persons so delight in speaking of Him" (34:17.301).[14]

3. *The Way of Perfection* and the Confessor–Penitent Relationship

This spiritual friend of Teresa's was the nobleman García de Toledo. Born around 1515 (the same year as Teresa), he was the nephew of the count of Oropesa, a grandee of Spain. In 1535 he joined the retinue of the Viceroy of New Spain and in the following year took the Dominican habit. After his life-changing encounter with Teresa in 1562, Toledo became the nun's confessor, disciple, editor, and supporter. He continued in this role until 1569, when he accompanied his cousin, the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, to Peru. Teresa rejoiced on hearing of his return to Spain in 1581, but they never saw each other again.[15]

It was Toledo who ordered Teresa to write her second major work, *The Way of Perfection* (*Camino de perfección*) in 1566. Ostensibly a gloss on the Lord's Prayer written for the twelve nuns of Saint Joseph, the austere Discalced convent that Teresa,

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12 See Kieran Kavanaugh, "*The Book of Her Life*: Introduction," in CW, vol. 1, 15–51, esp. 33–37. On Toledo as an intimate addressee, see Alison Weber, "La semántica disidente de Teresa de Jesús: Tres palabras claves " in *Teresa de Jesús: V Centenario de su nacimiento, Historia, literatura y pensamiento, Actas del Congreso Internacional Teresiano*, ed. Jesús García Rojo (Salamanca: Diputación Pontificia de Salamanca, 2015), 151–167.

13 "Miré los grandes talentos y partes que tenía para aprovechar mucho, si del todo se diese a Dios. Porque esto tengo yo de unos años acá, que no veo persona que mucho me contente, que luego querría verla del todo dar a Dios con unas ansias que algunas veces no me puedo valer […] y así le dije [a Dios]: 'Señor, no me habéis de negar esta merced; mirad que es bueno este sujeto para nuestro amigo'" (OC 34.7–8.327–328).

14 "[…] que a semejantes pláticas siempre se hallaba presente y lo mucho que se sirve en que así se deleiten en hablar en Él" (OC 34.17.333).

15 Toledo died in 1590 at the age of seventy-five.

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after much opposition, had founded in 1562, *The Way* also represents an impassioned defense of mental prayer and a commentary on the kind of sociability Teresa hoped to promote in the new convent. She warns her nuns to avoid factions, cliques, or exclusive friendships, and instead to be affable with each other and with visitors to the locutory:

> So, Sisters, strive as much as you can, without offense to God, to be affable and understanding in such a way that everyone you talk to will love your conversation and desire your manner of living and acting, and not be frightened and intimidated by virtue. This is very important for religious; the holier they are the more sociable they are with their Sisters. (41.7.199)[16]

This sociability is, in fact, intrinsic to Teresa's original Constitutions (1567): twice a day, the rule of silence was lifted and the nuns were to gather for conversation.[17] Other articles are designed to protect the intimacy of spiritual conversations that took place in the locutory.

More surprising is Teresa's encouragement for nuns to accept—without guilt—spiritual love for their confessor, although she is clearly aware of the psychological complexity of the relationship. Warning the nuns that the devil will batter them with scruples, she nonetheless urges them not to be unduly alarmed by mixed spiritual-sensual love for their confessor:

> What souls can do in this situation is to try not to think about whether they love the confessor or don't love him: but if they do love him, let them love him […]. [I]f they know that the confessor directs all his words to the profit of their souls and they do not see or know of any other vanity […], they should not weary themselves over any temptation they may have about their great attachment; when the devil is worn out he will go away. (460, note 7)[18]

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16 *The Way* appears in vol. 2 of CW. "Así que, hermanas, todo lo que pudiereis sin ofensa de Dios procured ser afables y entender de manera con todas las personas que os trataren, que amen vuestra conversación y deseen vuestra manera de vivir y tratar y no se atemoricen y amedentren de la virtud. A religiosas importa mucho esto: mientras más santas, más conversables con sus hermanas" (OC 41.7.606–607). Significantly, the Spanish word translated here as "sociable" is *conversables*. Conversation also had an important apostolic connotation in Ignatius' lexicon; German Arana, "Spiritual Conversation: A Privileged Apostolic Instrument of the Society of Jesus," *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* 32, no. 1 (2005): 22–49.

17 The introduction of a second hour of recreation in the late afternoon was an audacious innovation, since this contravened the primitive Carmelite Rule. At various times, officials attempted to curtail the hours of recreation; DST, s.v. "Recreación" (T. Álvarez).

18 "Lo que en esto pueden hacer es procurer no ocupar el pensamiento en si quieren o no quieren; sino si quisieren, quieran. […] [S]i en el confesor entendieren que todas sus pláticas es para aprovechar su alma y no le vieren ni entendieren otra vanidad […]. por ninguna tentación que ellas tengan de mucha afición se fatiguen, que de que el demonio se canse se le quitará" (OC, 443–444, note 16). Toledo made in all about fifty corrections to the first redaction (Escorial Codex) and identified polemical passages.

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Teresa's frankness in describing mixed spiritual-sensual love is striking. It is not surprising that most of the passage cited above, written in 1566, was excised from her second redaction (written later in the same year); other bold statements such as the following were also deleted: "When you know some person like this [spiritual friend], Sisters, let the Mother prioress diligently strive that he speak with you. Love such persons as much as you like" (7.4.67).[19] In the second, more discreet redaction, Teresa recommends that if the penitent notes signs of "vanity" in the confessor, she should request a replacement.[20] Significantly, in both redactions, Teresa defends the nun's liberty to change confessors, although she suggests a significant role for the prioress as gatekeeper to this relationship.[21] The second redaction is certainly toned down, but the ebullience is unmistakable. Having successfully founded an enclosed convent and assured of Toledo's support, Teresa affirms the legitimacy, indeed the desirability, of spiritual love between a nun and her confessor.

4. "On Making the Visitation," Jerónimo Gracián, and the Limits of Sociability

In 1576 at the behest of her confessor Jerónimo Gracián (Gracián de la Madre de Dios, 1545–1614), Teresa drafted guidelines for the inspection of the twelve Discalced convents she had founded by this date.[22] Gracián was the third of twenty children born to Diego Gracián and Juana Dantisco. His father had served as a secretary to Charles V and Philip II, and several of his brothers held similarly influential positions at court. After studying theology under the Jesuits at the University of Alcalá de Henares, Gracián made his profession as a Discalced Carmelite in 1573. His rise was meteoric—within a year he was appointed vicar provincial of all Calced and Discalced Carmelite friars in Andalusia.[23] Teresa and Gracián met for the first time in April 1575, when Teresa

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In the second redaction (Valladolid Codex, 1566?), Teresa amended these problematic passages and, as Kavanaugh suggests, "toned down many of the more spontaneous and confidential assertions and some of the subtle irony that flowed from her pen." This passage was replaced with a briefer one (chap. 4, par. 14), in which Teresa writes in vague terms about the devil's interference in spiritual friendships; Kavanaugh, "Introduction," 15–36, esp. 18–19, qtd. at 17.

19 "Cuando alguna persona semejante conocieres, hermanas, con todas las diligencias que pudiere la Madre procure trate con vosotras. Quered cuanto quisiereis a los tales" (OC, 455, note 6).

20 It is not clear what Teresa means by vanity. I surmise she is referring to a confessor who attempts to promote his penitent's holiness and, by implication, his own prestige as a spiritual guide.

21 *The Way*, 461–462, notes 4–6.

22 By this year, Teresa had also founded two friaries; DST, s.v. Fundandora/fundaciones 894–897 (anon.) See also Enrique Llamas Martínez, "Visita de descalzas," in *Introducción a la lectura de Santa Teresa*, ed. Alberto Barrientos, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 2002), 599–601.

23 As vicar provincial, Gracián was the second highest ranking friar in Andalusia.

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was sixty and Gracián thirty. On Pentecost of that same year, she made a special vow, promising to obey him in all things.[24]

In 1574, the papal nuncio charged Gracián with reforming the Calced in Andalusia. This marks the beginning of the acrimony between the two branches of the order. The hostility became so intense that in 1580 the pope established a separate Discalced province; Gracían was elected as its first provincial the following year. An enthusiastic proponent of extending the apostolic charism of the Discalced, he sponsored missions to the Congo, Ethiopia, and the New World. Despite having been one of Teresa's closest collaborators, after her death Gracián soon found himself in conflict with other Discalced friars, especially the second provincial, Nicolò Doria (Nicolás de Jesús María, 1539–1594). As Stephen Watson summarizes a complex situation, Doria accused Gracián of "being too lenient regarding abuses and too easy with dispensations […] excessively oriented to the apostolic life and not concerned enough with the ascetical-contemplative life."[25] In 1592, Doria orchestrated his expulsion from the order. Gracián's post-expulsion career was tumultuous: he was captured by pirates and held captive in Tunis; once ransomed, he preached throughout Spain and the Spanish Netherlands. A prolific writer, he published numerous autobiographical, hagiographical, and devotional treatises before his death in Brussels in 1614.[26]

Let us return to the summer of 1576 when Teresa wrote, at Gracián's behest, a guide for making a convent visitation.[27] Teresa evidently felt that she had valuable advice to convey to the young friar. The overall principles in this text align with those established in Teresa's Constitutions of 1567: austerity tempered by moderation; flexible discipline; impartial friendships; and convent governance placed in the hands of a wise and affectionate prioress, working in collaboration with chaplains, confessors, and the visitator. Nevertheless, by 1576 Teresa's letters suggest that she harbored doubts about Gracián's

24 On Teresa's intense attachment to Gracián, see Janice Mary Luti, "'A Marriage Well Arranged': Teresa of Avila and Fray Jerónimo Gracián de la Madre de Dios," *Studia Mystica* 12 (1989): 32–46; Barbara Louise Mujica, "Paul, the 'Enchanter': Saint Teresa's Letters to Jerónimo Gracián," in *The Heirs of St. Teresa of Avila: Defenders and Disseminators of the Founding Mother's Legacy*, ed. Christopher Wilson (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2006), 21–44.

25 Stephen Watson, "Introduction," in *Pilgrimage of Anastasius: The Autobiography of the First Provincial of the Discalced Carmelites* by Jerome Gracián, trans. Stephen Watson (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2023), ix–xxxiv, esp. xvi–xix.

26 In addition to Watson, see Ildefonso Moriones, *Ana de Jesús y la herencia teresiana* (Rome: Teresianum, 1968), esp. chap. 2, 66–99, and Domingo Ángel Fernández de Mendiola, *El Carmelo teresiano en la Historia: Una nueva forma de vida contemplativa y apostólica* (Rome: Teresianum, 2008), esp. chaps. 4 and 6. For an extensive bibliography, see Fidel Sebastián Mediavilla, ed. *Peregrinación de Anastacio*, Publications of eHumanista, https://www.ehumanista.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/sitefiles/publications/monographs/Peregrinacion%20de%20anastasio.pdf (last accessed May 20, 2024).

27 Fortunato Antolín, "Visita de descalzas," in *Introducción a la lectura de Santa Teresa*, ed. Alberto Barrientos, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 2002), 599–604, esp. 600.

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discretion and, more generally, felt it advisable to make a strategic retreat from the sociability promoted in her earlier writings.[28] No wonder. The previous year had been an *annus horribilus*. In March 1575, the Inquisitorial tribunal in Valladolid sequestered Teresa's *Life* for examination. In May, the nuns faced unanticipated hostility when they arrived to make a foundation in Seville; and in December, an ex-novice denounced the community to the Inquisition, alleging *Alumbrado* practices.[29] John of the Cross (1542–1591) had been kidnapped and briefly imprisoned by the Calced.[30] Although the inquisitors were satisfied by Teresa's two written defenses of her spiritual life and ignored the charges of *Alumbradismo*, she was undoubtedly shaken by these events.[31] By 1576, Teresa's experience had tempered the optimism of *The Way of Perfection*.

Like many prescriptive documents, *On Making the Visitation* not only lays out rules for what should be done, but also intimates the infractions—actual or potential—that make such rules necessary. Accordingly, Teresa recommends that the visitator inquire about the finances of the convent, the nuns' general welfare, and breaches of enclosure, all concerns heightened by the adversities of the previous year.[32] Significantly, Teresa addresses potential conflicts between nuns and the prioress. She advises the visitator to question all nuns about whether there is more communication between the prioress and the convent confessor than is necessary. There follows a puzzling piece of advice: "And if [some nun] should be tempted to misjudge [the prioress], he ought to listen to her very carefully […]. Even though often what she [the accuser] thinks will not be so, and she will exaggerate it, he [the visitator] can inquire about the truth from the other

28 On Teresa's *funambulismo* ("tightrope walking ability")—her care to avoid theological extremes and political controversies—see María Rosa Alabrús and Ricardo García Cárcel, *Teresa de Jesús: La construcción de la santidad femenina* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2015), esp. 199–204.

29 *Alumbrado/alumbradismo* was not a unified heresy but a pejorative umbrella term used by the Inquisition for heterodox beliefs, including the claim that all ceremonies, rites, sacraments, and external devotions were unnecessary for salvation. See Alastair Hamilton, "The *Alumbrados*: *Dejamiento* and its Practitioners," in *A New Companion to Hispanic Mysticism*, ed. Hilaire Kallendorf (Boston, MA: Leiden, 2010), 103–124.

30 John of the Cross was one of the first Discalced Carmelite friars. He collaborated closely with Teresa throughout her life, serving as confessor to nuns and as teacher and superior to Discalced friars. He was twice imprisoned by the Calced. Celebrated for his exquisite lyrical poetry and mystical writings, he was canonized in 1726 and declared Doctor of the Church in 1926. See DST, s.v. Juan de la Cruz (Gabriel Castro) and Richard P. Hardy, *John of the Cross, Man and Mystic* (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2015).

31 Enrique Llamas Martínez, *Santa Teresa de Jesús y la Inquisición española* (Madrid: CSIC, 1972); DST, s.v. "Inquisición" (Alberto Pacho).

32 For example, "He [the visitator] should observe especially whether there be two grates at the grille in the parlor, one on the outside and one on the inside, and whether they are such that no hand can reach through"; "On Making the Visitation," (#15; 341). This text is included in vol. 3 of CW. "En especial debe mirar [el visitador] los locutorios, que haya dos rejas, una a la parte de afuera, y otra a la de dentro, y que por ninguna pueda caber mano" (OC #15; 1305).

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nuns […]. And having found out the truth, he should afterwards reprimand her [that is, the accuser] severely so that this will not happen again […]." (#16; 341).[33] I interpret this elusive passage to mean that the visitator should listen to accusations against the prioress, confirming them if necessary with testimony from other nuns, but in most cases give the prioress the benefit of doubt. Teresa also recommends inquiries into the confessor–penitent relationship: "It is very important to inquire about procedures concerning the confessor, and how much power he is given. […] [I]t is important that communication with him be only very moderate, and the less there is the better" (#39; 1314).[34] This recognition of the possibility of conflict between the prioress and her subordinates, and abuses of the confessor–penitent relationship represents a notable retreat from the sentiments expressed in *The Way*.

In the final section of this work, Teresa praises Gracián as a model visitator, but offers hypothetical examples of excessive familiarity: the visitator "should never allow [the nuns] to go to excess in the meals given him during the days of the visitation" (#48; 352); he should not "show any great love for the prioress or that he gets along well with her" (#50; 353).[35] Were these in fact hypothetical warnings? Or was Teresa alluding to rumors that were circulating about Gracián? The following passage suggests that embedded in Teresa's fulsome praise for her affable confessor is a plea for greater discretion.

> It is necessary that visitators of the future follow what is done now by the provincial [i. e., Gracián] that the Lord has given us. […] [Let him show] no more familiarity to one Sister […] than he does to all, but show love to all together as a true father. The day in which a visitator in some monastery should have a particular friendship, even though it may be like that between St. Jerome and St. Paula, he will not escape the critical remarks of others, any more than those two did. And not only will it do harm in that monastery, but in all of them, for the devil will at once make it known so as to gain something. Because of our sins the world has gone so astray in this respect that many troubles arise, as is now seen. (#45; 351)[36]

33 "Y si alguna hubiere tentada, oírla muy bien, que, aunque hartas veces le parecerá lo que no es y lo encarecerá, puédese tomar aviso para saber la verdad de las otras, poniéndoles precepto, y reprenderlo después con rigor, porque queden espantadas para no lo hacer más" (OC #16; 1306).

34 "Mucho es menester informarse de lo que se hace con el confesor, y no de una ni de dos, sino de todas, y la mano que se le da; […] es menester que no haya comunicación con él, sino muy moderadamente; y mientras menos, es mejor" (OC #39; 1314).

35 "No consienta el Visitador desmasías en las comidas que le dieren los días que estuviere visitando" (OC #48; 1316); "No conviene, al que lo es, mostrar que quiere mucho a la priora ni que está muy bien con ella" (OC #50; 1317).

36 "Es menester llevar adelante lo que ahora hace el prelado que el Señor nos ha dado, los que vinieren […] que con ninguna hermana tenga más particularidad que con todas para estar con ella a solas, ni escribirla, sino a todas juntas mostrar el amor como verdadero padre. Porque el día que en algún monasterio tomare particular amistad, aunque sea como de San Jerónimo y Santa Paula, no se librará de murmuraciones,

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In sum, by 1576 Teresa appears to have realized that more formal disciplinary procedures would be necessary to control the nuns' emotions of jealousy, envy, and vindictiveness, as well as to avoid any indications of favoritism or familiarity between prioress and confessor that might invite scandal. The egalitarian, improvisational spirit evoked in *The Way*, she intimates, should be modified to accommodate a more hierarchical, closely monitored style of governance, one that accepts as inevitable constraints on the intimacy of spiritual friendship.

5. "*Las constituciones del cerro*" (1582): How to Destroy a Convent

I turn now to a third text, *Las constituciones del cerro* (*Constitutions for the Monastery of Melancholy*), written by Jerónimo Gracián in 1582 and, according to Ildefonso Moriones, in collaboration with Teresa.[37] This work, a parody of monastic constitutions, describes the *opposite* of what should be done to maintain harmony in a religious community. There is evidence that the Discalced Carmelites wrote and shared similarly ludic texts for in-house consumption. But the strident tone of this text is exceptional. Its fictitious author, Friar Melanco Cerruño (Friar Gloomy Melancholy),[38] lays out rules that will foment melancholy, a malady that encompasses acedia, depression, hatred, rancor, sadness, scruples, and despair. Melancholy provokes ill-will among the religious regardless of status,[39] but I focus here on Friar Melanco's instructions about how to promote melancholy by inciting discord between the prioress and the confessor. His first rule is destroy the custom of the monthly "account of spirit," according to which nuns

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como ellos no se libraron […]." (OC #45; 1315–1316). I modify Kavanaugh and Rodríguez's translation, since I interpret the subjunctive ("que con ninguna […] *tenga*") to refer to the visitator of the future rather than to Gracián. St. Paula of Rome (347–409 CE) was a famous Roman noblewoman who became a friend and patron of St. Jerome (347–420 CE). His enemies accused him of having an amorous relationship with her. Teresa herself had authorized one of these practices: fearing the Calced might poison Gracián, she had allowed the nuns to serve him meals within the convent; María José Pérez González, *María de San José y Teresa de Jesús: historia de una amistad*, https://delaruecaalapluma.wordpress.com/2022/12/01/maria-de-san-jose-y-teresa-de-jesus-historia-de-una-amistad/ (last accessed May 20, 2024).

37 "Apéndice I: Constituciones del Cerro [1582]," in Ildefonso Moriones, *Ana de Jesús y la herencia Teresiana* (Rome: Teresianum, 1968), 472–508. For reasons of tone, dating, and allusions to historical events, I have argued that María de San José Salazar (1548–1603) is a more likely collaborator than Teresa. See Alison Weber, "Monjas melancólicas y confesores melancólicos en la vida y obras de María de San José Salazar," in *Mujeres entre el claustro y el siglo: Autoridad y poder en el mundo religioso femenino siglos XVI–XVIII*, ed. María Ángela Atienza (Madrid: Universidad de La Rioja, 2018), 37–51.

38 Moriones suggests the title is an allusion to El cerro de San Pedro, a hermitage near Pastrana where the novice master instituted such severe penances that all the friars became seriously ill; "Constituciones del Cerro," 472. Translations to *Constituciones del Cerro* are my own.

39 He describes, for instance, malicious gossip among the nuns, rivalry between the prioress and the subprioress, competition between the prioress and the novice mistress, and so forth.

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were required to give the prioress an account of their progress in prayer.[40] Deprived of the opportunity to purge their "temptations" (ill-will, scruples, depression) through the prioress's mediation, Friar Melanco explains, these noxious emotions "will rot inside [the nuns] and result in a grave case of melancholy."[41] Melancholy also thrives when the confessor and prioress disagree over penitential practices. Teresa feared that extreme penance would damage a nun's health and produce delusions of divine favors; permission from the prioress was required to perform penances beyond those prescribed by the Rule.[42] Fray Melanco perversely advises:

> If [the confessors] see a nun inclined toward penance, let them give her free rein, and even impose it during confession, so that the prioress cannot change it, and if the prioress tries to restrain the nun, let her resent it greatly and say that the prioress is interfering in matters of conscience. (#484)

Wittingly or not, Gracián's satire underscored what would become a major point of contention in the order's imminent civil war: the incongruity—and apparent irreconcilability—of a nun's vow of obedience to the prioress and the sacramental authority of the priest over confession.

The scenarios dramatized in *Las constituciones del cerro* were not, in fact, hypothetical; they allude to conflicts that nearly destroyed the Seville convent in 1578, when Beatriz de la Madre de Dios (Chávez: 1538–1624), a recently professed nun, began to suffer from unspecified spiritual afflictions. A secular priest, García Álvarez (Garciálvarez; dates unknown), subjected her to lengthy general confessions. The prioress, María de San José, considering these visits excessive, dismissed the confessor. He, in turn, retaliated by denouncing the prioress to the Calced authorities, who interrogated all the nuns at length and forwarded their confessions to the Inquisition. The Holy Office apparently declined to pursue the case, although in 1579 the Calced provincial removed María from office and confined her to her cell for several months.[43]

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40 This practice was mandated in *Constitutions*, CW vol. 3, #41, 331–332. One of the accusations against the nuns of Seville in 1575 was that they were, in effect, making a heterodox sacramental confession to their prioress.

41 "[N]o dando quenta de su spíritu, se le pudrirían las tentaciones y bendría a ser gran cerruna […]." (*El cerro* #483). Translations from this text are my own. The verb "pudrirse" alludes to the Galenic theories of melancholy, according to which the malady resulted from the retention of noxious humors; Weber, "Monjas melancólicas."

42 *El cerro* #40, 331, and #59, 332–333. On Teresa's attitude regarding moderation in penance, see Moriones, *Ana de Jesús*, 11–15. "Indiscreet penances" were also a point of contention in the friaries. In 1569, Teresa sent John of the Cross to Pastrana, one of the first Discalced Carmelite friaries, to moderate such practices.

43 See DST, s.v. Garciálvarez (anon.); María José De la Pascua, "La carmelita María de San José (Salazar), una priora rebelde," in *Mujeres en el claustro*, ed. Ángela Atienza (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2018), 53–81;

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6. Scandal *Intramuros*

I have been arguing that Teresa hoped enclosure would provide a safe space for spiritually intimate conversations and that collaboration between the visitator and prioress would prevent factionalism. However, there are indications in *On Making the Visitation* and in her correspondence that she was increasingly aware of the difficulty of maintaining such an equilibrium. Stories of Gracián's overly familiar conduct with the Seville nuns figured prominently in the denunciations made to the Inquisition in 1578. Several nuns alleged that Gracián spent an entire day alone with the prioress, that the nuns gave him an embroidered pillow and served him roast turkey, and that he embraced them and danced naked before them—accusations that the nuns retracted within the next two years.[44] What happened within those convent walls we cannot know with certainty, but details of the retractions suggest that the confessions were fictions elicited by suggestion and threats. Nevertheless, at the end 1578, the papal nuncio Felipe Sega excommunicated Gracían and ordered him to be confined to the monastery in Alcalá, ostensibly for his conduct as visitator to the Calced in Andalusia, although the accusations regarding his comportment with nuns may also have been a factor. Gracián's fortunes improved in 1580. Thanks in large part to the king's intervention, on June 22, Pope Gregory XIII issued the Brief of Separation that established the Discalced as a separate province. At their first chapter, Gracián was elected provincial.

Yet scandal continued to dog Gracián. In 1585 at a chapter meeting in Lisbon he was accused of wasting time with the nuns in the new foundation. In response he wrote, "The calumny that has done most damage […] has been occasioned by those who go around saying 'Nuns, nuns, so much contact, so much friendship with nuns,' without explaining themselves further."[45] Furthermore, he argued, his accusers did not appreciate the skill and care (and implicitly time) required to direct nuns who practiced mental prayer properly.[46] At the chapter in Ubeda held two years later, he faced similar charges of undue intimacy: the nuns washed his clothes, sent him woolen sheets and linen shirts, and made special dishes for him to eat. In his defense he argued that it is not a sin to wash the clothes of the infirm, nor is it a sin for the poor to receive gifts.[47] There were

and Alison Weber, "Introduction," in *For the Hour of Recreation by María de San José Salazar*, trans. Amanda Powell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1–26.

44 The texts of the accusations have been lost; for the retractions, see Llamas Martínez, *Santa Teresa y la Inqusición*, 194–219.

45 "[L]a calumnia que más daño ha hecho y más ha perturbado ha sido decir en común: 'Monjas, monjas, mucho trato y mucha amistad con monjas' etc., sin declararse más"; Doc. 276, in Eulogio Pacho, et al., eds., *Documenta primigenia. Volumen III (1582–1589)*, MHCT (Rome: Teresianum, 1977), 51–92, qtd. 70. My translation.

46 Ibid., 71. My translation.

47 Doc 321, in ibid., 226–228. My translation.

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further accusations of an illicit relationship with María de San José, then prioress of the Lisbon convent. Gracián may have been an innocent victim of malicious rumors, but the repetition of similar allegations of familiarity with nuns over the years suggests an over-confident attitude that did not serve him well.

Arguably, the rumors of scandal that swirled around Gracián also influenced Doria's decision to dramatically change the structure of convent governance beginning in 1585, when he was elected the second provincial of the Discalced. Many of the proposed changes were designed to enforce enclosure and limit the time nuns spent with their confessors; others were directed toward restricting the role of the prioress in the discernment of spirits and the selection of confessors. Under Doria's proposals to modify the Constitutions of Alcalá (1581), nuns would no longer be able to change confessors more than three times; friars would be forbidden to speak with any nun without permission from a new, centralized governing body, the *Consulta*. No longer would prioresses have the authority to dispense with the presence of a monitor in the locutory; nor would nuns be allowed to raise their veil when engaging in spiritual conversations.[48] The proposed changes reflect not only the desire to resist laxity and centralize authority, but also a very different vision of communal life, one based on austerity rather than *suavidad*, or gentleness. *Suavidad*, a multivalent term in Teresa's lexicon, appears fifty times in her writing; it belongs to a semantic family that includes *alegría* (joyfulness) and *libertad santa* (holy freedom). Based on Teresa's belief that progress in prayer was better achieved through spiritual fellowship and joyfulness than ascesis and prescribed rules, *suavidad* in practice meant moderation in penance, occasions for joyfulness, and flexibility in discipline.[49] For Doria, *suavidad* was nothing more nor less than an excuse for laxity. In a letter to the friars of Pastrana on January 2, 1588, he wrote:

> One of the excuses for laxity is to say that souls are guided better with gentleness, […] that it makes them serve the Lord with pleasure, and that guiding them by the law is too harsh, and frightens them, and takes away their simplicity […]. And what can be said about those who like to associate with women under the pretext of guiding them to the Lord with gentleness? There are and have been thousands of examples of how dangerous and lax all this is![50]

48 Teresa's 1567 Constitutions, following the norms of the period, required the presence of a monitor (*escucha*) during conversations in the locutory but with a crucial exception: "unless one is dealing with conscience matters" (CW vol. 3 #15, 323). See Ildefonso Moriones, *El P. Doria (1539–1594) y el carisma teresiano. Digital edition, 2017*, https://delaruecaalapluma.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/doria-y-el-carisma-teresiano.pdf (last accessed May 18, 2024), 31–32, and Alison Weber, "Spiritual Administration: Gender and Discernment in the Carmelite Reform," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (2000): 123–146, esp. 129–131.

49 For examples of how Teresa and her followers understood this concept, see Moriones, *Ana de Jesús*, esp. 11–15; 81–85; 110–111. See also DST, s.v. "alegría" (T. Álvarez) and "amistad" (T. Álvarez).

50 "Otra raçón con que la relaxación se ampara es que las almas se guían mejor con suabidad [sic], […] y hace servir al Señor con gusto; y que guiar todo por la ley es demasiado rigor, que atemoriza las almas

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Early in 1589, Ana de Jesús (Lobera; 1545–1621), prioress of the Madrid convent, and María de San José, with Gracián's support, petitioned Pope Sixtus V to conserve the Alcalá Constitutions and thus thwart Doria's proposed changes.[51] With the brief *Salvatoris*, issued June 5, 1590, the pope granted the nuns' request. Doria responded by issuing a circular letter to the Discalced nuns in which he spelled out what he saw as the disastrous consequences of the brief:

> Oh Mothers! How it pains me to see Discalced nuns call for holy freedom! How much better it would be if they persisted in calling for holy obedience […]! And how it pains me that their confessions are given with the intention of benefiting their confessors and the Church! What novelty is this! […] What kind of conversations will there be when they are alone without a monitor! […] Although the Lord has on occasion permitted a holy woman to teach and help the church, that is one thing […]. But the universal doctrine of the Church is that the woman keep silent and learn, look to herself and confess her sins so that they may be pardoned, for that is the purpose of confession […] [I]n conclusion, with the word "freedom," which you call "holy," you desire license; with the word "gentleness" […] you want to satisfy your wishes and demands in governance […].[52]

Doria did indeed understand clearly that for the nuns "holy liberty" meant the right to enjoy intimate friendship with a compatible confessor, a friendship that might bring spiritual benefit to their interlocutor and to the Church. And he was having none of it, nor did he believe that this corresponded to the wishes of the foundress, whom he held as a paragon of humility and obedience.

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y les quita la simplicidad […]. Pues, ¿qué diré de ser amigo de tartar de ordinario con mugeres, con título de guiarlas con suabidad al Señor […]? Quán peligroso y relajado sea todo esto para quien lo haze, mill experiencias ay y á abido cada día […]"; Doc. 323, *Documenta primigenia*, vol. 3: 257–259. My translation.

51 The Alcalá Constitutions (1581) include modifications to those written by Teresa (1567). Most scholars accept that, although not drafted by the foundress, overall the Alcalá text met with her approval; Kieren Kavanaugh, "Introduction to the *Constitutions*," CW vol. 3, 311–318.

52 "¡Oh, madres! ¡y cómo me duele ver que tan presto monjas descalzas llamen santa libertad, y cuánta más razón fuera que perseveraran algo más en llamar santa la obediencia […]! ¡Y cuánto más me duele ver que su confesión sea con espíritu de aprovechar sus confesores y la Iglesia. […] Que aunque alguna vez a alguna mujer santa ha dado el Señor que enseñe y aproveche en la Iglesia, ésa es una […]. Pero la doctrina universal de la Iglesia es que la mujer calle y deprenda y mire por sí y confiese sus pecados para que se los perdonen, que es el fin de la confesión. […] [E]n suma, con título de libertad, que santa la bautizan, Vuestras reverencias desean libertad, con título de suavidad apetecen sus deseos y mandos en el gobierno"; Carta del P. Nicolás de Jesús María a las Carmelitas Descalzas (21 de Agosto de 1590), in *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y América*, ed. Silverio de Santa Teresa, vol. 6 (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1937), 747–753, qtd. 751, 753. My translation.

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The dissident nuns' victory was short lived, however. Ten months later his successor, Gregory XIV, overturned Sixtus' brief. On February 17, 1592, Gracián received the sentence of expulsion and was stripped of his habit.

7. Conclusion

Arguments over the nature of Teresa's original charism, points of contention among her earliest biographers, continue today, encouraged by Pope John Paul II's exhortation to religious congregations to renew fidelity to their "original charism."[53] For Gracián's apologists, he was the heir who truly grasped the apostolic and evangelical meaning of Teresa's charism, whereas Doria reduced the charism to the asceticism of the primitive Rule, regular observance, and a strictly contemplative life.[54] Teresa's vision of a reformed convent in which ascetic rigor and moderate care for the body, solitude and sociability, discipline and gentleness, contemplation and the mission of "bringing souls to God" were compatible, in which male and female religious could love each other despite the temptations of sensuality and the perils of scandal—all this constituted a bold monastic experiment in mid-sixteenth-century Spain. In the heady early years of the reform, when Teresa enjoyed the support of the papal nuncio, an aristocratic confessor, and other powerful nobles in Castile, she underestimated how vulnerable her convents would be to scandal and how difficult it would be for prioresses and prelates to negotiate overlapping areas of spiritual authority. But in the last years of her life, she was beginning to see the disadvantages of shared governance. A letter written to Doria on December 21, 1579, betrays her exasperation with discord in the Seville and Malagón convents. Although on the surface, tranquility has been restored in Seville, Teresa remains disappointed with María de San José, who had recently been reinstated as prioress: "Advise [her] so that she understand well her obligations according to the observance of the order's directions […]. Sometimes I get angry with her and the rest of them […] since they never informed me of anything […]."[55] In Malagón, the nuns are unhappy with their

53 Facundo Sebastián Macías, *Palabras del más aquí y del más allá: Teresa de Avila, sus primeros biógrafos y el diseño de la santidad católica en la Europa de la Contrarreforma (1502–1614)*, 2 vols. (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2022), esp. vol. 2. The pope's exhortation regarding fidelity to "original charisms" was delivered in 2004 at the General Chapter of the Institute of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. On the order's multifaceted response, see Kate Kuenster, "The Fractured Face of Carmel," *The Way* 89 (1997): 48–63.

54 Moriones's opinion of Doria (*El P. Doria*) is decidedly negative. For a more nuanced assessment, see Silvano Giordano, "Nicolò Doria: una personalita discussa," in *Nicolò Doria: itinerari economici, culturali, religiosi nei secoli XVI–XVII tra Spagna, Genova e l'Europa*, ed. Silvano Giordano and C. Paolocci (Rome: Teresianum, 1996), 47–78.

55 Letter #318 to Nicolò Doria, December 21, 1579, in *The Collected Letters of St. Teresa of Avila*, 1578–1582, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2007), vol. 2, 240–244, qtd.

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current prioress and have petitioned for the restoration of her predecessor. Teresa is also apprehensive about nuns who want to change confessors. While she previously entrusted the prioress with this duty, she now asks Doria to superintend the process: "If a nun wants to confess with someone other than the ordinary confessor, designate someone to give this permission as long as the confessor be a friar of your choice […]."[56]

Although there is no evidence that Teresa had lost faith in the possibility of transformative male–female spiritual friendships, as the foundations multiplied, she became increasingly aware of the difficulty of supervising such relationships. Distance and an unreliable postal system impeded her ability to direct the prioresses in how to select postulants and confessors, or how to discipline transgressors. And even her most trusted prioresses were not to make decisions on their own. This said, Teresa probably would not have rejected as a ridiculous "novelty"—as Doria did—the notion that a nun's confession could be of benefit to her confessor and the Church. But she may have admitted in her late dark hours of illness, exhaustion, and disappointment, that this would be the exception rather than the norm.

8. Postscript

It is tempting to quip that Doria won the battle but lost the war. Today, Carmelite nuns have the freedom to change confessors multiple times, as do members of all monastic orders. The major figures who were punished following the nuns' rebellion of 1590 have been vindicated. On November 28, 2019, the Holy See declared Ana de Jesús Lobera Venerable. And in 1999 the general definitory of the Discalced Carmelites officially revoked Gracián's sentence of expulsion and expressed profound regret for the injustices suffered by him and by Ana de Jesús and María de San José.[57] There is growing scholarly interest in these figures as literary, intellectual, and spiritual heirs of Saint Teresa.[58]

But "war" is an inadequate metaphor. What bedeviled the Discalced Carmelites at the end of the sixteenth century is better described as a tangle of interconnected quarrels. In a broader sense, these are issues that trouble many organizations, religious and secular, large and small. Can the original rules and procedures of an organization function

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at 242. "Avise vuestra reverencia a la [priora anterior] para que se entere mucho en lo que está obligada según orden y en que se guarde y las Constituciones […]."; *Epistolario*, ed. Luis Rodríguez Martínez and Teófano Egido, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Espiritualidad, 1984), 655.

56 *Collected Letters*, 242. "[C]uando alguna se quiere confesar con otro padre que el ordinario, que deje vuestra reverencia señalado se le den […] el que a vuestra reverencia pareciere […]."; *Epistolario*, 655.

57 General Definitory of the Discalced Carmelite Order, "Official Declaration of Rehabilitation for Fr. Jerome Gracián of the Mother of God, OCD," *Carmelite Digest* 15 (2000): 73–77.

58 For frequently updated bibliographies, see "Teresa, de la rueca a la pluma" [https://delaruecaalapluma.com/estudios/carmelitas/] and "Bieses: Bibliografía de Escritoras Españolas" [https://www.bieses.net].

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when it grows in size and complexity? What is the best way to enforce discipline—through clearly defined rules or flexible decision-making? What conflicts result when women and men share authority? And—especially relevant for monastic orders that prize chastity as a capital virtue—what impact do intense, interpersonal relationships between men and women have on their collective mission?

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Michèle Steiner

Confessors, Priests, and Family

The Relationship between Nuns and Male Clerics in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

1. Introduction

Over the last three decades, an increasing interest in the role of women religious in early modern Catholic societies in Europe and beyond has led to a reassessment of assumptions that had previously gone unquestioned. Historians have examined female convents in relation to their importance for familial economies of honor, their function as "bastions of chastity and prayer,"[1] and their role as places of commodity production and exchange. In doing so, historians have broken through convent walls that had once seemed impenetrable and begun to reintegrate these institutions into the "world."

At the root of the interconnectedness between early modern women's convents and the "world" are the social networks that underpin every form of resource exchange and knowledge transfer between nuns and their social surroundings. In the social networks of women religious, male clerics form a significant and influential group, yet we still know surprisingly little about the ties of nuns to male members of the clergy. Among these relationships, interactions between nuns and confessors have received the most scholarly attention. Influential research on this subject comes from Jodi Bilinkoff, who explores the "spiritual and personal bonding" that accompanied the production of hagiographical life narratives of early modern nuns.[2] However, other

1 Mary Laven, *Virgins of Venice: Broken Vows and Cloistered Lives in the Renaissance Convent* (New York: Viking Press, 2003), p. xxiv. – I would like to thank my co-supervisor Christian Windler, Giuanna Beeli, Lukas Camenzind, and Nicolas Rogger for the kind invitation to present my conference paper in this edited volume. Furthermore, I am grateful for the helpful feedback and the support I received from my supervisor Nadine Amsler and Samuel Weber in the brainstorming, preparation, and the writing phase of this paper. In order to make quotes from the sources generally accessible, they have been translated from French, German, and Italian into English.

2 Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 77. Cf. Jodi Bilinkoff, "Soul Mates: Spiritual Friendship and Life-Writing in Early Modern Spain (and Beyond)," in *Female Monasticism in Early Modern Europe: An Interdisciplinary View*, ed. Cordula van Wyhe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 143–153. The following historians also address the relationship between confessors and nuns. Patricia Ranft focuses on the "manipulative" character of these relations, as both the spiritual directors and the nuns "tried 'to manage or utilize skillfully' the relationship": Patricia Ranft, *Women and the Religious Life in Premodern Europe* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 116. According to Gabriella Zarri, "the relationship between nuns and confessors has so far not

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forms of relationships between clerical men and women have not yet been studied extensively.[3] This is rather surprising, particularly when considering that dynastic strategies often involved the accommodation of several sons and daughters in convents and monasteries.[4] Nuns would therefore have had an ample network of brothers, cousins, and uncles in a variety of ecclesiastical positions at their disposal.

This chapter aims to help close this research gap. It intends to trace the extensive social network of three women's convents in the Swiss city of Solothurn, connecting the enclosed nuns with the "world" outside the cloister walls. The focus lies on the relationship between nuns and clergymen. Whereas many of the clerics in the social network of the Solothurn nuns were regulars—Capuchins, Franciscans, and Jesuits—nuns were also in contact with secular priests such as the canons of the collegiate church of St. Ursus in Solothurn.

A variety of sources from the archives of the three convents serve as the basis of this investigation. First the Visitandine, the Capuchin, and the Franciscan nuns of Solothurn will be introduced as the main protagonists of the story. The various categories of male clerics with whom these communities of women religious interacted will then be described, allowing for an overview of the resources circulating in this vast social network. Finally, the forms and functions of relationships between men and women religious will be illustrated. In doing so, this chapter will help with better understanding the central characteristics of spiritual work, daily practices of cloistral exchange, and processes structuring everyday life in both women's convents and male clerics' institutions.

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received attention that goes beyond sexual practices," in: Gabriella Zarri, "Gli studi italiani sui monasteri femminili e loro culture: Una rassegna," in *La storia di genere in Italia in età moderna: Un confronto tra storiche nordamericane e italiane*, ed. Elena Brambilla and Anne Jacobson Schutte (Rome: Viella 2014), 43–63, p. 63. Finally, in her study of the Ursulines in Vienna, Christine Schneider also devotes a chapter to the relationship between nuns and their confessors: Christine Schneider, *Kloster als Lebensform: Der Wiener Ursulinenkonvent in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (1740–90)* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2005), 262–268.

3 Mary Laven explores the nature of relationships formed between celibate men and women in early modern Venice. She discusses possible places of (illicit) encounters and even instances of (sexual) transgression that appear in records of trials: Mary Laven, "Sex and Celibacy in Early Modern Venice," *Historical Journal* 44 (2001): 865–888.

4 On the family network of nuns, e. g., Elisa Novi Chavarria, *Monache e gentildonne: Un labile confine; Poteri politici e identità religiose nei monasteri napoletani secoli XVI–XVII* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2001). P. Renée Baernstein uses the Milanese convent of San Paolo to show how nuns of the Sfondrati family worked together with their male relatives to pursue dynastic interests: P. Renée Baernstein, *A Convent Tale: A Century of Sisterhood in Spanish Milan* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2002).

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2. Nuns and their Sacred Homes: The "Conventscape" of Solothurn in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The site of this story is the Swiss town of Solothurn, a Catholic free city with around 4,000 inhabitants in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[5] Since the Reformation, the small town was surrounded by the Protestant territories of Bern and Basel. Even though Protestant ideas circulated in Solothurn in the early 1520s, the local authorities decided to retain the "old faith." In the following decades, Solothurn transformed itself gradually into a "Catholic state," with a skyline shaped by monasteries, convents, and numerous bell towers (Fig. 1).[6] A monumental baroque fortification complex separated the town from its rural surroundings, protecting the city dwellers from potential (religious) enemies. Immediately outside the city gates, visitors to Solothurn would have passed by the three women's convents, themselves hidden behind high and supposedly protective convent walls.

Between 1588 and 1646, the "conventscape" of Solothurn underwent profound changes. While in the late Middle Ages, two religious communities had tended to the spiritual welfare of the urban population, by the mid-seventeenth century, no fewer than six monastic institutions were fulfilling this role. What had happened?

In 1588, a group of male Capuchins joined the Franciscans, who had been present in the city since the thirteenth century. In due time, the newcomers established their own monastery outside the city walls. Shortly thereafter, the Beguines found themselves in the midst of a storm. Their presence in Solothurn is documented from the mid-fourteenth century, and by the 1420s, they are known to have adopted the Rule of St. Francis.[7] This development laid the groundwork for later tensions, which culminated in the early seventeenth century when, in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, the papal nuncio to the Swiss cantons, Ladislao d'Aquino (1546–1621), initiated a reform of the convent that sparked violent upheavals. While the Capuchins supported the reform-minded women of the community, the Franciscans sided with the so-called "elder" sisters. In 1614, this conflict resulted in a split within the community. Consequently, the new Capuchin nuns built their own convent (which was given the name of "Namen Jesu") to the north of the city, while the "elder" sisters remained within the city walls for the time being. It was only a good thirty years later that the nuns erected their new convent of St. Joseph just in front of the eastern Basel gate, far away from the settlement

5 Pierre Harb et al., "Solothurn (Gemeinde)," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from December 20, 2012, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/001174/2012-12-20 (last accessed May 28, 2024).

6 Ulrike Strasser discusses the role of women's convents in a "Catholic state": Ulrike Strasser, *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

7 Hans Sigrist, "Die Hintere Samnung zu Solothurn," *Jurablätter* 21 (1959): 104–112, 106–109.

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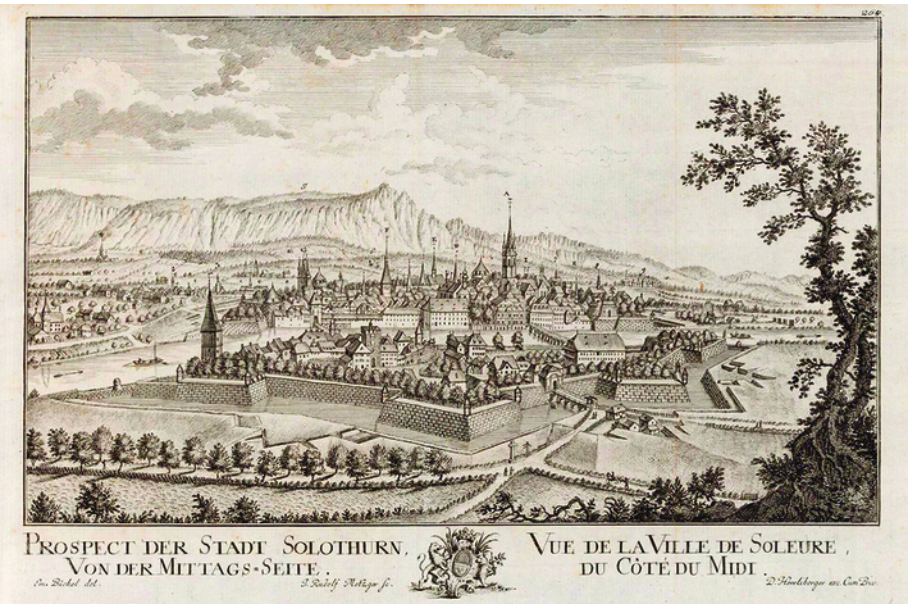

Fig. 1 The city of Solothurn in the second half of the eighteenth century, as depicted in the *Neue und vollständige Topographie der Eidgnoßschaft* by David Herrliberger, printed in Zurich by Johann Kaspar Ziegler, 1754–1773 (p. 398f). © Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Res 1364.

of the competing Capuchin nuns.[8] Around the same time, in 1644, nuns of the Order of the Visitation arrived in Solothurn, where they asked for asylum. Military conflicts in the County of Burgundy, triggered by the Thirty Years' War, had brought them to town. The nuns belonged to a comparatively young order originating in Savoy that had been founded by Francis de Sales (1567–1622) and Jane Frances de Chantal (1572–1641) in 1610. Finally, two years after the arrival of the Visitandines, the Society of Jesus followed them to the city, having been called by the Solothurn Council.[9] By the mid-1700s, the small city of Solothurn had fashioned itself as a Catholic state boasting a high density of religious institutions in the city and its immediate surroundings.

Patrician families, in particular, helped shape the Catholic state. By inscribing themselves in this religious space, they left material traces still visible today. Fig. 2 shows a family portrait, originally created for the no longer existing family chapel of the von

8 Klemens Arnold, "Terziarinnenkloster St. Josef in Solothurn," in *Helvetia Sacra: Die Franziskaner, die Klarissen und die regulierten Franziskaner-Terziarinnen in der Schweiz*, ed. Brigitte Degler-Spengler et al. (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1978), 689–702, here 689–690; Johanna Strübin and Christine Zürcher, *Die Stadt Solothurn III: Sakralbauten* (Bern: Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte, 2017), 29.

9 Strübin and Zürcher, *Solothurn*, 29–30.

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Roll in Emmenholz, in the suburbs of the town.[10] Framing their numerous offspring, we can see Johann Ludwig von Roll von Emmenholz (1643–1718) on the left and Maria Magdalena Wallier (1653–1729) on the right. Johann Ludwig and Maria Magdalena were no strangers to Solothurn's upscale urban society. After his military career for the French Crown had come to a disappointing end, Johann Ludwig held various influential offices in the city. Starting as a member of the *Großrat* (the great council of Solothurn) in 1663, he eventually became *Schultheiß* (head of the government) in 1707 and leader of the anti-French faction of the patriciate.[11]

Lined up between their two parents, we see the couple's sons and daughters (some of whom had died before the painting was commissioned, as indicated by small red crosses above their heads). At the heart of the painting, directly next to Jesus on the cross, we recognize a nun in a Franciscan habit. It is Sr. Maria Louisa Clara (1685–1738), born Maria Elisabeth von Roll, the fifth daughter of the couple, who entered the Franciscan convent St. Joseph in 1700 at the age of fifteen and took her vows two years later, in 1702.[12] However, she was not the only family member pursuing a religious career. On the left side of the painting, we can also detect her brother Robert (born Franz Philipp, 1689–1752), who had been a Benedictine monk at the monastery of Einsiedeln in central Switzerland since 1706.[13]

The large painting is remarkable, since it presents the family as a unit that never existed in this way. The painting builds a bridge not only between the living members of the family and the already deceased sons and daughters, but also between different estates, secular and ecclesiastical. It exemplifies how patrician families—with the support of their clerical sons and religious daughters—fashioned themselves as integral members of the Catholic urban society.

Johann Ludwig, Maria Magdalena, and their children were not the only patrician family to pursue this strategy. A local historian once described the three women's convents of the town as an "almost exclusive domain of the patriciate." In contrast, he considered the composition of the monasteries of male regular clerics to be indicative of a wider social stratification.[14] Even though it would be wrong to describe the women's

10 Charles Studer, "Die Kapelle im Emmenholz," *Jurablätter* 44 (1982): 137–141.

11 Erich Meyer, "Johann Ludwig von Roll von Emmenholz," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from January 5, 2012, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017506/2012-01-05/(last accessed May 28, 2024).

12 Klosterarchiv Franziskanerinnen St. Joseph, Solothurn (hereafter KlA Fr), Chronik u. Protokoll Kloster St. Joseph, Solothurn 1887, list of nuns in the appendix.

13 The archive of the von Roll family in the State Archive of Solothurn contains the contract between the Abbey of Einsiedeln and Robert's father, Johann Ludwig von Roll: Staatsarchiv Solothurn (hereafter StASO), Familienarchiv von Roll, Nr. 721, Contract between the Einsiedeln Abbey and Baron Ludwig von Roll concerning the renunciation of son Robert in Einsiedeln, June 8, 1706.

14 Hans Sigrist, *Die Spätzeit und das Ende des patrizischen Regimes*, Solothurnische Geschichte 3 (Solothurn: Vogt-Schild, 1981), 241.

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Fig. 2 The family portrait of Johann Ludwig von Roll von Emmenholz and Maria Magdalena Wallier, accompanied by their sons and daughters, in the family chapel of the von Roll at Kreuzen near Solothurn. © Photo: Christian Windler.

convents as purely elite institutions, it is true that—at least until the mid-1700s—daughters from patrician families represented the majority of women religious in these institutions.[15] Most of them had grown up in Solothurn, with family members occupying the highest political positions in the city council. A smaller, not negligible number of nuns came from leading families of other Catholic cantons of the Swiss Confederacy, such as Lucerne, Schwyz, and Uri.

As these remarks demonstrate, we should not underestimate the importance of clerical family members in shaping the self-perception of elite families. Even though

15 As historians such as Silvia Evangelisti have demonstrated, women's convents not only offered a career option for representatives of the highest ranks of society, but also for women of humbler social origin. These women, often called "lay nuns," were responsible for the execution of more strenuous tasks such as cooking, gardening, or tending cattle—all duties that could not be performed by women of patrician descent. For more information on these "lay nuns": Silvia Evangelisti, "To Find God in Work? Female Social Stratification in Early Modern Italian Convents," *European History Quarterly* 38 (2008): 398–416; Barbara Lawatsch Melton, "Loss and Gain in a Salzburg Convent: Tridentine Reform, Princely Absolutism, and the Nuns of Nonnberg (1620 to 1696)," in *Enduring Loss in Early Modern Germany: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Lynne Tatlock (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 259–280; Claire Walker, "Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30 (1999): 397–418.

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Maria Louisa Clara and Robert both lived in religious institutions behind cloister walls, they appear in the painting as an integral part of their patrician family.[16]

3. The Social Fabric of Convents: The Nuns' Social Networks

Although the regulations on enclosure codified during the final session of the Council of Trent in 1563 sought to more strictly separate female religious communities from the "world," they failed to hermetically seal women off from their social environment. Social networks remained an important resource for women's convents well into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The conventual networks encompassed not only family members or friends of nuns, who would, for example, send annual gifts on the day of their Saint patron, but also various groups of male clerics. When we attempt to structure the ample and somewhat opaque social web linking the women's convents with the "outer world," we end up with several distinct zones of contact between male clerics and nuns. First, we find clerics who maintained a primarily functional relationship with the nuns, such as confessors or spiritual advisors. Second, there were familial ties between nuns and their clerical brothers or uncles, and third, we observe clerics embedded in institutions that had neighborly relations with women's convents. The following remarks seek to outline the diverse forms and dynamics of the relationships between nuns and (regular) male clerics.

Confessors and other spiritual guides were influential figures in the lives of early modern nuns. Confessors usually shared moments of profound intimacy with their penitents. Not only did they counsel the nuns in the regular and standardized meetings in the confessional, but they also accompanied the bishop or the spiritual father responsible for the yearly visitations and attended the nuns' hour of death. As Jodi Bilinkoff argues, relationships between nuns and their confessors were often characterized by a deep "spiritual and personal bonding."[17] Religious women desired a capable spiritual director, often a "kindred spirit, someone who could offer them advice, defend them against the accusations of others, and with whom they could exchange confidences: a true friend."[18] According to Bilinkoff, celibate life even offered the "only culturally sanctioned possibility" for friendships across gender lines.[19]

The constitutions of the order of the Visitandines reflect such wishes and paint a picture of the "ideal confessor" that leaves little room for ambiguity. According to this

16 It is assumed that the painting was commissioned before 1718, the year of Johann Ludwig von Roll's passing. See Rudolf Walz, *Kirche zu Kreuzen, Einsiedelei St. Verena bei Solothurn* (Basel: Gesellschaft für Schweizerische Kunstgeschichte, 1972), 6–7.

17 Bilinkoff, "Soul Mates," 143.

18 Ibid., 144.

19 Ibid., 143.

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text, an "ordinary confessor" had to be a "man of doctrine, prudence, and irreproachable life, discreet, honest, steadfast, and devout," so that the bishop, the spiritual father and the reverend mother of the convent could rely on him. Furthermore, the constitutions underline the importance of the confessor in securing the perfection of the nuns, as he was to be "like the visible angel deputed to the preservation of the souls of the convent, and for their advancement to eternal salvation." Finally, just as the nuns were to respect the confessor, he also had to treat them with reverence, "considering them to be the sacred spouses of the son of God."[20] The constitutions therefore place great importance on nurturing a relationship of respect and trust between the nuns and their confessor. As a learned, honest, and discreet man, he was to accompany and support the nuns on their path to salvation.[21]

Spiritually congenial confessors were also sought after in Solothurn. Shortly after settling in town, the Solothurn Visitandines engaged Jacques-Desiré Aurigard[22] as their communal confessor. When Aurigard died in 1687, at the advanced age of eighty-four, he had served the convent as a confessor for over forty years, until seventeen days before his death. During this time, Aurigard had accompanied the community through moments of both joy and suffering. As his obituary in the chapter book of the community and in the *Annales* shows, the nuns particularly appreciated his conversational skills, his exemplary lifestyle, and—in a nod to the qualities listed in the constitutions—his having all the characteristics necessary for a confessor.[23] They probably also remembered his support at the deathbed of terminally ill nuns, to whom he administered the last sacraments, witnessing their "good deaths."[24] Furthermore, Aurigard even provided a direct link to one of the founders of the religious order of the Visitandines. As his obituary states, he is said to have been elected prophetically as a confessor by Francis de Sales himself. When Aurigard attended the Jesuit College in Porrentruy, de Sales

20 *Regles de S. Augustin, Constitutions et Directoire pour les Sœurs Religieuses de la Visitation* (Paris: La Veuve Herissant, 1782), 190–192, 197.

21 It is interesting to note here that the Order of the Visitation itself was founded by "one of the most famous pairs" of spiritual friends, namely Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantal (both were later canonized). Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450–1700* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 219. For more information on this spiritual couple, see also Bilinkoff, "Soul Mates," 150.

22 Some more information on Jacques-Desiré Aurigard can be found in: Alexander Schmid, *Die Kirchensätze: Die Stifts- und Pfarr-Geistlichkeit des Kantons Solothurn*, vol. 1 (Solothurn: B. Schwendimann, 1857), 227.

23 The chapter book of the Visitandines suggests that Aurigard "had all the good qualities that the constitutions prescribe" and that he was a strong rhetorician who lived an exemplary life, so that "everyone loved his conversations." See Klosterarchiv Visitation, Solothurn (hereafter KlA V), A1, 8,1, Kapitelbuch, 39–40. Also: KlA V, A2, 9,2, Annales de notre monastère de 1644 à 1956, 15–16.

24 For more information on practices of death and dying in the convent of the Visitandines in Solothurn, see Michèle Steiner, "Ein Leben für den Tod? Nonnen im Kloster Visitation in Solothurn im langen 18. Jahrhundert," *xviii.ch* 14 (2023): 81–94.

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happened to pass through town and visit the school. Witnessing the young Aurigard dispute with one of his fellows made quite an impression on the soon-to-be saint, so much so that he placed "his holy hand on the head of this young man he said was a little David who would overthrow the great Goliath."[25]

However, not all of the confessors served in Solothurn for such an extended period. Aurigard's successor, Pierre Gabrelle, only spent two years in the community (1687–1689).[26] He was soon replaced by Jacques Thomann, who ministered the community for eighteen years, until his sudden death in 1708.[27] Unfortunately, neither the *Annales* nor the convent's chapter book provide any information about the reason for Gabrelle's dismissal. His case nevertheless illustrates that a harmonious relationship between a confessor and the nuns in his care—as appears to have existed with Jacques-Desiré Aurigard—was not always the norm. In fact, many historians have uncovered instances of power abuse and conflicts over the appointment of confessors.[28]

However, confessors and other spiritual advisors were not the only group of male clerics with relations to communities of women religious. Nuns usually possessed an extensive network of family members, such as brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles, in nunneries and monasteries throughout—in this case—the Swiss Confederacy. For example, the Solothurn Visitandine Anne Angélique Élisabeth Brunner (1758–1837) not only had an aunt who resided in the same convent, but her brother was abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Mariastein, a famous place of pilgrimage.[29] More details on the ties between siblings living in religious institutions emerge from the case of the Capuchin nun Maria Aloysia Josepha Schumacher (1734–1809). She remained closely connected to her brother Joseph until her passing in 1809. Joseph was a couple of years older than Maria and a monk in the Cistercian monastery of St. Urban in the countryside of Lucerne. Maria's personal recordings in the so-called "small chronicle" of the Capuchin convent Namen Jesu offer invaluable indications on the relations with her brother, who was present at the most important moments of her life. He accompanied her on her journey to her future convent in Solothurn in 1750, and they maintained

25 KlA V, A2, 9,2, Annales de notre monastère de 1644 à 1956, 15–16.

26 Schmid also refers to his short period of employment in the convent of the Visitandines: Schmid, *Kirchensätze*, 246.

27 Thomann even requested to be buried in the convent church, which the community allowed and "which took place amid a deluge of tears from our community," in: KlA V, A2, 9,2, Annales de notre monastère de 1644 à 1956, 70–71. Also: KlA V, A1, 8,1, Kapitelbuch, 41, 44.

28 On Cistercian monks and nuns in Switzerland, see Lukas Camenzind, *Umstrittene Observanz: Die Zisterzienser im frühneuzeitlichen* Corpus helveticum (Cologne: Böhlau, 2025), e. g., chapter 3.1. "Der Beichtigerhandel".

29 Her brother Hieronymus Brunner (1739–1804) was elected abbot of Mariastein at the age of twenty-six and steered the community through the troubles of French occupation. For more information on Brunner, see Lukas Schenker, "Hieronymus Brunner," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from March 10, 2011, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/025789/2011-03-10/ (last accessed May 28, 2024).

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contact through letters and gifts (such as a cherished choral book in 1761) throughout her life in the convent. Joseph even assisted his sister in her flight to Lucerne when French troops invaded Solothurn in 1798 and forced the Capuchin nuns to flee to safety.[30]

Finally, nuns not only stood in contact with confessors, spiritual guides, and monastical siblings. The women's convents of Solothurn were also part of a dense web of religious institutions, forming an urban community of salvation. As can be seen in the account books of the convent of the Visitandines, the nuns maintained regular contact with the Capuchin, Franciscan, and Jesuit congregations residing in the city. Even after the abolition of the Jesuit order in 1773, so-called "ex-Jesuit fathers" received financial and material support from the nuns. Such relationships resulted primarily from the spatial proximity of the communities. We may therefore aptly describe this relational category as "religious neighborliness."

As I have shown with the help of exemplary stories, Solothurn nuns maintained a dense network of social relations with both regular and secular clerics. This network comprised clerics with a functional position, as well as priests linked to them through family ties and "neighborliness," embedding the nuns in a far-reaching social web. In the following section, I will show that this social network was not only sustained by written or oral communication, but also had tangible material implications.

4. Alms and Pastries: A Social System of Circulating Resources

When discussing social networks that connected nuns with male clerics, we must also consider the material and immaterial resources circulating through and within these networks. In the previous section, we could see that nuns were part of a dense network of social relations with clerics of various positions. As studies on "economies of the social" have shown, early modern households were not isolated units. Rather, they were intricately connected through social relations that linked them to the sphere outside the immediate domestic space.[31] If we adopt a rather broad definition of "households," we can understand early modern religious communities as "religious households." Social

30 Sonja Victoria Werner, et al., eds., "Kleine Chronik des Kapuzinerinnenklosters Namen Jesu in Solothurn," *Jahrbuch für Solothurnische Geschichte* 82 (2009): 173–230.

31 On the "economies of the social," see Gabriele Jancke and Daniel Schläppi, "Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen: Wie Gruppen in frühneuzeitlichen Gesellschaften Ressourcen bewirtschafteten," *L'Homme* 22 (2011): 85–97; Gabriele Jancke and Daniel Schläppi, "Einleitung: Ressourcen und eine Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen," in *Die Ökonomie sozialer Beziehungen: Ressourcenbewirtschaftung als Geben, Nehmen, Investieren, Verschwenden, Haushalten, Horten, Vererben, Schulden*, ed. eadem and idem (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2015), 7–36.

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relations connected the nuns with the sphere outside the cloister walls and therefore formed an important part of the conventual "household economy."[32]

In order not to lose their effectiveness, social relationships need constant fostering, as the persons involved have to be reminded of the relation continually, in the sense of "doing relationship."[33] This is where both material and immaterial resources come into play. As they create a tangible connection between the parties exchanging them, resources contribute significantly to the process of structuring relationships. In the longer term, they can even lead to a mutual sense of obligation and expectation as the bond between the parties becomes stronger. This is why Jenny B. White speaks of "reciprocal debts," or of a "system of debt exchange."[34]

In the following, I will draw on the account books of the Visitandines in Solothurn and other sources from the convents' archives in order to show how nuns and male clerics "did relationship" with the help of a wide array of resources. Examples of financial beneficence, food gifts and more enduring presents allow us to make the conventual "system of debt exchange" visible. These examples will also show how these resources helped to maintain long-lasting relationships between the nuns and their male religious counterparts.

Extensive listings of alms and donations represent a significant number of entries in the account books of the Visitandines. Not only did the nuns themselves receive copious amounts of merciful offerings, but they also contributed smaller (and larger) sums to individual clerics and local as well as transregional clerical institutions.[35] Summarized under the title "rôle de la reconnaissance," the account books offer a glimpse into the nun's social economy of financial transactions. For example, in 1776, they bequeathed twenty-five *livres* for a celebration in the name of "Monseigneur provost de Sury, our most worthy spiritual father."[36] Peter Joseph Felix von Sury (1719–1786) was no stranger

32 Jancke and Schläppi, "Ökonomie," 85–87.

33 Ibid., 97. For early modern nuns, whose mobility was limited by regulations of enclosure, gift-giving had yet another function. As Edmund Wareham notes when writing about the nuns' practice of gift-giving: "Gift-giving offered them [the nuns, M.S.] an innovative strategy of symbolic communication, to remind those beyond the convent wall of their presence," in: Edmund Wareham, "The Hierarchy of Gingerbread: Gift-Giving at Christmas in Medieval Convents," in *St Edmund Hall Blog*, December 9, 2020, https://www.seh.ox.ac.uk/blog/the-hierarchy-of-gingerbread-gift-giving-at-christmas-in-medieval-convents (last accessed Sept. 21, 2023).

34 Jenny B. White, *Money Makes Us Relatives: Women's Labor in Urban Turkey*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 96, cited in: Jancke and Schläppi, "Ökonomie," 89. At this point, reference should be made to the extensive literature on gift-giving practices in early modern times, first and foremost: Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

35 Laven has already noted that "nuns provided financial support to priests […]," in: Laven, "Sex and Celibacy," 882.

36 KlA V, Aa, 10a, Einnahmen und Ausgaben 1775–1786. The same expenses were listed in the accounts for the following year 1777, in: Ibid.

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to the town of Solothurn. Between 1776 and his death in 1786, this local-born priest not only served as provost of the collegiate church of St. Ursus and as vicar-general for the Solothurn territories. As spiritual father of the Visitandines, he was also responsible for the community's adherence to observance.[37] In addition to the expenses for the provost, the same book lists a couple of *livres* for the former Jesuit priests Ludwig Wagenmann and Michael Barré as a New Year gift (so-called *étrennes*).[38] Besides priests from Solothurn, clerics from more remote communities also received monetary gifts from the Solothurn Visitandines. In 1787, unidentified religious men from the French town of Poligny and "reverend Fathers of the Congregation of St. Jean" from the province of the Dauphiné were supported through monetary contributions.[39]

Apart from allocating financial resources, the nuns also donated some of their income in kind to clergymen and religious institutions. The same account books tell us how the Visitation convent supported former Jesuit priests not only with financial means, but also with food gifts.[40] In 1777, the Visitandines offered the aforementioned Wagenmann a basket of biscuits and *lekerli* (sweet treats), a loaf of gingerbread, and honey. For Easter, Michael Barré received a lamb, and during the year, three geese, seven ducks, bread, two punnets of strawberries, twelve jugs of wine, and a plate of pork meat and sausages. That same year, the Capuchin brethren of Solothurn received—among other things—homemade pastry, five carps, five geese, a duck, and sixty-four *oiseaux de veau* (meat rolls, called *Fleischvögel* in Swiss German). Even better fared the guardian and the vicar of that monastery, who received a separate small basket of cookies and treats. However, the nuns were not only generous towards the Capuchins. The same accounts list a gift of a quarter of a calf (twenty-eight pounds), five geese, thirty meat rolls, three currant tarts, two punnets of strawberries, and fifteen jugs of wine for the local male Franciscan community.[41]

As these examples demonstrate, women's convents used monetary donations and, above all, food gifts as resources to cultivate relationships, particularly with neighboring

37 After his studies in Milan, Rome, and Paris, von Sury received his ordination in Fribourg in 1742. At this time, he was already back in Solothurn, where he had been admitted to the collegiate church in 1741. For further biographical information, see Urban Fink, "Peter Joseph Felix von Sury," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from May 23, 2012, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/025927/2012-05-23/ (last accessed May 28, 2024).

38 KlA V, Aa, 10a, Einnahmen und Ausgaben 1775–1786. After the abolition of the Society of Jesus, Ludwig Wagenmann and Michael Barré worked as professors at the now state-held former Jesuit college of Solothurn, in: Schmid, *Kirchensätze*, 52.

39 KlA V, Aa, 11a, Einnahmen und Ausgaben 1787–1796.

40 Luiten notes that self-produced commodities such as fruit and fish were a particularly appropriate means "to keep open the channels along which an exchange of communication, obligation, favour, and affection took place," in: Loek Luiten, "Friends and Family, Fruit and Fish: The Gift in Quattrocento Farnese Cultural Politics," *Renaissance Studies* 33 (2019): 342–357, p. 356.

41 KlA V, Aa, 10a, Einnahmen und Ausgaben 1775–1786.

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communities. It is therefore not surprising that such communities, in turn, also offered gifts to the convents. The account books of the Visitandines record a variety of edible offerings made to the nuns. In the late 1770s, for example, their confessor annually presented them with a plate of pork products.[42] While the sources remain silent about the reason for this gift, another entry offers additional information. On the occasion of "the feast of our most honored Mother" in 1779, the nuns recorded the gift of half a calf, three pigeon pies, and six jugs of wine, which had been presented to them by their spiritual father von Sury. The same cleric also accorded the nuns three *Boulles d'inde* (turkeys) as a gift for the New Year celebrations in 1779, as he had already done in the previous years.[43]

It seems that the primary purpose of these gifts was not the exchange of goods per se, but rather the maintenance of relationships—an argument that is supported by another source from the Capuchin convent Namen Jesu. In 1757, the reverend mother Sr. Maria Johanna Rosalia Jacobea Settier (1698–1769) drafted a set of guidelines for future superiors of the community. Among these duties was the distribution of New Year's gifts. While in the mid-1700s parish priests in the town's countryside were among the recipients of a box of sweets from the nuns, their names were later crossed out of the book by a subsequent mother superior.[44] This indicates that the relationship with the parish priests had over time lost its usefulness and the practice of using resources to maintain it was abandoned by the nuns.

However, the exchange between nuns and male clergy included more than monetary donations and food gifts. In addition to these resources, male clerics of Solothurn received the fruits of the nuns' labor. To usher in the New Year in 1777, the Visitandines sent "thirteen dozen" small reliquaries to the Capuchin friars.[45] For the same community, the nuns regularly recorded work "for the supply of *agnus*,"[46] referring to small devotional objects known as *Agnus Dei*. Such items—besides *Agnus Dei*, examples include rosaries and scapulars—had been used by Catholic clergy since the early seventeenth century as church-approved alternatives to the widely popular magical talismans believed to help people cope with the challenges of everyday life. The database of the historical museum Blumenstein in Solothurn contains remnants of this devotional production, which was pursued not only by the Visitandines but also by other religious communities in the city (Fig. 3). This parallels the findings of Nicolas Guyard on conventual relic networks in early modern Lyon and Rouen. The French historian was able

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Sonja Victoria Werner and Rolf Max Kully, eds., *Haußbuch: Wirtschaftliches, gesellschaftliches und liturgisches Pflichtenheft der jeweiligen Frau Mutter des Klosters Namen Jesu in Solothurn*, Veröffentlichungen der Zentralbibliothek Solothurn 33 (Solothurn: Zentralbibliothek Solothurn, 2012), 26.

45 KlA V, Aa, 10a, Einnahmen und Ausgaben 1775–1786.

46 Ibid.

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Fig. 3 Single parts from the Franciscan convent of St. Joseph, used for the production of *Agnus Dei*, probably from the eighteenth century. © Historisches Museum Blumenstein, Solothurn, HMBSO 2021.0699.02.

to show that a variety of religious orders participated in the distribution and circulation of relics. As relics could not be sold but only distributed by donation, their dispersion was overlapped with the social and patronage networks of religious communities.[47]

Not only did the nuns themselves produce liturgical objects, but they were also presented with gifts used for liturgical practices. In 1761, the Capuchin nun Maria Aloysia Josepha Schumacher received a choral book from her brother, the Cistercian monk Joseph Schumacher. In her recordings, she mentions the great effort her brother

47 Nicolas Guyard, "Sanctifier le cloître: Les dons de reliques aux carmélites de Lyon et Rouen à l'époque moderne," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* (2017): 283–302. For more information on the circulation of relics in early modern Switzerland, see Hansjakob Achermann, *Die Katakombenheiligen und ihre Translationen in der schweizerischen Quart des Bistums Konstanz* (Stans: Historischer Verein Nidwalden, 1979); Christophe Duhamelle, "Roman Saints Scattered All Over the World: Catacomb Martyrs; Materiality and Networks," in *Making Saints in a "Glocal" Religion: Practices of Holiness in Early Modern Catholicism*, ed. Birgit Emich, Daniel Sidler, Samuel Weber, and Christian Windler (Cologne: Böhlau, 2024), 333–356; Christophe Duhamelle and Stéphane Baciocchi, "Des gardes suisses à la frontière confessionnelle: Apothéose et banalisation des corps saints des catacombes," in *Reliques romaines: Invention et circulation des corps saints des catacombes à l'époque moderne*, ed. Stéphane Baciocchi and Christophe Duhamelle (Rome: École française de Rome, 2016), 371–411.

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had put into designing and writing the book. The choral book—the paper had cost him four *Kronen*—was gifted to Maria Aloysia Josepha as a "token of sisterly love" ("gedenck zeichen schwösterlicher liebe"). The cover of the book was procured by the Capuchin nun herself (it cost her seventeen *Batzen*), so that the highly cherished volume could be used in the choir of the convent for the first time on Christmas Eve of the same year.

As the preceding remarks have shown, early modern convents and monasteries were embedded in a system of mutual commitment that structured relationships between nuns and clergymen. In this social network, resources did not circulate in one but in various directions, feeding a system of constant exchange and resource transfer. Gifts in kind exemplify this practice of exchange. On specific annual feast days such as New Year's or Easter, nuns and clergymen exchanged small edible presents, linking them in a "system of debt exchange." However, the circulation of resources was not the only way in which nuns and clergymen were bound together in a social network, as I will demonstrate in the following section.

5. Sharing Tasks: Exploring Gender and Work in Religious Communities

Like food gifts and financial beneficence, contemporary ideas of gender similarly transcended convent walls and had an impact on communal ideas, norms, and rules. The following explorations build on Monika Mommertz' reflections on a gendered division of roles (*Funktionenteilung*)[48] and on Heide Wunder's concept of the "working couple."[49] Considering these ideas, I will discuss the issue of how gender affected work in a cloistral microcosm and ask to what extent cloistral work constituted gendered work.[50] Of course, not every instance of work performed in early modern religious institutions can

48 By using gender as a tracer, Mommertz has been able to examine the impact of gender on the division of responsibilities, competences, and resources. She makes clear that the category of gender is generally relevant, as it allows for making formerly invisible presences visible and for discussing both practices of exclusion and inclusion. On this question, see Monika Mommertz, "Geschlecht als 'tracer': Das Konzept der Funktionenteilung als Perspektive für die Arbeit mit Geschlecht als analytischer Kategorie in der frühneuzeitlichen Wissenschaftsgeschichte," in *Nonne, Königin und Kurtisane: Wissen, Bildung und Gelehrsamkeit von Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michaela Hohkamp and Gabriele Jancke (Königstein im Taunus: Helmer, 2004), 17–38.

49 See Heide Wunder, *"He is the sun, she is the moon": Women in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

50 Claire Walker was the first to highlight "the centrality of gender" when talking about work appropriate for religious women. She made clear that "the work nuns were permitted to undertake in order to make ends meet [was, M.S.] determined largely by social and gender expectations": Walker, "Martha and Mary," 399, 401. Tammy McGuire uses the concept of "spiritual labor" to demonstrate how spirituality may be used as a resource that can be codified, commodified, and regulated: Tammy McGuire, "From Emotions to Spirituality: 'Spiritual Labor' as the Commodification, Codification, and Regulation of Organizational Members' Spirituality," *Management Communication Quarterly* 24 (2010): 74–103.

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be described as gendered. However, if we compare labor done in female convents with duties carried out by male clerics, some gender-specific differences become visible.[51] Thus, it is possible to distinguish between types of labor done by nuns, tasks performed by male clerics, and non-gender-related duties carried out by both nuns and clerics, as I will demonstrate with the help of three examples.

One of the tasks performed by male clerics is deeply rooted in the rules and practices of the Catholic Church. It relates to the church regulation that only (male) priests have the right to say mass and administer the sacraments of communion and confession to the faithful.[52] However, nuns could provide the material basis for the celebration of masses. Thanks to their prior education as young women of patrician rank, choir nuns were able to manufacture embroidered liturgical garments or paraments. In the treasury of the convent of the Visitandines, we can find—among other things—a precious dalmatic, a long and wide-sleeved tunic used as a liturgical vestment (Fig. 4). This piece of art was crafted by the nuns themselves, made from a donation of the French ambassador to the Swiss Confederacy from 1749 to 1751, Antoine-René de Voyer, Marquis de Paulmy.[53]

In addition, nuns not only provided the material but also the financial basis for the celebration of masses. In 1644, Barbara Wallier (1599–?), spouse of the deceased Wolfgang Greder (1592–1641),[54] endowed the convent of the Capuchin nuns with 1,000 pounds. In return, the nuns pledged to have a "Seel Ambt" (an office for the dead) read annually on the first of October, and to pray for Wallier and her late husband.[55] Even though the Capuchin nuns could indeed pray for the souls of Barbara Wallier and Wolfgang Greder, they could not themselves celebrate mass.[56] To fulfill the wishes of their benefactress, the Capuchins depended on the support of a male cleric. Assigned with care work for the souls of the couple in this world and beyond, nuns and male clerics split the tasks according to gender norms and responsibilities, institutionally

51 According to Walker, whereas male monasteries "became famous for their scriptoria and scholarship, nuns were renowned for their spinning and needlework": Walker, "Martha and Mary," 400.

52 Laven, "Sex and Celibacy," 871.

53 Strübin and Zürcher, *Solothurn*, 320–321. In their *Annales*, the nuns noted that they were able to complete the *regalia* for the beatification of Jane Frances de Chantal in 1751, in: KlA V, A2, 9,2, Annales de notre monastère de 1644 à 1956, p. 31.

54 Wolfgang Greder and Barbara Wallier married in 1621. Even though Greder was part of the *Großrat* of Solothurn, he pursued a military career as captain and later colonel of the troops of the duke of Rohan in the Valtelline and in France. For more information, see Erich Meyer, "Wolfgang Greder," in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, version from January 13, 2006, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/017574/2006-01-13 (last accessed May 28, 2024).

55 Sonja Victoria Werner, et al., eds., "Grosse Chronik des Kapuzinerinnenklosters Namen Jesu in Solothurn 1609–1913," *Jahrbuch für Solothurnische Geschichte* 82 (2009): 456.

56 On the function of women's convents as "prayer and purgation factories," see Ulrike Strasser, "Bones of Contention: Cloistered Nuns, Decorated Relics, and the Contest over Women's Place in the Public Sphere of Counter-Reformation Munich," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 90 (1999): 255–288.

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Fig. 4 A dalmatic crafted by the Visitandines, made from a donation of the French ambassador Antoine-René de Voyer, Marquis de Paulmy. © Historisches Museum Blumenstein, Solothurn, HMBSO 2008.0001.b, photograph by Kantonale Denkmalpflege Solothurn, Guido Schenker, 2016.

working together in ways that paralleled the functioning of the early modern working couple.

Apart from the provision of the material and financial basis for the celebration of masses, nuns also equipped clerics with objects used for the propagation of Catholic devotional practices. Thanks to the research of Hillard von Thiessen and Dominik Sieber on the role of male Capuchins and Jesuits as multipliers of the Catholic faith, we know today that regular clerics played a crucial role in the distribution of devotional objects.[57] While the role of male clerics for the diffusion of these items is well known, the role of nuns in the production of these media has only been examined sporadically.[58] As

57 Hillard von Thiessen, *Die Kapuziner zwischen Konfessionalisierung und Alltagskultur: Vergleichende Fallstudie am Beispiel Freiburgs und Hildesheims 1599–1750* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Wissenschaften, 2002), 428–449; Dominik Sieber, *Jesuitische Missionierung, priesterliche Liebe, sakramentale Magie: Volkskulturen in Luzern 1563 bis 1614* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005), 134–151.

58 For information on the production of paper pills, an edible and paper-based form of medicine, by nunneries, see Samuel Weber, "Father Pepe's House of Cards: Jesuits, Cheap Print, and Material Devotion in Eighteenth-Century Catholicism," *Journal of Modern History* 97, no. 2 (2025): 269–306.

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I have already shown above, Solothurn nuns such as the Visitandines were diligent producers of devotional objects that they later transferred to the Capuchin friars of the town. Due to the regulations of enclosure, nuns were not able to distribute these objects on their own, at least outside the convent walls. Instead, they joined forces with the male Capuchins who took charge of this task. Again, the friars and the Visitandines formed an institutional cross-gender working couple, with the two teaming up for a common goal, namely the propagation of the Catholic faith.

As these select examples show, a closer look at the spiritual work performed in the Solothurn "conventscape" uncovers the gendered dimensions of religious labor. Patronage relationships of nuns generated donations for masses, while their prior education and socialization enabled them to produce precious liturgical objects. However, as nuns were both restricted in their mobility and excluded from celebrating mass, they were dependent on cooperation with male clerics. Patterns of a gendered division of work must therefore be taken into account when researching spiritual labor.

6. Conclusion

To perform spiritual labor, both nuns and male clerics depended on cooperation. Due to Church regulations, nuns were allowed neither to say mass nor to distribute self-produced devotional objects outside convent gates. They were in need of male clerics who fulfilled these tasks.

However, patronage relationships and the social network of nuns generated donations for masses, and dowries and agricultural property provided financial means and material goods. Such resources could be used for the upkeep of priests and the distribution of alms, as my case studies have shown. Thus, I suggest understanding early modern convents as religious households, consisting of nuns with a far-reaching social network of variably affiliated clerics. Whereas some of these clerics such as the confessors lived in close spatial proximity to the nuns, others reached out to the nuns from more distant locations. Just as in secular settings, labor performed in and for these households was divided between nuns and male clerics according to gendered norms and practices. Whereas nuns provided artisanship and income generated through patronage resources as well as their dowries, male clerics said mass and disseminated devotional objects outside convent walls.

Furthermore, we have seen that women's convents functioned as microcosms of circulating resources, where commodities, services, and money flowed. Both clerics and nuns produced and generated these resources and helped to maintain this network of social relations. Thus, resources did not stop at convent walls but broke through them and connected enclosed nuns with the "world" surrounding them. It was only through this exchange of resources and this social network that nuns could perform their spiritual labor.

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Religious or spiritual work performed by nuns in early modern convents, as well as by male clerics, can therefore only be understood if gender is marshaled as an integral category of analysis. Contemporary norms of gendered labor had an impact on a variety of aspects connected with economies of the religious. The concepts of the "working couple" and of a gendered division of roles developed by Heide Wunder and Monika Mommertz are therefore not only applicable for secular households. Rather, these concepts offer new perspectives for understanding labor generated by both religious women and men, nuns and male clerics. Their integration into studies of early modern religious institutions should therefore be considered imperative.

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