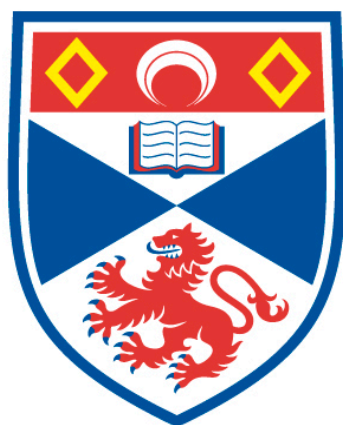


Jesuit confession and the private absolution of heresy in sixteenth-century Italy

Jessica M. Dalton

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## **Abstract**

This thesis offers the first extensive explanation of a unique papal privilege conceded to the Society of Jesus in 1551. This privilege allowed the new religious order to bring former heretics back into the Catholic Church in the absolute secrecy of sacramental confession. The thesis focuses on the use of this privilege on the Italian peninsula during the sixteenth century. There, the concession of the privilege was particularly remarkable as it conflicted with the jurisdiction of the Roman Inquisition, which had been established by Pope Paul III just a decade earlier. The Roman Inquisition used judicial processes to fight the spread of Protestant heresies in the Catholic heartlands. When popes throughout the sixteenth century granted Jesuits in Italy the privilege to absolve heresy, they gave the Society a jurisdiction that undermined their very own organ for stemming religious dissent.

This thesis traces the history of the privilege chronologically, using both normative documents and case studies reconstructed using material from the archives of the Society, Inquisition, papacy and temporal leaders. With this approach, the thesis corrects existing accounts of the privilege, which explain it according to the aims of individuals and institutions outside of the Society without integrating the objectives of the Jesuits who actually solicited the power. By incorporating all of these factors, the thesis offers the first detailed history of the privilege and uses that history to illuminate the early Society's relationships with the papacy and the Roman Inquisition, aspects of Jesuit history that have been subject to persistent mythologisation. By analysing the fluctuating pastoral and institutional priorities that dictated the course of the early modern Church, this thesis shows that the actions and interactions of three of the most important protagonists in early modern history - the Society, the papacy and the Inquisition - were characterised by a shared pragmatism, even if their priorities were only pushed into alignment by the crisis that the Church faced after the Protestant Reformation.

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## Conventions

1. Italian place names are anglicised (e.g. Genoa not Genova).
2. Names of people are written in their own original language, rather than italicised as they often are in original sources (e.g. Cristóbal Rodríguez not Cristoforo Rodriguez), except those that are well-known in their anglicised form (e.g. Ignatius Loyola).
3. All original sources are translated or paraphrased in the body text with the original language quotations provided in the footnotes. All translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.
4. Quotations are presented with their original spelling, except for 'v's and 'i's, which have been substituted where necessary with 'u's and 'j's. Similarly, abbreviations are expanded to facilitate fluid reading.



## Introduction

In Venice in the last months of 1556, Jesuit priest Cesare Helmi faced a quandary about a grave matter: the absolution of a heretic in sacramental confession.

That week, a man had confessed to Helmi that he had 'erred in many matters' fundamental to the Catholic faith. He had been part of a sect of 'Anabaptists' and people who espoused 'other various heresies'. He had believed serious errors about 'sacramental matters', 'indulgences' and 'the authority of the pope'. He had even recruited others to join him in the sect. These were serious sins. This man was a heretic.<sup>1</sup>

In the mid-sixteenth century, the Catholic Church hierarchy was on the alert for heresy on the Italian peninsula. In the German lands, Martin Luther had challenged the doctrines and authority of the Church. Luther's criticisms sparked a fierce debate and religious revolutions across northern Europe. Individuals and entire states defied papal authority, adopting these new Protestant confessions as their official religion.<sup>2</sup> It was not long before Protestant ideas arrived on the Italian peninsula.<sup>3</sup> Whether they came in the pages of books or on the tongues of merchants, sailors and scholars, Protestant beliefs found sympathy amongst curious and dissatisfied Catholics, as well as non-Catholic Christians like the Waldensians, a group originating in twelfth-century France.<sup>4</sup> By the mid-sixteenth century, there were suspicions and accusation of heresy raised against those at the height of Italy's ecclesiastical and social

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alli giorni passati ho udito una co[n]fessione d'un'Heretico: il qual si è trovato haver errato in molti casi sia de sacra[menta]li come dell'Indulgentiae et autorità del Papa...Costui era d'una setta nella q[u]ale si trovano anabattiste; sacramentarii et altre diverse heresie: et in q[ue]lla città della quale lui si trova esser bandito p[er] molti debiti, q[ue]sto Heretico ha tirato alcuni a quella setta.' Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (hereafter, ARSI), *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.3r.

<sup>2</sup> On the Protestant Reformation see Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (New York: Viking, 2014); Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided* (London: Allen Lane, 2003); Peter Marshall, *1517: Martin Luther and the invention of the reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Alistair E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther. 1517, printing and the making of the Reformation* (London: Random House, 2015) and Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (London: Bodley Head, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> On heresy in sixteenth-century Italy see Delio Cantimori and Adriano Prosperi (ed.), *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altre scritti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992); Frederic Church, *The Italian reformers, 1534-1564* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine and John Jeffries Martin, *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy. Contexts and Contestations* (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2006); Adriano Prosperi, *Eresie e devozioni. La religione italiana in età moderna. I. Eresie* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010) and Antonio Rotondò, *Studi e ricerche di storia ereticale italiana del Cinquecento* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1974).

<sup>4</sup> On the Waldensians see Euan Cameron, *The Reformation of the heretics: the Waldenses of the Alps* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Vincenzo Tedesco, *Storia dei Valdesi in Calabria. Tra basso medioevo e prima età moderna* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2015) and Pierroberto Scaramella, *L'Inquisizione romana e i Valdesi di Calabria* (Naples: Editoriale Scientifica, 1999).

hierarchies.<sup>5</sup> For successive popes, Italian princes and the vast majority of the curia and clergy, Protestant sympathisers were heretics. If heresy spread in Italy, it could destroy the Catholic Church and consign the souls of its inhabitants to hell.

Responding to this grave threat, Rome closed ranks. Pope Paul III (1534-49) addressed the claims and successes of the reformers, convoking the Council of Trent and, in 1542, founding the Holy Office of the Roman Inquisition to find and, if necessary, punish heretics.<sup>6</sup> A congregation of cardinals in Rome ran the Inquisition, supervising tribunals, old and new, all over the peninsula. They tried thousands of cases during the sixteenth century, investigating and sometimes even executing heretics, from young scholars such as Pomponio Algeri to noblemen like Pietro Carnesecchi.<sup>7</sup> Confessing in 1556, Helmi's penitent asked for mercy at the very moment when ecclesiastical and temporal authorities were most anxious to eradicate heresy throughout the Italian peninsula.<sup>8</sup> As the sixteenth century went on, the threat of heresy waned and the Inquisition began to target a broader range of moral misdemeanours,

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<sup>5</sup> Two of the most famous cases are that of nobleman Pietro Carnesecchi and Cardinal Giovanni Morone, which have been edited with additional material by Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcato: *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557-1567)* (Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1998-2000), 2 vols in 4 and *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone. Edizione critica* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1981-95), 6 vols in 7.

<sup>6</sup> The Council of Trent addressed both Luther's challenges and earlier calls for reform. Scholars since Wilhelm Maurenbrecher have supported the notion of a Catholic Reformation, driven by long-held calls for reform, rather than a reactionary Counter-Reformation. See, for example, Maurenbrecher, *Geschichte der katholischen Reformation* (Nördlingen: C.H. Beck, 1880). On the various terms used see O'Malley, *Trent and all that: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (London: Harvard University Press, 2000). On the Council of Trent see Hubert Jedin and Ernst Graf (trans.), *A History of the Council of Trent* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957-61), 2 vols (the first two volumes of Jedin's original German text) and John O'Malley, *Trent. What Happened at the Council* (London: Harvard University Press, 2013). On the Roman Inquisition and its precursors see Christopher Black, *The Italian Inquisition* (London: Yale University Press, 2009); Elena Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio. Penitenza, confessione e giustizia spirituale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000); Andrea Del Col, *L'inquisizione in Italia dal XII al XXI secolo* (Milan: Mondadori, 2006); Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1996) and Giovanni Romeo, *L'Inquisizione nell'Italia moderna* (Rome: Edizioni Laterza, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> For statistics see del Col, *L'inquisizione in Italia*, pp.772-82 and John Tedeschi and William Monter 'Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries' in Tedeschi (ed.) *The Prosecution of Heresy, Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghampton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), pp.90-102. On Pomponio Algeri, see Daniele Santarelli, 'Morte di un eretico impenitente. Alcune note e documenti su Pomponio Algeri di Nola', *Medioevo Adriatico*, 1 (2007), pp.117-134.

<sup>8</sup> As a northern port-city and printing hub Venice was seen as particularly vulnerable to the threat of heresy. See Paul Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); John Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies. Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (London: University of California Press, 1993); Santarelli, 'Eresia, Riforma e Inquisizione nella Repubblica di Venezia del Cinquecento', *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni*, LVII (2007), pp.73-105; Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring saints: pretense of holiness, Inquisition, and gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618-1750* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) and Aldo Stella, *Dall'anabattismo al socinanesimo nel Cinquecento veneto: Ricerche storiche* (Padua: Liviana, 1967).

such as sodomy and superstition.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, the Church adapted her approach to heretics in Italy, focusing on converting foreigners using conciliatory methods.<sup>10</sup>

His penitent's admission was grave, but Helmi thought that he could help. He would make use of the sacrament of confession. Even before the official foundation of Helmi's order, the Society of Jesus, in 1540, its founder, Ignatius Loyola, had used confession to elicit profound spiritual conversions within himself and wayward Catholics.<sup>11</sup> When the Jesuits began their official ministry to believers, infidels and heretics, confession was central.<sup>12</sup>

Helmi also knew that the Jesuits had an extraordinary advantage in cases of heresy, which distinguished them from other confessors: in 1551, Pope Julius III had given all Jesuits an unprecedented papal privilege. This privilege allowed the Jesuits to absolve the sin of heresy in *foro conscientiae* during confession and to lift the automatic excommunication that heresy incurred.<sup>13</sup> This meant that Jesuits could reconcile heretics to the Church entirely independently of ecclesiastical superiors, such as bishops and inquisitors. And the Jesuits could do all of this in the absolute secrecy of sacramental confession.<sup>14</sup>

The use of the Jesuit privilege had a substantial impact on the Catholic Church and wider society. For this reason, Helmi expressed serious concerns about whether his case warranted use of the privilege. Helmi's penitent had made his heresies a 'public matter', imperilling the souls of others, as well as his own.<sup>15</sup> His heresy was also a political threat. Venice was exceptionally independent from Rome but, like other Italian states, was governed by temporal authorities that were inextricably entwined with ecclesiastical matters.<sup>16</sup> Public religious

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<sup>9</sup> Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.131-57.

<sup>10</sup> On this period see, Irene Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero. Forestieri e Inquisizione e Roma in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2011) and Peter Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism in early modern Italy* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp.32-6.

<sup>12</sup> On the Jesuits, confession and conversion see *ibid.*, pp. 136-151; Sabina Pavone, *I gesuiti dalle origini alla soppressione, 1540-1773* (Rome: Laterza, 2004), pp.27-32 and Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp. 485-507.

<sup>13</sup> A. Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum romanorum pontificum taurinensis editio* (Turin: Seb. Franco, H. Fory et Henrico Dalmazzo editoribus, 1857-67), 25 vols, vol.6, p.464.

<sup>14</sup> Describing the *foro conscientiae*, Jesuit theologian Juan Valero explained that it pertained to the sacrament of confession but had effects outside of confession: 'Secundo observa, quod per Forum interiore vel conscientiae, aliquando intelligitur forus animae in iudicio poenitentiali sacramenti Confessionis. Aliquando etiam extra Confessionem; ad distinctionem Fori contentiosi...Ubi per Forum conscientiae non intelligitur tantummodo forus Sacramenti poenitentiae, sed etiam extra ipsum Sacramentum.' Juan Valero, *Differentiae inter vtrumque forum, iudiciale videlicet et conscientiae : nondum hac noua luce donatae et magna cum cura studioque iucubratae et concinnatae* (Valldemossa: Emmanuelis Rodriguez, 1616).

<sup>15</sup> '...p[er] esser stato cosa publica...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.3r.

<sup>16</sup> The Republic's state heresy tribunal the *Tre savi all'eresia*, for example, comprised Venetian noblemen who worked with the patriarch, inquisitor and papal legate. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, p.51.

rebellion was an affront to these temporal leaders and, therefore, a danger to social stability.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Helmi's penitent had also confessed that he had incurred 'many debts' and been 'outlawed'.<sup>18</sup> Ecclesiastical and temporal authorities would be eager to know of these crimes. If Helmi absolved his penitent, they would never find out. And whilst some canon lawyers declared that the secrecy of confession could be broken to reveal dangerous heretics, the Jesuits disagreed.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, there was one type of heretic whom the Jesuits could not absolve: heretics already known to inquisitors. As Helmi's penitent had made his heresy a 'public matter' he could have fallen into this category.<sup>20</sup> According to Canon Law, somebody commits the sin of heresy when they obstinately err from Catholic teaching.<sup>21</sup> This sin incurs excommunication from the Church automatically, or *latae sententiae*.<sup>22</sup> If discovered by inquisitors, a heretic could also be excommunicated judicially, or *de iure*. To reconcile a known heretic, one needed the jurisdiction to absolve the sin of heresy and to lift judicial excommunication. The Jesuits did not have this. There were three types of jurisdiction over heresy, known as *fora*: the *foro externo*, *foro conscientiae* and *foro interno*. Only jurisdiction in the *foro externo* lifted judicial excommunication.<sup>23</sup> And only inquisitors had jurisdiction in the *foro externo*.

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<sup>17</sup> On the perception of heretics as traitors in Venice see Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*, p.51. On the links between Church, society and heresy more broadly see Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought. The Society of Jesus and the State, c.1540-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.66-72.

<sup>18</sup> '...et in q[ue]lla città della quale lui si trova esser bandito p[er] molti debiti, q[ue]sto Heretico...'  
ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.3r.

<sup>19</sup> On these debates about heresy and the seal see Vincenzo Lavenia, *L'infamia e il perdono. Tributi, pene e confessione nella teologia morale della prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004), pp.101-30. On 'fraternal correction' before denunciation to the inquisition see also Stefania Pastore, 'A proposito di Matteo 18.15. *Correctio fraterna* e Inquisizione nella Spagna del Cinquecento', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 113 (2001), pp.352-63 and Stefania Tutino, *Shadows of Doubt: Language and Truth in Post-Reformation Catholic Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.13-5.

<sup>20</sup> Generally, the Jesuits were also barred from absolving relapsed heretics as some feared that relapsed heretics would seek private absolution to escape the serious inquisitorial penalties that they faced. Some Jesuits requested privileges to absolve relapsed heretics, but others expressed concerns that in so doing they would absolve false converts. For a request see Jerónimo Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu ab anno 1546 ad 1577* (Madrid: A. Avrial, 1898-1904; Lopez del Horno, 1905; Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1962), 5 vols, vol.3, p.401. Father Tarquinio Rainaldi expressed concerns about absolving *relapsi* in a letter of 1562: 'Mi occorre dimandare circa la facultà nostra di assolvere da heresia et casi contra la fede...quelle possano esser guidicati relapsi, se ricascano, overo per esse liberarsi dale molestie delli inquisitori...'  
ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 122, f.90v.

<sup>21</sup> 'Sed proprie et stricto modo dicitur haereticus, Christianus, qui de articulis fidei sentit...and aliter sentit, quam Romana Ecclesia, dicitur haereticus.' Ambrosium De Vignate, *Elegans ac utilis tractatus de haeresi editus per praeclarum et famosissimum iur. utr.* (Rome: Ex typographia Georgii Ferrarii, 1581), p.11.

<sup>22</sup> John P. Beal, James A. Coriden and Thomas J. Green (eds), *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Paulist Press: 2000), p.1575 (canon 1364); R.H. Helmholz, *The Spirit of Classical Canon Law* (London: University of Georgia Press, 2010), p.384; Lavenia, *L'infamia e il perdono*, p.105.

<sup>23</sup> 'Si quis fuerit per iudicem excommunicatus, and denunciatus: remittendus est ad eu[m], ut absolvatur in foro exteriori, qua[m]vis in foro conscientiae possit absolvi per aliquem habente[m] facultates Societatis Iesu...'

Still, the Jesuits' jurisdiction over heresy was greater than that of ordinary priests. Ordinary priests had jurisdiction over heresy in the *foro interno*. This jurisdiction pertained only to the sacrament of confession. During this sacrament penitents confess their sins to a priest and ask for God's forgiveness. If the penitent demonstrates contrition, the priest absolves him, assigning small penances, such as prayers. If a heretic went to a priest with jurisdiction in the *foro interno* that priest could absolve the sin of heresy, repairing the heretic's relationship with God.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, that priest could not lift the automatic excommunication *latae sententiae* incurred by the sin of heresy.<sup>25</sup> The priest would have to send all penitent-heretics to somebody (usually an inquisitor) with jurisdiction to lift this excommunication: jurisdiction in *foro conscientiae*. Before Pius V revoked it, bishops enjoyed jurisdiction in *foro conscientiae* over heresy within their own dioceses.<sup>26</sup> Through their papal privilege, the Jesuits had a greater authority – jurisdiction in *foro conscientiae* anywhere in the world. With this, Jesuits in Italy could absolve unknown heretics and lift their *latae sententiae* excommunication without ever notifying an inquisitor or bishop.<sup>27</sup> For penitent-heretics unknown to the inquisitors, the Jesuits offered a one-stop shop, where they could be both absolved and also reconciled to the Church secretly.

Helmi's letter to Rome asking 'how much he could do for that heretical person' suggests that he was nervous about using his jurisdiction over heresy, but thought that a private absolution might achieve the greater good.<sup>28</sup> Helmi's penitent had promised to 'make every satisfaction'

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Polanco, *Breve directorium ad confessarii ac confitentis munus recte obeundum* (Antwerp: Joannes Bellerum, 1575), p.21r. On the jurisdiction of bishops and ordinaries over heresy see Del Col, 'Strutture e attività dell'Inquisizione Romana, pp.361-3 and Fosi, *Papal Justice: Subjects and Courts in the Papal State, 1500-1750* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), pp.105-125. On the changing role of episcopal tribunals in Italy see Thomas Brian Deutscher, *Punishment and Penance: Two Phases in the History of the Bishop's Tribunal of Novara* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> '...nam sola jurisdictio foro sacramentali non sufficeret; tamen illa communicatur per haec privilegia, cum limitatione ad privatum absolutionis modum, ut sufficat ad tollendum reatum, et obligationem coram Deo...' Francesco Suarez, *Opera Omnia editio nova, a Carolo Berton, Cathedralis Ecclesiae Ambianensis vicario, iuxta editionem ventiam XXIII tomos in-f[oli]o continentem, accurate recognita, reverendissimo ill[ustrissimo] Domino Sergent, Episcopo Corsopitensi, ab editore dicata* (Paris: Ludovicum Vives, 1861), p.996.

<sup>25</sup> 'Parrochi, and alii Confesarii approbati ab Ordinario absolvere possunt ab haeresi mentali, seu pure interna, cum excommunicationem annexam sibi non habeat.' Thomas Delbene, *Clerici Regularis Theologiae Professoris, Examinatoris, S. Rom. Universalis Inquisitionis Qualificatoris, aliarumque S.S. Congreg. in Urbe Consultoris. De officio S. Inquisitionis circa haresim* (Lyon: Joannes-Anthony Huguetau, 1666), p.215.

<sup>26</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.487.

<sup>27</sup> Jesuit theologian Valero describes the function of the *foro conscientiae* in reference to bishops: 'Ubi per Forum conscientiae non intelligitur tantummodo forus Sacramenti poenitentiae, sed etiam extra ipsum Sacramentum. Quippe qui Episcopi possunt dispensare super praedictis Irregularitatib[us] and Suspensionibus...' Valero, *Differentiae inter vtrumque forum*, pp.1-2. On the *foro conscientiae*, see Elena Brambilla, 'Il <<foro della coscienza>>. La confessione come strumento di delazione', *Società e Storia*, 81 (1998), pp.591-608.

<sup>28</sup> '...dichirare quanto possa io far à q[ue]lla p[er]sona heretico...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 107*, f.3r.

that it 'would be judged he ought to make' for his errors.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, a private absolution might have broader benefits. The penitent had promised that he would 'bring his wife' who was 'in the same error' to be reconciled too.<sup>30</sup> Helmi's doubt about how to act stemmed from a conflict between his desire to save souls and his jurisdictional concerns; a clash between pastoral and institutional priorities.

Helmi's internal conflict was a microcosm of a broader problem faced by the Catholic Church in sixteenth-century Italy. Pastorally, popes wanted to save those who had rejected Catholic teaching. Nonetheless, successive pontiffs sought to fulfil this mission through institutionally-controlled judicial methods. The judicial processes that they instituted repelled penitents who feared that the Inquisition would expose and punish them.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, Inquisitors faced political resistance from the temporal powers who ruled the patchwork states of the Italian peninsula. The rulers wanted to control matters of religion and social discipline themselves. Some temporal leaders compromised with Rome, but others blocked the papal tribunal until the end of the century.<sup>32</sup> In the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church's central mission to convert errant souls was undermined by the very system with which she sought to fulfil it.

The Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy reflected the papacy's willingness to compromise institutional aims in favour of pastoral ones. By soliciting the privilege to absolve heretics in confession, the Jesuits prioritised their mission to save heretics' souls over the judicial

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<sup>29</sup> '...mi ha detto ch[e] è p[er] fare ogni satisfattione ch[e] da me sarà giudicato doversi fare.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.3r.

<sup>30</sup> '...mi ha promesso [con]ducer seco la sua moglie ch[e] sta in il medes[i]mo error.' Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Fear of the Roman Inquisition is more difficult to trace than the 'Black Legend' of the Spanish tribunal, which influenced it. Vincenzo Lavenia argues that the tribunal did not earn such a severe reputation as it abandoned public punishments in the 1570s. Nonetheless, Silvana Siedel Menchi's account of lay violence against inquisitors indicates that it was held in contempt. Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia*, p.819; Lavenia, 'Il tribunale innominato. Appunti sull'immaginario dell'Inquisizione romana' in Giuliana Ancona and Dario Visintin (eds), *Religione, scritture e storiografia: omaggio ad Andrea Del Col* (Montereale Valcellina: Circolo Culturale Menocchio, 2013), pp.295-6; Silvana Seidel Menchi, 'The Inquisitor as Mediator' in Delph, Fontaine and Martin, *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy*, pp.173-4.

<sup>32</sup> The Republic of Lucca, for example, never accepted the jurisdiction of the Roman Inquisition. The rulers of other states, such as Savoy-Piedmont and Ferrara, cooperated with Roman inquisitors to an extent but fundamentally retained control. On Lucca see Simonetta Adorni-Bracessi, 'La Repubblica di Lucca e l'«<abborrita»> Inquisizione: istituzione e società' in Andrea del Col and Giovanna Paolin (eds), *L'Inquisizione Romana in Italia nell'età moderna. Archivi, problemi di metodo e nuove ricerche. Atti del seminario internazionale Trieste, 18-20 maggio 1988* (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali ufficio centrale per i beni archivistici, 1991), pp.333-62. On Savoy-Piedmont and Ferrara see, Charmarie Jenkins Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara, 1534-1559', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 6 no.1 (April, 1975), pp.67-93 and Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del duca. I domenicani e il Sant'Uffizio in Piemonte nella prima età moderna' in Carlo Longo (ed.), *I Domenicani e l'Inquisizione romana* (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 2008), pp.415-476.

processes through which popes ordinarily reconciled religious dissenters. By conceding the privilege, successive popes took the same position, demonstrating their readiness, or, perhaps, need, to prioritise securing conversions over their desire to do so through a judicial system. This concession was particularly remarkable on the Italian peninsula. In areas of northern Europe, the successes of the Protestant Reformation had demolished Catholic ecclesiastical infrastructure. There, Jesuits empowered to reconcile heretics replaced absent episcopal and inquisitorial tribunals. But Italy had both old and new inquisitorial and episcopal systems for finding and converting heretics. Nonetheless, the popes gave the Jesuits a power that conflicted with, and sometimes even exceeded, existing jurisdictions.

This thesis will offer the first scholarly history of the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics in Italy. It will explain why the Jesuits and the papacy prioritised pastoral aims over institutional goals in the fight against heresy, despite clear clashes of jurisdiction. It will use that story as a prism to illuminate the character and development of the early Society and its relationship to the Church at large.

The thesis will argue, first, that the Jesuits, papacy and Roman Inquisition all initially believed that a distinct, extra-judicial route to reconciliation was necessary for heretics in Italy. Absolving heretics independently and extra-judicially, the Jesuits overcame pastoral and political obstacles that prevented inquisitors from securing converts, penitents, or both in sixteenth-century Italy. By doing this, the Jesuits fulfilled their own mission to save souls and helped popes and inquisitors to fulfil theirs.

Secondly, the thesis will argue that, despite this superficial agreement, the Jesuits' position on extra-judicial reconciliations actually contrasted with that of successive popes and inquisitors. The Jesuits prioritised pastoral aims over institutional ones as a matter of principle. In contrast, popes and inquisitors were only willing to compromise institutional objectives during the emergency of the aftermath of the Reformation. When the threat of spreading heresy declined in Italy, so did Rome's willingness to grant the Jesuits jurisdictional autonomy. This change in circumstance exposed a fundamental contrast between the conditional stance of successive popes and inquisitors, and the principled position of the Jesuits.

The Jesuits' organisation and *modus operandi* were forged in a time of crisis. When that crisis subsided the Society had to reform. Tracing the history of the privilege throughout its

lifespan, overall this thesis will demonstrate that, on the crucial question of religious dissent, the positions of the Jesuits and successive popes were only pushed into brief harmony by the religious emergency of the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

The history of the Jesuit privilege leads us to three key conclusions about the early Society and the sixteenth-century Church.

- Firstly, it shows us that autonomy was central to the early Jesuits' contribution to the fight against heresy. Moreover, it demonstrates that the Holy Office and the Holy See initially valued this autonomy. This conclusion undermines existing interpretations of the privilege, which suggest that it was only ever a tool of the inquisitors or popes who subordinated the Jesuits.<sup>34</sup> In reality, the key characteristic of the privilege was that it freed the Jesuits from the usual ecclesiastical hierarchy. This allowed the Jesuits to convert heretics where papal forces were absent or faced hostility. It was for this reason that the Jesuits' autonomous jurisdiction was valued not only by the Society, but also by popes and inquisitors. Overall, my interpretation of the Jesuits' anti-heretical role chimes with new histories of the Society, which emphasise its flexibility, diversity and ambivalence.<sup>35</sup>
- Secondly, a study of the privilege illustrates the pragmatism of the sixteenth-century Catholic Church. By granting and supporting the privilege, popes and inquisitors approved a jurisdiction that conflicted with that of their Holy Office. They did this so that the Jesuits could overcome obstacles particular to certain areas of Italy. These

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<sup>33</sup> Traditional works on the history of the popes and the history of the Society discuss the Jesuits' relationship with individual popes, but the first modern scholarly analysis of the history of the relationship between the Society and the papacy was O'Malley's *The Jesuits and the popes: a historical sketch of their relationship* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2016). O'Malley also treated the topic briefly in his *The First Jesuits*, pp.296-310.

<sup>34</sup> Existing explanations of the privilege appear in Firpo's *La presa di potere dell'inquisizione Romana*, (Rome: Laterza, 2014), pp.65-6; Pastore's *Il Vangelo e la Spada. l'Inquisizione di Castiglia e i suoi critici* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003), pp.338-40; Prosperi's, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.236-7 and 492 and Romeo's *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati e inquisizione nell'Italia del cinquecento* (Naples: Città del Sole, 1997), pp.63-75.

<sup>35</sup> Pavone opens her section on the Jesuits and heresy noting that recent research that has shown that the Society was not 'crushed' into 'Roman positions' in the post-Reformation debates. Nonetheless, she states that this research highlights conflicts between the Jesuits and 'other institutions of the Roman curia' who were 'not always willing to accept the enormous privileges' of the Jesuits. As the Jesuits' privileges were given to them by the popes, Pavone's admission of conflict implicitly excludes the papacy. Moreover, although O'Malley's *The Jesuits and the popes* underlines that the Jesuits' vow of obedience to the papacy did not allow pontiffs to order them around, O'Malley suggests that the addition of the 'defence of the faith' to the Jesuits' Institute in 1550 made them 'defenders of the papacy'. O'Malley, *The Jesuits and the popes*, pp.17-22; Pavone, *I gesuiti*, p.21.



conclusions further undermine traditional interpretations of a monolithic Roman Church. Rather, they support research that emphasises the pragmatism of the Church and the influence of local agents and issues on sixteenth-century Catholicism.<sup>36</sup>

- Finally, the Church's provision of extra-judicial means of reconciliation for heretics exposes the limitations of inquisitorial and episcopal systems by showing that judicial systems were not successful alone. That the Church provided such routes even though they clashed with judicial methods further underlines their necessity. Inquisitorial and episcopal tribunals dominate scholarship on heresy in sixteenth-century Italy.<sup>37</sup> Even histories that discuss extra-judicial methods focus on how they supported judicial systems. This thesis will suggest, instead, that extra-judicial methods were parallel, autonomous routes to reconciliation. This conclusion underlines the importance of recent scholarship on Catholic institutions that converted heretics extra-judicially in late sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century Italy.<sup>38</sup> It also suggests that the chronology of discussions of these institutions could begin earlier, tracing the roots of their approach in the work of the early Jesuits.

## Historiography

Critical scholarly analysis of the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy has only emerged in the

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<sup>36</sup> Key works for this new understanding of early modern Catholicism are Simon Ditchfield, 'Decentering the Catholic Reformation. Papacy and Peoples in the Early Modern World', *Archive for Reformation History*, 101 (2010), pp.186-208; 'In search of local knowledge: rewriting early modern Italian religious history', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 19 (1998), pp.255-296; *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Fosi, *Papal Justice*; Mary Laven, 'Encountering the Counter-Reformation', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59 (2006), pp.706-720; 'Introduction' in Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen and Laven (eds) *Ashgate Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.1-14 and Keith P. Luria, "'Popular Catholicism" and the Catholic Reformation' in Comerford and Pabel (eds), *Early Modern Catholicism: essays in honour of John W. O'Malley S.J.* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), pp.116-7.

<sup>37</sup> Adriano Prospero's *Tribunali della coscienza* was the first text to incorporate pastoral figures in the fight against heresy, such as preachers and confessors, into the broader narrative of anti-heretical activity in early modern Italy. Nonetheless, *Tribunali*, and subsequent monographs that take the same approach are, fundamentally, works on either the Roman Inquisition or bishops and so focus on their aims, rather than the aims of agents like the Jesuits. Recently, articles have treated on the independent aims of Jesuits and other religious orders, though they still discuss their activities in relation to the work of the Roman Inquisition. For monographs incorporating the Jesuits, but focusing on inquisitions and bishops see, for example, Matteo Al Kalak, *Il riformatore dimenticato. Egidio Foscarari tra inquisizione, concilio e governo pastorale (1512-1564)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2016); Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada* and Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*. For articles focusing on the work of the Jesuits and other religious orders see Pierroberto Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti e l'Inquisizione Romana 1547-1562', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 117 (2005), pp. 135-157 and Giovanna Paolin, 'Gli ordini religiosi e l'Inquisizione: analisi di un rapporto' in Del Col, Andrea and Giovanna Paolin (eds), *L'Inquisizione romana: metodologia delle fonti e storia istituzionale: atti del seminario internazionale, Montereale Valcellina, 23 e 24 settembre 1999* (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2000), pp.169-185.

<sup>38</sup> Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero* and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*.

last few decades. Early Jesuit historians legitimised the privilege, portraying it as perfectly harmonious with inquisitorial activities. This was an attempt to elide any controversy around the first Jesuits, who were accused of heresy in Spain, France and Italy.<sup>39</sup> This approach cast a long shadow on Jesuit historiography. Apology for the Society, if not for the Roman Inquisition, persisted well into twentieth-century discussions of the Jesuits' anti-heretical activities. The influence of traditional Jesuit mythologies is even seen in late twentieth century inquisitorial histories, in which secular historians offered the first discussions of the privilege's broader impact. These texts described the privilege as a mechanism to lure men into the courts of the Roman Inquisition or as a political tool of the pope. They painted Jesuits as loyal collaborators of the Holy Office and papacy, just as earlier Jesuit texts had. Like contemporary Jesuit scholarship, these inquisitorial histories pulled the Society out of the vacuum in which it had been previously studied, incorporating the Jesuits' work into the broader history of the Church. But the ecclesiastical systems as they portrayed them were centralised, overbearing and efficient. Such interpretations jar with newer revised histories of the Society, conversion and early modern Catholicism in general, which have emphasised compromise, contradiction and conflict.<sup>40</sup> Within these revised histories, the Jesuits' anti-heretical activities and relationship with the Church appear ever less uniform. The privilege to absolve heresy, which affected them both, must be reconsidered with fuller attention.

The key characteristics of early Jesuit history are tied together in the *Chronicon* of Juan Alfonso Polanco (1517-76), secretary to the first three Superior Generals. The Society's first official history, the *Chronicon* established the legend of Jesuit history for centuries to come. Polanco knew that history was a useful tool for the Society. The correspondence that he used to compile the *Chronicon* had been shaped by his own rules for the Society's correspondence.<sup>41</sup> With remarkable foresight, Polanco archived these letters at the Jesuits' headquarters in Rome. And the *Chronicon* itself was intended as a source book for later

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<sup>39</sup> On accusations of heresy towards to the early Society see Pierre-Antoine Fabre, 'Ignace de Loyola en procès d'orthodoxie (1525-1622)' in Susanna Elm, Eric Rebillard and Antonella Romano (eds), *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000), pp.101-24; Pavone, 'A Saint under Trial. Ignatius of Loyola between Alcalá and Rome' in Robert Maryks (ed.), *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p.45. On its effect on Jesuit historiography see O'Malley, 'The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where does it stand today?' in O'Malley (ed.), O'Malley, *Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) pp.1-35 and Guido Mongini, <<Ad Christi similitudinem>> *Ignazio di Loyola e i primi gesuiti tra eresia e ortodossia* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2011), pp.23-44.

<sup>40</sup> Research on conversion in early modern Italy has also underlined the increasing use of more consolatory, compromising strategies. See Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero*. and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*.

<sup>41</sup> Juan de Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Jesu Historia* (Madrid: Typographorum Societas, 1894; Augustinus Avrial, 1894-8), 6 vols.

Jesuit historians.<sup>42</sup> As such, the *Chronicon* is a vital key for understanding the early Jesuits' priorities. Establishing the legend of the early Society, it portrays confession as a central and effective means of reconciling heretics. Polanco wanted to cultivate the impression that the Jesuits were a useful pastoral force for combating the greatest threat to the Church in Italy.

But Polanco was careful not to portray the Jesuits as acting above their station. He underlines the legitimacy of the privilege, describing its concession 'through apostolic letters in the form of Brief'.<sup>43</sup> The Jesuits' use of the privilege is only alluded to, with no mention of queries, controversy or jurisdictional conflict, just missionary success.<sup>44</sup> Describing a bitter clash over the privilege between inquisitors and Jesuits in Spain, Polanco does not call the episode a conflict, but an occasion when the Jesuits decided to use their privilege 'most moderately' as the inquisitors only very 'scarcely' ordered 'that faculty to be conceded to others'.<sup>45</sup> Polanco portrayed the Jesuits as important protagonists in the fight against heresy in Italy. But he did not reveal the complex impact of the privilege that facilitated this role.

Later Jesuit historians followed Polanco's lead. Polanco's successors also sought to portray the Jesuits' anti-heretical efforts as effective but uncontroversial; perfectly harmonious with the work of the Roman Inquisition. Pedro de Ribadeneira (1527-1611) underlined the Jesuits' cooperation with the inquisitors and even claimed that 'Ignatius fought vigilantly' for the institution of an inquisition in Rome.<sup>46</sup> Later, Giampietro Maffei (1533-1603) wrote that

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<sup>42</sup> For Polanco's role in the Society's correspondence see Markus Friedrich, 'Government and information management in Early Modern Europe. The Case of the Society of Jesus (1540-1773)', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), pp.539-563 and Mario Scaduto, 'Un scritto ignaziano inedito: Il 'Del officio secretario' del 1547', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 29 (1960), pp.305-328. On the intended use of the *Chronicon* see John Patrick Donnelly (trans.), *Year by year with the early Jesuits (1537-1556): selections from the "Chronicon" of Juan de Polanco, S.J.* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), p.xiv.

<sup>43</sup> 'Concessit hoc anno idem Pontifex Julius Societate nostrae per apostolicas litteras in forma Brevis, quod prius viva voce de absolutione ab haeresi...concesserat.'

Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, vol.2, p.426.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, this account: 'Verum praecipuus fructus animarum in ministerio Sacramentorum confessionis et communionis percipiebatur; erant enim confessiones frequentissimae, et permultae animae ex faucibus ereptae fuerunt; inter quos decem vel duo-decim haeretici et gravissimis irretiti daemonis laqueis ad viam salutis per Domini gratiam sunt reducti.'

Ibid., pp.481-2.

<sup>45</sup> 'Facultatem absolvendi a casibus haeresis a Summo Pontifice impetratam P[ater] Ignatius in Hispaniam ad Collegia, sicut et aliarum nationum, miserat, et quidem per patentes litteras; sed illis in regnis propter auctoritatem Sancti Officii Inquisitionis moderatissime illa utendum esse prudentes existimabant; nam aeagre ferre Inquisitores videbantur aliis quam ipsis facultatem eam concedi.'

Ibid., p.354

<sup>46</sup> 'Illud etiam acriter pugnavit Ignatius, ut, quae in Sacerdotes illos conijciebantur, ea iudicio, excuterentur, ac profferentur in lucem, ne qua ex silentio infamiae nota illorum vitae, nostro[que]; nomini inureretur; quod, multis repugnantibus atque obnitentibus, tandem vicit.' Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae, Qui Religionem Clericorum Societatis Iesu Instituit*. (Cologne: Birckmannica sumptibus Arnoldi Mylii, 1602),

Loyola personally led many Lutheran heretics to the Holy Office.<sup>47</sup> Jerónimo Nadal (1507-1580) went further, proposing that Loyola founded the Society so that its members could combat heresy.<sup>48</sup> This narrative was perpetuated by seventeenth-century Jesuit historians Niccolò Orlandini (1554-1606) and Francesco Sacchini (1570-1625).<sup>49</sup> Even in the late twentieth century, André Ravier used the *Chronicon* as the key source for his history of the Society.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the effects of this early mythologising were not confined to Jesuit scholars, nor to positive myths about the Society. Negative readings of Ribadeneira and Maffei soon emerged in Protestant narratives in which Jesuit papal agents fought an heroic Martin Luther.<sup>51</sup>

In the modern period, Jesuit scholars continued to neutralise controversy in accounts of the Society's anti-heretical activities. This involved a careful curation of the Society's correspondence, which was often laced with confusion and conflict. In the late nineteenth century, Jesuit scholars began publishing selected papers from the Society's central and local archives as the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*. Stating that they 'separated the useful from the useless', the editors favoured accounts of Jesuits as protagonists at major moments of the Counter-Reformation narrative.<sup>52</sup> Discussions of the problems that the Jesuits encountered fighting heresy and using their privilege are under-represented. This is particularly notable as the Society used letters, like Helmi's, as a means of problem-solving.

Jesuit authors of the modern period also tried to elide controversy surrounding the early Jesuits' role. In the early twentieth century, the Society's official historian, Pietro Tacchi-Venturi (1861-1956), claimed that his history of the Jesuits in Italy would buck this trend,

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p.262.

<sup>47</sup> 'Complures praeterea haereticos, grassante iam tum peste Lutheriana, tempestius disputationibus monitisque convictos, ad sacra Quaesitorum tribunalia volentes adduxit, and cum sancta Romana Ecclesia in gratiam secreta abiuratione restituit.' Giovanni Pietro Maffei, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae Qui Societatem Iesu Fundavit Postremo Recognita*. (Bordeaux: S. Millangius, 1589), p.81.

<sup>48</sup> Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal*, vol.5, pp.315-6.

<sup>49</sup> Niccolò Orlandini and Francesco Sacchini, *Historia Societatis Iesu* (Rome; Cologne; Antwerp, 1615-1710), 5 vols.

<sup>50</sup> André Ravier, *La Compagnie de Jésus sous le gouvernement d'Ignace de Loyola (1541-1556) d'après les Chroniques de Juan-Alphonso Polanco* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991).

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, *Commentarius historicus et apologeticus de Lutheranismis sive de reformatione religionis ductu D. Martini Lutheri in magna Germaniae parte aliisque regionibus* (Frankfurt: J.F. Gleditsch, 1692). O'Malley, *The Historiography of the Society of Jesus*, p.11.

<sup>52</sup> '...non <<omnia illa scripta utilia historiae scriptoribus censenda sunt. Delectus proinde adhibendus fuit, quo utilia ab inutilibus decerneremus>>.' Diego Lainez, *Lainii Monumenta: epistolae et acta patris Jacobi Lainii, secundi praepositi generalis Societatis Iesu* (Madrid: Typis G. Lopez del Horno, 1912-8), 8 vols, vol. 1, pp. xiii-xiv.

providing neither apology nor diatribe.<sup>53</sup> But Tacchi-Venturi still whitewashed the Jesuits' position.<sup>54</sup> Unlike earlier authors, he decided to distance the Society from inquisitorial activities; a stance that reflected personal and contemporary distaste for policing belief.<sup>55</sup> To maintain a distance between the Jesuits' activities and inquisitorial matters, Tacchi-Venturi omitted mention of the privilege altogether. Describing the bull that granted the privilege to absolve heresy, he merely states that it 'conceded some notable privileges' and only cites the privilege 'of promoting [the Society's] students or scholastics to a doctorate' specifically.<sup>56</sup> The privilege to absolve heresy, though perhaps the gravest privilege conceded in the bull, is not mentioned as it brought the Jesuits' ministry too close to inquisitorial work.

The Society's next official historian, Mario Scaduto (1907-95), also distanced the Society from the Holy Office. His history and, even more so, his articles, published evidence of the Jesuits' most intimate collaborations with the Roman Inquisition.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, they insisted that the Jesuits were reluctant supporters of the Holy Office. Tacchi-Venturi states that the Jesuits' efforts were hampered by churchmen who enacted 'ecclesiastical legislation' that 'was not at all indulgent' and 'imposed public abjuration' of heresy 'at the hands of the inquisitors'.<sup>58</sup> By admitting that Jesuits and inquisitors were in conflict over the privilege, Scaduto goes beyond the rose-tinted accounts of his predecessors. But Scaduto fails to explain why a Society in conflict with the papal Inquisition was able to secure and regain their privilege to absolve heresy on multiple occasions, often with inquisitorial support. Scaduto offers details about how the Jesuits used the privilege. But his desire to distance the Jesuits from the Holy Office undermined his explanations of the privilege's role in the relationship between the Society and the inquisitors.

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<sup>53</sup> Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia, narrata col sussidio di fonti inedite dal P. Tacchi Venturi* (Rome: 1910-51), 2 vols, pp.x-xiii. See also Tacchi-Venturi's comments on Ribadeneira's history in 'Della prima edizione della vita del N.S.P. Ignazio scritta dal P. Pietro Ribadeneira. Note storiche e bibliografiche del P. Pietro Tacchi Venturi, S.I.', *Lettere Edificanti della Provincia Napoletana*, 9 (1901). On the character of Tacchi Venturi and apologetics see Alessandro Saggioro, 'Storico, testimone e parte. Pietro Tacchi Venturi: storia, storiografia e storia delle religioni' in *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, storiche e filologiche, Rendiconti* 13 (2002), pp.451-489. On the preface to *Storia della Compagnia* and Ribadeneira's *Vita* see particularly, pp.463-8.

<sup>54</sup> Pavone, 'A Saint under Trial: Ignatius Loyola between Alcalà and Rome', p.45.

<sup>55</sup> Prospero, *L'Inquisizione Romana. Letture e ricerche* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003), p.xi. See Robert Maryks, "Pouring Jewish Water into Fascist Wine": *Untold Stories of (Catholic) Jews from the Archive of Mussolini's Jesuit Pietro Tacchi Venturi* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

<sup>56</sup> Tacchi-Venturi, *Storia della Compagnia*, vol. 2, part 2, p.540.

<sup>57</sup> Scaduto, 'Tra inquisitori e riformati. Le missioni dei gesuiti tra Valdesi della Calabria e delle Puglia', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 15 (1946), pp.1-76.

<sup>58</sup> Scaduto, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia. L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione, 1556-1565* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1950), p.709.

In the last decade of the twentieth century less apologetic scholarship on the privilege emerged as part of a shift in Jesuit historiography. Although the revision of Jesuit scholarship in this period saw increasing numbers of lay scholars working on the Society, one of the key instigators of the shift was a Jesuit historian, John O'Malley.<sup>59</sup> In 1993, O'Malley's *The First Jesuits* admitted controversy, conflict and confusion into an account of the privilege for the very first time.<sup>60</sup> O'Malley emphasised that the privilege allowed the Jesuits to bypass the tribunals of the Roman Inquisition. He admitted that Jesuits were confused about how it was best used. And he stated that other institutions were jealous of the Society's privilege.<sup>61</sup> More broadly, O'Malley's was the first history to study Jesuit institutional documents in the context of their pastoral ministry, and to consider both within the broader history of the Church and European society. Discussing the privilege in this context, O'Malley established a foundation for scholars to examine its role and impact within the Jesuits' ministry and their relationship with other institutions.

O'Malley's approach represented a broader revision of Jesuit scholarship, as Jesuit and lay scholars collaborated to integrate the Society into the broader cultural, intellectual and political history of the early modern period. This methodology was fundamental to *The Jesuits*, a volume produced by O'Malley and others in 1999, which considered the Society's contribution to European history through a range of disciplines.<sup>62</sup> Advocating a similar approach, scholars such as Silvia Mostaccio called for the extraction of the Jesuits from their own mythologies and traditional narratives of the Counter-Reformation Church; as Luce Giard called it, a '*désenclavement*' of Jesuit history.<sup>63</sup> They argued that the abundance and careful curation of Jesuit sources could lead historians to misunderstand the Society's role in the development of modern Church and state. They called for more critical examination of

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<sup>59</sup> For an account of this shift see Emanuele Colombo 'Gesuitomania. Studi recenti sulle missioni gesuitiche (1540-1773)' in Catto, Mongini and Mostaccio (eds), *Evangelizzazione e globalizzazione. Le missioni gesuitiche nell'età moderna tra storia e storiografia*, (Rome: Dante Alighieri, 2010), pp. 31-59, particularly pp.33-5.

<sup>60</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.148.

<sup>62</sup> Gauvin Alexander Bailey and O'Malley (eds), *The Jesuits: cultures, sciences and the arts, 1540-1773* (London: University of Toronto Press, 1999). This volume was followed by Bailey and O'Malley (eds), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

<sup>63</sup> Luce Giard used this term in her concluding comments in Bailey and O'Malley (eds), *The Jesuits*, pp.707-12. See also Giard, 'Le devoir d'intelligence ou l'insertion des jésuites dans le monde du savoir' in Giard, *Les jésuites à la Renaissance. Système éducatif et production du savoir* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1995), pp.xi-lxxix; Silvia Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity: The Jesuits Viewed in Comparative Perspective in Light of Some Recent Italian Literature', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), pp.410-41 and Franco Motta, *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi*, 19 (2002).

the Jesuits' developing strategies.<sup>64</sup> This new approach has continued to characterise the abundant scholarship on the Society produced in the early twenty-first century.<sup>65</sup> Much of this work is comparative, studying the Jesuits European and extra-European missions, and the Jesuits and other religious orders.<sup>66</sup> Some articles and books have focused on one aspect of the Society's character or ministry, such as obedience or confession, or on a particular period.<sup>67</sup> All such works discuss the Society within the cultural, political and social contexts in which it worked, rather than the traditional narratives of the Counter-Reformation, previously promoted by the Jesuits themselves.

The success and vivacity of work in this new paradigm is evident in the activity of Jesuit institutions such as Boston College. There, Robert Maryks has employed these new approaches in his own research on the Jesuits in the early modern and modern periods, and as an editor of volumes and series of primary and secondary sources.<sup>68</sup> His *Jesuit Historiography Online* epitomises the aims of the scholars who pioneered the *désenclavement* of the Society's history in the late 1990s, offering historiographical essays to scholars of Jesuit history and 'the many disciplines with which it intersects'.

This shift in Jesuit scholarship is crucial for understanding the significance of the history of the privilege to absolve heresy. The privilege affected and was affected by individuals and institutions outside of the Society, and it played an instrumental role in the Society's relationship with these individuals and institutions. Moreover, it was, in essence, a

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<sup>64</sup> Ditchfield, 'Of Missions and Models: the Jesuit enterprise (1540-1773) reassessed in recent literature', *Catholic Historical Review*, 93 (2007), p.343 and Fabre and Romano 'Les jésuites dans le monde moderne. Nouvelles approches', *Revue de synthèse*, 120 (1999).

<sup>65</sup> For an overview of this scholarship see Emanuele Colombo, 'Gesuitomania. Studi recenti sulle missioni gesuitiche (1540-1773)'.

<sup>66</sup> Y. El Alaoui, *Jésuites, morisques et indiens. Etude comparative des méthodes d'évangélisation de la Compagnie de Jésus d'après les traités de José de Acosta (1588) et d'Ignacio de las Casas (1605-1607)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006); Paolo Broglio, *Evangelizzare il mondo: le missioni della Compagnia di Gesù tra Europa e America (secoli XVI-XVII)* (Rome: Carocci, 2005); E. Corsi (ed), *Órdenes religiosas entre América y Asia. Idea para una historia misionera de los espacios coloniales* (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, Centro de Estudios de Asia y África, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, the articles that comprise the special issue of *Rivista storica italiana* 'Alle origini della Compagnia di Gesù', 117 (2005), pp.5-178; Marina Caffiero, Franco Motta and Pavone (eds), 'Identità religiose e identità nazionali in età moderna', *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 1 (2005), pp.7-93; Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits. The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) and Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>68</sup> Maryks (ed.), *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola; Jesuit survival and restoration: a global history, 1773-1900* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); "Pouring Jewish Water into Fascist Wine; Saint Cicero and the Jesuits"; with James Bernauer, "The tragic couple": encounters between Jews and Jesuits (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

recognition of the obstacles and limitations of the world in which the Jesuits and Catholic Church operated. The history of the privilege, therefore, offers a concrete means of examining the history of the Society as it intersected with the ecclesiastical, religious, social and political history of the time. In doing this, this thesis will apply the most important lessons of recent Jesuit scholarship to a central aspect of the Society's early history: its efforts to fight heresy.

Whilst historians of the Society laid the ground for a full investigation of the privilege, it was historians of the Holy Office who offered the first critical analysis of the privilege's impact. These scholars supported the *désenclavement* of the Society's history by partially integrating it into the history of religious discipline in Europe. They also underlined the importance of extra-judicial methods of conversion and reconciliation, on top of the judicial methods on which scholars have focused. Nonetheless, their explanations are limited. They describe how the privilege might have supported the practical and political aims of the inquisitors or popes at a particular time. But many do not integrate the aims of the Jesuits who solicited the privilege into their explanations. Nor do they explain how those aims were negotiated and compromised when they clashed. This has led inquisitorial scholars to characterise the privilege according to the aims of either of the Holy Office or papacy at a particular point in time. Whilst inquisitorial scholarship provides a vital starting point for our study, it does not fully explain the privilege's role and effects on the pastoral and institutional life of the Society and the Church.

The most dominant existing explanation of the privilege suggests that inquisitors used Jesuits with the privilege to attract penitent-heretics who would then be lured to an inquisitorial tribunal. Adriano Prospero suggested this in *Tribunali della coscienza* (1996) and 'Anime in Trappola' (2003), which argued that an oppressive inquisition made tools of confession and confessors.<sup>69</sup> According to Prospero, they did this by obliging confessors to withhold absolution from penitent-heretics until they had made a 'spontaneous appearance' at an inquisitorial tribunal. Although Prospero admits that the privilege exempted the Jesuits from the control of the inquisitors, he passes over this to focus on moments in which the privilege

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<sup>69</sup> Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.215-8 and 492. On spontaneous appearances see also Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.61-2; Brambilla, 'Il <<foro della coscienza>>' and Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography: Telling Tales before the Roman Inquisition', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 17 (2013), pp.444-5.



was negated.<sup>70</sup> Prosperi describes some possible motivations of the Jesuits who solicited the power but these are completely subordinated to those of the inquisitors in his analysis. Moreover, by focusing on how the privilege was negated to be more useful to the Inquisition, Prosperi fails to explain why popes and inquisitors supported the privilege in its original, unlimited form between, at least, 1551 and 1567, and 1572 and 1587. Vincenzo Lavenia, a student of Prosperi, has incorporated the role of the Jesuits and their privilege into detailed, localised accounts of the inquisition's aims and activities in early modern Italy. This has addressed some of the generalisations in Prosperi's book. Nonetheless, by focusing on the aims of the inquisition, rather than the objectives of the Jesuits, Lavenia's work still fails to describe the nature and impact of the privilege comprehensively.<sup>71</sup>

Explanations such as Prosperi's rely upon the notion that sacramental confession was used to control the laity. This idea is long-established in both Anglophone and Italian scholarship but has recently been qualified. In the 1970s and 1980s English historian John Bossy argued that, during the sixteenth century, the sacrament of confession transformed from a semi-public act of conflict resolution into an individual encounter in which the confessor acted as a private, moral judge.<sup>72</sup> For Bossy and Italian scholars like Prosperi and Paolo Prodi, the Council of Trent renewed the use of the sacrament as a means of policing the faithful when it confirmed obligatory annual confession and the role of the confessor as a judge.<sup>73</sup> Recent scholarship has reinforced this interpretation. Wietse de Boer has shown how the Milanese curia used annual confession to distinguish believers from heretics.<sup>74</sup> Patrick O'Banion's work on religious life in sixteenth-century Spain has illustrated that the Holy Office routinely questioned defendants about how often they confessed and communed and quizzed witnesses on the sacramental habits of their neighbours.<sup>75</sup> Jane Wickersham's study of inquisitorial manuals underlined the use of annual confession as a barometer of orthodoxy well into the

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<sup>70</sup> Prosperi, 'Anime in trappola. Confessione e censura ecclesiastica all'Università di Pisa tra '500 e '600', *Belfagor*, 54 (May 1999), pp.265-7; *Tribunali della coscienza*, p.492.

<sup>71</sup> See, for example, Lavenia, 'Giudici, eretici, infedeli. Per una storia dell'inquisizione nella Marca nella prima età moderna', *Giornale di Storia*, 6 (2011), pp.1-38 and 'L'Inquisizione del duca'.

<sup>72</sup> John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 25 (1975), pp. 21–38.

<sup>73</sup> Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, p.469 and Paolo Prodi, 'Il sacramento della penitenza e la *restitutio*' in Prosperi (ed.), *Per Adriano Prospero* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2011), p.119; *Una storia della giustizia. Dal pluralismo dei fori al moderno dualismo tra coscienza e diritto* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000), p.286.

<sup>74</sup> Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul: confession, discipline, and public order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp.169-76.

<sup>75</sup> Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.61-2 and Patrick O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), p.15.

late sixteenth century.<sup>76</sup> All of these works show how the Church sought to use confession as a means of policing the faithful in sixteenth-century Europe.

But research on the relationship between curia and laity in early modern Europe suggests that in reality such efforts were often frustrated. Marc Foster's study of Catholic reform in Speyer (1992), and many of the essays in *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (2000), disrupt the image of a submissive laity.<sup>77</sup> They show that people frequently refused to perform public penances and successfully frustrated the imposition of the decrees of Trent. Ronald Rittger's research on penance in Lutheran Germany and O'Banion's discussion of confession in Catholic Spain have also underlined the centrality of compromise in relationships between laymen and priests.<sup>78</sup> Such conclusions are bolstered by Angelo del Torre's investigation of episcopal visitation records in early modern Piedmont.<sup>79</sup> Del Torre's findings underline the conclusion that the sacraments often facilitated a relationship of mutual benefit and responsibility between the laity and clergy, not the oppression of laymen by priests. *The Ashgate Companion to the Counter-Reformation* cemented the importance of negotiation between Catholic institutions and the laity in any study of religion and religious change in the early modern period.<sup>80</sup>

Such work supports the observations of Heinrich Schilling and Wietse de Boer, who have criticised historians who fail to distinguish between rules on confession and the effects of their application.<sup>81</sup> With Wolfgang Reinhard, Schilling was an architect of the confessionalisation thesis, which argues that the disciplinary measures that emerged from the

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<sup>76</sup> Jane Wickersham, *Rituals of Prosecution. The Roman Inquisition and the Prosecution of Philo-Protestants in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p.85.

<sup>77</sup> Marc R. Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the villages. Religion and reform in the bishopric of Speyer, 1560-1720* (London: Cornell University Press, 1992) and Katharine Jackson Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (eds), *Penitence in the Age of Reformations* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

<sup>78</sup> O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain*, pp.5-6 and Ronald Rittgers, *The Reformation of the Keys: confession, conscience and authority in sixteenth-century Germany* (London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

<sup>79</sup> Angelo Torre, *Il consumo di devozioni: religione e comunità nelle campagne dell'ancien régime* (Venice: Marsilio, 1995) and 'Politics cloaked in worship. State, Church and local power in Piedmont 1570-1770', *Past and Present*, 134 (February 1992), pp.42-92.

<sup>80</sup> See Laven's introductory overview and remarks to Bamji, Janssen and Laven (eds), *Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, pp.8-11 and contributions by Clare Copeland, 'Sanctity', pp.225-242 and Nicholas S. Davidson, 'The Inquisition', pp.91-108.

<sup>81</sup> Boer applied this critique to W. David Myers' "*Poor Sinning Folk*": *Confession and Conscience in Counter-Reformation Germany* in the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28 (1997), pp.897-8. For Schilling's observations see, for example, 'Die Kirchenzucht im frühneuzeitlichen Europa in interkonfessionell vergleichender und interdisziplinärer Perspektive - eine Zwischenbilanz' in Schilling, *Kirchenzucht und Sozialdisziplinierung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa: mit einer Ausahlbibliographie* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p.38.

Reformation aided the rise of the modern state.<sup>82</sup> De Boer has successfully applied the confessionalisation thesis to his research on Borromeo's Milan.<sup>83</sup> Having analysed the theory and practice of social discipline in early modern Europe, de Boer and Schilling emphasised the need to distinguish between rules and aims, and their intended and unintended consequences.

Other scholars have applied similar criticism to Prosperi's 'oppression' interpretation. They have shown that confessors as well as lay people resisted strict inquisitorial orders regarding confession. Giovanni Romeo has argued that members of the Society ignored inquisitorial decrees that ordered them to withhold absolutions pending their penitent's visit to the inquisition. Romeo's research has shown that few Jesuit confessors are named in records of 'spontaneous appearances'.<sup>84</sup> Elena Bonora has argued that Barnabite priests behaved similarly.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, Romeo has shown that the Jesuits were often exempt from the obligation to send their penitents to a tribunal before absolving them, even during the pontificate of the arch-inquisitor Paul IV.<sup>86</sup> If the Jesuits were exempt or opted out of the system of spontaneous appearances, and other obligations to the Roman Inquisition, we must look beyond this system to explain their privilege and role in the fight against heresy.

Instead of characterising the Jesuits as a tool of the Holy Office, Romeo and others have argued that the Society were a crucial supplement to the Inquisition. This is because the presence of the Holy Office on the Italian peninsula was fragmentary and often weak. Romeo

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<sup>82</sup> On confessionalisation and social discipline see, for example, Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Konfession und Konfessionalisierung in Europa' in Reinhard (ed.), *Bekenntnis und Geschichte. Die Confessio Augustana im historischen Zusammenhang*, (Munich: Vögel, 1981), pp.165-89 and Heinz Schilling, 'Zwang zur Konfessionalisierung? Prolegomena zu einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 10 (1983), pp.257-77. See also, Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation: Central Europe, 1550-1750* (New York: Routledge, 1990). On religious discipline and state-building see Reinhard and Schilling, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the Early Modern State. A Reassessment', *Catholic Historical Review*, 75 (1989), pp.383-494 and, with particular attention to Calvinism, Philip S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution. Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). On the confessionalisation thesis in scholarship see, O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, pp.108-17. While studies by de Boer and Prosperi have emphasised religious discipline in early modern Italy, Laven has questioned its importance in Catholic territories in light of recent scholarship that highlights the importance of negotiation in early modern Catholicism. Mazur's work is typical of such scholarship, underlining the failures of systems of social discipline and persistent negotiation with converts. de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*; Laven, 'Encountering the Counter-Reformation' and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*.

<sup>83</sup> de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul*.

<sup>84</sup> Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati*, p.73.

<sup>85</sup> Elena Bonora, 'I barnabiti tra storia dell'ordine e storia della Chiesa' in Firpo (ed.), *Nunc alia tempora alii mores. Storici e storia in età posttridentina, Atti del convegno internazionale, Torino, 24-27 settembre 2003* (Florence: Olshki, 2005), pp.111-40.

<sup>86</sup> Romeo, *L'inquisizione nell'Italia moderna*, p.27 and *Ricerche su confessione dei peccati*, p.43.

states that, for this reason, the Jesuit colleges were a vital complement to inquisitorial tribunals.<sup>87</sup> Massimo Firpo has also suggested that the Society were a distinct adjunct to the Roman Inquisition. He has openly criticised Prospero's suggestion that 'the Church won' the fight against religious dissent.<sup>88</sup> Whilst Romeo focuses on the practical benefits of the Jesuits' supplementary role, Firpo focuses on the political implications. He claims that Julius III empowered the Society with the privilege to absolve heresy in order to create a distinct, loyal force in the fight against religious dissent. Firpo states that Julius III did this because he clashed with the Roman Inquisition and because the cardinal-inquisitors had become too powerful.<sup>89</sup> Firpo's explanation appears in a broader text on Julius III and the inquisition and, therefore, does not fully integrate the Jesuits' motivations and actual use of the privilege. Romeo's explanation does not explore the institutional impact of the privilege. Nonetheless, both scholars extricate the Jesuits' work to combat heresy from the context of the inquisitorial system and the aims of the inquisitors. In doing this, their explanations are a vital contribution to this thesis's investigation of the privilege's role and impact, from the point of view of the Society who solicited it, as well as the external institutions that it affected.

Recent research on the Holy Office bolsters the notion that the inquisitorial system needed supplementary support. In the last 20 years, evidence of the tribunal's inefficiency has emerged from the archive of the Roman Inquisition, the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (ACDF). Before the official opening of the archive in 1998, only a handful of historians applied for access to its documents successfully, using personal connections. This system inhibited the progress of scholarship on the Inquisition, despite the important work of historians using inquisitorial records elsewhere.<sup>90</sup> Gigliola Fragnito, a

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<sup>87</sup> Romeo, 'Note sull'Inquisizione Romana tra il 1557 e il 1561', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa*, 36 (2000), p.136-40; *Ricerche su confessione*, pp.43-6.

<sup>88</sup> Firpo 'Tribunali della coscienza in età tridentina', *Studi Storici*, 38 (1997), pp.355-82 and *Vittore Soranzo vescovo ed eretico. Riforma della Chiesa e Inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Rome: Laterza, 2006), p.512.

<sup>89</sup> Firpo, *La presa di potere*, p.65.

<sup>90</sup> Massimo Firpo, for example, was repeatedly denied access to the ACDF but used documents available at other archives to compile detailed and extensive histories of important trials. For inquisitorial documents held outside of the ACDF and the historical losses to the records of the Roman Inquisition see Tedeschi, 'The Dispersed Archives of the Roman Inquisition' in his *The Prosecution of Heresy*, pp.23-45. Anne Jacobson Schutte discussed the opening of the ACDF in 'Palazzo del Sant'Uffizio: the Opening of the Roman Inquisition's Central Archive', *Perspectives on History*, 37 (May 1999), pp.25-8, suggesting that the archive was closed because swaths of the curia 'fear historical scholarship' and opened because Pope John Paul II wanted to make the Catholic Church appear a 'defender of human rights'. Whilst Schutte is focused on the possible implications of the Inquisition's early history, Leo XIII's failure to open the ACDF when he opened the Archivio Segreto Vaticano in 1879 may also have been influenced by sensitive recent documents on modernism and liberalism produced by the CDF, which might have negated his efforts to establish a positive relationship between the Church and the modern world.

scholar granted early access, soon discovered that the Congregation of the Index, the inquisitorial organ responsible for censorship, was plagued by a lack of expertise, cooperation and personnel at both a central and local level.<sup>91</sup> Even works that illustrate the increasing efficiency of the Holy Office highlight the continued obstacles faced by inquisitors in Italy. The work of Thomas Mayer, a later user of the ACDF, showed how the Inquisition became an increasingly bureaucratic and well-controlled tool for the papacy in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but also demonstrated the limits of this tool and the persistent political resistance to Roman inquisitors in certain Italian states.<sup>92</sup>

Inquisitorial research has underlined the particular local challenges that the Holy Office faced. The significance of both local context and individual agents is evident in the content and organisation of the *Dizionario Storico dell'Inquisizione* of 2010.<sup>93</sup> The *Dizionario* was one of the most important products of the fervent period of research that followed the opening of the ACDF. It comprises explanations of the hugely varied topics covered in inquisitorial archives. The Society of Jesus has not one but three entries in the *Dizionario*.<sup>94</sup> The provision of separate entries underlines the fact that the type and extent of the Jesuits' activities depended on the demands of the context in which they worked. Even within Italy, the varied religious, ecclesiastical and political situations across the states affected the work of the inquisitors and the anti-heretical activities of the Jesuits. This local variation is further underlined by the individual entries for each tribunal in the *Dizionario*. To understand the nature and impact of the Jesuits' contribution to the fight against heresy in Italy, we must always consider the demands and influence of the locales in which they worked.

Recent scholarship on the Society outside Europe has examined the particular contexts in which the Jesuits worked.<sup>95</sup> Studies focused on America and Asia have shown that papal privileges allowed the Jesuits to respond to the needs of converts without the ecclesiastical

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<sup>91</sup> Gigliola Fragnito, *Bibbia al rogo: la censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della Scrittura (1471-1605)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997). See also Fragnito (ed.), *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition on the Stage of Italy, c.1590-1640* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), p.2. In both this work and his *The Roman Inquisition: a papal bureaucracy and its laws in the Age of Galileo* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) Mayer highlights the continued conflicts between the Roman Inquisition and local authorities in states like Venice.

<sup>93</sup> Prosperi, Lavenia and Tedeschi, *Dizionario storico dell'inquisizione*. (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010), 4 vols.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp.665-77.

<sup>95</sup> Fosi, *Papal Justice*, p.3.

infrastructure found in Europe.<sup>96</sup> Such work highlights the purpose of papal privileges, not as personal gifts but as pragmatic exceptions to overcome obstacles to effective ministry. Other research on the Jesuits' foreign missions has shown that the roots of policies that have been described as innovative and 'Jesuit' are found in the particular settings in which the Jesuits worked.<sup>97</sup> By turning away from Rome, these studies highlight the local influences on the Jesuits' solicitation of privileges and the development of strategies in Rome and elsewhere.

Considering the Society's European missions alongside their extra-European activities allows us to discern the Jesuits' fundamental strategies. The work of Luke Clossey and many others has demonstrated that Jesuits in Europe, Asia and the Americas were not motivated by the pope's desire to roll back the successes of the Reformation. Rather they were driven by the Society's key objective to save the souls of their own missionaries and those whom they encountered in their ministry.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, Paolo Broggio has used a comparative study of Jesuit missions in Spain and the Spanish Americas to highlight strategies that stretched across the Society's global missionary activity.<sup>99</sup> By looking at the Society's work more holistically and from a pragmatic point-of-view, scholars have shown that Jesuit policies were motivated by the Society's desire to save souls in spite of the various obstacles presented by the particular contexts in which they worked.

All of this research has shown that the Society overcame hurdles in the fight to win new souls in the mission field by using flexible strategies. Recent institutional histories of the Society have also emphasised this. Both Sabina Pavone's *I gesuiti* (2004) and Silvia Mostaccio's review article 'A Conscious Ambiguity' (2008) argued that the early Society was characterised by a deliberate inconsistency that allowed the Jesuits to work effectively with

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<sup>96</sup> Broggio, 'Le congregazioni romane e la confessione dei neofiti del Nuovo Mondo tra *facultates* e *dubia*: riflessioni e spunti di indagine', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée*, 121 (2009), pp.173-197. On the continued use of privileges and faculties to negotiate the application of apostolic power in varied mission contexts see Giovanni Pizzorusso, 'Le Monde et/ou l'Europe: la Congrégation de Propaganda Fide et la politique missionnaire du Saint-Siège (XVIIe siècle)', *Institut d'Histoire de la Réformation. Bulletin Annuel*, 35 (2013-2014), pp.40-7.

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Banchoff and José Casanova (eds), *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016), pp.28-9.

<sup>98</sup> Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the early Jesuit missions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Trent Pomplun, *Jesuit on the Roof of the World. Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Tibet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit encounter with the East* (London: Faber, 2012) and Po-Chia Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

<sup>99</sup> Broggio, *Evangelizzare il mondo*.

the individuals and contexts that they encountered.<sup>100</sup> Such interpretations build upon the conclusions of studies on obedience within the Society by Claudia Alfieri, Michela Catto and Antonella Romano.<sup>101</sup> These scholars illustrated the importance of rebellion in the praxis and development of the early Society, undermining old paradigms which claimed that the Jesuits moved in lock-step under Roman direction. Now it is clear that the Society was not characterised by corporate homogeneity but by a necessary diversity and ambivalence.

Recent scholarship has argued that flexibility also characterised the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy within Europe. This notion is key to Pierroberto Scaramella's challenge to Romeo's work. Scaramella has stated that by characterising the Jesuits as a supplement to the inquisition, Romeo subordinates the Society within an interpretative framework dominated by the Holy Office, just as in Prospero's explanation.<sup>102</sup> Instead, Scaramella argues that the Jesuits' role was ever-changing, that they worked to convert, absolve and reconcile heretics independently, collaboratively, secretly and openly, sometimes centre-stage of the Counter-Reformation drama and at others well outside of its grand narrative.<sup>103</sup> Scaramella interprets the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics as a crucial mechanism for a flexibility that allowed the Society to work outside of traditional hierarchies and to traverse boundaries of jurisdiction.<sup>104</sup>

The work of Stefania Pastore supports Scaramella's argument that the Jesuits were not necessarily subordinated by inquisitors. In her study of the inquisition in Castile between 1460 and 1598, Pastore concurs with her advisor Prospero, arguing that the Jesuits worked as agents of the inquisition.<sup>105</sup> She also supports Prospero's suggestion that the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics facilitated their collaboration with the inquisitors.<sup>106</sup> All the same, Pastore shows that the Jesuits in Castile used accommodating pastoral strategies in these

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<sup>100</sup> Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity' and *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*.

<sup>101</sup> 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). For a reference to Romano's comments, spoken at the conference that instigated this publication see Pavone, 'Dissentire per sopravvivere. La Compagnia di Gesù in Russia alla fine del Settecento' in Alfieri and Ferlan, *Avventure dell'obbedienza nella Compagnia di Gesù*, p.197. See also Michela Catto, *La Compagnia divisa: il dissenso nell'ordine gesuitico tra '500 e '600* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2009).

<sup>102</sup> Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti e l'Inquisizione romana', p.154.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.138-41

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.149.

<sup>105</sup> Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la spada*.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.338-40.

collaborations, despite the severity of local inquisitors. This interpretation indicates that the Jesuits worked with the inquisitors in a relationship of mutual influence, not of subordination.

The research of Pastore and others suggests that it was not only the Jesuits but the Catholic Church in general that adopted a pragmatic and flexible response to the threat of heresy. In recent years, research emphasised the role of negotiation, plurality and compromise in Catholicism in Italy, and dispelled the notion that the sixteenth-century Church was centralised, oppressive and unreactive.<sup>107</sup> Elena Brambilla has demonstrated that the Church's approach to religious dissent was as pragmatic as the Jesuits', arguing that judicial and pastoral means of reconciling religious dissenters had coexisted for many centuries.<sup>108</sup> Recent research on the conversion of Protestants in early modern Italy has emphasised the continued interaction between pastoral and judicial means of reconciling dissenters in the early modern period.<sup>109</sup> Such scholarship demonstrates that we should not define the Jesuits' extra-judicial reconciliation of heretics by the ways in which it conflicted with the inquisitorial system. Nor should we explain the privilege solely by how it could facilitate inquisitorial processes. Rather, we must consider the Jesuits' extra-judicial reconciliation of heretics as an integral part of a broadly pragmatic approach to heresy on which the Jesuits had an active influence.

This reassessment of the Society and the institutional Church calls for and facilitates a reassessment of the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy. Interpretations that present the Jesuits as mere servants of the pope or inquisitors no longer stack up. The Jesuits exercised the privilege with no limitations for long periods of its lifespan. Moreover, the Church tolerated conflicting systems for reconciling heretics. It is clear that, in the religious emergency of the mid-sixteenth century, both the Jesuits and the Church at large tolerated plurality, compromise and even conflict, even at the expense of centralisation, traditional hierarchy and corporate unity. Studying the history of the privilege from the point of view of the Jesuits and those whom it affected, we shall see that the privilege was a mechanism for a jurisdictional autonomy and flexibility, that the Jesuits used it to overcome obstacles to finding heretics and securing conversions and for furthering their institutional mission. Moreover this thesis will

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<sup>107</sup> Aron-Beller and Black, *The Roman Inquisition: Centre versus Peripheries*; Mary Laven, 'Encountering the Counter-Reformation' and 'Introduction' in *Ashgate Companion to the Counter-Reformation*; Keith P. Luria, '“Popular Catholicism” and the Catholic Reformation' in Comerford and Pabel (eds), *Early Modern Catholicism*. p.116-7.

<sup>108</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, pp.492-4 and Romeo, 'Tribunali della coscienza: inquisitore, confessori e missionari', *Quaderni storici*, 102 (1999), pp.796-800.

<sup>109</sup> Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero* and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism in Early Modern Italy*.



continue the story, beyond existing explanations, to show that the Jesuits' flexibility in matters of heresy would come to an end when the threat of heresy subsided and the Church's pragmatism led popes to prioritise institutional concerns over pastoral aims.

### Sources

This study has employed a variety of sources to reconstruct the events and motivations that led to the concession of the privilege, and to trace its role and impact in Italy. Official documents that conceded, negated and revoked the privilege provide a basic framework for reconstructing its history. Nonetheless, they do not explain the reasons behind the Jesuits' requests or the popes' decisions. Personal and diplomatic correspondence, as well as further bulls, briefs and apostolic letters contextualise the popes' broad strategies and specific concerns. The Society's abundant correspondence reveals the Jesuits' motivations. It also helps us to piece together the negotiations and relationships that supported the Jesuits' requests for privileges. Jesuit letters also record the impact of the privilege, institutionally and pastorally. Moreover, they show how the Jesuits negotiated conflicts and collaborations with popes, inquisitors, bishops, princes and their penitents. Records of the decisions of the Holy Office, such as *decreta* and inquisitorial correspondence, tell of the privilege's impact on the inquisitors. They also reveal the approach and aims of the inquisitors whom the Society worked with and alongside. None of these sources offer us the view of the penitents for whom the Jesuits requested the privilege. They do, however, allow us to reconstruct the Jesuits' role and impact as they took shape as a religious order during this transformative period of early modern history.

The popes who conceded the privilege had various and often conflicting motives. In their roles as head of the Catholic Church and prince of the Papal States, they balanced pastoral and institutional concerns and held real political power, both in Italy and abroad.<sup>110</sup> For this reason, their motivations and actions, as reflected in the sources they left behind, were varied and sometimes even contradictory. Bulls and briefs regarding the privilege give us some information about their concessions. *Sacrae religionis*, which officialised the concession of the privilege on 22 October 1552, outlined the basic limits of the power. Nonetheless, such documents offer no information on how the Jesuits used the privilege, or any particular reason for its concession to the Society, beyond basic praise for the Jesuits' virtues and

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<sup>110</sup> On this dual role of the pope see Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).

activities.<sup>111</sup> Later manuscript and printed documents held at the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), ACDF, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV) and various regional archives such as the Archiginnasio in Bologna help us to trace the fate of the privilege, recording its re-concession, negation and revocation. But they too reveal little about the motivations behind decisions. Sometimes, manuscript and print copies of bulls and briefs, made and stored by the Jesuits and inquisitors, offer extra information. They can include names of supporters present at the solicitation of the privilege or the printing of a bull.<sup>112</sup> Still, whilst these documents provide the structure of the privilege's history, we must look beyond them to discern how and why that history took its course.

The privilege to absolve heresy was not granted by popes on a whim, but solicited specifically by the Jesuits. Jesuit correspondence, therefore, must be our starting point for understanding its intended purpose and actual use. The abundance of Jesuit correspondence held at the ARSI comes in three forms: reports, ad hoc queries from Jesuits across the peninsula, and the responses of the Superior General and his advisors. Letter writing was the Jesuits' chief means of governance, but also served to record and share important and edifying information within the Society.<sup>113</sup> We must, therefore, look at letters with an awareness of the Jesuits' desire to minimise controversy and legitimise their position. As we have already seen, the early Society was keen to gloss over conflicts that arose from use of the privilege. This problem is evident not only in the content but also in the selection of letters edited in the Society's *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (MHSI) (1894-2009).<sup>114</sup> The MHSI are a useful support for the extensive archival research presented in this thesis. Read critically, reports can also help to flesh out our comprehension of the privilege.

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<sup>111</sup> A. Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol.6, p.464

<sup>112</sup> For example, this copy of *Sacrae religionis*: 'Otho miseratione divina tt. Sanctae Sabinae S.R.E. Praesbyter cardinalis de Augusta nuncupatus. Universis et singulis praesentes literas sive praesens publicu[m] transumpti instrumentu[m], inspecturis, lecturis, visuris, pariter et audituris, salute in domino seipiterna[m] et praesentibus fide[m] indubiam adhibere.' ARSI, *Instutum* 222, f.263r.

<sup>113</sup> Friedrich, 'Circulating and Compiling the Litterae Annuae: Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 76 (2008), pp.1-39 and 'Government and Information-Management' and 'Ignatius's Governing and Administrating the Society of Jesus' in Maryks (ed.), *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola. Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp.123-140; Joseph A. Munitiz, 'Communicating Channels: Letters to Reveal and to Govern', *The Way Supplement*, 70 (1991), pp.64-75.

<sup>114</sup> The last volume in the MHSI is Enrique García Hernán (ed.), *Monumenta S. Franciscus Borgia VII (1550-1566)* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2009). A new series, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, nova series* replaced MHSI in 2005. Like the MHSI, the *nova series* publishes primary sources but with critical editions, reprints and translations, grouped thematically, rather than chronologically. On the MHSI see Robert Danieluk, 'Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu - uno sguardo di insieme sulla collana', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 81 (2012), pp.249-89.

Nonetheless, to discern the nature and impact of the the Jesuit privilege we must look to letters that arose from conflict and controversy.

Letters that demand the privilege or ask questions about its use are crucial for understanding its role in the Jesuits' ministry and the Church's fight against heresy. The details of Helmi's case, for example, show his concerns and thus reveal the stakes of the privilege and its effects on the Jesuits' ministry. Responses to queries like Helmi's show us what the Superior Generals would and could compromise in the pursuit of their pastoral and institutional goals, allowing us to discern their changing status in the Church and society, over time and across the Italian states. This correspondence also indicates that Jesuits absolved heretics in Italy both before the concession of the privilege and after its revocation. These letters alone make it clear that we must look beyond normative documents such as bulls to understand how and why the Jesuits sought to absolve heretics.<sup>115</sup> With records from the Society's earliest days right through the seventeenth century, Jesuit correspondence at the ARSI allows us to build case studies and to trace longer institutional developments. These give concrete form to the privilege's pastoral and institutional significance for the Jesuits, and its impact on the Church at large.

The impact of the privilege on the work of the Roman Inquisition, both positively and negatively, has left its trace in inquisitorial *decreta*. The *decreta* record the decisions of the cardinals-inquisitors regarding general inquisitorial policy, often in response to particular cases in tribunals across the peninsula.<sup>116</sup> Though they offer scant information, the *decreta* record significant moments when the Jesuits' privilege either complemented or clashed with that of the Holy Office. A *decretum* of 20 October 1553, for example, tells us of a close collaboration, when a Jesuit confessor 'absolved in the *foro conscientiae*' a Jewish convert whom inquisitors had accused of practicing his old religion, before the man was 'consigned to Lord Ignatius [Loyola] for the effect of instructing' him.<sup>117</sup> A *decretum* from a meeting of 1592 records a clash, stating that cardinal-inquisitors 'read the memorial' prohibiting Superior

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<sup>115</sup> Letters from the 1540s have led Giorgio Caravale to conclude that the concession of the privilege merely normalised a long-used mechanism. Caravale, 'Ambrogio Catarino Politi e i primi gesuiti', *Rivista storica italiana*, 117 (2005), p.80-109.

<sup>116</sup> Aron-Beller and Black in Aron-Beller and Black (eds), *The Roman Inquisition: centre versus peripheries*, pp.11-2; Jonathan Seitz, 'Interconnected Inquisitors. Circulation and Networks Among Outer Peripheral Tribunals' in Aron-Beller and Black (eds), *The Roman Inquisition: centre versus peripheries*, p.158.

<sup>117</sup> '...Didacus Perez - Dederunt licentiam confitendi peccata sua alicui ex Societate D.N. Jhesu Christi, qui illum absolvat in foro conscientiae...' ACDF, *Decreta 1548-58*, p.230 / f.119v.  
'Didacus Portugheis. Accepta obligatione iuratoria sub poena treremium relaxetur et consignetur do[mi]no Gnatio ad effectum instruendi...' Ibid., p.241/ f.125r.

General Claudio Acquaviva from conceding 'faculties of receiving and absolving any heretics'.<sup>118</sup> As well as recording the effects of the privilege on the inquisition, *decreta* illustrate how conflicts were resolved. In doing this, they reflect the status and priorities of the inquisitors and Jesuits, and the stakes of the situation at hand.

The influence of the Roman Inquisition on the concession and use of the privilege can also be discerned from correspondence between the cardinal-inquisitors and tribunals across the Italian peninsula. For cardinal-inquisitors and local inquisitors, this correspondence was a means of supervision and problem-solving. Now, such documents are held at regional Italian state archives, the ACDF, and partially published by scholars such as Pierroberto Scaramella.<sup>119</sup> Letters highlight the successes and failures of the inquisitorial system and the obstacles that it faced.<sup>120</sup> They suggest why the inquisitors might have required or requested the Jesuits' help in certain areas. Inquisitorial correspondence also tells us of collaborations and conflicts between the Jesuits and the Holy Office. These letters offer a vital starting point for further research on how the privilege was used, and why it was negated and, eventually, revoked.

The ARSI and ACDF also hold treatises written by Jesuits defending the privilege. These are vital for our comprehension of the privilege and its fate, offering the most detailed defence of the privilege ever written by the Jesuits. They provide a vital supplement to Jesuit letters in which the privilege is often treated reticently. Such treatises indicate how the Jesuits used the privilege and what they believed its value had been. Moreover, in the Jesuits' selection of examples and emendations to drafts of these documents, they reveal what the Society perceived to be the inquisitors' main concerns. The Jesuits' letters to the inquisitors are thus a

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<sup>118</sup> 'Pro Generali Societatis Jesu lecto mem[oria]li p[er] eius parte p[ro]hibitio sup[ra] concess[a] facultatis recipiendi et absolventi quoscunq[ue] hereticos et deputandi provinciales qui recipiant et absolvant et dato mem[oria]li audito dictus fuit.' ACDF, *Decreta 1592-3*, f.420v.

<sup>119</sup> Scaramella, *Le lettere della Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio ai Tribunali di Fede di Napoli*. On the history and contents of the ACDF, see Daniel Ponziani, *L'Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede. Profilo storico e descrizione dei fondi documentari*, in Alejandro Cifres (ed.), *Memoria Fidei. Archivi ecclesiastici e nuova evangelizzazione* (Rome, Gangemi, 2016), pp. 85-96. On the various inquisitorial sources elsewhere in Italy and the world see Patricia H. Jobe, 'Inquisitorial Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: A Preliminary Handlist' Charles Amiel, Gustav Henningsen and John Tedeschi (eds), *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe: studies on sources and methods* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), pp.33-53; Tedeschi, 'The Dispersed Archives of the Roman Inquisition' in Amiel, Henningsen and Tedeschi (eds), *The Inquisition in Early Modern Europe*, pp.13-32.

<sup>120</sup> Black, 'Relations between Inquisitors in Modena and the Roman Congregation in the seventeenth century' in Black and Aron-Beller (eds), *The Roman Inquisition: centre versus periphery*, pp.91-117; Giuliana Ancona and Dario Visintin, 'Centre and Periphery: The Correspondence between the Congregation of the Holy Office and the Inquisition in Friuli between 1578 and 1653' in Black and Aron-Beller (eds), *The Roman Inquisition: centre versus periphery*, pp.118-38.

crucial means of understanding the role of the privilege in both the pastoral and institutional history of the Society and the Church.

Jesuit reports and inquisitorial *decreta* offer us some information on penitents' backgrounds. Although the specific information learnt in confession was protected by the seal of secrecy, Jesuits requesting help and reporting success in their efforts to convert heretics offered some general information on their penitents. Queries from the mission field often reveal whom the Jesuits sought to absolve in particular contexts. Requests for the privilege in Turin specify that the Jesuits needed it for the 'French' there.<sup>121</sup> An inquisitorial decree mentions that the Jewish convert whom the Jesuits absolved was 'Portuguese', and an inquisitorial *decretum* tells us that a soldier reconciled by a member of the Society was 'German'.<sup>122</sup> Such information became increasingly important from the late sixteenth century as nationality became a key factor in deciding whether an extra-judicial reconciliation could be granted.

Such reports tend to corroborate the traditional chronology and geography of heresy in sixteenth-century Italy.<sup>123</sup> From the 1530s, Jesuits absolved those who had heard new Protestant heresies in learned cities and trading centres such as Bologna, Modena and Venice.<sup>124</sup> In the middle decades of the sixteenth century they purported to catechise and absolve errant Catholics all over the peninsula, particularly in rural, remote and, consequently, neglected places, such as Corsica.<sup>125</sup> From the late 1560s, Jesuits reported that they converted Waldensian groups in the far north and deep south, after other heretical sects had been suppressed.<sup>126</sup> And like Roman authorities, the Society focused on the absolution of

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<sup>121</sup> 'Prego V[ost]ra P[at]ernità ch[e] mi co[n]ceda di este[n]der la faculta di absolvere ab eresi ad un altro sacerdote qual mi parera p[er]che ve[n]gono alcuni fra[n]cesi...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.169r.

<sup>122</sup> 'Didacus Portughesis. Accepta obligatione iuratoria sub poena trirremium relaxetur et consignetur do[mi]no Gnatio ad effectum instruendi...' ACDF, *Decreta 1548-58*, p.241/ f.125r.

'Samuele Reidano Tedesco d'anni 30...è carcerato p[er] causa d'heresia formali, che l'anno passato di Maggio fù cosi riconciliato, et assoluto dall'heresie in foro conscientiae dal P[ad]re Vittoriano Premoro Gesuita.' Archiginnasio, *B1866*, f.143r.

<sup>123</sup> This narrative is clear in Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Turin: Claudiana, 1997) and Cantimori, *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento* and is also seen in recent texts such as Black, *The Italian Inquisition*.

<sup>124</sup> This is evident in Helmi's letter about 'Anabaptists' and believers of 'other heresies' in Venice and Alfonso Salmerón's absolution of heretics and those who had 'read Lutheran books'. ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.3r. Salmerón, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis, Societatis Jesu: ex autographis vel originalibus exemplis potissimum depromptae a patribus ejusdem societatis nunc primum editae* (Madrid: Typis Gabrielis Lopez del Horno, 1906-7), 2 vols, vol. 1, p.63.

<sup>125</sup> Juan Alfonso de Polanco, *Epistolae et commentaria P. Joannis Alphonsi de Polanco e Societate Jesu; addenda caeteris ejusdem scriptis dispersis in his monumentis* (Madrid: Typis Gabrielis Lopez, 1916-7), 2 vols, vol. 2, p.455.

<sup>126</sup> On the Jesuits' missions to the Waldensians of the Kingdom of Naples see Scaduto, 'Tra Inquisitori e Riformati'.

foreign heretics in the later sixteenth century.<sup>127</sup> The correlation between the Jesuits' narrative of their own absolutions and the history of religious dissent should be treated with some suspicion. The history of heresy in Italy has frequently been told through inquisitorial documents. As the Jesuits were keen to portray their work as harmonious with that of the Holy Office it is likely that they highlighted cases that matched the aims of the inquisitors. Comparison of Jesuit accounts with inquisitorial censures often exposes the fallacy. For example, Jesuit correspondence after the revocation of the privilege suggests that their focus was the conversion of the foreigners whom the inquisitors sought to reconcile. Nonetheless, inquisitorial records reveal that the Jesuits continued to reconcile other heretics, to whom the inquisitors were unwilling to grant mercy.

Jesuit letters also offer us some information about the social status of penitents, and the social dynamics of conversion. This information also corroborates our existing understanding of the social dynamics of heresy and conversion in sixteenth-century Italy. Jesuit correspondence indicates that those considered to be heretics existed at all levels of society. It also illustrates that conversions were often a pragmatic response to the demands of a particular social situation.<sup>128</sup> This is clear from a report from Vulturara in the Kingdom of Naples, which notes that a Jesuit converted the 'most rich' and 'most trusted' man in the community and then charged him to convince the town's obstinate Waldensians to become Catholic too.<sup>129</sup> Those whom he converted would have protected their own status by following the man's lead. Similarly, Helmi's query to Rome revealed that his penitent was an outlaw and also tells us that his wife, who had followed him in heresy, was assumed to join him in conversion.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> '...intorno alla'facoltà d'assolvere ab heresia...In Italia per tutti gl'Oltromontani è necessaria l'istesa facoltà...De gli'altri che no[n] sono Oltramo[n]tani sono casi rari...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r. The popes' and Roman Inquisition's focus on foreigners from the later sixteenth century is evident in Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero* and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*.

<sup>128</sup> Helmi's penitent's reference to his wife reveals nothing of her agency or aims. Nonetheless that she erred from and returned to the Catholic Church with her husband fits the picture emerging from recent scholarship, which shows that women and men often changed religious confession for pragmatic, familial and social reasons. See Ditchfield and Helen Smith, *Conversions: Gender and Religious Change in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p.5. Pragmatic conversions are also evident in research on migration in the early modern world. See, for example, the case of seventeenth-century Syrian Abdone, who switched from Islam to Christianity on several occasions, as detailed in Natalie Rothman's *Brokering empire: trans-imperial subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), pp.97-9 and cases of conversion amongst northern European soldiers in Italy in Mazur's *Conversion to Catholicism*, pp.98-115.

<sup>129</sup> '...tra li quali ci fu un vecchio delli principali et più ricco et di più credito delli altri, il qual havea un suo figliolo maggior al santo officio in Roma prigione. [Il v]ecchio fu essortato dal padre promettendoli che, se li aggiutava a indurre il populo a confessar[e] la [verità], che lo scriveria alli illustrissimi cardinali, acciò su usasse misericordia con suo figlioli...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, f.15.

<sup>130</sup> '...mi ha promesso [con]ducer seco la sua moglie ch[e] sta in il medes[i]mo error.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 107*, f.3r.

These cases do not appear suspect. But we should consider such details critically, as some Jesuits emphasised social distinctions to underplay the conflict of jurisdiction caused by the privilege. One request for the privilege, for example, insists that the Jesuits reconciled those who were perceived to be the weakest figures in Society: women, rustics, old people, youths and the infirm who would 'quake in front of Bishop'.<sup>131</sup>

It is difficult to deduce information from surviving sources about the number of people affected by the Jesuits' privilege, let alone the numbers from each particular sect. Jesuits sent varying amounts of information to Rome, with some reporting that they had converted eight or ten Lutherans 'who came to confess themselves' and others merely alluding to good numbers of confessants and converts.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, such claims, specific or vague, were shaped by the Jesuits' aim to edify and encourage their confrères, which could encourage exaggeration.<sup>133</sup> Jesuits' reports to cardinal-inquisitors are similarly suspect. They often supported requests for further privileges of absolution and so aimed to emphasise the efficacy of the Jesuits' work. The specific aims of the popes and inquisitors could also affect qualitative information in such documents, as Jesuits described reconciliations that correlated with inquisitorial aims and papal policy. Furthermore, the description of heretics in all such documents may not reflect their beliefs. Jesuit accounts, like contemporary inquisitorial documents, deploy narratives and categories that anathematised those who deviated from orthodoxy, frequently referring to the errant as Lutherans and Anabaptists, when they may have been nothing of the sort.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> 'De non tollenda facultate absolvendi haereticos et eos q[ui] legisse[n]t libros prohibitos...Item quid cogas ad Ep[iscop]orum Tribunalia reliquam plebam idiotam, verecundam, rusticos, foeminas, puellas, infirmos...senes, iuvenes...q[ui] tremme cora[m] Episcop[um].' ARSI, *Institutum 187-I*, f.330v.

<sup>132</sup> 'Hora dipoi uno mese se sono convertiti per gratia del signore Dio otto, o dieci, de questi lutherani, quali sono venuti a confessarse con meco.' Paschase Broët, *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti, Claudii Jaji, Joannis Codurii et Simonis Rodericii Societatis Jesu ex autographis vel originalibus exemplis potissimum depromptae* (Madrid: Typis Gabrielis Lopez del Horno, 1903), p.44. Jesuit letters often speak in broad terms of great 'fruit' from confessions or allude to great numbers by claiming that they had spent long periods of time hearing confessions. For example: 'Questo mese di Maggio s'ha fatto assai frutto nelle confessioni...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 108*, f.217r. and Emmanuel Gomez's comments in *Epistolae mixtae ex variis Europae locis ab anno 1537 ad 1556 scriptae nunc primum a patribus Societatis Jesu in lucem editae* (Madrid: Augustinus Avrial, 1898-1901), 5 vols, vol. 3, pp.91-2.

<sup>133</sup> A similar call to caution has been made regarding abjuration documents produced by the Roman Inquisition, in which accounts of the lives and misdemeanours of those renouncing their heresy are shaped by the penitent or inquisitor to fit narratives that served their purpose. See Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography'. On the importance of narrative in abjurations see Stefano dall'Aglio, 'Voices under trial. Inquisition, abjuration, and preachers' orality in sixteenth-century Italy', *Renaissance Studies*, 31 (February 2017), pp.25-42.

<sup>134</sup> Lucio Biasori, 'Before the Inquisitor: A Thousand Ways of Being Lutheran' in A. Melloni (ed.), *Martin Luther: A Christian between Reforms and Modernity (1517-2017)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp.509-26.

We can reconstruct the history of the privilege to absolve heresy using the abundant Jesuit and inquisitorial correspondence available in archives and, to some extent, published, as well as papal documents available in Rome and local Italian archives. These sources also allow us to use the history of the privilege to illuminate the relationship between the Society, Roman Inquisition and papacy, during formative years for the Jesuits and the Holy Office and a transformative period for the Holy See. The limitations of the sources and the secrecy of sacramental confession prevent us from drawing firm conclusions about the number and type of penitents whom the Jesuits absolved and the privilege's impact on them. The history of the privilege to absolve heresy does, however, provide a unique vantage point to consider how the Church and the Society negotiated their pastoral and institutional priorities whilst responding to the greatest crisis that the Catholic Church had faced in a millennium.

### **Thesis overview**

With a generally chronological framework, this thesis will consider the concession, use, negation and revocation of the privilege to absolve heresy. It will assess the role and impact of the privilege in the fight against heresy through normative institutional documents, manuscript treatises explaining and defending the privilege and geographical case studies based on archival research. Tracing the history of the privilege, from its precursors, throughout its lifespan and beyond its revocation, the thesis will deduce patterns of use across varied contexts. This history will also reveal how the privilege affected the secular and ecclesiastical institutions with whom the Jesuits interacted. This broader approach will address flaws in explanations that define the privilege according to its outcomes in one particular context, or for one particular institution. Examining how the Jesuits used the privilege independently and in collaborations in different religious, ecclesiastical and political contexts, the thesis will establish the broader strategies of the Jesuits, and the papacy and Roman Inquisition. These strategies highlight the obstacles that the Catholic Church faced in its efforts to shore up religious orthodoxy in sixteenth-century Italy and how the Church tried to overcome them. Analysing how Jesuits, popes and inquisitors negotiated in conflicts and collaborations, the thesis will illuminate the priorities, actions and interactions of three of the most important protagonists in the history of the Catholic Church and early modern society: the papacy, the Roman Inquisition and the Jesuits.

Chapter One will offer the first full history of the privilege's solicitation and concession, from its limited precursors in the 1540s to its official concession in Julius III's *Sacrae religionis* in



1552. Considering the motivations of Jesuits who solicited and used the privilege, the chapter will establish how the privilege fulfilled the Jesuits' pastoral and institutional objectives. Moreover, by reconstructing the historical context of its solicitation, the chapter will underline the importance of individual relationships for the concession. The chapter will propose two key conclusions about the significance of the privilege's concession and use. Firstly, by examining the use of the privilege in contexts as varied as Bologna and Corsica, we will see that, for the Society, the fundamental benefit of the privilege was jurisdictional autonomy. Autonomy allowed the Jesuits to absolve and reconcile heretics without involving the inquisitors or bishops, who were often absent or deterred penitent-heretics otherwise willing to reconcile with the Church. Secondly, we shall see that this autonomy had institutional benefits, as well as pastoral ones, allowing the Jesuits to fight heresy not only on behalf of popes and inquisitors, but also for temporal princes who could support their growing ministry. This conclusion undermines existing explanations of the privilege, which consider the power only as it benefitted the Roman Inquisition and the papacy. Instead, my research corroborates scholarship that emphasises the ambivalence of the early Society and the pragmatic benefits of this ambivalence.

Having established the privilege's role in the early Jesuits' ministry will consider its impact on the work of the Roman Inquisition, from its official concession in 1552, through the papacy of Paul IV (1555-9) to the pontificate of Pius IV (1559-65). During this time the Jesuits used the privilege, with no limitations, in collaborations with the Roman Inquisition. These collaborations took place across the peninsula, from Valtellina and Piacenza in the North, to Vulturara in the southern stretches of the Kingdom of Naples. This chapter will argue that Jesuit autonomy was vital to these collaborations. Firstly, it will show that, by appearing to work as a distinct, independent force, the Jesuits were able to distance themselves from the Holy Office. This allowed the Jesuits to convert and reconcile heretics for the Roman Inquisition where inquisitors and inquisitorial commissaries faced popular hostility and resistance from local leaders who resented papal interference. Secondly, study of these collaborations will reveal the importance of the individual men who comprised the Roman Inquisition, who solicited the Jesuits' help and supported the Society's retention and use of the privilege. This conclusion exposes the impossibility of deducing corporate positions for the Holy Office, which was comprised of cardinal-inquisitors with varied motivations. Overall, Chapter Two will show that, in the emergency of the post-Reformation period, the most zealous cardinal-inquisitors were pragmatic enough to compromise judicial

processes to fight heresy effectively, and that the Jesuits had a similarly practical approach to their patrons at the Roman Inquisition.

Chapter Three will trace the history of the privilege during the pontificate of Pius V (1566-72), a period of subtle yet profound transformation for the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy. Under Pius V, the Roman Inquisition became increasingly efficient and the threat of religious dissent in Italy waned. As Pius's need of the Jesuits diminished he withdrew his support for the privilege. His exact position on the privilege is difficult to discern, as he did not explicitly revoke or negate the power, but rather failed to confirm its re-concession. This chapter will establish Pius V's stance through institutional documents and Jesuit correspondence, in which fathers at all levels of the Jesuit hierarchy express doubts and confusion about the validity of the privilege. Jesuit correspondence also allows us to reconstruct what appear to be the only two occasions that Pius V permitted the Jesuits to absolve heretics. These two cases are exceptions that prove the rule, showing that Pius was only willing to compromise judicial approaches to religious dissent when it suited his needs: in Savoy-Piedmont where the inquisition faced continued political resistance, and in the Papal States, where fear inhibited the work of explicitly papal agents. Remarkably, we shall see that, despite Pius V's resistance, the Jesuits' continued to solicit the privilege to absolve heresy. Their persistence reveals a fundamental contrast between the Jesuits' belief in the ongoing need for extra-judicial reconciliations, and successive popes' willingness to compromise judicial systems only when specific circumstances demanded it.

Chapter Four will explain the factors that led Sixtus V (1585-90) to revoke the privilege in 1587, after a period of support for the power from Gregory XIII (1572-1585). Sixtus's concerns about the institutional impact of the Jesuits' jurisdictional autonomy merged with grievances about the Society from within and without the order, pushing him to revoke the privilege. Firstly, the chapter will establish the roots of grievances about the privilege in complaints of Jesuits and temporal princes in the earliest days of the Society. It will then show how complaints from the Bishop of Paris and the Spanish King and Inquisition pressed Sixtus V to stem the Jesuits' independence in matters of heresy. These concerns merged with the pope's own fear that the Jesuits' modus operandi conflicted with his own efforts to centralise ecclesiastical government. Finally, the chapter will analyse the Jesuits' written defenses of the privilege, sent to the pope and the Roman Inquisition. These appeals offer detailed descriptions of the privilege, its use and its impact, from the Jesuits' point of view.

They reveal that the Jesuits saw the privilege as an ongoing necessity to overcome the failures of bishops and inquisitors, and the fear of penitent-heretics. Nonetheless, their arguments for this pastoral necessity did not answer the institutional concerns of those who opposed the privilege. Overall, Chapter Four will demonstrate that Sixtus V revoked the privilege because he prioritised institutional concerns over the pastoral benefits of the Jesuits' help. His decision to revoke the privilege inverted the dynamic that had led to the concession of the privilege in 1551, when Julius III had compromised judicial systems to prioritise his pastoral aim of securing converts.

The final chapter of the thesis will trace the after-life of the privilege, in the pontificate of Sixtus V and his successor Clement VIII (1592-1605). First, the chapter will show that the popes continued to value the extra-judicial reconciliation of heretics, but only in extremely limited circumstances that suited their particular aims; principally, in this period, the conversion of foreigners in Italy. This conclusion underlines the circumstantial nature of the popes' willingness to compromise judicial methods of reconciling heretics. Moreover, the extremely limited powers of absolution granted to the Jesuits in this period show that the roots of the merciful approaches towards foreign heretics attributed to the early to mid-seventeenth century have much earlier precedents in the Jesuit ministry. The second section of the chapter will show that the Jesuits' position on extra-judicial reconciliations continued to contrast with that of the popes, using inquisitorial *decreta* that reveal that the Jesuits repeatedly violated the revocation of their privilege. These cases show that the Society continued to see jurisdictional autonomy over heresy as a crucial asset for its ongoing mission to save souls.

The history of the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy is a narrative of fluctuating priorities and shifting compromises. By requesting and granting the privilege, Jesuits, popes and inquisitors demonstrated their acceptance that fear, absent churchmen and political resistance were major obstacles to an exclusively judicial system of reconciling heretics. By soliciting and supporting the privilege to absolve heresy, the Jesuits and the Church hierarchy accommodated human frailty to secure conversions. They did so at the expense of institutional ideals. Nonetheless, the course and ultimate fate of the privilege shows that institutional priorities could not be negated in the long term. Popes sought to govern the Church more effectively through increasing centralisation, even if they did not always

achieve this goal.<sup>135</sup> When Sixtus V and his successors prioritised institutional centralisation over securing conversions, the Jesuit privilege became a compromise too far. The Jesuits saw it entirely differently. They continued to value the pastoral effects of their privilege more than they feared its institutional implications. But eventually even they were also forced to favour institutional stability over winning converts. When it came to papal privileges, where the papacy led, the Jesuits had no choice but to follow. When the privilege was revoked, the Society accepted the blow gracefully. Ultimately, the Jesuits too prioritised their need to survive and thrive as a Catholic organisation over their ardent desire to retain a power that they saw as vital for their pastoral mission.

Tracing the history of the privilege from the 1540s to the early seventeenth century, this thesis will consider the factors and events that changed the priorities of the Society, Roman Inquisition and papacy, shaping their roles and relationships during a transformative period for the Catholic Church. Specifically, it will offer an account of the Jesuits' ministerial and institutional development, as the early Society negotiated its pastoral aims with the often conflicting demands of the institutional structure that facilitated its ministry. More broadly, it will offer a study of the grave and complex conflict that faced the Catholic Church and Catholic organisations, like the Society of Jesus, in sixteenth-century Italy: the need to survive as both a body of believers and an ecclesiastical and political organisation.

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<sup>135</sup> Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', p.270.

## Chapter One: The Confident Society: Mission Building 1540-1555

‘He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith.’<sup>1</sup> - *Formula of the Institute*, 1550

In 1550, the Society of Jesus made a striking change to its *Formula of the Institute*, the statement that defined its rule and mission. For the first time ever, the ‘defence of the faith’ became its principal purpose. In the first decade of the the Jesuits' apostolate, their pastoral ministry had emerged as an effective means of addressing one of the fundamental aims of the sixteenth-century Church: defending Catholic orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> By the end of that decade, this aim was enshrined in the Jesuit mission.

In May 1551, the Jesuits would be empowered to defend the faith with an eye-wateringly generous gift from Pope Julius III (1550-1555).<sup>3</sup> Calling on the pope after dinner, Jesuit father Alfonso Salmerón knelt at his feet and asked him to grant the Society's confessors the power to absolve heretics anywhere in the world.<sup>4</sup> Julius consented, giving a religious order that was just ten years old a power that put them on par with the inquisitors and bishops who pronounced on cases of heresy across the Italian peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio M. de. Aldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: the formula of the Institute* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1990), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Gleason has argued that this period in the papacy began with Paul III (1534-1549). Firpo has argued that, during the first years of Julius III's pontificate (1550-3), the defence of the faith guided the agenda of the Catholic Church. Underlining the correlation between the Society's mission and that of the institutional Church in this period, O'Malley and McCoog have argued that the Jesuits' assumption of the 'defence of the faith' marked their 'change in mentality'. Similarly, Ulderico Parente has argued that the Society's *Constitutions* correlated with the agenda of the Church as expressed at Trent, although Mostaccio has criticised Parente's interpretation of the Church as unrealistically monolithic. Firpo, *La presa di potere*; Gleason, 'Who was the First Counter-Reformation Pope?', *Catholic Historical Review*, 81 (1995), pp.179-184; McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589-1597: Building the Kingdom of Saint Peter upon the King of Spain's Monarchy* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp.1-3; Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity', pp.418-9; O'Malley, 'Introduction' in O'Malley, Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris and T. Frank Kennedy (eds), *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), pp.xxiii-xxvii; Ulderico Parente, 'Note sull'attività missionaria di Nicolás Bobadilla nel mezzogiorno d'Italia prima del Concilio di Trento (1540-1541)', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 117 (2005), pp.64-79.

<sup>3</sup> A. Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol. 6, pp.422-6.

<sup>4</sup> 'M[a]estro Salmerone sacerdote della Comp[ani]a di Giesu andato a visitar n[ost]ro S[ereniss]imo P[adre]. Papa Iulio III et havendo trovata la comodita (finita la sua cena) di parlare a sua sta dopo altri ragionamenti m'ingenociai, et li domandai le seguenti gratia. P[rim]a che M[est]ro Ignatio o il Proposito pro tempore esistente della Comp[ani]a di Giesu posso per se o per altri sacerdoti della detta Comp[ani]a che a lui parevano idonei assolvere de casi apertinenti all'heresia in foro tantum conscientiae.' ARSI, *Institutum* 222, f.297.

<sup>5</sup> '...sua s[anti]ta molto graziosamente le concesse.'  
Ibid.

Current explanations of the privilege to absolve heresy focus on the relationship between the Jesuits, Julius III and the Roman Inquisition.<sup>6</sup> Such explanations tell part of the privilege's history but fail to explain the motivations and actions of the Jesuits who solicited the power and used it to work autonomously, as well as for the papacy and the Roman Inquisition.

This chapter will propose an alternative interpretation of the privilege, arguing that the power was solicited by the Jesuits and conceded by Julius III for pragmatic rather than political reasons. Using the privilege to absolve heresy, Jesuits reconciled heretics that they converted but who could or would not approach a bishop or inquisitor, because of fear or a lack of ecclesiastical personnel. The experiences of the early Jesuits and Julius III, and the context in which they collaborated were key to their shared belief in the necessity of the privilege. Jesuits soliciting the privilege based their arguments on their experience in the mission field. Julius III had known of the the benefits of private absolutions since his cardinalate, when he had organised similar temporary powers of absolution for penitent-heretics who feared the inquisitors. As pope, Julius recognised that Jesuits would also need the privilege for religious dissenters in areas where there were no bishops or inquisitors to reconcile them. Presenting the exact context of the privilege's solicitation, concession and earliest use, this chapter will demonstrate that it was the pastoral pragmatism of the Society, Julius III and their mutual allies, that motivated the solicitation, concession and use of the privilege to absolve heresy, not politics or cynical manipulation.

The ability to work outside the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy had both pastoral and political advantages for the Jesuits. Using authority granted by the pope, rather than delegated by the local bishop, the Jesuits could work independently or collaborate with authorities of their choice. This included the very cardinal-inquisitors whom Firpo claims that Julius III sought to undermine. This freedom facilitated the 'conscious ambiguity' with which Silvia Mostaccio characterises the early Society, allowing the Jesuits to negotiate conflicting calls to obedience from their Superior General, the pope and local temporal and ecclesiastical leaders. With this political agility, the Jesuits ensured that the alliances they made were advantageous for both their pastoral ministry and their broad institutional ambitions. Considering the benefits of the privilege to absolve heresy, for the Jesuits who solicited it, the pope who conceded it and the

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<sup>6</sup> Firpo, *La presa di potere*, pp.65-6 and Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.xv-xvii and 236-7. Prosperi also discusses the privilege briefly on pp.496-7 in the context of the Jesuits' attitude to confession and willingness to collaborate with the inquisitors.

ecclesiastical and temporal authorities who benefitted from it, the power was, principally a mechanism for pastoral and institutional flexibility.

### **Finding supporters in Tridentine Italy**

The Jesuits' long-standing personal relationships with Julius III and his circle are key to understanding how and why the Society secured the privilege to absolve heresy. The early Jesuits' ministry served the most fundamental needs of a Church blighted by poorly-trained, negligent clergy and the threat of religious dissent spreading from the Protestant north. In return for the Jesuits' help, powerful ecclesiastical authorities protected and promoted the nascent Society. And it was not only religious leaders who established relationships of mutual benefit with the Jesuits, but also temporal powers. For many Italian princes, as well as the Jesuits and the Church at large, the true danger of religious heterodoxy and inobservance lay not in doctrinal error, but in the rebellion of those who defied the authority of the pope or their Christian ruler.<sup>7</sup> The sin of heresy could, therefore, also be considered a treacherous crime, in Catholic states both *laesae maiestatis* and *laesae maiestatis divinae*.<sup>8</sup> The Jesuits' pastoral ministry provided a sound orthodox formation to future generations and converted heretics and unruly Catholics who threatened the religious, social and political order.<sup>9</sup> The privilege to absolve heresy made the Jesuits' ministry more effective for this task and benefitted many of their most powerful allies.

From the time of the Jesuits' arrival on the Italian peninsula in the late 1530s, they used strategic alliances to establish and advance their Society. These were relationships of mutual benefit. Cardinal Gasparo Contarini admired the Jesuits' spirituality and may have undergone their central spiritual programme, the *Spiritual Exercises*, under Loyola's guidance.<sup>10</sup> Contarini also happened to be one of Paul III's closest advisors, and he gladly petitioned the pope to accept the Society's loose religious rule.<sup>11</sup> The Jesuits also won over potent Italian

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<sup>7</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p.65.

<sup>8</sup> '...crimen haeresis procul dubio, est maius crimine laesae maiestatis...quia per haeresim offenditur divina maiestas...' Girolamo Giganti, *Tractatus de crimine laesae maiestatis insignis* (Lyon: Jacopo Giunta, 1552), p.445. Prosperi, *Misericordie: conversioni sotto il patibolo tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2006), p.36.

<sup>9</sup> Sabina Pavone, 'I gesuiti in Italia (1548-1773)' in G. Pedullà, S. Luzzatto, E. Irace (eds), *Atlante della letteratura italiana. Dalla Controriforma alla Restaurazione. Volume 2: Dalla controriforma alla ristaurazione* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011), p.371 and Prosperi, *La vocazione. Storie di gesuiti tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2016), pp.82-5.

<sup>10</sup> Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p.273, fn.62.

<sup>11</sup> Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, pp.92 and 141.

princes, serving as teachers, preachers and confessors to their subjects. In return, patrons like Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara recommended the early Society at the papal court.<sup>12</sup> Powerful churchmen also lauded the Jesuits to their princely relatives. Cardinal Juan Alvarez de Toledo, for example, commended the Society's and its colleges to his niece, Elenore, Duchess of Florence.<sup>13</sup> In the first decade of their ministry, the Jesuits won supporters across the most important dynastic and ecclesiastical networks in Italy and asked for their help to secure the necessary position and privileges to advance their order and its work.

Early in 1550, one such supporter became very powerful indeed. For, on the 7 February 1550, Cardinal Giovanni Maria Ciocchi Del Monte became Pope Julius III.<sup>14</sup> There is little evidence that the Jesuits were especially delighted at his unanticipated elevation.<sup>15</sup> But the events following Del Monte's election suggest that the Society's leaders were confident that they could rely on his support. This confidence was inspired by close collaboration with Del Monte throughout the late 1540s. And, as the concession of the privilege to absolve heresy in May 1551 proves, it was a confidence that was richly rewarded.

When Del Monte became pope he had already worked in close quarters with Jesuits for years, as papal legate and president of the first session of the Council of Trent (1545-7).<sup>16</sup> At the council's inception Pope Paul III had employed two of the Society's founding members, Diego Laínez and Alfonso Salmerón, as his personal theologians.<sup>17</sup> And Del Monte may have also known the French Jesuit Claude Le Jay and the Dutchman Peter Canisius, who were employed at the council by Cardinal Otto Truchsess von Walburg. Walburg, the Prince Bishop of Augsburg, had charged the Jesuits to thwart Lutheranism in his diocese by running a seminary and a university.<sup>18</sup> Del Monte retired from his position as president in 1547, but continued to play a decisive role in conciliar debates.<sup>19</sup> Both before and after this retirement,

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<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Ercole d'Este in *Bobadillae Monumenta*, pp.6-7.

<sup>13</sup> Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, pp.718-9.

<sup>14</sup> Annibale Grisonio to Girolamo Muzio on the 21st January 1550 in Girolamo Muzio, *Le vergeriane. Discorso se si convenga ragunar il concilio. Trattato della comunione de'laici et delle mogli de'cherici* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de'Ferrari et fratelli, 1550), p.166r quoted in Firpo, *La presa di potere*, p.33.

<sup>15</sup> Loyola's reaction was not as exuberant as his response to the accession of Julius's ill-fated successor, Marcellus II. Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.9, pp.13-7.

<sup>16</sup> Del Monte was president between the opening of the Council in 1545 to its transferral to Bologna in 1547.

<sup>17</sup> O'Malley, *Trent. What Happened at the Council*, p.118.

<sup>18</sup> Allyson Creasman, *Censorship and Civic Order in Reformation Germany, 1517-1648* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p.125 and O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p. 324. See also, Jedin and Graf (trans.), *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol.1, p.529, fn.2. and vol. 2, p.20.

<sup>19</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp.87-8.



he interacted with some of the most erudite and active early Jesuits.

At Trent, Laínez and Salmerón cultivated an impression of orthodoxy and obedience. As papal theologians, they were expected to utter the first words on the controversial points of theology and ecclesiology up for discussion.<sup>20</sup> Sensitive to the importance of this prominent role, in 1546, Loyola instructed Laínez and Salmerón to steer a safe, moderate course in contentious debates, avoiding polemic, considering both sides of each argument and deferring to wiser, more experienced delegates.<sup>21</sup> If Loyola saw the council as a means of building a good reputation for the Society, as has been suggested, he wished to cultivate an image of trustworthy and wise servants, undertaking serious tasks in a discerning manner, as mediators, rather than agents attempting to deliver specific reforms.<sup>22</sup>

Jesuits claimed that their conduct at the Council kindled Julius III's desire to grant them papal privileges. In a letter to Laínez, Polanco, Loyola's secretary, described the meeting during which Salmerón solicited Julius III for the privilege to absolve heresy. Polanco claimed that the pope had a 'very high opinion' of Laínez and Salmerón, 'not informed by others, but by his own experience'.<sup>23</sup> Trent was central to this experience, as, there, the pope had seen the Jesuits seek 'the service' of God and 'the help of souls' 'without [personal] interest or ambition'.<sup>24</sup> Polanco's claims were borne out by Julius III's actions. Like his predecessor, Julius sent Salmerón and Laínez to the council as his representatives, and with the mind that they would respond to the leaders of the Lutherans who were, apparently, on their way.<sup>25</sup> Polanco's emphasis on Julius's trust in the Jesuits' ability to address religious rebels is significant. With major churchmen suspected of heresy and recent memories of Loyola's own brushes with the inquisitors, the Jesuits' religious orthodoxy was not taken for granted.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, Polanco claimed that, given his experience of the Jesuits at Trent, Julius III

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<sup>20</sup> Pavone, 'Prete riformati e riforma della Chiesa: i gesuiti al Concilio di Trento', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 117 (2005), p.118.

<sup>21</sup> Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.1, p.386.

<sup>22</sup> Pavone, *I gesuiti*, pp.22-3.

Pavone, 'Prete riformati e riforma della Chiesa', p.115. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p.324-5.

<sup>23</sup> '...la opinione molto grande che tiene S[ua] S[antità] di loro, come lui dice, non informato de altri, ma con esperienza propria...' Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, p.457.

<sup>24</sup> '...che senza interesse nè ambizione cercano il suo servitio, et aggiunto dell'anime.' Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> '...perchè lui mandava adesso al concilio detto P. Mtro. Salmeron et il Padre don Jacopo Laynez, con animo che, venendo li capi delli lutherani, loro havessino a risponderli...' Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, p.457

<sup>26</sup> Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.22-3 and Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity', p.415. On the Jesuits' efforts to censor their brushes with religious heterodoxy see Mongini, <<*Ad Christi similitudinem*>>.

conceded the power to absolve heresy most graciously, showing great confidence.<sup>27</sup>

The details included in Polanco's account are significant. His letter was much more than a personal communication to Lainez. Although the text was written on behalf of the Superior General in the format of a missive, the document reads more like a memorial than an informative epistle. Such records were crucial. Until the privilege was ratified by papal bull in October 1552, it was conceded only *viva vocis oraculo*, face-to-face, and thus had limited legitimacy. In order to have validity, the privileges conceded and the details of the concession needed to be written down.<sup>28</sup> Polanco's account was, therefore, a record not only of the Jesuits' worthiness of the privilege, but also of the legitimacy of the concession itself.

The Jesuits claimed that their personal experience and relationship with Julius III was crucial for the concession of the privilege. They had long used individual relationships to advance their young Society. The Jesuits' relationship with Julius gave them the status and opportunity to solicit the privilege to absolve heresy, a conclusion that supports Firpo's suggestion that Julius granted the power to empower a loyal task force to counter a dominant inquisition. But it was not only at Trent that the Society would have the opportunity to prove themselves to the future pope, and it was not only Julius who supported and sought to facilitate the early Jesuits' anti-heretical activity and privilege. When a series of events moved the Council south to Bologna in 1547, Cardinal Del Monte and others gained first-hand experience of the Society's ability to convert heretics one-on-one, as did other figures who would play a vital role in the Society's work to reconcile religious dissenters, both before and after the concession of the privilege.

### **The Council of Bologna, 1547**

The translation of the Council from Trent to Bologna in March 1547 had profound consequences for the relationship between the Jesuits and the future Julius III. It was in this city that they would first collaborate to reconcile heretics extra-judicially. When the

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<sup>27</sup> '[il papa] lo concesse molto gratiosamente, mostrando grande confidentia della sapiente dispensatione del Padre preposito nostro...' Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, p.458.

<sup>28</sup> 'Viva vocis oraculum esse Privilegium, quod Princeps, v.g. Pontifex sola voce...concessit; quamvis subinde, ut etiam pro foro externo probari, and practicari valeat, postea in scripturam redigatur.' Anacleto Reiffenstuel, *Jus canonicum universum, clara methodo juxta titulos quinque librorum decretalium. In quaestiones distributum, solidisque responsionibus, and objectionum solutionibus dilucidatum* (Antwerp: Sumptibus Societatis, 1755), vol. 4, p.355. See also pp.356-7.

sudden death of twenty-six-year-old bishop of Capaccio sparked fears of an infestation of the plague at Trent, Council president Del Monte called for its transfer.<sup>29</sup> In spite of major objections from the Emperor Charles V, the council soon transferred 228 kilometres south to Bologna, a city in the heart of the Papal States.<sup>30</sup> Del Monte had been governor of Bologna for two years before becoming a cardinal in 1536, so knew well that the city was severely troubled by heresy.<sup>31</sup> What is more, he would know that its inquisition was dysfunctional, often failing to pursue heretics of the city.<sup>32</sup> In Bologna, Laínez and Salmerón could follow Loyola's advice to avoid contention at the Council. But they would be hard pushed to escape religious controversy on the streets. There the Jesuits would collaborate with Del Monte and his close friends such as Ambrogio Catarino Politi, to tackle the city's religious rebels without involving the local inquisitors.

It seems that Loyola wanted Laínez and Salmerón to exploit every opportunity to convert the errant in Bologna. Elaborating his instructions on conduct at the Council, Loyola told the two fathers that, whenever they were unoccupied with conciliar work, they should pursue the pastoral activities central to their ministry as Jesuits: 'to preach, hear confessions and read, teaching youth, giving [good] example, visiting the poor in hospitals, and encouraging neighbours' 'for the greater glory of God'.<sup>33</sup> Obediently, Salmerón kept the Society's future and ministry at the front of his mind. Writing to Loyola in December 1547, Salmerón explained that he had been looking around the city for a location for a Jesuit college.<sup>34</sup> Salmerón was also pursuing the Jesuits' key mission to help souls and claimed to have found many confessants and people who wanted to go through Loyola's *Exercises*.<sup>35</sup> Through both institutional planning and pastoral ministry, Salmerón was promoting Catholic orthodoxy in Bologna.

What is more, Salmerón told Loyola that he had converted some 'who were in heresy or read

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<sup>29</sup> O'Malley, *Trent. What happened at the Council*, p.122.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.127-8 and Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2, p.313.

<sup>31</sup> Umberto Mazzone, *Governare lo Stato e curare le anime: la Chiesa e Bologna dal Quattrocento alla Rivoluzione francese* (Limena: Libreria Universitaria, 2012), p.58. On heresy in Bologna see dall'Olio, *Eretici e inquisitori nella Bologna del Cinquecento*, pp.51-158.

<sup>32</sup> Romeo, 'Note sull'Inquisizione Romana', p.129.

<sup>33</sup> 'A maior gloria de Dios N.S. lo que principalmente en esta jornada de Trento se pretende por nostros, procurando estar junctos en alguna honesta parte, es predicar, confessar y leer, enseñando á muchachos, dando exemplo, visitando pobres en hospitales, y exhortando á los próximos...'  
Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.1, pp.387-8.

<sup>34</sup> Salmerón, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis*, vol.1, p.63.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

Lutheran books', whom he had then absolved and reconciled to the Church.<sup>36</sup> In Bologna in 1547, four years before receiving the papal privilege to do so, Salmerón was already absolving and reconciling heretics in the secrecy of sacramental confession, without involving the local inquisitors who had jurisdiction over the crime.

Moreover, Salmerón was not alone in his actions. Another Jesuit, Paschase Broët, wrote to Rome of his own absolution of heretics in the city. Broët had come to Bologna from the nearby city of Faenza, where temporal authorities had requested help to reform moral life in the diocese.<sup>37</sup> But once in Bologna he had angered local leaders. Broët's letter, which appears to be for Loyola's attention, explained that the vice-inquisitor of the Bolognese monastery of San Domenico was irate that both he and Salmerón had absolved heretics in the city.<sup>38</sup> In his letter, Broët justifies his actions, stating that the eight or ten Lutherans who came to him to confess themselves were converted.<sup>39</sup> Crucially, they had not been tried, 'not by the ordinary, nor by the inquisitor', which would have meant that only the bishop or inquisitor could have absolved them.<sup>40</sup> Although the Lutherans converted by Broët and Salmerón were unknown first-time offenders, the inquisitor of San Domenico was furious with the Jesuits for dealing with a matter that he saw as strictly inquisitorial and 'had made a complaint about it with the episcopal vicar of Bologna', saying that Broët 'wanted to make a new tribunal'.<sup>41</sup>

If the Jesuits had not yet received a papal privilege to absolve heresy, who had given Salmerón and Broët the authority to absolve heretics autonomously in Bologna? Broët's letter suggests that prominent conciliar delegates were involved. Broët states that he went to the episcopal vicar to answer the vice-inquisitor's allegations, and explain that the absolutions were legitimate. According to Broët, they had been given the authority to absolve heretics or Lutherans who wish to convert to the obedience of the Holy Church by the Most Reverend Monsignor Santa Croce, otherwise known as Cardinal Marcello Cervini: a cardinal-

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<sup>36</sup> '...yo e entendido en la absolucion de algunas personas occultas, que estavan en herejias o leyen libros lutheranos.' Salmerón, *Epistolae P. Alphonsi Salmeronis*, vol.1, p.63.

<sup>37</sup> Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Jesu historia*, vol.1, pp.176-7 and p.217.

<sup>38</sup> Broët, *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti*, pp.43-4.

<sup>39</sup> 'Hora dipoi uno mese se sono convertiti per gratia del signore Dio otto, o dieci, de questi lutherani, quali sono venuti a confessarse con meco...' Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> '...li quali non erano stati inquisiti nè dal ordinario nè del inquisitore.' Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> '...la qual cosa ha saputo il vice-inquisitore de santo Domenico, et ne ha fatto querella con il vicario del vescovo de Bologna, dicendo che volevo fare novo tribunale.' Ibid.

inquisitor, the future Pope Marcellus II, and Del Monte's right-hand-man at the Council.<sup>42</sup>

Bröet was confident of the support of Santa Croce and the rest of Del Monte's circle: he remained adamant of the legitimacy of his actions. When Broët promised the episcopal vicar that the Jesuits would not absolve any Lutherans in Bologna again, his reason was not a lack of authority. On the contrary, Broët reiterated that he and Salmerón had been given 'delegated apostolic authority' to absolve heretics, 'for the salvation of the souls of these poor creatures'.<sup>43</sup> Even so, Broët suggested that 'for the future' they 'would not absolve similar Lutherans anymore' as he saw 'that [the inquisitors] were not happy about it' and wanted 'to have peace with everybody'.<sup>44</sup> To prove the validity of the Jesuits' actions in the city, Broët enclosed with his letter to Rome a copy of Cardinal Santa Croce's brief granting the fathers the authority to absolve heresy in Bologna.<sup>45</sup> Other Jesuits would act similarly, when their privilege to absolve heresy irked local authorities; asserting its validity, even if they relinquished its use for the sake of institutional stability.<sup>46</sup>

The future Julius III and his friends were key for the Jesuits' work with heretics in Bologna, and elsewhere. The name of Ambrogio Catarino Politi recurs in accounts of the Jesuits' anti-heretical activities in Bologna, and of the concession of the privilege in 1551.<sup>47</sup> Politi had first encountered the Jesuits when their order was in its earliest state in Paris. In 1538 he defended Loyola when he was challenged by the inquisition, testifying of the Jesuits' orthodoxy and zeal against all heretics, whether from old or recent sects.<sup>48</sup> A Dominican

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<sup>42</sup> 'Per questa sarà avisata V[ostra] R[everenza] come monsignore R[everendissi]mo de Santa Croce ha dato autorità a M[aestro] Alfonso et a me di assolvere quelli heretici o lutherani che se vorranno ridurre all'obedientia della santa chiesa.' Broët, *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broëti*, pp.43-4.

<sup>43</sup> '...ho riposto...che quello ho fatto con authorità apostolica delegata, et per salute delle anime de questi pov[er]retti...' Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> 'Et vedendo che non se ne contentavano, gli ho detto che per l'advenire non assolverò più simili lutherani: et questo per haver pace con tutti.' Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> No brief is edited with the letter.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Polanco's exchange with Bishop Egidio Foscarari in Modena. Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol. 5, p. 702. This is discussed in Al Kalak, *Il riformatore dimenticato*, p.160, as are Foscarari's own powers on p.104.

<sup>47</sup> Emily Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2013), p.114.

<sup>48</sup> 'Examinatus fuit in eius camera solite residentie, in domo Rev[erendissi]mi Charpensis, R[everendus] P[ater] D[ominus] frater Ambrosius Pollitus...Circa vero doctrinam et scientiam eorum testatur quod, cum sepe habuerit collationem familiarem circa res theologicas et sacre scripture, vidit et cognovit non nisi catholicam et securam doctrinam, et amplius magnum zelum pro veritate catholica et contra hereticos omnes, tam veteres quam recentes.' Archivio di Stato di Roma (hereafter, ASR), *Tribunale del Governatore, Investigazioni dal 5 luglio 1538 al 1° gennaio 1539*, busta-registro 12, f.161v. Edited in Marcello del Piazzo and Cándido de Dalmases, 'Il processo sull'ortodossia di S.Ignazio e dei suoi compagni svoltosi a Roma nel 1538. Nuovi documenti', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 89 (1966), p.443.

theologian, polemicist and canon lawyer, Politi was present at the Council of Bologna in his capacity as bishop of Minori. When Politi's old acquaintance, Giovanni Battista Scotti, arrived in the city seeking forgiveness from the Catholic Church, Politi led Scotti to Cardinal Santa Croce and, eventually, to a private reconciliation with Salmerón.<sup>49</sup> Scotti was a relapsed heretic, and so, according to Canon Law, should have been executed.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, as Scotti stated at a later inquisitorial trial, with Cardinals Del Monte and Santa Croce mediating, and with the authority that they had in that [matter] through an apostolic brief from Paul III, he was reconciled in Bologna through 'the absolution and the making of an abjuration to Reverend Father Alfonso Salmerón of the Society of Jesus'.<sup>51</sup> Like the Lutherans absolved by Salmerón and Broët, Scotti too was reconciled extra-judicially by a Jesuit without involving the local inquisitors.

Scotti shared a fundamental characteristic with the other heretics absolved extra-judicially in Bologna: fear of the Roman Inquisition. In his letter to Loyola, Salmerón had claimed that the heretics whom he reconciled came to him because they knew 'how some suspected of heresy are punished in Rome'.<sup>52</sup> Scotti had the same apprehension. On his arrival in Bologna, he carried a letter of recommendation from Giovanni della Casa, stating that he had come to Bologna rather than Rome for fair treatment 'because his troubles began with the Most Reverend Inquisitors in Rome' and they were not 'well informed of his good works'.<sup>53</sup> For this reason Politi advised Scotti to go to the cardinals in Bologna, who then referred him to Salmerón.<sup>54</sup> In the cases of the anonymous Lutheran converts and Scotti, a notorious heretic, Cardinals Santa Croce and Del Monte and Archbishop Politi thought that fear of the

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<sup>49</sup> An inquisitorial document written around 1568-9 states that Scotti was '...persuaso da frate Ambrosio Catharino et riconosciuto dei suoi errori, partendosi si presentò al cardinal Santa Croce...inquisitore et legato del concilio in Bologna'. Edited in Firpo and Marcatto (eds), *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinale Giovanni Morone*, vol. 6, p.145.

<sup>50</sup> Wickersham, *Rituals of Prosecution*, p.239.

<sup>51</sup> 'Egl'è dall'anno 1546 in qua che io me reconciliai con la santa chiesa romana mediante li reverendissimi et illustrissimi cardinali Di Monte et Santa Croce, allora legati del Concilio, per l'authorità che essi havevano in ciò per breve apostolico da papa Paulo tertio. Li quali reverendissimi et illustrissimi commiserò il darmi l'assoluzione et fare l'abiuratione al reverendo padre don Alphonso de Salmerone / della compagnia di Gie[s]ù.' Firpo and Marcatto (eds), *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinale Giovanni Morone*, vol.2, part 1, p.366. As noted by Firpo and Marcatto, the date given that Scotti gives in this statement is incorrect, he came to Bologna in 1547 and was abjured in that year, not 1546.

<sup>52</sup> See quote footnote 38 of this chapter.

<sup>53</sup> '...Et perché il suo travaglio hebbe principio dai reverendissimi inquisitori a Roma, esso ha qualche dubbio che Lor Signorie reverendissime, non essendo per aventura anchor ben informate delle buone opere sue...' Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter, BAV), *Vat. lat. 14830*, f.20v. Edited in Firpo and Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinal Giovanni Morone*, vol.2, part 1, p.366, fn.62.

<sup>54</sup> Giorgio Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia. Ambrogio Catarino Politi (1484-1553)* (Florence: Olshki, 2007), p.248. Firpo and Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinale Giovanni Morone*, vol.1, p.291.

inquisition was sufficient reason to grant Salmerón the power to absolve and reconcile heretics.

These stories from Bologna demonstrate that the Jesuits were granted faculties to absolve heresy during the first decade of their ministry, before the concession of the papal privilege in 1551. Such faculties were not limited to their time in Bologna. In 1541, just a year after the Society was officially established, Paul III had given Broët and Salmerón the power to absolve heretics, schismatics, and other excommunicates during a mission to Ireland.<sup>55</sup> The same pope conceded similar faculties for use on the Jesuits' missions to non-Christian territories.<sup>56</sup> Later, in 1550, the papal nuncio Luigi Lippomano granted the Society the faculty to absolve heretics in the German lands.<sup>57</sup> Lippomano had also worked alongside the Jesuits at Trent and Bologna.<sup>58</sup> The privilege of 1551, saw these earlier, individual concessions transformed into a permanent papal privilege that granted the Society the faculty to absolve heresy without geographical or temporal restriction, giving them an autonomous jurisdiction over the sin and the automatic censures it incurred.<sup>59</sup>

Nonetheless, there were important differences between the ecclesiastical situations in Bologna and Ireland. Broët and Salmerón had been sent to Ireland to reconcile the chieftains of the country and organise resistance against the English king, Henry VIII.<sup>60</sup> Like the non-Christian territories of the New World and the German lands, there was no inquisition in Ireland and, theoretically, the bishops answered to the English king, who had been excommunicated by Pope Clement VII in 1532.<sup>61</sup> This was mission territory. When the Jesuits reconciled penitent dissenters they filled a gap in the existing ecclesiastical infrastructure, without undermining other authorities with jurisdiction over heresy. But Bologna had both a resident bishop and a long-established inquisition. And Salmerón himself

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<sup>55</sup>The brief granting the faculties for the mission to Ireland is held in ARSI, *Institutum* 194, ff.21r-23v.

<sup>56</sup>For the concession of the privilege to absolve heresy in *pars infidelium*, see Francesco Suarez, *Opera Omnia*, p.991.

<sup>57</sup>A summary of and patent for graces Lippomano conceded to Salmerón, Jay and Canisius in 1550 reads: '...ab omnibus et singulis per eos perpetratis, haereses, et ab eade[m] fide apostasias, blasphemias, et alios quoscunq[ue] errores...absolvere et liberare.' ARSI, *Institutum* 194, f.69r.

<sup>58</sup>On Lippomano see Michelson, 'Luigi Lippomano, His Vicars, and the Reform of Verona from the Pulpit', *Church History*, 78 (September 2009), p.584-605.

<sup>59</sup>Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia*, p.281.

<sup>60</sup>McCooy, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588. 'Our Way of Proceeding?'* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp.21-2.

<sup>61</sup>W.T.G. Kirby, *Essays on Religion, Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p.72.

stated that heretics came to him for a private absolution precisely to avoid the inquisitors. In Bologna, the cardinal-legates, two of them future popes, empowered the Jesuits in a way that would clash with the jurisdiction of long-established and legitimate authorities. What is more, the Jesuits do not seem to have been afraid of confessing to this clear conflict of interest.

The Bologna cases suggest that Julius III, Santa Croce and Archbishop Politi believed that institutional norms could be undermined if it meant that they would win converts. Politi's involvement in the solicitation of the privilege to absolve heresy from Julius III in 1551 suggests that, like the faculties in Bologna, the privilege was a pragmatic compromise. In addition to Polanco's letter to Laínez, two manuscript descriptions of Salmerón's meeting with Julius III are now held at ARSI in larger collections of documents on privileges granted to the Society.<sup>62</sup> Both documents note Politi's presence at the meeting.<sup>63</sup> The details of the account, written by Salmerón, are identical in both documents, matching those given in Polanco's letter. A third record held at the ACDF replicates the details and appears to have been copied from one of the documents at the Jesuit archive.<sup>64</sup> This version was sent to the cardinal-inquisitors during debates on the validity of the privileges in the 1580s, and also includes a section of the papal bull, *Sacrae religionis*, which gave the privilege its full validity.<sup>65</sup> The ACDF document also mentions Politi's attendance of the meeting, underlining his support for the concession and witness to its legitimacy.<sup>66</sup>

The emphasis placed on the Jesuits' work at Trent in accounts of the concession, and the presence of Politi, their ally in Bologna, underline the importance of the Society's previous experience with Julius III and his circle for the concession of the privilege to absolve heresy. These details support Giorgio Caravale's suggestion that the official concession of the privilege in 1551 put into law actions that had become commonplace during the pope's cardinalate.<sup>67</sup> But despite the importance of Julius III's circle in the Jesuits' early use of such

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<sup>62</sup> ARSI, *Institutum* 190, f.4r and ARSI, *Institutum* 222, f.297.

<sup>63</sup> The account in *Institutum* 190 appears to be a copy of the account in *Institutum* 222, with the signatures of Salmeron and Politi transcribed.

<sup>64</sup> ACDF, *St. St. D-4-A*, ff. 12r-v.

<sup>65</sup> A. Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol. 6, p.465.

<sup>66</sup> Otto von Truchsess acted similarly, witnessing of the papal bull that granted the faculty officially on 22 October 1552: 'Otho miseratione divina Sanctae Sabinae S[ua] R[everendissima] E[xcellentia] Praesbyter cardinalis de Augusta nuncupatus. Universis et singulis praesentes literas sive praesens publicu[m] transumpti instrumentu[m], inspecturis, lecturis, visuris, pariter et audituris, salute in domino sepiterna[m] et praesentibus fide[m] indubiam adhibere.' ARSI, *Institutum* 222, f.263r.

<sup>67</sup> Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia*, p.281.



powers, the Jesuits also used the privilege outside of their collaborations with the papal court. The independent jurisdiction that the privilege afforded the Society allowed its members to reconcile heretics autonomously in collaboration with a range of ecclesiastical and temporal authorities. The Jesuits' relationship with the pope may at first seem one of great intimacy and loyalty, as suggested by Firpo's explanation of the privilege. But in practice this did not mean that they worked for him alone. Indeed, for the Jesuits, papal support and powers were significant because they allowed them to work independently in the mission field.

### **Beyond papal obedience**

One of the key benefits of papal privileges was that they granted the Jesuits the autonomy to work outside of the usual ecclesiastical hierarchies.<sup>68</sup> This is evident in the early Jesuits' use of the privilege to absolve heresy in the service of temporal as well as ecclesiastical powers. This conclusion concurs with recent research on the early Jesuits that has shattered the traditional image of a Society working in perfect alignment with Rome.<sup>69</sup> Reviewing changes to scholarship on the Society, Silvia Mostaccio has identified a conscious ambiguity in the approach of the early Jesuits, as they adapted to the situations and stakes of the various contexts in which they worked.<sup>70</sup> The privilege to absolve heresy was a mechanism that granted the Jesuits the autonomy to pursue their mission to save souls alone, and to develop flexible working relationships with a variety of authorities as and when it suited them. Interpretations of the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy that examine the power's impact only on one of the Society's collaborators, such as the pope or the Roman Inquisition, fall short because the most important quality afforded by the privilege was jurisdictional and operational independence.

There is evidence to suggest that Julius III favoured the pastoral strategies used by the Jesuits to convert heretics. In his first year as pope, he granted extraordinary measures to penitent-heretics, and Julius was the first pope to promulgate edicts of grace to encourage heretics to come back to the fold.<sup>71</sup> The first, *Cum meditatio cordis nostri*, declared that all who owned

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<sup>68</sup> Mongini, <<*Ad Christi similtudinem*>>, p.44.

<sup>69</sup> See Mostaccio's historiographical review 'A Conscious Ambiguity' and the articles it discusses, especially Pierroberto Scaramella, 'I primi Gesuiti e l'Inquisizione Romana' and Pastore, 'I Primi Gesuiti e la Spagna: Strategie, compromessi, ambiguità', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 117 (2005), pp.158-178. See also Mongini, <<*Ad Christi similtudinem*>> and Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*.

<sup>70</sup> Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity', pp.440-1.

<sup>71</sup> Brambilla, 'Giulio III' in Prosperi, Lavenia and Tedeschi (eds), *Dizionario storico dell'inquisizione*, vol.2, p.712.

heretical books could choose a confessor to absolve them and lift the automatic excommunication that their crime had incurred, if they consigned the books to the inquisition within two months.<sup>72</sup> The second, *Illius qui misericors*, offered heretics a private absolution and abjuration if they denounced themselves to local inquisitors.<sup>73</sup> The commonalities between Julius III's jubilee briefs and the private reconciliations facilitated by the Jesuits' privilege are clear. Like the Jesuit privilege, the jubilee edicts aimed to encourage those who 'delay returning to the flock of Christ' out of fear, 'abhorring public penance.'<sup>74</sup> Julius III's predilection for compromising, pastoral methods of reconciliation supports Firpo's conjecture that the Jesuits were empowered to further the pope's pastoral programme to fight heresy, undermining the harsh, political inquisitorial strategies of which he disapproved.<sup>75</sup> In the concession of the privilege to absolve heresy, the pope empowered able, itinerant Jesuits to undertake a pastoral approach to religious dissent that complemented his own.

The notion that Julius empowered the Jesuits to bolster his personal anti-heretical agenda is supported by traditional explanations of the Society's obedience to the Holy See. The early Jesuits' first journey to Rome is the nucleus of traditional interpretations of the Jesuits' subservience to the pope, as Loyola and his earliest companions put themselves in the service of Pope Paul III.<sup>76</sup> The first Jesuits' promise to Paul III found its full expression in the Society's vow to obey the pontiff regarding missions, which Loyola drafted into the Society's *Constitutions*.<sup>77</sup> When Loyola outlined his ideal of obedience for the Society he called for the total submission of judgment and will: obedience *perinde ac cadaver*.<sup>78</sup> According to

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<sup>72</sup> Bartolomeo Fontana, *Documenti vaticani contro l'eresia Luterana in Italia* (Rome: Società Romana di storia patria, 1892), pp.412-4.

<sup>73</sup> Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol. 6, pp.414-5.

<sup>74</sup> '...diversi fideles, diabolica fraude decepti, se in diversas erroneas et ab eadem fide alienas opiniones paulatim deduci permiserint, et modo publicam poenitentiam abhorrentes...ad ovile Christi redire differant.' Ibid., p.414.

<sup>75</sup> Firpo, *La presa di potere*, p.66. Girolamo Muzzarelli said that the pope was 'irritato continuamente contra l'officio della santa Inquisitione et volendoli alcuni persuadere che per malignità et invidia del papato il detto officio persequitava N. [Reginaldo Polo] et Morone.' Firpo and Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del Cardinal Giovanni Morone*, vol.2, part 2, p.804.

<sup>76</sup> Fabre, 'The Writings of Ignaius of Loyola as a Seminal Text' in Maryks (ed.), *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola*, p.111

<sup>77</sup> O'Malley, 'Mission and the Early Jesuits', p.7.

<sup>78</sup> Loyola's most widely-read letter on obedience was written to the Portuguese province in March 1553 in response to a letter from its new provincial, Diego Mirò, who complained that many Jesuits there remained overly-attached to his predecessor Simaõ Rodrigues and, therefore, disobedient to him. The letter is edited in *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructione*, vol.4, pp.669-681. Traditional interpretations of the Jesuit obedience also refer to 'Rules for Thinking with the Church', Loyola's supplement to the Spiritual Exercises. The 'Rules' are edited in Loyola, *Monumenta Ignatiana. Series secunda: Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum directoria* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1955), pp.326-8.

Prosperi, the Jesuits' vow of obedience to the popes, just as popes became involved in the organisation of missions, made the Society 'the instrument of the papacy...the instrument of papal will'.<sup>79</sup>

Nonetheless, recent research on the Society has suggested that, in practice, papal obedience was not so clear cut. As soon as the Jesuits went out into the field, Loyola's ideal of obedience was compromised by a host of social, economic and political demands that dictated the success of the Society's missions.<sup>80</sup> Despite the ostensibly strict implications of the Society's vow to obey 'the supreme pontiff regarding missions', the principle of papal obedience was applied flexibly, and often used by the Society as a shield or court of appeal, rather than an uncompromising standard.<sup>81</sup> The Society's *Constitutions* even gave the Superior General parity with the pope when dictating where members should be sent on missions, and whom should be sent.<sup>82</sup>

This flexible attitude to papal obedience is evident in negotiations over the transfer of Jesuit missionaries. When Nicolás Bobadilla left the service of Duke Ercole d'Este in July 1539, he shielded himself from charges of disloyalty by telling the duke that, although the Society wished to serve in his territories more than any other in the world, the will of the pope compelled him to leave.<sup>83</sup> In 1550, however, Loyola compromised the principle of papal obedience, telling the same duke that 'the commandment of the said [Holy] See' that Silvestro Landini go to Corsica '[did] not force' the Jesuits to take the missionary out of the duke's service, and so Loyola had commanded Landini to continue working in his duchy.<sup>84</sup> In practice, the vow of papal obedience was applied strategically, invoked to free the Society from obligations, or ignored as a barrier to continuing a particular mission.

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<sup>79</sup> Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza.*, p.569.

<sup>80</sup> Flavio Rurale in introduction to Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.xiii.

<sup>81</sup> The Society's bull of foundation, *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae*, states that all professed members are 'speciali voto adstringi, ita ut quicquid modernus et alii Romani Pontifices pro tempore existentes iusserint, ad profectum animarum et fidei propogationem pertinens, et ad quascumque provincias nos mitter voluerit, sine ulla tergiversatione aut excusatione, illico, quantum in nobis fuerit, exequi teneamur.' Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol. 6, p.304.

<sup>82</sup> *Constitutions (Part VII, Chapter 2, par. 618)* in George E. Ganss (trans.), *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), p.271.

<sup>83</sup> Bobadilla, *Bobadillae monumenta*, p.16.

<sup>84</sup> 'È vero che si è trattato di qua...di mandarlo [Landini] per Commissario della Sede Apostolica in Corsica; ma in tanto che non ci forza il comandamento della Sede detta, io ho dato ordine che si adoperi in servire al Signor Nostro Gesù Cristo in quella parte della sua vigna che è commessa alla cura di V[ostra] Eccellenza.' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, p.56.

The Jesuits also appealed to their close ties with the papacy when they faced opposition from local ecclesiastical authorities. This is evident in a letter from Francesco Stefano, a Jesuit working at the Society's college in Messina in the late 1550s. When a cardinal wanted to prohibit Jesuits in the city from administering the sacraments to a local convent, Stefano referred to the papal privileges that allowed them to do so. In addition to indicating their apostolic authority, which trumped the power of the cardinal, Stefano suggested that he could call upon allies at the top of the ecclesiastical and secular hierarchies to fight his corner. Writing to the Superior General, Stefano asked if he should appeal to the Pope or the Spanish monarchy who ruled Sicily to reverse the cardinal's order.<sup>85</sup> Stefano demonstrated his certainty of the pontiff's support suggesting a third option: that Julius III write to the cardinal himself to tell him 'that he cannot proceed like this with us'.<sup>86</sup>

The Jesuits' pragmatic approach to papal obedience undermines the notion that their vow of obedience regarding missions made them 'instruments of papal will'. The Jesuits used their relationship with the pope to act independently, as a means of remaining independent from local ties when necessary and even as a trump card in ecclesiastical and jurisdictional squabbles. The Society used the privilege to absolve heresy in the same way, working confidently alone, and with a range of ecclesiastical and temporal leaders, including dukes, bankers, and the zealous agents of inquisitorial rigour whom Firpo claims the pope sought to undercut. Pierroberto Scaramella has highlighted the need to consider the variety of anti-heretical work that the Jesuits undertook, underlining their shifting relationships with the institutions and individuals with whom they collaborated.<sup>87</sup> In the Jesuits' discussion and solicitation of the privilege to absolve heresy it was this flexibility to adapt their mission, negating canonical norms and operating with jurisdictional and institutional autonomy, that emerges as the privilege's key asset. Far from considering the privilege in relation to the mission of the papacy or, worse still, one pope, we must ground our interpretation in the missionary experiences of the Jesuits who sought and used the power across sixteenth-century Italy.

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<sup>85</sup> '...il Cardinale vuole prohiber[e] di n[ost]ri che no[n] possano piu co[n]fessar[e] e co[m]municar[e]. Cosa certa no[n] sappiamo. Ma questo lo dico, accio sappiamo dalla P[aternità] V[ostra] ch[e] li pare dobbiamo fare se tal cosa accade e come habbiamo d'usar delli n[ost]ri privilegi e se dobbiamo appellare alla Monarchia ò al Papa ò se pare alla P[aternità] V[ostra] sarà bene ch[e] il pappà scrivess[e] al Cardinale, ch[e] no[n] p[ro]cedesse cossi co[n] noi.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 107, f.312r.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Scaramella, 'I primi Gesuiti e l'Inquisizione Romana', p.154.

### **Privileges and pragmatism in the mission field**

The Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy can only be explained within the context of the Society's pastoral ministry. This is the context in which the Jesuits solicited and used the privilege and spoke of its purpose. In Salmerón's letter from Bologna in 1547, he discussed the private reconciliation of heretics as a mechanism that transformed sacramental confession and the ministration of the *Spiritual Exercises* into a means of reconciling Lutherans to the Catholic Church. The Lutherans whom Broët wrote about had also come to him as a confessor. It is clear from the Jesuits' own correspondence that, for them, the significance of the privilege to absolve heresy was its role in their pastoral activities. When we examine how the Jesuits used their privilege in this ministry it becomes clear that it was a pragmatic measure to overcome the obstacles that they faced on the ground, not a mechanism to tie them to one party at the papal court, or a cunning inquisitorial lure.

Polanco's description of the privilege's concession suggests that it solved a practical problem in the Jesuits' ministry. It states that the authority 'to absolve from cases appertaining to heresy' had been 'lacking in...the graces already conceded by the Apostolic See' and was granted 'to console many souls', that is, for pastoral purposes.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, the privilege to absolve heresy was just one of several privileges requested at the meeting of 1551. All of these privileges were pragmatic, helping the Society to overcome issues that inhibited the success of their ministry. Amongst these concessions was the authority to exempt Jesuits from obligatory fasts that could weaken a confessor or preacher working in an area with few local pastors.<sup>89</sup> Seen in the same pragmatic terms, the privilege to absolve heresy gave Jesuit missionaries the means to overcome the fear and canonical norms that impeded their ability to save the souls of penitent-heretics who otherwise languished outside of the Catholic Church.

From the earliest days of their organisation the Jesuits requested dispensations and privileges to overcome practical problems.<sup>90</sup> Such concessions were central to the form of the Society

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<sup>88</sup> '...absolvere de casi appartenenti all'heresia, in foro conscientiae, il che per consolar molte anime manchava a nostre gratie già concesse per la sedia apostolica...'

Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol. 3, p.457.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> On the pragmatic motivations for soliciting faculties for foreign missions see Paolo Broggio, 'Le congregazioni romane e la confessione dei neofiti del Nuovo Mondo tra *facultates* e *dubia* riflessioni e spunti di indagine', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome - Italie et Méditerranée*, 121 (2009), pp.173-197.

approved by Paul III in 1540. This rule freed the Jesuits from obligations to pray and fast regularly like other religious orders so that they might work more intensely and freely.<sup>91</sup> The Jesuits' early approach was borne out by later missionary experience. Speaking of his work on the island of Corsica, Jesuit father Emmanuel Gomez claimed that he did not have time to pray the liturgy of the hours at all, let alone in choir, never having a moment 'to take bodily refreshment [and] never to say my [divine] office'.<sup>92</sup> Gomez claimed that he could pray the office at night, but prioritised his duties to give spiritual counsel and absolutions, exclaiming 'how many nights I stay here in [my] room until midnight to hear confessions!'<sup>93</sup> For the Jesuits, the ministration of the sacraments and its effect on the laity was always more important than the observance of institutional norms. As the Jesuits' missionary experience grew, so did their knowledge of potential obstacles to their task and so, therefore, did their requests for privileges. This was the process through which the Jesuits carved out their role in the religious and ecclesiastical fabric of sixteenth-century Italy. It is within this process that we should define the privilege to absolve heresy.

The pragmatic pastoral concerns that drove the Society to request the privilege to absolve heresy are evident in entreaties for the privilege from individual Jesuit missionaries. Two years before Salmerón's solicitation of the privilege from Julius III, the privilege was requested by Silvestro Landini, a Jesuit missionary working in Correggio, a small town on the outskirts of Ferrara. In July 1549, Landini sent Loyola a list of powers and dispensations that he required to make the most of his efforts to the save souls in Correggio.<sup>94</sup> Landini claimed to enjoy great success converting people through the sacraments, claiming that many 'come every day to confession and communion' and some 'kneel on the uneven ground in the middle of the street to tell me that I want to confess them'.<sup>95</sup> Many who had previously failed to fulfil their annual obligation to go to Mass now went daily; every day, he claimed, was like a jubilee.<sup>96</sup> Landini was pleased with his work so far, but he needed some papal dispensations

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<sup>91</sup> David Crook, 'Music at the Jesuit College in Paris, 1575-1590' in O'Malley, Bailey, Harris, and Kennedy (eds), *The Jesuits II*, p.465.

<sup>92</sup> 'Io non o tempo nè da pigliare etiam la reffettione corporale, nè mai puosso dire il mio officio, se non alla notte, et quante notte vi resto in camara insino a meza notte ad udire confessione!' Emmanuel Gomes in *Epistolae mixtae*, vol.3, p.93.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Landini in *Litterae quadrimestres: ex universis praeter Indiam et Brasiliam locis in quibus aliqui de Societate Jesu versabantur Romam missae* (Madrid: Augustinus Avrial, 1894-1932), 7 vols, vol.1, pp.161-3.

<sup>95</sup> 'Tanta è la moltitudine che viene ogni dì alla confessione et comunione...et s'inginocchiano sull'aspra terra in mezzo la strada a pregarmi che io gli voglia confessar.' Ibid., p.162.

<sup>96</sup> 'Ogni dì pare giubileo. Prima non si comunicavano nè molti una volta l'anno; hora ogni dì et ogni domenica.' Ibid.

to fulfil his mission. Amongst those requested was the power to give absolution from heresy.<sup>97</sup> Like Salmerón's request to Julius III, Landini's appeal for the authority to absolve heresy was couched in a longer entreaty for faculties to aid his missionary work, betraying the pragmatic motivations behind the privilege.

The other powers and dispensations requested by Landini support this conclusion. In the same letter, Landini requested permission to be able to read heretical books and to absolve people who had contracted incestuous or otherwise prohibited marriages.<sup>98</sup> Although Landini does not specify his exact reason for needing the faculty to absolve heresy, his explanation for requesting the power to absolve irregular marriages suggests pragmatic motives. Landini requests this second power of absolution 'because the majority of such people, in every region, are already married in this way with children, and they do not confess or receive communion.'<sup>99</sup> As many people in Correggio had already had children within a marriage that was prohibited by Canon Law, Landini thought that it better to absolve them of the misdemeanour than to let husband and wife languish outside of the Church in mortal sin and excommunication *latae sententiae*.<sup>100</sup> By absolving these people, who had not intended any harm, Landini would save them from social exclusion and hell fire. Landini gave a similarly pragmatic reason for his need for a licence to read heretical books, stating that 'there are many of them in these parts...and they do a great damage, and mainly because there is not anybody there who answers against [them]'.<sup>101</sup> Landini requested privileges that would allow him to achieve positive outcomes from the imperfect situations that he had discovered in Correggio, even if it meant bending Canon Law.

This pragmatic principle can be applied to Landini's request for the power to absolve heretics. If somebody in Correggio had fallen into heresy but was now penitent, Landini need not put him off with the prospect of an unnecessary or impossible inquisitorial process. With the

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<sup>97</sup> 'Tre cose bisognaria che io havesse da Sua Santità per mezzo di V[ostra] P[aternità] R[everenda], se a lei paresse. 1.o L'assoluzione d'heresie...' Landini, *Litterae quadrimestres*, vol.1, p.164.

<sup>98</sup> '...2.o Poder[e] leggere li libri heretici...3. La dispensatione di consanguinatade et affinitade natural...' Ibid., p.163.

<sup>99</sup> '...perche la maggior parte quasi, in alcune terre, sono congiunti con figliuoli già in questo modo, et non si confessano nè comunicano.' Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> '...putant hanc poenam latae sententiae ligare statim etiam in foro conscientiae ante declaratoriam...' Carolo Antonio Tesaurò, *De poenis ecclesiasticis, seu canonicis. Latae sententiae à iure communi, and Constitutionibus Apostolicis, Decretis[ue]; sacrarum Congregationum* (Rome: Hermann Scheus, 1640), p.14.

<sup>101</sup> '...che molti ne sono in queste parti, et se ne scrive et fanno grande danno, et maxime che non ce n'è chi faccia capo contro...' Landini, *Epistolae quadrimestres*, vol.1, p.163.

power to absolve heresy, Landini could reconcile him to the Christian community and save his soul immediately. Later in the century, when the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy was under threat, they would defend it in similarly pragmatic terms. A treatise given to the head of the Roman Inquisition in 1586, for example, states that the Jesuits needed the authority to absolve heretics independently of the inquisition 'because, as experience has taught, [heretics] never convert' as they feared the inquisition would deny them absolution and there will be fear for the salvation of that soul.<sup>102</sup> If Landini did not absolve the penitent-heretics of Correggio, no one would.

Other requests for the privilege had similar emphases. Just a couple of years after his mission to Correggio, Landini found himself working on the island of Corsica. There the absence of ecclesiastical authority had led to ignorance and corruption amongst the clergy and left many islanders in a state of serious sin, and many as excommunicates. With the privilege to absolve heresy, Jesuits on Corsica replaced absent bishops and inquisitors, reconciling anyone whom they could convert. Freed from the need to cooperate with an ecclesiastical authority to reconcile heretics, the privilege also allowed the Jesuits to work in the direct service of a temporal power, who were keen to combat religious dissent amongst the clergy, religious and lay-people of the island that they ruled.

The other powers listed in the concession to Landini and Gomez also indicate that the Jesuits saw privilege to absolve heresy as a pragmatic measure. Although the privilege to absolve heresy had been granted by papal bull when the Jesuits arrived in Corsica in 1552, it was delegated selectively by the Superior General.<sup>103</sup> Missionaries often requested and carried written briefs or patents to prove their powers to authorities in the mission field.<sup>104</sup> A papal brief dated August 1552 states that, on Corsica, Landini and Gomez could 'totally liberate' heretics if they humbly sought reconciliation and vowed thereafter not to commit heresies.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> 'In Italia per tutti gl'Oltramontani è necessaria l'istesa facultà, perche non si ridurràn[n]o mai come l'isperienza hà insegnato a presentarsi al santo ufficio è così chi li nega l'assolutione, serra la paura della salute a quell'anima.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f. 314r.

<sup>103</sup> For examples of letters patent in which it was delegated see *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, p.487; p.488; p.489; p.537; p.538; p.540 and p.551.

<sup>104</sup> Examples are held in ARSI, *Institutum 194*.

<sup>105</sup> '...quascunq[ue] utriusq[ue] sexus personas...lutherana, aut aliis nefariis haeresibus, et erroribus aspersos...ab hu[iusm]o[d]i haeresibus nec non maioris excommunicationis, aliisq[ue] sententiis censuris...incuris, dicta auctoritate informa ecclesia consecuta, iniuncta inde eis pro modo culpae paenitentia salutari absolvendi et totaliter liberandi et ad manus et sanctae m[at]ris ecclesiae graemium nec non gr[at]iam et benedictionem sedis Ap[osto]licae restituendi et recipiendi personas praedictas...personas...si...id humiliter peturint...receptis prius ab



The brief also cites the Jesuits' powers to absolve anybody on the island of sins and crimes ordinarily reserved to the Holy See, to visit, investigate, punish and reform universities, colleges and the heads and members of churches and religious communities.<sup>106</sup> All of these powers are pragmatic, transforming the Jesuits pastoral ministry into a means of converting sinners and reforming the Church, without relying upon ecclesiastical powers who were absent or who deterred penitents from converting.

Another document, published in the Jesuits' *Monumenta*, indicates that the particular context of Corsica instigated the request to use the privilege. The document lists graces that could be useful for the help of souls in Corsica, amongst these is the power to reconcile heretics, especially those who were neither relapsed nor leaders.<sup>107</sup> Although the editors of the Society's *Monumenta* have dated this document to 10 September 1552, a month after brief listing the privileges was granted, this attribution is based on a date written on a letter in the same collection, rather than the content of the document itself.<sup>108</sup> This attribution appears to be incorrect. The author of the list of 'graces' frequently uses the future and conditional tenses, indicating that these were concessions to be requested for the mission, rather than privileges that had been granted a month before. Once again, it seems that the power to absolve heretics was requested by Jesuits based on the demands of mission.

The letters that Landini and Gomez wrote during their mission to Corsica illustrate the problematic situation that they found there and underline their need to address it independently. On Corsica Landini and Gomez filled the gaps in the ecclesiastical hierarchy

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eis abiuratione haeresum et errorum hu[us]m[od]i de super legitime facien[do] et iuramento q[ue] talia aut illis similia deinceps non committere...' ARSI, *Institutum 194*, f.65r.

<sup>106</sup> '...et q[u]oscunq[ue] Chri[sti] fideles ad vos unde cunq[ue] pro tempore recurrentes eorum confessionibus diligenter auditis ab omnibus, et singulis eorum peccatis, criminibus excessibus, et delictis quantumcunq[ue] gravibus et enormibus et ubi expediens vobis videbitur, et sedi praedicta reservatis etiam in Bulla in diem caenae D[omi]ni legi consueta contentis, semel in vita tantum similiter absolvendi...Nec non ecclesias, monasteria, communitates, Universitates, Collegia, et pia loco quaecunq[ue] e[st] exempta, ac eorum clerum universum, per vos vel alium, seu alios idoneos visitandi, et quae ex eis correptione et emendatione tam in sp[irit]ualibus, q[uam] temporalibus indigere congoveritis tam in capite (non t[ame]n ep[iscop]os, aut eorum sup[er]iores) q[ua]m in membris reformandi...Monasteria, et domos monialium e[st] exempta quorumcunq[ue] etiam S[anc]tae Clarae ordinum eiusdem Insulae ingredundi...inquirendi, et contratas e[st] per viam investigationis, denuntiationis, vel inquisitiones, aut al[i]s procedendi, et ubi necessarium fuerit eas debita animadversione puniendi et corrigendi, ac etiam in capite et in membris secundam ipsaru[m] ordinum regularia instituta reformandi...' ARSI, *Institutum 194*, ff.65r-66v.

<sup>107</sup> 'Alcune gratie spirituali, che potriano essere in Corsica convenienti per aggiunto dell'anime...D'assolvere dell'escomunica, etiam in foro exteriori, et reconciliare l'heretici, massime quelli, che non fossino relassi nè capi.' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.4, pp.415-6.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.407, fn.1.

left by bishops and priests who had abandoned or neglected their flocks.<sup>109</sup> More details are offered in correspondence between the two missionaries, who worked on different parts of the island, now held at the state archive of Genoa. 'The Church of this land is totally lost', Gomez lamented to Landini, 'there are no priests here, no vestments, no chalices, nothing at all for divine worship'.<sup>110</sup> Even though there were six hundred families in the capital of Bastia, the Jesuits told their colleagues in Rome that they had only 'one priest, old, ignorant and of little talent', who had to spread his limited gifts across three or four further benefices on the island.<sup>111</sup> Letters from the missionaries to the *Compere di San Giorgio*, who governed the island, revealed that, where priests were present they were corrupt, that 'there is no pastor here except to drink the milk and steal the wool from the poor sheep'.<sup>112</sup> With no ecclesiastical hierarchy, without even reliable parish priests, the Jesuits had no choice but to address the situation alone.

According to Landini and Gomez, the lack of pastoral care had left the people in a state of sin and excommunication, and with no way out. In a report to Rome, they claimed that the people of Corsica were 'tainted by every stain of sin', 'by heresy, blasphemy and wicked vice'.<sup>113</sup> Many had broken Canon Law in acts of heresy, in prohibited marriages and in other misdemeanours that incurred *ipso facto* excommunication. This was a censure that could be lifted by an inquisitor, bishop, or somebody with a special delegated privilege to do so.<sup>114</sup> But on Corsica there do not appear to have been any bishops or inquisitors. Polanco's *Chronicon* claimed that when Landini and Gomez arrived on Corsica, there had been no bishop resident for 60 or 70 years, even though there were seven dioceses on the island.<sup>115</sup> And, whilst scholars note an inquisitorial presence on the island in the fourteenth century, the Jesuits'

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<sup>109</sup> The Constitutions declare that when choosing mission territory the Superior General should consider areas of 'greater need, because of the lack of other workers.' *Constitutions* (Part VII, chapter 2, paragraph 622a).

<sup>110</sup> 'La ch[ies]ia di questo paese è dal tutto persa. No[n] vi è preti no[n] parame[n]ti, no[n] callici, no[n] cosa alcuna al Divino colto pertine[n]ti...' Archivio di Stato di Genova (hereafter, ASG), *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Sala 35/233*.

<sup>111</sup> 'Detto Rettore essendo 600 famigl[i]e nella Bastia no[n] tiene altro, che un prete vecchio ignora[n]te et di poco talento...et tiene altri 4 o 5 beneficii con cura delle quali nessuno vi cura.' ARSI, *Mediolanensis Historia* 79, f.7v.

<sup>112</sup> '...no[n] vi è pastore si no[n] a mangiare il latte et rapire la lana alle poveri pecorelli...' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Sala 35/233*.

<sup>113</sup> 'Da l'Heresia, biastemma et vitio nefando...q[ue]sta gente è tinta d'ogni macchia di peccato, dove più e dove meno.' ARSI, *Mediolanensis Historia* 79, f.1r.

<sup>114</sup> Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*, pp.303-4.

<sup>115</sup> '...cum sexaginta annis vel septuaginta nullus Episcopus (septem autem in ea insula dioeceses sunt).' Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Jesu historia*, vol. 2, p.455. Whilst Polanco may have exaggerated to aggrandize the Jesuits' achievements on Corsica, the bishops of the major dioceses were absent. Balduino de Barga, the bishop of Mariana, for example, was resident in Rome. Carlo Luongo, *Silvestro Landini e le "nostre indie"* (Florence: Firenze Atheneum, 2008), p.251.

desire to learn from the inquisitor at Genoa if there was any inquisitor on the island indicates that, by the mid-sixteenth century, Roman authorities were unaware of a tribunal there.<sup>116</sup> The Jesuit missionaries attempted to remedy the situation, nourishing the neglected laity with the 'food of the word of God' and healing their souls with 'the medicine of the Most Holy Sacraments'.<sup>117</sup> Their privileges of absolution became a vital life-line to the excommunicates of Corsica. According to the missionaries, some came 'from 60 or 100 miles away in order to be absolved from excommunication', and others complained 'that we can't delegate [the power] to other confessors to absolve their wives, who cannot come here'.<sup>118</sup> Empowered by the privilege to absolve heresy and lift the excommunication it incurred, the Jesuits claimed that they could reconcile many willing souls on the island.

The Jesuits' jurisdictional autonomy over heresy also gave them institutional flexibility, allowing them to work independently and for temporal leaders. On Corsica, Landini and Gomez used their papal powers in the service of the *Compere di San Giorgio*, the administrative arm of the Genoese bank that governed the island.<sup>119</sup> Throughout the year 1550, the protectors of the *Compere* corresponded with Stefano Usodimare, a Genoese Dominican working at the heart of the papal court in Rome, begging him to send men to reform 'the little regulated life of the priests' of the island.<sup>120</sup> The *Compere* discussed the grave situation with the governor of Corsica, Lamba Doria, who told them of the heretical, alchemist monks and armed, unruly priests on the island.<sup>121</sup> On 27 October 1552, after

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<sup>116</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. Volume three* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), p.254. 'Avanti del partire piglione informatione, d'un Padre inquisitore che sta a S[anto] Domenico...se informino etiam si c'è inquisitore alcuno nel'isola...' *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.4, p.416.

<sup>117</sup> '...tanta havessi io usata deligentia in questo luogho verso la salute delle anime di Christo, subuenendoli col cibo verbi Dei et con la meditina delli S[antissimi]mi sacramenti...' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Sala 35 /233*.

<sup>118</sup> 'Altri venendo de 60 et 100 miglia, per essere assoluti di scomuniche ec si lamentano ce no[n] possiamo delegar altri confessori per assolvere le moglie loro, che non possono condur qua.' ARSI, *Mediolanensis Historia* 79, 7v.

<sup>119</sup> Antoine-Marie Graziani, 'Ruptures et continuités dans la politique de Saint-Georges en Corse (1453-1562)' in Giuseppe Felloni (ed.), *La Casa di San Giorgio: il potere del credito. Atti del convegno, Genova, 11 e 12 novembre 2004* (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2006) and Felloni, *1407. La fondazione del Banco di San Giorgio* (Rome: Laterza, 2010).

<sup>120</sup> 'R[everen]do padre noi perseveriamo di continuo nel desiderio che sia provveduto al puoco regolato vivere de preti dell'isola n[ost]ra di Corsica...' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Corsica litterarum - Sala 34 - 607/2401*, f.88v.

<sup>121</sup> A letter from Doria to the *Compere* spoke of the following case: '...il padre vicar[i]o de frati cappucini...m'ha richiesto il braccio di prender[e] due de lor[o] frati quali usciti da loro monaster[i]o e ordine ...contra quali detto vic[ari]o ha dato querella di heresia, e di qualche dubitacio di alchime e moneta falsa.' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Sala 35 - 232*. On 18 November 1552 the *Compere* produced a document outlining 'come se ha da proceder[e] contra li preti', which declared the 'preti esser insolenti in portar[e] arme et altre insolentie no[n] honeste al viver[e] loro...' The Jesuits described the priests and religious of Corsica in similarly

months of requests, Landini and Gomez arrived at the *Compere's* headquarters, the Palazzo di San Giorgio in Genoa. They carried a letter of recommendation from Usodimare praising them as 'of good letters, utmost zeal for salvation of souls...[and with]...the greatest faculties from His Holiness'.<sup>122</sup> On top of their papal brief, the protectors of the *Compere* gave the Jesuits their own patent, charging all Corsicans to allow the Jesuits 'to execute all the things that are committed to them, declared in the said [papal] brief and pertinent to the Christian Religion', particularly regarding 'the little regulated life of priests of this island and things pertinent to the divine worship and the salvation of souls'.<sup>123</sup> Records of decisions taken by the *Compere* indicate that the bank also provided financial support for the mission, noting 'expenses made for the reverend Don Silvestro Landini of Sarzana and Don Emanuele of Monte Maior, priests of the Society of Jesus in the city of Rome, sent to the island of Corsica', on 21 November 1552.<sup>124</sup> On Corsica, the Jesuits may have used papal powers, but they were employed and protected by temporal leaders.

The privilege to absolve heresy allowed the Jesuits to work independently of ecclesiastical authorities who could be unreliable, and with a range of individuals and institutions concerned with the fight against religious dissent. On Corsica, papal powers gave the Jesuits the authority that they needed to convert and reconcile the people of the island, in spite of the absence and inadequacies of the local clergy and prelates. The Jesuits were driven by the pursuit of what their own *Constitutions* defined as the 'universal good', not the service of those who sought help 'to fulfil their own spiritual obligations to their flocks'.<sup>125</sup> Nonetheless,

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disparaging terms, stating in a report to the *Compere*: 'Molti Preti, et frati non sanno legg[e]re, Altri non sanno la forma de sacramenti, ne la materia, ne intendano literalmente il senso. Molti confessori tengano cattiva vita senza dottrina, altri sono concubinari, usurari publichi, sgherri, seditiosi et tolgono le donne de altri per forza et le tengano in casa, et pur fanno cura de anime...' ARSI, *Mediolanensis Historia* 79, f.7v.

<sup>122</sup> 'Questi sono doi de bone l[ett]re et ottimo zelo di la saluti delle an[im]e, hanno poi da S[ua] S[anti]tà ampliss[im]a facolta...' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Corsica litterarum - Sala 34 - 232*.

<sup>123</sup> 'Protettori delle Co[m]p[re] di S[an] Giorgio dell'Ecclesia Rep[ubli]ca di Genova, mandando la S[anti]tà di N[ostro] S[ignore] nell'Isola di Corsica apregli nostri li Rever[en]di don Silvestro Landino, et Don Manuel de Monte maggior sacerdoti della Compagnia del Jesu...per quanto ci viene riferito...nel Breve di S[ua] S[anti]tà à quelli drizzati et particolarmente al poco regolato viver di preti di cotesta Isola et alle cose pertinenti al Divino culto et salute dell'anima, che si ritrovano in quella, et desiderando noi, che essi possino essequire tutte le cose che gli sono commesse...In vigore della p[rese]nti ordiniamo al Mag[iste]r Governatore, et à tutti gli altri ufficiali nostri in detta Isola et successori di quelli, che quanto hanno caro la gr[ati]a nostra, debbiano detti R[everen]di Padri carezzare honorare, et reverire et così provvedere che sia fatti de chiascheduno altro habita[n]te in detta Isola...' ARSI, *Institutum* 194, ff.66r-v.

<sup>124</sup> 'Expensa facta pro r[everen]dis d[on] Silvestro Landino de Sarzana et d[on] Emanuele de Monte Maior[is] sacerdotibus Societatis Jesu in urbi Roma missis ad Insulam Corsicae...' ASG, *Banco di San Giorgio - Cancellieri - Corsica litterarum - Sala 34 - 593/1382*, f.56v.

<sup>125</sup> *Constitutions* (Part VII, chapter 2, paragraphs 618 and 622) in Ganss (trans.), *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, p.271 and p.274.

the Jesuits' mission did complement the aims of others. On Corsica, the Jesuits work broadly served Julius III's objective to ensure that the Italian states remained Catholic. But it also served the particular aims of the temporal *Compere di San Giorgio*. In this mission we see that, far from binding the Society to serve as agents of the Holy See, papal privileges gave the Jesuits the freedom to collaborate with temporal powers against corrupt ecclesiastical authorities, furthering their pastoral mission and winning new institutional allies.

## Conclusion

The freedom to serve diverse individuals and institutions using papal privileges offered the Jesuits occasions to cast their net a little further, to establish new missions and colleges to help souls. Papal privileges furthered the Jesuits' pastoral mission, and when executed in the service of certain authorities, this helped the Jesuits to expand their Society, the institution that supported their growing ministry. On their way to Genoa, Landini and Gomez were ordered by Loyola to stop in Bologna to visit the Genoese Archbishop, Gerolamo Sauli, who was living in the city as papal pro-legate.<sup>126</sup> Sauli approved the mission to Corsica but asked that Landini perform a full visitation of his Genoese archdiocese first.<sup>127</sup> Loyola charged Landini and Gomez to undertake Sauli's task in Genoa and to give a good impression of the Society.<sup>128</sup> It seems that they succeeded. In 1554, the governors of the republic formally requested a Jesuit college for Genoa, citing the praise of Genoese lords and citizens who had seen the good work of Landini and Gomez.<sup>129</sup> That the Society's expanding ministry was self-perpetuating is clear in Sauli's strong support for the project and the appointment of Tomasso de Spinola, procurator of Corsica, to oversee the establishment of the college in the city.<sup>130</sup>

The Jesuits relied upon the institutions and individuals with whom they collaborated to carry out and expand their ministry. This is evident in concession of powers of absolution through the Society's relationship with Julius III and his circle. It is also clear in the relationship between Landini and Gomez and the *Compere*, to which they wrote, detailing their

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<sup>126</sup> Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.4, p.416.

<sup>127</sup> The patent for this extra mission was given by cardinals Bernardino Maffei and Giovanni Ricci and is published in *ibid.*, pp.422-3.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p.416.

<sup>129</sup> *Epistolae mixtae*, vol.4, pp.142-3. On the Jesuits in Genoa see Davide Ferraris, 'I rapporti della Compagnia di Gesù, <<incarnazione della riforma>>, con il potere religioso e temporale a Genova' in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria Nuova Serie LV CXXIX fasc II* (Genova: Nella sede della Società Ligure di Storia Patria Palazzo Ducale, 2015), pp.75-106.

<sup>130</sup> *Epistolae mixtae*, vol.4, pp.142-3.

requirements, on a daily basis, so that it could send help as best as it could.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, the broader institutional benefits of collaborative missions are seen in the establishment of the Jesuit college in Genoa.

Nonetheless, flexibility was the key institutional asset of the Jesuits' privilege, as well as its crucial pastoral benefit. No matter how far the Jesuits' ministry appealed to the objectives of others and relied upon their support, their main objective was the salvation of souls, not the service of men. Ultimately, the Jesuits did not care particularly whom they collaborated with, as long as it helped them to fulfil their mission. The Society's connections with external authorities sustained their missions, they did not define them.

When the island of Corsica was stormed by French soldiers in August 1553, the Jesuits demonstrated remarkable political agility, adapting working relationships so that they could continue their mission there. Situated on the sea route between Italy and Spain, Corsica was a highly sought-after prize in the Italian wars between the French kings and the Holy Roman Emperors.<sup>132</sup> On 22 August 1552 a company of French and Turkish soldiers, along with a number of Corsican exiles, took Bastia, declaring the liberation of Corsica from Genoese tyranny.<sup>133</sup> The Jesuits reacted rapidly to the changing political dynamics. By 7 September Polanco could tell Landini that he had written to French Cardinal Eustache du Bellay and secured the favour of the French authorities for the Jesuit mission on the island.<sup>134</sup> Polanco ordered Landini to take this notice by hand to Antoine Escalin des Aimars, the general in command of the galleys of the French king.<sup>135</sup> Whilst Corsica's fate hung in the balance, Loyola told the Jesuit missionaries to continue converting the islanders, but to remain silent on matters of state.<sup>136</sup> Working with delegated apostolic authority, the powers that the Jesuits

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<sup>131</sup> '...si accordino con detti signori de S[an] Giorgio de avidarli alla giornata delli bisogni che occorreranno, et che essa signoria li habbi de mandar soccorso come meglio si potrà.' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones*, vol.4, p.416.

<sup>132</sup> Ilario Rinieri, *I vescovi della Corsica* (Milan: Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale, 1934), p.70.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp.70-1.

<sup>134</sup> 'Intendendo il successo delle cose di Corsica n[ost]ro p[adr]e [Loyola] per non manchare del suo conto de proceder[e] all[e] R[everendissim]e V[ost]re dello agiutto et favore che si potessi ha fatto ricorso alli superiori et supplicato al R[everendissim]o Car[dina]le de Parigi ovvero de Bellai scrivasi à quelli ch'hanno la suprema authorita per il Re...et con ogni charita si sono offeriti à far[e] questo officio benche p[er] esser[e] le R[everendissimi] V[ostri] Co[m]issari di sua S[anti]ta si persuademo che starano securi...' ARSI, *Epistolae nostrorum* 50, f.25r.

<sup>135</sup> '...questa l[ette]ra adonque andara per mano del Ill[ustrissim]o S[ignor] Monsuer le Baron dela Garda General delle gallerie del Re...' Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> 'Il parso etiam à n[ost]ro P[adr]e Preposito m[aest]ro Ignatio che io havisasi alle R.R.V.V. che attendendo à predicare la do[t]trina conveniente per il vevere X.iano non si impachino in ragionar[e] de cose de statti...' Ibid.

needed to fulfil their mission were independent of the territorial authorities who had requested and funded their presence on the island. For the Jesuits, allegiances were only relevant as far as they helped the Society to pursue its pastoral mission. And, in the summer of 1553, the *Compere di San Giorgio* no longer fitted the bill.

Members of the Society requested special privileges not to serve one individual or institution, but so that they might reconcile their converts, in spite of the obstacles presented by the varied contexts in which they worked. In cities and villages across sixteenth-century Italy, the Jesuits preached, taught and heard confessions to correct those who had erred from Catholic orthodoxy. Empowered with the authority to absolve heresy, they transformed this pastoral ministry into an effective means of addressing the problem of religious dissent. In doing this the Society fulfilled its fundamental mission to help souls and, at the same time, satisfied the pressing concerns of princes and popes. By the first years of the 1550s, the Jesuits' extensive missionary experience had allowed them to discern what powers were necessary for their ministry. In turn, the valuable service that the Jesuits had offered others put them in the position to secure such privileges. Like the addition of the 'defence of the faith' to the *Formula* in 1550, the solicitation of the authority to absolve heresy is evidence of the Jesuits' growing awareness of their role in efforts to fight religious dissent in sixteenth-century Europe. It is also a testament to their confidence to request the necessary, but often controversial, powers that they needed to fulfil this duty.





## Chapter Two: The Jesuits and the Roman Inquisition

On 2 October 1567, Cardinal Michele Bonelli instructed the Portuguese Jesuit Cristóbal Rodriguez for an investigative mission to Le Marche in the Papal States.<sup>1</sup> Bonelli ordered Rodriguez on behalf of his great-uncle Pope Pius V, the former cardinal-inquisitor who continued his efforts to eradicate heresy when he was elected to the papacy in January 1566.<sup>2</sup> Through Bonelli, Pius charged Rodriguez to investigate disobedience in Le Marche, 'secretly finding out how the clergy, religious, bishops, governors and other public persons do their duty, about the divine cult, about the residence of rectors and bishops, about the observance of the Council of Trent and of the orders of His Holiness, and also if there are any abuses, disorders and public sins, like concubinage, usury, simony, blasphemy, suspicions of heresy etc.'<sup>3</sup> In other words, Rodriguez was to spy on all those under the obedience of the Roman Church.

Rodriguez's investigations were to be clandestine and his image as a Jesuit pastor would be vital to the deception.<sup>4</sup> 'Firstly', Bonelli instructed, 'go with a companion, teaching Christian Doctrine and hearing confessions etc, according to the usual [manner] of the Society'.<sup>5</sup> If Rodriguez carried out the Jesuit's ordinary pastoral duties, heretics and lax ecclesiastics would 'not become aware of what is intended'.<sup>6</sup> This strategy contrasted starkly to the procedure for the arrival of an inquisitor, who was announced with a sermon in the local church and an edict of grace displayed publically.<sup>7</sup> In Le Marche, Rodriguez's pastoral disguise would allow him to win the trust of potential informants, as he mined them for information, claiming that 'under pain of excommunication...[he would] keep their secret'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Istruttione à voi P[ad]re Don Cristoforo Rodriguez di quanto haverete à fare p[er] ordine et nome di N[o]s[tr]e.' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, f.87r.

<sup>2</sup> On the life and career of Michele Bonelli see Prosperi, 'Michele Bonelli' in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani. Vol. 11* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1969), pp.766-774.

<sup>3</sup> 'Anderete per la Marca procurando d'intendere secretam[en]te et informarvi come fanno l'uff[ici]o loro il Clero, Religiosi, Vesc[ov]i Gover[na]ri et altre persone publiche; Del culto Divino, d[e]lla residenza de'rettori, et vescovi; Dell'observanza di Concilio Tridentino, et d[e]lli ordini di S[ua] S[anti]ta, et anco se vi sono alcuni abusi, desordini, et peccati publici, come de Concubinarii, usurarii, simoniaci, blastemi, sospetti di heresia ec.' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, f.87r.

<sup>4</sup> 'Il modo d'informarvi d[e]lle predette cose secretem[en]te sarà.' Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 'Primo andare con un Compagnia insegnando la Dottrina X.tiana, et confessando ec. secondo il solito [de]la Compagnia...' Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> '...avio no[n] si accorgino di quello ch[e] si pretende.' Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Romeo, *L'Inquisizione nell'età moderna*, p.20.

<sup>8</sup> '...diteli da parte di S[ua] S[anti]ta a per quanto hà grato la gr[at]ia sua, et sotto pena di scomunicate lat[a]e sententie à qua non possit absolvi nisi à Ro[mano] Pont[efi]ce vel in articulo mortis ch[e] vi tenghi secreto...' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, f.87r.

Given this promise, Bonelli promised that any informant would say 'what he knows about that monastery etc and about anything that you ask him'; information that was then to be sent to Rome.<sup>9</sup> 'Remember well that which they will tell you', Bonelli instructed Rodriguez, 'and afterwards, in your room, write it down'.<sup>10</sup> In Le Marche, Rodriguez could work successfully as a papal and inquisitorial spy: just as long as he did not appear to be one.

This chapter will argue that the jurisdictional autonomy that allowed the Society to work independently, and sometimes in competition with the Roman Inquisition, was also an asset in its collaborations with the Holy Office. Whilst the Jesuits tackled religious disobedience on missions for the pope and Roman Inquisition, their strategies often relied on their ability to disassociate themselves from papal institutions. This was especially true of the Society's collaborations with the Holy Office, whose links to the papacy and reputation for cruelty often impeded its work on the Italian peninsula. As we shall see, Rodriguez and Pius V had developed the strategy used in Le Marche during earlier collaborations, when Pius ran the Roman Inquisition as Cardinal Michele Ghislieri. As ostensibly independent agents, absolving heretics without involving inquisitors or bishops, the Jesuits could convert and reconcile heretics where inquisitorial commissaries faced insurmountable pastoral and political obstacles, even as they worked hand-in-glove with the Roman Inquisition.

The leaders of the Society had always negotiated their relationship to the Roman Inquisition with great care, cultivating a working dynamic whilst keeping a distance. The early Jesuits neutralised suspicions about their own orthodoxy by declaring their absolute support for the work of the cardinal-inquisitors.<sup>11</sup> Inquisitorial *decreta*, histories of the Society and mission reports describe the Jesuits collaborating with cardinal-inquisitors from the early 1550s. At the same time, Jesuit sources illustrate that the Society wanted to maintain a clear autonomy from the Holy Office. Institutional independence allowed the Jesuit Superior Generals to deploy their personnel in a manner that suited the Society's mission. It also allowed the Society to distance themselves from fear of the Roman Inquisition amongst the laity. Working autonomously, the Jesuits could forge a range of alliances within the Church, hedging their bets with the most advantageous associations during a period in which power

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<sup>9</sup> '...et vi dica quelch[e] sà di quel Monastero ec. et di qualch[e] li domanderete.' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, f.87r.

<sup>10</sup> 'Osservate bene nella memoria quello, ch[e] vi diranno, et dipoi nella stanza lo scriverete...' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, f.87r.

<sup>11</sup> Jerónimo Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronimi Nadal Societatis Jesu*, vol. 5, pp.314-5 and Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, p.262.

dynamics were often in a state of flux. The Jesuits sought all of the opportunities and protection that inquisitorial collaboration offered, but they did not want hostility to the tribunal to harm their pastoral or institutional progress.

Jesuit autonomy also benefitted the Roman Inquisition. Records indicate that both the Jesuits and cardinal-inquisitors believed that their collaborations were more successful if the Jesuits worked independently. For the cardinal-inquisitors, the Society provided orthodox agents from a range of European backgrounds who were not tied to the papacy in the popular imagination.<sup>12</sup> In sixteenth-century Italy, weak and inefficient local tribunals, lay resistance to judicial methods and political hostility meant that the Holy Office could not undertake its mission to combat religious dissent alone.<sup>13</sup> Across Italy, lay confraternities bolstered the work of local tribunals and inquisitorial commissaries.<sup>14</sup> Jesuits fulfilled many of the same roles and more, but had the added value of a distinct and novel institutional identity that alienated them from the inquisition. Thus, in Piacenza, a city with Spanish governors, an independent Jesuit agent could act as an inquisitor without representing the intervention of foreign, papal power. In a diocese such as Vulturara, where earlier inquisitorial violence prevented commissaries of the Holy Office from securing conversions, a member of the Society could endear himself to the local populace with his benign reputation before executing inquisitorial orders. On a peninsula where inquisitors faced barriers of political diplomacy and public image, the privilege to absolve heresy that empowered the Society to work in competition with the Holy Office made Jesuits some of its most valuable collaborators.

Whilst recent scholarship has incorporated the work of the Jesuits into accounts of the Roman Inquisition's use of pastoral means to control religion and morality, it has often presented the Society as a mere tool of the Holy Office.<sup>15</sup> The Jesuits' use of the privilege to absolve heresy as a mechanism of autonomy during their inquisitorial collaborations proves that this was not the case. This conclusion fits into new interpretations of social discipline in the sixteenth-century Church, which have revised traditional portrayals of a rigid and centralised Tridentine system by highlighting local resistance to Roman schemes.<sup>16</sup> Scholarship on the

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<sup>12</sup> Romeo, 'Note sull'Inquisizione Romana'.

<sup>13</sup> Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.27-9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p.28.

<sup>15</sup> Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.xiv-xvii.

<sup>16</sup> This approach is typified in the work of scholars such as Simon Ditchfield and Mary Laven. For a list of works see footnote 36 of the introduction to this thesis.

Society has also challenged the notion that the Jesuits were subordinated to central agendas, underlining the variety of roles that the Society assumed and its changing and flexible relationship to the inquisition and papacy.<sup>17</sup> By studying the role of the privilege to absolve heresy in inquisitorial collaborations we see that the Jesuits' flexibility and autonomy not only served the Society, but also the Roman Inquisition, allowing us to reconcile the picture of a fragmented and imperfect inquisitorial system with new interpretations of the Society of Jesus.

Distinction from the Holy Office also had institutional benefits for the Society. These appear to have intensified as their relationship with the inquisition became more intimate and sophisticated. In the first half of the 1550s, Loyola resisted the election of fathers to permanent inquisitorial positions. For Loyola this was impractical for the Society, taking fathers out of his obedience and hampering his ability to send Jesuits where the most spiritual fruit could be harvested. In the 1560s, the Jesuits' asserted their autonomy to protect the Society from the damaged reputation of the tribunal. In 1564, Rodriguez memorialised his refusal to work as an inquisitorial judge in an official report from a mission in the Kingdom of Naples, distancing himself from the Holy Office in a land where it was 'most hated'. In the same year, the Jesuits asked Pope Pius IV for a bull that would prevent the meddling of other inquisitors in cases of heresy related to the Society.<sup>18</sup> When soliciting this privilege the Jesuits did not call for support from their usual ally, cardinal-inquisitor Michele Ghislieri, but another member of the Holy Office who was in better standing with the pope, and not directly involved in the Society's anti-heretical missions. As the pastoral and political problems faced by the inquisition and its members worsened, the Society's autonomy became all the more valuable to the Jesuits for their missionary success and for their future as an institution.

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<sup>17</sup> Work on the Jesuits and obedience has emphasised their flexible attitude to central authorities. The concept of 'negotiated obedience', through which Jesuits reconciled norms of obedience with the demands of their own conscience, was proposed by Antonella Romano. For a reference to Romano's verbal comments see Alfieri and Ferlan (eds), *Avventure dell'obbedienza nella Compagnia di Gesù*, p.197. Mostaccio also applied the concept in her *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience* and "Perinde ac si cadaver essent". Les jésuites dans une perspective comparative: la tension constitutive entre l'obéissance et le 'representar' dans les sources normatives des réguliers', *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 105 (2010), pp.44-73. The previous interpretation of the Society as a monolithic, obedient organisation was founded on official Jesuit rules and histories and the characterisations of influential Italian scholars such as Benedetto Croce, who described the Society as an '*esercito politico*' in his *Storia della età barocca in Italia. Pensiero, poesia e letteratura. Vita morale* (Bari: Gius. Laterza and Figli, 1929), p.19. See also, Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*. On the Jesuits' flexible relationship with the Roman Inquisition see Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti e l'inquisizione Romana'.

<sup>18</sup> 'Ut contra suspectos de heresi, si quos esse contingeret, praepositus Generalis per se, vel alios procedat et puniat, nec alii inquisitores se immiscant et omnino ut societas immediate subiecta summo pontifici...'  
ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, filza 14, f.48r.

### **Competitors and collaborators with the Holy Office**

The Jesuits' solicitation and early use of the privilege to reconcile heretics is emblematic of the early Society's relationship with the Roman Inquisition. By requesting and using a power analogous to that of the inquisitors, the Jesuits confirmed their mission's reach into the realm of inquisitorial jurisdiction whilst ensuring that they could work independently of the Holy Office. Parallel strategies can be seen in the interactions between the two institutions in the early 1550s. In these years we find the earliest records of Jesuits working directly with the Holy Office, even as they undertook independent missions to convert and reconcile heretics. It was also in this period that Loyola confirmed that members of the Society would not assume permanent or long-standing inquisitorial posts. The Jesuits' aims were more strategic than they were substantial. Jesuits worked for inquisitors so that they might increase their opportunities to save souls. But by establishing the Society's institutional autonomy from the Holy Office, Loyola maintained control over the Jesuits' ministry during a crucial period for the Society's formation.

In order to understand the Society's relationship to the Roman Inquisition, we must consider when and why Jesuits asserted their autonomy. The Jesuits themselves offered reasons for their need to distinguish themselves from the early modern inquisitions from the early 1550s to the mid-1560s. Despite the value of this written reasoning, it must be compared critically with the decisions taken by the Society on a case-by-case basis, as the Jesuits' statements and actions were not always consistent. Emerging in the stormy religious, ecclesiastical and political climate of sixteenth-century Europe, members of the Society revealed themselves as consummate diplomats. As Rodriguez's instructions for Le Marche prove, outright deception was not seen as inappropriate in pursuit of the greater good. By looking critically at the Jesuits' words and actions we can assess the priorities of the Society, clarifying the motivations for decisions that might appear ambivalent.<sup>19</sup>

The privilege to absolve heretics in *foro conscientiae* gave the Society a power analogous to that of the Holy Office, allowing Jesuits to use a distinct, secret process to reconcile heretics whom the inquisitors had not detected. In Siena, Father Jerónimo Rubiols absolved and reconciled heretics autonomously, telling Duchess Elenore de Toledo that the Jesuit college

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<sup>19</sup> Mostaccio, 'A Conscious Ambiguity', pp.440-1 and Scaramella, 'I primi Gesuiti e l'Inquisizione Romana', p.148.

was working to purge Siena of Lutherans.<sup>20</sup> Rubiols and his confreres worked autonomously until they were asked by Paul IV's cardinal-inquisitors to cooperate with their commissary in Siena, a collaboration that they abandoned as soon as the opportunity arose on the death of the pope.<sup>21</sup> At the Jesuit college in Turin the rector also took the matter of reconciling heretics into his own hands. Sidelining the Holy Office, the rector claimed that 'it was not necessary to speak of inquisitors, nor of abjuration, which is a most hateful thing' to the penitent Huguenots who sought his help.<sup>22</sup> When using their privilege, Jesuits like Rubiols and Gagliardi replaced and competed with the inquisitors in the cities in which they worked, offering an appealing alternative to a judicial reconciliation.

The Society's privilege to absolve heresy was so close to the authority of the Holy Office that some conflated the role of the Jesuits with that of inquisitors. As we saw in the last chapter, the angry inquisitor in Bologna accused Salmerón and Broët of trying to establish 'a new tribunal' when they absolved heretics. A manuscript biography of Silvestro Landini, now held at the ARSI, indicates that sixteenth-century Corsicans mistook the Jesuits for inquisitors, because they had the authority to absolve heresy. The author writes that 'those first fathers [on Corsica] had some extraordinary authority, even [an] exterior [authority], so that they were commonly called the inquisitors'.<sup>23</sup> Although this biography was produced after the mission, first-hand reports corroborate this statement.<sup>24</sup> When scandalous rumours about Landini and his missionary companion reached the papal court in Rome, Loyola sent Sebastiano Romei, a man from outside of the Society, as an incognito investigator to interview Corsicans about the Jesuits' conduct.<sup>25</sup> In his report to Polanco, Romei noted that the Corsicans habitually referred to the Jesuit missionaries as the *inquisitori*.<sup>26</sup> Both

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<sup>20</sup> '...ero venuto qui a Fiorenza a parlare con la S[igno]ra duchesa...informandola di certe cose...et finalmente li ricomendai molto facessi provvedere a purgar Siena delli luterani...' Rubiols in Diego Laínez, *Lainii Monumenta*, vol. 3, pp. 548-9.

<sup>21</sup> Valerio Marchetti. *Gruppi ereticali senesi del cinquecento* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1975), pp.172-6.

<sup>22</sup> '...ve[n]gono alcuni fra[n]cesi quali no[n] inte[n]do et creda V[ostra] P[aternalità] ch[e] no[n] ci[o]e altra via p[er] aiutarli et ch[e] no[n] bisogna parlar[e] de inquisitori ne de abiuratione ch[e] e cosa odiosissima...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.169r.

<sup>23</sup> '...Pare che havessero quelli primi padri, qualche autorità straordinaria, manco esteriore perciò che erano comunemente chiamati, l'inquisitori...' ARSI, *Mediolanensis historia* 98, f.5v.

<sup>24</sup> The document is undated, but was clearly written sometime after Landini's death in 1554, possibly in preparation for his failed canonisation trial of 1612. Luongo, *Silvestro Landini e le "nostre Indie"*, p.15.

<sup>25</sup> 'Ignatius Sebastium Romaeum, nondum sacerdotum, ut virum externum, sub Cornelli nomine, incognitum exploratorem misit, qui in socios inquireret et Ignatio rem totam nuntiaret.' Note in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.2, p.657, fn.2.

<sup>26</sup> Romei, *Epistolae Mixtae*, vol.3, p.128.

consciously and by mistake, it seems Jesuits in Italy were identified with the inquisition because of the power that allowed them to reconcile heretics.

The Society competed with the inquisitors, but they also collaborated with the Holy Office from the early 1550s. In Rome, Jesuit theologians catechised and absolved men in the jails of the inquisition.<sup>27</sup> Others helped to compile the Index of Prohibited Books.<sup>28</sup> In Modena, Siena, Florence and Naples, members of the Society informed the Holy Office of local dissenters, bringing inquisitors news of suspect parishioners and dangerous preachers working in their area.<sup>29</sup> Some fathers even took on official inquisitorial roles, working as delegates or commissaries of the Holy Office in a particular locale.<sup>30</sup> On 6 October 1553, for example, inquisitorial *decreta* note that 'Doctor Bobadilla of the Society of Jesus shall be made commissary in the province of the Marches of Ancona'.<sup>31</sup> Just a few weeks later, a *decretum* tells us that 'an Anconian apostate shall be reconciled by the Reverend Commissary', indicating that Bobadilla had told them of plans to absolve a penitent-heretic.<sup>32</sup> Members of the Society used their privilege to operate autonomously, but they also used it in direct collaboration with the cardinal-inquisitors.

By the early 1550s, the Roman Inquisition was the most powerful body of cardinals. Alliances with its members were valuable. Prominent cardinal-inquisitors such as Gian Pietro Carafa had a clear agenda for post-Reformation Catholicism and punished those who obstructed their goals.<sup>33</sup> Other members of the congregation offered the Jesuits support

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<sup>27</sup> See the case of Diego Perez, a Portuguese Jew jailed by the Roman Inquisition after being accused of practicing Judaism after Catholic baptism. Perez was absolved by the Jesuits and sent to them for catechesis: 'Didacus Perez - Dederunt licentiam confitendi peccata sua alicui ex Societate D.N. Jhesu Christi, qui illum absolvat in foro conscientiae ut possit cum aliis communicare.' ACDF, *Decreta 1548-58 copia*, p.230. 'Didacus Portughesis. Accepta obligatione iuratoria sub poena triremium relaxetur et consignetur do[mi]no Gnatio ad effectum instruendi et ibi assignarunt pro carcere illum locum...' Ibid., p.241.

<sup>28</sup> Pavone, *I gesuiti*, p.24.

<sup>29</sup> See the case of Bobadilla and Father Andrea de Oviedo informing on Franciscan preacher Sisto di Siena in Naples in 1552. For Oviedo's denunciation see ACDF, *Stanza Storica R-4-E*, ff.329r-331r. On the case see, Scaramella, *L'inquisizioni, eresie, etnie: dissenso religioso e giustizia ecclesiastica in Italia (secc. XVI-XVIII)* (Bari: Carucci, 2005), pp.98-100.

<sup>30</sup> On inquisitorial commissaries see Andrea Del Col, 'Commissario del Sant'Uffizio, Italia' in Prosperi (ed.), *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol.1, p.352. On the lay police or *familiars* of the Holy Office see Dennj Solera, 'I familiares del Sant'Uffizio romano. Un profilo istituzionale e sociale dei servitori dell'Inquisizione papale', *Riforma e movimenti religiosi: rivista della Società di studi valdesi* (Turin: Claudiana, 2017), pp.277-286.

<sup>31</sup> 'Doctor Bo[b]adilla Societatis Yhesus, fiat ei commissio in provinciae Marchiae Anconitanae.' ACDF, *Decreta 1548-58 copia*, p.228.

<sup>32</sup> '...Apostata Anconitanus - Reconcilietur per Rev[eren]dum Commissarium...' Ibid., p.230.

<sup>33</sup> Firpo, *La presa di potere*, p.ix.

through their inquisitorial role and dynastic influence. Landini responded to cardinal-inquisitor Juan Alvarez Toledo's call to go to 'the environs of Florence, Ferrara and Lucca, and others nearby' to deal with the infection of heresy and other Jesuits informed Toledo about individual heretics they had discovered.<sup>34</sup> In return the Jesuits claimed that the cardinal-inquisitor was an exceptional patron of the Society, a 'defender of us in all our affairs'.<sup>35</sup> When Loyola sent fathers to establish a college in the Tuscan territories of Cosimo I de' Medici, they went to his wife, Duchess Elenore, Toledo's niece, armed with letters of recommendation from her uncle.<sup>36</sup> Toledo also supported the establishment of Jesuit colleges in Pisa and Spain, making it clear that collaborations with the Roman Inquisition not only gave the Jesuits security and occasions to save more souls, but also opportunities for institutional expansion.

Sometimes Jesuits refused or terminated work for the Holy Office. Such incidences were infrequent. Nonetheless, the scarcity of such refusals makes them all the more valuable, as they offer an insight into the freedoms that the Society fought to retain, even in negotiations with their key allies.

Some refusals were motivated by reasons of government. Loyola and Laínez, the first Superior Generals of the Society, worried that placing Jesuits in official, permanent inquisitorial offices would disturb the internal hierarchy of the order. This was evident in their discussion of the request of King John III of Portugal, who asked that the Society staff his inquisition in Lisbon in 1556. Loyola and Laínez had serious misgivings. Loyola was concerned with the authority that an inquisitorial position would confer, worrying 'about the honour of the occupation' of 'taking and condemning' heretics.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, Laínez objected because of the 'great deal of authority that the inquisitors have in Spain', which could

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<sup>34</sup> '...Dominus Joannes de Toledo, qui haereticae pravitatis Inquisitor erat, optabat ut P[ater] Sylvester in illis confinibus ditionis Florentiae et Ferrariensis et Lucensis, et aliis vicinis, quae male audiebant propter haeresis infectionem, concionaretur, id ei P[ater] Ignatius serio comendavit.' Polanco, *Vita ignatii Loiolae*, vol.2, p.23.

<sup>35</sup> Luis Gonçalves da Câmara in Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitz (eds.), *Remembering Iñigo: glimpses of the life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: the Memoriale of Luis Gonçalves da Câmara* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), p.225.

<sup>36</sup> Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.3, pp.718-9.

<sup>37</sup> 'En lo que toca al cargo de la inquisición, ver que S.A. se serviría dello, quando no repuñase á nuestro instituto, mucho nos inclinaría á tomar tal assumpto; per la cosa es de mucha consideración; y así por la dignidad como por la ocupación, y más que todo por la autoridad y officio de prender y condenar, temo mucho no sea cosa que sea cosa que se compadezca con nuestro modo de proceder.' Loyola to Jacob Miro in *ibid.*, p.163.



undermine the Society's aim 'to help souls with the spirit of humility'.<sup>38</sup> These concerns show that the Jesuits thought that the status of the inquisitor, rather than on his aims or methods, was contrary to the Jesuits' mission. On a committee of prominent Jesuits, half of whom had undertaken inquisitorial duties, the Superior General and his successor were outnumbered by fathers who saw no problem with inquisitorial work and wished to accept the task.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, the Superior General and his successor did not object to fathers working for the Holy Office, but they wanted as much authority as possible to dictate, who, when and where.

During an inquisitorial mission in 1552, Loyola had demonstrated his desire to decide when and where Jesuits exerted their energies in Italy. On the request of cardinal-inquisitor Toledo, Loyola had sent Father Andrea Galvanello to act as ordinary in the town of Morbegno in Valtellina. This Alpine territory was a refuge for heretics from Italy and northern Europe, and governed by the Zwinglian Three Grey Leagues.<sup>40</sup> An inquisitor had been sent to the region but been unsuccessful in his mission to convert Protestants and encourage the Catholic community in the area.<sup>41</sup> The cardinal-inquisitors in Rome charged Galvanello to protect the orthodox from heretical contamination whilst they undertook the difficult task of finding a permanent ordinary who was not 'a wolf, being a heretic'.<sup>42</sup> But when this endeavour took longer than the 'five or six months' that Loyola had envisaged, the Superior General revoked Galvanello from the inquisitorial mission.<sup>43</sup>

As Loyola would confirm in the *Constitutions*, he did not want Jesuits working in fixed positions for external authorities for longer than three months.<sup>44</sup> This could only be 'longer or shorter in proportion to the greater or lesser spiritual fruit which is seen to be reaped there or

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<sup>38</sup> 'As rezões por que ao P. Layez não parecia que se aceytasse a inquisição era polla muita autoridade que tem os inquisidores em Espanha, da qual elle, com razão, dizia que avião os da Companhia de fugir, pois nosso instituto he ajudar às almas com espirito de humildade.' Candidus de Dalmases and Fernandez Zapico (eds), *Monumenta Ignatiana. Series quarta. Scripta de S. Ignatio. Fontes Narrativi de Sancto Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis. Narrationes scriptae ante annum 1557* (Rome: Societatis Iesu, 1943), pp.732-3.

<sup>39</sup> Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.9, p.215.

<sup>40</sup> Giancarlo Andenna, 'The Lombard Church in the Late Middle Ages' in Gamberini (ed.), *A Companion to Late Medieval and Early Modern Milan. The Distinctive Features of an Italian State*, p.101; Antonio Rotondó, 'Esuli italiani in Valtellina nel cinquecento', *Rivista storica italiana*, 88 (1976), p.759 and Giampaolo Zucchini, *Riforma e società nei Grigioni* (Coira: Archivio di Stato e Biblioteca Cantonale dei Grigioni, 1978), p.14.

<sup>41</sup> Scaduto, *L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione, 1556-1565* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1974), p.660.

<sup>42</sup> 'Pur sucedendo che un'altra terra nella medesima vale, chiamata fossino in grave pericolo de pigliare uno pastore, più presto lupo, essendo heretico...' Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.5, p.631.

<sup>43</sup> '...vi ho mandato in Morbegno per 5 o 6 mesi; et pur, vedendo che la provigione di un'altro non era fatta, vi ho permesso stare così insin' al presente.' Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.5, p.631. '...vi leviamo di là per aiutarci di vostra opera nelli nostri collegi...' Loyola, *ibid.*, p.530.

<sup>44</sup> Loyola, Ganss (ed. and trans.), *The Constitutions*, p.270.

is expected elsewhere'.<sup>45</sup> In September 1553, the spiritual harvest in the difficult mission territory of Valtellina could not compare with the 'great need' of Galvanello at the Society's college in Venice.<sup>46</sup> Loyola was willing to help the inquisition, but asserted his authority to assign members of the Society the tasks that he thought most important, even when this took them away from inquisitorial roles.

Loyola was clearly in a position to negotiate the Society's dealings with the Roman Inquisition. The cardinal-inquisitors' assent to Loyola's request is recorded in the *decreta* of 31 August 1553.<sup>47</sup> As the Superior General explained to Galvanello, 'I have informed those Most Reverend Cardinal Inquisitors and they were happy that we get you out of there to help us with your work in our colleges.'<sup>48</sup> Loyola's subsequent instructions to Galvanello underline the assertion of his will over the needs of the Roman Inquisition. Although Galvanello would be travelling to the Jesuit college in Venice first, he would soon return to Valtellina. But next time Galvanello would work under Loyola's direction. The Superior General was well aware of the local desire to retain Galvanello in Morbegno and the potential upset about the Superior General's to move him to Venice. 'Keep all of this secret' he advised Galvanello, 'so that those from Morbegno who want you cannot write to Rome, nor put an obstacle in the way of this revocation'.<sup>49</sup> Despite the wishes of the inquisitors and local demand, Loyola wanted his men under his control, not locked into a long-term post for the Holy Office.

The Jesuits' own privileges and numerous collaborations with the Roman Inquisition are a testament to their willingness to lend a hand in the battle against heresy, even in explicitly inquisitorial roles. The cardinal-inquisitors offered the Jesuits opportunities for ministry and institutional support as a powerful political body in the Catholic Church and through their broader dynastic links. But in the Society's formative years, Jesuit authorities maintained operational independence from the inquisitions, so that they might control their own pastoral and institutional mission. The cardinal-inquisitors' easy assent to Loyola's inconvenient revocation of Galvanello indicates that they recognised and respected Jesuit autonomy. But,

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<sup>45</sup> Loyola, Ganss (ed. and trans.), *The Constitutions*, p.270.

<sup>46</sup> Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.5, p.529.

<sup>47</sup> 'Revocetur ille de Societate Ihesu in Morbegno.' ACDF, *Decreta 1548-58 - copia*, p.222 [f.115r]

<sup>48</sup> '...ho informato questi R[everendissimi]mi Signori cardinali, et cosi sono stati contenti che vi leviamo di là per aiutarci di vostra opera nelli nostri collegi...' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.5, p.530.

<sup>49</sup> '...pur tenga tutto questo secreto, acciò che la parte che lo desidera de Morbegno non possa scriver a Roma, nè dar impachio in questa rivocazione...' Ibid., p.459.

as we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, the Holy Office was not acting selflessly. For the Jesuits' ability to act independently, or, at least, to appear to do so, benefitted the Inquisition as well as the Society.

### **Popes, empires and the politics of conversion**

The Roman Inquisition faced political hostility in Italy, which the Jesuits could overcome. The pope whom the inquisitors represented was both a spiritual and a temporal power: the head of the Roman Catholic Church and the prince of the Papal States, which cut a vast swathe across Central Italy. But on the Italian peninsula the pope was just one prince amongst many. Depending on the occupant of the See of St Peter, his family ties and his ambitions, the pope of Rome was either an ally or rival to the princes who ruled the other Italian states.<sup>50</sup> To complicate matters further, the patchwork of territories in sixteenth-century Italy was dominated by foreign rule. From the Duchy of Milan to the Kingdom of Naples, some of Italy's largest and most powerful lands fell within the Habsburg sphere of influence.<sup>51</sup> Relations between the papacy and empire could be frosty, and sometimes bloody. Although the pope had given the Roman Inquisition jurisdiction over heresy across the peninsula, political hostility between the pope, rulers of Italian states and their foreign allies often impeded the cardinal-inquisitors' ability to assert their influence on or through local tribunals. As members of a new religious order with no formal, public tie to the pope or his inquisition, the early Jesuits did not face the same resistance. When Jesuits worked for the Holy Office in states hostile to Roman interference, the Society and the papal inquisition benefitted from the independence established by Loyola in the early 1550s.

The concerns of temporal leaders prevented the papal inquisition from exerting its authority in many major states of sixteenth-century Italy. The government of Venice refused to cede complete control over the prosecution of heresy.<sup>52</sup> In Lucca, the papal tribunal was seen as an instrument of foreign power seeking to intervene in state affairs, with no respect for local

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<sup>50</sup> In his *Il sovrano pontefice* Paolo Prodi argued that, from the fifteenth century, the papacy played a decisive role in the development of the modern state.

<sup>51</sup> On the Spanish in early modern Italy, see Piers Baker-Bates and Miles Pattenden (eds), *The Spanish Presence in sixteenth-century Italy. Images of Iberia* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015) and Thomas James Dandeleit and John A. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy. Politics, Society, and Religion 1500-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>52</sup> Del Col, 'Le strutture territoriali e l'attività dell'Inquisizione Romana' in Agostino Borromeo (ed.), *L'Inquisizione. Atti del Simposio internazionale* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2003), pp.356-357. On the inquisition in Venice see Riccardo Calimani, *L'Inquisizione a Venezia: eretici e processi, 1548-1674* (Milan: Mondadori, 2002) and Del Col, 'Organizzazione, composizione e giurisdizione dei tribunali dell'Inquisizione romana nella repubblica di Venezia (1500-1550)', *Critica storica*, 25 (1988), pp. 244-294.

civic laws.<sup>53</sup> Ten years after the establishment of the Roman Inquisition, Gian Pietro Carafa had to ask Father Laínez if he would recommend the authority of the Holy Office of the Inquisition to the Duke of Florence, Cosimo I de' Medici, who insisted on electing his own inquisitors and demanded the presence of state representatives at almost every stage of the inquisitorial process.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, in some states, state control of anti-heretical measures was a matter of great political and diplomatic sensitivity. This was true of Ferrara and Savoy-Piedmont.<sup>55</sup> In an attempt to build alliances with France, both Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara and Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy had married French princesses. But the standing of both dukes in Italy was damaged by their wives' suspected heresy.<sup>56</sup> To further complicate matters, the diplomatic advantages of their marriages would have been entirely compromised if they had angered their French allies with an embarrassing investigation into the orthodoxy of the princesses, by local investigators or the Inquisition. The pope was still head of Catholic Christendom, but his position as prince of the Papal States and the potential political backlash from inquisitorial investigations, meant that there was resistance to the Roman Inquisition, even amongst Catholic princes in Italy.

Relations between state powers and the delegates of the Roman Inquisition were particularly complex in Piacenza. In 1547, after half a century of jostling between the papacy, France and Habsburg forces, Piacenza was ceded to the governors of Emperor Charles V.<sup>57</sup> Triumph for the imperial side came with a highly personal attack on Pope Paul III, the murder of his most beloved son, Pierluigi Farnese, whom he had made duke of Parma and Piacenza.<sup>58</sup> The murder was thought to have been carried out by allies of the imperial viceroy of Milan,

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<sup>53</sup> Adorni-Bracessi, 'La Repubblica di Lucca e l'«*abborrita*» Inquisizione' in Del Col and Paolin (eds), *L'Inquisizione Romana in Italia nell'età moderna*, p.234.

<sup>54</sup> Polanco, *Vita ignatii Loiolae*, vol.2, p.177.

<sup>55</sup> On Ferrara see Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara'. On Piedmont see Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del duca'.

<sup>56</sup> Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara', p.71. Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del duca', pp.418-9.

<sup>57</sup> Piero Castignoli, *Eresia e inquisizione a Piacenza nel cinquecento* (Piacenza: Tipleco, 2008), p.81. On political-jurisdictional changes in sixteenth-century Piacenza see Ditchfield, *Liturgy, sanctity and history in Tridentine Italy*, pp.9-10.

<sup>58</sup> Hubert Jedin in Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik and Hubert Jedin, Anselm Biggs and Peter W. Becker (trans.), *Reformation and Counter Reformation* (London: Burns and Oates, 1980), p.474. See also, Maria José Bertomeu Masiá, *La guerra secreta de Carlos V contra el Papa. La cuestión de Parma y Piacenza en la correspondencia del cardenal Granvela. Edición, estudio y notas* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2009), pp.28-52. O'Malley discusses the conflict in the context of debates between the emperor and the pope about the relocation of the Council of Trent in *Trent: What happened at the Council*, p.134.

Ferrante Gonzaga.<sup>59</sup> Gonzaga was soon to deal another blow to the pope. When Paul III founded the Roman Inquisition in 1542, Piacenza's own inquisitorial tribunal became subject to the Holy Office at Rome. After taking control of the city in 1547, however, Gonzaga repudiated the authority of the pope's inquisition, declaring that the new Piacentine state had supreme jurisdiction in all cases of heresy.<sup>60</sup>

Throughout the late 1540s and early 1550s, the governing élite of Piacenza failed to cooperate with the local inquisitors to combat the heresy that was rampant in the city.<sup>61</sup> When the *podestà* of Piacenza, Pietro Antonio Marliano, asked inquisitor Callisto Fornari for the names of those whom he suspected of heresy and what evidence he had against them Fornari rejected the request outright.<sup>62</sup> The inquisitor even threatened the governors of the city, telling them that temporal authorities had no right to interfere in his work, lest they incur 'the censures and excommunications provided by His Holiness' Julius III for such cases.<sup>63</sup> Hostility towards Fornari was equally vehement. In a letter to Ferrante Gonzaga, Marliano wrote that Fornari was so disliked in Piacenza that an insulting sonnet mocking the inquisitor had been 'found attached to diverse places of the city'.<sup>64</sup> Years of hostility between the

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<sup>59</sup> O'Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council*, p.134. On the assassination of Pier Luigi Farnese see also Stefano dall'Aglio & Donald Weinstein (trans.), *The Duke's Assassin: Exile and Death of Lorenzino De' Medici* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 102 and 179. Dall'Aglio demonstrates that the murder of Pier Luigi Farnese was just one of a string of high-profile assassinations ordered by Charles V against his perceived enemies in Italy.

<sup>60</sup> Castignoli, *Eresia e inquisizione a Piacenza*, p.83.

<sup>61</sup> 'Nell'anno 1557 essendo dall'Inquisitore stata usata grandissima dilige[n]za per trovare gli heretici, ò sospetti d'heresia, che erano in Piacenza; havendogli ancora à ciò dato il suo favore il Duca Ottavio, ne furono circa trenta, i quali erano heretice, and molti altri sospetti...' Umberto Locati, *Cronica dell'origine di Piacenza già latinamente fatta per il R.P. Omberto Locati, and hora dal medesimo, ridotta fedelmente nella volgare nostra favella* (Cremona: Vincenzo Conti, 1564), p.305. On heresy in Piacenza see, Gianmarco Braghi, *L'accademia degli Ortolani (1543-1545). Eresia, stampa e cultura a Piacenza nel medio Cinquecento* (Piacenza: Edizioni L.I.R., 2011); Castignoli, *Eresia e inquisizione a Piacenza nel cinquecento*; Salvatore Caponetto, Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (trans.), *The Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Italy* (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999), p.226; Federico Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1962), pp.168-70; 191-2 and Franco Molinari, *Il cardinale teatino beato Paolo Buriali e la riforma tridentina a Piacenza (1568-1576)* (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1957).

<sup>62</sup> '...fu risolto in Consiglio di scrivere al potestà di quella città che vedesse di intender[e] dal inquisitor quale erano quelle persone contra quali si procedeva, et se gli erano inditii urgenti contra di loro, et avisasse.' ASMil, *Documenti diplomatici post 1535*, 148, ff.514 and 519, edited in Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti*, p.274. '...ma non ne ho potuto ritrare altro, perché me ha risposto non potere propalare alcuna cosa circa ciò...' ASMil, *Documenti diplomatici post 1535*, 148, f.517. Edited in Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti*, p.273.

<sup>63</sup> '...incorra le censure et escomunicazioni comminate da Sua Santità in questa materia, come per l'alligato transonto de le bolle...potrà vedere.' Edited in Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti*, p.273. Fornari referred to a brief of Pope Julius III of March 1551, which stated that civil authorities could not intervene in inquisitorial business.

<sup>64</sup> '...e da lí a due giorni si è trovato attaccato in diversi luoghi de la città un sonetto in vituperio d'esso frate...'

inquisitorial tribunal and the city's Spanish governors hampered the ability of both inquisitorial and state authorities to identify and convert the city's heretics.<sup>65</sup>

The acrimony between Piacenza's inquisitors and temporal authorities was exacerbated when accusations of heresy were directed against the city's élite. In a sermon of 1549, Fornari had claimed that Protestantism was rife amongst the Piacentine nobility.<sup>66</sup> The local inquisitor did not see the high social status of his accusants as an obstacle to acting upon his suspicions. According to a letter written in May 1552 by the governor of Piacenza, Garcia Manrique, the officials of the inquisition tried to proceed against many citizens of the city, acting impertinently and 'putting the spirits of many in a mess and a muddle'.<sup>67</sup> Manrique had admonished Fornari, suggesting that, in the future, the inquisitor proceed with the necessary finesse in such matters.<sup>68</sup> But Fornari proved unresponsive and relations between the papal tribunal and the Piacentine élite remained hostile.

Attempting to resolve this stalemate, the cardinal-inquisitors of Rome sent a Spanish Jesuit, Martin de Olave, to reconcile heretics in the city. The mission was instigated by Manrique himself, who had expressed severe concerns about the orthodoxy of his wife, Isabella Bresegna, in a conversation with his nephew Cardinal Francesco Bobadilla y Mendoza.<sup>69</sup> Manrique did not want to humiliate his wife, but the accusations of heterodoxy that had followed her since the 1540s were a source of public scandal.<sup>70</sup> Recognising the delicacy of the situation, Cardinal Mendoza contacted Loyola through a secretary who travelled to Rome

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ASMil, *Documenti diplomatici post 1535*, 149, f.672. Edited in Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti*, p.275.

<sup>65</sup>This persisted even after the Farnese returned to Piacenza, for example in the duke's attempted revocation of local inquisitor Umberto Locati. Ditchfield, 'Umberto Locati O.P. (1503-1587): Inquisitore, Vescovo e Storico - un profilo bio-bibliografico', *Bolletino Storico Piacentino*, 84, (1989), p.212.

<sup>66</sup> Molinari, *Il cardinale teatino beato Paolo Buriali*, p.33.

<sup>67</sup> '...questi ufficiali della inquisitione (per dirla) impertinatamente et fuore di tempo cercano di procedere contra molti cittadini mettendi in garbuglio et scompiglio gli animi di molti...'

ASMil, *Documenti diplomatici post 1535*, 148, f.79. Edited in Chabod, *Per la storia religiosa dello Stato di Milano durante il dominio di Carlo V. Note e documenti*, p.273.

<sup>68</sup> '...gli ho fatto parlare, pregandoli et essortandogli...che procedano con quella destrezza che si conviene...' Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, vol.4, pp.139-40.

<sup>70</sup> On Bresegna see Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius von Loyola als Mensch und Theologe* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), pp. 197-206; Camilla Russell, *Giulia Gonzaga and the religious controversies of sixteenth-century Italy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp.80-1 and 87. See also, Caponetto (ed.), *Benedetto da Mantova. Il Beneficio di Cristo. Con le versioni del secolo XVI, documenti e testimonianze* (Chicago: Newberry Library, 1972), pp.449-50, fn.11. Caponetto is incorrect when he states that Isabella fled Piacenza in 1553, a year before Olave's arrival.

in person to put to him in words what was not to be committed to letters.<sup>71</sup> Mendoza liaised with Loyola and their mutual ally Cardinal Toledo to find somebody who could undertake the task successfully, seeing to the 'spiritual health of that person who has such necessity of it' whilst 'procuring it without any particular dishonour or hearsay'.<sup>72</sup> Olave was selected for the mission and officially charged by cardinal-inquisitor Toledo to visit 'a certain court' at Piacenza, which was 'infected by the fraud of the Demon, by Lutheran heresy, or certainly vehemently suspected' to be.<sup>73</sup> In Piacenza, Toledo ordered Olave to convert and absolve Bresegna and any heretics in her circle, reconciling 'everyone, who is in the said house or family'.<sup>74</sup>

The patent given to Olave by cardinal-inquisitor Toledo granted the Jesuit powers that were even greater than those that the Society had received from the Julius III, extending them so that he could absolve heretics in *utroque foro*, that is in either the internal or external forum.<sup>75</sup> Whilst Olave's papal privileges allowed him to absolve and reconcile heretics in place of an inquisitor, they did not empower him to reverse any existing inquisitorial condemnation or censure. With Toledo's patent, Olave could reconcile heretics unknown to the Holy Office and reverse any sentences that had been executed by Fornari. The instructions from Toledo make the intention of Olave's powers clear, stating that he 'should restore [members of the court] to integrity of reputation' and make 'them and their descendants suitable for each and every position, dignity, honour, office and benefice'.<sup>76</sup> In his official instructions for the mission, Loyola told Olave that all were to be treated with discretion and that Toledo had ordered the Jesuit to receive 'the abjurations and acts [of faith] from them, [so] that matters that relate to the external forum proceed judicially, but secretly'.<sup>77</sup> In Piacenza, Olave had

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<sup>71</sup> 'Scripsit ergo P[atri] Ignatio et misit quemdam ex suis domesticis ut verbo ipsi explicaret quod litteris committendum non erat...' Polanco, *Vita Ignatii Loiolae*, vol.4, p.139. See also Mendoza to Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola epistolae et instructiones*, vol.6, p.704.

<sup>72</sup> 'Y pues my fin es la salud spiritual del que está tan neçessitado della y tengo obligaçión á procuralla syn infamia ny rumor special...' Mendoza to Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola epistolae et instructiones*, vol.6, p.506

<sup>73</sup> 'Cum autres n[ost]ras pervenerit, quandam familia, de qua tecum verbo egimus, haeresi lutherana, vel aliis forsan, Daemonis fraude infectam fuisse, vel certe vehementer suspectam...' ARSI, *Institutum 194*, f.73r.

<sup>74</sup> '...ab omnibus et singulis sententiis, censuris ecclesiasticis, ac allis quibuscunq[ue] poenis absolvas, et singulos eorum, qui in dicta domo sunt vel familia ad integritatem famare restituas, eosq[ue] ac descendent ipsor[um] ad omnes et singulos gradus, dignitates, honores, officia et beneficia respective habilites, tibi auctoritate, ac facultatem impartimur.' ARSI, *Institutum 194*, f.73r.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> 'Con esto el Card. de Santiago dize que V[uestra] R[everencia] trayga consigo las abjuraciones y actos etc, y que la cosa que toca al foro exterior passe iurídica, aunque secretamente.' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola epistolae et instructiones*, vol.6, p.507.

both the power to replace the failed inquisitors and to delicately reverse any damage that they had done.

As a Spanish Jesuit, Olave was in a much better position than the Italian inquisitor to carry out this delicate mission. As a Jesuit, rather than an inquisitor, he was distinct from the notion of papal interference. His Iberian patrimony also distanced him from association with Roman power. In Spanish Italy, there was a belief in the strength of Iberian identity, a *unitas generis*, based on language, morality, psychology and thought.<sup>78</sup> During the early 1550s, many wished to see solely Spanish governors in the Duchy of Milan.<sup>79</sup> The Jesuits themselves acknowledged common nationality as a diplomatic tool, sending Spanish fathers to govern Jesuits in Iberian-ruled areas of the peninsula, where Italian fathers complained of their characteristically Spanish rigour.<sup>80</sup> This distinctive character was certainly seen as an asset by those who organised the mission to Piacenza, who stated that Olave had the 'ears and tongue necessary for this matter'. Olave's background also helped him practically. Bresegna herself spoke Italian with some difficulty.<sup>81</sup> In the wake of conflicts between papal nobility and Spanish Habsburg forces, Olave's Jesuit identity and kinship with Manrique's house ingratiated him with his Piacentine hosts, whilst alienating him from the local inquisitors and all that they represented.

It was not only on missions to Spanish territories that Jesuits would use their institutional distinctiveness and shared patrimony to try to convert heretics. In the same month as Olave set out for Piacenza, French Jesuit Jean Pelletier went to the court of Ercole d'Este to convert his Protestant wife, Renée of France. In a mission of similar sensitivity, Pelletier assumed a role that could not be undertaken by the duke's local inquisitors or directly by the cardinal-inquisitors of Rome.<sup>82</sup> In Ferrara, Renée's heresy was a scandal.<sup>83</sup> She had even invited John

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<sup>78</sup> Chabod, *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell'epoca di Carlo V* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1971), pp.215-6. On the importance of Spanish identity in the politics of the Duchy of Milan at the end of the reign of Charles V and the beginning of Philip II, see Chabod, *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell'epoca di Carlo V*, pp.215-225. On the Spanish in Italy see Dandeleit and Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy*. On the Jesuits and other religious orders in Spanish Italy see Flavio Rurale, 'Male religious orders in Sixteenth-century Italy' in Dandeleit and Marino (eds), *ibid.*, pp. 481-516.

<sup>79</sup> Chabod, *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell'epoca di Carlo V*, p.219 and pp.222-3.

<sup>80</sup> Esther Jimenez Pablo, 'The Evolution of the Society of Jesus during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: an Order that Favoured the Papacy or the Hispanic Monarchy?' in Massimo Carlo Giannini, *Papacy, Religious Orders, and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Rome: Viella, 2013), pp.54-5.

<sup>81</sup> Castignoli, *Eresia e inquisizione a Piacenza*, p.85.

<sup>82</sup> For Pelletier's plan to convert Renée see his letter to Loyola in *Epistolae mixtae*, vol.4, pp.119-21.

<sup>83</sup> On Renée of France see also, Bartolomeo Fontana, *Renata di Francia, duchessa di Ferrara* (Rome: Forzani, 1889-1890).



Calvin to the ducal court.<sup>84</sup> But political concerns prevented the local inquisitors and cardinals of the Holy Office in Rome from even trying to convert the princess. Renée was the daughter of the late King Louis XII of France and cousin to the king regnant, Henry II. In an effort to win French favour, Paul III had banned d'Este's local inquisitors from trying to convert the princess.<sup>85</sup> This put Renée directly under the jurisdiction of the cardinal-inquisitors but, as delegates of the pope, they were unlikely to risk an intervention that could anger or embarrass the king of France.<sup>86</sup> Once again, a Jesuit offered the diplomatic solution. Pelletier was a Frenchman but an ally of Ferrara and Rome. Moreover, with his autonomous identity and jurisdiction, he could act independently of both duke and pope. As with Olave in Piacenza, Pelletier distanced himself from the political acrimony excited by the ducal and Roman inquisition to intervene in the conversion of a member of the foreign élite, making himself an asset to both the state and to Rome.

Ultimately, Olave and Pelletier were unsuccessful in their attempts to convert the foreign noblewomen and their circles. Just weeks after Olave's arrival in Piacenza in March 1554, Manrique wrote to Loyola of his great sadness at the Jesuit's imminent departure.<sup>87</sup> The following year Bresegna's rejection of Catholic norms was confirmed when Giulio Basalù told the inquisition at Venice that she had an heretical 'opinion of justification' and had denied the value of 'the sacraments and the Mass'.<sup>88</sup> In 1557, Bresegna vindicated her accusers, fleeing Italy for Protestant Tübingen before travelling to Zürich and settling in Calvinist Chiavenna.<sup>89</sup> Renée of France abjured her heresy under Pelletier's influence, but she too fled the peninsula for France after her husband's death in 1559.<sup>90</sup> Later the demise of her powerful Catholic son-in-law, Francois, Duke of Guise, granted Renée the liberty to live openly as a Calvinist in France, where she acted as a patron and protector of Protestants.

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<sup>84</sup> Church, *The Italian Reformers*, p.86.

<sup>85</sup> Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara', p.81.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.82.

<sup>87</sup> Manrique in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola epistolae et instructiones*, vol.6, p.498.

<sup>88</sup> See the denunciation of Giulio Basalù to the Venetian inquisition: 'Questi, che nominarò apresso, tenevano la sopraditta oppinione della giustificazion[e] insieme con quelle conseguenze di principio de' sacramenti et contraditti di sopra...quelli che nominarò apresso tenevano le sopraditte oppinion[e] e di più negevano li sacramenti e la messa: don Germano de Minadois, messer Lattanzio Ragnoni, donna Brianda mogliera del tesorier, la signora Lurcrezia Pugiola, il baron de Bernaldo, don Zorzi marich, donna Isabella Briseegna...' Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Sant'Uffizio*, busta 159, ff.37r-v and 38v. Edited in Caponetto (ed.), *Benedetto da Mantova*, pp.448-9. Russell, *Giulia Gonzaga*, p.166.

<sup>89</sup> Russell, *Giulia Gonzaga*, p.166.

<sup>90</sup> Blaisdell, 'Politics and Heresy in Ferrara', p.87; Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Italy*, pp.242-3.

Although both missions failed, the examples of Piacenza and Ferrara illuminate the extent to which politics, within and without the peninsula, affected the operations of the Roman Inquisition and its satellite tribunals. The Society had not yet earned the indelible association with papal Rome that would ornament, or, in the work of their detractors, taint their reputation.<sup>91</sup> As a new, international religious order, the Jesuits provided inquisitors with autonomous agents who could execute inquisitorial will where politics hampered the success of explicitly inquisitorial delegates. Common heritage with temporal powers further alienated these Jesuits from Italian papal power and ingratiated them with their hosts. On other missions, the Jesuits' distinction from the Roman Inquisition facilitated dialogue with heretics on a personal as well as a political level. As the years wore on and popular hostility to the Holy Office grew, the contrast between the pastoral image of the Jesuits and the more authoritarian character of the inquisitors became starker, and so an increasingly important asset of the Society's work for the Roman Inquisition.

### **Good cop/ bad cop: conversion strategies in the 1560s**

Pope Paul IV had sought to undermine the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy, but events of the 1560s indicate that, ultimately, his anti-heretical initiatives made them more valuable, and especially to the Roman Inquisition. During his pontificate as Paul IV, former cardinal-inquisitor Gian Pietro Carafa expanded inquisitorial authority, jealously guarding the tribunal's power and limiting the jurisdiction of others involved in the fight against heresy.<sup>92</sup> Carafa was a vehement opponent of religious dissenters, reputedly claiming that 'if my own father were a heretic, I would gather the wood to burn him'.<sup>93</sup> He firmly believed that his inquisition's jurisdiction trumped that of secular powers.<sup>94</sup> In the last years of the 1550s, Paul IV ordered confessors to refuse absolution to penitent dissenters who had not revealed themselves to his all-powerful inquisitors, effectively undermining the Jesuits' privilege, until

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<sup>91</sup> On the historiography and mythologies surrounding the history of the Jesuits see, for example, O'Malley, 'The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where does it stand today?' and Pavone, *The Wily Jesuits and the Monita secreta: The Forged Secret Instructions of the Jesuits: Myth and Reality* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005).

<sup>92</sup> Daniele Santarelli, 'Dinamiche interne della Congregazione del Sant'Uffizio dal 1542 al 1572', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 97 (2013), pp.9-10. See also, Firpo, *La presa di potere*.

<sup>93</sup> '...se nostro padre fusse heretico noi li portassemo le fascine per abrucciarlo.' The quote was given by Venetian ambassador, Bernardo Navagero on 23 Oct 1557. See Santarelli (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Bernardo Navagero, ambasciatore veneziano a Roma (1555-1558)* (Rome: Aracne, 2011), p.587-90.

<sup>94</sup> Santarelli, *Il papato di Paolo IV nella crisi politico-religiosa del Cinquecento: le relazioni con la Repubblica di Venezia e l'atteggiamento nei confronti di Carlo V e Filippo II* (Rome: Aracne, 2008), pp.170-1.

cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri won them an exemption.<sup>95</sup> By his death in 1559, Paul IV's focus on punitive means of combating heresy had damaged the reputation of the Roman Inquisition, with the general public as well as politically. Inadvertently, therefore, he made the inquisition's Jesuit collaborators more valuable, as the Society offered loyal, ostensibly benign agents who could solicit penitents on behalf of the Holy Office without damaging association with the tribunal. There are few traces of collaborations between the Society and the Roman Inquisition during Paul IV's reign. But after the pope's demise, flurries of letters between the Jesuits and cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri indicate that the Society and the Holy Office instrumentalised the contrast between the pastoral character of the Jesuits and public perceptions of a formidable inquisition, which had certainly worsened under the Carafa pope.<sup>96</sup>

During the sixteenth century, Jesuits across the peninsula reported that penitent-heretics came to them to avoid a Holy Office that they feared. According to the Jesuits, these penitents feared that the tribunal would prove unmerciful. In Turin, a father reported that going to the Holy Office would be a 'most hateful matter' for penitent-heretics.<sup>97</sup> Salmerón wrote that Lutherans in Bologna converted but would not approach inquisitors as they 'had heard how in Rome [people] went castigating some suspected heretics'.<sup>98</sup> Working in the Kingdom of Naples, Father Cristóbal Rodríguez said that people were so scared of the inquisitors that they would not even come to church, because 'they were frightened, remembering those who had been taken [by the Holy Office] the previous year'.<sup>99</sup> Later arguments for the Society's privilege to absolve heretics were often framed around fear of the Holy Office, as we shall in Chapter Four. From North to South, Jesuits in Italy argued that negative perceptions of the inquisitors and their methods stopped penitents from approaching the tribunal.

Inquisitorial documents indicate that the Holy Office and its delegates also acknowledged that fear of the tribunal was an obstacle to penitents. They also show that the Inquisition

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<sup>95</sup> Peter Canisius, *Beati Petri Canisii, Societatis Iesu, epistulae et acta. Collegit et adnotationibus illustravit Otto Braunsberger* (Freiburg: 1896-1923), 8 vols, vol.2, p.658.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, the collection of letters from Ghislieri to Rodríguez edited in Scaduto, 'Tra Inquisitori e Riformati'.

<sup>97</sup> ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 136*, f.169r, see quote in footnote 22.

<sup>98</sup> '...que aca de a sabido como van castigando en Roma algunos por suspectos de heresi...' Salmerón, *Epistolae Salmeronis*, vol. 1, p.63.

<sup>99</sup> 'La mattina, dato il segno, quasi non si trovava in chiesa con chi parlare, et così fu necessario che il vicario e capitano della terra andassero per la città et farli venire: tanto erano spaventati, ricordandosi di quelli [che] l'anno passato furono pigliati.' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc. 14, filza 15.

attempted to overcome it. In the 1570s, the inquisitor of Turin argued that more conciliatory techniques and fewer punishments would make the tribunal that was 'hateful to all' more successful, claiming that he had converted many heretics with no threat of penalties.<sup>100</sup> An edict announcing the arrival of an inquisitor in Bergamo declared that, in spite of their threats of punishment, they sought 'the salvation of souls and not the death of persons'.<sup>101</sup> A similar edict of the 1560s also attempted to allay fears that the tribunal was unmerciful, encouraging heretics to 'leave the shadows' for the 'living rays of the kindness of Pope Pius V', claiming that inquisitors' 'ears are always ready to hear you' and 'arms are always ready to welcome you, and you will always find our heart soft...and our spirit inclined to indulgence'.<sup>102</sup> Vincenzo Lavenia has corroborated the link between the punishments of the Roman Inquisition and its reputation, arguing that the papal tribunal did not earn a Black Legend as terrifying as the Spanish tribunal because it abandoned public punishments after the 1570s.<sup>103</sup> In the period covered in this chapter, these penalties had not yet been abandoned and both Jesuits and inquisitors acknowledged that public fear of the inquisition was a major obstacle to securing conversions.

The cruel image of the Holy Office was grounded in tales of the medieval Italian inquisitors and their early modern Spanish counterparts, but contemporary accounts indicate that the sixteenth-century tribunal also earned hostility.<sup>104</sup> One of the inquisition's founding fathers, Gian Pietro Carafa, had a clear influence on negative perceptions of the papal tribunal. As cardinal-inquisitor and, from 1555, as Pope Paul IV, Carafa intensified the scope and severity of the Roman Inquisition. Carafa's influence over the tribunal was so great that he attempted to use it as a tool to define the limits of Catholic orthodoxy on his own terms, condemning all those who did not live up to his ideal, despite the diverse viewpoints present in the papal curia.<sup>105</sup> As Pietro Carnesecchi wrote in a letter of 1557, as pope, Carafa seemed to be 'taking

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<sup>100</sup> For a discussion of his account see Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del duca', p.443.

<sup>101</sup> 'Ultimo dechiaro che p[er] queste n[ost]re admonitio[n]e e[x]cepti cerchamo la salute dele anime e non la morte del[l]e p[er]sone.' Archivio di Stato di Modena (hereafter, ASM), *Inquisizione*, busta 270, fasc. 1.

<sup>102</sup> 'Uscite delle tenebre e venite co[n] la guida di questi vivi raggi della bonta di Pio quinto Pontefice Massimo.' 'Le nostre orecchie saranno sempre pronte ad udirvi, terremo sempre aperte le braccia p[er] raccogliervi, e troverete sempre il cuor nostro molle perduono [?], e l'animo tenero a l'indulge[n]tia.' ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 270, fasc. 3.

<sup>103</sup> Lavenia, 'Il tribunale innominato', pp.295-6.

<sup>104</sup> Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia*, p.819.

<sup>105</sup> Firpo, *Inquisizione Romana e Controriforma. Studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone e il suo processo d'eresia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), p.13.

care to fill the prisons with cardinals and bishops on behalf of the inquisition'.<sup>106</sup>

Carnesecchi's own release from the jails of the Holy Office on Paul's death in 1559 is a testament to the pope's influence over the fate of those whom he distrusted. Carnesecchi's eventual condemnation and execution by Carafa's protégée, Michele Ghislieri, has been identified by scholars as the ultimate triumph of the inquisitor-pope's campaign against those with compromising attitudes to Reformation ideas.<sup>107</sup>

Paul IV's vehemence against heretics was well-known during his lifetime. In his first year on the papal throne, Paduan student Pomponio Algeri was condemned as a heretic and boiled in oil in Rome's Piazza Navona.<sup>108</sup> This highly unusual and cruel execution was quickly memorialised in Protestant martyrologies.<sup>109</sup> Such accounts further tainted the image painted by books on Carafa's tribunal by Italian religious exiles such as Girolamo Massari.<sup>110</sup> Sixteenth-century correspondence also illustrates that there was a clear public perception of particular popes' attitudes towards heretics. During the pontificate of Paul's successor, Pius IV, pamphlets stated that Paul IV 'was made hateful and almost dreaded' for his inquisitorial rigour.<sup>111</sup> Conversely, a letter sent to a prisoner of the Roman Inquisition during the

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<sup>106</sup> 'Il papa attende a empiere le prigioni di cardiali et vescovi per conto dell'Inquisitione'. Carnesecchi quoted in Firpo and Marcatto (eds), *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557-1567)* (Vatican City: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1998-2000), 3 vols, vol. 2, part 1, pp.268-9. On the influence of Carafa's accusations in the failure of Reginald Pole's papal candidature see Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp.224-235 and Firpo, *La presa di potere*. On the trial of Giovanni Morone see Firpo and Marcatto, *Il Processo Inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone*.

<sup>107</sup> Ditchfield has described the scholarly emphasis on the Roman Inquisition's influence on the course of Catholicism as 'the inquisitorial turn'. See Ditchfield, 'Innovation and its limits. The case of Italy ca.1512-ca.1572' in Philip Benedict, Seidel-Menchi and Alain Tallon (eds), *La Réforme en France et en Italie* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2007), pp.154-6. See also, 'The Carnesecchi Moment' in Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.123-130.

<sup>108</sup> On Algeri's case see Santarelli, 'Morte di un eretico impenitente'.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Heinrich Pantaleon, *Martyrum historia. Hoc est maximarum per Europam persecutionem ac sanctorum Dei Martyrum, caeterarum que rerum insignium, in Ecclesia Christi postremis and periculosus his temporibus gestarum, atque certo consilio per Regna and Nationes distributarum, Commentarii* (Basel: Nicolaus Brylingerus, 1563), p.329.

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, Massari's counterfeit inquisitorial manual detailing the tribunal's cruel rules under the name of inquisitor Silvestro Mazzolini and a false Roman imprint: [Girolamo Massari] *Modus solennis et autenticus, ad inquirendum and convincendum Luteranos, valde necessarius, ad salutem Sanctae Apostolicae Sedis, and omnium Ecclesiasticorum, anno 1519 compositus, in Martini Luteri perditionem, and eius sequacium* ([Basel: Johannes Oporin], 1553). On the historical and literary accounts of the early modern inquisitions see Prosperi, 'L'Inquisizione nella storia: i caratteri originali di una controversia secolare' in Prosperi, *Inquisizione Romana: letture e ricerche*, pp.69-96; Lavenia 'Il Tribunale Innominato' and Michaela Valente, *Contro l'Inquisizione: il dibattito europeo, secc. XVI-XVIII* (Turin: Claudiana, 2009).

<sup>111</sup> Eugenio Alberi (ed.), *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato* (Florence: Società Editrice Fiorentina, 1839-1863), 15 vols, vol. 10, pp. 29; 46-51. On sixteenth-century descriptions of Paul IV, positive and negative, and their links to contemporary politics see Alberto Aubert, *Paolo IV. Politica, Inquisizione e storiografia* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1990) particularly pp.109-223.

pontificate of the more lenient Gregory XIII calls the man to request pardon 'from the present pope, who is a very benign, benevolent prince, and who happily pardons each person, who comes penitent and humbled'.<sup>112</sup> Taking charge of the tribunal during its formative years, Carafa's zealotry towards religious dissenters left a black mark on popular perceptions of his techniques and of the Roman Inquisition, which would survive his death in 1559.

Supreme Inquisitor Michele Ghislieri was dedicated to continuing Carafa's agenda after his death but well-aware of the obstacles posed by hostility towards the inquisition.<sup>113</sup> He turned to the Jesuits. Ghislieri was familiar with the hostility that the Holy Office faced. In 1551, he had fled Como when popular resistance to his own investigations became violent.<sup>114</sup> Such experience surely contributed to the inquisitor's appreciation of Jesuit agents who could circumvent popular resistance to the tribunal. As we have seen in his later instructions to Rodriguez in Le Marche, Ghislieri recognised that Jesuits may have been more readily trusted than papal agents.<sup>115</sup> In the early 1560s, Ghislieri and the Jesuits began to develop these strategies, using the Society's benign reputation to combat heresy in parts of the peninsula where the inquisition had marred its reputation, and so inhibited its own chances of securing conversions.

The Jesuits were active collaborators in these inquisitorial strategies. During the early 1560s, Cristóbal Rodriguez would insist upon his autonomy from the Roman Inquisition, even as he worked hand-in-glove with his patron, cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri, during a mission to the Puglian diocese of Vulturara. The following year, in a report to Jesuit father Francesco Borgia, Rodriguez stated that he had not worked as an inquisitor in Vulturara, despite the fact that he went to the diocese on the orders of the Roman Inquisition.<sup>116</sup> Rodriguez stated that '...the Society did not want the father sent by the Holy Office to go as a commissary or judge of the Holy Office'.<sup>117</sup> Rodriguez also asserted this distinction at the time. When he and his

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<sup>112</sup> '...ch' adesso sarebbe tempo da ottenerla dal Papa presente, il quale è prencipe molto benigno, placabile, et ch[e] volentieri perdona a ciascuno, ch[e] pentito, et humiliato viene alla debita contritto di falli com[m]essi...' Archiginnasio, B1860, CCXLV.

<sup>113</sup> Elena Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi. La definizione dei poteri nella Chiesa posttridentina* (Rome: Laterza, 2007), p.xii.

<sup>114</sup> Church, *The Italian Reformers*, p.165.

<sup>115</sup> Michele Miele, 'Pio V e la presenza dei Domenicani nel corso della sua vita' in Guasco and Angelo Torre (eds), *Pio V nella società e nella politica del suo tempo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), p.30.

<sup>116</sup> On this mission and others in the area see, Scaduto, 'Tra Inquisitori e Riformati'.

<sup>117</sup> 'la Compagnia non volse che quel padre che si havea da mandare fusse [commissario] o giudice del santo officio...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc. 14, filza 15.

missionary companion announced their arrival to the local authorities in Vulturara, normal practice for members of the Society, they claimed that they had clarified that they had not come as inquisitorial judges, but only on behalf of the Holy Office to preach the truth of the faith and to comfort souls, 'so that those who had incurred excommunication were absolved of it'.<sup>118</sup> According to Rodriguez, he had not only rejected inquisitorial office in Vulturara but he had defied the papal tribunal in doing so, refusing to 'go as a commissary or judge of the Holy Office like the cardinals [of the inquisition] had asked'.<sup>119</sup> In Rodriguez's report to Borgia and his account of the announcement to the governor in Vulturara, the Jesuit made it very clear that he did not act as an inquisitor.

Yet Rodriguez's claim not to work as an inquisitorial commissary or judge contradicts his own descriptions of his actions in Vulturara. In the very report in which he denied acting in an inquisitorial office, Rodriguez wrote that he was given orders on how to impose sentences, abjurations, and penances for those who would confess the truth and 'to pick and imprison the others'.<sup>120</sup> In both the nature of his duties and his obedience to the Holy Office, Rodriguez acted as an inquisitorial commissary. And in an earlier, personal letter to Láinez, Rodriguez admits to the fact, writing that in Vulturara he was undertaking the same service as 'Reverend Father Valero' Malvicino, the inquisitorial commissary to the region before Rodriguez's arrival.<sup>121</sup> A memorial written in the second half of the 1560s, now held at the ARSI, also reveals that Rodriguez acted as an inquisitorial commissary in Vulturara stating that, 'In the past years, the said Reverend Father Christophoro Rodriguez, doctor of Holy Theology and commissary of the Holy Office of Rome, was in the diocese of Vulturara'.<sup>122</sup> Despite his protestations, it is clear from evidence produced during and after the mission that Rodriguez's rejection of inquisitorial status in Vulturara was a matter of appearances not actions.

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<sup>118</sup> 'Subbito si parlò al governatore della città, significandoli como la nostra venuta era da parte delle detti [inquisitori per] essortare et predicare la verità della fede, et acciò fussero assoluti dalle scomuniche [nelle] quali erano incorsi, se loro con humiltà et obedientia, captivantes intellectum in obsequ[ium] fidei, vi]vessero..' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc. 14, filza 15.

<sup>119</sup> '...come li detti illustrissimi domandavano...'

Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> '...ci diedero l'ordine che si dovea osservare cusi nelle sententie, abiuratione et penitentia di quelli [che] confessassero la verità, come per pigliar[e] et incarcerar[e] li negativi.' Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> '...fa un an[n] o che era qui un R[everen]do P[ad]re Fra Valero, dominicano, mandato per il medesimo servitio...' ARSI, *Epistolae nostrorum* 86, f.182r. On Malvicini see Lavenia, 'Un inquisitore e i valdesi di Calabria. Valerio Malvicini' in Renata Ciaccio and Alfonso Tortora (eds), *Valdismo mediterraneo. Tra centro e periferia. Sulla storia moderna dei valdesi di Calabria* (Salerno: ViValiber, 2013), pp.105-22.

<sup>122</sup> 'Gli anni passati il detto R[everen]do Padre Xpoforo Roderiquez Sacr[a]e Theologie docto[re] et co[m]missario del S[an]to Officio di Roma fu alla dioc[esis] della Voltorara...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 134, f.412r.

Rodriguez alienated himself from the inquisitors for both political and pastoral reasons. His motivations are made clear in a second report dated to July of 1564, a *littera quadrimestra*, which was a standard quarterly update written for circulation within the Society.<sup>123</sup> The report clearly states that Rodriguez was sent to Vulturara by the Holy Office, working 'at the insistence of the cardinal inquisitors [for] the conversion and instruction of some lands...[where] almost everybody is a heretic.'<sup>124</sup> Like Rodriguez's own report to Borgia, the quarterly report underlines Rodriguez's status as an independent agent, stating that he 'did not do the work as an inquisitor, but as that which was proper to our Society.'<sup>125</sup> A small detail in the report tells us why this distinction was important. Rodriguez's work in Vulturara was almost brought to an abrupt end when 'ministers of the devil' spread rumours that he 'was acting in an office of the Roman Inquisition'.<sup>126</sup> According to the report, these accusations led to Rodriguez's arrest as, in Vulturara, the Roman Inquisition was hated very much.<sup>127</sup> Rodriguez was keen to underline his status as a Jesuit, rather than an inquisitor, because, in the territory of Vulturara, the negative repercussions of association with the Holy Office could have robbed him of both his mission and freedom.

The Roman tribunal faced both political and pastoral obstacles in the Kingdom of Naples. Since the early 1540s, its Spanish rulers had blocked the establishment of a papal tribunal.<sup>128</sup> In his report, Rodriguez argued that the reason that heresies were discovered so late in Vulturara was because there was not 'an inquisition of the Holy Office in the Kingdom of Naples to use the means that it uses in the lands of His Holiness'.<sup>129</sup> In the absence of a permanent tribunal, the inquisition in Naples was run by bishops. Rodriguez's awareness of this important distinction is seen in the multiple episcopal patents that he won for the

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<sup>123</sup> Friedrich, 'Ignatius's Governing and Administrating the Society of Jesus', p.138.

<sup>124</sup> '...s'è mandato un Padre al regno di Napoli ad instantia delli car[dina]li inquisitori...nella conversione et instruttione d'alcune terre del Regno di Napoli; quali non solam[en]te erano de h[a]eresi tutti erano heretici...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, filza 23, f.10r.

<sup>125</sup> '...benche questo Padre non fa l'ufficio d'Inquisitore, ma quelli che sono proprii di n[ost]ra Comp[ani]a...' Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> '...per ministerio d'alcuni ministri del Demonio quali dando nome in Napoli che questo P[adr]e faceva ufficio della Inquisitione (quale è molto odiosa li)...' Ibid., f.10v.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish dependencies: Sicily-Naples-Sardinia-Milan-The Canaries-Mexico-Peru-New Granada* (London: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 49-88, especially pp.78-80. Peter Mazur, *The New Christians of Spanish Naples 1528-1671: a fragile elite* (Palgrave Macmillan: Houndsmills, Basingstoke, 2013), p.3.

<sup>129</sup> 'Sonosi scoperte queste heresie tanto tardo perché per non essere nel regno di Napoi inquisitione del [santo] officio usar[e] li mezzi che usa in le terre di sua santità...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, f.15.



prosecution of heresy in the various dioceses of the Kingdom in 1564.<sup>130</sup> This was a legitimate route to securing full jurisdiction over heresy in the diocese.<sup>131</sup> But Rodriguez still concealed the activity of the inquisitor under the office of a vicar.<sup>132</sup> Whether acting with the Jesuits' own papal privileges or under the patent of a bishop, Rodriguez had been sent to the South by the inquisition and was acting in place of an inquisitorial commissary.

The cardinal-inquisitors also faced serious pastoral obstacles in the Kingdom of Naples. During the early 1560s, state authorities and delegates of the Roman Inquisition cooperated to convert the region's centuries-old Waldensian communities.<sup>133</sup> During these interventions, in the years immediately preceding Rodriguez's arrival in 1563, the name of the Holy Office had been utterly blackened when the inquisition violently repressed the Waldensian communities in San Sisto and La Guardia.<sup>134</sup> Persistent heretics were executed, villages were razed to the ground, the bones of the deceased were dug up and burnt.<sup>135</sup> Arriving at the close of one of the most bloody chapters in the history of the Italian inquisitions, Rodriguez would have enjoyed little success soliciting conversions as a representative of the Holy Office.

Appearing to work autonomously, Rodriguez could convert and reconcile heretics without exciting the fear associated with commissaries who had caused such devastation in the recent past. Rodriguez himself recognised the need to overcome recent inquisitorial history in a territory where he found 'the whole land very terrified and alarmed', frightened that the Jesuit would be another Malvicino, who had 'put many in prison, and from there to the galleys'.<sup>136</sup> Using other means and acting with great gentleness, Rodriguez distinguished himself from the negative memories of the last commissary, working with the Waldensian communities

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<sup>130</sup> Multiple examples can be found in ARSI, *Institutum 194*, ff.160r-v; f.165r, f.166r, f.167r. Scaduto, 'Cristoforo Rodriguez tra i valdesi della Capitanata e dell'Irpinia', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 35 (1966), p.21.

<sup>131</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.480-1.

<sup>132</sup> Prosperi, 'L'inquisitore come confessore' in Prodi (ed.), *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), p. 196.

<sup>133</sup> On the Waldensians in the Kingdom of Naples see Scaramella, *L'Inquisizione romana e i valdesi*.

<sup>134</sup> Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.5-7.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> 'Al principio, quando siamo arrivati, trova tutta la terra molto spaventata et spavorita, perché fa un ano che era qui un R[everen]do P[ad]re Fra Valero, dominicano, mandato per il medesimo servitio; et alhora si hano mandati molti in prisione, et dipoi a galera; e cusì havevano paura che io faria altra cosa simile...' ARSI, *Epistolae nostrorum 86*, f.182r.

and managing 'slowly to encourage them and to persuade them to confess the truth' of their heresy, so that he might give them lighter penances and reconcile them to the Church.<sup>137</sup>

The contrast between the Jesuit and his inquisitorial predecessors was instrumentalised in negotiations with the people of the Vulturara. When some locals remained obstinate in their heresy, the local vicar with whom Rodriguez worked called upon the richest and most trusted man in the community, telling him that if he called the people to confess and convert they would write to the cardinal-inquisitors to ask that mercy be used on his brother, who languished 'at the prison of the Holy Office in Rome'.<sup>138</sup> The efficacy of such a deal relied on the man's trust in the pastoral mission led by Rodriguez and his belief that the inquisitors in Rome were treating his brother cruelly. The Jesuit and his companions exploited the contrast between negative perceptions of the Roman Inquisition and their pastoral character; they used a classic strategy of good cop, bad cop.

Rodriguez used a pastoral approach in Vulturara, but, like his strategy in Le Marche, its efficacy relied on the Jesuit's pastoral image. The methods used on his mission contrasted with the brutality of the inquisitorial commissaries of the recent past. As Rodriguez wrote in his report, at the beginning of his mission he went to the local church where the vicar 'spoke [to the people] with sweetness, assuring them that, if they did their due, not only would they not be molested' as they had in the past, 'but liberated and absolved'.<sup>139</sup> In order to receive this mercy, the people must be prepared to tell the truth, when they were called, a deal that echoed inquisitorial edicts that promised mercy for the cooperative.<sup>140</sup> There were clear parallels between the approaches of some inquisitors and the Jesuits. The Society's policy of reconciling those who came and confessed their heresy willingly was similar to policies of more lenient inquisitors, who gave lighter penalties to those who exposed themselves to the tribunal. Nonetheless, in an area in which popular perceptions of the Inquisition had been so tainted by delegates working in the merciless manner of men like Carafa, Ghislieri and

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<sup>137</sup> '...fra li altri mezzi, uno fu di gran eficatia acciò disesero la verità, cioè usar[e] con loro gran suavità; et cusi procurai pian piano di sortarli et persuadirli a che confesasero la verità...' Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> '...tra li quali ci fu un vecchio delli principali et più ricco et di più credito delli altri, il qual havea un suo figliolo maggior al santo officio in Roma prigione. [Il v]ecchio fu essortato dal padre promettendoli che, se li aggiutava a indurre il populo a confessar[e] la [verità], che lo scriveria alli illustrissimi cardinali, acciò su usasse misericordia con suo figlioli...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, filza 15.

<sup>139</sup> 'Il padre li parlò con suavità, certificandoli che, se loro facevano il debito, non solo non sariano molestati, ma liberati et assoluti...' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, filza 15.

<sup>140</sup> '...pregandoli che fussero preparati a dir[e] la verità quando saria[no] chiamati.' Ibid.

Rodriguez believed that promises of mercy would prove unconvincing from the lips of an open inquisitorial commissary.

## Conclusion

As we saw in Chapter One, the Jesuits believed that privileges would improve the success of their missions by allowing their members to act pragmatically and independently on the ground. The studies presented in this chapter show that the Jesuits' formal independence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, including the Holy Office, was also valuable for their inquisitorial collaborators. Despite the increasing power of the central tribunal during the 1550s, the Roman Inquisition faced practical, political and pastoral obstacles when it sought to assert its influence across the Italian peninsula. Sometimes, they could not find a suitable, effective and orthodox authority, as in Valtellina. At others political and popular hostility made it impossible for open delegates of the tribunal to secure conversions. As a pastoral religious order with powers analogous to those of the inquisitors, the Jesuits provided an attractive alternative to the usual inquisitorial personnel.

The Society's inquisitorial collaborations were dominated by powerful individuals, with whom the Jesuits developed close working relationships. The letters exchanged between Rodriguez and Ghislieri indicate that their alliance was one of mutual respect and, at times, affection. As Pope Pius V, Ghislieri expressed a confidence in Rodriguez's abilities that was based on his long experience of the Jesuit's 'usual diligence and prudence'.<sup>141</sup> The Society's earlier inquisitorial collaborations were dominated by the influence of Juan Alvarez de Toledo, whose patronage of the Jesuits went far beyond his inquisitorial role. Like all client-patron relationships, these were alliances of mutual benefit, granting the Jesuits opportunities and protection from fluctuations in the ecclesiastical hierarchy in exchange for their services to the Holy Office.<sup>142</sup>

Ghislieri was an advocate for the Jesuits at the papal court because the Society's jurisdictional

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<sup>141</sup> 'N[ostro] S[ignore] m'ha ord[ina]to che vi scrive...ch[e] vuole servirsi di voi, et ch[e] p[er] il viaggio usiate d[e]lla v[ost]ra solita diligenza, et prudenza...' ARSI, *Epistolae Externorum* 7 - I, f.325r.

<sup>142</sup> Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe. Religious conflict, dynastic empires and international change* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp.40-42 and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'Factions in the Sacred College in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' in Gianvittorio Signorotto and Visceglia (eds), *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.103. On the politics of the conclave see Pattenden, *Electing the Pope in Early Modern Italy, 1450-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

autonomy allowed its members to work as the pastoral face of the Roman Inquisition. In the last year of Paul IV's reign, Ghislieri's petitions for the Jesuits reversed the pope's limitation of the Society's privileges to northern Europe. Although confessors were generally bound to oblige penitents to make a spontaneous appearance at a tribunal before receiving absolution, with help from Ghislieri the Jesuits won an exemption. Writing to the rector of Genoa on 20 January 1559, Superior General Laínez stated that 'it is true that we had the faculty for heresy through our privileges' and that His Holiness [Paul IV] has confirmed those privileges, in these past days.<sup>143</sup> The cardinal-inquisitor was also a crucial supporter when the Society was challenged on the ground. When an inquisitor in the town of Recanati looked upon their privilege to read prohibited books 'with discontent', Laínez confidently stated 'if he is not happy...it is enough for us if the Supreme Inquisitor is happy, from whom [the licence] was procured and obtained'.<sup>144</sup> In the difficult years of Paul IV's papacy, Ghislieri was a crucial ally for the Jesuits at the papal court and elsewhere. But his support for the Jesuits was self-interested. Eager to fight heresy but compromised by the limitations of his own tribunal, Ghislieri's empowerment of the Jesuits ensured that inquisitorial and papal interests were represented across the peninsula.<sup>145</sup>

By the early 1560s the intimacy of the Jesuits' relationship with Ghislieri was beginning to compromise the very independence that they had solicited him to protect. During the pontificates of Paul IV (1555-9) and Pius IV (1559-65), Ghislieri was the Jesuits' main point of contact at the Holy Office.<sup>146</sup> But his personal interest in their privileges soon began to limit the Society. In the first years of the 1560s, Jesuit correspondence indicates that the Superior General consulted the cardinal-inquisitor on when and how the Jesuits could use their privileges. A letter from Laínez to the Jesuit rector in Venice, states that Ghislieri 'has

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<sup>143</sup> '...è vero che noi havevamo facultà p[er] li privilegi n[ost]ri q[ua]nto al heresia: li q[ua]li privilegi questi giorni passati sua s[anti]ta ci confermò.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 61, 381v.

<sup>144</sup> 'Che l'inquisitore di Ricanati vistassi con malcontento, di quella licenza, non sappiamo perche. Ma finalmente se lui non si contenta, bastava a noi che si contenti il suprema Inquisitor, dal quale [è] stata procurata et ottenuta...Et forse no[stro] p[ad]re parlava al Ca[r]dina[l]e Aless[andrin]o accio mandi qualche cappello al commiss[ari]o di Ricanati.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 61, 428r.

<sup>145</sup> Romeo, 'Note sull'Inquisizione Romana', p. 135.

<sup>146</sup> In 1561, Ghislieri's name, Cardinal Alessandrino, appears next to that of Otto von Truchsess on a document securing the Society's privilege to absolve heresy: '...sarebbe per molto servizio d'Iddio et aiuto di montanine, se alcuni de nostri haveremo da V[ostra] S[anti]ta le gratia sequenti, in foro conscientiae et viva voci oracolo t[antu]m. P[rim]a Di absolver di casi d'heresia et d'haver letto libri proibiti, et d'altri casi contra la fede (come ce lo concesse Papa Giulio III)...Die 10 Martii in Consistorio Secreto 1561. Presente il R[everendiss]imo et Ill[ustriss]imo Car[dina]l[e] d'Augusta. F.M.G. Car[dina]l[e] Alexand[ri]nus...' ARSI, *Institutum* 222, f.273r-234r. See Romeo, 'Pio V nelle fonti gesuite: Le *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* e le *Epistolae Italiae*' in Guasco and Torre (eds), *Pio V nella società e nella politica del suo tempo*, pp.85-110.

given the faculty so that [the rector] can give absolution to that young woman who is fallen into a case of heresy'.<sup>147</sup> In 1561, Laínez complained that Ghislieri had put so many provisos on their use of the papal faculty that to use it was 'nearly as much as to do nothing', underlining the importance of autonomy to the Jesuits' understanding of their privilege and its role.<sup>148</sup> Father Pedro Ribadeneira agreed when he said that the cardinal-inquisitor's advice on how to use the power seemed 'as much as revoking the authority that His Holiness had given to us'.<sup>149</sup> The Jesuits sought papal privileges as a means of having autonomous power, so that they would not need to rely on permissions from the broader ecclesiastical hierarchy. A decade after the Jesuits received their privilege to absolve heretics, their relationship with Ghislieri had begun to negate that fundamental advantage.

Two documents, now held in the state archive in Rome, indicate that the Jesuits sought to secure papal privileges independently of Ghislieri during the height of their collaborations in the mid-1560s. The first document, dated November 1564, is a chapter for the writing of a draft of a bull by Pius IV that confirms, clarifying points of controversy, and amplifies the privileges and graces previously granted by popes to the Society of Jesus.<sup>150</sup> In this document, the Jesuits sought affirmation of the faculty conceded by Paul III 'of absolving from each and every sin, crime, excess, misdemeanour, and from those certain sentences, censures and ecclesiastical penances resulting from these cases...without the pre-judgement of anyone'.<sup>151</sup> Such a concession would have provided papal documentation to answer anybody who questioned the Jesuits' power to absolve censures incurred by serious sins such as heresy. The Society also requested freedom from the obligation to use or delegate the

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<sup>147</sup>'Si è parlato al Car[dina]le Alix[andri]no et ha data facultà per potersi dar[e] l'assoluzione à quel giovana che è ricorso in caso di heresia...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 63, ff.117r-v.

<sup>148</sup>'La declaratione fatta per il Car[dina]le Alix[andri]no...a noi ci pare sia quasi ta[n]to come non fare nie[n]te.' Ibid., f.116r.

<sup>149</sup>'...della dechiaratione del cardinale Alessandrino sopra l'abiuratione, il che mi par tanto quanto rivoarci l'autorità che S[ua] S[anti]ta ci haveva dato...'

Ribadeneira, *Patris Petri de Ribadeneira Societatis Jesu sacerdotis: confessiones, epistolae, scripta inedita, ex autographis, antiquissimis apographis et regestis deprompta* (Madrid: Ex officina typographis, 1920-3), 2 vols, vol. 1, pp.379-80.

<sup>150</sup>'Capitolo per la stesura della minuta di una bolla di Pio IV che confermi, chiarendone i punti controversi, ed ampli i privilegi e le grazie precedentementi concessi dai pontefici alla Compagnia di Gesu.' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14, f.47r.

<sup>151</sup>'Cum etiam per Paulum III per litteras in forma brevis sit concessum, Praesbiteris Societatis Jesu, ut quosvis utriusque sexus christi fideles eorum confessionibus diligenter auditis, ab omnibus et singulis eorum peccatis, criminalibus, excessibus, et delictis, et a quibusvis ex ipsis casibus, resultantibus sententiis, censuris et poenis ecclesiasticis, absolvendi facultas sit concessa.' Ibid.

faculty on demand.<sup>152</sup> Another document in the same collection, also dated to 1564, makes a clear request for independence from the Holy Office, asking 'that the Superior General himself, or through others, proceeds and punishes those suspected of heresy [in the Society]', stating that 'no other inquisitors are to meddle in this as everybody in the Society is immediately subject to the pope'.<sup>153</sup> When the Society's relationship with Ghislieri was at its most intimate, the Jesuits were working to ensure that they were not entirely reliant on his support.

The Society's assertion of independence from Ghislieri was both practically and politically astute. In June of 1564, Pius IV had imposed radical reforms on the Holy Office, undermining Ghislieri's power as the head of the Roman Inquisition and granting the pope more authority over the tribunal.<sup>154</sup> Ghislieri had begun to anger the pope and looked set to fall from grace at any moment.<sup>155</sup> Conscious to avoid the negative repercussions of these fluctuations in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Jesuits aligned themselves with the pontiff and his allies. In 1564, it was not to their usual inquisitorial supporter that they handed their papal solicitations, but to Cardinal Marcantonio Amulio, who had been appointed to the Inquisition by Pius himself and was previously his ambassador to Venice.<sup>156</sup> And during Pius IV's pontificate Amulio was a better guarantor of the Jesuits' interests than his boss at the Roman Inquisition. The Jesuits' relationship with the Roman Inquisition was one of mutual benefit and self-interest. And the Jesuits' loyalty to particular cardinal-inquisitors was contingent, just like the Society's alliance with the temporal authorities of Genoa discussed in Chapter One.

In this chapter we have seen how the Society cooperated with the Roman Inquisition to address weaknesses in its tribunal system. We have also seen that this cooperation was facilitated by autonomy and political agility. The picture that emerges from close study of the

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<sup>152</sup> 'Quandocunque absolvendi vel dispensandi facultas conceditur, et praecipue in terris infidelium intelligatur nihil pro huiusmodi absolutionibus vel dispensationibus exigi vel taxari posse, sicut nec pro aliis societati consuets ministeriis, iuxta ipsius constitutiones quidquam exigi vel admitti potest...' Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> 'Ut contra suspectos de heresi, si quos esse continget, praepositus Generalis per se, vel alios procedat et puniat, nec alii inquisitores se immiscant et omnino ut societas immediate subiecta summo pontifici...' Ibid, f.48r.

<sup>154</sup> Guasco, *Pio V nella Societa e Politica del suo tempo*, pp.16-18 and Elena Bonora, *Roma 1564: La congiura contro il papa*, (Rome: Laterza, 2011), p.149-50.

<sup>155</sup> Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa. Nepotism and papal authority in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.116-7.

<sup>156</sup> 'Ponti sopra la minuta di n[ost]ri privilegii che in mano M[onsignor] Car[dinale] Amulio.' ASR, *Miscellanea Famiglie Gesuiti*, B180, fasc.14., f.47. Pattenden, *Pius IV and the Fall of the Carafa*, p.141.

Jesuits' use of the privilege in collaboration with the Roman Inquisition contrasts with interpretations that subordinate the Society's work to that of the Roman Inquisition; rather it fully incorporates the Jesuits' anti-heretical efforts into the picture of a consciously ambiguous, pragmatic and flexible Society that has emerged in recent scholarship. In the pages to come, we shall see that these characteristics were also key to the Jesuits' efforts to fight heresy on behalf of temporal leaders hostile to Rome, even as the Society was increasingly marginalised by the pope.





### Chapter Three: Between the Prince and the Pope: Privileges and Power During the Pontificate of Pius V

When cardinal-inquisitor Michele Ghislieri became Pope Pius V in January 1566, senior Jesuits anticipated that he would prioritise the work of the Roman Inquisition. Just days after the conclave closed, Superior General Francesco Borja wrote that 'matters of Reform and the Inquisition [would] come first' now.<sup>1</sup> Others in Rome agreed. In a letter of March 1566, the Venetian ambassador to the Holy See claimed that 'matters of religion would be the most favoured' by Pius, 'and particularly of the Inquisition'.<sup>2</sup> Another Italian writer told the Archbishop of Santa Severina, Giulio Antonio Santoro, that Pius V's pontificate would herald a return to the inquisitorial severity of his mentor, Pope Paul IV (1555-9). 'To Rome, to Rome, what awaits you?' he asked, 'come happily, God has revived Paul IV there.'<sup>3</sup>

Pius V soon corroborated these predictions. Establishing the Roman Inquisition as a stable institution, he built permanent headquarters for the congregation at a cost of more than 50,000 scudi.<sup>4</sup> In 1568, he executed Paul IV's enemy Pietro Carnesecchi, the Florentine nobleman who had escaped condemnation for heresy at Paul's death in 1559.<sup>5</sup> In 1570, Pius established the Congregation of the Index, imposing Paul IV's rigorous censorship of heretical books and reversing the more moderate guidelines set by Pius IV.<sup>6</sup> He also re-appointed Scipione Rebiba, Francisco Pacheco and Gian Francesco Gambarà, cardinal-inquisitors who had been loyal to Paul IV but sacked by Pius IV.<sup>7</sup> Some feared Pius V's

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<sup>1</sup> '...le cose della Riforma et Inquisitione andaranno molto inanzi.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 66, f.122r.

<sup>2</sup> '...e fossero più favorite le cose della religione, e particolarmente della Inquisizione.' Paolo Tiepolo in Fabio Mutinelli, *Storia arcana e aneddotica d'Italia, raccontata dai veneti ambasciatori* (Venice: Pietro Naratovich, 1855-6), vol. 1, p.38.

<sup>3</sup> 'A Roma, a Roma, ch'aspettate? Venite allegramente...perché Dio ci ha resuscitato Paolo IV.' Marcantonio Fiorenzo to Giulio Antonio Santoro, 9 January 1566, published in G. Cugnoni (ed.), *Autobiografia di monsignor G. Antonio Santori, cardinale di Santa Severina* in *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria*, 12 (1889), p. 339.

<sup>4</sup> David Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), p.77; Ludwig von Pastor, Frederick Ignatius Antrobus and Ralph Francis Kerr (eds), *The History of the Popes from the close of the Middle Ages drawn from the secret archives of the Vatican and other original sources; from the German of late Ludwig Pastor* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1874-1928), 40 vols, vol.17, p.288.

<sup>5</sup> On the case of Pietro Carnesecchi see, Firpo and Marcatto (eds), *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi*.

<sup>6</sup> Romeo, *L'Inquisizione nell'Italia moderna*, p.19. On the Index and its congregation see Fragnito, *Church, censorship and culture in early modern Italy*; Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo* and Vittorio Frajese, *Nascita dell'Indice. La censura ecclesiastica dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> 'X[ian]a congregatio offitii sanct[a]e Roman[ae] inquisit[ion]is racta Rom[a]e in palatio ap[osto]lico coram S[anc]tissimi D[omino] N[ostro] Pio divina prudentia P[apa] P[io] quinto et Ill[ustriss]imis et

inquisition even more than that of his mentor. A witness at the trial of Count Niccolò Orsini claimed that 'at the time of Pope Paul [IV]...[Orsini] never went to mass'.<sup>8</sup> Under Pius V, however, Orsini was so concerned about the consequences of his past transgressions that he had a great fear of the pope.<sup>9</sup>

A return to the approach of Paul IV was potentially very damaging for the Society's privilege to absolve heresy. Paul IV had tried to negate the privilege, issuing a brief that required all confessors, including Jesuits, to refuse absolutions until penitent-heretics had visited the Holy Office, though the Jesuits do not appear to have been held to this.<sup>10</sup> Documents produced to defend the privilege in the 1580s suggest that Pius V followed suit. These list concessions of the privilege from Julius III's pontificate onwards. They fall silent after the concession of Pius V's predecessor, Pius IV, before moving on to the concessions of his successor, Gregory XIII.<sup>11</sup> Another list notes that Pius V conceded the privilege, before stating that Gregory XIII granted the same but 'also in Italy', implying that Pius V only confirmed the privilege for northern Europe.<sup>12</sup> As these documents relayed the history of papal support for the privilege in order to defend it, the authors of the first list would not have omitted a full concession of the privilege by Pius V, had he granted one.<sup>13</sup> The authors' intention to defend the privilege

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R[everendissimi]mis D[omi]nis car[dinali]bus de Pisis [Scipione Rebiba], Paccecco et Gambara inquisitionibus g[e]n[er]alibus p[er] eandem S[anctum] D[ominum] N[ostrum] de novo ad officium deputatis in qua interveneru[n]t omnes infra[scrip]ti ec. Die iovis 7.a mensis Februarii 1566. Ill[ustrissimi]mus et R[everendissimi]mus D[ominus] Cardinalis Pisarum, Ill[ustrissimi]mus et R[everendissimi]mus D[ominus] Pacceccus Ill[ustrissimi]mus et R[everendissimi]mus D[ominus] Cardinalis de Gambara...' ACDF, *Sant'Ufficio Decreta, 1565-7*, f.35r. Bonora, 'L'Inquisizione e papato tra Pio IV e Pio V' in Guasco and Torre (eds), *Pio V nella società e nella politica del suo tempo*, pp.54-55 and Santarelli, 'Dinamiche interne della Congregazione di Sant'Uffizio', p.12.

<sup>8</sup> '...al tempo di Papa Paolo piu di due anni ne mai allora andava a messa in quel tempo.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica R-2-m*, f.226v. For quote on Pius V see Fosi, *Papal Justice*. p.96.

<sup>9</sup> Fosi, *Papal Justice*. p.96.

<sup>10</sup> On Paul's brief in the context of papal edicts on confession and the inquisition see Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, pp.406-409. On the brief's effects see Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.231-3. Brambilla argues that Paul's brief was one of many through which confessors gave information to inquisitors, not a unique action of a fanatical inquisitor-pope who was taking the first steps to transform confessors into inquisitorial tools, as Prosperi's description suggests. Romeo argues that there is no evidence that the Jesuits were held to this rule in his *Ricerche su confessione*, p.44. A letter by Laínez in January 1559 confirms this: '...è vero che noi havevamo facoltà p[er] li privileggi n[ost]ri q[ua]nto al heresia: li q[ua]li privilegii questi giorni passati sua s[anti]ta ci confermò.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae 61*, 381v.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, a record from the last years of the sixteenth century: 'Absolvendi ab haeresi et lectione librorum prohibitorum...Idem Pius 4 X. Martii 1561...Absolvendi ab haeresi. Gregor. ult[im]o Martii 1573.' ARSI, *Institutum 185 - I*, f.313v.

<sup>12</sup> 'Absolvendi ab haeresi ande Pius Quintus die 12 Maii 1568. Absolvendi ab haeresi etiam in Italia. Greg[ori]o Ult[im]o Martii 1573.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, ff.45r-v.

<sup>13</sup> These records comprise a dossier sent to the Roman Inquisition in response to challenges to the Society's privilege in 1585-6. On the verso of the first document it reads: 'Dato all Ill[ustrissimo]mo Car[dinale] S[an]ta Severina a di 5 di Marzo 1586 - circa la facolta d'assolvere ab haeresi'. The lists of privileges to absolve heresy and more limited concessions given to the Society end with concessions granted by Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) and do not include any of the privileges and more limited concessions given by Gregory XIV (1590-1)

also explains why Pius V's limitation of the privilege to countries outside of Italy is only implied in the second list. The caution and silence in these later records reflect the Society's uncertainty about the status of the privilege during the reign of Pius V.

This chapter will argue that Pius V did not explicitly revoke the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy, but curtailed their jurisdiction, only allowing Jesuits to reconcile heretics when it served his inquisitorial interests directly. Continued requests for the privilege show that the Jesuits still deemed the privilege necessary. But when Pius V failed to reconfirm the privilege, Borja advised Jesuits to exercise caution with heretics seeking reconciliation, to avoid conflict with a former ally of the Society on whom all of its privileges now relied. Both contemporary and later records show us that, at least twice, Pius V agreed when Jesuits requested the privilege in Italy. But these concessions came with severe jurisdictional and geographical limitations. Whilst, at first, they seem to represent exceptions to Pius V's broader inquisitorial agenda, they show that he had no intention of supporting the blanket privilege that had previously provided penitent-heretics with a genuine alternative to inquisitorial process. As Pius V limited the Jesuits' role, he exposed the contrast between papal perceptions of extra-judicial reconciliations and those of the Society.

In our first case study, the pope allowed Cristóbal Rodríguez to absolve heretics in Le Marche. Here, Pius V used the privilege as a lure, ordering Rodríguez to act as a spy and to gather information from heretics who came to him for pastoral care. Once Pius V had Rodríguez's intelligence, he overturned his reconciliations and imprisoned his penitents. A later Jesuit history claims that Rodríguez was betrayed by Pius. But contemporary sources suggest that the Jesuit was complicit in the pope's scheme. It is difficult to deduce Rodríguez's strategy. Nonetheless, his successful solicitation and, eventually, use of the privilege demonstrate that the Jesuits insisted that extra-judicial reconciliations were still necessary, even as the pope sought an inquisitorial monopoly on reconciliations.

The Jesuits' insistence on the necessity of extra-judicial reconciliations is also evident in our second case study, in which Pius V granted Jesuits in Savoy-Piedmont permission to absolve heresy with no obligation to involve the inquisition. This concession demonstrates that there

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and Clement VIII (1592-1605), suggesting that the records were put together during the pontificate of Pope Sixtus V (1580-1590). ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, ff.309r-317r.

were territories where the pope had no choice but to support the Jesuits' independent anti-heretical activities. In the mid-sixteenth century, the north-easterly state of Savoy-Piedmont was seen as a gateway for heresies from northern Europe to enter Italy. Worse still, it was also the only Italian state where Pius failed to impose inquisitorial influence. That Savoy-Piedmont was the only Italian territory where the Jesuits appear to have received the privilege without limitations demonstrates that Pius successfully marginalised the Jesuits and enforced inquisitorial authority across Italy.

These cases support interpretations of the privilege that argue that an overbearing inquisitorial system subordinated the Jesuits.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, they correct the chronology of these explanations, tracing the roots of this dynamic to the late 1560s, more than ten years after the concession of the privilege. This chronological correction supports my argument that we must look to the earlier history of the privilege to fully explain its role and impact. Our studies also nuance explanations that emphasise the inquisition's oppression of the Jesuits, showing that circumstances forced even Pius V to negate his inquisitorial ideal. Moreover, in these exceptions it was Jesuit autonomy, perceived and real, that allowed the Society to work effectively for the pope. Overall, by studying the problems that Pius V faced imposing his inquisitorial ideal in Italy this chapter underlines the need to investigate the outcomes of papal directives, rather than assuming their success.

### **Pius V and the rise of the Roman Inquisition**

Superior General Borja was initially confident of Pius V's approval of the privilege to absolve heresy, but the Jesuits soon discovered that Pius's support was far from sure. In letters to colleagues, Borja claimed that Pius had confirmed all of the Society's privileges during their first papal audience. Nonetheless, Pius's responses to entreaties regarding the privilege and his broader limitation of extra-judicial reconciliations cast doubt on the status of the Jesuits' jurisdiction. In letters, Jesuits expressed uncertainty, telling the Superior General that they had abandoned plans to absolve heretics to avoid acting illicitly. Eager to retain papal favour, soon even Borja refused to extend the privilege and advised Jesuits to exercise caution with penitent-heretics. During previous pontificates, Superior Generals had advised Jesuits to avoid conflicts of jurisdiction in cases of heresy and, under Paul IV, there had been some

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<sup>14</sup> Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.xv-ii and pp.236-7.

doubt about when the Society could absolve heretics.<sup>15</sup> During Pius V's papacy these fears returned and were corroborated.

After Borja's first meeting with Pius V in January 1566, he thought that the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy was secure. Writing to Salmerón and the Society's provincials, Borja said that he had 'supplicated [Pius V] for the confirmation of all the graces of our Society, thus conceded by other popes, as by himself, when he was inquisitor, and he granted them lovingly'.<sup>16</sup> According to Borja, Pius had ordered that Cardinal Marcantonio Amulio 'should act as witness of [the concession]', a standard means of confirming the concession of privileges granted orally, *viva vocis oraculo*.<sup>17</sup> Borja told Salmerón that he did not 'request' all of 'the graces that were conceded to Your Reverence through His Holiness when he was a cardinal' 'anew', as Pius 'had confirmed for us all those [privileges] that his predecessors and [he] himself, when he was a cardinal, had conceded to us'.<sup>18</sup> As cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri, Pius V had confirmed the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics in Italy, provided the heretics had not already been 'reported to the inquisitors'.<sup>19</sup> For Borja, Pius's blanket confirmation was enough to confirm the privilege to absolve heresy. He advised Salmerón that he 'could use [his privileges] as before'.<sup>20</sup>

Still, Borja lacked evidence of Pius V's confirmation of the Society's privileges. It is unclear whether the Jesuits ever received it. A record written by Polanco before his death in 1576 states that on 29 September 1566 'confirmation and record of every grace of the Society was

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Polanco's advice in *De licentia petenda ab ordinariis pro confessionibus* of 1564:

'...che come è stato antico costume n[ost]ro di usar li n[ost]ri privilegii con buona gratia et benedictione de Vescovi et Prelati...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom.* 1, f.16r.

On doubts about using the privilege under Paul IV see concerns expressed by Nicolás de Bobadilla and Pedro de Ribadeneira in Bobadilla, *Epistolae Bobadillae*, pp.250-3 and Ribadeneira, *Epistolae Ribadeneira*, vol.1, p.380.

<sup>16</sup> 'También le supliqué por la confirmación de todas las gracias de nuestra Compañía, así las concedidas por otros pontífices, como por él mesmo, siendo inquisidor, y [o]torgólo amorosamente...' Borgia, *Sancti Francisci Borgiae Epistolae*, vol. 4, p.170.

<sup>17</sup> 'Dopoi li supplichai confirmassi tutti li privilegii et gratie...et ordinò al cardinal Amulio, che stava presente, rendessi testimonio de detta confirmatione.' Borgia in Salmerón, *Epistolae Salmeronis*, vol. 2, p.69.

<sup>18</sup> 'Le gratie che furno concesse a V[ost]ra R[everenza] per S[ua] S[antità] quando era cardinale, non accade dimandarle di novo, essendo che ci ha confirmate tutte quelle che suoi predecessori et lui stesso quando era cardinale ci haveva concesso...' Salmerón, *Epistolae Salmeronis*, vol. 2, pp.88-9.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Laínez's reference to Ghislieri's confirmation of the privilege from Julius III, allowing them to reconcile all heretics who were not relapsed: '...La declaratione del Alessandrino ultima...Concessit ut confessari designati per patrem Prepositum possent absolvere ab heresi in foro conscientiae tantum, dum tamen probabiliter scire possi[n]t morali scientia huiusmodi homines qui absolvuntur non esse delatos apud Inquisitores...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 63, f.132r.

<sup>20</sup> '...sì che V[ost]ra R[everenza] potrà usar di quelle come prima.' Salmerón, *Epistolae Salmeronis*, vol.2, p.88.

requested from the pope'.<sup>21</sup> Nine months after Borja's first meeting with Pius, Amulio's testimony had still not arrived.<sup>22</sup> A later Jesuit history of the privilege sent to the Roman Inquisition in the 1580s complicates the picture, stating that on 29 September 1566, the same day as the request recorded by Polanco, Pius V 'confirmed for the Society all the privileges and faculties that had been conceded to it'.<sup>23</sup> This later source suggests that Pius responded to the request of 29 September immediately. Nonetheless, as a defence of the privilege, it may have attempted to extrapolate the request recorded by Polanco into evidence for continued papal support for the privilege. Unlike Bishop Politi's confirmation of Julius III's concession of the privilege, there is no testimony of Pius V's meeting with Borja amongst records of privileges granted *viva vocis oraculo* at the ARSI.<sup>24</sup>

A year after Pius V's election, Jesuit authorities remained confused about the privilege. They sought clarification from the Superior General, older institutional documents and even from the pope himself. Although some believed in Borja's claim that Pius had confirmed the Society's privileges *viva vocis oraculo*, the pope subsequently provoked doubts. Before departing for the German lands, Borja's principal assistant, Jerónimo Nadal, asked Pius about the validity of the privilege. Nadal did not record Pius's response but said that 'certain words that the pope said to him' made him question whether Jesuits could absolve heretics simply in the forum of the conscience without abjuration, as in the past.<sup>25</sup> Discussing the question with Fathers Diego Ledesma and Peter Canisius, Nadal referred to a record of privileges given to the Society by Pius V's predecessor, Pius IV, stating that they 'could absolve in those regions

<sup>21</sup> 'Confirm[ati]o o[mn]ium gra[tiarum] Societatis et nota q[uod] petitu[m] fuit a sum[m]o po[n]tefice ut co[n]cederet ta[m] q[uam] p[re]decessiorib[us] q[ue] q[ua]m q[ue] ab ipso du[m] esset I[n]quisitor co[n]cessarat ita co[n]cessit.' ARSI, *Institutum* 190, f.5r.

<sup>22</sup> '...ho havuto à scrivere la p[rese]nte p[er] suplicar humilm[en]te V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma si degni far testimonio, della co[n]firmatione et revalidatione delle n[ost]re gr[ati]e, et privilegii, che S[ua] S[anti]ta fece viva voce alle 7 di genaro passato, avanti V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma ansi ordinando à quella facesse fede de cio, come potra ricordarsi...ci è parso (come facciamo) supplicare à V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma si contenti farlo, conforme alla minuta che qui va, (o come parera meglio à V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma ma la sustanza è quella che va nella minuta.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 66, ff.249r-v.

<sup>23</sup> 'Pio Papa Quinto, quale sotto li 29 di settembre 1566 confirmò alla Comp[ani]a tutti li privilegii, et facultà che li erano state concesse.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-A*, f.10r.

<sup>24</sup> See a copy witnessed by Ambrogio Catarino, now held at the Jesuit archive: '...et questo tutto fu in p[rese]nza del R[everendissi]mo in X[ian]o P[adr]e Frate Ambrogio Cahterino Vesc[ov]o dignissimo de Monori, et in testimonio della verità di queste cose mette qui la sua mano. Ita est. Io frate Ambrogio Cath[arin]o confesso esser[e] vero tutto quello nela sop[radet]ta memoria si continene, et p[er] fede del[l]a verita ho sottoscritta p[er]pina manu et proprio sigillo sigilato. Frate Ambrog[io] Cath[arin]o Vesc[ov]o de Menori ho sup[ra]. Alphonso di Salmeron Sacerdote del[l]a Co[m]p[agnia] di Giesu.' ARSI, *Institutum* 194, f.2v.

<sup>25</sup> 'Io consultai in Augusta co'l P[adre] Ledesma et P[adre] Canisio, per certe parole che mi dise il papa alla partita, se puoteuamo noi assoluer' li heretici simpliciter in foro conscientiae sine abiuratione...' Jerónimo Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu*, vol. 3, p.316.

from all cases reserved [to the pope] in Coena Domini'.<sup>26</sup> These cases included heresy.<sup>27</sup> The fathers' willingness to refer to a document produced under the previous pope suggests that, despite being confused by Pius's comments, they accepted that he had reconfirmed their privileges verbally in January 1566. Indeed, in light of Pius IV's document, Nadal, Ledesma and Canisius resolved that they could absolve heretics as before, even if they had no proof of Pius V's confirmation of their privilege.<sup>28</sup>

But Pius V soon instigated more doubts. According to Nadal, when Canisius asked if the Jesuits could also absolve relapsed heretics in Germany 'the response that His Holiness gave was that all this [was] to proceed in a judicial manner in [cases of] heresy in Germany'.<sup>29</sup> Pius's insistence on a 'judicial manner', that is inquisitorial reconciliations, made Nadal think that the Jesuits could not act in any cases of heresy, as they acted in the *foro conscientiae*, a secret, extra-judicial jurisdiction.<sup>30</sup> To Nadal 'it appear[ed] very difficult that a confessor put or make [someone else] put the things that he has heard in sacramental confession in another forum'.<sup>31</sup> For him, the process would compromise the role of a confessor, as the penitent's 'sin would not only be reduced to the external forum, but also to the criminal external forum', taking the penitent from a sacramental confession to a judicial court.<sup>32</sup> If the Jesuits were to do this without breaking the secrecy of confession, they would need to secure 'the consent of the penitent' every time, and he 'ought not to be forced to this'.<sup>33</sup> For Nadal, Pius V's orders meant that Jesuits could not fulfil their duty as confessors to penitent-heretics. Later, Nadal reasserted his belief that Pius V meant that Jesuits could not fully reconcile heretics to the

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<sup>26</sup> '...trovando un vivae vocis oraculo de Pio 4.o dato al cardinale alessandrino, che adesso è papa, che puotesimo assolver[e] in his regionibus de tutti li casi reservati in coena Domini.' Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu*, vol. 3, p.316.

<sup>27</sup> 'Certe ex Bulla in coena Domini crimen haeresis Summo Pontifici reservatur...' Luis de Paramo, *De origine et progressu officii Sanctae Inquisitionis, eiusque dignitate and utilitate, de Romani pontificis potestate and delegata Inquisitorum: Edicto Fidei, and ordine iudiciario Sancti Officii, quaestiones decem* (Madrid: Ex Typographia Regia, 1598), p.786.

<sup>28</sup> '...trouando vn vivae vocis oraculo de Pio 4.o dato al cardinale alessandrino, che adesso è papa, che puotesimo assolver[e] in his regionibus de tutti li casi reseruati in coena Domini, risolsemo che puoteuamo...' Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu*, vol. 3, p.316.

<sup>29</sup> 'Dipoi partendomi io della prouincia d'Alamagna ho saputo in Herbipoli da M[ae]stro Canisio, che lui scrisse a V[ost]ra P[at]ernità dubitando se li relapsi puono esser[e] assolti da noi, et la risposta che ha dato Sua Santità, la quale spero nel Signore che temperarà Sua Beatitudine, et tutto questo modo iuridico di proceder' nelle heresie in Alamagna.' Ibid., pp.316-7.

<sup>30</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.492.

<sup>31</sup> 'Pare molto difficile che un confessore, le cose che ha sentito in confessione sacramentale, la metta o facci meter' in altro foro...' Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu*, vol. 3, p.317.

<sup>32</sup> '...non solo si riduca il suo peccato al foro esteriore, ma etiamdio al foro esteriore criminale...' Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> 'Pare molto difficile che un confessore, le cose che ha sentito in confessione sacramentale, la metta o facci meter' in altro foro, almanco senza consenso del confitente, il quale non si deue sforzar' a questo.' Ibid. For the debates on heresy and the seal see Lavenia, *L'infamia e il perdono*, pp.101-30.

Church, telling Borja in December 1566 that 'His Holiness simply give us the faculty to absolve from every heresy, and schism etc only in the internal forum in confession, reserving to himself and bishops, who by law are inquisitors, all exterior jurisdiction, since they act as commissaries of the inquisition in Rome.'<sup>34</sup> If, as Nadal suggests, Pius V had limited the Jesuits to actions in the internal forum of confession, rather than the *foro conscientiae* with which they could absolve the sin of heresy and the consequent excommunication, the Jesuits' authority had been severely curtailed.

Doubts about the validity of the privilege spread quickly amongst Jesuits in Italy. In the summer of 1567 a father at the Jesuits' college in Loreto asked Superior General Borja to clarify the privilege's status. He had needed to communicate the authority to absolve from excommunication on account of heresy twice but, whilst he had been told by some fathers that the rector still had the privilege, others said that the Superior General had revoked it.<sup>35</sup> To avoid acting illicitly, Raggio took 'the path that says that they do not have the faculty - as it was safer.'<sup>36</sup> Jesuit authorities were confused about their powers to absolve other grave sins too. In June 1568, Borja wrote to the Jesuit provincial in Lombardy, stating that he had been ordered to delegate the power to absolve excommunicates who had 'usurped ecclesiastical jurisdiction' in error and that only provincials in France and Germany could this.<sup>37</sup> Although letters between Rome and Loreto do not mention Pius, and the letter to Lombardy concerns another misdemeanour, they indicate that, during this pontificate, significant doubts about the validity of their privileges pervaded the Jesuit hierarchy.

Pius V's broader measures contributed to doubts about the validity of the Jesuits' authority to absolve heresy in Italy. In 1568, he promulgated a new version of *In Coena*

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<sup>34</sup> 'Padre, m'occorre una cosa che non ho scritto in un'altra lettera, et è che Sua S[anti]tà simpliciter ci dase a noi facultà di assolver' d'ogni heresia, et scisma etc. *in foro interiori tantum in confessione*, riservandosi a se et alli vescovi, che *de iure* sono inquisitori, tutta la iurisdittione exteriore, sì come fanno li commissarii dell'inquisitione in Roma, li quali dano licenza alli nostri d'assolver' *in confessione sacramentali* senza più.' Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Iesu*, vol.3, p.349.

<sup>35</sup> 'Et perche due volte già, sendomi accaduto di havere à co[m]municare l'authorità d'assolvere ab excommunicatione ob haeresim...mi sono trovato involuppato, dicendomi alcuni di questi sacerdoti, cioè Il Ministro et altre che Il Sup[er]iore del Collegio semp[re] l'ha havuta; altri che non, ma che V[ostra] R[everenza] l'ha revocata...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 134*, f.12r.

<sup>36</sup> '...ho voluto più presto credere à quelli sacerdoti, che mi dicevano che non c'era authorita, che à gli altri, parendomi la parte più sicura.' Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> 'Li giorni passati fu mandato per error[e] à V[ostra] R[everenza] della facultà del Papa di nominar 4 in ogni Provincia p[er] assolvere q[ue]lli che havessero incorso nella escomunicat[i]o[n]e in bulla coen[a]e D[omi]ni p[er] conto della giurisdittione ecc[lesiasti]ca usurpata, no[n] fa[r] uso di tal facultà p[er]che solame[n]te fù concessa p[er] le Pr[o]v[in]ci[al]e di Alemagna et Francia per le quali anche sole fù dimandata.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae 67*, f.128v.



*Domini*, a bull which listed the sins that only the pope could absolve.<sup>38</sup> The bull reserved heresy to the pope.<sup>39</sup> This was not unusual. However, unlike earlier bulls, in his *In Coena Domini*, Pius explicitly nullified all existing privileges that contradicted its aims.<sup>40</sup> The Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics contradicted Pius V's reservation of heresy to his own jurisdiction.<sup>41</sup> In the past, the Jesuits had secured special exemptions from *In Coena Domini*. A record of the Jesuits' 'faculties of absolving from heresy' indicates that the Society requested an exception from Pius, but that he granted it only 'in the Transalpine provinces'.<sup>42</sup> In another document of 1570, Pius told members of the Society that they could not use their privileges in ways that affected judicial processes in the Papal States.<sup>43</sup> These mandates confirm that Pius V did not want the Jesuits to impede the work of his inquisition in Italy and that, in places, through their privileges, he believed that they did.<sup>44</sup>

By November 1568, the Jesuits recognised that these measures curtailed their jurisdiction over heresy. Advising the rector of the Society's college in Milan, Borja wrote that Jesuits

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<sup>38</sup> O'Banion, *The Sacrament of Penance and Religious Life in Golden Age Spain*, p.66.

<sup>39</sup> 'Nos igitur vetustum, et solemnem hunc morem sequentes excommunicamus et anathematizamus...Usitas, Ciclevitas, Luteranos, Zuinglianos, Ugonottos, anabaptistas, Trinitarios, ac omnes et singulos alios Haereticos, necnon scismaticos...' See summary and copy of the bull in Mario Canepa, 'La bolla "In Coena Domini" del 1567 in un memoriale del vicerè spagnolo di Sardegna', *Archivio Storico Sardo*, 29 (1967), p.125.

<sup>40</sup> 'Non obstantibus quibuscunque privilegiis, Indulgentiis, ac litteris apostolicis generalibus, vel specialibus, eis vel eorum alicui, vel aliquibus cuiuscunque...tollimus, et omnino revocamus, et a quibus quidem sententiis nullus per alium, quam per Rom[anum] Pont[ificem] nisi in mortis articulo constitutus absolvi possit...' Canepa, 'La bolla "In Coena Domini" del 1567', p.132. For the controversy regarding the nullification of ancient privileges enjoyed by Spain, see in Canepa, 'La bolla "In Coena Domini" del 1567', pp.75-137. For other examples of the bull *In Coena Domini*, see editions of bulls by one of Pius V's predecessors, Clement VII (9 April 1528), and his immediate successor, Gregory XIII (5 April 1583) [Clement VII], *Bulla Clementis vii In Cena Domini lecta in Urbe veteri anno MDccviii in qua Urbis direptores perhorre[n]do eterne maledictio[n]is anathemate nunc primus da[n]tati sunt* (Rome: 1528) and [Gregory XIII] in *Liste et extraits de divers actes d'appel, au futur concile general, interjettez par les eglises, princes, etats, Communautez Ecclesiastiques and Seculieres des Pays-Bas Autrichiens and François, à laquelle on a ajouté les Bulles Unam Sanctam, and In Coena Domini* (1719), pp.xxi-xxx.

<sup>41</sup> Brambilla argues that Pius's bull *In Coena Domini* effectively nullified privileges to absolve heretics extrajudicially. *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.487.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. That the Jesuits saw the exemption from *In Coena Domini* of 12 May 1568 as a licence to absolve heretics in the lands north of the Alps is evident in a document to the Roman Inquisition in which the Jesuits refer to the exemption as a faculty: 'Absolvendi ab haeresi andc. Pius Quintus die 12 Maii 1568' before moving on to refer to 'Absolvendi ab haeresi etiam in Italia. Greg[ori]o Ult[im]o Martii 1573'. ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, f.45r. 'Facultates absolvendi ab haeresi re. Societati Jesu concessae...De facultate absolvendi ab haeresi Societati Jesu à Sum[m]is Pontificibus concessa... De eadem facultate pro Transalpinis provinciis...Facultates omnes, de quibus supra, non censeri revocatas per bullam Coenae, concessit Pius 4. X Martii 1561. Et Pius V die 12 Maii 1568.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.313r. See another version of this document in ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, [f.46v].

<sup>43</sup> 'Il Papa ha voluto che N[ostro] P[adre] ordinassi severam[en]te id est in virtute obedientiae alli n[ostri] che fan[n]o reside[n]za nel stato della Chiesa, che q[ua]ndo visitano le prigioni in tal n[ost]ro essercitino le opere di charità, che no[n] s'intromettano nelle cause, ovvero processi dei prigioni contenta[n]dosi di far il suo debito nel foro della consci[en]tia co[n] li prigioni...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 68, f.143v.

<sup>44</sup> Romeo, 'Pio V nelle fonti gesuiti', p.124.

could only absolve heretics in the internal forum and could no longer remove the censures that excommunicated them from the Church. Borja wrote that 'the penitents are to go to the inquisitors...to reveal their accomplices; and whether they go or not, [the penitent] ought to understand that he is absolved in the internal forum before God, but not in the external [forum]'.<sup>45</sup> Although Imperial governors had tried to establish the Spanish Inquisition in Milan, by the late 1560s inquisitorial activity in the city was directed by Archbishop Carlo Borromeo with support from the cardinal-inquisitors in Rome.<sup>46</sup> Borja's statement indicates that the Jesuits' jurisdiction was restricted in favour of local tribunals overseen by the Roman Inquisition.

Pius V also curtailed the powers of other institutions that reconciled heretics extra-judicially. The bull *In Coena Domini* of 1568 prevented anybody in Italy from absolving heretics, except the pope and the Holy Office.<sup>47</sup> This revoked bishops' authority over heresy, reversing a decree of the Council of Trent.<sup>48</sup> In 1569, Pius restricted the power of the Apostolic Penitentiary, traditionally responsible for granting faculties of absolution, so that it could only concede faculties in the *foro conscientiae*, for heretics unknown to the inquisitors.<sup>49</sup> The Penitentiary were also banned from absolving heretics or conceding privileges to others to

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<sup>45</sup> 'Li penitenti ad andare alli inquisitori dove saranno, a revelar li complici; et hor vada nor no, deve intendere [il penitente] ch'è assoluto nel foro interiore avanti a Dio, ma non già nel'esteriore, perché se vi fossero l'indicii, si potrebbe procedere contra de lui per il giudice ecclesiastico, nonostante che avanti Iddio già sia assoluto.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 67, f.180r.

<sup>46</sup> In this period it seems that the local inquisitor and head of the Roman congregation were in close contact. See, for example, correspondence held in ACDF, *Stanza Storica N-3-f*, ff.327v-328r. On conflicts between state, Roman and episcopal authorities over heresy in Milan see, Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.38-40.

<sup>47</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, pp.546-8.

<sup>48</sup> The bull is discussed, with edited excerpts, in Ludwig Von Pastor, *Storia dei papi dalla fine del medio evo. Compilata col sussidio dell'Archivio segreto pontificio e di molti altri Archivi. Volume VIII* (Rome: Deslée and C.i, 1964), pp.606-8. The sixth chapter of the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent reads: 'Liceat Episcopis in irregularitatibus omnibus and suspensionibus, ex dilecto occulto provenientibus, excepta ea quae oritur ex homicidio voluntario, and exceptis aliis deductis ad forum contentiosum, dispensare; and in quibuscumque casibus occultis, etiam Sedi Apostolicae reservatis, delinquentes quoscumque sibi subditos, in diocesi sua per seipsos, aut Vicarium, ad id specialiter deputandum, in foro conscientiae gratis absolvere, imposita poenitentia salutari. Idem and in haeresis crimine in eodem foro conscientiae eis tantum, non eorum Vicariis, sit permissum.'

Philippus Chiffletius (ed.), *Sacrosancti et oecumenici Concilii Tridentini Paulo III. Julio III. et Pio IV. Pontificibus maximis celebrati canones et decreta* (Brussels: Joannis Van Vlaenderen, 1741), p.221.

For numerous references to inquisitorial manuals noting the change to the concession see, Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.547, fn.7. See also, Prosperi, 'L'inquisitore come confessore', p.210.

<sup>49</sup> 'Limitatio nonnullarum facultatum maioris poenitentiarum eiusdemque ministrorum...Concedimus igitur maiori poenitentiarum nostro ut possit absolvere et absolvi mandare, in foro conscientiae dumtaxat...'  
Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum, diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol. 7, p.750. Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.550.

absolve heretics who had spoken of their heresy publically.<sup>50</sup> Pius limited all jurisdictions that affected the powers and interests of the Roman Inquisition.

Under Pius V, inquisitorial jurisdiction was supreme. In the Papal States, he ordered all judges and princes to obey inquisitorial mandates and send all suspects of the inquisition to Rome, even if they were imprisoned for a greater crime.<sup>51</sup> In 1569, the bull *Si de protegendiis* reaffirmed the tribunal's supreme and infrangible authority, protecting the inquisitors' freedom to work 'under the shield of the inviolate authority of the faith, outside of any danger in exercising any duty'.<sup>52</sup> From the end of the 1560s, correspondence between the cardinal-inquisitors and the peripheral tribunals grew in frequency and length as Pius V increased the inquisition's efficiency and authority over satellite courts.<sup>53</sup> These changes were significant and enduring. The republication of *Si de protegendiis* well into the seventeenth century demonstrates that inquisitors referred to Pius's reforms when asserting their supreme authority.<sup>54</sup>

Pius V wanted to abolish the extra-judicial reconciliation of heretics in Italy, where he gave the Roman Inquisition supreme jurisdiction. His legal reforms and the acquiescence of doubtful Jesuits, anxious to retain the pope's favour, demonstrates how close he came to achieving this. This situation reflects Pierroberto Scaramella's claim that Ghislieri's ascension to the papal throne saw 'the effervescence of the repressive apparatus' of the Roman Inquisition and, consequently, 'the impossibility, on the part of the Jesuits, to use or to assert their own prerogatives and privileges'.<sup>55</sup> Our first case study bolsters this interpretation, illustrating that, even when Rodriguez won papal permission to reconcile heretics, his actions lacked true autonomy. Nonetheless, as our second case study will show, the 'effervescence' of the Roman Inquisition was still limited in some corners of Italy. There, Pius V empowered

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<sup>50</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.550.

<sup>51</sup> '...à tutti li Giudici del stato ecclesiastico et prega gl'altri sig[no]ri et Principii, che debbano obbedire alli Ill[ustriss]mi Cardinali sopra l'inquisitione et dobbano mandar[e] qui alla inquisitione tutti che l'inquisitione domanderà non ostante che li chiamati siano preggioni por maggior deliti.' BAV, *Urb. Lat. 1040*, f.303r.

<sup>52</sup> '...quelli, che essercitano il Sacro Uffitio d'Inquisitione dell'Heretica pravità, siano sotto il scudo dell'invioabile autorità di questa fede, fuori di qualunque pericolo in essequire qualunque Uffitio, and Essaltatione della Fede Cattolica.' ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 270, fasc. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Romeo, 'Note sull'Inquisizione Romana', p.128. Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti e l'inquisizione Romana', p.155.

<sup>54</sup> 'In Pesaro, Ancona, e di nuovo in Gubbio, per Francesco Maria Ciotti 1632. D'ordine del P. Inquisitore Generale di Gubbio, &c.' ASM, *Inquisizione*, busta 270, fasc. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti', p.155.

Jesuits to carry out the 'personal management of affairs of religion' from which Scaramella claims that they were excluded by Pius V.<sup>56</sup>

### **A Jesuit spy in the Papal States**

Pius V allowed Jesuits to absolve heretics privately at least twice. These exceptions indicate that the Jesuits insisted on the necessity of extra-judicial reconciliations and that, in some circumstances, the pope agreed. One such concession was to Cristóbal Rodriguez, the Portuguese Jesuit with whom Pius had collaborated as a cardinal-inquisitor. In 1567, Pius sent Rodriguez to Le Marche in the Papal States, to investigate heresy and other forms of disobedience. In return, Pius V gave Rodriguez permission to absolve heretics autonomously. Despite broader efforts to limit extra-judicial reconciliations, Pius was willing to allow his old ally to reconcile penitent-heretics. However, the pope subsequently overturned Rodriguez's absolutions and jailed his penitents. Rodriguez demanded that his jurisdiction be respected and his penitents were released. Despite this resolution, the case exposes a fundamental contrast between the position of the pope and that of the Jesuits. Whilst the Society continued to think that genuinely autonomous extra-judicial reconciliations were essential, Pius only respected them as far as they supported inquisitorial endeavours.

Before becoming Pius V, cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri had had to compromise with the Jesuits. During the pontificate of Pius IV, Ghislieri's dominance over the Roman Inquisition was severely diminished, as the pope transferred executive powers to himself and other members of the congregation. In stark contrast to Ghislieri's hard-line policies, Pius IV promoted compromise solutions, allowing inquisitors to reconcile first-time offenders privately.<sup>57</sup> Pius IV filled the Holy Office with more moderate cardinals and ensured that cases were discussed by the whole congregation, not just pronounced upon by Ghislieri.<sup>58</sup> The attack on Ghislieri's authority was obvious. As the Venetian ambassador to Rome wrote, 'the whole of the Inquisition is no longer in the hands of the Most Illustrious [Cardinal] Alessandrino, but His Holiness has appointed seven cardinals with equal authority, who attend to the affairs of the Inquisition, the cases are divided between them'.<sup>59</sup> In his biography

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<sup>56</sup> Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti', p.155.

<sup>57</sup> 'See Pius V's 'Pastoralis officii munus' published in *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol.7, p.238.

<sup>58</sup> Bonora, 'L'Inquisizione e papato tra Pio IV e Pio V', p.55.

<sup>59</sup> 'Non resterò di dire che la somma della Inquisitione non è più in mano dell'Illustrissimo Alessandrino, ma Sua Santità ha deputato sette cardinali con equal autorità...li quali si sono divisi li processi fra di loro.' Paolo Tiepolo, ASV, *Capi dei consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere degli ambasciatori, Roma*, b.24. Edited in Bonora, 'L'Inquisizione e papato tra Pio IV e Pio V', p.55.

of Pius V, Girolamo Catena declared that Pius IV's actions severely limited the authority of Supreme Inquisitor Ghislieri.<sup>60</sup> With his power restricted, and a pope amenable to the Jesuits' approach, Ghislieri had been in no position to undermine the Society's papal privileges or to lose the assistance of Jesuits who could overcome many of the obstacles that his inquisition faced.

As Pius V, Ghislieri did not have to support the Jesuits in the same way, but he had a strong working relationship with Cristóbal Rodríguez, whom he lauded for his zeal and diligence.<sup>61</sup> After a mission in Naples, the pope praised Rodríguez's 'usual goodness and ingenuity' and for having 'spoken the truth to him so sincere[ly] and freely'.<sup>62</sup> During his first papal audience with Superior General Borja, the second item on their agenda, after the confirmation of the Jesuits' privileges, had been 'the matter of D[octo]r Rodríguez', who was discussed 'with the enthusiasm of His Holiness'.<sup>63</sup> The new pope demonstrated his continued trust in Rodríguez by putting him in charge of the '*inquisizione del mare*', which monitored heresy on Spanish galleys fighting the Turks and, later, on the ships sailing into the Battle of Lepanto, in which Pius's Holy League triumphed.<sup>64</sup> Pius rewarded Rodríguez with great responsibilities in matters of the religion, the inquisitor-pope's central concern.

Pius V trusted Rodríguez enough to make him a papal spy. As we saw at the beginning of Chapter Two, Pius ordered Rodríguez to go to Le Marche to gather information on religious disobedience and to relay it to the pope. In Le Marche, Rodríguez was not only a papal informer, he was also to act as an agent of the Roman Inquisition. A Jesuit account written in 1581 tells us that Rodríguez was tasked to quash 'the most pernicious seeds and sprouts of

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<sup>60</sup> '...poscia limitogli molto l'autorità di Supremo Inquisitore' Girolamo Catena, *Vita del gloriosissimo Papa Pio Quinto. Con una raccolta di lettere di Pio V à diuersi principi, andle risposte, con altre particolari. Et i nomi delle galee e de' capitani, cosi Christiani, come Turchi, che si trouarano alla battaglia nauale* (Mantua: F. Osanna, 1587).

<sup>61</sup> 'Si loda il buon zelo et solita diligenza di V[ostra] R[everenza].' ARSI, *Epistolae Externorum 1*, f.78r. Edited in Scaduto, 'Tra Inquisitori e riformati', p.50.

<sup>62</sup> 'R[everen]do Padre Christ[ophor]o. L'offitio che havete ultimam[en]te fatto col S[igno]r Vicere con la v[ost]ra solita bontà et ingenuità è tanto piaciuto a N[ostro] S[igno]re ch'io devo in nome suo ringratiarvi, che gli habbate parlato cosi sincera, et liberam[en]te la verità come havete fatto...' ARSI, *Epistolae Externorum 7-I*, f.315r.

<sup>63</sup> 'Doppoi si tratto con gusto di S[ua] S[antità] delle cose del D[ottore] Rodríguez.' Borja in Salmerón, *Epistolae Salmeronis*, vol.2, pp.69-70.

<sup>64</sup> G. Civale, *Guerrieri di Cristo. Inquisitori, gesuiti e soldati alla battaglia di Lepanto* (Unicopli: Milano, 2009); E. García Hernán, 'La asistencia religiosa en la Armada de Lepanto', *Anthologica Annua*, 43 (1996), pp. 213-263; Scaduto, 'Tra inquisitori e riformati', pp.17-18.

heresy' in San Ginesio by Pius V.<sup>65</sup> And, when Rodriguez arrived in the city of Macerata, he found another letter instructing him 'to go to San Ginesio to exhort certain men that they should go to present themselves to the Holy Office'.<sup>66</sup> According to this later account, Rodriguez was asked to ensure that 'the public ploughmen and sowers of evil [were] thoroughly investigated', and to be fined and punished by him.<sup>67</sup> Contrary to Scaramella's claim that the Jesuits were precluded from judicial roles under Pius V, Jesuit accounts suggest that Rodriguez's role in San Ginesio was inquisitorial.

In San Ginesio, Rodriguez also reconciled penitent-heretics. A later Jesuit account claims that Rodriguez demanded permission to reconcile heretics privately as a condition of accepting the mission. Written in the early seventeenth century, the document states that Rodriguez accepted 'the grave command imposed' regarding San Ginesio 'with a willing spirit but in caution, so that whomever he should have found guilty and also harmless, he should absolve [and] compel to abjure their heresy not in public in the churches, but permit it to be fulfilled in private.'<sup>68</sup> Although Pius had failed to approve the Jesuits' privilege in Italy, this account claims that he allowed Rodriguez to reconcile heretics in the Papal States, despite the presence of inquisitors.<sup>69</sup>

But this account also claims that Pius V overturned Rodriguez's absolutions. According to the document, after allowing Rodriguez to absolve penitent-heretics secretly Pius summoned several of them to Rome where they were 'thrust into the prison, which is vernacularly named the Holy office, just as fugitives or deserters of their ancestral religion'.<sup>70</sup> The account claims that Rodriguez was outraged at this violation of his jurisdiction and dashed immediately

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<sup>65</sup> 'Missus iterum est a Pio V ad Genesinos (oppidum id est in Piceno, nec infrequens nec ignobile), quo oppido perniciosissima haeresum semina germinaque clam succrescere Pontifex innudierat.' ARSI, *Rom. 185 (Necrologia 1602-1656)*, f.44v.

<sup>66</sup> '...venuto in Macerata trovai una lettera del Illustrissimo Alexandrino et mi bisognò andar a San Genese per esortar cert'homini che andassero a presentarsi costà al Santo Officio.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 135*, f.9r.

<sup>67</sup> '...eo nimirum consilio, eo destinans patrem; ut publici aratores satoresque mali pervestigatos deferret ad se mulctandos atque plectendos...' ARSI, *Rom. 185*, f.44v.

<sup>68</sup> 'Impositam gravem sane provinciam, libenti quidem animo sed ea cautione suscepit, ut quoscunque sotes ac innoxios deprehendisset, non publicis in templis, ut assolet, haeresim eiurare compelleret, sed id privatim ab ijs praestari permetteret.' Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Lavenia, 'Giudici, eretici, infedeli', pp.20-23.

<sup>70</sup> 'Postulatis annuit Pontifex; sed cum haeretici aliquot ex ijs Romae a Patre Christophoro missi essent ad Pium, sponsonis oblitus ille...'...in carcerem cui a Sancto Officio vulgo nomen est, mox in eos, tanquam in avitae religionis desertores, et transfugas, editurus exempla, detrudi mandavit.' ARSI, *Rom. 185*, f.44v.

Rome, where he admonished Pius that 'he ought to remain [firm] in the promises to him'.<sup>71</sup> Pius apparently acquiesced right away, releasing the men from the jails of the Holy Office and accepting the legitimacy of Rodriguez's absolutions.<sup>72</sup> The account suggests that Pius disregarded the validity of the Jesuits' jurisdiction when he wanted information from Rodriguez's penitents and respected it only after they had been imprisoned and, most likely, questioned, by his Holy Office.

Although the later account claims Rodriguez was betrayed, it is possible that Rodriguez and Pius worked together to entrap penitent-heretics lured by the promise of private absolution. Vincenzo Lavenia has suggested that the later Jesuit account probably represents an attempt to conceal Rodriguez's complicity in a trick that violated the seal of secrecy of sacramental confession.<sup>73</sup> This interpretation is supported by Pius's instructions to Rodriguez when he set out for Le Marche, in which the pope instructed Rodriguez to act like a Jesuit pastor, rather than a papal agent, so that heretics on whom he spied would 'not become aware of that which is intended'.<sup>74</sup> If Rodriguez used his Jesuit identity to conceal his role as a papal spy, it is possible that he deceived those whom he absolved to further inquisitorial investigations. In Le Marche, Rodriguez may have helped Pius V to facilitate an inquisitorial spy ring.

Whether Pius V betrayed Rodriguez or conspired with him directly, the San Ginesio episode indicates that the pope respected the private reconciliation of heretics only as far as it aided inquisitorial ends. This attitude reflects Pius V's fears about the privilege when he was a cardinal-inquisitor. Writing as in September 1563, he told Rodriguez not to pardon heretics too quickly as 'it always was and is the characteristic of heretics to go with deception and to swindle Catholics'.<sup>75</sup> Jesuits using the privilege of absolution worked on exactly the opposite premise to Pius's suspicious stance. For the Jesuits, the penitence of heretics seeking reconciliation with the Church was self-evident. But Ghislieri believed that only the

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<sup>71</sup> 'Quod ubi Pater Rodriguez accepit, continuo Romam advolavit, Pontificem adiit, liberrime conquestus est, data sibi esse verba, debere promissis stare illum, qui operusum adeo, ac difficillimos habens explicatus, sibi munus iniunxisset.' ARSI, *Rom. 185*, ff.44v-45r.

<sup>72</sup> 'Nec irrita fuere apud Pontificem verba Dei famuli. Siquidem homines confestim educi iussit e vinculis, privataque illis irrogata poena contentus fuit.' *Ibid.*, f.45r.

<sup>73</sup> Lavenia, 'Giudici, eretici, infedeli', p.6.

<sup>74</sup> 'Il modo d'informarvi d[e]lle predette cose secretaem[en]te sarà. Primo andare con un Compagnia insegnando la Dottrina Xtiana, et confessando ec. secondo il solito [de]lla Compagnia accio no[n] si accorgino di quello ch[e] si pretende.' ARSI, *Institutum 187*, f.87r.

<sup>75</sup> '...avvertisca che sempre la proprietà delli heretici è stata et è di andare con fraudolentia et di agabbare i catholici...' ARSI, *Epistolae Externorum 1*, f.68. Edited in Scaduto, 'Tra inquisitori e riformati', p.44.

inquisition could sort the penitent from deceivers, explaining that whilst 'the confessor believes everything that happens [to be] said to him: the judge always doubts the offender of the truth'.<sup>76</sup> In February 1568 a Jesuit noted that Pius V 'knows that public heretics sometimes go to the sacrament to confess falsely and to mock it', indicating that his concern about feigned conversions persisted into his pontificate, and demonstrating his continued reticence about extra-judicial reconciliations.<sup>77</sup>

Whilst Pius V's concession to Rodriguez in 1567 echoed his use of the Jesuits as cardinal-inquisitor, his subsequent reversal of the absolutions indicates a shift in the dynamic that came with his ascension to the pontificate. Ghislieri's standing and inquisitorial agenda had been diminished by contrasts with Pius IV, who disliked him and supported the Jesuits' approach and privilege. But as Pope Pius V Ghislieri could pursue his own agenda, granting Rodriguez the privilege to absolve heresy, before undermining him to pursue his own inquisitorial ideal. Of course, Pius V had greater power as pope in the Papal States than he had had as a Roman inquisitor in the various states of Italy. Nonetheless, Pius was not only emboldened by his power in the Papal States. His actions there were typical of his broader curtailment of the extra-judicial reconciliation of heretics across the Italian peninsula. In Italy Pius permitted extra-judicial reconciliations only as far as they facilitated the triumph of his inquisition. If Rodriguez was complicit in Pius's scheme in San Ginesio, as he was in his role as papal spy, it seems that a Jesuit who had valued the private absolution of heretics as a legitimate, autonomous route to reconciliation, was now forced or willing to use it as a cynical trap for the Roman Inquisition. Whilst at first the case of San Ginesio might appear to be an exception to Pius V's broader agenda, on closer inspection, it is an exception that proves the rule.

### **'A firm garrison to resist heresy' in Savoy-Piedmont**

The year after Rodriguez's mission to Le Marche, Pius V extended the privilege to absolve heresy to Jesuits in Savoy-Piedmont. There, Duke Emanuele Filiberto I had welcomed the

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<sup>76</sup> 'Avvertisco ancora V[ostra] R[everenza], che altro è la persona di confessore, altro è di giudice: il confessore crede tutto quello che li viene detto: il giudice ha sempre sospetto il reo della verità, et massime in hoc genere causarum; perchè V[ostra] R[everenza] mi scrive che, se si usasse gran rigore etc...che fugiriano dal paese, piacesse al Signore che non vi fusse mai entrata tal generatione.' ARSI, *Epistolae Externorum 1*, f.68. Edited in Scaduto, 'Tra inquisitori e riformati', p.44.

<sup>77</sup> 'S[ua] S[antità]a doppo havere visto quanto sopra si contiene ha detto che à così fare si muove, perchè sa che gli heretici publico alle volte vanno al sacramento della confessionare fittitiamente et per burlarsene.' ARSI, *Institutum 190*, f.6r.



Society but frustrated the influence of Pope Pius V and his Roman Inquisition. Savoy-Piedmont was a notable exception to the pope's largely successful mission to monopolise anti-heretical activity across the Italian peninsula. Unfortunately for Pius V, the Catholic orthodoxy of Savoy-Piedmont was considered crucial for the conservation of Catholicism in Italy. Savoy-Piedmont was home to communities of Waldensian heretics. It also bordered France, Switzerland and the German lands, where religious dissent imperilled Catholic orthodoxy and public order. Relations between the duke, the Roman Inquisition and the Jesuits demonstrate that the Society's organisation and approach allowed it to fight heresy hand-in-glove with the duke where Pius and his inquisition were prevented by political hostility. When Emanuele Filiberto resisted the pope's tough inquisitorial agenda to follow his own conciliatory policies, Jesuits in Savoy-Piedmont worked as intermediaries, diligently converting heretics to please both the prince and the pope.

Three records indicate that Pius V granted the power to absolve heresy to Jesuits on 22 November 1568. One specifies that the concession was for the city of Turin and two others refer to a concession for northern Europe.<sup>78</sup> The first is a letter written by Borja on 22 November 1568, telling fathers at the Jesuit college in Turin that Pius V had granted them the privilege. The other two records date to the late 1580s and inform the Roman Inquisition that the privilege was granted to Jesuits in the northern or transalpine parts of Europe on that same day. One of these later records tells us that, just like his mentor Paul IV, Pius V granted Superiors of the Society and others judged suitable by Superiors faculties so that they would be able to absolve from cases of heresy and schismaticism in every part of northern Europe.<sup>79</sup> The second document refers to the concession of the faculty of absolving heresy for the Transalpine provinces.<sup>80</sup> These documents and similar contemporary lists use the term 'northern' or '*septentrionalis*' interchangeably with '*transalpinis*', indicating that they referred to privileges for areas north of the Alps, beyond the Italian states. These documents seem to refer to two or three separate concessions, one for the Italian city of Turin, south of the Alps, and two beyond Italy in northern Europe.

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<sup>78</sup> For Turin: ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.232r. For the two records of concessions for northern or transalpine parts: ARSI, *Institutum* 185-I, f.310r and ACDF, *St. St. D - 4 - A*, f.61r.

<sup>79</sup> 'Paulus Quartus 8 mensis Maii 1557...concessit, ut in omnibus partibus Septentrionalibus Superiores Societatis, et alii à Superioribus iudicati idonei, quibus id committeretur absolvere possint à casibus haereseos et schismaticis...Idem concessit Pius V 22 Novembris 1568 pro eis.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-A*, f.61r.

<sup>80</sup> 'De facultate absolvendi ab haeresi Societati Jesu à Sum[m]is Pontificibus concessa...De eadem facultate pro Transalpinis provinciis.' ARSI, *Institutum* 185-I, f.310r.

The Turin concession complicates our argument so far. Read alone, the concessions for the northern territories appear consistent with Pius V's willingness to grant the privilege to Jesuits in northern Europe, but not in Italy. Although Savoy-Piedmont comprised territories in modern-day Italy and France, much of the state, including Turin, lay in Italy, south of the Alps. The city was Italian ecclesiastically, as well as geographically. Formally, Emanuele Filiberto had accepted the jurisdiction of the Roman Inquisition, distinguishing himself from neighbouring northern European states like France.<sup>81</sup> Whether our records refer to one concession or to three, the concession to Turin appears to contradict Pius V's anti-heretical agenda in Italy, demanding that we reassess the interpretation suggested by legal documents and Rodriguez's mission in Le Marche. In Le Marche, Rodriguez's jurisdiction was granted as a lure to further the inquisitorial agenda that is evident in legal documents. But in Savoy-Piedmont Jesuits in an Italian city were given a genuinely autonomous jurisdiction to reconcile heretics.

The concession of the privilege to Jesuits in Turin came after a series of requests from Achille Gagliardi, rector of the Jesuit college there. Like the rector in Loreto, Gagliardi believed that he had the privilege to absolve heretics. In July 1568, he wrote to Borja to ask for his permission to extend the faculty to absolve heretics to other priests because he 'could not attend to hearing confessions'.<sup>82</sup> Gagliardi reported that even if there were another three or four priests there, they would be well occupied with confessions. Moreover, through confessions, some penitents 'were converted from errors to the Catholic faith, and others are [going] to do so'.<sup>83</sup> Gagliardi insisted that his desire to extend the privilege to other Jesuits in Turin was purely practical, as there were some French people who came to confession whom

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<sup>81</sup> On Savoy-Piedmont see Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, p.30; Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del Duca' and 'L'Inquisizione negli Stati sabaudi: Roma, Torino e la politica religiosa' in Jean-François Chauvard, Andrea Merlotti and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds), *Casa Savoia e Curia romana dal Cinquecento al Risorgimento* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2015), pp.113-128.

<sup>82</sup> 'Desidero ch[e] V[ostra] R[everenza] Estenda la facultà di absolver ab h[a]eresi a gli altri sacerdoti, cioe a quelli ch[e] a me parerà, p[er]ch[e] io no[n] posso attender a udir confessioni...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 136*, f.132r.

<sup>83</sup> 'P[adre] Ministro no[n] puo quasi attendere ad altro ch[e] a confessar[e], et se ci fossero a[n]cora tre o quattro di piu sariano ben occupate...' Ibid., f.130v.

'Ma si partono p[er] no[n] ci per loco, ne chi li co[n]fessi, si sono ridotti alcuni da gli errori alla fede Catholica, et altri stan[n]o p[er] farlo.' Ibid., f.131r.

he did not understand.<sup>84</sup> Without extending the privilege to others Gagliardi said that there was no other way to help them.<sup>85</sup>

According to Gagliardi, the Jesuits' work to convert heretics in Turin was vital for the orthodoxy of all of Italy. Gagliardi argued that the city was vitally important to Italian efforts to resist heresy from France.<sup>86</sup> During the Italian Wars, Turin had been occupied by French forces.<sup>87</sup> The French left in 1560 but remnants of their community and Protestant religions remained. This threat was exacerbated by French merchants travelling through the city and official alliances between French Protestants and older Waldensian communities of rural Savoy-Piedmont.<sup>88</sup> Gagliardi told Borja that if nothing was done to stem the spread of religious heterodoxy in Turin heresy would be disseminated through all of Italy.<sup>89</sup> Gagliardi alleged that this had already begun, telling Borja that 'it is known that those of Geneva make every effort to enter through this door into Italy'.<sup>90</sup> If Gagliardi was to be believed, Jesuit confessors in Turin were empowered to save the entire peninsula from heretical contamination.

Gagliardi was not the first Jesuit to express fears that Savoy-Piedmont could provide a gateway for dangerous heresies to enter into Italy.<sup>91</sup> In 1560, Antonio Possevino, the first Jesuit to work in Savoy-Piedmont, wrote to Superior General Laínez to tell him that Protestants were sending catechists from Geneva into the state.<sup>92</sup> Both political and religious

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<sup>84</sup> 'Prego V[ostra] P[aternità] ch[e] mi co[n]ceda di este[n]der la faculta di absolvere ab eresi ad un altro sacerdote qual mi parera p[er]che ve[n]gono alcuni fra[n]cesi quali no[n] inte[n]do...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.132r.

'E necessario haver facoltà p[er] altri ch[e] p[er] me d'absolver[e] ab heresi p[er] li fra[n]cesi ch'io no[n] intendo.' Ibid., f.232r.

<sup>85</sup> '...creda V[ostra] P[aternità] ch[e] no[n] c'è altra via p[er] aiutarli...' Ibid., f.131r.

<sup>86</sup> 'Racoma[n]do a V[ostra] P[aternità] q[ue]sta città p[er]ch[e] è loco di gra[n]dissima importa[n]za p[er] resister all'heresie d[alla] Fra[n]cia...' Ibid., f.131v

<sup>87</sup> Gustavo Mola di Nomaglio, *Feudi e nobiltà negli stati dei Savoia. Materiali, spunti, spigolature bibliografiche per una storia* (Turin: Società storica delle Valli di Lanzo, 2006), p.80.

<sup>88</sup> Scaduto, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia: L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione*, pp.673-4. On the Synod of Chanforan where this alliance was made and the Waldensians generally, see Cameron, *The Reformation of the Heretics*, p.133.

<sup>89</sup> '...semp[re] piu mi par[e] ch[e] questa città sia u[n] loco di gra[n]de importa[n]za, dove e espedientissimo ch[e] la Compagnia vi pia[n]te un fermo p[re]sidio p[er] resister[e] all'heresia, p[er]che altrimenti ho gra[n]dissima paura, ch[e] no[n] si vadda semina[n]do di qua p[er] tuta la Italia...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, ff.71r-72v. Such terminology is typical of the early Jesuits, who, like others, frequently compared heresy to a disease, emphasising its contagious and destructive nature. See Höpfl, *Jesuit political thought*, p.67.

<sup>90</sup> '...sappia ch[e] fan[n]o q[ue]lli di Geneva ogni sforzo p[er] entrar[e] p[er] q[ue]sta porta nell'Italia...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.131v.

<sup>91</sup> Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy*, p.125.

<sup>92</sup> '...facendo venir di Ginevra minis[tri] Catechisti.' ARSI, *Institutum* 187, ff.126r.

leaders echoed the Jesuits' concerns about the region.<sup>93</sup> The Venetian ambassador to Savoy-Piedmont reported that Huguenots from the valleys had already attempted to occupy certain towns in the Duchy so that they might establish another Geneva in Italy.<sup>94</sup> Pius IV took the threat of heresy in Savoy-Piedmont seriously, electing bishop François Bachaud as the first papal nuncio to the state in 1559, granting him powers to work on behalf of the Roman Inquisition there.<sup>95</sup> Two years later, cardinal-inquisitor Ghislieri himself would visit Savoy-Piedmont with 'the greatest faculty to proceed against heretics'.<sup>96</sup> When Ghislieri became Pius V, he showed similar concern, personally selecting the state's inquisitors to ensure that tribunals were staffed by men who would execute his anti-heretical agenda.<sup>97</sup> Gagliardi's claims may have been exaggerated to support his request for the privilege, but they reflected an accepted view of the religious situation in Savoy-Piedmont.

Duke Emanuele Filiberto also feared heresy in his state. Protecting Catholic orthodoxy was crucial for preserving his sovereignty. In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg had declared that the religious confession of a state's subjects was dictated by their ruler.<sup>98</sup> This decision tied religion, territory and temporal authority, making religious rebellion an act of treason.<sup>99</sup> In Savoy-Piedmont, Emanuele Filiberto feared that heresy could stoke political sedition, that 'under the pretext of religion, a popular state would go taking root little by little'.<sup>100</sup> As the ruler of territories that traversed the Alps, he had first-hand experience of the grave political consequences of religious rebellion. The triumph of Calvinism in Geneva had contributed to

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<sup>93</sup> Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, p.30 and Caponetto, *The Protestant Reformation in sixteenth-century Italy*, p.135.

<sup>94</sup> 'Il desiderio degli Ugonotti delle Valli di S[ua] A[ltezza], come del Delfinato, con l'intelligenza di Ginevra e d'altri principali di questa maledetta setta, si è più volte scoperto essere d'impadronirsi di qualche luogo forte in Italia...saria stato impossibile a ricuperarlo, e di più avriano piantato in Italia un'altra Ginevra...' Edited Giovanni Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte fino alla morte di Emanuele Filiberto 1517-1580* (Florence: Claudiana, 1914), p.348.

<sup>95</sup> Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione negli Stati Sabaudi', p.117 and Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 28 (1959), p.71. On the foundation of the nunziature see Fausto Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo. (15 ottobre 1560-giugno 1573)* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1960), pp.ix-xvi.

<sup>96</sup> '...Mons[ignor] Rev[erendissimi]mo Alessandrino [Michele Ghislieri], al quale N[ostro] S[ignor] ha dato pur similmente per breve amplissima facultà di procedere contra heretici...' ASV, *Savoia Nunziatura*, 224, ff.18v-20v. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, pp.68-9. See also, Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p. xii.

<sup>97</sup> Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione negli Stati Sabaudi', p.120.

<sup>98</sup> Nadia Urbinati, 'Concordia and the Limits of Dialogue' in Alfred Stepan and Charles Taylor (eds), *Boundaries of Toleration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), pp.132-3.

<sup>99</sup> Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe*, p.181.

<sup>100</sup> '...sotto pretesto della religione si andasse radicando a poco a poco uno stato popolare.'

Emanuele Filiberto to Alfonso d'Este quoted in Scaduto, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia: L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione*, p.676.

his loss of the city in the 1530s, whilst the religious wars in France offered a vivid demonstration of the destabilising and bloody consequences of confessional conflict.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, the duke was alleged to have said that 'the ruin of every State came from not conserving the Catholic religion intact'.<sup>102</sup>

Despite widespread concerns about heresy in Savoy-Piedmont, Borja had to negotiate Gagliardi's request with Pius V. In a letter to Gagliardi, Borja wrote that he had told the pope that many heretics were converted by the Jesuits in Turin.<sup>103</sup> The ever sceptical pope 'pointed out [that Gagliardi should] maintain that these conversions are not feigned, as they are often in France.'<sup>104</sup> Pius's allusion to France suggests that he knew that Gagliardi sought the extension of the privilege for Frenchmen in Piedmont, that is to stem the migration of heresy into Italy. Nonetheless, Pius refused the request, stating that 'it would be very expedient [that], wishing to return to the womb of the Church, [the penitent-heretics] make the abjurations in the hands of the inquisitor, if they are not secret heresies.'<sup>105</sup> Even in Savoy-Piedmont, Pius was reluctant to use private reconciliations to quell the threat of spreading heresy.

In September 1568, Gagliardi tried to convince Pius, through Borja, that the Jesuits in Turin should and could deal with some cases of heresy alone. According to Gagliardi, it was 'not necessary to speak of inquisitors, nor of abjuration' in the cases that he heard because the 'heretics are secret and seduced through ignorance'.<sup>106</sup> Gagliardi's claim suggests that the heretics that he met were not notorious or known to the inquisitors, and could therefore be absolved and reconciled to the Church *in foro conscientiae*. Gagliardi also argued that heretics would not approach the inquisition as they thought it 'a most hateful thing' through

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<sup>101</sup> Fonzi (ed.), *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.x and Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione negli Stati Sabaudi', p.114.

<sup>102</sup> '...e mi commemorò le discordie degli Eretici seguite in Vormazia, presente Carlo Quinto, e se stesso: e mostrando che la ruina d'ogni Stato veniva dal non conservar[e] la religione cattolica intattissima.' Jean Dorigny and Niccolo Ghezzi (trans.), *Vita del P. Antonio Possevino della Compagnia di Gesu gia' scritta in lingua francese dal padre Giovanni Dorigny, Ora tradotta nella volgare italiana, Ed illustrata con varie note, e piu lettere inedite, e parecchi Monumenti aggiunti al fine* (Venice: Remondini, 1759), vol. 2, p.55. Quoted in Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, p.138. See also, Höpfl, *Jesuit political thought*, p.72.

<sup>103</sup> 'Che referendosi al Papa che si convertivano molti heretici...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 61, f.145r.

<sup>104</sup> '...mostrò tenere non fossero impiastrate queste riduttioni, come sogliono essere in Francia...' Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> '...che sarebbe molto espediente, volendo tornare al gremio della Chiesa, facessino abjuratione nelle mani dell'Inquisitore, se non fussino heresie secrete...' Ibid., f.145r.

<sup>106</sup> '...no[n] bisogna parlar de inquisitori ne de abiuratione...esse[n]do ch[e] questi ch[e] ricoreno a noi sono heretici secrete et sedutti p[er] ignora[n]tia.' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.169r.

which even 'the Catholics are scandalised'.<sup>107</sup> Appealing to the concerns of Pius and Borja, Gagliardi promised that, if granted, the power would be used with every caution.<sup>108</sup>

Two weeks later, on 22 November 1568, Borja told Gagliardi that the pope had acquiesced. 'Our Father gives the faculty to absolve from heresy in the *foro conscientiae*, in the same way that was conceded to Y[our] R[everence], to F[ather] Antonio Genovese, because only he knows the French language. And also to F[ather] Francesco Butiron'.<sup>109</sup> In a territory where the Roman Inquisition had official jurisdiction, Pius V made an exception to his agenda, granting Jesuits permission to absolve heretics independently.

Pius V's concession is explained by the ecclesiastical situation in Savoy-Piedmont. Although Emanuele Filiberto had agreed to cooperate with the Roman Inquisition, he never accepted its agenda. Officially things looked clear cut. Whilst ecclesiastics in the territory that had formed the Duchy of Savoy claimed Gallican privileges that gave them autonomy from Rome, in the Principality of Piedmont the Holy Office had established tribunals in four key cities, including the capital Turin.<sup>110</sup> Pietro Ferrero, bishop of Vercelli and ducal ambassador to Rome, recorded that the fight against heresy in Savoy-Piedmont was 'principally committed' to 'ordinaries and inquisitors', that is, to ecclesiastical authorities elected by the Holy See, but 'His Highness [the duke] might wish to make some of his [own men] intervene'.<sup>111</sup> This last point was crucial. Emanuele Filiberto never relinquished control over the anti-heretical agenda in his state. Whilst advisors to his son, Duke Carlo Emmanuele, would characterise his approach as an unsuccessful imitation of Venice, which asserted its independence from Rome, his actions exemplify the tendency of secular princes to direct religious discipline in

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<sup>107</sup> '...no[n] bisogna parlar de inquisitori ne de abiuratione ch[e] e cosa odiosissima della quale et li catholici si sca[n]daliza[n]no...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae* 136, f.169r.

<sup>108</sup> '...et s'a[n]dara in questo con ogni cautela...' Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> 'N[ostro] P[adr]e da facultà di assolvere ab her[e]si in foro consci[enti]ae, al modo che à V[ostra] R[everenza] fu concesso, al P[adre] Ant[oni]o Genovese, perche solo lui sa la lingua Francesa, et anche al P.Franc[esc]o butiron, se cosi parera à V[ostra] R[everenza]...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Italiae* 67, f.169v.

<sup>110</sup> Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione negli Stati Sabaudi', p.121 and Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.104-5. On the resistance to the inquisition in Savoy see Achille Erba, *La Chiesa sabauda tra Cinque e Seicento. Ortodossia tridentina, gallicanesimo savoiaro e assolutismo ducale (1580-1640)* (Rome: Herder, 1979).

<sup>111</sup> 'V[ostra] Alt[ez]za come Prencipe eletto da Dio regnar ne suoi stati con gratia sua...da persever[e] in questo suo santo proposito di voler principalmente tener cura delle cose della Religione, et quella parte de suoi stati che trova eesser machiati di heresia col braccio et authorità sua aiutar gli ordinarii ecclesiastici et inquisitori à purgarla con ogni sollecitudine rigorosame[n]te sapere che da sacri Canonii et concilii, questa cura è principalmente co[m]messa à Prelati Ordinarii et Inquisitori...Et quando V[ostra] Alt[ez]za per sodisfazione del'animo suo volesse far[e] intervenir[e] alcuni de suoi, no[n] mi dispiacera...' Biblioteca Reale di Torino (hereafter, BRTO), *Miscellanea patria* 101, no. 6.

their own lands.<sup>112</sup> The duke may have come to a formal agreement with the popes of Rome but, in reality, he thought that he was the only one who should decide how to confront the heretics in his territories.

Emanuele Filiberto employed the full apparatus of the state to crush heresy in Savoy-Piedmont and the Jesuits soon helped. In the first year of the duke's reign he banned his subjects from educating their children in Protestant countries.<sup>113</sup> He had buildings constructed for Protestant ministry destroyed and those who constructed them confronted with military force.<sup>114</sup> Emanuele Filiberto also outlawed attendance at Protestant sermons, fining first-time offenders 100 scudi and consigning repeat offenders to a lifetime rowing galleys.<sup>115</sup> The duke also introduced financial incentives for those who denounced heretics, giving judicial officials, community syndicates and subjects a third of any fine paid by a heretic whom they revealed.<sup>116</sup> Emanuele Filiberto elected a committee of loyal state officials to execute these edicts, comprising Don Filippo di Savoia, Signor di Racconiggi, Count Giorgio Costa della Trinità, the Captain of Justice Senator Corbis and his inquisitor Tomasso Giacomello.<sup>117</sup> An armed, roving, state inquisition, this group converted or punished those who had deviated from Catholic orthodoxy and, in so doing, rebelled against the duke.<sup>118</sup> In 1560, Jesuit Antonio Possevino would join the group, providing preaching and catechesis to convert and instruct penitent-heretics.<sup>119</sup> Possevino's involvement in these missions established a pattern

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<sup>112</sup> 'Il Duca Emanuele Filiberto tentò di ottenere, ad imitazione di Venezia, l'assistenza degli ordinari nelle cause d'Inquisizione...non riuscì.' Edited in Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, p.109. On the Roman Inquisition in Venice see, for example, Pio Paschini, *Venezia e l'Inquisizione Romana da Giulio III a Pio IV* (Padua: Editrice Ateneo, 1959). Emanuele Filiberto's strategies are an example of 'confessionalisation'. Nonetheless, his failures to convert well-established heretical groups such as the Waldensians support later criticisms of this thesis, which underline the failures of such policies and the resistance of lay people. On the confessionalisation thesis, its application and scholarly debates on the thesis see footnote 82 of the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>113</sup> Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', p.68

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> '...veniva prohibito à tutti suoi sudditi di qualunque co[n]ditione di andar[e] à sentir[e] Ministri Luterani predicanti nella Valle di Lucerna, ò in qual si voglia altro luogo sotto pena du scudi cento la prima volta, e della Galera perpetua per la seconda volta.' Marco Aurelio Rorengo, *Memorie storiche dell'introduzione dell'Herese nelle Valli di Lucerna, Marchesato di Saluzzo, and altre di Piemonte, Editti, Prouisioni, Diligenze delle Altezze di Sauoia per estirparle* (Turin: Giovanni Domenico Tarino, 1649), pp.39-40.

<sup>116</sup> '...mandando di più à gl'Officiali di giustitia, a Sindici delle Communità, and ad'ogni altra persona, che riconoscendo qualche delinquente, lo facessero carcerara, overo lo riuelassero con promessa del terzo delle pene pecunarie imposte.' Rorengo, *Memorie storiche dell'introduzione dell'Herese nelle Valli di Lucerna*, p.40.

<sup>117</sup> 'In essequitione poi di tal Editto...furono eletti per souraitendenti del fatto alcuni principali della Corte, cioè D[omino] Filippo di Sauoia, Sig[nore] di Racconiggi, and il Conte Giorgio Costa Sig[nore] della Trinità, e per Commissaro, ò sia Delegato il Senator Corbis Capitano di Giustitia, acciò assistesse al P[adre] Giacomello Inquisitore.' Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Scaduto, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia: L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione*, p.677.

<sup>119</sup> On Possevino's missions in Savoy-Piedmont see, Camillo Crivelli, 'La disputa di Antonio Possevino con i Valdesi', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 7 (1938), pp.79-91; Raffaele Di Simone, *Tre anni decisivi di*

followed by Jesuits who supported state forces fighting heresy in Savoy-Piedmont.

Emanuele Filiberto had resisted Roman authority since the foundation of Savoy-Piedmont in 1559, despite the efforts of successive popes. When Ghislieri arrived in 1561, Pius IV had granted him general superintendence over the whole state.<sup>120</sup> He ordered the duke to abandon his autonomous actions and cooperate with Rome.<sup>121</sup> But Ghislieri complained that the duke's edicts on heresy continued to encroach on ecclesiastical jurisdiction and Pius IV ordered Emanuele Filiberto to revoke his anti-heretical laws. According to Ghislieri, the duke merely paid lip-service to this command, before continuing to 'observe [his own edicts] more than ever'.<sup>122</sup> When successive popes enforced their religious authority using political instruments, such as inquisitors and nuncios, Emanuele Filiberto appeared to see their actions as an illicit interference.<sup>123</sup> Religious rebellion threatened the duke's authority and the safety of his subjects, and he thought that he should decide how to confront it.

Emanuele Filiberto resisted Roman authority well into Ghislieri's pontificate.<sup>124</sup> In his first year, Pius V nominated the Dominican Francesco Papardo as inquisitor general in Savoy-Piedmont, empowering him with 'every type of faculty and each and every authority that pertains to a duty of this kind, by law and [by] custom'.<sup>125</sup> Despite this sweeping power, Emanuele Filiberto's secular forces refused to hand over wanted heretics to Papardo.<sup>126</sup> Their attitude reflected that of the duke himself, who refused to cooperate with the nuncio who had been elected as an intermediary between Turin and Rome. In November 1568, Pius V ordered his new nuncio, Vincenzo Lauro, 'to persuade and exhort His Highness [the Duke] to provide that heretics do not settle in his state and see to it with every diligence to expunge [his states]

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*storia valdese. Missioni, repressione e tolleranza nelle valli piemontesi dal 1559 al 1561* (Rome: Università Gregoriana, 1958) and Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte'.

<sup>120</sup> Scaduto, *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia: L'Epoca di Giacomo Lainez: l'azione*, p.677.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> 'Mons[ignor] rev[erendissi]mo Alessandrino scrive che quel'editto tanto preiudiziale a l'auttorità ecclesiastica non è stato altrimenti rivocato, come il sig[nor] duca promise a V.S., ma che si osserva più che mai.'

ASV, *Savoia Nunziatura*, 224, ff.21v-22r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.71.

<sup>123</sup> Prodi, *The Papal Prince: One Body Two Souls. The Papal Monarchy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.167.

<sup>124</sup> Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del duca', p.420.

<sup>125</sup> '...cum plena, libera et omnimoda facultate et auctoritate omnia et singula que ad huiusmodi officium de iure et consuetudine ac alias quomodocumque pertinent.' Quoted in Romano Canosa, *Storia dell'Inquisizione in Italia dalla metà del cinquecento alla fine del settecento. Torino e Genova. Vol. III* (Bari: Sapere 2000, 1988), p.32.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p.33.



of all infected persons.<sup>127</sup> But Lauro failed to convince the duke to support the Roman Inquisition.<sup>128</sup> When Pius V personally pressed Emanuele Filiberto to allow his Roman Inquisition to work unimpeded, the duke said that he would 'without any exception', but only if Pius lent military support to his efforts to recapture Geneva.<sup>129</sup> Pius had given his inquisition the power to pursue heretics across the Italian peninsula. But Emanuele Filiberto treated Rome as a political power to be bargained with, not a universal religious authority to be obeyed.

Emanuele Filiberto also resisted Rome because he believed that his own methods were more effective than the popes'. Emanuele Filiberto was keen to demonstrate that he took a hard line on heresy, particularly as his French wife, Marguerite of Valois, was rumoured to protect heretics at the ducal court. Nonetheless, he openly disagreed with Pius V's approach.<sup>130</sup> Emanuele Filiberto disputed Pius's view that the Waldensians should be exterminated, arguing that it was not always best 'to burn a man, the death of whom will not make [other] men better'.<sup>131</sup> When Pius continued his efforts to impose his hard line in Savoy-Piedmont, appointing inquisitors from Rome and ordering them to use violence if necessary, Emanuele Filiberto argued 'that one has to use mediocrity as much as is necessary in these times',

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<sup>127</sup> '...la sua principale intentione dovrà essere nel suo negotio di persuadere et essortar[e] S[ua] A[ltezza] a proveder[e] a buon hora che gli heretici non si annidino nei suoi stati et attender[e] con ogni diligentia a espurgarli di tutte le persone infette...' ASV, *Nunziatura di Polonia*, 171, ff.32r-33r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.145.

<sup>128</sup> 'N[ostro] S[ignor] è avisato che le cose della Inquisitione in cotesto stato non procedono con quel favore, che si dovrebbe...' ASV, *Nunziatura di Polonia*, 171, ff.114r-v. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.226.

<sup>129</sup> In a letter to cardinal-nephew Michele Bonelli, nuncio Vincenzo Lauro reported that he '...dal sig[nor] duca risposto che, se piacesse a la divina bontà concedere a N[ostro] S[ignore] le forze di fare una buona lega in difesa de la religione cattolica...nel qual caso s'offerisce di volere senza eccezione alcuna accettare la santa Inquisitione in questi stati ne la maniera che piacerà a N[ostro] S[ignore]...' ASV, *Savoia Nunziatura*, ff.46v-49r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia*, pp.244-5.

<sup>130</sup> On Marguerite of Valois see, Rosanna Gorris Camos, '«Pia ricevitrice di ogni cristiano»: poésie, exil et religion autour de Marguerite de France, duchesse de Savoie' in Jean Balsamo (ed.), *Chemins de l'exil havres de paix: migrations d'hommes et d'idées au XVIe siècle; actes du colloque de Tours, 8-9 novembre 2007* (Paris: Champion, 2010), pp.177-228; Cesare Cantù, *Gli eretici d'Italia. Discorsi Storici. Vol. 3* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1866), p.359; C. Rosso, 'Margherita di Valois e lo Stato sabauda (1559-1574)' in Firpo, Fragnito and Peyronel Rambaldi (eds), *Atti del convegno Olimpia Morata: cultura umanistica e Riforma protestante tra Ferrara e l'Europa* (Ferrara: Panini, 2007), pp.149-156.

<sup>131</sup> '...non...convenendo in questi tempi abbruciar un huomo la cui morte non fa gli huomini esser miglior...' Quoted in A. Pascal, 'La lotta contro la Riforma in Piemonte al tempo di Emanuele Filiberto, studiata nelle relazioni diplomatiche tra la corte sabauda e la Santa Sede (1559-1580)', *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Vaudoise*, 53 (1929), p.56. Pius V had suggested that the Waldensians of Naples might be dealt with through 'l'esterminio di quella città et di tutta quella generatione.' ARSI, *Epistolae externorum I*, f.68r. Edited in Scaduto, 'Tra inquisitori e riformati', p.44.

working towards 'that which builds and does not destroy'.<sup>132</sup> In some cases, Emanuele Filiberto even tolerated long-established groups like the Waldensians, whom bloody interventions had failed to convert.<sup>133</sup> Ecclesiastical and temporal leaders in the Kingdom of Naples had taken a similar stance with their own Waldensian communities, recognising that violence and the evacuation of taxable land were less desirable than the presence of known heretics.<sup>134</sup> For Emanuele Filiberto, peace and stability were paramount: the conservation of the Church in general, but particularly in his own lands.<sup>135</sup>

The contrast between Emanuele Filiberto's clemency and some of the popes' harsher policies caused tension between Turin and Rome. Popes even blamed the duke for the persistent threat of heresy spreading in and from Savoy-Piedmont. In June 1561, Pius IV's nephew, Carlo Borromeo, wrote to Emanuele Filiberto, telling him that his toleration of the Waldensians infuriated the pope, who wanted to see the eradication of heresy and the punishment of obstinate heretics.<sup>136</sup> Emanuele Filiberto was equally critical of Rome. During Pius V's pontificate, the duke told his ambassador to the Holy See, Abbot Vincenzo Parpaglia, that he was better able to judge the best way of proceeding based on the quality and circumstances of each case than those in Rome 'a long way from the dangers'.<sup>137</sup> Discussing the work of Pius V's inquisitor, Papardo, Emanuele Filiberto suggested that the orders of Roman authorities were merely advisory, arguing that it was important to refer 'to another judgement [to consider] if the way of proceeding is apt to destruct or truly to build'.<sup>138</sup> This conflict of approaches reflected a conflict of interests. Whilst Emanuele Filiberto was principally concerned with balancing discipline and tolerance to stabilise his state, popes wanted stricter measures to secure the orthodoxy of all of Italy.

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<sup>132</sup> 'Il mio parer [è] che si habbia da usare della mediocrità tanto necessaria in questi tempi, castigando, non disperando, accioché si eddifichi et non si rovini.' Edited in Pascal, 'La lotta contro la Riforma in Piemonte', p.56.

<sup>133</sup> On the duke's efforts to convert the Waldensians see, de Simone, *Tre anni decisivi di storia valdese*.

<sup>134</sup> Scaduto, 'Tra Inquisitori e riformati', pp.3-5.

<sup>135</sup> '...passarò alle considerazioni che mi occorrono concernenti in generale la conservatione de la Chiesa et degl'Ecclesiastici et in particolare de' miei stati.' Pascal, 'La lotta contro la Riforma in Piemonte', pp.54-5.

<sup>136</sup> 'L'accordo che Vostra Signoria scrive essere seguito con quelle Valli, come è in tutto contrario a l'opinione che Nostro Signore teneva di Sua Altezza, et al desiderio che ha di veder[e] estirpate le heresie et puniti severamente li ostinati in esse, così Vostra Signoria può credere, che gli è dispiacciuto infinitamente...!' ASV, *Savoia Nunziatura*, 224, doc. n.19, ff.16r-17r. Edited in de Simone, *Tre anni decisivi di storia valdese*, pp.249-50.

<sup>137</sup> 'Altro è esser[e] in Roma lungi dalle insidie, altro è l'esser[e] qui in mezzo di esse...' Quoted in Pascal, 'La lotta contro la Riforma in Piemonte', p.55.

<sup>138</sup> '...et rimettendo a l'altrui giudizio se il modo di proceder[e] de l'Inquisitore et el predetto vicario è atto a distruggere o vero ad edificare...' Ibid., p.54.

By contrast, the Jesuits presented themselves as loyal servants of the duke's plans. The first Jesuit to meet with Emanuele Filiberto was Antonio Possevino, who visited the ducal court to commend the Society when he came to Savoy-Piedmont as Commendatore of Fossano.<sup>139</sup> Possevino emphasised the Jesuits' support for the duke's anti-heretical strategy. Rather than emphasising Roman ecclesiastical jurisdiction over heresy, Possevino underlined the duke's duty to see 'the souls [of his state] restored to God', just as the 'state has been restored to His Highness by divine majesty'.<sup>140</sup> In doing so, Possevino complemented the duke's strong belief that he, and not the Roman inquisitorial authorities, should set the anti-heretical agenda in his state. Possevino also concurred with Emanuele Filiberto's concerns about the political ramifications of religious dissent, claiming that the protection of Catholicism in Savoy-Piedmont would bring about 'the establishment of his states' and prevent another episode like 'the disunion of Geneva and other places because of heretics', as once they leave the Church heretics 'also disengage from temporal power'.<sup>141</sup> Possevino proposed himself as an intermediary between Turin and Rome, who could solicit help for ecclesiastical reform in Savoy-Piedmont and remind papal representatives and the Jesuit Superior General of what might be done to end '*rumori*' in the duchy whilst protecting the dignity of the duke.<sup>142</sup> In Savoy-Piedmont, Possevino proposed the Jesuits as a tool of state.

Unlike Roman nuncios and inquisitors, Possevino claimed that the Jesuits would work in perfect harmony with the state. According to Possevino heresy in Savoy-Piedmont could only be fought with 'a great tempering of wise religious [men]', 'who do not damage the temporal with the spiritual, but [see to it] that the one is the support of the other'.<sup>143</sup> Such statements suggest that the Jesuits agreed that heavy-handed interventions caused problems rather than resolving them. Jesuits like Loyola had long claimed that, through their pastoral approach to

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<sup>139</sup> Alessandro Monti, *La Compagnia di Gesù nel territorio della Provincia Torinese* (Chieri: M. Ghirardi, 1914), 5 vols, vol.1, p.106.

<sup>140</sup> 'Il primo fu che, poiché dalla maestà divina era restituito a sua altezza il suo stato, si aspettava che da lei si restitissero l'anime sue a Dio.' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324-I*, ff.8r-13v. Edited in Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', p.93.

<sup>141</sup> '...così ne sarebbe seguito, oltre la perpetua gloria, anchora stabilimento de suoi stati, sì come per lo contrario si vedeva esser[e] seguita la disunione di Ginevra et d'altri suoi luochi per causa de gli heretici...' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324-I*, f.8r. Edited in Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', p.93. '...gli heretici, che, distaccati dalla Chiesa, si disingonano anco dalle postestà temporali.' Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> '...mostrandoglieli sub[it]o gli inviasse ad u[n] tempo a Roma onde venisse aiuto alla riform[at]ione ecclesiastica, et modi di estinguer[e] questo poco di fuoco, ho sempre ricordato, et à detto S[igno]r Nu[n]cio, et al G[e]n[er]ale Jesu.te quel che mi pareva opportuno p[er] finir[e] presto questi romori con dignità di V[ostra] Alt[ezza].' Archivio di Stato di Torino (hereafter, ASTO), *Lettere di particolari - P*, Mazzo 58.

<sup>143</sup> '...era necessario un gran temperamento di prudenti religiosi, che compatissero et non guastassero col spirituale il temporale, ma che l'uno fosse appoggio dell'altro.' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324-I*, f.21r. Edited in Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', p.102.

heresy they could 'preserve that which stays healthy' and 'cure that which is already corrupted by the heretical plague'.<sup>144</sup> This method complemented the duke's aim to curb religious rebellion whilst preventing the social unrest that had been exacerbated by violent attempts to convert heretics.<sup>145</sup>

Possevino made sure that the Jesuits were perfectly placed to fight for Catholic orthodoxy for the duke. Immediately on arriving in Savoy-Piedmont he sought ducal support for the establishment of Jesuit colleges in the duchy. From these bases, Possevino claimed that the Society could deliver education to protect subjects from the perils of religious error and pastoral care to Catholics and heretics seeking reconciliation with the Church.<sup>146</sup> Gagliardi fought for a college in the city of Turin, which, as 'a place that is so close to various lands and of great concourse and passage' needed a Jesuit college to increase 'the number of people who could resist the heresies' that travelled through the city.<sup>147</sup> According to Gagliardi, a Jesuit college would be 'a firm garrison to resist heresy' in Savoy-Piedmont.<sup>148</sup> Writing to the duke of Monferrat in the 1580s, Possevino claimed that it was Jesuit colleges that had solved Emanuele Filiberto's problems with heresy, claiming that the duke had found 'all Piedmont with many stains of heresy and ignorance', but had eradicated heresy by founding Jesuit colleges in Mondovi, Turin, Chambery, Vercelli and Annecy.<sup>149</sup> During his first meeting with

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<sup>144</sup> '...pare che la Compagnia nostra...quanto più presto potrà, a preservare quello che resta sano, e a curare quello che già è ammorbato dalla peste eretica...' Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.12, pp.259-60. Höpfl, *Jesuit political thought*, p.67.

<sup>145</sup> Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione del Duca', p.437.

<sup>146</sup> On Jesuit colleges see, Paul F. Grendler, 'Láinez and the Schools' in Paul Oberholzer (ed.), *Diego Láinez (1512-1565) and his Generalate. Jesuit with Jewish Roots, Close Confidant of Ignatius Loyola, Preeminent Theologian of the Council of Trent* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2015), pp.649-78; Grendler, *The Jesuits and Italian Universities* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017); O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp.200-39; Ladislaus Lukács, 'De origine collegiorum externorum deque controversiis circa eorum paupertatem obortis 1539-1608', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 29, (1960), pp.189-245; Pavone, 'I gesuiti in Italia' and Aldo Scaglione, *The Liberal Arts and the Jesuit College System* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1986). For an overview of literature on Jesuit colleges see Grendler, 'Jesuit Schools in Europe. A Historiographical Essay', *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 1 (2014) pp.7-25.

<sup>147</sup> 'È di grandissima utilità per essere in un paese che è tanto vicino a diversi paesi e di gran concorso e passaggio; per far[e] qui numero di gente che possano resistere all'eresie...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 139*, f.219v-220r.

<sup>148</sup> '...è espedientissimo ch[e] la Compagnia vi pia[n]te un fermo p[re]sidio p[er] resistere all'heresia...' ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae 136*, f.72r.

<sup>149</sup> '...il S[ign]or Duca Em[m]anuele di Savoia trovando tutto il Piemonte con molta macchia di heresia, et ignoranza, volse ch'io fundassi il collegio nostro a Mondevi, il q[u]ale poi si trasferi in Turino, et quel de Ciambri in Savoia, alli quali poi si sono aggiunti quei di Vercelli, et di Annessi pe[r] i quali i paesi si sono purgati di errori.' ASTO, *Monteferrato - Feudi per A e B*, Mazzo 1, fasc. 11, f.4r.

Emanuele Filiberto, Possevino had claimed that, had there been a strong Jesuit college in Annecy, the nearby city of Geneva may not have been lost to the duke.<sup>150</sup>

When Gagliardi requested the extension of the privilege to absolve heresy at the college in Turin in 1568, the Society had already won the duke's support for their plan to fight heresy from colleges across Savoy-Piedmont. Unlike the Roman Inquisition, the Jesuits had been accepted by the duke as a key part of his anti-heretical agenda. Emanuele Filiberto personally funded their establishments, giving an annual endowment of 400 scudi to the colleges at Mondovì and Chambéry and 150 scudi each for Cuneo and Carignano.<sup>151</sup> In Turin, the Society inherited a property and money from a private donor, Aleramo Becutto, but the Jesuits also secured a substantial stipend from the duke.<sup>152</sup> As confessors, preachers and teachers, Jesuits were fully integrated into Emanuele Filiberto's state-run schemes for fighting heresy. From the early 1560s, the Society influenced the duke's anti-heretical agenda in ways that the pope and his inquisition could and would not.

The concession of 22 November 1568 indicates that, eventually, even Pius V realised that his power was limited in Savoy-Piedmont. In the later record of privileges granted for Jesuits in the 'northern parts', the reference to the concession of the 22 November 1568 states that Pius V allowed Jesuits to absolve heresy in areas where 'ecclesiastical liberty [was] violated'.<sup>153</sup> Since the eleventh century, the principle of ecclesiastical liberty held that temporal powers could not impede the Church's authority.<sup>154</sup> Instructing his nuncio in Turin, Vincenzo Lauro, Pius V claimed that ecclesiastical liberty had been violated in Savoy-Piedmont, ordering Lauro to make continual efforts for 'the immunity of ecclesiastical matters and for the conservation of ecclesiastical liberty and jurisdiction'.<sup>155</sup> Pius V had predicted that the

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<sup>150</sup> 'La quarta cosa il raccomandarle caldamente fu il collegio di Annessi, mostrandole quel frutto che se ne sperava; et come non menco che per via di guerra sua altezza poteva indursi a credere che per tal mezzo si havrebbe potuto far[e] qualche mossa in Ginevra...' ARSI, *Opera nostrorum 324-I*, f.8v. Edited in Scaduto, 'Le missioni di A. Possevino in Piemonte', p.94.

<sup>151</sup> The *minuta* for the patent for the college at Mondovì is held in ASTO, *Regolari di qua da Monti*, Mazzo 10, Mondovì, [fasc.] no.1.

<sup>152</sup> The official record of Beccuto's donation of 300 scudi per year is held in: ASTO, *Materie ecclesiastiche - Regolari diversi - Torino - Gesuiti*, Mazzo 1, fasc. no. 33. On the various colleges in Savoy-Piedmont see Alessandro Monti, *La Compagnia di Gesù nel territorio della Provincia Torinese*, vol.1.

<sup>153</sup> 'Absolvendi à casu bullae coenae violatae libertatis ecc[lesiasti]cae ut facultas delegari possit duob[us] in singulis Collegiis. Pius V. 22. Novembris 1568.' ARSI, *Institutum 187*, f.310v.

<sup>154</sup> On the principle and its application in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, see Kenneth Pennington, 'Ecclesiastical Liberty on the Eve of the Reformation', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law*, 185 (2016), pp, 185-207.

<sup>155</sup> 'Haverà poi a far offitii continuamente, nelle occorrenze che potranno venire alla giornata, con S[ua] A[ltrezza] per la immunità delle cose ecclesiastiche et per la conservatione della libertà et giuridittion[e]

protection of ecclesiastical liberty would be necessary in 'occurrences that could come daily with H[is] H[ighness]', even if the duke was called to the 'obedience and devotion that every Catholic prince owes to this H[oly] See'.<sup>156</sup> When Lauro failed to sway the duke, Pius V warned Lauro that his 'coldness' in seeking 'to give a hand to the Holy Office' and ensure that it had 'every help and favour' had made the pope consider abolishing the nunciature altogether, 'getting rid of the nuncio at that court'.<sup>157</sup> This extreme threat reflects the Pius's frustration at the duke's continued violation of ecclesiastical liberty, and at his own inability to check it.

The reference to 'violated ecclesiastical liberty' in this later record suggests that this and the other documents noting a concession for northern or transalpine parts on 22 November 1568 refer to the concession to Gagliardi in Turin on the very same day. Closer analysis of the documents corroborates this interpretation. These references to privileges for northern and transalpine territories appear on lists of concessions written and sent by the Jesuits to the Roman Inquisition in the late 1580s as proof of the continued papal support for the Society's privilege to absolve heresy. Given this aim, it is probable that the Jesuit authors retrospectively extrapolated the Turin concession of 22 November 1568 as a concession for all areas outside of the jurisdiction of the Roman Inquisition. We have already seen an example of this strategic interpretation in their extrapolation of Pius V's exemption to the bull *In Coena Domini* as a concession of the privilege to absolve heresy for all of northern Europe. Although the references in these lists were written by Jesuits and are not, therefore, direct evidence of Pius V's interpretation of the situation, their conflation of Turin and northern Europe would also reflect the pope's broader view that Roman authority was frustrated in Savoy-Piedmont, just as it was beyond the Alps.

Gagliardi's request for the privilege in Savoy-Piedmont echoes those from other corners of the peninsula, suggesting that the Jesuits still believed that some heretics required a genuinely autonomous route to reconciliation with the Church. Such requests met with caution from

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ecclesiastica'. ASV, *Nunziatura di Polonia 171*, ff.32r-33r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.145.

<sup>156</sup> '...per la obedientia et devotion[e] che debbe ogni principe cattolico a questa S[anta] Sede.'

ASV, *Nunziatura di Polonia 171*, ff.32r-33r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.145.

<sup>157</sup> '...di ordine di S[ua] S[anti]tà se le responde ch'essa ha sentito gran dispiacere vedendo con quanta freddezza si proceda costì et come poco si pensi in dare il braccio al S[ant] Ufficio...si risolveria a levare il suo nuntio di quella corta...' ASV, *Nunziatura di Savoia 10*, f.341r. Edited in Fonzi, *Nunziature di Savoia. Volume primo*, p.225.

Borja, who was keen to maintain good relations with a pope whose support for the Society's privileges was far from certain. At first, Gagliardi's request was no different. Nonetheless, the fear and frustration caused by the ecclesiastical situation in Savoy-Piedmont led Pius V to make an unusual exception and grant the privilege to Jesuit confessors in Turin. Unlike other Italian states where Pius V had formed working relationships with temporal leaders, in Savoy-Piedmont the Jesuits had the upper hand. Working with Emanuele Filiberto from state-sponsored colleges, the Jesuits could make a strong case for their ability to fight heresy where papal inquisitors were obstructed. Reluctantly, it seems that Pius V agreed.

### **Conclusion**

Pius V's pontificate heralded a transformation in the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy. This did not come with a bold, explicit revocation of the privilege, but a gradual marginalisation of the Jesuits and their jurisdiction over heresy. Pius V increased the efficiency of his inquisition and extended its power across Italy. He established compromises with secular and ecclesiastical authorities in states that had previously resisted Roman influence, such as Lucca, Naples, Milan and Venice.<sup>158</sup> Pius did not need the Jesuits across the peninsula and so failed to confirm the papal privilege that gave the Jesuits a truly autonomous jurisdiction over heresy. Any concessions on this score were cases when extra-judicial reconciliations could be used as an inquisitorial lure or a desperate replacement for Roman influence in the small corner of Italy where Pius had failed.

The use of the privilege under Pius V reflects the picture painted by scholars who have suggested that the privilege was conceded to support the work of the inquisitors. Nonetheless, by identifying the roots of this characterisation in the late 1560s we see that it is unhelpful to define the privilege solely as a papal and inquisitorial tool. Such interpretations represent part of the privilege's history that stands in stark contrast to its intended and actual use during the first fifteen years after its concession. Even so, evidence presented in this chapter supports Scaramella's claim that Pius V's pontificate saw permanent changes to the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy and their privilege to absolve heretics. Although the Jesuits quickly regained their privilege to absolve heresy at the ascension of Pope Gregory XIII in 1573, the

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<sup>158</sup> On Lucca see Adorni-Bracessi, 'La Repubblica di Lucca', especially pp.260-1; On Naples, Scaramella, *Le lettere della Congregazione del Sant'Ufficio ai Tribunali di Fede di Napoli 1563-1625* and 'Inquisizione, eresia e potere feudali nel Viceregno napoletano alla metà del cinquecento', in Maurizio Sangalli (ed.), *Per il cinquecento religioso italiano. Clero, cultura, società* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2003), vol.2, pp.513-21. On Venice see, Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.31-8.

development of the inquisition under Pius V and the waning threat of heresy in Italy meant that the Jesuits' privileges were seen as excessive, a power that undermined papal authority rather than supported it. When the throne of Saint Peter passed from Gregory XIII to former inquisitor Sixtus V, the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy in Italy would be revoked forever, and their autonomy as an institution permanently curbed.



## Chapter Four: Bargaining for Autonomy: Challenges and Change at the Close of the Sixteenth Century

In a letter written to the cardinals of the Roman Inquisition, Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (Superior General 1581-1615) acknowledged that the Society's privilege to absolve heretics should be completely revoked. The undated letter appears to have been written in the first months of 1587, at the close of a dispute over the privilege between the Society and the Roman and Spanish Inquisitions.<sup>1</sup> The Jesuits presented a detailed case for the value of the privilege, but Pope Sixtus V (1585-90) took a different path. Acquaviva's letter stated that, 'in the future', Jesuits would 'neither claim, nor ask for' any special right of 'proceeding in cases of heresy'.<sup>2</sup> Acquaviva gave just one justification for his acceptance of the revocation of the privilege: the Jesuits 'saw well' that they were not unique in matters of heresy.<sup>3</sup> In 1571, Pius V had made the Society a mendicant order, putting them in the same category as older religious like the Dominicans.<sup>4</sup> In his letter of 1587, Acquaviva fully accepted this change, writing that any claim that the Jesuits could proceed in cases of heresy where the other mendicants would not have proceeded 'would be a very hateful matter'.<sup>5</sup>

With this letter, Acquaviva complied with a judgement that conflicted with his own. Before the revocation, Jesuit authorities had sent at least three treatises to the Roman Inquisition, arguing that the Society should retain its privilege precisely because it made a unique contribution to the fight against heresy. Although inquisitorial systems were now efficient and far-reaching, the Jesuits claimed that they needed the privilege as fear prevented many penitent-heretics from approaching tribunals. If the privilege was revoked in Italy, the Jesuits claimed that the Church would see many lost sheep err eternally.<sup>6</sup> In treatises and letters sent to the cardinal-inquisitors, the Jesuits reflected on fifty years of ministry and argued that in matters of heresy the Society should enjoy a privilege that was as unique as its contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> We know about this discussion, which will be examined extensively in this chapter through documents held in ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Per l'avenire quando che con effetto si vedesse, ò ragionevolmente si sospettasse, che in alcuno fosse tal peste, non pretendiamo, ni supplichiamo in conto alcuno di essere in questa parte singolari col procedere in causa haeresis, dove gli altri Mendicanti non procedessero, perche questo ben vediamo che sarebbe cosa molto odiosa.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, f. 75r.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum*, vol.7, pp.923-6.

<sup>5</sup> ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, f. 75r.

<sup>6</sup> 'Nisi velimus ovem perditam aeternum peris[s]e, necessarium plane erit vel nobis, vel aliis sacerdotibus o[mn]ino largam ab haeresi absolvendi facultatem co[n]cedere...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.330r.

This chapter will explain why Acquaviva shifted his position on the Society's role in the fight against heresy. It will argue that the Jesuits lost their privilege because claims for the singularity of their ministry aggravated rather than appeased Sixtus V's institutional concerns. Since 1551, the privilege had given Jesuit Superior Generals jurisdictional autonomy in the grave matter of heresy. But the continued concession and use of that autonomy often depended on the compliance of local leaders and, crucially, the approval of the pope. There had been murmurings against the privilege in the past. But during the pontificate of Sixtus V persistent Jesuit factionalism and complaints from external authorities grew and converged with Sixtus's own concerns about the Jesuits' role. The privilege to absolve heresy gave the Jesuits autonomy in cases of religious dissent, an area that Sixtus sought to control. As such, the privilege encapsulated his broader apprehensions about the Society. Sixtus asked the Jesuits to answer their critics. But when the Jesuits' defence focused on pastoral advantages and not concerns about their peculiar autonomy and governance, Sixtus revoked the Jesuits' jurisdiction over heresy entirely. Without papal support for the privilege and the *modus operandi* that it facilitated, Acquaviva had to comply.

The generalate of Claudio Acquaviva is often heralded as a long period of internal reform for the Society, sparked by both internal debates and external pressures.<sup>7</sup> We saw early signs of this shift in the pontificate of Pius V. In that period, the Society's autonomy contrasted increasingly with the agenda of a pope who wanted to control initiatives to fight heresy. But the debate that erupted in Sixtus V's pontificate had even earlier origins. It began when Loyola and his advisors established a uniquely centralised government and acquired papal privileges that allowed Jesuits to work outside normal ecclesiastical and temporal hierarchies. From the 1550s to the 1590s, men inside and outside the Society argued that the figure of the Superior General wielded excessive authority and autonomy. During Sixtus's papacy, this long-standing quarrel was intensified by disputes in Spain and France, and the pope's own concerns. As a unique mechanism of autonomous jurisdiction over the grave matter of heresy, the privilege soon became central to this broader and much older controversy.

In the late 1580s, the Society could not continue to operate as it had in its first forty years. As we saw in Chapter One, the first Jesuits defined their institution according to the demands of

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<sup>7</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, pp.13-6 and 'Codificare l'obbedienza. Le fonti normative di gesuiti, oratoriani e cappuccini a fine Cinquecento', *Dimensioni e Problemi della Ricerca Storica*, 1 (2005), p.51.

ministry, accruing roles from churchmen and princes who faced spreading religious dissent, and papal privileges that allowed them to fulfil these tasks. But by the pontificate of Sixtus V, the Church's response to heresy had changed radically. The notion that the Roman Inquisition would be a temporary measure was abandoned during the pontificates of Pius IV (1559-65) and Pius V.<sup>8</sup> The Holy Office became a permanent, efficient system, cooperating with the majority of Italian princes and run by popes with an increasingly firm hand. In this situation, the Jesuits' flexible approach to penitents and the privilege that facilitated it were no longer an asset to the Holy See, but an obstacle to papal plans.

Pius V's successor, Gregory XIII (1572-85), had been a great supporter of the Society and its privilege, but the Jesuits' autonomous reconciliation of heretics jarred with Sixtus V's agenda. Sixtus wanted a centralised ecclesiastical hierarchy, governed through congregations of cardinals that answered directly to the pope. Of these congregations, the Inquisition would be the most powerful. Sixtus was not the first pope to limit the Jesuits' autonomy. As we have seen, Paul IV and Pius V had sought to restrict their role in the fight against heresy.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, these measures were limited because the Inquisition still relied on the Society's help to overcome pastoral and political obstacles. Moreover, the Jesuits successfully requested the reversal of such restrictions during the more favourable pontificates of Pius IV and Gregory XIII.<sup>10</sup> During the pontificate of Sixtus V, the Jesuits' privilege still suited their pastoral mission. However, it no longer served the powers whom they worked for and alongside and, in the case of the pope, who were the ultimate source of their authority. In this context the pope sought to repeal everything that distinguished the Jesuits from their fellow mendicants, including their jurisdiction over heresy.

This chapter demonstrates that, in order to understand the Jesuits' changing status, we must look to external ecclesiastical and political factors, transnationally, as well as pressures from

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<sup>8</sup> See *Licet ab initio* which founded the Roman Inquisition: Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum*, vol. 6, p.344. On its shift from a temporary institution to a permanent one see Maria Anna Noto, *Viva la Chiesa, mora il Tiranno. Il sovrano, la legge, la comunità e i ribello (Benevento 1566)* (Naples: Alfredo Guida Editore, 2010), pp.46-8 and Proserpi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.133-4.

<sup>9</sup> Paul IV imposed obligation to refuse absolution to penitent heretics until they had visited an inquisitorial tribunal. Pavone, *I gesuiti*, p.27 and O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, pp.329-335. Pius V demanded that the Society conform to rules imposed on other religious orders. Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 17, pp.279-84.

<sup>10</sup> 'Gregorii Papae XIII Constitutio Qua Societatis institutum, and ratio gubernandi confirmantur: and ne quid contra h[a]ec a quoquam tenetur, graviter interdicitur.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica N-3-g*, f.92r. 'Gregorius xiii p[rim]a Aprilis 1573 dedit facultatem absolvendi quosuis à quibusuis casibus hereticos...' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-a*, f.63r.

within and without the Society. This approach is adopted in recent historiography on the Society, particularly during Acquaviva's generalate. Works by Paolo Broggio, Silvia Mostaccio and Giovanni Pizzorusso have considered the Jesuits' changing missionary approach and status in relation to Acquaviva's efforts to reinvigorate the evangelical spirit of the Society and legitimise the Jesuits' position in countries such as Spain, but also in the context of a Church and world in which the pope was increasing his control over missions.<sup>11</sup> This chapter will build upon this work, showing that the profound transformation of the Society during this period was not only the fruit of Acquaviva's impulses, or those of the popes, but various pressures from inside and outside the order all over Europe, motivated by both religious and political concerns. In this period, the Society was forced to evolve so that it could survive in an ecclesiastical and political world that increasingly favoured centralised systems for controlling ecclesiastical discipline; systems in which the Jesuits' privilege was completely anomalous.

### **Internal conflicts and external controversies**

Calls for major changes to the Society's form of government emerged throughout the sixteenth century. Generally these complaints focused on two issues, the authority of the Superior General and the entry of men of Jewish descent in the Society. These matters were bound up with nationalist concerns. The Jesuits' needed to cooperate with local leaders on their missions and factions emerged as Jesuits in France and Spain grew closer to local authorities who shared their grievances about Roman interference in their countries and their discriminatory views. Successive Superior Generals knew that factionalism damaged the Society. Even so, they refused to compromise their traditional government, pastoral approach or privileges to quash complaints. From Loyola's formation of the Society to the first years of Acquaviva's generalate, central Jesuit authorities firmly reasserted the Society's traditional way of proceeding.

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<sup>11</sup> See Broggio, Francesca Cantù, Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Antonella Romano (eds), *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva: strategie politiche e religiose tra Cinque e Seicento* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2007), particularly, Pizzorusso, 'La Compagnia di Gesù, gli ordini regolari e il processo di affermazione della giurisdizione pontificia sulle missioni tra fine XVI e inizio XVII: tracce di una ricerca' in Broggio, Cantù and Romano, *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva*, pp.237-270 and Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, especially pp.83-104. Alessandro Guerra advocated this change in approach in his *Un generale fra le milizie del papa*, pp.15-6, and identified it in Mario Rosa's much earlier account of Acquaviva in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol.4, pp.168-78.

The Superior General's authority over individual Jesuits and the Society as a whole was much greater than leaders of other religious orders<sup>12</sup> And Jesuits were called to serve the Superior General with absolute obedience. The principle of obedience was fundamental to the identity, spirit and work of the Society.<sup>13</sup> Like many men of their era, Jesuit authorities saw obedience as a virtue that was part of the natural order.<sup>14</sup> But unlike other religious orders, Jesuit obedience worked through a highly centralised internal hierarchy. The Superior General ruled for life, elected all other authorities within the Society, personally approved all members, and corresponded with Jesuits all over the globe.<sup>15</sup> This system was established by Loyola as, through centralisation and obedience, Loyola believed that it would unite Jesuits dispersed all over the world and ensure that they had a universal sense of purpose.<sup>16</sup> But even Loyola accepted that his ideal of blind obedience was often compromised by the realities of mission life. Away from Rome, Jesuits were called to obey local temporal and ecclesiastical powers whose commands might conflict with those of the Superior General. Moreover, Jesuits with strong local alliances and familiarity with particular contexts might make better decisions alone. Sometimes disobedience was necessary in pressing circumstances, when obedience to Rome could endanger the success of the mission or even the life of the missionaries.<sup>17</sup> Recent scholarship has confirmed that this 'negotiated obedience' was normal in the Society.<sup>18</sup> Still, the Jesuits' principles of hierarchical obedience set the Society apart from all other religious institutions.

When it came to the delegation of the privilege, the effects of the Jesuits' organisation were profound, within and without the Society. *Sacrae religionis*, the bull that granted the privilege, declared that the Superior General could concede the privilege to whomever he chose.<sup>19</sup> When he delegated the privilege, the Superior General chose from men whom he had admitted to the Society and decided which Jesuits could reconcile heretics. Moreover, when

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<sup>12</sup> Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Constitutiones Societatis Jesu* (Rome: Societatis Jesu, 1934-8), 3 vols, vol.3, p.201. Generals of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, for example, had short terms and their local authorities were elected locally. William A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order* (New York: Alba House, 1966), 2 vols, vol. 1, p.217 and Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p.26

<sup>13</sup> Mostaccio, 'Codificare l'obbedienza', p.50.

<sup>14</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p.26.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich, 'Government and Information-Management in Early Modern Europe', pp.541-3; Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p.26 and Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.84. These systems contrasted to those of the Dominicans and Franciscans, whose leaders were elected regionally and who took solemn vows after a set period. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order*.

<sup>16</sup> Loyola, *Constitutiones*, vol.1, pp.6-7 and *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.1, p.559.

<sup>17</sup> Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, pp.45-52.

<sup>18</sup> This scholarship is discussed in Chapter Two footnote 17.

<sup>19</sup> Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum*, vol. 6, p. 464.

those members asked for his advice about use of the privilege, the Superior General decided which heretics they could reconcile. The Jesuits' government and privilege meant that cases of heresy discovered by the Society were dealt with in a closed system led by the Superior General. This system extracted the Jesuits from the usual ecclesiastical hierarchy, which demanded that all clergy go to a papal institution, such as the inquisition or the Apostolic Penitentiary, to request faculties of absolution. It also exempted the Jesuits from the rule that ordered ordinary priests to send penitent-heretics to bishops or inquisitors to lift their excommunication.<sup>20</sup> The Jesuits' system circumvented external supervision or intervention. And when the Jesuits made decisions about reconciling heretics, they affected not only the pastoral mission of the Society, but also the security of the Church and state, and ecclesiastical and temporal efforts to fight heresy.

The role of the Superior General was criticised from the Society's first days. As early as 1556, a founding member of the Society, Nicolás de Bobadilla, decried the figure of the Superior General as tyrannical and contrary to the fraternal spirit in which the first Jesuits had come together.<sup>21</sup> On Loyola's death, Bobadilla argued that the Society should reform its *Constitutions* to emulate the older rules used by Franciscans and Dominicans, who had long worked successfully as global missionaries.<sup>22</sup> In the 1560s and 1570s, Jesuits such as Antonio Araoz and Edmond Auger agreed with Bobadilla, arguing that the Society should localise both power and resources. In the 1580s, Bobadilla's concerns reverberated in the protest of Father Vincent Julien who criticised the Superior General's authority to dictate on matters of orthodoxy and heresy.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the sixteenth century, Jesuits objected to the Society's traditional form of government.

Jesuit protestors successfully solicited support from external authorities. Calls to localise authority appealed to kings, bishops and inquisitors who resented Roman interference in ecclesiastical matters.<sup>24</sup> Even King John III of Portugal, an early Jesuit supporter, sought to release Jesuits from their obedience to the Superior General so that they could run his

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<sup>20</sup> For an outline of the processes of denunciations, by penitent-heretics and others, see Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.56-7.

<sup>21</sup> Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal*, vol. 3, pp.50-1.

<sup>22</sup> Arthur L. Fisher, 'A Study in Early Jesuit Government: The Nature and Origins of the Dissent of Nicolás Bobadilla', *Viator*, 10 (1979), p.407. On Bobadilla's complaints see also the first chapter of Catto, *La Compagnia Divisa*.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the case of Vincent Julien see Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, pp.86-94.

<sup>24</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p.26.

inquisition under his authority.<sup>25</sup> The reaction to this request exposed contrasts in the early Society as Loyola and his successor Diego Laínez objected and Bobadilla, Martin Olave and Alfonso Salmerón saw no problem.<sup>26</sup> Contrasts between Roman Jesuit authorities supporting centralisation and Jesuit missionaries valuing local alliances re-emerged throughout the sixteenth century.

Protests also echoed grievances particular to the territories where the Jesuits worked. Both Antonio Araoz and King Philip II of Spain believed that Iberian authorities should direct Spanish Catholicism.<sup>27</sup> Araoz's calls for the localisation of power and funds within the Society concurred with Spanish law, which banned students and money from leaving Spain.<sup>28</sup> Araoz's most radical demand of all, that the Society institute an independent Superior General for Spain 'to avoid danger of heresy', mirrored a long tradition of Spanish condescension to Rome.<sup>29</sup> Araoz also supported the Spanish crown's attempts to bar foreign ideas and Jewish blood in Spanish institutions. The Society's official stance would shift to match Araoz's anti-Semitic views after the election of Superior General Everard Mercurian in 1573, before being crystallised in Acquaviva's statutes of 1593.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, between 1540 and his death in

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<sup>25</sup> Dauril Alden, *The making of an enterprise: the Society of Jesus in Portugal, its empire, and beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p.671; O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p.312.

<sup>26</sup> Polanco in Loyola, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola. Epistolae et instructiones*, vol.9, p.215. See also, Candidus de Dalmases [et al], *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis... Narrationes scriptae ante annum 1557*, pp.732-3; O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p.312.

<sup>27</sup> On power struggles between Philip II's Spain and Rome see Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent King. A New Life of Philip II* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp.89-95; 'Vescovi e Inquisitori nella Spagna Post-Tridentina', chapter seven in Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, pp.349-404 and Pattenden, 'Rome as a 'Spanish Avignon'? The Spanish Faction and the Monarchy of Philip II' in Baker-Bates and Pattenden (eds), *The Spanish Presence in sixteenth-century Italy*, pp.65-84.

<sup>28</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia Divisa*, pp.42-3.

<sup>29</sup> Araoz's five points were: '1. It must be requested of the Pope that all the religious Orders of Spain be given a Spanish General: the purpose of this measure being to avoid the danger of heresy. 2. For the same reason, no Spaniard residing abroad must be elected General, Commissary, or Examiner in Spain. 3. The customs and usages of nations being so diverse, it is not advisable to mix them. 4. There is danger that under the pretext of attending General Congregations, members of religious Orders may act as spies for the enemy and take money abroad. 5. It would be highly desirable if the king would write those Cardinals protectors of the religious orders requesting that they refrain from opposing this plan.' Antonio Astraín, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España* (Madrid: Tipográfico <<Sucesores de Rivadeneyra>>, 1902-25), 7 vols, vol.3, p.105. The notion that the Society elect a Superior General for Spain was also posited by others. In an account of the General Congregation that elected Mercurian, the author, probably Possevino, speaks of the suggestions of two theologians in Andalusia to avoid 'divisione d'animi' in the Society saying: 'Che un giorno per via del Re, ò, di altri non propogano in una congregazione Generale che per de causa non vogliono che si elegga Generale che sia disceso di heretici ò sia stato heretici ò habbia parenti tali, ò altra simile nota, delle quali bastera accenarne ogni minima per mettere ombra alla Inquisitione di Spagna.' ARSI, *Cong. 20B*, f.212r. The hostility faced by Jesuits in Spain was often tied up with nationalist suspicions of disloyalty and Ultramontanism. See Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*, p.42. J. A. Fernández-Santamaría, *Natural Law, Constitutionalism, Reason of State, and War. Counter-Reformation Spanish Political Thought, Volume II* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), p.34.

<sup>30</sup> For a full account of debates on Jewish ancestry in the Society see, Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish ancestry and purity-of-blood laws in the early Society of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

1573, Araoz's position conflicted with the stance of powerful sections of the Society, including Loyola, Nadal and Ribadeneira, and Láinez and Polanco who were both of Jewish descent, or *conversos*.<sup>31</sup> Although Jesuits of other nationalities agreed with Araoz, Loyola perceived his prejudice as peculiarly Iberian, calling it '*el humor español*' or even the '*humor de la corte y del Rey de España*'.<sup>32</sup>

Jesuit protests also echoed popes' criticisms of the Society's government and way of proceeding. In 1556, Bobadilla made sure that Paul IV heard about his protest, telling the pope that the *Constitutions* contained 'things, which the Holy See would never concede' and 'contrary to the order that the holy Church observes'. According to Bobadilla, they undermined the Jesuits' vow of obedience to Holy See, which should 'act as absolute master of this Society'.<sup>33</sup> Bobadilla's tale-telling worked. Paul IV shortened the Superior General's term from life to three years and ordered the Jesuits to live the disciplined liturgical routine of traditional religious orders, mandates that the Society avoided until they were nullified at Paul's death in 1559.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, in 1587-9, Vincent Julien's protests regarding obedience to the Superior General spurred Sixtus V to order an inquisitorial investigation into the Society's rules and government.<sup>35</sup>

Inadvertently, some Jesuit protests alerted external authorities to the fact that the privilege to absolve heresy undermined their authority. Araoz does not appear to have objected to any of the Society's privileges. Nonetheless, as king of Spain, Philip II's concerns about the influence of the Society's Roman authorities extended to their jurisdiction over heresy. In Spain, heresy had been in royal hands in Spain since 1478.<sup>36</sup> A century later, Philip II increased his jurisdiction, using his inquisition to exercise royal authority in Spain and in his

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See also, Emanuele Colombo, 'The Watershed of Conversion: Antonio Possevino, New Christians and Jews' in Bernauer and Markys (eds), *The Tragic Couple*, pp.25-42 and Maryks, 'Ignatius of Loyola and the Converso Question' in Maryks (ed.), *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola*, pp.84-102.

<sup>31</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*, p.42 and O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p.190. On Philip II's ban on all Spaniards going to foreign universities except specific, approved colleges at Bologna, Coimbra, Naples and Rome, see Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), p.83.

<sup>32</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, p.129.

<sup>33</sup> 'Quanto alle constitutioni et dechiarationi, responde che sono dentro molte cose buone necessarie, ma che hanno bisogno di reformatione...perché contengono cose, le quale la sede apostolica non li concederà mai.' Bobadilla in Nadal, *Epistolae Hieronymi Nadal*, vol.4, p.101. 'Le constitutione e declaratione fatte...hanno cose difficultose, et altre impertinenti, et altre contrarie al ordine che observa la santa chiesa...' Ibid., p.733. '...bisogna che V[ostra] S[anti]tà si faccia patrone assoluto di questa Compagnia.' Ibid., p.735.

<sup>34</sup> Kathleen Comerford, *Jesuit Foundations and Medici Power, 1532-1621* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), p.91.

<sup>35</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.93.

<sup>36</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, pp.3-5.



overseas territories.<sup>37</sup> For the king, a jurisdiction over heresy delegated by the Jesuit Superior General in Rome undermined his authority. Philip agreed when Araoz argued that authority should be localised within the Society, but went further than Araoz, believing that Jesuits in Spain should also abandon jurisdiction that came from the pope.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, when Edmond Auger supported the bishop of Paris in his protest against Roman interference in France, he unintentionally gave the bishop the means to complain about the Jesuit privilege to absolve heresy, a power that Auger did not oppose.

In the face of internal conflict and external challenges, the Society's leaders reasserted their traditional approach and government, elaborating its principles and seeking confirmation of their privileges. This began with Loyola, who first defined his ideal of obedience in response to the rebellion of Father Simão Rodrigues, who encouraged Portuguese Jesuits to defy the Society's rules.<sup>39</sup> When Father Miguel de Torres went to Portugal to enforce Loyola's authority, he told Jesuits to submit or leave the order. During Torres' visit, more than 30 Jesuits were expelled or voluntarily left the order.<sup>40</sup> After Loyola's death, Polanco and Nadal responded similarly to Bobadilla's petitions, re-approving the *Constitutions* and electing Laínez as a Superior General who would uphold the Society's traditional hierarchy.<sup>41</sup> Laínez did not disappoint. When Araoz accused him of breaking Spanish law by sending money from Spain to Rome, he stood his ground and refused reform.<sup>42</sup>

This stubborn stance did nothing to quell Jesuit dissent. At the death of Superior General Borja, in 1573, nationalist factions lobbied to decide the Society's leadership. Like earlier protests, this factionalism was motivated by an often indistinguishable combination of nationalism, racial prejudice and desire for reform. A group of prominent Italian Jesuits went

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<sup>37</sup> Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition*, p.27.

<sup>38</sup> For many years, Jesuits seem uncertain about the status of the privilege in Spain. Some fathers claimed that they used their privilege to absolve heretics in collaboration with local Spanish tribunals, others absolved heretics privately in Spain on the pretense of jubilees or *bula de la cruzada*. When the royal Council of the Inquisition heard of such cases in the early 1560s it ordered that Jesuits 'in those kingdoms' 'in no way' 'use this grace' to absolve heretics. When Pedro de Ribadeneira reported that the privilege was still valid in Spain in 1564, he received a swift rebuttal from Superior General Laínez. The matter was resolved decisively in the pontificate of Sixtus V. See Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, pp.338-40. Laínez corrected Ribadeneira in a letter of 16 May 1564, edited in Laínez, *Lainii Monumenta*, vol.8, p.15.

<sup>39</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*, p.24 and O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, p.331.

<sup>40</sup> Dennis Edmond Pate, 'Jeronimo Nadal and the Early Development of the Society of Jesus, 1545-1573' (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1980), p.143 and p.216 fn. 15.

<sup>41</sup> Fisher, 'A Study in Early Jesuit Government', p.397.

<sup>42</sup> Riccardo G. Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)* (Rome: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1954), p.136.

to Gregory XIII arguing that the next Superior General should not be a Spaniard, as Spaniards were harsh governors.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Spanish was synonymous with *converso*. Attempts to exclude Iberian candidates were also efforts to ensure that the Society's next leader did not have Jewish blood.<sup>44</sup> A Portuguese faction, supported by the king, Sebastian I, and Portuguese cardinal, Infant Don Enrique, openly protested that the next Superior General should have neither Jewish nor Moorish roots.<sup>45</sup> These protests also had a particular aim: preventing the election of Juan de Polanco, the Spanish *converso* who was a key architect of Loyola's hierarchical government.<sup>46</sup>

The Congregation's forty-seven delegates were well aware of this factionalism. They comprised superiors from each province, two representatives elected by each province, the four assistants to the deceased Superior General and vicar-general Polanco.<sup>47</sup> Provincial delegates were acutely aware of and even involved in protests in their own region. The delegate for Portugal, Father Leão Henriques, collaborated directly with the Portuguese king and cardinal to lobby for their nation's interests.<sup>48</sup> Regional delegates and central authorities deliberately engaged with such issues at the Congregation in a special commission to examine 'actual and possible harm to the Society', overseen by Polanco and informed by reports from Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal.<sup>49</sup> The seriousness of the situation was underlined by the intervention of Gregory XIII following a complaint from an influential Italian Jesuit, probably Benedetto Palmio.<sup>50</sup> Before the Congregation had even convened the pope asked Polanco not to elect a Spaniard.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, factionalism would dictate the outcome of the election, as Gregory encouraged the Jesuits to elect Everard Mercurian, his friend and a Walloon, who was seen as a neutral figure.

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<sup>43</sup> Mario Fois, 'Everard Mercurian' in McCoog (ed.), *The Mercurian project: forming Jesuit culture, 1573-1580*, (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004), pp.27-8.

<sup>44</sup> Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, p.xxvi.

<sup>45</sup> John W. Padberg, 'The Third General Congregation - 1573' in McCoog (ed.), *The Mercurian project*, pp.53-4

<sup>46</sup> Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, p.117.

<sup>47</sup> Padberg, 'The Third General Congregation - 1573', p.50.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>49</sup> Padberg, Martin D. O'Keefe and John L. McCarthy (eds), *For Matters of Greater Moment: the first thirty Jesuit General Congregations: a brief history and a translation of the decrees* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), pp.135-6.

<sup>50</sup> An account by Antonio Possevino speaks of an anonymous 'presupposito, cioè che era cosa evidente, et nota quasi a tutta la compagnia, et fino à piu grandi di questa corte, che quella persona era stimata avversa non da alcuni solamente ma da una natione intiera, la quale opinione pareva necessario che totalmente si diradicasse....' ARSI, *Cong. 20B*, f.206r. Antonio Astraín has used Possevino's account to identify the Jesuit as Palmio in Astraín, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España* (Madrid: 1912-25), 3 vols, vol.3, pp.7-8, fn.2.

<sup>51</sup> Padberg, 'The Third General Congregation', p.52.

Although the reassertion of the Jesuits' traditional way of proceeding had failed to solve problems before, the Society's Roman authorities were adamant that the new Superior General pursue this strategy. The Congregation's twenty-third decree declared that the *Constitutions* 'remain inviolate' to 'be handed on to [their] successors exactly as they were received from our reverend father Ignatius'.<sup>52</sup> The Congregation ordered the new Superior General to request papal bulls approving the Society's *Constitutions* and affirming that the Jesuits enjoyed privileges that exceeded those of the other religious orders.<sup>53</sup> Even before the Congregation, Jesuit authorities had successfully solicited the reconcession of their privilege to absolve heresy from Gregory XIII.<sup>54</sup> The Superior General protected the Jesuits' privileges by securing an exemption to a recently-promulgated bull that imposed the decrees of the Council of Trent on all priests and religious and revoked all 'the privileges and indults heretofore allowed them'.<sup>55</sup>

Everard Mercurian fulfilled this brief. To ensure all Jesuits understood Loyola's standards, he published a 'Summary of the Constitutions' as well as some 'Common Rules' and 'Rules for Important Offices', highlighting and explaining significant points.<sup>56</sup> Mercurian also published the Jesuits' first *compendio privilegiorum*, an important, confidential reference work that recorded the many privileges enjoyed by the Society.<sup>57</sup> Mercurian also expanded these privileges. Whilst Pius V had limited the Jesuits' privileges, Gregory gave them the privilege 'of absolving heresy, also in Italy', 'of absolving Ultramontanes who have read or held prohibited books', 'of absolving from the reading of prohibited books where and who we can absolve from heresy' and 'of absolving from apostasy from faith, those we can [absolve] from heresy'.<sup>58</sup> With Gregory's support, Mercurian restored the authority that the Jesuits had enjoyed under Loyola.

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted and translated by Padberg, *For Matters of Greater Moment*, p.243.

<sup>53</sup> Padberg, 'The Third General Congregation', p.59. See the decree in Padberg, *For Matters of Greater Moment*, p.145.

<sup>54</sup> 'Absolvendi ab haeresi. Gregor[io] ult[im]o Martii 1573.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.313v.

<sup>55</sup> Padberg, *For Matters of Greater Moment*, p.164.

<sup>56</sup> Fois, 'Everard Mercurian', p.26.

<sup>57</sup> Padberg, 'The Third General Congregation', p.61

<sup>58</sup> 'Absolvendi ab haeresi etiam in Italia. Greg[ori]o Ult[im]o Martii 1573. In Hispania tamen non alios qua[m] qui sunt de Societate si contingerit, quod Deus avertat, incidere Die 18 Martii 1583...Absolvend[I] ubiq[ue] Ultramontanus qui libros ha[er]eticos leg[er]int vel retinuerint. Gregor. 17. Januarii 1581...Absolvendi a lectione libror[um] prohibitor[um] ubi et quos absolvere ab haeresi possumus. 6. Novembris 1583...Absolvendi raprotitos bona naufragantiu[m] die 18 Martii 84...Absolvendi ab Apostasia a fide quospossumus ab haeresi 20 Januarii 1585.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-B*, ff.45r-v.

Mercurian's successor, Claudio Acquaviva, took the same approach, explaining the way of proceeding that Loyola established, and never deviating from it. In the first year of his generalate, Acquaviva published the *Ratio Studiorum*, which outlined the Society's teachings and strategy, confirming Loyola's approach to discipline.<sup>59</sup> Aiming to unify the Society in its ministry, Acquaviva published a *Directorium* for Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and numerous letters on the Society's missionary activity.<sup>60</sup> Acquaviva recognised that the conflicts within the Society stemmed from a tension between centralised authority and the demands placed upon Jesuits spread across the globe. Like Loyola he suggested that members do their best to reconcile orders from Rome, commands from local authorities and their own consciences, though, fundamentally, he shared Loyola's belief that blind obedience to authority was the ideal.<sup>61</sup> When powerful groups like the Dominicans claimed the Society was overly autonomous, theologically suspect and determined to undermine other religious orders, Acquaviva could rely upon Gregory's XIII's support for their traditional structure and privileges, just as Loyola had relied on Paul III and Julius III.<sup>62</sup>

Gregory XIII's support for the Society was crucial for the maintenance of their traditional government and privileges. Gregory supported the Jesuits as he made good use of them. He charged the Jesuits to run the newly established English College in Rome and to evangelise China and Japan.<sup>63</sup> In return, he funded the Society's Collegio Romano and Collegio Germanico in Rome and confirmed and enlarged their privileges.<sup>64</sup> Gregory's broader backing for the Society's missions and confirmation of its privilege to absolve heresy in Italy indicates that the pope valued the Jesuits' work to support Catholics and convert heretics, and was confident that they could work harmoniously with his Inquisition. This support allowed the Superior Generals to reassert the Jesuits' traditional authority and approach, despite continued controversy.

The Society's troubles persisted throughout Mercurian's generalate, as old protests gained new supporters. Araoz died in 1573, but his ideas survived him. Two memorials sent to

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<sup>59</sup> Pastore, *Il vangelo e la spada*, p.440. See also, Guerra, *Un Generale fra le milizie del papa*, p.99.

<sup>60</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, pp.114-5.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Guerra, *Un Generale fra le milizie del papa*, p.101.

<sup>63</sup> Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 19, pp.234-258; Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.83.

<sup>64</sup> Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, vol. 19, pp.250-4.

Philip II in 1577 complained about the centralisation of the Society, claiming that the Superior General's control over who took final vows made the system arbitrary and that Spanish houses and provinces should have more autonomy.<sup>65</sup> Like earlier protests, these complaints mingled nationalism with specific concerns about *conversos* in the Society. Unlike Araoz, the Jesuits behind these memorials were either *conversos* or pro-*converso*; their protest was, partially, a response to the Society's increasingly anti-semitic policies.<sup>66</sup> Things were no quieter on the Italian peninsula. In 1578, three Italian professors of the Collegio Romano visited Gregory XIII and wrote to twelve cardinals to bemoan the state of the Society under Mercurian.<sup>67</sup> Like Spanish dissenters of the 1570s, they wanted to democratize the peripheral structures of the Society.<sup>68</sup> In Spain and Italy, the Society's two major geographical centres, Jesuit authorities faced internal protesters who called upon the highest authorities for support.

Factionalism was an almost inevitable consequence of the Jesuits' missionary work. They needed to maintain close relationships with the local secular and ecclesiastical authorities who facilitated their missions. Even Nadal, who loathed Araoz, admitted that the Spaniard could not be sacked, as the Society needed his court connections to fund and expand their Spanish institutions.<sup>69</sup> This situation corroborates the conclusions of scholars who have emphasised that Jesuits who criticised central authorities were not dissidents, but a crucial element of the Society's *modus operandi*.<sup>70</sup> During the pontificate of Sixtus, the Jesuits could no longer hold back the protesters' broad agenda by confirming their traditional way of proceeding. When the concerns of the pope himself merged with existing grievance, this strategy was ineffective and, eventually, fatal for the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy. Whilst Jesuits did not express any concerns about their privilege, it encapsulated many of the grievances of allies who wanted to control religion locally. It was not long until the pope added his voice to their complaints. The privilege to absolve heresy represented the willingness of Jesuits and popes to compromise institutional norms for pastoral goals. When Sixtus V objected to the privilege, the Society's leaders would have to prioritise their institutional survival over their belief in the continued pastoral benefits of the power.

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<sup>65</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia Divisa*, pp.44-5.

<sup>66</sup> Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, pp.125-6.

<sup>67</sup> Fois, 'Everard Mercurian', p.29.

<sup>68</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia Divisa*, p.49.

<sup>69</sup> Nadal, *Epistolae Hieronymi Nadal*, vol.1, p.252.

<sup>70</sup> See Pavone's reference to Romano's spoken comments in 'Dissentire per sopravvivere' in Alfieri and Ferlan (eds), *Avventure nella obbedienza*, p.197 and Alfieri and Ferlan's comments on pp.7-9.

## Troubles abroad: controversies in France and Spain

When King Philip II of Spain and Bishop Pierre de Gondi of Paris complained about the Jesuits to Sixtus V, the pope would not countenance the reassertion of the Society's traditional way of proceeding. Their grievances alerted Sixtus to the contrasts between the Jesuits' government and his own agenda for the Church. Sixtus pushed for an ever-more centralised ecclesiastical government and the authority of the Superior General contrasted with this. Moreover, in the hierarchy of specialist congregations that reported to the pope, the Holy Office was supreme.<sup>71</sup> Sixtus also wanted to homogenise and control religious orders. The Society's peculiarities, including its unique privileges, conflicted with his aims. When persistent complaints from Jesuit dissenters and their supporters compounded Sixtus's own concerns, the pope announced major reforms. Whilst Pius V had failed to confirm the privilege, making the Jesuits unsure of its status, Sixtus V revoked it categorically.

From the beginning of his pontificate, Sixtus V sought to centralise the papacy. In December 1585, he implemented an old yet often ignored rule that ordered all ecclesiastical authorities to receive his blessing and instructions before being consecrated.<sup>72</sup> In January 1588, Sixtus promulgated *Immensa aeterni Dei*, a bull to formalise and increase the number of congregations of cardinals who advised him.<sup>73</sup> In May 1586, he had established the Congregation for Regulars, uniting his desire to govern through congregations and to control religious orders more closely.<sup>74</sup> Sixtus also sought to control religious by enclosing convents and reinforcing the strict rules already imposed on enclosed sisters.<sup>75</sup> Sixtus also intervened in controversies caused by religious orders with multiple papal privileges, charging a special body to resolve such disputes.<sup>76</sup> Whilst research on the various congregations of cardinals has

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<sup>71</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.450, fn. 29; Alessandro Hübner, *Sisto Quinto. Dietro la scorta delle corrispondenze diplomatiche inedite tratte dagli archivi di stato del Vaticano, di Simancas, di Venezia di Parigi, di Vienna e di Firenze* (Rome: Tipografia dei Lincei, 1887), 2 vols, vol.1, p.369 and Pietro Palazzini, 'Le Congregazioni Romane da Sisto V a Giovanni Paolo II' in Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna (eds), *Sisto V. I. Roma e il Lazio* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1992), p.23.

<sup>72</sup> Silvano Giordano, 'Sisto V' in *Enciclopedia dei papi* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000) 3 vols, vol.3, p.206.

<sup>73</sup> As scholars such as Agostino Borromeo and Simon Ditchfield have underlined, this reorganisation was not a revolution in Church governance, but rather the completion of a process that had begun at least a decade earlier. Agostino Borromeo, 'I vescovi italiani e l'applicazione del concilio di Trento' in Cesare Mozzarelli and Danilo Zardin (eds), *I Tempi del Concilio: religione, cultura e società nell'Europa tridentina* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), p.32 and Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', pp.268-9.

See also, Hübner, *Sisto Quinto.*, p.363-91; Fosi, *Papal Justice*, p.26; Giordano, 'Sisto V, papa (Felice Peretti)' in *Dizionario Storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol. 3, p.1439; Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition: A Papal Bureaucracy*, p.11 and Palazzini, 'Le Congregazioni Romane da Sisto V a Giovanni Paolo II', pp.19-38.

<sup>74</sup> Giordano, 'Sisto V', p.218.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Giordano, 'Sisto V', p.218.

underlined their persistent independence from papal control, Sixtus's legislative measures show his clear desire to establish a strictly centralised ecclesiastical government.<sup>77</sup>

Sixtus soon realised that the Jesuits' loose religious rule and numerous privileges contrasted with his ecclesiastical ideals. In 1588, Sixtus localised the process of admission to the Society, taking away the Superior General's exclusive power and declaring that 'Provincials have the power of admitting, doing it with the advice of thier advisors'.<sup>78</sup> He also took Jesuit disputes under his own judgement. When French Jesuit Vincent Julien condemned Loyola's ideal of obedience to the Roman Inquisition in 1588, Sixtus ordered a commission to investigate any errors contained in the Society's *Constitutions*.<sup>79</sup> That same year, Sixtus learned of the theological dispute between Jesuit Lenaert Leys and professors at the University of Louvain and demanded that he receive all the details so that he could declare the outcome.<sup>80</sup> When Luis de Santander, a Spanish supporter of Julien, complained about Jesuit government in Spain, Sixtus sent Bishop Jerónimo Manrique as his own investigator, demanding to know how the Jesuits differed from other religious orders, in matters such as their vows, liturgical life and habit.<sup>81</sup> In Rome and abroad, Sixtus personally intervened in complaints about peculiar aspects of the Society, which clashed with his own ecclesiastical ideal.

Still, at first, the Jesuits seemed confident in Sixtus's support for their privileges. On 5 March 1586, Jesuit Roman authorities wrote to cardinal-inquisitor Giulio Antonio Santoro, asking

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<sup>77</sup> Ditchfield has cited an example from the research of Gigliola Fragnito, which demonstrates that the Roman Inquisition successfully halted the distribution of an Index approved by Sixtus V's successor Clement VIII. See, Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', p.270 and Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo*, pp.173-198. For another example see Fausto Parente, 'The Index, the Holy Office, the condemnation of the Talmud and publication of Clement VIII's Index' in Fragnito (ed.) and Belton (trans.), *Church, censorship and culture in early modern Italy*, p.190. Sixtus V enjoyed some success in his efforts to diminish the power of the congregations and increase his own. Sixtus took personally compiled guidelines for the production of a new index of prohibited books and when he was disatisfied with what the Congregation of the Index produced ordered that 'it should be re-done in different manner.' See Parente, 'The Index, the Holy Office, the condemnation of the Talmud and publication of Clement VIII's Index', pp.175-81.

<sup>78</sup> 'Monuimus iam antea R[everen]tiam V[ost]ram de constitutione a Sant[issi]mo D[omino] N[ostro] Sixto V. nuper edita tum de spuriis non admittendis, tum de modo alios admittendi...Praeterea illud e[s]t, ut Pro[vincia]les, et qui potestatem habent admittendi, id faciant cum consilio suor[um] Consultor[um]...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom. 1*, f.103r.

<sup>79</sup> '...errores in eis contentos...' ACDF, *Stanza Storica M-3-g*, p.452. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland and England, 1589-1597*, p.229.

<sup>80</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, pp.95-6.

<sup>81</sup> Padberg, *For Matters of Greater Moment*, p.10.

the Holy Office to draft a brief confirming the privilege to absolve heresy.<sup>82</sup> This letter stated that the Society required proof of the privilege as the bishop of Paris, Pierre de Gondi, had complained and denied that they held the privilege.<sup>83</sup> The author claimed that Sixtus V had 'explained that it was well that [they] should request [proof of] this faculty, because when it would be worthwhile for prelates, or for others...we can show them our faculty'.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, the Jesuits wanted a document to prove and explain the faculty clearly.<sup>85</sup> And they assumed that Santoro would comply as he knew how important the privilege was, and why it was necessary in northern Europe.<sup>86</sup>

The author of the letter was sensitive to controversy regarding the privilege. In the draft now held at the ARSI, the author has crossed out a reference to absolved heretics and written some who were absolved from heresy instead.<sup>87</sup> This small change is significant, underplaying the figure of the dangerous heretic to focus on the generalised sin of heresy. Thus, the author stressed the act of absolving sins, which was the proper duty of the confessor, rather than the liberation of heretics, which was more controversial. Such changes in focus also appear in Jesuit texts produced after Sixtus V's revocation. In a report of 1592, the Jesuit author changed his reference to the 'revocation of the privilege of absolving from heresy' to the 'revocation of the privilege of absolving manifest heretics'.<sup>88</sup> Here, the modified reference minimised Sixtus's revocation by implying that the privilege could still be used in some cases of heresy, just not those in which the penitent was a flagrant rebel. In this case, the shift in emphasis seen in the 1586 document is inverted, and the act that had been banned is made to

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<sup>82</sup> ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, ff.323r-329r. On the verso of this letter it notes that it was 'Dato all'Ill[ustrissi]mo Car[dina]le S[an]ta Severina a di 5 di Marzo 1586' and to the 'Most Oss[ervissi]mo Mons[ignore] Ottavio Acq[uaviva]', who was a domestic prelate to Sixtus V and vice-legate of the patrimony of the Holy See. Jacques-Paul Migne and Charles Breton, *Dictionnaire des cardinaux: contenant des notions générales sur le cardinalat* (Paris: J-P. Migne, 1857), pp.249-50.

<sup>83</sup> '...il Vescovo isteso di Parigi ch[e] n'ha fatto sentimento, dice che no[n] l'harebbe per male, quando li si mostrassi ch[e] noi l'habbiamo, si mette in co[n]sideratione a S[ua] B[eatudi]ne. se forse sarà bene spedire Breve.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.309r. On Bishop Pierre de Gondi see Joanna Milstein, *The Gondi: family strategy and survival in early modern France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp.137-172.

<sup>84</sup> '...et gia et S[ua] Stà mostrava ch[e] era bene ch[e] costasi di questa facultà, perch[e] qua[n]do à prelati, ò altri convenisse vedere quanto legittimamente fussero assoluti alcuni dalla heresia, potessi mostrarsi la facultà n[ost]ra...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.309r.

<sup>85</sup> 'Hora perche S[ua] B[eatudi]ne veniva bene nella cosa et voleva trattare del modo dell'uso di questa facultà si supp[li]ca a V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma à favorire questa ispeditione, et farne che habbiamo le cose distender et con chiarezza...' Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> 'V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma sa quanto questo importi, et la precisa necessità ch[e] n'habbiamo in tutti li parti settentrionali.' Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> '...convenisse vedere quanto legittimamente fussero assoluti 'alcuni dalla' ~~gli hereticis/sia.~~ Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> '...fuisset nobis intimata Sixto Papae V revocatio privilegii absolvendi ~~ab haeresi~~ manifestos haereticos...' Ibid., f.318r.



appear graver, rather than less serious. Both documents reveal the Jesuits' caution about how others perceived their privilege.

Indeed, the letters of 1586 and 1592 stress that the private reconciliation of heretics would not cause scandal, a criticism levelled against the Jesuits in this period. A treatise held with the 1586 letter confirms that the letter to Santoro was a direct response to such criticism from Bishop Gondi in Paris. With this document, entitled a 'Response to questions from France', Jesuit Stefano Tucci disputed the notion that the Jesuits' privilege undermined episcopal processes and scandalised Catholics who saw former heretics who had been secretly reconciled receiving Holy Communion.<sup>89</sup> Tucci argued that public sinners whom the Jesuits absolved secretly could not receive Holy Communion in Church before being absolved by a bishop and before it was publically known that they had been reconciled.<sup>90</sup> But Tucci also argued that the Jesuits should be allowed to act autonomously before episcopal intervention. He claimed that 'if before private absolution and penitence, public abjuration in front of the bishop is to be expected the privilege conceded to some of absolving heretics in *foro conscientiae* would be vain'.<sup>91</sup> Tucci's statement was a clear defence of the validity and value of the Jesuits' autonomous jurisdiction over heresy, which Tucci's treatise and the 1586 letter suggest Gondi had attacked.

Remarkably, it seems that Gondi's complaints about the privilege were inadvertently instigated by a member of the Society. In January 1586, Gondi complained to Acquaviva, by then Superior General, on behalf of King Henri III of France. He wrote Acquaviva a letter asking him to ban Jesuits in France from interfering with matters of state.<sup>92</sup> This request aimed to stop Jesuit support for the Catholic League, that had been established by Henri, Duke of Guise, to eradicate Protestantism in France and was critical of Henri III's attitude towards Calvinists.<sup>93</sup> Gondi also decried aspects of the Society's governance and authority,

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<sup>89</sup> 'Responsio ad Franciae qq. de usu facultatis absolvendi ab haresi. P. Stephani Tucci.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, ff.323r-329r.

<sup>90</sup> 'Haeretici manifesti à nostris secretò absoluti, non possunt publicè se ingerere ad Divina, anteq[uam] eis esse absolutos et verè conversos publicè innotescat...' Ibid., f.323v.

<sup>91</sup> 'Et planè si anti privatim absolutionem ac poenitentiam expenctanda esset publica abiuratio cora[m] Episcopo vanum esset privilegium quibusda[m] concessum de absolve[n]dis haeticis ab excomm[unicatio]ne in foro conscie[n]tia...' Ibid., ff.324v-325r.

<sup>92</sup> A. Lynn Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1973), p.177.

<sup>93</sup> On the Jesuits, the League and French politics see Eric Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy. Catholic Reform and Political Authority in France (1590-1615)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) and Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*.

outlined in its *Constitutions* and *compendio privilegiorum*. This included their power to absolve heresy. On hearing Gondi's complaints, Acquaviva had been shocked. As he told the Jesuit provincial of France, Odon Pigenat, both the *Constitutions* and *compendio privilegiorum* were strictly confidential and circulated only within the Society.<sup>94</sup> Acquaviva asked Pigenat secretly find out how Gondi had obtained these documents.<sup>95</sup> It was not long before Pigenat discovered that the bishop had been aided by Edmond Auger, a senior member of the Society in France and confessor to Henri III.<sup>96</sup>

Auger shared Gondi's discontent with papal authority. Like Gondi he wanted to assert the Gallican privileges that gave French ecclesiastical authorities independence from the Holy See. Some Jesuits even claimed that Auger opposed the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Trent in France.<sup>97</sup> Auger's distaste for Roman authority seems to have extended to the orders of the Superior General. Even though the *Constitutions* banned ecclesiastical ambition, some said that Auger coveted high office, even a cardinal's hat.<sup>98</sup> The rector of the Jesuit house at Paris, who was not Auger's enemy, claimed that Auger believed that he was exempt from his vows of obedience and poverty, heeding the will of the king instead.<sup>99</sup> Auger's attachment to Henri III certainly defied a Jesuit decree, which stated that 'no one of our religious ought to be assigned to princes or other lords...to attach themselves to their courts or dwell with them as confessors or theologians'.<sup>100</sup> But in Paris Auger spent more

<sup>94</sup> 'R[everentia] V[ostra] scire debet Ep[iscopu]m Parisiensem tulisse secum ex Francia non solum Const[itution]es n[ost]ras, sed et[iam] Compendiu[m] privil[eg]ioru[m] quod omnia diligenter lectitavit, et de iis multu[m] sermone[m] mecu[m] habuit. Hoc aut[em] et molestia mihi attulit, cum de compendio tame[n] exp[re]sse à nobis prohibitu[m] esset.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.259r.

<sup>95</sup> 'Quare velim ut R[everentia] V[ostra] investiget unde illa habuerit, et quicquid compereris nobis ten[er]e[bat](?). Id tame[n] faciat prudenter et secrete...' ARSI, *Franc. 1 - II*, f.259r.

<sup>96</sup> Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*, p.181. Auger mentioned this allegation in a letter to Acquaviva on 13 May 1586: 'Scribet ide[m] pater [Pigenat], quam deceptus fuerit nuper, à inditu Ep[iscop]i Parisien[is] in falsis rumorib[us] reru[m] nostrar[um].' ARSI, *Gall. 92*, f.129r. Acquaviva spoke of it to Auger again in 15 July 1586: '...si sospettò di lei in questi punti che'il vescovo di Parigi trattò con noi!' ARSI, *Franc. 1*, f.248r. Auger denied the allegation in a letter to Acquaviva of 24 June 1586. Speaking of those who caused disorder for the Society in France, he stated '...dagli stessi ò heretici, ò Catholicici malvagi, ò buoni altresì, ma passionati da loro. Inter [que]sti, grandezze, voluptà, et partialità contro à quali si combatte impedimenti tuttavia nel servizio d'Idio molto più facilile à rompere, et vincere che gli domesticì. Tra gli quali questo è uno fastidiosissimo, di pensare che gli articoli d[e]l Vescovo di Parigi portati costa siano nati quà.' ARSI, *Gal. 64*, 13v.

<sup>97</sup> Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*, p.180. On the earlier history of the Council of Trent and France, see Alain Tallon, *La France et le Concile de Trente (1518-1563)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997). On Gallicanism and Trent see especially, pp.795-800.

<sup>98</sup> Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*, p.183. Saffores to Acquaviva, 28 April 1586: 'P[ate]r Edmundus Augerius...se quidem nostris Constitutionibus impediri ne fiat ep[iscop]us vel Ar[c]ie[p]i[sc]opus, sed nihil esse quod ipsius impediatur, que fiat Cardinalis si Rex Xpianissimus voluerit...' ARSI, *Gal.92*, f.117r

<sup>99</sup> 'Accommodat se tamen ad Regis nutum...atque etiam inter concionandum magnis effert laudibus, non sine multorum offensione.' Ibid, f.101v.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted and translated by Padberg, *For Matters of Greater Moment*, p.122.

time at the royal palace than amongst his fellow Jesuits. Auger never publically opposed the privilege to absolve heresy, but his discontent with Roman authority motivated him to collaborate with Gondi, who sought to undermine the Society in matters of state and religion.

The status of the privilege soon became more precarious. In June 1586, the French Provincial Claude Matthieu, reported from Loreto that the privilege should be used only for *transalpinos* and that 'it is preferable to abstain' from using it on those from other countries.<sup>101</sup> This statement indicated that the privilege was now effectively invalid in Italy.

Serious complaints about the privilege also came from Spain. Around 1585, Philip II's Spanish inquisitors discovered that the Jesuit Provincial of Castile, Antonio Maracen, had personally punished Father Francesco di Ribera for preaching heresy and Fathers Sebastián de Briviesca and Cristóbal de Trugillo for teaching heresy to female penitents and soliciting the same penitents for sexual favours in 1583-4.<sup>102</sup> In Spain, the king's inquisition had absolute authority over heresy, and the sexual solicitation of penitents by confessors (*sollicitatio ad turpia*) had been under inquisitorial jurisdiction, in Spain and in Italy, since 1559.<sup>103</sup> Nonetheless, Briviesca kept the whole affair secret, dismissing the men privately and sending them away from Spain.<sup>104</sup> In doing so, Maracen and his advisors had undermined the

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<sup>101</sup> 'Cetera quod quaerit an per novam bullam in Coena D[omi]ni revocati sint facultates nostri, scire debet non est revocatas...poterit et illic retinere facultatem absolvendi ab haeresi, Transalpinos tamen: non ab aliis prestat abstinere...' ARSI, *Franc. I*, f.241r.

<sup>102</sup> According to a record compiled from witness statements by notaries of the Spanish Inquisition at Valladolid in 15 July 1587, the crimes were detailed to Didacus Hernandez, a professed Jesuit at the college in Monterey, by one of the penitents in question in 1583: 'Ceteru[m] quaedam ex illis Beatis eidem Didaco causam aperuit, ob quam nolebat reverti ad confitendum patribus Societatis. Ea vero causa talis erat quoniam ipsa habuerant commerciu[m], et familiariter conversatae fuerant cum quodam Sebastiano Bribiesca eiusde[m] Societatis religioso...et easdam falsam, et perniciosam doctrina[m] docuerat...' BAV, *Ottob. Lat. 495*, f.50r-v.

'...verbi Dei predicatorem in collegio Societatis Jesu Segobien[is] Franciscus de Ribera professum sui ordinis, qui publice tum in dicto collegio, tum extra collegium in dicta civitate Segobien[is] in concionibus ad populu[m] habitis falsam, et perniciosam dotrinam, et propositiones haereticas, et scandolosas, malescientes et temerarias, et blasphemias haereticas dixit, et praedicavit dixit enim.' Ibid., f.63r.

'...dixtus Antonius Maracen quibusdam eiu[m] Societatis Religiosis per eorum litteras intellexisset Christophorum de Trugillo eiusdem ordinis professum, audiendo confessiones sacramentales quarundam feminarum, in actu ipso sacramentalis confessiones, vel in actu confessioni prossimo singulis ear[um] verba obscena dizisse, in dicendo ipsas, ut dicerent, quomodo in lingua Castellana appellaretur membrum genitale viri...quod praedictum Maracen pariter novit et intellexit...' Ibid., f.66r-v. On this case, see also, Astrarín, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España*, vol. 3, pp.368-410; Pastore, 'A proposito di Matteo' and *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, pp.439-451.

<sup>103</sup> Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*, p.511. On *sollicitatio ad turpia* see Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional. A Sacrament Profaned* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.508-19.

<sup>104</sup> 'Quodquam dictus Antonius Maracen quamvis fuit admonitus de malesana doctrina quam dictus Ribera praedicavit, et ex praefatis qualificationibus intellexit earum cognitionem, sicut dictum fuit, ad Sanctum Officium pertinere; nihilominus id nunqua[m] S[anct]ae Inquisitioni denunciavit.' BAV, *ibid.*, f.66r.

jurisdiction of the Spanish Inquisition and, therefore, the authority of the king. It is not known how the Spanish Inquisition discovered the case.<sup>105</sup> But in 1585 the king's inquisitors arrested Marcen and his consultants, Francisco Larata and Juan López.<sup>106</sup> It soon emerged that Maracen had dealt with heresy independently of the Spanish Inquisition before.<sup>107</sup> The Iberian inquisitors convicted the Jesuits involved, but when the Society appealed to Rome Sixtus V revoked the matter to his own jurisdiction.<sup>108</sup> The pope's intervention saved the Jesuits from the clutches of the Spanish Inquisition. Nonetheless, their privilege to absolve heresy would not survive the ensuing debate.

During the Spanish controversy of 1585-7, the Jesuits stood accused of absolving fellow Jesuits of crimes that fell under inquisitorial jurisdiction in Spain and Italy. A duplicate of a Spanish Jesuit document regarding 'matters necessary for remedy' in the Society, sent to the Holy Office during Sixtus V's pontificate demonstrates the confluence of complaints about obedience, centralisation and privileges at that time.<sup>109</sup> Defending their system of internal discipline, the Jesuits mounted a pragmatic case, saying that Superiors knew how to punish and reform subjects better than external authorities and could do so without causing scandal to the Society or the Church.<sup>110</sup> The Jesuits also referred to privileges enjoyed by the

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'...praefatus Antonius Marcen scivit, et intellexit delicta et facinora ad S[anct]u[m] Inquisitionis Officium spectantia...et nihilominus non denunciavit ea, sicut tenbatur, apud S[anct]u[m] Inquisitionis Officium, immo celavit, et occultavit et dimisit sicut dictum est, praefatum Bribiescam, eundem ad partes remotas destinando eo consilio, ut quamvis aliquo tempore praedicta facinora ad notitiam S[anct]i Officii pervenierente, ille facinorosus non posset reperiri in Hispania, vel ad eam reduci, propterea quod esset transmissus in Italiam.' BAV, *Ottob. Lat.* 495, f.62r.

'...dictus Ribera inde dimissit et recessit, et per litteras, quas scripsit, notum est in Italiam, se contulisse.' Ibid., f.66r.

<sup>105</sup> The record merely states that 'aliquo tempore praedicta facinora ad notitiam S[anct]i Officii pervenirent...' Ibid., f.62r.

<sup>106</sup> Pastore, *Il Vangelo e la Spada*, pp.440-1.

<sup>107</sup> Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain* (Macmillan: New York, 1906-22), 4 vols, vol.2, pp.34-6.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.35. An undated document addressed to Sixtus V bound together with letters and memorials of Spring 1587 states that Sixtus had 'favoured' the Society in the quarrel. Another letter to in the same cache, dated to 13 April 1587, mentions that Sixtus revoked the matter to Rome because the Jesuits suggested that the Spanish were trying to change the Institute of the Society, undermining its obedience to Rome: 'Havendo la S[anti]tà V[ost]ra favorita la Compagnia di Giesù con mio scrivere in Spagna in sua raccomandatione per i travagli che si passano con l'Inquisitione...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.233r.

<sup>109</sup> 'De suerte que en resolucion seade considerar q. siendo la obediencia en esta religion ciega (como ellos dissen) y mandando su General que no denuncien sus subditos aningun herege sin corregirle primo fraternalmente...Tentandose in esto su manera de gobierno tan extra ordinaria delas de mas religiones...y sobre todo pretendiendo tener breves para absolver hereges, paratener y libros de hereges, podrian resultar muchos y muy grandes inconvenientes y muy dignos de remedio.' BAV, *Ottob. Lat.* 495, f.9r. The document is entitled: '*cosas dignas de remedio que algunos padres de la compania de Jesus an dado al Sancto Off[ici]o de la Inq[uisici]on copia del qual...del qual se embio ala buena memoria de Sisto quinto.*' Ibid., ff.1-10v.

<sup>110</sup> 'P[rim]a perche li super[i]o[ri] sanno piu maneumenti de sudditi, che non il Tribunale del santo officio...2.o Perche possono mettere rimedio più tosto, con più secretezza, con manco infamia delle parti, et della Religione

Franciscans and Dominicans to defend their right to discipline internally.<sup>111</sup> Compendia of privileges for both of these mendicant orders show that they had been given the authority to absolve their own members of heresy and to lift the censures that heresy incurred.<sup>112</sup> When Pius V had made the Society a mendicant order in 1571, he had ordered that Jesuits were to enjoy all the same privileges as other mendicant orders, then and in the future.<sup>113</sup> By absolving members of their own order, the Jesuits argued that they resolved internal problems effectively using an authority that they held legitimately, like other mendicant orders.

But it was the private absolution of heretics outside the Society that concerned most authorities. In external cases the Jesuits could not argue that their actions were on a par with other mendicants. The Iberian authorities had already curbed the use of the privilege in Spain after noticing that it disturbed the ordinary ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>114</sup> A Jesuit record that appears to have been produced in the late 1580s notes that this limitation was reasserted on 8 March 1583, during Gregory XIII's papacy, when the Jesuits were told that they could not absolve those outside of the Society in Spain.<sup>115</sup> Defending the privilege after the Spanish controversy, the Jesuits admitted that they did 'not have it for Spain, nor demand it, if not for those who are of the Society'.<sup>116</sup> And, as we shall see in the final section of this chapter, the privilege suffered the same fate in Italy when Sixtus realised that the Society's traditional *modus operandi* disturbed his ideal of ecclesiastical government.

The narrative of steadily increasing papal power established by scholars such as Paolo Prodi has been disrupted by research highlighting the resistance of curial congregations in the face

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istessa. 3.o Perche l'una ò l'altra, ò tutte dua le parti più facilmente si manifesteranno al superiore come à Padre per rimediare ò toglier l'occasione, che non al S[an]to Officio...' ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-b*, f.3r.

<sup>111</sup> 'Et quanto al p[rim]o la bona fede, e giusta opinione di poter procedere si racioglie p[rim]o dal Jus c[an]o[n]ico de tutti gli Ord[in]i Regolari, à superiori de quali si dà podestà di poter conoscere de delitti de sudditi...' ACDF, *Stanza Storica I-5-b*, ff.2r-3v.

<sup>112</sup> Granted in the 13th century, the friars' privilege was reconfirmed in the 15th century: 'Alexander VI concessit omnibus, and singulis Praelatis Ordinis Minorum de Obseruantia (scilicet Generalibus, Prouincialibus, and Custodib[us]) plenarium facultatem, and auctoritatem, quoscumq[ue], subdito suos (Fratres, videlicet, and Moniales S. Clarae ac vtriusq[ue] sexus Tertiarios) inuenerint in aliquo haeresis...possint eos absoluere, and cum eis dispensare...' Hieronymus Asorbo, *Compendium Privilegiorum Fratrum Minorum et aliorum Mendicantium, and non Mendicantium, ab Alphonso de Casarubios Hispano* (Venice: Haeredes Petri Ricciardi, 1609), p.269.

<sup>113</sup> Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum*, vol.7, p.923.

<sup>114</sup> Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal*, vol.4, p.519.

<sup>115</sup> 'Absolvendi ab haeresi. Gregor[io] ult[im]o Martii 1573. In Hispania tamen non alios q[ue] qui sunt de Societate, si contingeret (quod Deus avertat) incidere. die 8 Martii 1583.'

ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f. 313v.

<sup>116</sup> 'Per Spagna no[n] l'habbiamo ne la dimandiamo, se no[n] p[er] quella ch[e] sono della Comp[ani]a...' Ibid., f.314r.

of papal intervention.<sup>117</sup> However, Sixtus V's revocation of the Jesuit privilege in the face of the Jesuits' bold defence demonstrated his determination to seize control over key areas of papal policy. Moreover, as we shall see in our final chapter, continued papal support for the revocation after Sixtus's death suggests that his efforts were largely successful, even if some Jesuits rebelled. Sixtus's transferral of the Spanish and French cases to his jurisdiction were also effective attempts to assert the papacy as the ultimate arbiter in matters of faith internationally, despite Habsburg political dominance, Gallicanism and increasing local control of religion in both Catholic and Protestant states.<sup>118</sup> The revocation of the privilege would not mark a dramatic watershed in the Society's actions, but it would regularise the process that Pius V had begun, eliminating autonomy from the Jesuits' anti-heretical activities permanently and fitting the Society into the centralised ecclesiastical infrastructure desired, if not fully realised, by Sixtus V.

### **Defending the privilege in the late 1580s**

The Jesuits did not relinquish the privilege readily. When Sixtus V's inquisition asked for an explanation of the Society's power, the Jesuits mounted a strong defence. Ultimately, their efforts were unsuccessful. Rather than convincing the pope and his Inquisition, the Jesuits' defence revealed a chasm between their priorities and those of the Holy See. While the Society remained focused on reconciling heretics on the ground, Sixtus was determined to take full control of the Church's anti-heretical activities. In their defence of 1586-7, the Jesuits presented many of the same arguments for the privilege that they had proposed at its solicitation. But whilst popes like Paul III and Julius III had been happy to empower them to supplement the inquisitorial system in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, the privilege had no place in Sixtus V's Church.

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<sup>117</sup> A critique of the narrative of increasingly centralised power within the Catholic Church, exemplified in works like Prodi's *Il Sovrano Pontefice*, is offered by Ditchfield in his 'In Search of Local Knowledge'. Ditchfield also offers an explanation of the intellectual foundations of Prodi's interpretation in 'In Sarpi's Shadow: coping with Trent the Italian way' in *Studi in memoria di Cesare Mozzarelli* (Milan: VandP, 2008), 2 vols, vol. 1, pp.585-606, especially pp.596-9. See also Pattenden, *Electing the Pope in Early Modern Italy*, pp.185-6.

<sup>118</sup> William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty. Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp.328-9. Bouwsma cites Sixtus V's excommunication of Henri of Navarre in a successful attempt to prevent him from receiving the French crown, at least for the duration of his pontificate. On this case see N.M. Sutherland, *Henry IV of France and the politics of religion, 1572-1596*, vol.2, pp.291-335. On Gallicanism see also Nancy Lyman Roelker, 'The Two Faces of Rome: The Fate of Protestantism in France' in Malcolm R. Thorp and Arthur J. Slavin (eds) *Politics, Religion, and diplomacy in early modern Europe: essays in honor of De Lamar Jensen* (Kirkville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), pp.95-111.

The Jesuits did not anticipate the revocation of the privilege. Their letter to Santoro concerning Bishop Gondi assumed papal support. They wrote to Santoro to ask that he remind the pope that he had promised a new brief when they met at the Congregation of the Holy Office.<sup>119</sup> Less than a year before Sixtus V would revoke the Society's privilege, and in the face of serious criticism from abroad, Acquaviva still felt confident enough of the pope's support to ask for written evidence of the power.

The Jesuits' confidence at this stage was understandable. An instruction given to members of the Society by Acquaviva in 1585 indicates that, at the beginning of Sixtus's papacy, the privilege was limited but valid. This 'Instruction for those, to whom the faculty of absolving from heresy is conceded in Europe', reinstated Paul IV's rule that heretics who voiced their heresy must visit the Holy Office before receiving absolution, 'to be provided for in the external forum', that is, to have any judicial censures lifted.<sup>120</sup> This instruction reflected a new state of affairs under Sixtus. This is clear as the 'method of use' outlined in the document differs from the Society's role in the pontificate of Sixtus's predecessor, Gregory XIII, when the Jesuits used the privilege with no caveats. Moreover, the letter of March 1586 indicated the discussion of the privilege was far from over, stating that the pope wanted to discuss the way in which this faculty is used.<sup>121</sup>

A bundle of documents held at the ARSI suggests that these discussions became more serious after the Spanish and French controversies of 1585-6. This diverse cache reflects the importance of the privilege for the Jesuits and underlines the variety of factors that led to its demise. The collection comprises three treatises defending the nature and impact of the privilege in Europe - one in Italian and two in Latin, the letter about Gondi of March 1586, Tucci's 'Response to the questions from France', a list of five points about privileges and their use and a list of concessions of the privilege by various popes. The Italian treatise states that it was written for cardinal-inquisitor Santoro 'to satisfy the order that he had given in the name of the Holy Office, beyond the other written [in] Latin, that was given regarding the

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<sup>119</sup> 'N[ost]ro Sig[or]e havendo il G[e]n[er]ali della Comp[ani]a di Giesu trattato con S[ua] S[antit]à intorno alla facoltà di assolvere ab heresi...ordinò che sene parlassi con V[ost]ra S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissi]ma ch'alla p[rim]a Cong[regatio]ne glie ne ricordassi.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.309r.

<sup>120</sup> 'P[rim]o de facultas alicui e n[ost]ris absolvendi ab haeresi conceditur, caveat in primis ne quempiam ad Inquisitionis officiu[m] delatum absolvat; quod si aliquos complices habeat eum no[n] absolvat, nisi ille quod debet circa denuntiationem prius fecerit.' Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> 'Hora perche S[ua] B[eatitudi]ne veniva bene nella cosa et voleva trattare del modo dell'uso di questa facoltà...' Ibid.

faculty to absolve from heresy'.<sup>122</sup> This note indicates that at least two of the treatises, the Italian document and one of the Latin documents, responded to an inquisitorial order that the Jesuits explain their privilege. Moreover, all three of the treatises are addressed to the 'Lord Cardinal Inquisitors of Heretical Depravity'.<sup>123</sup> Although Santoro was second in command at the Holy Office, he was its first point of contact with Sixtus V.<sup>124</sup> Santoro's personal management of the affair and the arguments proposed in these documents suggest that it was Sixtus who had instigated scrutiny of the privilege and its impact, not only in France, Spain and northern Europe, but also in the Italian territories under the jurisdiction of his Roman Inquisition.

Although all of the documents except the letter about Gondi are undated, analysis of their content suggests that they were produced during the discussions about the privilege in 1586-7. We know that Tucci's response was an answer to Gondi's criticisms. The Italian treatise also refers to Gondi, mentioning writings about the privilege that had come recently from Paris and a bishop from Paris who had recently spoken to the cardinal-inquisitors about the privilege.<sup>125</sup> The Italian treatise also seems to refer to one of the Latin treatises, stating that it was written because it was necessary to have another document about the privilege in addition to one that had already been written in Latin.<sup>126</sup> Although it is not clear which of the two Latin treatises this refers to, the content of both Latin documents has parallels with the Italian text, suggesting that they were produced for the same purpose. The list of concessions of the privilege also seems to date to Sixtus's pontificate, terminating with the concessions of his predecessor, Gregory XIII, and omitting the faculties to absolve northern European heretics from Sixtus's successor, Clement VIII.<sup>127</sup> Whilst there are no explicit references to connect the document on the use of papal privileges to the discussions of 1586-7, its common

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<sup>122</sup> 'Per sodisfare all'ordine che V[ostra] S[ignoria] n[os]tra dato in nome della Cong[regatio]ne del S[an]to Officio, oltre l'altro scritto latino che si dà intorno all'facoltà d'assolvere ab heresia.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r.

<sup>123</sup> 'Ill[ustriss]imis ac R[everendiss]imis DD. D[omi]nis Cardinalibus contra haere.cam pravitatem Inquisitor[i]bus.' Ibid., f.313v. 'Ill[ustriss]imis et R[everendiss]imis D[omi]nis DD. Card[ina]libus haereticae pravitatis Inquisitoribus'. Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Fosi, 'Santoro, Giulio Antonio (Santori, Santorio)' in Lavenia, Prosperi, Tedeschi (eds), *Dizionario Storico dell'Inquisizione*, vol.3, p.1385.

<sup>125</sup> '...et di Francia hanno scritto più volte et ultimamente di Parigi dopo ch[e] arrivò il vescovo che qui à Roma ne fece vi chiamò...'. ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r.

<sup>126</sup> '...necessità che vi è della oltre l'altro scritto Latino, che si dà intorno alla'facoltà d'assolvere ab heresia.' Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Clement VIII clarified Sixtus V's revocation and limited it to Spain and Italy, freeing fathers in other parts of Europe to absolve heretics: 'Il P[adre] Generale di detta Comp[ani]a...andò da N[ostro] S[igno]re Papa Clemente Ottavo, e sotto li 16 di 9bre 1592 riferitoli il tutto, et il bisogno che havevano le provintie oltramontane, et altre rimore, n'hebbe risposta, che tal decreto s'intendeva solo in Spagna, et Italia.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-a*, f.10r.



theme and the links between the other documents in this cache suggest it was produced in the same context.

The three treatises underline institutional reasons for the necessity of the privilege in northern Europe, underlining the frail ecclesiastical infrastructure on a continent ravaged by Protestantism. The treatises claim that the privilege was vital for England, Scotland and parts of Ireland because there were no Catholic bishops, and in places where the scarcity of bishops or size of the diocese made it difficult for penitents to find a bishop to absolve them.<sup>128</sup> Fear of ecclesiastical authorities is also highlighted as a major impediment to securing reconciliations in northern Europe. Where there were prelates, the Jesuits claimed that some rustics, women, children and old and infirm people whom they absolved would 'tremble in front of the Bishop'.<sup>129</sup> In many areas, the treatises argue, parish priests could not help with this problem, as they were ignorant and depraved.<sup>130</sup> According to the Jesuits, this was the reason that so many penitents came to them instead of their own clergy, and that bishops referred cases to the Society rather than delegating them to local priests.<sup>131</sup>

The Jesuits' defence of the privilege in Italy was focused on fear. The treatises claimed that northern European Ultramontanes in Italy feared that inquisitors would refuse to reconcile them. Therefore, the Jesuits needed the privilege to reconcile them themselves.<sup>132</sup> Often, the Jesuits stated, penitents feared revealing their heresy in front of several people, instead of an individual confessor sworn to secrecy. As many of them refused to renounce their heresy in front of a confessor and two witnesses, the Jesuits found it unsurprising that so many

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<sup>128</sup> 'Quanto alle facolta dimandate per Scotia et Inghilterra, et per quella parti di Hybernia dove no[n] sono vescovii Catho[li]ci paiono necessariu[m] ut iacent.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r. '...q[ua]n[d]o al[i]ar[ium] multos haereticos, quibus o[mn]ib[us] sana[n]dis pauci Ep[iscop]i satis esse nequa[n]t. Item Ep[iscop]i in dictis Regnis amplissimas habent dioceses: quos id circo e[x] longinquis locis difficile est adire.' Ibid., f.330r.

<sup>129</sup> 'Item quid cogas ad Ep[iscop]or[um] Tribunalia reliquam plebam idiotam, verecundam, rusticos, foeminas, puellas, infirmos, agoniza[n]tes, senes, iuvenes, qui nostrae co[n]versationi dui assueti, mallam a nobis absolvi, q[u]i tremme[nt] cora[m] Episcop[um].' Ibid., f.330v.

<sup>130</sup> '...li parrochi communemente sono tali, neglegenti si ve[n]gono andare cosi volontieri dà loro , come vano à quei della Comp[agni]a, il che evidentemente dimostra la frequenza de simili ch[e] vengono à questi, et no[n] vano a quelli.' Ibid., f.314r. 'Item Ep[iscop]i qui nobis aequiores sunt, requirunt huiq. facultatis usum potius a Societate, q. utram procurat suis curatis, quod illi fere ubiq. sint indocti, ventres[?], co[n]cubinarii, dissoluti...' Ibid., f.330r.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> 'In Italia per tutti gl'Oltromontani è necessaria l'istesa facoltà, perche non si ridurrano mai come l'isperienza hà insegnato a presentassi al santo ufficio ci cosi chi li nega l'assolutione... serra la paura della salute a quell'anima.' Ibid., f.314r. 'Quia cum frequentissimi essent, et sint Dei gratia, Transalpini praesertim homines, qui ad sanitatem mentis redeuntes, salutem etiam in Urbe quaerent; paucissimis tamen persuaderi potuit, ut sic coram Confessario et duobus testibus abiurarent; multo vero plures fuere, qui ut ad S.tum illud Tribunal abiuraturi accederent, recusarunt; unde oportebat eos in eorum perditione dimittent.' Ibid., f.316v.

transalpine converts never approached the inquisitors to officially join the Church.<sup>133</sup> Fear was such a great impediment to reconciliation that the Society stated that if the pope took the Jesuits' privilege away, the cardinal-inquisitors would have to find another way of offering reconciliation secretly in confession, without the obligation to visit a tribunal.<sup>134</sup> For the Jesuits, fear of the inquisitors was so powerful that a solely judicial system for converting and reconciling heretics was inconceivable.

The Jesuits argued that the private absolution of heretics in Italy complemented, rather than undermined, the judicial system. The Italian treatise claimed that Jesuit confessors helped the inquisition to find heretics, stating that few heretics handed themselves in to the inquisitors without the encouragement of their confessor.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, the author of this treatise claimed that the privilege allowed the Jesuits to convey valuable information to the inquisitors.<sup>136</sup> Far from impeding the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Society claimed that the privilege supported it, allowing the Jesuits to work respectfully to promote the agenda of bishops and the Holy See.<sup>137</sup>

These claims are contradictory. On the one hand, the Jesuits suggested that they could convince penitents to reveal themselves to the inquisition. On the other the Jesuits argued that fear of the inquisitors was so great that souls perished avoiding the tribunal, making an entirely extra-judicial means of reconciling heretics vital. If it was necessary to have a route to reconcile some heretics that totally avoided the inquisitors, the Jesuits could not argue that this route could also serve the inquisition. The presentation of such contrasting arguments underlines the Society's concern about losing the privilege and their willingness to use every possible argument in its defence.

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<sup>133</sup> 'Quia cum frequentissimi essent, et sint Dei gratia, Transalpini praesertim homines, qui ad sanitatem mentis redeuntes, salutem etiam in Urbe quaerent; paucissimis tamen persuaderi potuit, ut sic coram Confessario et duobus testibus abiurarent; multo vero plures fuere, qui ut ad S[anc]tum illud Tribunal abiuraturi accederent, recusarunt; unde oportebat eos in eorum perditione dimittent.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.317v.

<sup>134</sup> 'Se no[n] dimeno si giudica ch[e] no[n] convenghi havere tale facolta in Italia le SS. VV. Ill[ustrissi]me. vedano come si darà remedio à quell'anime...et considerino secondo la loro prudenza et zelo che modo si debba tenere, acciò che un'anima che si vuol ridurre possa trovar rimedio nel foro della penitenza sacramentale, senza haver obligata di manifestarsi in foro exteriori...' Ibid., f.314r.

<sup>135</sup> 'Nam in paucis, qui ad errores abuirandos sua sponte accedunt, quotusquisque esset qui id faceret, nisi a Confessario persuatus!' Ibid., f.317r.

<sup>136</sup> '..faculta si la strada per' ch[e] il S[an]to Ufficio habbi notitia elenche senza dubio s'accorse' de molte cose appartenuti al suo tribunale...' Ibid., f.314r.

<sup>137</sup> 'Societatem quoq[ue] eadem passim cum huius S. Sedis honore maximoq[ue] animar[um] proventa usam esse...' Ibid., f.330r. '...cum tu[m] in h[uius]mo[d]i usu semp[re] cautimus ne merito offenderemus Ep[iscop]os sed illor[um] potius ovile augere, et popule erga ipsos revere[n]tia c.p. virili procurare.' Ibid., f.330v.

The Jesuits also appealed to the long papal support for the privilege in Italy. According to the Italian treatise, no pope had conceded the privilege without considering the evidence for its necessity.<sup>138</sup> The effects of the privilege were also evident in the concessions themselves, as earlier popes would not have given the Society such a power without an important reason.<sup>139</sup> According to the Jesuits, successive popes had seen the great need for an extra-judicial route to heresy, judging that the privilege to absolve heretics should be granted for the salvation of souls, so that 'the lost sheep may not perish for eternity, nor the smoking flax' of conversion 'be extinguished'.<sup>140</sup> The documents claim that the Jesuits had not used the faculty lightly either. When dealing with Italian heretics, cases that the Jesuits claim were much rarer than those of Ultramontanes, the Jesuits were cautious, only conceding the privilege to Provincials, who could only grant it to suitable priests for specific cases.<sup>141</sup> In Italy, the Jesuits claimed their privilege was a harmonious and vital complement to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The Society did not persuade the pope. In February 1587, Sixtus V promulgated a brief revoking the Society's jurisdiction over heresy and overturning all previous concessions of the privilege. With this brief Sixtus V banned Jesuit confessors from absolving manifest heretics and from claiming to have the privilege to do so.<sup>142</sup> Instead, the Jesuits were ordered to send penitent-heretics to the tribunals of the Inquisition.<sup>143</sup> After 36 years of near continuous use of the privilege, this brief revoked the Jesuits' ability to absolve heretics

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<sup>138</sup> '...perche ne dalla Comp[ani]a si sono dimandate ne co[n]cedute dà i so[m]mi Pontifici senza havere lunga isperienza dell'estrema necessità che ve n'era; et l'uso ancora ha mostrato per Divina misericordia il frutto che ne segue...' ARSI, *Institutum*, f.314r.

<sup>139</sup> 'si vel haec sola spectant u[s]q[ue] nec leviter aut sine gravi causa a Sanctissimis Pontificibus hanc facultate[m] fuisse Societate concessam...' Ibid., f.330r.

<sup>140</sup> '...qua Societatem videbant magno cum Dei ac Ap[osto]licae Sedis honore, animarumq[ue] spirituali profectu, passim uti; tum facultates alias multas concederent, quas ad salutem animarum sibi a Deo commissarum, concedendas esse, no[n] leviter iudicarunt, ne scilicet ovis perdita in aeternum pereat, vel linum fumigans extinguatur.' Ibid., f.316r

<sup>141</sup> 'De gli'altri che no[n] sono Oltramo[n]tani sono casi rari, et ne quali si procedeva con questa moderazione et che si concedeva la facultà soli provinciali con potesta di co[m]mun[ic]arla à persone considerata idonea de n[ost]ri sacerdoti, solamente però in casi p[ar]ticulari, q[ua]n[do] gli pareva convenire...' Ibid., f.314r.

<sup>142</sup> 'S[antissi]mus D[ominus] N[ost]rus Sixtus Papa 5 statuit, atq[ue] mandavit, q[ue] p[re]sbiteri Societatis Jesu no[n] audeant de caetero quocunq[ue] sub p[rae]textu privilegiorum à S[an]ta Sede Ap[osto]lica quomodo libet votentur absolvere in confessionibus, neq[ue] in foro conscientia[e], seu poenitentiali, aut alias quomodocunq[ue], et qualiter cunq[ue] haereticos manifestos, sed illos mittant ad tribunal S[anc]t[ae] Inq[uisitio]nis. Et quatenus Congreg[ati]o dicta Societatis Jesu alias obtinerit à s[anc]ta Sede Apl[ic]a facultatem absolvendi tales haereticos, illa ab eis auferatur p[er] ut eam p[re]senti decreto abstulit.' ACDF, *Stanza Stanza D-4-A*, f.5r.

<sup>143</sup> ACDF, *Stanza Stanza D-4-A*, f.5r. See quote above.

autonomously across Europe. On the Italian peninsula, the pope would now oversee each and every reconciliation.

The revocation of the privilege suited Sixtus V's broader inquisitorial agenda. For Sixtus, the Holy Office was supreme amongst the administrative congregations of the Holy See, as defending the faith was the 'foundation of the entire spiritual edifice'.<sup>144</sup> In the first year of his pontificate, Sixtus had extended the remit of the Roman Inquisition, putting crimes of magic and superstition under its jurisdiction.<sup>145</sup> Sixtus also guaranteed the inquisitors' impunity, promulgating a brief that ordered that their bulls be heeded with no restrictions or caveats around the world.<sup>146</sup> The Jesuits' privilege represented a dangerous anomaly to Sixtus's centralised anti-heretical system and risked undermining the work of his Holy Office. The Jesuits' defence did nothing to convince the pope that their help warranted an exception to his broader agenda. If the reign of Pius V saw the triumph of the Roman Inquisition, that of Sixtus V heralded the annulment of rival jurisdictions.

The revocation of the privilege to absolve heresy was just one aspect of the reforms that Sixtus sought to impose on the Society during his pontificate. Sixtus's desire to change the government of the Society and to limit its jurisdiction over heresy were motivated by common concerns, centred on the belief that the Society had become dangerously autonomous and self-referential. Although it occurred after the privilege had been revoked, the complaint of Vincent Julien highlights the links between obedience, hierarchy and heresy in the Society that so concerned Sixtus.<sup>147</sup> In early 1588, Julien sent Loyola's famous letter on blind obedience to the Roman Inquisition. Julien wanted the letter censured for heresy, claiming that Loyola's principle of obedience made the theological and doctrinal views of each Superior General law in the Society. In a document held with defenses of the privilege, the Jesuits defended their practice of obedience stating that Julien's claims were 'false, and, nay more, ridiculous'.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Giordano, 'Sisto V', p.207.

<sup>145</sup> Tomassetti (ed.), *Bullarum diplomatum*, vol. 8, pp.646-650. See also, Black, *The Italian Inquisition*, pp.131-57.

<sup>146</sup> 'Sixtus Papa V immunitatibus Sancti Officii plurimum favorabiliter intendens decrevit, et mandavit, quod omnes et singul[a]e Bullae...quae pro hoc sancto officio, ac omnibus aliis, et singulis quarumcumq[ue] Provinciar[um], Civitatum, terrarum, et locor[um] universi orbis hereticae pravitate Inquisitionibus in futura expediri quomodolibet contingerint, expediantur gratis...' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-a*, f.50r.

<sup>147</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, pp. 86-94.

<sup>148</sup> 'Falsus immo est, im[m]o ret ridiculus (ne gravius aliquid diam) sensus qui Constitu[tioni]bus Societatis imponitur nempe quod societas sibi arroget velle se tanq[uam] ex cathedra definire ea quae a suis religiosi

Despite these protestations, Sixtus ordered an examination of the *Constitutions* to find any errors that might have contributed to an excessively self-referential way of proceeding.<sup>149</sup> The pope's concerns are highlighted in a list of suggestions from the cardinal-inquisitors about the numerous complaints regarding the Jesuits' form of government. The document, dated 11 January 1590, advises that the Society adopt principles and systems of older religious orders, shorten the term of the Superior General, undergo regular visitations and to localise power.<sup>150</sup> This advice reflected the pope's desire to balance and democratise authority in the Society and, in so doing, to transform the Jesuit Generalate into a role that was similar to the leaders of the traditional religious orders. Overall, Sixtus sought to bring the Jesuits into the ecclesiastical hierarchy, working, as other religious, under firmer papal control.

Sixtus V died in August 1590, before his reforms to the *Constitutions* could be implemented. But his revocation of the privilege to absolve heresy endured. A letter written by Cardinal Camillo Borghese after Sixtus's death but before his own pontificate as Clement VIII made the transformation of the Society's autonomy clear. As Sixtus V had revoked the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heretics in the forum of the conscience, Borghese warned them not to use it. Instead, he ordered that they ask the cardinal-inquisitors for permission to absolve penitent-heretics on a case-by-case basis, just like bishops and members of other religious orders.<sup>151</sup> From 1587 onwards, the Jesuits could absolve heretics, but only when the inquisitors decided it was fit, just like members of the other religious orders.

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eru[n]t de fide catholica tenedua in iis de quibus eos aliquando dubitare contingerit.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.302r.

<sup>149</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.96.

<sup>150</sup> 'Ex plurimis querelarum contra P[at]res Societatis Iesu scripturis super eorum regimine. Notae factae die xi Januarii 1590...Electio Provincialis et Rectorum in Capitulo Prov[incia]li. Usus et iurisdictio Capitulum Prov[incia]lum. Admissio tam ad vota simplicia, quam ad professionem in Capitulo seu per Prov[incia]lem de consensu Praepositi, vel Rectoris, et Capitoli seu Collegii. Deputatio Visitorum per Prov[in]cias uno quoq[ue] triennio, vel quinquenio cum omnimoda potestate corrigendi. Facultas admittendi in Societatem reservata Prov[incia]li, ut est et in Regula B. Francisci, sed in part[icola]ri Collegio de consensu Collegii. Praeceptus correctionis fraternae prout alia praecepta affirmativa et iuxta Regulam B. Augustini servandum.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica N-3-g*, ff.362r-363v.

<sup>151</sup> '...Sisto V sotto li 19 di febrari 1587 rivoco alli Padri della Compagnia la facolta di assolvere in foro conscientia]e gl'heretici manifesti, et piu N[ostro] Sig[no]re nella bolla in Coena D[omi]ni ha rivocato assolutamente la facolta di assolvere gl'heretici in foro conscientia]e. Et che però detti Padri p[er] l'avenire avertano di no[n] servisse di tal facolta, ma havendone bisogno, la dimandino dalla Sacra Cong[regatio]ne del S[an]to Officio, che se gli concedera con patenti particolari, come spesso la concede à diversi Vescovi, e persone regolari.' ARSI, *Stanza Storica D-4-a*, f.6r.

## Conclusion

On 11 November 1592, two years after Sixtus V's demise, cardinal-inquisitor Giulio Antonio Santoro summoned Acquaviva's secretary, Diego Ximenez, to the Holy Office. In his account of their meeting, Ximenez stated that, Clement VIII had ordered the Inquisition to discuss the solicitation of women in confession.<sup>152</sup> In preparation, Santoro had been looking for a decree on the subject made during Sixtus's pontificate, which ordered that religious could investigate and absolve cases of solicitation within their order.<sup>153</sup> Santoro could not find it. He had, however, found a decree on the absolution of heretics.<sup>154</sup> Confronting Ximenez with cardinal-inquisitor Sarnano, who had been a confidant of Sixtus V, Santoro told him that he knew that the privilege had been disputed, but had now learnt that it had been totally revoked.<sup>155</sup> Reading the decree, Santoro declared that Sixtus V had ordered that Jesuits hold no privileges to absolve manifest heretics.<sup>156</sup> Santoro then told Ximenez that 'this was, up until now, ordered to you'.<sup>157</sup> In response, Ximenez claimed absolute ignorance. In 1592, Ximenez made a remarkable declaration on behalf of the Society, stating that 'such a thing, until today, was not told to us'.<sup>158</sup>

Ximenez claimed that the Jesuits were unaware of the revocation because the period in which it had taken place was so turbulent. He wrote that the privilege to absolve heresy was discussed at length, but that the Society and the Inquisition had also discussed more troubling matters regarding the Society's foundational documents: the Institute and the Constitutions.<sup>159</sup> Embroiled in these discussions, they had not resolved the question of the privilege to absolve heretics. If anything, Ximenez claimed, the Jesuits had expected a confirmation of their jurisdiction, not a revocation. Indeed, Ximenez had noted the resolution of their discussion on the verso of a document about the privilege sent to the cardinal-inquisitors in 1586. It read:

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<sup>152</sup> 'Mi disse s'è trattato per ordine di S[ua] S[anti]ta la cosa de sollicita[tio]ne mulieru[m]...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.319r.

<sup>153</sup> '...fu un Decreto à tempo di Sixto V...à t[emp]o di Sixto V fu risoluto in questo tribunale q[ue] in casu sollicitationis possent procedere Superiores Regulares.' Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> 'Altro decreto io no[n] ho trovato che questo; et prese un foglio dal suo tavolino...' Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> '...et in presenza del Sig[no]re Car[dina]le Sarnano mi disse già sapere che fu disputato all'hora del potere assolvere ab haeresi, nel quale negotio ho trovato questo Decreto...ch[e] in so[m]ma era questo, cioè. Die 27 Februarii 1587 S[anctiss]imus D[ominus] N[ost]rus Sixtus V. decrevit, q[ue] praesbiteri Soci[eta]tis Jesu vigore quorumlibet privilegioru[m] non possent ulterius absolvere manifestos haereticos et soggiunse S[ua] S[ignoria] Ill[ustriss]ima Questo all'hora vi fu intimato.' Ibid., f.319r.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> 'Tal cosa (risposi io) sino al di d'hoggi no[n] ci è stata detta.' Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> '...seb[b]ene si trattò lungam[ent]e altri citroq[ue] della facultà dell'assolvere ab haeresi che tiene la Comp[ani]a...' 'All parlo piu; perche s'intrò in altre cose et censure piu fastidiose circa l'instituto, et il libro dell'essame delle co[n]stitutioni della n[ost]ra Comp[ani]a.' Ibid., f.320r.

'These reasons seen by the Most Illustrious Lords, nothing other was said to us than that a draft of a brief in which faculties were conceded to us would be made...which brief was not made'.<sup>160</sup> The reasons seen by the cardinal-inquisitors were, most likely, the defenses of the privilege examined in this chapter. According to Ximenez's account, he had expected the inquisitors to respond to these documents with a brief confirming the Society's privilege. But, in the end, they had not responded at all.

Although the Society faced many controversies during the pontificate of Sixtus V, it seems unlikely that Ximenez was ignorant of the revocation. Acquaviva, Ximenez's boss, knew of the revocation, as is clear from the letter discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Furthermore, in 1588 Acquaviva sent a letter to the entire Society telling them that Jesuit inquisitors they should not involve themselves in inquisitorial matters.<sup>161</sup> And the sheer effort with which the Society defended the privilege suggests that it was a key concern in broader debates, not a mere side issue that would be forgotten about. The privilege was an important part of the discussions that shaped the future of the Society during this period. It encapsulated the tension between the agenda of Jesuit authorities and the plans of the ecclesiastical and temporal powers leading the post-Reformation Church. Whilst Ximenez's account of the confused manner in which the question was concluded may be true, his claim of complete ignorance was not. Indeed, Santoro's revelation of the brief implies that Jesuits were openly using the privilege. This all suggests that Ximenez claimed ignorance to underplay the Jesuits' actions and, as he said himself, to give himself time to tell other Jesuits what Santoro had said.<sup>162</sup>

Sixtus V did not have a problem with the private absolution of heretics *per se*. However, the Jesuits' unsupervised use of the mechanism did not fit his institutional ideals. As Borghese's letter indicated, the pope's revocation allowed Jesuits to secure powers to reconcile heretics in confession, but only when the inquisitors deemed it necessary, not when the Superior General decided that they could. When used within the Jesuits' centralised hierarchy of obedience, the

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<sup>160</sup> '...ne significata altra risolu[tio]ne che la seguente, la quale io all'hora notai à tergo d'uno de memo[ra]lli che s'erano dati à quei Sig.ri l'an[n]o 86. cioe. Visis ab Ill[ustrissimis] D[ominis] his rationibus, nihil aliud fuit nobis dictu[m], q[u]e q[uam] fieret minuta Brevis in qua facultatis nobis concederentur, fere eadem, ad tempus tamen. La quale minuta no[n] fu fatta.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.319v.

<sup>161</sup> 'Ne in confessionibus nostri se immisceant in iis quae spectant ad inquisitionem.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom. 1*, f.101r.

<sup>162</sup> '...io la suppliciai che volessero darci tempo per informare del che S[ua] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissima] si contesto...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.319v.

privilege to absolve heretics had transformed the Superior General into the Jesuits' ultimate authority in matters of heresy, entirely precluding ecclesiastical and temporal authorities affected by his decisions. This was a problem for Sixtus, and for men like Bishop Gondi in Paris and Philip II in Spain. In 1586-7 the Jesuits offered a reasoned argument for the pastoral necessity of the privilege, arguing that they provided a vital supplement to judicial systems that was comprehensive on paper, but not always in practice. Nonetheless, the Society's plea on the part of fearful penitents did not diminish the broader institutional concerns of Sixtus V. It was for this reason that he revoked the privilege.

This disagreement between the papacy and the Jesuits regarding the role of the privilege reflects a contrast that had existed during the Society's first 50 years. The Jesuits had requested the privilege for pragmatic reasons, when they encountered flaws in existing systems for reconciling heretics. Sometimes these problems were related to the specific concerns of the Reformation period, such as a lack of resident bishops or a penitent's fear of being stigmatised. More often, however, the problems encountered by Jesuits were caused by human weaknesses and institutional failures that would always exist in one form or another. For the Jesuits, the privilege to absolve heresy was a crucial mechanism for their ongoing mission to ensure that harmless men who could be saved would not needlessly perish. In contrast, popes from Julius III to Sixtus V saw the Jesuits' privilege as an emergency measure to supplement permanent systems for reconciling heretics during a religious crisis. In the eyes of supportive popes like Julius III and Gregory XIII, it echoed the effects of temporary edicts of grace, expanding the channels through which the fallen could return to the Church. For more reluctant pontiffs, such as Paul IV and Pius V, the private absolution of heretics was a second-rate option to plug the gaps in an inquisitorial system that had not yet reached full efficiency.

On paper, the revocation of the privilege signalled the triumph of Sixtus V's institutional aims over the Jesuits' pastoral ideals. Nonetheless, Ximenez's denial of the revocation five years later suggests that the pope's efforts to centralise power in matters of heresy were not wholly successful. The immediate failure of Sixtus's revocation corroborates scholarship that highlights the contrast between legislative orders and their actual effects.<sup>163</sup> But Sixtus V's efforts to centralise jurisdiction over heresy had lasting impact. Providing the next step in the

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<sup>163</sup> Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge', pp.266-70.



process of centralisation and normalisation begun by Pius V, Sixtus eradicated some previously legitimate routes back into the Church and established clear, centralised norms for the reconciliation of heretics. Even if these changes were not consistently observed during Sixtus's pontificate, they lasted. His successor, Clement VIII, reasserted the revocation of the privilege. Moreover, he established further papal institutions for the conversion of heretics, directing all penitents to places and people under his control. Clement's successor, Paul V, confirmed papal dominance over the Inquisition and the supremacy of the Holy Office over religious orders.<sup>164</sup> By the pontificate of Urban VIII, the pope had more power over the inquisition than ever before.<sup>165</sup> None of these popes would reinstate the Jesuit privilege. Sixtus's reforms, including the revocation of the privilege, were not radical innovations, nor did they have full effect immediately, but they were significant steps in the development of an anti-heretical system that functioned solely through papal channels.

Whilst scholars have discussed 'negotiated obedience' between members of the Society and their superiors, Acquaviva's acceptance of the revocation demonstrates that the Society, as an institution, made similar compromises with the pope. 'Negotiated obedience' was the means through which the Jesuits reconciled their ideals and policies with the often conflicting demands of the religious, ecclesiastical, social and political contexts in which they worked.<sup>166</sup> This included the various contexts that came with different papacies. Acquaviva accepted the revocation of the privilege, and with it the notion that the Society was like any other mendicant order, because the Superior General too had to reconcile his pastoral ideals with the institutional aims of the pope, and, ultimately, with the Society's own desire to survive as a Catholic organisation.

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<sup>164</sup> G. Brunelli, 'Paolo V, papa (Camillo Borghese) in Lavenia, Prosperi, Tedeschi (eds), *Dizionario storico dell'inquisizione*, vol. 3, p.1167 and Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition: A Papal Bureaucracy*, p.12.

<sup>165</sup> Mayer, *The Roman Inquisition: A Papal Bureaucracy*, p.7 and pp.76-109. For specific actions of Urban VIII regarding the Holy Office see G.Brunelli, 'Urbano VIII, papa (Maffeo Barberini) in Lavenia, Prosperi, Tedeschi (eds), *Dizionario storico dell'inquisizione*, vol. 3, pp.1616-7.

<sup>166</sup> Alfieri and Ferlan (eds), *Avventure dell'obbedienza nella Compagnia di Gesu*, p.10; Pavone, 'Dissentire per sopravvivere', p.197 and Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience* and 'Perinde ac si cadaver essent'.



## **Chapter Five: All Roads Lead to Rome: the Jesuits and Routes to Reconciliation at the Close of the Sixteenth Century (1587-1605)**

After the revocation of the privilege worldwide, the Jesuits became papal agents in the fight against heresy in Italy. But rather than enjoying autonomous jurisdiction over heresy, they could now only absolve heretics privately in cases approved by the pope and his inquisition. Sixtus V and his successor, Clement VIII (pope 1592-1605), granted Jesuits powers to absolve heresy on an ad hoc basis, as and when they thought it desirable. These powers were for specific groups or individuals, and were often limited temporally and geographically. They almost always required a visit to the Roman Inquisition. A faculty that Sixtus granted on 23 March 1589 was typical, allowing Jesuit confessors at the papal penitentiary at St Peter's Basilica to reconcile heretics who visited them there – but only if these heretics were German and visited the Holy Office to reveal their accomplices.<sup>1</sup> After the revocation of 1587, Jesuits could only reconcile those whom the popes thought deserving, often through institutions that the popes supported and never in direct competition with a Catholic inquisition.

Considering the after-life of the privilege from 1587 onwards, this chapter will argue, first, that, from the papacies of Sixtus V to Clement VIII, the Jesuits could only secure faculties to absolve heretics in limited circumstances dictated by papal aims. Considering the case of the conversion of the household of the French ambassador to Venice, Philippe de Canaye, we will see that, in Italy, the Jesuits' faculties were focused on the reconciliation of foreigners whose conversion served the popes' pastoral and political aims. Secondly, it will argue that, for the Jesuits, autonomy remained the crucial characteristic of extra-judicial reconciliations for heresy, showing how, after the revocation of the privilege, members of the Society continued to absolve heretics as and when they thought it right, even when they had no papal faculties to do so. Overall, this chapter will demonstrate that the limitation of the Jesuits' powers of absolution exposed the long-standing gulf between the Society's view of extra-judicial reconciliations and that of the papacy, as the papacy restricted the Jesuits' powers of absolution to suit their new limited needs and Jesuits pushed against and violated papal laws,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Die 23 Martii 1589. Facultas penitentiariis. S[anc]tiss[im]us D.N.D. Sixtus Papa V concessit Presb[ite]ris Societatis Jesuitarum Penitentiariis in Basilica Princ[ip]is Apost[olorum]de Urbe facultatum recipiendi et absolendi in sacramentali confessione quoscunque Germanos haereticos occultos coram se sponte comparentes dummodo ante ipsa sacramentalem confessione adhortentur illos, ut veniat ad S.to Officium ad denunciandum suos complices.' BAV, *Barb. Lat.* 5195, f.106v.

to use, as far as they possibly could, the flexible *modus operandi* that had been exemplified and facilitated by the privilege to absolve heresy.

The limitation of the Jesuits' powers of absolution reflected Sixtus V's desire to centralise ecclesiastical government, and the lasting impact of his reforms.<sup>2</sup> Through limited faculties of absolution, Sixtus and Clement offered flexibility to some heretics who sought reconciliation with the Church. But the Jesuits who used those faculties had none of the flexibility that they had previously enjoyed through their privilege to absolve heresy, with which they could decide whom to absolve independently. Moreover, as such faculties usually required that heretics reveal themselves to the Roman Inquisition, the Jesuits' absolutions were no longer a distinct route of reconciliation. It appears that it was only in Savoy-Piedmont, one of the few Italian states where the Roman Inquisition faced continued obstacles, that Jesuits were given faculties with no requirement that penitent-heretics denounce themselves to inquisitors.<sup>3</sup> Still, the papal nuncio there carefully supervised the delegation and use of such powers. By deciding exactly who could have an extra-judicial absolution and from whom, Sixtus and his successors micro-managed pastoral routes of reconciliation to the Church from Rome, as well as the judicial means provided by the inquisition.

These faculties of absolution also reflected the Holy See's increasing focus on converting foreigners in Italy. On the Italian peninsula, Sixtus V and Clement VIII granted faculties almost exclusively for *Oltramontani* or Ultramontanes: English, French, Flemish and German heretics.<sup>4</sup> No such amnesties were granted for native dissenters. From the late sixteenth century, popes sought to neutralise the threat posed by the ever-growing number of people travelling from northern Europe to Italy, and especially to Rome, which became a hub for those seeking work, refuge and, sometimes, conversion to Catholicism.<sup>5</sup> Because these

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<sup>2</sup> Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia*, p.509-565.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, this faculty granted to Jesuit Father Rosetti: 'Con lettera de 30 di Maggio 1596. fù concesso al P[ad]re Rossetti facultà d'assolvere e riconciliare gl'heretici in utroq[ue] foro.' ACDF, *St. St. D-4-a*, f.422r. On persistent problems in Savoy-Piedmont see Lavenia, 'L'Inquisizione negli stati sabaudi', pp.114-5.

<sup>4</sup> On the *Ultramontani* see Fosi, 'Roma e gli Ultramontani. Viaggi, conversioni, identità, in *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 81 (2001), pp.351-396.

<sup>5</sup> On early modern Rome as a centre of conversion for foreigners see Fosi, '<<Con cuore sincero e con fede non finta>>: conversioni a Roma in età moderna fra controllo e accoglienza' in Maria-Cristina Pitassi and Daniella Solfaroli Camillocci (eds), *Les Modes de la conversion confessionnelle à l'Époque moderne. Autobiographie, altérité et construction des identités religieuses* (Florence: Leo Olschki, 2010), pp.215-233; 'Conversions de voyageurs protestants dans la Rome baroque' in Rainer Babel and Werner Paravicini, *Grand Tour. Adeligen reisen und Europäische kultur vom 14. bis zum 18. jahrhundert. Akten der internationalen kolloquien in der Villa Vigoni 1999 und im Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris 2000* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2005), pp.569-78; 'Preparare le strade, accogliere, convertire nella Roma barocca. Percorsi di salvezza.' in Stefano

foreigners often came from regions where Catholicism was no longer the dominant Christian confession, the Church identified them as potential dissenters and enemies. When legalistic methods failed to identify and genuinely convert such foreigners, the papacy adopted softer, persuasive methods.<sup>6</sup> Successive popes encouraged foreign converts by supporting and running colleges, hospitals, congregations and penitentiaries, where religious and cultural groups, often united by nationality, offered foreigners catechesis in their native language, material and moral support, and often private absolution.<sup>7</sup> Jesuits worked within these institutions and even ran some of them, like the papal penitentiaries and the English College. Their faculties of absolution were often limited to serving the pope in such contexts.

The contrast between the Society's view of their powers of absolution and the practical position of the popes is further underscored by the actions of Jesuits who violated the revocation of the privilege and continued to absolve whomever they thought deserving. In their defence of the privilege in 1585-6, the Society had claimed that, in Italy, they needed the power to absolve heresy more for foreigners more than for Italians, but that there were occasions when it was necessary for penitent-heretics from Italy.<sup>8</sup> Despite receiving no faculties permitting it, Jesuits continued to absolve Italians. Others sought faculties to absolve heretics autonomously without denouncing them to the Inquisition. Sixtus V and Clement VIII denied such requests. That some Jesuits rebelled against the Holy See, and that, ostensibly, some Jesuit authorities, such as Diego Ximenez, overlooked this rebellion, expands the conclusions of recent research that has underlined the prevalence of disobedience within the early Society. Current scholarship predominantly focuses on internal conflicts in the Society over external institutional matters.<sup>9</sup> Cases in which Jesuits violated the revocation

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Andretta, Claudio Strinati, Alessandro Zuccari, and Gloria Fossi, *La storia dei giubilei: volume terzo 1600-1775* (Florence: BNL Edizioni, 2000), pp.43-83 and 'Roma e gli Ultramontani.

<sup>6</sup> The motivations and methods of this approach are explored extensively by Fosi in her *Convertire lo straniero*.

<sup>7</sup> On national churches, hospitals, and colleges as places of conversion see Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography', pp.452-6; *Convertire lo straniero*, pp.37-51; 'The Hospital as a Space of Conversion: Roman Examples from the Seventeenth Century' in Giuseppe Marcocci, Wietse de Boer, Aliocha Maldavsku and Ilaria Pavan (eds), *Space and Conversion in Global Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp.154-74; Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*, pp.43-65.

<sup>8</sup> 'De gli'altri che no[n] sono Oltramo[n]tani sono casi rari, et ne quali si procedeva con questa moderazione et che si concedeva la facultà soli provinciali con potestà di co[m]mun[ic]arla à persone considerata idonea de n[ost]ri sacerdoti, solamente però in casi p[ar]ticulari...' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r.

<sup>9</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*; Romano's verbal comments are referred to in Alfieri and Ferlan, *Avventure dell'obbedienza*; Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*, pp.20-2; Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*.

of the privilege to absolve heresy show that some members of the Society not only defied their superiors but resisted papal control and contravened papal law.<sup>10</sup>

Previous accounts of the concession of the privilege to absolve heretics and the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy have emphasised the importance of the Society's relationship with the pope and the Church, from Polanco in the sixteenth century to Firpo and Prospero in the twentieth.<sup>11</sup> In these explanations of the privilege, the Society's ongoing fidelity or even servility to the papacy is key. Scholars discuss the Jesuits' role and powers in direct relation to the aims and strategies of the institutional Church, its pope and his inquisition. But a study of how the Jesuits used their powers of absolution, up to and beyond the revocation of their privilege, challenges these interpretations. So far, this thesis has shown that the Jesuits used the privilege not only in the service of the pope and the Roman Inquisition, but also to work autonomously and to help secular authorities. This chapter will demonstrate that it was only after the revocation of the privilege in 1587 that the aims of the institutional Church dominated the Jesuits' use of powers to reconcile heretics privately. Neither Firpo nor Prospero explicitly argue that the Jesuits had only used their privilege to serve the aims of the pope and inquisition. But by defining the Jesuits' role according to the objectives of the Holy See, rather than the ways that the Jesuits actually used the privilege, their interpretations are limited, telling us only how the privilege served the papacy and inquisitors, and failing to describe or explain the ways that the Jesuits' extra-judicial reconciliations changed over time.

Faculties to absolve foreigners granted by Sixtus V were an early manifestation of a conciliatory approach to heretics that is frequently associated with later pontificates.<sup>12</sup> Clement VIII's acceptance of the penitence of Henri de Navarre and support of pastoral institutions to convert heretics were a turning point in the history of the popes' attitude to foreign religious dissenters.<sup>13</sup> But the pastoral and political motivations for Navarre's reconciliation already underlay the special faculties of absolution that Sixtus V granted to the Jesuits after 1587. The Jesuits' faculties show that the change in papal policy that found its

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<sup>10</sup> Mostaccio has pointed out that, in spite of their vow of papal obedience, the Society resisted papal control. Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.84.

<sup>11</sup> Firpo, *La presa di potere*, p.65; Polanco in Dalmases and Zapico, *Fontes narrativi de S. Ignatio Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis*, vol. 1, p.272 and Prospero, *Tribunali della coscienza*, pp.230-6; p.569 and p.574.

<sup>12</sup> Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero*, pp. 57-60. The fear of foreign heretics coming to Italy existed in the 1550s and Gregory XIII sought to counter negative perceptions of Catholicism amongst northern Europeans in his jubilee of 1575.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.74-85 and Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*, p.45.

most bold public expression in cases like Navarre's was actually born of a much longer tradition of consolatory approaches to religious dissenters, which the Society had championed and facilitated for many decades.

The key contrast between the Jesuits' view of extra-judicial reconciliations and that of the papacy was the role of autonomy. Successive popes allowed the Jesuits to provide extra-judicial reconciliations to penitent-heretics who might otherwise fail to convert. However, once the threat of heresy had waned, these popes did not think it necessary to grant those who facilitated these reconciliations the freedom to choose whom they absolved. Despite this, many Jesuits continued to believe that they should have the ability to absolve a penitent-heretic whom they thought worthy, without referring to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The strict limitation of the privilege is an example of efforts to centralise ecclesiastical government that are often seen as typical of this period.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the Jesuits persistently solicited ever greater faculties and, at times, defied outright the revocation of the privilege, thus vindicating those scholars who have argued that local resistance often made centralisation an ideal rather than a reality.<sup>15</sup>

Contrary to persistent interpretations of the Society as papal agents in the fight against heresy, the Jesuits had long differed from the papacy in their view of extra-judicial reconciliations. As successive popes took the matter of extra-judicial reconciliations into their own hands, this contrast was exposed. Popes from Julius III to Pius IV, had not conceded the privilege to absolve heresy to give the Jesuits autonomy *per se*, but rather to empower the only religious order able to help them to confront the geographic and human scale of the threat to Catholic orthodoxy in mid-sixteenth-century Italy.<sup>16</sup> When Pius V felt he needed the Jesuits' help less, he effectively limited their powers. Gregory XIII wanted Jesuits' support on a broader scale, and so restored their privilege. Sixtus V and, later, Clement VIII centralised all systems of reconciliation, focusing pastoral means on specific social and cultural groups.<sup>17</sup> For these popes the concession of an autonomous jurisdiction to the Jesuits had none of its previous rewards. On the contrary, it conflicted with the systems of reconciliation that they had established. For the Jesuits, however, the need to absolve heretics privately was an

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<sup>14</sup> Del Col, *L'Inquisizione in Italia*, p.509-565

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter Four footnote 77.

<sup>16</sup> Romeo, *Ricerche su confessione*, p.52.

<sup>17</sup> Fosi has underlined how even initiatives begun by religious orders like the Oratorians were taken over by the Holy See. Fosi, 'Roma e gli "Ultramontani"', pp.364-5.

inevitable, permanent requirement of their ministry, which could not be limited to a particular period, place or group.

### **The politics of conversion at the turn of the seventeenth century**

Antonio Possevino's reconciliation of the household of the French ambassador to Venice, Philippe de Canaye, exemplifies the Jesuits' transformed role in the fight against heresy after the revocation of the privilege. When Possevino wanted to convert and reconcile Canaye's household he was bound to solicit the pope for the necessary powers of absolution. In 1602, Possevino successfully solicited faculties from Clement VIII, through his inquisition, to absolve Canaye and his wife and daughter.<sup>18</sup> Later, in November 1605 and January 1606, Possevino also secured faculties to reconcile Anne de Colignon, George Krilgauser and Erhard Perolt, members of Canaye's household and former adherents to the teachings of Calvin and Luther.<sup>19</sup> The Canayes and their household were granted extra-judicial reconciliations as they were foreigners, but not only because they were foreigners. They were foreigners who could bolster the Catholic cause, pastorally and politically, where it needed it most. The protagonists in the Canaye case were prestigious and powerful. Nonetheless, the pope's motivations for granting them private absolutions and Possevino's role as a papal agent in the conversions were typical of most extra-judicial reconciliations for heresy after the revocation of the privilege. From 1587, popes would micromanage extra-judicial reconciliations, without granting any autonomy to the Jesuits, and their concessions would focus on foreigners, whose conversion to Catholicism benefitted Rome both pastorally and politically.

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<sup>18</sup> Possevino's account of Renée Canaye's conversion and a copy of her abjuration in Italian can be found in ARSI, *Opera nostrorum 324 - II*, ff.342-3r, with a copy in French on ff. 347r-8v. Possevino's account of the conversion of their daughter on 4 October 1602 is held in the same folder on f.349r. The biography of Canaye in his edited letters incorrectly implies that Renée Canaye and her daughter converted in 1600, the same year as Canaye. See, Canaye, *Lettres et ambassade de messire Philippe Canaye Seigneur de Fresne, Conseiller du Roy en son Conseil d'Etat* (Paris: E. Richer, 1635-6), 3 vols, vol.1, p.8

<sup>19</sup> The abjurations of Colignon, Krilgauser and Perholt can be found in the same cache of letters referenced above. 'Nous Antoine Possevin ec en vertu, et auctorité de la faculté à nous donée par n[ost]re S[ain]t Pere Clement viii ayant ouy v[ost]re presente confession libre, et volontaire, et ayants este devement informez de vostre vraye et S.te conversion...declarons, que vous George Jrilgauser avez esté heretique formel...de la secte de Luter...À cause de quoy vous estes tenu abjurer, et renoncer à toute doctrine contraire, ou different de celle, que reçoit et enseigne la sainte Eglise catholique Romaine...' ARSI, *Opera nostrorum 324 - II*, f.377r. 'Nous Antoine Possevin ec. en vertu, et auctorité de la faculté à nous donee par n[ost]re S[ain]t Pere Clement viii...declarons, que Erhard Perolt de Norimberg aves esté hérétique formel...de la secte de Luter...À cause de quoy vous estes tenu les abiurer, et renoncer à toute doctrine contraire, ou differente, de celle, que reçoit, et enseigne la sainte Eglise Catholique, Romaine comme nous vous enjoignons le faire: et moiennant la dite abiuration...' Ibid., f.379r.



Sixtus's successors never reconceded the privilege. Broadly, they were more supportive of the Society, but they retained control over reconciliations, judicial and extra-judicial. Of the three short pontificates that succeeded Sixtus's that of Gregory XIV (December 1590-October 1591) presented the best opportunity for the Jesuits to regain the privilege. Gregory restored much of the support and independence that Sixtus had withdrawn from the Society, defending the *Constitutions* when they were attacked by the Spanish ambassador, funding Jesuit colleges and restoring the Superior General's power to elect novices personally.<sup>20</sup> But Gregory did not restore the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy. Like Sixtus, he stated that the Society should not dictate its own government independently of the pope.<sup>21</sup> Clement VIII showed more promise. When a group of Italian Jesuits demanded the democratisation of authority in the Society, Clement did not intervene, as Sixtus had, but ordered the Jesuits to resolve the matter autonomously.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, Clement steered a similar course to Gregory XIV and Sixtus V in the question of autonomy in cases of heresy. When the Jesuits questioned the revocation of the privilege in 1592, Clement clarified and confirmed its annulment and reasserted the revocation in subsequent legislation, for Spain in 1593 and Italy in 1599.<sup>23</sup> Clement did this in spite of protests from Superior General Acquaviva, who told him that the revocation was problematic not only north of the Alps, but also in 'other places where His Holiness knows, even through experience, the precise necessity that there was for such a faculty'.<sup>24</sup> Despite efforts to regain the privilege, by the end of the sixteenth century, it was patent that the Jesuits could not secure autonomous jurisdiction over heresy in lands with Catholic inquisitions.

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<sup>20</sup> On the complaint of the Spanish Crown see Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España*, vol. 3, pp.473-5. On Gregory's measures see *Bullarium diplomatum*, vol.9, pp.414-5 and 436-442 and Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. 22, p.399.

<sup>21</sup> 'Ne dictae Societatis institutum, constitutiones aut decreta...impugnare vel immutari, alterar aut formam aliam seu rationem circa ea induci curare contra vel praeter ea seu quaevis alia ipsius instituti substantialia agere...praeterquam nobis aut Romano Pontifici pro tempore existenti, idque immediate, vel per nostrum aut Sedis Apostolicae legatum seu nuncium...' *Bullarium diplomatum*, vol. 9, pp.440-1

<sup>22</sup> Catto, *La Compagnia Divisa*, pp.101-44.

<sup>23</sup> 'Clement VIII - Exponi Nobis nuper - Revocantur in regnis Hispaniae facultates presbyteris Soc. Jesu. concessae absolvendi ab haeresi et legendi libros prohibitos.' Louis Delplace, *Synopsis actorum S. Sedis in causa Societatis Iesu: 1540-1605* (Florence: Ex typographia, 1887), p.179. 'E lapsis aliquot mensibus post electionem S.D.N. Clementis Papae Octavi Ill.mus D. Card.lis Sanctae Severinae signi friavit R.P.N. G[e]n[er]ali Preposito eiusd. Smi D.N. Voluntatem eam esse ne in Italia poen[a]e n[ost]ri absolvere ab h[a]eresi et à[b] lectione libror[um] hereticor[um] alios pr[a]eser[ti]m Transalpinos. Diego Ximenez.' ACDF, *Stanza Storica D-4-A*, f.16v. 'Per il che andando io per altri negotii hoggi dalla S[anti]tà di Il Sig[no]re Clemente VIII la supplicae che ci dichiarasse quel che dovevamo fare intorno à questo poiche tal decreto [di Sisto V] legava li mani a tutta la Comp[agni]a etiam dio nelle Provincie Oltramontane et altre remote dove la Sua Beat[udi]ne sapeva anco per esperienza la necessita precisa che ci era di tale facultà al che ma Beat[udi]ne mi rispose che tal decreto s'intendeva solo in Spagna et Italia...' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom. 1*, f.149r.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

This meant that the Jesuits had to solicit the pope, through his inquisition, each and every time that they wanted to absolve a penitent-heretic. The process followed by Antonio Possevino in the absolution of the Canaye household in Venice was typical. To secure the necessary faculties for these cases, Possevino negotiated with the pope through cardinal-inquisitor Giulio Antonio Santoro and, after Santoro's death in 1602, cardinal-inquisitor Camillo Borghese, who would become Pope Paul V in 1605. Clement conflicted with some members of the Holy Office, but the pope and the inquisitors collaborated on these concessions.<sup>25</sup> Santoro and Borghese took each of Possevino's solicitations to the pope and then relayed the response, intervening only with notes about the form that documentation should take. The powers that Possevino secured were extensive, allowing him to absolve his converts in both fora.<sup>26</sup> This power was even broader than the authority that Possevino had enjoyed under the Jesuits' papal privilege, which allowed them to absolve heretics who were unknown to the Holy Office, but not to lift censures that the inquisitors had already imposed. Nonetheless, Possevino's faculties could only be used precisely as the papal inquisition had ordered. Possevino solicited the Canayes abjurations and wrote the sentences using a template written out for him by the papal inquisition. He declared the absolutions as valid 'with the authority given to [him] by Our Most Holy Father Clement VIII, Pope of the Universal Church'.<sup>27</sup> The reconciliations of the Canaye household may have been performed by Possevino, but they were the result of a direct, broader collaboration between Possevino and the Holy Office and the Holy See, which established the process, and parameters of Possevino's powers.

Possevino's pastoral ambitions extended far beyond the limitations of the faculties granted to him. He wanted the freedom to absolve all French heretics in Venice. For more than a decade, Possevino had been engaged in the battle against heresy in the Kingdom of France, as

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<sup>25</sup> Clement and the Inquisition clashed over the distribution of an Index and the concession of licenses to read vernacular Bibles. See, Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo*, pp.173-198 and Fausto Parente, 'The Index, the Holy Office, the condemnation of the Talmud and publication of Clement VIII's Index', p.190.

<sup>26</sup> 'La [ette]ra di V[ostra] R[everen]tia de 17 di Gennaro si è letta giovedì prossimo passato in Congregazione avanta S[anti]ta d. N[ost]ro Sig[no]re et consideratosi maturamente il tutto, la S[anti]tà Sua si è contentata di concedere facoltà à V[ostra] R[everen]tia di poter' assolvere in utroq[ue] foro dall'heresie il S[ign]ore Ambas[ciato]re di Francia residente appresso cotesta Ser[enissi]ma Republica, et sua consorte, e tutti della sua famiglia...' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324 - II*, f.289r.

<sup>27</sup> 'Io Ant[oni]o Possevino della Co[m]p[ani]a di Gesu coll'auttorita à noi data San.mo nostro Padre Clemente Ottavo, Papa dell'Universale Chiesa...' Ibid., f.346r. The template or 'modo di abiuratione' sent to Possevino by Santoro is held with the correspondence at ff.332r-3v and is an example of the *schede di assoluzione* discussed by Fosi in 'Con cuore sincero', pp.6-8.

a preacher, confessor, Jesuit rector and writer of polemic.<sup>28</sup> In Venice, Possevino sought the continuation of this mission to the French. Clement VIII would not hear of it. Responding to Possevino's request, cardinal-inquisitor Santoro stated that the pope would not grant the faculty to absolve French heretics generally, which Possevino had requested in a letter.<sup>29</sup> Instead, Santoro advised Possevino to ask the inquisitors for faculties on a case-by-case basis, like all other Jesuits.<sup>30</sup> Possevino made individual requests for each of his converts in Canaye's household and, in the requests recorded by Possevino, the pope granted them through his inquisition. Conceding these faculties, cardinal-inquisitor Santoro made it clear that Clement VIII intended them for the specified cases only, and not for other Frenchmen and Ultramontanes in Venice.<sup>31</sup>

The Canaye household could support the Catholic cause in ways that other foreigners in Venice could not. Clement VIII knew and encouraged this. In the second half of the sixteenth century there was an increasing assumption amongst ecclesiastical and political powers that the religious confession of the ruling classes could dictate the orthodoxy of a whole state, a notion had been made official in some parts of Europe by the Peace of Augsburg of 1555. The Canaye household could solicit further conversions amongst prominent Frenchmen. After granting his family private absolution, Clement VIII encouraged the Canayes to use their position and personal experience of the pope's benevolence to convert others amongst their class in France and in Venice. This is clear from Clement's correspondence with the family. After Possevino had absolved Canaye's wife and daughter, both husband and wife wrote to the pope to thank him for his mercy towards them and Clement responded exhorting them to spread the faith.<sup>32</sup> Clement responded, telling Renée Canaye of his delight that she had inspired her daughter to convert too.<sup>33</sup> In his letter to Philippe, the pope lauded him for

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<sup>28</sup> Mostaccio, *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience*, p.40.

<sup>29</sup> 'Le facultà che ricerca nella sua di assolvere altri Francesi eretici che citassero in codesta Città alla giornata, non è parso à sua s.tà per hora concederle...' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324 - II*, f.292r.

<sup>30</sup> '...me secondo occorrenze ella potrà darne avviso, che non si mancherà delle previsionì necess[ari]e.' Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> 'Et questa autorità se le concede solamente come si è detto per il S.re Ambasc.re et quelli della sua famiglia, et non per altri Francesi et Oltramontani che si trovano costì.' Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> 'Iterum et semper benedictus sit Deus, acutor omnium benedictionu[m], qua per viro fidelem convertit mulierum infidelem...' Ibid., f.358v.

<sup>33</sup> 'Itaque gratiam Dei in se expertus, de tua salute, de tua aeterna felicitate sollicitus erat, Deum[ue] dies ac noctes anxius orabat, ut tibi quoque eadem gratiam, eumdeque spiritum conversionis communicaret, Quod nunc Dei benignitate consecutus exultat gaudio, et Deo gratias agit, et tanto magis, quod filiolarum quoque vestra[rum] dilectissimae Ranatae conversionis cumulus accessit, qu[ae] in teneris annis, et fargili sexu virilem prudentiam, et constantiam ostendit, et matrem praeclare est imitata, quo nomine parentibus, et natae iterum et saepius in Domino gratulamur.' Ibid., f.360r-v.

converting his Calvinist wife and called him to convert more vigorous men for the Church.<sup>34</sup> Clement's encouragement paid off. In correspondence from Venice, Canaye sought the conversion of friends such as Casaubon and fellow ambassadors of the French king.<sup>35</sup> He also encouraged others to convert prominent Frenchmen, urging Cardinal du Perron to convert two lost sheep who were particularly urgent cases because they were influential in France.<sup>36</sup>

Possevino also urged Canaye to promote the Catholic agenda on a broader scale.

Possevino solicited Canaye for printing privileges for Catholic texts in France, particularly his own. In response Canaye asked Nicolas de Neufville, the French secretary of state, to supplicate the chancellor for a privilege that would allow Possevino to print his works in France.<sup>37</sup> Possevino also urged Canaye to rehabilitate the Jesuits in the kingdom. Suspensions of pro-Spanish treachery had led King Henri IV to expel the Jesuits in 1595. Attempting to repair the situation on behalf of Possevino and the pope, Canaye wrote to Philippe de Bethune, Henri IV's ambassador to Rome, imploring him to urge the king to welcome the Society back, substantiating his case with Possevino's arguments and good repute.<sup>38</sup> As a

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<sup>34</sup> '...quod talenta tibi à Deo tributa, et credita, in uxore, et liberis tuis multiplicaveris sic etiam speramus, quod eadem Dei adiutrice gratia, etiam robustiores viros convertes, et qui calamum, et facundiam et cetera animi, et externa bona, ad multarum animarum detrimentum olim adhibuisti, eadem ad multorum utilit[at]em et salutem deiceps adhibeas, ut te faceri scimus...' ARSI, *Opera Nostrorum 324 - II*, f.360v.

<sup>35</sup> The original copy of his most insistent letter, British Library (hereafter, BL), *MS Burney 364*, ff. 309r-310r, is edited in John Russell (ed.), *Ephemerides Isaaci Casauboni cum praefatione et notis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), vol. 1, pp.82-5. Canaye suggested that Casaubon come to Venice to meet Paolo Sarpi, possibly desirous to introduce the scholar to a milieu in which he could convert. On the interactions between Sarpi, Canaye and Casaubon see, Gaetano Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), pp.33-135, especially pp.60-5.

<sup>36</sup> 'Monsieur and Madame de Dangeau m'ont escrit depuis peu l'vn, me repetant ingenuëment ce qui le retient au Hugienotisme; l'autre se vantant ignoramment d'vn repos de conscience qu'elle ne veut ébranler. Si vous accuseray-je, Monsieur de n'auoir assez diligemment poursuiuy la brebis égarée, and si proche de vostre troupeau, and si ancienne en vostre amitié, and de telle consideration au pays, si vous ne leur donnez vne couple de iours; mais il faut que ce soit sans y estre inuité, autrement ce ne sera iamais.' Philippe Canaye, *Lettres et ambassade*, vol.1, book 2, pp.26-7.

<sup>37</sup> '...Je vous remercie, Monsieur, de la reco[m]mandation qu'ils vous a plû faire à Monsieur le Chancelier, du priuilege que desire le pere Posseuin; c'est vn grand and docte personnage, and tres-bon seruiteur du Roy, and tres-affectionné à la France, and qui par les merites s'est acquis vne grande reputation.' Ibid., vol. 1, book 1, p.414.

Luigi Balsamo, *Antonio Possevino S.I. bibliografo della controriforma e diffusione della sua opera in area anglicana* (Leo Olshki: 2006), p.16.

<sup>38</sup> In a letter to the ambassador, Nicolas de Neufville, Canaye mentions the English Jesuit Robert Persons, who is suspected of pro-Spanish and anti-French sympathies, urging de Neufville to encourage the king not to punish the entire Society for one man's errors: '...son General [Claudio Acquaviva]...a desiré que vous vissiez, parce qu'il voudroit bien pouuoir remettre Personius and toute sa Compagnie en bonne odeur vers sa Majesté, and tous ses seruiteurs...Nos confusions passées ont contraint beaucoup de gens à chercher appuy and faueur en Espagne; si maintenant le bon-heur and la vertu de sa Maiesté fait qu'ils repentent, ie croy Monsieur, qu'il leur faut ouuir les bras...Je croy aysement qu'il y a eu de l'ambition and de la passion en ce Personius: mais Mo[n]sieur, vaut-ils pas mieux de le voir reuenir, que le desesperant le forcer à faire pis?...Les fautes sont personnelles, and ne doiuent estre punies generalement...mais si les Princes ne dédaignent point de gagner vn particulier à leur seruice [i.e. of the Jesuits], avec dépense and entretenement; ie croy que ce ne seroit pas prudence de refuser les

former papal diplomat in Sweden, Poland and Russia, and a direct participant in the negotiations over the absolution of King Henri IV of France, Possevino had significant experience using religious conversion to build confessional and political alliances.<sup>39</sup> And as a prominent convert and French statesman, Canaye was well-placed to use his position to further the pastoral and political aims of the Catholic Church.

The notion that confessional affinity translated to political alliances was well-established. Some Frenchmen claimed that Canaye himself had exploited the advantages of being Catholic to further his diplomatic career. When Canaye publically renounced his Calvinism in 1600, some of his colleagues had suggested that his conversion to was an attempt to facilitate French diplomacy in Italy, claiming that he had only converted to secure the ambassadorial post in Catholic Venice.<sup>40</sup> Clement VIII had shown similar political shrewdness in his absolution of the king himself, who was formerly a Protestant known as Henri of Navarre. Clement's motivations were, presumably, principally religious.

Nonetheless, his decision allowed Henri to become king and so secure France's position as a Catholic state large and powerful enough to rival Spain. This was crucial for the pope as Spain had become so powerful that it threatened him with the establishment of its own national church, Spanish hegemony on the Italian peninsula.<sup>41</sup> In late sixteenth-century Europe, religious conversion could be a powerful political instrument.

The link between religious affinity and politician alliance in the Canaye conversions was exploited by both Clement VIII and his successor Paul V. Canaye's potential influence on the pope's political standing came to a peak when the Holy See came to blows with the Venetian Republic in 1605. In that year, Paul V placed an interdict on Venice for claiming that the

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affections and volonte d'une si grande Communauté, and qui a jetté de telles racines par toute la Chrestienté, qu'il est difficile de les endommager sans blesser la Religion.' Canaye, *Lettres et ambassade*, vol. 1, book 2, pp.67-8.

<sup>39</sup> Sutherland, *King Henry IV of France and the Politics of Religion*, vol. 2, pp.507-8. On Possevino's diplomatic missions see John Patrick Donnelly, 'Antonio Possevino, S.J., as Papal Mediator between Emperor Rudolf II and King Stephan Báthory', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 69 (2000), pp.3-56 and Stéphane Mund, 'La mission diplomatique du père Antonio Possevino (S.J.) chez Ivan le Terrible en 1581-1582 et les premiers écrits jésuites sur la Russie moscovite à la fin du xvie siècle', *Cahiers du monde russe*, 45 (2004), pp.407-440.

<sup>40</sup> Canaye alluded to such accusations in his letter to another ambassador: 'Et che per una volta, per assicurarvi, che coloro molto male giudicano di me, i quali giudicano, che l'ambitione me transversum egerit. Se io avessi avuto della ambizione io avevo in Castro più gran modo di fomentarla che in Venetia.' ARSI, *Opera nostrorum 324-II*, f.367v.

<sup>41</sup> Clement VIII had been reluctant to lift the papal excommunication of the king, which barred him from the French monarchy, as he had promised the Spanish that he would never do so. He eventually reneged. On Clement VIII's involvement in the papal absolution of Henri IV, see Sutherland, *Henry IV and the Politics of Religion*, vol.2, pp.528-591.

state should control ecclesiastical matters, not the pope.<sup>42</sup> Retaliating, Venice expelled the Jesuits from their Republic, as the order, particularly Possevino, were vehement supporters of the papal side and refused to celebrate Mass in the Republic.<sup>43</sup> France soon became a crucial power-broker in the controversy.<sup>44</sup> Working on Paul V's behalf, Possevino called upon their ally Canaye to argue for the pope's cause. But on this occasion Possevino and Paul were unsuccessful. Canaye's growing Gallicanism had led him to sympathise with the Venetian argument. Still, their attempts to make such use of Canaye, and a relationship that had been facilitated through private absolutions for heresy, indicates that their motivations for helping the Canaye household were political as well as pastoral. Paul V would demonstrate a similar approach in attempts to court the favour of the English ambassador to Venice, Henry Wootton. When the pope became concerned that Wootton and his acolytes were spreading heresy in the Veneto, he asked Possevino to befriend Wootton, to debate religious controversies and solicit support for the Catholic cause in Venice and England.<sup>45</sup> Yes, Possevino and the pope sought the salvation of Wootton's soul. But they also wanted the defence and fortification of the Catholic Church around the world, so that it might also save the souls of many others.

Possevino knew that the pope's willingness to grant faculties of absolution was motivated by his broader ecclesiastical and political agenda for the Church. For this reason, Possevino ensured that Clement VIII knew that Canaye had granted him political favours in return for the private absolution of his household. Possevino and Canaye translated Canaye's entreaties to 'another ambassador of the king' into Italian and wrote to the inquisition of Canaye's efforts to convert Isaac Casaubon, so that the pope heard about Canaye's efforts to convert other

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<sup>42</sup> On the Venetian Interdict see Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, especially pp.293-483.

<sup>43</sup> Pietro Pirri, *L'interdetto di Venezia del 1606 e i Gesuiti: silloge di documenti con introduzione* (Rome: 1959). Possevino and Bellarmino became embroiled in a heated debate, through letters and pamphlets supporting the papal cause. Their key opponent was the Venetian Servite Paolo Sarpi, who wrote his *Trattato dell'interdetto di Paolo V nel quale si dimostra che non è legittimamente pubblicato* in 1606. On Sarpi and the interdict see Cozzi, *Paolo Sarpi tra Venezia e l'Europa*; Jaska Kainulainen, *Paolo Sarpi: A Servant of God and State* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) and David Wootton, *Paolo Sarpi: between Renaissance and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately for Paul V, the debate on Venetian ecclesiastical independence had pushed Canaye to a Gallican position and, through this, sympathy for the Republic. Bouwsma, 'Gallicanism and the Nature of Christendom' in Bouwsma (ed.), *A Usable Past. Essays in European Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p.320.

<sup>45</sup> Giovanni Soranzo, 'Il P. Antonio Possevino e l'ambasciatore inglese a Venezia (1604-1605)', *Aevum*, 7 (October-December 1933), p.390.

influential Frenchmen.<sup>46</sup> Possevino's request for faculties to absolve Anne de Colignon, a member of Canaye's household, makes it clear that he thought the pope more likely to grant a private absolution to a convert who could support his agenda to re-Catholicise Europe. In his request, Possevino encouraged Pope Paul V by promising further conversions, stressing that, if reconciled, de Colignon would influence the conversion of others.<sup>47</sup> Later, Possevino explicitly assured the pope that his favours to the Canaye household had bought him the ambassador's political favour, writing that, because of the private absolutions, de Colignon and Canaye were indebted to the pope 'incessantly and on every occasion showing it with most grateful memory to whatsoever French lord and others who pass through there'.<sup>48</sup>

The Canaye case stands out because of the prominence of its protagonists and the richness of the documentation, but in all other ways it resembles the other episodes in which Jesuits absolved heretics in Italy after the revocation of their privilege. In Venice, Possevino could only play the part prescribed to him by the pope, to serve the pope's ambitions to protect and promote Catholic orthodoxy, principally through the conversion of foreigners. The pope's inquisition presided over all his actions. This was true of all reconciliations, judicial and extra-judicial, across the board in Italy.

From the end of the sixteenth century, systems of reconciliation in Italy were focused increasingly on the conversion of foreigners. As the threat of native heresy decreased, popes

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<sup>46</sup> The letter reads: 'Pertiche non sapendo le cause della mia conversione, et gidicandone voi secondo il vostro senso. Voi non sapete se dovete dirmi liberamente il vostro parere, ò se dovete tacerlo. Ma inanti che voi vi risolviate nell'uno ò nell'atro, io vi prego, et vi sco[n]giuro per il debito del quale sete obligato alla vostra Anima, che voi facciate quel ch'io hò fatto, et da poi avendo invocato Dio da dover, et avendo vi pensato bene me ne mandate il vostro parere.' ARSI, *Opera nostrorum 324-II*, f.366r. On the verso it reads: 'Lettera tradotta di Francese in Italiano del Sig[no]r Ambasciator[e] di francia in Venetia, Ad un altro Amb[asciato]re del Re che era à Alzieres.' On the outside of the French version on ff.335-338v it reads: 'Coppia Franc[ese]+ Ital[ia]n[a] della l[ette]ra di Mons[ieur] Di Fresnes Canaye Amb[asciato]re del Re di Francia à Mons[ingnor] Presid[en]te di Mesieres Amb[asciato]ri del detto Rè. In materia della sua conversione.'

<sup>47</sup> 'È da sperare Mons[igno]r Ill[ustrissi]mo dall'intesa misericordia di Dio, che questa buona giovane, la quale si prepara per far meno una confessione generale di tutta la sua vita, debba servire di efficace inserimento per aiutare molt'altri, ò parenti, ò conoscenti.' Ibid., f.372v. On 2 November 1602 Possevino wrote to Rome claiming that the pope's favour to the ambassador had inspired him to write to Causubon: 'Ma perché Sua B[eatitudi]ne nel Brieve diretto al S[igno]re Amb[asciato]re l'animava ad aiutar[e] altri alla co[n]vers[i]one poichè costa io avevo mandato una sua, ch'egli scriveva al Casabuono bon dottis[im]o ma heretico...' Ibid., f.361r.

<sup>48</sup> 'Però supplico humilmente V[ostro] S[igno]re Ill[ustrissi]mo che si contenti di proporre à S[ua] B[eatitudi]ne se vorrà colla Sua S[an]ta Benedittione confirmare la conversione della detta Damigella, et concederle tanto à lei, quanto à chi la confesserà per una volta Indulgenza plenaria in forma di Giubileo...non dubito, ch'essa co'l S[igno]r[e] Amb[asciato]re ne resterebbono obligatissimi à S[ua] S[anti]tà poiche incessantemente in ogni occasione mostrano con gratissima memoria à qualunq[ue] Sig[no]re francese, et altri, i quali passano di qua.' Ibid., f.341r.

from Pius V onwards aimed to ensure that Italian Catholics were not infected with heresies from non-Catholic countries. Italians were banned from visiting heretical states and bound to ostracise and denounce non-Catholic foreigners when they were discovered on their peninsula.<sup>49</sup> Many foreign visitors appeared before the Roman Inquisition spontaneously to renounce their heresy and so avoid persecution. When the Holy See recognised that many foreigners were not converted using repressive methods, which encouraged dissimulation, they offered foreign heretics more appealing, extra-judicial means for reconciling with the Church.<sup>50</sup> Sixtus V and his successors transformed extra-judicial institutions like penitentiaries, churches and colleges into places of Catholic catechesis, conversion and absolution for foreigners. Working alongside independent Catholic institutions, such as national churches and hospices, the papacy supported initiatives to offer moral and material support to foreign converts in Italy, and instituted its own.<sup>51</sup>

The Jesuits were given powers of absolution to facilitate these initiatives. The faculty that Sixtus V granted to Jesuit confessors at the papal penitentiary at St Peter's basilica in 1589 was typical. As penitentiaries, these fathers were already in the direct employ of the pope, working on his behalf to absolve serious sins over which only he had jurisdiction.<sup>52</sup> In the past, heresy had been counted amongst them, but Pius V had limited the penitentiaries' powers to the internal forum and declared that he did not want Jesuit penitentiaries in Rome or at the Holy House of Loreto to reconcile heretics.<sup>53</sup> At first, it might seem that Sixtus V's

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<sup>49</sup> Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography', p.440. These regulations were set out in Pius V's *In Coena Domini* of 1568. See Canepa, *La bolla in Coena Domini*.

<sup>50</sup> Fosi, 'Con cuore sincero', pp.219-24 and 'Conversion and Autobiography', pp.439-442.

<sup>51</sup> On these institutions see Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*, p.43-65 and Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero*, which focuses on initiatives and institutions supported by the papacy.

<sup>52</sup> Kirsi Salonen, 'The Curia: The Apostolic Penitentiary' in Atria Larson and Keith Sisson, *A Companion to the Medieval Papacy. Growth of an Ideology and Institution* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p.259. Matthäus Meyer, *Die Pönitentiarie Formularsammlung des Walter Murner von Strassburg. Beitrag zur Geschichte und Diplomatiek der päpstlichen Pönitentiarie im 14 Jahrhundert*, vol. 25 of *Spicilegium Friburgense* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg Schweiz, 1979), p.8.

<sup>53</sup> Brambilla, *Alle origini del Sant'Uffizio*, p.475. In 1567 the rector of the Jesuit college at the shrine expressed shock when he was warned that he could no longer delegate the privilege to other fathers at the shrine, indicating that, previously, such absolutions were deemed normal. This episode is discussed in Chapter Three on p.102. On the Holy House of Loreto and the Jesuit college there see, Lavenia, 'Miracoli e memoria. I gesuiti a Loreto nelle storie della Compagnia (sec. XVI-XVII)', in Massimo Bonafin (ed.) *Figure della memoria culturale. Tipologie, identità, personaggi, testi e segni*, (a special edition of *L'Immagine Riflessa. Testi, Società, Culture*), 22, (2013), pp. 331-348 and Paul V. Murphy "'Your Indies": The Jesuit Mission at the Santa Casa di Loreto in the Sixteenth Century' in Konrad Eisenbichler and Nicholas Terpstra (eds), *The Renaissance in the Streets, Schools and Studies: Essays in Honour of Paul F. Grendler* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2008), pp.210-31. On the college's foundation see, ARSI, *Rom. 122-I*, f.6r and Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica (hereafter, APA), *Penitenzieri minori 3*, ff.4r-5v. For the privileges granted to the Jesuits at Loreto by Julius III see ARSI, *Fond. Lauret. 1*, ff. 221-228v.



concession of 1589 was an attempt to restore some independent authority over heresy to Jesuit penitentiaries. Nonetheless, the faculty only applied to Germans who had not yet been discovered by the inquisition and who were willing to visit the inquisition to reveal their accomplices.<sup>54</sup> Rather than empowering the Jesuit penitentiaries to provide an alternative route for reconciling foreign heretics, Sixtus V limited the penitentiaries' faculty so that they attracted foreign heretics whom the papacy sought to convert, before convincing them to hand themselves in to the Holy Office. Using this faculty, Jesuits acted as papal agents, attracting, converting and absolving the foreign targets that suited the pope's pastoral and political aims, just like Possevino.

Sixtus V granted individual Jesuits faculties with these same characteristics, limiting them for use on foreigners who were willing to co-operate with the Roman Inquisition. In 1590, Sixtus gave Antonio Possevino a faculty for absolving Ultramontanes of heresy sacramentally in confession.<sup>55</sup> Like the faculty for the Jesuit penitentiaries, Sixtus limited Possevino's power to heretics from northern Europe, clearly stating that Possevino must not absolve any Portuguese and Spanish in Italy.<sup>56</sup> Possevino's faculty also complemented the work of the Catholic inquisition, requiring that penitent-heretics had first satisfied the Holy Church by denouncing 'any accomplices, if they have any, who are in Italy, or in other Catholic countries and places, so that such delinquents can be proceeded against' by the inquisitors.<sup>57</sup> Even Roberto Bellarmino could not secure autonomous jurisdiction over heresy. In 1605, Clement VIII allowed Bellarmino to absolve an English nobleman who had confessed heresy in Rome, but only after the man was persuaded to reveal himself to the Holy Office.<sup>58</sup> Bellarmino was a representative of the papacy's pastoral and judicial means of reconciling heretics. He was both an inquisitor and the first cardinal appointed for the conversion of heretics at the head of the new papal 'Congregation for those who come to the faith

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<sup>54</sup> See footnote one in this chapter.

<sup>55</sup> 'Die 21 Julii 1590 tomo 3 fol. 223. Scriptum fuit Pri Possevino Paduae concedendo ei facultatem absolventi Ultramontanos ab haeresi in sacramentaliter confessione exceptis Lusitanis et Hyspanis...' BAV, *Barb. Lat.* 1370, ff.266-7r.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> '...et avio che si sodisfavia alla S[an]ta Chiesa, cercara distiamente, si pero potra d'indurre esso penitento a manifestarsi overo a denuntiare i complice si ne havessi alcuno, che fussero in Italia, o in altre Terre, et Luoghi de Cat[toli]ci ne quali si puo procedere contro tali delinquenti.' *Ibid.*, f.267r.

<sup>58</sup> 'Hereticus nobilis Anglis existens in Urbe suadetur ad comparendu[m] in S[an]cto O[fficio] ubi secreto expedietur, et quatenus vnueret, fuit dictu[m], ut C[ardina]lis Belarminus concederet facultate, ut absolvi posset in foro conscientiae 27 April 1605.' Archiginnasio, *B1887*, f.426r.

spontaneously'.<sup>59</sup> This congregation sought to resolve the practical problems faced by foreigners who came to Rome and renounced the faith of their homeland.<sup>60</sup> The congregation's pastoral image also aimed to remedy the Church's reputation for repression, despite the fact that its members collaborated with the Roman Inquisition.<sup>61</sup> Acting as the twin pastoral and judicial face of the pope's anti-heretical strategies, Bellarmino played a role that typified the papal approach to heresy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, facilitating carefully controlled judicial and extra-judicial methods of reconciliation to target those whom the pope wanted to convert.

Sometimes the Jesuits merely acted as a direct conduit to the Holy Office, without any faculties of their own. This is evident in faculties of absolution granted to some individual inquisitors following the revocation of the Jesuits' privilege. In 1587, for example, Sixtus V gave cardinal-inquisitor Santoro permission to go to the Jesuits' English and German colleges in Rome absolving and reconciling anybody who had expressed an interest in renouncing their heresy, without the usual inquisitorial processes.<sup>62</sup> Like many national institutions in late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Rome, the Jesuits' colleges provided a hub for foreigners seeking conversion, as well as places of education and moral support.<sup>63</sup> Sometimes churches and hospitals sent foreigners to the Jesuits' colleges when they had expressed a desire to convert.<sup>64</sup> At the colleges, converts could be catechised and abjured by a Jesuit who

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<sup>59</sup> On Bellarmino's role in the inquisition see Peter Godman, *The Saint as Censor. Robert Bellarmine between Inquisition and Index* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp.xii-xiii and Ingrid Rowland, *Giordano Bruno. Philosopher / Heretic*, p.255.

<sup>60</sup> 'Cose per' avventura vi fusse qualche eretico, che dubitasse dalla sua fede, o che sentisse co[m]punto di ricevere la fede catolica se ne doverà dar[e] parte subito à sua Ecc[elen]za, la quale avrà cura di mandarlo al Cardinal deputato per la conversione degli eretici, come fù nell'anno santo di Clemente VIII il Cardinal Bellarmino.' Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma (hereafter, ASVR), *Atti della segreteria del cardinal vicario*, t.77, f.3v. This reference to Bellarmino's role appears in a letter by Cardinal Francesco Pignatelli, of 25 February 1699, 'circa li scandali et altre materie alle quali si deve provvedere nell'anno santo'. On the congregation, see Fosi, 'Fasto e decadenza degli anni santi' in Luigi Fiorani and Adriano Prosperi (eds), *Roma, la città del papa: vita civile e religiosa dal giubileo di Bonifacio VIII al giubileo di papa Wojtyla* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000) (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), p.815; 'Preparare le strade, accogliere, convertire', p.76 and Fosi, 'Roma e gli "ultramontani"', p.364.

<sup>61</sup> Fosi, 'Roma e gli "ultramontani"', p.364-5.

<sup>62</sup> 'Die 25 Novembris 1587. Ill[ustrissi]mi P[at]ri Facultatem concesserunt Ill[ustrissi]mo et R[everendissi]mo D[omino] Card[inali] S[an]tae Severinae absolvendi et reconciliandi ad gremium S[anct]ae Matris ecc[lesi]ae omnes et quoscunque scholares Anglos et Germanos Collegior[um] Anglicani et Germani de Urbe, qui Ecc[lesiastic]is censuris innodati reperiuntur ex ca[sibus] haeresis aut lectionis librorum prohibitorum, seu conversationis et familiaritatis haereticorum...' BAV, *Barb. Lat. 5195*, f.106r.

<sup>63</sup> On the English College as a place of conversion see Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography', pp.452-5. On ways that the inquisition used native preachers to win and secure conversions in national churches see, Fosi, 'Roma e gli "ultramontani"', p.389.

<sup>64</sup> Fosi, 'The Hospital as a Space of Conversion', p.157.

spoke their native tongue.<sup>65</sup> But absolutions and reconciliations were usually concluded by the Holy Office or cardinal-inquisitors offering softer options, such as the extra-judicial route offered by Santoro at the German College.

Sixtus V and his successor Clement VIII, sought to control extra-judicial means of reconciliation, including the Jesuits' absolutions. In contrast to their privilege to absolve heresy, the Jesuits' later faculties were bound by the limitations of the popes' mercy and could only be used to fulfil papal ends. The more merciful attitude towards foreign heretics evident in these faculties motivated the Canaye conversions, institutions for conversion, major reconciliations such as that of Henri of Navarre, and, later, the initiatives of seventeenth-century popes like Alexander VII.<sup>66</sup> Within their new, limited powers, the Jesuits had very little room for autonomy or agency. For the first time, the Jesuits effectively became papal agents.

### **Jesuit disobedience**

After the revocation of the privilege, many Jesuits continued to act as they had in the past. Remarkably, some of them defied the revocation of the privilege to absolve heretics autonomously, as and when they thought it necessary. Inquisitorial decrees record the reprimands of cardinal-inquisitors who had discovered Jesuits absolving heretics autonomously without denouncing them to the tribunal. Despite Diego Ximenez's claim that the Jesuits were unaware of the revocation of their privilege, declarations from Superior General Acquaviva indicate that it was highly unlikely that the authorities of the order did not know. This section of the chapter will show that Jesuits disobeyed the pope, by violating the revocation of the privilege and, therefore, papal law. These cases expand the conclusions of recent historiography, suggesting that the Jesuits were willing to ignore not only the orders of their own leaders, but also those of the leader of the entire Catholic Church. Even cases in which Jesuits violated the revocation unknowingly underline the fundamental contrast between the limits of papal policy and the character and ambition of the Jesuits' ministry, further weakening the traditional interpretation of the Society as a papal militia.<sup>67</sup> By

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<sup>65</sup> Fosi, 'Conversion and Autobiography', p.453.

<sup>66</sup> Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero*, pp.177-82; Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*, pp.43-5 and Sutherland, *Henry IV and the Politics of Religion*.

<sup>67</sup> This image, propogated by the Jesuits themselves, has been revised in recent scholarship on the Society by scholars such as Broggio, Catto, Clossey, Mostaccio, Romano, Scaramella, cited throughout this thesis. Generally, this scholarship fulfils two purposes, both called for by Simon Ditchfield in a review article of 2007: focusing on internal tensions in the Society and considering the role of the Jesuits in the broader history of early

violating the limitations placed on their activity, Jesuits demonstrated that autonomy remained key to their use of private absolutions for heresy, even if, for the Holy See, jurisdictional independence was prohibited as an obstacle to centralised systems of reconciliation.

The discussion of the privilege to absolve heresy between cardinal-inquisitor Santoro and Diego Ximenez described in the conclusion of Chapter Four indicates that the Jesuits had continued to absolve heretics five years after the revocation of their privilege to do so. Santoro's need to reveal Sixtus's brief, which he had found whilst looking for another document, suggests that he was surprised at the notion that the Jesuits were banned from absolving heretics privately – perhaps because some Jesuits had continued to do so.<sup>68</sup> Ximenez's claim to be ignorant of the brief corroborates this notion, implying that he thought the Jesuits still had the power to absolve heretics.<sup>69</sup>

But the Jesuit authorities were well aware of the revocation of the privilege. We know that Acquaviva had used a circular letter to advise Jesuit confessors of the ban in 1588. Such letters were one of the means through which Acquaviva sought to unify the activity of Jesuits across Italy, Europe and the rest of the world. In his letter of 1588, Acquaviva ordered all priests of the Society 'not to involve themselves in those [things] which regard the Inquisition during confessions'.<sup>70</sup> His letter acknowledged that some Jesuits might think that they could use their faculties to deal with inquisitorial matters, but warned them that they should not absolve anybody who knew of other heretics but had not denounced these heretics to the

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modern religion and Europe. This revision to Jesuit scholarship is part of a broader historiographical shift called for by scholars like Ditchfield and Laven who have urged historians not to project the monolithic character of the nineteenth-century Church onto the more varied and reactive Catholicism of the sixteenth century. Broggio, F. Cantù, Fabre and Romano (eds), *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio*; Catto, *La Compagnia divisa*; Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*; Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge'; 'Of missions and models'; Laven, 'Encountering the Catholic Reformation'; Mostaccio, 'A conscious ambiguity'; *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience* and Scaramella, 'I primi gesuiti e l'inquisizione Romana'.

<sup>68</sup> '...et in presenza del Sig[no]re Car.le Sarnano mi disse già sapere che fu disputato all'hora del potere assolvere ab haeresi, nel quale negotio ho trovato questo Decreto...Sixtus V. decrevit, q[ue] praesbiteri Soci[eta]tis Jesu vigore quorumlibet privilegioru[m] non possent ulterius absolvere manifestos haereticos...'

ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.319v.

<sup>69</sup> 'Tal cosa (risposi io) sino al di d'hoggi no[n] ci è stata detta.'

Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> 'Ne in confessionibus nostri se immisceant in iis quae spectant ad inquisitionem. N[ostro] P[adre] Claudio Acquaviva. N[ostro] P[adre] [Claudio Acquaviva] ha fatto avvisare tutti li nostri confessori, che nelle confessioni che assoltarano, no[n] s'impaccino in cose apparteneti all'offitio dell'Inquisitione, se bene per le nostre facultà, come sono tutti i casi compresi nel p[rim]o articolo nellla Bulla Coenae quali potranno vedere.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom. I*, f.101r.

Inquisition.<sup>71</sup> In this letter, the authorities responsible for running the Society affirmed Sixtus V's vision for the Jesuits' new limited role in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. As the leaders of a Catholic religious order, Jesuit authorities had little choice in the matter.

Numerous inquisitorial decrees indicate that Jesuits defied Clement VIII's reassertion of Sixtus's revocation and reconciled heretics without notifying the tribunal. Sometimes the inquisitors pre-empted a violation of the rules, driven, perhaps, by the Jesuits' past transgressions. In 1599, for example, Clement's inquisitors reminded Jesuit confessors of their obligation to urge the heretics whom they absolved to visit the inquisition, particularly during jubilees when they would have large numbers of penitents.<sup>72</sup> In May 1614, Pope Paul V's inquisitors notified Superior General Acquaviva similarly, warning him that Jesuits could not absolve heretics who had not first satisfied the inquisitors.<sup>73</sup> Similar cases appear in inquisitorial decrees from the next decade. In the spring of 1624, during the pontificate of Gregory XV (pope 1621-3) a certain cardinal-inquisitor Mullino wrote to the inquisitor in Bologna to tell him that a German soldier who had been imprisoned for 'formal' (that is deliberate) heresy in nearby Rimini had claimed that he had been absolved and reconciled by a Jesuit priest who claimed to have a special faculty for the purpose.<sup>74</sup> In the months that followed, the Holy Office attempted to resolve the case by reasserting Sixtus V's revocation of the privilege, reminding the Jesuits that they did 'not have the faculty of absolving from heresy in Italy' and 'warning them to abstain from it' again.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> 'Similme[n]te quelli che fussero co[n]sapevoli, che alcun'altro haveva opinioni hereticale, et no[n] l'havevero denotato all'Inquisitione, no[n] l'doverà assolvere finche le denunci.' ARSI, *Epistolae Generalium Rom. 1*, f.101r. It seems that the Superior General's warning was prompted by a case in which a Jesuit sought to absolve from necromancy or witchcraft, which Sixtus V had put under inquisitorial jurisdiction: 'Item detto N[ostro] P[adre] a 28 di Gen[naio] 1588 in Frascati disse che no[n] voleva che ci impicciassimo in assolvere incatessi come cosa di negroma[n]ti o streghe o chi tenesse tali libri and perche e cosa dell'Inquisitione. Dima[n]dato le certe superstitioni che corrono tra domiciole o altri, come di dire orationi sopra malette, far' brevi o portarli and l'intendevano tra tali. N[ostro] P[adre] rispose che no.' Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> 'Hereticis venientibus ad Urbe praesertim anno Jubilei, et petentibus per se adire Jesuitas pro absoluteione in foro Conscientiae, nec teneri adire S[anctum] O[fficium] nihil fuit concessum'. Archiginnasio, *B1887*, 630, f.421r.

<sup>73</sup> 'Jesuitae non habent facultatem absolvendi eos, qui non satisfaciunt S[ancto] O[fficio] et hoc eorum Procuratori G[e]n[er]ali notificatur 2 Maii 1614.' Ibid., f.908r.

<sup>74</sup> 'Rev[erendo] P[ad]re, Samuele Reidano Tedesco d'anni 30. Soldato già in Vercelli in Valtellina, et ultimamente nel Dominio Veneto, dice nel S[ant] Off[icio] di Rimini, [d]ove è carcerato p[er] causa d'heresia formali, che l'anno passato di Maggio fù così riconciliato, et assoluto dall'heresie in foro conscientiae dal P[ad]re Vittoriano Premoro Gesuita, q[ue]sto conferma con lui, dicendo havere havuto la facoltà da V[ost]ra R[everenza] et desiderando q[ue]sti miei N[ost]ri Ill[ust]rissimi intender com[e] passa q[ue]sto fatto; mi hanno commesso di scriverne, com'f[acc]io, à V[ost]ra R[everenza], acciò dia avvisa di quanto così è successo in q[ue]sto proposito...Roma li 30 di Marzo 1624. Come Fr[at]ello. Il Card[ina]le Mullino.' Archiginnasio, *B1866*, f.143r. On foreign soldiers in Italy see Mazur, *Conversion to Catholicism*, pp.98-115.

<sup>75</sup> '...Jesuitae non habent facultatem absolvendi eos, qui non satisfaciunt S[anctum] O[fficium] et hoc eorum Pr[ae]positi G[e]n[er]ali notificatur 2 Maii 1614 f.156, sicut habent facultatem in Italia absolvendi ab haeresi in

But inquisitorial correspondence from the 1630s indicates that penitents still continued to demand a distinct route to reconciliation, and looked to the Jesuits to administer it. In 1635, the Dominican inquisitor of Ancona, Paolo Egidio Tamerghini da Como, complained that there were very few trials in his tribunal.<sup>76</sup> According to Tamerghini, people went to the Jesuit confessors at the penitentiary at Loreto rather than visiting him to abjure their heresy and receive absolution.<sup>77</sup> Tamerghini claimed that penitents secured an absolution at the penitentiary and were 'liberated from the obligation to tell the Holy Office'.<sup>78</sup> Whilst this was just the opinion of one inquisitor, it echoes the arguments made by Jesuits themselves defending the privilege in 1585-6 when they stated that they needed to absolve some heretics privately as they refused to go to the inquisition, fearing that it would 'deny [them] absolution'.<sup>79</sup>

Tamerghini's complaint underlines the conflict between the activities of some Jesuits and other systems of absolution at the time. It is difficult to pinpoint which faculties the Jesuit penitentiaries at Loreto had in 1635, but records suggest that it is unlikely that they had received the power to absolve heretics.<sup>80</sup> Whether the Jesuits there acted legitimately or not,

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foro conscientiae 30 Aprilis 1624 f.72, et monentur abstinere iii septembris 1624 f.146' Archiginnasio, *B1887*, 630, f.908r.

<sup>76</sup> 'In q[ue]sta Inquisit[i]one ancorche abbi sotto di se molte città, terre e castelli si stà mesi e mesi che non compare alcuna depositione, ancorche vi siano delitti e gravi...' ACDF, SO, *DD-2-d*, f.413r.

<sup>77</sup> '...e mi vien significato che ciò provenga perche chi hà obligo di denunciare v[ai] à Loreto...' Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> '...e cola sono assoluti e liberati dall'obligo d'avisar il Sant'Off[ici]o...à me pare gran cosa che tanti e tanti vadino cola, e mai alc[un]o ha statto mandato da Confess[ar]si al Sant'Off[icio]...' Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> 'In Italia per tutti gl'Oltramontani è necessaria l'istesa facultà, perche non si ridurrann[o] mai come l'isperienza hà insegnato a presentassi al santo ufficio ci cosi chi li nega l'assolutione... serra la paura della salute a quell'anima.' ARSI, *Institutum 185-I*, f.314r

<sup>80</sup> During the pontificate of Sixtus V, jurisdiction over heresy at the penitentiaries seems only to have been delegated through special limited faculties, such as the faculty to absolve Germans in 1589. A list of faculties for the penitentiary at Loreto published in 1636, suggests that the penitentiaries' powers were similarly limited in the period of Tamerghini's letter. In this list, penitentiaries are banned from absolving the sin of 'heresy through an external act': 'Facultates à S[an]c[t]o D[omi]no N[ost]ro Papa Urbano VIII minoribus Penitentiariis Sacrae Domus Lauretan[ae] in litteris Apo[sto]licis datis Romae 20 Junii 1636 et ad formam constitut[i]onis Alex[and]ri Pap[ae] VII sub die 12 feb. 1659, minoribus Penitentiariis Basilic[ae] S. Petri ad Urbe concessa[re] à nobis Fabitio S[ua] R[everenda] E[xc]ellentia Card[inale] Paulutio maiore Penitentiario iuxta earundem litterarum tenorem subscript[ae] et sigillo nostro munitq[ue]. Reverendi Patres Penitentiarii à nobis deputati apud sacram Domum Lauretanam poterunt in foro conscientia[re] et per se ipsos tantum absolvere quascunque personas...à quibuscunq[ue] casibus, et sententii, excommunicationis, aliisq[ue] eccl[esiastic]is censuris etiam sedi apo[sto]lic[ae] quomodolibet in Bulla Cen[ae] reservatis, iniunctis etiam salutaribus penitentiis, et aliis de iure iniungendis. Exceptis infrascriptis...H[eretic]is per actum externum...' ARSI, *Rom. 222*, p.2. Whilst the Apostolic Penitentiary, which controlled the minor penitentiaries in Rome and Loreto, opened its archives to scholars in 2011, many records are not available for consultation because its work concerns the internal forum of the sacraments, which is bound by a sacred seal of secrecy. On the archive of the Apostolic Penitentiary see Alessandro Saraco, *La Penitenzieria Apostolica e il suo archivio* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2012).

Tarmegnini felt that their work was incompatible with the successful functioning of the inquisitorial system. The irritation that prompted Tarmegnini to write to the Holy Office indicates that, nearly fifty years after the revocation of the privilege, some inquisitors believed that Jesuits continued to undermine the ecclesiastical hierarchy within which they were now supposed to operate.

For the Jesuits, a route to reconciliation that was private and autonomous remained vital. Early members of the Society had solicited the privilege after a decade of ministry because the private absolution of heretics was the logical conclusion of both their missionary praxis and the spirituality that informed it. At the close of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits had changed neither their approach nor activities. Loyola had described the general confession used by the Society as a 'complete conversion by undertaking a devout life'.<sup>81</sup> At the end of the sixteenth century, Acquaviva reiterated this view, urging Jesuits to seek out the most serious sinners, so that they worked for those who were most needy, not faithful Catholics who required less help.<sup>82</sup> For Acquaviva, using confession to support and console the most errant, rather than the most devoted, was fundamental to the formation of every Jesuit.<sup>83</sup> Acquaviva also reiterated Loyola's view that the confessor should be merciful, rather than judgmental, stating that the souls of penitents should be considered with their 'defects, passions, propensities [and] temptations' 'not as in front of a judge...but as a father'.<sup>84</sup> Such an approach demanded flexibility and the ability to work without referring the penitent to an external judge. These requirements clashed with the centralised and, at least partially, judicial approach supported by the papacy.

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<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Moshe Sluhovskiy, 'General Confession and Self-Knowledge in Early Modern Catholicism' in Asaph Ben-Tov, Yaacov Deutsch and Tamar Herzig (eds), *Knowledge and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p.39.

<sup>82</sup> 'Desidero che nelle confessioni, nelle quali dobbiamo cercare il frutto, et consolatione de' prossimi, si applichi l'animo ad aiutar quei che sono piu bisognosi, ne si spenda tempo con poco frutto, dove potessimo con maggior gloria divine et piu utilità dell'anime piagate spendere la nostra industria.' ARSI, *Institutum* 217, f.34r.

<sup>83</sup> '...Che i confessori piglino da vero affetto à così santo ministero, et molto importante, et no[n]meno sarà p[er] molti rispetti gravi, et di molto servito del Sig[no]re che si mandino p[er] alcuni mesi in missioni à fruttificare p[er] varii luoghi, et in q[ue]sto bisogna mettere effiacia p[er]che si vincano le difficoltà... et tanto maggior sarebbe il bisogno di spicarli, che certo è compassione, et scrupolo, vedere operarii della Comp[ani]a fatti p[er] imprese così alte in aiuto dell'anime starsene ligati in un confessionale con alcune poche donne penitenti, che si confessano due ó tre volte la settimana p[er] sua devotione stando fra tanto le povere anime p[er] le castella e p[er] le ville tanto bisognose, et p[er] altra parte tanto disposta al frutto.' ARSI, *Institutum* 217, f.39v.

<sup>84</sup> Original document held at Hauptstaatsarchiv Munich, *Jesuiten* 9, f.57, quoted by Prosperi in *Tribunali della coscienza*, p.496, fns. 26 and 27.

Knowingly and unknowingly, legitimately and illegitimately, Jesuits continued to absolve heretics in a manner that conflicted with the orders of popes, cardinal-inquisitors and the administrators of local inquisitorial tribunals. The violation of the revocation of the privilege shows that some Jesuits saw a conflict between the pastoral demands of their own ministry and papal policy and that, for many, the demands of ministry were more important than papal law. As we saw in Chapter One, Jesuits like Alfonso Salmerón had absolved heretics who sought reconciliation with the Church in the 1540s, long before the concession of the privilege to absolve heresy.<sup>85</sup> These early absolutions, along with later breaches of the revocation, demonstrate that the Jesuits absolved heretics because their ministry and penitents demanded an alternative route to reconciliation, both before they had the privilege and after it was taken away. The Jesuits' violation of papal law was not born of any willful rebellion against the Holy See. Like disobedience within the order, it was driven by a desire to pursue the best possible route to fulfil the Society's divine mission. For the most part, the Jesuits complied with the changes imposed on them. Nonetheless, when the demands of papal policy competed with Jesuit ministry, some fathers listened to their own conscience, even above the orders of the Holy See.

## **Conclusion**

The private reconciliation of the Canaye household illustrated the popes' pastoral and political aims when converting foreigners in Italy. They wanted to save souls, but also to promote the Catholic cause to other potential converts and to bolster Roman interests in their converts' countries of origin. The conversion of foreigners in Italy ensured that orthodoxy was preserved at its heart whilst demonstrating that Catholic truth would triumph over Protestant error. It also demonstrated that the Holy See was a paragon of Christian benevolence, forgiving even those who could be deemed its most dangerous enemies. Clement VIII, Possevino and Canaye were all well aware of the political implications of such conversions, having played direct roles in the absolution of Henri of Navarre.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Canaye's own renunciation of Protestantism had followed the public triumph of Cardinal Jacques du Perron over the Calvinist Philippe de Mornay at the religious debates at

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<sup>85</sup> Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia*, p.281.

<sup>86</sup> Possevino had acted as a papal representative to Henri of Navarre's envoy to the pope, the Duc de Nevers. Clement VIII had, eventually, granted an absolution to Henri. Canaye was present at Henri's court from 1584 and worked closely with him until his death in 1610. Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard. Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.63. Sutherland, *Henry IV of France and the Politics of Religion*, p.507.



Fontainebleau in 1600.<sup>87</sup> Men like du Perron saw Canaye's return to Catholicism as a great boon and used the debate to launch a campaign to convert Causubon and key members of the French Royal Household.<sup>88</sup>

The dynamics of the Canaye case were replicated in Italy during the course of the seventeenth century. They were key to even grander conversions, as the papacy harnessed the impact of foreign converts with ever greater drama. This phenomenon would reach its zenith in 1654 when Alexander VII welcomed the formerly Lutheran Queen Christina of Sweden to Rome with great pomp and ceremony, having her carried through the city's Porta del Popolo on a sedan chair designed by Gianlorenzo Bernini.<sup>89</sup> The same pastoral and political aims were fulfilled by papal faculties, institutions and incentives targeted at all levels of the social hierarchy. Jesuits were given powers to facilitate these papal strategies. But they were given nothing further. No longer did the popes need a roving, autonomous force to plug gaps in the inquisitorial system all over Italy. Instead, they gave the Jesuits powers that allowed them to work as papal agents, faculties that were harmonious with the work of the inquisition and the popes' strategies to reconcile foreigners in both principle and practice.

Nonetheless, the limited papal faculties of absolution granted after 1587 conflicted with the Jesuits' pastoral aims and activities. For this reason, some Jesuits performed absolutions that violated the limits of the faculties that the popes were willing to grant them. This contrast between the position of the popes and the Jesuits had always existed. The Jesuits had solicited the privilege to absolve heretics autonomously in order to overcome obstacles in a spiritual ministry focused on conversion and mercy. But successive popes had empowered the Jesuits for practical not principled reasons, supplementing their inquisition, when and where necessary, with pastors who were orthodox and well-placed. As the Holy Office

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<sup>87</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper is suspicious of this claim, stating that the cardinal usually held debates after a well-known figure had converted privately so that their conversion could be proposed as the dramatic outcome of the discussion. Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: The Various Life of Sir Theodore de Mayerne* (London: Yale, 2006), p.123.

<sup>88</sup> Nicholas Hardy, *Criticism and Confession. The Bible in the seventeenth-century republic of letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 63-4. On the attempts of du Perron and de Thou to convert the king's sister, Duchesse de Bar and others see Christina L. Griffiths, 'Confessional Conflict and "Turkish" Tolerance? Philippe Canaye, Sieur de Fresnes, Huguenot and Catholic Convert' in Jane McKee and Randolph Vigne (eds.) *The Huguenots: France, Exile and Diaspora* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2013), pp.39-42.

<sup>89</sup> On the conversion of Queen Christina of Sweeden see Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and her circle: the transformation of a seventeenth-century philosophical libertine* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) and Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-reformation in Scandinavia: The Age of Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina of Sweden 1622-1656* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

became more efficient and the threat of religious rebellion diminished, so did the contexts in which the Jesuits could absolve heretics extra-judicially. The contrast between the Society and the Holy See was exposed when the ambitions of the Society and the needs of the papacy diverged.

The difference between how the Jesuits used their privilege of absolution and how they applied their later, limited faculties weakens the notion that the early Jesuits were papal agents in the fight against heresy. A study of the use of the privilege from the 1550s onwards shows that it gave the Jesuits the freedom to absolve heretics in a variety of circumstances, often without any papal involvement. Earlier popes may have conceded the privilege to fulfil their own ends, but its actual impact and significance went far beyond this. It was only after the revocation of the privilege, when the popes reduced the Jesuits' powers to serve their reduced needs, that the Society's legitimate activities to absolve heretics can be defined, almost entirely, by papal objectives. The more detailed chronology of the privilege and its after-life provided in this thesis thus undermines persistent characterisations of the first Jesuits as a Roman taskforce in the fight against heresy.

The Jesuits' violation of the limits placed on their powers of absolution indicates that papal attempts to centralise pastoral processes of reconciliation had limited success. This evidence bolsters criticisms of scholarship that has taken the centralising dictates of Sixtus V and his successors as a reflection of the activities and approach of those whom they sought to command.<sup>90</sup> Whilst popes from Sixtus onwards reorganised and limited extra-judicial routes of reconciliation, this did not change the ministry of Jesuits who had long granted mercy to penitent-heretics. Neither, according to inquisitor Tamerghini, did it change the expectations of the Jesuits' penitents. In rare cases the popes themselves recognised the limits of their influence, granting Jesuits and Capuchins in some areas of Savoy-Piedmont faculties that did not oblige their penitents to visit the Holy Office.<sup>91</sup> Such concessions, along with the Jesuits' continued requests for broader privileges and, in some cases, violation of papal law, exposed the contrast that had long underlay the Jesuits' view of extra-judicial reconciliations and that of the papacy. They appear to prove the Society's argument that there would always be men

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<sup>90</sup> Ditchfield, 'In Search of Local Knowledge' and 'Decentering the Catholic Reformation' and Laven, 'Encountering the Catholic-Reformation'.

<sup>91</sup> See, for example, the concession cited in footnote three of this chapter.

and women who would only convert to Catholicism if offered a private, genuinely non-inquisitorial route into the Church.



## Conclusion

The Society's privilege to absolve heresy allowed the new religious order to occupy a radically broad and flexible role in the fight against heresy in the Catholic heartland of Italy; converting religious rebels alone, as papal missionaries, and in collaboration with princes, cardinal-inquisitors and bishops. The history of the concession, negation and revocation of the privilege sees the popes' priorities and the Jesuits' central mission coalesce and then drastically diverge, as the religious emergency of the sixteenth century reached its peak and then subsided. Surprisingly, the irreconcilable difference between the Jesuits and the papacy in negotiations over the privilege was not about the amnesty that the privilege offered to potentially dangerous heretics, but the fact that the privilege allowed the Jesuits to work without supervision. This autonomy was crucial to the effectiveness of Jesuits' anti-heretical activities during the height of the post-Reformation crisis. But, as this emergency waned, the institutional drawbacks of the Jesuits' freedom became greater than its benefits for the pope. The complications introduced by the Jesuits' autonomy in matters of heresy make the popes' initial concession of it to the Society in Italy all the more remarkable. The concession of such great autonomy also significantly undermines persistent interpretations of the Jesuits as servile papal or inquisitorial agents. On the contrary, the relationship between the Jesuits, popes and inquisitors was formed through negotiation and characterised throughout by a shared pragmatism, even when their priorities conflicted. This thesis uses the history of the privilege as a prism to illuminate how the Jesuit order was shaped by these negotiations of the fluctuating pastoral and institutional aims of the Society, papacy and Roman Inquisition in Italy. Its lessons contribute to the study of other ecclesiastical institutions in Italy, as well as the Society and Catholic organisations across the globe.

First and foremost, the Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy must be defined as a mechanism that allowed the Society to fulfil its pastoral mission. Since the foundation of their order, the Jesuits used confession to encourage profound inward conversions, and sought to secure the souls of the converted by bringing them back into the institution of the Church. After encountering penitent heretics in their ministry, the Jesuits solicited the privilege to absolve heresy so that they could fulfil this fundamental spiritual and pastoral mission amongst those whom they considered the gravest and most needy sinners, in spite of the barriers ordinarily presented by Canon Law. In doing this, the Jesuits addressed the central challenge facing the Catholic Church in sixteenth-century Italy: the threat of heresy, in their view, spreading to

orthodox believers and damning them to hell. Still, as it was the Jesuits who requested the privilege, and not the Church that thrust it upon them, their own motivations, rather than the broader aims of the popes and his congregations, must be the starting point of any account of the privilege's nature and impact, at its concession and throughout its history.

Whilst the privilege was borne of the Jesuits' particular mission, it soon became a crucial node of interaction between the Society and the men who ran the major institutions of early modern Italy, namely the popes, the cardinal-inquisitors of Rome and the princes of the Italian states. These figures quickly realised that the Jesuits' effective use of the privilege transformed the Society into a force that could fight religious dissent in Italy where inquisitorial and episcopal systems could not. This was the key reason that successive popes and inquisitors granted and supported the privilege, even though the Jesuits' autonomous jurisdiction could undermine their own judicial means of countering religious dissent. Some popes, such as Julius III, preferred the empowered Jesuits to a Roman Inquisition run by cardinals whom they despised. Nonetheless, the Jesuits' intimate collaborations with the Holy Office from Julius's pontificate onwards make it clear that both he and later popes conceded the privilege principally because it empowered the Jesuits to plug gaps when and where inquisitors faced insurmountable obstacles. As long as such obstacles persisted and the threat of spreading heresy remained high, popes granted the Jesuits the privilege to absolve heretics across Italy, whenever and wherever the occasion arose, without referring to the usual ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Because of the service that it rendered to both the Church and state, the privilege soon allowed the Society to fulfil its institutional as well as pastoral aims. In sixteenth-century Italy, the Jesuits' ability to convert and reconcile heretics where nobody else could transformed them into an invaluable force to both secular and ecclesiastical patrons. Serving such powers, the Society won vital patronage at a time when they needed support to establish their order globally. The Jesuits used ecclesiastical patronage to secure further privileges and favours from the pope. And they called upon both ecclesiastical and princely supporters to win the funds and permissions necessary to found colleges and houses on the Italian peninsula and beyond. The privilege's role in building the Jesuits' network, and the Jesuits' use of this network to secure the privilege as the decades progressed, demonstrates the inextricable, essential ties between the order's spiritual and institutional objectives,

underlining the need to integrate both into any explanation of the Society's actions and development.<sup>1</sup>

But the privilege also caused controversies in the Jesuits' relationship with the papacy and other institutions. In practice, the privilege made the Jesuits an ungovernable force in the grave matter of religious disobedience. Once granted to the Superior General, the privilege put the power to make decisions about orthodoxy and heresy, and penitence and obstinance, in the Society's hands. This power was delegated within the order through a closed system that excluded any external supervision, even from the pope himself. This genuine autonomy in matters of heresy was essential to the privilege's positive impact on the Church's anti-heretical mission in mid-sixteenth-century Italy. But that very same autonomy also rendered the privilege problematic and controversial. Indeed, eventually, it was autonomy that would lead popes to revoke the privilege. Popes' willingness to delegate such extensive freedom to the Society in the first place, in spite of its inherent problems, demonstrates the importance of autonomy in the early Jesuits' role and relationship with the papacy and challenges persistent suggestions (as detailed in this dissertation) that they were papal agents in the fight to protect and promote Catholic orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

The concession of the privilege to absolve heresy represented the willingness of popes and cardinal-inquisitors to prioritise the salvation of heretics above the desire to rely on an inquisitorial system working under the authority of the pope. Popes from Julius III to Gregory XIII largely overlooked the fact that the Jesuits' privilege could undermine the investigations of their own inquisitors in order to respond effectively to the immediate religious and ecclesiastical crisis that they faced – a truly pragmatic approach. My findings in this thesis bolster recent histories of the early modern Church that highlight its reactive, compromising

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<sup>1</sup> This approach has been vital to recent revisions to Jesuit history. It was pioneered in O'Malley's *The First Jesuits*, and has borne fruit in studies on Jesuit obedience such as Mostaccio's *Early modern Jesuits between obedience and conscience* and missionary work such as Clossey's *Salvation and Globalization*.

<sup>2</sup> This interpretation is seen in explanations such as Prosperi's and Firpo's. Even O'Malley's recent explanation of the Jesuits' relationship with the pope, which emphasises that it was a partnership, states that the addition of the 'defence' of the faith to the Society's mission statement meant defending the papacy, thus tying the Society's anti-heretical activities to service of the pope. O'Malley, *The Jesuits and the popes*, p.22. The notion that the Jesuits lived up to an ideal of blind obedience, particularly in their relationship to their Superior General has been revised in scholarship by historians such as Michela Catto, Silvia Mostaccio and Antonella Romano, cited extensively throughout this thesis. O'Malley himself clarified the exact meaning of the Jesuits' vow of obedience to the papacy in *The Jesuits and the popes*, pp.16-21 and earlier in 'The Fourth Vow in Its Historical Context: A Historical Study', *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits*, 15 (January 1983), pp.1-43.

character.<sup>3</sup> But the popes' pragmatism would not always favour pastoral aims. The revocation of the privilege was equally an act of pragmatism, but one that prioritised the pope's institutional objectives over his desire to reconcile heretics at any cost. As the threat of spreading heresy subsided in Italy and the Roman Inquisition became more efficient, the benefits of the privilege diminished. At the same time, its negative impact increased. For, in the very same period, popes such as Pius V and Sixtus V focused increasingly on establishing a more centralised ecclesiastical government, with which the Jesuits' autonomy in matters of heresy completely clashed. Responding to these religious and ecclesiastical changes, the pragmatism of successive popes led them to prioritise institutional objectives over pastoral aims. As the Society's autonomous jurisdiction clashed with the popes' centralising ambitions, they restricted and then revoked the privilege, transforming the Society's role forever.

The Jesuits' motivations for soliciting the privilege were just as pragmatic as the popes' reasons for conceding it. Nonetheless, whilst the popes' priorities shifted, the Jesuits consistently preferred pastoral aims over institutional objectives. The Jesuits requested the privilege in reaction to the religious and ecclesiastical situation that they discovered during their early ministry in Italy. They wanted to be able to absolve and reconcile penitent-heretics, even when those heretics were too frightened to approach an inquisitor or bishop, and even when there was no inquisitor or bishop around to reconcile them. Throughout the privilege's lifespan and even beyond its revocation, the Jesuits remained dedicated to the notion that extra-judicial reconciliations were always essential for some penitent-heretics. When the time came, the Society did not relinquish the privilege because its priorities changed, but because its authority as a Catholic religious order relied on the cooperation of the papacy.

The history of the privilege shows that the Society and the papacy were equally pragmatic. But it also reveals that their priorities in early modern Italy were only pushed into alignment briefly by the religious crisis of the mid-sixteenth century. Indeed, the history of the privilege shows that the Society's relationship with the papacy was formed by a constant process of

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<sup>3</sup> Such revised interpretations have been proposed by scholars such as Simon Ditchfield, Irene Fosi and Mary Laven in scholarship cited throughout this thesis. The same approach has been applied directly to the history of the Jesuits by scholars such as Mostaccio, and directly to the Jesuits' role in the fight against heresy in Pierroberto Scaramella's 'I primi gesuiti e l'inquisizione Romana', though only in a summarising article which is, like earlier interpretations of the privilege, focused on their interactions with the Roman Inquisition.



negotiation, not by an abstract concept like papal obedience. The solicitation, concession and revocation of the privilege demonstrate that the precise form of the Society, and the powers that facilitated it, were shaped as the Jesuits applied their ministry to the needs of Catholic powers. As their ministry and order took form, the Jesuits negotiated with popes for the powers and freedoms that they needed in order to work more effectively. The Jesuits' flexible approach to penitents had initially responded to the Church's needs. But when their way of proceeding began to conflict with institutional plans, the popes renegotiated the Jesuits' role. The Jesuits were the inferior party in this partnership, but they were not without influence and certainly not servile in their obedience. The persistence of the Jesuits' influence and their ability to negotiate their role is evident in the privilege's afterlife in the limited faculties to absolve heretics extra-judicially granted to the Jesuits and others during the pontificates of Sixtus V and Clement VIII.

By using the history of the privilege to illuminate the nature and influence of the Society's interactions with other institutions and individuals engaged in the fight against heresy, this thesis provides the first detailed application of the *désenclavement* of Jesuit scholarship to the Society's anti-heretical activities in Italy: a central aspect of Jesuit history. The Jesuits' solicitation of the privilege may have arisen from their own particular ministry and spirituality, but it affected the most important work of many authorities, both ecclesiastical and temporal, and both locally and centrally. As such, its history traces the early Jesuits' development and activities as they intersected with and were shaped by their aims and the aims of individuals and institutions outside of the Society. This *désenclavement* of the history of the Society's anti-heretical role corrects not only early Jesuit myths about their activities and aims, but also modern interpretations of the privilege that define it exclusively according to the objectives of either the papacy or the inquisition, or solely according to the pastoral aims of the Jesuits. By describing how the Jesuits' own aims interacted with and were affected by the objectives of the individuals and institutions with which they worked, this thesis presents the first comprehensive account of the privilege's use and impact. Its findings also illuminate the nature and broader effects of the Jesuits' relationship with the institutions and individuals whom they worked with and alongside during an era that was formative for the Society and transformative for the entire Catholic Church.

In order to define the nature and impact of the privilege, this thesis has used case studies from all over the Italian peninsula to trace patterns of use and impact across various

ecclesiastical, political and religious contexts. This approach has illuminated common strategies and effects in the Jesuits' anti-heretical activities, the particulars of which varied according to the demands of each mission, case and context. In turn, this approach has revealed the diverse challenges faced by the Catholic Church hierarchy across the Italian peninsula, and underlined precisely why it needed support from the Jesuits. This methodology was essential to establish how, where and why the Jesuits used the privilege, and to what effect, and to explain why successive popes and inquisitors granted and supported the power.

My conclusions lay important groundwork for future studies, both local and global, about the institutional history of the Church and responses to religious dissent in the early modern world. A sustained, in-depth case study of the Jesuits' use of the privilege in one locale, for example, would allow us to deduce its full effects on the local authorities who policed heresy in the various states of sixteenth-century Italy. Such a study could also draw upon emerging scholarship on the changing role of the early modern episcopate, by revealing the view of bishops whose status in the fight against heresy changed dramatically over the course of the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> More broadly, such a study could be used to analyse changes to the role of territorial authorities such as bishops, in comparison to that of emerging itinerant, international groups such as the Jesuits.<sup>5</sup>

There is also scope and sources for comparative study between the Jesuits and other religious orders in matters of heresy in Italy. A comparison between the faculties of absolution granted to the Society and the order of the Capuchins in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, for example, would respond to those scholars who argue that only comparative work

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<sup>4</sup> Local case studies that have focused on the changing role of the episcopate and religious discipline include Al Kalak, *Il riformatore dimenticato*, which discusses some of the Jesuits' work in Modena and Deutsher, *Punishment and Penance: Two Phases in the History of the Bishop's Tribunal of Novara*. Fosi has considered the interactions between episcopal courts and inquisitorial tribunals in 'Conflict and Collaboration. The Inquisition in Rome and the Papal Territories (1550-1750)' in Aron-Beller and Black, *The Roman Inquisition*, pp.33-59. The essays in Jennifer DeSilva (ed.) *Episcopal Reform and Politics in Early Modern Europe* (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2012) considers the changing role of the bishop in this period across the continent. For Italy see particularly the contribution of Celeste McNamara 'Challenges to Episcopal Authority in Seventeenth-Century Padua', pp.173-193 and for conflict between bishops and inquisitors, that of Jean Pascal Gay 'The Trials that Should Have Been. The Question of Judicial Jurisdiction over French Bishops in the Seventeenth Century and the Self-Narration of the Roman Inquisition' in Jennifer Mara DeSilva (ed.), *Episcopal Reform and Politics in Early Modern Europe* (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2012), pp.194-214.

<sup>5</sup> This question has been raised in works of legal and theological history such as Brambilla's *Alle origini Sant'Uffizio* but its implications can only be fully explored in case studies.

will allow us to assess the originality, peculiarity and contribution of the Jesuits accurately.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, such a study would also test the argument, presented in this thesis, that the popes empowered the Jesuits for pragmatic rather than principled reasons, as the Capuchins had never previously heard lay confessions, let alone developed their own particular approach to the sacrament.<sup>7</sup>

Applying the conclusions of this thesis to a broader comparative study is equally promising. This thesis has shown that the popes' approaches to religious dissent were motivated by the desire to save souls, but also by their political and governmental objectives. By comparison, the Society remained focused on its salvific mission in Italy, as far as its fundamental reliance on the papacy would allow. A global comparison of the Jesuits' approaches to various forms of religious dissent could test the notion, suggested by this thesis and other recent work on global missions, that the Society's mission must be defined in soteriological terms, rather than according to the aims of a Counter-Reformation Church based in Italy.<sup>8</sup> Such a study would further the revision of Jesuit histories that consider the order within traditional narratives of the Counter-Reformation by integrating conclusions about the Jesuits' work to counter religious disobedience in Europe into research on their global missions.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, a broader, global comparison of the Jesuits' approach to religious dissent would allow us to integrate the conclusions of recent scholarship on mission, conversion and religious difference, forcing us to consider the effect of local motivations, such as the post-

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<sup>6</sup> Mostaccio, 'Codificare l'obbedienza' and 'A Conscious Ambiguity', pp.424-5 and 431-2; Franco Motta and Sabina Pavone, 'Per una storia comparative degli ordini religiosi' in *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 1 (2005), pp.13-24. Mostaccio states that the benefits of such a comparative approach are seen in Maurizio Sangalli's, 'Le congregazione religiose insegnanti Italia in età moderna: nuove acquisizioni e piste di ricerca' in *Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica*, 1 (2005), pp.25-47.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Fregona, *I frati cappuccini nel primo secolo di vita* (Padua: Edizioni messaggero, 2006), pp.60-1.

<sup>8</sup> For an introduction to such scholarship see Bronwen McShea's introduction to a special edition of the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* on 'Jesuit Missionary Perspectives and Strategies Across the Early Modern Globe', *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 1 (2014), pp.171-6 and Charles H. Parker's 'The Reformation in Global Perspective', *History Compass*, 12 (2014), pp.1-11. For examples of scholarship that compares the Jesuits' strategies in the Old and New Worlds see, Broggio, *Evangelizzare il mondo*, Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization*, McShea, 'Cultivating Empire Through Print: The Jesuit Strategy for New France and the Parisian "Relations" of 1632 to 1673' (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2011) and Jennifer Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: A Paradise Inhabited by Devils. The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), particularly chapter three. Parker has applied this approach to Protestant missions in his 'Converting souls across cultural borders: Dutch Calvinism and early modern missionary enterprises', *Journal of Global History*, 8 (2013), pp.50-71. Tadhg Ó'hAnnracháin's *Catholic Europe, 1592-1648. Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) is also vital for this shift, focusing on early modern Catholicism outside of its heartlands and underlining the varied timescale of and influences on efforts to renew Catholicism across Europe.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Broggio, *Evangelizzare il mondo*.

Reformation crisis in Italy, on the ways that religious dissent was defined and approached, both inside and outside of early modern Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The Jesuits' privilege to absolve heresy was both typical and exceptional in its time. On the one hand, it was one of a host of papal concessions that allowed the Society to fully and effectively pursue its spiritual mission in its ministry to sinners. Providing flexibility and pragmatism, the privilege reflected both the *modus operandi* of the Jesuits and the character of the institutional Church at large. Simultaneously, in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, at a time when popes, cardinals, bishops, princes and ordinary laymen feared that heresy could destroy Catholicism at its heart, the stakes of the privilege's effects were extraordinary and far exceeded those of other concessions to the Society and other religious and ecclesiastical groups. In effect, the privilege gave a brand new religious order a power that could even exceed that of the popes' own men, charged to fight what they saw as a perilous threat to Christian civilisation. Crucially, whilst the Society enjoyed the privilege, it also took the Jesuits out of the popes' control.

As popes from Pius V onwards sought to solidify a more centralised ecclesiastical government, the privilege that had been granted to address the greatest threat to the Church in the immediate aftermath of the Reformation came to embody the Church's greatest anxieties at the close of sixteenth century. As the story of a power that responded to both the everyday realities of human and institutional deficiencies and to one of the greatest crises that the Church has ever faced, the history of the privilege is much broader and more significant than a technical or chronological account of a single papal concession. The history presented in this thesis has traced the fluctuating status of the pastoral and institutional concerns that governed the direction of the Catholic Church and large sections of European society at a time when the continent was undergoing unprecedented religious, political and social change. It demonstrates that the negotiation of these aims shaped not only the Society, but also the way that the Church and state responded to the splintering of Christendom. In doing so, the history of the privilege supports and expands crucial revisions to the history of the Jesuits and of Catholicism itself, negating previous emphases on obedience, control and hierarchy by demonstrating that autonomy, flexibility and constant negotiation and compromise

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<sup>10</sup> See Tara Alberts, *Conflict and Conversion: Catholicism in Southeast Asia, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved. Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). These questions are already being broached in works on Italy such as Biasori, 'Before the Inquisitor: A Thousand Ways of Being Lutheran'.

characterised both the Society and the Church, and their efforts to protect themselves and the rest of the world at a time of radical change.

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