The Society of Jesus's Private Instructions

1 How the Society Should Present Itself When It Receives a Foundation in a New Place

The initial paragraph intriguingly functions on two levels: it serves both as a behavioral guide for the Jesuit order and as a parody, offering a satirical critique of Jesuit practices. While the formal language and structure mirror traditional religious virtues, the context suggests a potentially insincere or self-serving intent, particularly evident in phrases like "they may be more generous toward us," which imply hidden motives for humility and charity. When viewed as a parody, these instructions seem humorous, seemingly exaggerating Jesuit practices to critique or mock the order's methods and motivations. The portrayal of these directives as secretive, especially in a satirical light, injects intrigue, possibly aiming to shock or scandalize by unveiling "insider" information or ridiculing the order's perceived pretensions. The text's rhetorical strategies, including parallelism, anaphora, and vivid imagery, skillfully mimic Jesuit language while subtly subverting it through parody. This approach casts the Jesuit order in a dubious light, transforming virtuous language into a vehicle for criticism, suspicion, and humor. Thus, whether interpreted as a genuine exposé, a humorous caricature, or a combination of both, this dual-functioning excerpt stands out as a complex and multifaceted rhetorical piece, rich in both guidance and critique.

In order that it may be received and accepted by the inhabitants of the place, where it was recently established, much will be conducive to this: the explanation of the Society's goal, prescribed in the second rule of the *Regulae Societatis*: to devote oneself to the salvation of one's neighbor as well as oneself.[1] Therefore, humble services must be performed, strangers in hospices and those cast in dung must be visited, confessions of anyone must be heard, and it is necessary to go to distant places; alms must be sought and given to the poor in the sight of others, so that, edified by our deeds, they may be more generous

1 This formulation echoes the Jesuit Constitutions (Examen, c. 1, n. 2 [3]): "Finis huius Societatis est non solum saluti et perfectioni propriarum animarum cum divina gratia vacare, sed cum eadem impense in salutem et perfectionem proximorum incumbere," which was indeed reproduced in the second paragraph of the Rules. On the double goal of the Society, see François Courel, "La fin unique de la Compagnie de Jésus," *AHSI* 35 (1966): 186–211, https://archive.org/details/ahsi-1966/page/1/mode/1up (accessed September 13, 2024).

toward us. All should practice external modesty so that they may edify others, or those offending among us may be dismissed for this reason.

11 What Must Be Done to Gain the Intimate Familiarity of Rulers and Magnates

The chapter outlines intricate strategies for the Jesuits to insinuate themselves into the inner circles of rulers and magnates, weaving in the importance of the term nostri. *This Latin word, translating to "our own" or "ours," emphasizes the cohesive, secretive, and exclusive nature of the Jesuit order, underscoring an us-versus-them mentality and binding members of the Society together in a unified cause. The detailed strategies include interpreting rulers' actions favorably, supporting their desires* (*even controversial ones like waging war*)*, engaging in manipulative diplomacy, gifting, proposing marriages, and handling reserved religious matters such as absolving sins and granting dispensations. The text also alludes to the Jesuits' role as confessors, their use of probabilism, and their cultural engagements like theatrical performances and rhetorical compositions to win favor. By employing terms like* nostri *and* insinuare *and crafting the content to resonate with Jesuit internal practices, the author creates an ominous and conspiratorial tone. The systematic way the strategies are laid out and the sense of insidious infiltration paint the Jesuits as master manipulators, working behind the scenes to control and influence the powerful by any means necessary, reflecting a cynical and intensely anti-Jesuit portrayal of the Society.*

Considerable efforts are essential for this; experience has shown that rulers are positively influenced by spiritual and ecclesiastical persons when their offensive deeds are not harshly criticized but interpreted more favorably.[2] This is

2 In the context of chapter 2, it is pertinent to refer to a passage from Ignatius of Loyola's 1541 letter to his early Jesuit companions Paschase Broët (*c.*1500–62) and Alfonso Salmerón (1515–85). Broët, a French Jesuit, and Salmerón, a Spanish Jesuit and biblical scholar, were among the first companions of Ignatius and played significant roles in the formative years of the Society of Jesus. Their contributions were vital in establishing the Jesuit order's foundational principles and practices. This excerpt sheds light on the genuine Jesuit practice of *accomodatio* in interactions with influential figures, a theme that the *Monita privata* later cleverly exaggerates. Loyola advised: "When interacting with individuals of stature or influence, to attract their goodwill for the greater glory of God our Lord, it is essential to first understand and then adapt to their temperaments. For those with a spirited and quick-witted disposition, respond in kind with lively and cheerful discussions on virtuous and holy subjects, avoiding a demeanor that is too solemn or somber. Conversely, if they are more reserved, deliberate, and serious in their communication, mirror these traits as such behavior will resonate

evident in marriages arranged by rulers with their relatives, which face great difficulty due to public opinion condemning such unions. Thus, when rulers pursue these and other ambitions, they should be encouraged, believing they will achieve their desires, and reasons that enhance their desires should be provided, namely that such a marriage will lead to a greater bond and the glory of God.[3] When a prince undertakes actions not universally favored, like waging war, his will must be supported, and he should be encouraged to be resolute.[4] Influential individuals in the kingdom should be won over to support the ruler's will,[5] but specifics should be avoided to prevent direct association with us; however, if challenged, general warnings that seem to endorse our position can be cited. Undertaking missions on matters pleasing to rulers helps in gaining their familiarity. By small gifts, we can win over the inner circle of the rulers, ensuring our members are well informed about the prince's character, preferences, and ways to gain his favor, without violating the rights of virtue and conscience.[6] Opportunities should be taken to endear ourselves to magnates and rulers.

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with them. This approach aligns with the principle of 'I became all things to all men' [1 Cor. 9:22]," https://library.georgetown.edu/woodstock/ignatius-letters/letter1#letter (accessed September 15, 2024).

3 The phrase "maioris vinculi et gloriae Dei" in the text, translating to "of a greater bond and the glory of God," may allude to the Jesuit motto "Ad maiorem Dei gloriam" (For the greater glory of God). This potential reference could either align the described actions with the Jesuits' stated mission or, given the apparently critical tone of the document, serve as a cynical twist on the motto to critique the methods and intentions of the Society.

4 The repeated use of the verb "monere" (to warn or advise) in the text and the text's title, *Monita privata*, emphasizes the advisory or cautionary nature of the content. Beyond aligning with the *Monita*'s critical tone, this choice of wording also resonates with the Jesuit lingo, reflecting a specific aspect of their internal governance, where "monere" and "monita" signify instructions or admonitions from superiors to subordinates. It illustrates the hierarchical and disciplined nature of the Society, acting with a singular purpose, and serves to underscore the portrayal of the Jesuits in this anti-Jesuit document as both manipulative and rigorously organized in pursuing their goals.

5 The Latin verb "insinuent" (from "insinuo") in this context carries several layers of meaning and rhetorical weight. Literally, it implies a method of subtle infiltration or indirect influence, suggesting that the Jesuits wind their way into the minds of influential figures. Metaphorically, it resonates with common anti-Jesuit portrayals of the order as secretive, manipulative, and sly. Historically, this choice of wording aligns with existing prejudices and suspicions of Jesuit political intrigue and hidden agendas. Additionally, if the text is imitating the internal language of the Jesuits, the term may be an attempt to present an insider's unflattering view of the Society's methods. This multifaceted usage serves to reinforce the text's overall anti-Jesuit message, crafting a specific and critical image of the Jesuits that resonates with broader societal fears and criticisms at the time.

6 The inclusion of the phrase "however, preserving the right of virtue and conscience" provides a multifaceted perspective on the portrayal of the Jesuits within this text. While, on the one hand, it might be seen as a concession to acknowledge the Jesuit emphasis on moral

If rulers are unmarried, suitable virgins affiliated with ours and their families should be suggested as potential wives. These women should be described in flattering terms, as the rulers would themselves prefer. This approach can transform strangers into allies through these marital connections, a strategy proven effective through the House of Austria in the realms of Poland, France, and other duchies and territories.[7] To maintain the favor of these women, a deep love for our Society should be instilled in them through various means, including through maids devoted to us. In this way, they will reveal the secrets of their mistresses and other information essential to us.

In guiding the consciences of magnates, favor authors who advocate for a more lenient conscience over the stricter views of monks. This will ensure magnates follow our guidance and rely on our advice. To win over rulers, magnates, and prelates, share with them the merits of our order, such as extensive powers to absolve from reserved sins and censures and to grant dispensations regarding fasting, debt reconciliation, marriage impediments, and other vows. Invite them to our schools, welcome them with poetry, and dedicate theses to them.[8] If appropriate, they should be treated well at meals and, if their status warrants, greeted in various languages by ours. Help settle disputes between magnates. Should a ruler be subservient to us, promise favor, and confer honors through our influence to others who are initially alien to us. Ultimately, ensure

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decision-making, including their significant contributions to the discussions on conscience, probabilism, and sacramental confession, it also serves as a nuanced rhetorical device. By juxtaposing the idea of preserving virtue and conscience with the manipulative tactics described elsewhere in the document, the author may be highlighting a perceived contrast or hypocrisy within the Jesuit order's methods. This phrase reflects both an understanding of real aspects of Jesuit philosophy and a critical portrayal aimed at questioning the sincerity or integrity of these principles in practice.

7 The original text's reference to "through the house of Austria in the realms of Poland, France, and other duchies and territories" serves as a clue pointing toward the geographical focus of the document. Mentioning the House of Austria and its influence in places like Poland and France indicates a focus on central European power dynamics, specifically during the reigns of historical figures like Sigismund III of Poland (1566–1632, r.1587–1632) and Louis XIII of France (1601–43, r.1610–43). For a more detailed geopolitical context, see the introduction.

8 These lines allude to the Jesuits' significant influence as spiritual advisors, employing probabilism to guide moral decisions. Probabilism allowed for flexibility in moral judgments and was often associated with Jesuit moral theology. The Jesuits were able to grant dispensations and absolve "casus reservati"— particularly grave sins reserved for absolution by higher church authorities. The use of probabilism in conjunction with these powers depicts the Jesuits as sophisticated and flexible moral guides, though within the context of this anti-Jesuit document, these descriptions may be employed to depict their influence as manipulative and overreaching, wielding their spiritual authority to control and further their own agenda. More on reserved cases in chapter XIV. See Robert Aleksander Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits: The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).

that rulers, great lords, and prelates are so devoted to the Society that they act on its behalf against their own kin and do not support anyone dismissed from the Society. Promised honors should be conveyed to these leaders, and upon their conferment, they should be celebrated with verses written by our students upon their first visit to the jurisdiction.[9]

III What Will the Lords Care for Us When They Are Destitute of Money but Have Much Authority in the Republic and Can Benefit Us in Other Ways[10]

Chapter III delineates the strategies the Society of Jesus purportedly employed to engage with and influence secular lords, bishops, and rulers across various regions, particularly in German-speaking lands and Poland. The chapter's rhetoric is multifaceted, intricately detailing the Jesuits' political maneuvering, including their methods of acquiring property, managing colleges and churches, and the politics of canonization. It provides an insight into how they might negotiate the religious landscape of Catholic, heretical, and schismatic territories. The

9 The reference to greeting with "little books of poems by students" at the first entrance of the place where jurisdiction will be exercised is an allusion to the Jesuit tradition of using theater, rhetorical arts, and literary compositions as means of engaging with the political and social elite. These cultural productions, often prepared by students in Jesuit colleges, were not only part of the educational curriculum but also served diplomatic and ceremonial purposes. They were employed to honor and cultivate relationships with sponsors, patrons, and rulers in the territories where the Jesuits operated. Within the context of this text, this practice may be portrayed as another subtle strategy to win influence and favor with those in power. Cf. *Ratio studiorum* [404]: "Affigantur carmina scholae parietibus alterna. Carmina affinis fere mensibus ad aliquem celebriorem diem exornandum; vel magistratus promulgandos, vel alia quapiam occasione, selectissima quaeque a discipulis descripta. Imo etiam pro regionum more aliquid prosae brevioris; quales sunt inscriptiones, ut clypeorum, templorum, sepulcrorum, hortorum, statuarum; quales descriptiones, ut urbis, portus, exercitus; quales narrationes, ut rei gestae ab aliquo divorum, additis interdum, non tamen sine lectoris permissu, picturis, quae emblemati, vel argumento proposito respondeant" (Poems are to be affixed alternately to the walls of the school. Poems related to the celebration of some notable day every few months; whether for announcing magistrates or for any other occasion, the most select ones written by the students. Indeed, even according to the custom of the regions, some shorter prose works; such as inscriptions, like those of shields, temples, tombs, gardens, statues; such as descriptions, like that of a city, harbor, army; such as narratives, like the deeds performed by one of the saints, sometimes adding, but not without the reader's permission, pictures, which correspond to the emblem or the proposed theme).

10 The term "republic" is being used in this text as in "state." There is no discussion of political systems here.

author depicts the Jesuits as both manipulative and adaptable, able to strategically align themselves with various power structures while guarding against competition from other religious orders and secular clergy. Through specific examples and nuanced descriptions, the chapter constructs an image of the Society as a power-hungry and cunning order, unafraid to exploit ecclesiastical and secular systems to further its influence. The tone is one of both admiration for the Jesuits' effectiveness and a warning about their perceived machinations.

Such lords, if they are secular, should be courted for their goodwill and assistance against our adversaries: favor for legal disputes, authority, and power for the purchase of villages, houses, gardens, and stone structures for constructing dwellings for our Society, especially in those cities that do not want to have ours.[11] These same lords should be conciliated to mitigate, indeed to restrain, the fury of lesser men who cooperate with us in no way.

Regarding spiritual figures, such as bishops and archbishops, the demands must be tailored according to the diversity of nations and what the opportunity of the matter will show. In certain regions, it must be ensured that prelates and parish priests who are subordinate to them respect ours and do not obstruct our ministries; in other regions, more is needed. For in Germany and Poland, bishops hold significant authority,[12] and with little effort and in collaboration with the ruler, they can grant us monasteries, parishes, provostships,[13]

11 Cf. the anti-Jesuit text from the time of the Zebrzydowski Rokosz, Consilium: "Primum operam dant, ut in primariis regni aut provinciae urbibus seminaria, collegia, templa quam plurima, tanquam instantis messis suae horrea, vel occupent vel exstruant" (They first endeavor to occupy or build as many seminaries, colleges, and temples as possible in the principal cities of the kingdom or province as if they were warehouses for their immediate harvest). Jan Czubek, ed., *Pisma polityczne z czasów rokoszu Zebrzydowskiego 1606–1608*, 3 vosl. (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1918), 3:27.

12 The reference to the particular authority of bishops in Germany and Poland may offer insight into the author's awareness of these regions' ecclesiastical and political landscape. It is worth noting that several bishops were related by blood to the Jesuits in this period. For example, Stanisław Roz[d]ražewski (*c.*1540–1619) was an older brother of Hieronim (1546–1600), the bishop of Kujawy and secretary to Kings Sigismund Augustus (1520–72, r.1548–72) and Stephen Báthory (1533–86, r.1576–86). He was buried in the Jesuit Il Gesù Church in Rome. Melchior Grodziecki (1584–1619) was a paternal nephew of Jan (d.1574), the bishop of Olomouc. Mikołaj Wołucki (d.1605) was likely a paternal nephew of Paweł (*c.*1531–1599), bishop of Łuck, etc.

13 In an ecclesiastical context, "praepositurae" refers to positions or offices of prelates who are in charge of certain jurisdictions within the church. The term is often translated as "provostships" or "prepositures," and it usually denotes a leadership or administrative role, such as the head of a chapter of canons in a cathedral or a collegiate church. These

and the foundations of altars,[14] despite any tension that may arise from secular priests.[15]

What we can achieve in those places where Catholics are mixed with heretics and schismatics[16] should be demonstrated to the bishops, and they will be shown that they will bear great fruit in this way,[17] something they cannot

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roles can include both pastoral and administrative duties, depending on the specific traditions and canon law of the ecclesiastical institution they are part of.

14 "Fundationes altarium," referring to the "foundations of altars," denotes the historical practice of establishing and endowing altars within the church. This tradition involved not just the construction of the physical altar but also the allocation of resources for its perpetual care and the performance of liturgical services, particularly the celebration of Mass. Such endowments were typically acts of devotion, executed by affluent individuals or families seeking spiritual merit, commemoration, or the ongoing remembrance in prayers and Masses for the repose of their souls. This custom was an integral aspect of ecclesiastical and spiritual life in medieval and early modern Christian Europe, illustrating the interplay between religious devotion and social practices of the time. This Jesuit "prerogative" is criticized in "Prosa in laudem Iesuitarum," published below.

15 In the late sixteenth century, the Jesuits' influence and growth were facilitated by the support of various Catholic authorities, including bishops and secular rulers. For example, in Munich, Duke William V of Bavaria (1548–1626, r.1579–97) invited the Jesuits to establish a college in 1559, and the Jesuits were granted control over several parishes in the region. Similarly, the foundation of the English College in Rome in 1579 by Pope Gregory XIII (1502–85, r.1572–85) was part of the Counter-Reformation efforts to train English priests, with the Jesuits playing a crucial role in its administration. These instances exemplify the collaboration between the Jesuits, bishops, and secular rulers in acquiring ecclesiastical properties, which sometimes led to tensions with secular clergy who saw the Jesuits' growing influence as a threat.

16 In the context of the *Monita*, the terms "heretics" and "schismatics" refer to distinct groups within Christian denominational divides, as understood by the Catholic Church during the period. Heretics (Protestants like Lutherans, Calvinists, or Polish/Czech Brethren) are individuals or groups who, according to Catholic doctrine, hold and propagate beliefs that are deemed to be in error or contrary to the essential teachings of the church. This often involved doctrinal disagreements on fundamental aspects of faith, such as the nature of the Trinity or the role of sacraments. On the other hand, schismatics (like Orthodox Christians) are those who, while maintaining core doctrinal beliefs of Christianity, have broken away from the administrative and ecclesiastical authority of the Catholic Church. The primary issue in schism is not doctrinal error but the refusal to submit to the pope's authority or to remain in communion with members of the church who acknowledge that authority. The distinction is significant in the Jesuit strategy described in the *Monita*, as it implies a tailored approach to reintegration of these groups into the fold of the Catholic Church, with heretics needing doctrinal correction and schismatics requiring reconciliation with the church's authority.

17 The statement reflects a historical reality in which bishops often invited the Society of Jesus to their dioceses, recognizing the Jesuits' efforts in combating heresy and promoting the Catholic faith. Notably, Cardinal Stanislaus Hozjusz (Hosius [1504–79]), a prominent Polish bishop, invited the Jesuits to the diocese of Warmia in Poland and sponsored the

expect from secular priests and monks except for singing.[18] Their zeal should be praised and the perpetual memory of the deed inculcated. Such foundations that the Society will succeed in, in place of secular priests, will be easily obtained by those bishops who confess to ours, depend on our direction, and are in expectation of higher levels of a more opulent bishopric through our means.[19]

Ours must work with both bishops and rulers to ensure that, when founding our colleges next to parish churches, only ours have the right to appoint the perpetual vicar responsible for the care of souls; the current superior of the place will act as the parish priest, and the entire administration of the church

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foundation of their first college in Braniewo (Braunsberg) in 1565. Other examples include the invitation extended to the Jesuits by the archbishop of Milan, Charles Borromeo (1538–84), and the support offered by the Spanish bishops during the establishment of Jesuit colleges and missions. These invitations were typically in response to the perceived threat of Protestantism or other challenges to Catholic orthodoxy, and the Jesuits were seen as valuable allies in these religious battlegrounds.

18 The comparison here reflects both a practical and rhetorical distinction between the Jesuits and other religious orders or secular clergy. On the one hand, the Jesuits were known for their adaptability, mobility, and focus on missionary and educational work rather than monastic practices like choir singing. Their lack of obligation to the common monastic choir allowed them more freedom to travel and engage in apostolic activities. On the other hand, this statement might also be seen as subtly elevating the Jesuits' role by contrasting their active and diverse ministry with what could be portrayed as the more limited and ritualistic contributions of other clergy. Whether this reflects an actual disdain for other religious orders or merely emphasizes the Jesuits' distinctiveness would depend on the broader context and intent of the author. For further insights into Jesuit distinctiveness, see Robert Aleksander Maryks, ed., *Exploring Jesuit Distinctiveness: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ways of Proceeding within the Society of Jesus*, Jesuit Studies 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004313354 (accessed September 15, 2024).

19 The relationship between Jesuits and bishops often extended beyond mere spiritual guidance to deeper collaboration in pastoral and administrative matters. This connection can be traced to figures such as Hosius, mentioned above; Adam Konarski (1526–74), bishop of Poznań, founder of the Jesuit college in Poznań (1572); Walerian Protasewicz (*c*.1505–79), bishop of Vilnius, founder of the Jesuit college in Vilnius (1570), transformed into the Academy of Vilnius in 1579 (Academia et Universitas Vilnensis Societatis Jesu), and Hieronim Rozdrażewski (*c*.1546–1600), bishop of Kujawy, whose brother, Stanisław (1540–1619), was the first rector of the Jesuit college in Pułtusk (1566–72). In France, Cardinal François de La Rochefoucauld (1558–1645), bishop of Senlis, was known to be close to the Jesuits and sought their counsel. In the Spanish territories, Archbishop Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero (1546–1622; in office 1607–22) of Lima was instrumental in promoting Jesuit missions in South America. Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606), the Jesuit visitor to the East Indies, worked closely with bishops to organize and expand Jesuit missions in Asia. These collaborative relationships demonstrate the intricate and multifaceted ways in which the Jesuits interacted with and influenced the ecclesiastical hierarchy of their time.

will fall under ours. The construction of colleges will be overseen in locations where academics oppose us or where Catholic or heretical citizens prohibit us from foundations in their cities.[20] They will also arrange for preaching pulpits[21] in the principal churches of the more distinguished cities.[22] When the matter of beatifying or canonizing one of ours arises,[23] the case should

20 This passage reflects the Jesuits' strategic efforts to secure university privileges for their colleges in the face of opposition from established academic institutions and various religious groups. In Polish cities like Kraków and Poznań, these attempts were met with significant resistance. Some scholars place the *Monita* exactly within the context of the Poznań dispute. In Kraków, despite establishing a college, they were unable to obtain university privileges, primarily due to opposition from the Kraków University. This contrasted with their success in Vilnius, where they received such privileges from King Stephen Báthory. Paul F. Grendler's work provides an in-depth analysis of these dynamics, illustrating the complex interplay of academic, religious, and political factors influencing the Jesuits' expansion in Europe during this period. See Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe, 1548–1773*, Brill Research Perspectives in Jesuit Studies 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

21 The Latin term "cathedra concionatoria" literally translates to "preaching chair." In ecclesiastical terms, it refers to the pulpit or the chair from which sermons are delivered within a church. The cathedra denotes a seat of authority and is often used to signify the chair or throne of a bishop in his cathedral church, symbolizing his teaching authority—especially when it comes to preaching. However, "cathedra concionatoria" specifically emphasizes the function related to preaching or delivering homilies and sermons.

22 This passage reflects the Jesuits' desire to maintain control over the administration of their colleges and associated parishes and their strategy in navigating opposition. By ensuring that only Jesuits had the right to appoint the perpetual vicar, a priest responsible for the ongoing spiritual care of a parish in the absence of the regular parish priest, the Society sought to exercise more direct influence over the spiritual and temporal care of the souls in their charge. Moreover, the mention of overseeing the construction of colleges and arranging for preaching pulpits indicates their proactive approach in seeking influence within the cities, even in the face of opposition from scholars, Catholics, or heretical citizens. Such connections enabled the Jesuits to navigate the complex ecclesiastical and political landscapes of the time, securing support and autonomy for their educational and ministerial endeavors.

23 The process of beatification and canonization within the Catholic Church involved intricate negotiations and often required the support of influential figures. By 1612, the Society had begun the process for several of its members. Ignatius of Loyola (*c.*1491–1556) was beatified on July 27, 1609 by Pope Paul V (1550–1621, r.1605–21). Additionally, Stanisław Kostka (1550–68) was beatified on August 19, 1605, and Luigi (Aloysius) Gonzaga (1568–91) was beatified on October 19, 1605, also by Pope Paul V. The canonization of these figures (Ignatius in 1622, Kostka and Gonzaga in 1726) and many others involved building support from bishops, rulers, and other powerful individuals, as well as navigating the political and religious landscape of the time. These efforts underscore the importance that the Society of Jesus placed on officially recognizing its members' sanctity and reflect the political and ecclesiastical maneuvering often associated with such endeavors. The beatification of these figures before 1612, and the absence of any canonized Jesuit saints at the time of this text's publication, may have given additional weight

be promoted with the Apostolic See through magnates' letters.[24] If any of these nobles are dispatched on legations, care should be taken not to let them become acquainted with other religious orders that have agreements with us, lest they transfer their affections to them and introduce them into the provinces where we are prominent.[25]

Therefore, if prominent men pass through provinces where ours are, they should be received at the colleges and treated with religious modesty.[26]

IV What Should Be Recommended to Preachers and Confessors of Rulers and Magnates

Chapter IV elaborates on a fictionalized strategy that the Jesuits use in directing and controlling the nobility. The text is crafted with careful rhetoric to present the Jesuits as manipulative and duplicitous, emphasizing their supposed focus on political governance under the guise of spiritual direction. Using specific

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to the issue and made it a noteworthy point of discussion or contention. For more on this topic, see *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, special issues: "Jesuits and Sanctity," 9, no. 1 (2022), https://brill.com/view/journals/jjs/9/1/jjs.9.issue-1.xml; and "How to Be a Jesuit Saint," 9, no. 3 (2022), https://brill.com/view/journals/jjs/9/3/jjs.9.issue-3.xml (accessed October 31, 2024).

24 The usage of "magnates" within the context of *Monita privata* may suggest the Central-East European origins of the text's author. In the early modern period, "magnates" specifically referred to the high aristocracy in regions such as Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia, denoting individuals with substantial political and social sway. This term's presence in the document aligns with the vernacular of that era and region, indicating that the author was likely familiar with or part of the sociopolitical landscape of Central-East Europe, where the nobility class wielded enormous influence. For the Jesuits, maintaining favorable relationships with these magnates would have been crucial for establishing and securing their presence and privileges within these territories.

25 This convoluted passage addresses the strategic concern within the Society of Jesus regarding the potential shift of noble patrons' support toward other religious orders. It advises caution to prevent influential figures, especially those engaged in diplomatic endeavors, from forming attachments with other religious groups that might have some form of alliance or "symbolize"(from medieval Latin "symbolizare," that is, "to agree") with the Jesuits. The aim is to safeguard the Jesuits' preeminent position in certain regions by limiting the influence of competing orders, such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, whose growing influence could disrupt Jesuit dominance. A loss of noble support would have posed a significant threat to the Jesuits' ability to secure resources and protect their expanding educational and spiritual missions.

26 This section reflects the Jesuits' careful balancing act of aligning with influential nobles while simultaneously guarding against potential competition from other religious orders, such as the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these orders often competed for patronage, influence, and territorial expansion.

verbs such as "inculcate" and employing vivid metaphorical expressions like not straying "even a fingernail's breadth," the author builds an image of the Jesuits as insidious influencers. The mention of accepting modest gifts and living in humble chambers criticizes perceived Jesuit hypocrisy and laxism. The chapter's language, filled with insinuations and allusions, paints the Jesuits as scheming political operators, exploiting their roles as confessors and advisors to rulers for their gain.

In order that the direction of kings, princes, and illustrious men be rightly instituted through ours, they must direct them in every way so that their direction seems to aim at the conscience the rulers entrust to them.[27] However, this direction should not aim immediately but gradually at external political governance.[28] Therefore, they must often impress upon the

27 The Latin expression "conscientiam concredere" encapsulates a key aspect of the Jesuit role as spiritual directors, particularly in their relationship with rulers and other high-ranking individuals. Entrusting one's conscience to a Jesuit confessor was not merely a matter of private spiritual guidance; it had profound political and social implications, reflecting the Jesuits' expertise in moral theology and casuistry. This practice of guiding the conscience could influence decisions with significant consequences for governance and public policy. The anti-Jesuit sentiment expressed in this text may reflect a reaction to this influence, seen as an undue intrusion into secular affairs. For a deeper exploration of this theme, see the special issue of the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017), https://brill.com/view/journals/jjs/4/2/jjs.4.issue-2.xml (accessed September 16, 2024).

28 The Jesuits' Fifth General Congregation (1592/93) in its decrees 47 and 48 explicitly articulated the Jesuit commitment to abstain from secular and political affairs. This decree underscored the Society's foundational purpose of spreading faith and harvesting souls through spiritual means, emphasizing that involvement in secular politics and state governance was contrary to their religious mission. Recognizing the inherent risks of such entanglements, the decree strictly forbade Jesuits from engaging in public or political matters of princes and states. This policy was intended to preserve the purity of their spiritual objectives and to avoid the distractions and conflicts that could arise from political involvement. This stance was not only a reaffirmation of their religious dedication but also a strategic measure to maintain the Society's focus and integrity in a period marked by complex political and religious dynamics. Despite the decree's clear directives, the Society of Jesus found its principles challenging to implement in practice. Even post-decree, several Jesuits remained prominent as political advisors and participants in the affairs of the courts where they were appointed, deviating from the strict non-involvement in secular matters as mandated by their own regulations. Subsequently, the Society's many authors also addressed political matters directly. One notably contentious issue was the debate on tyrannicide, which sparked some of the most severe criticisms against the Jesuits. See John Padberg, ed., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations; A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees* (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 12–13, 200–201. See also Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. 53–63; Robert Bireley, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War: Kings, Courts, and Confessors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

rulers[29] that the distribution of goods and dignities in the republic must be aligned with justice and that God is gravely offended if the rulers sin against it. However, they should declare that they do not wish to interfere in any administration of the republic and that they speak of these matters reluctantly, in accordance with their duty.[30]

Once the rulers have grasped this, let it be explained to them what virtues the men to be appointed to the dignities of the republic must possess. The recommendations for dignities should be drawn from friends of our Society, as well as those individuals whose promotion would benefit the Society. They should not name them to the ruler themselves but through the intimate friends of our Society and of the ruler. Thus, confessors and preachers should be informed by ours, who are men of virtue, power, wealth, and generosity toward us in every part of that dominion. They should keep the names of these individuals with themselves and introduce them to the ruler, skillfully praising them. This way, those whme confessors and preachers have previously commended may find promotion by the rulers more accessible when the opportunity arises.

Confessors and preachers of rulers should remember to treat them gently and in no way offend them in sermons or private conversations.[31] They should moderately accept confections and distilled waters, be content with little money for private use, and, while in the palaces, should retire to humbler

29 The verb "inculcare" used in this context carries a weighty connotation, emphasizing the persuasive influence that Jesuit confessors and counselors could exert. Translated as "to impress upon" or "to inculcate," it implies a persistent and determined effort to instill principles, values, or beliefs. This word reflects not only the Jesuits' approach to spiritual direction but also their pedagogical methods, deeply rooted in their broader mission of education and moral guidance. In their role as spiritual directors, Jesuits sought to guide the moral and ethical decisions of those they counseled, including monarchs and high-ranking officials. The use of "inculcare" here suggests, particularly to critics of the Jesuits, an overzealous or manipulative approach, reflecting a broader mistrust of the Jesuit order's influence in both religious and political governance.

30 The rhetorical device being employed here could be seen as irony, where the writer presents the Jesuits as apparently caring about religious matters (justice, conscience, sin) while subtly insinuating their underlying political ambition and manipulation. It is a tool to criticize and cast doubt on the sincerity and authenticity of the Jesuits' intentions. In the broader context of anti-Jesuit writings, this technique would be consistent with efforts to portray the order as Machiavellian, using religion as a cover for worldly ambitions. It is a way of undermining the integrity of the Jesuits by hinting at a hidden, nefarious agenda beneath the surface of pious words and deeds.

31 The reference to gentle treatment may allude to accusations of Jesuit laxism, a criticism that Jesuits were overly lenient in their moral theology, particularly in the confessional. This portrayal fits into a broader anti-Jesuit narrative that sought to depict the Society as manipulative and self-serving. Blaise Pascal's *Provincial Letters* (1656–57) famously criticized Jesuit moral theology, including perceived laxism, and could be a contextual touchstone for this allusion.

chambers.[32] They should wisely inculcate to their rulers not to stray even a fingernail's breadth from the counsel of spiritual fathers.[33]

They should ensure to be informed as soon as possible of the death of officials of the republic and act promptly about replacements. To remove themselves from suspicion of external governance, they should not promote friends' causes before rulers themselves but rather entrust them to others.

v What Is to Be Done with Religious Who, While Agreeing with Us in Many Occupations,[34] Detract from Us a Lot

Chapter v outlines a strategic approach for the Jesuits to handle potential competition from other religious orders, which are not named explicitly, enhancing the universal nature of the threat they perceived. The language is carefully crafted to depict the Jesuits as the embodiment of religious excellence, emphasizing their supremacy in all aspects except specific monastic practices like chanting and austere living. Without referring to specific historical competitions, the text touches on the competitive nature of educational control. Various rhetorical devices, including amplification and exaggeration, are employed to underscore the Jesuits' superiority and subtly create fear to deter potential rivals. These devices manipulate perceptions by portraying the Jesuits as divinely sanctioned, diligent, and deserving of their prominent role, while belittling potential competitors. The chapter unveils a methodical and ambitious approach to maintaining influence,

32 This passage alludes to the expectations of modesty and humility traditionally associated with the religious but possibly also to criticisms against Jesuits, particularly for indulging in luxury and excessive comfort. The reference to "confections and distilled waters" may symbolize worldly temptations and luxuries, while "retiring to humbler chambers" contrasts the ostentation of some Jesuits with the ideal of simplicity and poverty.

33 There may be an underlying insinuation here. The advice might be interpreted as an exaggerated portrayal of the Jesuit approach, suggesting they manipulate those they counsel. The image of not straying "even a fingernail's breadth" can be seen as hyperbolic, reflecting an accusatory tone that the Jesuits demand unquestioning obedience and exercise undue influence over the powerful.

34 The Latin text uses the term "symbolizare," which already appeared in chapter III. Derived from medieval Latin, *symbolizare* means "to agree" or "to come to a shared understanding." In the context of the *Monita privata*, it is used to convey the idea of alignment or cooperation, particularly in matters where other religious orders appear to agree or overlap with the Jesuits in terms of occupation or influence. The repetition of this term across multiple chapters emphasizes the Jesuits' concern about religious competitors who might symbolically align with them on certain activities, such as education, but pose a threat to their unique influence and control. The use of this term subtly highlights the Jesuits' strategic focus on differentiating themselves while maintaining their supremacy within the church.

offering a window into the strategies and priorities attributed to the Jesuits in this period. This reflects their reputation for calculated control, leadership within the church, and their ability to present themselves as the ultimate authority in both spiritual and educational realms.

We must bear the burden of these religious with unyielding courage. Therefore, it must be impressed upon people that our order possesses the perfection of all religious orders and that in whatever areas other religious orders excel, the Society shines even more brightly in the church of God, except in chant and austerity of life, where we differ from monks.[35] Everything else in the Society is considered superior, even the subjects themselves.[36] The deficiencies of other orders should be noted to demonstrate they are less capable of fulfilling the tasks in which they compete with us.[37]

35 The reference to the Jesuits differing from monks in "chant and the harshness of life" emphasizes some of the distinctive features of the Jesuit order compared to traditional monastic communities. Monks, particularly those in more ascetic orders, often prioritize liturgical chant and a rigorous ascetic lifestyle, whereas Jesuits are known for their flexibility and adaptability (*accomodatio*) in various cultural contexts. This adaptability allows the Jesuits to engage more directly with their mission of education, evangelization, and practical service in the world, distinguishing them from the more insular or contemplative monastic traditions. The Jesuit approach to penance and spiritual discipline is also tailored to the individual's spiritual needs and circumstances, often decided in consultation with a spiritual director, rather than being uniformly imposed across the community, as seen in monastic orders. In the previous chapter, which dealt with ingratiating bishops, the author reduced the monks' "utility" to their role in liturgical chant, underscoring a broader criticism of monastic life as lacking practical engagement with the world.

36 This hyperbolic statement might be used to caricature the Jesuits as arrogant or self-aggrandizing, claiming superiority in all aspects over other religious orders. It could be a deliberate exaggeration by the author to paint the Jesuits in an unflattering light, emphasizing their pretentiousness. Such hyperbole fits into the broader rhetorical strategy of the *Monita privata*, which uses exaggeration and subtle satire to criticize the Jesuits' perceived ambitions and methods. The depiction of the Jesuits as claiming supremacy in everything (except chant and asceticism) amplifies their portrayal as manipulative and self-serving, adding to the text's overall anti-Jesuit tone.

37 The competition for educational dominance between the Jesuits and other religious orders was a notable feature of the era. In Poland, this rivalry later became particularly evident between the Jesuits and the Piarists (Scolopi), who were founded in 1597 and established in Poland in 1642. Both orders sought to establish schools and influence educational policies, with the Piarists focusing on educating poor boys—a mission that sometimes overlapped with Jesuit objectives. In other regions, similar dynamics emerged: in Italy, the Jesuits faced competition from the Somaschi Fathers, and in France, from the Oratorians. These educational rivalries were not just about teaching but often involved political maneuvering and appeals to local and papal authorities, reflecting broader tensions over influence within the church and society. For the Jesuits, maintaining

Greater effort must be made against those religious who wish to establish schools for educating youth in places where our Society has already carried out this task with dignity and success. It must be demonstrated to rulers that such individuals will cause disturbances in the republic. It should be suggested to external academics that these religious, rather than ours, would bring about their downfall. Rulers should be advised that the Society alone is sufficient for educating youth.

If these religious possess papal letters or commendations from cardinals, they should act through rulers to the pope, to whom it will be demonstrated that the Society is fulfilling its role well. Testimonies from the cities where our colleges exist, affirming our good conduct, should be procured. Care must also be taken to diligently persuade others to fear the disturbances that might arise from the presence of various schools and teachers, even if they are religious. Meanwhile, our members should ensure that studies are pursued and examples of our work are published with the applause of others.

VI On Winning Affluent Widows to the Society

In chapter VI, the author exposes a Jesuit strategy for influencing affluent widows to support the order, revealing a manipulative and calculated approach to securing financial and social influence. Presented as a detailed plan, the text portrays the Jesuits as systematically targeting wealthy widows through the careful selection of confessors, frequent visits, and persistent spiritual direction. While the surface text engages with the practices of spiritual care, the underlying rhetoric paints these actions as self-serving, portraying the Jesuits as using spiritual guidance for control rather than genuine care. The chapter emphasizes the widow's frequent participation in sacraments and attendance at Mass, suggesting these practices are tools for manipulation. By highlighting the benefits of widowhood and cautioning against remarriage, the author draws on theological notions, possibly inspired by Paul the Apostle's teachings, to imply a cynical manipulation of Christian doctrine. The Jesuits are depicted as strategically reducing the widow's household, installing loyal officials, and gradually taking control of her decisions, reinforcing the image of calculated influence and opportunism. The tone of the chapter is both revealing and accusatory, constructing a damning image of the Jesuits' tactics. The specific guidance on dealing with widows serves as a broader critique of the Society, illustrating a blend of spiritual zeal, pastoral cunning,

dominance in education was crucial to their broader mission of shaping future leaders and exerting spiritual and intellectual influence across Europe.

and organizational manipulation, fitting neatly into the larger framework of anti-Jesuit sentiment woven throughout the Monita privata.[38]

Let fathers of advanced age, with a lively complexion,[39] be selected for the task of engaging with these widows, whom ours should visit more often. If a widow has shown affection for the Society, in turn, let the works of our Society be offered to her; if she accepts and begins to frequent our churches, let such a confessor be given to her, who will guide her well and make her constant in maintaining widowhood, enumerating the benefits of widowhood, by which she is to obtain ample merit.

38 Olwen Hufton's historical research, as presented in her article, provides valuable context to the *Monita*'s claims by shedding light on the complex interplay between altruism, reciprocity, and the intricate relationships between the Jesuits and their female patrons. While Hufton's work highlights the positive aspects of these relationships, such as mutual support and charitable contributions, it also acknowledges the underlying tensions and controversies, particularly regarding the Jesuits' reliance on their wealthy patrons. Notable examples include figures like Donna Leonora d'Este (1515–75) and Isabella Roser (b. *c.*1456), who were deeply involved with the Jesuits. Similar dynamics can be observed in the Polish context. Dorota of the Goryński family, known first as Mińska and later as Barzyna through her marriages, generously endowed the Jesuit house and the Church of St. Barbara in Kraków before her death in 1613. Other notable patrons include Elżbieta Łucja Gostomska Sieniawska (1573–1624), who founded the Jesuit college in Lviv, and Anna Alojza Ostrogska Chodkiewicz (1600–54), who established the Jesuit college in Jarosław. These women played a crucial role in securing the Jesuits' influence through their financial support and social connections. Additionally, Additionally, Elżbieta Potocka Szczuczyna (*c.*1700–66) is remembered for her sponsorship of Jesuit sermons and numerous acts of charity in Lviv. These examples from Poland, along with those from Italy and elsewhere, enhance our understanding of the pan-European nature of the Jesuits' reliance on female patronage and the complexities of these relationships, which were often marked by both mutual benefit and controversy. Hufton's work deepens our appreciation for the subtleties of these interactions while providing context for the claims made in the *Monita*. See Hufton's "Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and Their Female Patrons," *Renaissance Studies* 15, no. 3 (2001): 328–53.

39 The term "colore vivido" in the original text carries a broader connotation than its direct English translation of "complexion." In this context, it refers not only to physical appearance but also encompasses a range of characteristics, including expressiveness, personality, and communication style. The phrase suggests the selection of individuals who are not only lively or healthy-looking but who also possess a dynamic and engaging character, an expressive manner, and a compelling way of speaking. This multifaceted understanding of "colore vivido" emphasizes the importance of selecting individuals who could interact effectively and appealingly with widows. Such individuals were chosen not only for their physical presence but also for their ability to win trust, foster relationships, and subtly influence the wealthy widows through personal charisma. This strategic emphasis underscores the calculated nature of the Jesuits' efforts to form close relationships with influential patrons.

In order that the whole matter may go better for her, it should be advised that her entourage of servants be reduced, officials should be appointed, and stewards of the estate organized. Prescriptions should be made concerning the management of the household, taking into account the location and the person. Above all, the confessor should ensure that the widow acquiesces to his advice and follows his direction as the foundation of future spiritual good. The use of sacraments should be proposed,[40] frequent listening to sacred teachings, recitation of litanies, and exhortations should be given twice or thrice a week, emphasizing the benefits of widowhood, the troubles of remarrying, and the dangers and new burdens of the same.[41]

The confessor should cleverly suggest noble men, whom the widow had not previously refused for marriage, and describe these men in such a way, highlighting their manners and vices, that upon hearing about them, the widow does not even entertain the thought of marriage. Once they are inclined toward

40 The encouragement of frequent sacramental confession and Communion, as outlined in this text, reflects a central aspect of Jesuit spiritual practice. Rooted in the Devotio Moderna tradition, this emphasis on regular participation in the sacraments was not only distinctive but also influential in shaping the spiritual lives of early modern Catholics. For the Jesuits, frequent confession and Communion were key components of their mission to spiritually guide and engage laypeople, helping to strengthen their influence within Catholic communities. However, this approach was controversial and faced strong opposition from the Jansenists, who emphasized original sin, divine grace, and predestination. The Jansenists viewed the Jesuits' promotion of frequent Communion as overly lax, arguing that it diminished the seriousness of sin and grace. For them, such practices represented a dangerous departure from traditional church teachings, which reserved Communion for those in a state of grace after significant penitential preparation. These theological disputes, particularly concerning the nature of free will and grace, created deep rifts within the church, especially in the second half of the seventeenth century, and became one of the central points of contention between the two movements.

41 The commendation of widowhood and caution against remarriage found in this text has biblical roots, particularly in the teachings of Paul the Apostle. In his First Letter to the Corinthians (7:8–9), Paul expresses a preference for the single state, including widowhood, over marriage, though he acknowledges that marriage is preferable to "burning with passion." Paul further elaborates on this idea in verses 32–35, where he suggests that the unmarried and widows are free from worldly concerns and can be more devoted to the Lord's affairs. Historically, this passage from Paul has been interpreted as a theological endorsement of celibacy and widowhood, which were often considered spiritually superior states by the early church and later monastic traditions. The sentiment expressed in this chapter reflects a long-standing theological tradition within the church that encouraged widows to remain unmarried and dedicate their lives to God. Various religious orders, including the Jesuits, applied these teachings by promoting the spiritual benefits of widowhood, sometimes encouraging wealthy widows to support the church through acts of charity. This interpretation of Paul's message became especially significant in contexts where religious influence over widows was seen as a way to secure both spiritual and material support for ecclesiastical institutions.

widowhood, religious vows should be recommended as soon as possible, so that, having taken a vow of chastity, they may completely close off any path to a second marriage. At that time, it is especially advisable that young men, who are too free in their jests, be removed from the household, few guests be admitted, and that moderation be maintained in dealing with those who remain.

The prefects of the rural districts, chaplains, and other officials[42] should either be recommended by our people or depend on the nod of our people. Once progress has been made to this point, the widow will gradually be led to perform good works, which, however, she will carry out under the guidance of her spiritual father.[43]

VII What Method of Preserving Widows in Widowhood, and concerning the Disposition of the Revenues They Have

Chapter VII of this anti-Jesuit parody delves into strategies for preserving widows in their state of widowhood and managing their wealth, outlining methods for securing their loyalty and financial support for the Society of Jesus. The chapter advises rewarding widows' generosity by including them in the merits of the Society and encouraging them to renew their vows of chastity and adopt Jesuit customs.

42 In this passage, the roles of "prefects of the rural districts, chaplains, and other such officials" are crucial to the broader strategy of influencing and guiding widows. The term "prefects of the rural districts" could be contextually understood as akin to estate managers, who wield significant influence over rural governance and land management. These individuals had authority over day-to-day operations and were responsible for ensuring the smooth running of estates, which gave them considerable control over economic and social matters. The selection of these officials, based on their esteem for or dependency on the Jesuits' recommendation, highlights a strategic approach to extending influence beyond spiritual matters and into the secular and administrative domains. By ensuring that such key figures are aligned with or indebted to the Jesuits, the order creates a network of influence that facilitates the gradual guidance of widows toward "good works" under Jesuit direction. This network is not merely about spiritual guidance; it represents a deliberate effort to leverage social and administrative structures in order to consolidate control. The strategic placement of these officials demonstrates the Jesuits' understanding of social dynamics and their ability to manipulate these systems to achieve their objectives, blending spiritual leadership with worldly governance.

43 The concept of a "spiritual father" (*pater spiritualis*) providing guidance and direction became an integral part of early modern Catholicism, with the Jesuits playing a crucial role in its development. Stemming from their emphasis on frequent sacramental confession, the Jesuits extended this relationship into a form of spiritual mentorship. The spiritual father would not only offer absolution but also provide personal guidance, counsel, and support throughout the individual's spiritual journey. This transformation in the confessor's role from a purely sacramental figure to a holistic spiritual mentor was a hallmark of Jesuit apostolate.

It emphasizes the monitoring of decorum, offering leniency in confessions, providing special privileges, and urging widows to fund Jesuit projects, particularly the maintenance of colleges reliant on alms. From a rhetorical perspective, the text adopts an instructional tone, as if delivering a genuine guide, outlining specific steps to manipulate widows' spiritual commitments and financial assets for the benefit of the Society. The detailed guidance on managing widows, from controlling their behavior to leveraging their wealth, serves as a satirical critique of Jesuit practices. By alluding to actual Jesuit customs, the text enhances its credibility, painting a damning portrait of how widows' vulnerabilities could be exploited. The interweaving of real Jesuit spiritual practices with a cynical, manipulative interpretation makes the critique both more biting and believable. This duality creates an insidious portrayal of the Jesuits, presenting their spiritual guidance as deeply intertwined with financial manipulation and self-interest, resonating with existing suspicions and hostility toward the Society.

If, in addition to common affection, a widow shows her generosity toward the Society with not insignificant sums of money or valuable possessions, let her become a participant in the merits of our Society. If she has made a vow of chastity, let her renew it in our manner twice a year. Let the domestic order of our Society be explained, and if she finds it agreeable, let it be prescribed for her household.[44] Monthly confessions should be encouraged, and for the feasts of Christ the Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the apostles, syndics—both male and female—should be appointed to note deficiencies among household members and servants, reporting them in a distinguished manner. Nods, whispers, and clandestine conversations should be forbidden, and those who transgress should be severely punished.[45]

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44 In the Society of Jesus, the practice of renewing vows holds significant importance, particularly for Jesuits in formation, known as scholastics. According to the Jesuit Constitutions (sections 346–47), scholastics must renew their vows twice a year, specifically at Christmas and Easter. This renewal serves as a reaffirmation of their commitment to Christ in chastity, poverty, and obedience, reflecting the Jesuit emphasis on continuous spiritual formation, personal conversion, and growth in virtue. The *Monita privata* repurposes this practice, applying it to widows and suggesting that they renew vows of chastity twice a year under Jesuit guidance. This can be seen as a satirical exaggeration of actual Jesuit practices, implying a manipulative strategy to further bind widows to the Society. Additionally, the mention of monthly confessions reflects a distinctive aspect of Jesuit spirituality. Frequent sacramental confession and communion, rooted in the Devotio Moderna tradition, were central to Jesuit ministries, fostering both personal holiness and deeper spiritual engagement. The emphasis on frequent confession was also a means of maintaining a close spiritual relationship between the Jesuits and those under their guidance, reinforcing the Jesuit ideal of ongoing spiritual growth.

45 In the Society of Jesus, a "syndic" is an individual appointed within the house to oversee matters of decorum and exterior propriety. According to the Jesuit Constitutions (271), the syndic's duty involves inspecting the church and the house, noting any unbecoming

Let there be respectable young women in the household, who can engage in piety by making various ornaments for the churches. They should have a guide above them who supervises their work and cultivates their manners. Widows should be visited frequently and engaged in pleasant yet spiritual conversations. They should be supported and favored, and in confessions, they should not be dealt with harshly unless there is little hope of receiving anything from them.[46]

It will be helpful for preserving widows in widowhood if many things are done to favor them, such as granting them entry into our houses and allowing them conversations with those they prefer among us.[47] They should not be permitted to leave the house in cold weather or when they feel unwell.[48]

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behavior or appearance and reporting it either to the superior or directly to the person at fault, depending on their authority. In the *Monita privata*, the role of the syndic is extended beyond the Jesuit house to the households of widows, where they are tasked with monitoring the behavior of both male and female servants. This mirrors the Jesuit practice but with a more manipulative twist, suggesting that control over the widow's household is a means of exerting greater influence over her life and decisions. The reference to syndics in this context reinforces the satirical depiction of Jesuits as controlling not only the spiritual lives of their patrons but also their daily surroundings, all under the guise of maintaining decorum and propriety.

46 The instruction to deal leniently with widows in confessions, as presented in this anti-Jesuit text, can be interpreted as reflecting an opportunistic or manipulative approach, possibly to gain financial favors from the widows. While the Jesuits were renowned for their dedication to the sacrament of confession and their role as spiritual directors, the portrayal here suggests a lack of spiritual rigor and integrity in their confessional practice. This aligns with broader criticisms of the Society, particularly from Jansenist circles, who often accused the Jesuits of moral laxity and a too-permissive approach to confession. The Jansenists, emphasizing a more austere understanding of sin, grace, and penance, frequently accused the Jesuits of promoting a form of "easy absolution" that undermined true contrition and repentance. In this context, the leniency toward widows depicted in the *Monita* is presented not as an act of pastoral care but as a calculated strategy to secure financial or material gains, reinforcing the satirical critique of Jesuit practices as self-serving and manipulative.

47 The mention of students adorning celebrations with verses reflects the Jesuit educational emphasis on rhetoric and composition, which was a core component of their curriculum. As mentioned earlier, students were often tasked with crafting verses or literary pieces for special occasions, such as religious festivals or visits by dignitaries, as part of their training in eloquence and literary skills. This practice aimed to develop students' abilities to articulate and present ideas persuasively, a key element of Jesuit pedagogy. In the context of this anti-Jesuit booklet, however, this practice is portrayed in a more cynical or manipulative light. The crafting of verses may be seen as a way to flatter benefactors and win favor, suggesting that even educational exercises were employed for self-serving purposes. While the text critiques this as a form of manipulation, it nonetheless reflects a genuine aspect of Jesuit education, where rhetoric and public display played important roles in cultivating influential relationships and advancing the Society's objectives.

48 The phrase "satisfy the sensualities" may refer to the Jesuit practice of engaging the senses through spiritual exercises, processions, and other aspects of their ministry. Jesuit

The weddings of daughters should be adorned with verses written by external scholars, and if funerals are to be arranged, let them be splendid, though mournful, and the catafalque should not be of ordinary design. Finally, whatever can be done to appeal to the sensibilities of widows—provided they are generous and intimately devoted to the Society—should be done, but with caution and without causing scandal.

When discussing the disposition of the revenues that widows have, they should be presented with the ideal of perfection seen in holy individuals who, neglecting their friends, distributed their wealth to the poor in the name of Jesus Christ. Examples should be brought forth of widows who, by doing this, quickly achieved sainthood. Therefore, when widows resign themselves into our hands and are prepared to follow the direction of their spiritual father, it should be impressed upon them that their actions will have greater merit before God. They should not give alms to religious persons without the confessor's knowledge; instead, they should present a list of what they intend to give, and the confessor can subtract or add as he deems fit.

Confessors should be wary of frequent visits by other religious to the widows, lest these visits lead women, who are naturally inconstant, away.[49]

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spirituality often emphasized the use of all five senses in their well-known Spiritual Exercises, where participants were encouraged to visualize and emotionally experience biblical scenes as a way to deepen their religious devotion and understanding. This sensory engagement was intended to make spiritual realities more vivid and personal, fostering a closer connection to God. However, in the context of this anti-Jesuit booklet, the phrase may be portrayed with a more negative or manipulative intent. The idea of engaging the senses is twisted to imply indulgence or manipulation of physical desires, suggesting that the Jesuits use sensory experiences not for genuine spiritual growth but rather to control and influence the widows for their own benefit. This portrayal reinforces the text's broader critique of Jesuit practices as self-serving and deceptive, casting suspicion on their methods of fostering devotion.

49 The phrase "by nature inconstant," as used in this early modern text pertaining to the Jesuits, reflects the gender norms and biases prevalent during that period. The Jesuits, an exclusively male religious order founded in the sixteenth century, were deeply influenced by the patriarchal and hierarchical societal structures of their time. This era was characterized by rigid gender roles and a predominantly patriarchal worldview, elements that inevitably shaped the Jesuits' perceptions and writings. Such views on women, including the notion of them being "inconstant," were widespread and reflected the stereotypical and often misogynistic beliefs of the period. This perception influenced how religious orders, including the Jesuits, interacted with and guided women, particularly in their pastoral work. While these perspectives were normative in the early modern era, it is essential to contextualize them as products of their historical setting, recognizing that they are now understood to be outdated and discriminatory. Today, such views bear little resemblance to contemporary understandings of gender equality and individual behavior. This footnote aims to provide historical insight without imposing anachronistic judgments,

When a significant amount of money has been gathered from the widow's assets, confessors should ensure that this does not prompt widows to remarry. Instead, they should propose, and even urge, the establishment of ordinary pensions to help meet the annual needs of our colleges and professed houses, particularly those in Rome.[50] The same funds can be used for small buildings and church vestments, which can be dedicated to our sacred buildings after the widow's death.

The widows should be made aware of the deficiencies in our churches and the unfinished structures of our colleges, and they should be encouraged to make expenditures for projects that will secure them perpetual glory, such as temples, ciboria, and buildings that are deliberately not completed quickly, so that they might have ongoing opportunities to exercise their generosity. This strategy should also be applied to benefactors and rulers who build costly projects for us. If there are valuables, they should be advised to preserve them for eternity, such as by donating them to the tombs of our blessed in Rome.[51]

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acknowledging the evolution of societal attitudes toward gender over time, while also noting how these biases shaped Jesuit practices and interactions with female patrons.

50 The reference to the financial needs of the professed houses in Rome alludes to the Jesuit Constitutions' stipulation that these houses should live on alms and the free-will offerings of the faithful (part 7, chapter 2, no. 1). This practice was central to the Jesuit commitment to poverty and their reliance on divine providence. The professed members of the Society, who had taken final vows, were expected to live without fixed incomes, trusting in the generosity of benefactors to sustain their missions. However, in the context of this anti-Jesuit critique, the reliance on alms is portrayed in a more cynical light. The *Monita privata* suggests that this practice is less about spiritual poverty and more about strategically manipulating wealthy patrons, such as widows, to secure financial support. By framing the Jesuits' need for donations as part of a broader plan to exploit their benefactors, the text casts suspicion on the sincerity of the Society's commitment to poverty. This portrayal reinforces the work's overall critique of the Jesuits as self-serving and financially opportunistic rather than genuinely reliant on divine providence.

51 The reference to "the sepulchers of our blessed in Rome" alludes to the graves or tombs of those considered blessed or beatified within the Jesuit order, particularly located in key Jesuit sites such as the Church of the Gesù, the mother church of the Society of Jesus in Rome, which houses the tomb of St. Ignatius of Loyola. These tombs were not only places of pilgrimage and devotion but also held symbolic importance as sites that reflected the spiritual legacy of the Society's founders and its most venerated members. In the context of this anti-Jesuit text, the instruction for widows to send valuable items (*clenodia*) to these sepulchers is presented as a manipulative tactic, casting the Jesuits as using the veneration of their blessed members as a pretext for extracting wealth. This directive fits into the broader narrative of portraying the Jesuits as financially exploitative, suggesting that religious devotion is being cynically used as a cover for accumulating material riches. The *Monita privata* thus leverages the symbolic importance of these tombs to heighten its critique of Jesuit practices, painting the Society as more focused on material gain than on genuine spiritual devotion.

This should be supported by examples of other matrons who have done the same. For these reasons, it will be demonstrated that widows can attain the highest perfection by relinquishing their love for earthly things and making Christ the Lord the possessor of their wealth, through the servants of his Society. If they wish to dedicate their sons and daughters to the service of God, their generosity should not be rejected, but we should accept gifts more sparingly from those widows who direct their children toward the secular world.

VIII Regarding the Remedies, So That the Sons and Daughters of Our Devout Followers Embrace the Religious State

In chapter VIII, the focus is on how the sons and daughters of the Society's devotees might be influenced to embrace a religious state. The advice provided is both manipulative and coercive, reflecting the anti-Jesuit sentiment that permeates the text. The widowed mother is instructed to exert control over her daughters by denying them feminine adornments, employing threats and abstinences, and emphasizing the burdens and hardships of marriage. For her sons, she is encouraged to be frugal, withholding necessities to create dissatisfaction with worldly life, thus subtly guiding them toward a religious calling. The language of the chapter underscores the strategic and scheming nature of these interactions, portraying the cultivation of devotion and spirituality as acts of manipulation and control. The text casts a critical light on the Jesuits, suggesting that their guidance is less about genuine spiritual care and more about orchestrating outcomes for their benefit. The chapter thus presents a stark and cynical portrayal of religious indoctrination, painting the Jesuits as calculating figures who use coercive tactics to secure loyalty.

This must be carried out gently yet firmly by the widowed mother. For daughters, make the situation troublesome through the use of whips, threats, abstinences, and harsher treatment. Deny them exquisite female adornments, promise a larger dowry if they wish to become nuns, and exaggerate the furies of a future husband and the burdens of marriage. Let the mother herself display sorrow, regretting that she was not a nun. In the end, act in such a way against the daughters that, overwhelmed by the tedium of staying with their mother, they aspire to enter a monastery.

Let ours converse familiarly with the sons, and let them be accepted into colleges, where they will be shown things that will move them toward entering our Society. These include the gardens near the colleges, where recreational activities take place, and the refectories, where cleanliness is displayed. The external conversations among our members should be pleasant and witty, yet

not neglecting spiritual matters. The sons of such widows should have instructors who are very friendly to us and even future members of our Society. The mother should withhold necessities from her sons for a short period, presenting them with complicated matters concerning property. If they go to other provinces for the sake of their studies, let the mother not treat them generously with money, so that, overcome by tedium, they may seriously contemplate entering the religious life in foreign lands.

IX On Increasing the Revenues of the Colleges

Chapter IX purports to reveal the intricate strategies employed by the Society of Jesus to increase the income of their colleges. It portrays the Jesuits as manipulating relationships with influential figures, including rulers, nobles, matrons, and widows, subtly balancing spiritual guidance with calculated requests for material support. The rhetorical tone is critical and suspicious, casting the Jesuits' actions as self-serving and manipulative rather than genuinely spiritual. By detailing these tactics, the text aims to raise concerns about the Society's methods and influence, suggesting they are more focused on acquiring worldly wealth than offering sincere spiritual guidance. The chapter likely resonates with readers already skeptical of the Jesuits, reinforcing negative stereotypes and deepening mistrust and opposition.

It must be seriously inculcated to the confessors of rulers, magnates, and matrons that, while they confer spiritual benefits on them, they should also receive temporal benefits for the common good of the Society. Therefore, they should not miss opportunities to accept what is offered, and if it is deferred, they should subtly remind them without appearing overly eager. Those confessors who are less diligent in this matter should be regarded as less concerned with the common good, removed from their positions with the princes, and reprimanded at home.

We have heard with great sorrow of young widows, prematurely deceased, whose fault—due to the negligence of ours—was not bequeathing their very precious church furnishings to us, nor accepting when the surviving widows offered. In acquiring such things, it is not the timing but the willingness of the offeror that should be considered. They should visit the homes of citizens, the households of nobles, and also those of widows, from all of whom they should prudently inquire whether, for the good of their soul, either they, their friends, or relatives might bequeath anything to the churches.

The same inquiries should be made of parish priests and prelates, who should first be encouraged to perform spiritual duties, during which time many

of ours can gain much. Among all these, they should strive to capture goodwill, explaining the gratitude of the Society and the faithful administration of the places they receive from benefactors, unlike other secular priests and monks. They should be knowledgeable about gardens, stone quarries, widows, the cities in which they reside, villages, estates—who the owners are, under what contracts, and with what burdens these properties are held—and whether those goods can be acquired either through contracts, by accepting their sons into the Society, or by donation.

Devout followers of the Society sometimes sell their goods to the colleges with an agreement that, after a short time, the Society will receive them back for free. If it happens that widows devoted to us have only daughters, they should be directed to the religious life of nuns, with whatever dowry is provided; the rest—such as villages, jewelry, and all other possessions—will be easily gained by ours. However, if a widow friendly to our Society has only one son or more, and there is no hope that the sons or son will enter the Society, it should be suggested to the mother that it suffices if she leaves her entire possessions to the sons, while the collected sum of money and her own dowry can be bequeathed to the Society.

Moreover, there are widows from various places inclined toward piety and most devoted to our Society. These should be encouraged to assign their properties to our colleges, while they themselves should be content to receive an annual pension, so that they may more conveniently devote themselves to God, free from the care of temporal matters.

x On Showing the Rigor of Discipline in the Society

The paragraph outlines stringent disciplinary measures within the Society, particularly regarding the expulsion of members for various reasons. It implies that the Society exercises rigorous control over its members, even to the point of expelling those who have dedicated years of service or are suffering from ailments like kidney stones. Grounds for expulsion include diverting devotees to other religious orders and showing undue affection toward family in matters of possessions. Before expulsion, members may undergo "mortification" through lower-ranked roles and public penances. The text also advises superiors not to be overly cautious in dismissing individuals, stating that the Society is under no obligation to retain any member, even those who have taken vows. Beyond detailing disciplinary protocols, the passage implicitly highlights an authoritarian atmosphere, portraying the Society's strictures as harsh and unforgiving, with a focus on the Society's interests over the well-being of individuals.

We will demonstrate the rigor of discipline by expelling individuals whenever it seems fit to the Society, regardless of their condition or status—whether they are old, young, having spent their strength and age, or afflicted with stone disease or any other ailment after entering the Society.[52] Causes for ejections[53]—excluding reserved cases where it would be lawful, except in cases of pollution,[54] include directing our devoted followers and friends, who are useful to the Society, to other religious orders, or informing their parents or other individuals who prevent them from entering the Society, particularly if, in resigning their goods, they demonstrate affection toward their relatives by not donating everything to the Society.

However, such individuals should first be mortified for several years within the Society, assigned to menial offices, and restricted to teaching in the lower schools. Higher studies, especially the fourth year of theology, should not be granted.[55] Public chapters of faults should be held more frequently during meals.[56] Fathers should be prohibited from hearing confessions and kept

52 The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus ([209]–[217]) outline four principal causes that may justify dismissal from the Society. The first cause involves incorrigible passions or vices that offend the Divine Majesty. The second pertains to the individual's impact on the good of the Society, including hidden impediments, notable incompetence, or setting a harmful example through words or deeds. The third concerns simultaneous harm to both the good of the Society and the individual, such as physical illnesses or an inability to adapt to obedience and the Society's way of proceeding. The fourth cause involves matters contrary to the good of those outside the Society, such as hidden marital bonds, legal servitude, or significant debts. These causes are rooted in the overarching concern for the honor and glory of God, the welfare of the Society, the individual, and others outside the Society. Dismissal, if justified by any of these causes, is not seen as an act of uncharity but as a decision aligned with the service of God and the mission of the Society.

53 The use of the term "eicere" (to expel or eject), as opposed to the more common Jesuit term "dimissio" (dismissal), may reflect a deliberate rhetorical choice to convey a harsher sense of rejection. This stronger language emphasizes a more forceful or abrupt severing of ties, distinguishing it from the relatively formal and procedural connotations of "dimissio."

54 "Pollution" in this context refers to a particular moral failing, often associated with impurity or sexual misconduct. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus outline reserved cases for dismissal, including grave offenses such as apostasy, heresy, schism, homicide, and other serious crimes. Moral offenses related to purity and obedience are also treated with greater severity and may require intervention from higher authorities within the Society.

55 The "resignation of goods" within the Society of Jesus refers both to the relinquishment of personal property in accordance with the vow of poverty and to the severing of financial and material ties with one's family.

56 The term "capitulum [culparum publicum]" refers to the public chapter of faults, a monastic practice in which members of the religious community openly confess their minor faults or are admonished by a superior in a communal setting, often during a meal. This practice aims at fostering humility, transparency, and mutual accountability within

away from interactions with outsiders. Their dear possessions should be taken from their rooms, and frequent public penances should be assigned. From this point, it will be easy to proceed to dismissal.

If individuals noted for the above faults complain before the provincials,[57] they should not be easily believed. The act should be excused, and it should be explained that they are bound to obey their superior as long as there is no sin involved.[58] Superiors should not be scrupulous in dismissing individuals. Since our order rejoices in the name of the Society and its members,[59] it is no wonder that dismissal is a part of the Society, as the bonds of the Society and its members are more easily dissolved and are not perpetual.

Dismissal has been part of the Society since its establishment, and this is evident from the fact that the Society has simple vows for scholastics and formed coadjutors. These vows do not constitute a mutual contract, as if the

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the community. It emphasizes the communal dimension of religious life, where each member is responsible not only for their own spiritual growth but also for supporting the growth of others. In the Jesuit context, the call for more frequent *capitula* could be seen as a call for a more rigorous observance of community life and spiritual ideals.

57 In the context of the Society of Jesus, the authority to dismiss members varies according to their status within the Society. According to part 2, chapter 1 of the Constitutions, the provincial can dismiss novices and those with simple vows (with communication from the superior general in individual cases), while only the general can dismiss those who are professed of solemn vows. This hierarchical structure underscores the seriousness with which dismissal is handled and the careful consideration given to such decisions within the Society.

58 The principle to "obey the superior, wherever there is no sin," is firmly grounded in the Jesuit Constitutions. This passage emphasizes complete devotion to obedience, recognizing the superior as representing Christ and requiring both external compliance and an interior resignation of personal will and judgment. The text specifies that obedience should be "entirely and promptly" executed, even in matters "difficult and repugnant to sensitive nature," and extends to "all things in which no sin is seen." The superior's will is to be regarded as the rule for individual will, aligning with "the first and supreme rule of all good will and judgment, which is the Eternal Goodness and Wisdom" ([284]).

59 The statement could be read as a criticism or mockery of the Jesuits' practices surrounding dismissal. It may argue that, while the Jesuits promote values of companionship and society, they are willing to dismiss or expel members, possibly for reasons the text's author finds trivial or unjust. The use of the word "rejoices" and the phrase "it is not surprising that dismissal is associated with the Society" could be seen as sarcastic, highlighting a perceived hypocrisy or inconsistency between the Jesuits' stated values and their actions. The sentence might criticize the Jesuits for being too quick to dismiss members, despite their emphasis on community and companionship, pointing to this as evidence of a flaw or failure in the Society's approach. It may also be an attempt to tarnish the Society's reputation by closely associating it with the act of dismissal, implying that this is a defining feature of the order. This passage connects thematically to the testimonies of famous dismissals appended to the *Monita*.

Society were obligated to always retain individuals with such vows. The obligation falls only on the person making the vow, not on the Society, which can dismiss anyone with such vows whenever and for whatever reason it seems fit.[60]

Even though some in the Society make a profession of four vows, and others of three vows in the solemn manner of other monks, these individuals too can be dismissed from the Society.

XI How Ours Will Unanimously Behave against Those Dismissed

In chapter XI, the practices and principles of the Jesuit order are depicted through a conspiratorial and accusatory lens. Contradicting the compassionate approach to dismissal described in the Jesuit Constitutions, the text accuses the Society of using manipulative and controlling tactics, akin to modern non-disclosure agreements. The author insinuates malevolent success and sinister motivations behind these actions. The rhetoric mirrors the historical works of Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1526–1611) and János Nádasi (1613–79), who chronicled the misfortunes of those who left the order. However, this text twists their tradition into a critique of the Jesuits.

Since such individuals can cause much harm to the Society, certain methods must be employed to counteract them. Before they are dismissed from the Society, they must promise and leave a written testimony stating they will not speak ill of the Society.[61] The dismissed person's access to both spiritual

60 The reference to the profession of four or three solemn vows within the Society of Jesus underscores the varying levels of commitment within the order. While some members make a profession of four vows—including a special vow of obedience to the pope regarding missions—others take three solemn vows, as is common in other monastic traditions. However, it is important to note that even those who have taken such solemn vows can be dismissed from the Society. This reflects the Society's distinct understanding of religious vows and emphasizes that, despite the seriousness of the commitment, the Society retains the authority to dismiss members if necessary. The dismissal procedures for those with solemn vows are more strictly defined and typically require higher authority within the Society, as outlined in the Jesuit Constitutions (part 2, chapter 1, "Dismissal from the Society," particularly §3 regarding the dismissal of the professed of solemn vows).

61 The requirement for dismissed members to promise not to speak ill of the Society, as outlined in this conspiratorial document, can be compared to a modern-day non-disclosure agreement (NDA). An NDA is a legally binding contract that compels parties to maintain the confidentiality of specific information, preventing disclosure to unauthorized individuals. In the politically charged and secretive environment of the time, this practice within the Society likely served a similar purpose—ensuring that internal matters,

and secular lords, whose favor he might seek and where he could find a place, should be blocked. His bad inclinations, vices, and defects—which he may have revealed during his confessions to superiors[62] and for which he was directed while in the Society—should be mentioned, as he has yielded his right to secrecy in this regard.

If the lords involved are not devoted to us, those who are devoted to us, being highly regarded, should ensure that the dismissed does not receive favor from those who are less sympathetic to us. And if it cannot be arranged to turn the lord's mind away, at least he should be persuaded not to support the dismissed person in any way. It should be reported through our colleges who has been dismissed, with the reasons for their dismissal exaggerated. It should also be said during exhortations that the dismissed individual ardently desires to re-enter the Society. The causes for dismissal should be subtly shared with outsiders, especially those for which the common people hold us in contempt, so that dismissals are seen as more justified and plausible.

If a dismissed person is heard speaking against us, respected members of the Society should counter these statements by asserting the authority, reputation, and the spiritual fruit the Society bears in the church of God. They should emphasize the good esteem of our life and teachings, which earns us the trust of kings, princes, and magnates for confessions and sermons. They should also explain our zeal for serving others, especially each member of our own Society. Those in favor of the dismissed should be invited to meals and persuaded not to support the dismissed, encouraging them to trust the Society's judgment. During these meals, the reasons for the dismissal should be fully explained, presenting all the relevant evidence, and all faults of the dismissed should be meticulously laid out, omitting nothing, even if some aspects remain doubtful.

Be cautious in promoting the dismissed to any ecclesiastical benefits unless they have given a considerable amount of money, assigned their goods to us, or

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potential criticisms, or sensitive information remained confined within the organization, thus safeguarding its reputation and interests.

62 The manifestation of conscience, as described in the Jesuit Constitutions (§155), was a key practice within the Society of Jesus, requiring all members to disclose their inner spiritual state to their superiors. This allowed superiors to actively engage in each individual's spiritual discernment and offer guidance. In the translated text, the reference to revealing inclinations, vices, and defects previously shared with superiors during this manifestation suggests a practice potentially aimed at control and influence. While the manifestation of conscience was intended to promote spiritual growth and understanding within the Society, it could also serve as a means of exerting authority and managing members, particularly in cases of dismissal. This dual function—spiritual guidance and organizational control—reflects a nuanced aspect of the practice, which may be further critiqued in the context of this anti-Jesuit parody.

specifically demonstrated their friendship with the Society. Confessors should also persuade princes and kings that when conferring honors on someone, they should take the individual's generosity and good will toward our Society as evidence of their worthiness, especially if they provide a college or similar foundation for us.

If the dismissed gain any support, a diligent investigation into their lives, behaviors, and faults should be conducted through our friends and devoted followers, especially those of the lower orders, and these findings should be spread to prevent people from favoring or sheltering the dismissed. If they persist in favoring the dismissed, they should be threatened with censures, and absolution should be denied if they remain stubborn.

Any praise of the dismissed should be diminished through subtle and ambiguous statements,[63] crafted in such a way as to turn people's minds away from the dismissed and reduce their credibility. The misfortunes that befall the dismissed should be publicized with great sympathy during exhortations, so that others may be frightened and remain in the Society, even if unwillingly.[64]

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63 The use of the term *argutum* (wittiness) in this passage is particularly noteworthy, given its broader significance in early modern literature, especially within the genre of the epigram. During this period, *argutum* encompassed more than mere cleverness or humor; it was an essential rhetorical tool, often employed to convey complex ideas through concise, pointed expressions. In this context, the instruction to diminish praise of the dismissed "with clever and ambiguous propositions" aligns with the era's appreciation for *argutum*. This tactic required a sophisticated command of language, enabling the speaker or writer to subtly shape the audience's perception. The strategic use of *argutum* reflects the rhetorical finesse prized in the period, offering insight into the Jesuit order's nuanced internal communications, as well as the broader cultural appreciation for eloquence and subtlety in discourse.

64 The emphasis on the unfortunate fates of those expelled from the Society of Jesus in early Jesuit literature reflects a broader historical trend. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, a prominent Spanish Jesuit hagiographer known for his unwavering loyalty to the Jesuit order, illustrates this in his *Diálogos en los cuales se trayan algunos ejemplos de personas que habiendo salido de la religión de la Compañía han sido castigados severamente de la mano de Dios* (Dialogues in which are brought forth some examples of people who, having left the order of the Society, have been severely punished by the hand of God), composed between the late sixteenth century and 1607. This series of dialogues recounts divine punishments inflicted on individuals who left the Society, serving as both a cautionary tale and a reinforcement of loyalty to the Jesuit cause. Similarly, János Nádasi, in his *Tristes annuae desertorum* (The sorrowful annual letters of the deserters), compiled annual letters about deserters from the Society, focusing on their subsequent misfortunes. Intriguingly, Nádasi's collection includes the account of Zahorowski, the purported author of the *Monita secreta*. These writings reveal the Society's concern with its reputation and the perception of its members. By emphasizing the severe consequences for those who left, the Jesuits conveyed the notion of divine providence favoring their

XII On the Selection of Young Men for the Society, and the Way to Retain Them

Chapter XII offers a critical perspective on the Jesuit method of recruiting and maintaining new members. Contrasting sharply with the Jesuit Constitutions, the booklet outlines a strategy emphasizing enticing candidates through artifice and opportunism, specifically targeting young men of noble birth, wealth, and pleasing appearance. The rhetoric of the text strategically manipulates these recruitment methods into appearing insidious, with phrases like "utmost skill and industry are required" to employ tactics of flattery, gifts, and temporal inducements alongside chastisements and severe reproaches to control behavior. The text also hints at the international politics of recruitment, emphasizing the Society's willingness to adapt its approach in regions like the German-speaking lands and Poland, where the relationship with ruling monarchs is a factor. The repeated mention of regions like the German-speaking lands and Poland highlights the Jesuits' strategic flexibility in adapting their recruitment tactics to local political contexts, especially where monarchs were supportive. This emphasis serves to suggest ethical lapses in how the Jesuits navigated these power dynamics and stokes concerns about their growing influence in such regions. Moreover, the language used to describe the recruitment process, including warnings and scruples, introduces moral ambiguity, questioning the integrity of the Jesuit mission. The booklet transforms what might be seen as thoughtful discernment and care in recruitment—as described in the Jesuit Constitutions—into a calculated and manipulative strategy, thus serving the author's broader critical agenda against the Society.

The greatest skill and effort are required to recruit young men of good intellect, not of contemptible appearance, noble birth, and wealth.[65] To attract such

order while underscoring the spiritual dangers of abandoning it. This narrative offers a glimpse into the complex relationship between religious dedication, social politics, and reputation management within the early Jesuit order. For further scholarly analysis of obedience and disobedience within the Spanish Jesuit order during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Doris Moreno Martínez, "Obediencias negociadas y desobediencias silenciadas en la Compañía de Jesús en España, ss. XVI–XVII," *Hispania* 74, no. 248 (2014): 661–86, doi: 10.3989/hispania.2014.019 (accessed September 25, 2024).

65 This description deviates significantly from the Jesuit Constitutions. The parody highlights recruitment strategies focused on noble birth, intellect, and wealth, as well as manipulative retention methods, such as favoritism and strategic chastisement. In contrast, the Constitutions emphasize virtuous internal qualities ([148]–[156]) and minimize the importance of extrinsic factors like nobility and wealth ([161]). Additionally, thethe

individuals, show them favor from the school prefects, do not allow them to be harassed by teachers, praise them frequently, give them gifts, invite them to the vineyard and offer them some fruits. They may be received at the refectory during celebrations. When dealing with others, accusations should be based on some conjectures, and an angry face should be shown; they should be sharply rebuked and reprimanded, and it should be demonstrated that their youthful age makes them prone to all evils unless they become religious. They should be frightened with the threat of eternal damnation.

When they ask to be admitted to the Society, do not admit them immediately; delay their admission for a time. In the meantime, nurture them with conversations and commend our sweet institution to them. As their desire grows, they will insist more eagerly on being admitted. If, after joining, someone later wishes to leave, remind him of the fervent enthusiasm with which he sought entry into the Society.

Since it is especially difficult to attract the sons of senators and wealthy men in their home country, if such young men show interest, they should be sent to Rome for the novitiate. However, they should first be brought to the attention of the general or the Roman provincial. If they come to Germany, France, or Italy and express a desire for the Society, they should be accepted without hesitation from those dominions where the monarch is favorable to the Society. Under such a ruler, these and similar things should be done, and if the ruler's subjects need our favor, they will not easily rise against us. Even if they do, they will gain nothing.[66]

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text's portrayal of the coercion applied to those who who leave or are dismissed contrasts sharply with the Constitutions' more compassionate approach ([225]–[230]).

66 This paragraph highlights the strategic measures employed by the Jesuit order to recruit young men from noble or wealthy backgrounds. It outlines a process where candidates may be sent to Rome for novitiate training with prior approval from high-ranking Jesuits. The text specifically emphasizes the ease of recruitment in regions like Germany, France, and Italy, under monarchs sympathetic to the Society as of 1612. In France, King Louis XIII initially ruled under the regency of his mother, Maria de' Medici, and later under the influence of Cardinal Richelieu (1585–1642), both known for their favorable stance toward the Jesuits. In the Holy Roman Empire, Emperor Matthias (1557–1619, r.1612–19) ruled during a period of escalating religious tensions that would culminate in the Thirty Years' War. Although not deeply devoted to the Jesuits, Matthias showed a degree of tolerance toward them, which provided a measure of stability for the Society's activities. In Spain, King Philip III (1578–1621, r.1598–1621) was a loyal supporter of the Jesuits, actively backing their missions. Meanwhile, in Italy, the Papal States were governed by Pope Paul V (r.1605–21), who was also generally supportive of the Jesuit mission. The support of these rulers is depicted as advantageous, offering the Society protection from opposition and easing recruitment efforts. This portrayal contrasts with the official Jesuit Constitutions,

Do not miss opportunities to attract the sons of those who come to our schools for studies from other provinces, especially when they begin to lose money. Partly from the shame of losing money and partly from fear of the troubles they expect from their parents or relatives, they allow themselves to be induced into joining the Society. This strategy has had great success with Germans and Poles.[67]

Inconstancy must be addressed according to the character of the individual, with exhortations about the poor outcomes of those who have been dismissed and the benefits of the religious calling. To ensure that the parents and relatives of those joining us are content, the excellence of our Institute and the great applause and honor that the world and rulers give to the Society should

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which emphasize spiritual qualities and suitability for service over reliance on political or social favor.

67 The recurring mention of Germany and Poland in the text may signal a specific historical or cultural commentary by the author, particularly in relation to territories under the influence of the Habsburg dynasty. In the context of this anti-Jesuit parody, the focus on these regions could suggest concerns or critiques about Jesuit activities in areas where the Habsburgs wielded significant political power. The Jesuits were actively involved in educational and missionary efforts in both German-speaking lands and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, often working closely with the ruling dynasties. By highlighting these countries, the author may be emphasizing perceived failures or controversies related to the Society's influence, recruitment strategies, or interactions with the Habsburg political structures. This focus aligns with earlier references to the House of Austria in the text, which was central to Jesuit operations in regions like Poland, France, and Germany. The repeated references to these areas might also indicate broader anxieties or tensions within European society concerning the expansion and power of the Jesuit order, particularly in territories controlled by the Habsburgs, who were deeply intertwined with both religious and political interests. This concern is echoed in the writings of Paolo Sarpi, especially in his 1611 letter to Jérôme de l'Isle Groslot (d.1622), where he critiques the Jesuits' role in Germany, an important Habsburg territory: "Gli occhi di tutti sono rivolti alle cose di Germania, le quali sono di tanto momento e così gran conseguenza, che maggior non si potrebbe pensare. Sopra tutto, io resto pieno d'ammirazione, come, essendo noto a ciascuno che i Gesuiti sono stati autori e istigatori di tutto il male occorso, siano nondimeno esenti dal partecipare ai pericoli ai quali è esposta l'altra parte, e restino sicuri di continuare a far ardere il fuoco maggiormente. Piace così a Dio di acciecar il mondo, che non vegga nella luce del sole" (All eyes are on the matters of Germany, which are of such moment and of such great consequence that none greater could be imagined. Above all, I remain full of astonishment, as it is known to everyone that the Jesuits have been the authors and instigators of all the misfortune that has occurred, and yet they are nonetheless exempt from sharing in the dangers to which the other side is exposed, and remain secure in continuing to fan the flames even more. It pleases God to blind the world, that it does not see even in the light of the sun) (*Lettere*, 2:199). Sarpi's observations reflect broader concerns about Jesuit influence in Habsburg territories, where their close ties to the ruling dynasty and their role in religious conflicts made them a significant political and spiritual force.

be highlighted. They should insinuate themselves into close familiarity with the recruits' families and ensure their contentment if necessity and the person's dignity demand it.

XIII On Nuns

Chapter XIII provides a brief directive advising Jesuits on how to navigate their relationships with nuns, who are portrayed as important benefactors. The text emphasizes the need for respect and consideration, especially regarding their seclusion and financial contributions, such as the funding of colleges. The instruction to avoid troubling them about their seclusion suggests a metaphorical respect for their autonomy and distinct spiritual roles. The rhetorical strategy blends deference with pragmatism, highlighting the practical understanding of the societal and financial dynamics at play between the Jesuits and other religious orders.

Let our confessors be careful not to offend the nuns, as they are such great benefactors that some have helped in the foundation of our colleges, and many have given half their dowry with the consent of the monastery and the abbess.[68] Therefore, to avoid troubling them over matters of enclosure, leave such issues to the bishops. Instead, preserve the favor of the nuns, lest they act against us on account of the halved dowries, and reproach those given to our Society.

XIV On Reserved Cases and Reasons for Dismissal from the Society

Chapter XIV lays bare the guidelines of the Society of Jesus concerning sacramental confession, particularly the handling of reserved cases by superiors and confessors. It explains how the superior general, after consultation, may decide to dismiss a member, reflecting the Jesuits' authority over cases typically reserved for bishops. Interwoven with historical references like the expulsion from Venice, the narrative emphasizes the controversial nature of the Society's practices. The

68 The relationship between Jesuit confessors and nuns, as highlighted in the text, reflects a practical and strategic dynamic, typical of historical interactions between religious orders. While the text does not reference specific historical figures, this context can be enriched by considering real examples, such as Abbess Magdalena Mortęska (1554–1631), who historically supported the Jesuits by founding their house in Toruń (Royal Prussia). Many Jesuits served as confessors to female religious communities, including Mortęska's Benedictine nuns.

author leverages these practices to argue against the Jesuits, painting their handling of reserved cases as manipulative and inconsistent with church norms. By invoking sexual sin and solicitation, the text seeks to provoke moral outrage, aligning with broader patterns of anti-Jesuit rhetoric, which often played on societal taboos. This blend of legal, historical, and moral reasoning reflects and intensifies the anti-Jesuit controversies of the period, revealing a complex interplay of resentment, scrutiny, and rhetorical strategy. This chapter presents a starkly different portrayal of the grounds for dismissal compared to the Jesuit Constitutions. While the Constitutions offer thoughtful guidelines that consider the well-being of the individual and the Society, the text emphasizes severe cases such as sexual misconduct and rebellion. This contrast seems to be a deliberate effort by the author to cast the Jesuit Society in an unflattering light, highlighting immoral and duplicitous behavior within the Society.

Besides the cases described in the instruction, which only the superior or an ordinary confessor with his permission can absolve—namely sodomy, fornication, adultery, rape, and unchaste touches of either a man or a woman—if anyone, for any reason, plots against the Society with any zeal, let them know these are grounds for dismissal from the Society. They shall not be absolved until they have promised outside of confession to reveal this either by themselves or through the confessor to the superior. If the superior discerns that the sin was committed with an accomplice or causes serious harm to the Society, he shall not absolve unless the penitent promises to write about this matter to the general or grants the confessor or superior permission to write about such a case.[69]

Otherwise, the general shall in no way absolve the penitent. Once the general is made aware of the penitent's case, having discussed it with the secretary, he shall conclude what seems expedient for the Society and will assign dismissal from the Society to such a penitent. If they refuse to accept it, they can never be validly absolved.[70] We have decided to do this with our theologians

69 The relationship between the superior and the confessor, as described here, contrasts sharply with the portrayal in the Jesuit Constitutions. While this text emphasizes rigid control, strict reporting mechanisms, and punitive measures, the Constitutions primarily focus on spiritual development, discernment, and pastoral care. The contrast highlights the *Monita*'s intent to portray the Society of Jesus as authoritarian and manipulative, whereas the Constitutions prioritize the well-being and spiritual growth of individuals through a more compassionate and developmental approach to discipline and guidance.

70 The statement regarding the use of absolution as a tool for enforcing dismissal from the Society appears to conflict with canonical law. By tying absolution to obedience in an administrative matter, the text blurs the lines between spiritual authority and

in reserved cases and with the approval of the Apostolic See, despite some opposition.[71] However, the confessor must remain silent about dismissing a penitent from the Society. If the penitent speaks of it outside of confession, let them be dismissed; if they refuse to speak, the written ordinance against pretenders will be maintained. Meanwhile, as long as they refuse to speak outside of confession, they shall not be absolved.

If any of our confessors hear that an external person of either sex has had an indecent act with a member of the Society,[72] they shall not absolve them until they speak of it outside our confession, even if our member is dismissed;

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organizational control. In canonical tradition, absolution is reserved for the forgiveness of sins, and its use as a means of enforcing compliance with an internal decision suggests a manipulation of sacramental power for disciplinary purposes. This portrayal raises questions about the ethical use of spiritual authority within the Society, reinforcing the critical tone of the *Monita*.

71 The Jesuits' authority to absolve reserved cases—sins and censures typically under the jurisdiction of bishops or the Apostolic See—was a significant pastoral privilege. This faculty was first granted to the Society's early companions in Venice and to Jean Codure (1508–1541) in 1540 by Pope Paul III (1468–1549, r.1534–49). It was later expanded through papal documents such as the brief *Cum inter cunctas* (1544) and the bulls *Licet debitum* and *Sacra religionis*, which also included the power to absolve heresy, as outlined in the bull *Coena Domini*. While this practice was a notable feature of Jesuit ministry, it was not exclusive to them; other religious orders, like the Theatines, were granted similar privileges. The historical roots of these faculties trace back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when the church began appointing individual priests as special confessors endowed with these privileges. This practice evolved further with various mendicant orders during the fifteenth century. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the expansion of these privileges became essential in overseas missionary fields, responding to the pastoral needs of those territories. These faculties extended beyond absolution of sins to include dispensations related to the Office of the Church, reflecting the church's adaptive approach to support apostolic and charitable work. However, these special privileges were not without controversy. They were sometimes seen as undermining episcopal authority or as favoritism toward certain orders, which sparked resentment and opposition in some circles. For more details on the handling of reserved cases within the Jesuit order, refer to chapters II and XIV of this text. For an in-depth historical overview, see Ralph Vincent Shuhler's *Privileges of Regulars to Absolve and Dispense: An Historical Conspectus and Commentary* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1943).

72 "Solicitation" refers to the act of a priest using the sacrament of confession to solicit or request sexual favors from the penitent. This constitutes a grave violation of both civil and canon law within the Catholic Church. Historically, such cases were reserved to the Apostolic See, underscoring the seriousness of the offense. Procedures for handling these cases were outlined in Pope Benedict XIV's (1675–1758, r.1740–58) apostolic constitution *Sacramentum poenitentiae* (1741). These norms were later incorporated into the 1917 Code of Canon Law and updated in the 1983 code. The church considers solicitation not only a grave sin but also a delict (canonical crime), which can incur penalties including dismissal from the clerical state.

the external person shall be absolved. If two of ours commit sodomy,[73] the one who does not reveal it shall be dismissed, while the one who reveals it first shall be retained in the Society but chastised so severely that, willingly or unwillingly, they will follow the other after a short interval.

The Society may also dismiss individuals for these reasons, as it is a kind of body: if, over time, it finds them to be coarse in manners and speech, or for whatever other reasons the superiors see fit, they will dismiss anyone from the Society with a general warning.[74] To hasten their dismissal, they shall be vexed, everything shall be done against their inclinations, and whatever they request shall be denied, even in small matters. They shall be kept from advanced studies and placed under superiors with whom they are dissatisfied. Nor should those who, when vexed, rise against the superior, complain about him before their brethren, or express displeasure with what happens in the Society regarding

73 "Sodomy" in the early modern period encompassed a broad range of sexual acts considered non-procreative or outside the bounds of lawful marriage. While the term was often associated with male same-sex relations, it could also refer to acts such as bestiality or non-vaginal intercourse between heterosexual partners. Heavily laden with moral and legal condemnation, the term reflected the societal norms and religious teachings of the time. In various jurisdictions, "sodomy" was considered a criminal offense, punishable by severe penalties, including death. Within the church, it was regarded as a grave sin, and ecclesiastical authorities actively sought to combat and punish it among both clergy and laity. The definition and understanding of "sodomy" were shaped by a complex interplay of theological, legal, and cultural factors, making it a multifaceted and often controversial issue in early modern society. These issues were addressed in many manuals for confessors produced by the Jesuits during this period, which saw significant development in the early seventeenth century.

74 This passage employs an organic, or "corporate," metaphor, a rhetorical device frequently used in discussions about the state and the church, and notably favored by Paul in his epistles. The Society of Jesus is likened to a body, with each member contributing to its overall health and functionality. The idea mirrors medical practices of the time: just as the health of the whole body depends on the well-being of each part, the well-being of the Society relies on the conduct and qualities of its individual members. Thus, the notion of "amputation"—here, the dismissal of members—serves as a necessary treatment to preserve the health of the entire body, or Society. This concept aligns with the Jesuit Constitutions, which adopt a similar corporate approach in their governance, emphasizing the role of each member in maintaining the order's overall health and effectiveness. The use of such metaphorical language underscores the perception of the Society as a unified entity, where the well-being and integrity of the whole are preserved by taking decisive action against any elements deemed harmful or unfit. This analogy between the human body and a corporate body was a powerful and common way of conceptualizing and communicating the importance of unity and purity within organizations during this period.

widows or the direction of public affairs, and who praise the Venetians (from whom the Society was expelled), be kept in the Society.[75]

Just before dismissal, the person to be dismissed shall be sharply agitated, removed from a specific office, and sent now to this, now to that duty. In the meantime, they shall be reproached for not performing their assigned duties well, and harsher penances shall be assigned for even minor infractions. Their faults shall be recited from the chair at mealtime so that they are confounded. During this period, when they display notable impatience, in the sight and hearing of others, they shall be dismissed as a scandal to others. However, their affairs shall first be reviewed, and they shall be helped to go to a vineyard or a nearby college. In the meantime, they shall be dismissed from the place they least expect.

XV Those Who Must Be Preserved and Cherished among the Society's People

Chapter XV outlines the categories of individuals within the Society of Jesus who must be preserved and cherished, particularly focusing on hardworking members with connections to wealth and influence, as well as those in various ministerial roles. The author's rhetoric subtly critiques the Society, suggesting that its priorities may be more aligned with material gain and strategic relationships than with spiritual values. By highlighting internal policies that appear self-serving, this chapter reinforces the text's broader aim of portraying the Jesuits as pragmatists, potentially at odds with their publicly professed spiritual ideals.

75 The reference alludes to the Republic of Venice's expulsion of the Jesuits in 1606. This expulsion was part of broader tensions between the papacy and Venice, culminating in the Venetian Interdict. The mention of this event sets a *terminus post quem* for the publication of this text, as it could not have been written before this date. The phrase "who praise the Venetians" reflects hostility toward Venice's actions, particularly its defiance of papal authority and the expulsion of the Jesuits. This critique complicates the traditional attribution of *Monita* to the Polish Jesuit Hieronim Zahorowski, as his personal grievances with the Society would likely not have involved direct political commentary on Venice. Instead, it could reflect concerns more aligned with the broader European Jesuit experience, especially in regions where tensions between religious and secular authorities were particularly fraught, such as Italy during the Venetian Interdict. This historical reference provides valuable insight into the timing and provenance of the text, suggesting it may have originated in a context with stronger ties to European, rather than strictly Polish, political-religious struggles, and is directly related to the Venetian references in the *Monita*'s appendix that we have edited and translated below.

The foremost place is held by the diligent workers who promote not only the spiritual good of the Society but also its temporal welfare, such as the confessors of wealthy widows.[76] As these confessors approach old age, they should be replaced by others with fresh strength and adequate age. Let them be granted whatever they ask in terms of food, clothing, and other things, and they should not be harassed by the ministers with penances. Superiors should not be overly trusting toward such individuals. Consideration should also be given to those who report even minor faults observed in others to the superior or who, placed in roles like ministers, assistant ministers, or beadles, know how to mortify others—not out of personal feelings but out of love for religious discipline. Young men who are relatives of our benefactors and founders should be cherished and sent to study in Rome; if they study in their own province, let them be provided with what they need to be cherished. Grace should also be extended to those young men who have not yet made the resignation of their goods for the Society;[77] after they have done so, they should be nourished with bread, not milk.[78]

Lastly, those who bring many select young men to the Society, showing a good disposition toward the Society's institution, should not be overlooked.

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76 See chapter VI above.

77 The reference to individuals who have "relinquished their goods for the sake of the Society" aligns with the Jesuit vow of poverty and reflects a deeper commitment to detachment from worldly possessions within the Society of Jesus. According to the Constitutions, it is considered an act of "greater perfection, detachment, and abnegation of all self-love" ([258]) to relinquish temporal goods without specifying a particular use or place for them within the Society. The ultimate decision on how these goods should be used rests with the superior general, who is viewed as best positioned to determine their use for the greater and more universal good of the Society and its spiritual mission.

78 It is important to interpret this passage, which emphasizes the special treatment of young men related to the Society's benefactors and founders, in the context of the text's parodic nature. The reference to Hebrews 5:11–14, which contrasts the need for "milk" with "solid food," takes on an ironic tone in this context. In the epistle, "milk" traditionally symbolizes basic teachings for the spiritually immature, while "solid food" represents more advanced doctrines for those who are spiritually mature. The instruction in the text to nurture these privileged young men with "bread" (symbolizing "solid food") instead of "milk" parodies the idea of advancing them quickly, not because of their spiritual or intellectual readiness but because of their connections. This satirical commentary critiques perceived practices within the Society, humorously suggesting that nepotism and favoritism based on lineage or association could take precedence over the spiritual and intellectual development valued by the Jesuits. The parody thus questions the integrity of the Society's commitment to the holistic growth of its members, provocatively hinting at how preferential treatment may undermine the Society's professed mission and values.

XVI On the Disdain of Riches

Chapter XVI provides a critical view of the Jesuits' attitudes toward wealth, particularly in terms of how they manage alms, funerals, and even the treatment of members who have relinquished their wealth to the Society. The text highlights the seemingly hypocritical practices of the Jesuits, advising them to deny modest alms for ordinary services, refuse cheap burials in their churches, and even dismiss members who have made significant donations. This critique aligns with the larger theme of the Monita privata*—a portrayal of the Society as prioritizing temporal gain over spiritual values. The unrelated final paragraph emphasizes the importance of secrecy within the Society. It details a contingency plan for handling the disclosure of confidential instructions should they be leaked to outsiders. The phrase "god forbid" underscores the Jesuits' fear of misinterpretation by those unfamiliar with the instructions' intended purpose. The proposed strategy of outright denial, coupled with the enlistment of members unaware of these instructions to confirm their ignorance, is intended as a method of damage control. This passage reveals the author's anticipation of how the Jesuits would respond if such documents were exposed. Indeed, in real life, Jesuit defenders like Mateusz Bembus (c.1567–1645) in* Monita salutaria *(Salutary admonitions [Kraków: Piotrkowczyk, 1615]) and Jacob Gretser (1562–1625) in* Contra famosum libellum cuius inscriptio est: Monita privata Societatis Jesu libri tres apologetici *(Against the famous booklet entitled* Private Instructions of the Society of Jesus, *three apologetic books [Ingolstadt: Angermaria, 1618]) dismissed the* Monita *as a forgery. Ironically, their denials closely mirrored the tactics suggested in the parody itself, reinforcing the portrayal of the Jesuits as secretive and manipulative. This preemptive stroke by the author deepens the parody's critique of the Society, exposing an organization that—according to the* Monita*—operates with a hidden agenda and seeks to manipulate its public image. The rhetorical strategy blends secrecy and hypocrisy, contributing to the broader anti-Jesuit sentiment that characterized early modern religious polemics. The mirroring between the content of* Monita *and the Jesuits' real-life reaction exemplifies the charged atmosphere of religious discourse during this period and serves as a testament to the author's insight into Jesuit practices.*

Lest too great a desire for wealth be attributed to us, it will be useful not to accept modest alms for ordinary services performed by ours. Let cheap funerals in our churches be denied. Widows who have exhausted themselves by giving to us should be dealt with more harshly, as should our members who have

resigned their goods to the Society.[79] Indeed, such individuals should sometimes be dismissed, either by not returning anything to them or by significantly deducting for expenses the Society has incurred on their behalf.

[Guidelines for the Discreet Communication of Private Instructions within the Society]

Superiors should diligently keep these private instructions to themselves, sharing them only with a few serious fathers, who shall then instruct others on how to serve the Society fruitfully. These instructions should be communicated as if derived from the fathers' own prudence, not as writings from another source. Should these admonitions, God forbid, fall into the hands of outsiders, since they would likely be interpreted in a sinister manner, they should be denied as being representative of the Society's true sentiment. This denial should be reinforced by those among us who are undoubtedly unaware of such matters. These private instructions should be opposed by the general instructions and the printed or written ordinances that contradict them. Finally, an investigation should be conducted to determine whether someone from within our ranks betrayed the Society, for no superior would be so negligent as to fail to keep such significant decrees securely. If even the slightest suspicion falls upon someone, they should be held accountable and dismissed from the Society. Testimonies about the Jesuits of Certain Italians and Spaniards[80]

In the Testimonies, a multi-faceted critique of the Jesuit order unfolds through appended texts complementing the Monita. *These documents allege manipulative Jesuit practices, such as exploiting wealthy widows, political maneuvering, and calculated recruitment methods, echoing concerns raised in the* Monita. *The Testimonies emphasize the Jesuits' intimate political connections, particularly as confessors to monarchs like Sigismund III of Poland and Louis XIII of France, consolidating their influence through their political advice. Insights into internal governance, including member dismissal and hierarchical structures, align with the* Monita*'s portrayal of a rigorously managed institution. Scrutiny of the Jesuits' financial dealings and relationships with benefactors further echoes the* Monita*'s portrayal of the Society's economic tactics. The documents suggest a disparity between the Jesuits' professed values and actual conduct, highlighting efforts to discredit critics and manage public perception. They demonstrate*

79 On the concept of resignation by members of the Society, see instruction X above.
80 Despite the title, there is no information in the testimonies from Spaniards.

the Jesuits' significant societal influence, from personal relationships to broader political spheres.

The Testimonies' inclusion in the 1612 Nysa edition of the Monita *underscores their historical significance. The typographic link to Krispin Scharffenberg's Nysa workshop—a center of diverse religious ideologies—hints at efforts to obscure the texts' origins, possibly influenced by Jesuit connections to figures like Charles I of Habsburg, bishop of Wrocław. The presence of Jan Ostroróg's counterargument further complicates the narrative, particularly given his conversion from Lutheranism under Jesuit influence. The Testimonies emphasize the House of Austria's influence in regions like Poland and France during the rule of families such as the Habsburgs, underscoring the Jesuits' deep connections with rulers like Sigismund III and Louis XIII. The appendix also details Jesuit socio-political maneuvers and internal governance, offering a rich understanding of the order's practices. The geographic scope, including Venice, Bohemia, and Polish-German territories, mirrors the European landscape of the* Monita, *reflecting widespread anti-Jesuit sentiment during the early modern period. This relationship between the Testimonies and the* Monita *is also sharpened by the inclusion of Cardinal Bernard Maciejowski's letter to the Venetian doge and the satirical poem "Prosa in laudem iesuitarum," both of which sharpen the focus on Venice, enhancing the critical tone against the Society. The Testimonies' references to Superior General Claudio Acquaviva and the expulsion from Venice contextualize the anti-Jesuit sentiment across Europe and provide insight into the political and religious tensions of the time.*

1. Except for the judgment of the supreme pontiffs, who have approved this Institute of the Ignatians,[81] it is commonly said about them that they are fathers of unjust art, deceitful fraud, and malicious trickery. Contrary to the custom and manner of all religious orders,[82] they dismiss people after

81 The author's use of the term "Ignatians" rather than the official "Society of Jesus" is notable and may reflect an intentional distancing from the formal identity of the Jesuit order. This choice of nomenclature suggests the author may not be a member of the Society and could be adopting a critical stance. It mirrors a common tactic employed by anti-Jesuit writers, particularly Protestant critics, who often used terms like "Loyolitae" to subtly critique the order by emphasizing its founder, Ignatius of Loyola, rather than associating the group with the sacred name of Jesus. Protestants often refused to use "Society of Jesus" because they believed the Jesuits were improperly appropriating the holy name for their own ends, seeing it as an act of usurpation. This terminological shift might indicate a nuanced understanding of, and potentially disapproval toward, the Jesuits' role and influence during the period.

82 On the contrast between the Jesuits and other religious orders, see chapter V of the *Monita*.

many years spent in the Society.[83] Fabio de Fabiis in Naples dismissed eleven from one college,[84] each of whom had spent a great deal of time in the Society, including Biondo, an excellent preacher, to whom all of Rome's populace flocked to listen, who was so neglected that he was driven out of the Society.[85] What about those two lights, the Cicala brothers, professed in the four vows, lecturers in theology, very dear to Pope Clement VIII,[86] who rejected the dignity of the cardinalate offered by him, successfully completed most difficult legations, and after the death of Clement VIII, in hatred of Pope Clement, the general Claudio, more rightly Bloody-Water than Living-Water,[87] drove them out of the Society.[88]

83 The issue of dismissal from the Society occupies a significant space in the *Monita*. See esp. chapters X–XI, XIV, and XVI.

84 Fabio de Fabiis (Fabii [1545–1615]) was reputed to be the last and only descendant of the famous Roman general Fabius Cunctator (*c*.280–203 BCE), who famously delayed Hannibal's (247–*c*.183 BCE) advances during the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE). Despite strong familial opposition, Fabiis joined the Society of Jesus in 1567. He later held several key administrative positions, including superior provincial of the Neapolitan province (1600–2), rector of the Roman College (1602–4), and assistant to Acquaviva (1604–8), roles which granted him the authority to dismiss members of the Society. In 1608, he was appointed assistant general for the Italian region. His writings concerning various juridical matters under Acquaviva's governance are preserved in the ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico, part 2 (Manuscripti), section 15. Jesuit historian Francesco Sacchini composed his biography. See ARSI, *Vitae* 62 and 147. See *DHCJ* 1367. His tenure overlapped with that of the Cicala brothers, who are also referenced in this paragraph.

85 Perhaps Bartolomeo Biondi (b. *c*.1548) who was dismissed on July 27, 1596 (ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 54, fol. 15) or, more likely, Andrea Blondo, who was dismissed on June 14, 1601 (fol. 17^{v}).

86 Pope Clement VIII (1536–1605) reigned from February 2, 1592, to March 1605. Prior to his papacy, under Sixtus V (1521–90, r.1585–90), he was dispatched to Poland as a legate a latere (1588–89), where he successfully negotiated the release of Archduke Maximilian III of Austria (1558–1618; r.1612–18) who had been imprisoned after his failed claim to the Polish throne.

87 "Claudio the Bloody-Water rather than Living-Water." This is a mischievous play on words based on the name of Claudio Acquaviva, the fifth superior general of the Society of Jesus, who held the position from 1581. Acquaviva's frequent admonitions are parodied in the *Monita*. The invective against him reveals intense negative feelings, likely shared by the Cicala brothers—Jesuit priests of Turkish descent mentioned in the next paragraph—who were expelled by Acquaviva despite having professed the four solemn vows of the Society. This particular animosity highlights the tension between Acquaviva and certain members of the Jesuit order.

88 Antonio Cicala (b.1570, Lecce–d.1629, Naples) entered the Society of Jesus, as did his brother Vincenzo (d.1616). They were relatives of the famous Turkish general Sinan Pasha Cicala (*c*.1545–1605). Both brothers were sent on numerous diplomatic missions to European courts by Pope Clement VIII. Vincenzo took the four solemn vows in 1600, and Antonio in 1599, but both were expelled from the Society in 1605 by Acquaviva after the death of Pope Clement. See Pirri, *L'Interdetto di Venezia,* 81–83, 87. In Paolo Sarpi's

11. Blessed be God, who quelled the revolt of the Venetians with Paul V, or to that effect, that his holiness saw how much he ought to favor the Jesuits, who, with flattery and feigned zeal for religion, were the heads of such great scandals.[89]

Historia particolare delle cose passate tra'l sommo pontefice Paolo V. e la serenissima republica di Venetia gli anni MDCV, e MDCVI (Venice: Roberto Meietti), 139, Antonio Cicala is mentioned as accompanying Francesco de Castro to Venice as part of an embassy: "Conduceva [Francesco de Castro] anco seco il Cigala, gesuita, come principal ministro dell'ambasceria; ma, meglio consigliato, lo lasciò tornar a Roma" (Francesco de Castro also brought with him Cigala, a Jesuit, as the principal minister of the embassy; but, upon better advice, he let him return to Rome). On August 27, 1615, the Venetian ambassador to Rome, Agostino Nani (1553–1627), wrote to the doge and senate: "The General of the Jesuits endeavored to expel from the Society the two brothers Cigàla [*sic*], who, under Clement, urged the pope to suppress the order in Spain, and who carried out many negotiations for Cardinal Aldobrandino. The support of the Spanish ambassador and the cardinal has saved them. The pope means to send them to Spain or, as others say, to England to look after Catholic interests." The documents on their dissmisal case are to be found in ARSI, *Informationum 62 de dimissis e Societate*, 1:435, fols. 1000–1042.

89 On April 21, 1607, a peace treaty between the papacy and Venice concluded with Paul V lifting the interdict, despite Venice's refusal to amend its stance on civil jurisdiction over ecclesiastical properties and clergy. This treaty permitted the return and asset restoration of the Capuchins and Theatines but explicitly excluded the Jesuits at Venice's insistence—a decision Paul V reluctantly accepted, resulting in the Jesuits' permanent expulsion. This highlighted the papacy's miscalculation in issuing an unenforceable interdict and in demanding Jesuit obedience, which directly led to their banishment. The Jesuits, serving papal interests, were implicated as provocateurs in the broader "revolt of the Venetians" against Pope Paul V, manifesting in the 1606 Papal Interdict over jurisdictional disputes and the secular trial of clergy. Sarpi's *History of the Interdict* portrays the Jesuits as subversive agents, involved in spreading slander, covert operations, and promoting political doctrines favoring monarchy over aristocracy—doctrines that conflicted with Venetian republicanism. Sarpi accuses the Jesuits of instigating widespread unrest, justifying their expulsion as necessary for the stability of Venice. Sarpi's critical stance is evident in his *History of the Interdict* (1:72–73), where he writes: "While discussions were ongoing in Venice, Rome, and the courts of princes, the Jesuits did not cease to act adversely against the Republic, both outside Italy and within its cities. They spread many slanders, both in private conversations and public preachings, and within the Republic's domain, through letters to their followers. They also called their devotees to the borders, entering the domain in disguise to carry out malevolent acts [...]. The doctrine of the Jesuits regarding political matters, favoring monarchy over aristocracy with principles greatly opposed to the governance and institutions of the Republic, was also examined. The Jesuits have been identified as authors and instruments of all uprisings, seditions, disorders, and damages that have occurred in our times across all kingdoms and provinces of the world. Faults were found not only in individual members but also in the Society as a whole, far more than could have been imagined." This passage encapsulates the Venetian perspective on the Jesuits, framing them as a disruptive force in global politics and affirming their expulsion as justified by their role in provoking dissent.

III. It is a matter of regret that the Jesuits had as a supporter of their order Gregory XIII,[90] from whom they obtained the privileges they wanted. I doubt their value, since they were granted to the prejudice of the ordinaries,[91] and at the request of women, who, because of old customs, had much influence with that pope, and through them the Jesuits obtained their privileges.[92]

IV. It is difficult to assert anything about the goodness of the Jesuits, for the complaints about them, which come from almost all kingdoms and provinces, prove their malice.[93]

V. From my familiar conversation, I learned what a devout man wanted to know from me about the vows and ranks of the Jesuits.[94] Their vows are

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90 Pope Gregory XIII reigned from 1572 to 1585 and was a strong supporter of the Jesuits. His bull *Ascendente Domino* (1584) confirmed the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and reinforced the privileges previously granted to the order by Popes Paul III, Julius III (1487–1555, r.1550–55), Paul IV (1476–1559, r.1555–59), and Pius V (1504–72, r.1566–72). For further details, see Agostino Borromeo, "Gregorio XIII," in *Enciclopedia dei papi* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana Treccani, 2000), 3:200–2.

91 That is, of bishops. The privilege granted to the Jesuits allowed them to resolve the reserved cases of bishops in sacramental confession. See chapter XIV of the *Monita* above.

92 See Jacob Gretser's *Contra famosum libellum*, 994, where he defends Pope Gregory XIII against accusations or suspicions of undue influence by women, particularly concerning the issuance of official church documents. The text acknowledges the existence of a son, explaining it either as a result of a youthful marriage or a lapse during a more passionate time of life, which the pope later atoned for through virtuous deeds. In fact, Ugo had a son, Giacomo, born to an unmarried woman named Maddalena Fulchini in 1548. Giacomo was sent to study with the Jesuits in Bologna and later became the keeper of Castel Sant'Angelo and gonfalonier general of the Holy Roman Church, the highest military position in the Papal States. He died in 1612.

93 In his *Refutatio* of this paragraph, Gretser references, among other Western anti-Jesuit works, *Actio* [*larvati*] *equitis Poloni in Jesuitas*, which was composed in the Polish milieu. See Sarpi's letter (1:212–13): "Non credo che mai più fosse un genere d'uomini così giurati nemici della bontà e verità" (I believe there has never been a kind of men so sworn enemies of goodness and truth). On the *Actio*, see Michał E. Nowakowski, "Investigating an Anti-Jesuit Crime: The Reattributed 'Equitis Poloni in jesuitas actio prima' (1590) and Its Impact on the Anti-Jesuit Sentiment in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth" [in review].

94 Sarpi wrote about his research on the Jesuit vows in a 1610 letter to de l'Isle Groslot (2:171): "E per rispondere a quello che V. S. mi dimanda, le dirò che le Costituzioni sono una composizione fatta dal primo principio della loro fondazione, la quale dopo poco tempo ha ricevuto un augumento intitolato: Declarationes et annotationes Constitutionum, con decreto che queste ancora siano di pari autorità alle Costituzioni: le quali cose tutte sono fatte innanzi ogni congregazione generale. In esse congregazioni fanno, secondo esigenza, nuovi decreti; ed io ho una formula di certi loro voti, nella quale si dice: Extracta ex prima Congregatione generali, tit. 6, decret. 23; tale che V. S. può comprendere quanto siano multiplici le deliberazioni di queste congregazioni, poichè sono distinte per titoli e

twofold: solemn and simple. The latter bind the one who vows, not the religious order, hence the Society can dismiss such a person with such vows whenever it wishes. Some make three solemn vows, others four, namely to go without provisions to all parts of the world. The ranks are four: first, the scholastics and coadjutors, who make vows after their novitiate. Second, the formed coadjutors, who make the same simple vows publicly and do not renew them as the scholastics do, who renew their vows twice a year. Indeed, if they are priests, they are called formed spiritual coadjutors, those who are constant in hearing the confessions of the poor, and who visit the sick and those lying in filth.[95] Third, those who are professed with three vows are very few; fourth, there are those professed with four vows, who enjoy their own privileges, associate as they wish with widows[96] and princes, have access to the confessions of monarchs, and, finally, are attentive to the governance of republics and highly skilled in gathering and amassing wealth. All such vows are such that it is up to the general to have the power to dismiss someone with such vows from the Society, which is certainly most serious to look after one's own affairs when one's age and health are weakened. Arise, O God, and correct

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decreti" (To answer your question, I'll say that the Constitutions are a compilation made from the very beginning of their foundation, which shortly after received an addition titled *Declarationes et annotationes Constitutionum*, with a decree stating that these too hold equal authority to the Constitutions. All of this was established before any general congregation. In these congregations, new decrees are made as needed; and I have a formula of some of their vows, which states: Extracted from the first General Congregation, title 6, decree 23; so you can understand how manifold the decisions of these congregations are, since they are distinguished by titles and decrees).

95 This is a direct reference to the first admonition of the *Monita*: "Quare humilia obsequia obeunda in xenodochiis et fimo iacentes invisendi, ad confessiones excipiendas" (Therefore, humble services must be performed, strangers in hospices and those cast in dung must be visited, [and] confessions of anyone must be heard). This reflects the emphasis on performing menial and humble tasks as part of the Jesuit mission, which the *Monita* critiques as part of a strategy to gain influence and control under the guise of religious service.

96 Widows are a prominent theme of the *Monita*, appearing in chapters VI–IX and referenced again in chapters XV and XVI. In defending the Jesuit interactions with widows, Gretsezer highlights an example from the Polish context by referencing St. Hyacinth's influence on Bolesław V the Chaste (1226–79), duke of Kraków and Sandomierz, and his wife, Kunegunda of Hungary (1234–92), in helping them maintain their vow of chastity. Gretser uses this example to illustrate the spiritual guidance that religious figures provided to noble widows and families during this period (995).

these frauds, for it cannot happen that many young people under their care are not deceived.[97]

VI. It is astonishing that the Jesuits insert disastrous stories about religious orders, especially the Dominicans,[98] among their curious writings, as Del Rio did,[99] with no other purpose than to incite hatred against them and to commend the sanctity of their own Society, while among themselves they cunningly conceal many evils that occur. In Brno, Moravia, under the rector Campano,[100] indeed a Jesuit (who, whenever he wished, took the Most Holy Sacrament to his room), was snatched away by a demon with his body and never appeared again. Many, appearing after death, confess to be damned. Those dying curse the day of their birth because they had entered the Society. So much so do they dissent among themselves with long-standing hatreds that in informing on each other to their general and superiors, those about to die hardly forgive each other nor restore the reputation taken away.[101]

VII. The Republic of Venice, following the expulsion of the Jesuits, now enjoys both domestic and external peace, particularly with the Most Holy Paul V. The Germans envy this to them, but even more so the Poles, who, being more servile, partly out of love for private gain and partly in the hope of obtaining honors through the Jesuits, who hold sway with the king, suffer the dominion of the Jesuits and allow their counsels, so that the king administers Poland to their greatest hatred.[102] This favor of the lords

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97 In response to this accusation, Gretser wrote: "You clearly show what you hide under your chest, namely something about Luther or Calvin. If not the entirety of Luther or Calvin: For who among Catholics would ever dare to say that the Supreme Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ, the Successor of Saint Peter, with his Decrees & Diplomas, would support frauds, and, to ensure they are as widely spread as possible, lend them strength?" (996).

98 See the first testimony.

99 Probably Martín Delrio (1551–1608), a Flemish theologian known for his works on demonology.

100 Giovanni Paolo Campano was the rector of the college in Brno from 1581 and died in Rome in 1592.

101 Cf. instruction XIV.

102 This note may reference King Sigismund III Vasa and the Zebrzydowski Rokosz, a rebellion of the Polish nobility against the king, who was closely associated with the Jesuits. A fragment from the poem "Wotum" (*c.*1607) circulating among the *rokoszans* reads: "Weneci samego się papieża nie bali, / Który kazał im znowu Jezuity wsadzić; / Ale go słuchać nie chcą, wolą się z nim wadzić. /Nuż wy też, cni Polacy, ze snu się ocućcie, / A tę truciznę z siebie co rychlej wyrzućcie!" (In Venice, they were not even afraid of the pope himself, / Who ordered them to readmit the Jesuits; / But they do not want to listen to him, preferring to quarrel with him. / Now you too, honorable Poles, wake up from your sleep, / And quickly rid yourselves of this poison!). This reflects a clear connection between the

towards the Jesuits, if it does not bring about overthrow, makes for perpetual dissensions in the republic.[103]

VIII. From the time when religious orders arose in the church of God, no religious order has ever claimed as much for itself as the Society of Jesus claims in ruling over monarchs, inciting lords against their subjects, guarding widows, leading them to vows by receiving their goods, depriving their relatives of hereditary succession, granting them great liberty of life by flattering them, dissuading marriages, so that they may more freely indulge in their desires with them.[104]

IX. I cannot bear the foolish defenders of the Jesuits. For by pretending that they have produced some fruit in the church, they excuse their crimes and hateful deeds, which, because they have increased the Catholic faith,

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expulsion of the Jesuits from Venice and the *rokosz*'s goals. In a letter to Jacques Gillot, Sarpi wrote (1:353): "Faccia di stampare al più presto i documenti ammanniti; perocchè ai veleni di già conosciuti sono da contrapporre gli antidoti. Se i Gesuiti, anco tutti, le saranno addosso, poco male: vano è il volere andar loro ai versi. Creda pure a me: tanto ella fece fin qui, che il loro odio verso di lei non può farsi maggiore; e bene ne darebbero prova, se al volere rispondessero le forze" (Proceed to print the prepared documents as soon as possible, because antidotes must be offered against the already known poisons. If all the Jesuits oppose you, it is of little consequence: it is futile to try to please them. Trust me: you have done so much already that their hatred toward you cannot grow any larger; and they would prove it if their desires matched their capabilities).

103 Testimonial VII draws a sharp contrast between the Republic of Venice, which expelled the Jesuits to secure peace with Pope Paul V, and Poland, where Jesuit influence is portrayed as a source of discord and unrest. This testimonial resonates with themes from the Zebrzydowski Rokosz texts. For example, "Ad Patres Iesuitas" criticizes the Jesuits for their political and economic ambitions, echoing Venice's strong stance against them. Similarly, *Echo rokoszańskie* calls for similarly firm opposition to the Jesuits in Poland, inspired by Venice's success. Another example is the satirical hymn "Hymnus de s. Patribus Societatis Iesu," which circulated among *rokoszans* and highlighted widespread European discontent with Jesuit political and religious influence. Together, these texts emphasize the defense of local autonomy and republican values against the Jesuits' support of monarchical systems, reflecting the critique in testimonial VII of Jesuit interference in Poland. Additionally, the appended poem "Prosa in laudem Iesuitarum" in the Nysa edition of the *Monita* belongs to the same genre of anti-Jesuit poetry that emerged from Venice. Another Polish text that echoes testimonial VII is *Consilium de recuperanda et in posterum stabilienda pace Regni Poloniae* (1607), which states: "Sicut vel ex Venetorum exemplo intelligere possumus, quos hæc Secta per universam Italiam pro pestilentissimis hæreticis proclamare dicitur, idéo saltem, quòd latis seu potiùs renovatis Legibus, Jesuitarum cupiditati frenum injicerunt" (Just as we can understand from the example of the Venetians, whom this sect is said to proclaim throughout all of Italy as the most pestilential heretics, therefore at least, because with the laws being broadened or rather renewed, they have put a bridle on the greed of the Jesuits).

104 This testimony reads like a table of contents of the *Monita*.

therefore they should govern republics, therefore deceive and attract to themselves noble youths, and when it pleases them, expel the same, extort from widows, and lie about money. Certainly, God, the vineyard keeper, if not through them, would have provided through others, but they frequently hear confessions, indeed. I dare to say that those who confess to the Jesuits are either ambitious and simoniacal, or greedy, or cunning, and with evil schemes, want to achieve something in that republic where the Jesuits' regime exists.

I Of Bernard Maciejowski, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Archbishop of Gniezno,[105] to the Ruler of the Venetians

If the Most Illustrious Magistrate of Venice seeks my judgment about the Jesuits, I must express, speaking for myself, that I regret having been a supporter of the Jesuits. I have noticed, to my detriment and to the republic's, many unfortunate events have occurred, which would never have been experienced if Our Most Serene Sigismund, the senators of the kingdom, had embraced the opinions not of the Jesuits but in the governance of the republic.

II To the Legate

The Jesuits possess privileges by which they surpass bishops in jurisdiction, I hope that this contributes to the honor of God. As far as I can tell, their privileges lead to the freedom of sinning and the contempt of the clergy. Those who reject these, take refuge with the Jesuits, who, by easily absolving them from reserved cases and grievous sins, increase the number of pseudo-pious Catholics and decrease the number of Catholics with solid piety and a fearful conscience.

105 Cardinal Bernard Maciejowski was a key figure in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Catholic Church, closely associated with the Jesuit order. Educated at the Jesuit college in Vienna and later studying theology in Rome under the influence of prominent Polish Jesuit Piotr Skarga (1536–1612), Maciejowski maintained strong ties with the order. His leadership roles, including bishop of Kraków (1600–5) and archbishop of Gniezno (1606–8), placed him at the center of Poland's religious transformation during the Counter-Reformation, much of which aligned with Jesuit objectives. His work in reforming the Polish church according to the Council of Trent's (1545–63) decrees further demonstrates his connection to Jesuit teachings. If authentic, this letter must have been written between 1606 and 1608.

III Of Jerzy Radziwiłł, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Bishop of Kraków[106]

It is astonishing how subtly the Jesuits ingratiate themselves with people—they flatter eagerly, sting sharply, anoint the heart with spiritual words, but they strongly extort money. From my experience, I advise that no one should be too familiar with the Jesuits if bishops want to preserve their authority. They should do nothing through them but by themselves with their prelates, carry out what pertains to the clergy and the governance of the diocese.

IV Piotr Myszkowski, Bishop of Kraków,[107] to Sixtus V

In the recently celebrated provincial synod, initiated by the bishop of Kuyavia,[108] many things were granted to the Jesuits, which would make any religious order arrogant. It will be for Your Holiness, having seen the statutes, to confirm or disapprove them. I, to use the pen of truth, in considering the vocation of the Jesuits, fear they may be similar to the Templars, who, by plausible methods seeking the adornment and order of the churches, grew into such power that they became a burden to kings. For by what means they can move kings against subjects, with an easier one, subjects against the king. I wish to falsely say that the Jesuits are a subtle evil, beneficial in piety studies against the orthodox, what to pretend, by the ultimate event, which I do not know, I do not wish for ruin or perpetual turmoil of republics.

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106 Cardinal Jerzy Radziwiłł (1556–1600) was a significant figure in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth's religious and political scene, with strong ties to the Jesuits. Originally educated in Calvinist schools, he converted to Catholicism under the influence of Skarga. Radziwiłł's ecclesiastical career, including his roles as bishop of Vilnius (1579–91), bishop of Kraków (1591–1600), and cardinal, reflects the Jesuits' influence in the upper ranks of the church during the Counter-Reformation. His efforts to implement reforms aligned with the Council of Trent, along with his diplomatic missions to the Papal States, underscore his close connection to the Jesuit-led Counter-Reformation in both the church and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. If authentic, this letter would have been written between 1591 and 1600.

107 Piotr Myszkowski (*c.*1510–91), as bishop of Płock (1567–77) and later of Kraków (1577–91), was initially a strong supporter of Jesuit activities. His patronage is demonstrated by his support for their initiatives, including backing Skarga's foundation of the Arcybractwo Miłosierdzia in Kraków. However, Myszkowski also supported the Kraków Academy in its conflicts with the Society of Jesus. If authentic, this letter would have been written between 1585 and 1590, during the pontificate of Sixtus V (born Felice Peretti).

108 Hieronim Rozdrażewski (1546–1600), bishop of Kujawy (1582–1600), whose older brother Stanisław (1540–1619) was a Jesuit and the first rector of the college in Pułtusk.

V Demetrius Sulikovius, Archbishop of Lviv[109]

The Jesuits are vigorous soldiers in writing against heretics, guardians of the Roman faith. In their dealings with princes, they are fabricators of evil, with widows, they are bloodsuckers of money, with boys in schools, they are deceivers, not teaching solid arts, and attracting boys of good intellect to themselves.

VI The Same

The schools of the Jesuits bring some fruit to the Christian Republic, but the most to the Jesuits themselves, for by choosing the better talents for themselves, they deprive fathers, families, and the homeland of this good, who could have more greatly adorned both themselves and their own. The worst part, however, is that having sweetly deceived, they again expel them, for whom it is difficult to gain access to high prelatures, either because of the tired strength of those dismissed by them or the very serious king's aversion of mind by the persuasion of the Jesuits, not to favor those whom the Jesuits had expelled.

They certainly tried to persuade me not to provide for one dismissed by them in my diocese, and when I asked for the reason why they were so enraged against him, they replied, so that, defeated by weariness due to his bad success, he might seek some corner and not be in our sight or by the fortunate success of his affairs, lead others to imitate him out of our Society.

The Jesuits lie about rendering obedience to the supreme pontiffs. Julius IV and Pius V in their bulls, commanded that all priests of the Ignatian Society become professed of three vows, who could not be of four vows. The contrary is heard, that scarcely in one province are there three, or one professed of three vows, most priests being only of three simple vows, so that they may be more easily dispatched from the Society.

I know of a book to be published that describes the fraudulent institution of the Jesuits. I would call it tyrannical, for in the hands of the general alone lies all the power to establish and annul whatever he wants in the Society, with all others vainly protesting, and to attribute to one man as much as the vicar of Christ

109 Jan Dymitr Solikowski (1539–1603), archbishop of Lviv (1587–1603), played a pivotal role in the Counter-Reformation in Poland and maintained close interactions with Skarga. His tenure saw significant religious reforms, including the 1593 Lviv Synod and the 1596 Synod of Brest, which formalized the union between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Solikowski worked closely with Skarga, particularly when he was appointed as the administrator of reclaimed churches in Riga, with Skarga serving as his advisor. If authentic, this letter would have been written between 1587 and 1603.

claims for himself by Christ's privilege only in matters of faith. I reproached a Jesuit familiar to me for this, who responded to me: Only Claudio Acquaviva had attributed this to himself; therefore, he had expelled many, even professed from the Spaniards, who wanted to have in Spain a provincial with that jurisdiction, which was given during the time of Ignatius.

The Jesuits vainly soften sinister speeches of men about themselves with false stories, telling the worst that has happened to those who feel differently about them than they wish. They say Sixtus V died quickly because he ordered himself to wear yellow hoods. Clement VIII died at the hour he wanted to approve the Dominican opinion on grace. His nephew Peter is wasting away with many diseases, Paul V's nephew died because he did not immediately at the first request canonize Ignatius.

Prose in Praise of the Jesuits[110]

Wealthy Jesuits, in cities they reside,
Seeking immunities, with pride,
Claiming piety as they arrive in lands,
Aiming to govern with cunning hands.[111]

110 Despite being titled "Prose in Praise of the Jesuits," this text is undeniably poetic in both structure and style. It uses rhyme, rhythm, and a clear stanzaic form, which are hallmarks of poetry rather than prose. This mislabeling as "prose" could be an ironic or satirical choice, possibly intended to mock or criticize the Jesuits by contrasting their lofty, prose-like vows with the rhythmically structured accusations of hypocrisy and ambition laid out in poetic form. In early modern literature, it was not uncommon for satirical or rhetorical works to be labeled "prose" even if they had a poetic structure, often as a way to emphasize that the work aimed at persuasive or moral critique, rather than purely artistic or lyrical expression.

111 Cf. Sarpi's letter to Jacques Leschassier (1550–1625): "In quanto all'arcano modo di agire dei Gesuiti in questi stessi luoghi da cui già vennero espulsi, credo che la S. V. abbia colto perfettamente nel segno. Si crede per molti indizi, e questi assai probabili, che alquanti di loro, con mutate vesti, s'introducano nelle nostre città; e ciò senza troppe malagevolezze. Le ragioni perchè ciò fanno, sono due: la prima, per tenere in fede e nella soggezione i loro adepti, affinchè non passino in altre mani; l'altra, per appropriarsi il danaro che loro suol essere pagato dalle vedove e dagli altri ricchi superstiziosi. Quanto alla meraviglia da lei provata che questo segua, tornando a danno de' parrochi e dei pastori ordinari, stantechè i Gesuiti non permettono in verun luogo che i loro devoti trattino cogli ordinari di alcuna cosa senza saputa e senza il loro permesso; più è da maravigliare ch'essi vengano favoriti da molti fra quei medesimi pastori, tinti pur troppo della stessa pece" (Regarding the secret manner in which the Jesuits act in these very places from which they have already been expelled, I believe Your Excellency has hit the mark perfectly. It is believed, based on many indications—quite probable—that some of them, in changed clothes,

As confessors to kings, they seek their role,
In public honors, they take control.
Preaching of poverty, yet wealth they crave,
Urging wives from husbands to save.

They compel theft as a dowry's gain,
Thus wives, in thievery, keep husbands free from stain.
To widowed rich, religious vows they sell,
Observe how Jesuits from this swell.

They cease not Jesus, stripped and poor, to show,
Till widows' treasures toward them flow.
Confessors to rich women, they aspire,
Sharing in wealth, their sole desire.

In confessions, they probe, not for the soul's peace,
But what lies in chambers, wealth's increase.
They visit the rich, inquiring of their lot,
Seeking what riches for them are wrought.

To prisoners' confessions, they turn away,
"Forgive us, little sons," they say, "we're held at bay."
They claim goods of the altar and chapter,
Denied by Venetian lords, those sea-capturers.

Patrons to parishes, they claim their right,
Rule over kings, in monarchs' sight.
Craftsmen deceived, their common plaint,
Even Paul V to war, they made a saint.

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have infiltrated our cities with little difficulty. The reasons are twofold: first, to keep their followers loyal and submissive, ensuring they do not turn to others; second, to appropriate the money typically paid to them by widows and other rich superstitious people. As for your wonder that this occurs, to the detriment of parish priests and ordinary pastors, since the Jesuits do not allow their devotees to deal with ordinaries without their knowledge and permission, it is more astonishing that many among these same pastors favor the Jesuits, unfortunately tainted by the same corruption [89]). This approach is echoed in *Consilium*: "For while on the one hand they display a certain miraculous control of life, an angelic chastity, and a devout devotion to religious piety, on the other hand, a deep avarice so cruel, and such a clever artifice of encircling noble families and deceiving widows and orphans." See Czubek, *Pisma polityczne*, 3:40.

No certain habit marks their order's guise,
To deceive men and women, their prize.
Dominicans, Franciscans, in church, do more,
Yet boast not, nor vain glory store.

Not ruling kings for fruits they've grown,
Their order's laws more strictly known.
Jesuits, though deeds be small, amplify,
Thus with lies, men's minds they falsify.