CHAPTER FOUR

JESUIT OPPOSITION TO THE PURITY-OF-BLOOD DISCRIMINATION (1576–1608)

Thus there is no Poland, no Spain, no Germany, no France, but one Society, one God in all, all in one Lord Jesus Christ, whose members you are.
Everard Mercurian, S.J., 1573

The prior purity-of-blood legislation promulgated in Toledo that we have analyzed in Chapters One and Three—Mayor Sarmiento’s in 1449, Inquisitor Silíceo’s in 1547, and the anti-converso decree of the Jesuit Fifth General Congregation (1593)—provoked a fifteen-year-long storm of opposition that eventually led to the limitation, if only superficial, of the lineage inquiry (up to the fifth generation) by General Congregation Six (1608).¹ Five influential Jesuits, who have frequently appeared on previous pages of this book, constituted the vanguard of this opposition: Antonio Possevino, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Diego de Guzmán, Juan de Mariana, and García Girón de Alarcón. This chapter examines their pro-converso writings within their historical context.

García Girón de Alarcón is virtually unknown, yet his memorial from 1597 is the most comprehensive critique of the Jesuit purity-of-blood discrimination. This is why we shall dedicate to him and his text much space in this chapter. Juan de Mariana, a member of the memorialistas movement, authored a work entitled De rege et regis institutione, in which he expressed his views on the discrimination against the conversos. It was Antonio Possevino who explicitly mentioned Mariana’s Jewish ancestry.² Diego de Guzmán—whom

¹ Harald E. Braun, in his recent Juan de Mariana and Early Modern Spanish Political Thought (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007), p. 93, incorrectly stated that General Congregation 6 (1608) revoked the 1593 decree. Juan de Mariana and his friend Pedro de Ribadeneyra did contribute, through their writings, to the defense of the conversos’ status, as we shall see below, but their success was only partial, for General Congregation 6 just limited the genealogical inquiry. The 1593 decree was revoked only in 1946.
² See Possevino’s “Memorial,” ARSI, Congr. 20b, f. 208; see also Mariana’s, “De rege et regis institutione,” in Juan de Mariana, Obras (Madrid: Biblioteca de
historians consider an Old Christian—may have been motivated to write his pro-converso letter to Superior General Acquaviva by his profound friendship with his converso master, Juan de Ávila, and another of his converso disciples, Gaspar de Loarte, who—as we have seen in Chapter Two—encountered apparently insurmountable obstacles in joining the Society of Jesus due to his Jewish lineage. Obvious also is Guzmán’s affinity for the closet-converso Ribadeneyra, who employed in his anti-discrimination writings his authority as one of only a few surviving disciples of Ignatius of Loyola and as a man of government—he had held important offices in the Jesuit administration for decades until Mercurian’s “house cleansing.” Possevino—the only Italian in this Spanish-dominated quintet—was almost certainly a closet-converso and became one of the earliest and fiercest opponents of purity-of-blood discrimination in the Society. His first memorial was penned as early as 1576, i.e., three years after General Congregation 3, during which Possevino personally witnessed the head-on collision between the anti- and pro-converso parties that concluded with the rigged election of Mercurian, as we have seen in the previous chapter. His is the only text of the genre that has been fully studied in the Anglophone historiography on the subject. Possevino composed his second memorial on 13 October 1598—already after the promulgation of the anti-converso decree by General Congregation 5. The synoptic reading of both memorials that we offer here for the first time allows de-coding of the author’s often secret-style prose. We first turn our attention to his memorial from 1576.

---

3 See ARSI, Cong. 20b, ff. 206–12.
historians consider an Old Christian—may have been motivated to write his pro-converso letter to Superior General Acquaviva by his profound friendship with his converso master, Juan de Ávila, and another of his converso disciples, Gaspar de Loarte, who—as we have seen in Chapter Two—encountered apparently insurmountable obstacles in joining the Society of Jesus due to his Jewish lineage.

Obvious also is Guzmán's affinity for the closet-converso Ribadeneyra, who employed in his anti-discrimination writings his authority as one of only a few surviving disciples of Ignatius of Loyola and as a man of government—he had held important offices in the Jesuit administration for decades until Mercurian’s “house cleansing.”

Possevino—the only Italian in this Spanish-dominated quintet—was almost certainly a closet-converso and became one of the earliest and fiercest opponents of purity-of-blood discrimination in the Society. His first memorial was penned as early as 1576, i.e., three years after General Congregation 3, during which Possevino personally witnessed the head-on collision between the anti- and pro-converso parties that concluded with the rigged election of Mercurian, as we have seen in the previous chapter. His is the only text of the genre that has been fully studied in the Anglophone historiography on the subject. Possevino composed his second memorial on 13 October 1598—already after the promulgation of the anti-converso decree by General Congregation 5. The synoptic reading of both memorials that we offer here for the first time allows de-coding of the author’s often secret-style prose. We first turn our attention to his memorial from 1576.

Figure 16. The Italian Jesuit writer and diplomat Antonio Possevino (1533–1611)

Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) from Mantua in Italy was one of the most adamant and prolific opponents of the purity-of-blood legislation in the Society of Jesus. Under his influence the 1593 anti-converso decree was mitigated, if insignificantly, by the Sixth General Congregation in 1608. Modern scholarship has established Possevino’s Jewish ancestry with quasi-certainty.
Antonio Possevino

Thomas Cohen describes Possevino’s memorial as “a hybrid text: part personal letter, part learned exegesis, part polemic, part exhortation” directed (especially in its opening section) at an unnamed opponent whom Cohen identifies as Benedetto Palmio, Assistant General to Mercurian and the author of the anti-converso memorial that we have studied in Chapter Three. Possevino’s text is set within the context of the Congregation of Procurators that took place in Rome in 1573, during which Mercurian’s secretary had conversations on the subject of converso discrimination with the Spanish representatives—“always very faithful to the Society and its general”—who expressed their concern about the anti-Spanish atmosphere that surrounded the election of Mercurian and that continued to be fed by his assistant Palmio, leading to a potential division among the Jesuits:

It was evident, and known to almost everyone in the Society and to the most important men of this court, that that person [N] was an adversary not of a few men but of an entire nation, and that this opposition needed to be totally uprooted...for if a remedy had not been introduced it could have caused an irremediable schism in the Society.8

Possevino’s intention to write the present memorial to Mercurian, petitioning that the latter compose an edification letter on unity in the Society, may have been motivated by the suggestion of the Spanish procurators who had been scandalized by the discrimination against the conversos—regardless of their faithfulness to and love for the Society—that had been instigated by Benedetto Palmio

---

7 The Congregation of Procurators is an assembly of “persons who should come from the provinces, at least one every three years from each province, having been elected by the votes of the professed and rectors of the province, to inform the general about many things” (Const. [679]).
8 “Prima che si venisse alle particolari risposte si toccò uno presupposto, cioè che era cosa evidente et nota quasi a tutta la Compagnia et fino a più grandi di questa corte che quella persona era stimata avversa non da alcuni solamente ma da una natione intiera, la quale opinione pareva necessario che totalmente si diradicasse: perciocché Vostra Paternità sa che era noto che da N. quel che era stato detto secretamente a bocca a Provinciali quando al tempo della congregazione generale furono mandati in Ispagna, la quale cosa come fu detta senza tener tutta quella luce, la quale si ha tenuto in parte dapoi, potrebbe, se in parte non si fosse cominciato a rimediare, haver cagionato scisure irrimediabili nella Compagnia” (Cong. 20b, f. 206). The translation is by Cohen in his “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 546. In my transcription of the manuscripts I adjusted the orthography, where it helps in reading the text.
during General Congregation [3]. It was also probably motivated by what he observed personally in the General Curia in Rome after the congregation—Mercurian was “cleansing the house” by removing from Rome and possibly from Italy the Spanish subjects, many of whom—as we have seen in the previous chapter—had Jewish origins. In Possevino’s eyes,

The aforementioned letter will be of universal consolation, that will edify everyone, and that it will show that in the heart of [Mercurian] there is no other spirit than that of Father Ignatius and the other Generals, and it will remove every threatening notion from the World. And so I hope that [the letter] will serve to ensure that the hearts of the Society allow themselves to be governed by the paternal providence of Your Paternity, without seeking evasive human remedies, as some men (driven by their passion) have sought, not without notable damage to fraternal charity.10

The mentioned “damage to fraternal charity” was rooted, claims Possevino, in the idea of purity of blood. Reflecting Alfonso de Cartagena’s Defensorium unitatis christianae that we have analyzed in Chapter One, Possevino emphasizes that lineage distinctions are vestiges of paganism and contradict the Jesuit tradition:

Whether one looks to the Constitutions, or to the example of former Fathers General, or to the disposition of Divine Providence manifested in Sacred Scripture, one cannot see how this fear can be born within a Society whose Institute should be distinguished by the blood that is found

---

9 “Aggiunto che questa avversione nel core massime di N. è stata da q[elli] che l’amano con pieno animo e i quali sono stati sempre fedeli alla Compagnia, stimato sempre per il maggiore ostacolo inanzi a Dio che la religione nostra potesse havere in questi tempi, essendosi massime dapoi forse troppo indulgenti su […] permesso che se ne scrivesse et ragionasse, anzi havendone esso medesimo anco ragionatone in tal modo che si è stimato che non ne seguissete minore ingiuria al prossimo, il quale dobbiamo amar come noi stessi, di quel che seguirebbe se alcuno chiamasse ladro un che si fosse convertito, o heretic un figlio o parente di heretic, ancorché esse fosse fedele et cattolico, ha come veramente so (et Deus scit quia non mentior) dato occasione di pensare che i giud[izi] fatti in questa materia et le informazioni date anco a tempo della congregazione non erano senza passione” (Cong. 20b, f. 206).

10 “Et penso che la detta lettera oltre esser di consolatione universale edificherà ciascuno et dichiarerà che nel petto suo non ha altro spirito che quel del Padre Ignatius et de gli altri Generali. Et si come basterà per lievar ogni sinistro concetto di Mondo, così spero che anco sarà efficace per fare che i cori della Compagnia si lascino governare dalla providentia paterna di Vostra Paternità, senza cercare mezzi huomini indiretti, come alcuni per simile passione pigliarono non senza ferita notabile della carità fraternela” (Cong. 20b, f. 207). The translation is by Cohen in his “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 547.
in its freedom, and in the fact that it permits no preference for lineage, or for human concerns, which are vestiges of paganism, or for its own honor, such as not allowing oneself to be touched by others or to greet them, as is the custom of some infidels about whom Father Alessandro Valignano has recently written to Your Paternity.\(^{11}\)

Commenting on this passage, Cohen writes that it “constitutes one of the most powerful critiques of the concept of purity of blood to be found in the vast literature—contemporary and modern—on the subject. Moreover, Possevino here for the first time links debates about nation and lineage to debates about the Jesuit missionary enterprise. Illustrious lineage depends on Jesuit ideals, not on blood. Possevino’s argument brings together all the diverse strands of Jesuit opposition to the idea of purity of blood, from Scripture, to the Ignatian tradition, to the ongoing development of Jesuit pastoral ideals, and finally to the common humanity and intelligence of his contemporaries in the Society.”

To make his point, Possevino turns in this part of his memorial to prove what Palmio would deny: the Jesuit tradition from Loyola to Borja indefatigably opposed any lineage discrimination. He begins with a portrayal of Ignatius, a foreigner in Rome:

Father Ignatius, [of] holy memory, who was Biscayan, knew the practice and nature of things in Spain. God had elected him, so that he become a model and ideal of all his successors. He knew best of all what he said in his *Constitutions* and thus their understanding must be perceived from his actions and from that prudent fortress, which he planted among humanly insurmountable difficulties [in] this Society. He was really very prudent and saint man, and a foreigner in Rome; he had [also] dealt with the Inquisition of Spain. Even though he ingenuously knew how much storm in those times it would have raised against the Society, he nevertheless felt that the spirit of God does not make favoritisms among people [Romans 2:11] and believed more in Jesus Christ than in earthly prudence. This idea remained carved in the minds of the Society and he shaped the Society in such a way that not even one thing moved him to

---

\(^{11}\) “Si aggiunge che se si deve pigliare la regola della verità di questo fatto o dalle Constitutioni o dall’intelligenza loro o dall’esempio de Padri Generali passati o dalla dispositione della divina Providenza manifestata nella Scrittura santa, non si vede onde possa nascere questo timore in una Compagnia, il cui Instituto deve essere insino col sangue conservato nella sua libertà et che in lui non entrino quelle partialità di carne et bilanci humani, le quali sono propri vestigi di gentilità et di honor proprio, si che non osano toccarsi o salutarsi l’uno l’altro, come di alcuni infedel scrive hora a Vostra Paternità il Padre Alessandro Valignano” (Cong. 20b, f. 207). The translation is by Cohen in his “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 548.
alter it, knowing that *what God has joined together, let no one separate* [Matthew 19:6]. And the letters he wrote about this are known.\(^{12}\)

Not much effort was needed to etch Loyola’s anti-discrimination ideal into the mind of his direct successor, Diego Laínez, for he himself was of Jewish stock—his Castilian ancestors converted after the anti-Jewish *pogroms* of 1391, as we have seen in Chapter Two.\(^{13}\) Possevino reminds that Ignatius employed him in all major enterprises, such as the foundation of many colleges in Sicily, the mission in [North] Africa, the Colloquy of Poissy, and the Council of Trent (which was attended by so many Spanish prelates), without “this vain fear [of people of Jewish lineage]” that characterizes the current Jesuit administration. The election of Laínez to the highest post in the Society that took place in the time of a strong anti-converso tempest in Spain and Rome was, to Possevino, a manifest sign that

God does not make any distinctions of nations, persons, or qualities, as far as his precepts are being observed and one walks rightly in front of his eyes, and that God wants to preserve the primeval status of the Society, to which he gave so many gifts, so that the early Society would serve as a model of the kinds of stones, with which the Society’s construction should be made.\(^{14}\)

\(^{12}\) “Il P. Ignatio [di] santa memoria fu biscaino, sapeva per praxi et natura le cose di Spagna, era stato da Dio eletto perché fosse un modello et idea di tutti gli altri successori suoi, meglio di tutti sapeva quel che volse dire nelle sue Constitutioni et così l’intelligenza loro deve essere presa dalle sue attionti et da quella prudente fortezza, la quale piantò fra difficoltà humanamente insuperabili [in] questa Compagnia. Esso era prudentissimo et veramente santo, era forestiero in Roma, stato nell’Inquisizione di Spagna ancor che innocemente sapeva quanta tempesta in quei medesimi tempi era stata eccitata contra la Compagnia, non di meno esso il quale sentiva che lo spirito di Dio no era accettatore di persone et che credeva più a Gesù Cristo che alla prudentia terrena, segui quel modo onde et esso resto scolpito negli animi della Compagnia et la ridusse in stato tale che niuna cosa lo mosse ad alterare il suo ordine, sapendo che Dio comanda *quod Deus coniungit homo non separet*. Et le lettere che intorno a questo scrisse sono note” (*Cong. 20b*, f. 207*\(^{1}\)*). See also Cohen, “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 549. The letters mentioned at the end of the quotation are those quoted above in Chapter Two.

\(^{13}\) See Cohen, “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 549, who believes Laínez was a first-generation Christian.

\(^{14}\) “Segui al P. Ignatio di santa memoria il P. Laynez, nel cui tempo avvennero quelle terribili tempeste che furono in Ispagna et a Roma mosse per questa materia, ma Dio Signore, il quale voleva che l’opera sua andasse inanti, si come era stata dall’eterna sua sapienza ordita se ne servi tanto, come fece nell’Europa et nell’Africa in fundare collegi di Sicilia et tanti altri, in predicare qui tanti anni dove erano tanti Spagnuoli signori et prelati nell’assemblea di Poyssi et nel Concilio di Trento, dove era, si può dire, tutta Spagna nei suoi pretanti, però alcuna nota non gli apportò simile materia,
Francisco de Borja, Mercurian’s direct predecessor, according to Possevino was another model of this kind of stones:

Even though he had much knowledge about lineage issues—he served at the court of Charles V—this servant of God never wanted to make this sort of distinctions, aware that the Society was not governed by other means than its proper spirit of God. And because where is the Spirit of God, there is liberty, he employed those means that God our Lord gave him.  

Just like his predecessors, Cartagena and Oropesa, Possevino could not omit the authority of the Pauline epistolography in his argument against the lineage discrimination. He recommends that those who harbor in their hearts such discrimination “should do some spiritual exercises on charity, on loving one’s neighbor as oneself, and on the things that were said by Saint Paul in the First Letter to Corinthians.”

Thomas Cohen reads in Possevino’s memorial other echoes of Paul’s influence on his pro-converso approach. It can be seen “in the context

\[\text{Cong. 20b, ff. 208v–209r.}\]

Other fragments of Paul’s First Letter to Corinthians that other pro-converso writers utilized, as we have seen in Chapter One, were: Cartagena’s recommendation to give the weak neophytes the milk of love and generous breasts rather than solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2); Nicholas V’s warning of schism born out of favoritism given to Jews over Gentiles (1 Corinthians 3:22); and his reminder of unity of the Christian church, regardless of ethnicity (1 Corinthians 12:12–3). We shall also see below how Alarcón recalls 1 Corinthians 1:24–6 to remind that Christ is God’s wisdom for both Gentiles and Jews.
of Possevino’s insistence on the efficacy of conversion and on the need for self-examination […]]. The memorial’s argument on behalf of the New Christians may be read as a confirmation of Paul’s prophecy, in the lesson on the olive branch, that the Jews will be even more disposed to embrace Christianity than other non-Christians. Beginning with his reference to [Paul’s First Letter to the] Corinthians and continuing throughout the rest of the memorial, Possevino will argue that far from being a hindrance to the Society, Jesuits of Jewish descent are among the Society’s most effective members.”17

Indeed, the last statement, as we shall see below, is a sort of refrain in all Jesuit pro-converso texts. Possevino affirms that he could give many examples of the fruitful ministry being performed by Jesuits of Jewish stock, and—unlike Alarcón—he specifically quotes three names of Jesuits of Jewish descent to make his point: Manuel de Sá, Francisco Antonio, and Juan de Maldonado. We have already encountered Manuel de Sá on previous pages of the present book. Whereas Francisco Antonio is little known (Possevino mentions that he was a preacher at an imperial court), Juan de Maldonado played a significant role in the history of the early Society. He was born in 1533 in Casa de Reina (Badajoz, Spain) and entered the Society in 1562. Together with the converso Juan de Mariana, he was instrumental in founding the first Jesuit colleges in France. Maldonado, who authored authoritative commentaries on the four Gospels, was considered the father of modern positive theology. Acquaviva appointed him in 1581 a member of the committee on the Ratio Studiorum, but he died prematurely two years later.18

Further in his memorial, Possevino states that

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

18 “Potrei aggiungere molti altri esempi vivi del frutto che si fa per i ministeri de tali anco al presente nella Compagnia, se Vostra Paternità non sapesse che oltre quei di Spagna, et di Maldonato in Parigi, de Francesco Antonio in predicare tanti anni all’Imperatrice, di Emanuele Saa in Milano, di molti altri lettori et predicatori altrove, et anco di altri di altre nationi che Vostra Paternità forse non conosce” (Cong. 20b, f. 208v).
principal officials at the court are of this [Jewish] stock and, offended by such a distinction, could contribute to the destruction or division of the Society, which, while professing to be holy, and to model itself after Jesus its leader, could ultimately be complicit in harming Jesus, and be society of the world rather than of Jesus.19

One should conclude, then, utilizing the rules for the discernment of spirits established by Ignatius, that the fear of Jesuits of Jewish ancestry is born out of a different spirit than God’s, for the latter, which is contrary even to a shadow of schism, accompanied—Possevino repeats—the foundation of the Society, and the Jesuits should follow it as exemplary.20

The Jesuits who are driven, in Possevino’s view, by the contrary-to-God spirit, which allegedly is that of the Devil, can be divided in three groups:

(1) The first one is called, after the expression of a Spanish official who paid visit to Mercurian, “villanazzi.” “These were men who were from poor, rural backgrounds, who were often despised by their colleagues from elite families, and who sought to make up through lineage for what they lacked in virtue and talent.” In fingering these men, Possevino calls attention to the sharp socioeconomic divisions that existed within the Society during the first generations. At the same time, he calls into question the claims of the villanazzi to purity of blood. He suggests not that they are of Jewish origin but that if their lineages were to be examined, “there would be found more than four things—and perhaps in their own lifetimes—which would make them turn silent and grow red.”
(2) The second group is “those men—for the most part Portuguese—who show signs of overweening ambition (because they feel themselves to have been deprived of offices in the Society on which their honor depends), or who reject the ‘eternal wisdom’ of the Society concerning the unity of all men.” Using bold strokes, Possevino declares that those among his colleagues who reject Paul’s affirmation that “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek” are questioning—“perhaps inadvertently”—the efficacy of baptism, and “are creating a new species of Cathars.”

(3) The third group consists of men who simply lack humility. Cohen has observed that “here Possevino singles out the Portuguese and brings his pastoral concerns to bear both on the Portuguese and Mercurian. He believes that the blindness of the Portuguese concerning their pernicious attitude towards New Christians has specific causes.”

---

21 This argument by Possevino is reminiscent of Alonso Cartegena’s Defensorium, where—as we have seen in Chapter One—the Bishop of Burgos accused the authors of the anti-converso legislation in Toledo (1449) of being heretics because they acted against Christian unity and undermined the regenerative character of baptism. Possevino will repeat this argument in another memorial that we shall analyze below.

22 “Faccio quel che a Vostra Paternità è stato dimostrato da procuratori et da alcuno altro venuto ultimamente della corte, cioè che coloro i quali parlano in questa materia, si riducono (parlo di quei della Compagnia) a tre sorti di persone, o a villanazzi, per usare della sua voce, i quali, non havendo altro lustro di virtù, vanno mendicando dalla carne quello che se si andasse un poco esaminando e rivedendo loro i conti adesso, usando di quella fallace ombra di pretesto del ben commune di che si servono nell’esaminar gli avoli et bisavoli, si troverebbono più di quattro cose et forse nella loro stessa vita, le quali gli farebbono et tacer, et arrossire. Gli altri sono quei che ut animalis et nescientes quae sunt spiritus Dei, ancorché essi tocchino di questo, non-dimenno ut eluant hanc, qui nati sunt ex sanguinis, non ex Deo, putant maculam, si danno a ragionare contro questo, come et di quei di Portugallo et d’altri potrebbe dirsi: non avendonesi fra tanto che mentre pensano che in questo consta l’honore loro o danno segno di ambitione, dubitando di non havere honore come tanto evidentemente l’hanno dato alcuni di qualche Provincia per vedersi privi dell’adominazione o finalmente non credono affatto né molto gustano quel che ha detto l’eterna sapienza della cui compagnia si nominano, cioè che iam abluti estis, iam sanctificati estis, et che nova creatura è quella che in conspetto di Dio è considerata et che si vos filius liberaverit, vere liberi eritis, et che appresso Dio non è distinzione di Greco, né di Giudeo, la quale definitione introducendosi, oltre il dannarsi latente et forse inavvedutamente l’efficacia del battesimo et farsi una nuova specie di Catari, finalmente può generare radicum amaritudinis quae inquit multos, et una reale divisione et per conseguente diminuzione, se bene l’opinione pregiudicata d’alci si sentire altrimenti fin tanto che la ruina più evidente non segua. Et all’ora non so quanto erit bonus dicere non putaram… I terzi sono di quei che comunemente si sa che sono poco addentro dotati di humilità poiché questa virtù se non è nel core et non nasce da carità, può essere spesso velame di malizia, et pelle, o cicatrice che copre la nascosta postema. Il che anco Vostra Paternità può havere molte volte considerato et a me più di una volta ha detto di alcuni i quali hanno mosso o trattengono questo veleno disseminato, de quali si sa in che credito sono o per conto di umilità, o per conto dell’osservazione della disciplina et d’altro” (Cong. 20b, f. 209r). See Cohen, “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” pp. 554–5.
This sort of men offered three reasons to Possevino against his petition that Mercurian compose a letter on unity: (1) impediment to the common good, (2) concern of a few Portuguese, and (3) the desire not to extend the practice of admitting persons who bring dishonor upon the Society. To answer their objections, Mercurian’s secretary boldly reiterates his argument that Jesuits of Jewish ancestry did contribute much to the common good and that Ignatius banned any “defamatory libels, which instead have been permitted to circulate both in writing and in hushed voices throughout the current [Mercurian’s] generalate,” such as that of the future assistant general, Manuel Rodrigues.23 Possevino explicates that the latter is the most notable example of the anti-converso transformation—he was first an ally of the New Christians but became one of their most acerbic opponents within the Society. Possevino states that this transformation was a result of Rodrigues’s decision to accommodate himself to the disposition he had discovered to exist in N [Palmio], even though all the “best Fathers” reject any distinctions based on lineage and understand that those who make such distinctions are driven by “mere passions.”24

To Possevino’s dismay, these passions played a significant role during the Third General Congregation [1573], during which the Portuguese lobby opposed the election of Juan Alfonso de Polanco as the new superior general, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Like Palmio, Possevino in his memorial assigns responsibility for the anti-Polanco conspiracy to the representative of the Portuguese delegation, Leão

23 We have seen his anti-converso campaign, which was supported by Hoffaeus and Maggio, in the previous chapter.
24 “La seconda causa del timore è per alcuni di Portugallo, il che Vostra Paternità ha alcune volte mostrato o quando predicò qui alcuno Portughese in Roma, […] penso esser bene di farne scusa coll’Ambasciatore et di scriverne fino in Portugallo. Il che fra le altre cose cagioni che da qual tempo in qua il P. Emmanuele Rodriguez il quale sino all’hora le haveva più volte scritto che non temesse niente di questo et che esso si trovava bene con tutti, et del P. Cipriano et di altri che l’amavano si servi molto, cominciasse dapoi ad acomodarsi all’humore che haveva scoperto esser in N. Et così seguendo il commune uso anco esso cominciò mostrare come molti hanno fatto di applaudire a N. in questo, con tutto che migliori Padri della Compagnia et qui sentiunt d[e] Jesu et eius Societate in bonitate, riconoscano et riconobbero fino al tempo della congregazione generale che questo era mera passione. Et so che al P. Antonio Wink è parso nuovo alcuna deliberatione di N. et mi disse che non desiderava visitare al presente et forse Dio Signor Nostro ha così voluto che chi andava nel suo cuore diritto et universale et secondo lo spirito del P. Ignatio, non tirasse sopra l’anima sua alcuna colpa per esser instrumento di quale apertiva o per meglio dire esclusione nella Germania, in qua et multa sunt quae dicantur, se si vuole bilanciare carnalmente il negozio” (Cong. 20b, f. 210r). See also Cohen, “Nation, Lineage, and Jesuit Unity,” p. 556.
Henriques, who carried to Rome some letters from the king of Spain.25

Leão utilized those letters in the papal court not only to campaign “with much zeal” against Polanco but also to push for legislation that would prevent any future election of a converso superior general. The Portuguese allied in their efforts, continues Possevino, to undermine the Jesuit Constitutions—for which they should be excommunicated—with the Italian Palmio, who pressed on the Italian Possevino “to do battle for his homeland Italy [by voting against a converso Spaniard, i.e., Polanco],” but Possevino, “as a Christian and one faithful to the Society,” refused to do so and reported the intrigue to Polanco [who as vicar general was presiding over the congregation].26 Not only Possevino but also the entire congregation was in shock when they learned about the Portuguese conspiracy:

As the whole congregation was astonished and everyone fixed their eyes on the Portuguese as the perpetrators of this deed, the aforementioned Father [Leão Henriques], having now been touched in his conscience, knelt down publicly and asked for pardon, and said, “I am the cause of this.” But both in his own judgment and that of the congregation, he very clearly declared himself condemned. May it please God that he be absolved, and there not follow from the occurrence some sad consequence.27
Contrary to what Palmio argued in his later memorial, Possevino interestingly associates this anti-constitutional attempt with the subsequent movement within the Society aimed to change its Institute. As we have seen in Chapter Three, however, the *morialistas* movement was mainly composed of Spanish Jesuits, many of whom were undeniably conversos—which Possevino denies—and not Portuguese. Thomas Cohen summarizes this part of Possevino’s memorial as follows:

The pope’s intervention at the Congregation represents a key point in Possevino’s analysis of the stages of development of the New Christian problem within the Society. First, there existed an incipient anti-New Christian movement under Borja, but it was censured by the hierarchy; then came the Portuguese-led intervention in the 1573 election, which will continue to have the potential to create a schism within the Society if Mercurian does not write the letter of unity that Possevino is requesting or take some other comparably decisive action. Central to Possevino’s argument concerning the New Christians is that the Society must not adopt a policy of appeasing the Portuguese either concerning nationality or concerning lineage. Spain brings the same love and obedience to the Society as any other province. As for the New Christians, we have seen that Possevino believes that, in terms of their virtue and dedication, they represent an elite within the Society.28

The last part of Possevino’s 6,500-plus-word memorial is a list of fourteen detailed recommendations that somehow summarize the content of his text to Mercurian. What seems to be Possevino’s primary preoccupation here is the risk that the Spanish Jesuit provinces might secede from the Roman centralized curia with the support of Spanish

---

lay government, which might result in the creation of a branch of the Society under the supervision of an independent commissary, as had happened many times in the history of other religious orders.\(^{29}\) As we

\(^{29}\) "Cioè che non si scriva o ragioni da particolari in alcuna materia che cagioni dissentione o divisione d’animi già che vede Vostra Paternità quale lettera et per qual via et scritta a suggestione di più principali theologi le è stata ultimamente mandata dall’Andalusia. Che la patienza offesa non si vada assottigliando per tentare altre vie per dividere la Compagnia si come Vostra Paternità sa che avvenne fra minimi a Genova per alcune lettere procurate da alcuni di Spagna da loro Re, et qui in Roma della Religione Premonstranense, il cui eletto generale per essere francese fu dal Re Filippo ricusat. Che non si dia occasione a Spagnuoli di dire al Re et ad altri Principi che la cagione di volere altre nationi fra loro è perché sono state o heretiche o conversate fra loro, istituite o nate da Parenti heretici. Che un giorno per via del Re o di altri non propongano in una Congregatione Generale che per detta causa non vogliano che si elegga Generale che sia disceso di heretici o sia stato heretico o habbia parenti tali o altra simile nota, delle quali basterà accennarne ogni minima per mettere ombra alla Inquisitione di Spagna. Che non si offerrcano al Re diversi memoriali acioché né Fiamengo per parecchi anni si faccia, allegando o naturale avversione da Spagnuoli o inclinazione a ribellarsi, o vero nota di heresia, o di amicizia et conversazione o parentado de tali. Il che in questi tempi non sarebbe difficile che un solo che fosse in Anversa o altrove facesse credere si come per via di un altro Re si è operato (ancorché con brutti modi) nella passata congregazione. Che non si cominci a fare apertura a fare particolari religioni di una sola la quale adesso habbiamo, si come avvenuto di altre Religioni che si trovano, chi osservanti, chi conventuali, chi capuccini […] sotto pretesto et con qualche colore di volere vivere secondo Instituto della Compagnia interpretato et usato dal P. Ignatius di cui son[o] in questa materia diverse lettere in Ispagna et altrove. Che non si vada cercando le razze antiche di Portoghesi, i processi et altre maledini lontane dallo spirito di Dio con vedere se quei che fanno del rigoroso in questa materia sono figlioli di schiave, se hanno havuto altra macchia, o anco peccato carnale. Che il medesimo non si vada vedendo di Siciliani, Sardi, et altri. Che non si alleghi che [es]endo il pubblico usurario se non se pente fra un anno scommuni[…] et tenuto per heretico da canoni, non si alleghi che Genovesi et molti altri d’altra patrie [es]endo discesi da tali non conviene che siano admessi nella Compagnia o alti gradi in essa. Che non si vadano cercando che sono stati micidiali, bastará et altre tal cose, [es]endo che tali molti sono nella Compagnia et molti di quei che si stimano legittimi non forse […] per tacere altro. Che non si vada procurando di fare convocare Congregatione Generale come sa Vostra Paternità che pochi giorni son fu scritto da una persona principale ad un’altra principale. Il che era segno che haveva in petto altre cose che non si considerano forse. Che non si proponga un giorno al Re di Spagna che in tutti i suoi stati si pongano diversi di Spagna che almeno in parte amministrino, poiché i colleghi sono cose più pubbliche che delle altre Religioni. Che finalmente no si dimandi come hanno altre Religioni di haver una volta uno ultramontano, un’altra Italiano, o vero uno commissario perpetuo in Ispagna (il che adesso non sarebbe difficile forse di persuadere a Sua Santità per il […] et signifi di havere […] Compagnia. Che finalmente non si tieni la communicatione dell’aiuto di una natione all’altra, si come già per opera dei nostri è stato facile di procurare, supposto il timore humano che fin qui N. ha mostrato et il non andare all’incontro a tali inventioni le quali subito furono avisate dal P. Valignano all’arrivo suo in Portugallo et dapoi nell’India che ha causato che già i Spagnuoli sono stati rivocati dal Giapone et
have seen in the previous chapter when dealing with the memorialistas movement, Possevino’s warnings were fully grounded, but ignored by Mercurian, who soon removed Possevino from his office of secretary of the Society and sent him to remote Sweden. Possevino, however, did not give up his stubborn fight against the discrimination that reached its apex in the legislation of 1593. Five years after the promulgation of the de genere decree, he again grabbed his well-worn pen to write another passionate memorial. This time its addressee was Mercurian’s successor, Superior General Claudio Acquaviva.  

Possevino’s second memorial originated as a reaction to the anti-Jewish and anti-converso atmosphere in the Society of Jesus that was galvanized by the 1593 decree. The text begins with the author’s lamentation about the way some Jesuits had been discussing, during their leisure time, either among themselves or with lay people, the conversion of Jews and their descendants to Christian faith. Possevino bluntly asserts that this kind of discussion is against the spirit of God. But even much more against that spirit is the licentious buzzing about those of Jewish descent who had been called by God to the Society of Jesus.  

The memorial’s structure is built on these two accusations: (1) the first part is a traditional biblio-historical excursus on the place of Jews in the development of the Christian Church from the beginning to the times of Pablo de Santa María, and on the character of baptism that echoes the pro-converso writings we have seen in Chapter One; (2) the second one deals with the role of conversos in the Society of Jesus, upon which the 1593 decree inflicted many wounds. The text concludes with a surprising note on Mercurian’s contribution to unity

dapoi non hanno voluto alcune nationi oltramontane allegando il dubbio dell’heresia et poco ha che diedero segno di non volere Italiani che governino nell’India, le quali cose se già non fossero seguite mentre si tace, et si condisce a gli humori. Il che et è dannosissimo come vedrà in una scrittura che va con questa del P. Mironi et mai non è prima avenuto, potrebbe forse pensarsi che le sopra scritte ragioni non havessero quel peso che veramente hanno” (Cong. 20b, ff. 211’–212’)

30 For a very brief summary of this document, see Donnelly, “Antonio Possevino,” pp. 10–1.

among the Jesuits, which is in stark contrast to what Possevino had written to the latter in his first memorial. This move was probably aimed to make Acquaviva feel guilty for the different way in which he managed the converso problem, compared to his predecessors, Mercurian (unfairly) included.

Possevino’s biblio-historical excursus is unsurprisingly well-developed, for its author was eagerly involved, as we have seen in Chapters Two and Three, in the Jesuit apostolate with Jews in Rome and influenced Pope Gregory XIII’s decision to create a college of neophytes for training preachers to convert Jews in Italy and the Levant.

According to Possevino, nobody can deny that Christ founded the Church by unifying two peoples in one fold: Jews and the Gentiles, both of whom were chosen to guide it. This way no tongue should dare to call those who became Christians by the name of “Jews,” or “Greeks,” or “Scythians,” or “Gentiles,” for all are one in Christ [Colossians 3:11], despite their shared responsibility for the death of Jesus.\[32\]

Following the similar ecclesiological premises expressed in Carthagenà’s Defensorium, Possevino draws the Jewish soteriology with large strokes: God could not nullify his faith because of the Jews’ unbelief [Romans 3:3], and instead chose them as apostles and disciples to “fertilize the world with Christian faith” and preside over the Church of Jerusalem after the city’s destruction in the personae of fifteen archbishops, as Eusebius had narrated.\[33\]

---

32 “Quanto alla Chiesa cristiana, nessuno è il quale possa pretendere ignorarla che Christo nel congregarla dì ogni natione quae sub coelo est et che essendo egli pietra angolare fece utraque unum; la onde prese poi de Giudei et de Gentili facendo degli uni et degli altri non solo un ovile ma etiam diò i pastori et dottori di lei, volendo insieme che poi che erano fatti sue membra, nil iis damnationis esset quoniam erant in Christo Jesu, ne fosse lingua si, o incredula o temeraria insieme, la quale osasse nominar i già fatti christiani, o Giudei, o Greci, o Schiti, o Gentili, ma omnes unum in Cristo. Pero quel infinita carità di Christo con tutto che i Giudei et Gentili havessero chi col procurarlo, chi con aconsentirvi, imbrattare di fero le mani del suo innocen-tissimo sangue” (Inst. 184/II, f. 349v).

33 “Non però volle che incredulitas eorum fidem suam evacuaret. Anzi, perché le sue strade sono lontanissime da quelle del mondo, fece con fatti che superabundaret gratia, ubi abundasset delictum et che la sua chiesa insino alla consummatione del mondo ricevessi da quattro venti ognuno che a lei venisse. Così eleggendo fra gli stessi Giudei dodici apostoli et, doppo il tradimento di Giuda, un altro apostolo pur stato Giudeo et, poi che ascese in cielo, S. Paolo oltre i settanta discepoli et alla voce di s. Pietro convertendosene molte migliaia dentro di Gerusalemme et fuori et crescendone per mezzo et degli altri apostoli et discepoli et di questi altri già convertiti il numero grandissimamente, Christo raccolse tanto seme che puotè spargersi per fecondar il
Naturally, the Jewish soteriology cannot be construed without exemplifying St. Paul’s thought, to which Possevino dedicates the next paragraph. Despite Paul’s assertions, like the one that Jews still had a veil set over their hearts [2 Corinthians 3:15], Paul in his choices of building the Christian Church could not contradict the voice of God who was calling other Jews, as he had called Paul himself to become “a vase of election” and apostle [Acts of the Apostles 9:15],

For one is the God who justifies circumcision by faith and foreskin through faith [Romans 3:30]. Therefore, just as through the offense of one, all men fell under condemnation, so also through the justice of one, all men fall under justification unto life [Romans 5:18]. Who will make an accusation against the elect of God? God is the One who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? [Romans 8:33–4].

Like for Bishop Cartagena in his Defensorium, the most evocative example of God’s justification of the Gentiles for Possevino is the episode from the Acts of the Apostles 10 that narrates how Peter’s vision about the irrelevance of the Jewish dietary restrictions for his faith in Christ made him reveal God’s election of Cornelius.35

---


Bypassing briefly the examples of ancient martyred popes of Jewish ancestry, such as Linus and Evarist, Possevino highlights the contributions of the Iberian Christians of Jewish stock “to the penetration of the New World by the Christian faith and to the reparation of the Old World” in the period closer to his own life, such as Julian, Archbishop of Toledo, and Pablo [de Santa María] of Burgos, Bishop of Cartagena and Burgos as well as chancellor at the court of King León. Thanks to the latter’s preaching many Jews spontaneously converted to Christianity, as Doctor Navarrus [Martín de Azpilcueta, 1491–1586] had testified. It is true, affirms Possevino, that many Jews from Spain and Portugal “went back to their vomit,” for they had falsely converted in order to maintain their property and avoid abandoning their homeland and relatives. Yet he is hopeful that many of these can still become saints, “converting from the fear of slave to that of son and from the fear of death to religion,” as [John] Cassian [c. 360–435] had noted. Their relapse cannot justify the prohibition against admitting other conversos to the Christian faith. Otherwise, we should also give up every effort to convert pagans, since many of those who had converted in Asia, America, or Europe later abandoned Christianity and killed those who had converted them. The relapse of the latter is even graver, for they received grace, sacraments, and bigger gifts than the Jews did.

36 St. Linus is traditionally considered the successor of St. Peter as the bishop of Rome (r. 64/67–76/79).
37 Evarist, as an example of a Jewish Christian, was mentioned by Cartagena in his Defensorium that we have seen in Chapter One.
38 “Ma furono poi da Dio chiamati dal giudaismo et assenti al pontificato et oltre altri martiri, al martirio, Lino, Evaristo et se altri tali furono. Ma lasciando a parte ciò che potrebbe dirsi di quei dei seguenti secoli, vediamo se come anticamente Iddio volle che si procedesse con quello spirito così vicino alla presente età, ha voluto usarne, servendosi poi dalla Spagna et di Portogallo per far penetrar la fede cristiana nel mondo nuovo et per ripararvi in qualche parte il vecchio. Et prima chiara cosa è che s. Giuliano, archivescovo di Toledo et molti dotti rabbinì in lei si convertissero talmente alla fede che poi ridussero molti alla Christiana religione. Et Paolo borghese, il quale di giudeo divenne per gratia di Dio Christiano et il quale fu prima il vescovo di Cartagena et dapo di Burgos et supremo cancelliere di Castiglia et del re don Leone, convertiti alla predicazione quasi tutta la città di Burgos dal giudaismo in manera che sicome nel libro 5 di suoi consigli scrisse il dottor Navarro, sponte omnino sua baptismum susciperunt, quoque discendentium nullum adhuc audivimus deviasse a fide catholica. Et quales (soggiounge) sunt multi qui sola Dei verbi efficiata sine ullo metu illato convertit sunt et passim convertuntur” (Inst. 184/II, f. 350v).
39 “Che se altri poi sono ritornati al vomito, o piuttosto nascostamente sono stati pertinaci nella loro perfidia, quali sono stati molti fra coloro i quali in Portogallo o in Spagna in alcuni luochi furono per forza costretti a ricevere esteriormente la
The second part of Possevino’s memorial challenges another reason cited by some Jesuits for banning Jews from the apostolate and their descendents from the Society of Jesus: these men have forgotten with what kind of spirit God had wanted to found the Jesuits, who in their service to the New and Old World played a role analogous to the primitive Church. To found the Society, God chose ten people, most of them Spaniards: some of them were Old Christians, some New; \(^{40}\) some noble, some ignoble, for God does not make favoritisms of persons [Romans 2:11]. Thus, the first superior general was an Old Christian, and his immediate successor a New Christian. Indeed, Diego Lainez—as Possevino had already abundantly written in his first memorial—was employed in many important missions by his predecessor, Ignatius of Loyola. Loyola, illuminated by God’s light, followed God’s will rather than human respect, for the Society was a universal body to serve the entire world and did not have some particular interests of a local religious order. Ignatius’s spirit was reflected in the choice of General Congregation 1 to elect Lainez the new superior general, in spite of his own caveat that he might not qualify for the position due to his Jewish lineage.\(^ {41}\)

religione Christiana. Et questo fecero per conservare la roba o per non abbandonar la patria e i parenti loro, questi non hanno luoco fra i veri convertiti; non più di quei che fintamente o si confessano o aburano le heresie o per qualche falso rispetto entrano in famiglie religiose, coi quali la ragione vuole che molto circospettamente si proceda et che ci siano canoni et leggi, le quali prescrivano il modo o di tenergli lunghi da noi o di dispensargli ex causa massime che anco di questi si trovano molti, che dal timor servile possono convertirsi in filiale e i convertiti per la paura della morte alla religione possano diventare santi, sicome mostra Cassiano. Ma si la ricaduta poi dovesse farli astener di procurare la salute o l’admissione degli altri, bisognerebbe senza dubbio per simile ragione lasciar tutta la cura della conversione della gentilitia, poiché tanti popoli et regni già convertiti dagli istessi apostoli dell’Asia et conseguentemente da altri in Africa et nell’Europa ritornando indietro, uccisero che convertiti gli aveva. Bisognerebbe dico abbandonare ogni impresa di ridurre gli eretici, il peccato et l’offendicolo dei quali è più grieve (sicome disse s. Tomaso) di quel dei giudei, in quanto hanno ricevuto la gratia, i sacramenti et maggiori doni di loro” (Inst. 184/UII, f. 350\(^ {r–v}\)). On Azpilcueta’s relation to the Jesuits, see Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits*, pp. 51–2, 58, 59, 66, 70, 82, 111–2, 145.

\(^ {40}\) As we have seen in Chapter Two, Lainez and Bobadilla were conversos, but so also perhaps was Rodrigues. Unfortunately, Possevino is here quite oblique, except for about Lainez.

\(^ {41}\) “Della Compagnia poi conviene dire che ella è stata da Dio secondo l’esempio della primitiva chiesa, dovendo ella servire per aiuto del vecchio et nuovo mondo. Perciò la divina sapienza di primi 10 eleggendo alquanti Spagnuoli i quali furono poi principali instrumenti di lei, volle che questi furono parte dei vecchi, parte de nuovi christiani, sicome anco parte nobili, parte ignobili, non essendo Dio accettator di persona. Et fatto il primo generale dei vecchi christiani, subito volle che si facesse il...
God was not indignant, continues Possevino, seeing the work of other New Christians in the Society, such as that of Alfonso de Polanco of Burgos (which is a city that Loyola must have known well, being close to his native Guipúzcoa). He was secretary of the entire Society during the tenures of the first three superiors general [and Possevino’s direct predecessor] and was the second most important person in the Order. Possevino had already dedicated much space in the 1576 memorial to Polanco, when dealing with the conspiracy against him during General Congregation 3. In Possevino’s view, the Society’s openness to admit and help every person whom God called was the reason why the Jesuit Order was so popular and requested by so many lay rulers. Possevino repeats again that the Iberian Jesuits of Jewish ancestry excelled in their learning as major teachers in Italy, France, Germany, and elsewhere. Their books had been and will be of great help, especially against the heretics. God called others for martyrdom, such as the Portuguese Pedro Ramón, who joined in heaven other
martyrs, among them Rodolfo Acquaviva, a nephew of the addressee of the present memorial.

Possevino concludes this part of his memorial by stating that if a man knows the [indiscriminatory] spirit with which God founded the Church and instituted the Society of Jesus—which he has described so far—it is easy to conclude that the reasoning of those Jesuits whom Possevino criticized as jeopardizing their unity at the beginning of his text would never have been accepted by Father Ignatius because of its harmfulness to the body of the Society and to the salvation of the neighbor.⁴⁴

The inability to foresee how grave and incurable this harmful discriminatory reasoning is for the Society’s body, writes Possevino, explains finally why some Jesuits are engaged in prejudiced and mocking anti-converso conversations. There are four more precise aspects of the mentioned harm resulting from such behavior: (1) sedition and arguments among confreres caused by the mean fingering of some respected and beloved Jesuits as Jews, which is against the Jesuit Constitutions that punish as plague those who engage in such acerbic reciprocal biting in the Society;⁴⁵ (2) the profound anger inflamed by lineage hunting characterized by endless genealogical digging in search of heretics, which makes “the Society divided into Jerusalem and Samaria” and to which the Spaniards object, saying, for example, that the French Albigensian heresy is 300 years old and has been not

---

⁴⁴ “Dalle quali cose tutte conoscendosi con quale spirito habbia Dio proceduto nel fondare la sua chiesa et nell’instituire la nostra Compagnia, sarà facile il giudicare se alcuni procedendo con contrari concetti et ragionando in modo che giammai non sarebbe stato permesso da N[ostro] P[adre] Ignatio, giovino o noccciano all’edificio nostro et alla salute dei prossimi. Che le tante lacrime et penitenze contro ogni minima regola al P. nostro Ignatio, quant’ogni pensiam che costasse quella in che consiste l’unione e il nervo principale della Compagnia” (Inst. 184/II, f. 351v).

⁴⁵ “La prima ferita è quella che nasce da chi semina seditione et risse inter fratres, la quale è tanto più grande quanto s’infamano le centinaia et non dire le migliaia di uomini chiamati da Dio a questa vocazione, computandosi quei che sono andati al cielo. Che si ingiuria et il porre sospetto che uno non sia Christiano, quanta sarà in una religione tali il nominar i Christiani religiosi con dispregio et acerbità giudei. Et quel rispetto o pace interna potrà esser giammai mentre si mostrano a dito coloro i quali dallo spirito vero della Compagnia erano rispettati, amati et impiegati debitamente. Le Constitutioni poi castigando giustamente et dovendo tanquam pestos arcere tales a societate. Chi di questa maniera ragiona o chi dia occasione perché se ragioni in tanto pregiudizio altrui, come si esserguiranno […] ma senza dubbio si ivicem mordinus, ab invicem consumemur et omne regnum in se divisum disolabitur” (Inst. 184/II, f. 351v).
eradicated yet;\(^{46}\) (3) the offense to the many New Christian founders and financial supporters of Jesuit colleges in Spain and Portugal, which testify to their infamy;\(^{47}\) and (4) the depreciation of the Society by lay and ecclesiastical rulers because of this bitterness reigning among the Jesuits, which results from considering New Christians to be profane.\(^{48}\)

Antonio Possevino concludes his memorial to Acquaviva by repeating his thesis from the previous memorial, that the wounds he has just mentioned already could be foreseen during General Congregation 3, which elected Mercurian as the new superior general. Mercurian was expected to affirm that the variety among the Jesuits was the foundation not only of the Society’s conservation and vigor but also of its promotion. Indeed, after his election Mercurian beseeched the Jesuits to embrace each other by saying, “You all are brethren and sons of the same vocation. Thus there is no Poland, no Spain, no Germany, no France, but one Society, one God in all, all in one Lord Jesus Christ, whose members you are.”\(^{49}\) Possevino proved, however, in his first memorial,

\(^{46}\) “La seconda ferita è che si è aperta la porta et accesa una fiamma interiore negli animi di molti per esaminarli le progenie altrui, se sono nati di hereticci, se essi lo sono stati, se furono i padri o avoli loro inquisiti, si per questo fuggirono dai loro stati, se favorissero gli eretici, se i loro padri e avoli sono stati o sono antichi usurari, se nati di schiavi o Turchi o apparentati con chi ne sia nato, se discesi da schismatici o essi nutriti nello scisma, se bastardi o discesi da tali et si in altra maniera notati, colle quali cose se mai saranno o proposte a nuove congregazioni sotto i titoli di offendedici o lungamente saranno fomentate da altri col far della Compagnia Gierusalemme et Samaria, \textit{quomodo Societatis poterit} consistere oltre che mentre vive la causa di tali concetti che meraviglia è se si piglia occasione con principi di far che non si piglino ormai altri dei nostri che dei propri sudditi. So io che [es]sendo rimproverato a Spagnuoli da alcuni Francesi questa nota di nuovi Christiani, essi risposero che già più di 300 anni sono che l’eresia degli Albigensi nacque in Francia, la quale mai non si potuta diradicare” (\textit{Inst. 184/II}, ff. 351’–352’).

\(^{47}\) “La terza ferita è che molti in Spagna, in Portogallo et altrove, chi erano di nuovi Christiani avendo o fondato o aiutato a fondar la Compagnia e i collegi nostri, possono tener per affronto non solo che i loro siano esclusi dall’esser in lei ammessi, ma insiem abbiano inanti gli occhi le case, le chiese per segno o nota d’infamia, li quali aiutaron a fabbricare” (\textit{Inst. 184/II}, f. 352’).

\(^{48}\) “La quarta ferita è che non tutti saranno a segno per tacere con i principi et coi vescovi et coi popoli, si coloro che tengono per profani quei che in alcun modo fossero nella Compagnia discesi da Christiani nuovi, siano essi manifestati o per nati di eretici o di altra maniera scome sopra si è detto, et lasciandosi questa amaritudine sparsa nei principi di essa Compagnia, \textit{et quis erit finis?}” (\textit{Inst. 184/II}, f. 352’).

\(^{49}\) “Però savissimamente N.P. Everardo poi che fu eletto generale et lungamente in quella congregazione si previdero gli incurabili danni che nascerebbero da questo modo di procedere, ragionò a lei con efficacissime parole in materia dell’unione degli animi, nella quale avendo detto che più che nella multitudine o dottrina consisteva
how Mercurian’s actual policy contradicted his desire, expressed in the quoted speech, for the union of hearts in the Society of Jesus.

During the twenty-year period that separates the two memorials of Possevino, two other condemnations of the 1593 decree were composed: one by Diego de Guzmán, another by Pedro de Ribadeneyra.

*Diego de Guzmán*

We have already told the story of Guzmán’s vocation in Chapter Two, when discussing his relation to the converso Gaspar de Loarte. There we also brought up his testimonies about Ignatius of Loyola’s and his envoy Jerónimo Nadal’s adamant non-discrimination policy in admitting candidates of Jewish stock, whose most illustrious example was Giovanni Battista Eliano.

Guzmán’s 2,300-word letter was apparently sent to Pedro de Ribadeneyra, but its style suggests that it was a proposal of a memorial to be forwarded to Superior General Acquaviva: it requested the abrogation of the *de genere* decree. The text has the same structure as Alarcón’s: it is divided in two parts, the first of which lists six ways in which the spirit of the 1593 decree differed from the early Jesuit practice and the *Constitutions*. In addition to the first reason we have already seen in Chapter Two, Loarte’s closest friend cites the obvious unpopularity of the decree among the Jesuits, many of whom are very important and known for their virtues, learning, and wisdom. The daily experience shows how the implementation of this decree creates in the Society an occasion for many ills, such as jealousies and discords, contentions and alterations, which eventually lead to the loss of peace, unity, and true love that Jesus Christ left as precept to his Apostles during the Last Supper. 

---


51 Acquaviva was strongly convinced of the opposite, as we have seen in Chapter Three.

52 “Y se ve cada día que todos comúnmente bien de este decreto, diciendo que se tiene experiencia cierta que dondequiera que hay este tal decreto, se ha visto y se ve...
The third and fourth reasons echo again Alarcón’s memorial: after the promulgation of the decree, many influential and valued Jesuits, whose work brought many fruits in the Society, left the Order. Some of them left even though they were not required to do so by the decree; but they were afraid that the gathering of information about their background would jeopardize their honor. Others, who were forced to leave because of their lineage, which had never bothered anybody before, did so in spite of their notoriety as very gifted persons both in virtues and learning, through whom the Lord brought much fruit among both the faithful and heretics.53

Guzmán’s fifth reason is a warning about enmities and other inconveniences that will result from lineage investigations that could produce false testimonies. It had already happened in some military orders and university colleges and certainly will happen in the Society, which was founded to remedy all sins and every occasion that would lead to them. How can the Jesuits help and console many persons who are affected by this situation, if persons know that the Society itself has produced such a decree?—asks Diego de Guzmán rhetorically.54

The last reason articulated in the first part points out that in order to pursue its mission of helping people in many parts of the world, the Society needs many good subjects. Thus, Father Ignatius wrote down
what good characteristics the candidates should have. Now, many people meet these requirements but fail the lineage background check. Consequently, the Society loses many subjects of this kind, while just one of them could gain many others. Thus, “by losing one grain, we lose a great harvest,” Guzmán observes. 55 To illustrate his point, Guzmán interestingly brings here an example of a Jesuit not of Jewish but Morisco lineage, by whom “nobody was offended.” His name is [Juan de] Albotodo, 56 and he is presented as an indefatigable worker for the people of Granada, who were “edified by seeing that our Lord had taken such a rose amid the thorns” and who supported him with thousands of ducats that he distributed among the poor of the city. So, when he died, everybody felt as if his or her own father had died. 57 Diego de Guzmán concludes this part by praying that these and many other reasons will persuade the superior general to abrogate, or at least mitigate, the decree, which could be done, he suggests, by the pope, without the burden of convoking a general congregation. 58

55 “La sexta, hay necesidad en la Compañía de buenos y muchos sujetos para proveer a tantos y diversos asuntos que abraza para ayudar las ánimas en tantas partes del mundo y para esto ordena nuestro Señor por medio del nuestro bendito padre Ignacio las partes que han de tener los que se han de admitir en la Compañía. Ahora se ve claramente que hay muchos que tienen todas las partes que son menester, mas les faltará sola aquella; y así se priva de los tales sujetos que uno solo de ellos pudiera ganar a muchos, y perdiéndose un grano se pierde una gran mies” (Instit. 186e, f. 356r).

56 Juan de Albotodo (1527–78) was born into a Morisco family from Granada. He worked among the Moriscos of his native city, using Arabic. His success convinced his superiors to establish a Jesuit house and school in the Morisco quarter of Albaicín, where he operated with other Jesuits for a decade until the Morisco rebellion in 1568–70. Subsequently he worked in Seville, where he died. His funeral testified to the great esteem that the citizens had for his work (see DHCJ 1:38–9). Guzmán himself was from Seville and moved back there nine years after Albotodo’s death (1587), which explains why he would choose the latter as an example here. On Albotodo’s work in Granada, see Coleman, Creating Christian Granada, pp. 156–7.

57 “Tengamos en la memoria el gran fruto que hizo el Padre Albotodo que era del linaje de los moriscos de Granada el cual hizo maravillas, dondequiera que estuvo, en ayudar las ánimas y socorrer infinitas necesidades espirituales y corporales especialmente en […] y la tenía toda en su mano. Y aunque todos sabían que él era de aquel linaje, ninguno se ofendía por ello, antes se edificaban viendo que nuestro Señor había sacado una tal rosa de medio de las espinas y le daban muchos millares de ducados que distribuyese entre muchos pobres y obras pías de la ciudad. Y así cuando nuestro Señor se lo llevó, fue tanto el sentimiento de todos, como si cada uno perdiera su propio padre” (Instit. 186e, ff. 356r–v).

58 “Y si por estas razones y por otras muchas que hay muy efíacas fuese persuadido nuestro Padre General que este decreto se abrogase, o a los menos se moderase, no excluyendo a otros que los que el decreto común excluye para ser sacerdotes, mas para coadjutores se puedan recibir, esto podría Su Paternidad concluir tratándolo con Su
The second part of Guzmán’s letter-memorial takes the form of an appendix that contains a list of ten brief points. They present inconveniences that the de genere decree creates in the Society. The first one, which would be picked up also by Alarcón, points out a big risk of using lineage as a hidden excuse to dismiss someone from the Order.\(^{59}\) Guzmán seems to be surprised by the fact that the decree must be observed outside Spain, even though elsewhere the issue of lineage is nonexistent—for example, in Rome, where a famous Dominican preacher, known as “the Jew,” is much esteemed for his doctrine and grace of preaching. (This preacher had been baptized along with his father after he had been catechized in a Jesuit house in the time of Ignatius.) Besides, even in Spain, other religious orders do not have such a decree, and the Dominicans observe it only in some convents and with limitations.\(^{60}\)

Repeating what he had already written in the first part, Guzmán calls the witness of many grave people “of lineage” who are scandalized by the promulgation of such a decree in the Society, blaming its [general] congregation for having been presided by the demon.\(^{61}\) Another scandalous and divisive inconvenience can be created during the examination for admission, if a superior is “of lineage” and has to bar a candidate

---

\(^{59}\) “Suceden muchas veces ser menester despedir algunos de la Compañía según lo mandan las Constituciones por diversos casos y defectos que tienen o han tenido. Y habiendo ahora este decreto, hay gran peligro de escándalo que se diga que por el linaje se despiden; y así se impida el […] por mucho que convenga para el bien de la Compañía que se vaya” (Instit. 186e, ff. 356’–357’).

\(^{60}\) “Porque este decreto no solo toca a España, mas a las otras naciones donde no se suele hacer caso del linaje, sino que los reciben muy fácilmente, si tienen las otras buenas partes, como por ejemplo en Roma hay un predicador de santo Domingo que llamen el hebreo y que se bautizó junto con su padre y se catequizó en nuestra casa profesa en tiempo de nuestro Padre Ignacio, el cual es muy estimado en todas las ciudades de Italia por su doctrina y gracia de predicar. Pues si por allá y en otras partes ha de ser guardado este decreto, necesariamente ha de suceder escándalo notable pues las otras religiones no lo tienen en España. Lo tienen los padres de s. Domingo en algunos conventos, mas con mucha limitación, como es que si uno es caballero aunque le toque por otra parte ser del otro linaje no le impide nada” (Instit. 186e, f. 357’).

\(^{61}\) “Que se sabe que personas muy graves en dignidad y letras y linaje se hayan escandalizado por este decreto y dicho abominaciones de la Compañía, como que el demonio presidia en aquella Congregación y cosas semejantes” (Instit. 186e, f. 357’).
because of his lineage.\textsuperscript{62} That is why Spanish families do not want to send their sons to Jesuit colleges, being afraid that, should they discover vocation and want to enter the Order, they would expose themselves to embarrassment, as is already happening.\textsuperscript{63} Sometimes, though, such families insist that the Society admit their sons, as in the grotesque case Guzmán quotes: “We have heard that somewhere, because the Jesuits did not receive somebody of this lineage, the relatives arrived masked in the night and threatened to kill the Jesuits if they did not admit their son, and the Jesuits were forced to do so for the fear of death.”\textsuperscript{64}

Conversely, there will be people without vocation to the Society who will want to enter only because they want to be considered of pure lineage.\textsuperscript{65} Thus, the Society becomes unavoidably abhorred not only by “the people of lineage” but also by many who are not but who are often bound to them by ties of friendship or blood. Consequently, the Society is seen as adverse, for it was founded to embrace and console all kinds of people.\textsuperscript{66} Guzmán again regrets, then, that the Society closes its doors to the people who are most excellent in virtues and letters but cannot be admitted to the Order solely because of their lineage, even though they have vocation. Vice versa, the Society opens the door to less capable people just because they possess one thing that the others do not have.\textsuperscript{67}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{62} “Que hay ocasión grande dentro la Compañía de haber escándalos y cizaña. Como será, si hubiese de los superiores que les tocase algo de aquel linaje y fuese menester hacer examen de algunos que pretenden entrar, puede decir, ‘Eres tu superior y tienes parte de este linaje y buscas me a mí si tengo algo’” (\textit{Instit. 186e}, f. 357r).
  \item \textsuperscript{63} “Nuestros no querían enviar sus hijos a nuestros colegios por miedo que si tuviessen vocación y queriendo entrar, no los reciban y quedan afrentados, como ya se ha sabido que acontece esto” (\textit{Instit. 186e}, f. 357v).
  \item \textsuperscript{64} “Ya se ha sabido que en algunas partes por no haber recibido alguno que le tocaba algo de este linaje, han venido de noche sus parientes enmascarados y han amenazado de matar a los nuestros, si no lo reciben, y ha sido menester recibirlo por miedo de la muerte” (\textit{Instit. 186e}, f. 357v).
  \item \textsuperscript{65} “Sucederá que algunos que aunque no tengan vocación a la Compañía cual sea verdadera, sino por ser tenidos por limpios de linaje quieran entrar” (\textit{Instit. 186e}, f. 357v).
  \item \textsuperscript{66} “Necesariamente se hace la Compañía odiosa a gran multitud de gente no solo a los que les toca de aquel linaje, mas también a otros muchos aunque no les toque nada, porque siempre hay de los que tienen amigos muy íntimos que les toca y también a otros que tienen parientes y muy cercanos que les toca, de manera que abraca esta ocasión de odio y de aversión una gran multitud de universidades y calidad de gentes, lo que es escándalo que todos podemos ver, habiendo nuestro Señor fundado la Compañía para abrazar y consolar a toda suerte y calidad de personas” (\textit{Instit. 186e}, f. 357v).
  \item \textsuperscript{67} “Se cierra la puerta a personas muy señaladas en mucha virtud y letras y autoridad y dignidad que, aunque tengan vocación de entrar en la Compañía, si […] les
Guzmán concludes his draft of the memorial by saying that even Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and Inquisitor General Gaspar de Quiroga considered the Society dishonored by promulgating a law that bars from the Society not only priests of lineage but also lay brothers of the kind.68

Diego de Guzmán must have written his memorial from Seville sometime between the promulgation of the 1593 decree and his death in 1606, just two years before the decree’s limitation that he fought for. He wrote it to Pedro de Ribadeneyra not only because of the bond of friendship that tied them but also because the latter was known to have good connections at the court in Madrid, through which he might have been able to pressure Acquaviva. At any rate, Ribadeneyra himself engaged in a campaign that targeted the 1593 decree, employing some of the arguments offered by Guzmán.

**Pedro de Ribadeneyra**

The most cohesive reaction of Pedro de Ribadeneyra to the purity-of-blood discrimination in the Society of Jesus is contained in his memorial under the title, *Las razones que se me ofrecen para no hacer novedad en el admitir gente en la Compañía* [The reasons that I think of for not making any change regarding the admission to the Society], which is the only text of the kind that was published in its entirety.69

We have already seen parts of this text in Chapter Two, when quoting the instances of Loyola’s desire to be a Jew by blood and instances of the adamant condemnation by early Jesuits (Laínez and Nadal) of such a discriminatory policy as “opposite to the spirit of God.”

---

68 “Se sabe muy cierto lo que sintió en esto el Cardinal Arzobispo de Toledo, Inquisidor General don Gaspar de Quiroga, que fue que en lugar de ganar honra se ha la Compañía deshonrado con este tal decreto, cerrando la puerta no solo a los sacerdotes, mas también a los coadjutores, lo cual apenas se puede guardare en los colegios de las universidades, cuanto menos en una religión como esta. Y lo mismo sintió el obispo santo desear, don Francisco Sarmiento de buena memoria” (Instit. 186e, f. 358’).

69 ARSI, *Instit. 184 I*, ff. 292’–295’; and *Mon Rib.* 2:374–84. The particularity of this text comes not from the author’s advanced age, as Anna Foa has suggested in her “Limpieza and Mission” (p. 306), but from the author’s converso background and from authoritativeness within the Society.
Ribadeneyra begins his memorial by bluntly affirming that the lineage discrimination constitutes a substantial change in the Jesuit Constitutions, which do not exclude those of Jewish stock; even Loyola’s anti-converso relative, Antonio de Araoz, had to succumb willy-nilly to their authority. Yet, Araoz must have been quite stubborn in his prejudice, for Ribadeneyra quotes two letters that Loyola’s successor, Diego Laínez, wrote to him in this regard. The first one was composed in November 1560 and the second in November 1564. Both letters strongly opposed “the national humor” in Spain against the conversos—as if they were made of other metal—as destructive to the unity of the Society. Ribadeneyra employed the traditional argumentation for Christian unity used in Pauline epistolography and the Acts of the Apostles that we already have seen abundantly in other pro-converso writings.

Like Possevino, Ribadeneyra highlights the stark contrast between the pro-converso attitude during the governments of the first three superiors general—especially during the generalate of Francisco de Borja, who “was still easier in accepting this kind of people than Fathers Master Ignatius and Master Laínez” —and the novelty introduced by the 1593 decree. To a Jesuit objecting to this openness, Borja would reply that he was pursuing the same kind of policy that the Spanish monarch was, in whose service many conversos were employed. Additionally, Borja would point out that he could not restrict the admission to the service in the house of that Lord, who “makes no favoritism [acceptatio personarum: Romans 2:11] neither between Jew and Greek [Romans 10:12], nor between Barbarian and Scythian [Colossians 3:11].” Curiously, Ribadeneyra also adds that the discriminatory practice was alien to the current Superior General Acquaviva, but this statement was probably a kind of captatio benevolentiae trick, aimed—as we have seen it already in the first memorial by Possevino in respect to Mercurian—at persuading the addressee to change the policy, so that his authority be not jeopardized.

Ribadeneyra also refutes the accusation that the memorialistas movement was composed of Jesuits of Jewish origin, for which they would have been punished by the 1593 decree. To the contrary, he

---

70 See Mon Rib. 2:377.
71 See Mon Rib. 2:377–8.
stresses, the leader of this group of *perturbatores*, [Francisco] Abreo, was considered pure,72 and many converso Jesuits, at any rate, showed that “they were very faithful and true sons of our Father [Ignatius] and of the Society.” The people who initiated major turmoil in the Society—continues Ribadeneyra—were not of Jewish stock; and even if they were, it would not suffice to punish them with this kind of decree, for we have to remember that among those people in the Society we find the most excellent men in sainthood, letters, prudence and of rare gifts, like Giovanni Battista Romano. Like Guzmán, Ribadeneyra is surprised by the lineage obsession in Spain, while elsewhere this issue is nonexistent—for example in Rome, where a great Dominican preacher, Father Alexander, who converted from Judaism, operates with no obstacle.73

Consequently, the honor of the Society and of Spain is compromised, for the Italians consider it entirely Jewish or crypto-Jewish. This bias undermines the Society’s union, for its members look at one another as enemies who belong to a different caste or sect. The atmosphere of suspicion and division that seems to be a civil war is viewed by Ribadeneyra as “vinegar added to the fire that will consume the entire Society.” This concern for the Society’s future was expressed—Ribadeneyra reminds—by many holy and illustrious friends of the Society, Master [Juan de] Ávila included, who predicted that the Society would be destroyed if it introduced distinctions of lineage and blood.74 Acquaviva’s special envoy to investigate the consequences of these distinctions, García Girón de Alarcón, wrote in response to the superior general the most comprehensive and systematic critique of the Jesuit purity-of-blood legislation.

72 Francisco Abreo was born in 1528 in Fuente Guinaldo (Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca) and entered the Society in 1569 in Salamanca. His Sephardic name, birthplace, and intellectual interests, however, suggest converso origin. Before he became a Jesuit, he studied law in Salamanca and consequently taught there and in Oviedo with much success. Mercurian refused to admit him to the profession of solemn vows, and Acquaviva dismissed him in 1588 due to his alleged (financial) independence, but he left the Society only in 1592 and moved to his birthplace. See *Información en derecho. En defensa de la Bula conservatoria, dada por los Pontífices Pío V y Gregorio XIII a la Compañía de Jesús, Casas, Colegios y Religiosos dellos* (s.l., c. 1575); “Contra Institutum S.I.,” in ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 163; *DHCJ* 1:7; Astrain, *Historia*, 3:354–7, 413, 418sq, 490–3, 537sq; and García Casar, *Fontes iudaorum regni castellae*, vol. VI: “El pasado judío de Ciudad Rodrigo” (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1992).

73 See *Mon Rib*. 2:379–80. This part would suggest that Ribadeneyra used Guzmán’s text to write the present memorial.

74 See *Mon Rib*. 2:380–3.
García Girón de Alarcón was born in 1534 in Albaladejo (Cuenca) to Alonso Girón de Alarcón and Juana Pacheco. As the oldest son he inherited the mayorazgo of his father in Albaladejo and Piqueras, and that of his maternal uncle, Juan de Silva y Pacheco, in Villarejo. Most likely he was also related to doña Juana de Alarcón of Villa de Minaya (Cuenca), who was married to don Juan de Pacheco, whose son, Alonso, also entered the Society. After his six-month experience with the Jeronymites, which constituted for him a legal impediment to join the Jesuits, he nevertheless entered the Society in 1555, supported by a request directed to Francisco de Borja by the converso Juan de Ávila, with whom Alarcón had been acquainted in Granada. After his studies in Alcalá he was ordained priest in 1567 and celebrated his first mass in a church of the Jesuit novitiate that he had founded in Villarejo. Among many other administrative duties he was superior provincial of Andalusia. As such, he participated in General Congregation 4 (1581), which elected him assistant general for Spain, and he was thus a colleague of Hoffaeus, Maggio, and Rodrigues, whose anti-converso campaign we have studied in the previous chapter. Alarcón kept his office until General Congregation 5 (1593), which promulgated the de genere decree. The Jesuit Superior General Acquaviva appointed him (1595–7) visitor in the provinces of Castile and Toledo, both of which expressed their opposition to that decree. At the end of his visit to these provinces and close to death, García de Alarcón commissioned Juan de Montemayor to write a memorial on his behalf. The latter was elected in 1597 to participate in the Congregation of Procurators in Rome, and the next year he would

---

75 See ARSI, Fondo Gesuitico 1652, N. 263. There was another Jesuit named Pacheco who was mentioned in the previous chapter. His first name was Juan Bautista, and he was born most likely to a converso family in Uclés, in the same province of Cuenca. Alarcón might be also related to the famous playwright Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, whose father, Pedro, immigrated from Albaladejo in Cuenca (where García was born) to Taxco in Mexico. In 1572 Pedro married a descendant of the Cazalla merchant converso family from Seville, Leonor de Mendoza. See Willard F. King, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, letrado y dramaturgo: su mundo mexicano y español (Mexico: Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Lingüísticos y Literarios, 1989), Chapter 1 and the genealogical tree of the House of Albaladejo (Appendix B).

76 Kamen in his Crisis and Change (p. 14) mentions an anti-limpieza memorandum from 1613 by Juan de Montemayor, though without providing enough details about it, so I could not establish whether it is the same text we are discussing here.
become superior provincial of Castile. The document was dated 16 December 1597 and was carried to Rome, where it has survived in the Jesuit Archives until today but has been virtually unnoticed.

The purpose of this text addressed to Acquaviva is to advise the superior general about the suggestion made to him by “many eminent men from the Society, either in doctrine, piety, religion, or government, who are known for their love and faithfulness to the Society and its superior general” to obtain from the pope some limitation to the third canon of General Congregation 5, which prohibits the admission of candidates of Jewish lineage and orders the dismissal of those subjects who anytime before their religious profession would be discovered to have such ancestry, without giving to the general the power to grant exemptions.

Alarcón’s text has a twofold structure: the first part reflects the author’s training in law and presents a set of papal and conciliar documents refuting the discrimination of Jewish Christians based on their lineage alone; the second offers fifteen reasons whereby the 1593 decree was harmful to the Society of Jesus itself. Despite the initial suggestion of the decree’s mitigation, Alarcón’s argumentation makes this decree wholly unacceptable, for he quotes the documents that call not just for the alleviation of discriminatory legislation but, further, prove its unlawfulness tout court.

The most important papal document of this kind that the Castilian Jesuit cites almost entirely—as did his former Jeronymite confrere, Oropesa, in his Lumen—is Nicholas V’s bull Humani generis inimicus (1449), which we have already seen in Chapter One as a reaction to

77 See ARSI, Inst. 184–I, ff. 296–312.

78 “Pater Garcia de Alarcon Visitator Castellae et Toleti mihi Romam proficiscenti valde commendavit simul etiam inuxit ut ipsius nomine Patri nostro generali deferram, quae ei multi viri e Societate, in doctrina e pietate, in religione et gubernatione praecipui, et in amore et fidelitate in Societatem, neconon ad Patrem nostrum generalem valde praecari proposuerunt circa canonom tertium Quintae Congregationis generalis (quo cavetur ne in Societatem admittantur, qui ex Hebraeorum genere originem trahunt: quod si errore aliquo quispiam admissis fuerit, quocumque tempore ante professionem detegatur, dimittatur, quin generalis super hoc dispensare possit) haec autem deferenda censuit non ut canon derogatur, aut penitus deletur, sed ut ei aliqua declaratone Summi Pontificis nonnulla limitatio adhibeatur” (Inst. 184–I, f. 297). Note that Alarcón does not mention the debarment of Moriscos in this summary of the 1593 decree.

79 Anna Foa has noted in her “Limpieza and Mission” (pp. 302–3) the similarity of the title of this encyclical with the never-promulgated anti-racist Humani generis unitas of Pope Pius XI, which was co-written by three Jesuits: the American John LaFarge
Sarmiento’s first purity-of-blood legislation and whose very existence Bishop Simancas undermined in his Defensio Toletani Statuti (1573). The jurist Alarcón highlights its eight points:

(1) Three major monarchs of Castile and León “established under severe penalty that there be no preference between the new converts to the faith, especially from the Jewish people, and the Old Christians in keeping or receiving honors, offices and dignities, both ecclesiastical and civil.”

(2) The pope had seen these royal sanctions supplied with their authentic seals, which he sufficiently discussed and—after mature deliberation—approved with apostolic authority on his own initiative, fully certain that they complied with the sacred canons and law.

(3) Nicholas declared the contrary judgment as erroneous, therefore those who follow it are dubbed “new sowers of zizania” (novos seminatores zizaniae), “contemptuous of the documents of our faith and unity” (contemptores documenti salutaris fidei nostrae et unitatis), “those who renew dissent that had been extirpated by the Apostle Paul” (renovatores dissidii, quod ab apostolo Paulo extirpatum), “totally alien to our Lord Christ” (alienos ab infinitis Christi Domini nostri), “deviators from the truth of the Catholic faith” (aberrantes ab veritate fidei catholicae), “opponents of the authority not only of the Sacred Scripture, but also of the sanctions of the most illustrious lay princes” (contradictores non solum authoritatis Sacrae Scripturae, verum etiam sanctionum illustrium Principum saecularium, quae visae sunt et discussae, approbatae et roboratae a Sede Apostolica), “sowers of falseness against the norm of Christian religion and what is contrary to peace and unity” (seminatores falsitatum contra Christianae religionis normam [et] quae contraria sunt paci et unitati), and “scandalous to the neighbor” (scandalizatores proximorum).

(4) The pope’s motu proprio orders all Catholics, whether ecclesiastic or lay, of any status, rank or condition, under penalty of excommunication, to admit all the converts to the faith of the Gospel and those who will convert in the future, and their descendants of both
the clergy and laity, as long as they live as good Christians, to all
dignities and offices, and everything else, i.e., communities of men
religious, to which all other old Christians are universally admitted,
and that there be no discrimination between the latter and other
Christians because of their recent acceptance of the faith.83

(5) Under penalty of excommunication, Old Christians should not dis-
grace the New Christians by word or deed, nor should they let oth-
ers do such things, but rather they should contradict and oppose it
with all their might; and with all their charity they should accom-
pany them and honor without favoritism of persons.84

(6) Nicholas ordered bishops to punish those who teach the opposite in
words or deeds and those who inflict injuries by means of various
penalties from imprisonment to pecuniary ones.85

(7) Apostates from the faith ought to be punished according to com-
mon law.86

(8) The Apostle Paul at the beginning of the Church extirpated an acri-
mony that was born between Jews and Gentiles, to which he abun-
dantly related through almost entire Letter to the Romans.87

The second most authoritative papal document that the Salmantican
alumnus cites in his letter to Acquaviva is Paul III’s bull Cupientes
Iudaeos (1542), a papal document that was issued under the sway of the
founder of the Order of Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola, a fact that Alarcón
may have not known. The fragment in which Alarcón is especially
interested was inserted into a collection of decrees commissioned by
Pope Gregory XIII; it is actually a quotation of the decree De his qui
volunt ad fidelm converti of the Council of Basel (1431–7). Alonso de

83 “Præcipitur sub excommunicationis poena omnibus catolicis ecclesiasticis et
securaribus, cuiuscumque status et conditionis sint, ut omnes ad fidem evangeli
conversos et in posterum convertendos et eorum posteros tam ecclesiasticos quam
saeculares catholice et secundum quod decet Christianum viventes admittant ad
omnes dignitates et officia et universaliter, ait, ad omnia alia, communitys scilicet
religiosorum et similia adque alii Christiani quantumcumque antiqui admirati solent,
nec propter fidei novae receptionem interos et alios Christianos discretiones fiant”
(Inst. 184–I, f. 300').
84 “Præcipit sub eadem poena excommunicationis ne quis eos verbis aut factis con-
tumeliis afficiat, neve ab alii aliis afficiat imo ut pro viribus contradicat et
se opponat iniuria afficere volentibus, et tandem ut sine acceptance personarum eos
charitate prosequantur” (see Inst. 184–I, ff. 300'–301').
85 “Præcipit Episcopis, ut docentes contrarium aut eos verbo vel facto, aut quoquo
modo iniuria afficientes puniant captura, privatione, inhabitatione, poenis pecuniariis
et alii suius modi, omissa omni iuris solemnitate, sola facti veritate inspecta” (see
Inst. 184–I, f. 301').
86 “Apostantes a fide iubet puniri iuxta ius commune” (see Inst. 184–I, f. 301').
87 “Apostolum Paulum extirpare se simplice dissidium antelationis exhortum initi
nascentis Ecclesiae inter Iudeos et gentiles quod Apostolus late prosequir epistola ad
Romanos fere per totam” (see Inst. 184–I, f. 301').
Cartagena hammered it out there and included in his *Defensorium*, as we have seen in Chapter One: “Those recently converted to the faith must enjoy the same privileges, exemptions, and liberties that the Old Christians do, ‘for the members of the family of God and the saints become citizens by the grace of baptism and it is much more worthy to be regenerated in the spirit than to be born in the flesh’.”

The spirit of this decree, continues Alarcón, was reflected in a document by Pope Alexander III, who reprimanded a bishop for being unwilling to admit to his Church and give an ecclesiastical benefice to a convert from Judaism; Alexander argued that the bishop should not dishonor the man because of his Jewish origin.

Additionally, Alarcón cites the names of other popes who, albeit not directly, were driven by the same kind of spirit that Nicholas’s bull contained, among them Pius V, Gregory XIII, Innocent III, and Gregory IX. The latter underlined that what makes someone a good servant in God’s eyes is not his provenience but the nobility of his virtues and the honesty of his life, words that echo St. Paul’s First Letter to Corinthians (1:24–6): “To those who have been called, Jews as well as Greeks, the Christ is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God [...], for not many are wise according to the flesh, not many are powerful, not many are noble.”

For the sake of fairness, Alarcón admits that there are some statutes approved by the Apostolic See, whereby “those who are from the circumcision” are rejected in some Churches, but he explains that those papal documents do not have universal value, for they were proposed in specific circumstances, where their confirmation seemed to be a prudent solution. Yet, those churches, which adopted such restrictions,
soon realized how harmful and inconvenient they were and, consequently, petitioned from popes or monarchs their abrogation. An example of this practice was the Church of Burgos, which saw in the observation of this discriminatory law many inconveniences, likewise the Church of Toledo itself, under the rule of Archbishop Alonso Carrillo de Acuña (to whom Oropesa dedicated his *Lumen*, as we have seen above), issued a decree that Alarcón himself consulted in the archives of the Santa María Church in Alcalá de Henares. In it, the irritated Carrillo complains that in Toledo, as well as in other cities and towns of his archdiocese, many confraternities, chapters, and colleges do not admit New Christians, falsely justifying it with piety. In such places, the candidates are scrutinized with regard to their origin, which produces many scandals and undermines peace and unity. In reaction to this division of “nations and origins,” which he considers to be contrary to law and charity, Carrillo prohibited under penalty of excommunication the observance of such statutes. Carrillo’s decree

---

88 “Praeterea extat constitutio Pauli [ ], f. 301r.

89 “Praeterea in iure communi extat decretalis Alexandri 3 . . . de rescriptis quae edita anno 1542 quae . . .

90 For the sake of fairness, Alarcón admits that there are some statutes that do not have universal value, for they were proposed in specific circumstances, where their confirmation seemed to be a prudent impulse (Inst. 184–I, f. 301r).
was confirmed in 1483—reminds Alarcón—by his successor, Cardinal Pedro González de Mendoza (1428–95). Also, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez [de Cisneros] (1436–1517) followed the policy of these two archbishops of Toledo: he advised his Franciscan confreres not to refuse the candidates “who had origin from Hebrews.”

To finish his list of highest Church authorities who disapproved lineage discrimination, Alarcón—following perhaps a similar treatise by the Franciscan Gaspar de Uceda—adds that of the Dominican Cardinal Cajetan (Tommaso de Vio, 1468–1534), who was consulted in 1514 (when the conversion of Jews was quite recent and, hence, when their “return to the vomit” more frequent) by the academics from Salamanca about whether it was licit to refuse the admission of those who converted. He replied that refusing only for the reason of their Jewish origin seemed to him irrational, “for our salvation comes from Jews, from whom Christ, the Apostles and many fathers of the faith were born according to the flesh. This refusal would generate in Jews an excuse not to convert to Christianity, knowing that their children would be rejected forever.”

94 “Quam constitutionem deinde illustrissimus cardinalis Petrus Gonzalez a Mendoza Archiepiscopus etiam Toletanus approbatis et confirmavit anno 1483 in quadam provisione data Victoriae, fuit enim gubernator horum regnorum. Reverendissimus etiam cardinalis Frater Franciscus Jimenez Archiepiscopus Toletanus ordinis Divi Francisci consuluit suae religioni ut trahentes originem ab Hebraeis non repellerent quin potius admittentur ad sui habitus susceptionem” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 302v). Cardinal Cisneros kept a converso physician, whose nephew, Alfonso de Pisa (1528–98), also a physician, entered the Society in 1552 in Alcalá, as we have seen in the previous chapter.

95 Gaspar de Uceda, a theologian from Salamanca, wrote a treatise against the purity-of-blood statutes in his Franciscan Order in 1586. See Elvira Pérez Ferreiro, ed., El Tratado de Uceda contra los Estatutos de Limpieza de Sangre: una reacción ante el establecimiento del Estatuto de Limpieza en la Orden Franciscana (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2000).

96 “Et Cardinalis Caetanatus consultus a doctoribus academiae Salmanticensis anno Domini 1514 quando erat satis recens conversio iudaeorum ad fidem, an esset licitum eos repellere a religione respondet tomo I opuscolorum tractatu 3 […] qui continebatur 17 respondiones, respondione 6 in eius fine his verbis: “Irrationabile mihi videtur perpetuum statutum aut opus huius modi refutatium respectu illorum qui nulla alia suspicionis nota sunt affecti nisi quod originem ex iudaeis traxerunt, tum quia salus nostra ex Iudaeis est, ex quibus natus est Christus secundum carnem et Apostoli et plurimi patres fidei, et ignari invenierunt sui generis filios repellendo: tum quia occasio daretur Iudaeis, ut ad fidem non convertantur dum intelligunt conversorum filios in generatione et generationem repulso a religione, tum quia religio status est talis, ubi
The second part of Alarcón’s letter deals with the unconstitutionality of the 1593 decree and highlights the harm it had brought to the Society of Jesus. The decree alters the Jesuit Institute substantially, for the Jesuits accepted the Institute from Father Ignatius, who was believed to have received at least its substance directly from God. To add or delete something that Ignatius wrote in the Constitutions regarding impediments to a man’s joining the Society means altering the Institute substantially. Even though General Congregation 5 itself (which approved the de genere decree) declared that the essential impediments for admission to the Society belong to the substance of the Jesuit Institute, it added the impediment of lineage as essential. But, Alarcón argues, when Ignatius made a distinction in the Constitutions between the primary and secondary impediments for the admission, he did not include lineage in either of the two.97

96 “Et Cardinalis Caietanus consultus a doctoribus academiae Salmanticensis anno 1514 quando erat satis recens conversio iudaeorum ad fidem, an esset licitum do eos repellere a religione respondet eto tome I opuscolorum tractatu 3 [. . . ] qui contiuentur ad sui habitus susceptionem” (?Inst. 184–I, ff. 302 v–303r).

Note that Bishop Simancas (as we have seen in Chapter One) challenged Cajetan’s authority by saying that the conversos were trouble-makers in monasteries; “Caietanus dixit ad illa monasteria ire possunt, sed nolunt isti, nisi perturbare omnia” (Simancas, Defensio, f. 20). Even though the attribution of this text to Cajetan is dubious, it is true that Alarcón omitted a part of Cajetan’s response, which Uceda included in his treatise and criticized. In it, the Dominican theologian stated that the purity-of-blood statutes did not constitute a mortal sin, arguing that as sons of priests are excluded from the Church due to paternal malevolence, so should the descendents from Judaism be excluded, due to the incredulity of their ancestors: “Primeramente digo que Cayetano erró tomando fundamento de este Concilio mal entendido [Council of Pisa in 1409], porque, aunque dijo, como arriba está referido, que los Estatutos de que vamos hablando eran irraisonables por las razones sobredichas, juntamente añadió que no era pecado mortal hazer los tales Statutos: los hijos de los clérigos son excluidos de la Iglesia por la malicia paternal, luego también los descendientes del judaismo deben ser excluidos por la incredulidad de sus progenitores” (Ferreiro, Tratado de Uceda, pp. 137–8). Cajetan’s ambiguity fed the arguments of both sides of the converso polemics.

97 “Prima, quia statuto alteratur et mutatur eius institutum in re satiis substantiale, quod nos a Patre nostro Ignatio accepimus eumque probabiliter credimus illud a Deo immediate recepisses quodam omnia substantialia. Probatur quia addere vel adimere aliquum circa ea, quae Pater noster Ignatius in Constitutionibus reliquit circa impedimenta substantialia exclusentia aliquem a Societate est alterare institutum in rebus substantialibus. Nam ut recte vidit congregatio 5.a generalis, canone 17 impedimenta essentia, quae aliquem an ingressi Societatis impeditunt, res est ad substantiam institutum spectans, at hoc statutum circa huius modi impedimenta unum addit substantiales” (?Inst. 184–I, f. 304).
Indeed, Loyola established in the *Constitutions* ([165]–[176]) five essential impediments<sup>98</sup> that bar a candidate absolutely from being accepted into the Society:

1. “To have separated oneself for a time from the bosom of the Holy Church, by denying the faith in the midst of infidels, or by falling into errors against the faith and having been condemned because of them by a public sentence or by withdrawing as a schismatic from the unity of the Church.”<sup>99</sup>
2. “To have been a homicide or infamous because of enormous sins.”
3. “To have received the habit of a religious institute, or to have been a hermit with the garb of a monk.”
4. “To be bound by the bond of matrimony or of legal servitude.”
5. “To be mentally ill, with the result that the judgment becomes obscured and unsound, or to have a notable disposition toward such illness.”<sup>100</sup>

Additionally, there are nine secondary impediments ([177]–[189]),<sup>101</sup> “none of which by itself bars admission to the Society, but which nevertheless renders the applicant less suitable”:

---

<sup>98</sup> The *Constitutions* explain the character of these impediments as follows: “In regard of all these impediments it is expedient that neither the superior general nor the whole Society should be able to dispense, since it is universally good that no dispensation be granted from them. However, should one of these impediments be found in a person who has such other qualifications as to give certitude that the Society could be much helped by him in the service of God our Lord, and should the person himself petition the supreme pontiff or his nuncio or chief penitentiary for permission, notwithstanding the Constitutions, to be received into the Society, its superior general not being opposed, then the superior general may give his consent, so long as the door would not be opened to large numbers or to anyone, as has been stated, without exceptional qualities” [176].

<sup>99</sup> The *Constitutions* commented on this impediment as follows: “[166] Even though one has not been condemned by a public sentence, if his error has been public and he has been highly suspect and there is fear that proceedings may be instituted against him, he ought not to be admitted. But this judgment will be left to the superior general. [167] With respect to schism, if someone was born in a schismatic region, so that the schism was not simply an individual sin committed by the person himself but a general sin, he would not be understood to be excluded from the Society for this cause (and the same holds true of one born in a heretical region). Rather, what is envisaged is a person who is under infamy and excommunication after having contemned the authority and vigilance of our holy mother the Church, so that the heresy or schism is the person’s individual sin, not the general sin of the nation or country.”

<sup>100</sup> See *Inst. 184–I*, ff. 304v–

<sup>101</sup> The *Constitutions* explain this kind of impediments as follows: “[178] Each of the impediments of this second category could itself suffice to bar admission. But since there might be other compensating excellent qualities such that it would appear in our Lord that one of these defects ought to be tolerated, the discernment of this case
(1) “In regard to the interior, passions, which seem uncontrollable, or
sinful habits of which there is no hope of much emendation.”
(2) “An intention that is not as right as it ought to be for entrance into
a religious institute but is mixed with human designs.”
(3) “Inconstancy or notable listlessness, so that the applicant seems
unlikely to amount to much.”
(4) “Indiscreet devotions that lead some to fall into illusions and errors
of importance.”
(5) “A lack of learning or of intellectual ability or of memory to acquire
it, or of facility in speech to explain it, in candidates who manifest
an intention or desire to progress farther than temporal coadjutors
customarily do.”
(6) “A lack of judgment or a notable obstinacy in one’s personal opinions,
which is very troublesome in any congregation.”
(7) “In regard to the exterior, a lack of bodily integrity, illness and
weakness, or notable ugliness.”
(8) “Age too tender, or too advanced.”
(9) “Debts or civil obligations.”

As both lists clearly show—confirms Alarcón—the impediment of
lineage that was established in the 1593 statute is not extant here. It
is true that Loyola mentioned the question of ancestry in the section
“General Exam” of the Constitutions, but not as an impediment—the
text simply asks the candidates’ examiner to ask whether his family
comes from old or modern Christians. The purpose of this ques-
tion is just to gather more information about the subject. Alarcón
repeats again that adding this substantial impediment means alter-
ing the Institute substantially and that it opens a precedent to add
other substantial changes in the future, which would result in the
creation of a new Institute and a different religious order than the
one Ignatius founded. The Society has always desired with all its
might to avoid any such substantial alteration.102

is left to the discretion of the one who has the authority to admit. It will also belong
to him to make a dispensation in such cases, subject to the judgment of the superior,
who ought to be informed of any difficulty that might arise and whose opinion should
be followed.”

102 “Huius autem impedimenti quod habetur in statuto nullam fecit mentionem,
nam licet in examine […] § 2 moneat, ut interrogetur recipiendus, an sit ex progeni-
toribus iam olim christianis, an modernis, hoc non est, quia impedimentum esse cen-
seat talis propagatio, sed ut maior notitia recipiendi habetur, cius signum apertum
est. Nam eodem § 2 eodem tenore ait. Interrogetur an sit ex legitimo matrimonio
et tamen non esse legitum constat nullum esse impedimentum. Igitur denuo addere
hoc impedimentum substantiale est alterare institutum in re substantiali, quo aditus
It has to be remembered—continues the Jesuit jurist—that Ignatius, even though he was originally from Guipúzcoa (whose people used to persecute with hatred those who are from the circumcision), nursed conversos with special love, inspired by God’s spirit during his long prayers, penances, and sacrifices, and he did not reject them from his community. Rather, he admitted into the Society men of Jewish lineage, for they rendered the Society famous by their doctrine, sanctity, and erudition and conserved its integrity and indemnity during the Council of Trent. Although some in the Society during Ignatius’s lifetime did try to introduce such an impediment, he dismissed them as alien to the Society’s spirit and would do so now, if he found such people.103

Alarcón could still comprehend the need to introduce the Toledan statutes [1449], understanding that the conversion of Jews in Spain was then quite recent and that many of them were still being daily caught practicing “their perfidy,” but he underscores that such a motivation to hound converts was not unnecessary in Spain, for many conversos are truly faithful and only a few of them relapse—their infamy and obstinacy have been eliminated and purified by the durability of their faith.104

If Ignatius had objected to the lineage statutes, Alarcón continues, it is necessary to refuse them also now. A similar issue had been

aperitur, ut in aliis substantialibus successu temporis alteretur, et sic fiat aliud institutum, alia quae religio ab ea quam a patre nostro Ignatio accepimus contra id quod tota Societas cunctis viribus semper curavit, ut institutum illaesum servetur, quin in aliquo substantiali mutetur” (Inst. 184–1, ff. 304v–305r).

103 “Confirmatur […] quia licet Pater noster Ignatius esset natione Gipuzcuanus, cuius rationi homines eos, qui ex circumcisione sunt praecipuo prosequuntur odio, tamen spiritus Dei afflatus, magna consultatione divina praemissa, post multas orationes, poenitentias et sacrificia, illos praecipuo amore prosequutos est, nec a sua communitate reiecit, quin potius admissit huius nationis homines, quia suae doctrinae, sanctitate et eruditione Societatem illustrarunt, eamque in concilio tridentino integram et indemnem in suo instituto conservarunt, et licet tempore patris nostro Ignatio non desuerunt, qui hoc addere impedimentum curarunt; eos tamen ut alienos a spiritu Societatis reiecit, nec minus nunc reiceret si adesset” (Inst. 184–1, f. 305v).

104 “Imo magis, quia tunc maior erat ratio et occasio ita statuendi eo quod tunc recentior erat conversio Iudaeorum in Hispania, et quotidie deprehendebantur re labi in suam perfidiam, quia dicte fuerunt conversi, ne compellerentur ex Hispania egredi, quod praecipua causa fuit Siliceo condendi statutum Toletanum, nunc autem cessat in Hispania ista ratio, cum constet vere et ex animo eos esse fideles, paucique inveniuntur qui ad perfidiam pristinam revertantur [305r], ut eorum inflamia et praesumptio, ne iterum in veterem perfidiam relabuntur ob recentem conversionem et malam educationem, per diuturnitatem in fide abolita est et purificata” (Inst. 184–1, ff. 305v–s).
raised during the generalate of Father Francisco [de Borja], who knew well Spanish affairs, but even though he was pressured to go in that direction, he refused it with all his strength. Moreover, argues Alarcón, the proper purpose of the Society, according to the *Constitutions* and papal bulls, is to bring all men to the faith, even infidels, whatever nation they come from, and help them attain salvation and perfection. So that the Jesuit ministers may be pleased by all nations, it is necessary that no decree be offensive to any nation, making these ministers unwanted by such a nation.¹⁰⁵

It is demonstrated, writes García de Alarcón without hesitation in a form of a syllogism (a reasoning dear to Cartagena), that if the *Constitutions* established that the Society must admit those who are considered apt and useful and if somebody “from the circumcision” is judged to be apt and useful for the Society’s goal (which happens often), *ergo* it is against these *Constitutions* not to admit such a subject. The lineage decree stated, he reminds, that those who are offensive to the people to whom the Society directs its ministries should not be admitted, but this offense is not being experienced in Spain, especially in Castile, Toledo, and in the Bética Province [where Alarcón was sent as general’s special envoy]. Furthermore, the evidence shows that not only in the Society but also in other provinces of the mendicant orders (where this kind of statutes were not legislated), their members exercise without offense all kinds of ministries, especially that of confessor to important ecclesiastics and noblemen. They are canons, bishops, and cardinals as well, and even the Holy See does not consider them unfit or inept to exercise their religious ministries.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ “Quare si tunc pater noster Ignatius obstitit huic statuto videtur necessario nunc repugnaturus fuisse. Similis quaestio excitata est tempore patris nostri Francisci, qui res Hispaniae bene comprehendebat; neque tamen ullus eum in hanc partem inclinari voluit, sed totis viribus reclamavit. Confirmatur secundo, quia secundum Constitutiones et bullas summorum pontificum, proprium munus Societatis est omnes homines, etiam infideles cuiuscumque nationis sint, ad fidem reducere, reductos quae ad assequendam suam salutem et perfectionem iuvare, ergo ut ministri Societatis grati sint omnibus nationibus oportet non esse decretum quod aliqui earum officiandum sit, eos qui invisos tali nationi faciatur” (*Inst.* 184–1, f. 305v).

¹⁰⁶ “Confirmatur tertio, quia Constitutione p. 1 c. 1 § 1 ait admittendos esse qui ad finem Societatis apti et utiles esse iudicabuntur, ergo quando aliquis ex circumcisione aptus et utiles ad Societatis finem iudicatur, quod frequenter contigit, contra Constitutionem est eum in Societatem non admittere. Verum ait decretum hos ad Societatem esse ineptos quod cum offensione populi eius ministeria exerceant, hanc tamen offensionem in Hispania, saltem in regnis Castellae, Toleti et Beticae non experimur, quin imo quotidie videmus non solum in Societate, verum in omnibus
Against the common accusation that those of Jewish ancestry are ambitious and that they have disturbed tranquility in the Society by writing memorials and asking lay princes for help by other illicit means,\(^{107}\) Alarcón admits that some of them are ambitious, yet many more are humble, tranquil, lovers of evangelical peace, and imitators of the Crucified. Those who are ambitious and charged with exciting uproars must be punished not by a lineage decree but by exclusion from the Society, just like the Society would exclude any other Jesuit caught in infidelity to their religious Order and its superior. The reason for this [as Alonso de Cartagena had pointed out] is that these vices are characteristic not of a race but of an individual; they originate not from lineage but from free will. Representatives of other races have the same kind of vices, yet we do not assume that they characterize an entire race.\(^{108}\)

Another argument against the lineage decree is that it has diminished the good reputation of Society’s piety and sanctity, which has

\(^{107}\) Alarcón refers here to the movement of memorialistas that we have studied in the previous chapter.

\(^{108}\) “Aliter dicitur eos esse ambitiosos et tranquillitatem Societatis perturbase monumentis seu memorialibus, et aliis illicitis mediis, auxilium postulantes a principibus saecularibus verum contra hoc est, quod licet aliqui sint ambitiosi, aliis et multo plures inveniuntur eiusdem generis humiles, tranquilli, pacis evangelii amatores, imitatores Crucis Christo, quare quorundam malitia omnibus nocere non debet, sed puniendi illi essent si de ambitione et perturbatione convicti sunt, non quidem hoc decreto, sed eos a Societate exclusendo simul cum aliis nobilibus, qui cum eiusmod in eadem infidelitate cum sua religione et capite deprehensi sunt. Nec huius modii vitia sunt propria generis sed personae, quae quidem non ex genere, sed ex libero arbitrio originem trahunt, nunc autem ex culpa quorundam non debent omnes tales praesumi, sicut ex hoc quod in multis alterius generis similis vitia reperiantur, non ideo omnes tales praesumuntur” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 306v–r).
been so renowned among the Jesuits themselves and other important men, inquisitors included. Such men have suggested that this decree was made without prior prayer and deliberation in front of God, which is opposite to what Ignatius used to do. Consequently, respect and obedience, which are required for the superior general’s directives, will be diminished.109

The third argument against the decree is that for members of the Society to become examiners of genealogies seems alien to the Society’s Institute. Following the view expressed by Cardinal Francisco Mendoza de Bobadilla (1508–66) in his Tizón de la nobleza (1560), Alarcón highlights how very annoying and burdensome it is to inquire and investigate the ancestors, grandparents, and great grandparents of candidates: Spanish Jews, especially in the provinces of Castile, Toledo, and Bética, have made great efforts to obfuscate their origins by contracting matrimonies with the noble families of Old Christians.110

Ironically, this blood mixture can be found in those who are said by their relatives to be free of it. Thus, the examination of genealogies of candidates can bring offense to many nobles, especially if they are already unaware of their forgotten and buried genealogical past. Some candidates would be discouraged from entering the Society, paralyzed

109 “Secunda sit quia bona existimatio et opinio sanctitatis et pietatis quam Societas apud omnes habet, tam apud suos, quam apud exterros hoc decretum valde diminuta videtur, nam plurimi tam de Societate, quam saeculares nobiles et gravissimi viri et ex tribunalibus supremis inquisitorum censent illud conditum esse non praemissa tanta oratione et consultatione divina, ac edita est constitutio de aposito a patre nostro Ignatio, sed in quibusdam aliud humani intervenisse in eo stabilendo, et cum omnia Societas decreta, quae hucusque edita sunt, huius modi sint, ut non solum bona et iusta censeantur, verum etiam optima reputentur, non tantum sancta judicentur, verum etiam supremam evangelii perfectionem redoleant et continente, hoc unum, quod a plurimis non ita perfectum judicatur aliorum omnium minuet opinionem et authoritytem, iamque in posterum congregationis generalis decreta attendi incipiet animis, quibus aliae communitates et confraternitates quae aliquando ducuntur passionibus. Atque hac via obedientia cultus et veneratio, quae decretis omnibus habebatur valde diminuta invenitur, nec non bona existimatio quam tota Societas erga viros spirituales habebat, eam fundatam esse in spiritu et in omnibus suis decretis et decisionibus spiritu tantumagi divino. Veneratio etiam et obdeantia, quae mandatis nostri Patris generalis debetur, valde repescet et debilitata manebit” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 306r–v).

110 Fernán Díaz, the Realtor of Juan II, noted that there was barely a noble house in Spain that had no converso in its family tree. If Jewishness was attached to blood, genealogy would become a weapon of the weak, and the nobility of Iberia would be destroyed. See Nirenberg, “Mass Conversion,” p. 35.
by fear of compromising the social status of their relatives, many of whom come from very illustrious families.111

Fourth, this decree in Spain will exclude from the Society those men who would sufficiently and aptly perform the Society’s minis-
tries, which require a great number of talented people. At the same
time, there is a risk that the Society will accept pure-blooded people
of mediocre talents, which is an aberration of the rules established in
the “[General] Exam” of the Constitutions.112

111 “Tertia, quia alienum esse videtur ob instituto Societatis, eius religiosos exami-
natores fieri generum et genealogiarum et valde molestum et grave inquirere et inves-
tigare progenitores, avos et proavos omnium admittendorum, quod finem ulterior
offensione fieri minime potest. Cuius aperta ratio est quoniam eius gens Hebraeorum
in Hispania, praesertim in provinciis Castellae, Toleti et Vetricae, summo conatu
curet suam nativitatem occultare, totis viribus conatur cognitiones inire cum chris-
tianis veteribus et nobilibus, et idcirco perpauci sunt, qui si divitis affluant connu-
bia contrahant cum hominibus eiusdem generis, sed haec in parte consilium Pauli 3
sequenda quareuntrur Christianos veteres et generos nobiles et [...] illustres, ex quo
sit domus etiam illustrissima Hispaniae, maximam quae partem populorum sanguini
eorum iam esse permixtam. Unusquiepe horum brevi tempore solet familias totius
civitatis praecipus suas sanguine commiscere. Unde iam ita valde extensa est evolutio
sanguinum horum duorum populorum in his provinciis, ut collega fide dignus mihi
dixerit ex oppositorius collegiorum, etiam si hi tales sint, ut in sua opinione securi
sint a tali missione, nihilominus dum informationes exacte summuntur, maior pars
eorum reperitur admissa; et hac causa reiciuntur. Si ergo haec mixtieo reperitur etiam
in his qui iuxta suam et congnatorum sentientiam ab ea liberi sunt, quid erit de reliquo
populo? Praetera sibi qui in Hispania vulgo dicuntur libertados discendentes ex unica
illa muliere dicta, Antona Garcia, brevi tempore ita aucti sunt, quia aliarum famil-
iarum connubiis se miscuerunt, ut in tribunalibus regii delimitando illorum privile-
gios tracetur, ne prae illorum multitudine tributare regia minuantur. Quae commissio
sanguinum erit iam ex tot millibus Hebraeorum qui in Hispania remanserunt? Erit
igitur molestissimos nostros examinatores fieri harum genealogiarum et cum offen-
sione multorum etiam nobilium. Nam dum informatio alciuus summitur in alio
oppido, palam fierit mixtiones aliorum etiam nobilium, quae iam oblisioni [sic] erant
inaditae et penitus occultae” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 307v–308r).

112 “Quartum quia hoc statutum in Hispania in causa erit ne admittentur homi-
nes qui sufficientem et apte ministeria Societatis exequentur. Nam cum omnia eius
ministeria sint proximos iuvare lectionibus humanitatis, philosophiae, theologiae
scholasticae et positivae, concionibus, et confessionibus desitque chorus, quo religiosi
mediocris ingenii solent occupari, ad quae omnia exiguntur homines non solum vir-
tute verum etiam ingenio, eruditione, et iudicio pollentes conici potest, ad haec omnia,
quae magnam insignium hominum copiam requirunt, de futuros homines, qui his
omnibus idonee satis faciant, in religione ita extensa et dilatata quod quidem ex parte
iam coepimus experiri in tyrocinii. Ab illo enim tempore, quo statutum conditum est,
vix aliiquis magna expectationis receptus est. Licet enim sint pluriim omnino liberi
ab isto sanguine, caeterum nollunt sui et cognatorum honoris periculum facere. Et
ideo homines provectae aetatis aliqui insigni qualitate praediti paucissime erunt, qui
Societatem ingredi tentent, et contentur. Qua forte ratione in quadam religione mona-
chali, ubi hoc statutum servatum esse hoc videmus, quantumque sit a principibus
divitiis et honoribus aucta et locupletata, non tamen in ea reperiri homines qui etiam
suos proprios monachos in paucissimis collegiis docere valeant, sed opus est praemiis
The fifth argument against the decree comes from Alarcón’s preoccupation with the weak economic situation of the Society, whose wealth depended much on the support of the affluent converso nobility that sent their sons to the Order, as Possevino also pointed out in his second memorial. The decree could make them change their previously written wills by which they had donated their assets to the Society; the families could choose to allocate their assets to other pious works.¹¹³

Moreover, the converso families—which usually come from urban environments—will lose their devotion and piety towards the Society, knowing that their relatives are being thrown away because they are considered dishonorable. Consequently, they will turn towards those congregations that welcome their sons, threatened furthermore by their fear that the lineage inquiries could compromise their social status. As a result—complains Alarcón—“many people of great expectations will escape from us and the Society will feel poor and deficient without them, as the experience has already shown.”¹¹⁴

non mediocribus ex academiis magistros saeculares adducere, qui suos monachos in propriis domibus erudiant, et illorum cathedras regant; imo et necessarios ad chorum non inveniunt, sed opus est eas quaerere, rogarem invitare, et illorum debita solvere coguntur qui recipere homines, qui ministeria Societatis apte exequi non possent et tales deinceptos Societas cogetur recipere; imo cum constet eos decretem non tangere, parvi ducentur et interdum etiam obtegentur alii defectus vocationis ingenii, conditionis, et aliarum rerum quae ad institutum magis spectant et necessariae sunt, de quibus in Examine c. 2 §4 et c. 3 §14” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 308v–r).

¹¹³ “Quinta, quia Societas non solum detrimentum patietur in reputatione spiritus, et in hominibus aptis ad institutum, verum etiam in facultatibus et in rebus temporalibus, quarum inopia valde premitur tota societas. Est quidem certum ex experientia iam comprobatum factum aliorum omnium qui societatem ingrediantur aut nullas esse aut value tenues. Qui enim nobiles in Hispania religionem ingrediantur, communitur aut eas non habent, aut si habent, eas cognatis relinquunt, existimantes ad eorum statum, ut pote nobilium, omnia esse illis necessaria. Qui vero nec nobiles sunt nec ex Hebraeorum genere oriuntur, agricolaes sunt, ita pauperes, ut communitur tam ipsi quam eorum parentes ex proprio labore vivant. Qua propter excludendo a Societate eos qui communitur abundant opibus aditus intere luditur quo Societas in temporalibus sublevari posset. His accedit quod multi huuius generis saeculares, qui suas facultates iam testamento nostris donaverant, cum se a Societate contemni videant mandata abrogaunt et ad alia pia opera se convertent” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 308v–309r).

¹¹⁴ “Sexta, erit occasio, ut plurimi externi nos in domibus nostris relinquant et alias religiones adeant: pietatemque et devotionem erga Societatem eiusque ministeria intermittant. Cum enim sint plurimi in civitatibus ex hoc genere trahentes originem, cum videant universis sui generis ab hominibus huius religionis contemni et repellent ut indignos sua societate, cum videant item saepe suos filios aut cognatos studio ingrediendi Societatem teneri eosque repellil, qui eorum filii sunt aut cognati quam devotionem erga societatem poterunt conservare? Ad alias potius religiones suum affectum convertent et cum religiosis illis potius fabulari et tractare curabunt, qui nec
The seventh disadvantage of the de genere decree (which labels the converso Jesuits as inept to hold governmental offices) diminishes the conversos’ love towards their superior general. The latter’s refusal to promote such subjects based on their origin and regardless of their merits produces in them hatred and not love towards the Society, by which—if they are ambitious—they will negatively influence other people of the same origin and many other noblemen, with whom they exercise much authority. That will force them to threaten to request the appointment of an external visitor for the Spanish provinces, which would result in their separation from the administration of the general. As Possevino did already twenty-five years earlier, Alarcón predicts that this will happen if the Institute of the Society changes its substantial features, turning itself into another religious order.¹¹⁵

The decree makes maintaining Society’s purity very difficult for the way the order would dismiss those who “do not walk in the spirit,” because the dismissed and their relatives—who could feel disgraced—might ascribe their removal to the problem of their origin and not to

eos nec eorum filios et cognatos a suis congregationibus reiciant. Atque haec offensor maiori erit, si post factam informationem intelligat ob illius defectum non suos filios vel cognatos admissi. Est igitur occasio magnum populi partem a nostris ministris avertendi et ut plurimi singularis expectationis adolescentes non audeant se ab officiis honorificis exclaudi. Namque se illi qui huius generis sunt non ad tyrocinium admittantur, inepti censentur, etiam admissos ad rectoratum et alia honorifica munera ineptos iudicandos esse. Et quidem plures eorum prudentiae, lenitatis et aliarum qualitatum defectu ad regiminis munus ineptissimos esse continget; et tamen si ad haec non promoventur, non meritorum defectui sed ipsis rationi tribuent. Qua propter aliae religiones hominibus maxime expectationis illustrabuntur, nostra autem Societas eorum paupertatem et inopiam persentiet, prout iam coepimus experiri” (Inst. 184–1, ff. 309r–v).

¹¹⁵ “Septima, qui etiam in Societate huius generis reperiuuntur, aliquis de amore Societatis et patris nostri generalis ammittet, cum haec de causa se ab officiis honorificis excludi putent. Existimabunt namque se illi qui huius generis sunt ut ad tyrocinium admittantur, inepti censentur, etiam admissos ad rectoratum et alia honorifica munera ineptos iudicandos esse. Et quidem plures eorum prudentiae, lenitatis et aliarum qualitatum defectu ad regiminis munus ineptissimos esse continget; et tamen si ad haec non promoventur, non meritorum defectui sed ipsis rationi tribuent. Qua propter, licet inuste Societas amorem in odium commutent et (quod dolendum est) si Dei amore priventur et in spiritu ambitionis tangantur, per se atque eos qui sui generis sunt, imo et per multos alios nobiles eiusdem Societatis apud quos non parum auctoritas habent, visitatorem externum petere conabuntur, assignantes (ut dicunt) non causam pro causa. Non enim suae petitionis causam quae eos precipue impellit et movet assignabunt ne se ipsos prodant huiusce generis esse, sed alias causas reddent, quae vmi maiorem apud externos habent. Atque ita ne harum provincialium gubernatio a patre nostro generali pendeat, funditius tollere conabuntur. Quo fiet ut in rebus valde substantialibus alteretur institutum atque mutetur et alia religio fiat. Et quamvis vivente patre nostro generali propter ipsius animi constantiam, et invictum brachium non illis praevalituros probabile sit. Tamen cum nunc plures huius generis adolescentes sint, illo deficiente forte praevalebunt” (Inst. 184–1, ff. 309r–310r).
the lack of virtue. This situation could generate enmity, especially if
dismissals were public. Eventually, the Society would be either com-
pelled to either not dismiss or be risk being accused of injustice.116

Another problem that the de genere decree produces is the required
dismissal of those converso Jesuits who are not yet admitted to their
solemn profession, but whose lineage impediment was discovered after
their admission to the Society, where—unlike in other orders such as
the Jeronymites—the period between the entrance and final vows is
much longer (fifteen years or even more, if someone was not admitted
to the profession for his entire life). It could happen, then, that a subject
must be dismissed after many years of being a Jesuit, even though his
qualities would make him eligible to the profession. Lineage—claims
Alarcón—could become a weapon in the competition among men reli-
gious, especially confessors of influential women who could become
involved in fabricating rumors about the lineage of their confessor’s
enemy. No wonder that many grave men from other religious orders
affirmed that this decree was going to destroy the Society.117

116 “Octava, quia medium dimittendi eos qui in spiritu non procedunt, quod potis-
simum est, ad Societatem in sua puritate conservandam, hoc decreto reddetur valde
difficile. Nam saepe eveniet aliquos ob morum defectus dimittere; et tamen eorum
cognati et qui cum eisdem inimicitiis gerunt, defectui generis exclusionem adscribent;
praecipe quando publica contentio est, an illius cognati huic sanguini admissi sint;
quo Societas omnibus illius cognatis reddentur invisa, imo cum videant se ipsos exclu-
sione infamari, nostros cogent, vimque inerent ut dimissionis causas publice pate-
faciant, quae saepe in re et apud nos sufficientes erunt apud exterum tamen levae, et
insufficientes iudicabantur. Qua propter vel non excludere compellemur vel inustitiae
arguemtur” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 310v–311r).

117 “Nona, cum iam lex spiritus valde in Societate tepescat et vetus homo praevaleat,
erunt in posterum contentionem et amulationes inter nostros, tam inter subditos et
superiores quam inter magistros concionatores et operarios. Atque res saepe eo usque
deveniet ut unus alteri opponat, eum essentiale ad Societatem impedimentum habere,
eo quod in informatione generis quando admissus est, manifestus defectus fuerit. Et
cum hoc impedimentum obici possit usque ad professionem, quae post longum tem-
pus in Societate sit, hoc decretum innumerarum vitium et perturbationum semina-
rum erit quas quia experti sunt religiosi timorosi ordinis Divini Hieronymi decretum
suum (ut fertur) limitarunt, ut post tyrocinii annum, cum primum quis ad profes-
sionem admittitur, his objectionibus locus non detur. In nostra autem Societate hunc
defectum obiciendi occasio inter eos qui qualitates ad professionem habent, durat per
quindecim annos et amplius inter eos vero qui ad professionem non sunt admittendi
per totae vitae cursum. Et cum frequenter inter confessores esse solent amulationes
et invidia in more confessiones praesertim mulierem, si vestigium aliquod inveniatur
ad opponendum hoc impedimentum, illud obiciet: auxilia quondaque ab ipsismet
mulieribus petendo, ut testes sint vel testes quaerant qui hunc defectum superiori vel
alteri confessori suas confabulationes prohibent adscribant, quae omnia fient magni
cum scandalo populorum. Propter quae plures etiam religiosi graves aliorm ordinum
hoc decreto destruendum esse Societatem dixerunt” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 310v–311v).
The tenth disadvantage of the decree that Alarcón underscores in concert with Possevino is the possibility of creating in the Society divisions between the Spaniards and other nations, for the decree debars the descendants of Jews and Muslims, who come mostly from Spain, but not descendants of heretics and apostates, who troubled different nations much more than those Jews who—helped by God’s grace—converted. Thus, the decree contradicts common law and the papal decisions that do exclude from civil and ecclesiastical offices the sons and nephews of the heretics and apostates in paternal line, but not the sons of Jews who converted and not even the Jews themselves who converted. Therefore, right reason dictates that conversos be admitted rather than refused.\textsuperscript{118}

Additionally, the decree debars those whose number in the Society is not small and who excel in letters, preaching, government, and sainthood, even though their names have to be silenced here for the sake of not exciting controversies. A Dominican noted the same sort of presence in his order—he made a catalogue of learned and holy people who excelled in these virtues: most of them were those of Jewish ancestry.\textsuperscript{119}

The twelfth argument against the decree is that it does not follow the legal maxim that “in doubt a safer solution has to be chosen.” Thus, it is safer and more secure to admit than to exclude, given that nobody ever condemned the former, but pontiffs and many very learned men

\textsuperscript{118} “Decima, occasio erit divisionis inter Hispanorum nationem et alias Sociatatis, cum enim in decreto a Mauris et Haebreis descendentes excludantur, quod Hispanos plurimum tangit, non vero descendentes ab haereticis quoq nationes ad venas multo plus inficit, occasio erit decisionis indicandique rem plus multitudine suffragiorum quam rationum pondere definitam esse, nam secundum ius commune et omnium pontificum decisiones, qui Christi ecclesiam gubernarunt, quorum aliquae in principio sunt adductae, deterioris multo conditionis sunt descendentes ab haereticis et apostatis, quam ab Haebreis et aliis infidelibus, qui Dei adiuti gratia se ad fidem converterunt. Cum illos et eorum filios atque nepotes per lineam virilem ius commune ab honoribus et dignitatis ecclesiasticis et saecularibus excludat (c. Statutum 2 de haereticis in 6) non vero filios Haebreorum, qui se ad fidem redegerunt, imo nec ipsosmet Hebraeos aut infideles qui ad fidem sunt reducti, repellit […] eam re de prescriptis. Illos ergo admittere, hos reicere contra rectam rationem esse videtur” (Inst. 184–I, f. 311r).

\textsuperscript{119} “Undecima. Quia si occulos convertamus ad eos qui in Societate litteris, conccionibus, gubernatione, et sanctitate floruerunt non exiguam partem huius nationisuisse inveniems; quos sine ulla controversia possem, sed eos honoris causa silentio permitto. Quod ergo huc usque factum est, idem etiam in posterum sperari poterit. Maxime cum quotidiae a suis progenitoribus, qui denuo sunt conversi magis ac magis recedant. Hunc accedit quoq frate Dominicus Baltbanas ordinis Divi Dominici cathalogum fecit, quo ostendit ex hominibus doctis et sanctis, qui in sua religione doctrina et sanctitate floruerunt, maiorem partem ex Hebraeorum genereuisse” (Inst. 184–I, fl. 311r–v).
did condemn the latter even in older times, when the risk of re-
conversion of Jews was much more real. Cajetan, as was mentioned,
considered such a debarment in the Dominican Order unreasonable.
Perhaps there are some reasons, continues Alarcón, for such
discrimination in the Portuguese provinces, where—as one says—the
New Christians do not want to intermarry with the Old Christians
and they used to have a different kind of education. Moreover, it is
said that the Spanish Jews who fled to Portugal were from more villain
families. Yet, this judgment must be left to those who know these
things better.120

In Spain, no mendicant order has such statutes, even though some
of them did have them when the Jewish conversion was still recent.
Now, however—realizing the huge inconveniences of such laws—they
have abrogated them. So, those orders will consider the Society odd
and longing for vain fame if it now issues such statutes itself.121

The penultimate argument against the exclusion of those who
have Jewish ancestry is, according to Alarcón, that it will become a
source of many crimes and the occasion for numerous sins, which
is incompatible with the mission of the Society as described in the
papal bulls of Gregory XIII. Thus the Society, which was sent by God

120 “Duodecima, quia in dubiis tutor pars est eligenda, c. invenis de sponsalibus,
maxime inter viros qui de spiritu et perfectione evangelica assequenda pertractant.
Tutius autem est et securius hos admittere quam repellere: quia hoc nullus unquam
condemnavit; imo Pontifices in principio adducti et viri doctrina, religione, et nobili-
tate pollentes probant illud autem, loquendo iam his temporibus in Hispania et de
religione ita extensa ac est societas, multi viri doctissimi condemnant et Caietanus
loco supra allegato dixit etiam priscis temporibus, quando erat recens conversio
Iudaorum in Hispania, et frequens eorum relaxus, esse irrationali eos a religione
praedicatorum excludere. Signumque a Sede Apostolica confirmatum reperitur, id est
quia tunc praepositiones fuerunt quae huius modi statutum honestunt. Sicut forte
nunc in Lusitaniae provincia esse possent rationes tale statutum honestantes, in qua
(ut fertur) qui ex circumcisione sunt cum christianis veteribus connubia non contra-
hunt educationemque ab aliis christianis antiquis satis diversam habent. Et ex Iudaeis
qui in Hispania remanserunt, quando ab his provinciis reiecti sunt, familiae viliores ad
regnum illum confugerunt. Verum huius rei iudicium iis qui haec proximiis norunt,
relinquendum est” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 311′–312′).

121 “Decima tertia, quia in Hispania nulla religio mendicantium tale statutum habet,
imo eti aliquae earum in principio quando Iudaorum conversio recens erat, et relap-
sus continuus illus rationabiliter condiderunt. Deinde postquam maxima sunt incon-
venienciae experti, illud tandem abrogarunt. Qua propter Societas, cum eam omnes
illud denuo edidisse videant, singularitatis et inanis gloriae cupida existimabitur”
(Inst. 184–I, l. 312).
to eradicate sins in his Church, should make every effort to eliminate such statutes.  

Finally, since the Society—unlike other communities—is supposed to be governed paternally, its every member, regardless of his nationality, is expected to respect, love, and esteem his superior, and especially the father general as his natural father. With this decree, however, many subjects who are not of his nationality [i.e., non-Italians], will perceive the father general not as a father but as a judge. So that everybody will consider him a father, it seems to many of his faithful sons that, using his power and authority, he should seek from the pontiff some kind of declaration that would alleviate the decree’s rigor.  

On a much lesser scale, Alarcón’s claim of the harm inflicted on society in general by discrimination against conversos was further supported by one the most influential writers of the Spanish Siglo de Oro, Juan de Mariana, known as the Spanish avatar of Titus Livius.

122 “Decima quarta. Quia Societas potissimum Deus in suam ecclesiam misit (ut testatur Gregorius 13 in bullis eidem Societati concessis) ad populorum peccata eradicaanda, et funditus autem confraternitatum et aliarum communitionum excludentia eos qui ex circumciscione sunt, intrumentaque plurimorum delictorum et innumerabilium peccatorum occasiones ut supra Toletenum concilium testatur. Societas vero, quae totis viribus conari debuisse set ut talia statuta delerentur, ut eis abrogatis, infinita etiam peccata cessarent, hoc statuto, cum aede ipsae communitiones illud a viris pietate, prudentia, doctrina et sanctitate pollentibus emanasse intelligant, id quo post diuturnas orationes et sacrificia Deo oblata, sine ulla animi perturbatione neque passione, omnes denuo in suis statutis antiquis roborabuntur, imo et confraternitates quae eo carent nunc primum conficiant. Quare Societas hoc statuto radices peccatorum originesque fovebit” (Inst. 184–I, ff. 312r–v).

123 “Decimquinta. Quia Societas gubernatio non est ad aliarum communitionum gubernationi similis, sed qualsis est in privata quaedam familia, inter patres naturales et filios eorum nativos. Quare quotquot sunt in Societate, unde cumque et ex quacumque natione sint, superiores, praeertim Patrem nostrum generalem, ut proprium parentem respicere, amare et venerari debent; et contra superiores eodem ut filios nativos debent intueri, eorumque honor et solatio consulere. At stante hoc decretement, subditi, qui nunc sunt huius nationis, praeertim ii, apud quos non multum spiritus orationis viget, nonnullam occasionem habebunt patrem nostrum generalem non ut patrem, sed ut iudicem respiciendi. Ut igitur ab omnibus habeatur ut pater, prout revera est, semperque fuit; visum est multus eius fidelissimis filiis expedire, ut eius industria et auctoritate a summo pontifice aliqua illius statuti declaratio exigeretur, quo rigor eius temperetur” (Inst. 184–I, f. 312v).
auctoritate a summo pontifice aliqua illius statuti declaratio exigeretur, quo rigor eius semperque fuit; visum est multis eius fi delissimis fi liis expedire, ut eius industria et sed ut iudicem respiciendi. Ut igitur ab omnibus habeatur ut pater, prout revera est, nonnullam occasionem habebunt patrem nostrum generalem non ut patrem, qui nunc sunt huius nationis, praesertim ii, apud quos non multum spiritus orationis debent intueri, eorumque honori et solatio consulere. At stante hoc decretum, subditi, natione sint, superiores, praesertim Patrem nostrum generalem, ut proprium parenf i lios eorum nativos. Quare quotquot sunt in Societate, undecumque et ex quacumque gubernationi similis, sed qualis est in privata quadam familia, inter patres naturales et Inst. 184–I

nunc primum confi cient. Quare Societas hoc statuto radices peccatorum originesque denuo in suis statutis antiquis roborabuntur, imo et confraternitates quae eo carent orationes et sacrifi cia Deo oblata, sine ulla animi perturbatione neque passione, omnes peccata cessarent, hoc statuto, cum aede ipsae communitates illud a viris pietate, pru totis viribus conari debuisset ut talia statuta delerentur, ut eis abrogatis, infi nita etiam peccatorum occasiones ut supra Toletenum concilium testatur. Societas vero, quae qui ex circumcisione sunt, intrumentaque plurimorum delictorum et innumerabilium canda, et funditus autem confraternitatum et aliarum communitatum excludentia eos testatur Gregorius 13 in bullis eidem Societati concessis) ad populorum peccata erad...
Juan de Mariana

We have already mentioned Mariana in Chapter Two, when pointing out his blood ties to the converso clan of Suárez de Toledo, and in Chapter Three, when dealing with the memorialistas movement, to which he belonged.\(^{124}\) Illegitimate son of a priest, Juan de Mariana was born in 1536 in Talavera de la Reina (Toledo). He entered the Society of Jesus in Alcalá in 1554; was ordained priest in Rome in 1562; and professed his final vows there in 1564. After eight years in Italy, with Juan de Maldonado he laid foundations of the first Jesuit College in France, Clermont de París. Together with Francisco Suárez and Baltasar Gracián, he is considered one of the major thinkers of the Spanish Golden Age. In addition to his learned biblical commentaries, he authored a history of Spain, *Historiae de rebus Hispaniae libri XX* (Toledo, 1592),\(^{125}\) which also investigated the Jewish settlement in pre-Visigothic Iberia; a treatise on economy (*De monetae mutatione*, 1609), for which he had been under house arrest for fifteen months; a comparative study of the Arab and Christian calendar (*De annis arabum cum nostris comparatis*, 1609); and a work on government in the Jesuit Order (*De reformatione Societatis [Discurso de las cosas de la Compañía]*, 1625). He died in 1624 in Toledo.\(^{126}\)

In more generic terms than Alarcón, Juan de Mariana expressed the desire to limit the purity-of-blood statutes in his (in)famous treatise that included the approval of a collective tyrannicide,\(^{127}\) *De rege et regis institutione* (Toledo, 1599):

> The virtuous person must never find the door shut to any honour or reward, however elevated these may be, and it should matter little that he is Spanish or Italian, Sicilian or Belgian…. The prince must decide firmly not to allow whole families to be disgraced because of vague rumours among the populace. The marks of infamy should not be eternal, and it is necessary to fix a limit beyond which descendants must not pay for

\(^{124}\) For Astrain’s interpretation of Mariana’s engagement in the movement, see his *Historia*, 3:574–7.

\(^{125}\) The Spanish revised and updated version appeared under the title *Historia general de España* in Toledo in 1601.

\(^{126}\) For his Jewish ancestry, see Antonio Possevino, *Memorial*, f. 208r. See also Kamen, “Limpieza and the Ghost of Américo Castro,” p. 23. On the role of Mariana as a book censor of the Spanish Inquisition, see AHN, Inquisición, lib. 580, ff. 27r, 147r, 164r.

\(^{127}\) The work only added oil to the fire of anti-Jesuitism in France, where Mariana was charged with inspiring the assassination of Henry IV by a would-be Jesuit student, François Ravillac.
the faults of their predecessors, carrying on their brow always the stain that marked these… Can one believe that it does no harm for the state to be split into factions, always harassed by the unbelievable hatred of the majority of its citizens, hatred from which at the very first opportunity civil war and discord must arise? One could possibly run no risk in depriving of all honours those who bear this stain, if they were few in number. But today, when the blood of all degrees in the state is confused and mixed, it would be highly dangerous, since we have in our country as enemies all those who are excluded from public affairs, not for their own fault but for that of their forefathers. It is the nature only of tyrants to sow discord among their subjects… Lawful kings always direct their principal care to seeing that all classes in the realm are united in love.\textsuperscript{128}

In conclusion, the outspoken Jesuits Antonio Possevino, Pedro de Ribadeneyra, Diego de Guzmán, García Girón de Alarcón, and Juan de Mariana strongly opposed in their writings the Jesuit anti-converso legislation, employing the old arguments of the pro-converso literature that we have presented in Chapter One, but also bringing some new points of view related to the specific circumstances of the early Jesuits. Even though the 1593 decree was actually moderated, if only superficially, by the Sixth General Congregation in 1608,\textsuperscript{129} it was not abrogated until more than three hundred years later, in a decision of General Congregation 29 (1946),\textsuperscript{130} which considered the impediment of ancestry unconstitutional, even though it did not condemn the racial discrimination practiced by the Society in the previous centuries. The legislation of 1593 was abrogated almost certainly under the sway of the Shoah.\textsuperscript{131} This story, however, is the material for another book.

\textsuperscript{128} See Juan de Mariana, \textit{Obras} (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1950), vol. 31, pp. 540–2. The translation is by Henry Kamen (see his \textit{Crisis and Change}, p. 10). Another similar document addressing the purity-of-blood statutes in Spain was \textit{Memorial para quitar o limitar los estatutos de limpieza} (1632) by Fernando de Valdés (d. 1642), rector of the Jesuit Imperial College in Madrid, censor of the Suprema and superior provincial of Toledo (1637–40). See Kamen, \textit{Crisis and Change}, pp. 20–1; and Ronald W. Truman, \textit{Spanish Treatises on Government, Society and Religion in the Time of Philip II. The ‘De Regimine Principum’ and Associated Traditions} (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 333–5.

\textsuperscript{129} For more details about this process, see Medina, “Ignacio de Loyola,” p. 608.

\textsuperscript{130} For a different chronology of this process, see Baron, \textit{Social and Religious History of the Jews}, pp. 15–6; and Pike, \textit{Aristocrats and Traders}, p. 68.