PART 1

Introduction

Protestantism and Early Jesuits

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The five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (1517) provides an opportunity to reflect in a new way on the relationship between the Protestants and the Society of Jesus, which was founded twenty-three years later (1540). Before we discuss the Jesuit–Protestant encounter in Africa, which resulted from the colonial expansion of the Catholic and Protestant European empires through the second half of the second millennium, let us begin by providing the broader historical context of the relationship of Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491–1556) and the Society of Jesus, the order he co-founded, to Protestantism.

It is a commonplace in current scholarship and popular literature that the Jesuits were founded as a sort of papal troop to combat Protestantism. This anachronism, however, does not find support in the original Jesuit sources—it had been invented, interestingly enough, by Ignatius’s companions near and after his death, and the myth then became part of both Protestant and Jesuit historiographies, although they obviously employed different language to narrate the Society’s origins and goals. The aim of this introductory essay is to show the contrast between the early Jesuit documents and later Jesuit and Protestant historiographies on the origins of the relationship between the Society of Jesus and Protestantism, with a special focus on Martin Luther (1483–1546), often called a “heresiarch” in the Jesuit sources.

As David Myers explained well in his essay on Ignatius and Luther for Brill’s *Companion to Ignatius of Loyola* (2014),

Ignatius and Luther never met, and though Ignatius knew something of “Lutheranism,” Luther never heard of the Jesuits’ founder or of the Society of Jesus itself. Nor is it at all clear that Ignatius intended his Society to be a bulwark against the Protestant flood or that he was even a church reformer in the first place. The historical literature comparing the two men involves anachronism and stereotype rather than the details of their lives. Historians who talk of Ignatius and Luther have really been referring to Jesuits and Lutherans, as these groups crystallized in the half century following the deaths of their founders (Luther in 1546 and Ignatius in 1556).¹

1 William David Myers, “Ignatius Loyola and Martin Luther: A History and Basis of a Comparison,” in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, and Influence*, ed. Robert A. Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 141–58, here 141.

Indeed, the earliest Jesuit sources describing Ignatius's life and the beginnings of the Society rarely mention Luther or other Reformed leaders and Protestantism more broadly.² This is quite understandable for those documents narrating the life of Ignatius in 1520s Spain, where Protestantism had very limited impact and the Spanish ecclesiastical authorities, in particular the Inquisition, were more concerned about the spread of the *alumbrado* movement.³ It is striking, however, that the narratives of Ignatius's permanence at the University of Paris between 1527 (just after John Calvin's [1509–64] departure from there)⁴ and 1535—including those by his first companions like Pierre Favre (1506–46), Diego Laínez (1512–63), Simão Rodrigues (1510–79), or Nicolás Bobadilla (1511–90)—where disputes with Protestants, including the famous *Affaire des placards* (October 17, 1534),⁵ made much fuss, lack any significant references to Luther or Protestantism.⁶ To be sure, the eyes of the first companions were directed more to Jerusalem and its Muslim population as a target of their proselytization than to Wittenberg, where Luther's movement symbolically began.

What is even more striking, these references are missing in the foundational documents of the Society, such as the *Formula Instituti* (1539) and the *Constitutions* (promulgated in 1558), in which the first Jesuits defined the identity of their new religious order and its aim. True, the adjusted formula of 1550, five years before the Peace of Augsburg,⁷ defines the Society's additional goal as *defense* of the faith, but there is no explicit mention of Protestantism. Hence the Jesuits described therein cannot be defined as a Counter-Reformation force, even if part of the Jesuit efforts in the Holy Roman Empire, including those of Peter Canisius (1521–97), were indeed dedicated to countering the success of Protestantism.

2 See, for example, Jos E. Vercruysse, “Melanchthon, qui modestior videri voluit [...]”: Die ersten Jesuiten und Melanchthon,” in *Der Theologe Melanchthon*, ed. Günter Frank (Stuttgart: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2000), 393–409, especially 393–94.

3 See Stefania Pastore, “Unwise Paths: Ignatius Loyola and the Years of Alcalá de Henares,” in Maryks, *Companion to Ignatius of Loyola*, 25–44.

4 See Carlos M.N. Eire, *The Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 289 and 450.

5 See, for example, Francis M. Higman, *La diffusion de la Réforme en France: 1520–1565* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1992) and Donald R. Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

6 See *Fabri monumenta*, 490–697; *Fontes narrativi*, 2:127–40; 3:5–135; *Bobadillae monumenta*, 613–33.

7 See, for example, Paul Warmbrunn, *Zwei Konfessionen in einer Stadt: Das Zusammenleben von Katholiken und Protestanten in den paritätischen Reichsstädten Augsburg, Biberach, Ravensburg und Dinkelsbühl* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983).

References to Ignatius's relationship to Reformers and Protestantism are also missing in his so-called autobiography,⁸ a narrative redacted by his close collaborators, including Luís Gonçalves da Câmara (c.1520–75) and Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80), to tell the story of Loyola's religious vocation as a prototype of Jesuit vocation. It circulated in manuscript after his death until it was withdrawn by the third superior general of the Society Francisco de Borja (1510–72; in office 1565–73) and replaced with Pedro de Ribadeneyra's (1526–1611) official biography (Latin edition in 1572 and the Castilian one in 1586). In this biography, Ignatius's preferred disciple highlighted the providential coincidence between Luther's summation by Emperor Charles V (1500–58, r.1519–56) to Worms and Ignatius's conversion in Manresa in 1521:

In 1521, driven by the Furies, [Luther] committed the high crime of openly declaring war on the Catholic Church. That was the very year in which God wounded Ignatius at the fort of Pamplona, to heal him and to make a brave leader out of that lowly slave to worldly vanity, opposing him to Luther as the fierce champion of his Church.⁹

The latter work reflects the new paradigm in Ignatian historiography that his close collaborators, it seems, began to construe toward the end of Loyola's life and especially after his death in 1556. Indeed, various writings by Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76) and Nadal reveal the same historiographical shift. They attempt to clear Ignatius and the still young Society (and perhaps themselves, being of *converso* background) of any suspicion of heresy. Their way of doing that was by highlighting the anti-Protestant character of the Jesuits.

In his defense of the *Spiritual Exercises* against the Dominican Tomás Pedroche's (d.1565) charges of heterodoxy from around 1556, Nadal wrote that Ignatius conceived the Society's *entire* institute against heretics, and especially "Lutherans."¹⁰ This is how he intended the expression "defense of faith" in Julius III's (r.1550–55) 1550 bull, which—as noted earlier—does not, however, refer explicitly to Protestantism. In his literary dialogue composed between 1562 and 1565, Nadal parallels the origins of "Jesuitism" with the rise of Luther and compares the two leaders to David and Goliath.¹¹ In his exhortation to

⁸ *Fontes narrativi*, 1:323–507.

⁹ Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *The Life of Ignatius of Loyola*, ed. Claude Paur (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014), 119.

¹⁰ *Fontes narr.*, 1:319, 322. In his exhortation at Alcalá, Nadal suggested that the Society was founded *largely* against the heretics of the time. See Nadal, *Commentarii de instituto Societatis*, 313–14.

¹¹ Nadal, *Commentarii*, 607.

the Jesuits in Cologne (1567), Nadal compares Ignatius to the role the founders of the Dominicans and Franciscans had played in fighting against heresies of their times and notes a parallelism between Ignatius's conversion and Luther's "nefarious wedding,"¹² which is imprecise, for Luther married Katharina von Bora (1499–1552) only in 1525. In his exhortation in Alcalá (1576), he is more precise in noting the synchrony between Ignatius's conversion and Luther's summation to Worms.¹³

In his life of Ignatius written between his exile from Rome in 1573 and his death in 1576, Polanco portrayed the co-founder of the Jesuits as a "new soldier of Christ" who began to serve "the heavenly king" following his vigil of arms at the Benedictine monastery in Montserrat toward the end of 1521, the year in which Luther began to "throw his venom" against the Roman Apostolic See when summoned to Worms by Charles v. In Polanco's words, Ignatius's and his companions' special *obedience* to the pope would become an antidote to Luther's *inobedience*.¹⁴ There is no such comparison in his earlier *summaria* of Ignatius's life composed in the early years (1547–51) of his tenure as the Society's secretary.

It seems that Polanco, Nadal, and especially Ribadeneyra (whose biography of Ignatius was actually printed and therefore had a wider circulation) influenced the next generation of Jesuit history writers.¹⁵ In his life of Ignatius commissioned by the fourth superior general Everard Mercurian (in office 1573–80), the Italian Giampietro Maffei (1533–1603) highlights the importance of the synchrony of the year 1521. Yet it must be said that "Lutheranism" is mentioned quite sparsely in his work.¹⁶ Similarly, in his history of the Society, the Italian Niccolò Orlandini (1554–1606) compares the dates of birth of Ignatius and Luther and mentions the death of the latter, but references to "Luther's venom" are rather scarce.¹⁷

12 *Fontes narr.*, 2:403.

13 Nadal, *Commentarii*, 317.

14 *Chronicon*, 18 and *Fontes narr.*, 2:522–23. The same parallelism had been used by Polanco in his *Informatio de Instituto Societatis Iesu* from 1564. See *Fontes narr.*, 2:307.

15 Ribadeneyra's agenda of portraying the Society as a providential force to combat Protestantism was also expressed in his other publications, including his history of the "English schism." See Spencer J. Weinreich, *Pedro de Ribadeneyra's Ecclesiastical History of the Schism of the Kingdom of England: A Spanish Jesuit's History of the English Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

16 See Giampietro Maffei, *Historiarum Indicarum*, in Maffei, *Opera omnia* (Bergamo: Petrus Lancellottus, 1747), 328, where bonsais are compared to Lutherans in "iniquity."

17 *Historia Societatis Iesu* (Cologne: Hierat, 1615), 3, 47, 85, 106–8, 128, 133, 148–49, 183, 209, 543.

The Italian Daniello Bartoli (1608–85) appears to be more explicitly in line with Polanco, Nadal, and Ribadeneyra in contrasting Ignatius and the Society with Protestantism. He describes Ignatius as a “valiant soldier” who was

carried out from the secular militia, to become the chief of a new militia, which, by means of other arms, and in a new species of warfare, was destined at once to serve the Church by its labors, and to defend her against the schism of Henry VIII in England, the apostasy of Luther in Germany, and the revolt of Calvin in France.¹⁸

Unlike his Jesuit predecessors, Bartoli contrasts Ignatius not just with Luther but also with other leaders of Protestant groups and emphasizes the synchrony of 1521 and 1534 in the lives of Ignatius and Henry VIII (r.1509–47). He continues:

Ignatius and Calvin were in Paris at the same time, and both made disciples in that city. The first attached to himself a great apostolic laborer, whose life and doctrines were destined to crush heresy; while the second found a powerful supporter for the mass of errors which he desired to propagate. Finally Henry VIII. king of England, who had acquired in 1521, the glorious title of Defender of the Faith, published an edict in 1534, whereby he condemned to death whosoever should not efface the title of “Pope” from all the books or writings wherein it might happen to be inserted. That very same year, Ignatius was at Montmartre, carrying through the plan of an association destined especially for the defence of the Church, and of the Sovereign Pontiff.¹⁹

Similarly, in his history of the Society, the French Jesuit Joseph de Jouvancy (1643–1719) portrays Ignatius and the Society as the leader of a march against Protestantism, and mentions Calvin next to Luther.²⁰

In the eyes of the contemporary Protestant writers, the main protagonist of this march was not Ignatius (who seemed to be unknown to Luther and other Reformers) but Canisius, whose catechism was discussed in 1556 by Flacius Illyricus (1520–75), a Lutheran Reformer from Istria. But the first Protestant,

18 Daniello Bartoli, *History of the Life and Institute of St. Ignatius de Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus* (New York: P.J. Kenedy, 1903), 15.

19 Ibid., 20. See also, for example, ibid., 77, 128, 192–93, 298.

20 Joseph de Jouvancy, *Epitome historiae Societatis Jesu* (Ghent: J. Poelman-De Pape, 1853), 62.

it seems, to write more specifically on the Jesuits was the famous German Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz (1522–86). In his *Theologiae jesuitarum praecipua capita* (Main points of the Jesuit theology, 1562), he describes the Jesuits as a papal offspring that invaded Germany, spreading their nests throughout. Chemnitz's historical reliability should, however, be questioned based on the sheer fact that he made Cardinal Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV [r.1555–59]) the founder of the Society, whereas in reality he founded the Theatines and was rather at odds with Ignatius and his Society.

Chemnitz's anti-Jesuitism characterized the works of other Protestant writers at the beginning of the next century, including the Swiss Reformed theologian Rudolf Hospinian (Rudolf Wirth [1547–1626])—who on more than four hundred *folio* pages of his *Historia jesuitica* describes the Jesuits as deceitful plotters against Protestants²¹—and the Protestant from Basel Ludwig Lucius (or Luz [b.1577]).²² Interestingly enough, former Jesuits who turned Protestants also became authors of anti-Jesuit works in this period, among them the German Elias Hasenmüller (d.1587) who wrote a history of the Jesuit order (*Historia jesuitici ordinis*) that was published posthumously by his Protestant editor Polycarp Leyser II (1586–1633) in 1593. It defines the goal of the Jesuit foundation as resistance to heretics, especially the Lutherans.²³

By the mid-seventeenth century, this myth of the anti-Protestant origins of the Society of Jesus seemed to have been well established, with the Flemish

- 21 Rudolf Hospinian, *Historia jesuitica de iesuitarum ordinis origine, nomine, regulis, officiis, votis, privilegiis, regimine, doctrina, progressu, actibus ac facinoribus* [...] (Basel: Typis Joh. Jacobi Genathi, 1627), available online at http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:99990 (accessed March 24, 2017). English translation: Rudolf Hospinian, *The Jesuit's Manner of Consecrating Both the Persons and Weapons* [...] (Dublin, 1681). Available online: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/home> (accessed March 24, 2017). On Hospinian, see Martin Sallmann, "Hospinian (Wirth), Rudolf," in *Religion Past and Present*, at http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_10100 (accessed March 24, 2017). Admittedly, Hospinian had been influenced by the work of Hasenmüller (see below).
- 22 Ludwig Lucius, *Jesuiten-Histori von des Jesuiten-Ordens Ursprung, Namen, Regulen, Beambten, Gelübden, Freyheiten Regiment Lehr, Fortpflanzung* [...] (Basel: Genath, 1626), available online at https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_YO9VAAAACAAJ (accessed March 24, 2017). Available online is also its Latin rendition, https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_gyRUAACAAJ (accessed March 24, 2017).
- 23 Elia Hasenmüller, *Historia iesuitici ordinis* [...] (Frankfurt: Johannes Spies, 1593), 11. Republished together with *Triumphus papalis* in 1605. The German Jesuit Jakob Gretser (1562–1625) responded to Hasenmüller's publication with a long letter in which he defined his work as known for its dishonesty and ignorance. See Jakob Gretser, *Epistola de historia ordinis Iesuitici scripta ab Helia Hasenmüller* (Dillingen: Ioannes Mayer, 1594).

Jesuit editors of the *Imago primi saeculi* (An image of the first century; Antwerp: Moretus, 1640), for instance, explaining that one of the reasons the Jesuits were founded was to defeat heretics, just as Francis (d.1226) and Dominic (d.1221) had defeated the Albigensian heresy in the thirteenth century.²⁴ This myth traveled with European Jesuits and Protestants to all the colonies they established around the world, including Africa.

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24 See Nienke Tjoelker, "Jesuit Image Rhetoric in Latin and the Vernacular: The Latin and Dutch Emblems of the *Imago primi saeculi*," *Renæssanceforum* 6 (2010): 97–118; and John W. O'Malley, S.J., ed., *Art, Controversy, and the Jesuits: The Imago primi saeculi (1640)* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press), reviewed by Mia Mochizuki in the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 3 (2016): 488–91 (doi: 10.1163/22141332-00303008-02).

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