

1 Early Modern Jesuit Missions in Asia

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1.1 The Sixteenth-Century Societ(ies) of Jesus

The Society (or Company) of Jesus officially saw the light in 1540, but its history started earlier. It was founded by ten men, who met in Paris in the second and third decades of the sixteenth century,¹ and among whom Loyola was recognised as the main founder. It is, however, the role he soon acquired as a model for all Jesuits that makes discussion of his life necessary (Durand 1992, 24). Ignatius de Loyola (1491-1556) was a Basque nobleman and soldier² who, after being wounded on the battlefield and inspired by reading Christian texts such as the *Legenda Aurea* by Jacopo da Varagine and Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*, experienced a religious conversion and abandoned

1 They were Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Diego Laínez, Pierre Favre, Alfonso Salmerón, Simão Rodrigues, Nicolás Bobadilla, Claude Jay, Paschase Broët, and Jean Codure (O'Malley 1993, 9).

2 On the specific meaning of “nobleman” and “soldier”, see Aveling 1981, 57; 62. Loyola's duties as both are exemplified in Martínez Millán 2012.

his mundane life. After trying different paths provided by the spiritual milieu of the time, including severe self-discipline, he concluded that those austerities were not the answer to the travails of his soul, and he strove to instead obtain an inner path of dialogue with God (O'Malley 1993, 23-5). This initial stage of his spiritual journey was later defined by Loyola himself as a pilgrimage. In 1523, he travelled to Jerusalem; since he was not allowed to remain there for long, returning to the city remained one of his objectives for a long time (25-6).³ His understanding of himself as a both spiritual and physical pilgrim would become a reference image for the Society as a whole, as well (Coupeau 2008, 33-4).

Having decided to obtain an official religious education, he was already enrolled at the University of Alcalá de Henares by 1526. The university, recently founded, promoted Humanism and a climate of academic and religious openness; its "hybrid form of erasmianism and *alumbradismo*" exerted lasting influence on Ignatius (Pastore 2005, 160). Loyola also began guiding people in an early form of the *Spiritual Exercises*, a series of meditations he had developed during a year-long penitence in the Catalan city of Manresa, based on his own spiritual tribulations (Pavone 2004, 4). These activities, together with his public catechising, landed him in three processes and an arrest by the Inquisition in Toledo, charged with *alumbradismo*.⁴ He was acquitted of all charges but decided to move to Paris in 1528.

During the following seven years, Loyola attracted a group of six likeminded students, whom he guided in the Exercises. On the day of the Assumption of 1534, on the hill of Montmartre, they took three vows: poverty, chastity, and to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Although they were welcome in Rome when they asked for a blessing for their journey, in the end going to Jerusalem proved impossible, and they decided instead to put themselves at the service of the Pope (O'Malley 1993, 32). It was during this period that they gave themselves a name ("Company of Jesus", that is, companions united in the name of Jesus) out of the necessity to define themselves to the people they met. In 1539, Loyola submitted to Paul III the draft of the *For-*

³ For an analysis of the interiorised understanding of the pilgrimage of Ignatius, and its contextualisation in the European premodern spiritual milieu, see Mollat du Jourdin 1992.

⁴ Considering the numbers of religious figures who were accused of such heresy in this period (such as Juan de Ávila, Teresa de Jesús, and Juan de Valdés), *alumbradismo* is probably better understood as an umbrella term for all sorts of heterodoxies which saw internal prayer as central to the relation with God and were defined more by their otherness than by their identity. See García-Arenal, Pereda 2012, 118-19. See also Pastor 2004. Pastore notes that it is difficult to understand the connection between *alumbradismo* and the Society of Jesus, because the latter strove to mask all accusations of heresy (2005b, 86). Broggio describes Loyola as "dangerously hanging in the balance", together with other Spanish religious figures of this period (2004, 36). On the other side of the spectrum, Mongini takes Loyola's affinity with *alumbradismo* for granted (2012).

mula of the Institute, and the Pope officially recognised the Society with the 1540 papal bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*.

Comparable to the Rules that regulate life in other Catholic orders, the *Formula* started out as a short text in five paragraphs, which listed the so-called *consueta ministeria*, that is, the pastoral activities in which the Jesuits engaged regularly:

public preaching, lectures, and any other ministrations whatsoever of the Word of God, and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments. Moreover, the Society should show itself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are found in prisons and hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good. (*Cons.*, 66-7)

The people who would be the objective of this activity were "infidels" (i.e., non-Christians), "heretics", and Christians. In the draft of this document, the management of schools had not been considered yet, and liturgical Hours were rejected in the name of an itinerant life and a special vow to the Pope, which would allow him to dispatch them anywhere. These latter characteristics were considered to be what distinguished the Society from older orders, and the Jesuits fought against their abolition regularly at the beginning (O'Malley 1993, 5-6).⁵

Following the indications of the *Formula*, the original companions, now eleven, voted Ignatius as Superior General in 1541 (35-7). In this same year, Loyola started working on the *Constitutions* requested by the papal bull with the crucial help of his secretary, Juan de Polanco (1517-76). The preliminary version would not be ready before 1552, however, when the work would pass for promulgation to another important member of this period, Jerónimo Nadal (1507-80; O'Malley 1993, 7). In this second period of the group's existence, their activities were understood as those of "pilgrims". Their own best example was Francis Xavier, who had been called the year before to go on a mission to India, by Dom João III, King of Portugal. Carrying out a wide variety of ministries, the Jesuits avoided being tied to a fixed abode (364-6). They began to make their presence felt in society at large, if on a small scale: they preached, taught the tenets of the faith publicly, and encouraged frequent communion and confession. Three

⁵ On the contrasts between Loyola and Pope Paul IV due to their different approaches to the reform of the Church and to the regiment of religious organisations, see Quinn 1981, 386-7.

of the original companions participated as theologians in the Council of Trent (1545-63), arguably the most important event of the century for the reform of Catholicism.⁶

Although they made Rome their centre, their numbers started to grow especially in Portugal where, in 1549, there were already seven professed houses. By 1550, the Provinces of Portugal, Spain, and India had been founded. In the following six years, their number would increase to twelve.⁷ Each province had a head in the figure of a provincial, and each residence in the province had its own superior (or rector; O'Malley 1993, 52-4). In 1548, the Jesuit first school was opened in Messina. After its success, the foundation and direction of colleges became one of the main enterprises on which the Society concentrated its efforts (366). The Collegio Romano would be created in 1551, followed by the Germanico in 1552. Quite suddenly, therefore, the Jesuits became the first order who made teaching a key element of their vocation (O'Malley 2000), finding themselves tied to fixed places in a way that they had initially tried to avoid. From this moment onwards, the search for balance between the life of the pilgrim and that of the teacher would be one of the themes at the centre of Jesuit identity.

Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* were printed with papal approval in 1548. The intention of Ignatius was that all novices should do them upon entering the Society, even though most of the members of the order had never done them by the time of Mercurian. Composed of "directives, meditations, prayers, declarations, procedures, sage observations, and rules" (37), their aim was to help Christians order their affections through a meditation on the life of Jesus so as to interpret God's will for their lives. Composed loosely of a four-week structure and adaptable to the circumstances, one of their essential elements was the general confession at the end of the first week. The *Exercises* were mainly aimed at the elites, as the lower classes mostly learnt from catechisms (37-9; 127-33).

In 1550, ten years after the original promulgation, Pope Julius III's bull *Exposcit debitum* issued a second edition of the *Formula*. In the section on the aims of the Society, "propagation of the faith" was now preceded by "defence" of it, and a renewed emphasis was placed on the Pope as "Vicar of Christ"; both elements indicate the consolidation of the challenge posed by the Reformed churches.⁸ The years between the promulgation of this second edition of the formula and

⁶ They were Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, and Claude Jay.

⁷ They were Andalusia, Aragon, Brazil, Castile, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Lower Germany, Portugal, Sicily, and Upper Germany.

⁸ Maryks 2008, 14-17. On the changing context, and the relationship between the Society and Lutheran Germany in these years see O'Malley 1993, 272-83.

1557 were a turbulent period for the Society of Jesus. Important figures of Catholicism, such as the Spanish theologian, Melchor Cano, and the faculty of theology of the University of Paris, condemned it as a “danger to the faith”, a censure that would echo widely in Europe (O’Malley 1993, 287-90). Internally, the Society had to face a series of struggles. The head and founder of the Province of Portugal, Simão Rodrigues (1510-79), led it to adopt religious practices considered extreme by the Jesuit Curia in Rome (Wright 2004, 55-6). Ignatius’ call to obedience did not obtain the desired results, and Xavier blamed Rodrigues for the unruliness and excess of religious zeal displayed in India by some missionaries from the college of Coimbra (O’Malley 1993, 330-3; Županov 2005, 114). As the Society strove to delineate a Jesuit “way of proceeding”, practices that were held as incompatible with it came under attack, including fasting and self-flagellation. More general complaints denounced the structure as too rigid, the power of some members as too great, and the emphasis put on obedience as too stifling.⁹ The presence of members of Jewish descent (*conversos*) was also contested, mostly by Iberian elements (Maryks 2010, 1-39). Discontentment of this kind would persist for a long time, aggravated by other issues related to essential aspects of the Society, such as its place in Christendom after the confirmation of the policies of the Counter-Reformation, and the creation of a specific policy of the Holy See regarding the extra-European missions (Fabre 2013, 347-8).

Opened in 1558, the first general congregation elected Diego Laínez as new General and approved the final version of the *Constitutions*. Although fulfilling a similar role, the *Constitutions* are rather different, both in organisation and substance, from the rules of other religious orders.¹⁰ They established the Society as a ministry-oriented organisation, presenting active life as a path to mature spiritually and to achieve salvation (O’Malley 1993, 337). The process of routinisation and institutionalisation of the Society, therefore, continued under Laínez as it had done under Loyola, with a strong generalate that was not appreciated by all (Pavone 2004, 13). The Society at this point numbered some 3,500 members and, in Italy alone, it managed 30 colleges (O’Malley 1993, 2; 207).

⁹ See for instance the so-called “conspiracy of Bobadilla”, O’Malley 1993, 308-9; 333-5.

¹⁰ Together with the *Formula*, the *Constitutions* occupy a central place in the *Institute*, which collects the documents that regulate the Society and the way in which the members live and work. Their aim was to expand the theoretical aspirations of the *Formula* into practical policies. It begins by describing the ideal person who would join the Society, and then regulates this person’s life inside the order through its ministries and activities, adapting to the spiritual growth the individual was supposed to go through. A description of the characteristics proper to the General and the Society ends the document (O’Malley 1993, 6-8; 335-8). On the relationship between the *Constitutions* and texts guiding other religious orders, see Brieskorn 1992.

The second General Congregation reunited in 1565 to elect Spanish nobleman Francisco de Borja y Aragon (Francis Borja), third Duque of Gandía and great-grandson of Pope Alexander VI, as third General.¹¹ For the occasion, the Congregation reviewed the work of the previous two generalates to assess the success and growth of the Society. Among other decisions, it implemented the creation of a novitiate in every province, where future Jesuits could be trained for two years, and it decided to not open any more colleges unless enough staff could be guaranteed for them (O'Malley 1993, 232; Scaduto 1972, 141-2). It is possible to identify, during Borja's generalate, a tendency towards reduction to norms, to the detriment of the knowledge of the *Constitutions*, which were much broader. As the Society of Jesus grew into a large, international order, the rules that were suitable to a small group of people, who considered themselves chosen by God, were not fitting anymore (Scaduto 1972, 169-74).

Under Borja, the relative freedom of the colleges' curricula was brought under stricter control: the so-called *Ratio Studiorum Borgiana*, a comprehensive series of suggestions on a much stricter discipline for the students and numerous regulations for the life of the colleges, was published in 1569 (Duminuco 2000, 83-4). Regarding the missions, the generalate of Borja saw the beginnings of the vast movement of petition of the *Indipetae* (Fabre 2013, 345). Under Borja, the Jesuits entered the Spanish Americas in 1566, with a series of unfortunate missions to Florida. In 1572, they established a mission in New Spain (Mexico) and reached Peru (Spanish South America) the following year (Dalmases 1991, 192-200; Scaduto 1992, 122-9). Borja also made extensive use of visitors, who were his direct representatives in the provinces to which they were sent. The regulations for this new office were set in the document *Officium Visitatoris* of 1566, giving them full power over local superiors but also tasking them with the consolation of the community.

The fourth generalate, held by Walloon Everard Mercurian (elected 1573-80), can be considered a bridge of sorts between the rule of the "first (Spanish) companions" and the more defined shape the Society reached under the long rule of his Italian successor, Claudio Acquaviva, because Mercurian was the last General to have personally met Ignatius (Ruiz Jurado 2004, 399). His rule was characterised by a continuous operation of defining and shaping the way of proceeding Jesuits against what was considered alien to the Ignatian tradition (Fois 2004, 30-1). At the same time, nationalistic tendencies, with

¹¹ Borja (or Borgia, following the Italian spelling), who would be canonized in 1617, had been viceroy of Catalonia. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1546. He had helped Loyola found many ventures, both through direct funding and by finding patrons, which extended to Spain, Portugal and the Vatican. On his life (with a varying degree of hagiographical leaning), see Dalmases 1991.

anti-Spanish and anti-converso sentiments, came to the fore during Mercurian's election and set the theme until the turn of the century (Padberg 2006, 26. See also Catto 2009, 101-44).¹²

Mercurian's generalate overall experienced a rapid growth in the number of Jesuits. By 1579, the Society counted 5,165 members in 199 communities, of which 144 were colleges (Fois 2004, 25). Mercurian strove to make the Exercises a conforming tool for every Jesuit, starting with the novices (Endean 2004, 36-41). In parallel, he supported centring the Jesuit self-understanding on an active life and the *consueta ministeria*. He promoted the education of young Jesuits, striving to have a more homogeneous preparation; to this end, he started a process of producing a curriculum for the colleges of the Society, which would end with the establishment of the *Ratio Studiorum* (Ruiz Jurado 2004, 399-406). Mercurian fought against nationalistic centrifugal forces, underlining the importance of the obedience the provinces owed to Rome, and chose Alessandro Valignano as his Visitor to the Province of India to evaluate the possibility of establishing a missionary region in Asia outside the control of the Portuguese *Padroado* (Witek 2004, 822).

The process of institutionalisation that had started with Loyola but had not evolved systematically concluded during the long generalate (1580-1615) of Acquaviva. This period was thus a watershed between the old Society of Loyola and the successful Society of the seventeenth century, which was the basis of the traditional image of the order (Pavone 2004, 33-4).¹³

1.2 Early Modern Portuguese Presence in Asia

As mentioned above, nationalistic tensions traversed the early Society of Jesus in different shapes. The Assistancy of Portugal, and its depending Provinces, was one of the sectors where this strain was particularly felt, as the status of the Society there was intertwined with the *Padroado Real* (Royal Patronage). Defined by historian Charles R. Boxer as "a combination of the rights, privileges, and duties, granted by the papacy to the crown of Portugal as patron of the Roman Catholic missions and ecclesiastical establishments in vast regions of Africa, of Asia, and in Brazil" (Boxer 1978, 77-8), the *Padroado* system authorised the King to appoint bishops and collect Church tithes, which would then become funds for religious enterprises in the re-

¹² On the relationship between Italian and Spanish spirituality in Italy in the context of the influence of the Spanish Crown and the Vatican, and also in relation to the election of Mercurian, see Jiménez Pablo 2013.

¹³ For the analysis of the history and historiography on Acquaviva, see Broggio et al. 2007. A study of the disunity of the Society under Acquaviva is Lecrivain 1998.

gion (Guimarães Sá 2007, 257-9). It follows that the missionary landscape of Asia was profoundly influenced by the imperial enterprises that surrounded and supported it: for instance, Jesuit missionaries would need permission from the Crown to travel to and reside in its extra-European possessions, and they often had to rely on its alms to fund their enterprises (Boxer 1978, 78-9).¹⁴

Born out of the so-called *reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal obtained the status of kingdom in 1147 after the conquest of its capital city, Lisbon, and strengthened its political structure under the dynasty of the Avis in the fourteenth century (Birmingham 2003, 1-24). The martial cultural milieu that characterised the court and nobility during their initial years of existence is often seen as the cause behind the beginnings of its imperialistic enterprise, generally identified with the occupation of Ceuta, on the Moroccan coast, in 1415. Gold, slaves, pepper, and ivory were some of the commodities the Portuguese sought as they descended along the African coast (Russell-Wood 1992, 126). A viceroyalty of India was set up first in Kochi (Cochin) in 1505 and then in Goa in 1530. In time, a network of fortified ports was organised along the coasts of south and south-east Asia, such as Socotra, Hormuz, Cannanore, and Melaka. Various “spheres of influence” were developed as well, such as the areas around Goa, Salsette island, and much of Sri Lanka (49). The Portuguese specialised in the trading of cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, cloths, precious stones, pepper, and other commodities (Subrahmanyam 1993, 67-71).¹⁵ The network functioned through the system of the *carreiras*, by which the Crown provided a vessel (generally a *nao*),¹⁶ a stipend, and a percentage of the cargo-hold for its captain (*capitão-mor*), while maintaining the rights of the route and the profits. These captains, who often were *fidalgos* with royal patents, could also perform the functions of ambassadors.¹⁷

This was the network that Francis Xavier and the other Jesuits who followed him to Asia used extensively, and their principal missions, especially west of Melaka, tended to coincide with the most

¹⁴ Still, exceptions to this rule existed, such as when Spanish Franciscans travelled from Manila to Japan in 1584, during the period of union of the Iberian crowns (Tamburello 1997, 343).

¹⁵ See also Boyajian 1993, 40-50; Pearson 2007.

¹⁶ A *nao* (carrack; modern spelling *nau*) was a large ship that generally had four decks, which could reach 1,600 tons. The *naos* were the standard vessels used in the *carreira da Índia* until the seventeenth century, when English and Dutch privateer activity forced them to be replaced by smaller vessels (Russell-Wood 1992, 28).

¹⁷ The upper echelons of nobility (*nobres*) were referred to as *ricos homens*, meaning “powerful men”. All the other noblemen, generally belonging to the military aristocracy, were called *fidalgos* (Disney 2009, 1: 103). On the *capitães-mor* of Macao, see Hesselink 2012, 18.

important ports of the Portuguese. Indeed, in addition to the aforementioned trade opportunities, Portugal's push towards the oceans displayed religious elements as well (Bethencourt, Curto 2007, 198). Dom Manuel's desire to present himself as the advocate of the Christian cause against the infidel and gain papal bulls to support his expeditions in Africa had been the main cause behind his ban against Muslims in Portugal.¹⁸ Messianism, present at his court in forms influenced by millenarian theologian Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202), and his desire to find and join forces with the fabled Prester John were also engines of the explorations.¹⁹

However, the context and organisation of the Portuguese ports on the China Sea differed profoundly from that of the Estado da Índia and the Indian Ocean. Once the Strait of Melaka was crossed, the influence of the Crown and its representatives was so weak that the main European actors in the area were the merchants and the missionaries (Russell-Wood 1992, 44; Disney 2009, 2: 181-2). A large number of settlements were developed by private Portuguese subjects too, parallel to the royal network, despite the attempts made to bring them somewhat under control (Subrahmanyam 1993, 71-2).²⁰ Among these was the city of Macao (Cidade do nome de Deus de Macau). This port had been founded on the Pearl River estuary in approximately 1555, after the Portuguese had been prohibited from entering China but allowed to participate in the trade fairs of nearby Guangzhou (Canton). The prohibition of Chinese merchants from dealing with Japan had allowed the Portuguese to insinuate themselves as a third party in the silk commerce (Disney 2009, 2: 183; Bethencourt, Curto 2007, 209).²¹ In time, the Jesuits would make Macao one of their most important centres in Asia, endowing it with a college and a monumental church.

In the 1560s, Macao's trade with Japan rose in importance, making it a key port city in the Portuguese network. Contacts with Japan had started in a private manner, when a Chinese junk carrying Portuguese men foundered on Tanegashima, an island south of Kyūshū.²² After 1571, most of Macao's trade was done with Nagasaki, a small, recently founded harbour that was given to the administration of the Jesuit missionaries. Within a decade, this Japanese port had de-

18 It can be argued that his expulsion of the Portuguese Jewish population was instead a capitulation under the pressure exercised by the neighbouring Catholic Monarchs (Soyer 2008, 58-9).

19 On Manueline messianism, see Subrahmanyam 1993, 50-1.

20 On the decentralisation of the Portuguese empire, see Bethencourt, Curto 2007.

21 Some hypotheses on the events that led to the founding of Macao are found in Russell-Wood 1992, 44.

22 On this event and its historiography, see Lidin 2004, 1-35.

veloped into a fortified, bustling centre, rich from the silk trade; although the population was nearly all Christian by the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were never a solid presence aside from the missionaries (Disney 2009, 2: 195; Gunn 2011, 174). The trade with Macao was organised as part of a wider exchange with Goa. From the Estado, European and Indian goods were shipped to Macao, where they were traded for silk, which was then exchanged for Japanese silver in Nagasaki (Disney 2009, 2: 184). In the decade of the 1580s, the investment of the Macao trade amounted to approximately 300,000 cruzados²³ and would often guarantee a profit of 100%.²⁴ The Macao–Nagasaki trade prospered longer than the rest of the Portuguese network. The cessation of the trade with Japan was, ultimately, caused by the expulsion of all Portuguese from the country by order of the shōgun in 1635 and then by the edicts of country closure (*sakoku*).

1.3 Francis Xavier's Mission in Asia

The founder of the Jesuit missions is traditionally identified as Francis Xavier (1506–52, canonised 1622).²⁵ Born in Navarre as Francisco de Jassu y Xavier, he became a member of Loyola's group after they studied theology together in Paris. In 1540, the same year in which the Society of Jesus received papal approval, Xavier was chosen to travel to Goa as Dom João III of Portugal had requested some preachers for “converting the heathen” in India.²⁶ Arriving on 6 May 1542, he set to work in the royal hospital of the city. In the evenings, he preached to the Portuguese settlers, to reconcile them with the Church and to their Indian families, who were often considered Christians in name only (Schurhammer 1973, 2: 204–11; 224–9). Xavier used Catholic pedagogical texts by João de Barros that he had brought from Portugal to preach, modifying them to better suit the specific Indian contexts he worked in.²⁷

²³ The golden Portuguese coin *cruzado* had already exited circulation in the sixteenth century but was kept for accounting and was worth 400 réis (reais). The real was the main unit of account both in Portugal and in the Estado da Índia. In Portugal, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, its value corresponded to 1/2340 of one mark silver (229.5 g), but by 1588 it had been devalued to 1/2800. However, the *real* was coined in India with less silver, so that it corresponded to 1/4398 of one mark silver. For an historical overview, see Steensgaard 1974, 417–18.

²⁴ The annual value of the Goa–Macao–Nagasaki trade in these years was approximately 600,000 cruzados (Boyajian 1993, 60; 64; Gunn 2011, 173–4).

²⁵ The most detailed recounting of Francis Xavier's life is still Schurhammer 1973.

²⁶ João III to Pedro Mascarenhas, ambassador of Portugal in Rome, 4 August 1539, quoted in Schurhammer 1973, 1: 544; 728.

²⁷ Schurhammer; Wicki 1944, 1: 94–5.

It was Xavier's work in the Pearl Fishery Coast that set the tone for his activities as a missionary outside Goa. The local population, the Parava, had converted to receive Portuguese protection from raiding Muslims but, in 1542, they were yet to receive any teachings on Christianity. Here, Xavier imparted baptism to those who had not received it yet. He taught the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and other articles of faith he deemed important, translated into Tamil, by having the community repeat them out loud. He took a stand against practices that he identified as idolatrous, destroying idols and punishing adultery (Schurhammer 1973, 2: 295-310; 337). Returning to Goa in November, he received new companions and letters there: the famed correspondence system of the Society of Jesus, which will be analysed in detail in the following chapters, was already taking shape.

Continuous movement characterised Xavier's missionary activity in Asia. After a stop in Kochi, he returned to the Fishery Coast in 1544; the following year, he did a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas in Chennai (São Thome) and then to Melaka (2: 588). In 1546, he moved through the Maluku islands (Moluccas), visiting and preaching in Ambon, Ternate, and Morotai (3: 3-207).²⁸ In July 1547, Xavier returned to Melaka and there, at the beginning of December, he met a Japanese man he called Anjirō (3: 268). It seemed that the man had fled his home in Satsuma, in southern Kyūshū, after committing murder; looking for someone who could help him spiritually, he had been directed to Xavier (3: 268-72). Xavier baptised Anjirō and his group in Goa, and interviewed them extensively on the qualities of their fellow Japanese and their country, while he was collecting information from a Portuguese merchant who had visited it.²⁹ These attempts to translate Christian concepts into Japanese, and elements of the Japanese religious milieu into Portuguese, resulted in the Jesuit concluding that the Japanese believed in a form of Christianity that had degenerated over time and, thanks to this, they would quickly convert to the 'correct' Christianity preached by the Jesuits, like Anjirō had done.³⁰ Anjirō had become a mould for the missionaries to create an ideal image of the Japanese, by generalising two aspects that they attributed to him – interest in religious matters and rapidity in learning them.

²⁸ See also Županov 2005, 55-6.

²⁹ The interview makes up two reports, written by Lancillotto (*DJ*, 1: 44-69 and *DJ*, 1: 69-76). For an analysis of the reports written by the merchant, Jorge Álvares, see App 1997a, 59-62.

³⁰ Urs App calls these attempts to understand the unknown by interpreting it through already familiar categories, the "Arlecchino mechanism". Both sides, the European and the Japanese, were victims of this process, with the result that their dialogues to try to understand each other often became two monologues (App 2012, 11-14). More details are available in App 1997a, 62-76.

Xavier then decided to travel to Japan together with Father Cosme de Torres,³¹ a Valencian man he had met on Ambon Island and who he had just admitted into the Society, and Cordovan Brother Juan Fernández, who had arrived in Goa from Portugal in 1548.³² When they finally landed in Kagoshima (in the Satsuma domain) in 1549, they found a comparatively rich domain in a country divided by civil war. The local daimyō was Shimazu Takahisa, head of the Shimazu family, from whom Xavier obtained a permit to preach. As he had done in India, he composed a new catechism, adapting the text he had used in Goa to refute elements of Japanese Buddhism, and had Anjirō translate it into Japanese. The resulting translation lacked style and depth, attracting the scorn of the listeners, and suffered from a very liberal approach to Christian tenets, to the point that it translated the word God as Dainichi Nyorai, the name of the Cosmic Buddha of the Shingon school (Schurhammer 1973, 4: 107-9).³³

After being expelled from Satsuma for not granting the arrival of the Portuguese carrack and antagonising Buddhist monks, Xavier travelled to Miyako (modern-day Kyōto), having left Torres and Fernández in Hirado with a small group of converts. This voyage to the capital and back is generally evoked in Jesuit letters and narratives as the most difficult heroic feat of Xavier in Japan, which describe him crossing snowy mountains, barefoot, with very little to eat (4: 166-8). During this travel, Xavier also came into contact with common complexities of negotiating with Japanese culture that would become topos of Jesuit literature, such as when he attempted to obtain access to the complex of Enryaku-ji, the headquarters of the Tendai school of Buddhism on Mt Hiei. His aim was to debate with the monks, convert them, and have their influence facilitate the conversion of the country. However, since he did not bear any gifts, he was refused entry (4: 191-7). When he returned south, after understanding that Imperial court was in a state of economic and institutional ruin, he stopped in Yamaguchi to obtain an audience with a daimyō whose power and influence he was sure of, Ōuchi Yoshitaka. To make clear his own status and impress the daimyō, Xavier introduced himself as ambassador of the governor of the *Estado da Índia*, possibly dressed himself in silks, and presented to Ōuchi an impressive array of precious gifts (4: 218-19).³⁴ Xavier had also visited the region of Bungo and its capital Funai (modern-day Ōita), invited by its daimyō Ōtomo Yoshishige (later baptised as Dom Francisco, 1530-87;

³¹ On Torres, see Schurhammer 1973, 3: 392-34.

³² On Fernández, see Schurhammer 1973, 3: 503 n58.

³³ See also App 1997b, 219.

³⁴ As will be considered below, there is no agreement among the retellings on how Xavier was precisely dressed during the audience.

also known by his Buddhist name, Sōrin) after the Portuguese carrack had landed there. Ōtomo was friendly with the missionaries and would, some years later, adopt Christianity, becoming one of its main supporters in Japan.

In the meantime, Xavier and his group had realised that the monks who worshipped Dainichi Nyorai had no knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that Dainichi was not a working, nor acceptable, translation of the word God (4: 225). They abolished the 'translation' of God with Dainichi and decided to use instead the Portuguese word 'Deus'. Xavier then instructed Torres and Fernández to carry out extensive interviews and debates with lay people and monks, who visited them in their house in Yamaguchi. The two Jesuits collected and reorganised their knowledge about Buddhist schools (*seitas*), which they then used to create arguments in favour of Christianity. It was at this stage that they concluded that Buddhism was a creation of the Devil to enslave the country, a notion that influenced most of its later depictions by other missionaries (Zampol D'Ortia, Dolce, Pinto 2021).

For the duration of his stay in Japan, Xavier had not received a single letter from his confreres, either from Asia or Europe. No letter reached the mission from 1550 to 1555, either. Jesuit Baltasar Gago explained this fact, stating that "Japan lay at the end of the world" (Schurhammer 1973, 4: 123). Indeed, this lack of contact with the Jesuit centres was anticipating a problem that would plague the Japanese mission until at least 1579. Still, worried about his confreres in India and ready for the next destination in his pilgrimage, Xavier decided to leave for China.³⁵ While the extent of his appreciation for the Japanese people is difficult to measure, especially in its fluctuations over time, it is inarguable that Xavier harboured great hopes for the conversion of the country.

Xavier left for India in November 1551, with four Japanese Christians: Mateus (who died in Goa in 1552), Bernardo (who died in Coimbra in 1557), Joane, and Antonio (Schurhammer 1973, 4: 297). From Goa, Xavier set sail again for Shangchuan, landing there at the beginning of September 1522. He fell ill as he was attempting to smuggle into China and died on 3 December of the same year (Schurhammer 1973, 4: 641-2).

35 According to Xavier, the Japanese were perplexed by the fact that, even if Christianity proclaimed the true God, the Chinese had never heard of it. Xavier knew that Buddhism had come to Japan from China (even if he ignored the role of Korea in this process), and therefore understood the cultural influence the China had on it. He thus presented converting the Chinese as a necessary step for the conversion of Japan.

1.4 The Example of Loyola and Xavier

Among the causes of internal tension in the Society of Jesus in its first half-century of existence, it is possible to find the various interpretations of the figure of Loyola, with his spirituality and his religious practices, as embodiment of the ideal Jesuit. The image of Loyola had been initially circulated in some informal texts and his autobiography, which was transcribed and interpreted by his secretary, Portuguese Jesuit Luís Gonçalves da Câmara.³⁶ These elaborations were retired in 1572, when Pedro de Ribadeneira's life of Loyola was published under the order of Borja (Mongini 2011, 40-1). This latter biography would not enjoy much success, since Mercurian soon commissioned another one from Giovanni Pietro Maffei (O'Malley 1999, 6-7). The quick succession of biographies about the founder can be interpreted as a symptom of both their importance to the order and the Society's changing self-image (De Certeau 2003).

The figure of the founder indeed held a key role in the creation of the image of the Jesuit, and thus of the Jesuit way of proceeding. As defined by Markus Friedrich, this expression was a

shorthand for everything that made up the Jesuits' common spiritual orientation and what distinguished them from other orders [...] a formula that could be used to practice spiritual identity politics. One could justify rejecting something by arguing that it was incompatible with 'our way of proceeding'. (Friedrich 2022, 72)

The above overview of the beginnings of the Society has already suggested that the way of proceeding was a work in progress, especially during the years before the generalate of Acquaviva, which would strive to solidify the image of the exemplary Jesuit. That the correct way to be a Jesuit was still debated in the 1570s is shown by an accident that occurred to Alessandro Valignano during his stay in Lisbon on his way to India. In a letter to Mercurian, Valignano informed the General that Portuguese Jesuit Luís Gonçalves da Câmara, at the time confessor of King Dom Sebastião I, held excessive power over the province. Câmara's way of proceeding was based not on love but on fear, according to Valignano, who quoted him saying that "[governing with love and gentleness was] a disposition contrary to the spirit of Fr. Ignatius".³⁷ This debate on what was Loyola's preferred manner of gov-

³⁶ The first text on the life of Loyola circulating in the Society had been the handwritten *Epistola de Patre Ignacio*, a letter written in 1547 by Lainez which gave some basic information, mainly on Loyola's spirituality, to the small community of the time. Following that, another influential text would be the 1548 *Summarium Hispanum* by Polanco. See Mongini 2011, 35-8.

³⁷ Valignano to the General, 12 January 1574, quoted in Cueto 2004, 889.

ernment had been going on for some time, tied to the aforementioned tensions between the Portuguese Jesuit leadership and Loyola. Nadal himself had tried to disprove Câmara's opinion; it had proved useless, since the latter drew authority by his direct witnessing of Loyola.

Furthermore, for the Society, Loyola's life prefigured its existence and confirmed its cosmic importance and uniqueness (Motta 2005, 6-7). The initial refusal to commit his biography to paper was permitted by the fact that "the story of Ignatius... was [understood as] already contained in the Gospels" (Mongini 2011, 36). Loyola had then transmitted his purported privileged position in God's plan for humankind to the Society as a whole, by teaching its members how to understand divine will through the Exercises and how to execute it in the world through the way of proceeding. Emerging from the late medieval Spanish milieu, elements of his spirituality reflected the tenets of *devotio moderna*: as proposed by Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, practices such as regular confession, communion, quotidian examination of conscience, consolation, and adaptability of spirituality were transposed directly into the Exercises; Jesuit appreciation of the encounter with Christ as a personal experience, distinct but not opposed to the institutional Church, and the need to adapt the message they had received for all audiences highlight the influence of *The Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony (O'Malley 1993, 265-6; Shore 1998, 3-5).³⁸ Enhanced by Loyola's personal ability to adjust to his environment, these were the basis of the purposefully built-in malleability of the *Institute* (O'Malley 2005, 6-7).³⁹

It goes without saying that Loyola had a profound impact on Francis Xavier. He understood mission through the lens of Ignatian spirituality and used *Spiritual Exercises* as a way to understand which place had been chosen by God as his next destination (López-Gay 2002, 249-57). The fact that Xavier had left Europe when the Society had only just stopped being a "charismatic band" (O'Malley 1993, 364) is also evident in his less-than-structured approach to missionary activity and his continuous search for more people to (attempt to) convert. As the first Jesuit missionary to travel outside Europe, Xavier mirrored Loyola's self-understanding as a pilgrim. The image of the road was always present in the Society's understanding of Jesuit life, and it filled their literature with small episodes of travelling Jesuits. "The way of proceeding was by foot", wrote Nadal (quoted in Scaduto 1974, 324),⁴⁰ in an interesting conjoining of physical trav-

³⁸ For a general introduction to *devotio moderna*, see Goudriaan 2009.

³⁹ The Society's ability of becoming localized, as Loyola's textual inspirations suggest, was obviously not an Ignatian prerogative. For a similar concept applied to Christianity and the Reformation at large, see Christian 1981, 180.

⁴⁰ On the importance of the "road" in general in the first Society, see 771-85.

el and more general Jesuit activity; he promoted the framing of the Jesuits as new Apostles, understood as men sent out by St. Peter to convert the world.⁴¹ This conceptualisation certainly fuelled Francis Xavier's fervent and restless pilgrimage through Asia, which was understood as both physical and spiritual movement. As will be considered below, Francisco Cabral too imbued the descriptions of his travels and visitations with a similar spiritual dimension.

Just as Loyola set the example for the Jesuits at large, Xavier would become a mirror for Jesuit missionaries. Xavier's time in Japan, his experiences there, and his approaches would be transmitted to subsequent generations of missionaries, upheld as exemplary, and used in debates both in favour of and against specific decisions regarding the mission. Different narratives of his life would be presented to support different policies, especially against norms implemented after the first generation of Jesuits, an example being the debates regarding garments in Japan that are considered in the following chapter. His correspondence would offer a framing for the concept and practice of the Jesuit mission, which was still in its infancy at the time. It prescribed an interpretation of the hardships of mission as a gift from God that facilitates the salvation of the missionary.⁴² While he would later come to condemn a direct, continuous connection between the conversion of gentiles and the salvation of the missionary who brought them to the faith, Xavier exhorted himself and others to find consolation in the difficult life of a missionary, which made them closer to Jesus Christ by fostering humility (López-Gay 2002).⁴³

⁴¹ On Nadal's "apostolic mobility" see O'Malley 1984.

⁴² See for example Francis Xavier's letter to his confreres in Rome, Goa, 20 September 1542, in *DJ*, 1: 158.

⁴³ The edifying nature of these comments becomes even more evident in later years, making them part of what Županov called the Jesuit "package tour brochure" (2005, 55) written to interest potential missionaries in the Indies, and identified in some of the more public writings of Xavier.

1.5 The Life and Character of Francisco Cabral

The information available on Francisco Cabral's life before his arrival in Japan is scarce. The catalogues of the Indian Province provide short profiles of his character, while his brethren supply rather polarised accounts of his virtues and faults. Among the most relevant remaining sources, the rather hagiographic obituary⁴⁴ "Da vida, e morte do Padre Francisco Cabral, que foi o segundo superior universal de Japã" appears to have been compiled with information collected directly from Cabral's statements.⁴⁵ In these documents, we learn that Cabral was born around 1530 on the island of São Miguel in the Azores archipelago.⁴⁶ His family, based in Covilhã, which is in today's Centro region, was well-known and belonged to the lower nobility. They claimed a mythical relation to the first king of Macedonia and were probably descendants of the Castilian family of the Cabreiras (McClymont 1914, 1). The Portuguese branch of the family can be traced back to the thirteenth century. Alvaro Gil Cabral supported King Dom João I against the claims of Castille to the throne and was governor (*alcaide-mor*) of Guarda and first lord of Azurara. From 1397, the family held the role of governor of nearby Belmonte (2-7). The most notable member of the family was Pedro Álvares Cabral, who went down in history as the first European to reach Brazil.

Francisco's father, Aires Pires Cabral, was administrative magistrate of the Azores archipelago and a member of the *Desembargo do Paço* (AJUDA, Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 103r), the central tribunal of justice of the Kingdom of Portugal; this position put him among the highest judicial authorities in the country. Francisco grew up in Lisbon (ARSI, Goa 33, I, 293r) and went on to study humanities at the University of Coimbra, probably grammar and rhetoric. He then left Europe to follow Afonso de Noronha, who was sailing to Goa to become viceroy of India. On this occasion, Cabral fought in the battle of Hormuz against the fleet of Sultan Suleyman and its famed commander, Piri Reis (Ahmet Muhiddin Piri), when he is said to have displayed good soldierly qualities (Bourdon 1993, 559). It was on this

⁴⁴ For instance, the text states that before Cabral's arrival the missionaries in Japan were not used to openly preach the Christ crucified and conflates it with the use of the Jesuit cassock (AJUDA, Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 108v).

⁴⁵ "Of the life, and death of Father Francisco Cabral, who was the second universal superior of Japan" in Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 103r-111r. The nature of the text is such that it gives little information about Cabral's work in India or Japan but provides an interesting picture of how he spent his retirement. A shorter obituary is found in the annual letter of 1609 in ARSI, Goa 33, I, 293r-4r.

⁴⁶ Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 103r. The two dates commonly proposed are 1528 and 1533. The latter seems more probable, if just because his father became *desembarcador* of the Azores only in 1529 (Drummond 1850).

occasion that he met Jesuit Antonio Vaz and decided to petition to enter the Society of Jesus, where he was accepted in December 1544 (Schütte 1980, 1: 189).

In the *Catalogus Sociorum Provinciae Indiae*, compiled in December 1555, Cabral appeared as a *Logicus* (that is, student of logic) in Goa (Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, henceforth: *DI*, 3: 409). At the beginning of 1555, Baltazar Dias, vice-provincial of India, informed the Provincial of Portugal that he had accepted Cabral as novice: "I have received a youth, son of Airez Pirez Cabral, *desembarcador*. His name is Francisco Cabral, well-known in Coimbra to the Fathers and Brothers. He knows Latin reasonably well. He is now doing the Exercises" (*DI*, 3: 210). In December of that year, a general letter stated that Cabral was studying under Antonio de Quadros, future Provincial. The writer took care to emphasise Cabral's prominence among the students, mentioning again his previous studies in Coimbra and the position of his father.⁴⁷ In 1556, the *Catalogus Sociorum Provinciae Indicae et Puerorum Collegii S. Pauli* confirmed him as a brother who had already pronounced three vows, his novitiate completed (*DI*, 3: 786). Cabral defended his thesis on 18 October 1556⁴⁸ and then studied theology for two years. In 1558, he was sanctified a priest and, later that year, became master of novices.⁴⁹ He wrote his first letter to the General the following year, as consultant of the Provincial; it does not seem that he ever introduced himself, as many others did. In his second letter, in 1560, Cabral stated that the General did not know him, as it was proper for somebody "so full of imperfections and so useless" as him; he explained then that the reason behind this missive was the request for a mass for a soul in Purgatory, as he understood it was a customary grace to missionaries. Again, he did not provide any information about himself, but this early text already established his tendency to follow the custom of debasing oneself in front of one's superiors.⁵⁰

Thanks to some reports on personnel sent to the General by the superiors of India, it is possible to have an idea of the character of Cabral. In 1559, the rector of the College of St. Paul, eminent theologian Francisco Rodrigues (1515-73), wrote to Rome as follows:

Francisco Cabral is of maybe 25 or 26 years of age. He entered [the Society] here. He was ordained last year and is in charge of

⁴⁷ Aires Brandão to the Jesuits in Portugal, Goa, 15 December 1555, in *DI*, 3: 375.

⁴⁸ Aires Brandão to the Fathers and Brothers of Portugal, Goa, 19 [?] November 1556, in *DI*, 3: 574. See also Luís Frois to the Jesuits of Coimbra, Goa, 30 November 1557, in *DI*, 3: 704.

⁴⁹ Antonio da Costa to the Jesuits in Portugal, Goa, 26 December 1558, in *DI*, 4: 186.

⁵⁰ Cabral to the General Lainez, Goa, 2 December 1560, *DI*, 4: 756.

the novices. He has very good feeling for the things of the Society, loves the virtues, and has proceeded very well and firmly in the Society. He is of good judgement and, from what is possible to see of him, with age and experience he will be one of the men that Our Lord will use for the Society, and worthy of trust; he understands fairly well the humanities and theology. He has little bodily strength and is often sick.⁵¹

The same month, Antonio de Quadros also reported back to Rome about his pupil as follows:

Father Francisco Cabral, sick but not weak, is very firm in the Society. He is rich in religious virtues, but is somewhat wilful. He is knowledgeable of the Society and its ways and spiritual matters. For somebody who has studied here, he has good knowledge of the humanities and theology, and seems to be budding as a good preacher. He is prudent and of a choleric nature⁵² and sometimes hasty. We still don't know how he will do with social interactions with others, but it seems well, because he has always presented himself well. We here have great expectations for him, so he is now master of novices.⁵³

Melchior Nunes Barreto, the following year, added that

[Cabral] preaches fervently, is obedient, loves to pray. He is very sick of the head and lungs, among the brothers received here he seems the most inclined to studies and virtues. He seems slightly contentious.⁵⁴

Therefore, Cabral seemed to be attentive to Christian virtues, although of a choleric character, hasty and contentious. He also appears to have had a weak constitution.

Cabral was master of novices until 1560 and spent the following year teaching theology. He was considered a skilled preacher: he is recorded preaching at the Church of St. John the Baptist, in the village of Carambolin in the north of Goa, during the Lent of 1559; in

⁵¹ Francisco Rodrigues to General Lainez, Goa, 17 November 1559, in *DI*, 4: 382.

⁵² Following Galenic temperamental theory, "just as the body and the soul are tightly connected, the temperament of a body also determines one's character. According to this theory, temperaments were either choleric or bilious (the yellow bile was also called *cholera*), melancholic (in Greek, black bile), sanguine, or phlegmatic. Each temperament makes men inclined to specific moral actions" (Casalini 2016, 197).

⁵³ Antonio De Quadros to General Lainez, Goa, November 1559, *DI*, 4: 400.

⁵⁴ Nunes Barreto to General Lainez, Kochi, 15 January 1560, in *DI*, 4: 505-6.

1560, he spent it in the Church of Misericordia and in the Cathedral, while preaching in the latter during the year.⁵⁵ In February 1562, he became rector of Vasai (Baçaim) (*DI*, 5: 242n25), where he preached on Fridays, “complying with the Constitutions”.⁵⁶ He returned to Goa in 1566, where he taught cases of conscience in the college.⁵⁷ A catalogue entry dates of the same year reads: “Father Francisco Cabral [...] proceeds well in virtue and is naturally honest. He has a proud nature, and it is difficult to change his opinions” (*DI*, 7: 74).⁵⁸ The following year, he was briefly rector of the house of Kochi and then of the college of Goa (Schütte 1980, 1: 192). Echoing Cabral’s obituary, Schütte highlights how his fast-moving career was due to the fact that he was held “in high esteem [...] for his mature grasp of religious life and his talent in guiding others” (1: 189).⁵⁹ While Cabral displayed from the beginning his religious zeal and his scrupulous attention to his vows, his distinguished name and the lack of other qualified people in the mission certainly contributed to his quick rise to positions of prominence.⁶⁰

The same year of 1567, the Provincial, Antonio de Quadros, proposed him for the fourth vow and, in April 1568, nominated him as Visitor to Japan (Bourdon 1993, 559). Worrying news had arrived from the archipelago that the mission there was creating a scandal by wearing inappropriate garments. Quadros had tried to visit Japan for some time, with little success, and had finally decided to send Cabral to investigate. He was supposed to be local superior there until joined by the new Visitor of the Province, Gonçalo Álvares. This arrangement meant that the first three years of Cabral’s superiorate in the archipelago were focused on the issue of the irregular dress, waiting for the Visitor to

55 Luís Frois to the Jesuits in Europe, Goa, November 1559, in *DI*, 4: 282; Luís Frois to the Jesuits in Portugal, 1 December 1560, in *DI*, 4: 728; Luís Frois to the Jesuits in Europe, Goa, 8 December 1560, in *DI*, 4: 791;

56 Melchior Dias to the Jesuits in Portugal, Vasai, 1 December 1565, in *DI*, 6: 559.

57 Gomes Vaz to the Provincial of Portugal, Leo Henriques, Goa, 29 November 1566, *DI*, 7: 50-1.

58 The text is attributed to Quadros, possibly with the help of Francisco Rodrigues (*DI*, 7: 71).

59 Original from Goa 33, I, 293r.

60 Many years later, Valignano still lamented the little preparation of the Jesuits accepted in India, generally former soldiers (Valignano to the General Acquaviva, Goa, 17 November 1595, in *DI*, 17: 189). This might have been a dig towards his longtime opponent, but Cabral had had the privilege of studying in Europe before entering the Society in Goa, which many other candidates had not. While Antonio de Quadros agreed about the mediocre quality of Cabral’s knowledge (*DI*, 5: 242), he also commented that “for somebody who has studied here, he has good knowledge of the humanities and theology”. Although Valignano does not explicitly refer to it, the purported detrimental effect that Indian climate had on virtue was another reason identified behind this issue (see for example *DI*, 15: 420-1).

solve other, more mundane, problems. Álvares, however, died at sea in 1573, and it was only from then that Cabral began to devote more attention to the general direction of the mission (Schütte 1980, 1: 216).

Cabral, therefore, left Goa in April 1568, with patents that appointed him Visitor of Melaka, Macao, and Japan. Once in Macao, he had to unexpectedly wait there for another year before leaving for Japan. This brought him into conflict with Organtino Gnechi-Soldo,⁶¹ who arrived there after him as the Visitor to the houses of Melaka and Macao, also bringing written, detailed orders from Visitor Álvares. A dispute on precedence ensued, as both men considered themselves Visitors (Schütte 1980, 1: 193). The animosity between the two was exacerbated by an accident with that year's capitão-mor, Manuel Travassos. While Cabral entered the latter's circle of friends, Organtino denounced him as "an exploiter and a bully who [...] had harassed the people of Macao and the foreign seafarers" (1: 193). The rift between the two had then spread to the rest of the mission. This led Organtino to write a strong letter to the Provincial, asking for Cabral to be removed from his position of superior of Japan. He judged Cabral to be proud, obstinate, and lacking self-knowledge, simplicity, and any real spirituality, as he did not understand "the true spirit of the Society" (1: 194-5).

Schütte attempts to give a balanced view of this quarrel. He suggests that Organtino had written these words while upset and that, being Italian, was not best equipped to understand the details of Portuguese India. Organtino was also of modest origins, while Cabral belonged to the minor nobility of the country. This probably exacerbated their contrasts, even if it put Cabral in a better position to both navigate the relationships with other people of a similar socio-cultural background and excuse their prevarications. Travassos had been a knight of the Order of Christ since 1548 and had excellent connections both at the Portuguese court and in the Estado da Índia. Cabral certainly was aware of the importance of fostering links for the Society of Jesus in a territory that was, overall, hostile to them. His good relationship with Travassos paid off in later years, when the trade of the capitão-mor proved vital for the successful survival of the Japanese mission (1: 196-7).⁶² At the same time, the profile of Cabral that emerges from Organtino's writings confirmed Cabral's

61 Organtino Gnechi-Soldo (generally known by his first name), Italian, born near Brescia in 1532, entered the Society in 1556, already ordained. He studied theology at the Collegio Romano and was then rector of the college of Loreto. General Borja personally chose him to be sent to India. Organtino landed in Goa in 1567, where he was briefly rector of the college; he moved then to Melaka and Macao. In 1570 he sailed to Japan together with Francisco Cabral; he was based at the Miyako mission for the next 30 years. Organtino died in Nagasaki in 1609 (Cieslik 2001).

62 Travassos later rendered important services to the Japanese mission (Hesselink 2012, 11).

negative traits as they appeared in the descriptions by his superiors in India – proud, quick to anger, precipitous in action, and stubborn in his decisions. He showed a certain disregard for people below his station, preferring to prioritise those he felt were his equals. These traits would inform his leadership of the Japanese mission too, where he arrived there on 18 June 1570: he would suffer from the less familiar context, no longer facilitated by his ability to navigate the complexities of the Portuguese society and its Asian networks.

A letter written by Gaspar Vilela when he returned to India in 1571 provides some comments on how Cabral was perceived at his arrival in Japan by a veteran of the mission.⁶³ The first issue highlighted is his age: Japanese people, Vilela informed Borja, naturally had more respect and a better opinion of older missionaries, so “the rector of Japan should be closer to fifty than to forty” (JapSin 7, III, 87v). Although Vilela presented his memorandum as a general commentary, this certainly is a reference to Cabral who, at the time, was not even forty years of age. The writer justified this necessity by referring to the character of the Japanese, but it might as well be that he perceived Cabral as too young for the important role. Cabral’s own consultant when he was superior in Vasai in 1565 had suggested the same, stating that it was prudent to keep with him an older missionary to offer counsel.⁶⁴ Vilela’s note indicates that, in the following five years, Cabral had not matured enough for the much more difficult position of superior of Japan.

Another quality to make a good impression on the Japanese, according to Vilela, was affability; humility and patience would help the new superior face the many difficulties. His attitude should be more that of a brother than a father, so that “with suavity all could make an effort to sustain what has been started” (JapSin 7, III, 87v). Vilela continued suggesting that the superior should provide guidance so that missionaries who commit infractions could mend their behaviour in Japan without being sent away; an office held for life would help the superior to appreciate his subordinates and care more for the converts, so that a mutual understanding and knowledge could be reached (JapSin 7, III, 87v-88r). These admonitions, grown from Vilela’s experience with Cosme de Torres,⁶⁵ suggest that the new superior left a lot to be desired.

Unsurprisingly, considering his role in the adoption of silk garments, Vilela’s letter also condemned sudden changes in missionary policies, “both in the dress and in the food, things that are not im-

⁶³ Gaspar Vilela to General Borja, 23 January 1572, in JapSin 7, III, 87-90v.

⁶⁴ Melchior Dias to the General, Vasai, 10 December 1565, in *DJ*, 6: 635.

⁶⁵ Although Torres held his office for life, and therefore his dedication to the Christians was arguably the positive evidence backing Vilela’s argument, he treated the European brothers with harshness (Melchior Nunes Barreto to General Lainez, Kochi, 15 January 1560, in *DJ*, 2: 259; 261).

portant [but] cause scandal when changed". According to him, Jesuits living in colleges and houses in European-held lands could not understand many aspects of the life of "those who work in the conversions" and imposed many rules on them, which he held, implicitly, were useless if not damaging. It was essential, in his opinion, that the superior conformed his behaviour to the fathers and brothers who had many years of experience in the land and that his decision-making was subjected to a consultation with the missionaries with the most experience in the country (JapSin 7, III, 88r). Otherwise,

It is very [damaging] when the superior does what he wants, like the one who went now [Cabral] does, and the first Father who went after him as visitor of China. This path will lead to the demise of the mission, as Father Cosme de Torres used to say, weeping [...] because there was nobody who would help Japan, nor take pity on it... (JapSin 7, III, 88r-89r)⁶⁶

The best option would have been, according to Vilela, to free the Japanese mission from the control of the Province of India.⁶⁷

The picture that Vilela drew of the Japanese mission was rather bleak; lack of certain funding, workers, and support from the Province had led it to the brink of disaster (Hesselink 2016, 5). Visitor Álvaro's intention to govern Japan through "the papers with many annotations that [Cabral] had brought"⁶⁸ and, most importantly, Cabral's inability and unwillingness to navigate and negotiate the rules of obedience, would prove fatal to his relationship with his brethren. As it were, Cabral's letters would soon start echoing Torres' cries for help. The distance of Japan from the centres of the Society of Jesus proved disastrous for Cabral due to the difficulties he had keeping in contact with his superiors and the exacerbation of the chronic lack of funds caused by this separation. Both were major hurdles in the implementation of his reform of the mission. As will be analysed below, the anxieties surrounding mass baptisms and the mounting tensions regarding what he felt was his role in the plan of Providence contributed to his dreary outlook. He believed his own salvation was in jeopardy, feeling abandoned by the Society and God. His leadership style became increasingly rigorous, particularly with the Japanese mission-

⁶⁶ The second Jesuit mentioned in this passage is probably the Visitor, Gonçalo Álvares, although technically the first to visit the Chinese mission after Cabral was Organtino Gneccchi-Soldo.

⁶⁷ On the complex matter of the separation of the missions of India and Japan due to different needs, see Friedrich 2017.

⁶⁸ Vilela does not mention explicitly the origin of these papers, however, these are likely the same annotations that Cabral received from Organtino in Macao, sent from Álvares (JapSin 7, I, 23v).

aries. By the end of his stay in Japan, he wished to be removed from the situation. His desire was finally granted by Alessandro Valignano, the new Visitor of the Indian Province, who would then go on to revolutionise the Japanese mission's policies with the hope of salvaging it from the damages inflicted by Cabral's superiorate.⁶⁹

Literature often erroneously suggests that Cabral was opposed to his own removal (Boxer 1951, 73; Hesselink 2016, 107; Ross 1994, 64; Elisonas 1997, 332). As this study will show, Cabral was instead keen to leave the mission, both Japanese Christians and Jesuit alike. He felt that this enterprise was a burden for his soul and that it had become a cause of spiritual contamination instead of a source of growth and elevation. While certainly he and the Visitor did not see eye to eye, Valignano's innovations simply represented the last straw for him. Believing he saw the final ruin of the mission looming ahead, Cabral moved to Macao in 1582 to be head of the Chinese mission until 1586. Then, he moved to India, where he had the role of superior of the professed house of Goa as of 1587. In 1592, he was nominated Provincial of India (Schütte 1980, 1: 242n233). His protestations on this occasion were similar to those he had made in the past against his role as superior of Japan. When promotion announcements like these were received, the content of the recipient Jesuits' answers often clash between tendencies of modesty and requirements to display obedience; Cabral's was not an exception to these rhetorical propensities, which appear also in his request to be dismissed from Japan. Nonetheless, the fact that he dedicated an entire letter to the General on this matter suggests that he was genuine in his request to be relieved of any role of authority.⁷⁰ He wished to be allowed to focus on the salvation of his own soul and believed it incompatible with offices of command, which will be illustrated in the following chapters. Unfortunately for him, it was only after his second tenure as superior of the house of Goa that he was able to dedicate himself to penance and prayer to his heart's content. In the last part of his life, it seems that he could find a certain spiritual peace, freed from administrative duties. His obituary supplies (again, rather hagiographically) a description of his activities in retirement. His devotion is described thus:

[Cabral] had his stations [of the Rosary] in the Jesuit House, which he walked every day, kneeling in front of all the images of Our Lady. Like a second Prophet Daniel, who in Babylonia prayed in the

⁶⁹ The study of the clashes between the two missionaries in Japan are outside the scope of this dissertation; the interested reader can find them in the precise analysis by Schütte (1980).

⁷⁰ The letter in question being that by Cabral to General Acquaviva, Goa, 25 November 1591, in *DI*, 15: 633-4.

direction of the temple of Jerusalem, he also visited from the windows the Churches of Our Lady of the Candles, of the Rosary, of the Mother of God, and of St. Francis [of Assisi], to whom he was very devoted. For this reason, he treated with great reverence [the Franciscans]. When he was Provincial, he had in his cubicle of [the college of] St. Paul a devote image of the Seraphic Father, at whose sight he became inflamed and burst into fervorous acts of love. When possible, he imitated [St. Francis'] heroic virtues: [...] he walked barefoot in procession to the churches during the Holy Week, even if he was already old; he was particularly devoted to the Discalced friars, among whom he found often spiritual consolation. (Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 104r)

He died in Goa on 16 April 1609, after two months of sickness (Jesuítas na Ásia 49-VI-8, 103-4v).

