

STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND REFORMATION TRADITIONS

The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews

*Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry
and Purity-of-Blood Laws
in the Early Society of Jesus*



Robert Aleksander Maryks

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BRILL

The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews

Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions

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VOLUME 146

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By

Robert Aleksander Maryks



BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2010

On the cover: The View of Toledo. El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos)
(Greek, 1541–1614). The Metropolitan Museum of Arts, New York City.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Maryks, Robert Aleksander

The Jesuit Order as a synagogue of Jews : Jesuits of Jewish ancestry and
purity-of-blood laws in the early Society of Jesus / by Robert Aleksander Maryks.
p. cm. — (Studies in medieval and Reformation traditions ; v. 146)

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-17981-3 (hardback : alk. paper) 1. Jesuits—Membership—
History—16th century. 2. Jesuits—Membership—History—17th century.
3. Marranos—History—16th century. 4. Marranos—History—17th century.
5. Antisemitism—Iberian Peninsula—History. 6. Race discrimination—Religious
aspects—Christianity. 7. Iberian Peninsula—Ethnic relations. I. Title. II. Series.

BX3706.A2.M37 2009
271'.53046089924—dc22

2009035704

ISSN 1573-4188

ISBN 978 9004 17981 3

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my particular gratitude to the scholars who have generously assisted me with their insightful comments and suggestions in the process of writing the present book. These include André Aciman, Miriam Bodian, Jonathan Boyarin, Richard F. Gyug, Ignacio Echarte Oñate, Kimberly Lynn Hossain, Francisco de Borja Medina, Thomas M. McCoog, Marc Rastoin, James W. Reites, Jean-Pierre Sonnet, and Alison P. Weber.

I owe much to the Jesuits of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome, Thomas M. McCoog and James F.X. Pratt for their friendly support and generous hospitality during my work there. The research in the archives progressed efficiently thanks also to the serene and accommodating spirit of the staff of the Institute, especially Nicoletta Basilotta and Mauro Brunello. I also thank Jill G. Thomas, the Jesuitana Librarian at John J. Burns Library of Boston College, who graciously and competently assisted me in finding and obtaining for publication the illustrations contained in the present book.

While writing this book in New York City, the help of the staff at Fordham University Libraries in collecting secondary sources was indispensable. I thank especially Christine Campbell, Helena Cunniffe, Betty Garity, and Charlotte Labbe.

A PCS-CUNY Research Grant provided the financial support necessary to do research in the archives of Rome in 2008, and Andrea Finkelstein, the acting chairperson in the History Department at Bronx Community College of the City University of New York, generously accommodated my teaching schedule to fit it into my writing project.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

*	born
†	died
ACA	Archivo de la Corona de Aragón, Barcelona
AHN	Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
ARSI	Archivo Romano Societatis Iesu (the Jesuit Archives in Rome)
AHSI	<i>Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu</i> (periodical)
c.	circa
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicon</i> (MHSI)
<i>Const.</i>	<i>Constitutions</i>
<i>DEI</i>	<i>Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana</i>
<i>DHCJ</i>	<i>Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús</i>
<i>Epp.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
f.	folio
ff.	folios
<i>Fontes narr.</i>	<i>Fontes narrativi</i> (MHSI)
GC	General Congregation
<i>MHSI</i>	<i>Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu</i>
<i>Mon</i>	<i>Monumenta</i>
<i>Opp. NN.</i>	<i>Opera Nostrorum</i>
r.	reigned
S.J. (S.I.)	Societatis Iesu (of the Society of Jesus)

See also *Monumenta Historica Societati Iesu* (MHSI) in Bibliography, where the abbreviations for the collection's volumes are provided.

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INTRODUCTION

In an email reacting to my lecture on the Jesuits of Jewish origins at the Jesuit Ricci Institute of Macau in November 2007, a Jesuit told me briefly the story of his Jewish lineage. While his other Sephardic ancestors went to Istanbul, Baghdad, Tehran, and—through the Silk Road—up to Shanghai, where they remained Jewish until today, both his grandparents were descendants of Jews who settled in Palermo and Trabia (Sicily), where they converted to Catholicism in order to survive (in the baptismal registers, which are still extant, they are described as “usurers”). Yet, they kept practicing Judaism secretly. From Friday evening through Saturday evening, his grandfather would hide the image of baby Jesus from a large framed picture of St. Anthony that he kept in his home. It was, in fact, a wind-up music box. On Fridays he would wind up the mechanism and push a button, so that Jesus would disappear out of St. Anthony’s arms, hidden in the upper frame of the picture. On Saturdays, he then would push the button again, so that Jesus would come back out from hiding into St. Anthony’s arms. As eldest son in his family, my correspondent was told this story by his father (who passed away in 1979), who also had asked him to eat only kosher food. None of his siblings was required to do so—they in fact hide their origins, since they are a devout practicing Catholic family.

Had the Jesuit who wrote me this email asked to enter the Jesuit Order between 1593 and 1608, his Jewish ancestry would have constituted a legal impediment to his admission, just because his character would have been allegedly compromised by his impure blood, no matter how distant his Jewish ancestors were. Had he asked to become a Jesuit between 1608 and 1946, his background would have been reviewed up to the fifth generation and the story of his heterodox paternal grandfather could, therefore, have been cited as reason to prevent him from entering the Order. However, had he become a professed Jesuit between 1540 and 1593, no law would have prevented him from following his vocation, even though not every confrere would have supported it.

This book tells the story of the evolution of the discriminatory concept of purity of blood, its complex nature, its magnitude in the early Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), and the role Christians of Jewish ancestry

played in the Order. Purity of blood (*pureza de sangre*) was an obsessive concern that originated in mid-fifteenth-century Spain, based on the biased belief that the unfaithfulness of the “deicide Jews” not only had endured in those who converted to Catholicism but also had been transmitted by blood to their descendants, regardless of their sincerity in professing the Christian faith. Consequently, the Old Christians “of pure blood” considered New Christians impure and morally inadequate to be active members of their communities.¹ As Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi put it eloquently, “the traditional mistrust of the Jew as outsider now gave way to an even more alarming fear of the Converso as insider.”² In the process of nation-state building in the early modern period, which was characterized by the national self-definition based on purity of lineage, the converso and Jewish elements—as figuratively epitomized in Shakespeare’s unmiscegenated Belmont—became a particularly dangerous threat. Arguably, the high number of Jews who converted to Christianity as a result of the *pogroms* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and as a result of the royal edict of 1492 con-

¹ There are different terms to designate this group: *New Christians*, *neophytes*, *maranos*, *confesos*, *tornadizos*, *alboraique*, and *notados*. I prefer to use *conversos*, for it does not carry any pejorative connotation, it is employed in contemporary historiography, and, additionally, it points out the Iberian origin of the group. The *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica, 1972, vol. 15, p. 133) explains that the term refers “specifically to three groups of Jewish converts to Christianity and their descendants in the Iberian Peninsula. The first group converted in the wake of the massacre in Spain in 1391 and the proselytizing fervor in the subsequent decades. The second, also in Spain, were baptized following the decree of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492 expelling all Jews who refused to accept Christianity. The third group, in Portugal, was converted by force and royal fiat in 1497.” However, there were many other groups that converted in Iberia between 1391 and 1492, or even prior to this period, such as thirteenth-century Majorcan Jews. See, for example, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: The Iberian and the German Models*, Leo Baeck memorial lecture, 26 (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1982), pp. 7–8. For a very concise history of the Iberian Jews and conversos, with a bibliography on the subject, see Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14th–20th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. xxv–lxiii; for a brief yet comprehensive recent work on the topic, see Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: Free Press, 1992), pp. ix–xxv and 2–144. For an analysis of the modern historiography on conversos and its place in broader scholarship, see Kevin Ingram, “Historiography, Historicity and the Conversos,” in Kevin Ingram, ed., *Conversos and Moriscos in Late Medieval Spain and Beyond*, Volume One: *Departures and Change* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2009), pp. 338–56.

² Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism*, p. 10. See also Max-Sebastián Hering Torres, *Rassismus in der Vormoderne: die “Reinheit des Blutes” im Spanien der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2006), pp. 34–5.

stituted much greater hindrance to the monarchs' vision of Catholic national identity than they had during the Visigothic rule in Spain, prior to the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711.³

The first part of the title of the present book, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews*, reflects the genealogical identification of the converted Jews and their descendants, no matter how distant, with their allegedly infidel ancestors. It was characteristic not only of some renowned Talmudic authorities⁴ and of the late medieval and early modern Christian authors whom we shall analyze throughout this book but also of some contemporary historians. Alfred Sicroff described this trend as "the ulcer of the Spanish existence."⁵ It is telling that, for instance, the titles of both the anti-converso legislation at the San Antonio de Sigüenza College, *Statutum contra hebraeos* (1497), and the major contemporary work on Spanish conversos by Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea* (Madrid: Ediciones Arion, 1961),⁶ reflect the identification of conversos with Jews, even though after the Expulsion of 1492 there were officially no Jews in Spain (as there were no Jews in Portugal after their expulsion in 1497).⁷

Caro Baroja, in fact, identified three different sources of the anti-Jewish bias: the economic (usury), the psychological (intelligence and arrogance), and the physical (body features and ungratefulness).⁸

³ In this context, Jerome Friedman's article "Jewish Conversion, the Spanish Pure Blood Laws and Reformation: A Revisionist View of Racial and Religious Antisemitism," published in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 18/1 (Spring, 1987): 3–30, lacks the chronological order, which leads its author to inaccurate if not false conclusions.

⁴ See the *responsum* of Hakham ha-Levi, citing Hakham Jacob Berab, to a question on the levirate marriage of a Portuguese converso in Matt Goldish, *Jewish Questions: Responsa on Sephardic Life in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 96–8. See also *ibidem*, pp. 99–105, and my forthcoming review of it in *Sixteenth Century Journal*.

⁵ See Albert A. Sicroff, *Los estatutos de Limpieza de Sangre: controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985), p. 11; and Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España: estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 70 and 90–1.

⁶ A few pages there (pp. 231–7) are dedicated to the converso problem in the Society of Jesus.

⁷ This is a characteristic underscored by both older and recent historiography on the subject. See, for example, Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Los judeoconversos en España y América* (Madrid: ISTMO, 1971), p. 28; and David L. Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute: Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580–1700* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 3.

⁸ See Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea* (Madrid: Ediciones Arion, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 104–6.

A mixture of prejudices based on these features the conversos allegedly inherited by blood pervades the entire anti-converso literature, starting with the first purity-of-blood legislation (1449) passed by the mayor of the city of Toledo in Castile, Pero de Sarmiento, to the *Estatutos* (1547) promulgated by the archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez Guijarro (1477–1557), better known as Silíceo,⁹ and to Bishop Diego de Simancas's *Defensio Toletani Statuti* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1573). Like the gentle (but not-gentile) daughter of Shylock, Jessica, in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, "in spite of canonical assurance of the regeneration through baptism, the converso was still considered a Jew in the eyes of Spanish Old Christians, and as such he [or she] was constantly responsible for the faults of his [/her] Jewish ancestors."¹⁰

Two major ecclesiastical intellectuals of fifteenth-century Spain adamantly challenged in their works the discriminatory portrayal of the converso: Alonso de Santa María de Cartagena (1384–1456) in the *Defensorium unitatis christianae* [In Defense of Christian Unity] (1449–50),¹¹ and Alonso Oropesa (d. 1469) in the *Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloria plebis Dei Israel, de unitate fidei et de concordia et pacifica aequalitate fidelium* (1450–66) [Light for the Revelation of the Gentiles and Glory to the People of God Israel: Concerning the Unity of the Faith and Agreeable and Peaceful Equality of the Faithful].¹² Although Gretchen Starr-LeBeau has pointed out in her

⁹ For the more racial rather than socio-political interpretation of the anti-converso legislation, see, for example, Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism*, especially pp. 11–6; Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995), Book 2: "The Reign of Juan II; B. Netanyahu, *Toward the Inquisition: Essays on Jewish and Converso History in Late Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 76–98; and Norman Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), pp. 88–103.

¹⁰ See Janet Adelman, *Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in The Merchant of Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), especially pp. 66–98, and my forthcoming review of it in *Sixteenth Century Journal*; and Sicroff, *Estatutos*, pp. 55–6 and 213.

¹¹ For the historical context and a portrayal of Cartagena, see Guillermo Verdín-Díaz, ed., *Alonso de Cartagena y el "Defensorium Unitatis Christianae."* *Introducción histórica, traducción y notas* ([Oviedo]: Universidad de Oviedo, 1992), pp. 15–98, and the bibliography cited there. See also Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition*, p. 97; and Bruce Rosenstock, *New Men: Conversos, Christian Theology, and Society in Fifteenth-century Castile* (London: University of London, 2002), pp. 22–52.

¹² Luis A. Díaz y Díaz, ed., *Alonso de Oropesa. Luz para conocimiento de los gentiles* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, 1979), pp. 18–20. Strangely, this translation abridges the original title, a manipulation that suggests only a partial content of Oropesa's work. In his discussion of Oropesa, Sicroff could base his presentation

important book on the religious history of Guadalupe in Extramadura that “fray Alonso de Oropesa’s work represents one of the period’s most important and carefully reasoned theological statements on the status of conversos in Christendom,”¹³ Cartagena’s work seems to have exercised even more influence in offering a distinctive Jewish-converso soteriology.¹⁴ This is why we shall spotlight his *Defensorium* in Chapter One, without failing to note, however, its theological resemblance to the *Lumen*. In their comprehensive template of arguments, both *Defensorium* and *Lumen* would become inspirational to many future efforts to defend the threatened status of conversos, including Jesuit conversos, as we shall see in the last chapter.

Analyzing Cartagena’s and Oropesa’s works adds significance to the understanding of the following chapters of this book for two reasons: first, Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76)—one of the most influential converso Jesuits—descended from the converso Maluenda clan of Burgos, which was allied with the newly converted Santa María family through the marriage of Alonso de Cartagena’s paternal aunt, María Nuñez (d. 1423), to Juan Garcés de Maluenda (el Viejo); second, the Jesuit jurist García Girón de Alarcón (1534–97), whose pro-converso treatise we shall examine below, belonged to the same order as Oropesa—the Jeronymites—before joining the Society of Jesus. The Jeronymites were renowned for their openness to converso candidates and as such represented—in Sicroff’s view—the Spanish pre-Erasmist

only on the quotations of the former in José Sigüenza’s *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo* (Madrid: Bailly-Ballière, 1907–9), before Díaz y Díaz published his Spanish translation of Oropesa’s work in 1979.

¹³ See Gretchen D. Starr-LeBeau, *In the Shadow of the Virgin. Inquisitors, Friars, and Conversos in Guadalupe, Spain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 46–9 and 113. See also Albert Sicroff, “El *Lumen ad revelationem gentium* de Alonso de Oropesa como precursor del erasmismo en España,” in Eugenio Bustos Tovar, ed., *Actas del cuarto Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas* (Salamanca: Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 655–64; Netanyahu, *Origins of the Inquisition*, p. 896; Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition*, p. 232; and Stefania Pastore, *Un’eresia spagnola: spiritualità conversa, alumbradismo e inquisizione (1449–1559)* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 2004), p. 25.

¹⁴ See Sicroff, *Estatutos*, p. 62: “[Cartagena] hizo un estudio tan profundo que durante dos siglos los abogados de los cristianos nuevos no encontraron nada que añadir a las consideraciones teóricas expuestas en el *Defensorium*”; and Pastore, *Eresia spagnola*, p. 5: “I due vescovi di Burgos, padre e figlio, rimasero per i conversos di fine secolo i rappresentanti della nobiltà conversa per eccellenza, ritornando come figure esemplari nelle *Generaciones y semblanzas* di Fernán Pérez de Guzmán e tra i *Claros varones de Castilla* di Fernando del Pulgar.”

movement.¹⁵ It is not unreasonable, therefore, to see connections between the Jeronymite and Jesuit converso traditions, which—to the best of my knowledge—have passed unnoticed by historians, but which deserve to be treated in a separate monograph.

Furthermore, the founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola (c. 1491–1556), had many contacts with influential Erasmists (and *alumbrados*) during his studies at Alcalá de Henares,¹⁶ as we shall see in Chapter Two. Indeed, his positive approach to conversos (and Jews) pre-dates the foundation of the Society of Jesus in 1540, despite the assertion of many experts to the contrary. His openness towards conversos may have been motivated by the financial support that he had sought from their network in Spain and in the Spanish Netherlands before founding the Society and that he would continue to seek as the superior general of the Jesuits. In spite of this down-to-earth concern, Loyola undoubtedly was, as Henry Kamen powerfully put it, “a deep and sincere spiritual Semite.”¹⁷

The foundation of the Jesuits coincided—for better or worse—with the rise of the Spanish anti-converso hysteria¹⁸ that reached its peak in 1547, when the most authoritative expression of the purity-of-blood legislation, *El Estatuto de limpieza* [*de sangre*], was issued by the Inquisitor General of Spain and Archbishop of Toledo, Silíceo. Even though Pope Paul IV and Silíceo’s former pupil, King Philip II, ratified the archbishop’s statutes in 1555 and 1556, respectively—in spite of the latter’s earlier opposition to it¹⁹—the authority and impetuous

¹⁵ Sicroff, “*El Lumen ad revelationem gentium* de Alonso de Oropesa,” pp. 655–64.

¹⁶ See Sicroff, *Estatutos*, p. 24.

¹⁷ See Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* ([New York]: New American Library, 1965), p. 12.

¹⁸ Eusebio Rey speaks about Silíceo’s “fiebre estatutista” and “psicosis nacional” (“San Ignacio de Loyola y el problema de los cristianos nuevos,” *Razón y Fe* 153 (1956), p. 184). See also Henry Kamen, “Una crisis de conciencia en la Edad de Oro en España: Inquisición contra Limpieza de sangre,” *Bulletin Hispanique* 88/3–4 (1986), p. 330.

¹⁹ See Rey, “San Ignacio,” p. 187; Feliciano Cereceda, *Diego Laínez en la Europa religiosa de su tiempo: 1512–1565* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1945–6), p. 399; Francisco de Borja Medina, S.J., “Ignacio de Loyola y la ‘limpieza de sangre,’” in Juan Plazaola, S.J., ed., *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo: congreso internacional de historia (9–13 septiembre, 1991)* (Bilbao: Mensajero/Universidad de Deusto, 1992), pp. 8–9; Sicroff, *Estatutos*, pp. 139 and 169–72; and Isabella Ianuzzi, “Mentalidad inquisitorial y jesuitas: el enfrentamiento entre el Cardenal Silíceo y la Compañía de Jesús,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 24 (2000): 11–31.

character of Silíceo did not deter Ignatius of Loyola and his converso successor, Diego Laínez (1512–65).²⁰ Encouraged by their close converso collaborators, they vigorously opposed the Inquisitor's attempts to preclude conversos from joining the Jesuits.²¹ They also had to counter the Jesuit provincial superior for Spain and Loyola's relative, Antonio Araoz (1515–73),²² who—abetted by his penitent, the prince of Éboli, Ruy Gómez de Silva (c. 1516–73)—made himself the Jesuit harbinger of the Iberian policy of *pureza de sangre*.²³

In a letter addressed to the Jesuit Francisco de Villanueva (1509–57), Loyola straightforwardly wrote that in no way would the Jesuit Constitutions accept the policy of the archbishop, who, according to Loyola, should take care of his own business rather than interfering with the internal issues of the Society.²⁴ The problem was that the flourishing College at Alcalá de Henares—which was inaugurated by the Jesuit Villanueva in 1546 and became a mine of Jesuit (converso) vocations—was located within Silíceo's diocesan jurisdiction.²⁵ In this delicate affair, Loyola was aided by his plenipotentiary emissary, Jerónimo Nadal [Morey] (1507–80), who visited the Inquisitor in February 1554. In communion with Loyola, Nadal insisted that the Jesuit Constitutions did not discriminate between candidates of the Society on the basis of lineage.²⁶ Nadal, therefore, during his visit to Iberia admitted a handful of converso candidates. In a heated debate over the admission of one of them, Luis (Diego) de Santander (c. 1527–99), Nadal frankly

²⁰ Diego Laínez: *1512 Almazán (Soria); †1565 Rome; priest in 1537; professed in 1541. On the Jewish ancestry of Laínez, see Carlos Carrete Parrondo, ed., *Fontes Iudaeorum Regni Castellae* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca; [Granada]: Universidad de Granada, 1981–[1997]), vol. 4: “Los judeoconversos de Almazán, 1501–1505: origen familiar de los Laínez.”

²¹ See Rey, “San Ignacio,” pp. 187–90; and especially Medina, “Ignacio de Loyola,” pp. 579–615.

²² Antonio Araoz: *1515 Vergara (Guipúzcoa, Spain); † 13 February 1573 Madrid; SJ 1538; priest in 1541; professed in 1542 (see *DHCJ* 1:215–6). On Araoz's anti-converso sentiments, see Medina, “Ignacio de Loyola,” pp. 8–9.

²³ See Rey, “El problema de cristianos nuevos,” pp. 187–90; and especially Medina, “Ignacio de Loyola,” pp. 8–10.

²⁴ [Rome] 2 January 1552, in *Cartas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, 6 vols. (Madrid: La V.E. Hijo de D.E. Aguado, 1874–89), vol. 3, pp. 13–21.

²⁵ Loyola employed Villanueva also in the affair of the converso Juan de Ávila's entrance to the Society (see Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.J., “San Juan de Avila y la Compañía de Jesús,” *AHSI* 40 (1971): 153–72). See also *DHCJ* 4:3976–7, where the author avoids the true motive of the conflict between the Society and the Inquisitor.

²⁶ See *Mon Nadal*, 1:233; and Antonio Astrain, S.J., *Introducción Histórica a la Historia de la Compañía de Jesus* (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1912), p. 353.

and proudly replied: “We [Jesuits] take pleasure in admitting those of Jewish ancestry.”²⁷

The heated polemics over Silíceo’s legislation were still echoed three decades later in Diego de Simancas’s *Defensio Toletani Statuti a Sede Apostolica saepe confirmati, pro his, qui bono et incontaminato genere nati sunt* [The Defense of the Toledan Statute, which was often confirmed by the Apostolic See for those who were born of good and uncontaminated lineage] (1573), despite the fact that the Inquisition in 1572 prohibited further discussion of the purity-of-blood issue.²⁸ This text—whose publication date coincides with the Jesuit Third General Congregation, in which the anti- and pro-converso lobbies collided—is of special concern here. Not only because—in contrast to the early Jesuit leadership—it defended Silíceo’s statutes but also because Simancas’s tract may have been utilized by some Jesuits to promote similar anti-converso legislation in the Society of Jesus during the decade of fervent discriminatory propaganda that preceded General Congregation 5 (1593). Indeed, a Jesuit from Toledo copied many excerpts from Simancas’s book in 1591. They are preserved in the Jesuit Archives of Rome but until now have remained unnoticed, because a Jesuit archivist inserted the manuscript (*Defensio Statuti Toletani*)—whose genre he did not recognize—into a folder containing documents (*statuta*) related to the foundation of the Jesuit College at Toledo.²⁹ These excerpts are analyzed in Chapter One for the first time. In the context of earlier anti-converso texts, they suggest the genealogy of modern racism, from Sarmiento to Silíceo to Simancas to anti-converso Jesuit legislation, and they indicate the correlation between early modern institutional Catholicism and the new racism developing in Spain and spreading outwards.

In this perspective, the anti-discrimination policy of the early Jesuit leadership constituted an act of bold and tenacious resistance to the early modern Iberian *Zeitgeist*. As a result, the minority of Jesuits of Jewish ancestry, socially and psychologically bonded one to another or dissociated from one another, shaped the history of the early Society of Jesus. They held the highest administrative offices, defined the Society’s institutional development and spirituality, revised Loyola’s historio-

²⁷ *Mon Nadal*, 2:21.

²⁸ See Sicroff, *Estatutos*, p. 178.

²⁹ ARSI, *Fondo Gesuitico, Toledo 1641*.

graphy by assigning it an inflated anti-Protestant character, filled the ranks of linguistically adroit missionaries in Asia and the Americas, authoritatively represented the Society at the Council of Trent, significantly contributed to the transformation of the Society into the first teaching order and to the placement of Greco-Roman culture in the center of the Jesuit school curriculum, (influenced by the Dominicans from the School of Salamanca) boldly offered a new epistemological frame to casuistry as a transition from medieval Tutorism to modern Probabilism,³⁰ developed a new discipline of moral theology, and staffed the papal penitentiary office at St. Peter's basilica in Rome. Some came from families who generously supported the work of the Society and the foundation of a number of Jesuit colleges; others enthusiastically engaged in many other extraordinary literary, diplomatic, and scientific endeavors (especially popular among them were different missions dealing with "heretics" and schismatics). "By their sanctity and learning they rendered the Society illustrious," as the Jesuit García Girón de Alarcón put it.³¹

On a much larger scale than the historian Marcel Bataillon has intuitively suggested,³² these contributions by Jesuits of Jewish ancestry helped to shape Early Modern Catholicism³³ by complementing the work of their distinguished Iberian converso fellows, such as Hernando de Talavera (1428–1507),³⁴ Joan Lluís Vives (1492–1540),³⁵

³⁰ See Robert A. Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits. The Influence of the Liberal Arts on the Adoption of Moral Probabilism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), passim.

³¹ See Alarcón's memorial in ARSI, *Instit.* 184/I, ff. 297^r–312^v. The same argument appears in Diego de Guzmán's memorial (ARSI, *Instit.* 186e, f. 255^v), as we shall see in Chapter Four.

³² Pierre-Antoine Fabre, ed., *Marcel Bataillon. Les Jésuites dans l'Espagne du XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009), p. 238.

³³ John W. O'Malley coined this term. See his *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), and my translation of it into Italian, *Trento e dintorni. Per una nuova definizione del cattolicesimo nell'età moderna* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2005).

³⁴ See Sicroff, *Estatutos*, pp. 13–4. Talavera, who was the Jeronymite bishop of Ávila and the confessor of Queen Isabella, wrote on sacramental confession (*Breve forma de confesar*), a preferred subject of Jesuit conversos—see Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits*, pp. 32–48. He was also very engaged in the apostolate with Moriscos, as were many converso Jesuits. For his portrayal, see, for example, Roth, *Conversos, Inquisition*, pp. 152–4; and David Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada: Society & Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492–1600* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 82–7.

³⁵ See Miguel Battlori, "Las obras de Luis Vives en los colegios jesuiticos del siglo XVI," in J. Ijsewijn and Angel Losada, eds, *Erasmus in Hispania, Vives in Belgio. Acta colloquii Brugensis, 1985* (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), pp. 121–45; and Valentín Moreno

St. Juan de Ávila (1500–69),³⁶ Luis de Granada (1504–88),³⁷ St. Teresa of Ávila (1515–82),³⁸ Benito Arias Montano (1527–98),³⁹ Luis de León (1528–91),⁴⁰ St. Juan de la Cruz (1542–91), and many others.⁴¹

However, after the death in 1572 of Francisco de Borja,⁴² the grandson of Pope Alexander Borgia (r. 1492–1503) and the third superior

Gallego, “Notas historiográficas al encuentro de Loyola y Vives,” in Juan Plazaola, ed., *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo: congreso internacional de historia (9–13 setiembre, 1991)* (Bilbao: Mensajero/Universidad de Deusto, 1992), pp. 901–8.

³⁶ His relation to the Society of Jesus will be discussed below.

³⁷ See his *De frequenti Communione libellus* (1591), another preferred Jesuit topic, and a biography of Juan de Ávila, *Vida del Padre Maestro Juan de Ávila y las partes que ha de tener un predicador del Evangelio* (1588) that he discussed with the converso Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra, about whom much will be discussed below.

³⁸ José Gómez-Menor, “El linaje toledano de santa Teresa y de san Juan de la Cruz,” *Toletum* 45–46 (1969–70): 88–141. On the relationship between Teresa and the Jesuits, see Alberto Risco, “Una opinión sobre los tres primeros confesores jesuitas de santa Teresa de Jesús (Cetina, Prádanos, B. Álvarez),” *Boletín de la Real Academia de la historia* 80 (1922): 462–9; Félix Rodríguez, “Santa Teresa de Jesús y sus consejeros jesuitas,” *Manresa* 59 (1987): 309–11; Joaquín Montoya, *L’amore scambievole e non mai interrotto tra S. Teresa e la Compagnia di Gesù* (Lucca: presso Francesco Bonsignori, 1794); Cándido Dalmasas, “Santa Teresa y los Jesuitas. Precizando fechas y datos,” *AHSI* 35 (1966): 347–78; Ugo de Miele, “Teresa d’Avila e i Padri della Compagnia di Gesù,” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 133 (1982): 234–43; Alban Goodier, “St. Teresa and the Society of Jesus,” *The Month* 168 (1936): 395–405; Ignacio Iglesias, “Santa Teresa de Jesús y la espiritualidad ignaciana,” *Manresa* 54 (1982): 291–311; Enrique Jorge, “San Francisco de Borja y Santa Teresa de Jesús,” *Manresa* 46 (1974): 43–64; Enrique Jorge Pardo, “Santa Teresa de Ávila y la Compañía de Jesús en el siglo XVI,” *Razón y fe* 166 (1962): 293–306; and Manuel Prados Muñoz, “Santa Teresa y la Compañía de Jesús,” *Manresa* 54 (1982): 75–8.

³⁹ See Antonio Pérez Goyena, “Arias Montano y los Jesuitas,” *Estudios eclesiásticos* 7 (1928): 273–317; Robert Giammanco, “Sull’inautenticità del memoriale antigesuitico attribuito a Benito Arias Montano,” *AHSI* 26 (1957): 276–84; and Sicroff, *Estatutos*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ See Sicroff, *Estatutos*, pp. 13 and 16–22.

⁴¹ Rey argued that Bataillon’s claim of the influence of the converso Juan de Ávila and Láinez on Catholic reform lacks proofs (see Rey, “San Ignacio,” p. 176). See the contrary view of Sicroff (*Estatutos*, p. 13): “No cabe duda de que la historia española habría sido muy diferente de lo que fue si hubiera seguido las corrientes religiosas e intelectuales introducidas por españoles de la estirpe de Talavera, Luis de León y Arias Montano.” Most Jewish scholars working on converso history—who are often more familiar with the history of the Protestant Reformation than the Catholic Reformation—associate the Iberian conversos more with the former than with the latter. A blatant example of this historiographical tendency is Yovel’s recent book on conversos and their relation to modernity. See Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos. Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), especially pp. 246–62.

⁴² Francisco de Borja: *1510 Gandía; SJ 1546; †1572 Rome; priest in 1551; professed in 1548. It is interesting to note that it was Borja’s grandfather, Pope Alexander VI, who rewarded the Aragonese King Ferdinand for his anti-converso policy with the title of “Catholic Monarch.” Borja’s pro-converso policy will be studied below.

general, a close-knit anti-converso party gained ground within the Society, as indicated by the archival material on the Italo-Portuguese sabotage of the election of Juan Alfonso de Polanco as Borja's successor during the Third General Congregation (1573), which we shall analyze in Chapter Three.⁴³ Upon election as vicar general, the converso Polanco was the most prominent figure in the Society of Jesus; he had been a senior administrator in the general curia in Rome since his appointment by Loyola in 1547 as Society's secretary. Because the previous two vicars general, Lainez and Borja, had been elected superiors general at the subsequent general congregations, Polanco was considered the most probable candidate for this highest post in the Society. After all—to the dismay of the Italian Benedetto Palmio (1523–98) and the Portuguese—the Spanish electors dominated the congregation. They governed all but one Italian province, and the province of Portugal also was in their hands.⁴⁴

Contributors to the *Mercurian Project* have recently discussed this anti-Polanco campaign more critically. Francisco de Borja Medina, S.J., pointed out that even though the Italian Benedetto Palmio denied in his unpublished autobiography the charge that he was part of the Portuguese intrigue during the congregation, his anti-Spanish tendencies were well known. Medina further pointed out that “the veiled attacks against Juan Alonso [*sic*] de Polanco for his Judeo-Christian ancestors were directed, in reality, against the Spanish nation.”⁴⁵ Moreover, John Padberg, S.J., argued that Palmio pressed Antonio Possevino “to do battle for his homeland Italy by voting against a Spaniard.”⁴⁶ Finally, Mario Fois, S.J., suggested that a distinction must be made between the anti-Spanish motivation of Palmio (and other Italians)

⁴³ See John W. Padberg, Martin D. O’Keefe, and John L. McCarthy, eds, *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations: A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees* (St. Louis, Mo.: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), p. 135.

⁴⁴ On Portuguese-Spanish tensions fueled by the patriotism of the former, see Nuno da Silva Gonçalves, “Jesuits in Portugal,” in Thomas M. McCoog, *The Mercurian Project: Forming Jesuit Culture, 1573–1580* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004), pp. 719–20.

⁴⁵ See his “Everard Mercurian and Spain. Some Burning Issues,” in McCoog, *Mercurian Project*, p. 945.

⁴⁶ See his “The Third General Congregation,” in McCoog, *Mercurian Project*, p. 54 (the information comes from Astrain, *Historia*, 3:7–8, but it can be traced back to Possevino’s memorial, ARSI, *Congr. 20b*, f. 210^v).

and the anti-converso opposition of the Portuguese group.⁴⁷ As we shall see, however, the archival material that we examine in this book reveals that the real intention of both Palmio and the Portuguese was to impede the election of Polanco or any other *converso* candidate. “Spanish” was a euphemism for “Jew/converso,” and the “anti-Spanish” campaign during the Third General Congregation was thus merely a camouflage for the Italo-Portuguese anti-converso conspiracy.

In spite of the death of the royal minister, Ruy Gómez de Silva, and his protégé Araoz in 1573, the anti-converso lobby found support in the newly elected superior general Everard Mercurian (1514–80), who from the very first years of his office “cleansed the house”: he removed from Rome (and possibly from Italy or even Europe) almost all Spanish Jesuits, especially those who are accused in Palmio’s memorial of being part of the converso lobby.⁴⁸

Ironically, Mercurian’s segregation policy created new opportunities for some converso or pro-converso Jesuits who had occupied high-ranking positions in the Jesuit administration to reinvent themselves as prolific writers. Three clear examples are Polanco, who spent the last years of his life composing the first multi-volume chronicle of the Society;⁴⁹ Nadal, who produced his monumental *Evangelicae Historiae Imagines* with 153 superb engravings by Bernardino Passeri (d. c. 1590), Maarten de Vos (1532–1603), the brothers Wierix, and others;⁵⁰ and especially Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1525–1611), who between 1574 and 1611 composed an impressive number of writings on history, historiography, asceticism, and politics, many of which were multi-edited and translated, assigning him a foremost place among the writers of the Spanish *Siglo de Oro*, as we shall see in Chapter Three.

Arguably, the discriminatory policy of Mercurian—one that was subsequently endorsed also by Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615)—and the defeat of the converso lobby during the general congregation triggered the anti-Roman movement by Spanish Jesuits known as the *memoria-*

⁴⁷ Fois, “Everard Mercurian,” in McCoog, *Mercurian Project*, pp. 21–5.

⁴⁸ See Palmio’s autobiography, ARSI, *Vitae* 164, ff. 42^r–45^v; Rey (“El problema de cristianos nuevos,” p. 187) mistakenly argued that Mercurian maintained the pro-converso policy of Loyola and Lainez.

⁴⁹ MHSI, *Chronicon*, 6 vols.

⁵⁰ Gerónimo [Jerónimo] Nadal, *Evangelicae historiae imagines: ex ordine Evangeliorum quae toto anno in Missae sacrificio recitantur, in ordinem temporis vitae Christi digestae* (Antwerp: Martin Nutius [Plantin], 1593).

listas.⁵¹ Contrary to what the closet-converso Ribadeneyra argued (in an attempt to minimize the participation of his fellow converso Jesuits in this movement),⁵² some members were indeed of converso background. In an alleged plot against their superior general in Rome, they sent secret memorials to the Spanish court, the Inquisition, and the Holy See, asking for reform of the Jesuit Institute and, especially, for the autonomy of the Spanish Jesuit provinces.⁵³ As in the case of the earlier *comunero* movement in Spain,⁵⁴ the vexed question of whether the participation of conversos in the *memorialistas* movement gives it an exclusively converso character needs a more comprehensive and unprejudiced answer, which exceeds the scope of the present book.⁵⁵

The converso character of the *memorialistas* movement was indeed accentuated by the anti-converso lobby, which after the election of Acquaviva (1581) included other high-ranking officials in the Jesuit curia, such as Paul Hoffaeus (c. 1530–1608), Manuel Rodrigues (1534–96), and Lorenzo Maggio (1531–1605). Their Italian predecessor, Assistant General Benedetto Palmio, had fueled their anti-converso bias. It is evident in a manuscript that has remained virtually unknown for more than 400 years (its critical edition is published in the appendix to the present book). In it, the author relates how “the multitude and insolence of Spanish neophytes” in the Order had been growing. According to him, the first two superiors general, Ignatius of Loyola and Diego Laínez, had excluded conversos, but conversos subsequently had found refuge in Laínez’s successor, Francisco de Borja. It was true that the converso party had been defeated during the Third General Congregation in 1573, Palmio related, but they were insufficiently controlled by the newly elected superior general, Mercurian, and consequently revolted against Rome under his successor, Acquaviva.

⁵¹ See *DHCJ* 3:2615–6.

⁵² See *Mon Rib.* 2:191.

⁵³ For an interpretation of this movement through the lens of the crisis of the “partido castellano” and the transformation of the Spanish monarchy, see José Martínez Millán, “La crisis del ‘partido castellano’ y la transformación de la Monarquía Hispánica,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 2 (2003): 15–17.

⁵⁴ See, for example, J.I. Gutiérrez Nieto, “Los conversos y el movimiento comunero,” *Hispania* 94 (1964): 237–61.

⁵⁵ See Francisco de Borja Medina, “Los precursores de Vieira: Jesuitas andaluses y castellanos en favor de los cristianos nuevos,” in *Terceiro centenário da morte do Padre António Vieira. Congresso internacional. Actas* (Braga: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1999), pp. 494–7, where he criticizes Astrain’s biased judgment on the movement, expressed in the latter’s *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España*.

This and other documents by Acquaviva and his three assistants that we critically scrutinize in Chapter Three undeniably reveal that these men orchestrated the discrimination of Christians of Jewish lineage into law at the Fifth General Congregation (1593), as punishment for the alleged participation of conversos in the revolt against their way of governing the Society. Ironically, this congregation was convened because of pressure from two converso Jesuits, José de Acosta (1540–1600) and Cardinal Francisco de Toledo (1532–96).

There is no doubt, however, that the 1593 decree—proclaiming that Jewish (and Muslim) ancestry, no matter how distant, was an insurmountable impediment for admission to the Society—ignored Loyola’s desires as expressed in the Jesuit Constitutions and contradicted the practice of the first three generalates. The lineage-hunting season began. The measure, which was voted for by all but two delegates, was so harsh that it scandalized even the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and Inquisitor General, Gaspar de Quiroga (1507–94), who affirmed that the Society dishonored itself by promulgating such a law.⁵⁶ Indeed, Quiroga, who held the reins of the Spanish Inquisition between 1573 and 1594—during the bout of the most intense Jesuit anti-converso offensive—restricted the employment of purity-of-blood laws, a policy that reflected a shift in the approach of Philip II’s council to the converso problem in the last decades of the sixteenth century.⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, the Jesuit Sixth General Congregation mitigated the 1593 decree in 1608,⁵⁸ if only superficially, because of strong opposition from many Jesuits led by Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), Diego de Guzmán (c. 1522–1606), Ribadeneyra, Girón de Alarcón, and Juan de Mariana (1536–1624). These men’s writings against discrimination

⁵⁶ On Quiroga’s relationship with Loyola, Laínez, Borja, and especially with Ribadeneyra and Mariana, see Henar Pizarro Llorente, *Un gran patrón en la corte de Felipe II: Don Gaspar de Quiroga* (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2004), pp. 104–7. He had an affable relationship also with Alfonso Salmerón (see ARSI, *Ita* 119, f. 195 and *Ita* 120, f. 131).

⁵⁷ See Kamen, “Crisis de conciencia,” pp. 322–56, and the revised English version of this article in Henry Kamen, *Crisis and Change in Early Modern Spain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993), part VII, pp. 1, 8–9, 12–3. Kamen is incorrect, stating that the 1593 decree regarded only Spain and that it was revoked in 1608 (p. 13). The first part of the error was followed by Stafford Poole in his “The Politics of *limpieza de sangre*: Juan de Ovando and His Circle in the Reign of Philip II,” *The Americas* 55 (1999), p. 367. The decree was universal and was abrogated only in 1946, as we shall see below.

⁵⁸ See Rey, (“El problema de cristianos nuevos,” p. 203); and Medina, “Los precursores de Vieira,” pp. 511–3.

and in defense of the indispensable minority of Jesuits of Jewish ancestry are analyzed in Chapter Four. Amid other arguments, Possevino would point out that discrimination against conversos had ramifications for the relationship with aboriginal peoples with whom the Jesuits worked as missionaries. Apparently, the Church at large became aware of the problem, as the canonical quotation of the Benedictine Bishop Prudencio de Sandoval (1553–1620) from his *Vida y Hechos del Emperador Carlos V* (1604) shows:

I do not censure the Christian compassion, which embraces all, for, then I would be in mortal error, and I know that in the Divine presence there is no distinction between Gentile and Jew, because One alone is the Lord of all. Yet who can deny that in the descendants of the Jews there persists and endures the evil inclination of their ancient ingratitude and lack of understanding, just as in the Negroes [there persists] the inseparable quality of their blackness [*negrura*]? For if the latter should unite themselves a thousand times with white women, the children are born with the dark color of the father. Similarly, it is not enough for the Jew to be three parts aristocrat [*hidalgo*] or Old Christian, for one family line alone [*solo una raza*] defiles and corrupts him...⁵⁹

Racial tensions played a pivotal role in early Jesuit history⁶⁰ (bearing in mind the obvious semantic difference of the early modern term of *raza*, but not its utter dissociation with modern racism or anti-Semitism)—to which the texts of Palmio, Acquaviva, Hoffaeus, Rodrigues, Maggio, and many other manuscript sources that we examine in the present book unequivocally testify. Nonetheless, the battle within the Order against those Jesuits with Jewish ancestry has been insufficiently acknowledged and has even been suppressed in scholarship on the subject.

In their writings on Benedetto Palmio, for example, two Italian Jesuit historians of high repute, Pietro Tacchi Venturi (1861–1956) and Mario Scaduto (1907–95), omitted Palmio's converso-phobic attitude. Tacchi Venturi, also involved in negotiations between the Vatican and the Mussolini regime regarding the fate of the Jews

⁵⁹ Quoted from Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and racial Anti-Semitism*, pp. 16–7. This relationship between converso discrimination and the discrimination of aboriginal peoples has been recently explored by Jonathan Boyarin in his *The Unconverted Self: Jews, Indians and the Identity of Christian Europe* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶⁰ For a description of various scholarly approaches in the periodization of the persecution of minorities, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), especially pp. 6–7.