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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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'Una porta para Turquia': The Society of Jesus and the Republic of Ragusa (1559–1612)

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ABSTRACT

The Republic of Ragusa (present-day Dubrovnik) played a crucial yet ambivalent role in early modern Catholic missions to the Ottoman Balkans. Despite its strategic position as 'una porta para Turquia,' Jesuit efforts to establish a permanent mission and a college repeatedly failed due to political resistance and ecclesiastical tensions. From Nicolás Bobadilla's 1559 mission to Claudio Acquaviva's early 17th-century attempts, the Society of Jesus sought to educate and strengthen Catholic communities while navigating Ragusan autonomy and Ottoman oversight. Using archival sources, this study explores how Jesuit educational ambitions intertwined with missionary strategy, highlighting how early failures shaped later Jesuit and *Propaganda Fide* institutions in the region.

Keywords:
Jesuit colleges in Ragusa, Ottoman Catholic education, early modern catholic missions, Counter-Reformation education, Propaganda Fide

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Introduction

Beyond the Adriatic Sea, early modern Catholic communities lived under the flag of the Sultans, alongside Muslims and the Orthodox, the latter representing the overriding majority among Christian communities. It comes as no surprise that in the eyes of the Holy See those communities were in serious danger, being marginalized by the Ottoman authority on the one hand and the Orthodox majority and their ecclesiastical hierarchy on the other. In the second half of the sixteenth century Roman pontiffs fostered a number of missions and apostolic visitations, primarily intended to ensure the survival of existing Catholic communities while strengthening local ecclesiastical networks. Scholars such as Antal Molnár and Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin have explored missionary correspondence and mapped the institutional structure of early-modern Catholic missions in the Ottoman Balkans, shedding light on the key role played by the Republic of Ragusa (present-day Dubrovnik). The city-state was located on the Dalmatian shore and represented the last Christian outpost.[1]

The Society of Jesus had made a mark in the Dalmatian area, for the first time, about two decades after its birth: the Jesuit Nicolás Alfonso Bobadilla (1511–90), one of the first companions to Ignatius of Loyola, operated in Zadar, Pula, and Ragusa between 1559 and 1561. A few years later, in 1575, Giulio Mancinelli (1537–1618), a Jesuit from Macerata in Italy, also accepted the invitation of the archbishop of Ragusa, Vincenzo Portico, and spent about two years in and around the city. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, however, the Society still struggled to settle a permanent mission in the city-state due to the strong political and religious interference of the Ragusan government and leading groups: two other attempts were made to establish a mission and found a college in the city between 1604 and 1612, but the project could only be accomplished—after a long and compromising negotiation process—in the second half of the century. In fact,

1 See for instance Antal Molnár, "Kavaljer Franjo Bolica (†1653): kotorski patricij na razdjelnici između Rima, Mletaka i Balkana," *Историјски записи*, *година* 93, nos. 1/2 (2020): 109–32; *Le Saint-Siège, Raguse et les missions catholiques de la Hongrie ottomane 1572–1647* (Rome: METEM, 2007), and "Raguse, point de médiation entre Rome et la Hongrie Ottomane aux XVIe–XVII siècles," in *La circulation des hommes, des oeuvres et des idées entre la Frances, l'Italie et la Hongrie (XVe–XVIIe siecles), Acte du Colloque international III*, ed. Amedeo Di Francesco and Adelin Charles Fiorato (Napoli: D'Auria M., 2004), 149–62; Tadhg Ó hAnnracháin, "Catholic Missionary Activity in the Northern Balkans in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism*, ed. Alison Forrestal and Seán Alexander Smith (Boston: Brill, 2020), 136–58; and Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe, 1592–1648: Centre and Peripheries* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015).

while the seventeenth-century attempts at planting a Jesuit mission in the city-state have attracted scholarly attention, the pioneering steps taken by Bobadilla and Mancinelli a few decades after the birth of the Society of Jesus still deserve to be investigated extensively.

Nicolás Alfonso Bobadilla and the First Jesuit Mission in Ragusa

Nicolás Alfonso Bobadilla first arrived on the shores of Dalmatia following the invitation of the bishop of Zadar, who was eager to obtain the support of a Jesuit father for the pastoral care of Catholics living in the area.[2] Diego Laínez (1512–64) and Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76) had welcomed that request since they believed it represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to establish a permanent mission in Dalmatia. Bobadilla, for his part, declared himself willing to serve God and the Society by operating among the Dalmatian Catholic communities.[3]

The close correspondence between the missionary and the Father General continued, and in a letter dated May 8, 1559, Diego Laínez again insisted on the centrality of Dalmatia for the arrangement of a wider missionary network capable of penetrating the adjacent Ottoman Empire:

> Fué muy animado para procurar de hazer allá un collegio: plega al Señor que venga á efecto. También está allí cerca de Ragusa, donde el arçobispo le desea mucho, y donde podría ser que el Señor abriese alguna porta para Turquía a la Compañía, como por otras partes se va abriendo. Será fácil cosa que con el tiempo se llegase á Ragusa, después de aver cumplido en Zara.[4]
>
> I was very eager to establish there [in Zadar] a college: pray to the Lord that it may come to pass. It is also in the vicinity of Ragusa, where the archbishop greatly desires it, and where I know the Lord could open some doors for Turkey to the Society, as he is opening them elsewhere. It will be easy to get to Ragusa over time, after we have completed our tasks in Zadar.

In his letter Laínez expressed satisfaction with the mission in Zadar, the Dalmatian outpost of the Venetian state, and declared himself willing to found a Jesuit college in the city. At the same time, he mentioned the possibility of doing missionary service in Ragusa for a spell—as a matter of fact,

2 Polanco (ex Comm.) to Bobadilla, March 15, 1559, *Bobadillae monumentae: Nicolai Alphonsi de Bobadilla, sacerdotis e Societate Jesu, gesta et scripta ex autographis aut archetypis potissimum deprompta*, epist.162 (Matriti: Typis Gabrielis Lopez Del Horno, 1913), 270.

3 Bobadilla to Laínez, April 10, 1559, *Bobadillae monumentae*, epist. 165, 274–75.

4 Laínez to Bobadilla, May 8, 1559, *Bobadillae monumentae*, epists. 169, 280. All translations are mine unless noted otherwise.

the local archbishop, Ludovico Beccadelli,[5] a native of Bologna, was keen to receive Jesuit support and collaboration.[6] Moreover, as the Father General emphasized, the foundation of a mission in Ragusa would serve as a bridge to the Ottoman territories. Ragusa, in this sense, was seen as a "porta para Turquia," a gateway to the Ottoman empire, as Laínez observed. This was an early insight destined to become the core of the Society's strategy during the seventeenth century.[7]

Bobadilla, who at that time was still recovering from illness, departed from Venice on June 17, 1559. Once in Zadar (or Jadera, as the city was known in the local Dalmatian language), the father informed Polanco and Laínez about the condition of local Catholics, also shedding light on his own needs. By that time, Bobadilla was planning to spend the forthcoming Lent in Ragusa in order to support the archbishop. The missionaries serving in Dalmatia, starting from these early experiences of the Society, were called upon to support the local clergy in their pastoral activities, which were made arduous by the geographical location of their dioceses. Therefore, Bobadilla, exhausted and suffering from a severe quartan fever, asked the Father General to send another priest to Ragusa to help him carry out his duties of preaching and taking confessions, as well as looking for young people willing to join the Society. Laínez eventually agreed and sent Luca Salernitano.[8]

After all, as Bobadilla himself observed, that was a difficult vineyard to harvest, one which required constant and demanding pastoral work:

5 A native of Bologna, a friend and fellow student of Giovanni Delle Case and Pietro Bembo, Ludovico Beccadelli (Bologna 1501–Prato 1572) embarked on an ecclesiastical career. In 1554 Pope Paul IV assigned him to the archdiocese of Ragusa. He was relieved in 1565; the previous year, Cosimo I de'Medici had in fact appointed him provost of Prato. Stricken by paralysis, he died in that town in 1572 (Giuseppe Alberigo, "Ludovico Beccadelli," in *Biographical Dictionary of Italians* 7 (1970), https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ludovico-beccadelli.

6 Beccadelli to Laínez, May 22, 1559, *Bobadillae Monumenta*, epists. 175, 288–90.

7 In fact, as Antal Molnár has observed, the Society of Jesus could use three possible "doors" to gain access to the Ottoman territories: the Republic of Ragusa but also Austria (and Ottoman Hungary), as well as Transylvania (Molnár, *Saint-Siège*, 134–36).

8 Giuseppe Boero, *Vita del servo di Dio p. Nicolò Bobadiglia della Compagnia di Gesù, uno dei primi compagni di S. Ignazio di Loiola* (Florence: Raffaello Ricci, 1879), 117.

> Yo soy ya viejo y mal sano; y quien quiere ganar, es menester trabajar bien. Y deseo haber lizentia para absoluer los xprianos renegados que tornan, como la de los hereticos: la daráel Alexandrino. De gratia que la impetren. Estas parte están cerca de Turchìa, y otra vez escriberé quánta necessidad tienen de ser ayudados. Y para esto es menester haber lengua eschiaua, y personas que vayan en Roma y Ytalia á los colegios nuestros más que de ninguna parte.[9]
>
> I am already old and sick; and anyone who seeks success must work diligently. And I wish to obtain the permission to absolve renegade Christians who return [to Catholicism], similar to that [we have for the absolution] of the heretics: the Alexandrinus [Michele Ghislieri, future Pius V] will grant us the license [to do so]. Pray tell, they do beg for it. This area is located in the vicinity of Turkey, and again I will write how much they need to be helped. And for this [reason] it is necessary to master the [local] Slavic language, and have people who go to our schools in Rome and in Italy more than anywhere else.

In fact, the liminal position of the Republic of Ragusa and Venetian Dalmatia posed a series of problems and difficulties already identified by Bobadilla himself. Living in the vicinity of the so-called "European Turkey," local Catholics were in peril: first of all, Bobadilla reported about Christians who converted to Islam, the so-called renegades, for whom the Jesuit asked to be granted the faculty of absolution. In 1551 the pontiff, Julius III, conceded to the Society the privilege to absolve the heretics. This allowed the Jesuits to reintegrate former heretics into the Catholic church "in the absolute secrecy of sacramental confession."[10] Bobadilla was thus asking to broaden the scope of this license to the extent of absolving those who were found guilty of apostasy but showed the firm will to revert the process.

In a letter that dated back to September 9, 1559, Polanco, on behalf of the Father General, guaranteed that the Society would do everything possible to obtain the aforementioned license from the pope or whoever had the power to grant it; furthermore, he noted that in fact "it is true that our brief of Julius III, if it were not revoked, would seem to extend to all sins against the faith, as can be seen in the same brief of [October 22, 15]52."[11] In January 1560, things seemed to be stuck: the cardinals of the Holy Office, as Laínez testified in a letter, had developed opposing views on the matter and therefore the privilege had not yet been granted.[12] A year later,

9 Bobadilla to Juan Alfonso de Polanco, July 20, 1559, Zadar, *Bobadillae Monumenta*, epists. 186, 310.

10 Jessica M. Dalton, *Between Popes, Inquisitors and Princes: How the First Jesuits Negotiated Religious Crisis in Early Modern Italy* (Boston: Brill, 2020), 10.

11 Polanco to Bobadilla, September 9,1559, *Bobadillae Monumenta*, epist. 189, 314–15.

12 Laínez to Bobadilla, January 20, 1560, *Bobadillae Monumenta*, epist. 190, 317.

however, according to a letter Father Polanco sent to Bobadilla on January 25, 1561, things seem to take a new turn:

> Nostro Padre ha parlato a S[ua] S[anti]a domandandoli grazia di poter li nostri reconciliare le apostate a fide quando uogliono tornare al gremio della chiesa: et l ha concesso doue non c' è nuntio, o uero legato della sede appostolica, come credo non sia in Ragusa nè in altri luoghi di Schiauonia; sì che la R.V. se ne potrà aiutare di questa concesione; et anche de altra di assoluere di tutti casi, etiam reseruati in bulla cene, quelli che si mandano alle galere.[13]

> Our Father [Laínez] has spoken to His Holiness, asking him for permission to reconcile apostates from the faith when they wish to return to the bosom of the Church; and he has granted it where there is no nuncio or legate of the Apostolic See, as I believe there is neither in Ragusa nor in other places in Slavonia: so that Your Reverence will be able to make use of this permission and also of the other to absolve in all cases, even those reserved [to the Pope] in the Bulla Coene, those condemned to the galleys.

Bobadilla also stressed the need to send priests able to understand and communicate in *lengua eschiava*, the local Slavic language. Vehicular language was an important issue that characterized the debate on missionary strategies, even after the founding of Propaganda Fide. This was a subject that in 1582 Marin Temperica (1534–1591)—a former Ragusan merchant who joined the Society of Jesus thanks to the influence of Giulio Mancinelli—also stressed.[14]

In a report sent to Acquaviva, Temperica sketched the "geography" of the languages in the Balkan region, noting affinities, similarities, and dif-

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As Giuliana Boccadamo has pointed out in her book *Napoli e l'Islam*, according to the sources produced by the Holy Office, a specific kind of reconciliation trial (*processetti di riconciliazione*) developed from the second half of the sixteenth century. It was a standardized procedure intended to investigate the circumstances and the reason behind the apostasy, meant to readmit the renegade into the Christian community while inflicting a punishment proportionate to the gravity of the crime. Nothing is said, however, about the alleged privilege granted to the Society of Jesus. See Boccadamo, *Napoli e l'Islam. Storie di musulmani, schiavi e rinnegati in Età Moderna* (Naples: D'Auria, 2010), 61–66. About the possibility of absolving repentant heretics through the sacrament of confession see also Giovanni Romeo, "Denunciare i delitti contro la fede nell'Italia della Controriforma: la storia di un fallimento," in *Dénoncer le crime du Moyen Âge au XIXe siècle*, ed. Martine Charageat and Mathieu Soula (Pessac: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, 2014), 189–201.

13 Polanco to Bobadilla, January 25, 1561, *Bobadillae Monumenta*, epist. 215, 366.

14 Temperica's report has been published in Josip Jurić, "Pokušaj 'Zbora za širenje vjere' god. 1627. da kod južnih Slavena uvede zajedničko pismo," *Croatia sacra* 8 (1934): 155–57.

ferences between the local tongues and insisting on the need to prepare missionary clergy from a linguistic point of view. He spoke the "Dalmatian" dialect and had mastered Turkish, a skill that in 1583 enabled him to be sent as a missionary to Constantinople, together with Giulio Mancinelli.[15]

Temperica's letter did not have an immediate impact on Catholic missionary organization. However, it certainly played a key role in arranging Jesuit missions in Ottoman Europe through the coming years, throwing light once again on the role played by local merchants when it came to facilitating the spread of Catholicism throughout the Balkans.[16]

Eventually, Bobadilla emphasized the need to educate young, local men in Italy in the colleges of the Society and send them back to their homeland at the end of their training. This strategy was to be fully developed through the coming decades: we might think, to mention a telling case, about the Illyrian College of Loreto, established in 1580, where young people from the Balkan peninsula and in particular from the Dalmatian coast, could be trained as priests.[17]

In fact, during his stay in Dubrovnik, Bobadilla was asked by the Ragusan leading class to establish a Jesuit college for the education of the local youth. The Ragusan senate, in a letter addressed to the Father General, asked Laínez himself to establish "in our city a college of priests. . . . Since

15 Pietro Pirri, "Lo stato della Chiesa ortodossa di Costantinopoli e le sue tendenze verso Roma in un memoriale del P. Giulio Mancinelli S. I," in *Miscellanea Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi*, vol. I (Rome: Storia e letteratura, 1947), 79–103; Vincenzo Ruggieri, "Costantinopoli vista da P. Giulio Mancinelli S. J. (1583–1585)," *Revue des études byzantines* 60 (2002): 113–31; Adina Ruiu, "Missionaries and French Subjects: The Jesuits in the Ottoman Empire," in *A Companion to the Early Modern Catholic Global Missions*, ed. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia (Boston: Brill, 2018), 181–204, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004355286_009; "Conflicting Visions of the Jesuit Missions to the Ottoman Empire, 1609–1628," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 260–80, https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00102007.

16 Molnar, *Saint-Siège*, 139.

17 Marco Moroni, "Propaganda Fide, i Collegi illirici e l'Albania," in Adrian Ndreca, *L'Albania nell'Archivio di Propaganda Fide* (Città del Vaticano: Urbaniana University Press, 2017); "Rapporti culturali e forme devozionali tra le due sponde dell'Adriatico in età moderna," in *Pellegrini verso Loreto*, ed. Floriano Grimaldi and Katy Sordi (Loreto: Tecnostampa, 2003), 181–216; Slavko Kovaćić, "Il Collegio illirico presso il Santuario della Santa Casa di Loreto 1580–1798," in *Pellegrini verso Loreto*, 217–50; Marko Trogrlić, "Gli alunni del Collegio illirico di Loreto: Giovanni Scacoz, un paradigma," in *Pellegrini verso Loreto*, 251–62; Josip Jurić, "Ilirski Kolegij u Loretu (1580–1860)," *Vrela i Prinosi* 13 (1982): 22–60. See also John V. A. Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter in the Balkans. A Study of Identity in Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Ann Abor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 428–31.

barbarians and infidels live in the vicinity of our border, it is necessary for our city to be equipped with more religious and pious people."[18] They wanted Bobadilla to settle permanently in the city along with two Jesuit companions to be sent there by the Society.

The Ragusan government also applied pressure to Bobadilla asking him to get in touch with the Holy See on its behalf (February 1560).[19] Four months later, on June 13, they addressed the Roman pontiff, Pope Pius IV (1559–65), and Giovanni Antonio Serbelloni (1519–91), bishop of Foligno (Italy) and cardinal of San Giorgio in Velabro, expressing the firm will to initiate a permanent Jesuit mission and a college in the city-state. It might be useful to recall that Pius IV himself had served as the archbishop of Ragusa from 1545 to 1553.[20] However, despite the efforts and the intense political pressure, the idea did not develop into a real project. Eventually, between May and June 1561, Bobadilla was given permission to go back to Italy, where he received proper medical treatment for his health issues.

Giulio Mancinelli: A Jesuit Between Ragusa and the "Ottoman Indies"

Another attempt to set the foundations for the establishment of a more stable mission in Dalmatia was made in the 1570s, when Giulio Mancinelli, a Jesuit from Macerata (Italy), was sent there at the Ragusan archbishop's invitation.

Mancinelli entered the Society of Jesus in 1558. He studied for five years (1563–68) at the Roman college and when the battle of Lepanto took place in 1571, he was in Florence, serving as the head of the local Jesuit college. He must have been very concerned about the outcome of the war: a few days before the battle, he had a mystical experience, an anticipation of the imminent Christian victory, as he reports in his memoir. He was so unbelievably glad, he reveals, he could barely hold back his joy.[21]

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18 Municipum Ragusiae to Laínez, June 13, 1560, *Bobadillae monumentae*, epist.199, 335.

19 "He sido forzado, con la charità e neccessità, de escribere al papa y al cardenal de Fuligno, alias de sancto Georgio, como dicen, y á V. R. en beneffizio desta republica di Ragusa, tanto proque me lo han rogado el rector y la signoría . . . " (Bobadilla to Polanco, February 1560, *Bobadillae monumentae*, Bobadilla to Juan Alfonso de Polanco, July 20, 1559, Zadar (*Bobadillae Monumenta*) epists., 186, 310. 191, 319).

20 Municipium Ragusiae to Pope Pius IV, June 13, 1560, *Bobadillae monumentae*, epist. 200, 336–37; Municipium Ragusiae to Giovanni Antonio Serbelloni, June 13, 1560, *Bobadillae monumentae*, epist. 201, 338.

21 Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), *Vitae* 42 (G. Mancinelli, *Historia della vocatione et peregrinatione*), chap. 20 ("Delle apparitioni buone, visioni, et rivelationi"), 272: "La vittoria che hebbe l'armata christiana contra quella del tur-

In the meantime, Mancinelli started his missionary activity in Italy, and subsequently carried on in the Ottoman empire and throughout eastern and central Europe. Between 1575 and 1576, he served as a missionary in Ragusa; between 1583 and 1586, he was in Constantinople establishing the first Jesuit mission there; he then passed through the Balkans and east and central Europe on his way back to Italy. Eventually, the Society of Jesus sent him to Algeria on behalf of the Kingdom of Naples to pay a ransom for a group of Christians who had been enslaved in 1592.

Was it common, among young Jesuit candidates, to choose the Ottoman lands as their preferred destination? In fact, it was not. As has been noted, since the very beginning of his spiritual activity, Ignatius seemed to realize the need to spread Catholicism among Muslims. On August 15, 1534, the founder of the Society and his first companions, Francis Xavier, Pierre Favre, Simão Rodrigues, Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, and Nicolás Bobadilla himself, made a singular vow, promising to go on a mission to the Holy Land. Were that not possible, they would go to Rome, at the service of Pope Paul III, willing to serve as missionaries "even among Turks."[22]

Throughout his life, the first Father General developed a strong interest in founding missions and colleges in North Africa to foster the propagation of the Catholic faith north of the Sahara. The first Jesuit who attempted to put into practice the Ignatian intuition was Diego Laínez himself. In 1550, in fact, the future Father General participated in the Spanish campaign to conquer Mahdia (ancient Aphrodite), nowadays on the coast of Tunisia.

As a matter of fact, while Laínez was in Palermo working as the visitor of the Sicilian Province, the viceroy of Sicily, Juan de la Vega, a great supporter of the Society, solicited Laínez's participation in the military expedition, begging Ignatius to let him go. The Father General at the time welcomed the idea with great enthusiasm, and Laínez joined the expedition as a military chaplain and spiritual director to the viceroy. After a difficult campaign, the Spanish garrison managed to conquer the town, which remained in the hands of the Iberian crown until 1554, when it was eventually regained by the Ottoman army. According to Laínez, the victory of the

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co, al tempo che don Giovanni d'Austria era di quella generale, la vidde et sentì in Fiorenza celebrando la messa credo nell'istesso giorno; che duro fatica di raffrenarsi nel manifestarla alli circostanti, finita la messa, tanta era l'alegrezza et la certezza che ne haveva: quantunque lo manifestasse ad alcuni particolari."

22 Emanuele Colombo, "Defeating the Infidels, Helping Their Souls: Ignatius Loyola and Islam," in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola*, ed. Robert A. Maryks (Boston: Brill, 2014), 184.

Spanish forces should be seen as a gift from God, a grace that could pave the way for the evangelization of Muslim peoples.[23]

In 1552, it was Ignatius himself who returned to the "African" and, more generally, Islamic issue, in a letter drafted by Secretary Polanco, addressed to Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80) but ultimately intended to attract the attention of Juan de la Vega in the hope that the viceroy might act as a channel between the Society and Charles V and his son Philip.[24] In his missive, the Father General hoped for the creation of a Spanish fleet that would definitively eradicate the so–called Turkish danger while at the same time weakening France, which had worryingly formed alliances with the sultan. Ignatius's words and *topoi* unsurprisingly reveal a familiarity with the model of the *Reconquista*, which could facilitate the expulsion of the Muslims from the Mediterranean area—as had occurred in the Iberian Peninsula—setting off the definitive rooting of the Roman Catholic faith. In fact, as Emanuele Colombo has pointed out, Ignatius "never abandoned his ambivalent attitude [toward Muslims], in which warlike and peaceful approaches existed side by side."[25]

In fact, despite these premises, the Society's missions in Ottoman territories were few and often unsuccessful. A wide variety of *litterae indipetae,* the letters sent to the general by those wishing to join overseas missions, shows very clearly that three of the most common destinations were China, Japan, and the Americas;[26] conversely, young Jesuits rarely expressed the desire to serve among the "Turks." Mancinelli was one of them, as he testifies in his unpublished memoir *Historia della vocatione et peregrinatione* [History of Vocation and Travels].[27]

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23 Gianclaudio Civale, "La Compagnia di Gesù, la guerra e l'immagine del soldato da Ignazio a Possevino (1546–1569)," *Società e storia* 140 (2013): 283–317.

24 Polanco (ex Comm.) to Nadal, August 6, 1552, *Monumenta Ignatiana Series Prima: Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones, tomus Quartus (1551–1553)*, epist. 2775, 354–59.

25 Colombo, "Defeating the Infidels," 184. On the history of the ambiguous relationship between Jesuits and warfare, see for instance "Jesuits and Soldiers, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 4 (2017); and Silvia Mostaccio, *Sacerdotal Masculinity at War: Jesuit Military chaplains at the Eighty Years' War* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023).

26 On this matter, see for instance Elisa Frei, *Early Modern Litterae Indipetae for the East Indies* (Boston: Brill, 2023); Emanuele Colombo, *Quando Dio chiama. I gesuiti e le missioni nelle Indie (1560–1960)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2023); Emanuele Colombo and Marina Massimi, *In viaggio. Gesuiti italiani candidati alle missioni tra antica e nuova Compagnia* (Milano: Il Sole 24 Ore, 2014); Pierre-Antoine Fabre, Girolamo Imbruglia, and Guido Mongini, eds., *Litterae Indipetae. Una fonte lunga cinque secoli* (Roma: IHSI, 2021).

27 Several versions of the *Historia* are currently available. Most of them are kept in

His desire to operate in the Ottoman lands supposedly burst while missionizing in Ragusa, where he encountered many people who had spent plenty of time in Constantinople. In a letter to Superior General Everard Mercurian, Mancinelli specifically mentions a man who used to serve as the Ragusan ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, who informed him about the tough conditions the Catholic communities were experiencing in the Ottoman capital.[28] Mancinelli, for his part, felt the urge to go there to help. In fact, as he specifies, he had been pondering it for more than fifteen years, doing plenty of penance and praying, hoping to fulfil his wish. He declared himself ready to die and eager to serve God and the Society by operating among the Ottoman Catholic communities. This letter, as far as I know, can be considered the actual *indipeta*, sent to Mercurian requesting permission to establish a Jesuit mission in Constantinople.

Thus, it seems that for Mancinelli himself Ragusa also ended up somehow being a "bridge" to the Ottoman lands, the place where his desire—at least according to his own testimony—developed into a clearer proposal to be submitted to the Father General.[29]

Mancinelli arrived in Ragusa in 1575, along with his fellow Jesuit Emerio de Bonis, at Archbishop Vincenzo Portico's invitation. During his stay, he worked alongside the archbishop throughout the diocese; in his *Historia*, he lists in detail the towns and villages he visited: Epidaurum (present-day Cavtat in Croatia), Canale (Konavle), Vitaglina (Prevlaka,

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the (ARSI), *Vitae* 41, 42, 19.

28 Mancinelli to Everard Mercurian, March 28, 1576, *Korade*, "Julije Mancinelli," 144. This letter has been recently re-published and translated into English by Emanuele Colombo, Irene Gaddo, and Guido Mongini, eds., *The First Italian Indipetae: Jesuit Petitions for the Indies (1557-80)* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2024), 237.

29 At the beginning of chapter 8, significantly entitled "Delle missioni et viaggi che fece nelle parti della Turchia [Missions and travels in the Ottoman Empire]," Mancinelli has much to say about his stay in Ragusa and its surroundings, while he devoted the rest of it to his visit to Constantinople. As he narrates, he clearly realized his missionary destination should have been the Ottoman Empire ("la Turchia"), where he eventually arrived after 25 years of prayers. Interestingly enough, this *incipit* summarizes various motifs pertaining to the *indipetae*'s traditional structure: the long-term wish to join a mission; the allusion to "holy indifference"; incessant prayers and penance, to begin with. That connection is even more clear if we think that Mancinelli, declared himself eager to be enslaved by the Ottomans, as he reports, seeking a closer opportunity to convert them to Catholicism. As already observed, in his letter to Mercurian, Mancinelli's emphasis on the needs of those who were already Catholic but were living in an Ottoman state, while in the *incipit* of the aforementioned chapter 8, he seemed to be slightly more interested in working to convert the "Turks."

nowadays at the border between Croatia and Montenegro), Castel nuovo (present-day Herceg Novi, Montenegro), and Cattaro (Kotor), which from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century functioned as the most important hub for postal communication linking Venice and Istanbul.[30]

> . . . Sono stato quasi tutti due questi mesi di Gennaro et di Febbraro per la diocesi di Monsignore, ne luochi dove non potesse arrivare il Commissario passato per pigliare solamente informatione di quelle parrocchie, et per catechizzare li contadini e li preti, et ho ritrovato grandissima divotione ne popoli, che venevano cinque, sei et otto miglia di lontano per le montagne asprissime et per la pioggia . . . et putti et vecchi per li uffitii sopradetti, . . . dalli loro l'Agnus Dei et de grani benedetti, et insegnato di dire la corona.[31]

> . . . I have spent almost all these two months of January and February in the diocese of the archbishop [Portico], visiting the places where the former Commissioner could not [enter] in order to collect information about those parishes, and to catechize both the peasants and the priests, and I have found great devotion among the peoples, who walked five, six, and eight miles through the rugged mountains and the rain . . . both children and old men to come to the aforementioned offices, . . . and I gave them the *Agnus Dei* and blessed grains, and taught them how to pray using the crown [rosary].

As a matter of fact, Mancinelli was mainly involved with people who were already Catholic although, perhaps surprisingly, "ignorant" about religion. Being worried about that fact, he tried to catechize them, traveling from village to village and celebrating mass outside the local churches, which were often damaged or too small, together with the parish priest or occasionally with one of the Observant Franciscans, who were at that time widely present in the Balkans. People, for their part, were very keen to listen to his sermons and desperate to acquire the little religious pictures and the small discs known as *Agnus Dei*, which Mancinelli frequently distributed—in fact, even among Italian children and adults, he used similar visual and physical aids as catalysts for catechization.[32]

Interestingly from our point of view, in a letter to Mercurian that dates back to 1576, Mancinelli also gives account of an argument involving the Jesuits and Bosnian Franciscans in Ragusa: the archbishop of the city-state wanted a Jesuit missionary to be with him as a preacher, and the Ragu-

30 On this matter, see for instance Molnár, "A Forgotten Bridgehead between Rome, Venice, and the Ottoman Empire: Cattaro and the Balkan Missions in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Hungarian Historical Review* 3, no. 3 (2014): 494–528.

31 Mancinelli to Mercurian, March 8, 1576, "Julije Mancinelli," *Korade*, 143.

32 ARSI, *Vitae* 42, 93.

san leading class (*Signori*), preferred a Franciscan.[33] That case provides a quite telling example of the tensions that characterized the relationships between the local elites and ecclesiastical leadership on one side and the Jesuit and other missionary orders on the other.

Considering the previous requests the Ragusan senate made to Bobadilla when it declared itself willing to welcome a permanent Jesuit mission in the city, there seems to have been a confusing change of pace here. Far from being surprising, however, both the political shift and the quarrel can be explained in light of the local framework: as we have already observed, the Ragusan patriciate maintained its independence and cultural and religious identity thanks to the formal alliance with the Sublime Porte. This strategy allowed the Republic to carry significant economic weight in the Balkan commercial network. The choice of a Bosnian Franciscan, certainly more pleasing to the Ottoman authorities, would in no way compromise the position of the city-state and therefore its privileges. On the contrary, a substantial part of the Dubrovnik patriciate feared that the presence of the Society of Jesus would inevitably lead to greater influence of the papacy and consequently jeopardize the formal neutrality of Ragusa.

This fear, according to Zdenko Zlatar, should be seen as the reason behind Dubrovnik's ambiguity, which prevented the Jesuit mission from achieving significant results and eventually made the establishment of a permanent Jesuit mission impossible. On the other hand, the attempts of the opposing patrician faction favoring establishment of the Society in Dubrovnik should, according to Zlatar, should be seen as a symptom of an anti-Ottoman initiative.[34]

In fact, this issue should be seen from another point of view. As Antal Molnár has shown, among the protectors of the Jesuit mission were mayors and merchants commonly known as supporters of the alliance with the Sublime Porte.[35] As a matter of fact, while the Dalmatian city-state was interested in preserving and sustaining its Catholic soul and strengthening its role as *antemurale Christianitatis*, the merchants and local senate were

33 Mancinelli to Mercurian, July 7, 1576, "Julije Mancinelli," *Korade*, 146. On this matter, see for instance Wietse de Boer, Karl A.E. Enenkel, and Walter Melion eds., *Jesuit Image Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Evonne Levy, "Early Modern Jesuit Arts and Jesuit Visual Culture: A View from the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 66–87; Pierre-Antoine Fabre, "L'allégorie est-elle une figure fondatrice de la culture jésuite?," in *Les jésuites et le monde des images*, ed. Gérard Sabatier (Grenoble: PUG, 2009), 83–101.

34 Zdenko Zlatar, *Our Kingdom Come: the Counter-Reformation, the Republic of Dubrovnik, and the Liberation of the Balkan Slavs* (New York: East European Monographs, 1992), 175–81.

35 Molnár, *Saint-Siège*, 144–45.

well aware of the need to pursue their political and economic ambitions: it was, in other words, a survival mechanism. This tendency clarifies the extent to which the political sphere could interfere with church life and structure in a city-state, as was the case with Ragusa and also Venice.[36] We might go so far as to say that the Ragusan Church, while suiting the spiritual needs of the local Catholic community, also served the political interests and secular prerogatives of the leading class.

Between October 1573 and April 1574, Giovanni Francesco Sormani (1566–1601), bishop of Montefeltro, also visited the archbishopric of Ragusa on behalf of the Holy See. A member of the circle of men around Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, the apostolic visitor found a difficult situation in terms of confessional discipline, as testified in his letters to cardinal Bernardino Carniglia. In fact, upon his arrival, he enthusiastically described the Ragusan community and its leaders as profoundly devout; thus, he asked the pope to allow them to celebrate a jubilee on the day of the Annunciation, to which their main church was dedicated.[37] Soon, however, he realized that things were different. In his subsequent letters, he expressed his growing concern about the spiritual conditions of the city-state: the Tridentine decrees had not been published, and prohibited books, such as the works of Erasmus and the vernacular versions of the Gospel (translated into local Slavonic using the Cyrillic alphabet), were widely spread in the area, especially among noblewomen. Jews who converted to Catholicism reverted to their ancient religious affiliation and lived openly as such. But maybe the most worrying issue was the peculiar relationship between the Ragusan leading class and the clergy, including Dominican and Franciscan friars. More often than not, noblemen and merchants asked, or even

36 About Venetian jurisdictionalism see for instance Efstathios Birtachas, "Politics and Religion in the Venetian Maritime State in the Early Seventeenth Century: The Case of the Greek Orthodox minority of Tinos," in *Minorités religieuses dans le Sud-Est européen*: *Actes de la session organisée dans le cadre du XIIe Congrès international d'études sud-est européennes*, ed. Mădălina Vârtejanu-Joubert (Brăilei: Editura Istros, 2020), 11–32; and Birtachas, "Verso lo stato moderno in Italia—Aspetti del giurisdizionalismo veneziano all'alba dell'età barocca: la sovranità sui sudditi greci nelle colonie d'oltremare," in *I greci durante la venetocrazia: uomini, spazio, idee (XIII—XVIII sec.): Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi*, ed. Chryssa Maltezou, Angeliki Tzavara, and Despina Vlassi (Venezia: Istituto Ellenico di Studi Bizantini e Postbizantini Venezia, 2009), 83–97.

37 Giovanni Francesco Sormani to Bernardino Carniglia, October 30, 1573, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), Congregazione dei Vescovi e Regolari (CVR), *Positiones 1573–1576* (unnumbered). The letters have been partially published in Angelo Turchini, "Giovanni Francesco Sormani e la Repubblica di Ragusa (Dubrovnik)," in *Giovanni Francesco Sormani vescovo di Montefeltro 1566–1601* (San Leo: Società di Studi per il Montefeltro, 2003), 121–51.

forced, priests to take confessions inside their private residences. They could oblige their spiritual fathers to absolve them of their sins by threatening them[38] and, most important, they considered Archbishop Crisostomo Calvino himself to be their personal chaplain.[39] The latter, for his part, played a key and active role in this undisciplined framework and ended up opposing the arrival and activity of the apostolic visitor, whose pastoral work was perceived as an exogenous—and thus dangerous—interference.

When it came to establishing a seminary in the city-state, Sormani confirmed the ambiguous position of the local leading class. He testified that, on the one hand, the Ragusan clergy was financially strapped and could not bear the cost of such an enterprise; on the other hand, the city leaders refused to provide any financial support since they were not interested enough ("atteso che questi S[igno]ri puoco il desiderano").[40] Once again, what emerges is the portrait of a Church bent to the will of the city-state.

Evidently, when Mancinelli arrived in Ragusa in 1575, things had not changed, even though Archbishop Portico, successor to Crisostomo Calvino, showed a different attitude toward the Society and its missionaries. It is not that surprising, then, that this second Jesuit enterprise, proving to be too fragile to cope with the local institutional framework and religious policy, came to an end in 1576.

While missionizing in Ragusa and its surroundings, Mancinelli, not unlike Bobadilla, observed and pinpointed at least two other problems to be solved: the lack of a proper number of trained priests and a kind of confessional promiscuity between different religious groups. Indeed, Catholic communities were often surrounded by so-called Schismatics (namely, Or-

38 "A quanto mi fu detto d'un religioso di questa città, ritrovandosi un nobile di questa città a confessarsi, il prete suo familiar non lo voleva assolvere, il che vedendo il nobile, si levò e disse al prette, mi voi assolvere o no? Il prette disse non posso, il nobile disse se tu no[n] mi assolve [*sic*], ti tagliaro il naso e l'orecchie, . . . il prette per timor gli dette l'assolut[ion]e," in Giovanni Francesco Sormani to Bernardino Carniglia, February 24, 1574, AAV, CVR, *Positiones 1573–1576* (unnumbered).

39 "Questi Signori no[n] sapendo rispondere altro, s'intende che vogliono aver ricorso a sua Beatitudine per ottener la dispensa di poter perseverar nella loro solita indicatura, et autorita plenaria contro al clero ecc, . . . et che l'Arcivescovo sia qui come è, et è sempre stato per un segno, e per loro mero cappellano, et non piu ultra." Giovanni Francesco Sormani to Bernardino Carniglia, April 10, 1574, AAV, CVR, *Positiones 1573–1576* (unnumbered).

40 Sormani to Carniglia, April 10, 1574, (unnumbered).

thodox) and Muslims, and this could have helped trigger religious hybridization and overlapping.[41]

In those years, Ragusa was an independent Catholic city-state, formally a tributary of the Sultan; Cattaro, where he also served, belonged to the Republic of Venice. On the other hand, Castelnuovo, was at that time an outpost of the Sublime Porte, being regained by the Ottoman army led by Hayreddin Barbarossa in 1539. It comes as no surprise that in Dalmatia Mancinelli got the chance to deal with the "Turks," and encountered a certain number of renegades—as Bobadilla had also reported a few years earlier. However, Mancinelli added fresh information on the matter:

> . . . i Rinegati di quei paesi alli Turchi soggetti facevano occultam[en]te battezzare i loro figliuoli, celebrare le nozze dal curato et benedire le sepulture di loro morti al modo christiano, e[ss]endo la maggior parte di loro restati d'a[n]i[m]o christiano per certi loro interessi della robba preso quella setta nello esteriore.[42]
>
> . . . the Turks, in other words the renegades who lived in those countries subject to the Turks, had their children secretly baptized, their weddings celebrated by the priest and the burials of their dead blessed according to the Christian tradition, most of them having remained Christian in their hearts and converted to that sect only outwardly due to interests linked to their personal properties.

In other words, Christian people who converted to Islam commonly married, baptised, and buried their dead according to Christian religious and ritual traditions since they publicly acted as Muslims but secretly still identified themselves otherwise. According to Mancinelli, they merely en-

41 In this regard, see for instance Suzanna Ivanić, Mary Laven, Andrew Morrall eds., *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); Sabina Pavone, "Sincretismo, conversioni e uso delle immagini tra cattolicesimo e induismo," *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 44, no. 2 (2018): 55–90; AA.VV. Borja Franco Llopis, Bruno Pomara Saverino, Manuel Lomas Cortés, and Bárbara Ruiz Bejarano, *Identidades cuestionadas. Coexistencia y conflictos interreligiosos en el mediterráneo (ss. XIV–XVIII)* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2016); E. F. Kent and T. R. Kassam, eds., *Lines in Water: Religious Boundaries in South Asia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013). See also Cesare Santus, *Trasgressioni necessarie. Communicatio in sacris, coesistenza e conflitti tra le comunità cristiane orientali (Levante e Impero ottomano, XVII–XVIII secolo)* (Rome: Bibliothèque des École françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2018). I am currently developing my doctoral dissertation about religious hybridizations in the Ottoman Balkans (from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century) into a book to be published by Viella (Rome) in 2025.

42 ARSI, *Vitae* 42, 125–26.

hanced their economic prospects by converting to Islam. Much has been written about this ambiguous, syncretic custom—known as crypto-Christianity or hidden Christianity—and how it spread particularly in the area of present-day Kosovo and Albania. The information reported by Mancinelli could be one of the first bits of evidence testifying to the existence of the practice.[43]

On the other hand, due to the lack of Catholic ministers, both Catholics and hidden Christians frequently asked the Orthodox clergy—widely present in the Balkans and the Ottoman empire ("non dimeno sono sparsi quasi per tutto il paese del Turco")—to serve their spiritual needs.[44] That is exactly the sort of practice, he reported, that should be eradicated while establishing more solid confessional boundaries.

It is interesting that, according to Mancinelli, "Schismatic" priests, both in Dalmatia and elsewhere, were ignorant, superstitious, and often claimed economic compensation when administering the sacraments. Moreover, they showed a profound and harsh aversion toward Roman Catholics and their Latin rite.[45] Nevertheless, they could live an honest and chaste life, he recognised, as was the case with the monks from Mount Athos (Calogeri di Monte Santo della Macedonia), whom he had had the chance to meet while missionizing in the Ottoman capital. Those men, he wrote, despite being naïve and gullible when it came to matters of faith, were in fact obedient and bound to their ancient and strict monastic rules.

Thus, while serving in Ragusa and its surroundings, Mancinelli experienced problems that he would also encounter in Ottoman cities such as Constantinople and Algiers, where missions were not aimed at converting the "infidels" but intended to help, once again, those who were already Catholic. It should be noted that, according to his own testimony, the over-

43 On this matter, see for instance Stavro Skendi, "Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottoman," *Slavic Review* 26, no. 2 (1967): 227–46; Noel Malcolm, "Crypto-Christianity and Religious Amphibianism in the Ottoman Balkans: The Case of Kosovo," in *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, ed. Harry Thirlwall Norris, Muriel Heppell, and Celia Hawkesworth (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 91–110; and Shan Zefi, *Islamizacija Albanaca i fenomen ljaramanstva tijekom stoljeća (XV.–XX.). Razlozi i stav Katoličke crkve* [The Islamization of the Albanians and the Phenomenon of ljaramanstvo (biconfessionality) down the centuries (15th–20th): Causes and position of the Catholic Church] (Zagreb: Albanska katolička misija, 2003). I have addressed the issue in a previous article, "Crypto-Christianity and Religious Hybridisation in the Ottoman Balkans: A Case Study (1599–1622)," *Studia Ceranea* 10 (2020): 217–26.

44 ARSI, *Vitae* 42, 125–26.

45 ARSI, *Vitae* 42, 126.

riding majority of conversions Mancinelli was able to facilitate occurred in Italy, between Florence and Naples, where he operated among Muslim slaves ("Turks" or "Moors") at the service of local aristocracy or kept in the local *bagni*.[46]

Acquaviva's Instruction for Jesuit Fathers Missionizing in Ragusa (1604)

About three decades later, in 1604, the Society made another attempt to establish a permanent mission in Dalmatia.[47] This time, at the invitation of then archbishop, Fabio Tempestivo (d. 1616), the fathers Aleksandar Komulović (1548–1608), Giacomo de Nobili, and Silvestro Muzio established a new mission in Ragusa. One should not forget that in the 1580s Komulović himself had been an apostolic visitor to the Ottoman Balkans, where he strengthened his knowledge of the local confessional landscape on behalf of the Holy See.[48]

On July 8, Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615), then Father General of the Society of Jesus, issued an instruction providing a common code of behavior, an institutional as well as cultural approach to be implemented when engaging with local communities. This code would be useful when it came to survival of the mission. Obedience, unity, and consistency were key concepts. In fact, the strategy for Ragusa should be read as part of a broader picture. Under Father Claudio Acquaviva, the Society underwent a general process of reformation in terms of governance and centralization, in which obedience itself played a major role.[49]

The instruction, still unpublished, identifies the ultimate goal of the mission: to serve the need of those who were already Catholic and provide assistance to local ecclesiastical hierarchies:

> Il fine principale per il quale sono stati destinati a tal impresa, è di aiutare le genti di quella Republica nello spirituale, e promuovere in esse la pietà Christiana con tutti i mezzi possibili proprij del n[ost]ro Instituto, come prediche, confessioni, raggiona[men]ti, Dottr[in]a christiana, et altri simili.[50]

46 See for instance ARSI, *Vitae* 42, 154–55.

47 Molnár, *Saint-Siège*, 144.

48 Antun Trstenjak, "Alessando Komulović S.I., 1548–1608. Profilo biografico," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 58 (1989): 48–52.

49 See for instance Silvia Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits: Between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (London: Routledge, 2014).

50 *Instruttione per li padri della Missione di Ragusa*, ARSI, Fondo gesuitico [FG] 720/a/I/10, f. 1r.

> The main purpose for which [these missionaries] have been destined for such an enterprise, is to help the people of that Republic in their spiritual life, and to promote Christian piety by all possible means that belong to our institute, such as sermons, confessions, reasonings, Christian Doctrine, and other similar tools.

The missionaries were thus advised to avoid any attempts at converting the "Turks." At the beginning of the 1600s, thanks to previous missions and visitations carried out in Dalmatia and in Ottoman territories, the Society had gained a good knowledge of the social, political, and confessional landscape in which the Republic of Ragusa was embedded. Acquaviva was very well aware of the ambiguous position of the city-state. That is why he urged the Jesuits not to try to convert the "Turks" living in the surrounding areas. Such an attempt would have certainly triggered tensions between the Republic and the Ottoman administration, putting the mission in danger. Something similar had happened to the mission established in Constantinople by Mancinelli and his successors. As a matter of fact, according to instructions the Jesuits received from Rome, they were explicitly asked not to attempt to convert Muslims or Jews and were thus advised to act cautiously while operating in the Ottoman capital.[51] Once again, the mission was primarily intended to serve the needs of pre-existing Catholic communities and individuals, such as merchants, ambassadors, and slaves, mainly living in Pera, the former Genoese district. That is why, even if operating in Constantinople, the Ottoman capital city, Jesuit missionaries ended up using pastoral tools developed while carrying out the so-called "popular missions" (those organized in Italy and Europe among people who were already Catholic) and not those tools pertaining to the missions *ad gentes*, the possibility of converting Muslim people to Catholicism being out of the question.

As we have seen, in Dalmatia, where the fragile status quo could not be altered, the situation was no different. The Jesuits operating there were required to integrate themselves into the social, political, and confessional landscape of the area. At the same time, they were asked to avoid any jurisdictional ambiguity. What did that mean? "Jesuit missionaries," Acquaviva cautioned, "should in no way express a desire to found colleges, nor welcome requests to that effect expressed by citizens; rather, they should

51 ARSI, Gal. 101, f. 42rv. The documents produced in the context of the first Jesuit mission to Constantinople are preserved among letters pertaining to the "Gallia" Assistance presumably because they were used in the preparation of the following mission, established in 1609 and led by a group of Jesuits from France, on which Adina Ruiu has worked and written extensively (see note n. 15).

urge the latter to write to Father General."[52] He also stressed the need to constantly inform the Society and the Father General about events, problems, and issues arising while missionizing in Ragusa. At the root of this approach lies the need to elude any potential and unwanted interference from external actors, as was the case with the Ragusan senate.

Acquaviva's recommendations make even more sense in the light of the role played by Dubrovnik merchants and trading colonies located in the Balkan region and Ottoman Hungary. Strongholds of the Catholic faith in the Ottoman territories, the colonies were placed directly under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the archbishop of Dubrovnik. More often than not, Dubrovnik's political and economic elites, in an attempt to advance their own interests, clashed with the Holy See or missionary hierarchies over the designation of bishops and parish priests.[53] That kind of interference could also include requests for the founding of Jesuit colleges and houses—another issue explicitly mentioned by Acquaviva in his instructions:

> Avvertiscano di non mostrar desiderio o trattare di fondazioni di Collegi, e quando pure essi cittadini ne trattassero, si accordino di non dar parola o promessa alcuna ma gli essorterano a scrivere al Padre Generale, al quale i Padri manderanno . . . informatione di tutto, et in particolare quanto sia necessario in quel luogo per la sostentatione di ciascheduno, et dovendovi il neg[oti]o con i detti cittadini, habbino cura, che si faccia conforme alla formula dell'accettar i Collegij.[54]
>
> They should not show any desire or deal to establish Colleges, and when dealing with them [with local citizens], they must not make any promises, but ask them to write to the Father General, to whom the Fathers will send . . . information about everything, and in particular about what is necessary there for the sustenance of each one, and since they have to deal with the aforementioned citizens, they must be sure that it is done according to our rule.

Examples of similar pressures are documented, as we have already observed, in the correspondence between missionary Nicolás Alfonso Bobadilla and Father General Diego Laínez in the second half of the sixteenth century. It is therefore not surprising that through his instructions Acquaviva condemned any personal initiative: the fathers were clearly instructed to avoid responding to requests made by the Ragusan elites. Instead, they were to promptly inform the Father General of such requests.

52 ARSI, FG.720/a/I/10, f. 1r.

53 See for instance Molnár, "A Chaplain from Dubrovnik in Ottoman Buda: Vincenzo di Augustino and his Report to the Roman Inquisition about the Situation of the Balkan Catholicism," *Dubrovnik Annals* 18 (2014): 95–121.

54 ARSI, FG.720/a/I/10, f. 1v.

Another Attempt to Open 'Una Porta para Turquia'

The Ragusan mission, established in 1604, came to an end in 1608 when the missionaries were told to make their way back to Italy. Indeed, the Senate of the Republic had been particularly lukewarm when it came to supporting the mission and were more interested in the foundation of a college for local youth than in the survival of the mission itself. Several Ragusan noble families once again feared that the presence of a permanent Jesuit mission would have worsened Ragusan-Ottoman relations, triggering economic and political problems that might threaten their independence. Most important, local elites declared themselves willing to open a Jesuit college in the city but, according to their intentions, it should serve the needs of what was in fact the Ragusan State Church.[55] That was unacceptable to the Society, which, for its part, wanted the college to be established in accordance with the "Formula of the Institute." Once again, internal political circumstances proved to be an important source of instability that resulted in the collapse of the Jesuit enterprise.

However, in 1609 Acquaviva organized a new mission, this time entrusting the task to Bartol Kašić (Bartholomew Kašić, 1575–1650), a Jesuit of Dalmatian origin born in Pag (present-day Croatia), along with Pandolfo Ricasoli, a Jesuit brother from Florence. In Dubrovnik the Jesuits, following in the footsteps of their predecessors, remained supportive of the local archbishop, Fabio Tempestivo. As was the case with Marin Temperica, Kašić had full command of the local tongue: without the need for interpreters, he took confessions for local people, educated the young, and took care of the sick. Despite the apparent degree of success and integration, the local senate refused to provide further financial support to the Jesuits, and Acquaviva could not help but call them back to Rome three years later, in 1612.[56]

Kašić, however, was asked to stay a little bit longer and was assigned a new job: serving across the border that separated Catholic Dalmatia from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, he should wait for the other members of

55 Molnár, *Saint-Siège*,145.

56 Miroslav Vanino, *Isusovci i hrvatski narod II: Kolegiji. Dubrovački, riječki, varaždinki i požeški* (Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut, 1987), 10. In fact, the first Jesuit residence in the city-state had been opened in 1619, under the generalate of Muzio Vitelleschi. After a long negotiation process between the Society and the Republic, a Jesuit college was eventually established in Dubrovnik in the second half of the seventeenth century, thanks to a generous donation given by Marin Gundulić, a Jesuit of Ragusan origin born in Ancona. In 1653 the Republic agreed to the conditions imposed by the Society. However, the latter could not help but accept opening the college with a smaller number of fathers (Vanino, *Isusovci i hrvatski narod II*, 694–95).

the forthcoming mission in Ragusa and then leave for Bosnia. His companions were Father Simone Matković (or Simon of John), a secular priest of Bosnian origin, and Istvan Szini, a Hungarian Jesuit. The pioneering intuition of Laínez, who had defined Ragusa as a "porta para Turquia"—a doorway toward the "Ottoman" indies, as we may call them—gained full meaning.[57] Eventually the Jesuit enterprise and experience in the Ottoman empire turned also out to be crucial for the organization of the missions arranged in Southeastern Europe by the Sacred Congregation for the *Propaganda Fide* [Propagation of the Faith], established in 1622.[58]

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57 In the same year, the Society also established a mission in Pécs (now in southern Hungary), while in 1613 it was the turn of Timișoara, in the historic region of Banat (now in Romania). Molnár, *Saint-Siège*, 163.

58 About Propaganda Fide and its activity see Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Governare le missioni, conoscere il mondo nel XVII secolo. La Congregazione pontificia De Propaganda Fide* (Viterbo: Sette Città, 2018) and more recently Giovanni Pizzorusso, *Propaganda fide. I. La Congregazione pontificia e la giurisdizione sulle missioni* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2022).