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Founding a Jesuit College in the Kingdom of Naples
(Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries): Local Strategies, Global Conflicts

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Founding a Jesuit College in the Kingdom of Naples (Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries): Local Strategies, Global Conflicts

NICCOLÒ GUASTI

My paper aims to illustrate certain elements of the political and economic strategies adopted by the “Old Society” (that is, the pre-suppression Society of Jesus) in relation to the foundation of its colleges.¹ The context I have chosen is that of the Kingdom of Naples, a territory that corresponds to present-day southern Italy, which was for two centuries (from the beginning of the sixteenth to the early eighteenth) one of the major *reinos* of the “Spanish composite monarchy.” Before briefly illustrating three case studies relating to this context, I would like to make some general observations.

My first observation concerns sources. Having a single repository for much of the documentation needed to reconstruct the history of the Society’s individual residences—namely the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI)—has definitely facilitated, and continues to facilitate, the relevant research: it has been particularly helpful to be able to consult the *Historiae provinciarum*, which contain the individual *Fundationes collegiorum* and the invaluable *Litterae annuae*,² while the series *Collegia* (*titulus* 18 of the *Fondo gesuitico antico*) brings together some of the documents relating to the creation and existence of the various residences.

The *Congregationes provinciarum/generales* collection, in addition, makes it possible to trace chronologically the internal debate about the order’s expansion strategies in both Roman and various local contexts, while the series that contain the “institutional” and “external” correspondence (like the *Epistolae praepositorum generalium*, the *Epistolae Italiae*, and the *Epistolae externorum*) also contain important information on the origins and development of individual residences. There are, obviously, other types of sources, handwritten and printed,³ some external to the Ignatian order. This wide range of ARSI documents enables us to reconstruct a comprehensive picture of the founding strategies employed by the Old Society.

My next observation concerns the dual type of funding needed to open a college or a residence in Europe during the early modern age. Here, we must make a distinction

1. This paper explores some topics analyzed in my last book *Collegi e masserie: I gesuiti nel Regno di Napoli (secoli XVI–XVIII); Alcuni casi di studio tra Capitanata e Terra di Bari* (Sesto San Giovanni: Editoriale Jouvence, 2022).

2. ARSI (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu), *Neap.* 72 (*Annuae litterae*, 1551–1614); *Neap.* 74 (*Annuae litterae*, 1640–49); *Neap.* 74a (*Annuae litterae*, 1642–49); *Neap.* 75 (*Annuae litterae*, 1650–75); *Neap.* 76, 1 (*Annuae litterae*, 1664–96); *Neap.* 76, 2 (*Annuae litterae*, 1700–67).

3. See especially Francesco Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia di Gesù appartenente al Regno di Napoli*, vols. 1–2 (Naples: Michele Luigi Mutio, 1706–11); Saverio Santagata, *Istoria della Compagnia di Gesù appartenente al Regno di Napoli*, vols. 3–4 (Naples: Vincenzo Mazzola, 1756–57); Giovan Francesco Araldo, *Napoli, l’Europa e la Compagnia di Gesù nella “Cronica” di Giovan Francesco Araldo*, ed. Francesco Divenuto (Naples: ESI, 1998).

between two forms of endowment. In general terms, the financing of a college relied primarily on a fixed income (an annuity), which served to cover the maintenance costs of the fathers, lay brothers, and students, as well as their educational and welfare activities. This was usually guaranteed by a city assembly or individual private benefactors, in particular those belonging to the nobility or to the secular clergy (the bishops and chapters of cathedrals).⁴ The *Constitutions*, however, recommended that the founders and benefactors of colleges (and in particular their heirs) should not be recognized as patrons in order to ensure that the heads of the order and the superiors had complete freedom of action.⁵ This initial income was frequently supplemented by the donation of buildings or land where the college and its church were to be built, together with its furniture and sacred furnishings.

However, apart from the financial endowment required to establish new sites, the future of the colleges depended on a continuous flow of money in the form of tithes, donations, bequests, and legacies from the faithful: the superiors invested this money to increase the income of individual colleges and of the province as a whole. Of course, in a mainly agrarian-based economy like that of *ancien régime* Europe, investments in landed assets or at least real estate were preferred, since these ensured a relatively safe additional income. Moreover, such types of investments did not break the vow of poverty that the Jesuits had to observe. It should be noted, however, that the initial concerns

4. On the Jesuits' founding strategies, see Miquel Batllori, *Cultura e finanze: Studi sulla storia dei gesuiti da S. Ignazio al Vaticano II* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1983), 121–38; László Lukács, "De origine collegiorum externorum deque controversiis circa eorum paupertatem obortis: Pars altera 1557–1608," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 30 (1961): 3–89; Louis Châtellier, *L'Europe des dévots* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987); Olwen Hufton, "The Widow's Mite and Other Strategies: Funding the Catholic Reformation; The Prothero Lecture," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1999): 117–37; Hufton, "Altruism and Reciprocity: The Early Jesuits and Their Female Patrons," *Renaissance Studies* 15 (2001): 328–53; Hufton, "Every Tub on Its Own Bottom: Funding a Jesuit College in Early Modern Europe," in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 5–23; Giancarlo Poidomani, *Gli ordini religiosi nella Sicilia moderna: Patrimoni e rendite nel Seicento* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2001); Poidomani, "Bilanci, finanze e gestione patrimoniale nei collegi gesuitici siciliani alla metà del XVII secolo," in *L'uso del denaro: Patrimoni e amministrazione nei luoghi pii e negli enti ecclesiastici in Italia (secoli XV–XVIII)*, ed. Alessandro Pastore and Marina Garbellotti (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001) 301–34; Patrizio Foresta, "Le strategie insediative della Compagnia di Gesù: Pietro Canisio ed il collegio di Praga," *Schifanoia: Notizie dell'Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali di Ferrara* 28–29 (2005): 49–59; Foresta, "Per una storia economica della Compagnia di Gesù nell'Impero tedesco in età moderna: Ipotesi di ricerca," in *Clero, economia e contabilità in Europa: Tra Medioevo ed età contemporanea*, ed. Roberto Di Pietra and Fiorenzo Landi (Rome: Carocci, 2007), 283–96; Fermín Sánchez Barea, "The Financing Sources of the Jesuits' Colleges in the Modern Age," *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences* 15 (2011): 2938–42; Niccolò Guasti, ed., *I patrimoni dei gesuiti nell'Italia moderna: Una prospettiva comparativa* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2013); Adriano Prosperi, *La vocazione: Storie di gesuiti tra Cinquecento e Seicento* (Turin: Einaudi, 2016); Ariane Boltanski and Aliocha Maldavsky, "Laité and Procurement of Funds," in *The Acquaviva Project: Claudio Acquaviva's Generalate (1581–1615) and the Emergence of Modern Catholicism*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Flavio Rurale (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017), 191–216; Boltanski and Maldavsky, "Économie de la foi: Les bienfaiteurs laïcs des collèges et missions jésuites entre l'Europe et les Indes (XVI^e–XVII^e s.)," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 237, no. 4 (2020): 647–73; Ariane Boltanski, "Funding the Propagation of the Faith: Noble Strategies and the Financial Support of Jesuit Colleges in France and Italy (c.1590–c.1650)," in *Trade and Finance in Global Missions (16th–18th Centuries)*, ed. Hélène Vu Thanh and Ines G. Županov (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 183–206.

5. Simona Negruzzo, "'Il bisogno temporale': Il patrimonio dei collegi dei gesuiti tra Piemonte e Lombardia (secoli XVI–XVIII)," in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 71–84, here 77–78; Boltanski and Maldavsky, "Économie de la foi," 666–68.

relating to the safeguarding of the vow stipulated by the *Constitutions* were allayed during the generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (in office 1581–1615), thus permitting riskier investments comparable to usury, such as the acquisition of government bonds (for instance, the Spanish monarchy's *jurros*).⁶ It is noteworthy that once the education of the elites had been added to the order's *consueta ministeria*, the Jesuits favored new openings in large urban centers, in other words where the courts, the ruling elites, and the mercantile classes resided. Even so, in the specific context of the Kingdom of Naples, the Jesuits continued to open residences (and therefore schools) also in provincial cities and in small agriculture-based rural centers.⁷

Studying the subject of expansion strategies of the Jesuits in Europe during the modern age is interesting for a number of reasons. First, because doing so illustrates some essential motivations and dynamics of the patronage supported by Catholic elites within and beyond the continent. The founding strategies form an ideal vantage-point from which to observe and understand the mental, political, and social mechanisms that drove the laity in general and the ruling classes in particular to finance the sacred, especially during the period of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Personally, I prefer to talk of “political-economic” strategies since the two dimensions (of politics and of economics), in a hierarchical society like that of the *ancien régime* (be it in Europe or in South America), were inextricably linked: from the point of view of the nobility and the mercantile families, financing the structure of a religious order not only secured the benefactor's spiritual salvation and his eventual admission to paradise but could also represent an investment in earthly status since it gave prestige to his family and strengthened its social and political position.⁸

Meanwhile, from the Jesuits' perspective, the economic support provided by the ruling classes was of fundamental importance to ensuring that free access to their schools and the many charitable and welfare activities carried out in those residences could continue. The privileged link the Society of Jesus was able to forge with the European elites was thus also used to bolster the standing of the order within the church, society, and individual states: as Luke Clossey and Ines G. Županov have demonstrated so authoritatively, the “spiritual economy,” linked with the veneration of the order's saints or martyrs, guaranteed the Society a significant return in terms of financial and

6. Giuseppe Galasso, *Economia e società nella Calabria del Cinquecento* (Naples: Guida, 1992), 377–80; Flavio Rurale, *I gesuiti a Milano: Religione e politica nel secondo Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), 180–96; Gaetano Sabatini, “Il Patrimonio degli ordini religiosi e l'investimento in quote di debito pubblico nel regno di Napoli in età moderna: Primi spunti per una riflessione,” in *Confische e sviluppo capitalistico: I grandi patrimoni del clero regolare in età moderna in Europa e nel continente americano*, ed. Fiorenzo Landi (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2004), 197–213; Poidomani, *Gli ordini religiosi*, 109–11, 148–49; Poidomani, “Bilanci, finanze e gestione,” 301–34; Fiorenzo Landi, “Le strategie finanziarie dei gesuiti nell'inchiesta innocenziana,” in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 25–39 (32–37).

7. Mario Rosa, “Strategia missionaria gesuitica in Puglia agli inizi del Seicento,” in *Studi di storia pugliese in onore di Giuseppe Chiarelli*, ed. Michele Paone (Galatina: Congedo, 1974), 3:159–86.

8. Hufton, “Widow's Mite,” 127–28.

political and cultural prestige.⁹

It should in fact be noted that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the economy was still conceived by theologians and the privileged ranks in the etymological sense of *oikonomica*, that is, as correct management of the “home” and family, while the Jesuits, like the medieval mendicant orders, justified the perception of financial resources as subordinate to Christian *caritas* (the “mother of all virtues,” according to Thomas Aquinas), thus using the religious dimension of the juridical concept of *antidora* (meaning “reciprocating gift” or “reciprocating benefit”) and the promise of an otherworldly reward in order to receive a steady stream of money from the faithful.¹⁰ From the Middle Ages, religious orders used the capital received in alms to maintain an “economy of charity” whose purpose was to redistribute goods on the basis of justice and the spiritual demands of charity.¹¹ Obviously, this does not mean that the Jesuits were not able, more than many other religious orders, to use this “economy of gifts” and “reciprocating” to quickly acquire vast assets of real estate and land and to manage them successfully and rationally. In respect of this, historiography has at times insisted that the Jesuits had no qualms about investing a part of the sums received in alms, specifically those donated for their colleges, following a logic that now appears oriented toward profit.¹² In addition, a number of scholars, such as Francesco Renda and more recently Giancarlo Poidomani and Paolo Quattrone, have also underlined the efficient way in which the Jesuits administered their wealth, in particular their real estate assets.¹³

Second, studying the Jesuits’ expansion strategies enables us to understand better the political dynamics and social balances prevailing between civil and religious power

9. Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Mission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 162–92, 216–37; Ines G. Županov, “Passage to India: Jesuit Spiritual Economy between Martyrdom and Profit in the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 1–39. See also Frederik Vermote, “Financing Jesuit Missions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 128–49.

10. Bartolomé Clavero, *Antidora: Antropología católica de la economía moderna* (Milan: Giuffrè Editore, 1991).

11. Giacomo Todeschini, *I mercanti e il tempio: La società cristiana e il circolo virtuoso della ricchezza fra Medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002); Paola Vismara, *Oltre l'usura: La chiesa moderna e il prestito a interesse* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino Editore, 2004); Paolo Prodi, *Settimo non rubare: Furto e mercato nella storia dell'Occidente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009); Jacques Le Goff, *Le Moyen Age et l'argent: Essai d'anthropologie historique* (Paris: Perrin, 2010); Amedeo Quondam, *Forma del vivere: L'etica del gentiluomo e i moralisti italiani* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010); Gérard Delille, *L'economia di Dio: Famiglia e mercato tra Cristianesimo, Ebraismo, Islam* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2013).

12. Landi, “Le strategie finanziarie,” 26–32; Flavio Rurale, “Calcolo e rischio nella gestione economica del collegio–università di Mantova (secoli XVI–XVIII),” in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 55–70.

13. Francesco Renda, *Bernardo Tanucci e i beni dei gesuiti in Sicilia* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1974), 64–71; Poidomani, *Gli ordini religiosi*, 106, 151; Poidomani, “Bilanci, finanze e gestione,” 312–31; Paolo Quattrone, “Accounting for God: Accounting and Accountability Practices in the Society of Jesus (Italy 16th–17th Centuries),” *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 29 (2004): 647–83; Quattrone, “Books to Be Practiced: Memory, the Power of the Visual, and the Success of Accounting,” *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 34 (2009): 85–118; Quattrone, “Gli effetti organizzativi dei manuali gesuitici tra religione ed economia,” in Di Pietra and Landi, *Clero, economia e contabilità*, 66–75. See also John W. O’Malley, “The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where Does It Stand Today?,” in *The Jesuits I: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 3–37, here 26–28.

in various locations: one thinks, for example, of the political support needed to open a college in places where other higher-level schools or universities already functioned and of the frequent conflicts triggered in cities or local communities by the Jesuits' arrival.¹⁴ These clashes, in a society as profoundly hierarchical as that of the Kingdom of Naples, affected the ruling classes and then extended to the peripheral political and administrative bodies of the state (since these were usually grafted on to strong existing rivalries between the most illustrious aristocratic families in the cities). These clashes often ended up involving the clergy (since the regular orders already present tended to oppose the arrival of new religious communities that might appropriate their economic resources and prestige).

Naturally, given the global reach of the Jesuits' activities, when one deals with the history of the Society's diffusion, it is naturally worth taking into consideration some specific cases. The reason for this is that it is only by comparing how general guidelines from Rome and the provincial leadership were adapted in different local contexts that one can discern the existence or absence of a strategy, assess its effectiveness, and identify any deviations from it: this is the "glocal" approach most suited to investigating the various facets of Jesuit action. However, this approach is valid only when the contexts are rigorously reconstructed. For example, the biographies of individual fathers and their supporters need to be analyzed, since there would otherwise be a risk of using formulaic comparisons in such a way as to produce superficial (or worse, anachronistic) examinations of complex phenomena.

In the specific case of the Kingdom of Naples, it is necessary to keep several factors in mind in order to best contextualize the founding strategies of the Jesuits. First of all, it is vital to have good knowledge of the political, administrative, and institutional framework of the Kingdom of Naples, as well as an awareness of its role within the Habsburg multi-synodal monarchy and the Spanish imperial system: the Spanish monarchy, as shown by John Elliott, Giuseppe Galasso, and, more recently, Aurelio Musi, was a polycentric and decentralized state in which each kingdom or territory had to make a financial and strategic contribution to the imperial policy of Castile.¹⁵ Hence, in the Kingdom of Naples, the opening of a college, after it had obtained a financial endowment from local patrons and benefactors, would usually need the endorsement of the viceroy, his Consiglio Collaterale and the Camera della Sommaria (the highest financial body of the kingdom). In the event of particularly bitter conflicts or protests, the Jesuits and the viceroy would also seek the backing of the two Neapolitan representatives in Madrid who belonged to the Consiglio d'Italia. In some cases, especially during the seventeenth century, discussions about a dispute caused by the foundation of a Jesuit residence could involve the favorite minister, the royal secretary and the

14. Paul F. Grendler, *The Jesuits and Italian Universities, 1548–1773* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017).

15. John H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present* 137 (1992): 48–71; Giuseppe Galasso, *Napoli spagnola dopo Masaniello: Politica, cultura, società*, 2 vols. (Florence: Sansoni, 1982); Galasso, *Storia del Regno di Napoli*, vol. 2, (*Il Mezzogiorno spagnolo, 1494–1622*) (Turin: Utet, 2006); Aurelio Musi, *L'impero dei viceré* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013). See a similar perspective in Pedro Cardim et al., eds., *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

royal family, and even the sovereign, almost making it a question of state. Indeed, at times it became exactly that because, as José Martínez Millán and Esther Jiménez Pablo have demonstrated, the policy of the Habsburg monarchy, from Charles V (r.1519–56) onward, followed the typical patterns of a factional struggle, by which the foundations of the Jesuits were supported by certain court “parties,” both at court and in local areas. For example, it has been demonstrated that during the reign of Charles V, the viceroys of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia (along with the governors of Milan), and particularly those chosen from within the pro-Castile faction led by Francisco de los Cobos and Pedro Álvarez de Toledo (third duke of Alba and viceroy of Naples from 1532 to 1553), tended to support the spread of the Society in Spain’s Italian territories, while after the ascent to the throne of Philip II (r.1556–98), the Jesuits, in Spain as in southern Italy, seemed to be linked to the Ebolist group led by Ruy Gómez de Silva, prince of Eboli.¹⁶ Then, in the first half of the seventeenth century, following the “de-Hispanization” and the “Romanization” of the order undertaken by Acquaviva, it was instead the “Roman party” that backed the Jesuits in the various Italian territories of Spain.¹⁷ What is more,

16. Carlos José Hernando Sánchez, “Entre ‘Napoli nobilissima’ y ‘Napoli sacra’: Las órdenes religiosas y el virrey Pedro de Toledo,” in *I religiosi a corte: Teologia, politica e diplomazia in antico regime*, ed. Flavio Rurale (Rome: Bulzoni, 1998), 51–100; José Martínez Millán, “Grupos de poder en la corte durante el reinado de Felipe II: La facción ebolista, 1554–1573,” in *Instituciones y élites de poder en la monarquía hispana durante el siglo XVI*, ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1992), 137–97; Martínez Millán, “Familia real y grupos políticos: La princesa doña Juana de Austria (1535–1573),” in *La corte de Felipe II*, ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Alianza, 1994), 73–106; José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, “La quiebra de la monarquía hispano-castellana de Felipe II,” in *La Monarquía de Felipe III: La casa del rey*, ed. José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Madrid: Fundación MAPFRE, 2008), 1:25–56; Martínez Millán, *La formación de la monarquía católica de Felipe III*, in Martínez Millán and Visceglia, *La monarquía de Felipe III*, 118–94; James M. Boyden, *The Courtier and the King: Ruy Gómez de Silva, Philip II, and the Court of Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Manuel Rivero Rodríguez, *Felipe II y el gobierno de Italia* (Madrid: SEACEX, 1998); Pedro Cardim and Joan-Lluís Palos, eds., *El mundo de los virreyes en las monarquías de España y Portugal* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2012); Aurelio Musi, *L'impero dei viceré*, 99–127.

17. José Martínez Millán, “Transformación y crisis de la Compañía de Jesús,” in Rurale, *I religiosi a corte*, 101–29; José Martínez Millán, “La trasformazione della monarchia hispana alla fine del XVI secolo: Dal modello cattolico castigliano al paradigma universale cattolico-romano,” in *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva: Strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. Paolo Broggio et al. (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2007), 19–53; Michela Catto, *La Compagnia divisa: Il dissenso nell'ordine gesuitico tra '500 e '600* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2009), 101–44; Flavio Rurale, “La politica cortigiana della Compagnia di Gesù,” in *Los jesuitas: Religión, política y educación (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. José Martínez Millán, Henar Pizarro Llorente, and Esther Jiménez Pablo (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2012), 1:103–21; Esther Jiménez Pablo, *La forja de una identidad: La Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2014); Jiménez Pablo, “El influjo de Roma en la organización y dirección de la Compañía de Jesús (1573–1581),” in *Centros de poder italianos en la monarquía hispánica (siglos XV–XVIII)*, ed. José Martínez Millán and Manuel Rivero Rodríguez (Madrid: Ed. Polifemo, 2010), 2:1261–1309; Jiménez Pablo, “The Evolution of the Society of Jesus during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Order that Favoured the Papacy or the Hispanic Monarchy?,” in *Papacy, Religious Orders, and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Massimo Carlo Giannini (Rome: Viella, 2013), 47–65; Jiménez Pablo, “La reestructuración de la Compañía de Jesús,” in Martínez Millán and Visceglia, *La monarquía de Felipe III*, 56–93; Silvia Mostaccio, “Gerarchie dell’obbedienza e contrasti istituzionali nella Compagnia di Gesù all’epoca di Sisto V,” *Rivista di storia del Cristianesimo* 1 (2004): 109–27; Mostaccio, *Early Modern Jesuits between Obedience and Conscience during the Generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615)* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Mostaccio, “Declinare l’obbedienza fuori e dentro la Compagnia: L’approccio gesuitico sotto il generalato di Claudio Acquaviva,” in Martínez Millán, Pizarro Llorente, and Jiménez Pablo, *Los jesuitas*, 2:995–1006; Fabre and Rurale, *Acquaviva Project*.

during the long *valimiento* of Olivares, a good number of the Spanish Jesuits, in agreement with Superior General Muzio Vitelleschi (in office 1615–45) and Pope Urban VIII (r.1623–44), aimed at opposing the hegemonic and “absolutist” policy (particularly in fiscal matters) of the favorite of Philip IV (r.1621–65), in order to redefine a new concept of “monarquía católica hispana” centered on the defense, guaranteed by the two branches of the Habsburgs, of the interests of the church and the spiritual power of the popes.¹⁸ I will not pause here to list the names of the viceroys who, through the sixteenth and seventeenth century, sided with the Jesuits’ settlement endeavors in the province of Naples.

A second variable to take into consideration when studying the founding strategies of the Neapolitan Jesuits is the complex ecclesiastical geography of southern Italy in relation to the Holy See. Most importantly, it must be remembered that the Kingdom of Naples, since the times of the Normans, was a vassal state of the pontiff (a vassal subordination attested by the *Omaggio della China*¹⁹) and that it consistently contributed to the financing of curial pensions, so much so that, as Mario Rosa claimed, entire southern provinces (such as Capitanata) were almost a “colonial land” of the prelates of the sacred Roman College.²⁰

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind the strength and persistence of the feudal system. During the early modern age, the power of the Neapolitan titled nobility grew in all the twelve provinces of the Kingdom of Naples, since, in exchange for its political loyalty, the Spanish sovereigns, from Charles V onward, routinely augmented the privileges and feudal powers of the nobility to the detriment of the bourgeois and popular ranks.²¹ As a result, even feudal dynamics profoundly conditioned the Jesuits’ plans for opening new sites, as I will now briefly try to demonstrate.

As I move on to describe the process by which the Society came to take root in the Kingdom of Naples, it should be remembered that the first settled community arrived in the southern capital in 1551 (three years after the foundation of the college of Messina in Sicily) in compliance with the will of Ignatius of Loyola. The community was officially established in 1558, when the First General Congregation sanctioned the birth of the Neapolitan province, with Alfonso Salmerón appointed as its head. The

18. José Martínez Millán, “La transformación del paradigma ‘católico hispano’ en el ‘católico romano’: La monarquía católica de Felipe III,” in *Homenaje a Antonio Domínguez Ortiz*, ed. Juan Luis Castellano and Miguel Luis López-Guadalupe Muñoz (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2008), 2:521–56; José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, “Nueva política con Roma,” in Martínez Millán and Visceglia, *La monarquía de Felipe III*, 1:160–87; Esther Jiménez Pablo, “El auge de la Compañía de Jesús,” in Martínez Millán and Visceglia, *La monarquía de Felipe III*, 198–219; Esther Jiménez Pablo, “La ideología religiosa de la Compañía de Jesús en el reinado de Felipe IV (1621–1645),” in *La corte de Felipe IV (1621–1665): Reconfiguración de la monarquía católica*, vol. 3, (*Espiritualidad, literatura y teatro*), ed. José Martínez Millán and Manuel Rivero Rodríguez (Madrid: Polifemo, 2017), 1559–668.

19. The “*Omaggio della China*” was a tribute paid by the kings of Naples as vassals to the popes.

20. Mario Rosa, *Curia romana nell’età moderna: Istituzioni, cultura, carriere* (Rome: Viella, 2013), 90–93.

21. Auelio Lepre, *Feudi e masserie: Problemi della società meridionale nel Sei e Settecento* (Naples: Guida, 1973); Aurelio Musi, *Il feudalesimo nell’Europa moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2007), 73–83, 114–18, 160–69, 176–81, 190–99, 205–22. About the feudal landed property owned by the clergy (including the Jesuits) in southern Italy, see Musi Aurelio and Maria Anna Noto, eds., *Feudalità laica e feudalità ecclesiastica nell’Italia Meridionale* (Palermo: Quaderni Mediterranea, 2011); Elisa Novi Chavarría and Vittoria Fiorelli, eds., *Baroni e vassalli: Storie moderne* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2012).

order's leaders and the southern community initially focused attention on Naples, one of Europe's most populous cities, which was always the main axis of the Jesuit presence in southern Italy, being home to seven houses: Gesù Vecchio (1552), the professed house of Gesù Nuovo (1579), the novitiate of Nunziatella (1587), Sant' Ignazio al Mercato (1612), San Francesco Saverio (1621), San Giuseppe a Chiaia (1623), and the college of the nobles (1634).²²

Until the first decade of the seventeenth century, however, the kingdom's Adriatic provinces—the Abruzzi and Apulia—were the chosen line for major expansion, as demonstrated, for example, by the creation of the colleges of Lecce, Cerignola, Bari, Barletta, Bovino, Molfetta, Monopoli, and Taranto. The final expansion effort took place in the 1620s and 1630s, in close connection with a renewed commitment to mission, and was concentrated on Calabria (with the opening of the colleges of Paola, Amantea, and Monteleone) and, as we have seen, also the capital. In total, from 1558 to 1767 (the year of the Jesuits' expulsion from the kingdom), thirty-seven residences were built, although the period of greatest expansion was between the year of the province's creation and 1634, when as many as thirty-five houses were inaugurated, while in the remaining 133 years of the Neapolitan community's existence only two new residences came into being (Sulmona in 1686 and Brindisi in 1752).²³ The Society's southern provinces did not always respect the dispositions that determined the minimum number of fathers and scholastics set by the *Constitutions*, by the general congregations, and by the generals. On the contrary, many of the residences in the Neapolitan province acquired a waiver on these provisions, thereby establishing themselves as *infimae rationis* colleges, which is to say small-scale structures. In southern Italy, closures (that is, the divestments) of colleges were infrequent, so much so that none of the order's seats were suppressed during the "survey" launched by Innocent X (r.1644–55) in 1649.²⁴

22. Michele Errichetti, "L'antico collegio Massimo dei gesuiti a Napoli (1552–1806)," *Campania sacra* 7 (1976): 170–264; Elisa Novi Chavarria, "Attività missionaria dei gesuiti nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia tra XVI e XVII secolo," in *Per la storia sociale e religiosa del Mezzogiorno*, ed. Giuseppe Galasso and Carla Russo (Naples: Guida, 1982), 2:159–85; Novi Chavarria, *Il governo delle anime: Azione pastorale, predicazione e missioni nel Mezzogiorno d'Italia; Secoli XVI–XVIII* (Naples: ESI, 2001); Carolina Belli, "La fondazione del Collegio dei Nobili di Napoli," in *Chiesa, assistenza e società nel Mezzogiorno moderno*, ed. Carla Russo (Galatina: Congedo, 1994), 183–280; David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Gentilcore, "Accomodarsi alla capacità del popolo: Strategie, metodi e impatto delle missioni nel Regno di Napoli, 1600–1800," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 109, no. 2 (1997): 689–722; Bruno Pellegrino, "I collegi gesuitici e la strategia della Compagnia nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600," in *Alle origini dell'Università dell'Aquila: Cultura, università; Collegi gesuitici all'inizio dell'età moderna in Italia meridionale; Convegno internazionale di studi (L'Aquila 8–11 novembre 1995)*, ed. Filippo Iappelli and Ulderico Parente (Rome: IHESI, 2000), 107–26; Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Mario Spedicato, "Il patrimonio dei gesuiti nel Mezzogiorno moderno: Alcune linee di lettura," in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 41–53; Alberto Tanturri, "La provincia napoletana della Compagnia di Gesù: Serie storica delle fondazioni, geografia degli insediamenti e identità dei fondatori (1558–1767)," in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 85–106.

23. Tanturri, "La provincia napoletana," 85–97.

24. Emanuele Boaga, *La soppressione innocenziana dei piccoli conventi in Italia* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1971); Emanuele Boaga, "Aspetti e problemi degli ordini e congregazioni religiose nei secoli XVII e XVIII," in *Problemi di storia della chiesa nei secoli XVII–XVIII: Atti del V convegno di aggiornamento, Bologna, 3–7 settembre 1979* (Naples: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1982), 91–135; Fiorenzo Landi, *Storia economica del clero in Europa: Secoli XV–XIX* (Rome: Carocci, 2005), 127–31; Poidomani, *Gli ordini religiosi*, 22–44.

In the Kingdom of Naples, the Jesuits favored the coastal mercantile cities and therefore the ports. Taking into consideration the four fundamental guidelines relating to the expansion of the Society in the south—Naples and the contiguous Tyrrhenian coast (seven seats in the capital, six in the surrounding area), Calabria (seven residences), the Abruzzi (six houses), and Apulia (nine structures)—we can see the absolute predominance of coastal settlements. In addition to the logistical reasons, such as the greater ease and safety of small cabotage communications compared to land-based ones, the motivations for this choice must be sought in a very specific calculation, which combined purely economic considerations with spiritual judgments and the desire to check heretical infiltrations: the coastal cities were the wealthiest and, therefore, those that could provide the largest donations, bequests, and alms.²⁵

Looking through the many reports drawn up by the fathers who came from Naples to the provinces to carry out missions among the people or deliver Easter sermons in small- and medium-sized provincial centers, one is soon persuaded that one of the guiding criteria adopted by the Jesuit leadership was the calculation of the economic and financial potential of the social context that was the subject of the catechesis. Such occasions provided the opportunity for a thorough exploratory survey, in which the pros and cons of establishing a future settlement were openly investigated: the Easter preaching and popular missions were moments in which to gain sympathy, forge alliances, obtain promises, and make preliminary agreements with the ruling groups and local authorities.²⁶

It is therefore not surprising to note that practically all the southern centers in which the Jesuits founded a college between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had been the focal points of popular missions on several occasions (as happened, thinking only of the three Apulian provinces, in Lecce, Barletta, and Taranto). In some cases, if we read these reports uncritically and with a contemporary eye, we might almost come to doubt that the action of catechesis was instrumental in assessing the economic potential of a specific territory and in building a network of friendships and patrons, vitally necessary to transform the sporadic and itinerant presence of the fathers into a permanent residence.²⁷ In reality, this is an interpretive bias (not by chance used effectively by the opponents of the order for more than two centuries), since the meticulous evaluation of the economic solidity of a given context—starting with the financial situation of the cities and the material conditions of the population—constituted the fundamental premise for the sustainable success of the religious, scholastic, and welfare activities that the Ignatians intended to carry out.

Most of the order's Neapolitan sites were financed by the nobility: the order's founders and benefactors, in particular of the residences in the capital, comprised lineages that cover the whole spectrum of the political, social, and economic status of the southern aristocracy—the great and the titled (the “barons,” belonging to lines of the old and new nobility, of Iberian, Italian, or local origin), in particular the families occupying the

25. Tanturri, “La provincia napoletana,” 97–102.

26. Rosa, “Strategia missionaria gesuitica,” 173, 175, 179–80.

27. See, for instance, the *Relatione di Castellammare* (May 24, 1608) in ARSI, *Neap.* 72, fol. 124^{r-v}.

five noble “seats” of Naples (that is, the rank representatives of the Neapolitan nobility residing in the capital, which in fact replaced the parliament in negotiations with the viceroys, in particular when the crown asked the kingdom for donations), but also the minor provincial nobility and the patrician classes of the coastal towns.

In reality, as Alberto Tanturri has demonstrated, in the case of the Kingdom of Naples (although the reasoning can also be extended to the other Spanish territories in Italy, such as Sicily and Sardinia) “a mixed foundation model” of the Society’s houses predominates: several subjects—usually one or multiple aristocratic benefactors or donors, a lay brotherhood, a town hall, a bishop—combined their donations to finance the opening and maintenance of a college: in other words, the Society’s locations were usually financed by networks of supporters who established veritable consortiums or joint ventures that were needed to guarantee, also from an intergenerational point of view, “long-term projects of capitalization” to the Society’s structures.²⁸

That the demand for new Jesuit settlements more often than not came from the nobility—twenty-six aristocrats were among the principal founders of the thirty-five branches of the Neapolitan province—did not always guarantee their survival or development. This was because the superiors often agreed to open a simple residence or college in a minor town simply to appease a tertiary. The order, in such cases, subordinated the economic calculation to an opposite logic: financial investment gave way to issues of status and political advantage that symbolic alliances with great families from the Neapolitan nobility could ensure. Such locations, of course, were unable to count on sufficient teaching staff, failed to fit organically into the administrative and operational fabric of the Society, were often located in interior areas far from the kingdom’s main roads or in economically fragile locations, and were therefore unable to develop. Thus, despite having a legacy that guaranteed a certain annual income, in the long run they ended up becoming an unsustainable burden on the order’s human and financial resources.

One of the essential elements that helps to explain the settlement strategies of the Jesuits in the Kingdom of Naples is that of the diverse juridical nature of the centers where they decided to open their structures. This is a factor that historiography has tended to underestimate, but in many situations it was of crucial importance. In fact, entire territories of the south, including cities and smaller centers (called “universities”), fell under the jurisdiction of old or new feudal families (the “barons”), while the sovereign maintained full control over certain urban centers and territories known as “royal” or “crown possessions.”²⁹ In the Kingdom of Naples, the Jesuits seemed to prefer building their residences in the latter, since the future of settlements established in fiefdoms would be uncertain because they were more closely linked to the ever-changing will of the family that had desired and endowed them. This was what happened in Cerignola and Bovino, whose colleges were closed only a few years after their foundation. Although often unable to counter an explicit request for a foundation made by

28. Tanturri, “La provincia napoletana,” 102–06; Boltanski, “Funding the Propagation,” 185–86, 191–94.

29. Giulio Sodano, “Governing the City,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 109–29.

an important feudal family with an outright rejection, the southern Jesuits (like the Roman leadership) were aware of the risk of basing the creation and development of a college in a preferential manner on rents guaranteed by a powerful noble founder, to which were added those paid by the communities and individual vassals wishing to please or emulate their lord. Moreover, in royal centers reliant on trade it was easier to collect alms and donations from a greater number of benefactors, so the economic dynamism and social articulation of the urban fabric of the royal cities were well suited to the “mixed” foundation model (with a plurality of lenders joined together in consortiums) preferred by the order.

The local areas that I have chosen in order to analyze in detail the political-economic strategies of the Society coincide with two of the ancient provinces of the Kingdom of Naples, namely Capitanata and Terra di Bari, located in present-day Puglia (the “heel” of the Italian “boot”; the third Apulian province in the Kingdom of Naples was Terra d’Otranto). In Capitanata, the Roman Jesuits acquired four large farms (*masserie*) at the beginning of the seventeenth century,³⁰ while the Neapolitan confrères threw themselves enthusiastically into a work of acculturation of the local populations, which culminated in the foundation of the colleges of Bovino and Cerignola. In the northern area of Terra di Bari, on the other hand, the college of Barletta was built and ended up having a very different, albeit complementary, fate to the other two residences. I have chosen these specific case studies because, in the context of an extensive historiographical debate that has analyzed minutely the strategies adopted by the Jesuits (as well as other orders of the Counter-Reformation, primarily the Theatines and the Piarists) to establish themselves in the continental south, the founding events in Bovino, Cerignola, and Barletta have remained rather more in the shadows than those of the Apulian (Bari, Molfetta, Monopoli, Lecce, and Taranto) and Neapolitan colleges. Furthermore, these three colleges went through complicated, conflicting, and interrelated foundational events, so it is necessary to analyze them as a whole.

The college of Cerignola was a creation of Anna de Mendoza, consort of Carlo Caracciolo, count of Sant’Angelo dei Lombardi and of Cerignola.³¹ A member of a family that had been close to the Society for decades, the noblewoman was the sister of a Jesuit (Giovanni) and had chosen as confessor one of the most influential fathers of the Neapolitan province, Girolamo Soriano (or Suriano), who in November 1582 had taken part in the final negotiation that led to the birth of the college in Bari.³² In 1578, when the opportunity to establish a presence in Barletta was lost due to the temporary

30. ARSI, *Fondo gesuitico* 929/33, 930/34, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1015a, 1073/1, 1111/XI, fols. 291^r–331^r; *Collegia*, 107/1478, fasc. 12, fols. 2^r–4^r; *Prov. Rom.* 150/1, fols. 176^r–177^r; 152/1, fols. 19^r–31^v; Lepre, “Feudi e masserie,” 28, 86–88, 137–38, 140–41, 145, 154–73; Niccolò Guasti, “Un dibattito interno alla Compagnia di Gesù: Le masserie dei gesuiti romani in Capitanata,” in Guasti, *I patrimoni dei gesuiti*, 123–55.

31. On Anna de Mendoza, see ARSI, *Collegia* 101/1472, docs. 1–5; Araldo, *Napoli, l’Europa e la Compagnia*, 27, 74, 171, 176–77, 230, 269, 311–12, 318, 379, 384, 386–87, 393–95; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 1:104, 110–11, 350–57, 393–94, 441–45; 2:24, 60–62, 71; Elisa Novi Chavarría, “Mendoza, Anna,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto dell’Enciclopedia italiana, 2009), 73:448–49; Parente, *Gesuiti e potere politico*, 139, 141.

32. ARSI, *Neap.* 179 (*Fundat. Colleg.*), 1:fols. 150^r–151^r; *Coll. Bariense. Assignatio Redditus* (copy); Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 1:207, 316, 351, 356, 360, 435–44; 2:36–37, 174.

failure of the negotiations that Soriano himself had conducted with the council (or “regiment”) of that royal city,³³ the superiors in Naples decided to accept Mendoza’s proposal to found it in Cerignola, the capital of the Caracciolo fiefdom. The countess, in addition to financing (along with her husband) the construction of the college and its church, offered an annuity of twelve thousand *scudi*, which was only just enough to cover the activities of the small community (a school of cases of conscience for the local clergy and grammar lessons for the children of patrician families).³⁴ It was therefore obvious that the existence of the college of Cerignola, built in a feudal “university,” was contingent on the will of its benefactress. Hence, when she returned to Naples in 1583 following the deaths of her faithful confessor Soriano and her second husband, the college had to endure a time of hardship, despite the good relations the Jesuits had managed to establish with the local bishop.

Thus, as early as January 1591, the province’s superiors decreed the discontinuation of the college, citing a number of reasons: the poverty of the population, the lack of students, the widely spread “bad air,” the difficulties in obtaining supplies, and the continuous flow of travelers that interrupted the completion of normal educational activities.³⁵ In truth, the fact that the closure, in 1592, of the college of Cerignola in the southern part of Capitanata took place in the same period as the opening of the college in Barletta in the northern part of Terra di Bari (the two towns are about thirty kilometers apart) is evidence of the partiality that the superiors of the order had always had for Barletta and confirms that the establishment of the Cerignola college had depended exclusively on the desire to gratify a demanding benefactress: in the end, it also proved to be a winning strategy from an economic point of view, given that Anna de Mendoza, once widowed and back in Naples, continued to finance the province generously, for instance by endowing the Neapolitan novitiate in 1587.³⁶

The events surrounding the college in the city of Barletta were rather different. Apart from being an important port and the center of one of the most prosperous agricultural areas in the Kingdom of Naples, Barletta was much more populous and wealthy than Cerignola or Bovino and, most importantly, as a royal city, it could not be subjected to the whims and oppression of local barons. It was also led by a rich and dynamic urban patriciate, which did everything necessary to provide the province

33. ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae*, 150/I, fols. 270^{r-v}, 393^{r-v}.

34. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 134, fol. 6^r; *Collegia* 26/1385, 2, docs. 1–5; *Neap.* 72, fol. 81^r; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 1:110–11, 350–57, 441–45; Filippo Iappelli, “Gesuiti a Cerignola: 1578–1592,” *Societas* 39, nos. 4–5 (1990): 120–26.

35. ARSI, *Congregationes provinciarum*, vol. 44 (1587–91), *Congreg. Prov. Neap.* 1590, fols. 49^r–50^r; *De tollendo Coll. Cerignola/Raggioni per togliere il Collegio della Cirignola, reviste dal P. Mario d’Andri, P. Luca di Stadio Rettore di Bari e P. Ger. Cicero per ordine della congregazione provinciale di Napoli 1590, e date al procuratore della provincia nostra per rappresentare al N. P. Generale*, 16 gennaio 1591. See also ARSI, *Sic.* 202, fols. 222^r–223^r; *Hist. Soc.* 58, fols. 157^r–160^r; Araldo, *Napoli, l’Europa e la Compagnia*, 177; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 1:350–56, 444–45.

36. ARSI, *Ital.* 160, fols. 199^{r-v}; *Collegia* 26/1385, 2, docs. 3–5; *Congregationes provinciarum*, vol. 44 (1587–91), *Congreg. Prov. Neap.* 1590, fols. 23^r, 49^{r-v}; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 1:104, 110, 350–57, 393–94, 444–45; 2:138; Araldo, *Napoli, l’Europa e la Compagnia*, 27, 74, 171, 176–77, 230, 269, 311–12, 318, 379, 384, 386–87, 393–95.

with an adequate budget.³⁷ In 1592, after years of negotiations,³⁸ this generosity finally convinced the superiors, both in Naples and Rome, of the need to found a college in the city (which might almost be seen as a sort of relocation of the Cerignola college, which had closed a few months earlier). In that year, they accepted an endowment that had been approved by the town hall in 1583 (five hundred ducats per annum, plus a one-off payment of four thousand *scudi* for the purchase of the building).³⁹ In addition to the closure of the college in nearby Cerignola, the situation was unlocked by an attempt of the Theatines to found their own residence in Barletta in agreement with a group of families who rivaled those supporting the Jesuits. That incident actually caused a bitter dispute between the two orders that was only resolved through the intervention of the viceroy (Juan de Zúñiga y Avellaneda), who upheld the appeals of the Jesuits and, more importantly, of Pope Clement VIII (r.1592–1605). In fact, at Acquaviva's request, the pontiff got the Theatine general to abandon his order's plans and to hand over to the Society a building that they had already acquired in the center of Barletta.⁴⁰

After the Theatines had left the city, the Jesuits quickly completed the construction of the college and immediately established permanent operations in the city. The inauguration of the college's church, described by the Jesuit historian Francesco Schinosi in his *Istoria della Compagnia di Giesù appartenente al Regno di Napoli* (History of the Society of Jesus in the Kingdom of Naples), was accompanied by a solemn procession "of the nobility, and every other order of people, behind the clergy" and with a Mass celebrated by the city's archbishop.⁴¹ The schools (of grammar for smaller children and of humanities for older ones) were opened by two father superiors sent to run the college—Sertorio Caputo and the Basque Cristóbal Corquera—assisted by five coadjutors. The success of the schools (along with the four Marian congregations connected to the college) can be measured by the fact that during 1593 the two schoolmasters were joined by another eight priests and three coadjutors, making eighteen Jesuits in all.⁴²

The *Litterae annuae* (in particular those of 1611, 1613, 1620, and 1622) reveal a stabilization of the activities carried out by the Jesuits in Barletta and, consequently, of their number, which, from 1613 onward, settled at around ten to twelve members.⁴³ Further bequests, made by private benefactors during the seventeenth century, allowed the Society to take root organically in the fabric of the city, ensuring solid continuity to

37. Victor Rivera Magos, Saverio Russo, and Giuliano Volpe, eds., *Archeologia storia arte: Materiali per la storia di Barletta (secoli IV a. C.–XIX d. C.)* (Bari: Edipuglia, 2015).

38. The first "survey mission" in Barletta carried out by a Neapolitan superior dates back to March/April 1576: see ARSI, *Epistolae Italiae*, 150/I, fols. 270^{r-v}, 393^{r-v}.

39. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 134, fols. 24^r, 107^r, 137^v–138^r, 163^v; *Neap.* 180 (*Fundat. Colleg.*), 2:fols. 5^r–202^v; *Collegia* 11/1369, 13, docs. 1–26; *Rom.* 14, I, fols. 28^r–30^r; *Sic.* 202, fols. 186^r–192^r; *Fondo gesuitico* 94, fols. 319^r–325^r; *Institut.* 188, fols. 294^{r-v}.

40. ARSI, *Prov. Neap.* 180 (*Fundat. Colleg.*), 2:fols. 5^r–27^v, 30^r–33^r, 41^r–43^r; *Rom.* 14, I, fols. 28^r–30^r; Araldo, *Napoli, l'Europa e la Compagnia*, 314–15; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 2:174–82; Vincenzo Maulucci, "I teatini a Barletta," *Regnum Dei* 49, no. 119 (1993): 3–57.

41. Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 2:176.

42. ARSI, *Neap.* 72, fols. 81^r, 113^r; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 2:177–80. See also Araldo, *Napoli, l'Europa e la Compagnia*, 314–15.

43. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 134, fols. 24^r, 107^r, 137^v–138^r, 163^v; *Neap.* 72, fols. 64^v–65^r, 81^r, 104^r–105^v, 113^r, 151^r, 174^v–175^r, 184^r, 194^r; Rosa, "Strategia missionaria gesuitica," 162–63, 185–86.

their activities. In fact, thanks to those new financial resources, starting from 1638, the college was entirely rebuilt on the model of the Gesù Nuovo in Naples. Then, in 1681, the adjacent church, dedicated to Saint Paul, was reconstructed.⁴⁴ From the start of the Austrian viceroyalty (1707) up to the expulsion decreed on October 31, 1767 by Ferdinand IV of Bourbon (r.1759–1825), the Jesuit community in Barletta, like the entire Neapolitan province, generally continued to prosper. When, on the night of November 18, 1767, Bourbon officials carried out the occupation of the college in accordance with the expulsion order issued by Ferdinand IV, ten Jesuits were present in the structure: three priests, six coadjutors, and a novice.⁴⁵

In the case of Bovino, the capital of the Duchy of Guevara (a noble lineage of Basque origin) situated in the Apulian province of Capitanata, the birth of the college (active from 1605 to 1637) was owed to Íñigo de Guevara, the second duke of Bovino and grand seneschal of the Kingdom of Naples. The story of this college's foundation is interesting and unusual since it was intertwined with the "patron's" deep religious conversion, which led him to abandon the lay state and to enter the Society: the opening was thus connected to the vocation of an "illustrious" personage and partly inspired by the well-known story behind Francisco de Borja's foundation of the University of Gandía.⁴⁶ After abandoning the lay state in 1604 and handing down his title and the estate of Bovino to his eldest son, in 1606 Guevara became, at the age of forty-five, a novice (along with another of his sons) in the Roman seminary of Sant'Andrea.⁴⁷ Shortly before moving to Rome to enter the novitiate, however, Guevara had already taken the first steps for the establishment of the college in Bovino,⁴⁸ assuring the general curia that his eldest son (Giovanni de Guevara) would commit an annual income of five hundred ducats for the completion of the college building and for food and clothing for the fathers, to which would be added a contribution of 1,500 ducats per year from the three towns that made up the estate (Bovino, Savignano, and Orsana). In addition to this, Íñigo de Guevara undertook to allocate part of the interest coming from the Monte Guevara, the bank fund he had established for the maintenance of the residence, and he guaranteed that in the following years his son would increase the annual income to

44. Rita Mavelli, "Barletta tra Sei e Settecento: Bilancio degli studi e nuove prospettive di ricerca," in Rivera Magos, Russo, and Volpe, *Archeologia storia arte*, 175–84, here 180–82.

45. ASFg (Archivio di Stato di Foggia), *Dogana delle pecore*, serie I, 739, fasc. 17389, fols. 16^r–17^v.

46. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.*, 177 (*Sobre la entrada en la Compañía del P. Indico de Guevara duque de Bovino en el reyno de Nápoles*), 105–7, fols. 268^r–283^r. Michela Catto is currently researching this peculiar vocation.

47. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 177, fols. 269^r, 276^r.

48. According to Schinosi, as early as 1562 Superior General Diego Laínez (in office 1558–65) had rejected a first request from the local population for opening a college in Bovino. The Neapolitan province delivered a favorable opinion on the opening of a college in Bovino in 1603, primarily because the city was near to Barletta and very close to the first Apulian farm (that of Stornara) the Roman Jesuits had purchased in 1600; the college opened in 1605: see ARSI, *Congregationes provinciarum*, vol. 51 (1593–1643), *Congreg. Prov. Neap.* 1603, fol. 41^{r-v}; *Fondo gesuitico* 929 (*Diversa bonorum Apuliae, secc. XVII–XVIII*), fasc. 1 and 1bis; 1111/XI, fols. 291^r–331^r; Rosa, "Strategia missionaria gesuitica," 174–75. Later (in the year 1608), it was Giovanni de Guevara who bought on behalf of the Roman province a second farm (called Ordonia) in the same Apulian province where Bovino was located, that is, the Capitanata: ARSI, *Fondo gesuitico* 1111/XI, fols. 171^r–176^r, 227^r–269^r, 280–292^r.

four thousand ducats.⁴⁹

Apart from the account provided in Schinosi's *Istoria della Compagnia di Giesù* at the start of the 1700s and by the declarations of Guevara himself and his son in the official document confirming the endowment of the college, it is clear that the old and new duke had "persuaded" their feudal communities to contribute the 1,500 ducats each year (which in fact represented the capital that covered the structure's "operating costs") by means of the forms of coercion typical of a feudal jurisdiction. It should in fact be borne in mind that the political and legal dynamics of an urban center under a feudal regime were very different from those existing in a royal town, where usually several patrician families competed for local office and thus also for opportunities to provide patronage to the religious congregations and institutions. Once the founding procedures were regulated and the agreements relating to the financial endowment concluded,⁵⁰ the college of Bovino became fully operational: in 1606, the staff was made up of eight fathers, a number that would remain constant from the mid-1620s to the early 1630s.⁵¹ The superiors immediately opened the "schools," and the college also served as a seminary for the clergy of the local diocese, which, in addition to courses in grammar and the humanities, offered a philosophy curriculum. The attitude of the bishop and the cathedral chapter, who had already shown themselves favorable to the Jesuits, was warm, enabling the new arrivals to carry out "their functions in the largest church consecrated to the Virgin of the Assumption, and to St Mark, bishop of Lucera."⁵²

And yet, despite all these positive initial circumstances, even the Bovino college (as had occurred in Cerignola) struggled to integrate into the local social fabric, in part because of certain unspecified "scandals" involving some of the fathers, to which the order's documents allude. It is in fact obvious that small provincial colleges, where usually only schools of grammar and humanities were opened (despite Bovino's offering a curriculum in philosophy), were served by rather young Jesuits—who in some cases might not have been so well trained or motivated—with consequent risks for the "endurance" or "quality" of those subjects: the closure of these locations stemmed in part from the need to avoid scandals and damage to the Society's reputation, and so it was the patrons' support alone that enabled the colleges to survive. Once the interest of the principal family of benefactors waned—in the case of Bovino because of the cooling relationship between the Jesuits and Giovanni de Guevara's son, Carlo Antonio (the fourth duke of Bovino), and of his wife, Placida Cybo, both Capuchin sympathizers—in 1636 the superiors of the province requested and obtained permission from Rome to close the college.⁵³ They cited logistical difficulties (Bovino was in the interior,

49. ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 134, fol. 53r, 177, fol. 268^v; *Collegia* 19/1378, 8 (*Confirmatio assignationis annui redditus cum dismembratione applicatione et unione: signatura Pauli V, 1606*); *Neap.* 180 (*Fundat. Colleg.*), 2: fols. 245^r–250^v; Santagata, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 3:150–51, 530–32; 4:286–87.

50. ARSI, *Congregationes provinciarum* vol. 51 (1593, 1603, 1608, 1643), *Congreg. Prov. Neap.* 1606, fols. 41^{r-v}, 59^v–60^r.

51. *Neap.* 73 (*Annuae litterae 1623*), fols. 183^r–185^r; Rosa, "Strategia missionaria gesuitica," 185–86.

52. Santagata, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 3:151.

53. ARSI, *Congregationes provinciarum* vol. 64 (1633–38), *Congreg. Prov. Neap.* 1636, fols. 48^r–56^v: *Memoria procuratoris de coll. Dissolvendis* (48^{r-v}).

far from the kingdom's main roads),⁵⁴ as well as economic and administrative management problems, which had already emerged during the debates of the provincial congregations at the start of the seventeenth century. But only at this time did those reasons seem more compelling than the risk of displeasing a family that had hitherto been tertiary of the Society.

In conclusion, the foundation and subsequent closure of the colleges of Cerignola and Bovino, both cities located in one of the three provinces of Apulia (Capitanata) and capitals of two feudal lordships belonging respectively to the Caracciolo-Mendoza and the Guevara families, are of interest because they provide a concrete illustration of the complexity of the link that existed between the birth, development, and crisis of the settlements of the order with the political-economic dynamics of the southern aristocracy in the early modern age. Second, these two examples demonstrate that, in the Kingdom of Naples, the practice according to which the Society would not accept "patrons" but only "founders" was repeatedly waived, in particular in the case of colleges that came into being within the "states" or feudal lordships: in these cases, in fact, since the lords were the legitimate holders of sovereignty in their fiefdom, as delegated by the king, they were able to assert a sort of *de facto* right of patronage over the foundations that they themselves financed either directly (with bequests and pious legacies of their own assets) or indirectly by obliging their cities to provide a fixed income to support the colleges.⁵⁵

It is in fact clear that the dynamics that led the southern "universities" to find in their devastated finances (in particular in the revenue from local taxes on consumption) the income needed to finance perpetually a structure of a religious order—whether a convent, a monastery, or a college—were very different depending on the political-judicial regimes in place, so it is natural that the ruling groups in the feudal "universities" tended to carry out the wishes of their lord, whereas in royal towns it was to be expected that a dialectic would develop between patrician families (many of them rivals) in support of this or that institution. Apart from the case of Barletta, this is what happened, for example, with the opening of the colleges of Aquila, Molfetta, and Monopoli.⁵⁶ In all these cases, a group of families supported, from within the town hall in charge of disbursing the fixed financial income that would allow the structure to maintain itself, an allocation for the Jesuits, while rival families opposed it, perhaps promoting instead the arrival of a rival order, such as the Theatines.⁵⁷ Then, very often, this clash between families involved a local clergy fearful that if the Jesuits settled they might take a slice of the available alms and bequests, so that the other regular orders or, more rarely, the chapters of the cathedrals addressed vehement protests to Naples (to

54. While in 1603 the provincial congregation had valued positively the logistic position of Bovino, in 1636 its assessment was the exact opposite.

55. See also the case of the college founded by Maria Sanseverino, the countess of Nola, in the homonymous feudal city: Filippo Iappelli, "Gesuiti a Nola: 1558–1767," *Societas* 41, nos. 1–2 (1992): 20–35.

56. ARSI, *Neap.* 180 (*Fundat. Colleg.*), 2:fols. 5^r–9^r; Schinosi, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 2:302; Santagata, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 3:319, 514.

57. A new conflict between the Jesuits and the Theatines developed in Taranto in 1612: see Santagata, *Istoria della Compagnia*, 3:173; 4:295–98; Filippo Iappelli, "Gesuiti a Taranto: Il collegio, la chiesa, l'iconografia," *Societas* 38, no. 6 (1989): 151–68, here 152.

the viceroy), to the court of Madrid, and, of course, also to Rome (in particular through specific complaints sent to the Congregation of Regulars, to individual cardinals, and even to the popes).

The complexity of the conflicts triggered by the foundation of a Jesuit college reminds us once again of the need to avoid simplistic generalizations or anachronistic interpretations of phenomena that must instead be rigorously put into context. Only when we understand all the various aspects of the “local” dimension can we put forward a truly “global” reconstruction of the founding strategies of the Old Society.