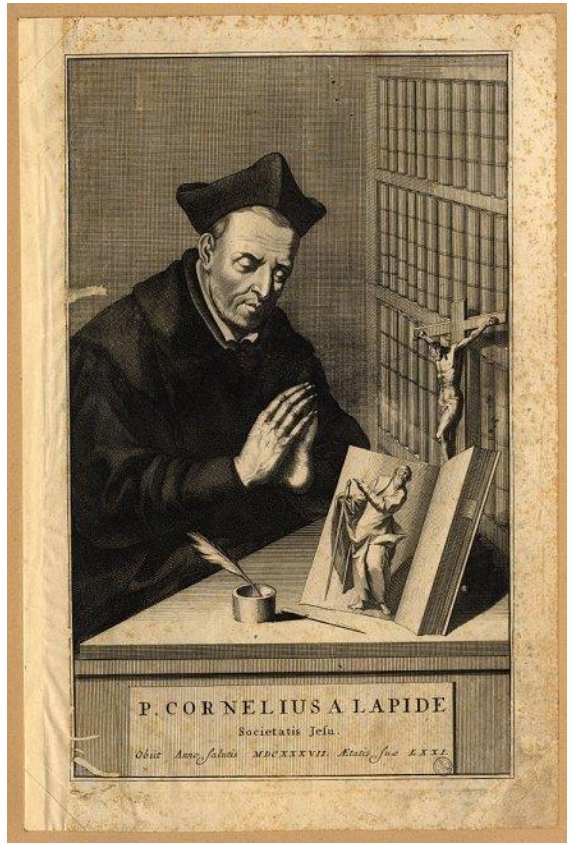
Early Jesuits and the Bible
Holy Scripture, Word of God

Education,
Education,
Education

1596 John Ogilvie enrols at the Scots College (which had moved from Douai to Louvain), undergoes instruction from Cornelius a Lapide SJ and shortly after becomes a Catholic.



Isaiah 50:5-9 [5] The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not
rebellious, I did not turn backward. [6] I gave my back to those
who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the
beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. [7] The Lord
GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I
have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to
shame; [8] he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with
me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them
confront me. [9] It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare
me guilty?

“Such also was Ogilvie, a martyr in Scotland, at one time my catechumen in Louvain and lately of our Society. It is clear from the account of his martyrdom that he astonished the Calvinists, for, though unconquered by torture and still bold and ready in debate, he opened not his mouth against his tormentors.”

This was interesting to me as a Scottish Jesuit, but the author had a throwaway line about A Lapide., that he was the only Jesuit of his time who knew the biblical languages. As a Bible person, I found this disappointing, but accepted it as true, as I didn’t know any better. However when this project on the Bible and the Exercises came up, I thought it might be important to get some sense of how literate the first and second generation of Jesuits were in the Bible and its languages.

Michael Yellowlees*, So Strange a Monster as a Jesuiste: The Society of Jesus in Sixteenth Century Scotland*

The Spanish Biblical and Cultural Renaissance

This two pronged movement is important for understanding the intellectual and religious context as a crucible for the early Spanish Jesuits. A cultural renaissance was set in motion from the halfway point of the fifteenth century and lasted till the end of the sixteenth. The elegance of language was central to this development, and the languages were both ancient and modern.

The ability to speak beautiful Latin developed hand in hand with a growing appreciation of the Castilian language. This movement had received impetus from the early Italian Renaissance, with Petrarch and Boccaccio being key literary figures. These developments flourished through the new technology of the printing press, the first Spanish printing press was established in Zaragoza in 1475.

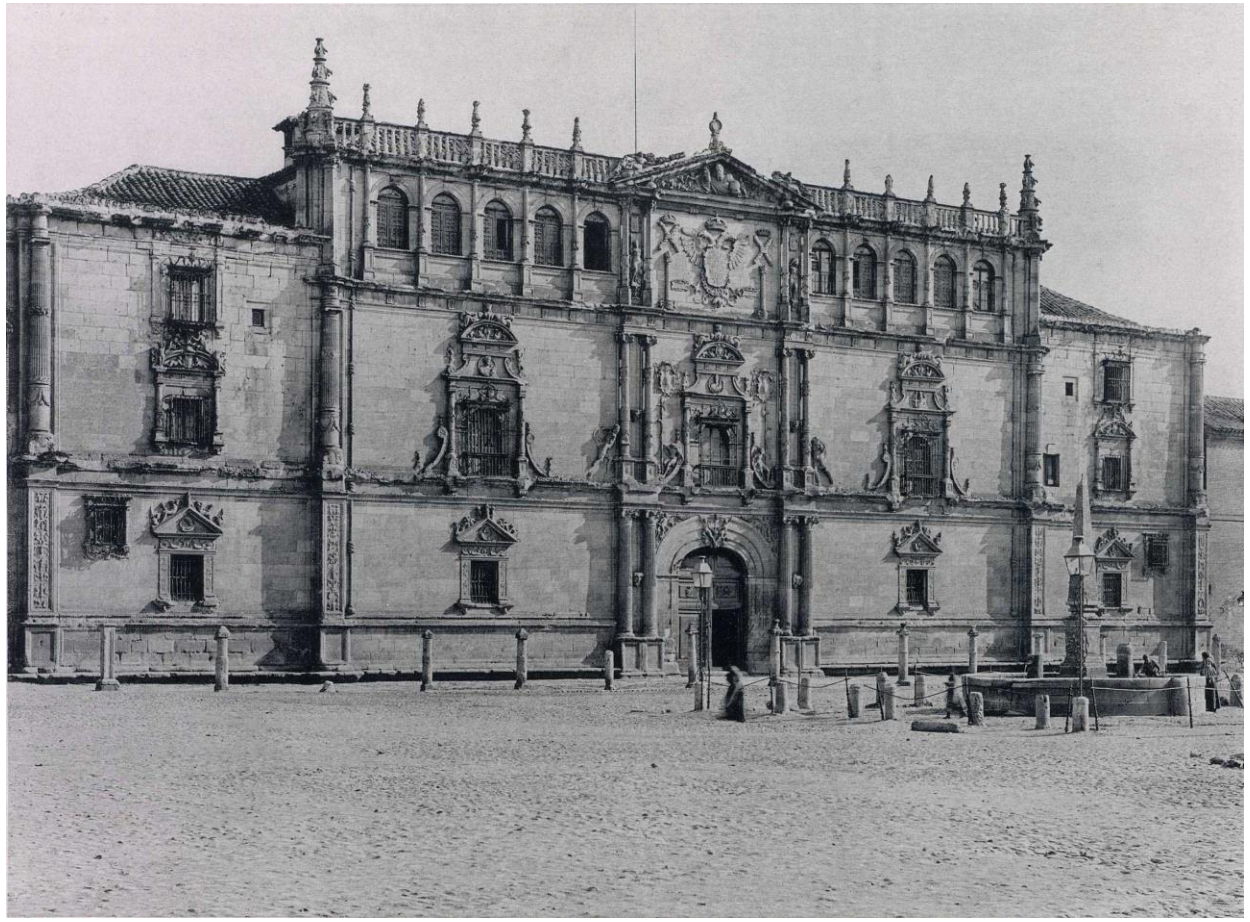
These cultural developments went hand in hand with a **spiritual** renewal movement. In 1485 in Zaragoza, there was published a Castilian translation of the Gospels and Epistles for Sundays and Feasts. And in 1502, Ambrosio Martino, a Franciscan, published in Alcala a Castilian version of the Life of Christ by Ludolph of Saxony, which as we know was important for Ignatius and the Spiritual Exercises.

Because it was based on the Gospels, it spread wide knowledge of the New Testament throughout Spain, as did further translations of the Sunday Gospels and Epistles.

1492 Reconquista, Columbus, Ignatius

In that dramatic year for Spain, 1492, Queen Isabella made a far reaching appointment to be Archbishop of Toledo, the most important see in Spain. He was a Franciscan called Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros.

University of Alcala



His two abiding achievements were the foundation of the University of Alcala, and the printing of the Polyglot bible: the Complutensian polyglot. (Complutum is the Latin name for Alcala).

The University of Alcala was a federation of about eighteen colleges. Cisneros had a great love for biblical studies, and before his death, he had planned for The Collegio Trilingue which opened in 1528 nine years after Cisneros' death. This college provided scholarships for around thirty students, 12 in Latin, 12 in Greek and seven in Hebrew.

When Ignatius left Jerusalem and returned to Spain. He spent some time trying to improve his Latin in Barcelona, then moved on to Alcala. He didn’t get a scholarship from the Trilingue, and after falling foul of the Inquisition, he moved on to Paris. In the following year Alfonso Salmeron, aged 13, arrived at the Trilingue, and was a very successful student. In his old age he reflected on his first love:

He wrote “ I avow that from my youth I was strongly inflamed with the love for these divine and sacred studies, and that compared to these, the other intellectual disciplines seemed mean. “

‘So lofty and rich are the Sacred Scriptures that there ever remains for those who come after, matter for reflection and writing.’

Already in 1510 Cisneros had begun collecting manuscripts and scholars to produce a new manuscript of the bible. There was a race between the scholar and reformer Erasmus and the Cisneros' team to have the first printed New Testament in Greek. The Spaniards finished in 1514, and printed the book but did not publish it till 1522. Erasmus finished in 1516, and printed and published the New Testament together.

Complutensian Polyglot

Haec tibi pentadecas tetragonon respicit illud
Hospitium petri ⁊ pauli ter quinqz dierum.
Namqz instrumētum vetus hebdoas innuit: octo
Lex nova signatur. ter quinqz receptat vtrunqz.

Vetus testamentū multiplici lingua nūc
primo impressum. Et imprimis
Pentateuchus Hebraico Gre-
co atqz Chaldaico idioma-
te. Adiūcta vnicuiqz sua
latina interpreta-
tione.

INCIPIT PROLOGUS IN LIBRVM
HVGONIS PHILOPHILI ANTIVI.

Prologus.

Patrina.heb.Tet.heb.Osee.i.

Trill.B.Hic.

Trill.Gre.ltt.cũ interp.latin.

Trill.Gre.ltt.cũ interp.latin.

Trill.B.Hic.

Tet.heb.Osee.ii.

Patrina..heb.

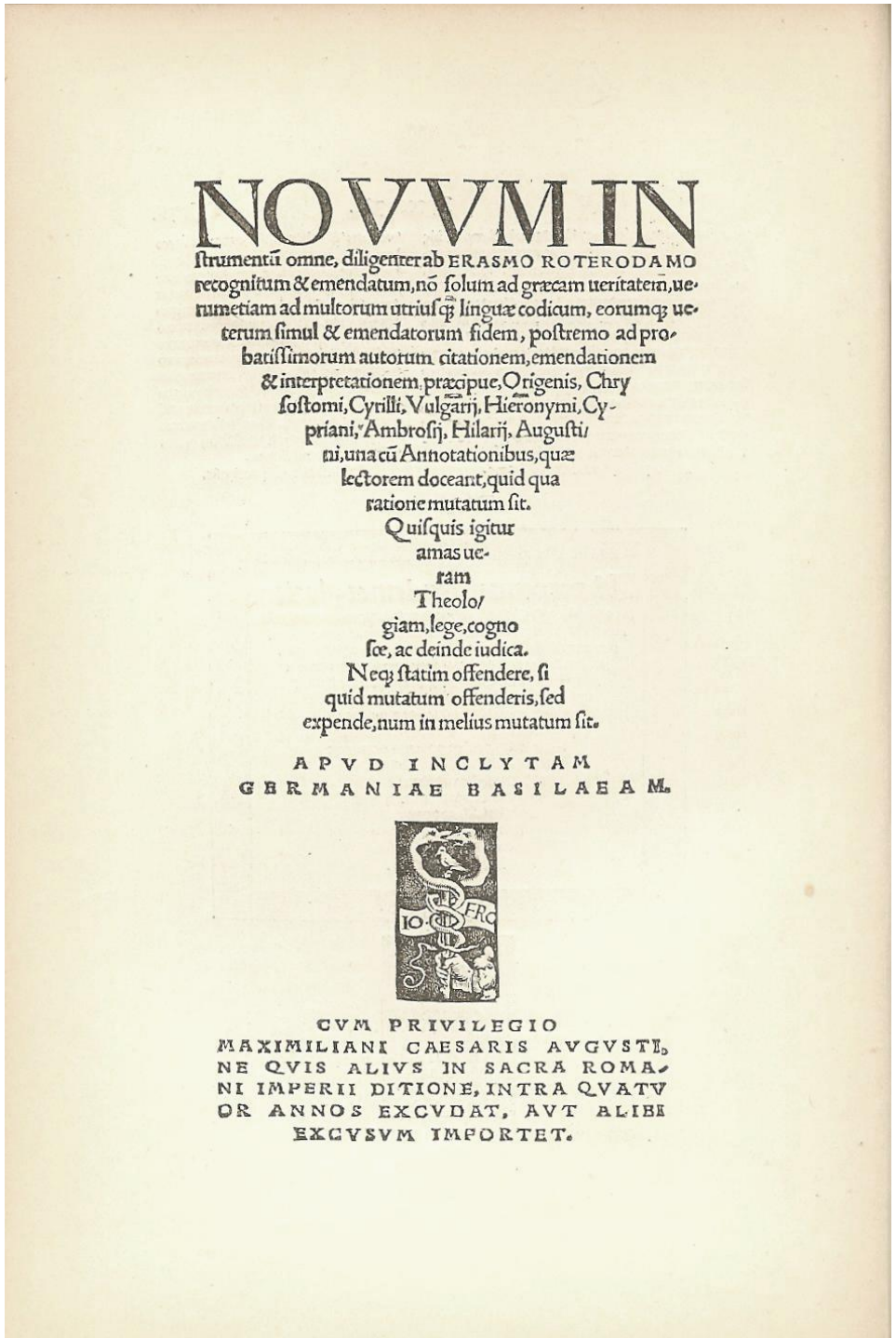
Cardinal Ximenes undertook to provide scholars with accurate printed texts of the Old Testament in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and the New Testament in Greek and Latin. The Complutensian Polyglot Bible also contains the Aramaic Targum of the Pentateuch (Targum Onkelos), and an interlinear Latin translation of the Greek Old Testament.

Volume one contains the text of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The upper three-quarters of the pages are divided in three columns that contain the Greek text in the left column; the text of the Latin Vulgate in the middle column; and the Hebrew text in the right column. The lower section of the page is divided into two columns: the left contains the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch known as the *Targum Onkelos*, the right the Latin translation of this text.

Volumes two and three contain the remainder of the Old Testament, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Volume four contains the New Testament, in Greek and Latin. The last part of volume four and volume five consist of a Hebrew and Aramaic dictionary, a Hebrew grammar, and a Greek dictionary.

Erasmus of Rotterdam

Five editions of *Novum Instrumentum omne* were published, though its title was changed to *Novum Testamentum omne* with the second edition, and the name continued. Erasmus issued editions in 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1536. Notable amongst these are the second edition (1519), used by Martin Luther for his translation of the New Testament into German, the so-called "September Testament," and the third edition (1522), which was used by Tyndale for the first *English New Testament* (1526) and later by translators of the Geneva Bible and the King James Version.



NOVVM IN
ſtrumentũ omne, diligenter ab ERASMO ROTERODAMO
recognitum & emendatum, nõ ſolum ad græcam ueritatem, ue-
rumetiam ad multorum utriuſq; linguæ codicum, eorumq; ue-
terum ſimul & emendatorum fidem, poſtremo ad pro-
bariſſimorum autorum citationem, emendationem
& interpretationem, præcipue, Origenis, Chry
ſoſtomi, Cyrilli, Vulgarij, Hieronymi, Cy-
priani, Ambroſij, Hilarij, Auguſti-
ni, una cũ Annotationibus, quæ
lectorem doceant, quid qua
ratione mutatum ſit.
Quiſquis igitur
amas ue-
ram
Theolo-
giam, lege, cogno
ſce, ac deinde iudica.
Neq; ſtatim offendere, ſi
quid mutatum offenderis, ſed
expende, num in melius mutatum ſit.

APVD INCLYTAM
GERMANIAE BASILEAM.

CVM PRIVILEGIO
MAXIMILIANI CAESARIS AVGVSTI,
NE QVIS ALIVS IN SACRA ROMA-
NI IMPERII DITIONE, INTRA QVATV
OR ANNOS EXCVDAT, AVT ALIBI
EXCVSVM IMPORTET.

Another of the first companions to come to Alcala was Diego Laynez, who would succeed Ignatius as the second General of the Jesuits. He and Salmeron became great and lifelong friends, and when Laynez decided to pursue his studies in Paris, Salmeron went with him. When they arrived in the Latin Quarter, the first person they met was Ignatius who found them lodgings at the College Ste.- Barbe, where they met Inigio's closest friends, Pierre Favre, Nicolas Bobadilla, and Simao Rodrigues. Francis Xavier was soon to follow. And Claude Jay was not far behind.

The Theological Traditions of Paris

When you read about Paris in the 1520’s, you have the impression that if you stood long enough in the same place, you would meet absolutely everybody.

Jacques Lefevre d’Etaples

He was a prolific translator of the Bible. He completed a translation of the Old testament in 1528, and was famous for his French translation of the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles, which he finished early in his career. His completed translation of the entire Christian Bible, punished in 1530 was the first in the French language.

Claude Jay

In 1534, Claude Jay came to Paris and enrolled at the College Ste-Barbe where the influence of Lefevre was strongest. Jay's earlier education in Savoie, marked by the piety of the devotio moderna and an intimacy with Scripture and the Church Fathers helped him to fit right in.

Lefevre had started out as an Aristotelian philosopher, went through a phase where his interpretation od scripture was very much dominated by Patristic Exegesis, both Latin and Greek. There was also an important mystical element. However by the mid 1520s he was writing “to know nothing beyond the Gospels is to know all things.”

We might understand this is another way of saying Sola Scriptura, and recognise that this would be where Ignatius would part company with a man whose work he otherwise appreciated.

Ignatius as director of studies

One of the stories we hear about Ignatius is how he met various of the first companions as they arrived in Paris, and pointed them in what he thought was the right direction. Various changes had happened in Paris, for one thing the King had appointed a number of professors in Scripture. Bobadilla had come to sit at their feet, but Ignatius steered him towards the Dominicans, who had abandoned the expositions of the Sentences of Peter the Lombard, and had begun to teach the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas. That was also where Ignatius directed Laynez and Salmeron when they arrived from Alcala.

Three dimensions of study

As an oversimplification, there were at least three dimensions of study which could be pursued, humanism, patristics and the Aquinas brand of Scholasticism. Erasmus had pioneered the establishment of the Greek text of the New Testament and was very critical of the Latin Vulgate of St Jerome. He also championed patristics, as the interpreters closest to the biblical text. He had no time at all for Scholasticism, be it in the version of Peter the Lombard or that of Aquinas. The Jesuits, under the guidance of Ignatius, found the theology of Aquinas really helpful for their ministries. They were also delighted with the ressourcement of the patristic writings by Erasmus.

On the other hand, they were nervous about dealing with the battle of the original Greek text and the centuries old traditional reverence for the Vulgate, the Latin Translation of the Bible.

People like Laynez and Salmeron were aware of the defects of the Vulgate text, and it has to be said that there were some serious deficiencies in Erasmus’s Greek New Testament.

Despoiling of the Egyptians Exodus 12:35

However both Erasmus and many of the Jesuits were well versed in the Latin and Greek classics, which was a major dimension of the humanist revival.

Towards a True Attitude of Mind within the Church

Eleventh Rule. To praise positive and scholastic learning. Because, as it is more proper to the Positive Doctors, as St. Jerome, St. Augustine and St. Gregory, etc., to move the heart to love and serve God our Lord in everything; so it is more proper to the Scholastics, as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and to the Master of the Sentences, etc., to define or explain *for our times* the things necessary for eternal salvation; and to combat and explain better all errors and all fallacies. For the Scholastic Doctors, as they are more modern, not only help themselves with the true understanding of the Sacred Scripture and of the Positive and holy Doctors, but also, they being enlightened and clarified by the Divine virtue, help themselves by the Councils, Canons and Constitutions of our holy Mother the Church.

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Michael Ivens comments:

This turns to two movements of the time, each with its inherent tendency to one-sidedness: evangelical humanism, characterized by zeal for the Church Fathers and a dismissive view of scholasticism; and a conservative tendency in which the scholastics continued to hold pride of place. The present rule is addressed to this state of affairs.

It is non-partisan, not only advocating the 'praise' of both authorities, but explaining how the two are mutually complementary. The appeal to the heart that he ascribes to the fathers is for Ignatius a quality of the highest importance. Appreciation of this quality should not, however, diminish respect for the clarity and the particular authority of the scholastics

When the first companions gathered in St Denis in Montmartre on 15th August 1534, there were seven of them. Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Diego Laynez, Alfonso Salmeron, Nicolas Bobadilla, Simao Rodriguez and Pierre Favre.

they all took vows of poverty and chastity and, further, promised that upon completion of their studies, they would make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and agreed to meet in Venice to embark from there.

The missing Jerome Nadal

Nadal could have been there, but he had fallen out with Ignatius. And when Ignatius suggested that he do the Exercises, Nadal pointed to a copy of the New Testament that he was holding and said, “ This is the book I intend to follow. Where you men are headed, I do not know, Do not mention these thing any more. Forget about me.”

Bangert, Nadal, p 7

The leaving of Paris 1536

By the autumn of 1536, France and Spain were at war again, and feeling in Paris was strongly against Spaniards. The first companions decided to bring forward the agreed date for going to Venice and sailing to the Holy Land, and in mid-November they did so.

In a similar way, Nadal was under pressure because of his Spanish connections, though strictly speaking he was from Majorca. He left Paris for Avignon, still a papal enclave in France, where he could reasonably expect immunity from the French soldiers. He hoped to do more theological studies and to master Hebrew.

By the end of his first year at University, Nadal had mastered Hebrew, and being involved with some of the fifty families of “the Pope’s Jews”, he learned much about the intricacies of the Jewish interpretation of Scripture.

One day a delegation from the Jewish community astonished him by coming to request that he, with his great philosophical and theological learning, might become their Spiritual Leader and Chief Rabbi. Nadal in a very politically non-correct way, told them to think again.

The Jews went to the provost of Avignon, and delated Nadal as a Spaniard who had violated the King of France’s decree of expulsion, and should be condemned to death.

Despite Nadal’s best arguments, the provost, in his own self-interest, between Nadal and his accusers condemned him to death. A furious argument then broke out in Hebrew between Nadal and his accusers which worried the provost that he had made a mistake, and this was perhaps some inner Jewish argument that he did not understand. And he freed Nadal. Not altogether unlike one of Paul’s battles with his accusers in Acts.

Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" The tribune replied, "Do you know Greek?

38 Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

39 Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people."

40 When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and mo (Acts 21:37-40 NRS)

Nadal’s Hebrew was good enough to save his life.

From Venice to Rome

Ignatius had returned to Spain, as it turned out for the last time. The other companions were now added to by three more French speakers. Pierre Favre had given them the exercises and recruited them. They were Claude Jay, Paschase Broet and Jean Codure all of whom had their Masters of Arts degrees from Paris.
After an arduous journey they found their way to Venice in January 1537 to find Ignatius had been waiting for them for over a year. They were hoping to take ship for the Holy Land. But since there were no sailings in the winter, they worked looking after the sick and the dying in two different hospitals.

It was during this time that Ignatius and those of the companions who were not yet priests were ordained on 24th June 1537. Ignatius, however, waited until Christmas Day 1538 before celebrating his first mass, such was his devotion to the Eucharist and his low estimation of his own worthiness to celebrate it.

Unfortunately the sea passages in the Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean were too dangerous for them to travel. There was a back-up plan in place however, and that was to go to Rome and offer themselves to the Pope for whatever ministry he needed them for.

La Storta

The Deliberation of the First Fathers

The collapse of the Holy Land project required a clarification of who the group were and what they were offering to the Pope. This deliberation which was a lived experience of discernment in common was written up by two of their number, Pierre Favre and Jean Codure.

author

Jean Codure

Pierre Favre

Despite being Scottish, I have to admit to a very large Celtic ancestry. I imagine that is where I get my more romantic impulses. That may explain the feeling I get when I read or hear the passage from the sixteenth chapter of Acts:

8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.
9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."
10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.
11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis,
(Acts 16:6-11 NRS

The great thrill I get when the word “we” is used for the first time. You almost feel the author of Acts stepping into the story that he has been telling. We are now a “we” and something new is happening.

The newness is the first European Christian, Lydia, who presents a new challenge:

“On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there.

14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul.

15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16:13-15)

There is something new here, and it is part of God’s plan as the verses before the vision make clear

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.
7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;

“And so we came to Rome”.

I get a similar feeling when reading the Deliberation. The very strong sense of ‘We’.

gathered

We decided to assemble before the day of separation and discuss for a number of days our common calling and the style of life we had adopted.

We were in perfect accord in singleness of purpose and intent; namely, to discover the gracious design of God's will within the scope of our vocation.

divided

After a number of such sessions, we found ourselves divided.

there was a plurality of views over which means would be more effective and more fruitful, both for ourselves and for our neighbour.

No one should be astonished that among us, weak and frail men, this difference of opinion should have arisen, since even the princes and apostolic pillars of the most Holy Church [Galatians 2:11), and many other holy men with whom we are in no way worthy to be compared, experienced a similar diversity of opinion and, at times, were in open conflict. They even left us a written record of their controversies.

God is incredibly lavish in His gifts to everyone (James 1:5), never does He disappoint anyone.

We were confident that He would in no way fail us, but since His kindness is without measure, He would assist us beyond our fondest hopes and expectations.

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. (Jas. 1:5 NRS)

The Formula of the Institute emerges from the *Deliberation*: the communal discernment [first drafted in 1539] to discern a common sense of the future of this gathering of people. It was a sense of self that could be proposed to the Pope as the identity statement of the group. In time, this became the basic “rule” of the Society of Jesus. It laid down the fundamental structure of what was to be a new religious order, prefacing the more technical statutes that became known as *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. The Formula , sometimes known as the Five chapters, which include: The Aim of the Society and Its Institutionalization, The Vow of Obedience to the Pope, The Vow of Obedience to the Superior of the Society, and the Vow of Poverty.

O’Malley is absolutely right when he says that ‘the Jesuits believed that in their ministries, they were following the ‘apostolic pattern’; that is they were imitating and reproducing for their own times the essential features of the ministries exemplified by Jesus’ disciples in the New Testament.’ There is a significant meditation in the second week of the exercises. It takes the whole of Matthew 10:1-42. In a text such as this and its counterparts in Luke 9 and Mark 6, not to mention the sending out of the 70/72 in Luke 10 “the Jesuits saw four points key to their self-understanding.”

‘First like the Twelve, they too were “sent”, that is they were instructed to seek out persons in need, commissioned at least in some general way by their superiors.

Second they were ‘to preach the gospel’, that is to engage in various ministries of the Word of God.

Third they were “ to heal the sick” which meant healing from sin through confession and other means, but also alleviating physical ills wherever possible.

Fourth they were to do all these things without financial recompense – they interpreted their vow of poverty especially in that sense. ’

(O’Malley p. 85)

The Formula of the Institute was presented to Pope Paul III. With some corrections, he approved what the Companions were suggesting, and he then promulgated it as a bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae* giving official Papal recognition to the way of life and mission proposed.

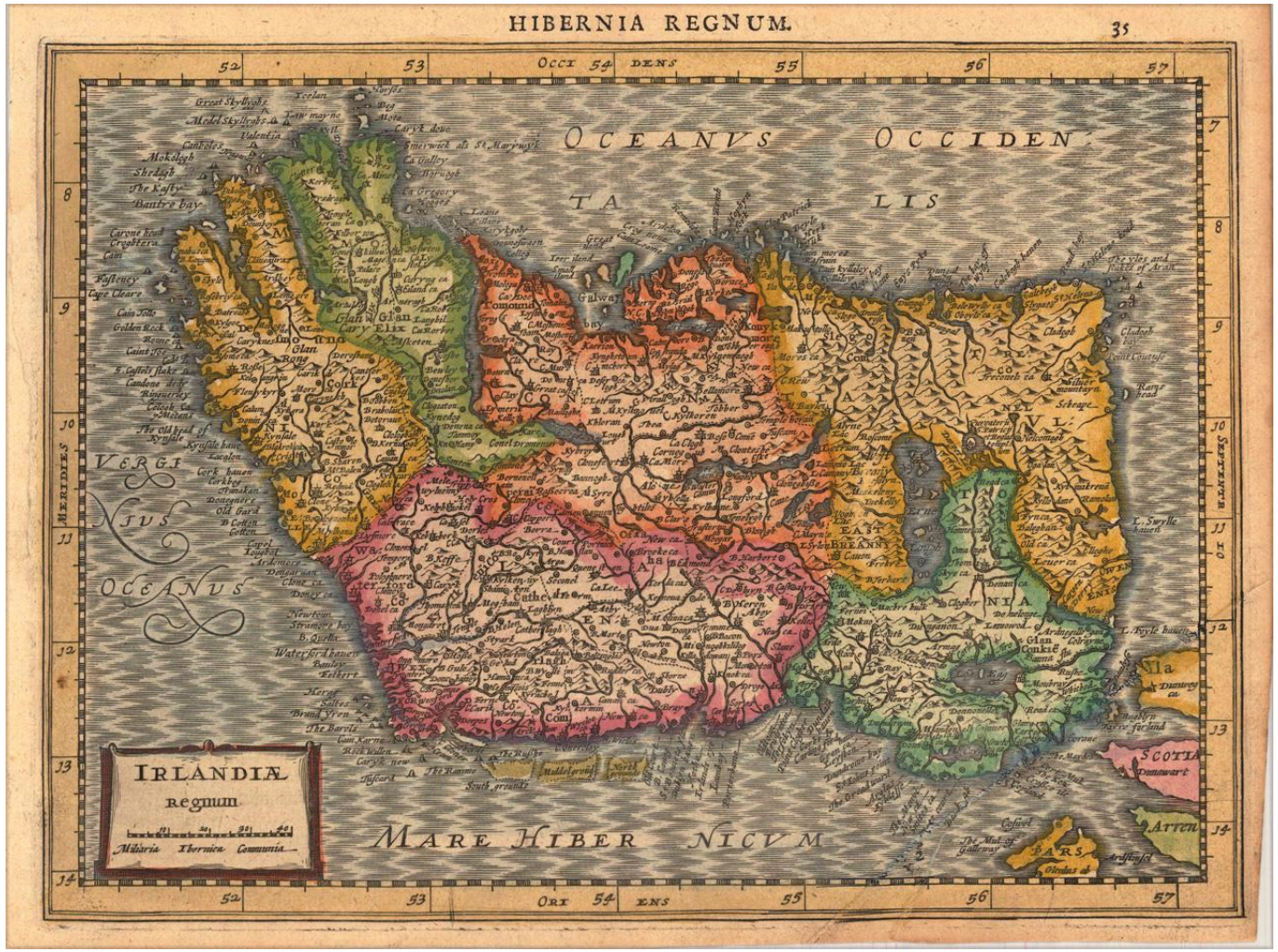

PAVLO·III·PONTIFICI·MAXIMO
DE·SOCIET·IESV·AB·IPSO·RECEPTA·ET·CONFIRMATA·OPTIME·MERITO

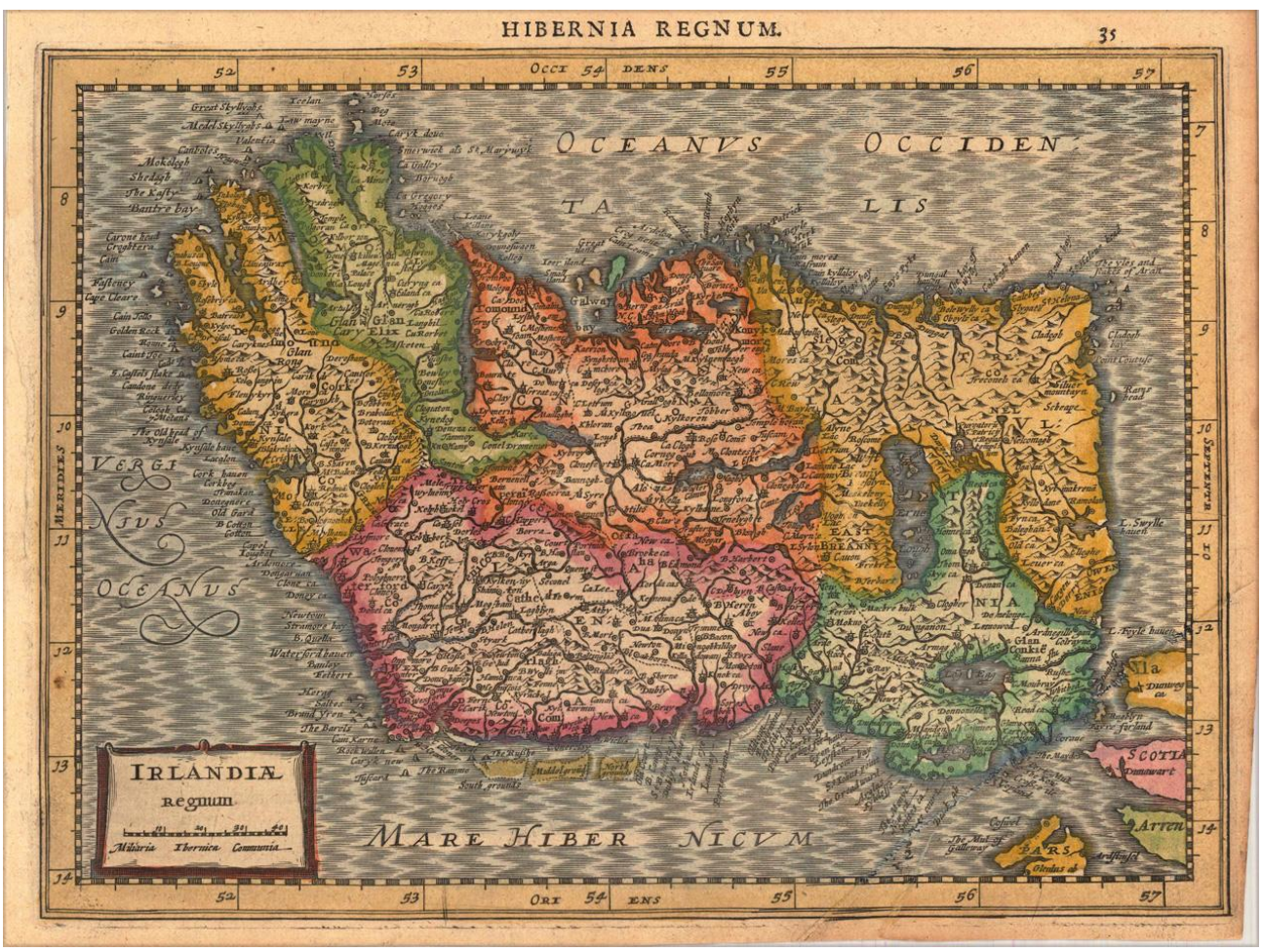
Broet and Salmeron
first companions of Ignatius
first Jesuits in Scotland 1541

+ Francis Zapata

They entered the city
on Hogmanay

Waiting for a boat to Ireland
to write a report on the Church there




IRLANDIÆ
regnum
Miliaria Ibernica Communia
OCCI DENS
SEPTENTR IO
ORI ENS
MERIDIES
OCEANVS OCCIDENTALIS
VERGIVIUS OCEANUS
MARE HIBERNICUM
SCOTIA
Arren
Galway
Tomond
Corck
Waterford baue

I’m going fishing

Broet, possibly wearing a kilt or plaid, heads for Irvine, thinking he might have to go by himself to Ireland. Whatever his disguise his courage is astonishing. ‘He looked like a Roman, spoke like a Frenchman, would have landed from Scotland, and yet hoped to pass himself off as an Irishman, while the penalty for being caught was almost certain death.’

Salmeron to Ignatius 2nd February

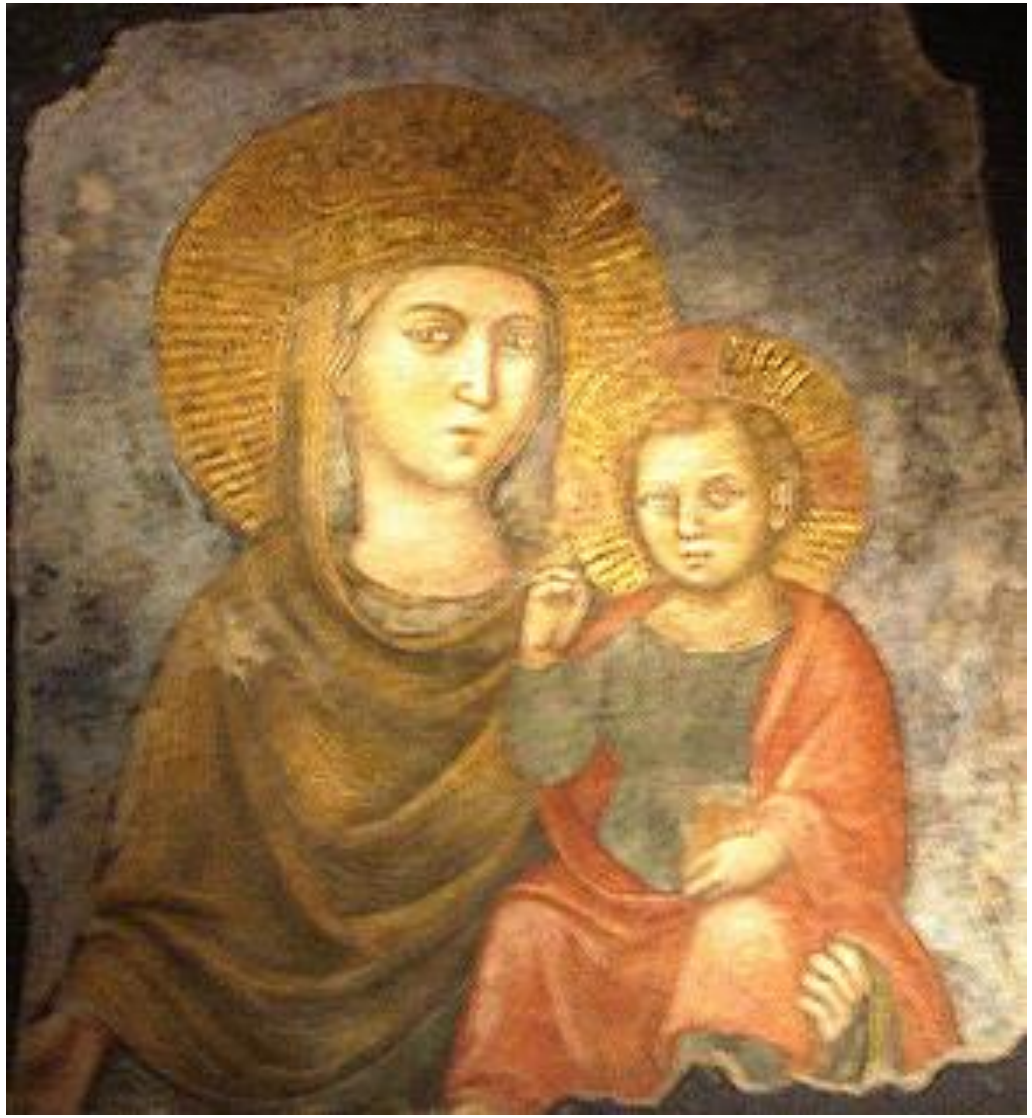
While we await Fr Paschase's return, we shall endeavour not to waste time. We have already started giving the Exercises to some, although if the Court were not leaving so soon we would have a greater harvest because we now have the reputation and authority to bear fruit.

Two stamps left their indelible mark on Salmeron during this first period of his life. The University of Alcala gave him his humanistic and biblical cast of mind, later widened by the theological traditions of Paris. Ignatius of Loyola gave him the Jesuit thrust ‘to the greater glory of God’. The early mission to Ireland gave him a first taste of working for the Institutional Church. The man of erudition would be also a practical political person.

Bangert p 176

Madonna della Strada

Salmeron remained in Rome from the late summer of 1543 until the winter of 1546. Preaching and Spiritual Exercises occupied him most. In the autumn of 1545 he delivered scriptural lectures three times a week on the Letter to the Ephesians at the Jesuit Church of Santa Maria della Strada.



Sant’ Anna de’ Folgenami

The reason why Salmeron spoke at this particular Church was the Marchesa de Pesacara,

Vittoria Colonna.

Vittoria Colonna

She was a devout woman and a cultured poet, and having helped Jay and Rodrigues in Ferrara in 1537, she came to Rome and supported Ignatius' House of Santa Marta for prostitutes. IN late 1545 she took of residence at the adjacent Benedictine Convent of Santa Anna dei Funari.

This was the site of her long and serious conversations with Michelangelo about the human thirst for God. She wanted to have a Jesuit preacher, and asked Ignatius, who gave her Salmeron.

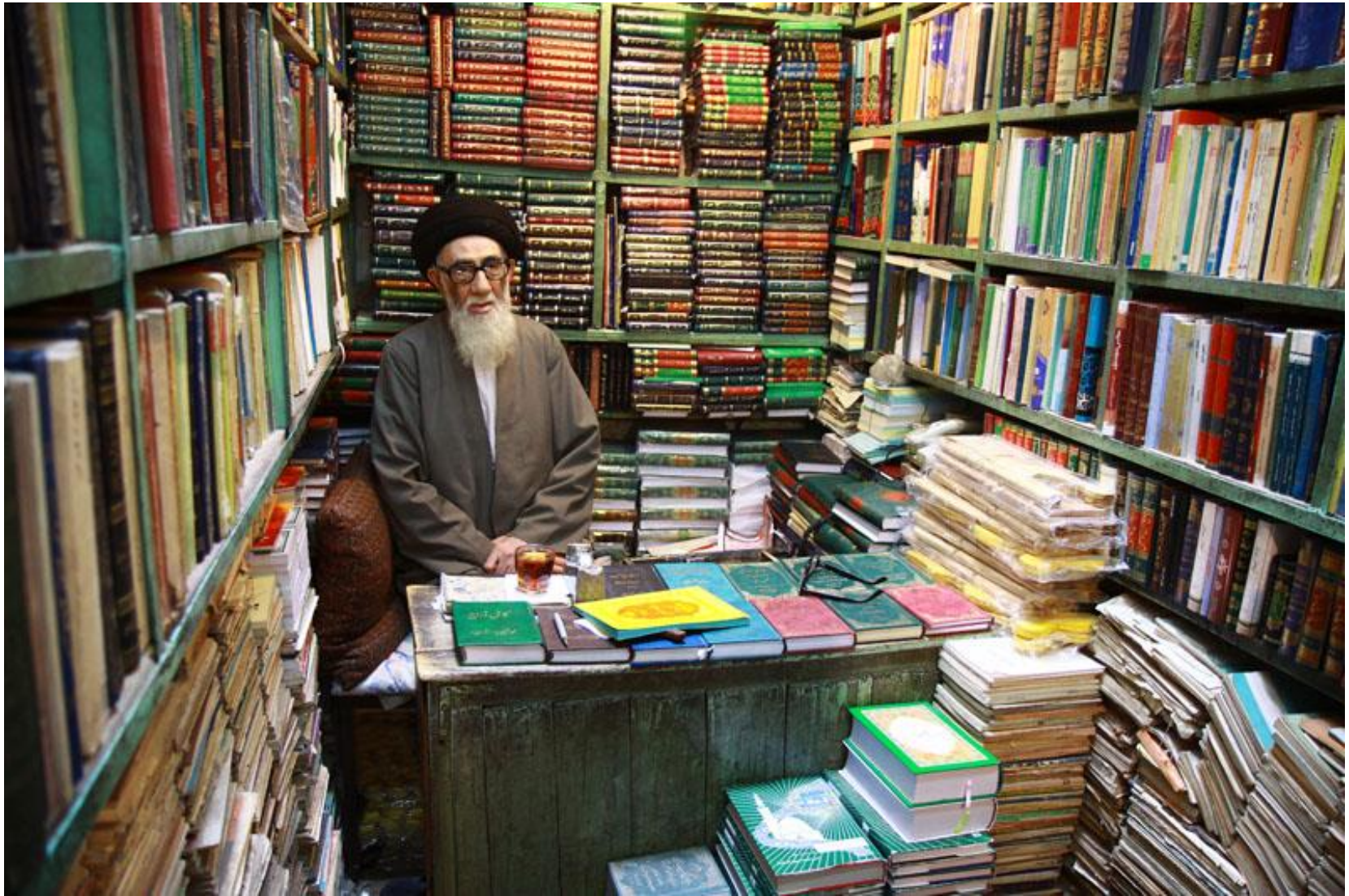
Interestingly, Michelangelo had an initial agreement with Ignatius that he would build the Church of the Gesu, presciely on the site of Sanata Maria della Strada. But it did not happen.

Every Kind of Ministry of the Word

Whoever desires to serve…..is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God, and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises…..hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments…..Furthermore he should carry out all these works altogether free of charge……

Exposcit debitum 1550 Julius III chapter 1

I read myself full



I think myself
clear

I pray myself humble

I let myself go

Every kind of ministry of the word is a phrase which recognises that there is more than one kind. While it is true that the reformation had emphasised the proclamation of the Word from the pulpit; it seems that in most Catholic Churches, apart from those administered by the mendicant orders, like the Franciscans and Dominicans, there was virtually no preaching of the word at a Church service. This was something which needed to be remedied. And it was something the Council of Trent was to take up, as it slowly creaked into gear.

Where to preach?

It was the Pope who gave the Jesuits the Church of Santa Maria della Strada. But in general they did not have any Churches to begin with. This meant that they tried to get themselves invited into other people's Churches, often at times when no Mass was being celebrated.
They also took up again their practice of preaching in the open air and the streets which they developed in the territory around Venice. They believed they were imitating the practice of Jesus, his disciples and Paul. They were also 'helping souls' by going out to them and not waiting for them to arrive at the Church.

The Word of God

The Jesuits believed that the “word of God’ was both testaments of the Scriptures, and prescribed direct study of the Bible as an essential part of the study of theology by those in training.
Also important for them was the Word of God spoken within. Ignatius’ experience at Manresa of being directly taught by God was not something they believed was reserved exclusively to him.

O’Malley recalls that in a letter to one of the young men in 1554, Ignatius congratulated him on beginning his study of scripture, but also assured him that in his preaching the Holy Spirit would compensate for the years of theological study that he lacked. [page 101]

Sacred Lectures

The word “Sacred” suggests that the Lectures were something different from the academic lecture; they were an adaptation of the knowledge of the classroom to meet the needs of ordinary people. Generally delivered to the laity in a church, and definitely not an academic lecture.

Sacred lectures were delivered as part of a series, and independent of the liturgical lectionary; the lecturer sat on the same level as the audience, wore no special vestment, and spoke pleasantly and agreeably.

They often delivered lectures in conjunction with a preaching assignment in a Church. In the morning, Jesuits would preach on the gospel of the day either before, after or during Mass, and in the afternoon deliver one of the lectures in the series.

When Jesuits spoke about “lecturing”, they usually meant lecturing on the Bible. We don’t know much about the content, but we do know something of the subjects.

Series of lectures

1556 Borja on Lamentations
Lectures on the Song of Songs in both Syracuse and Florence
1552 Bobadilla gave 40 lectures on Jonah
1542 Jay Galatians at Regensburg
1549 In Messina Andre des Freux on I Corinthians
1549 Salmeron in Belluno on Ephesians
1551 Laynez Naples 4/5 times a week on Galatians

Many references to lectures on Romans, Salmeron among them.

Spiritual Conversation

Publication

Much has been said about the phenomenal change brought about by the printing press. But in the early years of the Society of Jesus, it seeed as though some Jesuits were not too enthusiastic about publication and considered it as not helpful to the ministry. That there are very few copies of sacred lectures also tells its tale. It can best be found in the response by Salmeron, when his oration at the Council of Trent around Christmas of 1546 was published.

He wrote to a fellow Jesuit Paolo d' Achille:

"We are called to a way of life characterised chiefly by simplicity, modesty and unrestricted charity to our neighbour. True, the publication of books is not in itself incompatible with these qualities; it nonetheless can be an obstacle to more excellent works of charity and at times a distraction from them".

As O'Malley observes, a shift came about with the founding of the Schools/Colleges. Students needed books, textbooks at reasonable prices. Ignatius, in the last year of his life, made it his business to secure a good printing press for the Roman College.

Jesuit teachers, dissatisfied with existing textbooks, began composing their own, while colleges began acquiring their own presses, which served both the needs of the school and other apostolic needs. For example, in 1563 Nadal used the press at the College in Vienna to print fifteen hundred copies of the Spiritual Exercises.

Salmeron’s writings

Given what was just said by Salmeron, it comes as a surprise in his later life, to find him writing prolifically for publication. After his labours at the Council of Trent as a theological expert, and having completed his time as Provincial of Naples, he was encouraged by Francis Borgia, the third General of the Jesuits. Borgia had heard that Salmeron had kept rough copies of his lectures, which “only” needed organisation and expansion….
Salmeron wrote back saying

“I find it a difficulty of the greatest magnitude. There is a vast ocean of such writings; they are undigested; they are in such shape that I do not know where to begin or what approach to take. Besides it is an enterprise that demands both bodily vigour and the assistance of others. I am without either” [Bangert p 329]

However encouraged by other Jesuits such as Peter Canisius, and with the weight of the desire of Father General Borgia, he persevered and produced a vast output.

The Jesuits tried to send him help. And among a series of people, they sent Juan de Maldonado, who was regarded as one of the most talented Jesuits of his generation. A Spaniard who was working in Paris, until suspended by the University there, he himself in his enforced leisure time had written a commentary on the Gospels. However his talents led him to be much in demand, such that Salmeron did not receive too much help from him.

In the end Salmeron produced twelve volumes of commentary on the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, followed by four volumes of commentary on the letters of Paul.

Salmeron died in 1585 and it was not until 1597 that the first volume appeared and the full twelve were out by 1601, in the following year the Pauline Commentaries appeared.

Benito Pereira [1535-1610]

It was not just the New Testament that engaged Jesuit writers on Scripture. The magnum opus of Pereira was his four volume commentary on Genesis. The first volume appeared in Rome in 1589, the last in 1599. It was printed multiple times in places like Mainz, Lyon and Cologne. We started this talk mentioning Cornelius a Lapide, and he used Pereira in his own Genesis Commentary. The third volume, interestingly, was dedicated to Francisco de Toledo, himself one of the most outstanding exegetes of the 16th century. He was a Jesuit, and the first Jesuit to become a cardinal, for reasons that might interest us.

Marius Reiser, writing on the sacrifice of Isaac in a volume dedicated to the interpretation of the story in the early modern period says of Pereira that he was generally well-regarded among both his Protestant and his Catholic contemporaries on account of his great learning, his independent judgment and his natural science investigations, and for his commentary on Genesis.

Richard Simon, Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament 1685

“The Jesuit Pererius has written a huge book on Genesis with questions. Within it there is much learning. And even if the author has not set himself to the task of clarifying each word of the text, it is still very useful Since he answers the questions he has set with good judgment and clarifies the great difficulties which one meets in the text. He mainly concerns himself with referring to the views of the Fathers, which he has carefully assembled”

Vulgate

In the decree *Insuper,* The Council of Trent in 1546 decreed that the Latin Vulgate must be held by all Catholics as the Church's authentic version of the Bible. By the word 'authentic', the Council did not mean that the Vulgate in every respect an absolutely accurate rendering, but rather that it was free from error in everything pertaining to moral and dogmatic teaching, and was substantially faithful to the original scriptures. The Council was very well aware of the imperfections of the editions then in circulation, and called for a rapid new and accurate revision. Unfortunately this task was delegated to the Pope, who did not survive to see the completion of the task, nor did any of his ten immediate successors!

Sixtus V 1585-1590

Sixtus brought to his reign as Pope a tremendous energy and appetite for work, helped by his insomnia. First of all, he re-energised the limping commission on the revision of the Septuagint, and completed it within a year. The Jesuit Robert Bellarmine was on this commission. The next project was the Vulgate, and the work was completed in 1588. But the conservative Pope was not happy with the drastic nature of the changes, and decided that he had better do it himself with two helpers, one of whom was the Jesuit Francisco de Toledo. He received each completed page for his opinion, but the Pope only accepted his opinion if it agreed with his own.

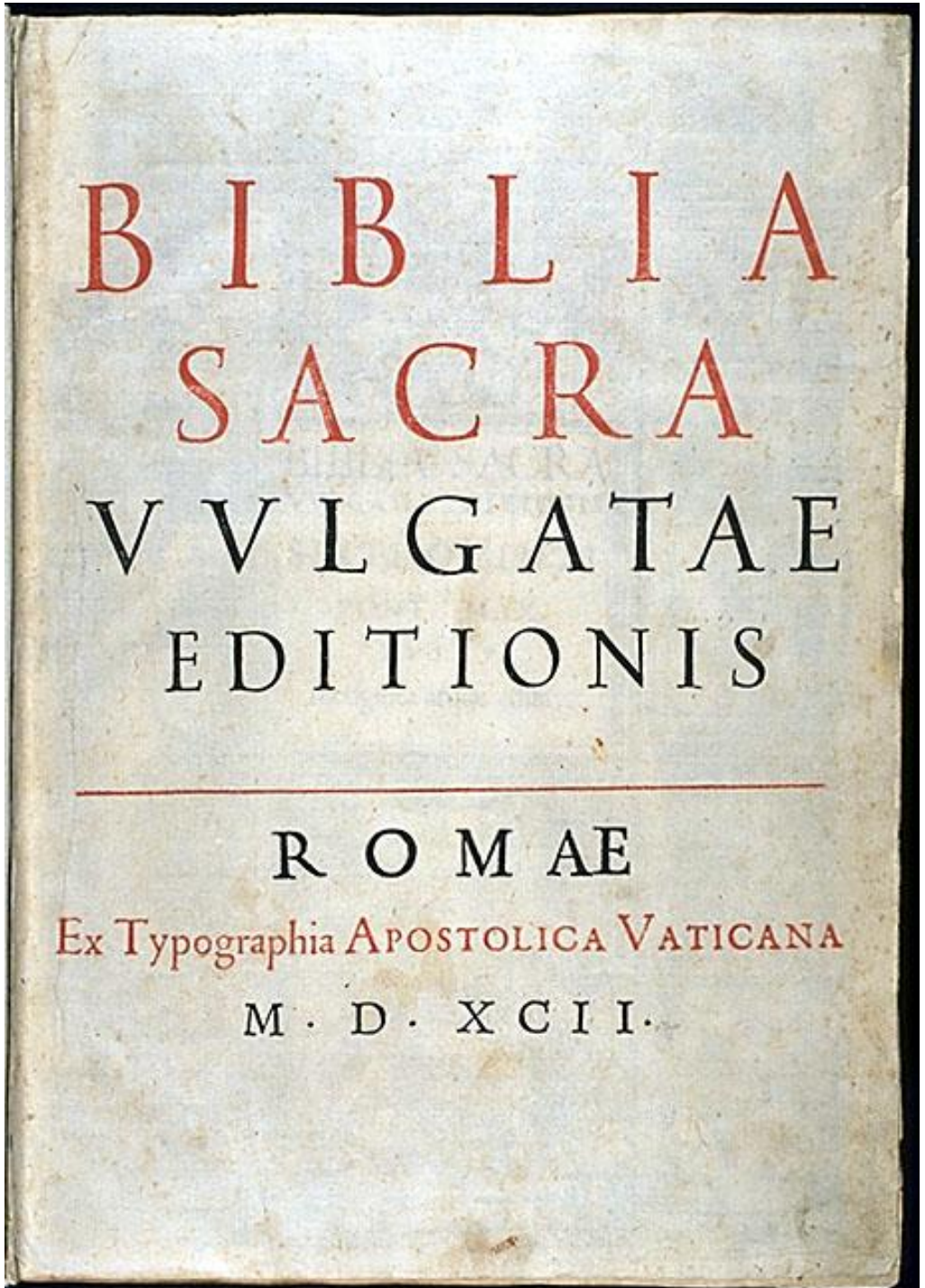
Short-lived Popes

It had not been long since Robert Estienne had developed the system of verse numbers. However the Pope decided to put in his own, which led to further confusion.
After 18 months, Sixtus had his bible ready, but when the first copies were brought to the Pope, he was furious to discover so many misprints that he had to spend another six months correcting them. In the middle of April 1590 it was announced that copies of the Bible had been presented to the cardinals and ambassadors. Everything then went quiet until on the 27th August, the bells rang to announce the death of the Pope. The bells were to ring again for Urban VII, Gregory XIV, followed three months later by Innocent IX.

Clement VIII January 1592

He appointed another commission, consisting of two cardinals and a Jesuit we have already met: Francisco de Toledo from whose decisions there would be no further appeal. Toledo was a prodigious worker, and had the experience of Sixtus' commission. After a first printing with multiple misprints, the final edition was ready before the end of 1592.

Meanwhile the unsatisfactory Sistine version was bought up and money returned by the Vatican Treasury, in an effort to clear the way for the new edition.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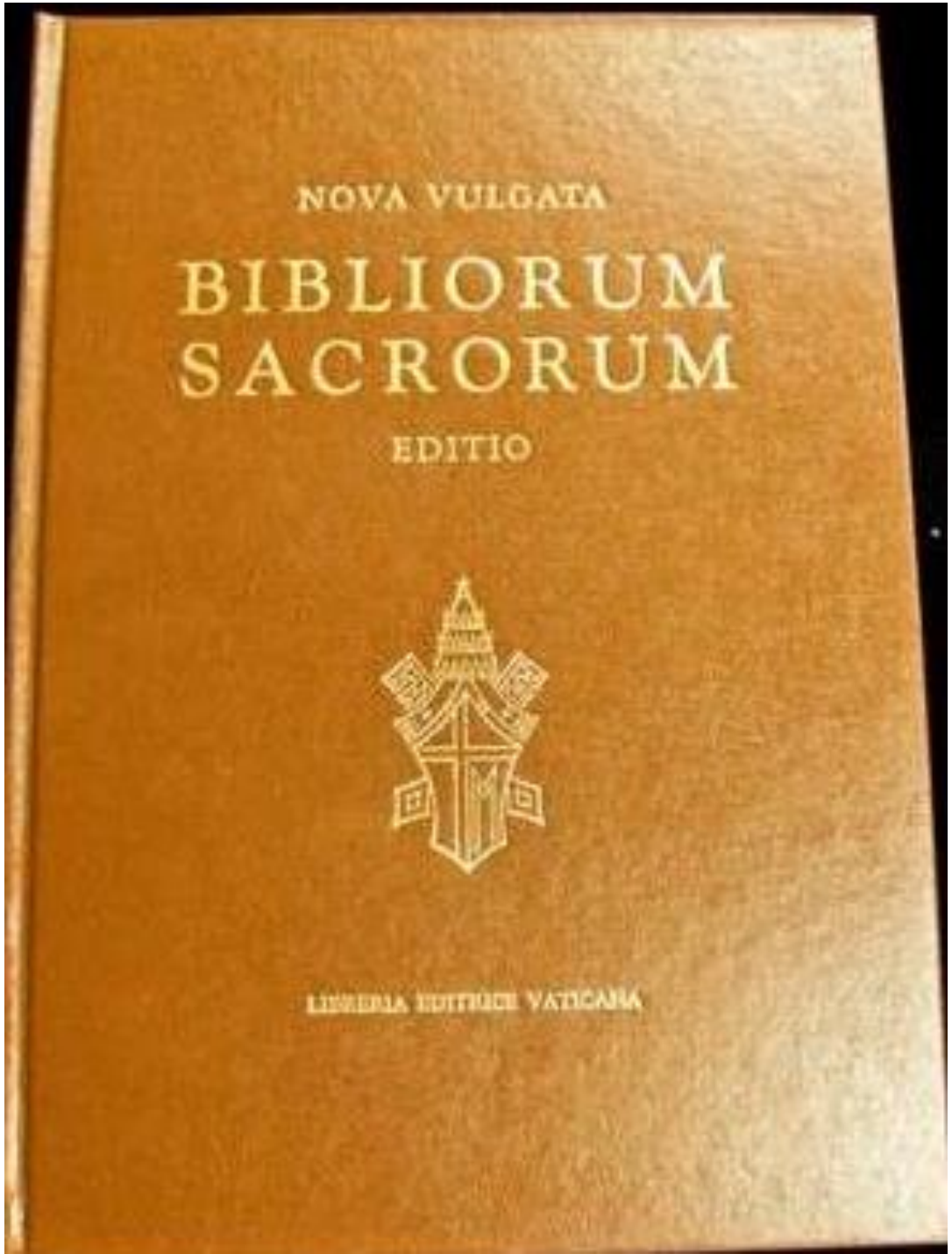
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