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## History-Keeping under Persecution: Sources from the College of Jesus of Coimbra, Discovered in 2016

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# History-Keeping under Persecution: Sources from the College of Jesus of Coimbra, Discovered in 2016

MARGARIDA MIRANDA AND CARLOTA MIRANDA URBANO

Any scholar of Jesuit studies will be aware of the multitude of relevant primary sources, many of which were carefully designed and collected over centuries to become windows for future research. Looking at the overwhelming amount of sources yielded by the Society of Jesus over five centuries of its history, one might think that almost everything has been inventoried and classified. It might seem that, despite the Jesuits' persecution, expulsion, and expropriation in the eighteenth century, everything relevant has been retrieved and carefully identified. However, in 2016, we got a surprise. In the course of maintenance and cleaning work at the New Cathedral of Coimbra—which, until the eighteenth century, served as the church for the Jesuits' college—a centuries-old hidden secret was brought to light.

When the restorer cleaned the inside of the baroque gilt-wood carved columns of the altar of Our Lady, she discovered a collection of more than one thousand pages of documents, most of them manuscripts. Inside the right column, there was a wooden wedge-shaped box containing an ivory crucifix wrapped in linen tow. In the same column, a cylindrical linen bag contained a thick manuscript volume with a smaller notebook inside. Surprised by the discovery, the restorer examined the remaining columns and found three more objects. In the inner column on the left side, there was a rolled codex—stored in cylinder form, so as to fit inside the column—inside which was a bundle of letters tied with a string. In addition, a burlap bag labeled with the name António de Vasconcelos contained several carefully stitched cloth packages. There was a final package in the same format but wrapped in paper, either unfinished or hastily closed.

As we cleaned and made an inventory of these documents, the origin of that treasure became increasingly clear. The earliest documents dated back to the sixteenth century, a letter from St. Ignatius of Loyola, written on March 18, 1542. The most recent texts were from September 1759, contemporary with the decree expelling the Jesuits from Portugal, issued on the third of that month, and with the events that preceded the departure of the last Jesuits from Coimbra. And so we came to the conclusion that on the very eve of the expulsion, which took place on October 24, 1759, a Jesuit named António de Vasconcelos (1727–1801) evaded the soldiers who guarded the college, entered its church, and hid a small treasure of documents within the most unexpected place, the rear of the altarpiece. In this

paper, we explain the historical circumstances behind this collection and describe its textual corpus.

### **The Foundation of the Society of Jesus and Its Presence in Coimbra**

The Kingdom of Portugal played a crucial role in the early development of the Society of Jesus. Three years before the pope approved their religious order in 1540, Ignatius and his companions in Paris had already attracted the attention of Portuguese officials—including King João III (1502–57, r.1521–57) and Pedro de Mascarenhas (1484–1555), his ambassador in Rome—who wished to include these men in the kingdom’s plans for Asia.<sup>1</sup> At that time, Portugal was involved in two important and interrelated endeavors: the maritime discoveries, integral to the monarch’s missionary design; and King João’s own cultural policy, which, in 1537, included reforms to the education system and the relocation of the public university to Coimbra. João wanted religious orders to educate and send missionaries to the discovered territories. He also granted scholarships for Portuguese students to study at the prestigious University of Paris so that, once trained in the humanistic tradition, they would return to improve the standard of education in their native country. Among its senior beneficiaries was Simão Rodrigues (1510–79), an early companion of Ignatius.<sup>2</sup>

In 1540, João and Mascarenhas successfully recruited two Jesuits—Rodrigues and the Spaniard Francis Xavier (1506–52)—to leave Rome for planned assignments in India. However, with their arrival in Lisbon, the presence of these “apostles” so pleased João that he postponed their departure. It took two years to reach an agreement: Xavier finally left for India, while Rodrigues would remain in Portugal, where he founded the Portuguese province of the Society of Jesus, the order’s first, in 1546.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the roles of Diogo de Gouveia (1471–1557), the principal of the Collège Sainte-Barbe in Paris, and Jerónimo Osório (1514–80), see Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na assistência de Portugal*, tome 1 (Porto: Apostolado da Imprensa, 1931), 1:218. Cf. Margarida Miranda, “Dom Jerónimo Osório e a implantação da Companhia de Jesus em Portugal,” in *O humanismo português e europeu no 5º centenário do Cícero Lusitanus: Dom Jerónimo Osório (1515–1580)*, ed. Cristina Pimentel et al. (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2020), 513–24, and Pimentel et al., *O humanismo português e europeu*. Osório studied in Paris and had a friendly relationship with Ignatius and his first companions, especially Pierre Favre (1506–46), whom he held in high regard.

<sup>2</sup> Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus*, tome 1, 1:41–56; John W. O’Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 31.

<sup>3</sup> Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus*, tome 1, vol. 1; see also Charles O’Neill and Joaquín M. Domínguez, eds., *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* [henceforth DHCI] (Rome: IHSI, 2001), s.v. “Portugal,” 3196–200.

From its inception, the Portuguese province engaged in intense missionary and educational activities, not only in Europe but throughout Portugal's overseas territories and always with the crown's support. This tradition was rooted in one of Rodrigues's first tasks in Portugal, the founding of a Jesuit college in Coimbra, where the king had transferred the public university a few years earlier. The construction of the College of Jesus began in 1547, while the erection of the church would not start until 1598 and would last one hundred years.<sup>4</sup> In 1555, João also entrusted the Jesuits with the Royal College of Arts in Coimbra. They followed the tenures of André de Gouveia and the French humanists, who had recently been condemned by the Inquisition. Both of these educational institutions became known as the "school of Coimbra," and their studies were at the center of the main textbooks disseminated by the *Ratio studiorum* (1599) throughout the Jesuits' network of schools.<sup>5</sup> Together with the University of Évora (the former Colégio do Espírito Santo), the Coimbra colleges had a significant impact on the intellectual and academic development of Portugal, Europe, and the wider world beyond.<sup>6</sup>

The Jesuits' educational enterprises in Portugal were an immediate success. The humanities courses at Coimbra alone attracted a number of distinguished teachers and learned men such as Manuel Álvares (1526–83), Cipriano Soares (1524–93), Pedro Perpinyá (Petrus Perpinianus [1530–66]), Miguel Venegas (1529–c.1588), and Luís da Cruz (1543–1604). Coimbra also hosted highly influential thinkers and teachers in the cycle of arts and philosophy, including Pedro da Fonseca (1528–99), Manuel de Góis (1543–97), Baltasar Álvares (1560–1630), and Sebastião do Couto (1567–1639), the authors of the Commentaries on Aristotle (known as the *Conimbricenses*), published between 1592 and 1606.<sup>7</sup> In the field of scripture and theology were the well-known names of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) and Luis de Molina (1535–1600), and in the field of historiography, Baltasar Teles (1596–1675), Simão de Vasconcelos (1597–1671), Fernão Cardim (c.1548–1625), and António Franco (1662–1732). Countless Jesuits left Coimbra to become noted missionaries in America, Africa, and Asia, including José de Anchieta (1534–97), Manuel da Nóbrega (1517–70), Luís da Grã (1523–1609), Inácio de Azevedo

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<sup>4</sup> António Garcia de Vasconcelos, "Os colégios universitários de Coimbra (fundados de 1539 a 1779)," *Biblos* 15 (1939): 1–169, here 41–42.

<sup>5</sup> Cipriano Soares, *De arte rhetorica libri tres ex Aristotele, Cicerone et Quintiliano praecipue deprompti* (Coimbra: Barreira, 1562); Manuel Álvares, *De institutione grammatica libri tres* (Lisbon: Barreira, 1572); and the "Coimbra Course" (*Cursus Conimbricensis*), an eight-volume commentary on Aristotle's philosophy, published by the presses of Coimbra and Lisbon between 1592 and 1606.

<sup>6</sup> Carlota Simões, Margarida Miranda, and Pedro Casaleiro, eds., *Visto de Coimbra: O Colégio de Jesus entre Portugal e o mundo* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Mário Santiago de Carvalho, *O curso aristotélico jesuíta Conimbricense* (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 2018); Carvalho, "Cursus Conimbricensis," in *Conimbricenses.org* encyclopedia, ed. Mário Santiago de Carvalho and Simone Guidi, latest revision: May 28, 2019, <http://www.conimbricenses.org/encyclopedia/cursus-conimbricensis> (accessed May 11, 2022).

(1526–70), Gonçalo da Silveira (1526–61), Melchior Carneiro (1516–83), and João de Brito (1647–93). In addition to playing essential roles in the missionaries' academic education, the College of Jesus and the University of Coimbra also became points of passage for noted Jesuit mathematicians and astronomers who studied or taught there before leaving on mission, such as the Italians Cristoforo Borri (1583–1632) and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and the German Christopher Clavius (1538–1612).<sup>8</sup>

However, in 1759, two hundred years after the Jesuits' arrival, the relationship between the Kingdom of Portugal and the Society of Jesus was completely shaken. A complex plot of power and intrigue contrived by the minister of the kingdom Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo (1699–1782),<sup>9</sup> famously known as the Marquis of Pombal, led to the Society's expulsion from the Portuguese territories. In less than two decades, similar processes took place in other European kingdoms and would culminate in the pope's formal suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. Thus, by the time of the suppression, the Jesuits in Portugal had already seen their assets confiscated and sold. They were forbidden to preach, confess, and teach in all Portuguese territories. The books once used in their schools were burned. Finally, a law declared the Jesuits "denaturalized, proscribed, and exterminated" in all the Portuguese domains.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of the Jesuits' expulsion from Portugal, their province was the order's largest. There were more than eight hundred Jesuits in Portugal operating twenty-two colleges, four seminaries, four novitiates, and twenty residences.<sup>11</sup> But the Portuguese assistancy also included just as many Jesuits who served in the overseas territories of Brazil, Africa, India, and the Far East.<sup>12</sup> While these 1,700 Jesuits were scattered around the globe at the time of their order's expulsion, one-tenth were concentrated in one city. In Coimbra alone, there were more than two hundred Jesuits, all at the College of Jesus, including António de Vasconcelos.

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<sup>8</sup> Simões, Miranda, and Casaleiro, *Visto de Coimbra*.

<sup>9</sup> See Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na assistência de Portugal*, tome 4, vol. 1 (Porto: Livraria Apostolado da Imprensa, 1950), and João Lúcio de Azevedo, *O Marquês de Pombal e a sua época* (Lisbon: Leya, 2018 [1990]), which features a portrait of one of the most controversial political figures of his time, as well as an account of the great repercussions his actions had inside and outside Portugal, from Brazil to Europe.

<sup>10</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Carvalho, Sebastião José," 675.

<sup>11</sup> According to Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus*, tome 4, 1:4–6, citing the official catalog of 1749 and other sources.

<sup>12</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Portugal," 3196–200.

## Describing the Corpus

The materials that Vasconcelos hid in the Jesuits' church in 1759 consisted of a small ivory crucifix and thousands of documents. The latter can be classified into four distinct groups: foundational documents, a volume on a theological controversy, a manuscript related to noted Jesuit orator António Vieira, and various papers from the time of the Jesuits' expulsion from Portugal. Taken as a whole, however, these documents capture the history of the Society in the Portuguese Empire from its founding and expansion to its precipitous fall.

### *Letters*

Dating from the sixteenth century, a bundle of letters found in 2016 bears highly symbolic meaning because they mostly belong to the period of the foundation of the Society of Jesus and its first province. On the surface of the package is written, both in Portuguese and Latin, "all these letters [are] only for the superior in Coimbra" (*Som<sup>te</sup> o Sup<sup>or</sup> deve ter estas copias em Coimbra; Soli sup<sup>ri</sup> / õ[m]nes hae epistolae coñimbricae*). Most of these letters came from the central government of the Society in Rome.<sup>13</sup> A few others came from Xavier in Cochin (India). The collection also includes letters that King João III sent to Rome in 1553. The monarch wrote to several different people regarding Luís Gonçalves da Câmara (1519–75) and the Jesuit apostolic works he was to represent in Rome.<sup>14</sup> Since the collection's discovery, under the supervision of Carlota Miranda Urbano, a team of Coimbra master's students have found published versions of many of these letters.<sup>15</sup> In some cases, the newly found manuscripts contain important differences from the originals, such as different recipients and even new paragraphs.

The foundational documents contain at least seven letters written by Ignatius. There are two letters addressed to Simão Rodrigues<sup>16</sup> between 1542 and 1545, including a copy of Ignatius's famous 1552 letter on the importance of obedience. In one letter, Ignatius wrote of the need to express the utmost gratitude toward the Portuguese king, and, in another, he granted Rodrigues permission to travel to Rome. There are also four letters from 1555. Of these, Ignatius addressed one to

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<sup>13</sup> Ignatius of Loyola and Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76), his assistant and personal secretary.

<sup>14</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Câmara, Luís Gonçalves," 608–9. After his tenure as the rector of the College of Jesus, he remained in Rome as procurator to the Portuguese province between 1553 and 1555 and as its assistant in 1558–59. His close relationship with Ignatius famously enabled him to write the so-called autobiography of Ignatius. He was called back to Portugal, where he was entrusted with the education of the young king, Dom Sebastião I (r.1557–58).

<sup>15</sup> These include texts by King João III; a letter from Polanco to the provincial of Portugal (1554) on the public disputations held at the College of Rome, "a city hardly keen on academic studies"; and a letter from Michelangelo Tamburini (1647–1730) to the rector of Coimbra (1713) asking for the university's participation in the beatification of Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621) with the same solicitude as in the canonization of Queen Isabel of Portugal (1271–1336).

<sup>16</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Rodrigues, Simão R. de Azevedo," 3390–92.

João Nunes Barreto (1517–62),<sup>17</sup> the patriarch of Ethiopia, and another to King João on the return of Dom Teotónio de Bragança (1530–1602) to the Kingdom of Portugal as requested by his brother Dom Teodósio (1510–63).<sup>18</sup> Ignatius's letters from 1555 also include one to the Jesuit provincial Diego Mirón (1516–90, in office 1552–56)<sup>19</sup> on the relations between the elected patriarch and the Jesuit provincial of India and their visitor and on each man's obligations of obedience. Finally, there is a letter Ignatius wrote to the provincials and rectors of the Jesuit colleges in Spain and Portugal on Luís Gonçalves da Câmara's recent return to Portugal. Gonçalves had accompanied some Jesuit scholastics, including Bernardo the Japanese (?–1557),<sup>20</sup> who was one of Xavier's first converts and the first Japanese convert to visit Europe. Briefly in Coimbra, he was a novice when Ignatius called him to Rome, where he remained from January to October 1555.<sup>21</sup>

Of these foundational documents, some of these letters are noted as copies, with text such as *traslado de uã do p.e Ignatio sobre a obediência* (copy of one [letter] from Father Ignatius on obedience). However, other letters appear to be originals, such as the one Ignatius wrote to Rodrigues on August 22, 1545. Devotion to the name of the Jesuits' founder led someone to cut out the signature of Ignatius of Loyola to make it a personal relic.

### ***Conclusiones ex universa theologia***

A second group includes a volume on a theological debate dated 1652 and carries the name of Francisco Soares (Lusitanus [1605–59], to be distinguished from Francisco Suárez Granatensis [1548–1617]).<sup>22</sup> It corresponds to a set of then-called *conclusiones*, also known as theses, *quaestiones*, *controversiae*, *propositiones*, or in the singular as *dissertatio* or *disputatio*. Handwritten notes in the margin identify the origin of the codex:

<sup>17</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Barreto, João Nunes," 352–53. Barreto and Melchior Carneiro were the first bishops of the Society of Jesus. Barreto was also the first patriarch of Ethiopia.

<sup>18</sup> Dom Teotónio of Braganza was a brother of Dom Teodósio I, fifth duke of Braganza. When nineteen years old, he escaped to the College of Jesus against his parents' will, before leaving to Rome, but had to return at the behest of his brother. Having received his doctorate in theology from the University of Paris, he was later archbishop of Évora (1578).

<sup>19</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Mirón, Diego," 2686. Born in Valencia, Spain, he was sent to Portugal, where he was one of the first residents of the College of Jesus (1542) as well as its first rector. He eventually succeeded Simão Rodrigues as provincial.

<sup>20</sup> Bernardo de Satsuma was the first Japanese Jesuit, one of the first converts to Christianity in Kagoshima, under Francis Xavier. The Society had great expectations of his potential role in the mission in Japan, but he died prematurely in 1557.

<sup>21</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Bernardo de Satsuma," 419–20.

<sup>22</sup> DHCI, s.v. "Soares, Francisco," 3593–94. He taught in Lisbon, Coimbra, and Évora and was rector at the University of Évora. As an author, he published a philosophy course that was highly appreciated for its clarity (*Cursus philosophicus*, 4 vols. [Coimbra, 1651]).

*Applicado ao C[olégio] de Coimbra pelo P[adr]e Manoel Pereyra [1619–83] da Comp.[anhia] de Jesus Lente de na Universidade de Évora, p[ara] q[ue] se guarde e conste a todo o tempo das dúvidas que no ditto Col. ouve entre o P[adr]e Franc[isco] Soares Lusitano e os Rdos. P.es Dominicicos.*

Assigned to the College of Coimbra by Fr. Manuel Pereira [1619–83] of the Society of Jesus teacher of *Prima de Theologia* at the University of Évora, so that at any moment the college keeps memory of the doubts had between Father Francisco Soares Lusitano and the Reverend Dominican Fathers.

“Assigned” should be interpreted as “destined to” (*alicui rei deditus*) rather than “used” in a college course. Thus Pereira destined to the College of Coimbra the theological *conclusiones*, which he had bound with other opuscles. The aim was, as written, to document the philosophical-theological controversy in Coimbra between Soares and the Dominicans.

The codex collects two sets of *conclusiones* defended by Jesuits, with Soares as the presider and Pereira as the defender, on February 20 and March 15, 1652 as well as a third set defended by Dominicans days later, on March 20. These sets are joined by another interesting text containing the testimonies and comments from university professors. These men had witnessed the events and determined that Pereira and the Jesuits had won the controversy, for which they expressed their appreciation.

While much is known of Pereira’s life, little of his work remains. Pereira was born in Lisbon, where, at the age of fifteen, he entered the Society and completed his novitiate. He taught humanities and philosophy in Lisbon and dogmatic theology and moral theology in Évora. He was rector in Braga before returning to Évora, where he was a senior theology professor (of *Prima*<sup>23</sup>) and rector in 1675. He died in 1683.<sup>24</sup> Only one of his works was published, appearing posthumously in 1724: *De restitutione tractatus sex in tres tomos distributi [...]* (Six treatises on the restitution divided into three volumes [...]).<sup>25</sup> As attested by the volume of *conclusiones* found in Coimbra’s cathedral, Pereira was Soares’s pupil and studied theology in Coimbra until 1652. Thus it was Pereira who had the *conclusiones* by his master Soares bound with his own manuscripts.

<sup>23</sup> The term “Lente de Prima” does not designate a particular subject but the canonical hour at which the teacher ministered the class.

<sup>24</sup> António Franco, *Évora ilustrada* (Évora: Edições Nazareth, 1945), 283, *passim*; Carlos Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, tome 6 (Brussels: Oscar Schepens, 1895), 494.

<sup>25</sup> Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus*, tome 4, 1:389; Diogo Barbosa Machado, *Biblioteca lusitana histórica, crítica e cronológica*, tome 3 (Lisbon: Na Officina de Ignacio Rodrigues, 1741), 333.



According to the handwritten annotations on the first pages, the following appears to be the origin of the book: “The book that Father Manuel Pereira, *Prima* Professor at the College of Santo Antão, lent to Father Manuel [?Carvalho]” (*Livro q[ue] o P[adre] M[anu]el P[erei]ra, lente de prima no C[olégi]o de S[ant]o Antão emprestou ao P[adr]e Manuel [Carvalho?]*). The wording on the spine of the codex reads: “General Conclusions of Theology, by Father Manuel Pereira from the College of Coimbra” (*Ex Vniu[ersa] Theologia a P.e Emmanuele Pereyra. Collegio Conimbricensi*).

The inscription on the spine highlights the difficulty of determining the authorship of early modern theses. In fact, the extended title points to two intellectual authors: the presider, that is, the professor, always the object of a stronger typographical emphasis, and the defender, or student. Of these two, who was the intellectual author of a thesis? Roque Cabral claims that there is usually not enough evidence to assign the topics either to the master or to the student.<sup>26</sup> However, based on an analysis of various documents, João Pereira Gomes asserts that the author is the teacher.<sup>27</sup>

Each set of printed *conclusiones* is followed by a number of handwritten pages of unequal extent and dense calligraphy, though always in Latin. The codex dedicates about four hundred pages to the Jesuit and Dominican contributions to the famous free will controversy, which originated in the sixteenth century with the work of Molina and Fonseca and had been debated by subsequent philosophers and theologians.<sup>28</sup> This debate, aroused by the Lutheran and the Calvinist doctrines on predestination and the absolute transcendence of God, intensified during Molina’s

<sup>26</sup> Roque Cabral, “Teologia e filosofia dos jesuítas em Portugal,” *Didaskalia* 20 (1999): 185–87.

<sup>27</sup> João Pereira Gomes, “As teses e o problema da sua autoria,” *Brotéria* 73 (1961): 397–427.

<sup>28</sup> Luis de Molina was born in Cuenca, Spain, and made his novitiate in Coimbra. He spent most of his life in Portugal. In Coimbra, he studied philosophy and theology, but most of his teaching took place in Évora. See Lúcio Craveiro da Silva, “Luís de Molina,” in *História do pensamento filosófico português*, ed. Pedro Calafate (Lisbon: Caminho, 2001), 2:547–58; and DH CJ, s.v. “Molina, Luís de,” 2716–17. Pedro da Fonseca was professor of philosophy at the College of Arts and professor of theology at the University of Évora, where he obtained his doctorate. He was also rector of the College of Coimbra. In 1564, he presented the treatise on predestination as well as the doctrine of “ciência media” at the University of Coimbra that gave rise to the famous controversy over free will and the cooperation of grace. Known as the “Portuguese Aristotle,” he is one of the greatest representatives of the Second Scholasticism. His publications include *Institutionum dialecticarum libri octo* (Eight books of dialectical institutions) and a commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, both of which were recommended textbooks in the *Ratio studiorum*. See Mário Santiago de Carvalho, “Fonseca, Pedro da,” Conimbricenses.org Encyclopedia, <http://www.conimbricenses.org/encyclopedia/fonseca-pedro-da> (accessed October 18, 2022); Amândio Coxito and Maria Luísa Couto Soares, “Pedro da Fonseca,” in Calafate, *História do pensamento filosófico português*, 455–501; and DH CJ, s.v. “Fonseca, Pedro da,” 1478. DH CJ, s.v. “Controversia de auxiliis,” 3732–35 provides an account of this long debate, which culminated in the Congregationes de Auxiliis, a set of eighty-five disputes between Jesuit and Dominican theologians held before the pope between 1602 and 1609. Since the controversy could not be resolved decisively, Pope Paul V (r.1605–11) ordered the issue to be abandoned. Yet despite the papal resolution, the debate continued.

magisterium in Évora and Fonseca's in Coimbra and Évora. The same topics were still hotly debated one century later, as attested by page 255, with the title *Disputatio publica cum Patribus Dominicanis circa materiam de auxiliis divinae gratiae* (Public discussion with the Dominican fathers on the help of divine grace).

In addition to this *disputatio* featuring Pereira as the winner, the document contains a range of canonical and juridical topics as taught and discussed in classrooms at the time. Topics included whether the son could alienate or pawn a property whose usufruct belongs to the father; whether contracts made under the effects of rage were valid; whether someone in exile could be killed while in a foreign territory; whether deaf-mutes could contract a valid marriage; and whether the pope could be deposed by a universal council. Considering these topics in their classes, each student had to account for a certain number of previously published theses or *conclusiones* and then had to defend them. Students debated a wide range of questions in class and examined all their argumentative consequences in an atmosphere that stimulated personal reflection and critique.<sup>29</sup>

From the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, thousands of theses were printed in Portugal. In the sixteenth century, some of them solely comprised a single, poster-size page, but in the seventeenth century theses with four pages were more common.<sup>30</sup> The *conclusiones* or theses functioned as a syllabus, whether for the exams taken by students or for the public acts solemnizing certain events. Their contents were thus the product of the master's lessons, so that very often the ideas in the *postilas* (notebooks containing the full text of the lessons) match the ideas synthesized in the printed theses, as observed by Gomes.<sup>31</sup> Assuming that the conclusions argued in class and the topics approved for examinations shared the same thought, the theses or *conclusiones* constitute vivid expressions of seventeenth-century teaching in Portugal, a synthesis of its guidelines. While some matters were of a more strictly scientific nature, others echoed divergences in thought at the time, as was the case with these theses.

The last *conclusiones*, from March 23, 1652 (p. 334), were those by their adversaries: Fr. Domingos Freire, presider, and Fr. João de Santo Agostinho, defender. Freire was from Porto and entered the Order of Preachers, where he taught "with a lot of admiration."<sup>32</sup> He was the deputy of the Inquisition of Coimbra and had been appointed deputy of the general council of that court shortly before his death in 1685. He was praised as a great poet and theologian, though historian Barbosa Machado does not mention any published academic work, meaning this

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<sup>29</sup> Pereira Gomes, "As teses e o problema da sua autoria," 397–427.

<sup>30</sup> The majority had between four and twenty pages, but some numbered a hundred, and Pereira Gomes ("As teses e o problema da sua autoria," 399) mentions one with over two hundred pages.

<sup>31</sup> Pereira Gomes, "As teses e o problema da sua autoria," 399.

<sup>32</sup> Barbosa Machado, *Biblioteca lusitana histórica, crítica e cronológica*, tome 1 (Lisbon: Na Officina de Ignacio Rodrigues, 1741), 711.

volume of *conclusiones* provides a unique insight into the scholarship of this famous Dominican.<sup>33</sup> Santo Agostinho remains unidentified. An author by the same name is mentioned by Barbosa Machado, though he is a different Franciscan from a different time period.<sup>34</sup>

This recovered volume presents Pereira's journey as a student. It also confirms Gomes's stance on the intellectual authorship of the theses, or *conclusiones*, and sheds light on a particular moment of religious debate. While Jesuit thought on free will is well known, the same does not apply to the Dominicans. These *conclusiones* therefore provide unique insights into a variety of topics, including those outside the field of Jesuit studies.

***António Vieira: Clavis prophetarum***

The newly discovered collection also consists of a long manuscript of *Clavis prophetarum* (Key of the prophets), one of the prophetic masterpieces by the celebrated Portuguese orator António Vieira (1608–97).<sup>35</sup> The manuscript is a set of six notebooks stitched together to total five hundred pages. The title page reads:

*Clavis Prophetarum / uerum eorum sensum aperiens/ Ad rectam Regni Christi in terris consummati/ Intelligentiam assequendam,/ A P. Antonio Vieyra Societatis Iesu/ Summo studio elaborata,/ sed morte praeueniente non absoluta, / Nec ultima manu expoliata./ Opus posthumum, ac desideratissimum./ A Collegio Bahiensi/ Ad admodum R. P. N. Thyrsus Gonzales/ Eiusdem Societatis Praepositum g[enera]lem/ Missum/ Anno MDCXCIX.*

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<sup>33</sup> He composed one *Life of St. Rose of Lima* and several Offices proper of the saints of the Dominican Order (p. 711).

<sup>34</sup> Barbosa Machado, *Biblioteca lusitana histórica, crítica e cronológica*, tome 2 (Lisbon: Na Officina de Ignacio Rodrigues, 1747), 578.

<sup>35</sup> He was born in Lisbon but departed to Brazil at the age of six, where he was raised and educated. A renowned preacher, writer, and diplomat, he was greatly appreciated by King João IV (r.1640–56). As a missionary, he excelled in the defense of the indigenous people (as well as the New Christians in Portugal). As for his literary production, he eventually saw his prophetic and millenarian thinking condemned. See DHCJ, s.v. “Vieira, António,” 3948–51. The commemorations of the fourth centenary of the birth and death of António Vieira, between 2008 and 2010, generated numerous publications, among which his *Opera omnia*, in thirty volumes, was published by Círculo de Leitores in 2013–14.

The key to the prophets that opens their true meaning, to achieve a correct understanding of the kingdom of Christ consummated on earth; elaborated with an accurate study by Father António Vieira of the Society of Jesus, but because of his death not finished nor revised [...]. An eagerly desired, posthumous work. Sent by the Colégio da Bahia to the very reverend Our Father Tirso González, the General Prefect of the same Society. Year 1699.<sup>36</sup>

Another page provides additional information about the manuscript's origins. The text, this time in Portuguese, reads: "*Clavis prophetarum* copied by Fr. Jeronymo de Castillo and assigned to this Collegio of Coimbra by Fr. André de Barros" (*Clavis prophetarum copiado pelo P. Jeronymo de Castilho e aplicado a este Collegio de Coimbra pelo P. André de Barros*). The Coimbra manuscript, therefore, was copied by Jerónimo de Castilho (1674–1730), a famous professor of humanities in Coimbra and Évora. Castilho made this copy while studying theology in Rome. In a marginal note, he refers to a second copy and indicates erasures and differences between the two versions.<sup>37</sup>

André de Barros (1675–1754), Vieira's first biographer, studied and taught in Coimbra, where, as shown by this manuscript, he used the *Clavis* in his teaching. This manuscript is yet another testimony of his knowledge of the text of the *Clavis*, which he studied and commented on. In 1736, Barros edited *Vozes saudosas da eloquência* (Voices longing for eloquence), a compilation of texts by and about Vieira. Among this collection was a critique of the *Clavis prophetarum* by António Casnedi (1643–1725), the author of a commented summary in Latin, which was for a long time the only known published version of the *Clavis*.<sup>38</sup>

In 1698, a year after Vieira's death, his former secretary Antonio Maria Bonucci (1651–1728) transcribed a copy of the *Clavis* and sent it to Rome for the attention of the Jesuit superior general, Tirso González (1624–1705, in office 1686–1705).<sup>39</sup> According to Arnaldo Espírito Santo, who studied the *stemma codicum* and made the critical edition of the *Clavis*, there is a mutilated copy in Rome and

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<sup>36</sup> The beginning of the manuscript contains the original title: *De Regno Christi in terris consummato libri 3* (Three books on the accomplishment of Christ's kingdom on earth).

<sup>37</sup> *Clavis prophetarum*, 474.

<sup>38</sup> José Pedro Paiva, *Padre António Vieira, 1608–1697: Bibliografia* (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional Portugal, 1999), 195–96.

<sup>39</sup> Arnaldo Espírito Santo, "A estética barroca do Latim da *Clavis prophetarum*," *Ágora* 1 (1999): 105–31; Espírito Santo, "Pontos de vista sobre o original da *Clavis prophetarum*," in *Letras, sinais para David Mourão-Ferreira, Margarida Vieira Mendes e Osório Mateus*, ed. Cristina Almeida Ribeiro et al. (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos e Departamento de Literaturas Românicas da Faculdade de Letras de Lisboa, 1999), 79–83; Espírito Santo, "Censuras da *Clavis prophetarum* do Padre António Vieira," in *Sub luce florentis calami: Homenaje a Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz*, ed. Manuela Domínguez García et al. (Santiago de Compostela: Universidad, 2002), 620–35.

another copy of this copy in Lisbon.<sup>40</sup> Further examination of the new manuscript of Coimbra thus has the potential to make important contributions toward a true appreciation of Vieira's *opus magnum*.

***Documents from the Period of the Jesuits' Expulsion***

The fourth type of material found in Coimbra's cathedral is a collection of documents from the period of the Jesuits' expulsion from Portugal in 1759. The first manuscript is a hagiography-themed notebook on Sister Maria Joana do Lourical (1712–55). The Jesuit Gabriel Malagrida (1689–1761) had argued that the mystical visions of this famous nun prophesized the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, which he saw as God's punishment against Lisbon and the royal court. Malagrida disseminated this argument in his *Juizo da verdadeira causa do terremoto que padeceu a corte de Lisboa em 1 de Novembro de 1755* (Judgment of the true cause of the earthquake suffered by the court of Lisbon on November 1, 1755). The biographical notebook of Joana do Lourical would therefore have been regarded by the Jesuits' critics as a compromising document. Its contents were associated with some of the numerous charges that led to the persecution of Malagrida, whom the Inquisition condemned to death as a heretic in 1761. The priest was strangled in a public square before his body was burned and his ashes scattered in the Tagus River.<sup>41</sup>

In 2016, this notebook was discovered with the *conclusiones* and not in the burlap bag bearing Vasconcelos's name, which suggests that it might not have been among the Jesuit's personal belongings. The notebook is composed of eight folios and fifteen pages. It contains a witness written by a sister, by blood, of Joana do Lourical, who accompanied her in religious life and with whom she had lived since childhood. Maria Joana Sanches da Graça, born in Évora, was one of the first female Portuguese writers, although most of her manuscripts were burned. This testimony by Joana's sister was written in the context of the informative proceedings initiated by the bishop of the diocese on the *Vida, virtudes e morte da serva de Deus* (Life, virtues, and death of the servant of God). José Caetano used this unpublished source in his biography of Joana do Lourical, which was published in 1762.

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<sup>40</sup> Espírito Santo, "A estética barroca do Latim da *Clavis prophetarum*," 107. See also António Vieira, *Clavis prophetarum: Chave dos profetas Livro III*, ed. and trans. Arnaldo do Espírito Santo (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 2000), a critical edition of the text by Arnaldo Espírito Santo, in accordance with the currently known MS.

<sup>41</sup> See Miguel Real, "O Padre Gabriel Malagrida e o Marquês de Pombal," *Brotéria* 169 (2009): 169–90; Pedro Calafate, "A polémica em torno das causas do terramoto de 1755," in Calafate, *História do pensamento filosófico português*, 3:368–81; and José Eduardo Franco, "O 'terramoto' Pombalino e a Campanha de 'desjuitização' de Portugal," *Lusitania sacra* 2ª série 18 (2006): 147–218.

In addition to this notebook, Vasconcelos left his own personal archives inside the burlap bag. Four packages were carefully stitched closed, identified with the name of “Ant. Vasconcelos” and the designations *Apontam. e Nom.* (Notes and names); *Cartas m<sup>hs</sup> e a<sup>lh</sup>* (Letters: Mine and others); and *Matrim* (Matrimony). A fifth package partly wrapped in paper has the monogram “AV.” This collection contains his papers and notes, written in Latin and Portuguese, on a variety of subjects: the list of theses he defended as a theologian on May 4, 1759 at the College of Jesus (indicating that despite some difficulties resulting from a siege, studies were not interrupted); allegations concerning a marriage in which he defended his young cousin, Josefa Maurícia de Vasconcelos, who was seeking to prove that she was married to Bernardino Ribeiro;<sup>42</sup> and his letter exchange, both active and passive, with his family, friends, and religious, on serious as well as trivial matters of daily life in the mid-eighteenth-century Portuguese kingdom.

The fifth package in the burlap bag—the one wrapped in paper, though unfinished or closed in haste—contained something particularly special: a historian’s notebook, titled *As cousas notáveis sucedidas em Portugal desde o ano 1750 até [...] (Notable events that happened in Portugal since the year 1750 until [...]).* Unfortunately, this item is the worst-preserved piece. One of the notebook’s pages had so many gaps that, in order to preserve the whole, it had to be recovered.

Acting as the custodian of collective memory, Vasconcelos left a record of the social and political events that took place year after year in the Portuguese kingdom. The title remained incomplete because the narrative was still *in fieri* when the author was compelled to interrupt it so that he could hide the documents before he and other Jesuits in Coimbra were forced to leave. Though the royal decree of expulsion was issued on September 3, 1759, the younger Jesuits did not leave the college until October 24. Nevertheless, the last event recorded in this notebook is from the morning of September 30, 1759 and contains the final warning about the departure procedures for elder professed priests. And then exile came, along with a long silence of over 250 years.

### **The Expulsion from the College of Coimbra and the Gesture of Father António de Vasconcelos**

Among the younger Jesuits forced to leave Coimbra for a hard journey into exile was António de Vasconcelos, who left behind what has since become a freshly found legacy. His name, like that of any other Jesuit, appears on a previous list of

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<sup>42</sup> Josefa Maurícia was only thirteen years old. She was born in Paio Mendes, Ferreira do Zêzere.

the last Jesuits to depart into exile.<sup>43</sup> Yet, with the discovery of Vasconcelos's archive in 2016, a deeper knowledge of this Jesuit's story has been gained, due largely to the research conducted by António Júlio Trigueiros.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the historical background of such a special legacy rescued from oblivion by an exiled Jesuit is all the more remarkable considering the context of the Jesuits' departure provided by José Caeiro (1712–91) in his memoirs, *De exilio provinciae lusitanae Societatis Iesu libri quinque* (Five books on the exile of the Portuguese province of the Society of Jesus).<sup>45</sup>

On the morning of February 15, 1759, soldiers entered and occupied the Jesuit college. They lived there separately from the Jesuits, who remained secluded within a section of the college behind doors the soldiers had closed with lime and cement.<sup>46</sup> For the next eight months, the Jesuits lived in strict isolation from the external world. The soldiers were forbidden to communicate with the Jesuits, under penalty of prison. They prevented any outside news, letters, or gifts from reaching the Jesuits. And that July, when the Jesuits were allowed outside in the yards, the surveillance team was reinforced with more guards who monitored the college's fence around the clock. On their return home, the priests were counted one by one.<sup>47</sup>

Soldiers also kept watch over the church. Entrance was strictly restricted to celebrating Mass in the few altars available. Caeiro recalled how distressing it was for the many priests in the college to have so few altars to celebrate Mass and be continually under the surveillance of the sentinels and external guards who controlled anyone entering or leaving the church.<sup>48</sup> Non-Jesuit priests who were obliged to celebrate Mass at the chapels of the college church had to bring their own liturgical implements and paraments, and soldiers carefully examined the church afterward so that nothing from the outside remained and nothing from the college was removed.<sup>49</sup>

The classrooms were overtaken by the soldiers.<sup>50</sup> The library was closed (although the rector was able to prevent the sale of its collection), and the Jesuits were prohibited from using the books, which obviously hindered their studies. Only

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<sup>43</sup> José Caeiro, *História da expulsão da Companhia de Jesus da província de Portugal (De exilio provinciae lusitanae Societatis Iesu libri quinque)*, trans. Júlio de Moraes and José Leite (Lisbon: Ed. Verbo, 1995), 3:307.

<sup>44</sup> See "Os jesuítas Portugueses exilados nos Estados Pontifícios no período pombalino e pós-pombalino" (PhD diss., Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 2017), which provides further contributions to the research already developed by Mariagrazia Russo, "L'espulsione dei gesuiti dal Portogallo e il loro arrivo in Italia," *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 76 (2009): 1–14, and Mariagrazia Russo and Antonio Trigueiros, *I gesuiti dell'assistenza Lusitana esiliati in Italia (1759–1831)* (Padua: Libreria Editrice Università di Padova, 2013).

<sup>45</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, vol. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:139, 157.

<sup>47</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:160.

<sup>48</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:157.

<sup>49</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:157.

<sup>50</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:157.

after long urging could the priests send a request to the competent authority. The answer, which came in July, provided for the official in charge of the siege and of the keys to personally hand over the books requested and ensure their appropriate registration, albeit only under exceptional circumstances. According to Caeiro, that only happened on two occasions.<sup>51</sup>

The printing office and the pharmacy were sold, the library was closed, and the manuscripts from the archives were scattered throughout the city. Everything in the college—from its warehouse, pantry, and church—was plundered and inventoried.<sup>52</sup> So, how was it possible to save and then hide such a large number of documents from the rapine? Most surprising, under such dire circumstances, was how Vasconcelos could collect and maintain manuscripts as relevant as the foundational letters, since these were probably in the hands of a superior or in an archive.

Caeiro's account of the strict surveillance also reveals the moments when it could be overcome. We can imagine the Jesuit taking chances to deceive the sentinels and climb up the altar in the dead of night, perhaps colluding with a sympathetic soldier who helped the prisoners. Indeed, although the soldiers and Jesuits lived apart, Caeiro wrote about one soldier who was loyal to the Jesuits. "One of the main gates of the church, which gave access to the altar of Our Lady," he wrote, "was handled by a soldier with an extraordinary loyalty to the Jesuits so that there was nothing happening during the siege that the soldier would not relay to the Jesuits with admirable skill and constancy."<sup>53</sup>

We do not know whether Vasconcelos requested the books or how he evaded surveillance. Perhaps he was in possession of the collection when the siege took place and managed to keep it undeclared in his room. Or perhaps one of the older priests kept those books along with the letters and then passed them over to Vasconcelos before the first group of Jesuits left Coimbra on September 30. The pack of letters from the sixteenth century, in particular, indicates that the latter scenario is more likely, considering Caeiro's account in which he mentions one specific moment when that could have happened.

On September 30, the Jesuits were ordered to remain in their rooms after dinner. The older priests received the news that they were to leave that night. The younger Jesuits asked for permission to leave their rooms to prepare a meal for those who were leaving. And so it happened. When the food was served, "everything needed for the meal was distributed among all so that everyone could enter the others' rooms."<sup>54</sup> According to Caeiro, this provided an occasion for the elder to morally encourage the younger, but it could also have been an occasion for

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<sup>51</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:164.

<sup>52</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:161.

<sup>53</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:157.

<sup>54</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:264.



the elder to give the younger what they treasured most. And so, together with the rescued letters and works, Vasconcelos hid his personal collection as well, his crucifix included, perhaps with the hope that one day he would return.

According to Caeiro, the official in charge of the siege expected that, without their superiors, the younger Jesuits would be discouraged. In reality, however, they immediately elected a new rector (the eldest by birth), who proceeded to organize the household. He assigned fellow Jesuits to various tasks within the community and appointed the teachers necessary so that the study of humanities would start, as always, on October 1, which was the following day.<sup>55</sup> Caeiro's account also refers to the official's efforts to convince this group to leave the Society. *In extremis*, they were allowed everything they wanted, from family visits to permission to receive and send letters.<sup>56</sup> The overwhelming majority of them, however, kept their resolve to stay in the Society of Jesus.

Finally, on October 24, 1759, the last Jesuits were removed from the college. In the morning, they were instructed to make a list of what they were leaving behind in their rooms, to write their name on the door, and to remain in their rooms after dinner. In the afternoon, two secretaries, duly escorted, went to each room to inform anyone who wished to leave the Society that they could do so until 1 a.m. Those who remained in the Society would be taken into exile at that same hour. The latter amounted to 141 Jesuits, comprising non-professed priests, philosophy students, rhetoric students, coadjutor brothers, and novices. Only two young philosophy students chose to leave the Society that night.<sup>57</sup> Caeiro recalled that after they left their rooms, the Jesuits "visited, with deep religious sentiment the church, the chapel, and the other places in the college [...] and kissed the walls and the floor."<sup>58</sup> Among them was Vasconcelos, whose previous display of boldness went unnoticed.

Despite the severe siege and the diligent zeal of the officials—threatened with their lives for the slightest negligence—Vasconcelos managed to deceive the authorities and, against the will of the almighty minister of the Kingdom of Portugal, the future Marquis of Pombal, he managed to save a considerable legacy from destruction. On the eve of the departure, when he elaborated the list of items he would leave behind, he had already managed to hide that treasure. He tried to prevent the destruction of what he considered most valuable: his own personal memories and the memories of the Society of Jesus under siege. In order to save all that, he climbed to the Altar of the Coronation and Assumption of the Virgin Mary and there placed the documental collection, perhaps hoping one day to return and retrieve what he had been impeded from taking with him. So extraordinary was this

<sup>55</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:292–93.

<sup>56</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:297.

<sup>57</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:306.

<sup>58</sup> Caeiro, *História da expulsão*, 3:306–7.

hideout that the whole collection remained hidden for over 250 years, inside the gilt-wood carved columns of the Altar of the Coronation and Assumption of the Virgin, situated in the transept on the left side of the main chapel of the college's church.

## **Conclusion**

After a 250-year time lapse, all these documents are now available for research. It is almost as if Vasconcelos could finally prevent Pombal's anti-Jesuit offensive, which generated various forms of persecution and perpetuated for centuries the dynamics of a *damnatio memoriae*. Electronically scanned at the cathedral's own initiative, the whole collection is now available to the scientific community. It quickly became a source of new information for researchers in the fields of history, philosophy, theology, and hagiography. After 250 years of silence, the exiled Jesuit has broken the wall of time and is now heard by a twenty-first-century audience, to whom he bequeaths the chance of rewriting history, no longer by the victors' hand but by the hand of the most vulnerable losers.

This legacy allows for a fresh perspective on the earliest period of the Jesuit province of Portugal as well as a better understanding of the history of one of the church institutions that most deeply shaped European intellectual life at the beginning of the modern age. Above all, the content of these documents and the gesture of the Jesuit who saved them from oblivion provide clear evidence of Ignatius's and his Jesuit sons' attitude toward recordkeeping and memory-preservation.