

Zeitschrift: Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte = Revue suisse d'histoire religieuse et culturelle = Rivista svizzera di storia religiosa e culturale

Herausgeber: Vereinigung für Schweizerische Kirchengeschichte

Band: 101 (2007)

Artikel: Communication and Bureaucracy in the Early Modern Society of Jesus

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-130398>

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Communication and Bureaucracy in the Early Modern Society of Jesus*

Markus Friedrich

Among the many documents on Jesuit bureaucracy housed in the Order's central Archive in Rome, a rather peculiar one summarizes the order's administrative structure. A single folio sheet, dating from around 1580 and today bound in the codex *Institutum* 188, provides an overview of the order's administrative tasks and offices.¹ The two pages are neatly divided into two columns, with the right one listing the several offices of the Society of Jesus and the left one detailing the office holder's assigned tasks. The table thus documents the remarkable degree to which the Society of Jesus conceptualized itself as an organized social body that relied on differentiated administrative processes. Even though the piece doesn't quite look like modern-day organizational charts, it is nonetheless a systematic representation of the order's administrative structure. The diagram also illustrates the degree to which the Society of Jesus consciously relied on paper-based communication in its bureaucratic operations. If we turn to the left column of the graph we can see that all the tasks are clearly connected to certain

* This paper presents ideas from an ongoing research project on the Jesuit system of information-management that is supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (FR 2535/I-1). Amy J. Buono and Paul Nelles improved my German English and read the manuscript carefully – many thanks!

The following abbreviations are used:

ARSI – Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu.

HStA M – Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Munich.

clm – Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, codex latinus monacensis.

CG – John W. Padberg SJ/Martin D. O'Keefe SJ/John L. McCarthy SJ (Eds.), *For Matters of Greater Moment. The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations. A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees*, St. Louis 1994. I refer to the number of the General Congregation, the decree and page numbers.

Const – John W. Padberg (Ed.), *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms. A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, St. Louis 1996. I quote part, chapter, paragraph, and page.

¹ See Appendix for the text and the dating. All quotes without reference come from the Appendix.

forms of administrative writing and correspondence. In fact, from early on the government of the Jesuits Order relied on a dense network of bureaucratic communication. Ignatius himself held the conviction that a constant stream of communication between the order's members was an administrative necessity. Ignatius' ideas were quickly institutionalized and transformed into a host of offices and the relevant types of documents needed to support this structure.

I hasten to add that this purely organizational or «political» perspective on communication was certainly neither the only, nor the most prominent viewpoint within the Society. Besides administrative communiqué, there were many other reasons for regular communication. Nonetheless, it is clear that the administrative dimension of communication played a crucial role for the Society of Jesus. A brief look at an additional piece of evidence can substantiate these remarks. In an important manual on letter writing distributed in 1620 by the Roman Secretary Francesco Sacchini to the Provincial of Germany Superior, the author's perspective on the function of communication was strictly administrative in nature: «In every task, profit and success depends on compliance with certain routines and protocols. Persons with many obligations are particularly dependant on diligent support. In the Society of Jesus this holds particularly true for the Father General and his Provincials. Since the epistolary communication between the General and the Provincials is the backbone of our order's administration, and since this communication relies on letters, it is important that the writing of these letters is done with the utmost care and accuracy.»²

The opening paragraph of Sacchini's manual is quoted here since it shows to what extent a purely administrative and technical approach towards letter writing was possible. As was the case in many other institutions in the period, the well being of the social body and orderly administration were thought to influence one another. Orderly administration, however, depended heavily on coordinated administrative communication.³ As the quote shows, the Jesuits were no strangers to these burgeoning ideas and it is from this perspective that I address here the relationship between «Religion» and «Communication».

In Niklas Luhmann's seminal study on the organization of large social entities, he examines the relevance of formalized communication. In his perspective, a «net of communication» (*Kommunikationsnetz*) can be called *formalized* if the path of information through the network is fairly predictable.⁴ Luhmann's

² This perspective remains valid throughout the text, at no point does Sacchini show particular interest in the spiritual or religious or other dimensions of writing. The quote is clm 26490, p. 1f.: «Cum sit magnum in omni opere compendium, et profectum quoque ingens ipsius operis, si certa ratione viaque tractatur; sine dubis praecipuis industriae adjunctis indigens, qui negotijs et permultis occupantur et gravibus. Huiusmodi maxime sunt in Societate nostra Praepositus Generalis, et Provinciales. Quorum inter se mutuuum commercium cum totam fere Societatis administrationem contineat, idque per literas fiat, merito singularem curam et solertiam scribendi labor requirit.»

³ See e.g. Francesco Senatore, *Uno mundo de carta. Forme e strutture della diplomazia sforzesca*, Naples 1998, 92.

⁴ Niklas Luhmann, *Funktionen und Folgen formaler Organisation* (3. edition), Berlin 1976, esp. 191–204; see also James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Im-*

subsequent analysis stresses predictability and formalization as key ingredients in understanding the function of social organizations. Predictability and formalization ensure that the results of many specialized sub-tasks fit together and can be re-composed. Formalization thus becomes a prerequisite for sub-dividing tasks. Such subdivisions, however, while helpful on the one side, also increase the complexity of the organization and the volume of additional communication. Standardization reduces information by selecting the most crucial aspects and assists the process of «simplifying» reality and transforming it into protocol consistent «fictions». Finally, Luhmann questions the optimization of bureaucratic structures. Are vertically organized structures more efficient than horizontally ones? Luhmann clearly argues for the efficiency of vertically structured, centralized organizations. We might see these as useful sets of questions when examining Jesuit organization.

The Society of Jesus and the History of Administration

The Society of Jesus understood itself as a strict hierarchy oriented towards the office of the General. The lower offices were structured «to deliberate issues – in a preliminary way – before they were referred to the ultimate Superior». Though theoreticians were generally eager to point out several «aristocratic» components, the basic structure of the order was «monarchical». Leading Jesuits, such as Jerome Nadal and Francisco Suárez held this view.⁵ Even though the sovereignty ultimately lay with the General Congregation, the Father General was nonetheless the major source of power in daily life.⁶ His position was further strengthened by the fact that he was elected for life tenure, and that the General Congregations were to be held as rarely as possible. The Constitution also stipulated for a central location of the government: preferably Rome.⁷

Such a strong and geographically stable center was both the cause for and the consequence of the paper-trail-based system of administration. Since administration was intended to be centralized, communication between the center and the periphery had to be both extensive and intensive. Many, and detailed letters traveled to Rome, keeping Rome ready for informed decision making. The growing amount of communication, on the other hand, made the local stability of the center all the more necessary. Since the administration saw itself as dependant on the information stored in torrents of papers, a physical separation of the governing body from Rome became impractical. Some of the earlier Generals, like

prove the Human Condition Have Failed, New Haven/London 1998 for the «simplifications».

⁵ Jeronimo Nadal, *Epistolae et Monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal*. 6 Bände, Rom 1898–1964, vol. 5, 764, 767.

⁶ HStA M Jes 5/3, p. 884–887. The (anonymous) author comments for instance, that the General should never be judged, but only counseled by his entourage.

⁷ Const VIII, c. 2 §677, p. 330; VIII, c. 1 §668f., p. 324.

Láinez or Borja, could and did, at times, govern as absentees.⁸ Later Generals, however, especially Claudio Acquaviva, fought against the imposition of a «moving Generalate», not the least on the ground that this would effectively make government impossible.⁹ Rome turned quickly into the major administrative «center of calculation» for the Jesuits.¹⁰

The central role of Rome, however, requires some qualification. Recent work, especially concerning the extra-European theaters, has stressed the important role of the Spanish, Portuguese, and French provinces as important places of Jesuit decision making,¹¹ putting the relevance of Rome into a global perspective. The distinctions between «center» and «periphery» have also been critically examined.¹² Speaking more specifically about the flow of information from Brazil, Jean-Claude Laborie has insisted on the relatively secondary – and marginal – role of Rome when compared to that of Lisbon.¹³ Along similar lines, Steven Harris has argued that the production and distribution of scientific knowledge within the Society is best described as a pluricentric network in which the many Colleges serve as centers on the regional and local levels.¹⁴

Such a focus on the day-to-day realities is a valuable corrective to long-standing assumptions about Jesuit organization. Nonetheless, the current reevaluation of local circumstances cannot completely override the strong centralized ideal of Jesuit organization. From a close-up perspective on quotidian life the centralized and organized image of the order may be an inadequate description. Yet, even if the discourse regarding centralization of the Society that Ignatius, Polanco, and Acquaviva created and defended fell short of reality, it is nonetheless of historical significance. Building on the Cistercian, Dominican, Franciscan, and other medieval experiences of a centralized monasticism, the Society of

⁸ See e.g. Enrique García Hernán, *La acción diplomática de Francisco de Borja al servicio del Pontificado, 1571–1572*, Valencia 1998. For Láinez see e.g. Donald Nugent, *Ecumenism in the Age of the Reformation. The Colloquy of Poissy*, Cambridge Mass 1974.

⁹ Markus Friedrich, «Deligierter Augenschein» als Strukturprinzip administrativer Informationsgewinnung. Zu einem Konflikt im Jesuitenorden (Claudio Acquaviva vs. Memorialistas), in: Arndt Brendecke/Susanne Friedrich/Markus Friedrich (ed.), *Informationsgeschichte in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Hamburg/Münster 2008 (forthcoming).

¹⁰ Bruno Latour, *Science in action. How to follow scientists and engineers through society*, Cambridge, Mass. 1987, 215–271.

¹¹ Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estoile, *Les Ouvriers d'une Vigne stérile. Les jésuites et la conversion des Indiens au Brésil*, Lisbon/Paris 2000, 63f., 82, 312–328. Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise. The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750*, Stanford 1996, 229–231, 668f., regarding the economic sector. Both authors generally hold a very balanced view of the Society's bureaucratic centralization.

¹² Ines G. Zupanov, *Currents and Counter-Currents. Jesuit geopolitics in Asia (16th century). A Commentary on Pierre-Antoine Fabre's, «Essai de géopolitique des courants spirituels. Alonso Sánchez entre Madrid, le Mexique, les Iles Philippines, les côtes de la Chine et Rome (1579–1593)»*, in: Paolo Broggio (ed.), *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva. strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra XVI e XVII secolo*, Rom 2004, 75–87.

¹³ Jean-Claude Laborie, *Mangeurs d'Homme et mangeurs d'âme. Une correspondance missionnaire au XVIe siècle, a lettre jésuite du Brésil, 1549–1568*, Paris 2003, 99–102.

¹⁴ Steven Harris, *Mapping Jesuit Science. The Role of Travel in the Geography of Knowledge*, in: John W. O'Malley (Ed.), *The Jesuits, Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts 1540–1773*, Toronto 2000, 212–239.

Jesus offers yet another chapter in the development of ecclesiastical thinking about social organization.¹⁵ The Jesuits made frequent and powerful statements about why and how a large-scale social organization should be governed. They also experimented with the administrative and communicative practices through which these ideals might be transformed into quotidian routines.

Regardless of their «success», the Jesuits thus took part in the early modern attempts at reconceptualizing the very act of governance. The growing empires as well as the developing nation states of Early Modern Europe were more and more governed through large bureaucracies that in turn depended on new practices of information gathering and efficient administrative communication.¹⁶ Large social bodies – states, trading companies etc. – became increasingly reliant on a constant survey of their own resources, as well as on surveys of the potential competitors' status quo. Ultimately, this contributed to a fundamental shift in political concepts.¹⁷ Religious institutions played an important role in this historical process. The following sections will show that the Jesuit Order can be seen a key example for these early modern developments in the understanding of administrative practice.

General Aspects of Jesuit Administrative Correspondence

Personal vs. Paper-Based Communication: Face-to-face communication between Rome and the provinces certainly existed. Personal mobility, in fact, should not be underestimated and was a major component of Jesuit identity. The meetings of the Congregations of Procurators put in place a regular and regulated system of personal exchange. Every three years delegates from the Provinces – elected in the Provincial Congregations – traveled to Rome to meet with the Father General. These meetings remain vastly understudied, especially given their importance for the order's smooth functioning. The Congregations of Procurators had a right to call for a meeting of the General Congregation. On several

¹⁵ On the medieval orders see Gerd Melville's work and his school in Dresden, e.g. Florent Cygler/Gert Melville/Jörg Oberste, *Aspekte zur Verbindung von Organisation und Schriftlichkeit im Ordenswesen. Ein Vergleich zwischen den Zisterziensern und Cluniazensern des 12./13. Jahrhunderts*, in: C.M. Caspar/Klaus Schreiner (Ed.), *Viva vox und ratio scripta., Mündliche und schriftliche Kommunikation im Mönchtum des Mittelalters*, München 1997, 205–280. These scholars have developed a historical-sociological perspective on medieval monasticism that stresses the role of communication for processes of institution building. The volumes in the Series *Vita Regularis* published by LIT-Verlag (Münster) are based on this perspective. For the Jesuits see Léo Moulin, *L'Organisation du gouvernement local et provincial dans les constitutions des Jésuites*, in: *Revue internationale des sciences administratives*, 21 (1955), 485–523.

¹⁶ For recent contributions see Lars Behrisch (Ed.), *Vermessen, Zählen, Berechnen. Die politische Ordnung des Raums im 18. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt 2006. Edward Higgs, *The information state in England. The central collection of information on citizens since 1500*, Basingstoke 2004.

¹⁷ Cornel Zwielerlein, *Discurso und Lex Dei. Die Entstehung neuer Denkrahmen im 16. Jahrhundert und die Wahrnehmung der französischen Religionskriege in Italien und Deutschland*, Göttingen 2006.

occasions in the history of the Society this legal right was employed.¹⁸ From my vantage point, however, it is perhaps more important to mention that the Roman Curia considered these tri-annual meetings as key information-gathering sessions, times when the «peripheral» areas would have a voice.¹⁹ In Rome, a parallel form of information gathering occurred through personal reports of the leading missionaries from overseas in one-on-one interviews.²⁰ Visitations constituted a third type of information gathering, based again on individual mobility²¹: the visitator travels, examines the communities and provinces assigned to him, and makes decisions based on his impressions in situ. All three forms show that decision-making within the Society of Jesus depended upon global personal mobility. The Jesuits installed appropriate organizational structures, either making the center move to the periphery (visitators), or the periphery come to visit the center (summoning of leading missionaries; Congregations of Procurators).

While Rome and the provinces were linked through these personal contacts, these forms of communication were supplemented by additional means. Visitations happened, yet Rome did not rely primarily on this information for governance, contrary, for instance, to the Order of Cluny of the same period.²² Decision-making in Rome depended heavily on information that was neither acquired through first hand experience, nor personally communicated. In the 1590s, a group of mostly Spanish Jesuits rebelled against these practices and promoted fundamental alterations to the administrative structure. Their anger was oriented especially towards paper-based information, which they regarded as potentially fraudulent, inadequate, and partial.²³ Their arguments resembled a

¹⁸ Most famously, the General Congregation of 1608 was summoned on the basis of a vote from 1606, see Mario Fois, *Il Generale dei Gesuiti Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615), i somme pontefici e la difesa dell'istituto ignatiano*, in: *Archivum historiae pontificae*, 40 (2002), 199–233, 229. Furthermore, at other occasions the Congregation of Procurators came close to forcing an extraordinary meeting of the General Congregation on the Generals, e.g. in 1693, see *ARSI Congr.* 30–34.

¹⁹ *Const.* VIII, c.2 §679, p. 330 parallels the letters and the Congregations of Procurators as means of communication.

²⁰ Josef Wicki, *Die ersten offiziellen mündlichen Berichterstattungen in Europa aus den überseeischen Missionsgebieten der Gesellschaft Jesu (1553–1577)* in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, 14 (1958), 152–166.

²¹ Guy Philippart, *Visiteurs, commissaires et inspecteurs dans la Compagnie de Jésus de 1540 à 1615* in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 37&38 (1968&1969), 3–128&170–291. Perhaps the paradigm for the «traveling center» was Jerome Nadal SJ, see William V. Bangert/Thomas M. McCoog, *Jerome Nadal, SJ, 1507–1580. Tracking the First Generation of Jesuits*, Chicago 1992. For a case-study of visitors (but not on the topics discussed here) see Alden, *Enterprise* (as footnote 11), 247–253.

²² See Jörg Oberste, *Visitation und Ordensorganisation. Formen sozialer Normierung, Kontrolle und Kommunikation bei Cisterziensern, Prämonstratensern und Cluniazensern (12.–frühes 14. Jahrhundert)*, Hamburg 1996 on Medieval orders and their practices of visitation. The strong dependence of the Cluniac General Congregation on the Visitor's reports and the Congregation's paralysis if no such reports were available, is well documented in Gaston Charvin (Ed.), *Statuts, chapitres généraux et visites de l'ordre de Cluny*, 9 vol., Paris 1967–1982. See esp. vol. 5, 1972, *passim*, documenting the period 1508–1571.

²³ For a more extensive reconstruction of the following see Friedrich: «Deligierter Augenschein» (as footnote 9).

more traditional understanding of eye witness accounts, one in which written testimonies were viewed skeptically.²⁴ For the most part, the rebelling Jesuits used these information- and communication-based arguments to petition for more local autonomy. For these Jesuits the distant nature of the Rome-based administration had to be overcome. Only a more decentralized administrative structure that was present in situ could make truly informed decisions. Against these growing claims, General Acquaviva defended the established system that included forms of personal testimony, but relied mostly on correspondence of local information. While not denying the potential for fraud or abuse, the Roman Curia did nonetheless trust the «second hand»-evidence of the letters and reports. From a Roman perspective, eye-witnessing could be «delegated» and adequately translated into written form. This principle was defended by Acquaviva and remained in place throughout the history of the early modern Society of Jesus.

Keeping distinct types of documents apart: Many kinds of documents existed within the broad genre of Jesuit correspondence. Sacchini's manual, as well as our diagram, lists several of them: instructions; documents on visitations; rules for governing; papers pertaining to the order's relationship with the Papal Curia; several types of letters; papers on juridical affairs; and papers regarding temporal affairs. Soon after the founding of the order in 1540, a separation of the written correspondence began, setting apart individual document-types for the discrete administrative areas. Several types of correspondence – on spiritual affairs, personnel, economic matters, historiographical information, etc. – were distinguished. The differentiation of document types according to administrative areas is of course far older than the Society of Jesus. One of the most important Ignatian classifications of correspondence – «secret» (*hijuela*) and «main» letters – was widely established in Italy by the 1530s and 40s. Ignatius could very well have been aware of these secular models.²⁵ On the one side, the Society of Jesus was thus part of a longer development of administrative organization and communication. On the other side, however, the Jesuit bureaucracy clearly shows a new quality, at least within the history of Western monasticism, especially in its constant drive towards an ever clearer and more detailed separation of document types. The Jesuits in the field were often reprimanded by the Roman Curia for not keeping the paper-trails apart or for colliding different types of information in one single letter.²⁶

²⁴ Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness. Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France*, Chapel Hill 2004 shows how during the sixteenth century the traditional «ethical» concept of eyewitness relied on a close connection between testimony and witness. This became substituted by an «epistemological» concept that relied on the «truth value» of a statement alone and could be given in a more a-personal, written form.

²⁵ Francesco Senatore, *Uno mundo de carta* (as footnote 3), 233–236, referring to sources already from the later 15th century.

²⁶ I give but one typical example (March 25, 1758, Vicar-General, Rome, to Carolus Anreitter, Innsbruck, ARSI Germ Sup 16, 146): «Literis ijsdem, quibus de statu Collegii me RV^a informavit, petivit unam facultatem utendi potibus peregrinis calidis, id quod juxta Ordinationum C.10 §3 separatis quidem literis faciendum erat.»

A complete chronology for these developments is not yet available, but some key dates can be noted. Many aspects of Jesuit communication go back to the initial days of the order's foundation in 1540. Ignatius himself laid the foundation for many of the later bureaucratic developments. An important first step towards a more generalized layout of the system was taken in 1547. In this year, Juan de Polanco, the first secretary of the order, issued two major instructions on letter writing.²⁷ Both Ignatius' correspondence with his fellow Jesuits, and the growing number of official norms after his death, show how the central bureaucracy sought to clarify the boundaries and distinctions between types of documents. Developments in the Jesuit system of letter writing, though, were not finished with Ignatius' death.²⁸ The 1570s and 1580s saw major developments regarding the catalogues and *informationes*.²⁹ During the very early years of Acquaviva's reign in the 1580s there was a major structural reworking of the edifying annual letters. These innovations contributed to the separation of distinct spiritual correspondence for internal and external usage.³⁰ Shortly after Acquaviva's death, the manual of Francesco Sacchini mentions at least 16 different types of documents, just going exclusively from the Provinces to Rome. Our diagram concurs: a set of discrete types of correspondence was established throughout the Society of Jesus.

Standardizing Information: In Luhmann's approach, communication in large organizations tends towards standardization. The early-modern Jesuit Order was no exception and a drive towards «a uniform method of letter-writing» can be seen in every aspect of its bureaucracy.³¹ Tentative tables of contents for the administrative correspondence were drawn up, points of interests specified, and a system of *topoi* invented to guarantee that Rome would receive information on the relevant matters. All the normative rules on letter-writing (*formulae scribendi*) insisted on this point. I will discuss several examples below. Indeed, without such standardization, complex and large organizations can hardly survive. Only then is it possible to make meaningful comparisons between pieces of information from chronologically and/or geographically diverse origins. Standardization is a major factor in achieving what Bruno Latour calls a «combine-

²⁷ Ignatius of Loyola, Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Iesu Fundatoris epistolae et instructiones, 12 vol., Madrid 1903–1912, vol. I, 536–541, 542–549.

²⁸ This is however assumed by Laborie, Mangeurs d'homme (as footnote 13), 44.

²⁹ ARSI Inst 40, fol. 77r–78r (Catalogues). Adrien Demoustier, Les Catalogues du Personnel de la Province de Lyon en 1587, 1606 et 1636, in: Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 42&43 (1973&1974), 3–105, 3–84, part I, p. 9–12 for a brief overview over the development of the catalogues. See below for the *informationes*.

³⁰ For the the *litterae annuae* see Markus Friedrich, Circulating and Compiling the Litterae Annuae. Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication, in: Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu, (2007). Laborie, Mangeurs d'homme (as footnote 13), 54 overlooks the strong tradition of purely internal *litterae annuae* when he assumes that in 1546 a «déplacement vers l'extérieur» of Jesuit spiritual communication occurred.

³¹ «pro uniformi methodo epistolarum», instruction by General Tamburini, 14.9.1709, ARSI Epp. NN. 9, p. 93.

ability» of information.³² Without the ability to «combine» the results of specialized offices, the unfolding of an organization into specialized offices would not be possible. Furthermore, not only the content of communication was regulated. Formalized standards for the external aspects of the correspondence were established to efficiently process the increasing amount of paperwork as the Jesuit Order grew. Precise instructions regulated details of formatting, language, and layout.³³ The regulation of these details must not be seen as an excessive attempt at control, nor as an obsession with unimportant minutiae. Rather, it was an essential prerequisite for the smooth functioning of Jesuit administration. The care for formal details, such as paper size language, and layout (size of margins etc.) was part of the Roman apparatus of standardization. It shows the degree, to which the Jesuit administrators in Rome were aware of the importance and advantages of formalization.

Regular Transmission and the Advantages of Serial Information: Besides being standardized and differentiated, another feature of Jesuit paperwork and communication was its serialization. While some of the documents mentioned in our diagram arrived on a case-to-case or ad hoc basis (i.e. juridical matters or the censors' documents), greater portions were intended to be written and received in regular and regulated intervals. This in fact demonstrates that information was viewed as highly volatile and time sensitive. The provinces' status quo was in constant flux. Jesuits died and new ones were recruited, financial situations went up and down, occasions requiring actions in Rome came and went. To cope with this changing world and to update constantly shifting information, regular writing seemed to be the only way. The pace needed to be quick enough to keep the information pertinent when it finally reached Rome.

The regularity of incoming news was a serious issue for Rome. Inquiries were made when certain office-holders did not report back. Only with a regular pace of reporting could delays and losses be recognized and investigated. Regularity became so important that even «blank messages» were prescribed in the unlikely case that nothing occurred worth reporting.³⁴ If nothing happened, it was important to know this too. The act of communication became a sign of a functioning administration, and silence a signal without a clear message. With the regularity of information, issues of quality also came into play. General Acquaviva made the connection very clear: while it was always possible for individual pieces of information to be false, every single piece could be checked against the totality of available information. This comparative procedure would reveal if incoming information was fraudulent or superficial. Unless one assumes that the stored information was generally not trustworthy, the serialized information would con-

³² Latour, *Science in action* (as footnote 10), 223, 237–241.

³³ E.g. clm 26490, p. 19 (## 2, 3, 5).

³⁴ See, e.g., the rules for the correspondance of the syndics of the universities, Const IV, c. 17 § 506, p. 189. For the Consultores see ARSI, Epp. NN. 113, p. 273.

tain a means to guarantee its quality.³⁵ While Acquaviva's enemies saw the plurality of information as disturbing and problematic,³⁶ the general regarded it as an advantage. Letters were checked against other written information, but not confirmed by first-hand impressions. This shows a reflexive attitude towards information. Acquaviva's point furthermore shows that the Curia sought information not only for immediate decision making, but collected it also for a potential usage in the future. Most likely, the Roman Jesuits did not worry too much about the slightly illusionary character of these ideas. Certainly, their optimism towards paper-based information and its quality remained in place during much of the Society's existence.

Structuring Correspondence: Time and Hierarchy: The system of Jesuit correspondence was structured by two basic points of reference: time and hierarchy. To those without offices, the right to communicate with the Roman authorities was granted but regularity was not an issue. In fact, only a small minority of letters to, and especially from, Rome, were unrelated to offices. Often – but not always – hierarchy translated into time, i.e. into frequency of letter writing. Higher officials wrote more often and received answers from Rome much faster. Concerning the details of frequency, the order experimented throughout the sixteenth century. The fast rhythm of communication that the Constitutions prescribed³⁷ soon had to be slowed due to the increasing volume of correspondence. It is clear from the constant need to readjust the system that it was a complex endeavor to successfully strike a balance between the two competing aims: frequency and manageability of correspondence.³⁸

The pace of communication was not only related to hierarchy. Yet another criteria regulated the intervals between letters, namely the writer's geographical distance from Rome. While Luhmann's above quoted vote for centralized structures takes instantaneous communication for granted, this of course was not the case in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Infrastructural delays must be taken into account by modern historians, as it is clear that they were taken into account by the Jesuits themselves. To do so, the Jesuits «translated» geographical distance in time, i.e. elongated intervals between letters.³⁹ To quote one early example, in a letter to Antonio Araoz from 1547 Ignatius himself distinguished three «time-zones»: Italy should write in a weekly rhythm; Spain, France, Flandres

³⁵ See e.g., from around 1590, the quote in ARSI, Fond. Ges. 700, fol. 38^v: «Neque verum ex ulla parte est quod asserunt, Generalem cogi illos confirmare quos solus Provincialis nominat [...] 3^o quia hic asservantur informationes missae ab alijs Provincialibus, et illorum Consultoribus ante tres, sex, novem, et plures annos; et nonnunquam ex altera provincia ad gubernanda alterius provinciae Collegia, si maior utilitas hoc suadeat, transmittuntur.»

³⁶ ARSI, Fond. Ges. 700, e.g. fol. 69^v.

³⁷ Const. VIII, c. 1 §674, p. 326/8.

³⁸ CG II, d. 54, p. 124.

³⁹ For Jesuits working outside of Europe, geographical distance was also translated into the expectation of additional «exotic» content of the letters.

and Germany once a month; India only once a year.⁴⁰ Again, the details of the system changed frequently, while the general idea remained the same. Very consciously the Jesuits managed infrastructural impasses by accommodating the schedules of correspondence.

Inevitably this adjustment of timeframes also had consequences for the understanding of decision-making in Rome. By granting far-away Jesuits a slower pace of communication, Rome accepted that for many details it could not be informed fast enough to make the decisions. This both implicitly and explicitly amounted to a conscious deferral of decision-making to the periphery. As Ignatius himself had written already: «Experience is now showing us that it is impossible to make provisions from here [in Rome] for many important things. This is partly because one cannot write and let us know everything (not everything can be confided in writing), and partly because often the time for making a decision runs out while people are asking our opinion here and we are sending a reply.»⁴¹

Infrastructural conditions thus made it necessary to delegate power and Ignatius encouraged the addressees at the College of Gandia to energetically use the range of power granted to them. Reducing the pace of far-away communication and positive integration of partial local autonomy are two sides of the same coin. It is important to recognize that this local autonomy was *not* seized against either the General's powers or the centralizing ideal: rather it was a conscious amendment to the centralizing scheme. It functioned as a subsidiary principle to the Roman domination.

Different Types of Documents

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to treat all the different forms of correspondence extensively, a brief survey is possible. Besides our diagram, Sacchini's manual will serve as an additional guideline. The Roman Curia had several modes of communicating its wishes to Jesuits throughout the world. Some of those mentioned in the diagram were straightforward and normative, e.g. instructions («for those who govern the communities and for those who have some other task») and «rules» or «clarifications of spiritual matters». And one might also add the «universal [letters]» of the diagram. Not mentioned in the diagram are the so-called «ordinations» which had more binding power than «horta-

⁴⁰ Ignatius of Loyola: *Epistolae*, vol. I, p. 550: «Que los que son en Italia y Sicilia scrivan acá cada semana, y los que están fuera della (como en España, Francia, Alemaña ó Flandes) cada mes; los que en las Indias cada año; y sin esto cada 4 meses se scrvirá, como ya fué ordenado; y esto sin las cartes que, según las occurrentias, estraordinariamente se han de scrvir.»

⁴¹ Ignatius of Loyola, *Epistolae*, vol. I, p. 551–562, here 554; translation in: Ignatius of Loyola, *Personal Writings. Reminiscences, Spiritual Diary, Select Letters*, including the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, translated with introductions and notes by Joseph A. Munitz and Philip Endean, London 1996, p. 186.

tory» instructions.⁴² It seems, however, as if such a nuanced vocabulary was not always followed. In fact, it would be hard to classify the many Roman normative texts according to these categories. The fine distinctions between morally binding, legally binding, and exhortatory binding probably did not always translate into practical differences. If we follow the usage of the word «instructio» maintained even today in the labeling of many the Roman Archive codices, it evidently could refer to a vast array of orders given either to all, or only to several, of the Superiors.⁴³ These norms mostly affected the administrative dimension of Jesuit life. *Instructiones* could either be given on specific occasions, to particular people, or they could be more generally given. No matter what, they retained their valid claims beyond the specific context for which they might have been issued. These normative texts were widely collected in Rome, as well as in the provinces.⁴⁴ Furthermore, an «official» collection of *ordinationes* was compiled. This was regularly printed and eventually became part of the so-called *Institutum Societatis Iesu*, comprising the most fundamental normative texts of the order. Several General Congregations ordered the compilation of these texts,⁴⁵ the first entire *Institutum* printed in 1638.⁴⁶

Another form of communicating normative frameworks was through the «litterae universales.»⁴⁷ Compared to the prescriptive language of *instructiones*, or *ordinationes*, those general epistles were much more persuasive in tone and gesture. They elaborated more often than not on the spirituality of the order, redirecting the zeal of the Jesuits in particular directions. The aims of these epistles were clearly to guide and steer Jesuit behavior, to create and implement identi-

⁴² As specified by CG VII, d. 81. All of these, however, had lesser normative power than decrees of the General Congregation, see CG VII, d. 76, p. 272. For the following discussion of normative documents see also Thomas McCoog, *The English Province of the Society of Jesus 1623–1699. An institutional history*, unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Warwick 1983, 19–22. A clear distinction between the two types of norms is also discussed in Bernardus de Angelis' Preface to the 1616 compilation of *Ordinationes*, reprinted e.g. in *Corpus Institutum Societatis Iesu in duo volumina distinctum: accedunt praeter ea quae editio novissima pragensis continet Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium, et catalogus provinciarum, domorum, collegiorum etc. eisdem societatis*. 2 vol, Antwerp 1709. vol. II, fol. A2^r. It becomes clear from his words that there were some *instructiones* «quae perpetuae legis vim habere videbantur» so that they were inserted into the series of *ordinationes*. The *instructiones* – like the *industriæ* and the *epistolae generalium* (on the latter see also below) – were only meant «ad directionem tantummodo Superiorum, pro re nata & eorum opportunitate legendae». See the equivalent statement in de Angelis' preface to the 1616-edition of the *Instructiones*, *ibid.*, fol. Z2^r.

⁴³ See e.g. the volumes ARSI Inst 50, 81, 82, 117. See also de Angelis' ambivalent statement in FN 42.

⁴⁴ See e.g. the volumes clm 11576, 24076, 24077.

⁴⁵ Accordingly, a compilation of *ordinationes* that was e.g. printed in 1595 as: *Ordinationes Praepositorum Generalium Communes Toti Societati. Auctoritate V. Congregationis generalis recognitae & contracta, Romae In Collegio Societatis IESU MDXCV*.

⁴⁶ McCoog, *English Province* (as footnote 42), 21.

⁴⁷ Only few of those highly important documents have been studied. See e.g. A. Coemans, *La lettre du P. Claude Aquaviva sur l'oraison* in: *Revue d'Ascetisme et Mysticisme*, 17 (1936), 313–321. H. Bernard-Maitre, *La genèse de la lettre du P. Claude Aquaviva sur l'oraison et la pénitence* in: *Revue d'Ascetisme et Mysticisme*, 37 (1961), 451–459.

ties. Therefore, they did address rather general topics and often presented a universal perspective on the Society and its needs. Through fairly regular printing, a certain canon of epistles became established. Editions of these *Epistolae praepositorum generalium Ad Patres et Fratres Societatis Iesu* appeared at least in Dillingen (1612), Rome (1615), Antwerp (1635, 1702, 1709), and Prague (1711, 1736). Growing with the Society, this collection became an important element of continuity, documenting the steady evolution of the Jesuit spirit. These epistles also kept the interpretation of the *Institutum* up-to-date and at times the collections had a preference for more recent epistles.⁴⁸ While not being legal documents in the strict sense, they retained considerable authority. Some of the texts, like Ignatius' *Letter on Obedience*, became standard references for all questions concerning the «Jesuit Way of Life». They were accordingly held in such high esteem that several editors of the Society's *Institutum* thought it necessary to include the Generals' letters into this fundamental compilation of Jesuit norms.⁴⁹

What these universal epistles were meant to achieve was nicely expressed by Bernardus de Angelis, Secretary of the Society, in his preface to the 1615 edition.⁵⁰ This type of letter should be like a «clean and trustworthy mirror» and serve as a guiding outline for the spiritual life. De Angelis acknowledged that there was no lack in general literature on spiritual affairs. However, what was missing was the accommodation of the broad spiritual perspectives to particular Jesuit circumstances. It was exactly this adaptation of the general rules to concrete historical circumstances that was the objective of the Generals' *litterae universales*.⁵¹ Relying on de Angelis' authoritative statement, we can say that the existence of these universal epistles documents the Roman Curia's clear insight into the necessity of being specific and historically concrete about what it meant

⁴⁸ See Michel de Certeau, *La Réforme de l'intérieur au temps d'Aquaviva*, in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, Ascétique et Mystique. Doctrine et Histoire*, vol. VIII (Jacob-Kyspenning), Paris 1974, col. 985–994, here 993f.

⁴⁹ Thus the 1709 Antwerp edition expressed amazement about how the previous edition from Prague could have possibly omitted them, see *Corpus Institutorum Societatis* (as footnote 42), vol. I., fol. b3^r (Praefatio). In this section the *Epistolae* are called «tanti momenti sint, ut Instituti Societatis cognitio medullitus habeatur; et ipsae indicia sint habitudinum et statuum variorum, per quos a principio suae originis tantum corpus quodammodo pertransivit».

⁵⁰ *Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad patres et fratres Societatis Jesum*, Rom 1615, fol. +2^r–+3^r. A very short but insightful assessment of this «internal literature» can be found in de Certeau, *La Réforme de l'intérieur au temps d'Aquaviva* (as footnote 48), col. 993f.

⁵¹ See *Epistolae generalium* (1615), fol. +3^r: «Et quanquam de rebus spiritum spectantibus, quaeque ad viam salutis & perfectionis fideliter insistendam conferrent, tum a Nostris, tum ab alijs plerisque, admirabili plane nobilium ingeniorum applausu, hac aetate nostra singulares et exculsi libri lucem viderunt: tamen hactenus extitit nemo, qui ex instituto, copiose de materia vocationi nostrae usque eo consentanea disserteret, aut qui particulatim de singulis, ut de spiritus renovatione, de Instituti dignitate, propositi nostri excellentia, Ministeriorum nobilitate, operandi modo, mutua caritate, et rerum omnium inter tam diversas nationes summa consensione, de studio perfectionis et illius obinenda, rationibus, de singulari denique tam altae vocationis beneficio disputaret.»

to be a Jesuit.⁵² While those epistles went out to the Society as a whole, they were at the same time preoccupied with keeping Jesuit identity palpable, concrete, and specific.

Specific forms of Roman control occurred in the realm of learning. This occasioned a type of regulated correspondence that helped to implement the order's policy on censorship and publication.⁵³ Jesuit censorship has been examined intensively in recent years and I shall thus only mention it here in passing.⁵⁴ Speaking in very general terms, every manuscript intended for publication by Jesuit authors had to undergo a complex process of internal scrutiny and censorship. By the end of the sixteenth century the previously decentralized structures of control did not function as intended. As a result, Claudio Acquaviva installed a central committee of censors in Rome. Our diagram correctly shows this task assigned to the Roman College. A constant stream of papers was produced: The finished manuscripts left the provinces to be censored in Rome; the suggested corrections were then returned to the authors in the provinces. Traces of this communication can still be found today in archives containing Jesuit materials.⁵⁵

The most common form of Roman intervention into Jesuit daily life, however, occurred through the regular correspondence between the General and the local office-holders, what the diagram calls «*litterae particularium*». Each year, the Generals wrote thousands of letters to the Provinces, providing responses to previous letters. For most of the office-holders, though not for all⁵⁶, regular communication with Rome was prescribed. Sacchini for instance, dedicates a chapter to the letters of the «*consultores*», Jesuits assigned to the provincials and local

⁵² See Markus Friedrich, *Beispielgeschichten in den Litterae Annuae. Überlegungen zur Gestaltung und Funktion einer vernachlässigten Literaturgattung*, in: Nicolas Pethes/Jens Ruchatz/Stefan Willer (ed.), *Das Beispiel. Epistemologie des Exemplarischen*, Berlin 2007 for more on this need and how it could be satisfied. The same function was also envisioned for Acquaviva's *Industriae*, a series of admonitions similar to the *instructiones*, see *Corpus Institutorum* (as footnote 42), vol. II, p. 263. It was deemed necessary «*ad peculiarem aliquam Institutionem descendere*». The name *industriae* explicitly referred back to Polanco's famous *Industriae*.

⁵³ This aspect is rather summarily treated in *clm* 26490, p. 20 (chapter 13, #1–2). Once again it is stipulated that the letters on these matters should not deal with other topics thus keeping the different administrative tasks apart.

⁵⁴ A recent survey is by Marcus Hellyer, *Catholic Physics. Jesuit Natural Philosophy in Early Modern Germany*, Notre Dame 2005. See also Idem, «Because the Authority of my Superiors Commands». Censorship, Physics and the German Jesuits, in: *Early Science and Medicine*, 1 (1996), 319–354. For case studies see Harald Siebert, *Kircher and His Critics. Censorial Practice and Pragmatic Disregard in the Society of Jesus*, in: Paula Findlen (Ed.), *Athanasius Kircher. The Last Man Who Knew Everything*, New York London 2004, p. 79–104 and Peter Godman, *The saint as censor. Robert Bellarmine between inquisition and index*, Leiden 2000.

⁵⁵ See Ugo Baldini, *Una fonte poco utilizzata per la storia intellettuale. Le «censurae librorum» e «opinionum» nell'antica Compagnia di Gesù*, in: *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento*, 11 (1985), 19–68.

⁵⁶ For instance, the so-called «admonitors» on the provincial and local levels were exempt from any obligation towards regularity, see *CG VII*, D. 52.

superiors to function as counselors.⁵⁷ Even from a cursory look through the correspondence registers of the Jesuit Roman Archives, however, it becomes clear that the overwhelming number of letters was addressed to the leading office-holders in the provinces – the provincial and the Rectors. Jesuits holding other offices (or none at all) received only few letters in comparison.⁵⁸ As we have seen above, the frequency of these letters was a major concern for Jesuit bureaucracy. It was in those letters between the general, the provincial, and the local superiors that information was conveyed, options communicated, and decisions articulated. In many ways this regular and highly regulated correspondence formed the backbone of the Society's quotidian administration.

The enormous normative framework around this correspondence that was set up by Sacchini and many others, clearly shows the concern for flawless administrative communication. Thus it was mandatory, for instance, for the information given to the General to be complete.⁵⁹ Different topics should be divided into different «chapters» or paragraphs.⁶⁰ Both the author, and the date of the letter, should be properly specified.⁶¹ One of the most important requirements in maintaining order was to keep the proper sequence of correspondence, thus not «choking» the paper trail. No one should reiterate the same issue before a response from the General was received, the system as a whole thus requiring a certain patience.⁶² Two other issues are particularly interesting:⁶³ firstly, the degree of certitude attached to each item reported must be mentioned clearly; secondly, letters written by the *consultores* «ex officio» should only contain information that pertains to their offices. For additional remark not related to the *consultores'* office, additional letters needed to be written. Other rules allow us more detailed insight into the daily routines of information management in Rome. It was mandated, for instance, that the geographical provenance should be marked on the letter, as well as on the «envelope».⁶⁴ This was necessary in order to allow the Roman Curia's «postal manager» to correctly expense the costs for the postal services.⁶⁵ However, there was more to the question of provenance. The evidence suggests that there was a geographical order followed by the Roman Curia in processing the large quantities of incoming mail. Indeed, an analysis of the dates

⁵⁷ clm 26490, p. 9f.

⁵⁸ Currently, I am preparing a computer-based statistical analysis of the administrative correspondence between Rome and Germany Superior. While exact figures are still forthcoming, the above-mentioned trend is beyond doubt. This database will substantiate the statistical claims in this essay in depth.

⁵⁹ clm 26490, p. 5 (#5).

⁶⁰ clm 26490, p. 5 (#4), 9f.

⁶¹ clm 26490, p. 7 (#7 and #9). See also *ibid.*, p. 4 (#3).

⁶² clm 26490, p. 8 (#3)

⁶³ See clm 26490, p. 9f. (on the *Consultores*).

⁶⁴ See footnote 61.

⁶⁵ This was mandated by Father General Acquaviva, see ARSI Epp. NN. 113, p. 163 and again by Father General Gonzalez on April 23, 1695, see his instruction in ARSI Epp. NN. 9, p. 42.

of Roman letters reveals that, to a certain degree, the correspondence with one province was dealt with on particular days. On many levels, geography thus structured the epistolary communication within the Society of Jesus.

These and many other detailed instructions on the regular administrative correspondence clearly illustrate issues I have already discussed. First of all, the instructions show the eagerness and effort that went into keeping the circulation of information functioning efficiently. The rules on paragraphing the letters also show the conscious breakdown of administrative operation into small and discrete tasks. This ability to cut the administrative process into individual tasks is nicely demonstrated by the way in which the Generals' letters were processed in Germany Superior: the original incoming writings were – quite literally – cut into pieces, each letter sliced into different tasks. The State Archive in Munich, for example, contains large quantities of these snippets, showing us the fact that these letters were cut into pieces with the utmost care.⁶⁶ There is only enough evidence to speculate about the ultimate function of these snippets. Were they to be sent to the relevant subordinate office-holder to spare the copyist the toil of duplicating an entire letter? Were they functioning mostly as mnemonic devices, bits of paper that could be thrown away after fulfilling Rome's instructions? In any event, the pure labor involved in cutting a letter into pieces – as well as the decision making involved in dividing a narrative whole into units – highlights the Jesuit mentality of subdividing administration into manageable and compartmentalized tasks.

The clear distinction between office-related and not-office-related information demonstrates the extent to which the Jesuit bureaucracy relied on a precise concept of «office». The above instructions show us that not only were several offices clearly kept apart but also that the concerns of individual Jesuits were broken into official and non-official facets. While both were considered relevant, they needed to be forwarded through different letters. Thus, the bureaucratic organization of the Jesuits effectively called for and depended on a division of each Jesuit's life in an office-related and a «private» part.⁶⁷ Finally, the explicit concern with certitude testifies to the essential role that factuality played in administration, but perhaps even more importantly highlights the pragmatic attitude of the order. Since certitude was not always possible, the next best thing was to act upon the information available. More generally speaking, Sacchini's correspondence manual took into account, in a systematic way, that information was often ambiguous and that decision-making was always based on some uncertainty that the Jesuit bureaucrats had to acknowledge.

«Soli» were a yet another peculiar form of «litterae particularium», mentioned in the diagram. The name stems from their function, as these documents were «solely» intended for the Father General and not to be read by the Assistants or

⁶⁶ See e.g. HStA M Jes 664, where most of the documents survive precisely in such a form.

⁶⁷ While Sacchini does not provide a positive term, other sources call everything non-official «private», see Tamburini's instruction, 14.9.1709, ARSI Epp. NN. 9, p. 95: «nec admisceant privata sua».

the Roman Secretary.⁶⁸ With this type of correspondence, the intention was to create a direct way of communication with the highest office – that of the Father General –, one open to each individual Jesuit regardless of his rank. Given that this form of communication was direct and without intermediaries or censorship, the strictly hierarchical organization of the order was short-circuited. Establishing such a fast and direct track to the ultimate Superior was a significant move for an early-modern social body. Sacchini's manual shows that the confidentiality of the *solli*-letters was protected. While the *solli* were understood to be crucial components of Jesuit communication, they were also prone to abuse. If one trusts the Roman complaints, many Jesuits declared their letters as «*solli*» not because they actually contained sensitive matter, but with the hopes of expediting their queries in Rome. Many *solli* did in fact receive fast answers from Rome. Moreover, judging from a remark by Sacchini, this strategy was also used to secure the General's attention: Letters were declared *solli* «so that they might reach the hands of the General more safely». When considering these «abuses» of the *solli*, one should take into account the Roman Curia's constant complaints concerning the heavy volume of letters.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the processing of «normal» letters was often the job of the the Assistants or the Secretary. Thus it becomes clear that the clever malpractice of *solli*-letters was an attempt of individual Jesuits to ensure their voice in Rome, and an extra guarantee that their needs would receive special attention.

Two other large areas of administration mentioned in the diagram concern the Society's external affairs. Time and again the dialogue of the order with the popes necessitated some form of action within the Roman Curia.⁷⁰ Certainly, if new breves or bulls were issued, news quickly spread throughout the Society. Contact with the papal administration necessitated more distinct forms of communication. For instance, the missionary activities of the Jesuit order had to be coordinated with the papal Congregation, the *Propaganda Fide*. This required, yet again, specific forms of correspondence and documents. For example, Jesuit missionaries were obliged to report regularly not only to the Father General, but also to the *Propaganda Fide*. Specific guidelines were written for these reports that mostly resembled the general Jesuit rules for letter writing. There existed, however, some specificity due to the unusual addressee.⁷¹ Adaptations occurred with regard to the titulation of the Cardinals, as well as with the prefatory letters to the Congregation. While these letters had to be of missionary origin, the General Curia nonetheless made sure that it had a final possibility to veto. It was stipulated that the reports for the *Propaganda Fide* be first sent to the General – unsealed – before they were forwarded within Rome.

⁶⁸ clm 26490, p. 6 (#5). The following relies on *ibid.*, p. 10f.: «ad manus Praepositi Generalis tutius perveniant».

⁶⁹ See e.g. clm 26490, p. 3f. and the opening of instructio IX in Institutum VII.

⁷⁰ See e.g. Fois, *Il Generale dei Gesuiti* (as footnote 18).

⁷¹ See the (undated) *Instructio ad Provinciales Germaniae pro Litteris mittendis ad Sac. Congregationem de Propaganda fide in relatione fructus Missionum*, in: ARSI Fondo Gesuitico 507, fol. 334^{rv}.

Much more of a distinctive stream of communication occurred concerning what our diagram calls «lites et expeditiones», or «lawsuits and accounts». This was the General Procurator's arena. In fact, the largest section in the Roman Archives is by far the Fondo Gesuitico, made up mostly by material stemming from this office.⁷² The creation of a Jesuit General Procurator must, again, be situated in a long tradition of monastic administration.⁷³ Originally mostly concerned with legal and economical affairs, the procurators of the various orders became increasingly involved in managing the relationship with the Papacy. There had been a growing papal concern, since the Middle Ages, on uniformity in the orders' approaches towards the Papal Curia. This, in turn, demanded a more specialized knowledge about ecclesiastical bureaucracy. Eventually the Procurators were recognized as the specialists in this area. This development was additionally boosted as orders established central headquarters in Rome, absorbing the communication with the Papacy. As can be seen from our diagram, much of this holds true for the Jesuit Order. Eventually the General Procurator – managing the affairs of the central government in Rome – was joined by a host of similar offices at all levels of the hierarchy. Each establishment, each province, and each assistancy installed Procurators.⁷⁴

While it is still impossible to evenly evaluate the administrative role of the General Procurator⁷⁵, recurrent complaints about specific deficiencies of communication might provide some initial impressions. In this case, the superiors and provincials were recurrently asked to swiftly forward authenticated copies of legal documents to Rome, especially those pertaining to new foundations.⁷⁶ Since selling and buying had always been a thorny issue with the Society, the Roman concern with these matters is not surprising. The Jesuits were keenly conscious that economic affairs could easily turn into «matters of conscience». Furthermore, the selling and buying had to happen in correct canonical forms.

⁷² Edmond Lamalle:, *La Documentation d'Histoire missionnaire dans le «Fondo Gesuitico» aux Archives Romaines de la Compagnie de Jesus*, in: *Euntes Docete*, 21 (1968), 131–176, here esp. 134–144.

⁷³ A useful historical survey can be found in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. 7 (Pio II – Rzedka), Rome 1983, s.v. «Procuratore generale».

⁷⁴ See Felix Zubillaga, *El Procurador de la Compagnia de Jesus en la Corte des Espana*, in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 16 (1947), 1–55; Felix Zubillaga, *El Procurador de Indias Occidentales*, in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 22 (1953), 367–416. Joseph Wicki, *Die Anfänge der Missionsprokuratur der Jesuiten in Lissabon bis 1580*, in: *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 40 (1971), 246–322. Agustín Galán García, *El «Oficio de Indias» de Sevilla y la Organización económica y misional de la Compañía de Jesús (1566–1767)*, Sevilla 1995. William F. Rea, *The Economics of the Zambezi Missions 1580–1759*, Rome 1976. Luisa Elena Alcalá, *The Jesuits and the Visual Arts in New Spain 1670–1767*, Ph.D. Dissertation New York University 1998.

⁷⁵ I am currently preparing additional studies on this aspect of the Roman bureaucracy.

⁷⁶ *clm* 26490, p. 26 (#3).

All contracts were therefore sent to Rome to be checked and approved by the Curia.⁷⁷ Once again, this documents not only the Roman Curia's attempt to control all legal affairs, but also to retain an overview over the status quo of the order.

There were several other aspects of the temporal affairs of the Society that generated distinct forms of correspondence. I shall only mention in passing that questions of architectural construction required intense communication with Rome. Plans were sent back and forth between the local Jesuits involved in construction and the Roman Curia.⁷⁸ Even more impressive is the constant stream of financial accounts that traveled between Rome and the Provinces.⁷⁹ While Sacchini is silent on this matter, the diagram is not. For example, a special post is created for a general accountant in Rome and a certain Dominicus Baccellius is suggested for the position. He is meant to keep a general overview over income and spending. From the very wording of the description of the office, the degree of specialization involved becomes obvious. The diagram suggests that this was an office on which the General was heavily dependant. More than other office holders, the accountant was thus rather explicitly encouraged to make suggestions to the Father General. He could «seriously advise» (*serio monere*) the General on financial matters. Once again, the general layout of the communication within the Society of Jesus is clear. The diagram stressed that the accountant worked on the basis of local accounts «sent here from other places» (*haec mittuntur aliunde*). More than on anything else, this office depended on the reliable transmission of local data that could be «combined» in Rome in order to achieve a general financial overview.

Strangely enough, the diagram is silent about one sector of administration and communication, which features largely in all other sources. Sacchini devotes about one third of his manual to components of «personnel-related communication», a very broad category that deserves sub-dividing. I will only quickly mention the mandatory documentation of deaths and the related literature of necrologies that needed to be written for each Jesuit after his death.⁸⁰ For the benefit of future historiography, as well as for the conservation of the Jesuits' *memoria*, this is explicitly meant to be a *complete* documentation. Two stages of communication were installed: a preliminary one (*celerius*) to announce the death as quickly as possible to the Roman Jesuits; and a more elaborate eulogy of the deceased as a second letter. Once again, Sacchini formalized these communications in great detail. Yet again, standardization was a necessary condition for future «combineability» of the many provincial texts into a more universal com-

⁷⁷ clm 26490, p. 22 (#1–6). The result is most likely the series of «instrumenta» in ARSI Fondo Gesuitico 76–105, described in: Lamalle, *La Documentation d'Histoire missionnaire* (as footnote 72), 135.

⁷⁸ clm 26490, p. 26 (#3). See e.g. Michael Oevermann, *Die Pläne François Aguilons für den Bau der Antwerpener Jesuitenkirche*, in: Jutta Held (ed.), *Intellektuelle in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich 2002, 119–145. See also the rich material and documentation in Horst Nising, «in keiner Weise prächtig». *Die Jesuitenkollegien der süddeutschen Provinz des Ordens und ihre städtebauliche Lage im 16.–18. Jahrhundert*, Petersburg 2004.

⁷⁹ See Alden, *Enterprise* (as footnote 11), on the economy of the Society.

⁸⁰ clm 26490, p. 18f. (Chapters 10, 11).

pendium. In fact, both Father Generals Charles de Noyelle and Thyrso Gonzalez promoted the compilation of a «uniform» collection of necrologies.⁸¹ A huge bureaucratic exertion was envisioned to achieve this goal. It is important to stress the fact that such bureaucratic procedures structured all of Jesuit correspondence, even types that produced «edifying» or «literary» genres such as the necrologies.⁸²

Besides the administration of the deceased, the personnel-related correspondence was geared towards two different goals: keeping track of and evaluating the Jesuits in the field. Both of these goals hark back to Ignatius himself, who insisted on systematic reporting of the Jesuits in the provinces.⁸³ Keeping track of the Jesuits in the field was mostly achieved through the «annual catalogues».⁸⁴ Every year, a list of all Jesuits living and working in individual communities was drawn up on the local level. The Provincial would compile the local lists, verify the data, and produce one complete document that was then transmitted to Rome.⁸⁵ A document appendix comprised special cases, such as delegations, traveling Jesuits, and dismissed Jesuits.⁸⁶ Even more than with other documents, for the catalogues, Sacchini insisted on accuracy. Not only was completeness of utmost importance, but Sacchini also pointed out that the legibility of names was of particular relevance. The Jesuits made also sure that the counting followed a similar scheme throughout the entire order. No individual should be counted twice, several possible scenarios for unclear counting were clarified in advance. A census made only sense if uniformity of the data was guaranteed.⁸⁷

More complex than the simple lists of the annual were the triennial catalogues, consisting of two separate parts.⁸⁸ While the first part numbered each Jesuit and provided basic biographical information (including the full names), the second part described basic mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of each individual Jesuit. The Second catalogue did not use the Jesuits' names but referred to the numbers given to each person in the First Catalogue. This number system re-

⁸¹ See Gonzalez' instruction from October 13th, 1691, in ARSI Epp. NN. 9, p. 26a. The key phrase is: «Quoniam a Congregatione generali XII postulatum fuit nomine complurium Provinciarum, ut Menologium Societatis repurgaretur, et in meliorem formam redigeretur, ac denique uniforme toti Societati exhiberetur».

⁸² I have stressed the same point for the *litterae annuae* in Friedrich, Compiling (as footnote 30).

⁸³ E.g. von Loyola, Epistolae (as footnote 27).

⁸⁴ clm 26490, p. 11–13 (chapter 6). On the catalogues see Adrien Demoustier, Les Catalogues du Personnel de la Province de Lyon en 1587, 1606 et 1636, in: Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 42&43 (1973&1974), 3–105, 3–84. Charlotte de Castelneau-L'Estoile, Les Ouvriers d'une Vigne stérile (as footnote 11), 176–182.

⁸⁵ clm 26490, p. 12 (#7).

⁸⁶ See the specific details in ARSI EppNN 113, p. 211.

⁸⁷ See e.g. the rules for the counting in the *Litterae Annuae*, here quoted from ARSI Epp NN 113, p. 131: «Sacerdotes, Scholares, Coadjutores, et Praeceptores seorsum sunt numerandi. Quod si Praeceptores inter Sacerdotes et Scholasticos reconsiti sunt, seligantur ab eiusdem, ne bis adjiciantur numerare capitum, ut ratio constet.»

⁸⁸ In fact, the catalogues comprised a third part, concerned with the material situation of the Jesuit communities, and not with the personnel. This *catalogus tertius* is left aside here. The procedure for the triennial catalogues is not described by Sacchini, who talks only about the formal aspects of these documents. See instead sections 32–35 of the *Formula Scribendi*, here *Corpus Instituturum* (as footnote 42), vol. I, p. 590f.

quired that the reader have access to the first part of the catalogue to understand the second. Besides being secretive, the Second Catalogues also excelled in formalizing evaluations.⁸⁹ Not only did they rely on a standardized set of criteria, an «evaluation template». The ratings given within each of the categories – health, physical status, spirituality etc. – were also highly standardized. Only one single word should be used as a descriptor: *bene*, *mediocriter*, *male*, etc.⁹⁰ The assessment of individuals was thus based on a standardized scale. Nonetheless, as we will see below, there always remained some ambiguity about how *good* qualities should be distinguished from *mediocre* qualities, etc.

Other parts of the personnel correspondence functioned along the same lines. Besides the routine catalogues, individual assessments of Jesuits were particularly important at three moments in their careers: times of promotions (*ad gradum*); the taking of the vows (*ad professionem*); and lastly, at the appropriate moment when a Jesuit would assume a governmental position (*ad gubernandum*). On each occasion, an *informatio* about the Jesuit would be produced in the province and sent to Rome where the decision would ultimately be made on the basis of this document, showing how much Rome relied on the accuracy of the regional/local briefings.⁹¹ A quotation from 1735 illustrates how this procedure worked and the part played by these *informationes*. Father General Franciscus Retz wrote to Franciscus Mossu, the Provincial of Germany Superior: «We currently consider and discuss the candidates you and your *consultores* have suggested for the administrative positions. Following our normal procedure, we have read the *informationes* and we have included the opinions of the Assistants. As a result, the following decisions have been made [...].»⁹²

When the incoming *informationes* were lacking or deemed insufficient, decisions were delayed accordingly and complaints sent to the provinces.⁹³ A whole branch of correspondence was thus created around these documents.⁹⁴ While the Provincial was responsible for the transmission of the *informationes* to

⁸⁹ For standardization in the First Catalogue see e.g. the stipulation, that the Jesuits' age should be given in only one specific way, e.g. the instruction of General Gonzalez in ARSI Epp. NN. 9, p. 23 (as #2).

⁹⁰ See e.g. ARSI Inst 142, p. 9.

⁹¹ clm 26490, p. 13–18 (chapters 7–9). The only article discussing the *informationes* is J.F. Keenan, Are «Informationes» ethical?, in: *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 29 (1997), 1–39.

⁹² ARSI Germ. Sup. 15 I, p. 163: «Quos RV^a cum CC [sc. consultatoribus] suis proposuit candidatos pro regendis domicilijs, de ijs deliberavimus. Lectis itaque de more informationibus, atque auditis PP [Patres] Assistantibus meis visum est in domino proficere [...].» Sacchini said the same about the catalogues, (see footnote 85).

⁹³ I give but one example, Francisco Retz (General) to Francisco Mossu (Provincial), 8.1.1735, ARSI Germ. Sup. 15 I, p. 152: «cum jam ex literis P. Rectoris Ingolstadiensis intelligerim causas, ob quas Christianus Ant. Eschenlohe a gradu suo differendus visus fuit in provincia, quae antea in informatione expressae non fuerant».

⁹⁴ This can be seen from the very detailed discussion of the *informationes* in ARSI Germ 112.

Rome, he was not alone in making the judgements expressed within the pages. The *consultores*, as well as additional Jesuits (*informatores*) participated in this process so that a mutual responsibility lay behind these important documents.⁹⁵

In the 1580s, Acquaviva formalized the *informationes*, partially building on earlier attempts at doing this from the 1570s. A list of criteria was drawn up that consisted of a fixed set of categories in which the candidate would be evaluated.⁹⁶ It seems as if during much of the order's early history (before 1773) these categories were not altered dramatically. Though a detailed survey of these documents cannot be provided within the span of this article, the basic features are clear: an «evaluation template» was established, just as in the triennial catalogues. The qualities assessed by the *informationes* were those that the Constitutions deemed mandatory for a Jesuit,⁹⁷ and thus the categories themselves are hardly surprising. Spiritual and moral probity were examined, a sufficient degree of learning had to be confirmed for promotions, while questions of prudence and discretion were mostly important for future administrators. While this elaborate and psychologically astute template described *many* important aspects of an individual's personality, it had no intention of completeness. By selecting important features of an ideal Jesuit, it necessarily simplified the person under consideration.⁹⁸ The Jesuits were certainly aware of the «simplifying» nature of standardization and the need to account for issues that did not fit within the rubric of the template. It is no surprise that Acquaviva added a mandate that any crucial, supplementary information about the candidate should also be communicated to Rome.⁹⁹

Informationes and catalogues were thus based on parallel practices of information gathering. While this is evident from early on, formalization of the *informationes* reached its apex only around 1700.¹⁰⁰ By the eighteenth century, official forms were printed that had only to be filled-in in the Provinces. Sentences were pre-formulated and the Provincial would only write in a single qualifying word in the vacant space. For example, such a pre-fabricated printed sentence would read: «he [the candidate] is _____ able to control his affects.» The act of evaluation was therefore reduced to inserting one qualifying word: a «very well», «quite», «not», and so forth. The constraining power of a pre-fabricated

⁹⁵ The highly complicated process of producing the *informationes* on the local and regional level cannot be dealt with here, but will be addressed in the future. For a comment on the collective responsibility behind these documents see BN Roma Mss Ges 1436, fol. 72rv.

⁹⁶ See ARSI Inst 40, fol. 51rv (Mercurian), 105r (Acquaviva).

⁹⁷ ARSI Inst 40, fol. 50v (Mercurian, 1575).

⁹⁸ For the role of «simplifications» in the process of producing surveys see Scott, Seeing like a State (as footnote 4). See also Peter Becker, Beschreiben, Klassifizieren, Verarbeiten. zur Bevölkerungsbeschreibung aus kulturwissenschaftlicher Sicht, in: Arndt Brendecke/Susanne Friedrich/ Markus Friedrich (ed.), Informationsgeschichte in der Frühen Neuzeit (as footnote 9), for an application to 18th century demography.

⁹⁹ ARSI Inst 40, fol. 105r.

¹⁰⁰ The following refers to the extant printed forms in the final section (no pages) of HStA M Jes 72. See also the series of filled-in forms in ARSI Austr. 89, 101, 109, 112, 116, 120 (for 1740, 1754, 1761, 1764, 1767, 1770).

bureaucratic form and its layout added to the template's standardizing drive. Evaluating individual Jesuits during decisive stages in their careers became, from Rome's perspective, ideally reduced to no more than a few dozen hand-written words scrawled into a printed form, which could even fit on an octavo-page.¹⁰¹ However, many extant forms show that quite often there were divergent assessments for individual candidates. The jurors involved discussed each individual candidate at length and their differing opinions were recorded on these documents.¹⁰² This fact nicely shows the limitations of formalization: while the documents standardized a few prescribed categories in unified scale, a method of «filling-in» the form could not easily be formalized.

Discussion about individuals also played a major role in the regular correspondence to and from Rome. Here, assessments could be given in more unrestricted, descriptive, and narrative modes, sometimes turning into elaborate reports about the Jesuits in question. This was a genuine part of the correspondence between Rome and the provinces that also influenced decision-making. But, while these forms of exchange concerning individual Jesuits existed, they obviously did not satisfy all the needs of the central government. Hence, the introduction of the standardized catalogues and *informationes*. Recalling Luhmann once more, at least two reasons might explain this phenomenon. Standardization has the potential to reduce the amount of information and orient it towards the recipient's needs. The first point may be ruled out for the Society of Jesus since communication concerning individuals was never limited to the catalogues or *informationes*, but in fact occurred in the vast majority of letters sent to Rome. The second point, however, holds true for Jesuit administration. By introducing catalogues and *informationes*, the Roman officials made sure that a minimum standard of information was conveyed. While Rome never insisted on getting *only* the type of information described here, the standardized catalogues and *informationes* ensured that Rome *at least* got the information it wanted, in the format it wanted. While Jesuit correspondence was not exclusively geared towards the recipient's needs by prescribing a specific form and layout, the Curia guaranteed that certain requirements were fulfilled.

Through the catalogues and the *informationes*, the Roman Curia had available information on the order's members that was not only up-to-date, but also extremely «combineable». In fact, several times in the history of the «old Society», the many provincial Catalogues have been recompiled into one universal statistical overview over the whole order.¹⁰³ Moreover, while completeness might not have been consistently achieved in the surveys, the procedures outlined here demonstrate the Jesuit's ability to turn «completeness» from an abstract ideal into a bureaucratic procedure. Completeness was both extensive and intensive. The administrative power of the catalogues made it possible to keep track of all Jesuits. What is more, the template that the catalogues prescribed made certain

¹⁰¹ While most forms actually printed on large folio-pages, there existed octavo-versions.

¹⁰² See the several volumes in ARSI Austr., mentioned above in footnote 100, *passim*.

¹⁰³ See the printed copies in ARSI Hist. Soc. 10–19.

that *all relevant* information *about all* Jesuits was available. Within this bureaucratic system, the evaluation template was highly prized because its categories were grounded in the Constitutions. None of them could easily be dismissed or overlooked. Complete information was therefore more than only an administrative need. It was also a spiritual obligation.

Conclusion

We began this discussion with a single document, the table in *Institutum* 188. The diagram's form and content illustrate the basic structures of Jesuit administration. It shows the Society of Jesus as a social body that consciously relied on regulated and differentiated forms of administrative communication. More specifically, the diagram clearly documents the explicit differentiation of offices and chains of correspondence within the order. I have tried to show what this meant in daily administrative work, as well as on what principles such an understanding rested. The history of the Jesuit Order has still to be re-conceptualized within the history of large-scale social organizations, as well as within general administrative history. This essay is a first attempt to address such issues.

While the second part of this paper surveyed some of the major types of correspondence and their individual norms and developments, the opening sections tried to spell out, in more general ways, several basic features of the Jesuit system of administrative information-management. It seems clear that the features of standardization, formalization, seriality, and simplification, were not specific to the Society of Jesus. Rather, the Jesuit Order was shaped by broader developments within the administrative culture of early modern Europe. While many aspects of Jesuit administrative communication find parallels in other organizations – empires, trading companies, nation states – the Society of Jesus was extraordinarily explicit about individual practices, consciously articulating the need to rely on highly refined administrative routines.

One might ultimately inquire about the religious dimensions of Jesuit communication. While I have stressed the secular aspects in this essay, some religious dimensions are nonetheless obvious. Firstly, I have emphasized that the border between «administrative» and «edifying» (or: religious) communication was often blurred. Secondly, while the routines described here can be considered purely administrative, they did not only produce bureaucratic but also «edifying» (or: religious) texts. Perhaps a paradox, the administrative underpinnings of Jesuit production of spiritual literature nonetheless merits attention. Lastly, an important question is raised: why did the Jesuits see a need to develop such a complex system? To answer this question, we would need to look outside the pragmatic functions of Jesuit administrative culture. What aspects of Jesuit spirituality, theology, or philosophy made Ignatius' followers so extraordinarily susceptible to the intricacies of paper-based administration? As will become clear in future work, there are many religious foundations to Jesuit administrative communication. And, of course, for the Jesuits, the efficient organization

and administration of their own social body was, in the end, a deeply religious task. They thought about their social body in secular (i.e. administrative) terms, but all for the sake of a religious goal. It might be the ability to combine both perspectives that made the Society of Jesus a successful global player.

Appendix: Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Institutum 188, fol. 44rv

Our diagram is part of a larger collection of norms and instructions, all written by one hand. The volume has modern pagination, but the original hand-written page numbers are still visible. On page 2rv there is a period table of contents, on which our diagram is called «Quae fere ad Generalem referuntur, quaeque ab eo deliberanda sunt.» The content of our page is neither related to the previous («An liceat filiis inconsultis vel invitis Parentibus ingredi Religionem», 37r-43r) nor to the following document («Gubernatio Collegij Romani ac in litteris et spiritualibus Communia quaedam omnibus scholasticis», 45r-47v).

The sheet itself bears no date, but certain criteria provide at least a rough chronological framework. A pencil manuscript entry on fol. 2r mentions «1577», while fol. 45r mentions «anno 1566» and fol. 150r refers to «1574.» The reference to Andres Cordeses and a letter to him on the «mode of prayer» makes it likely to assume 1579 as a terminus post quem. In that year, Cordeses and his peculiar position on that topic had caused a major upheaval within the order. Also, the mentioning of Domenicus Baccellius helps to date our diagram: According to the catalogue of the Roman Province from 1579, Baccellius was then 26 years of age, had entered the Society in Rome, 1573, and died already on November 19, 1583, see ARSI Rom 53, fol. 28r. The catalogue does not call him «pater», but confirms Florence as his birth place. Thus it seems likely that our diagram was written around 1580, certainly before the end of 1583.

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| Quae fere ad Generalem referuntur quaeque ab eo deliberanda sunt Ut prius ab aliquo expendantur aut tractantur. | |
| Res spirituales: ut de modo orandi: deque modo iuvandi proximos et ceteras. | Assistentium aliquis Praefectu rerum spiritualium |
| Instructio eorum, qui tum ad Coll[egi]as administranda tum ad varia munera in Societate obeunda mittuntur. Cum autem haec instructio spectet vel ad ea, quae propter particulares circumstantias egent novo lumine nec forte antea tractata sunt ita, ut eorum mem[ori]a extet apud Secretarium posset alicui peritiori iniungi hoc munus. | Assistente Et non Assistens sed qui antea similia administrasset aut novisset. |
| Vel ad ea quae iam cum plerisque a R.P.N. tractata sunt, extantque apud Secretarium. Ut de ratione Visitandi. De ratione administrandi. De ordine et commendatione exercitiorum. De ratione nostri Instituti. De modo orandi, quemadmodum iam ad P. Cordesem scriptum est. De novis regulis, Brevibus, Vivevocis oraculis, compendio facultatum: Declarationibus, seu resolutionibus missis ad varias Provincias, litteris aedificationis, et si qua alia huiusmodi sunt | Secretarius |

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| Litterae particularium | Substitutus per Secretarium |
| 2. Soli | Generalis |
| 3. Universales | Secretarius |
| 4. Instructiones | |
| Lites et expeditiones, Brevium et Bullarum atque aliarum huiusmodi rerum | Procurator Generalis adhibitis peritis cum opus est |
| Studia Scriptorum librorum revisio, et examinatio: varij modi docendi, seu opiniones diversae | Collegium Romanum |
| Casus conscientiae | Collegium Romanum Penitentiaria |
| Res tractandae cum Summo Pontifice, Cardinalibus et alijs | Assistentes Secretarius |
| Regulae, officia, quae de novo conficiuntur, Visitationum examinationes ac si quae aliae huiusmodi sunt ut obligationes Collegiorum foundationum et cetera | Proprius Assistens cum altero qui videbitur |
| Temporaria [!], ut redditus, expensique et dati rationes quaeque ad oeconomiam pertinent (cum scilicet haec mittuntur aliunde) ut earum rerum constet Generali ratio, ipseque monere serio possit quae ad bona Domini fideliter dispensanda spectare possunt | Aliquis qui bonus esset, ut aiunt, computista, et bene nosset subducere rationes. Hic autem videretur posse esse Procurator Collegij Romani si qui eiusmodi esset ut cum socio sua tractans, posset etiam hoc commodum afferre Societati Modo idoneus v[idetu]r Dominicus baccellius Florentinus ac tum aptior cum erit sacerdos. Hicque similes sui aliquos posset instruere ut Societati et Provincijs consuleretur qui hac opera non mediocriter egent. |
| Caeterum si ordine omnia quae tractata aut declarata sunt hactenus a Generalibus disponderentur esset unde et in consultationibus, et in dandis responsionibus uniformitati Societatis, conscientiae Generalium, Tempori et labori consuli posset. | |

Communication and Bureaucracy in the Early Modern Society of Jesus

The present essay studies the Society of Jesus as a large scale social organisation. It focusses, however, less on institutions and offices than on the practices of information management that were employed to govern the order. At first, some general remarks discuss the relevance of regulated communication for the process of administration. Then, the many different types of letters and forms are described that were used to convey information. Special emphasis is laid on the question of standardizing the information. Ultimately, the essay tries to integrate the Society of Jesus into the history of early modern administration and social organisation. To do so, the Jesuits are presented here especially as a social body whose administration was necessarily based on a complex system of information-management. The main task of the paper, besides establishing this methodological approach in a general way, is to detail the many different forms of documents (letters) that were created to forward information in a standardized way.

Kommunikation und Verwaltung in der Gesellschaft Jesu vor 1773

Der Jesuitenorden wird in diesem Aufsatz unter organisatorischen Gesichtspunkten analysiert. Dabei kommen weniger die Institutionen und Ämter, sondern eher die Praktiken der Informationsvermittlung zur Sprache. Ausgehend von einigen allgemeinen Überlegungen zur Notwendigkeit und Form einer regulierten administrativen Kommunikation innerhalb einer großen und global agierenden sozialen Organisation, werden die konkreten Brief-typen beschrieben, mittels derer die Gesellschaft Jesu Information übermittelte, standardisierte und verarbeitete. Letztlich versucht der Beitrag damit, den Orden der Jesuiten und seine administrativen Praktiken in eine allgemeine Geschichte der Verwaltung und der sozialen Organisation der Frühen Neuzeit zu integrieren. Schwerpunkt der Analyse sind dabei die unterschiedlichen Typen von administrativer Information, die innerhalb des Ordens zirkulierten und dabei jeweils spezifische Formulare und Dokumente benötigten.

Communication et bureaucratie dans l'ancienne Compagnie de Jésus

Cet article analyse l'ordre des Jésuites d'un point de vue organisationnel. Il s'agit alors moins des institutions et des fonctions personnelles que des pratiques de la transmission de l'information. A la suite de quelques réflexions d'ordre général sur la nécessité et la forme d'une communication administrative régulée au sein d'une grande organisation agissant de façon globale, sont décrits les types concrets de lettres au moyen desquelles la Compagnie de Jésus transmettait, standardisait et travaillait l'information. A partir de là, l'article tente finalement d'intégrer l'ordre des Jésuites et ses pratiques administratives dans une histoire générale de l'administration et de l'organisation sociale à l'époque moderne. L'analyse met l'accent sur les différents types d'information administrative qui circulaient au sein de l'ordre et nécessitaient alors des formulaires et documents spécifiques.

Keywords – Schlüsselwörter – Mots clés

Jesuits – Jesuiten – jésuites, Administration order – Administrationsordnung – ordre administrative – information – Information – information, order of knowledge – Orden des Wissens – ordre de savoir, literacy – Bildung – formatio, institutions – Institutionen – institutions, center-periphery – Zentrum-Peripherie – centre-périphérie

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