GOD IN ALL THINGS?

The Sacramental Logics of Jesuit Material Remains

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Abstract: A set of notarial documents from colonial New Spain (Mexico) offers a view of the long-distance Jesuit missionary network as anchored in a dense local network of intimate relationships. Following the arrest of members of the Society of Jesus in 1767 at the Colegio Espíritu Santo in Puebla de los Ángeles, a scribe is tasked with noting Jesuit belongings. He records unique objects held in safekeeping for local people in Puebla. Using the lens of a theopolitical anthropology, we see how the idea of a God-present in the Eucharist is central not only to the way that the Spanish Crown was prevented from taking the silver items from the chapel, but also to how these sacramental logics account for the accrual of disparate items in each Jesuit's room.

Keywords: Eucharist, expulsion, Jesuits, material networks, New Spain, silver, Society of Jesus

In 1767, a secret missive from the Spanish Crown informed its Viceroy in the Spanish Americas that members of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) were to be arrested and expelled from its continental holdings. The surprise announcement came in the form of a knock on the doors of Jesuit houses, colleges, and missions at dawn on 25 June 1767. Sleeping porters across the Americas were dismayed, it is fair to surmise, to open the door to the appointed commissioners and notaries who were backed by local militias, all representatives of the Crown, poised to usurp Jesuit power and wealth. Jesuits were called from their rooms and required to remain in the common areas while transportation was arranged and, importantly, their personal and collective holdings assessed. Within a few days, crowds had gathered on roadsides to watch Jesuits trek toward Veracruz, but the New Spaniards could say little. The Crown had imposed a gag order on

its subjects: to comment was a state crime. This was a commanding demonstration of state power to quash what had been the powerhouse order of religious men who had established missions around the globe and whose education system had shaped Catholic arts and humanities worldwide.

This article examines the 24 hours leading up to and following the arrest of Jesuits who lived at the Colegio Espíritu Santo in the city of Puebla de los Ángeles.¹ Our vantage point is provided by a notary. The very morning of the arrest, a scribe named Manuel del Castillo, armed with pen and paper, stands alongside the militia, tasked with memorializing the event and documenting Jesuit holdings.² To distinguish this from any notarial labor our scribe may have undertaken in the past, the Crown has published a set of very detailed instructions about how to put ordinary notarial skills to the extraordinary labor of processing an order of religious men. Akin to a probate process, the holdings of all Spanish-American Jesuits are to be categorized, valued, and slotted for future redistribution. Yet they have not passed away. Rather, they have awoken to a new reality: their way of life is being dismantled and sorted right before their eyes.

Among the most interesting aspects of the sorting process in those initial hours following the arrest is that the state's first move is to dust away the layer of items that *do not* belong to the Jesuits. As the notary navigates the space of the college, we see that the Jesuits had cultivated a wealth of deeply personal entanglements. This is evidenced by the fact that the Jesuit college had served as a place of safekeeping for items important to individuals in the community. As each Jesuit names money, clothing, books, instruments, and other things in his room that belong to the townspeople outside the college walls, what emerges is a fine-grained view of how deeply embedded the Jesuits were in the local community. The Crown may indeed have had its eyes on diverting or draining the larger arteries of Jesuit 'treasure', but the arrest and expulsion have cauterized the very local, capillary connections that extended beyond the corporate body of the Society into Poblano society itself. In usurping the terrain and power of the Society of Jesus, the Crown is compelled to reckon with the material remnants of affective religious relationships.

The notary is tasked with noting, marking, sorting. Yet in making sense of the great variety of items listed, we are faced with a 'sorting' problem of our own. The inventory itemizes objects that, upon closer examination, are not easily categorized as sacred or profane, religious or political. The idea of a God-present is central to the accrual of small items in these college inventories, and clearly this 'litter' offers clues as to how the Jesuit college, a crucial nodal point in a multi-scaled, long-distance missionary network, was made possible by its densely rooted local networks. But rather than categorize the items individually, in this article I suggest that we see them as accumulation, a kind of dust—that is, the differentiated but sum total of the many individual

relationships between Jesuits and local Poblanos. In other words, this is a moment for a theopolitical anthropology that is attentive to how human power relations take the divine into account in a way that mobilizes matter, both sacred and mundane.

The college was a unique site. While a parish church demands its parishioners to fulfill the annual precept to confess and take the Eucharist once a year, participation in activities sponsored by Jesuit colleges was voluntary. Jesuits were known for their advocacy of frequent confession and communion, meaning that those drawn to the Jesuits were choosing frequency, both in the examination of oneself and in the consuming of the body of Christ. The desire to know oneself and understand God's will more intimately through the sacrament of penance was driven by a hope to be worthy to sustain a frequent, tactile relationship with Christ incarnate. Through these person-to-person relationships, Jesuits mediated access to the divine by shaping the theological practices and salvational expectations of their followers. In other words, sacramental logics attracted people and things to the Jesuits, and rooted the Society's power in this swarm of activity around a site of urban holiness, the Jesuit college. These peripatetic possibilities for affective intensification and material densification anchored in the sacraments of penance and communion are what, in one day, the Crown immobilized.³

As we trail after the notary in his task of enumerating the holdings of the College of Espíritu Santo in Puebla, we see clearly how a Jesuit sovereignty-as-swarm is undone. What we have in hand is an inventory that documents the material culture that lay in the wake of the waning of the Jesuit way of life. The state may have put the Jesuits in a position of powerlessness, but as we shall see, there is a robust theological check on state power: the Crown cannot touch the silver that is God-touched. In what follows, I trace a theopolitics in the colonial Catholic Americas that follows sacramental logics in which power is derived from or checked by proximity to Christ incarnate in the Eucharist. In approaching the altar, a space where the foundational relationship between the Catholic divinity and its people is enacted, the state is compelled to defer to sacramental logics. Ultimately, the silver that adorns and mediates Christ incarnate belongs neither to the Crown nor to the Jesuits, but is to remain in the care of the people who worship at that altar. And we see how not only silver, but also the 'things' scattered across Jesuit desks and shelves, many of which are quite mundane, refer back to a triangular relationship between person, priest, and the altar. This elaborately choreographed and secretive campaign unfolds with an understanding that places proximate to the sacrament of the Eucharist afford possibilities over which the Crown has limited control. The Crown's move to 'arrest' the dynamic movement of people and things in and through the Jesuit college follows sacramental logics that understood how divinity could spark up in the everyday.

The Society of Jesus: Some Background

In 1521, Iñigo Loyola was injured in a battle in Spain and suffered a painful leg wound that placed this Basque soldier on a path to founding an order of religious men. Loyola's Society of Jesus went 'global' virtually from the start of its formal foundation in 1542. Unlike other religious orders, the Society of Jesus espoused a decidedly worldly Catholicism. Eschewing both monastery and parish, its members declared the world to be their home, and they called themselves "contemplatives in action." Dreams of martyrdom in remote locales drove the imaginations of many aspiring Jesuits, but the Order's *raison d'être* was described in very broad terms, that is, "to console souls." One of the first Jesuits, Francis Xavier, lived out this vision as he traveled frenetically throughout South and East Asia on a mission to convert "more, more, more!" souls to the Christian God.

But what drove the Society's rapid global expansion? Ignatius of Loyola drew followers to himself by way of his Spiritual Exercises, a meditative program that asked practitioners to imagine themselves undertaking action in the world under the banner of Christ. Originally designed to assist men in determining their vocations, the program was swiftly adapted to also guide lay people's religious decision making. An engagement with the Ignatian Exercises was deeply personal, as the retreat was geared toward a very careful examination of one's life history with the aim of reordering of one's life. The practice was popular among men and women who were inspired to find a way to be active in the world because, in Ignatian terms, God can be found "in all things" (Molina 2013: 31).

Among the colonizing powers in New Spain, the Society of Jesus was late to arrive and the first to leave, and quite ignominiously at that, as we are seeing here. In 1572, the Jesuits who established the Mexican Province scrambled to establish a toehold in the fairly well-established Spanish-styled cities of Mexico and the newly founded Puebla de los Ángeles. The Jesuits had followers among Spanish and Indian alike, as well as among the newly arrived African slaves—some of whom they owned and compelled to work on their haciendas, and some of whom were sold to fund the foundation of Espíritu Santo, the Jesuit college under study in this article. Yet by the eighteenth century, they had followers from among urban slaves and freed black communities who belonged to confraternities affiliated with the colleges.⁴

The Jesuits established colleges in New Spain to teach both young Spanish-American men and, in segregated colleges, the sons of elite indigenous leaders. The colleges also served to put young Jesuits through their paces as both scholars and teachers. Not only teaching institutions, the colleges were hubs in a global Jesuit missionary system. Almost every aspect of the Society's tight corporate hierarchy ran through these crucial nodal points. Basically, the

network of colleges functioned as a communication structure in which the superior general in Rome corresponded with the leaders of each province (the Provincial), who in turn oversaw operations that were directed by the rectors of the various colleges. As we shall see, missionaries, money, commodities, luxury items, books, and devotional practices all moved through smaller, local networks in which the Jesuit colleges, churches, and chapels, as well as affiliated confraternities, made deeply personal connections with the larger community. In addition, as the inventory under study here makes clear, the colleges functioned much like sacred architecture in the sense that religious activities and experiences ‘swirled’ around this space. Not unlike modern Protestant evangelicals who adapt a wide variety of structures to religious ends (Hovland 2016), the Jesuits built colleges and haciendas (Molina, forthcoming) that were configured to host wide-ranging devotional opportunities, such as making the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and joining lay sodalities, which encouraged people who lived inside and outside its walls to put the Catholic sacraments of penance and the Eucharist at the center of their lives. In other words, the Jesuits offered possibilities for a life centered on the frequent reception of the sacraments, and this was the magnetic pull that drew people and things into the bustling ambit that was the Jesuit colleges.

But not everyone was convinced. A movement against the Jesuits had begun to pick up steam in the middle of the eighteenth century when a combination of factors combined to bring the early modern era of Jesuit global mobility to a close. In quick succession, the Society of Jesus was shut down in European Catholic countries, first in Portugal (1759) and then in France (1764), culminating in the dramatic expulsion of its members from Spain and its American holdings (1767). An international order of men with allegiance to the Pope was a threat to the rising power of absolutist Catholic nation-states. The Society of Jesus was accused of being a kingdom unto itself, an accusation that was exacerbated by the depth and breadth of its economic interests across the Spanish-American world, as the Jesuits owned not only prime city real estate, but also slaves, land, haciendas, and livestock. These thriving businesses—untaxed—functioned as the financial supports for the central institution of the Jesuit missionary movement, the college. Additionally, the Jesuits had what many considered unfair advantages in that they were not required to tithe and their trade was not taxed. For centuries, their best minds had written theological treatises, some of which were notorious for being in ideological conflict with notions of absolute power (Benimeli 2008; St. Clair Segurado 2009; Van Kley 2018).⁵ And the Jansenists were appalled by the Jesuit mode of making the sacraments easily available to the laity.

Yet the Jesuits were not renegades; they had long worked in tandem with colonial power. They were, however, so adept at navigating the divide between papacy and Crown that the Society of Jesus was accused of being a sovereign power. We will see some truth to that accusation in the network of commodity

production that linked Puebla's Colegio de Espíritu Santo to its haciendas, *fincas* (estates), and sites for animal processing and sale, and how these untaxed earnings enabled the Society to accrue spiritual capital via its missions, its charitable work, its sponsorship of religious sodalities, and its educational ministry. These funds went into confraternities, the vast collections of books in the libraries, and the 'soft' power of the tight affiliations born of Jesuit education. These were the 'prizes' that the Crown was keen to end, co-opt, and/or redistribute.

Notarial Observations

Late at night on 24 June 1767, Francis Xavier Machado, a captain in the infantry and the commissioner charged with overseeing the arrest of the Jesuits in the city of Puebla de los Ángeles in New Spain, as well as the occupation and confiscation of all their holdings, made some initial statements about his preparations. Machado is running on a tight schedule. He had just been selected by the Viceroy to oversee the arrest in Puebla, but had been allowed to read the instructions only two days prior to the 25 June arrest date. Machado had in his hands the detailed *Instrucción* (Instruction), written by the Conde de Aranda, who served as the president of the Council of Castile and was a very close advisor to the king. These "providential instructions" had been printed in Madrid and distributed to commissioners like Machado by the Viceroy of New Spain, the Marquis de Croix, and were to be observed "to the letter."⁶ Aranda's instructions pertained to all of the Crown's holdings—Spain, the Americas, and the Philippines—with directives written specifically to the unique situation of its overseas holdings. While Machado did not concern himself with mission stations, as there were none in the vicinity of Puebla, from his notes it is clear that the instructions that most concerned him that evening were those pertaining to the speed and secrecy necessary to ensure the smooth unfolding of events. The tight window in which this would all have to take place (*la estrechez del tiempo*) was very much on Machado's mind. He was also following the Crown's stipulation: "To the Scribe that you will appoint to assist you in these proceedings, you will communicate nothing until a little while before implementing them; and even then taking care not to separate him from your side, once he has learned of this."⁷ Machado hired notaries, and the man he chose to be at his own side was Manuel de Castillo. The selected notaries were informed the night before the planned arrest. After revealing the Viceregal order and the Crown's formal instructions to the notaries, all five notaries were "enclosed in a separate room under lock and key until 1:30 in the morning."⁸ The commissioner, Machado, sequestered himself as well. Secrecy is imperative.

In the record, Machado's entries are not marked by the day, but by the hour: "I am now in my inn [*posada*] at approximately midnight. Present with me in

a closed room are only Don Joseph Rubio, Don Juan Sevillano, and Don Matias Graihusen. I asked for a formal oath upon their honor and faith to guard this most religious secret I will reveal to them. No one will leave my sight until the order is expressly given.”⁹ Machado had been named after one of the founders of the Society of Jesus, yet we have no indication of his opinions. His concern is to maintain total secrecy, which is intended to forestall any unrest. Even the soldiers cannot know the true reason why they are moving into formation on the Puebla streets until the very moment that the rector of the college is roused from sleep and the arrest announced.

Two hours later, Machado writes once again, indicating that all of the commissioners have moved to the house of Don Esteban Bravo de Rivero, a colonel in the Royal Army and governor of the city of Puebla. They are, he notes, “alone in one room,” and he extracts from them yet another pledge to guard the “most religious secret” (*el más religioso secreto*).¹⁰ Bear in mind that Puebla had five locations where arrests were to take place (two Jesuit seminaries and three Jesuit colleges), and that similar arrests, designed to take sleeping men by surprise, were to be undertaken simultaneously not only in the city, but across the Americas.

These several pages of quick description record Machado’s compliance with Crown protocols. Then the voice in the record shifts, and the scribe, Manuel del Castillo, speaks in the first person, noting how Machado and the soldiers have moved into formation at approximately 4:30 AM. “His Mercy gave the command to go down the street known as La Compañía.”¹¹ There is no little irony in the fact that the Jesuits—la Compañía de Jesús—occupy buildings on a street that bears their name. It signals the depths of the Society’s roots in New Spain and the challenge to uproot them. No doubt the weight of this task is what prompted the commissioner’s plea for help from on high. The notary observed that as Machado was about to bang on the door of the Colegio del Espíritu Santo to wake up the porter, he paused and said, “*Ave María Santísima*”—to which, in loud voices, the other commissioners responded, “forever will be blessed” (*por siempre sea bendita*)—and then the group moved upon the door.¹²

According to the *Instrucción*, the college should not be ransacked; instead, the Jesuits are to be treated well, that is, with “the greatest decency, attention, humanity, and assistance.”¹³ Now the soldiers know why they have been mobilized, and have followed further instructions to lock and guard the doors of the Jesuit churches and to place a sentinel to guard the bell towers.

Castillo’s notations shift briefly to an explicitly legal register, using language crafted to signal that Machado is indeed following the Crown’s printed instructions. He cites and then replicates much of the Sixth Article of the *Instrucción*: “The referred Señor Don Francisco Xavier Machado Fiesco, put into practice the proceedings [*diligencias*] of the legal occupation of the Archives, Papers

of all kinds, the Common library, books and desks of the Rooms, conforming to that prescribed by the Sixth Article of the printed *Instrucción* and signed by the most excellent Señor Conde de Aranda in Madrid on the first day of March of this year.”¹⁴

As the commissioner takes legal possession of Jesuit holdings in the name of the Crown, our notary is keenly attuned to space. We gain a sense of the rooms and their layout as he walks through the first floor. There are five rooms, plus two mezzanines. Castillo notes the direction in which he walks: “entering the room adjacent, to the right.” He describes all the furniture, objects, and papers, and is attentive to their placement. What ensues is a form of place-marking that counters a history of Jesuit place-making. The things that had circulated are tokens of Jesuit power that the state moves to mark and contain.

Castillo takes note of the cash and to whom it properly belongs, as in this example of items in the common area: “A large cedar box with only one lock. The Fathers agreed that what is inside belongs to Don Evarde Bonilla, a neighbor of this City, who has given these for safekeeping, and that the aforementioned [Bonilla] has the key.”¹⁵ What becomes clear at this point in Castillo’s methodical note taking is how so much of the *outside* is present *inside* the college walls. Individually, and collectively, the Jesuits keep things for their neighbors, a seemingly informal practice of safeguarding either money or goods for members of Poblano society:

In the room adjacent, entering to the right, [is] another box with iron brackets [*cantoneras de hierro*] on its corners and a lock. The Fathers said its contents belong to Miguel Santevas, who is also a neighbor in this City, and accordingly the owner has the key and put it in this College to keep for its better safety. In the same room, another small box with a lock that the same Fathers said is destined to keep money pertaining to the pious work of marrying orphans which is funded by Licenciado Catarroxa. And in the same room there were two large armoires with several kinds of notebooks, and chalk, and a decorated jewel box on the wall with three divisions, each with its own door and lock, and each door locked.¹⁶

We continue to follow Castillo and his entourage as they move, now toward the left side of the room, to examine several chests. These are files of paperwork “related to the College” and also to the Jesuit haciendas. He finds cupboards that hold the silver and wax for the chapel and another box of funds (again with two locks) that holds the College’s own contribution to the dowries for orphaned girls.¹⁷ The Fathers maintain the income of the Congregación del Populo (Congregation of the People). The locations of the keys to each box and cupboard are carefully noted. A large box, locked, contains the silver jewels belonging to the estate of the Echaverria family: due to the “hundred differences that occurred between the Heirs, it is there in deposit and its key held

in the same Procuraduría.” In the same room there is another large box full of cinnamon (*canela Zinamomo*). No specific owner is stated. And there are several bundles of “clothing from Europe” that belong to the Rector José Castillo and the Procurator Ignacio Mozarabe. The other bundle of clothing belongs to Don Cosme Damian de Ugarte and, as we can now expect, is being held for safekeeping. As we reach the end of the description of the main rooms, our scribe notes: “All of this was seen by the Lord Commissioner and Witnesses, and by me, the rooms were closed and the keys handed over to His Mercy.”¹⁸

Next the group moved to audit the library. Without exaggeration, the library was a principal space at every Jesuit college however remote. When the Jesuits arrived in New Spain in 1572, they brought books with them, but almost immediately Jesuit leadership articulated a need for a more systematic way to procure them. Books were considered crucial, not only to support the Jesuit education ministry, the writing of sermons, and missionary labor, but also because reading was considered an important spiritual practice—and, of course, one could read for enjoyment and practical learning. Thus, by 1767 the Society had been accumulating books for almost 200 years. Its libraries, print shops, and bookstores had become central components in the broad exchange of reading materials among a thriving translocal network of ‘lettered’ society (Martínez-Serna 2009; McManus 2017; Osorio Romero 1986).¹⁹ But the task of documenting this library’s holdings would wait for another day—another many years, in fact, as it took 7 to 15 years to process the Jesuit libraries, depending on the college (García-Monge Carretero 2004).

During this 24-hour period, Castillo makes the initial foray into the library rather swiftly. He notes the shape of the room, with wraparound shelving stretching up the high walls: “With the same subjects mentioned above, and with myself in attendance, we immediately went up to the library or the school library of common books, all of which were in one room on surrounding [shelves]. Everyone agreed, upon seeing a portion of books, that the number and titles [correspond] to the [indexed] works that compose the library.”²⁰ The Padres had asserted (and the notary ascertains) that there are exactly two copies of the general index. Accordingly, Castillo’s quick work to gather the bare outlines of the library’s holdings signals the closing of a crucial nodal point of Jesuit influence and connection to lettered society. Items that had once circulated are now under lock and key.

Sacramental Silver

With the indices in hand, the commissioner closes the room and collects the key before moving on to the Casa de Ejercicios (retreat house), another very important space that connected the Jesuits to the local community.

From the library, accompanied by His Mercy, with the stated Father Rector and Father Procurator and the aforementioned Don Fernando de Lavanda and Don Carlos Espinoza as Witnesses, we went to what they call the Casa de Ejercicios, where there is a Chapel and a Sacristy. We noted several Ornaments, Chalices, and other silver adornments; upon closing the doors, the keys were collected by His Mercy. With the same subjects we went to the interior high chapel, in which, in the same manner, it was acknowledged to contain that concerning the Divine worship, and where the Blessed Lord is deposited, and exists therein.²¹

This house in particular had been established in 1725 as a place where the laity could take part in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. Visitors would reside on-site for periods of 8 to 10 days to make the meditative retreat under the guidance of a Jesuit retreat leader. The notary's description—"what they call the Casa de Ejercicios"—offers no indication of how central the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises were to every Jesuit's vocation (it was how young men discerned whether they had a vocation to be a Jesuit) and their continuing spiritual life (they made the retreat annually), or of how this meditative program of self-reform was also a primary and very popular means by which Jesuits around the world connected to lay Catholics. The Exercises fostered not only the Jesuits' relationships with their innermost selves, but also with a variety of others whom they called to participate in an activist Christianity (Molina 2013). The notary refers briefly to an empty space with some silver adornments, but we have to imagine the quiet bustling of monthly retreats that drew people from all walks of life, including women and Indians (Díaz 2015; Molina 2008; Schroeder 2000). This was an important means by which locals became connected to Jesuit devotional practices; it made them familiar with the space of this particular college and facilitated relationships with Jesuits who gave sermons, heard their confessions, and sponsored their confraternities. Thus, when the door to "what they call the Casa de Ejercicios" is closed and the keys are "placed in the power of the same Commissioner," this was very "diligent labor" indeed,²² as the Exercises had been foundational to many relationships of trust and authority that underwrote the material networks, as shall soon become even more evident in this inventory.

Before forging ahead to the dismantling of the Jesuits' individual rooms, we need to consider Castillo's brief remark about the chapel's altarware: "We noted several Ornaments, Chalices, and other silver adornments." Helen Hills (2016) has described how colonialism, refinement, and salvation were inscribed into silver decorations of early modern Catholic churches. Silver, she writes, is a medium that is charged with potential for both profit and salvation (ibid.: 446–447, chap. 10). As it sorted Jesuit materials, the Crown attempted to differentiate the profitable from the salvific. To see this, we need to go beyond our 24-hour period and take a peek at the 1773 addendum to Aranda's *Instrucción*. In the

expanded directive, Christ incarnate becomes the decisive organizing principle for sorting silver. The amended instructions make clear that silver items should be described in accordance to the “degrees” of proximity to the body of Christ: “The first degree pertains to those items that make immediate contact with the divine cult.” These are silver objects that have an immediate connection to “the most sacred of the Religion” such as the chalice, patens, and monstrance, as well as the reliquaries holding saints’ bones.²³ The second degree includes silver items that make no physical contact with the divine cult but are ordinary items proximate to it that “daily serve the Sacrament” in a supportive role, such as the vinegar jar and its plate, altar candle holders and lamps. Also included is silver that “touches” images of saints, such as crowns, diadems, “and other similar items that in a certain mode surround the Sacred.”²⁴ In the third degree are items that have “no physical contact with the Sacred” but serve only to augment “its magnificence and greater pomp, such as vases and bouquets.”²⁵ The Crown is able to take for itself the silver of the third degree.²⁶

The same system of ‘degrees’ is to be used to evaluate the silver items held by “foundations subservient to these churches.” Included here are Jesuit-sponsored confraternities. For example, a 1775 inventory evaluates the holdings of the Congregation of the Morenos, a Jesuit-sponsored confraternity of slaves and freed blacks. These members marked their ownership of a silver chalice by engraving the name of the confraternity on its base.²⁷ “It is silver,” Hills (2016: 463) observes, “that transfers God to man, that transfers his *incorporation*.” For members of this and other congregations, the Jesuits mediated access to “the Divine worship,” a place where the Crown’s power was limited, but where slaves or freedmen could seek a salvation that amplified their social status. Belonging to this organization made them owners and custodians of silver of the first degree. While space does not allow a full discussion of the relationships among Afro-descended peoples and the Jesuits (Brewer-Garcia 2020), this silver story hints at how sacramental logics resulted in modes of enslavement and emancipation that were remarkably different from those considered paradigmatic by Mexico’s northern neighbor. Here we must simply note that the Crown might remove the Jesuits, but it still had to contend with the ways in which Christ incarnate centered the devotional lives and amplified the social status of those who moved in and around the Jesuit college.

Subtraction

We have walked through the front door, perused the open areas of the first floor, and briskly assessed the library. We have seen the notations about the main arteries of cash and goods that flow to and from the haciendas, and had a brief glance at the future’s more ‘refined’ inventories of silver altarware. Now Castillo

pivots to the processing of individual Jesuits and their belongings. The Jesuits had been pulled from their beds hours ago and have not been allowed to return to their rooms. At that moment, the Padre Minister is described as in the midst of interviewing each Jesuit about his capacity to travel because, the notary comments, the Padre Rector is indisposed. The men, first gathered in a main hall, have now been called by an officer and escorted to the Casa de Ejercicios where “His Mercy has resolved to lodge them under the custody of another Official and the corresponding sentinels.” Castillo notes that Machado’s decision to use the Casa for detainment is due to its strategic position: it is separated from the main parts of the college, and “communication” between the two buildings is limited to a single doorway that has iron gates.²⁸ Now the keeper of the keys, the commissioner reopens the Casa de Ejercicios. The place that fostered vocations built upon visions of global Catholicism has become a holding pen. From here, through the iron gates, each Jesuit is individually escorted to his now former room by an armed guard and required to assist in the audit.

The commissioner’s aim in this initial survey of the Jesuits’ individual rooms is to understand what belongs to the Order, what belongs to the individual Jesuit, and what belongs to neither. Each Jesuit is asked to point out anything in the room that is not his. Article 15 of the Crown’s printed *Instrucción* gives strict rules as to what each Jesuit was allowed to take with him: “Likewise, it was ordered that each Religious assist with the identification of his respective Chamber, so that in the same act he may declare if there is something in the room in which he is going to take or deposit, as well as to have his bed, clothes, breviaries, diaries, devotional booklets, tobacco of both species, and chocolate.”²⁹ In each entry, Castillo notes the name of the Jesuit and the room number, how the room’s occupant did indeed “assist” in the inquiry and collected only his allowed personal belongings, and, finally, that the keys were put into the power of the commissioner.

The view becomes even more plain. Poblanos conceived of the space of the Jesuit college as a kind of bank vault wherein one could leave treasured items for safekeeping. These relationships were forged individually, as not every Jesuit took part in this informal economy of exchange or safekeeping. Some were simply noted as having nothing “alien” or “foreign” in their rooms—the stock notarial phrase being “*no tener cosa alguna ajena*.” This was always followed by the all-important notation about the status of the keys. In the first room (*aposento*) audited, Castillo notes Padre Ignacio Mozarabe’s explanations about the money inside the two baskets in the cupboard: the funds belong to people whose names are written on little tickets, which are also inside the baskets, but those persons do not have documents in their power to ask for the funds.³⁰ He points out a bowl, a platter, and two saucers, all made of silver, that belong to his nephew, Don Lucas de Morales: “And having taken, said Religioso, that which was permitted him, the door to said Aposento was locked. The Commissioner

took the keys and in the appropriate manner we passed to the next.” The next room belonged to Padre José Ignacio Calderón, who pointed out that an English-language book on his desk was the property of the surgeon in the city, Don Juan Mantagas, and that they would also find among his papers a papal marriage dispensation conferred on Don Manuel Francisco Trujillo Labrador, which had been given to Calderón for safekeeping. He took what was permitted and then handed over the keys. Father Manuel Dominguez had nothing to declare, so “what was allowed was given him, and the key was taken by the Señor Commissioner, who on his own terms, passed to the next.”³¹

Father Pedro Gallardo declared that two large books about birds, bound in cardstock (*en pasta*), belonged to the common library of the College. The *aposeno* of Juan de Arriola could not be opened, as he was away at the Hacienda de San Pablo and had the key with him. Padre Torrija pointed out the three volumes written in Italian by Padre Josef Gravina,³² two volumes by Padre Gecio, as well as “*seis de la Racolta*,”³³ that is, six that Torrija referred to simply as “the collections,” although the use of the Italian word signals that, whatever the genre of writing collected therein, presumably they were also Italian works, all of which had been loaned to him by Licenciado Torrija, a priest from Acajete.³⁴ Padre Eugenio Ramírez pointed out that the two kimonos and a piece of lace belonged to Doña Maria Ana Castro.³⁵ Padre Alberto Zarzosa had a book about “the heavenly sphere” that belonged to a silversmith (*platero*) named Ortiz. Padre Ignacio Ronderos had a large bottle with a silver spout (*con boquilla de plata*) that belonged to his brother, Señor Doctor Don Vicente Ronderos, who was a canon of a church in Puebla. Ten pesos belonged to a man who made the altarpiece for Nuestra Señora de la Luz, but he could not recall his name. There was also a little bag (*taleguilla*) with money that belonged to *las Francos*, women (sisters?) who gave it to him for safekeeping. Padre Martín Vallarta had nothing to declare, collected his things, and handed over the keys.³⁶ Padre Bernardino Ortiz held in safekeeping a small coin box with 188 pesos belonging to Manuela de Salazar. Padre Antonio Cid, prefect of the Congregación de los Negros, was absent “as had already been noted,” and as Cid held the keys, his room could not be examined. This would be the same confraternity that had marked its ownership of the silver chalice.³⁷ There is insufficient room to describe here the varied items held in individual rooms, but to give the reader a sense of the range, I add here a few interesting objects: a large self-winding clock; the governing books for the Congregation of Nuestra Señora del Popolo; six bunches of silk flowers that belonged to a woman who lived down the street; a sealed sheet of paper described as “a case of conscience” that its owner implored them not to read; and, most ironic, a small book bearing the title *The Crisis of the Society of Jesus*.

In closing down the day, the commissioner returns to the starting point, the *porteria*. This is the lodging station from whence the porter had been torn

from his sleep earlier in the morning. With this, the notary declares that all Jesuits and their rooms have gone through the initial audit, with the exception of the four men who count among the mentally ill.³⁸ The goal of the Crown has been relatively straightforward: move the Jesuits out and immobilize the swirl of activity that daily orbited in and around the Jesuit college. But the motion of people and things is not just born of relationships among the Jesuits and their followers. Central to the scene is an idea about a God-present (Orsi 2016). Here, the incarnate Christ sits at the center of the swirl of activity and compels the Crown to stand back from the altar. The Crown, nonetheless, takes control over everything else that remains: “All of the keys reside with said Commissioner, His Mercy.” The document is signed by both Machado and Castillo. The day is finished.

Sacramental Logics and Jesuit Material Remains

Attentive to ritual (the keys), ready for any legal battles (the notary and his documentation), and prepared to put down a rebellion (the militia), the Crown wields its might. The spiritual, cultural, and economic capital that the Jesuits had accrued over approximately 200 years is disassembled, catalogued, and prepared for a long period of storage and eventual sale, while the men themselves prepare for long-distance travel. In leaning over Castillo’s shoulder, we have caught sight of the ritual display of sovereign power. The Crown brings the full weight of the law to bear upon each individual Jesuit, moving person by person, item by item, to freeze and contain the movable parts of what had been, just the day before, the Mexican Province of the Society of Jesus.

Yet as we have seen most plainly in the accounting of the silver altarware, sacramentality can put the brakes on state power. The Crown must pause and parse its actions carefully when confronting the place “where the Blessed Lord is deposited.” The Crown claimed for itself only the third-degree silver, perhaps a formal nod to its own ‘supporting role’. Here the Crown concedes that a church and its congregants are entitled to maintain God-touched silver and other items that pertain to “the divine cult.” Ironically, the plentiful third-degree silver was deemed too heavy to send back to Spain.

Can such sacramental logics be at the root of the relationships of trust and authority that explain the presence of the miscellaneous items in individual Jesuits’ rooms? These small vectors of exchange between Jesuits and their neighbors are so interesting in part because they are difficult to characterize. There can be no highly calibrated ‘degrees’ to the Crown’s sorting process of the books about birds, the silk flowers, the silver-plated water jug, the musical instruments, the kimonos, the divorce decree, the lace, the self-winding desk clock, the silver jewelry held for the family in dispute. Clearly, these

objects are what historian Leora Auslander (2005: 1027) calls “aesthetically invested objects.” These are all precious items—many of which are linked to embodied sensorial existence—that locals had deemed important enough to require placement with spiritual leaders. Included are items that delight the eye (images of birds), slide across the body (kimonos), signal status (kimonos and silver-plated goblets), provide visual and sensual pleasure (silk flowers), or are linked to the consumption of food (the decorative serving ware) as well as the passing of time (the clocks). In other words, they are connected to human sensorial experience. What some of these items have in common with the altarware is a vitality that resides in their preciousness, but also their material limitations. Akin to the silver that is touched and kissed, these items require care and protection (ibid.: 1015). And similar to the altarware, these are relational objects—objects that denote very tiny conduits of connection, networks to and from the Jesuits’ rooms, to the streets outside, to locations across the city of Puebla, and out to neighboring locations, like Cholula or Acajete.

The placement of particular objects in specific rooms bears witness to intimate relationships that were no doubt as varied and unique as the items listed, but all of which gesture, through the priest, toward the altar. These foundational relationships centered upon preparing that specific lay person to know herself well enough to approach the altar to consume Christ’s body. Whether built upon deference, fear, or friendship, sacramental logics authorized the Jesuits as caretakers of precious objects in a worldly Catholicism built upon finding God ‘in all things’.

Catholicism fosters material connections. We know this. From monumental churches to roadside chapels, these are the ritual centers from which flow a variety of material forms—candles, images, and rosaries being the most common—that lay people often tuck into their own pockets, take home, and place on shelves or on home altars. Yet we have seen a different array of items that were not taken *from* a sacred site. Instead, they condensed around an odd site: a Jesuit college.³⁹ Proximity to divinity does not make kimonos and books about birds religious in and of themselves; the Jesuit bedrooms are not themselves sacred spaces, but only mundane sites proximate to the sacred. Clearly, these are—also—luxury item owned by elites, precious and relatively rare. Similarly, the simple silk flowers could be the property of a wide range of *novohispanos* and do not, on their own, materialize ‘religion’.

And yet we find these items listed in this inventory because they condensed around religious relationships with specific Jesuits, like so much dust, swirling around a multiplicity of possibilities. “Semiotic processes are in constant motion,” Webb Keane (2018: 84) reminds us, and thus we cannot expect them to move in a single direction. In other words, we must be agile enough to follow not only the ‘material religion’ that flows ‘out’ from sacred spaces. Rather, I suggest we understand the disparate items in Manuel Castillo’s inventory

as remnants or tokens of theologically inspired affective relationships. The predominant affordance, I have argued, was a Jesuit-styled understanding of salvation as grounded in the frequent reception of the Eucharist and the concomitant frequency of the sacrament of penance. If the core of theopolitics is affective relationships, then it is a triangular relationship shaped by the shifting contours of self-altar-priest. The corners formed by the self-altar-priest relation do not hold things permanently. As Michael Marder (2016: 74) writes in his meditations on the power of dust as a metaphor: “There is nothing in this togetherness that is guaranteed to last from one moment to the next; its meanings, scales, and particles can always discombobulate and disperse.” Our inventory captures only a snapshot of what had been a dynamic swarm. Twenty-four hours later, Jesuit sacramental possibilities are vanishing, not only because the priests are prisoners soon to depart, but also because the Crown has arrested the objects, and has made impossible all mobility that does not entail a carriage ride to the port town of Veracruz.

The dust is settling on our dust-like items. The doors are locked, and the keys are—for the moment—in the hands of the Crown. In the years that follow, the Crown keeps tight control over the books and things, wary of invoking the Jesuits as an absent-presence (Mehl 2014; Vizuite Mendoza 2011). Despite the exiled Jesuits’ ability to shape emerging ideas about the Americas (Brading 1991; Cañizares-Esguerra 2001), the Society of Jesus, even when reconstituted in 1814 and re-established in the newly formed Mexico in 1815, will never have as much influence as it did during the colonial period. But one thing remains constant: when coming to terms with the waning power of the Spanish colonial state, or that of the newly formed independent nation, or even aspects of post-revolutionary Mexican state formation, scholars must attend to how sacramental logics have continued to shape the contours of political authority in Mexico.

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Notes

1. For a modern example of the ‘one day’ methodological approach where the eyes and the notebook belong to the ethnographer, see Napolitano (2007).
2. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits from Mexico in 1767 [manuscript] 1767–1781*, Ayer 1128 (1767), Newberry Library, Chicago, here 14.
3. I am indebted to Helen Hills’s (2016) study of rhizomatic forms of urban holiness anchored in church architecture and silver decoration in early modern Naples.
4. For the history of the transition from slavery to a predominantly freed black Catholic community in eighteenth-century Puebla, see Silva (2018).
5. Sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit theologian Francisco Suárez had espoused papal supremacy over the monarchy, while Juan Mariana took it to an extreme with his frank discussion of when regicide might be necessary. Among rigorist Catholics, especially the Jansenists, this kind of ‘casuistry’ engendered genuine abhorrence for Jesuit moral probabilism (St. Clair Segurado 2009; Van Kley 2018).
6. *Coleccion general de las providencias hasta aquí tomadas por el gobierno sobre el estrañamiento y ocupación de temporalidades de los regulares de la Compañía que existen en los Dominios de S.M. des España, Indias, e Islas Filipinas* [General collection of the measures taken up to here on the separation and occupation of the temporalities of the regulars of the Company [of Jesus]

that existed in the dominions of Spain, the Indies, and the Philippine Islands] (Madrid: Imprenta Real de la Gaceta, 1767), here 15. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

7. *Ibid.*, 6.
8. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 14.
9. *Ibid.*, 14v.
10. *Ibid.*, 16.
11. *Ibid.*, 17v.
12. *Ibid.*, 18.
13. *Collecion general*, 2.
14. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 7.
15. *Ibid.*, 21.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 21v.
19. Establishing libraries was not uncommon. Zumárraga, the first bishop of Mexico, established an Episcopal library that was supported by Crown funds and had extensive Renaissance holdings. J. Gabriel Martínez-Serna (2009: 196) notes that even the small Jesuit college at Parras had several hundred volumes of books that included “books in Portuguese, Italian, Latin, Nahuatl, and authors such as Ovid, Cicero, Quevedo, Suárez, Vieira, and Cervantes.”
20. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 21v.
21. *Ibid.*, 22.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Fondo Jesuita* [Jesuit documents], Legajo 139 (1774), Fondo Antiguo José María Lafragua, Puebla, here 6.
24. *Ibid.*, 6–7.
25. *Ibid.*, 9.
26. Saints’ relics are also categorized following a logic of ‘degrees’, with the first degree being the saint’s body itself, the second the saint’s clothing or objects that were used by the living saint, and the third a ‘touch’ relic, that is, something that has touched a first-degree relic.
27. *Fondo Jesuita*, 34.
28. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 27.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, 27v.
33. This is likely Giuseppe Maria Gravina (1702–1775), who published three volumes of *Trattenimenti apologetici sul probalismo* (Apologetic treatment of probabilism) in 1755.
34. *Raccolta* is Italian for ‘collection’ and could refer to any Italian collection of sermons, selections from scripture, or poetry, among other options.
34. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 27v.
35. *Ibid.*, 28. The introduction of this luxury item in New Spain is connected to its strategic position on the Manila Galleon trade route, as was the fashion

for other 'Asian' items, including porcelain and lacquerware and the Japanese screen. In the early seventeenth century, Mexican Jesuits incorporated kimonos into celebrations of the canonizations of Ignatius and Francis Xavier (1622). The kimono was worn by participants who represented Asia as one of the 'four corners' of the world in which the Jesuits were stationed. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history of the garment in New Spain parallels the adaptations of the Armenian or Indian 'robe' or dressing gown in European fashion for both men and women. The latter became a mode of dress that by the eighteenth century in New Spain was considered on a par with 'Parisian' styles, yet the word *quimono* and its connection to Japan were retained in local accounts (see Martins Torres 2019).

36. *Documents Concerning the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 28.
37. *Ibid.*, 28v. Cid is also listed as prefect of the jails. The congregation's name shifts depending upon the document, called alternatively the congregation of mulattos, blacks, morenos, or pardos.
38. *Ibid.*, 32v.
39. This is not so different, in some respects, from modern evangelicals who make use of a wide variety of places to launch their local and translocal evangelization (Hovland 2016).

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