

## *Uniformitas et soliditas doctrinae: History, Topics, and Impact of Jesuit Censorship in Philosophy (1550–99)*

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“Idem sapiamus, idem dicamus omnes” (We think the same, we all say the same). In referring to this maxim borrowed from the Apostle Paul, the Jesuit Constitutions demanded uniformity of doctrine among the order’s members.<sup>1</sup> This ruling extended to all areas of Jesuit culture, but it was especially intended to allow for the preventive censorship of Jesuit publications. With regard to the Jesuits’ program of education, the Constitutions require that the doctrine to be followed in their college and university classes should be “solid” and “safe,” that is, conform to Catholic doctrine.<sup>2</sup> Both requirements—“uniformity” and “safety”—were of equal importance. For to consider the “safety of doctrine” as being more important than that of doctrinal “uniformity” would be akin to disregarding cloth because food is more essential, as the Roman theologian Stefano Tucci (1540–97) put it.<sup>3</sup> Thus from 1581 onward, these two qualifications of Jesuit learning mostly appeared as a pair, leading to the notion of “uniformitas et soliditas doctrinae” (uniformity and solidity of doctrine). It took the Society of Jesus almost fifty years of discussion before the Jesuits arrived at a codified understanding of this concept, as set out in their *Ratio studiorum* in 1599; a centralized institute for Jesuit censorship was eventually founded in 1601.

This chapter sketches the origins and development of the debate over the notion of a uniform and solid doctrine and its impact on Jesuit philosophy. More precisely, it outlines how Jesuits thought about and actually exercised censorship in philosophy, how much liberty of philosophizing they allowed for, and what institutional means they established to enforce solidity and uniformity in doctrine. The scope of this chapter ranges from the drafting of the

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See n. 12, and Emilio Rasco, “Idem sapiamus, idem dicamus omnes’: ¿Una cita de Pablo?,” *AHSI* 46 (1977): 184–90.

2 See n. 14.

3 See *Mon. paed.* 7:37.

Constitutions in around 1550 up until the promulgation of the *Ratio studiorum* in 1599. However, before doing so, it is important to clarify four relevant issues.

The first of these is that “censorship” is employed in this chapter in the broad meaning of the term, not only applying it to the preventative or repressive censorship (*censura praevia* or *repressiva*) of books but more widely to all measures used to control the orthodoxy of printing and teaching, for instance by prescribing certain philosophical tenets and issuing general guidelines for teachers.<sup>4</sup>

Second, the focus of the chapter is restricted to cases of censorship within the Society. That is, it focuses on how Jesuits reflected on or exercised censorship over their fellow Jesuits’ teachings and publications; hence cases of Jesuits censored by other Catholic organs of censorship, for instance, are excluded from the following discussion.<sup>5</sup>

Third, this chapter focuses on the acts of censorship that applied to all the Jesuit provinces.<sup>6</sup> Peculiar provincial practices and rules that often co-existed with decrees and rules that were given to all provinces will, however, be considered when doing so would be helpful for understanding centralistic, supra-provincial guidelines and rules.

Finally, “Jesuit philosophy” here strictly applies to the branch of education that was referred to as “philosophia” or “cursus artium.”<sup>7</sup> Although the primary focus of this study is on philosophy, the censorship of theology cannot be excluded entirely because several discussions about and acts of censorship in philosophy are related to censorship in Scholastic theology.<sup>8</sup>

The chapter is divided into four parts, together with an appendix. The first section provides a brief history of all supra-provincial Jesuit documents relating to the censorship of philosophy. These documents are not analyzed in detail but are listed in order to provide a chronological overview and to distinguish between various kinds of censorship. The second part of the essay outlines the most relevant features of Jesuit censorship in a more comparative way. The chapter then goes on to explore the immediate impact of censorship

4 The expression “censura” is only occasionally used, but with regard to both printing and teaching, see *Mon. paed.* 4:664, 706; 5:77, 271, 283; Nadal 1976, 190, 387. In other cases, “censura” had a different meaning; see n. 11.

5 See n. 136.

6 For dates and names of all Jesuit provinces, cf. *Synopsis* 1950.

7 For the broader scope of early modern Scholastic philosophy, see Sven K. Knebel, *Wille, Würfel, und Wahrscheinlichkeit: Das System der moralischen Notwendigkeit in der Jesuitenscholastik, 1550–1700* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2000), 19.

8 See Ugo Baldini, *Legem impone subactis: Studi su filosofia e scienza dei gesuiti in Italia, 1540–1632* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), 81.

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