

**“Exercises” in Masculinity:
Models of Early Modern Manhood in the *Acta* of Ignatius of Loyola**

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At the insistence of his followers, the man who would become St. Ignatius of Loyola began dictating the story of his conversion and years following to his companion Luis Gonçalves da Câmara in 1553. The members of the newly founded Jesuit order had asked their leader to leave a testament of fatherly instruction for them, giving the writer didactic intentions that parallel those of the biographers of saints. In his study on the early years of the Jesuit order, John W. O'Malley relates that Jerome Nadal, a trusted assistant and one of the most influential first Jesuits, requested the account, originally entitled *Acta*,¹ so that new Jesuits would appropriate and imitate the Ignatian model. For Nadal, the *Acta* served as an embodiment of “nuestro modo de proceder,” the first Jesuits’ most meaningful expression of their innovative lifestyle and apostolic ministry. The Portuguese confidant da Câmara listened carefully to the future saint’s story on two occasions in 1553 and 1555, then sometime later after each occasion, dictated it to a Spanish scribe. A third period of dictation occurred in 1555, after which an entire month elapsed before da Câmara was able to repeat Ignatius’s words for transcription, this time to an Italian-speaking scribe (O’Mally 8-9). The text of the autobiography² we have today, then, passed through several filters (recipients and even languages) before reaching the written page, providing ample opportunity to carefully fashion a paradigm for Jesuit life that others could follow.

The didactic and public intentions of the *Acta* distinguish it from the early modern life-writing by women religious that has received so much critical attention from Hispanists for the past two decades. Feminist scholars in particular have found fertile ground for exploring the intersection of gender expectations, the writing act, and self-expression in life stories by and about women on both sides of the Atlantic.³ More recently, Hispanists have joined other scholars of Early Modern Europe in searching for ways that male writers of the period responded to expectations concerning male conduct.⁴ Mar Martínez-Góngora, for example, explores the role of self-control and moderation dictated by Spanish followers of Erasmus in the formation of masculine identity. Sidney Donnell and José R. Cartagena-Calderón both analyze models of masculinity in Golden Age drama, and Alison Weber examines manhood as performance in a collection of Lope de Vega’s poetry. These scholars acknowledge that “masculinity” is as much a social construction as “femininity.” Furthermore, like its counterpart “femininity,” what it means to be a man varies not only according to historical period, but also on factors such as ethnicity,

¹ Majorie O’Rourke Boyle suggests the title came from the Acts of the Apostles (3).

² I will use the term “autobiography” in the broader sense of life-writing, not implying the presence of a modern subject, even though the multiple filters through which Ignatius’s story passes makes the use of the term not entirely accurate. Boyle rejects the categorization of the text as autobiography insisting it is, like Augustine’s *Confessions*, epideictic, “rhetoric invented from the self about God.” (1). In his study of the *Acta*, John M. McManamon, S.J. refers to the text as a “so-called autobiography” (ix). I will refer to the text both as the *Acta* and as “autobiography” for the sake of simplicity.

³ The bibliography on women’s life writing has continued to grow since the 1989 publication of *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in their Own Works* by Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau.

⁴ See for example studies of masculinity in early modern England by Elizabeth A. Foyster and Alexandra Shepard, and of France by Todd W. Reeser.

social class, and religious and marital status⁵. Readings of male life-writing through the lens of prescribed social conventions for gender could shed new light on both the meanings of the text as well as the significance of “man” for the culture of which the text is a product. This study proposes such a reading of Ignatius’s *Acta* by exploring the Jesuit’s manipulation of accepted conventions of manhood in order to provide a role model for his religious brothers in their spirituality and defense of their unique lifestyle.

In her study on late medieval models of masculinity, Ruth Mazo Karras identifies “the knight” as one of several modes of manhood in the period⁶. She wryly notes that, as with the case of the rise of the middle class, scholars tend to observe a “crisis” and “revolutionary change” in masculinity in whatever their own period of study may be (8). The social and political changes surrounding sixteenth-century Spain, such as the Reconquest of Granada from the Muslims, the arrival of Europeans to the American continents, and the eventual bankruptcies of the Spanish state, will certainly force re-definitions of the work of a knight, or *caballero*. Sociologist R. W. Connell also sees this time as a key moment in the history of manhood, identifying the Spanish conquistadors as “the first group to become defined as a masculine cultural type in the modern sense” (187). In his classic study on *La Celestina*, José Antonio Maravall explored how changes initiated in the late fifteenth-century resulted in new roles for “nobles” and “plebeyos.” Maravall uncovers a tension between the older, chivalric values of the knight who exercised arms in war, and the newer ideal of conspicuous consumption of luxury goods and leisure time (31).⁷ His discussion brings fresh insight to the changing definitions of masculinity of the period when read as the gendered “noble *men*.” Ignatius of Loyola, however, draws his role model of the knight from the late Middle Ages. The opening sentence of his life story clearly establishes his pre-conversion identity: “Hasta los 26 años de su edad fue hombre dado a las vanidades del mundo y principalmente se deleitaba en ejercicio de armas con un grande y vano deseo de ganar honra” (4). The autobiographer places his upbringing and pre-conversion life squarely in the story of the traditional knight.

Although the ideal of knighthood varies across Europe, there existed an “international chivalric culture of shared values” (Karras 20). Young aristocrats could learn from numerous conduct manuals about the expectations for their behavior. These didactic works stressed nobility of birth as well as prowess and aggression that the knight would use in warfare as well as to measure himself against other men (Karras 38). In the sixteenth-century, prescriptive literature directed at the upper class negotiated both the accepted activities for a man of arms and the appropriate social roles of food, dress, and other conduct related to more refined courtly life. The figure of the noble-born, virtuous knight dedicated to service through the exercise of arms on horseback came out of both the literature of chivalry as well as medieval handbooks such as Ramón Lull’s *Libro de la orden de caballería*. Biographies of men of noble birth, like that of the early fifteenth-century Castilian knight Don Pedro Niño, also complemented literary models. Portrait collections of illustrious men such as Fernando del Pulgar’s *Claros varones de Castilla* and Fernán Pérez de Guzmán’s *Generaciones y semblanzas* provided early modern readers descriptions of

⁵ Theorists such as R. W. Connell have played a key role in defining masculinity as a collective social project that has multiple manifestations depending on factors such as race and class, and in recognizing the power relations between them. See his discussion of “hegemonic masculinity” pp. 76-81.

⁶ While acknowledging the presence of many other modes for masculinity during the period, “the student” and “the artisan” are the other two models Karras explores in her study.

⁷ The critique of the excess consumption and *ocio* of the upper classes heightens in the seventeenth century. Elizabeth A. Leffeldt analyzes how *arbitristas* from this century associate idleness and consumerism with a loss of masculinity, which in turn they say has caused the political and economic decline of the Spanish empire.

both contemporary and historical men of nobility worthy of emulation. Fernando del Pulgar includes in his collection those who are “dignos de memoria” (7), and celebrates men with noble lineage who live soberly, bravely defend the honor of their family and their superiors, and suffer misfortune with calm resignation. Many men portrayed by Pulgar also know how to speak with “gracia” to the pleasure of their listeners and look physically attractive. The author explains his methodology in the introduction: “[...] escriuiré los linajes e condiciones de cada uno, e algunos notables fechos que fizieron: de los cuales se puede bien creer que, en autoridad de personas, e en ornamento de virtudes, e en las habilidades que touieron, así en ciencia como en armas, no fueron menos excelentes que aquellos griegos e romanos [...]” (8). Nobility of lineage and dexterity in arms as well as knowledge makes a man worthy of inclusion in his portrait gallery. Treatise writers also addressed the manners related to the courtly duties that many nobles had. Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* appeared in Spanish in 1534 (vi), while Juan Luis Vives in *Introducción a la sabiduría* (1524) instructs readers in both virtuous conduct and the practical matters of cleanliness, diet, and sleep. For his part, humanist writer Pedro de Mexía (1497-1551) outlines the several positions of the contemporary debate over the exact divisions for the ages of man, each with their own set of behavioral mores, in his *Silva de varia lección* (242 ff). He also highlights how two *caballeros* with markedly different leadership styles each managed to gain fame as expert military men (254 ff). These works reveal a preoccupation with what it means to be a man, while acknowledging different modes of masculinity.

Sixteenth-century Spanish behavior guides, then, reveal their authors’ persistent efforts to negotiate what it meant to be a man, and particularly, a nobleman. Traditional biographers of Ignatius of Loyola have drawn the facile connection between their subject’s youth as a noble soldier, and the military-like organization and discipline of the religious order—significantly called a “compañía”—he founded. The first official biography, by Ignatius’s companion Pedro de Ribadeneira, contributed to this view by depicting his spiritual father as a soldier of orthodoxy for the Church combating heresy and Lutheranism.⁸ In his introduction to the English translation of the autobiography, John C. Olin observes that Ignatius’s zeal for active service “has often been viewed as the transposition of an ideal of chivalry or knightly service to the religious realm” (11). However, as John M. McManamon posits in his recent study on Ignatius’s *Acta*, such a portrayal results from reading the future saint’s life backwards through the lens of the Counter-Reformation, rather than from the perspectives of the writer’s own milieu of the Renaissance (xiii). The Loyola family line and Ignatius’s early years of service in the house of the Duke of Nájera certainly place him in the class of honorable *caballeros*. However, the presence of the values of the *caballero*, or noble soldier, goes beyond the substitution of the Church in place of an aristocratic lady as the benefactor of his service. Historian H. Outram Evennett hints that the Jesuit’s representation of a model noble from the late Middle Ages goes beyond such a simple transfer, and he comments “How insufficient [...] it is to regard St. Ignatius as simply an ardent Spaniard who brought medieval ideals of chivalry and a military outlook into his band of followers!” (62). The remainder of this study will explore the presence of the model of the *caballero* and other culturally accepted modes of manhood in Ignatius’s *Acta*. While Ignatius predictably recounts his rejection of the material wealth and status of his social class as part of his religious conversion, the writer also maintains aspects of the conduct of the noble soldier in order to instruct his spiritual sons of the new order in the Jesuit “modo de proceder.” Ignatius’s manipulation of the behavior mores for a nobleman of arms in his autobiography proves an effective means for teaching the humility and

⁸ See Terence O’Reilly for a discussion of how Counter-Reformation concerns shape Pedro de Ribadeneira’s portrayal of Ignatius in his first official biography.

asceticism as well as the embrace of an exceptionally active inner struggle for perfection and exterior service to others in ministry that characterize Jesuit spirituality.

Ignatius does not originate the model of the military holy man. Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell document many military men who preceded the Jesuit in sainthood (120; 135). In the bible, Paul exhorts Timothy to suffer persecution like a “soldier of Christ,”⁹ and the ideal of the *miles Christi* will evolve with the centuries. Despite the later role that the Jesuits would play in the spiritual conquest and colonization of the “New World,” the model of the soldier of Christ that comes down from later antiquity does not necessarily vanquish new souls or land for the Church. Rather, he patiently endures the suffering brought about by persecution and inner temptations to sin. Mathew Kuefler explores how the image of an ideal Christian “soldier” emerges out of the military crisis provoked by the decline of the Roman Empire. Faced with political and military defeat on the battlefield, the struggles of the soldier become a personal fight to patiently endure the suffering brought on by the third-century persecution of Christians. Tertullian compares the hardships suffered by jailed potential Christian martyrs to those endured by military soldiers, such as exposure to the elements, endless travel, and harsh labor (245-46). The manliness of these men (similar vocabulary is not used to describe the many female martyrs from the period) resides in their willingness to submit themselves to the tortures of their persecutors. Kuefler observes that “As an ideal of manliness, the *miles Christi* could take on himself all of the military vocabulary of traditional masculinity: the bravery, endurance, and self-sacrifice even to the point of death, everything associated with the *vita militaris*” (247). However, the apparent “defeat” of the Christian soldier in his martyrdom represented in reality a victory for God. By the fourth and fifth centuries, persecution of the Christians had ended, but the soldier of Christ turned inward to fight the invisible war against temptation (250). Centuries later, Erasmus adopts this figure of a soldier on an interior battlefield against sinful desires in his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* of 1503, titled *Manual of a Christian Knight* in its first English translation.¹⁰ For the Christian, writes Erasmus, this “[...] mortal life is nothing but a kind of perpetual warfare” in which we must defend ourselves from the continuous assaults of vices and temptations that threaten to wound our souls (38). For centuries, the Christian man who successfully waged the interior war to control his own desires to sin was masculine, a *miles Christi*.

In the first episodes of his life story, Ignatius’s religious brothers would recognize the inner struggles and asceticism of a military man of the world transformed to a soldier of Christ. The account of his injury that resulted in his initial conversion serves as the transition from noble soldier to one who suffers for God. Ignatius’s narrative conforms to the hagiographic paradigm of the adult holy person converted after a crisis.¹¹ He begins his story abruptly, at 26 years of age under the service of the Duke of Nájera. He relates his efforts to defend the fortress of Pamplona

⁹ “Bear your share of hardship along with me like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. To satisfy the one who recruited him, a soldier does not become entangled in the business affairs of life” (*The New American Bible*, 2 Tim 2.3-4). See also Ephesians 6.13-14 : “Therefore, put on the armor of God, that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate.”

¹⁰ Most scholars agree that Ignatius had some familiarity with the *Enchiridion*, although debate continues about its influence on Ignatian spirituality. Ignatius’s contemporary biographer Pedro de Ribadeneira, writing at a time when Erasmus was under attack in Spain, insists his spiritual father vehemently rejected the work. However, McManamon dismisses as “erroneous” the belief that Ignatius had an aversion to the works of Erasmus (60). Regardless of the impact the *Enchiridion* may have had on Ignatius, the idea of the soldier of Christ remained in different forms from antiquity through Ignatius’s lifetime.

¹¹ Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell document the frequency of the role of crises like illness in religious conversion in *Saints and Society*. See pp. 120 and 135, in particular.

against a much larger French army, there to take advantage of the revolt of the *comuneros*. While his fellow soldiers preferred to surrender against certain defeat, Ignatius, at this time known by his given name Íñigo,¹² convinces them to join him in continuing the fight, even after he himself gives what may be his last confession. With the shot of a French cannonball to his leg, he falls, as does the city. The French allow him to be taken back to his family home in Guipúzcoa for his broken leg bones to recover. Once the bones healed, Íñigo realized that one leg appeared shorter than the other, that “quedaba allí el hueso tan levantado, que era cosa fea” (4). However, the future saint still planned to “seguir el mundo” and, knowing such a defect in his appearance would affect his chances of success in the secular world, he insisted the surgeons re-break the leg so that it would heal normally. His decision alarmed his doctors and his family, but the surgery took place and he could “martirizarse por su propio gusto” (5), and begin his long recovery. During this lengthy and painful convalescence, he experiences a life-changing interior transformation, and a call to leave behind his occupation as a knight at court and dedicate his life to God by making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The remaining pages in his brief account relate his spiritual journeys of the next 17 years, up to the time when the pope approves the founding of his new religious order. After renouncing his possessions, he assumes a life of asceticism and sets out on a series of travels while clarifying and defining his vocation, including a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, studies in France, and submission to the Pope at Rome. Throughout these journeys, the future saint laid the framework for Jesuit spirituality by writing the *Ejercicios espirituales*, which he will have to defend numerous times to Inquisition authorities, and gathered followers who would later become the first members of the order. His account ends brusquely while describing his method for writing the constitution for the newly formed order. Ignatius’s account echoes the story of a soldier who undergoes a conversion, while it also weaves contemporary mores of masculinity into the hagiographical conventions.

The Christian martyr who endures torture and suffering as a soldier in battle plays a prominent role in a text that Ignatius singles out as key to his initial conversion. Ignatius shapes his account to conform to models of male saints found in his readings from this time. While recovering from his wounded leg, the future Jesuit must spend his time reading devotional literature rather than the “libros mundanos y falsos, que suelen llamar de Caballerías” that he preferred (5). He read “un Vita Christi y un libro de la vida de los Santos en romance,” which John C. Olin and other scholars identify as most likely Ludolph of Saxony’s *Life of Christ* and the thirteenth-century Dominican Jacobus de Voragine’s recently translated *The Golden Legend* (5). The autobiographer points to the *vitae* of Francis of Assisi and Dominic of Guzmán, both part of the collection, as especially influential in his conversion. The biographies of these founders of mendicant religious orders represent a model of the male saint that Ignatius’s readers should strive to imitate. He proposes to equal these saints in their penitential practice. Ignatius’s readers would recognize episodes from the life of St. Francis, in particular, in the future Jesuit’s account. The thirteenth-century Italian, like Ignatius, spent his comfortable youth pursuing vainglory until experiencing a conversion during an illness. Despite family resistance, he sells the cloth that formed part of the inventory of his family’s textile business and left the money at a church so the priest could make repairs, leaving transformed as “a new soldier of Christ” (12). Francis’s biographer describes the future saint’s subsequent dedication to poverty, his welcoming of

¹² Íñigo will begin to call himself “Ignatius” on a later trip to Rome. “Ignatius” is not an alternate form of Íñigo, but the religious leader may have adopted the new name in admiration for Ignatius of Antioch. See James Brodrick’s biography pp. 260-62 for an account of the change. I will refer to “Ignatius” as the writer of the *Acta*, and to “Íñigo” as the subject acting in the autobiography.

punishment and ridicule for his ascetic lifestyle, and his ability to attract a crowd with his preaching, episodes which will find echo in Ignatius's own story. Ignatius, for example, recounts how he returned to the house of the Duke of Nájera after his recovery to collect on debts owed to him. He then used the money to pay his own debts and, like St. Francis, gave the money to a church to restore and clothe a statue of the Virgin. Ignatius's brothers in the new order would recognize these shared experiences, which lent authority to their spiritual father's account of his life by putting it in a larger context of models of ascetic holy men.

Ignatius's life story, like that of most religious, incorporated readily recognizable features from the saints' lives read by him and his contemporaries. The use of military imagery in Francis's *vita*, however, suggests a more subtle connection to Ignatius's life that goes beyond the imitation of episodes relating to the initial conversion. The biographer Tomás de Celano relates that Francis, as the son of a clothing merchant, usually saw "piles of cloth to be sold" in his home. One night, though, he experiences a nocturnal vision in which "his whole home was filled with the trappings of war, namely, saddles, shields, lances, and other things[...]" Francis interpreted the vision as an omen that these arms belonged to him and "his soldiers," and his biographer finds it "quite fitting that mention be made of arms in the beginning and it is quite opportune that arms should be offered to the soldier about to engage one strongly armed [...] in the name of the Lord God of hosts" (9). By highlighting the role that Francis played in his conversion, Ignatius suggests to his religious brothers the connection between a lifestyle of extreme poverty and religious contemplation of the Italian saint with military and knightly imagery. The association of Francis as a "soldier of Christ" places Ignatius the former man of arms in the context of accepted religious, and serves as a first indication of the role that military, and in the case of Ignatius, knightly, mores of behavior will play in the religious founder's story.

While his spiritual brothers would have seen how Ignatius's opening episodes of his life story conform to models of holy men, they also would have full awareness that his family name places him alongside the *claros varones* depicted in the literary portrait galleries. Up to the time of his conversion, the young Íñigo grew up bathed in the complex code of exercises in arms and courtly behavior that produced exemplary knights. The Loyolas were an old, established family with a long history of military service that enjoyed political connections and influence even beyond Guipúzcoa and the Basque country to Castile.¹³ Íñigo begins his adolescence in the house of Don Antonio Manrique de Lara, duke of Nájera and viceroy of Navarre (O'Malley 23). By attaching himself to the service of a superior lord while developing combat expertise, the youth follows the typical trajectory of a future noble soldier. While at the duke's castle, Íñigo would have absorbed the values of competition in physical aggression, military prowess, and violence that Karras says characterize this mode of masculinity (21). Íñigo also would have received instruction on gentility and courtliness, including how to make political connections and forge relationships with powerful superiors while at court (Karras 25). Ignatius even confesses to fantasizing during his convalescence about the service and feats of arms he would do for a particular unattainable noble lady, fulfilling the "ritualized submission to women" that Karras identifies as key for the knight's identity (Karras 25). The bravery Ignatius describes in his opening paragraphs at the battle for Pamplona and his stoic acceptance of pain during the subsequent surgeries on his leg also help establish the religious leader as a traditional knight.

On first reading, it seems that Ignatius must give up the occupation as an active knight with its accompanying mores of conduct in order to pursue a path to spiritual perfection. By the late middle ages, knighthood required nobility and wealth (Karras 33), which he must abandon if he

¹³ James Brodrick's biography includes a thorough history of the Loyola family.

would imitate the poverty of Francis of Assisi. For this reason, when he initially sets out on what he will call his “pilgrimage” years, he repeatedly tries to hide his identity from fellow travelers and townspeople and subsists only on the alms he manages to beg. Contemplating his future, Ignatius makes preliminary plans to anonymously join the ascetic, contemplative Carthusian order upon return from Jerusalem, without revealing his family name in humility, “para que en menos le tuviesen” (8). Before he leaves, Ignatius relates that his brother tries to dissuade him from leaving his place in the noble family estate, “...y con muchas admiraciones le empieza a rogar[...] que mire cuánta esperanza tiene dél la gente, y cuánto puede valer[...]” (8), leading him to one room after another in the grand Loyola castle and bringing to mind the temptation of Jesus on the mountain.¹⁴ Ignatius resists this temptation to claim his material legacy. He begins the first part of his journey towards Manresa¹⁵ on a mule rather than a horse, which would have fitted more his high social status.¹⁶ For part of his journey, he makes a lengthy detour specifically in order to avoid recognition on the more travelled path. In these introductory paragraphs, Ignatius relates repeated attempts to cast aside his identity as a gentleman and knight by rejecting the honor naturally accorded to him by his family’s name and economic position.

As a former knight on a journey to the Holy Land, Íñigo could have framed his travels as a crusade. As Jonathan Sumption explains in his study on medieval pilgrimage, knights since the eleventh century could maintain their occupation as soldiers on the battlefield and simultaneously serve the Church through participation in the Crusades. Crusaders who fulfilled their obligatory vow to complete their journey were granted a plenary indulgence (137-40). However, Ignatius will also demonstrate to his readers his rejection of the crusading knight. On his way to Montserrat, he meets a fellow traveller, a “moro,” who denies that Mary could have maintained her virginity after giving birth. Ignatius’s choice of “moro” to identify the traveler has significance. Openly practicing Muslims had been expelled from the peninsula some years before, so the traveler was probably a new convert to Christianity, or a *cristiano nuevo*. The term “moro” brings to mind the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from Muslim rule, officially designated a Crusade. After the “moro” leaves his company on the road, Íñigo regrets not having defended “la honra” of the Virgin by engaging the Moor in combat. His use of the term “honra” further puts the conflict with the Moor in the frame of a knightly dispute. He decides to return to the crossroads where they parted ways, keeping a loose reign on his mule. When the mule decides to take the road that the Moor had not taken, Íñigo determines that God did not will him to fight the Moor. With this scene, Ignatius infuses his pilgrimage with spiritual value beyond that of the crusading knight hoping for an indulgence.

Íñigo makes his most symbolic abandonment of his role as a gentleman soldier in the relation of his vigil at Montserrat. The new convert openly acknowledges his inspiration for the ritual in the chivalric romances that still occupied his imagination: “Y como tenía todo el entendimiento lleno de [...] Amadís de Gaula y de semejantes libros [...] se determinó de velar sus armas toda una noche [...] [y] dejar sus vestidos y vestirse las armas de Cristo” (12). He had already purchased sackcloth to make a long tunic, and a walking stick with a pilgrim’s gourd. After a night of prayer at the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat, he lays down his arms. He makes a lengthy written

¹⁴ See Luke 4.5-8.

¹⁵ Ignatius heads for Barcelona via Monserrat and Manresa so he can sail to Venice and Rome, and leave from there for the Holy Land by sea.

¹⁶ Baldassare Castiglione prescribes in *The Book of the Courtier* that the gentleman should be “a perfect horseman” (30). See also biography of don Pedro Niño p. 8 where biographer specifies that a *caballero* must ride a horse, and not an *asno*. Llull’s manual for knights also insists on the horse as most appropriate for the *caballero* (131).

confession, and exchanges his clothes for the sackcloth and staff before he sets off for Manresa. Weinstein and Bell document similar cases in medieval hagiography of converted soldiers exchanging their arms for “weapons” for God, such as hair shirts and other instruments made for penance (111). Despite leaving behind his military weapons, placing his transformation in the context of the literary models of chivalric knighthood suggests that the mores of the *caballero* will still have a place in his life story.

Once in Manresa in new clothing, Íñigo practices asceticism in imitation of the saints’ stories he read in his recovery in a manner so extreme that his appearance singles him out. He lives by begging alms and abstains from wine and meat. His look changes, as he lets his hair grow out, though in the past “había sido muy curioso de curar el cabello, que en aquel tiempo se acostumbraba, y él lo tenía bueno” (14). He does the same with the nails of his fingers and toes. By doing so, he outwardly rejects the “good manners” described in conduct manuals, which require neat, though not elaborate, hair, nails and dress.¹⁷ While unrecognizable as a member of the old Loyola family, though, his contemporaries would have readily seen in Íñigo the figure of a religious pilgrim. Sumption documents that carelessness with the hair and nails such as Íñigo’s, together with the use of a staff and long tunic, had identified the pilgrim since the early medieval period (101, 171-72). The autobiographer explains the method of his harsh lifestyle during this part of his pilgrimage in terms of “outdoing” the saints who had inspired him: “cuando se acordaba de hacer alguna penitencia que hicieron los Santos, proponía de hacer la misma y aún más” (10). The competition he sets up between himself and the male saints whose stories he had read in *The Golden Legend* manifests the tension that Karras identifies as key for late medieval masculinity, “[...] the need to prove oneself in competition with other men and to dominate others. Medieval masculinity involved proving oneself superior to other men” (10). Leaving behind challenges such as military battles and tournaments of arms used by a *caballero* to prove manliness, Íñigo now demonstrates his heroism by beating saints at the contest of austerity. His choice of a pilgrim’s garments makes his asceticism particularly visible to others.

Despite his pious intentions for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Íñigo is plagued at Manresa by continual attacks of scruples that seem to block his progress towards the divine. He lives through a period of spiritual dryness during which he loses the ability to concentrate for prayer or mass and feels a desolation that makes him contemplate suicide (15). He spends hours on his knees in continuous prayer in the cell given to him by the Dominican monastery, fasting and denying himself of sleep. Yet despite his multiple lengthy meetings with his confessor at Manresa, he feels compelled to repeat his confessions. Margaret O’Rourke Boyle posits that the origin of Íñigo’s spiritual dryness lies in precisely the vice he tried to avoid by casting off his noble identity—vainglory. Boyle points to the advice of classical Christian moralists against excessive external penance to the body performed in order to receive admiration and attention (70-75). While Íñigo’s unkempt hair and nails and his sackcloth garment hide his identity as an honorable nobleman, at the same time they mark his body as that of a religious ascetic. When he decides to obey his confessor’s orders to moderate his penance, his scruples and period of disconsolation end. He is also able to discern the demonic origin of the “flying serpent” vision with many eyes that had offered him some consolation upon his arrival at Manresa.¹⁸ He then has a series of five key religious experiences that culminate in what modern Jesuits call “the Cardoner experience,” after

¹⁷ See the advice of Erasmus, for example, in “On Good Manners for Boys” (277-79), and chapter 4 of Juan Luis Vives’s *Introducción a la sabiduría*.

¹⁸ Boyle explores in depth the symbolic value of the vision of the flying serpent. She posits that the vision is actually of a peacock, represented as a hybrid snake-bird in medieval aviaries and the animal equivalent of vainglory (111).

the river by which he meditated. Here he underwent an infusion of divine knowledge and direct contact with God that definitively forms the future saint and which Jesuits consider fundamental to the spirituality of their order. This occurs only after he has conquered the vainglory of the ascetic as well as that of the knight.

Ignatius connects for his readers the vainglory of the soldier seeking fame through feats of bravery with the vainglory of the ascetic whose ability to endure extreme external penances singles him out for admiration in society without any resultant spiritual advancement in the soul. Only after the future Jesuit abandons his audaciously harsh lifestyle does he experience closer contact with the divine on the banks of the Cardoner. Ignatius teaches his spiritual sons that extreme asceticism lies at the other side of the coin of the daring knight who insists that surgeons re-break his leg so that it will not leave him deformed and diminish his social stature. Exterior penance, even in imitation of the models given to us by the saints, cannot take the place of the interior struggles needed to find the divine. Looking back, the Jesuit finds fault with the asceticism he practiced, “[...] no mirando a cosa ninguna interior, ni sabiendo qué cosa era humildad, ni caridad, ni paciencia, ni discreción para reglar ni medir estas virtudes, sino toda su intención era hacer destas obras grandes exteriores” (10). During this time, he uses his own experiences to give shape to the controversial *Ejercicios espirituales* as a way to discern divine will in the interior of the exercitant’s soul.¹⁹ Defending the value and orthodoxy of this revolutionary text and method of self-examination will give the Jesuit reason to call upon modes of behavior of the gentleman knight even after his conversion.

At Manresa, Ignatius makes great spiritual progress when he abandons both the model of the courtly knight and the strict ascetic. However, he clings to the mores of behavior of a *caballero*. The insistent presence in his life story of knightly behavior patterns even after his pivotal spiritual change in Manresa suggests that this model of manhood continues to have relevance for the future saint and merits analysis. His narrative of events after the Cadoner experience at Manresa is filled with his insistence on service, attempts to avoid looking fearful, and challenges to other men. These same characteristics describe the knights of chivalric romances and the model nobles featured in portrait galleries of the time. Ignatius will apply these masculine characteristics not only to outward apostolic service in the world but to the inward work of self-examination that gave him fruit at Manresa.

Although no longer fighting military battles, Ignacio’s steadfast life of poverty and his defense of interior spirituality outlined in the text of the *Ejercicios* bring out characteristics that define the noble soldier. In several points in the narrative, Ignatius conflates the courage required of a knight in battle with the fearlessness that results from the devout person’s trust that God to provide. During his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Íñigo ekes out a precarious existence as a beggar. Medieval societies supported pilgrims travelling on charity, and considered those making the journey entitled to free hospitality (Sumption 198). Íñigo made his survival through alms alone a sign of his total trust in God to provide for his necessities. He rejected any fear or uncertainty about his future as a sign of cowardice not in battle with other men, but as a lack of faith in God. Scruples trouble him when the captain of the boat taking him to Rome for the departure to Jerusalem refuses him passage unless he brings along some food, and he exclaims to himself “¿esta es la esperanza y la fe que tu tenías en Dios, que no te faltaría?” (22). Like other holy models, he frequently gives away what little money he has (31). Many of the laudable men featured in Pérez de Guzmán’s fifteenth-century collection *Generaciones y semblanzas* show a similar purposefulness. Pérez de

¹⁹ On the vast importance of the *Ejercicios espirituales* to Jesuit spirituality, see studies by Joseph de Guibert, S.J., John W. O’Malley, and John M. McManamon, S.J.

Guzmán praises many of his subjects, particularly military men and politicians, as “grande de corazón” or “esforzado de corazón.”²⁰ Covarrubias explains that “gran corazón” as “no es de tenerle materialmente grande en cantidad, sino en fuego, animosidad, y determinación” (237). Íñigo’s resolve to fearlessness leads him to take some imprudent risks that show off his determination. While conduct manuals for knightly behavior specifically discourage the taking of uncalculated risks just to display bravery, in chivalric literature protagonists commonly took up any challenge offered, regardless of the stakes (Karras 40-41). In particular, Íñigo’s insistence on passing through territory with two opposing armies brings to mind military bravery. Travelling in Italy after returning from Jerusalem, a group of Spanish soldiers warns Íñigo that both the French and “imperial” armies were fighting on the road by which he travelled, and showed him an alternate, safer route. He continues on the “vía real” and soldiers capture and question him. Furthermore, his consistent refusal of legal defense when detained on suspicion of heresy seems more of a determination to show his bravery to his jailers than a manifestation of his trust in God. Studying in Alcalá, Dominican inquisitors arrive from Toledo to investigate his relationship with the heretical *alumbrados*.²¹ Despite the offers of his friend doña Teresa de Cárdenas to hire legal representation for him, Íñigo insisted “aquel, por cuyo amor aquí entré, me sacará, si fuere servido dello” (36). He again refuses legal representation while detained by Dominican friars in Salamanca (41). Finally, cleared by Inquisitors but prohibited from helping people with his preaching, he determines to study in Paris, even though others warned him that “[...] en asadores metían los españoles; mas nunca tuvo ningún modo de temor” (43). Ignatius conflates the daring of the knight with the more pious fearlessness that stems from total trust in God.

Ignatius describes more direct challenges to other men that also echo the behavior of a knight. Karras identifies the need to prove oneself in competition with other men in order to dominate others as one of the crucial identifiers of manhood in all late medieval models (10). Although “defeating” the saints such as Francis in the harshness of asceticism reveals vainglory in the still spiritually immature Íñigo, even after his experience at Manresa he continues to challenge other men in the defense of his spirituality and lifestyle. While in Jerusalem, he contests the Franciscan friars in charge of caring for pilgrims at Jerusalem when they block his attempts to remain there to live. He argues with the friar in charge, insisting on his fearlessness and saying that “aunque al provincial no le pareciese, [...] que él no dejaría su propósito por ningún temor” and only abandons his plan when threatened with excommunication (28). He also deliberately provokes the Franciscans by visiting a holy site without the required native guide, and was dragged back to the monastery by an angry servant of the friars (29). Despite the humility of his lifestyle, Íñigo persistently treats others as equals and not superiors. He calls his habit of using the familiar form of address with everyone, regardless of social status, “devoción, que así hablaba Cristo y los apóstoles” (31). When captured under suspicion of spying while travelling in Italy, he hesitates about keeping the custom of using “vos” with the captain, but decides this is a temptation he should fight. Íñigo responds to the captain’s questions “sin hacer ningún modo de cortesía,” and the captain determines he is crazy and releases him (31-32). He seeks out confrontation even with representatives for the Inquisition. Inquisitors questioned the formal qualifications that Ignatius and his small group of followers had to lead others on such a spiritual, interior search. Above all, Church authorities suspected the methods of the *Ejercicios* aligned too closely with the heretical *alumbrados*, whose emphasis on interior, individual spirituality denied the role of the institutional

²⁰ See, for example, the “buen caballero” Juan González de Avellaneda (333) among many others.

²¹ Ignatius and his followers will also repeatedly need to defend themselves against accusations of an association with the *alumbrados* in part because of the prayer methods prescribed in the *Ejercicios espirituales*.

Church as a mediator between humans and the divine.²² Twice he hears that the Inquisition authorities are investigating him, and when they fail to call him to appear, he seeks them out to demand they give him an official sentence over the orthodoxy of his *Ejercicios* (50, 57). By seeking out opportunities to prove himself in competition with other men, Ignatius conforms to expectations for the noble soldier. However, the prowess and valor he demonstrates is an interior determination to defend his lifestyle and spirituality.

Ignatius's conflict with other men from the Inquisition in defending the orthodoxy of his *Ejercicios espirituales* suggests another mode of manhood described by Karras that parallels that of knighthood, that of the student in debate. Ignatius dedicates significant space in his narrative to his years as a student, 1524-35, when he gathered companions that would be the first Jesuits and earned the university credentials that Church authorities insisted they needed to fulfill their call to "ayudar a las ánimas" by teaching. For Karras, the university student strove to demonstrate his prowess and domination of others as much as his counterpart in arms, the *caballero*. At the university, pedagogical methods took the competitive format of scholastic disputation, in which the teacher identified a thesis and assigned one student the role of "opponent" and another that of "respondent." The master then "determined" the disputation by summarizing the arguments and giving his opinion (90). Karras sees in this methodology a kind of "ceremonial combat" in which words replace arms, and she documents the tournament atmosphere of public disputations and the language of sword-fighting used historically to describe them. Alexandra Shepherd, in her study on masculinity in early modern England, characterizes university study as a period in a young man's life in which he formed homosocial bonds with peers and performed "rituals of bravado through which they temporarily claimed dominance" and challenged established patriarchal norms. These challenges could take the form of drinking in excess, and hazing rites that degraded or did violence to new students or caused chaos in university towns (93-94).²³ Ignatius's readers would have noted his manipulation of these norms in his account of his time at Paris, where he ultimately receives his degree. Even though Ignatius structures a large section of his life story by the cities where he studied, his licentiate in 1533 at the College of Sainte-Barbe in Paris and his masters degree in 1534 go without mention (Olin 80). The confrontations that Íñigo and his companions had with (male) authorities came from his revolutionary *Ejercicios espirituales*, dedication to interior devotion, and commitment to active apostolic service outside the classroom. A scandal in the university resulted, for example, when two students from well-known families made the exercises and experienced an interior conversion ("grandes mutaciones") and began a life of poverty and helping others in a local hospital. The students were drug out of the hospital, back to their posts at the university (45). Ignatius's readers would also appreciate the contrast between the excessive drinking, gaming, and hazing practiced by the typical student, and the austerity and dedication to service with which he and his growing group lived.

Ignatius more subtly appeals to the mode of the "student" in verbal competition with other men in several points in his narrative, in particular when called to defend his *Ejercicios*. Early on, he frames his account of the five divine gifts he receives at Manresa as a result of a period of direct instruction from God, prefacing his list with: "En este tiempo le trataba Dios de la misma manera que trata un maestro de escuela a un niño" (18). The fact that his first knowledge of the divine comes directly from the Holy Spirit instead of a scholastic university will alarm Inquisition

²² See Melquíades Andrés Martín pp. 370-71 for a brief description and discussion of the movement.

²³ Karras explains that while university authorities imposed rules of moderation in drinking, eating, dancing, dress, and shows of swordsmanship, they tended to take a "boys will be boys" attitude when enforcing them (95ff). See also Shepard pp. 93-94.

authorities, and Íñigo will draw from the competitive ways of the student in disputation to defend himself and his companions. Under suspicion at Alcalá, Íñigo asks an Inquisition official if he had found heresy in his *Ejercicios*, and the priest replies “‘No, [...] que si la hallaran, os quemaran.’” In what sounds like a challenge, the future Jesuit rejoins “‘también os quemaran a vos [...] si os hallaran heresía’” (35). Ignatius also points to the male role of “student” in recalling his sentence when set free from jail in Alcalá to dress like other students²⁴ and to stop speaking of “cosas de la fee” until they had studied four more years. Furthermore, when visiting a Dominican monastery in Salamanca, Ignatius describes the conversations about his preaching more as debates with convent leaders, with the other friars watching as spectators, similar to the format of a public disputation at a university (40). Here also, Íñigo highlights his role of a student of God, informing the Dominican friars that “‘entre todos nosotros el que más ha estudiado soy yo,’ y le dió claramente quenta de lo poco que había estudiado, y con quán poco fundamento” (39). He opposes the traditional scholastic preparation of the friars by insisting that his own direct experience with the divine validates his itinerant preaching. By assuming the familiar role of university student in a disputation to defend knowledge learned not from established institutions but rather by direct contact from the divine, Ignatius makes his spiritual path more acceptable to his critics. His use of assertive methods in defending his spirituality mirror those of a disputation in which students battle with words instead of arms, and recalls the bravado of an ideal knight.

The motivation for his years of study was to “ayudar a las animas” (30), and this vocation for service guides his decisions from the time of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It will ultimately require the rejection of the monastic and community models that makes the Jesuit order unique.²⁵ While young Íñigo’s favorite chivalric novels certainly portrayed *caballeros* performing feats of arms in service of a lady, late medieval knights also viewed their knighthood as service to God (Karras 42-44). Ramón Llull maintains that the primary occupation of the knight is “mantener la santa fe católica,” and then to serve his emperor or king (112). The knight’s call to service extends beyond his superiors. Llull also emphasizes the duty of the knight to serve those below him by upholding justice, especially for the widowed, orphaned, elderly, and disabled (117). Ignatius consistently refers back to his desire to “help souls” in his story, and moves to another city when authorities restrict him from doing so. The help he provides at times takes the more literal form that echoes the service of chivalric ideals. Travelling to Jerusalem by way of Rome, for example, he defends his travelling companions, a mother and her daughter disguised as a boy, from soldiers trying to sexually assault them. Even at this early stage in his path to the divine, his idea of service has evolved from daydreaming while convalescing in Pamplona about the feats of arms he would perform for a noble lady (12).

As Evennett noted, however, the service Ignatius has in mind for himself and his companions involves more than transferring his chivalric ideals of service to a lady to charitable service to the poor and uneducated. John M. McManamon sees in Ignatius’s life story a “mirror for apostolic religious life,” in which the future saint and his companions serve others through both charitable works and by helping them become closer to the divine (53ff). In his early years at the universities in Alcalá and Salamanca, Íñigo’s service takes the form of teaching catechism in the

²⁴ Karras describes the typical dress of a university student. While specific requirements varied from place to place, in general luxurious and extravagant clothing was banned (99).

²⁵ Unlike other religious orders, the *Formula of the Institute* does not require Jesuits to recite the liturgical Hours together as a community. Of the various unique features of the order, the first Jesuits had to defend with special vigor this rejection of community life. They considered it vital in order for them to fulfill their vocation for service. See O’Malley p. 6 for a discussion of this and other distinguishing features of the order.

streets and engaging people in conversation about God. His goal was to “help” his audience by convincing them to engage in an examination of conscience twice a day as he describes it in the *Ejercicios*, and to participate frequently in the sacrament of confession and Communion (McManamon 59). Ignatius promoted the methods outlined in the *Ejercicios* as an effective way for individuals to cultivate a personal, more meaningful, and life-changing relationship with the divine. It is this active care of the interior of the individual, and the call to facilitate the individual’s path to God, to which Ignatius refers when he “helps souls.” It is also his defense of this prayer method that so frequently puts him in the competition with other men that characterizes early modern masculinity described by Karras. In the context of his confrontational verbal repartee with Church authorities, Íñigo’s readiness to take risks to show fearlessness creates the image of a knightly ascetic committed to service in the tradition of the apostles.

In the life story he tells for his spiritual brothers, Ignatius appeals to both saintly and secular models of manhood. The points of contact he makes with saints whose stories he read during his conversion, especially that of Francis of Assisi, both place his narrative in the hagiographic tradition and cautions his readers that the ascetic preoccupied with exterior penance shares the same vainglory as the knight striving for personal fame. Despite leaving behind his life as a noble soldier, however, Ignatius fills his story with behaviors that conform to accepted models of early modern masculinity. What lies behind the Jesuit leader’s insistence at proving his manhood? The autobiographer may have been responding to the gendered overtones of his critics’ opposition. Ignatius recounts that the doubts that Inquisition authorities had about his *Ejercicios* came from their outward resemblance to the practices of the heretical *alumbrados*, a group with women leaders like Isabel de la Cruz. His appeals to the model of the *caballero* may have helped to distance himself from this movement. Even at the time of dictating his story to da Câmara, the order continued to come under fire, particularly from Dominican theologian Melchor Cano. Cano had met Ignatius and believed him guilty of vainglory, and like Inquisition authorities he saw too much affinity between the *Ejercicios* and the practices of the *alumbrados*. In addition to a formal critique Cano drafted for the pope in 1552-56, the theologian also expressed his opposition to the Society in letters. In a communication to Juan de Regla from 1557, he discourages his correspondent from arranging for the King to make the spiritual exercises: “que a los Caballeros que toman en manos, en lugar de hacerlos Leones los hacen Gallinas, y si los hallan Gallinas los hacen Pollos” (526). Ignatius may be encouraging his spiritual brothers to embrace the combative attitude of the *caballero* as a more effective defense of their new order. More than an apology for the Society, though, Ignatius dictates the *Acta* as a model for cultivating a personal relationship with the divine. As McManamon argues, Ignatius ultimately intends for the text to serve the same purpose as the Acts of the Apostles, a report of “what God had done with them.”²⁶ The conduct of a secular nobleman, with its related models of *miles Christi*, and university student embattled in a disputation, allowed Ignatius to communicate the spirit of the activism that characterizes his order.

Although later biographers will use Ignatius’s text to construct a portrait of a militant fighting the heresies of the Counter-Reformation, the picture the future saint leaves us is of a soldier for apostolic service in the world who takes on the interior struggle to find the divine within himself. Terence O’Reilly says on two meditations in the *Ejercicios* on God in the world that “[...] the kingdom of God is interior and spiritual, the realm of men’s souls: it is not identified with the Church; and the foe is not said to be heresy, but the devil who rules through sin” (449). Ignatius has borrowed from contemporary models of manhood to create a new way for his spiritual brothers to be Jesuit *men*, active both in the world and in their interior, spiritual life. For decades, critics

²⁶ See Acts 14.27 and 15.4.

have pointed to ways in which female religious writers manipulated accepted norms of behavior for women, usually in highly codified language, in order to communicate their unique experience with the divine. The recent critical attention on masculinity invites similar readings of male religious texts. Early modern male writers, while in general enjoying more social and political power, had to conform to the expectations of conduct for their gender just as their female counterparts did. Uncovering unique perspectives on these models yields enriched readings of both the texts themselves as well as the social codes that frame them.

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