

FRANCIS XAVIER

and the

JESUIT MISSIONS IN THE FAR EAST

AN ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION OF EARLY PRINTED WORKS

From the Jesuitana Collection of the

JOHN J. BURNS LIBRARY, BOSTON COLLEGE

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*Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
The Jesuit Institute of Boston College*

2006

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INTRODUCTION

THE MAKING OF THE SECOND JESUIT SAINT: THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE CANONIZATION OF FRANCIS XAVIER, 1555-1622

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Francis Xavier died in a makeshift hut on the beach of the small, desolate island of Sancian (Shungchuan), fourteen kilometers off the coast of China, southwest of Hong Kong.¹ The date was December 3, 1552 and the saint died alone but for the company of his Chinese Christian interpreter, Antonio. It was to take over a year before certain word of the missionary's death reached the Jesuit Curia in Rome, but, as we learn from a letter dated November 21, 1555, written by Juan de Polanco, secretary of the Society, one of the immediate concerns of the Society of Jesus was the initiation of investigation into the cause of his canonization: eyewitness testimony of Xavier's "heroic virtue," apostolic zeal, holy death, and, above all, working of miracles, pre- or post-mortem, had to be gathered, scrutinized, and recorded for posterity.² To be sure, Xavier was a holy man who deserved the public recognition and veneration that came with canonization, but there was another unexpressed motivating factor in the Jesuits' eagerness to achieve this honor for one of their own. Although well established in Rome and other parts of Europe by this time, the Society of Jesus was still a relatively young order within the Catholic Church, viewed with suspicion or disdain by some co-religionists for its youth and at times novel "manner of proceeding:" to have one of its co-founders (Francis Xavier) – and of course, its founder as well (Ignatius Loyola, who was to die shortly thereafter in July, 1556) – officially canonized by Holy Mother the Church would represent a tremendous enhancement of its status in Rome and the universal church. The Society could then really take, with pride and full self-confidence, its place alongside the older, more venerable orders of the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans.

Again, that Francis Xavier was a holy man who deserved to be canonized, few really doubted, but canonizations do not come easy: virtue alone does not suffice. To achieve this end, it takes enormous time, money, and concerted effort, as well as, in early modern Europe, the support of powerful people in high places, both ecclesiastical and political. In the campaign for Francis Xavier's canonization, one of his most powerful and earliest political friends was John III, King of Portugal, under whose sponsorship the Jesuit missionary had first undertaken his apostolate in the Portuguese East Indian Empire. On March 28, 1556, the king sent a letter to his viceroy in the East Indies instructing him to begin interrogating witnesses to Xavier's apostolic

activities, character, piety, and thaumaturgic powers. Although the king died shortly thereafter, this first, important collecting of first-hand testimony was indeed carried out and subsequent Portuguese monarchs were to remain keen supporters of Xavier's cult, as were also the Spanish Hapsburgs.³ Another, even more dramatic show of political support for Xavier's canonization came in 1585 when the envoys of three Japanese feudal lords (referred to as "kings" in our early sources), friends of Xavier and the Jesuit missions, presented themselves at the papal court in Rome, in what was a most historic occasion, the "first diplomatic expedition ever from Japan to Europe" (see Cat. 4). In the words of Otomo Yoshishige, daimyo of Bungo (baptised Franciscus in honor of Xavier), the Japanese Christians were eager for Xavier's exaltation so that "we can build churches and altars to him, set up images of him, celebrate his Mass, and pray daily for his intercession."⁴

Later in Rome, in 1599, another personage of great political and spiritual authority in the papal court, Cardinal Cesare Baronio, was to lend his considerable support for the establishment of Xavier's cult by placing an image of the Apostle of the Far East in the Jesuit mother church of the Gesù, on an altar directly opposite the tomb of Ignatius Loyola: this was a public act whose symbolic message could not go unrecognized by the Roman authorities and populace. On that same altar, in 1614 was placed the precious relic of Xavier's right arm, a further boost to his cult, inasmuch as it became the object of great public veneration and the vehicle for many miracles claimed by the pious faithful (see Cat. 16 and 21 containing a Latin epigram about the relic of Xavier's arm, which, as the poem relates, miraculously survived near capture by pirates en route to Rome).⁵

Direct testimony of "heroic virtue" and the existence of a spontaneous popular cult devoted to the would-be saint are important components of the case for canonization, but, in early modern Catholic eyes, the working of miracles by the candidate for official sainthood represented the ultimate "empirical" confirmation of that person's privileged spiritual status as member of the celestial court. Thus, as we see abundantly in the books and engravings included in the present exhibition, detailed depiction in word and image of Xavier's wondrous works of supernatural healing, rescue, protection, clairvoyance, and raising from the dead, looms extremely large in the literature surrounding him in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, one half of the official summary of the special consistory held by Pope Gregory XV with his cardinals regarding Xavier's canonization (Cat. 12) is devoted to a meticulous account of his numerous miracles, much more than the number of pages in that same document devoted to his virtues. At the canonization ceremony itself in 1622 at St. Peter's Basilica, several of Xavier's most prominent works of wonder were illustrated by artists and put on display on a huge banner for the pious faithful to marvel at and be inspired by, just as readers of the many illustrated biographies of Xavier were meant to do in the years to come (see, e.g., Cat. 23).⁶

Xavier was celebrated as one of the Church's most effective foreign missionaries, but even more important in the popular imagination was his fame as worker of miracles, be they simple and humble, such as that of the crab (now a Xavier icon; see Cat. 23, p. 95) that retrieved the Jesuit's crucifix lost in the sea, or more astounding and exceptional, such as the numerous cases of people reportedly raised from the dead by Xavier (Cat. 23, p. 99). Although of enduring popularity in the literature and iconography surrounding Xavier, many of these miracles, however, have now been discounted, proven to be ungrounded in truth by Jesuit scholars themselves. For instance, as Xavier's British Jesuit biographer, James Brodrick reports, "The legend that St. Francis 'spoke in tongues' was traced to its source . . . and shown to be quite baseless. The story of the Crab and the Crucifix, which Père [Hippolyte] Delehayé [*eminent scholar of Christian hagiography*] dismissed as merely a borrowing from Japanese mythology, received even rougher treatment from his successor as Director of the Bollandists, that great scholar and man, Père Paul Peeters" who maintained that "the whole story was an invention of the seedy ex-gunner and refugee, Fausto Rodriguez, a Portuguese living on Spanish charity in the Philippines."⁷⁷

In fact, doubts and dissent over Xavier's reported miracles, especially the numerous cases of raising from the dead, erupted very early in this campaign for canonization, and right within the Society of Jesus itself. The controversy was sparked by the fanciful pages devoted to Xavier and his miracles included in the *Life of Ignatius Loyola (Vita Ignatii Loiolae)* written by one of the most eminent members of the Jesuit curia, Pedro de Ribadeneira (1526-1611). As the same James Brodrick laments, from the "seeds" of Ribadeneira's account of Xavier's miracles, there grew "a substantial tree of legend."⁷⁸ Ribadeneira's hagiographical work, completed by 1569, was only allowed to be published in 1572; still considered a work in progress, the *Life of Ignatius* was sent to the Far East to two of the leading Jesuit authorities on Xavier and the East Indian missions, Manuel Teixeira (who had worked alongside Xavier in India) and Alessandro Valignano (director of mission operations in that part of the world) for their judgement on its contents. Both men wrote back to the Jesuit Curia, roundly criticizing its pages on Xavier. Teixeira, for instance, complained to Ribadeneira himself:

It is said in Book IV, chapter vii, that our Lord by means of Father Master Francis raised the dead to life. His virtue and sanctity were indeed such that our Lord, of His infinite goodness and power, could have wrought such miracles through him, but inquiry has revealed no certainty on the subject, only common report that they had happened... As your Reverence well says in your prologue, if falsehood or exaggeration under any circumstances is unworthy of a Christian man it is far more so in dealing with the lives of the Saints. God has no need of our lies.⁹

Similar remonstrations came from Valignano who wrote to Father General Mercurian the following warning:

Anyone [*i.e.*, Ribadeneira] who provides more information [*than what Valignano reported in his own history of the Indian mission*] merely repeats information obtained from uncritical observers who, because of their affection or credulity, exaggerate whatever they heard in the marketplace. What is written in the above mentioned history [*i.e.*, *the one by Valignano*] is true. No one can write anything more than is certain or even probable. What is written therein is not only the certain truth but suffices to glorify our Lord in the life of his saint without the necessity of adding apocryphal or uncertain elements.¹⁰

When some time later Mercurian's successor as Jesuit General, Claudio Acquaviva, asked Valignano's opinion about the documentation for Xavier's canonization, the missionary again repeated the same strongly felt animadversions about the legends circulating about Xavier's miracles:

Though it is well deserved for him to be holy and blessed in heaven, one must take care to ensure that whatever one does in such an important matter is founded on solid information that will admit of no doubt. As I already wrote to Father General Everard Mercurian of blessed memory, the information that was collected here at the behest of King John III is in many points doubtful and uncertain. Since the people were so edified by Francis Xavier, they easily believed whatever was said and as tends to happen in such cases, miracles were seen where none took place and those who gave evidence easily reported as fact what they simply heard related by others. According to the inquiries I undertook at this time, the information gathered by the officials of the aforementioned king is not very trustworthy."

However, such criticisms as these directly from the Far East had no effect on the contents of Ribadeneira's *Life of Ignatius Loyola*, which went unrevised and set the tone for Xavier hagiography for centuries, as evidenced in the books and engravings in the present exhibition. Yet, as even the most recent Jesuit scholar to examine the question, Julius Oswald (writing in the *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, no less), confirms, Ribadeneira "indeed appears to have invented miracles in order to achieve the canonisation...."¹¹ Fortunately, nonetheless, even discounting these controversial miracles, the Xavier canonization "dossier" was still rich enough by way of heroic virtue, apostolic zeal, and more-than-human achievement and exploits to convince even the most skeptical of his contemporaries that he was indeed a saint.

It was to take twenty-two more years after the publication of Ribadeneira's 1572 work on Ignatius for Xavier to have a full-length biography of his own published in Europe. That work was Italian Jesuit Orazio Torsellino's *Vita Francisci Xaverii qui primus è Societate Iesu in India & Iaponia Evangelium promulgavit* (Cat. 6), a well-written, thorough work based on original sources emanating from the Far East such as the excellent manuscript *vita* compiled in Goa by the aforementioned Manuel Teixeira (for which see the appended *Chronology* at 1554). Torsellino's work, oft-reprinted and translated into other languages (see, e.g., Cat. 14, the 1632 English edition), was the first of several biographies to follow upon the formal petition for Xavier's canonization made of the Church by the Society of Jesus in 1593, acting upon the decision of its Fifth General Congregation. The beginning of the actual proceedings for canonization sparked further interest in Xavier's life as well as a need for complete, authoritative accounts of his activities and accomplishments. Another biography appearing in these pre-canonization years was that of João de Lucena who published his Portuguese life of Xavier in Lisbon in 1600 (see Cat. 10 for the later Italian translation). Of the series of Xavier biographies that appears subsequent to his canonization, Dominique Bouhours' 1682 work in French (Cat. 20) is worthy of special mention inasmuch as it proved popular among readers and had the distinction of being translated into English (*The Life of St. Francis Xavier of the Society of Jesus Apostle of the Indies and of Japan*, 1688) by none other than John Dryden, the eminent English poet, literary critic and playwright, who had converted to Roman Catholicism two years before the publication of his Xavier tome.

However, in these same years, those desirous of knowing more about Xavier did not have to rely only on second-hand accounts: they could turn to the man himself in the form of his letters and reports from the field. Even before Xavier's death, Ignatius Loyola had authorized the dissemination of his letters from the Far East among his fellow Jesuits in Europe with an eye to inspiring greater missionary zeal and volunteers within the Society. That goal was indeed reached, as in the course of the following two centuries, thousands of Jesuits dedicated their lives to the overseas mission efforts. However, Jesuits and would-be missionaries were not the only avid readers of letters of Xavier and his comrades working in the East Indies: these texts found great readership even among the general, literate, lay public who found the descriptions contained therein of strange new exotic lands, people, and customs both educational and entertaining, an early modern equivalent, as it were, of *National Geographic*. Our exhibition contains one of the earliest published and popular compilations (Louvain, 1566) of Jesuit missionary letters from India (Cat. 2). However, in a letter written March 27 of that same year, Jesuit superior Jerome Nadal, complained that this Louvain edition is "extremely defective throughout" ("*es todo muy corrupto*") and should be suppressed, with a new translation commissioned from the excellent Latinist Jesuit Father Giovanni Pietro Maffei. Maffei did indeed produce his (much reprinted)

translation, but the lamented Louvain edition was never corrected nor suppressed and continued to find wide readership and undergo several reprintings.¹²

Also contributing to the cult of Francis Xavier were accounts of his exploits and achievements included in general histories of the Society of Jesus or the Jesuit missions in the Far East. This genre of literature likewise found a ready audience among the literate general public of early modern Europe for the same reasons that had made the collections of mission letters so popular: their cross-cultural, anthropological, educational, and entertainment value. Some of the most famous and best-selling items in this category are those volumes of Daniello Bartoli's comprehensive *Dell'istoria della Compagnia di Gesù* devoted to the Asian missions (India, Japan, China). Although not a contemporary of Xavier, Bartoli, one of the most prominent men of letters in Baroque Italy, had access to documentation no longer extant, and hence the enduring value of his histories of the Society.¹³ Bartoli's pages on Xavier, first published in 1653 as part of his aforementioned volumes devoted to Asia, were eventually extracted and circulated as a separate biography entitled *De vita et gestis S. Francisci Xaverii e Societate Iesu Indiarum Apostoli* (Cat. 15).

Along with all of the above-described works in print there also proliferated visual representations of Xavier and his saintly accomplishments in both painted and engraved form, to inspire the faithful, expand his popular cult, and thus further advance the campaign for his canonization.¹⁴ Perhaps the most famous and artistically significant of all of these visual depictions is *The Miracles of St. Francis Xavier* by Peter Paul Rubens, a monumental altarpiece now in Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum but originally produced for the Jesuit Church in Antwerp in the years 1616-17, that is, after Xavier's beatification but before his official proclamation as a saint in 1622. As for Xavier's true likeness, there is a fairly consistent depiction of the saint in early modern art, thanks to a single portrait sent back from India to Rome by Valignano in 1583, based upon his death mask and the recollection of those who had known him personally.

This 1583 portrait, though now lost, was immediately and widely copied: see, for example, that in the Gesù in Rome as well as the aforementioned portrait of the saint placed in the same church by Cardinal Baronio in 1599, now identified with a canvas in the Pinacoteca Vaticana. However, there is a red chalk drawing (26.2 x 17.4 cm.) in the Jesuit archives in Rome, showing the ten "First Companions" of Saint Ignatius that "according to oral tradition" provides "the earliest known representations" of these men, Xavier among them.¹⁵ The present catalogue reproduces the uppermost trio of these red-chalk portraits (above, p.5) representing the saints of the 2006 anniversary year: Ignatius, Peter Faber and, in the center, Francis Xavier whose handsome face, with its fine features, dark, intense eyes, full, red lips, clear milky-white complexion, full head of jet black hair, and trim black beard we see in consistent fashion in so many other depictions of the saint, including those in this exhibition.

All of the above-described works – biographies, letters, histories, painted and engraved portraits, relics – well served, in ways direct and indirect, the purposes of the immense, persistent, and energetic campaign for Xavier’s canonization that began in 1553 and finally came to splendid fruition on March 12, 1622: on that day the official ceremonies of the canonizations of Xavier and Ignatius (the Society’s “premier” saint) were held in St. Peter’s Basilica, amidst great pageantry and sumptuous celebration. These festivities lasted several days and were of a magnitude considered noteworthy even in Baroque Rome where breath-taking pomp and circumstance were things of everyday life.¹⁶ The canonizations were a triumph for the Society of Jesus, which finally “had arrived.” They were a triumph as well for the other major party that had lobbied hard for them, the Spanish crown, whose power was at its very height in Europe, most especially in papal Rome where “Spanish imperial domination” represented “the key political reality.”¹⁷

Regarding the canonizations of March 1622, still today in the Roman oral tradition, one will hear repeated the quip of those who, aware of the inevitable political element at play in these ecclesiastical decisions, maintain that “Four Spaniards and one Saint” were canonized that day – the “one saint” being the much beloved Roman Filippo Neri, and the Spaniards being, in addition to Ignatius and Xavier, Teresa of Avila and the lesser-known medieval farmer, Isidore of Madrid. To be sure, as Thomas Dandeleit observes, these canonizations “were one of the most important signs of papal favor the Spaniards had ever received in Rome. They revealed as much as any financial or political concession the enormous degree of influence and goodwill the Catholic King enjoyed in the eternal city.”¹⁸ However, at the same time, the March 1622 canonizations simply confirmed (at least in the case of four of the five personages) what was already and firmly a matter of widespread popular opinion about the “heroic virtue” and great devotional appeal of these figures, Francis Xavier prominently among them.

Appendix: A Chronology of the Life and Posthumous Cult of Francis Xavier¹⁹

1506: On April 7 Francis Xavier (Francisco de Jassu y Xavier) is born in the Basque country of Navarra, in the castle of Xavier (“new house”), the fifth and last child of an ancient family of Basque aristocracy.

1515: After years of bloody conflict between Spain and France for its control, Navarra is forcibly annexed to the Spanish crown. Xavier’s family is directly involved in this struggle and ruined financially by its disastrous outcome.

1525: Xavier arrives in Paris to study at the University of Paris, living in the College of Santa Barbara (Collège Sainte-Barbe), which operated under the patronage of the King

of Portugal. There he will eventually meet another Basque aristocrat, Ignatius Loyola, as well as Peter Faber (Pierre Favre) of Savoy and the other “First Companions” (Simão Rodrigues, Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, Nicolás de Bobadilla, Claude Jay, Paschase Broët and Jean Codure). These men would ultimately form the Society of Jesus.

1530: Xavier becomes a Master of Philosophy and begins teaching at the small College of Dormans-Beauvais in Paris, while working toward his doctorate in theology. He abandons his studies before attaining his theology degree.

1534: On August 15, Xavier, together with Ignatius, Peter Faber and five of the other “First Companions,” makes solemn vows in a small chapel on Montmartre, Paris, to serve Christ in poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If the latter proved impossible, they would go to Rome to place themselves at the disposal of the pope. In September Xavier does the *Spiritual Exercises* under Ignatius’ direction (see Cat. 7).

1537: In early January Xavier arrives in Venice, from which he and the other companions intend to depart for the Holy Land. War between Venice and the Turks makes that journey impossible. On June 24, still in Venice, Xavier is ordained a priest.

1538: After a brief stay in Bologna, Xavier joins Ignatius and companions in Rome in April to seek the guidance of Pope Paul III regarding their apostolic future as a clerical order within the Church.

1539: In September Paul III gives his oral approval of the “Formula of the Institute” of the nascent “Society of Jesus.”

1540: On September 27 Paul III formally approves the founding of the Society of Jesus with the bull, *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae*. In March, Xavier leaves for Lisbon, at the request of the Portuguese king, John III, to be sent as missionary to the extensive Portuguese colonial empire in the East Indies.

1541: On April 7, Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary, leaves Lisbon for India, having also been named papal nunzio of the East Indies. In late August, his ship anchors for brief stays in Mozambique, Melinde (today Malindi, Kenya), and the island of Socotra (off the eastern tip of Africa) in present-day Yemen.

1542: After 13 grueling months at sea, on May 6 Xavier arrives in Goa on the west-central coast of India, capital of the Portuguese empire in the East Indies. At the end

of September, he leaves Goa for Cape Comorin on the Fishery Coast at the southern tip of India to minister to the Paravas, the pearlfishers earlier converted to Christianity.

1543: In October or November, Xavier returns to Goa, only to sail again on December 21 for Cannanore, also on the western coast of India. From now until his death, Xavier will be in constant travel in the East Indies, reconnoitering this vast territory for future missionary undertakings and sending back to Ignatius in Rome detailed letters about his experiences and enterprises.

1544: On January 1 Xavier arrives in the port city of Cochin, second-most important center of the Portuguese stronghold in India. From there, he makes a quick trip to nearby Ceylon on a diplomatic mission for the king of Portugal. By mid-February, he is back on the Fishery Coast and by Christmas returns to Goa.

1545: Commencing in January Xavier pays visits to Cochin, Ceylon, and various localities on the eastern coast of India (including Malipur, the putative burial place of St. Thomas the Apostle). In September he embarks on a more ambitious journey, sailing 3000 kilometers east for Malacca (today's Melaka), important seaport of Western Malaysia, under Portuguese control and center of all Portuguese traffic heading farther east towards the Molucca Islands, China, and Japan.

1546: On January 1, commencing another journey that was to take six weeks, Xavier sails 3000 more kilometers to Amboina, in the Molucca (Maluku) Islands, the famed "Spice Islands," north of Australia, now part of present-day Indonesia. In June he travels to Ternate, another of the Molucca Islands, representing the last Portuguese outpost in their eastern empire. In early September, he travels north to the islands of Moro where he remains for three months.

1547: Xavier is back in Ternate by January and by late April, has returned to Amboina. In early July, he journeys again to Malacca, remaining for six months. There he meets Anjiro (also known as Yajiro or Han-Sir), a Japanese gentleman and speaker of Portuguese. From Anjiro Xavier hears about the marvelous and ancient kingdom of Japan and becomes determined to plant the faith there. Anjiro will be Xavier's translator and guide in that endeavor. In mid-December, Xavier is once again on a boat, heading back to India.

1548: By mid-January Xavier has returned to Cochin, India, and spends the following fifteen months in various localities on the southern coasts of India.

1549: Xavier is ready for his Japanese missionary expedition, departing from Goa on April 15. By August 15, he reaches Kagoshima, capital city of southern Japan, on the island of Kyushu. This is Anjiro's native city and the local feudal lord gives Xavier permission to preach Christianity to the population.

1550: After a futile year in Kagoshima, in September, Xavier leaves for the Hirado, the port used by the Portuguese on Kyushu's northwestern coast. However, eager to reach the imperial court, he moves (November-December) to Yamaguchi, on the mainland and second largest of Japan's cities, where he is met with contempt and scorn at the court of the local lord.

1551: In January Xavier finally arrives in Miyako (modern-day Kyoto), capital of the Japanese imperial court, but is rebuffed by both imperial and university officials. He remains there only eleven days, having discovered that the feudal lord of Yamaguchi, in fact, wielded more power than the emperor. In February Xavier is back in Yamaguchi and this time is favorably received by the local court, since he and his companions are now suitably and impressively garbed in fine silks, attended by a proper retinue of servants, and bear copious presents for their host. In late summer-early fall, he visits the court of Bungo at the invitation of its ruler, but having learned of the even greater and more ancient civilization of China, becomes inspired to penetrate that mysterious land and plant the Christian faith there. However, in mid-November, hearing some disturbing news about the conditions of the mission in India, he departs Japan to return to Goa, stopping in Malacca on Dec. 27.

1552: On January 24 Xavier arrives in Cochin and, in mid-February, Goa. On April 17, he departs Goa for Malacca, on his way to fulfilling his dream of entering China, then closed, under the pain of death, to almost all foreigners. On July 17, he departs Malacca, arriving in September at Sancian, a small island off the coast of China, opposite Canton and modern-day Hong Kong. This was to be his last journey: on Dec. 3, after months of fruitless attempts to enter China and of illness, Xavier dies in a small, makeshift hut on the beach of Sancian. Contrary to future artistic renditions of the scene, he was assisted at his deathbed only by Antonio de Santa Fé, his Christian Chinese interpreter.

1554: In September the Chinese Antonio writes a long letter describing Xavier's final days to Jesuit Father Manuel Teixeira in Goa, a personal acquaintance of the future saint (he had been a novice under Xavier). Teixeira was later (1580) to compile the first detailed and scrupulously researched account of Xavier's life, based on eyewitness testimony such as Antonio's letter and the narrative of Jesuit Brother Juan Fernandez, Xavier's companion in Japan, known as the *Itinerario*. Though not published until 1912 (*Monumenta Xaveriana*, II: 815-918), Teixeira's biography, the *Vida del bienaventurado Padre Francisco Xavier*, circulates widely in manuscript form.

1553-54: Xavier's incorrupt body is transferred back to Goa, after spending a period of time in Malacca. For four days there is an uninterrupted line of people who come to venerate his remains.

1572: Pedro de Ribadeneira, S. J. (1526-1611), publishes in Latin his influential *Life of Ignatius Loyola*, containing a rather fanciful account of Xavier's miracles, with a view towards his eventual canonization.

1593: Acting upon the decision of its Fifth General Congregation, the Society of Jesus formally petitions the Church for Xavier's canonization.

1594: Jesuit Father Orazio Torsellino publishes the first book-length biography of Xavier, a successful account that is reprinted several times and in different languages. Torsellino shortly thereafter (1596) publishes a large and equally popular selection of Xavier's letters.

Before 1606: Alessandro Valignano, S.J. (1538-1606), great organizer of the Japanese missions, completes his *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias orientales (1542-64)*, further documenting and publicizing Xavier's activities and accomplishments in the Far East.

1619 (October 25): Xavier is declared "Blessed" (*Beatus*) by Pope Paul V with the brief, *In sede principis*.

1622 (March 12): Xavier is canonized, along with Ignatius Loyola, by Pope Gregory XV. (Due to Gregory's death, the actual bull of canonization, *Rationi congruit*, was published by his successor, Urban VIII, on August 6, 1623.)

1634: The tradition of the "Novena of Grace" (March 4-12) to Xavier begins, pursuant to the saint's apparition to and miraculous healing of Jesuit Father Marcello Mastrelli in Naples.



Notes

¹ For the facts of Xavier's life, the monumental four-volume account by German Jesuit Georg Schurhammer, considered by many the saint's definitive biography, is indispensable, as is John O'Malley's *First Jesuits*; more recently there is the shorter but still quite hefty volume by Spanish Jesuit Recondo. Although older, Brodrick's 1952 anniversary biography has the virtue of being not only reliable and intelligently critical, but also highly readable. Most biographies, including that of Schurhammer, do not discuss the canonization campaign, for which topic the most valuable secondary source is the essay of M.C. Osswald, as well as Wicki, esp. 1232-34, "III. Processi di beatificazione e canonizzazione (1556-1622) e culto." For a summary account of the saint's life, see the *Chronology* appended to this essay.

² Recondo, 1013-20.

³ J.Oswald, 242; M.C. Osswald, 260, 265.

⁴ Quoted by M.C. Osswald, 260; Üçerler, 347 for the quotation in the previous sentence; see also J. Oswald, 243. In the Xavier literature this historic Japanese diplomatic expedition is often described as if it had been the spontaneous, free initiative of Yoshishige, whereas in reality, as Jesuit scholar Üçerler (347) points out, it was a "carefully concerted effort on the part of the Visitor [*i.e.*, *Alessandro Valignano, S.J., the brilliant organizer of the Jesuit missions in Japan*] to organize on a grand scale a 'public relations' event that would be played out on both the secular and ecclesiastical stages of Europe." Valignano initiated and orchestrated the entire expedition, his purpose being "to impress Europe with the tangible successes of Jesuit efforts in Japan by presenting them with living examples of noble and pious youth [*i.e.*, *the diplomatic legates*] from that country. He was equally keen to impress the Japanese youth with the glories of European Christendom so that they in turn might influence the views of their fellow countrymen to whom they would recount their experiences upon their return." For further detail and analysis, see Schütte, I/2, 257-66. For Valignano, see also Ross.

⁵ In 1949, on the occasion of the four-hundredth anniversary of Xavier's arrival in Japan, the Roman relic of his arm traveled to Japan amidst great festivity, as we seen in photographs taken at that time in the collection of Burns Library (MS2005-20; ALEPH #2138768).

⁶ M.C. Osswald, 270-71. Among Xavier's thaumaturgic specialties were healing of and protection from the bubonic plague, one of the most dreaded and tragically frequent scourges of early modern Europe. The origins of Xavier's role as heavenly protector against plague are to be found in the saint's biography: when Xavier visited Malacca in June 1552, he found the island completely besieged by plague. Fearless, Xavier ministered to the sick and dying, coming into daily, direct contact with the contagion, without ever becoming infected by the fatal disease (Recondo, 970-72; see Cat. 23, p. 103), for an illustration thereof). Also contributing to his reputation as the invincible protector of health was undoubtedly the fact of his having gone so far as to drink pus from the foul, festering wounds of patients infected with deadly disease on other occasions, without harm to himself, as, for example, we read in Torsellino's description (Book 1, Chap. 5) of the saint's work in the Venetian Hospital of the Incurables. Xavier as tutelary plague saint is illustrated in numerous works of art, e.g., Rubens' altarpiece, *The Miracles of Saint Francis Xavier*, 1616-17 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) and one of the most important of early modern plague paintings, Guido Reni's *Pallione del Voto*, 1630 (Pinacoteca, Bologna): see the various discussions of Xavier and plague art in *Hope and Healing*, passim.

⁷ Brodrick, 535.

⁸ Brodrick, 535.

⁹ Quoted by Brodrick, 537; for the same letter, see J. Oswald, 243, who adds that Teixeira also complained

to Valignano “that Ribadeneira had misunderstood many things and had reported incidents that it would have been better to have omitted.” Ribadeneira’s exaggerations did not only concern Xavier’s miracles, as Teixeira points out to the Jesuit in Rome elsewhere in his reply: “In Book IV, Chapter 7 . . . you say that [Father Francis] founded more than forty churches on the Fishery coast. But on both coasts, the Fishery and Travancore, there are not today so many churches as that, and several were built after the time of Father Francis. He did not establish a single church in Travancore, and the credit for the ones now there belongs to Father Henriquez. All that he did on the Fishery Coast was to have some wattle structures roofed with straw put up to serve as churches” (quoted by Brodrick, 119).

¹⁰ Quoted by J. Oswald, 243.

¹¹ Quoted by J. Oswald, 244. About the unreliability of certain of the early testimony, Oswald comments: “Georg Schurhammer, S.J. came to a similar conclusion when centuries later, he examined critically the legends about and the miracles attributed to Francis Xavier.” See also Wicki, 1234-36, for the early controversy surrounding Xavier’s miracles.

¹² *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 5:293, s.v. “Maffei, Jean Pierre.” For an English translation of all of Xavier’s letters and writings, see the edition prepared by Costelloe.

¹³ M.C. Osswald, 263. Another bestseller in this genre of literature during our period was the *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas suscepta ab Societate Jesu* (Cat. 11), representing a Latin translation by Flemish Jesuit Nicolas Trigault of an unpublished diary account of the Chinese mission by the famous Matteo Ricci. However, “it is well known that Trigault made several changes and additions to Ricci’s *Storia* for propagandistic purposes” (Standaert, 369, n. 2; for Trigault and the important cross-cultural role he played, see Standaert, *passim*).

¹⁴ For Xavier in art see M.C. Osswald; Raggi; and Bailey, 160-66.

¹⁵ Lucas, Cat. 60, tentatively dating the drawing to the late 16th century.

¹⁶ See Tacchi Venturi, 34-80, 87-111, who gives excerpts from several Roman diaries and other contemporary primary sources offering detailed descriptions of the festivities; and, more recently, Tozzi, 168-73; and Dandele, 184-87, both with further bibliography.

¹⁷ Dandele, 12.

¹⁸ Dandele, 106-07.

¹⁹ I have compiled this *Chronology* from the standard Xavier biographies, for which see n. 1 above. Certain dates and other details are still disputed.

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