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# Moral Economy and the Jesuits

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## Abstract

In this article, originally published in French under the title “Les jésuites et la morale économique” (*Dix-septième siècle* 237, no. 4 [2007]: 739–54), Paola Vismara presents the Jesuits’ major contributions to the teaching of moral economy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. In particular, Vismara explores Jesuit doctrines on moral economy and focuses on various Jesuit approaches to the problems of contracts and the management of capital, with particular attention paid to lending at interest. Retracing the most significant early modern Jesuit theologians’ contributions to issues of moral economy, including the treatise of Leonard Lessius, Vismara paints a complex picture, highlighting the new ideas contained in the works of the Jesuit theologians, shedding light on disputes between probabilist and rigorist theologians, and discussing the Roman Church’s responses to various theological orientations to moral economy over three centuries.

## Keywords

Jesuits – Society of Jesus – usury – interest – extrinsic titles – *vix pervenit* – moral theology – triple contract – probabilism – rigorism

## Moral Economy within the Society of Jesus: An Introduction

Early modern Jesuit doctrinal and theoretical reflections concerning matters of moral theology have always been the object of much attention because of their intellectual importance during the period, and because of the controversies they engendered. These reflections and their pastoral implications

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inspired harsh criticism and heated quarrels that influenced the direction of, and even led to changes within, the Society of Jesus. Exploring the order's moral theology allows us to better understand the evolution of its intellectual approach and its overall contributions to understanding the relationship between morality and economy.

The idea that the Jesuits held uniform views in matters of moral theology became an oft-repeated cliché during this period; a more accurate picture can, however, be drawn when one analyzes the facts carefully. Indeed, not all the Jesuits active during this period were casuists or advocates of moral leniency (more properly "laxists"). This was the product of accusations leveled against the Jesuits from many quarters, at a time rife with disputes over moral theology and casuistry. Belonging to the same religious order does not necessarily involve identity of views. As an illustration, only rarely were Jesuit theologians among the most important representatives of laxism; on the contrary, it was not unusual to find rigorist and probabilist Jesuits.<sup>1</sup> We can observe, however, that sometimes the spirit of the body did inflect individuals' ideas. Evidence for this can be found in the Jesuit reaction to a quarrel between Conventuals and Jesuits that occurred in the second half of the seventeenth century after the publication of the *Apologia in favore de' santi padri* (Apology for the holy fathers) by the Friar Minor Bernardino Ciaffoni (1615/20–83), which accused the Jesuits of laxism.<sup>2</sup> The Jesuit Giovan Battista de Benedictis (1622–1706) reacted strongly against this accusation, and Superior General Tirso González (1624–1705), who was a probabilist, denounced this attack against the Society, whose members showed solidarity even while individual Jesuits advocated different moral theologies.<sup>3</sup>

1 Jean Laurent Le Semelier, *Conférences ecclésiastiques de Paris sur l'usure et la restitution, où l'on concilie la discipline de l'Église avec la jurisprudence du Royaume de France, établies et imprimées par ordre du card. de Noailles archevêque de Paris* (Paris: Frères Estienne, 1775; 1718<sup>1</sup>), 1:118, where reference is made to the *Mémoires de Trevoux* and Jesuit La Motte, as an undeniable proof that the Jesuits have a hostile opinion about the practice of banknotes, the perception of an interest on pupillary heritage, and the lending at interest to the rich.

2 Bernardino Ciaffoni, *Apologia in favore de' Santi Padri, contro quelli che nelle materie morali fanno di essi poca stima* (Avignon: Pietro Offray, 1698; 1696<sup>1</sup>). The work was prohibited and then published again in Venice in 1761, with this subtitle: *Opera postuma [...] molto necessaria per un infallibile regolamento delle scienze abbagliate ed illuse dai moderni probabilisti*. The author was a Conventual Friar. See *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1981), 25:98.

3 Francesco de Bonis [Giovanni Battista De Benedictis], *La scimia del Montalto, o sia apologia in favore de' santi Padri contra quelli che in materie morali hanno de' medesimi poca stima* (Gratz: Ad istanza dell'Autore, 1698).

Similarly, we cannot find uniformity of opinion on matters of moral economy within the early modern Society of Jesus. We can easily observe divergences in Jesuit theological opinion by exploring in-depth the issue of lending at interest, or “usury,” for example.

In the Catholic world, and within the Society of Jesus, there was agreement on the general definition of usury, even as there were different opinions on moral economy. These differences were clearly shown in the work of the committee established by Pope Benedict XIV (1675–1758) in 1744–45 with the aim of discussing several issues related to lending at interest (the discussions of this committee resulted in the encyclical *Vix pervenit*, published on November 1, 1745). There were two Jesuits on the committee, out of a dozen members: Egidio Maria Giuli (1691–1748) and Domenico Turano (1679–1759), who agreed on the theoretical definition of usury, but embraced opposite and incompatible perspectives on moral economy, approaching concrete moral cases in very different ways.<sup>4</sup>

### Jesuit Theories of Moral Economy: The Example of the Germanic Contract

The disagreement in the matter of moral economy between the Jesuits Giuli and Turano is a clear example of the deep theological divisions that existed within the Society. These divisions were particularly marked in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but were already present in a more subtle form in the sixteenth century. We can examine, for instance, the dispute over the so-called “triple” or “Germanic” contract.<sup>5</sup> As the name suggests, this “contract” was actually composed of three different contracts. The first section was a partnership agreement between a lender and a merchant; the second was an insurance contract, which guaranteed the restitution of the capital to the lender, who renounced a portion of the profits in return; in the third contract,

4 Paola Vismara, *Oltre l'usura: La Chiesa moderna e il prestito a interesse* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004), 8. On Giuli, see Roger Aubert, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et géographie ecclésiastique* (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1986), 21:62–63; Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1890–1932), 3:1479–80. Egidio M. Giuli taught canon law, and Benedict XIV highly appreciated him. See *Le lettere di Benedetto XIV al card. de Tencin* (Rome: E. Morelli, 1955), 1:315 (February 16, 1746). Giuli has been associated with the rigorist Dominican Daniello Concina. See Emile Appolis, *Entre jansénistes et zelanti: Le “tiers parti” catholique au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Picard, 1960), 324.

5 John T. Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 223; Jean-Philippe Lévy, “Un palliatif à la prohibition de l'usure: Le ‘contractus trinus’ ou ‘triplex,’” *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 18 (1939): 423–33.

the lender renounced a further part of the profit, agreeing to be satisfied with a lower but certain profit, usually five percent of the loan amount.

The Jesuit Peter Canisius (1521–97), who was also the author of a widely used catechism, believed that this type of contract was probably not morally unacceptable, although he was uncertain about the matter.<sup>6</sup> Several Jesuits, who refused absolution in confession to those who lent at an interest rate of five percent, concluded that the triple contract was not acceptable. Canisius submitted the question to his superiors. A committee of Jesuit theologians failed to conclusively decide the issue in 1573. A few years later, in 1581, another committee was summoned to judge the question. This committee concluded that a loan contract at a five percent rate was not legitimate *per se*, but accepted the legitimacy of the triple contract. Nothing new here: the contract was in common use in Germany, but was also employed elsewhere; many theologians, such as the Augustinian Martín de Azpilcueta (also known as Doctor Navarrus, 1492–1586), had already expressed their approval of it.<sup>7</sup>

In the mid-seventeenth century, the Jesuit Tommaso Tamburini (1591–1675) held this contract to be fully in line with moral law.<sup>8</sup> His opinion, which was considered to be the most conscious expression of the laxist method, was much discussed, and Tamburini's works, appreciated by probabilists, continued to be published into the eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Another Jesuit, Leonard Lessius

6 Clemens Bauer, "Rigoristische Tendenzen in der katholischen Wirtschaftsethik unter dem Einfluss der Gegenreformation," in *Adel und Kirche: Gerd Tellenbach zum 65. Geburtstag dargebracht von Freunden und Schülern*, ed. Joseph Fleckenstein and Karl Schmid (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 552–79.

7 The bull *Detestabilis avaritiae*, promulgated by Sixtus V on this subject (1586), raised discussions related to its interpretation.

8 See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 7:1830–41; *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Jean M. A. Vacant et al. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1946), 15:34–38; *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús biográfico-temático*, ed. Charles E. O'Neill and Joaquín M. Domínguez (Madrid–Rome: Universidad Pontificia Comillas–Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001), 4:3698; Santo Burgio, *Teologia barocca: Il probabilismo in Sicilia nell'età di Filippo IV* (Catania: Società di storia patria per la Sicilia Orientale, 1998); Massimo Petrocchi, *Il problema del lassismo nel secolo XVII* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1953), 22.

9 Tommaso Tamburini, *Opera omnia* (Venice: Pezzana, 1680); Tamburini, *De contractibus*, in Tamburini, *Opera omnia*, 175–261. Attacks against his theology were triggered in the age of the triumph of rigorism, in mid-seventeenth century, after the publication of the *Provincials*. In mid-eighteenth century, Jesuit scholar (and polemist) Francesco Antonio Zaccaria republished Tamburini's moral theology work (Venice: Pezzana, 1755). He added the *Prolegomena* for defending the author from the accusations he was charged with by his adversaries. At that time, the "veemente ventata di antiprobabilismo" (strong wave of anti-probabilism) in Italy is also related to knowledge of Pascal's work. See Alberto Vecchi, *Correnti religiose nel Sei–Settecento veneto* (Rome: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1962), 450.

(1554–1623), also provided a favorable opinion of the Germanic contract. He carefully formulated a list of *auctoritates* (authorities) who had expressed the same opinion, and he supported this opinion with arguments that he considered irrefutable.<sup>10</sup> In Lessius's view, the triple contract could be simplified by replacing it with a single contract known as *innominatus* (innominate contract), and applying the formula *Do et facio ut des et facias* (I give and do so that you give and do). Merchants and financiers greatly appreciated this contract, as it was simple and allowed the parties to reap significant profits.<sup>11</sup>

Undeniable proof of the contract's legitimacy was, for Lessius, the fact that the contracting parties both found it beneficial. The contract allowed merchants to borrow the necessary funds to develop their commercial activities at low prices. At the same time, it allowed widows, orphans, and those who possessed capital and needed to make it grow, so they did not end up in misery, to secure a steady income.

In this regard, at the beginning of the sixteenth century John Mair (1467–1550), a Scottish theologian teaching at the Sorbonne, formulated a principle according to which if the lender and the borrower agree to a contract (commercial loan), and if each one benefits from it, this arrangement is more in accordance with *pietas* (mercy) than in a situation where only one party profits.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, when both parties benefit from a contract, it is easier to find lenders, a fact that has positive consequences for borrowers. This was John Mair's signature argument on moral economy.

This idea of mutual benefit, which many theologians consider an important element in determining the moral legitimacy of contracts, is known as *commodum*, meaning "benefit" or "utility."<sup>13</sup> In the eighteenth century, the Ingolstadt Jesuit theologian Franz Xaver Zech (1692–1772) stated that the triple contract

10 Leonard Lessius, *De iustitia et iure caeterisque virtutibus cardinalibus: Ad Secundam Secundae D. Thomae a quaest. 47 usque ad quaest. 171* (Milan: Ioannem Baptistam Bidellium, 1618, [1605<sup>1</sup>]), 2, 25, dub. 3, 258–62.

11 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 25, dub. 3, nn. 26–29, 259. In order to guarantee the legitimacy of the contract, this formula is proposed: "Confero 1000 ad mercaturam, ut quotannis solvas 5 vel 6 salva sorte, eo modo quo doctores docent id esse licitum" (n. 31, 261). Lessius allowed an 8–10 % of interest rate.

12 "Non est tam pietati consonum ut unus lucretur quam ambo." See Louis Vereecke, *Da Guglielmo d'Ockham a sant'Alfonso de Liguori: Saggi di storia della teologia morale moderna 1300–1787* (Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni Paoline, 1990), 346–61. See also Odd Langholm, *The Legacy of Scholasticism in Economic Thought: Antecedents of Choice and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 100–17.

13 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 25, dub. 3, n. 25, 259.

has the merit of employing capital without committing injustice or usury.<sup>14</sup> He declared, however, that it should be allowed only in commercial centers where it was customarily practiced and authorized by established law.

The importance accorded to economic and financial activities by ecclesiastical thinkers was not new—Franciscans had made significant contributions to economic thought in the Middle Ages.<sup>15</sup> The Franciscan Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248–98), for example, tried to find a solution to the problems related to charging interest; he introduced into moral theology the mercantile idea of “capital,” and explicitly recognized the productivity of monetary capital. Late Scholasticism, based on the thought of Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), emphasized that economic activities were capable of fostering peace within society. Beginning at the end of the sixteenth century, several authors, including Tommaso Bozio (1548–1610), who was a member of the Oratory of Filippo Neri (1515–95), presented economic prosperity as a proper element of the true church, due to the role of *bona temporalia* (temporal goods) in the life of peoples and in religion itself.<sup>16</sup>

In order to properly understand the involvement and interest of Jesuit theologians in the world of economics and finance, it is useful to refer to the concept of “theological anthropology.” The Jesuits, in fact, developed theological approaches based on the harmony between the natural and the supernatural, elaborating an essentially optimistic view of humanity. According to this view, God himself conferred upon man the exercise of *dominium* (control) over human matters as well as over the whole of reality. Human activities were considered to be a concrete application of that power.

Even the developments of contemporary science attracted the interest of the Jesuits. Joseph of Gibalin (1592–1671), for instance, entitled one of his works *De universa rerum humanarum negotiatione tractatio scientifica* (Scientific

14 See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 8:1474–78; *Diccionario histórico*, 4:4073; Ludger Müller, *Kirche, Staat, Kirchenrecht: Der Ingolstädter Kanonist Franz Xaver Zech S.J. (1692–1772)* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1986), here 59–62; see also *Dissertationes tres, in quibus Rigor moderatus doctrinae pontificiae circa usuras a S. D. N. Benedicto XIV per Epistolam Encyclicam Episcopis Italiae traditus exhibetur* (Venice: Petrum Savioni, 1762; [1747–51]), 3, 2, 6, § 154–85, 92–99; in a 1762 edition, the text was published as an addition to Honoratus Leotardus, *Liber singularis de usuris et contractibus usurariis coercendis* (Venice: Petrum Savioni, 1762). Further editions in Jacques Paul Migne, *Cursus theologiae* and Francesco A. Zaccaria, *Thesaurus theologicus* (see Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 8:1475).

15 See Giacomo Todeschini, *Ricchezza francescana: Dalla povertà volontaria alla società di mercato* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004).

16 Carlo Poni, “Economia, scienza, tecnologia e controriforma: La teologia polemica di Tommaso Bozio,” in *Il Concilio di Trento e il moderno*, ed. Paolo Prodi and Wolfgang Reinhard (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), 503–42, here 523–27.

treatise concerning human commerce). Science influenced both humanity's mental structures and the approach of the theologian.<sup>17</sup> Today, Thomas Aquinas's ideas about probability are considered to be the basis of the theological tradition that culminated in Jesuit casuistry.<sup>18</sup> In the early modern period, fidelity to Thomistic thought was not synonymous with archaism; on the contrary, authors, including many Jesuits, who based their economic thought on Thomas's (rather flexible) opinions were often accused of being "modern."

In a time when being true to antiquity was a fundamental intellectual requirement, many Jesuits, such as Valère Regnault (1545–1623), Matthieu de Moya (1610–84; known by the pseudonym of Amadeus Guimenius), and Gabriel Daniel (1649–1728), advanced the thesis that it was better to subscribe to contemporary moral theology, rather than strictly following the ancient authors.<sup>19</sup> In their view, contemporary theologians had the merit of understanding and appreciating the relationship between morality and concrete situations, and the influence that daily circumstances exercised on ethics, which is embodied in history.

### Leonard Lessius (1554–1623)

A number of Jesuits proved themselves to be quite open-minded concerning the economy and its concrete cases. The Jesuit Leonard Lessius, an author of great importance who lived in the Low Countries during the early modern

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- 17 See Giulio C. Giacobbe, "Il 'Commentarium de certitudine mathematicarum disciplinarum' di Alessandro Piccolomini," *Physis* 14 (1972): 162–93; Giacobbe, "Francesco Barozzi e la 'Quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum,'" *Physis* 14 (1972): 357–74; Giacobbe, "La riflessione metamatematica di Pietro Catena," *Physis* 15 (1973): 178–96; Giacobbe, "Epigoni nel Seicento della 'Quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum': Giuseppe Biancani," *Physis* 18 (1976): 5–40; Giacobbe, "Un gesuita progressista nella 'Quaestio de certitudine mathematicarum' rinascimentale: Benito Pereyra," *Physis* 19 (1977): 51–86. See also Ugo Baldini, *Legem impone subactis: Studi su filosofia e scienza dei gesuiti in Italia 1540–1632* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1992), especially ch. 1.
- 18 Lorraine Daston, "Probability and Evidence," in *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2:1108–44, here 1111.
- 19 See especially Jean-Louis Quantin, *Le catholicisme classique et les Pères de l'Église: Un retour aux sources (1669–1713)* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1999). On Valère Regnault, see Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 6:1591–96; and *Diccionario*, 4:3327; on Mateo Giménez de Moya, see Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 5:1349–56; *Diccionario*, 3:2755–56; on Gabriel Daniel see *Diccionario*, 2:1043–44.

period, is an interesting example of this attitude.<sup>20</sup> Lessius, who knew the problems of the nearby commercial center of Antwerp very well and was in close contact with various businessmen, justified the occupations of trading and finance from a moral perspective. In his view, the new commercial and financial professions could be perfectly ethical from a Christian perspective, without necessarily renouncing the possibility of gaining a profit.

Lessius attempted to distinguish usury from interest, even at a lexical level. The word “usury” carried a negative meaning, and was the profit obtained from a loan agreement. This profit was at the time forbidden and illicit, and deserved the negative label of “usury.” However, the extrinsic titles justify the charging of an indemnity, which can be defined as “interest”; Lessius stressed that the word “interest” was entering into common parlance. However, Lessius recognized licit extrinsic titles to such an extent that, for him, the charging of interest became legitimate in almost all cases. For this reason, Lessius’s detractors protested that such multiplication of extrinsic titles, literally applied, threatened the whole idea of banning loans at interest.<sup>21</sup> Lessius’s reflections are not completely new, having very ancient roots, but his ideas are often innovative on their own terms and their context.

A capital owner who lends his money to others deprives himself of the possibility of making it grow. Lessius relies on the idea that money per se is potentially capable of bearing fruit through the *lucrum latens* (latent profit), meaning that it carries within it a possibility for profit.<sup>22</sup> This potentiality must

20 See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 4:1726–51; *Diccionario*, 3:2336–37; *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Alfred Vacant (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1926), 9/1:453–54; Hugo Hurter, *Nomenclator literarius theologiae catholicae* (Innsbruck: Libraria Academica Wagneriana, 1907), 3:619–31; Victor Brants, “L’économie politique et sociale dans les écrits de L. Lessius (1554–1623),” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 13, no. 1 (1912): 73–89, 302–18; Charles Van Sull, *Léonard Lessius de la Compagnie de Jésus (1554–1623)* (Paris–Bruxelles: Édition du Museum Lessianum, 1930); Toon Van Houdt, “Lack of Money: A Re-appraisal of Lessius’ Contribution to the Scholastic Analysis of Money-Lending and Interest-Taking,” *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 5 (1998): 1–35; Martin W. F. Stone and Toon Van Houdt, “Probabilism and Its Methods: Leonardus Lessius and His Contribution to the Development of Jesuit Casuistry,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 75 (1999): 359–94; *Leonardus Lessius, De iustitia et iure: Vademezum zu einem Klassiker der spätscholastischen Wirtschaftsanalyse*, ed. Louis Baeck and Bertram Schefold (Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1999), in particular the essays by Louis Baeck, Barry Gordon, Toon Van Houdt, and Bertram Schefold.

21 Lessius is not the only Jesuit who professes this doctrine. See, for example, the Portuguese Sebastião de Abreu (1610–74), *Institutio parochi seu Speculum parochorum* (Évora: Typis Academicis, 1665); see Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 1:23–25; *Diccionario*, 1:8.

22 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 20, dub. 11, 195.



be considered in correctly estimating the value of money, and because of this potentiality, it is perfectly legitimate to lend it at a price.<sup>23</sup>

One reason identified by Lessius as justifying a lender charging interest on a loan is the *molestia* (troubles) associated with servicing loans, and he does not even exclude the possibility that a lender can morally charge interest even if a loan causes only minor inconvenience.<sup>24</sup> *Molestia*, in fact, has also a price in his eyes. It is necessary, however to carefully and cautiously analyze specific situations. The grounds for licit charging of interest are identified in the obligation to lend, which can cause real or at least psychological discomfort to the lender, who becomes subject to certain hopes and fears when the borrower asks for money. This is particularly true for one who engages in commercial or financial activities.

The fineness of Lessius's analysis is reflected in both his technical references to the practices of commerce and finance, as well as in his frequent reference to the daily experience of merchants and financiers, the latter of which shows a theologian's attention to the emotional aspects of lending.<sup>25</sup>

Among the extrinsic titles legitimating the collection of interest on a loan, Lessius draws attention to the *spes lucri*, meaning the hope for gain. The main question here concerns the required conditions for *spes lucri* to legitimate a contractual stipulation of interest: in Lessius's opinion, *spes lucri* is almost always legitimate in commercial loans.<sup>26</sup> In such loans, the lender deprives himself for a given time of a certain amount of money, from which he hopes to eventually benefit; this hope can be monetized as well as another sentiment: the *metus damni* (fear of loss). Traders and financiers hope and fear, and it is

23 "Illa pecunia, quae mihi necessaria est ad aliquod damnum impediendum, non solum mihi valet quanti ipsa nude considerata aestimatur; sed etiam quanti est carere tali damno. Non enim tantummodo aestimatur res secundum seipsam, sed etiam quatenus domino est causa certi boni consequendi vel mali vitandi. Unde licite potest vendi pluris quam per se valet" (Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 20, dub. 10, n. 72, 195; see also n. 75 and dub. 11, n. 80, 195).

24 "Si tamen illa ratio lucrandi est molestior, potest illam molestiam aestimare, et pro ea exigere compensationem. Similiter si minus ista alia lucretur, quam lucratus fuisset prosequendo negotiationem: potest enim tantum exigere, quantum prudens arbitrabitur, omnibus circumstantiis perpensis" (Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 20, dub. 11, n. 85, 196).

25 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 25, dub. 3, n. 26, especially 259.

26 *Ibid.*, 2, 20, dub. 4, n. 37, 191; on *lucrum cessans*, *ibid.*, dub. 11, n. 82, 196: "Bene tamen potest exigi pro spe lucri, quam ex illa pecunia acceperas, qua spe simul te privas, dum illam pecuniam tradis." On exchanges, *ibid.*, 2, 23, dub. 2, n. 7, 238. Rigorist Paul Gabriel Antoine mentions the *spes lucri*, pointing out that Saint Thomas did not consider it as an extrinsic title. See Paul Gabriel Antoine, *Theologia moralis universa* (Rome: Haeredes Balleonios, 1757), 491. On Antoine, see *Diccionario*, 1:196.

necessary to take into account the emotions embedded in the relationship between human beings and money; there is a direct relationship between men's expectations and the desire for profit. It is quite obvious, however, that psychological or affective elements cannot be quantified accurately, as some moralists would require.<sup>27</sup>

Lessius's approach should be analyzed in the context of the early modern church, and the main question is whether this Jesuit theologian took a radical turn from the predominant moral orientation of the church at the time. In a sense, the answer should be negative, since in Lessius's thought gain cannot be the fundamental aim, effort, or aspiration of a Christian's actions. On the other hand, Lessius's novelties are remarkable. This theologian, in fact, considers money as an instrument of work, neither sterile nor unproductive. On the contrary, for Lessius, money has virtual power and potentiality, which are well attested by the activities of those who know how to manage their capital and to use money to ensure (sometimes considerable) profit. The Jesuit highlights the analogy between money and the sowing of grain: through human labor the soil gives its crops and, in the same way, capital generates profit. Money produces fruits *per industriam*, that is to say by the industry of the trader, the banker, or the merchant.<sup>28</sup> The passage from potentiality to action thus requires human activity. As soon as man engages in commerce and business, money is no longer sterile, and is thus a tool for merchants. In this sense, Lessius depicted more modern scenarios for the development of business and financial activities. Work (including forms of trading) can generate profits, which simply represent a reward for such activity.

The broad tolerance shown by Jesuit authors for lending at interest was not grounded on a contempt for pastoral care; quite the contrary. In this regard, Martino Fornari (1547–1612) wrote the very interesting *Trattato primo de' cambi* (First treatise on exchanges).<sup>29</sup> He justified his interest in the matter primarily

27 Lainez (1512–1565) included not only troubles and risks for obtaining the restitution of credit, but also “timor et anxietas iusta,” meaning fear and anxiety. See *Summa eorum quae per R. P. Jacobum Laynez sac. Societatis Jesu e sugesto proposita sunt populo genuensi circa mercatorum frequentiorum negotia*, in Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. R 97 sup, 16<sup>r</sup>).

28 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 20, dub. 11, n. 80, 195: “pecunia illa, quam mutuas alteri, quantum subest industriae tuae ad lucrum ex ea faciendum, pluris tibi valet, quam ipsa per se considerata, est enim veluti semen foecundum lucri per industriam, in quo lucrum ipsum, virtute continetur: ergo plus pro ea exigi potest, quam ipsa per se valeant, patet consequentia, quia dum illam tradis, etiam lucrum in illa latens tradere, censeris, eo enim te spolias.”

29 Martino Fornari, *Trattato primo de' cambi*, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. S 95 sup, 386<sup>r</sup>–399<sup>v</sup>. See also Fornari, *Tractatus de cambio*, *ibid.*, 401<sup>r</sup>–426<sup>r</sup>. The author was a professor of the theology at the Collegio Romano. Fornari was a probabilist. He stated for example (392<sup>r</sup>): “Nelle

by reference to pastoral considerations, showing sensitivity to certain features and modalities of financial activities. Lessius also took into account the doubts that hounded contemporary merchants and financiers, and the scruples of conscience of the people who needed to make their capital grow in order to live. People striving to be good Catholics posed their problems to shepherds of souls, especially their confessors.<sup>30</sup> Like many other authors, Lessius made a distinction between theory and practice. He stated that from a theoretical point of view, a loan of capital almost always corresponds to a missed profit for the lender, as long as the money was not intended to be kept safe but to be used. However, he stressed that it is necessary to be very cautious: what is legitimate in theory is not always so in practice. The difficulty in translating theoretical principles into practice causes pastoral concerns to emerge.<sup>31</sup> Lessius aimed at striking the right balance between excessive indulgence and equally excessive rigor. This inclination to *mediocritas* (moderation), meaning an emphasis on the middle ground between two excessive tendencies, and a flexible yet careful consideration of financial issues, were characteristic of the early modern Jesuit milieu.<sup>32</sup>

### In the Age of Triumphant Rigorism: Jesuits under Attack

In 1760s Lyon, some people feared that Oratorians would replace the Jesuits, who were more open-minded on moral economy, because “a single word

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cose dubbiose ciascuno debbe seguire la parte più favorevole, essendo più pronto ad assolvere che a condannare, non giudicando che ci sia inganno dove non è manifesto, anzi essendovi opinioni di dottori dall'una e dall'altra parte, può il fedele appigliarsi dove li pare.”

30 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 25, dub. 3, n. 31, 261. “Nihilominus sentio esse expediens, praesertim hoc tempore, et ad salutem animarum et ad commodum Principis et ad compendium viduarum et pupillorum, hanc formam non prohiberi, sed permitti. Quod ad salutem animarum expediat, probatur. Quia si haec forma prohibeatur, subtrahetur plurimis, qui redditus non habent, nec venales inveniunt, ratio vivendi salva sorte, quam tamen omnes conservatam volunt. Itaque conferrent se ad iniquas artes, ad occultas usuras, ad fraudes emptionum et venditionum, ad cambia sicca et ficta, ad mohatras, monopolia, furta. Alii paucis annis sortem consument, sicque filiae non poterunt honeste elocari, nec filii in studis liberalibus ali; aliaque plurima incommoda sequentur [...], quod enim ad commodum viduarum, pupillorum et plurimorum aliorum, qui alia ratione fructuose suam pecuniam non possunt impendere, expediat hunc contractum permittere, constat ex dictis. Alioquin consument sortem et tandem redigentur ad inopiam, vel ad turpia lucra se convertent.”

31 For example, Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 23, dub. 7, 244.

32 See, for example, Laínez, *Summa*, 2<sup>v</sup>–11<sup>r</sup>.

pronounced by a priest of the Oratory can instantly tear a hundred thousand crowns from trade, and reduce more than fifty families to misery.”<sup>33</sup> Lyon was in general a lively commercial center, and after a period of decline, the city once more became a place of both business and of intellectual discussion on economic themes.<sup>34</sup> In 1675, Minim Father André de Colonia (1617–88) challenged the idea that the commercial practices and customs in force in Lyon were of recent origin; he also aimed at demonstrating the currency of these practices in business and financial centers throughout Europe.<sup>35</sup> A number of works concerning commercial subjects were printed in Lyon during the seventeenth century. In the 1650s–60s, the Jesuit Joseph Gibalin (1592–1671) published dynamic and innovative works on lending at interest and trade.<sup>36</sup> Gibalin asserted that “the up-to-date loan, as is necessary for trade, is legitimate in the eyes of God”: several authorities, among them Jesuits, were invoked to support this principle.

However, changes began in the mid-seventeenth century. As Jean-Louis Quantin wrote, “Something crucial was played out at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the victory of severe morality in the Catholic Church.”<sup>37</sup> This period was marked by the ascendancy of various theological controversies.

The development of Dominican thought in this regard is significant. This order had shown remarkable openness to societal developments, especially in economic matters. However, in 1656 (also the year of the first of Blaise Pascal’s [1623–62] *Provincial Letters*), the General Chapter of the Dominican order issued an *admonitio* (admonition), according to which the Dominicans were forbidden to spread “new” ideas in matters of moral theology, by which was

33 Memories quoted by G. Guitton, “En marge de l’histoire du prêt à intérêt: Lyon jaloux d’Anvers et d’Amsterdam (1654–1678),” *Nouvelle Revue théologique* 75 (1953): 59–69, here 67.

34 Claude Langlois, “La morale économique en procès dans la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: ‘De l’usure’ de Jean Joseph Rossignol (1787–1804),” in *Religions en transition dans la seconde moitié du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Louis Châtellier (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000), 45–57, here 47.

35 André de Colonia, *Eclaircissement sur le légitime commerce des intérêts* (Lyon: Antoine Cellier fils, 1675), pages are unnumbered.

36 Joseph of Gibalin, *De usuris, commerciis, deque aequitate et usu fori Lugdunensis [...] tractatio bipartita, utriusque foro perutilis; ex iure naturali, ecclesiastico et civili, gallico et romano* (Lyon: P. Borde, L. Arnaud, C. Rigaud, 1656–57), 2; Gibalin, *De universa rerum humanarum negotiatione tractatio scientifica, utriusque foro perutilis* (Lyon: P. Borde, L. Arnaud, G. Barbier, 1663). On the author, see Guitton, *En marge de l’histoire du prêt à intérêt*; *Diccionario*, 2:1726–27.

37 Jean-Louis Quantin, *Le rigorisme chrétien* (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 19.

meant the so-called “large”—in the sense of open-minded and permissive—doctrines.<sup>38</sup> On this occasion, Pope Alexander VII (1599–1667) expressed his anxiety over the diffusion of *opinionoes laxae, novae ac parum tutae* (lax, novel, and little safe opinions).<sup>39</sup> This admonition seemed to be a renunciation of the orientation of the Dominicans; in fact, Thomas Aquinas’s considerations and texts by late Scholastic authors, such as Francisco de Vitoria (1483–1546) and Luis López (1530–95), on economics show a remarkable sensitivity and open-mindedness. Perhaps, as Jesuit Niccolò Ghezzi (1683–1766) stated in the mid-eighteenth century, there had been among the Dominicans an intellectually imprecise confusion between laxism and probabilism.<sup>40</sup> In any case, it is evident that the Dominicans feared promoting large doctrines, or being excessively open to secular realities; these concerns eventually led the order to repudiate its past.

The increasingly pronounced opposition to any large doctrines or religious innovation manifested itself in several attacks against the Jesuits. The *Apolo-gie pour les casuistes contre les calomnies des jansénistes* (Defence of casuists against the calumnies of Jansenists) by the Jesuit Georges Pirot (1599–1659), published anonymously in Paris in 1657, was censured by the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne; two years later (after the author’s death), the book was condemned by the Congregation of the Index.<sup>41</sup> Pirot’s work was considered to be dangerously innovative, especially on economic issues. This was not the only case—in 1641, for example, a book by the Jesuit Étienne Bauny (1564–1649) had been condemned by the Faculty of Theology of the Sorbonne.<sup>42</sup> Some authors in favor of the Germanic contract were also targeted by the rigorists. In the 1670s, for instance, the works of the Jesuit Jacques Tiron (also known as

38 Ibid., 76. See also Jean-Louis Quantin, “Le rigorisme: Sur le basculement de la théologie morale catholique au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Église de France* 89 (2003): 23–43; T. Deman, “Probabilisme,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 8/1:417–619; for further discussion on this subject in the seventeenth century see Nicolò Ghezzi, *Saggio de’ supplementi teologici, morali e critici di cui abbisogna la Storia del probabilismo e del rigorismo scritta dal p. Daniello Concina* (Lucca: fratelli Marescandoli, 1745), 175, 287.

39 Pietro Elli, *Il cardinale Fortunato Tamburini da Modena e il suo De conscientia* (Rome: Abbazia di S. Paolo fuori le mura, 1979), 179.

40 Ghezzi, *Saggio de’ supplementi*.

41 Jacques M. Grès-Gayer, *Le gallicanisme de Sorbonne: Chroniques de la Faculté de théologie de Paris (1657–1688)* (Paris: H. Champion, 2002), especially 36–52; Franz H. Reusch, *Der Index der verbotenen Bücher: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen und Literatursgeschichte* (Aalen: Scientia-Verlag, 1967), 2/1, 486 (first edition Bonn: Neudruck der Ausg., 1883–1885); Deman, *Probabilisme*, 515–18; Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 6:856–63.

42 Quantin, *Rigorisme*, 74.

Tyran or Tiran, 1626–94) were withdrawn from circulation after their publication, due to the Society of Jesus's internal policy disagreements, and a fear that a campaign against the Jesuits was being prepared within the church.<sup>43</sup>

Condemnation of several laxist propositions dated back to 1679. In 1687, Pope Innocent XI backed the election of Tirso González de Santalla as superior general of the Society of Jesus, in order to oppose the Society's probabilistic tendencies and force a change, despite the divisions and conflicts that would result.<sup>44</sup> Resistance, however, did not cease, resurfacing during the pontificate of Pope Innocent XII (1615–1700). This pope, not particularly inclined to rigorism, gave his protection to the Jesuit Paolo Segneri Senior, who not only supported probabilistic doctrines, but was also one of the most tenacious opponents of the rigorist Tirso González within the Society of Jesus.<sup>45</sup>

At that time, several Jesuit thinkers preferred not to define themselves as innovators. For some of them, this change of attitude had a deep impact, and resulted in their no longer attempting to reconcile Christian truth with human activities. Profound preoccupations hounded the Jesuits at this time, and they often surrendered to their adversaries' ideas instead of defending themselves against accusations. Many probabilist authors also began to outline the necessity of thinking in a more nuanced way, accommodating differences, and in the final analysis elaborating the lines of a new probabilism.

We have the impression that Jesuit theologians were seeking to demonstrate that their moral theology was in line with the doctrine accepted and promoted in Rome, and that they were not advocating for the propositions condemned by Alexander VII and Innocent XI. One of the most severe criticisms directed at the Jesuits concerned the Roman censures; they were accused of downplaying such condemnations with the excuse that the pontiffs had only ratified decisions made by the Holy Office.<sup>46</sup> It is therefore easy to understand the Jesuits'

43 Guitton, *En marge de l'histoire du prêt à intérêt*, 64.

44 Bruno Neveu, "Culture religieuse et aspirations réformistes à la cour d'Innocent XI," in Neveu, *Érudition et religion aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: A. Michel, 1994), 105–74. On González, see *Diccionario*, 2:1644–50.

45 Vecchi, *Correnti religiose*.

46 "Molti Probabilisti nel vedere il loro sistema per ogni parte leso, e mortalmente ferito dai due decreti di Alessandro VII e d'Innocenzo XI non sapendo qual altro partito prendere, si fecero a mettere in contesa la Pontificia autorità di questi Decreti. Produssero in campo un bizzarrissimo ritrovamento, di cui è mai sempre fecondo il Probabilismo. Questi decreti, diceano, non sono del Papa, come Papa, e come Capo della Chiesa Cattolica: ma sono del Papa, come capo della Inquisizione romana. Ora il Papa, come capo di quel Tribunale, se ha autorità, agguisa di ogni altro Principe, di comandare e di obbligare i sudditi anche in coscienza, non ha però il privilegio della infallibilità, la quale lui conviene

desire to proclaim and demonstrate their fidelity to the supreme pontiff, recognized as the supreme judge. It should also be noted here that discussions focusing on the value of Roman judgments and those relating to moral theology became closely linked.

It is worth mentioning two examples: the Jesuits Juan de Cárdenas y Céspedes (1613–84) and Domenico Viva (1648–1726).<sup>47</sup> Both wanted to show that the Society respected Rome's censures, but at the same time they developed a form of moderate probabilism, intended both to demonstrate their conformity with the Roman theological orientation and to mark a difference from laxism. Cárdenas is the author of the very ample *Crisis theologica* (The theological crisis), the fourth part of which, first published posthumously in 1687, is devoted to commentary on propositions condemned by Innocent XI in 1679.<sup>48</sup>

### The Value of Money

Discussions about the value of money are particularly interesting for the purposes of this study. The rigorist pope Innocent XI (1611–89) had radically denied that the simple availability of cash could be remunerated, on the grounds that it did not have a specific value.<sup>49</sup> Juan Caramuel (1606–82) in his *Theologia* (Theology) had supported the condemned thesis, and several other theologians, among them a few Jesuits, had also proclaimed that the value of money increased when, for monetary or commercial reasons, it had become scarce (*inopia* or *caerentia pecuniae*, i.e., a lack of money). In this way, money

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come capo della Chiesa universale." Daniele Concina, *Della storia del probabilismo*, 1, 77–79, quoted in Emanuele Colombo, *Un gesuita inquieto: Carlo Antonio Casnedi (1643–1725) e il suo tempo* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2007), 175. Concina attributes these doctrines to Jesuit de Moya and Carmelite Raymond de Lumbier; they were adopted successively by Juan de Cárdenas and Carlo Antonio Casnedi.

47 Domenico Viva, *Damnatae theses ab Alexandro VII, Innocentio XI et Alexandro VIII necnon Jansenii ad theologiam trutinam revocatae iuxta pondus sanctuarii* (Padua: Joannes Manfrè, 1723; 1708<sup>1</sup>). See *Diccionario*, 4:3990–91.

48 Juan de Cárdenas, *Crisis theologica: Sive disputationes selectae ex Morali Theologia, in quattuor partes distinctae* (Venice: Pezzana, 1710), first edition 1702; *Diccionario*, 1:654.

49 The proposition condemned is as follows: "Cum numerata pecunia pretiosior sit numeranda, and nullus sit, qui non maioris faciat pecuniam praesentem quam futuream, potest creditor aliquid ultra sortem a mutuuario exigere et eo titulo ab usura excusari." ("Propositiones LXV damnatae in Decr. S. Officii 2 mart. 1679," in *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Heinrich Denzinger and Adolf Schönmetzer [Barcelona: Herder, 1976], prop. 41, 462, 214).

was considered to be a good (*merx*). These theologians were often acquainted with financial centers where contemporary practices of exchange were common. Such was the case of the Augustinian Azpilcueta, according to whom the law of supply and demand determined the price of money.<sup>50</sup> Later, in the second half of the seventeenth century, Minimite Emmanuel Maignan (1601–76) affirmed that being able to dispose of a certain quantity of money was to be considered in evaluating the price of money. The scarcity of money was for him, therefore, a reason to establish an extrinsic title.<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, several Jesuits were on the frontline of the discussion about this subject. Martino Fornari wrote about exchanges as a phenomenon of purchase and sale, and did not even deny that they were a *contractus innominatus* (innominate contract). If money is merchandise, it follows that it has value and price directly connected to its abundance or shortage; therefore it has a “market” price. This Jesuit stressed that money should be considered from two different perspectives: first, from the formal point of view in its *proprio e principale* (own and main) use, as *prezzo della mercanzia* (the price of goods), and secondly, from the material point of view, as merchandise itself. According to Fornari, the latter constitutes a secondary, but totally legitimate use, since it does not contradict the nature of money.<sup>52</sup>

For Lessius there is an intrinsic logic of trade, which is not necessarily incompatible with Christianity and can ultimately contribute to the general good, even indirectly. In view of these considerations, Lessius considered money to be merchandise, and thus something that could be the subject of a contract. Money not only expresses price and value for commercial purchases, but it can also be purchasable merchandise per se.<sup>53</sup> In his opinion,

50 Alberto Ullastres, “Las ideas económicas de Martín de Azpilcueta,” in Martín de Azpilcueta, *Comentario resolutorio de cambios* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1965), lvii–cxvii.

51 See Vismara, *Oltre l'usura* (especially chapter 4).

52 Fornari, *Trattato primo de 'cambi*.

53 “Nam pecunia non solum est praetium et mensura rerum venalium, sed etiam potest esse merx venalis: tum ratione materiae, quae melior vel deterior est, tum ratione commoditatis conservandi, deferendi, numerandi; tum ratione distantiae localis.” (Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, lib. 2, cap. 23, dub. 1, p. 238). Regarding exchanges, the Milanese Oblate and renowned theologian Martino Bonacina refers to Lessius. “Pecuniae in cambio [...] non considerantur ut pecuniae, sed potius ut quaedam merces; pretium autem mercium crescit ob multitudinem emptorum et pecuniae, et ob raritatem venditorum, et ex opposito decrescit ob paucitatem emptorum et copiam venditorum, consequenter etiam aestimatio accidentalis pecuniae crescit ob multitudinem accipientium ad cambium



cash was undoubtedly of much greater market value than “virtual” money (e.g. bills of exchange).<sup>54</sup> For this reason he justified certain customs practiced by merchants in Antwerp that other theologians considered indefensible. Open-minded theologians like Lessius had to be cautious; being overly tolerant on these questions carried the risk of giving the reins to merchants, providing opposing theologians the opportunity to charge that a theory was “novel.”<sup>55</sup>

The Jesuit Luis de Molina (1535–1600) also considered money to be an instrument of perpetual profit (*instrumentum persistens lucri*), comparing it to merchandise.<sup>56</sup> His commentaries reveal an exploration of concrete situations, rather than a prior theological deduction.<sup>57</sup> Years later, another Jesuit, Juan de Lugo (1583–1660), proposed similar ideas. Lugo was particularly open to the possibility of charging interest.<sup>58</sup> In his *De iustitia et iure* (On justice and jurisprudence), he adheres to Lessius’s ideas and expresses open opinions on economic issues, from extrinsic titles to exchanges. These arguments lent themselves to further developments, as evidenced by Grotius’s (1583–1645) work. These developing attitudes resulted in a more modern conception of money. At the end of the eighteenth century, Nicolas Bergier (1718–90) wrote that money had become actual merchandise, and not a simple expression of value.<sup>59</sup>

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et ob raritatem pecuniae, decrescit vero ob paucitatem accipientium et multitudinem pecuniae” (Martino Bonacina, *Tractatus de restitutione et de contractibus*, Disp. III, quaest. V, punctum unicum, in Bonacina, *Opera omnia* [Venice: Sumptibus Societatis, 1683], 2:355–697, here 542, 544); see *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 11:466–69; Adriano Bernareggi, “Martino Bonacina ed altri scrittori di teologia morale,” *Humilitas* 1 (1929): 244–52, 278–83.

- 54 Lessius, *De iustitia et iure*, 2, 20, dub. 11, n. 96, 197: “Pluris valet id quod certum est et praesens, quam quod futurum et incertum.” *Ibid.*, 23, dub. 4, n. 30, 241.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 2, 20, dub. 14, from 199. See Van Houdt, “Lack of Money.”
- 56 Javier Hervada, *Historia de la ciencia del derecho natural* (Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1991), 228; Giovanni Ambrosetti, “Diritto privato ed economia nella Seconda Scolastica,” in *La Seconda Scolastica nella formazione del diritto privato moderno*, ed. Paolo Grossi (Milano: Giuffrè, 1973), 23–52.
- 57 See *Diccionario*, 3:2716–17.
- 58 See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 5:176–180; Gaetano Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica* (Venice: Tipografia Emiliana, 1843), 19, 221; *Diccionario*, 3:2438–39; Luciano Dalle Molle, *Il contratto di cambio nei moralisti dal secolo XIII alla metà del secolo XVII* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1954), 137–42.
- 59 “L’argent a une valeur qu’il n’avoit pas autrefois; il est devenu une marchandise, et non un simple signe des valeurs” (Nicolas Bergier, *Dictionnaire de théologie, Usure* [Paris: Gauthier frères, 1829], 255); see Jean Delumeau, *Préface*, in *Un théologien au siècle des Lumières: Bergier; Correspondance avec l’abbé Trouillet 1770–1790*, ed. Ambroise Jobert (Lyon: Centre André Latreille, 1987), 9–12.

Rigorists could not accept such views; they held them, on the contrary, to be a clear sign of theological drift. Many Jesuit theologians became concerned and sought to distance themselves from these novel approaches to the subject of money. Jesuit Paul Gabriel Antoine (1679–1743), who was inclined to rigorism, stated that the proposition that had been condemned by Innocent XI was untrue on the grounds that the value of money does not change over time; the possessor of money does not gain by keeping it locked in a safe.<sup>60</sup>

Cárdenas's attacks in the *Crisis* were especially directed at the thought of the Cistercian scholar Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (1606–82), who was generally considered a laxist, from whom it was important to differ. Caramuel had denied that the pope could modify the nature of things, and for this reason assigned little importance to the pontiff's decrees.<sup>61</sup>

Cárdenas supported only a few extrinsic titles: he expressly spoke of *lucrum cessans* (ceasing profits), *damnum emergens* (direct loss), and *periculum sortis* (risk of the loss of capital), but he did not accept the idea of *potentia lucrandi* (earning potential), which he considered *frustranea* (worthless). He also rejected the principle that allowed a lender to require an interest rate of five percent in the absence of any extrinsic title. He refused, moreover, the thesis that money is an instrument of work. According to him these theories, and in particular the idea that there was no transfer of property (*translatio domini*) in lending money, led to the approval of every kind of usury: this accusation was precisely what the Jesuits were charged with. As Cárdenas manifested his adherence to the decrees of the sovereign pontiff by bluntly attacking Caramuel, he also wanted to show that the latter did not share the ideas of Luis de Molina, Leonard Lessius, or Juan de Lugo. At a time when the Society was facing growing difficulties, it was necessary to adopt a defensive posture against outside threats.

### Conclusion: The Open-Minded Orientation and Caution of the Jesuits

The fears of the probabilists, and especially the Jesuits, the rise of rigorism, and a general concern for the spiritual state of Catholics encouraged a deep pastoral rigor. It is worth noticing that, in any case, in the sixteenth and seventeenth

60 “Mille nummi per se et secluso omni extrinseco, non pluris valent hodie quam intra duos vel plures annos, cum eorum valor per tempus non crescat: nec pecunia praesens est utilior possidenti, si mansura sit otiosa in arca” (Antoine, *Theologia moralis*, 490).

61 “Quia non datur in mundo autoritas, ut nigra merito dicantur alba” (quoted in Colombo, *Un gesuita inquieto*, 209).

centuries, the Jesuits who professed “large” doctrines in their theological works had been, conversely, quite severe in their sermons and catechisms. The archbishop of Milan, Carlo Borromeo (1538–84), who exhibited strong pastoral rigor, was very interested in moral economy. The first rector of the great seminary of Milan, the Jesuit Francesco Adorno (1533–86), knew these problems very well (he was born in Genoa, a lively commercial center). Adorno, who was also Borromeo’s confessor and spiritual director, analyzed the difficulties that mercantile activities, especially exchanges, led to.<sup>62</sup> It is possible to hypothesize that Borromeo’s pastoral concern was at the origin of his little treatise *De cambiis* (On exchanges). With a view to the publication of the *Instructions for confessors*, his vicar Nicolò Ormaneto (1515–77) had been asked to inquire with merchants and *uomini pratici di questi maneggi* (men who are skilled in these practices) to gain a better understanding of their problems. Later, Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615) welcomed the archbishop’s positive assessment of Adorno’s work.<sup>63</sup> The latter had underlined the need for great caution, especially since it was the tendency of scholars and men religious to accept prevailing financial practices without criticism.

A century later, at the turn of the eighteenth century, pastoral strictness became more pronounced. It is remarkable that the Jesuit Paolo Segneri insisted that lenders should be careful not to distort reality by invoking extrinsic titles that they do not possess. Extrinsic titles should not be used as a pretext to present as legitimate contracts and financial operations, which in fact were not.<sup>64</sup>

This rigor was sometimes, however, more apparent than real. In his catechism, the Jesuit Antonio Ardia (1654–1724) exhorted believers not to be too indulgent with themselves and to consider carefully whether the extrinsic

62 The treatise *De cambiis* is conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. S 103 sup, 330–60<sup>r</sup>. The main focus of the treatise is “An cambium bisuntinum sit licitum”; 358<sup>v</sup>– 360<sup>r</sup>, *Brevis resolutio in materia cambiiorum*. See *Diccionario*, 1:16.

63 Bernareggi, *Martino Bonacina*, from 244.

64 “So che si difendono con que’ titoli loro tanto speciosi, di lucro cessante e di danno emergente: ma non so se questi titoli si truovino però sempre di verità ne loro contratti; e dubito fortemente che sieno lor molte volte un semplice uncino, di cui si vagliono per tirare a forza que’ frutti, che non arrivano a cogliere con la mano.” Paolo Segneri, *Il cristiano istruito nella sua legge: Ragionamenti morali* (Venice: Paolo Baglioni, 1716; 1686<sup>1</sup>), 241. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 7:1050–89; *Diccionario*, 4:3547–48; Paolo Segneri, *un classico della tradizione cristiana*, ed. Rocco Paternostro and Andrea Fedi (New York: Forum Italicum, 1999); Ezio Bolis, *L’uomo tra peccato, grazia e libertà nell’opera di Paolo Segneri S.J. (1624–1694): Emblema di un approccio “pratico-morale” alla teologia* (Milan: Pontificio seminario lombardo, 1996).

titles they invoke really exist in a specific case.<sup>65</sup> In this regard, he wrote about the positions of the Holy See: *Veggiamo in questo punto così gelosa la Sede di S. Pietro* (We notice that the Holy See is quite jealous on this point).<sup>66</sup> However, in the same work he clearly distinguished interest from usury and declared the triple contract to be entirely legitimate.

A very interesting problem concerns the *titulus legis civilis* (title of civil law), which many Jesuits were inclined to recognize as totally legitimate. This extrinsic title was grounded on the sovereign's right to authorize the collection of interest for the sake of the public good. In theological faculties such as Pont-à-Mousson and Ingolstadt, this practice had become manifest and it was even more evident in the eighteenth century.<sup>67</sup> The importance assigned to the common good made many theologians consider business and finance to be indispensable activities not only for individual wellbeing, but also for the state and for society. The partisans of this title therefore justified it on explicitly political grounds.

An open orientation regarding the use of money emerges in the works of many Jesuits, although often less clearly in the age of rigorism than at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Issues related to lending at interest and economic morality, and, above all, Jesuit authority and practice in economic matters, were among the reasons for the attack against the Society of Jesus in the eighteenth century. Especially following the so-called Lavalette affair (Antoine Lavalette, 1708–67), the Jesuits were denounced as “merchants and usurers.” In spite of this, many Jesuits (or, more precisely, ex-Jesuits, because of the suppression) committed themselves to developing these themes at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This was the case for Jean-Joseph Rossignol (1726–1817) and Giovan Vincenzo Bolgeni (1733–1811), two well-known authors who contributed to moral economy by arguing in favor

65 Antonio Ardia, *Tromba catechistica, cioè spiegazione della dottrina cristiana* (Venice: Giacomo Tomasini, 1724; 1713<sup>1</sup>), 334. See Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 1:524–26. It is originally a text by J. Martínez de la Parra (1691); see also Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 5:635–38.

66 Ardia, *Tromba catechistica*, 334.

67 On Pont-à-Mousson, see René Taveneaux, “Les controverses sur le prêt à intérêt: L'usure en Lorraine au temps de la Réforme catholique,” *Annales de l'Est* 24 (1974): 187–215, here 193, 215; on Ingolstadt, see the theologians, Pichler, Zech, and Barth. See Langlois, *La morale économique en procès*; Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, 227, 353. For exploring further Pichler's ideas on the subject see *Ius canonicum practice explicatum, seu decisiones casuum selectorum* (Ingolstadt: Sumptibus Viduae Joan. Andreae de la Haye, 1746), 5, clxiii, 639–43. Rigorist Daniele Concina defined his theology “nova, prodigiosa atque inaudita”: see Daniele Concina, *Usura contractus trini dissertationibus historico-theologicis demonstrata, adversus mollioris ethicae casuistas et Nicolaum Broedersen* (Rome: Typographia Palladis, 1746), 269.

of “liberal” theories. After the period of the triumph of rigorism had ended, topics widely discussed in the first half of the seventeenth century resurfaced, with new accents, within the Society and the Catholic Church, which were profoundly changed.<sup>68</sup>

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68 Giovan Vincenzo Bolgeni, *Dissertazione undecima fra le morali sopra l'impiego del denaro e l'usura* (Lugano: Tipografia Veladini e comp., 1835), 134: “Se una volta deposti i pregiudizi e la sciocca paura della morale rilassata si accorderanno i teologi a riconoscere un vero contratto di locazione onesta e giusta ne' contratti di danaro ad interesse, cesseranno i raggiri di parole e si faciliteranno tali contratti espressi con sincerità; e da ciò nascerà un vantaggio grandissimo alla umana società, ed alla pace della coscienza.” This work, published after the death of the author, had been composed in 1782–83; on Bolgeni, see Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque*, 1:1611–22, especially 1621; *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 11:274–77; *Dizionario*, 1:476.