

The Jesuit Province of France on the Eve of its Destruction in 1762

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1. Introduction

The Province of France, with its centre at Paris, was the pre-eminent province of the French Assistancy of the Society of Jesus, a distinction it had enjoyed since the early seventeenth century.¹ The oldest of the five French provinces, in the eighteenth century it remained the largest, with foundations located throughout the north-western one-third of the kingdom, and more Jesuits listed in its catalogues than any other French province.² It was in possession

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1 The Assistancy of France, created in 1608 during the reign of Henri IV, was made up of the Provinces of France (established in 1552), Aquitaine (carved out of the Province of France in 1564), Lyon (detached from Aquitaine in 1582), Toulouse (located between Aquitaine and Lyon, in 1608) and Champagne (detached from the Province of France in 1616). French Jesuit institutions in French territory in the Low Countries, acquired as a result of Louis XIV's wars, remained part of the Assistancy of Germany. See Delattre, *Les établissements*, 2: 526–32. The Assistant, resident in Rome, was a senior member of the Society and usually a former provincial; in 1750–62, he came from the Province of France. See ARSI, *Franc.* 49, *Gall.* 116 and *Epp.* NN. 20a.

2 For much of the eighteenth century, the catalogues of the Province of France listed some 900 Jesuits, including members of other provinces serving in Paris, other institutions in France and in overseas missions. That the Province of France was still the largest in the French Assistancy in 1761 is confirmed in Vivier, *Status Assistentiae Galliae*, v–vi and 121–47. Vivier's version of the 1761 catalogue of the Province of France, which lists 711 members, is invaluable. Nevertheless, using the five previous annual catalogues and later documentation in French state archives, 712 members have been identified (including three whom Vivier did not include and omitting two of his subjects who were members of other provinces).

of the most famous French Jesuit institutions, including, in Paris, the professed house, with its magnificent church, and the college of Louis-le-Grand, with its extraordinary library. Beyond Paris, among many imposing colleges, that of Henri IV at La Flèche stands out because of its great size and the fine proportions of its structure.³ The design and ubiquity of such institutions, the decoration of their public rooms, and the furnishings of their churches and chapels were visual reminders that, at mid-eighteenth century, the Jesuits were deeply entrenched in education and in the religious and cultural life of the capital and of provincial towns.

Members of the Province included the best known of all French Jesuits. As preachers and confessors, significant numbers were in evidence at the king's court and among the most exalted ranks of Parisian and provincial society. Many were involved in the education of the male elites and other young men in Paris and in eighteen provincial towns. They included the provincial, the superior of the professed house, rectors of the Society's most prestigious colleges, highly regarded preachers, confessors and retreat masters, and widely respected teachers, scholars, writers and publicists. Through the Marian sodalities attached to most of their institutions, well-known Jesuits extended their connections with students beyond the classroom and study-hall; they also continued their affiliation with former students, and established relationships with other major figures in the towns.⁴ By conducting retreats and missions within their own or other institutions, they maintained links with a yet wider public.

By mid-century, ominous developments bearing on the future of the Society in France were also taking place. While most Jesuits lived and worked in ways that would have been familiar to earlier generations, forces opposed to the Society were gathering strength in Paris. Jesuit intellectuals had enjoyed respect as active participants in Enlightenment debates, and the Society had weathered *philosophes'* attacks on Jesuit education, the priesthood,

3 The novitiate, professed house, the church of the professed house and the colleges of La Flèche, Bourges, Blois and Rennes, were all designed or modified by the widely admired Province of Lyon architect, the temporal coadjutor, Etienne Martellange, * 22.XII.1569 Lyon, SJ 24.II.1590 Avignon, † 3.X.1641 Paris. (*Sommervogel*, 5:614).

4 Jesuit Marian sodalities/confraternities in Province of France institutions included those for students, gentlemen, bourgeois, artisans, servants, and sometimes for matrons. Loach, "Revolutionary Pedagogues?", underscores the significance of Jesuit confraternities in urban life.

and religion itself.⁵ But the Jesuits apparently underestimated the power of a group of Jansenist jurists in the *parlements*, for whom the Jansenist–Jesuit conflict of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had not been resolved with the papal condemnation of Jansenist beliefs in the bull *Unigenitus* in 1713. These politically motivated Jansenists were able, by the late 1750s and early 1760s, to gain significant support in the *parlements* and also at various levels of society and in the Church. They wanted to bring about an end to the Jesuits’ involvement in French education, as well as in ecclesiastical and secular politics — and to destroy the Society of Jesus itself.⁶ They initiated their case against the Jesuits in the *parlement* of Paris in 1760, at a time when Louis XV was unable to offer royal protection.⁷ It was in this setting that the Jesuit leaders in Paris made a series of mistakes whereby they placed the future of the Province — and ultimately of all 3300 Jesuits in France — in the hands of their sworn enemies.⁸ Jesuit institutions were seized

- 5 Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers*; Burson, “Between Power and Enlightenment”; and Northeast, *The Parisian Jesuits and the Enlightenment* (especially 176–218). See also, McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, 2: 509–29 on the Jesuits’ importance in religious and cultural life.
- 6 Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits*. See also the summary in McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France*, 2: 530–61.
- 7 For Louis XIV (r. 1661–1715), the Society of Jesus was an integral part of the Gallican or French national church in which, in secular matters, the king took precedence over the pope. In the lengthy theological quarrel between the Jansenists and Jesuits, he supported the Jesuits. Both he and his successor had Jesuit confessors at court who were thought to influence royal policy. Louis XV’s inability to protect the Jesuits from their enemies arose largely from his dependence on the *parlement* of Paris for approval of taxes intended to finance the Seven Years War. In return, the king did not intervene in the legal process against the Jesuits. See Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 1–5, and Thompson, “The French Jesuit Leaders and the Destruction of the Jesuit Order”, 242. Cf. Fumaroli, “Between the Rigorist Hammer”, 682–87, on the politics that resulted in the destruction of the Society in France. See Martin, *Henry III and the Jesuit Politicians*; Worcester, “Jesuit Dependence on the French Monarchy”, 106–15; and Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy*, on the Jesuits’ relations with the king in earlier centuries.
- 8 The Jesuit leadership of the Province failed to prevent the superior of Martinique from engaging in commerce and commercial speculation. The activities of Antoine Lavalette, * 26. X.1708 or 21.X.1709 Martin diocese of Vabres, SJ 10.XII.1725 Toulouse, † 13.XII.1767 Toulouse (ARSI, *Franc.* 21: 1757, f. 105 and *Sommervogel*, 4:1576) led to the bankruptcy of his mission and of his creditors in Marseille. When the leaders appealed a case involving Lavalette’s debts to the *parlement* of Paris, their enemies used the appeal to destroy the Society in

and members of the Province were dispersed in 1762 as a result of legal proceedings in the *parlement* of Paris and in the neighbouring *parlements* of Rouen and Rennes. Other sovereign courts followed the initiative of these three. The way was prepared for the French suppression in 1764 and universal suppression in 1773.⁹

The consequences of the suppression for public life in France were profound. The state seizure of Jesuit institutions constituted an assault on the Jesuits' influence in society and the Church and on the cultural inheritance of which the Jesuits had been the guardians. And it caused a great rupture in the history of religious orders and of education. For generations the Jesuits had provided a modified Renaissance education to future leaders of French society in over 100 colleges in France.¹⁰ Even if, as is widely recognised, the numbers of young men attending French colleges of all kinds — including Jesuit colleges — declined in the eighteenth century, the Jesuits still dominated college education and held many more colleges on the eve of the destruction of the Province than any other religious congregation.¹¹ The seizure of Jesuit colleges opened the way for state-sponsored experimentation with the curriculum and government of the colleges, and enabled other groups to expand their role in male education.¹²

That the Jesuits could be replaced in their colleges and that many colleges continued to function, however well or badly, under the new arrangements raises questions about the Jesuits' activities in the period prior to 1762. When agents of the *parlements* took possession of the institutions of the Province of France and dispersed its members, did they destroy an already weakened

France. Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, explains why and how the mid-century Jansenists achieved this goal; for the Jesuit superiors' response, see Thompson, "The Lavalette Affair and the Jesuit Superiors". In 1761, a few of the 3050 members of the French Assistancy were not French, while at least 250 members of the German provinces in French border territory were. See Thompson, "French Jesuits", 186.

9 For an overview of studies on this subject, see Nelson, "The Historiography of the Pre-Suppression Jesuit Mission in France". The most recent work on the suppression is Burson and Wright, eds., *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context*.

10 BnF, *Carte de l'assistance*, supplemented by information from annual catalogues.

11 Cf. Chartier, Compère and Julia, *L'éducation en France, 186–90*, who cite François de Dainville on the decline, and refer to 105 Jesuit colleges in 104 towns (at pp. 187–88).

12 See Bailey, *French Secondary Education*, on how the new arrangements worked.

organisation? Or was the Province essentially sound and might it, left undisturbed, have gone on providing education and other public services for years to come? What was the nature of the Province of France on the eve of its destruction? This study of the characteristics of the Province and the work of its members during the 50 years before the events of 1762 is based, above all and unless otherwise indicated, on computer-assisted analysis of all pertinent information in the extant annual and triennial catalogues of the Province for the eighteenth century.¹³ It also draws on state serial records on dispersed Jesuits.¹⁴ What follows is an analysis of the formation and careers of hundreds of members of the Province in the half century prior to the dispersal. The period 1712–61 is both brief enough to permit the thorough investigation of the lives as Jesuits of the members of the Province still present in 1761, and long enough to permit the detection of modifications in the nature of the Province since 1712. Change in the characteristics of the membership and in assignments undertaken, as well as in the nature of institutions, is measured over time. Comparisons are made between developments in specific periods, decades and key years within the half century. Simple statistics are used to explain Jesuits' experience. The emphasis is on groups rather than on

13 The statistics cited in the text, tables and Appendices 1–6, as well as those on which the figures are based, were generated from information in extant triennial and annual catalogues of the Province of France for 1700–61, in the machine-readable database of "The Eighteenth-Century French Jesuits Project of the University of New Brunswick". For the raw data, see ARSI, the triennial catalogues: *Franc.* 17: 1700, 1705, 1711; *Franc.* 18: 1714, 1717, 1720; *Franc.* 19: 1723, 1726, 1730; *Franc.* 20: 1734, 1737, 1740, 1743; *Franc.* 21: 1746, 1749, 1754, 1757; and the annual catalogues: ARSI *Franc.* 25 I and II: 1700–1708, 1710–20; *Franc.* 26: 1721–25, 1728–30; *Franc.* 26a: 1727; *Franc.* 27: 1731–44; *Franc.* 27a: 1749; *Franc.* 28: 1745–46, 1751–52; *Franc.* 28a: 1754; *Franc.* 28b: 1752–53; *Franc.* 28c: 1753–54, 1755–60; *Franc.* 28d: 1761; *Franc.* 29: 1709. While the catalogues for 1712–61 are the main source of information about the members of the Province who were present in the 50-year period which is the subject of this study, the extant catalogues for 1700–11 were also reviewed, to ensure that information about the members of the Province present in 1712 who entered the Society before that date was as complete as possible. And (as a further control) data on Jesuits and Jesuit institutions for 1712–61 were sometimes compared with data for the earlier period, to discern trends. (See the introductory note of the Appendices to this article.)

14 On professions of 1757–62, see the records of the *parlement* of Paris in AN Section ancienne X1b 8942 and X1b 8944, *arrêts* of 22 February and 22 July 1763, listing Jesuits who requested pensions and those who did not. Also AD Ille-et-Vilaine, 1 Bk 12 and 1 Bk 13, *états* of 1770 and 1777, listing Jesuits present in the territory of *parlement* of Rennes; also, 1 Bk 12, *état* of the Présidial de Nantes [1769].

individuals. This is primarily a study of “how things were” and of “how things worked” in the eighteenth-century Province of France. The approach is empirical; the focus is on prosopography (collective biography). The study of the personnel is preceded by a description of the institutions — notably the colleges — to which the majority of members of the Province were assigned.

2. Institutions

A contemporary map showing Jesuit institutions in France makes clear that in the eighteenth century the Province of France extended from the Île de France (which gave its name to the Province), southward to include most of the valley of the Loire (the territory from the Nivernais and Bourbonnais, to Berry, Maine and Anjou, to the region of Nantes) and the rest of Brittany. It also extended northward to take in much of the valley of the Seine and the remainder of Normandy, as well as Picardy and Artois.¹⁵ Its institutions, as listed in its catalogues, included houses for the Jesuits’ own purposes: the professed house in Paris; a novitiate, also in Paris, where the formation and first two probations of the most junior members took place; and a house of the third probation (or tertianship), in Rouen. Then there were the 19 colleges: two large colleges at Paris and La Flèche, each with a *convictus* or student residence; 11 middle-sized colleges at Amiens, Arras (with a *convictus* from 1716), Bourges (with a *convictus* from 1740), Caen, Moulins, Orléans, Quimper, Rennes, Rouen, Tours and Vannes; and six small colleges at Alençon, Blois, Compiègne, Eu, Hesdin and Nevers.¹⁶ (See Appendix 1: Profile of Large, Medium-Size and Small Colleges, 1712–61.) Centres of education and catechetics included four seminaries at Brest, Nevers, Rouen and (until 1744) Séz; three

¹⁵ BnF, *Carte de l’assistance de France*.

¹⁶ French Jesuit historians have long used the classifications “large”, “middle-size” and “small” to describe the French colleges. Cf. Demoustier, “Catalogues du personnel de la Province de Lyon”, part 1, 35–36. The criteria normally include the number of Jesuits in the college, its revenues, the courses it taught and, if known (as is not the case for the colleges of the Province of France in the eighteenth century) the number of pupils it taught. Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615) apparently used such categories in a circular interpreting the eighty-seventh decree of General Congregation 5. Cf. Chartier, Compère and Julia, *L’éducation en France*, 167. See Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, General Congregation 5 (1593–94), Decree 5/69 (in MS d. 87), 211–12. The Decree referred to colleges with 30, 60 or 100, Jesuits. Cf. General Congregation 2 (After the Election) (1565), 2/Formula for Accepting Colleges of Superior General Diego Lainez (1558–65) in Padberg, *Ibid.*, 133–34, which had described colleges with 20, 30, 50 or 70 Jesuits.

residences at Dieppe, Nantes and Pontoise; and two small missions at Bapaume (associated with the college of Arras) and in Lower Normandy, at Argentan.¹⁷ Altogether, the catalogues of the Province listed 31 houses in France until 1744, and 30 after that date.

The Province was also responsible for institutions elsewhere in the world, listed in its catalogues. Overseas, it was in charge of the college at Québec and a residence at Montréal, and of missions under French authority, most of them established in fixed locations in the seventeenth century. They included missions in the Americas and the Caribbean (including several to Indigenous peoples in New France, Louisiana and the Caribbean), and missions in the Levant, India and China. Members of all French provinces and, in a few cases, members of other assistancies served overseas. Until late in the period, the Province of France contributed more members to the overseas missions than any other province, or any two other provinces combined.

It is the colleges in France — the work done in them, their financial resources and, most particularly, the experience of the majority of the members of the Province, who lived and served in them — that are the major focus of this study. In eighteenth-century France, both the laity and the clergy were well served by the colleges. All offered lay pupils a classical education which began with grammar, humanities and rhetoric, collectively called “letters”. Some lay pupils went on to take all or part of the three-year programme in philosophy. Prepared for life in the way that the early promoters of Jesuit education for the laity had intended, the majority of such young men then assumed their place in society, in the professions and other occupations.¹⁸ Some lay pupils educated in the colleges in Paris and in the provincial towns later entered the Society and, in due course, completed their studies in philosophy (if necessary) and also did four years of theology at the large colleges of Paris and La Flèche.¹⁹ And a small number of Jesuit priests gained advanced

17 The seminaries at Nevers and Sées provided instruction in theology to members of the diocesan clergy, while the seminary at Brest prepared naval almoners. The seminary at Rouen was a residence for future diocesan priests studying theology at the college of Rouen. The residence at Nantes was a place of religious instruction, with attached retreat houses.

18 Cf. Grendler, “Jesuit Schools in Europe”, 9–17, on the curriculum and the purpose of the education provided in Jesuit colleges in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See also, O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 208–16.

19 See Part 3, below (“Personnel”), for a description of the formation of Jesuit priests.

degrees in theology and arts through the college of Bourges.²⁰ At the same time, young men admitted to the secular clergy were educated by Jesuits at most of the colleges and at the seminaries.

Generally speaking, the range of courses taught in particular colleges depended on their size. All 19 colleges offered letters, taught over five to eight years and including at least three years of grammar, a year or more of humanities, and a year or two of rhetoric. Seventeen — all but two small colleges — also offered courses in philosophy, consisting of at least the two courses in logic and physics. And, by the end of the period, 12 colleges taught at least one course in theology, usually scholastic theology. The two large colleges provided the widest range of courses. Preparatory grammar courses offered at Paris and La Flèche enabled very young pupils to enter the standard courses in letters when they were old enough. The complete programme in philosophy, including not only logic and physics but also a separate course in mathematics, was available at both large colleges, while Paris also offered an extra course in philosophy, intended to reinforce physics.²¹ Throughout the period the large colleges offered two classes in scholastic theology, one in moral theology and one in positive theology. Both colleges ceased early in the century to list sacred scripture as a separate course.²²

The remaining 17 colleges taught a narrower range of subjects. The 11 middle-size colleges all taught letters, of course, and Rennes and Rouen had an introductory grammar course for the youngest pupils. In philosophy, all middle-size colleges offered courses in logic and physics, while Caen also offered a course in mathematics combined with hydrography.²³ The teaching of theology in the middle-size colleges evolved at different rates. Bourges had one class of moral theology and two of scholastic theology throughout the period. It also offered a course in sacred scripture for many years, but replaced that course with positive theology toward the end of the

20 Fourteen of the 299 professed members of the Province in 1761 held degrees from the University of Bourges, apparently awarded while they were at the Jesuit college there: seven doctorates in theology, and five doctorates and two master's degrees in arts.

21 Metaphysics was not listed anywhere as a separate course; it was presumably taught as part of physics.

22 See Pavur (trans.), *The Ratio Studiorum*, for the complete Jesuit curriculum, first standardised in 1599 under Superior General Acquaviva, and modified subsequently.

23 Mathematics/hydrography was also taught in other ports: at the college at Québec, the residence at Nantes and the seminary at Brest.

period. It thus came to teach the same courses in theology as the two large colleges. Caen, Rennes, Rouen and Vannes taught moral theology at the beginning of the period, but Caen and Rouen later gave it up. Like the large colleges and Bourges, the colleges of Amiens, Rennes, Rouen, Tours and Vannes regularly offered two courses in scholastic theology. Caen and Moulins each had one. By the end of the period, eight middle-size colleges taught scholastic theology. Theology was not taught at Arras, Orléans or Quimper.²⁴ The six small colleges taught the full range of letters, with courses in grammar, humanities and rhetoric, but only Compiègne and Hesdin stopped there. The others also taught courses in logic and physics, sometimes in alternate years, and two taught theology; Alençon included scholastic theology as a regular course, and Eu added it before the end.²⁵ Colleges of all sizes appear to have provided essentially the same courses (and the same number of courses) at the end of the 50-year period as at the beginning, with only one modification. More colleges of the Province of France taught scholastic theology at the end of the period than at the beginning.

The financial underpinnings of Jesuit institutions were very uncertain. The main problem was the insolvency of many of the colleges, which were seriously indebted and had never been well-endowed. Their expenditures invariably outstripped their income. Annual revenues did rise slowly as the century wore on, but remained too limited to provide the solid support necessary to maintain the infrastructure, feed and clothe the Jesuit residents, pay travel expenses and pay off the debt. Some of the smallest colleges were too small and too poor to meet the Ignatian or any other requirement for a viable institution.²⁶ From Rome, more than

24 Having no theology courses, Quimper, for a time, offered instruction in *cas de conscience*, intended primarily for confessors.

25 At Alençon the teacher of physics also taught controversy, which provided arguments against heresy.

26 For congregational decrees concerning the requirements (which varied over time) regarding size and financial strength of the colleges, see Padberg et al., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, General Congregation 1 (1558), Decree 1/ 73, 86–87, General Congregation 2 (After the Election) (1565), 2/Formula for Accepting Colleges, 133–34, and General Congregation 5 (1593–94), Decree 5/ 69, 211–12; also General Congregation 8 (1645–46), Decree 8/ 27, 289–90. In the early days, at least 14 Jesuits were supposed to be present in each college (Decree 1/ 73); by 1565 (2/Formula), 133–34, confirmed in 1646 (Decree 8/ 27), that number had increased to 20. See also Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, 180, n. 7.

one Superior General recognised the dire financial plight of the French colleges as late as the 1740s and 1750s.²⁷

The Jesuit administrators' reports on the financial condition of the colleges, in the third part (*Tertius Rerum*) of the triennial catalogues, are the most complete of the Province's extant financial records. Because each report was prepared without reference to those which preceded it, comparative analysis is difficult. The reports do suggest orders of magnitude in the financial affairs of the colleges: debts, accounts receivable, gross income, charges owing on that income, and net income available to support the colleges once the charges were paid. Although the first two categories — passive and active debts — fluctuated wildly, it was possible to establish the relationship between the two kinds of debt, gross annual revenues and amounts actually available to meet college expenses.²⁸ (See Figure 1a: College Indebtedness 1700–57, Shown in Negative Amounts (Three Year Moving Averages), for an indication of the serious extent of the indebtedness of the colleges, based on debts owed less accounts receivable. See also Figure 1b: Net Annual Revenue of All Colleges, 1700–57, for information on the limited disposable resources of the colleges, after charges had been deducted.) The figures show an improvement in the revenues of the colleges, over the period as a whole. Regardless of any negative effects caused by the eighteenth-century price-rise, the colleges were apparently better off at the end of the period than at the beginning.²⁹

27 Detail on the extent of the colleges' debts in the eighteenth century is provided in Thompson, "The Fate of the French Jesuits' Creditors", 261–63 and in the appendix of Thompson, "French Jesuit Wealth", 318–19. Superior General Lorenzo Ricci (1758–73) inherited his predecessor's concern about the insolvency of the colleges. See ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 273, Ricci, "Istoria", f. 2.

28 Based on precise calculations for each of the three-year periods documented in the 17 triennial catalogues for 1700–57, Figures 1a and 1b on college finances are intended primarily to suggest trends. Pertinent amounts reported for each of the 19 colleges in the third part of the triennial catalogues at three-year intervals have been combined to arrive at aggregate totals. Moving averages were used in the first figure because of the great disparities between specific values from one three-year period to the next, and the difficulty of otherwise discerning a trend.

29 Figure 1b is based on a combination of the amounts reported by the 19 colleges as gross revenue, minus a combination of the amounts reported as charges (the few missing values were estimated by comparing proximate reported values). This calculation produced the combined net income of all colleges for each of the years in which reports were submitted. The disposable income of the colleges appears to have increased by 45.4 percent in 1705–57, or 17.2 percent in the first

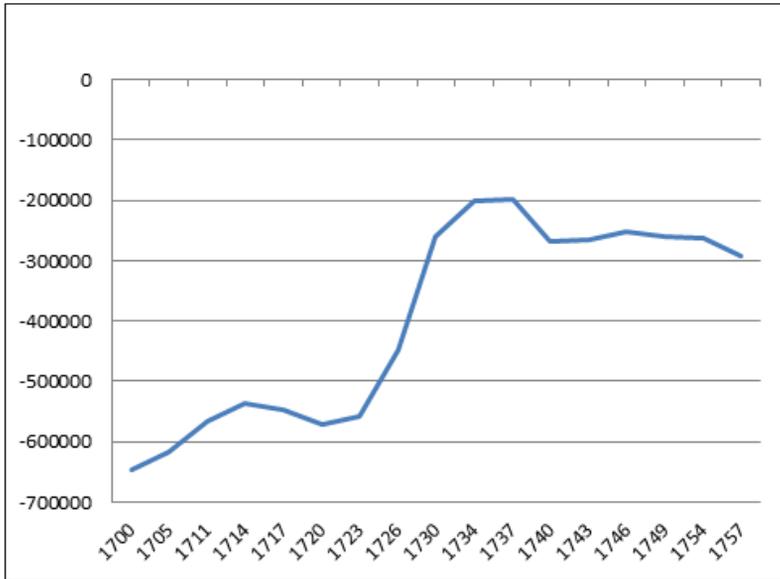


Figure 1a
College Indebtedness, 1700–57, Shown in Negative Amounts
(Three-Year Moving Averages)

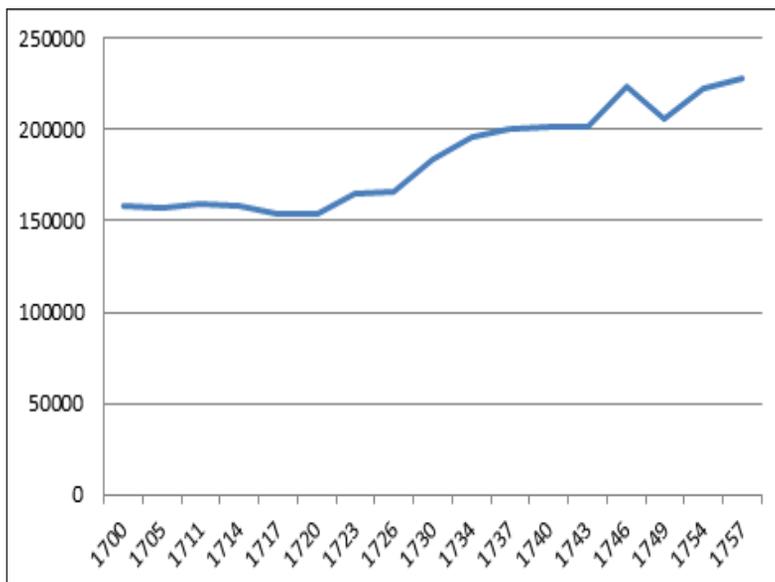


Figure 1b
Net Annual Revenue of All Colleges, 1700–57

3. Personnel

In 1712–61 roughly four-fifths of the members of the Province were priests and scholastics, while the remainder were temporal coadjutors. A review of the formation of the two groups and of the responsibilities they performed will provide background for a study of the changes which occurred in the Province of France in the half century before the dispersal. A man seeking to be a Jesuit presented himself at the door of the novitiate and then served a brief postulancy before being accepted as a novice. Novices were almost immediately identified as novice scholastics or novice temporal coadjutors.³⁰ Most novice scholastics were nearing the age of 18 at entry. They might be 17 or younger if they had previously studied no more than rhetoric and perhaps a year of logic; they could be 19 or older if they had completed philosophy.³¹ The formation of Jesuit priests in the Province of France in the eighteenth century can be seen to have followed a certain pattern. After a novitiate of about two years, the scholastic made simple first vows and became an approved scholastic, ready to undertake studies and meet other requirements that would prepare him for ordination as a priest. He then took a year or two of philosophy, if he had not already completed that programme, or immediately undertook his regency, which meant that he taught in one of the

25 years from 1705–30, and 24.1 percent in the subsequent 27 years from 1730–57. These aggregate amounts conceal slower increases and significant fluctuations from year to year in several colleges.

30 This study includes Jesuits who remained in the Society long enough to be included in at least one annual catalogue. It does not include postulants. BnF, Département des manuscrits, *Ms. lat.* 10988: Register of all entries of novice scholastics, April 1745–December 1761, lists the names and particulars of all the young men admitted to the novitiate, and demonstrates that they had been identified as novice scholastics within days of entry. It includes information on those who continued in the Society and on the significant proportion who departed within a few weeks (and are not in annual catalogues), sometimes with reasons for their departure. It provides invaluable data about entries in three years for which there are no annual catalogues: 1747, 1748 and 1750.

31 The median age at entry for novice scholastics increased from 17.5 to 18 years during the period 1712–61, meaning that, as a group, novice scholastics were at least six months older at the end of the period than at the beginning. The average age increased by nearly a year from 17.9 to 18.8. At the same time, even in the eighteenth-century Province of France, entries as young as 14 and as old as 24 were not unknown. In the remainder of this study, medians (considered a useful measure of central tendency because not influenced by outliers) and means (also called averages) will be used, as appropriate.

colleges. Regency traditionally lasted some four to five years, and longer in an increasing number of cases. As a regent, the Jesuit taught three or more years of grammar, then humanities and usually also rhetoric, to members of the same class, whom he accompanied throughout their study of letters. Or, as increasingly happened in this province in this period, he taught a cycle in one college, and a partial cycle in one or two other colleges, and then perhaps undertook functions related to teaching, such as being a prefect in the students' quarters or supervising pupils while they studied. At any time, a large proportion of all approved scholastics were regents, and that proportion increased over time.³² At the conclusion of his regency, the approved scholastic completed his study of philosophy, if necessary; otherwise he began the four-year programme in theology.³³ Ordination to the priesthood normally followed the third year of theology, usually when the Jesuit had been in the Society some 12 to 14 years, depending upon his age and education at entry. As an ordained scholastic, he went on to complete the fourth year of theology and then, for several years, assumed other responsibilities, such as the teaching of philosophy and minor administrative or pastoral functions. He then temporarily gave up those ministries to become a tertian preparing to make final vows. In the Province of France, among those priests who were present in 1712–61 and whose formation was complete, the vast majority had made final vows at about age 35, a year or two after completing their tertianship and some 17 years after entering the novitiate.

The range of ministries performed by priests who had made final vows may be classified as administrative, educational and pastoral.³⁴ It was normal to have responsibilities in two or even

32 Superior General Láinez dealt with a shortage of teachers in Jesuit colleges by requiring that all scholastics and priests should teach during their formation or subsequent career. This development prepared the way for young Jesuits to teach for long periods in the colleges. See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 200–01, Grendler, "Jesuit Schools in Europe", 12–13, and Grendler, "The Culture of the Jesuit Teacher", 20–21.

33 More usually than not, throughout the 50-year period, members of the Province of France who had not completed philosophy before entering the Society studied that subject for a year or two, then undertook their regency, and then completed the third year of philosophy. In contrast, Grendler found that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Jesuits did not teach until they had completed their philosophical studies. Cf. Grendler, "The Culture of the Jesuit Teacher", 23.

34 See below, Part 4 ("Statistics") for analysis based on these categories and the functions described here.

three areas simultaneously. Major administrative responsibilities included serving as provincial, his *socius*, the superior of the professed house or rector of a college, or consultor to the provincial or to the superior of the professed house, all of which appointments were held for three or four years, and many of which could rotate or be renewed. The superiors of the novitiate and of the tertian house are classified as major administrators, although their responsibilities were also pastoral; the novice master had a *socius*, also in this category. Other major administrative appointments included minister (overseeing the management) or procurator (accumulating the financial support) of a college or other institution of some size; or procurator, responsible for the financial and other affairs of overseas missions. Minor administrative responsibilities included serving in a three-year appointment as a consultor to a rector of a college or other institution; being a superior, procurator or minister of a small institution, such as a residence, mission or *convictus*; being the administrator of a retreat house; serving as prefect of studies or overseeing the health, physical and spiritual, of Jesuits in the colleges and other houses; and overseeing the upkeep of sacristies and chapels. Some priests who had made final vows were engaged in administration with a spiritual dimension, involving non-Jesuits other than students, including, for example, being a prefect of a Marian sodality or a retreat master.

Other ministries were primarily educational or pastoral. Teaching undertaken by priests who had made final vows included offering courses in the second and third years of philosophy and all theology courses in provincial colleges, and teaching philosophy or theology in the two large colleges and at Bourges. Experienced teachers might offer rhetoric at the large colleges. There were also established scholars and writers who published their own work, and some designated as sriptors, who publicised the work and successes of the Society. Minor teaching functions included teaching liturgical singing and the art of preaching. Pastoral ministries undertaken by priests who had made final vows included preaching to the faithful: in sodalities, on missions to the countryside, in Jesuit churches and, in rare cases, in a cathedral. Such ministries also included serving as confessors to the laity, including members of the sodalities, in Jesuit churches and chapels and elsewhere; and, privately, to such illustrious people as members of the nobility, the royal family, and the king himself. And Jesuits confessed other Jesuits.

It was usual to advance from lesser to more responsible and taxing positions. Some priests having recently made final vows

continued as teachers in the smallest colleges, and then went on to teach in more than one of the middle-size ones, and also assumed a succession of administrative responsibilities along the way. Others began as administrators in the smaller institutions, often with pastoral responsibilities. Growing older, a significant proportion who had first worked in the provinces were assigned to Paris as experienced teachers and administrators. By the time they reached their 50s and 60s many had settled into a career. Some were primarily administrators in term appointments, which in the case of administrators of the Province itself took them to the professed house in Paris. Two, usually in this age group, had responsibilities for the formation of novices and tertians. After years of other administrative or teaching assignments, priests who had made final vows might become the rector of a small college, then of a middle-size one, perhaps of a succession of colleges, culminating occasionally in appointment as rector of the largest. Or they were primarily but not exclusively teachers of philosophy or theology, perhaps ending their careers at La Flèche or Paris. Some were preachers, also gravitating to Paris. Most performed some pastoral ministries, including serving as confessors to other Jesuits, whatever their other assignments, wherever they were.³⁵ Some continued to exercise demanding ministries even into their 70s, but it was more usual to wind down at that stage and to be in smaller institutions, performing mainly sacred ministries. Those needing care were usually assigned to the college of La Flèche, perhaps to the college of Paris.

The second major category of Jesuits in the Province in the eighteenth century were the slightly more than one-fifth of the members of the Province who were temporal coadjutors. Their period of formation was shorter and simpler than that of their fellow-Jesuits who went on to become ordained priests. Most were about 25 years old and virtually all were able to read and write when they entered the novitiate, where they were almost immediately identified as novice temporal coadjutors.³⁶ In the case of the Province

35 Grendler's observations regarding teaching and other assignments after ordination, in "The Culture of the Jesuit Teacher", 24–25, are largely confirmed in the documentation (including careers reconstructed from annual catalogues) on which this study is based.

36 The median age at entry of novice temporal coadjutors remained constant at 25 years, while the average age decreased from 27.25 years in 1712–17 to 25.37 years in 1734–39, to 24.92 years in 1756–61. A smaller proportion of men over 25 years of age entered in the second half of the period than in the first.

of France, their formation included a novitiate of approximately a year, followed by the making of simple first vows and assignment to practical responsibilities, which could include the learning of skills or a trade, in another institution. For some nine years after completing their novitiate, they served the Society according to their abilities and practical preparation. About a decade after entry, these Jesuits completed a kind of tertianship, made simple final vows and attained the grade of formed temporal coadjutor.

Temporal coadjutors, including those still in formation, were assigned to support the work of the priests and scholastics. It was temporal coadjutors who supervised the work of servants and oversaw the administration of some kinds of property. Some laboured as artisans or tradesmen. Some made the clothes and shoes worn by other Jesuits. Others served as door-keepers, handymen, purchasers, sacristans, bakers, cooks, launderers or infirmarians. A few taught reading and writing at the primary level. A small handful were pharmacists, at the professed house and at the two large colleges.³⁷ Some temporal coadjutors were *socii*: assistants, secretaries and administrators supporting the work of professed administrators in Paris, which explains a concentration of formed temporal coadjutors at the professed house. Some, on entry, already had useful skills; others gained them in the Society.³⁸ A few remained in the same institution for decades. Even the smallest institution had at least one temporal coadjutor.

4. Statistics

Numbers and simple statistics may be more useful than words in describing the Province in 1712–61. The number and proportion of Jesuit priests whose formation was complete, who had made final vows and attained their final grade, is of primary importance. Jesuit priests did the major work of the Society and the future of any province depended on them, and on their renewal.³⁹ Some 924 priests who were members of the Province in 1712–61 had made final vows, and 901, or 97.5 percent of them, had made their solemn profession of those vows. Of the 901 professed priests, 897, or more

37 Pharmacists were assigned to the professed house and at the colleges of Paris and La Flèche. The Province of France also supplied a pharmacist for Québec and some overseas missions.

38 Cf. description of temporal coadjutors' functions in O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 60–61.

39 See above, "Introduction".

than 99.5 percent, were professed of four vows; the remaining four professed priests (less than .5 percent of the total) were professed of three vows.⁴⁰ Throughout the half century, 98 to 99 percent of the priests who had made final vows and served in the institutions in France were professed. The remaining 23 priests who had made final vows — less than 3 percent of all 924 priests who were members of the Province in 1712–61 and who had made final vows — were spiritual coadjutors. They had made simple final vows and were formed but not professed.⁴¹ Usually, during this period, no more

40 Three were professed before 1712, and one in 1734. The first three died in 1716, 1717 and 1739, the last, in 1755. On the distinguishing characteristics of the professed of three vows, see Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, [519–21], 236–37. In the Province of France in 1712–61, the professed of three vows had essentially the same formation as those of four vows, but their theological education tended to be more limited and they perhaps also had more limited aptitudes. They tended in 1712–55 to be found in the smaller institutions, engaged in administration and pastoral functions, though not limited to these ministries.

41 In Ignatian and eighteenth-century practice, the term “profession” refers only to solemn vows. Hence, in this essay, the words “professed” and “the professed” refer only to those formed Jesuits who had made their profession of four (or three) solemn vows. Cf. Ganss, in Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, 82, fn 22. The nature and distribution of grades had evolved since the early days of the Society, when there were more spiritual coadjutors than professed Jesuits. See O’Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 345–56 on grades and their distribution. See also Ganss, “Supplementary Notes. Note B: The Diversity of Grades”, *Ibid.*, 353–55. The triennial catalogues of the eighteenth-century Province of France make clear that the distinction between those priests who were professed (of four or three vows) and those who were formed but not professed (spiritual coadjutors who had made final vows) was maintained. That the distinction was important to administrators of the Society is demonstrated in, for example, the letter of Superior General Lorenzo Ricci to Charles Nectoux, provincial of Aquitaine, in ARSI, *Aquit.* 22, no. 69 Ricci to Nectoux, Rome, 31 March 1762, and ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 273, Ricci, “Istoria”, f. 66. Of the 23 spiritual coadjutors who were members of the Province in the 50-year period 1712–61, six had made final vows before 1712, 11 made final vows in 1712–36; and six made final vows in 1737–47. No spiritual coadjutors were formed in the Province of France after 1747. Spiritual coadjutors were 4 percent of all the priests (both the professed and the spiritual coadjutors) who made final vows (as opposed to all who were present) in the first 25 years—1712–36. In the second 25 years—1737–61—they were 2.3 percent of all the priests who made final vows in the period. Five spiritual coadjutors (as opposed to 299 professed) were still present in the Province in 1761; they were 1.6 percent of all 304 priests who had made final vows and were present that year. In other words, the numbers of spiritual coadjutors, like those of the professed of three vows, are, in most instances, statistically insignificant. These findings strongly support Lukács’ conclusion that the grade of spiritual coadjutor would have disappeared through attrition in the eighteenth century, had there been

than six to eight spiritual coadjutors served in France.⁴² Because it was almost exclusively professed Jesuits who performed the range of ministries understood to be those of priests who had made final vows, it is often appropriate to consider the professed as a discrete category.

Through analysis of the characteristics and experience of members of the Province, considered in appropriate sub-groups, changes that occurred in the Province during the 50 years prior to the dispersal will be traced through key periods: the first six years (1712–17), the middle six years (1734–39) and the last six years (1756–61). Statistics pertaining to the Province in the key years 1712 (at the beginning of the period), 1736 (half-way through the period), 1756 (the last normal year before the dispersal) and 1761 (on the eve of the dispersal) will be presented and comparisons made.⁴³ In 1712–56, nine-tenths of the members of the Province of France lived and worked in France; the remaining one-tenth were in overseas missions or, in a very few cases, at Rome.⁴⁴ Three-quarters of those who lived and worked in France were assigned to the colleges, which also meant that more than two-thirds (until

no universal suppression. In fact, the rate of attrition in the Province of France was greater than elsewhere in the French Assistancy and other provinces of the Society. See Lukács, “De Graduum Diversitate in sacerdotēs”, *AHSI*, 37 (1968), especially pp. 299–303, 305 and 316. The grade of professed of three vows ceased to exist in the Province of France in 1755.

42 See Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, [112, 113, 522], 112–13, 237, on the characteristics of spiritual coadjutors. The median and average time that elapsed between the entry and the making of final vows of the 23 spiritual coadjutors in this study was 17 years, essentially the same as for the professed. Usually (but not always) with limited formal education, spiritual coadjutors were likely to have developed a talent for preaching, even for teaching at the lower levels. In the Province of France in 1712–61 they served as preachers or missionaries in France and overseas, and sometimes as minor administrators in colleges, *convicti* or other institutions in France. There is a possibility that up to three priests counted as professed in 1712, two of whom died in 1713 and the other, in 1720, were spiritual coadjutors. The evidence is not conclusive.

43 Findings for the key years have been compared with findings for the 18 years 1712–17, 1734–39 and 1756–61. Values were checked against those for proximate years, to ensure those cited for key years are reliable.

44 Excluded from this study are 25 to 35 visitors each year from other Jesuit provinces in institutions in Paris, such as administrators of their provinces’ financial interests; and students, usually resident in colleges. Also excluded are the 100 to 140 members of other provinces counted in the overseas missions, and officially under the Province of France.

1756, some 68 percent) of the members of the Province as a whole were in the French colleges. By 1761, the proportions had changed slightly: 92 percent of the members of the Province were in France; of those, 78 percent were in colleges.⁴⁵

The principal characteristic of the Province of France in the eighteenth century was that it lost members. It was a much smaller province at the end of the period than at the beginning. Institutions and their purposes remained the same, but the number of Jesuits in them declined. (See Appendix 2: Members of the Province of France in Institutions 1712, 1736, 1756, 1761, which offers a description of the assignment of members to institutions and explains the extent of the decline in numbers.) A total of 2218 men were named in at least one annual catalogue for 1712–61, and the vast majority were present for significantly more than a year. The Province had a total membership of 820 in 1712, which shrank to 770 in 1736, 742 in 1756, and 712 in 1761, when the last catalogue was prepared, six months before the general dispersal.⁴⁶ Declines occurred of more than 6 percent over the first quarter century and nearly 4 percent over the next 20 years to 1756. Then, by the late 1750s, unfavourable publicity directed against the Society caused vocations to fall off. By 1761, when it was clear that Jesuit institutions would be seized within a few months, a further decline of 4 percent had occurred.⁴⁷ In other words, a total decline of 9.5 percent occurred between 1712 and 1756, and an overall decline of 13 percent occurred between 1712 and 1761. (See Table 1: Decline in the Number of Members of the Province of France.)

⁴⁵ See Appendix 2.

⁴⁶ Refer to Appendix 2, last column. The annual catalogue for 1761 includes information to November, approximately four months before the beginning of the dispersal.

⁴⁷ The refusal of the sacraments to Jansenists by the pro-Jesuit archbishop of Paris at mid-century, the Damiens affair of 1757, the appearance of some of the creditors of the Jesuit Lavalette in the commercial court in Paris in January 1760 and the French superiors' unedifying response were among specific developments that damaged the Jesuits' cause, even before August 1761, when the *parlement* of Paris forbade the Jesuits to accept novices or to make vows in the Society, and announced the forthcoming closure of Jesuit institutions. See AN Section ancienne X1b 8940 *arrêts* of 6 August 1761. Cf. Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits*, 62–89, and Thompson, "The Lavalette Affair and the Jesuit Superiors", 215–16 and 228.

Year	Total	Loss and percent decline at next date	Total loss and percent decline since 1712
1712	820		
1736	770	-50 6.1%	-50 6.1%
1756	742	-28 3.6%	-78 9.5%
1761	712	-30 4.0%	-108 13.2%
Period	Median	Decrease and percent decrease next period	Decrease and percent decrease since 1712-16
1712-16	821		
1734-38	769	-52 6.3%	-52 6.3%
1756-60	737	-32 4.2%	-84 10.2%

Table 1
Decline in the Number of Members of the Province of France

The losses were greatest among the priests (both those in formation and those who had taken final vows). The decline in their numbers, including the number of professed, came about gradually but was more than half complete by 1736. Fifty-seven priests were gone by 1736 and a further 47, by 1761. The total loss of priests by 1761, of whom almost 80 percent were professed, was 104 (or 22.5 percent): 12 percent of the number of priests present in 1712 had disappeared by mid-period and 12 percent of the number present in 1736, by 1761. By 1761, where 50 years before there had been 461 priests, there were now 357 priests. A parallel phenomenon is observable among the professed. There were 379 professed in 1712, 335 in 1736, 294 in 1756, and, as it happened, 299 in 1761. The total loss of the professed considered by themselves to 1756 was 85 (22.4 percent) and to 1761 was 80 (21 percent). A graph demonstrates how inexorable the losses were, to about 1750. (See Figure 2: Professed Jesuits, 1712-60.) To put it another way: each year, for 50 years, there were two fewer priests than the year before. In a period when almost every priest who had made final vows was professed, one or, more often than not, both missing priests were professed. Once approaching 60 percent of all priests and scholastics who were members of the Province of France in any year, the professed became not much more than 50 percent of the Jesuits in that category by 1756. More than 46 percent of the whole Province in 1712, the professed were reduced to less than 40 percent



Figure 2
Professed Jesuits, 1712–60

of the Province by 1756.⁴⁸ The number of ordained scholastics also declined.⁴⁹ (See Table 2: Decline in the Number of Priests and Table 3: Decline in the Number of Professed Priests.)

Year	Total	Loss and percent decline at next date	Total loss and percent decline since 1712
1712	461		
1736	404	-57 12.4%	-57 12.4%
1756	357	-47 11.6%	-104 22.6%
1761	357		-104 22.6%
Period	Median	Decrease and percent decrease next period	Decrease and percent decrease since 1712-16
1712-16	458		
1734-38	404	-54 11.8%	-54 11.8%
1756-60	358	-46 11.4%	-100 21.8%

Table 2
Decline in the Number of Priests

Year	Total	Loss and percent decline at next date	Total loss and percent decline since 1712
1712	379		
1736	335	-44 11.6%	-44 11.6%
1756	294	-41 12.2%	-85 22.4%
1761	299	-36 10.7%	-80 21.1%
Period	Median*	Decrease and percent decrease next period	Decrease and percent decrease since 1712-16
1712-16	379		
1734-38	335	-44 11.6%	-44 11.6%
1756-60	294	-41 12.2%	-85 22.4%

Table 3
Decline in the Number of Professed Priests

(*In this case, the medians for the five years and the numbers for key years are the same.)

⁴⁸ Refer to Appendix 2, last column. The proportion increased to 42 percent in 1761, in part because of the decline in entries and also because of a number of professions in 1757-61.

⁴⁹ The numbers in this category declined by more than 25 percent between 1712 and 1756, from 78 to 56 (with most of the losses occurring by 1736); by 1756 ordained scholastics, once 9.3 percent, had become 7.5 percent of the Province.

Things evolved very differently among unordained scholastics in the last half century before the dispersal. Their numbers grew from 190 to 223 in 1712–56, with about 220 unordained scholastics still present each year for the five years from 1756–60. The number of regents also rose steadily until 1758: from 84 in 1712, to 96 in 1736, and 109 in 1756, an overall increase of nearly 30 percent, while an average of 106 regents were present in 1757–60. This meant that a constantly increasing proportion of all unordained scholastics — 44 percent of this group in 1712–16, 48 percent in 1734–38, and almost 50 percent in 1756–60 — were regents. In the whole period, unordained scholastics, in contrast with priests, constituted an ever-increasing proportion of all priests and scholastics. And scholastics — both ordained and unordained — who had been 41 percent of all priests and scholastics in 1712, became 48 percent of that group by 1756. They constituted 32 percent of the whole province in 1712, 33.5 percent in 1736 and nearly 38 percent in 1756.⁵⁰ These changes drove the mean age of priests and scholastics down. Indeed, by 1761, the Province of France was the “youngest” province of the French Assistancy.⁵¹ (See Table 4: Change in the Number of Unordained Scholastics and Table 5: Change in the Number of Regents.)

Year	Total	Change and percent change at next date	Change and percent change since 1712
1712	190		
1736	200	+10 5.3%	+10 5.3%
1756	223	+23 11.5%	+33 17.4%
1761	206	-17 -7.6%	+16 8.4%
Period	Median	Increase and percent increase next period	Increase and percent increase since 1712–16
1712–16	189		
1734–38	198	+9 4.8%	+9 4.8%
1756–60	218	+20 10.1%	+29 15.3%

Table 4
Change in the Number of Unordained Scholastics

50 While the number of regents declined to 100, scholastics became only 36.4 percent of the Province in 1761. The totals for all scholastics in the various categories, including ordained scholastics, are available in Table 11, below, Part 6 (“A Matter of Policy?”).

51 That it had a higher proportion of scholastics than other provinces contributed to this state of affairs, although Toulouse and Champagne also had a significant proportion of scholastics. See Vivier, *Status Assistentiae*, xiii.

Year	Total	Increase and percent increase at next date	Increase and percent increase since 1712
1712	84		
1736	96	12 14.3%	+12 14.3%
1756	109	13 13.5%	+25 29.8%
1761	100	-9 -8.3%	+16 19.0%
Period	Median	Increase and percent increase at next period	Increase and percent increase since 1712-16
1712-16	84		
1734-38	95	11 13.1%	+11 13.1%
1756-60	108	13 13.7%	+24 28.6%

Table 5
Change in the Number of Regents

Very little change in the number of temporal coadjutors occurred over time. There were 169 temporal coadjutors in 1712, 166 in 1736 and 162 in 1756, which for them, as well as for the scholastics, was the last normal year. Yet even the temporal coadjutors experienced a 4 percent decline in their numbers in 1712-56, and a 12 percent decline by 1761.⁵² The relative stability of their numbers and responsibilities until 1756-60 reflected patterns in recruitment and retention intended to complement the assignments of priests and scholastics, and to assure the satisfactory management of the Province's institutions.⁵³ (See Table 6: Decline in the Number of Temporal Coadjutors.)

⁵² The decline in their numbers to 149 by late in 1761, which resulted from fewer vocations and a slight increase in dismissals by late that year, may be linked to the crises of 1757-61. See Table 12, below, Part 6 ("A Matter of Policy?") on dismissals of Jesuits under simple vows.

⁵³ The number of Province of France temporal coadjutors in overseas missions fluctuated in the key years 1712, 1736, 1756 and 1761 between 18 and 24, while the number of priests and unordained scholastics declined from 60 to 33. This had nothing to do with the fall of Québec in 1759, where the new British governors retained the Jesuits and Jesuit institutions already established in New France.

Year	Total	Loss and percent decline at next date	Total loss and percent decline since 1712
1712	169		
1736	166	-3 1.8%	-3 1.8%
1756	162	-4 2.4%	-7 4.1%
1761	149	-13 8.0%	-20 11.8%
Period	Median	Decrease and percent decrease next period	Decrease and percent decrease since 1712–16
1712–16	169		
1734–38	166	-3 1.8%	-3 1.8%
1756–60	159	-7 4.2%	-10 5.9%

Table 6
Decline in the Number of Temporal Coadjutors

5. Recruitment Patterns

Part of the explanation for the decline in the number of priests (in all categories, including ordained scholastics) and the rise in the number of unordained scholastics lies in entry patterns. A decade-by-decade review of entries of novice scholastics reveals a significant decline – even a crisis – in vocations in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, followed by an upswing after that. In 1702–11 and 1712–21, fewer men than in living memory became novices.⁵⁴ This decline in entries presaged a significant decline in the number of Jesuits who were available to perform all the usual priestly ministries in the two decades 1712–31, and for those advancing through the stages of life as members of the Society, it would have serious ramifications for decades to come. The fall-off in vocations in those first two decades meant that, although enrollments increased in the three decades before the dispersal, damage had been done. The resulting decline in numbers among the professed

⁵⁴ The explanation may lie in the royal government's heavy-handed attempts to destroy Jansenism, which culminated in the forced removal of highly-respected Jansenist women religious from their monastery in 1709 and in the pope's condemnation of Jansenist doctrine in the bull *Unigenitus* in 1713. Both actions were linked in the public imagination to Jesuit influence. Heads of families who once considered encouraging a son to enter the Society may well have had second thoughts. See above, Part 1 ("Introduction"), for the later implications of the Jansenist-Jesuit struggle.

was felt until the end of the period.⁵⁵ (See Table 7: Entries of Novice Scholastics by Decade.)

Decades	Number of Entries*
1672–81	>200
1682–91	>200
1692–1701	>200
1702–11	188
1712–21	169
1722–31	215
1732–41	231
1742–51	225
1752–61	217

Table 7
Entries of Novice Scholastics by Decade

(*The numbers for 1672–1701, which may have been as large as 230 per decade, are approximations, derived from a comparison of patterns among survivors discernible in the annual and triennial catalogues of the first three decades of the eighteenth century with patterns among survivors in the last three decades of the period.)

But other factors also were at work. A decline in the number of entries of novice scholastics and even of novice temporal coadjutors at the beginning of the period was followed by an increase in vocations. After the first two decades, and as time passed, more men sought to enter the Province of France, not fewer. Of the 2218 members of the Province of France in 1712–61, 37 percent had entered before the beginning of the period and many of them had long lives. Jesuits who had entered the Society before 1712 were a substantial portion of the Province during the first quarter century (1712–36), and many lived on into the 1740s and even to 1761, when more than three dozen were still alive.⁵⁶ The remaining 63 percent of the Province entered the

55 As most professed lived 30 or more years after profession, in any year the number of professed was made up of those who had been professed over the previous four decades — or more.

56 While the mean age at death for all members of the Province of France was 67 years throughout the half century, a significant minority (10 percent) of both

Society in the half century preceding the dispersal.⁵⁷ Among those who entered in 1712–61, 47 percent entered in the first 25 years, 53 percent in the last 25 years. (See Table 8: Entry Periods of Jesuits Present 1712–61.)

Period	Priests and Scholastics	Temporal Coadjutors	Total
pre 1712	652	164	816*
1712–36	490	168	658
1737–61	567	177	744
Total	1709	509	2218

Table 8
Entry Periods of Jesuits Present 1712–61

(*Cf. the total of 820 men of 1712 in Table 1, which is made up of those who entered before 1712, less those who died that year, plus those who entered that year.)

More variation in entry patterns may be discerned among scholastics and priests than among temporal coadjutors. Thirty-eight percent of the more than 1700 priests and scholastics who were members of the Province at any time in 1712–61 were already there by 1712. The remaining 62 percent constituted a second group, of 1057 men, who entered at some time in 1712–61. Approximately 46 percent of the second group entered in 1712–36, and the remaining nearly 54 percent entered in 1737–61. Entry rates had begun to return to normal levels in the 1720s and remained there. Significantly more Jesuit novice scholastics — at least 77 more — had entered and were present for a year or more in the quarter of a century after 1736 than in the previous quarter of a century. Of the more than 500 temporal coadjutors who were members of the Province in 1712–61, 32 percent had entered the Society before 1712, and 68 percent, or 345 men, entered in 1712–61.⁵⁸ Of that

priests and temporal coadjutors survived into their eighties, and a few lived on, into their mid- to late-nineties.

57 Totals are virtually complete. All Jesuits present in 1712 and all who entered subsequently and are listed in extant annual and triennial catalogues are included, supplemented by BnF, Département des manuscrits, *Ms. lat.* 10988: Register of novitiate entries, April 1745–December 1761.

58 The 509 temporal coadjutors were 22.9 percent of the 2218 members of the Province known to have been present for at least a year in 1712–61, while the

second group, 49 percent entered in the quarter century 1712–36 and the other 51 percent, in 1737–61. At least 11 more novice temporal coadjutors completed their novitiate in the second half of the period than in the first. There was greater stability in entry rates of novice temporal coadjutors than of novice scholastics, just as there tended to be greater stability among temporal coadjutors in other matters.⁵⁹

The geographical origins of members of the Province help to explain both the increase in entries and the decline in numbers during the half century before the dispersal. Again the patterns for priests and scholastics set them apart from temporal coadjutors. Priests and scholastics present in 1712–61 were likely to come from the territory of the Province of France, but a little less likely at the end of the period than at the beginning. Those from within the Province were likely to have come from a place with its own Jesuit institution. Thus, while close to 95 percent of priests and scholastics came from the kingdom of France, about two-thirds of them also came from a town with a Jesuit institution. Increasing numbers over the period as a whole were from places in France beyond the borders of the Province, and from abroad. At the beginning of the period, of the more than 80 percent from the territory of the Province, about 50 percent were from Normandy and Brittany, in roughly equal numbers.

In the course of the half century, some traditional recruiting grounds ceased to be the original home of as many priests and scholastics as previously, and one provided more. The growth of secularism in the eighteenth century may be linked with a fall-off in vocations. The number of priests and scholastics from Paris — centre of the Enlightenment — stood at 74 (or 11 percent of all priests and scholastics) at the beginning of the period, but by the

proportion of temporal coadjutors in most catalogues was 20 to 21 percent of the whole. As the median age of novice temporal coadjutors was six to seven years greater than that of novice scholastics and the usual lifespan of both groups was roughly the same, proportionately more temporal coadjutors than priests and scholastics were needed to maintain the usual ratio between the two groups. The proportion of temporal coadjutors to scholastics and priests (including spiritual coadjutors) had declined since the sixteenth century, when temporal coadjutors were approximately 25 percent of all Jesuits. See O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 60, citing Thomas Cohen's 1973 unpublished Harvard PhD dissertation, "The Social Origins of the Jesuits, 1540–1600", 1: 214 and 241.

⁵⁹ The relatively unvarying responsibilities of temporal coadjutors are described in Part 3 ("Personnel").

end had declined by more than 79 percent, to 15 (or fewer than 3 percent of all priests and scholastics). In 1712, the number of priests and scholastics from the surrounding territory of Île de France and the Valley of the Loire, was 168, and the number from Normandy was 157. These numbers had declined by 45 percent and 36 percent by 1761. The corresponding number of priests and scholastics from Brittany increased by 45 percent from the beginning to the end of the period. The 219 Breton priests and scholastics present in 1761 had become 39 percent of the whole group. At various times, superiors in charge of young Jesuits may have encouraged the entry and continuation of men from certain places. And it is reasonable to assume that one group of enthusiastic young men from a particular location would be followed by others.⁶⁰

Thus, in the last four decades of the Province's history, a clear geographical shift took place. As entries of scholastics from every other region declined, those from Brittany constantly increased. (See Appendix 3: Bretons as a Proportion of Novice Scholastics and Professed Jesuits, by Decade and Key Years.)⁶¹ This meant that the increase in the number of novice scholastics, which started in the 1720s, was maintained by Bretons for the rest of the half century and that Bretons became an ever greater proportion of all priests and scholastics. It was the increase in Breton novice scholastics that ensured the restoration of high numbers of approved scholastics, and made possible other developments involving the junior members of the Society in this period. (See Table 9: Geographical Origins of Priests and Scholastics.)

60 The novice master's place of origin may also have been important. Vocations from his native Normandy fell off after the retirement (and death) of the long-serving and highly regarded Claude Judde, * 21.XII.1661 Rouen, SJ 2.II.1677 Paris, † 11.III.1735 Paris (*Sommervogel*, 4:863), novice master until 1721. Three Bretons served as masters of novices after *père* Judde's retirement, in the period prior to 1752. Moreover, Joseph Fierard, * 1707 La Flèche, SJ 1723 Paris, † 23.IX.1773 Province of Milan (*Sommervogel*, 3:718), not himself a Breton, had been rector of the colleges of Quimper and Rennes for a decade before he became master of novices in 1760. See Thompson, *A Modern Persecution: Breton Jesuits under the Suppression*, 19–20 note 9, and 25.

61 The significance of Brittany as a recruiting ground for priests in 1745–61 was explained by Dehergne, "Note sur le recrutement", 356–61 and Langlois, "Jésuites de la province de France en Bretagne", 77–92. Neither reviewed the period before 1745. For Brittany as the mainstay of the Province for the longer term, see Thompson, *A Modern Persecution: Breton Jesuits under the Suppression*, 9–36.

Place	1712	1736	1756	1761	As % of all	
					1712	1761
Paris	74	45	20	15	11.4	2.7
IledeFr/Loire	168	121	112	108	25.8	19.2
Brittany	151	179	205	219	23.2	38.9
Normandy	157	146	101	87	24.1	15.5
Picardy/Artois	49	55	52	45	7.5	8.0
Subtotal: from Province of France	599	546	490	474	92.0	84.2
Other French	31	37	56	57	4.8	10.1
Foreign	12	16	27	32	1.8	5.7
Unknown	9	5	7	0	1.4	0
Total	651	604	580	563	100	100

Table 9
Geographical Origins of Priests and Scholastics

Temporal coadjutors tended to come from farther afield than priests and scholastics. A higher proportion of this category than of priests and scholastics came from places outside the Province but within the kingdom, and, increasingly, as time passed, a significant minority came from Champagne. But even more came from Picardy and Artois, within the Province of France, which by the end of the period was the place of origin of almost a quarter of all temporal coadjutors. Meanwhile, the number of temporal coadjutors from Normandy declined by nearly half. Brittany provided fewer than 10 percent of all temporal coadjutors at the beginning and end of the period. Proportionally, even more temporal coadjutors than priests and scholastics came from places in the kingdom with their own Jesuit establishment. (See Table 10: Geographical Origins of Temporal Coadjutors.)

Place	1712	1736	1756	1761	As % of all	
					1712	1761
Paris	11	12	12	9	6.5	6.0
IledeFr/Loire	44	35	30	25	26.0	16.8
Brittany	16	22	16	13	9.5	8.7
Normandy	31	23	19	16	18.3	10.7
Picardy/Artois	31	28	35	36	18.3	24.2
Subtotal: from Province of France	133	120	112	86	78.7	57.7
Other French*	29	36	31	30	17.2	20.1
Foreign	2	6	13	16	1.2	10.7
Unknown	5	4	6	4	3.0	2.7
Total	169	166	162	149	100	100

Table 10

Geographical Origins of Temporal Coadjutors

(* The numbers for Champagne were: 9 in 1712, 17 in 1736, 16 in 1756, and 19 in 1761.)

6. A Matter of Policy?

The decline in the number of professed Jesuits may not have been an entirely natural development. Starting in the 1730s, if not before, it appears to have been linked to decisions made by Jesuit superiors regarding the Province's institutions. By increasingly relying on the service of Jesuits still in formation, superiors maintained teaching in the colleges at close to the same levels throughout the period. An increase in the number of Jesuits in their regency and an increase, however slight, in the length of their service meant that more regents were available each year to teach and perform related functions.⁶²

The increase in the number of regents matched the decline in

62 In 1712, all regents were engaged in teaching letters; in the later key years, when there were more regents, all continued to teach classes except for a handful who performed "minor teaching functions". The nature and length of regency was not standardised in the early Society; the *Constitutions* stated that a scholastic could be "removed from one college where he has studied arts to lecture on them in another before he studies theology, and similarly in regard to other purposes" [417], Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, 204–05 and 205, n. 1.

the number of ordained scholastics. Table 11, below, demonstrates the relationship, in key years, between all kinds of scholastics: novice scholastics; approved scholastics studying philosophy or the first three years of theology; those serving as regents; and recently ordained scholastics who were finishing the fourth year of theology, serving in the colleges and elsewhere, or undertaking tertianship and preparing to make final vows. (See Table 11: Scholastics, Unordained and Ordained.)

	1712	1736	1756	1761**
Novice Scholastics, Phil. & Theol. 1-3 Students	106	104	114	106
Regents	84	96	109	100
Subtotal Unordained Scholastics	190	200	223	206
Active Ordained Scholastics (not incl. Novice PP)	62	52	46	44
Novice PP in Tertian House	14	6	10	9
Subtotal Ordained Scholastics*	76	58	56	53
Total	266	258	279	259

Table 11
Scholastics, Unordained and Ordained

(* Because spiritual coadjutors are not included, the totals differ from those for non-professed priests in Appendix 2.

**The decline in numbers of scholastics by 1761 is attributable to the crises of 1757–61.)

As the commitment of professed Jesuits to teaching was reduced very little despite the decline in their numbers, there was a slight increase, to 1756 and even to 1761, in the proportion of Jesuits whose major and sometimes sole function was teaching. The main, sustained increase came at the level of regents.

The reason for this state of affairs lies not in entry-rates or in death-rates but in more departures, and in what seems to have been a widely-applied dismissals policy.⁶³ This subject is complicated by the fact that the catalogues describe all departures as dismissals and refer to all dismissed Jesuits as *dimissi*, without indicating whether their departure was involuntary or voluntary. Among the scholastics, the rate of dismissal, whatever its cause, steadily went up, and may be said to have reached 45 percent by the end of the period.⁶⁴ While it is rarely possible to discover whether a particular dismissal was involuntary or voluntary, there are signs that it was the number of involuntary dismissals that was rising. It looks very much as if superiors retained increasing numbers

63 On the complex question of dismissals from the Society, guidelines were provided in the *Constitutions* ("The dismissal of those who were admitted but did not prove themselves fit"), [204–42], including which authority should authorise dismissals and the reasons for such dismissals (with variations according to stage of formation and grade), Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions*, ed. and trans. Ganss, 141–51.

64 All lists of *dimissi* in the extant annual and triennial catalogues of the Province for 1712–61 have been collated, and dismissal rates for all entrants have been calculated. Of all 1402 novice scholastics and novice temporal coadjutors who entered during this 50-year period, 437 or about 31 percent were dismissed by the end of the period. Of the 1057 novice scholastics who entered during the half century, 358 or about 34 percent were dismissed. Martin, "Vocational Crises", 205–08, described a dismissal rate of 35 percent in a comparable group in sixteenth-century Italy. For the Province of Brazil in 1556–1675, Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise*, 292, estimated a dismissal rate of one-quarter to a third of all entries. Thus, the eighteenth-century Province of France appears to have experienced a degree of stability comparable to that of other Jesuit provinces in an earlier period. But there is another, more precise way to establish dismissal rates for all scholastics. The present study concentrates on men who entered in successive decades long enough before the dispersal of 1762 to have completed their entire formation and to have made final vows if they remained in the Society. It has been found that among all who were novice scholastics in 1712–41, departures as a proportion of entries increased from about 35 percent of entries in the first decade (1712–21) to about 45 percent of entries in the third decade (1732–41). The dismissal rate for all scholastics who entered in the 30-year period (studied as a group) was 39 percent for the whole period (239 dismissals of the 615 entries in 1712–41). Comparable information is not available for other provinces. Appendix 4 and Table 12a, below, provide additional information on this topic.

of scholastics through regency and beyond, and then dismissed larger numbers of such Jesuits before they made final vows, rather than attempting to rebuild the Province by encouraging more scholastics to complete their formation and make final vows. Appendix 4 establishes trends in dismissals of unordained and ordained scholastics as entrants in particular decades, as scholastics present during key periods, and as scholastics who departed in particular decades or other defined periods. Its three parts demonstrate that increasing numbers of approved scholastics were leaving well into or after completing their regency, some just before or soon after ordination. Significantly, in the second half of the 50 years under review, an even greater number than previously had served the Society for more than 10 years before they left.⁶⁵ Dismissals of scholastics reached the highest levels for those who entered in 1732–41, the third decade of the half century.⁶⁶ (See Appendix 4: Entries, Dismissals and Survival among Scholastics, 1712–61.) Table 12a makes clear that both the number of late departures, and late departures as a proportion of all dismissals of scholastics, were on the rise for all who can be studied. As it happened, dismissals of temporal coadjutors beyond the level of novice also increased from the 1730s. (See Table 12a: Dismissals of Scholastics by Decade of Entry and Decade of Departure and Table 12b: Dismissals of Temporal Coadjutors by Decade of Departure.)

65 See Appendix 4b for information about time served by unordained and ordained scholastics before dismissal.

66 While it has been possible to document entries and dismissals for those present in the five decades 1712–61 (Appendix 4c), because the period of formation for Jesuit priests was typically 17 years, documenting progress from entry to dismissal or the making of final vows by period of entry was possible only for those who entered during the three decades 1712–41 (Appendix 4a). Table 12a includes numbers for the whole period.

Entry Period	1712-21	1722-31	1732-41*	1742-51**	1752-61**	Totals
Total number of entries	169	215	231	225	217	1057
Total number of dismissals	61	73	105*	71	48	358
After 1-2 years as a novice	25 41%	19 26%	21 20%	23 32%	32 67%	120 34%
Yrs 3-12 mainly after regency	25 41%	40 55%	69 66%	37 52%	16 33%	187 52%
Yrs 13 and later, sometimes after ordination	11 18%	14 19%	15 14%	11 15%	0	51 14%
Subtotal: Yrs 3 and beyond	36 59%	54 74%	84 80%	48 68%	16 33%	238 66%

Table 12a
Dismissals of Scholastics by Decade of Entry

(*Total number of dismissals to 1741: 239.

**Because formation took about 17 years, numbers in columns for 1742-51 and 1752-61 are incomplete.)

Departure Period	1712–21	1722–31	1732–41	1742–51	1752–61*	Totals
Total number of dismissals	66	60	90	88	108*	412 100%
After 1–2 years as a novice	24 36%	17 28%	21 23%	22 25%	35 32%	119 29%
Yrs 3–12 mainly after regency	28 42%	27 45%	50 55%	54 61%	51 47%	210 51%
Yrs 13 and later, sometimes after ordination	14 21%	16 27%	19 21%	12 14%	22 20%	83 20%
Subtotal: Yrs 3 and beyond	42 64%	43 72%	69 77%	66 75%	73 68%	293 71%

Table 12a
Dismissals of Scholastics by Decade of Departure

(*This column is skewed because of departures occasioned by the crises of 1757–61.)

Departure Period	1712–21	1722–31	1732–41	1742–51	1752–61*	Totals
Total number of dismissals	10	8	17	22	27*	84 100%
Year 1 after novice	6 60%	0	2 12%	0	6 22%	14 17%
Yrs 2-10 to formation	2 20%	5 63%	14 82%	16 73%	19 70%	56 67%
Yrs 11 and later, after formation	2 20%	3 38%	1 6%	6 27%	2 7%	14 17%
Subtotal: Yrs 2 and beyond	4 40%	8 100%	15 88%	22 100%	21 78%	70 83%

Table 12b
Dismissals of Temporal Coadjutors by Decade of Departure
 (*This column includes dismissals occasioned by the crises of 1757–61.)

The decade 1712–21 may serve as a bench-mark for further analysis of departures of scholastics. Among novice scholastics who entered in that first decade, almost 15 percent did not continue beyond the novitiate and a further more than 20 percent left the Society before completing their formation, usually several years before ordination, although then, as later, some were ordained and departed before making final vows. Then, starting with the novice scholastics admitted in 1722–31 and continuing for those admitted in 1732–41, a new pattern emerged. A smaller proportion — now between 8 and 9 percent — left at the end of the novitiate, while a larger proportion — a further 25 to 36 percent — remained to serve as regents before departing, and many of them departed after serving as regents for a longer time than the *dimissi* of the past.⁶⁷ The numbers help to clarify the point. While the number of those who left during or soon after the novitiate declined a little — from

⁶⁷ See Appendix 4a and the second part of Appendix 4b for information on departures by entry-year and years in the Society. In Appendix 4, periods of time connected with stages of formation (novitiate, period as approved scholastic, period after probable or known ordination as priest) have been used. Appendix 4b provides the results of a study of 93 *dimissi* who entered in the second and fourth decades of the eighteenth century.

25 who entered in 1712–21 to 19 who entered during the following decade, and 21 who entered in the decade after that — the number of those who remained, only to be dismissed later, increased from 36 who entered in 1712–21, to 54 who entered in 1722–31, and to 84 who entered in 1732–41. During the four decades before 1752–61, the number of novice scholastics dismissed in each decade remained fairly constant, ranging between 17 and 24. But the number of more senior approved scholastics and ordained scholastics who departed, increased by at least 50 percent, from 42 and 43 in the first two decades to 69 and 66 in the third and fourth decades. In other words, each year in the early period, on average, two novice scholastics and four approved scholastics left the Society. But from the early 1730s and until the late 1750s, in addition to two novices and four approved scholastics with fewer years of service, two approved scholastics (or sometimes an approved scholastic and an ordained scholastic), present for seven, eight, or more years, now also departed, on average, each year.⁶⁸ Whatever the reasons for their departure, it is striking that these *dimissi* were more numerous and that a greater proportion of them had served for a longer period than earlier *dimissi*.⁶⁹

Staying on to teach and then to take on additional assignments, regents and ordained scholastics, present in the period 1732–61, ensured that the Province still fulfilled the teaching and other responsibilities acquitted in earlier days when it had more members. But then a greater proportion of them than in the past disappeared between one annual catalogue and the next. It is doubtful that many of the later departures were voluntary, for it is unlikely that young men of this period required more time than their earlier counterparts to make up their minds to seek release from their vows, or that families would wait longer to attempt to recall a

68 The full significance of the dismissal of regents, other approved scholastics, and even of ordained scholastics nearing the end of their formation (and their replacement by others coming up behind them) is concealed in aggregate totals generated from successive annual catalogues. It is best understood by reviewing the experience of cohorts of *dimissi* and the rate of dismissal over successive periods. See Appendices 4a and 4c.

69 See Appendix 4c for departures by decade of departure. The Enlightenment was not a consideration. While the spirit of the age may account for the decline in vocations from Paris (see above, Table 9, in Part 5: “Recruitment Patterns”), it is inconceivable that it caused young men already in the Society to choose to wait longer than their pre-Enlightenment counterparts to ask to be released from their vows.

son. Rather, because the pattern of such departures is so strong, it appears that superiors either required or encouraged the departure of men whose formation in the Society was well advanced.⁷⁰ Indeed, such dismissals would seem by the 1730s to have become a matter of policy. The inexorable decline in the number of professed Jesuits was thus caused not by a shortage of possible candidates in the early stages of formation but by losses among scholastics, both approved and ordained, who might otherwise have gone on to make final vows.

The implications of these departures for the work of the Society were complex. It had to abandon some of its most cherished responsibilities. From 1712–56 the Province of France reduced its contribution of priests to the overseas missions by 25 men, or nearly 30 percent. In France, losses must have been most apparent at the level of the senior members. Such pastoral assignments as being a preacher or a confessor, even in exalted places, to pre-eminent people — appointments dependent on the availability of suitable priests — were fewer in the later years. The ranks of the professed included 19 fewer preachers and at least 10 fewer public confessors in 1761 than in 1712. The number of designated publicists declined by eight over the same period. As a result, the Jesuits' influence in public life can only have declined. Theologians no longer taught much theology other than scholastic theology. The atmosphere in the colleges must have changed, especially in the large colleges, where significantly fewer professed pedagogues, writers and scholars at the height of their intellectual powers were in residence. Yet most ministries, particularly in France itself, were not abandoned.

The problem posed by the lack of men eligible to perform administrative and spiritual functions was dealt with by continuing to rotate personnel, and, more important, by increasing the number of ministries performed by both the remaining ordained scholastics and, particularly, the remaining professed. Since this happened incrementally, even those actively involved may not have perceived that a great change was occurring. An analysis of the ministries performed by the professed in 1712, 1736, 1756 and 1761 reveals that their numbers in administrative functions went

70 A review of Part 2 (*Secundus*) of the triennial catalogues for 1717, 1737 and 1757 suggests that scholastics who had very good reports from their superiors about their judgment and other character traits generally tended to remain, while those who left, like many who remained, had mixed evaluations by their superiors. There was often little difference between the superiors' evaluations of those who remained and those listed among the *dimissi*.

up and stayed up, while not quite so many professed were assigned to teaching in 1756 and 1761 as in 1712 or even 1736. It also makes clear that, by 1736, many of the professed, including some of the major administrators, were being assigned to — and presumably carrying out — more functions than their counterparts a quarter of a century earlier. And the trend only continued. As time passed, fewer professed performed more functions than previously, by taking on added responsibilities and presumably by working harder. In France, by 1761, slightly more than three-quarters of the number of professed who had been present in 1712 assumed responsibility for almost as much work as the professed of 1712. This meant that nearly half the professed of 1756–61 performed one more function than the professed of 1712.⁷¹ Appendix 5 demonstrates the ways in which ministries were distributed and who performed them. (See Appendix 5: Ministries Performed by the Professed Alone and by All Priests and Scholastics, for a complete analysis of the nature and distribution of functions within these groups.⁷²)

That the professed had to work harder resulted from the decline in the number of scholastics completing their formation and going on to make final vows. But why were significantly fewer Jesuits attaining the highest grade in the Society of Jesus? Only suitability for full incorporation into the Society should have determined whether an approved scholastic continued to final vows or was dismissed from the Society. But perhaps other, familiar considerations preoccupied the decision-makers and influenced the rate of dismissals. Lower lay-student enrollments in the eighteenth century may have prompted superiors to manage with fewer professed Jesuits in the colleges.⁷³ Likewise, the insolvency of the colleges and the difficulty of getting by on meagre resources may have encouraged even local

71 In other words, the 299 professed of 1761, who were 78.9 percent of the 379 professed of 1712, performed 94.6 percent of the functions performed by the professed half a century before. By 1761, administrative functions seemed to be taking precedence over pastoral ministries.

72 The categories presented in Appendix 5 were described above, in Part 3 (“Personnel”).

73 The most trustworthy statistics on eighteenth-century student enrollments in French Jesuit colleges are those recorded, for each college from one three-year period to the next, for the Province of Champagne in Part 3 (*Tertius Rerum*) of the triennial catalogues of that province. They demonstrate a steady, downward trend. See Dainville, “Effectifs des collèges”, 455–88, with a table at 456–57. The few figures cited in Delattre, *Les établissements*, 1–4: passim for the colleges of the Province of France suggest the same tendency. See above, Part 1 (“Introduction”).

administrators not to seek the restoration of greater numbers in their establishments.⁷⁴ The traditions of the Society and arrangements made by the founders of the colleges determined that fixed costs recurred and could not be reduced. The Spartan conditions of most colleges and other institutions produced no surplus resources to draw on and there was little room left to reduce per capita costs. Men had to eat and be clothed. Travel costs were more-or-less fixed. The cost of maintaining Jesuits and institutions could not be reduced. Yet the prospect was not entirely bleak.

Administrators recorded positive developments on several fronts as time passed. Amounts owed by the colleges were declining and the net income which the colleges received each year was increasing. College administrators were closer to balancing their books by the second half of the period than in the first. In normal times, even taking account of any negative impacts of the price rise of the 1730s to the late eighteenth century, the significant increase in institutions' revenues should have made material life a little easier. And in one significant, demonstrable way, the financial condition of institutions in the Province of France did improve. The year-to-year decline in the number of resident Jesuits meant that income available to support the colleges increased by more than 55 percent per Jesuit between 1720 and 1757.⁷⁵ (See Figure 3: Per Capita Income: Jesuits in Colleges 1700–1757.)

74 The third part (*Tertius Rerum*) of the triennial catalogues, includes statements by administrators of the number of Jesuits being supported by the revenue of each college and then how many Jesuits that revenue could support. Administrators demonstrated penury by indicating that a given college was supporting more Jesuits than it could afford. Subsequently, the number of those supported often did go down.

75 In 1705–20 income per Jesuit in the colleges increased very little; in 1720–57 it increased from 281 to 444 *livres* per Jesuit. See above, Part 4 ("Statistics") and Appendix 2 for the numbers and proportion of members of the Province who lived in the colleges.

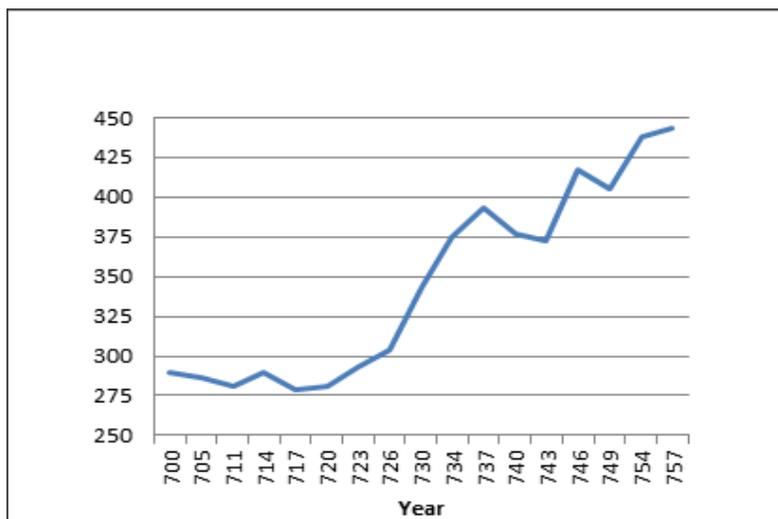


Figure 3
Per Capita Income, Jesuits in Colleges, 1700–57

In many ways, the day-to-day administration of the Province appears to have gone on much as usual at mid-century, despite the decline in the number of priests. The practice of moving Jesuits from one institution to another, as deemed necessary, persisted. In France, Jesuits continued to serve where most needed. Superiors of major institutions were changed at the usual three- to four-year intervals. Other priests and regents continued to move from one institution to another, as before, but in somewhat smaller numbers, with the further variation that many of the regents working their way through the cycle of teaching assignments would not remain in the Society long enough to make final vows.

7. Conclusion

The object of this article has been to provide a comprehensive description of the condition of the Province of France on the eve of its demise. The degree to which its institutions were maintained and members of the Province continued to carry out its purposes, despite its smaller size, has been assessed. It has been shown that the smaller province of 1756 — and even of 1761 — was serving French society in much the same ways as in 1712. And, because of an improvement in the revenues of the colleges, it was, in

material ways, somewhat better off by 1756 than it had been in 1736 or 1712. The outlook for the personnel may also be judged to have been better by 1756 and 1761 than in 1736, in the mid-period. Admittedly, in 1761 there were 80 fewer professed than there had been in 1712, and 36 fewer than in 1736. But while there were fewer professed members, those present tended to be younger than at mid-period, and in age to resemble their more numerous counterparts of half a century before. In French institutions the median age of the professed was 51 in 1712; 54 in 1736; 51 in 1756; and 50 in 1761. In the colleges, the distribution between those who had been professed for 16 years or more, and those who had been professed for less than 16 years had been roughly 50:50 in 1712, and 56:44 by 1736.⁷⁶ For the first half of the period, the professed had grown older. This situation had not endured, however. The interrelated developments in recruitment and dismissal, described above, had led, by 1761, to a new ratio between the categories of senior and junior professed. By 1761, in the colleges, that ratio had come to be 42:58.⁷⁷ Appendix 6 clarifies these developments on a college-by-college basis. (See Appendix 6: Distribution of Senior and Junior Professed in Colleges, 1712, 1736, 1761.) A renewal of the professed had been achieved. A higher proportion of the professed was ready for more years of service than 25 or even 50 years earlier.⁷⁸

This study of the catalogues of the Province of France reveals that a series of developments, not previously studied by historians, occurred within the Province of France in 1712–61 and determined its nature on the eve of its destruction. These developments were inter-related, often contrasting, even mutually offsetting. Thus, although the Province experienced a crisis in recruitment during the first two decades of the period, admissions increased in the subsequent three decades to levels comparable to those of the time of greatest expansion at the end of the seventeenth century. Entries

76 In 1736 the proportion of senior to junior professed in the whole province was 60:40.

77 The number of professions increased in the final years from 92 in 1742–51 to some 109 professions in 1752–62. Profession dates for the last 14 of the 109 are from records of the *parlements* of Paris and Rennes, referenced above, at Part 1 (“Introduction”). In 1761 the ratio of senior to junior professed for the whole province was 47:53; in 1712 it had been 49:51.

78 In age, 75 percent of the professed in France were between 35 and 61 in 1712, between 35 and 64 in 1736, between 35 and 60 in 1756, and between 35 and 59 in 1761.

did not decline again until the final crisis of 1761–62. The increase was achieved through complementary losses and gains. While entries from Paris and other traditional centres of recruitment in Île de France and Normandy declined significantly during the period, these losses were compensated for by significant increases in entries from Brittany, Picardy and Artois, and areas beyond the boundaries of the Province, including Champagne. Yet, because more dismissals occurred than before, the Province did not grow, but constantly lost many of its youngest members before their formation was complete. And, almost until the end, it had ever fewer professed members. Nevertheless, the function of the Society in France for which it was most widely known — providing education in its colleges — was maintained throughout the period. This was possible because regents continued to be available to teach the lower classes, while professed members still taught at the higher levels.

Yet, the fact that the Province had some 10 percent fewer members at the end of the period (in 1756–60) than at the beginning (in 1712–16) meant it was better able to live on its limited revenues, which were, in any case, improving.⁷⁹ Moreover, while the presence of fewer members at the most senior levels meant that the professed had to work harder in the short term, renewal among them was occurring. By the 1750s their ranks had been rejuvenated, and an increase in the 1750s in younger members who remained in the Society promised further renewal of the senior ranks. Given just a few more years, the essentially healthy province of the mid-1750s should have been able to rebuild its membership, resume responsibilities abandoned earlier, and survive indefinitely. But time was something it did not have.

That, in the half century before the final crisis, the Province assumed the characteristics described here, has been linked in this analysis to the nature and extent of dismissals in the period. Why did so many scholastics leave? Some novices were soon found by the novice-master or themselves or their parents to be unsuited to continuing in the Society, and arrangements were made for them to leave at an early stage.⁸⁰ But for the majority of *dimissi*, who

⁷⁹ See Table 1, above, Part 4 (“Statistics”).

⁸⁰ In some cases, BnF, Département des manuscrits, *Ms. lat.* 10988: Register of all entries of novice scholastics, April 1745–December 1761 states reasons for the dismissal of novice scholastics. These ranged from poor health, poor eyesight, and unsuitable character to homesickness. In a few cases, novices were dismissed “at the request of their parents”.

had become approved scholastics or even ordained scholastics, the situation was more complicated. The long period of formation allowed time for them to adjust their behaviour and habits of mind to the requirements of their vocation. At intervals their superiors advised scholastics how they might remedy their unsatisfactory characteristics and then presumably allowed them time to do this. As in the case of novice scholastics, it was local superiors who made the decision to initiate the process which led to the dismissal of some approved scholastics and ordained scholastics.⁸¹ But scholastics themselves — and surely sometimes heads of families — must also, in some cases, have sought to influence decisions. Sometimes the distinction between involuntary and voluntary dismissals must have been blurred. Approved scholastics may have stayed on, despite doubts about their future in the Society, waiting for a clear decision from above, while superiors may have hesitated to seek dismissals, knowing they had to staff the colleges. Or perhaps uncertainties festered and scholastics sought release from their vows, in anticipation of dismissal by their superiors. Such arrangements could have suited both sides: administrators who needed teachers, young men who sought experience and wanted to stay. Some departures may have been negotiated.⁸² In the

81 Cf. ARSI, *Aquit.* 21, no. 22, letter of Superior General Lorenzo Ricci to Charles Nectoux, provincial of Aquitaine, Rome, 4 February 1761, on normal procedures for dismissing scholastics, which involved ensuring that the Provincial completed the appropriate forms. Cf. *Aquit.* 22 no. 69, Ricci to Nectoux, Rome, 31 March 1762 and no. 74, Ricci to Nectoux, Rome, 19 May 1762, which explained the procedures to be followed by Provincials in dismissing whole categories of scholastics, spiritual coadjutors and temporal coadjutors (all those under simple vows), in the event of the dissolution of the Society in France, if such members asked to be released from their vows.

82 Cf. the case of Élie Catherine Fréron, * 20.I.1718 Quimper, SJ 23.XII.1733 Paris, released from his vows 10 April 1739, died at Montrouge 10 March 1776 (ARSI, *Franc.* 20: 1734, f. 53r; Balcou and Benhamou, "316 Fréron", online). As an approved scholastic, he was deemed by his superiors to be lacking in good judgment when he defied them to attend a play. He sought release from his vows, apparently in preference to waiting to be dismissed, and went on to be a famous journalist. Another possible "negotiated dismissal" is that of the approved scholastic Jean-Baptiste Louis Gresset, also a Breton, * 29.VIII.1709 Vannes, SJ 3.IX.1726 Paris (ARSI, *Franc.* 19: 1730, f. 371v), released from his vows in 1735 in Paris. Having got into trouble with his superiors for lampooning members of the establishment, Gresset was "exiled" from Paris to La Flèche, where he nevertheless taught rhetoric for two years before being dismissed. See Northeast, *The Parisian Jesuits and the Enlightenment*, 204–15.

absence of conclusive evidence, these issues remain unresolved.⁸³

8. Afterword

External, not internal, forces destroyed the Province. No causal link between the changes in the Province which took place from 1712–61 and the destruction wrought by the *parlements* in 1762 has been established. By the end of that year, all the Province's institutions in France had been seized by representatives of the state. And the residents — priests, scholastics and temporal coadjutors — had been dispersed and obliged to take up new, much more solitary lives. For members of the Province, young and old, the dispersal ushered in a period of severe testing. French Jesuits who wished to continue to teach, preach or perform any public function were required to take an oath which included forswearing their connection with the Superior General in Rome, on pain of expulsion from France.⁸⁴ Initially, any Jesuits who refused to take such an oath could be banished by the *parlements*. Then, in November 1764, a royal edict suppressed the Society of Jesus but guaranteed the right of individual French Jesuits to remain in France.⁸⁵ Significant numbers of non-juring members of the Province of France did stay in the kingdom, although they were harassed by their enemies during the 1760s and into the 1770s. Some did experience exile. For a time, even former scholastics who had left the Society many years before the dispersal could face the threat of expulsion from France.⁸⁶ And during the French Revolution, a disproportionate number of surviving members of the Province lost their lives.⁸⁷

The French suppression lasted until 1814, when the restored Society of Jesus was permitted to return to France. Two of the youngest members of the Province, scholastics in 1762 and now

83 The correspondence between the French superiors and the Superior General in ARSI, *Franc.*, *Gall.* and *Epp.* NN. for the period 1712–55 was not reviewed by this researcher. It might well shed more light on this intriguing question.

84 AN, AD XVII, 20, *arrêt*, 6 August 1762. Other *parlements* and sovereign courts required a similar oath.

85 AN, AD XVII, 23, *édit du roi*, November 1764.

86 See BnF, Département des manuscrits, *Coll. Joly de Fleury*, 1631 ff. 47–55v. The *parlement* of Paris treated scholastics long since dismissed from the Society in the same way as those who experienced the dispersal of 1762.

87 See Thompson, "French Jesuits", 196–98, and on the period of the dispersal and suppression, *Ibid.*, 181–98.

old men, took part in the formal restoration, in Paris. They were accompanied by four other old men, also scholastics in France before the suppression. The two — and another, at that time too ill to travel — were the remaining fragments of the old Province of France.⁸⁸ But the Province of France was not restored. It was replaced in the nineteenth century by the Province of Paris, which, in turn, became the pre-eminent French province of the Society of Jesus.

Summary

What was the condition of the Province of France, pre-eminent province of the French Assistancy, on the eve of the state seizure of its institutions and dispersal of its members in 1762? Through a quantitative analysis of the life of the Province during the 50 years before its destruction, based primarily on annual and triennial catalogues, it is shown that the number of men who made up the Province was significantly smaller, its colleges materially somewhat better off, and its professed members fewer but younger at the end of the period than at the beginning. As the end approached, professed and other members were working harder, still carrying out most of their educational and pastoral responsibilities in France, and significant numbers of young men from well-established recruiting areas were still seeking to become members. The smaller Province of 1761 was essentially healthier than the larger one of 25 or 50 years before, and might have survived indefinitely had it not been overwhelmed by superior external forces. The ways in which the decline in numbers came about are explained. Circumstantial evidence that the reduced size of the province was a consequence of changes in dismissal patterns and even in dismissals policy is

88 Thompson, *Ibid.*, 198. The three members of the Province of France who lived on after the restoration were Pierre-Joseph de Clorivière, * 29.VI.1735 Saint-Malo, SJ 14.VIII.1756 Paris, † 5.I.1820 Paris (*Sommervogel* 2:1244); Jean-Baptiste de la Fontaine, * 30.III.1739 diocese of Rouen, SJ 18. IX. 1756 Paris, † 27.III.1821 Paris (*Sommervogel* 3:848); and Charles Fleury, * 21.IV.1739 diocese of Rouen, SJ 13.IX.1756 Paris, † 2.V.1825 (in England in 1814) (ARSI, *Franc.* 21:1757, ff. 86–88; Vivier, *Catalogus Sociorum*, 16). A tiny catalogue listed the seven surviving members of the French Assistancy, including the three members of the Province of France who were incorporated into the restored Society in 1814. Thus it happened that, “the fragments that remained were not lost, but gathered up”. John vi, 12, cited by Vivier, *Ibid.*, title page; the catalogue is at p. 16.

also reviewed. The result is a portrait of a functioning province intimately woven into the fabric of French life before its dramatic eradication eleven years before the universal suppression of the Society in 1773.

Résumé

En quel état se trouvait la Province de France, province fort importante de l'Assistance de France, à la veille de la saisie de ses institutions et de la dispersion de ses membres par l'État en 1762? Une analyse quantitative de la vie de la Province, portant sur les cinquante années qui précèdent son démantèlement et basée, pour l'essentiel, sur les catalogues annuels et trisannuels montre une diminution significative des effectifs humains qui composaient la Province ainsi qu'une amélioration relative des conditions matérielles de ses collèges ; elle montre également que ses membres profès étaient à la fois moins nombreux et plus jeunes à la fin de la période considérée qu'à ses débuts. Dans les dernières années, tous les membres — ceux qui avaient fait profession et les autres — travaillaient plus, tandis qu'ils continuaient d'assurer la plupart de leurs charges éducatives et pastorales en France ; dans les aires de recutement bien établies, un nombre non négligeable de jeunes hommes continuait d'aspirer à devenir membres. De fait, la Province de 1761, plus petite qu'elle n'avait été vingt-cinq ou cinquante ans auparavant, était essentiellement en meilleure santé et elle aurait pu survivre longtemps si elle n'avait été terrassée par des forces extérieures et supérieures à elle. On verra plusieurs explications de la chute des effectifs. On reviendra également sur les preuves circonstanciées qui attribuent la réduction en taille de la Province à des changements touchant les modèles et même la politique de renvoi. Ce faisant, cette étude dresse le portrait d'une Province qui, dans les années précédant son spectaculaire démantèlement puis, onze ans plus tard, la suppression universelle de la Société en 1773, non seulement était opérationnelle mais encore participait intimement à la vie de la France.

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Appendices

Introduction and Overview: The Eighteenth-Century French Jesuits Project of The University of New Brunswick

This project was made possible by the generosity of the late Father Georges Bottereau, * 11.II.1912 Nonancourt (Eure, Normandy), SJ 14.XI.1929 Paris, † 7.VIII.1985 Rome,⁸⁹ Associate Archivist at ARSI in the period 1978–85, when the principal researcher travelled annually to ARSI in search of documentation. He arranged for the microfilming of all the eighteenth-century catalogues, annual and triennial, of the Province of France, and of other documentation. And he made translations into French of Latin and Italian documents essential to the project. The memory of his encouragement in the early stages of this project has inspired this attempt to make previously-unpublished major findings available to other researchers. Professor Gail Campbell conceptualised and oversaw the creation of the machine-readable data-base, and solved computing problems along the way. She has very kindly continued to be involved with the project since 1983.

What follows is a description of the quantifiable data in the machine-readable data-base and the nature of the statistical information generated from it. Another aspect of the project has, of course, been the accumulation of qualitative, non-quantifiable information, essential for the interpretation of the statistics and to understanding other aspects of the history of the Province of France and of the Society of Jesus in France in the eighteenth century. No attempt has been made here to describe those sources or their use.

Objectives

The first of the two parts of the Eighteenth-Century French Jesuits Project was devoted to explaining the experience of Jesuits during the half century before the dispersal and suppression of 1762–1814. It was based primarily on the annual and triennial catalogues. The first objective was to understand the nature of the Province in 1761, the last full year of its existence. This was done by examining its work and the men who did that work, at intervals during the half century 1712–61: in 1712 (50 years before the dispersal), in 1736 (25 years before the dispersal), in 1756 (five years before the dispersal, and the last normal year before unfavourable propaganda connected to legal proceedings against the Society and the Damiens affair began

⁸⁹ ARSI, Nicolas Verastegui, *Catalogus defunctorum, 1970–1985*.

to influence recruitment and retention), and in 1761 (the final year). Comparisons between the situation in each of these four, “key” years were made to reveal how the institutions and membership of the Province were evolving until external threats were apparent, and to detect any institutional response to those threats in 1756–61. The second objective was to discover as much as possible about the lives as Jesuits of the 712 men who were members of the Province in 1761, with a view to recognising life-course and career patterns among these “men of 1761”. Again, comparisons were made — this time with the lives as Jesuits of 1227 other members of the Province known to be present in 1712–60 — to establish the extent to which Jesuits’ lives changed in the half century before the dispersal. A third objective, defined after the project was underway, was to ascertain if there were patterns of dismissal/departure and retention among young members of the Province in successive decades during the 50-year period. The part of the data-base created from information in the catalogues has been used exhaustively for the first time in the preparation of the present article. Previously, it was used to provide background for articles and chapters on the experience of Jesuits in the period after 1762 and in the preparation of an article on French Jesuit wealth prior to 1762 and of the first chapter of a monograph on the Breton Jesuits.

Use of the catalogues

All data in the triennial catalogues of 1712, 1737, and 1757 (those closest to the key years) were recorded, including the information from part 1 (*Primus*) on personnel (family and given name, place of origin, birthdate, state of health, date of admission to the Society, time spent studying specific subjects before entry and in the Society, time spent in specific ministries, degrees earned and statement of grade in the Society and where and when final vows were made), part 2 (*Secundus*) the superiors’ assessments of the qualities of those under them (intelligence, judgment, discernment, experience, proficiency in studies, and temperament), and part 3 (*Tertius Rerum*) on the financial condition of institutions (notably the colleges). With a view to using extant annual catalogues systematically, ensuring that all the professed of the 50-year period were included, and cross-checking to make sure that findings for the key years were not skewed, all data in the annual catalogues were recorded for three “runs” of six years each: 1712–17, 1734–39, and 1756–61. Additional data in the annual catalogues on the 712 men of 1761, for all the years from their entry to 1761, were recorded. The extant triennial and annual catalogues

of the eighteenth century were mined for missing information about all 1939 Province of France Jesuits (the 712 men of 1761 and the 1227 others who died before the making of the annual catalogue of 1761) who appeared in the runs, and for information about all entries and dismissals/ departures of scholastics and temporal coadjutors, throughout the 50-year period. All extant eighteenth-century triennial catalogues were used to fill in missing information on particular Jesuits included in the study and to determine the financial condition of the colleges over the period. Data from the catalogues were coded in standardised, machine-readable format.

Nature of the data

This information, when available, was included in the machine-readable data-base on the Jesuits: date of birth, place of origin (*patria*), education before entry, date of entry, date of ordination, date of final vows, education in the Society, highest grade attained, institution and the ministry/ ministries or function/ functions to which each Jesuit was assigned (in each run-year for the 1227 who died before the making of the annual catalogue of 1761 and in every year he was in the Society for each of the 712 men of 1761), date of departure/ dismissal or death, place of death. Summaries of superiors' evaluations of the state of health and also of all the qualities of mind, character and education of those in their charge (part 2 of the triennial catalogues) were included. The spelling of men's names was standardised and linkages between names and pertinent data were made. Complete profiles of the men of 1761 and snapshots of aspects of the careers of the men present in the Province long enough to be recorded in at least one annual catalogue in a run-year were created. The 1939 Province of France Jesuits studied in this way included 299 professed and 413 other Jesuits present in 1761, virtually all the other professed Jesuits and spiritual coadjutors present at any time in 1712–60, a very high proportion of all formed temporal coadjutors present at any time in 1712–60, and all other Jesuits present at any time during the 18 years comprehended in the runs. Entry and departure information for all men who were present in at least one catalogue was recorded, with the result that the data-base includes the names and at least the date of entry of 2218 men altogether. Information in both kinds of catalogue was compared and collated. Institutional histories were created, based on the run years. Financial histories of the colleges, based on the triennial catalogues, were established. Histories of occupations carried out in the various institutions are as complete as possible. Making comparisons between years within runs helped to eliminate

clerical errors. Comparisons between years within a run confirmed what was typical of a particular six-year period. Information about the years 1712, 1736, 1756 and 1761 was used to show trends in membership levels and the evolution of responsibilities. Medians based on 1712–16, 1734–38, and 1756–60 were used in establishing the numbers and kinds of Jesuits present in the early, middle and later periods. Note that while the data-base contains information about all Jesuits present in the Province of France in the periods studied, only data pertaining to members of the Province of France have been used to generate the statistics presented in this article.

Other aspects of the project

The second part of the Eighteenth-Century French Jesuits Project was devoted to explaining the experience of Jesuits during the half century of the dispersal and suppression of 1762–1814. Its machine-readable data-base was compiled from serial French state and French church records pertaining to Jesuits' lives after 1761. It has provided the statistical bases for most of the principal researcher's publications. (See the bibliography of this article.)

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