

Palazzo Adriano in Sicily and the Jesuit Mission of 1638*

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Greek Rite Catholics Prior to the Jesuit Mission

In the course of its history Sicily has absorbed many foreign peoples including the Greek and Albanian settlers who fled from the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans in the fifteenth century. The two groups of settlers shared a common Orthodox Christian religion and both groups came from relatively the same geographical area of South Eastern Europe. As a result in Sicily or Southern Italy where they settled practically no distinction was made between the Greek exiles of the Peloponnese, who fled after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, from the Albanians. The latter were forced to leave their country after the fall of Giorgio Castriota, better known as Skandenberg (1468), the leader of the Albanian resistance movement against the Ottomans.

Both the landowners and the government of Sicily recognized the usefulness of these refugees as farmers. The newcomers were thus encouraged to settle in areas that had been almost completely abandoned for many centuries and which consisted mainly of woody

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uncultivated land. In creating these new settlements, the Albanians gave an impetus to a movement which by the 1600s began to change the face of the countryside of Sicily. In earlier times the royal houses of Sicily - Norman, Hohenstaufen and Angevin - had all founded new villages, and the leading noble families followed suit. Some aristocratic families and some feudal ecclesiastical entities conceded the Greek and Albanian settlers the faculty to cultivate the land, keep herds of cattle, sheep and goats, and develop village communities of their own.¹

The French historian of early modern Sicily, Maurcie Aymard, reports that Graeco-Albanian settlements sprang all over the island at Palazzo Adriano (1482), Biancavilla (1488), Piana degli Albanesi (1488), Mezzoiuso (1501), Contessa (1520), and at San Michele di Ganzeria (1534).² Another group arriving from Negroponte (modern Euboea in Greece) had already established itself in the environs of the castle of Migaido, near Tusa in 1488.³ The largest of these seven main settlements was that of Piana degli Albanesi and the settlers, mostly Greek rite Albanian Catholics, have managed to retain a distinct identity down to the present. Over the centuries the communities managed to retain their own Greek rite clergy, their own religious rites, their own language, folklore, and fashions of dress. It was probably thanks to the inaccessibility of their new settlements that the Greek and Albanian communities managed to keep their own distinct religious rite almost intact for so long.

The study that follows is based upon a three page manuscript description of a mission which was carried out in 1638 at the mountainous village of Palazzo Adriano by the Jesuits. The *Arberesch* – as the Albanians of Italy are known – were originally allowed to settle in Palazzo Adriano by the Abbot of Fossanova and Casamare who at

1 I. Peri, *Restaurazione e pacifico stato in Sicilia 1377-1501*. (Roma-Bari: La Terza, 1988), 72.

2 M. Aymard, *La Sicile, terre d'immigration*. In *Les immigrations dans le pays méditerranéens au XVIIIème et au début du XIXème siècles*, Actes des Journées d'études, Bendon 6-7 avril, 1973, (Nice, 1974), p.139; O. Cancila, *Baroni e popolo nella Sicilia del grano*. (Palermo: Palumbo, 1983), 14.

3 The document was originally quoted by C. Filangieri, 'Feudalità viva: Migaido', *Persefone*, Anno II, (Messina, 1966) and reprinted in more detail in 1969. cf. Cancila, *Baroni e popolo*, pp.14-15.

the time was the landowner of that area. According to Pietro Pompilio Rodotà, the original community which was established at Palazzo Adriano consisted of thirteen extended families.⁴ But the territory changed hands in 1527 when the Opezzinga family, a family of bankers and merchants of Pisan origin, became the feudal overlords of the territory.⁵

It seems however that the early enthusiasm of the Sicilian authorities for the new settlers soon waned especially since less than a generation after their arrival the Graeco-Albanian communities began to gain notoriety for banditry. They terrified the local peasant population and infested the countryside armed with cross bows, bows, and fire-arms. In the early 1540s the Viceroy of Sicily, Don Ferrante Gonzaga (1535-1546), determined to fight banditry, was induced to inquire even on the feudal lords themselves some of whom seem to have protected these bandits.⁶ One of their champions was the Baron of Comiso who on being found guilty of having protected bandits had his lands confiscated.⁷ Despite the adoption of very tough measures, during the rule of the succeeding Viceroy, Don Juan de la Vega (1547-1557), the feudal lords continued to protect bandits in exchange for part of the booty.⁸ At this time brigandage seems to have become a characteristic part of everyday life in Sicily particularly in the hinterland where royal, or feudal justice, were practically non-existent. Indeed the bandits, with whom the descendants of Greek and Albanian refugees were often associated, often hailed from among the poorest ranks of peasant communities and were often believed to resort to banditry as a means of survival. Most often these bandits were little more than mountain-dwellers who attacked the settled well-off agriculturalists of the valleys whom they robbed. Their notorious ability in the use of arms, and the

4 Pietro Pompilio Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, Libro iii. (Rome: Salomoni, 1763), 106.

5 A Battaglia, *L'evoluzione sociale in rapporto alla proprietà fondiaria in Sicilia*. (Palermo: Aristide Battaglia, 1974), 127.

6 C. Trasselli, *Da Ferdinando il Cattolico a Carlo V. L'esperienza siciliana, 1475-1525*. (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1982), 718-720.

7 G. Capasso, *Il governo di Don Ferrante Gonzaga in Sicilia dal 1535 al 1543*. In *Archivio Storico Siciliano, Nuova Serie* 31 (1906), 450-451.

8 G. Giarrizzo, *La Sicilia dal Vicereame al regno*. In *Storia della Sicilia*, vol. 6. (Naples: 1978), 42-43.

reputation for allegedly wild behaviour, were still very much alive in the seventeenth century when the Jesuit priest Father Marco Lima led a mission to their territory.

Father Lima and the Jesuit Mission of 1638

On 22 November 1638 Father Marco Lima - who had been entrusted with the mission at Palazzo Adriano – concluded a detailed report on his recent missionary activity from the Jesuit College of Bivona in Western Sicily.⁹ Fr Lima had originally intended to spend but a couple of days in Palazzo Adriano but he wrote that the locals were so overjoyed by the presence of the missionaries that the mission was extended and was only terminated a week after it began.

Who was Father Lima and why was he chosen for this task? Information on Father Lima is rather sparse. In the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Jesu*, Lima is said to have published a book in 1648 entitled *Brevis narratio translatione sacre domus Lauretanae in Picenum, seu Compendium Historiae Lauretanae*.¹⁰ However Lima was considered important enough by the nineteenth century Jesuit scholar Carlos Sommervogel (1834-1902) to include a brief biography of Father Lima in the fourth volume of *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus*. Sommervogel notes that Father Lima was born on 8th September 1604 at Retimo (modern Réthimnon) on the island of Crete then under Venetian rule. He then left for Italy and was received by the Company of Jesus on 21st September 1625. Lima spent six years teaching humanities and moral theology at Loreto where he also served as confessor to the Greek rite Catholics. He died at Recanati on 8th April 1664.¹¹

Although brief and lacking in detail the short biography by Sommervogel provides enough evidence to explain why Father Lima was chosen for the Palazzo Adriano mission. Lima had himself been

9 *Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu* [ARSI] *Sicula* [Sic] vol.184 part 1, ff. 225r-226v: 22 November, 1638.

10 The *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Societatis Jesu*, was a work begun by Father Peter Ribadeneira, S. J., continued by Father Philip Albegambe, S. J., and brought up to date by Father Nathanael Sotwel S.J. in 1675.

11 C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 4. (Brussels: 1890), cols.1836-1837.

brought up as a Greek Catholic in Crete. As a native Greek speaker he was considered an ideal subject of the Company of Jesus to work with the Greek Catholics of central Italy. Thus when in 1638 the diocesan bishop of Girgenti (modern Agrigento) approached the Jesuits to carry out a mission among the Greek Catholics of Palazzo Adriano Father Lima was an obvious choice. There seems to have been a general belief at the Jesuit Curia in Rome that native speakers should be given easy access to the Company and then sent to preach, and if possible convert, the native population, whose language they spoke. A clear example of this emerges from the Jesuit attempt to teach Arabic to the Maltese in the early seventeenth century.¹²

In brief the account of Father Lima's mission starts off with

12 Conscious of Malta's great potential as a bridge to establish contacts with the Muslim countries of the Maghreb Ignatius of Loyola, approved the request of Bishop Cubelles to erect a college in Malta in 1554. V. Borg, *Girolamo Manduca: His life and works*. In *Melita Historica* 7, no.3 (1978), 237-257. In a way this interest in the teaching of Arabic may be associated with the original idea of Loyola himself to organize missions to the Holy Lands. The prevailing belief that the Maltese had a natural aptitude to learn Arabic induced the Father General in 1625 to advise the Provincial of Sicily to be more lenient in receiving Maltese youths within the ranks of the Society, once they had acquired the necessary qualifications. The Father General required one specific requisite from the Maltese candidates and that was that they had to learn to read and write Arabic before joining as they could be channelled to foster pastoral work among Arabic speakers. On 18 December 1625 the Father General urged the Provincial of Sicily: *Similmente raccomando caldamente a V.R. che sia anco facile ricevere i Maltesi di lingua arabica atti per la Compagnia, e raccomando al P. Rettore di malta, che procuri che questi giovani che dimandano la Compagnia imparino a scrivere, e leggere la lingua arabica.*' *ARSI Sic.* vol. 9, f. 92v. See also: Borg, *Girolamo Manduca*, 251, n. 40. Among those who joined the Company in 1625 was the Maltese Jesuit Domenico Magri. *ARSI Sic.* vol. 9, f.11r; Borg, *Girolamo Manduca*, 251, n. 3. In a letter of 15 May 1637, the Jesuit trained Inquisitor Fabio Chigi (later Alexander VII), conscious of the affinity between Maltese and Arabic, and wishing to exploit Malta as a training ground for missionaries in the Levant and expressed his intentions. Chigi's plans soon bore fruit as by 30 September 1637 the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide established a school of Arabic in Malta with Don Francesco Azzopardi as the first lecturer. A. Cremona, *L'antica fondazione della scuola di lingua araba in Malta*. In *Melita Historica* 1, no. 2 (1953), 91; 1, no.3 (1954), 143. Docs. D.E. cf. S. Fiorini, *The Collegium Melitense and the Universitas Studiorum to 1798*. In R.G. Sultana, ed., *Yesterday's Schools. Readings in Maltese Educational History*. (Malta, PEG, 2001), 55.

information on the geographical position of Palazzo Adriano which he said lies some 36 miles from the city of Palermo in the diocese of Agrigento. Lima points out that the village had been called Palazzo Adriano because the Roman Emperor Hadrian had built a palace for his nephews there and in order to confirm this view Father Lima refers to the survival of ancient remains that had survived to his times. The area largely consisted of hilly wooded land, there was an abundance of water, and it was ideal for hunting activities and contained a great variety of plants and medicinal herbs.

Father Lima then turns his attention to the inhabitants. He explains that the cultivated land was well cared for by the Albanians of Greek rite. These had originally arrived from Epirus, or Albania, which he describes as a region of Greece, between Macedonia and Achaia. They reached Sicily some time after the fall of Constantinople to the Mohamedans (Turks). The rebellious and indomitable Albanian Christians had fought hard, under the leadership of Giorgio Castriota known as Scanderbegh [original spelling], to keep their territory free from the Turkish yoke. However at last the Turks had the upper hand and they were forced to flee their home country. Father Lima argues that after many adventures and hardships most of them arrived in Sicily and some of them were given the chance to settle at Palazzo Adriano.

Father Lima then gives a generic description of the population. At the time he was writing – in 1638 - the population of Palazzo Adriano reached approximately 4,000 souls. Some eight hundred of them had drifted away from the Greek rite and joined the ranks of the Latin Catholics. However, despite the change, the Latin rite followers continued to converse in their native Albanian tongue that was spoken by everyone in Palazzo Adriano. In short he describes them as *Arberesch* and goes on to give details about their character. He describes the men as strong, proud, and they could easily resort to homicide. But despite their poverty all households were well-equipped with arms and they were very sharp shooters. Likewise the women are said to be hard workers and no less tough than their men for which reason they were highly feared throughout Sicily. Father Lima learnt that the population had been better off in earlier times but by the time of his visit the inhabitants were impoverished. Father Lima does not go into detail as

to why he was surprised to learn that despite their abject poverty and pride the women looked healthy and honest. Finally Father Lima was surprised to find that over the generations these women had managed to maintain a dignified appearance.

Despite the positive aspects of their character the Jesuit priest was rather shocked with the low moral standards of the Palazzo Adriano *Arberesch* which he blamed on their crass ignorance in matters of faith, and their spiritual corruption which he says were dominated by 'superstitious' beliefs and magical practices. He gave as an example the practice among newly married women to untie their husband's right foot shoe lace in order to ensure the birth of progeny. The prostitutes likewise recited orations consisting of sacrilegious words in order to keep married couples in discord among themselves and without any scruples these 'loose' women prepared remedies to procure abortions or to miscarry.

A major preoccupation of the Jesuit Father Lima was the poor standard and quality of the priesthood. These were no more than ten in number and they were all married. Strictly speaking Eastern rite Catholic priests are allowed to marry to this day. But the *Arberesch* priests were poor and had very limited knowledge of Christian doctrine. Lima goes on to explain that there were four churches. The Cathedral church dedicated to Saint Demetrius, was the best constructed and relatively well kept. It could be reached from a stairway leading to the town square by the river. Mass was said every day but the rite was carried out with little respect and few of the faithful attended the service. Lima blamed the great poverty of the church and the priests for the way they kept the Holy Sacrament which was normally kept in untidy wooden boxes, as were the sacred vestments. On the other hand the Latin rite Catholics administered three small chapels which were likewise badly cared for and the faithful were little better off than their Greek rite compatriots. The Jesuit noted that many Latin rite faithful often reached old age and died without the basic rudiments of the Faith. For Father Lima the blame lay squarely on the shoulders of the local clergy who led a scandalous public life and often gave a bad example to their parishioners. He insisted that the clergy were duty bound to teach the Greek rite Catholics to cast away abuses from their rite, while the

Latin Church should have tried to remedy the pitiful situation of the religious ignorance that persisted among the faithful. Lima opined that this would have been easy to remedy because although the Albanians were rough and rather crude in their lifestyle, the Jesuit missionaries had noticed that they could easily yield to the principles of religion and Christian piety. He insisted that had a serious effort been made on a local level the inhabitants would by time of his visit have either turned to the Latin rite, or, at least, they would have become better Greek Catholics. Lima then advised that in similar out of the way places, the diocese must always avoid sending two or three friars and let them do as they please without any direct control from the diocese. Father Lima was insistent on this point mainly because he discovered that the friars ended up living and mingling with the rustic peasants. The latter lacked any knowledge of religious doctrine and spirituality and rather than improve the religious qualities of the peasants, the Catholic friars ended up compromising their own moral behaviour. But Father Lima declared that he had no wish to enter into the details of the immoral attitude of the friars and preferred to keep a chaste silence. He had said enough to induce the church authorities to investigate!

Father Lima concern about the low standards of the *Arberesch* of Palazzo Adriano and their clergy appears to have been the main preoccupation of the Jesuits. The Jesuits were so conscious of this problem that Father Lima had been ordered by his Father Provincial to temporarily leave the College of Bivona to carry out this mission. On his part Father Lima seems to have concurred with the decisions of his superiors. Thus when he was ordered to set for the mission, he lost no time and immediately informed Signor D'Arrigo Canuti, agent of his Eminence Cardinal Francesco Barberini, and immediately left for his mission of Palazzo Adriano in the company of a few unnamed Jesuits brothers who remained anonymous throughout the report.¹³ The trip was short but difficult and distressful as Father Lima and his companions had to climb up the rocky-mountains which made the uphill climb to the village very difficult. Worse still the zealous Jesuit missionaries had to endure torrential rain for the last eight miles of their trip. They had to pass through narrow mountain passages, cross

13 Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, 112.

dangerous rivers, and in the end they were soaked to the skin which induced Father Lima to declare in his report that he felt as if they were sailing rather than travelling on land. Indeed the progress of the Jesuits on the road was so slow that the sun had long set before they finally reached their destination in pitch darkness.

Despite the tiring and exhausting trip the Jesuits soon went to work. Early the following morning, after the celebration of mass, they explained their mission to the local clergy. They visited the whole territory and urged all the inhabitants of both rites to attend lessons on Christian doctrine. In the meantime they chose the Latin rite church of St Sebastian as their base and put the church in a functioning order so as to be able to accommodate the faithful. That same evening, many villagers attended the sermons, including the Greek rite priests and their Vicar. But the Jesuits soon realized that the villagers were so ignorant and helpless that they felt obliged not only to impart religious knowledge but even to teach basic health principles to everyone.

On Thursday, the day dedicated to Saints Simon and Jude, High Mass, followed by a sermon, was held at the Greek rite Cathedral. The missionaries then published a plenary indulgence and exhorted all those present to confess and receive Holy Communion. That evening they continued to teach Christian doctrine to the faithful and began to hear confessions. By Friday morning the number of those who wished to confess had increased and on Saturday the amount of penitents had increased so much that the Jesuits continued to hear confessions until two hours after sunrise of the following day.

Although they were exhausted the Jesuits were unable to resist the throng of people and after some rest they were forced to return to the missionary base where they continued to do their duties until early evening. But the confluence of people remained high. Thus although they had originally planned to leave on Sunday afternoon, after a General Communion, they decided to stay longer. In his report Father Lima wrote that the missionaries remained longer because when the people learned of their planned departure, they began shouting and insisting that the missionaries should stay for a month. This in Lima's view was evidence of the popularity of the mission. According to the *Arberesch* population the Jesuit mission would have had limited value

if the Jesuits had to depart after such a short time?

In his report Father Lima explained that he felt duty-bound to remain at Palazzo Adriano for some more time. Indeed he argued that the pressure of work that Sunday morning was so strong that the Jesuits had to seek help from other local confessors. During the High Mass sang at the Greek rite Cathedral, 160 Albanians confessed and received communion with great devotion to the amazement of all present. But there were still many who wished to confess and had not done so by Sunday afternoon. It was thus impossible to leave that Sunday afternoon. In reality Father Lima argued that it was an act of providence that they remained for some more time because on Monday, which happened to be All Saints' Day, they had to handle some pitiful cases.

Father Lima then goes on to give details of a few case-studies which were particularly moving. He declared to have confessed someone who had been committing sacrilege for seventeen long years. This person had continued to receive communion but had refrained from confessing 'the worst sin'. One wonders to what sin Father Lima was precisely referring to although it is probable that it was connected to some form of extra marital relations. He added that some thirty Greek rite Catholics received communion during High Mass that Monday.

But that was not all. Father Lima reports other successes which for a champion of the faith, like himself, were no mean achievements. He noted with great satisfaction that one penitent confessed after eleven years, and another one after seven. Another penitent, a woman, who had lived in sin for five years, had returned within the folds of the Church. Furthermore he reported that two married women had given up their bad practices; a couple that had lived out of wedlock for three years had finally decided to marry; and four separated couples were reunited after a long time. One thief confessed that he had made a reasonably large robbery and decided to return the stolen goods to the rightful owner. Above all many women vowed that they would abstain from practicing magic, and sacrilegious superstition. Seven other penitents made a general confession after many years of living 'in sin'.

But Father Lima must have rejoiced particularly when he managed to convince married women to give up their adulterous relationships. One of these women dismissed the pimp who brought

her clients 'to commit adultery'. Another woman terminated her three years of concubinage with a young man. Father Lima's concern was centred upon the assumption that the woman continued to confess and receive absolution despite the fact that she was living in a state of sin. Other 'triumphs' of the mission included the absolution of a penitent adulterous woman who smothered her newly born 'non-baptised' babies. Like most of his contemporaries Father Lima must have been greatly concerned with this woman who practiced infanticide and must have felt some relief when she promised that she intended to return to the folds of the Church. The Jesuit missionary's concerns were spiritual and he does not add much detail to the condition of the woman in question. It is possible that the woman was single as a married woman did not need to conceal her condition. She would probably have been poor like most of the villagers and her liaisons could have helped to provide some form of income and she would have lived alone, without any form of male protection, or family. That would have made this woman particularly vulnerable. But although Father Lima might have fully understood that the woman in question committed infanticide under some form of duress he was not obliged to go into such details in his report. The aim of the report seems to have been that of highlighting the great success of his mission. And every word is geared towards that direction.

In order to prove the great benefits of the mission, Father Lima argues that thanks to the sacrament of confession, and several private meetings with penitent persons, many abuses had been lifted. Amongst other he persuaded the married Greek rite priests to stop several of their bad habits like that of fondling their small children while wearing sacred vestments and chanting prayers in the choir. He also insisted that these priests should keep the Holy Sacrament more decorously and neatly, and to refrain from giving pecuniary penance during confession, largely because the people were so poor that often they were unable to perform the penance given. Father Lima further insisted that those parishioners who for devotional reasons fasted on Saturdays and abstained from eating meat on that day should be allowed to continue this practice. He even insisted against allowing villagers who left the Greek for the Latin rite to return to the Greek rite.

Father Lima concludes his report by pointing out that the Jesuit

missionaries had preached twice during High Mass at the Greek rite church and many attended the ritual which in his opinion was evidence of the success of the mission. The Jesuit asserted that the mild efforts of the missionary fathers had left the desired effect especially thanks to their preaching, the teaching of Christian doctrine as well as confessions had induced some five hundred villagers to receive Holy Communion. In his report Father Lima concluded that when they arrived at Palazzo Adriano the Jesuits had found a community that lacked spiritual devotion but after their brief stay they had left behind both the Greek and Latin rite Catholics in great religious fervour and piety. On their departure the Greek Vicar and other Greek rite priests thanked the Jesuit Fathers for their mission and accompanied them for some way on their return journey. Finally Father Lima hinted to the submissive role played by the local Greek rite priests by remarking how they had asked him to act on their behalf with the Cardinal whom they had previously asked to grant them some dispensations for their rite. The Jesuit priest gracefully acceded to their wish and he explained that he did his utmost to portray a good picture of the Greek rite clergy of Palazzo Adriano with the authorities in Rome.¹⁴

Jesuit Impact on Palazzo Adriano

In order to be able to evaluate the way the mission at Palazzo Adriano was carried out, one must first understand the basic principles of a Jesuit mission. In the early days of the Company of Jesus the founder, Ignatius Loyola, advised his companions to counter heresy and unethical behaviour not by persecution or polemic, but rather by private conversation, by preaching on Catholic doctrines, by administering the sacraments, and above all by giving a good example of Christian life. This definition was somewhat revised in 1550 by Ignatius himself who defined the purpose of the Society as ‘the defence and propagation of the faith and... the advancement of souls’.¹⁵

14 This was confirmed by the publication of the book on the Greek rite in Italy by Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, 108.

15 T. O'Reilly, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation: The hagiographic tradition*. In *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990), 439-470, esp. pp.446-447.

The idea of mission became such an integral part of the core of Jesuit methods that with time Loyola's name became associated with the mission and conversion of non-Catholics.¹⁶

John O'Malley explains that in their missions Jesuits conceived themselves primarily as 'pilgrims', or as 'apostles' who, similarly to St Paul, travelled from one place to another to spread the teachings of the gospel. They essentially saw themselves as itinerant preachers, like Jesus and his disciples, primarily concerned with inculcating holiness in the hearts of their listeners.¹⁷

In essence the Jesuit aim in such missions was to convert the individual to the very core, hence the insistence on the 'soul'. By 'soul' the Jesuits meant the whole person, in essence, this meant amongst other, providing food for the body, tending a sick body and teaching the mind. Besides Jesuits cared for prisoners in jail and tended the sick in hospitals. They assigned similar activities equal importance to their teaching and other academic work. Yet since prisoners did not normally require round-the-clock attention, in time, caring for prisoners became more compatible with their teaching schedules. In short, the Jesuits primarily wanted to help the individual achieve the best possible relationship with God. The religious and cultural framework in which the Jesuits lived meant that they believed that acceptance of the basic Christian dogmas was a necessary precondition for such an experience to be complete and fully genuine. Therefore rather than simply studying church dogma, they sought to inculcate it among the faithful. They hoped and did their utmost to help others to accept the lived reality of God's action in their lives rather than simply attaining an intellectual assent to orthodox Christian beliefs.

From the early days the Jesuit assumptions about God, the world, human beings and the interrelationship among these issues remained constant in their belief. They were the more important aspect of the Company of Jesus and manifested themselves in a number of ways

16 'When Ignatius was canonized in 1622, his feast on 31 July was commemorated in the Roman breviary by a prayer that recalled how through him God had reinforced the Church Militant with a fresh supply of soldiers, and by readings in which it was stated that he and the Society had been raised up to overthrow Luther and his fellow heretics' O'Reilly, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Counter-Reformation*, 442.

17 J. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*. (Cambridge: Havada University Press, 1993), 15.

although they were nowhere clearer than in the Jesuit ministries and their attempts to 'help souls'. But underneath edifying narrations, like that of the mission in Palazzo Adriano, the literature of the community in question shows how the missionaries approached the harsh reality of the everyday existence of the ordinary inhabitants of Catholic Europe. They were particularly concerned with marriage practices and had to deal with cases that breached canonical irregularities. However even after Trent, at the height of the seventeenth century, some gestures like the bride's untying of her husband's right foot shoe lace in order to ensure the birth of progeny mentioned above, and other gestures which at the popular level were thought to be an essential part of the nuptial marriage rituals, continued to survive.¹⁸

Why were the Jesuits so successful in their mission of Palazzo Adriano? The Jesuits were very tactful in their approach. missionaries did not warn the faithful of excommunication but limited themselves to preach and show how traditionally accepted practices were in fact sinful in the eyes of the Tridentine church. This may perhaps explain why their teachings were so successful that the missionary in question, Father Lima, gave indications in his *relatione* that the laity began slowly to change their habits. The *relatione* seems to imply that the ecclesiastical effort to introduce a new type of discipline thus reached its objective in that it managed to transform individual transgression, or sin – attributed to weakness of the flesh ingrained in social habits that had in fact existed for centuries. It was in essence part of a widespread strategy to transform the behavioural patterns of Catholics in southern Italy as elsewhere in the Catholic world. This does not imply that the Jesuits were constantly conscious of the change in popular behavioural patterns. Nonetheless they were most conscious that the Church wanted to transform society and that in order to achieve this aim the old traditional habits, which missionaries attributed to the crass ignorance of the population, had to be discarded. The fragments of old practices that were retained were to be purified from the socio-cultural traditions

18 Ottavia Niccoli, *Baci rubati. Gesti e riti nuziali in Italia prima e dopo il Concilio di Trento*. In S. Bertelli and M. Centanni, eds., *Il gesto*. (Florence: Ponte alle Grazie, 1995), 224-247, esp. 243.

of the past and integrated into Catholic Tridentine practices.¹⁹

The *relationi* of the Jesuit missionaries in southern Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continually list the extraordinary successes of their missions. But apart from the list of victories one cannot ignore the difficulties they faced in their attempts to wipe out ancient traditions and habits which may have survived long after the missionaries left. Such practices seemed to disappear during times of fervent religious activity but continued to re-emerge largely because they formed an integral part of the acculturation process of the region. Nevertheless something had in fact change for good. If the new strategy was not properly understood by the illiterate masses, these came to perceive ancient habits as wrong.²⁰ Thus when these old customs re-emerged, they were often frowned upon because more often than not they came to be seen as individual sins and the old system of practices was slowly put aside.

The Jesuits often resorted to their own missionary strategies and techniques but it has often been pointed out these methods were not new and were surely not invented by themselves, or indeed by any other religious order, but had rather re-surfaced from earlier times. Thus the new missionaries adapted and modernized old methods for the conversion of the masses. However it may be argued that the Jesuit missionaries were right, at least to some extent, to think that they were introducing a form of Christianity that had not penetrated the cultural life of the rural communities who lived cut off from civilisation.²¹ What needs to be clarified is that what the missionaries were imparting was not an original form of Christianity but rather a version of Christian beliefs adapted by the Council of Trent. The main aim of the policy was to eradicate popular religious beliefs at grass roots level in order to be able to exert social control. One needs to appreciate that these missions served as a partial response to the Protestant Reformation, at a time when the Church, threatened by outside forces, sought to strengthen her hold over her faithful adherents by ensuring that they could understand

19 A. Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari*. (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 622-624.

20 *Ibid.*, 640.

21 *Ibid.*, 627-631.

her basic tenets.²² All religious orders partook in this exercise, but the Jesuits in particular proved to be the champions of the missionary movement.

Therefore the aim of the mission was that of conversion but how did the Jesuit missionaries go about their work? Although the Jesuits aired their concern about the lack of basic religious knowledge among the masses, they believed that the unlearned, poor and violent masses could help them fulfil the extraordinary conjoint promise of a return to the idealized early Church and tried hard to try to create some sort of earthly paradise in the lands of their missions. This attitude was associated with the general belief that the primitive Church was characterized by religious fervour and devotion towards the Holy Eucharist which induced the early Christians to receive Holy Communion frequently. In medieval times such notions formed part of the monastic ideal of perfection so that monks and nuns frequented the Eucharist much more frequently than any other section of society. However after the Council of Trent it became possible for the laity to reach a state of religious bliss by receiving Holy Communion more frequently than ever before. It was believed that the deformation of the original Christian notion had reduced sacramental confession and Holy Communion to an annual obligation which was expected from every Christian. Between the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries a great deal was being written about the need to reform the outlook of the lay Christian. Realising that the trend was akin to their beliefs, the Jesuits made the notion their own and diffused it as part of their programme of missionary activities.

The job of the missionaries was mainly directed towards persuasion of the faithful in matters of public morals. They tried to eradicate traditional practices and to substitute them with Tridentine norms. The texts of their *relationi*, such as the one in discussion, are indicative of their way of perceiving the issue. The missionaries were conscious of the need to multiply the efficacy of their intervention by divulging their way of perceiving reality. Naturally one cannot ignore the other aspect of the *relatione*. The *relatione* was an instrument of information to the authorities and it aimed at provoking a disciplinary intervention. But one fundamental key to understand the pressing

22 Ibid., 635-637.

reality was that of pinpointing individual defects and sins when these emerged. In short they believed that there existed rites and customs, which formed an integral part of social life, which had to be uprooted. The Jesuits thus conceived of themselves as engaging in a ministry of the 'consolation of souls'.

These missions were believed to be a crucial aspect of religious life. According to Adriano Prospero the idea of the missions originated from an attempt to transfer the crusading impulse of conversion to the Catholic faith into the internal regions of Europe. As a result missionaries often failed to distinguish the specific situations which they faced in a particular environment. For this reason it is perhaps advisable not to take *relazioni*, like the one of Palazzo Adriano, at face value because they often include frequent recurrences of certain stereotypes, such as, for example, the people's complete ignorance of God and the sacraments.²³ One may add that in the missionary tradition, the Jesuits, like Father Lima above, tended to glorify achievements, conversions, miraculous occurrences, with the result that *relazioni* often said very little, if any at all, about the aims of their activity. One may argue that the intention of the missions in the periphery of Southern Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and elsewhere was to evangelize and finally to Christianize the rustic peasants who inhabitant 'the Indies' as these peripheries were called. They claimed, and undoubtedly managed, to introduce new devotions based on the precepts of the Council of Trent. But they did not always succeed to bring about the necessary changes towards religious devotion as the missionaries wished. As a result the native population often sought to adapt, adjust and fit the missionaries' teaching to suit their own needs and beliefs.

The Jesuits and Sacramental Confession

Sacramental Confession or, the 'consolation of souls', had originally been perceived by St Ignatius Loyola whose preoccupation is best manifested in his *Spiritual Exercises*, where it is described

23 Adriano Prospero, 'Otras Indias': *Missionari della copntoriforma tra contadini e selvaggi*. In *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura: Convegno internazionale di studi*. (Florence: 1982), 206-234, esp. 213, 217.

several times. St Ignatius recognized that the 'consolation of souls' had different manifestations depending upon the spiritual state of the person experiencing it. But the Jesuits always insisted on the internal change of the heart, a change that came from God, brought the penitent closer to Him. This state of affairs induced the penitent to feel a sense of guilt and anxiety which early Jesuit theology attributed to a sense of contrition. This sense of guilt emerged from the application, and practice, of the sacrament of penance. Indeed the importance attached to penance has often been seen as the centre piece of Jesuit ministry. Hence the insistence of the Jesuits on the consolatory aspects of that sacrament, and the insistence on the fundamental role it played in Christian ethic, particularly after the Council of Trent, is normally associated with Jesuit theology.²⁴

It was in essence a theology meant to counteract the radical Protestant doctrine of consolation which undermined the orthodox and traditional order of things. This explains why the Council of Trent felt the need to reaffirm the role of confession and why the Catholic Church produced its own zealots on the matter. Ignatius Loyola, and his Jesuits, may perhaps be considered as a champion of the Church of Rome in the matter.²⁵ From their inception, the Jesuits exalted the consolations of sacramental confession. T. Tentler argues that:

...in doing so they drew on the best traditions of medieval pastoral theology; kept faith with the original spirit of the order; and responded to needs that modern society continued to generate.²⁶

The Catholic Reformation came to consider confession as: 'the

24 Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, 621.

25 Martin Luther had asserted that 'any Christian even a woman or a child' could in the absence of a priest absolve as well as the pope or bishop. This proposition was condemned by Pope Leo X in the Bull *Exurge Domine* published in 1520. The fourteenth session of the Council of Trent (chap. 6), basing itself on the gospels of Matthew (xviii, 1.18) and John (xx, 1. 23) condemned as false and as at variance with the truth of the Gospel all doctrines which extend the ministry to any others than bishops and priests. These were the only ones with power to remit sins. The Catholic doctrine, therefore, is that only bishops and priests can exercise that power.

26 T.Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation*. (Princeton: 1977), 367.

consoling gift of eternal salvation'.²⁷ Thus the Catholic Church felt the need to reaffirm sacramental confession with fervent devotion because it was seen as a necessary condition of survival for the whole ecclesiastical system. Thus

If the sinner has recourse to the tribunal of penance with a sincere sorrow for his sins, and a firm resolution of avoiding them in future, although he bring not with him that contrition which may be sufficient of itself to obtain the pardon of sin; his sins are forgiven by the minister of religion, through the power of the keys. Justly, then, do the Holy Fathers proclaim, that by the keys of the Church, the gate of heaven is thrown open.²⁸

The Catechism of the Council of Trent teaches that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance and priestly absolution so that men would not remain in 'anxious suspense' over the forgiveness of sins. Thus it was only through the sacrament of penance that man could hope to regain the grace of God.²⁹

The greatest reserve was counselled when dealing with sins of the flesh so that sex would not be named imprudently, but its aspects, its correlation, and its effects must be pursued down to their slenderest ramifications.³⁰ Thus in the seventeenth century the Jesuit Paolo Segneri exhorted the confessor to:

Examine diligently, therefore, all the faculties of your soul: memory, understanding, and will. Examine with precision all your sense as well... Examine, moreover all your thoughts, every word you speak, and all your actions. Examine even unto your dreams, to know if,

27 Tentler, *Sin and Confession*, 368.

28 *On the Sacrament of Penance*. In J.A. McHugh & C.J. Callan, eds., *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*. (Rockford, Illinois: 1982), 190.

29 H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, vol. 2. (St Louis, Missouri: 1961), 10.

30 M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. (Harmondsworth, 1981), vol. 1, pp.19-20; cf Paolo Segneri, *L'Instruction du Penitent*. (Paris, 1695), 301.

once awakened, you did not give them your consent. And finally, do not think that in so sensitive and perilous a matter as this, there is anything trivial and insignificant.³¹

The Council of Trent was very sensitive on the issue of the administration of the sacrament of penance. This is demonstrated by the fact that henceforth no priest could become a confessor unless he held a parochial benefice or obtained a special licence from the bishop of his diocese. When granted such licences were only valid for one year and one had to pass through a rigorous qualifying examination.³²

The Jesuit interpretation of the role of the sacrament of penance provides clear evidence of how the Jesuits accepted the Church institutions, yet at the same time they interpreted them within a framework moulded by them and to some extent refashioned by these same institutions according to their practical needs. At times this interpretation was carried out unconsciously and they had no intention to depart from the basic tenets of the Catholic Church. Thus amongst other the Jesuits accepted the various ecclesiastical tribunals including the Inquisition.³³ At the same time, the Jesuits often managed to generate a high-pitched religious enthusiasm in those among whom they lived. It was in essence a kind of enthusiasm that was free of the great religious disputes of the times. As John O'Malley points out

When the Jesuits worked with confraternities, when they taught children to teach along with them in their catechesis, and when they looked for benefactors for their schools and other works, they reveal to us a prior engagement with religion by the Catholic population that was not the product of fear, hatred, or elitist campaigns.³⁴

31 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 19; Segneri, *L'Instruction*, 301-302.

32 J. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire*, Eng. trans. (London, 1977), pp.201-202; H.C. Lea, *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, vol. i, (Philadelphia, 1896), vol.i, p.303.

33 A. Borromeo, 'The Inquisition and inquisitorial censorship', in J. O'Malley (ed.), *Catholicism in Early Modern History. A Guide to Research*, (St Louis, Missouri, 1988), pp.253-272.

34 O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, (Cambridge Mass. & London, 1993), pp.20-21.

The missions in the hinterland of mainland southern Italy and Sicily for example were for a while associated with the Jesuits, although it must be said that throughout the early modern period (xvi-xviii centuries) and even later Capuchins likewise played a conspicuous role as missionaries.³⁵

Sinners were heard, and if they were penitent, were received with open arms by the Church. But the success of the work of the missionaries took much longer to seep in, so that old habits continued to linger on for centuries after the corrective intervention. Despite the sense of triumph and mass conversion one reads about in the *relationi*, it was obviously difficult to succeed in eradicating long practices and beliefs. Thus unethical practices, like cohabitation before the solemnization of matrimony, remained standard long after the missionaries left the parish. Perhaps one major reason for the universal acclaim of Jesuit success is based on the fact that the Jesuit missionaries did not frighten the faithful with excommunication. They simply limited themselves to preach and to show how traditionally accepted practices were in fact sinful in the eyes of the Tridentine church. This may perhaps explain why their teachings were so successful among the laity who on learning about their faults they slowly began to change their habits. The ecclesiastical effort to introduce a new type of discipline thus reached its objective in that it managed to transform individual transgression, or sin – attributed to weakness of the flesh. It was in essence part of a widespread strategy to transform the behavioural patterns of Catholics in the Catholic world. But change was wrought partly as a result of compromise.

In their missions the Jesuits preached with “terrorizing eloquence”. They used the catechism and the confessional but for all their show the Jesuit missionaries realized that they could not afford to jeopardize their position by dismantling the belief structures on which the laity depended. However hard they they tried to root out the most reprehensible and superstitious aspects of popular religion, they

35 Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari*, pp.600-607; E. Novi Chavarría, ‘L’attività missionaria dei Gesuiti nel mezzogiorno d’Italia tra xvi e xviii secolo’, in G. Galasso and C. Russo (eds), *Per la Storia sociale del Mezzogiorno d’Italia*, vol.ii, (Naples, 1982), esp. p.4.

maintained an extended stock of approved ecclesiastical remedies to fulfill the material and psychological demands of the people. In short some elements from past practices were retained but these had to be purified from the socio-cultural traditions of the past and integrated into Catholic Tridentine practices.

Concluding Remarks

Did the Jesuit Mission of 1638 change the customs of the Palazzo Adriano community? If one reads between the lines the detailed description on Palazzo Adriano which Pietro Pompilio Rodotà published in 1763 provides ample information on the difficulties that the community had to face in the years that followed. Rodotà not only provided information on the origins of the community, its functions, and the eventual establishment of a Latin parish, but he also dwelt in some detail on the various dealings between the locals, the diocese of Girgenti (modern Agrigento), the magnates of the area, and the Holy See. However it is not my intention here to go into the details of squabbles that the Albanian community of Palazzo Adriano had to endure. One interesting point that emerges in Rodotà's book is the confirmation that Father Lima had in fact managed to convince Don Arrigo Canuti, Cardinal Barberini's representative, to allow the Greek rite clergy enjoy special measures and to safeguard their privileges.³⁶

There were changes in the number of churches where functions were held. Rodotà described the matrix church of the Greek rite, sited on top of a hill, which he said was dedicated to saints Mark and Nicholas. The geographic description surrounding the major church of St Demetrius, provided in Father Lima's *relatione*, seems to refer to the same church. The church described by Rodotà had been somewhat reduced in size and we are told that during the time of Cardinal Ludovisi the *Arberesch* community built a new church in honour of Our Lady of the Assumption attached to it. The new, somewhat larger, church took over the primary role from the old church and was officially honoured with the title of collegiate by an Apostolic Brief of Pope Gregory XV

36 Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, p. 108; cf. ARSI Sic., vol.184 part 1, fol.226.

(1621-1623), the uncle of the community's protector, Cardinal Ludovisi. Despite the title of Collegiate the Church of the Assumption never really functioned like a Collegiate. But the Greek rite faithful had some more churches. There was one church dedicated to Our Lady of the Graces which was originally built in 1560; another one dedicated to the Virgin and the martyred Saint Parasceve; then there was the church of Our Lady of Mercy; and finally a church dedicated to Our lady of Miracles. The churches dedicated to Saints Mark and Nicholas; the church of Our Lady of Graces; and the chapel of the Sacrament at the Matrix Church, dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, were all served by a confraternity by the time Rodotà published his book.³⁷

Rodotà then turned his attention to the Latin rite churches. There were likewise some drastic changes over the span of over a century. In 1638 Father Lima claimed that the number of souls of Palazzo Adriano reached a total of around 4,000 souls. Of these some eight hundred practised the Latin rite.³⁸ We also learn that at first the Latins were deprived of a church building to perform rites but were allowed access to the private chapel of the feudal landlords of the area - the Opizzinghi family. By 1561 Vincenzo Opizzinghi, a devout follower of the Carmelites, obtained permission to erect a small Carmelite friary, and a small church, which was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin. The small Carmelite community had the faculty to administer the sacraments in the Latin rite. However they did not survive for long and not long after the friary was suppressed and its revenues were joined to those of the diocesan seminary at Girgenti. The church of the Assumption, associated with the friary, began to serve as the seat of a confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel but regular religious functions were not held there. In short the Latin rite faithful had been deprived of their own church. The general poverty and the shortage of funds did not augur well for the small Latin community of Palazzo Adriano and it was only with the blessing of Cardinal Francesco Barberini – through the intervention of his agent Don Arrigo Canuti -

37 Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, 110-111.

38 The Jesuit Father Marco Lima only mentioned the church of Saint Demetrius - which he called 'a Cathedral' - and three small churches which were supported by Latin rite incomes but does not mention a specific church where the Latin rite was performed. *ARSI Sic.*, vol.184, part 1, f. 225v.

and thanks to the generosity of the Greek Catholics that the Latin rite faithful could utilize the church of St Sebastian for their services. The donation was approved and blessed by the Bishop of Girgenti, and was ratified by an act of notary Giovanni Schirò in 1638 - the year Father Lima carried out his mission in Palazzo Adriano.

With time the Latin rite faithful increased in number but they remained a minority group and as such continued to play a minor role in the life of the community. Thus the church of St Sebastian continued to be dependent on the Greek rite Matrix Church. The Latin rite priest had the status of chaplain and it was only in 1658, due to the increase in Latin rite followers, that he was elevated to the status of parish priest. Nevertheless by the late seventeenth century the Latin rite followers had managed to gain so many privileges that they even began to encroach on the rights of the Greek rite community. By 1678 the Latins were even threatening the pre-eminence of the Matrix church.³⁹ Rodotà complained that the Latins had by then forgotten all about the generosity of the Greek rite followers and tried hard to subdue them through impositions emanating from the ecclesiastical tribunal of the Latin diocese of Girgenti. Thus by 1763 the Latin rite enjoyed the use of three more churches namely the Church of Our lady of Mount Carmel, the Church of St Anthony of Padua, and the Church of Our lady of Piedigrotta.⁴⁰

Despite the emerging rivalries between the two factions Rodotà provides evidence to show that both the Palazzo Adriano Greek and Latin rite communities were at the mercy of outsiders. Both communities continued to endure hardship right up to the mid-eighteenth century at the time of his writing. In fact Rodotà concluded his section on Palazzo Adriano with an anecdote that took place in 1750. On that occasion the community petitioned to Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) to elevate their Latin Matrix Church of St Sebastian to the status of a Collegiate. Nonetheless the Bishop of Girgenti refused to ratify this privilege because he considered the proposal to be totally unjustified. The Bishop listed the reasons for objecting in a letter he sent to the Holy See dated

39 Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito Greco in Italia*, pp. 111-112.

40 *Ibid.*, 113.

19 October 1750. He argued that there were only six Latin rite priests and two clerics – definitely not a sufficient number for a Collegiate. They were in the main outsiders to the community. Further more the Latin rite clergy were rather short of funds, and therefore unable to sustain themselves with much dignity. Furthermore the Bishop argued that it would be untenable for all the Latin priests at Palazzo Adriano to become canons, pointing out that even at Cathedral Church of Girgenti not all serving priests were canons! Finally the Bishop highlighted the fact that, at Palazzo Adriano, the Greek rite clergy had always enjoyed precedence over the Latin rite priests and concluded that the elevation of Latin rite priests to a higher dignity in the ecclesiastical ranks could cause discontent among the Greek rite clergy.⁴¹ It seems that thanks to the Bishop's letter nothing had materialized by the time Rodotà published his book in 1763!

41 Ibid., 113-114.

Appendix I

Compagnia di Giesù in una Terra d'Albanesi di rito Greco detta volgarmente in Sicilia Palazzo Adriano

Bivona 22 Nov 38

P. Marcus Lima

(f. 225) Giace nella valle di Mazara zona dell'Isola di Sicilia nella Diocesi del Vescovato di Girgenti discosta da Palermo miglia 36 sotto benigno clima, in posto amenissimo, una Terra chiamata da Siciliani Palazzo Adriano per haver ivi ditto Imperador Romano edificato un sontouso palazzo à suoi nipoti, come fin'hoggi attestano le fabbriche, et molto più i folti boschi di caccia, selve, colli, e valli da chiarose copiose acque fecondate, e cinta da monti fra quali quello delle Rose così ditto dalla varietà delle'herbe medicinali, e di gran virtù incorona gl'altri tutti vaghamente vestiti, e fruttuosamente coltivati, habitata d'Albanesi di greco rito venuti d'Epiro ò Albanis regione nella Grecia fra Macedonia, et Achaia quando persa di già e presa Constantinopoli da Maumeth secondo come gente rebelliosa et indomita sotto la guida loro nazionale di Giorgio Costrioto per sopranoime ditto Scanderbech che fù terrore e flagello dè Turchi, furono scacciati, e sternati, questi venuti in gran numero in Sicilia, doppo lunghi disaggi, come che nati sotto benigno, e favorevole clima d'aere perfettissime, seppero molto bene fra tutta Sicilia scieglier' a prè loro detto luogho, all'ora dal solo Palazzo Adriano imperiale occupato, li fu concessa da chi affittava quei poderi d'habitare, e coltivare quei terreni et rendergli i frutti di vassalaggio. Si seppero mantenere fra hoggi di ch'arrivano al numero di 4 mila incirca e fra questi da 800 sono di rito Latino però dalla medesima lingua, e natione e gente robustissima e fiera, sopra tutto facile all'homicidio, non v'è casa che non sia ben fornita per povera che sii d'armi, sono velocissimi cursori in sparare l'inimico un colpo questi quasi tutti ne sparare duri, con ogni poco si sostentano; nella gagliardia di puoco cedono le donne alli mariti, facendo fatighe et esercitii d'huomini non ordinarii, che per tanto sono anche temuti nell'Isola per l'adietro stavano in miglior fortuna, hora per i continui stiramenti in

povertà grande. È degno di meraviglia che gente così povera, et fiera sii tanto bene in grata, et colorita carnagione accompagnata dall'habito honesto, et maestoso delle donne, che mantengono il natio di Macedonia. Questo è per me lo stato loro temporale essendo lo spirituale assai più calamitoso, et infelice per la crassa ignoranza, che in loro regna, et annida dalla quale oltre molte corruttezze, et abusi nasce una infinità di superstitioni, e magari come nel sposarsi la donna scioglie la strenga della scarpa del piè destro del marito per haver prole, e non esser sterile, una certa oratione di parole sacrileghe che dicono le donne di mal'affare per tenere i coniugati fra di se in odii risse, e rancori; senza scrupolo veruno pigliano remedii de quali non sono ne ignoranti, ne scarsi per far' aborto, e sconciarsi, i sacerdoti che non arrivano alla decina sono tutti ammogliati sono poveri di fortuna et molto più di dottrina. Hanno 4 chiese, il Duomo (f. 225v) dedicato à San Demetrio, è la migliore, il materiale, et uso di 3 navi della chiesa, e competente e vago, l'atrio per haver la scalinata in sù la piazza dove passa il fiume è maestoso, e vago officiano ogni dì, ma con poco decoro, et meno popolo. Per la povertà grande delle chiesa, e de sacerdoti, non si custodisce il Santissimo Sacramento con l'ordinario decoro, tenendolo in certe scatole poco nette, conforme sono le sacre vesti sacerdotali ; tre sole chiesiole hanno introiti latini et queste mal in ordine per la poca, ò nulla cura di chi per l'adietro havea la parrocchia, non s'aprofittorono niente i nostri, muorendo vecchi senza sapere i primi rudimenti della nostra santa fede, cosa degna di lacrime, e questo puramente per colpa di chi non si coltivava per il mal esempio de costume, e vita così pubblicamente scandalosa, s'assodavano prima i greci nel loro modo di vivere con qualche vituperio del rito, e chiesa latina, Dio perdon à chi non ci rimediava toccandoli ex munere et offitia perche quantunque per altro gl'Albanesi sian di natura ruvida, e cruda, sono però all'esperienza che toccammo con mano alle cose della chiesa, e pietà facilmente pieghevole, e ben' affezionati, e se fin'hora se ci fosse atteso sarebbono, ò tutti di rito Latino, o pur nel loro Greco da ogni corrutela innocenti lasci che altri ai quali tocca ex offitio rappresentino l'enormi scandali, che per il passato commettendo quei che havevano cura di pascere i nostri Latini. Solo dico che giudico necessarissimo A. M: G. di Sua Divina Maestà in simili luoggetti, e terrecciole per modo veruno non stiano 2 0 3 fratri

soli, perche ci si Gran libert  di campagna fra contadini, e rustici privi d'ogni dottrina e spirito vivono alla campesca, non mi conviene scendere   casi particolari comprendendo il tutto ottimamente Vostra P.a da un casto silentio. In tale stato dunque trovai l'Albanchi quando fu per ordine del mio Padre Provinciale avvisato andassi al nostro Collegio di Bivona per fare la sudetta Missione. Scrisi di subito al Signor D'Arrigo Canuti Agente dell'Emminentissimo Signor Cardinale Francesco Barbarini, esibendomi   quanto rapresentava con santo e focoso zelo esser di gran servizio   Sua Divina Maest ; di subito ci invit , et arrivati ci allogio et tratt  con uffiti di straordinaria cortesia, e gentilezza; f  corto s  il nostro viaggio, ma ben penoso e travaglioso dovendo corteggiare sempre monti malegevoli et rupestri con una continua e sempre via pi  riccha pioggia, che volse per 8 miglia accompagnarci fin al termine; pi  fiate passammo passi stretti, anco dei fiumi pericolosi, e per haver sotto e sopra acque abundantissime mi pareva pi  presto navigare che viaggiare, arivando fuor di ogni speranza di chi c'aspettava ad un' hora di nocte; la matina detta la messa publicamo la causa della nostra venuta; fecimo che con alcune cofanelle s'andasse pi  volte per tuta la terra dell'uno, et altro rito intimando alla dottrina christiana tutti, accomodando fra tanto noi il luogho; la sera li condussimo tutti nella nostra parocchia Latina di San Sebastiano dal Signor Don Arrigo posta in qualche decoro, et ordine, f  grande il concorso di tutti, vi intervennero buona parte de sacerdoti greci col loro Vicario; piacque   tutti il modo, tutti lodorono il fine, e l'arrivo nostro; trovammo universalmente grandissimo bisogno d'insegnare i primi principi della salute, anche   persone decrepite. Il Giovedi di santi Simone e Giuda fatta la predica nel Duomo greco inter missarum sollennia, publicammo la indulgenza plenaria, et esortammo alla Santa Confessione e Communione, la Sera del Giovedi senza lasciar mai di far la Dottrina, cominciammo lesti (f. 226)   sentire le confessioni; il Venerdi matina ci crebbero; il giorno pi  che pi ; il Sabato sentimmo dall'alba fin' a 2 hore, non puotendo pi  resistere alla calca della gente ritornammo di subito fin ad un hora di sera crescendo sempre mai il concorso del popolo, quale in sentire che fatta la communion generale il doppio pranzo della Domenica dovevamo partire, comminci  a gridare che ci tratenessimo per un mese, e che dovendo cos  presto partire non

occorea che fossimo andati, fù tale il concorso della Domenica matina che ci bisognò chiamare aiuto dè confessori; nella messa cantata greca nel Duomo loro dove confessarono e si comunicarono 160 Albanesi con grandissima devotione e meraviglia di tutti non arrivando à tal numero; come dissero alcuni la loro comunione, che fanno il dì Santissimo di Pascha; per il desiderio di tutti; molti di quei che desideravano di confessarsi con noi non puotemmo partire, e certo fù providentia dicta causis judicia abyssus multa, perche il lunedì di tutti Santi ci occorsero casi lacrimevoli; confessai una persona che per 17 anni commettea continuo sacrilegio comunicandosi ben spesso con tacere per vergogna nella confessione il peccato più grave; si comunicarono il dì di tutti Santi altri 30 greci con devotione grande nella loro messa solenne; si di che il conveniente remedio ad una persona che per anni 11 non potea se non con peccato mortale petere, et reddere debitum; un'altra pur di 7 anni; una donna doppo 5 anni di mala vita si ridusse nella strada della salute; 2 maritate lasciarono l'antica mala pratica; un matrimonio per 3 anni invalido si validò; 4 copie di persone doppo lunghi interessi, et inalterati odii si pacificarono; una persona prima di finir la sua confessione fece la restitutione del furto ben grande; più donne doppo molto tempo s'astenero di fare fatucchiaria, e sacrileghe superstitioni; una maritata scacciò di casa la casa sua mezzana, che l'era commodità di peccare adulterando; una levò afatto la pratica d'un giovane col quale per 3 anni confessandosi invalidamente peccava; trovai una, che per occultare i suoi adulterii senza battezzar i figli l'affogava, promise, e già si pose in stato di salute. 7 persone fecero confessioni generali per integrare le sacrileghe di molt'anni; per mezzo delle confessioni e privati colloquii levanno più e più abusi come che i sacerdoti greci stando in choro, e massime con l'habiti sacerdotali, e sacri, non lascino venir da loro in quel tempo e luoghi i loro figliuoletti, ne tampoco l'accarizzare per althro, che tenghino con più decoro, et nettezza il Santissimo Sacramento, nelle confessioni non diano penitenze pecuniarie, stante la grande povertà della gente, quale non ni fà poi nulla; ne difficultino ne proibiscono à chi di loro per devotione vuol digiunar il Sabbatho, et astenersi della carne; à chi una volta passò al rito latino, non l'ammettono più nel greco; predicammo 2 volte inter missarum sollennia nella loro chiesa

con sommo loro concorso, e sodisfattione nostra; conpiacendosi Sua Divina Maestà d'agradire questi nostri pochi travagli con farci toccare con mano il frutto spetiale delle prediche, dottrine e confessioni dando il pane della vita à 500 in circa che fù tutta la nostra messa. tal fine assorti P:M: la nostra Missione quale finimo necessitate di ritornare ad propria lasciando il popolo tutto massimo i greci in desiderio di noi, e i latini infervore grande, e devotione: venne il Vicario greco et altri sacerdoti, e molti di loro à ringraziarci, e volerci fin fuori accompagnare, con bel termine ci scusammo restando più verso di noi affetionati; mi pregorono però rappresentassi al Signor Cardinale alcuni dispense che desiderano in torno al rito loro, quali rapresenterò à Sua Emminetissima, onde per fine sigillando questa mia breve relatione come sempre di cuore mi raccomando alli Santi Sacrifici et orationi di V. Pa e sue benedittione: Bivona 22 di 9bre 1638

Di V.P.M.R

Servo in Signore
Marco Lima

ARSI [Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu] Sic. Vol. 184 part 1 (Sicula Historia: 1626-1644) (ff.225-226)

Appendix II

Texts containing data on Palazzo Adriano

Several texts containing information on the Greek-Albanian colonies of Sicily were published in the nineteenth century particularly between the years 1827-1866. Some of these texts either devote a large section on Palazzo Adriano or else they deal completely with that Greek rite colony. The following publications are of particular relevance:

1) A. Battaglia, *L'evoluzione sociale in rapporto alla proprietà fondiaria in Sicilia*. (Palermo: 1895), 137 et seq. (Battaglia published the *capitoli* of Palazzo Adriano of 1507 leaving out the privilege of approval and the earlier *capitoli* of 1501).

2) N. Buscemi, *Saggio di storia municipale di Sicilia ricavata dai monumenti contemporanei*. (Palermo: 1842).

3) C. Capizzi, *Giuseppe Valentini S.J. Una vita per il popolo e la cultura albanese*, in *Il contributo albanese d'Italia allo sviluppo della cultura e della civiltà albanese*. In *Atti del xiii Congresso Internazionale di Studi Albanesi*, Palermo 26-28 novembre 1987. (Palermo: 1989), 129-163;

4) G. Crispi, *Memorie sulla origine e fondazione di palazzo Adriano colonia greco-albanese in Sicilia, delle chiese ivi edificate e dei litigi che vi nacquero tra i due cleri da che vi si introdusse Parocchia Latina*. (Palermo: 1827)

5) G. Crispi, *Osservazioni alla storia di Palazzo Adriano donde lo scrittore N(icolò) B(uscemi) comincia un saggio di storia municipale di Sicilia*. (Palermo: 1842).

6) G. La Mantia, *I capitoli delle colonie greco-albanesi di Sicilia dei secoli xv e xvi*. (Palermo: 1904).

7) D. Minuto, *Il 'Trattato contra greci' di Antonino Castronovo (1579)*.

In Z.N. Tsirpanlis, *Memorie storiche sulle comunità e chiese greche in Terra d'Otranto (XVI secolo)*, vol. 2, pp. 845-877.

8) E. Morini, *Per una storia della presenza religiosa greca nell'Italia posttridentina. A proposito di alcuni studi recenti*. In *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 22 (1978), 519-536. (Some bishops were uncomfortable with the presence of Greek rite communities among the faithful of their dioceses. This was mainly due to the fact that the Greek rite clergy owed their allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Levantine episcopate from whom they sought instructions rather than from the diocesan authorities and the Pope of Rome).

9) P.P. Rodotà, *Dell'origine progresso, e stato presente del rito greco in Italia osservato dai greci, monaci basiliani, e albanesi*. Libri iii. (Roma: 1763). (Libro iii, pp.106-114 contains details on Palazzo Adriano.

10) G. Spata, *Studi etnologici di Nicolò Chetta*. In *Rivista Sicula*, vol. 3 (1870), 174 et seq. (In 1870 Giuseppe Spata copied the capitoli with slight changes from a copy of 1737 and additional information on the Albanian colonies of Sicily and the historiographical work of Chetta).

11) N. Spata, *Cenno storico sulla fondazione, progresso e stato religioso politico delle quattro colonie greco-sicule*. (Palermo: 1845. (published as an appendix of the Palermo edition of a another book by Spata, *Storia di Giorgio Castriotto soprannominato Scanderbeg principe dell'Albania*. Palermo: 1847, r.a. Palermo, 1998).

12) R. Starrabba, *Dell'Origine di Palazzo Adriano*. In *La Sicilia*, vol. 2 (1866), 334-338.