

“Creole Jesuit Hagiography: Volume III of Francisco de Florencia’s *Historia de la Provincia*,” paper presented for *Jesuits and Crypto-Jews in Seventeenth-Century Spanish America: Individual and Familial Biographies*, The Conference on Latin American History, Chicago, Illinois, USA, January 8, 2012.

This paper analyzes creole Jesuit hagiography in the *vidas* of Francisco de Florencia’s *Historia de la Provincia*. Although he published the first volume of his provincial chronicle in 1694, the second and third volumes were never printed and remained in manuscript form. Volume III has survived in the Jesuit archives of Mexico City and contains biographic summaries of forty-six Jesuits from the first half century of the foundation of the Society of Jesus in New Spain. In order to write these *vidas*, Florencia modified those from Andrés Pérez de Ribas’s manuscript chronicle by removing personal references that were not his own, shortening sections, cutting out others, and slightly rearranging word order. In a few cases he added his own commentaries, specifically short vignettes that drew attention to the indigenous nobility of the pre-Hispanic past, highlighted the military service of the early conquistadors, and that boasted of the general wealth of noble families in New Spain. These *vidas*—largely unknown to contemporary scholars—reflect both the historical memory of the Company of Jesus and the personal ambitions of a creole scholar seeking after parity within the larger “composite monarchy” of Spain. Volume III of Florencia’s *Historia de la Provincia*—described by one commentator as an example of the “uncritical methods of seventeenth-century hagiography”—provides a fascinating window into the larger politics of empire in the early modern Spanish world.