Henrique Leitão & José Eduardo Franco, eds.

Jesuítas, Ciência e Cultura no Portugal Moderno: Obra Selecta do Pe. João Pereira Gomes, SJ. Lisbon: Esfera do Caos, 2012. Pp. 349. Hb, 19,90 Euros.

João Pereira Gomes (1917–2002) was a Portuguese Jesuit, extremely active in the 1940s and 1950s as an historian of the cultural and educational activities of the Society of Jesus, working in the context of the Lisbon based “Casa dos Escritores” (or Jesuit House of Writers). His best known work is certainly the monumental *Os Professores de Filosofia da Universidade de Évora, 1559–1759* (Évora: Câmara Municipal, 1960), but he was also the author of a large number of minor but relevant studies, which were published mainly in the Jesuit scholarly journal *Brotéria* (Lisbon, from 1902) and in the Jesuit-inspired *Verbo: Enciclopédia Luso-Brasileira de Cultura* (Lisbon: Editorial Verbo, 1963–1995). A significant part of João Pereira Gomes’s studies have now been rescued from oblivion in a handsome volume by the joint efforts of Henrique Leitão and José Eduardo Franco, two of the most prolific and innovative Portuguese historians of science and culture.

The editors organized the selected articles in three parts (regardless of original publication dates), which roughly define so many areas of intervention cherished by its author: “Science and its Protagonists” (27–129), which deals with the activities of Jesuit scientists and the impact of European scientific advances in Jesuit circles in Portugal; “Culture and its Debates” (131–233), mainly concerned with the discussion by Portuguese Jesuits of contemporary European cultural and philosophical trends; and “Education and its Institutions” (235–317), where the pedagogical establishments and activities of the Society of Jesus in Portugal are analyzed.

The introduction to the collection presents the author’s biography, characterizing his methods of historical research and contextualizing his scholarly production. João Pereira Gomes was renowned for his self-effacement, assuming the role of a modest *scriptor* in a larger historiographical enterprise, that of setting the record straight in terms of the Society of Jesus’s cultural activities and relevance in Portugal. In one of the articles included in the collection, the Portuguese Jesuit quotes the historian Hernâni Cidade (1887–1975) as writing that “the Jesuits were ‘in Portugal verbose scholastics’ that vegetated in a ‘comfortable subservience before intellectual authorities’” (148, my translation). This quotation, which summarizes the prevailing attitude of a large section of the Portuguese intelligentsia about the Jesuits in the 1930s, may well have been Pereira Gomes’s leitmotif when contributing to the history of the cultural and educational activities of the Society of Jesus in Portugal, in the period between the order’s establishment in the middle years of the sixteenth century and its

suppression in all Portuguese territories in the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, there is generally a polemical side to Pereira Gomes's writings, since he struggles to disprove the black legend that in Portugal presented the Jesuits as reactionary enemies of progress and science. And through meticulous archival research work—which was one of his trademarks—Pereira Gomes slowly builds an unbeatable case for a Society of Jesus which was anything but monolithic, whose members included outstanding scientists and intellectuals, many of them perfectly aware of European cultural trends and scientific innovations, that they discussed openly, in manuscripts, theses, letters, and published works, with their European peers, within a vast, truly worldwide, Jesuit network. If today many of the author's assertions concerning Jesuit science and culture are commonplace, such was not the case in Portugal in the two decades between 1940 and 1960, when most of the articles included in the collection were published.

One of the procedures used by Pereira Gomes was the reconstitution of the virtual libraries of such Jesuit scholars as Francisco Soares Lusitano (1605–1655) and Inácio Monteiro (1724–1812), thanks to textual references interspersed in their works. This is one of the surprises of reading Pereira Gomes's texts: the use of methods of research that nowadays have become common practice, but which he was already using fifty or sixty years ago. Another surprise is that his researches have stood the test of time very well, for they were mostly based on a wealth of manuscript and printed sources. The biographic and bibliographic data concerning Portuguese Jesuits is one case in point. Another is the inter-textual connections that Pereira Gomes solidly establishes within the productions of a large number of Jesuits scientists. And (to quote a personal favorite of mine) still another case is found in the pages devoted to exploring the possible contents of Jesuit libraries.

All in all this is a rich collection of articles that will be extremely useful for anyone working within the field of Jesuit science and culture in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Two detailed indexes (names, 319–341; ideas, 343–345), quite uncommon in Portuguese scientific works, will help the reader find his or her own way in this treasure trove of Jesuit erudition. One question and one minor drawback are worth pointing out. The question: after the 1970s, the prolific João Pereira Gomes became strangely silent. Is his deep involvement in the *Verbo* encyclopedia reason enough to explain this silence? The last we hear of him was as reviser of the Portuguese translation of the *Clavis Prophetarum* by António Vieira (1608–1697), published in Lisbon in 2000, which means he was still active at that time. The minor drawback: understandably, there are no editors' notes to the texts of Pereira Gomes, since this would be a monumental, perhaps even unachievable, task. So the reader must be advised that there

have been developments in the state of the art, concerning Jesuit science and culture, a matter that is conveniently stressed in the introduction, where a large and recent bibliography is duly noted.

Rui Manuel Loureiro

Centro de História de Além-Mar, Lisbon

descobrimientos@gmail.com