Paul Begheyn, SJ

Jesuit Books in the Dutch Republic and its Generality Lands 1567–1773. Library of the Written Word, volume 26. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Pp. xvi + 454. Hb, \$194.00.

The fruit of twenty-five years' prodigious research, this bibliography provides a very useful catalogue of the Jesuit imprints that were printed and circulated in the independent Netherlands prior to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in the late eighteenth century. Begheyn has exhaustively scoured the libraries of the Low Countries, from Friesland to Flanders, to come up with a total of nearly thirteen hundred titles published in the Republic of which a Jesuit was an author, editor, or translator. "Jesuit book" is therefore in this compendium a broadly conceived category and does not confine itself to Jesuit authors who were themselves Dutch (a mere thirty-five of the almost three hundred authors found). Instead, it casts a wide net over virtually all types of Jesuit works that were published in the Republic during this period. Thus we have everything from translations of Machiavelli to devotional poetry to biographies of Chinese emperors. The Jesuits' diverse and far-flung activities in the worlds of scholarship and mission are well represented here. Indeed, the Jesuit devotion to books and learning is well expressed in the aphorism by that great Dutch Jesuit Peter Canisius that is quoted in Chapter Two: "Better a college without a church of its own than a college without a library of its own."

No mere short-title catalog, this bibliography comprises entries that are models of thoroughness. They include complete titles, full imprint information, locations of copies, and bibliographical sources. Such comprehensive data will prove invaluable to researchers. Begheyn also includes lists of printers and writers, and an appendix of letters about book publication in the Republic by more prominent Jesuit authors such as Athanasius Kircher. This bibliography will surely be an indispensable reference for scholars of Catholicism, book history, and intellectual history in the early modern era. Begheyn's catalog is truly a monumental achievement and provides a great service to the field.

That said, perhaps the only disappointing thing about this bibliography is its introductory chapters, particularly Chapter Three. In his description of the history of the Society of Jesus in the Low Countries, Begheyn's sense of precision fails him. Perhaps most problematic is his rather fuzzy use of the term "Dutch Republic," whose origin he appears to posit in the 1560s, even though the scholarly consensus agrees that the earliest one can plausibly speak of an identifiable, independent Republic on the Netherlandish political landscape would be the 1580s. It is unclear why his starting date is 1567 instead of, say, 1585, the year Antwerp fell back into Spanish hands, or 1584, the start of the

clandestine *Missio Hollandica* intended to reconvert the independent Protestant north back to the Catholic church. Or perhaps it should be 1592, the year Jesuit missionaries were first reported evangelizing inside the Republic? Begheyn's chronology is distinctly unclear.

Additionally, his brief summary of the history of the Holland Mission and its often fraught relationship with regular orders such as the Jesuits would certainly have benefitted from consultation with some of the more recent literature on early modern Dutch Catholic life, especially Charles Parker's *Faith on the Margins: Catholics and Catholicism in the Dutch Golden Age*. One would have liked to have read, for example, some speculation as to who the market and audience for all these Jesuit publications were, particularly those printed up by publishers who had few qualms about copying or translating Jesuit works without seeking permission first. Who constituted the scholarly market for this wide and diverse array of literature? The books published by the Society of Jesus itself in these Protestant lands were primarily products either of the four Jesuit colleges (two of them quite short-lived) in the conquered Generality Lands or of Jesuit stations (a system of clandestine parishes) within the Republic itself. The former produced work primarily educational and scholarly in content, while the latter had more devotional purposes and included items such as poems, songbooks, and catechisms.

Begheyn does a neat job of summarizing the principal subjects of these publications. Among the most apparently popular were Jesuit accounts of Asia and the Americas, places of lively interest to a mercantile society whose lifeblood was global trade. Also widely circulated were Jesuit works on classical and church history and natural philosophy. Some less conventional Jesuit scholars, such as the polymath Kircher, had their works deliberately published in Amsterdam so as to avoid the strictures of Roman censors. That the most learned Jesuits would take advantage of the comparatively wide-open publishing culture of the Golden-Age Dutch Republic should be no surprise.

Whatever his shortcomings as a historian, Begheyn is a superlative bibliographer. This compendium represents a truly prodigious effort by an intrepid scholar. *Jesuit Books* will remain the definitive catalogue of early modern Dutch Jesuit bibliography for generations to come.

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