Book Reviews

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When the Institute of Jesuit Sources was founded in 1961 in Saint Louis, its aim was to make documents from and studies of Jesuit history and spirituality available to the English-speaking public. In the more than fifty years that have followed, many valuable publications have been offered to scholars. In 2014, the Institute moved to Boston where its mission continues in the new context of the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College, opened in the same year. Given that the purpose of the latter is to offer programming on the Society of Jesus’s history and Ignatian spirituality, the collaboration of both institutions is natural, as the present volume proves. In keeping with the above-mentioned goal of its publisher, the volume provides English texts of selected documents relating to the first historical period of Jesuit pedagogy.

The book is organized into four parts, containing thirty chapters of translated texts. All but one (chapter 4) have already been published in their original languages by László Lukács in the series Monumenta Paedagogica (Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu 92 [1965], 107 [1974], 124 [1981], 141 [1992]). The original languages are: Latin (thirteen documents), Italian (eleven), and Spanish (seven), with the text in chapter 9 in both Latin and Italian. In the present volume, all are translated into English by the editors (with the exception of chapter 4 where a previous translation of Polanco’s text is used).

The documents published here are works of nineteen different Jesuit authors. Some of them are well-known members of the Society, e.g. Ignatius of Loyola and two of his first companions, Pierre Favre and Diego Laínez, while others are undoubtedly less famous. The editors introduce all these authors with a biographical note at the beginning of each chapter. Perhaps too scrupulously, they repeat these introductions for each document when the same individual has multiple texts. For example Polanco has five documents, Loyola and Diego de Ledesma, three each, Giuseppe Cortesono, Ludovico Gagliardi,
Benet Perera and Juan Pedro Perpinyá, two each with the same biographical introduction repeated. The texts are not of equal length: chapter 13 has fifty pages, while chapter 23 only two. To aid the reader, the editors provide footnotes and a comprehensive index. Each chapter begins with a short introduction explaining the origins and the content of the document, indicating the original language of each text and its location in the *Monumenta*. Furthermore, a very useful “Selective Timeline” (xiii–xix) helps place the documents in the wider context of events and other publications relative to the same problematic. On the other hand, the book has neither a conclusion nor a bibliography.

The criterion for determining the texts included here must have been their significance to the story of the already famous passage from the declaration of “No estudios ni lectiones en la Compañía” of 1541 to ever more intense involvement in teaching (especially after 1548), eventually codified with the *Ratio studiorum* in 1599. The “Introduction” reviews the most important stages of this history, while the documents (to which the narration refers) are milestones indicating the path the Jesuits took in their adventure in education.

The editors organize their selection of texts into four groups, according to what they call “tenets” (29) of Jesuit pedagogy: inspirations, administration, formation, and practical issues about teaching.

The first set of texts shows what the Society thought about this new ministry. Several important issues regarding the improvement of both teaching and learning are enumerated and discussed by the authors collected here: for example, the importance of a proper balance between study and spirituality (chapter 1), the need for the financial and political support of benefactors (chapters 6–7) or the belief that young Jesuits should take as much time as needed for their studies (chapter 2).

The second part of the book is dedicated to administrative issues, including the concrete rules that very quickly became a necessary condition of the proper functioning of the schools. Several examples and considerations on this subject are provided, coming particularly from the experiences of the first years of the Roman and German colleges (chapters 9–15), as expressed in reports prepared “so that everyone does not have to learn at his own expense and to the detriment of the college” (108).

The third “tenet” focuses on formation, understood as a complex process of educating both in letters and in spirit, as was the goal of the Jesuits from the beginning. Among the various problems discussed in this section, adequate space is given to the apparently opposite emphasis on freedom in studying and teaching on one hand, and on uniformity of doctrine on the other (chapters 21–22).

The fourth and last part of the volume is dedicated to what the editors call the “practical issues” of teaching in Jesuit schools. The texts relate to several
of the disciplines (humanistic studies—chapters 23–25; mathematics—chapter 26; Hebrew—chapter 27; philosophy—chapters 28–29; theology—chapter 30) taught in the colleges, proposing diverse pedagogical strategies and techniques, primarily to help teachers in their mission of transmitting knowledge to their students.

With all this, the book is an excellent complement to the English version of the *Ratio studiorum* printed in 2005 by the same publisher (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources) and edited by Claude Pavur—one of the editors of this volume. It covers an important period in the history of Jesuit education, because in this history it is not only the rules that are important, but also where they come from and how they reached their final formulation in 1599. One looks forward to the next volume in this series.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00402008-01