Book Reviews

Wietse de Boer, Karl A.E. Enenkel, and Walter Melion, eds.

Jesuit Image Theory. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xix + 497. Hb, \$ 206.

What was the Jesuit rationale for the image? Overwhelming evidence demonstrates how much care the early Society devoted to the *imago* in material and intangible formats: image as *figura*, *pictura*, *repraesentatio*, *similitudo*, *simulachrum*, and *speculum*. But how did Jesuits justify the number of images used and the prominent role they played in areas like Mariology, rhetoric, and the *ratio studiorum*? It has been recognized that, for early modern Jesuits, the image was the instrument best suited to explain the mysteries of incarnation within the limits of human capacity. The signal achievement of this anthology, *Jesuit Image Theory*, resides in the volume's substantive clarification of this answer: *enargeia* was the life force, the *raison d'être*, of Jesuit art. Derived from the Aristotelian notion of actuality, it was where an idea's activity of "being at work" attained its most full realization of itself. *Enargeia* was how the Jesuit image achieved its functionality as an *imago agens*, the driving image that thrust the viewer into the contemplative action of the bodying forth of ideals.

After an introduction by Walter Melion that sketches out the kinds of sacred images in Ignatius' life, the range of picturing in the early Society, and the first stirrings of an unofficial art theory, the book is divided into two parts. The first section treats the explicit discussion of imaging in treatises (six essays), and the second, the implicit argumentation in the objects themselves (eight essays). For the purpose of this review, authorial contributions are considered thematically.

Three essays introduce the ways Jesuit images work. Wietse de Boer traces how the conception of sacred images among the earliest companions was shaped by the young Society's brushes with the Inquisition in light of French Calvinism in Paris and by Catholic apologists in Rome seeking to codify an orthodox position on the cult of images. Ralph Dekoninck describes how a Jesuit semiotics coalesced in seventeenth-century writings around Augustine's understanding of the *figura*, diagrammed in a helpful chart (84–85), with the

image transformed from an endpoint into a vehicle for the apprehension of knowledge. Agnès Guiderdoni unpacks the nature of the Jesuit *figura* in the Jesuit Maximilian van der Sandt's thought, where symbolic theology, which mobilized memory, and mystical theology, which accounted for experience, always concluded in the metaphor.

Melion then selects the metaphor of Host and heart in one of the earliest meditative books propagated by the order—the *Libellus piarum precum* (1575) from the Jesuit college in Trier—to remind readers of the importance of non-mimetic imagery as a pictorial mode that could allude to the transcendent nature of Christ, where abstract circles reenacted ontological change. James Clifton looks at another combination of symbol and mimesis, this time a reliquary *arma Christi* and spokes of a narrative wheel in Antoon Sallaert's *Glorification of the Name of Jesus* (c.1635) to show how a fluid iconological spectrum allowed meditative paintings to harness associations with a monstrance, a mirror and select scenes from the life of Christ to figure salvific sacrifice.

If the Reformation sparked a crisis in symbolic representation, nowhere were these hermeneutical negotiations more visible than in the relationship of word and image. Andrea Torre reveals how the verbal etymology of the stigmata in Emanuele Tesoro's panegyric sermon *Il memoriale* (1671) could be recalibrated for a "metaphorical thickening of language" that was mnemonic, exegetical, catechetical, and oratorical (104–5). David Graham determines why contemporary verbal and visual sources increasingly came to populate Jesuit emblem books, like Claude-François Ménéstrier's early (1662) and late (1684) editions of *L'art des emblèmes*. Perhaps counter-intuitively, Hilmar Pabel details the *Spiritual Exercises*-based sensory description Petrus Canisius used to stimulate interior sight in the service of spiritual transformation of the self in his *Notae evangelicae* (1591–93).

What emerges is the fierce competition, or *paragone*, among the arts in a field leveled by reform. The fraught relationship between *écrit* and *image* is what Pierre-Antoine Fabre exposes in Louis Richeome's *La peinture spirituelle* (1611), where the ambiguous layering of *ekphrasis* and engraving produced the disorienting double vision of opacity and revelation. Taking advantage of the recent materialist turn in art history, Anna Knaap presents Hendrick van Balen's innovative paintings on stone of the *Life of the Virgin* (1621) for the Antwerp Jesuit church as the result of the cross-pollination of Reformation and *Kunst- or Wunderkammern*. And Steffen Zierholz pinpoints *enargeia* as the link between mental and physical spaces that allowed Niccolò Circignani to convert *repraesentatio* to *praesentia* in his painting of the Chapel of the Nativity at the Gesù (1584), over a century before Andrea Pozzo's ceiling of the Church of Sant'Ignazio (1694).

From a Jesuit perspective, the point of *paragone* was not so much illusionistic depiction as the quintessential embodiment of *enargeia*: by drawing on the “application of the senses,” eyewitness became active participant. Karl Enenkel charts how Franciscus Neumayr established oratorical animation as the critical agent in creating the *evidentia* needed to persuade, notably in his fascination with “spectacula,” or performances ranging from mystery play to *tableau vivant* to mechanized installation. With *enargeia* viewed as a life-giving force, Aline Smeesters maintains that Jesuit genethliac poetry leavened Virgil’s *Aeneid* with Thomist principles to accentuate the divine formation of person and idea. Lastly, Jeffrey Muller returns to the much debated question of accommodation to argue that Jesuit imagery afforded another forum for winning audiences at home and abroad, and it could be added, thus engaged in one more manifestation of *enargeia*.

But the true testimonial to the significance of this volume, which functions as a *summa* of current thinking on Jesuit image-making, may yet come in the studies it will inevitably stimulate, an apt tribute to the pulse of the *imago agens* as it beats onward.

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