Book Review Essays

Getting beyond "Jesuit Thinking". The "désenclavement" of Jesuit Studies Twenty Years on. Where We Are Now? A Consideration of

Ines G. Županov, ed.

The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

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Luce Giard, in her reflections on the proceedings of the first of the two big Jesuit conferences held at Boston College, in 1997, published subsequently as *Jesuits: Cultures, Arts and the Acienes, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999) proclaimed that the event marked the evidence of the recent "opening out" (*désenclavement*) of scholarship on the Society of Jesus (709–10) to those who were not themselves Jesuits. She cannot have anticipated quite the renaissance of the field of Jesuit studies pursued by lay men and women that followed over the next twenty years. In a review of Thomas Worcester's edited volume, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits* of 2017 (*JJS* 5, no. 4 [2018]: 643–56), I wondered whether it was perhaps unreasonable to expect a single book to encompass the Jesuit achievement in both its pre-1773 and post-1814 incarnations. Now, we have the resounding answer: not when you have over one thousand pages at your disposal, a team of able translators and the editor is the Zagreb-born historian and Indologist Ines G. Županov. After completing her first degree in comparative literature and Indology in her native Croatia, Županov gained an MA and then a PhD in history at UC Berkeley, before spending two years as a postdoctoral fellow at SOAS. She subsequently went on to make her academic career in Paris at the CNRS, where until recently she has been a director of research at the Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie de Sud (although she is currently, 2019–21, seconded to the Centre de Sciences Humaines de New Delhi). This international CV, which also includes several years spent doing research and fieldwork in India, has given her not only a

truly interdisciplinary range of reference but also a network of scholarly contacts that spans the globe. The result is that Županov has been able to bring together a first-rate, international team of forty authors from all stages of their careers, many of whom are already familiar names to readers of this journal as leading figures in their respective fields; but significantly many more are not (yet).

Indeed, a significant number of (not only early career) contributors are not as widely known as they should be and their intellectually distinguished and significant contributions to the field have not received the attention they deserve solely for the reason that much (or all) of their work remains untranslated into English. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the *Handbook* is its making available, in mostly idiomatic and fluent English translations, the work of so many excellent scholars working primarily in languages other than English. It is an unfortunate omission that this “behind the scenes” dimension to the book remains largely invisible, since aside from very few chapters where the translator is actually named there is no reference whatsoever to what must have been a considerable enterprise. I hope that when the paperback edition of the *Handbook* is printed, the editor will be allowed to insert some suitably generous acknowledgements of the considerable labor of the people involved. The scholars whose work, to date, has not been made widely available enough in English include: Fernanda Alferi on tracking Jesuit psychologies; Hélène Vu Thanh on Jesuits in Portuguese Asia; Frederick Vermote on financing Jesuit missions; Anne-Sophie Gallo on Jesuit theatre; Federico Palomo on the missions to “the Other Indies”; Rafael Gaune Corradi on those to the Iberian colonial world; Romano Gatto on Jesuit mathematics; Stefania Pastore on the early Jesuits’ relationship with the *conversos* and *alumbrados* in the Iberian world; Charlotte de Castelnau-L’Estoile on Jesuit “anthropology”; Adina Ruiu on French and Canadian Jesuit history writing; Niccolò Guasti on the “the Age of Suppression [1759–1820]”; Martín A. Morales, S.J. on the restoration of the Society and the politics of its archival memory; Guillermo Wilde on the Jesuit Paraguay missions as recalled in the mid-nineteenth century; Frédéric Gugelot on “a Jesuit way of being global” at and after the Second Vatican Council, and Benoît Vermander, S.J.’s nuanced and all too brief *envoi* to the volume: “Jesuits in the twenty-first century.”

Interestingly, and in sharp contrast to the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*, Vermander and Morales are two of only four members of the Society who have contributed chapters to the volume (the others being Festo Mkenda who contributes a precious account of Jesuit involvement in Africa from 1548 to 2017 and Patrick Goujon, who writes interestingly on elites and the constitution of Jesuit identity). The subjects of the chapters by Guasti, Wilde, Gugelot, Morales, and Vermander also remind us that this volume is genuinely true to

its aim to provide coverage of the “New Society” as well as the Old. Of the more widely known contributors whose works are already well represented in English, it is very good to have in one place such authoritative treatments of: the *Spiritual Exercises* by Silvia Mostaccio; Jesuit accommodation, dissimulation, and mental reservation by Stefania Tutino; Jesuit missions between the papacy and the Iberian crowns by Giuseppe Marcocci; Jesuits and Islam in early modern Europe by Emanuele Colombo; the Jesuit Rites Controversy by Claudia von Collani; Jesuit education by Cristiano Casalini; the Jesuit mission to England by James Kelly; Jesuits in the Orthodox world by Paul Shore; Jesuit visual culture by Mia M. Mochizuki; missionary art and architecture by Gauvin Bailey; the Jesuits and the Enlightenment by Joan-Pau Rubiés, and anti-Jesuitism in a global perspective by Sabina Pavone. As a film critic might say, this is truly luxury casting on a grand scale.

In order to give shape to this cornucopia of contributions Županov divides the handbook into eight themes: Foundation and Administration; Spirituality and Economy; Education and Politics; Global Mission; Jesuit Aesthetics and Artistic Production; Scientific Projects; Anti-Jesuitism, Enlightenment, and the Suppression and Restoration. The first—Foundation and Administration—consists of three particularly strong contributions that collectively constitute an essential orientation for readers if they are to get the most from this *Handbook* in that they show, in creatively complementary fashion, how Loyola's vision came to be translated into a truly global community both institutionally and emotionally. First, Pierre-Antoine Fabre shows how central retrospective “narrativization” was to the Society of Jesus from the very beginning: right from the so-called “Montmartre Oath” of 1534 which should be seen as a “group portrait,” with all the staged artfulness the term suggests. Yet, from the outset this was not the work of the single author/founder Ignatius Loyola, whose immense written *nachlass*, including no fewer than seven thousand letters (mostly from the final decade of his life) was almost entirely written by his secretary Juan Alfonso de Polanco. Aside from his journal (1544–45) and some marginal corrections to the *Constitutions* and *Spiritual Exercises*, Loyola left no autograph manuscripts (7). Second, Markus Friedrich's authoritative account of the evolution of the normative basis of the Society shows it only really comes to printed fruition with the publication of the *Institutum* in 1635. The centerpiece of this document were the *Constitutions*, which had been ratified by the General Congregation of the Society in 1558, two years after the death of Ignatius. However, as Friedrich emphasizes: “They were far from the final normative word on Jesuit affairs” (25).

Prominent amongst the additions was the set of regulations relating to education in the *Ratio studiorum* (Plan of studies) of 1599. This single date can mislead as it disguises the complex process that went behind this set of

regulations, which were the result of extensive consultation and negotiation whose paper trail today fills seven substantial volumes that make up the *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu* (1965–92). In addition, there were not only rules for rectors, for procurators, for general congregations, and for provincial congregations but also ones for letter writing, traveling and, notably, for history writing. It is one of the strengths of this handbook that due weight is given to the various ways in which the Society curated its own historical significance and positioned itself historically. It did so first of all by means of carefully edited *litterae annuae* (annual letters) of news from the missions, discussed by Paul Nelles in his acutely observed chapter on the role played by letters in the making of the Society. He argues that they should be seen very much as a collective enterprise whose role as conduits of “mutual consolation and edification” must be regarded as central to Jesuit identity formation. As Nelles puts it so well: “But before Jesuits became expert observers of the natural world and non-European societies, *they were experts on Jesuits* [...] [they] relied on a deep-seated corporate culture of knowledge gathering, production and diffusion” (61, emphasis added). Secondly, the Society carefully curated its heritage in published volumes of official history in both Latin (begun by Niccolò Orlandini, 1554–1606) and the vernacular, (notably in Daniello Bartoli’s multi-volume, but unfinished *Istoria della Compagnia di Gesù*, 1653–73). Although perhaps the most important and influential history of the early Society, the *Chronicon Societatis Iesu*, written by Juan Alfonso de Polanco, secretary to the first three superior generals, remained unpublished until 1894–98. These works are enumerated in a chapter by Paul Shore, which, as is the case with many of the chapters, takes the story up to the twentieth century and so crosses a line between the Old and New Society that has for long interfered with our understanding of the Jesuits as a phenomenon over the *longue durée*. However, these modes of history writing should be considered along with their internal counterpart, which included *vitae* of illustrious members of the Society and autobiographical accounts of vocations that were ultimately modelled on Ignatius’s own so-called *Autobiography*, as well as poetry (discussed with panache and insight in an invaluable chapter by Yasmin Haskell), illustrated books (analyzed in a splendid chapter by Walter Melion and Ralph Dekoninck), and theatre and music.

These last two topics are treated, respectively, by Anne-Sophie Gallo and David R. M. Irving, in ways that remind us that the Jesuits made creative use of all media that were available to them. In the case of Irving, he shows, how, despite the fact that the Jesuits were, in origin, specifically excused the obligation to sing the Divine Office (“Jesuita non cantat”), music was not excluded from

their strategy of accommodation so that it became a veritable “passport for Jesuits to enter the closed circles of Asian high courts, indigenous societies in the Amazon, cosmopolitan societies in colonial port cities, and the global traffic of travellers, traders and spiritual people” (598). Irving concludes by arguing for the fundamental significance of music to Jesuit ministry: “The Jesuits’ emphasis on education, daily routines of study, and the intensive use of education in communication and evangelization positioned music as a central activity in the Society and its missions” (620). For Gallo, “the paradox of Jesuit theater” lay in the fact that “in their effort at ‘killing’ theatricality the Jesuits, in fact, reinvented theater, particularly religious tragedy” (579). Gallo then takes the story of the pedagogical role played by theater further by examining not only its role in the nineteenth century but also for the formation of the Society’s scholastics in twentieth-century France.

If there is one theme that links so many of these essays, it is translation in all its tropes. An emblematic example of Jesuit prowess in this field of “soft power,” or “serious play” as Yasmin Haskell prefers to view it was Costanzo Gioseffo Beschi (1680–1747), who not only translated a ballad by the ancient Tamil poet, Tiruvalluvar, into Latin, but also wrote an epic on the life of St Joseph: *Themba-vani* in High Tamil. Meanwhile Prospero Intorcetta and his colleagues attempted the cultural translation of Confucius in their *Confucius Sinarum philosophus, sive scientia Sinensis latine exposita* (1687). There were also such less well-known defenders of the virtues of Latinity in the face of the Enlightenment critique that was to reach a crescendo in d’Alembert’s polemic in the *Encyclopédie*, as Pierre Brumoy (1686–1742), editor of the *Journal de Trévoux*, composer of French plays, pioneering translator of Greek tragedies into French and eloquent defender of the “cult” of Latin literary culture. For Brumoy, “it was only by *composing Latin* verse that we acquire an intimate knowledge of those ancient models from which our modern standards of politesse, conversation and good taste are derived” (554, italics in the original).

However, it was the composers of Latin epic poems, who were paying tribute to the enduring pedagogic power of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, such as Francesco Ben-ci’s 5,600 hexameter *Quinque martyres* (1591) about the five Jesuit martyrs of Salsete, India (in 1583); Bartolomeu Pereira’s *Paciecidos* (1640) on St. Francis Pacheco, martyred in Japan (1626); and Niccolò Giannettasio’s unfinished *Xaverius viator* (1721), based on the life of St. Francis Xavier, whose work collectively “functioned as critical nodes in a truly global affective circuit that allowed ideological energy to flow constantly between classroom, seminary and mission field” (556). Moreover, Haskell speculates intriguingly that the long suppression period (c.1759–1814) witnesses a “second wind” for Jesuit

Latinity—both as a medium for original composition and as a target language of translation—since this activity helped members of the ex-Jesuit diaspora: “to maintain a sense of community and continuity in exile” (553).

The not unrelated theme of Jesuit humanism is treated with unfailing nerve and verve by Stuart M. McManus. This tour-de-force of a chapter argues compellingly for adoption of the term “world philology” (borrowed from Sheldon Pollock) to describe Jesuit humanism, “not in its universality, but in its ability to interact with the learned traditions from Asia, Africa and the Americas” (738). As McManus argues, this engagement with “Indo-humanisms” was both “polycentric and reflexive, with developments in Europe influencing other contexts and vice versa” (738). It also “inadvertently imposed Greco-Roman and wide European norms [on these languages], creating a connected, if colonial, world theology” (738). After a crisp account of the core texts and practices of Jesuit teaching of Latin—in which Manuel Álvarez’s grammar, *De institutione grammatica libri tres*, first printed as early as 1472 had enduring popularity, Cypriano Soares’s guide to rhetoric, *De arte rhetorica libri tres* (1562), truly global circulation and Cicero’s orations universal, canonical authority, McManus goes on to emphasize how this curriculum was envisaged primarily not as equipping a young Jesuit with the capacity to translate, but more with the ability to compose in elegant and persuasive Latin poetry and prose. Moreover, and crucially, this training was intended “to provide them with the skills and meta-language to be persuasive in other languages” (741). Although of course problematic and misleading, the application of Latinate grammatical structures to such tongues as the south-Indian language of Konkani-Marathi did not prevent the English missionary Thomas Stephens (1549–1619) from composing the *Kristapurana*, a poem on the life of Christ, which was still being recited by Indian Catholics in the nineteenth century. The challenge in McManus’s second case study: the Americas, where he focuses on the Tupi-Guaraní language family spoken in Paraguay (a zone whose borders then encompassed parts of what are today southern Brazil and northern Argentina) was even greater.

However, that did not stop Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, in his grammar of Guaraní (1640), from treating noun plus preposition combinations as if they were part of a Latinate case paradigm. Though he was faced with even greater challenges in the Guaraní’s “transnumerality” (where distinctions between singular and plural verbs and nouns was only made where necessary) and in the existence of a “nominal tense” (which describes “the addition of tense markers to nouns, adverbs, and adjectives to describe former and future status” [748]). Notwithstanding such challenges, Montoya succeeded in making creative use of his humanist training thus showing that it “could allow for a form of meta-linguistic creative imitation that could make unfamiliar linguistic structures

legible and create a new local culture of Indo-humanism within the larger intellectual context of Jesuit world philology" (748). Back in the Old World, figures such as that P. T. Barnum of erudition, the polymath Athanasius Kircher (1602–80) drew gratefully and greedily on the letters and texts sent in by Jesuit missionaries from outside Europe to construct a providential understanding of cultural origins, which gave Egypt and its hieroglyphics pride of place "as seed-bed for the world's religions and textual traditions" (750). It was, however, left to the former Jesuit, Lorenzo Hervás y Panduro (1735–1809), who benefited from his own expulsion from Spain and move to Rome where he encountered other Jesuit philologists who had been expelled from around the world, which enabled him to write that pioneering text of comparative philology that was the *Catálogo de las lenguas de las naciones conocidas* (1800–5).

The circumstances surrounding the suppression and restoration of the Society discussed by Niccolò Guasti in his (not only) chronologically capacious chapter, reveal the extent to which Pope Clement XIV tried to mitigate the undoubted severity of his action by choosing the device of the papal *brief* (rather than bull) *Dominus ac redemptor* (1773). This left the execution of its provisions up to those who read them out to individual communities; whether it be rulers or bishops and enabled some rulers, in particular Empress Catherine of Russia, to mitigate its effects so as to effectively preserve the Society within her territories. When it came to the restoration, the Society became identified with the forces of reaction. In particular, its role as a great educating order was seen by the likes of the chancellor of the Austrian Holy Roman Empire, Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859; chancellor 1821–48), as providing the cement for the restored conservative social order.

This reputation of the Jesuits as defenders of conservative Catholicism was not to be fully dispelled until the generalate of the Basque Pedro Arrupe (1907–91) whose enthusiastic response to Vatican II and warm embrace of some of the teachings of liberation theology earned him the disapproval of Pope John Paul II, who took advantage of the incapacitating stroke suffered by Arrupe in 1981 to appoint a temporary delegate Paolo Dezza to take over control of the Jesuits until the election of Peter Hans Kolvenbach in 1983. When this superior general convened the Thirty-fourth General Congregation of the Society in 1995, "for the first time in the history of the Society, fewer than half the delegates came from Europe and America" (1057). Decree 5 no. 3 stated: "To be religious today is to be inter-religious in the sense that a positive relationship with believers of other faiths is a requirement of a world of religious pluralism [...]. Dialogue is a new way of being [the] Church." Shortly after his election as superior general in 2016, the Venezuelan Arturo Sosa (the first Latin American to lead the Society) stated in an address given in Delhi in February 2017:

We Jesuits seek to collaborate in the development of creative thinking that may propel the new age of Humanity towards social justice, dignity and peace. We wish to do this always in partnership and in collaboration with others. We have no desire to develop a thinking peculiar to ourselves, to be characterised as a “Jesuit thinking.” We participate in a collective intellectual creation because we know that we are limited and have wide variations even among ourselves (1064).

When Giard noted the “opening out” of Jesuit studies two decades ago, she also remarked:

Little attention was given [at the conference] to the spirituality, to theology, or to Jesuit curricula as required in the training of the Jesuits themselves. Thus we had no opportunity to learn who was dawn to join the society of Jesus, or when and why they did so. Nor did we learn how candidates to the Society were evaluated, accepted, instructed, trained, tested, apportioned among the several levels of membership... then inspired, and guided, motivated and further evaluated [...]. All in all, the conference provided no instrument for probing the cognitive, mental and social procedures through which Jesuits would build their identity as members of a particular religious order (*Jesuits*, 709–10).

Though Giard does not even appear in the *Handbook*'s index, her critical spirit clearly pervades the whole enterprise since her list of caveats reads almost like a checklist of topics that Županov has tasked her contributors to tackle. Taken together with the imminent publication by Princeton University Press of the English translation of Markus Friedrich's magnificently comprehensive and intelligently argued history of the Society (*Die Jesuiten: Aufstieg, Niedergang, Neubeginn* [Munich: Piper, 2016]), the future of Jesuit studies is genuinely looking very bright indeed.

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