Barton T. Geger, S.J., ed.

A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. Revised ed. Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, [2020]. Pp. 175. Pb, \$19.95.

The translation by Parmananda R. Divarkar of the so-called “autobiography” of St. Ignatius (printed in the first edition by the Institute of Jesuit Sources 1983 then in St. Louis), has been retained in this new edition, the work of Barton T. Geger, a research scholar at the Boston College Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies. He has slightly amended the translation (§86, allowing us to see that it was Ignatius himself and not the inquisitor who took the decisive step to clear Ignatius when he left Paris in 1535); but he has left some of its oddities (e.g. the imaginative reference to a “balcony” §24 where the text simply refers to a “holem,” as noted 127n13). But Geger’s “principal aim” in this edition is “to help readers appreciate how its stories and its spiritual wisdom are consistent with, reminiscent of, or inspired by, the Catholic tradition in the 1,500 years before Ignatius” (8–9). The most original aspect of this new edition is precisely the abundant reference (in the notes) to the classical spiritual texts that built up the mental world of Ignatius; they are listed in an appendix.

Another appendix provides a useful “timeline” of Ignatius’s life. Here one finds a reference to the crucial year 1517, when in fact his life changed drastically with the disgrace and death of his patron. To my mind, this is the date referred to in §1 rather than 1521, and it reinforces the view that his “conversion” process began some years before his wound at Pamplona, though it emerged into his consciousness only while ill in Loyola (see Geger’s note, 112–13n11). The other reference Ignatius gives (§30) to the date of his birth is correct if he is calculating from 1553 when he began to relate his “memoirs” (admittedly this is difficult to reconcile with Câmara’s *Foreword* [23]). However, it seems certain, and not just “probable” that Ignatius was born in 1491.

The spoken *memoirs* had to jump many hurdles before reaching their printed form: from another person’s memory to note form, then to a dictated version, and (for nearly half) to a translation into Italian. The notes provide much needed help in reaching the mind of Ignatius, even if Geger seems to have deliberately—I think unwisely—omitted the psychological track opened up by William Meissner (*Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992]): the early loss of his mother, and the distance from his father, must have led to much repressed pain. Instead Geger lays stress on the question of *vanity*: “Perhaps it was really vanity that made him want to say something” (14); and “after he was finished,

he still worried that he would be perceived as vain. It is a helpful reminder that saints are still human beings" (159). On this point I would quibble: Ignatius told Câmara "how much he had been bothered by this vice *for two years*" (21, my italics). But there are many indications in the memoirs that he had put that vice behind him. On several occasions Ignatius is willing to speak highly of himself (his prowess in resisting pain [§2]; his fine writing [§11]), but seems intent on showing how ridiculous he could look (§91) and his need to recognize his failings (§31: "They should make him remember the offenses that he had committed against God"). Moreover, the text we have points to an account of his early life that was anything but edifying. Did Câmara, or someone else omit this? Superior General Francisco de Borja clearly thought the whole account would not assist in the canonization process and did his best to hide it. However, to my mind the best indication that vanity was no longer a problem for Ignatius is the humor that runs through the memoirs: surely this is the key to appreciating the famous incident where he is guided by a mule (§15), and I think Ignatius *was* being ironic when he told Vicar General Juan de Figueroa in Alcalá that he also was in danger of being burned (*pace* 143n18). "Ignatius had a horror of being considered a saint; this would explain his omission of the López de Mendoza incident, when someone who had cursed Iñigo was burned to death, which pious folk might have taken as a sign of Iñigo's sanctity, and we know" (see 138–39n5), and we know from Câmara's own reminiscences that Ignatius broke off confessing to a Jesuit who spoke too highly of him (*Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola; The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara*, ed. Joseph Munitiz [Leominster: Gracewing, 2004], 155 [§266.3]).

An interesting question that emerges concerns Ignatius's attitude to priesthood: commenting on §50 Geger notes "Apparently on his return voyage, Ignatius decided to become a priest, since there would have been little reason otherwise to study theology in the sixteenth century" (136n5). This seems to me doubtful. When Ignatius was ordained, his delay in celebrating his first Mass reinforces the impression that priesthood was for him very much a personal, almost private adjunct. It is known that in Rome he would take hours to celebrate Mass and he recorded in his spiritual diary that this was the occasion for great mystical illuminations. Moreover, there were educated laymen trained in theology.

This review has highlighted points where I differ from the editor. But it would be a pity if I failed to convey to readers the riches of this new edition. With the numerous quotations from classic authors, especially the apophthegmata, the "life" of St. Anthony, Cassian, and Jean Gerson, as well as the authors

read by Ignatius, while recovering at home in Loyola, Geger opens up the thought-world familiar to Ignatius. This is an invaluable help to understanding this unique text.

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