Clavius was a staunch opponent of astrology and reaffirms the importance of the Catholic regulation in this period.

At first, the manuscript lessons of the “Aula da Esfera” were the sole focus of Ribeiro’s doctoral dissertation. However, the notebooks ended up being a point of departure from which he was able to write a wider account on the history and practice of astrology in Jesuit context from Europe to South America and East Asia. *Jesuit Astrology* is a *tour de force* and it is quite an achievement for a doctoral dissertation. Elegantly written, carefully argued, and supported by myriad manuscript and printed sources it is a landmark in the fields of Jesuit studies, science and religion, and early modern astrology. Hopefully, the book will spur a lively academic debate around a commonly neglected topic in the history of the Society of Jesus. Finally, *Jesuit Astrology* challenges the black-and-white accounts of Jesuit science and education and offers an alternative way to grasp the paradox of modernity in Jesuit history and historiography. The teaching and practice of science in the Society of Jesus was characterized by a long-lasting tension between tradition and modernity. In the case of astrology, this tension provided room for a diverse range of opinions and for the emergence and development of a sanctioned practice of a discipline that was consistently criticized and firmly regulated by the Catholic Church.

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Since the publication of Charles Boxer’s *Christian Century in Japan* (1951), or going further back, that of Bernhard Varen’s *Descriptio regni Iaponiae* (1649), many commentators and researchers have provided insights into the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Catholic evangelization led by the then young Jesuit order in this distant part of the Far East. The remarkable rise and fall of the Japanese mission, marking both the climax and the onset of the decline of the Iberian-led Age of Exploration, warrant examination from diverse perspectives: religious/intellectual/”glocal” history, anthropology, international relations, cultural studies, even philology, and linguistics. Ucerler’s
comprehensive work, based on an impressive array of primary and secondary sources in multiple languages, Eastern and Western, spanning from antiquity to the present, serves as a valuable summary of the current state of knowledge in this varied field. It is suited both as an introductory text for students and as a stimulating guide for more seasoned researchers, reminding them of the exciting opportunities for further exploration. Ucerler, a seasoned academic researcher and a Jesuit, whose past work has led to the discovery of several significant primary documents, including the Magdalen Japanese translation of Pedro Gómez’s *Compendium* (c.1593), is uniquely qualified to author such a comprehensive study.

The book focuses on three main areas. The first is Gomez’s *Compendium*, a Jesuit manuscript intended for Japanese candidates for the priesthood, whose Latin original is housed in the Vatican Library and a partial Japanese translation in Magdalen. The discovery of another substantial Japanese translation dealing with astronomy in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Germany, too late to be included in this volume, should be followed up (by interested readers) through consulting the work, most notably by Sven Osterkamp and his team. Ucerler’s second focus is the ambitious but controversial plan by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Sánchez (1547–1593) to use Japan as a stepping stone for conquering China, and, thereby, practically all of the civilized Far East, a concept Ucerler explores without shying away from its more troubling aspects. The third area covers a similar scheme by Pedro de la Cruz (1560–1606) to conquer and fortify a single Japanese island as a base for evangelization, alongside the reactions this and other Iberian Catholic activities provoked among Western Protestants and Japanese observers alike. Ucerler also suggests that the enduring image of Japan as a divine country, impervious to foreign religions, was shaped in response to these Iberian Catholic threats, adding a layer of historical depth to the discussion of Japan’s modern identity and resistance to Catholicism.

While acknowledging the breadth of Ucerler’s work, the review notes its inevitable limitations in fully covering the Catholic mission in early modern Japan, a task that would encompass an entire library, would like to mention a few primary sources that may have deserved inclusion. The review also points out certain omissions, such as the lack of discussion on Diego Collado and the Jesuit-mendicant controversies, while suggesting additional sources that could enrich the study. Despite these gaps, Ucerler’s book is praised for its comprehensive approach and its contribution to ongoing scholarly discourse,
offering insights that resonate with contemporary academic interests in imperialism, nationalism, and their ideological underpinnings.

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It is a rare pleasure reading a book of essays in which every text contributes insightfully to the success of the whole volume. *Jesuit Art and Czech Lands, 1556–1729* offers a fascinating, wide-ranging, and beautifully researched examination of how the Society of Jesus creatively and flexibly wielded art in its efforts to strengthen the Catholic Church and convert Protestants in Bohemia and Moravia. The essays explore the rich and often contentious historical contexts of these lands’ early modern religious and cultural landscapes.

Michal Šroněk’s lengthy introduction delves smartly into the long history of religious dissent beginning with Jan Hus and the resulting Hussite War (1420–34), the reformed Unity of the Brethren, the legally sanctioned Utraquist Church, and the uprising of the Estates (1618–20). St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague was stripped of its paintings and sculptures on December 21–23, 1619. With the imperial victory at the Battle of White Mountain (1620), the Catholic Church reasserted its confessional domination. The Jesuits and older religious orders were crucial agents in the re-Catholicization. Šroněk writes, the “book explores the artistic strategies the Jesuits used to promote and reintroduce the cults of miraculous images and saints and local Catholic customs” (xix) in these lands. They stressed art’s didactic, meditative, and visual roles in their missionary activities. The introduction concludes with two maps of Jesuit colleges and Marian pilgrimage sites in the Czech lands, followed by a helpful timeline from 1415 to 1781.

In chapter 1 (“The Church that Žižka Destroyed: The First Jesuit Churches in the Czech Lands”), Ondřej Jakubec notes the Jesuits established colleges in seven cities prior to 1600. Typically, they took over older monasteries and churches. In Prague, they moved into the former Dominican monastery of St. Clement by the Charles Bridge in 1556. As later essays make clear, the