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# Early Jesuits and the Rhetorical Tradition, 1540–1650, written by Jaska Kainulainen

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hundred years, they are, as Harnett puts it, “a source of grace for us, for the Society of Jesus and for all the Ignatian family” (128).

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Jaska Kainulainen, *Early Jesuits and the Rhetorical Tradition, 1540–1650*. Routledge Research in Early Modern History, 86. London: Routledge, 2024. Pp. 268. Hb, £125.00.

The main argument of the book is that the Jesuits, in placing rhetoric at the heart of their educational system, were following in the footsteps of Ciceronian humanism, as explained in the introduction (1–19). To break with medieval Scholasticism, the humanists devised a teaching program centered on grammar, poetry, history, moral philosophy, and rhetoric. In the wake of Isocrates and Cicero, the Jesuits set themselves the goal of training informed citizens, involved in civic life (*vita civilis*) and capable, through their intellectual and moral training, of working for the common good (*commune bonum*). This presupposes a certain conception of rhetoric associated with wisdom: in adopting this program, the Jesuits reconciled the definitions given by Cicero (the art of persuasion) and Quintilian (the art of speaking well).

The following chapters are of unequal length. Tracing the origins of ancient rhetoric and the beginnings of humanism, Chapter 2 (20–55) shows that the Society of Jesus, by adopting the humanist educational model of the *studia humanitatis* and the *modus parisiensis* of the University of Paris, helped Italian humanism to flourish beyond the sixteenth century, especially within the Roman College, founded in 1551. The dual tradition of antiquity and Christianity, inherited from the first centuries of the church, is characteristic of the Renaissance. Latin appears to be the key to all learning in the colleges, as shown in Chapter 3 (56–69), which describes the pedagogy implemented in grammar classes prior to the teaching of the humanities and rhetoric. Chapter 4 (70–120) delves into other aspects of Jesuit education, dealing with the role of manners and politeness, then the common good and the democratization of education, culminating in a more general reflection on the humanist—and therefore Jesuit—association between education and virtue. Finally, the implementation of the teaching of rhetoric (pedagogical principles and

reading lists) is studied after a reminder of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the colleges in Messina and Rome. Chapter 5 (121–49) is dedicated to Jesuit Ciceronianism. Adopting Cicero as their principal model, the Jesuits implemented an imitation conceived as emulation rather than slavish reproduction. They followed Cicero in the three aims of eloquence (to teach, to please, to move), favoring epideictic rhetoric and the great Christian style. Cyprian Soarez's *De arte rhetorica* (Coimbra, 1562) is discussed, and then the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic. It emerges that Jesuit education was characterized by a civic ethos nourished by *De oratore* and *De officiis*. Chapter 6 (150–60)—shorter than the others—shows the role of correspondence in the administration and unity of the Society of Jesus, the rules established by Loyola to facilitate letter writing, and the Jesuit Jean Voel's *De ratione conscribendi epistolas* (Lyon, 1578), inspired by humanist treatises, including that of Erasmus.

Having set the scene, in Chapter 7 (161–204), the author explores the civic and political implications of Jesuit involvement in the rhetorical tradition, beginning with a presentation of the main Jesuit theorists of political thought. He then studies the following notions: virtue, nobility, common good, prudence, and adaptability. As for the Jesuits' own participation in civil life, he recalls the ambiguity of their status as a religious order within society compared to other religious orders. Chapter 8 (205–25) explores the complexity of Jesuit missionary work on a global scale. In the early days, catechetical instruction was necessarily more important than in Europe, but soon enough, the curriculum was the same and was also taught in Latin. Three complementary examples are studied (India, Mexico, and Peru), highlighting the different issues at stake. A brief conclusion (226–28) brings the book to a close, followed by an appendix (“Teachers of rhetoric at the college of Rome from 1552 to 1653”), bibliography, and index.

The overall thrust of the book, which rightly places Jesuit rhetoric within the Greco-Roman and humanist rhetorical traditions, is highly stimulating. The author considers the civic consequences of this conception of rhetoric, drawing on a wide range of sources (treatises, letters, and regulatory texts such as the *Constitutions* and the *Ratio studiorum*). The book is carefully edited, despite a few typos in the Latin and French titles. There is one factual error (192): the opponent of the Jesuits who worked with Étienne Pasquier was not the famous Jansenist Antoine Arnauld (1612–94), but his father (1560–1619), who bore the same name. Here are a few suggestions in response to the book's thought-provoking demonstrations. Quintilian's essential role in the rhetorical tradition perhaps deserves to be reassessed: Renaissance pedagogy owes much to him, alongside Cicero. The discussion is based on an abundant but

not exhaustive bibliography, particularly on Jesuit rhetoric. Several chapters of Marc Fumaroli's *Histoire de la rhétorique dans l'Europe moderne (1450–1950)* (Paris, 1999) could have been useful, especially Alain Pons's chapter on the literature of manners. The Jesuit notion of *accommodatio* is invoked several times: Stephen Schloesser has highlighted its link with *decorum*, the principle of adaptation in Ciceronian rhetoric ("Accommodation as a Rhetorical Principle: Twenty Years after John O'Malley's *The First Jesuits* [1993]," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 3 [2014]: 347–72). Basically, what's at stake is assessing the usefulness to society of the training provided by the Jesuits. As the author clearly shows, the ambiguity lies in the fact that Jesuit colleges trained both lay persons and future Jesuits. The notion of *orator christianus* may be questioned as may the difference between the manuals and the scholarly sacred rhetoric of Carlo Reggio (*Orator christianus*, Rome, 1612), which is quoted several times. The *Eloquentiae sacrae et humanae parallela* by the French Jesuit Nicolas Caussin (La Flèche, 1619) could have provided some clues. Despite a few repetitions and a few wanderings, the multiplicity of issues considered makes for a rich and interesting book, in which everyone can glean stimulating information, syntheses, and reflections.

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Michela Graziani and Salomé Vuelta García, eds., *Il canone letterario gesuitico italo-iberico (secc. XVII–XVIII): Nuove indagini*. Biblioteca dell'Archivum Romanicum." Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia, 538. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2023. Pp. x + 104. Pb, €23.00.

As the rather prosaic title suggests, the five short essays gathered in this slim volume belong to a series of studies designed to present research into the evolving Jesuit literary canon in Italy and Spain in the early modern period, here with new reflections upon Spanish and Italian drama, the Italian translation of Spanish comedies, Luso-Asiatic historiography and anti-Jesuit Portuguese literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The contents are arranged chronologically.