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# Jesuits and Their Books: Libraries and Printing around the World

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## Jesuits and Their Books

### *Libraries and Printing around the World*

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The geographical and chronological spread of topics in this thematic issue of the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* is the result of a mandate to give coverage to both pre- and post-suppression research, around the globe, on Jesuit libraries and printing, in a total of six or seven articles. As this is no small task, a great deal of information is missing from the volume. I began with the premise that the subjects and regions which have received the most coverage over the previous two decades should be excluded: therefore, there is no article on Argentina, China, France, Hungary, Italy, Spain, or the United States. Within these geographical limitations, I hoped to highlight topics which are less familiar to the Anglophone world and which are rarely considered together: Ethiopian and Croatian colleges; Japanese printing and Canadian library science; Venezuelan missions and Lebanese scholarly journals; censorship in Ethiopia and expansion of access to information in Lebanon; dispersal of Japanese books and collection of Canadian books; the beginnings of literacy in the Orinoco delta and twentieth-century wars in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The purpose of the collection is decidedly not to hold up such a diverse list of subjects and their possible relationships to each other as key to understanding Jesuit libraries and book production and use around the world from 1540 to the present. It is, instead, to open up a conversation, to honor the Jesuits' historical commitment to globalism, and to advance the historical understanding of libraries, librarianship, book production, and book collection. What the authors of these articles and I hope to accomplish, in other words, is a broader understanding of the function of the printed word in Jesuit communities in different parts of the globe, and to gather together information on these diverse regions over time to begin understanding what might be called a Jesuit "way of proceeding" in collecting and using books.

Many scholars have contributed to the field, and their research continues to influence the study of Jesuit books and libraries. In the previous twenty-five years, for example, Paul Begheyn has written extensively on the library of the

Jesuit colleges in the Netherlands and on the Jesuit printing houses there; Adrian Dudink has examined the theologate library at Fujen University in Taiwan; Marisa Andrea Gorzalczany and Alejandro Olmos Gaona have studied the Jesuit library of Asunción (Paraguay); Theresa Kappus and Kelly O'Brien Jenks have written about the intersection of libraries and Jesuit pedagogy in the United States; Juan Navarro Loidi has investigated the scientific and mathematical books of the Quito Jesuits; Sheza Moledina has examined the Jesuit Seminary Library in Jersey; and Josef Vintr has examined books printed at the Jesuit house in Prague.<sup>1</sup> These studies are invaluable predecessors to the current volume. At the same time, this is a complex and changing field. As the eminent Dr. Dominique Julia counseled me in an electronic conversation, three major points must be addressed in any discussion of the history of Jesuit libraries:

1. The historical difficulties of establishing a standard or normative interpretation for what a library ought to contain, and classifying books in those collections (by which he was referring to issues developed in the early history of the order, at home in Europe and abroad) loom large in our understanding of Jesuit libraries—and continue to color our understanding of both how regulations were developed and applied on the local level, and how necessary adaptations influenced later advice.
2. Perhaps more significantly, difficulties of collecting books in the first place play a role in both the initial assembly, as well as in the survival, of anything we wish to consider a library. Even in modern times, major bequests, of money or books, can skew a collection in a particular direction.
3. Libraries are not museums, but places of work—for the students and the Jesuits who maintain them. Thus we must not merely see them as collections,

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1 Examples of works by these authors include: Adrian Dudink, "The Zikawei Collection in the Jesuit Theologate Library at Fujen University (Taiwan): Background and Draft Catalogue," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal* 18 (1996): 1–40; Marisa Andrea Gorzalczany and Alejandro Olmos Gaona, *La biblioteca jesuítica de Asunción* (Buenos Aires: M.A. Gorzalczany and A. Olmos Gaona, 2006); Theresa Kappus and Kelly O'Brien Jenks, "Angels and Demons: Online Library Instruction the Jesuit Way," *Journal of Library Administration* 50 (2009): 737–46; Juan Navarro Loidi, "Los libros matemáticos y científicos de la biblioteca del colegio de los jesuitas de Quito (s. XVII–s. XVIII)," *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 52 (2002): 198–211; Sheza Moledina, "Livres en exil: Le cas de la bibliothèque du scolasticat jésuite de Jersey, modelé par le père Descoqs," *Gryphe: revue de la Bibliothèque de Lyon* 6 (2003): 34–39; and Josef Vintr, "Prima principia linguae Bohemicae - stručná mluvnička češtiny ze 17. Století," *Our Speech* 93 (2010): 248–53.

but ask what role in the formation and education of Jesuits, and in the people whom they taught, such an institution might play.<sup>2</sup>

In order to address issues of not only book ownership and use, but also book production, we must add this question:

4. Many Jesuit colleges and houses had access to printing presses. What role did these play in the acquisition of texts by the institutions and in teaching?

Clearly, this collection of six articles can only hope to start a conversation on a more comparative level, and not to address in full any of these fundamental issues. Individual studies on Jesuit libraries or printing houses, including the recent very work of Tamara Samoiliuk on Belarus, Noël Golvers on China, and Claudio Fedele et al. on Italy, are better positioned to discuss the developments in a given time and place.<sup>3</sup> Our task is to gather more information for the bigger picture.

Each article in this edition tells readers something about the creation of book collections, and together they offer a fascinating glimpse into the ways the development of such collections has changed through the centuries. From the production (and destruction) of *gə'əz* texts for Ethiopia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to the promotion and preservation of “Oriental studies” in Syria and Lebanon in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the scholarship represented here describes both a series of adaptations (to environmental factors, to wars and/or hostile local contexts, to technology, and to frequent movements and consolidations of institutions) and a series of continuities (in subjects, in institutional purposes, and in the use of the library for students and members of the Society). Although the articles span the entire history of the Society, few make reference to

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2 Dominique Julia, in personal email correspondence, August 2, 2013.

3 Самойлюк is also sometimes transliterated Samoilyuk or Samolyuk. Examples of the highlighted scholars' work are: Tamara Samoiliuk, “Иезуитское книгопечатание в Беларуси” [The Printing of Jesuit Books in Belarus], in *Jėzuitai Lietuvoje (1608–2008): gyvenimas, veikla, paveldas (Jesuits in Lithuania (1608–2008): Life, Work, Heritage)*, ed. Neringa Markauskaitė (Vilnius: Lietuvos Nacionalinis Muziejus, 2012), 245–53; Noël Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning for China. Circulation of Western Books between Europe and China in the Jesuit Mission (ca. 1650–ca. 1750)*, vol. 1, *Logistics of Book Acquisition and Circulation* (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2012) and vol. 2, *Formation of Jesuit Libraries* (Leuven: Ferdinand Verbiest Institute, 2013); and Claudio Fedele, Italo Franceschini, and Adriana Paolini, eds., *La Biblioteca del Collegio dei Gesuiti di Trento: pubblicazioni e manoscritti conservati nelle biblioteche trentine: catalogo*, 2 vols. (Trento: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Soprintendenza per i beni librari e archivistici, 2007).

the survival period (1773–1814), not because it was unimportant to the libraries (indeed, it was a watershed moment, because it necessitated inventorying of collections) but because most of the contributions are confined to either the pre-suppression or post-restoration eras; the role of the suppression in the studies of Canada and Croatia is secondary, and thus is mentioned only briefly.

I have grouped the contributions roughly according to date, starting with the pre-suppression articles by Yoshimi Orii (Japan), José del Rey Fajardo (Orinoquia), and Kristen Windmuller-Luna (Ethiopia), progressing to one entirely post-suppression article by Rafael Herzstein (Lebanon) and ending with two articles that span the full length of Jesuit history: Gordon A. Rixon (Canada) and Marica Šapro-Ficović and Vegh (Croatia). This grouping allows me to make some summary statements by way of introduction. In some ways, all the articles treat similar subjects: availability of funds and of books, adaptation to environment and community, transportability of Western European learning, organization of knowledge and patterns of collection, preservation and promotion of culture (along with its mirror image, the destruction of culture), translation and language, accommodation and acculturation, intellectual and religious competition, consolidation and dispersal of collections, use of texts by patrons and staff, and production and transmission of information. Such broad comparisons, however, obscure the richness of the individual submissions, and therefore I will take a more narrow approach in what follows.

The first and perhaps single most important point addressed in these articles is that the Jesuits were visitors to all of the places discussed in these studies; while eventually each region would boast native members, the foundation of colleges, presses, and libraries was the result of some form of missionary activity. The Jesuits themselves, and the books they carried with them or manufactured after arrival, were thus interlopers, attempting to re-form and reform the regions in which they arrived. This is true even in Croatia, to which the Society was invited by local authorities and where it was culturally more familiar to its audiences. There, rival forms of Christianity pre-dated the formation of the Jesuits, and the Protestant Reformation posed a significant threat. The existence of Christianity in Ethiopia, though, should not be read the same way as that in Eastern Europe. Although the Society's arrival in Ethiopia was quite early, the purpose of the mission there was quite different from those in Europe or the Americas, as evidenced in part by Windmuller-Luna's references to the attempts to censor, "correct," and outright destroy Ethiopian books and by the ongoing difficulties in creating a stable form of production of new books. The long literary tradition of Ethiopia is in sharp contrast to Fajardo's observations about the lack of literate culture in the Orinoco delta. Nonetheless, in Japan, in the Orinoco watershed, and in Ethiopia, the Jesuits arrived as distant foreigners, speaking

unknown languages and facing significant environmental challenges. Printed books, and the Romance languages in which they were printed, were mysterious to the locals on all three continents. This meant that the Jesuits coming from Europe to these regions were faced with multiple new obstacles, probably only partially anticipated—illiteracy in Latin, Spanish, or Portuguese, for example, would be easier to overcome in Spain or Portugal than in Colombia/Venezuela, Japan, or Ethiopia. Since books are relatively useless to illiterate populations, the missionaries had to teach many basic skills to those they wished to influence or change, before they could address the more difficult philosophical and theological concepts associated with monotheism, incarnation, and related topics. In broad terms, both Orii and Fajardo remind us that imperial activity, even religious imperialism, is a process of negotiation, and that acculturation is at least a two-way street (in Ethiopia, since the route to the missions was indirect, it was considerably more complicated and politicized). The Jesuits, as much as the local population, had to adapt to the changing circumstances, and to remain flexible under what could be very challenging, and very fluid, conditions.

Despite their differences, in many ways, the work of Orii, Fajardo, and Windmuller-Luna on early missions informs the interpretation of the remaining articles. In addition to establishing questions of cultural exchange, the first three articles demonstrate the necessity of expanding our definition of “library” to include even small collections of books, ideally stored in a dedicated place (even a printing house or niche), and of understanding how important those books were not simply for teaching, but also for what we today would call the mental health of the Jesuits. To quote Fajardo, a library was “every missionary’s best companion,” because it supported the spiritual and intellectual well-being of the Jesuits, in addition to serving the missionary work.

A second overarching observation is that books came to institutional libraries from a variety of places and for a variety of reasons. Foundational documents for the Society of Jesus specify only that colleges must have libraries, but not what the contents thereof ought to be. For centuries, finding out what a library should not have was easier than determining what it ought to have. Advice like that of the *Constitutions*, which emphasizes reading and teaching “humane letters of different languages, logic, natural and moral philosophy, metaphysics, scholastic and positive theology, and Sacred Scripture,” left much of the decision-making to the leadership in a given time and place—and much of the collecting as well.<sup>4</sup> Examples include Mercurian’s “Rules for the Prefect of the Library” (1580), which states, “When he shall understand that the house

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4 *Constitutions*, IV,5,351, in George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 188.

lacks some necessary books or that some very useful ones have been published he shall notify the superior so that, if it seems good to him, they may be bought. If however, there should be useless books in the house, he shall likewise let him know so that they may be exchanged for other better ones.”<sup>5</sup> A list of thirty books for Jesuit novice masters dates from the following year. Although it should not be read as instructions on constructing a library, it is helpful for our understanding of what were considered “basic” books for Jesuits. It calls for copies of (for example) St. Gregory the Great’s *Moralia*, Thomas à Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*, and works by Albert the Great, Augustine, Richard of St. Victor, Dionysius the Carthusian, Gregory of Tours, and Eusebius.<sup>6</sup> Individual colleges occasionally addressed the library or the job of librarian in their *Rules*; the Roman College, for example, stipulated that the institution keep “sufficient” books for the subjects taught there.<sup>7</sup> As the Society matured, so did the recommendations on book ownership. This was (at least in part) likely tied to developments in censorship, including the foundation of the Congregation of the Index in 1571. On the one hand, this meant far greater restrictions on book ownership—but on the other, it meant a convenient list of books which were never to be purchased or read at the Jesuit colleges, along with one document which was required (the *Index* itself). The norm in the first decades of Jesuit education, in sum, was a mixture of vague statements about subjects and specific author/title combinations, all amounting to a relatively short list of books to be kept by the colleges accompanied by a long list of what was unacceptable.

This lack of guidance—which in itself had multiple causes—meant that the earliest Jesuit libraries were rather haphazard in gathering books. In many cases, institutions had to be content to accept donations, rather than actively creating and curating a library. These donations could be very valuable; the gift from Nicholas Isvánffy to the Zagreb College, as Šapro-Ficović and Vegh point out, became the nucleus of that college’s library, and multiple donors provided for the library of the college in Ancona in their wills. Sometimes, indeed, soliciting gifts was necessary—Ethiopian missionaries often had to rely on donations because they could afford neither the time nor the money to procure books

5 Quoted in Brendan Connolly, “The Roots of Jesuit Librarianship: 1540–1599” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1955), 74 (his translation).

6 Thomas H. Clancy, *An Introduction to Jesuit Life: the Constitutions and History Through 435 Years* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976), 123–26, and Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 216–17.

7 For the *Rule* for the Roman College, see “Regulae Collegii Romani (1550),” in *Regulae Societatis Iesu (1540–1556)*, ed. Dionysius Fernández Zapico (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1948), 270–71.

through more direct channels. As Noël Golvers has demonstrated in his breathtakingly thorough study of Jesuit book collecting for Chinese missions, though, depending on donations could be a troublesome thing. Letters pleading for copies of particular volumes, or the money to procure them, did not always produce the desired result, and the missions often had to settle for less.<sup>8</sup> In some fortunate cases, as in Japan for example, a dedicated local printing press was available to provide texts for the library, both in European and indigenous languages. The press producing books for Ethiopia (and Goa), on the other hand, was located in Rome. Jesuit printing and Jesuit libraries have changed over the centuries, and the more modern institutions clearly follow different collection practices. Modern Jesuit institutions have libraries and research centers which resemble those of other universities: specializing according to the needs of the curriculum and generally maintaining collections of Jesuitica, but still not according to a list determined by the Society. Few of these institutions have their own printing presses, and those that do, like Fordham University or the Ateneo de Manila, have to answer to commercial as well as academic pressures in their production of texts.

The third general observation I wish to address in this introduction comes from the articles that address information science. Šapro-Ficović and Vegh and Rixon demonstrate the role of Jesuit libraries in, for lack of a better term, modernization. Rixon begins with a discussion of “encyclopedic approaches to knowledge and subject mapping,” issues at the heart of the Society’s earliest missionary endeavors and which continue to inform book production, preservation, and circulation. In both Croatia and Canada, Jesuits brought or printed books in multiple languages (including native ones), created new educational systems, developed agriculture, and engaged in cutting-edge architecture based on the philosophy and rhetoric of memory. The interruption occasioned by the suppression did not dampen the Jesuits’ enthusiasm for learning or for books, but in these places, as in Japan, the dispersal of volumes was a problem. Orii’s descriptions of the difficulties of cataloguing translations of European books remind us that classification is not merely to be considered in the context of acquisitions: it is also a complex linguistic problem for cataloguing and maintenance. Rixon and Šapro-Ficović and Vegh describe a superficially opposite problem, but one that could be similarly destructive: consolidation and book transfers. In the face of the upheavals that led to movements of collections around Canada and Europe, the Society revisited its approach to collecting and to serving its patrons. This adaptation

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8 Golvers, *Libraries of Western Learning*, vols. 1 and 2. See especially vol. 1 for the correspondence.



continues, through advances in technology on multiple levels (digitization, computation, and analytic tools), and simultaneously on the abandonment of adaptation, because unlike the early centuries of Jesuit history, collections are open to those outside the community without any requirement to invite people to join the Society (thus, one need not become a Jesuit to gain access to the Society's knowledge).

My fourth and final observation on the articles as a whole is that they remind us of the truly global nature of the Society's history. For example, Orii points out that by their nature, the *Kirishitan-ban* books were global, though produced locally—they originated from European sources and in some cases were brought to Europe, though they were printed in Japan. Windmuller-Luna's description of the nearly comical problems of supply within Ethiopia is another example—European books intended for an African mission were often waylaid in an Asian port. A more subtle case is illustrated by Rixon in his discussion of how Regis College wrestled with how to classify different kinds of knowledge, eventually selecting, and then altering, a foreign classification system (that of the Library of Congress). Patterns of collecting and classification in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Catholic libraries did not fit well within LC, which was based on the organization of books, rather than of knowledge. As such, existing collections had to adapt to a foreign set of rules—as amended by new call numbers (the Lynn-Peterson variant). A set of processes begun in France thus moved through a French colony, adjusting to indigenous practices, surviving multiple transfers of power and language, and eventually adapted to (and adjusted) a system developed in the United States. Whether by design or not, the intellectual exchanges were never one-sided. In some instances, like the participation of professors from the College of Beirut in teaching Middle Eastern languages in Rome and the establishment of a *gō'az* printing press in that same city, remote cultures came to Rome while Rome was sending out Europeans to evangelize; these overt exchanges were to serve the needs of the Society, but certainly produced a wider influence. On other fronts, the cultural sharing was less dramatic; Europeans protected Japanese-language books, for example, or read *gō'az* texts in order to refute or destroy them. Above these local stories and their individual interactions, of course, was a global religious order, centered in Rome. Its successes in spreading and/or supporting Christianity depended in significant part on the books its members produced and transported.

Taken together, these observations lead us to one very large question: What is a "Jesuit" library, and what are "Jesuit" books? This implies not merely issues of what is required to create a library for members or students of the Society of Jesus, but also of what is "Jesuit" about the creation of a book or a library.

The articles in this collection do not answer this question, but provide us with a basis on which to stand, while calling for and conducting future research. My discussions with colleagues at various conferences, including the March 2015 Renaissance Society of America conference (at which Marica Šapro-Ficović will participate in a session organized and chaired by me), show that interest in Jesuit libraries is vital and growing. Untapped resources in this field abound. As I chose geographical areas underrepresented in Anglophone literature, an obvious avenue is to pursue other neglected regions: for example, Australia, the Caribbean, India, and the Philippines. Those who study the Society in the aftermath of the suppression also need to pay attention to the dispersal of books, not just to nineteenth-, twentieth-, or twenty-first-century librarianship. Orii demonstrates the difficulties faced by such endeavors of reconstruction by pointing out the ways in which books can be simultaneously “lost” and still extant—miscataloging by language or by printer has caused much confusion. The inventories taken at the time of suppression are useful in this pursuit, but determining which books went where, and why, will yield insight into the value of given collections or volumes, as well as into the very process of suppression: how much damage was done to buildings and books? Who profited? A telling example of what can be learned, and of what was lost, is found in the study of Holbeck Hall in Nottinghamshire, a Jesuit house founded by 1673, with a significant library which was seized by the British Privy Council in 1678, in an attempt to punish the Jesuits for their alleged cooperation in the Popish Plot.<sup>9</sup> The governors of Sion College, an Anglican institution which had lost much of its own library in the Great Fire of London in 1666, campaigned for those books from the collection which were deemed theologically and politically safe, and received a transfer of a large number of books by mid-July 1687. The contents of the library were transported to Whitehall Palace in London to be inventoried, and then moved to Sion, but somewhere along the line, some books from the original collection were apparently embezzled: a smaller number arrived in Sion College than had been found in Holbeck Hall. As no initial inventory had been taken before the transfer, determining which ones, and at what point—before the seizure in Holbeck, between Holbeck and London, between Whitehall Palace

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9 Hendrik Dijkgraaf, *The Library of a Jesuit Community at Holbeck, Nottinghamshire (1679)* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 70 and 84–87. According to Dijkgraaf, the earliest verifiable date is 1673, but some letters suggest 1669, and one of the first occupants, Edward Turner, began missionary work in 1664 (70). This volume contains a list of the books which were kept by Sion College, after purging duplicates and “papist” titles, a total of 1,212 volumes (903 distinct titles).

and Sion—remains impossible.<sup>10</sup> This is not a singular case: books taken from the Jesuit libraries were dispersed wherever the Society was suppressed.

In general, historians of books and of libraries also need to consider the most difficult issue that develops from the above: how to understand the use and circulation of materials, among Jesuits and the public at large. Very few historical studies of library readership are available for periods prior to the twentieth century—in part this is a question of records, but not entirely. The same sort of work that produces fruit regarding an individual book or author, the study of marginalia, can be used to discuss readership. One recent example is Owen Gingerich's *The Book Nobody Read*.<sup>11</sup> In addition, several of the articles in this collection discuss teaching, noting its connection to books in the libraries. Studies of more modern Jesuit institutions can more easily delve into this puzzle, but the earliest libraries can provide some hints as well. Before such an enterprise is undertaken, though, we need more information on the content of collections, as well as on the methods employed in collecting. Historians of the Society of Jesus do not lack for documentation—indeed, the printed and manuscript resources the Society contain multiple resources for addressing these questions.

The authors in this issue are pleased to contribute to this growing field, and to point to areas ripe for future research. We are grateful to Robert Maryks for proposing it, and to the external reviewers for their comments, which have improved the individual contributions and the whole.

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10 Dijkgraaf, *The Library of a Jesuit Community*, 90; William H. Milman, "Some Account of Sion College in the City of London and Its Library," *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archeological Society* 6 (1883): 53–122, here 108: "In 1679, upon the seizure of a Jesuit study at Holbeck, the books were given by the King to the College. Some, however, were injured, and many more embezzled, so that it was but a small residue which reached the library."

11 Owen Gingerich, *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus* (New York: Walker and Company, 2004).