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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Special Section: Circa Missiones. Jesuit Understandings of Mission through the Centuries

Understanding 'Mission' and Jesuit Education: An Introduction

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ABSTRACT

This introductory essay presents a selection of six papers delivered at the 2023 International Symposium on Jesuit Studies, held in Lisbon under the theme *Circa Missiones*: Jesuit Understandings of Mission through the Centuries. The symposium brought together over 100 scholars to explore how the Society of Jesus has conceived and enacted mission across different historical and cultural settings. Hosted at Bróteria, the Jesuit house of writers and public scientific institute, the gathering underscored the enduring relevance of Jesuit missionary thought. The six contributions featured in these proceedings engage the theme from diverse disciplinary perspectives, offering critical insights into the evolving semantics, practices, and theological frameworks that have shaped Jesuit mission from its origins to the present.

Keywords:
mission, Jesuit pedagogy, Jesuit history, primary sources, history of education

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Scholars naturally considered Lisbon a fitting location when the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies (Boston College) issued a call for proposals for the International Symposium on Jesuit Studies on the theme *Circa Missiones: Jesuit Understandings of Mission through the Centuries*. Few places evoke the Jesuit missionary enterprise as directly and profoundly as Lisbon. The Portuguese province was the first established within the Society of Jesus, founded by Simão Rodrigues (1510–79), while Saint Francis Xavier (1506–52)—initially bound for Portugal after the withdrawal of Nicholas Bobadilla (1511–90) due to health reasons—would soon depart from Lisbon, inaugurating and shaping the Society's missionary identity for centuries to come.[1]

On June 12, 2023, more than 100 participants gathered in Portugal's capital to present their research within the distinguished setting of Bróteria, the Jesuit house of writers and a renowned scientific institute open to the public today. Francisco Mota, S.J., has provided an account of this institution in the first issue of the newly launched *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*.[2]

The title of the Symposium was an *emprunt* from the Latin formulation of the fourth vow taken by members of the Society upon their final profession. The *Constitutions of the Society* articulate this vow in the following terms:

> In addition to the three vows mentioned, the professed of the Society also make an explicit vow to the present or future Sovereign Pontiff, as the Vicar of Christ our Lord. This is a vow to go wherever His Holiness commands, whether among the faithful or the infidels, without excuse and without requesting any financial support for the journey, for the sake of matters pertaining to the worship of God and the good of the Christian religion.[3]

1 On the role of Portugal in the history of the early Society and its missions, see Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). On the missionary identity of the Jesuits see also Ines Zupanov, "Introduction: Is One World Enough for the Jesuits?," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov, Oxford Handbooks (2019; online edition, Oxford Academic, November 6, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190639631.002.0006, accessed February 8, 2025; and, more recently, Emanuele Colombo, *Quando Dio chiama. I gesuiti e le missioni nelle Indie (1560-1960)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2024).

2 Francisco Mota, S.J., "Reimagining our Intellectual Apostolate through the House of Writers," *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 1, no. 1 (2025): 115–36, https://doi.org/10.51238/1L38w6q.

3 *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: A Critical Edition with the Complementary Norms,* ed. Barton T. Geger, S.J. (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2024), 80.

Known as the "special" vow, its explicit reference to the Pope has fueled both the Jesuit legend and the polemics of their critics. Yet, its very existence attests to the profound roots of the concept of *mission* within Jesuit culture.

The notion of mission within the Society of Jesus is multifaceted. In its most fundamental sense—though this may seem overly broad—mission refers to the condition of "being sent."[4] For the Jesuits, this means that their activities, endeavors, and work as members of a Catholic religious order are not the result of personal decisions or individual choices but rather the fulfillment of a mandate whose ultimate authority resides in God. The Roman Pontiff serves as the highest human authority in this process, an authority, though, that can be delegated to or exercised through the Superior General, and, by extension, the Provincial. At the same time, this structure does not exclude the individual Jesuit from participating in the discernment process that leads to the Superior's final decision. Yet, for any Jesuit, mission first serves as the testing ground for his *indifference*—a concept central to Jesuit spirituality. In terms often used in historiography, it is the context in which he becomes an instrument of the divine will.[5]

Historically, the earliest explicit meaning of mission in Jesuit culture referred to engagement with "Turks and whatever other infidels" (*Formula Instituti*), that is, the evangelization of those outside the Christian, Catholic faith.[6] The inclusion of the Turks and other infidels in this formulation reflects the original context surrounding the first Jesuits, who formed their companionship in 1540. Originally a group of university students in Paris, they had vowed in 1534 to remain together and embark on a collective pilgrimage to the Holy Land, mirroring Ignatius of Loyola's own journey a decade earlier.[7] While their initial vision was centered on the Middle East, their missionary field would soon expand to the vast global networks of the Iberian empires, stretching from the Far East to South America.

One of the first to recognize the evangelizing potential of this group of university graduates was their former principal, Diogo de Gouveia (1417–

4 Jerome Aixalá, "Misión, Acepiciones," *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, ed. Charles E. O'Neill, S.J. and Joaquín Maria Domínguez, S.J. (Rome-Madrid: Institum Historicum, S.I.–Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001), vol. 3, 2686–87.

5 On the concepts of indifference and instrumentality, see Christopher Van Ginohven Rey, *Instruments of the Divinity: Providence and Praxis in the Foundation of the Society of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

6 *Constitutions,* 63.

7 See Ignatius of Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, revised edition, ed. Barton T. Geger. S.J. (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2020).

1557). In endorsing their confirmation as a religious order, he wrote to the King of Portugal, emphasizing their promise as missionaries in the Portuguese colonies.[8] The King's support proved decisive, as the Society's missionary endeavor would, in fact, commence from the shores of Portugal, with Francis Xavier setting sail for India, eventually working in Japan, and dying just a few miles from entering China.

Within the context of this missionary enterprise, *mission* took on a second, structural meaning. Missions were not merely apostolic endeavors but also institutional entities—settlements, organizational units within provinces, or even semi-autonomous entities within Jesuit assistancies. The *reductions* in Latin America exemplified the first type, while other missions were sometimes itinerant though administratively linked to a specific Jesuit province. For example, the American Northwest was designated as a mission under the jurisdiction of the Piedmont province of the Italian Jesuits.[9]

Missionary activity was not confined to non-Christian lands. In early modern Europe, Jesuits conducted missions, particularly in rural areas, to evangelize or re-evangelize populations. These missions sought to counteract Protestant proselytization or to reform religious practices that the Catholic Church no longer deemed acceptable. Their purpose was to reinvigorate Catholic faith in alignment with Roman orthodoxy. Silvestro Landini (1503–54) set one of the earliest examples of itinerant preaching in the countryside, a model that would be developed by the Italian Jesuit Paolo Segneri (1624–94) in the seventeenth century.[10]

The Jesuits also served as military chaplains, attached either to armies on the ground or to navies aboard battleships. Since the Flanders wars, they referred to this apostolate as *missio castrensis* and *missio navalis*, emphasizing their commitment to providing spiritual care in the context of military service.[11]

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8 On the history of Diogo's endorsement to the confirmation of the Society of Jesus, see Cristiano Casalini, *Aristóteles em Coimbra: Cursus Conimbricensis e a educaçao no Collegium Artium* (Coimbra: Coimbra University Press, 2015), 29–31.

9 See Gerald McKevitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848–1919* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

10 On Landini, see John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 127.

11 Ariane Boltanski, "A Jesuit Missio Castrensis in France at the End of the Sixteenth Century: Discipline and Violence at War," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 4 (2017): 581–98, https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00404003; and Vincenzo Lavenia, "'Missiones Castrenses': Jesuits and Soldiers between Pastoral Care and Violence", *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 4, no. 4 (2017): 545–58, https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00404001. On primary sources related to the *missio cas-*

Beyond these broader categories, a Jesuit *mission* could also refer to a highly specific diplomatic or political assignment. The career of Antonio Possevino (1533–1611) offers a rich repository of such missions, many of which had explicit political objectives. His tasks included peacemaking, negotiating dynastic marriages, influencing courtly life, and converting rulers—all critical functions within the Jesuit approach to mission.[12]

As the intellectual apostolate became deeply embedded within the Society, missions were also understood as opportunities for Jesuits to engage in explorations, geographical reconnaissance, and scientific expeditions. Figures like Joseph Pierre de Bonnécamps (1708–90) exemplified this aspect of Jesuit mission, contributing to the Society's prominent role within the network of learned societies between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The vast scope of the Society of Jesus's missionary enterprise captivated both its members and the broader public. Equally compelling was the prospect of martyrdom for the Catholic faith in lands that were not only distant from home but also far removed from European culture. While mission may not have always been the primary motivation for young Catholics to enter the Society, it undoubtedly became a powerful force sustaining their vocation once they had joined. Historian Emanuele Colombo has described this as a "vocation within the vocation," a defining characteristic of the Jesuit mentality within the Catholic landscape.[13] This enduring zeal is evidenced by the *litterae indipetae*—pleas written by individual Jesuits to the Superior General, requesting to be sent on mission. These petitions, abundant and widespread, attest to a persistent longing for overseas missions that continues to this day.[14]

This fervor was further intensified by the reports Jesuits published in Europe about their missionary work abroad—a literary genre that flour-

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trensis, see Silvia Mostaccio and Alessandro Serra's forthcoming volume, *Jesuit Military Missionaries in Northern Europe* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, forthcoming 2025).

12 Emanuele Colombo, "Possevino, Antonio," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani,* 85 (2016), accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-possevino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/. On Possevino see also Andreas Mazetti Petersson, *A Culture for the Commonwealth: Antonio Possevino, Authority, History, and the Venetian Interdict* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2022).

13 Colombo, *Quando Dio chiama*, 5.

14 See Emanuele Colombo, Irene Gaddo, and Guido Mongini, *The First Italian Indipetae: Jesuit Petitions for the Indies* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2024). See also the *Digital Indipetae Database: Jesuit Petitions for Missions*, a digital database available through the Portal to Jesuit Studies: https://indipetae.bc.edu.

ished throughout the early modern period. The allure of the exotic and the distant not only fueled missionary aspirations but also gave rise to a mirrored usage of the term *mission*—applied metaphorically to the ministries and apostolates assigned to Jesuits who did not travel abroad. Landini often referred to the island of Corsica as his own "India."[15] Similarly, Saint Francis de Geronimo (1642–1716) longed to be sent to the Far East. When he petitioned the Superior General for a mission to India or Japan, he was instead encouraged to find his own "India" within Italy itself. [16] Embracing this directive, he dedicated his life to the streets of Naples, preaching, visiting hospitals and prisons, and carrying out the works of mercy that had characterized the early Jesuits. He founded sodalities, worked with the poor, and taught in the college, following a path of service that ultimately led him to sainthood.

For many other Jesuits, though, "local" assignments frustrated their desire to follow in the footsteps of Francis Xavier. It is in this metaphorical extension of the term *mission* that we find its connection to the Society's most significant and enduring ministry: education. Once the Jesuits embraced educational work—particularly after Superior General Diego Laínez's (1512–65) directive that bound every Jesuit to "bear part of the burden of schools"—young men entering the Society understood that while they might or might not be sent on overseas missions, they would inevitably be entrusted with some role in education.[17] For many, especially scholastics pursuing advanced studies while simultaneously teaching grammar and humanities to children, the task of educating youth became a profound spiritual challenge. This struggle is well-documented in the frequent exhortations, admonitions, and even rebukes that superiors and Jesuit writers directed toward them over time, expressed through letters, congregation decrees, and instructional texts.

The allure of the Indies—imbued with exoticism and the dramatic narratives of missionaries converting countless indigenous peoples (countless, at least, according to their reports)—stood in stark contrast to the seemingly monotonous, routine labor of teaching. The daily grind of drilling students in declensions and conjugations through rote memorization

15 Simone Ragagli, "Landini, Silvestro," *Dizionario Bigrafico degli Italiani* 63 (2004), online edition, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/silvestro-landini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/.

16 Dario Busolini, "De Geronimo, Francesco, santo," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 49 (1997), online edition, accessed February 7, 2025, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/santo-francescode-geronimo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/.

17 O'Malley, *The First Jesuits,* 200–201; and Paul Grendler, "The Culture of Jesuit Teacher 1548–1773," in *Humanism, Universities, and Jesuit Education in Late Renaissance Italy* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022), 390–411.

could hardly compete, in the imagination of many Jesuits, with the grand and heroic exploits of their missionary brethren.

In his *Exhortation for the Teachers of Young Students in Jesuit Schools* (1625–26), Francesco Sacchini (1570–1625) demonstrated acute awareness of the internal struggle his young fellows faced, and he sought to leverage this contrast rhetorically to inspire their effort, if not their enthusiasm, for the work of teaching:

> As so many of our brothers in the Society are scattered through the entire world among the savagery of barbaric peoples, stripped of every human consolation, and sweating away at such hard labor, if we should be spared, should we not rightfully grieve to be passed over as unworthy? Let us listen to Saint Ignatius scolding us in Moses, "Will your brothers go out to the fight and you sit here?" Truly, anyone who has a drop of real Christian character—let him be so inspired. Let him grieve if he sees anyone has been given more troubles than he has. Let him endeavor not to be excused but to be given the heaviest burden. Let him think that to the extent his burden is the heaviest, just so far is he most gloriously honored.[18]

For many young Jesuits, education became a form of nearly excruciating martyrdom—an apostolic mission undertaken while longing for the exotic encounters of foreign lands. However, perhaps paradoxically, despite these expressed reactions, the Society collectively embraced the ministry of education and never wavered in its commitment to the centrality of schools among their apostolates. Historians such as John O'Malley and Paul Grendler have noted that, even when Laínez made the decision to entrust the entire Society with the educational endeavor, no objections were raised by his fellow Jesuits—despite the fact that some had not hesitated to voice criticisms at the time.[19]

The history of the Society was inextricably linked to education as a mission. Jesuits were "sent" to schools, navigating the global network of the Society's educational institutions like pieces on a chessboard. Many embraced this mission with genuine enthusiasm and deep religious commitment. As O'Malley and others have emphasized, what distinguished the Jesuit educator's mentality and set it apart within the educational landscape of their time was a profound "faith in education"—a principle that required teachers to be more than mere instructors.[20] Jesuit educators were called to

18 Francesco Sacchini, S.J., *Exhortations for the Teachers of Young Students in Jesuit Schools*, ed. Cristiano Casalini and Claude Pavur, S.J. (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2021), 245.

19 O'Malley, *The First Jesuits,* 200–201; and Grendler, "The Culture of Jesuit Teacher 1548–1773," 393.

20 O'Malley, *The First Jesuits,* 208.

care deeply for their students, to approach teaching as more than a profession, and to see it as a true apostolic calling.

The Society not only founded schools, colleges, and universities but also developed a pedagogical model encapsulated in the *Ratio studiorum* (1599), which emerged from the wealth of practical experience accumulated by Jesuit educators in the field. Beyond its formal institutions, the Society adapted its pedagogical approach to local contexts and historical circumstances, demonstrating that education was, for the Jesuits, an evolving mission rather than a rigid framework.

Education ultimately became the hallmark of the Society, even in missionary contexts, where the Jesuits saw their evangelizing work as deeply intertwined with the formation of youth, just as it was in Europe. This is why Juan de Bonifacio's phrase, *Institutio juventutis est renovatio mundi*, resonated so profoundly within the Society.[21] The "world" the Jesuits sought to renew was embodied in the vast global network of educational enterprises they established from the sixteenth century onward. Even in colonial settings, where formal schools or colleges for Europeans or Christianized local elites were absent, the educational mission persisted through the teaching of Christian doctrine and efforts to promote literacy. Education was envisioned on of the most effective means to achieve that help and progress of souls that the foundational documents of the Society of Jesus set a goal. "Youth is the leven of Christianity," as Possevino used to say.[22] Therefore education was a mission in itself, as well as one of the most relevant strategies in the missionary activities the Jesuits pursued in non-Catholic countries and environments.

The fate of these two essential aspects of the Jesuit apostolate—missions and education—was so intertwined that when the Society of Jesus was expelled from Catholic countries and ultimately suppressed in 1773, it survived in places such as Russia, Prussia, and, to some extent, the United States. In these regions, non-Catholic rulers refused to relinquish the Jesuit schools, which had been operating successfully until then. Thus, these lands of mission became, paradoxically, places where Jesuit education endured despite the formal suppression of the order.[23]

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21 José Mesa, S.J., ed., *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education from St. Ignatius to Today* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2017); Mesa, ed., *La pedagogía ignaciana. Textos clásicos y contemporáneos sobre la educación de la Compañía de Jesús desde san Ignacio de Loyola hasta nuestros días* (Mensajero: 2019).

22 Cristiano Casalini and Luana Salvarani, "Introduzione," in *La coltura degl'ingegni*, by Antonio Possevino, S.J. (Rome: Anicia, 2008).

23 See Marek Inglot, S.J., *How the Jesuits Survived Their Suppression; The Society of Jesus in the Russian Empire (1773-1814)* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University

When Pius VII restored the Society of Jesus in 1814, he did so through the Bull *Sollicitudo Omnium*, in which he outlined the steps he had previously taken to grant the request of Russian Emperor Paul I. The emperor had sought formal recognition for the Jesuits who had continued serving Catholic communities within his empire despite the Society's suppression. Pius VII wrote:

> For this reason, considering with careful attention how great the benefits would be for those vast regions, almost devoid of evangelical laborers, and how much growth such clergy would bring to the Catholic Religion—clergy whose upright conduct was praised with such high commendation for their constant dedication, fervent zeal for the salvation of souls, and tireless preaching of the word of God—we have deemed it reasonable to support the wishes of such a great and benevolent Prince.[24]

The pope further noted that a similar request had come from Ferdinand I (1751–1825), King of the Two Sicilies, who, like Czar Paul I, sought to entrust the Jesuits with the education of youth. Ferdinand wished to employ them in the instruction of Christian piety and the fear of God—"the beginning of Wisdom"—as well as in the teaching of literature and the sciences in colleges and public schools.[25]

With the universal restoration of the Society, the Jesuits were able to resume their interrupted educational activities, sustain those that had survived, and establish new institutions in the wake of the suppression. Combined with a renewed missionary spirit, schools and colleges began operating on a truly global scale. In 1833, Superior General Jan Roothaan (1785–1853) issued a pivotal letter, *De missionum exterarum desiderio excitando et fovendo*, urging Jesuits to rekindle their missionary vocation. As historian Claudio Ferlan observed, "In line with his other initiatives, such as his works on the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Ratio studiorum*, Roothaan sought to restore the original identity of the Society of Jesus. He achieved his goal, and the expansion or reopening of missionary frontiers defined his generalate."[26] Key milestones included the reestablishment of missions in India (beginning in 1834) and China, as well as new settlements among Native Americans (starting in 1838). The reopening of the Japanese mis-

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Press, 2015); and Sabina Pavone, *Una strana alleanza. La Compagnia di Gesù in Russia dal 1772 al 1820* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2010).

24 For the Italian version of the Bull, see https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-vii/it/documents/bolla-sollicitudo-omnium-7-agosto-1814.html. An English version can be found here: http://www.totustuustools.net/magistero/p7sollic.htm, 3.

25 See http://www.totustuustools.net/magistero/p7sollic.htm, 4.

26 Claudio Ferlan, *The Jesuits: A Thematic History* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2024), 38.

sion, however, proved more challenging and was only realized in 1908—several decades after the Meiji Restoration (1870) lifted the ban on Christianity.

The nineteenth century saw the United States emerge as a key seedbed for an extraordinary expansion of Jesuit education. Within the broader framework of their missionary work, the Jesuits established a vast and rapidly growing network of schools, particularly in urban centers across the East, Southeast, and Midwest. They also anticipated the territorial expansion of the United States, founding missions and schools in the South and the West. The worked with native Americans in rural areas, as well as with the communities of catholic immigrants who started to crowd the American cities since the middle of the eighteenth century. As previously noted, many of these institutions were formally designated as "missions" of European provinces across the Atlantic. Italian Jesuits, in particular, played a crucial role in founding colleges in the western frontier. Belgians started from St. Louis and founded school in the Midwest. The Germans founded Canisius college and John Carroll University.[27]

The history of Jesuit education in the United States is inextricably linked to the multifaceted notion of mission. Schools, colleges, and universities were not only territorially and organizationally established as missions, but they also embodied the multiple apostolic missions that defined the Society's work. These institutions pursued social objectives by educating youth—many of whom were children of displaced Catholic migrants—and served as centers for the broader apostolic endeavors of the Jesuits, who, as religious men, shared their communal lives largely within the material setting of a college. As Luce Giard once described, the Jesuit college functioned as a "center for knowledge, art, and faith,"[28] a space where the complex semantics of mission ultimately crystallized, extending beyond the metaphorical notion of alternative "Indies" for Jesuits longing to be sent afar.

Superior General Pedro Arrupe (1907–91) articulated this vision explicitly in 1980 when addressing Jesuit officials gathered at the Jesuit Curia in Rome. As they deliberated on how to foster genuine collaboration with the laity in secondary education and how best to apply Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation to their work, Arrupe epitomized the purpose of Jesuit schools as fundamentally missionary.

27 Michael Rizzi, *Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States: A History* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2022).

28 Luce Giard, "The Jesuit College A Center for Knowledge, Art, and Faith 1548-1773," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 40, no. 1 (2008): 1–31, https://doi.org/10.6017/ssj.v40i1.4013.

He said:

> The secondary school is an effective apostolic instrument which the Society entrusts to a community, or to a definite group of men within a community; the purpose can only be apostolic. This commitment to such men and for such a purpose, is an authentic act of "mission." The secondary school is the primordial means of apostolate for that community. And that community, inasmuch as it is an apostolic group of the Society, must concentrate its activity towards attaining the greatest possible apostolic results from its use of this educational instrument.[29]

In this issue of the *Jesuit Educational Quarterly*, we publish a selection of papers that were submitted for the proceedings of the Symposium.[30] The topic of this selection might appear surprising, or even exotic, to Jesuit educators today. Yet, precisely because these essays explore the multifaceted nature of Jesuit missionary endeavors across different regions and time periods, we hope they can stimulate our readers to find in these histories, some clues on how cultural, linguistic, political, and theological challenges can be addressed in Jesuit educational contexts today. Indeed, despite the geographic and historical diversity that these essays cover, several common themes of import emerge, including the Jesuits' culture of adaptation, their role as cultural intermediaries, their engagement with language and scholarship, and the complex political and ecclesiastical landscapes they had to navigate.

A. Taiga Guterres offers an in-depth exploration of how the concept of *mission* evolved in Jesuit education by analyzing the *Jesuit Educational Quarterly* as a primary source. He traces the shifting meanings of the term as it appeared in articles published between 1938 and 1970, highlighting key semantic transitions—most notably, its gradual shift from apostolic identity to institutional purpose. Guterres emphasizes the emergence of the mission statement and its role in shaping Jesuit educational discourse by situating such an emergence within the broader ecclesial and societal contexts which framed this transformation.

One of the most striking themes that emerges from this collection is the Jesuits' remarkable adaptability in foreign contexts. Alessandro Valig-

29 Pedro Arrupe, S.J., "Our Secondary Schools Today and Tomorrow," in *Other Apostolates Today: Selected Letters and Addresses—III*, ed. Jerome Aixalá (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1981), 55–78.

30 Other contributions will be available through the *International Symposia on Jesuit Studies,* a series dedicated to the proceedings from the symposia that the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies (Boston College) has been organizing yearly. The series is published by the Institute of Jesuit Sources in an open, online format on the website of the publishing house: https://jesuitsourcesdigital.bc.edu/.

nano's (1539–1606) *Advertimentos e avisos* (*Advice and Notices*), a manual for Jesuit missionaries in Japan, discussed by Laura Madella, exemplifies this strategic accommodation. Recognizing that authority and esteem were crucial for successful evangelization, Valignano encouraged Jesuits to adopt Japanese customs and manners. Yet, as Madella notes, this cultural flexibility also raised concerns within the Society of Jesus, with General Claudio Acquaviva (1543–1615) insisting on modifications to avoid theological and doctrinal ambiguities. The tensions inherent in Valignano's approach foreshadow broader debates about inculturation, revealing the precarious balance between adaptation and orthodoxy that Jesuits had to maintain.

A similar dynamic is at play in Vietnam, where, as Kim-Bảo Đặng details, Jesuits played a crucial role in the development of *Chữ Quốc Ngữ*, the Romanized script for the Vietnamese language. Their linguistic efforts were not merely utilitarian; they were part of a deliberate strategy to embed Christian doctrine within the vernacular, thereby making religious concepts more accessible to local populations. The creation of this script—drawing on Portuguese linguistic traditions and refined by figures like Alexandre de Rhodes (1591–1660)—ultimately had profound cultural implications, reshaping Vietnamese literacy and intellectual traditions. This case raises an important question: was the development of *Chữ Quốc Ngữ* an incidental byproduct of missionary work, or was it a carefully planned initiative to facilitate conversion? The answer lies in the interplay between Jesuit scholastic methods and their evangelical ambitions.

Beyond linguistic adaptation, Jesuit missions also functioned as centers of scientific inquiry and exploration. John Cunningham's study of Joseph-Pierre de Bonnécamps highlights the role of Jesuits as scholars and naturalists. Trained in mathematics and hydrography, Bonnécamps was both a missionary and a scientist, meticulously documenting the landscapes, flora, and fauna of North America during his expeditions. His work, however, was not confined to scientific observation; it also entailed complex interactions with Indigenous communities, military figures, and colonial administrators. Bonnécamps's career illustrates how Jesuit missionaries often occupied multiple roles—as educators, cartographers, ethnographers, and priests—demonstrating the Society's commitment to integrating knowledge production with its evangelizing mission.

The geopolitical dimensions of Jesuit missions are also evident in Zsófia Kádár's examination of the Austrian Province's missionary activity in the 17th century. While the Jesuits of this province had limited involvement in classical overseas missions, they played a critical role in the religious landscape of Central and Eastern Europe, particularly in regions contested

by the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburgs. The presence of a mixed population—Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims—complicated their efforts, requiring innovative approaches to evangelization. Kádár's analysis, based on Jesuit catalogs and reports, sheds light on the structure and personnel of these missions, as well as the motivations that drove Jesuits to the frontier zones. His findings suggest that experiences in these contested regions may have prepared some Jesuits for later missions in distant lands such as Japan and India, linking European and global Jesuit missionary efforts in unexpected ways.

A similar geopolitical complexity characterizes the Jesuits' activities in the Balkans, as explored by Silvia Notarfonso. The Republic of Ragusa (modern-day Dubrovnik) served as a crucial gateway for Catholic missionaries seeking access to the Ottoman-controlled Balkans. Yet, as Notarfonso shows, Jesuit efforts in this region were fraught with difficulties. Early attempts, such as those led by Nicholas Bobadilla and Giulio Mancinelli (1537–1618), were short-lived, reflecting the precarious political and ecclesiastical environment. Even in the early 17th century, sustained missionary work remained elusive due to political opposition and logistical challenges. However, these failures were not without consequence; they contributed to the gradual establishment of a more enduring Catholic presence in the Balkans. Notarfonso's study underscores the reality that Jesuit missions were not always stories of triumph; they were often characterized by setbacks, recalibrations, and long-term strategic planning.

Taken together, these essays offer a rich and textured understanding of Jesuit missionary activity, demonstrating that these missions were not monolithic enterprises but dynamic engagements shaped by local conditions and broader global currents. The adaptability of Jesuit missionaries—whether in Japan, Vietnam, North America, Central Europe, or the Balkans—was a defining feature of their efforts, allowing them to mediate between cultures, languages, and political entities. Their involvement in linguistic development, scientific exploration, and geopolitical maneuvering underscores the multifaceted nature of their work. Ultimately, these studies remind us that Jesuit missions were sites of both encounter and contestation, where the negotiation of faith, culture, and power played out in complex and often unexpected ways.

For those working in Jesuit education today, these historical accounts serve as a powerful reminder of the enduring values and challenges of Jesuit pedagogy. The adaptability, intellectual rigor, and commitment to engaging with diverse cultures that characterized Jesuit missions remain vital to contemporary Jesuit institutions. Whether through fostering dialogue between different traditions, promoting linguistic and cultural un-

derstanding, or integrating faith and reason in academic inquiry, Jesuit educators continue to navigate complex global realities with the same spirit of curiosity and discernment that defined their predecessors. By studying these missions, modern educators can gain insights into how to sustain and evolve Jesuit educational ideals in an ever-changing world.

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