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Review of *Jesuit Pedagogy, 1540-1616: A Reader*

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Jesuit Pedagogy, 1540-1616: A Reader. Edited by Cristiano Casalini and Claude Pavur, S.J. Boston: Institute for Jesuit Sources, 2016. 346 pages. \$45 (cloth).

As I compose this book review, Jesuit delegates from across the globe are gathered in Rome for General Congregation 36 to elect the 31st Father General of the Society of Jesus. It might seem inappropriate to ask which of the other Superior Generals, after St. Ignatius, is greatest, as if it's a subject for barstool disputes, like asking who is the greatest quarterback ever, or whether Michael Jordan is greater than LeBron James. I grant that such a dispute might seem a bit tactless, but there is something to be said for being able to engage such a debate with intelligence.

To simplify the debate, I propose narrowing the dispute: Pedro Arrupe or Claudio Acquaviva? My sense is that while many of our colleagues in Jesuit higher education have some degree of familiarity with the contributions of Arrupe, they might draw a blank regarding Acquaviva. Quite a few Jesuit institutions have buildings, programs, schools, and scholarships named in honor of Arrupe. He served as Superior General from 1965-83, and many Jesuit university faculty and staff are familiar with the social justice themes he emphasized. For example, in his ["Men for Others" address](#) to graduates of Jesuit schools in Valencia, Spain on the Feast Day of St. Ignatius Loyola, 1973, he said, "Today our prime educational objective must be to form men and women for others." Indeed, Arrupe sometimes has been called the "second founder" of the Jesuits.

However, the title "second founder" was, for centuries, given to Claudio Acquaviva, the fifth and longest serving Superior General. Perhaps it is understandable that most today are not familiar with Acquaviva. He was Superior General from 1581-1615, during the days of Shakespeare and Galileo. My sense is that when it comes to Jesuit higher education, the provincialism of the present-moment leaves far too many without any detailed

awareness of the important contributions made by the Jesuits of the late Renaissance.

This lack of detailed historical awareness is understandable. Acquaviva's central accomplishment was establishing the committee that produced the most important text for Jesuit education, the *Ratio Studiorum* (1599). While it is a masterpiece, it reads like a dry collection of rules. Several translations of the text are available, but it is difficult to expect a contemporary person without the interest of a specialist to read it. In addition, a wonderful array of letters and material pertaining to Jesuit education during the first generations of the Jesuits exist, but they have been available only in the languages of Renaissance Europe, especially Latin. Until now.

Cristiano Casalini and Claude Pavur have done a great service for those of us who work in Jesuit higher education. Their new book is a delightful collection that allows contemporary readers to enter into the perspective of the early Jesuits from the inside. For those of us engaged in the practice of teaching and learning, especially in the liberal arts, this is a wonderful collection. Without question, this text should be in every serious collection on Jesuit pedagogy. Even more, it deserves to be discussed and studied by teachers, students, and administrators in Jesuit higher education.

The 33-page introductory essay is an outstanding overview of Jesuit education from the founding of the Society in 1540 through the period of Acquaviva. At Saint Louis University, we incorporated this essay into a faculty summer institute on Jesuit mission and identity with excellent results. In addition, students in my first-year honors seminar found in the essay a concise description of early Jesuit education. It first explains the state of colleges and universities

during the late medieval and Renaissance periods; it then examines the question of why the Jesuits became involved in education, followed by a history of the first school for lay students (at Messina, Sicily in 1548). Finally, it traces the rapid expansion in Jesuit schools in Europe, India, China, Japan, and the Americas, leading to the development of the *Ratio Studiorum*.

Anyone who has ever gone through a core curriculum review process will be impressed by the audacity of Acquaviva's goal: to articulate a common curriculum, with co-curricular activities, to be put into practice at the growing network of 300-plus Jesuit schools. It took more than fifteen years of committee meetings, but Acquaviva got what he wanted in 1599 when the *Ratio Studiorum* was first approved. A slightly revised version, approved in 1616, guided Jesuit education until the Society's suppression in 1773. The influence of Acquaviva's program is still reflected in the strong emphasis on humanities, rhetoric, philosophy, and theology at Jesuit colleges and universities. The introductory essay cuts through the dry rules of the *Ratio Studiorum* to provide several very helpful tables that outline the program of studies and typical class schedule used at Jesuit schools during the days of Acquaviva. In my view, this essay alone makes this book worthwhile.

Still, the most delightful part of the volume comes from dipping into the various letters and texts made available here in translation. Casalini and Pavur draw from the work of László Lukács, S.J., whose archival work resulted in a seven-volume collection of documents pertaining to Jesuit education. Casalini and Pavur translate select letters from the Lukács volumes to focus on four areas: inspirations, administration, formation, and practical issues about teaching. To get a feel for this book and its contents, Boston College has posted online a [20-minute interview](#) of Casalini and Pavur discussing this book.

Each reader, no doubt, will have his or her favorite section. I particularly like the letter with advice regarding how mathematical disciplines could be promoted in the schools of the Society: "First, you will have to select a teacher of uncommon learning and authority" (291). It is refreshing to see that great teachers have always

been crucial for making great content come alive. In a similar way, I could point to advice about what's needed to be a good student in philosophy class (such as do your homework, take good notes, reflect on the material frequently, get to know your teacher) or a how to develop good assignments in humanities classes ("themes of composition should be varied, frequent, brief"). I was particularly impressed by the short letter from St. Ignatius answering a question from a teacher complaining to him that the compositions of his students are filled with errors, and marking the papers is exhausting. After Ignatius states that it is ideal to return papers with detailed corrections, he acknowledges that this is difficult for "someone who has as many as we have in our classes." So, Ignatius marked the paper, returned it, and asked for prayers. I wish St. Ignatius would correct some of my students' papers!

Jesuit higher education involves both the concerns of Arrupe and Acquaviva. In our day, we might do well to deepen both sides of this dispute, but many of us will need to learn more about the Acquaviva side of the tradition of Jesuit education. This reader by Casalini and Pavur is an outstanding and important addition. It would make a wonderful basis for an interdisciplinary panel discussion that could include participants from faculty (especially mathematics, languages, literature, history, theology, and philosophy), administrators, and student affairs, with each panel member commenting on a selection from the reader and reflecting on its implications for contemporary practice. HJE