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The First Jesuits and the First Jesuit Universities

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Abstract

John W. O'Malley, S.J. in *The First Jesuits* described well the basic principles of the Jesuit educational ministry that shaped Jesuit schools and universities. He did not discuss what constituted a Jesuit university because that was not the purpose of the book. After assessing the major contributions that O'Malley made to define the principles of Jesuit education, this article will pick up where O'Malley left off by describing the first Jesuit universities. Because Europe had different kinds of universities, the Jesuits adapted their university mission to them. They taught in four kinds of universities before 1773: the all-Jesuit university, the civic-Jesuit collegiate university, the civic-Jesuit Italian law and medicine university, and the civic university in which individual Jesuits taught but the Society had no institutional role.

The First Jesuits of John W. O'Malley is a broad study of the first twenty-five years of the Society of Jesus. The book focuses on the development of Jesuit ministries, Jesuit culture, and their "way of proceeding." Indeed, the title of the manuscript that he submitted to Harvard University Press carried the title *The First Jesuits: Their Ministries, Their Culture, and Their Way of Proceeding, 1540-1565*. But the press shortened it to *The First Jesuits*.¹ Even though the original title was long, the press should have kept it, because it exactly describes the book. It explains the principles and actions by which the first Jesuits defined and formed the Society.

As is well known and as O'Malley made clear, the first Jesuits did not intend to become teachers. Nevertheless, education did become the major ministry of the Jesuits. In *The First Jesuits* and in various articles published subsequently, O'Malley made several important points concerning why the Jesuits became educators and how they implemented their goals.²

O'Malley's first and most important point was that the Jesuits became educators of non-Jesuit students, almost all lay boys and youths, in order to contribute to the common good of society. They viewed education as providing spiritual and especially worldly benefits to students, their parents, and to society at large. On December 1, 1551, Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517-1576) on commission from Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), wrote a letter to the provincial superior of the

Jesuit province of Spain explaining the benefits of education. A Jesuit education helped students by leading them to God. It also helped students by providing free education. It helped parents by relieving them of the burden of the financial and moral obligation to educate their children. And Jesuit schools prepared students to be good pastors, civic officials, administrators of justice, and other positions where they would act for the benefit of society. Polanco wrote nothing about education serving the church or reforming the church.³

The second major point that O'Malley made about Jesuit education concerned its structure. Jesuit education had two parts. It combined a humanities education based on the ancient Latin and, to a lesser extent, Greek classics that Italian Renaissance humanists developed, with the medieval scholastic and Aristotelian university that taught philosophy, science, and theology. The Jesuit lower school taught the humanities, while the Jesuit upper school offered the university arts curriculum. And some Jesuit schools also taught theology, which was the culmination of the medieval university curriculum. The Jesuits "did not oppose humanistic education to scholastic (university or professional) education, as if these were two incompatible systems or cultures. They saw them, rather, as complementary."⁴ O'Malley also correctly emphasized the importance of the program and example of Italian humanism on early Jesuit education, while not denying the *modus parisienses* (that is, the tighter organizational

structure) that the first Jesuits learned at the University of Paris where they all studied. Some earlier historians probably put too much emphasis on the influence of the *modus parisiensis* on Jesuit schools. O'Malley righted the balance.

The third major point that O'Malley made was that education was the most important ministry of the Society and, therefore, all Jesuits would teach. On August 10, 1560, Polanco wrote a letter to all the superiors of the Society. He wrote in the name of first Jesuit Diego Laínez (1512-1565) who became vicar general in 1556 and superior general in 1558. Laínez through Polanco told the superiors that education was the most important ministry, equal to all the other ministries combined. For this reason, every Jesuit would teach. O'Malley was the first historian to recognize and emphasize the extraordinary importance of this decision.⁵

O'Malley placed Polanco's letter at the beginning of his chapter on education because of its importance. It implemented a plan to produce a sure and regular supply of Jesuit teachers for the schools and universities. Every Jesuit priest or scholastic preparing for ordination taught. They almost always taught Latin grammar, the humanities, or rhetoric for three to five years in a Jesuit lower school.⁶ For many Jesuits that was their only teaching, because they spent the rest of their years performing other ministries. A small number of Jesuits judged to be the best scholars spent all or most of their careers as Jesuits teaching. Today, more than 450 years later, that plan is still in place. Almost all Jesuits teach, usually as scholastics before ordination.

The fourth major point that O'Malley made was that because the Jesuits became teachers they engaged in secular culture much more and in different ways than other religious orders at that time. The schools gave the Jesuits "a kind of entrée into civic life that operating churches alone could never have provided." The Society became a learned order. They became scholars in many disciplines that members of other religious orders avoided. Guided by their teachers, students in Jesuit schools produced theatrical performances with music that attracted townspeople. Some Jesuits became advisers to princes.⁷

O'Malley's book established basic principles. But because of its nature, it did not present many details about the educational ministry. In particular, O'Malley did not discuss Jesuit universities or Jesuits teaching in universities, except in passing. O'Malley mentioned that the Roman College (Collegio Romano, founded in 1551 as a lower school) soon added courses in philosophy and theology, and became a modest university. In the seventeenth century "its reputation far exceeded that of its rival, the University of Rome." He noted that degree ceremonies at the Roman College imitated those at the University of Rome.⁸ He reported that a handful of first Jesuits briefly taught in the University of Rome and in German universities between 1537 and 1552.⁹ O'Malley also noted that Ignatius of Loyola barred the Jesuits from teaching canon law, civil law, and medicine.¹⁰ But he did not address the impact of these restrictions because their full meaning did not become apparent until after 1565. The rest of this article will supplement *The First Jesuits* by explaining the intense involvement of the first Jesuits and their immediate successors in European universities. In particular, it will discuss how the Jesuits adapted their university mission to the different kinds of universities then in existence in Europe.

Defining a Jesuit University

What constituted a Jesuit university? There was no uniform answer to that question for the first Jesuits and their successors until 1773. A minimum definition was a university with some Jesuit professors. About forty European universities met that description between 1553 and 1773. However, they were not all alike. There were four different kinds of universities in which Jesuits taught and the Society had—or did not have—an institutional role.

1. The all-Jesuit university completely ruled by the Society
2. The civic-Jesuit collegiate university of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Europe
3. The Italian civic-Jesuit law and medicine university
4. The civic university with individual Jesuit professors but no institutional role for the Society.

Understanding the different kinds of universities and the roles of the Jesuits in them is important because the different forms of universities either offered large educational opportunities to the Jesuits or limited what they could do. The Jesuits had to adapt to universities if they wanted to teach in them. And to some extent, universities also had to adapt to the Jesuits. The rest of this article will describe what the Jesuits did and did not do in these four kinds of universities. As mentioned above, John O'Malley did not address these matters because they were mostly beyond the chronological limits of his trail-blazing book.

Ignatius of Loyola began the process by writing some guidelines for Jesuits and universities when he drafted the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, the rules and organizational plan of the Society. But he came to universities late and addressed them only partially. In late 1553 or early 1554 Ignatius drafted a short section on universities that became chapters 11-17 (paragraphs 440-509) of the final version of the Constitutions.¹¹ Ignatius affirmed that the Jesuits might undertake the charge of universities that would teach and confer degrees on non-Jesuit students. These graduates would then “teach with authority elsewhere what they have learned well in these universities for the glory of God our Lord.”¹² He saw universities as an extension of the ministry of the schools; hence, universities would be very similar to Jesuit schools.

According to Ignatius, Jesuit university professors would teach the humanities, philosophy, mathematics, and especially theology. But, as O'Malley indicated, no individual Jesuit or Jesuit university would teach civil law, canon law, or medicine, because these disciplines were “more remote from our Institute.”¹³ (Institute meant both the founding documents of the Society and its ministries.) Ignatius did leave a tiny loophole for canon law: Jesuit professors of theology might include some aspects of canon law, such as decrees of popes and church councils, in their teaching of theology. But they were forbidden to teach canon law in so far as it “is directed towards trials in court.”¹⁴ Since a major reason for studying canon law was to acquire the expertise to win disputes in court trials and elsewhere, this meant that Jesuits could not teach canon law, and

that Jesuit universities would not include professorships of canon law.

In the view of Ignatius, universities were Jesuit schools that conferred degrees. A Jesuit rector would have complete authority over the university. That included the power to appoint all the lecturers and to name a Jesuit chancellor, who would organize the lectures and confer degrees. Or the rector might serve as the chancellor. In addition, Ignatius expected that university students would adhere to a code of moral conduct and could be persuaded to receive the sacraments regularly and attend daily Mass. In short, Ignatius described the first model, a university completely controlled by the Society. The Jesuits adopted Loyola's Constitutions as the law of the Society in 1558.

The All-Jesuit University

The Roman College was an all-Jesuit university, that is, a university under complete Jesuit control. The Jesuits founded it in 1551. It began to teach the university disciplines of philosophy and theology in 1553. All the teachers were Jesuits. A Jesuit rector governed the Roman College. It taught both Jesuit students and non-Jesuit students. The papacy conferred on it the authority to award degrees in philosophy and theology, and it did so. It began to teach canon law at the end of the seventeenth century, although it never taught medicine. It was a university in everything except title.¹⁵ Today it continues under the name of Pontifical Gregorian University. The rector is always a Jesuit, and a substantial minority of the professors are Jesuits. The current rector is an American, Father Mark Lewis, S.J., who is an historian by discipline.

The Roman College was by far the most famous and prestigious all-Jesuit university before 1773. It had a unique position because it was located in Rome and had strong papal support. Its Jesuit professors were often the finest scholars of the Society. But there were other, more modest all-Jesuit universities. With the approval and support of civil authorities the Jesuits founded new universities in which the Society ruled the entire university. These were small collegiate universities in which the Jesuits did all of the teaching of the humanities, philosophy, and theology, and that

was the entire university. Nevertheless, the institution possessed a university charter from emperor, pope, or both, conferring on it the title, rights, and privileges of a university, including the right to award degrees including the doctorate. In these cases, the all-Jesuit university was hard to distinguish from an ordinary Jesuit school except that the former had the power to confer degrees based on a university charter issued by a pope or emperor. Because of the charter, observers probably viewed an all-Jesuit university to be more prestigious than an ordinary Jesuit upper school. It is likely that a degree from an all-Jesuit university was more useful to a student seeking a civil position than the same amount of study but no degree from a Jesuit school.

The University of Dillingen was an example of a modest all-Jesuit university located far from Rome. Dillingen was a small town in southeastern Germany. In 1549, Cardinal Otto Truchsess von Waldburg (1514-1573), the prince-bishop of Augsburg and the ruler of Dillingen, founded a boarding school there in order to educate the clergy of his own diocese. In 1553 he obtained from Pope Julius III and Emperor Charles V (1500-1558; r. 1519-1556) a university charter awarding it the rights and privileges enjoyed by the universities of Paris and Bologna including the authority to confer degrees. This was a vast exaggeration typical of the grandiose language of university charters; Dillingen was still nothing more than a boarding school for diocesan clergy. But Cardinal Truchsess was ambitious, and he wanted the Jesuits to govern and teach in the University of Dillingen. Peter Canisius (1521-1597) had the unenviable task of getting the cardinal to commit the necessary funds to support the Jesuits in Dillingen, while superior general Diego Laínez had to find Jesuits to teach. Laínez believed that teaching Catholic theology in Germany was a high priority, so he found some Jesuits to teach at Dillingen at the price of declining invitations to found more schools in Italy and elsewhere. The Jesuits took official possession of the University of Dillingen in 1564. Under Jesuit direction it grew to 500 to 600 students in the 1580s.¹⁶ At this time it taught only the humanities, philosophy, and theology, like the Roman College.

The small University of Dillingen is important in Jesuit university history because it disregarded the Jesuit Constitutions and Ignatius of Loyola by appointing a Jesuit to teach canon law. The prohibition had not been popular. Some Jesuits and parents of students wanted the Jesuits to teach canon law, but superior generals Everard Mercurian (r. 1573-1580) and Claudio Acquaviva (r. 1581-1615) had said no. Still, they allowed a compromise. A few Jesuit boarding schools which believed that their students needed some canon law instruction made limited special arrangements. For example, beginning in 1586 the German-Hungarian College in Rome arranged for a secular priest with a doctorate in law to come and lecture on canon law to the boarders for an hour four times a week.¹⁷ But the Jesuits themselves did not teach canon law.

Heinrich von Knöringen (1570-1646; r. 1598-1646), the prince-bishop of Augsburg who ruled Dillingen, and the local Jesuits decided that the university would teach canon law and that a Jesuit would do it. Knöringen, who had studied with the Jesuits in Dillingen and at the German-Hungarian College, was a strong supporter of the university. He obtained papal permission for the professorship, and the Dillingen Jesuits persuaded the reluctant superior general Muzio Vitelleschi (r. 1615-1645) to approve it. In 1625 the University of Dillingen created a professorship of canon law and appointed a Jesuit, Paul Laymann (1574-1635), to fill it.¹⁸ Laymann, who published many works in moral theology and canon law, was the most influential Jesuit moral theologian of his time. He taught until 1632 when the university closed temporarily because of Protestant military actions. Once the canon law barrier had been breached, Dillingen added a professorship of civil law. In 1629 it appointed a layman, the first to teach at the University of Dillingen, to teach civil law. This was a small exception to the principle that an all-Jesuit university had only Jesuit professors. Then in 1637 the university appointed another Jesuit, Christoph Schorrer (1603-1678) to the canon law professorship, which he held until 1643.¹⁹ Schorrer was followed by additional Jesuits teaching canon law and the university continued to teach civil law. But the university never taught medicine.

Other all-Jesuit universities and a few schools followed the lead of Dillingen. By the 1690s, twelve Jesuit universities and schools in northern Europe and two in Italy were teaching canon law.²⁰ At the Fourteenth General Congregation (November 16, 1696, to January 16, 1697), the delegates endorsed the teaching of canon law and encouraged provincial superiors to establish canon law professorships in the major schools in their provinces. The Congregation offered two reasons: many schools were already teaching canon law, and canon law supported positive theology.²¹ That is, learning some canon law was useful in the study of theology, a Jesuit priority. Nevertheless, the Fourteenth General Congregation was careful to repeat the prohibition of the Constitutions: Jesuits should not teach the parts of canon law useful in litigation.²² The Sixteenth General Congregation (November 19, 1730 to February 13, 1731), removed this prohibition by authorizing Jesuits to teach all parts of canon law.²³ Hence, more Jesuit universities and schools taught it.²⁴ Canon law was the only disciplinary breach of the university part of the Constitutions. The action demonstrated that the Jesuits adapted to the times. They revered Ignatius, while the Constitutions that he wrote continued to be the law of the Society. But the Jesuits were willing to modify the Constitutions up to a point. So far as can be discovered, no Jesuit taught civil law or medicine in a Jesuit school or university in Europe before the suppressions of the late eighteenth century, just as Ignatius had decreed.

Other all-Jesuit-controlled universities across Europe included Pont-a-Mousson in Lorraine, plus Bamberg, Graz, Molsheim in Alsace which moved to Strasbourg in 1681, Osnabrück, and Paderborn in German-speaking lands.²⁵ Tournon was a French Jesuit university until 1626.²⁶ The Jesuit University of Olomouc (or Olmütz) in the Czech Republic began in 1573 as a philosophy and theology university; law was added in 1679, although the Jesuits viewed it as unnecessary.²⁷ The Jesuit university of Breslau (or Wrocław) in Lower Silesia (now part of Poland) began in 1702 and taught only philosophy and theology.²⁸ The Universities of Cagliari and Sassari in Sardinia, which was ruled by the Kingdom of Aragon until 1718 and the Duchy of Piedmont-Savoy

afterward, were thriving all-Jesuit universities, as was Évora in Portugal.²⁹

In 1579 the Jesuits founded the all-Jesuit University of Vilnius in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (formally the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) with charters from the king of Poland and Pope Gregory XIII. The University of Vilnius was important to the Jesuits, because the University of Cracow (permanent foundation in 1400) prevented the Jesuits in Cracow from teaching external students. The University of Vilnius added canon and civil law in 1645, but never taught medicine before the suppression.³⁰

Coimbra: The First Civic-Jesuit Collegiate University

In 1555 the Jesuits were invited to join the University of Coimbra, a collegiate university. The Jesuits in a collegiate university was a different model than what Ignatius envisioned in the Constitutions. It was a collegiate university in which the Jesuits shared governance with other members of the university under the overall authority of the civil government of the state or city in which the university was located. Hence, the term “civic-Jesuit.”

A collegiate university was a corporate institution consisting of colleges and faculties, with colleges the most important.³¹ Often a single college was the dominant part of the university. Colleges were teaching and residence institutions in which teachers and students lived, taught, and studied together. A collegiate university concentrated on teaching the humanities, philosophy, and theology. The vast majority of its students were young; they ranged in age from nine or ten to about twenty-one and they lived in colleges. The students first learned or perfected their Latin by studying the ancient classics. The students then studied arts, which meant philosophy based on Aristotelian texts. The vast majority of students completed their studies with the bachelor of arts, licentiate of arts, or master of arts degree. A small number went on to acquire degrees in theology, law, or medicine. Some theology students became regent masters. That is, while studying theology they supported themselves by teaching the humanities and philosophy to younger students. In the

terminology of twenty-first century North American and, to a lesser extent, European education, a collegiate university was a combined advanced secondary school and undergraduate university topped off by theology, plus a little law and medicine. All northern European and Iberian Peninsula universities were collegiate universities at the time of the first Jesuits. The University of Paris, where all of the first Jesuits studied, was a collegiate university on a grand scale.

Collegiate universities taught very little law and medicine, which, like theology, were faculties. A great imbalance between the large number of teachers of arts and theology, whether regent masters or professors, and a few professors of law and medicine characterized collegiate universities. They were clerical and religious in culture, because the overwhelming majority of teachers were clergymen or would-be clergymen, and because the colleges in which the vast majority of students and teachers lived, taught, and studied had quasi-monastic rules. In small collegiate universities a single college might dominate the university, and sometimes a religious order ruled and taught in the dominant college.

Coimbra in Portugal was the first civic-Jesuit collegiate university of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Europe. It began as a collegiate university without the Jesuits. But King John III Aviz (1502-1557; r. 1521-1557) of Portugal was not happy with it. Founded in Lisbon in 1290, the university had moved around until the king transferred it to Coimbra in 1537. He wanted to make it better. Disappointed with the teachers, in February 1548 he founded the *Colegio das Artes* (frequently called Royal College of Arts because it enjoyed the king's patronage) to teach the humanities and philosophy. The College of Arts was a typical institution in a collegiate university: it was a combination teaching and residential college for teachers and fee-paying students. It resembled colleges across Europe including the Collège de Sainte-Barbe in Paris, where five to seven first Jesuits, including Ignatius of Loyola, had lived and studied between 1528 and 1536. Indeed, the king had provided funds enabling fifty Portuguese students to study at the Collège de Sainte-Barbe.

Now the king elevated the *Colegio das Artes* to a high position in the University of Coimbra and

invited a Portuguese academic administrator who had served as principal of the Collège de Sainte-Barbe to be its principal. The king then persuaded some well-known academics, who were not Portuguese subjects, from the University of Paris and elsewhere to move to the College of Arts of Coimbra. These teachers did the greater part of the university's teaching in Latin grammar, rhetoric, poetry, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, and philosophy. Equally important, no student was admitted into the upper faculties of theology, canon law, civil law, and medicine without a certificate from the principal of the College of Arts attesting that he had studied philosophy in the College.³²

However, the College of Arts did not do well. The teachers quarreled and enrollments were low. The king looked for a solution and he spotted the Jesuits. They were already there in the university, because in 1542 the Jesuits had established a non-teaching College of Jesus in Coimbra for young Jesuits attending classes at the university. Moreover, the Jesuits had begun to teach in their college in 1552. John III came to Coimbra to see for himself in 1555. The Jesuits arranged for some of their students to engage in a disputation and to orate in Greek and Latin as the king listened. Impressed, he asked the Jesuits to take charge of the *Colégio das Artes*.

For the Jesuits this was a high reward-high risk proposition. The king offered the Jesuits a prominent institutional position in a civic university. This was not just a proposal that one or two Jesuits teach in the university. It was an offer for the Society as an institution to take control of the most important college in the university, that is, to become central to the operations of a non-Jesuit university. This would be a new situation for the Jesuits. Further, if the king was pleased, he could do much more for the Jesuits in Portugal. On the other hand, it was a risky new venture for the Jesuits. It was one thing to operate the Roman College, their own university in Rome itself. It was quite another to teach in and manage the major college of a university located on the western side of the Iberian Peninsula. Could the Jesuits satisfy the king? The Jesuits would need to provide more teachers for Coimbra. Could they find teachers for Coimbra? They were already experiencing

great difficulty supplying teachers for their existing schools. Failure in Coimbra would have repercussions in Portugal and beyond.

Ignatius did not hesitate. He accepted the king's invitation. Although it was a bold step for the Jesuits, Ignatius was willing to take calculated risks that promised high rewards. This was a chance to secure a prominent role in a collegiate university, the common form of European university outside of Italy. Ignatius and other first Jesuits may also have seen Coimbra as an opportunity to replicate for others their educational experiences at the Collège de Sainte-Barbe and other colleges in Paris that meant so much to them. Ignatius and the next superior general Diego Laínez dispatched some of the Society's most talented scholars, including Manuel Alvares (1526-1583), Cipriano Soares (1524-1593), and Pedro da Fonseca (1528-1599), to teach in the College of Arts. They also sent some of the Society's ablest young Jesuits who were still students, such as Christoph Clavius (1538-1612), to study at Coimbra.³³

A Jesuit became principal of the College of Arts, and the Society became a major constituent part of the University of Coimbra. The Jesuits taught and lived with most of the students who were studying the humanities and philosophy in pursuit of bachelor, licentiate, and master of arts degrees in the Royal College of Arts. The Jesuit principal of the college determined which students might advance to the higher faculties of law, medicine, and theology.³⁴ The results of the Jesuit intervention were impressive. Enrollment in the College of Arts soared. So did the number of Jesuits in the university. In the 1570s, the College of Arts had 1,500 students, and there were 160 to 175 Jesuits in the now two Jesuit colleges at Coimbra. In the late sixteenth century, the Jesuits in the College of Arts offered sixteen classes, including five in theology, which were attended by nearly 2,000 students ranging in age from about ten to adult, while the College of Jesus taught additional students.³⁵ On the other hand, the Jesuits did not rule other teaching colleges, nor the faculties of theology, law, and medicine. But Francisco Suárez, S.J. (1548-1617) taught theology at the University of Coimbra from 1597 until his death.

Thus, the Jesuits entered the University of Coimbra. They did not join the university as individual teachers. Instead, the Society was given a key institutional position, stronger than that of any other religious order by far, in an existing university. They dominated instruction in the humanities and philosophy and determined who might enter the advanced faculties. They attracted many students and the enrollment figures argue that the students were satisfied. But the Jesuits did not rule the entire university, and they sometimes encountered resentment and opposition within the university.

Thanks to Coimbra, the civic-Jesuit collegiate university model of the Iberian Peninsula and northern Europe emerged. It was a collegiate university in which the civil power and the Society shared governance. The civil ruler—most often king, emperor, or prince—gave the Society an important position in a collegiate university, almost always to teach philosophy and the humanities, often theology as well. The Society became part of the corporate structure of the university. That is, the statutes of the university made the local college of the Society a part of the university with certain privileges, rights, and responsibilities. A contract between the university or the civil ruler and the Society indicated that the Jesuits were to be paid a specified amount for their teaching in the university. Statutes and rules indicated which teaching positions Jesuits would fill and their obligations. The contract and statutes commonly stipulated that Jesuit superiors, not the university or the civil ruler, would choose the Jesuits who would fill the contracted teaching positions. In civic-Jesuit collegiate universities, the Society typically dominated the teaching of the humanities and philosophy, or philosophy and theology. But they had no authority over the rest of the university. On the other hand, the faculties of law and medicine usually had few students and influence.

The Coimbra story was quickly replicated, especially in central Europe where the Jesuits became part of many civic universities. Civic-Jesuit collegiate universities in central Europe included Cologne, Heidelberg from 1629, Ingolstadt beginning in the 1570s, Innsbruck, Mainz, Prague, Trier, Würzburg, and Vienna.³⁶

The Italian Civic-Jesuit Law and Medicine University

Italian universities were law-and-medicine doctoral universities, the approximate equivalent of twenty-first-century research universities and professional schools.³⁷ They conferred only doctorates; bachelor and master's degrees had disappeared by 1450, because students saw them as an unnecessary expense. Italian universities awarded degrees only in law, medicine, and theology, not in arts. Sixty-seven to seventy-five percent of the doctorates awarded in the sixteenth century were in law and medicine, and the percentage of law doctorates rose in the next two centuries. Civil law dominated; canon law was simply an appendage to civil law. Italian universities did teach philosophy, but it was considered preparation for the study of law and medicine. They offered limited humanities and theology instruction.

Students in Italian universities were older than those in collegiate universities. Italian students acquired expertise in Latin in humanistic pre-university schools before going to a university. They arrived at the ages of seventeen or eighteen and stayed until the ages of twenty-four or twenty-five. Because Italian universities were Europe's leaders in law and medicine, many students from northern Europe and the Iberian Peninsula acquired bachelor or master of arts degrees at home, then went to Italy for doctorates in law or medicine. Students in Italian universities were laymen, with the exception of the small number of clergymen who studied theology. Italian universities lacked teaching-and-residence colleges with semi-monastic rules. Hence, students lived in unsupervised rented quarters. The student culture was lay, quarrelsome, and sometimes lecherous. Most students carried swords, while townspeople hid their daughters. About seventy-five percent of the professors taught law or medicine; the rest taught theology, philosophy, and the humanities. Professors were almost exclusively laymen except for the one or two friars from local monasteries who taught theology. Finally, Italian universities were civic. City councils and princes chose the professors and paid the bills. Given the differences, the Jesuits faced formidable obstacles if they wished to teach in Italian universities. Nevertheless, two Italian

princes and two city councils gave them roles in new universities.

The University of Parma was the first and most important. The ruling dynasty and the city of Parma in northern Italy had wanted a university for a long time. Ranuccio I Farnese (1569-1622; r. for his father 1586-1592, r. 1592-1622), duke of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, decided to found a university and he invited the Jesuits to be part of it. After extensive negotiations, the Society agreed to provide a certain number of professors for specified positions for which they would receive payment. The Society would choose which Jesuits would teach in the university. The duke and the city of Parma would appoint and pay the professors of law and medicine. The University of Parma began to offer classes in the autumn of 1601.³⁸

The University of Parma was a middle-sized Italian university of twenty-seven to thirty professors (there were no regent masters), nine of them Jesuits, one-third of the total. Two Jesuits taught Scholastic theology, and single Jesuits taught moral theology, metaphysics, natural philosophy, logic, mathematics, moral philosophy, and rhetoric. In the eighteenth century the Jesuit professorship of moral philosophy became a Scripture professorship. Unlike collegiate universities in northern Europe, the rest of the Jesuit establishment in Parma, which included a humanities day school and a noble boarding school, was not part of the University of Parma.³⁹

Further investigation shows that the Jesuits did not follow Italian university practice exactly. Medium- to large-sized Italian universities had concurrents, that is, two or more professors who taught the same subject matter and text at the same hour. It was believed that this gave students choices and that competition stimulated better teaching. It also produced bitter rivalries between concurrents and among students who followed one concurrent and criticized the other. For the Jesuits concurrents would have meant a layman teaching a different analysis of Aristotle's *Physics* in natural philosophy, and a Franciscan teaching Scotist theology in competition with a Jesuit teaching Thomism. Although the University of Parma had concurrents for all the major positions in civil law, canon law, and medicine, the Jesuits

refused to accept concurrents for any of their positions. They strove to teach a consistent understanding of a discipline and believed that philosophical and theological alternatives confused students and encouraged error. The duke acquiesced.⁴⁰

The Jesuits also asked to teach their university classes in their own building at some distance from where the law and medicine lectures were held. They argued that this would produce greater quiet and discipline for their students. Again their request was granted. The Jesuits taught in their own building about a fifteen-minute-walk from the renovated palace where the law and medicine professors lectured.⁴¹

Some details about their teaching indicated how the Jesuits fit into an Italian law and medicine university but held to the *Ratio Studiorum*. The Jesuits comprised about one-third of the professors, but taught about forty percent of the lectures, because the four Jesuits who taught metaphysics, natural philosophy, logic, and rhetoric lectured twice daily, morning and afternoon. They did this because the *Ratio Studiorum* mandated it. By contrast, Italian university professors almost never delivered two daily lectures in the same discipline. On the other hand, the Jesuits who taught Scholastic theology, moral theology, and mathematics at the University of Parma lectured once daily, again because the *Ratio Studiorum* decreed it. Thus, when the *Ratio Studiorum* and university practice differed, the Jesuits at Parma followed the *Ratio Studiorum*.

The Jesuits did not get everything they wanted. Antonio Possevino, S.J. (1533-1611), who conducted the final negotiations for the Jesuits before the university began, wanted university statutes designed to make Parma a well-behaved Catholic university. It was an open secret that northern European Protestants came to study law and medicine in Italian universities while the authorities turned a blind eye so long as they did not engage in anti-Catholic acts. So, Possevino asked Duke Ranuccio I to bar heretics from enrolling. He further asked that students be forbidden from carrying arms. He wanted students who engaged in indecent behavior, wrote obscenities on walls, and played (unspecified) illicit games to be punished. He urged the duke to

prevent students from shutting down lectures through noisy demonstrations or inventing vacation days, as often happened in Italian universities. However, the statutes issued by the duke did not bar heretics from attending or strip students of their swords. The unstated reasons were obvious. If the duke had forbidden students to carry swords, they would not have come. And foreign students, including heretics, brought prestige to the university and income to the town.⁴²

So the University of Parma was a civic-Jesuit Italian law and medicine university in which the Jesuits comprised one-third of the faculty. They did all the teaching in theology, philosophy, mathematics, and rhetoric. Indeed, in some ways they had their own arts and theology university within the larger law and medicine university. They had a significant role in the University of Parma, but not as important as in the University of Coimbra and other collegiate universities. The Jesuits taught in the University of Parma until they were expelled from the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza on the night of February 7/8, 1768. The universities of Mantua, Macerata, and Fermo were also civic-Jesuit Italian law and medicine universities.⁴³ But only Parma and Macerata exist today as state universities, the latter known for its law faculty.

Universities with Individual Jesuit Professors

A small number of other universities appointed individual Jesuits to teach without giving the Society an institutional position in the university. This happened because the university or the civil government wanted the learned expertise of a single Jesuit. Or a Jesuit received a personal appointment as the consequence of excellent scholarship and friendship with influential figures. When an individual Jesuit professor was judged to have discharged his duties well, another Jesuit or two might follow him into the university. These were also individual appointments which did not lead to the Society obtaining an institutional or contractual role in the university.

The University of Ferrara was an example. The Duchy of Ferrara had multiple water management problems because of the Po River, which regularly flooded, the Reno River, and the water-soaked

Comacchio marsh near the Adriatic Sea. A Jesuit advised Ferrara on water issues on an intermittent basis for a number of years. Then in 1675 Francesco Lana Terzi, S.J. (1631-1687), an able mathematician, was appointed to fill the sole professorship of mathematics at the University of Ferrara. In addition to teaching the university mathematics curriculum, which was very similar to the mathematics curriculum of the *Ratio Studiorum*, he was charged with training men in water management and dike construction. The city then added new duties: anyone who wished to earn accreditation as an expert in hydraulics was obliged to attend the lectures of Lana Terzi, who would lecture in Italian. Lana Terzi filled the position until 1679. After a layman taught for nine years, four more Jesuits filled the professorship of mathematics from 1688 until 1771, and advised the duchy on its water issues.⁴⁴ The universities of Pavia and Siena in Italy, and several Spanish universities, also appointed one or more individual Jesuit professors in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries to teach various subjects.

The individual appointments at the universities of Ferrara, Pavia, Siena, and elsewhere document some significant changes. By the late seventeenth century and especially in the eighteenth, some civic universities were willing to appoint individual Jesuits without giving the Society an institutional role. And the Society accepted this. Although they preferred an institutional role, the Jesuits did not make further demands on these universities. The appointments also demonstrated that some Jesuits, especially those with mathematical and scientific expertise, were part of Enlightenment in Europe at a time when opposition to the Jesuits was mounting.

Conclusion

O'Malley isolated and explained the basic principles of Jesuit schools and universities that the first Jesuits developed. He also made it clear that they did not come fully formed from the brains of Ignatius of Loyola and other first Jesuits. The documents show that there was a good deal of experimentation, risk, and opportunities seized or fumbled.

This article has supplemented O'Malley's insights by examining in detail the place of first Jesuits and their successors in European universities. Most important, it explains the four kinds of universities that then existed and the position of the Jesuits in each of them. A major conclusion of this survey is that the Jesuits were not wed to a single university model. They adapted their university participation to the different kinds of universities to be found across Europe. Moreover, they ignored some of the teaching restrictions that Ignatius had decreed when they thought it necessary. The result was that the Jesuits played an extraordinary role in European university education from the 1550s to 1773. One scholar notes that twenty-one of the approximately twenty-two Catholic universities in German-speaking lands "were in some way connected with the Society of Jesus."⁴⁵ While the Jesuit impact was strongest in Germany, Jesuits were part of some universities in every other Catholic territory in Europe.

Individual Jesuits succeeded as university professors for several reasons not discussed in this article. Some of the Jesuit professors in the Society's first seventy-five years were brilliant and prolific scholars and teachers who showed what the Jesuits could do. The Society continued to provide high quality university professors throughout Europe for the next two hundred years because the Society expanded greatly, and because the Society continued to maintain very high scholarly standards for its priests. As members of an international religious order who taught the same curriculum everywhere, the Jesuits personified the cosmopolitan Republic of Learning of which its professors and universities were members.

Today in the twenty-first century there are still a variety of Jesuit universities. Moreover, just as the Jesuits of the Old Society taught disciplines that Ignatius forbade them to teach, today's Jesuit professors and universities teach disciplines that the first Jesuits could not have imagined. At the same time some of the educational principles and practices of the first Jesuits still shape the Society and their universities today. That is an impressive legacy. HJE

Notes

- 1 John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The Education of an Historian. A Strange and Wonderful Story* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2021), 132; John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), introduction, especially 14-19. I thank Mary Kate Holman, Cathy McGrath, and an anonymous reader whose editorial comments improved this essay.
- 2 John W. O'Malley, S.J., *Saints or Devils Incarnate? Studies in Jesuit History* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). This is a collection of fifteen articles first published between 1984 and 2008.
- 3 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 212-13; O'Malley, S.J., *Saints*, 119, 209.
- 4 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 253-56; O'Malley, S.J., *Saints*, 210-14, quote on 210.
- 5 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 200-01; O'Malley, S.J., *Saints*, 194; László Lukács briefly mentions the letter but did not indicate its importance in his introduction to *Monumenta paedagogica Societatis Iesu. Penitus retractata multisque textibus aucta edidit Ladislans Lukács*, vol. 2 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1974), 37*.
- 6 Jesuit temporal coadjutors or brothers did not teach, because they were not Latin-educated.
- 7 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 223-35, 241-42; O'Malley, S.J., *Saints*, 197, 239 (quote).
- 8 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 222; O'Malley, S.J., *Saints*, 59 (quote), 239.
- 9 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 201.
- 10 O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits*, 215.
- 11 Paul F. Grendler, *The Jesuits and Italian Universities 1548-1773* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press 2017), 62-67.
- 12 John W. Padberg, S.J., ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 177.
- 13 *Constitutions*, 179.
- 14 *Constitutions*, 179-80.

- 15 Riccardo Garcia Villoslada, S.J., *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)* (Rome: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1954) is still the best survey for the pre-suppression period. There is a large bibliography on the Roman College.
- 16 Bernhard Duhr, S.J., *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*. 4 vols. in 7 parts (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1907-1928), vol. 1:194-200, 610-11; vol. 2, part 1:568-77; James Broderick, S.J., *Saint Peter Canisius* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1998), 351, 567-77, 615, 649, 766-67; Karl Hengst, *Jesuiten an Universitäten und Jesuituniversitäten* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1981), 168-80, 299-302; William V. Bangert, S.J. and Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., *Jerome Nadal, S.J. Tracking the First Generation of Jesuits* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1992), 143-44, 320-21; and Rita Haub, "From Peter to Paul: The Province of Upper Germany in the 1570s," in *The Mercurian Project. Forming Jesuit Culture 1573-1580*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004), 162-65. Some of the discussion of the University of Dillingen revisits material that first appeared in Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548-1773* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 91-93.
- 17 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 323-24.
- 18 Duhr, S.J., *Geschichte*, vol. 2, part 1:571. For the biography of Laymann see Robert L. Bireley, S.J., "Laymann, Paul," in *Diccionario Histórico de Compañía de Jesús: Biográfico-temático (DHCJ)*, eds. Charles E. O'Neill, S.J. and Joaquín M.A. Domínguez, S.J., 4 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, and Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001), vol. 3:2297-98.
- 19 Duhr, S.J., *Geschichte*, vol. 2, part 1:568-74; Robert S. Gerlich, S.J., "Schorrrer, Christoph," in *DHCJ* 4: 3530.
- 20 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 323-38.
- 21 Catholic positive theology uses Scripture; the writings of the Church Fathers; decrees of ecumenical councils, popes, and synods; the works of theologians; tradition; history; and canon law to discover God's plan for humans. By contrast, speculative theology tries to comprehend the nature of God and his message for humans through philosophical and theoretical investigation.
- 22 *For Matters of Greater Moment. The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations. A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees*, trans. and eds. John W. Padberg, S.J., Martin D. O'Keefe, S.J., and John L. McCarthy, S.J., (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 368 decree 20.

23 *For Matters of Greater Moment*, 383 decree 30.

24 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 338-39.

25 For these universities, see Duhr, S.J., *Geschichte*, vol. 1:133-43, 163-69; vol. 2., part 1:164-69, 187-90, 553-58, 586-88, 590-95; and the relevant pages in Hengst, *Jesuiten an Universitäten*, 184-99, 205-36, 288-94. In addition, for Graz see Gernot Heiss, "Educational Politics in the Austrian Lands and the Foundation of the Jesuit University of Graz," in *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter Reformation*, ed. Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 178-86; for Molsheim see Simona Negruzzo, *L'armonia contesa. Identità ed educazione nell'Alsazia moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), 99-128, 183-230 et passim; and for Paderborn see Johannes Sander, *Geschichte des Jesuitenkollegs in Paderborn 1580-1659*, ed. and trans. Gerhard Ludwig Kneissler (Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2011), notes by Friedrich Gerhard Hohmann.

26 In 1561, the Jesuits were given control of the Collège Cardinal de Tournon which was raised to a university by Pope Julius III and French King Henry II (1519-1559; r. 1547-1559) in 1552. Hence, it became the Jesuit University of Tournon which taught arts and theology. However, a coalition of other French universities and parlements persuaded the Parlement of Toulouse to withdraw university status in 1626. Pierre Delattre, S.J., "Le Collège Cardinal de Tournon," in *Les établissements des jésuites en France depuis quatre siècles; repertoire topo-bibliographique publié à l'occasion du quatrième centenaire de la fondation de la Compagnie de Jésus 1540-1940*, ed. Pierre Delattre, S.J., 5 vols. (Enghien: Institut supérieur de théologie, 1949-1957), 4:1408, 1414-16, 1428.

27 David Papajik, "The Development of Olomouc University from 1573 to the Present," *History of Universities* 27 no. 2 (2013): 146-54.

28 Carsten Rabe, *Alma Mater Leopoldina. Kolleg und Universität der Jesuiten in Breslau 1638-1831* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999).

29 For the universities of Cagliari and Sassari, start with Raimondo Turtas, *La nascita dell'università in Sardegna. La politica culturale dei sovrani spagnoli nella formazione degli Atenei di Sassari e di Cagliari (1543-1632)* (Sassari: Dipartimento di Storia, Università degli Studi di Sassari, 1988). For the University of Évora see Rodrigues, *História*, vol. 1, part 1:578-85; vol. 1, part 2:303-35.

30 Paulus Rabikauskas, S.J., "Lituania," in *DHCJ* 3:2387-89, 2391-93.

31 Although the taxonomy of Jesuit universities is my own, the comments about collegiate universities of Willem Frijhoff are useful in "Patterns" in *A History of the University in Europe*. Vol. 2: *Universities in Early Modern Europe (1500-1800)*, ed. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 64-69.

32 Mário Brandão and M. Lopes D'Almeida, *A Universidade de Coimbra. Esboço da sua história* (Coimbra: Por ordem da Universidade, 1937), vol. 1:181-213; António de Vâsconcelos, *Os Colégios universitários de Coimbra* (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1938), 1-77. Theophilo Braga, *Historia da Universidade de Coimbra nas suas relações com a instrução publica portuguesa*, 2 vols. (Lisbon: Typographia da Academia Real das Sciencias, 1892-1895), argues that the Jesuits schemed to enter the university, for which evidence is lacking, and that their entry initiated the decay of the university. Given the modest state of the university before 1555, the second statement is laughable. See also Cándido María Ajo González de Rapariegos and Sáinz de Zúñiga, *Historia de las Universidades hispánicas*, vol. 2, *El siglo de oro universitario* (Avila: Senén, 1958), 276-91; and Cristiano Casalini, *Aristotle in Coimbra. The Cursus Conimbricensis and the Education at the College of Arts*. trans. Luana Salvarani (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 21-24. Some of the discussion of the Jesuits in the University of Coimbra repeats Grendler, *Jesuit Schools*, 75-77.

33 Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, (Porto: Apostolado da Imprensa, 1931-1950), vol. 1, part 2:336-73; Brandão and D'Almeida, *A Universidade de Coimbra*, part 1:203-08; 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), 30-32; and Casalini, *Aristotle in Coimbra*, 34-35, 37-41. Liam Matthew Brockey, *The Visitor. André Palmiero and the Jesuits in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 33-74, provides a good survey of the Jesuits in the University of Coimbra by focusing on one Jesuit there.

34 Alden, *Making of an Enterprise*, 32, note 29, reports that there is no evidence that the Jesuits used this power to exclude qualified applicants from the higher faculties.

35 Rodrigues, *História*, vol. 1, part 2:374-400; vol. 2, part 2:15; Cándido María Ajo González de Rapariegos and Sáinz de Zúñiga, *Historia de las universidades hispanicas*, vol. 3, *Periodo de los Pequeños Austrias* (Madrid: Artes Gráficas C. I. M., 1958), 207-17; Casalini, *Aristotle in Coimbra*, 34-35, 37-41; Brockey, *The Visitor*, 63, 68;

Nuno da Silva Gonçalves, S.J., “Jesuits in Portugal,” in *The Mercurian Project*, 705-44, at 729, 739.

36 It is not possible to list the relevant bibliography. However, although my analysis and terminology differ somewhat, see the useful comments of Rainer A. Müller, “‘Universitas et Societas Jesu’. The Catholic Universities in Early Modern Germany,” in *Università in Europa. Le istituzioni universitarie del Medio Evo ai nostri giorni: Strutture, organizzazione, funzionamento*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Milazzo 28 settembre - 2 ottobre 1993, a cura di A. Romano (Messina: Rubbettino Editore, 1995), 395-403.

37 This and the succeeding paragraph are based on Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 46-51.

38 Grendler, *Universities*, 129-32; and Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 154-61.

39 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 164-69, 174-75.

40 Grendler, *Universities*, 145, 147-48; Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 171-72.

41 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 169-70.

42 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 161-64.

43 The most interesting by far was the University of Mantua, created in 1625. However, it did not survive the War of the Mantuan Succession, the terrible sack of Mantua of July 18-20, 1630, and the plague. See Paul F. Grendler, *The University of Mantua, the Gonzaga, & the Jesuits, 1584-1630* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

44 Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities*, 370-76. On Lana Terzi, see Mario Zanfredini, S.J., “Lana-Terzi, Francesco,” *DHCJ* 3: 2275-76; and Alessandra Fiocca, “Galileiani e Gesuiti a Ferrara nel Seicento,” in *Galileo e la scuola galileiana nelle Università del Seicento*, ed. Luigi Pepe (Bologna: CLUEB, 2011), 302-05.

45 Müller, “‘Universitas et Societas Jesu,’” 398. The exception was the Benedictine University of Salzburg founded in 1622.