

Book Reviews

BIANCHINI, Paolo; Perla CHINCHILLA and Antonella ROMANO (comps.), 2014, De los colegios a las universidades. *Los jesuitas en el ámbito de la educación superior*, Lima, Universidad del Pacífico/Pontificia Universidad Javeriana/Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla/Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México. 400 pp.

Since its founding in 1540, the Company of Jesus has been at the center of intense debates. It has had enthusiastic defenders but also fierce critics. The expulsion of the order from the Spanish empire and its later suppression in the second half of the 18th century at the behest of King Carlos III of Spain were traumatic experiences for its members and an expression of the firm determination of the monarch to impose his authority over an ecclesiastic body that was addicted to the directives of Roman popes. After almost five decades, Pope Pius VII reestablished the Company of Jesus in 1814 as a strategy to strengthen papal authority and re-evangelize the population of a Europe that was becoming less and less confessional as a result of the secularizing and laical policies inherited from the French Revolution and Napoleonic imperialism.

Commemorations of centennials have the virtue of updating information on past events since they provide us with the opportunity to propose new interpretations, which are generally more pondered and less impassioned. The bicentenary of the reestablishment of the Company of Jesus is just such an occasion, as this book demonstrates. The volume is a compilation of essays that analyze the education that was provided in Jesuit schools and universities from the 16th century to the present from a perspective that, for the most part, is not apologetic.

Schools were the principal type of institution founded by the Jesuits. These, together with churches, constitute the most important visual, cultural, and artistic heritage of the order in various parts of the world. Although their purpose was to educate local elites, they were

also spaces for the education of the Jesuits themselves, from where they went on to practice their extensive and prolific teaching activities. There were teachers from many different regions of the world at the schools. This resulted in the confluence and interchange of humanistic and scientific knowledge as well as of mission experiences.

The book is made up of three sections. The first, consisting of five essays, deals with the Jesuit educational system before the suppression of the order in 1767. In "Los jesuitas en la formación educativa e intelectual del mundo moderno: génesis y estructura de los colegios (1540-1650)," Antonella Romano explores in detail the conversion of an order that was initially created for evangelization into one dedicated to teaching, at the same time as she analyzes the *Ratio studiorum* or the study plans of Jesuit schools. Paolo Bianchini discusses the challenges that Jesuit pedagogy faced in the context of 18th century Enlightenment Europe in "Los colegios jesuitas y la competencia educativa en el mundo católico entre el fin del Antiguo Régimen y la restauración." In "Jesuitas y universidades en el Nuevo Mundo: conflictos, logros y fracasos," Enrique González provides a rigorous discussion of the juridical status of universities in the Americas and, in particular, those founded by the Jesuits. A key tool of Ignatian pedagogy were bibliographical collections and their importance is discussed by José del Rey Fajardo in "El papel de las bibliotecas jesuíticas en la fundación de la cultura moderna." Finally, in this part of the book, the fascinating and at times almost novelistic intellectual work of Jesuits and ex-Jesuits on the old continent during the 18th century is described in detail by Antonio Trampus in "Los jesuitas y la República de las letras: el desencanto del mundo."

The second section of the book consists of three essays about schools in the 19th century. As the compilers point out, for the Company of Jesus, schools were essential to their survival and insertion into society from 1814 on. Thanks to these schools, the sons of St. Ignatius were able to return to the territories where they previously had been known for their educational work. In "Los colegios jesuitas en la América del siglo XIX. Tradición, continuidad y rupturas," Francisco Javier Gómez Díez reconstructs the long and often troubled process the company had to go through to reopen its educational institutions. Expulsions, closures, and economic problems were only a few of the challenges faced by the order in the Latin America republics. The Company faced similar difficulties in the Philippines due to rivalries with the Dominicans and the political history of the islands, according to the study by Josep Maria Delgado and Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, "Más allá del tiempo: el colegio jesuita de San José de Manila (siglos XVI-XX)." The work of the congregation was particularly ephemeral in Mexico in the first half of the 19th century as Rosalina Ríos Zúñiga demonstrates in "Ausencia y presencia de colegios jesuitas en la educación superior en México: San Ildefonso y San Gregorio (1800-1856)."

The third section of the book consists of an appendix which describes the histories of the institutions of higher learning that make up the Association of Universities of the Company of Jesus in Latin America (Asociación de Universidades de la Compañía de Jesús en América Latina, Ausjal). Thirty universities and educational institutions in 14 Latin American countries belong to this network. Ausjal was established in 1985 in Rome and is part of a worldwide network of more than 200 Jesuit universities on five continents.

Seen as a group, the articles in this book – despite the fact that they are quite different in terms of length and type of analysis – offer valuable information that contributes to the history of the education provided by the Company of Jesus during the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition, like any book that deserves to be read, it raises questions and provides new perspectives for further research such as: what were the factors that led Latin American governments and ecclesiastical hierarchies to readmit the order after 1814? What kind of social reception did the reopening of Jesuit schools receive? How should we understand the persistence of anti-Jesuit feelings in a context in which its educational project was expanding? Today, having reached the bicentenary of its reestablishment, the Company of Jesus is once again the focus of a rich collection of academic studies and for this, we should be grateful.

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