

time discussing the *Concilium* than the *Rychsztag*, and many aspects of the dialogues' content and structure are left unexplained – but it is certainly helpful. The reader is left hoping for a monograph-length study on Eckstein and his works and what they reveal about this very important time and place in European history.

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*A companion to Ignatius of Loyola. Life, writings, spirituality, influence.* Edited by Robert Aleksander Maryks. (Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 52.) Pp. xiv + 345 incl. 1 map and 13 figs. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2014. €154. 978 90 04 25113 7; 1871 6377  
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In his introduction, Robert Maryks describes this volume as a 'panorama of current scholarship on Loyola' (p. 3) that will help us in the 'quest for the historical Ignatius' (p. 2). As Maryks explains, there is still a great deal of demythologising to be done when it comes to the founder of the Society of Jesus. He is, to borrow Maryks's phrase, covered in 'many layers of theological and rhetorical paint' (p. 3). Thankfully, this work of returning to the sources, re-examining Loyola's life, and placing events in context has long been underway. This edited volume, while uneven, contains a number of significant contributions to this worthwhile cause.

The best chapters meet the brief of the book: providing 'solid historical background for the times and places in which Ignatius lived' (p. 283) and focusing on what actually happened during Loyola's life. Markus Friedrich looks at the government and administration of the fledgling Society of Jesus. We routinely hear about how efficient the Jesuits could be but there is much to learn about the nuts and bolts of day-to-day decision-making and the structural intricacies of the Society. Friedrich concludes that Jesuits were 'much more subtle, realistic and flexible than the "black legend" of an all-powerful, micro-managing, quasi-absolutist general in Rome seems to suggest' (p. 140). José García de Caste Valdés invites us to look more closely at the contributions of Ignatius' first companions. Loyola was, of course, central – not least because the *Spiritual exercises* did so much to foster proto-Jesuit cohesion – but it is a shame that the role of his earliest *confères* has been underplayed: often buried beneath the 'inertia of hagiographic sensibilities ... of more than 450 years' (p. 81). Also deserving of special praise are Emanuele Colombo's chapter on Ignatius and Islam (Loyola is portrayed as veering between pastoral concern for Muslims – or, at least, wanting to save their souls – and militant zeal) and Rady Roldán-Figueroa's attempt to compare how Ignatius and Juan de Avila 'reflected theologically about the spiritual renewal of the laical state' (pp. 161–2): they both 'conceived the spiritual vocation of the laity in positive terms', seeing it as 'fundamental for the renewal of Roman Catholicism in general' (p. 162).

Two pieces on the earlier part of Loyola's career have some interesting things to say. Sabina Pavone looks at the charges of potential heterodoxy levelled at Loyola and suggests that this may have created a Jesuit mindset that went to great lengths not to 'spark additional suspicions about the order' (p. 46). Stefania Pastore covers similar ground in her account of Loyola's time at Alcalá. Jesuit historians, Pastore

writes, have played down Loyola's exposure to Erasmian and Alumbrado ideas but, in fact, this was a 'world from which he had drawn ideas, insights and ... also warning signs and fears' (p. 43). It is, however, something of a stretch to suggest that, subsequently, 'the first Jesuits ... tested the farthest reaches of orthodoxy' in the process of grasping 'how far theological speculation could go' (p. 43). Those 'farthest reaches' were distant indeed during the 1520s and 1530s.

When seeking the 'historical Ignatius' we must be mindful that Loyola has often been pulled out of context and used as a conduit for novel, sometimes anachronistic, interpretations and theories. Judging from the introduction, this is precisely what this volume hoped to avoid, but a number of chapters sail close to the wind. They are all interesting but seem to dilute the advertised purpose of the collection. Three contributions deploy Loyola as a prism through which we can explain the emergence of something called 'modernity'. For Christopher van Ginhoven Rey, Loyola played a starring role through his 'position on the relation between the spheres of divine grace and human initiative' (p. 200) and is portrayed as 'anticipating and challenging the eventual separation and the opposition between both spheres' (p. 200). Moshe Sluhovsky discusses 'The *Spiritual Exercises* and the modern self', explaining how Ignatius stressed the 'primacy of immediate experience over other forms of interactions with God' (p. 216), produced 'pre-figurations of some characteristics of modernity' (p. 217) and paved the way for 'radical potential to enhance individual self-cultivation through introspection' (p. 231). For David Marno, the *Exercises* also represent a 'predecessor of our modern secular notions of attention' (p. 232), albeit expressed in a different, devotional register. This is all quite a burden to place on Loyola's shoulders. In related fashion, Elizabeth Rhodes's intriguing piece on Loyola and women relies heavily on a decidedly modern conceptualisation of gender politics while Pierre-Antoine Fabre's account of Loyola's writings makes great play of modish literary theory. Fascinating pieces, both, but they run the risk of applying different layers of Maryks's aforementioned 'paint'.

The book also contains William David Myers's game attempt to compare Loyola and Martin Luther, Frédéric Conrod's suggestion that the legacy of the *Spiritual exercises* had something to do with the 'merging of philosophy and literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the consequent rise of the novel' (p. 267) – hard to see what this has to do with the quest for the historical Ignatius – and Javier Melloni Ribas's analysis of the 'surprising affinities' (p. 248) between Loyola and the Buddha. Robert Maryks's own chapter on Ignatius and the 'converso question' appears to derive from a section of his 2010 book on Jesuits of Jewish ancestry.

Companions to complex subjects are notoriously difficult to get right, so it is perhaps unsurprising that this volume is not as panoramic as the editor indicates. It does, however, contain several high quality pieces and numerous pointers towards future avenues of research. The goal of thematic consistency – a quest for the historical Ignatius – was also well chosen, if only fitfully achieved.

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