



# NARRATIVES OF ADVERSITY

**Jesuits on the Eastern Peripheries  
of the Habsburg Realms (1640–1773)**

*By Paul Shore*

CEU PRESS

# NARRATIVES OF ADVERSITY



# NARRATIVES OF ADVERSITY

*Jesuits in the Eastern Peripheries  
of the Habsburg Realms*  
(1640–1773)

Edited by  
Paul Shore



Central European University Press  
Budapest–New York

©2012 by Paul Shore

Published in 2012 by

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

*An imprint of the*

Central European University Share Company

Nádor utca 11, H-1051 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: +36-1-327-3138 or 327-3000

Fax: +36-1-327-3183

Website: www.ceupress.com

E-mail: ceupress@ceu.hu

400 West 59th Street, New York NY 10019, USA

Tel: +1-212-547-6932

Fax: +1-646-557-2416

E-mail: mgreenwald@sorosny.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the permission of the Publisher.

ISBN 978-615-5053-47-4

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

Shore, Paul J., 1956-

Narratives of adversity : Jesuits in the eastern peripheries of the Habsburg realms (1640-1773) / Paul Shore.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 978-6155053474 (hardbound)

1. Jesuits—Austria—History—17th century. 2. Jesuits—Austria—History—18th century. 3. Jesuits—Europe, Eastern—History—17th century. 4. Jesuits—Europe, Eastern—History—18th century. I. Title.

BX3728.S56 2012

271'.53049—dc23

2011049973

Printed in Hungary by  
Akadémiai Nyomda, Martonvásár

*To M.*



# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Prelude	1
Introduction: A Fragile Splendor	7
I Narratives of Adversity	17
II Peripheries	37
III “In Campos”	65
IV Campaign in Prešov	93
V Sex and Demons	111
VI Detrimenta, Damna...	125
VII Theatre and Suffering	135
VIII Jesuits in Banská Bystrica, Kláštor pod Znievom, Sárospatak, and Levoča	173
IX In Pursuit of History	211
X An Unredeemed Loss: The Jesuit Mission in Belgrade	243
XI Trnava	251
XII Conclusion	281
Bibliography	313
Index	363
Registry of geographical names	379



## Acknowledgements

This book has taken shape over a number of years, in several different settings, and without the support of many institutions and the contributions of a wide array of individuals it could not have been completed. The early development of this book was facilitated by a Fulbright Austrian-Hungarian Joint Research Grant and the Collegium Budapest. I would like to thank the Faculty of History at Cambridge University for letting me be part of their community for much of the 2008–09 academic year, as well as Jesus College and Hughes Hall, Cambridge where I received hospitality as well as material and moral support. In particular I must acknowledge Sarah Squire for helping me to come to Cambridge in the first place, and William O'Reilly and Derek Beales for their ideas and professional guidance. The participants in seminars and lectures at Cambridge and elsewhere, some of whose names I never learned, also challenged and redirected my thinking as the project progressed. The Jesuit Institute at Boston College, which for a year was where the actual business of writing took place, was a perfect environment for reflecting on all things Jesuit, and Father T. Frank Kennedy, S. J., was a thoughtful and supportive host. Special thanks to the ever-helpful staff of the Burns Library at Boston College. Brandon University graciously gave me resources and time as a visiting professor to complete the project. Among the other institutions that helped make this book possible have been Central European University, Pasts, Incorporated, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Library, the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, the library of the Eötvös Loránd University, and the libraries of Harvard, Brown and Yale Universities. Central European University Press, in the person of Krisztina

Kós and her staff, has been a pleasure to work with, the sort of understanding editorial team that every writer hopes for.

Many individuals have endured reading the entire text or portions thereof, and have corrected errors, suggested more felicitous ways of expressing ideas, and reacted more generally to the goals and approaches of this study. Thanks to László Kontler, Martyn Rady, Robert Evans, Jennifer Lowe, Matthew Herrell, Éva Sandner, Géza Pálffy, Emanuele Colombo, Father John W. Padberg, S. J., Charles Jelavich, Lynn Whidden, Frank Schaer and the anonymous reviewer of my manuscript after it was submitted to CEU Press. Bálint Bethlenfalvy skillfully prepared the bibliography. Frank Schaer and Etleva Lala caught more than a few errors and debatable transcriptions in the Latin, for which I am very grateful. And my students at Central European University through their curiosity and fresh view of the topic have contributed more than they may ever realize.

Any errors of fact or interpretation are of course my own.

P. S.

Budapest, July 2011

## PRELUDE

### The Lure of Challenge

At the turn of the seventeenth century, in the rapidly evolving world of the frontiers among Habsburg, Ottoman and Transylvanian territories, Father Paul Ladislaus Baranyi was one of the most active and influential players. Born in 1657 to a noble family in Jászberény in Ottoman occupied Hungary, and educated at the great Jesuit training center in Graz, Baranyi undertook his fourth vow as a Jesuit in Cluj before the Society had been officially reinstated in the independent Grand Principality of Transylvania.<sup>1</sup> As an exponent of baroque piety, Baranyi believed in holy images that could appear in candle flames and aggressively promoted devotion to such images.<sup>2</sup> He was also an author of popular devotional texts, a school administrator, and the prime mover in the establishment of the Uniate Church in Transylvania.<sup>3</sup> But among Jesuits his name also survived because of other exploits, which included long journeys conducted incognito and in laymen's garb through dangerous regions in the east. One day, returning from

---

<sup>1</sup> Baranyi also studied at Trenčín, at the Jesuit novitiate, which was then also far from the Ottoman frontier. Gyenis, *A trencsényi jezsuita noviciátus anyakönyve*, 38; Stoeger, *Scriptores*, 21.

<sup>2</sup> In Varona [?], Hungary an image of the Virgin holding the infant Jesus in her arms was attested to by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. In the same town a painting of the Virgin owned by Nicolaus Bercsényi, who had served as a general in Francis Rákóczi's army, and in whose courtyard the miraculous candle image had appeared, was said to weep. Letter of Paulus Baranyi to Gabriel Hevenesei, Pestini, 6 March 1709, Ms. III, Kap. A, Tomus VIII, fol. 352, ELTEK.

<sup>3</sup> Horányi, *Memoria Hungarorum et Provincialium*, i, 115; Stoeger, *Scriptores* 21, Márton, "A gyulafehérvári vallási unió (1697–1701)."

giving the viaticum to a remotely situated Catholic, Baranyi was passing through a forest “with only one servant,” when he was set upon by “heretic [probably Calvinist] noblemen.” In response to their own threatening swords, Baranyi *drew his own sword*, cut at his assailants, and they ran away.<sup>4</sup> The brief but highly suggestive account of these events published in the early twentieth century gives no source, and other contemporaneous accounts of Baranyi’s life make no mention of the incident, so the story may have survived in a less formal or oral tradition of the Austrian Province.

On its most literal level, the story of Baranyi’s successful escape from immediate physical *periculum* contains many surprising details. We may ask, was it customary for this intrepid priest to travel with more than one servant? And did he usually carry a sword? (There are a few reports of Jesuits traveling armed in Ottoman Serbia, but the *Constitutions* of the Society made no provisions for such things.) How did this Jesuit, who on another occasion managed to “rescue the inhabitants of an entire district,” acquire the skills necessary to perform these feats? Were these skills in any way part of his Jesuit training?<sup>5</sup> Do they shed light on Baranyi’s life before entering the Society? Beyond these more obvious questions, what does the preservation of this story say about the ways in which one could be a “good Jesuit” along the eastern edges of what was then regarded as Europe? By joining the Society of Jesus and accepting the possibility of facing danger and even death, how were the behaviors of what might be understood as passive martyrdom vis-à-vis a skilled and successful personal defense understood? And most importantly, what does the survival and valuing of this story tell us about the culture and values of the Society that gave Baranyi his identity, his mission, and his faith?

Within the overarching plotline of “adversity confronted and overcome” common to Jesuit narratives throughout the world we find

<sup>4</sup> Velics, *Vázlatok a Magyar jezsuiták múltjából*, Vol. 3: 1690–1773, p. 9. In 1653 the “cives” of Roman, Moldavia wrote that Jesuits traveled about in carts and on horseback, clad in fox furs, armed and accompanied by *famuli*. The Jesuits were also accused of writing, “falsas fingendo literas,” to Constantinople, Germany and Poland. Călinescu, “Altre Notizie,” 439.

<sup>5</sup> Noble youths attending Jesuit schools in the mid-seventeenth century were taught, along with the classics, how to ride a horse and handle a sword. Péter, K, *Beloved Children*, 176.

Jesuits like Baranyi working along the peripheries of Habsburg territory experiencing very varied consequences of their efforts. But defeat, in the sense that our contemporary secularized society generally understands the term, was never one of these outcomes. This was not merely because the triumphalist narrative promoted by the historians and chroniclers of the baroque Society did not encourage admissions of defeat, but because of the fundamental way in which Jesuits understood their mission and its relation to events taking place around them. Keen observers of the world and aware of causal relationships, Habsburg Jesuits nonetheless lived in a world where the will of God was evident everywhere, from crosses visible in crystals and on the face of the sun to the inscrutable actions of strangers. Moreover, even among the most learned of these men, the legitimacy of alchemy was conceded as a possibility and dramatic supernatural intervention in day to day life was a constantly anticipated event.<sup>6</sup> The Society's motto, *Omnia ad maiorem Gloriam Dei* was meant to be taken literally in every eventuality, so that even the physical death of Jesuit and destruction of whatever material creations he had brought into being were events that might be offered to, and reflected the greater glory of God. Thus the Habsburg Jesuits of the seventeenth, and to a lesser degree, the eighteenth century as well, understood the world as a place where adversity and triumph existed simultaneously, and where the inevitability of the latter never precluded the experience of the former. In this seeming contradiction and tension lies the heart of this book.

That said, the claim that one has identified tensions within the Society and within individual Jesuits must be put forth with qualification. When speaking of the collective perceptions of any human organization counting thousands of members, all of whom died several centuries ago, generalization of course is a tricky business. The narratives of Jesuit experience are rich sources of information about these perceptions, but must be utilized with an awareness of how these narratives came into being. The shaping of them included the introduction of material that might not pass the test of empirical truth, but was "pious fiction"

---

<sup>6</sup> Martinus Szentiványi, arguably in his day the most learned Jesuit of the Austrian Province, believed alchemy might be true. Evans, *The Making*, 378–379. Other Jesuits collected "unicorn horns" and the fat of hanged men for their supposed medicinal benefits.

as opposed to “pious fraud.” The former was stereotyped in character, “whose use was governed by a clear set of conventions,” and which may include the recollection of actual experiences, while the latter is a self-conscious fabrication from whole cloth.<sup>7</sup> Both interpolations are evident in the writings of baroque Jesuits, but the pious fictions of the Jesuits tell us the most about their own goals, motivations, and dilemmas, since they reflect the rules created by Jesuits themselves that were intended to advance the mission of the Society.

At any point faith and doubt might be mixed in the understandings of Jesuits telling and hearing of the experiences of their brethren. Varying experiences were reshaped in their retelling to illustrate larger truths, and these were indeed held to be the truths which justified the Society’s existence and provided members with a meaningful explanation of their individual lives. While the separation of subjective experience from the ideal experiences promoted by the Society cannot be accomplished merely by analyzing the documents Jesuits composed, it is still possible to gain some understanding of both types of experiences from records describing personal experiences of Jesuits, as validated and refined by others within the Society. Thus we read that Georgius Görgöny, a Jesuit brother who died in 1686, was remembered both for the bravery he demonstrated during the uprising led by Emericus Thököly, and for how he overcame the memory of his mistreatment and continued his life in the community years later. Seized by rebels in Trnava, he faced deadly danger, went into exile in Poland, was captured and beaten, but forgot his misfortunes, and even assisted a Calvinist in need.<sup>8</sup> Görgöny apparently acquired the sword with which he had been threatened by his persecutors, and kept it as a memento.<sup>9</sup> These facts, as entered into the Society’s official record, became one of the most important elements of the surviving narrative of the life of the *coadjutor temporalis*, an anecdote unique to him alone but also an *exemplum* of both explicitly Christian forbearance and of triumph in the world, and on the world’s terms.

In principle, each encounter with adversity was an opportunity for a Jesuit to experience victory of one kind or another. In reality, the

---

<sup>7</sup> See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 291–292.

<sup>8</sup> *Elogia Defunctorum VI*, Ms I, Ab 142, fol. 71, ELTEK.

<sup>9</sup> *Lit. An. Prov. Aust. 1686, Austria 146*, fol. 98r, ARSI.

challenges of a mission on the edge of Western Christendom were often exhausting.<sup>10</sup> In Alba Iulia, in 1718, a Jesuit wearily noted that during the previous three years, the *residentia* had suffered through war, and attack by the Turks, and the plague.<sup>11</sup> The cost of adversity to individual Jesuits, while very seldom addressed directly in the Society's records, suffuses the reports sent to Provincials and to Rome and sometimes bursts forth in the more private correspondence of Jesuits. The challenge of explaining and integrating the experience of adversity had an impact on Jesuit perceptions of their allies and opponents, and of those souls they sought to care for. Jesuit experience took place in the nexus between practical problem solving and the absolute glory of Jesuit art and music, between the ideal and subjective, the ungendered and the unmistakably masculine, the meticulously recorded institutional memory and the lost event, between individual mortality and sublime eternity. It is an experience without exact parallel in the history of the Habsburg realms, and one that compels our attention since at its heart are the improbable men who left an indelible imprint on the southern and eastern frontiers of Catholic Europe.

---

<sup>10</sup> Numerous other sources document the difficulties of life in this region. Floods, thievery, heavy snowfall, the ubiquity of widows and orphans and disease of livestock brought on by rotten fodder are for example among the hardships experienced in the Uzhhorod district. *Repraesentatio Humillima desolatae Status Comitatus Unghvariensis (1729)*, in Gabriel, *Pohyb Obyvatelstva*, 43–47.

<sup>11</sup> *Annuae Residentiae Soc'ris Jesu Carolina Anno Domini 1719*, Szentiványi.



## INTRODUCTION

# A Fragile Splendor

The Jesuit presence in Hungary can be traced back to the invitation in 1554 of Nicholas Olahus (1493–1568), archbishop of Esztergom, to the Jesuits to come to what is now Trnava, Slovakia to teach and help rebuilt Catholic institutions in the rump of the historic Kingdom of Hungary left after the upheavals of the Reformation and the Turkish invasion. These early arrivals set a pattern of two important relationships that would continue throughout the entire pre-Suppression history of the Society of Jesus in Hungary. First, the source of the impetus for the Jesuit program, while driving eastward, would be Vienna. Secondly, the goals of the Jesuits would remain the consolidation of a Catholic presence that had deep roots in the region, but which had been profoundly undermined by the events of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> These characteristics set the Jesuit enterprise in Royal Hungary apart from the Society's work in Transylvania, Ukraine, or Russia, which had never been predominantly Catholic, and were much farther from the Imperial capital and the administrative center of the Austrian Province of the Society. Also significant is the time frame in which these two relationships came into existence: The Hungarian enterprise was conceived while the Founder of the Society, St. Ignatius of Loyola, was

---

This chapter is based on a seminar paper delivered at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London, London, UK in November of 2007. This essay was prepared with support from Collegium Budapest Institute for Advanced Studies, Saint Louis University, the University of Glasgow, the University of Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, and the Hungarian Fulbright

<sup>1</sup> Tóth, "The Old and New Faith," 205–220.

still living and before the initial charism of the order had begun to be rationalized and routinized. While the spread of the Society's influence through east Central Europe would soon bear the marks of the organizational model that Jesuits employed throughout the world, the passion and ambition of Ignatius and his companions also colored the early experiences of Jesuits working in this region. The tensions between the emotions associated with these first years and the realities of modest gains over many decades, are among the most outstanding features of the Society's undertaking in the Habsburg East.

For the next seven decades after their arrival the Jesuits, restricted by their commitments in Vienna and elsewhere, and beset by misfortunes such as the burning of a major portion of the town of Trnava that also destroyed their compound, were unable to expand significantly into this territory. After the first third of the seventeenth century and the conclusions of the disruptions brought on by the *Bruderzwist*,<sup>2</sup> the Society of Jesus's program of expansion eastwards from its strongholds in Vienna, Prague and Trnava was directed through the mountainous spine of what is now Slovakia. This strategy created a network of communities that both supported the Society's efforts at conversion and Catholic education, and provided a dependable series of Catholic strongholds sympathetic to the Habsburgs and their allies in a region saturated with Protestant and anti-dynastic sentiments. These Jesuit communities also provided a source of support for future expansion of the Society's Austrian Province, a process which came with the withdrawal of the Ottomans from Hungary and Transylvania. Yet such a project was never easy, for at every turn were confessional and ethnic groups hostile to the Society's goals, and communications were arduous through this sparsely populated region.

This volume will examine several of the Jesuit communities situated along the periphery and the records that they left behind about their interactions with the local populations. It will also explore the connections between Jesuit activities along the southern perimeter of Habsburg influence, in modern-day Serbia, as well as the much more elaborated set of outposts along the northern edge of the Austrian Province. The most northeasterly of these outposts was in Uzhhorod,

---

<sup>2</sup> Brady, *Communities, Politics and Reformation*, 392–393.

in modern day Ukraine, the furthest easterly town of any size in Royal Hungary in the seventeenth century. While part of the Austrian Province, the history of this Jesuit community stands apart from the other residences and schools created in Royal Hungary during the seventeenth century because its history from the start was closely connected with the development of the Ruthenian Uniate Church and was linked to the support of noble Catholic patrons with ties to the ruling caste of Transylvania. Before relocating to Uzhhorod, in 1614 the Jesuits had set up a school in an abandoned Franciscan monastery in Humenné, to the west, but found more secure patronage and a greater opportunity to proselytize among the Orthodox population in Uzhhorod. The early history of this mission suggests how difficult it was to maintain a presence in this hostile environment, even with the support of the distant Habsburgs. At almost the same time outposts were established in Prešov, Sárospatak, Košice, and elsewhere, thereby creating a chain of Jesuit residences stretching eastward towards frontiers with Transylvania, Poland and the Ottoman Empire, foundations that promoted not merely a common set of values and ideas, but also more technical skills.<sup>3</sup> All of these were settings where the Society was pursuing its goals from other directions, and regions that remained political unstable for many decades. These smaller Jesuit enterprises never became cultural or confessional centers on the scale of Trnava to the east or even of Cluj to the south, but they did contribute collectively to the Catholic presence in the eastern Habsburg lands and to the flowering of baroque visual art that occurred in the eighteenth century in this region.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the long term survival of the Habsburg dynasty seemed in doubt more than once. The considerable investment made by Jesuit communities in Royal Hungary to create an impressive physical presence thus was designed not merely to overawe the local population, but also reflected the lack of real power that the Society would have felt as it worked to gain the upper hand in these predominantly non-Catholic regions. The baroque expression of the Jesuits of Royal Hungary was therefore a fragile splendor, in part modeled after the larger western cities of the Habsburg lands,

---

<sup>3</sup> McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500–1800*, 73.

and in part defined by the need to defend Catholicism from the hostility of Orthodox, Lutherans, Calvinists, and others. This splendor also performed the important task of reminding the Jesuits themselves of their mission and of the potential glory attendant upon it. The material splendor of the Society's presentation of God's glory also reflected the theology of Jesus as "King", a warrior who conquers, an image quite distinct from the Orthodox portrayal of Jesus as judge or creator.<sup>4</sup> And as we shall see this fragile splendor was also reflected in the Latinity of Jesuit documents that recorded the progress of the Society.

Jesuits cultivated this theology, wrote their chronicles and built their institutions in an environment that has been labeled "homosociality," a culture centered on "emotionally sustaining father-son relationships," with Ignatius the Patriarch functioning as the *Urvater*.<sup>5</sup> The exclusively male composition of the Society, while it has always been well known, must be viewed from a different angle when considering the failures as well as the successes Jesuit experienced along the Habsburg periphery. An exclusively masculine community afforded both opportunities for expressing the emotions that might arise from the experience of adversity, but it could also at times restrict the expression of these sentiments. The narratives cited in following chapters, although they are often populated with females, are essentially stories of men told by men, for consumption by men. Setbacks and defeat were therefore understood in terms of male experience, and recounted for a male readership that would presumably understand the internal experiences of the participants.

Recatholicization along this challenging periphery had distinctive characteristics, even if the Jesuits who participated in the process also served in other parts of the Austrian Province, or sometimes even in "the Indies." The timing and execution of the recatholicization of Royal Hungary and Transylvania differed from the earlier and largely successful efforts of the Society in the Hereditary Lands of the Habsburgs which lay to the west of the Leitha in three ways. First, in the east, the Society was not able to bring the full weight of its tactics into play until the latter part of the seventeenth century, by which time Calvinism and Lutheranism had already been rooted for a century and a half in

---

<sup>4</sup> Bouvier, "Jésuites (Théologie ascétique ou spiritualité)."

<sup>5</sup> Strasser, "'The First Form and Grace,'" 66.

the schools and communities of the region. These confessions had also become points of self-identification for nobles and burghers resisting Habsburg domination, a fact that remained true until the mid-eighteenth century at least. Secondly, the Jesuits undertaking the work of teaching and proselytizing faced continual want and hardship (difficulties that also confronted the general population) that could not easily be alleviated by distant Vienna. The effort expended addressing these problems could not be committed elsewhere, for example, to provide greater physical safety to Jesuits.<sup>6</sup> And while the Society steadily built up a network of schools that came to dominate education in Hungary, it had to do so without the advantages of building on already existing institutions; nothing the equivalent of the medieval universities of Prague or Vienna, which were handed over to the Society in the seventeenth century, had ever existed in Royal or Ottoman occupied Hungary.<sup>7</sup> Indeed the early Society, as attuned as it was to developing urban schools, in Hungary had no urban centers of any size. Adding to each of these disadvantages was the strained relationship between Jesuits and many elements of the local elites, who often failed to provide recruits to the Society. The poor fit between the Society's aims and the needs and desires of the aristocracy and gentry ranged from the curriculum offered (which Kelemen Mikes, the personal secretary to Francis II Rákóczi denounced as of little use to a man) to the brand of florid Counter-Reformation piety that attracted some to Catholicism but drove away others. Yet despite these handicaps, Jesuit outposts endured and even gained ground in the decades before the Suppression.

The Jesuit undertaking in Royal Hungary and along the southern frontiers of the Habsburg realms raises some of the same questions that arise from an examination of the Society's activities in the neighboring regions of Transylvania, Ottoman Hungary and Transcarpathia. The common denominators in each of these cases are the vast and almost ungovernable Austrian Province, the kaleidoscope of religious

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, in 1707, masked men terrified travelling Jesuits, but there is no evidence the Society could do much to prevent the occurrences. *Diarium Residentiae Sŷ Patakiensis*, Ms. I, Ab 96, April 19, 1707, fol. 90r, ELTEK.

<sup>7</sup> In 1767, the Society was operating 42 gymnasia, 3 universities (not all with complete faculties), 3 academies, 4 elementary schools, and 18 *convictus* and *seminaria* in Hungary and Transylvania. Egyed, *A katolikus egyház*, 316.

and ethnic groupings, the expanding power of the Habsburgs, and the relative scarcity of resources in comparison with other parts of Europe. There were also the perennial challenges of disease and death, and especially before 1700, of Jesuits or Jesuits in training being dismissed from the Society. These elements set the Jesuits' encounters in the Habsburg east apart from their confreres' elsewhere in Europe, where the Society's methods of instruction were the same, but the political arrangements were far different. The promotion of Catholicism in both its Roman and Eastern Rite (or Uniate) forms and the necessity of working with the military and civil help to bind together the more or less remote Jesuit communities of Royal Hungary and the rest of the Austrian Province. But these factors were not the most important sources of the connection. The universalist and uniform aspects of the Society's mission worldwide were far deeper than the easily recognized similarities in record keeping; the tasks of preaching, teaching, and converting, despite the allowances made for local circumstances, were strikingly uniform in the techniques, goals, and ways of measuring success. While this approach could be criticized for its rigidity, there were several reasons for the limited degree of adaptation and flexibility undertaken by the Society. First, the desired outcome of the Society was not concord among the various confessions present in the region, but the triumph of Catholicism in its several forms, Tridentine and Eastern Rite. And while seldom stated explicitly, Tridentine Catholicism was intended always to have the upper hand in its relations with the Eastern Rite.

Moreover, the triumph at which the Society aimed was not a relative one, where some accommodations might be made with other confessions or for varying interpretations of dogma among Catholics. Instead what the Jesuits sought, from the first, was an absolute victory of Catholicism, even if their approaches often required close and courteous interaction with non-Catholics. This uncompromising spirit was most evident in the seventeenth-century Austrian Province, although it did not die away completely in the eighteenth, and even lived on after 1773 in the mindset of some former Jesuits. While Theresian Vienna had already started on the journey towards a rationalist system influenced somewhat by Enlightenment ideals, Hungary proper remained under the *Carolina Resolutio* of 1730, which decreed civil penalties for non-Catholics and perpetuated what has been called a second

Counter-Reformation.<sup>8</sup> In Royal Hungary, not only was an “acatholicus” of whatever stripe dangerous from an ecclesiastical perspective, but confessional variety bred political confrontation, something that the Society’s most important allies the Habsburgs viewed with horror and which they made every effort to suppress.

As the Society negotiated its position in a sometime hostile and not infrequently fluid environment, the role of theology in its enterprise, as opposed to the promotion of orthopraxy, could be at times obscure. The Habsburg East knew nothing of the controversies that rocked the Catholic Church in France and no movement comparable to Jansenism ever arose within the eastern reaches of the Austrian Province. And most of the Danube Basin was free of the overt rivalry between Jesuits and other Catholic religious orders, something all too common to the east and south. Instead Jesuits working on the eastern and southern peripheries of Catholic Europe had to contend, not with challenges to their own understanding of the role of penance, for example, but with a lack of institutional infrastructure resulting from a long Ottoman occupation and with unstable material conditions. Yet something additional may have been lacking. Creativity did not characterize the theological output, which was nonetheless sizable, of these Jesuits. Since the composition of theological texts requires neither scientific apparatus nor an immense library (and as we shall see, Jesuit libraries in the region were more than equal to this demand) the relative aridity of examples of this Jesuit specialty must be considered as we examine the Society’s response to adversity. Among the possible factors at work here was the pattern by which young men were recruited into the Society and the attractions a life as a Jesuit would have held for a student even before the process of recruitment had gone into high gear.

The Jesuits of Royal Hungary can be credited with a major contribution to the integration of the region into the larger Habsburg polity. After the first decade of the eighteenth century, no community of Royal Hungary, in what was now part of the greater reconstituted Kingdom of Hungary, ever raised serious opposition to the House of Austria. Jesuit schools contributed to this integration most of all,

---

<sup>8</sup> The *Carolina Resolutio*, reaffirmed by Maria Theresia in 1742, regulated mixed marriages, and compelled Protestants to observe Catholic holy days. Király, “The Hungarian Church,” 113.

training the admittedly small number of diocesan clergy and laymen who became intellectual leaders in the middle to late eighteenth century. As it had in diverse settings, the curriculum of the *Ratio*, even when it was encountered in a piecemeal and incomplete fashion, functioned as a catalyst for cultural cohesion; the sons of magnates, merchants and peasants mastered the vocabulary of virtue and were guided to draw similar conclusions about appropriate artistic expression.<sup>9</sup> Even the smaller towns of Royal Hungary gained contact with the high baroque aesthetic of the Habsburg lands, in both its architectural and literary forms, in large part because of the presence of Jesuit teachers, preachers, and builders. Yet this facet of the Jesuit presence remained in a real way alien to the indigenous culture of the region, not the least because the material culture created by the Society had as its goal a connection with established folkways and patterns of life, not the rebuilding of a shattered nation. The Society's strategy of building schools (many of which had no pretensions of being considered universities that would compete with older institutions with that name) in the busy towns of France and Italy was largely a success,<sup>10</sup> since there were often existing traditions of Catholic education in these communities and despite the rivalries between competing Catholic religious orders a substantial segment of the upper classes continued to support Catholicism. In Royal Hungary the Jesuits could count on neither of these factors, and while the Society always cultivated powerful sponsors, its greatest sponsor in the region, the House of Habsburg, was often short of cash and never genuinely popular among the majority of the landed gentry and aristocracy especially in the east. Yet the very absence of other institutions often impelled Jesuits to create „academiae” and even a few universities.

The position of the Society in such an environment was at once far more secure politically than in many other European countries,<sup>11</sup> yet

---

<sup>9</sup> Virtue might be expressed through Jesuit art, as when Joannes Gyologi (1686–1761) listed Christian virtues by describing an imaginary church interior and the artworks in it. Knapp and Tüskés, “The Emblem in Hungary,” 66.

<sup>10</sup> Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 480–484.

<sup>11</sup> Jesuits of the Austrian Province were spared the drama of one of their fellows being accused of heresy, something that could happen even in allegedly “Jesuit ridden” Spain. Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas*, 185.

more fragile than it seemed at first glance. Despite immense efforts and measureable success in creating a network of Jesuit communities and schools, the Society never overcame the lasting resentment of at least a segment of the Protestant population, nor did its ambitions to extend Catholic culture into east succeed greatly. Jesuit school drama is one monument that the fathers working along the peripheries left behind, but the actual influence of this art form was ultimately far less than the vast number of known titles might seem to suggest.<sup>12</sup>

While not ephemeral, the long-term Jesuit impact on the peripheries of the Habsburg east eludes easy analysis, perhaps because the post-Suppression landscape left few areas for the seeds that Jesuits had planted to grow. The entire edifice of the Society's program was predicated to a great degree on a baroque sensibility that included religious piety but also extended to aesthetics. In a city such as Vienna, with the strong support of elites and the means of persuading or even compelling people to participate, this baroque culture flourished.<sup>13</sup> The sources cited in this study will show how in many instances the same sensibility and aesthetic, while leaving a considerable artistic legacy, was not driven by the same sustaining forces, and like the Jesuits who promoted it, faced continual adversity.

---

<sup>12</sup> This theme is taken up in the author's "Counter-Reformation Drama: The Special Case of Hungary" in *The Ashgate Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, eds. Mary Laven and Alex Bamji (forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> Vocolka, "Counter-Reformation and Popular Piety," 131–132.



# I

## Narratives of Adversity

It is fair to say that the Jesuit contribution to the cultural history of East-Central and indeed to that of Eastern Europe was much more important than that of the West.<sup>1</sup>

The Society of Jesus has inspired more debate, scholarship, and speculation than any other Catholic order, and has probably been the subject of more books and articles than any other religious organization in history. The reasons for this are not hard to find. The Jesuits exploded onto the world stage in the mid-sixteenth century, and quickly became the most visible worldwide exponent both of Reformed Catholicism and of an expansionist European mindset that was not limited to Catholics.<sup>2</sup> A century later the Jesuits were operating 800 schools on all of the known continents and had become the objects of heated debates about their beliefs, motives, and actions.<sup>3</sup> As time passed the controversies about the motivations and methods of the Jesuits as well as their results gained intensity, and in recent years have coalesced around contemporary questions of globalization, inculturation, and the transactional nature of religious conversion that have gained prominence in academic discourse.<sup>4</sup> The Society has been labeled “the first multinational corporation” and Jesuits dubbed, with some exaggeration,

---

<sup>1</sup> Burke, *Jesuits and the Art of Translation*, 31.

<sup>2</sup> O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*.

<sup>3</sup> Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism*, 33.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric, and Proof*, 78; Louthan, *Converting Bohemia*, 175.

“planetary men, the first in whom the world network became, to some degree, a world system.”<sup>5</sup> On occasion during the past century eminent historians have weighed in with interpretations of the motives of the early Jesuits that sometimes seem based more on wishful thinking and anachronistic attribution of motives than on evidence.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile the field of Jesuit studies, once the home of confessional polemics, has burgeoned in recent years, and the wealth of still unexamined materials left behind by the Jesuits seems to guarantee that scholarly investigations, both by those focusing directly on Jesuits and by others dealing with broader cultural themes, will prove fruitful for many years to come. The question therefore is not—Why another book on Jesuits? But rather—What kind of book on Jesuits?

While the remarkable successes of the Society, advertised with consummate skill by the Jesuits themselves,<sup>7</sup> grab our attention, other events that were less than successes also deserve close examination. Some of the setbacks experienced by the Society in the first decades of its existence were spectacular, to the point that the retelling and visual representation of these seeming disasters themselves became an important part of the culture and lore of the Jesuits and shaped the Society’s self-perception.<sup>8</sup> Yet as Jennifer D. Selwyn notes, there is legitimate danger in becoming too preoccupied with Jesuit “success” and “failure,” especially when anachronistic standards of our own individualistic, competitive modern society are applied.<sup>9</sup> Certainly the early Jesuits who were martyred, banished, or faced imprisonment did not necessarily see themselves as failures, but instead understood adversity as useful to the

---

<sup>5</sup> Headley, *The Europeanization of the World*, 97, quoting Samuel Adrian Miles Adshead, *China in World History*, 247.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Toynbee, for example, wrote that the Jesuits of China “were acting with uncommon insight and courage in trying to discriminate the essence of Christianity from its Western antecedents.” Toynbee, *An Historian’s Approach to Religion*, 267.

<sup>7</sup> *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Iesv*. The Jesuit concern for self-representation as expressed in the *Imago* was relatively unusual in the seventeenth century. Burke, “The Jesuits and the Art of Translation,” 30.

<sup>8</sup> The best known of these disasters was the destruction of the Japanese mission. The 26 Jesuits martyred in Nagasaki in 1597 soon became part of the triumphant narrative of the Society, retold many times in school dramas produced by the Jesuits. Yuki, *Martyrs’ Hill: Nagasaki*.

<sup>9</sup> Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils*, 11–12.

just and necessary for sinners.<sup>10</sup> Yet Jesuit enterprises did experience disasters, defeats and frustrations: practical goals were not achieved, conversions proved impermanent, anticipated support from the powerful dried up, and natural calamities destroyed the physical creations of the Society. Jesuits sometimes tasted bitter, even self-destructive disappointment and depression.<sup>11</sup> Recent scholarship, including that undertaken by Jesuits, has begun to look at these failures in a new light, something that has had a very salutary effect on the study of the Society.<sup>12</sup>

This book examines the experience of challenge and adversity among some of the Jesuits of the Austrian Province from the moment of “high tide” of the Society, in the fourth decade of the seventeenth century, until the suppression of the Society by papal *breve* in 1773.<sup>13</sup> In particular the focus will be on the eastern and northern fringes of this vast, almost ungovernable administrative unit, which stretched to Moldavia, Ukraine, Serbia and Wallachia, and which was continually riven with ethnic tensions.<sup>14</sup> With very few exceptions, these regions, the home of hundreds of Jesuits,<sup>15</sup> were not the scene of spectacular systematic Jesuit setbacks such as occurred in Japan, Ethiopia, or later China. Rather the Jesuit experience in the eastern reaches of the Habsburg realms unfolds in the documents generated by the fathers as a complex mix of subjective and individually varied reactions to events

---

<sup>10</sup> This idea was developed by the French Jesuit Claude de la Colombière (1641–1682) in his “The Secret of Peace and Happiness.” de la Colombière, *For God’s Greater Glory*, 166.

<sup>11</sup> The suicide in 1628 of the well known Jesuit traveler Nicolas Trigault for example was covered up by Jesuit officials. Dame Olwen Hufton, personal communication, 12 February 2009.

<sup>12</sup> In the words of Timothy Brook, “Jesuit historians have learned to historicize their subjects and recognize setbacks as something historically more interesting than tests in an allegory of faith.” Brook, Review, 620.

<sup>13</sup> Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation*, 63; Smith, *The Suppression of the Society of Jesus*.

<sup>14</sup> Lukács, *A független magyar jezsuita rendtartomány kérdése*. Not only did Hungarian Jesuits seek a province of their own separate from the Austrians, but Slovene and Croat Jesuits also quarreled. Pörtner, “Defending the Catholic Enterprise,” 569–586. Thanks to Dr. Pörtner for making this material available prior to its publication.

<sup>15</sup> In 1749, the entire province counted 1772 Jesuits, “ex his sacerdotes 751.” Hamy, *Documents pour servir à l’histoire des domiciles*, 20.

both explicable and inexplicable. Like their brethren elsewhere, Central European Jesuits struggled with the tension between rendering some of what they encountered as comprehensible within a paradigm of identifying theological and cultural “equivalencies,”<sup>16</sup> while identifying the unique and even the bizarre, which nonetheless might add to an edifying narrative about the progress of the Jesuits and the advance of the Holy Church.

By attempting to explore the subjective, recorded responses of men to a wide variety of experiences, including adversity, doubt, miscommunication, and even failure, this book must also address the problematics that accompany interpretation of written documentation of experiences, especially when several centuries separate the writer from the reader and interpreter, and what Peter Burke calls the “fictive elements” of an official record become harder to identify.<sup>17</sup> This exploration is significantly aided by our growing understanding of the different ways Jesuits collected, categorized and recorded information.<sup>18</sup> Yet what remains elusive at times is a grasp of what individual Jesuits understood themselves to be doing, since they kept their records in a language that was not their native tongue (and as the documents themselves reveal, of which not all Jesuits had a strong command), and in doing so followed established formulae and epistolary modes that could obscure their own motives and feelings.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The pre-1773 Society sought to “establish equivalencies” as it came in contact with different cultures, a tendency driven both by the desire to locate the means of introducing Catholic teaching, and by a genuine hope of finding rationally defined commonalities among diverse human configurations. Davidson, *The Universal Baroque*, 11.

<sup>17</sup> Burke, *History and Social Theory*, 126.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Markus Friedrich has identified a shift around the middle of the seventeenth century, when the composers of the *Litterae Annuae* or “annual letters” began to write their accounts along thematic rather than geographic lines. Markus Friedrich, “Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*,” 20–23. The relationship between audience and content of Jesuit letters is explicated in Correia-Afonso, *Jesuit Letters and Indian History*, 74–78.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Ines G. Županov notes that Ignatius of Loyola identified four audiences of epistolary writing: the kings and the nobles, the common people, the Company, and yourself. These she correlated with four epistolary writing modes, geo-ethnographic, dialogic/polemical, theatrical, and self-

Each Jesuit writer possessed, to a greater or lesser degree, a dual identity which shaped both his personal understanding and the written recording of his experiences. To a greater degree than the members of most other Catholic orders a Jesuit functioned as an individual, given the responsibility (particularly when on isolated missions) to make decisions, often without recourse to his superiors, who might reside hundreds or even thousands of miles away. These decisions were based on his best assessment of local conditions, and through an understanding of the Jesuit's mission shaped through the process of "discernment." But every Jesuit was also part of a highly literate, world-spanning organization, whose writers self-consciously echoed earlier Jesuit writers and who strove to portray the enterprises of the Society as a unified whole whose members were nevertheless highly mobile and to a degree interchangeable. Such an approach sometimes fostered the non-critical collection of data whose presentation would do no violence to the established and edifying narrative.<sup>20</sup> On other occasions facts were pre-selected to fit an anthropomorphic rendering of the Society which tended to exclude failures and contretemps. Indeed the "Life history" of the Society as recorded in the *Imago Primi Saeculi* presented Jesuits collectively as an entity that was born (*nascens*), grew (*crescens*), suffered (*patiens*), and was ultimately triumphant, a biography closely matching that of the Savior for whom the Society was named.

The differing categories of the Society's correspondence and the varying audiences of Jesuit letters and reports make investigation of archives holding Jesuit materials an undertaking requiring sensitivity to the relation of the writer to the institution that requires him to write.<sup>21</sup> There is also the psychological state of the Jesuit writer, hard to assess from this distance, but undoubtedly a major influence on the composition of these documents. Ines Županov, here writing of the Society's Indian missions, points out:

---

expressive, each of which would shape the organization and content of Jesuit writings. Županov, *Disputed Mission*, 32.

<sup>20</sup> Caruana, "The Jesuits and the quiet side of the Scientific Revolution," 254.

<sup>21</sup> Ginzburg notes that records of the ideas of the "subordinate classes" are written at one remove from their source by those "more or less openly attached to the dominant culture." To give only one example, the experiences of Jesuit *coadjutores temporales* or brothers would have been typically recorded by Jesuit priests. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, xv.

Until the suppression of the Jesuits in the middle of the eighteenth century, all the Jesuits in the Maduari mission followed [Roberto] Nobili's adaptationist method of conversion and continued to rely on the utopian mode in their writing whenever they wanted to situate their own position as subjects in the missionary field. In a state of permanent weakness and insecurity without direct institutional support, the missionaries were doomed to live and write a utopia in order to bridge the gap between the strange and the familiar, the mute and the loquacious, the "pagan" and the Christian.<sup>22</sup>

The degree of weakness and insecurity felt by the Jesuits of the Habsburg east was not so pronounced as that of their brethren in Asia, but there are parallels between the two experiences. Missions conducted in at least nominally Catholic regions of Central Europe faced other, perhaps more subtle challenges: merchants might treat the arrival of a travelling mission as a time to promote business, and the atmosphere of the community during a Jesuit missionary's visit could resemble a bustling fair more than an opportunity for repentance and reform.<sup>23</sup>

And while this book is in no way a study in art history or the history of science, the activities of the Society in these areas cannot be ignored when examining the documents that make up a written narrative such as that created by the Jesuits. This is especially true for the Jesuits working in the realms of the House of Habsburg. To borrow a phrase from Robert Evans, the work of the Jesuits in these lands was the single most important element of the "universal enterprise" of the dynasty which aimed at the regaining of a large segment of Europe for Catholicism.<sup>24</sup> The work of the Jesuits of the Austrian Province was also a key part of the even greater "universal enterprise" of the Society itself, a project of conversion and education that proclaimed immodestly "unus non sufficit orbis"—one world is not enough.<sup>25</sup> The Jesuit

<sup>22</sup> Županov, *Disputed Mission*, 235.

<sup>23</sup> Louis, *The Religion of the Poor*, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Evans, *The Making*, 419.

<sup>25</sup> This line, also used on the sails of the ship that bore the Jesuit Manuel da Nóbrega to the New World, is slightly modified from one in Juvenal's *Satires*, itself derived from Plutarch's *Moralia* [vi], 466, 4, which refers to the ambition of Alexander the Great, weeping because there were no worlds

project in the Habsburg East was therefore balanced in a cat's cradle of several tensions, including some that were internal, that were the source both of much of the Society's strength and of its vulnerability.<sup>26</sup>

First, the organization of the Society was highly rationalized, with the tasks and lines of responsibilities of each category of Jesuit spelled out in the Society's *Constitutions*.<sup>27</sup> Obedience was a basic expectation, and "disturbers of the Society" were to be cast out or penalized.<sup>28</sup> Yet the glue that held the Society together was the deeply personal and in some ways highly individual experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*,<sup>29</sup> which while undertaken with a spiritual director, required each retreatant to imagine and internalize the physical and emotional aspects of Scripture. The experience of the *Exercises* was then expressed in a climate of baroque devotion that exalted self-denial, mortification of the flesh, and passionate attachment to the Eucharist or the Virgin, whose cult the Jesuits planted and promoted wherever they went.<sup>30</sup> The religious passions of the Jesuits were thus simultaneously individual in their origins and also reflections of collective and continually reinforced belief and experience. The modern reader is struck by the emotional intensity, and at times seemingly unconscious sensuality, in the devotional writings of men who in other contexts could be examples of a Stoic *indifferentia* to pain and death.<sup>31</sup> The art found in

---

to conquer. The writer acknowledges Travis Brimhall for identifying this connection.

<sup>26</sup> While scholars have examined, for example, the tensions between Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits, our understanding of Jesuit national or ethnic identity in the context of what Ginzburg termed the "crisis of ethnocentricity in the sixteenth century" is still incomplete. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*, 78.

<sup>27</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*.

<sup>28</sup> Decree 54 of the 5th General Congregation, (1593–1594), in Padberg, O'Keefe and McCarthy, eds., *For Matters of Greater Moment*, 204–205.

<sup>29</sup> The *Exercises* were composed by Ignatius about 1522 to 1524, and were approved by the pope and published in 1548. Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Far from producing the robotic automatons of anti-Jesuit polemics, the *Exercises* could give Jesuits immense confidence to act in the world. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed*, 205.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanus Csete (1648–1718) carried the cult of the Virgin deep into Transylvania by way of Poland. Weiser, *Vitae Patrum et Magistrorum*, 84–88.

<sup>31</sup> The Jesuit curriculum of the *Ratio Studiorum* included attention devoted to *indifferentia* through the *Paradoxica Stoicorum* of Cicero. Reiss, "Revising Descartes," 30.

Jesuit churches has frequently been parsed as a self-conscious attempt to draw the faithful—or not yet faithful—first through curiosity, and then through sensuous appeal and affective engagement.<sup>32</sup> The paintings, decorative details and sculpture produced by the Society were however also for the benefit for the Jesuits themselves. These creations, often the work of Jesuit brothers, were an expression of the profound emotionality and underlying physicality lying just beneath the surface of Jesuit culture itself and which supplemented the Society's more intellectually abstract accomplishments.<sup>33</sup>

Likewise the tens of thousands of dramas produced by the Society's schools drew upon the *regulae* of Ciceronian rhetoric but simultaneously appealed to the senses and feelings through their "special effects" and plots that drew upon emotionally charged themes of virginity, Divine retribution, sacrifice, and noble death.<sup>34</sup> The heightened emotionality and dramatic juxtaposition of contrasts that characterizes Jesuit culture in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was also a response to a period of crisis and disaster for much of Europe and Asia, on political, economic and biological fronts.<sup>35</sup> Besides these crises were additional circumstances, such as a very high infant

<sup>32</sup> Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque*, 185.

<sup>33</sup> The root of this sensuality was the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves, which required the retreatant to envision the physical details of Christ's life. Smith, Jeffrey Chipps, *Sensuous Worship*, 44. The experience for laypersons was of equivalent intensity, and considerable importance was attached to the completion of the exercises by lay retreatants. A sensual link thus was built between Jesuits and the laity. In Trnava in 1650, we read "... usu propè receptu[m] est Neo-Mystis, non nisi per exercitia, velut per sacram portam introire ad altare dei." (... the initiates gain access only through exercises, just as if through a holy gate to the Altar of God.) *Annuae Literae Societatis Iesv anni M.D.C.L.*, 84.

<sup>34</sup> For the relation of "special effects" to the visualizations experienced in the *Spiritual Exercises*, see Mitchell, *The Jesuits: A History*, 140–141. The use of ghosts and spirits in these plays is discussed in Hóman and Szekfű, *Magyar történet*, VI. kötet, 383–38. The single most complete register of Jesuit school dramas in the easterly portions of the Austrian Province is Staud, *A magyarországi jezsuita iskolai színjátékok forrásai*. See also Kilián, "Törökverő magyarok az iskoladramában," and Shore, "Baroque Drama."

<sup>35</sup> Schöffner, "Did Holland's Golden Age Coincide with a Period of Crisis?" 84–87. Historians have also pointed out the effects of an economic crisis and of a breakdown in social relationships, as well as a new intrusion

and child mortality rates, which since they were constant, at the time would not have been perceived as crises but nonetheless added stress, bereavement and confusion to the daily lives of most people.<sup>36</sup> Austrian Jesuits experienced the first decade of the eighteenth century, with the Rákóczi rebellion and the War of Spanish Succession (in which the Habsburg claimant, the Archduke Charles, was defeated) as a widespread experience of “detrimentum.”<sup>37</sup> Even earlier, in the years of the last Ottoman push to capture Vienna, the Austrian Province had seen a decline in its numbers.<sup>38</sup> So, even as the Society refined its modes of aesthetic expression, it was called upon in its Habsburg enterprises to confront mounting instances of human suffering and misfortune, some of which were diagnosed as God’s punishment for sin.<sup>39</sup> This tension between the much discussed “glory of the baroque” and reality of famine, plague and rebellion is a distinguishing characteristic of the Jesuit

---

of religion into people’s lives. Rabb, *The Struggle for Stability*, 5. For the economic crisis see Hobsbawm, “The Overall Crisis of the European Economy.”

- <sup>36</sup> There are no reliable data for child mortality for the Habsburg realms during this period. In the mid-seventeenth century in the Beauvoisis district, north of Paris, 42% of children died before their fifteenth birthday. Ernst, *Teufelaustreibungen*, 12.
- <sup>37</sup> Nilles, *Symbolae*, 4. The Roman headquarters of the Society even maintained files on the “detrimenta” Jesuits faced worldwide: *Historia SĴ*, 137, ARSI; Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, 244–45, footnote 17.
- <sup>38</sup> The number of members of the Austrian Province fell from 1,177 in 1679 to 889 in 1685, and slowly rose afterwards. Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge*, vol. 3, 185.
- <sup>39</sup> Already in 1622 high prices and the plague had been described as expressions of God’s anger at Hungary. Hein, *Szepességi, avagy löcsei krónika és évkönyv*, 158. Foreign invasion, in the view of Protestant preacher Megyesi Pál, was the consequence of idolatry, drunkenness, cursing, fornication, and other sins. Murdock, “Death, prophecy and judgment in Transylvania,” 220. The relationship between sin and punishment might be expressed less directly in Jesuit documents. The obituary of Ladislaus Vid (1619–1687) asserted that Hungary had fallen into the hands of Turks and heretics, but Vid was untroubled, “eo quod sciret similia mala non posse evenire sine Dei beneplacito et iusto iudicio.” (because he understood that evils such as these might not occur except by the will and just judgment of God.) *Elogia Defunctorum IX*, Ms. I, Ab 145, fol. 98, ELTEK.

experience in the Austrian Province throughout the entire century and a half preceding the Suppression.<sup>40</sup>

The asceticism attested to in the Society's narrative of its own activities forms another point of tension with the settings of power, wealth and exalted social exchange in which Jesuits often moved. This tension was far more than simply the ancient Christian trope of the temptation of luxury, power or sex placed in front of the hermit; instead the location of a Jesuit in the tension between pleasure and denial was on occasion the dramatic setting for the public display of Jesuit virtue and influence, as retold in the narrative of the Society. Jesuit obituary notices are crowded with accounts of extreme self-mortification and conspicuous restraint of the deceased when in the company of the wealthy and powerful. In these settings a Jesuit's physical presence at the tables of the mighty, validating as it did the importance of the Society, was as important as his own responses to luxury and potential gratification. The fact that the missionary Emericus Kiss (1631–1683) was at the court of Princess Zsófia Báthory is noted at the beginning of his obituary, but then we read "... in exquisita Principis mensa ferculorum apparatu cibi potûsque [eum esse] parcissimum, et extra consueta prandiis coenae tempora rarissimè quidquam admittentem" (... he was most sparing in consumption of dishes and drinks set before him at the

<sup>40</sup> Between 1640 and 1711, plague, spread by armies, camp followers and traders, struck Hungary and Transylvania at least fourteen times, with particularly severe epidemics in 1653–1656, 1660–1666, 1683, and 1708–1711. Plague made one final appearance in the eastern Austrian Province in 1739 to 1745. Ágoston and Oborni, "17. század," 100. Some counties lost as much as 40 to 46% of their population. Faragó, "Adatok a pestisjárványok magyarországi történetéhez," 41. Other infectious diseases, regarded as the "pestis," continued to ravage Hungary well into the middle of the century; An *ex voto* for delivery from the "plague" dated 1759 is in the church of St. Francis, Buda and other reports of "pestis" are found in the town records of Braşov for the same period. Even in years not identified as crests of plague epidemics, the cost to Jesuit communities could be very high. In 1679 alone the Uzhhorod community lost three priests "in obsequio pestiferorum." *Elogia Defunctorum VII*, Ms. I, Ab 143, fols. 126–128, ELTEK. The same year in Győr, Petrus Gödi (1635–1711) provided "pharmacis" (medicines) to plague sufferers. *Elogia Defunctorum*, Ms. III, Kap. A, Tomus V, fol. 5, ELTEK. For the use of medicines to promote the Faith, see Krapka and Mikula, *Dejiny Spoločnosti Ježišovej*, 262.

banquets of the Prince, and outside the usual times for dinner, very rarely did he even take a taste of something).<sup>41</sup> Wenceslaus Wroteus (d. 1652), a *coadjutor spiritualis* and confessor to Count Slavata of Prague defenestration fame, was praised in his obituary as “nullo aulico pulvere sorditas,” further testimony of the high value placed on the ability of Jesuits to be in the world of power and magnificence, but not of it.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed the simultaneous rejection of, yet proximity to luxury was an echo of the Society’s regulation that Jesuits were not to seek high positions such as a bishop’s seat, even as they found themselves close to the centers of power. Severe asceticism might even drive a Jesuit to reject some of the fruits of the Society’s own achievements in the healing arts, a renunciation that might be recorded with approval by another Jesuit. Yet the requirements of hospitality, the cultural norms of the region and, we may suppose, the desires of some Jesuits themselves resulted in the occasional engagement with lavish food and drink. Sometimes this lavishness was instituted by the civil authorities and noted approvingly by Jesuits, as when word reached Banská Štiavnica that Imperial forces were holding Uzhhorod: a *Te deum* was solemnly celebrated, and wine flowed, “ad gratuitam plebis complaudentis refectio-nem pro libitu.”<sup>43</sup> But we also read in Jesuit records that the guests at the Jesuit residence in Kláštor pod Znievom, clerics all, on Fat Tuesday 1716 “sat multu’ de vino ebiberunt.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Elogia Defunctorum VIII*, Ms. I, Ab 144, fol. 316, ELTEK. With comparable drama dangers that Kiss faced are also recorded: “... heterodoxorum impudentia ferrum non raro in insidiis aramavit in jugulum...” (... not infrequently in plots against him the steel of impudent heretics was placed against his throat.) But was this meant literally? *Elogia Defunctorum X*, Ms. I, Ab 146, fol. 316; 317, ELTEK.

<sup>42</sup> *Annuae Literae Societatis Iesv anni M.D.C.LII*. (Pragae, [n.d.]), 71. The relationship between the Jesuit and his surroundings might be rendered in a phrase suggesting the self-conscious awareness of the former regarding the latter. Joannes Lippay (1606–1662) not only confronted many illnesses, but “in aulicis turbis nunquam turbatus” (he was never perturbed by the crowds at court). Horányi (probably quoting Jesuit documents), *Memoria Hungarorum et Provincialium*, vol. 2, 35.

<sup>43</sup> *Lit. An. Prov. Aust 1685, Austria 145*, fol. 129r, ARSI.

<sup>44</sup> *Diarium Residentiae S. J. Thuroczyensis ab 1704*, Ms. I, Ab 111, fol. 260v, ELTEK. On the day after Christmas, 1736 the Maramureş Jesuit community entertained local dignitaries with a seven course meal that included ab-

Perhaps the most readily apparent tension within the Austrian Province of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was between the Jesuits' promotion of the universal and their necessary engagement with the particular. The message of the Tridentine Church, and the language, Latin, in which this message was articulated, were universal in application, as was the curricular tool that trained all Jesuits and guided their students, the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599.<sup>45</sup> But baroque Jesuits assiduously sought to adapt to local conditions, and not infrequently made compromises with their larger agenda in order to achieve an important objective that loomed before them.<sup>46</sup> In Hungary this meant confronting a formerly mostly Catholic region where a destructive Turkish occupation,<sup>47</sup> a stagnating economy, oppressive social arrangements that have been rightly called "late feudalism," and wholesale conversion to Protestantism in the sixteenth century left only a very stony soil in which to replant the seeds of a vibrant Catholicism.<sup>48</sup> Some districts regained from the Turks indeed presented a challenge seldom previously encountered by the Society in Europe: not merely few Catholics or an absence of Catholic clergy, but a completely uninhabited landscape.<sup>49</sup> The ideal promoted by the Council of Trent had been the cultivation of a stable parochial life, but in many communities in Royal Hungary, poor communications, the small number of Catholics, and the hostility with which they were regarded by others prevented the development of a close-knit pattern of parishes, or even the stable presence of a solitary parish priest.<sup>50</sup> Interwoven with each of these factors were inter-ethnic tensions that would only grow sharper in the eighteenth century. Jesuit missionaries therefore had to adapt

---

sinthe as well as wine. *Diarium Missionis Societatis Jesu Residentiae Maros-Vasarhelyensis*, Szentiványi 691, XI, 68, fol. 172v, BB.

<sup>45</sup> Pavur, *The Ratio Studiorum*.

<sup>46</sup> French Jesuits made major compromises to secure their position within the Gallican Church. Nelson, *The Jesuits and the Monarchy*, 243–244.

<sup>47</sup> Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, traveling to Turkey thirty years after the withdrawal of the Ottomans, found Hungary between Neszmély and Buda "for the most part desert and uncultivated." Letter to Lady Mar, Peterwardein, 30 January 1717, in *Embassy to Constantinople*, 76.

<sup>48</sup> Kosáry, "The Enlightenment in Hungary," 69.

<sup>49</sup> Juhász, "Ladislaus Köszeghy," 64.

<sup>50</sup> O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, 135.

their universalist vision to isolated, particularist, and sometimes xenophobic communities. Moreover the tension between Hungarian Estates (possessing a distinctive history and privileges tied to unique local circumstances) and the Crown (sacred and controlled by the Habsburgs, who made universalistic claims of sovereignty) was expressed in a “late feudal dualism” within which the Society operated and which placed Jesuits in sometimes ambiguous political positions.<sup>51</sup> Elements of the universal/particular dichotomy existed at every level of Hungarian society with which the Jesuits engaged. The line between “superstition” that had to be eradicated and local custom that might be incorporated into acceptable Catholic practice had to be reinterpreted by Jesuits at every turn, a challenge that had as its intellectual background the probabilism controversy of the seventeenth century, in which the Society was deeply embroiled.<sup>52</sup>

Jesuit uncertainty about the “acceptable” versus the “unacceptable” colored the Society’s dealings in both Europe and the Far East and reached back to its early curricular controversies of the sixteenth century, when the redoubtable Antonio Possevino (1534?–1611) had deplored chivalric romances of the sort Ignatius had enjoyed before his conversion, while Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621) had approved of Dante and even the much racier Boccaccio.<sup>53</sup> These debates in turn echoed similar ones over pagan versus Christian literature that had animated Church Fathers more than a millennium earlier, but which had acquired new urgency in an environment where Calvinists and rival Catholic orders decried the morals of Jesuits (while imitating their curriculum). The political landscape along the periphery of Habsburg lands continued to change through these years, as well, as alliances were redrawn and repeated blunders by Vienna-based monarchs and cruelties committed by their proxies alienated much of the Hungarian Estates and confirmed the resolve of the historic league of *Pentapolita*,

---

<sup>51</sup> Kosáry, *Culture and Society*, 67.

<sup>52</sup> Probabilism asserted that minority opinions on moral questions might still be followed, even when most authorities took an opposing view. Jesuit support for probabilism drew charges that the Society promoted moral laxity and even relativism. Ashworth, “Catholicism and Early Modern Science,” 157–158.

<sup>53</sup> Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media*, 41.