

Jesuit Philosophy on the Eve of Modernity

Edited by

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Philosophy in Jesuit Schools and Universities

Paul F. Grendler

For the Jesuits, the collective term “philosophy” eventually meant the trio of logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics, all based on the study of the appropriate texts of Aristotle (384–322 BCE). Jesuit philosophy rose out of the *cursus artium*, the philosophy course, of the University of Paris. But it took many years of experimentation before the Jesuits developed and refined their own philosophy curriculum and codified it in the *Ratio studiorum* of 1599. Once this was accomplished, the Society had a comprehensive and uniform philosophy curriculum, which they taught in an increasing number of schools and universities. High enrolments proved that Jesuit philosophy was popular with students. On the other hand, philosophers in secular universities criticized Jesuit philosophy teaching for a lack of originality and too much homogeneity. The Jesuits, by contrast, prized uniformity and achieved it, in part, through dictation and textbooks.¹

1 The Development of the Philosophical *Cursus*

All of the first ten Jesuits, with one possible exception, plus Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76) and Jerónimo Nadal (1507–80), studied philosophy at the University of Paris between 1525 and 1538.² Hence the form and content of Parisian philosophical instruction strongly influenced the Jesuits’ initial attempts to teach philosophy. At Paris, the *cursus artium* consisted of three years of philosophy. Students began with two years of logic. In the first year, they concentrated on the *Summulae logicales* (Summaries of logic), written in the 1230s by Peter of Spain (1210/15; elected Pope John XXI 1276; d. 1277). The most published logic textbook of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it was a

¹ I wish to thank Christoph Sander who read an earlier draft and made many useful suggestions, Professor Liam Brockey for the information on philosophy in the Asian missions, and Professor Nelson Minnich for help with a passage. The mistakes are all mine.

² Diego Laínez (1512–65, in office 1558–1612) may have been an exception. He already had bachelor, licentiate, and master of arts degrees from Alcalá de Henares when he arrived in Paris at the end of 1532. He concentrated on theology at Paris, which does not mean that he ignored philosophy.

Jesuit Logic

E. Jennifer Ashworth

1 Background

1.1 *Sixteenth-century Logic and the Ratio studiorum*

In the sixteenth century, the study of logic underwent big changes, largely owing to the impact of humanism. New emphases on classical language and the study of rhetoric led to a changed style of writing in which the very sophisticated technical language used by medieval logicians was abandoned, along with their use of *sophismata* or puzzle cases designed to test the use of logical rules. At the same time, specifically medieval contributions to logic such as supposition theory, consequences, and insolubles or semantic paradoxes were either simplified or excluded. Some of the new logic texts in this tradition were brief and insubstantial, but others, especially those by Jesuit authors, were also influenced by scholarly humanism, which paid careful attention to the recovery of Greek commentators and to the study of works by Aristotle in the original Greek. Aristotle's *Organon* had always formed the core of medieval logic teaching, but in many ways Aristotle came to play an even more important role for early modern authors, as is abundantly illustrated by the work of Jesuit logicians.¹

This work has to be seen in the context of an educational system that saw logic as a prolegomenon to other studies, and as a guide to the key educational tool of disputation, in which arguments for and against particular theses had to be produced. The Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* set out the kind of logic to be taught in Jesuit educational institutions during the first year. First of all, the teaching

¹ For developments in logic, see E. Jennifer Ashworth, *Language and Logic in the Postmedieval Period* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974); Ashworth, "Developments in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Handbook of the History of Logic 2: Mediaeval and Renaissance Logic*, ed. Dov M. Gabbay and John Woods (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 2008), 609–43. For Jesuit logic, see Wilhelm Risse, *Die Logik der Neuzeit: 1. Band 1500–1640* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag [Günther Holzboog], 1964), 359–439. All the original texts cited that are not available in modern editions or reproductions are available on the internet in digitized versions.

Early Jesuit Philosophers on the Nature of Space

Paul Richard Blum

1 Introduction

The philosophy of nature was studied by the early Jesuits in the form of commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics* and in those parts of the philosophy textbooks (*Cursus philosophicus*) that treated these issues on the model of Aristotle. The topic of space in those Jesuit Aristotelian works serves as a touchstone for the way Jesuits thought. It is hard to discuss the Jesuits' understanding of nature summarily precisely due to their meticulous discussions of nearly every fine point. Differences between the various authors are not advertised in broadsheet but worked out in inquiries on single topics and with respect to alternative solutions. The Jesuits' contributions to the history of scientific thought have frequently been studied. But there is a tendency in the literature to focus on Jesuit philosophy with the aim of demonstrating that the Jesuits were both Scholastic Aristotelians *and* modern scientists.¹ Rather than contributing to this historiographical agenda, the current chapter is instead concerned with how the Jesuits systematically developed a concept of space; it also explores the specific forms of thought that shaped their teaching. As such, I have tried to avoid qualifiers like new science, materialism, mathematization, and so on. Thus, the focus in this chapter is on the Jesuits' critical reception of authorities and their engagement with reality in theories and metatheories of knowledge.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the first three Jesuit physics textbooks and their arguments about space. As will become clear, the textbooks started with a close reading of Aristotle that was informed by the Scholastic interpretation as well as by recently available sources. The chapter will then compare a number of recurrent themes and the ways in which they were

¹ For literature, see Mordechai Feingold, ed., *The New Science and Jesuit Science: Seventeenth-Century Perspectives*, Archimedes 6 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003); Feingold, ed., *Jesuit Science and the Republic of Letters* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). There is no treatment of the Jesuits' philosophy of space in Daniel Garber and Michael Ayers, eds., *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). This study is a result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as project GA ČR 14-37038G, "Between Renaissance and Baroque: Philosophy and Knowledge in the Czech Lands within the Wider European Context."

From Probability to the Sublime(s): Early Modern Jesuit Rhetoric; an Anti-philosophy or an Alternative Path to a Modern Idea of “Truth”?

Anne Régent-Susini

Philosophy has often been conceived as opposed to rhetoric; indeed, the supposed tension between the active and the contemplative life has become a truism in Western thought. This apparent tension is reflected in the perception of the early modern humanists, who inherited the Greek Sophists' view of the importance of speech and rhetoric, which seemingly stood opposed to the importance medieval thinkers attached to dialectics and Scholasticism. And as they primarily considered themselves ministers of the Word, this particularly applies to the Jesuits and the emphasis they placed on the importance of preaching and the emotional effects of their speeches.¹ In doing so, the Jesuits seemingly rejected Scholasticism's opposition to the use of rhetoric: indeed, in the Jesuit *Constitutions*, good preaching is primarily defined by contrast to the Scholastic method: “[The Jesuits] will exercise themselves in preaching and in delivering sacred lectures in a manner suitable for the edification of the people, which is different from the scholastic manner.”²

The main sign of the preeminence of rhetoric over philosophy in the Jesuit tradition is contained in the widely influential curriculum the order designed for use in its colleges. The curriculum that was taught in the powerful network of Jesuit colleges established at the instigation of Popes Gregory XIII (r.1572–85) and Sixtus V (r.1585–90)³ not only shared in common Ignatius of Loyola's (c.1491–1556) *Spiritual Exercises* but also two major pagan authorities: first, Aristotelian science and philosophy, at the very moment when Aristotelianism

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- 1 See, for instance, the long and influential *Orator Christianus* (1612) by Jesuit professor of rhetoric at Rome, Carlo Reggio (1540–1612), which, like so many post-Tridentine preaching manuals, emphasizes the importance of emotional persuasion.
 - 2 Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George E. Ganss (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 201.
 - 3 See, for instance, Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia: Jesuit Educational Strategy, 1553–1622* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 159–60.

Analytical Index

1 Principles

1.1 Unitas/uniformitas doctrinae

See all references to C1a, 1550–58 | TR, Polanco, 1547–48 (*Const.* I, 275–76) | C1b, 1550–58 | EP, Polanco to Fernandes, 1551 (*Epp. ign.* III, 502–3) | TR, Ledesma, 1564–65 (*Mon. paed.* II, 474, 477, 478) | TR, Polanco, 1565 (*Pol. compl.* I, 560) | CP, Naples, 1568 (*Mon. paed.* III, 27) | CP, Sicily, 1568 (*Mon. paed.* III, 29) | EP, Mercurian to Borja, 1569 (*Mon. paed.* III, 455) | CP, Rome, 1572–73 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 220–21) | EP, Ledesma to Mercurian, 1574 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 196–204) | CP, Upper Germany, 1576 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 281) | DE, Hoffaeus to all German provinces, 1577 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 703–4) | CP, Naples, 1581 (*Mon. paed.* VII, 288) | TR, Roman Jesuits, 1584 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 29, 30) | C7a, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* V, 13, 22) | TR, Tapia, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 75, 80) | TR, Tapia, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 269) | TR, Pr. Aragon, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 276) | TR, Pr. Rhenana, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 285)

1.2 Doctrina segura, solida, magis approbata

TR, Polanco, 1548–50 (*Reg.* 230; *Mon. paed.* I, 41) | C1b, 1550–58 | CO, I.2.1; I.3.11; X.3, 1550–1558 (*Const.* III, 8, 86, 272) | RS, Polanco, 1551 (*Mon. paed.* I, 75–76) | RS, 1555–56 (*Mon. paed.* I, 343) | TR, Nadal, 1556–68 (Nadal 1976, 387–88) | RS, Perera, 1564 (*Mon. paed.* II, 667, 677) | TR, Ledesma, 1564–65 (*Mon. paed.* II, 478) | TR, Polanco, 1565 (*Pol. compl.* I, 560) | TR, Nadal (regarding Évora), 1561 (*Mon. paed.* III, 78) | EP, Canisius to Borja, 1567 (*Mon. paed.* III, 416) | CP, Upper Germany, 1573 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 238–39) | EP, Ledesma to Mercurian, 1574 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 196–204) | CP, Upper Germany, 1576 (*Mon. paed.* IV, 282) | CP, Naples, 1581 (*Mon. paed.* VII, 288) | TR, Roman Jesuits, 1584 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 29) | TR, Roman Jesuits, 1585 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 41) | C7a, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* V, 22, 77) | TR, Pr. Rhenana, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 285) | TR, Tucci, 1589 (*Mon. paed.* VII, 33–39)

1.2.1 *sententia communis*

TR, Nadal (regarding Évora), 1561 (*Mon. paed.* III, 78) | RS, Ledesma, 1564 (*Mon. paed.* II, 487) | TR, Ledesma, 1564–65 (*Mon. paed.* II, 477, 478) | RS, Perera, 1564 (*Mon. paed.* II, 667) | C2, 1565 | TR, Morales (regarding Rome), 1578 (*Mon. paed.* III, 324) | C6, 1582 | TR, Roman Jesuits, 1585 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 41) | C7a, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* V, 77, 107) | TR, Tapia, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 75) | TR, Neapolitan Jesuits, 1586 (*Mon. paed.* VI, 60) | TR, Tucci, 1589 (*Mon. paed.* VII, 33–39)

Manuel de Góis: The Coimbra Course and the Definition of an Early Jesuit Philosophy

Mário S. de Carvalho

1 Introduction

Manuel de Góis (1543–97) was the leading figure behind the well-known editorial enterprise entitled *Coimbra Jesuit College Commentaries* (CJCC), or *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis Societatis Iesu*.¹ Published in Coimbra and Lisbon between 1592 and 1606, the eight volumes of the CJCC contain commentaries on Aristotle's philosophy (commenting on Aristotle was a custom common to all sixteenth-century European universities and a duty within the Jesuits' philosophical schools). Although usually known by the Latin formula "Conimbricensis," which is derived from the majority of the titles that make up the CJCC, the name is slightly misleading given that other philosophical works were also printed in Coimbra (namely by members of the St. Benedict College) and because other Jesuit authors, such as António Cordeiro (c.1640–1722), for example, published their own *Cursus philosophicus Conimbricensis*.²

Góis joined the Society of Jesus on August 31, 1560 at the age of seventeen. After completing his philosophical and theological studies at the Jesuit University of Évora, he taught Latin and Greek in the towns of Bragança, Lisbon, and Coimbra (1564–72). In 1574–78 and 1578–82, Góis taught two courses of philosophy at Coimbra.³ This experience may have acted as a catalyst to him assuming a prominent role in the CJCC, which also benefited from the contributions of three other Portuguese Jesuits. When Góis died, Cosme de Magalhães (d.1624) wrote an appendix to the volume on *De anima*, entitled *Problems Related to the Five Senses*, and Baltasar Álvarez (d.1630) wrote another appendix to the same volume, the *Treaty on the Separated Soul*. Finally, Sebastião do Couto (d.1639)

1 António Manuel Martins, "The Conimbricenses," in *Intellect et imagination dans la philosophie médiévale/Intellect and Imagination in Medieval Philosophy/Intelecto e imaginação na filosofia medieval, Actes du XI^e Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale de la S.I.E.P.M. (Porto, du 26 au 31 août 2002)*, ed. Maria Cândida Pacheco and José Francisco Meirinhos (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 101–17.

2 António Cordeiro, *Cursus philosophicus Conimbricensis* (Lisbon: Regia Deslandesiana, 1714).

3 Rodrigues 1938b, 115–22.