

**MISSION MOSTLY ACCOMPLISHED:
NARRATIVES OF JESUIT SUCCESSES AND FAILURES
IN HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA, 1640-1772¹**

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Among the many entries appearing in the *Catalogus Studiosorum* of the Jesuit university in Kassa, which was founded in 1657 and which continued with a few interruptions under the direction of the Jesuits until 1773, four stand out. On 28 August 1724, Adalbertus Fabiani, a *Principista*, or student in one of the lower classes of the school, was killed by a “guardian of the plums” (*occisus a custode prunorum*) over an undisclosed sum of money.² In July of 1740, a few months before the commencement of the War of Austrian Succession, Andreas Cetto left the *Grammatista* class (also one of the lower classes) to join the Imperial army as a drummer boy.³ At about perhaps the same time Antonius Lerman, who in 1739-1740 had been a second-year theology student, died while attending plague victims in Nagyvárad.⁴ Finally, next to the name of Joannes Geger, who appears in the *Catalogus* for the 1723-1724 academic year as a first-year theology student (as an *externus* or non-Jesuit) is a notation written in a second hand that he had left the priesthood and married. Next to this notation is a single word in a third hand: “mortuus” (dead).⁵

Four different students, four different fates: the recording of these data suggests some of the successes, challenges, and failures that the Society of Jesus encountered in Royal Hungary and Transylvania during the more than two centuries it was active in the region. The worldwide Jesuit enterprise sought, during the first period of its history, between its creation in 1540 and its suppression in 1773, to convert, educate, influence, and to some degree control the populations which it came in contact with. Jesuits also

¹ I would like to acknowledge the staffs of the library of the Benedictine Archabbey of Pannonhalma and the City Archives of Kassa, Slovakia, for their assistance in the preparation of this essay.

² *Catalogus Studiosorum Almae et Episcopalis Academiae Cassoviensis Societatis Iesv ab anno MDCLXXXIII*, Archiv 216, folio 94r, Mesta Košice (AMK hereafter).

³ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 134v, AMK.

⁴ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 131v, AMK.

⁵ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 92r *et passim*, AMK.

endeavored to foster and perpetuate their institutional culture, and to promote the values of that culture in the broader society through various means.⁶ In doing so, the Jesuits by the mid-17th century had become the single most significant cultural and educational force in the world.⁷

In Royal Hungary, where the Society arrived in 1561, Jesuits faced especially daunting obstacles to their program. This was not merely because Calvinism and, to a lesser degree, Lutheranism were deeply engrained in the culture of the towns where Jesuits attempted to establish schools and programs of conversion. The connection between the Society and the House of Austria also provoked suspicion among the independent burghers and aristocrats of the region, while peasants in some districts had to be forcibly brought back to the Catholic fold. Moreover, the Jesuits' undeniable complicity in the "Bloody Assizes" of Eperjes in 1687 guaranteed that the hostility of a significant segment of the population would far exceed the usual inter-confessional enmity and instead crystallize into a hatred of the Society as an instrument of oppression, torture, and enslavement. The legendary cruelty of Father Nicolaus Kelio in the interrogation of prisoners became part of the collective memory of the Calvinist community of the region.⁸ To the southeast in Transylvania, Jesuits faced similar resistance from Calvinists, plus the challenges of supporting a Greek-Catholic or Uniate Church in the face of opposition from Orthodox believers.⁹

Add to this mix the lurking horror of the plague,¹⁰ periodic incursions by Turkish and Tartar forces, the regular threats of famine, flood, drought, diseases decimating livestock populations, the inevitable fires,¹¹ and even the occasional earthquake,¹² and there were innumerable chances for tragedy and setbacks to the Jesuit program.¹³ Yet the

⁶ See also Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 159-160; 211-12.

⁷ Specifically, John Bossy locates "the height of Jesuit influence in the Empire between 1560 [a strikingly early date] and 1630." John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.

⁸ Jan Kvačala, *Dejiny reformace na Slovensku [Podelová kniha Hurbanovej ev. Literárnej spoločnosti na rok 1935 číslo 33]* (V Lipt. Sv. Mikuláši: Nákladom spolku Trnocius. Tlačené v knihtlačiarňi Bratrov Ráuzsovcov, 1935), 240.

⁹ Paul Shore, *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in Eighteenth-century Transylvania* (Aldershot; Rome: Ashgate; Institutum Historicum S. I., 2007), 27-54.

¹⁰ Plague struck Hungary and Transylvania 17 times between 1640 and 1711. Ágoston Gábor and Oborni Teréz, "17. század" in Szák Gyula (ed.), *A magyar újkor története* (Budapest: Pannonica, 2007), 75-139; here 100.

¹¹ *Historia Collegii Homonna-Vnghvariensis*, folio 48r; *Historia Residentiae Eperiensienis Soc'is Jesv ab Anno 1673 ad Annum 1756 inclusivè*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 42v, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Könyvtára (ELTEK hereafter).

¹² Gyenis András, "Régi jezsuita rendházak," <http://mek.oszk.hu/00000/00014/00014.htm> (accessed 2 April 2009).

¹³ The last Mongol invasion of Hungary occurred as late as 1717, when hundreds of prisoners were seized and held for ransom. Fogarassy Zoltán, "Az utolsó tatárjárás Magyarországon," *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi Szemle* 42, 1 (2007), 304-19; here 304. The entire Hungarian landscape was devastated in the seventeenth century. Royal Hungary had received savage treatment from its Habsburg rulers even before wars of "liberation" began in earnest after 1683. Robert John Weston

Tridentine, triumphalist ideology of the Counter-Reformation Society compelled Jesuit writers to compose a narrative in which virtue inexorably overcame depravity and indiscipline, the Church was victorious over her enemies, and Jesuits, by emulating their predecessors, perpetuated the transnational institutional culture of their Society.¹⁴ These narratives reveal both internal tensions as well as tensions among different narratives.

I

Several persistent themes may be identified in the narratives of Jesuit activity in the Habsburg East, a place of shifting frontiers and porous borders, all of which lay within the huge Austrian Province of the Society. These themes include: retribution, a complex and situationally derived set of definitions of success, the struggle for self-denial, and converging patterns of recorded Jesuit responses to both good and bad circumstances.

Given the Christian message of forgiveness, the emphasis on retribution in the Society's documents may be the most surprising to us today, but it has a long pedigree going back to the Old Testament. Jesuit polemics, homiletics, drama, and "official" record keeping such as *Diaria* and *Annuae* all report divine retribution for sacrilegious or impious acts.¹⁵ An anonymous Jesuit writing from Kolozsvár in Transylvania in the mid-17th century describes a Protestant preacher who dies shortly after debating a Jesuit, and a foolish peasant blinded after tossing a stone at a crucifix.¹⁶ But some of the most lurid accounts of retribution are reserved for men who left or were dismissed from the Society, or who never completed Jesuit training. The tone of some of these accounts stands in opposition to the attitude of the Society's Founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola, who took a relatively lenient and realistic view of the dismissal of future Jesuits in training.

Not so forgiving was János Nádasí, one of the most prolific and influential of Hungary's seventeenth-century Jesuits and confessor to Eleonora, the widow of Emperor

Evans, *Austria, Hungary and the Habsburgs: Essays on Central Europe c. 1683-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11.

¹⁴ Recent scholarship has applied discourse analysis to definitions such as "superstition" employed by Jesuits and others in the religious competition in the Habsburg East. See Maria Crăciun, "Superstition and religious differences in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Transylvania" in Eszter Andor and István György Tóth (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith: Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400-1750* (Budapest: Central European University / European Science Foundation, 2001), 213-31; here 217.

¹⁵ Punishment for bad behavior colors religious discourse throughout Hungary and Transylvania during this period. Graeme Murdock, "Death, Prophecy and Judgment in Transylvania," in Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206-22, here 220.

¹⁶ Paul Shore, "Fragmentum annuarum Collegii Societatis Iesu Claudiopolitani: The Account of a Jesuit Mission in Transylvania, 1659-1662," *Renaissance and Reformation Review* 8.1 (2006), 76-96; here 86. Since the document in which these miraculous events were recorded was not intended for circulation, even within the Society, we may suppose that the Jesuit writer believed implicitly in the account he was composing.

Ferdinand III.¹⁷ Nádasí's unpublished manuscript, entitled *Tristes annuae Desertorum* ["The Misfortunes of Those who Deserted"], makes it clear what could happen to a man who turned away from the Society. Here are a few of Nádasí's more lurid examples. Lucas Komenski, a Jesuit brother in Nagyszombat, then only a short distance from the Ottoman frontier, spoke disrespectfully to other brothers (he called them "cobblers") and to novices alike, and was dismissed from the Society. The errant former Jesuit was then rumored to have taken up with a deserter from the Franciscans, and while leading a vagabond's life he was robbed of his money, his clothes, and his weapons, wounded in the head and left to die.¹⁸ Another Jesuit dropout died suddenly in Kassa while writing letters critical of the Society.¹⁹ Georgius Miller, in Pozsony in 1655 to attend the coronation of Leopold I, suffered arguably the most ignominious fate of all. Miller was present at a presumably wine-fueled conversation about the relative merits of Hungarians and Austrians (Miller was Austrian) which grew heated and degenerated into a brawl, whereupon Miller drew his sword and wounded several *famuli* or servants. Enraged Hungarian nobles pursued him, and although Miller found temporary refuge in a local aristocrat's house, he was soon back on the streets where his adversaries cornered and killed him. Eyewitnesses reported that Miller was not even able to cry out the words "Jesu Maria," the standard exit line of Catholic martyrs of the day.²⁰ Miller's swordplay may mean that he had already left the Society when his fatal encounter occurred (although another Jesuit made good use of his sword—but more about him in a moment).

The stories of these erring ex-Jesuits or almost-Jesuits are intended to convey more than condemnation of those who leave the Society. They also describe retribution for indiscipline, self-indulgence, worldliness, and the "wrong kind" of sensuality (which may also be inferred in the descriptions in the Kassa *Catalogus* of former clergy who are reported to have "died in marriage": after all, eventually all of the university's former students died!)²¹ While the Society demanded extreme mobility, physical effort often to the point of exhaustion, and initiative tempered by obedience, restraint and self-control were also key elements of Jesuit culture. Preoccupation with the potential loss of self-control suffuses the writings of Baroque Jesuits, and in part explains the need to identify the consequences of indiscipline. This indiscipline contrasts with the successful self-discipline described in Jesuit hagiographies, such as those devoted to the Bohemian St. Joannes Nepomucene, who refused to break the seal of confession and was then killed.²² Moralizing

¹⁷ Johann Nepomuk Stoeger, *Scriptores Provinciae Austriae Societatis Jesu*. (Vienna: Typis Congregationis Mechitharisticae, 1855), 239-40; Wix Györgyné, *Régi Magyarorsági Szerzők. I. A kezdetektől 1700-ig*, ed. and intro. P. Vásárhelyi Judit (Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, 2007), 562.

¹⁸ Joannes Nadasi, *Tristes annuae Desertorum*, 118.F 2, 330-31, Pannonhalmi Főapátsági Könyvtár (PFK hereafter).

¹⁹ Nadasi, *Tristes annuae*, 118. F2, 266, PFK.

²⁰ Nadasi, *Tristes annuae*, 118. F2, 382-383, PFK.

²¹ Nadasi mentions a Transylvanian noble who left the Jesuit novitiate in 1633 and married. A thief broke into his house had stabbed him to death with a lance. Nadasi, *Tristes annuae*, 118. F2, 344-345, PFK.

²² Paul Shore, "The Several Lives of St. John Nepomuk," in J. Chorpenning (ed.), *He Spared Himself in Nothing": Essays on the Life and Thought of John N. Neumann, C. Ss. R., Fourth*

school dramas and emblematics also stressed this theme—think of the hardworking bees and industrious blacksmiths found in some of these images.²³ Thus while an unmistakable flavor of *schadenfreude* lingers in some of the Jesuit accounts of retribution falling upon blasphemers and the like, the Jesuit exaltation of self-discipline also derived from the concrete fact that many of the Society's startling successes were the result of just such self-discipline.

II

The Society of Jesus, from its inception, contrasted itself from both the older contemplative orders and with orders that cultivated their identity through collective ritual, such as the daily chanting of the Holy Office.²⁴ Contemporaries sometimes looked askance at what seemed to be the Jesuits' lack of demonstrated collective piety, but the absence of such rituals in the Society's life also meant that a sense of solidarity and relation to the physical world would have to be found elsewhere. The Society addressed these human needs, perhaps unintentionally, through its work in the world, and these activities inevitably brought its members contact with those who would live all their lives in the wider secular world. Among these were the majority of the students in Jesuit schools, which brings us to Andreas Cetto, the drummer boy. We cannot know what motivated the Jesuit record keeper to note that this young student left the Kassa academy to seek a very dangerous and possibly lethal path as an unarmed member of an Imperial regiment. We can begin to contextualize the shift in setting from the potentially sacred and generally safe and patterned world of the Jesuit school to the profane, chaotic, and deadly environment of the battlefield. And we can speculate as to what such a departure might have meant to the Kassa Jesuit community. Historians of the Jesuits, addressing the relation of the Society to the physical and material, have tended to focus on the plastic arts, on architecture, and, to a lesser degree, on play production and the printing of books. Less well known or understood is the relationship between Jesuits and the pre-industrial world of artisans, craftsmen, and laborers. In fact, the Society's communities across Europe were staffed with Jesuit brothers or *coadjutores temporales*, who filled the roles of pharmacist, stone mason, printer, carpenter, barber, silversmith, architect, musical instrument builder, tailor, bookkeeper, and many others.²⁵

Bishop of Philadelphia, on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of his Canonization (Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2003), 3-24.

²³ Staud Géza, *1561-1773* 3 vols. (Budapest: Magyar Könyvtár, 1988); Yasmin Annabel Haskell, *Loyola's Bees: Ideology and Industry in Jesuit Latin Didactic Poetry* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2003); *Imago Primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu a Provincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata...* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1640).

²⁴ John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA / London: Harvard University Press, 1993), 135-36.

²⁵ P. J. Shore, "The Unknown Brethren of Cluj: Jesuit *coadjutores temporales* in the Heart of Transylvania, 1690-1773," *Historical Yearbook* 5 (2008), 3-12.

In the earliest days of the Society, brothers had been forbidden to be taught to read and write. Over time this regulation was gradually ignored and then dropped, and many Hungarian brothers in the course of their careers performed both numerate and literate and more physically applied tasks that kept Jesuit communities functioning.²⁶ While Jesuit priests earned a deserved reputation as intellectuals who scorned messy sciences such as medicine and preferred to study the distant stars, Jesuit brothers profoundly influenced the climate of their communities, and, by association, the atmosphere of the schools associated with them. They did this both through their roles as workers in the material world and through their piety, which, as their obituary notices (composed by Jesuit priests) illustrate, was often highly visible within their community. This connection to practical work and applied skill was reinforced by close connections between Jesuits and non-Jesuit craftsmen and professionals. An enigmatic entry in the *Diarium* of the Kassa residence for 5 August 1702 reports that the community sent “our doctor” to an officer who had been wounded in a duel with another soldier.²⁷ Records for the Kassa Jesuit community list no “medicus” among its personnel, so the exact relationship between doctor and community in this case must remain a mystery. A similar hint of close association with the medical profession is found in the *Diarium* of the Kassa community for 9 May 1673 where the redoubtable Father Franciscus Topos (who ten years later would die a prisoner of Imre Thököly’s troops) is grouped with the residence’s apothecary and an unnamed “chirurgus” who was apparently not a Jesuit.²⁸

While Jesuit brothers went about the business of executing their crafts, students in Jesuit schools frequently moved into similar craft occupations. Joannes Lenkes, a *Grammatista* in Kassa in 1731-1732, became a wagon driver; his classmate, Josephus de Stegner, became a soldier.²⁹ Joannes Linter, in the *Principista* class of 1724-1725, eventually left school to become a surgeon or chirurgus (a craft also pursued by Jesuit brothers),³⁰ while Joannes Pigay became an “artifex.”³¹ For many the Jesuit educational program was a “drop-in, drop-out” experience never intended to lead to higher studies, a fact that must have been readily apparent to the fathers as they taught, and which they apparently did not consider a symptom of failure of either their students or themselves. Jesuit teachers would have argued that the self-discipline and morality gained in their schools benefited everyone.

But is it still a leap from the secular world of crafts, professions, and trades to the theatre of war—until we remember the many ways and activities in which the Jesuits of the Austrian Province and the Imperial armies intersected. The most conspicuous of these were

²⁶ Jesuit *coadjutores temporales* possessed varied and highly developed skills. Brother Paulus Benyo, who served in Eperjes, spoke four languages. *Historia Residentiae Eperiensiensis ad annum 1771*, Ms. I, Ab 91, folio 11r. Domincus Strassinger (1636-1694), a Jesuit brother who worked in half a dozen locations, was noted for his skill in Latin. *Elogia Defunctorum VII*, Ms. I, Ab 143, 130, ELTEK.

²⁷ *Diarium Collegii Cassoviensis*, Ms. I, Ab 86, folio 252v, ELTEK.

²⁸ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensiensis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 33v, ELTEK.

²⁹ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 112v, AMK.

³⁰ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 96v, AMK.

³¹ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 166r, AMK.

the *missiones castrenses*, in which Jesuits served as military chaplains.³² One of the most famous of these was Lucas Kolich, who was present at the siege of Buda in 1686, where he braved danger to administer last rites to the dying.³³ Another connection between the military and the Society was in the backgrounds of some of the Jesuit brothers who had followed the profession of arms before entering the Society.³⁴ Ignatius himself had been a soldier before receiving the wound at Pamplona that set him on the course to sainthood, and although the often repeated characterization of the Society as “military” in its organization is only at best partially accurate, in fact individual Jesuits could demonstrate a distinctly militant approach to adversity and could successfully combine martial arts with more literary pursuits.

Ladislaus Paulus Baranyi, who played a major role in the creation of the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania, exemplifies this melding of the Jesuit mission and martial skill. Baranyi was also a widely read author of devotional texts who traveled the backwoods of the Habsburg East in layman’s clothes and under an alias. One day, returning from giving the viaticum to a remotely situated Catholic, Baranyi was passing through the forest “with only one servant” (does this suggest that some Jesuits often traveled with several servants?) when he was set upon by “heretic (probably Calvinist) noblemen.” In response to their own threatening swords, Baranyi *drew his own sword* (did he usually carry a sword?), cut at his assailants, and they ran away.³⁵ This episode might be contrasted with the less self-disciplined and certainly less successful experience of Georgius Miller. On another occasion the intrepid Baranyi “rescued the inhabitants of an entire district” from a Tartar attack. The success of a particular Jesuit might therefore be defined on occasion by his demonstrated capacity for resistance, resourcefulness, and, when circumstances absolutely required it, martial skill. Jesuit obituary notices abound with stories of how Jesuits endured through times of danger (*periculum* is a constantly reiterated theme) and survive to go on to other accomplishments. To cite only one instance, Martinus Cseles, one of the pioneering historians of Medieval Hungarian history, was captured and carted from place to place by Rákóczi’s soldiers for more than a year but was eventually freed and returned to his scholarly and teaching pursuits.³⁶ Thus success might also be understood as the training of young men to conduct their lives with these same tools, along with the more polished skills of eloquence and good manners. Jesuits traveling incognito might also

³² Juhász István, “Nyugati missziós törekvések a románoknál,” in Deér József and Gáldi László (eds), *Magyarok és románok* 2 vols. [=A Magyar Történettudományi Intézet Évkönyve] (Budapest: Athanaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt. Nyomdája, 1973), 251-336, here 314.

adatbank.transindex.ro/html/alcim_pdf3488pdf (accessed 26 March 2009).

³³ Matthias Tanner, *Societas Jesu Apostolorum Imitatrix* (Pragae: Typis Universitatis Carolo Ferdinandae, 1694), 940.

³⁴ Michael Klein (?-1679), a *coadjutor temporalis*, had been a soldier before entering the Society, although Satan placed obstacles in his path that caused him to fall into temptation and “prius saeculi delitias.” After penance, Klein was readmitted to the Society. *Elogia Defunctorum VIII*, Ms. I, Ab 144, 489b, ELTEK.

³⁵ Velics László, *Vázlatok a magyar jezsuiták múltjából*, Vol. 3: 1690-1773. (Budapest: A Szent István Társulat Kiadása, 1914), 9.

³⁶ Stoeger, *Scriptores*, 50.

disguise themselves as soldiers.³⁷ Viewed in this light, the departure of Andreas Cetto to the army would not have seemed so abnormal, since it might possibly lead to exposure to valor and victory.

On the other hand, what might seem to us as defeat could be recast in Jesuit narratives as success, through analogizing with other events or by the retelling of the story that placed emphasis on the depravity of the Society's opponents. In the spring of 1708 Joannes Pergauer was returning from Moldavia when in the Transylvanian town of Sibiu he was attacked by bandits and shot four times. While being transported on a cart he died, a mobile Jesuit to the very end. The account of Pergauer's death given in the *Litterae Annuae* of the Austrian Province for 1711—the previous two years had been filled with many disruptions in communication owing to the Rákóczi rebellion—characterize his assailants as wild and savage men, while Pergauer's wounds are described in terms reminiscent of Christ's.³⁸ The Jesuit's sacrifice is to be celebrated more than mourned, since the purpose of the Jesuit's life is to be a witness to the faith, and martyrdom is the ultimate act of witness. One of the most influential Jesuit publications of the late 17th century, Matthias Tanner's *Societas Jesu usque ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem*, was entirely devoted to the martyrdom of Jesuits and lavishly illustrated with scenes of their deaths, and thereby provided guideposts for the future composition of Jesuit sacrifice.³⁹ Deaths such as Pergauer's were thus not only acts of witness, they were also expressions of *aemulatio* of Jesuits who had gone before, and the retelling of each of their stories moved towards a point of convergence at which the essential virtues of the Society were confirmed and glorified. Less deadly but nonetheless harrowing experiences—such as that of Ladislaus Vlesnowski, who worked deep inside Ottoman territory in Andocs until he was shot in the foot by “criminals” and then somehow made his way to a nobleman's court where he distinguished himself as a preacher—added to the converging corpus of Jesuit lore with its themes of service, suffering, mobility, and eventual success.⁴⁰ Considering that vocations for the Austrian Province remained steady right up until 1773, these narratives of Jesuit sacrifice do not seem to have dissuaded potential Jesuits, and may have even inspired some young men to join the Society.

Returning to our students in Kassa, let us consider Antonius Lerman, the secular priest who died nursing plague victims, probably during the terrible year of plague of 1739. The entry recording Lerman's death is another piece of evidence of how Jesuits regarded success. Even though Lerman was not “one of Ours,” as the Society's records described Jesuits, the decisions that he made leading to his death as a *victima charitatis* show that not only had the Society managed to convey its basic values to one of its *externi* students, but

³⁷ An *articulus* of 1655, writing of the Jesuits, notes “[...] vestibis militaribus aut aliorum hominum latitant [...]” Péter Bod, *Historia Hungarorum Ecclesiastica* 3 vols. C Rauwenhoff and J. J. Prins eds. (Lugduni Batavorum: J. Brill, 1888-1890), tomus II, liber II, 321.

³⁸ Nicolaus Nilles, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris coronae S. Stephani* (Innsbruck: F. Rauch, 1885), 384.

³⁹ Matthias Tanner, *Societas Jesu ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem militans...* (Prague: Typis Universitatis Carolo-Ferdinandae 1675).

⁴⁰ *Catalogus Defunctorum IV*, Ms. I, Ab 140, 137, ELTEK; Ladislaus Lukács, *Catalog personarum et officiorum Provinciae Austriae S. I.*, vol. 2 [= *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*] (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1982), 787.

that this student had found the fortitude to carry out these values in life and in death. In his death Lerman emulated countless Jesuits, priests and brothers, who had also been *victimae charitatis*. Lerman not only gave his life in service to others, he also engaged directly with the physical manifestation of God's will, since for Counter-Reformation Jesuits the ultimate cause of diseases, especially the plague, was God.⁴¹

The interrelation of God's will with the experience of success and setback is found throughout Jesuit records, sometimes in a tone of a slight bewilderment as to the ways of the Almighty. But Jesuits generally tried to keep a stiff upper lip. The yearly report from Eperjes for 1736 ran through a short list of *damna* or misfortunes, and then concluded with the words, "But since all these things come from the thrice best and greatest God, let the glory be to him."⁴² While God was the ultimate source of all things, He did not always get the immediate credit for catastrophe: when a fire broke out on the roof of the Jesuit church in Kassa on a June day in 1701, and spread rapidly, destroying fifty burghers' houses, the writer of the community's *Diarium* observed, "The common opinion is that the fire was started by a *malevolus*" (a person of ill will).⁴³ These slightly smaller misfortunes presented big challenges to Jesuit writers. While a spectacular martyrdom or even the extinction of an entire Jesuit missionary project, such as occurred in Japan in the late 16th century, could be woven into the larger story of the Society emerging triumphant through times of severe testing, the daily and drawn out hardships of a mission post located in a none too prosperous corner of Europe resisted incorporation into a heroic narrative, and instead invited subjective and emotionally tinged responses.⁴⁴ These difficulties were often accompanied by the inevitably disappointing actions by a few of the students of Jesuit schools.

The death of young Adalbertus Fabiani in an obscure quarrel over money is such an instance of failure and disappointment. A less extreme example of an undoubtedly disappointing outcome is the case of Michael Hamiel, a student among the *Minores* in 1734-1735, who was expelled from the Kassa school for thievery ("ejectus ob furta[m]").⁴⁵ Kassa University records also report the death of a student at another student's hands during the 1672-1673 academic year, a case which the university rector sought to have tried

⁴¹ It should be noted that while this assertion can be made with certainty for the seventeenth century, it is at least possible that by the 1730s some Jesuits in Western Europe might have begun to move away from this absolutist position. For Jesuits of the Austrian Province, however, we may be quite certain that they saw all disease as God's doing. A variation on this theme occurs in the obituary notice of Franciscus Janesco, a scholastic in Kassa who died in 1772, which states that "it pleased the Most Holy Mother [of God] to summon him to his reward." *Annuae Collegii Cassoviensis Societatis Iesv, 1735-1772*, Ms. I, Ab 89, folio 169r, ELTEK.

⁴² *Historia Residentiae Eperiensienis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 65v, ELTEK.

⁴³ *Diarium Collegii Cassoviensis*, Ms. I, Ab 86, vol. 2, folios 208v-209r, ELTEK. See also Wick Béla, *A jezsuita rend története Kassán* (Bratislava-Pozsony: Concordia Könyvnyomda és kiadóvállalat, 1931), 18.

⁴⁴ The decision of the Austrian commander in Belgrade to use a Catholic church as a granary prompted Ignatius Perizhoff to write in 1689 to the Primate of Hungary, "God does not have a home in Belgrade." Quoted in Mijo Korade, Mira Aleksić and Jerko Matoš, *Jesuits and Croatian Culture* [=Most / The Bridge, a journal of Croatian Literature, vol. 15], Anita Peti trans. (Zagreb: Društvo Hrvatskih književnika, 1992), 103.

⁴⁵ *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 120r, AMK.

in academic court.⁴⁶ The anonymous author of the *Historia* of the Eperjes residence expressed more personal feelings, possibly tinged with a non-Hungarian's negative views of Hungarians, regarding students when he described the situation in 1704, when the Rákóczi rebellion was at its height. Several of the middle-level classes had been cancelled since "the students seem to prefer the gunpowder of their homeland over academics. And as for the few who remain in school, they are disgusting to the Muses."⁴⁷ Crises of this nature posed the greatest challenges to the Jesuit imperative to create a triumphalist and edifying narrative, since they not only pointed to a failure of the educational program of the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 to inculcate the proper morals in students, but in the first three cases mentioned, also raised the possibility of *scandalum*, an anathema to Jesuits. Two of the great preoccupations of 17th-century Jesuits were *scandalum* and *pacem cum externis*;⁴⁸ the latter could be cultivated through longstanding contacts and negotiations that might calm even adversaries, but the latter might strike unexpectedly, and from within, furnishing fuel for the Society's enemies, who never ceased to produce literature accusing the Jesuits of everything from regicide to the seduction of widows and innocent girls.⁴⁹

In fact, persisting anxiety about *scandalum* and insecurity about possible failure formed the inverse of Jesuit triumphalism; the tension between these two polar opposites created an environment in which the cultivation of *indifferentia* might prove very helpful.⁵⁰ *Indifferentia* could protect a Jesuit from the dangers of vanity in the face of success (although the Society's critics charged that Jesuits were still quite susceptible to this vice). *Indifferentia* and the capacity to remain *immobiliter* also helped Jesuits cope with the frustrating lack of success of their schools, which might have nothing to do with the capacities of students. Plague in 1735 forced the closing of Jesuit schools in Kolozsvár; three years later the disease returned, perhaps reintroduced by the presence of an infected corpse.⁵¹ In 1645, the Nagyszombat University was struggling to recover from the ravages of war. The composer of the *Matricula* of the University noted "[...] it was very hard to begin the academic year. Peace is declared, but it is only the shadow of peace. We returned to the Muses, but the start of the school year had to be deferred until January."⁵²

And Jesuits could recognize the value of *indifferentia* when they encountered in it others; Paulus Beke, traveling in Moldavia in the 1640s, wrote approvingly of the hermits

⁴⁶ O. R. Halaga, "Z dejin košickéj university," *Historický časopis* 4 (1956) 521-535; here 529-30.

⁴⁷ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensienis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 21r, ELTEK.

⁴⁸ Letter of Vitus Sachta, S. I., Olomouc, 10 July 1606. *Historia Soc. 137*, folio 182r Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI hereafter).

⁴⁹ For an analysis of the most significant of these anti-Jesuit publications, see Sabina Pavone, *The Wily Jesuits and the Monita Secreta: The Forged Secret Instructions of the Jesuits: Myth and Reality*, John Murphy, SJ, trans. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005).

⁵⁰ The Jesuit curriculum of the *Ratio Studiorum* included attention devoted to *indifferentia* through the *Paradoxa* of Cicero. Timothy J. Reiss, "Revising Descartes: On Subject and Community" in Patrick Coleman, Jayne Lewis, and Jill Kowalik (eds.), *Representations of the Self from the Renaissance to Romanticism* (Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16-38; here 30.

⁵¹ *Historia S. J. Claudiopoli*, 2039 FMI/1608 folio 245v; folio 230r, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár.

⁵² Quoted in Mészáros István, "A nagyszombati jezsuita gimnázium és egyetem 17. századi anyakönyve," *Regnum: Magyar Egyháztörténeti Vázlatok. Essays in Church History in Hungary* 14, 1-4 (2002), 97-106; here 105.

there who avoided the conflicts between the Latin and Greek Christians.⁵³ These men seldom showed their faces, avoided meat, and grew lean through fasting. This retiring asceticism was something quite different from the better known exhibitionist self-mortification promoted by the Society in the form of flagellant processions and exposure to cold. But it resonated with a strain of inward-directed self-discipline and distancing from the distractions of the world also practiced by the baroque Society.

Self-discipline was both a means towards success and a demonstration of that success. Father Baranyi's long service in the Habsburg East was in part the result of an iron will wedded to an iron constitution. The story of his successful defense against multiple attackers became another chapter in the lore of a Society that had been founded by a Basque nobleman originally wishing to be a knight errant in the service of the Virgin. Far less swashbuckling but still worthy of mention in his obituary was the fortitude of Jesuit brother Laurentius Petrisch, who like a number of other Jesuits, was tempted by a woman described as a "Siren" but remained a steadfast "Ulysses" in the face of temptation.⁵⁴ (Two points to consider here. One, how do we know this story? It must have been initially recounted by Petrisch himself. And two, what does it say about the culture of the Jesuits that this particular episode and others like it would merit inclusion in obituary notices?) Self-discipline of the sort demonstrated by Petrisch addressed both the anxiety over *scandalum* and provided a model for Jesuits who found themselves in delicate situations with women.⁵⁵ Let us consider one more example from archival sources to illustrate this point. The setting is Eperjes, in 1696. A widow has been tormented by nightly infestations of an "incubus", a demon seeking to have sexual intercourse with her, and in this case taking the form of her deceased husband. With the help of a Jesuit priest the woman is freed from the demon, although she has to perform a public penance (implying she had failed to resist the demon?).⁵⁶

The following year another woman, a recent convert from Unitarianism, is similarly delivered from nocturnal demonic harassment in the same town.⁵⁷ Setting aside the unanswerable question of what each of these women may have actually been experiencing, we must consider that Eperjes was a small community of at most three thousand inhabitants, a place of face to face relationships, tightly twined kinship connections and probably incessant gossip. The news of these exorcisms would have traveled rapidly through the town, where many Protestants continued to regard the Jesuits

⁵³ Since Beke was once chained up in a barn as a result of a dispute with a local Moldavian official, he knew something about conflict between Latin and Greek Christians. Benda Kálmán, *Moldvai Csángó-Magyar Okmánytár 1467-1706* (Budapest: Magyarságkutató Intézet, 1999), 507.

⁵⁴ *Elogia Defunctorum IV*, Ms. I, Ab 140, 320, ELTEK.

⁵⁵ *Scandalum* could take other forms as well. The suicide in 1628 of the well known Jesuit traveler Nicolas Trigault was covered up by Jesuit officials. Dame Olwen Hufton, personal communication, 12 February 2009.

⁵⁶ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensienis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 6r, ELTEK. Demons were active on many sexual fronts. In seventeenth-century Transylvania, one was reported to have boasted how he had gotten a Calvinist pastor to fornicate with his own daughter. Tóth István György, "The Missionary and the Devil: Ways of Conversion in Catholic Missions in Hungary" in Andor and Tóth (eds.), *Frontiers of Faith*, 79-87; here 86.

⁵⁷ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensienis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 7r, ELTEK.

with contempt or hatred. Even devout Catholics might be easily persuaded that a Jesuit was transgressing by lingering about a woman's bed.⁵⁸ Discretion, conspicuous rectitude, and evident self-discipline were called for every step of the way, as they were in innumerable other situations, such as the conversion of a Roma woman who had previously been a Muslim (the *Historia* mentions that she abandoned the "green garment under which she concealed her sex"),⁵⁹ the presenting of a candle that had been blessed to a Muslim midwife in Transylvania,⁶⁰ or the reforming of a woman who had spent twenty years of sin among the Tartars.⁶¹ Each of these acts was not only an act of Christian charity; it was a performance of Jesuit virtue—a specifically masculine virtue, as there were no female Jesuits. This virtue was echoed the narratives of Jesuit school dramas and other performances which sought to redeem the Society's reputation from the thieves, would-be alchemists, dropouts, brawlers, and murder victims who had also been counted among their communities.⁶²

III

The Jesuits of the Habsburg East are identifiable as individuals, but time and time again the bureaucratic imperatives of the Society caused their individual stories to converge into a synthesized narrative which reflected not only the collective experience of Jesuits in the eastern Austrian Province but also the broader story of the Society, which saw its role as embracing the entire world and its goals no less than the salvation of entire peoples.

But the narratives of success and failure generated by Jesuits in the Habsburg East are also notable for what they do not address. Scientific investigations, descriptions of local cultures, and linguistic studies, all mainstays of Jesuit writings of the period, do not form an important part of this corpus.⁶³ The practical demands of extending and solidifying the position of the Roman Church took precedence over everything else. The east included a frontier between two worlds of literacy, but not one that challenged Jesuits intellectually,

⁵⁸ Lyndal Roper sees a "sexual logic" in exorcisms performed during this period by Catholic priests, since possessed women's behavior might also be perceived as excessively masculine. Admission of sexual experience with nocturnal demon might also fall under this category. Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religions in Early Modern Europe* (London / New York: Routledge: 1994), 190-91.

⁵⁹ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensensis*, Ms. I, Ab, 90, folio 12v, ELTEK.

⁶⁰ *Litterae annuae Provinciae Austriae 1662, Austria 142*, folio 186r, ARSI.

⁶¹ *Historia Residentiae Eperiensensis*, Ms. I, Ab 90, folio 16v, ELTEK.

⁶² Nadasi implicitly acknowledges the impact these "failed" Jesuits had on the culture of the Society when he mentions such rogues as Christophorus Seeman, who after his dismissal from the Jesuits dabbled in alchemy, denied he had ever been a priest, and connived to marry a young noblewoman. Nadasi, *Tristes annuae*, 118. F2, 347-48, PFK. Other internal scandals are only hinted at, as when in 1756 four "candidati Theologiae," all of whom were "Reverendi Domini" were dismissed from the Kassa University. *Catalogus Studiosorum*, 216, folio 152v, AMK.

⁶³ The eastern reaches of the Austrian Province of the Jesuits did serve as a point of departure for Jesuits journeying eastward, Joannes Grueber (1623-1680) being the most famous of these. C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia 1603-1721* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1924), 338; *Elogia Defunctorum IX*, Ms. I, Ab 145, 504, ELTEK.

and the engagement of Jesuits with Eastern Rite Christianity is likewise devoid of a significantly spiritual element.⁶⁴

The historian's task of teasing out the personal narratives of Jesuits from the converging historical records of the Society is made more complex by the histories of the Jesuits that were written following the re-establishment of the Society in 1814 and the commencement of the second period of its history. Much of the historical literature produced in the late-19th and early-20th centuries on the Society's earlier enterprises in Hungary was composed by Jesuits and their sympathizers working in an environment where the role of the Society was much smaller and its vision more circumscribed than it had been before 1773.⁶⁵ These writers frequently viewed the accomplishments of the earlier Society through the lens of later events, which included the radical reforms of Joseph II and the anti-clericalism of the French Revolution, and they chose to see its opponents as at best wrongheaded and the Jesuits themselves as victims of persecution (which on occasion they undoubtedly were).

At the same time some Protestant historians, now freed from the civil disabilities under which they had suffered through much of the eighteenth century, returned to the theme of Jesuit as persecutor and plotter (also a valid assessment on occasion, and one receiving fresh impetus from the anti-Jesuit lectures of Jules Michelet and the novels of Eugène Sue)⁶⁶ when writing the histories of their own churches. The development of competing national historical narratives in the last 150 years likewise has led to conflicts over who can claim the heritage of various Jesuits. Questions have arisen that had never been part of the original Jesuit or anti-Jesuit narratives. Was the Jesuit historian Samuel Timon a Hungarian or Slovak? How many Romanians attended the Jesuit university in Kolozsvár?

The recasting of what may be considered the "third" Society of Jesus in the mid-20th century in a more socially activist and ecumenical vein has encouraged Jesuit scholars to view these events from a fresh perspective, one more attuned to interactions between cultures and without an overwhelming Eurocentric bias, and has fostered an environment where non-Catholic scholars feel very welcome participating in dialogue with Jesuits about their past. We must now strive to glimpse the interplay between the individual careers of Jesuits and the larger ideology that both drew these men into the Society and then reshaped their identities. What remains most elusive 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 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.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Tóth István György, *Literacy and Written Culture in Early Modern Central Europe* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2000), 207.

⁶⁵ Szabó Adorján, *A kassai jezsuiták viszontagságai a Rákóczi-korban* (Kassa: Nyomatott a "Szent Erzsébet"-nyomda Részvénytársaságnál, 1909-1981 [?]), 7.

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Cubitt, *The Jesuit Myth: Conspiracy Theory and Politics in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁷ For example, Ines G. Županov notes that Ignatius of Loyola identified four epistolary writing modes, geo-ethnographic, dialogic, polemical, theatrical, and self-expressive, each of which would shape the organization and content of Jesuit writings. Ines G. Županov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit*

The evidence we do have suggests that the Jesuits of the Habsburg East had complex and at times seemingly conflicted responses to their successes and failures. Circumstances others might have characterized as obstacles appeared in Jesuit chronicles as, if not proofs of success, at least demonstrations of Jesuit virtues.⁶⁸ Armed with the self-discipline and intellectual categories learned in their formation and inculcated with an ideology that exalted the House of Austria as the champion of the Church, Jesuits were still capable of erecting a triumphal arch in Kolozsvár to Francis II Rákóczi, the Habsburgs' archrival, of expressing fear in the face of danger, and of penning letters filled with subjective sorrow and loneliness.⁶⁹ Future investigators of the Jesuit experience in this region must remain mindful of the tension between the architectonic academic and theological systems which defined the Society's mission and the equally real individual, human experiences of Jesuits that collectively formed the execution of that mission, for it is at the human level that Jesuits of Hungary made their most lasting impact.

Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-Century South India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 32. Jesuit literacy and inter-Jesuit correspondence may also be contrasted with the broader culture of the Habsburg Counter-Reformation which frequently placed less stress on books and reading and more on the arts. Karl Vocelka, "Enlightenment and the Habsburg Monarchy: History of a Belated and Short-Lived Phenomenon," in Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter (eds.), *Tolerance in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 196-211; here 197.

⁶⁸ Thus the story of a woman denouncing Jesuits during the 1683 siege of Vienna could be retold to confirm the constancy of the Jesuit preacher Fridericus Jellensiz. *Elogia Defunctorum VIII*, Ms. I, Ab 144, 440 ELTEK.

⁶⁹ Szirtes Zsófia, "Herkules és Diadalkapu: Illusztráció a Rákóczi-szabadságharchoz egy erdélyi kéziratban," *Művészettörténeti Értesítő. A Magyar Régészeti és Művészettörténet Társulat Folyóirata* 57.2 (2008), 303-12. As Rákóczi's troops approached Túrócz, an anonymous Jesuit wrote, "Eramus tota die et nocte, in vigiliis cum maximo timore [...]" *Diarium Residentiae S. J. Thuroszienis ab 1704*, 17 November 1709, Ms. I, Ab 111, folio 125r, ELTEK. Three years earlier in Sárospatak, facing the same army, a Jesuit wrote, "timor undiq." *Historia Residentiae Patakiensis S. J.* Ms. I. Ab 96, folio 86r, ELTEK. In 1650, Father Gregorius Ramasi reported from "Szatensis," "Nam inprimis residentia sit desolatissima, vinea neglecta, praedium vacuum et ruinosum [...]" *Informatio de Statu Transylvaniae et Spe Conversionis Austria 20, Missio Hungarica 1607-1633 et Transylvanica 1570-1650*, folio 360r, ARSI.