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FR. ALESSANDRO VALIGNANO. S. J.

(1539 1606)

WHO GREATLY INFLUENCED JESUIT LETTER-WRITING
AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE EAST

[After the portrait by N. Oddi]

JESUIT LETTERS AND INDIAN HISTORY

A Study of the Nature and Development
of the Jesuit Letters from India (1542–1773)
and of Their Value for Indian Historiography

by
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With a Preface by
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Cum permissu superiorum

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TO
MY MOTHER
AN ASSIDUOUS READER OF
JESUIT LETTERS
OF NO HISTORICAL VALUE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Some years ago, on being awarded the Sir Phirozeshah Mehta Research Scholarship by the University of Bombay, I chose for study the following subject: India and the Society of Jesus, a Systematic and Critical Study of All Jesuit Historical Sources. The theme was suggested by a paper on "Jesuit Letters and Accounts," read by the Rev. H. Heras, S. J. at the session of Indian Historical Records Commission held at Mysore in 1942. My original plan was very ambitious. The complete work was to be made up of five main parts: a critical estimate of the documents; a biographical study of the authors; a complete list and account of all their historical writings, the whereabouts of the latter, translations, etc.; an exposition of the information contained in them that was relevant to Indian history; indices of names, places, and main events.

It is often the case with research work that the more one delves into a subject, the more one realizes its vastness and complexity. So was it in this instance. After having spent a long, long time in perusing Jesuit documents concerning Indian history, I still cannot claim to have read all those that are extant. This, it is true, has only served to convince me the more of the importance and necessity of such a study. But then was I to go on hunting forever, never coordinating what I had gathered?

"The ideal complete and perfect book that is never written," says Sir Charles Oman in his work *On the Writing of History*, "may be the enemy of the good book that might have been written." Realizing this, I decided to take a much more limited subject for my thesis for the Ph. D. Among the Jesuit documents, the letters sent by the missionaries to their superiors, colleagues,

relatives and friends, claim a place of honour. These have become the subject of the present study.

While writers like Vincent Smith, C. H. Payne, Fr. H. Hosten and Sir Edward Maclagan, have done much to make Jesuit sources known to historians, none of them has given us a detailed study of the Jesuit Letters. Smith and Payne concerned themselves chiefly with secondary source like the Jesuit histories, while Maclagan's purpose was merely "to give in outline an account of the Jesuit connection with the Mogul empire." Fr. Hosten's main achievement was to make available to scholars historical material from the vast treasure-house of Jesuit documents. He published a number of the Jesuit Letters and allied writings in English translations, and some excellent essays on related topics. But he was concerned with Northern India only, for the most part, nor did he attempt a critical evaluation of the letters of which we speak.

It is this task that we have undertaken. While making good use of the Jesuit histories, we do not deal in great detail with these secondary sources in the present thesis. Again, the allied documents like the *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius* have been utilized, but neither are these our main concern.

This thesis claims to be one of the few studies hitherto made of sources of Indian history. It is a critical evaluation of a group of documents, not an exposition of newly-discovered historical facts nor history written on the basis of Jesuit sources. Its aim is fourfold:

1. To gauge the value of the Jesuit Letters for the historiography of India; and as a means to this, as well as for the benefit of the scholar who may like to go further into the matter,
2. To give a general idea of the nature of their contents and of their territorial range,
3. To indicate the historical works in which use has been made of them,
4. To point out the present whereabouts of the original Jesuit Letters, and the scope for further action with regard to their utilization.

In this connection it must be noted that the thesis does not purport to be an exhaustive guide to the Jesuit Letters and their contents. As will be shown in the course of it, new material is being continuously discovered and published, and consequently it is not feasible to prepare such a guide at the present stage. It is hoped, however, that by establishing the historical value of the Letters an incentive may be given to further research in the subject, and to greater efforts to discover and to publish the doubtlessly large amount of hitherto hidden material.

The exposition of the thesis has been made as clear and concise as its nature and purpose made it possible. All the same, quotations and bibliographical references are liberally provided. This is done to make it possible for others to verify the statements in the text, as is expected of a scientific work, and to suggest further readings to those interested in the subject. It must be noted that quotations from non-English sources have been reproduced directly in their English translation, which has been made as literal as the sense of the text allows. Photographic copies of original documents in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus and in the British Museum, available at the Indian Historical Research Institute, have been utilized; but these were neither important nor numerous enough to warrant special mention in the Bibliography, particularly since some of the documents had already been published by Fr. Hosten.

All the above was written in June, 1953, before this thesis was submitted to the University of Bombay. After it was approved, early in 1954, I had the good fortune to be able to spend a few weeks in Rome, working at the Jesuit Institute of History, with the Jesuit Archives next door. In the Institute I revised and improved my manuscript with the help of Frs. G. Schurhammer and J. Wicki, to both of whom I was already greatly indebted. Fr. Schurhammer has also very kindly written a Preface to this work.

Not the least pleasant aspect of my research has been the contacts it has enabled me to establish with scholars in India and abroad, whose ready helpfulness and courtesy convincingly

prove that there are fewer barriers in the intellectual world than in the political. Prof. G. M. Moraes, my teacher of college days, has again rendered me all the help I sought from him as my guide. The nature of my subject made it necessary for me to seek the assistance of several authorities on Jesuit and Portuguese history. Among those who were particularly helpful, besides the Fathers mentioned above, are Prof. C. R. Boxer of the London School of Oriental and African studies, Prof. M. Saldanha, formerly of the Lisbon University, Chevalier P. Pissurlencar, Archivist of the Government of Portuguese India, and, of course, Fr. H. Heras of the Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay. It is to Fr. Heras's inspiration and to the Library of the Institute that this work is almost entirely due. Many other brother-Jesuits too, and particularly Frs. A. Saulière, E. Hambye, J. H. Gense, A. Hetting and A. Conti, have given me much assistance and encouragement. Messrs. Maggs Bros., London, have supplied me with very useful information. To all the above, and to many other helpers of whom I cannot make individual mention, go my sincerest thanks.

I acknowledge my indebtedness to the University of Bombay for the grant-in-aid received by me from the University towards the cost of publication of this work.

In the Presidential Address to the 14th Session of the Indian History Congress held at Jaipur in December, 1951, Dr. G. S. Sardesai is reported to have said that for the National History of India, which was being eagerly looked forward to, "the first thing necessary was a diligent and intensive search for the original materials lying unknown and often uncared for both in and outside the country." If this study succeeds in drawing the attention of scholars to a good source of history that is among those that are less known and least utilized, the labour it entailed will not have been in vain.

JOHN CORREIA-AFONSO, S. J.

*Colegio de S. Francisco de Borja,
San Cugat del Vallés, Barcelona,
15th August 1954.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>A.H.S.I.</i>	<i>Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu.</i>
<i>B.S.O.S.</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution.</i>
<i>Doc. Ind.</i>	<i>Documenta Indica.</i>
<i>Ep. Xav.</i>	<i>Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta.</i>
<i>I.H.R.C.</i>	<i>Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings of Meetings.</i>
<i>J.A.S.B.</i>	<i>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.</i>
<i>J.B.H.S.</i>	<i>Journal of the Bombay Historical Society.</i>
<i>M.A.S.B.</i>	<i>Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.</i>
<i>N.Z.M.</i>	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft.</i>

PREFACE

Already in 1931 at the International Congress of Orientalists in Leyden, and in 1932 in the Preface to my book *Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und seiner Nachbarländer zur Zeit des hl. Franz Xaver (1538–1552)*, I showed the importance of the Portuguese archives for the history of India in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Besides the general and particular Histories and the official documents contained in the 1100 volumes of the Royal Chancellery and elsewhere, there are before all the original letters from India. About 90,000 of them are contained in the two collections *Corpo Chronologico* and *Gavetas* of the National Archives, almost all of the 16th Century, not to speak of those preserved in other collections of the same archives, the Ajuda, the National Library, the rich *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* in Lisbon (Catalogue by Fitzler-Ennes, 1928), and the General Archives of Goa. The letters sent to India by the King, together with some answers received, are contained in the collection *Documentos Remettidos da India*, 302 volumes (of which 62 in Lisbon, the others in Goa); only a part of these have been published by the Academia das Ciências of Lisbon, 1880-1935, and by Cunha Rivara in the ten volumes of his *Arquivo Portuguez-Oriental*, Nova-Goa, 1857-76. The collection is composed of 12,318 documents, and they treat year by year of the chief events in India from 1584 to 1811.

These original letters (and among them some from the kings of Malindi, Kishn, Ormuz, Basra, Djazira, Gujarat, Bijapur, Cannanore, Tanor, Cranganore, Eddapalli, Cochín, Vadakkumkur, Kotte, Sitavaka, Kandy, the Maldives, Ternate, Gilolo, Pedir and Islam Shah) make it possible to check the Portuguese, and "much more" the Indian, chronicles. At

times a single letter is enough to disprove whole lists of kings, e. g. of Kotte and Cochin. It was only after I had published the original letters on Ceylon in 1928 that it became possible to write the true history of the island during the years 1539-52, and the author who wants to write the history of India between 1538 and 1552 will have to consult the 6000 letters and documents of which I gave the summaries in *Die Zeitgenössischen Quellen*.

There have been authors who either ignored or underrated the value of these letters. A recent writer even said that men like Martim Afonso de Sousa and the Portuguese conquerors without exception had little understanding of the real India, that lay beyond the reach of their coastal guns, and that they lived in completely unreal worlds. A few facts will be sufficient to show how false this statement is.

Of course they did not study the profound speculations of a Sankaracharya or a Ramanuja, nor did they ever read the verses of the Mahabharata or the Ramayana, or other sacred or learned works of the immense literature written in Sanskrit or other Indian languages. But about the political events in real India they were as a rule extremely well informed. The Portuguese *casados*, as they were married with Indian women, were in close touch with their Hindu neighbours. The governors had their fortresses and captains all along the Indian coast, and their ambassadors and informers in the various Indian courts. Before Martim Afonso de Sousa accompanied Bahadur into the interior of his kingdom he had got a most detailed report of the Sultan's expedition to Chitor and his defeat by Humayun, written by a Portuguese eye-witness and companion of the Sultan. Not less informed was his successor D. Joam de Castro. One example will suffice. In his war with the king of Gujarat and the Adil Khan of Bijapur, he sent letters to the Pathan king Islam Shah and his allies Darya Khan, Alam Khan and Ulugh Khan, and through his captain in Diu to the Rajput prince of Jakat in Kathiawar, and despatched his ambassador Tristram de Paiva, with 56 oxen loaded with sulphur, armour, steel caps, daggers and lances, to the court of Vijayanagar. Ten days after his arrival Paiva sent him a letter describing in every detail his solemn audience in the

palace of Sadasiva in the presence of the following important personages: Ramaraj, his brothers Tirumalaraj and Venkatadri, the Abyssinian captain Dillawer Khan, the king of Bankapur and all other captains and grandees, about sixty in number, and also the ambassadors of the Nizam-ul-Mulkh, the Imad-ul-Mulkh and the Qutb-ul-Mulkh. The letter continued to describe how Ramaraj in the presence of all these personages publicly praised the heroic battles of Castro in Cambay against Sultan Mahmud, in Dabul against the Adil Khan, and in Salsette against his captains, where he killed Salabat Khan; and then how Ramaraj, the day after the audience, told Paiva privately that he confided more in the friendship of the Portuguese governor than in that of all his other neighbours. The letter also stated that Ramaraj ordered at once victuals, wheat and grain to be sent from Tirakol, Bankapur and Chandraguti to Goa via Ankola, and that he had driven away the ambassador of the Adil Khan, who had offered an alliance. The friendship between the Hindu Emperors of Vijayanagar and the Portuguese in Goa, their natural allies against the powerful Muhammadan kings of the Deccan, was old, and the narrative of Paes (1520) and the chronicle of Nuniz (1525), published by Sewell in his *A Forgotten Empire*, show how well informed the Portuguese were not only about the actual political situation, but also about the culture and customs and history of Southern India.

Amongst the Portuguese sources the Jesuit Letters are of special importance. Their authors were as a rule well educated persons and many of them well acquainted with the languages and customs of India, like De Nobili, who studied Sanskrit at the Hindu university of Madura, Beschi, the great Tamil scholar and author of the classical *Tembavani*, Stephens, well-known through his classical Christian Marathi *Purana*, and Jerome Xavier, author of quite a number of Persian works, written for the court of Akbar. Frois, one of the most prolific letter-writers had an extraordinary passion for exact details: not satisfied with the description of Upper-Miyako and its neighbourhood in 1573 he gives also the names of 20 of the more important temples and of 60 villages burnt on this occasion, and in 1565 he describes with all their details the famous

buildings of the Japanese capital, whilst Almeida does the same with the temples of Nara.

The Annual Letters, according to instructions sent from Rome, gave regularly as an introduction to the religious events of each year also a detailed account of the political situation, so, e. g., for Japan till 1640, for Tonking and Annam for the years 1634-57, and in the same way also for Abyssinia, China and India. The great historical value of the Jesuit Letters is shown by the 15 volumes of Beccari for Abyssinia, for the Mogul Court by MacLagan's *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, and for the history of Vijayanagara by Fr. Heras's *The Aravidu Dynasty*.

The Jesuit Letters had this value from the beginning. The letters of St. Francis Xavier to Mansilhas are our chief source for the war going on in 1544 between the Telegu Emperor of Vijayanagara and the Chera kings of Travancore on one side, and the Pandya kings of Tinnevely on the other; and the memorial about Japan which Xavier sent to Europe contained the first notice sent there about the Shinto religion and the birth, preaching and death of Buddha.

A critical edition of these Jesuit Letters — at present mostly unpublished, or published in extremely rare works, translated disfigured and shortened — is therefore one of the most urgent requisites for all occupied with oriental, and especially Indian, history. The task is not easy and not the work of a few years, considering the enormous mass of letters preserved and their dispersion in many places. The collection *Jesuitas na Asia* (copies of the documents in the Jesuit archives of Macao and Peking made in the 18th century) alone fills more than 60 bulky volumes, whilst the Goa section (India, Malacca and the Moluccas) in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus comprises 76 volumes (45 of which contain letters), the Far East section (Japan, China and Indo-China) 194 volumes (150 of these being formed by letters).

It was therefore with special pleasure that I read the diligent and critical study of the author about the Jesuit Letters and Indian History, and I hope it will draw the attention of Indian historians to this important source, hitherto badly neglected by too many writers.

Rome, 6th August 1954.

GEORG SCHURHAMMER, S. J.

INTRODUCTION

TRENDS IN MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY

University courses in the higher stages are today laying more and more emphasis on personal investigation, and the amount of written output in modern journals that claims to be the fruit of research work is indeed surprising. At times these studies do not merit the name of research, which has been defined as an "endeavour to discover facts by scientific study," or a "course of critical investigation"; rather they seem to deserve the gibe of the wit who said, "to copy from one book is called plagiarism, to copy from several is known as research"! Nevertheless, a lot of honest and earnest research work is being done, and in the field of history almost as much as in that of the natural sciences. It is not our task here to make an apologia for these scholarly labours, but a few words on the value of historical investigations will not be irrelevant to our thesis.

It may seem a trifle paradoxical to state that our inquiries into the past are made with an eye to the future, yet J. B. Bury, one of the greatest of English historians, stressed this very point in his Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge, in 1903, wherein he affirmed that the future development of man was the *raison d'être* of much of the laborious historical work undertaken by scholars. What is the spirit of this work? Bury tells us that the gathering of materials bearing upon minute local events, the collation of manuscripts and the registry of their small variations, the hours of patient toil in official archives, the microscopic research that is being carried on by armies of painstaking students—all this work, the hewing of wood and the drawing of water, has to be done in a spirit of faith: the faith that a complete assemblage of the smallest facts of human history

will tell in the end. And the eminent historian then declares the purpose of this work:

The labour is performed for posterity—for remote posterity; and when, with intelligible scepticism, some one asks the use of the accumulation of statistics, the publication of trivial records, the labour expended on minute criticism, the true answer is: "That is not so much our business as the business of future generations. We are heaping up material and arranging it, according to the best methods we know; if we draw what conclusions we can for the satisfaction of our own generation, we can never forget that our work is to be used by future ages. It is intended for those who follow us rather than for ourselves, and much less for our grandchildren than for generations very remote." For a long time to come one of the chief services that research can perform is to help to build, firm and solid, some of the countless stairs by which men of distant ages may mount to a height unattainable by us, and have a vision of history which we cannot win, standing on our lower slope.¹

It may well be inquired further: what is the use of this vision of history, of the detailed knowledge of the past which research will provide? Does history really repeat itself? The answer is that the detailed knowledge of the past in no way enables man to predict infallibly the future, but just as certainly it can help him to understand better the present; such an understanding is, of course, an essential for effective and well-directed action. The historian's task is "to probe into and verify by every possible means the experience of mankind so that by seeing themselves in one dimension more men may gain a better understanding of what kind of creatures God fashioned them to be."²

The importance of historical research having thus been established, its effects on the writing of history may next be considered. Few historical works have stood the test of time, when regarded from the scientific as distinct from the literary point of view, and of no great period of the past can the claim be made that its definitive history has been written. History is being continually re-written—why? Four principal reasons may be noted: the errors and inadequacies of existing histories, the discovery of new material, the significant re-interpretation

1. J. B. Bury, Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge, January 1903, in *English Historians*, with an Introduction by A. J. Grant (London, 1906), pp. 92-93.

2. Ross J. S. Hoffman in the *Catholic Historical Review*, 36 (1951) 450, quoted by William Lucey, "Observations on Recent American Historiography," *Historical Bulletin* (St. Louis), 29 (1951) 26.

of old material, and the shifting attitudes and viewpoints in regard to the past.³ The evident connection between these factors and research work will become clearer still as we proceed to review briefly some recent developments in historical method, i.e., in the body of principles and rules designed to help us in garnering the source-materials of history, evaluating them critically, and presenting a synthesis of the results achieved.

A recent work on historical methodology attributes the present state of this science to several causes,⁴ among which we pick out the following as being most relevant to our theme: first, the influence of Leopold von Ranke, who insisted so much on the value of official documents, and next, the publication of elaborate collections of source materials. It is an undeniable fact that in the 19th century the science of history underwent a revolution. The machinery of research was perfected, and both individual scholars and learned associations produced from archives collections of material to be worked up into the artistic form of history. Since the present thesis purports to be a study of Jesuit documents on Indian History, it behoves us to examine a little more closely Ranke's contribution, with a brief reference to the science of documents, nowadays called "diplomatic."

In 1824 Leopold von Ranke published his *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations from 1494 to 1519*, a work which has been acclaimed as inaugurating the critical period of historiography. Already in 1821 there had been founded in Paris the "École des Chartes" for the study of archives, especially the national collections; but it was Ranke, "the father of modern scientific history," who established "the cult of the document." In his opinion—and this has prevailed—modern history would no longer have to be founded on the reports even of contemporary historians, except in so far as they were in possession of personal and immediate knowledge of facts, still less on works yet more remote from the source, but on the narratives of eye-witnesses, and on the genuine and original documents.⁵

3. Gilbert J. Garraghan, *A Guide to Historical Method* (New York, 1948), pp. 412-420.

4. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.

5. Cf. James Brodrick, "1688 and All That, or History Through Liberal Spectacles," *The Month*, 167 (1936) 205-215, where Ranke is quoted and his view maintained.

The great German historian stressed the importance of basing history on new and hitherto unpublished archival material, specially in the form of diplomatic and other official documents, and rightly so, because recourse to first-hand material is indeed the fundamental rule of all scientific work. Much of the perverted history of the past owes its origin to the unscholarly if time-saving device of passing on statements obtained at second- or third-hand, without checking them even when this could be done with ease, and often without mentioning their purloined origin.⁶

It must be admitted, however, that there is some truth in the remark that the cult of the document has at times turned into idolatry. Equally objectionable is the tendency to think that the more ancient a work, the more truth about the distant past it must necessarily contain. Prof. Renier relates an amusing anecdote which will illustrate this point. The 16th century French priest, Abbé Barthélmy, had in his youth known an erudite cleric who possessed a vast library. This venerable scholar talked about the Parthians, whose arrows, according to him, flew so fast that their metal heads melted in the air owing to friction-heat. The young Barthélmy could not swallow that one, and ventured to express a doubt, whereupon his friend reached for an ancient Greek tome and read aloud the passage in which the story was told; then he put away the book with the words, "that settles it."⁷

Referential hoariness of age is by itself of no avail in settling any moot point in history! It is not antiquity that is the criterion of truth, but objective evidence; sometimes a comparatively recent critical source can be more accurate and reliable than an old and contemporary one. Besides, antiquity gives rise to the problem of authenticity, and it is to solve this problem that a new auxiliary science has arisen, that of diplomatic.

Diplomatic is the science of documents and investigates their date, place of origin, and authenticity. But what is a docu-

6. In the third lecture on *The Present Position of Catholics in England*, John Henry Newman exposes the facile manner in which misstatements of facts are passed on from one historian to another.

7. G. T. Renier, *History, Its Purpose and Method* (London, 1950), p. 147.

ment? Without restricting its meaning too much, one may say that it is any original record, public or private, official or unofficial, printed or unprinted.⁸ Historical scholarship after Ranke has come to depend more and more on archival and original documents, i.e., documents beyond which one cannot go for some particular data. The great historian's unearthing of diplomatic papers in the Venetian archives was a turning point in historical methodology, for it led him to draw the attention of scholars to the importance of having a solid documentary basis for their historical works, though he himself was not always free from a partisan bias. It is clear that this importance can be exaggerated, but neither must it be overlooked.

One of the causes of the re-writing of history, as has been said before, is the change of viewpoints with regard to the past. The style of writing history—we do not refer to literary style—changes, because the questions which society asks the historians are themselves apt to change, as the focus of interest shifts. There was a time when “battle-history” was much in vogue, and military events were the chief theme of historians. In those days—greatly to the schoolboy's despair and ruin!—history texts specialised in lists of dates of important events, generally wars or legislative enactments. The great Ranke himself clung to the idea of political history, *Staatengeschichte* as the Germans call it. It has been remarked that his classicism led to his great limitations as an historian. He did not deal with the history of the people, with economic or social questions; he had a more exalted conception of history. Writing in the manner of Thucydides and Gibbon, rather than that of Macaulay and Taine, he concerned himself chiefly with the great men of the world, and limited his field to the history of the State.⁹

To day we take a more comprehensive view, bearing in mind the “*nihil humanum a me alienum puto*” of the ancient sage. Accordingly, history is now defined as “the science which first investigates and then records, in their causal relations and

8. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

9. “Ranke”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed., New York, 1911), XXI, 894.

development, such past human activities as are (a) definite in time and space, (b) social in nature, and (c) socially significant."¹⁰ The emphasis is on the social aspect, and history is becoming more and more concerned with the totality of men's experiences in the past, all of which have affected in some way or other, and to a greater or lesser extent, social life. There is a pronounced tendency to throw down all barriers to the universal reach of history in its specific field of past human experience, and to abandon the conventional but arbitrary blocking off of history into periods.

This tendency is becoming increasingly evident in the general histories that are being published in our own day. In English historiography a landmark in the transition from the political to the social point of view was the publication of J.R. Green's *Short History of the English People* in 1874. In his preface to the book, the author declares:

I have preferred to pass lightly and briefly over the details of foreign wars and diplomacies, the personal adventures of Kings and nobles, the pomps of courts, or the intrigues of favourites, and to dwell at length on the incidents of that constitutional, intellectual and social advance in which we read the history of the nation itself.¹¹

In the social sphere itself, great attention is being paid to moral and religious attitudes, and rightly so, for in the words of Carlyle, "It concerns us more to understand how man's moral well-being had been and might be promoted, than to understand in like sort his physical well-being; which latter is ultimately the end of all political arrangements," and this is the proper view to take, since "for man's true advantage, not the outward condition of his life, but the inward and spiritual is of prime influence."¹²

10. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

11. J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People* (rev. ed., London, 1916), p. ix.

Even before Green, Macaulay had declared: "The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity — these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely indicated by what historians are pleased to call important events. They are not achieved by armies or enacted by senates. They are sanctioned by no treaties and recorded in no archives. They are carried on in every school, in every church, behind ten thousand counters, at ten thousand firesides. The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the under current flows. . . . we must remember how small a proportion of the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system." — "Essay on History," *Life and Works* (London, 1897), V, 156.

12. Thomas Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Works* (London, 1899), II, 92.

Likewise Arnold Toynbee, certainly to be counted among the best-known living historians, remarks that in the study of history as a whole, economic and political history should be subordinated to religious history, "For religion, after all, is the serious business of the human race."¹³ The historian of today, concerned with past human activity in all its branches, has to study also the sacred books of the people of whom he treats, as well as the reports and documents on their religious practices and cults.

Though in our own days the writing of history has lost much of its literary glamour, yet it is obvious that in such writing science and literature cannot be altogether dissociated. Though literary quality belongs to the accidentals of history, yet it must not be neglected; to hold that it is scientific to be dull, is a libel on science. Now, as every student of composition and style knows, one of the ways of securing vividness in literary productions is to introduce into them picturesque relevant details. The historian of today also wishes to make history vivid and enlivening, so that he stirs the imagination and the feelings; he does this by filling the reader with a sense of the reality of what is told, an impression that is secured by weaving into the narrative concrete and colourful detail, so that history becomes in some measure, in the words of Michelet, "a resurrection of the flesh."

The historian, then, tries to reconstruct as much of the past of mankind as he can, but this is no easy task. It is seldom that he can tell the story of even a very limited period exactly as it actually occurred, not only because he cannot lay his hands on all the necessary records, but also because he is faced with the limitations of human imagination and of human speech controlling such an "actual" re-creation. The historian, however, says Prof. Louis Gottschalk, can endeavour to approach the actual past "as a limit," as the geometrician might put it. For it is obvious that the past, conceived as something that actually took place, limits the kinds of record and imagination that the historian may use. He must make sure that his records really come from the past and are genuine, and that his imagi-

13. Arnold Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York, 1948), p. 94.

nation is directed towards *re-creation* and not creation. It is thus that history is distinguished from fiction, poetry, drama, and fantasy.¹⁴

Detailed evidence about the past has to be found, and its genuineness ascertained. For the conscientious historian this means laborious hours spent in delving in long-forgotten volumes, among the dusty records of ancient archives, in the memoirs and correspondence of great men and their satellites, and the unpublished diaries of humbler folk. It is this quest for detail that has given an added importance to original documents.

One point must here be made quite clear: truth is not to be sacrificed to narrative art. There have been some who have pleaded for history with a bias. Let us read first history that is lively and interesting, they say, never mind if it isn't all true—we shall correct our notions later! This point of view we cannot admit. If the essence of the narrative is made to consist in vivid but imaginary pictures of men and deeds, we shall have novels or dramas or what you will—but not history! The truth must prevail: one cannot be fed on picturesque lies, and then lay them down at will. Biased history is a misnomer, for in so far as it is biased it is not history at all, for true history endeavours to tell us what actually happened and why, and to present us with a corpus of ascertained fact.

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We have drawn attention above to three tendencies in modern historiography: the insistence on original documentation, the widening range of history, and the quest for detail. While the first trait taken by itself might have fostered the production of mere compilations, full of quotations, cross-references and footnotes, the other two characteristics of contemporary historical studies have helped to save us from this fleshless spectre, and to produce histories that are real and alive, pulsating with the life of the people of whom they speak.

To produce histories that are objective and reliable is no easy task, but it is one that we cannot shirk. In our own country

14. Louis Gottschalk, *Understanding History, A Primer of Historical Method* (New York, 1951), p. 49.

there is plenty of room for such historical study. Writing on this subject, no less an authority than Sir Jadunath Sarkar states:

The modern method of historical investigation runs in two channels: the research worker must try to reach the very fountain-head of information, and he must hear all witnesses, as far as possible, before he can attain to the true facts.

Secondly, he must, as far as humanly possible, assemble all the materials, written in different languages and now preserved in many different countries and cities. Let him beware of hearing one side or even only a few witnesses and thus pronouncing a one-sided judgment. Such conclusions cannot stand the scrutiny of time.¹⁵

It is against this background of modern historiography which stresses the need for the study of original sources, wherever they may be found, that we shall view the Jesuit Letters from India. Their existence is not altogether unknown to writers on Indian history, some of whom even refer to them in their works. But these letters taken as a whole have never hitherto been studied in detail, nor submitted to a process of critical evaluation.

In the pages that follow, the general nature of the Jesuit Letters will first be outlined. Then the Letters from India will be closely studied in their various aspects. Next, a brief consideration of the Jesuit Letters from countries other than India will show the accepted historical value of these documents. The concluding chapter will state the more important findings of the whole study, and indicate the scope for further investigation.

15. Jadunath Sarkar, "The Progress of Historical Research in India," *Modern Review*, 89 (1951) 35-36.

CHAPTER I

JESUIT CORRESPONDENCE: ITS NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Jesuit achievements in the New World and in the East have acquired a lasting place not only in the annals of the Catholic missions, but even in secular history. This has been due in great part to their intrinsic worth, to the magnitude of the successful undertakings of the Jesuits in such widely-distant regions as Paraguay and Japan, Abyssinia and Tibet. But their fame is due in some measure to another factor that must not be overlooked: the enormous mass of information that has been preserved concerning these deeds. The most prolific source of this information is the Jesuit Letters, which form the subject of the present work.

Ignatius of Loyola was a born leader of men, and his talent for organization has been recognized by friend and foe alike. He realized that for the preservation and growth of the Society of Jesus, which he had founded, it was essential to secure union among its members, and close contact between subjects and superiors. Consequently he prescribed that frequently, at appointed times, the Superior General was to receive reports from the Provincials and Rectors under him, the Provincials from the Rectors subject to his authority, and these last from their subjects, to all of whom replies and instructions had correspondingly to be given.

Since personal contact between the various members of the Order was out of the question in very many cases, owing to the distances which separated them, epistolary correspondence came to play an important part in cementing the unity of the

young Society, and in its government. "Already in the time of St. Ignatius," wrote Böhmer, "communications by letter in the Order had an importance as in no State of contemporary Europe."¹

The question naturally presents itself: what was the nature of these letters? We may say that their essential aim was twofold: the edification of the members of the Society, and their guidance as well. Scattered widely over Europe, and even further afield, the first Jesuits displayed a very natural desire to be kept in the know regarding the successes or otherwise that fell to the lot of their brethren, so as to draw inspiration and edification from them. This desire was also shared by non-Jesuits, lay and clerical, who, in the difficult times the Church was passing through in Europe, found in them encouragement, and also valuable lessons of experience. Moreover, the centralized form of government in the new Order required that headquarters should be kept informed about the condition of residences and missions in other places, and about the Jesuits working there—only thus could prescriptions be issued regarding local problems, and local superiors be appointed.

The epistolary intercourse thus originally undertaken for purely domestic reasons had more far-reaching consequences: it furnished abundant material for the writing of history. It is under this aspect that the Jesuit Letters are studied in the present work and for a better understanding of them it is necessary briefly to trace their origin.

In the early days of the Society of Jesus, its dispersed members were kept informed about domestic occurrences and matters of importance by a *hebdomadarius* or weekly letter-writer, residing with the General of the Order at Rome. This office was exercised by each of the brethren in turn; the first one to hold it for a considerable length of time was no less a person than St. Francis Xavier. It was full-time job for any man, since each Jesuit wanted to have all the news about the rest.

Ignatius of Loyola also required that members of the Society should write to him and acquaint him with their doings. In September 1541, for instance, Frs. Brouet and Salmeron were

1. H. Böhmer, *Die Jesuiten* (2nd. ed., Leipzig, 1907), p. 43.

told to report carefully on their journey to Ireland, and their work in that country. Frs. Faber and Domenech received a like injunction.

Already in these instructions it is laid down that general information should be written with thought and care in a main letter, which might be shown to anyone, while information of a more private nature should be set down in a separate sheet, which was known as a *hijuela*. The General had occasion to complain that, notwithstanding his directions, some of his subjects wrote to him letters showing considerable lack of care and of discretion, which were a source of great embarrassment. For when these letters had to be placed before persons of authority, in the course of transacting business with them, he was hard put to it to show them one part of a letter and cover up another!²

The importance which Ignatius attached to frequent interc6mmunication by letter among the members of the Society may be gathered from his remarks to one of his earliest companions, Fr. N. Bobadilla. The latter was annoyed with the minute directions issued by the Jesuit General on the subject of epistolary correspondence, and wrote to him rather bluntly, saying among other things that Ignatius ought not to amuse himself correcting the letters of his brethren, since outsiders might be led to believe that the General of the Society of Jesus did not know what to do with his time. Ignatius took the outburst in good part, but gently yet firmly maintained his point. A passage in his letter to Bobadilla reveals the incipient popularity of the letters:

Many of our friends, when they know that we have received letters from some one of the Society, wish to see them and enjoy them. If we refuse to let them see these we shall estrange them; but if we show them letters in which the news is all thrown together in confusion, they are disedified.³

Some years after this incident, Ignatius' secretary, Fr. Polanco, sent a circular letter to the whole Society in which he

2. Letter to Fr. P. Faber, December 10, 1542 *Obras Completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, ed. Ignacio Iparraguirre and Candido de Dalmases (Madrid, 1952), pp. 686-689.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 695-700; and Paul Dudon, trans. William Young, *St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Milwaukee, 1949), pp. 373-374.

brought forward no less than twenty reasons for diligent correspondence. These reasons, which must have supplied much food for thought to the members of the Order, may be roughly grouped into three classes. Some of the arguments advanced by Polanco concern the internal good of the Society considered as an association: close contact by letter between its members would promote union and consequently strength, it would foster mutual love and encouragement, and help towards the good government of the Order and an efficient disposition of its missionary forces. The Society would also gain some external advantages: its good name would be upheld, vocations to it would be developed among the readers of the letters in the outside world, and friends of the Order would be encouraged by a closer acquaintance with its work to continue aiding it. Finally, the individual members would be strengthened in their vocation, would increase in humility and diligence when they learned about the labours of others, and would also find it easier to seek counsel and advice from their colleagues.⁴

At the same time Polanco drew up a set of "Rules which are to be observed in the matter of writing by those of the Society who are scattered outside Rome." Three things, declared Polanco, had to be considered regarding the letters to be sent to Rome. First, what was to be written; next, how it was to be written; thirdly, with what diligence it was to be written and despatched. And concerning the mode of writing he said:

In the first place, placing oneself before what has to be written, one should see what is to be set down in the main letter, *id est*, what can be shown to many, as are the things of edification, and what is to be set down in the *hijuelas*, *id est*, what is not to be shown, whether it be of edification or not, as are one's own defects or those of others, and some praiseworthy things, but which are not for the knowledge of all.⁵

Polanco also gave detailed directions about the arrangement of the letters and the distribution of material, and recommended that two or three copies of each letter should be forwarded to Rome.

4. *Monumenta Ignatiana. Series Prima. Epistolae et Instructiones* (Madrid, 1903-11), I, 536-541.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 547.

The business-like spirit of the Jesuit Secretariate is also reflected in the instructions sent to a certain Fr. Helmi, on November 10th, 1554, in which he was told that in his letters he was not to repeat stale news, but to say what was to be said, and if there was nothing to be said, to state this quite plainly. The letters were to be brief and to the point. Lengthy preambles, useless details and bombastic language were to be avoided.⁶ It is evident then that what was wanted at Jesuit headquarters in Rome from the official letters was a clear statement of affairs that would help superiors to guide and promote the Society's progress.

The essence of the various instructions of the first Superior General of the Society of Jesus was gathered in a section of the Constitutions which he wrote for his Order, and which were approved by its first General Congregation held in 1558, two years after his death. It reads as follows:

It will be of great help [to foster the spirit of union among the members of the Society] that letters should be exchanged between subjects and superiors; this practice will bring about a thorough knowledge of each other, and of the news and information related in those letters that come from different parts. And about this letter-writing the superiors, and in particular the General and the Provincials, will take a special care. They will order things in such a way as to obtain that in every place they should know about the things that are being done in other places, which knowledge is a source of mutual consolation and edification in Our Lord.⁷

This general recommendation was made more specific in the Declarations appended to the Constitutions, which decreed that every four months every house of the Society should write to the Provincial about the things that had happened there in the past four months. The Provincial was to send to the General a copy of these letters, and had also to forward other copies of the same to the other houses of the Province.

Owing to the slow means of communication, only yearly reports were asked for from India, and this concession was extended to Europe in 1565. For some time every house and

6. *Ibid.*, VIII, 33-34.

7. *Monumenta Ignatiana. Series Tertia. Constitutiones* (Rome, 1934-38), II, 621.

residence sent a yearly report to Rome. But in 1571 it was decided that a Provincial report should be sent yearly to the Society's headquarters, comprising the accounts of the various houses of the Province.⁸

The letters received at Rome from each Province of the Society were entrusted to a Father of talent and prudence who had to analyse them, and make extracts from them. These extracts, gathered together, made up the history of the Society for the year. It was circulated for reading in order to tighten the bonds of union within the Society. For a long time the collected extracts were meant for the perusal of members of the Order only, a measure dictated by prudence because of the troubles and perils besetting the Church and the Society in Europe at that time. The revelation of the facts recorded in the letters might, for instance, endanger the lives of, and intensify the persecution against, those Catholics who sheltered Jesuit priests.⁹ Individual letters, however, from the diffusion of which good only could be expected to follow, were soon available to a wider public—for example, the epistles of St. Francis Xavier. In 1583 selections from the Annual Letters were printed for the first time, and became accessible to the general public; the question of their publication, as also of the much more famous collection of Jesuit Letters known as *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, will be dealt with in a later chapter.

So much as regards the origin of the official Jesuit Letters whose value will be discussed at length in subsequent pages. Here let it suffice to note that they are not the transactions of an historical society, nor the reports of a fact-finding commission, but writings dealing primarily and essentially with the work of the Jesuits themselves, and thus limited in range. Their primary purpose was well attained, for lessons were learned from the experiences of others, comfort afforded to Jesuits in distress, and emulation aroused among members of the Order.¹⁰ But they went further. To give an account of

8. Cf. Alessandro Valignano, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales (1542-64)*, ed. Josef Wicki (Rome, 1944), Intro., p. 26*.

9. Léon Pouliot, *Étude sur les Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France (1632-1672)* (Montreal and Paris, 1940), p. 5.

10. Cf. Ludwig von Pastor, *History of the Popes*, XII, Eng. trans. ed. R. F. Kerr, (London, 1912), p. 76.

their work, the Jesuit letter-writers had naturally to describe the background against which it was developing, and the circumstances surrounding it; and in doing this they supplied valuable material for the writing of secular history too, though they were not, nor are now, an infallible or a fully-satisfying source of historical information.

When examining the historical value of the Jesuit Letters from India, we shall see the care their writers took to secure detailed information and to check up on its reliability. Here attention is only drawn to the fact that, if the letters were exact, the readers also could be exacting. The superiors of the Society insisted on accuracy and fidelity to truth on the part of their chroniclers. They gave detailed directions on the subject, which taken together could form a little treatise on the writing of history. Sensational effect was not what was wanted, but objectivity and reliability.

The following is an instance in point. Reports about England were being sent to the General of the Society, residing at Rome, by a certain Fr. Silesdon, who was at the time in Belgium. The General, Fr. M. Vitelleschi, while thanking him for many lengthy epistles, went on cautiously to say that "all did not offer the same degree of certainty." He added some useful advice:

To the end that in labouring to write out such long letters, you or others whose help you may employ may not go to undue lengths, I would have you know that I do not desire you to send hither all the reports which are rehearsed wholesale every week by the scribblers of news. When we want such letters, we can easily get them here [in Rome] from others. But I would have you make a selection out of all the news available, and then communicate to us what you have ascertained to be more authentic, what is of greater consequence, and particularly all that concerns the condition of Catholic interests, and matters connected therewith. To this, when you can, you might add the expression of your own judgment.¹¹

From this instruction one can rightly conclude that a comparatively high standard of reporting was demanded from Jesuit correspondence. Owing to human frailty, errors and

11. From the General Archives of the Society of Jesus at Rome, *Anglia, Epist. Gen.* 1627, June 5. Quoted by Thomas Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, (London, 1907-17), Text, I, p. 48.

indistinctness would still creep in, and other factors too contributed to their falling short of perfection. When writing about the doings of Jesuits in other lands where the Church was being persecuted, the chroniclers had to be careful not to be too explicit. Their reports might get into the wrong hands and be a source of danger to their benefactors and to their Jesuit brethren whose daring deeds they were describing. Moreover, since the work being done was the work of the Society as such, and not of individuals merely, a certain official impersonality characterized the reports, especially those meant for a fairly wide public.

From what has been said so far, three types of Jesuit Letters may be distinguished: those meant for the superiors of the Order, those meant for the members of the Society in general, and those addressed to the public at large. To these may be added a fourth class: the letters addressed to personal friends, within or without the Society. It is clear that the contents of these various classes must differ according to the purpose of the writer and the character of the receiver. Charity and discretion would forbid the recording for the general public of what might justly be laid before a superior. Similarly, there would be more of self-revelation and plain speaking in letters to intimate friends than in the more impersonal communications addressed to everybody in general and to no one in particular, which would tend to become stereotyped.

The following important point should also be borne in mind: the missionary was not expected to air his views concerning political matters, though he would be bound at times to warn his superiors of past or future complications which concerned the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of his mission. Thus in the India of those days, where there were many independent and semi-independent rulers wielding despotic sway over their subjects, missionary work among the latter generally involved dealings—pleasant and otherwise—with the former, and these events had to be duly reported.

Consequently it will be found that the letters of the first class, those addressed to superiors, are the most explicit and

illuminating, because most realistic. Reliable and detailed information was wanted by superiors in order that they might be able to govern wisely and well; reliable and detailed information was supplied by their subjects who had to turn to them for advice and help, and hence had to expose in detail their problems and difficulties. Allowance must be made for the fact that the letters from the local superiors to the Jesuit headquarters in Rome might at times be somewhat apologetic—and consequently less objective—in nature, when they had to vindicate their policies and actions.

The letters which were meant for the members of the Society in general are more discreet in style, yet are written with a good deal of freedom and affectionate regard, as befitted intercourse between religious brethren. They supply details regarding social life and customs and missionary work abroad, and are at times hortatory in tone.

The style of the letters addressed to the general public is more studied, and their contents were more carefully checked and censored.¹² The *Relations* from Canada, for example, belong to this class, and it is these that have been most eagerly studied by historians, as will be seen in a later chapter.

The letters of the fourth class also contain very interesting information, both about each author and his environment, and about the reactions of the one to the other. The Jesuits, it must be remembered, were among the first to establish contacts between the civilization of Europe and the ancient cultures of the East. Some of their accounts written for personal friends were soon published either in their original form or with new titles and in the guise of *Relations*. The great bulk of such as were not destroyed, however, has long lain buried in private or public archives, as the catalogues of Messrs. Maggs Brothers and of other booksellers testify. In the present century much of this material is being made available to the historian, as are also the letters of the first and second categories, chiefly through the efforts of the Jesuit Institute of History at Rome.

12. Cf. André Rétif, "Brève histoire des Lettres édifiantes et curieuses," *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, [*N.Z.M.*], 7 (1951) 39.

It is good to note that side by side with the Jesuit Letters there grew up another literature which we might term "allied documents." These are studies or reports on particular topics, such as the life and customs of a particular tribe, the account of some important missionary expedition, or the history of of some noted mission station or college. Being generally written by experts, they have a surpassing value for the historian. But they are not Jesuit Letters, strictly speaking, and hence only a little space will be devoted to them in the present work.

The origin and general nature of the Jesuit Letters has been outlined in the foregoing lines. They have been divided into four groups, and the chief traits of each have been briefly commented on. The potential contribution of each of history has also been indicated. It is now possible to take the next step in this study and, to proceed to a detailed survey of the Letters from India.

CHAPTER II

THE JESUIT LETTERS FROM INDIA: HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION

From what has hitherto been said there is no room for doubt about the great importance which Ignatius of Loyola attached to epistolary correspondence between the members of the newly founded Society of Jesus. It is not a matter for surprise, therefore, that this particular detail of Jesuit organization was not neglected by such a perfect disciple of his as Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary in the East.

Already before leaving Europe, Francis wrote from Bologna to his "Father in Christ" and to Fr. Codazzo on March 31, 1540:

As I think it is only through the medium of letters that we shall see one another again in this life — in the next it will be face to face with many embraces — it remains for us during the little time left here below to secure these mutual glimpses by frequent writing. This is what you tell me to do, and I shall see to it, as well as to your instructions about the *hijuelas*.¹

Francis kept his word. Even before reaching India, he took advantage of a long stop at Mozambique to inform his companions at Rome about the happenings on board ship, and his own experiences there.² After his arrival in India he himself became an indefatigable letter-writer, and organized the intercourse by letters with his co-workers. Local superiors like Paulo de Camerino, Antonio Gomes,³ and Melchior Nunes

1. *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta* [*Ep. Xav.*], ed. G. Schurhammer and J. Wicki (Rome, 1944-45), I, 29-30; also James Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier* (London, 1952), p. 79.

2. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 91-93.

3. *Ep. Xav.*, II, 125, 217, 225.

Barreto,⁴ among others, were urged to write about the affairs entrusted to them. Still more specific instructions were given by Xavier, on the eve of his departure for Japan, to the Flemish Jesuit, Gaspar Berze. On that occasion he wrote:

You will relate to the College [at Goa] in great detail all the work which you there do [at Ormuz] for God our Lord, and the fruit which God produces through you, since the letters which you write to the College will be of use for transmission to the kingdom [Portugal]; and in them you will write things of edification and such as to move those who see them to serve God. To the Lord Bishop you will also relate, and to Cosme Anes, the fruit which you there produce.⁵

The same injunction, first given in April 1549, was afterwards conveyed to the other Jesuit missionaries labouring in India.⁶ Berze's letter of December 1st, 1549, bears evidence that Xavier's orders were not disregarded. "My dear Brothers and Fathers write at length," he says, "each one individually, as Father Master Xavier commanded each one of us who are scattered in these pagan regions."⁷ And in his farewell instructions to Berze, before embarking on his last expedition in 1552, Xavier once again insisted that all the brethren of the Society should be told to write a yearly report to the General of the Order at Rome.⁸

The great apostle's painstaking solicitude was not wasted, and from 1553 a large number of Jesuit Letters from India began to arrive at the Society's headquarters in Rome. Among them was what may rightly be called the first Annual Letter, written by young Luis Frois on behalf of his Superior, and dated Goa, December 1st, 1552.⁹ In course of time Frois became an expert chronicler, and his numerous and compendious writings are without doubt among the best ever produced in the East. There was steady improvement in the style and content of the Indian letters, for reasons which we shall presently note, and rich material for the historiographer is to be found therein.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 443.

7. *Documenta Indica* [*Doc. Ind.*], ed. J. Wicki (Rome, 1948-54), I, 597.

8. *Ep. Xav.*, II, 417.

9. *Doc. Ind.*, II, 445-491.

It is not to be thought that Ignatius left the members of the Society in India to their own devices in the matter of epistolary correspondence, neither did he leave the matter entirely in the hands of St. Francis Xavier. From the very beginning he instructed his subjects in the East to attend carefully to the composition of their letters, both public and private, making the former suited to the tastes and needs of those who were to read them, and avoiding certain possible dangers. Towards the end of 1547, through his secretary, he charged those in India to send detailed information regarding whatever might help to the better government of the Society and the greater edification of all. They were to relate whatever was worthy of being known and speak about such things as the climate, diet, customs and character of the natives and of the peoples of India.¹⁰ Ignatius' vigilant secretary, Fr. Polanco, did not allow the brethren in India to forget their Superior-General's orders;¹¹ neither did Francis Xavier,¹² nor the Rector of the College at Goa.¹³

The founder of the Society of Jesus never relaxed his watchful superintendence over the Indian letters. He was solicitous about their safe journeying both to and from India,¹⁴ which in those days of couriers and sailing-ships, of wars in Europe and countless perils on the high seas, was a matter for great concern. As Brodrick remarks, there was many a slip between the pen and the ship! In 1553 Ignatius wrote to the superiors in India and Brazil, asking them to see to it that their subjects did not grow careless about sending the detailed information that was required at Rome. This was to be sent in two parts, as it has already been stated—there was the information which was not meant for the public eye and was intended to help the authorities at home to guide the members of the Society and their labours; there was also the news which could be shown to all, describing the work and personnel of each mission,

10. *Monumenta Ignatiana. Epistolae et Instructiones*, I, 648-650. Cf. also Jesús M. Granero, *La acción misionera y los metodos misionales de San Ignacio de Loyola* (Burgos, 1931), pp. 87-88.

11. *Doc. Ind.*, I, 207-208.

12. *Ibid.*, I, 279. *Ep. Xav.*, II, 113, and *passim*.

13. *Ibid.*, II, 246-147.

14. *Ibid.*, II, 313.

and the character of the region and of the people among whom they worked.¹⁵

But it is in Ignatius' letter of February 24th, 1554, to Gaspar Berze, that we see how the Indian letters were becoming a mine of information for European readers, and how eager Ignatius was to spread in the West news of the mysterious Orient. He had "taken the pulse of persons of great quality and intelligence," he wrote, and added that to edify them more it was advisable that the letters should give more news of general interest, and less concerning individual members of the Society. These latter details, necessary for good government and for the edification of the brethren, could be sent in a separate letter. Ignatius proceeded:

Some leading figures who in this city [Rome] read with much edification for themselves the letters from India, are wont to desire, and they request me repeatedly, that something should be written regarding the cosmography of those regions where ours [i.e., the members of the Society of Jesus] live. They want to know, for instance, how long are the days of summer and of winter; when summer begins; whether the shadows move towards the left or towards the right. Finally, if there are other things that may seem extraordinary, let them be noted, for instance, details about animals and plants that either are not known at all, or not of such a size, etc. And this news — sauce for the taste of a certain curiosity that is not evil and is wont to be found among men — may come in the same letters or in other letters separately.¹⁶

Complying with these instructions, the missionaries sent to Europe most interesting news about the fauna, flora, ethnography, religion, customs, traditions and history of the lands where they laboured. An idea of the vast field covered by their correspondence in a little over a decade after their arrival in India is given by a letter of Fr. Frois to the Jesuits in Portugal, dated Malacca, November 19th, 1556.¹⁷ Therein he specifies the accounts sent to Europe about the peoples of Japan, Abyssinia and India, to which he is going to add yet another, about the people of the Moluccas.

15. *Obras Completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, p. 865. When leaving on his last missionary expedition to China, Francis Xavier appointed Gaspar Berze Superior of the Jesuits in India. This trusty lieutenant, however, died in October 1553, some months before Ignatius' letter to him was written. Even bad news travelled slow in those days!

16. *Monumenta Ignatiana. Epistolae et Instructiones*, V, 329-330.

17. *Doc. Ind.*, III, 522-562.

However, to err is human, and among the Jesuit writers some were guilty of inexactitudes and indiscretions. These defects were made especially evident by the investigations of Fr. A. Valignano, who visited the houses and missions of the Society of Jesus in India on behalf of the General of the Order, between 1574 and 1583, and again between 1587 and 1595. It has already been explained that the Jesuit Letters were not primarily meant to convey historical information, nor were they generally written from a historical viewpoint. Hence it happened at times that in the private letters and reports (and, more rarely, in the official ones), some relevant circumstantial details were omitted, so that certain events were liable to be misinterpreted. Thus when the letters began to reach a wider public through the press, and even found their way to India in this guise, some readers took exception to the truncated and inexact accounts appearing therein, while others were offended by the writers' criticism of their vices. One reader was so displeased and angry that he wrote a book to expose the errors and falsehoods of the letters from India, but finally himself destroyed it.¹⁸

Fr. Valignano wrote to the General of the Society at Rome, pointing out the deficiencies of the Jesuit Letters from the East. He especially criticized the private letters that were printed even before the official publication of the Annual Letters in 1583. Himself an accurate observer and a reliable historian, the Visitor was not blind to the shortcomings of his brethren in these respects. Not seldom, he stated, the accounts were written *in fervore spiritus*, on the basis of first impressions and without sufficient experience. At other times it was not the missionaries who were at fault, but the censors and editors in

18. Polanco writes: "He [Fr. Rodrigues] remarks that the letters about Indian affairs, printed in Portugal, return to India, and it was of little edification to some that a number of things were contained in these letters which they did not consider to be altogether exact, on account of the omission of certain circumstances in the description of events. The persons involved in the narrative took exception to this travesty of things. . . . A Franciscan friar, a friend of ours, told us that he knew of one who had written a book by way of refuting as false statements in these letters, but the good religious saw to it that the other himself destroyed the book." — *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Jesu Historia* (Madrid, 1894-98), VI, 834.

In an earlier volume he states: "The same B. Dias remarks that the letters about the activities of Fr. Gaspar in Ormuz, which had been printed in Portugal, should be suppressed, since some whose defects were therein rebuked took it very ill." — IV, 664.

Europe, and also the booksellers and publishers. The latter made bold to embellish the written reports with sundry gross exaggerations — there was no disclaimer to fear from the distant authors! — their main concern being to make good profits. In 1575 Fr. Valignano writes to the General that orders have been given to superiors throughout the Province, then comprising both India and Japan, that they should see to it that letters were written with simplicity, truthfulness and with a full knowledge of the facts, avoiding exaggeration.¹⁹

Writing about the Jesuit Letters from Japan, some time later, Fr. Valignano shows himself still dissatisfied, and points out several causes for the misinformation conveyed in them. Some of these may have also made themselves felt in the writing of the Indian letters, hence they are to be briefly noted: (1) Some missionaries allowed themselves to be deceived by external appearances and mistook them for the reality in describing the character of the people; (2) Others indeed were not themselves deceived, but for the sake of edification they attached to these external appearances a significance which made their readers believe that they were a true picture of the reality; (3) Others still, in great fervour of spirit, described certain conversions as being due to a real change of heart on the part of the people, forgetting the mercenary motives of their rulers who favoured the spread of Christianity; (4) Finally, there were Jesuits who were too fond of generalizing, and gave to the features of one particular case a national significance for which there was no warrant. The Visitor states that he has censured this style of writing, and expects more thoughtfulness and consideration in the future. Since the missionaries are so scattered, it is difficult to keep a check on their letters; perhaps in the last resort the remedy would be not to allow too easily that the letters should be printed in Portugal.²⁰

Moved by the Visitor's remonstrances, Fr. General entrusted him with the correction of the Indian letters which were about to be reprinted in Europe. Fr. Valignano in his reply,

19. Cf. Granero, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91. And Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 96*-97,* footnote 102.

20. Valignano, letter to the General of the Society of Jesus, in *op. cit.*, pp. 481-482.

received in Rome in 1585, drew attention to some of the chief errors in the printed letters: the names of persons, places and things were wrongly spelt, while from ignorance of the circumstances in India, the translators often changed the meaning of the original, exaggerating things, and at times even altering the sense into just the opposite. It also happened that some of the published accounts were written by inexperienced newcomers.²¹ The instructions and complaints of Valignano had a salutary effect. The official letters also improved, as can be seen from the Japanese Annual Letters which later on became the ideal of historical mission reports.

A recent article in the *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* throws further light on the official regulations concerning the letters from India. It is a record of the instructions issued by the Generals of the Order in Rome to the superiors in India, from 1549 to 1613, and in it we find also rules for the correspondence of the Jesuits. We note, for instance, the care that was taken to prevent indiscretions, and how Latin gradually came to be established as the language for the official letters — and a good Latin style too was demanded of the correspondents!²²

As noted above, the first "Annual" or "General" letter from India was the one written at Goa in December 1552. It is to be borne in mind that the Indian Province of the Society extended at that time right up to Japan; it was only in 1605 that two full-fledged Jesuit Provinces were set up in the East, that of Goa and that of Malabar, comprising far vaster territories than these names would indicate; seven years later a separate Japanese Province was constituted. With the growth of the Society in the East, and the multiplication of its administrative units, the number of official letters sent to Europe grew apace, and there are Annual Letters from Goa, Malabar, "Mogor", and so on.

"The General Letters," says a Portuguese historian, "soon became very popular and were much appreciated, precisely

21. Cf. G. Schurhammer, trans. J. Devine, "Historical Research into the Life of Francis Xavier in the Sixteenth Century", *St. Xavier's College Magazine* (Bombay), 16 (1923) 42-43.

22. J. Wicki, "Auszüge aus den Briefen der Jesuitengeneräle an die Obern in Indien (1549-1613)," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* [A.H.S.I.], 22 (1953) 114-169.

because they put together events referring either to a year, or to an establishment, or to a mission station."²³ The official letters gradually began to replace the private ones, but it is worth noting that the latter never disappeared. So for two centuries and more from the time of Francis Xavier there was a steady flow of private and official Jesuit correspondence to and fro, between India and Europe. Many of these letters, especially the private ones, either lie hidden from, or have been totally lost to, students of history. However, a good number of them have survived, to the advantage of both the secular and the ecclesiastical historian.

Our study of the origin and development of the Jesuit Letters from India would not be quite complete without some mention of the "allied documents" produced in India: we refer to the accounts of special topics or regions which, though not letters in the strict sense of the word, are the work of men on the spot — thus having the authority of first-hand knowledge — prepared for the information of superiors and friends.

The distinction between the letters and the allied documents is not of our making. The Provincial of Malabar wrote:

Notwithstanding we send to Your Paternity every year in the *Annual Letters*, as we shall do this year also, a relation of the fruit with which God our Lord has been pleased to bless the labours of your humble sons in this Province, it is my intention to send you this short account of the Missions. In this, I shall not relate how ours are employed in various ministries of the Society... as they belong more properly to the *Litterae Annuae*. All that I propose to do is to give Your Paternity a short notice of the several Missions in charge of the Fathers of this Province...."²⁴

A short notice of the allied documents is all the more justified by the importance that some of these allied documents have deservedly acquired in the eyes of students of Indian history — the commentaries of Monserrate and of Fenicio, for instance.

Among the first three missionaries sent to the court of Akbar, the Great Mughal, was the Spaniard Antonio de

23. A. da Silva Rego, *Documentação para a História do Padroado Português do Oriente*, (Lisbon, 1947-53), V, Intro., pp. xi-xii.

24. *A Short Account of the Missions under the Charge of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus of the Malabar Province in the East Indies written to the Most Reverend the Father General of the Society in the year 1644* (Trichinopoly, [1907]), pp. 1-2.

Monsserrate. Mindful of the recommendations of the Founder of the Order, Fr. Monsserrate kept a daily record of his stay with the Emperor. As he himself tells us:

Ever since the days of our Father Ignatius of happy memory, who was the first to prescribe it, it has become customary in the Society to write down whatever occurs. Roderic Vincentius, the Superior of the Province of the Society in India, what time we set out to go to Zelaldin Equebar, King of the Mongols, charged me to record whatever would happen both in the way and during our stay with the King. The nature of my calling and the rule of the Society imposing on me the obligation of obeying to the letter, I so conformed to this order that, every day, at night, for full two years and a half, I committed to writing the events of the day. In this daily labour of a chronicler, I have described the various particulars which my travels and circumstances brought under my notice. These are: rivers, towns, countries, the customs and manners of peoples, temples, religions, the leanings — simulated leanings, it is true, — which the king, when we had come to his court, manifested towards the religion of Christ, as also the kindness which, from mere self-interest, he affected towards Rodolf (Acquaviva), to whom had been confided this weighty Mission, and towards his companions; again, Rodolf's zeal, consummate prudence and remarkable erudition, and our disputations with the Agarenes; next the Chabul war, which was marked with great tenacity of purpose and superior statesmanship on the part of Zelaldin, and ended successfully by the flight of Hachim; finally, the joyful ovations that signalized this triumph.²⁵

On Monsserrate's return to Goa an abstract was made of the parts of his diary dealing directly with Akbar and the main features of his rule, and was entitled *Relaçam do Equebar Rei dos Mogores*. In 1912 a scholarly edition of the Portuguese text together with an English translation was published by Fr. H. Hosten in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.²⁶ The *Relaçam* contains a vivid personal description of Akbar, and a general survey of the Empire and its organization. Though not very long — “as short as was consistent with truth”, the author declares — it contains valuable material that has already been used by historians of standing, like Count von Noer in his *Kaiser Akbar*.

However, Monsserrate's best-known work is his accurate

25. “Introduction to Father A. Monsserrate's *Mongolicæ Legationis Commentarius*,” *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* [*M.A.S.B.*], 3 (1914) 518-519.

26. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* [*J.A.S.B.*], New Series, 8 (1912) 185-221.

and detailed report entitled *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*.²⁷ "Not only is this work of exceptional value," says Maclagan, "but the history of its preparation, of its long hibernation, and of its wonderful rediscovery in recent years is one of quite extraordinary interest."²⁸ It is impossible here to expatiate either on the contents of the *Commentarius* or on its history; let it suffice to say that it is perhaps the Jesuit document that has been most used by historians of Mughal India, which conclusively proves its worth. "The earliest known account of Northern India by a European since the days of Vasco da Gama," the *Commentarius* is a first-class guide to the India of its day, and useful as a check and supplement to other contemporary narratives. It is not free from errors, of course, but it does show the alertness and the powers of observation of its author; while the painstaking care displayed in the preparation of the report throws light on Jesuit methods of procedure, and helps in the evaluation of the Jesuit Letters.

Another early Jesuit study of Indian questions, the fruit of personal investigations, is Fr. Jacobo Fenicio's *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais*, completed in 1609, used (generally without acknowledgment) by Barradas, Faria y Souza, Baldacus, and other chroniclers, and made known to the learned world chiefly through the efforts of Jarl Charpentier.²⁹ This work — as others of the same type — seems to have had an immediate practical end in view: to furnish its readers with an adequate knowledge of Hindu mythology, as a necessary basis for its refutation. It is a guide-book for missionaries, written by a man of rare ability, undaunted courage, and a remarkable gift for languages. The treatment of the subject is thorough, so that it betrays "that scholarly spirit which is not always to be found, even in later centuries. Altogether, Father Fenicio

27. The Latin text was published by H. Hosten in *M.A.S.B.*, 3 (1914) 513-704. An English translation by the same appeared in several issues of the *Catholic Herald of India* (Calcutta), 1920 and 1921. Another (annotated) translation, prepared by J.S. Hoyland and S.N. Banerjee, is *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S. J.* (London, 1922.)

28. Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London, 1932), p. 150.

29. *The Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Brit. Mus. Ms. Sloane 1820), edited with an introduction and notes by Jarl Charpentier (Uppsala, 1933). Cf. also articles by the same on the same in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution* [*B. S. O. S.*], 2 (1921-23) 731-754, 3 (1923-25) 317-342, 413-420; and G. Schurhammer, "Das 'Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais' des P. J. Fenicio S. I. (1609)," *A.H.S.I.*, 3 (1934) 142-147.

well deserves a place amongst the many eminent forerunners of the present European knowledge of India."³⁰

Not all the Jesuit works of this category have been made public. About the year 1615, a short time after Fr. Fenicio had completed his treatise, Fr. Diogo Gonçalves put the finishing touches to his *Historia do Malavar*. The book itself has not yet appeared in print, but an excellent study of it has already been published by Fr. J. Wicki.³¹ It shows clearly that Gonçalves's manuscript is a valuable commentary on Travancore and its neighbouring countries, composed by a man who had lived in the land for two decades, understood and spoke its language, and had been an eye-witness of several of the events and customs therein recorded. After a few chapters dealing with the early kings and the political divisions of those parts, the greater portion of the four books which make up the treatise is devoted to a critical review of the social and religious institutions of Malabar. Only important points are dealt with, and the author's breadth of vision is shown by his tolerant attitude to local customs that are purely civil or social. In short, Fr. Gonçalves produced a little work that is a mine of information for the indologist.

Finally, for the sake of completeness, yet another type of allied documents may here be mentioned: the catalogues of Jesuits working in India during the various years. Ignatius wished to have precise information regarding the members of his Order stationed in each residence, mission and province. Already in 1547 he asked the Portuguese Jesuits to send to Rome the lists of the members and houses of the Society in their territory; this injunction was later extended also to India and Brazil.³² From the year 1553 there are such directories of the missionaries working in India.³³ Therein we find recorded the names of the missionaries and, in later years, details regarding their date and place of birth, their entrance into the Society,

30. Jarl Charpentier, "Preliminary Report on the *Livro da Seita dos Indios Orientais* (Brit. Mus. Ms. Sloane, 1820)," *B.S.O.S.*, 2 (1921-23) 748.

31. Josef Wicki, "Die *Historia do Malavar* des P. Diogo Gonçalves S. I.," *A.H.S.I.*, 14 (1945) 73-101.

32. *Doc. Ind.*, II, 618.

33. *Ibid.*, II, 619-621.

their occupations and their death. These catalogues are not of very great moment for the secular historian, but they help at times to determine the chronology of events, and also to assess the character and the value of the testimony of some of the Jesuit letter-writers.³⁴

This brief outline of the development of the letters and allied writings proceeding from the pens of Jesuit missionaries, together with the remarks that will be made in the following chapter on some features of the Jesuit Letters, will enable us to gauge their importance and historical value.

34. Cf. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

CHAPTER III

THE JESUIT LETTERS FROM INDIA: SOME FEATURES

As a further step in our study, an attempt will here be made to point out some of the salient features of the letters and reports sent from India to Europe by Francis Xavier and other members of the Society of Jesus.

The letters of Francis Xavier stand alone by themselves. No sane judge of style would ever claim that they are literary masterpieces. They are, as a matter of fact, most unliterary: dashed off in a haste, disorderly, repetitive, and rendered even more unlovely from the point of view of style by Xavier's practice of introducing the most handy idiom—Spanish, Portuguese or Latin—whatever might be the main language he happened to be using at the moment. Nor are the letters of superlative historical value, though there are some illuminating passages concerning happenings on the Travancore coast; picturesque detail there is, but not in abundance.

Whatever may have been his shortcomings as a letter-writer, Francis Xavier has been called the fore-runner of the Catholic "Fides" news-service, and he did indeed forward to Europe some of the earliest information about the East, its cults and customs.¹ With him, it has been said, began a new era for the students of oriental culture. Apart from this, the Xaverian documents, whatever their historical worth, have an imperishable value for their revelation of a noble spirit, and for the effect they exercised and still exercise on generous souls all the world

1. Victorino Capanaga, "Sus Cartas: Francisco Javier, Predecesor y Ejemplo de la 'Agencia Fides'," *Catolicismo* (Madrid), No. 153 (March, 1952) pp. 6-7.

over. They are intensely personal, revealing the little details that went up to make up the saint's personality, betraying the tenderness of his heart and the nobility of his mind—hence the spell they cast over their readers.

The letters of Xavier's fellow-missionaries and successors may be dealt with collectively. Most of them were written after the instructions of Polanco and Valignano had had their full effect, introducing a measure of method and a principle of selection in Jesuit epistolography. It is expedient to take, at the outset, a general view of the Jesuit Letters. what do they look like? They are generally written on sheets of quarto size, space being saved by placing the lines close together and by writing in small characters. Each letter is usually headed by the Cross and the invocation "Pax Christi," a common form of greeting, especially among priests and religious. Often there is also prefixed the name of Jesus and sometimes the letters "M.R.A.," indicative of the Virgin Mary. On the top of the page is also to be found at times a note such as "1a. via," "2a. via," showing what copy of the document is in question, since not seldom three or even more transcripts of the same letter were sent separately to Europe as a precaution against loss at sea. At the end of the letters are to be found the Jesuit emblems of the Cross, the IHS (standing for the name of Jesus) and the three nails, and these are sometimes introduced in the form of a seal.²

Sincerity, piety, culture—all these can be noticed in the writings; and considering the physical and psychological circumstances in which they were written, "they form a marvellous monument of the vitality and enthusiasm inspired by the Society to which the writers owed obedience."³

The letters of a more official nature looked much the same as the private letters. Their external appearance is, of course, much less important than their contents. Especially after the instructions of Polanco and Valignano, the Jesuit letter-writers were careful to supply useful information and details of appealing edification. Students of history are naturally

2. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

1^a Via.

Sh. Nov 1632 Agri
 1^a Via di Castro

+

Geno

Tommaso Maria

Molto D^o in Christo N^o D^o

Pax Ego

In quella loro missa a V^a come dopo di avere
 tre anni vicini passati nel regno di Bengala
 in compagnia del nostro fradellone del collegio di
 Agri che fu mandato in quel Governatore di al
 ne torre adesso si no sto giorni che siamo for
 nati in Agri perche V^a Re ha chiamato l'Alto
 N^o fradellone della forte dove lo ha ricevuto con
 honore mostrando sodisfatto del suo humo giude
 no et periamo nel fig^o che gli dia alcuni altri
 buoni frangis. (or qua altro la sempre si arro
 ra di fare fructo in tutti, nel migliore modo che
 si può, chiedendogli al uero culto di Dio et mouer
 degli ad agitare la salute dell'anima loro.
 Dime non lo dir altro che fino uenti e dua anni e la
 sta in quella missione dove ho uisuto molto costituito
 in domo et perche del Re mi sento animato per
 puerare che al continuato et me sappi V^a che
 in alcuni anni in que valle la missione molto haugum
 coti per il uero salua della nostra fig^o di Dio, come anche
 gli padre della che mostrare di non ino. Ricordi della
 della Memetaria quelli che giouano. V^a Re ha coltano
 approbato il remedia per mezzo della D^o Maria
 altro non mi occorre che chiedere la V^a bened^o di V^a
 di Agri 24. Agosto 1632. D^o J. de Castro in Christo
 D^o J. de Castro in Christo

1632. 1 in.

concerned with the historical information to be found in the letters, which was also of interest to the superiors of the order. Accurate reports were expected not only about members of the Society, but also about the countries and peoples among whom their lot had been cast. The attitude of the rulers of the land in religious questions had also to be recorded, since it could do much to promote or hinder the work of the missionaries.

Hence it is that the Jesuit Letters from India not seldom open with an account of the state of affairs in political and ecclesiastical circles, before coming down to details concerning the work of the Society and its members. Furthermore, an exact knowledge of geography was essential for the planning of missionary expeditions, while the work of conversions and religious discussions necessitated a study of the Indian religious beliefs and practices. Information on all these points is to be found in the Jesuit Letters.

Let it be clearly understood, however, that the letters were not intended to supply data for the historian of the future, and hence they will not give full satisfaction to him today. In subsequent chapters the question will be treated more fully, for the present let it suffice to record here the following very balanced judgment of C. H. Payne:

The range of their [the Jesuits'] outlook naturally determined the range of their letters. These were written for the purpose of keeping the Superiors of their Order in touch with the Missions, and informed as to the progress that was being made. They may, in fact, be described as progress reports, or collectively, as 'official correspondence.' The references they contain to the public affairs of the day are, in consequence, few in number, and relate, with rare exceptions, only to circumstances that came under the personal observation of the writers, or had a direct bearing on their lives, or the work of their calling. The information contained in such references is sometimes detailed and of great value: in other cases, and these are unfortunately the more numerous, it is disappointingly meagre and vague.⁴

The truth of this statement may be verified by an inspection of the contents of any collection of Jesuit Letters, the second volume of *Documenta Indica*, for example. In this compilation is to be found information on a variety of subjects: the voyage to India and its hardships, Karma and Indian religious beliefs,

4. P. du Jarric, ed. C. H. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits* (London, 1926), Intro., p. xl.

the state of Cochin and of Ceylon in 1551, the conversion of the King of the Maldives, social customs in South India, etc.

The Annual Letters of the major administrative divisions of the Society — the Provinces and the Missions — were to a large extent written on the basis of information supplied by their constituent units — the colleges and mission-stations. They thus make up a synthesis in which minor details are frequently omitted. Often too the news, at first recorded in a residence away from the administrative centre, is reproduced at second-hand. In these cases the Annual Letters have consequently less authority than reports drawn up by the protagonists themselves: "The historical value of the General Letters," says Silva Rego, "is inferior to that of the personal ones. These represented the direct testimony of the missionaries themselves. Those, giving the indirect testimony of the scribe, were evidently subject to his judgment."⁵

This is indeed true, but the drawback must not be exaggerated. It is to be borne in mind that the local reports on which the Annual Letters were based would generally be drawn after more consideration, and with a greater sense of responsibility than is likely to be found in letters of a purely private character. Moreover, the local reports were on the whole faithfully adhered to and correctly reproduced in the chief letter of the Mission or Province; and finally, the first-hand reports were at times textually reproduced in the Annual Letter itself.⁶

Another characteristic of the Indian letters proceeds from the prudence and discretion which Ignatius enjoined on his subjects, and which has already been noted. In the letters meant for publication the missionaries were to omit details to which exception might be taken by their fellow-Jesuits or by the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. There is not to be found in them anything like the severe and passionate words of animadversion which Francis Xavier employed in his private correspondence with Simon Rodrigues, when speaking of Portu-

5. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, V, Intro., p. xi.

6. Cf. the extracts from the letters of missionaries reproduced in Fr. N. Pimenta's Annual Letter of Dec. 1, 1600, *J.A.S.B.*, N.S. 23 (1927) 67-82.

guesse officials in the East. "All go the same road of 'I plunder, thou plunderest'," the saint once wrote, "and it terrifies me to witness how many moods and tenses and participles of that miserable verb *rapio* [to plunder] those who come to India discover."⁷

The historian may lament this policy of silence on matters which interest him greatly, but, again, the missionaries were not writing for him; and it is not difficult to realise that by being too outspoken about official lapses they might easily add to their existing difficulties in India, while their readers in Europe would neither profit by these revelations nor be able to help them.⁸ In their direct correspondence with high civil and ecclesiastical circles the missionaries could at times be very blunt and severe indeed — as the letters of St. Francis Xavier amply testify. It has also to be taken into consideration that the omission of the personal names of public personages might be due either to prudence or to the fact that these names would mean little to the distant readers overseas.⁹

As regards the length of the letters --- both private and official — that were despatched from India to Europe, it is to be noted that they ran to many pages. This may be a matter for surprise, since in our own days most people rarely make time for anything more than a hurried note, and long letters are looked upon as curiosities of a remote past. However, the extensive length of the Jesuit Letters is not difficult to account for.

Take for example the Annual Letters. They had to give an account of an entire year's doings, and consequently even the greatest economy of words could not reduce their bulk beyond a certain limit. Other official letters, and private ones too, were *de facto* annual, since the Indian fleet left Cochin or Goa for Lisbon but once a year. Correspondents could only post their letters between times and at long intervals. Naturally they had much to say: past events to record, future problems to discuss, help and advice to seek. The following account by

7. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 282; Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier*, p. 207.

8. Cf. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, V, Intro., pp. xii-xiii.

9. Such anonymous references are recorded, e. g., in H. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, I (Madras, 1927) 317, 338.

a Spanish Jesuit, writing from Cancheu in China, gives an idea of postal delays in the 17th century:

The advice boat leaves in December of this year, viz., 1689, from Macao it takes three months to go to Goa, so that it arrives in that city in March. The letters are kept waiting the whole of the year 1690 in Goa. Thereafter they leave Goa in January, 1691, and arrive in Lisbon in September of the same year, and thence in a month or two they are received in Aragon in October, 1691. From Aragon they answer in January or February, 1692; these letters arrive in March in Lisbon, in which month or at the beginning of April the ship for India leaves and arrives in Goa, in the same year, 1692. The letters wait there till April, 1693, when they leave for Macao, and in three months they arrive there. And so, the letters written in Spain, 1692, are received in Macao in August, 1693, and thence they are sent to the Fathers who are here in China. In this manner it is clearly seen that four years are necessary for an answer to be received to a letter, with the provision that in this calculation there may be some slight difference, more or less, depending on the state of the sea and winds.¹⁰

The writer, it is true, is concerned with China, whence Fr. A. Schall reported on March 17th, 1660, to the General of the Order, Fr. G. Nickel: "Your letter of five years ago has just reached me"! However, more than a hundred years earlier, when the Jesuits first arrived in the East, conditions were worse if anything, and letters from India were also subject to heavy delays. "I have been nine years in India," writes Fr. Antonio Marta in 1587 from Amboina to the Jesuit General. "Although I have written once every year or even oftener, I have received only one letter from you in return. It is obvious that the great distances are to blame for this."¹¹

In Europe the letters were awaited with eager curiosity not only by Jesuits, but also by other persons, both lay and ecclesiastical, who were interested in the progress of the Faith in the lands of India. It was a praiseworthy curiosity, which the missionaries were not loath to satisfy by writing at length,¹²

10. From an Annual Letter from the Far East reproduced in part in the Maggs Brothers' Catalogue, *Voyages and Travels*, III, Part II (London, 1946) 128-129.

11. Felix A. Plattner, trans. Lord Sudley and O. Blobel, *Jesuits Go East* (Dublin, 1950), p. 71. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

12. "I then resolved, both because Fr. Master Gaspar commanded me, and because charity bound me to it, to write to you, dearest Fathers and Brothers of my soul, of whom I beg for the love of Our Lord that you may pardon me if in this I should be lengthy, since the great desires that I have of communicating to you the great needs there are here make me write at length; and also because Fr. Luis Gonçavez asked me, in a letter which he wrote to

and about which Ignatius had given express instructions, as noted earlier. Jesuit eagerness to obey orders from Rome would thus also tend to increase the length of the letters. A factor on the other side of the balance was that with the letters being written faithfully by all the members of the Society in India, each one could afford to limit himself to his own field of work. Thus Fr. N. Lancillotus writes to St. Ignatius that he will limit his account to Quilon and the Fishery Coast since "all the Fathers in these parts having an order from Your Reverence to write to you every year, it will not be necessary for me to write anything about the others or about other parts and provinces, as I did in past years."¹³

In addition to the slow and occasional means of postal conveyance there was the fear of letters getting lost at sea. It is partly due to this that the same item of information is at times repeated in various letters. Fr. E. de Morais wrote the following significant lines to the brethren at Coimbra: "Last year I wrote to you giving an account of what was happening here, but since owing to the difficulty of the voyage I do not know whether my letters reach you, I shall now give you briefly an account of everything."¹⁴ The mail often did get lost at sea, or suffered other mishaps. A telling instance in point is provided by the Jesuit Letters from Mughal India, of the year 1615, which reached England instead of Italy.¹⁵

None more than the Jesuit Fathers in India deplored the uncertain fate that dodged these letters on their long journey home. They had spent hours in composing and copying them for their colleagues and for all Europe. Fr. Jerome Xavier writes to Fr. Thomas de Ituren (in Spain), on December 4th, 1615:

me, that I should write the minutiae of Cape Comorin. This I shall not do in such an extensive manner as is the nature of the things themselves, but shall relate those things which will be able to console you in the Lord, and hearten you in no small measure to serve Him...." — Fr. B. Nunes, S. J., to the Portugese Jesuits, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 558.

13. Letter of Fr. N. Lancillotus to Fr. Ignatius of Loyola, Quilon, October 29th, 1552, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 378-379.

14. Letter of Fr. E. de Morais to the Jesuits at Coimbra, *Doc. Ind.*, I, 456.

15. H. Hosten, "The Jesuit Post from Mogor for 1615 gone to England," *The Examiner* (Bombay), 70 (1919) 318-320, 329-330, 338-340.

I received Your Reverence's letter of the 27th of February of this year on the 27th of November of the same, and the many bits of good news you give me in it afforded me much consolation. I do not know how my letters did not reach you; for I write to you every year, though it costs me trouble, as I have no one to help me in these lands of the Mogol to make copies (*a escribir vias*), and I have not the strength I had formerly; but my love draws strength out of my weakness; and so I cannot help being pained that those letters which cost me so much trouble did not reach you."¹⁶

Yet these men stuck doggedly to their task of corresponding with the West, amid uncongenial or even hostile surroundings, and often in circumstances of discomfort, illness and disappointment. "I felt very much Your Reverence's telling me that you had not received my letters," says Fr. Joseph de Castro to the Portuguese Assistant of the General of the Society. "The fact is that I do not let pass a year without writing to Your Reverence and to our Father General."¹⁷

And it is in the love and zeal patent in lines like these that must be found the ultimate reason for the very existence of the Jesuit Letters, for their contents and style. Bound to one another by the close bonds of a common vocation and ideal, as well as by a supernatural love, the members of the Society desired to share with one another their joys and sorrows, to expose their needs and seek advice. Hence it is on a cheerful note of tender affection and of exhortation that most of the letters end, both private and official ones. The closing lines of the very first Annual Letter from Goa, written by the scholastic Luis Frois, may serve as an example:

At the moment there is nothing more that occurs to me to write to you, only to ask you all, for the love of Jesus, that you should deign to have a special care of me in your fervent and acceptable prayers, and by your letters console my poor soul; and if you should feel that by the superfluity of this letter I have overstepped the due limits, please attribute it to the great love in Christ

16. H. Hosten, trans., "Eulogy of Father Jerome Xavier, S. J., a Missionary in Mogor," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 123.

17. H. Hosten ed., "Three Letters of Fr. Joseph de Castro, S. J., and the Last Year of Jahangir," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 150-151. The difficulties for the journey of the post in the other direction were not few either: "... I had no letter from Your Reverence to which to reply; for of all the ships which left Portugal, the first fought against four English ships and was so damaged that her own Captain, who got ashore with all the people on board, set fire to her, lest she might prove of use to the enemies: the second arrived, but without letters or Fathers, as these came on board the third, of which we have no news."—From a letter of Fr. J. Xavier in "Eulogy of Father Jerome Xavier," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 127.

Our Lord which I bear you in the depth of my soul. May God Our Lord grant us all to be conscious of his holy will and to fulfill it, and confirm us in the purity of his divine love.¹⁸

The spirit of tender affection and fraternal solicitude breathes through all the letters, even the official ones, which could easily have been very coldly impersonal.

In the present chapter some of the principal features of the Jesuit Letters from India have been outlined: their exterior appearance, their aim of providing information as well as edification, the manner of drawing up the *Litterae Annuae*, the length of the accounts, and the spirit in which the task of letter-writing was performed by the members of the Society of Jesus in India. Not all these traits can be seen with equal clearness in all the Jesuit Letters, but they do manifest themselves even in the comparatively few that have been published. It is with the publication of the Letters from India that the following chapter deals.

18. Letter of Bro. Luis Frois to the Jesuits at Coimbra, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 489.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUBLICATION OF THE LETTERS

The first news of Francis Xavier's labours and success in India took Catholic Europe by storm. Copies after copies of the early letters of the saint were painstakingly made by hand, and sent from city to city. "From the Pope right down to the benches of the university lecture-halls," says a modern writer speaking of the most famous of Xavier's missives, "all the world was struck with wonder. That letter went round the world, and it could be said with reason that Xavier had not produced less fruit in Spain and Portugal by his letter, than in India by his teaching."¹

There is in letters generally a directness and immediacy of appeal that gives them a charm of their own; and if such be the case even with an ordinary letter, it is no matter for surprise that the epistles of the heroic Xavier, full of the thrills and the consoling news of the fabled East, were received in Europe with eager curiosity.

The Jesuits, of course, had their own arrangements for the circulation of the Indian letters within the Society. These travelled from house to house, much in the same manner as in our own days the books of a circulating library. Since they could not be permanently retained they were often copied in many a Jesuit residence, and arranged for reading during the community meals.² Nor were the outsiders forgotten. As

1. Ignasi Casanovas, *Sant Ignasi de Loyola* (Barcelona, 1930), p. 397.

2. Cf. Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal* (1931-50) Tomo I, Vol. II, p. 524. At the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal, the precious folios with copies of the missionaries' letters were confiscated and transferred to various State archives.

it has already been noted, it was Ignatius' plan that the news from the missions might be shown to the friends of the Society, as a proof of his affectionate regard for them, and also as a means to secure their interest and goodwill. Therefore copies of the letters were made on their behalf also, and the Codex Ottoboni of the Vatican Library contains a number of missionary accounts transcribed for Cardinal Cervini, a great friend of the Jesuit General and later elected Pope.

Furthermore, a method was soon devised that benefited the smaller Jesuit residences, which did not receive a special copy of the letters, nor were able to make one for themselves. The letters were sent to their final destination unsealed, so that they might be read at the different "ports of call" on the way, before reaching their "home port." Another difficulty to be faced simultaneously with that of their distribution was the language problem. During the early decades most of the missionary letters from India were written in Portuguese or Spanish, and much patience and skill was required to secure good Latin, Italian, French and German translations. This difficulty was only gradually overcome.

The system of transcription by hand involved many delays and was liable to be the source of many inaccuracies. The Society was not slow to seize upon the great new weapon of propaganda discovered a century earlier — the printing press. Already in 1545, a French translation of the famous letter Xavier wrote from Cochin on January 15th, 1544, was printed at Paris.³ Such was its success that a second edition was promptly called for in Paris, while a German edition was published that same year, 1545, probably at Augsburg.⁴ The letter aroused the imagination and awakened the enthusiasm of a great number of people; it prepared public opinion to relish the future *Lettres Édifiantes*.

3. The title reads: *Copie dunne lettre missive envoyee des Indes, par mōsieur maistre François xavier, frere treschier en Ihesuchrist, de la societe du nom de Ihesus, a son preuost monsieur Egnace de Layola, et a tous ses freres estudiās aux lettres a Romme, Paue, Portugal, Valence, Coulogne, et a Paris. On les vend a lenseigne des Porcelletz deuāt le college des Lōbards, chez Iehan Corbō. Avec Priuilege. 1545.* The only extant copy of this edition is to be found in the India Office Library, London. Cf. *Ep. Xav.* I, 214.*

4. Cf. J. Wicki, "Der älteste deutsche Druck eines Xaverius-briefes aus dem Jahre 1545 (ehemals in Besitz des Basler Humanisten Lepusculus)," *N.Z.M.*, 4 (1948) 297-300.

The Jesuits were not indeed the first to use the press as a means of publicity. Individual missionary relations had already been published by other religious Orders, such as the Franciscans, but these did not follow any definite plan, nor was their system of correspondence well organized.⁵ Ignatius, however, who was a born tactician, realized immediately the tremendous possibilities latent in the Indian letters and their publication. The importance he attached to them may be gathered from his own correspondence wherein he gives detailed instructions for their transcription, translation and distribution. The most efficient publisher could scarcely have shown a better grasp of what the reading public wanted. At a later period, when the copyists could not cope with the demand, Ignatius and his Order turned to the press. In the introduction to a Portuguese collection of Jesuit Letters, published in 1562, Fr. M. Alvares explains why the press has been resorted to:

Since from this Province of Portugal have to be sent to all the colleges and houses of the Society the letters which each year are written to us from India, Japan and China, and other eastern regions by our Fathers and Brothers who are there engaged in the conversion of the gentiles, and it is not possible to satisfy the desires of all if they were to be copied by hand and by other ordinary processes, it seemed convenient in the Lord to print some of the many that have arrived....⁶

The printed letters were sent to booksellers to be disposed of at a nominal price, while measures were also taken to secure wide publicity for this new type of literature.⁷

As the letters from India increased in number with the arrival of new members of the Society of Jesus on its shores, it was found more convenient to bind several relations together in book form, the first collection of which we have record being entitled *Avisi Particolari delle Indie di Portugallo*. It appeared in Rome in 1552, and edition followed edition, especially in

5. Cf. Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 27*-28.* A glance through the volumes of Streit's *Bibliotheca Missionum* shows how by far the greater part of the published missionary accounts, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries, was of Jesuit origin.

6. Introduction to the *Copia de algumas cartas*...quoted in Rodrigues, *História*, T. I, II, 525, footnote 2; cf. also *ibid.*, p. 526, footnote 1.

7. Cf. Granero, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

Spanish.⁸ Seven years later great progress had been made, and a four-volume set of Jesuit Letters, the *Diversi Avisi Particolari dell' Indie di Portogallo* was printed at Venice; in 1563 a Latin edition appeared at Dillingen, and thus the Indian letters came to reach an even wider public, in Northern and Central Europe.⁹

New problems arose as the volume of missionary correspondence and the demand for it continued unabated. Mention has already been made of Valignano's strictures on the letters from the East on account of the misinformation they conveyed, and of his insistence that they should not be printed in too great a haste. In Europe, however, it was not misinformation that was feared so much by the Jesuit authorities, as disedification and the arousal of opposition. So with an apologetical and apostolic rather than an historical end in view, the Indian letters were touched up, or summarized, or enlarged, or embellished! For instance, where Xavier had written, "Among many graces . . . this is one, that in my days I have seen that which I so greatly desired, which is the confirmation of our rule and manner of living," the French and Latin versions read, "Among many graces one indeed is very great for me, that I have seen our Society and way of living approved by the Pope and the cardinals, confirmed and strengthened by them."¹⁰

There was often an over-emphasis on edification — edification not rightly understood. The supernatural was accentuated and the human element relegated to the background, so that there is at times an atmosphere of unreality about the whole scene. But it is not the missionaries themselves who must bear the chief blame for these misrepresentations. Their letters, as originally written, show their transparent good faith and contain a straight-forward account of their activities and experiences.¹¹ The interference with their letters is indeed a matter for regret to the scholar, as are also the misconstruc-

8. Cf. *Doc. Ind.*, I, Intro., pp. 77*-78.*

9. Cf. *Doc. Ind.*, I, Intro., pp. 80*-82.*

10. Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 39*-40,* footnote 26. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 155.

11. H. Thurston, "Pioneer Jesuits in the Far East," *The Month*, 147 (1926) 323.

tions, distortions and discrepancies that crept into the text in the process of translation and publication.¹²

Even the worthy Polanco, in many respects a very great benefactor of historical science, is not entirely blameless in this regard. He had his own way of "improving" the letters from India, striking out a passage here, changing a line there, for the intended spiritual profit of his readers, but to the distress of the historian. In 1604 Fr. Valignano had some strong things to say about the editing of the Jesuit Letters in Europe. He pointed out that when those who had no experience of things in the East wished to correct what had been recorded by those who laboured there, they committed many errors by explaining and interpreting customs and events according to European notions. The Visitor consequently desired that nothing should be shortened or explained in his own work, nor anything else added to it, and that every kind of exaggeration should be avoided; and he proceeded:

For to tell the truth I am ashamed to see in our letters and in the histories written on the life of our blessed Master Francis Xavier and these countries of China and Japan many matters which should have better been omitted and which were written with many exaggerations, which seems to me very inappropriate in the life of saints.¹³

One should not be too hard, however, on the European editors. From the literary point of view, a certain standard was demanded of the Jesuit Letters by their readers, and the missionaries could not always attend to this themselves. It must also be remembered that there was no unwarranted infringement of authors' rights. Authors and editors belonged to the same Society, which was ultimately responsible for the published letters, and was vested with the full copyright of them.¹⁴ The same cannot be said of private individuals who edited and published Jesuit Letters on their own account.

12. Thus the Portuguese phrase in a letter of Fr. H. Henriques which means "a man from among these *chavallacaras* [Parava fighting men]", has in Latin the strange meaning, "one of those from the city of Somnicoli." *Doc. Ind.*, II, 393. Cf. also Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., p. 37.*

13. Letter of Valignano quoted by Schurhammer, "Historical Research into the Life of Francis Xavier in the Sixteenth Century," *St. Xavier's College Magazine*, 16(1923) 57-58.

14. Cf. A. Rétif, "Brève Histoire des Lettres édifiantes et curieuses," *N.Z.M.*, 7 (1951) 43-45.

Neither set of editors, of course, intended to publish historical documents!

It was but natural that gradually confusion should become worse confounded by the remodelling of the same letter in different places. It was therefore decided that all the Indian letters should first be sent to Coimbra for correction, and be thence distributed. A measure of uniformity, if not greater accuracy, was thereby secured.¹⁵

The reading public in general did not find fault with the letters in their corrected form: between 1545 and 1573 over fifty editions of the Indian Jesuit Letters were published.¹⁶ The great demand for them is further evidenced by the forgeries of dishonest publishers, concocted for the pious consumption of curious, if not very critical, readers.

An interesting study of some forged letters purporting to be from the pen of St. Francis Xavier has been made by Fr. G. Schurhammer,¹⁷ and it would not be surprising to come across other cases of the same type. Even in our own days there are not lacking writers who, through neglecting to investigate the authenticity of a document, have themselves erred, and have led others into error. Here is an instance which is relevant to our subject.

In 1922 there was published in Bombay a *Souvenir of the Exposition of St. Francis Xavier*. One of the contributions to it was "The City and the Saint (Letters from an Eye-Witness) translated with brief notes by A. Soares, M.A., LL.B." These "documents," the fruit of Mr. Soares's keen mind and fertile imagination, are a masterpiece of historical reconstruction and of literary art. The history of the letters, which are supposed to have been written in 1542, was not given by the "translator" since "it would be too long to narrate" in the *Souvenir* article. Nor was evidence adduced to establish their authenticity. Yet

15. Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 40*-41.*

16. *Ibid.*, 41.*

17. G. Schurhammer, "De Scriptis Spuriis S. Fr. Xaverii," *Studia Missionalia* (Rome), 1 (1943) 1-50. *Id.*, "Cartas Falsificadas de São Francisco Xavier," *Boletim da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, N. S. 2 (1930) 923-934.

they have been swallowed, hook, line and sinker, by some writers.¹⁸ It is not without reason that modern historical method, as we have noted in the Introduction, lays stress on the study of original documents, and deprecates reproduction of information gathered at second-hand, especially when no reference is made to its source.

The spread of the printing press, the remarkable success of the various editions (chiefly of semi-official and private missives), the discrepancies between them—all these hastened the advent of yet another stage in the publication of the letters from India. In 1583 the official Annual Letters, compiled at Rome from the reports of the various Provinces and Missions, were there printed and became public for the first time, under the title: *Annuæ Litteræ Societatis Jesu anni MDLXXXI ad Patres et Fratres eiusdem Societatis* ("The Jesuit Annual Letters of 1581, to the Fathers and Brothers of the Society of Jesus").

The first series of this collection reproduced the Annual Letters of thirty-four years (1581-1614) in thirty volumes. Next there occurs a big gap, and the subsequent series, published more than thirty-five years later, did not go beyond five years (Annual Letters of 1650-1654). From the point of view of history, the following remarks may be made about the new venture. The Annual Letters now made public gave an account of happenings in the Society as a whole, consequently Indian affairs were not given extraordinary importance and were even apt to be neglected.¹⁹ The editing was done at Rome, and in the process of correction, recasting, and translation, the original script was much changed. Since these letters were meant for a wider reading public, details of smaller moment were freely omitted. On the other hand, the seal of official approbation gave more authority to the new work. More attention was likewise paid to public affairs and achievements of the Society of Jesus than to happenings of purely domestic interest.²⁰

18. Cf. R. A. Welfle, *Greater than the Great Mogul* (Ranchi, 1940), pp. 11-13; and, after him, J. S. Narayan, *Acquaviva and the Great Mogul* (Patna, [1945], pp. 39-40). Also M. Gollis, *The Land of the Great Image* (London, 1943), p. 36

19. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

20. Rodrigues, *História*, T. II, I, Intro., pp. xvi-xvii.

It is not to be thought that with the appearance of the Annual Letters in print, the publication of separate letters and reports from individual missionaries ceased altogether. Because of their own special flavour and the recent news that they gave, the demand for these accounts was for a long time maintained, and many were published in various European cities, chiefly by private enterprise. Maclagan lists a number of such works dealing with Mughal India,²¹ and there are doubtless many more unlisted letters, referring to other mission areas.

As the years passed by, and the *Litterae Annuae* ceased publication while the editions of individual reports diminished in number, there appeared compilations containing missionary letters of a personal or semi-official character for the most part. The best known of these collections is the Jesuit-edited series *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses, écrites des Missions Étrangères par quelques Missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jésus* ("Edifying and Curious Letters written from the Foreign Missions by some Missionaries of the Society of Jesus").²² The original publication ran into thirty-four volumes, the Indian letters in it dealing chiefly with the French Jesuit missions in South India. The first volume, edited by Fr. C. le Gobien, appeared at Paris in 1702; the last, edited by Fr. L. Patouillet, came out in 1776, a short time after the well-nigh complete suppression of the Society in 1773.

The decree "Dominus ac Redemptor" of 1773 dealt a terrible blow to the Order, to the Jesuit missions and the literary activities connected with them. The next four decades are a sorry tale of many woes: dwindling numbers, misunderstandings, persecutions and set-backs; and the former members of the Society in India would have to speak of all this in their few private letters to Europe.

No anti-Jesuit propaganda or legislation, however, could stop the demand for the *Lettres Édifiantes*. Several new editions, especially of the earlier volumes, were published.²³ Yves de

21. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.

22. For a complete study of this publication, cf. Rétif, *op. cit.*

23. Cf. Victor H. Paltsits, *Contributions to the Bibliography of the "Lettres Édifiantes,"* (Cleveland, 1900), and Rétif, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Querbeuf a member of the recently suppressed Order, found solace in his grief by re-editing the entire series in twenty-six volumes with notes, published between 1780 and 1783 at Paris. He employed a different method of arranging the letters: instead of publishing them in their chronological order, he followed a geographical one, devoting five volumes to the Levant, four to America, six to the Indies, and nine to China; the remaining two volumes contained documents till then unpublished. The *Lettres* were published again at Lyons in 1819,²⁴ and at Paris and Toulouse, 1829-32.²⁵ The last edition, to our knowledge, is the four-volume set issued by the Panthéon Littéraire, 1838-43, and twice reprinted.

The fame of the new publication spread beyond France. A German edition in thirty-eight parts, *Der Neue Weltbott mit allerhand Nachrichten deren Missionarien Soc. Jesu* ("The new World-Messenger containing a Wealth of Information sent by the Jesuit Missionaries"), was brought out by Fr. J. Stöcklein and his successors between the years 1726 and 1758.²⁶ It is not a mere translation from the French, but contains letters from German missionaries which are not to be found elsewhere.

Other selections and anthologies of the Jesuit Letters appeared in Spanish, Italian, Polish and English. The English compilations are likely to be of greater interest to Indian students, as being more readily accessible and comprehensible. The celebrated Purchas included in his collection of travellers' narratives the "Indian Observations gathered out of the Letters of Nicolas Pimenta, Visiter of the Jesuites in India, and of many others of that Societie, written from divers Indian Regions, principally relating to the Countries and accidents of the Coast of Coromandel, and of Pegu."²⁷ But much more valuable is John Lockman's *Travels of the Jesuits into Various Parts of the World*,

24. There is a set of this edition in the Library of the Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay. Volumes VI-VIII are devoted to letters from India.

25. Volumes XVIII-XXIV are devoted to India. Volumes XXI-XXIV are available at the Indian Historical Research Institute.

26. Cf. Rétif, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

27. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (Glasgow, 1905-07), X, 205-222. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 74-80.

published in two volumes at London in 1743.²⁸ In the dedication of the work—which contains several letters about India—the editor, who was swayed by religious bias, qualifies the Jesuits as “a Body of Men whose literary Productions will be as acceptable to You, as the Tenets and Practices ascribed to them must be distasteful.” He achieves a production more suited to the English taste by omitting accounts of conversions and miracles!

The restoration of the Society of Jesus throughout the world, in 1814, paved the way for a new era in Jesuit and missionary literature. In 1894 the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*, a periodical publication of historical documents relating to the Society, was launched at Madrid. Thirty-five years later it was transferred to Rome and began to assume an international importance.²⁹

The earlier volumes of the collection suffered from an insufficient description of the manuscripts used in them, some inexactitudes in the reproduction of original documents, and a poor bibliography. Gradually, however, a critical and scholarly spirit came to pervade the new enterprise. Thus as far back as 1898 the editors of the *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal* set down for themselves thirteen rules, based on the ones framed by German historians at their congress of 1895 at Frankfurt-on-the-Maine, among which are the following:

We shall reproduce documents as they are in the MSS., changing not a word, nor even a letter.

We shall supply the punctuation where it is lacking in the MSS.

28. From the Introduction it would seem that Lockman's original intention was to publish five volumes, but not more than two saw the light of day, as Messrs. Maggs Bros. assure us. These two volumes have no index, and to supply this deficiency, as well as to give an idea of the richness in content of the Jesuit Letters, one has been prepared and is reproduced as Appendix A of this work. The Library of the Indian Historical Research Institute also possesses another English publication: *The Travels of several Learned Missioners of the Society of Jesus, into Divers Parts of the Archipelago, India, China, and America* (London, 1714).

29. For a history of the enterprise see D. Fernandes Zapico and P. Leturia, “Cincuentenario de Monumenta Historica S. I., 1894-1944,” *A. H. S. I.*, 13 (1944) 1-61. Cf. also “Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu,” *Historical Bulletin* (St. Louis), 24 (1946) 51-52, 64-65.

If any evident errors are found in the originals, we shall so correct them that the reader may notice our correction either in a note or in the text itself, within square brackets.³⁰

A special Jesuit Institute of History was set up in Rome in the 1930's, and in our own days trained Jesuit specialists run the new periodical publication entitled *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*. They also publish the volumes of the *Monumenta*, and other historical works.

The recent tomes are a model of historical research and scholarship; they have been prepared after a thorough search for original documents, and contain exact and detailed descriptions of codices and their whereabouts, together with a critical reproduction of texts, excellent introductions and notes, bibliographies and indices. One is reminded of the words of Andrew Lang:

If ever one has met with absolute sportsmanlike fairness in the discussion of historical points which excite partisanship, it is amongst members of the Society of Jesus. No doubt this does not apply equally to all the members of this or any community of any sort. But, speaking as a Protestant, one may declare that whatever the principles and training of the Society may be, they do not warp in the individuals that not too common intellectual virtue, absolute fairness of judgment in historical questions.³¹

Every Indian scholar may judge for himself of the high historical standard of the publications of the Jesuit Institute of History, by inspecting the six volumes relating to India which have been edited in recent years by its members.³² They are the work of Frs. Georg Schurhammer and Josef Wicki, who have brought to their work a German thoroughness coupled with a deep love for their subject.

"The Eastern section," says a writer about the *Monumenta*, "presents a special historical interest since it throws light on

30. *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal Societatis Jesu* (Madrid, 1898-1905), I, Pref. pp. xxi-xxii.

31. Andrew Lang in *Pilot*, October 12th, 1901, quoted in "The New History," *The Month*, 104 (1904) 91.

32. *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii aliaque eius scripta*, ed. G. Schurhammer and J. Wicki, 2 vols. (Rome, 1944-45).

Documenta Indica, ed. J. Wicki. Three volumes have been published so far (Rome, 1948-54).

Alessandro Valignano, *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales* (1542-64), ed. J. Wicki (Rome, 1944).

the points of contact, in the 16th and 17th centuries, between European civilization in full process of development, and the millenary civilizations of the Far East."³³ The volumes concerning India that have been published so far contain much material for the social and political history of the west coast, and there is no doubt that as more volumes are issued, covering a gradually widening area of Jesuit activity in this vast sub-continent, more and more new documents will be brought to light, and an increasing amount of data will be made available for the writing of Indian history.

No account of the publication of the Jesuit Letters from India would be complete without a mention of the work of Fr. H. Hosten. For long years he dedicated himself heart and soul to the study of every source of information bearing on the history of the Jesuits in Mughal India. His greatest achievement was probably the discovery and publication of the *Commentarius* of Monserrate, but he also brought to light many letters of the Jesuit missionaries in India, and published some in their original language or in English or in both.³⁴ It would not be too much to say that these are in all likelihood the only Jesuit Letters from India with which most students of Indian history are directly acquainted.

It must also be remarked that Jesuits have not been the only ones to publish Jesuit documents on India. Almost concurrently with the publication of the *Documenta Indica* at Rome, the Portuguese historian Antonio da Silva Rego has been editing the *Documentação para a História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente*, published at Lisbon. Of the ten volumes on India which have been issued to date, the last eight contain documents relating to the Society—and other documents as well—up to the year 1561. The originals of these are for the most part to be found in the Portuguese archives.

33. Edmond Lamalle, "Pour une édition systématique des relations et des lettres des Missionnaires Jésuites en Amérique," *Studi Colombiani* (Genoa), 2 (1951) 607.

34. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3 and 391-394 ("The Chief Contributions by Father H. Hosten, S. J., to the History of the Jesuits at the Mogul Court"). Though Fr. H. Hosten's chief concern was with Mughal India, he also wrote about the Jesuits in other parts of the country. These studies, together with the ones recorded by Maclagan, are listed in Appendix B.

Finally, a short reference to the Jesuit bibliographies will not be out of place here, since these serve as guides to the Jesuit Letters and other documents. In the opinion of Maclagan, the erudition of the Jesuits has been nowhere more markedly displayed than in the bibliographies which have been prepared of the literary productions of the members of the Society.³⁵ The classic ones date from Ribadancira's (1602) to Sommervogel's, supplemented by Bliard and Rivière (1890-1932). An interesting periodical publication of the intervening period was the *Moniteur Bibliographique*, issued at Paris and elsewhere between 1888 and 1914. In recent years Fr. E. Lamalle edited a complete current bibliography of the history of the Order in the issues of the *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, a work that was taken up in 1952 by Fr. L. Polgár. A more general work is the *Index Bibliographicus Societatis Iesu*, edited by Fr. I. Juambelz, four volumes of which have so far been issued, covering the years 1937-50.³⁶ Again, mention must be made of a non-Jesuit publication that is very helpful for the study of Jesuit documents. It is Robert Streit's *Bibliotheca Missionum*, a bibliography of the missions which began publication in 1916 and still continues, under the direction of Fr. J. B. Dindinger. Volumes IV, V, VI and VIII of this monumental work deal with India.

Thus far the nature and history of the Jesuit Letters from India have been outlined, and details have been given about the publication of the Letters and their consequent availability to the general reading public and especially to historians. The next step will be to study, chiefly on the basis of the published letters, the territorial range of these documents, as a help to their evaluation.

35. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 10

36. Cf. also E. J. Burrus, "Jesuit Bibliography," *Historical Bulletin*, 30 (1952) 131-140, 219-234, 31 (1953) 78-99.

CHAPTER V

THE TERRITORIAL RANGE OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA

Letter-writing in the Society of Jesus forms, as has been seen, an integral part of its administrative system. It is natural to expect, therefore, that from all places in India where the Jesuits stayed for any considerable period, communications should have been forwarded to their headquarters both in India and in Europe. Such indeed must have been the case, but not all the Jesuit Letters have been preserved, and only a fraction of those preserved has been published. In this chapter a brief survey will be made of the area of Jesuit activity in India, which is, equivalently, an account of the places about which we may hope to find data in the Jesuit correspondence.

Some of this correspondence has already been utilized by scholars, directly or indirectly, in the service of Indian history. References to their works will be found in the text of the present chapter, and, more especially, in the footnotes. The reader will thus have an idea of the chief authorities for the history of each region who have made use of Jesuit material. In the writings of these historians will be found more precise information about the Jesuit Letters relevant to their subject, as also further bibliographical indications.

A few additional remarks must be made before starting our survey. It will treat of the territorial extent of the Society's apostolate in India from the year 1542, when Francis Xavier arrived in the country, to the year 1773, when the decree for the suppression of the Society throughout the world was issued.

Even before this step was taken, the Jesuits had been banned by the King of Portugal, in 1759, and likewise by the King of France, in 1762. A fatal blow had thus been dealt to the Jesuit missions in the areas controlled by these two countries. It may be said, however, that for two centuries from the time Xavier first set foot in India, the Society of Jesus gradually extended the area of its activities in this land. Its members reached the remotest corners of the country, and thence sent news of what they saw and did.

The "Indian Province" of the Society, erected in 1549, extended as a matter of fact from the Cape of Good Hope to the Moluccas, and even beyond them, to Japan.¹ Our study limits itself, however, to what is today known as India. Others have written with scholarship and exactness about the Jesuit missionaries who crossed the mighty mountain barriers of the north of India, who penetrated into Burma, and who established the Order in Ceylon.²

Along with the text will be found a very simple map based on the *Atlas Geographicus Societatis Jesu* of L. Carrez, published at Paris in 1900. The maps in that volume, as Carrez informs us, have been drawn up with the aid of ancient missionary charts and of other Jesuit documents such as the Catalogues, Relations and Annual Letters of the Missions. They thus enable us to have at a glance a fairly accurate picture of the range of Jesuit activity. Incidentally, the 1819 edition of the *Lettres Édifiantes* contains a fairly detailed map of peninsular India designed by the Royal Geographer of France, M. D'Anville, on the basis of Jesuit geographical charts, showing important towns, Catholic churches, etc.

Parallel with the territorial expansion of the Society was an increase in its personnel, and consequently in potential letter-writers. For a very long time all the missionaries for the

1. The boundaries of the new Province are not clearly set down in the decree of the General of the Society, issued at Rome on October 10th, 1549 (*Doc. Ind.*, I, 507-510); it is to be remembered that the geography of the East was still very vague at that time.

2. Cf., e.g., C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721* (the Hague, 1924); F. Guerreiro, ed. C. H. Payne, "The Mission to Pegu," in *Jahangir and the Jesuits* (London, 1930), pp. 185-278; S. G. Perera, *The Jesuits in Ceylon* (Madura, 1941).

East had to set out from Lisbon, and lists of departures for the missions are available, giving us an idea of the numerical strength of the Order in India during the early years. For the later years there are the Catalogues of the various Provinces and Missions.

Antonio Franco in his *Synopsis Annalium Societatis Jesu in Lusitania*, published in 1726, lists the departures for the missions from 1541 to 1724; and Camara Manoel has published a similar catalogue of the missionaries who left for the Orient during the years 1541-1613.³ Yet another catalogue, together with a list of letters received from the East, has appeared in the *Documentação* of Silva Rego.⁴ In the beginning the infant Society could spare but few members for the new undertaking, but so speedy was its growth, and so ardent the desire for the missions—both due in great part to the Jesuit Letters from India—that bigger groups soon set sail. In 1574, for example, Fr. A. Valignano beat all previous records by leading an expedition of forty-two picked men to the missions of the East, a figure that was improved upon by the 1602 expedition of fifty-eight Jesuits.

It may be said without exaggeration that the first scene of the missionary labours of the Jesuits was the very voyage to India. About the dangers and hardships of this voyage, and about the men who were building Portugal's colonial empire, we can learn much from the letters of Francis Xavier and of his co-workers and followers.⁵ The vivid picture of the frightful sea journey which the Jesuit Letters place before our eyes is confirmed by the accounts of other European travellers such as Pyrard de Laval.⁶

Francis Xavier landed in Goa on May 6th, 1542, and before the year was out he was already working in the Fishery Coast. By 1549, the year in which the Saint was placed at the head of the newly constituted Indian Province of the Society,

3. Jeronymo da Camara Manoel, *Missões dos Jesuítas no Oriente nos Seculos XVI e XVII* (Lisbon, 1894), pp. 129-157.

4. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, VI, 154-164.

5. C., e. g., *Ep. Xav.*, I, 91-93, 119-128; *Doc. Ind.*, I, 317-332, 382-390; Purchas, *op. cit.*, X, 74-75.

6. Cf. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99; Plattner, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-49.

the Jesuits had established themselves in Goa, Cape Comorin, Quilon and Mylapore, and it is about these places that they first gave news to Europe. In the letters included in the very first volume of the *Documenta Indica*, covering the years 1540-1549, mention is made of several important towns and forts, such as Broach, Calicut, Chaul, Cochin, Cranganore, Diu, Tanur and Vijayanagara. These letters also throw interesting light on the social and religious life in Goa.⁷

The first political event of note to be described in the Indian letters is the war between Rama Varma, ruler of the Southern Tinnevely district, and Vetum Perumal of Kayattar, in 1544. The material on this subject, which is to be found in the letters of St. Francis to Francis Mansilhas, has been used by many historians. Their reconstruction of the happenings has been far from perfect, however, and we are indebted to Fr. G. Schurhammer for a clear exposition of the entire episode.⁸

It is but natural that the Jesuits should have established their first residences in territory under Portuguese control. It was the King of Portugal who had invited them to India, and they had a duty to fulfil towards his subjects. Accordingly there was a northward movement from Goa, and soon Jesuit stations sprang up at Bassein, Bandra, Thana and Damaun.⁹ But neither Xavier nor his successors were content to confine their activities to the areas under European domination; they gradually penetrated into the Muhammadan territory in the north, and in time a station was opened at Surat. This great trading centre was for long important in the political map of India, and the Jesuit information about it is consequently of special interest.

7. *Doc. Ind.*, I, 396, 495, and *passim*. Fr. G. Berze's letters in the *Documenta Indica* have drawn the attention of a Jewish scholar as being useful historical material: cf. Walter J. Fischel, "New Sources for the History of the Jewish Diaspora in Asia in the 16th Century," *Jewish Quarterly Review* (Philadelphia), N. S. 40 (1950) 379-399.

8. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 178-247, where concise bibliographical, historical and geographical data will be found.

9. *Doc. Ind.*, I, Intro., 13*-24,* II, Intro., 1*-3*; G. Schurhammer, "Some Documents on the Bassein Mission in the Possession of the Society of Jesus," *Journal of the Bombay Historical Society* [*J.B.H.S.*], 2 (1929) 195-200.

In 1580 the first Jesuit mission was received at Fatchpur by the Great Mughal. Little need be said about this and the two subsequent missions to Akbar's court, about the missionaries' familiar dealings with the Emperor and their travels in his retinue. They are sufficiently well known to the students of Indian history, as is also the value of the letters despatched by the Jesuits chiefly from Agra and Lahore.¹⁰ The Jesuits also gathered many interesting bits of information during their journeyings in the suite of Mirza Zu'lqarnain, the powerful Christian nobleman who became Fauzdar of Sambhar, and later Governor of Lahore.¹¹

Nor did the activities of the Society in Mughal India cease at Akbar's death. Jahangir too was quite well disposed towards its members, and showed them considerable favour. We have consequently precious evidence about the character, life and reign of this Muslim monarch, from the pens of such men as Frs. Jerome Xavier and Francisco Corsi.¹²

It was the probity of two Jesuit priests in Bengal, it may be remembered, that apparently attracted Akbar's favourable attention towards Christianity.¹³ These Jesuits had arrived in Bengal as early as 1576, but it was only in 1598 that a regular mission was there established.¹⁴ Hugli was the field of their earliest endeavours, then the Fathers pushed on to Chandecan and Siripur in the north, and to Chittagong in the east;¹⁵ later on they even established a residence at Patna.¹⁶

10. The most complete accounts of the Jesuit missions to Akbar are to be found in Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, and P. du Jarric, ed. C. H. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*.

11. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-180; H. Hosten, "Mirza Zu'lqarnain, a Christian Grandee of three Moghuls," *M.A.S.B.*, 5 (1916) 115-194.

12. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-98; F. Guerreiro, ed. C. H. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*.

13. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

14. Cf. H. Josson, *La Mission du Bengale Occidentale* (Bruges, 1921), I, 49-138, which gives an excellent account of the Jesuit Mission in Bengal from the time of its inception to that of the suppression of the Society; also J. J. A. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1919), pp. vi and 101.

15. H. Hosten ed., "Jesuit Letters from Bengal, Arakan and Burma (1599-1660). A new version of the Annual Letter from Goa (December 1, 1600) dated September 8, 1602," *Bengal, Past and Present*, 30 (1925) 52-76.

16. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-387; Josson, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

Seventeenth-century India was the scene of a many-sided struggle between the Great Mughal, the lesser Indian rulers, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the French. The trade and revenue of Bengal were part of the coveted booty, and its harbours figured prominently on the war map. The Jesuit Letters from this area reflect the temper of the times, and furnish useful details about the drift of events. A tragic landmark in the history of the Bengal Mission was the siege and capture of Hugli by the Mughals, in 1632. A full account of this is given by Fr. J. Cabral in a letter to the Provincial of Malabar, written in the following year.¹⁷

The instructions for the extermination of the Portuguese settlement at Hugli had been issued by the Emperor Shah Jahan. His ascension to the Mughal throne marked the return to power of orthodox Islam, and consequently a gradual decrease in the prestige and influence of the Jesuits. The decline was even more marked during the reign of his son Aurangzeb, a devout Muslim, when the missionary work of the Fathers was brought almost to a total standstill.

Small wonder then that the zealous priests, finding little scope for their activities in the big cities like Agra, Delhi and Lahore, should have sought more promising fields for evangelization. After a first unsuccessful attempt towards the north-west, they turned eastwards, sending new men to Bengal, and opening mission-stations in Nagpur and Narwar.¹⁸ In Jaipur too they received a hearty welcome from Raja Jai Singh, and helped him to set up an observatory in his principality.¹⁹

The last survivor of the Mughal Mission was Fr. Francis Xavier Wendel, who died in 1803, thirty years after the suppression of the Society had brought its work to an untimely end. But if the Mughal Mission was the greatest Jesuit enter-

17. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-104. The author makes use of Cabral's account as published by L. Besse in the *Catholic Herald of India* (Calcutta) of 1918, in various places between pp. 91 and 671.

18. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-136.

19. Cf., e. g., H. Hosten, *Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India and Inscriptions on their Tombs, Agra (1580-1803)* (Calcutta, 1907), pp. 37-39; and G. M. Moracs, "Astronomical Missions to the Court of Jaipur 1730-1743," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 27 (1951) 61-65, 85.

prise in Northern India, there were others no less important in the South, to which we must now return.

In 1598 the Jesuit outpost at S. Tome, Mylapore, provided the starting point for a mission to the ruler of Vijayanagara. It was well received by Venkata II, and the Fathers were held in great esteem at his court. Chandragiri and Vellore were the principal scenes of their labours for a decade, and about these, as about the Aravidu Empire in general, they have left us precious information.²⁰ Jinji too was visited at about this time by a Jesuit, Fr. N. Pimenta, who has recorded his impressions of "the greatest Citie we have seen in India, and bigger than any in Portugall, Lisbon excepted."²¹

In 1605, a part of Southern India, which had already been constituted some years before into a Jesuit Vice-Province, became the full-fledged "Province of Malabar."²² Its territory was very extensive, and included at one time the Missions of the Fishery Coast, Travancore, Cochin, Madura, Ceylon, Bengal and Pegu, Malacca and the Moluccas.²³

The Fishery Coast figured early in the Jesuit Letters, as has already been mentioned, and for two centuries it witnessed the labours of the Jesuit missionaries. Under the expressive title, "Sidelights on South Indian History from the Letters and Records of Contemporary Jesuit Missionaries, 1542-1756,"²⁴ Fr. J. Castets has put together a number of items of historical interest collected from the Jesuit correspondence. Of these items, he states, "some are mere incidental references to actual political events and situations; others are descriptions or accounts of facts and occurrences involving such political events

20. Cf. H. Heras, *The Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara*, pp. 464-485 and *passim*; *id.*, "The Jesuit Influence in the Court of Vijayanagar," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, 14 (1923-24) 130-140.

21. Cf. H. Heras, "The City of Jinji at the End of the 16th Century," *Indian Antiquary*, 54 (1925) 41-43.

22. The most complete study of it is D. Ferrol's *The Jesuits in Malabar*, two volumes of which have appeared so far (Bangalore, 1939, 1951).

23. For a view of the Indian sector of the Province, see the map, p. 55.

24. In *The Magazine* (St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly), 18-21 (1929-33) at various places.

or social conditions" — a good summing-up, indeed, of the nature of the historical information to be found in the Jesuit Letters in general.

Unlike the Portuguese Empire in India, the Jesuit missionary efforts were not confined to the coastal regions. Fr. Fenicio, for example, explored the land of the Todas and brought back information which was published three centuries later by W.H.R. Rivers in his famous work on that tribe. Fr. Fenicio also penetrated into "the kingdom of the Salt," across the Ghats from Calicut.²⁵ Information about the Zamorin, the roving Kunhale, and political conditions in Calicut, is to be found in the Annual Letters and other Jesuit reports.²⁶

As far back as 1596 a Jesuit priest, Fr. Gonçalo Fernandes, arrived in Madura from the Fishery Coast; the mission which he inaugurated is now associated with such famous names as Robert de Nobili, John de Britto and Constant Beschi. The labours of the Jesuits in this area have been brought to the notice of the public through the works of Bertrand, Besse, Castets and Houpert.²⁷ Though these authors do not provide us with a critical edition of the original sources, they have reproduced enough material from the missionary letters concerning the Nayaks of Madura, Tanjore and Jinji, to make it clear that, for the historian of South India, such an edition is "a desideratum, the importance and urgency of which can hardly be overestimated."²⁸

25. Cf. "Padre Fenicio's Expedition to Todaland (1603) and to the Kingdom of the Salt (1610)," in Ferroli, *op. cit.*, I, 472-480.

26. Cf. "The Zamorin and the Jesuits (1596-1615)," in Ferroli, *op. cit.*, I, 212-248, and *passim*.

27. J. Bertrand, *La Mission du Maduré*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1847-54); L. Besse, *La Mission du Maduré* (Trichinopoly, 1914); J. Castets, *The Madura Mission* (Trichinopoly, 1924); J. Houpert, *A South Indian Mission* (Trichinopoly, 1947).

28. R. Sathyanatha Aiyar, *History of the Nayaks of Madura* (Madras, 1924), p. 37. The author, who gives in an appendix extensive passages from Jesuit sources, says of the Jesuit Letters: "As coming from educated men of high qualifications who lived in this country and with the people, these writings are of great value. They throw much light on the religious, social, economic, and political conditions of South India in the seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries. Though their object was mainly and professedly religious, passing remarks on other aspects of society could not be avoided. Consequently, even the historian of political events will gain considerable material for history if he dive deep into these documents and collect these incidental references. In a way they serve as a necessary corrective to the Indian tradition as embodied in the *Mackenzie Manuscripts*. From 1659 to 1688 they contain a brief sketch of the political condition of the country, apart from casual notices of it in narrating the progress of missionary activities. The history of the reigns of Tirumala Nayaka and his two immediate successors, at least from 1656 to 1682, could hardly be written with sufficient fulness but for these records." — *Op. cit.*, p. 36.

An idea of the valuable contents of the Letters from Madura will be obtained from a perusal of the descriptive catalogue of the Madura Mission Archives at Trichinopoly, published by Fr. Hosten in his report: "My Journey to Mylapore, Pondicherry and Trichinopoly."²⁹ Fr. A. Saulière, at present in charge of these archives, informs us that the first Annual Letter from Madura — as distinct from those of the Malabar Province — seems to have been written in 1640; the last Annual Letter of the Mission that is recorded in the Archives is of 1757. There are some gaps between these two dates, however, as not all the *Annuae* have been preserved.

Moving to the north we find the Mission of Mysore begun in 1648 by the Neapolitan Jesuit, Leonardo Cinnani; to this Mission were entrusted the districts of Salem and Coimbatore. Even after the suppression of the Society, the former members of the Order continued to labour in Mysore till the end of the 18th Century.³⁰ The Jesuit Letters of this area, which are yet to be published, speak of the extension of Mysore by "Raja Narassa," the siege of Seringapatam by the Raja of Kanara, the rise to power of Hyder Ali, and the persecutions of Tippu Sultan.³¹

Bordering the Mysore Mission to the east was the Carnatic Mission of the French Jesuits, which is well represented in the collection of *Lettres Édifiantes*. The group of founders, having had to quit the mission of Siam owing to a political upheaval, landed at the French settlement of Pondicherry in 1689. Their repeated pleas to Rome, to be allowed to found a mission in India, were heeded, and early in the 18th century the Carnatic Mission was established. Its members were to work in the French territories in India, such as Pondicherry and Chandernagore, as well as in the kingdoms of Jinji, Vellore and Golconda.³²

29. In *Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings of Meetings [I.H.R.C.]*, 4 (1922) 57-102.

30. Ferroli, *op. cit.*, II, 211-251, 554-564, and *passim*.

31. From information provided by Fr. Ferroli, it would seem that the Annual Letters of Mysore that are extant cover the period 1662-1743. Outside these two limits the letters are irregular; for the closing years of the mission there are some private letters, chiefly by Frs. P. Licchetta and F. X. Pavone.

32. Ferroli, *op. cit.*, II, 426-427; Josson, *op. cit.*, I, 101-140.

The Deccan Sultanates were not left unexplored by the enterprising Jesuit Fathers. Already in 1561 Fr. Gonzalo Rodrigues had visited the court of Ali Adil Shah I,³³ and several years later the missionaries secured a foothold in Bijapur, and the favour of Sultan Muhammad Adil Shah.³⁴ Raichur, Kittur and Sunda were some of the stations of the Mission which in time came to form part of the Vicariate Apostolic of "the kingdom of the Great Mogul, Adil Khan [Bijapur] and Golconda."

A leading figure of the Bijapur Mission in a later period was Fr. Gonçalo Martins. He was afterwards sent by the Viceroy of Portuguese India to Shivaji's court to secure the ratification of the Maratha-Portuguese treaty of 1667,³⁵ and thus forms a link between the Jesuit activity in the Muhammadan and in the Maratha areas. The Jesuits witnessed the rise of the Maratha power in Western India, and the ravages of the wars between the young nation and its neighbours in the Konkan and in Southern India.³⁶ Their records are valuable for forming a correct picture of the Maratha era, especially in the region of Salsette.³⁷

If the Marathas contributed in part to the downfall of the power of the Portuguese on land, the Dutch undoubtedly wrested from the latter their mastery of the sea. Fr. Ferroli gives an account of "Dutch Exploits in India and Ceylon, as Related by Contemporary Jesuit Letters, 1602-1633."³⁸ This narrative is helpful for a study of the rise of Holland's colonial power.

The rapid survey made above gives a summary idea of the range of Jesuit activity in India, and consequently of the great potentialities of the Jesuit Letters as sources for its history.

33. Cf. H. Heras, "Three Catholic Padres at the Court of Ali Adil Shah I," *J.B.H.S.*, 1 (1928) 158-163.

34. Cf. H. Heras, "Some Unknown Dealings between Bijapur and Goa," *I.H.R.C.*, 8 (1925) 130-146.

35. P. Pissurlencar, "Portugueses e Maratas, I, Shivaji," *Boletim do Instituto Vasco da Gama* (Nova-Goa), No. 1 (1926) 66-71.

36. Cf. H. Heras, "The Marathas in Southern India, According to Jesuit Sources," in D. V. Potdar and G. N. Mujumdar eds., *Historical Miscellany* (Madras, 1928), pp. 7-24.

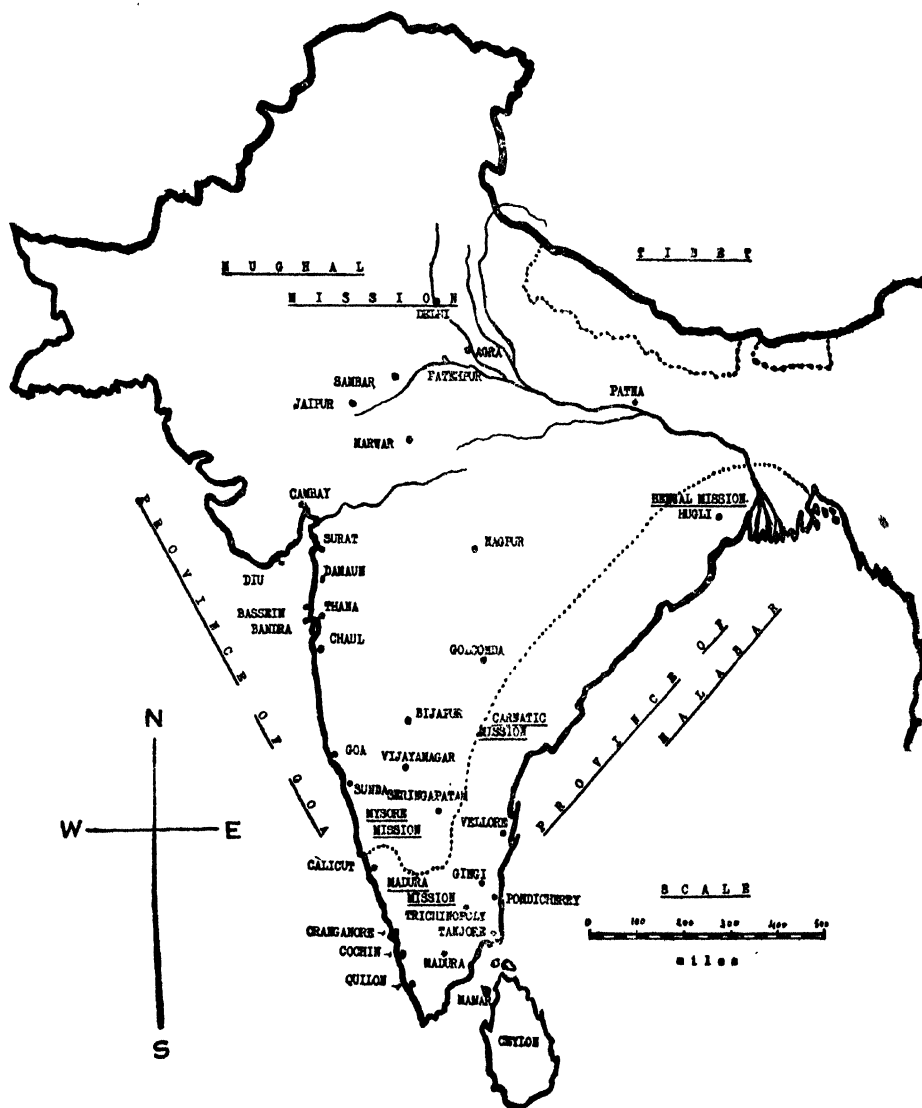
37. Cf., e. g., G. Schurhammer, "Some Documents on the Bassein Mission in the Possession of the Society of Jesus," *J.B.H.S.*, 2 (1929) 199-200.

38. Ferroli, *op. cit.*, II, 1-24.

JESUITS IN INDIA

1542-1773

PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS AND STATIONS



CHAPTER VI

LETTER-WRITERS FROM HERE AND THERE

One of the first steps in the evaluation of any historical evidence is a study of the source of its provenance, i.e., an inquiry into the character and competence of the man who has left behind the written record. Therefore, before attempting any appraisal of the Jesuit Letters as sources for Indian historiography, it is necessary to refer to the authors of these letters.

It would be an impossible task to consider here each one of the hundreds of missionaries who were responsible for the Indian correspondence of the Society of Jesus for over two centuries. We shall consequently limit ourselves to pointing out what they had in common, as Jesuits, and then proceed to a more detailed examination of a few representative letter-writers from India.

An accusation that has at times been levelled against the Society is that it endeavours to shape all its members in the same mould, and thus destroys the personality of the individual. This is an unwarranted allegation, and the great and many-sided achievements of the men whom the Order has sent forth into the world—missionaries, teachers, scientists, spiritual writers, men of letters—are a standing refutation of the charge. Nevertheless, the Society does certainly require and develop certain qualities in each one of its members, and gives them a good proportion of their training in common. These two points, then, have to be considered.

The qualities demanded of candidates for the Society

may be summed up under three heads: intellectually, they must be endowed with good judgment and sound doctrine, or show at least an aptitude for acquiring it; morally, they must be keen in the pursuit of virtue, be calm, constant and zealous; in what concerns externals, they should have good health and a facility in speaking, so necessary for social intercourse.¹

It would be idle to claim that everyone admitted into the Order excelled in these gifts, but a high standard was certainly demanded at Jesuit headquarters in Rome, and by local superiors elsewhere. It was these preliminary requisites that made local recruitment for the Society in India so difficult in the old days; nor did St. Francis Xavier hesitate to dismiss some of his European subjects, such as Antonio Gomes and Francis Mansilhas, for failing to live up to their vocation, through faults in obedience, for instance.

The training which the Society of Jesus gives to those of its members who are to become priests is long and thorough, lasting from twelve to fifteen years. Besides the spiritual training, there are courses of humanistic studies, of philosophy and theology. The Jesuit is thus fashioned into a man of culture and discrimination, whose powers of observation and judgment are sharpened by the repetitions and disputations which form so important a part of the educational system of the schools.²

It must be confessed that not all the missionaries despatched from Europe to St. Francis Xavier's assistance were of his own intellectual and moral calibre. The impression was even created in Europe that only men of mediocre talent were sent to India.³ In this distant land apparently, as even Xavier had thought, it was virtue and experience rather than learning that were necessary;⁴ and the Saint had occasion to complain that some were lacking in the two former!⁵

1. Robert Schwickerath, *Jesuit Education, Its History and Principles Viewed in the Light of Modern Educational Problems* (St. Louis, 1904), p. 416.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 422-425. Cf. also Gaetan de Bernoville, trans. Katherine Balfe, *The Jesuits* (London, 1937), p. 106.

3. Cf. Polanco, *op. cit.*, III, 390.

4. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 259, II, 37.

5. *Ibid.*, II, 347-348.

Fr. Miguel Torres, Jesuit Visitor of the Portuguese Province, determined to attack the evil at its roots by despatching to India, in 1553, a group of picked men, among them the Rector of the College of Lisbon. Ignatius of Loyola himself was very keen that the men sent to India should be "persons on whose life and doctrine great trust could be placed." In a letter to Francis Xavier of June 1553, instructing him to return to Europe, he declared that one of the benefits of this visit would be that he would be able to choose the right men for the Indian missions.⁶

That these missions did not lack religious of learning and holiness in succeeding years, is amply proved by the array of famous names that stand out prominently in the history of the Society in India: Rudolf Acquaviva, Alessandro Valignano, Jacobo Fenicio, Robert de Nobili, John de Britto, Costanzo Beschi, and a host of others.

One item of Jesuit training that is especially relevant to our subject is the study of the vernaculars. The rules of the Society specifically state that "for the greater union of those that live in the Society, and for the greater assistance of those among whom they dwell, all shall study the language of the region wherein they reside, unless their own native tongue be there more profitable," and this prescription is based on the Constitutions drawn up by St. Ignatius.⁷

It did not take the Jesuit missionaries long to realize that it was imperative for them to master the local languages if they wished to reach the heart of India. Thus we find some of them devoting years to the almost exclusive study of the Indian languages, and composing grammars and dictionaries of them for their colleagues. Instances in point are the works of Frs. Henry Henriques and Costanzo Beschi in Tamil,⁸ Fr. Thomas

6. On this point, and the entire question of missionary personnel, cf. Granero, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-150.

7. Cf. *Monumenta Ignatiana. Constitutiones*, II, 455.

8. Henriques wrote a grammar, a vocabulary, and several spiritual works in the "lingua malavar" (Tamil). Cf. *Doc. Ind.*, II, 304-305. Details about Beschi's works will be found later on in this chapter.

Stephens in Konkani,⁹ and. Jerome Xavier in Persian.¹⁰ Writing to St. Ingatius on November 28th, 1550, in praise of the apostolic work of the Jesuits in India, the Bishop of Goa declared that they went about among the people teaching them Christian doctrine and that the better to do so "some of the Fathers learnt the languages of these parts..."¹¹ It was doubtless to this knowledge of the languages of the land that their success as missionaries was in a great measure due. Admittedly, not all the Jesuits were polyglots, nor had all of them that facility for languages which made the above-named missionaries famous.

Nevertheless the fact remains that the average Jesuit missionary in India was a man of culture, observation and judgment, possessing also some knowledge of the languages of the land. Eminent and above the rank and file there were many others, but a study will here be made of eight representative writers of Jesuit Letters. They wrote at different periods, and in different parts of the land; most of them, though not all, were authors of official letters. Some, like Frs. Alessandro Valignano, Jaboco Fencio and Jerome Xavier, have been left aside of set purpose, since they are already rather well known to the student of history. A few of the less famous missionaries will be dealt with, so that, as in the random sampling method, a more balanced view of the Jesuit letter-writers in general may be obtained.

Frois. Luis Frois, born at Lisbon in 1532, was employed in the Secretariate of King John III when still a youth. Early

9. "The Jesuits spent much time and energy in studying the various languages of the country with the object of being able the more easily to conduct their religious propaganda. They devoted themselves to these studies with such zeal, that Father Stephens, an English priest who was in Salsete and Goa for thirty years was the author of the first grammar of the modern languages of India and also the writer of a brilliant poem popularly known as the Christian Purana, published in 1640, Goa, in Marathi with a mixture of Concani words." — Ethel M. Pope, *India in Portuguese Literature* (Bastora, Portuguese India, 1937), p. 140.

10. Cf. Maclagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-221. Persian, though not spoken by the ordinary people, was required for dealing with the higher classes, and especially at the Mughal Court where the Fathers had to attend on the Emperor. Maclagan also speaks about the Fathers' solicitude to learn the languages of India, *ibid.*, pp. 193-198.

11. *Doc. Ind.*, II, 120.

in 1548 he entered the Society of Jesus and was soon afterwards appointed to the Indian missions, arriving in Goa in October of the same year. Frois stayed in Goa till 1562, excepting for a couple of years spent at Malacca, and a few short visits to the northern outposts of Chaul and Bassein. After his noviceship and ecclesiastical studies, the young priest was made Secretary to the Rector of the College of Goa, and to the Provincial of the Indian Province, on account of his extraordinary talent as a writer, which he exercised even before his ordination to the priesthood. In 1563 he entered Japan, where he died thirty-four years later.

The earliest letter of Fr. Frois that has come down to us is dated Goa, December 1st, 1552. It was written at the command of Fr. Gaspar Berze, who was then Superior of the Jesuits in India, Francis Xavier being away on his Chinese expedition. "This can rightly be called the first Annual Letter," says Wicki, "in which is presented an outline of the activities of the College of Goa."¹² No less than 136 epistles of this prolific writer have been traced, the greater number of them being rather lengthy. Only a few of these have been published.¹³

Luis Frois is more famous as an authority on Japan than on India. He wrote an excellent history of the Land of the Rising Sun, and a great number of letters about his experiences there.¹⁴ Fr. Balthazar Tellez, speaking of those who sailed for India in 1548, mentions

Bro. Luis Frois, a native of Lisbon, who after having been made a priest in Goa, wrote, with a good style, great diligence and truth, all things regarding the conversion of the infidels in the regions and kingdoms of Japan, taking particular care to write every year to Portugal about the fortunes of that new Christian community; his letters were received with great excitement not only in Portugal, whither he sent them, but also all over Europe, where they were in demand.¹⁵

12. Preface to the letter of Frois, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 445.

13. Some have been published in Silva Rego, *op. cit.* Concerning Frois, cf. Pope, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-131; G. Schurhammer, "O P. Luis Frois S. J. e a Sua História do Japão," *Brotéria* (Lisbon), 9 (1929) 95-106.

14. A German version of the History, under the title *Die Geschichte Japans (1549-1578)*, was published by G. Schurhammer and E. A. Voretzsch at Leipzig in 1926.

15. Balthazar Tellez, *Chronica da Companhia de Jesu, na provincia de Portugal* (Lisbon, 1645-47), I, 393, quoted by Schurhammer, "O P. Luis Frois," *Brotéria*, 9 (1929) 95.

Though the Indian letters of this Jesuit were written in his less mature days, they are still of high historical worth. Their author is a master of description, using colourful illustrations and dramatic episodes, and he has a keen eye for noting characteristic traits. From the historical point of view, Frois's most commendable qualities are an absence of verbosity and oratorical padding, and a passion for concrete facts. Thus, for example, not content with saying that there were many baptisms in Goa, he gives the exact numbers for each month, and enumerates the various villages where they took place. Again, in characterizing the pupils of St. Paul's as a motley crowd from all quarters, he mentions some of the races and countries represented, giving also very minute details about their daily time-table.¹⁶

The best compliment we can pay Fr. Frois as an epistolographer is to say that Japan's gain was India's loss. Had he remained longer in this country, he would surely have left behind a magnificent heritage for the historian.

Pimenta. Fr. Nicholas Pimenta was born at Santarem, Portugal, in 1546. At the age of sixteen he joined the Society of Jesus, in which he held posts of responsibility, such as that of Rector of the famous college of Coimbra. In 1596 he was sent out to India as Visitor, was later appointed Provincial of Goa and, in 1609, Visitor of the new Malabar Province. He died at Goa in 1616.

Hosten has published in English some of Fr. Pimenta's letters,¹⁷ and few as these are, they suffice to reveal the Jesuit Visitor as a man of experience and judgment, as we would expect of one who held such responsible offices in his Order. From what his colleague wrote about him, the Visitor seems to have been a kind man, but not lacking in firmness. Indeed some of those who came directly under his authority seem to have thought him rather high-handed at times.¹⁸

There are some features of Pimenta's letters which make

16. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, VI, 75-76, 327-331.

17. *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 57-65, 67-82, 83-107; *Bengal, Past and Present*, 30 (1925) 52-76.

18. Cf. Ferroli, *op. cit.*, I, 282-284.

them especially valuable to the historian. As his *Annuæ* were addressed to the General of the Society, the Visitor did not feel himself in any way constrained to silence. He spoke bluntly on certain topics, on which, when writing to others, greater reserve would have been necessary. Furthermore, he endeavoured to give most precise and detailed information. Consequently we find the names and the places quite clearly indicated, and not a few personal references to members of the Society, as well as to civil and ecclesiastical authorities. For instance, the complaints of Fr. Surrentino, the misbehaviour and fall from grace of the Captain of Cranganore, the relations with the Franciscans — all these are quite straightforwardly set out in the Annual Letter of 1601.

Pimenta's office made him singularly well fitted to give an over-all picture of India, which at the time of his first visit of inspection formed but a single Province of the Society. He is very methodical in his accounts, as may be seen in the Annual Letter just mentioned, which follows the geographical order of the Colleges and Residences from Goa to the north, and then from Goa to the south and the east.¹⁹ He was also careful to insist on exact information being provided to him by those under his authority.²⁰

From the historical point of view, yet another commendable trait of Fr. Pimenta's *Annuæ* is his practice of reproducing extracts from the reports submitted to him, thus leading us to the original sources of evidence. In the Annual Letters of 1600 and 1601, for example, are to be found passages from the communications of Frs. Corsi, Soares and Coutinho, of the King of Portugal, the Viceroy of India, and Philip de Brito. Fr. Pimenta was evidently very businesslike in his ways: not content with an oral request for Jesuit missionaries made by the Viceroy, he asked for it in writing. The original was then deposited in the Goa Jesuit Archives, while a copy was embodied in the letter to the General.²¹

19. H. Hosten ed., "Father N. Pimenta's Annual of Margao, December 1, 1601," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 83-107.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-104.

The letters of this missionary have already been utilized by historians of Mughal India and of Vijayanagara. Their contents and reliability are such as to merit for them an even wider study.

Gonçalves. A younger man than Fr. N. Pimenta was Fr. Sebastian Gonçalves, author of a much quoted, but hitherto unpublished, *Historia dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus nos reynos e provincias da India Oriental*, completed in 1614. He was born at Ponte de Lima, in Portugal, about the year 1555, entered the Society of Jesus in 1574, and was employed for some time at Rome and in the Azores. In 1593 he set sail for India, where he filled several offices of importance such as those of Rector of the College of Damaun, Assistant to the Provincial, and Superior of the Professed House of Goa. Dear to all on account of his kind and benevolent disposition, he died at Goa on March 23rd, 1619.²²

It is as a letter-writer, and not as the author of the *Historia*, that Fr. Gonçalves interests us here. He wrote three Annual Letters of the Goan Province, in the years 1600, 1602 and 1609. All these are preserved in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus, as is also a private letter to the General of the Order, Claudius Acquaviva.

Like Pimenta, Fr. Gonçalves was well placed to obtain a general view of the Indian scene, especially in so far as it concerned the Society. He had quite a large fund of personal experience and took special care to observe Indian customs and manners, and to examine places of historical importance. For this he had many opportunities during his travels as Assistant to the Provincial, which also brought him into contact with many persons of importance, both lay and ecclesiastical. Moreover, having been entrusted with the task of writing a History of the Order in India, he had worked through all the sources of eastern missionary literature. It is true that in what concerned the early period of Jesuit activity in the East he relied too much on these sources; but his critical powers are

22. For a short account of Fr. Gonçalves's life and work, cf. J. Wicki, "Des P. Seb. Gonçalves *Historia dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus nos reynos e provincias da India Oriental*," *N.Z.M.*, 8 (1952) 261-269, and *id.*, "Zum Humanismus in Portugiesisch-Indien des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Studi sulla Chiesa Antica e sull' Umanesimo* (Rome, 1954), pp. 211-212.

evidenced by the *Censuras*, or corrigenda, which he drew up, pointing out the errors in the books on St. Francis Xavier and the East written by Guzman, Tursellinus, Ribadeneira, Lucena and Guerreiro.²³ Though he wrote with exactitude and clearness, yet he was apt to stray off the point in his narrative, and to indulge in very lengthy digressions, "and for this reason his work was not printed."²⁴ The *Historia*, however, is at present being printed in Lisbon; none of Fr. Gonçalves's Annual Letters has so far been published.

De Proença. In Fr. Anthony de Proença we have a representative letter-writer of the south, to which we now turn. Born at Remella, Portugal, in 1625, he entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 18; at 22 he was already in Goa, though not yet a priest. In 1653 he joined the Madura Mission, where he laboured till his death in 1666.

Fr. de Proença was afflicted with an unascetical obesity which conveniently disguised his austerities and mortifications, and spurred him to superhuman labours. His very presence radiated spiritual joy, and he seems to have been endowed with a special gift for dealing with people, high and low alike. For instance, he was in the good graces of the powerful zamindar of Coumaravadi, who permitted, and even favoured, his missionary work;²⁵ while his own flock loved him so much that, not satisfied with the simple burial given to their pastor on the banks of the Coleroon, they dug up his body and interred it in a special tomb. The grave of "Paramanandaswami," as they called him, became a place of pilgrimage, venerated by Christians and non-Christians alike.

This Jesuit composed a Tamil-Portuguese dictionary, and must therefore have had a fair knowledge of the Tamil language. As a missionary in Trichinopoly and Cangupatti, and Superior of the Madura Mission during the last years of his life, Fr. de Proença acquired a knowledge of men and affairs that lends special weight to his testimony. He witnessed and shared

23. Cf. J. Wicki, 'Die Zensuren des P. Seb. Gonçalves S. I. (1609-1612),' *Studia Missionalia*, 7 (1952) 77-107.

24. Francisco de Souza, *Oriente Conquistado* (2nd. ed., Bombay, 1881-86) I, Preface (page unnumbered).

25. Besse, *La Mission du Maduré*, pp. 127-128.

the great trials of his flock in those days: persecutions, the ravages of the war between the rulers of Tanjore and the Muslims of the North, enslavement by the Dutch. These are partly recorded in his Annual Letters.

The *Annuae* composed by Fr. de Proença cover the decade beginning in 1655. Much that came from his pen has been reproduced in Bertrand's *La Mission du Maduré*. This author, as he himself declares, combines at times several letters into one,²⁶ hence it is difficult to find out what was the exact original text of the letters published. Fr. de Proença follows a system in the arrangement of his letters that is rather helpful to the historian. He begins with an account of the political events which affect the life of the Mission, and then proceeds to deal with the latter. This account at times runs to several pages of very interesting information.

Freyre. Just a century after the first of the Annual Letters had been despatched from India, a missionary set foot on its shores, who was to specialize, so to say, in their composition. This was Andrew Freyre, born at Lisbon in 1625, and a Jesuit from 1643. A short time after his arrival in India, the promising young priest entered the Malabar Province, and in 1655 was sent to learn Tamil in the Fishery Coast.

Early in the following year he began his career in the Madura Mission, where he soon won recognition as a zealous and able missionary. For almost a score of years he laboured arduously in Tanjore, which was then passing through very difficult times, as we learn from Fr. de Proença's narratives. In 1666, on the death of the latter, Fr. Freyre was appointed Superior of the Madura Mission. He held this office till 1670—suffering even imprisonment in the meantime—and again during the years 1679-1683. In 1688 he was nominated Provincial of Malabar, and had been chosen for the Archbishopric of Cranganore, but died before the Papal brief of appointment could reach him, in February 1692.

The above data will vouch for Fr. Freyre's abilities and experience. He also wielded "a wonderful pen," to quote Fr.

26. Bertrand, *op. cit.*, II, Preface, pp. vi-vii.

de Proença, and the many Annual Letters he wrote bear witness to this. It was Fr. Freyre's style—modelled perhaps on that of Fr. de Proença—to give at the beginning of his reports a succinct account of political conditions in the part of the country where he worked, together with some shrewd reflections. "If I were to depict in true colours what I have seen with my own eyes," he wrote in his very first Annual Letter, in 1667, "I am sure no one would believe me, or if one did one would feel great sorrow and be moved to compassion for so many poor people. But as this is not my purpose, I shall only say that it will take years to restore this state to its former prosperity."²⁷

Fr. A Saulière has published a list of the *Annuae* which Fr. Freyre wrote between the years 1667 and 1683.²⁸ Of the thirteen mentioned, only six have been preserved, there being a gap between the years 1668 and 1674. This is all the more regrettable from the historical point of view owing to the quality of the information given by the great missionary in his reports. From a remark he makes in one of his letters it looks as if some of his *Annuae* never reached Rome. It is also possible that some copies may have found their way to Goa, and now lie buried in one of the archives in Portugal, whither the Jesuit records were despatched at Pombal's orders.

Botelho. A contemporary of Frs. de Proença and Freyre, but labouring in another part of India, was Fr. Antonio Botelho. Born in Portugal in 1600, he seems to have joined the Society in Goa, and for some years he worked there and in the northern outposts of the Province. In 1648 he assumed charge of the College of Agra, and was thus an important figure in the Mughal Mission till the time of his return to Goa. In 1667 he was appointed Provincial of Goa, an office which he probably held till his death in 1670.

As is the case with the majority of the missionaries in India, the extant letters of Fr. Botelho are few, and these mostly of an unofficial character; they are not of very great value for the writing of history. Fr. Botelho, who did much good at

27. "Missionary Letters of Fr. Andrew Freyre, S. J.," trans. A. Saulière, *The Harvest* (Belgaum), 4 (1949) No. 3, p. 11.

28. A. Saulière, "Missionary Silhouettes," *The Harvest*, 3 (1948) No. 1, p. 15.

Summa memorandarum rerum, quae apud Magni Mogoris Regnum
vidi et observavi Pater Antonius Botelho
Societatis Jesu Graue Provincia Prae
positus Provincialis, intra sex
annuum, quò illuc superius
vixi, et Missionarius

Nulli, ut cupidis Europae animis morem gererem, ea rogatu P. Sebastia-
ni de Almeida Societatis Jesu in Japonia Episcopum obsecra aliqua
magni Mogoris nra in lucem edere stavi; eo tamen pacto, ut solùm
quod viderim, et vixi, ac miratus fuero, exponerem; Turpe si velle, et
quod quid fama, et annales referunt, scribere, nec meum esse, nec prius
fieri, ut quæ magnitudinis volumina, in Europæ regum admirationem
et quæ me promptius expectarem, ut adhaerere quæ, tunc nomen. Cum
praesentior scriptis non in paranda, excedissent memoriam tam parvè
regem ut, quod ^{inter} ~~memoria~~ exponant, fave Deo, ut scriben eorum rerum
magnitudo quam verisimilis prior scriptis, non obesse Deum
deario incolarum generis, ac civitatum, quas cum expectetur, nasci, de
legum Principum, et moribus, et amplitudine idealium gestarum operis
acere civitatis libere præcipua.

Ab origine ad Austriam per nongentas circiter leucas
proceditur magni Mogoris Regnum; longitudine quam latitudine ma-
ius triduum vixit Regna, quorum Regimen propriis agant
quingenta Regi, purpurati, omnes adhaerent. Mogori huius cogniter
obtemperantes Regnum hoc uti magnum corpus est ita multum aliter
sanguine egregio fallitur quicquid hauserit tantum: credi Mogoris
incolas, cum maior die fertur numerus, qui frequenter terras ex-
colunt, et ignobilioris nominis viros habitant; Primum vero minor
genus quod vixitum Civitatem et arcem est, vixit qui vi armenum
gentem illam sui imperio subdidit. Sibi Regi Gentiles genere Ra-
paci, et huius primus Gentis illius genus) uti retinere dominandi;

Priorem Mogoris
incola

Rapaci
267

— 1 in.

Agra, was an industrious worker, yet quiet and humble withal. On his return to Goa he prepared two valuable memoranda: the "Relation of the state of Christianity which we have in the Kingdom of the Great Mughal", and the "Relation of the more notable things which I have observed in the Kingdom of the Great Mughal."²⁹

The author's offices as Rector of Agra and Provincial of Goa placed him in a good position to obtain information. Since the memoranda, unlike the letters, were written many years after the events therein recorded had taken place, it is no matter for surprise that inaccuracies should have crept in, chiefly regarding dates. All the same, Botelho's work is based on personal observation and, for all its shortcomings, constitutes a valuable supplement to the information provided by contemporary European travellers, having besides a charm of its own.³⁰

Martin. Fr. Pierre Martin has been given a place in our selection, partly because he worked for a time in Bengal, before proceeding to Southern India, and partly because his letters are of the more unofficial type. This French Jesuit was born at Limoges in 1665, entered the Society in 1680, and fifteen years later left Europe to work in the missions of the Middle East. However, Providence had other designs on him. Fr. Martin was transferred to Bengal in 1697, whence he left for Pondicherry a couple of years later. He subsequently joined the Madura Mission, and in 1714 was deputed to represent the Malabar Province in Rome; there he died in 1716. Fr. Martin was both clever and zealous, and Clement XI is reported to have said of him, "He is a saint; we must raise him to the altars."³¹ He had also a great facility for languages.

The earliest extant letter of this missionary is from Bala-sore (Bengal), January 30th, 1699. Therein he relates the perils of his voyage to India, and speaks of his studies in the "famous university of the Brahmins" in Nadia, north of Hugli. We next

29. A copy of the Latin text of the two relations exists in the Jesuit Archives at Rome. A facsimile reproduction of the first page of the second relation will be found facing p. 66

30. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

31. Letter of the Bishop of Sisteron, in P. Prat, *Histoire du Bienheureux Jean de Britto* (Paris and Plancy, 1853), pp. 394-395.

hear from him from Camanayaquenpatti in Madura. The letter to Fr. le Gobien—running to fifty closely printed pages in the 1816 edition of the *Lettres Édifiantes*—is full of information on a variety of subjects, such as life on the Fishery Coast, the Dutch power in India, etc. The energetic Jesuit had quite a few exciting experiences in the course of his labours in Malangur and the Marava region. Robbery, persecution, imprisonment—all these were familiar events in the life of the Madura missionaries in those stormy days.

Fr. Martin's letters are of a much more informal type than those of the other letter-writers mentioned in the present chapter. Writing to his fellow-countrymen and colleagues in France, he could allow himself considerable freedom of style. His missives—long, interesting, and full of descriptions of persons, places and events—are characteristic of the French collections of Jesuit Letters, and help to explain the great popularity of the *Lettres Édifiantes*.³² As regards their value, they are surely not as authoritative as the official Jesuit Letters, but they provide a picturesque background, replete with local colour, rarely found in the other historical narratives of South India.

Beschi. The most famous of our group of letter-writers, though not precisely as a correspondent, is Fr. Costanzo Beschi. Born at Castiglione, in Italy, on November 8th, 1680, he joined the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus at the age of 18. In 1709 he was ordained priest, and the following year was the only Jesuit missionary to sail from Lisbon for the East. He landed at Goa either in September or October, 1710, and was soon despatched to Ambalakad and thence to the Madura Mission.

This Mission was passing through very troublous times. The rulers of Tanjore and Madura engaged in a relentless persecution of their Christian subjects, and the missionaries shared the lot of the latter. Of Fr. Beschi the writer of the Annual Letter of 1712 says:

I know all the inconveniences he experienced in those excursions while assisting his flock; for I have lived there myself. One has to live in the huts

32. Several of Fr. Martin's letters, published in the *Lettres Édifiantes*, have been translated into English and appear in Lockman's *Travels of the Jesuits*.

of those Christians, which are more like stables than houses, to sympathize with the missionary. There is scarcely room to say Mass. The ministry is exercised during the night, and one must be careful to avoid gatherings of Christians. During the day one must not show himself, as the country is hostile, and yet one must instruct the Christians, who are very ignorant, settle their quarrels, and always in a hurry, stealthily, with more trouble than fruit.³³

In the course of the many military raids of which Southern India was the victim in those days, when the country was overrun by the armies of rival chiefs, Fr. Beschi was on one occasion seized and threatened with death, but finally released. The Italian missionary was mostly confined to his residence by these disturbances, and wisely devoted his time to the study of Tamil, in which he acquired a wonderful proficiency. This is not the place, however, to expatiate on his merits as an excellent Tamil grammarian, lexicographer, poet and prose-writer, perhaps the greatest India has ever seen.³⁴

The genius and zeal of this Jesuit cannot be doubted. In 1718 his superiors wrote of him:

Fr. Beschi is of quick genius; but the maturity of the judgment is somewhat defective, however, not in things of great moment. Let the same be understood of his prudence; there is hope, however, that he will become more prudent, with the advice of the superiors, and with the experience he will acquire with years. . . . He shows great aptitude to treat even affairs of importance.³⁵

That this was not a vain hope is evinced by the fact that he was later appointed Visitor of the Madura Mission. His personal charm won for him the favour of such great personages as the Mughal General, Chanda Sahib, and the Nawab of Vellore.³⁶ But Fr. Beschi was just as much at home with the poor, and before his death in 1747 had laboured in a number

33. Annual Letter of 1712 quoted in Ferroli, *op. cit.*, II, 300.

34. Of Beschi it has been said: "His versatile genius and erudition have left an indelible impress on every branch of Tamil literature. . . . He avoided Father Robert de Nobili's blind passion for Sanskritizing Tamil; he is rightly called the father of Tamil prose; he was the pioneer in the field of Tamil fiction; he was also the pioneer Tamil lexicographer, compiling the first Tamil dictionary. . . . which still holds the field as a standard authority."—S. S. Bharati, "Tamil," in C. S. S. O'Malley ed., *Modern India and the West* (London, 1941), pp. 509-510.

35. Cf. L. Besse, *Father Beschi of the Society of Jesus, His Times and Writings* (Trichinopoly, 1918), p. 166.

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-163; also Ferroli, *op. cit.*, II, 306-308. and cf. S. Manuel, "Was Beschi the Dewan of Chanda Sahib?" *New Review*, 11 (1940) 296-303.

of mission-stations such as Trichinopoly, Madura, Tanjore, Ellacurichi and Ambalakad.

The great Tamil scholar had thus many opportunities of learning about the march of events around him. Besides a few personal letters to the General of the Society, he has left us the Annual Letter of the Madura Mission for the year 1731. In it he paints a dark picture of the Maratha invasion of Tanjore which throws light on the reactions of the southerners to the new power that was rising in Western India.

*

A short study has been made in the foregoing pages of a number of Jesuit letter-writers who laboured in India. The principles governing the selection and training of candidates for the Society of Jesus, it has been shown, secured that the missionaries despatched to India should in general be men of education and culture, whose powers of observation and judgment were well developed, and who were expected to gain a knowledge of the languages of their adopted country. These qualities indeed adorned the representative group of Jesuit writers who have been more closely studied in this chapter, the findings of which can be aptly summed up in the words of the Protestant editor of the *Travels of the Jesuits*:

I believe it will be granted, that no Men are better qualified to describe Nations and Countries than the Jesuits. Their Education, their extensive Learning; the pains they take to acquire the Languages of the several Regions they visit; the Opportunities they have, by their Skill in the Arts and Sciences, as well as by their insinuating Address, to glide into Courts, where Access is often denied to all but themselves; their Familiarity with the Inhabitants; their mixing with, and, often, very long Abode among them; these, I say, must necessarily give our Jesuits a much more perfect Insight into the Genius and Character of a Nation, than others who visit Coasts only, and that merely upon Account of Traffic, or from other lucrative Motives.³⁷

And after all that has been said about the nature, characteristics, history, publication and range of the Jesuit Letters from India, one may venture to pass on to the central part of this thesis, the evaluation of these documents from the historian's point of view.

37. Lockman, *op. cit.*, I, Preface, p. vii.

CHAPTER VII

THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA A GENERAL VIEW

The nature and purpose of the Jesuit Letters have been dealt with in the preceding pages. Incidentally it has been pointed out that they have been highly spoken of by those research workers who took the trouble to make a study of them. By way of further information, the all-important question will now be tackled: what is the historical value of the Jesuit Letters from India? The answer to this question involves a reference to the rules by which the genuineness and reliability of historical documents is wont to be tested in order to determine their historical worth.

To begin with, it may boldly be asserted that such answers to the question as have hitherto been attempted by divers scholars have mostly been limited in their purview, and restricted to one point or another in which their writers were interested. Moreover their findings were often based on imperfect data. Use was often made, not of the original documents, but of garbled versions of them, and of second-hand sources of information. This explains the different conclusions arrived at by many, see-sawing between commendation and condemnation—on the one hand exaggerated praise, and wholesale disparagement on the other.

For instance, many who perused the informative Jesuit reports from the Mughal Court spoke of them in words of unstinted praise. Others, who read the every-day accounts of the missionaries, saw in them little more than endless pages, replete

with uninteresting and at times unauthenticated details. They were as outspoken in dispraising as others had been in praising. An attempt will here be made to arrive at a more balanced estimate.

The fault of which many critics have been guilty is a too facile generalization, either in favour of the Jesuit Letters or against them. It is a first principle of historical assessment that the appraisal of documents is not to be performed *en bloc*. Each document, even each part of it, has to be examined by itself.¹ This is no doubt a tedious task, but it is the steep and narrow path the historian must tread.

Perhaps it may here be objected that this method of proceeding makes it impossible to attempt a general evaluation of the Indian letters, the very task we have set ourselves. This is not so. It is not intended here to pass a general judgment for or against the individual letters, but to make a study of their general characteristics. This study will show whether the Jesuit Letters as such can supply material for historiography, without presuming to decide the value of every single letter.

To a certain extent the evaluation of the letters has already been accomplished in several previous chapters. In the fifth chapter, for instance, the far-ranging territories covered by the Jesuit Letters was briefly surveyed, and an idea was thus obtained of the extent of their potential contribution to Indian historiography. The sixth chapter was a study of the person of the Jesuit letter-writer, made in order to ascertain his general trustworthiness. Once a historian's general trustworthiness has been established, he may confidently be taken as a guide, though one must be ready at the same time to suspend assent if doubt arises as to the accuracy of individual statements.²

The contents of the present chapter may be listed under four headings: the nature of the documents under review, their authenticity, the authority of their writers, and their veracity. A sharp line of demarcation has to be drawn between the

1. C. Langlois and C. Seignobos, trans. G. G. Berry, *Introduction to the Study of History* (London, 1925), p. 160.

2. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

last two items. It has to be determined not only whether the author of a document could or could not get at the truth, but also whether he was truthful or not—there may be science without sincerity.

Letters constitute a unique literary type: it may be said that they are a written conversation between one person and another. When they go in for description or narration, they take on more or less the nature of chronicles and records. This material is especially valuable when it includes reports of contemporary happenings or pictures of existing customs and behaviour-patterns. As historical sources, letters must be examined like any other testimonial evidence.

If an examination is made of the four types of Jesuit Letters already mentioned—those meant for the superiors of the Order, those addressed to the members of the Society in general, those intended for the public at large, and those written to personal friends—it will be realized that most of them are “formal sources.” In other words, their authors had the conscious intent of communicating information of a historical nature. However, this statement requires some qualification: it was not the missionaries’ main task to convey historical intelligence, nor did they write for the sake of historical science as such. The historical information they gave was meant to provide a background for the better understanding of their missionary activities; it had a pragmatic purpose.

Again, the Jesuit Letters are “contemporary sources,” standing in chronological nearness to the events they deal with. They contain in many instances the reports of eye-witnesses of the events described, and even of participants in them, and are thus also “primary sources.”³ Hence they have about them a vividness and realism of their own, which is hard to rival. The Annual Letters, however, as distinct from the missionaries’ personal missives, cannot claim to retain the value of direct evidence; but there are compensating factors that make up

3. Cf. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-107.

for the want of the personal touch, as has been pointed out already.⁴

The confidential reports of the Jesuits in India to their superiors in Europe—and there are a good number of them extant—are the most reliable of all. They were written after mature consideration, not long after the events narrated had taken place, and with no desire to win or please a circle of readers.⁵ The letters to friends have indeed a spontaneity and intimacy which vouch for the writer's truthfulness,⁶ but it may be doubted whether the historical information therein reproduced was always gathered with care. The letters for circulation within and without the Society were meant for propaganda, not in the odious connotation that the word has at times, but as a means to influence public opinion for a good purpose; the Jesuit writers neither believed nor followed the principle that the end justifies the means. However, it behoves the historian to exercise special caution when dealing with this type of documents.

The question of authenticity has first to be settled, since even granting that the Jesuits were accurate and truthful letter-writers, this would be of little avail if the documents known today as the Jesuit Letters from India were only forgeries. That such forgeries have been foisted on the public is a historical fact that has been pointed out already. But these cases are the exception and not the rule.

"To be able to declare a document as genuine or false," says Garraghan, "one must, though all the steps need not be taken in every case, decipher it, date it, localize it, determine its authorship."⁷ This is being admirably done in the definitive edition of the Jesuit Letters and other documents published by the Jesuit Institute of History at Rome. It is to be noted that provenance is often a guarantee of genuineness,⁸ and the preserva-

4. *Supra*, p. 26.

5. Compare Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

6. Cf. Gottschalk, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

7. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

8. Cf. Gottschalk, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

tion of the original letters in official archives for many centuries is a good warrant of their authenticity.

More subtle, and hence more dangerous, than wholesale forgeries, are documents that are only partly true. They may be so owing to changes in the text, due either to unintentional errors in copying or to deliberate intention to modify their contents, or to interpolations and insertions of extraneous matter into a genuine document.

In the fourth chapter, on the publication of the Jesuit Letters from India, it has already been pointed out that such practices were at times employed in editing these writings for the public. Fortunately, however, a vast amount of originals and first copies of the letters is still extant, and the editions of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* present the scholar with the results of a scientific collation of the various manuscripts. Thus he is generally in a position to study the Jesuit Letters as they came from the pens of their writers.

It must also be remembered that the editing at Rome in the 16th century, undertaken chiefly from motives of prudence and with the edification of readers as an end, consisted in the omission of indiscreet and unedifying details and the addition of few explanatory notes, rather than in the distortion and falsification of historical accounts.

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To know whether a witness is telling the truth, it has first to be established whether he is in a position to do so. This point is more complicated than it would at first sight appear. Among other things, it requires a study of the person's competence, and of the conditions under which he obtained his evidence. From the preceding chapter the competence of the Jesuit writers is beyond question. The personal qualities demanded of a Jesuit, his thorough and many-sided training, his sense of responsibility—all these resulted in cultivating and developing the Jesuit missionary's powers of observation and the critical faculty as well.

There are other reasons too which lend weight to the Jesuit testimony. Speaking of the traveller's narrative as a type of historical literature, Prof. L. F. Rushbrook Williams says:

Its great value as evidence lies in the fact that the traveller, being generally a foreigner, takes notice of things which a native of the country would pass over as too obvious and too familiar to be described; and these are sometimes just the things about which the modern historian stands most in need of information. This is particularly likely to be the case where the traveller belongs to a type of civilization entirely different from that of the people among whom he is sojourning.⁹

How much more consonant with human psychology is the above analysis than the following remark of Prof. S. R. Sharma on the Jesuit missionaries: "The strange rather than the normal, scandal rather than sober truth, and the spectacular rather than the ordinary, usually attracted them."¹⁰ To the man from Europe, there was little that was ordinary in India. The Jesuits in this land, as foreigners belonging to a Western civilization entirely different from that of the Orient, were thus well qualified to be good observers.¹¹

It has also to be borne in mind that the missionaries set down their observations in letters rather than in books. This secured a recording of events soon after their occurrence—and contemporaneity goes a long way to guarantee accuracy.¹²

Furthermore, the Jesuit missionaries were particularly well situated for scrutinizing the contemporary panorama of men and events. This is the opinion of an English writer:

The Missionaries being settled Inhabitants of those Countries they write of, speaking the Languages and reading the Books, are able to acquaint us with many Curiosities, which Travellers in passing through can never be Masters of. The Writers of those Letters make the Knowledge of those people they are among their Study, and converse with all Sorts from the Highest to the Meanest; they are Men chosen out of many for that Purpose,

9. L. F. Rushbrook Williams, *Four Lectures on the Handling of Historical Material* (London, 1917), p. 45.

10. Sri Ram Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India (1526-1707 A. D.)* (Bombay, n.d.), p. 136.

11. Says Vincent Smith, "The Fathers were highly educated men, trained for acute observation and scholarly writing. They made excellent use of their opportunities at the imperial court...."—*Akbar the Great Mogul* (London, 1917), p. 7.

And C. H. Payne remarks, "The Fathers who resided at the Mogul court were men of learning and culture, and in most cases accomplished writers. They were also keen, shrewd, and, as far as their religious prejudices permitted, sympathetic observers."—*Akbar and the Jesuits*, Intro., p. xxxix.

12. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

and consequently the only Persons that can set us Right in our Notions of these People so remote from us. and so different in all Respects.¹³

For example, it is admitted on all hands that the Jesuits had abundant opportunities for studying Akbar and Jahangir at close quarters. Besides occupying a privileged position at the imperial court, they were in frequent and close attendance upon Akbar's person, and as a result of such constant and familiar intercourse they came to know him very thoroughly. Hardly less intimate is the portrait they have left of his son and successor.¹⁴

The members of the Society were also treated in an honourable and friendly manner in several other Indian courts, such as those of Jaipur and Vijayanagara. But what is more, the missionaries, especially in the south, came to identify themselves to an increasing extent with the people among whom they worked, thus acquiring an intimate knowledge of their customs and way of life.¹⁵

A brief reference may here be made to the political activities of the Jesuits. This is not the place to deliver judgment on the question, suffice it to say that religious and political interests were so inextricably mixed in those days, that activity in one field often involved activity in the other. At other times it was thought that only the integrity and influence of the missionaries could secure a just and lasting peace between warring powers, that would benefit all. Jesuits were, therefore, often used as intermediaries between European empire-builders and native sovereigns, and were respected and trusted by both parties. Thus, for example, Frs. Simon de Sa and Belchior Coutinho accompanied the ambassadors of Venkata II to the Portuguese Viceroy,¹⁶ Fr. Gonçalo Martins was an

13. Preface to *The Travels of Several Learned Missioners of the Society of Jesus*, p. A 3, reverse.

14. C. H. Payne in *Akbar and the Jesuits*, Intro., p. xii. Cf. also W. Moreland and A. Chatterjee, *A Short History of India* (London, 1936), p. 212.

15. Castets, "Sidelights on South Indian History," *The Magazine*, 18 (1929) 89-90.

16. Heras, *Aravidu Dynasty*, pp. 434-435.

envoy to the courts of Bijapur and Bednur, and to Shivaji,¹⁷ and Fr. Damian Vieira was sent as a legate to Aurangzeb.¹⁸

Whether justified or not, these occasional occupational pursuits would tend to make the Jesuits well aware of the moves on the political chess-board. Little wonder that they were often held in suspicion by the English who hated and feared some of their number as "great intelligencers," "knowing all news which was stirring."¹⁹

A further qualification of the Jesuit letter-writers is their linguistic proficiency. They spent much time and energy in studying the various local dialects, for apostolic purposes, and as required by their rules. In the latter days of the Indian missions, and especially in the south, Jesuits such as Fenicio, de Nobili and Beschi acquired a real mastery of Indian languages;²⁰ but even at an earlier period Thomas Stephens and Jerome Xavier had proved themselves proficient linguists. However, the proficiency of the Jesuits in this regard must not be exaggerated: there were among them a few geniuses and a few failures, and between these two extremes lay the majority, of talents above the average, for the most part.

There still remains an important point to be discussed: the sum total of the adverse general remarks passed on the accuracy of the Jesuit testimony. The unbiased reader will find that whereas specific accusations are at times quite justified, sweeping generalizations against the letters are altogether unwarranted.

Various and many are the disparaging remarks, wise and otherwise. There is the problem of objectivity. Regarding the European travellers in India during the Mughal era, an Indian historian of note remarks that they differed in personal qualities and talents, they wrote for an uncritical public, and

17. Heras, "Some Unknown Dealings between Bijiapur and Goa," *I.H.R.C.*, 8 (1925) 130-146; Pissurlencar, "Portugueses e Maratas, I, Shivaji", *Bol. do Inst. Vasco da Gama*, No. 1 (1926) 66.

18. Heras, "A Treaty between Aurangzeb and the Portuguese," *I.H.R.C.*, 10 (1927) 36-47.

19. Cf. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

20. Max Muller has high praise for the linguistic achievements of the Jesuit missionaries, as is pointed out by Houpert in *A South Indian Mission*, pp. 189-190.

had their prejudices: "To expect an average European Christian of the sixteenth or seventeenth century to give us a balanced account of men and things in 'heathen or moorish India', even when he had unusual means of learning about them, would be to expect almost the impossible."²¹

These remarks cannot be taken to apply to the Jesuit writers — and the learned author indeed treats of them separately. It has already been shown that as a rule they were men endowed with capabilities above the average, men who drew up their reports with a sense of responsibility. What as regards prejudice? Of course they had their share of it, but then who has not? It is good to remember that:

Objectivity does not require that the historian be actually free from prepossessions or prejudices—racial, political, religious, or of any other kind.

This would be to require a psychological impossibility. Education, environment, and other circumstances result in certain fixed views, likes and dislikes, which in most people, if not in all, become a second nature. No one can be said to be entirely free from them. What objectivity does require is that the historian allow none of his prepossessions and prejudices, whatever they be, to cloud his judgment, to draw him beyond the evidence, to distort his estimate of persons and things. This is by no means an impracticable ideal...²²

It may be safely asserted that the missionaries had their prejudices, but that these did not always cloud their vision. In official reports especially, and on matters which concerned them little personally — such as some of the wars between rival princes — they can be trusted to give a balanced account of things. When prejudices come into play they are sometimes so obvious as to stand self-condemned, without interfering seriously with the reader's view of the general picture.²³ In other cases the judgments passed on persons and events are unsatisfactory, but the descriptions of these are quite objective.

Another charge is that the Jesuits were uncritical about the information they set down, "they wrote whatever came in their way, without taking care to verify them [sic]."²⁴ In

21. Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, pp. 138-139.

22. Garraghan, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

23. Payne in the Intro. to *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. xli.

24. M. Roychoudury, *The Din-i-ilahi, or The Religion of Akbar* (Calcutta, 1941), Intro., p. xxxii. The author declares that the Jesuits are guilty of so much inconsistency that "it be-

the case of the unofficial letters of the early days, there is some foundation for this indictment, as was pointed out by Fr. Valignano himself. But it must be borne in mind that both in these and in the official letters is to be found a vast amount of information obtained by personal observation. Moreover, the writers often took pains to obtain exact information, and by stating the source of many news-items enabled readers to judge their worth. Thus Fr. Pimenta wrote in his Annual Letter of 1601, "The Rector gave information about this, but vaguely as I do now. I have written to them telling them to send very distinct information..."²⁵

Lastly, the veracity of the missionary letter-writers must be established. It must be shown that either the witness's character is such as to exclude every suspicion of deliberate misrepresentation on his part, or that such misrepresentation is ruled out in a particular case. Now no one tells a lie without a cause. Some contributing factors to untruthfulness in the writing of history are the following: low principles of conduct and lack of character, the author's personal interest and advantage, the vested interests and advantage of the group to which he belongs, desire to please the reading public.²⁶

On examination, the Jesuit testimony will be found to be remarkably free from these unpleasant traits. The letter-writers were men of good breeding who felt bound by their

comes palpable that the Fathers had first-hand knowledge in very few things." (*Ibid.*, p. xxxviii, cf. also pp. 173-174). It would have been interesting to learn how many inconsistencies the writer had found in original Jesuit sources. The information under the heading "Jesuit Sources" on p. 312 of the book betrays the author's poor acquaintance with them. "The first Jesuit Mission to Akbar" published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1914) is not a translation, but the original version of Monserrate's *Commentarius*, in Latin. The Persian farmans granted to the Jesuits by the Mughal Emperors were published not by Hosten but by Felix, in the *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, 5 (1916) 1-53. Peruschi is not the earliest printed authority for the missions, as will be clear from a perusal of p. 12 of MacLagan's work. The very title of MacLagan's work is wrongly cited, as "*Jesuits and the Mogor*." Though Prof. Roychoudury's premisses cannot go unchallenged, less open to objection is his conclusion about the Jesuit accounts: "without minimising their historical importance, we would suggest that they should be taken very cautiously." (p. 174).

25. Annual Letter of 1601, *J.A.S.B.*, N.S. 23 (1927) 104. Cf. also, e.g., *Doc. Ind.*, I, 585.

26. Cf. Langlois and Seignobos, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-172; Gottschalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-165; Garraghan, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-290.

religious character to tell the truth. In their private communications with their superiors they had nothing to gain and everything to lose by misleading them; their loyalty to the Order would make it imperative for them to send as accurate reports as possible to headquarters.

Furthermore, the Jesuits were not sycophants. In their private communications they criticized the local European officials unsparingly. They could be even more outspoken about Indian rulers who were less likely to come to know of their reports sent to the countries overseas. The correctness of their statements has been accepted by many; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, writes, "I cannot, however, resist giving you some more quotations from the accounts of the Portuguese missionaries. Their opinions are of far greater value than those of courtiers."²⁷

Though fulness of detail is not always a valid test of veracity, nor a guarantee of the accuracy of a report, yet it is an interior criterion of documents that can be used by historians: the little insignificant items of information in which the Jesuit Letters abound create a general impression in their favour, even though they cannot conclusively establish their reliability. One may say that Frois's comprehensive account of the College at Goa,²⁸ and Corsi's vivid picture of the journey to Asirgarh,²⁹ just like Monserrate's minute description of Akbar's person and character,³⁰ are simply too detailed to have been invented.

All the same, it has to be borne in mind that the letters written for general circulation have to be treated with more caution than the others. In strict justice, not everything that could be told to a superior could be told to others; and even if it could, prudence would often check the pen. This was especially the case when the missionaries were dealing with official doings in India, or with local customs that were not quite edifying. The final picture they present, then, may at times

27. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Glimpses of World History* (London, 1939), p. 312.

28. Letter of L. Frois, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 466-468.

29. Extract reproduced in the Annual Letter of 1600, *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 72-73.

30. "Father A. Monserrate's Account of Akbar," *Ibid.*, 8 (1912) 190-202.

be incomplete — and this is to be regretted from the historian's point of view — but not necessarily distorted or misleading, especially if the reader keeps in mind the limitations of the Jesuit Letters.

And after these general considerations, a few particular points may be taken up in the process of evaluating the epistles from India.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA: PARTICULAR ASPECTS

It was pointed out in the Introduction that modern scholars set great store by contemporaneous documents, the social background of history, and the vivid portrayal of events. The first of these points has already received some attention; a few observations will here be made about the other two.

The letters from India not only give detailed descriptions of the work of evangelization accomplished by the missionaries amidst many difficulties, but they also contain much interesting information about the *milieu* in which they laboured. These accounts put before us colourful sketches of local scenes and customs, of religious creeds and practices, and also of some notable events in history. They present the reader with a *tableau vivant* of life in the East, making him familiar with common sights and little everyday occurrences, which the professional historian seldom concerns himself with, but which help us to re-create the past.¹ Incidentally they shed light on the administrative systems and officers of various Indian kingdoms and principalities.

The authors, it is true, are mainly concerned with religion — their own and others' — but religion has always played an important part in the life of men and nations, especially in the East:

1. Cf. Payne in the Introduction to *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. xlii-xliii.

If any shall happen to think there is still too much of the Particular Actions of the Missioners and of Religious Matters in some of the Letters, they are desir'd to consider that something must be allow'd for Connection, and above all that in most of those Parts, which cursorily read over may seem to be barely Religious, there is, when rightly Consider'd much Information, as to the Manners, Customs and Idolatrous Worship of the *Indian Nations*.²

The Jesuit Letters also throw light on many historical characters. As is generally recognized, for a knowledge of the nature and temperament of Akbar and Jahangir, it is necessary to rely to a great extent on these accounts. The same may be said of many lesser personages of whom mention is made in the letters — such as the native rulers of the south, the Portuguese officials and the English traders. Their descriptions of these are full of human interest, and help us to realize the spirit of the times.

Among the most readable books of travel that have been published in recent years are the works of C.R. Boxer and F. A. Plattner;³ both owe a great debt of gratitude to the Jesuit Letters, which enabled them to add local colour to their accounts, by providing them with interesting details. For the Jesuit Letters are full of details — sometimes even annoyingly so! A survey of the letters from India published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1927, abundantly shows how Jesuit superiors asked for details from their subjects in India, and how these were supplied by the latter and sent to Europe.⁴ Again, the indices of the official edition of the Jesuit Letters and other documents regarding India (the *Documenta Indica*) reveal the vast variety of informative particulars to be found in those pages. Besides general information, these writings at times provide data regarding the geographical location of places, and are also helpful in solving chronological puzzles.

The question now arises: are the details in the Jesuit Letters accurately given? That the Jesuits have been wrong on some occasions must be unhesitatingly admitted. An examination

2. *The Travels of Several Learned Missioners of the Society of Jesus*, Preface, p. A 3, reverse.

3. Further information about these will be found in Chapter XIII.

4. Cf., e.g., *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 104, 121-122, 148.

will however be made of a few alleged errors, because these have formed the bases of very sweeping condemnations.

It must be remarked once again that many criticisms are founded on a very poor knowledge of the letters. An eminent writer, for example, believes that the Annual Letters were "sent by the Archbishop from Goa to the Pope in Rome or the Portuguese Government in Lisbon."⁵ Many others are acquainted with Jesuit sources only through the works of Smith and Payne, who reproduced secondary Jesuit authorities rather than the Letters themselves. These secondary Jesuit authorities, the Jesuit histories, are less reliable than the Letters, as will be shown later.

To begin with, exception has been taken to the Jesuit account of Akbar's religious policy. Some writers have doubted and belittled the Jesuit evidence, "which is tainted because of the fact that though they were always ready to see him [Akbar] baptized, they never succeeded in bringing him into their fold."⁶ As stated above, allowance has undoubtedly to be made for the missionaries' prejudices and lack of understanding of things Indian,⁷ but it will not do to reject their testimony wholesale.

It is not only from the orthodox Badaoni -- whose attestations are suspect -- but also from Akbar's bosom friend Abu'l Fazl, that we can obtain confirmation of the Jesuit reports concerning the Emperor's religious leanings. Of course, Abu'l Fazl may also have had his reasons for misrepresenting facts, but the same can be said of all the other witnesses that are brought forward; yet it would be idle to suggest that all their evidence should be dismissed forthwith. Here is just the point. The task of determining the relative value of contradictory information is not easy. Not only has the good faith of a witness to be determined, but also his intelligence and opportunities for getting at the truth.

If the trouble is taken to submit the Jesuit evidence to this searching analysis, it will be found that the Jesuit letter-

5. Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, p. 134.

6. S. R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, (Calcutta, 1940), p. 55. Cf. also Roychoudury, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.

7. Cf. Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, p. 136.

writers have a valuable contribution to make to our knowledge of Akbar.⁸ It is quite possible, even probable, that minor contradictions will be found among the different correspondents, but these have a value of their own, assuring us that the testimonies are mutually independent, and not merely copied one from another.

Another moot point is the account of the fall of Asirgarh, where again it is not so much a missionary letter from India, but a secondary source, du Jarric's History, that is questioned. The Jesuit account is presumed by Vincent Smith to have been taken direct from Fr. Jerome Xavier, and is accepted as it stands.⁹ C. H. Payne, on the other hand, finds serious difficulties in the way of such an acceptance.¹⁰ He points out that du Jarric borrowed his version from Guerreiro, and doubts whether the latter could have availed himself of any eye-witness account of the siege. But from whom could Guerreiro's information come, if not from the Jesuits who, as seems to be established by the Annual Letter of 1600, were at Akbar's camp?¹¹

Historians fail to agree among themselves on some points that are important for the discovery of a solution. If it is true, as Payne, points out, that Abu'l Fazl does not hide Akbar's attempts to win over the defenders of Asirgarh, yet the author of the *Akbarnama* is not completely frank on the point, mentioning only the "soothing words" and not the "large quantities of gold and silver that were sent secretly to those who conducted

8. Many charges levelled against the Jesuit Letters are due to misinterpretations. Here is an instance in point: "Father Xavier, whose letters generally supplied the sources of Du Jarric, wrote in a letter of Dec. 4, 1615, that Akbar had embraced Hinduism and died in that faith. This mistake on the part of one who was present in the third mission and who could see things for himself, betrays a lack of knowledge of contemporary events and as such should not be taken as reliable source of history."—Roychoudury, *op. cit.*, p. 179, footnote 11.

What Fr. Xavier actually says in the letter cited is that Akbar "died neither as a Moor nor as a Christian, but in the Gentile sect which he had embraced."—*J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 125. Now the Jesuit missionaries generally used the word "gentio" ("gentile") to indicate the followers of any religion other than the Christian and Muhammadan ones; thus Fr. Manuel Godinho speaks of the Parsis as "gentiles who adored the sun."—*Relação do Novo Caminho que fez por Terra e Mar vindo da Índia para Portugal, no Anno de 1663, o Padre Manuel Godinho da Companhia de Jesus* (2nd ed., Lisbon, 1842), p. 32. It is clear from this that "gentile" and "Hindu" are not convertible terms.

9. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-284, 297-300.

10. Payne, in the Notes to *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. 251-258.

11. "Fr. N. Pimenta, S.J., on Mogor," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 23 (1927) 73.

the defence.”¹² If Firishta does indeed mention a pestilence within the fort, yet little independent value can be attached to his attestation for his work is “avowedly a compilation.”¹³ On the other hand, confirmation for the Jesuit account has been sought for from another contemporaneous source, the *Zafar-al Walih*.¹⁴

The point at issue is a much involved one, to say the least. The fact is that after studying several accounts of the famous siege it is difficult to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. However, on the evidence at hand, it will not do to dismiss the Guerreiro-du Jarric narrative as a pure fabrication, much less to discredit entirely the primary Jesuit sources owing to the shortcomings of a secondary one.

In the next place, the Jesuit testimony about the Maratha invasion of South India has likewise been challenged. For instance, Sir Jadunath Sarkar declares, “The Jesuit annual letter for 1677 is mostly wrong and based on rumour.”¹⁵ Now the only English version of this letter, or rather of extracts from it, which we have seen, is in the paper “The Marathas in Southern India According to Jesuit Sources,” to which reference has already been made. On the whole, the details to be found there agree remarkably well with Sir Jadunath’s own narrative in his great work on Shivaji.¹⁶ It is possible that the learned author made his acquaintance with the Jesuit Letter through Bertrand’s *La Mission du Maduré*, which is cited in his Bibliography. This work is undoubtedly useful, but a trap for the unwary, since its author has not reproduced the missionaries’ accounts as they stand, but has at times amalgamated several letters into one, thus misleading some historians especially in questions of chronology.

12. Cf. *Akbarnama of Abul Fazl*, ed. H. Beveridge, III (Calcutta, 1907) 1168, and du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 108.

13. Cf. Payne, in the Notes to *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p. 253, and Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, p. 38.

14. H. Heras, “The Siege and Conquest of the Fort of Asirgarh by the Emperor Akbar,” *The Indian Antiquary*, 53 (1924) 33-41. Information and opinions on the question will also be found in: MacLagan, *op. cit.*, p. 58; Ishwari Prasad, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1939), p. 353; Roychoudury, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. xxxii-xxxv; T. W. Haig, “The Faruqui Dynasty of Khandesh,” *The Indian Antiquary*, 47 (1918) 178-183.

15. J. Sarkar, *Shivaji and His Times* (4th ed., Calcutta, 1948), p. 377.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 283-293.

Perhaps it may be pointed out here that the Jesuit correspondents did not merely rely on rumours. "If I were to depict in true colours what I have seen with my own eyes...", writes Fr. Freyre,¹⁷ and in a passage of Bertrand's book we read, "Such is the state of desolation in which the kingdoms of Jinji and Vellore find themselves. I do not go into details, words fail me to express the horrors of which we are witnesses."¹⁸

It may be stated in passing that the Portuguese sources of Maratha history were for long neglected by scholars. Sir Jadunath Sarkar, for example, once declared that the Portuguese of Goa at Shivaji's time were an ignorant, weak and decadent people, that he had learnt that there was no manuscript account of Shivaji among the many Portuguese records preserved in Lisbon and Goa, and that none had been printed in the numerous Portuguese magazines and series of State papers.¹⁹

How different is the picture we get from Sr. P. Pissurlencar, custodian of the archives of Portuguese India. At the Kamshet conference he is reported to have declared that there were a surprisingly large number of historical documents in private hands, especially in religious houses. And further, that:

The materials in this language [Portuguese] are all absolutely contemporaneous, dated and full of exact details. They not merely throw light on the history of the Portuguese settlements in India but also supply invaluable information to an unimaginable extent on the events and personages of the Muslim monarchies of the Deccan (especially Bijapur and the Nizam Shahi), the Vijaynagar empire, the house of Shivaji, the Peshwas, the Kanarese dynasties of Bednur & c. and even Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. They are indispensable to the historian of the early career of Shahji (the father of the great Shivaji), the Angrias, and the Maratha navy.²⁰

It is to Sir Jadunath's credit that in his later works he has not failed to make use of Sr. Pissurlencar's studies.²¹ This only shows that one can always profit by the knowledge of others, and that there is still plenty of useful material yet un-

17. "Missionary Letters of Fr. Andrew Freyre, S. J.," *The Harvest*, 4 (1949) No. 3, p. 12.

18. Bertrand, *op. cit.*, III, 272.

19. Jadunath Sarkar, "Sources of the Life of Shivaji," *Modern Review*, 35 (1924) 569.

20. *Report of the Meeting of Workers in Indian History at Kamshet (Poona District) 2nd-6th October, 1938* (Bombay, n.d.), p. 11.

21. Cf. J. Sarkar, review of "Portugueses e Maratas: I Shivaji," *Modern Review*, 40 (1926) 47, and *Shivaji and His Times*, p. 377.

known to the Indian historian. The Portuguese archives still offer a fruitful field of study to all students of modern Indian History,²² and among their treasures are also Jesuit documents.

The above criticisms of some details of the Jesuit evidence lead us to speak of the corroboration of the Jesuit Letters by other historical sources. This is a thorny subject since the independence and reliability of the corroborating testimony have to be established before any importance can be attached to the latter. Hence it is in a way easier — though not more safe from a historical point of view — to write the history of periods about which there is little documentation, than of those which are dealt with in many sources not always in agreement among themselves.

As will be shown later, the value of the Jesuit Letters is derived partly from the fact that other documents covering the same period are few and far between; consequently in some instances the missionaries' accounts cannot be checked by other reports. There is, however, parallel evidence for some of the events recorded by the Jesuits, and it is of this that we propose to speak. It would be unwise, of course, to conclude that because a single incident reported by the letters from India is confirmed by another author, all the Jesuit accounts are true. It would be equally indefensible to generalize and declare all the Jesuit reports to be untrustworthy, because a particular one has been proved to be wrong. "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus," is a very unsafe principle for a historian. Several sources, however, are indicated, by which the Jesuit Letters can be checked up, and their value be better gauged.

One of the authorities often brought forward in support of the Jesuit accounts of Akbar's religious policy is Badaoni. Many modern writers, however, rightly treat with caution his evidence, as being swayed by the orthodox prejudice against the Emperor's religious innovations. But it has also to be borne in mind that the Muslim chronicler had no love to spare

22. Surendranath Sen, *A Preliminary Report on the Historical Records at Goa*, (Calcutta, 1925), p. 86.

for "those accursed men," the members of the Society.²³ This would consequently be a factor on the other side of the balance, and Badaoni, when describing the Jesuit successes at court, would not be inclined to colour the picture too much in their favour. As indicated earlier, Abu'l Fazl can also be consulted on the subject, and the *Memoirs* of Jahangir can also be referred to.²⁴

The narratives of the English travellers and envoys in India, such as Hawkins and Roe, can likewise be put to good use. The constant opposition between the missionaries and the English makes their agreement on any point very valuable indeed.²⁵ The Jesuits in Central and Western India — Portuguese and Spaniards for the most part — disliked these newcomers as Protestants and Englishmen, while on the other hand "we must reckon with the sturdy Protestantism of the Englishman, which rendered him quite incapable of recognizing any merit in a Jesuit."²⁶

Apart from Mughal India, there are some other regions for which confirmative evidence is forthcoming. The graphic description of the perils of the voyage to India, found in some of the Jesuit Letters, is corroborated by other European writers like Pyrard de Laval. The descriptions which the Fathers give of native customs and scenes can also be compared with other contemporary accounts;²⁷ and excellent studies can be made of Jesuit sources as confronted with other Portuguese and Indian evidence.²⁸

The most satisfying information, however, is always the one afforded by our own eyes. Though the events and cus-

23. Al-Badaoni, trans. W. H. Lowe, *Mumtakhbat-ut-Tawarikh* II (Calcutta, 1884) 267-268; MacLagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

24. Cf. Payne in the Notes to *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pp. 88-115, *passim*.

25. For some instances cf. *ibid.*, pp. 80 and 111, 86 and 115. A few details of Fr. J. Xavier's letter of Dec. 4, 1615—cf. *J.A.S.B.*, N.S. 23 (1927) 124—find confirmation in the *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster (London, 1926,) p. 74, and in the *Letters Received by the East India Company from Its Servants in the East*, ed. *id.*, II (London, 1897), p. 150. References to Jesuit sources are also provided by the same writer in *Early Travels in India 1583-1619* (London, 1921), pp. 49, 55, 82-85, 89-90, 127, 281-282, 322, 331.

26. W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, Preface, p. xi. Cf. also I. Fonseca, "Jahangir and the Jesuits," *Journal of the University of Bombay*, I (1932) 204-208.

27. Cf., e.g., *Doc. Ind.*, II, 561-562, 568-572.

28. A good example is: G. Schurhammer, "Iniquitiberim and Beteperumal, Chera and Pandya Kings in Southern India, 1544," *J.B.H.S.*, 3 (1930) 1-40.

toms described by the Jesuit missionaries cannot, after the lapse of centuries, be thus attested to, their geographical and archaeological descriptions at times can. Handicapped as they often were by their ignorance of the Indian culture, and not having at their disposal the scientific equipment of today, their observations were not entirely free from error. Yet it is amazing how many of these have stood the test of criticism in the light of modern findings.²⁹

Sufficient progress in the study of the Jesuit Letters has been made in the foregoing pages, to make possible the final assessment of their historical worth. To this task the following chapter is devoted.

29. Cf. J. Mc Farland, "Jesuit Geographers of India, 1600-1750," *New Review*, 12 (1940) 496-515; and S. Noti, *Joseph Tieffentaller, a Forgotten Geographer of India* (Bombay, 1906)).

CHAPTER IX

THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA: FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to form a correct estimate of the Jesuit documents and their value, it is in the last resort necessary to weigh their true deficiencies. These deficiencies, and a counterbalancing factor, will here be discussed, before the final estimate of the Jesuit Letters is made.

The shortcomings of the missionary correspondence as a source of evidence were pointed out long ago and in no uncertain manner, not by an outsider, but by one of the household — Fr. Valignano, the Jesuit Visitor of the Indian missions.¹ Other charges levelled against the Letters from India have also been considered in the preceding chapters. While readily acknowledging that adverse criticism in the matter has some foundation in fact, the danger of going in for hasty generalizations was likewise deprecated. An attempt will now be made to point out the real defects of the missionary epistles, from the historical point of view. The following remarks, however, apply chiefly to the unofficial letters.

Speaking of travellers' narratives in general, Prof. Rushbrook Williams is of the opinion that they are liable to suffer from the following weaknesses: the traveller fails to understand much of what he sees; he has to rely far too much on gossip, and is at times the victim of deliberate deception; his account

1. *Supra*, Chapter II.

is at times written long after the sight-seeing, in old age, when the memory has grown dim.²

Though not all the Jesuit Letters can be described as travellers' narratives, since the missionary letter-writers often dwelt for many years in the same region, there is no doubt that they suffered at times from the shortcomings mentioned above. Thus it happened that the European missionaries, especially in the early days of the Society in India, could not always fathom the workings of the Indian mind. For instance, when they were entrusted with the education of a Mughal prince, they failed to realize that this might be due not to Christian leanings on the part of his father—not entirely, at least—but as an Indian historian suggests, to the fact that “an Indian parent would have recourse to all sorts of charms in order to save the life of his ailing child without any intention of leaving his ancestral religion.”³

Moreover, many Jesuits failed to appreciate the finer points of Indian civilization, though it must be confessed that they had few chances of seeing its nobler aspects. Viewing Indian culture from a purely religious standpoint, they only saw in it an obstacle to their missionary work.⁴ But there were also those, however, who came to form a favourable idea of Indian morals. And it must be borne in mind that if at times the gloomy side of the picture was emphasized, this was probably done with the best of intentions, in an effort to elicit European sympathy and help for the Indian missions.

This lack of comprehension was made worse at times by the ignorance of the local language. Both of these, of course, affected the writer's evaluation and second-hand evidence, rather than the eye-witness descriptions of men and events, which form such an important feature of the Jesuit Letters. It must be stated in all fairness to the missionaries that they themselves were the first to realize the uncertainty of the knowledge acquired through interpreters, and the unreliability of the latter. The

2. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

3. Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, p. 136.

4. Instances may be found in the *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, pp. 12 and 147. Cf. also the Introduction to the same, p. xiv.

following passage from a letter of Fr. Henry Henriques, written in January, 1551, is worth quoting:

Since till now the instruction in the mysteries of the Faith was being given through interpreters, the people could not understand things well, because the interpreters could not explain such ideas. And since to be able to do good among these people it is necessary to understand their language, the four of us who are at present here [on the Fishery Coast], namely, Father Paul, Brother Balthasar, Brother Ambrose, who was received into the Society here in India, and I, strive to learn to read and write in *malavar* [Tamil] which is indeed a laborious task. But the Lord God has given us much assistance, especially in that a *malavar* grammar is ready, which the Brothers study. With it one learns within a short time to speak correctly, putting things in their correct place, such as the conjugations and declensions, and all the tenses.

Among us we have made a rule never to speak but in *malavar*; and there is a penalty for the one who speaks Portuguese, except when we speak with the Portuguese, and also when we speak among ourselves of the things of God, encouraging one another to serve Him. The Christians are greatly consoled to see us speaking their language, both because of the spiritual doctrine which we can give to their souls, which before could not be done well through interpreters, and because the interpreters, ours as well as those of the captains, received presents and committed other abuses; and now because they are understood and known to us they are more careful about what they do. We hope in God our Lord that we shall not only speak the language, but that after some days we shall order that writing among us is to be done not in Portuguese but in *malavar*.⁵

Most of the Jesuit missionaries set to work to master the vernaculars, and many were eminently successful. As they became more at home in India, some of their number studied Indian books and Indian philosophy, not merely with the idea of refuting it, but with the desire of profiting by it.⁶ The greatest of them, men like de Nobili and Beschi, paved the way for the European orientalists of future generations.

Another complaint of Fr. Valignano was that the missionaries' reports were at times "made from hearsay, without sufficient information." He was referring to the unofficial letters, which on occasion did indeed reveal an excessive credulity and

5. Letter of Fr. Henriques to the Portuguese Jesuits, *Doc. Ind.*, II, 158-159. Cf. also *ibid.*, p. 381.

6. Cf. Ferroli, "The study of Sanskrit, and of Indian culture in general," in *op. cit.*, II 402-407.

a lack of discrimination.⁷ Little harm can be caused by these reports when the context makes clear the poor source and little reliability of the information. It is when no source is indicated regarding news that has in fact been received from others, or when sentences have been torn from their context by editors, that the historian is liable to be deceived. Special caution must, therefore be exercised when dealing with secondary sources, which are not always faithful to the original documents.

It has already been shown how the nature of the Jesuit correspondence and the rules governing it, enforced a prudent silence in the case of letters that might be made public. John Lockman has some reason for saying that whereas, generally speaking, the Jesuits were best placed for furnishing the public with valuable accounts of many distant countries, yet their profession and certain personal views were apt to exercise a restraining influence on their pens. "This may be the Reason," he adds, "why they often deviate from Truth in their Relations; trouble the Public with many unentertaining Particulars, and omit other from which the World might have reaped the highest Advantage."⁸ Exception may be taken to the phrase "deviate from the Truth," unless it be understood to mean, "do not tell the whole truth." The missionary letter-writers were guilty of faults of omission rather than of commission, and the exclusion of incidents that did not help to edification "does not invalidate the value of this magnificent contribution" of the Jesuit Letters to history.⁹

A minor defect in the Letters, but none the less irritating, is the repeated suppression of geographical names, and the mutilation of these as also of personal names. The epistles of Francis Xavier are exceptionally distressing in this respect. Either he could not spell some of the tongue-twisters of the South Indian languages, or he felt that his brethren in Europe would make little out of the names, however they were spelled. His references to the areas of his labours are often indistinct. So the home of the Macuas becomes "a kingdom where I move

7. Cf., e.g., Letter of Fr. Morais to the Jesuits at Coimbra, *Doc. Ind.*, I, 466.

8. Lockman, *op. cit.*, I, Preface, p. ix.

9. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, IV, Intro., p. xi.

about," and Macassar in the Celebes is "a very distant land, perhaps five hundred leagues from here"—this is beautifully vague, and disconcerting! Few too will fail to sympathize with the difficulties of historians trying to identify the mysterious "Iniquitiberim."¹⁰

The problem of finding out who is who and which is which is not always easy. It is further complicated by the Portuguese, Latin, or French version in which Indian proper names often reached the reader, in which guise they were often altogether unrecognizable. It may be noted in passing that some apparent historical errors in the Letters are due to the prevalent custom of using personal names as generic ones. Thus "o Equebar" did not stand for Akbar alone, but for the reigning Mughal Emperor, whoever he might be at the time in question; consequently there would be references to "o Equebar" as the ruling monarch, long after Akbar's death.¹¹

There is in addition a sprinkling of other faults of less importance, and for which it is scarcely fair to criticize the Jesuit writers. Small slips in dates, for instance, can easily be forgiven them when we consider the conditions under which they were often working, and the different systems of reckoning the months and years in various parts of India. The same may be said of the political divisions mentioned in the letters from India. They were not always clear, since it was often difficult to distinguish between a petty raja and a great landowner, an independent sovereign and a nominal ruler; and thus the terms "realm" and "region" in the Jesuit Letters do not always have the connotation we would give them nowadays.¹²

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An extrinsic factor that lends added weight to the Jesuit testimony is the paucity of other records, at least in the case of some portions of Indian History. Take Muhammadan India, for example. No doubt a good number of chronicles are available dealing with this era, since the Muhammadans showed a liking for the writing of professed histories. In his very useful

10. Cf. *Ep. Xav.*, I, 181-188.

11. Cf. Notes on the letter of Fr. Pimenta, *J.A.S.B.*, N.S. 23 (1927) 72-73.

12. Cf. *Doc. Ind.*, I, 463; Lockman, *op. cit.*, I, 4.

work, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, Prof. Sharma gives an imposing list of Indian sources: official records, official histories, non-official histories, provincial histories, biographies and memoirs, gazetteers, private letter books, administrative manuals, and literary works.

However, as Prof. Sharma himself notes, the official historians had to dance to the imperial tune, and since the best writers were sure to be employed by the Government, there were hardly any non-official histories worthy of the name.¹³ The Jesuit accounts serve as a useful corrective to the eulogistic descriptions of the activities of contemporary monarchs, given by the court chroniclers, and as a supplement to the non-official records.¹⁴

In this connection, it is not only the integrity of the witness, but also the kind of evidence that he brings forward, that has to be taken into account. The contemporary Muhammadan historians—and little are they to be blamed—generally omitted mention of many matters of supreme interest to the modern readers, such as descriptions of the social institutions which were for them the most familiar things on earth. They concentrated on a mere narrative of events, with reference to chronological sequence, as found in some of the *Annals* of the nations of the West.¹⁵ The Jesuit writers, as already indicated, throw light on these social institutions.

A similar story might be told of the Maratha period, though here Portuguese State records are even more valuable than the missionary correspondence. "Since the learned historian Rajwade mercilessly exposed the serious defects of the Marathi Bakhars," says Bal Krishna, "there has been aroused a keen

13 Sharma, *A Bibliography of Mughal India*, pp. 30-31, 35.

14. Cf. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 260; C. Collin Davies in a review of *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, *B.S.O.S.*, 7 (1933-35) 229-231.

15. "Hence it is that these works [of the historians of Muhammadan India] may be said to be deficient in some of the most essential requisites of History,—for 'its great object,' says Dr. Arnold, 'is that which most nearly touches the inner life of civilized man, namely, the vicissitudes of institutions, social, political, and religious. This is the *teleiôtaton telos* of historical enquiry.' (*Lectures on Mod. Hist.* p. 123.) In Indian Histories there is little which enables us to penetrate below the glittering surface, and observe the practical operation of a despotic government and rigorous and sanguinary laws, or the effect upon the great body of the nation of these injurious influences and agencies."—H.M. Elliot, *Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Muhammadan India*, I (Calcutta, 1849), Preface, p. xv.

spirit of quest for original documents.”¹⁶ These documents are in various languages—Persian, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English. Among them may be numbered the Jesuit Letters from South India, already mentioned in the previous chapter. It is not contended here that a general history of the Maratha period, even a sketchy one, can be compiled from Jesuit sources alone; but they are useful in fixing dates, and invaluable for corroborating the testimony of other writers, and for filling up gaps in their accounts. This is also true, to a greater or lesser extent, of the Jesuit Letters from other regions of India.

Here the question naturally present itself: what about the other Europeans who came to India at the same time as the members of the Society? They were, of course, in a position to increase our knowledge of contemporary conditions in this country. Unfortunately, however, the correspondence of the other religious orders in India was not as well organized as that of the Jesuits; while among the lay people many were adventurers who had little taste for literature, and did not care to write down their experiences—some of them probably could not have done so even had they wished! Unlike such men, the Jesuit missionaries were persons of talent and culture, they were not just casual travellers, moreover, but men who spent long periods of time, and often the remainder of their lives, in the regions to which they had been posted.

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A final evaluation of the Jesuit Letters may now be attempted. The value of a document, Prof. Gottschalk declares, depends on several factors: its closeness in time to the event it records, the seriousness of the author's purpose, the confidential nature of the document, the expertness of the author in the matter in question.¹⁷ It is to be seen how the Letters from India fare in the light of these considerations. The following remarks indicate the general characteristics of the Jesuit correspondence, and do not constitute a final assessment of each individual letter taken separately.

16. Bal Krishna, *Shivaji the Great* (Bombay, 1932), I, 17. There is also the testimony of Dr. S. N. Sen, "It has been amply demonstrated that the students of Maratha History cannot be indifferent to the original Portuguese sources..." Sen, *loc. cit.*

17. Gottschalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

The official letters as a whole must be rated very highly indeed from the point of view of reliability: they were written regularly, with care and consideration, on subjects connected with the writer's work, and often under his direct observation. The confidential reports to the superiors of the Order—which in recent years are being published together with the other Jesuit documents—are the most dependable, since a high degree of accuracy and sincerity is to be expected of them.

The unofficial letters have to be read with greater caution as regards their accuracy, especially when they record happenings not witnessed by the writer, but even they can be of help in the study of Indian social customs and civic institutions. To them may be applied with a good deal of truth Payne's remark about du Jarric's *History*; they are "guide[s] to the spirit rather than to the events of the time, to the characters of men rather than to their actions."

Since in their letters the Jesuits did not profess to write history, it is but natural that references to political events should not be as numerous and coherent as the historian would wish. Pleasant exceptions to this rule are some of the letters from the Mughal and the Madura Missions. For the rest, the Jesuit Letters are but auxiliary sources when there is question of writing a general history; they provide supplementary and corroborative evidence. As Rochemonteix says of the Canadian *Relations*, "C'est de l'histoire, mais l'histoire incomplète."

The complaint should not too easily be made that the letter-writers narrated trivial incidents. That is to a large extent a matter of personal opinion. It must be borne in mind that all facts fit somewhere in the great scheme of things, and an apparently trivial fact may turn out to be of great consequence in the hands of a scholar. That is why modern historical scholarship rightly deprecates the selective editing of historical documents, insisting that the latter should be presented to the historian in their integral form.¹⁸

18. "Editing Modern Historical Documents," *Indian Archives*, 1 (1947) 136-137.

After this careful survey of the Jesuit Letters from India, the historian will surely agree with the verdicts of two eminent scholars, neither of whom can be accused of partiality for the Jesuits. Sir E. Denison Ross observes: "The contributions of their [the Jesuit] missionaries to the historical and geographical literature of the world constitute an inestimable treasure-house of knowledge, and have placed under a lasting obligation all students of the East."¹⁹

And Sir William Foster, in a letter to Fr. H. Hosten of May 1, 1912, "said that the work of publishing the letters of the Jesuit missionaries in Mogor, Tibet, Bengal and Burma, while it would prove a heavy task, would be one of great interest and importance, and the result could not fail to be of great interest to the historian."²⁰

It is natural that after a critical evaluation has been made of the Jesuit Letters, some information should be given about the influence they have exercised within and without the Society, and about their present whereabouts. These points will be dealt with in the subsequent pages.

19. E. Denison Ross, "The Portuguese in India," *Cambridge History of India*, V (ed. H. H. Dodwell, Cambridge, 1929) 3.

20. H. Hosten, "The Jesuit Post from Mogor," *The Examiner*, 70 (1919) 318.

CHAPTER X

THE EFFECTS OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA

The Jesuit Letters from the missionfield were sent to Europe not only for the information of higher superiors, but also for the enlightenment and edification of the members of the Order and of its friends. From what has been said hitherto it is clear that both these aims were attained to a most gratifying extent. After recalling to mind the details given in the fourth chapter, a further step has to be taken in the present study. It consists in a closer examination of the effects of the Indian Letters on the reading public in the West, and on students of history.

In the materialistic ego-centric world of today it may be a trifle difficult to realize the ardour and enthusiasm with which those pages, often penned hastily in some rude oriental hut, were read by 16th-century Europe. In royal courts, famous universities, and middle-class homes, the good news from the East was welcomed with joy by scholars and by people of ordinary education, by the clergy and the laity. The events narrated therein provided thrills for the most *blasé*, and the news struck a consonant note in the hearts of those stirred by the apostolic spirit of the Counter-Reformation.

The earliest letters came from Francis Xavier, and the first to read them were naturally the communities of the various Jesuit houses, and their friends. Cardinals and priests vied with each other in their admiration for the great missionary, and gave his epistles the widest publicity. It must be remembered that Xavier's was the first account of Jesuit missionary activities received in Rome, and the unique character of the narrative,

the distance of the countries in question, the great results achieved, aroused feelings of grateful astonishment all over Europe.¹ At first in its original version and then in translations, Xavier's letter of January 12th, 1544, travelled the length and breadth of Christendom, kindling apostolic zeal everywhere. Some generous souls, not content with admiration, strove to follow in Xavier's footsteps by entering the Society of Jesus. Among these was Jerome Nadal, perhaps the greatest of Jesuit educationists.²

To Catholic Europe Francis was an inspiration, and his achievements in this field were almost matched by those of his successors. The letters of Berze, Lancillotus, Henriques, and their colleagues kept burning in the West the flame of interest in all things Indian.³ Many were attracted to the Society and to the missions by the stirring accounts of the dangers, labours and spiritual consolations to be found there. Like the *Jesuit Relations* from Canada, they won support for the Order in men and money. Of these *Relations* it has been said that if their authors had aimed only at financial aid, their endless, almost monotonous, repetitions of tales of hardship, suffering and death would still arouse our interest. "But the fact is that recruits came and volunteers desired to come precisely because the field was naturally so uninviting, so repellent."⁴ A similar statement might be made about the letters from India.

Within the Society itself the effects of the Indian Letters were profound if not spectacular: the fervour of the brethren

1. A. Astrain, trans. R. Hull, *A Short Life of St. Ignatius* (London, 1928), p. 92.

2. Nadal wrote: "There was sent to me from that city [Rome] by a friend a copy of one of the earliest letters of Master Francis Xavier, in which that eminent Father related the abundant and wonderful fruit of souls given by the Lord, and in which he gave thanks that he had seen the confirmation of the Society of Jesus by the Apostolic See; at which words, I woke up as it were from a long sleep, and remembering Ignatius, and the things which had taken place between Father Ignatius and me, I was stirred to the depths of my soul, and striking the table with my hand I exclaimed: 'Now this is something'."—*Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal, I—1546-62*, p. 11.

3. Echoes of the Jesuit interest in India roll down the centuries. The renowned poet Fr. Gerard Manley Hopkins, S. J., wrote to a friend in India, in 1872: "I have a yearning towards Hindoos. Write about Brahmins, write about Rajpoots, write about Vaisyas, write about Sudras. Be detailed about Benares, be minute about Allahabad. Dwell on Vishnu, enlarge on Juggernaut. Develop caste, describe Shuggee. Be long, be lengthy, be voluminous, be tedious..." —Quoted by J. Brodrick, "The Enigma of Salvation," *The Month*, N. S. 2 (1949) 359.

4. Raymond Corrigan, "The Missions of New France: a Study in Motivation," *Mid-America*, 18 (1936) 240.

Rec. 437

Copia de algunas
cartas que los padres y hermanos
de la compañía de IESVS, que an-
dan en la India, y otras partes orien-
tales, escriuieron a los de la misma
compañia de Portugal.



Desde el año de M. D. LVII. hasta el de 1562.

Tresladadas de Portugues en Castellano.

IMPRESSAS EN COIMBRA

Por Ioan de Barrem.

Joseph A. de ...
1562
[Handwritten signatures and scribbles]

TITLE PAGE OF AN EARLY EDITION OF
THE JESUIT LETTERS, 1562.

[Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon]

increased, and many thousands applied to be sent to the eastern missionfield. Witness to this are the 15,000 letters in which they made their request (the *Litterae Indipetae*), accumulated over a period of very many years, and still preserved in the Roman archives of the Society of Jesus. Not only in Europe, but even among the missionaries of the New World, the effect of the *Litterae Indicae* made itself felt.⁵

It is not here intended to create the impression that there were no discordant notes in the chorus of praise for the missionary accounts from the East. Polanco, as already recorded, relates the case of an incensed reader who wrote a refutation of their errors, though he refrained from publishing his animadversions. The omission of relevant circumstances, the revelation of some not very creditable actions, and the distortions introduced into the original text by European publishers, were a sore trial to many. The "editing" in Europe by private publishers was done without malice, yet in the interests of truth an official version of the Society's activities in India was required, free from the errors and inaccuracies which marred the existing editions of the Jesuit Letters. It was to meet this need, and to satisfy the demand for reliable news from the Orient, that Fr. A. Valignano embarked on the writing of a History of the Society of Jesus in the East.

It was not the Catholic world alone that took an interest in the Jesuit Letters: since truth and courage are the common heritage of mankind, all men could seek information and inspiration in the missionaries' reports. Lockman, who is by no means

5. Fr. Serafim Leite writes: "The joy with which the Jesuits of Brazil received the mail, whether from the home land or from their companions who watered the eastern world with the sweat of their apostolic labours, cannot be described. To appreciate it, there suffices what Blasques relates, at the arrival of the letters. The greater part of the Fathers and Brothers was in the village of Espiritu Santo, Bahia, celebrating the feast of the Patron, in 1564, and 'it must have been two hours past midnight when he who brought them entered the house; the brethren could not contain their contentment and joy, seeing the great things that the Lord deigned to work in his creatures by means of the members of the Society, in so many and so diverse parts of the world. From that time till morning, there was none who could sleep, because the Father Provincial began at once to read the letters.'

"The news which thus caused vigils of enthusiasm was 'great news from Japan; of this and of the remaining, which you know can bring us consolation, especially since we do not expect from the Fathers and Brothers other consolations, for these excel all others, please make us sharers.' It was Grã who spoke. And he asked for the letters from India." —*História da Companhia de Jesus no Brasil* (Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro, 1938-50) II, 540-541.

uncritical of the Jesuits, remarks that some readers are attracted by the solitary peregrinations of the missionaries, even though little advantage could accrue therefrom to the arts, to geography, or philosophy; while others find pleasure in the manner of writing of the Fathers.⁶ And another English editor remarks:

As there is great Variety of Subjects and those who handle them are all Men of Learning and known Abilities, there is no Question to be made but that every Man may find something agreeable to his Taste, unless perhaps there be some Palates so deprav'd as cannot find Satisfaction in anything but what is Trivial and Romantick. ⁷

There is something, indeed, in the Letters to please every taste. But what is passing strange, even the businessman was stirred by them and dreamt of the new markets and of the prospects of trade which they opened before his eyes! Such seems to have been the effect of a letter of Fr. Thomas Stephens, S. J., who is commonly reputed to have been the first Englishman to set foot in India. Writing from this country to his father in England, on October 24th, 1583, Fr. Stephens gave a description of his journey to Goa, and of the fruits and other products of that region. His missive helped to awake the interest of the London merchants in the Indian trade; perhaps the early beginnings of "John Company" may be traced to a Jesuit Letter.⁸

So much for the effects of the Indian Letters on the members of the Society and on the general reading public. Today, in a world that is becoming increasingly small and well-known, it is difficult to imagine the sensation caused centuries ago by the Jesuit Letters from the East.

In view of the many testimonies cited in past pages, and of the great regard in which the Jesuit Letters from other countries are held by historians, it might have been expected that the value of the Jesuit Letters from India for the writing of history should have been clearly realized. Had such been the case, the

6. Lockman, *op. cit.*, I, Preface, pp. vii-viii.

7. *The Travels of Several Learned Missioners of the Society of Jesus*, Preface, p. A 3.

8. Cf. J. Courtenay Locke ed., *The First Englishmen in India* (London, 1930), pp. 7, 19-31; James Southwood, "Thomas Stephens, S. J., the First Englishman in India," *B.S.O.S.*, 3 (1923-25) 231-240; Plattner, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

present work would have been to a certain extent superfluous. Hence it behoves us to consider the impact of these missionary documents on the writers of history.

It is but natural that the ones to set greater store by the Jesuit Letters, and to study them most closely, should be the Jesuits themselves. Soon after their first appearance, the letters were used—not very critically—in the preparation of the Jesuit histories, with which the following chapter concerns itself. In recent years there have been published monumental works on the history of the Provinces and Assistancies (groups of Provinces) of the Order; these are largely based on the Jesuit Letters and other documents to be found in the archives of the Society and elsewhere. Of these histories the best known are those of Astrain on Spain, Rodrigues on Portugal, Leite on Brazil, Duhr on Germany, and Tacchi-Venturi on Italy, and they are of importance for the secular no less than for the ecclesiastical historian, since in Renaissance Europe religion and politics were inextricably mixed up. The same may be said of various modern biographical and missiological monographs published by members of the Order, and meeting with great success; the latest best-seller is James Brodrick's *Saint Francis Xavier* (London, 1952).

But what about non-Jesuit historians? It is related that as early as 1556 the Imperial Chronicler, D. Juan Paez, asked for all the missionary letters available because he desired very much to embody them in the history of his times, which he was preparing.⁹ However, speaking in general, it may be said that historians have made little use of the Indian Letters; this is not so much because after mature consideration they have decided them to be of little use—testimonies of eminent scholars of all nations prove the contrary—but because they have often been unaware of their existence and publication.

In Europe itself, at the beginning of the present century, an English author boldly made the following charge:

The problem of the history of the Jesuits differs so much from the problems offered by other history. While in the last sixty years, State by State, library by library, corporation by corporation, the Vatican itself, have opened their stores to the world, the Jesuits keep the treasures of their archives sealed.

9. Letter of Fr. Ribadeneira from Brussels, June 21st, 1556, cf. Granero, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

While able men of various nations and religions have vied with one with another in shedding light on the history of their belongings, the Jesuits seldom take the field, except to see that the memory of their forerunners receives no harm. While in every other department, the student is met on all hands by the assistance of those whom it most deeply concerns, here, should he not possess certain qualifications, he is likely to find nothing but opposition. "Catch your man," implies a search in the dark for something, the whereabouts or nature of which is unknown. Information is withheld; evidence must be dragged from unwilling witnesses; qualities that are studiously concealed must be scrutinized. The land traversed is unmarked by many paths; and the goal can only be reached by careful and inquiring feet.¹⁰

Apparently this historian had never read what the impartial *Athenaeum* had to say about Foley's *Records of the English Province*: "The Jesuits seem determined to have no secrets from English inquirers. They appear only anxious to let us know all they themselves know about their past doings."¹¹ What is stranger still, the diatribe appeared a decade after the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* had started giving to the world a substantial monthly instalment amounting in the year to some two thousand pages containing original documents of every kind relating to the internal history of the Order!

But it must not be forgotten, in the last instance, that the Jesuit archives are of their very nature private, and that while the Order requires from its members absolute frankness and sincerity with their superiors even in the most intimate affairs of conscience, the latter are naturally bound to secrecy, according to the nature of each case. Hence it is obvious that some of the personal communications preserved in the Jesuit archives cannot, in justice, be made public.

The Jesuit documents have been utilized to some extent by German historians, always in the vanguard of research and scholarship. Among others, E. Gothein and G. Loesche—non-Catholics both—discovered in them valuable material. The great Ludwig von Pastor thought it worth his while to study the Jesuit Letters, and had recourse to them in the preparation of his *magnum opus*, the *History of the Popes*.¹²

10. John Pollock in the *Independent Review*, January 1904, as quoted in "The New History," *The Month*, 104 (1904) 90.

11. Quoted in "The New History," *The Month*, 104 (1904) 90.

12. Pastor speaks of "the great authoritative *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*." — *History of the Popes*, XII, 1.

The popularity of the *Lettres Édifiantes* in France has already been noted. This publication, says the *Journal des Savants* was "awaited with impatience",¹³ and André Rétif adds that, "they are an integral piece of the psychological and moral complex of the 18th century, they made a place for themselves in history, and left their mark on it."¹⁴ They influenced renowned men of letters like Fontenelle, Voltaire, Turgot and Chateaubriand; and a glance through the modern French works on the history of the missions, the natural sciences and the discovery of the ancient civilizations of the East, suffices to show that the influence of the Jesuit Letters has not come to an end, even though they are no longer so well known by the general reading public.

English writers of the early 18th Century did not fail to borrow information from the *Lettres Édifiantes*, and this was also done, as Lockman states, by "our *Royal Society*, who introduced some Discoveries of these Fathers into their Transactions."¹⁵ Later on the Jesuit Letters fell into oblivion, and were overlooked by nearly all historians writing in English, until the present century.

And here the question arises: what has been the attitude of research workers in Indian history towards the Jesuit Letters? This must be clear to a great extent, from a perusal of the previous chapters. Since the Jesuit documents are mostly preserved in Europe, and have generally been published there, it is natural that European writers of Indian history should have been the first to pay attention to them. As early as 1888, the veteran scholar H. Beveridge drew attention to the potential Jesuit contribution to Indian historiography, and in October, 1910, he published in the London *Indian Magazine and Review* an article on Fr. Anthony Botelho's report which is to be found among the Marsden Manuscripts in the British Museum.¹⁶

It was left to Vincent Smith, however, to show the great utility and value of the Jesuit sources in supplementing the

13. June 1750, p. 1201. Quoted by Rétif, "Brève Histoire," *N.Z.M.*, 7 (1951) 47.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Lockman, *op. cit.*, I, Preface, pp. xix-xx.

16. Earlier English accounts of the Jesuit missions to Akbar are mentioned in E. D. MacLagan, "Jesuit Missions to the Emperor Akbar," *J.A.S.B.*, 65 (1896) 39.

data given by Indian chroniclers. This he did in his *Akbar, the Great Mogul*, published in 1917, wherein he states:

Failure to read the Jesuits has resulted in the currency of much false history. The Fathers were highly educated men, trained for accurate observation and scholarly writing. They made excellent use of their opportunities at the imperial court, and any book which professes to treat of Akbar while ignoring the indispensable Jesuit testimony must necessarily be misleading. ¹⁷

It is clear from Smith's work, however, that he was much more familiar with secondary Jesuit sources, such as du Jarric's History, than with the original Jesuit Letters, though it must be admitted that in Monserrate's *Commentarius* he had at hand a first-rate primary source. But the perfunctory nature of Smith's investigations and his unjustifiably strong allegations against the Mughal historians,¹⁸ alienated the sympathies of many and brought about a reaction, so that some Indian scholars came to look upon the Jesuit Letters with dislike and distrust. The well known books of C. H. Payne and Sir Edward Maclagan present a more critical and balanced estimate of Jesuit historical sources, and have deservedly come to be held in high regard by modern historians. It must be noted, however, that few are aware of the fact that the extant Jesuit Letters contain historical information regarding other areas besides the Mughal Empire.

Indian scholars, in general, have paid scant attention to the Jesuit Letters, though some have made use of the histories based on them. The neglect of the letters is doubtlessly due in part to linguistic difficulties which stand in the way of a direct acquaintance with the Portuguese, Spanish and Latin originals. Nor were the Jesuit documents easily available in English translations. To these unfavourable factors there seems to have been added in a number of cases a bias against foreign sources that has blinded some to the fact that the historian must not fear to accept the truth about the past, from whomsoever it may come to him. It is only in recent years that the publicity given to Jesuit accounts by European writers of Indian

17. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

18. Payne, in du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. xxxv, 251-258.

history, and the study and publication of the letters in learned reviews, have made them better known in historical circles.

The labours of Hosten and Maclagan have not been in vain. Today no historian of India worthy of the name can ignore the existence of Jesuit documents bearing especially on the history of the northern, western and southern portions of the country, between the years 1542 and 1773. Of course, after he has made an impartial study of the Jesuit Letters, he may still pronounce against them, and may do so quite sincerely.

It is often the case with original sources that they are less consulted than the more systematic historical works based on them. In the previous pages the historical importance of the Jesuit Letters has been established, and there is every reason to believe that the modern trends in historical inquiry mentioned in the Introduction — the insistence on original contemporary documentation, the emphasis on social history, and the need of vividness in historical narrative — will gradually turn the attention of Indian scholars in an increasing degree to the Jesuit Letters from India. It is natural, therefore, that details should be given about their present whereabouts, but before this is done, some information regarding the Jesuit histories, to which reference has just been made, is called for.

CHAPTER XI

THE JESUIT HISTORIES, PRODUCTS OF THE JESUIT LETTERS

No treatment of the missionary correspondence from India would be complete without a brief survey of the Jesuit histories. Two reasons chiefly urge us to undertake such a study. In the first place, these histories were to a great extent based on the Jesuit Letters themselves, and at times even reproduced them textually. Secondly, they are better known and more accessible to the world at large than the original epistles, and hence have been the bases of many judgments, favourable and otherwise, passed on the historical value of the latter.

As secondary sources, the histories possess both the merits and the shortcomings characteristic of this type of historical material. By supplying additional matter of different provenance, they place in better perspective a particular item of information from a primary source. At the same time they suggest further lines of investigation to the research worker. Moreover — and this is very important — the secondary authorities often preserve for posterity data from first-hand evidence that is no longer available.

To offset these advantages there is the undoubted fact that the further one goes from a primary source, the more danger there is of error creeping in, and the more laborious becomes the task of historical criticism. Alterations are at times made, intentionally or otherwise, that vitally affect the original account; there is ample scope too for the insertion of deceptive interpolations. Literary style may produce further difficulties. For instance, it was usual in the literature of a certain period

to put speeches into the mouths of the protagonists in an historical scene; the unwary reader may thus be led to accept as a genuine piece of oratory what is in fact a spurious one.

It is clear from the above that the historical worth of a particular secondary source will depend on the primary testimony on which it is based, and on the accuracy with which this is reproduced. Of the general histories compiled by the Jesuits at various times to recount the development of the Society and of its missions, Sir Edward Maclagan has said: "These histories were written by learned Jesuits in Europe who had access to first-hand authorities, and they were compiled with considerable skill and fidelity."¹ This statement calls for a closer examination.

Imbued with the scientific spirit, modern Jesuit scholars were among the first to treat with caution the histories produced by their brethren in ages past. Fr. Antonio Astrain, speaking of the manuscript histories of the Order extant in some archives, warns his readers to be on their guard against them. His reason is that such works, like the 17th-century Spanish Lives of Saints, showed a "devout partiality" for the edifying and the miraculous.²

It must be noted, on the other hand, that when the Jesuits first began to write history they were confronted by two great intellectual forces. One was Humanism, with its leanings towards classicism and the unflagging quest for historical truth; the other was the conflict arising out of the Protestant revolt.

1. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 5-6.

2. Speaking of the 17th century, Astrain remarks: "It is known that at that time pious historians were dominated by a devout partiality that inclined them to see in any place eminent virtues, heroic deeds, stupendous miracles, ecstasies, visions, raptures, revelations, prophecies, a whole world of spiritual marvels, and that, swept off by the eagerness to praise everything, some reached the point of manifest falsification. Something of this devout partiality can be perceived in the histories of the Society. Add to this the lack of care with regard to chronology, the superficiality in what concerns the explanation of events, the anecdotal character of the works — for the authors instead of expounding the collective work of the Order busy themselves with collecting individual deeds of edification — and we shall be convinced that in these histories there is not so much historical substance as some imagine. With all this, as the merit of these works is rather unequal, and in some there are real preciousities, we shall briefly expound the character of each." — Antonio Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España* (Madrid, 1902-25), I, Intro., pp. xxxiv-xxxv. Fr. S. Leite, the great authority on the history of the Society of Jesus in Brazil, shares these misgivings: cf. *op. cit.*, I, Intro., p. xii.

The early Jesuit historians were often good Latin scholars and true humanists, but the hard fight against Protestantism caused them at times to take ultra-conservative positions and to give an apologetical tint to their writings. But on the whole they rendered noble service to the cause of historical science. "After the brilliant beginnings made by the humanists, confessional polemics not only slowed up progress but threatened to submerge true history entirely. That it did not do so was due in a measure to Jesuit historians."³ In the last instance, only an examination of each of the Jesuit histories — the present study is concerned only with those that deal with India — can reassure us about their worth.

The various biographies of St. Francis Xavier will not be dealt with here. The first of these to be published was the work of Horatius Tursellinus (1594) and he was followed by Lucena, Sanvitores, and others. Their labours have been carefully examined by Frs. G. Schurhammer and J. Wicki in their masterly Introduction to the *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii*, and they do not contain enough material for the secular historian to justify a detailed criticism in these pages. A similar statement might be made about the contemporaneous biographies of Rudolf Acquaviva.

Neither has it been considered necessary to study here the histories that treat of the work of the entire Order, both in Europe, its first home, and abroad; a passing reference to them must however, be made. Polanco's *Vita Ignatii Loiolae et rerum Societatis Iesu Historia*, generally referred to as the *Chronicon*, covers the history of the Society during the lifetime of its Founder, and may be considered as the first of these histories. Written by Ignatius' industrious secretary, it contains extracts from some of the Indian Annual Letters no longer extant.

Next may be mentioned the official *Historia Societatis Jesu* published at Rome over a period of a century and a half (1615-1759), and covering the years 1540-1632. Frs. Orlandini, Sacchini, Jouvancy and Cordara were the persons chiefly

3. Edward A. Ryan, "Jesuit Historical Scholarship," *Woodstock Letters*, 69 (1940) 308.

responsible for this monumental work, and they were well fitted by their talents, and by the access they had to original documents, to do it well. Another general history is the *Kerckelycke Historie van de gheheele werelt* of Fr. C. Hazart, published at Antwerp in 1682. These works are only partly concerned with happenings in the missions, and they are not easily accessible to most readers. Hence it is only with the Jesuit histories of the missions, having particular reference to India, that the present chapter concerns itself.

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The Indian Letters, for all their undoubted merits, did not provide a complete and coherent account of Jesuit activity in the Eastern missionfield. As early as 1558, Fr. P. J. de Perpiñan, an excellent preacher and writer, had conceived a plan for a History of the Indian Missions, but the time was not yet ripe for such an undertaking. During the Generalate of Francis Borgia several attempts were made to put the scheme into execution, and it was rightly thought that the best place to find an author for the proposed work would be the Indian Province itself. But in India, as the Jesuit Visitor Fr. G. Alvares had once reported, the zealous Fathers were more inclined to make than to write history, nor had they at hand the necessary copies of the official accounts sent to Rome in the past.⁴

It was left to Frs. M. da Costa and G. P. Maffei to meet to some extent the long-felt need, which is thus expressed in the opening page of Valignano's *Historia*:

As the reading of the things of the East delighted much those in Europe, some devoted friends of the Society were so desirous of making them known to all, that as the letters from the Fathers and Brothers in India arrived, they had them copied and printed in various regions. And as the letters were from many persons, who wrote them from various places distant from one another, and who were of very different talents, as happens in that so great a Province, and as they were not written to be printed, nor were they printed in due order, they caused a certain confusion, by which many things either were not understood or seemed contradictory; and thus to remedy this inconvenience it seemed necessary to me to write a History of all those things in a more clear and orderly manner...⁵

4. Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., p. 33.*

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

Da Costa. The eminent bibliographer and missiologist, Robert Streit, awards to Fr. Manuel da Costa's treatise the honour of being "the first mission-history of the Jesuits in the East Indies."⁶ Fr. da Costa was born at Lisbon in 1540, entered the Society of Jesus at the age of 19, and died probably in 1572, for he does not figure in the Jesuit catalogue of the following year. Having had much to do with the Indian correspondence of the Society, he was eminently fitted to compose the *Historia das Missões do Oriente até o anno de 1568* ("History of the Missions of the East till the year 1568"), which he completed in the year mentioned in the title.

The original work was never printed, but a Latin translation by Fr. G. P. Maffei appeared at Dillingen in 1571, under the title: *Rerum a Societate Jesu in Oriente gestarum Commentarius*. Unfortunately this version was so unreliable that it evoked bitter comments from da Costa himself: "So many lies together would dismay even a man who prided himself on them, how much more one who, in order not to deviate a syllable from the truth, sacrificed entire days and nights..."⁷

The disgusted author does not blame his translator, but the Roman censors. Their clumsy interference, he points out, led to several major blunders in the published work which he fears will discredit other Jesuit books on the East. Evidently the *Commentarius*, as published, can be of little use to the historian.

Maffei. Fr. Giovanni Pietro Maffei's first excursion into the field of history did not turn out a success, as is clear from what has been said above. That the fault, however, was not principally his was amply proved by his next work, *Historiarum Indicarum libri XVI*. Printed at Florence in 1588, the work has gone through at least twenty-three editions in various languages.

Maffei was born at Bergamo, Italy, in 1535; he entered the Society thirty years later, and lived to the age of 68. An excellent Latin scholar and professor of rhetoric, this Jesuit

6. Streit, *op. cit.*, IV, 249.

7. Letter of Fr. da Costa to Fr. P. da Silva, March 26th, 1572, in Valignano, *op. cit.*, pp. 486-487.

was early entrusted with the translation of the Indian Letters into Latin. A five-year stay in Lisbon, where he had access to the valuable codices of correspondence from the East, was an even better preparation for the composition of his great work. He availed himself, moreover, of the manuscripts of the Life of St. Francis Xavier by Teixeira and of the first part of Valignano's *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales*. As both these were written in the East by men personally acquainted with the work of the Order in those regions, their evidence. — and consequently Maffei's own work — is highly to be esteemed.

The Italian version of the treatise, which is more accessible, is difficult to analyse, since it is not divided into chapters. The deficiency is partly compensated for by a good index. Of greater interest to the research student than the book itself are the letters from India which Maffei reproduces at the end of his work. One of them especially, from the pen of Fr. O. Bresciano, gives details about the West Coast of India from Malabar to Bassein.

Valignano. Next in the list comes Fr. Alessandro Valignano, who completed in 1588 his *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales (1542-64)*. The book was not published in full, however, until the year 1944!

Valignano is one of the greatest figures in the missionary history of the East. Born at Chieti, Italy, in 1539, he had already made a name for himself as a lawyer, when he abandoned all his prospects in the world to enter the Society in 1566. Such were his abilities and talent for organization that in spite of his youth the Jesuit General appointed him, in 1573, Visitor of the Missions of the Society in India and Japan. He exercised this office during the years 1574-83, was then made Provincial of the Indian Province of the Order (1583-87), and again appointed Visitor of India and Japan (1587-95), and of Japan and China (1597-1606). He died at Macao in 1606.

On his first appointment to India, Fr. Valignano had been entrusted with the task of composing a chronicle of the labours of the Society of Jesus in the East — Maffei's history had not yet been published. From the critical remarks which the Visitor made about the Jesuit Letters, we get an idea of the

high standard of accuracy which he demanded of them.⁸ This same standard he set before himself. He wrote the *Historia* only after a long stay in the East had given him a reliable picture of the conditions prevailing there; the text was then corrected several times, and even after this its author was loath to give his chronicle to the public without its contents having been thoroughly checked.⁹

Valignano was in an excellent position to write an accurate history. The sources he used were: his own personal experience gathered in the course of a detailed inspection of the Jesuit residences and mission-stations in the East, the evidence supplied by veteran missionaries, Teixeira's Life of St. Francis Xavier and some other works about India, and the Jesuit Letters of previous years, some printed already, others not yet.

The great sinologist, Matthew Ricci, had the highest regard for Valignano's work on grounds which he set out in a letter to Maffei — such as the Visitor's conscientiousness, wide experience in a position of authority, and long stay in the Orient.¹⁰ Valignano shows great balance of judgment, rejecting the exaggerated accounts of Jesuit successes in the East given by some of his *confrères*.¹¹ He does not lose himself in details

8. *Supra*, Chapter II.

9. In 1585, Valignano wrote to the General of the Society: "And because Father Teixeira says in this letter that Your Paternity had written to him, that you wished the life of Father Master Francis Xavier composed by him to be printed, it appeared to me wise to make Your Paternity attentive, for the love of our Lord, not to be in such a great hurry to print what has been written from here, for in truth great deliberation seems necessary in the printing of such matters. Therefore I begged Your Paternity last year, not to print that first part of the Indian History before I had gone through it once more and had submitted it to the perusal of the oldest fathers of the Province, for although I am certain that I have not written anything untrue and have employed great care to verify all my statements — since the History will be printed as composed by a member of the Society — I am not yet satisfied with it, until the work has been examined again, so that it may be thoroughly perused and pronounced reliable. And therefore, as I already formerly wrote, I hold it for quite certain: if the History of Father Maffei is printed before matters concerning India have been thoroughly examined here in India, that it will contain many exaggerated (*exorbitantes*) and false statements, which it is better to correct before it is printed than afterwards." — Letter quoted by Schurhammer, "Historical Research into the Life of Francis Xavier," *St. Xavier's College Magazine*, 16 (1923) 45-46. Cf. also Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. 100*-101*.

10. Valignano, *op. cit.*, Intro., p. 104*.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 96* - 99.* It is possible, however, that the Visitor was not always fair in his judgment of the Jesuit superiors in India. Cf. J. M. Granero, "Un gran misionero, el P. Alejandro Valignano," *Missionalia Hispanica*, 9 (1952) 199-206.

— which is to be regretted at times from the point of view of the research student. Writing for the edification of his brethren, he felt himself obliged to omit certain episodes such as dismissals from the Society, or the misdeeds of persons of authority and public standing — these he reserved for his confidential reports to the Jesuit General.

For the Indian historian, Valignano's work has a special importance. The author himself had a personal knowledge of the East, and his book has the value of a primary source in some respects. He can give local colour to his narrative, even though he did not witness the events related therein, which took place several years before his arrival in India. Some chapters of the first part of the *Historia* give interesting information about the journey from Europe to the East, the castes and customs of India, and the Portuguese power in the country.

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Non-Jesuit scholars have made little use of the histories mentioned above; they are much better acquainted, however, with the works now to be described.

Peruschi. Fr. Giovanni Battista Peruschi, of Rome, entered the Society in the lifetime of its Founder, and died in 1598 at the age of 73. His *Informatione del Regno et Stato del gran re di Mogor della sua persona, qualita, et costumi, et delli buon segni, et congettture della sua conversione alla nostra santa fede. Cavatta della relatione, et da molti particolari havuti di la l'anno de 1582 et del 91 et 95* (Rome, 1597), is well known — so well known, indeed, that Smith wrongly refers to it as “the earliest printed authority for the missions, with the exception of the *Annuæ Literæ* for 1582-3 in the British Museum.”¹²

The book met with immediate success, and French, German and Latin translations appeared within a year. The Latin version, *Historica relatio de potentissimi regis Mogor . . . vita moribus, et summa in Christianam religionem propensione*, first issued at Mainz in 1598, is obtainable more easily than the others. The entire *Relatio* was reprinted in John Hay of Dalgetty's *De Rebus Japonicis, Indicis et Peruanis epistolæ recentiores . . . in librum unum coacervatæ* (Antwerp, 1605).

12. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 467. But cf., *contra*, Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 12.

The student of Indian history should note that Peruschi's work, whose main theme is the person and realm of the great Akbar, was published several years before that monarch's death. It reproduces Fr. Monserrate's famous *Relaçam do Equebar Rei dos Mogores*, completed in 1582, besides extracts from the letters of Frs. Pinheiro and Jerome Xavier, with news of the third Jesuit mission to the Mughal Court.

Guzman. Fr. Luis de Guzman was born at Osorno, Spain, in 1543, and joined the Society of Jesus twenty years later, after having studied in the University of Alcalá. He held many positions of responsibility in the Order, being appointed successively Master of Novices, Rector (several times), and Provincial of the Jesuit Provinces of Andalusia and Toledo. He died in 1605. Four years before his death, and at the instance of the Jesuit General Fr. Claude Acquaviva, he published his *Historia de las Misiones que han hecho los religiosos de La Compañia de Jesús para predicar el sancto Evangelio en la India Oriental, y en los Reynos de la China y Japon* (Alcalá).¹³

Both on account of his learning, and of the experience and contacts which he had acquired in various positions of authority in the Society, Guzman was well qualified for his task. The sources he used were the published works on India available at the time, the letters of his brethren in the East, and the personal testimony of missionaries who had dwelt in India for many years. These missionaries he met in Jesuit houses in Spain, when they passed through on their way to Madrid and Rome to despatch the business of their missions. From all these sources Guzman sought "to take what was certain and proven, leaving aside other things that were not so in the same degree."¹⁴

The chronicle comprises thirteen books and a treatise. The first three books contain matter of interest to the Indian historian. In the very first one there is an account of Portuguese beginnings in India, and of the work of Francis Xavier.

13. The first edition was in two volumes. More easily available is the one-volume edition: *Historia de las Misiones de la Compañia de Jesús en la India Oriental, en la China y Japon desde 1540 hasta 1600* (Bilbao, 1891).

14. Guzman, *op. cit.*, (Bilbao ed.), Prologue, p. 11.

The second book describes Jesuit activity in Goa, Southern India and Ceylon, and has passages about the Nayak of Madura, the Emperor of Vijayanagara, and the Zamorin of Calicut. In the third we find a general survey of the Jesuit missions to the Mughal Court up to the end of the 16th century. It is good to remember that Guzman, like Peruschi, wrote while Akbar was still living.

The *Historia* is free from two defects common in the Spanish historical literature of the day: a penchant for ridiculous exaggeration, and a fondness for pious and lengthy digressions. There is a simplicity about the narrative that lends it elegance, and the author makes no pedantic attempt to display his erudition or to philosophize.

Guerreiro. The mantle of Guzman fell on the capable shoulders of Fr. Fernão Guerreiro. Born at Almodovar, Portugal, in 1550, he entered the Society in 1567. At the time of his death, fifty years later, he was Superior of the House of the Professed in Lisbon.

The five volumes of Guerreiro's famous work were published between the years 1603 and 1611, and relate the history of the Eastern Missions of the Society during the years 1600-1609. The first volume is entitled *Relação annual das Cousas que fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus na Índia, e Japam nos annos de 600 e 601, e do processo da Conversam, e Christandade daquellas partes tirada das Cartas geraes que de la vieram* (Evora, 1603), and this title is also borne, with appropriate variations, by the succeeding four. The detailed references to the various translations and editions,¹⁵ which were rendered necessary by the extreme rarity of the book in all its forms, are no longer called for. The work has recently been re-issued in three volumes, under the comprehensive title, *Relação Anual das Coisas que Fizeram os Padres da Companhia de Jesus nas Suas Missões Do Japão, China, Cataio, Tidore, Ternate, Ambóino, Malaca, Pegu, Bengala, Bisnagá, Maduré, Costa da Pescaria, Manar, Ceilão, Travancor, Malabar, Sodomala, Goa, Salcete, Lahor, Diu, Etiópia*

15. Cf. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 6-7; Payne in the Introduction to Guerreiro, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pp. xiii-xiv.

a alta ou Preste João, Monomotapa, Angola, Guiné, Serra Leoa, Cabo Verde e Brasil nos Anos de 1600 a 1609 e do Processo da Conversão e Christandade daquelas Partes: Tirada das Cartas que os Missionários de lá Escreveram (Coimbra-Lisbon, 1930-42). No one can complain that the title is vague!

Guerreiro is well known to readers of English through C. H. Payne's publication, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, which is an annotated translation of some parts of the *Relação*. There is more than this about India in Guerreiro's work. We have, for instance, details about the third Jesuit mission to Akbar, the dealings of Venkata II of Vijayanagara with the Portuguese, the wars of the latter in Bengal, their relations with the Zamorin, etc. Indeed the author seems to have felt constrained to offer some sort of an explanation for the amount of space devoted to temporal affairs in a history of the missions.¹⁶

For the preparation of his book, Guerreiro undertook the enormous task of reading and comparing the great number of letters that kept coming in from the various missions of the Society, both in the East and in the West. He then coordinated their contents, distributing the matter into appropriate chapters, but losing little of the colour and interest of the originals. As a matter of fact he seems to have stuck so closely on occasion to the original letters, that he practically reproduced them verbatim.¹⁷ However much this may detract from the literary value of the *Relação*, it enhances its worth in the eyes of the historian, who thus has access to the primary evidence.

Du Jarric. Best known of all the Jesuit mission histories is the work of Fr. Pierre du Jarric. Born at Toulouse in 1566, this Frenchman joined the Society of Jesus in 1582, and died at Saintes at the comparatively early age of 50.

16. "Nor should it be thought strange that while dealing with spiritual matters we should also deal with some things that concern the temporal state of the kingdoms and provinces of which we shall speak: since this is done for the sake of a clearer exposition of the affairs of the Christian community and so as to have a perfect account of the characteristics of the lands, peoples, and persons of whom there is mention: for all redounds to the much greater glory of God, and in all will be seen examples whence a good disposition and good judgment will be able to draw much spiritual fruit." — Guerreiro, *Relação* (Coimbra ed.), I, "To the Reader" (page unnumbered).

17. Cf. H. Heras, "Jesuit Letters and Accounts," *I.H.R.C.*, 18 (1942) 8. A detailed survey of the Jesuit histories will be found there.

Not quite satisfied with Fr. Guzman's work, which he had been instructed to translate into French, du Jarric wrote to the Spanish Jesuit seeking enlightenment on some points. The good Father never replied, for the excellent reason that he was no longer among the living. Fr. du Jarric then contacted Fr. Guerreiro of Portugal, who not only solved his difficulties but also sent him a number of useful books and documents. Among the latter were some notes of Fr. Albert Laerzio, once Provincial of the Malabar Province, and thus well qualified to give first-hand news about the south of India.

Taken as a whole, du Jarric's work is not original, for it contains much material that is merely reproduced in French from the works of Guzman and Guerreiro. However, the additional data from the papers supplied by the latter enabled du Jarric to give to his readers new information about India. The first volume of his chronicle, which appeared in 1608 at Bordeaux, is entitled *Histoire des choses plus memorables advenues tant ez Indes Orientales, que autres pais de la descouverte des Portugais, en l'establissement et progrez de la foy Chrestienne et Catholique: et principalement de ce que les Religieux de la Compagnie de Iésus y ont fait, & enduré pour la mesme fin; depuis qu'ils y sont entrez jusques à l'an 1600*, and the two succeeding volumes (1610, 1614) bring the narrative up to the year 1610. A Latin translation, entitled *Thesaurus Rerum Indicarum*, was published at Cologne in 1615.

The *Histoire* gives the reader a convenient summary of all the printed material on its subject available at the time, together with the contents of Jesuit Letters which are no longer extant. C. H. Payne, who translated and annotated a portion of du Jarric's work under the title *Akbar and the Jesuits*, says of it:

Its importance consists in its being an accurate reproduction of a large store of first-hand evidence, much of which is not available elsewhere.... I have found that du Jarric used his authorities with fidelity, either literally translating, or carefully summarising. Except for an occasional reflection, or moral 'aside,' he never obtrudes himself on his readers. Errors of translation are here and there to be met with; but in a work covering close on two thousand five hundred quarto pages, compiled from materials written in at least four different languages, and available in many cases only in manuscript form, our wonder is, not that du Jarric made errors, but that he made so few.¹⁸

18. du Jarric ed. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

Higher praise for a secondary source could scarcely be given.

The author of the *Histoire* has more to relate about Malabar, Madura, Vijayanagara and Vellore than has Guerreiro; there are also interesting chapters in the third volume about Diu, and the relations of the Portuguese with Bahadur Shah of Gujerat. But it was not du Jarric's purpose — as it was not of the other Jesuit authors mentioned — to write a general history; consequently the references to contemporary political events are not as numerous as one might wish. However, in Payne's opinion, the chief interest of du Jarric's narrative lies in "the intimate light it sheds on the character and mind of Akbar, in the portraits it presents of the royal Princes and other notable figures of the time, and in the insight it affords into the general conditions of life under Mogul rule."¹⁹

Bartoli. The very year in which the first volume of the *Histoire* appeared, Daniel Bartoli was born at Ferrara, Italy. He entered the Society of Jesus at the early age of fifteen, and showed great promise as a preacher and writer; in 1650 he was entrusted with the task of preparing a history of the Order in the different parts of the world. Fr. Bartoli dedicated the best years of his life to this work, which brought him great renown even before his death in 1685. The *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* of Sommervogel lists no less than thirty-nine works from his pen, on a variety of subjects.

Of interest to Indian scholars is Bartoli's *Dell' Istoria della Compagnia di Gesù. L'Asia*, the first part of which was published at Rome in 1653. *L'Asia* deals with the apostolate of St. Francis Xavier and his early companions. To its third edition (1667) was added the *Missione al Gran Mogor del P. Ridolfo Aquaviva della Compagnia di Gesù*, which had appeared separately in 1663. There are many translations and editions, the most common edition being the Italian edition of Naples, 1853-61.

The Italian historian made good use of the books and of the documents from the Jesuit archives made available to him at Rome. He wrote well—so well, indeed, that it was thought

19. *Ibid.*, p. xi.

by many that in aiming at literary excellence he had neglected historical accuracy. Recent studies, however, have tended to re-establish his reputation as a historian, who wrote with first-hand evidence before his eyes.²⁰ His works on the Far East, for example, are much esteemed for the authentic and precise information they contain.

De Magistris. A little known author on South India is Fr. Hyacinth de Magistris, an Italian who entered the Society of Jesus in 1626 at the age of twenty-one. He spent many years in the Malabar Province, made several journeys to Europe on its behalf, and was even sent to Brazil as Visitor by the General of the Order. He died at Goa in 1668.

Fr. de Magistris's work is entitled *Relatione della Christianità di Maduré Fatta da Padri Missionarii della Compagnia di Gesù della Provincia del Malavár* (Rome, 1661). A French version of this book was issued at Paris in 1663.²¹

The author's long stay in India, his knowledge of the vernaculars—he is reported to have known Malayalam to perfection!—and his many official contacts, enabled him to write with authority on the kingdoms of Madura and Tanjore, with which his book is chiefly concerned. It is less satisfying, however, than the other mission-histories reviewed here.

De Souza. Last in the list—only chronologically to be sure—is Fr. Francisco de Souza. A Portuguese, but born in Brazil in 1648 or 1649, he entered the Society in 1665. After his arrival in India, Fr. de Souza held there several responsible offices. He died at the College of Goa in 1712.

Of de Souza's magnificent work, *Oriente Conquistado a Jesu Christo pelos Padres da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa*, two parts, covering the years 1542-1585, appeared at Lisbon in 1710. The third part, which the author left in manuscript cannot now be traced. There is however in the "Fundo Geral" (176, fol. 42-78) of the Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon, a lengthy

20. Cf. "Bartoli," *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Milan-Rome, 1930-38), VI, 247-248.

21. This is more easily available, and is entitled: *Relation Dernière de ce qui s'est Passé dans les Royaumes du Maduré, de Tangeor, & autres lieux voisins du Malabar, aux Indes Orientales. Esclairez de la lumiere de l' Evangile, par les Peres de la Compagnie de Jesus.*

MSS. entitled "Noticias que o Padre Provincial da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa manda a Real Academia de Portugal, começadas do anno de 1585, em que o Padre Francisco de Souza da mesma Companhia acabou a 2ª parte da sua historia intitulada 'Oriente Conquistado a Jesu Christo pellos Padres da Companhia de Jesus da Provincia de Goa'." This may help to make up in some measure for the loss of de Souza's manuscript. A second edition of the *Oriente Conquistado* was printed at Bombay in 1881-86.

In the Preface to the second volume of his chronicle, the author gives as his authorities (a) a manuscript history by Fr. Sebastian Gonçalves, (b) Bartoli's books on Asia, Japan and China, and (c) the History of the Society and other documents of the Secretariate of the Society of Jesus at Goa. There is in this book material which is not to be found elsewhere.

Fr. de Souza's critical sense and discrimination has won for him recognition as a trustworthy historian. He does not suffer from a "devout partiality"! For example, when relating the unexpected deliverance of Goa from imminent attacks by the Marathas and the Mughals, after the intercession of St. Francis had been invoked, de Souza is content to write: "It does not belong to me to examine whether these results were brought about in a miraculous manner, or a purely natural one; I only say that the common voice of [Portuguese] India at the time attributed the preservation of the State to a miracle, and still does so today."²²

The author of the *Oriente Conquistado* is careful to adduce the names of the witnesses and the evidence on which his statements are made. Like Valignàno, he too deprecates the exaggerations of some authors in favour of the Society. An instance in point will be found in the account of the progress of Christianity in Salsette, Goa. After describing some attacks on Jesuit priests near Rachol, which were not fatal, de Souza writes:

Fr. Mathias Tanner says that in the year 1554, when D. Antonio de Noronha was Viceroy, two priests of the Society were killed by stoning in Salsette; and I do not know who prevented him from getting the correct news,

for the year was not 1554, when there were still no missionaries of the Society in Salsette and D. Affonso de Noronha was the Governor, but 1564, when D. Antão de Noronha was Viceroy. The religious of the Society, of whom only one was a priest, did not die by martyrdom, nor did the tradition of this Province ever recognize such martyrs. Fr. John Nadasi fell into the same error. . . .²³

The *Oriente Conquistado* contains very detailed information about the various regions of Goa and the progress of Christianity there. It also gives news about the rulers of Bijapur, Cochin, Vijayanagara, Travancore, Madura, Mughal India, etc. Several pages are devoted to the first Jesuit mission to the Mughal Court; these were translated into English by Fr. H. Hosten in the *Examiner* of 1920. So authoritative and illuminating are de Souza's two volumes, that they make the reader regret all the more that the manuscript of the third should have been lost.

The above review of the principal Jesuit histories of the Indian missions that have been published, will have given an idea of their utility to historians. That they are not without faults has been pointed out by Jesuit writers themselves, ever the best critics of their colleagues' work.²⁴ It is clear that as regards particular items of information, secondary sources are to be used only when primary sources fail, and even then not without caution. But as stated earlier, once a historian has proved himself worthy of confidence, the reader may more easily trust himself to his guidance, being ready, of course, to suspend assent if doubt should arise as to the veracity and accuracy of individual statements.

23. De Souza, *op. cit.*, II, 7-8.

24. Mention has already been made, in chapter IV, of Gonçalves's "Censuras" concerning the works of Guzman, Guerreiro and others.

CHAPTER XII

THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE LETTERS FROM INDIA

The natural outcome of the study and evaluation of the Jesuit Letters will be a keen interest in these records, and a desire to know where they are to day to be found in the original, or at least in accurate and reliable copies. This desire will be all the keener in our own days when, after Ranke, so much emphasis is laid on "the narrative of eyewitnesses, and the genuine and original documents." The present chapter provides some information regarding the preservation of Jesuit records, and the present whereabouts of the Jesuit Letters from India.

The official letters of the missionaries naturally converged towards the three great administrative centres of the missions of the Order: Goa, Lisbon and Rome. A brief study of the Jesuit archives in these places is consequently called for, and since the final destination of most of the official letters was Rome, where also the archives of the Society were first organized, with Rome shall this survey begin. It will be supplemented by information regarding the official and unofficial Jesuit Letters now scattered in a number of European and American archives that do not belong to the Order; more specific details about these will be found in one of the appendices.

The administrative system of the Society of Jesus is highly centralized, and from the time of St. Ignatius its headquarters have been located in Rome. Here reside the General of the Society and his assistants from different parts of the world, with whose help he governs and directs the activities of the far-flung Order. It was in 1544, only four years after the official establishment of the Society, that Ignatius and his companions

moved into the house adjoining the church of S. Maria della Strada, in what is today the Piazza del Gesù; this house in Rome was to be the official residence of the General, and the administrative centre of the Society, till the suppression of the latter in 1773.¹

In the beginning the volume of Jesuit correspondence was very small, and neither a permanent secretary nor an archivist was considered necessary, the first Jesuits doing the official letter-writing by turns. Only in 1546 was a regular archive inaugurated, with registers of the letters sent and received. It was of a very unpretentious nature, however, and the incoming letters were folded and kept in chests and drawers, with or without archival marks.

The letters of Francis Xavier were naturally very much in demand, and as his first companions in the religious life were extremely desirous of seeing them, Ignatius at times forwarded the originals to them, keeping only a copy in the archives; but the usual course was to retain the original missive and to distribute copies of it, generally made by hand at Rome. While the epistles of Xavier to his Jesuit brethren were widely dispersed in the course of time, some others, like the ones to the King of Portugal, were carefully treasured. The measures taken by the Jesuit General to preserve Xavier's writings came rather too late. Today, of the 137 letters and other writings of the great missionary, whose text has been preserved, only 33½ are extant in the original, the majority of them in Lisbon. Even these have not escaped the attention of devout clients of the saint, and not-so-devout hunters of souvenirs, who have cut out the signatures and other parts of various documents, leaving only nine original letters intact.²

The letters from the other Jesuits in India were also popular, but, as has been mentioned before, they could not be published as they stood. The task of preparing them for the press would not have been extraordinarily difficult had all the missionaries

1. Cf. G. Schurhammer, "Die Anfänge des Römischen Archives der Gesellschaft Jesu (1538-1548)," *A.H.S.I.*, 12 (1943) 89-118. This authoritative article has provided much information for the present chapter.

2. *Ep. Xav.*, I, Intro., pp. 19*-23.*

adhered strictly to Ignatius' instructions about sending their information in two parts: one that contained news of general interest and edification and could be shown to anyone, the other of a confidential nature, with details useful for the good government of the Order and the edification of its members. This remissness on the part of the letter-writers is in a way fortunate, for it must have been a reason for retaining the original letters at Rome and having copies made of the approved portions only, for circulation among a wider circle of readers. Traces of the laborious work of correction of the Founder can still be seen in some of the letters preserved in the Roman Archives of the Society; these letters have also been marked and annotated for use in the writing of the History of the Order.³

The man who did most, however, to organize the Jesuit archives and to preserve the precious information received from the East, was Fr. Juan Polanco. This Spanish Jesuit was appointed Secretary of the Society of Jesus in 1547, when thirty years old, and ably filled the office for the space of over a quarter of a century. A far-sighted and industrious man, he conceived Rome as the head and heart of the Society, whither news had to come from all over the world, and where it had to be collected and edited for the public and for the History of the Jesuit Order which he had already in mind.

In an earlier chapter mention has been made of his instructions on letter-writing, but just as important were the rules he laid down for the Jesuit Secretariate in Rome. These rules are divided into five sets dealing with: the letters received at the Curia (or headquarters) of the Society, other writings received at the same, letters sent from the Curia, news of edification for the general public, and the preservation of documents. Regarding the last item, he decided that five record-books should be kept. In the first book was to be copied in chronological order the substance of the letters of an edifying or historical nature. In the second book, the *Livro Secreto*, were to be recorded details of importance for the government of the Society, whether they were edifying or not, such as came usually

3. *Doc. Ind.*, I, 409.

in the *hijuelas*. The third book was for copies of the more important letters. The fourth was meant for special questions concerning the Society. The fifth volume was to be a repertory, with the dates of the letters received and sent.⁴ Some of these volumes are still extant, and are of considerable historical value.

With the future History of the Society always in mind, Polanco ordered in 1552 that the letters from India, which were forwarded from Portugal irregularly and with delays, should be despatched to Rome soon after their arrival from the East, and together with a Latin translation. In Rome itself further translations were made into various European languages, and the letters were edited for the press.⁵ The shortcomings of these processes, from the historical point of view, have already been noted, but Polanco must be given credit for realizing the importance to the Jesuit Letters from India, at least for the history of the Society itself. The preservation of the original writings, which is due in a large measure to his efforts, makes the scholar independent of the mutilated versions that were often published in the early days.

For over two centuries the *Litterae Indicae*, the letters of the missionaries in the East, were eagerly received in Rome, their contents were noted, copies made for circulation, and the originals generally preserved with care. In the stormy years before the suppression of the Order, however, the Indian Letters received at Jesuit headquarters seem to have diminished in number, if one is to judge from the actual contents of the Jesuit archives. It is said that many were intercepted by the enemies of the Society,⁶ who stopped at nothing to bring about its downfall; this is a plausible explanation.

At the time of the suppression, the central archives of the Society were still located in the residence of the Gesù, where they had been inaugurated. They were returned to the Jesuits at the time of the restoration of their Order, in 1814, in a rather complete state. For safety's sake they were

4. *Ep. Xav.*, I, Intro., pp. 66*-67.*

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 67*-72.*

6. Rodríguez, *História*, T. IV, I, Intro., p. xi.

shifted in 1870 from Rome to Fiesole near Florence, and some decades later to Exaeten and Valkenburg in the hospitable Dutch territory. Finally, a little before World War II, they came back once again to Rome. The greater part of their contents are now preserved in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu*—a treasure-house of information about the East. The last Annual Letter of the Province of Goa that is preserved in these archives is actually for the years 1750-1753. The last one of the Province of Malabar is of 1745 and is signed "Iosephus Khrening," this being a missionary who left Europe for Malabar in 1737, and died about the year 1789. Other evidence, however, seems to establish the fact that the Annual Letters were continued till 1759, the year of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portuguese territory.

A number of codices that were for long kept at the Professed House of the Gesù, were confiscated by the Italian Government after the seizure of Rome in 1870, and were incorporated in the *Archivio di Stato*. They were returned to the Society in 1924. The Vatican Library possesses some collections of transcripts of Jesuit Letters from India; one such is the Codex Ottoni, which belonged to Cardinal Cervini.⁷

Closely rivalling the Roman archives in richness of historical material of Jesuit provenance are the archives of Portugal. Lisbon was the starting-point of the sea-journey to the East, the residence of the Portuguese Provincial, and the training ground for many of the future missionaries of India. Consequently to it and to the two other Portuguese cities where important Colleges of the Society existed—Coimbra and Evora—were forwarded a large number of Jesuit Letters from India. The College of Coimbra, especially, was very much in the thoughts of the Jesuits abroad, as a glance through the volumes of the *Documenta Indica* will testify.

The original letters could not always be preserved in these Colleges, as they had also to be read in the other houses of the Society. Soon the bigger Jesuit establishments had them copied in big folio volumes, for the edification and information of their com-

7. *Ep. Xav.*, I, Intro., pp. 203*-208.*

munities, to whom they were read. Thus at the Professed House of St. Roque in Lisbon, and at the Colleges of Coimbra and Evora, valuable codices of copies of missionary letters were kept.

It must be clearly noted that these copies have not as great a value as the original epistles. They were meant for reading at table during meals, for the edification and diversion of the listeners. Hence anything likely to hinder these two ends—mention of Jesuits that had subsequently been dismissed from the Society, for instance—was sedulously omitted in the process of transcription, or altered or cancelled thereafter. With the same ends in view, explanatory notes were at times added marginally and even inserted into the text, and irrelevant passages were deleted.⁸ In default of the archetypes, however, recourse may be had to these transcripts, the ones of the Professed House of Lisbon being more reliable than the rest.

The persecution of the Jesuits by the Marquis of Pombal is well known to students of European history. It meant the end of the flourishing Jesuit colleges and residences in Portuguese territory, and the destruction or spoliation of much that was greatly valued by their inmates. For instance, the much valued copies of the letters from the East, the *Cartas da India*, of the College of Coimbra, and hundreds of packets of documents belonging to the same institution, were confiscated and transferred to other places; the codex *Cartas da India* is now preserved in Lisbon, in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁹ A like fate befell the archives of the other Jesuit houses in Portugal, whose contents are now scattered in a number of public establishments such as the National Library of Lisbon, the National Archives of the *Torre do Tombo*, the Ajuda Library, and the Public Library of Evora,¹⁰ as also in some private libraries.

It is a great pity that these documents have long lain hidden from scholars, both Portuguese and foreign. This is due in no small measure to the lack of good catalogues of the Portuguese

8. *Doc. Ind.*, I, Intro., pp. 62*-63.*

9. *Ep. Xav.*, I, Intro., pp. 196*-200.*

10. Cf. S. G. Perera, "The Lisbon Archives," *Ceylon Literary Register*, 3rd Series, 3 (1933) 287-288.

libraries and archives, which greatly hampers investigations made on the spot, and renders consultation by post almost impossible. As a matter of fact a Portuguese historian has stated that historians from his own land have been misled by wrong information from foreign sources, when they had in their own archives the most authentic details regarding the points in question.¹¹

In recent years, fortunately, a mass of these documents has been published by the *Agência Geral das Colónias*, Lisbon; the most important of these publications, from the point of view of the present study, is the *Documentação para a História do Padroado Português do Oriente*, edited by Antonio da Silva Rego. The Portuguese records have also been consulted in the preparation of the *Documenta Indica* series by Josef Wicki. The existence of these records became better known to the English-speaking world after the investigations of F. C. Danvers, who also called attention to the volumes of Jesuit Letters in Portugal "which no doubt contain much valuable information regarding events in India during the periods to which they . . . refer, as seen by non-official observers."¹²

The official Jesuit archives in other parts of Europe also suffered during the years of the persecution and the suppression of the Society. This happened in Spain, for instance, where the spoliation of the archives was planned in advance and carried out with thoroughness.¹³ In various ways Jesuit records came into the possession of several public establishments in the Continent, such as the *Archives Nationales de Paris*¹⁴ and the *Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*.¹⁵ The valuable British Museum collection of Jesuit manuscripts will be dealt with separately.

It is not strange, perhaps, that the Jesuit archives in Goa—the Rome of the East, and administrative centre of the Order

11. Silva Rego, *op. cit.*, I, Intro., pp. vii-viii.

12. F. C. Danvers, *Report to the Secretary of State for India in Council on the Portuguese Records relating to the East Indies contained in the Archivo da Torre do Tombo, and the Public Libraries at Lisbon and Evora* (London, 1892), pp. vii-viii.

13. C. Eguia Ruiz, "Los Jesuitas, proveedores de bibliotecas. Recuento de muchos espolios," *Razón y Fe* (Madrid), 130 (1944) 235-258.

14. Bernard Mahieu, "Les Archives Nationales de Paris, source de l'histoire des missions," *N. Z. M.*, 7 (1951) 105-118.

15. MacLagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 17, 374-375.

in these parts—should have been organized rather late indeed. For the missionaries of the Order in India, to quote once again Fr. Alvares's report, were more inclined to make than to write history, and the frequent changes of superiors were not conducive to the organization of correspondence and the formation of an archive. It was only in 1584, during the Provincialate of the great Valignano, that a Provincial Archive was organized by Fr. J. Cota, after the pattern of the Jesuit archives in Rome. Up to this time the important documents had been kept by each house for itself. The little care that was exercised in this matter is shown by the fact that in Xavier's own lifetime the documents regarding the foundation and endowment of the College of Goa had already been lost.¹⁶

Gradually the official records of the Society came to be preserved with greater care in the various Jesuit houses in India, and especially in the Provincial Archives in Goa. But time brought various mishaps to these papers, and many perished in flames during the wars between the Portuguese and the Dutch. The latter, for instance, set fire to the Jesuit library and archives in Cochin, when they captured that city in 1663.¹⁷

As the Jesuits in the East grew in numbers and spread far and wide over India, and beyond it, the volume of correspondence arriving at their headquarters in India naturally increased. It is a safe guess, therefore, that when Pombal's emissaries arrested the seven score Jesuits in Goa on the morning of the fateful September 26th, 1759, a great number of Jesuit Letters and other reports must have been stored in the Goan archives of the Order. What happened to these precious records? It may be said at once that they were maltreated much in the same way as their legal owners, who were shipped off to the foul prisons of St. Julian in Portugal. Details are hard to come by, but the following data seem authentic.¹⁸

After Pombal had ruined the missions of the Society of Jesus in India, and seized its goods, he ordered in the king's

16. *Doc. Ind.*, I, Intro., p. 65.*

17. *Ibid.*, p. 65*; Hosten, "The Marsden MSS.," *B.S.O.S.*, 3 (1923-25) 148-149.

18. G. Schurhammer, *Die zeitgenössischen Quellen zur Geschichte Portugiesisch-Asiens und Seiner Nachbarländer zur Zeit Des Hl. Franz Xaver (1538-1552)* (Leipzig, 1932), Intro., p. xlv. The author bases his account on Portuguese historical studies on the Goa archives.

name that the state and ecclesiastical archives of the Portuguese territories in India should be sent to Lisbon by ship. This was in 1774. The carrying out of these instructions was entrusted to a certain Luis Xavier, of whom the Portuguese Governor wrote, in 1799, that he had proceeded in a most faithless manner and had had caused great damage. In any case, over 12,000 State documents in 62 folio volumes (the *Livros das Monções*) arrived in Portugal and are now in the Archives of the *Torre do Tombo*. But the records of the religious orders seem to have disappeared without leaving a trace.

The veil of mystery was lifted just a little in 1880 by J.A. da Graça Barreto. He stated that when in 1774 the Archbishop of Goa, Francisco da Assumpção e Brito, was ordered to send to Lisbon all important documents from the Goan archives, he endeavoured to comply; the ship's captain, however, refused to take on board the huge heaps of official papers and letters piled up high on the pier, and had them burned at the Aguada Fort.¹⁹ It seems that a declaration of the Archbishop was also found to the effect that he had, on Pombal's orders, destroyed all documents in favour of the Jesuits.²⁰

Thus the priceless records of centuries perished miserably. Some Jesuit Letters were saved, however, and came into private hands. Hosten was informed by the Goan scholar, J.A. Ismael Gracias, that in 1776 a certain M. Diancour of the Paris Academy had come to Goa and bought some of the manuscripts formerly preserved in the Jesuit archives.²¹ Other Jesuit documents have found their way to the British Museum, and the importance of this collection of missionary records—the Marsden Collection—calls for a closer study of its history.²²

William Marsden, born in Ireland in 1754, was for several years employed by the East India Company in Sumatra. In 1828

19. Schurhammer, *Quellen*, loc.cit.

20. *Ibid.*; cf. also Casimiro C. de Nazareth, *Mitras Lusitanas no Oriente*, II (2nd. ed., Nova-Goa, 1924), Prologue, pp. iv-v.

21. Hosten, "*Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*," Introduction, *M.A.S.B.*, 3 (1914) 517.

22. Information on the subject may be found in: Hosten, "The Marsden MSS. in the British Museum," *J.A.S.B.*, N. S. 6 (1910) 437-461; *Id.*, "The Marsden MSS. and Indian Mission Bibliography," *B.S.O.S.*, 3 (1923-25) 129-150; E. Denison Ross, "The Manuscripts collected by William Marsden, with special reference to two copies of Almeida's *History of Ethiopia*," *B.S.O.S.*, 2 (1921-23) 513-538; C. R. Boxer, "More about the Marsden Manuscripts in the British Museum," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1949) 63-86.

he presented to the British Museum a set of documents "brought from the Archives of the Romish Church in Goa" (Additional MSS. 6878-6879), and in 1835 another collection of historical records apparently from the same source (Additional MSS. 9852-9861). From the contents of the documents themselves, and from the archival marks appended to them, it is evident that these papers belonged to the archives of the Professed House of Goa. Thus some of the manuscripts are original letters sent to the Provincial of Goa, while in the documents of codices 9852 and 9854 it is expressly stated that they belong to the Jesuit Archives of Goa.²³

By whom were they brought to Europe in the first instance? Marsden himself is silent on the point. Hosten conjectures that the Marsden MSS. may have formed part of Pombal's booty after the suppression of the Society, and have been retained by him in his own palace instead of being deposited in the Royal Archives of Portugal. After his death these manuscripts may have come under the auctioneer's hammer, when perhaps Marsden acquired them. But, as Hosten himself confesses, this would not explain how other documents seemingly from the Goan archives of the Society came into the possession of private individuals in India, such as Colonel Wilford, who had secured some of the writings of Fr. Monserrate.²⁴ It may be noted, however, that whatever the history of the Marsden manuscripts may be, their authenticity has never been called into question.

The odyssey of another set of documents belonging at one time to the Jesuit College of Rachol, in Goa, is related by Alberto Feio in an introductory note to the *História da Etiópia* of Fr. Pero Pais. These papers are now in the Public Library of Braga, in Portugal, and were bought for it from the heir of a certain Dr. Manuel de Oliveira. The latter had himself acquired them from the descendants of a Portuguese diplomat, the Conde da Barca, to whom they had been presented in 1789 by Sir Joseph Banks of the Royal Society of England. How did the English scientist obtain these Jesuit records? He does not

23. *Ep. Xav.*, I, Intro., pp. 210*-211.*

24. Hosten, "The Marsden MSS.," *B.S.O.S.*, 3 (1923-25) 148.

seem to have been in India himself, and Feio conjectures that the manuscripts were acquired in Goa by some English traveller, after the suppression of the Society, and later passed into the possession of Sir Joseph.²⁵

At present no original Jesuit Letters from the Society's archives seem to exist in the *Arquivo Histórico do Estado da Índia*, the official archives of Portuguese India, where the old documents once lying scattered in various Government departments have been collected. Personal investigations and a perusal of the most recent studies on the Goa archives²⁶ reveal only two hitherto unpublished Jesuit codices that might contain copies of letters with historical material. These are the *Missões da Província de Goa e Malabar* and the *Copiador das cartas dos Padres Jesuitas aos seus provinciais* (1744-1758), the latter evidently meant for copies of letters addressed by the missionaries to the Provincial of Goa. The State Archives of Goa have been recently reorganized under the direction of Sr. P. Pissurlencar, who is also an eminent authority on Indo-Portuguese and Maratha history. The documents of importance relating to the Jesuits which exist in these Archives have already been utilized by him in the preparation of his historical works.

What has been said thus far concerns chiefly the official letters, and, before passing on to the unofficial ones, it may be remarked that some of the missionaries' communications never reached their real destination. Such was the case with the Jesuit post from Mughal India of the year 1615.²⁷ The letters were entrusted by the Jesuits to an Englishman going to Europe via Aleppo, but, owing either to the faithlessness of the messenger or to some untoward occurrence, the letters never reached their destination. Today they are to be found among the Cottonian MSS. in the British Museum.

If it is difficult to trace the whereabouts of the official letters of the Jesuit missionaries in India, it is a sheer impossibility to

25. Pero Pais, *História da Etiópia* (Oporto, 1945), I, Bio-bibliographical note, pp. xxvii-xxix.

26. P. Pissurlencar, *Roteiro do Cartório Geral do Estado da Índia* ([Lisbon], 1941); C. R. Boxer, "A Glimpse of the Goa Archives," *B.S.O.S.*, 14 (1952) 299-324.

27. H. Hosten, "The Jesuit Post from Mogor for 1615 gone to England," *The Examiner*, 70 (1919) 318-320. A similar mishap befell some Jesuit correspondence from China, which is now preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Cf. E. I. Murphy, "Early Missionary Enterprise in China," *The Month*, 179 (1943) 222-234.

Annuę literę collectę Agorenſis, et Miſſionis
Agorenſis, collectę ex parte anni
1648, et parte anni 1649

Toto hoc tempore, quatuor in hac Miſſione Laicos, pro iu-
bilo egregie deſiderant. Rex Sarracenus, in cuius Regia-
ritudine, ut olim ita nunc a Religione Chriſtiana ſumme re-
uerſus omnes ſunt aditus propagande, Chriſtiana Religio
occluſa. Vt ſunt Puberiores, et Regii miniſtri, ſic et
Patres obſcure incogniti, exempla ſumma ueneratione
proſequantur, ubi tamen agitur de Religione poſſibilitate
omni amicitia lege nil notis ſciant, ut ſue ſortes, et nos
inſurgunt, omnia nobis inſauſta comminantur. Inter de-
ſcripti temporis ſcandales non ſemel apud Agorenſem ſi ber-
natorem deſolati, cuius quod Chriſtianos in Sarracenorum
ſuspicio latet, etiam aduſum ſalutis exanimem reuer-
ſamur, et ſcandalo uice modo ingratum baptiſmo inſerimus.
Et ea accuſatione imminente aliquam perſecutionem time-
bamur. Sed Virgo Dei para, cuius tutela plures iam annos
hæc Miſſio ſeruat inuicta, omnes noſtros conatus ſuccu-
tus reſpectu, obſecrat ut Rex miniſtri, et beatiſſimus ſalutem
accuſationem opprobrant, inter eos anguſtia ſemio eſt, quæ non
inſolent, quam difficile eſt Evangelium ſeruari. Et hi ſer-
uantes inter eos diſcrimans iterum, et exanimem conatus in
omni ſeruat Evangelium ſub modo ſeruari, et ſer-
uatur, ſed prudentia magiſtra, quæ quibus, ſeruari.

1 in.

find out what happened to the numerous private letters which they undoubtedly wrote to their relations, friends and benefactors. The greater number of these letters has probably perished, but a good many have survived to this day. Some have remained for centuries in family chests, others have either been gathered up by public libraries in Europe and America, or have fallen into the hands of private collectors. The value that historians set by these documents may be realized from the fact that the Huntington Library of Los Angeles bought eighty pages of the letters of the Jesuit pioneer in California, Fr. Eusebio Kino, for a total sum of 18,750 dollars, or 235 dollars a page!²⁸

The Kino letters belonged to the Aveiro collection. Since the latter is of interest to Indian scholars also, some information about it is quite in order here, and may also provide a clue to the fate of other such collections of private Jesuit Letters.

The Duchess d'Aveiro d'Arcos y Maqueda (1630-1715), was a Portuguese by birth, and earned for herself the title of "Mother of the Missions" by her great generosity and zealous efforts on their behalf. She not only helped the Jesuits in Portugal to send out new workers to distant lands, but personally corresponded with these missionaries, and received from them in return news about their work. Their letters to her were personal ones, but it was expected that the Duchess would allow that the reports sent to her should be circulated among the Jesuit houses.

It does not seem, however, that the letters to the noble lady from the missionaries overseas ever became known to those outside her own little circle, and they remained buried in the family archives for long years. It was only in 1924, when Messrs. Maggs Brothers published a detailed catalogue of a part of the Aveiro collection of autograph letters relating to the Catholic Missions in India and the Far East,²⁹ that research students were made aware of the existence of this historical treasure-trove. The documents cover the years 1663-1771, and some of them contain material for Indian historiography.³⁰

28. Herbert E. Bolton, "The Jesuits in America: an Opportunity for Historians," *Mid-America*, 18 (1936) 231.

29. *Bibliotheca Asiatica*, Part II (London, 1924).

30. Heras, "Jesuit Letters and Accounts," *I.H.R.C.*, 18 (1942) 3-4.

The catalogues of Messrs. Maggs Brothers and of other dealers in old books and manuscripts reveal that from time to time centuries-old private letters of the Jesuit missionaries are offered for sale. Many of these, no doubt, will contain little to interest the historian, but others may destroy the official and received conclusions on events of some importance. It is depressing indeed, as Sir Charles Oman remarks, when, comment and compilation being finished, some benevolent stranger shoots in upon one some important private papers which have been for ages in private hands, and which give definite information regarding subjects on which surmise alone has been possible hitherto.³¹ But the historian must be prepared for such eventualities. Despite the investigations made in the past by private individuals and by learned societies, there are doubtless many Jesuit Letters from the East still lying in unsuspected places; and it would not be surprising if some incidents in Indian history should appear in a new light when all these Jesuit Letters have been published.

It has been seen that the bulk of the official letters of the Jesuit missionaries are preserved in the original in the archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome. A smaller number of original letters, and many volumes of first copies of the letters from the missions, are to be found in the Portuguese archives. Other archives and libraries in Europe also possess, in smaller numbers, official and unofficial Jesuit documents from the East; while not a few personal letters of the missionaries remain in private hands. With this survey of the present whereabouts of the Jesuit Letters from India the present study draws near its close; but before the final summing-up it is advisable to cast a glance at the Jesuit Letters from other parts of the world, that by realizing the importance attached to these documents by historians of repute one may be helped to evaluate better the Indian Letters.

31. Charles Oman, *On the Writing of History* (London, 1939), p. 202.

CHAPTER XIII

THE JESUIT LETTERS FROM COUNTRIES OTHER THAN INDIA

It is the aim of the present work to study and evaluate the Jesuit Letters as a source for Indian history. Lest it should be thought that this is just a hobby-horse of ours, and that we are labouring the point of their importance, it is advisable to make a brief survey of the use that has been made of Jesuit correspondence in the historiography of other countries. These countries are many and include practically all the nations of the new worlds discovered by the great explorers of the Age of Discovery, for in the words of Macaulay:

The Jesuits invaded all countries which the maritime discoveries of the preceding age had laid open to European enterprise. They were to be found in the depths of the Peruvian mines, at the marts of the African slave-caravans, on the shores of the Spice Islands, in the observatories of China. They made converts in regions which neither avarice nor curiosity had tempted any of their countrymen to enter; and preached and disputed in tongues of which no other native of the West understood a word.¹

In an age when the terrors of the sea were very real indeed, and cartography was in its infancy, the pioneering achievements of the Jesuits surely merit some admiration. From the time that their greatest missionary, Francis Xavier, landed in Goa, in 1542, their progress towards both east and west was very steady. In 1546 they reached the Moluccas, in 1549 they made their appearance in Japan; in 1557 they entered Ethiopia, in 1560 they penetrated East Africa up to the Monomotapa; in 1565

1. Macaulay, "Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes," *op. cit.*, VI, 470.

they established themselves at Macao, and from 1580 they were at the court of the Great Mughal; in 1583 they settled in the interior of China, in 1598 they worked among the people of Pegu; in 1623 they sought an entry into Madagascar, in 1615 they made their way into Cochin-China; in 1616 they passed into Cambodia, in 1624 they penetrated into mysterious Tibet; in 1626 they spread into Tonking and Siam, and in 1642 visited Laos. They set sail for the Congo in 1547, for Brazil in 1549, for West Africa in 1560, and in 1611 were labouring among the savages of Canada.²

But wide as was the range of their voyages, it is not this alone that has won for the Jesuits consideration and esteem among writers of history. After all, there were others too who travelled far and wide, as for example the members of various other religious orders, the merchant adventurers and the *conquistadores*. But strangely enough these have left comparatively little data for future generations. It was the Jesuits who were largely responsible for the advancement of the knowledge of the distant lands and of their peoples. By their letters and reports to their superiors and to friends at home, and by the chronicles of their travels, they acquainted Europe with the customs, usages and traditions of the strange peoples among whom they had cast their lot. Their observations became sources of information contributing to the history, ethnography and geography of the new countries.

The writings of the missionaries of the Order covered three continents: America (North and South), Africa and Asia. Among them, the *Jesuit Relations* of North America have proved to be of outstanding value, as will be seen from the testimony of eminent historians. After treating first of the *Relations*,³ the information supplied by Jesuit missionaries about South America, Africa, China, Japan and Central Asia will be considered in the remainder of the present chapter. The Indian Letters which have already been made the subject of a detailed analysis, will thus be seen in better perspective.

2. Cf. Francisco Rodrigues, *História da Companhia de Jesus na Assistência de Portugal*, T. I, II, 523.

3. Speaking of the *Relations*, it has been said: "They were, however, but one collection of hundreds of similar documents, such as the reports and writings of Paez, d'Almeida, Mendez and Lobo on Abyssinia; of Sicard on Egypt; of Cordeyro on the Azores; of Barradas on the

North America. The *Jesuit Relations* of Canada were published yearly from 1632 to 1672, as annual reports sent by the Jesuit missionaries to their brethren and friends in Europe. These *Relations* constitute the most important and often the only material available for the history of Canada of that period. Some of the volumes became so rare that complete sets could not be found even in the great libraries of Europe. The Canadian Government, realizing their historical importance, painstakingly searched for all of them and had them reprinted in three large octavo volumes in 1848.

In a well-documented study on the *Relations*, published by a Canadian historian some years ago, it is shown how Catholic and non-Catholic scholars in search of documents bearing on the early history of Canada gradually became acquainted with these Jesuit accounts, and discovered in them a mine of information and of heroism.⁴ They then began to tell the world at large about the priceless treasure they had found.

The *Relations* were at first regarded with suspicion because of their religious character, but the more they were studied and examined, the more important and valuable they proved to be, and the more they were used by historians. Parkman in particular, a Protestant, wrote for his countrymen a history of the Jesuits in North America, published in 1867. Therein he points out that the Jesuit accounts, though written by men of education, are often lacking in style, as might be expected of narratives penned in haste in Indian lodges or rude mission houses in the forest, amid countless annoyances and interruptions. He also remarks that as regards the value of their contents, the *Relations* are exceedingly unequal, for in their desire to edify their brethren, the missionaries set down modest records of

lands of the Tigris; of Tieffenthaller on Hindustan; of Tachard on Siam; of Koeffler on Cochin-china; of de Andrade, de Semedo, du Halde, Gerbillon, Legobien, Gaubil and von Laimbeckhoven on China and its neighbours, Mongolia, Korea and Tibet. The *Memoires concernant la Chine* and the *Lettres Édiſantes et Curieuses* of the French Jesuits laboring in China, if not so well known as the Canadian *Relations*, are quite as important. Lafiteau and Charlevoix wrote authoritatively on the Indian tribes of Canada; Acosta with great distinction on the lands and peoples of South America; Valera and Eder on Peru; Molina on Chile; Dobrizhoffer on the Paraguay Reductions; Eckhart on Brazil; Salvatierra, Kino and Baegert on Mexico; Combes on Mindanao and the Phillipines."—Martin P. Harney, *The Jesuits in History* (New York, 1941) pp. 215-216.

4. Pouliot, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-39.

marvellous adventures and sacrifices, and vivid pictures of forest-life, side by side with monotonous details of the conversion of individual savages, and the praiseworthy deportment of some exemplary neophyte. And Parkman then proceeds:

With regard to the condition and character of the primitive inhabitants of North America, it is impossible to exaggerate their value as an authority. I shall add, that the closest examination has left me no doubt that these missionaries wrote in perfect good faith, and that the relations hold a high place as authentic and trustworthy historical documents.⁵

A further tribute to the value of these accounts is Thwaites's edition of the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* published at Cleveland between 1896 and 1901. The opinion of this American scholar, who subjected the *Relations* to a searching examination, is worth quoting:

The authors of the journals which form the basis of the *Relations* were for the most part men of trained intellect, acute observers, and practised in the art of keeping records of their experiences. They had left the most highly civilized country of their times [France] to plunge at once into the heart of the wilderness and attempt to win to their Christian Faith the fiercest savages known to history. To gain these savages it was first necessary to know them intimately, their speech, their habits, their manner of thought, their strong points and their weak. These first students of American Indian history were not only amply fitted for their task but none have since had better opportunity for its prosecution. They performed a great service to mankind in publishing their annals, which are for historian, geographer, and ethnologist our best authorities.⁶

Thwaites then shows how these writings vividly portray the manner of life in the primeval forests—the life of the devoted missionaries as well as of the untamed Red Indian tribes, when relatively uninfluenced by contact with Europeans. In his opinion it is largely due to the Jesuit *Relations* that the French regime in North America is one of the best illuminated periods of history.⁷

Not all will agree with the encomiums of Parkman and Thwaites; some may even be inclined to side with Antoine Arnauld who branded the missionaries as “concocters of the

5. Francis Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America* (Boston, 1867), Preface, p. vi.

6. Reuben G. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (Cleveland, 1896-1901). Quoted by Thomas Campbell, *The Jesuits* (London, 1921), p. 872.

7. *Ibid.*

Relations," and derided their accounts as "a tissue of lies" and an "exaggerated and conceited apologia" of their own deeds.⁸ However, Pouliot has written a masterly vindication of the historical worth of these documents, acknowledging at the same time their real limitations.

The Jesuit writers were the first to avow that they were neither by vocation, nor by official appointment, the chroniclers of the French colony. One of the greatest of them wrote, "I do not pretend to relate all that is done in this country, but only that which conduces to the good of the Faith and of religion."⁹ Therefore the unbiased historian, after studying the documents at first hand, will be obliged to conclude that as regards the natural history of the land, its social history, and the history of the missionary apostolate in Canada during the 17th Century, the Jesuit *Relations* constitute a valuable source of information that cannot be disregarded.

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South America. We come to the vast tropical regions where the pioneering Jesuits have left their mark down to our own day, and from where they sent most interesting reports back to Europe. In 1549, half a century after the discovery of Brazil by Cabral, Governor Thomas de Souza took with him to that spacious land a little band of six Jesuits. The letters from Brazil—like the other Jesuit Letters—were meant to give both edification and information, and the first one was naturally written by the Superior of the group of missionaries, Fr. Manuel de Nobrega. A man born to rule, his letters are characterized by remarkable objectivity and clearness. Others followed in his wake, producing the earliest treatises on the natural history of Brazil, and giving a mass of ethnological and cultural data.

The greatest of Nobrega's aides was Joseph de Anchieta, renowned alike for consummate scholarship and unflagging zeal, whose illuminating letters were eagerly read in Europe. He also composed a grammar and a dictionary of one of the native languages. Of course, in the matter of scientific informa-

8. Cf. Pouliot, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

9. Paul le Jeune, in *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, VII, 288 Quoted by Pouliot, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

tion, we cannot expect from these men of the 16th century the technique and accuracy of our own days. For all that, their vast culture and powers of observation, together with the first-hand nature of their knowledge, merit a hearing for their evidence.

In the purely historical field these Jesuit Letters are precious and well-nigh indispensable sources for the history of Brazil. Most of them were written without any thought of publication, which is a good warrant for their sincerity. Among these writings we have the *Sumario das Armadas*, with a description of military campaigns; others described the life, dwellings, races and customs of the native population; and others still contain passages of juridical interest concerning the rights of the local inhabitants. For example, in the *Discurso das Aldeias* there is a rather strong criticism of the oppression of the indigenous population by the local officials—where the discriminating reader, while acknowledging the manifest sincerity of the authors, will have to make allowances for the excitement which prolonged debates on certain topics are apt to arouse!¹⁰

The detailed instructions given to the Jesuits in Brazil regarding the recording of important events, the collection of material for the reports, the drafting of the Annual Letters and their despatch, fill us with admiration—especially when we consider the fact that they were written in an age when “Annual Reports,” as we know them now, were practically non-existent. For example, Fr. C. Gouveia, Visitor of the Brazilian Province, decreed as follows in 1589:

Immediately at the beginning of the year a Father or Brother, most fitted for the task, shall be appointed to go on composing the Annual Letter, and to him shall be handed over all letters in which things of edification are reported. And on the same day or on the next to that in which there happens something worthy of being written down, he shall write it down *ad longum* in a note-book which he shall have for the purpose. And each month he shall show to the Superior what he shall have written down, and at the end of the year he shall gather together all the Annual Letters of the other colleges [residences]. And from all he shall make a General Letter, keeping a copy of it in the book in which they are usually written.¹¹

10. Cf. Leite, *op. cit.*, II, 531-541, for more detailed information on the Jesuit Letters from Brazil.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 536.

It is good to note here that a similar procedure was followed in the other Jesuit missions, both in the West and in the East.

Precautions were also taken against indiscretions in their correspondence by members of the Order, and against the capture of the documents by enemy powers on the high seas; recourse was even had to code-words and -numbers. All this may help us to understand the dictum of the Brazilian scholar, that it would be presumptuous for anyone to write the history of Brazil without the history of the Society of Jesus in Brazil having first been written.¹²

Side by side with the Jesuit sources concerning Brazilian history, there are others which narrate the development of several South and Central American lands where the Jesuits laboured: Peru (from 1568), Mexico (1572), Paraguay (1586), and Chile (1593).¹³ Jesuit documents from the Mexican area are more easily accessible to the English-speaking world due to the labours of Dr. Herbert Bolton and his colleagues of California University. Dr. Bolton, who published *Kino's Historical Memoir* (Cleveland, 1919), declares that the most important of the results of the now prevalent practice of repairing to archives is the need of rewriting a large part of history in the light of the rich sources hitherto unused. The *Jesuit Relations*, in his opinion, are the merest bagatelle when compared with the material that has been gathered subsequently from archives, or with the even greater bulk of documents still in manuscript and still unused.¹⁴

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Africa. In striking contrast with the rather successful American ventures was the failure of the early Jesuit missions to the Dark Continent. Among the most ancient of these expeditions, full of harrowing trials and valourous deeds, was the Abyssinian undertaking. In the course of the 15th century news had reached Portugal that there actually existed a Christian

12. Capistrano de Abreu, reported in Leite, *op. cit.*, I, Preface, p. xiv.; and cf. II, 631.

13. For a fuller account of the Jesuit historical works on the South and Central American regions, cf. Pedro Blanco Trias, *Historiografos Jesuitas, Siglos XVI-XIX* (Valencia, 1947), pp. 83-95.

14. Herbert E. Bolton, "The Jesuits in North America: An Opportunity for Historians," *Mid-America*, 18 (1936) 228.

kingdom in Ethiopia, and it was generally believed that the mysterious "Prester John" ruled there.

After the Portuguese had found an entry into the kingdom the time seemed ripe to start the work of reuniting this schismatic country with Rome, and Ignatius of Loyola conceived the plan on a grand scale. He chose one of his best men, Fr. J. Nunes Barreto, to be appointed Patriarch; and the prelate was given as assistants two Bishops, Andrew Oviedo and Melchior Carneiro, and eleven picked men of the Order. From Goa, where the party arrived in 1556, Bishop Oviedo and a few of his companions actually got into Ethiopia in 1557. But the enterprise failed chiefly because of clashing political interests, and by 1597 the last member of the group of pioneers had died a lonely death.

The next important endeavour to enter the Negus's realm was made by Fr. Pero Pais. His first, but unsuccessful, attempt to make his way into the country via Arabia cost him seven years of captivity. In 1603, however, he managed to enter Ethiopia through Diu and Massawa. For three decades the Jesuits were able to exercise a fruitful apostolate in the land but, as in other cases, the loss of favour with a despotic sovereign meant the destruction of the mission and its personnel; and in 1640, with the martyrdom of the last Jesuit missionary, the Ethiopian mission came to an end.¹⁵

So much for the history of the undertaking. Like their colleagues elsewhere, the Jesuit missionaries in Abyssinia kept Europe informed of the religious and civil state of the country where they laboured, through a number of letters and reports. Frs. Pais, d'Almeida and Barradas were responsible for scholarly investigations into the geography, ethnology and history of Abyssinia; the missionaries also made the first maps of the sources of the Blue Nile. Unfortunately, their voluminous and scientific works remained long unpublished. It was only in the present century that Beccari published in fourteen big volumes, with an Index besides, the *Rerum Aethiopicarum Scriptores Occidentales* (Rome, 1906-17). It happens that this work —

15. A very readable account of the Jesuit missions to Ethiopia, and to the Eastern lands, is to be found in Felix A. Plattner, *Jesuits Go East*.

like some others that are ostensibly concerned with Africa alone — contains a number documents relating to India also, since both regions were for a long time united for the purpose of Jesuit administration.

Two entire volumes contain Pais's *História da Etiópia*,¹⁶ an extensive study and the first comprehensive guide to the old Christian kingdom, portrayed in geographical, ethnological, political and religious terms. Incidentally, this hero of the Ethiopian mission has also given us the earliest known description of the interior of Arabia, of European authorship.¹⁷ His account of Ethiopia is worthy of special attention -- as are also his Annual Letters -- on account of the confidence which the Negus placed in him. According to Balthazar Tellez, he was spoken of by the Negus Susenyos in terms of great praise. In Fr. Pais, said Susenyos, he had all he wanted: "a teacher for doctrine, a counsellor for doubts, a captive and a slave for service."¹⁸ Pais's authority is further enhanced by the collection which he had made of valuable Ethiopian codices and documents, and the number of local languages which he had mastered.

Further volumes in the series edited by Beccari are filled with the works of Fr. Manuel Barradas, Fr. Manuel d'Almeida and the Patriarch Mendez. The last four tomes contain miscellaneous relations and letters of the usual type. All these authors had unrivalled opportunities closely to observe public affairs and persons, and also to examine official documents and qualified witnesses. Their intention is plainly noted by Fr. d'Almeida in the prologue to his history of Ethiopia: "Let me add, on the subject of this work, what I was going to say, namely, that my first intention is not to delight the reader with flowers of speech, but to relate only the truth to such as desire to accept it at its own value, without affectations and posturings, regarding which the poet has well said that they diminish rather than increase natural beauty."¹⁹ By way of commentary it

16. A two-volume edition of this work, with an introduction by Elaine Sanceau and a bio-bibliographical note by Alberto Feio, was published at Oporto in 1945.

17. C. F. Beckingham, "Some Early Travels in Arabia," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1949) 173.

18. Cf. Elaine Sanceau, *Em Demanda do Preste João* (Oporto, 1939), p. 320. The original English version of the book is entitled *Portugal in Search of Prester John*.

19. Cf. E. Denison Ross, "Almeida's *History of Ethiopia*: Recovery of the Preliminary Matter," *B.S.O.S.*, 2 (1921-23) 786.

may be added that a distinction has to be made between intention and fulfilment; yet in the study of the history of Ethiopia there is a place of honour for these letters, relations and books written not by historians long after the event, but by the very men who personally took part in the great doings.²⁰

Best known to the English-speaking world as a writer on Abyssinia is Fr. Jerome Lobo, an abridged translation of whose work was published by no less a person than Samuel Johnson. His is a most readable and even racy account of the events that took place during the patriarchate of Afonso Mendez. "He seems to have been especially marked out for adventure, and hardship," says Sir Charles Rey, "and he records it all in simple and direct language, enlightened in places by flashes of shrewd peasant humour that go some way toward making one understand how it was he was enabled to survive the adventures he encountered."²¹

And Dr. Johnson, who was not easily pleased, pays the following tribute to Fr. Lobo:

He appears by his modest and unassuming narration to have described things as he saw them, to have copied nature from life, and to have consulted his senses, not his imagination. He meets with no basilisks that destroy with their eyes; his crocodiles devour their prey without tears; and his cataracts fall without deafening the neighbouring inhabitants.

In his account of the mission, where his veracity is most to be suspected, he neither exaggerates overmuch the merits of the Jesuits, if we consider the partial regard paid by the Portuguese to their countrymen, by the Jesuits to their society, and by the papists to their Church, nor aggravates the vices of the Abyssinians.²²

Equally useful, but less prolific than the Abyssinian letters, are the accounts we have from Jesuit sources regarding other parts of the Dark Continent. Some Jesuit missionaries penetrated into the heart of Africa and brought back detailed information about the lakes of Nyassa and Tanganyika. The

20. Charles F. Rey, *The Romance of the Portuguese in Abyssinia* (London, 1929), p. 13.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

22. Samuel Johnson, Preface to the trans. of J. Lobo, *Voyage to Abyssinia*, in Charles D Ley ed., *Portuguese Voyages, 1498-1663* (London, 1947), p. 291.

Portuguese Jesuits also learnt much about the Congo and Angola while working in those regions.

China. At the beginning of the 17th century, China was still a land of marvel and legend, a great but little understood country. It was then that the Jesuits entered it, and gradually revealed to the Western world the glory and cultural richness of the great empire. "Almost without rivals in their task," says Arnold Rowbotham, "they poured into Europe, during a period of nearly two hundred years, quantities of letters, documents, and books, which in an increasing degree caught the imagination of Europe and made of the members of the Society the supreme contemporary interpreters of the Orient."²³

It was in 1583 that the celebrated Jesuit, Matthew Ricci, obtained the right to settle down in a country in which for generations the rule of enclosure had been more rigorously enforced than in any convent. Ricci was a man of outstanding ability as were Schall and Verbiest. Little wonder then that with such men the Jesuits succeeded in penetrating deep into the real life and character of mysterious China, its culture and its inhabitants. They had free access to the imperial palace and were thus able to gather historical data not to be found in contemporaneous Chinese books. The knowledge thus gleaned they conveyed to the cultured world of the West, and that first and foremost through their letters. These were intended for the information of their superiors and colleagues, and also for propaganda purposes: they were forever saying to their brethren in Europe, "Come and join us." Incidentally, they supplied a bird's-eye view of the rich pattern of Chinese civilization. The letters are of unequal value for they deal with all sorts of topics ranging from the sublime to the trivial, now in a naive, now in a scholarly manner — but on the whole interesting information is rarely lacking.

Besides the letters, the Jesuit missionaries also wrote down their memoirs. Among the first to give an exact and comprehensive study of the Chinese nation was Nicholas Trigault,

²³. Arnold Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1942), p. 243.

whose *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas* (1615) is a rather free version of Ricci's memoirs. The book created an enormous stir: "Toute l'Europe l'admira et le reçut avec grandissime contentement"; and translations and editions appeared in half-a-dozen countries and languages. With what may seem to us exaggerated self-confidence the author states in the opening pages of his work:

We [the Jesuit missionaries] have seen their most noble provinces [of the Chinese]; we enter every day into conversation with the principal citizens, the magistrates and the men of letters; we speak the native language of the Chinese; we have learned by careful inquiry, their habits, customs, laws and ceremonial and finally (what is of the greatest importance), day and night we have their books in our hands.²⁴

Nor is this a conceited exaggeration. In the words of Mr. Rowbotham, a non-Catholic and formerly professor at Peking, "The claims of authority and excellence implied in these words are justified."²⁵ Another eminent Jesuit authority on China is Fr. Martin Martini, who won European fame with his *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655) and the *De Bello Tartarico* (1657).

An offshoot of the Jesuit Letters was du Halde's *Description de la Chine* (1735). As editor of the *Lettres Édifiantes*, this Jesuit received an amount of material which was not suited for publication in that series, hence he cleverly arranged it so as to produce another treatise meant to give information to the public and to make known the work of the Order. Though not free from blemishes — which evoked complaints from his own colleagues — du Halde's work became a source-book for future writers, and it has been opined that no single work on the Far East, before or after, has had such a profound influence on European thought. The missionaries also made valuable contributions to Chinese cartography and astronomy.²⁵

24. Nicholas Trigault, *De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*, p. 3, quoted by Rowbotham, *op. cit.*, p. 245. The words are actually Ricci's: cf. *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci S. I.*, ed. P. Tacchi Venturi (Macerata, 1911-13), I, 2. In his introduction to Ricci's works Fr. Tacchi Venturi quotes Baron Richtofen's tribute to the Jesuit contribution to sinology.

25. Rowbotham, *loc. cit.*

25. Besides the Italian Ricci, and the Flemish Schall and Verbiest, the Portuguese Jesuits also played a part in the development of Chinese astronomy. Cf. Francisco Rodrigues, *Jesuitas Portugueses Astrónomos na China, 1583-1805* (Oporto, 1925).

From the number of books written in recent years, describing the Jesuit venture in China, we get an idea of the wealth of interesting material that is available for such a study.²⁶ Nevertheless it is likely that many other very valuable documents still remain unpublished. Many, alas, have been destroyed by time and fire, as for example in the Macao archives where much was stolen and scattered by the myrmidons of Pombal. Fortunately there are several magnificent transcripts and also original records still preserved in the great archives of Portugal, and perhaps elsewhere also in the Continent. A typewritten catalogue on the documents in the collection "Jesuitas na Asia" runs to no less than 578 pages!²⁷ The student of the history of China has thus at his disposal many reliable data of Jesuit provenance.

Japan. To Portuguese Jesuits goes the credit of having been the first to give to Europe concrete details about life, religion and manners in the Land of the Rising Sun. Posterity has not hitherto done full justice by them, and it is difficult to allot the blame in the question. They have been stigmatized as "poor observers" — a slanderous allegation as will be brought home to all who read the collections of letters entitled *Cartas de Japão*. Unfortunately these Jesuit Letters have been made available to the greater part of the reading public not in their original form, but in the guise of garbled and truncated translations. While the copious reports of the French Jesuits in China were published in the celebrated *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses*, the no less valuable epistles of their Portuguese *confrères* were drastically censored in Rome by editors who found them prolix and unedifying. The Portuguese editions, i. e., those published in Portugal itself, are more complete and accurate:

26. Besides Prof. Rowbotham's work, we may mention the following: C.W. Allan, *Jesuits at the Court of Peking* (Shanghai, n. d.), Eloise T. Hibbert, *Jesuit Adventure in China* (New York, 1941). Cf. also C. R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East* (the Hague, 1948).

27. H. A. de Almeida e Silva, "Relação de Todos os Documentos Existentes nos 62 Volumes da Collecção da Biblioteca da Ajuda Intitulada 'Jesuitas na Asia'" (Lisbon, 1941). Most of the documents listed deal with China and Japan, but the first four codices are devoted to India, about which there is also information in a miscellaneous codex at the end. Cf. also G. Schurhammer, "Die Schätze der Jesuitenarchive in Makao und Peking," *Die Katholischen Missionen* (München-Gladbach), 57 (1929) 224-229; and Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East*, pp. 286-287.

they abound in picturesque descriptions of the geographical, social and religious aspects of the Japanese archipelago and its people, which, with the curiosity and wonderment of foreign visitors, the priests recorded for the benefit of others.

The Japanese letters are not always as clear and concise as the historian would wish. But after making due allowance for national and religious prejudices, the fact remains that the Portuguese missionaries were keen and intelligent observers of the social life that went on around them. As Prof. C. R. Boxer remarks, the Portuguese Jesuits were first and foremost missionaries seeking the greater glory of God, according to their motto, and hence in their "edifying and curious letters" the emphasis is necessarily on the edifying rather than on the curious; nevertheless the student of Old Japan will find interesting matter in these pages and it is significant that leading Japanese historians rate this correspondence very highly.²⁹

With their usual thoroughness the Jesuits set about mastering the difficult Japanese tongue. Fr. John Rodrigues, for instance, produced a pioneer dictionary and grammar of the Japanese language (1603-1604), while Fr. Gaspar Vilela attained a considerable proficiency in the idiom and a fair knowledge of the various Buddhist sects. Moreover, in Japan as in other Asiatic missions of the Society, the Jesuits enjoyed the friendship and esteem of the leading men of the State. They were on the best of terms with three successive rulers — Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu — and they made many converts in high places. They were thus most favourably placed for observing the contemporary political scene. To this we may attribute the fact, confirmed by modern historical research, that the Jesuit accounts on some moot points of Japanese history are more correct than the native chronicles. In brief, the *Cartas* certainly rank with the Jesuit Letters from Canada, China and India as historical documents of the first order, and often of considerable literary merit.

29. C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, and London, 1951), p. 50.

Central Asia. The last of the Jesuit enterprises here mentioned is equally rich in material for historian and geographer alike, and is closely connected with the Indian mission-field: we refer to the Jesuit penetration of Central Asia. The geographers of the 17th century were hopelessly at a loss: they knew nothing of the country that lay in the centre of the vast Asian continent. Deserts and mountains, the unfriendly cold and hostile tribes, had made this region one of the least known parts of the world. The Jesuits were the first to remove the veil of secrecy. Several of them became famous explorers and are considered to have added to our knowledge of the trans-Himalayan areas; among these are counted Bento de Goes, Antonio de Andrade and Ippolito Desideri.³⁰

In the 13th century Marco Polo had already travelled overland from Ormuz to Shangtu, in the mysterious land of Kublai Khan, returning home by the sea route. Nevertheless the geographers of the 17th century had not solved satisfactorily the problem of Cathay and of its connection with China. The Jesuits at Akbar's court had a geographical and, still more, a missionary interest in the problem, since Christian peoples were

30. The most complete account of the Jesuit journeyings in this area is to be found in C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721* (the Hague, 1924). Cf. also MacLagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 335-362, and Plattner, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-166, 179-188. The following paragraph from the Preface of Wessels' book is most helpful for a fair and critical valuation of the Jesuit Letters in general:

"A few points should not be forgotten, if we would arrive at an equitable judgment. Those men [the Jesuit missionaries] and had not been, as a rule, prepared for their arduous undertakings by thorough geographical and ethnical studies; they did not set out richly equipped with physical instruments of all kinds; they were pioneers in the fullest sense of the word; without any precursors, without maps, without the experiences of others to guide them. Nor, while they were out in regions untrodden by European foot, did they consider themselves in the first place discoverers who were making a name for themselves, geographers adding to fresh data to the stock of human knowledge; explorers widening the horizon of the human mind;—before everything else they were, and remained, missionaries going out to cast abroad the seeds of the Gospel wherever human heart would give it soil; whose one ultimate purpose was to gain souls rather than to discover territories; who never lost sight of their *raison d'être*, and therefore carried into their enterprises the same indomitable energy and daring that had called them away from friends and home to brave the perils of the deep without any wish or hope of gain and glory. Thus they must not be looked upon as geographical specialists, but as honest level-headed men, writing for their experiences in a land of bewildering strangeness; their writings should not be perused by the light of the exacting canons of the specialist who reports for a geographical magazine or to a learned society. They should be read, with a critical eye indeed, but not in a spirit of fault-finding, and as to the facts reported, with a bias in their favour unless they can be shown to have erred. Certainly they did make mistakes, as who does not? Their written accounts are often insignificant, abounding in generalities and hopelessly lacking in those points which a scientific training would have made them pick out as of first rate importance. But even so they have their merits as every pioneer has."—Preface, pp. vi-vii.

reported to be living beyond the great mountain range and they were anxious to establish contact with them. In Ricci's letters from China they had read that Cathay and China were one and the same country. But the Jesuits in Goa and Agra remained sceptical: could Cathay, which they erroneously thought to be Christian, be identical with heathen China? In any case they had to seek information about the numerous Christians who were said to inhabit the vast table-lands of Central Asia, and Bento de Goes was chosen for the arduous task of finding them.

The epic journey of this valiant lay-brother now belongs to history. Setting out from Agra in October 1602, he journeyed amid innumerable perils and hardships, via Kabul, Yarkand, Aksu, Turfan, Chami, and arrived finally at Sucheu, where he died in April 1607. He had found no Christians, but he had confirmed Ricci's solution: Cathay was China. Bento de Goes is ranked among the greatest of Central Asiatic explorers, and Sven Hedin, Aurel Stein and others, who have followed in his wake, speak of him with sympathy and respect; unfortunately only a bare fragment of the great pioneer's notes has survived him, and thus, as Sir Henry Yule opines, a most valuable geographical account was lost to posterity.³¹

The death of Goes was not the end of the Jesuit attempt to discover the Christians of the trans-Himalayan regions. In 1624 Fr. Antonio de Andrade set out on the same quest, but with Tibet for his goal. This intrepid Jesuit was the first European to climb the mighty ramparts of the Himalayas, to discover one of the principal sources of the Ganges, and to penetrate into the hermit kingdom of the Lamas. He repeated the feat in 1625, and with some companions established a mission at Tsaparang. The value of Andrade's narrative of his first journey, entitled *Novo Descobrimento do Gram Cathayo*,³² has been much discussed; it is ably vindicated by Wessels, with the help

31. Henry Yule ed., *Cathay and the Way Thither* (London, 1916), IV, 179. Cf also: Plattner, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150; Guerreiro ed. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pp. xxiii-xxvi, 119-182; Mariano Saldanha, "Viagens de Penetração e Exploração no Continente Asiático," in A. Baião, H. Cidade and M. Muria eds., *História da Expansão Portuguesa no Mundo* (Lisbon, 1937-40), II, 214-217; MacLagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 339-341.

32. The full title is: *Novo Descobrimento do gram Cathayo ou Reinos de Tibet, pello Padre Antonio de Andrade da Companhia de Jesu, no anno de 1626* (Lisbon, 1626). New edition by Esteves Pereira (Coimbra, 1921).

of the findings of later travellers.³³ The Annual Letter of Tibet, 1626, and other letters of Fr. Andrade are still extant. Though not of uniform interest to the historian and the geographer, they are worthy of consideration: they are the writings of one who is "a milestone in the passing of the centuries," and whose journeys mark the beginning of the European exploration of Tibet.³⁴

Other daring explorers like Francis de Azevedo, Stephen Cacella, John Grueber and Albert d'Orville kept up the endeavour to establish firmly the Tibetan mission; it is to Fr. Ippolito Desideri, however, that goes the honour of having been the first to make a complete circle round the northern Himalayas and to give "the first accurate description of Tibet in all its particulars," before Europe had any knowledge of the language of that mysterious realm. Natural history, social organization, religious cults — all find a place in his *Historical Sketch of Tibet*, in which there is also a detailed and complete account of the Tibetan religion, founded entirely on the canonical texts.³⁵ After bringing out Desideri's great merits as a contributor to our knowledge of Tibet, Sven Hedin continues:

Add to this the general merit of his narrative, the absence of fantastical speculation, the quiet matter-of-fact way in which he gives his observations, and nobody will call it an exaggeration if I regard Ippolito Desideri as one of the most brilliant travellers who ever visited Tibet, and amongst the old ones, by far the most prominent and the most intelligent of all.³⁶

Truly a worthy tribute from one great explorer to another!

*

In the present chapter we have made a brief survey of the contribution which the Jesuits made, especially through their letters, to the historiography of various countries. They

33. Wessels, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-68.

34. The story of the Jesuits of the Tsaparang Mission was confirmed by the findings of a British official, Mr. G. M. Young, who visited the region in 1912. Cf. MacLagan, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-355; H. Hosten, "Two Letters of Fr. Ippolito Desideri, S. J.," *The Examiner*, 69 (1918) 340.

35. Fr. Desideri's manuscript was only published in the present century. English readers will find a translation, with a good introduction by C. Wessels, in the *Broadway Travellers* series: *An Account of Tibet, The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistoia, S. J., 1712-1727*, ed. by Filippo de Filippi (London, rev. ed., 1937).

36. Sven Hedin, *Southern Tibet*, I, 278-279, quoted by Wessels, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

were not always the earliest European arrivals in all these lands; nor are theirs always the only records of early travels there; nor, again, can one claim for the Jesuit Letters a uniform historical value. But there is reason to hold that the Jesuit Letters are of considerable importance for the historian, and that they have been recognized as such by scholars of many nations. This fact should be borne in mind; it will help towards a true appreciation of the importance of the Jesuit Letters for Indian historiography.

The following lines from the pen of a renowned scholar in the field of oriental culture, Jarl Charpentier, not a Catholic himself, form a fitting conclusion to this chapter. They are from his Introduction to the *Livro da Seita* of Fr. Fenicio:

This is not the place for expounding the merits and demerits of the Society of Jesus nor for praising or criticising its missionary methods. However, leaving all these things aside it may be safely asserted that the modern knowledge of the geography of the then unknown parts of the world and the acquaintance with the history, religions and social customs of Asiatic, African and American peoples and races has been founded by Jesuit missionaries. To quote only a few examples: very little indeed was known about the mighty empire of the great Mogul until the Jesuits — and above all Father Monserrate — published their reports upon their missions to the court of Akbar. The identity of Cathay and China was put beyond doubt through the hardihood of the explorer Benedict Goes, and the political and historical status of China was revealed to the Western world chiefly through the arrival there of Father Ricci and his companions. And Tibet remained a terra incognita until the journeys through that country of the Jesuits Andrade (1624) and Grueber and d'Orville (1661). Modern scholars may judge from different points of view the missionary work of the Jesuits; and there is scarcely any doubt that the Malabar and Chinese rites were not a very lucky experiment. A modern time may even find the heroism of numberless Jesuit Fathers who have met torture and martyrdom in the missionary fields less imposing. But no time will be able to refuse to the Society of Jesus the glory of having founded modern scientific research.³⁷

37. Fenicio, *op. cit.*, Intro., pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

CHAPTER XIV

A FINAL GLANCE

An attempt may now be made to sum up the findings of the present inquiry. The introductory chapter underlined some of the more important developments in the method of writing history, which has undergone a profound change from the time Leopold von Ranke stepped into the scene. He gave a great impetus to historical research, and the movement which he launched to secure well-documented historical works has gained momentum with the passing of time. Three principal tendencies characterize the best historical productions of the present day: an insistence on original documentation, an inclination towards social history, and a quest for details that enliven the narrative. It is against this background of modern historiography that is to be viewed a special type of historical source-material, the Jesuit Letters from India.

As an essential part of this study a brief review has been made of the nature, development and types of the Jesuit Letters in general. From this it is evident that the letters in question dealt primarily and essentially with the work of the Jesuits themselves, and were thus limited in range. However, in supplying the necessary details of the background against which their work was carried out, the writers provided valuable material for the students of secular history. And since the superiors of the Society insisted on accuracy and fidelity to truth on the part of their chroniclers, a comparatively high standard of reporting was maintained by the latter. It is here to be noted that the shortcomings of the Jesuit Letters from the historian's point of view were due not only to the human frailty of their

writers, but also to the very nature of the Jesuit correspondence, which excluded certain topics from its purview.

The Jesuit Letters from India which form the subject of the present study date from time of St. Francis Xavier's arrival in this country, in 1542, to the year 1773, when the decree for the suppression of the Society throughout the world was issued. In the history of their development and organization there stands out the figure of Fr. Alessandro Valignano, who did much to correct their defects, and to secure reliable and useful information from the Jesuit missionaries in India. Side by side with the Jesuit Letters there sprang up another type of Jesuit literature, the "allied documents" or reports on special topics, like Monserrate's famous *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*, to which a brief reference has been made.

A closer inspection of the epistles penned by the members of the Society of Jesus in India reveals certain salient features of these writings. The letters of Francis Xavier are in a class apart, important much more for the inspiration than for the information they contain, but not devoid of the latter. The others have many points in common, due no doubt to the common spirit which animated the missionaries, and the uniform instructions which guided all of them in their task of letter-writing. A general survey has consequently been made of some principal traits of the Jesuit Letters from India: their exterior appearance, the aim of providing information as well as edification, the manner in which they were composed, and their length.

The correspondence of missionaries in India might never have attracted the historian's notice had they not been printed and widely circulated in contemporary Europe, especially in Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Italy and Germany, through such famous collections as the *Lettres Édifiantes* and the *Weltbott*. From the viewpoint of historical evidence it is particularly regrettable that the letters should have suffered in the process of translation and publication, being at times unskilfully censored and considerably distorted and mutilated, while even forgeries were put on the market. Recently, however, the Jesuit Institute of History in Rome has begun to publish an authoritative edition of the Jesuit documents on India. The

critical reproduction of the texts together with excellent introductions, critical apparatus, notes, bibliographies and indices, give a superlative value to the volumes of *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii* and *Documenta Indica*, and are a great help to the scholar in forming a well-founded and fair estimate of the historical value of the Jesuit Letters from India.

Since letter-writing in the Order formed an integral part of its administrative system, it is to be presumed that from all those places in India where the Jesuits stayed for any considerable period of time communications should have been forwarded to their headquarters both in India and in Europe. The great potentialities of their letters as sources of historical data are thus made evident, since between 1542 and 1773 the members of the Order penetrated to the furthestmost limits of the country and had a great number of permanent residences in its western, southern and south-eastern regions, besides those in the heart of the Mughal Empire and in Bengal, and from these places many letters were despatched to their superiors, relatives and friends. Not all these letters have been preserved, and fewer still have been published, but historians who have used them testify to their evidential value.

For the evaluation of historical evidence it is necessary to investigate the character and competence of the person who renders it. An acquaintance with the methods of selection and the training of the individual Jesuit missionary shows that he was fashioned into a man of culture and discrimination, whose powers of observation and judgment were sharpened by the scholastic system of education. Especially relevant to our theme is the training in many tongues and the familiarity with the languages of the land which the Jesuit missionary was expected to acquire. These details about the Jesuit formation, and a study of the achievements of some great letter-writers like Frs. Freyre and Pimenta, help one to gauge the reliability of the information contained in the Letters from India.

The central part of the present study has been an examination of the evidential worth of the Jesuit Letters, a piece of historical criticism never fully attempted up to now, for statements on the question in the past have often been limited in

their range and based on imperfect data. A consideration of the nature of the letters reveals that they were contemporary historical sources of several types, varying in their utility to the historian according to the public for which they were intended. The character of the Jesuit missionaries, their talents and training, their contacts with the great and the lowly in Indian society, their sense of responsibility—these are some of the factors which lead one to attribute a high degree of accuracy and veracity to the Jesuit Letters from India. This is not deny the existence of defects in the latter, especially from the historical point of view. Some of these as has already been remarked, were inherent in the very nature of the Jesuit correspondence, which was limited in its range; others, such as hasty generalizations and lack of sympathy with things Indian, were especially evident in the early stages.

The modern trends in historiography mentioned at the outset add to the value of the missionary letters, so full of interesting details about Indian social life and about characters and personages of greater or lesser importance in Indian history. These have enabled modern writers to add much local colour to their accounts of the East. Some of the details supplied by the Jesuit writers have been corroborated by other contemporary chroniclers, but the accounts of the missionaries cannot always be checked by the writings of others. As a matter of fact, the lack of other historical sources for certain areas and periods of the history of India enhances the value of the Jesuit documents.

Some of the elements on the negative side have already been noted. It must be remarked that to the lack of appreciation of the finer points of Indian civilization due at times to an imperfect knowledge of the local language, there were added in some cases smaller defects such as the suppression or mutilation of proper names. In the last instance, of course, each Jesuit Letter has be to examined separately before final judgment can be passed on its evidential value.

In so far as a general appreciation may be ventured upon, it may be stated that the official letters of the missionaries to their superiors are more balanced and reliable than the un-

official ones. The former were written at regular intervals, with care and consideration, on subjects connected with the writer's work and sometimes under his direct observation. The unofficial letters have to be read with more caution, in so far as their evidence may have been less carefully weighed by the writers, but they too can be of especial help in the study of Indian social customs and civic institutions. The final picture presented by letters written for general circulation is at times incomplete, since not everything could be told to the public, but not necessarily distorted or misleading. Finally, the majority of the Jesuit Letters are but auxiliary sources when there is question of writing a general history, for which they can provide evidence that corroborates and supplements the one derived from other documents.

Has the value of the Jesuit Letters from India been recognized? It can easily be proved that the letters sent by the missionaries to Europe from this country had a profound influence on the contemporary Catholic world, and also affected readers of other creeds and of diverse interests. In the writing of history, however, these letters have been little utilized, except by the Jesuits themselves, and by some German and French scholars. English writers of Indian history have also made use of them, but the majority of Indian historians have either been ignorant of their existence (or at least of their extensive range) or have been mistrustful about their reliability. The neglect of the Jesuit Letters is doubtlessly due in part to linguistic difficulties which stand in the way of those who are ill acquainted with Portuguese, Spanish and Latin, and to the scarcity of good English translations. There is reason to believe that owing to the modern trends in historiography the attention of Indian scholars will turn in an increasing degree to the Jesuit Letters from India.

In the case of many writers the knowledge of the Jesuit Letters has been obtained through the Jesuit histories, such as those of Guerreiro and du Jarric. For this reason, and since the histories were based on the Letters, a few remarks about the former are called for. The Jesuit histories of the missions contain a good deal of material about India; they at times preserve for us historical data from first-hand evidence no longer availa-

ble elsewhere. But against these advantages there is the undoubted fact that the further one goes away from the primary witness, the more danger there is of error creeping in, in the shape of modifications and interpolations. The histories must therefore be used with caution.

After a study and evaluation of the Letters from India has been made it is natural that information should be given also about their present whereabouts, so that scholars may know where the original letters are available for a closer scrutiny. Tracing the course of the journeyings of the missionaries' epistles it is found that they converged towards three great administrative centres of the missions of the Order: Goa, Lisbon and Rome. The bulk of the official Jesuit Letters are now preserved in the original in the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome, while a much smaller number of originals and many folios of first copies are to be found in Portugal. Others lie scattered in a number of private and public libraries in Europe.

And all that has been said about the Letters from India is seen in a better perspective when one knows how highly the Jesuit Letters from other countries are esteemed by the historians of those lands. It was not without reason that an eminent scholar asserted, in a passage quoted a few pages earlier, that the modern knowledge of the geography of the then unknown parts of the world, and the acquaintance with the history, religious and social customs of Asiatic, African and American peoples and races, had been founded by Jesuit missionaries.

*

In the utilization of Jesuit sources historians of foreign nations have led the way, and we must no longer lag behind. More than one scholar of our own country has of late voiced the plea for a diligent and intensive search for the original materials relating to the history of India that have long lain neglected both within and without our frontiers, and in some cases are in danger of being lost forever. This is an arduous but imperative task. It will call for many wearisome hours of work, much of which will in the end seem to have been wasted—but it is not so, for even a negative result, though less exciting than a positive one, can be very valuable for historiography.

The nearer one gets to modern times, the more difficult is the task imposed on the earnest scholar, for he has to work through an increasingly great mass of documents in order to form a correct picture of men and events in the era which he is studying. Consequently the task of the historian who is concerned with India in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries is no easy one, as there is a wealth of documentation on these periods. Yet the task cannot be shirked, and it is a matter for rejoicing to know that learned bodies, such as the Indian Historical Records Commission, are aware of the great prospects and obligations in this field.

In its post-war development scheme, and in several of its sessions in recent years, the Indian Historical Records Commission has drawn attention to the need for procuring documents concerning India which are in the possession of foreign governments. In 1948 the Research and Publication Committee of the Commission passed the following resolution:

This Committee reiterates that for enabling the Indian Research Scholars to write a complete and more authentic account of the political, social and economic condition of India in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and particularly the History of Indian trade, commerce and shipping, the Government of India be requested to arrange with the Governments of Holland, Portugal and France for obtaining microfilm copies of all such records in their possession as may have any bearing on India.¹

Acting in conformity with such directives the National Archives of India had by 1950 already acquired microfilms of many documents in Dutch and English hands,² and more are no doubt gradually being acquired from various sources. However, it was a trifle surprising for the present writer to learn that up to May 1953 no microfilm copies of the records of Indian interest available at Lisbon and Goa had yet been obtained, and it is to be feared that the deterioration in the diplomatic relations between Portugal and the Indian Union may further delay the securing of Portuguese documents on India. Now among these documents are to be numbered the letters from the Jesuit missionaries in India. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that these are the most important of the lot, yet they and the

1. *I.H.R.C.*, 25 (1948) Part I, p. 40.

2. *I.H.R.C.*, 27 (1950) Part I, pp. 52-53.

other Jesuit Letters now preserved in Rome have an undoubted value and consequently must not be forgotten. One may here recall the words of that great authority on the Jesuits in India, Fr. H. Hosten:

It has been said, and we think rightly, that if the Relations of the Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India during the XVIIth and XVIII centuries were published, they would to some extent revolutionize the History of the Moghul Empire. What is true for the North, would be no less so for the rest of India; all the more, if the various Religious Orders which laboured in India during the first three centuries of the Conquest—Carmelites, Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Theatines, Jesuits, Foreign Missionaries of Paris—were to combine to rescue from the dust of their libraries their long accumulated wealth of precious MSS. and rare in-folios. No doubt, we should stand confronted with a hard and heavy undertaking; but in these days of monumental enterprises, it would not be unfeasible.

The publication of the Jesuit Relations of North America, preparations for which were begun in 1894, and the first volumes of which appeared in 1896, was completed in 1902. It comprises no fewer than 73 volumes of more than 27,000 pages.

The "Annals of the East India Catholic Missions" would be an even more voluminous store-house of historical materials—profane and religious—unparalleled in breathless interest.³

How then is the full value of the Jesuit Letters to be secured? The first step would have to be a general stock-taking of all these documents and allied Jesuit writings on India. The information given in previous pages will be of assistance in this connection. Further inquiries could be made from libraries, archives, and dealers in old manuscripts, in Europe, America and India. The Jesuit Institute of History in Rome will also be able to render help in these efforts.

In the paper read at the Mysore Session of the Indian Historical Records Commission in 1942, Fr. H. Heras had the following suggestion to make:

A proposed catalogue of Indian Historical Jesuit Records.

Sir Edward Maclagan published a "Tentative Lists of Jesuit Letters and Reports" from the Mughal Empire, Bengal and Tsaparang, as an Appendix to his work *The Jesuits and the Great Moghul*, pp. 369-390.

The completion of this list and continuation of the same, adding all

3. H. Hosten, *Jesuit Missionaries in Northern India and Inscriptions on their Tombs, Agra*, pp. 43-44.

other published Jesuit records of historical importance referring to India, would be of extraordinary help to all historians of India.

This catalogue of Indian Jesuit Records, would, so I imagine, require for [sic] different sections to make it most practical for use and reference.

1st Section. Continuous lists of Jesuit records in chronological order, *i.e.*, in order of the dates on which they were written, having full name of author of record, place and date of writing it, brief analysis of its contents and reference to the book wherein it is published.

2nd Section. Subjects of the letters in alphabetical order with reference to the 1st section. The subjects of the letters should be carefully specified, for instance:

Jahangir:

- as Prince Salim
- friendship with Jesuits
- rebellion against Akbar
- enthronement
- doings against Christianity
- religious controversies
- rebellion of Prince Khusru
- journey to Kabul
- liking for Christian paintings
- Portuguese relations
- etc.

Thus all historians would easily find whatever exists in the Jesuit records referring to the subject of their study.

3rd Section. Index of proper names.⁴

The plans has much to commend it, and the finished product would undoubtedly be a boon to historians, but it may be doubted whether there is any likelihood of it being carried out by anyone in the near future. While endeavouring to promote its execution, it may be more profitable to have a preliminary survey made of the range of the Jesuit Letters from India, on the lines of the modest attempt made in the fifth chapter of this work, but in still greater detail. This survey would be a helpful guide to scholars specializing in any particular area or period of Indian history, since they would thus come to know about Jesuit writings relevant to their study, and might even be led to unearth and to publish other Jesuit accounts preserved in foreign archives and unknown to the world at large.

4. H. Heras, "Jesuit Letters and Accounts," *I.H.R.C.*, 18 (1942) 18-19.

Besides this, as has already been suggested, and is in conformity with the plans of the Indian Historical Records Commission, an endeavour should be made to secure microfilm copies of the Jesuit documents bearing on Indian history which are to be found not only in Lisbon but also elsewhere in Europe. Thus the Marsden Collection in the British Museum, which has not yet been microfilmed for the National Archives of India, is certainly worth photographing, as are also many other Jesuit papers preserved in Rome.

Another line of action would be to secure accurate and scholarly translations of the Jesuit Letters that have already been published in Europe in Latin, Portuguese and French—languages which present difficulties to many in India. What Payne has so ably done with the works of du Jarric and Guerreiro might also be done with great profit with other Jesuit authors both of letters and of other accounts. If to these translations were appended bibliographies and critical notes with reference both to European and Indian sources, they would be rendered of inestimable value to the Indian historian.

Students of history in this country are eagerly looking forward to the National History of India which should be ready in the not-too-distant future. It is to be hoped that the work will be a model of accuracy and impartiality that will reflect credit on its authors and on our land. In order to produce it no efforts must be spared to secure all the available evidence about India's past. The contribution that the Jesuit Letters have to make to this evidence is small indeed, when compared to that which is provided by some other sources, but it is not negligible. Let it be esteemed as such and duly utilized.

APPENDIX A

AN INDEX TO JOHN LOCKMAN'S

TRAVELS OF THE JESUITS

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- Sonnakallu, I, 439
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- Surat, I, 3, 10, 165, 166
- Tachard, Fr. Guy, letters of, I, 160-78, 478-87
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APPENDIX B

THE CHIEF CONTRIBUTIONS BY FATHER H. HOSTEN, S. J., TO THE HISTORY OF THE JESUITS IN INDIA*

The Catholic Herald of India (Calcutta)

1906. Foundation of the Jesuit Mission at Patna (1620), by L. Besse, S. J., notes by H. Hosten, pp. 804-805.
1907. Father Henry Roth, S. J., 1650-1651, translated from the German, by J. Bosk, S. J., introduction, notes and conclusion by H. Hosten, pp. 171-172.
1910. The List of Jesuit Missionaries in Mogor. July 13, November 2 (p. 689).
1911. On Father Monserrate's *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*. December 10, pp. 815-816.
1913. Mirza Zu'lqarnain, the founder of the Agra College, pp. 478-479 (also in *Statesman*, Calcutta, of July 6, 1913).
1914. Western Art at the Mogul Court, pp. 670-672; part of this is reproduced in the *Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society*, III (1922) Part I, pp. 110-114.
1916. Summary of a paper by Fr. Felix, O.M.C., on Moghul Farmans, Parwānas and Sanads. August 30, and September 6, 13, pp. 584-585.
1916. Akbar's Christian Wife. August 23, September 27 (p. 634).
1917. Catholic Antiquities in North India, according to Rev. Fr. J. Tiefenthaler, S. J. January 17, 31, March 7.
1918. The Fall of Hugli: at various places between pp. 91 and 671.
1918. The Pathans in 1581: a Query, p. 888.
1918. Fr. Fernão Guerreiro's annual relation for 1602-03, on Bengal, Arakan & Pegu.
1920. Father Anthony Monserrate's Commentary on the Mongol Mission to Akbar's Court. Translated from the Latin. At numerous places between p. 636 of 1920 and p. 920 of 1921.
1921. Persian Lives of the Apostles; from Akbar's Agra Library. June 22, pp. 479-481.
1924. Father Matthew Ricci, S. J., of Pekin, November 19, pp. 737-738.
1930. Missionary Letters and Allied Papers on Bengal, Arakan, & Burma (1598-1608). August.

*MacLagan, in *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, has published a catalogue of Fr. Hosten's writings on the Jesuits at the Mughal court. The present Appendix is based on MacLagan's compilation, but it lists Fr. Hosten's contributions to the history of the Jesuits in the whole of India, omitting on the other hand those writings which deal with the Jesuits outside Indian territory, e.g. in Tibet and Burma.

The Examiner (Bombay)

- 1912. Jesuit Annual Letters from Goa and Cochin (1618-1624). At various places between p. 47 and p. 139, February 3 to April 6.
- 1916. Akbar's Christian wife, p. 372.
- 1917. Father Henry Uvens *alias* Henry Busi, S. J., a missionary in Mogor (1648-1667). October 13 and 20, pp. 407-409 and 418-420.
- 1917. The Spiritual Letters of Father Antonio Ceschi di Santa Croce a Jesuit Missionary in the Moghul Mission (1647-1656). On various dates between July 7 and September 8, pp. 267-358.
- 1918. René Madec, or a French Catholic Nawab in the N. W. Provinces (b. 1736, d. 1784). April 20, pp. 158-160.
- 1918. Father Francis Xavier Wendel, S. J., the last Jesuit in Mogor (d. 1803). May 4, pp. 178-179.
- 1918. The Rishi and Jerome Xavier. November 9, p. 446.
- 1919. The Jesuit Post from Mogor for 1615, gone to England. August 9-23, pp. 318-320, 329-330 and 338-340.
- 1919. Letter of Fr. N. Pimenta, S. J., on Mogor (December 1, 1600), translated from the Latin. October 11, pp. 407-409.
- 1919. Fr. Fernao Guerreiro's Annual *Relation* of 1602-1603 on the Mogor Mission. November 22, 29, pp. 469-470, 478-480.
- 1920. The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar's Court (1579-1583) according to Father de Souza, S. J. On various dates between March 13 and July 3, between pp. 107 and 270.
- 1922. Was George Strachan, the Oriental traveller, a Jesuit? On April 1, 8 and 15, between pp. 128 and 149.
- 1927. Bandra's Madonna from the Sea. July issues, pp. 339-340, 353-354, 363-364.

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

- 1910. The Marsden MSS. in the British Museum, VI, pp. 437-461.
- 1910. List of Jesuit Missionaries in Mogor, VI, pp. 527-542.
- 1911. A list of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries in Bengal and Burma (1576-1742), VII, pp. 15-23. (With Father Besse, S. J.)
- 1911. Fr. A. Monserrate's description of Delhi (1581), Firoz Shah's tunnels, VII, pp. 99-108.
- 1911. Father A. Monserrate's *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*, VII, pp. cxxxvi-cxli. (Same as in the *Catholic Herald of India*, December 10, 1911.)
- 1912. Father A. Monserrate's Account of Akbar (November 26, 1582), VIII, pp. 185-221.

1912. Firoz Shah's tunnels at Delhi, VIII, pp. 279-281.
1913. Earliest Jesuit Printing in India. From the Spanish of the Rev. Cecilio Gomez Rodeles, S. J., translated by Fr. L. Cardon, S. J., edited by Fr. H. Hosten, S. J., IX, pp. 149-168.
1913. The Twelve Bhuiyas or Landlords of Bengal, IX, pp. 437-449.
1914. Father Jerome Xavier's *Lives of the Apostles*, X, pp. 65-84.
1915. Notes on Father Monserrate's *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius*, by H. Beveridge; edited and annotated by H. Hosten, XI, pp. 187-204.
1922. Fr. A. Monserrate, S. J., on Salsette, Chorão, Divar, and the Molucas (1579), XVIII, pp. 349-369.
1922. Father A. Monserrate, S. J., and Captain Wilford, XVIII, pp. 371-374.
1925. A MS. Tamil Grammar by Fr. C. J. Beschi, S. J., XXI, pp. 95-96.
1927. Father N. Pimenta's Annual Letter on Mogor (Goa, December 21, 1599), XXIII, pp. 57-65.
1927. Father N. Pimenta, S. J., on Mogor (Goa, December 1, 1600), XXIII, pp. 67-82.
1927. Father N. Pimenta's Annual of Margao, December 1, 1601, XXIII, pp. 83-107.
1927. Eulogy of Father Jerome Xavier, S. J., a missionary in Mogor, XXIII, pp. 109-130.
1927. Some letters of Father Jerome Xavier, S. J., to his family (1593-1612), XXIII, pp. 131-136.
1927. Some notes on Brother Bento de Goes, S. J. (1583-1607), XXIII, pp. 137-140.
1927. Three letters of Father Joseph de Castro, S. J., and the Last Year of Jahangir, XXIII, pp. 141-166.

Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

1914. Jesuit Letters and Allied Papers on Mogor, Tibet, Bengal and Burma. *Mongolicae Legationis Commentarius, or First Jesuit Mission to Akbar*, by Father Anthony Monserrate, S. J. (Latin Text), III, No. 9, pp. 513-704.
1916. Jesuit Letters and Allied Papers on Mogor, Tibet, Bengal and Burma. Mirza Zu'lqarnain, a Christian Grandee of three Great Moghuls, with notes on Akbar's Christian wife and the Indian Bourbons, V, No. 4, pp. 115-194.

Bengal, Past and Present (Calcutta)

1910. The Earliest Recorded Episcopal Visitation of Bengal, 1712-1715, pp. 200-227.
1911. The Lettres Edifiantes on Bengal, I, 1-33.

1916. 'The Bandel and Chinsura Church Registers (1757-1913), XIII, pp. 159-222.
1925. Jesuit Letters from Bengal, Arakan and Burma (1599-1660). A new version of the Annual Letter from Goa (December 1, 1600); dated September 8, 1602, XXX, pp. 52-76.
1927. Akbar's Queen Mary, XXXIV, pp. 97-105.

Journal of the Punjab Historical Society

1918. The family of Lady Juliana Diaz da Costa, VII, pp. 39-49.
1918. The Annual *Relation* of Father Fernão Guerreiro, S. J., for 1607-1608, VII, pp. 50-73.

Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society

1918. The Armenian Inscription of the Central Jail Compound, Agra, II, Part I, pp. 40-50.
1919. Armenian Inscription from the Native Chapel, Catholic Cathedral Compound of Agra. II, Part I, pp. 51-55. (With Mesroby J. Seth).
1922. European Art at the Mogul Court, III, Part I, pp. 110-184.

Journal of Indian History (Trivandrum)

1922. Jesuit Annual Letter from Mogor (March 1648-August 1649), I, pp. 226-248. (With Father L. de Vos).

Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies

1923. The Marsden MSS. and Indian Mission Bibliography, III, pp. 129-150.

The Englishman (Calcutta)

1926. Akbar's Christian wife. August 19 and September 16.

The Statesman (Calcutta)

1916. Akbar's Christian wife. September 16 and November 14.

Kerala Society Papers •

1928. Peter Louis S. J., or the First Indian Jesuit, pp. 1-3.

Indian Historical Records Commission, Proceedings of Meetings

1922. My Journey to Mylapore, Pondicherry and Trichinopoly, pp. 57-102.

The Indian Athenaeum

1923. Extracts from Some Jesuit Annual Letters, Malabar and the Fishery Coast, translated from the Latin by the Rev. A. Sauliere, S. J., with introduction and notes by the Rev. H. Hosten, S. J. September.

Les Missions Belges de la Compagnie de Jésus (Brussels)

- 1911-15. Missionaires Catholiques et Langues Indigenes du Bengale, XIII-XV, at various places.

Separately Published

1907. Jesuit Missionaries in Northern Indian and Inscriptions on their Tombs, Agra (1580-1803). Calcutta.

APPENDIX C

ARCHIVES OF SPECIAL INTEREST IN CONNECTION WITH JESUIT LETTERS AND INDIAN HISTORY

Belgium

Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels.

England

British Museum, London.

France

Archives Nationales, Paris.

Germany

Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich.
Stadtarchiv, Cologne.

Italy

Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Rome.
Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome.
Bibliotheca Vaticana, Vatican City.
"Fondo Gesuitico," Rome.

Portugal

Academia das Ciências, Lisbon.
Arquivo do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Lisbon.
Arquivo Histórico Colonial.
Biblioteca da Ajuda, Lisbon.
Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon.
Biblioteca Publica, Evora.
Torre do Tombo, Lisbon.

Spain

Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid.
Archivum Provinciae Toletanae Societatis Iesu, Madrid.

APPENDIX D

TENTATIVE LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF THE JESUIT LETTERS FROM INDIA, 1542-1773*

Copie dunne lettre missive enuoiee des Indes, par mōsieur maistre Frācois xauier, frere treschier en Ihesuchrist, de la societe du nom de Ihesus, a son preuost monsieur Egnace de Layola, et a tou ses freres estudiās aux lettres a Romme, Pauie, Portugal, Valence, Coulogne, et a Paris.
Paris, 1545.

Copie dunne lettre missive enuoiee des Indes, par monsieur maistre Francois xauier, frere treschier en Ihesuchrist, de la societe du nom de Ihesus, a son preuost monsieur Egnace de Layola, & a tous ses freres estudians aux lettres a Romme, Pauie, Portugal, Valence, Coulogne, & a Paris. Item deux aultres epistres faictes & enuoiees par ledict seigneur maistre Francois xauier a son preuost & freres treschiers en Ihesuchrist de la societe du nom de Ihesus, lune de la cite de Goa, & lautre de Tatucurim.
Paris, 1545.

Indianische Missiue Oder Sendbriefff Herren Francisci Xauier der Ordens Jesu Christi inn Indien Regelherren, geschriben an den Probst Ignatium von Layola, vnnnd andere seine mitbrüder, die zu Rom, Padua, Portugall, Valentz, Cöln, vnd Paris wonen. Von dem anfang des Christlichen glaubens in Indien.
[Augsburg], 1545.

Copia de unas cartas del padre mestre Frācisco, y del padre M. Gaspar, y otros padres dela compaña de Iesu, que escriuieron de la India a los hermanos del colegio de Iesus de Coimbra. Tresladadas de Portugues en Castellano. Recebidas el año de M.D.lj.
Coimbra, 1551 or 1552.

Lettere del Padre Maestro Francesco et del Padre Gasparro et altri della Compagnia di Giesù scritte dalla India ai Fratelli del Collegio di Giesù de Coimbra, trodotte di lingua Spagniuola, ricevute l'anno MDLI.
[Venice, 1552].

Avisi Particolari delle Indie di Portugallo Riceuti in questi doi anni del 1551 & 1552 da li Reuerēdi Padri de la cōpagnia de Iesu doue fra molto cose mirabili si uede delli Paesi, delle genti, & costumi loro & la grande cōuersioue di molti populi, che cominciano a riceuere il lume della sãta fede & Relligione Christiana.
Rome, 1552.

These dates refer to the composition of the originals, and not to their publication; the letters have been arranged, however, according to their chronological order of publication. The list has been prepared with the aid of various Jesuit bibliographies and of Streit-Dindinger's *Bibliotheca Missionum*.

Nuovi Avisi delle Indie di Portugallo ricevuti questo Anno del 1553 douc si tratta della cōuersione di molte persone principali & tra li altri d'un Re signore de 11000 Isole, con una discriptione delli costumi de i Giaponesi nostri antipedi & come lore riceuono la nostra Santa Fede.

Rome, 1553.

Novi Avisi di Piu Lochi de l'India et Massime de Brasil ricevuti quest' anno del MDLIII douc chiaramente si puo intendere de la conuersione di molte persone etiam molto principali nelle terre già scoperte & no minor s'aspetta nell'altre che si han de scoprir & la mutatione grande che fanno de la lor vita dil che n'han conseguito oltra la ciuilla & politia di costumi che Dio operi al presenti euidenti segni & miracoli in loro.

Rome, 1553.

Copia de unas Cartas de algunos padres y hermanos dela compaña de Iesus que escriuieron dela India, Iapon, y Brasil a los padres y hermanos dela misma compaña, en Portugal trasladadas de portugues en castellano. Fuerõ recibidas el año de mil y quinientos y cinquenta y cinco. Acabaronse a treze dies del mes de Diciembre.

[Coimbra], 1555.

Copia de Diuersas Cartas de Algunos Padres Y Hermanos De la Compaña De Iesus. Recibidas el Año de Mil y Quinientos Cinquenta y cinco. De las grandes maravillas que Dios nuestro señor obra en aumento de la santa fe catolica, en las Indias del Rey de Portugal, y en el Reyno de Japon, y en tierra de Brasil...

Barcelona, 1556.

L'Institution des Loix, costumes et autres choses merueilleuses & memorables tant du Royaume de la Chine, que des Indes contenues en plusieurs lettres missiues enuoyées aux Religieux de la Compagnie du nom de Iesus. Traduites d'Italien en Francoys.

Paris, 1556.

Avisi particolari delle Indie di Portugallo; novamente havuti questo anno del 1555 da li R. padri della Compagnia di Jesu.

Rome, 1556.

Avisi particolari dell'Indie di Portugallo, novamête hauti quest' anno del 1557 dalli R. Padri della Compagnia di Jesu.

Rome, 1557.

Recopilacion de las cartas que fveron embiadas de las Indias & Islas del Serenissimo rey de Portugal, a los hermanos de la compaña de Iesus d'l collegio de Coymbra. Agora de nuevo corregidas y añadidas en esta Impression.

Cordoba, 1557.

Avisi particolari del aumento che Iddio da alla sua chiesa Catholica nell' Indie, et specialmente nelli regni di Giappō, cō iformatione della China, ricevuti dalli padri della Compagnia di Jesu questo anno del 1558.

Rome, 1558.

Nuovi Avisi dell'Indie di Portugallo ricevuti dalli reverendi padri della Compagnia di Giesù, tradotti della lingua Spagnuola nell' Italiana.

Venice, 1559, 1568.

Diversi Avisi Particolari dall' Indie di Portogallo riceuti dall' anno 1551 sino al 1558 dalli Reuerendi padri della compagnia di Giesu. Dove s'intende delle Paesi, delle genti, & costumi loro, & la grande conuersione di molti popoli, che hanno riceuto il lume della santa fede, & religione Christiana. Tradotti nuouamente dalla lingua Spagnuola nella Italiana.

Venice, 1559, 1565.

Nuovi Avisi Dell' Indie Di Portogallo, Riceuti dalli Reurendi Padri della compagnia di Giesu, tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell' Italiana, Terza Parte.

Venice, 1562.

Copia De Algunas Cartas que los Padres y Hermanos de la Compañia de Jesus, que andan en la India y otras Partes Orientales, escriuieron a los de la misma Compañia de Portugal. Desde el Año de M.D. LVII. hasta el de LXj. Trasladas de Portugues en Castellano.

Coimbra, 1562.

Epistolae Indicae in Quibus Loculenta extat Descriptio Rerum nuper in India Orientali praeclare gestarum a Theologis societatis Iesu: qui paucis hinc annis infinita Indorum milia Christo Iesu Christiq. Ecclesiae mirabiliter adiunxerunt. Eiusdem argumenti Epistolae complures breui prodibunt, quae omnes bona fide narrant incredibilem Ecclesiae Catholicae apud Indos & non ita pridem repertas Insulas propagationem: estq. historia illa si ulla quidem alia, nunc lectu dignissima iucundissimaq.

Dillingen, 1563.

Nuovi Avisi Delle Indie Di Portogallo, Venuti nuouamente dalli R. padri della compagnia di Giesu, & tradotti dalla lingua Spagnola nella Italiana. Quarta parte.

Venice, 1565.

Copia de las Cartas que los Padres y hermanos de la Compañia de Iesus que andan en el Iapon escriuieron a los de la misma Compañia de la India, y Europa, desde el año de MDXLVIII que comēgaron, hasta el pasado de LXIII. Trasladas de Portugues en Castellano.

Coimbra, 1565.

Epistolae Indicae de Stupendis et Praeclaris Rebus, quas diuina bonitas in India, & variis Insulis per Societatem nominis Iesu operari dignata est, in tam copiosa Gentium ad fidem conuersione.

Louvain, 1566, two editions.

Nuovi Avisi dell' Indie di Portogallo...tradotti dalla lingua Spagnuola nell' Italiana.

Venice, 1568.

Nuovi Avisi dell' India de Reverendi Padri della Compagnia di Giesu. Ricevuti quest' anno MDLXX.

Rome, 1570.

Epistolae Indicae et Iapanicae de Multarum Gentium ad Christi Fidem, per Societatem Iesu conuersione.

Louvain, 1570.

Nuovi Avisi dell'India de'reverendi padri della Compagnia di Gesù. Ricevuti quest' anno, 1571.

Brescia, 1571.

Nouveaux Advertissemens Tres-Certains, Venus des parties du pays de midy: Contenant la conversion de trois grans Roys infideles, de la secte de Mahomet, convertis & baptizez, avec tous leurs subiects: & suyvent à present nostre sainte Foy Chrestienne. Traduicts d'Italien en François, sur la copie imprimée à Rome.

Lyons, 1571.

Sendschreiben und warhafft zeytungen, Von auffgang und erweiterung des Christenthumbs bey den Hayden inn der neuen welt: Auch von verfolgung unnd hailigkeit der Gaislichen Apostolischen Vorsteher daselbs so ersi discs jar ausz den Orientischen Indien kommen und jetzt inn deutsche sprach transzfiriert worden.

Munich, 1571.

Nuovi Avisi Delle Indie di Portogallo. Quinta Parte.

Brescia, 1579.

Lettere dell' India Orientale scritte da' . . . Padri della Compagnia di Gesù. . . . Novamente stampate ed ampliate.

Vinegia, 1580.

Kurtze Verzeichnuss und Historische Beschreibung deren Dingen, so von der Societät Jesu in Orient, von dem Jar nach Christi Geburt. 1542 biss auff das 1568 gehandelt worden.

Ingolstadt, 1586.

Selectarum Epistolarum Ex India Libri Quatuor. Ioanne Petro Maffeo Interprete.

Venice, 1588.

Francisci Xaverii Epistolarum libri quatuor, ab Horatio Tursellino e Societate Iesu in Latinum conversi ex Hispano. Ad Franciscum Toletum S.R.F. Cardinalem.

Rome, 1596. New editions in subsequent years.

Epistolae Patris Nicolai Pimenta visitatoris Societatis Iesu in India Orientali ad R. P. Claudium Aquavivam eiusdem Societatis Praepositum Generalem. Coae 8 Kal. Januarii 1599.

Milan, 1600.

“Avvisi della Missione del Regno del Gran Mogor.”

(In: *Copia d'una breve relatione della Christianita di Giappone*).

Venice and Rome, 1601.

Recentissima de amplissimo Regno Chinae, item de Statu rei Christianae apud magnum Regem Mogor.

Mainz, 1601.

Nova Relatio Historica de rebus in India Orientali a Patribus Societatis Jesu, anno 1598 et 99 gestis a R. P. Nicolao Pimenta visitatore Societatis Jesu, ad R.P. Claudium Aquavivam eiusdem Societatis Praepositum Generalem missa.

Mainz, 1601.

Japonica, Sinensia, Mogorana, hoc est De rebus apud eas Gentes a Patribus Societatis Jesu ann. 1598 et 99 gestis. A. P. Ioanne Orano in Latinam linguam versa.

Liege, 1601.

Neue Historische Relation Und sehr gute fröliche vnd lustige Bottschaft was sich in vilen gewaltigen Königreichen der Orientalischen Indien...

Dillingen, 1601.

Relations des Peres Loys Froes, et Nicolas Pimenta de la Compagnie de Iesus. Av R.P. Claude Aquaviva General de la mesme Compagnie. Concernant l'accroissement de la foy Chrestienne au Iappon & autres contrées des Indes Orientales és années 1566 & 1599. Traduites du Latin imprimé à Rome.

Lyons, 1602.

Cartas que o Padre N. Pimenta da Companhia de Jesu...escreveo ao Geral della, a 26 de Novembro do ano de 1559 & ao 1 de Dezembro de 600, nas quaes...relata o successo da insegne victoria que A. Furtado de Mendoça alcãçou do Cunhale grande perseguidor da Fee, etc.

Lisbon, 1602.

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