

## Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



**Constructing a Saint Through Images. The 1609 Illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola. With introduction by John W. O'Malley and Latin translations by James P. M. Walsh**  
**The Reckoned Expense. Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits. Edited by Thomas M. McCoog. Revised edition**

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***Constructing a Saint Through Images. The 1609 Illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola.***

**With introduction by John W. O'Malley and Latin translations by James P. M. Walsh.**

Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2008. Pp. vii, 199.

***The Reckoned Expense. Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits.***

**Edited by Thomas M. McCoog. Revised edition.**

Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2007. Pp. xxxiv, 495.

1609 witnessed the beatification of Ignatius of Loyola. In celebration, the religious order he had founded produced the *Vita beati patris Ignatii Loiolae*, a collection of 81 engravings with accompanying captions. It was more than an invitation to jubilation, however; it was also an exercise in astute propaganda. The Jesuits were keen that Loyola should be awarded the even greater accolade of canonization and the *Vita* was intended to inspire an outpouring of popular devotion and to remind Europe of Loyola's miraculous deeds — very much a prerequisite for acquiring sainthood. It seems to have helped the cause since, in 1622, Loyola was indeed recognized as a saint.

In his richly rewarding introduction, John O'Malley explores the early Jesuits' obsession with producing accounts of Loyola's life. It became increasingly important to focus attention on Loyola's primary role in creating and sustaining the order, often at the expense of the other initial companions who dreamed up the idea of a new religious community in 1530s Paris. Making Loyola analogous to St Francis or St Dominic did wonders for his reputation. O'Malley also explores the ways in which the various accounts of Loyola reflected changing Catholic attitudes towards recounting the deeds of the Church's saintliest individuals. Higher critical standards were very much the order of the day and, while adoration never fell out of fashion when discussing Loyola, the Jesuit leadership was also impressively insistent upon accuracy. Not that this excluded the possibility of exaggeration or embellishment. As O'Malley explains, accounts of miracles and prophetic moments had been few and far between in earlier narratives of Loyola's life, but by 1609 they had become an essential commodity. Along with portrayals of Loyola's early struggles and spiritual odyssey, the *Vita* was sure to include numerous stories of Loyola's extraordinary healing powers, visions, and encounters with demons.

The *Vita* is a profoundly important work. As well as having a major impact on future Jesuit iconography, it had considerable artistic merit, derived not only from the engravings of Jean-Baptiste Barbé but also from the fact that drawings by Peter Paul Rubens (at the beginning of a life-long association with the Jesuits) also seem to have been involved.

It wasn't easy to promote someone for sainthood in Counter-Reformation Europe. Between 1523 and 1588, O'Malley reminds us, there was not a single canonization. Perhaps the Church was still reeling from humanist and reformist assaults on the excesses and superstitions that surrounded the cults of saints. The Jesuits therefore scored a major triumph by elevating their founder to such a lofty rank. By 1622 the pace of canonization had picked up, but only slightly, and the *Vita* undoubtedly played a major role. Given the large number of extant copies, it seems to have been a well-circulated volume, and, if nothing else, it pays tribute to Jesuit confidence. O'Malley tells us that, thirteen years before sainthood arrived, there were already proofs of an engraving celebrating Loyola's canonization.

This is a handsomely-produced volume. The reproduced engravings exactly reflect the size of the originals and James Walsh's translations of the Latin captions are excellent: accurate but not stolid. It might be remembered, of course, that not all Jesuits have shared the consistent approval and adulation enjoyed by Loyola. A case in point would be Edmund Campion, and there is just room to note a new edition of Thomas McCoog's influential edited volume, *The Reckoned Expense*, first published in 1996. This is a welcome reprise, complete with revised versions (some substantial) of many of the chapters and a new analysis of the relations between Campion and William Shakespeare.

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