

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



**de Ribadeneira, Pedro. The Life of Ignatius of Loyola, trans.
Claude Pavur**

Gilles Mongeau

Volume 39, Number 2, Spring 2016

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086557ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v39i2.26867>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Mongeau, G. (2016). Review of [de Ribadeneira, Pedro. The Life of Ignatius of Loyola, trans. Claude Pavur]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 39(2), 190–192. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v39i2.26867>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2016

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Protestant and Catholic writers felt compelled to develop new strategies of interpretation while still maintaining some traditional modes of analysis.

ANNE RUSSELL

Wilfrid Laurier University

de Ribadeneira, Pedro.

***The Life of Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Claude Pavor.**

Jesuit Primary Sources in English Translation 28. Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014. Pp. xxxi, 483. ISBN 978-1-880810-83-2 (paperback) \$34.95.

This is the first complete English-language translation of Ribadeneira's life of Ignatius Loyola; the translator worked from the critical Latin edition established by Candido de Dalmases in 1965 for the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*. In his translator's notes, Claude Pavor acknowledges that he has not reproduced Dalmases's scholarly apparatus in full; on the other hand, he has introduced certain features of his own for this edition, most importantly a unified paragraph numbering scheme that is consistent with schemes used in other documents of the Society of Jesus, like the English language edition of the Jesuit *Constitutions*. While scholars wishing to use the text with more advanced students will still need to send them to the Latin edition, the lightening of the apparatus makes for greater readability when using the text in non-specialist settings.

Pavor's introduction is short and very helpful for the non-specialist, highlighting the text's usefulness as a historical and biographical resource, and giving the general lines of Ignatius's life and the beginnings of the Society of Jesus, as well as some details of Ribadeneira's own life and career. The perspective of the introduction is strictly historical, with passing references to the literary quality of the text.

Ribadeneira's account of the life of Ignatius Loyola unfolds in five parts, the first four of which are in strictly historical sequence, with the fifth and final part offering a summary portrait of Ignatius's virtues and the graces he received. The story the author tells is complex. In addition to providing a coherent narrative that is as factual as possible, relying on eyewitness accounts and extensive documentation from across the Society of Jesus of his day, Ribadeneira links

Ignatius's life to the birth and development of the Society of Jesus. He shows in this way the emergence of the Jesuit order from the spiritual experience and development of its founder. Conversely, Ignatius emerges from the narrative as a model to be imitated by every Jesuit.

What is fascinating about this text is the sharp literary differences between it and the so-called "autobiography" dictated by Ignatius to Goncalves de Camara and completed by him only twenty years before. Beyond the differences of content which Pavur notes, it is in the composition and style of the texts that the most interesting differences reside. As Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle and John McManamon (among others) have noted, the text dictated by Ignatius has a very specific rhetorical form designed to engage the reader in a kind of spiritual performance. Like the *Spiritual Exercises* and in parallel to them, the *Acta* of Ignatius seek to trace a spiritual pathway to be travelled by the reader *with* Ignatius. By contrast, Ribadeneira's text owes much more to the discipline of grammar; what counts is narrating an accurate history and presenting a coherent likeness of the man Ignatius, establishing facts critically so that the narrative corresponds closely to the reality it describes. The reader of Ribadeneira's biography is placed *before* Ignatius. In a few short years, the cultural context of the Jesuits themselves had changed significantly enough that the method of the *Acta* was no longer as useful to their understanding of their founder and their charism as it might have been in the beginning. The intention of the Jesuit general superiors who commissioned the life of Ignatius was to replace the autobiography (or *Acta*) completely; copies of de Camara's text were to be taken out of circulation and sent back to Rome.

As the text evolved through various editions, Ribadeneira introduced other themes or purposes into his narrative: most notably, the *Life of Ignatius* became an apologia for the charism of the Society in the face of various criticisms from both theologians and Church authorities. Both the discussion of Ignatius's life and virtues and the presentation of the missionary efforts of the Society were also designed to convince critics that God's grace did indeed flow through the apostolic works of the Society of Jesus. At key points in his narrative, Ribadeneira introduces documents such as papal bulls approving the Society's way of life; texts from patristic and medieval authors that show that the Society's charism has deep roots in the Church's tradition; and other commentary or information designed to justify or explain the Society to its detractors and defenders.

The Life of Ignatius of Loyola represents a significant development in the self-understanding of the Society of Jesus by an author who was himself a founding member of the order and who was present throughout its rapid early evolution. His explanations of this evolution are interesting in themselves, but it is perhaps the unselfconscious literary evolution—from the founding texts of the Society (*Spiritual Exercises*, *Acta* of Ignatius, and *Constitutions*), which owe so much to medieval practices of rhetoric, to this more grammar-influenced text—that is most striking. The transposition of the charisma of the Society from one cultural context to another, as it emerges from this *Life*, is well worth the further study and exploration that Pavur hopes to foster through this translation.

GILLES MONGEAU

Regis College, University of Toronto

Duncan-Jones, Katherine.

Portraits of Shakespeare.

Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2015. Pp. ix, 126 + 39 colour ill. ISBN 978-1-85124-405-8 (paperback) £14.99/US\$25.

In this short but telling book, British scholar Katherine Duncan-Jones weighs in on the increasingly fractious matter of portraiture associated with Shakespeare, an ongoing source of friction among Shakespeareans chasing the Holy Grail of an image of the bard painted from life. The field is littered with venal exchanges, dubious claims, glancing and self-serving scholarship, and polysyllabic slap-downs, as in eminent English art historian (and former director of the National Portrait Gallery) Roy Strong calling Stanley Wells's suspect assertions about the Cobbe Portrait's authenticity "codswallop"—in *The Guardian* no less (April 2009).

Duncan-Jones has a stake in the tussles too, and she has rightly critiqued the Cobbe, in this book and elsewhere, with some panache—a critique that has elicited howls of protestation from the rival camp and demands for apology. It's not often that academic debate in the arts and humanities, much less early modern studies, gets this tetchy. Yet with Shakespeare's life-image the stakes are high, involving substantial material consequences including institutional self-interest, academic and curatorial careers, and significant revenue streams derived from