

Jesuit Philosophy



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Related Topics

Religious orders · Aristotelianism ·
Novatores · Logic · Natural Philosophy ·
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Introduction

The Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius of Loyola and established by a papal bull in 1540, plays an enormous role in our philosophical historical consciousness: they have regularly been portrayed as the key educators of early modern Europe, but also as the culprits of all forms of “popish” misguidance and ignorance, submitting human thought to the dictates of the Catholic Church. Nineteenth-century anti-Jesuitism liked to quote Voltaire’s *bon mot* according to which “it is of the essence of a Jesuit to be a bad philosopher” (17 November 1735), because Jesuit science was based on “dictated words mistaken for true ideas” – as opposed to experimental science which was supposed to be going the other way round, from things to ideas, then expressed by

words. But Voltaire, just as Descartes more than a century earlier, had been himself a student of the Jesuits, and there are strong reasons to believe that both were much more indebted to Jesuit science than their negative comments might betray. Over the last decades, the historiographical perception of the philosophical legacy of the Jesuits has dramatically changed. The Jesuit philosophical heritage is now largely considered not so much as anti-modern but on the contrary as the laboratory where decisive innovations of early modern philosophy were prepared. Jesuits are now commonly credited as the true inventors of so many elements usually typically associated with early modern philosophy, such as the rise of facultative logic, the destruction of substantial forms in metaphysics, the invention of consciousness as self-awareness (► “[Consciousness](#)”), or the vindication of natural rights defined as the subjective faculty or capacity of individuals (see Schmutz 2018, for a historiographical synthesis).

Early-modern Jesuits were indeed omnipresent, if only *geographically*: the Society had managed to construct an efficient network of colleges – from its first foundation in Messina (1548) to all over Europe, South America, and even to the Imperial court in China, the rooftop of Tibet, or the Portuguese colonies in Africa or Southern Asia. Heralds of the Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits even managed to obtain an almost complete monopoly of education in certain regional contexts, by being granted the complete management of historical Faculties of

Arts, the most famous case being the Colégio das Artes in Coimbra (Gomes 2012; Casalini 2017a) – a situation also prevailing in Central European Habsburg territories, such as Dillingen (Leinsle 2006), Ingolstadt, Innsbruck, Graz, Prague, or Trnava (Tyrnau). In other places – especially in ancient university towns such as Paris, Salamanca, Louvain, Cologne, or Padua – the Jesuits had a much more difficult time, but also managed to impose themselves as a radical alternative to the venerable universities (see Grendler 2018, for an efficient overview). The force of attraction of Jesuit pedagogy could be explained by its peculiar blend of Renaissance humanism in humanities, renewed Aristotelianism in philosophy, and revived scholasticism and Biblical exegesis in theology – all associated with an aggressive policy of free education deliberately geared towards the nobility, the rising merchant urban classes, and, in the specific case of Spain and Portugal, towards the Jewish *converso* elites – Laínez (the Second General), Toledo, Suárez, Mariana, Possevino, were all of Jewish ancestry.

Three Waves of Jesuit Philosophy

The study of early-modern Jesuit philosophy has traditionally been largely focused on what we shall call here the “first wave” of the 1560–1620 generation, with prominent figures such as Francisco de Toledo (1534–1596, author of the first collection of printed Jesuit textbooks on logic and other parts of Aristotelian philosophy), Benet Perera (Pererius, 1536–1610, author of a highly influential synthesis of physics and metaphysics, *De communibus omnium rerum naturalium principiis et affectionibus*, 1576, often reprinted), Pedro da Fonseca (1528–1599, author of a complete commentary on Aristotle’s metaphysics and the mastermind of the famous *Cursus Conimbricense*, a collection of new translations and commentaries on Aristotle’s logic and natural philosophy, published between 1592 and 1606, often reprinted), Francisco Suárez (1548–1617, author of the acclaimed *Disputationes metaphysicae*, 1597, often reprinted) (► “Ontology”), and Antonio Rubio (1548–1615, author of one of the most widely read logic textbooks of the first part of the seventeenth century, with more than

50 reprints between 1603 and 1644) (► “Aristotelian Logic in Early-Modern Thought”). All of these works arguably exerted a major influence during the first part of the seventeenth century – Descartes himself affectionately recalling “les Conimbres, Toletus et Ruuius” as the standard textbooks of his training at the Collège de La Flèche (*Letter to Mersenne*, 30 Sept. 1640, AT III, 185). The emergence of Jesuit philosophy was accompanied by many attempts to normalize and regularize its teaching, as it culminates in the dispositions on the teaching of philosophy in the *Ratio Studiorum* (1599). Often celebrated by historians of education, the true importance of the *Ratio*, which is relatively unprecise in its commitment to the authority of Aristotle in philosophy and Aquinas in theology, has been often overestimated by historians. As the early debates at the Roman College show, there has never been really a consensus among the Jesuits, neither on which trend of Aristotelianism to follow – Perera was, for instance, accused to hold the then unorthodox views of Paduan Averroism (Blum 2006; Forlivesi and Lamanna 2014) – nor on which reading of Aristotle’s metaphysics to follow – the medieval commentary of Aquinas being, for instance, matched by the more “transcendental” or “supertranscendental” readings of the Scotistic tradition, from Antonio Andrés down to Nicolas Bonetus (see Courtine 1990; Doyle 2011, 2012; Forlivesi 2014). Most of the Jesuit courses of this “first wave” do not, however, constitute a decisive break with the broader tradition of sixteenth-century scholastic philosophy: Toledo, after all, was a student of the Dominican Domingo de Soto (1495–1560), and Suárez remains deeply indebted to the Renaissance tradition of the Bologna Dominicans, such as Paolo Barbo Soncinas (†1495) or Crisostomo Iavelli (†1538). The “first wave” allows to explain what is still medieval in the modernity, and why both Descartes and Spinoza might be related to Aquinas and Scotus through these influential Jesuit textbooks.

A “second wave” of Jesuit philosophy, more decisively modern, started during the generation of the 1620s. The insistence on being the true interpreter of the past medieval tradition – as testified in the vivid debates about the correct

interpretation of Aquinas and Augustine, and still vindicated in Francisco de Mendonça's posthumous *Viridarium* (1631), who claimed to prefer the authority of the Ancients over the Moderns – is replaced by a fully assumed claim to novelty. Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592–1667), in the Preface to his *Cursus philosophicus* (1632, which underwent six editions until 1669), suggested that Christians should not be afraid of novelty, since Christianity itself was a novelty in its time. This novelty is expressed both in the promotion of new science and in the resolute invention of new concepts, unheard of in medieval scholasticism.

First, the “second wave” confirms the tendency towards autonomy of certain philosophical disciplines that did not fully belong to the late medieval canon, such as mathematics and ► [experimental science](#). The Jesuits quickly became the providers of state-of-the-art mathematics, mechanics, and optics (► [“Mechanics and Mixed Mathematic”](#) and ► [“Optics”](#)), and integrated these disciplines into their standard courses of philosophy (Baldini 1992; Romano 1999). In Rome, Lisbon, and Antwerp, the Jesuits were constructing a new philosophy of nature which had little to do with the traditional Aristotelian heritage. Innovations in applied mathematics allowed them to attract the interest of the Imperial Court in China or to enhance the transatlantic commerce (► [“Navigation”](#)). While the venerable Colégio das Artes in Coimbra remained a citadel of increasingly revised Aristotelianism, the Colégio de Santo Antão in Lisbon became a major centre of scientific innovation during the seventeenth century, to which an important community of other European scholars – in particular exiled English Catholics – strongly contributed, such as Ignatius Stafford (1599–1642), who died in Lisbon and had traveled to Salvador da Bahia (on the Portuguese context, see Carolino and Leitão 2006; Romeiras 2019; another precious case study is Dollo 1984 for Sicily; and more generally on the place of the Jesuits in early-modern networks of knowledge, see Romano 2000; Feingold 2003a, b).

Second, this “second wave” corresponds to the truly innovative moment of Jesuit philosophy proper in the more traditional fields of scholastic

logic, physics, and metaphysics, with the mapping of new philosophical problems and the invention of a number of new concepts – never really discussed as such in the Middle Ages and in some cases, not even in the earlier generations. Leibniz himself famously drafted a list of novel concepts introduced by the Jesuits (*Theodicy, Preliminary Discourse*, § 6). A forerunner in the theology was certainly Luis de Molina (1535–1600), with his invention of the concept of “middle knowledge” (*scientia media*) of so-called “conditional future contingents,” i.e., divine knowledge of what free creatures would do under hypothetical circumstances (Freddoso 1988; Knebel 2000; Anfray 2002). Although basically designed as a means of reconciling God's foreknowledge with human free will, Molina used middle knowledge in his account of predestination, which consists in God's choosing to create an order of things in which creatures act righteously or wrongly out of their own free will (► [“Grace”](#) and ► [“Divine Providence”](#)). In the wake of *scientia media*, theological optimism or the thesis that God's choosing the best is morally necessary was another doctrinal invention, first defended by the Sevillian Jesuits Diego Ruiz de Montoya (1562–1632) and Diego Granado (1571–1632), and later endorsed by Antonio Pérez (1599–1649) or Martín de Esparza (1606–1689) at the Roman College (Ramelow 1997; Knebel 2000) (► [“Theodicy”](#)).

Compared with other religious orders like the Dominicans, who adopted a largely reactive attitude against scientific novelties of the time, Jesuits also innovated within the strict field of philosophy. One can think here about the immense debate about the *praecisiones obiectivae* in theory of knowledge (whether abstraction requires some objective features in the thing itself), the fine-tuning of the medieval concept of *ens rationis* (Novotný 2013), the invention of the concept of truth-makers (*verificativa*), the development of the concept of “states of affairs” (*status rerum*, see Schmutz 2009), or the emergence of a properly epistemological conception of “possible worlds,” decades before Leibniz. The notions of ► [mode](#) and of modal distinction are typical examples of the way conceptual inventions introduced during the first wave set the stage for new

debates among authors of the second wave. Modes, conceived as determinations of things, were first introduced by Fonseca and eventually systematized by Suárez (Menn 1997). One prominent use of mode was to account for the *per se* unity of material substances. Its difference from a mere aggregate is grounded in the presence of a “substantial mode of union,” which functions as a kind of metaphysical glue but is not a further thing along with matter and substantial form. After Suárez, Jesuits debated about the ontological status of these modes of union and their number (Anfray 2019). Another example is the concept of imaginary space (► “[Space, Representations of](#)”), which originally denoted the extra-cosmic void, and that was systematically used in order to solve some problems with the Aristotelian discussion of place. Such imaginary space became equivalent to a kind of absolute space, independent of bodies, although its precise ontological status was a matter of debates (Leijenhorst 1996; for the parallel concept of imaginary time, see Daniel 1981).

All these concepts stood at the core of the famous *Cursus philosophici*, of which the first Jesuit model (1615) has been printed by Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (1578–1641, on its context, see Schmutz 2020). Scores of similar courses would be produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emancipating philosophy not only from the succession of Aristotelian books inherited from the medieval tradition but also from its classical interpretations. Hurtado de Mendoza had himself vindicated a resolutely “nominalist” reading of many classical topics, inspired in particular by Peter Auriol and other later medieval authors: the reduction of categories to three (substance, absolute accident – which includes both quality and quantity –, and modal accident – including all other Aristotelian categories), the identification of the ► *species* with the mental act, the distinction of divine attributes as mere connotative terms, etc. This marked the beginning of a long tradition of printed courses of philosophy, of which several became celebrities and were often reprinted: Rodrigo de Arriaga (1632, Prague – on his importance, see the seminal work on Jesuit philosophy by Eschweiler

1931), Francisco de Oviedo (1641, Alcalá and Madrid), Baltasar Telles (1641) and Francisco Soares (1651, both from Portugal, widely used in Brazil), Thomas Compton Carleton (1649, Liège and popular all over Europe), Giovanni Battista Giattini (1651–1653, Rome), Pierre Gautruche (1653, Caen), Richard Lynch (1654, Salamanca), Silvestro Mauro (1658, Rome), Ildefonso de Peñafiel (1653, Peru), Antonio Bernaldo de Quirós (1666, Valladolid), André Sémerly (1681, Bologna and Rome), and so many others. Thousands of similar courses are kept in the manuscript form of student notes. These courses would be spread all over the Catholic colleges of the world, but also became sought-after material in Protestant and Reformed academies in Germany or the British Isles. This is how late Jesuit courses of philosophy, such as Agostinho Lourenço’s very astute *De triplici ente* (1688) – published by the English Jesuits of Liège and sponsored by the Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese wife of Charles II – constitute the key to understanding many debates between John Locke and the Lisbon-trained English Catholic John Sergeant about the “Way of Ideas” and also on many issues of semiotics (► “[Theory of Ideas, Semiotics](#)”).

All these courses created innovative discussions on specific subjects and also created space for the progressive integration of non-medieval elements. In metaphysics, Honoré Fabri (*Metaphysica demonstrativa*, 1648) proposed a completely revised framework, considering that the key to metaphysics was accurate distinction between mind-dependent and mind-independent features among objects of knowledge (what he calls their *ratio obiectiva* or “objective reason”), and he applied this method to classical topics such as universals or the discussion of time. In Spain, Sebastián Izquierdo (1601–1681) attempted to redesign completely philosophy according to a combinatorial framework (*Pharus Scientiarum*, 1659), inspired by early-modern Lullism. In physics, the question of the composition of the continuum acquired a central place, and some Jesuit *Cursus* were ready to put on an equal footing Aristotle’s view and the thesis that the continuum is composed of an actual infinity of nonextended

indivisibles, a thesis that was associated with Zeno of Elea. In his later *Physica* (1667), Honoré Fabri tried to steer a middle path between the ancient scholastics and the new philosophers, by attempting to show that Aristotle's genuine philosophy, freed from substantial forms and other scholastic inventions, could account for the phenomena just as well as corpuscular philosophy (► [“Corpuscularianism”](#)). Fabri's attempted synthesis is flawed with inconsistencies, but it is revealing of his attitude to the new science which consists in piecemeal acceptance and rejection (Roux 2013).

Such an attitude was already visible in the context of the reception of Galileo (► [“Galileo's Natural Philosophy”](#)). According to an established view, the Florentine scientist's early views on scientific method were elaborated from Jesuit teachings at the Roman College about demonstration through *regressus* (Wallace 2006). Galileo's mathematization of natural philosophy also betrays the influence of Jesuit mathematicians like Christoph Clavius (1538–1612) (Feldhay 1998). Later Jesuits were involved in controversies with Galileo about heliocentrism, as for instance Christoph Scheiner (1575–1650) who argued that the sunspots were satellites revolving around the Sun. The reception of Galileo's thought is symptomatic of the Jesuit twofold strategy of dealing with his scientific novelties: Galileo's science of motion, developed in the *Discorsi*, is “domesticated” within a broader tradition of questions on natural philosophy, while at the same time, the results of the *Discorsi* are divorced from the Copernican cosmology of the *Dialogo* (Raphael 2017; see also Palmerino 2003). More generally, the Jesuits' reaction to Galileo are representative of the difficulties of reconciling the ambition to remain at the cutting edge of the science of the day with the necessity of maintaining the Aristotelian framework, and most of all, the disciplinary divisions between physics, mathematics, and metaphysics.

Similar tensions are at play in the reaction to ► [Descartes](#) and other ► [novatores](#) such as Gassendi, Malebranche, and others. In France, Pierre Bourdin (1595–1653), the author of the seventh set of objections to Descartes's

Meditations, triggered Descartes's “war with the Jesuits” (AT III, 572) by publicly refuting his *Dioptrics* in public defenses of doctoral theses (Roux and Collacciani 2017). The English Jesuit Compton Carleton discussed critically Descartes's theory of the eucharist in his course of philosophy (1649). Overall, opposition to Descartes' thought remained the dominant trend among the Jesuits, and several aspects of Descartes's philosophy were finally condemned by General Michelangelo Tamburini (1706, with earlier attempts in 1696). Revealingly, this opposition adopted literary forms typical of the times, like satiric pamphlets, as in Gabriel Daniel's *Voyage du monde de Descartes* (1691), or discourses, as in Ignace-Gaston Pardies' *Discours de la connaissance des bêtes* (1672) (see Roux 2013; on Jesuit condemnations, see Orella 1967; Ariew 2011: 241–292; and the seminal Sortais 1929, for a classical history of the Jesuit reception of Cartesianism).

A third and last wave of Jesuit philosophy corresponds to further development mainly during the eighteenth century, which sees the definitive abandonment of the scholastic framework and a more resolute integration of the new philosophies. In the discussion of ► [principles](#), the Cartesian *cogito* and the Leibnizian ► [principle of sufficient reason](#) challenged the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction. Again, regional contexts vary of course greatly: an Irish Jesuit of the Flemish Province, Richard Arsdekin (1620–1693), although anti-Cartesian, had already tried to redefine completely metaphysics as an axiomatic science, i.e., as a reflection on the first principles of knowledge, and not as ontology (science of being or substance). In 1701, René-Joseph de Tournemine (1661–1732), who endorsed a Cartesian account of the soul-body union, had founded the *Mémoires de Trévoux*, with the aim of competing with other recently founded literary and scientific journals. The French Jesuits, after the publication of Claude Buffier's *Cours des Sciences* (1732) definitely abandoned medieval-inspired scholasticism, and Buffier's course is often celebrated as one of the sources of common sense philosophy. David ► [Hume](#) famously started writing his *Enquiry* in

a French castle, not far away from the college of La Flèche, and he made a great use of the peculiar brand of pre-Enlightenment Jesuit philosophy he could find in its library (Perinetti 2018). In Rome, ► **Rugjer Josip Bošković** (1711–1787)’s *Philosophia naturalis* (1758) can be seen as a definitive farewell to Aristotelianism in physics, even to its very mitigated forms common in the late seventeenth century: Boscovich develops an account of the physical world as obeying a single law, along with a novel conception of matter composed of atoms conceived as points but endowed with a single force that oscillates between repulsive and attractive. The Aristotelian framework is completely overthrown and Boscovich devised a whole natural philosophy that tried to achieve a synthesis of Newton and Leibniz (Baldini 2006). In Germany, there is a generational break between Anton Mayr (1739) and Joseph Mangold (1755), which sees the progressive introduction of Leibnizian and Wolffian ideas (► **“Wolff”**), as well as the victory of experimental science. The Bavarian Jesuit Bertold Hauser was reading the *Acta eruditorum*, and Leibniz’s *De primae philosophiae emendatione* published there (1694) helped him redefining metaphysics as a general epistemology reflecting on the principles of knowledge (*Ontologia*, 1755). Especially in Central Europe, “Wolffian Jesuitism” became the standard philosophy at the dawn of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When the Jesuits were progressively expelled from the European lands and finally suppressed (1773), the metaphysical framework of Francisco Suárez’s *Disputationes* had long faded away.

The Identity of Jesuit Philosophy

Is there anything truly specific about early modern Jesuit philosophy, that would distinguish it from many other early modern scholastic traditions, especially that of the powerful postmedieval traditions of Thomism and Scotism? A lot has been written about Jesuit eclecticism, their liberalism (the culture of the *delectus opinionum*), their supposedly “baroque” mindset, or more recently, about the pervasive presence of Jesuit spirituality in all aspects of their teaching. However, similar features can be found among other specifically

modern scholastic traditions, such as Capuchins, the Minims, or the Clerics Regular. The Society, founded in the aftermath of the fifth Council of Latran (1513), and in the intellectual context of the rise of positive theology in humanism and the Reformation, had quickly to be committed to the positive defense of certain dogmas. This explains the insistence put on certain publications: in the field of philosophy, the science of soul received particular attention in the early generations, such as the influential ones by the Conimbricenses or the early full commentary by Girolamo Dandini (1611) (► **“Soul”**, ► **“Psychology”**, and ► **“Jesuit Psychology”**). Ethics also revealed itself as a particularly controversial topic: a major difference between Renaissance Aristotelianism and the early Jesuits was their refusal to dedicate systematic and independent commentaries to Aristotle’s *Ethics*. With a few exceptions, the Jesuits resolutely integrated ethics into the newly developing field of moral theology (*Theologia moralis*). They integrated the discussion on virtues and vices into their commentaries on the second part of Aquinas’ *Summa* (Theiner 1970). This explains why the early-modern legal philosophy of the Jesuits was developed in their voluminous theological treatises on right and justice or on the laws (*De iustitia et iure*; *De legibus*), which exerted a strong influence on the development of early-modern conceptions of natural rights. The same can be said about the immense early-modern debate on probabilism, which did not take its root in a strictly philosophical curriculum, but in moral theology (Maryks 2008; Gay 2011; Schüssler 2019).

If there is to be something truly Jesuit, it is certainly their belief that philosophy as itself is a way to practice a correct theology. In the preface to his *Metaphysical Disputations* (1597), Suárez clearly spells out the idea that philosophy needs to be an exercise of clarification of concepts later needed in theology. This does not so much mean that philosophy has to be simply submitted to theology – although some more later Augustinian-minded Jesuits have said so, such as Miguel de Elizalde (*Forma verae religionis*, 1662) – but that theological truths themselves are open to rational scrutiny. The Jesuit contribution to the history of philosophy is hereby closely

linked to their commitment to push the claims of reason very far, even in fields that were traditionally restricted to *revealed* theology. The most striking case was the development, between Gregorio de Valencia (1549/1550–1603) and Juan de Lugo (1583–1660), of an extremely rationalistic approach to faith – that would still produce numerous debates about the *Vernunfttheologie* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Eschweiler 1926). Many seventeenth-century Jesuits were deeply committed to the project of ► [natural theology](#), often with Neoplatonic traits, such as the Savoyard Jesuit Théophile Raynaud (1587–1663; *Theologia naturalis*, 1622). The desire to achieve a knowledge of God that would be rationally and naturally *acquired* (and not just *revealed*) justified the wildest explorations of nature and the revision of ancient authorities, as admitted by Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595–1658; *Curiosa filosofia*, 1644, p. 4), who offered his own original challenge to Aristotle’s theory of substantial forms based on Renaissance hermeticism. Rather than being characterized as “first being” or “source of contingency” as in classical scholastic natural theology, the new Jesuit physicists described God as a clockmaker, as an architect or even as “magnet,” as it was proposed by yet another Jesuit polymath, the German Athanasius Kircher (1602–1680). He explained the entire universe as a magnetic chain connecting all the elements of the world to God, as “the central magnet of all things” (*Magnes*, 1641, p. 907), from which everything emanates and diffuses by means of divine magnetic rays.

This commitment to rationalism also explains the attempts, by Jesuit authorities, to regulate teaching, which have often been ridiculed by historians as the sign of their traditionalism and repressive mindset. After the old controversies at the sixteenth-century Roman College which prompted the *Ratio studiorum*, there have been several important attempts to normalize Jesuit teaching among all provinces. In 1651, the General Francesco Piccolomini attempted to impose a list of normative propositions to the French Province (*Ordinatio pro studiis superioribus*, 1651), that included the refusal to teach some of the novel

proposals by Arriaga and others, but it encountered immediate resistance in many regional contexts. In 1706, another General, Michelangelo Tamburini, confirmed the condemnation of a certain number of Cartesian-inspired propositions, among which the argument that one should doubt of everything excepting one’s own existence. This was a revealing attitude: from the Jesuit perspective, if the only source of certainty was to be our self-awareness, then this means that we should disqualify any other form of natural knowledge by the senses or by human testimony, and that we would always need a divine guarantee or supernatural knowledge for all other objects. According to the standard Jesuit interpretation at the time, the absolute certainty of the *cogito* collapses into that very type of fideism that late sixteenth-century Jesuit apologetics had rejected (► [“Skepticism in Early Modern Thought”](#)). A couple of decades earlier, the French Jesuit Honoré Fabri had therefore already dismissed the Cartesian *Meditations* as “not belonging to metaphysics, but to theology” (*Epistolae tres*, 1674, p. 13). This attitude is in conformity with the continuous Jesuit commitment to a program of knowledge based on experience, reasoning, and increasingly human testimony. This attention to human testimony as a legitimate source of knowledge explains also the cultivation, in many early-modern Jesuit colleges, of new sciences (history, archaeology, anthropology, linguistics), all seen as legitimate sources of philosophical inquiry – there is a specifically Jesuit “archaeology of the human sciences” to be written one day, by studying the epistemological framework that was behind, for instance, their missionary enterprise (on may think here of José de Acosta, 1540–1600) and the powerful rise of historical scholarship and erudition, which progressively replaced scholasticism.

It was common to say that one needs an oxcart to carry Jesuit philosophy – because their books are so heavy and numerous (Jurieu, *La religion des Jésuites*, 1689, p. 19). When the Society was finally suppressed in 1773 by pope Clement XIV, after having been successively expelled from various countries, oxcarts were indeed needed to carry their libraries to auctions or to the stake.

Their disappearance left a big void, which in certain regional contexts amounted to a mild educational disaster: not because of the value of any singular author, but because they had constituted a collective intellectual enterprise, involving thousands of minds working together over the decades. As Arriaga had put it in the Preface of his course (1632), the fields of knowledge are so vast that only a multitude of minds can cultivate them and separate the wheat from the chaff.

Cross-References

- [Aristotelian Logic in Early-Modern Thought](#)
- [Bošković](#)
- [Consciousness](#)
- [Corpuscularianism](#)
- [Descartes](#)
- [Divine Providence](#)
- [Experimental Science](#)
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- [Soul](#)
- [Space, Representations of](#)
- [Theodicy](#)
- [Theory of Ideas](#)
- [Wolff](#)

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