

Refashioning the Heroic: Jesuit Epic and the Language of Empire

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Abstract: In the late sixteenth century, five Jesuit brothers led by Rodolfo Acquaviva (1550–84) set out for the court of the Mughal emperor Julāl-ud-Dīn Muhammad Akbar (1556–1605). Unfortunately, their dream of founding a mission in India was brutally terminated by local opposition in July 1584. When their martyrdom was announced in Rome, it was immediately celebrated by Francesco Benci (1542–94), professor of rhetoric at the Collegium Romanum, in a six-book epic, *Quinque martyres e Societate Iesu in India* (Venice: Muschius, 1591). The poem was the first of a new type of epic, distinct from yet dependent upon the Classical tradition. This paper emphasises Benci's innovation by analysing his transformation of the language and ethos of Classical epic into a new form, Jesuit neo-Latin epic. The *Paciecidos* (Coimbra: Universitatis Typographus, 1640), written by Bartholomeu Pereira (1588–1650), professor of Scripture at the Jesuit college in Coimbra, continues in the same tradition. This twelve-book epic extols the missionary exploits of his cousin Francisco Pacheco (1566–1626), Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Japan, chronicling Pacheco's voyage from Macau, his covert missionary work during the Christian persecutions under the Shogun, and his eventual arrest. The poem culminates in horrific scenes of the martyrdom of Pacheco and eight companions at Nagasaki in June 1626.

Keywords: Jesuits; Christian epic; martyrdom; India; Japan.

From the late sixteenth-century onwards, epic poetry written by Jesuit priests flourished.² Whereas *res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella* (“the deeds of kings and generals and the sorrows of war”, Horace, *Ars poetica*, 73) were the traditional subject of Classical epic, Jesuit poets seized upon the military virtues (courage, faithfulness, obedience, endurance) in Saint Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* to formulate a new heroism for the *ecclesia militans*. Written for Jesuit seminarians about Jesuit heroes, the *aristeia* (“great deeds of excellence”) in their poetry became acts of martyrdom. Intended for repeated perusal, and often accompanied by indices for easy reference, these poems were published in portable, pocket-sized octavo volumes. They were to provide a constant reminder of the hazards and glory of the Jesuit vocation for the young seminarian, especially when fulfilling their “Fourth Vow”, which bound members of the Society to do ministry anywhere in the world.³

And indeed, Jesuit missions across the globe afforded ample opportunity for heroic acts of courage. Two poems, which describe the early Jesuit missions to the East, have been chosen here to highlight the reception of the language and ethos

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² Gwynne 2017.

³ On the ‘Fourth Vow’, see O'Malley 1993, 298–301.

of Classical epic and its transformation into Jesuit heroic poetry. The *Quinque martyres e Societate Iesu in India* (Venice: Muschius, 1591) by Francesco Benci (1542–94), professor of rhetoric at the recently established Jesuit university in Rome, the Collegium Romanum, is the first example of this new genre of epic. The poem is an elegant and dramatic account in six books of the first Jesuit mission to India (1580–83). The poem centres upon the journey of five Jesuit brothers led by Rodolfo Acquaviva (1550–83) to the province of Salcete in the summer of 1583, their attempt to found a new church and mission, and their subsequent martyrdom in a local riot.⁴ Written as part of the campaign for the beatification (and eventual canonisation) of the five main protagonists, the *Quinque martyres* was also designed as a model for the composition of hexameter verse and to teach Virgil's sublime style at the Collegium Romanum (and at other Jesuit colleges in Europe and farther afield), while avoiding the dangerous influence of his pagan gods and unwholesome subject matter. Published some fifty years later, the *Paciecidos* (Coimbra: Universitatis Typographus, 1640) by Bartholomeu Pereira, professor of scripture at the Jesuit college in Coimbra, continues in the same tradition. This twelve-book epic extols the missionary exploits of his cousin Francisco Pacheco, Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Japan, chronicling Pacheco's voyage from Macau, his covert missionary work during the Christian persecutions under the Shogun, and his eventual arrest. The poem culminates in horrific scenes of the martyrdom of Pacheco and eight companions at Nagasaki in June 1626.

The acts of martyrdom, set within the broader context of Jesuit missions across the world, are articulated via the medium of Classical epic. This is done primarily although not exclusively with reference to Virgil's *Aeneid*, mitigated through Christian exegesis, most importantly via Vida's *Christiad*, probably in the edition with extensive commentary made by Bartolomeo Botta (Pavia: Hieronymus Bartolus, 1569). In each, Classical epic is recast as Christian panegyric and the didactic nature of the genre deliberately emphasised to teach lessons of moral choice, endurance, and salvation amongst the Jesuits being trained to pursue similarly dangerous missions. As Yasmin Haskell has observed, "Jesuit neo-Latin epic [...] demands a level of reader participation unparalleled in its primary literary model (Virgil). The lives of the heroes portrayed in these poems are quite literally exemplary."⁵ They thus conform, it may be added, to the contemporary epic theory expounded by Giovanni Antonio Viperano, who also taught at the Collegium Romanum. He argued that epic narrative will be "either mannered, in which delineation of mores is emphasised, or pathetic, in which the emotions are more powerfully stirred by murder and wounds."⁶

As Benci's poem was the first Jesuit epic, we must begin with this programmatic

⁴ For the Jesuits in India, see Županov 2006; Henn 2014. All references to the *Quinque martyres* are to the edition of Gwynne 2018; all translations are my own.

⁵ Haskell 2010, 206; see also Haskell 2013.

⁶ Viperano, *On Poetry*, 75.

work. *Quinque martyres* recounts the first Jesuit mission to the court of the Mughal emperor Julāl-ud-Dīn Muhammad Akbar (1542–1605). An advocate for religious tolerance, Akbar was interested in the religion professed by the Europeans on the coast and so invited the Portuguese to send representatives from Goa to debate their Christian beliefs with Muslim doctors at the weekly discussions held in the ‘Ibādat-khāna (“Hall of Worship”) at his court in Fatephur Sikri. Their meetings are depicted in an exquisite miniature, illustrating a deluxe copy of the *Akbarnāma* (“History of Akbar”) written by Abu’l Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551–1602), which is believed to have belonged to Akbar himself (see fig. 1).⁷



Two Jesuit Fathers, distinguished by their dark soutanes, are sitting on the ground at Akbar’s right. One is clean-shaven, the other is older and wears a beard. Above the scene an inscription from the *Akbarnāma* notes the presence of “Pādrī Rodolf, one of the Nazarene sages”. One of the two Fathers can thus be securely identified as Rodolfo Acquaviva, while the other probably represents Antonio Monserrate, who left a detailed account of the weekly meetings.⁸ On realising the impossibility of converting the Mughal hierarchy to Christianity, the Jesuits switched their attention to the lower classes. In Benci’s poem the cordial reception afforded at

⁷ For recent discussion of this popular image, see Okada 2004, 190–99; also Calza (ed.) 2012, 73; and more generally, Losty & Roy 2012, 26–79.

⁸ *Commentary of Father Monserrate*.

the emperor's court contrasts with violent local opposition, as a group of five Jesuit brothers attempt to found a new church and mission among the Hindu population at Cuncolim in the south of the territory of Salcete, on the borders of the state of Bijâpur.

This disputed border territory had a long history of unrest, which only increased with the arrival of the Jesuits. Their destruction of Hindu temples and shrines was met first with appeals to the viceroy and, when this had no effect, violent retaliation. For the missionaries had argued that if the Hindus in Salcete were granted concessions, others would ask them too, and their achievements and authority would be undermined.⁹ The destruction escalated. In 1583, Rodolfo Acquaviva received orders to enter this hotspot in order to maintain law and order and effect more conversions. He was accompanied by an international group of four Jesuits: the Spaniard Afonso Pacheco, Pietro Berno da Ascona, and two Portuguese, Francisco António and Francisco Aranha. The choice of particular members of the group was potentially explosive. Pacheco and Berno had previously been working in the area and had already antagonised the local population. The Hindus held Pacheco responsible for the ban on their customs, while Berno had been present as many temples were destroyed and had personally wrecked many images. Perceiving the intentions of the missionaries and remembering previous injuries, the Hindu population rose in revolt. Within two days of their arrival they had massacred every Jesuit, and the local Christians who had accompanied the priests. The Jesuit missionaries' journey through Salcete to Cuncolim, their violent martyrdom, and their reception in Paradise form the climax of Benci's narrative.¹⁰

I The Epic Structure of the *Quinque martyres*

Aeneas's divinely ordained journey to found Rome provides the obvious point of reference for Benci's poem.¹¹ The connection is declared immediately in the first lines. These echo the opening of Virgil's *Aeneid* while at the same time contrasting the Classical world with the Christian:

⁹ Mendonça 2002, 273–4.

¹⁰ Benci's poem was immediately popular: it was first published at Venice in 1591, and a second corrected version issued from the Vatican Press a year later; the poem was reprinted throughout the seventeenth century, and was also included in the massive anthology of Jesuit epic poetry, the *Parnassus Societatis Iesu*, printed at Frankfurt in 1654. All references are taken from the edition of 1592.

¹¹ Rainier Carsughi (1647–1709), lecturer at the Jesuit Collegium Romanum in the late seventeenth century, advised his students to resist the temptations of Lucan, Statius, and Claudian and look only to Virgil when writing epic verse: Haskell 2010, 203.

Felices sociorum obitus, qui littore in Indo,
 Finitimam qua Goa uetus Salsethida tangit,
 Christum animis pulchroque olim per vulnera fuso
 Sanguine testati, laetis meruere piorum
 Adscribi ordinibus, sit fas mihi munere uestro
 Dicere caelicolae; vos o memorate canenti,
 Quae mens, qui sensus fuerit morientibus, et quae
 Gloria tanti operis sublimes aethere tollat. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 1.1–8)

The blessed martyrdom of those companions who once bore witness to Christ by their courage upon the shores of India where ancient Goa borders upon neighbouring Salcete, and by the shedding of their noble blood through wounds, deserve to be enrolled among the happy ranks of the saints, if I may be permitted to sing with your gift, you who dwell in Heaven. Recall for the poet their resolution, their emotions as they were dying, and how the glory of their great enterprise now raises this exalted band to Heaven.¹²

These lines resonate with references which recall key moments in Virgil's *Aeneid*: *socius* is the regular word used by Aeneas when addressing his companions (*Aen.* 1.198) and *littore in Indo* ("the shores of India") recalls Aeneas's arrival on "the shores of Lavinium" (*Lavinia litora*, *Aen.* 1.3). However, the *felices obitus* ("blessed martyrdom") of the Jesuit brothers contrasts with the *difficilis obitus* ("difficult death") of Dido (*Aen.* 4.694); the word *obitus* is used uniquely of Dido; while the adjective *felices*, used only twice throughout the *Aeneid*, recalls the *felices animae* ("blessed spirits") sought by the Sibyl and Aeneas in the Underworld (*Aen.* 6.669–70). Having outlined the subject of his poem, Benci then directly addresses his students (and global readership), by equating the Jesuit missionaries with the wandering heroes of epic. Yet here the individual, earthly glory immortalised in Classical epic is replaced in the poem by a desire for Heaven, entry into Paradise, and the reward of eternal bliss. Like Aeneas's frequent addresses to his companions, these lines are intended to bolster their fortitude and resolve:

At vos, o socii, quibus almi nomen Iesu
 Et nova praefixit pietas, et fervidus ardor,
 Ignati patris exemplo: quos sancta secutos
 Signa, per ignotas divinae lumina legis
 Ferre iuvat terras: longinqua per aequora uectos
 Seu procul Ammerice, seu uos diuersa Sinarum
 Ora tenet, quacumque plaga vos dividit orbis
 Extremus, vitae incertos, certosque pericli:
 Quae vos cumque agitant curae, quae munera, quisquis
 Vos labor exercet, fructu minuyente laborem:
 Si vacat, et tenuem vatis non spernitis orsum,

¹² Gwynne 2018, 106–7.

Accipite haec, vestras acuant quae carmina mentes,
Instillantque acres perfuso melle liquores. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 1.20–32)

But you, my companions, who have been inspired by sweet Jesus' name, a new devotion, and fervent love by Father Ignatius' example, you, who follow the holy standards and delight to carry the light of divine law across unknown lands; borne over distant oceans, whether detained in far-off America or upon the remote shores of China, wherever seas and far-flung lands separate you from us, fearing for your life, and into certain danger; whatever worries beset you, whatever duties, whatever task oppresses you, the rewards lessen the hard work; if you have leisure, and you do not despise the meagre undertaking of the poet, then take these verses to sharpen your resolution as you imbibe courageous draughts with their honey coating.¹³

After this exordium, the narrative starts *in medias res*. Rodolfo Acquaviva has already spent three years at the court of Akbar, trying in vain to procure the conversion of the emperor to Christianity. Realising the impossibility of his task, Acquaviva has returned reluctantly to Goa. News of the recent execution of Edmund Campion in London adds further to his feeling of dejection and misery. While meditating upon these events, Acquaviva is visited by his guardian angel who transports him to Paradise to witness a glorious cavalcade of Christian martyrs. The funereal colouring which the ghost of Marcellus gave to Virgil's *Heldenschau* in *Aeneid* 6 is dramatically intensified in the parade of wounded martyrs which Benci describes:

Sed nec cuncta licet paucis percurrere, nec sunt
Omnia clara procul spectantibus; aspice summa
Ora virum, densosque humeros, huc dirige gressum,
Victricem aspicias diverso funere gentem.
Pars rapido submersa mari, pars stipite fixa,
Pars pice, pars oleo, liquentis et unguine cerae
Perfusa, admotis facibus, lamnisque perusta,
Aurea cum volucris penetravit ad astra favilla. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 1.431–8)

Yet it is neither appropriate to race through all this in a few words, nor is everything clear to the spectators at a distance. Look at the men's proud expressions and the dense line, turn your attention here and you will see a people victorious in the diverse manner of their deaths. Some were drowned in the fast-flowing sea, some crucified, some covered in pitch, some in oil or the grease of melting wax, and scorched when torches or red-hot sheets of metal were applied; with their flickering ashes, they have gained entrance to golden Heaven.¹⁴

Christ is seen as the *rex gloriosus martyrum* ("the glorious king of martyrs"). Through His example, passage into Heaven is assured: "For all these people the love of Christ

¹³ Gwynne 2018, 106–7.

¹⁴ Gwynne 2018, 128–9.

and a great desire for Heaven extinguish their fear of death and bitter pain while they scorn their wounds and press on with their great undertaking,” the guardian angel observes.¹⁵ The parade culminates in the vision of the English martyr Edmund Campion and his companions Alexander Briant and Ralph Sherwin, who had recently been brutally executed at Tyburn. This proves particularly inspiring, and leads Acquaviva to exclaim, “O new examples of ancient virtue, which future ages will soon admire! O blessed piety! O brave hearts of brothers, whom Christ made worthy of such honour!”¹⁶ According to contemporary sources, when news of Campion’s death reached Goa, Acquaviva was observed lamenting that he had not yet been given a similar opportunity for martyrdom. Book One closes with Acquaviva’s resolve to embrace a similar fate.

Book Two comprises a dialogue between Rodolfo Acquaviva and João Vicente da Fonseca, archbishop of Goa (1582–87), on the forthcoming Jesuit mission.¹⁷ In Book Three, the brothers assemble and Afonso Pacheco describes previous missions and the problems encountered. If Book One offers a glimpse of Paradise, then the journey to Salcete in Book Three is a Classical *katabasis*, as their river crossing is described in language which echoes Aeneas’s descent into the Underworld. For example, the brothers’ ferryman recalls Charon, while the description of Hindu rites and practices evokes the monsters assembled at the entrance to the Underworld:

Tartarei hic volucres, miris simulacra figuris
 Monstrorum et facies obsceno corpore reddunt.
 Hic Sphinx horrida, et flammis armata Chimaera,
 Gorgoneum hic monstrum, diris hic feta colubris
 Hydra nocens, Harpyia rapax, et Scylla biformis,
 Turgidus hic Python, triplicique immanis hiatu
 Cerberus, ac vario concretæ semine pestes. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 3.568–74)

Here, winged creatures from Hell, and the images of monsters with incredible shapes, restore their appearance in their repulsive bodies. Here, the dreadful Sphinx, and the Chimaera armed with fire; there, the monstrous Gorgon, here, the poisonous Hydra, having newly brought forth deadly snakes, the greedy Harpy, twin-shaped Scylla, swollen Python and huge Cerberus with his triple maw, and other hybrid creatures.¹⁸

Book Four describes the religious debates at the court of Akbar, and the explanation of the Christian message affords Benci an opportunity for an epyllion on the life of Christ. A break in the narrative between Christ’s Ministry and His Passion and a direct quotation from Virgil, *maius opus moveo* (“I set in motion a greater

¹⁵ Gwynne 2018, 106–7.

¹⁶ Gwynne 2018, 136–7.

¹⁷ The Metropolitan See of Goa, known as ‘the Rome of Asia’, had jurisdiction from the Cape of Good Hope across South and East Asia.

¹⁸ Gwynne 2018, 202–3.

work”, Verg. *Aen.* 7.45), mark the second half of the poem in which Christ’s Passion will prefigure Acquaviva’s own inevitable martyrdom. Book Four concludes with Pentecost. As the Apostles disperse, particular emphasis is given to Thomas’s mission into India.

The premonitions of martyrdom, revealed to Rodolfo Acquaviva in the prophetic visions of Book One, are realised in Book Five when the local population attacks. In a divine council Christ, Ignatius and Xavier approve their imminent deaths. Echoes of the story of Nisus and Euryalus (*Aen.* 9.176–449) add an elegiac pathos to the account of the death of two young catechumens:

O irae immanes, et inexaurabile vulgus,
 Qui modus est caedis? Generis vos vincula nulla,
 Vos aetas non ulla movet. Iam patruus, eheu,
 Arripit Alphonsum puerum, caedemque minatur,
 Ni librum abijciat (librum namque ipse ferebat
 Unde preces, de more, dies noctesque sacerdos
 Funderet Alphonsus, orando et duceret horas)
 Abnegat hoc puer Alphonsus, nec ponet utrisque
 Abscisis manibus. Fremit acrius, et magis urget
 Barbarus, et (dirum), fulgenti deripit ambas
 Ense manus, cecidere ambae, librumque resectae
 Semianimis retinent digitis: irascitur hostis
 Hoc magis, et poenas invisio a sanguine sumit.
 Namque ferunt cum foeda Petrus simulacra deorum
 Erueret Bernus Coculini in finibus olim,
 Alphonsi indiciis oram qui noverat omnem
 Fecisse: Hinc patruo poenas odiisque suorum
 Dat puer immeritas, et fixo gutture collum
 Et captum leto posuit caput: et cadit ille,
 Ut rosa, quam nascens nimio sol decutit imbre.
 Domnicus Alphonsum confosso ut corpore vidit
 Exhalantem animam, turbatus imagine mortis,
 Incertus quid agat, fugiat ne, petat ne periculum,
 Constitit exanimis, telumque instare tremiscit:
 Tum faciem propior mortem ferrumque timenti,
 Tentat nequicquam celeres extendere gressus,
 Sed dolor, et gelida prohibet formidine sanguis.
 Huc periture veni, cursuque et voce secutus
 Miles ait, comitem ne desere: dicere versus
 Vos soliti, alternis, iunctis aut vocibus ambo,
 Ite ambo, laudesque Deo persolvite vestro.
 Dixerat, et tenerum latus inter et ilia ferrum
 Condit, et Alphonsi rapiens ad flebile corpus,
 Alterum in alterius proiectum funere voluit.
 Ille manus tendit, dulcem complexus amicum.

Et visus sensisse alter, blandeque recepit.
 Quae vobis, quae nunc, pueri, pro laudibus istis
 Carmina persolvam? Meritas mea carmina laudes
 Deficiunt, vestraque dabunt nihil indole dignum.
 Sed vobis laus certa manet: pulcherrima magnus
 Dona dedit Christus, superumque adiunxit honori:
 Et vestrum admirans venerabitur India nomen,
 In mare praecipiti dum flumine profluet Indus. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 5.961–1003)

O inhuman rage! Implacable mob, does your slaughter know no end? Neither ties of kinship nor youth move you! Alas, Afonso's uncle now grabbed him and threatened to kill the boy unless he threw away his books (for Afonso always carried a book from which he poured out prayers day and night like a priest, and would pass the time at his devotions), but the boy Afonso refuses and says that he will not put aside his book even if both his hands are cut off. The savage rages more fiercely at this and presses on further and (fearful to behold) slices off both hands with his flashing sword; both fell to the ground and, carved off, still grasp the book in their twitching fingers. The enemy becomes even more infuriated by this and exacts vengeance upon his hated relative. For they said that when Pietro Berno first overthrew the foul statues of the gods on the borders of Cuncolim, he had done so on the information received from Afonso who knew the whole area well. Thus the boy pays the undeserved penalty to his uncle and for the hatred of his own people, and when his throat had been cut, he reclined his neck and head subdued in death. And he falls like a rose overwhelmed by the early morning dew.

Dominico, as he sees Afonso with a fatal wound and breathing his last, is disturbed by the sight of his death, is uncertain whether to run away or face the danger? He froze, out of his mind in panic, and started to tremble as the weapon approaches, then the face presses closer on the one fearing death and the sword; in vain, he tries to take to his heels, but grief and cold fear prevent him. "Come here, to die," the warrior shouts as he runs after him. "Don't desert your friend. You two, who are always reciting your prayers, one after the other, or in chorus, go together, sing your praises to your God." He stopped talking and sinks his sword between his tender flanks and groin, and then drags his body to Afonso's pitiable corpse, he rolled them across each other in death. Dominico stretches out his hands and embraced his dear friend who seemed to feel his presence and sweetly acknowledges him.

What songs, what can I now render to you, boys, to match your glorious deeds. My poetry lacks sufficient merit and will not provide anything worthy of your excellence. Certain glory awaits you. Christ Almighty has given the most beautiful gifts and has joined you to the honours of the blessed. India will admire and venerate your name, for as long as the Indus flows into the sea with its rolling stream.¹⁹

As with the account of the deaths of the five principal martyrs, there seems an almost morbid delight in gruesome detail. The image of the twitching fingers still clutching the breviary rivals the goriest battle scenes in Lucan or Silius Italicus, while Lucretius had observed the movement in severed limbs. Comparison with

¹⁹ Gwynne 2018, 336–9.

contemporary reports of the incident, however, reveals that if anything Benci has toned down the details of their deaths. The altarboy Alfonso not only had his hands cut off when he refused to relinquish his breviary, but was then hamstrung and left in agony. He was found, still alive, the following day and finally despatched.²⁰

Book Six opens with the reception of the martyrs in Paradise:

Limes erat late gemmis illusus et auro.
 Difficili adscensu. multi potuere vocati
 Ferre gradum, paucis res obtigit, aequus amavit
 Quos Pater, et miserans vultu respexit amico.
 Agnovit Rodulphus iter, nam lacteus ibat
 Purpureo liquor immistus, procerumque piorum
 Effigies memorem revocabat cognita mentem.
 Quos inter cum se ipse nova sub imagine vidit
 Et virtute pares socios, hoc munere laetus
 Promissamque fidem superumque agnovit amorem. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 6.11–20)

The golden path was strewn far and wide with jewels. The ascent was difficult. Many have been summoned who had the power to mount the steps, but few manage. Our Father loved them equally, and pitying them, looked back with a kindly expression. Rodolfo recognised the path, for the Milky Way was stretching out stained with purple, and he remembered the images of those great and holy men. When he saw himself in a new form among their number and equal in virtue, he was overjoyed by his reward and he acknowledged the faith and the love promised by those who dwell in Heaven.²¹

Although Benci is imitating Aeneas's apotheosis in Vegio's supplement, he was on dangerous ground theologically, as none of the martyrs had been officially recognised by the Church, nor had Ignatius or Xavier yet been either beatified or canonised.²² The narrative continues with the recovery of the the martyrs' bodies and their funeral. Because the poem was written as part of the campaign to have the martyrs canonised, Benci makes the event more striking for his Roman audience by associating their funeral with the pomp of the recent translation of the relics of the fourth-century Greek theologian Saint Gregory of Nazianzus from Santa Maria in Campo Marzio to Saint Peter's Basilica (1580):

His ego crediderim miratos aetheris ignes
 Lucentem radiis noctem, vincique timentes,
 Accendisse magis fulgentibus aethera flammis,
 Quin certasse etiam praestantem cernere pompam
 Christicolum ritu, Indorum per littora, talem,

²⁰ Goldie, S. J. 1897, 135; for this gory trope in Classical rhetoric and poetry see, *The Severed Hand*.

²¹ Gwynne 2018, 348–9.

²² Ignatius was beatified by Pope Paul V on 27 July 1609; Francis Xavier by the same on 25 October 1619; both were canonised by Pope Gregory XV on 22 May 1622; see Ditchfield 2010.

Qualem Gregorii Nazanxi antistitis ossa
 Duxere, antiquos Roma referente triumphos:
 Tertius a decimo cum felix arbiter orbis
 Gregorius transfert humili de marmore ad aedem
 Textilibus pictam gemmis, auroque nitentem,
 Vaticanus ubi mons sese acquavit Olympo. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 6.677–88)

I could very well believe that the stars in Heaven stood in amazement at the night glittering with these torches and, fearing to be outdone, had illuminated the Heavens further with gleaming stars, or rather, had striven in competition at the sight of such an outstanding ceremony, in the Christian rite along the shores of India, as when they moved the relics of Gregory of Nazianzus, and Rome recreated ancient triumphs. The happy judge of the world, Pope Gregory XIII, transferred the bones from a humble grave to a chapel embellished with precious stones matched together and shining with gold where the Vatican hill rivals Heaven.²³

Acquaviva himself appears to the archbishop of Goa while he was celebrating an anniversary mass on the feast day of Ignatius of Azevedo.²⁴ Unlike the Classical ghosts who return from Elysium, bloody and torn, Acquaviva is radiant with his wounds gleaming (and curiously recalls the appearance of Ascanius at *Aen.* 7.278):

Non qualis Mogorum longis e finibus olim
 Venerat, aut nuper Goa decesserat urbe;
 Pulchrius at multo diffundens corpore lumen
 Affuit ante oculos, et nota maior imago.
 Purpureo insignem iaciebat vertice flammam,
 Aurea pendebant demissa monilia collo,
 Corpus honos Tyrio redimibat regius ostro,
 Et rutilo clarum lucebat sidere pectus. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 6.415–22)

Not as he had lately returned from the distant lands of the Mughals, or when he had recently departed Goa; but an image much more handsome, pouring light from his body, larger than in life, stood before his eyes. From his bloody head, he cast an amazing tongue of fire, a golden collar hung low from his neck, his body was wreathed with the regal honour of Tyrian purple and a red star blazed bright upon his chest.²⁵

The poem concludes with the inscription placed on the tomb as the five brothers are interred together: “until the final day will destroy the world and their souls, as commanded, will return into their own bodies”.

²³ Gwynne 2018, 382–3.

²⁴ 15 July (old calendar): Ignatius de Azevedo and his forty companions had been thrown overboard by the Huguenot skipper Sourie en route to the West Indies.

²⁵ Gwynne 2018, 368–9.

II The *Heldenschau*

As we have seen, while meditating on the first martyrs Acquaviva is visited by an angel who transports him to Heaven to witness a cortège of early Christian martyrs. Acquaviva thus seems to fulfill the prophecy of Saint Paul's words to the Corinthians (I Cor. 4:9), "For I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men".²⁶ In this context, the angel's frequent direct question *Aspicis?* ("Do you see?", 351), is particularly striking. Echoing Anchises' words to Aeneas as future Roman heroes parade past on the Plains of Elysium, the question is not only directed at Acquaviva; it is also directed at the seminarian readership with the intention of inviting them to share Acquaviva's vision, meditate on their own vocation, and prepare for their work as professed members of the Order. Benci references the recent cycle of paintings which had been added to the fifth-century circular church of Santo Stefano Rotondo on the Caelian Hill:

Hunc spectat magis atque magis, secumque volutat
 Maxima quae impressa in gyrum spectacula pandit.
 Qualia, quae vivis hominum simulacra figuris,
 Qui Christum impavidi quondam cecidere professi
 Artifices pinxere manus, temploque sacrarunt
 Roma tuo, Caeles ubi primum insedit Etruscus,
 Caelius e cuius deductus nomine collis;
 Pannonii hic sedem Stephano posuistis et aram. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 1.245–52)

Rodolfo stares intently at this and wonders at the meaning of the wonderful sights depicted in the circle. Like the frescoes with the lifelike images of those people, who long ago acknowledged Christ and died fearlessly, which skilful hands have painted and dedicated in your church, Rome, where once Etruscan Caeles, from whom Caelian hill takes its name, had his abode;²⁷ here you Hungarians have placed a house and an altar to Saint Stephen.²⁸

On the orders of Pope Gregory XIII (1572–85), the complex was given over to the Hungarians for use as a Jesuit seminary, and in 1580 it was joined with the German College to become the Pontificum Collegium Germanicum et Hungaricum. Its walls were redecorated with a new fresco cycle by Niccolò Circignani ("il Pomarancio") and Antonio Tempesta, of thirty-two scenes of early Christian

²⁶ Puto enim quod Deus nos apostolos novissimos ostendit tanquam morti destinatos, quia spectaculum facti sumus mundo et angelis et hominibus.

²⁷ Caeles Vibenna: see Cic. *De Off.* 3.16.66; *Rep.* 2.18.33; Tac. *Ann.* 4.65, "The hill was originally called Oak Hill because of its dense growth of oak trees, and was later named 'Caelian' after Caeles Vibenna, an Etruscan chief who, for helping Rome, had been granted the hill as a residence by Tarquin Priscus."

²⁸ Gwynne 2018, 118–9.

martyrdom arranged chronologically according to the persecutions of the Roman emperors, beginning with the proto-martyr Stephen (after whom the church is named: see fig. 2) and culminating in the vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem.



Michele Laurentano, rector of the College, made it clear that these frescoes were not to be seen as works of art, but as visual aids for the purpose of teaching and meditation: “The sight of an infinite number of torments and martyrdoms moves one to devotion. And even if the painting is mediocre but very devout, many people cannot see it without being moved to tears and spiritually uplifted.”²⁹ The frescoes, mediocre or otherwise, were immediately printed and disseminated across Europe in a small volume entitled *Ecclesiae militantis triumphus* (Rome: Bartholomaeus Grassius, 1585), which went to several editions.

The format of the frescoes is based upon the *Evangelicae historiae imagines*, an illustrated book of Gospel meditations commissioned from Jerónimo Nadal by Ignatius himself, although he did not live to see the work.³⁰ Indeed, each image reads like the page of a book with header, panel, and footnotes (see fig. 3).

²⁹ Cited by Keane 2009, 4.

³⁰ Eventually printed by Martin Nuntius in Antwerp in 1593 and 1594: see Buser 1976; also Bailey 2003, 122–3, 132–52, figs 38–51.



A single example must suffice. Above the fresco of the martyrdom of Saint Stephen a monumental inscription from the Psalms reads:

EFFVNDERVNT SANGVINEM S[ANCTI] IN CIRCVTIV HIERUSALEM
 (“The saints have shed their blood round about Jerusalem”, Psalm 78:3)

The incidents in the central narrative scene are keyed by letters of the alphabet to explanatory captions, in Latin and Italian, below:

I VDAEI ECCLESIAM DEI PERSEQVNTUR

LAPIDATVR STEPHANVS

CAEDVNTUR APOSTOLI

IACOBVS FRATER IOHANNIS [OCCIDI]TVR GLADIO

Like so many later visitors to the church, Charles Dickens was appalled by the brutality of these scenes and observed that “these hideous paintings” displayed “such a panorama of horror and butchery that no man could imagine in his sleep, though he were to eat a whole pig raw, for supper”.³¹ Be that as it may, the frescoes, and the popular series of prints and engravings based upon them, were

³¹ Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, 136, “The spectacle of cruelty spilled out as pornography onto the walls of the Jesuit college churches in Rome; the scenes, copied and imitated in printed works, became European bestsellers. [...] in a series of scenes depicting the martyrdom of the early Roman Christians, Pomarancio explicitly and even obscenely brought to life the sado-erotic complicity between the voyeurism of the Roman emperors, the deadly precision of the torturers, the calm submission of the enraptured victims, and the menacing sight of the instruments of torture”; Županov 2006, 169–70.

intended not to give the seminarians nightmares, but to provide them with material for meditation and prayer. The present tense in the explanatory panel makes the images more vivid and immediate, while the fact that each verb is passive underlines the martyrs' obedience to the will of God. Punning upon the dubious etymological association of Caelian with *caelum* ("Heaven"), the church, which in its original form was built in the image of the Holy Sepulchre, can be seen to represent the Heavenly Jerusalem around which the martyrs parade, recalling the Christian cavalcade witnessed by Acquaviva in Book One.

In the second of his orations "In Praise of Poetry", Benci argues that poetry is superior to painting as it appeals not only to sight, but also by its sound. Discouraging on a simile from Vergil's *Georgics* (*Ut saepe ingenti bello*, 4.279–83), Benci concludes, "Who, when they read such lines, is so completely stupid or deaf that he does not seem to be in that very battle, in the midst of the heat of the fighting and bloodshed?"³² His *ekphraseis* of martyrdom function in the same way, and were expected to be similarly engaging for the seminarian readership. In addition, it can be argued that the extended description of the martyrs' deaths in Jesuit epic are also intended to act as funeral orations which magnify these acts of bravery in terms of Classical heroism. For example, Polybius had claimed that the most important consequence of the funeral oration was to inspire young Roman spectators "to endure every suffering for the public welfare in the hope of winning the glory that attends upon brave men".³³ Acquaviva's death exemplifies such bravery, modified through the *Spiritual Exercises*, and recalls the frescoed image of Saint Stephen as he kneels in patient submission before the enemy:

Talia dicentem circumstant agmine denso,
Et clamore ruunt hostes. nec pulchra tueri
Ora ausus quisquam. tantum decus enitet ore,
Tantus honor fronti. crudeli vulnere miles
Occupat aversum bis caeso poplite; at ille,
Sacra velut certo succumbens victima ferro,
Innexus genibus terram petit, inclinato
Vertice suppliciter, dulcemque appellat Iesum,
Cuius amor docuit saevam contemnere mortem. (Benci, *Quinque martyres*, 5.800–08)

Closing ranks, the enemy surround him as he was speaking and then, with a shout, rushed forward. No one dared to look the beautiful vision in the face. Such grace shone in his expression, there was such honour on his brow. A soldier seized him and hamstringed both legs with a ghastly wound. Yet that renowned man, like a sacrificial victim sinking under a sure blow, bent his knees to the ground, bowed his head in an attitude

³² Benci, *Oratio Octava*, 50v, "Quis enim est usque adeo tardus et surdus, quin ea cum legit, esse sibi in eo proelio, in medioque ardore pugnae caedisque videatur?"

³³ Polybius, *Hist.* 6.54.3; trans. Paton 2011, 3, 390–91.

of humble entreaty, and called upon sweet Jesus, whose love had taught him to scorn a brutal death.³⁴

III Pereira, *Paciecidos*'

A similar didactic pervades Pereira's *Paciecidos*. In order to understand this poem, however, some historical context is again necessary. The Jesuit arrival in Japan, despite initial success on the western periphery of the country, and the excited reception afforded a Japanese embassy to Europe (1582–90) sent under the auspices of Alessandro Valignano, *visitator* ("visitor" or "inspector") of the Jesuit missions in the East Indies, took place at a critical moment in the country's history. The Japanese state was being reconstructed upon the ruins of the civil war which had devastated the country since the end of the fifteenth century. While Christianity had initially been welcomed, the climate of appeasement changed dramatically with the advent of the powerful Tokugawa Shogunate, which judged that Christianity posed a threat to the nascent new order and had to be extirpated. As a result, a thorough persecution of the Christian missionaries and their adherents began, culminating in a series of horrific mass executions of undescrivable brutality.

An extensive critical apparatus of marginalia and notes supplements Pereira's poem to explicate these circumstances for the contemporary reader. Indeed, the argument of the individual books would perhaps prove incomprehensible without the useful index which accompanies the poem. The inclusion of basic information about the Society of Jesus indicates that this poem was also intended for a readership outside Jesuit circles. (A seminarian, for example, would not need notes to identify Francisco Borgia, Luigi Gonzaga, or Stanislaw Kostka.) The argument to Book Three is given here as an example, and the explanatory notes have been added from the index:

Libri Tertii Argumentum.

Narrantur Pacieci munia apud Iappones: Emoritur Cubosama: eius filio Xoguno imperante Provincialis creatur Paciecus, et loco Episcopi Valentii Ecclesiae Iapponensi gubernator praeficitur. A Chusamono apostata accusatione defertur ad Mondum regni Tacaci gubernatorem: proditor a Mondo lubenter excipitur, et de captando Pacieco ambo decernunt. (Pereira, *Paciecidos*, p. 37)

The argument of the third book:

Pacheco's duties among the Japanese are recounted; the *Cubosama* dies; Pacheco is created Provincial during the shogunate of his son and made governor of the Japanese church in place of Bishop Valentius. He is brought before Mondo, governor of the province of

³⁴ Gwynne 2018, 328–9.

Tacaco, by the accusation of the apostate Chusamono; the traitor is willingly received by Mondo, and both confirm the need to seize Pacheco.

XOGUNUS. Nomen commune Iapponum imperatoribus, quo prae omnibus titulis, utitur is, qui modo regnat Cubosammae filius.

VALENTIUS. P(ater) Iacobus Valentius, Lusitanus, societatis Iesu, Iapponiae Episcopus, qui cum non posset persecutionis causa ad Iapponem accedere, curam Episcopalem commisit Pacieco, ipse Sinensis Episcopatus curam gessit.

CHUSAMONUS. Christianus Iappon, qui a fide deficiens, Paciecum prodit. vulgo Chusaimon.

MONDUS. Unus e tribus gubernatoribus Tacaci, qui Paciecum comprehendit, et ad urbem Nangasaquum Midsuno remisit.

TACACUM. Regum Iapponicum, vulgo Tacaco.

MIDSUNUS Midsunus Cavachius, praefectus Nangasaqui, qui Paciecum, et socios, Imperatoris iussu a carceribus avocatos occidit. (Pereira, *Paciecidos*, pp. 219–34)

SHOGUN. The general name for the emperors of Japan, which the son of the *Cubosama*, who now rules, uses before all other titles

VALENTIUS. Father Jacob Valentius, Portuguese, member of the Society of Jesus, Bishop of Japan, who since he could not arrive in Japan because of the persecutions, gave care of the episcopacy to Pacheco, while he took charge of the bishopric of China.

CHUSAIMON. A Japanese Christian who, lacking faith, betrayed Pacheco, Chusaimon in the vernacular tongue.

MONDUS. One of the three governors of Tacaco, who seized Pacheco and sent him to Midsumo at the town of Nagasaki.

TACACO. A province of Japan, Tacaco in the vernacular.

MIDSUNUS. Midsunus Cavachius, prefect of Nagasaki, who killed Pacheco and his companions, removed from gaol on the orders of the emperor.

The exotic Japanese names, transferred into Latin and successfully adapted to the hexameter, do not hinder an appreciation of the poem.³⁵ On the contrary, they act like the Etruscan and Italic place names in Virgil, and contribute to the idea of Jesuit *imperium sine fine* (“empire without end”). This is defined in Book Three in a lengthy panegyric on the achievements of Muzio Vitelleschi (1563–1645), sixth superior general of the Order, during whose tenure of office the first jubilee of the foundation of the Society was celebrated. The poet lists the Order’s achievements, and lauds their work against heresy and their missions in Brazil, Ethiopia, Tibet, and China:

³⁵ For the accommodation of foreign place names to the verse, note that Cicero praised a line of verse as “illuminated by brilliant names of places” (*Orat.* 49.163; cf. Quint. 12.10.33). The trope was repeated by Augustine, who described the Book of Amos as “embellished with the names of places as though with lights” (*De doctrina Christiana*, 4.7.17).

Haec videt ab Romae septena Mutius arce,
 Principe quo primum condens gens aurea seclum,
 Aeternum spondet lustris volventibus aevum;
 Nec mirum est, veterum nam quis felicior illo,
 Iesuadum imperium terris extendit, et astris?
 Hoc duce conscendit meritas Ignatius aras,
 Xaverique decus, Borgaeque ingentia facta
 Templacolunt, Gonsaga tibi solemnia mittunt,
 Et Kostcae aethereos Polonia solvit honores.
 Ille etiam extinctos lapponum in finibus olim
 Ioannem, Didacumque astris, Paulumque sacravit,
 Et pia thura dedit, sacrisque insignibus auxit.
 Is modo Brasilicae palmas, et facta cohortis
 Clavigero memorat Patri, det poscit honorem
 Divinum, et tandem meritis altaria ponat.
 Macte Parens, divum nimium faecunde! darentur
 Si tibi, quae petimus longissima saecula? nostrum
 Quis foret Indigetum numerus! maiora paterent
 Templas, locusque aris, simulachris ara deesset.
 Haec astris: nec terrae unquam te regna minorem
 Accepere; tuis vexillum Andradius heros
 Extulit auspiciis, perque invia regna Tibeti
 Intravit, coeloque urbes cum rege subegit
 Necnon et terrae steriles, atque arva Potentis
 Infaecunda olim, te nunc cultore feraces
 Promittunt messes, felix quas dextra Casellae
 Mandavit sulcis, coelestique amne Ioannes
 Irrigat, et falcem iam nunc supponit aristis. (Pereira, *Paciecidos*, pp. 42–3)

Muzio watches these events from the sevenfold citadel at Rome, where first a golden race, founding the first century, pledges an eternal age as the years roll by; it is no wonder, for who of the ancients is more blessed than that man, who extends the authority of the Society of Jesus over the lands and to Heaven itself? Under this leadership, Ignatius has ascended deserved altars, churches honour the glory of Xavier and the great deeds of Borgia and perform solemn rites for you, Gonzaga, and Poland pays heavenly honours to Kostka. He has also sanctified to the heavens John, Didacus and Paul, once killed on the borders of Japan, and has given pious incense, and augmented them with holy images.³⁶ He recently reminds the key-bearing Father of the deeds of those in Brazil and their martyrdom and asks that he give them divine honour and finally place altars to those who deserve it. Well done Father! So abundant in saints! What things you would achieve if the long life, which we hope, would be given you! What a number of native tribes would be ours! Greater churches would appear and places for altars and altars for images would not be lacking. These things concern Heaven; and the earthly kingdoms

³⁶ The three Japanese Jesuits killed amongst the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Japan on 5 February 1597 at Nagasaki: John Soan de Goto, James Kisai, Paulo Miki.

have not received less under your authority; under your auspices the hero Antonio de Andrade raised the banner, and entered the pathless kingdoms of Tibet, and subdued the cities for Heaven with the king, and furthermore the barren lands and the fields of Potens, once infertile, while you are now their husbandman promise abundant crops, which the blessed right hand of Casella has planted in furrows, and John waters them from the heavenly stream and already now brings the sickle to the crop.

As in the *Quinque martyres*, the *Paciecidos* culminates in the reception of the martyrs from Nagasaki in Paradise. The martyrs are escorted to Heaven in triumph by Japoniel, the guardian angel of Japan. As they arrive a brilliant cloud bursts in two, revealing nine crowns and nine palms. Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier, both recently canonised (22 May 1622), welcome the martyrs to Paradise:

Protinus aethereo nubes praelucet Olympo
 Candida, Iesuadumque sacros imitata caminos
 Innocuis splendet flammis, prunasque rubentes
 Incendit, simulatque rubris variata pyropis.
 Non olim incensis tibi, magne Elia, quadrigis
 Clarius ire datum, tales se lucida nubes
 In flammis volvit, tantoque accenditur auro.
 Ut propius venere, globus tunc nubis ab alto
 Scinditur in partes geminas, intusque refulget
 Syderibus, palmasque novem, totidemque coronas
 Ostendit, Lysiumque ducem, clarosque sodales
 Sedibus excepit niveis, ostroque locavit.
 Tum circum Aligeri proceres, gentesque peritae
 Conventus variare modos, flexusque ciere,
 Et digitis pulsare lyras, et pectine chordas,
 Aera mulcebant citharis, et sydera cantu;
 Necnon alternis plaudit chorus alter, ovantes
 Mille agitant pedibus plausus, et nablia tentant
 Ad numerum; festisque sonat clamoribus aether;
 Iesuadae laeti ascendunt, oculisque choreas,
 Divinosque probant numeros, et carmina laudant.
 Evadunt celeres, caelique palatia vecti,
 Adstabant portis, gentis cum maximus author
 Loiola effulgens auro, stellisque decorus,
 Egreditur, signumque manu radiantis Iesu
 Deponens, patriis venientes excipit ulnis.
 Hunc prope gemmarum radiis Xaverius ardens,
 Atque Tago, atque Indo, totoque Oriente coruscus
 Adproperat, claro radiantem pectore solem
 Gestabat, se uno radiis atque igne minorem. (Pereira, *Paciecidos*, pp. 209–10)

Immediately, a gleaming cloud shines forth on heavenly Olympus and resembling the sacred furnace of the members of the Society it shines bright with harmless flames, and

kindles glowing coals and imitates the glittering with diamonds and rubies. Not such a bright cloud embraced you in its flames, great Elijah, when you were permitted to travel gleaming in a fiery chariot, and is illuminated by so much gold. As they approached the cloud bursts in two halves from the top and glitters inside with stars and reveals nine palms and crowns and receives the Portuguese leader and his renowned companions on snowy thrones and shrouds them in purple. Then, the winged host everywhere singing in harmony and those skilled to create songs and to move bows and pluck lyres with their fingers and chords with quills, charm the heavenly stars with harps and song; moreover, a second chorus applauds alternately and thousands rejoicing create applause by stamping and pluck harps to the beat; the sky rocks with the festive noise. The members of the Society of Jesus cheerfully ascend and inspect the heavenly chorus and crowds and praise their songs. They head off quickly and, conveyed to Heaven's palaces, they stand at the gates, the great founder Loyola gleaming in gold and decorated with stars comes out with a group of people, making the sign with his hand of radiant Jesus and receives them as they arrive in his paternal embrace. Next to him, Xavier, glittering with sparkling jewels, and crowned with Tagus and Indus and the whole east, approaches; he was wearing a sunburst on his radiant chest, and itself lesser by one fire with its rays.

This last book also is concerned with the martyrs' earthly remains. The Shogun, however, had ordered the martyrs' ashes and bones to be ground down and then scattered at sea. This results in a curious piece of poetic invention, as the River Lima summons Neptune to create a submarine shrine for the nine heroes which must surpass the Pyramids and the tomb of Mausolus: "let a thousand nymphs add scarlet shells and bind it round about with coral and decorate the roof with glittering pearls."³⁷

It is perhaps worth recalling at this point the complaints Erasmus made against the literary circles of Rome earlier in the century. In his dialogue *Ciceronianus* (published 1528), he had criticised the excessive syncretism and their attempts to describe Christian concepts in Classical Latin. Erasmus had singled out Jacopo Sannazaro's epic *De partu Virginis* for particular criticism, saying that Sannazaro would have deserved more praise if he had treated his subject more reverently:

What is the point of all those invocations of the Muses and Phoebus? And what do we make of it when he depicts his Virgin meditating especially on the sibylline oracles, when he inappropriately brings in Proteus prophesying about Christ, and fills everything with Nymphs, Hamadryads, and Nereids?³⁸

Not surprisingly, the Jesuit epicists completely ignored Erasmus.³⁹ They looked to

³⁷ Pereira, *Paciecidos*, 214, "rubentes / Mille addant Nymphae conchias, circumque retexant / Coraliis, gemmisque super fulgentibus ornent."

³⁸ Erasmus, *Dialogus Ciceronianus*, "Nunc quorsum attinebat hic toties invocare Musas et Phoebum? Quam quod virginem fingit intentam praecipue Sybyllinis versibus, quod non aptum Proteum inducit de Christo vaticinantem, quod Nympharum, Hamadryadum, et Nereidum plena facit omnia?"

³⁹ In the preface to *Iesus Puer* (1690), his epic on the boyhood of Christ, Thomas Ceva (1648–1737)

the tradition of the earliest Christian writers and happily repeated their formulaic paganisms where *caelicolae* are angels, *Olympus* represents the Christian Heaven, and so forth.⁴⁰ Pereira's appeal has epic precedent in Venus's request to the River Numicius to wash away from her son's body whatever immortal part remained before his translation to the stars, in Vegio's thirteenth book of the *Aeneid* (13.626–7).⁴¹ More importantly, the underwater chapel finds a Christian precursor in the watery graves of Saints Irene of Tomar and Clement:

Hic mores, et facta virum, claroque figuras
 Insertent auro, tantoque emblemata caelent,
 Ut Tagus inuideat, vitreo sub gurgite quamvis
 Virgineos thalamos, venerandisque ossibus aras
 Irenae extulerit; nec iam se Pontica iacent
 Aequeora, Clementi, sibi quod memorabile quondam
 Extruxisse datum, coelo aedificante, sacellum.
 Nunc superses tibi maius opus Neptune: parandum
 Pluribus hospitium est, pluresque in fluctibus arae. (Pereira, *Paciecidos*, p. 214)

Here let them place the mores and deeds of the men and make figures in gleaming gold, and engrave such a great ornament that the river Tagus may be envious, although under the glassy waves he has buried the virginal bed and altar of the venerable bones of Saint Irene; and the Pontic sea may no longer boast because he was once allowed to have raised for himself the memorable shrine of Saint Clement, while heaven was the builder. Now there is a greater task for you, Neptune; a home must be prepared for many and many altars must be made in your waves.

IV Conclusion

These epics were written with a specific purpose and for a particular audience. They were composed by Jesuit professors not only for the delectation, but also, and more importantly, for the edification of their students who would perhaps face similar situations in the Jesuit global mission of enlightenment. As such, they offer a significant window on the early pioneer decades of Jesuit expansion in Asia, its reception in Europe, and the central role which this played in Jesuit pedagogy. These poems also played an important part in the propaganda battle with the Protestants over the significance of saints, martyrs, and their relics, and to demonstrate how far the glory of the Holy Roman Church extended.⁴² As we

states explicitly that he found the Christian poems of Sannazaro and Vida inspirational.

⁴⁰ Green 2006, 351–72.

⁴¹ Vegio, *Short Epics*, 40, “Hunc corpus nati abluere et deferre sub undas, | quicquid erat mortale, iubet.”

⁴² Županov 2006, 170, “The sweet death *pro fide* (for the faith) was cultivated in colleges and seminaries in Rome to prepare for the worst (or the best) those who would be called under oath of

have seen, Aeneas's divinely ordained mission to found Rome provides an obvious point of reference. Whereas Classical epic is imbued with the culture of individual earthly glory, in Jesuit epic this has been replaced by a desire for Heaven and the reflected glory of entry into Paradise, and painful exit from this world is more than compensated for by entrance into an eternal life of bliss in the next. Aeneas travels to found Rome; the Jesuit heroes travel from Rome, or Goa (known as the "Rome of the East"), to spread Roman Catholicism. Like Aeneas, they are driven by divine will, but Christian certainty contrasts with the fickle fortune of Antiquity. This is not unique to Jesuit epic: in the fourteenth century, Henry of Avranches had composed a fourteen-book epic on the life of Saint Francis, and had claimed that his saintly hero was greater than the military heroes of Classical epic, for Francis not only conquered the world, but had also overcome his own passions.⁴³ Reading the lives of the saints brought Ignatius to put aside his own ideas of military conquest in favour of spiritual endeavours, and this tension is echoed throughout Jesuit epic. It is also represented pictorially in the emblematic device which prefaces Pereira's poem (see fig. 4).



This shows Pacheco kneeling in chains between a galleon tossing on the waves and a flaming pyre. The image relates literally to the twin hazards which Pacheco has

obedience to join the most difficult missions in *partibus infidelium* or among the Protestants.”

⁴³ Henry of Avranches, *Legenda sancti Francisci*, 1, 11–15, “Nam quid respectu Francisci Iulius, aut quid / Gessit Alexander memorabile? Iulius hostem / Vicit, Alexander mundum, Franciscus utrumque. / Nec solum vicit mundum, Franciscus et hostem, / Sed sese, bello vincens et victus eodem.”

endured: *unda hinc conspirat, et inde ignis; uterque meos in caelum attollit honores* (“On this side the wave, on the other fire conspires against me; both raise my honours to Heaven,” *Paciecidos*, 12.125–6). Above, the Jesuit monogram *IHS* and the motto *EX VTROQUE PACIECVS* reinforce the message of his sacrifice. More subtly, the emblematic image associates Pacheco with Caesar to whom this motto is generally applied, *EX VTROQUE CAESAR*. Emblem books, such as Paradinus’ *Symbola Heroica* (Antwerp: Christophorus Plantinus, 1583), explain the meaning (see fig. 5):



Hoc apophthegmate: *Ex utroque Caesar*, significatur, his duobus, armis scilicet et literis, Iulium Caesarem recto corporis statu semper gerendis strenue invigilantem, factum totius orbis dominatorem. (Marcus Claudius Paradinus, *Symbola Heroica*, p. 284)

The meaning ascribed to this maxim, “from both directions Caesar”, is that, from two sides, namely arms and letters, Julius Caesar standing tall, always watching diligently what needs to be done, was made master of the whole world.

This is, indeed, exactly what was expected of the new *Miles Christianus* serving in the Jesuit corps of the army of Christ in the *Ecclesia Militans et Triumphans*.

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Figures

1. *Akbarnāma*: Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS 03.263b. © Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.
2. Martyrdom of Saint Stephen, Santo Stefano Rotondo, Rome. Photo author.
3. Jerónimo Nadal, *Evangelicae historiae imagines, adnotationes et meditationes* (Antwerp: Martinus Nuntius, 1593 and 1594).
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