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## Archiving Jesuit Libraries: Past, Present, and Future

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# Archiving Jesuit Libraries: Past, Present, and Future

KYLE ROBERTS

The announcement by the Maryland province in April 2019 that it was discontinuing its affiliation with Wheeling Jesuit University raises important questions about the archival implications of moments of transition in the Society of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Since the opening of schools in Gandía in 1546 and Messina and Palermo in 1548, teaching has been central to the Jesuits' mission and identity.<sup>2</sup> Closure of Jesuit schools also has a long history. Jesuits maintained an estimated 650 schools on the eve of their global suppression in 1773.<sup>3</sup> Restored Jesuits in the United States opened and closed schools throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; their brethren in Europe and Latin America frequently had those decisions made for them as they faced waves of persecution and expulsion. Yet, even with the benefit of historical context, the news about Wheeling is unsettling. There are, of course, many issues involved in the closure, merger, or transfer of any school's affiliation, but of particular concern to us should be the place of the archive in the process. This is an issue of more than just who retains ownership of records; it is crucially about what protocols exist for documenting moments of completion.

Two conferences held at Boston College—"Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives" (2018) and "Engaging Sources: The Tradition and Future of Collecting History in the Society of Jesus" (2019)—spoke in varying degrees to the urgency of the moment. Archivists, administrators, and scholars from across North America and around the world came together to wrestle with, and seek solutions for, issues related to the preservation and provision of access to Catholic archival holdings in the face of declining numbers of women and men religious and

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<sup>1</sup> "Wheeling Jesuit Will End Its Jesuit Affiliation at School Year's End," April 10, 2019, <https://wvmetronews.com/2019/04/10/wheeling-jesuit-will-end-its-jesuit-affiliation-at-school-years-end> (accessed April 19, 2022); Rick Seltzer, "Tied to Bishop Scandal, Wheeling Jesuit Chairman Steps Down Months after Exigency," *Inside Higher Ed*, June 11, 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/06/11/tied-bishop-scandal-wheeling-jesuit-chairman-steps-down-months-after-exigency> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> John W. O'Malley, S.J., "Concluding Remarks," in *I gesuiti e La "Ratio studiorum"*, ed. Manfred Hinz, Roberto Righi, and Danilo Zardin (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2004), 509–21, here 513–14.

<sup>3</sup> Alfonso Rubio Hernández, "Las librerías de La Compañía de Jesús en Nueva Granada: Un análisis descriptivo a través de sus inventarios," *Información, cultura y sociedad* 31 (December 2014): 53–66, here 54.

the increasing number of orders coming to completion.<sup>4</sup> Following the 2018 conference, thirty different houses of women religious were visited by conference organizers; none had archival programs in place. Malachy McCarthy shares that archival priorities were often a distant third to selling off property and securing healthcare support for aging members.<sup>5</sup> Consolidation of the archives of most of the Jesuit provinces in the United States into the Jesuit Archives & Research Center (hereafter JARC) in St. Louis, Missouri, preceded the 2019 conference.<sup>6</sup> Many presenters at the latter conference chose to consider the distinctive nature of Jesuit recordkeeping and the varied ways those records can illuminate the past, making the case for the value of these records. An underlying current running throughout the conference, however, was consideration of the possible future preservation and dissemination of Jesuit archival sources.<sup>7</sup>

Among the archival records that have been saved by and about Jesuits, certain types are traditionally better preserved than others. Libraries, for example, have proven particularly vulnerable in moments of transition and closure. This is concerning given the central role that collections of books have played in the Society of Jesus's endeavors since its founding in 1540. Jesuits depended upon libraries for the instruction of students, the edification of the order's members, and the dissemination of the faith. This extended beyond their initial efforts in Europe. From their earliest forays in the mission fields of Asia and the Caribbean, Jesuits carried books with them to introduce Western European learning, to serve as resources for translation, and ultimately to use as a means of accommodation and acculturation. Over the centuries, Jesuit libraries became repositories for the preservation and transmission of the significant scholarly and spiritual output of the Society's members.<sup>8</sup> Yet they have been unevenly—an archivist suggested

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<sup>4</sup> “Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives: A Working Conference, Hosted by Boston College, July 11–13, 2018,” <https://catholicarchives.bc.edu> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Two important outcomes from the 2018 conference are the formation of the Archival Resources for Catholic Collections (ARCC) working group and a white paper on best practices (launched at the annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association in January 2020). See Malachy R. McCarthy et al., “Preserving the Past, Building for the Future: The Working Paper from the 2018 Boston College Archive Conference” ([Chicago], 2020).

<sup>6</sup> The archives can be consulted online at: <http://jesuitarchives.org> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> See the 2019 program of the International Symposium on Jesuit Studies, “Engaging Sources: The Tradition and Future of Collecting History in the Society of Jesus,” Boston College, June 11–13, 2019, <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/centers/iajs/programs/international-symposia/2019---boston.html> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Noël Golvers, “Jesuit Libraries in the Old and the New Society of Jesus as a Historiographical Theme,” in *Engaging Sources: The Tradition and Future of Collecting History in the Society of Jesus; Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Boston College, June 11–13, 2019*, ed. Cristiano Casalini, Emanuele Colombo, and Seth Meehan (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2019), 1–2, <https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/publications/symposia/2019symposium/symposia-golvers> (accessed April 3, 2022); Kathleen M. Comerford, “Jesuits and Their Books,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2, no. 2 (April 9, 2015): 179–88, here 182.

“sloppily”—documented then and now.<sup>9</sup> What, for example, will become of Wheeling’s library collections and archives as it transitions away from its Jesuit affiliation? As Jesuits face a period of contraction in Europe and the United States unparalleled since the suppression of the Old Society in 1773, it is important to be aware of the archival strategies being employed to ensure preservation and access to the intellectual heritage they amassed.

In this essay, I reflect on the nature of the library as archive, share three hallmarks of Jesuit library practice with archival implications, and then suggest three strategies for safeguarding this legacy for future scholars. These reflections have their origins in work undertaken between 2011 and 2019 at Loyola University Chicago with my students through the Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project. Our efforts focused on reconstruction, documentation, and interpretation of the book and library culture of Jesuit libraries in the nineteenth-century Midwestern United States.<sup>10</sup> Understanding the accomplishments of Jesuits of the American Midwest, however, required placing their work in the context of the practices and technologies of the Society over the past five hundred years, in search of larger patterns of library creation, growth, and dispersal. It also demanded engagement with best practices in the field of Catholic archives, many coming out of the 2018 “Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives” conference.<sup>11</sup> Taken together, they provide important guidance on how to ensure the documentation of an important facet of the Jesuit enterprise at a critical juncture.

### **Library as Archive**

The Society of Jesus established formal recordkeeping protocols to document its history, governance, and daily operations as early as the sixteenth century with Juan Alfonso de Polanco’s *Formula scribendi*.<sup>12</sup> As papers from the conference by Juan Dejo, S.J., Paul Nelles, and Markus Friedrich argue, this culture of recordkeeping was instituted through annual letters, correspondence, diaries, financial records, house histories, memoirs, and much more. With converts who came out of an established mercantile elite, it should not be surprising that they borrowed the technologies and practices of this culture. They proved to be astute managers who

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<sup>9</sup> Email to author from Thomas McCoog, S.J., May 30, 2019.

<sup>10</sup> See the Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project website: <https://jesuitlibrariesprovenanceproject.com> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> Particularly valuable is the work of the ARCC Repository Working Group that was formed out of the conference. See <https://archivalrcc.org> (accessed April 3, 2022).

<sup>12</sup> The *Formula scribendi* was in effect from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Then it was reformulated under the title *Practica quaedam*, which remains in use to the present. Robert Danieluk, S.J., “Archives and Libraries,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*, ed. Thomas Worcester, S.J. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 43.

used accounting to shore up their precarious finances.<sup>13</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the order, issued directives mandating letter writing to document the internal life of the Society and its interactions with the outside world. These letters promoted a feeling of inclusion, made everyday life legible, and served as a measure for the work of evangelization. Ignatius's correspondence, John W. O'Malley, S.J. argues, constitutes the largest extant collection of letters of any sixteenth-century European figure.<sup>14</sup> As the order grew, Jesuits developed strategies that allowed them to keep track of their records and provide a synthesis of the information they received.

Underlying the creation of any archive is a fantasy of accessibility and permanence, as scholars have noted. A religious order that went global almost from the start needed to track and make accessible documentation concerning the operations of its men around the world. The permanence of that archive—in printed form, such as the *Jesuit Relations*, or in manuscript aggregation, such as found in province offices, houses, and schools—fed an expectation of permanence of the Society of Jesus itself and, by extension, the Catholic Church. For example, the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus (ARSI), located on the grounds of the Jesuit curia in Rome, holds the archives of the central government for the worldwide Society dating back to 1540 on 1,800 meters of shelving.<sup>15</sup> In North America, JARC maintains an estimated ten thousand linear feet of records for fourteen past and current administrative provinces from across the United States, itself a fraction of what was likely created by Jesuits, individually and as a Society, over time.<sup>16</sup> Another attempt at permanence is the longstanding effort to catalog every known work by and about Jesuits. This rich bibliographical tradition began with Pedro de Ribadeneyra at the start of the seventeenth century, reached its apogee with Carlos Sommervogel who assembled nine volumes with an estimated 150,000 entries in the latter nineteenth century, and continues today with the Jesuit Online

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<sup>13</sup> Juan Dejo, S.J., “Spiritual Edification and Publishing Policies in Jesuit Work in South American Missions (Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)” and Markus Friedrich, “A Jesuit Culture of Records? The Society of Jesus, the Life Cycle of Administrative Documents, and the Late Medieval and Early Modern History of Bureaucratic Information,” in Casalini, Colombo, and Meehan, *Engaging Sources*, <https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/publications/symposia/2019symposium/symposia-dejo> and <https://www.jesuitportal.bc.edu/publications/symposia/2019symposium/symposia-friedrich> (accessed April 8, 2022); Paul Nelles, “*Cosas y cartas*: Scribal Production and Material Pathways in Jesuit Global Communication (1547–1573),” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 2, no. 3 (2015): 421–50.

<sup>14</sup> Ignatius's letters fill twelve volumes in the 125-volume *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu*. John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 2–3.

<sup>15</sup> The Latin name of the archive is the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, <http://www.sj-web.info/arsi/en/archivum-romanum-societatis-iesu> (accessed April 3, 2022); Robert Danieluk, S.J., “*Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*,” in Worcester, *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*, 44–45.

<sup>16</sup> Email from David Miros, director of JARC, January 7, 2019; for an overview of the holdings of the JARC, see <http://jesuitarchives.org>.

Bibliography.<sup>17</sup> Yet, we need only look at the dramatic history of expulsion and suppression, and the more recent declining enrollment of the order, to be reminded that this sense of permanence is an illusion. Belief in the permanence of the archive offers a balm during the too frequent reminders of the Society's impermanence.

Historic Jesuit libraries function as a kind of archive. Today, libraries and archives are very different entities for the professionals in charge of them. Archives hold unpublished materials that are unique, while libraries hold printed materials that, presumably, could be replaced. "The value of an individual item in an archival collection depends on its relationship to the other items in the collection," Paul Erickson reminds us; "an individual piece will be significantly less relevant if it is removed from the archive."<sup>18</sup> Yet this sense of interrelation is what makes a historic Jesuit library akin to an archive. Jesuit libraries are collections of texts, printed and manuscript, gathered for specific purposes. From the start of the order, each Jesuit house that wanted to host a college had to have a common library. Within Jesuit houses, there could also be libraries that held more specialized collections intended for the use of instructors of particular classes, such as mathematics or pharmacy, or men who performed specific functions, such as rector or provincial.<sup>19</sup> Over time, Jesuit libraries functioned as repositories for the prodigious output of the order's members. Throughout, Jesuit readers transformed their library books into unique witnesses of Catholic intellectual and spiritual life through a range of markings. Through their unique activities of assemblage and marking, Jesuit libraries became archives.<sup>20</sup>

### **Archival Opportunities and Challenges: Three Hallmarks of Jesuit Library Practice**

As early as 1546, Jerónimo Nadal devised rules for the functioning of libraries that committed Jesuits to technologies for documenting these library collections in formats that could potentially be archived. For example, the first rule required the librarian to have "a complete list of all books of the house written in order according to their faculties," essentially a subject catalog for the collection. The third rule even more explicitly spelled out the creation of a paper record:

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<sup>17</sup> Kasper Volk and Chris Staysniak, "Bringing Jesuit Bibliography into the Twenty-First Century: Boston College's *New Sommervogel Online*," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 64–68. See also <https://jesuitonline-bibliography.bc.edu> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Paul Erickson, "Where the Evidence Is: Or, Willie Sutton Visits the Library," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 2, no. 1 (April 3, 2014): 186–94, here 188

<sup>19</sup> Brendan Connolly, "Jesuit Library Beginnings," *Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 30, no. 4 (1960): 243–52, here 245; Golvers, "Jesuit Libraries," 2, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Kyle Roberts, "Mold as Marking," *Material Religion* 17, no. 2 (2021): 266–69.

He will have a paper volume sewn with a thread through the middle for each faculty. In one part of this he will note down which books each one had in his room of this faculty. In another part he will note which books of the same faculty the rector has authorized to be loaned to externs, adding, at the same time, the name of him who took the books, the year and the day. When they shall have been returned he will erase from the book what he had written.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to this borrowing ledger, the librarian was also required to track (via “a list”) all the books brought into the house by individual men, so that they could be returned in the event any decided not to remain. Each rule necessitated the creation of a record of library growth, use, and potential dispersal that could have been entered into the archive.

While systematic policies governed the functioning of Jesuit libraries, the Society did not institute similar policies for archiving information about the size and use of those libraries’ collections. Having spent the last decade looking through American Jesuit archives for materials related to their libraries, I can attest to a lack of a clear procedure for archiving such material. If I am lucky, there is some cache of materials organized under “Library Materials.” At the same time, I have also come to appreciate the opportunities and challenges of archival recovery that emerge from three hallmarks of Jesuit library practice: the marking of books; the documentation of library holdings, especially at moments of transition; and the embrace of new technologies of recording and access. By remaining aware of these practices, valuable archival material may be uncovered that can then be preserved.

### ***Hallmark 1: Jesuits Never Met a Book They Did Not Want to Mark***

In 2014, my Loyola University Chicago students and I began tracking down books from the original library collection from St. Ignatius College, precursor to the modern-day university. As they requested books from Special Collections and pulled books off the shelves of the Library Storage Facility and the circulating stacks of the main library, they were continually surprised by what they found inside. Many books retain evidence of their previous ownership. Bookplates, inscriptions, stamps, and shelf-marks litter the inside covers, flyleaves, and title pages of library books.<sup>22</sup> These vestiges of a book’s previous life hold a key to its

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<sup>21</sup> Susan Carole Masirovits, “The Jesuit Libraries in Spanish America, 1573–1767” (MLS, Kent State University, 1972), 17.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, a copy of Joseph Milner’s *The History and Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesuit Christ* [...] (London: B. Crosby, 1808) from the St. Ignatius College Library and held at

origins, to the world of early and modern Catholic print culture, and to ongoing Jesuit efforts to steward their library collections.

This phenomenon is not limited to Loyola. Every nineteenth-century Jesuit college or university library collection I have visited has yielded similar results. Jesuits quite simply made a policy of marking their books. This commonly took the form of a specially designed ink or embossed stamp with some combination of the name of the school, location, and reference to the order. For example, the stamp used by St. Ignatius College in the 1870s included the name of the school as well as “Chicago, ILLS” and “IHS.”<sup>23</sup> One might be tempted to assume the extent of marking in books collected by nineteenth-century Jesuits for their libraries was a reaction to the widespread loss of cultural heritage during the suppression period, but there is evidence that the restored Society simply continued a practice from the Old Society.<sup>24</sup> The European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project, directed by Kathleen Comerford, documents examples of pre-suppression ink stamps in books from Jesuit college libraries across Europe.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond stamps, written provenance marks reveal earlier ownership and use of books. The founding library collection for Boston College came from a convert named Joseph Coolidge Shaw (1821–51), who was an inveterate marker of books. Two hundred of the 350 books Shaw bequeathed to the future Boston College survive in the library today, having been identified by his markings and a nineteenth-century library stamp. Shaw’s markings often record place and date of acquisition, thus revealing many were acquired during a pivotal three-year sojourn in Europe, where he converted to Catholicism. Not only does this collection tell us what was available to the original students and faculty priests at Boston College but also about the works that shaped the spiritual transformation of a wealthy Harvard-educated Boston Protestant.<sup>26</sup>

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Loyola University Chicago, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jesuitlibrariesprovenanceproject/12-640277375/in/photolist-kg2c93-kg2c8b-kfYJa8-kfYJ5P-212GmCK-CVArFo-G1CKov-x3pTF4-G1CKkz-x3XjNx> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, the mark on the title page of the third volume of Brownson’s *Quarterly Review*, now held at Loyola University Chicago: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jesuitlibrariesprovenanceproject/12643271433/in/album-72157641190154745> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>24</sup> The origin of this mode of marking is likely an outgrowth of a practice of marking books with a uniform formula of the type “(inscriptus Catalogo) Collegii (al. *Residentiae*) *Soc(ieta)tis Jesu*” followed by the respective toponym in Latin form put the genitive-locative case. Golvers, “Jesuit Libraries,” 7.

<sup>25</sup> See the European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project’s website: <https://www.jesuit-libraries.com> (accessed April 8, 2022). The digital archive can be found at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/1422-29640@N08> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Ben Birnbaum and Seth Meehan, *The Heights: An Illustrated History of Boston College, 1863–2013* (Chestnut Hill, MA: Linden Lane Press at Boston College, 2014), 12–13; Charles F. Donovan, *Joseph Coolidge Shaw: Boston Yankee, Jesuit, Early Boston College Patron* ([Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College], 1990), 3.



Jesuit houses and colleges also relied on written inscriptions to mark ownership. In the process of tracking down, photographing, describing, and uploading to a digital archive the marks in surviving library books, Loyola students realized that the St. Ignatius College Library originated in a sizable gift of books from the Jesuits in St. Louis, the seat of the Missouri province. The phenomenon of a “starter” collection has been better known from other Jesuit colleges. In November 1843, the Maryland–New York province gifted one thousand books from Georgetown, the oldest and largest school in the province, to the new College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>27</sup> No similar memory had come down in Loyola’s history, but the presence of “Scholast. S.J. Vice Prov. Missouri.” (or some variation thereof) handwritten across the title page of scores of books alerted student researchers to this missing chapter in the library’s history. In time, over 260 titles, in at least 525 volumes, were identified.<sup>28</sup> A later perusal of the earliest volume of the vice president’s diary, the primary source for the early history of St. Ignatius, revealed an easily bypassed entry documenting the arrival of the books.

For many historic Jesuit libraries, surviving books are, quite simply, the archive. They are evidence of what Jesuits collected and, as we have seen, often contain information about from whence these books were acquired. This information typically has not been transmitted to the metadata recorded in manuscript and printed catalogs, card catalogs, or integrated library systems. Fordham University appears to be an outlier in this regard. It still maintains the original library from its precursor St. John’s College as a separate collection and can be searched for as such through the online library catalog.<sup>29</sup> But this is the exception. For most colleges and universities, original library books were subsumed over time in the mass of new holdings. Valuable acquisition information was lost as bibliographical records migrated from one platform to another. The retrospective inclusion of such information is time consuming and not often a

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<sup>27</sup> Walter J. Meagher and William J. Grattan, *The Spires of Fenwick: A History of the College of the Holy Cross, 1843–1963* (New York: Vantage Press, 1966), 72. While the number of books donated to Holy Cross is well documented, the titles of the books are not. No list from the time is known to survive. The titles can be reconstructed by going through surviving books in the Holy Cross collection today.

<sup>28</sup> Michael J. Albani, “In the Shadow of Pio Nono: The Saint Ignatius College Library and the Making of Catholic Chicagoans, 1857–1878” (seminar paper, Loyola University Chicago, April 2016). The titles with these inscriptions have been gathered in the “Missouri Vice Province” album on the Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project Flickr site: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jesuitlibraries-provenanceproject/albums/72157653130248265/with/14298069242> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>29</sup> Less clear is why the collection was either kept separate or separated from the larger collection over time. Michael Wares, assistant director for Technical Services, notes in an email on June 4, 2019: “My vague recollection from when I started at Fordham in the early 1970s was that what’s now the St. John’s Collection had been separated from the general collection when Fordham went to LC Classification, in the 1930s. I know that at least some of them eventually got LC call numbers, and I can’t recall whether they were ever intershelved with newer books.”

priority for librarians.<sup>30</sup> As we will see, these books are often under the greatest threat of dispersal.

### ***Hallmark 2: Jesuits Documented Their Libraries in Moments of Competition and Transition***

Mechanisms for documenting library collections have changed since the eighteenth century, as have the circumstances in which Jesuits found themselves. Competition with non-Catholic schools and transition, ironically, have done more to secure an archival record for Jesuit libraries than periods of peaceful growth. When not forced to document collections, it was easy for it not to happen.

William Kane, S.J., a librarian at Loyola University Chicago, reflected on the failure of Jesuit libraries to document their collections over time in his 1939 survey, *Catholic Library Problems*. In this candid work, Kane lauded the recent rapid growth of Catholic library building in the United States, which he placed at an estimated three thousand libraries serving a half-million patrons but lamented how such libraries perpetually fell behind their non-Catholic counterparts. Kane likely drew his inspiration from a report issued earlier in the decade in response to a letter from Superior General Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (in office 1915–42) about the general situation of Jesuit education, especially in comparison with non-Jesuit schools. A fear that Jesuit libraries had significantly fallen behind secular universities stood out in the report.<sup>31</sup> Kane knew well documentation of the problem was elusive. “Accurate figures about Catholic library growth are hard to get, even for individual libraries,” he complained in his survey. When it came to annual inventories of collections, for example, he reflected that “many Catholic libraries preferred, as they still prefer, to stick to round-number guesses.” He went on to acknowledge the failure of some Catholic libraries, “the larger as well as the smaller,” to return information for the occasional reports compiled by the US Bureau of Education, the chief source available for statistical comparison.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Librarians and archivists at Boston College and Loyola University Chicago have begun doing this work. Books once owned by Joseph Coolidge Shaw are identified as such in the Boston College online catalog. Several original books at Loyola University Chicago are now identified as being from the “St. Ignatius College Collection.”

<sup>31</sup> “Report of the Commission on Higher Studies of the American Assistancy of the Society of Jesus” ([United States]: [Society of Jesus], [1932?]). The report is often referred to as the Macelwane Report, after the primary author, James B. Macelwane, S.J., dean of the Graduate School of Saint Louis University. A helpful analysis of the concern about Jesuit university libraries can be seen in Lowrie J. Daly, S.J., “Forty Years After: Educational Deja vu,” *Woodstock Letters* 98, no. 3 (July 1, 1969): 359–60.

<sup>32</sup> William Terence Kane, *Catholic Library Problems* (Chicago: Loyola University, 1939), xi, 29.

Jesuit colleges and universities that did return information revealed a picture of rapidly increasing library holdings over the last quarter of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. An 1876 report produced by the US Bureau of Education provided information for ten Jesuit colleges and universities that reported nearly 150,000 volumes. Holdings ranged from five thousand volumes at the University of San Francisco (founded 1855) to over thirty-two thousand at Georgetown (founded 1789). A 1929 report from the same agency demonstrated that aggregate holdings had grown to 685,000 volumes at eleven colleges and universities, a fourfold increase over a fifty-year period. The disparity between institutions also grew, ranging from 11,800 volumes at St. Joseph's College (founded 1851) to nearly 175,000 at St. Louis University (founded 1818).<sup>33</sup> Worried about too many "round-number guesses," Kane requested holdings data from individual libraries. Even accounting for the adjustment of what Kane believed to be more accurate numbers, the results showed an astonishing three-quarters increase in the intervening nine years to over 1.2 million books held at thirteen Jesuit colleges and universities. St. Joseph's remained at the low end of the spectrum with 22,520 books, a far cry from the estimated two hundred thousand held at Georgetown.<sup>34</sup> Even without the collections data from other Jesuit schools in the calculation, this number represents an impressive cultural heritage.

Making such a calculation in the twenty-first century is similarly challenging, but once again reveals astonishing growth in library holdings over eighty years. The Library Deans Conference of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) creates an annual accounting of various facets of the libraries of the twenty-seven Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States. The group's focus, however, is on demographic, physical plant, and budgetary metrics; library holdings are not one of the types of information documented.<sup>35</sup> The Association of College and Research Libraries, however, systematically collects this information. Twenty out of twenty-seven Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States are represented in its 2017 *Academic Library Trends and Statistics*. They hold a reported 14.5 million items in their physical collections. Even larger is the size of their digital collections: nearly sixteen million reported objects, reflecting a major shift in library holdings over the past generation. The systems that allow for access to, and support of, digital collections also allow librarians to get around Kane's "round-number" problem. Yet, the disparity in holdings persists. The number of physical books ranges from 97,500 at Rockhurst to 1.93 million at Georgetown, although the availability of digital books offsets that difference to

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<sup>33</sup> Kane, *Catholic Library Problems*, 206.

<sup>34</sup> Kane, *Catholic Library Problems*, 207.

<sup>35</sup> "AJCU 2018 Reported Date Elements Collated for Responders" excel spreadsheet. I am grateful to Marianne Ryan, dean of Loyola University Chicago Libraries, for sharing this internally circulated document with me.

some extent.<sup>36</sup> In all, the holdings of American Jesuit universities and colleges today are impressive, having grown substantially over the last 135 years from 150,000 to 30.5 million objects.<sup>37</sup>

The sources just described provide aggregate counts at specific points in time, but documentation of actual titles held requires a different set of sources. Materials found in Jesuit archives related to library holdings tend to document beginning or end points, often associated with moments of transition. For example, the earliest surviving library catalog for St. Ignatius College is a manuscript subject catalog created around 1878, eight years after the founding of the school on the west side of Chicago and seven years after the city around it burned to the ground. Annual prospectuses celebrated the rapid growth of the library over its first few years. Collections had grown so extensive (5,100 titles in eight thousand-plus volumes) that the librarian needed a tool to help navigate the collection.<sup>38</sup> An 1871 catalog of the library at St. Joseph's (now Spring Hill) College in Mobile, Alabama, marked a different beginning. The New Orleans mission of the Lyons province took over the fledging college from the bishop of Mobile in 1847 and expanded the student body, especially following the Civil War. On the evening of February 4, 1869, fire destroyed the main administration building, which held the library, two frame houses, and the frame church.<sup>39</sup> The vice president's diary notes that "the library, the cabinet, together with the furniture of the house, everything was destroyed." Undeterred, Jesuits set to rebuilding. Two years later, a librarian created a subject catalog for the rebuilt library, proudly listing 2,702 titles in 5,090 volumes. That catalog remains in Spring Hill's archives, a poignant testimony to Jesuit endeavors.<sup>40</sup>

Archival documentation also marks the end of Jesuit libraries. The single greatest source for understanding eighteenth-century Jesuit library culture is the inventories and auction catalogs created at the time of suppression and expulsion. Spanish Jesuits made the greatest inroads in the Americas before the papal suppression in 1773. In the summer of 1767, news of the suppression by the Spanish

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<sup>36</sup> Many of the smaller schools have digital and electronic book holdings that outnumber physical book holdings.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Jane Petrowski, *2017 Academic Library Trends and Statistics: Carnegie Classifications; Associate of Arts Colleges, Baccalaureate Colleges, Masters Colleges and Institutions, Doctorate Granting Institutions* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2018). I am grateful to Jane Currie, reference librarian at the Loyola University Libraries, for bringing this source to my attention and for coordinating her student workers to extract this information from the source.

<sup>38</sup> Kyle Roberts, "Rediscovering Physical Collections through the Digital Archive: The Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project," *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 445–58.

<sup>39</sup> *An Outline History of Spring Hill College* (Mobile, AL: Spring Hill College Press, 1991), 2–3.

<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, a second fire struck in 1909 that destroyed about two-thirds of the library collection. Patrick Cronin, S.J., "The Burning of Spring Hill College," *Woodstock Letters* 38, no. 2 (n.d.): 209–10.

crown reached the New World, resulting in 2,617 Jesuits being rounded up on ships and transported back across the Atlantic. The Society's eighty-seven colleges and universities and twenty seminaries in the Americas were transferred to the control of secular clergy, other religious orders, or a local council.<sup>41</sup> The royal order authorized the seizure of "the Archives, the Papers of all types, the common Library, the Books and Bookcases; including those that belong to each Jesuit, gathering them together in one or more places and giving the Keys to the Judge of the Commission (for the administration of the Temporalities)."<sup>42</sup> Inventories made of the collections at the time of the Jesuits' dispossession provide rich, if compromised, materials for studying their libraries and have been well used by scholars of Central and South America.<sup>43</sup> Alfonso Rubio Hernández, for example, has been able to reconstruct the curriculum, content, and classification of Jesuit schools in Santa Fe de Antioquia and Bogotá from 1767 inventories.<sup>44</sup> The scramble to secure the collections seized from the Jesuits by a range of colonial figures speaks to the value of books in the eighteenth century, and to the high esteem held for the Jesuits' efforts.

### ***Hallmark 3: Jesuits Embrace New Technologies for Managing Library Collections***

Jesuit libraries have consistently adopted new technologies for managing library holdings. Three primary technologies for managing library collections over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the bound catalog, the card catalog, and the integrated library system—expanded options for recording information about books and making them more accessible. Each, however, created its own opportunities and challenges for archival preservation.

The earliest and longest-serving technology was the bound catalog. Organized by author, subject, or some other variable, the bound catalog—usually manuscript, but sometimes printed—provided primary documentation and classification of library holdings for centuries. A typical entry might include the name of the author, a short title, publication place and date, format, number of volumes, and, as these were tools for finding within large collections, place within

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<sup>41</sup> Masirovits, "Jesuit Libraries in Spanish America," 53. Quoted in Jerome Vincent Jacobsen, S.J., "Educational Foundations of the Jesuits in Colonial Hispanic America," in *Greater America: Essays in Honor of Herbert Eugene Bolton*, ed. Adele Ogden and Engel Sluiter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), 105–23, here 122.

<sup>42</sup> Masirovits, "Jesuit Libraries in Spanish America," 32–33.

<sup>43</sup> Golvers points out that auction catalogs offer often incomplete views of a collection because they had already been "'screened' and selected" before being sent to sale. Golvers, "Jesuit Libraries," 8.

<sup>44</sup> Hernández, "Las librerías," 53–66.

the library's organizational schema.<sup>45</sup> The bound catalog had the weakness of not being easily extensible. It did a very good job of documenting what was held in a collection at a specific time, but Jesuit libraries were far from static. Acquisition of new texts created a crisis of where to record them in the catalog; eventually, librarians had to re-do the catalog.

Libraries began to switch over to card catalogs in the later nineteenth century. The idea of recording bibliographical information on an individual card that could be filed in a drawer, as opposed to aggregated with other titles in a bound volume, was first experimented with in the eighteenth century but did not receive widespread use until the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century. A card system organized by subject, author, or another variable replaced the unwieldy bound volume. Card catalogs allowed collections to be easily kept up to date by adding cards as new books came in and removing them as old books were taken out.<sup>46</sup> The *Woodstock Letters*, an internal serial of the American Society begun in 1872, records the transition of colleges and libraries from one technology to another. In 1891, the Jesuit librarian at the College of the Holy Cross rearranged the collection of an estimated twenty-five thousand volumes and created a card catalog.<sup>47</sup> The following year, Georgetown followed suit.<sup>48</sup> The creation of the card catalog was often accompanied by the reclassification of collections from a Jesuit-designed system to the secular Dewey Decimal System.

The promise of not only storing bibliographical information but also processing it led libraries to embrace automated technologies in the second half of the twentieth century. Card catalogs dominated libraries by mid-century, but they came with drawbacks: the cost of filing cards, their physical bulk, and the reality that a clerical mistake could make a book impossible to find. The Library of Congress hired mathematician Henriette D. Avram in 1965 as part of its work toward mechanized information retrieval. The following year, she introduced Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC), a computerized system for bibliographical recordkeeping. By the 1980s, Online Public Access Catalogs (OPAC) replaced card catalogs as the dominant technology for access and discovery, first in larger university and public libraries and eventually everywhere.<sup>49</sup> Today, libraries use

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<sup>45</sup> There is a rich tradition of Jesuits devising classification schemes for their collections, dating back to Antonio Possevino (1593), Claude Clement (1635), Jean Garnier (1678), and Johann David Koeler (1728). See Golvers, "Jesuit Libraries," 5–6.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Devereaux, Carla Diane Hayden, and Library of Congress, *The Card Catalog: Books, Cards, and Literary Treasures* (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2017), 21–22, 82.

<sup>47</sup> "Varia: Worcester, Holy Cross College," *Woodstock Letters* 20, no. 3 (1891): 480.

<sup>48</sup> Lawrence C. Chamberlain, "Georgetown University Library, 1789–1937" (master's thesis, Catholic University of America, 1962), 74.

<sup>49</sup> Devereaux, Hayden, and Library of Congress, *Card Catalog*, 148–54. On the point about the physical bulk of card catalogs, one scholar estimated that large university library collections doubled every sixteen years in the first three quarters of the twentieth century.

some form of an online Integrated Library System (ILS). Built around a relational database, an ILS brings together collection and circulation management while providing a browsable user interface. Where the bound catalog and the card catalog had material limitations on what could be recorded about holdings, the creation of MARC and more recent advances in linked open data have allowed for a much greater amount of information to be preserved.

While the successive embrace of new technologies for expanding user access is understandable, each technology presents challenges for archival preservation. Bound catalogs often survive by accident. Most were discarded after being replaced by new bound catalogs or a card catalog. Their ephemerality was always expected, although a significant number from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Jesuit libraries survive today. Card catalogs present the opposite problem: for the period of their dominance, librarians assumed their permanence. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of cards sat in sturdy wooden cabinets in college and university libraries. Yet as the OPAC grew in popularity, card catalogs were relegated to library attics, basements, or, more often, dumpsters. With their disposal often came the loss of significant information about books as the processes by which cards were converted to MARC records introduced human error or failed to capture certain types of provenance or other information.<sup>50</sup> Several decades after this process happened, scholars have launched efforts, such as at the University of Virginia, to preserve card catalogs in recognition of the information they contain.<sup>51</sup> The ILS of today presents its own archival challenges. Privacy policies place greater limits on what information can be retained about users and use. The sheer amount of data in the ILS and the ways it could be queried make it difficult to conceive how to archive it effectively.

## Map and GPS

In light of the three salient hallmarks of past Jesuit library practice with archival implications, how can we safeguard the rich legacy of Jesuit libraries for the benefit of future scholars? First, we need to acknowledge the scope and complexity of the problem. Then we can explore three strategies for the protection of these materials that might be adopted by archivists, historians, and community members.

The case of Wheeling Jesuit University is instructive of the situation archivists will increasingly find themselves in moving forward. In May 2019, I reached out to the director of the university library and the archivist of the Maryland

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<sup>50</sup> Devereaux, Hayden, and Library of Congress, *Card Catalog*, 157.

<sup>51</sup> Anne E. Bromley, "The Old Card Catalog: Collaborative Effort Will Preserve Its History," UVA Today, December 9, 2019, <https://news.virginia.edu/content/old-card-catalog-collaborative-effort-will-preserve-its-history> (accessed April 8, 2022).

province, under which Wheeling had been a mission, for their thoughts about the archival implications of the recently announced discontinuation of Jesuit affiliation. The library director did not respond, but Thomas M. McCoog, S.J., Maryland province archivist, replied immediately. He acknowledged it was early in the process, and that he had been in contact with the diocesan archivist at Wheeling, the Jesuit superior, and two members of the faculty.<sup>52</sup> McCoog's first step, he said, was to ascertain what papers and documents existed, where they were located, and how well cared for, preserved, and organized they were. Those inquiries received varying responses, and his next step was to relocate to oversee the process of dividing the papers between the new iteration of Wheeling and the Maryland province. McCoog clearly expressed that much was still unknown. "To my knowledge there is no map and no GPS for this," he concluded his email. "If you find one, please let me know."<sup>53</sup>

The release in January 2020 of the working paper that came out of discussions at the 2018 "Envisioning the Future of Catholic Religious Archives" conference at Boston College provides some general contours of a way forward for religious communities in times of transition. The paper argues that three interrelated principles undergird any successful effort to preserve archival materials of religious institutions downsizing or reaching completion. First, any effort has to be collaborative, involving the cooperation and coordination of members of religious communities, archival professionals, and scholars. No single institution or group can do the necessary work on its own. Second, all three groups need to be educated about the importance of these materials and methods for their preservation. The paper proposes a website and listserv for offering guidance and sharing best practices as a means to this end. Finally, members of each group have to commit to advocating for these collections among their constituents. "Once organized collections are publicized and made accessible," the paper argues, "their value is assured, and the move to developing sustainable repositories becomes possible."<sup>54</sup> By necessity, the working paper seeks to provide a flexible pathway for preserving the broad range of materials generated by religious orders through the creation of a formal organization for fundraising and education, an adaptable archival program, the identification of national or regional repositories, and various modes for working together.

Many of the approaches in the working paper are useful for the records of Jesuit libraries, although by their nature, library collections pose distinct challenges for archival preservation that require specific strategies. Let me briefly propose

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<sup>52</sup> A representative of the library had been copied in on the discussion but had not participated.

<sup>53</sup> Email to author from Thomas McCoog, S.J., May 30, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> McCarthy et al., "Preserving the Past," 4.



three strategies for preservation, publication, and digital presentation as a starting place for this important work.

### ***Strategy 1: Preservation***

To varying degrees, archival traces of historic Jesuit libraries have taken the form of holding and circulation data, original books and other printed materials, as well as a range of documents generated by librarians. Before the last quarter of the twentieth century, such material typically occurred in analog formats. The rise of MARC, OPAC, and personal computers has created a more varied landscape of documentation in digital formats. Most library material today is born digital, with the exception of books—and even that is changing. Given the extant mass of analog and digital data documenting Jesuit libraries past and present, the question of what we should preserve and in what formats is an important one.

Preserving holdings data is an obvious starting point. The organic nature of Jesuit college and university libraries means that library collections are always changing. Archives can typically preserve no more than a snapshot of holdings at a particular time and place. More bound catalogs and auction records have survived than card catalogs, although the amount of bibliographical data the latter contains exceeds the former. An ILS used today to manage the primary functions of a library is regularly backed up, but less clear is how frequently the information it contains is deposited in university archives. Given that most Jesuit colleges and universities have uploaded information about their collections—or a segment thereof—to OCLC's WorldCat, there are other ways for archivists and scholars outside of particular institutions to secure a snapshot of these library holdings.<sup>55</sup> The challenge is to create a protocol for archiving this information in a place where scholars can find it, rather than allowing its preservation to be an afterthought.

The availability of circulation data has changed more significantly over time. Scholars will have to undertake different kinds of studies of borrowing depending on the time period. For example, a ledger from the seminary at Florissant, Missouri, from the late 1840s reveals in intricate detail the specific books borrowed by individual priests, brothers, and novices. The ledger provides unique insight into the intellectual and spiritual interests of foreign-born men at the first Jesuit novitiate west of the Mississippi River.<sup>56</sup> Yet the expansion of privacy laws over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has disaggregated borrowers

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<sup>55</sup> Twenty-four of the twenty-seven Jesuit college and university library systems are discoverable on WorldCat. Combined, they have records for over 17.1 million books and other objects, as of January 25, 2020.

<sup>56</sup> Collections of St. Louis University Special Collections. Listed under "Library: Register of Patrons; 1847–1849," DOC REC 001 0002 0044 OVZ.

from the record for specific titles once the works are returned. Such laws are increasingly necessary for student, staff, and faculty patrons at a time when data on personal choices is being collected at an unprecedented rate.<sup>57</sup> As a result, a historian would not be able to undertake a similar reception study for a student or faculty member's borrowing in the twenty-first century. Scholars instead will have to explore larger trends in usage and circulation within segments of the whole university community. That said, the number of surviving borrowing ledgers like the one from Florissant is very small. Scholars, in general, must continue to think in creative ways about how to explore these questions.

Preserving the estimated thirty million-plus books and other objects held in Jesuit universities and colleges is not really feasible, nor necessarily advisable. A major trend of the second half of the twentieth century had been for Jesuit university libraries to amass as many books as possible. While collecting continues apace in the twenty-first century, the types of materials circulating has changed dramatically. Northeastern, Yale, and the University of Virginia have all seen declines of fifty percent or more in undergraduate borrowing of printed books and other materials over the past decade. The situation is no different at Jesuit universities and colleges. In the 2008–9 academic year, members of the Loyola University Chicago community made over ninety-nine thousand borrowings of printed materials from the university's libraries. Ten years later, that number was less than half, falling to just over forty-six thousand. Changes in usage have been uneven; these numbers reflect a thirty-five percent decline among faculty, a fifty-seven percent decline among graduate students, and a sixty percent decline among undergraduates.<sup>58</sup> University and college libraries, however, are not being used any less. As Dan Cohen explains: "The decline in the use of print books at universities relates to the kinds of books we read for scholarly pursuits rather than pure pleasure, the rise of e-books and digital articles, and the changing environment of research."<sup>59</sup>

Certain library books are worth considering for preservation. The decline in borrowing of printed materials and the rise in digitization makes older books, especially those published in the nineteenth century, particularly vulnerable. As demand for study spaces and use of electronic resources increases, libraries have accelerated the movement of print material collections out of campus library

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Kyle M. L. Jones and Dorothea Salo, "Learning Analytics and the Academic Library: Professional Ethics Commitments at a Crossroads," *College & Research Libraries* 79, no. 3 (2018): 304–23.

<sup>58</sup> I am grateful to Chris Martin, head of Access Services at the Loyola University Chicago Libraries, for sharing this information with me.

<sup>59</sup> Dan Cohen, "The Books of College Libraries Are Turning Into Wallpaper," *The Atlantic*, May 26, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/05/college-students-arent-checking-out-books/590305> (accessed April 8, 2022).

buildings to offsite depositories.<sup>60</sup> The latter can be regions of benign neglect, but they can also be staging grounds for weeding and deaccessioning, especially as libraries reconfigure themselves as distributed networks of books rather than copy-specific collections. As libraries link to digital surrogates of these titles in Google Books, HathiTrust, or behind a paywall in a commercial collection, it becomes easier to justify not keeping original copies, especially of books not old enough to be shelved in Rare Books and Special Collections nor protected by copyright.<sup>61</sup> For a collection like the original library at St. Ignatius College, eighty-three percent of which was published in the nineteenth century, there is potentially a great loss of information held only in original books if careful attention is not paid before deaccessioning. Expanding interest in provenance studies has made us more attune to evidence of ownership, acquisition, and reception marked inside individual material texts, all information that is rarely included in catalog records.

Special Collections and Archives divisions within university and college libraries offer a potential site for the preservation of Jesuit library materials. While circulation of printed materials may be down, visits to archives are up, a reflection of student desire for direct encounter with primary sources and the efforts of archivists and faculty to work together to design meaningful exercises for class visits. At Loyola University Chicago, University Archives and Special Collections have seen a steady rise in student use over the past few years. In the 2013–14 academic year, 182 students came to the archives for classes; five years later, that number rose to 523, an almost threefold increase.<sup>62</sup> Yet, Special Collections divisions are not able to steward all printed material. “Ideally we’d be able to house Loyola’s St. Ignatius College Library books in Special Collections. Doing so would help connect the present university to its past and allow students to actively participate in that connection by using the collection,” explains University

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<sup>60</sup> The demand for preserving books within main library structures, often with open shelves for browsing, has remained a popular response among students and faculty to such plans. For what happened at Yale, see David Yaffe-Bellany and Jacob Stern, “Yale Students Aren’t Ready to Close the Book on the School’s Libraries Just Yet,” *Washington Post*, April 21, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/04/21/yale-students-arent-ready-close-book-schools-libraries-just-yet> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>61</sup> Andrew M. Stauffer, “An Image in Lava: Annotation, Sentiment, and the Traces of Nineteenth-Century Reading,” *PMLA* 134, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 81–98, here 94; Stauffer, “The Nineteenth-Century Archive in the Digital Age,” *European Romantic Review* 23, no. 3 (June 1, 2012): 335–41. Stauffer identifies books published between 1800 and 1927 as being particularly vulnerable. Rare Books and Special Collections libraries often set 1800 as a cut-off publication date for the ingestion of books from library collections. Books remain in copyright up to ninety-five years after printing. Thus in 2022, books published before 1927 can be protected.

<sup>62</sup> In the intervening period, the archives were renovated and made more conducive to class visits, but this also reflects an increasing interest among faculty and students in basing course projects around archival collections. Kathy Young, Loyola University Chicago Archives & Special Collections, FY16 Annual Report (Chicago, 2016), 10; Kathy Young, Loyola University Chicago Archives & Special Collections, FY19 Annual Report (Chicago, 2019), 10.

Archivist and Curator of Rare Books Kathryn Young. “Realistically, however, the Loyola Special Collections lacks the space and staff to do so. So, we add what we can to Special Collections and track extant books via notes in the catalog record in hopes of creating a virtual collection to represent Loyola’s original library.”<sup>63</sup> Archivists, curators, and librarians at other Jesuit institutions are in a similar situation.

### ***Strategy 2: Publication***

Publication provides another mode of preservation, with the goal of engaging new interest but also the consequence of privileging certain narratives and formats. As literary critic Lindsay DiCuirci reminds us, a central tenet of antiquarianism is a belief in the preservative power of print. Antiquarians see replication as an insurance policy against destruction—both of the material object and of the individual or community that created it. Republishing rare materials reintroduces them into public use and gives them new life, but also is part of a larger work to construct a certain type of past. “Repetition (through printing) and accumulation do not only build a collection upward or forward,” argues DiCuirci, “but also downward and backward, accumulating a past or an archive of multiple pasts.” Such is particularly apt for a religious order that had its past systematically erased globally in the eighteenth century and regionally or nationally multiple times in the nineteenth century. What antiquarians choose to reprint is instructive. It reflects the historical consciousness of a period: the narratives they seek to construct or reinforce, the authors they desire to suppress, and the aspects of a culture they most value.<sup>64</sup> Not everything in the archive can be reprinted, so what is reprinted bears the weight of that selection process.

Preservation of Jesuit library records through print has come more at the instigation of individual scholars than the official publishing house of the order. Since 1961, the Jesuit Sources series, published by the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies (IAJS), has been the order’s primary antiquarian activity in the United States, making Jesuit primary sources and foreign publications on the Jesuits available in English translation. Its online catalog today has 150 titles for sale.<sup>65</sup> Series publications are segmented into works on early Jesuits, faith formation, governance/mission of the Society of Jesus, history, Jesuits abroad, and the *Spiritual Exercises*. Missing from the catalog, however, are reprints of materials

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<sup>63</sup> Email to the author from Kathryn Young, January 28, 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Lindsay DiCuirci, *Colonial Revivals: The Nineteenth-Century Lives of Early American Books* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 5, quote 6.

<sup>65</sup> See the “About Us” section of the Jesuit Sources website: <http://jesuitsources.bc.edu/about-us-1> (accessed April 8, 2022).

related to libraries. *A Guide to Jesuit Archives* by Thomas McCoog, S.J. comes the closest to representing such material.<sup>66</sup>

The digital age has ushered in expanded opportunities for furthering the work of preservation. Digitization of primary sources offers unprecedented opportunities for reproduction but can be expensive and time consuming, especially in consideration of the attendant labor of transcription, translation, metadata enhancement, and storage. A guiding principle of any digitization project should be publishing sources not traditionally accessible rather than prioritizing the creation of digital editions of works already widely available as material texts. There can be an element of decolonization at work here. By publishing materials that have not previously been privileged, we have the opportunity not only to recover the words of displaced people but also to re-center their experience. Ongoing work on the women and men enslaved by the Jesuits is particularly illustrative of what can come from this realignment.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, digital publishing offers opportunities for accessibility beyond the archive, linkages to other sources of information, and possibilities for visualization that exceed what can be done in print. This is important for library records, in particular, which require more explanatory annotation than other forms of records to be meaningful for users. In all of this work, we always need to think about the platforms on which records are most effectively accessed by readers and researchers.

### ***Strategy 3: Digital Presentation***

What should a digital platform for presenting the many types of library records—holdings, circulation data, provenance information—look like? At the most basic level, it has to support textual transcriptions of original records. They can be published in HTML, although even greater functionality is gained by marking those files up in XML, such as with the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). More likely, the starting point for such a project is some form of digital archive. Archives can be built in a proprietary digital asset management program—such as ContentDM, Preservica, or Islandora—but also on social media image-sharing platforms. For example, the digital archive for the Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project relies on Flickr, while the European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project initially used

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<sup>66</sup> Thomas M McCoog, S.J., *A Guide to Jesuit Archives* (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 2001).

<sup>67</sup> For a good example of a work that uses a digital approach to read Jesuit records against the grain, see Kelly L. Schmidt, “Enslaved Faith Communities in the Jesuits' Missouri Mission,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 37, no. 2 (2019): 49–81.

Instagram.<sup>68</sup> Creators of both projects appreciated how social media platforms provided an economical way to host large image files and could also attract potential viewers who might not have known they had an interest in Jesuit books. Social media platforms provide opportunities for co-curation through their commenting functions. In the long term, however, standalone sites offer greater stability, especially as social media platforms are acquired by other companies with divergent plans.<sup>69</sup> Moving from image to library reconstruction requires a more sophisticated platform. Historical bibliographical information can be uploaded to a contemporary ILS, such as an open-source program like Koha, and then be reconstructed through copy cataloging. Matching historic references to modern MARC records for titles expands the metadata available for analysis and offers opportunities for standardization through the use of authorities' files. An ILS can be used to reconstruct a single library collection but can also be populated with multiple library catalogs, providing a form of union catalog tracing the commonalities, and revealing the differences, in Jesuit book collecting.

When possible, we should consider using platforms that already exist for this work, such as those created by the Catholic Research Resources Alliance (CRRA) or the IAJS. There are several benefits to working with already developed online resources. Discoverability is foremost among them. The CRRA's Catholic Portal aggregates materials held by diverse libraries, seminaries, and archives. The Catholic Portal brings together bibliographical records for books, manuscripts, photographs, ephemera, and other materials recorded in a range of formats. The portal's twelve collecting themes—which include Catholic education, intellectual life, social action, and missions—ensure that a broad range of material is included on the site.<sup>70</sup> The IAJS has similarly created a range of digital research tools—including bibliographies and online libraries—to help people find primary and secondary sources related to the Jesuits. Out of its work comes the potential creation of authority files, allowing for a standardization of names, in particular, of Jesuit authors. Both the CRRA and IAJS have significant institutional resources invested in them, ensuring the likelihood of their long-term sustainability, something that is not guaranteed with standalone projects built on social media platforms.

Great opportunity exists to build partnerships between the IAJS, CRRA, JARC, and the remaining twenty-seven Jesuit colleges and universities in the

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<sup>68</sup> See the Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project's Flickr page at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jesuitlibrariesprovenanceproject>. The European Jesuit Libraries Provenance Project's Instagram page can be consulted at: <https://www.instagram.com/jesuit-provenance> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>69</sup> The librarians at Georgia Southern University have created such a site for the European Jesuit Provenance Project on its Digital Commons platform: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/jesuit-lib> (accessed April 8, 2022).

<sup>70</sup> The CRRA's Catholic Portal can be consulted at: <https://www.catholicresearch.org> (accessed April 8, 2022).

United States for building these resources and coordinating teaching and internship opportunities for students to learn more about book history, Jesuit history, and the Catholic intellectual heritage.

## Conclusion

The nearly five hundred-year history of the Society of Jesus assures us that Wheeling will not be the last school to leave the Jesuit fold. From the Old Society (1540–1773) to the restored Society (1814–1965) and even to the so-called “New Society” that followed the Second Vatican Council (1965–present), Jesuits have been accustomed to weathering major shifts in demographic and geographic interest and political acceptance.<sup>71</sup> The order’s flourishing in New Spain and New France before the suppression was surpassed only by the growth and expansion of the order in the United States over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Changing global demographics within the Society are already demonstrating that the twenty-first century will see former colonial possessions, such as India, Africa, and the Philippines, show the greatest signs of growth. Running throughout, however, is the primacy of the Jesuits’ role as educators and their need for materials (e.g., books, e-books) for instruction, evangelization, and individual edification. The past will continue to provide the resources for the present and the future.

Documenting moments of transition requires recognition of the archival implications of past practice and formulation of strategies for safeguarding this legacy for the future. For collections that have not traditionally been well archived, such as library records, it behooves us to acknowledge the problem and work toward remedies. Quite simply, now is the time to draw that map and program that GPS as numbers decline and schools are threatened. Jesuits and those who work with them in the restored Society will likely have more say about the future disposition of their library collections than their Old Society forefathers, but the scope of their collections is staggering in comparison. These libraries, too, will fall prey to—if they are not already experiencing—consolidation and closure, shifts in reading practices, and declining resources for their upkeep. Preserving all that they ever collected is impractical and goes against the organic nature of libraries; preserving documentation of what they acquired, how they used it, and what they discarded is an achievable goal.

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<sup>71</sup> See Stephen Schloesser and Kyle Roberts, eds., *Crossings and Dwellings: Restored Jesuits, Women Religious, American Experience, 1814–2014* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).