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THEOLOGIA CONTROVERSA IN THE 16TH C. JESUIT SCHOOLS OF THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH AS A TOOL OF THE COUNTER REFORMATION

St. Ignatius of Loyola did not leave his congregation any detailed rules concerning theology teaching. He acted mostly according to the papal primacy and the Church teachings. The latter underwent a considerable reconstruction in the second half of the 16th century during the Council of Trent. In the light of the initial Jesuit findings, the early teaching curriculum included scholastic theology, i.e. speculative and dogmatic theology, lectures on the Holy Bible and positive theology¹.

As it happened in many other cases, also the Society adapted all its rules to local circumstances. All programs were carefully written and prepared in a manner conforming with special needs and conditions, such as the religious and social environment. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was treated by the Jesuits as a specific and difficult territory due to its religious diversity and the constant threat from Protestants. The Constitution, a principal document regulating the works of the Society², designated the Bible and *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas

¹ For general observations on early Jesuit education studies cf. T. Hughes, Loyola and the Educational System of the Jesuits, New York, 1907; J. B. Herman, La pédagogie des jésuites au XVI^e siècle. Ses sources, ses caractéristiques [Jesuits' pegagogy in the 16th c. Its sources, characteristics.], Louvain 1914; F. Charmot, La pédagogie des jésuites. Ses principes, son actualité [Jesuits' pedagogy. Its principles and topicality], Paris 1951; La pedagogia della Compagnia di Gesù. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Messina 14–16 novembre 1991. [Pedagogy of the Jesuits Society. The acts of the International Congress, Messina 14–16 November 1991], ed. F. Guerello, P. Schiavone, Messina 1992; J. W. Donohue, Jesuit Education. An Essay on the Foundations of its Idea. New York 1963.

² The first edition prepared by J. de Polanco, the secretary of St. Ignatius and one of his closest advisers was issued in Rome (*Constitutiones Societatis Iesu. Anno 1558*, *Romae, in aedibus societatis Iesu. [The con-*

Aquinas as the most important handbooks to be used by the Jesuits in theology teaching. In contrast positive theology was taught basing on works by several selected authors³.

St. Ignatius of Loyola's opinion was that the Jesuits should have appropriate, i.e. quick and efficient solutions against Protestants⁴. Therefore, they presented popular theology among people in an easy and accessible way as well as prepared books necessary for teaching this subject⁵. Thus, besides complete academic theology, as taught at universities, the Jesuits were forced to create cumulative theology that would briefly discuss the most general questions of the Catholic confession.

The introduction of the Jesuit Order into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the idea of Stanislaus Hosius⁶ who was involved in conducting the reform of the Catholic Church in the country⁷. It should be mentioned that he was one of the most actively opposed against the Protestant Reformation in Poland. Hosius thought that educating both priests and laity was the most efficient way to promote the Catholic faith⁸. He insisted on building a new social and Catholic background in his diocese, which was rather small and located in a distant part of the country. Hosius was not distinguished as a theologian; however, supreme as a diplomat and administrator. He obviously received recognition among the Jesuits.

The Order settled in Warmia and tried to adapt the local educational system for building their own teaching practice. For almost sixty years, the rectors of local communities and most provincial superiors came from abroad, mostly from Italy. The professors, especially in the field of theology and philosophy,

stitutions of the Society of Jesus. In 1558, in Rome, in the house of the company [1558]). It was reprinted in 1570, 1577 and 1583 as Constitutiones Societatis Iesu cum earum Declarationibus [The constitutions of the Society of Jesus with Declarations]; cf. also J. Garía de Castro, Polanco. El humanismo de los jesuitas [Polanco. The humanism of the Jesuits] (1517–1576), Bilbao – Santander – Madrid, 2012.

³ J. Brodrick, *Powstanie i rozwój Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, T. 1 *Początki Towarzystwa Jezusowego* [*The rise and development of the Jesuit Society*, Part 1: *The Beginnings of the Society of Jesus*], Kraków 1969, s. 82–106; L. Piechnik, *Nowe elementy wniesione przez jezuitów do szkolnictwa polskiego w XVI wieku [New elements introduced by the Jesuits to the Polish education in the 16th c.], "Collectanea Theologica" 1976, No. 1 (46), p. 67–77; entry <i>Teologia, Encyklopedia wiedzy o jezuitach na ziemiach Polski i Litwy* [*Encyclopedia of the Jesuits in Poland and Lithuania*], *1564–1995*, ed. L. Grzebień et al., Kraków 1996.

⁴ S. Bednarski, *Upadek i odrodzenie szkół jezuickich w Polsce [The fall and renaissance of Jesuit schools in Poland*], Kraków 2003, p. 13–31.

⁵ L. Piechnik, *Nowe elementy...*

⁶ J. Umiński, Kardynał Stanisław Hozjusz, biskup warmiński (1504–1579) [Cardinal Stanislas Hosius, bishop of Warmia (1504–1579)], Opole 1948; Kardynał Stanisław Hozjusz (1504–1579). Osoba, myśl, dzieło, czasy, znaczenie [Cardinal Stanislas Hosius (1504–1579). The person, thoughts, works, times and significance], ed. S. Archemczyk, J. Guzowski, J. Jezierski et al., Olsztyn 2005.

⁷ J.A. Kalinowska, Kardynał Stanisław Hozjusz (1504–1579) wobec sekularyzacji swoich czasów [Cardinal Stanisłas Hosius (1504–1579) faced with secularization of his time], in: Laicyzacja i sekularyzacja społeczeństwa nowożytnego (XVI–XVIII w.) [Secularization of the modern society (16th–18th c.)], ed. J. Wiśniewski, Olsztyn, 2008, p. 25–30.

⁸ Cf. H. Gulbinowicz, Geneza konstytucji hozjańskich Seminarium Duchownego w Braniewie [The origins of the Hosius' cconstitutions of the Theological Seminary in Braniewo], "Studia Warmińskie" 1968, No. 5, p. 43–65.

were also from outside the Commonwealth as there was an insufficient number of Polish Jesuits who were already ordained and prepared to fulfill their duties. Educating the so called Polish Jesuits was quite a lengthy process, even though the priests coming from the Commonwealth's territory were aware of local circumstances.

In fact in the theology and philosophy training, the Polish Jesuits rebelled against teaching exclusively works by Thomas Aquinas⁹. Because of the local circumstances within the frontiers of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, they underlined among others the necessity to include works by the Church Fathers, as well as books by theologians who commented on biblical texts¹⁰. The reason was not only to oppose the Protestants, but also to promote the teaching in the parts of the territory inhabited by people of the later Ruthenian Catholic Church.

From the very beginning the Jesuit Order discussed the question of establishing a firm educational system¹¹. They even started to organize it, but the teaching remained effectively independent in every province till the end of the 16th century¹². For almost twenty years this common educational system was discussed¹³. A particular problem in establishing the teaching program in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was that the country was quite large, and its social and religious situation was diversified. Furthermore, it was also remote from the discussions and arguments taking place in Western Europe¹⁴.

Nevertheless, as in other Jesuit colleges in central and northern Europe, the main subject of the academic education was the so-called *theologia controversa*, i.e. an analysis of issues disputed between Catholics and non-Catholics. It should be mentioned that in the Commonwealth public discussions were popular, during which opponents met and presented their views; hardly ever were those disagreements solved in a violent manner. However, it should be noted that since the Order considered peaceful coexistence with others to be the best way to introduce them

⁹ R. Darowski, Stan obecny i perspektywy badań nad filozofią w szkolach jezuickich w Polsce (XVI–XVIII w.) [A current status and future prospects of studies on philosophy in Jesuit schools in Poland (16th–18th c.)], "Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej" 1978, No. 24, p. 237–285; R. Darowski, Przepisy dotyczące nauczania filozofii w uczelniach jezuickich w Polsce w XVI wieku, Studia z historii filozofii [Regulations concerning philosophy teaching in Jesuit high schools in Poland in 16th c. Studies on the history of philosophy], Kraków 1980, p. 47–85.

¹⁰ M. Bednarz, Jezuici a religijność polska [The Jesuits and Polish devotion], "Nasza Przeszłość" 1964, No. 20, p. 149–224.

¹¹ L. Grzebień, Z dziejów szkolnictwa jezuickiego w Polsce [From the history of the Jesuit education in Poland], Kraków 1994, passim; S. Bednarski, Jezuici polscy wobec projektu ordynacji studiów [Polish Jesuits and the project of the school regulations]. Kraków 1935.

¹² B. Natoński, Humanizm jezuicki i teologia pozytywno-kontrowersyjna od XVI do XVIII wieku. Nauka i piśmiennictwo [The Jesuit humanism and positive-controversial theology from 16th to 18th c. Studies and writings], Kraków 2003.

¹³ Cf. S. Bednarski, Jezuici polscy wobec projektu ordynacji studiów [Polish Jesuists and the project of the school regulations], Kraków 1935.

¹⁴ L. Grzebień, *Jezuici polscy a reformacja [Polish Jesuits and the Reformation]*, "The sixteenth anniversary of the Faculty of Theology in Krakow" 20 X 1996–20 X 1997, Kraków 1998, p. 535–548.

to the Catholic faith, the Jesuits did not regard shaping the pupils' confessional identity as the main task of schooling¹⁵.

The subject that helped strengthen pupils' faith was obviously theology, involving the most bearing points of the Roman Catholic doctrine and taught at every stage of education. In the 16th century, it was the positive-controversial theology called *Controversiae* ("controversies"), while in the 17th century it was renamed "controversial theology" (*Theologia controversa*). It was a subject that included a short outline of faith, i.e. of basic, scholastic theology and a detailed analysis of questions disputed by Catholics and non-Catholics. Therefore, polemical theology was adapted to a considerable extent to geographical regions where diverse religious confessions were present. It was modeled after Robert Bellarmin's *Disputationes*¹⁶.

St. Robert Bellarmin was one of the most important figures in the Counter-Reformation. Upon the start of his studies, his teachers adhered to St. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine. As a professor of theology and a later rector of the Roman College, who supported the reform decrees of the Council of Trent, he was the best person to prepare the handbook on polemical theology.

He attempted to collect and summarize all the various religious disputes between Catholics and non-Catholics. The result of his research was compiled to a book entitled *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei*, which was first published in Ingolstadt in 1581–1593. Bellarmine's method consisted in reviewing the issues in a calm and fair manner rather than arguing against Protestants.

At the very beginning of the Order in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the students and candidates had to complete the education in various ways. As the first generation of priests in a country where no school at this level existed in those days, the first Polish Jesuit polemists were educated at the Roman College; later, they imported the methodology of controversy teaching to Poland.

The first chair of controversy was officially opened in 1581 at the Academy of Vilnius, which started this kind of teaching in 1579. The first head of controversy was Emanuel de Vega from Portugal. This Jesuit devoted much of his attention to dogmatic questions in controversial issues and opted for an individual course of instruction¹⁷. It is quite obvious that his educational methods included discussions, teaching and a practical training. The latter meant that the a person graduating from one of the higher classes could teach in lower ones or take part in rural missions.

¹⁵ B. Natoński, Szkolnictwo jezuickie w Polsce w dobie kontrreformacji, Wiek XVII – barok, kontrreformacja. Prace z historii kultury [Jesuit education in Poland in the times of Counter Reformation. 16th c. – Baroque, Counter Reformation. Cultural Studies], ed. J. Pelc, Wrocław 1970, p. 309–337.

¹⁶ Cf. S. Bednarski, Stosunki kardynała R. Bellarmina z Polską i Polakami. Na podstawie korespondencji. [R. Bellarmin's Relations with Poles and Poland. On the basis of his correspondence], Kraków 1928.

¹⁷ K. Budzyk, *Ideologia i kultura doby kontrreformacji. Działalność jezuitów i Piotra Skargi [Ideology and culture in the time of the Counter Reformation. The works of Jesuits and Piotr Skarga.]*, "Polonistyka" 1949, v. 5 (2), p. 101–118.

In fact teaching positive-controversial theology depended on professors and thus, had an individual approach. Consequently, for a student faced with the need to present his level of expertise in the field, a better option was to give the name of his teacher or the college he completed rather than to explain which books and authors he read in the course of his studies For example, Fryderyk Bartsch¹⁸, one of the long-term teachers of the subject in Braniewo, believed that one should stick to a specific handbook, e.g. Enchiridion locorum communium adversus Ludderanos by Jan Eck (Joahennes Eckius)¹⁹ or Summa doctrinae christianae by Peter Canisius²⁰. The first one, with forty-six editions before 1576, was directed primarily against Philip Melanchton's Loci Communes, but to some extent it refers to the teachings of other protestants as well. The other one was constructed as a list of two hundred and eleven questions in five chapters to answer the most important questions on religious matters and was based on works of numerous authors, not only Thomas Aquinas. Bartsch chose the Enchridion for a straightforward reason – it was a book the Jesuits, maybe Bartsch himself, already had in their library.

With respect to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Bartsch underlined that because of the specific nature of the country, one should only pay attention to problems which were of particular importance in Poland, such as: the Holy Communion under both kinds (against the Lutherans), the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (against the Calvinists), the cult of saints, the Church tradition, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, the purgatory, justification by faith and works, clerical celibacy, the origin of the Holy Spirit (against the Orthodox), infant baptism (against the Anabaptists), and the divine nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit (against the Anti-trinitarians).

In general, the Jesuits attributed particular importance to controversy lectures in the last stage of education, i.e. in the rhetoric classes. Most pupils, those who did not intend to pursue a career as Jesuits, would end their education there. However, as such they needed a solid base to start working as teachers or secretaries at nobility's estates and these lectures would greatly help them and prepare them for these tasks. On the other hand, for future Jesuits, who would soon

¹⁸ Cf. F. Bartsch (S. Bednarski), Polski Słownik Biograficzny [Polish Biographical Dictionary], v. 1, Kraków 1935, ed. W. Konopczyński, p. 329–330; F. Bartsch (L. Grzebień), in: Słownik Polskich Teologów Katolickich [Dictionary of the Polish catholic theologians], v. 1, Warszawa 1981, ed. H. E. Wyczawski, p. 118; J. Łukaszewska-Haberkowa, Fryderyk Bartsch SJ (1552–1609) i jego działalność literacka [Fryderyk Bartsch SJ (1552–1609) and his literary works], in: Pamięć wieków kształtuje potomność. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana ks. prof. Ludwikowi Grzebieniowi z okazji 70. urodzin [The memory of the centuries shapes posterity. The jubilee book dedicated to Fr. prof. Ludwik Grzebieni on the occasion of his 70th birthday], ed. A. P. Bieś SJ, B. Topij-Stempińska, Kraków 2010, p. 225–239.

¹⁹ J. Eckius, Enchiridion locorum communium adversus Lutherum [et] alios hostes Ecclesiae... [Enchiridion of common places against Luther [and] other Church's enemies...], Landshut 1525.

²⁰ P. Canisius, Summa doctrinæ christianæ... in usum Christianæ pueritiæ [A summary of the Christian doctrine ... for Christian youth's use], Vienna 1555.

commence their philosophy and theology studies, the lectures in controversy provided a strong foundation for future education.

In the 16th century Poland, the most dynamically developing center for positive-controversial theology studies was Poznań with teachers such as Pedro Artieda²¹, Alfonso Pisa²², Laurence Arthur Faunt²³ and Pedro Viana²⁴. The annual disputes held at the local college were included in the most comprehensive and unique handbook of controversy of the 16th century Poland, published in Cologne in 1585, known under the title *Controversiarum aliquot praecipuarum fidei christianae succinctae et accuratae explicationes in Collegio Posnaniensi*..

Between 1583–1599, during the process of creating the Jesuit *Ratio studio-rum*, after internal discussions within the Society, it was decided that polemical theology should only be studied in the Roman College and in countries endangered by heresy, particularly in Poland. In those years the number of Polish Jesuits working as teachers in Jesuit colleges grew rapidly²⁵. The *Ratio studiorum* was a document that standardized the global system of Jesuit education and collected regulations for school officials and teachers which relied on classical subjects, such as theology and philosophy. Created by experienced scholars, it did not and could not take account of any local specifics. It was too general.

Discussions concerning a common teaching program of the Jesuit Order were lengthy and violent, especially because of various geographical and religious conditions in the provinces. A special committee was formed: its task was to work on the *Ratio studiorum* and organize studies in colleges located north of Italy. As it was agreed, two fields of theological studies were to be created, i.e. scholastic and positive theology²⁶.

As stated by the committee, scholastic theology students, besides the commentary to *Summa* by St. Thomas, in the course of four years would also study controversy and the Holy Bible. Positive theology students were to devote the first two years to philosophy, while the second two years would be spent on lectures and classes in controversy, moral theology and the Holy Bible.

²¹ Pedro Artieda (1548 – 1578) was a Spanish Jesuit who worked in Posnan from 1573 to 1576, cf. J. Terlaga, *Działalność ks. Jakóba Wujka T.J. jako rektora Kolegjum Poznańskiego [Jakób Wujek's activity as a rector of the Collegium in Poznan*], Kraków 1936, p. 32, 65 and 82.

²² Alfons de Pisa (lat. Pisanus; 1552–1598), from Spain, attained Poland in 1577 and worked in Poznań and Kalisz.

²³ Laurence Artur Faunt (known as Faunteus or Anglus, i. e. lat. "from England"; 1552–1591), was born in England, educated in Louvain, in Poland from 1581.

²⁴ Pedro Viana (1549–1609) was a Spanish Jesuit who worked from 1573–1578 as a profesor e. g. in Vilnius, cf. R. Darowski, *Pierwsi arystotelicy wileńscy [First Aristotelians in Vilnius]*, "Analecta Cracoviensia" 1980, No. 12, p. 173–191.

²⁵ E. g. Adrian Radzimiński (1557–1615) and Adrian Junga (1551–1605), already known as polemists and writers, started teaching.

²⁶ S. Bednarski, *Jezuici polscy wobec projektu ordynacji studiów [Polish Jesuists and the project of the school regulations]*, "Przegląd Powszechny" 1935, No. 205, p. 69–84 and 223–240.

Because of the specific character of the province and its geographical conditions, Polish Jesuits petitioned the *Ratio Studiorum* commission to take these aspects into consideration in the final version of the document. In the discussion on lectures in theology they were against splitting the subject in two parts. Their view was that instead of commenting on St. Thomas' *Summa*..., a theology teacher in the college should write separate works on every theological issue. The Polish Jesuits stressed that the most important thing in disputes with the Protestants and the Orthodox was the knowledge of the Holy Bible and the rules of dialectics, particularly the decisions of Councils which were completely neglected by non-Catholics.

The final version of the *Ratio studiorum*, accepted by the entire Congregation was published in 1599 and did not include rules on controversy teaching. It consisted of regulations which were compulsory for the entire Congregation; since positive-controversial theology was classified as one of the particular issues, it became one of the subjects to be studied by those who were supposed to work among non-Catholics. In those days, positive-controversial theology was not fully shaped in the universal Church; however, without aligning it with scholastic theology, it had no possibility for a more complete development²⁷.

In practice, lectures on controversy, which might as well be called lectures in the field of positive-controversial theology, continued to be taught separately in colleges offering a full course in theology.

Theology, particularly its positive-controversial variant, began to collapse gradually and slowly in the early 17th century. In the Polish Province conflicted with the Academy of Cracow attempting to create a local academy, positive-controversial theology suffered a serious crisis and eventually gave way to other questions. Perhaps he last who worked on controversies were ascetic writers Mikołaj Łęczycki²⁸ and Kasper Drużbicki²⁹ who, however, should be considered 17th-century authors.

Especially in the 16th century, many prominent writers in the field of positive-controversial theology could be found among the Polish Jesuits. Besides the above-mentioned, one should name e.g. Jakub Wujek, who published the first Polish language comparative theology handbook entitled *Iudicium albo rozsądek niektorych Katholikow o Confessiey Sędomierskiey*³⁰. He set an example to

²⁷ L. Piechnik, *Nowe elementy wniesione przez jezuitów do szkolnictwa polskiego w XVI w.* [New elements introduced by Jesuits to Polish education in the 16th c.], "Collectanea Theologica" 1976, No. 1 (46), p. 67–77.

²⁸ M. Bednarz, Łęczycki M., in: Ignacy Loyola, Pisma wybrane [Selected writings], Kraków 1968, v. II, p. 605–606; M. Sopoćko, Mikolaj Łęczycki o wychowaniu duchowem [Mikolaj Łęczycki on spiritual training], Wilno 1935.

²⁹ J. Krzyszkowski, O. Kasper Drużbicki SJ [Kasper Drużbicki SJ], "Sacrae Poloniae Millennium" 1965, v. 11, p. 573–613; J. Gummersbach, Kilka rysów z wewnętrznego życia O. Kaspra Drużbickiego [Selected features of Kasper Drużbicki's spirituality], "Nasze Wiadomości" 1926, No. 8, p. 208–215.

³⁰ [Judicium, or the common sense of certain Catholics of the Sandomierz Confession], Kraków 1570.

others, i.e. Andrzej Jurgiewicz³¹, Adrián Junga (already mentioned), Stanisław Grodzicki³² and Jan Uberus³³ who followed in his footsteps.

The Jesuit education in the 16th-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was based and formed on general rules and decrees of the Council of Trent, however – as in many other aspects – it should be treated as a process. From 1565, when the Order for the first time opened a school, the educational system as well as local programs gradually developed into more strict and less independent schooling methods. To reinforce the protection of the Roman Catholic faith against the Protestants and the Orthodox, *theologia controversa* was the most important subject both for studying and academic development. The professors adjusted the content of their lectures to local circumstances, and current problems and disputes. When the religious situation began to change, *theologia controversa* was no longer needed and more emphasis was placed on general theology.

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³¹ A. Jurgiewicz (1560–1640) dead as a theologian in Vilnius, who was a former Jesuit and polemical writer.

³² S. Grodzicki (1541–1613) completed studies in Germany and Rome, worked mainly as a professor of dogmatic theology, but occasionally taught and wrote on polemical problems, cf. K. Drzymała, *Ks. Stanisław Grodzicki IF. Stanisłas Grodzickil*. Kraków 1973.

³³ J. Uberus (lat. for Uber or Huber; 1559–1612) was a German speaking Jesuit who worked in Northern Poland from 1585.

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Theologia controversa in the 16th c. Jesuit schools of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a tool of the Counter Reformation Summary

Aim: The author's aim in this article was to present the Jesuit education in 16th c. in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as a result of Council of Trent and following Church's reform. Introducing the Jesuit Order into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the idea of S. Hozjusz. He was one of those who conducted the reform of the Catholic Church in the country. Hozjusz thought that the education of priests and laity is the most efficient way to promote the Catholic faith.

Methods: The author hereof applied a method based on the analysis of historical sources and then described the result.

Results: From the very beginning the educational system was discussed and organized in the Jesuit Order, but the teaching was effectively independent in every province till the end of the 16th c. The main subject in academic education was the so-called *theologia controversa*, which consisted in analysing issues which were disputable between Catholics and non-Catholics. However, it should be noted that for the Jesuits shaping the pupils' confessional identity was not the main task of schooling, as they considered peaceful coexistence with others to be the best way to introduce them to the Catholic faith.

Conclusions: The conclusions depict the main books and methods used in the educational system as well as the development and collapse of *theologia controversa* teaching. The R. Bellarmin's oeuvre was the first handbook of the

subject, but in every college it was adapted to local needs and the students' level. Therefore, theology teaching was independent till the end of the 16th century when *Ratio Studiorum* was officially published.

Following a theological crisis within the Order in Poland at the beginning of the 17th c. *theologia controversa* was forsaken. Nevertheless, some Jesuit writers (M. Łęczycki and K. Drużbicki) still continued teaching it (mostly having Orthodox Christians in mind) and printed educational books dealing with this issue. The author provides the audience with a thorough description of how *theologia controversa* was introduced in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, who the teachers were and what books and methods were used.

Keywords: the Jesuits, 16th c., education, school, *theologia controversa*.