

A NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF ANNOTATION NINETEEN

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Introduction

THIS NOTE IS written for non-specialists, by a non-specialist. It is intended for those who become involved in giving the Spiritual Exercises in daily life, and who wish for some little historical background. Because more than four and a half centuries have passed since Ignatius began to share with others his experiences in the cave at Manresa, the history of the Exercises and implicitly of Annotation 19 is wide, and no attempt will be made to cover it here. All that is attempted is an indication of what the first Jesuits understood by Annotation 19. How did they interpret it? If they gave the full Exercises in daily life, as is done today, would they have understood that work to be a faithful translation into practice of what Ignatius meant by Annotation 19? Again, if the early givers of the Exercises did in fact give the full Exercises in daily life, would they have regarded this manner of giving the Exercises as normal — as we do today — or exceptional? A final angle on our question: are Annotation 19 and the giving of the full Exercises in daily life synonymous? Can the two be equated, such that the authority of Ignatius can be invoked or assumed for the giving of the full Exercises in daily life? Or have we an example in our day of a creativity which yet is faithful to the intentions of Ignatius and to his stress on adapting the Exercises to the needs of exercitants?¹

Sources for the history of Annotation 19

1. *Texts* of the Spiritual Exercises used by Ignatius: Ignatius's original Autograph is now lost, but a copy exists which he himself made use of and corrected in his own hand: it is therefore accurate. It is known as the *Autograph*.

During Ignatius's lifetime, a latin translation of the Spanish was made by Fr Frusius: this was approved and published in 1548, eight

years before Ignatius died. It is known as the *Vulgate*. Textual criticism goes back to these two texts, as do translations.

There are other texts dating from the lifetime of Ignatius, of more or less importance. All are contained in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu (MHSJ)*, vol 100.

2. *Directories*: These contain the wisdom gathered by the various givers of the Exercises. They are found in *MHSJ*, vol 76. The definitive Directory, published in 1599, is available in english translation (London, 1925).

3. Accounts of how the Exercises were given are scattered over the more than one hundred volumes of the *MHSJ*.

4. Historians of the Exercises draw on these sources. Of the historians, I. Iparraguirre is the most useful. He compiled a three volume history of the Exercises: vol 1 deals with the Exercises in the lifetime of Ignatius; vol 2 with the period from the death of Ignatius to the publication of the official Directory (1556-1599); vol 3 with the evolution of the Exercises in Europe in the seventeenth century. These volumes are as yet available only in the original Spanish: they are enormously rich in material.²

Also useful is P. de Leturía: *Estudios ignacianos*, 2 vols (Rome, 1957). Brief accounts of the history of Annotation 19 are given by J. P. Van Schoote as an address to a congress on the Exercises at Loyola, 1966,³ and in G. Cusson: *Conduis-moi sur le chemin d'éternité* (Rome, 1973), pp 14-28.

5. An essential source of bibliography is L. Polgar: *Bibliographie sur l'histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus 1901-1980*, vol I: *Toute la Compagnie* (Rome, 1981). The entries on the Exercises run from n 2731 to 4164: section J, 'Adaptation' runs from n 4025 to 4075.

The interpretation of the text

Annotations 18-20 are to be read together: the nineteenth must not be taken in isolation. The guiding principle for the three Annotations is that the Exercises are to be adapted for different exercitants. To enter into the mind of Ignatius on this point of adaptation, it is helpful to think rather of 'spiritual exercises of St Ignatius' than of 'The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius'. The book Ignatius wrote contains many exercises, among which, and taking up the major space, are the 'full' Spiritual Exercises; but there are many other exercises, for example on examination of conscience, confession, ways of prayer. In other words, the book is not dealing with one issue only, that is, the giving of a thirty day retreat, which

is then to be adapted and scaled down for particular exercitants. Rather, it is a collection of exercises, each to be used according to the needs of a situation.

What exercises might be offered to the persons described in Annotation 18? 'To each according as he seeks to dispose himself', but mainly exercises described early in the book, that is, the examens and the method of prayer on the commandments, etc., and perhaps First Week matter; 'but not the election or matters beyond the First Week'.

What group is envisaged in Annotation 19? The text says: *al que estuviere embarazado en cosas publicas o negocios convenientes, quier letrado o ingenioso*. The translations differ, especially in regard to the last phrase. Rickaby translates: 'A man engaged in public affairs or necessary business, or connected with letters or industry'. Puhl: 'One who is educated or talented, but engaged in public affairs or necessary business'. Mullan and Longridge translate likewise. But although the Spanish may be disputed, the Latin clearly favours Puhl: for the *Vulgate* runs: *sive ingenio sive literis praeditus sit*. Annotation 19 concerns a person who has greater capacity than those described in Annotation 18.

What exercises are to be given such a person? The Principle and Foundation, the examens, a method of confessing and receiving the Blessed Sacrament: then for three days in the morning, the meditation on the first, second and third sins: three more days on personal sins, and three more again on the punishment of sin, plus the ten Additions. Then he should follow the same method in meditating on the mysteries of the life of Christ as is explained later. Ignatius emphasizes that the First Week is to be presented fully and given due time: nine days are indicated. Did he feel that a longer period would be unnecessary or would tend to drag? What depth of foundation was he preparing? Enough to give a base for 'the mysteries of the life of Christ' or enough for the full Exercises? To answer these questions, let us look at Annotations 18-20 as a progression, not only in regard to the quality of persons and their availability, but also in regard to the content to be given them. We may follow Iparraguirre in speaking of three classes of exercises: *leves*, the term occurs in Annotation 18 and is translated as 'light' or 'easy'; *abiertos*, referring to Annotation 19: a term used by Ignatius and preserved by P. Gonzales de Camara, and meaning 'open' as against 'enclosed';⁴ *completos y de modo perfecto*, referring to Annotation 20. The term is Iparraguirre's and means 'the complete Exercises, given in a perfect

manner'. Annotation 20 alone has *todos los Ejercicios* (all the Exercises). The Spanish text does not use the noun 'exercises' in Annotation 19; instead it employs a verb. There is a strength and emphasis in the terms employed in Annotation 20 which are not present in Annotation 19. Annotation 20 alone carries the notion of limitless horizons: the word *más* ('the more') occurs ten times. The conclusion suggests itself from the text that in Annotation 20 alone is Ignatius dealing with the full Exercises. The text does not support the notion that Ignatius thought that what he proposed in Annotation 19 matched what he proposed in Annotation 20.

The exercises to be given in Annotation 18 are 'light and easy' not in regard to their content, for the content of the First Week is not light and easy, but in regard to their goal. In Annotation 18 the goal is repentance, confession, peace of soul, and so the exercises need not be taken with great intensity: the superstructure to build on the foundation which they give is fairly light. In Annotation 19 the exercises of the First Week are to be made with greater application and intensity, because the person can go further. But how far does Ignatius think he can be brought in *Ejercicios abiertos*? Does he limit the time given to the First Week (nine days is suggested) because he has a limited goal for this sort of person? It seems that in Annotations 18 and 19 a principle is operating: limited goal, therefore limited time on First Week. The text is inconclusive, but when we contrast both what it says and omits with the text of Annotation 20, many hints are given us that Ignatius had limited hopes for those involved in Annotation 19, while the contrary is true regarding Annotation 20.

Recent enthusiasm for the interpretation of Annotation 19 as meaning 'the full Exercises in daily life' has obscured a relevant point in Annotation 20. Perhaps it is there rather than in Annotation 19 that we should look for some Ignatian support in giving the full Exercises in daily life. According to Annotation 20, the full Exercises are to be given in the order set out in the book, to a person who is more disengaged and who wishes to make as much progress as possible. But they can be given in more than one setting: ordinarily (Spanish *por vía ordenada*; Latin *secundum successum communiorem*) this will mean seclusion and solitude, and the values of going apart are indicated at length. But the use of the word 'ordinarily' indicates again the governing principle of adaptation and flexibility: there may well be situations in which a suitable candidate can be given the full Exercises without this seclusion and solitude. It is startling to

think of a person making the full thirty day Exercises without seclusion and solitude, but they are currently being made by persons while dwelling in slums. Hence our adaptation of giving the full Exercises over many months to persons engaged in other matters may find some encouragement here.

The Directories

Rather than present the comments of various Directories in regard to Annotation 19, let us take the official *Directory* of 1599, which may be seen as summarizing and sifting the best wisdom gathered from the experiences of many men giving spiritual exercises over more than half a century. Classes of persons for whom the Exercises are suitable (ch IX) are divided into two: those capable of the full Exercises, and those

to whom the Exercises should not be given in their entirety. This may be either because their state is fixed, as in the case of married people and others to whom, for other reasons, it is not expedient to give the Election. Or it may be because official business or other occupations preclude opportunities either of time or place, as may happen to State officials, and sometimes to the nobility, or to heads of families and the like. . . .

This appears to be the received interpretation of Annotation 19. That it runs directly counter to current practice is clear, but not a cause for dismay; what is important here is to acknowledge historical facts.

If the above conclusion be true, it is hard to see how Longridge could justify the statement that those following Annotation 19 receive the full Exercises as to matter but not as to form.⁵ G. Cusson, however, does offer evidence that the Exercises were given to persons who did not move away from their own homes into places of retreat.⁶ A few observations may be made here: first, Cusson seems to think of Annotation 20 as referring only to those who go into retreat away from their own homes: but Annotation 20 offers the possibility that Ignatius would take a person through the complete Exercises while they remained in their own home, so long as they were not engaged in other occupations. Nor was this strange, since retreat houses did not yet exist, nor had the early Society many houses in which a room might be found for a retreatant. In passing over this aspect of Annotation 20, Cusson is forced to consider these occurrences of the full Exercises in daily life as belonging to Annotation 19.

The point is not unimportant: the evidence suggests that those who could not fully disengage themselves from affairs were not given the full Exercises: if they were, it was by exception. But persons who could fully disengage themselves were given the full Exercises, in the seclusion of their homes or elsewhere, and these Exercises would take a month, more or less. The present-day practice, of giving the full Exercises to persons engaged in other affairs and extending these over nine months or so, seems not to be rooted in early practice. My point would be, not that our current manner of giving Annotation 19 was not tried in the early days, but that it did not seem to pass the test of time and reflection on experience. We know that Ignatius's views on giving the Exercises modified over the years: in the *Constitutions* (Part VIII, 4F) and in the *Directory* of 1599 (ch 1, n 7) he urges great care in selecting persons for the full Exercises, and this prudence came from reflecting on experience.

Iparraguirre, commenting on the *Exercicios leves, abiertos* and *completos*, states that those following Annotation 19 normally would not take up the question of the election; while continuing their daily work, they would follow the Exercises for a month or two or more, and gain by an extended time what was lost in intensity. As to those following Annotation 20, he says that granted their total freedom for the making of the full Exercises, no external factors were held as essential: 'the one fixed factor was that there are no external fixed factors'. Adaptation is the principle that rules the arrangements of the retreat: the place, the number of days spent, the numbers of hours of prayer, the making or not making of the election, and so on . . . all these would vary in accord with the needs of the exercitant.⁷ Scattered throughout his three volumes are illustrations of this approach. He notes in the introduction to his third volume that one falsifies the sources by approaching them with a fixed idea of the Exercises, and that this approach blinds one to what is there.⁸

Concluding comments

We have looked at the text of the Exercises and noted the contrasts between Annotation 19 and Annotation 20: the former indicates a limited goal, whereas the latter's is unlimited: the full Exercises appear to be for the fully disengaged alone, whether they live in 'retreat' at home or elsewhere. The term 'ordinarily' in Annotation 20 has been underlined. The practice of Ignatius and the early Jesuits has been hinted at: the indications are that while some persons were given the full Exercises in daily life over an extended period,

this method did not survive the test of experience, and is discouraged by the official *Directory* of 1599. We may add that after 1599 the Exercises entered a new phase, with a loss of the original inspiration, especially of the importance of one-to-one direction; little is heard of Annotation 19: Iparraguirre's third volume, on history of the Exercises in Europe in the seventeenth century, contains only one index reference to Annotation 19.

Our study indicates that for Ignatius several principles must guide the giving of the full Exercises: (a) they are for a few, and these are to be chosen and prepared with great care; (b) one-to-one direction is required; (c) the election is centrally important, and the conditions for it are to be prepared with deep sensitivity to the subtle workings of the spirits on the human heart. Silence and solitude and disengagement from other affairs are required: the giver of the Exercises is to be discreetly available but not obtrusive. We have also noted above that the foundations for the election are laid in the First Week, such that where First Week matter is more gently presented, the inference is that the exercitant will not be making the election later.

The conclusion emerges that Annotation 19 was not seen as a variation of Annotation 20, that is, as an equally desirable way of giving the full Exercises. Since the very term 'Annotation 19' is jargon, and meaningless to the laity whom we especially wish to help through the Exercises, it might well be dropped: it falsifies the historical reality. 'Exercises in daily life' seems a better term to cover what is intended, and gives greater flexibility: 'Exercises in daily life' can cover a wide variety of exercises and allow for differing lengths. The escape from rigid schematization ('I only give Annotation 19 retreats'!) would open us to Ignatius's overriding desire 'to help souls' and to adapt the Exercises always to individual needs. Perhaps we do not look long enough at Annotation 18, nor at Annotation 19 as written; perhaps we tend to ignore the extraordinary value Ignatius placed on the full Exercises made in solitude and silence, and on the conditions he thought would best favour a good election. The giving of shorter Exercises *but with individual care* brings great fruit, as those working in the 'Open Door' or 'At Home' retreats well know. Might we look more closely at the possibility of a person making the full thirty day Exercises at home, granting that costs in retreat houses can be a diriment impediment?

Ignatius would not say to those of us who give the full Exercises in daily life over many months: 'This does not fit in with my Annotations!' Rather he might ask: 'Do you find by reflecting on this

experience that it achieves the best possible fruit in your cultural situation, which is so different from mine?' He might also add, I suspect: 'Don't get obsessed with only one method of giving the Exercises. Learn their inner dynamics. Be ready and able to adapt them. Give the full Exercises only to the few, from whom the greatest fruit can be hoped, for the glory of God'.

NOTES

¹ The contemporary practice of giving the full Exercises to persons in daily life over an extended period, perhaps eight months or more, began about the mid-sixties. See Cusson, G.: *Les Exercices 'dans la vie courante': résultats d'une enquête 1966-76* (Rome, 1976). Terminology differs: french authors speak of 'Exercises in daily life'; likewise Spaniards. Some english speaking authors, notably J. Veltri, speak of the 'Annotation 19' retreat.

² Iparraguirre, I.: *Práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio en vida de su autor (1522-56)* (Rome, 1946); *Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio (1556-99)* (Rome, 1955); *Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio: evolución en Europa durante el siglo XVII* (Rome, 1973).

³ 'Une formule audacieuse de grande retraite, les Exercices spirituels selon la dix-neuvième annotation'. Spanish text in *BAC, Los Ejercicios de San Ignacio a la luz del Vaticano II*, (1968).

⁴ *Memorial*, n 311; *Fontes Narrativi* 1, 708, in *MHSJ*, vol 66.

⁵ Longridge, W. H.: *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (London, 1909), p 19. The author instances the case of Possevinus who made the Exercises while secretary of the Society (p 20). The fact that Possevinus spent forty-seven days on the First Week was perhaps a poor advertisement for giving the full Exercises in daily life.

⁶ Cusson, G.: *Conduis-moi sur le chemin d'éternité* (Montreal, 1976), pp 15-24.

⁷ Iparraguirre, I.: *Práctica de los Ejercicios*, p 43.

⁸ Iparraguirre, I.: *Historia de los Ejercicios*, vol III, p 25-27.