Klaus Koschorke and Johannes Meier included as volume 14 in their series *Studien zur Außereuropäischen Christentumsgeschichte – Studies in the History of Christianity in the Non-Western World* the dissertation of Julia Lederle called *Mission and Economy of the Jesuits in India – Intermediate Actions in the Example of the Malabar Province in the 18th Century*. The historical doctoral thesis was successfully defended on September 21st before Prof. Peter Becker at the University of Vienna. The study intends to cast light on the so far not researched side of the Jesuit mission in Southern India. Portugal, the upcoming and ambitious European colonial power, had since 1498 developed trade posts in Indian ports and already in 1538 made great efforts to win members of the Society of Jesus (SJ), newly founded in 1540 by the Spanish nobleman Ignatius of Loyola, for the evangelization of its new territories in Asia. It did so even before the Society of Jesus had obtained papal recognition. The nobleman Francisco de Jassu y Javier from Navarra in Spain, better known as Francis Xavier, joined the new religious congregation founded by his compatriot, Ignatius of Loyola, in Paris. Together with two other Jesuits, he was sent to Asia in 1540, where they first settled in Goa, a part of India that was controlled by the Portuguese. A little later, Xavier went across the border to the Portuguese enclave of Goa and “became one of the great figures of modern missionary endeavours because of his missionary enthusiasm” (H. Rzepkowski, *Lexikon der Mission*, 1992). The history of Portuguese education and evangelisation in the home country and overseas can hardly be written without considering the contribution of the Jesuits, a community that in Portugal by the year 1600 had already reached a membership of 600. Soon there was the Province of Goa as well as a Malabar Province (1601/05) of the Jesuits that made it possible to do greater work and produce a more effective ecclesial organisation in the south of India. The mission of the Jesuits in India was from its beginning part of the Portuguese Padroado-Mission and was for a long time supported by government funds. The rise and fall of the Portuguese colonial power on the Indian Sub-continent was for almost three centuries closely connected with the rise and fall of the Jesuit mission until the government ordered the dissolution of the Jesuit Order in Portugal and its colonies (1759). In her study the author was able to research the economy of the Jesuits in the Malabar Province on the basis of the traditional way of bookkeeping and narrative sources. The upkeep of the missionaries and their institutions, here especially their colleges, is worth mentioning. They demanded that in times of decline and failure they receive financial support from the Portuguese colonial power. They showed a solid financial administration and expansion while at the same time securing their own sources of income. The study examines the motives of the missionaries, who, in order to secure their finances, combined knowledge of economics in their home countries with their knowledge of the Indian market. In this way they could acquire goods which could be sold at a profit on the Indian market. But we cannot fix the role of the Jesuits solely to their economic endeavours, because this would not correspond to the unity of faith, ideas and material culture of the missionaries, as the author rightly stresses. The author is not only concerned with the description of the intermediate bearing of the Jesuits within missionary structure in South India, but also wants to point out their specific concept of “economic intermediality” in India. This she does without neglecting the mediator role of the Jesuits, especially for the sake of their pastoral mission work. The first three chapters of her work deal with the historical assumptions and backgrounds of the topic. The fourth and fifth chapter then are dedicated wholly to the Jesuits and their missionary efforts in India. Here she presents and evaluates the internationality and transnationality of the Jesuits and their unique communication system. Four chapters in the third part of the book are devoted to the actual topic of the study: the economic activities of the Jesuits in South India. “The Jesuits maintained the cumbersome book keeping
methods, as used traditionally in the Church and did not operate with the mercantile sophistication of their time” (p. 197) is the way Lederle sums up the situation.

In the section *Finances of the Malabar Province* (p. 217-230) we learn more about the financial situation of the Jesuits there. In general, for example, “the Jesuit establishments were frequently in debt” (p. 217); cooperation with the financially better situated Goa Province was repeatedly necessary, when, for example, the existence of colleges needed to be secured. “However, even in the difficult times during the eighteenth century, the financial situation was not experienced as so disastrous. Even the Malabar Province was able to support itself despite dwindling Portuguese aid and political instability. All in all, the Malabar Province showed, compared with Goa, a more modest and healthier financial basis” (p. 230). Where Jesuits acted as economic intermediaries, their own profit was never very high. Their budget was still covered by considerable allocations from Europe and by income from the estates in India. “Undoubtedly successful and also less efficient economic activities of the order, that made use of its global presence, its mobility and communication structure, occurred” (p. 275). But for all that, the order cannot be compared with a profit seeking enterprise, rather with a non-profit organisation. The Jesuits combined economic, missionary and scientific interests. This combination of different fields of expertise made it possible for them to be seen as intermediaries. However, this perception also reveals their limitations. In the course of the research, it was often easy to overlook the spiritual motivation, or at least to undervalue it. If we want to understand the Jesuits and their founder, and in this connection all their activities, we cannot avoid looking at the Spiritual Exercises. When we understand the concept of spiritual “indifference”, the heart of their spirituality, we understand better the behaviour of the Jesuit missionaries, such as their readiness for action, their commitment, perseverance, and coping with failures.

Thanks to this publication, fruit of many years of doctoral studies, a wider circle of interested persons can profit from these newly gained insights. Admittedly, certain repetitions, which are justified in a dissertation, should be reduced to a minimum in a book. It would have been desirable to have done some of this editorial work, although the publication as such is successful. On pages 210 and 211 the name of the canon lawyer and mission lawyer Theodor Grentrup (1878-1967) is incorrectly written. - Paul B. Steffen, SVD.