



Liam Matthew Brockey. *The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014. 528 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-674-41668-0.

Reviewed by Jorge Canizares (University of Texas at Austin)

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Commissioned by Sumit Guha (The University of Texas at Austin)

Jesuits in Asia

The Jesuit André Palmeiro was born in Lisbon in 1569, some fifteen years after Francis Xavier had already established Jesuit missions in Goa and Nagasaki. Palmeiro, however, was not groomed to be a missionary but a theologian; he became one of the leading figures of neo-scholasticism in Coimbra, second only to the great Francisco Suárez. It was only at age forty-eight that this learned, ascetic, punctilious, and pragmatic man was tapped by the Jesuit curia in Rome to survey the Portuguese missions of Asia, from Mozambique to Japan. For the next eighteen years until his death, the former landlubber, cloistered Ivory Tower dweller Palmeiro spent his time moving around seas, rivers, and terra firma all over Asia, evaluating established missions and trying to get new ones off the ground. As a visitor, or alter-ego of the Jesuit superior in Rome, Palmeiro enjoyed almost vice-regal powers that superseded those of the Jesuit provincials. Until his death in Macau in 1635, Palmeiro visited three sprawling provinces, Malabar, Goa, and Japan (the latter included also the vice-province of China), each covering thousands of miles and widely dispersed missions, residences, and colleges. In *The Visitor*, Liam Matthew Brockey uses the voyages of Palmeiro to offer a sweeping account of Jesuit missions in East Africa (Mozambique and Ethiopia); Western India (Lahore, Agra, Diu, Cambay, Goa, Onor); South and Eastern India (Cranganore, Cochin, Quilon, Madurai, Tuticorin, Colombo, Tranquebar, São Tome de Meliapor, Bengal); Southeast Asia (Laos, Siam, Cochinchina,

Tonkin, Champa, Hainan); China (Macau, Nanxiong, Nanchang, Jianchang, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Beijing); and Japan (particularly the southern eastern island of Kyushu). The resulting narrative is breathtaking and enthralling, in short, a feat of scholarship by a historian fully in command of his craft.

The book deals with empire and the lack thereof. The first part is devoted to the urban, religious baroque, Mediterranean world that the Portuguese Jesuits took with them to India. The Jesuits managed to replicate in Goa, Cochin (now Kochi), Colombo, and Macau many of the same institutions they had in Coimbra, Lisbon, Evora, and Braga, namely, networks of colleges and novitiates. The colleges produced in cities cadres of educated merchants, lawyers, priests, and functionaries, grateful and willing to endow even more educational establishments. The novitiates, in turn, churned out an exquisitely regimented hierarchy of Jesuit artisans, managers, missionaries, college instructors, professional academics, and imperial functionaries and diplomats. For each college and novitiate to exist it had to be financially self-sufficient by plowing pious lay endowments into urban real estate, banking, and landholding. The model was self-replicating, producing hundreds if not thousands of autonomous entities that nevertheless acted in tandem. Local colleges and missions were tied to a province and then to Rome through strict bureaucratic hierarchies, vast epistolary networks, a stream of publications touting

missionary and academic successes, and visitors. From 1534, when the order was first created, to 1634, when Palmeiro was fading, the Jesuits went from a band of seven, huddled in Paris, to a sprawling army of thousands, spanning the globe. The Jesuits had a monopoly on the education of lay urban elites and thus the ear of the mighty and powerful. But success also bred hatred and the order had its share of enemies, particularly other mendicant orders like the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Augustinians, who saw the Jesuits as too worldly and power grasping.

The model that first emerged in Paris and Rome reproduced fissionarily in India and China because there was a colonial empire, Portugal: one of commercial hubs and wealthy urban merchant patriciates. Goa was the headquarters of the Portuguese in Asia, a colonial capital profiting from trade in the Indian Ocean and thus rich in lay and ecclesiastical bureaucracies. The Jesuits thrived in Goa through the accumulation of pious gifts and endowments, which were enough to maintain not only colleges in several nearby cities and a novitiate in Goa itself but also residences and missions in Mozambique, Ethiopia, Lahore, Agra, and even Tibet. The world of predictable religious routines and institutional rules Palmeiro experienced in Coimbra was not very different from the one he experienced in Goa. Brockey is very good at describing some of these rituals and routines in the Indian tropics: sodalities, sermons, colleges, hagiographies, corporate rules, festivities, processions, relics, canonizations, personnel management, high-flying diplomacy, inter-institutional conflict with friars and bishops, and even the intrigue of murders and suicides within.

The mechanism of self-replicating institutions comes across constantly. Brockey takes Palmeiro into a trip to Sri Lanka where we learn how the alliances between Portuguese armies and island local rulers who were fighting against a northern kingdom yielded a gift of dozens of coastal villages whose tribute allowed the Jesuits to maintain a college in Colombo and several missionary residences along the coast. Palmeiro's trip to the Portuguese-controlled cities of Diu and Cambay, north of Goa and bordering Mughal territory, allows Brockey to explore the role of a powerful Moghul Armenian magistrate who gifted the Jesuit tributary towns outside Diu and Cambay to maintain missionary residences. Brockey describes how Palmeiro, during a stay in Cochin, capital of the province of Malabar, struggled with the mendicant archbishop over the control of dozens of tributary villages on the Pescaria coast, a dispute that took

the villages away from Jesuit control only to have them returned a few years later, after a successful and well-orchestrated lobbying campaign with the pope and the Roman curia.

But the first section of the book also provides hints of another world over which neither the Portuguese nor the Jesuits had any control. Brockey describes Palmeiro's struggles to cross the channel between Pescaria and Sri Lanka as well as to visit the more Eastern Indian sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites of St Tome de Meliapor. These were all voyages in waters plagued with Dutch privateers. This section also describes Palmeiro's many efforts to find alternative routes into Ethiopia to circumvent Muslim control over all the ports on the Red Sea. The Jesuits had established a compact with the Ethiopian emperor to have the Ethiopian Christian follow the new Roman Catholic liturgies of Trent. Sending missionaries into Danqaz, including a bishop, therefore, was a necessity that required imagining inland routes via Mogadishu and even Mombasa. The Jesuits did manage to smuggle the patriarch securely into Ethiopia but got everything else wrong: the geography of East Africa, the ability of the Ethiopian emperor to enact changes in the Ethiopian church, and the degree of control of Arab fleets over the Red Sea. To be sure, the Jesuits were haunted by more than just lack of control over logistical routes and alliances. Brockey describes the Jesuit conundrum in the Hindu sacred city of Madurai as they sought to convert a population well outside Portuguese colonial control. Given their tattered black robes and their willingness to serve the pearl divers of the coastal Pescaria, the Jesuits were at first shunned as the lowest of the lowest caste. Roberto de Nobili, a high caste Jesuit himself, from the patriciate of Florence, quickly understood that for the Jesuits to succeed they need to be taken as high Brahmans. This required behavioral and theological accommodations that were perceived by many rival mendicant orders (and by many Jesuits in India themselves) as heretical. In short, to succeed in Madurai, the Jesuits were forced to change robes, theological terms, sacraments, and a host of other patterns. It was lack of power over local missionary conditions that led to accommodational missionary strategies, not any ingrained Jesuit humanist tolerant streak.

In the second half, Brockey explores a world in which the Jesuits did not have the protections afforded by empire to work: China, Southeast Asia, and Japan. Like in Madurai, the Jesuits had constantly to accommodate, adapt, and change, enacting in the process extraordinarily daring innovations. Brockey describes, for instance,

how Palmeiro set up a Jesuit merchant fleet in Macau to trade with Cochinchina and Vietnam, ending all pretenses of using lay Portuguese merchants as intermediaries. It had been the China-Japan trade of silk for silver that had allowed Macau to get established and the Jesuits to maintain the thriving missions of Japan and China. But the closure of Japan not only as missionary theater but also as a source of merchant wealth forced Palmeiro to find new trades and a new attitude to commerce. The theological innovations of Nobili in Madurai were also the innovations that Alessandro Valignano enacted in Japan and Matteo Ricci in China, decades before Palmeiro arrived in Macau.

Brockey describes in painstaking detail the debate within the Jesuit order that the strategies of Ricci to have Jesuits pass as Western Confucian mandarins triggered. Palmeiro saw with great suspicion all the doctrinal and pragmatic restrictions on conversion Ricci's accommodations had created on the ground. The Jesuits depended solely on the patronage of literati mandarins to survive amid profoundly xenophobic populations. The Jesuits were forced to live alone in residences, wear long beards and silk robes, and spend their time hiding while exchanging highly ritualized visits and pleasantries with mandarin bureaucrats. The Jesuits convinced a handful of powerful mandarins that Christianity was just another version of Confucianism, but one with a natural philosophy of mathematics that accurately predicted behavior of celestial phenomena. The mandarins were dazzled by the Jesuit astronomical predictions and by their mechanical apparatus, including artillery, clocks, and maps. Yet these same "converted" mandarins were not willing to adapt their everyday behavior to the positive law of the Christian sacraments: dietary laws and conceptions of family, marriage, and divorce, for example. Worse, even the highest mandarins were liable of being sacked at every turn through an involved imperial system of ex-

ams, controls, and counterweights. Mandarins were not a hereditary class but a meritocracy. Every time one powerful Christian mandarin died, the Jesuits had to find a new one. The Jesuits were spread thin and wholly dependent on the power of these fleeting figures. And yet, after a careful analysis of all these shortcomings, Palmeiro could find no alternatives. All Palmeiro managed to offer in his criticisms to Ricci's ways was to dictate changes in the Chinese terms the Jesuits should use for God and heaven. The change itself created an uproar and formidable push back. Similar things happened in Southeast Asia where the Jesuits were not as dependent on a tiny bureaucratic elite to spread. The Jesuits found themselves powerless in Cochinchina to force the Christian communities of Japanese exiles to behave like pliant, European urbanites, but then not even the Europeans were as supine as the Jesuits imagined.

The Visitor answers many questions and sheds abundant light on this dichotomous Jesuit self in Asia, poised between empire and the lack thereof. One of the things Brockey does not answer, however, is why was it that only in Japan did the Jesuits manage to replicate the whole of the order: colleges, novitiates, lay followers, brethren, and professed Jesuits? Even in the colonial strongholds of Goa, Cochin, and Macau, the Jesuits failed repeatedly at integrating native Indians and the Chinese as professed Jesuits. Why did the Jesuits fail, in places they fully controlled, to incorporate Indians, Southeast Asians, and the Chinese as the highest members of the order: fourth-vow clerics, theologians, astronomers, diplomats, and academics? Brockey casts doubts on the narrative of European racism to explain Jesuit policies of treating locals as only good to become menial brethren, at best, or servants and outright slaves, at worst. This extraordinarily subtle book, however, only offers superficial answers to this puzzle in Jesuit behavior.

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