**Giuseppe Marcocci, Wietse de Boer, Aliocha Maldavsky
and Ilaria Pavan, eds.**

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This collection of essays joins the burgeoning field of what might legitimately be called ‘conversion studies.’ The degree to which early modern Europeans crossed (and even re-crossed) confessional boundaries was inevitably increased by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, while the so-called ‘voyages of discovery’ precipitated a scale of Christian missionary activity and cultural encounter the like of which had not been seen for almost a millennium. The editors’ intelligent decision to engage with the topic from the perspective of space—or rather place—brings this book securely within the ambit of studies that are fully alive to the fact that conversion could refer to an intensification of faith, on the one hand, as well as to “a change of heart in the political, cultural or aesthetic sphere” (2), on the other; but also to the need to view conversion, of whatever type, both contextually and comparatively. Only thus is it possible to see it in all its contingency and frequently shifting ambiguity.

To this end, the book has been organized thematically, rather than chronologically or geographically. The first part, “City and Country,” draws on the strengths of ‘connected history’ to compare the processes of conversion in newly conquered Granada, Tridentine Rome, colonial Cuzco, seventeenth-century Palestine, and Poland in the first half of the nineteenth century. In a well-argued and well-structured essay on Granada as a ‘New Jerusalem,’ Mercedes García-Arenal highlights several telling points often underplayed—or simply ignored—in the frequent retellings of this story. First, she reminds us that well before the fall of Granada, the frontier had not been impermeable, and that in the fifteenth century nobles were converting to and from Christianity according to the state of play of the power politics between the Castilian crown and the last Islamic kingdom in the peninsula. García-Arenal also makes the important point that Ferdinand and Isabella’s initial aim was the incorporation, rather than the conversion, of their new Muslim subjects. This was reflected in the generous terms of the first treaty, so that by 1495 there were still fewer than 500 Christians in a population of over 60,000. Even by the mid-sixteenth century, the city had only been Christianized—or, rather, Castilianized—to a certain extent. For example, although a chapel for royal burials was built as early as 1504–21, by 1550 there was still no *plaza mayor*—an urban feature the settlers of New Spain had carefully replicated throughout the Americas. However, already in 1499 the Mudejar revolt had accelerated changes

to the urban fabric (a papal bull of 1501 allowed for the construction of twenty-three parish churches). This revolt had been provoked by the requirement imposed by Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, primate of Spain, that the Muslim descendants of Christians (*elches*) be baptized. Such an uncompromising policy has traditionally been contrasted with that of Granada's bishop, the 'Arabized Christian' Hernando de Talavera. However, García-Arenal demonstrates the importance of considering both prelates as sharing essentially a common ideology, messianic and focused on the creation of the city as a New Jerusalem. Central to her contention is a little-known document: the liturgical office celebrating the taking of the city, introduced by Talavera and celebrated annually on the anniversary of the conquest.

In his chapter, Adriano Prospero offers a characteristically subtle and nuanced reading of Italian methods of capital punishment, very far from that influentially described by Michel Foucault. There was no carnival atmosphere, in which rules were inverted; no last dying speech that exonerated the authorities. On the contrary, eyewitnesses such as Michel de Montaigne described scenes of "devout cruelty," in which the audience expressed feelings of pity and moans of entreaty and sympathy as the executioner butchered the dead bodies of those who had been judicially murdered.

Gabriella Ramos shows us that the message of Gregory the Great's letter to Mellitus—in which the pope exhorted the prelate not to destroy pagan temples but to repurpose them—was still of the utmost relevance to colonial Cuzco, where leading Inca families had themselves interred in churches on or near areas with which they had historical links. This was in the mutual interest of the indigenous families and of the colonial church. Furthermore, it was much easier for the latter to secure attendance at religious instruction and liturgical ceremonies if churches were sited according to this topographical logic.

It is refreshing to find coverage of the early modern Palestine in this wide-ranging volume; Felicita Tramontana reminds us of the continuing importance of 'medieval' religious orders, such as the Franciscans, who played a crucial, even monopolistic role in the area not only as guardians of the holy places, but also in their work various cities and settlements besides Jerusalem. Tramontana shows that "the diffusion of Catholicism is best understood in terms of the model of diffusion by contagion [...] with the Franciscans acting as carriers" (87). She also adds the significant detail that the friars hired Eastern Christians as translators/interpreters (*dragoman*), most of whom subsequently became Catholic and that most villages where Catholicism spread were inhabited by Eastern Christians.

The second, strongest section of the book is devoted to the theme of "Segregation and Permeability." It opens with a fascinating piece by Susana

Bastos Mateus, who, in a study of sixteenth-century Lisbon, demonstrates how “the introduction of the [Portuguese] Inquisition [in 1536] marked the creation of a new penitential and punitive topography in Lisbon” (130). This came about not only with the establishment of a College for the Doctrine of the Faith for the re-education of penitent heretics (mainly New Christians) but also with the designation of the whole surrounding neighborhood (including the church of Nossa Senhora de Graça) as an area within which penitents—who were clearly visible in their bibs, or *sanbenitos*, which they were obliged to wear over their ordinary cloths—had to reside while they underwent a highly visible process of rehabilitation. So thoroughly researched and well-presented an essay is particularly invaluable, given how exiguous the literature in English on the Portuguese Inquisition is.

Irene Fosi’s study of the hospital as a space of communication and exchange in seventeenth-century Rome allows Anglophone readers to see something of why her monograph *Convertire lo straniero: forestieri e inquisizione a Roma in età moderna* (2011) is such a fundamental study for our understanding of conversion. She demonstrates that the predominance of lower-class and Italians among hospital inmates must be balanced by an awareness that many foreigners preferred to take refuge in national colleges or hospices, such as the Venerable English College, a fourteenth-century foundation that endures to this day. Fosi also reminds us of the longstanding importance of medical metaphor in description of the sacraments, and of the doctor as a conceptual counterpart to the confessor. Indeed, the Council of Trent had described the whole sacramental process as a “*medicamentum*.”

Guillermo Wilde’s evocative and suggestive discussion of the political dimensions of space-time categories in the Jesuit missions of Paraguay is the first essay to take us beyond Europe. He shows that the missionaries organized space in more than fifty mission towns in South America in ways that did not simply impose Western customs on indigenous peoples. To begin with, “there was [...] a clear split between the canonical forms of the ‘official baroque,’ the aesthetic program of the Church, and a set of ‘marginal’ cultural manifestations that expressed a certain degree of freedom among the Indians” (198). In particular, the Indians “conceived of their mission town [not in contrast with] but as integrated in the immediately surrounding region; for them the interior and exterior of their mission towns were not mutually exclusive spatial dimensions but complementary ones” (203). Wilde concludes that “mission space was far from being closed and homogenous” (206), and that the missionized were still able to assert their agency in ways that we are still trying to trace and understand.

Paolo Aranha's discussion of the Malabar rites controversy has to be one of the most insightful and intelligent essays written on this topic in many a year. To begin with, he makes the crucial point that scholars have ignored the Malabar rites' nature as Christianized Hindu *samskāras* (sacramental rituals), which underlay and legitimated caste hierarchies, rather than mere cultural traits, accepted to render Christianity more palatable to non-European peoples. Consequently: "far from being an enlightened experiment of early modern missionaries, [whereby the Jesuits consciously sought to mix Christianity with local religions] the Malabar Rites were primarily an expression of the prevailing agency of the leading native converts" (215). Furthermore, according to Aranha, the Malabar rites do not simply represent inculturation *avant le lettre*—an anachronistic analysis in any case, the very term 'Malabar rites' was not used at the time. Aranha's case study concerns an illustration from the Jesuit Broglia Antonio Brandolini's work in defense of the Malabar rites, published in 1729, which shows an orthographic projection of the church of the nobles and of *parreas* (*i.e.* untouchables). The point of the image was to show possibility of preserving the local, Indian social hierarchy while having the entire community share the same space for the purposes of mass (the two contiguous chapels shared the same external wall and were both able to view the same, single altar).

The third and most ambitious section of the collection, "Distance and Mobility" opens with Giuseppe Marcocci's boldly pioneering essay on the place of the sea in conversion. As is to be expected from a specialist in Portuguese history, Marcocci is particularly alive to the sea "not only as an immense expanse of water linking lands and peoples very distant from one another, but as a new physical dimension to be identified and mastered" (235). Above all, he is interested in trans-oceanic sailing as a space of personal transformation and the "maritime religiosity" on display both in ports and aboard ship, as Catholic sovereignty over the oceans was asserted in the wake of Nicholas V's bull of 1455, *Romanus pontifex*. This measure granted the Portuguese monarchs the title of "true lords" of the oceans, in return for fulfilling their duty to convert the non-Christian peoples they encountered. However, those Christians who travelled aboard ship required special attention, since they were regarded as being in a spiritual "state of necessity" (*i.e.*, in a state of particular danger akin to that of a dying person). Accordingly, the constitutions of the archdiocese of Lisbon of 1569 required all mariners and passengers to make a general confession and take communion within fifteen days before departure (consecration of the Host was not permitted once on board). Once underway, those onboard celebrated religious holidays as best they could and

when faced with storms used a variety of means: from prayers and psalms to relics, which were sometimes thrown into the tempestuous waves to propitiate divine displeasure. Marcocci also notes the sailors' own profane practices, which borrowed Christian ritual language: one such was the ceremony of 'baptism' carried out on those who were crossing the equator for the first time. Closer to home, the spiritual orthodoxy of crews and their passengers was monitored by the 'Inquisition of the sea' a tribunal set up by the Spanish Inquisition at around the time of the battle of Lepanto (1571), and which was continue down to 1624. It was charged with meeting the challenge of an environment in which many of the members of the enslaved galley crews were themselves renegades or reluctant converts. This chapter closes with a section on the challenges posed to religious orthodoxy by the slave trade, in which the state of the souls of those transported under unspeakably harsh conditions was routinely ignored.

With Aliocha Maldavsky's essay, we return to South America and the question raised some years ago by Olwen Hufton in her 1997 Prothero lecture, "The Widow's mite and other strategies: funding the Catholic Reformation" (published in the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* in 1998): who actually paid for the Counter-Reformation? Maldavsky convincingly traces how members of the Peruvian creole elite used charitable giving to Jesuit colleges to protect their economic interests as *encomenderos*. It was proof of their compliance with royal requirements that privileges be held only in return for fulfilling responsibilities towards the spiritual welfare of charges. If the conclusion that the *encomenderos* strengthened their legitimation by means of such "devout self-fashioning" (281) is perhaps unsurprising, the archival evidence is valuable, as is the reminder that even such a new, avowedly 'modern' order as the Jesuits had to operate within existing patronage structures.

Emanuele Colombo and Rocco Sacconaghi bring the reader back to Europe, but with a remarkable twist: their subject is Mohammed el-Attaz (1631–1667), son of the king of Fez, who converted to Catholicism and became a Jesuit (taking the name Baldassare Loyola). For several years, he devoted himself—with notable success—to the conversion of (some 800) Muslims in the seaports of Genoa and Naples, before dying in Spain in the odor of sanctity, *en route* to the East Indies where he had hoped to proselytize at the Mughal Court. What makes his story so rich and rewarding is the existence of not only more than two hundred letters, an unpublished autobiography, and a spiritual journal, but also a sacred drama by Calderón de la Barca depicting Muhammed/Baldassare's conversion. All this enables the authors to show how, notwithstanding his conversion—or, as Mohammed/Baldassare preferred to understand the question, his series of conversions—he could not erase the memories

of his Muslim self. To take just one, particularly powerful instance, while still attending the Jesuit novitiate, Baldassare asked God to show him heaven: in the illustrated report to his superiors drafted the next morning, the doors of heaven clearly have the features of Arab architecture, arguably recalling the city gates of his hometown of Fez.

This volume could have been more tightly edited. There are few references made between chapters, in one instance the text has clearly not been revised by a native speaker of English, and neither of the chapters on nineteenth-century Russia and Poland really speak to the rest of the contributions. Furthermore, they will, I suspect, be of limited interest to the readers of this journal, and so I have not discussed them. Nevertheless, the editors are to be congratulated for bringing together a truly global range of perspectives and insights to stimulate what is still a new and vital field.

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