Stephanie Kirk and Sarah Rivett, eds.

Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. Pp. vi + 352. Hb, \$49.95.

In this tremendously rich interdisciplinary volume, editors Stephanie Kirk and Sarah Rivett have collected a group of essays that explore the diverse and complex ways in which early modern European empires in the Americas reshaped Western Christianity. This collection builds on recent trends in Atlantic history toward comparative analysis. Thanks in no small measure to J. H. Elliott's magisterial study *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), scholars have mostly abandoned the once prominent notion of an Atlantic world divided into two conflicting systems largely isolated from one another: an Iberian-Catholic against an Anglo-Protestant. Without denying the obvious rivalry between Spain and Britain, newer studies tend to underline the commonalities and interconnectedness of the Atlantic networks these two empires built. Both empires attempted to strengthen civil and ecclesiastical government in the Americas, to missionize and control indigenous peoples as well as African slaves, and to cultivate simultaneously commerce and strains of religious utopianism. The essays in this volume contribute admirably to comparative Atlantic studies, using the theme of religious transformations to deepen historical understanding of the contrasts and also the points of contact between the Iberian and British Atlantics.

Beyond merely enriching the existent literature of Atlantic history, several pieces help correct a significant shortcoming of that literature by investigating the much neglected question of how colonial ecclesial communities and missions reshaped Christianity in the home country of each empire. To win converts or even nominal adherents, European churchmen in the Americas had to adapt their religious messages to the social and cultural sensibilities of their American audiences. Because of the need to adapt, Catholic and Protestant Christianity were as much "religions on the move" (37) as any of the indigenous American belief systems. Previous scholarship has rarely explored how adaptations of belief and practice in the new world "moved" Christianity on the other side the Atlantic. *Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas* provides historians with some model approaches for charting such movement effectively. The essays in Kirk and Rivett are nicely balanced to achieve the comparative purposes of the volume. In addition to an introductory piece by J. H. Elliott, the book contains three essays focused on the Iberian Atlantic, three focused on the British Atlantic, and three more that directly compare particular religious transformations that occurred in both. The pieces centered on the Iberian Atlantic include studies of the refashioning of martyrdom in New

Spain, the religious mission of two eighteenth-century Brazilian mulatto Catholic priests to the African Kingdom of Dahomey, and the seventeenth-century Jesuit effort to map the Amazon basin. The works dealing with the British Atlantic are comprised of a discussion of the transoceanic politics of Puritan texts, a methodological reflection on the study of indigenous and European spiritualities in New England, and a re-reading of Cotton Mather's biography of Massachusetts governor William Phips in light of the text's religious and political rhetorics. Finally, the comparative analyses include essays on the uses of hagiography in colonial discourse, the influence of ethnographic writing on seventeenth-century demonology, and the role of civic republicanism in situating religion in public life during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Of special interest to scholars of the Society of Jesus is Carmen Fernández-Salvador's essay on Jesuit exploration accounts of the Amazon, the only study in the collection with a specifically Jesuit subject. The piece deftly analyzes these texts' scientific, spiritual, and imperial objectives. Relying on records from earlier Spanish and Portuguese expeditions as well as their own explorations, the Jesuit authors, who wrote during the 1630s from Quito, produced texts with a wealth of detailed information on the peoples, natural world, and topography of the river basin. Historians have rightly seen these exploration narratives as yet another product of the Jesuits' worldwide scientific networks. Yet as Fernández-Salvador convincingly argues, the authors of these accounts meant not only to acquire empirical knowledge but also to serve the interests of both the Jesuit order and the Spanish Empire. By mapping the Amazon, they hoped to place a hitherto unknown world under the dominion of the Society of Jesus (which was planting there the church with the blood of its martyrs) as well as the Spanish crown, whose agents these Jesuits were.

The value of Kirk and Rivett to Jesuit studies goes well beyond Fernández-Salvador's superb essay. The models of comparative analysis the book contains have the potential to provide new perspectives and to generate new insights into the Jesuit order's development and influence. The discussions in the volume of the sixteenth-century Jesuit natural historian and missionary José de Acosta (1539–1600) suggest what comparative analysis can accomplish. Several essays take up Acosta's most influential work, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (1590), for their own purposes. From these various treatments, the connections of Acosta and his book to religious transformations throughout the Atlantic world come into focus. In its origins and its subsequent influence, Acosta's book was linked to, among other things, the Society of Jesus's new-

world educational and missionary efforts, the Jesuits' rivalry with the mendicant orders, philosophical debates pitting realists against nominalists, as well as the demonization of Native American religions, first within the Iberian-Catholic Atlantic and later in the Anglo-Protestant one as well. The charting of such connections and the discovery of their significance is what comparative Atlantic history is all about.

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DOI 10.1163/22141332-00302006-23