Alison Forrestal and Seán Smith, eds.

The Frontiers of Mission: Perspectives on Early Modern Missionary Catholicism,
Catholic Christendom 1300–1700, Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xi + 202. Hb, €110; \$132.

The Society of Jesus has long been closely identified with the early modern Roman Catholic missionary movement and its global reach. Indeed, such is the richness of the archival and printed record and so persuasive has been manner in which the Jesuits have described their own exploits and achievements that even the more than casual observer might be forgiven for assuming that the Society enjoyed a monopoly over missions in both the Old and New Worlds. This is a particularly welcome addition to the existing bibliography on the subject since, firstly it considers other orders besides the Jesuits and secondly, it looks at both Europe and the Americas (and beyond). Moreover, there are enough essays of good quality to justify the volume (though not the price). However, given the somewhat uneven engagement with the idea of “frontier” by several contributors, a fuller engagement with the theme in the introduction, and informed by a more up-to-date bibliography, would have been particularly welcome.

I remain unconvinced whether Frederick J. Turner's frontier thesis really still has much traction, particularly when there is now available the work of such scholars as Tamar Herzog. (Although, to be fair, the editors do at least refer in a footnote to her *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2015] and Wolfgang Reinhard, ed., *Empires and Encounters, 1350–1750* [Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard UP, 2015] and which they say came too late to their notice to be considered.) However, there is less excuse for the omission of any reference to Serge Gruzinski's *Les quatre parties du monde* (Paris: Éditions La Martinière, 2004) or indeed to the whole literature of historical geographers such as Stuart Elden's *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago/London: Cambridge UP, 2013). The essay by Karin Vélez, “Jesuit Weeping on Mission Frontiers, 1560–1760” takes three far-flung missionary frontiers: the Italian Marches, Paraguay, and New France (Canada). She shows us that while weepers in both the Italian peninsula and South America “seem to have mustered tears to mark communal loss and to perform Catholic identity,” those in Canada wrote of their own tears and how on one occasion a Huron chieftain “urged a Jesuit to stop his crying lest it be misunderstood” (24). In the case of Slavic pilgrims to Loreto, in the sixteenth century they still wept at their loss of the Holy House centuries before when it hopped across the Adriatic. In the case of the Guaraní indians, they wept at the trauma of having to undergo enforced relocation, together with their Jesuit leaders, from their well-established reductions in the 1750s.

It is also very good to have an essay in English by Dominique Deslandres, whose study of the French missions to New France in the seventeenth century, *Croire et faire croire* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), is a genuine classic. Her chapter is devoted to a richly contextualised study of the life and work of Marie Guyart de l'Incarnation (1599–1672) who, Deslandres argues, “was among the first [to dare to admit failure in making French her ‘savage children’ and so] to recognise the irreducible ‘otherness’ of the Amerindians” she encountered in Quebec (66).

Seán Smith's case study of the Lazarist mission to Madagascar (1648–74) takes us to a mission frontier that has been wholly neglected, at least in Anglophone literature. Here, at what was very much the sharp end of the extra-European missions where hardship made martyrdom an all too real possibility, it took a while before the missionaries realized that mortification of the flesh had literally mortal implications and that Vincent de Paul's invitation to his missionaries to perform the role of victim was self-defeating. Andrew Redden's evocative chapter takes us to the Chilean frontier and looks at the other models that coincided with the usual missionary blueprint of heroism: what he calls the “pragmatic institutional avoidance” of martyrdom and the “highly reluctant” approach to it (both 111).

With Andrew McCormick we return to the Old World but to the less than familiar area of islands such as Naxos, Santorini, Syros, and Tinos in the Aegean sea in the late eighteenth century. This is perhaps the least successful of the chapters, not only because it is somewhat out on a limb chronologically speaking (dealing with the 1778–79 period) but also because of its sloppy tendency to make seriously misleading statements such as its reference to the Papal Congregation of Propaganda Fide as the body which had: “orchestrated Roman Catholic missionary activity around the world since 1622” (116)—which would only have been possible had the royal patronage enjoyed by the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies not existed—as well as the anachronistic reference to the Collegio Urbano “in the shadow of St Peter's Basilica” (125) when at the time in question the college was located near the Spanish steps. This chapter also suffered from overlong footnotes, which reflects perhaps the reluctance of the editors to be more interventionist and impose their vision more effectively on the project as a whole. The protagonist of this chapter is the Lazarist Pierre-François Viguier, apostolic vicar of the Congregation of the Mission's house in Algiers, whose plan to construct a new regional seminary on the island of Naxos was accompanied by a thoroughgoing desire to sort out the chaotic finances, which the suppression of the Society of Jesus had left in its wake. Such was Viguier's conscientious loyalty to the French state that when Napoleon took the reins of power, he reinstated the Lazarist mission in the Archipelago. Tadhg ÓhAnnracháin brings his linguistic prowess to bear on a compelling

chapter about Catholic missionary activity in the Northern Balkans, where rivalry between Jesuit missionaries and the already well-established Franciscan province of Bosnia complicated any potential Roman Catholic gains. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were no fewer than fourteen convents, and 149 friars, whose numbers more than doubled in the next couple of decades. By contrast, the number of Jesuit missionaries always remained exiguous when compared to the challenge they faced in trying to (re)convert local peoples who were so profoundly uninstructed in the faith. So that one missionary, Marino de Bonis, had no hesitation but to refer Karashevó as “my new Indies” (150n48). However, papal financial support for missionaries was as nothing when compared with money spent by pontiffs such as Clement VIII and Gregory XV on armies to expel the Ottomans from the Balkans. The initial annual income of the newly endowed Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1622, just under three thousand scudi, was but one-fiftieth of the funds the same pope provided in subsidies to the Holy Roman emperor and the Catholic league. ÓhAnnracháin’s perhaps unsurprising conclusion is that “the Balkans thus in many ways remained the forgotten child of European Catholicism, something which clearly played its part in the increasing momentum of Islamisation in the latter part of the seventeenth century” (157).

Intra-Catholic tensions—this time within the Franciscan order between the Observants and Conventuals (and later with the Capuchins)—provides the guiding thread to another strong essay in the collection, Megan Armstrong’s account of Franciscan competition over the Holy Land (1517–1700) as reflected in fourteen treatises produced by Observant members of the order. Responsible since 1431 for the custody of the Holy Places, the friars in these works “constructed Observant jurisdiction in the Custody as a mark of apostolic succession” (162), dating back to their founder’s own mission to the Middle East when St. Francis, on his third attempt, made it to Egypt in 1219 where he met the Sultan Malik-al-Kamil.

In the case of Jacques Goujon, in his *Histoire et voyage de Terre Sainte* (1670), Franciscan jurisdiction was traced right back to Christ himself. A distinctive feature of many of these treatises was the attention they paid to liturgical performance, specifically the re-enactment of Christ’s descent from the cross. French support of the Capuchins from the early seventeenth century further complicated intra-Franciscan rivalries. In a brief afterword, the doyen of global missionary studies, Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, frames the previous chapters in a truly global context. He identifies three common themes: martyrdom, cultural accommodation, and the missionary and the early modern state. As the Bohemian Jesuit, Matthias Tanner reminded readers of his Jesuit martyrology of 1675, fewer than one-fifth of the 304 martyrs he listed were killed

by Protestants in Europe. Hsia also reminds us of the relevance of the “white martyrdom” brought about by illness or simply the rigors of a long, demanding but humdrum missionary career (as opposed to the heroic “red martyrdom” desired by so many European Jesuits). Notwithstanding the successful attempt by the French monarchy to make Catholic missions into “an instrument of diplomacy” (191) by the late seventeenth century, when they made inroads into the weakening hegemony of particularly the Portuguese *Estado da Índia*, Hsia concludes that “the Catholic missionaries transcended boundaries between peoples and cultures to help lay the foundations of the modern world” (193).

For all its virtues, this volume unfortunately shows signs of hurried editing. In addition to the several glitches already referred to above, on page 135 there is a reference to a “Map 6.1 The Araucanía archipelago [Chile] in the late eighteenth century” below a map of the eastern Mediterranean. In general, the uneven quality of the poorly integrated maps suggests that they were an afterthought. Moreover, it is a shame that the chapters do not speak more to each other. I know it is always a particular challenge to get contributors to read each other’s essays, but in lieu of this, more active intervention on the part of the editors would have been welcome, particularly now that the historiographical consensus, confirmed by these (on the whole) excellent essays, is that the missionary enterprise was marked by its heterogeneity and various responses to the “unsettled certainties of the frontier zone.”

Simon Ditchfield

University of York

simon.ditchfield@york.ac.uk

DOI 10.1163/22141332-00501008-02