Jorge Flores

Unwanted Neighbours: The Mughals, the Portuguese, and Their Frontier Zones,
Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2018. Pp. 288. Pb, \$48.00.

This book draws on a formidable range of Portuguese and Jesuit primary source material—most of it dating from the late sixteenth through the early seventeenth centuries—to draw a vivid, highly original picture of the Portuguese *Estado da Índia* and its relationship with the Mughal empire of that era. More broadly, it describes, in considerable detail, the watchful, often deeply suspicious relationship that the Portuguese developed towards a cluster of neighbouring contemporary Asian empires which, at the time, were in varying degrees ambitious to expand. These empires, which included Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Persia, as well as the Mughal empire itself, had all started out as territorial empires. However, Portugal's *Estado da Índia* had been founded as a maritime empire that had subsequently grown rich, and prospered, mainly on the back of its seaborne trade.

Flores implies that the Safavid and Ottoman empires, being overwhelmingly territorial in character (with the partial exception of the Ottomans, who *did* have something of a maritime tradition, though they only sought to exercise it intermittently) were not usually regarded by the Portuguese authorities as posing a very serious threat to Goa's maritime interests before the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries. However, from the start of the 1570s, when the Mughal emperor Akbar shifted his capital from Delhi to Fatipur Sikri, which was more oriented towards the central and southern territories of the subcontinent, the situation, from the Portuguese viewpoint, took on a more menacing character. By that time the Mughals had already established domination over much of northern India and were undeniably the most formidable political and military force in the sub-continent.

Through the later decades of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, Akbar and his successors expanded southwards from their northern strongholds, first into Gujarat, then into the Deccan and also into Bengal. As early as 1573, Akbar had already seized control of the key Gujarati port of Surat—and from then on it seemed increasingly clear that the Mughals were bent on securing a maritime dimension to their sub-continental dominance. In the eyes of the suspicious Portuguese *that* was when the alarm bells really began to ring—and deep concern that the Mughals were bent on dominating the entire Indian subcontinent firmly set in.

From this point, Floris's book takes us into substantially new territory. Drawing on a formidable range of mostly Portuguese and Jesuit documentary sources—many of which Flores identifies, describes and analyses for the first

time—a suspicious, watchful but, in the long term, mutually enlightening relationship now gradually developed, rapidly intensifying as both Portuguese and Mughals each sought to learn more about the other. The “conversation” between the two empires—the Portuguese and the Mughal—developed and intensified rapidly, and regular contact and communication between them became the established norm.

Flores thus describes a situation in which, by the early seventeenth century, Portuguese sensitivity to the Mughals and vice versa, were already well-established and continuing realities. Each side’s interest in the other had taken root and was growing rapidly, their conversations multiplying and deepening, with particular intensity through the first few years of the seventeenth century, as the Mughals aspired to become a significant maritime power, as well as a territorial empire, through their control of key port cities in Gujarat and Bengal—an outcome Goa was always anxious to prevent. Accordingly, the Portuguese sought to shore up the resistance to Mughal territorial expansion of frightened lesser polities, such as the Deccan sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar.

Unwanted Neighbours presents the reader with a relatively straightforward text consisting of a prologue and six chapters. The prologue provides an introduction to the geographical and political contexts of the late sixteenth/early seventeenth Mughal-Portuguese relationship, while Chapter One seeks to establish “the physical and imaginary gates” by which the two were connected. Of the remaining four chapters, two focus on Portuguese-Mughal inter-relationships in Gujarat while the other two describe their interactions and relationships in the Deccan sultanates and in Bengal.

A mixture of competitive tension, mutual curiosity and, somewhat surprisingly, a considerable amount of mutual co-operation, more often than not prevailed in the Mughal-Portuguese relationship. Clearly, the Mughals possessed an overwhelming superiority in military numbers to sustain their territorial expansionary ambitions, which the Portuguese could never match. But Goa, at least until about the mid-1630s, controlled or dominated enough of the seas and key sea-routes—as the meticulous research of Flores here clearly demonstrate,—to retain its maritime edge.

It is generally fair to say that, until quite recently, the history of the Mughal-Portuguese relationship per se has not attracted much historiographical attention. Most historians of South Asia have elected to prioritise attempting to explain how the sub-continent was progressively penetrated, and ultimately taken over, by sundry Europeans and their respective trading companies—until eventually falling under the control of the English East India Company. Flores, however, is among a handful of scholars who have shown that a vast

body of mostly Portuguese and Jesuit material also still exists, through which quite different questions can be addressed and approaches adopted. The Jesuits in particular, who learned much about the Mughals through their mission to the courts of Akbar and Jahangir, and subsequently in their continuing roles as diplomats and observers, made invaluable contributions to European knowledge of this remarkable “other.” In *Unwanted Neighbours*, Flores has taken full advantage of this invaluable literary heritage.

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DOI:10.1163/22141332-00701009-04

Martin Nogueira Ramos

La foi des ancêtres: Chrétiens cachés et catholiques dans la société villageoise japonaise XVII^e–XIX^e siècles. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2019. Pp. 416. Pb, €25.00.

This extremely well-researched book is the first comprehensive publication on the history of the so-called Japanese *hidden Christians*—not only in Western language, but also in Japanese. It is well known that Francis Xavier, one of the first Jesuits, brought Christianity for the first time to Japan in 1549. The Catholic denomination quickly succeeded in spreading widely there during the latter half of the sixteenth century. However, Christianity was banned and Catholic missionaries were expelled by the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi—who united Japan after the Warring States period—and the Tokugawa regime, which overthrew the previous rulers (edicts issued in 1587, 1612, and 1614). Under the Tokugawa government (1603–1868), the Christians—especially ordinary civilians in Kyushu—kept their faith clandestinely despite the official interdiction without any contact with Western priests. They are called by historians *hidden Christians*, *Crypto-Christian*, or *Senpuku* or *Kakure Kirishitan* in Japanese. Their existence stepped into the spotlight after a famous “discovery” (1865) by a French missionary from the Paris Foreign Missions (MEP), Bernard-Thadée Petitjean (1829–84). Ramos focuses precisely on this part of the history of Christianity in Japan, from the late eighteenth century to 1889, and he provides the first study on this crucial—and mostly neglected by previous scholarship—period, which he calls the “second evangelization.”

Given the material upon which it deals, this book also tackles the difficulties of describing such history. The outlaw character of the hidden Christians