

Liam Matthew Brockey

The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014. Pp. x + 515. Hb, \$ 39.95.

Rather than the biography of a man, Liam Matthew Brockey's substantial volume (442 pages of narrative text) is a study of "how the Society [of Jesus] functioned outside of Europe" (19) in the first decades of the seventeenth century. The figure of the visitor [*visitor*] was particularly important to every Jesuit mission, and anybody familiar with Jesuit history is no doubt acquainted with the towering figure of the Italian Alessandro Valignano, visitor general for all Asian missions between 1573 and 1606. Valignano is credited with setting the Jesuit missions on a new path through his organizational skills and his understanding of local conditions and customs, to which the Jesuits accommodated to an unprecedented degree during his tenure, especially in East Asia.

Brockey sheds light on the career of another visitor, the Portuguese André Palmeiro (1569–1635), who held the position a decade after Valignano, first in India, then in East Asia, from 1617 until his death in 1635. In spite of being "a major figure in the early seventeenth century's Jesuit enterprises" and thus deserving of "a larger place in the Society's history, and more generally, that of Christianity in Asia" (5), Palmeiro has remained unknown to all but a small circle of specialists. Through a close reading of Palmeiro's reports and letters to his superiors in Europe, Brockey opens up vistas onto the far-flung Jesuit missions of maritime Asia, from Mozambique to Goa, from Malabar to Tonkin and Cochinchina, from Macao to Beijing, and, ultimately, to Japan.

The book is divided in two parts: "Inside the Empire" (here, "empire" stands for Portugal and its Estado da Índia) and "At Empire's Edge." The five chapters of "Inside the Empire" offer the context needed to understand the role of a visitor within the Jesuit order and Portuguese history as well as the activities of Palmeiro as visitor from 1617 to 1625. During this period, he interacted with governmental and ecclesiastical structures from Lisbon to South Asia. Once in India, Palmeiro first conducted an extensive visitation of the troubled and almost bankrupt province of Malabar (headquartered in the southwestern port of Cochin, and comprising the Coromandel Coast, the island of Ceylon, and outposts as far as Bengal, Burma, Malacca, and the Moluccas). In Cochin, he encountered "a clutch of oversized egos" (103) among the Jesuits, divided into Portuguese and Italian factions; he tried to bring order by enforcing the Society's universal rules, and by asking the general to reprimand those resistant to disciplinary and institutional procedures. He also visited the inland Madurai mission, an experiment in accommodation to Brahmanism led by Roberto de Nobili and outside the territories subject to the Estado da Índia—

and thus a source of great tensions within the Society and with the Portuguese ecclesiastical establishment in India (108–12). In spite of his initial doubts, Palmeiro became convinced that Nobili's methods were acceptable, and defended him before the hostile bishop of Cochin, the archbishop of Goa, and the Goan Inquisition. The visitation of the province of Goa, home to the viceroy and the archbishop primate of the East Indies, as well as several well-endowed Jesuit foundations, was quite a different affair. The province comprised several colleges and residences along the northwestern coast of India, a detachment at the Mughal imperial court, and a smattering of small outposts in the Indian Ocean all the way to Mozambique, including an important mission at the imperial court of Ethiopia. Especially in the city of Goa, powerful personalities, within and without the Society, posed a challenge to the visitor's authority. Palmeiro made certain enemies, cultivated the favor of the viceroys, and ultimately won some praise for his equitable measures towards his subordinates and his attempts to broker peace with the other orders on issues ranging from real estate expansion to religious precedence. He also gathered information on the African missions from deputies he had dispatched there, so that he could take appropriate measures to assist the Jesuit bishop secretly sent as Latin patriarch of Ethiopia.

The second part, "At Empire's Edge" (also five chapters), focuses on Palmeiro's residence in East Asia between 1626 and his death in 1635: his primary work in Macao, as well as his inspection tour to Beijing. East Asia was at the "edges of empire," in the sense that there (except for Macao) the patterns of Jesuit community life were no longer those of Europe and of Portuguese colonies. China, Japan, Tonkin, and Cochinchina were all independent states, not subject to Portuguese power, and their Jesuit communities were often very small. Here, missionaries had to adapt to local circumstances, no longer bound to colonial political and ecclesiastical authorities as they were in India. Only obedience to the Society, represented by the visitor, kept them connected to the universal church and the *padroado* system.

Palmeiro initially spent much of his energy dealing with the recent crisis of the Japanese mission, persecuted by the Tokugawa shogunate, and with the large influx of Jesuits who had fled Japan for Macao. He tried to send some men back *incognito*, as well as money and letters to those who had remained as underground missionaries. For a while, it seemed that the situation was improving. In 1628–29, he thus felt able to travel from Macao to Beijing, then stopping to visit the lower Yangzi region, where most Christians were concentrated. Palmeiro wanted to understand the limited progress in conversions in the Ming empire, and to mediate between the China vice-province and the Japan province over the "accommodation" strategy towards Confucian termi-