

TABLE RONDE / ROUND TABLE

A Round Table on Luke Clossey's  
*Salvation and Globalization in the  
Early Jesuit Missions*

(WINNER OF THE WALLACE K. FERGUSON PRIZE,  
CANADIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, 2010)

The Wallace K. Ferguson Prize is awarded annually by the Canadian Historical Association (CHA) to the best book in a field of history other than Canadian. In 2010, Luke Clossey, associate professor at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, joined a list of 30 superb scholars whose scholarship has received the Ferguson Prize since it was established in 1980. It is especially fitting that Clossey's study, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*, returns us to a temporal period similar to that which distinguished Ferguson's career. Clossey's history of salvation, globalization, and early Jesuit missions in China, Germany, and Mexico is, as the CHA prize committee argued, an impressive, innovative, and ambitious study.<sup>1</sup> First published by Cambridge University Press in 2008, Clossey's account of the personnel, monetary, relic, and information networks of missions in the seventeenth century masterfully demonstrates how global histories can also be social histories.

As part of the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in May 2012, a round table was convened by CHA to celebrate and reflect upon Clossey's bold study. This session, held at the University of Waterloo, was chaired by Greta Kroeker (University of Waterloo) and featured commentaries by Brandon Marriott (St. Anne's College, Oxford University), Karin Vélez (Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota), and Kenneth Mills (University of Toronto). The contributions to this round table retain their original oral character and collectively paint Clossey as an inspirational mentor, an insightful colleague, and a brave historian. Brandon Marriott frames his comments in relation to his own work on the seventeenth-century Jewish messiah Sabbatai Sevi, honing in on the perils, predicaments, and pleasures of conducting cross-religious, transnational, global histories. Karin Vélez takes us into her 2009 graduate seminar

<sup>1</sup> The original citation of the prize committee can be found on the website of the Canadian Historical Association, Prizes: [http://www.cha-shc.ca/en/Prizes\\_24/items/10.html](http://www.cha-shc.ca/en/Prizes_24/items/10.html).

at Northeastern University, enabling us to observe how future historians conceived of and debated – we are told there was table pounding – the importance of Clossey’s work. Kenneth Mills outlines seven reasons why Clossey’s study is admirable and encouraging, reasons that range from Clossey’s courage and breadth to his reflections upon Jesuit self-authorization, promotion, and diffusion. Luke Clossey graciously participated in this session designed to celebrate and bring attention to his insightful scholarship.

We at *Histoire sociale / Social History* would like to thank each of our contributors for agreeing to share their responses to this groundbreaking study and hope that you enjoy this exciting and engaging exchange.

Jarett Henderson  
 Mount Royal University  
 HS/SH Book Review Editor

**Brandon Marriott, St. Anne’s College, Oxford University:**

Luke Clossey’s *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* received the Wallace K. Ferguson Prize for being an “outstanding scholarly book” in a field of history other than Canadian history. But *Salvation and Globalization* is not completely without mention of the country that Clossey now calls home. To the early modern Jesuit missionaries who are the main historical figures of Clossey’s book, we are the “Savages of Canada” (p. 241). The Jesuit Julien Maunoir once described his mission field on Ouessant Island off the coast of Brittany as so remote from Christianity and all civilization as to be positively “Canadian” (p. 233).

The selection committee for the Ferguson Prize was impressed with three aspects of Clossey’s “highly readable and engaging book.” First, his bold vision: producing the first global study of the early Jesuits. Second, his innovative method: examining the trans-regional connections between China, Germany, and Mexico, three places rarely studied together. Third, his “extensive and intensive linguistic and archival work”: Clossey discusses no fewer than 53 different Jesuit missionaries who were active in at least two of the three countries that frame this study. As the prize committee correctly notes, this adds “biographical depth to the book’s global breadth.”

One word in particular strikes me repeatedly in Clossey’s text and in reviews of it. This word, found in part in the title, is *global*. This book, the selection committee reminded us, is the “first truly global study of the Society of Jesus’ early missions.” Clossey explains in the introduction that this is not a work of multiple area studies, nor is it comparative history (p. 10). Rather, it is an examination of a single transnational phenomenon that brings together two historiographies rarely associated with each other: world history and the history of the Catholic Reformation (p. 2). By drawing these historiographies together, Clossey shows how a global perspective is essential if we are to understand the Jesuits’ early missions. In a departure from previous scholarship, Clossey argues that the “single most

impressive facet of these men's collective biography is their global movements" (p. 137). The Jesuits developed networks of information, relics, and finances that expanded to fit the opportunities brought about by global travel in the early modern period (p. 160). Not only was money sent between Germany and China, Germany and Mexico, and Mexico and China, but a lively exchange of letters also criss-crossed the Pacific Ocean. As Clossey points out, sometimes news travelled from Taiwan to Manila more rapidly via Mexico, demonstrating just how circuitous communication could be (p. 196). This global perspective provides a corrective to earlier views of the Jesuits, while poking holes in the myth of a centralized and unified Jesuit society. Far from the centre, this society did not appear centralized at all (p. 57). In fact, the very existence of ties between distant Jesuit missions independent of Rome further revises traditional interpretations that saw connections operating only between Rome and each independent mission region (p. 192).

*Salvation and Globalization* not only has an impact on the study of missions, but it also "reconfigures historians' understandings of early modern Catholicism" (p. 237). Clossey's examination of globalization in the period between 1500 and 1700 stands apart from the work of sociologists, which tends to examine more contemporary forms and aspects of globalization such as syncretism, agency, and cultural consumption. Clossey, however, explores the relationship between globalization and salvation in the early modern period and elaborates upon the uniqueness of the transnational character and institutionally sophisticated phenomenon of early Jesuit missions (p. 250). For Clossey, the global and salvific elements "fed into each other to create a unique moment in the history of Christianity" – an inherently unstable, global, and salvific moment at which the global worked to erode the salvific (p. 256).

For the many new answers that *Salvation and Globalization* provides, it also raises as many questions. I wonder, for example, if there is not something inherently teleological in looking for, and locating, a contemporary trend such as globalization in the early modern Catholic Church. Put another way, how would the 53 Jesuit missionaries respond to this study? What would they have said about how their actions were presented? Did they see themselves as agents of globalization? In short, would your subjects agree with your analysis?

Certainly there is much to be commended in *Salvation and Globalization*, but its broadest value for historians rests in the book jacket's claim that this text will be "required reading for historians of Catholicism and the early modern world." *Salvation and Globalization* not only offers much to historians of Catholicism or the early modern period, but also to the historian's craft more broadly. I would contend that it is possible for an historian of northern Canada, for example, to learn from Clossey's discussion of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Jesuits, in particular, by employing Clossey's world history methodology. By placing local, national, or regional topics in their larger historical context, Clossey brings new connections, themes, and even archival sources to the fore. Under the tutelage of Clossey, I began research on the seventeenth-century Jewish messiah Sabbatai Sevi. Sevi, as the most popular Jewish messiah

since Jesus, has been the subject of much scholarship with rich historiographies in Hebrew and English. By employing a cross-religious and transnational approach, I located primary sources in novel locations and found untapped archival materials on the Jewish messiah written by English merchants and diplomats who lived in Tuscany and the Dutch Republic as well as printed reports published by Italian and Dutch newspaper editors.<sup>2</sup> Although my own research has benefited from this same “world history methodology,” it has led me to question the term “world history” itself. Jurgen Osterhammel notes that global history is a variant of world history, whereas Lila Abu-Lughod completely differentiates world history from global history: the former focuses on disparate places, whereas the latter focuses on the linkages among places. Patrick Manning seems to disagree. What Abu-Lughod calls global history is world history; it is the story of connections with the global human community that emphasizes the crossing of boundaries and the linking of systems in the human past.<sup>3</sup> Then there is transnational history, which is also known to explore the movement of actors, objects, ideas, and forces that cross national boundaries. As such, what is world history? How do we define and differentiate it from global or transnational history? *Salvation and Globalization* primarily focuses on Germany, China, and Mexico – is this transnational, global, or world history? Which term should be used for what, when, and why?

*Salvation and Globalization* also highlights the biggest challenge of conducting world history: the scope and breadth of research required for such a wide-ranging study. Clossey explains that his original proposal repeatedly ran up against the warning that this project was “too grand” for any one person (p. xi). Narrowing the field to three areas – an “evil necessary for making this study feasible and intelligible” – still required seven years of archival work (p. 11). Clossey’s attempts to limit his geographical framework also led to more areas of inquiry, for, in the early modern world, it was impossible to connect China and Mexico without the Philippines (p. 11). As Clossey explains, “The trail of these global missionaries records led [him] around the world, to research in a dozen countries” where archivists assisted him “despite their doubts as to the sanity of anyone who searches for Mexican material in German archives and German material in Mexican archives” (p. xi).

Seven years of research, 1,200 texts penned in Latin, Spanish, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese combined with the difficulties of early-modern dialects: Clossey’s research is undeniably impressive. Any historian who has conducted transnational research knows very well that a project’s greatest challenge can often be the acquisition of the necessary language skills. Clossey describes his own linguistic skills as amounting to a blend of “Sino-Arabic-Germano-Romantic pidgin,” but anyone who has encountered Clossey knows very well that his language skills far exceed this humble notation (p. xi).

2 Brandon Marriott, “The Birth Pangs of the Messiah” (PhD dissertation, Oxford University, 2012).

3 For more on this debate, see Joseph Inikori, “Africa and the Globalization Process: Western Africa, 1450-1850,” *Journal of Global History*, vol. 2 (2007), pp. 63-86.

I once mentioned to Clossey that I might need to learn Ladino, the language of the Ottoman Sephardic Jewry that is now rarely used. Clossey reminisced fondly, “Ah Ladino, I remember when I started to study it when I needed a break from Chinese.” What are we mere mortals with negligible linguistic abilities to do? Is it possible to do world history without first spending years learning many different languages?

I would like to conclude by addressing Clossey’s post-*Salvation and Globalization* scholarship – what does one do once one has finished such an awe-inspiring project? Go bigger, of course! Clossey’s latest project, the “Global Jesus Project,” is precisely that: a study of Jesus across the early modern world. For those who have not trooped with Clossey through northern Georgia in search of Jesus’ manger, or joined him on one of his other quests to find Jesus in the hundred-plus countries that he plans to visit over the next five years, Clossey is in the process of chronicling the spread and development of the story of Jesus between 1400 and 1800. We can only hope that the results of this Global Jesus Project will be as fruitful as those of *Salvation and Globalization* and that in a few years we will again be celebrating Clossey’s visionary, innovative, and impressive scholarship.

**Karin Vélez, Macalester College:**

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be invited to comment here, and to be in this fine Canadian company. As an American scholar, I represent Dr. Clossey’s non-Canadian audience on this panel. I come to you with a true story, a story that holds my usual mixture of admiration – and irritation – with Dr. Clossey for making me think so hard. Do not be fooled by his pleasant Canadian demeanour, or by the understated appearance of his title and book cover. A rebel sits in our midst, which is why he has rightly earned the distinction of the Canadian Historical Association’s Ferguson Book Prize.

I would like to share a story about the reaction to Dr. Clossey’s book in a graduate course that I taught at Northeastern University in the fall of 2009. It sums up the effect and important contribution of his work, beyond the sphere of prize committees, in a single word: revolution. Let me set the scene by explaining a bit about the course I was teaching and its format. It was a reading course about religious expansion that addressed two key questions: Why, and how, have some religions spread throughout the world? Does *world* history actually work to improve our understanding of this particular phenomenon? Or, phrased more sharply: When analysing religion, where does world history serve us well, and where does it fail us dismally?

These are big questions, but we went about answering them in a very practical way. There were twelve books assigned, one per week. Each week the whole class would all read one book. One graduate student would defend the book and its contribution to world history. Another would choose an additional, external reading and use it to challenge the assigned book. Then the class would vote on whether the assigned book should belong to a new canon of exemplary texts on religion in world history.

I'd like to stress that the week that Dr. Clossey inadvertently sabotaged my classroom dynamic, his book, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions*, was not the assigned text. It was week nine of twelve, and the theme was spiritual charisma; we were discussing who spreads religion and how. The case study was the Jesuits, but I had chosen to feature another prize-winning book about them. The title of the book I chose is not important. I chose it to give the students a more traditional party line on the Jesuits as a rather exceptional proselytizing organization that really got around the world. Clossey's book appeared as an afterthought on the list of suggested fodder that I gave to the student challenger, because I had only just read it and was still processing it. So I stuck it on the list of optional outside readings along with works by Ines Zupanov, Carlo Ginzburg, and Istvan Toth, as well as the writings of some early Jesuits, primary source excerpts from *The Jesuit Relations*. I did not expect the challenger to hone in on Clossey, nor did I anticipate the effect that this would have.

For eight weeks previously, class had unfolded rather predictably and satisfactorily for me, only in my second year teaching graduate students. There would be a lively, constructive critique of the assigned text, and then, after about two hours, the students would bring themselves around and concede that the book that I had told them all to read did, in fact, make an important contribution to world history and to the history of religion. This smoothness ended in week nine. The challenger introduced Clossey and unleashed chaos. There was pounding on the tables. Voices were raised. At the two-hour mark, the vote on the assigned text was deadlocked, with almost half the class trying to lead a rogue movement to vote Clossey into the canon, instead of the assigned book on the syllabus. Nor did it end there. The graduate students were so excited by Clossey having liberated them from the shackles of traditional history that they repeated this debate and deadlocked vote for all the remaining classes and texts that semester.

As I have since learned is frequently the case for professors, my graduate students forced me to reckon with the question: what did Dr. Clossey do so much better here, with his deceptively straightforward history of Jesuits, of religion in the world? Three major answers came up in the class discussion that autumn, and, looming behind all three, I see a fourth, ingenious moral – or path-breaking methodology – that I would like to put on the table today.

First: the wacky assemblage of regions that Dr. Clossey has collected for discussion here – China, Germany, and Mexico – defiantly undercuts traditional parameters of study. Through the accident or coincidence of Dr. Clossey's own background, he found himself well-versed enough in three disparate regions to pursue exploration of all three. His success at this undertaking hits at an unspoken fear and reality: that our historical understanding is, indeed, limited by our own twenty-first-century parochialism, not by the parochialism of the past. Studies of Rome, even studies of Rome, Lisbon, and Madrid, can only show us so much about the past. Clossey invites us to think bigger, to learn more languages and travel to more places, seriously to follow our globe-trotting antecedents.

The conscientious practice in the subfield of Jesuit history to address early world travellers has been to dig up one or two remarkable superstars such as

Eusebio Kino, whom Clossey mentions (p. 35). Kino was an exemplar of an early, fluid sense of nationality, since he considered himself Italian by birth, German by education and upbringing, and ended up carrying out his mission work in the Spanish dominion of Mexico in the late 1600s. But Clossey does not just point to Kino. He dredges up 53 lesser-known Jesuits whose identities and self-definitions were also hamstrung across three continents. The travels, careers, and life experiences of a few of these men left them, like Clossey, with a foot in each world – and yes, if you do the math, that does require an extra, magical third foot. Clossey’s point is that there are more than a handful of seventeenth-century individuals whom we cannot understand, holistically, unless we expand our analytical frame – unless we follow Clossey and do the hard work of going global.

Second: networks, as presented by Clossey, are not the sparkling, awesome, well-oiled, highly orchestrated systems that our era of computer networks would like to project on the past. Instead, we get mundane, gritty, unmediated connections: letters that take two to five years to make a circuit of the oceans, and, when they finally arrive, contain incorrect information (p. 46); letters that do not include as much exotic reportage (p. 193) or scientific data (p. 207) or debate of missionary tactics (p. 202) as we would like to see, although we have laboured hard to foreground these details above all else. What these letters do show us is a whole lot of the ordinary: exchanges of coin and of relics; endless repetition of a shared desire to save souls; and, my personal favourite, thank-you notes to patrons. There is an interesting latent moral behind Clossey’s emphasis on the prosaic here: *Old* gestures like writing thank-you notes, *archaic* activities that we have been told to do by our mothers – or, in this case, fathers – are actually what is shepherding in the *new* religion. From the Jesuit perspective, tremendous cross-cultural change is not precipitated or driven by the breaking of tradition, but by the magnifying of it. The old leads the way to the new.

Third, and along similar lines, is Clossey’s presentation of spirituality. Clossey insists on putting the old idea of Jesuits winning souls back into the picture, as one of their key motivators. This has not been done enough. Partly due to the preferences of twenty-first-century audiences, the historiography still tends towards showing the opposite; in Clossey’s well-chosen words, today’s readers “encounter atheistic Jesuits risking their lives to travel to the ends of the earth to embrace multiculturalism, to find themselves, or even to be [themselves] converted” (p. 8). Clossey’s work stands as an important corrective to our stubborn predilection to see ourselves in the past, emphasizing instead that Jesuits were driven by “widespread salvific urgency” (pp. 236-237), by the “salvation of souls” (p. 245) more than by the social work of providing refuges for orphans or prostitutes.

The key twist in Dr. Clossey’s sense of Jesuit interest in salvation, though, is to pound in the *global* ambition inherent in a quest for souls, a quest that we continue to interpret inaccurately as conservative or quaintly backwards. No, says Clossey. He writes: “What distinguishes . . . the Jesuits . . . from other world-spanning phenomena is an awareness of causality . . . the missionary who travels from new Spain to China would be intensely and necessarily aware of the

Chinese stimulus of his travels. The cause would be so alive to him that he would die for it" (p. 253). There, at the heart of a supposedly "pre-modern" obsession with salvation, Clossey isolates a supposedly "modern" recognition or awareness of the interconnectedness of the globe. This is still a radical and heretical premise among historians today: that being salvific *is* being global, and that the connection between these two ideas happens early, centuries before our world forums and international conventions.

Let me briefly recap the three traditional categories that Dr. Clossey has disrespected, or redefined, in his book, before I turn to the hidden fourth target that I suspect he most sought. First, empires, or regionalization: he urges us to think beyond these political and geographical boundaries. Second, networks: he invites us to decentralize them and focus on their more mundane aspects. Third, spirituality: he insists that it is neither peripheral nor antiquated, but actually a motor for globalization. This brings me to a fourth point, where he leaves us: contesting the constrictive assumptions of chronology. Towards the very end of his book, Dr. Clossey criticizes the terminology of "early modern" (p. 248). Implicitly, however, he has railed against this category throughout his entire book, arguing that we cannot sweep "salvation" into some ancient past, and we cannot claim "globalization" as a modern phenomenon, unique to our own time. He has shown us a seventeenth-century moment and a seventeenth-century group of individuals who acted outside our preferred temporal categories of analysis. This is the real fire hidden in Clossey's book: that our labels of "early" and "modern," "late" and "traditional," fail to explain a large component of the past.

Since we have the benefit of Dr. Clossey's presence today, I would love to hear him say more about this brave final claim: where it has taken him since he wrote this book, whether he still believes it as fervently, and what the challenges are of defending it in the presence of early modernists like myself. But I do not want to sign off with just those open questions. I am inspired and humbled by Dr. Clossey and his 53 Jesuits into making my comment into something of a thank-you note. In all honesty, back in the fall of 2009, as a fledgling professor of sixteen graduate students in outright revolt in my classroom, I was not feeling terribly grateful to him. From where I stand now, having wrestled with some of the challenges of the methodology of world history myself, I would like gratefully to acknowledge and congratulate Dr. Clossey for destroying my lesson plan. He makes it look deceptively easy to muster strange skill sets and language training, to travel the world figuratively and literally, in order to achieve understandings that do not just go outside the box; they break the boxes that need to be broken. On behalf of my graduate students and the many junior historians who follow and must reckon with your work: Thank you.

**Kenneth Mills, *University of Toronto*:**

Do the best questions – the most enduring – always seem gentle in the beginning? Many years ago, in the context of a discussion of the apparent differences between the evangelization of Moriscos (new converts from Islam) in the late



fifteenth- and sixteenth-century peninsular Spanish kingdoms and indigenous peoples in the contemporary Americas, John H. Elliott – then my dissertation supervisor – wondered “where the *best* missionaries went?” As I pondered the deceptive simplicity of the question, I swear I could just about make out Elliott’s true self leaping up and clicking its heels. For one who loves to set off fireworks in the laps of others, here was a good one, and this time the lap was mine.

With the burr of Elliott’s question under my saddle for years, Luke Clossey’s *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* has felt like a book I had been waiting for. The Jesuits – with the rapid, nigh on global spread of their colleges, churches, residences, and evangelization settings over the second half of the sixteenth century and just beyond – offer a wonderful test case for the question, and much else besides. Tellingly, Ignatius and his companions did not initially set global missionization as a principal aim. Yet it soon seemed that the *padres* and *hermanos* of the Society were everywhere a Counter-Reformation Catholic was allowed to be, as well as plenty of places where they were not so welcome. There was even considerable pressure for the Jesuits to take it further and do even more, for instance to embrace parish work, as the mendicants had done in the Indies before their arrival.

Ranging across considerations of methodology and content, I present seven reasons why I find Luke Clossey’s study admirable and sure to fuel further research: its breadth; the noticing; the courage; the attention to the workings of mobility, travel, and distance; the similarly productive reflections upon Jesuit self-authorization, promotion, and diffusion; his rare insight into this (aforementioned) matter of “bestness” in missionaries; and, finally, the major questions arising and unresolved thanks to this book.

### **Breadth**

The prospect of universal conversion – involving a struggle against the tireless and multiform Devil and his agents – was urgently apparent for many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic religious. It is captured in everything from great paintings to *biombos*, as much in the prefaces to catechisms as in missionary treatises and lexicons of the age. In spite of the rise of Protestantisms in northern Europe (or, just possibly, because of it), over the course of the sixteenth century prospect became project. The signs were there for those who needed them that the whole world might become Catholic, guided by the Spanish and Portuguese, acting as the pope’s specially appointed pastors. In the wake of such happenings as the conquest of Tenochtitlan, Magellan’s circumnavigation, Pizarro’s contested seizure of Peru, multiple Portuguese beginnings in Asia, and the naval victory at Lepanto, the entire world seemed within grasp.

Yet, as Elliott’s question to me suggests, neither were Catholic Christian missionaries cut from the same cloth, nor emerging evangelization efforts the same from one setting to the next. Our knowledge of global Catholic Christian missionization has remained fragmented, with more expansive studies such as those by C. R. Boxer (*The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*) and R. Po-Chia Hsia (*The World of Catholic Renewal*) as exceptions to the rule. A universal

vision is built into Jesuit thought, mission, and machinations, but this has been inadequately captured by historical interpreters. Germany and Mexico mattered for Nicolas Trigault (1577-1628) in China, and a remarkable number of other contemporaries – who become Clossey’s protagonists – shared this mindset. In *Salvation and Globalization* a remarkable edifice is built around a sub-set of 53 early Jesuits who became missionaries in Germany, Mexico (New Spain), and China. These are far-flung and “different” enough contemporary zones to suggest, over and over again, the still broader whole that is Clossey’s quarry. One learns from the multilingual leavings of their time on earth in a way that is quite unique. Of course, one is left to ponder the author’s freely-admitted “relative arbitrariness” (p. 18) of it all. Why *this* 53? Why Germany, Mexico, and China, amidst the far greater possible geographic diversity and scope? Whether the choices are a function of Clossey’s linguistic skills, archival accessibility, temperamental predilections, more serendipitous factors, or a combination of these and more, for this reader at least, the ultimate effect is disarming. While it is not surprising that the supervisors of Clossey’s doctoral dissertation – where this book began – worried that he was taking on too much, spreading his thesis about the aim and “technologies” of salvation too thin, it is a good thing he stuck to his course. The breadth of Clossey’s ambition is his book’s principal accomplishment. Even as objections and concerns mount, his judicious choosing and concrete exemplification pull one along.

### Noticing

Beyond the breadth of research (and the writerly resolve) required to write such a study, there is a single reason one learns so much from this book. The reason is Clossey’s noticing, a curiosity and appetite for details of seemingly all kinds, both at the purported Jesuit centre and across so broad a sweep of territories. One learns, for instance, that, hungry for more reporting than regular letters could provide about the missions in the East, Ignatius, as early as 1552, had recalled Francisco Xavier from Asia, believing he could administer the far-flung missions he and others had begun “just as easily from Portugal,” and that only Xavier’s death saved him the trip (pp. 56-57); that, as dedicated as the earliest Jesuits were to the apostolic poverty of holy beggars, they were – already by the time of Father General Francisco Borgia (1565-1572) – permitting themselves the luxury of travel by horseback (p. 147); that Jesuits in Portuguese India became enmeshed in the financial workings of colonial administration far more deeply than their contemporaries in Spanish America (pp. 167-168); that the task of quantifying individual “souls” to be saved across so broad a global canvas became a particularly vexing problem (pp. 226-227); and that, in spite of centralizing commands at many turns, there were frequent autonomous assertions within the global Jesuit ranks, as when the Jesuits in late sixteenth-century New Granada confidently proposed the establishment of their own college for aspirant missionaries in Salamanca (p. 146, n. 57). I select these examples from scores of such soundings.

The noticing is worth remarking upon because of the scale of Clossey’s undertaking. Tales are told of the English historian Sir Keith Thomas in Oxford that

focus upon his (alleged) shoe boxes crammed with index cards, on which exquisite details have been recorded, not just from his reading, but from discussion and experience. One has read, in somewhat similar spirit, of Umberto Eco's love of list-making. Clossey seems a bird of this feather, an exceedingly well-organized magpie. It seems likely that – in digital form, one expects – Luke Clossey has long been building a painstaking and glorious shoebox empire of detail and lists, kept organized with regard to how he might deploy the detail into narrative and argument. He declares himself a practitioner of “historical ‘dromography’,” brandishing interdisciplinarity, gesturing at a conjuncture of “geography, history and the logistics of trade, movement, transportation and communications networks” (p. 10).

### Courage

I like the historiographic courage of Luke Clossey – though I will acknowledge that my understanding of “courage” will not be everyone's.<sup>4</sup> Clossey is, for me, a studious version of the river-boat gambler and songster who has been emerging in Bob Dylan's recent recordings – a teller equipped with information, but just as reliant on inventiveness and wit in making his connections, a teller fired by attentiveness, cool noticing, and the near-sacred obligation of being entertaining *en route*.

It is worth remarking on the kinds of detail included here. Clossey writes of his “willingness to be astonished at the familiar” (p. 6). I read this as the author's way of insisting, as Ann Laura Stoler has recently pointed out, that reading “along the grain” of colonial sources is vital, and vitally connected to all other potential readings, very much including those purportedly “from below” and “against” the grain. Clossey is not the first to treat missionaries as “exotic” and potentially unfathomable as any “other” they may have sought. Yet the verve and sustained nature of his focus upon the multiple perspectives of Jesuit religious stand out in an accomplished sub-field of inquiry that increasingly recognizes the co-creation of historical realities in which evangelizations and responses are intrinsically entwined.

Taking his sources seriously, especially when in word and deed Jesuit actors and commentators *say* they are seeking their own salvations as well as the salvation of others, takes a certain amount of courage. Continuing a (similarly historiographically brave) investigative line championed earlier by Thomas Cohen (of York University), Clossey shows just how many, and how fully, early Jesuits were motivated by their own spiritual journeys and eternal salvation, to the point that they themselves might become the only true converts to emerge from decades of enterprise in the wider world.

Following his sources – who imagined an “essential unity” in which all would be saved and beneath God's mercy – Luke Clossey captures Jesuit motivation. He keeps the story big, universal, playing, as his historical subjects were, for broke, for an eternal life that connected them to their potential converts. Investigators of Jesuit missionization in different regions will balk at how much this

<sup>4</sup> Fond thanks to Carla Lois and Chet van Duzen for pushing at my thoughts around what constitutes “courage” and “adventure,” for our early modern historical subjects and for ourselves.

focus on the macro level can miss about variation on the ground, but Clossey's aim is different. How does one understand a world – he asks, with his historical subjects in mind – in which northern Europe appears increasingly torn from Rome, in which so many daughters and sons of Noah have strayed, and in which still more have been so long disadvantaged in the darkness? One understands, Clossey persuasively shows, by feeling urgency, by theorizing and developing “a burning need for global mission” (p. 101).

### **Mobility, Travel, and Distance**

Clossey accumulates a number of productive meditations on what mobility, travel, and distance meant to the early Jesuits. He is most interested in the ways in which “distance enhances authority,” becoming a nearly unassailable kind of “evidence” one could brandish to readers back home in Europe, as well as abroad in other missions (p. 104). Of course, as investigators as diverse in their interests as Edmundo O’Gorman, Anthony Pagden, Rolena Adorno, and Sabine MacCormack have shown, Jesuits were hardly the only early modern scribblers to partake of the authority offered by eye-witness accounts. Yet Clossey, with his mind fixed on Jesuit mindset and motivation, re-animates the matter. Descriptions from afar were edifying inspiration and recruitment tools: “a distant soul is an attractive soul” (p. 105). In conceiving of and elaborating upon the appropriateness of a mission, cultural distance might even be shrunk, as Jesuits attempted in China (pp. 111-113).

Clossey captures, simultaneously and suggestively, how travel and distance throw missionaries back upon their meagre resources to get by. The reaching for and reliance on fellow countrymen, other religious, relatives, and brethren is striking, and it runs against the theory of the Indies as blessed exile, where one can be undistracted and God’s purest instrument. Distance was also a varied enemy to “truth.” It meant that much correspondence between Jesuits never arrived, or, when answers or orders were involved, was so delayed as to be rendered useless. Distance also invited forms of disobedience, devil-may-care behaviours, risks and experiments – some of which simply persisted into practice, while others are held in check by a wilful (if not always effective) centre.

### **Promotion, Self-authorization and Diffusion**

The global network of knowledge sought by, say, an Athanasius Kircher opens an exciting vista upon the promotion, publication, and diffusion of Jesuit investigations. Even a glance at the extraordinary width of curiosity and publication trajectories of other Jesuits – take Nicolas Trigault, José de Acosta, or Francisco Florencia – hints at the extent of the subject. Distance from home and from each other enhanced the fact that there was always the need to write accounts, to fix accomplishments or narrate activities in certain ways, and to send these off into a wider world of readers. Information abounded, of all kinds. Quoting the Dominican Gregorio García’s fondness for a disarming Castilian proverb – “from long journeys, long lies” (p. 47 and n. 15) – Clossey registers a salutary reminder. Especially when the subject of their writing pertained to the conversion of indigenous peoples, or the reform of lives more generally, needful Jesuit self-projection

is so often what we “get” on the many-hued surfaces of our sources. In their *cartas annuas* corresponding Jesuit provincials proved to be fierce editors of themselves and their brethren, while they also wrote to satisfy, inform, and entertain their readers. All religious orders composed their own histories, arguing for their antiquity, centrality, and authority in this province and the other, but none did so in as globally impressive and sustained a manner as the Jesuits.

Luke Clossey penetrates the promotion of Jesuit triumphs with subtle appreciation for what members of the Society did in fact achieve, intentionally and otherwise. It helps immeasurably that as an historical interpreter he admires many things and is curious about more, and that these things are not only of the Jesuits. Clossey is primarily interested in how Jesuit modes of thought and action around the salvation and missionization of souls played out, and in how these modes often failed to be what their proponents intended. The room for “failure” is absolutely vital. Clossey’s wise nose for promotion, editing, and propaganda and publication – what at one point he calls “bold editorial hands,” often those provincials who decided just what went in and what was left out in reportage and self-representation to the Father General in Rome, and, effectively, to brethren around the world – is part of what truly makes this book.

### A “Best” Missionary

It may not be too self-indulgent, or tangential to a consideration of Luke Clossey’s study, to return to our gentle initial question. What would a *best* missionary have been like? Did the evangelization settings – in Spain, in Europe, in Indies east and west – rank in some way for Jesuit contemporaries, with certain regions seeming to demand certain kinds of talents and qualities in their aspirant *operarios*?

How to define this word *best*? Not a few Jesuit studies would answer that, essentially, it was any religious who aspired to the ideals and actions of Francis Xavier (1506-1552), the early Apostle to the East, and a notably prolific prototype for those who followed. Yet “best” is a terribly problematic word for a historical interpreter trained to understand, to tell, to analyse, but not to judge or prescribe. Did contemporaries take best to mean “effective,” and if so, effective at precisely what? At conversion? Conversion was a trumpeted project of contemporary Catholic missionaries, but it connoted (as it still connotes) a completion, a pretension of totalizing, measurable accomplishment, away from which most investigators will rightly shy in search, instead, for unfolding process.<sup>5</sup> Obstacles in mind, second, what signs are there that certain kinds of missionaries were thought suitable for certain missions and not others, and why?

Recruitment was not always about attracting the most widely learned or gifted synthesizing minds, as the Jesuit founders realized. There is – in the sources – an

5 Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, “Introduction” in Mills and Grafton, *Conversion: Old Worlds and New* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003). See also the essays in this volume and those in its companion (perhaps especially the final piece by Neil McLynn), Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, eds., *Seeing and Believing Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003).

abiding sense that distant lands demanded more physical fortitude of “European” bodies and minds than did nearer climes. Clossey quotes a suggestive few words penned by Jerónimo Nadal, at the height of his power within the Society in 1561, on this score. Nadal advises Father General Diego Laínez to send “to the Portuguese Indies those physically strong missionaries of a talent too ‘mediocre’ to be useful in Germany” (p. 43). Is what is important in his statement the apparent prejudice about the nature of the missionary’s task in a Germany being more intellectually demanding than an Asia, where physical endurance would be key? Or is there more hiding here, in Nadal’s admittedly cold comparative expression of the fact that a best missionary – when far from home in an elemental mission involving non-Christians, neophytes, and misbehaving colonists – would be a person less focused on time for study and synthesis, and more prepared to get his hands dirty and to survive the experience? Here are dynamic and delicate matters of global mission, deliciously raised by Clossey’s work amidst the sources themselves. Were a rigorous examination of the original words of Nadal to find considerably more company, then there would be grounds for further investigation of how and why certain kinds of missionaries were dispatched to one place and not another, as well as grounds for broader speculation upon the consequences of such decisions.

Would best turn out to be constitutionally courageous and energetic, or careful and reflective? Would it mean highly orthodox? Did it mean steadfast on doctrine and established ends? Focused on the sacraments, on confessing and saving souls by the book, as it were? Did it also mean a tireless extirpator, on the look-out for heresy and error and vulnerability to the Devil and his minions? Is a best missionary predominantly a conveyer, the one who transfers and tirelessly transplants and guards the authorised image, the European form? Or is he one who patiently moves within the many constraints of colonial setting? Is a best Jesuit missionary, on balance, one who proves gifted as a student and preacher in indigenous vernaculars? Perhaps a composer of hymns which played amidst the metaphorical powers of various thoughtworlds? A cultural and religious translator, then, in a number of senses at once?

Following Luke Clossey’s example, we need to take much care not to splice what we are discovering with what we might desire. I strongly suspect that it would say more about us, and the needs of our time, to think that “best” for an early Jesuit missionary ultimately meant more adaptable, flexible, and accommodating to native practices and uncertain realities. Students of syncretism in its various forms have justifiably flocked to Jesuit archives, and one does find evidence of remarkable Jesuit interest in pre-contact non-Christian histories and cultures, patience before neophytic errors, and some notable overlooking of hybrid exuberances judged to be cultural and of little harm. But, as Clossey does well to convey and as careful readers of contemporary Jesuit writings are soon aware, such evidence is never alone. The early Jesuits were present and recording their thoughts and actions at an incredible intercultural moment, but they were not one thing in the face of it. They were decidedly not the harbingers either of ethnography or of a spirit of multicultural global partnership. Their members could turn up

pregnant treasures for us to think with in their wake, while being simultaneously as high-handed, forbidding, and narrowly focused as other contemporaries.

### **Questions and Matters Arising**

Good books raise questions and turn up issues their authors will not resolve. They introduce complexity to what has often been simplified. Perhaps most importantly, authors of good books are confident enough in what they are doing to allow them not to flinch before what they scarcely touch. From among several questions raised by Luke Clossey's study, a cardinal one might be put thus: how unique were the early Jesuits in their time? In global ambition, in their converging priorities of salvation of self then other, in their strategies, and in the outcomes to which they contributed, do they stand wholly or mostly alone? Further, and more sharply, how accurate is it for a historical interpreter of the early modern world to isolate her study of the designs and activities of the Society of Jesus and its members from the investigation of those of other religious orders?

The Jesuits – from their archives to their much-vaunted independence of spirit – can carry us away. For all that such a focus upon Jesuits allows and achieves, the danger is splendid isolation, a kind of precious reification of the Society, its members, their relationships with others, and their repercussions – even to the point of contributing to romantic and consuming myths about Jesuits that have been under construction for nearly half a millennium.

In scanning contemporary evangelization settings for the peers of Clossey's sub-set of 53 who partook of an identifiably global vision of mission and showed themselves multiply engaged in the enterprise of salvation in their increasingly complex world, still more Jesuits do stand out. But, by these admittedly broad criteria, one's attention just as surely alights on non-Jesuits, both before and after the Society's foundation in 1540. In the wake of the reconquest of Granada in 1492, the adoption of the kind of notably gradualist and accommodationist approach often ascribed to Jesuits was favoured by the Hieronymite first archbishop of Granada, Hernando de Talavera, as he approached the conversion of the Muslim population in his archdiocese. Before and in the Jesuits' own time, members of the Order of St. Dominic who took on missions and parishes in the Caribbean basin and Tierra Firme are also prominent, Bartolomé de Las Casas and Domingo de Santo Tomás only the most famous among them. Their bravery before the ravages wrought by colonial rule and "Christian" example, their written aims, their evident range of thinking, and their width and kinds of missionary engagements – while never identical, of course, and sometimes markedly different – are related to those of their Jesuit contemporaries. Augustinian and Mercedarian examples also come to mind.

The most striking family resemblance to the early Jesuits, however, comes from among the Franciscans (suggesting that contemporary Jesuit visions of Ignatius as a "new Francis" was far more than simply the rhetoric of an apostolic torch passing through blessed hands). Across the oceans, despite the foundering of aims and much hard work, both religious orders had seriously worked towards complementing their own missionization through the training and ordination of clergy of indigenous and mixed descent.

Evidence of Franciscan engagements very like those attributed to contemporary Jesuits abounds. Take, for instance, Fray Diego de Valadés, a *mestizo* who joined the Franciscan order about 1550 in one of the settings well treated by Clossey, that of New Spain. Valadés's *Rhetorica Christiana* (1579) gave force to his broad argument that a conversion of indigenous peoples in New Spain, as elsewhere in the Indies, was being achieved in ways that had proven impossible among the Moriscos of peninsular Spain. Closer to home, he preached in at least three indigenous tongues, and his extensive missionary experience brought knowledge and force to written work which compares intriguingly with what the Jesuit José de Acosta would soon after propose. Valadés believed native peoples to be, by and large, predisposed to Catholic Christianity, and thus awaiting committed and effective evangelizers. Having studied under and assisted the early Franciscan Pedro de Gante, Valadés advocated (what he himself and his teacher had lived) missionary study of indigenous mnemonic systems, and immersion in indigenous histories and cultures, to prepare for the acts of adaptation and re-creation which successful evangelisation would require. Valadés is justly most famous for setting out a system of indoctrination and preaching among indigenous peoples in which the spoken word was complemented by the extensive use of didactic images, the very kinds of instruction often associated with Jesuit evangelization. Similarly illustrative for my point is the example of a creole Franciscan named Luis Jerónimo de Oré (1554-1630), who hailed from Spain's southerly viceroyalty of Peru. Like Valadés, Oré was a seasoned evangelizer and has gained perhaps the lion's share of his contemporary fame as a highly accomplished preacher in indigenous tongues (in Oré's case, primarily Quechua). Also a devotional writer, Oré might be most succinctly described as a translator and re-creator of Catholic Christianity in the Andean tongues of Quechua and Aymará, among the most sensitive and creative of a small but highly influential group of cross-cultural Christian thinkers in Spanish America in the era following the standardizing efforts of the third provincial councils of Lima and Mexico. As Alan Durston's *Pastoral Quechua* has captured, Oré's influence can be traced not only in his devotional, lexicographical and missionary treatises,<sup>6</sup> but also in his interaction with Jesuit and other linguist-evangelisers, especially the team working towards publication of the multi-lingual pastoral complements for the Third Lima Council (1585) – a project supervised by the aforementioned Jesuit José de Acosta.

That the Jesuits had no monopoly on global salvific vision or accommodative mission strategies does not weaken Clossey's contentions (nor does it harm those of others who have memorably focused their differently-aimed arguments in related ways). Let me be clear that Clossey makes no explicit claim for the early

6 Most notably the *Symbolo Catholico Indiano* (1598), the *Corona de la Sacratísima Virgen María* (1617), and his five-language compendium of texts, the *Rituale seu Manuale Peruanorum* (1607), which included the Guaraní texts by another Franciscan contemporary in the vast interior region of Paraguay and Tucumán, and a noted linguist himself, Fray Luis Bolaños (1550-1629).



Jesuits' uniqueness – but the effect of his focus upon them can suggest it. The questions his work raises remind us in salutary ways that the task of representing early modern Jesuits in their ample contexts, and not mistaking history as it has often been told for all that history may contain, is ongoing. The wealth and extent of Jesuit documentation, the relative organization, welcome, and openness of Jesuit archives to investigators, and the veritable machine of Jesuit-inspired and Jesuit-fired historiography, among other things, incline historical interpretation in certain directions. It takes nothing away from the Jesuit *modo de proceder* to find that the *padres* and *hermanos* of St. Ignatius were accompanied by others in certain key principles, as well as in their variety, in their many-mindedness, and, on occasion, even in their scope. It should intrigue us – not surprise us – to find “Jesuit-like” (but non-Jesuit) actors and consequences across the early modern world. Luke Clossey's *Salvation and Globalization* encourages it, and much more.

## Response and reflection by the author

**Luke Clossey, *Simon Fraser University*:**

This is a tricky forum to prepare for, not knowing whether my book would be praised or buried. My first strategy was to pour through the three panellists' own writings for typographical errors, so I'd be able to say, “Sure, my book may well be intellectually vacuous for the reasons you've just explained, but let's talk about the way you used the semicolon on your page 68.” Hearing the comments just given is an unexpected treat. I'm humbled by their kindness, and marvel that they sometimes can understand the point of a book better than its author does, and can express that point with greater eloquence.

I'll start with the largest question, raised by Dr. Marriott: Is *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* world history? The category is contested. Quite a lot gets included under the heading, often even studies of modest geographical range. One world historian, brought in by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to review a rejected grant application, admonished me that “world history is not the history of the world.” Even if we're not allowed to take up the most straightforward definition, I suppose that any good definition should still be geographical. Ideally, our labels should be the snuggest fit possible without inelegant hyphens, so world history is defined to be a history that cannot fit nicely into any smaller box. *Salvation* is German-Chinese-Mexican history, but that category is excluded as inelegant, and I was left with “world.” (We can see the power of the national level of history when we don't flinch when referring to a history of the Duchy of Saxe-Weißenfels-Querfurt as “German history.” *Salvation* covers more of the world than Saxe-Weißenfels-Querfurt covers of Germany, yet no one says a history of Saxe-Weißenfels-Querfurt is not really German history because it excludes Bavaria and the Rhineland.)

By this definition, world history is just an inconveniently big kind of history, different in scope but not in method. Marriott also speaks of a world history methodology. Certainly, we can introduce students to world-history scholarship to evaluate and possibly imitate – witness the ingenious system that Professor Vélez describes – but is there really a methodology to follow? Perhaps world history “methodology” is nothing more than “ignore jurisdictional lines.” Though never quite so reckless, my best world-history mentors – Jerry Bentley died in July and remains in my mind – always had bottomless enthusiasm.

When I was writing *Salvation*, it often felt like I had bitten off more than I could chew, and I expected that the reviews would point out all of the mistakes I made, while generally being forgiving out of respect for the book’s scope. In fact, except for John O’Malley (S.J.) catching me in a mistake about the Jesuits,<sup>7</sup> none of the criticisms have been fact-related. Instead, they are motivated by ideology or style preferences: it’s bad to use a contemporary word like “globalization”; it’s bad to not give proper biographies; it’s bad to write a book about missionaries rather than their prey; it’s bad to have too many “clever ideas” in the conclusion or to use “overdramatic” language.

The world-history recklessness that entails these problems has a necessary flip side in a strict discipline in maintaining focus. Specificity and discipline let relatively young, ignorant historians write histories bigger than they ought, and, as more of the past becomes digital, broad searches will become more feasible and efficient. (Working now on a global project that ends two decades into the nineteenth century, I find myself reading historical biographies, which presumably end with their subjects’ demise, but discipline forces me to close the book at 1820, a stopping point that often feels as abrupt and arbitrary as my own death. For all I know, Thomas Jefferson and Ram Mohan Roy are still happily alive and well today. Somehow big topics mean big areas of neglect.) I looked in every place I could think of for my Jesuits, but thus had to ignore everyone else. That leaves me wholly unable to answer the questions Professor Mills raises about my missionaries’ contemporaries, except to offer my sense that the Jesuit mentality seems more a product of its age than its institutional identity.

The strictness of this discipline, ideally, supports and is supported by a commensurate organization. In the depths of my computer’s hard drive I sought confirmation of Mills’s notion of my magpie shoebox and found a mildewy and moth-eaten 77,504-word document entitled “Draft Winter 2002.” This began as an outline, and for the next twelve months I haphazardly filed under the various subject headings a heap of *Stoff* – gems from the archives, ideas born of boredom on trains en route to those archives, as well as long quotations, jokes, and slogans (“Let Jesuits be Jesuits!”). Perhaps this, then, might be a “world-history methodology”: a focused question with an unusually broad geography,

7 John W. O’Malley, “*Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* [review],” *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 95 (2009), no. 4, pp. 846-847.

skimming unusually many sources looking for evidence made rare by the narrow focus, and the careful arrangement of unusually incohesive results. The manuscript sent to the publisher five years later had grown by another 40,000 words' worth of further reading and reflection, but was mostly the product of obsessive revision that turned data into lists, then into clumps, then into prose. Marriott once mentioned that *Salvation*, despite its author's strategy of using humour to make it more accessible, remains quite dense. That perhaps reflects its evolution. If you polish a magpie's shoebox long enough, it does become a well-stuffed book.

When I did leave the archives for a breath of air, my frustration at the mismatch between the Jesuits in the documents and the Jesuits in the historical scholarship grew, until I realized that my historiographically informed preconceptions were the real problem, not the sources. Jack Handey once reminisced, "When I found the skull in the woods, the first thing I did was call the police. But then I got curious about it. I picked it up, and started wondering who this person was, and why he had deer horns."<sup>8</sup> When the evidence does not fit the preconceptions, it's time to revisit those preconceptions. Discovering early-modernities was perhaps more exciting, but wouldn't picking them out of an ocean of tradition misrepresent the historical reality? Suddenly recognizing and understanding the lack of modernity becomes more important than the search for modernity had ever been. Perhaps my own conservatism made this change of direction a natural one for me, as I had always appreciated the traditional, whether in reading saints' lives or in reading thank-you notes (a custom whose traditionalism Dr. Vélez so astutely picks up).

Thus many of the biggest bites I bit off were in the conclusion, where I argue for a re-periodization, if not replacing O'Malley's "early modern Catholicism" with "global salvific Catholicism," then at least understanding "early modern Catholicism" to refer to a phenomenon so global as to highlight the importance of salvation. I assumed this would start some discussion, but it has been almost entirely ignored. O'Malley's early modern Catholicism stretches to include Asia and the Americas, but is fundamentally rooted in Europe. He explains his understanding of "early modern" in a paragraph containing ten other proper nouns: Great Schism, Hundred Years War, French Revolution, Italy, Italian Renaissance, Quattrocento, Germany, France, Spain, and England.<sup>9</sup> In a similar way, "early modernity" in general has long been stretched beyond Europe. World-history perspectives tend to reject this, resisting the application of a European concept worldwide. My argument in *Salvation*'s last chapter attempted to parallel this rejection: the "early modernity" at the heart of early-modern Europe and O'Malley's early-modern [European] Catholicism is not quite the same as the "early modernity" at the heart of the early-modern World and Clossey's early-modern [world] Catholicism.

8 Jack Handey, *What I'd Say to the Martians: And Other Veiled Threats* (New York: Hyperion, 2008), p. 34.

9 John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 8-9.

In hindsight, I was wrong. I was so intent on, and impressed by, the global that I made two, related, mistakes. I (unlike Mills in his comments) underestimated the importance of letting the sources lead, and I (unlike Véléz in her comments) underestimated the importance of the traditional. I had thought “global” was strong enough that it could qualify “early modern” enough to make room for the surprisingly un-modern Jesuits I had met in the archives. I never drew what now seems the obvious conclusion: if the Jesuits, famously the most modern facet of early-modern Catholicism, are not modern at all, then there probably cannot be much modernity, early or otherwise, in the era. “Early-modern Catholicism” is not bland or meaningless; it is wrong.

As I moved on to broader projects I have begun to realize that the same could be said for the period as a whole. The world between the Emir Timur and the Jiaqing emperor, and even O’Malley’s Europe between the Schism and the Revolution, was more ubiquitously, more impressively, and more interestingly traditional than it was ever modern. Turning “early modern” inside out, into a “late traditional,” gives us a newer, truer perspective. I’ve been informally pushing for a reconceptualization of the entire period for some time now, and the idea has gained some traction, especially among historians of religion. Once I’ve gathered some more necks to keep mine company on the chopping block, we’ll be working out a manifesto calling for a “late traditional world.” I wonder if my mightily necked co-panelists, for whose comments I am grateful, could be coaxed into some such future collaboration?