{essays in history}

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Theologies of Failure: Islamic Conversion in Early Modern Rome

Rosemary Lee

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The Ottoman state was extraordinarily tolerant of Catholic evangelization efforts in cities like Istanbul and Aleppo. The greatest challenge that missionaries faced in the Levant was not death, but failure. Comparisons certainly did not help matters. While missionaries in the New World were reporting spectacular numbers of conversions, their confreres in the Near East failed consistently to convert Muslims to Christianity. Today their failure does not surprise us. Islam was and is a compelling monotheistic faith, and despite what Thomas á Jesu might tell us, there is no reason why anyone "should" convert to Christianity.[1] Early modern missionaries, however, believed fervently in the superiority of their own particular creed. They found it difficult to understand why the "superior" religion failed to win out. Why were "Oriental" peoples so resistant to conversion? Why, when given the opportunity to convert to Roman Catholicism, did they refuse? Why, in fact, were far more Christians converting to Islam than the other way around?

These questions were difficult to answer in post-Tridentine Italy, but the religious congregation responsible for overseeing missions to the Levant, the Propaganda Fide, did its best. The tremendous distance between Istanbul, Aleppo, and Rome, however, made advising and counseling missionaries difficult. In the absence of direct oversight, the Propaganda Fide recommended that its missionaries turn to a number of approved texts for guidance, which they could carry with them and consult as needed. The secretary of the Propaganda Fide, Francesco Ingoli, most frequently recommended one text in particular: *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium*. *De Procuranda Salute* was written in Latin by an early proponent of the Propaganda Fide, the Spanish Carmelite Thomas á Jesu. It was published in Antwerp in 1613, and soon became the standard text for missionaries in the Middle East.[2]

Historians have long appreciated the ways in which authoritative texts like Jose de Acosta's *De Procuranda Indorum Salute* shaped missionaries' views of non-European societies.[3] Thomas á Jesu's own work has never been subject to similar analysis, though it was the handbook for missionaries dispatched to the Levant. If historians want to understand how missionaries were instructed to interact with Muslims and come to terms with their inability to convert them, Thomas' text is the one which scholars ought to consult.[4] By studying Thomas's text, we can

understand better how the Propaganda Fide taught its missionaries to approach the individual failures they encountered in the Ottoman Empire without abandoning their belief in the overall soundness of their project.

Thomas' understanding of "success" and "failure" were deeply intertwined so deeply that we cannot discuss one without considering the other. By first studying his program for evangelizing the Ottoman Empire, we will understand how he viewed the process by which authentic religious change was achieved. Like Acosta, Thomas tailors his Ottoman conversion strategy to his own understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the peoples whom he desires to convert. Unlike Acosta's strategy in Peru, however, Thomas' strategy in the Ottoman Empire is one that emerges in dialogue with medieval missionary efforts. He offers his readers a uniquely seventeenth-century fusion of medieval strategies with cutting-edge technological developments, such as new Arabic-language printing presses.

After considering Thomas' program for "success," we will turn to his understanding of failure. Missionaries faced two sources of failure in the Near East. First was the issue of Muslim resistance to conversion. Secondly, and far more serious to early modern missionaries, was the issue of Christian conversion to Islam. Of all the belief systems which Catholic missionaries encountered in the early modern period, Islam was the only one which was also engaging in global proselytization. The results of Islamic proselytization were as obvious to early modern missionaries as they are to early modern historians today.[5] For Catholic missionaries, understanding the failure of their message to take root in the Near East meant primarily understanding why men and women chose to convert to Islam and to remain Muslims. Thomas considered a number of explanations for Islamic resistance to conversion, before presenting his own, definitive answer. As we shall discover, Thomas' answer was not specific to Christian converts to Islam, nor to the particular difficulties which missionaries faced in the Ottoman Empire. For Thomas, the problem of failure was at heart a theological one. Thomas solved the problem of failure by redefining conversion itself. He detached missionaries' individual successes and failures from the actual process of conversion, which he attributed exclusively to the

predestined will of God. For Thomas, the problem of failure was inseparable from the problem of conversion itself.

The "Omniscient" Thomas à Jesu:

Though *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium* would become the authoritative text for Middle Eastern missionaries, it was not originally written to serve that audience. As his choice of title suggests, Thomas à Jesu's scope was far larger than the Ottoman Empire or the greater Islamic world. *De Procuranda Salut*e ran to twelve books. It functioned as a portable "controversy," providing missionaries with everything that they needed to know about the many belief systems that they might encounter in the Near East, Africa, and Asia. At times, *De Procuranda Salute* reads like an Audubon guide to the world's religions. Book VII, for example, runs nearly one hundred and fifty pages, with chapters on every Eastern Christian community that a missionary might stumble across, no matter how small or obscure that community might remain. Thomas also included books on Protestantism, Judaism, and what he designated as "ethnic religions," the ancestral religions of China and Japan. Each of these books included two parts: first, a discussion of the "nation," "law," or "heretics" under question, and secondly, Thomas' suggestions for converting said persons to Catholicism.

De Procuranda Salute was not simply a handbook to the world's religions and cultures, but also included more theoretical reflections on evangelization. Were public disputations effective in converting Protestants to Catholicism?[6] Should missionaries assume disguises? Is it sinful for a missionary to eat meat on a fast day to conceal his identity? [7] What role should Christian princes play in the conversion of their subjects? Can they force their subjects to convert to Christianity? Thomas had answers to all of those questions, and, like a good subject of the Spanish Crown, he concluded that it was probably licit for rulers to force their subjects to convert to Christianity, since Ferdinand the Catholic had already employed similar tactics.[8]

Like any textbook*, De Procuranda Salute* was not perfect, and not simply because Thomas approved of the use of force in converting peoples to Christianity. Over time, increased contact with Eastern Christians and Muslims revealed the limits of Thomas' knowledge. Contrary to what

Thomas wrote, Muslim clerics did not wear images of Muhammad around their necks.[9] Nor did the Qur'an commend homosexuality as an act pleasing to God.[10] It is not surprising that Thomas made so many mistakes. While Thomas did travel widely in Northern Europe, he never visited the Ottoman Empire. His work with the Discalced Carmelites took him from Spain to Rome (1607 to 1610), where he conducted much of the research for *De Procuranda Salute* while working on a new mission initiative, an early progenitor of the Propaganda Fide. While in Rome, Thomas read voraciously, met international "experts," and observed the arrival of embassies from Ethiopia and the Congo. All of these experiences broadened Thomas' horizons and encouraged him to begin thinking on a global scale. Thomas and members of the Italian branch of the Discalced Carmelites began promoting the establishment of a new religious congregation to oversee, rationalize, and coordinate all Catholic missions internationally, including in territories subject to the Spanish Crown. Not surprisingly, Spain opposed the foundation of this new congregation.[11]

When his new congregation failed to materialize, Thomas' superiors transferred him to France, Belgium, and the Spanish Netherlands, where he founded a number of new religious houses. He also arranged for *De Procuranda Salute* to be published in Antwerp, a popular publishing center for Spanish-language texts.[12] Lacking first-hand experience of any Muslim-majority society, Thomas relied on the writings of early modern missionaries and travelers, medieval authors like Thomas Aquinas and Riccoldo da Montecroce, and sixteenth-century historians like Cesare Baronio when formulating his own thoughts about Islam.

Despite its flaws, *De Procuranda Salute* remained the handbook for missionaries and would-be missionaries in the Near East.[13] The Italian traveler Pietro della Valle borrowed a copy from the Discalced Carmelites' library in Isfahan in 1617 when he began to think more seriously about involving himself in evangelization efforts in the Near East.[14] In fact, the Carmelites thought *De Procuranda Salute* was so important that they invited Pietro della Valle to "update it," with a set of annotations correcting Thomas' errors.[15] Della Valle was not the only one to read Thomas' work. Missionaries outside Thomas' own religious order also consulted it. The Propaganda Fide's secretary, Francesco Ingoli, mailed a copy of it to fra Pacifique de Provins in Aleppo in 1627.

Pacifique de Provins, an agent of the "Grey Eminence," Pere Joseph, was leading the French Capuchin mission in Aleppo at the time. Pacifique had written to Ingoli for advice on how he ought to interact with the Syrian and Armenian Christians whom he had found in the city.[16] *De Procuranda Salute's* encyclopedic nature ensured that it would become the one text which the Middle Eastern missionary could not do without. Despite its flaws, Thomas' work became the normative one for the Congregation and its team of missionaries in the Levant.

Evangelizing from Behind Closed Doors:

Early modern missions to Muslim-majority communities, whether in Spain, North Africa, or the Levant, were unique because such missionaries were not confronting an Islamic "Other" for the first time. Unlike Spanish friars in Latin America, or missionaries like Matteo Ricci and Francis Xavier in China or India, missionaries to Muslim communities had centuries of Christian-Muslim experience upon which to draw in crafting policies. Evangelization in the Near East did not develop out of the "discovery" of a new continent or new civilization. Seventeenth-century missionaries, though associated with the new orders of the Catholic Reformation, drew on the experiences of their medieval predecessors in negotiating their own relationships with Islam. Missionaries' methods, like their knowledge of Islam, reflected the many debts which they owed to their predecessors.[17] Thomas was no exception to this trend. He drew on a number of older, medieval models in developing his own program for evangelizing the Ottoman Empire. He also advocated a number of uniquely seventeenth-century strategies. These "updated" strategies took advantage of recent developments in printing technologies and institutional knowledge developed through the encounter with Protestantism in Northern Europe.

One possibility for obtaining conversions was through publication. Thomas' belief in the importance of publication was one shared by the Propaganda Fide, and was in fact one of the explicit justifications for its money-losing press. Books could travel and present arguments in ways in which missionaries could not.[18] If provided with access to the "true Scriptures," Thomas believed that Muslim readers would "see the light" and realize how unfavorably Islam compared to Christianity.[19] For this

reason, providing Muslims with Arabic-language texts of the Christian Scriptures was particularly important. In the same way that it was important to publish works in Latin, the international language of Europe, to counter Protestantism, Thomas argued that missionaries ought to arrange for Arabic-language works to be disseminated in the Islamic world.[20]

Thomas saw conversion as a two-part process in the case of converting a Muslim to Catholic Christianity. First, the missionary must convince the convert that Islam is a false religion. Once the missionary has demolished the Muslim's former belief system through logical proofs, he must then work to convince the Muslim that Christianity is the true religion. Thomas himself believed that the first step was the easiest. Convincing a convert of the truth of Christianity was the far more difficult step, as "the doctrines of the Christian faith exceed all capacities of our intellect, and cannot be investigated by any light of natural reason."[21] The primary challenge which the missionary faced in "proving" the truth of Christianity was in explaining mysteries which were by their very nature ineffable. The Christian faith was a mystery that could only be revealed by God.[22] For a true conversion to take place, God had to move the heart of the convert to recognize the truths of faith and long to cling to them. Conversion was both a rational and emotional process, directed by God.

Needless to say, the Muslim convert did not play much of a role in Thomas' process. The Muslim convert, like converts in the New World, played a largely passive role, as the person acted upon, rather than as the actor.[23] Thomas acknowledged that all people had an instinctive longing for truth, but considered the Christian faith to be so transcendent that it could not be grasped unaided by the seeker, no matter how sincere he or she might be. Seekers in fact were predisposed to delusion and error, because the Christian faith transcended human understanding, which was all that seekers had upon which to rely. Seekers could not discover the truth unaided. Truth could only be known from an inward experience of God. The initiative, in fact, did not lie with the missionary as much as it lay with God.[24]

While the process of conversion may ideally be overseen by a missionary, it did not require the physical presence of one. Arabic-language texts, which could be hidden and distributed secretly through

the Ottoman Empire, could be just as effective, if not more so, than a European missionary with an imperfect command of Turkish, Arabic, or Persian. This is one reason why the Propaganda Fide "publicized" spontaneous conversions, such as the report of an Ottoman cadi in Cyprus who converted to Christianity after reading a copy of the Arabic Gospels, without access to any missionaries at all.[25] These unsubstantiated accounts affirmed conversion as Thomas and the Propaganda Fide understood it. While most likely fictitious, these accounts supported the Propaganda Fide's claim that their unusual model of conversion did "work" in practice.

Even if missionaries did not have the opportunity to present their rational arguments against Islam, however, they always had recourse to assiduous prayer and the allure of an "upright life:"

Even if you are not able to attain a reasonable hearing, you will always have recourse to assiduous prayer and the example of a most upright life. For there are many among the Turks who have renounced Christ out of fear or carnality; they are more easily taught than the others … The natural light [of reason] remains among the Turks. Blasphemy against Christ is prohibited; the holiness and beauty of the Christian law is greatly admired, so greatly that they would concede authority to anyone of upright life, more than arguments.[26]

Thomas stressed the importance of good example and upright living continually, not only in converting Muslims, but also in converting Eastern and Greek Orthodox Christians to Roman Catholicism. In Books II and IV of *De Procuranda Salute*, he stressed the importance of a reformed lifestyle for missionaries. He even claimed that cloistered monks could be effective missionaries.[27] Thomas spelled out these considerations more fully in his "prequel" to *De Procuranda Salute*. His 1610 *Stimulus Missionum* was printed in Rome shortly before he left for the Netherlands. Like *De Procuranda Salute*, *Stimulus Missionum* was also concerned with the problem of global evangelization.[28] However, Thomas was more concerned with his own religious order, the Discalced Carmelites, in *Stimulus Missionum*, and wrote principally to defend his belief that members of contemplative religious orders can and should be effective missionaries.

Thomas considered austerity the primary marker of an effective missionary, and stressed the importance of contemplation in acting as the engine driving the missionary. Actions taken without contemplation were necessarily incomplete.[29] As Thomas considered austerity and contemplation possible only within a conventual setting, he understood the convent to be the most effective site for conversion to be effected. According to Thomas, the performance of an austere, disciplined lifestyle was essential for gaining converts. In fact, Thomas singled out "sloth" or spiritual lethargy as the peculiar vice of the unsuccessful missionary.[30]

In part, Thomas stressed the importance of the missionary's self-presentation and lifestyle out of his own understanding of the qualities which disincline potential converts from embracing Roman Catholicism. Thomas saw his own particular form of Christianity as transcending reason, and was unable to conceive of any "rational" arguments which potential converts might offer against it. For Thomas, the main obstacle which missionaries faced in "winning" conversions were not the rational disputations of potential converts, but converts' passions and emotions, which themselves were not susceptible to reasoned argumentation.[31]

The relationship which Thomas charts between reason and passion on the part of potential converts is particularly clear in his discussion of Greek Orthodoxy in *De Procuranda Salute*. He noted in the case of Greek Orthodox Christians that a number of doctrinal differences separate them from Roman Catholic Christians, such as the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed. However, when proceeding with ordinary Greek Christians, he did not advise the missionary to engage in theological disputation:

In conclusion, nothing in the way of public controversy ought to be proposed to Greek Christians, unless given the most apt occasion. Why do I conclude this? This is because they must be brought to a sense of contrition of their sins, with tears and with a detestation of their vices, by the fear of God. By this, they will be persuaded to correct their lives. It is easier to bring them to unity with the Church in this manner, rather than through disputation.[32]

Thomas recognized that what he has just proposed may have sounded scandalous to many readers, who were accustomed to thinking of rational disputation as the means by which converts were "won."[33] Thomas does not rule out the possibility of rational disputation, but advised that missionaries use their best judgment: that they dispute with Greek Orthodox Christians rarely, "at opportune moments," and when they stand the best chance to winning "good fruit."[34] Thomas advised his readers to adopt this policy because theological differences are not the issue in winning ordinary Greek Orthodox Christians. Theologically-savvy elites, of course, were a different matter, and Thomas emphasize that missionaries must adopt different tactics in interacting with them.[35] Thomas instead stressed the importance of acknowledging potential converts' fear and suspicion of the Roman pontiff and the Catholic Church.[36] Rightly or wrongly, Greek Christians had been hurt by Roman Catholics in the past. Thomas emphasized that missionaries should be cognizant of the fact and recognize that their most pressing duty is to replace Greek Christian "hatred" with "love."[37]

Because potential converts' objections to the faith are not rational, rational argumentation was not an effective means of gaining or winning their conversion, as rational arguments did not address the human passions that were the primary hindrance in their conversion. Rather than convincing potential converts intellectually of the righteousness of his cause, the missionary ought to focus on attracting them emotionally. Thus, rather than preaching, missionaries should rely on assiduous prayer and the "allure" of a perfectly austere lifestyle, which Thomas believed could be a potent draw for "Oriental" types struggling to transcend their own carnality.[38]

The mode of "silent witness" which Thomas advocated is in fact one of the oldest forms of evangelization practiced by European Christians in the Near East. Francis of Assisi enjoined silent witness and peaceful coexistence on his friars who believed themselves called to serve as missionaries to the "Saracens" in the *Regula non bullata* of 1221. In his first rule, Francis outlined the manner in which his followers ought to relate to Muslims and nonbelievers.[39]

Therefore, any brother who, by divine inspiration, desires to go among the Saracens and other nonbelievers should go with the permission of his

minister and servant … As for the brothers who go, they can live spiritually among [the Saracens and nonbelievers] in two ways. One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake, and to acknowledge that they are Christians. Another way is to proclaim the word of God when they see that it pleases the Lord, so that they believe in the all-powerful God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Creator of all, in the Son Who is the Redeemer and Savior, and that they be baptized and become Christians. [40]

In 1226, Honorius III issued a letter providing further instruction for quiet-living Franciscan missionaries. He advised friars to grow out their hair and beards, to adopt other clothing to conceal their identities as Christian religious, and to be peaceful and discreet in tending to the spiritual needs of Christians.[41] Friars who chose to pursue a policy of "peaceful witness" ministered to European merchants and renegades, and not surprisingly, rarely mastered anything more than the rudiments of Arabic necessary for daily life. Arabic-speaking Muslims or Christians were not the focus of their pastoral efforts, as they would become for early modern missionaries.[42]

Peaceful coexistence, of course, was not the only way for medieval friars to engage with the Islamic world. Many of them also courted martyrdom—as per Francis' "option two." Typically, friars of the second persuasion launched into diatribes against Islam at the doors of mosques, usually on Fridays when crowds were gathered for worship. Their intention was to gain martyrdom, rather than the conversion of their hearers. These medieval missionaries spoke of their burning desire for martyrdom rather than of their desire to "save souls" or "win souls for God." Achieving martyrdom was not easy. Friars went to great lengths to win martyrdom for themselves, often denouncing the Prophet multiple times, until the baffled local authorities finally lost patience and sentenced them to the deaths that they so longed for.[43]

Qur'anic prohibitions on religious debate shaped the form that Christian evangelization took in the Near East in both the medieval and early modern period. Thomas, reflecting in the early seventeenth-century on "best practices" for engaging with the Islamic world, drew on a number

of older, medieval models. He did not, however, adopt medieval strategies uncritically. He did not advocate the use of martyrdom as a strategy in conversion, for example. In fact, he devotes a substantial section of Book V to defining martyrdom and the occasions in which it is and is not permissible. Few medieval missionaries would pass Thomas' test, as he considered only those deaths that were not willfully sought to be true martyrdoms.[44]

The model which Thomas offers for evangelizing the Islamic world is a fusion of the medieval and early modern. Thomas emphasized the importance in learning Arabic to interact with Muslims, either through face-to-face conversations or, more likely, through publication.[45] He also cited recent advances in printing technology that made the large-scale publication and dissemination of non-Latin texts possible for the first time. Neither of Thomas's methods required the physical presence of a missionary in the field. One could be an effective missionary without ever preaching to (or even interacting with) a Muslim man or woman. A reputation for sanctity might be enough to pique a potential convert's interest in Christianity. It is for this reason that Thomas, a Discalced Carmelite to the last, concludes that his cloistered religious order is peculiarly suited for evangelizing the Near East, owing to the "perfection" and "austerity" of its way of life.[46]

The model which Thomas proposed for evangelizing the Islamic world is likely to be as startling to modern readers as it was to his contemporaries. Traditionally, early modern historians have highlighted the institutional innovations within the Jesuit order that made them effective missionaries. Jesuits did not observe rules of cloister, as monks did. They were also exempt from the duty of saying the Divine Office, a set of prayers that even free-ranging mendicants were enjoined to pray at set hours of the day.[47] By renouncing conventual life in favor of a mode of living that prized flexibility and de-emphasized asceticism, Jesuits were able to move more freely and respond more nimbly than other religious orders to changing opportunities. Central to the Jesuit model was the practice of "accommodation," whereby Jesuits like Matteo Ricci tailored their self-presentation and evangelization strategies to the societies and cultures in which they found themselves.[48]

Ultimately, however, the Jesuit model did not take root in the Near East. New religious orders, such as the Franciscan order's early modern

offshoot, the Capuchins, continued to pursue a conventual style of religious life. They sought religious transformation not only through conversation or individual contact, but also through solitary and corporate devotional activities.[49] Though not a Capuchin friar himself, Thomas drew on a similar set of cultural values. Reflecting on the unique opportunities and challenges that evangelization in cities like Istanbul, Cairo, and Aleppo offered, Thomas looked to older, medieval models of monastic life, rather than the more free-ranging lifestyle of the Jesuit order. For Thomas, the strict observance of cloister was not a barrier to effective evangelization, but rather, a source of spiritual and moral strength.

Thomas' preference for austerity, cloister, and prayer reflected his own Carmelite background. Thomas chose the Discalsed Carmelite order as a young man, after reading the autobiography of Teresa of Avila, the founder of that order.[50] His belief about the proper locus of evangelization was inseparable from his belief about what made for an apostolic life. Thomas' model for evangelizing the Islamic world reflected both his Carmelite spirituality and his understanding of the unique circumstances that missionaries faced in the Ottoman Empire. While missionaries may carry out religious debates in Persia, and also at the Moghul court in India, Thomas knew that polemical preaching against Islam was not permitted in the Ottoman Empire. Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire must develop other ways of proceeding from the public, systematic catechesis upon which their confreres regularly relied to make converts.

A number of factors, Qur'anic and otherwise, ensured that traditional, Tridentine catechesis would not become the means by which missionaries would interact with the Ottoman world. Catechesis included not only rote instruction in reformed Catholic belief and practice, but also the denigration of converts' former beliefs and practices, a practice forbad in the Muslim world.[51] Ronnie Hsia describes catechesis as an extremely hierarchical form of religious instruction.[52] Adrian Prosperi would go further and define it as inherently "hegemonic." It is no mistake that classic, Tridentine catechesis occurred exclusively in regions that were either overtly colonized (Mexico) or subsisted in a quasi-colonial relationship with the political center (Spanish Naples). Ottoman political and social

dominance ensured that catechesis would not be widely practiced in the Ottoman Empire. Thomas thus never offered a sample sermon which missionaries might use in preaching against Islam, as he knew that missionaries would rarely be granted the opportunity to preach. He offered instead Pius II's conciliatory letter to the Ottoman sultan, in which Pius II urged Mehmed in elegant humanist Latin to embrace Christianity.[53] (Mehmed, of course, never replied.)

Theologies of Failure:

Despite all of their linguistic training and theological preparation, missionaries found little success. Conversions did happen, but they were exceedingly rare. The handful of accounts in the Roman archives of Muslims converting to Christianity were occasioned by native evangelists or, in the case of Thomas da Novara, by a European whose unusual language skills and deep sympathy for local customs erased the boundary which many other missionaries scrupulously maintained between the European, Catholic self and the "Oriental Other," both Christian and Muslim. Missionaries' inability to achieve conversions was very obvious. Sooner or later, each missionary in the Levant needed to come to terms with the reality of failure.

Yet if the letters of request considered by the Propaganda Fide are any indication, many would-be missionaries dreamed of heading to the Ottoman Empire to convert Muslims to Christianity, and ideally, to be martyred while doing so. Few missionaries expressed any desire to work with Eastern Christians or Greek Orthodox in their letters of application, the one exception being a group of missionaries from Reggio Calabria who were ethnically Greek themselves.[54] Far more typical is a letter from a Capuchin friar in Palermo, fra Alessandro, who wrote in 1627 that his desire to "spread the faith" in the Ottoman Empire was stoked in part by reading his confreres' glowing accounts of their many "successes" in the Ottoman Empire.[55] In Istanbul, the text was considered so incendiary two years later that the Propaganda Fide's visiting Vicar General advised that the French Capuchins be prohibited from distributing it, as it alleged that they had secretly converted a number of Muslims to Christianity.[56] The difference between Italian dreams and Ottoman realities could not be greater.

Thomas, ensconced in Rome's many archives and libraries, considered Christianity "infinitely superior" to Islam and thus was hard-pressed to explain why so many people in the Ottoman Empire fervently adhered to an "inferior" religion. He understood various reasons for the failure of the missionaries' message. Initially and most simplistically, Thomas cited the appeal of polygamy, the fear of reprisals, and the desire for advancement in Ottoman government and society. These "mundane" reasons justified Muslims' choice to persevere in their own religion. Christianity, by contrast, offered fewer worldly advantages.[57]

Missionaries in the Near East were not only confronted by Muslims' unwillingness to exchange their own religion for Christianity, but also by the far greater scandal of Christian conversion to Islam. Eric Dursteler has characterized the seventeenth-century as "the golden age of the renegade," of Christian converts to Islam. While numbers of renegades are difficult to come across, he estimates that they may have numbered in the hundreds of thousands, certainly far more than the handful of Islamic converts to Christianity.[58] Christian converts to Islam were highly visible in Ottoman society, in part because conversion to Islam was one mechanism of upward mobility for men.

While some may have initially converted to Islam for more secular motives, Eric Dursteler's collection of case histories suggests that many converts became quite fervent in their new beliefs. They often attempted to convert their Christian relatives to Islam. Tijana Krstic has also demonstrated how new converts to Islam nurtured their spirituality by reading, copying, and collecting devotional works on 'Isa (the Islamic Jesus), among other topics. Through introspection and devotional reading, practices shared by both faiths, converts negotiated the relationship between Christianity and their new faith, Islam.[59] Missionaries to the Near East thus not only had to cope with their persistent inability to convert anyone to Christianity, but also with the challenge of sincere Christian conversion to Islam.[60] Thomas dedicated a number of chapters within Book X to the issue of conversion to Islam, but suggestively, includes no commentary on the former Christianity of many of these converts. Instead, he left Islamic converts' former religion unspecified.[61]

Thomas' characterization of Islam shifts throughout *De Procuranda Salute*. Often he describes it as "irrational" and "inferior." At other

moments, his descriptions suggest a more complex relationship with Islam, particularly when dwelling on aspects of Islamic belief that are in harmony with Christianity, such as the belief in the oneness of God and Islamic veneration of Christ and Mary. Thomas' more complex relationship with Islam comes to fore when discussing the many attractions which Islam offered to converts. Thomas, like many other clerics, predictably cites the many "carnal pleasures" promised to converts to Islam, not only in this world, but also in the next.[62] Yet ultimately more "worldly" arguments failed to satisfy Thomas. He acknowledged that many converts could find certain Islamic teachings reasonable and attractive: that God is one, and that all human beings owe him reverence and honor. Ultimately, Thomas understood Islam to be a religion of this world and thus comprehensible through reason, as opposed to Christianity, which is not of this world, nor able to be understood through reason.[63] He concludes by citing a passage from the Gospels, arguing that the persistent phenomenon of (Christian) conversion to Islam ought not lead his readers to suppose that Islam, rather than Christianity, was the true religion:

> When it is asked, "why do so many peoples adhere to the sect of Muhammad, which is full of errors …" people ought not wonder about it, because Holy Scripture says, "infinite are the number of fools," and "Many are called, but few are chosen."[64]

For many missionaries, the impossibility of achieving conversions in the Near East was not simply due to the material advantages that Islam offered believers, but it raised a matter which sooner or later all ambitious missionaries had to confront: the issue of failure. For European missionaries to the Near East, who rarely succeeded in converting anyone to their form of Christianity, the problem of failure had been a particularly acute one from the earliest days. As Tolan discusses in his own study of medieval missions, thirteenth-century missionaries like Riccoldo da Montecroce ultimately fell back upon an anthropological theory of "Oriental" obstinacy and error to absolve themselves of a sense of personal failure. Only irrational people, so the argument went, would continue to cling to beliefs that were so obviously false.[65] Theories of climate and geography also encouraged missionaries to construct an imaginary of "the Orient" and its peoples,

claiming that they were geographically predetermined to be driven by human passions and emotions (particularly lust) and were incapable of rational decision-making.[66] As evidenced by the case of Greek Orthodox Christians, this European "anthropology" of the Orient was not limited to Muslims, but included Christians as well.

The anthropology of the Orient and its peoples which European missionaries developed in the medieval period would ultimately become one of the darkest heritages of the medieval and early modern missionary movement. Edward Said connected the projection of this Orientalist discourse in the modern era with the birth of colonialism. Its medieval and early modern counterpart was conditioned by something quite different: failure. European missionaries, particularly those representatives of the Catholic Reformation who understood the righteousness of their cause to lie in its universality, were unable to see how culturally conditioned and non-universal their own religion was. Nor were many missionaries able to appreciate the meaning and purpose which many Muslims could find in Islam. According to missionaries like Riccoldo da Montecroce, the problem could not lie in their message or in the possibility that Islam might also be a valid path to God. The problem could only lie in the people, Christian and Muslim, who persistently refused to conform their thoughts and behaviors to missionaries' messages.

Thomas absorbed this proto-Orientalist discourse from the writings of medieval missionaries like Riccoldo da Montecroce, whom he cites regularly. Thomas, however, did not adopt this proto-Orientalist discourse wholesale. Central to Thomas's model for global evangelization was the belief that ultimately all human beings, wherever they might be, all want and deserve the same thing. Hence, all peoples are capable of conversion. It is for this reason that Thomas dedicates a chapter in Book I on the dignity and rationality of the human soul. Thomas believed that individual human souls had the capability of transcending their own particular culture if God so wished.[67] Thomas did believe that the peoples of the Near East, both Christian and Muslim, were dominated by passions, though he makes no reference to geographical factors in "determining" this, as Renaissance humanists writing on the Ottoman Turks often did.[68] He developed a psychology and model for conversion which theoretically overcame Ottoman

subjects' sinful proclivities, by reserving all agency in the process of conversion for God, so much so that the presence of a missionary was not even necessary to ensure true and authentic conversion.

Though the problem of failure was particularly acute for missionaries to the Near East, other missionaries also wrestled with the problem of failure. Perhaps it is for this reason that Thomas set aside an entire chapter, both in Book III and later in Book IV, to examine why even the best missionaries failed. He had these words to offer to missionaries who had become disappointed and discouraged:

Before everything else ministers ought to carefully consider how arduous it [conversion] is … preaching the Gospel to nonbelievers has always been extremely difficult, and in our own estimation, our labors achieve little fruit. But truly this [conversion] is not the work of man, but nothing other than that of God … Faith in God and the heart of man are in the hand of the Lord … neither our own work, labor, or diligence achieve the call of nations to the Gospel, but only merciful and providential God.[69]

When mundane reasons failed to satisfy, Thomas concluded, "God gives faith to some, but not to others," unintentionally echoing the words of a sixteenth-century Swiss reformer whom Thomas, as a Spanish Carmelite, would otherwise have very little in common. [70]

Missionaries ultimately turned to a variety of theories to explain the failure of their message to take root in the Near East. Missionaries who were particularly incompetent often fell back on proto-Orientalist theories of "Oriental" obstinacy, in part because their poor language skills limited their ability to build meaningful relationships.[71] Missionaries who were more proficient in Arabic rarely cited Orientalist "reasons" to explain the failure of their message. Their language skills and long residence in the Near East allowed them to know Ottoman subjects personally, emphasizing how very unique each person whom they met really was. The close relationships that they enjoyed with Arabic-speaking Muslims and Christians also revealed the many ways in which Islam could be a source of meaning to devout believers.[72] Thomas' recourse to a theory of conversion as "predestined" and outside missionaries' control is one that can be found again and again in letters

from more proficient Near Eastern missionaries, as they struggled to come to terms with their own inability to effect religious change. By viewing conversion as a process whose success or failure was already predetermined by God, "unsuccessful" missionaries absolved themselves of a sense of personal failure or blame. God simply chose a small number to be saved, and many others to be lost.[73]

"Omniscience" Revisited:

Ironically enough, Thomas á Jesu, the author of *De Procuranda Salute*, never traveled to the Ottoman Empire or to Persia, the two countries which occupied much of his thought. Instead, he turned to the many resources that seventeenth-century Rome offered to students of Middle Eastern languages, cultures, and societies, and became an expert on world religions without ever overstepping the city limits. He met Italian and Middle Eastern "experts," read widely and avidly in Rome's many scholarly libraries, and debated the "best practices" for converting individuals to Catholic Christianity. Like many early modern "orientalists," Thomas' interest in Islam and in other religions practiced in the Middle East was sparked by his desire to convert the adherents of those faiths to his own particular form of Christianity, Roman Catholicism.

Thomas was often, even hilariously, wrong. Pietro della Valle's own annotations, which survive in four folio sheets in manuscript, detail the many ways in which Thomas was wrong, such as his interpretation of "Islamic sexuality" and his beliefs about Islamic devotional practices, and in his understanding of Ottoman culture and society.[74] Thomas was also wrong in other, more subtle ways, as missionaries to the Near East would soon discover. While conversion to Islam undoubtedly brought material benefits in the Ottoman Empire, conversion to Catholic Christianity was not without its own advantages. High-ranking Eastern Christian clerics, for example, regularly converted to Catholicism as a strategy in their battles for the Ottoman Empire's influential patriarchal sees.[75] Despite Thomas' many shortcomings, however, missionaries continued to turn for him for advice and encouragement.

The model which Thomas proposed for engaging with the Islamic world emerged from his study of medieval missions to Muslim-majority

communities, as well as the contemplative spirituality that underpinned his own life. From medieval missionaries' accounts, Thomas absorbed a particular discourse stressing the obstinacy, error, and fallen nature of "Oriental" peoples. Thomas' reading of "Oriental" peoples, both Christian and Muslim, convinced him that preaching and other forms of rational argumentation would not be effective in converting them to Catholic Christianity. Instead, Thomas drew on older models of "silent witness," which missionaries had practiced for centuries in the Levant. Thomas did discard some aspects of medieval and Renaissance European scholarship on Islamic societies, and engaged critically with other elements, such as the role of martyrdom in effecting religious change. His Carmelite spirituality instilled in him a fervent belief in the intercessory power of prayer, and in the importance of austerity in fostering conversion.

Thomas' model for evangelizing the Islamic world was tied closely to his "theology of failure." Indeed, they were one and the same. Missionaries, after all, might as easily ask why their confreres succeeded in Lima as ask why they themselves failed in Aleppo. The answer in either case was the same for Thomas: because God ordained it. Under Thomas' model, missionaries did not even need to be physically present for conversion to occur. The only thing that was required for a true and authentic conversion was the presence of God. The presence of God could be conveyed just as effectively, in Thomas' view, through devotional literature as it could through the presence of a missionary. Conversion was a process overseen *and* foreseen by God, and thus, missionaries' own individual efforts had no meaningful effect in God's greater plan. Conversion could, and did, happen without them. Thomas does not couch his "theology of failure" in the language of Calvin or Luther. He refers solely to the gift of "fides," faith, rather than the gift of "gratia," grace. Still, the similarity of his viewpoint to those of other writers north of the Alps is startling and suggestive.

Ultimately, Thomas' model for conversion was very close to the model which he proposed for leading an apostolic life. Thomas was not the only one to trace a link between evangelizing others and attaining individual salvation. Luke Clossey's *Salvation and Globalization* highlighted the relationship which young Jesuits found between evangelizing others and assuring their own personal salvation.

His research in fact suggests that assuring their own salvation was the reason why young Jesuits initially desired to become missionaries.[76] Like Clossey's Jesuits, Thomas á Jesu approached the problem of conversion not only in terms of transforming Ottoman subjects, but also in terms of transforming the self, through the devotions, prayers, and spiritual disciplines associated with his own religious order. If Thomas believed that every Discalced Carmelite could be a missionary, the reverse also held true: all Carmelite missionaries were Carmelite friars first and foremost. The lifestyle that Thomas instructed his readers to pursue in Istanbul, Aleppo, and elsewhere was little different from the lifestyle of religious at home who were not directly engaged in mission work.

Thomas' study of evangelization, when considered with others, highlights the diversity of approaches within the missionary movement.[77] Thomas' model was vastly different from contemporary Jesuit strategies in China or India, or from Franciscan efforts in the Americas.[78] Rather than viewing early modern Catholicism as a uniform and centralized phenomenon emanating from Rome, Thomas' text invites present-day readers to consider Catholicism in the early modern period as a zone of dialogue and debate over the most authentic form of the apostolic life. Thomas himself was active in Rome and was intimately familiar with many of the religious orders, congregations, and institutions which we today consider typical of the Catholic Reformation. His work, however, reveals the diverse and decentered nature of early modern Catholicism. Early modern Catholicism was very much like the missionary movement that was its most prominent characteristic: a multipronged movement with a diverse array of spiritualities, traditions, and approaches to evangelizing others and redeeming the self.

[1] Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches towards the Muslims* (Princeton University Press, 1984), 7.

[2] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium,* (Antwerp, 1613). A copy of this book may be found in the Vatican Library in Rome.

[3] Prosperi, Adriano, *L'Europa cristiana e il mondo: alle origini dell'idea di missione. Dimenzioni e problemi della ricerca storica.* 1992. pp. 189–220. Prosperi cites Acosta's attention to "civility" as indicative of the

increasingly "secular" preoccupation of missionaries in the early modern period (ie, a shift from apocalyptic to more "rational" and systematic theorizing and training).

[4] "Die neue Kongregation machte sogleich "De Procuranda Salute" des Thomas à Jesu zu ihrem ersten "Missionshandbuch". Sie empfahl es ihren Missionaren," Josef Metzler, "Wegbereiter und Vorläufer der Kongregation: Vorschläge und erste Gründungsversuche einer römischen Missionszentrale," in *Memoria Rerum,* 73.

[5] Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press,, 2008).

[6] Thomas à Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium,* 543.

[7] Ibid., 218-9.

[8] "Probabile valde est posse Principes Christianos ex sua ditione Iudaeos, aut paganos expellere, datis inducijs, ut, si entra tal tempus baptizentur, possint remanere. Id sub nostra' ferme aetatem in Hispania à Rege Catholico Ferdina'do huius nominis V factu' fuisse legimus (ut tradit Simancas de Catholic. Instit. tit. 35 num. 7) ex multoru' hominum doctissimorum consilio, & sententia. Iussit enim Saracenos, & Iudaeos quosq. ab Hispanijs discedere, quò vellent, intra quadrimestre temporis spatiu, ut vel ad fidem, & Religionem Christianam conuerterentur, vel bonis omnibus suis venditis ab Hispania discederent, eis tamen, baptismate intingi, cuperent remanere concessit. In hoc enim vis simpliciter non infertur, sed libera optio datur, ut vel Christianorum prouincias deserant/deferant intra certum tempus, vel Christiani fiant," ibid, 209-210.

[9] Thomas à Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium,* 219. Della Valle challenges Thomas' interpretation in his annotations: ASV Della Valle – Del Bufalo Busta 52 f. 291.

[10] Thomas à Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute Omnium Gentium,* 678-9. Della Valle argues that the Qur'an does not condone homosexual acts in ASV Della Valle – Del Bufalo Busta 52 f. 296 l.

[11] Thomas à Jesu has an entry in the New Catholic Encyclopedia. Internal evidence within Thomas' text suggests that he did the bulk of his research from Rome. On page 3, he gives a summary of various libraries in Rome with important holdings for mission research.

[12] Josef Metzler, "Wegbereiter und Vorläufer der Kongregation: Vorschläge und erste Gründungsversuche einer römischen Missionszentrale," in *Memoria Rerum, Vol 1,* 70-72.

[13] "Die neue Kongregation machte sogleich "De Procuranda Salute" des Thomas à Jesu zu ihrem ersten "Missionshandbuch". Sie empfahl es ihren Missionaren," Josef Metzler, "Wegbereiter und Vorläufer der Kongregation: Vorschläge und erste Gründungsversuche einer römischen Missionszentrale," in *Memoria Rerum, p.* 73.

[14] "In Spahan, l'anno 1617, oltra de seguitar tutti gl'incominciati studij, lessi anco Fra Tomasso di Giesu Carmelitani Scalzo De Procuranda salute omnium gentium, e ci scrissi sopra un libretto d'annotationi," ASV Della Valle-Del Bufalo Busta 92 f. 35.

[15] The annotations themselves may be found in ASV Della Valle-Del Bufalo Busta 93 f. 291-8.

[16] APF *Lettere Volgare 6 (*1627) f. 132. For Pacifique de Provins' relationship with Pere Joseph, see Catholics and Sultans, 85-86. The classic study in English on Pere Joseph is Aldous Huxley, *The Grey Eminence: A Study in Religion and Politics* (Harper, 1941). A more recent study has been published in French with new documents from Pere Joseph's family archive: Benoist Pierre, *Le Père Joseph: l'Eminence Grise de Richelieu* (Perrin: Paris, 2007).

[17] Bernard Heyberger, "Islam dei Missionari," in Heyberger, ed., L'islam visto da Occidente: cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'islam : atti del convegno internazionale, Milano, Università degli studi, 17-18 ottobre 2007 (Milan: Marietti, 2009), 306. For a description of the development of medieval European Christian scholarship on Islam, see Norman Daniel's classic study, Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of An Image,* (Oneworld, 2009).

[18] Francesco Ingoli, the Secretary of Propaganda Fide, actually made this argument multiple times to justify the continued existence of the Propaganda Fide Press. See, for example, Ingoli's discourse in SC Stamperia 1, f. 50 left.

[19] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute*, 728. Secretary Ingoli also claimed that a number of Muslims had been converted secretly in the Ottoman Empire and Persia through their reading, including a Cadi in Cyprus whom Ingoli claims was converted by an Arabic-language text of the Gospels, without having any access to any missionaries at all; see SC Stamperia 1, ff. 50 left.

[20] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute*, 729.

[21] "dogmata fidei Christianae ita omnem nostri intellectus capacitatem excedere, ut nulla ratione naturali lumine possint investigari," Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 127.

[22] Ibid., 129.

[23] Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, ed., *Conversion: Old Worlds and New,* Studies in Comparative History: Essays from the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies (University of Rochester Press, 2003), x.

[24] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 128.

[25] Francesco Ingoli cites this curious case (most likely an "urban legend") in a speech he delivered defending the Propaganda Press. See APF SC Stamperia Misc 1 f. 49.

[26] "Quod si nec rationibus praeberent auditum, adiuuandi erunt assiduis precibus ac integerrimae vitae exemplo. Multi enim ex Turcis, maxime qui metu tantum, ac ob carnis illecebras Christo renunciarunt, dociliores sunt alijs… Reliqui autem Turcae ipso naturali lumine ducti, ac Christum blasphemari non permittentes, diuitas & pulcheritudinem Christianae legis eo magis admirantur, quo magis aliquis vitae probitate, plusquam argumentis, auctoritatem sibi apud eos conciliauerit," Ibid., 729.

[27] Ibid., 83.

[28] Thomas á Jesu, *Stimulus Missionum* (Rome, 1610), 5.

[29] Ibid., 10.

[30] Ibid., 103.

[31] Ibid., 106-7.

[32] "In concionibus etiam populo habendis (ut viri etiam Graeci Catholici & pii sentient) nihil de controversiis publice proponantur, nisi commodissima oblate occasione. Quare qui ubi uterque ritus tam Graecus quam Latinus viget, concionaretur, ita se gerat… hoc est incipiendum scilicet esse, a peccatorum contrition, lacrymis & a detestation vitiorum, a cognition sui, a timore Dei, quibus cum persuasum sit ut vitam corrigant, facilius quam per disputations ad Ecclesiae unitatem adducuntur," Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 287.

[33] "Sed dices, "Numquam ergo de controversiis erit agendum? Respondo nonnumquam erit, sed parce et oportune, & cum ex ea fructus speratur," Ibid., 287.

[34] Ibid., 287.

[35] Ibid., 287-8.

[36] Ibid., 291.

[37] Ibid., 291.

[38] See Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 729, in reference to Muslims.

[39] John Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan: The Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6-11.

[40] Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady, trans. *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 121-2.

[41] Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan,* 10.

[42] See Tolan Saracens, 219.

[43] Kedar, *Crusade and Mission, 14-16.*

[44] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 224-5.

[45] *Ibid.*, 729.

[46] Thomas makes this argument on page 718 of *De Procuranda Salute*. He also claims that cloistered religious like himself are ideally suited for mission work in his earlier work, *Stimulus Missionum.*

[47] Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Early Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples,* Catholic Christendom (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004), 71-2.

[48] Ronnie Hsia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[49] Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans, the church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 85-87.

[50] See "Thomas of Jesus (Diaz Sanchez de Avila)," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, 2nd Edition, Vol. 14, p. 36.

[51] The classic study of catechesis and social discipline in Italian is Adriano Prosperi's *Tribunali della Coscienza.* See also Jennifer Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples.* For colonial Mexico, the classic study is Inga Clendinnen's *Ambivalent Conquests,* which details Spanish missionaries' catechetical program, their reliance on local elites to act as mediators, and the "failure" of their message to take root in the Yucatan.

[52] Ronnie Hsia, "Translating Christianity," *Conversions: Old Worlds and New,* 88-9.

[53] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute*, 737-747.

[54] APF SOCG 2: ff. 47-49 contains a letter of request from a mixed group of "ethnically Greek" and Italian Capuchins from Reggio Calabria.

[55] APF SOCG 2 f. 129. Fra Alessandro describes the unnamed Capuchin text as a very recently published "relazione stampata"

describing the many "achievements" of the Capuchins, and the tolerance extended to them by the Ottoman state.

[56] APF SOCG 113 ff. 48 & 53. The Vicar General, Fra Guglielmo, describes the Capuchin text as "the one circulating in Italy."

[57] Thomas á Jesu*, De Procuranda Salute,* 721.

[58] Eric R. Dursteler, *Renegade Women: Gender, Identity, and Boundaries in the early modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 111.

[59] Dursteler, *Renegade women,* 10-11. See also Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 90-1.

[60] "Sincerity" became a marker of authentic religious conversion after the Council of Trent. Krstic discusses the Tridentine concept of sincerity and its usefulness as an analytical category in studying conversion to Islam in Kristic*, Contested Conversions to Islam,* 102.

[61] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute*, 721.

[62] Ibid., 721.

[63] Ibid., 721.

[64] "… qua quarebatur, Quare tanta populorum multitude sectae Mahometi, erroribus … plenae adhaeserit. Nec de hoc debent multum homines admirari … Quoniam, ut scriptura sancta restatur, *stultorum infinitus est numerous,* Eccl. 1 & Matt 20 dicitur, *Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi,"* ibid., 723.

[65] John V. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (Cambridge University Press: New York, New York, 2002), 225.

[66] See Tolan, *Saracens,* 145, for the relationship between Western European theories of climate and medieval anthropologies of Middle Eastern Christians.

[67] Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 6-11.

[68] For Bisaha's analysis of classical theories of climate, see Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks (*University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, PA, 2004), 45-6.

[69] "Ante omnia igitur oportet Ministros attentè considerare qua'ta fit haec res, quàm ardua … Saepius item recogitent barbarorum, atque aliorum Infidelium veram ad fidem conuersione' difficilem esse, Euangelijque praedicationem inter infideles fuisse semper difficillimam & eius fructificationem existimatione nostra longè laboriosiorem. Verè hoc non opus hominis est, nec alterius cuiusquam quam Dei … fidemque demum Dei esse, cordaque hominum in manu Domini … neque industriae, neque laboris nostri, aut diligentiae esse vocationem gentium ad Euangelium, sed tantum solius miserantis & praeuenientis Dei," Thomas á Jesu, *De Procuranda Salute,* 117.

[70] "Facilius autem est illorum fidem falsam ostendere, quam nostrum veram demonstrare. Fides enim cum eorum sit quae non aspicimus, donum est Dei." *ibid.*,729.

[71] For example, see the Jesuit Thomas Raggio's account in his 1570 expedition from Mount Lebanon, which he took with Giovanni Battista Romano, an Arabic-speaking converted Jew from Egypt. In his formal report, coauthored with Romano, Thomas Raggio concludes that efforts to bring Maronite worship in line with Roman, western norms are due to failure: ARSI Gal. 106 f. 145-6. Romano's letter to Jesuit headquarters in Rome expresses his own frustrations with Raggio; Romano claims he is "worse than useless," see ARSI Gal 106 f. 133-4.

[72] Heyberger, "Islam dei Missionari," in Heyberger, ed., *Islam visto da Occidente,* 302.

[73] APF SC Siri 1, f. 124. A Carmelite in residence in Aleppo makes the argument that conversion it ultimately up to God, and that a missionary's inability to convert anyone is not a sign of failure in the opening of his 1666 Relazione. He cites in particular the "difficulty" in converting Muslims to Christianity.

[74] These annotations may be found in ASV Della Valle-Del Bufalo Busta 93 f. 291-8

[75] John Joseph, Muslim-Christian Relations and Inter-Christian Rivalries in the Middle East: The Case of the Jacobites in an Age of Transition (State University of New York Press: Albany, NY, 1983), 31-2.

[76] Luke Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization in the Early Jesuit Missions* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 120-123.

[77] Ronnie Hsia's survey of the Catholic Reformation includes two chapters on missions in the New World and Asia. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187-216.

[78] Prosperi, "L'Europa Christiana."

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