At the beginning of the Portuguese expansion, with the conquest of Ceuta in 1415, the method used to convert other peoples to the Christian religion was not unlike the method applied by the crusaders toward Muslims: it consisted basically of building churches on the ruins of destroyed mosques. This overlaying of religious spaces serves well as a metaphor for the belief that a shift in religion will naturally follow the occupation of space by military conquest. Because the enemies were Muslims, whose religion punished apostasy with death and condemned Christian missionaries to the same fate, occupation of territory was the only means of gaining new spaces in which Christianity could flourish. Space, but not souls: The fight against Muslims was considered in itself to be a serviço de Deus (a service to God); that is, one of the ways to enable eternal salvation.

The Portuguese came into contact with non-Muslim “others” for the first time during the 1440s on the coast of Guinea, but a long time would pass before they would have the will to convert and would develop adequate tools for efficient missions. It was not until the fourth decade of the sixteenth century that Europeans were able to aim seriously at transforming other individuals into Christians. At that time, they began to send effective bodies of missionaries, organized in religious orders, ready to discover the best way to convert other peoples to Christianity: learning their language and their mores, and making themselves revered, obeyed, and, if possible, loved.

The reorganization of the Roman Catholic Church brought about by the Council of Trent (1545–1563) would transform missionary action into one of the main duties of Catholicism. Whereas the Spanish had only pagans to convert in the Americas and the Philippines, the Portuguese encountered Muslims on both coasts of Africa, in several parts of India, and in Southeast
Asia. This led eventually to the persistence of the religious ideals of the Crusades in the Portuguese empire, although by the end of the sixteenth century the Portuguese had abandoned their ambition to convert Muslims and concentrated their efforts on peoples of other religions. The variety of systems of beliefs the Portuguese had to deal with was enormous and compelled them to acquire knowledge of other religions: from the Amerindian and African ones to the Chinese Taoist sects and the Buddhists in Japan. They also faced a wide variety of religions in confined areas, India being the most famous case, where Hinduism was perhaps the dominant belief system.

Before the Jesuits and other religious orders began to undertake missionary work on a large scale from the 1540s onward, efforts to Christianize were inconsistent. We are led to suspect that, despite stated ambitions to convert other peoples, the Portuguese arrived in new places with just enough priests to minister to the passengers on their ships. In India, for instance, the only religious order regularly established before the Jesuits were the Franciscans, who specialized in poor populations of the Fishery Coast. These were massively converted in 1536 and 1537. The Franciscans were also the only religious order before the arrival of the Jesuits in 1542 to establish houses where the brothers could live together communally in places such as Cochin, Goa, and Chaul. Missions from other religious orders did not enjoy lasting success before the Jesuits stimulated a competition among the different orders for influence in areas around the world.

In the long run, military violence alone could not ensure domination. This was especially true for a small country with relatively few people to export, such as metropolitan Portugal. In order to transform territorial occupation into hegemony, colonial powers had to transform other peoples’ cultures. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, at least, the most effective way to do this was to use religion. It gave the recipients a new master narrative, conveniently mirrored in existing social and political structures. Native and imported populations were integrated into the church by baptism and acquired new clothes and new names and were encouraged to adopt monogamous marriages in order to follow a model of family identical to that of the colonizers. The evangelization task progressed without ever threatening seriously the colonial enterprise or the slave system.

As Charles Boxer noted in his impressive *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion*, papal bulls issued from 1432 to 1436 legitimized African slavery, and the voices raised against the slave trade were few and mainly from Spanish ecclesiastics. The only Portuguese author who condemned it openly was a Dominican, Fernando de Oliveira, whose book, *Arte da guerra do mar* (Art of Sea Warfare), published in 1555, had little impact. As in the Spanish empire, but unlike the Dutch or the English, who made relatively little effort
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to evangelize until the nineteenth century, the will to integrate colonized peoples into the Catholic Church was an essential element of the colonial enterprise of the Portuguese. It cannot be understood separately from the economic and political motivations of expansion.

The Padroado Régio and the Military Orders

In the Portuguese empire, as with the Spanish, the crown was in charge of the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. This prerogative, known as the padroado régio (royal patronage), entitled Portuguese kings to propose the creation of new bishoprics in the empire and to nominate bishops, who would later be subject to papal confirmation. In return, kings were responsible for the funding of religious activities and religious institutions, such as building churches, paying stipends to the secular clergy, or underwriting the religious orders that were established overseas. To raise this money, the crown received the ecclesiastical tax, the dízimo, normally exacted by the church. Not only did the crown enjoy the control of the church in their empire, but they also held a monopoly of religious action, and missionaries had to abide by Portuguese rules. Even if such missionaries were not Portuguese, they had to affiliate with Portuguese branches of religious orders, or they had to acknowledge Portuguese authority, namely by departing from Lisbon aboard Portuguese ships.

The Portuguese padroado preceded its Spanish counterpart by nearly fifty years. In 1433, the Portuguese king D. Duarte was already granting spiritual jurisdiction over the Madeira Islands to the Order of Christ, and in 1455 the bull Romanus pontifex recognized the crown's rights to rule spiritual matters in the newly discovered territories. The Spaniards began their efforts in papal court in order to obtain the same prerogatives in the 1480s in the context of the fight against Spanish Muslims and the colonization of the Canary Islands. Only in 1508 did Julius II grant the bull Universalis ecclesiae, which enabled the Castilian crown to rule spiritual matters in the Americas.

How did the Portuguese rulers gain this degree of control over church affairs? In order to answer this question, we have to go back to the Reconquest in the Iberian Peninsula. War against the Muslims was regarded as sacred. Knights who participated in it joined military religious orders, which were entrusted with the conquest of new territories and often were rewarded with vast tracts of land in frontier areas. Their members were expected to obey vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. There were four such orders in Portugal – Santiago, Avis, Hospital, and Christ – all of them created to
fight Islam in the context of the Causades. In the long run, the Avis dynasty appropriated rulership and control of those powerful institutions. Two processes concurred to bring about this outcome: their "nationalization" and "royalization." By the former, they came under Portuguese control after losing their ties with the main branches, which were situated outside the realm. The Order of Christ replaced (or succeeded) the Order of the Temple, suppressed by the pope, and the orders of both Avis and Santiago were freed from Castilian control (Avis was a branch of the Order of Calatrava). The Hospitallers were the exception, remaining international, but they were of secondary importance. Only the orders of Avis, Santiago, and Christ are of major concern. By "royalization," we mean the process by which their leadership tended to be increasingly granted to men of the royal family, either legitimate or illegitimate sons of kings, and even, albeit more rarely, to their nephews. Both of these processes can be traced back to the fourteenth century and reached a peak in 1550, when King João III merged the leadership of the three orders in his person, an arrangement that Pope Julius III institutionalized the following year.

One of these military orders in particular was granted important privileges concerning "spiritual action" in the newly discovered and conquered Portuguese territories: the Order of Christ. This occurred mainly in the period when Henry the Navigator was its governor and used the Order of Christ to back up his exploratory activities in the Atlantic and West Africa. The town of Tomar, the location of the headquarters of the Order of Christ, was to have through its vigiaría (district church) authorization to direct the spiritual well-being of the new territories, without recourse to episcopal authority. Naturally, with such prerogatives, the Order of Christ was soon to overshadow the two other existing military orders. It became increasingly wealthy, especially after 1500, when Manuel I began a significant political and economic investment in the Order of Christ, to which the pope granted a vast amount of ecclesiastical property, resulting in a spectacular increase in the number of members.

The control of the vigiaría of Tomar over the religious structures of the new territories soon had to give place to new bishoprics as the empire expanded. Its role as spiritual headquarters would cease when the first bishopric with metropolitan status was created overseas in Funchal in 1514. This diocese was assigned religious control over the territories between Cape Bojador and India until 1551. It lost this prerogative when the need to form new dioceses in distant territories arose.

Although the Portuguese crown never lost control of the religious institutions inside its empire, it is true that after the middle of the seventeenth century it could not ensure the monopoly of religious action. The downfall
of the padroado occurred between the 1620s and 1640s. The Congregation of Propaganda Fide was created in 1622, by which the pope took specific action to encourage missionary activity instead of delegating it to the Iberian imperial nations as before. He thus broke the traditional religious monopoly of the two empires. This meant that not all the religious orders acting in them would be national or obey national authority. The 1630s proved to be the most damaging to Portuguese religious activity. Jesuits and other missionaries were violently expelled from Ethiopia and Japan. In other areas, European competitors of the Portuguese increased their military activity, as was the case in Malacca, which Portugal lost to the Dutch in 1641. After the Portuguese expelled the French Capuchin mission from Maranhão in 1615 and the Dutch from Pernambuco in 1654, Brazil remained the Portuguese colony where the religious monopoly of the padroado was most efficient.

The Dioceses of the Empire

The formation of bishoprics followed the evolution of the empire. After the foundation of the diocese of Funchal, the next wave of new bishoprics was created in 1533–1534: Angra (Azores), Santiago (Cape Verde), São Tomé, and Goa. The increasing importance of Brazil led to the creation of the See of Bahia in 1551. Then the patriarchy of Ethiopia followed in 1555, and two new dioceses were dismembered from Goa, one in Cochin and the other in Malacca, both in 1557. Later in the century, the dioceses of Macao (1575) and of Funai in Japan (1588) were created. In mainland Africa, the first diocese was created in 1596, the bishopric of Congo-Angola.

The main shift in spiritual authority was the elevation of Goa to metropolitan status in 1558, with jurisdiction over all the Indian Ocean and East Asia. The second major restructuring of authority occurred in 1676, when Bahia was elevated to the metropolitan see of Brazil. The following year, it would aggregate under its authority the Diocese of Angola, thus confirming the close ties between the two areas, linked by the slave trade. The Portuguese empire would thus have two religious centers, one in the Indian Ocean and the other in the Atlantic. Goa would have jurisdiction over the bishoprics of Cochin, Malacca, Macao, Japan (Funai), Meliapor (founded in 1600), the prelacy of Mozambique (1612), and the last bishoprics to be created by the Portuguese in the East, Nanqin and Beijing (both founded in 1690). Bahia aggregated under its authority the newly created dioceses of Rio de Janeiro and Olinda (both founded in 1676), Maranhão (created in 1677), Angola (placed under its authority in 1677), São Tomé (incorporated in 1679), and during the eighteenth
century the dioceses of Pará (1719) and Mariana, São Paulo, and Goiás (all founded in 1745) followed. The structure of the dioceses was thus closely related to the administrative organization of the empire. There was the Atlantic triangle and the Estado da Índia, although Macao came to enjoy a certain autonomy because of its distance from Goa, its religious importance as the last Portuguese territorial outpost in eastern Asia, and as the crossroads of the arrival and departure of missionaries to China and Japan. As such, it had a special link with the bishoprics created in either Japan or China.

Also in the Estado da Índia, the diocese of Angamale-Cranganor became a special case. It was constituted in the area where the only existing Christian community in India before the arrival of the Portuguese was located. After some years of contact, there were problems because the Portuguese considered such a community impure by Catholic standards. At first, nothing could be done because the pope recognized the authority of the patriarch of Armenia as legitimate. A campaign was initiated to submit these Christians to the padroado, and the fight was won when the Synod of Angamale (1599) condemned some of the doctrinal propositions of the Malabar Christians. The diocese was elevated to metropolitan status in 1608, although it never had any bishopric under its authority. This peculiar situation derived from the fact that the nomination of the first archbishop, the Catalan Jesuit Francisco Ros, created tensions among his colleagues because he was not Portuguese. He had been appointed precisely because he knew Syriac, and his see was elevated to metropolitan status in order to give him autonomy from Goa.

The actual presence of Portuguese bishops varied. Bishops tended to be absent from their assigned dioceses until the Council of Trent insisted upon the permanent residence of bishops in their dioceses. But, even if the Council set a standard, bishops could be difficult to replace in certain areas, or unexpected difficulties would keep a see vacant for several years, as was the case when an appointed bishop died on the way to his diocese. There were other complications as well. It was impossible to obtain papal confirmation for nominee bishops between 1640 and 1668, during the Restoration War, because the popes were pressured not to do so by the Spaniards.

Bishops from the secular clergy were rare, and the religious orders tended to monopolize the spiritual command of certain dioceses, such as the Franciscans in Cape Verde, the Augustinians in São Tomé, and the Dominicans in Mozambique in the seventeenth century. Jesuits avoided being named bishops, an office they did not consider their vocation, except in areas where they sought supremacy in missionary activity, such as Ethiopia, Macao (although not in the eighteenth century). Angamale-Cranganor,
and Japan. Nevertheless, most dioceses in the empire had bishops from a great variety of alternating religious orders: Franciscans (several branches), Dominicans, and Augustinians most frequently; Carmelites, friars of the Order of Christ, and secular clergy tended to be fewer; and Benedictines and Cistercians very rarely assumed this role. Bishops also tended to concentrate on their urban functions, which consisted mainly of caring for the Portuguese colonists or creole population, and were less concerned with missionary activities. In contrast to the prolific Jesuits, and to a lesser extent Dominicans and Franciscans, not many bishops were linked with printing activities or were the authors of religious literature. One of the few exceptions was the Franciscan Gaspar de Leão, bishop of Goa from 1560 to 1567 and 1571 to 1576. He was the sponsor of the second printing press to be installed in Goa and was the author of a treatise on the conversion of Gentiles and Muslims entitled Desengano de Perdidos.

Synods were few in the Portuguese empire and accordingly only a small number of printed synodal constitutions survive to this day: Angra (1559), Funchal (1578), one in Goa (1567), one in Angamalé (also known as Diamper, in 1599), and one in Bahia, published as late as 1707. The only archbishopric where synodal activity was significant was Goa, where four other synods took place (in 1575, 1585, 1592, and 1600), although the results were not published at the time. Bishops in the Portuguese empire limited themselves to diocesan visitations, rarely venturing out to the wilderness (except for the Amazonian expeditions of two bishops of Pará, D. Frei João de S. José Queirós and D. Frei Caetano Brandão in the 1760s and 1780s). Episcopal seminaries were also few; instead, Jesuit schools for the training of their members and the education of the local elites were created everywhere in the empire, but the formation of a native clergy was severely limited by racial prejudice. The secular clergy suffered from an ill reputation for ignorance, greed, and loose behavior, and the Jesuits (and even other religious orders sometimes no less guilty of the same accusations) did not hesitate to profit from their moral advantage.

Historians have also confirmed the scarcity of parish clergy in all the areas of the empire and their lack of high moral and intellectual qualities. The padreado suffered from the same ills as the other elements of the Portuguese empire. The kings failed to give ecclesiastical institutions their fair share of royal revenues and often paid them late. More than that, bishops also became royal officers, who were often asked to gather extra monies for the military defense of the empire, as was the case in Asia when Portuguese territories were under attack during the seventeenth century. For instance, D. João Ribeiro Gaio, bishop of Malacca, took charge of the defense of the city during the siege of 1587.
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Religious Orders

Secular priests under direct supervision of bishops could not alone, because of their relatively small number, have provided adequate spiritual service to such large new territories. Recruitment of ecclesiastics relied heavily upon religious orders whose members, as distinguished from secular priests, lived according to a rule and inside the walls of a monastery. Although not always setting evangelization as their main task, many of the existing and new religious orders in Portugal expanded to the new territories. Some expanded modestly, as did those of medieval origin, such as the Benedictines, who went only to Brazil, where they founded monasteries with rural estates similar to the ones they had in northern Portugal.

The most suitable for overseas export were no doubt the mendicant orders, whose friars, unlike the monks of the monastic orders, enjoyed greater mobility and had since their beginning included evangelization among their goals. Before the Jesuits made their entrance in the 1540s, Franciscans and Dominicans had already arrived in Asia, although there were few places where they arrived before the Jesuits. Only the Fishery Coast, Ceylon, and East Africa can be quoted as examples of pre-Jesuit missionary activity. There were areas where they obtained the monopoly of religious action from the pope, as was the case with the Franciscans in Ceylon. Nevertheless, time would show that the only areas to be indoctrinated exclusively by a religious order other than the Jesuits were the islands of Solor and Timor. There, the Dominicans were the only missionaries as well as being strong political agents, ensuring a Portuguese presence in the area as the Jesuits did in Japan. Other religious orders would be influential in other Asian areas, such as the Augustinians in Bengal and Pegu (southern Burma) and the Franciscans in Ceylon and southern India. Carmelites, Theatines, and other smaller religious orders (often non-Portuguese) arrived during the seventeenth century in the Portuguese territories, although their presence was not significant when compared with the Jesuits and the two main mendicant orders, the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Jesuits were engaged in a permanent rivalry with the Dominicans and the Franciscans. The rate of founding new monasteries intensified after the appearance of the Jesuits, who set the stage for a fight for areas of influence that would go on for the next 200 years. China and Japan were perhaps the areas where such competition was most fierce because it involved not only rivalries between the mendicant orders and the Jesuits but also Luso-Spanish frictions during the period of dynastic union. The Franciscans and Dominicans who threatened the Jesuits' monopoly over religious affairs arrived from the Philippines,
which was under the Spanish *patronato*. The attempts of the Franciscans and Augustinians in Manila to create convents in Macao during the 1580s, which failed, can also be viewed as attempts to challenge both the Portuguese *padroado* and the Jesuits’ monopoly over the missions in Japan and China.

The Portuguese empire was the first field of evangelization of the Jesuits (the order was scarcely two years old when Xavier departed for India), preceding by some twenty years their service in the Spanish and French empires. Among all the religious orders that were engaged in evangelization, historiography has stressed the Jesuits’ success in Portuguese colonies. Nevertheless, we do not know to what extent the self-production of sources by this order is responsible for a distortive effect that leaves other orders, albeit themselves not lacking in literary production, largely in the Jesuits’ shadow. Even so, we could argue that, even if the main competitors, the Franciscans and Dominicans, cannot be ignored, the efficacy of Jesuit propaganda was sufficient to create an image of success that the reality of missionary work would in many cases deny.

Several reasons may be cited to explain why the Jesuits came to appear to be the most successful religious order that engaged in missionary activity in the Portuguese empire. This “success” was the result of an effective combination of organizational devices, political pragmatism, and economic independence.

With regard to organization, the Jesuits possessed like no other religious order the requisites for successful missionary activity. Unlike other regular clergy, they could make free use of their time: They were not limited by the demands of the cloister and did not need to comply with canonical hours. As soldiers of Christ, they were trained to obey orders without questioning them. Also, an abundant network of colleges and Jesuit residences, both in Portugal and overseas, made sure that each missionary was given adequate doctrinal and theological training. Also, the Jesuits would do everything in their power to acquire the tools necessary to convert populations. The initial use of interpreters was soon replaced by the learning of local languages, and in Brazil they even adopted a general language for the indoctrination of the Amerindians. In Goa, Macao, and Japan, Jesuit headquarters were equipped with printing presses for the publication of books, either in Portuguese or in local languages, which would help them in their doctrinal work. The other religious orders might eventually follow these strategies but never all of them simultaneously and never on the same scale. Also, the Jesuits organized the promotion or public relations of their order in a way that made their missionary efforts the best-publicized in Europe. To start with, they were
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an international organization: Their members were recruited throughout Catholic Europe, and obviously they intended for their efforts to become known as widely as possible. The so-called annual letters or relations, sent by virtually all missions, could be published in Europe within a short time after their arrival and were carefully edited to serve propaganda functions. The Jesuits were so well organized that such reports could even be published at the same time in different cities. If some letters were not considered sufficiently important to be published, they could still serve as vehicles of updated information to the central authorities of the order.

None of this would have sufficed if the Jesuits had not proved to be good politicians: They managed to remain close to power, especially to the monarchs and their representatives, either as confessors or as educators. They could also adopt low-profile strategies, performing services and collaborating with other local institutions, apparently without self-interest. They would preach at local churches, serve as confessors to the powerful, administer extreme unction to the dying, and care for the sick and wounded on board ship, in hospitals, or in their homes. In brief, they would do anything that might give them local prominence, even tasks the order was not originally intended to perform, such as the responsibility for parishes, the nomination for bishoprics, or the administration of hospitals. The most famous hospital administered by the Jesuits was the Royal Hospital of Goa, under their administration since 1591, but in India they would also specialize in hospitals for the newly converted. With few exceptions, such as the controversy over the enslavement of native Brazilians, the Jesuits never took official stands against royal and colonial institutions. They always presented themselves as loyal servants of the king, although, in practice, they gained effective control of some areas of missionary work. This was the case in Japan, where the Jesuits were largely responsible for the presence of Portuguese merchants. This was also what happened in Brazil, where they gained authority over villages of converted Amerindians. In the 1720s, for instance, Jesuits did not allow diocesan visitations to Brazilian missions.

If the Jesuits hesitated before they contradicted established political power, they did not do so when it came to ensuring economic independence. The order developed means of self-sufficiency and became largely autonomous from the padroado régio, whose payments tended to be postponed and devaluated. In Brazil, the Jesuits became owners of large estates, either raising cattle or, after the beginning of the seventeenth century, becoming involved in the sugar plantation economy. In urban environments, they owned a large number of houses, which provided them with rents. In India, they received tributes from villages they owned as the result of a major transfer
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of lands from indigenous control to their hands, after the temples to which such lands belonged were destroyed and the property subsequently appropriated. Income from lands in India financed a number of missions, even as far away as China or Japan. In the latter, Jesuits were largely responsible for the development of the silk trade, and the Japanese converts also supported local churches.

The success of the Society of Jesus as an institution cannot be mistaken with the efficiency of their religious action. Recent historiography has emphasized the limits of the conversion work they undertook. In Brazil, as demonstrated by Charlotte de Castelnau l’Estoile, the missionaries who actually lived among the Indians in villages were just a small proportion of the Jesuits living in Brazil and the most subordinate members of the order; they complained bitterly about their “barren vineyard.” Ines Zupanov analyzed the way in which theological disputes could mask professional rivalries, distinctions of social background, and nationalism by studying the history of the competition between Gonçalves Fernandes Trancoso and Roberto da Nobili in the Indian mission of Madurai. This conflict went as far as Rome, where the papacy was to have the final word over the acceptance of Nobili’s adaptive methods of conversion, which his partner so strongly opposed.

True, the Portuguese empire could not do without the Jesuits from their appearance in 1540 until virtually the beginning of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, as an institution that could be singled out for its “otherness,” the Jesuits were always (even before their expulsion) easy targets for criticism, especially from less successful competitors. In the long run, this process of “othering” would cause their ruin, and the crown, other religious orders, and even segments of the population were happy to see the Jesuits expelled from metropolitan Portugal and its colonies after 1759. After the expulsion, missionary and teaching activities in the empire were disorganized, and efforts had to be made to replace the Jesuits; in Goa, there was a serious attempt to form a native clergy that would attend to the numerous parishes the Jesuits had left unattended.

The Inquisition

Another institution created in metropolitan Portugal to be exported to its empire was the Inquisition. The Portuguese Inquisition, created by the pope in 1536 at the request of João III, persecuted mainly crypto-Judaism. Persecution of converted Muslims was confined mainly to the second half of the sixteenth century. The Inquisition was slow to expand overseas: Only in the 1560s, after a strong controversy both locally and in Portugal, was it
introduced to Goa, where it acted mostly against converted Jews that had sought refuge both there and in Cochin following the persecutions in metropolitan Portugal. The Goan Inquisition had a reputation for cruelty and persecuted a higher number of individuals than any other metropolitan branch. By the second half of the seventeenth century, persecution of New Christians gave way to the persecution of local converted populations under suspicion of sustaining Hindu cults. The Inquisition was also used against European rivals. One of them was the French doctor Charles Dallon, who was accused of heresy and incarcerated for several years. He wrote an account, published in Leiden in 1678, which was to be a major contribution to the “black legend” of Portuguese India. It not only enjoyed tremendous success in Protestant Europe but also was one of the first writings against the Inquisition to be published in Catholic Europe. The work appeared in four French editions before 1700.

The Inquisition was never established in Brazil, in contrast to Spanish America, where it was established in Lima (1570), Mexico (1571), and Cartagena (1610). This does not mean that the Inquisition did not make its presence felt in Brazil, however. The territory was under permanent surveillance. The accused were sent to Lisbon for trial and sentencing, and several detection systems for deviant behavior were installed. The first such devices were inquisitorial visitations, in which inspection teams from the Lisbon Inquisition would be sent to Brazil. The first covered the areas of Bahia and Pernambuco and took place between 1591 and 1595. There were similar visitations in this decade to the Azores, Madeira, and Angola. Other inquisitorial visitations in Brazil followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one between 1618 and 1620 in Bahia and the other in Grão-Pará from 1763 to 1769.

After 1637, such visits were interrupted because of the financial crisis brought about by the Restoration War (1640–1668). Also, a network of alternative control was put in place to monitor the colony’s orthodoxy, which made such visitations by the metropolitan Inquisition superfluous. Among them was the development of an ecclesiastical justice system independent from the Inquisition, where bishops organized diocesan visitations that paid due attention to deviant behavior. Last but not least, the Jesuits were eager to help in persecuting offenders, often acting as representatives of the Lisbon Inquisition (comissários). The Inquisition in Brazil, although directed at religious orthodoxy, was not as harsh on crypto-Judaism as its Goan counterpart and was soon to have “sexual offenses” perpetrated by Old Christians as its main target. Sodomy, fornication, and bigamy (considered to be inspired by the devil) were the main crimes prosecuted. Nevertheless, although many of the accused were sent to Portugal for trial, the colony
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was spared from harsh inquisitorial action because the latter might threaten the political stability of a territory that supplied high tax profits to the crown.

The Inquisition of Goa was suppressed by Pombal in 1774, then reopened by Queen Mary I when the former prime minister of José I fell into disgrace (1778), but it was closed definitively in 1812 as a result of pressure from the English. Nevertheless, in the years immediately before its first closure in 1774, it lived up to its reputation for harshness and cruelty, increasing the number of convicts and public executions, with low-caste Christians from India accused of idolatry (gentilidade) as the main victims.

Confraternities and Religious Life

Confraternities revealed and reflected the adherence of the local populations to Catholicism. They were an expression of the religiosity of the laity, linking formal ecclesiastical structures with communities of believers. They encouraged the practice of everyday religious observance and made sure that the events in the ritual calendar were duly celebrated. Confraternities proved to be the most efficient religious institutions at the local level: They organized processions; catered for the building of churches and maintenance of religious equipment; assured the payment of priests for the regular cure of souls; and provided the locals with a sense of social importance through membership. In the mining area of Minas Gerais, for instance, they were for a long time the only religious institutions available. The religious orders had been forbidden in the territory because the crown was not willing to lose any profits drawn off by pious legacies or tax exemptions. In Northeast Brazil, the chapels of the sugar mills would have similar functions, providing spiritual services both to slavemasters and to their workers.

Private arrangements and associations created through the initiative of local populations, even if under the auspices of the religious orders, could be more important than parishes. Confraternities allowed the populations to compensate for the inefficient religious structures set up by the padrado régio. Even when parishes existed, the tendency was to give them to the care of religious orders, which would sometimes compete ferociously for their control. In the hinterland of Goa, for instance, the crown divided the territory among different religious orders, ascribing specific groups of parishes to the Jesuits, Franciscans, secular priests, Dominicans, and Augustinians.

Confraternities were ever present in the empire, just as they were in metropolitan Portugal: Strictly hierarchical and discriminating in their requirements for membership, confraternities existed to match virtually any
social situation, and the number of confraternities to which a person was able to belong was a sign of distinction. From the Misericórdias to the Third Orders, limited strictly to local white elites, one could find confraternities for everyone. More than ensuring the celebration of weekly masses or the receiving of sacraments, they made the religious cult a part of life in any Portuguese colony.

Confraternities were not always the spontaneous gathering of locals in associations; they were often promoted by the religious orders, and, as such, they could be arenas for competition among them. More than just a means of improving devotion, confraternities could also be used by religious orders to channel eventual inheritances into the hands of a sponsoring order. Religious orders needed confraternities because members would bequeath masses and assign property to pay for them. In Goa, the main enemies of the local Misericórdia were confraternities sponsored by the existing religious orders, especially the Jesuits, who became the Misericórdia's main opponent.

In Brazil, confraternities were particularly important to the African population, both slaves and freemen. They provided a means by which some autonomy for the black and mulatto populations in relation to the white colonists could be negotiated. In fact, whites were ever present as part of black confraternities, sometimes as members of the boards of directors and at other times as patrons. Brazilian confraternities would even have regular denominations based on race: The Santo Sacramento would be for whites, the Nossa Senhora das Mercês for mulattoes, and the Rosary ones for the blacks. Brazilian confraternities could group individuals of African origin according to their color (blacks and mulattoes tended to go to separate confraternities) and even ethnic origin, although this was not always the case because in areas such as Minas Gerais, brotherhoods for nonwhites did not make such distinctions. For ethnic and religious minorities, confraternities could serve as powerful devices for social integration: They incorporated New Christians in both Brazil and India (Cochin and Goa). In the latter, they were especially sought after as integrative devices when the establishment of the Inquisition in 1560 started to persecute the New Christian community.

The world of confraternities was strictly hierarchical. For instance, in Brazil, the Santíssimo Sacramento confraternities, which admitted whites, prepared the main altar for the Corpus Christi celebration, while other confraternities prepared the secondary altars. Even cults included distinctions. In Brazil, white colonists would pay blacks and mulattoes to take their places and whip themselves in penitent processions during Lent. In a hierarchical world, no wonder such confraternities tended to be in conflict
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over protocols, and public disorders between them verged on the ridiculous. A confraternity might refuse to participate in a procession if the place to which it had been assigned was judged inferior; another might even compare the quality of the wax it used in its candles with the wax used by another brotherhood.

Women and Religion

Religion in the empire was a male-controlled business like much of every aspect of colonial life. The few women either of Portuguese birth or with Portuguese ancestry living in the different parts of the empire were urged to enter the marriage market. The lack of white brides was real, but there was never a consistent policy to make them available in the colonies, probably because there were plenty of nonwhite women with whom to create marital relationships. Also, for inheritance reasons, most parents in the colonies wished to place their daughters in convents and did so by sending them to Portugal. Convents for women in the colonies were few and founded late: The policy of the crown was to delay their establishment as much as possible. Only three convents were founded in the seventeenth century: Santa Monica in Goa in 1606, the barefoot Carmelites of Macao in 1633, and the Poor Clares of the Desterro in Bahia in 1677. In the Spanish empire, by the 1620s, there were already thirty-six convents for women, fifteen of those located in Mexico City. The contrast is striking, and it can be partially explained by the reluctance of the crown to found new female convents overseas, despite the willingness of the municipal authorities to safeguard the honor of widows and orphaned girls in the cloister.

Female convents were not established in Asia in the following century. In the second third of the eighteenth century, however, five more convents were created in Brazil: three in Bahia (Lapa, Mercês, and Soledade) and two in Rio de Janeiro (Ajuda and Santa Teresa).

The alternative to placing women in convents was the recolhimento, which allowed the cloistering of women according to monastic rules without the necessity of their taking vows. The recolhimentos were convenient because they permitted women to reenter the marriage market. Because the crown was not so restrictive about their foundation, they were founded in higher numbers than convents, but equally slowly.

We can expect a low participation of women from the Portuguese colonial groups in the public activities of confraternities, although there are few studies on the subject. Such women were not welcome outside the domestic sphere, although they were expected to attend Mass at church. Even so,
women of high status would travel to churches in coaches and litters that concealed them from public exposure. As for devotional activities organized by confraternities, we find white women as honorary members (mostly through widowhood) of elite confraternities, such as the Misericórdias, rather than as active participants. Nevertheless, in Brazil, white women of high status could enter the Third Orders as members (and not just as representatives of a deceased husband or father) and participate actively in their devotional life.

**Strategies and Methods of Evangelization**

The Church of Rome took upon itself the goal of converting to Christianity virtually every people on Earth. In consequence, the number and variety of potential Catholics was immense, and different strategies were necessary for success. The indoctrination effort was especially strong and coherent after the Council of Trent. Earlier, war with the Muslims precluded conversion by peaceful means, and the church lacked the tools to indoctrinate local populations. Hence, the first conversions by the Portuguese were little more than baptisms, either of single individuals or of people in large numbers, the so-called mass baptisms. More than that, such conversions were often the result of diplomatic efforts by the representatives of the Portuguese king in the newly discovered territories; they were not the result of any organized initiative on the part of ecclesiastics.

The case of Africa is a good example of conversions on a limited scale, where cultural misunderstandings on both sides prevailed. Efforts to convert the natives took place mainly during the reign of João II, with the baptism of the kings of Kongo, or with the rearing of African-born children in Portugal in the Lóios convent of Lisbon (of the Order of Saint John the Evangelist). Later missions to the west coast of Africa did not last long, and we can sense a tension between the exigencies of the slave trade and the Christian faith. We can even suspect that conversion of the king of Kongo, D. Afonso, in 1491 was due to his interests in the slave trade and that the guns and horses he acquired from the Portuguese contributed to his supremacy over other African peoples in the area.

The adoption of Portuguese habits accompanied conversion: The local king and his relatives at a baptismal ceremony would be renamed after the Portuguese king and his family. A new ritual practice, which included the granting of Portuguese noble titles and the Order of Christ to the native king’s entourage, would last well into the eighteenth century. The king of Kongo would give the habit of the Order of Christ to his subjects, but this
would mean nothing except the use of crosses on dress and other attire. Similarly, the king was elected, but his authority was confirmed by a coronation officiated over by a Catholic priest.

Advantages in the slave trade, the opportunity to acquire guns, and increased authority through the adoption of Portuguese civil and religious rituals, often misunderstood, are among the benefits to native rulers that might explain such “spontaneous” conversions in times when organized religious action on the part of the Portuguese was scarce. But, even as the empire further developed, missionaries faced difficulties establishing themselves in Africa. Climate and disease, for example, were major obstacles, causing high mortality among them.

Religious investment in black slaves would begin not in Africa but upon their arrival in Brazil. For practical reasons, it was easier to Christianize them in a territory entirely controlled by the Portuguese, where the effects of African cultural resistance to conversion could be suppressed. In Bahia, for instance, slaves would be baptized on arrival near the port in the lower part of the city, in the church of the Conceição da Praia, after death had taken its heaviest toll during the crossing of the Atlantic, thus reducing the potential “wastage” of evangelization efforts.

In East Africa, the Jesuits also had a tenuous presence. In fact, their missions did not last long on either of the African coasts: They withdrew from Cape Verde and Guinea and were chased from Ethiopia. Only the missions in Mombasa and Mozambique were to last, owing to the transit of ships en route to India and Macao that used those ports, but the effort lacked enthusiasm. The presence in Africa of missionaries from other religious orders would also be tenuous. They existed but were irregular, and the number of missionaries in the field was ridiculously small because of the previously mentioned climatic and cultural obstacles.

In India, missionaries tended initially to baptize a large number of locals without indoctrination, preferably from the lower castes and untouchables. The religious orders that were more prone to turn first to the poor for converts were no doubt the mendicants, especially the Franciscans. They proselytized among fishermen and other low-caste strata on the Fishery Coast because such groups complemented their ideology of poverty. Often this strategy engendered conflict with the authorities, as was the case with the Franciscan martyrs in Japan in 1597, who made the mistake of failing to secure authorization before beginning their mission. On the whole, missionaries tended to be respectful of hierarchies and sometimes were eager to take advantage of them: The principle cujus regis ejus religio (the religion of the people follows the religion of the prince) was implicit in many conversions because it was expected that after the conversion of the local potentate
his subjects would follow. Winning local powers to the Christian faith was an inevitable strategy in territories where military conquest was impossible for the Portuguese, as was the case in Japan and China but also in Ethiopia and Tibet. Nevertheless, this policy did not preclude the Jesuits from investing in the indoctrination of common people. They devoted themselves to the indoctrination and the maintenance of cult routines, to the translation of religious books, to preaching, and to the creation of confraternities that allowed local converts to organize devotion and replace the insufficient numbers of resident missionaries or the nonexistence of parishes.

Francis Xavier became known for his mass conversions in many parts of the Asian continent during his ten years of travel there (1542–1552). It is not likely that those neophytes were seriously indoctrinated before and after baptism. The top-down policy was no doubt attempted in Ethiopia, India, Japan, and also China. In the latter, all efforts were made to convert the emperor, especially during the times of Adam Schall von Bell, who enjoyed a prominent position in the emperor’s court between 1645 and 1661. Such efforts were a continuation of the Jesuits’ cultivated ability to become close to people in high circles and to exert influence on them, as they had done also in Catholic courts in Europe from the beginnings of the order in the 1540s. But if in Japan the feudal system ensured that the conversion of daimyos was followed by the conversion of their subjects, in China it proved to be different because the mandarins were little more than administrative pieces in the imperial machine, lacking power to determine the conversion of the populations under their authority. Recent scholarship also demonstrates that the Jesuits not only created missions in many areas of the Chinese empire but also created very large Christian communities, and there were hundreds of thousands of conversions.

In east India, conversion would oscillate between force and peaceful indoctrination. For a brief moment, Vasco da Gama and his men did not recognize the Hindu religion as distinct from Christianity, thinking that Hindu temples were Christian churches. Some years of tolerance followed even after this misunderstanding vanished, but things would change after the 1540s. In the 1550s and 1560s, the Portuguese destroyed hundreds of Hindu temples and some mosques in the Goa area and appropriated their revenues, but the ideal solution was to induce the new converts to destroy them themselves, encouraged by the missionaries, as was done in Japan. Another strategy was to indoctrinate children, judged the best means of making a deep impression. In India, one tactic was to give privileges to those who converted, such as exemption from paying certain taxes (dizimos) to the Portuguese, or to give preference in awarding contracts for the exploitation of land. In the area of Goa, the office of Pai dos Cristãos (“Father of Christians”) was
created, a Portuguese ecclesiastic whose responsibility it was to see to the well-being of the converted, who were frequently expelled or ostracized by their communities. The office would also see to it that the privileges enjoyed by new converts would be respected. The Jesuits controlled this office in the region from 1557 to 1759.

Another strategy for conversion would be the creation of local confraternities especially designed for the natives. These institutions allowed for the maintenance of cult duties with a minimum of Jesuit priests, delegating devotional practices to chosen converts as well as creating a sense of community among the neophytes. Many of these institutions also performed charitable practices, and in China and Japan they were mostly Marian or even imitations of the Portuguese Misericórdias. The Jesuits also organized them in India, sometimes accompanied by a hospital for the converts, and introduced them in the Amerindian villages they established. They also had special confraternities for students boarding in their colleges or for the newly converted in both Goa and Bahia, which would stage spectacular processions, especially on the occasion of collective baptisms, and also theater plays.

In Brazil, Padre Manuel da Nóbrega favored military dominance over the Amerindians as a precondition of any efforts at conversion. This policy, elaborated in 1556 and 1557, was radically opposed to the position of the Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas, who advocated the absence of violence in religious proselytism. Nóbrega's policy seems to have been a response to the disappointments he had experienced as a missionary, which had revealed to him the inner difficulties of making the natives truly understand the Christian faith. José de Anchieta, another Jesuit missionary, also supported the forced grouping of Amerindians in villages. But even in Asia, some missionaries were convinced that successful conversion was necessarily a long process that might take generations to accomplish if the Christian religion was to be fully incorporated. It was implicit in their efforts, as in the case of the destruction of Hindu temples, that initial violence would lead to peaceful evangelization efforts that would succeed in the long run. Two recurrent metaphors in the writing of missionaries, "conquest" and "sowing" of souls, illustrate slightly different attitudes toward evangelization: Whereas the former is mainly a military metaphor, the second implies continuing efforts that would lead to successful conversion.

In the Far East, the missionaries had to adapt to an environment that was not under the hegemony of the Portuguese. No wonder that the strategy of the missions was adaptation, also called dissimulation by its detractors, because the Jesuit Alessandro Valignano "invented" it between 1579 and 1582. In Japan, where the Jesuits were the first to embark upon
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evangelization, they had to adapt to other mores, dress, and manners. It has to be said that the most famous men willing to give up European ways of living – albeit only in appearance – were not Portuguese but the Bavarian Adam Schall, the Flemish Ferdinand Verbiest, or the Italians Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, Michele Ruggieri, and Roberto de Nobili. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to relate such a strategy with peripheral spaces not integrated in the Portuguese or any other European empire. Moreover, it would be an exaggeration to say that such men were the first Europeans to leave Eurocentrism behind. They were still engaged in cultural or religious imperialism on behalf of Catholic Europe, and if they tried to understand and adapt to other cultures, they often judged them negatively compared with European values. Of course, the adaptive few faced resistance from orthodoxy and could develop their strategy only because they were in peripheral areas where there was little immediate supervision from the center. The number and quality of their opponents in Europe, both inside and outside the Jesuit Order, is a measure of the novelty of their attitude. Both in China and Japan, the missionaries consciously changed their clothes, shaved their beards, adopted local hairdos, and even dropped their liturgical rituals. In China, they carefully imitated the dress and manners of the Chinese elites who they thought were the most important to be converted, and they adopted Chinese names of honor. The Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili (b. 1577–d. 1657) adopted a similar strategy in Madurai (on the southwest coast of India). He presented himself as an Italian Brahmin who had renounced the world, thus traveling barefoot, eating a vegetarian meal a day, and dressing poorly. Although he was accused by some of his fellow Jesuits of mixing pagan rites with Christianity and of having accepted the caste system in 1623, the pope approved his methods of conversion.

Adriano Prosperi has related such missionaries to Italian court culture and to the civilization of manners in Europe. Italian Jesuits were used to “dissimulation” in their home courts and transferred the practice in order to overcome difficulties in converting the Japanese and the Chinese. Certainly they could not be won over by force as was the case in Brazil, where Amerindians were sufficiently powerless to be grouped in villages at the will of the missionaries. It is questionable, however, that dissimulation was the monopoly of Italian courts.

Missionaries were accepted in China for reasons that had little to do with the Catholic faith: Their scientific knowledge became highly appreciated, whether related to clockworks, mapmaking, or astronomy. In 1781, after the Jesuits had already been chased from Macao (1762) and when evangelization had been forbidden in China, the emperor still wanted a Portuguese man of
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science by his side to fill the See of Bejing. Thus, the “bishop of Peking” was sent as quickly as possible in the hope that he might secure the precarious statute of Macao with concise instructions on how to perform his mission.

The proof that the Jesuits were far too innovative when compared with other missionaries is the rites controversy, which followed shortly after the Jesuits lost the monopoly on evangelization of China to other religious orders in the early 1630s. These other orders soon questioned the adaptation of doctrine and ritual that had been developing since the times of Matteo Ricci and Ruggieri, and the pope condemned the Jesuits’ methods after a debate that lasted approximately a century. This debate, which developed between 1645 and 1742, when the pope at last condemned these Jesuit approaches to conversion definitely, contradicted the acceptance of Nobili’s methods in 1623 and would undermine the possibility of successful missionary work in China.

The evangelization of Japan had started in 1549, thirty-three years before that of China, and Japan was where Valignano in the early 1580s had first developed the idea of adapting to the local culture. He was opposed by colleagues less prone to give up their lifestyles and religious principles, but in spite of such controversies, missions in Japan were so successful as to convince the Jesuits and the European Catholic world that a conversion of all the Japanese was imminent. In the beginning, they had every reason to be optimistic: The existence of a single language in Japan made indoctrination easier than in areas where there were many, and converts, although numbers are uncertain, were in the hundreds of thousands. Nevertheless, time would show otherwise. Between 1587 and 1639, a set of prohibitions of the Christian faith was introduced, followed by the martyrdom of both Japanese Christians and European missionaries. In the end, Christianity was almost completely eliminated in Japan.

Indirectly, it was the Jesuits, as the avant-garde of the European penetration of Japan, who made available the means to unify the islands under a centralized power. The guns that were essential to the process of unification were introduced into Japan as a result of the commercial relations the Jesuits helped to develop. But to a unified Japan, the very existence of Catholics in their midst was unthinkable because it suggested submission to a foreign religious power. When the Japanese came into contact with Europeans who traded without proselytizing, such as the Dutch, the fate of the presence of the Catholics was sealed. The same was to occur much later in China, when the rites controversy convinced the emperor K’ang-hsi (1654–1722) that Catholicism was impractical in China.
Conclusion

The Portuguese would eventually succeed in converting, at least superficially, most of the natives and the imported populations in the territories over which they exercised colonial rule for several centuries. This is true for Brazil and for colonies in Africa, Goa, and East Timor. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, European rivals who visited Portuguese colonies, Protestants as well as Catholics, often made comments in their travel accounts about the questionable behavior of slaves in church, the lack of integrity of the clergy, both secular and regular, and the “idolatry” of the religious rites they witnessed. None of these comments were innocent of biases generated by the competition among European nations for the amassing of territories overseas. A French traveler, Pouchot de Chantassin, observed black slave women attending a Mass in the Cape Verde islands with naked breasts. Van Braam Houckgeest, a Dutchman, in the late 1780s described in ironic detail a puppet show inside a church in Macao during Holy Week designed to represent the ascension of Christ in the presence of his Holy Mother. Even if we know these descriptions were influenced by the imperial ambitions of their authors, they also draw attention to one characteristic of the evangelization carried out by the Portuguese that was also common to the Spanish empire, namely its exteriority. No doubt the exteriority of the Catholic faith in general, even if allowing for the existence of “fake” Christians among the newly converted, made it more accessible to peoples whose culture also relied heavily on highly visible public ritual.

We should not overestimate the importance of insufficient orthodoxy or the superficiality of conversion to Catholicism. Never in colonial times was there the assumption that Christianized natives would have the same rights as the colonizers or experience spirituality in the same way. Conversion did not imply equality; if converted “pagans” were to be equal in their afterlife, the same could not be said of the earthly one. Never before the second half of the eighteenth century was there any serious or successful effort to give the newly converted the same access to colonial institutions as whites. They could not enter religious orders, be admitted as members to elite confraternities, or attain most administrative offices in the imperial structure on the same standing as the European-born or those of European origin. They were barred from the priesthood, and even when Valignano, the Neapolitan Jesuit, tried to enforce his policy of transforming some converted Japanese into Jesuit missionaries, he was severely opposed by his peers. Native clergy were not numerous in any of the places ruled by the Portuguese before the regime of the Marquis de Pombal. There was always an ambiguous and
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contradictory relationship concerning the formation of native ecclesiastics among the Portuguese authorities.

One of the arguments of the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide against the Portuguese padroado was precisely the lack of a significant body of native priests, and the new institution had precisely the formation of local clergy as one of its main goals. Yet in spite of this accusation, there were more native ecclesiastics in the Portuguese empire than in Spanish America, although they tended to become secular priests rather than friars because the various religious orders were always reluctant to admit nonwhites. But the truth is that regular efforts to recruit nonwhite clergy were irregular over time in most Portuguese colonies. Even if some natives from the East African coast, from the African islands of Cape Verde and São Tomé, and from Goa or Japan were ordained priests, their existence was always controversial among the Portuguese authorities; more than that, they managed only exceptionally to escape subaltern roles in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Conversion was often harmed by bitter rivalry among religious orders. National issues could be at stake, but most often each religious order fought for the supremacy of its missions in a given area. The Jesuits opposed the influence of other orders and even opposed their peers from the Spanish empire in converting the Japanese, even if the Order was transnational in theory. In Brazil, even while trying to protect the Amerindians from the greed of the colonizers who enslaved them, the Jesuits would not recognize the same humanity in black slaves because the missionaries were just as involved in the plantation economy as other colonists.

Today, scholars are prone to emphasize opposition and resistance to conversion in contrast to the thousands of letters sent to Europe by missionaries that publicized endless triumphs and good hopes for the conversion of other peoples. Even in these letters, we come across, albeit rarely, testimonies to the idea that most subjects of evangelization associated religious action with the desire of the missionaries to dominate them. It happened for instance in Japan, where the persecutions of Christians were motivated by fears of imminent military invasions by the troops of the Spanish emperor. Even if religious sources rarely mention the matter of resistance to Catholicism, the many narratives of treason and martyrdom prove that evangelization did not take place without opposition. Rebellion could be violent and fatal to the missionaries who fell victim to violence. Nevertheless, the martyrdom of missionaries was more symbolic capital from which the Catholic Church was eager to profit. Religious orders gave abundant publicity to the suffering of their missionaries, and the prestige of the faraway missions was such as to ensure a regular flow of recruits to the most distant missions. The times
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when religious proselytism would outrightly be accused of imperialism were still to come.

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*On the Military Orders, “Padroado Régio,” and the Formation of Dioceses*


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General

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Missions by Area

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