

The Temporal Politics of Spiritual Conquest: History, Geography and Franciscan Orientalism in the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* of Friar Paulo da Trindade

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ABSTRACT: This article queries the relationship between imperial expansion, geographical knowledge and epistemic spatiality in Portuguese Asia. It proposes to disentangle these aspects by exploring the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* of Friar Paulo da Trindade, a Lusophone, Asian-born Franciscan writing in Goa in the 1630s. Trindade's chronicle provides disturbing insights into the difficult relationship between imperial expansion and the spatial organization of knowledge. Information about Asia and its peoples appears systematically detached from the spatial frameworks created by other authors and thrown into a panorama deeply reliant on spirituality and sacred history. Trindade's work suggests that there were strong political reasons for the Order of Saint Francis to embrace such a narrative. Whilst generalizations remain to be avoided, the shadow cast by the Jesuits over the Franciscan enterprise in the East played a key role in the adoption by the Seraphic order of a discursive strategy where time trumped space.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese Empire; Asia; writing culture; knowledge; space; cartography; social history of science.

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RESUMEN: *Las Políticas Temporales de la Conquista Espiritual: Historia, Geografía y Orientalismo Franciscano en la Conquista Espiritual do Oriente de Frei Paulo da Trindade.*- Este artículo se interroga acerca de la relación entre expansión ibérica, conocimiento geográfico y espacialidad epistémica en el Asia portuguesa. Se propone desentrañar estos tres aspectos mediante el análisis de la *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* que compuso en Goa, en torno a 1630, Fr. Paulo da Trindade, un franciscano de origen portugués nacido en Asia. La crónica de Trindade proporciona una mirada perturbadora sobre la difícil relación entre expansión imperial y organización espacial del saber. La información sobre Asia y sus gentes aparece sistemáticamente disociada de los marcos geográficos creados por otros autores y dibuja un panorama fuertemente impregnado de espiritualidad e historia sagrada. La obra de Trindade sugiere que hubo poderosas razones políticas que llevaron a la Orden de San Francisco a adoptar esa tipo de narrativa. Sin caer en generalizaciones, la sombra de los jesuitas sobre la empresa franciscana en Asia jugó un papel esencial en el recurso por parte de la Orden seráfica de una estrategia discursiva en la que el tiempo se impuso al espacio.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Imperio portugués; Asia; cultura escrita; conocimiento; espacio; cartografía; historia social de la ciencia.

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“*Andavam como arrebatados e bêbados de espírito*”
(Trindade, 1962, I: 213)

Conquest and cognition, most historians will agree, go hand in hand. Every conqueror is an explorer, and every explorer a conqueror. Spatial metaphors dominate our understanding of knowledge production, so much so that the histories of European expansion and science have become inextricably intertwined. Together, Empire and exploration stand not only at the heart of the grand narrative associating global modernity with the expansion of nations from Northwest Europe. They also dominate more critical narratives designed to bring back the Catholic Southwest into the picture. Iberianist critics of the Anglo-French master narrative may focus on a different period and a different place, but still generally emphasise how expansion and reorganisation in space through travel, trade and conquest were key for the expansion and reorganisation of knowledge (Cañizares-Esguerra, 2004; Navarro Brotons and Eamon, 2007; Almeida, 2011).

There is, in principle, not much to object to this. The evidence for an intertwining of Empire and knowledge production is overwhelming (on particular sciences in the Portuguese Empire, ranging from cartography to botany and ethnology, see (Albuquerque, 1983; Horta, 1991; Randles, 2000; Rubiès, 2000; Leitão and Costa, 2008; Walker, 2010; Leitão and Alvarez, 2011; Biedermann, 2013; Gaspar, 2013; Leitão and Gaspar, 2014;). Yet there are some grey areas worthy of exploration. One of them regards the production of science in contexts dominated by religious faith. As Zur Shalev (2012) has shown, an innovation as crucial as the quantification and geometrisation of space—undoubtedly a key element in the development of early modern science by any measure (Woodward, 2007)—flourished not only in secularised settings, but also in connection with profound religious devotion. In close connection to this, another area of enquiry concerns the fact that the emergence of a ‘new spatial consciousness’ (*nouvelle conscience spatiale*, Besse, 2005: 147), so central to early modern science and to our own understanding of early modernity as a whole, was neither linear nor irreversible. This seems relevant not only in terms of science history, but also to early modern studies in general, as it can be drawn upon to support a wider critical enquiry into the historiographical lumping together of ‘Empire’, ‘conquest’, ‘science’ and ‘territorialization’. The latter is important because, as I have argued elsewhere, territoriality is not inherently and necessarily the central characteristic of Empire in general, and certainly not of the Portuguese Empire in particular (Biedermann, 2014b).

Over the following pages, I explore the devotional management of geographical and ethnographic knowledge by Franciscan friars in the East in the seventeenth century.¹ The way knowledge was handled in this particular discursive context, dominated by the idea of ‘spiritual conquest’, is not only fascinatingly idiosyncratic in itself; it is also quite possibly the single most accessible site for us to start querying the metaphor of knowledge expansion

as it emerged from the Renaissance and continues to inform science history today. Whilst there can be little doubt that knowledge during the period tended to be systematized in ways that allowed for it to be mapped onto the new, mathematically describable surface of the globe, it also becomes important to acknowledge how a fundamentally different alternative remained available, and was in fact deployed with relative success by some. What we shall encounter are people who, in their quest to maintain a body of knowledge untouched by the innovations of the time, overtly defied precisely such things as the mathematisation of geographical space or the spatially structured systematization of ethnographic knowledge.

Naturally, there are some risks in embracing a branch of history that produced no palpable contributions to what we may still legitimately describe as the advancement of knowledge. One might in fact be tempted to say at this point that the exception—that is, the refusal, by some Franciscans, to play by the emerging rules of the new scientific discourse, allied with their emphasis on spiritual conquest—only proves the rule—that is, how important the mainstream links between secularisation, Empire and science really were. However, the texts under discussion had a considerable life of their own precisely at the time when the scientific revolution was taking off, and it would seem wrong simply to ignore them.

It could also be objected that Franciscan attitudes of denial were not consciously cultivated at all. This is not a problem in itself, since it would simply mean that we take a Foucaultian path of “reveal[ing] a *positive unconscious* of knowledge: a level that eludes the consciousness of the scientist and yet is part of scientific discourse” (Foucault, 2002: xi, original italics). Perhaps this is what science historians have had in mind all along when making statements about the Franciscans who, in Asia, “following their traditional orientation, concerned themselves especially with salvation and the advancement of medicine”, this being in contrast of course with the Jesuits, generally held to be more inclined to mathematics, astronomy and cartography (Vogel, 2006: 829). However, the contention of this article is that the Franciscan attitudes under scrutiny were taken consciously and deliberately, and are best understood as sitting rather manifestly and explicitly on the surface of inter-institutional rivalries. An emphasis on social conflicts in studies of the early modern scientific field is not new. It has produced important results, for example, in the study of Spanish Renaissance cartography (Sandman, 2007), and deserves further development as Iberian imperial history itself increasingly emphasizes the role of factional strife in the making of overseas expansion.

The goal of the present enquiry is not to bring the neglected Franciscans ‘up’ to the level of the Ignatians, whose mathematical training, calculated rhetoric and writing culture, architectural mnemotechnic, and art of creating archives the friars probably never attained (Feingold, 2003). My aim here is quite simply to remind us of how the Franciscans, whilst less audible than the Jesuits in Portuguese Asia, were by no means silent. Ultimately, this study queries a particular, unduly neglected branch of

early modern knowledge production recently identified as ‘Franciscan Orientalism’ (Županov and Xavier, 2015: 158-201). It asks the question that necessarily arises from such a designation: what were the politics of Franciscan Orientalism in Portuguese Asia?

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE ORIENT ACCORDING TO FRIAR PAULO DA TRINDADE

Let us begin with the ominously titled *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* (“Spiritual Conquest of the Orient”), a 1200-folio chronicle on the Christianisation of Asia, written by the Franciscan friar Paulo da Trindade in Goa around 1630-36. The *Conquista Espiritual* has been largely underestimated as a piece of Portuguese imperial writing. Historians may occasionally consult this chronicle in search of information on Catholic missions or minor political and military events. Yet they typically ignore it, as they ignore other works of its kind, when considering the history of Portuguese knowledge production and the history of imperial literature as a whole. There are, to be sure, strong reasons for this to be the case. A text such as the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* bears all the hallmarks of a second-rate, largely derivative work based on other, more elaborate sources. As Félix Lopes, the editor of the only printed edition of Trindade’s work, already pointed out, most of the geographical descriptions of the Orient are taken directly, and sometimes verbatim, from earlier Portuguese works (Trindade, 1962: I, 37, n°. 1). Amongst these, the most prominent with regard to geographical and ethnographic information are the *Décadas da Ásia* written by the Portuguese court humanist João de Barros (c.1496-1570) in the 1530s to 1550s, and their homonymous sequel produced some decades later in Goa by Diogo do Couto (c.1542-1616). Another important source was the *Etiópia Oriental* of friar João dos Santos (c.1570-c.1625), dating from the early years of the seventeenth century (Barros, 1988; Couto, 1947; Santos, 1999). Anyone might thus be forgiven for considering it more interesting to engage with those originals than with a rather artless, late and poorly written copy.

And yet the way Trindade filtered and structured the information contained in the better-known works of his predecessors is in itself deeply relevant. Five chapters placed relatively close to the beginning of book one of the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* are dedicated to the geography of the East (Trindade, 1962: I, 37-61). This would be, by the standards of the time, where we would expect the geographical stage to be set for the narration of the missionary activities that make up the bulk of the chronicle. A first chapter “[a]bout the great coast that extends from the Cape of Good Hope to China, and the nations, kingdoms, empires and provinces that in all those parts were discovered by the Portuguese” is followed by a chapter on the islands adjacent to the lands thus described, another on “the richest and most precious things produced in each of these lands of the Orient”, and finally two chapters on the Portuguese possessions in the region.

But in what terms exactly is the stage set for the narration of spiritual conquest? The following excerpt is a good example of how the text proceeds:

Starting from the Cape of Good Hope, which is at 34 degrees and a half of southern latitude, the first land that follows is the great *Ethiopia Oriental* [...] In this *Ethiopia* the greatest kingdom is that of *Monomotapa*, which is over 200 leagues long and almost equally wide. The regalia that he [King Monomotapa] uses are, according to some authors, a golden hoe with a handle made of ivory, to signal that he cultivates the land, and two arrows manifesting the rigour of his justice [...] The king has many wives, and the main wife is his sister [...]

[Then] come the three Arabias, namely *Petrea*, *Deserta* and *Felix*, where the bird Phoenix is said to be born, of which so many things have been written by authors such as Pliny in book X, chapter 2, Solinus in chapter 46, and others. There is only one such bird in the world, it is about the size of an eagle, and it lives for 660 years [...] When the time comes for it to die, it flies to Syria where, after making a nest of aromatic wood which it collects for this purpose, it lies down on it and dies there, and of its marrow a little creature is born which becomes another bird Phoenix, and once its wings grow it flies to Arabia. It is all red, except its neck which is the colour of gold, and a tail that is purple and rose-coloured.

Next to Arabia is the great Empire of Persia, the king of which is called *Sofi*, a name that bears great pre-eminence among those people because it is like among us the *emperador* [...] When the Portuguese arrived in the Indies, the king of Persia was *Ismael Sofi*, who descended from *Mafamede* by the way of his daughter *Fátima* and who, being the youngest son of Sultan *Aidar*, king of *Ardevel* (who had fourteen sons and five daughters), became a great knight and great lord and king of all Persia, and so powerful that he dared to wage war on the Great Turc and other kings and lords [...] (Trindade, 1962, I: 37-38)

This is, to say the least, a peculiar geographical introduction for a chronicle as grand as the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente*. Perhaps it all comes down to a desire to keep the chapters short and easy to read. The division of the text suggests that maintaining a roughly equivalent length of five pages per chapter played a role in the organisation of parts of the work. It may certainly also be said that writing an accurate geography of the East was not a primary objective for Trindade, who could refer his readers to other authors instead. Yet the way the text has been put together from fragments gleaned in the much more systematic and detailed works of Barros, Couto and Santos remains remarkable.

At first, some evident similarities might suggest a common goal. As João de Barros a century earlier, Trindade proceeds in his general overview from West to East, advancing along the coastlines of East Africa and Maritime Asia to give descriptions of the main polities and regions extending inland. As the author of the *Decades of Asia*, the author of the *Spiritual Conquest of the Orient* gives some geographical coordinates. It could even be argued that the text makes most sense if read with a picto-

rial outline of Africa and Asia in mind, however vague that may have been for readers (we simply do not know to what extent cartographical innovations produced by the Portuguese were absorbed by the wider readership). In other words, the reference to a latitude of 34 and a half degrees might easily be mistaken for an emulation of the method advocated by Barros and, with him, most great Renaissance geographers and cosmographers: a method based on the homogenisation of global space through geometrisation, the subjection of the earth's surface to the universal power of the Ptolemaic grid (Besse, 2003; on Barros see Biedermann, 2004 and in press).

And yet the extraordinarily powerful, systematically construed and detailed textual cartography produced by Barros, a veritable *tour de force* creating a vigorously structured map-like image in the mind of the reader, has been watered down to little more than a sketch. In fact, the very method that guided Barros —his effort to emulate a Ptolemaic logic going from the universal to the particular (that is, from cosmography through chorography to topography) and impose it on each and every place described— has been largely abandoned. The systematic invocation of the cartographical grid championed by Ptolemy and reintroduced to mapping from the fifteenth century, central to Barros's endeavour of creating cartographical descriptions through words, is mostly gone. To be sure, its vestiges do appear here and there in measurements and degrees of latitude, such as those already mentioned for the Cape and the kingdom of Monomotapa. But Trindade shows little interest in the method underlying such data, that is, the neo-Ptolemaic order associating each thing on the globe with a mathematically describable position on the grid.

This is not to say that the description does not present some characteristics of the geographical writing culture that had, by Trindade's time, been flourishing for over a century in the Ibero-Italian world (cf. Olivari, 2002; Padrón, 2007; Safer and Santos, 2007). The central passages of chapter 1 in particular, dedicated to India and parts of Southeast Asia, do contain significant amounts of geographical information, including various measurements and some reminiscences of Barros's cartographic writing technique. For example, the text does give an account of the Bay of Bengal that is visually fairly evocative:

After the Cape [Cape Comorin] the coast begins to rise again towards the North up to the estuary of the River Ganges, forming a great arch called *Seio Gangetico* [i.e. *Sinus Gangeticus*] or Bay of Bengal, [then] it descends again towards the South until another famous cape [...] named *Singapura*, where the city of Malacca is situated [...] From Cape Comorin [...] to the deepest point of this bay [...] the distance is around four hundred and ten leagues, divided into three states [namely Vijayanagara, Orisha, and Bengal] [...] (Trindade, 1962, I: 39).

Overall, though, this kind of information has lost much of the power that it had in other works. In this particular passage for example, Trindade returns very quickly to the amalgamation of *varia* that he favours:

In the kingdom of Bengal the River Ganges, so celebrated by the [classical] authors, flows into the ocean sea through two mouths about eighty leagues distant from each other. This river is one of the [most] famous in the world, it carries much water, and is considered by many to be coming from Scythia, whilst other [authors have it that] it comes from the Earthly Paradise, being one of the four rivers mentioned by the Holy Scripture, called Pishon, as is the judgment of Eusebius and St. Hieronymus [...] The *gentios*, blind in their reasoning and lacking the light of the true Faith, hold its waters to be so holy that they believe they will go straight to the heavens if they wash themselves therein [...] Solinus in his *Polyhistor* states that the people living along this river feed on the fragrance of flowers [...] But our Portuguese [travellers], who have been to all those parts, have not found any notice of this marvel [*maravilha*] which, if it is true — which it does not seem to be— is certainly quite extraordinary and strange (Trindade, 1962: I, 39-40).

Trindade, like everyone else at the time, has supplemented the geographical data with various references to classical authors. His general outline of the East is interspersed with what may at first sight appear as signs of respect for the formalities of erudite geographical writing. But here again, it is all significantly more fragmentary and haphazard than in any of the major reference works. Like the latitudes and other measurements strewn across Asia somewhat indiscriminately as remainders of a mathematical principle discarded by the author, the occasional pointing to Pliny or Solinus is not much more than a half-hearted allusion to the writing practices of others. In fact, Trindade gives a selection that will strike the modern reader as bizarrely arbitrary: a king's gilded insignia and sexual habits in one region, a mythical bird in the next, a sultan's fourteen sons and a people living on the fragrance of flowers in yet another region, and so on.

The problem here is not selectivity in itself. Even the most comprehensive map or text offers a selection of data following a political agenda (Harley, 1988). What is striking is the apparent randomness of what has been retained, and its corrosive effect on the spatial order of the world and its textual representation. Systematic selections as those of Barros and many other authors of the period would typically follow a scheme, a list of questions, a set of criteria applied more or less rigorously to all regions described. Geographers and ethnographers attempted to offer their readership information about certain *kinds* of things, and laid it out in a way that was systematically relatable to geographical space. By the latter I mean that Barros, for example, followed a logically structured list of topics (comparable to, say, the list of topics used by Sebastian Münster) within each of the regions described. It was the era of classificatory pioneering *and* cartographic revolution after all, and in both areas the Portuguese played an important role (Biedermann, 2013). Yet Trindade's only guiding principle seems to have been to give one or two curious occurrences for each kingdom or region.

Crucially, these occurrences are of various different *kinds* if considered by the standards of the more rigorous taxonomies then in the making. One is compelled to think

of the famous opening in Foucault's *The Order of Things*, with its rambling quote gleaned from an imaginary "Chinese encyclopaedia" made up by Borges. Animals, it is there said, can be divided into the following categories:

(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies (Foucault, 2002: xvi).

The striking aspect is not so much the rhetoric and aesthetic function of *mirabilia* in a changing world — what, in the footsteps of Greenblatt, Pramod Nayar has described for a context closer to ours as "an explanatory and exploratory aesthetic that enabled the traveler to discover, wonder at, organize and define, and ultimately explain (away) India's newness" (Greenblatt, 1991; Nayar, 2005: 214). Nor is it the intellectual curiosity that such things may elicit and the way they may draw attention to various, more or less distant corners of the globe (Daston and Park, 1998). We are, with Trindade, much deeper in the structures of religiously guided representational practice than the presence of the marvellous might suggest to the fleeting observer. At stake here is rather the autonomous power of those marvels when interconnected and, as a collective, allowed to shine more brightly than the surface upon which they sit. As Foucault pointed out with regard to the Chinese encyclopaedia, "what transgresses the boundaries of all imagination, of all possible thought, is simply that alphabetical series (a, b, c, d) which links each of those categories to all the others"; or, in other words, the very "possibility of juxtaposition" when such different things are involved (Foucault, 2002: xvii).

Whilst in Trindade there is no alphabetical, nor any other sort of explicit signposting other than the belonging to a certain region, the juxtaposition of kings, mythical birds and other sorts of curiosities across a vast, recently "discovered" space is a powerful one. Indeed, I would argue that it is powerful enough to impose its own logic over that of the already feeble geographical organisation underlying it. The sheer force that attracts these things to each other is such that geographical space — as opposed to the mere places where each of those things happen to exist — ceases being the independent, fundamentally constitutive entity that the leading scholars of the time considered it to be. To remain for a final instant with Foucault, one wonders where such disparate things could ever meet, "except in the immaterial sound of the voice pronouncing their enumeration, or on the page transcribing it? Where else could they be juxtaposed except in the non-place of language?" (Foucault, 2002: xvi-xvii)

The absolute non-place of language would, of course, be the divine *logos* as it existed before the creation of everything else. It does not and probably cannot come in a pure state even in a sacralised geography such as that of Trindade. But it can be made to breathe through a text. The two crucial points with regard to the *Conquista*

Espiritual are: firstly, the textual structure allowing for the geometrisation of terrestrial space — i.e. the creation of a neo-Ptolemaic cosmography along the lines proposed by sixteenth-century authors — has been destabilised. It is there, but its deficiencies are too many for us to ignore. Secondly, a disparate series of curiosities has been imposed upon this dissolving space and allowed to take control over the narrative as a whole. Thus the possibility of a methodical, man-made intersection between language and space is reduced. A series of utterly heteroclitic things are "laid" or "placed" in sites ultimately so different from each other — despite their apparent contiguity on the map — that the notion of a homogenous, mathematically describable terrestrial space begins to melt away. If the question of "where" is asked at all, it is resolved by pointing to an uneven kind of space heavily contorted by a succession of very different places. What unifies this space is the marvellous variety of divine creation rather than a single, unified, global geometrical principle. From the intellectual world of Euclid and Ptolemy, we are being taken again to that of the makers of Medieval world maps (Woodward, 1985; Scafi, 2006), images, that is, where space was neither homogenous, nor isotropic, nor cosynchronous as Renaissance cartographers wished it to be (Woodward, 2007: 12-13).

But why? Before we attempt to draft a response, let us ascertain that the question as such is relevant indeed, and that the problem at stake represents more than an isolated slippage in Trindade's text.

IDOLATRY AND THE NON-MAP OF THE BODY APOCALYPTIC

As the brief but brutal reference to the blindness of the Gentiles (*gentios*, non-Christians other than Muslims, that is, people ignorant of the true faith but likely to embrace it once given the chance) leaves clear from the onset, Trindade is not the kind of author who may attempt any sort of *understanding* of religious otherness. His ethnography will necessarily have to be one of an aggressively judgmental kind.

From the fragile geography to the robustly moralistic ethnography of Trindade, the transition relies on the rhetoric of divine creation. Upon the two chapters dedicated to sketching out the mainland and the islands of the Orient, follows a chapter about the riches that God has created for the people there. The central message of this chapter is explicitly a moral one. Having though been given everything by the creator, the people of the East fail to recognise how much gratitude they owe Him:

He who considers the many riches and precious things that the author of nature, God our Lord, has with such generosity distributed along with the lands of the Orient, will not be able not to wonder at how poorly the people of the Orient reward their own Creator in return for all the good things they have received from Him, for we see that, instead of knowing Him and receiving His Faith and keeping His law, they live so far removed from all this that they do not even seem to have the light

of reason, except for their adoration of the first Cause, which they bestow upon pieces of stone and of wood and, even worse than that, to the demon himself; for the Orient is like a seminary of all the diabolic superstitions and idolatries of the world, and it seems indeed that there is a competition between the goodness of God and the wickedness of men, because the more He devotes Himself to doing good things for them, the more they excel at offending Him [...] (Trindade, 1962, I: 47).

The geography of the riches of the Orient is, then, essentially a geography where the marvellous indicates moral depravity. It is a twofold source of *maravilha* for the Christian observer, who will marvel at the diversity of things created by God and at the ingratitude He receives in return. In East Africa, for example, God has created many gold and silver mines. In the woods of a certain island off Cape Delgado, in the North of what is today Mozambique, there is much *maná* or *mauna*, which

is excellent for purging [the body] and is produced by the dew of the sky when it falls upon certain trees that exist [in that island], which are the only ones on the trunks, branches and leaves of which this dew curdles, and once it has curdled it becomes like candy sugar, sticking to the branches in the manner of a resin, and when hanging from the leaves it has the appearance of pearls (Trindade, 1962, I: 48, based on Santos, *Ethiopia Oriental*, fol. 40).

And yet the peoples of the region are all, as we shall see further expounded below, in the hands of the devil. This fundamental fact throws a rather uncanny light on the way Trindade lists the most noteworthy features of Oriental geography. Such lists may remind the reader of earlier mercantile geographies of the East starting with Tomé Pires's *Suma Oriental* (Pires, 1944) or, again, the economic information woven into the geographical passages of Barros's *Décadas da Ásia*. But the way space and marvel are here interwoven takes on a very different character.

Persia produces carpets and fruits, the kingdom of Cambay many kinds of cotton textiles (the sheer succession of names reveals astounding plenty: "*beatilhas, canequins, bofetás, cachas, beirames, cotonias*, and others of this sort"), the Deccan has diamonds, Ceylon is filled with cinnamon, Bengal abounds in cotton again, Siam yields precious stones, Borneo camphor, and the Moluccas cloves. The geographical order becomes increasingly haphazard though as the text ventures eastwards: upon the Fishery Coast follows Bengal and then the Coromandel Coast, and after Siam come Sunda, Timor, Borneo, Ryukyu, Vijayanagara, the Moluccas, Cochinchina, Malacca, and finally China. China is, perhaps inevitably at the time, the place where it all culminates with a prodigious accumulation of natural riches combining everything that elsewhere comes only in parts (Trindade, 1962, I: 50).

One is here strongly reminded of the moral judgments built around the topos of plenty in early modern English accounts of India, particularly by authors interested in

natural resources. Pramod Nayar (2005) has argued that British engagement with Indian plenty went through three phases, or rhetoric moments: first, a pleasurable topography of plenty; second, a realisation of excess; and third, an explanation of India's landscape in moral terms, ultimately preparing the ground for conquest and colonisation. The most striking feature of Trindade's (de-)moralised geography is not its precociousness with regard to the bulk of English writing. After all, the topos of plenty was not a Portuguese invention, but rather a very old theme in European representations of the East (Campbell, 1988: 109). The truly remarkable aspect is how the three analytical moments exposed by Nayar have been compressed in a single argument by Trindade.

Temporal conquest, Trindade acknowledges implicitly, may have resulted from the lure of Asian riches. For this, he quickly adds, the Portuguese should not be blamed. Not only because it has cost them much blood, money and physical effort to discover, explore and take over lands in the East, but mainly because extreme plenty and beauty constitute *per se* a just cause of war. The explanation is somewhat unorthodox and based on an unconventional translation of a passage from the Book of Judith, but it is given without hesitations:

And hence what can be said of India and of the Portuguese is the same that was said by Holofernes's soldiers when, having besieged the city of Bethulia, they saw the beautiful Judith [...]: 'Who would despise this people, that have among them such women? And who would condemn us for taking up arms against them for this cause?' '*Quis contemnat populum hebraeorum, qui tam decoras mulieres habent, ut non pro his merito pugnare contra eos debeamus* (Trindade, 1962, I: 51).²

The second sentence of the biblical quote (from Judith, 10:18) is usually translated in the sense that the Assyrians did *not* wish to proceed with the siege, given the beauty of the women of Israel. Here, instead, the sense is inverted to suggest that a land as beautiful and plentiful as India had inevitably to become an object of desire. The Portuguese engaged in its temporal conquest quite simply because they were the first Europeans to arrive.

Then, however, comes the clerical comment that one would expect in addition to such an overt vindication of physical violence: "[they were] moved to engage in this difficult conquest, not so much on grounds of their greed for the things [of India], as of their zeal to convert its people and desire to extend the boundaries of the Christian religion" (Trindade, 1962: I, 51).

For this is what temporal conquest by good Christians can only justifiably be about: something intertwined with spiritual conquest. In the Orient the Portuguese have "conquered many lands", but the statement can only make full sense once the author adds with the help of the conjunction "and" (expressing the connection with effortless self-evidence) that "the preachers of the Holy Gospel have through their preaching won many souls" (Trindade, 1962: 51). Note how the verb in the first case is *conquistar* (to conquer), and in the second *ganhar* (to win

over). Two entire chapters ensue after this passage, giving a general outline of the Portuguese military conquests in the East. The chronicle as a whole then expounds the religious deeds of the Franciscans. Needless to say, any reader at the time would have been acutely aware that the only preachers to have been present during the temporal conquest from the very beginning, as Portuguese fleets began to roam the waters beyond the Cape, were members of the Seraphic order. We shall return to this point further below.

Perhaps the most spectacular piece of ethnographic writing and ranting produced by Trindade concerns the general nature of idolatry in the Orient. It comes along as chapter 16 of book one, is about five pages long, and carries the ominous title of “How rich, esteemed and venerated the true soldiers of Christ, the *Fratres Minores*, found idolatry to be in India, and how they triumphed over it.” The triumph is, obviously, the story told by the chronicle as a whole, so it is here only briefly summarised. What much of the chapter expounds is the perverse abundance of all things idolatrous. That the adjective “rich” should here be the first in the title certainly establishes a solid bridge with the previous considerations about Asia’s natural resources. But in its vehemence, the chapter on idolatry goes far beyond.

Again, Trindade had a chance to follow other authors for his critique of Oriental religious culture. He could have opted for a description where, after establishing a rigorously structured geographical outline, it would have been possible for him and the reader to explore one by one the various religious systems of each of the countries concerned. There was by this time more than enough material to attack religious culture in India, Southeast Asia, China and naturally the Middle East one after another, and build a strong comparative case for Christianisation in each of these regions. But again, Trindade was not interested in engaging with the world beyond the Cape through a systematic combination of geography and chorography or regional study. His map of idolatry was to be dramatically different from those produced by others. In fact, it was to be a “figure” bearing all the hallmarks of being precisely *not* a map:

When I set out to consider the great veneration in which in these Oriental parts idolatry was held—the greatness of its riches, the numerousness of its temples, the pomp of its festivities, the dear cost of its sacrifices, and finally the nobility of its servants—its comes to me represented in the figure of that meretricious woman that the apostle St. John saw in his Apocalypse, sitting on a red beast with seven heads and ten tails [...], adorned with precious jewels of gold, pearls, and precious stones; of whom he also says that she held in her hand a cup full of abominations and filth, and on her forehead she had a label saying “mystery” (Trindade, 1962, I: 82).

The non-map of Oriental idolatry is based on the body of St. John’s apocalyptic woman. It has, as Trindade himself suggests by using a range of different nouns, visual qualities and is certainly an object for “consideration” in

a sense sitting close to “contemplation.” But it is not the kind of surface upon which a Renaissance mapmaker would have laid out the countries of the earth (nor indeed anything less material such as concepts or emotions). It is referred to successively as a representation, a figure, an *estampa* (usually indicating a print), and a hieroglyph. If it were a painting, it would be an allegory, the elaborate body of the apocalyptic woman shining with her gilded paraphernalia against a dark, pitilessly un-perspectival background of moral misery. This figure needs no geometrically construed space to rule vast parts of the world. The deception through which it holds a large part of mankind to ransom does not have the spatial pictorial qualities of a Renaissance painting. It is a dismal Baroque *chiaroscuro* from the deep folds of which emerges one barbarous idolatrous practice after the other, an infernal, perennial source of evil that dazzles the benighted peoples of the Orient in tones of silver and gold (cf. Alpers, 1983; Jay, 1988).

The figure carries a name (“*Babylonia*, which means confusion”) and calls for an interpretative contemplation, an exercise in deciphering the various signs of its diabolic nature. The latter are visible as such to the eye of the true believer, who will thus also be able to grasp the full extent of the devil’s creation. Indeed even the “barbaric gentiles” themselves may not always be fooled, although they will not see the full picture until they convert. At one point Trindade sustains that their worship is not based on an assumption of divinity at all, but merely on their fear of the devil, whom they recognise as “evil and perverse” and whom they hope to “placate and appease” with their deeds (Trindade, 1962: I, 82-83)

Here is, then, how this vast body of idolatrous practices and beliefs is to be read. The seven heads of the apocalyptic woman stand for the many idolatrous kings of those parts. The cup filled with filth is

the vile doctrine of many different sects that exist across this gentility, and the false theology of their vain gods, accompanied by many rites, ceremonies, diabolic sacrifices and witchcraft that their infernal books teach to them, some of which are read in public universities, which the kings support with vast endowments (Trindade, 1962, I: 83)

As even Trindade had to admit, there was a problem in understanding how such terrible abominations could appeal to the aesthetic sense of people anywhere. Hence the argument that the devil made his teachings more appealing by giving them a pleasant form—pleasant, at least, to the ears of Asians, given that the plenty involved is again of dubious value to the mind and the senses of the true believer. The form by which the false doctrine is made palatable is the verse, and more specifically the “very sonorous verses to which these people are very inclined and by which they delight themselves very much.” The adjective “sonorous” (*sonoro*, an ambiguous choice suspended semantically between “loud” and “reverberant”) comes supplemented two lines below with the

words “*mui suaves*” and “*melodia*”, indicating a certain sweetness and melodiousness pleasant even to the outside listener—a relatively rare occurrence at a time when, in general, Asian music was much less appreciated by European observers than Asian visual arts and crafts. The point is that whoever recites the false doctrine in such a manner will have their senses “entertained by the suavity of the verses and the melodiousness of the singing” and will thus fail to recognize how he or she has fallen prey to demonic forces. This, again, equals the functioning of the cup in the hand of the apocalyptic woman. As Trindade reminds the reader, that symbol had been rightly interpreted by Saint Ambrosius as illustrating how a splendid form can momentarily outshine vile content: “since the drink, made of abominations and filth, could please no-one, at least the beauty of the gold in which it came covered would” (Trindade, 1962, I: 83).

And thus the symbolic reading proceeds. As the apocalyptic woman has the word “mystery” (“*mistério*”) written on her forehead, “which means the same as secret” or “secrecy” (“*segredo*”), those professing the diabolic doctrines in the Orient do all they can to maintain a grip on their sacred scriptures. Idolatrous knowledge is to be transmitted only in a very controlled and limited manner by people such as the Brahmins—a rather curious critique in the argument of a seventeenth-century Catholic, for whom the Christian doctrine would always and very emphatically have to be filtered through the various layers of the Roman Church before it reached any lay person. Finally, Trindade comes back to the topos of plenty again, expounding that the richness of the apocalyptic woman’s dress and jewellery stands for the richness of the temples, festivities and priesthood of idolatry.

Having given these preliminaries, Trindade is in a position to delve into each of his three themes (temples, festivals, priests) separately, following a thematic organisation void of any geographical structure. A first section is dedicated to the riches controlled by the “pagodas”, that is, any form of temple or statue where a false god created by the devil is worshipped. This is dramatically a matter of numbers, of telling how many temples receive how much money for their functioning. In the kingdom of Vijayanagara alone—a somewhat disconcerting polity to appear so prominently in a text written six decades after its demise—there are sixty-four temples receiving sixty thousand gold coins a year. This monstrous amount of money is not further explained, that is, no exchange rate is given (it equalled about 300,000 Portuguese *cruzados*, a vast sum of money). What is, however, prominent is that each of these *pagodas* receives its grant in thousands of gold coins also called *pagodas*. The proximity of the two meanings of the same word certainly suggests an overlap, a diabolic stratagem to confound and to blur the boundaries between religion and commerce. There are also, inevitably, thousands of temple dancers (*bailadeiras*), whom Trindade describes as prostitutes sustaining the temples with the revenues of their disgraceful trade (Trindade, 1962, I: 84).

QUANTIFYING IDOLATRY: THE DEVIL IS IN THE FIGURES

If the mathematisation of geographical space was no priority for Trindade, the quantification of idolatry was—not so much in the preliminary section of the text, where the emphasis is on abstract notions of plenty, but certainly in the subsequent sections dedicated to concrete riches. Along with the *bailadeiras* we learn of the abundant resources given to the many “idols”, that is, statues of false gods. One temple alone in the city of *Angor* in Cambodia is given as having nine cloisters and containing twelve idols made of massive gold, some the size of a ten year old child. Once, Trindade narrates, a gold idol was captured by Vasco da Gama on a Moorish ship near Calicut—again, an interesting conflation of idolatry and trade—weighing about thirty *arráteis* (roughly fifteen kilograms). It had two large emeralds in the place of its eyes, was covered in a richly decorated mantle of gold and precious stones, and carried a ruby on its chest the size of a *cruzado* coin (Trindade, 1962, I: 84)—yet another crossing of boundaries between idolatry and trade, though here with a premonition of Christianity, since the *cruzado* was a coin bearing the Portuguese royal coat of arms on one side, and on the other the cross of the Order of Christ surrounded by the words *In Hoc Signo Vinces*.

The next section is dedicated to the great number and the sumptuousness of the temples containing such images. Here, too, numbers are key. They do not serve to geometrise space, but to offer a picture of diabolic plenty. In a place on the Malabar Coast, a single league of land (that is, an area of perhaps twenty or thirty square kilometres) is said to support over 140 temples. In Japan, one temple alone holds 1,500 gold statues distributed over nine terraces lit by uncountable lamps made of silver and gold. Adjacent to a temple on the Coromandel Coast, the building alone where cattle was supposedly assembled to be sacrificed (*sic*) was made of 700 marble columns larger than any ever seen in Spain or Portugal (Trindade, 1962, I: 84).

Even when such things could be given a precise number, they are always close to slipping into the domain of the inscrutable. They can then either not be counted at all (“*não têm conto*”), or their sheer size is out of bounds. An idol statue in Japan is said to be of such an unreasonable and utterly disproportionate size (“*descompassada grandeza*”) that a pigeon sitting on its head would appear as a little bird to the observer on the ground. This is interesting, incidentally, because it creates a steep gaze from below, a very rare occurrence in European geographic accounts and travel books of the time, and certainly something to bear in mind for our conclusions below (Trindade, 1962, I: 84).

Finally, Trindade dwells on the sumptuousness of the festivities. The juggernaut festival is inevitably there to send a shiver down the reader’s spine with its carts carrying hundreds of people and cutting devotees into pieces on the ground. The main festival at *Tremel* in the South of India is said to attract a staggering four million people from all over the Orient—twice the entire population of

Portugal—and, among them, three to four hundred thousand equestrians (Trindade, 1962: 85). But the keystone of the edifice of Asian idolatry are the Brahmins, “one of the noblest castes of India”, who claim descent from the god *Bramá* and maintain even the most powerful secular lords under their sway (Trindade, 1962, I: 86).

FRANCISCANISM AND THE NON-SPATIAL NATURE OF SPIRITUAL CONQUEST

This is where the attentive reader will be realizing, at the latest, what Trindade’s panorama is all about: whilst subjecting Asian kings by means of arms is one thing, fighting idolatry and its powerful priests is a completely different, significantly more challenging matter. It is, of course, what the Franciscans have been asked to accomplish and, in their own view, put into practice with success. For as the “fornicating woman of the Apocalypse [...] has been defeated, stripped of her riches and handed over to the flames [...] so the Oriental idolatry [...] could not be protected by the kings” and was “defeated by that which can achieve anything, that is the true Faith of Jesus Christ Our Saviour, preached by the *religiosos*, in particular those of our Seraphic Religion.” It was they who, “armed with celestial arms and fortified by the divine grace [...] took to the battlefield as true soldiers of Christ” and destroyed the diabolic inventions seen by Saint John. They waged “crude war” upon idolatry to strip her of her clothes, destroy her temples, forbid her festivals, and so on. All this, not for the sake of triumph in itself, but to liberate “thousands of souls” from her power and, through baptism, show them the light of hope that would lead them out of the darkness of the previous age (Trindade, 1962, I: 86-87).

Who, upon considering such mesmerizing glories, would wish to map them onto a flat and flavourless, mathematically construed planisphere, a modern map showing the divine *orbis terrarum* on a plain surface dominated by an abstract geometrical grid? The stage for Franciscan conquest is the world as a whole, their mission a conquest undertaken in the name of God. In fact, it is even more than that: it is the Lord’s own undertaking in the world He has created, and it must not be bogged down in the realities of geography, be they material (the territories of Asian kings) or ideational (the Euclidean grid). God’s generosity is endless, His goodness has no bounds. He

closes His eyes to all this ingratitude, and has been pleased to bestow upon them [the people of the Orient] such mercy as if they had obliged Him by much devotion, sending them from such distant lands [i.e. Portugal] the knowledge of the Faith and preachers of His Holy Gospel, upon which many have converted and received baptism, so that today already one can see among these barbarians very clearly the knowledge of the true God, even among those who out of their great obstinacy do not wish to fully reap its benefits. (Trindade, 1962, I: 47).

In fact, we can now start to fully grasp the subaltern nature of the role played by geography and cosmography

in the entire text. At the beginning of the chronicle, Trindade had expressed already the thought that:

Since we will deal with the many souls that in various kingdoms have been won for God Our Lord by the *Frates Minores* through the preaching of the Holy Gospel in this Spiritual Conquest of the Orient, it shall not be devoid of purpose for us to give a brief and summary notice of the many provinces, kingdoms and empires that were found by the Portuguese.

This is how geography can help support the narrative of Franciscan glory: not by laying out the exact shapes and sizes of lands on the paper, nor by expounding with precision and system the territories that the friars would then conquer in the name of the Lord, but simply by offering an unquestionable, God-given place in which the greatest of all battles would occur and the forces of the devil defeated.

This applies not only to Asia as a whole but also to certain regions in particular, and most spectacularly to the island of Sri Lanka, where the Franciscans enjoyed a missionary monopoly during the sixteenth century. As I have argued elsewhere, the precedence of history over geography permeates and shapes the more than 250 pages dedicated by Trindade to *Ceilão* (Biedermann, 2014). Time and again, the reader is promised information on space only to be pulled straight back into the depths of time. Chapter 1 of book III, for example, titled “*Da Formosa ilha de Ceilão e de algumas grandezas suas*”, has a brief description of Sri Lanka lifted (but significantly shortened) from Barros. It mentions the island’s position near the southern tip of India, its oval shape, its overall orientation and its latitudinal position (Trindade, 1962, III: 3 based on Barros, 1988, III: fols. 25-28). However, this is not the information with which Trindade opens his text, nor does it have by any means a dominant position. The first and principal aspect the reader is confronted with is rather this:

One of the most famous islands in this Orient is *Ceilão*, which deserves a very particular place in this our history, not so much because of the notable things with which nature has adorned it, but rather because of the singular services that were there performed to God and to the Crown of Portugal by the friars of Saint Francis, because they were the first preachers of the Gospel there [...] irrigating with their blood the new plants they planted, converting with their doctrine many thousands of its natives, including many princes and people of royal blood, one of whom was Dom João Párea Pandar [Dharmapala], king of *Cota* [Kotte] and grandson of the emperor of the entire island, who through the teaching of our friars received the holy baptism and, upon his death, not having an heir, left his kingdom and the right [to imperial overlordship] that he had over the entire island to the Crown of Portugal, following the advice of those same friars (Trindade, 1962, III: 3).

Everything, including the Portuguese Crown’s right to conquer Sri Lanka on grounds of the testament of King

Dharmapala (r.1557-97) signed in Colombo in 1580, results from the historical depth of the Franciscan presence and from the blood shed by the friars in the island. None of the historical transformations referred occurs *on the ground of* an autonomous, pre-existing, geographically describable space. It is not history that takes place in Ceylon, but Ceylon that takes a place in (Trindade's) history. Space, if granted any importance at all, emerges from the depths of time. This is the case here and in a number of other passages (Trindade, 1962, III: 4-15).³

To Trindade, what matters are the people and their experience of the sacred. Space only matters in relation to time. The grid we are given to observe is not built upon latitudes and longitudes. As Douglas Kelly put it in a commentary on Medieval Franciscan thought better left untranslated, “le temps s'intègre aux lieux de manière inextricable [...] le lieu et le temps —*hic et nunc*— forment une grille” (Kelly, 1988: 126). This *grille*, a metaphorical grid combining space and time, was precisely what Renaissance cartographers abhorred. It may be worth reminding ourselves at this point about the way geographical maps, and *mappae mundi* in particular, functioned before the reintroduction to the Catholic West of the universal Ptolemaic grid.⁴ The makers of Medieval world maps had been keen to produce an “image of a world defined by theology, not geography, where place is to be understood through faith rather than location, and the passage of time according to biblical events is more important than the depiction of territorial space” (Brotton, 2012: 89). In the words of David Woodward, most world maps made before the mid-1400s are best understood “as teaching rather than locational devices”, and “they relied on mystical, symbolic, and allegorical imagery to a remarkable extent” (Woodward, 1985: 515).

They were “moralized, didactic displays” and it makes sense—with due care not to oversimplify things—to see them in connection with a deeper mistrust towards the realities of the physical world, going back to the early centuries of Christianity. In contrast with early Judaism, Christians had come to show relatively “little interest—with some important exceptions—in the exact location of even their most sacred events” (Woodward, 1985: 514 based on North, 1979: 76). Early Christian philosophers had emphasised that “knowledge of information about the earth was of strictly secondary importance to the Christian, whose mind should be on a higher plane” (Woodward, 1985: 515). When Petrarch, on an April afternoon in 1336, looked around from the top of the Mont Ventoux and chose to sit down and flip open his pocket Augustine, his eyes famously fell upon a quote urging him not to be carried away by what he saw around him, and rather concentrate on what remained within (Petrarch, 1990: 41). As he stood on that ridge—or quite possibly much later, when he finished writing his account—the poet sensed that he was at a crossroads in the history of the time-space relationship, and may not have been quite sure about what would come next. In the sixteenth century, the Jesuits learned to harness the power of knowledge pertaining to the physical world, and in particular to the way the world

was being mapped to emulate the Ptolemaic ideal. They embraced the view from above and the power of textual mapping, and put it to the service of religion. But their project did not go uncontested.

What Trindade reminded his readership of was that crucial moment when any human being or organisation can choose between one thing or the other: engage in the physical world or focus on the spiritual. A more conciliatory, intermediate stance was out of the question. The Jesuits may have styled themselves as a militia of God and laid out with spectacular textual, scientific and visual skill the territories they wished to conquer. But the only ‘true soldiers of Christ’, the ones understanding that the *orbis terrarum* was a matter of faith, not space, were to Trindade the followers of Saint Francis. If, as Frank Lestringant has observed with regard to Renaissance geography, “space is a form of thought” and “the problem is not to think about space [because] it is space itself that thinks” (Lestringant, 2002: 30); then we may wish to say about Trindade that he aimed to think *through* time or, indeed, allow time itself to do the thinking and talking.

ORDERLY BATTLES: THE POLITICS OF SPIRITUAL CONQUEST IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GOA

Why, then, did such a remarkable return to an older conception of geography occur in that particular place at that particular time?⁵ Friar Paulo da Trindade—born in Macao around 1570-71, possibly from an Asian mother—spent much of his life as a Franciscan in India, where he died in 1651. His career in the order was not straightforward. He led a faction of Asian-born friars in their fight against the hegemonic intentions of friars from Portugal, spent some years in quasi-exile in a village near Goa, but then also served as Commissary General from 1633 to 1636 and, finally, was elected to a position at the Tribunal of the Inquisition.

One of the most pressing issues for the Franciscan Order in Asia at the time was the inexorable advance of the Jesuits. The rivalry was particularly virulent with regard to Sri Lanka, where the friars had enjoyed a missionary monopoly until 1602, when the Jesuits were officially allowed to enter the island riding a wave of anti-status quo political reform (Abeyasinghe, 1966; Biedermann, 2014c). Dom Jerónimo de Azevedo (captain-general of Ceylon, 1594-1612), the man at the heart of the Habsburg imperial administration's attempt to not only conquer Ceylon but also break the existing Portuguese power structures hindering its control by the Crown, was a brother of Inácio de Azevedo, a Jesuit martyr in Brazil. Against this forceful intervention, the Franciscans at Goa kept protesting in vain for many decades.

To be sure, there is the possibility of thinking about the matter in continuity with a wider, deeper history of Franciscan culture hinted at above. Indeed, it may well be that Trindade as an ‘author’ is an illusion because the very notion of authorship was of diminished importance among the Franciscans. Trindade may have relied to a

large extent on a now lost work by his fellow friar Francesco Negrone (or Francisco Negrão) who may have done the editing of alien textual sources himself. We have no further information on this matter, but it is clear that the textual palimpsest that survived draws its lifeblood from texts and narratives circulating within the Franciscan Order (cf. Županov and Xavier, 2015: 178). On a more general level, it is tempting to see Trindade's dismissal of Renaissance geography and cosmography as deeply rooted in Medieval practices, including early Franciscan travel literature (Roest, 1996: 122). We may even wish to embrace here what Jordan Kellmann has written about the writing culture of the Capuchins in the New World,

rooted in the assumption that perception is divinely guided, apprehension and discernment are fundamentally internal processes guided by God, not external analytical reductions of the world. Confronted with the intense profusion of natural productions, the Franciscan ideal of perception was a kind of divinely guided ecstatic appreciation of the natural world (Kellmann, 2011).

This is, indeed, where Trindade's take on the world as a writer merges with the spiritual drunkenness alluded to in the opening quote of this article: to walk around "*arrebataado*" (Trindade, 1962, I: 213) is to walk around enraptured, mesmerized, enthralled by the wonders of the world. To be "drunk" as a friar is not to be fascinated by the spacious amplitude of it all but, as Trindade points out a few pages later, to be "like drunk from divine love" ("*como bêbado do divino amor*"; I, 216). In this sense, then, it may be right to read Trindade as a 'quintessential Franciscan' and, through him, attempt to capture some of the intellectual life, as it still happened in the seventeenth century, of an order that was far less successful in putting itself on the (modern) map than its main rivals.

However, I would also like to insist on the concrete and very pressing politics of such a textual choice in its immediate historical context. It is in this particular, virulently political context that the textual options of Trindade make sense not just as a matter of inescapable group culture, but as a matter of deliberate, rational choice. Trindade's declared goal was to debunk a narrative successfully created and circulated by the Jesuits regarding the inefficacy of Franciscan labour in the East. In the prologue to his chronicle, Trindade clarifies that he is coming out to defend "the honour of this Holy Province [...] after having read a book that a certain author composed in Italian and had printed in Rome, wherein he, with not less temerity than audacity, has dared to state that the friars of Saint Francis in India do not labour to create Christian communities, but only to bury the dead and sing Requiems" (Trindade, 1962, I: 5). The "author" here targeted is almost certainly Pietro Maffei, writer of the *Historiarum Indicarum Libri XVI*, a book that overtly attacked Franciscans by portraying them as inefficient missionaries (Maffei, 1589). The declared objective of Trindade was to mount a potent counter-attack against Maffei, the Societas Iesu as a whole, and everything they stood for. True, the *Libri* were by then over four decades old, yet they re-

mained a painful reminder to Franciscans of the superior power of Jesuitic writing and print culture well into the seventeenth century.

But how does one beat the Jesuits on paper? Certainly not, Trindade seems to have reckoned, by allowing oneself to be dragged onto the kind of terrain where they had proven themselves to be unbeatable. Not, then, by investing in a narrative set on a modern geographical stage. If Luis de Guzmán, the Jesuit, had declared that 'to write about the missions that have occurred in various kingdoms of the East Indies, it shall be necessary to first give some notice (though briefly) of this land; because this shall be of much help for everything that will be described in the course of this history' (Guzmán, 1601: fol. 1.); if other Jesuit authors like Pedro Páez and João Rodrigues had invested in solidly structured geographical frameworks for their chronicles, placing them firmly in the realm of what humanists like João de Barros had deemed recommendable (Páez, 2008; Rodrigues, 2001 and later Faria e Sousa, 1731 and Queiroz, 1916); then Trindade had to make it clear how the 'lands' of his history were not up for grabs, not susceptible of measurement and description in the increasingly hegemonic sense of the word. Rather than trying to draw a better map of the East, what Trindade set out to do was to draw a different map—or indeed draw no map at all, at least not in the emerging modern sense of the word, following the new conventions of this art (cf. Woodward, 2007: 12-13). If a map was there at all, then it was of the type drawn centuries earlier in the monasteries of medieval Europe.

The realm of Trindade's *Conquista* is not the sum of the measurable territories extending from, say, 40° to 140° East and 10° South to 50° North. It is the realm embraced by God when He sent His son to redeem humankind:

As the holy King David prophesised in one of his psalms, regarding the extended lordship [*senhorio*] that the Son of God would come to have on Earth when he came to it taking the guise of our humankind, this [lordship] would extend from one sea to the other, and from the Euphrates to the confines of the Earth [...] and how literally this prophecy has come true can be seen [now], since it is [now] known to us how far the Empire of the Christ extends, from one sea to the other, that is, as declared by Genebrardo,⁶ from the Western Ocean to the Eastern Ocean and from the Euphrates of Palestine to the Far East, which are truly the last confines of the Earth (Trindade, 1962, III: 478).

This is, then, the true historical-geographical panorama that Trindade has in mind, the realm of the spiritual conquest ordered by God, prophesized by the greatest of kings, and put into action by the followers of Saint Francis. The geography of the Orient is so deeply intertwined with the history of the Franciscan order that the two cannot be taken apart.

Why? Because whilst the Jesuits might well wield their influence to invade territories once held by the Franciscans—an unlawful infringement, the friars would continue to insist—here was something they could not enter:

the depths of history. However artfully the Jesuits might incorporate into their collective memory events prior to their founding in the early 1540s, Trindade could remind his readers of the obvious: only the Franciscans had really been there from the beginning. Their presence in the East, going all the way back to Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (c.1185-1252), was even older than that of the Portuguese Crown, whose officials were now so wrongfully redistributing the lands and souls of those parts. Their presence in the Orient was, in other words, based on an inalienable right of the most sacred kind, linking up the Franciscan body politic with Asia, and the mission that constituted the single subject of the *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* directly with God.

Such a concrete political reading may in fact turn out to be more cautious at present than any wider conclusions involving Franciscan and Jesuit writing culture in general. Not all Franciscans wrote or thought like Trindade, and not all Jesuits embraced the opposite ideals.⁷ The *Etiópia Oriental* of the Dominican friar João dos Santos (Santos, 1999) opens with one of the most systematic and solidly structured geographical overviews of the entire period. Friar Gaspar de São Bernardino (São Bernardino, 1842), a Franciscan traveller to Persia, reveals great interest in framing his narrative spatially. On the other hand, some Jesuit authors attempted to create historical depth by starting with the lives of Ignatius of Loyola or, more frequently, Francis Xavier (Valignano, 1944; Fróis, 1976; Gonçalves, 1957). We are only just beginning to grasp the amplitude and complexity of these matters, and a number of possible exceptions serve as reminders that much remains to be done before we understand the panorama as a whole.

Whilst I have above spoken of a possible return of Trindade to an ‘older’ paradigm of subjecting geography to history, the story clearly also tells us something about the simultaneity of multiple regimes of knowledge at the time. The emphasis still prevalent among science historians on the making of ‘modernity’ should not lead us to brand everything else as a return to a more distant past, but rather to investigate the complex articulations between competing and often complementary paradigms. It may here, on the one hand, be worth reminding ourselves of how the apparent backwardness of Trindade was a matter of deliberate choice and belligerent resistance. At the same time, on the other hand, a note may also be in place that there is as little need to dismiss such an attitude as meaningless in the greater story of scientific progress as there is to romanticise it. Most disturbingly perhaps, the history of how the Seraphic friars engaging with Asian societies resisted the new geographic and ethnographic methods of their time may be gaining relevance today as we strive to cope with science denial on an unprecedented scale.

For the time being, we may wish to acknowledge the following facts. Perhaps due to the hegemonic discourses created around the secular scientific revolution on the one hand and the modernity of Jesuit writing culture on the other, or perhaps quite simply because we have failed to look in the right places, a whole corpus of seventeenth-cen-

tury knowledge regarding the earth and its inhabitants seems to have evaded our attention. We now know that something describable as Franciscan Orientalism (Županov and Xavier, 2015) existed within the wider remit of Catholic Orientalism, and hence should play a role, as a significant component of the latter, in our appreciation of the twisted preliminaries to Orientalism in the Saidian sense. The work of Trindade is a powerful and intriguing example of a discursive strategy occurring at the time of—and indeed directly dependent upon—European expansion, and yet built around a notion of spiritual conquest precluding the ideological deployment of a rational spatiality as one would expect it.

This has direct implications for the way we understand the management of new geographical and ethnographic information in the early modern period. It speaks volumes about the ways knowledge could be discussed and presented without assuming a necessary relationship with territory and space. Knowledge could be deliberately detached from such emerging forms of epistemic and political organisation, and connected with a non-territorial concept of Empire fundamentally different from the one most early modernists still tend to favour. The next step for historians shall be to scrutinize in more detail the conditions under which such a subculture could flourish, and the reasons for which an organization as powerful as the Order of Saint Francis decided to embrace it in Portuguese Asia. This may then also take us back, some day, to asking the more difficult question of why *exactly* those who chose the path of science did so. Because the latter is, ultimately and from the point of view of a genuinely social history of science, still a matter to be resolved.

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NOTES

- 1 My understanding of knowledge management is here broadly in line with Blair (2010: 1-5).
- 2 The English translation of the first sentence of the biblical quote is here taken from the King James Bible, but the second is my translation of Trindade’s Portuguese translation.
- 3 Also note how, as explored above with regard to the riches of India, the fertility of Ceylon—a veritable terrestrial paradise—goes hand in hand with the ‘natural laziness’ of its people (Trindade, 1962: III, 5-6).
- 4 Note however the now well-documented fact (Gautier Dalché, 2009) that many elements of Ptolemy’s work remained present in the Christian West during the medieval period.
- 5 I am relying here on some thoughts drafted recently during an earlier incursion into the work of Trindade (Biedermann, 2014). On Trindade’s life see Machado (1752: 534), Lopes in Trindade

- (1962: 1), vii-xvii, and Teixeira (2008). A recent description of the friar's work is in Županov and Xavier (2015: 172-189).
- 6 Gilbert Générard, the French Benedictine Orientalist and author of a widely read commentary on the Psalms (Générard, 1581).
- 7 On the crass tensions that could oppose individuals of different national and social background within the Jesuit order, Županov (1993).

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