

Chapter 10

PIETY AND PIRACY: THE REPATRIATION OF THE ARM OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

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ABSTRACT

A 1695 epigram described the threats that pirates posed to the fleet that was returning the arm of St. Francis Xavier to Europe from the Far East, via Goa, India. Through the epigram, we catch a glimpse of the functional agreements and practices between military men, merchants, and missionaries during the age of exploration. This essay examines the testimony about relics in counter-Reformation canonization proceedings, how sacred objects were protected from pirates in the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic and Indian Oceans, the role the ship's chaplain played in this specific defensive mission, and whether the rhetoric about the threat of pirates paralleled the rhetoric about the danger of Protestants.

Keywords: Cross-cultural engagements, cultural translations, pirates, relics, canonization, missions, Saint Francis Xavier, Jesuits

IN 1695, AN Italian Jesuit published a book, *Tria Fortium David, Hoc Est Jesu Christi*. In it, Antonio Barone included an epigram describing the threats that pirates posed to the fleet that was returning the arm of St. Francis Xavier to Europe from Goa, India.¹ The voyage of the relic had occurred eight decades earlier, between 1617 and 1618, and neither the beautification documents of 1619 nor the canonization documents of 1622 emphasized the dangers of pirates when they discuss the translation of the saint's bones. The epigram itself is quite short: fourteen lines celebrating the sanctified victory of Francis Xavier's mortal remains over the barbarous threat of infidels during transit from the Indies.

As Peter Burke has argued, most "students of the saints have assumed that they are witnesses to the age in which they lived. For a historian of mentalities, however, they

¹ Antonio Barone, S. J., *Tria Fortium David, Hoc Est Jesu Christi* (Naples, 1695). A copy of this book can be found at the Burns Library at Boston College, along with an impressive collection of Xaveriana. The full text of the epigram is at the end of this essay.

have to be treated as witnesses to the age in which they were canonised.”² Through Barone’s epigram, St. Francis Xavier also serves as a witness to the decades after his canonization, as the age of exploration was entering its third century. The epigram serves as yet another reminder of the divisive forces of war and religion, an idea that is not restricted to the seventeenth century.³ Through this epigram, we catch a glimpse of the functional agreements and practices that developed between military men, merchants, and missionaries during the age. An examination of the journey of Xavier’s body reveals how relics were imagined in a post-Trent mind, and how the rhetoric about the threat of pirates to Xavier’s relics paralleled the rhetoric about the danger of Protestantism and Protestant states to Roman Christendom and Catholic states.

The life and death of Francis Xavier made him among the most notable counter-Reformation saints of the Roman church.⁴ Xavier, from an aristocratic family that could trace its pedigree back to Carolingian times, was educated at Xavier Castle before going to university in Paris, where he met Ignatius Loyola and the other men who would form the Society of Jesus.⁵ On April 7, 1541, his thirty-fifth birthday, Xavier set sail from Lisbon for India, having accepted the call to spread the Gospel message to all corners of the world. Thirteen months later, he arrived in Goa. He spent roughly a decade in India and the Far East, eventually being smuggled, with two companions, down the Cochin Chinese coast and north into the China Sea by a man named Avan, who was known as *o Ladrão*, the “Thief” or “Pirate.”⁶ Francis Xavier died on December 3, 1552 in Sancian, an island “literally [...] in sight of China.”⁷ Now referred to as Shangchuan Island, and not far from the mouth of the Pearl River, Xavier had been isolated there by traders who feared being caught breaking the Chinese laws against foreigners entering the Ming Empire. These laws had been enacted to curb the piracy that was rampant along the coast.⁸

Upon his death, Francis Xavier was placed in a coffin filled with lime, to ensure quick decomposition, and lowered into a grave on Sancian Island. Two and a half months later,

² Peter Burke, “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” in *Religion and Society in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800*, ed. Kaspar von Greyerz (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 48.

³ For a discussion of an oceanic *longue durée*, see Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 1, trans. Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

⁴ In addition to Burke, “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” see R. Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 122–37.

⁵ The Society of Jesus was approved as an order in 1540, but Xavier was not present in Rome at the time. Rita Haub, “Francis Xavier: An Introductory Life,” *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 71 (2002): 223.

⁶ Jean Lacouture, *Jesuits: A Multibiography*, trans. Jeremy Leggatt, (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1995), 98.

⁷ William L. Hornsby, “A Visit to the Tomb of S. Francis Xavier at Sancian,” *Woodstock Letters* 31 (1902): 402.

⁸ Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007), 28–29.

the grave was opened in preparation for the trip to Malacca, and “the body was as fresh as on the day of its burial.”⁹ Indeed, some Catholics of earlier generations heard hagiographic stories of a shovel hitting the body and causing blood to flow from it.¹⁰ Xavier was buried again in Malacca a month later, but not in the presence of Jesuits. Without supervision, the body was removed from the coffin and laid in the grave, “which was filled with earth [and] rudely pressed down so that it bruised his face in several places.”¹¹ In August 1553, five months later, Jesuits opened the grave and discovered the mistreatment of the body as they placed the “still uncorrupt,” but newly bruised, body in a new coffin to begin its journey to Goa.¹² This journey began three and a half months after this latest disinterment, and went into port in Cochin two months after that. The body was viewed there by a Jesuit, and its incorruptibility was related in a message to Goa.¹³ A month after that, on March 15, 1554, fifteen months after the saint’s death in Sancian, the body of Francis Xavier arrived in Goa, travelled in a procession from the harbour to the College of St. Paul, and was exhibited for three days.¹⁴

The *Annales* School, among others, holds that religion and the economy have confronted each other from the very beginning of civilization, and that as they travelled the road together, “one of the partners—the economy—became more pressing, made more demands.”¹⁵ In the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, mercantile relationships were the avenues, and had priority, for the determination of intellectual or cultural exchanges. The seventeenth-century recorders of Xavier’s journey would have disagreed, and emphatically stated that they “must not omit mentioning the after-fate of the vessel which brought the precious deposit from Malacca to Goa. As soon as the crew had disembarked and all the cargo landed, she opened and sunk, as if unwilling to be employed in any less glorious office.”¹⁶

9 *Documenta Indica* III, 74–75, 654–67, cited in J. Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” *Indian Ecclesiastical Studies* 5 (1966): 24. The city-state of Malacca is a former Portuguese colony in the south of modern Malaysia.

10 Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” 24.

11 *Doc. Ind.* III, 122, 671–73, cited in Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” 25. This bruising would have occurred three or four months after his death.

12 *Doc. Ind.* III, 76, 672–73, cited in Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” 25.

13 *Doc. Ind.* III, 251, cited in Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” 52.

14 The body was then placed on the epistle side of the high altar, until the church was demolished in 1560 for a rebuilding project. In the years after this, the coffin was kept in the Father Rector’s room, in the room of the Master of Novices, on the altar of St. Thomas in the newly rebuilt church, and in the sacristy. *Doc. Ind.* III, 76–77, 176, cited in Humbert, “Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659,” 26.

15 Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, trans. Sian Reynolds (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 559.

16 D. Bartoli and J. P. Maffei, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier, Apostle of the Indies and Japan*, ed. and trans. F. W. Faber (New York: P. O’Shea, 1889), 541. Italian Daniello Bartoli (1608–1685) entered

This record of Xavier's journey, originally published in 1653, reflects the hardening of lines in the counter-Reformation. In many ways, the writing of one sixteenth-century Jesuit who explained that an incorrupt body was a sign of a life untainted by corruption seems more modern than the biography a century later.¹⁷ In this earlier document, written in 1555 by a member of Ignatius Loyola's inner circle, the elements of recognition and reception of the saints reflected a dynamic between Roman church and believer; this dynamic created avenues to reconcile faith and reason. In accepting the report that a sweet odour surrounding the body of a saint indicated that his or her life and work remain sanctified, a believer could actively acknowledge the legitimacy of the cult of saints. The later historiography created a more static relationship between church and believer, consistent with the counter-Reformation, but denying the believer earlier ways to reconcile faith and scientific advancements. Rather than the earlier invitation to consider how the physical and spiritual intersect in the sanctified body and life of a saint, the later writers challenge the reader to believe that a ship threw itself to the bottom of the sea after the saint left its care.

The Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment required modern minds to acknowledge that an incorrupt body did not always mean an intact one. The politics of canonization reflect these changes. The bodies or body parts of saints on display in Rome today, for instance, do not closely resemble people merely sleeping or limbs recently severed. While they may be in remarkable condition considering their age, it is difficult to argue that these relics remain scientifically incorrupt with the passage of time. The earlier statement from 1555 foreshadows the influential role the Society of Jesus would have in the Roman church during the Scientific Revolution. This statement from the earliest years of the religious order reconciles faith with the yet-unnamed biological and environmental sciences, stressing the sanctified incorruptibility of the life, as much as the body. Confessional wars shaped the efforts to canonize Xavier in the late sixteenth century, and confessional wars then shaped the historicizing of the canonization process.

The 1653 version of Xavier's journey remained the primary one for over two centuries. It is a version of dramatic detail. With regard to Xavier's body, the authors state that "it was juridically inspected from time to time by the doctors and prelates of Goa, who always found it, not only incorrupt, but flexible, and of its natural color."¹⁸ On two occasions, someone "applied their finger to the wound in the shoulder caused by the rough usage when he was interred at Malacca, and both times the finger produced a flow of blood and water. Fresh blood likewise flowed from his neck and stained the brocade pillow which supported his head,—once when the body was pressed into a coffin somewhat too short" for the tall saint.¹⁹

the Society of Jesus in 1623, the year after the canonization of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier. He, with Maffei, published the biography of Xavier in 1653. Bartoli served for decades as the official historiographer of the Society of Jesus.

17 Juan Polanco, secretary to Ignatius Loyola, to Miguel Torres, Rome, November 21, 1555, *Doc. Ind. III*, 303–4, cited in Maria Cristina Osswald, "The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier, 1552–1640," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 71 (2002): 264.

18 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 541.

19 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 541. Punctuation is from the original.

"It is true," this seventeenth-century version continues, "the saint seems not to have been pleased at the amputation of his arm: at least, from thenceforward the body, though still uncorrupt, did not retain the same florid complexion, or look altogether so handsome, as before."²⁰ The amputation of Xavier's arm was on orders from the general of the Society of Jesus. At the end of the sixteenth century, Father Claudio Acquaviva sought to unify the Jesuits under interior and exterior models. It was a time of crisis in the order, especially between Spanish and Italian Jesuits, and the pope who had just died had allowed for, and even encouraged, this division, in order to assert the papacy's supremacy.²¹ After this pope's death, a general congregation of the Society of Jesus was held in 1593–1594, and the initiative to canonize Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier was part of the plan for the order's repair.²²

This canonization initiative for Loyola and Xavier reveals the fluid identities of the two men and of identity itself in the early modern age. Both saints were Spanish, but were not of Spain in their service to the church of Rome. Ignatius Loyola had left Spain for Rome under a cloud of suspicion from the Spanish Inquisition, and never returned to his homeland.²³ Francis Xavier had been sent to the Indies by the king of Portugal, and never returned to Europe. When the Portuguese king heard of Xavier's death in the Far East, he petitioned the pope directly for Xavier's canonization, bypassing the Society of Jesus, the order that Xavier co-founded.

By the early seventeenth century, Superior General Acquaviva's effort to re-unify the Society of Jesus through the canonization of Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier gained momentum, and the return of Xavier's relics to Rome was a part of this initiative. In 1607, some Jesuits petitioned General Acquaviva to authorize transfer of Xavier's head to Rome: "Repeated requests resulted in the separation of the right arm. That, apparently, satisfied them."²⁴ Therefore, in 1614, Rome sent a request to the Jesuits in Goa to send this relic;²⁵ on November 3, 1616, "by order of the Fr. General and in order to hasten the process of canonization, the right arm of Xavier's body was amputated, to be sent to Rome."²⁶

²⁰ Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 542.

²¹ See John W. Padberg, S. J., Martin D. O'Keefe, S. J., and John L. McCarthy, S. J., eds. and trans., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 10–13. The first three superior generals of the Society of Jesus were Spanish, as were the members who had been in Ignatius Loyola's inner circle. Acquaviva, the fifth superior general, was Italian. The fourth superior general had been from an area of the Low Countries that is now in modern-day Belgium.

²² Humbert, "Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659," 26.

²³ Maria del Pilar Ryan, *El Jesuita Secreto: San Francisco de Borja* (Valencia: Biblioteca Valenciana, 2008), 177–78.

²⁴ Georg Schurhammer, "Ausztige aus den Briefen der Jesuitengenerale an die Obern in Indien (1549–163 sic)," *AHS/ 22* (1953), 161, cited in Osswald, "The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier," 265.

²⁵ *Monumenta Xaveriana*, vol. 2, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* 144 (Madrid: Typis Gabrielis Lopez del Homo, 1912), Letter 16, November 25, 1614.

²⁶ Humbert, "Transfer of the Body of St. Francis Xavier Before 1659," 26.

The importance of Xavier and the other first Jesuits to the order can be seen in a decree of the General Congregation of 1615–1616 that stated that “Relics of the saints entrusted to our houses and colleges are not to be given away by any of Ours. Whoever does otherwise is to be punished, in accord with the judgment of the superior general.”²⁷ And relics of Francis Xavier were, indeed, entrusted to Jesuit houses and colleges. Xavier’s body has been with the Goan Jesuits since 1554; his lower right arm is at the Gesù in Rome. His upper right arm was divided among the Jesuit colleges of Malacca, Macao, and Cochin in 1619; the extra bit of the elbow went to Macao. Father General Muzio Vitelleschi, who had been elected in this latest general congregation to succeed Acquaviva, had all of Xavier’s internal organs removed from the corpse and distributed to Jesuit settlements worldwide; “smaller portions of the arm were sent to Meehl in Cologne; an ear went to Lisbon, half a toe, to his birthplace, pieces of breastbone, to Tokyo, and a tooth to Oporto.”²⁸

While the Society of Jesus expected obedience from its members regarding the relics of the saints, and threatened punishment, the laity invented ways to be piously disobedient. From the official historiography from the seventeenth century, we learn that the body of Francis Xavier had been displayed for veneration. The feet of the saint were uncovered, so that the faithful could kiss them as devotion prompted: “an old woman indiscreetly pious, anxious to have some relic of the saint, instead of kissing the foot, bit a piece off one of the toes; but she could not conceal her theft, for the flowing blood immediately betrayed her.”²⁹ The narrator concluded about Francis Xavier, “Thus was our Lord pleased to honor a virginal body which had been so instrumental to his glory.”³⁰

The virginity of Francis Xavier was in contrast to the conversion story of Ignatius Loyola, in which a battlefield injury turned him from a life of debauchery. Among the symbols associated with Xavier is the lily, indicating purity and virginity. In the early modern era, the emergence of the individual, masculinity, and authority were all contested topics between Catholic and Protestant states and institutions. Members of the Society of Jesus, arguably the first modern religious order for men, were charged by

27 Congregation 7, November 5, 1615–January 26, 1616, Decree 28 (In MS, d.37). John W. Padberg, S. J., “The Third General Congregation: April 12–June 16, 1573,” in *The Mercurian Project: Forming Jesuit Culture, 1573–1580*, ed. Thomas M. McCoog, S. J. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2004), 261.

28 Georg Schurhammer, *Gesammelte Studien*, IV, 345–48, cited in Osswald, “The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier,” 263–64. While the rest of the list of relic destinations is from Schurhammer, the information about the elbow in Macao comes from Naresh Fernandes, “Tomb Raider,” *Transition* 84 (2000): 4–19. Jeffrey Chipps Smith notes that “Queen Marie de’ Medici, who resided in Cologne in 1642 during her exile from France, presented Francis Xavier’s rosary and his arm bone” to the rector; *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 182.

29 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 541.

30 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 541–42.

Ignatius to be “contemplatives in action.”³¹ It does not have a branch for women, and its emphasis on intellectual, moral and spiritual strength served as an answer to Protestant attacks concerning the masculinity and moral rectitude of the Roman church and its clergy.³² As one scholar has observed about the Ignatian tradition of the examination of conscience, “Jesuit piety itself is decidedly aggressive; Ignatius did not call it spiritual exercise for nothing.”³³

The idea of the sea as a gendered area has attracted much recent scholarship, and women were most often seen as interlopers in these areas of “masculine security.”³⁴ Francis Xavier, when alive, embarked on a voyage with merchants, other missionaries, and military men. Francis Xavier’s role in this world of rough and intrepid men, bringing the word of God to a hostile audience, reconciled the oft-conflicted ideas of virginity and masculinity.³⁵ The expression of masculinity was amplified by the threat of pirates to his relics returning to Europe.

The mid-seventeenth-century narrative of Xavier’s journey by the Jesuit historiographer is a tale of strength and show of force. After Xavier’s right arm was severed, on November 3, 1616, it “was transferred the year following from India to Portugal, when,

31 Kevin F. Burke, S. J., and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, *The Ignatian Tradition*, Spirituality in History Series (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 25. The phrase was first used in print by Jerónimo Nadal, commissary for Ignatius Loyola.

32 For a more detailed examination of masculinity in the early Jesuit order, see Jodi Bilinkoff, “A Christian and a Gentleman: Sanctity and Masculine Honor in Pedro de Ribadeneyra’s *Life of Francis Borgia*,” in *Francisco de Borja y su Tiempo: Política, religión y cultura en la Edad Moderna*, ed. Enrique García Hernán and María del Pilar Ryan (Valencia: Albatros Ediciones—Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2011), 447–55.

33 Elizabeth Rhodes, “Join the Jesuits, See the World: Early Modern Women in Spain and the Society of Jesus,” in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley, S. J., et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 35. The Spiritual Exercises are a compilation of guided meditations, prayers, and contemplative practices developed by Ignatius Loyola.

34 Charles Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 61–62. Another, and more recent, work is John C. Appleby, *Women and English Piracy, 1540–1720: Partners and Victims of Crime* (Rochester: Boydell, 2013).

35 St. Francis Xavier was declared Patron of the Orient in 1748, and was declared Co-Patron of All Missions in 1927, with St. Therese of Lisieux (1873–1897). Therese had been canonized in 1925. After a trip to Rome with her father, she entered a French cloister at the age of fifteen and remained a cloistered nun until her death at age twenty-four. She was named a co-patron of missions because she prayed for priests on missions and became an “apostle to apostles” through her prayers and correspondence. For insight about the very different roles and role-modelling of these co-patrons, see the seminal work on post-feminist theology, see Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For a recent study of St. Therese, see Thomas R. Nevin, *The Last Years of Saint Therese: Darkness and Doubt, 1895–1897* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a concise biography of St. Therese, known as the Little Flower, see Owen F. Cumming, *Prophets, Guardians, and Saints: Shapers of Modern Catholic History* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007).

had not God watched over it, Rome would not have *gained* what Goa had *lost*.”³⁶ The relic had been accompanied to Europe by Father Sebastian Gonzales, the procurator of the Jesuit province. The priest and the relic were “in a small vessel, quite unfitted to contend in battle against the large ships of war usually met with on those seas: they found themselves pursued by a Dutch man-of-war,—a double enemy, on the score of religion as well as nationality.”³⁷

By the seventeenth century, the Red Sea, where the pirates threatened the relic, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean had all become sites of exchange. But while the medieval Mediterranean was its own integrated system,³⁸ early modern waters were not. In the age of empire, the oceans were the means and representation of an emerging global network, “not because they were assumed to be empty, vast, and lawless, but because globally circulating processes were transforming them into a different kind of bounded legal space.”³⁹ There were networks that operated independently of the state, and as with physical spaces, there were attempts to create monopolies on sacred spaces for both spiritual and political purposes. As a consequence, the relationships between military men, merchants, and missionaries were a balance of friction and familiarity.

The relationship between space and ecclesiology for the West has its roots in the Middle Ages. The Roman church came to identify itself in terms of physical space and to define itself in territorial and material, more than philosophical, terms.⁴⁰ The age of exploration and the confessional age were informed by these changes to the church’s expression of identity; in turn, exploration and confessionalization informed changes to the church. And empires never exist in isolation. By nature, they create along their boundaries zones of contact between ethnic, religious, political, and cultural groups that, in turn, challenge the concepts of centre and periphery through various forms of encounter.

The form of encounter those on the vessel containing Xavier’s relic feared was a violent one: “The Portuguese gave themselves up for lost: crowd what sail they would, there was no chance of outstripping their formidable adversary; still less had they to hope from an engagement, having neither soldiers nor ammunition.”⁴¹ But they had a holy weapon:

All at once they remembered that they had the arm of St. Francis Xavier to defend them, and they entreated Father Gonzales to hold it up in sight of the

³⁶ Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 542. Emphasis in the original.

³⁷ Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 542. Punctuation is from the original.

³⁸ See S. D. Goitein, “The Unity of the Mediterranean World in the ‘Middle’ Middle Ages,” *Studia Islamica* 12 (1960): 29–42.

³⁹ Lauren Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47 (2005): 724.

⁴⁰ See Dominique Iogna-Prat, *La Maison Dieu. Une Histoire Monumentale de l’Église Au Moyen Âge, v. 800–v. 1200* (Paris: Le Seuil, 2006).

⁴¹ Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 542.

enemy, whilst they on their knees would supplicate the saint to have pity—if not on them, who were unworthy of it—at least on so precious a portion of himself, and not permit it to fall into such impious hands. The Dutch were already so close upon them that they could hear their shouts of exultation in anticipation of an easy victory. Gonzales made his appearance, bearing the saint's arm. The crew instantly fell on their knees. The father advanced to the edge of the deck, directly facing the enemy, not invoking Xavier against them, but, crying aloud in his name, he threatened them, and forbade them to advance another yard. And assuredly it was the voice of God and of the saint, speaking through his mouth; for there stood the Dutch ship, with all her sails spread, yet as motionless as if she had been suddenly embedded in ice, the Portuguese brig in the mean time pursuing her passage to safety in Lisbon.⁴²

In response, the “Dutchmen seemed stupefied, or as it were bewitched, as they witnessed the miraculous effects, the cause of which was totally unknown to them.”⁴³ The rejection of relics as “magical trinkets” was held in common by the Protestant reform movements of the sixteenth century. As the Reformation continued, the sanctity of a saint's body was not the only contest about body. Protestants tried to create the body, especially Christ's, as transcendent, even in the sacrament of Communion. Protestants replaced the body with the Word; the altar with the pulpit. The debate about whether the events at the altar are bodily sacrifice had ramifications about the bodies of saints and about ideas of pilgrimage, both of which inform the narrative about the journey of Xavier's arm to Europe.⁴⁴

The concept of holy people is not unique to Europe or Christianity. What does appear to be “uniquely Christian, though, is the idea that saints are not only extremely virtuous people, but also efficacious mediators with God on behalf of the living; more powerful dead than alive.”⁴⁵ This, of course, was also an idea that came under fire in the Reformation, and one of the reasons that canonization processes came to a standstill during the middle decades of the sixteenth century. The voyages of commerce and missions, however, stimulated a re-framing of holiness: the “imputation of sainthood, like its converse, the imputation of heresy or witchcraft, should be seen as a process of interaction or ‘negotiation’ between centre and periphery, each with its own definition of the situation.”⁴⁶

And, as the confessional lines hardened, there were elements that were not going to be open for negotiation. Plague and heresy, for instance, “became connected as evils in need of eradication. In both cases, Xavier was considered an exemplary miracle worker. Thus Peter Paul Rubens's famous ‘The Miracles of Saint Francis Xavier,’ painted for the

42 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 542–43.

43 Bartoli, Maffei, and Faber, *The Life of St. Francis Xavier*, 543.

44 For an analysis of the role of the body in sacrament, see Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

45 Burke, “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” 45.

46 Burke, “How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint,” 53.

Jesuit church in Antwerp, demonstrates the use of plague imagery as a metaphor for heresy.⁴⁷

Protestants saw the use of the saints as a form of idolatry, and even the Roman church acknowledged faulty practice among the laity. One of the decrees of the Council of Trent declared, "Moreover, in the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed."⁴⁸ Erasmus thought folly the practice of the veneration of saints: "So among the saints, those are most resorted to who are the most romantic and fabulous: as for instance, a poetic St. George, a St. Christopher, or a St. Barbara, shall be oftener prayed to than St. Peter, St. Paul, nay, perhaps than Christ himself."⁴⁹

The European audience who were the consumers of the hagiography of Francis Xavier would have responded to Xavier's connection to the story of St. Christopher. The tall and strong Christopher carried pilgrims across a treacherous river, and one day carried the Christ child across. He became *Christoferens*, the bearer of Christ. Xavier carried the word of God over dangerous waters to those who had not yet received it, and protected those on the journey home.

The European audience were consumers of another image of his mission activity, an *Imago primi saeculi* of Xavier carrying an Indian, or at least a non-European, on his back. A half-century after the event allegedly occurred, Pedro Ribadeneira, a Jesuit and the first historiographer of the order, recorded a story told to him by Diego Laínez, one of the original founders of the Society of Jesus and successor to Ignatius Loyola as general of the order. Laínez said that, in 1537, "Xavier had awakened him during the night to relate the dream to him [in which Xavier] had an Indian or Ethiopian on his back, who had been so heavy that he was able to carry him only with great effort."⁵⁰ This story was recorded at a time that canonizations in the Roman church were restarting after the jarring effects of Protestant reform, and the story is an intentional display of masculinity, heroism, and service.

Although Francis Xavier carried the man in his dream over land, many of the miracles attributed to him during the canonization process, and before, involved water. As early as 1543, there was testimony to Xavier having brought back to life a child who had drowned in a well, which is one of the miracles seen in "The Miracles of Francis Xavier" by Peter Paul Rubens.⁵¹ In 1546, in the Moluccas, in eastern modern Indonesia, Xavier allegedly lost a cross in a storm at sea and a crab delivered it to him once he was ashore. This is one of four miracles represented on the banner in St. Peter's during his canonization in 1622; a crab is often seen in Xavier's iconography. Another miracle attributed to

47 Paul Begheyn, "The Cult of Saint Francis Xavier in the Dutch Republic," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* 71 (2002): 311.

48 The Reverend J. Waterworth, trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent* (London: C. Dolman, 1848), 235.

49 Desiderius Erasmus, Hans Holbein, illus., *In Praise of Folly: With Portrait, Life of Erasmus, and His Epistle* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1922), 171.

50 Osswald, "The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier," 273.

51 Begheyn, "The Cult of Saint Francis Xavier in the Dutch Republic," 311.

the saint is that he converted seawater into fresh water for his shipmates while sailing from Malacca, in modern Malaysia, to China in 1552.

As the early modern world confronted how water was imagined as space, as opposed to how land was imagined as space, Francis Xavier emerged as a figure who transcended these challenges. The sailing ship is an important image associated with various episodes of his life, and figures prominently in his canonization documents. Many times "Xavier's prayers calmed storms at sea, preserved them from attacks of pirates, and generally steered the ship safely into port. Subsequent petitions [to him] for his intercession also brought miraculous salvation from emergencies at sea."⁵² While early modern travellers were often suspect in issues of corruption, loyalty, and identity, Francis Xavier represented a transformative model, one whose physical passage through adversity, while alive and dead, represented a heroism and faith available through veneration to those who did not travel as well.

Francis Xavier's sainthood is a cultural indicator of early modern Europe. Like other heroes, in the argument of Peter Burke, "they reflect the values of the culture which sees them in a heroic light."⁵³ And heroism, and heroic sanctity, are fundamental characteristics of the post-Trent saints.⁵⁴ Even later in the seventeenth century, spiritual, political, and military heroism came together in the 1672 beatification documents of Pope Pius V and in his 1712 canonization documents. During the successful promulgation of Pope Pius V, the 1571 victory at the sea by the Catholic League over the Turks at Lepanto became an image in the Catholic consciousness, representing defeat of infidels, both Muslim and Protestant.

It was in this context that the short epigram about Francis Xavier and the pirates that opened this essay was written, as well as other testimonies about Xavier's mission. Of note are the testimonies by Fernão Mendes Pinto, the Portuguese explorer who became famous for his autobiography about his adventures in the Far East, and infamous for the outrageousness of his tales there.⁵⁵ Some of the passages of Fernão Mendes Pinto's *Perigrinations* "related to the heroic missionary, Padre Francisco, who was so much loved and esteemed by the adventurous merchants and soldiers who had the good fortune of coming near him."⁵⁶

⁵² MHSI, Mon. Xavier, II, 707, cited in Osswald, "The Iconography and Cult of Francis Xavier," 270.

⁵³ Burke, "How to Be a Counter-Reformation Saint," 45.

⁵⁴ "Heroic" is first used to refer to exercises of virtues by Teresa of Avila, canonized with Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier in 1622; "heroic sanctity" is first used in the 1624 beatification documents of the third superior general of the Society of Jesus, Francis Borgia.

⁵⁵ Fernão Mendes Pinto and Rebecca D. Catz, ed. and trans., *The Travels of Mendes Pinto* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). In his twenty years of travels, Mendes Pinto was a soldier, merchant, diplomat, captive, and pirate. He was also a missionary, serving with Francis Xavier for a time as a Jesuit lay brother. He rejoined Xavier when Xavier left Japan, but returned to Portugal in 1554 with stories of the heroism and miracles of Xavier. Dissatisfied with the wealth and honour these stories brought him, Mendes Pinto abandoned the Society of Jesus in 1557.

⁵⁶ Hornsby, "A Visit to the Tomb of S. Francis Xavier at Sancian," 405.

There were practical reasons for the Roman church and Catholic states to use the rhetoric of heroism in the late seventeenth century. In 1670, for example, the English government agreed to restrain its pirates in return for Spain's concession over England's conquest of Jamaica. This "crackdown in the Atlantic Ocean encouraged pirates to move into the Indian Ocean, where a large group planted itself on Madagascar and preyed on European shipping," including English vessels that they previously had been paid to leave alone.⁵⁷ Other European states during the seventeenth century's Golden Age of Pirates claimed that they could not control the actions of their subjects who happened to live outside of their own state's geographical boundaries or "beyond the line."⁵⁸ Being at sea meant having no clear space in the world, and the lines were blurred by cycles of inter-imperial war and peace. Moreover, mariners and would-be pirates had one eye always on return and the possibility, however remote, of being brought to trial for crimes on the high seas.⁵⁹

The tensions in Europe, and those felt by Europeans outside Europe, were projected onto the widening world. In literature, especially, Protestants took interest in Christian lands like Ethiopia because these lands were never under the papal yoke. The Renaissance had stimulated a focus on the exotics of Africa and Asia; the Council of Trent strengthened these outward-looking trends, with its emphasis on missions. In action and rhetoric, the "politicization and militarization of oceanic space, as much as its globalization, distinguished European oceanic expansion from that of other seafaring peoples."⁶⁰ Pirates were both a reality and a manifestation of the tensions between the Protestants and Catholics, the Ethiopian and Roman churches, and Ethiopian Christianity and Jihadist Muslims.

The rhetoric about piracy retained these constant themes, even when the reality in time and space changed. Through the late medieval and early modern period, Europeans deplored "Mahometan tyranny" and conflated Islam and piracy as if they were one and the same, "the present terror of the world."⁶¹ This "present terror" demonstrated the different needs for authenticity in this age; it is both captured from the past and created for the future. Antonio Barone wrote the epigram that opened this essay of the threats posed to the relic of St. Francis Xavier, and the heroic response from Naples, Barone's birthplace. The Jesuit Barone had never been to a general congregation of the Society of Jesus, and Naples was itself peripheral to the Jesuit metropolis in Rome. There was a close relationship between Jesuit efforts to evangelize and bring Christian civility to Naples and their missionary efforts in the New World and Asia.⁶² Barone articulated the

57 Elizabeth Mancke, "Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space," *Geographical Review* 89, *Oceans Connect* (1999): 232.

58 Alan L. Karras, *Smuggling: Contraband and Corruption in World History*, Exploring World History (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 24. See also Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

59 Benton, "Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism," 707.

60 Mancke, "Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space," 226.

61 Adrian Tinniswood, *Pirates of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests, and Captivity in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean* (New York: Riverhead, 2010), 99.

62 See Jennifer D. Selwyn, *A Paradise Inhabited by Devils: The Jesuits' Civilizing Mission in Early Modern Naples, Catholic Christendom, 1300–1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

threats posed to the relic of St. Francis Xavier from a position, both geographically and confessionally, at the edge of waters politicized.

The Red Sea, where pirates threatened the relic of St. Francis Xavier, mimicked the early modern Mediterranean as an arena for patterns of interchange. There was extensive Ethiopian diaspora in the early modern Mediterranean. Muslims moved to Egypt for education or to Mecca, 70 kilometres inland from the Red Sea, for religious reasons. There were also pockets of Orthodox Ethiopian Christians in Jerusalem, Cairo, Cyprus, and Malta. There were small communities of Ethiopian scholars in Rome and Venice. This diaspora, as diasporas often do, hinged on pilgrimage, either religious or intellectual. In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the flow of writing was also one way. Few European missives were dispatched to the Red Sea, but there are many from Ethiopian Christians to their Mediterranean brethren, particularly addressing how to deal with Jesuit missionaries.⁶³

In the early modern era the historical gaze shifts, sometimes expanding and sometimes narrowing. An element in this shift concerns the Catholic ideas of outsiders drawn into the Catholic Mediterranean from Africa as slaves, which competes with the Catholic ideas of missionaries who went to the New World or Asia, where the inhabitants remained. There is a liminality to pirates and Protestants that confronts narratives of slavery and redemption. Both privateers, their legitimacy created with letters of marque, and pirates were European outcasts who brought previously unknown seafaring expertise to the business of Barbary and Red Sea piracy. Piracy allowed these men to join a new and different social *milieu*, reneging their own culture and religion because they had been rejected by their own culture and religion.

In the mid-seventeenth century, there was an emergence of long-distance privateering and piracy to the Red Sea, in particular, from bases in the Caribbean and North America. These “ventures confirmed the breakdown of an attenuated Elizabethan pattern of enterprise, focused on Spain, which had influenced the activities of buccaneers from the 1650s to the 1680s. The intrusion of English predators [...] was part of a wider restructuring of privateering and piratical enterprise” at the end of the seventeenth century.⁶⁴ As a result of the pirate dispersal from the Caribbean, the emergence of Red Sea piracy was supported by promoters in North American ports, particularly New York, and was encouraged by the opportunities for profitable plunder in the region.⁶⁵

The Red Sea was long, deep, and hazardous in many places for inexperienced navigators. The pirates displaced from the Caribbean and Atlantic had seafaring experience that gave them advantage in the Red Sea waters. The Red Sea supported the regular passage of pilgrims, trade in precious stones and materials, and ships laden with supplies of European money, including Spanish silver. These merchant ships were

⁶³ See James De Lorenzi, “Red Sea Travelers in Mediterranean Lands: Ethiopian Scholars and Early Modern Orientalism, ca. 1500–1668,” in *World-Building in the Early Modern Imagination*, ed. Allison Kavey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 173–200.

⁶⁴ Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, 32. For a globalized perspective, see Miles Ogborn, *Global Lives: Britain and the World, 1550–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 169–94.

⁶⁵ Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, 33.

normally large and well-manned, but often lacked effective ordnance. They were vulnerable to the small fleet of European pirates and privateers who “congregated at the Straits of Bab al-Mandab, a narrow exit and entry point, thus avoiding the dangers of coral reefs within the Sea itself.”⁶⁶

As concepts of space, boundaries, and identities were challenged, chaplains and missionaries urged men at sea to recognize what could best be described as a spiritual or moral genealogy. The epigram of the repatriation of Xavier’s arm to Rome occurs in a historical moment when *patria* itself is challenged. The corruption of identity during oceanic travels is as big a threat to Christians as are pirates and mortal sin. A play about the life of the notorious pirate John Ward was one of the most popular of the early seventeenth century. The play’s title, *A Christian Turned Turk*, reveals its plot, as well as larger questions about identity in the early modern world. What, in the age of European religious conflict, is a Christian? Of lesser importance, what is a Turk? In the play, Ward’s “second-in-command Gismund answers to a request to identify the ship ‘We are of the Sea,’ indicating that for him the pirate vessel represents an alternate political space, and that his allegiances are free from the claims of orthodox national identity.”⁶⁷

The popularity of the play challenges the audience, both contemporary and modern, to confront ideas of corruption, conversion, and renunciation. How does piracy corrupt someone enough to influence a man to convert to Islam? Does exposure to the English or to Protestants weaken a man enough to cause him to renounce the one true faith? The play portrays the Turk as a man who is strong on land but weak on the water; what are the dynamics of identity and dangers to it during travel?⁶⁸

We return to the idea of the incorruptibility of the saint’s body being about the incorruptibility of the man and his faith. In Fernão Mendes Pinto’s work, Francis Xavier “is obliquely presented in the work as a warrior-priest who spurs men on to combat,” and is often depicted with a sword.⁶⁹ This depiction also reflects the complementary roles of chaplain and ship’s captain during the age, and the enormous burden of the missions placed on both. It was common in “sixteenth-century naval practice to devolve extraordinary responsibility upon the lone figure of the pilot; in the case of Spanish and Portuguese vessels, royal regulations gave the pilot sole charge over the ship’s course.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Appleby, *Women and English Piracy*, 33, citing K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 129–31, 147–48, 156, 214; and John Ovington and Hugh George Rawlinson, eds., *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 267–74.

⁶⁷ Robert Daborne, *A Christian Turned Turk* (London, 1612), Scene 2, cited in Claire Jowett, *The Culture of Piracy, 1580–1630: English Literature and Seaborne Crime* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 3.

⁶⁸ For a strong analysis of identity in travel writing, see Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in Early English Travel Writing*, Apple-Zimmerman Series in Early Modern Culture (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011).

⁶⁹ Fernão Mendes Pinto, *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, ed. and trans. Rebecca D. Catz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 502.

⁷⁰ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984), 69.

In the missionary world, similar responsibility was given to the chaplains on board ships. The priests would act as confessor to the captain and crew and try to convert any slaves that may have been loaded. Among the more traditional pastoral duties the Jesuits performed on board, they also celebrated feasts and other holy days: "On saints' days there would be full processions around the ships, with fathers dressed in vestments and boy acolytes holding candles, carrying relics and the host."⁷¹ In fearful times, the chaplains would lead "the final prayerful pleas to God in front of the banners and holy relics unfurled on the upper desk before which all had knelt in prayer."⁷²

In the case of Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, two French privateer vessels shadowed for a number of days the ship on which Ricci and other Jesuits had sailed out of Lisbon. When the privateers "sailed too close to the three large carracks of the India fleet, the carracks' captains ordered the guns run out, while the Jesuits, suffering grievously from seasickness, stood on deck, clasping their crucifixes and ready to exhort the crews into battle." The French sailed away.⁷³ Later, Ricci would acknowledge Xavier and "make of that faith his glory when he wrote in his *History of the Christian Expedition to the Kingdom of China* that he would never have tackled the project without crediting 'the man who first undertook it, and who by dying and leaving his remains there took possession, as it were, of this conquest.'"⁷⁴

The Jesuits had more than otherworldly reasons for assuming these defensive postures. In the overlapping interests of military men, merchants, and missionaries, the

loss of ships and cargo on the homeward run to Goa and Europe had important long-range effects on Jesuit finances, especially if the ships went down before reaching Portuguese-controlled Malacca, where they would have to pay massive transit dues, some of which would later reach the Jesuit missions in the form of payments remitted back to them by the crown.⁷⁵

The interests of the Jesuits and the crown were linked.

These actions were not always in line with the Roman Church. At the Council of Trent, senior churchmen had urged penalties of suspension or even excommunication for those indulging in such trading (silk market, in this case).⁷⁶ But the missions needed to support themselves, and the arguments they used "verged on the specious: that it

⁷¹ *Documenta Indica*, ed. Joseph Wicki, S. J., *Monumenta missionum Societatis Jesu, Missiones Orientales*, vol. 2 (1577–1580) (Rome, 1970), 311, cited in Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 77.

⁷² Bernado Gomes de Brito, *Tragic History of the Sea: 1559–1622*, ed. and trans. C. R. Boxer (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1968), 68–72, cited in Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 71.

⁷³ *Doc. Ind.*, II, 306, 336, cited in Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 68–69.

⁷⁴ Matteo Ricci, *Histoire de l'expédition chretienne au royaume de la Chine* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1978), cited in Lacouture and Leggatt, *Jesuits: A Multibiography*, 178.

⁷⁵ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 178.

⁷⁶ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 176.

could not be called trading if one did not literally *touch* the silk being shipped, or that one was not engaged in a business deal if one did not set foot in a Chinese market.”⁷⁷

The age of piracy, therefore, challenged order in a number of ways. Defining piracy and rules of the sea “became related to the question of legitimate sponsorship—indirectly important to understandings of sovereignty.”⁷⁸ How significant is the separation of these colonies and missions from their metropolises? Where do the doctrine and practice diverge? For political, economic, and religious reasons, “the control of oceanic space had become not just a commercial question but part of the construction of power in the European state system.”⁷⁹

The short epigram that started this line of research and this essay asserts that the transitions and dislocations of experience occurred beyond the lifetime of Francis Xavier. In its overt declaration of heroism on the seas, there is something below the surface. It suggests that travel is the experience of distance and detachment, and that travellers observe their own time and place, as well as another’s. In its reading and context, the epigram is a comment on the closing of the Middle Ages, a Roman church under siege, a post-Tridentine sanctity, and of life and death at sea, where multiple narratives and identities can exist.

The word “translation” gained widespread use in the thirteenth century to mean the transfer of the body or relics of a saint from one resting place to another, to carry it over land or sea. It is more widely understood now to turn an idea from one language to another. The function of a translation, whether of relic or word, is dependent on the experience and expectations of the target audience, who are influenced by the context and culture in which they find themselves.

In the early modern era, a time of political, intellectual, theological, and social upheaval, the translation of the relic of the arm of Francis Xavier was an act of creating order out of chaos. As Peter Brown has observed about the origins of the cult of saints and use of relics, “distances between groups and persons were overcome by gestures of grace and favor, and the dangerously long miles of the imperial communications system were overcome by a strenuously maintained ideology of unanimity and concord.”⁸⁰ This was as true in the early modern world as in the late antiquity of Brown’s scholarship.

In an age of confessional and imperial wars, translations—the movement of relics to people—lessened the need for pilgrimages, the movement of people to relics. In profound ways, if “relics could travel, then the distance between the believer and the place where the holy could be found ceased to be a fixed, physical distance.”⁸¹ Even within the

⁷⁷ Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, 177.

⁷⁸ Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism,” 704. See also Anne Perotin-Dumon, “The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and Law on the Seas, 1450–1850,” in *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires*, ed. James D. Tracy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 196–227.

⁷⁹ Mancke, “Early Modern Expansion and the Politicization of Oceanic Space,” 233.

⁸⁰ Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 89.

⁸¹ Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 89.

heroic language of the epigram, there is a utopian notion that rolls back the Reformation. The translation of the arm of the beloved, courageous, and pure Francis Xavier fulfilled the role of most relics: they “made plain, at a particular time and place, the immensity of God’s mercy. They announced moments of amnesty. They brought a sense of deliverance and pardon into the present.”⁸² The incorruptible saint made the corrupt whole.

In early modern literature, translation was seen as something that could restore integrity to a narrative or identity where a hole was perceived. Translations can be used to examine how literary systems close or open, and whether there is a perception of self-sufficiency. Indeed, the efforts of both Francis Xavier and his immediate successors “to find a way into Guangdong Province in the second half of the sixteenth century foundered as a result of their inability to enter into a conversation with the local authorities.”⁸³

There were hundreds of miracles credited to Francis Xavier, and even his contemporaries wrote that many were exaggerations or inventions. A modern biographer even writes of the patron saint of missionaries that Xavier, “as usual, depended on the services of some native who had learned Portuguese. The fact that he is never known to have even attempted to hear the confession of any person in the East, except such as had a smattering of Portuguese or Spanish, is plainly indicative that he had no miraculous command of languages,”⁸⁴ which the hagiography had attributed to Xavier.

In the decade that he served as a missionary, Francis Xavier apparently was never able to perform sacramental duties in any language other than those he knew as a European aristocrat. The issues of piety and piracy that surround the repatriation of St. Francis Xavier’s arm are part of a story of what was lost in translation in the early modern European efforts to conquer and save the world.

Appendix Barone’s Epigram

Vel ad Indos Roma Xaverio vocanti praesto est contra Barbaros

Epigr. CLXIV

Ir ruerat, flammisque minax Badagus, armis:
Obvia nee fuerant, qui satis arma ferant.
Unus erat, sed inerme Caput, Saberus: in
Hostem At ruit: in certam nee pavet ire necem.
Christiadum sic urget Amor: quos ante sacro
Fontis adhuc madidos tinxerat irnbre latex.
Hoc tulerit Lojola? Alio vel ab Orbe vocanti

⁸² Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 92.

⁸³ Brockey, *Journey to the East*, 245. For a discussion of the language issues of the Jesuits in India, see Katharine Smith Diehl, “Review: Catholic Religious Orders in South Asia, 1500–1835,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (1978): 699.

⁸⁴ James Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier* (New York: Wicklow Press, 1952), 340.

Advolat, auxilio quo juvet ille suo.
 Addit se lateri Comitem: radiisque corusco
 Barbaricas subito disiicit ore manus.
 Sat venisse, sat & vidissee hostemque videndo
 Perculit. Haec oculis laurea quanta fuit!
 Magna licet fuerit Jaus, quod sic vicit: ad Indos
 At quod sic venit, gloria major erit.

Id. Epigr. CLXV

Te, Lojola, suo Tyberis dum clauderet alveo;
 Alterius sensit Xavier Orbis opem.
 Viventem nam multus adhuc te in vota vocabat:
 Cui dexter facili Numine semper a des.
 Fert cunctis Saberis opem; Lojola, sed ipsi
 Qui sert Sabero, discite, quantus erat.

[Xavier was available to be called by Rome to the Indies, against the Barbarians. Epigram 164. The new Christians [of the Indies], before they were strengthened by weapons, encountered the menacing fire of the Badagus,⁸⁵ and failed before them. Although the leader was unarmed and had no saber, he rushed in against the enemy, able to fell them as surely as a murderous quake. Christian love is compelling: Before the font [of Baptism], one can be dipped and imbued with the sacred. Why did Loyola take this [step to call Xavier to the Indies]? From another world, God flies toward the call of need, to support one of his own. He accompanies his own from their side, hand and mouth flashing rays, suddenly scattering Barbarians. Enough came and enough saw the enemy unnerved. And this is how the presence of the Truth was acclaimed! What he won was more powerful than the Caste-Jaus. He came [and brought Christianity] to the Indies, all to the greater Glory to God!]

85 On June 16, 1544, Francis Xavier wrote about the Badagus, an indigenous tribe overrunning the Fishery Coast of India and raiding villages, causing newly-converted Christian communities to flee inland or out to rocks on the coast, where they were accosted by pirates and other raiders.