

## A Failing Mission?

Salvation in the Jesuit Mission in Japan Under Francisco Cabral

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# Introduction

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## Overview

The year is 1549, and Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier (1506-52), the “Apostle of the Indies”, has been in Japan for approximately three months. Between the harsh crossing he recently experienced to reach the archipelago, and the difficult journey that awaits him to reach the capital of the country, his thoughts still linger on the tense situation he has left behind in the college at Goa, where the effervescent spirituality of some missionaries is causing disharmony and disorder among the ranks of the Jesuits.<sup>1</sup> He therefore takes advantage of a short reprieve in Kagoshima to write numerous exhortations to his brothers; one passage of this “Great Letter from Japan” reads:

Look carefully after yourselves, brothers mine in Jesus Christ, because there are many in hell who, when alive, were cause and instrument, with their words, of the salvation and acceptance into the glory of heaven of others.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The situation is detailed in Županov 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Xavier to the Jesuits in Goa, Kagoshima, 5 November 1549, in Ruiz-de-Medina, *Documentos del Japón* (henceforth: *DJ*), 1:150. All translations, except where otherwise indicated, are mine.

In other words, Xavier is clarifying for his brethren that bringing about the salvation and conversion of others does not assure the same outcome for the missionary.

This paragraph opens a window on a question that is not usually raised in the writings of Xavier, who was often preoccupied with directing the development of the Jesuits' recently founded enterprise in Asia and would have taken this soteriological understanding for granted. Simultaneously, the fact that Xavier had to explicitly state this suggests that not all missionaries had the same approach to salvation and mission. What exactly is the relation between the salvation of the soul of the Jesuit and that of the people he aims to save, either new converts or old Christians? And, so, how does a missionary ensure his own salvation? How does this preoccupation tie into the policies that surround the missionary enterprise? These queries allow us to reframe the stance of early modern Jesuit missionaries on the issues they confronted in their ministries and shed light on their attitudes and decision-making regarding the entirety of their evangelising activity.

This monograph applies these considerations to the work of the Portuguese Jesuit Francisco Cabral (1532-1609) while he was the head of the mission in Japan (1570-79), with a particular focus on his decisions for the governance of this enterprise. The figure of Cabral emerges from the historiography of the Jesuit mission of Japan as a sort of embarrassing accident in an otherwise stellar enterprise. He is dwarfed by the charismatic action of the Japanese mission's founder, the enterprising administration of the later Visitor, Alessandro Valignano (1539-1606), and the systematic policymaking of Bishop Luís Cerqueira (1552-1614); he also lacked the skilful proclivity for writing of Luís Frois (1532-97), the inventive resilience of Gaspar Vilela (1526-72), and the extensive knowledge and appreciation of Japanese culture of João Rodrigues Tçuzzu (1561-1633). In general, Cabral's missionary work is similarly ignored, as historiography either follows the Xavier-Valignano-Cerqueira order of (supposed and desired) progression or focuses on specific periods of the mission that fall outside his superiorate (1570-79).<sup>3</sup> The one trait of Cabral that emerges clearly from the literature is that he did not show any love for Japanese people nor their culture. He considered them sensual, sinful, and treacherous. His writings after he left Japan to evangelise in India are particularly aggressive on this point: in the 1590s, his opposition to Valignano's political and spiritual work results in a vitriolic attack against Japan, the latter's favoured mission, in which

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**3** A representative of the first group is Boscaro 2008. To the second, focusing on specific periods or missionaries, belongs Schurhammer 1973; Bourdon 1993; Moran 1993; Brockey 2014. A thematic approach on the theology of the post-Valignano period is taken by Üçerler 2022.

Cabral exaggerated all the negative traits he could attribute to the Japanese, just as he had exalted the positive ones of virtuous Japanese Christians when the mission was under his tutelage. The figure of Cabral is thus flatly returned as nothing more than a “fidalgo y muy fidalgo”,<sup>4</sup> a Portuguese medieval *conquistador* who stood in the way of the “modern [...] pliable, perspicacious” (Elison 1988) Italian missionaries who had understood the *real* strategy to bring the Gospel to Japan.<sup>5</sup>

This monograph aims to complicate this narrative by making Cabral’s case a “telling failure”.<sup>6</sup> Cabral’s writings, spurred by his desperation and fear of not being saved, say a lot, about various topics that were generally considered not edifying enough to appear explicitly in missionary correspondence. By looking at the reasons why Cabral considered the Japanese mission as failing, this research aims to reveal the expectations and worldviews that Cabral brought with himself from Europe and Goa. It will analyse the manner in which Cabral’s imagined missionary glory shattered, together with his plan of evangelisation, upon contact with a multi-layered enemy: his own brethren, accused of refusing to obey; his superiors, who appeared to ignore the mission; the Japanese people, who rejected Christianity regardless of the what Cabral held to be his sacrifices; and the Japanese Christians, whose piety is described to be much more pleasing to God than Cabral’s own. This approach sheds light on why this enterprise of Japan, often hailed as the most important among those of the Society of Jesus and depicted as one of their most successful ones, at a certain point of its history had been considered on the brink of failure by one of its superiors. In this way, the figure of Cabral is returned to the relevant contexts in which he lived and that produced his worldview, while an analysis of the tensions that surrounded his work in Japan contributes to the challenging of the traditional portraits of the Society of Jesus that describe it as a highly homogeneous and orderly organisation.<sup>7</sup> A close reading of his correspondence, often against the grain, shows the centrality of discourses of salvation in the missionaries’ narratives. Refusing to see the Jesuits just as pioneers of intercultural contacts (and one would be hard-pressed

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**4** A *fidalgo* was a man of the Portuguese military aristocracy. The expression, originally by missionary Organtino Gnechi-Soldo, was made famous by Elison 1988, 20.

**5** The frequency of this narrative as it appears in historiography is discussed in Brockey 2014, 102-3.

**6** I am following the approach delineated in the collection by Keevak, Hertel 2017.

**7** Numerous studies present critically the different aspects of the traditional image of the Society in different periods. Historical outlines up to the present are O’Malley 1999, Mitchell 1980, 7-12. A brief explanation of why the stereotype of uniformity persists in academic studies is in Brockey 2014, 19. For a more detailed overview of the literature of Jesuit stereotypes, see Aveling 1981, 18-48.

with Cabral), this text aims to avoid what historian Luke Clossey has described as the “unspoken but widely lurking prejudice of the Europeans as the ‘same’ [as modern researchers]” (Clossey 2008, 6-7). For the same reasons, it also strives to avoid falling into a “no true Jesuit fallacy” by considering the figure of Cabral always in relation to other influential members of the Society of Jesus, such as Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier; although Cabral’s contrast with Valignano on the missionary policies for Japan of 1580-81 falls outside the scope of this study, references to the Visitor and his writings are necessary to understand the period before his intervention in Japan.

Luke Clossey researched the extensive bulk of the letters *Indipetae*,<sup>8</sup> the petitions of young Jesuits who wished to become missionaries, to examine the impact that the aspiration for their own salvation had on petitioners’ yearning for the Indies. Contrary to the myth of the altruistic Jesuit who was worried primarily about his flock, Clossey’s findings highlight a balanced desire to save both themselves and others (121-3). If this was the double intent of the Jesuits who wished to work in extra-European lands, the question of how to save oneself ceases to be a small addendum to the key question of missionary policy proper and instead takes centre stage, alongside the desire to save others, in the preoccupations that surround missionary activity. As stated by Clossey, soteriological worries were indeed a central feature of early modern Catholicism (246-7).

What, then, is meant by Xavier’s suggestion to “look after oneself”? Faith in God, unsurprisingly, appears in his writings as the most important feature in a missionary;<sup>9</sup> humility too, as the best instrument to know one’s own sinful tendencies and to obtain a more complete abandonment to God.<sup>10</sup> These passages are peppered with references to Ignatius Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises*, the guide to find God’s will that compelled Francis Xavier to enter the group that would later become the Society of Jesus, and on which he relied while a missionary in Asia.<sup>11</sup> The constant reference to the understanding of God’s will, through the *Exercises*, and the unconditional acceptance of it are therefore one of the ways to look after one’s spiritual wellbeing. How, though, ought a missionary to avoid a too personal reading of God’s will, and the excessive zeal of some enthusiasts,

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**8** For a general introduction on the *Indipetae*, see Maldavsky 2012. See also the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, *Digital Indipetae Database* (<https://indipetae.bc.edu/>).

**9** Francisco Xavier to the Jesuits in Goa, Kagoshima, 5 November 1549, in *DJ*, 1:148.

**10** “There is nobody in hell who, when alive, worked to obtain the means to reach this interior humility”. Francisco Xavier to the Jesuits in Goa, Kagoshima, 5 November 1549, in *DJ*, 1:150.

**11** Ruiz de Medina highlights the passages in question in the critical apparatus of *DJ*.

which is “arranged by the Devil to upset [them]” (*DJ*, 1:151)? The other principal tool against the temptations of religious excesses is obedience (*DJ*, 1:153). An often-controversial topic,<sup>12</sup> the conceptualisation of Jesuit obedience indeed presents the orders of the superior as an interpretation of divine will. In this world-oriented religious order, obedience comes to be a substitute for more traditional (and extreme) forms of mortification, which Loyola believed to be a gateway for egotistic temptations. In the most radical interpretations of this concept, obedience came to represent, in its total abandonment to God’s will as interpreted by one’s superior, the last hope of salvation for a Jesuit who had lost his path.

Obedience emerges from Xavier’s letters as a most important aspect of the soteriological path because it was part of a wider structure, encapsulated by the first Jesuits in the *Formula of the Institute*.<sup>13</sup> “The defence and propagation of the faith” appear as the main objectives, but subsequent lines betray the characteristic preoccupation with salvation identified by Luke Clossey in early modern Catholicism: “let [the aspirant Jesuit] take care [...] first of all to keep before his eyes God and then the nature of this Institute which he has embraced and which is, so to speak, a pathway to God” (*Cons.*, 67). As was common in religious orders from the twelfth century (Riches 2010; Strieder 2001, 51-75), the Society of Jesus adopted the solemn vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, to be taken by spiritual coadjutors and professed members (O’Malley 1993, 347. See also Alden 1996, 12-13). In addition to the three solemn vows, some professed Jesuits swore a fourth vow, one of special obedience to the Pope regarding missions (“*Exposcit debitum*” [4], *Cons.*, 68). Taken by the original companions of Paris as a possible substitution in case their pilgrimage to Jerusalem was not successful, on this vow represented for Loyola “the principal foundation of the Society” (quoted in O’Malley 1993, 298). Regardless of its name, however, the fourth vow had little to do with the Pope himself, as the General and even people outside Jesuit hierarchy could be invested with this authority as well, such as the King of Portugal (O’Malley 1993, 299-300. See also Foresta 2012, 334-40). In this sense, it was mostly a manner to support the itinerant nature of the ministry of the Jesuits, that is, their missions. Francisco Cabral’s work in Japan will therefore be

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**12** On the creation and perpetuation of the stereotype of complete Jesuit obedience, see Burke 2001.

**13** This document, incorporated in the papal bulls that approved the Society of Jesus, and corresponding to the Rule in older orders, states explicitly the main aspects of the Jesuit way of proceeding. The *Formula of the Institute* and the papal bulls are generally collected at the beginning of the *Constitutions*; the edition used for this dissertation is *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* edited by George E. Ganss (henceforth: *Cons.*, followed by the entry number if between square brackets).

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analysed in relation to the path of salvation prescribed by the Formula, and other subsequent readings of the traditional vows through Jesuit lenses. The specificities of the Catholicism promoted by the Society of Jesus thus intersected with the peculiarities of the mission to Japan, creating an uncommon situation, which still spoke to the wider context of early modern missionaries.

## Periodisation

The first step to approaching the world as it was understood by the Jesuit missionaries, and more specifically Francisco Cabral, and reducing the inevitable approximations is to consider the context in which these men were moving, and which produced their worldview. This is a particularly important step, as the Jesuits had often displayed a tendency to hyper-awareness of the contexts they came across through their casuistry and their attempts at adaptation to other cultures (Burke 2002, 164-5).<sup>14</sup> As Peter Burke points out, in an outline of the history of the concept of 'context', it is most fruitful to consider multiple contexts at the same time (164). When dealing with people and ideas interacting on a global scale, if on one side the multiple contexts are a tangible reality, then, on the other, the problem of identifying the more relevant ones becomes particularly pressing in light of the sheer number of possibilities, if nothing else. Being aware of the multiplicity of possibly relevant contexts, how is it possible to delineate them with sufficient precision? Burke, at the end of his essay, defines a context as "phenomena that are not in focus at a given moment: especially, perhaps, those that are just out of focus" (174), that is, an essential part of the matter at hand that is lying at the margins.

To navigate the numerous possibilities, it is thus necessary to hypothesise a hierarchy of possible contexts (Shōgimen 2016, 245-7). Once a pertinent context is identified for a specific statement, the validity of said context can be tested on other assertions. The initial context can then, in turn, call to other relevant contexts. To give a pertinent example from Chapter 2, the preoccupation of Cabral with silk is linked with the soteriological consequences of poverty; this in turn recalls the importance of salvation in early modern Catholicism, but also the importance attributed to fine garments in *senigoku* Japan; or to the apostolate of Francis Xavier, and to the textual tradition that sees the latter mediating the two; or, finally, it can inform a discussion on the financial status of the mission. A verification of these contexts with other utterances by Cabral highlights how the

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<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of the sixteenth century's lack of concern with universalism, see Toulmin 1990. For casuistry, see O'Malley 1993, 144-52.

connection with the Japanese *milieu* was present, but mostly superficial in nature, while the necessities of early modern Catholicism emerged more solidly as the source of Cabral's preoccupations. By treating the context as a hypothesis, therefore, it is possible to discriminate among Burke's nested contexts to identify those that are "just out of focus" from those which just appear to be significant.

One of the wider contexts that inform Cabral's writings therefore, not even particularly out of focus, is the sixteenth-century Catholic milieu, that is, early modern Catholicism, which introduces a question of periodisation. Attempting to find a historical label for the period following the Protestant schism, Hubert Jedin's ground-breaking 1946 essay, "Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation" (translated as Jedin 1999), proposed to refer to it as both "Counter-Reformation" and "Catholic Reformation",<sup>15</sup> and recognised that some phenomena, such as the Council of Trent and the Society of Jesus, could fall under both names (Jedin 1999, 44). Jedin's approach has since been widely adopted by historians and scholars of religion (O'Malley 1991, 178), with some important exceptions.<sup>16</sup> More recently, John W. O'Malley has suggested the name "Early Modern Catholicism" to replace all the previous labels (193). In doing so, he links the many aspects of sixteenth-century Catholicism with the wider historical period ("Early Modern") in which they were set, instead of focusing only on the changes in religious structures. The adoption of this term also allows the elements that the traditional descriptions left stranded to be captured, such as many of the activities of the Society of Jesus (O'Malley 2002, 8).

However, the "Early Modern" label has not been accepted by historians as bland and faceless, as O'Malley purports (140). In addition to its chronological vagueness, its link to the contested idea of "modernity" highlights the risk it carries of levelling, by assuming that the world was on its way to modernisation (Goldstone 1998). The history of non-Western countries, especially, can fall victim to an approach that interprets differences as development aberrations by bringing

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**15** The difference is due to the perception of the "Counter-Reformation" as a merely reactionary movement, nearly without a will of its own. The idea was clearly not appealing to Catholic scholars, interested in describing a true renewal of the Church. Protestants, on the other side, tended to see the Reformation as the "true restoration" or as a positive movement towards a more modern disposition of religion ("modernity" having, for them, a clearly positive connotation). See Jedin 1999, 21-2.

**16** Reinhard gives another possible perspective by highlighting the affinities between Catholic and Protestant reforms, with his Confessionalization (*Konfessionalisierung*) approach (1989). Another perspective, the "Tridentine", from the Council of Trent (1545-63), purported this event as central in the evolution of the Roman Catholic Church. While admitting its importance in restructuring the life of both lay and clergy and in delineating the general policies that ruled the Church in the following centuries, the name is far too specific to be really useful as a wider context for such a complex situation. See, for example, Bossy 1970.

it continuously into comparison with the West (Trouillot 2002, 847; Parr 2001, 407).<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the tendency to understate a period's internal differences, in an effort to find common traits, and to exalt dissimilarities with other periods, can obfuscate the connection that transition moments have with the preceding centuries. The narrative is made linear, so that the result appears homogeneous and inevitable (Goody 2006a, 23). When inherited by the Early Modern period, this outlook can limit the possibility of historians to see past the teleology of modernisation, and to understand and describe the past on its own terms. This danger affects especially the sixteenth century as it was an early moment of transition, at the periphery of many of the systematisations and developments that would characterise the following centuries of the early modern period. As historians debate periodisation and potential new labels,<sup>18</sup> these considerations are necessary for a study that proposes to focus on a mission perceived as failed, and to make it speak in valuable ways. The early modern contexts will therefore be analysed in Chapter 1, as other, specific influences on Cabral's spirituality and worldview will be analysed when relevant.

The sixteenth century was a period of great changes in Japan as well. After the national unification around the sixth century, and the blooming of Japanese imperial culture during the Heian period (794-1185), political power was concentrated in the hands of the military class, whose head was considered the shōgun. During the Ōnin civil war (1467-77), the Ashikaga shōgunate, which had ruled the country by controlling imperial power, had emerged weakened and unable to maintain mastery over its nominal vassals. Approximately a century of civil war followed, the so-called *sengoku jidai* (the Warring States period) (Hall 2001, 13),<sup>19</sup> conventionally ending with the deposition of the last Ashikaga shōgun in 1573, or later, in 1600. It was characterised by the rapid rise and fall of military leaders, the *sengoku daimyō*, who rejected central control, carved territories for themselves through armed conflicts, and ruled independently over them (Sansom 1961, 249). However, due to the quick urbanisation and economic development of the country, various new social forces were emerging alongside the daimyō; the great Buddhist complexes, village communes, regional communes, egalitarian leagues of warriors and peasants (*ikki*), and local landowners – they all fought among

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**17** The label of “modernity” thus facilitates the assignation to the West all the “positive” qualities, finding their opposites automatically in the non-Western world (inaction, backwardness, disorder, etc.) and creating the traditional dichotomies found also in Orientalism. On this latter topic, see also Goody 2006a, 304; Mignolo, Schiwy 2002.

**18** Such as “early-modern”, suggested in Clossey 2005, 593-4.

**19** Another common end date is 1568, the year when Nobunaga entered Kyōto.



themselves for dominance, and against the warlords (Souyri 2002, 182-200; Lamers 2000, 16-19). The instability of the country's political situation, often lamented by the missionaries, heavily marked the initial decades of Jesuit presence in Japan, like the subsequent unification would. For this reason, the present study will use the *sengoku* label when discussing sixteenth-century Japan.

## Scope and Sources

From a chronological point of view, this study covers the years of Cabral's superiorate of Japan, from his landing in Japan in 1570 to the arrival of Valignano in 1579. Soon afterwards,<sup>20</sup> Cabral left the office of universal superior of Japan, even if he still maintained a prominent position in the mission as superior of the house of Bungo (Ôita). The extremely detailed study penned by Josef Franz Schütte, *Valignanos Missionsgrundsätze für Japan*, available in English with the title *Valignano's Mission Principles for Japan*, delineates the events of the last years of Cabral in Japan in a still relevant manner, considering extensively Cabral's reaction to Visitor Alessandro Valignano's reforms in Japan. However, I argue that historiography's focus on the disagreement between the two men as the reason behind Cabral leaving the Japanese mission fails to consider that Cabral's perception of the failing of the mission predates by years the Visitor's arrival. It is my objective to provide the analysis of a case study of a failure of a sixteenth-century mission, and I hope that such analysis can provide additional background information on the famous clash between Valignano and Cabral, by focusing on the latter's own understanding of the mechanisms and development of the Japanese enterprise.

The primary sources used to analyse the theme of salvation during this period are mostly comprised of Jesuit correspondence from Japan, focusing especially on Cabral's letters. Most of these sources belong to the period of Cabral's superiorate; these manuscripts are mostly found in the Archivum Romanorum Societatis Iesu (Rome), the library of the Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid), and the Ajuda Library (Lisbon). Prior or subsequent letters are used as well, such as those printed in the collection of Evora (1598)<sup>21</sup> or those present-

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**20** It is not clear when exactly Cabral was removed from his position of universal superior of Japan and nominated superior of Bungo, but by August of 1580 this decision had already been implemented.

**21** *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesus escreuerão dos Reynos de Iapão & China aos da mesma Companhia da Índia, & Europa des do anno de 1549. até o de 1580 [...] Impressas por mandado do Reuerendissimo em Christo Padre dom Theotónio de Bragança, Arcebispo d' Euora* (henceforth: EVORA). Another relevant collection of sixteenth-century printed Jesuit letters is *Cartas que os padres e irmãos da Companhia de Iesus, que andao nos Reynos de Iapão escreuerão aos da mesma Companhia da*

ed in the critical editions of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, to shed further light on the topics involved in the analysis. Additional Jesuit-produced documentation is used to shed light on the events, such as Luís Frois' *Historia de Japam* (1580s) (henceforth: *Historia*). Texts composed to support the evangelisation efforts, such as catechisms and reports, are considered as well. Chapter 3 provides ample information about Jesuit letter-writing, especially that between missionaries and their superiors who lived in other parts of the world. It delineates the importance of the correspondence that connected the centres and peripheries of the early modern Jesuit global network and how it sustained the governance of the Society. During his superiorate, Cabral strove to maintain contact with the nodes of Jesuit presence that were most relevant to the mission in Japan: Goa, Lisbon, and Rome. As will be delineated, Cabral concluded that this tool of governance and support of the union among Jesuits was not as efficient as earlier Jesuits had hoped.

The analysis of the themes present in these documents takes priority over the narration of the history of the Japanese mission, to enable the reconstruction of the contexts that inform Cabral's missionary policy and judgements on the successes and failures of the mission. Perhaps most evidently, Japanese people appear most often as Cabral's rhetorical tools, to support his argumentations, showing his approach to Japanese people and their culture. In this sense, this study is an exercise that aims to reconstruct the *forma mentis* of a Jesuit missionary of the sixteenth century.

## Structure

This monograph is composed of five chapters, an introduction, and brief concluding remarks.<sup>22</sup> It is guided by the analysis of two interdependent subject matters: Catholic salvation and (missionary) failure. The first, being the missionaries' explicit preoccupation and final objective of their enterprise, is more starkly discussed by both sources and analysis. The second, a very unedifying topic, appears rarely in an explicit form in the sources, and when it is present, it appears woven tightly together with salvation. As the tools Cabral had to obtain salvation, for himself and for the Japanese people, seem to fail

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*India, e Europa, des do anno de.1549 ate o de.66. [...] Impressas por mandado do Illustre. e Reuerendiss. Senhor dom João Soarez, Bispo de Coimbra* (henceforth: COIMBRA).

<sup>22</sup> Part of the research presented in this monograph has been previously published as "The Dress of Evangelization: Jesuit Garments, Liturgical Textiles, and the Senses in Early Modern Japan" (2020). *Entangled Religions*, 10; and "Purple Silk and Black Cotton: Francisco Cabral and the Negotiation of Jesuit Attire in Japan (1570-73)" (2016). Maryks, R.A. (ed.), *Exploring Jesuit Distinctiveness*. Leiden: BRILL, 137-55.

one after the other, the idea that Japan is a failed mission coalesces in his letters in a more solid manner. The relation between the two, salvation and missionary failure, sits at the centre of this study, which strives to ask the question, when does a Catholic mission fail? Of course, it is not possible to answer such a question in general terms. Taking the point view of a sixteenth-century Portuguese Jesuit missionary, this study follows his point of view to focus on the spiritual dimension of failure; although economic, governance, and practical causes all appear in his correspondence, Cabral's worldview brings them all back to Providence and God's will for the world.

To facilitate the analysis that follows it, the first chapter offers a historical background on the Society of Jesus, its missions, and its relation to the Portuguese Empire in Asia, and introduces the figure of Francisco Cabral and his life until his arrival in Japan. Aiming to illustrate how Catholic salvation worked both in its theoretical and practical forms in the Jesuit mission of Japan, the thematic chapters consider each specific tool for salvation, following the loosely chronological order in which they come into focus in Cabral's correspondence. Chapter 2 focuses on the Jesuit vow of poverty and the debate that surrounded the use of silk Japanese garments by the missionaries. Chapter 3 analyses the vow of obedience and how it operated within Japan and the mission's connections with the Jesuit headquarters in Goa and Rome. Chapter 4 uses conversion as the leading theme and focuses on its conceptualisations in relation to the Jesuit attempts to bring the Japanese people to salvation. Finally, in Chapter 5, all these matters, which could be deemed 'small' failures, culminate in the perceived collapse of the mission by Cabral, who foresees its doom and abandons it.

