Humanist or Exclusivist?

A Critical Analysis of *The Commentary of Father Monserrate S.J. on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*

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Jessica Hope Lohner, candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in History, has presented a thesis titled, *Humanist or Exclusivist? A Critical Analysis of The Commentary of Father Monserrate S.J. on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, in an oral examination held on April 27, 2017. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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Abstract

On November 17, 1579, at the invitation of the Akbar, the Mughal emperor, three Jesuit missionaries set out from Goa on a journey that would lead them across much of the Indian subcontinent as they travelled to Fatehpur Sikri, the capital of the Mughal Empire. In true Jesuit form, the three missionaries produced copious writings during the mission, which included detailed journals and letters. Before the fathers departed, the Provincial superior of Goa had charged Father Antony Monserrate with keeping a comprehensive record of the mission. Between 1582 and 1590, Monserrate compiled his Commentary based on the notes that he had made daily for the duration of the mission. Once completed, the Commentary effectively disappeared from the historical record until 1906 when it was rediscovered at St. Paul’s Cathedral Library in Kolkata. Since its re-emergence, the Commentary has become one of the foremost primary resources for both the study of Akbar and the Mughal Empire and early Jesuit missions. Yet, despite its presence in all major studies and analyses in the areas mentioned above, there has never been a detailed examination of the Commentary itself. Monserrate spent eight years meticulously assembling the Commentary; therefore, the deliberate method, language, and structure he used in its construction deserve some consideration of their own. Monserrate demonstrated both humanist and exclusivist elements within the text of the Commentary. To assess the presence of these positions within the text, both travel literature theory and martyrological literary analysis are employed.
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Introduction

One of the best known examples of Jesuit inculturation is Matteo Ricci’s treatise *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, published in 1603, where the famous Jesuit missionary to China uses Confucian ideas and values to present the Christian faith to a Chinese audience.¹ Like most Renaissance humanists, the early Jesuits believed that God was the source of all truth and truth was universal, which meant that it could be found throughout history, nature, and cultural diversity.² This assumption allowed them to actively seek knowledge from everything they observed, including in non-Christian and non-Western cultures, while somewhat paradoxically always treating Western Christian culture as inherently superior. Beyond the general constraint of implicit Western and Christian superiority, the Jesuits’ willingness to accommodate was also limited by the parameters of the Catholic tradition in which the Society of Jesus operated. While Jesuit missionaries noticed and admired aspects of all cultures and customs that reflected a revealed truth from God, all other religions were perceived as the deceptions of Satan or silly superstition. This limitation meant that if a belief challenged basic Catholic teachings in any way, the fathers would not try and understand it further.

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A good example of this can be found in The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar, which narrates the encounters of three Jesuit missionaries at the court of Akbar the Great from 1580 to 1583. Monserrate’s Commentary clearly demonstrates the tension between humanism and exclusivism found within a sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary. The mission was initiated when an embassy sent by the Great Mughal, Jalal ul-Din Muhammad Akbar (1542-1605) was received in Goa in September of 1579. Akbar had entrusted the embassy with the delivery of three nearly identical letters inviting two Jesuits to come to Fatehpur Sikri. The Archbishop, the Viceroy, and the Jesuit fathers of Goa each received an addressed copy of the above letter. While the embassy was received with all proper ceremony, there was no consensus on how to respond to the request. The Portuguese Viceroy in India was D. Luis de Ataide, the third count of Atouguia, and he was against complying with the request as he feared that Akbar might hold the fathers for ransom, since the request coincided directly with heightened tensions over control of the Indian Ocean. Consequently, out of the many volunteers, not a single Portuguese father was selected; the three Jesuit fathers ultimately sent were Italian, Spanish, and Persian.

Rudolf Acquaviva (1550-1583) was the leader of the mission. He was an Italian of noble birth, the son of the ninth Duke of Atri. He was also the nephew of Claudio

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4 Exclusivism in the context of religion refers to the belief that there is only one religion that is valid.
7 Correia-Afonso, The Jesuits in India, 79.
Acquaviva, who would become the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in 1581. At
the beginning of the mission, Acquaviva was thirty years old and highly regarded for his
“sterling piety.”10 Antony Monserrate (1536-1600) was a Spaniard from Catalonia.
Forty-three at the outset of the mission, he spent the first six months incapacitated by an
illness.11 The detailed journals he kept during his time with Akbar have provided some
of the richest historical source material available from this period. Francis Henriquez
(1538-1597) was a bit of an anomaly. He was similar in age to Monserrate and a convert
to Christianity. Henriquez was born in Persia, and began his education in Ormuz, which
is located in present-day Iran. His main function was to serve as an interpreter and
administrator for the mission.12

Henriquez, Monserrate, and Acquaviva, accompanied by Akbar’s ambassador
and interpreter, left for Fatehpur Sikri on November 17, 1579. The journey was long and
difficult. Monserrate’s description of the journey states that the group travelled through
Surat, Mandu, Ujjain, Sarangpur, Sironj, Narwar, Gwalior, and Dholpur, which is a
journey of over two thousand kilometers. Monserrate was detained due to illness, but the
others reached Fatehpur Sikri on February 28, 1580. The Jesuits quickly grew
disillusioned with Akbar and his lack of interest in accepting Christianity. Gradually the
fathers were permitted to return to Goa. Henriques was the first to be recalled in mid-
1581, Monserrate was sent by Akbar with an embassy to the King of Spain in 1582, and
the mission formally ended with the departure of Acquaviva at the beginning of 1583.13

13 Correia-Afonso, The Jesuits in India, 80-81.
Shortly after his return to Goa, Acquaviva was reassigned as superior of the Jesuit outreach at Salsette. As Acquaviva and his companions went to scout out a location to build their church, they were attacked by an angry mob of Hindu villagers and martyred. Monserrate stated that Acquaviva “was pierced by five great wounds, two at the back of his knees, one in his throat, one on the crown of his head, and one in his breast.”

In the *Commentary*, Monserrate devoted a substantial amount of space to praising Acquaviva, his nature, works, and martyrdom in a manner that reflects the traditional martyr stories of the Christian faith.

In 1579, before the fathers had departed, the Provincial of Goa had charged Monserrate with keeping a comprehensive record of the mission. Between 1582 and 1590, Monserrate worked on constructing his *Commentary* based on the notes that he had made daily for the duration of the mission. Once completed, the *Commentary* effectively disappeared from the historical record until 1906 when it was rediscovered at St. Paul’s Cathedral Library in Kolkata. Since its emergence, the *Commentary* has become one of the foremost primary sources for both the study of Akbar and the Mughal Empire and early Jesuit missions.

Although the *Commentary* is engaged with for the above mentioned areas, to date there has been no significant scholarly study dedicated to the first Jesuit mission to Akbar itself, nor a detailed literary analysis of the *Commentary*. Rather, the few

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15 Ibid., xv.
16 The reason that it took Monserrate eight years to construct the *Commentary* was because his circumstances often interfered: in 1588, the ship that he was on was seized by Arabs and he was sent to prison in Dhafar and later moved to a prison in Sanaa. See S.N. Banerjee and John S. Hoyland, “Editors’ Introduction,” *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J. on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, trans. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N Banerjee (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2003), xii.
academics who examine this mission, such as John Correia-Afonso and Edward Maclagan, tend to take a broader view of Jesuits in India, Jesuit missions to Akbar, or Jesuit missions to the Mughal Empire.\(^\text{18}\) A recent scholarly interest in early cross-cultural interactions has provided a couple of studies that offer a short introduction to this mission, but these stop well short of anything approaching deep or sustained consideration of the relevant historical materials.\(^\text{19}\) This paper seeks to fill this gap in the scholarship regarding the text of the *Commentary* and the first mission to Akbar by examining the tension that is present within the text with the presence of both humanist and martyrological elements. Furthermore, the paper will also strive to demonstrate that this tension reflects the tension found within the foundations of the Society of Jesus, which perhaps suggests an underlying paradox within the Order itself.

The tension between humanism and exclusivism is present within the one of the most defining practices of the Society of Jesus, the experiential prayer methods that are taught through the *Spiritual Exercises*. A person making the *Exercises* (an exercitant) participates in an intense month-long retreat under a spiritual director who guides him or her through daily prayer and meditation.\(^\text{20}\) The *Exercises* are crafted to allow the spiritual director the flexibility to adapt the program to best meet the strengths and needs of the

\(^\text{18}\) The main works that provide a scholarly account of the first mission are John Correia-Afonso, *The Jesuits in India 1542-1773* (Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash Anand, 1997) and Edward Maclagan *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (New York: Octagon Books, 1972). Correia-Afonso focuses more on Valignano, and the mission is only mentioned as an event that occurred while Valignano was the Visitor to India. Maclagan has one chapter dedicated to the first mission and another dedicated to the *Commentary*. Hugues Didier’s article “Muslim Heterodoxy, Persian Murtaddun and Jesuit Missionaries at the Court of King Akbar (1580-1605),” *Heythrop Journal* 49 (2008) presents the mission in a very judgemental, sarcastic tone.


individual exercitant while still maintaining the overall weekly themes of the purpose of
life and sin, the life of Jesus, the Passion of the Christ, and the Resurrection. The
exercitants are instructed to engage with all of their senses while meditating, including
sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. The flexibility and the engagement of the senses
stem from the humanist principles of accommodating the message and engaging the
whole person (the Renaissance man was a well-rounded engaged man). Too much
flexibility, though, was concerning for the Catholic Church, as the sixteenth-century was
also a time of religious unrest in Europe, with the Reformation, Inquisitions, and
Counter-Reformation all spreading suspicions and conflict. Therefore, Ignatius included
“Rules for Thinking with the Church” at the end of the Spiritual Exercises. It is in this
section that one can see the limits on humanism that exclusivism implements. One well-
known example is found in the thirteenth rule: “To be right in everything, we ought
always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides
it…” As every Jesuit makes the Exercises at least twice during his long formation, at
the beginning and at the end, he is shaped by this process. In fact, a Jesuit scholar of the
Exercises, Philip Endean, argues the Exercises are so influential that they are what make
a Jesuit a Jesuit, and from the beginning they have been an essential part of the Order’s
ministry.

Both the Exercises and humanistic education form the foundation of Jesuit
training, as outlined in the Constitutions of the Society by its founder, Ignatius of Loyola,

21 Ibid., 9.
22 David L. Fleming, ed., The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: A Literal Translation and a
Contemporary Reading (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Studies, 1978), 78.
23 Ibid., 234.
during the 1540s and 1550s. The steps are based upon the life of Ignatius himself and are still followed today. The training progression provides another example of the tension found between humanism and exclusivism within the Order. The process begins with making the *Exercises* and a period of service called the novitiate. With the approval of the provincial superior, the novitiate ends when the novice is invited to take his first vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. At this point, the new Jesuit is directed down one of two paths, brother or scholastic, the latter course leading to priesthood. After taking first vows, those working toward ordination study broadly in sciences and humanities, and then spend two years studying philosophy. After a period of full-time ministry, the scholastic returns to university for four years of training in theology that is concluded with ordination to the priesthood. Prior to being invited to take his final vows, the Jesuit priest reflects on his time as a Jesuit and again makes the *Exercises*. All Jesuit missionaries, including the three examined in this paper, follow this long process of humanistic education followed by theological training leading to full incorporation into the Society.

As the first Jesuits began to spread far afield as missionaries, Ignatius instituted a practice of mandatory letter writing to maintain a “union of hearts and minds” within the Order. This meant that the Jesuits became prolific writers. They wrote letters to superiors, to each other, to acquaintances, friends, family, and benefactors. They also kept journals and edited official reports and commentaries. Each form of writing was

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25 The Jesuit brother studies according to his ability and shares in the work of the Jesuit community. 26 Once period of reflection is over, the Jesuit priest may be invited to make his final vows, including, if he is invited, the vow of obedience to the pope in missions. Thomas Worcester, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, edited by Thomas Worcester (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4. The latter vow has also been viewed as a vow of universal mobility, in contrast to traditional monastic vows of stability to a particular monastery. 27 Grant Boswell, “Letter Writing among the Jesuits: Antonio Possevino’s Advice in the ‘Bibliotheca Selecta’ (1593),” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 66, no. 3/4 (2003): 257.
tailored in tone and content to fit the purpose and audience of the genre. For example, personal letters between Jesuits and their direct reports to their supervisors would be honest about frustrations and tribulations; conversely, letters meant to be read publicly were filled with positive reports and news from the front lines. This distinction can be found within the sources from the first mission to Akbar. In 1981, John Correia-Afonso, a prominent historian of Jesuits in India, translated and published a selection of the letters written by the fathers of the first mission.\textsuperscript{28} The excerpts found within Letters from the Mughal Court are filled with the range of hopes and trials that the fathers felt while they were at the Mughal court. The Commentary, on the other hand, does not contain any reference to the frustrations or times of desolation that the fathers felt. Instead, the narrative of the mission was polished to reflect the tropes found within the accepted tradition of religious stories, hagiographies and martyr narratives.

To understand the culture that the fathers encountered in the Mughal Empire, it is important to consider Akbar and his empire. Technically, Akbar was the third ruler in the Mughal line, which was established by his grandfather, Babur (1483-1530), when he invaded from Kabul, but most historians credit Akbar with the establishment of the Mughal Empire.\textsuperscript{29} Akbar’s father, Humayun (1508-1556), had been pushed out of northern India by a temporary Indo-Afghan alliance, and with the assistance of Persia, had only recently regained the lost territory when he tragically fell from a ladder in his library and was killed. This meant that on March 10, 1556, at the tender age of fourteen,

\textsuperscript{28} Correia-Afonso, Letters, prologue.
Akbar inherited the throne of a newly re-conquered territory.\textsuperscript{30} The kingdom was deeply divided: conquering versus conquered, Muslim versus Hindu, Mughal versus Rajput, and Sunni versus Shi’a. Divisions in the society ran both deep and wide. Due to his age, the first five years of his reign were under two regents, and Akbar was therefore unable to implement any major changes. Upon freeing himself from the shadow of his regents, Akbar began to aggressively expand his territory. He was ambitious, ruthless, and occasionally cruel.\textsuperscript{31}

By the middle of the 1560s, he had expanded the borders of his empire substantially, and began to work on establishing an infrastructure to maintain it. Recognizing the dangers of a divided kingdom, he focused on creating an inclusive society where he would be accepted as the ruler of all.\textsuperscript{32} To obtain the desired cooperation, he began with diplomacy; he offered the Rajput monarchs some of the highest positions within his created nobility in return for their loyalty.\textsuperscript{33} To reinforce these alliances he married the Hindu princesses.\textsuperscript{34} When leaders resisted Akbar’s diplomatic offers, and refused to subjugate themselves to him, he would use force, often particularly brutal, to make a point.\textsuperscript{35} Indian historian Burjor Avari states that Akbar was successful in securing the loyalty of all groups because he was able to transform the mindset of the nobility from family-based loyalty to a “pan-Indian imperial service.”\textsuperscript{36} Religion and ethnicity were not factors in the assignment of prestigious positions or advancement.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 101.
\textsuperscript{32} Bashir, \textit{Europe and the Eastern Other}, 65-66, 70.
\textsuperscript{33} The Rajputs were Hindu rulers of smaller territories. Bashir, \textit{Europe and the Eastern Other}, 70; Avari, \textit{Islamic Civilization}, 101, 104.
\textsuperscript{34} Bashir, \textit{Europe and the Eastern Other}, 70.
\textsuperscript{35} Avari, \textit{Islamic Civilization}, 104; Wink, \textit{Akbar}, 28.
\textsuperscript{36} Avari, \textit{Islamic Civilization}, 107.
Akbar’s goal was to create a peaceful, tolerant state. This desire for toleration was part of his motivation for constructing both Fatehpur Sikri, his new capital, and the Ibadaht Khana, the building where the religious debates were held, and for eventually creating his own system of religion, the Din-i-ilahi.

From its foundations, the architecture and design of Fatehpur Sikri reflects Akbar’s deep desire to form a state where both Hindu and Muslim subjects would feel welcome. The architecture was based upon local Hindu traditions, rather than the customary Islamic style. Within the city, Akbar commissioned the Ibadat Khana in 1575 and began holding religious discussions among the various Islamic sects in 1576.

Akbar quickly grew tired of the lack of unity between Muslim scholars over religious interpretations and appears to have cancelled the debates within the year. Beginning in 1578, the discussions resumed, this time including voices from other religions. Abul Fazl (1551-1602), Akbar’s official court historian, described the new format and spirit of the discussions:

The wide capacity and the toleration of the Shadow of God were unveiled. Sufi, philosopher, orator, jurist, Sunni, Shia, Brahman, Jati, Sevra [Jain monks], Charbak, Nazarene, Jew, Sabi (Sabian), Zoroastrian, and others enjoyed the exquisite pleasure by beholding the calmness of the assembly, the sitting of the world-lord in the lofty pulpit (minbar), and the adornment of the pleasant abode of impartiality.

The “Nazarene” mentioned in the above passage refers to the Jesuit fathers of the first mission, Acquaviva, Monserrate, and Henriquez. The primary occupation of the fathers while they were at Fatehpur Sikri was to participate in these truly inter-religious discussions.

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37 Avari, Islamic Civilization, 113; Wink, Akbar, 106.
38 Ibadat Khana translates to ‘House of Worship.’ Din-i-ilahi translates to ‘Religion of God’ or ‘Faith of the Divine.’
40 Rezavi, “Religious Disputations,” 199.
41 Ibid., 200.
dialogues in the presence of Akbar. Although the Jesuit accounts tend to focus on the Muslim-Christian dispute, Akbar did not favor any one religion. Evidence of the fact that Akbar did not privilege Christianity over the others can be found in the creation of *Din-i-ilahi*, which included components of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Jainism, but hardly any Christian elements.  

The political motivations for the establishment of the religious debates in the *Ibadaht Khana* cannot be ignored. As Pius Malekandathil, a historian of Mughal India, notes, the only religions invited to participate were those with either a significant representation within the empire or those connected to states that would provide some political or economic benefit to the empire.  

While Akbar was impressed by the honesty of the Jesuits in Bengal, he also wanted to secure a political relationship with the Portuguese in Goa. For example, a year and a half into the mission Acquaviva reported to the Superior General of the Society that Akbar had invited the fathers because he “knew his brother was going to wage war against him, and since he had to go and meet the enemy in person he wished to protect his back, making sure of the Portuguese by a show of attachment to our faith.”  

Acquaviva’s assertion directly supports Malekandathil’s thesis. Akbar’s motivations for the debates appear to be a complicated mixture of personal spirituality and political strategy.  

For an analysis of the *Commentary*, it is particularly important to establish the worldview that Monserrate operated within, as it heavily influenced how he perceived the world around him and how he reflected that back in his writing. The best method of

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44 Ibid., 17.  
doing this is through the dual lenses of travel writing and martyrrology theories. The Commentary itself fits neatly into the literary genre of travel writing. One of the foremost scholars on the subject of early modern travel writing is Joan Pau Rubiés, and his work is particularly relevant to the study of Monserrate’s Commentary.

The best place to begin an analysis of Rubiés and his theory is with a discussion of travel writing. There is no standard form of what travel writing is, only that without travel, the work would not exist. A basic misconception that many people share is that travel writing is written by a traveller and describes what he or she witnessed during his or her exploration. While this is one type of travel writing, the genre is much more complex. Some authors of travel writing have never physically travelled anywhere; instead, they simply gather stories and inspiration from those who have. Merchants’ records are also considered travel writing, although many do not describe travel at all.

Travel writing also spans both fiction and non-fiction categories; for example, Sir Thomas More’s Utopia is a well-known fictional travel narrative of the sixteenth century and Monserrate’s Commentary is a good example of a non-fictional account from the same period.

Travel writing as a genre became increasingly popular starting in the fourteenth century, largely influenced by both Europe’s growing naval exploration and the rise of humanism during the Renaissance. Readers looked to travel narratives for the entertainment that the descriptions of curious behaviours provided. They also searched these narratives for evidence of universal human traits. In effect, this new demand for

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48 Ibid., 243.
49 Ibid.
travel writing changed the way that it was composed. Rubiés argues that travel writing at this time was transformed from primary accounts, such as a journal, to the more detailed accounts of the cosmographer.50 The *Commentary*, very much a product of its time, was a cosmographic account that was organized chronologically and included elaborate descriptions of events and local geography.

Cosmography and cosmographer are terms that are not often found in writing outside of early modern studies. During the Renaissance, cosmography was an academic area of study that was synonymous with geography.51 However, the idea that there should be separation and specialization in academia is a relatively new construct, and certainly did not exist during the Renaissance. Rather, as Rubiés explains, it was a “flexible genre” that often combined descriptions of places, theological explanations for “strange natural phenomena,” economics, and navigational information.52 In other words, in the early modern period, when Monserrate wrote the *Commentary*, academics were interested in the world as a whole, and their writings reflect this broad view.53 Thus, the *Commentary* was not simply a narrative of the religious elements of the mission; rather, it was a intricately woven account that, within the main storyline, included detailed descriptions of geography, history, customs, religious practices, people, architecture, flora, and fauna.

Rubiés works extensively with early modern Jesuit missionary travel writings to examine motivations, culture, questions of identity, and representations of the ‘other.’ He

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50 Ibid., 245.
53 From the creation of the Society of Jesus, all Jesuits have been extensively educated in the humanist tradition. Therefore, Monserrate was a member of the intellectual community.
observes that the increase of ethnological content in travel narratives highlights “the importance of questions of national, religious and other cultural identities.” He further argues that travel narratives were then later used to create collective identities through the use of the categories of classifications found within them. One of the primary methods of establishing identity in the early modern period was to highlight difference. This focus on identity, however, did not mean that the traveller did not find areas of commonality with foreigners. Rubiés emphasizes that during the early modern period identities were more fluid, and it was possible for an individual to have “overlapping cultural identities.”

The question of identity becomes more rigid and complex when the author was a missionary commissioned by an official religious order. The worldview and motivations of missionaries varied from that of merchants and soldiers. Early missionaries, such as the Franciscan Ramon Llull (1232-1316), were so focused on refuting alternate beliefs such as Islam, that all their attention was directed to polemics rather than cultural observation. However, the Jesuits occupied a more complex position. They were, first and foremost, concerned with spreading Christianity. As such, they shared a zeal for martyrdom that was common to many missionaries at the time. This led to traditional polemical refutations of religions such as Islam, sometimes with the intention of provoking the rival to commit acts of violence in defence of their faith. In these areas,

55 Ibid., 8.
56 Ibid., 22.
57 Ibid., 8.
58 Ibid., 22.
the Jesuits were blinded by dogmatic understandings, limiting their observational powers. Nonetheless, their humanist training and education made them and the Society, as a whole, more open-minded. Early on, the Jesuits became known for their ideas of inculturation and accommodation. Alessandro Valignano, Francis Xavier, Matteo Ricci, Robert de Nobili, and Alexandre de Rhodes are among the most well-known Jesuit missionaries because of their work in adapting Christianity to local cultures in Japan and China. Therefore, the combination of their educational training, a willingness to concede the good in other cultures, and a dedication to scientific observation make the writings of the early modern Jesuit missionaries a rich and complex source for historians.

Rubiés uses the writings of many Jesuit missionaries in Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625 to analyze the development of European perceptions of South India. In the introduction, he pays particular attention to the writings of Valignano, who was the Jesuit Visitor to the province of India from 1574 to 1606. In his reports, Valignano organized the many different Asian groups that he encountered into a “hierarchy of civilizations” that was structured according to race and religion. In a footnote, Rubiés states that Valignano did not explain his classifications, but he felt that the skin colour and culture of Indians indicated that they could never be as good Christians as the Japanese. This example is important for the study of the Commentary as Monserrate did the same when he described the various groups of people he encountered, such as the Zoroastrians, the

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60 Rubiés, Travel and Ethnology, 8.
61 Ibid., 2.
62 Ibid., 6-8.
63 Ibid., 8 ft.13.
inhabitants of the Satpura Mountain Range, several Hindu sects, and various Muslim communities.

Rubiés provides a framework through which it is possible to examine the humanist elements of accommodation, the well-rounded man, and the universal truth in Monserrate’s writing, and forms the basis of the first section of this paper. However, Rubiés framework does not address the question of how Monserrate constructed the narrative in the *Commentary*. For that, literary theory, specifically the study of martyrologies, can provide some insight and analytical methodology.\textsuperscript{64} Like travel writing, martyrologies were another popular literary genre that early modern writers used in order to “[grapple] with religious change and conflict” during the Reformation era.\textsuperscript{65} Ignatius was also heavily influenced by the stories of the saints and martyrs found within the *Golden Legend*, one of the two books that he meditated on that led to his conversion.\textsuperscript{66} When providing directions for the second week of reflection in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius encouraged reading The *Golden Legend* and the *Imitation of Christ*.\textsuperscript{67} The purpose of meditating on the stories of the saints and martyrs was to foster the replication of the “inner integrity” of the saints within the exercitant.\textsuperscript{68} Right from the initial stages of formation, Jesuits were urged to imitate the saints and martyrs in their daily lives. The stories of martyrs and saints helped to further reinforce the exclusivist

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\textsuperscript{64} Although there are several definitions for martyrology, for the purposes of this paper the term will refer to an official collection of stories about individual Christian martyrs.


\textsuperscript{67} Fleming, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 68.

\textsuperscript{68} Cymbalista, “The Presence of the Martyrs,” 289.
views of the Catholic Church, and motivated missionaries to want to join the ranks of the heroes of the faith by winning the red crown of martyrdom.⁶⁹

The first chapter of Alice Dailey’s *The English Martyr: From Reformation to Revolution* is particularly helpful as it clearly outlines the historical development of martyrologies and describes the accepted literary form. Dailey argues that the publication of *The Golden Legend*, written by Jacobus, a Dominican monk, in the mid-to-late thirteenth century, was largely responsible for creating what became the standard formula.⁷⁰ The narrative formula became fixed and inflexible: the saint or martyr, a Christian of pure character (often a virgin), found himself or herself in a situation where his or her faith was challenged by a persecutor where he or she issued a declaration of faith, which ultimately resulted in his or her death.⁷¹

By engaging with Dailey’s theory on martyrologies it is possible to examine the exclusivist limitations of Monserrate’s worldview in his engagement with and depictions of those he met. Akbar’s invitation created a situation where the fathers were confronted with both the old, long-established understandings of Muslims and Islam, and the new cultures and religions that Europeans had never encountered previously, while believing that their greatest prayers were about to be answered with the imminent conversion of the Great Mughal. These seemingly contradictory outlooks exist in tension within Monserrate and the *Commentary*, and the frameworks outlined by Rubiés and Dailey provide the lenses to examine it.

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⁷¹ Ibid., 31-33, 100.
Monserrate the Humanist

Rubíés’ analysis of *The Book of John Mandeville* provides an effective framework for an examination of Monserrate’s *Commentary*. Both accounts were written by ordained priests, feature narratives of a religious journey, and contain detailed cosmographical sections. Furthermore, like the author of Mandeville’s travels, Monserrate’s primary purpose for the inclusion of various ethnological accounts was to either exhort or correct his intended European Christian audience. *The Book of John Mandeville* was a popular narrative in early modern Europe that was written during the fourteenth century. The book outlines the journey of John Mandeville, an English knight, on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Scholars now believe that *The Book of John Mandeville* was composed by a priest who had never travelled; rather, the author collected and copied the writings of others in order to create his own narrative.72 Like the *Commentary*, the account of Mandeville included both a religious message and ethnological and geographical descriptions. On the surface, the two subjects do not blend together. However, Rubíés demonstrates that the author was motivated by the desire to inspire Christian reform when he included both the scientific and religious content.73 The inclusion of ethnographical information was used to demonstrate the humanistic belief in “a kind of universal morality” that is found in all religions and customs, and that God can use to teach the faithful moral lessons.74 This same pattern of thought can be found in Monserrate’s writing.

As the purpose of writing accounts like the *Commentary* was to instruct and entertain Christian European readers, there was an expectation that the superiority of the

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72 Rubíés, “Travel Writing as a Genre,” 12.
73 Ibid., 15.
74 Ibid.
Christian faith would be unquestionable. This meant that any praise of heathens or infidels would immediately be followed with condemnation of the religion of those described and an exhortation to Christians. Many times these condemnations completely contradict the praise in the phrase before. Rubiés argues that these denunciations were simply a pious concession to European expectations. However, the addition probably stemmed deeper than that. Many of the men writing, like Monserrate, were devout Christians, and although they could admire traits, their exclusivist views would not allow them to consider anything superior to Christianity. The Commentary demonstrates this well. It was first and foremost a religious text, the record of a Jesuit Mission to the Great Mughal, and Monserrate’s examples and illustrations serve to entertain, educate, and sometimes shame his reader.

It is also true in early modern travel writing that if the author failed to clearly demonstrate the superiority of Christianity, the editors and copyists would later adjust the manuscript prior to distribution. The knowledge of how their letters and journals would be edited changed the way that some Jesuit missionaries wrote their accounts. For example, between 1632 and 1673 the Jesuit Superior of New France sent an annual report to Paris that detailed the events that had occurred that year across the province. This report was composed by compiling the letters that the various Jesuits had submitted to him throughout the year; he would then edit it to “remove all that was ‘impolitic or at best unessential to the purposes of the published series […] removing portions here, altering the language there, and welding the several pieces before him into a concise and

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75 Ibid., 11.
comprehensive story…”’76 Once the report reached Paris, it was again edited and then subsequently published in the Jesuit Relations. A copy of the published Relations was then sent back to the mission in New France where the Jesuits there could observe the changes that had been made to their original manuscript before submitting the next year’s report. This led to a shift in the way that the Superior would compose his subsequent reports, both in tone and organization.77 Unlike the example of the Jesuit Relations from New France, there is no direct evidence to suggest that Monserrate altered his writing style to conform with editing practices; however, he would have been familiar with the general form and literary style of the multiple ‘relations’ circulating during the sixteenth century. Furthermore, Monserrate also would have been aware of the general expectations of his audience.

Jesuit missionaries had a double mission: first, to spread the gospel, and second, to be diligent cosmographers. In regard to the second mission, and as humanists, they possessed a sense of responsibility to produce detailed records of what they learned, to ensure they contributed to the historical record in as valuable a way as the classical recorders did. The combined writings of Monserrate, Acquaviva, and Henriques reflect these objectives to varying degrees. The fathers’ letters focus more on the daily events and challenges that the missionaries faced and the perceived spiritual advances.78 Within the letters there is still passing mention of scientific and historical observations. Monserrate’s Commentary, on the other hand, was an account that wove the two objectives evenly. Due to the effort that the fathers placed on recording their physical

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77 Ibid., 103.
78 Correia-Afonso, Letters.
surroundings, the people they met, and the activities they participated in, both the surviving letters and the *Commentary* have become invaluable to historians who study Akbar and early modern India. In this manner Monserrate fulfilled one of his aims when he composed the *Commentary*. In his letter to Superior General Claudius Acquaviva, Monserrate stated that the Superior of the Society in the Province of India had assigned him the “charge of recording everything that happened both on the journey and during our residence with the King” in keeping with the classical tradition of travel journals whose “devotion to Geography, marine Exploration, and History—those most weighty subjects of study—have enriched the republic of letters with generous provision.” At the end of the letter, Monserrate stated:

> For my part—unless I am deceived by self-love—I believe that some attention given to Indian History will not prove to be without its use to students of Geography and the Classics, and especially to those of us who are devoted to the study of learned and polite writers….In these books I have endeavoured (if I may say so without arrogance) to correct, explain and reconcile—in as seemly and moderate a manner as possible—many passages in those Geographers and Historians who have written about India and Arabia: and this I have done as a service to the teachers and lecturers in our own schools.

In other words, he had current and future academics in mind while he was penning his report.

After his superior tasked him with providing a record of the mission, Monserrate kept a journal where he “embraced every new experience or fact which the day’s journey or events had brought before [his] notice—for example the rivers, cities and countries which [they] saw: the customs, temples and religious usages of their inhabitants….” As

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79 Banerjee and Hoyland, “Editors’ Introduction,” xiii.
80 Monserrate, *Commentary*, xv.
81 Ibid., xviii.
82 Ibid., xvi.
he recorded all that he noticed, he diligently searched for any trace of Christianity for he believed that,

This empire of India, which the Turks call Indusstan, used in times past to be ruled by Christian kings. Our ancestors, owing to their ignorance of India before it was explored by the Portuguese, used to call these kings the Indian Presbyter Johns; and there were many silly and superstitious tales told concerning them.83

It is obvious that Monserrate was fascinated by what he witnessed and encountered while he was in India, and as he attempted to convey what he was witnessing to his audience he frequently employed comparisons from Europe. To demonstrate the tension between his humanistic training and his exclusivist worldview, this section will compare how Monserrate presented the culture and religion of four different groups: the Zoroastrians, the inhabitants of the Satpura Mountain Range, Hindus, and Muslims.

The first group that Monserrate encountered on his way to Fatehpur Sikri were the Parsis, who were Zoroastrians. He began his description by stating that,

In colour they are white, but are extremely similar to the Jews in the rest of their physical and mental characteristics, in their inclination to hard work, in their dress and in their religion. Indeed they are often called Jews by the Portuguese, nor do they themselves entirely disavow the name.84

The remainder of his portrayal continued to use “the Jews” as his reference point, and he concluded that he regarded the Parsis as “Jews or Samarians.”85 In all his comparisons it is obvious that he expected his reader to understand the “customs of the Jew,” which was a logical assumption considering the long, troubled history of Jewish people in Europe.

83 Ibid., 215. Presbyter John, or Prester John, was a legend of a mythical king and priest that spread through Europe during the middle ages. He was thought to have been a devout Christian, though not Catholic, who ruled a powerful kingdom in the Three Indies. Europeans devoutly believed this king and kingdom existed, and spent centuries searching for it. For more information on the myth see Charles F Beckingham and Bernard Hamilton, eds., Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes (Aldershot, UK: Variorum, 1996).
84 Monserrate, Commentary, 6.
85 Ibid., 9.
After the basic translation that Parsis equal Indian Jews was established, Monserrate focused on the peculiarities. For example, he began his discussion on Zoroastrianism by stating that, “[t]hese religious customs not only resemble, but definitely reproduce, those of the Jews. But though these people are bound by so many Jewish religious usages, still they worship Fire and the Sun, and build temples to Fire.”

Areas of Zoroastrianism that Monserrate felt did not fit the mould of “Jew,” and thereby needed further attention included holy offices, oaths, prayer, language, scriptures, diet, marriage, sexual norms, and funerary practices.

The Parsis’ beliefs on death and the treatment of the deceased was the hardest part for Monserrate to comprehend. In shocked disbelief he related that,

They neither burn nor bury their corpses, but let them down into a place surrounded with high walls to prevent wild animals entering, as though it were better to be torn and devoured by birds of prey or scorched by the heat of the sun, than to be consumed by the flames, or covered with earth and so disposed of!

S. N. Banerjee, the annotator of the *Commentary*, clarified the practice Monserrate referred to: when a member of the Parsi community died, the naked corpse would be left in the *Dakhma* (the Tower of Silence) for vultures to devour. The Zoroastrian traditional belief was that a demon possessed all bodies after death, which made the corpse unclean. They also believed that fire and earth were pure, so burning or burying an unclean corpse was prohibited. There is no detailed analysis of this ritual in Monserrate’s account, nor is there any evidence he attempted to understand it. Although the Parsis were like Jews, “their character [was] so wild and savage that they seem to differ not at all from other

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Ibid., 7.
87 Ibid., 7-8
88 Ibid., 7.
89 Ibid., 7 ft.25.
heathen.”\textsuperscript{90} If one were to try and recreate Monserrate’s perceived hierarchy of religion and culture, Catholic Christianity would be at the top, Jews would be midway down, and heathens would be near the bottom. Monserrate’s description of the Parsis placed them neatly between the Jews and the heathen.

The inhabitants of the Satpura Mountain Range were fit into the heathen category. There was no concentrated effort to find anything of value in the culture of this tribe. Their religion was simplified into one sentence: “The inhabitants of these mountains worship ghosts.”\textsuperscript{91} Monserrate describes their political structure as one of unsophisticated chaos:

They are ruled by three kings, of whom one is the master of the other two and as it were their emperor. They are constantly at war with the Mongols. When one of their tribes is pacified, and a treaty made with the Mongols, the other two tribes carry on the wild and savage warfare, and frequently defeat their great enemy. Occasionally these battles are drawn; but the Mongols can never inflict on the mountaineers a decisive defeat.\textsuperscript{92}

This passage demonstrates his admiration of their ability to defeat the great Mongol armies, but it is not described in a way that would indicate that Monserrate felt that the Europeans could learn from the tribes of the Satpura Mountain Range, as further evidenced in his conclusion:

These mountaineers are wild, barbarous and degraded. They are addicted to brigandage, and have no weapons except bows made of bamboo and short arrows with rusty points. Yet they are exceedingly fierce, intractable, greedy of spoil, and headstrong. They have no cavalry and no artillery, but are vastly aided by the nature of their country, which is remarkable for its deep jungles and precipitous crags.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 13-14.
In other words, in Monserrate’s opinion, without the aid of their environment these tribesmen would not have been so successful militarily. Monserrate and his European audience are left to feel superior to these “degraded heathens.”

Another group that Monserrate fit into the heathen category, although not nearly as clearly, was Hindus. He felt that the Brahmin had a “superstitious religion,” in which the traditions and stories were little more than “silly old-wives-fables.” While Monserrate was traveling with Akbar’s military camp he visited Mathura. According to him, the city was “believed to have been founded by Crustnu [Krishna] who is also called Viznu [Vishnu].” In the same manner in which he equated the Zoroastrians with Jews, he likened Mathura with Rome: “Since Viznu is the most famous of the Indian false gods, it follows that Maturanum has for long been the fountain-head of superstitions in India, just as Rome was in Europe.”

Monserrate was strongly disdainful of the Hindu practices and rituals he witnessed; he was particularly critical of Krishna, one of their gods:

He was a restless and unruly boy, a petty thief and a liar. He lived with a shepherd, and stole milk, ghi and cheese. He denied the theft when accused of it; and stole the clothes of some girls who were bathing in a river. He broke the pots and furniture of the neighbours, and let their calves out of the pens so that they might run away, thus giving trouble to the herdsmen. Beginning thus with childish mischief, he went on to steal eight wives from their husbands by force, and sixteen thousand by fraud and guile, as soon as he attained manhood (if indeed he be worthy of the name of man). The temples I have referred to preserve the memory of these wonderful deeds, lest they should be forgotten. Such is the shamelessness of the Brachmanaes, and the folly of the common people of India.

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94 Ibid., 90.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 93.
97 Ibid., 92.
His disdain and disbelief are evident in his sarcasm. To further strengthen his argument, he claims to quote Cicero, “What land is more savage than India: what land more barbarous?” At this point, it appeared that Monserrate felt there was no good in the religion or culture of the Brahmins.

However, further into his description, he seemed to contradict this sentiment. When he portrayed the Hindu pilgrimage to Mathura, he seemed almost in awe. Pilgrims came to Mathura to bathe in the river as they believed it would purify them of their sins. Monserrate stated that it was “an extraordinary sight”: multitudes of men and women were mixed together, ritually bathing in the river in “perfect modesty.” He asserted that the reason this modesty was possible was because

they regard it as a heinous offence to do anything foul or immodest in such a sacred place (as they regard it). They may not even think for a moment of any evil action whilst they are engaged in these impious ceremonies. Moreover, once they have bathed, they take the greatest care for the rest of their lives to avoid what they regard as sins.

Monserrate was careful to ensure that he did not attribute the praise to the Hindu faith, “For the cunning of the Evil One is such that he has put a false idea of religion into their minds.” But he does not hide his admiration of the pilgrims’ dedication to living without sin. In fact, he continued to exhort his Christian audience to correct their ways and follow the example of these pilgrims:

Surely it is greatly to be desired that real sins should be avoided with equal zeal and care by those who have been trained not in a false but in the true religion, and have gained true pardon by a genuinely pious ceremony—the Sacrament of repentance.

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98 Ibid., 93.
99 Ibid., 93.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 93-94.
Rubiés found a similar contradiction when he studied Marco Polo’s thirteenth century
*Description of the World*. Marco Polo praised the sexual restraint of Indian Brahmins
and then concluded with a contradictory statement: “these are so cruel and so treacherous
and so perfect idolaters that I tell you it is devilry.” As mentioned earlier, these
contradictory statements served to emphasise the gap between Christians and
heathens.  

It is understandable that Monserrate would find the pilgrimage ritual
commendable, as it closely resembles several fundamental Christian rituals, such as
baptism and pilgrimage. However, other Hindu rituals did not receive the same praise.

He described the Indian Holi festival as “savage and degraded”:

> For during a space of fifteen days they are at liberty freely to cast dust
upon themselves and upon whoever passes by. They plaster with mud
their own bodies and those of any persons they may meet. They also
squirt a red dye out of hollow reeds. Having thus degraded
themselves they come at length, on the fifteenth day, to the most
abominable part of the whole festival. On this day they dedicate a
tree, of a species somewhat similar to the palm, to that Mother of the
Gods, who is called by many names, (the ancient Romans knew her
as Cybele and the Great Mother and ‘Idaea’). Such superstition is
indeed senseless and absurd. When the tree has been dedicated, they
make offerings to it as though it were a god. At last, having vowed
that they will dedicate another tree the following year, they build up
huge piles of logs, as high as towers, in front of the houses, in places
where three ways meet. When night comes they pace round these
piles singing: and finally burn to ashes the consecrated (or rather most
execrable) tree.  

The festival was completely foreign to Monserrate and, in many ways, quite shocking.

Though he did his best to accurately describe it, the description does not portray the Holi
festival in a recognizable way. Once again, he was confronted with a tradition that he
could not understand, and that tradition is condemned without inquiry into possible

103 Rubiés, “Travel Writing as a Genre,” 11.
104 Monserrate, *Commentary*, 22-23.
meanings and symbolism. However, it is noteworthy that he once again equated Hinduism with Roman mythology. In explaining culture and religion, the Parsis were equated with Jews and the Hindu Indians with ancient Romans.

Unlike Zoroastrian and Hindu traditions, Monserrate did not feel the need to find a suitable comparison for the Muslim sects he encountered. Many passages focus on Muslim ceremonies, beliefs, customs, architecture, and communities, understandable since Monserrate and his companions were surrounded by Muslims for the duration of the mission. As most Europeans had a well-developed preconception of ‘Musalman’, just as they had one of ‘Jew’, translation was not necessary. This allowed Monserrate to expand on the contradictions and intricacies that he observed. His descriptions provide a complex combination of old stereotypes and an admiration for what he witnessed.

One Muslim society that Monserrate paid particular attention to was the Kashmiri. He introduced the tribe through a brief account of their history:

The Casmirini or Caspirii were conquered by the Musalmans one hundred years ago, and were compelled to adopt their laws, and system of government. But all the inhabitants of that region say that long ago they were, by race and custom, Jews. If questioned on this point they acknowledge that this was their origin. Their type of countenance, general physique, style of dress and manner of conducting trade are all similar to those of European Jews. For those that live in Lahorum deal in rubbish, cast-off clothes, ironmongery, shoes, armlets, bolts and bars, and all manner of second-hand goods.¹⁰⁵

Monserrate does not question that the Kashmiri were of Jewish decent, for their appearance and occupations supported this assertion. While he was in Lahore he made a similar observation of the Kashmiri who worked there: “These Casmirini are bakers, eating-house-keepers, and sellers of second-hand rubbish, a type of trade which well

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 111.
suits their Jewish descent.’’

In this circumstance, it appears as though the Kashmiri were the ones insisting on their linkages with Jews, rather than Monserrate asserting the comparison. However, it is probable that even if the Kashmiri had not claimed this ancestry, their customs and appearance would have led Monserrate to a similar conclusion.

To his credit, Monserrate did not accept everything he heard at face value. There is one aspect of the Kasmiri story that he does question, the explanation of how the Jewish group came to be in the Kashmir mountain range:

Others must judge whether there can be any truth to the following story, which has reached my ears in a round about manner.... Now the priests made very careful investigations as to whether or not the Caspirii were Jews. They discovered that by race they clearly were Jews, but had become Musalmans by religion one hundred years ago.... I am well aware that, in the opinion of some, Alexander is held to have transported the Jews to that district of the Caspian mountains which is near the Caspian Sea. I do not question their opinion. On such an evenly-balanced point I will adopt Terence’s saying, ‘If they say so, I say so: If they say no, I say no.’

The general consensus of scholars who study the origins of the Kashmiri and their conversion to Islam is that prior to conversion they were part of the Hindu caste system. A prevalent theory argues that the motivation for the Kashmiri claiming Jewish ancestry was their desire to distance themselves from their polytheistic past.

Much of the history that Monserrate had fed to him, and later he repeated with varying

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106 Ibid., 160.
107 Ibid., 111-2.
levels of acceptance, appears to have been based on myths. It is interesting to note which aspects inspired the varying levels of skepticism. That the Kashmiri were forcefully converted to Islam was not even questioned. That they were Jews was questioned, but easily accepted. How the population came to be in the mountains was received and reported with open speculation.

Considering the common perception of Muslims in early modern European society as lustful, violent, barbaric pagans, Monserrate’s easy assertion of the forced conversion fit the expectations of his audience.\textsuperscript{109} Muslims were expected to be “savage and degraded,” even if they were capable of creating wondrous cities and customs.\textsuperscript{110} For example, when Monserrate described Mandu, he stated that:

> No one can tell with any degree of certainty by whom and at what time this great city was founded; for the Musalmans, whose nature is indeed that of barbarians, take no interest in such things: their chronicles being scanty and unreliable, and full of old wives’ tales.\textsuperscript{111}

Within Mandu, the custom that drew direct praise from Monserrate was the extravagance and attention paid in tomb building. He admired the manner in which Muslims spent large sums of money to build magnificent tombs to honor their holy saints: “Indeed in this respect—namely their belief that fitting honours should be paid to heavenly saints and seemly tombs made for the dead—these Musalmans are wiser and better than certain abandoned creatures of our own age.”\textsuperscript{112} The high praise of this custom, not religion, serves an underlying purpose, to shame “the abandoned creatures” in Europe to reform their ways.

\textsuperscript{110} Monserrate, \textit{Commentary}, 22.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 18.
In a similar fashion, Monserrate admired the Tomb of Humayun, Akbar’s father. However, it was his perception of the devotion of Haji Begum, one of Humayun’s wives, that Monserrate focused on in this account:

Throughout her widowhood she devoted herself to prayer and almsgiving. Indeed she maintained five hundred poor people by her alms. Had she only been a Christian, hers would have been the life of a heroine. For, as some writer has wisely said, the Musalmans are the apes of the Christians. In many ways they imitate the piety of the Christians, though without gaining the reward of that piety; for they have wandered away from the true faith and the true charity.  

In one breath Monserrate praised her actions as that of a heroine, should she have been of the true faith, and in the next asserted that all Muslims are only imitators, no better than primates. Like other polemic beliefs that preceded his, the only good that Monserrate would allow himself to acknowledge in regard to Islam were those traditions that mirrored teachings in the Christian tradition.

If he admired practices in Islam that reflected admirable Christian teachings, he condemned beliefs that adopted Christian roots and altered them to fit the Islamic ideology. One example was the Islamic use of Gabriel, an archangel in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Gabriel was mentioned in a passage that discussed Shia beliefs in Ali:

For they pay reverence to the lion, as the symbol of Ahalis, on the precarious authority of a certain fable into which they drag the name of Gabriel… Consider, I pray you what silly tales the Musalmans believe, what unworthy leaders they follow (endeavouring to tread in their very footsteps), what messengers of God and interpreters of religion they reverence! The most detestable feature in this fable is that they impudently and impiously drag Gabriel upon the scene as the communicator of their nonsense, although this Gabriel is by the authority of the sacred books, by the writings of the saintly Fathers, and by the common consent of the Holy Church and of all Christians.

113 Ibid., 96.
regarded as one of the chief princes of Heaven and ministers of God.\footnote{114} Monserrate saw the Qu’ran and other Islamic teaching as fables, or “silly old-wives tales.” The leaders of the faith, like Krishna in Hinduism, were deemed unworthy. That the holy name of Gabriel was included in this degraded belief was detestable to Monserrate.

Although there were aspects of Islamic tradition and culture that Monserrate admitted to admiring, in general he was combative when interacting with the Muslims at Fatehpur Sikri, as will be detailed in the next section. However, he never portrayed Akbar or Abul Fazl in the same manner as he did the rest of the ‘ulama. This is because Monserrate did not see Akbar and Abul Fazl as true Muslims. In the Commentary, Monserrate’s admiration of Akbar permeates the pages. Akbar was described as a cunning leader with “careful skill and foresight.”\footnote{115} For example, Monserrate admired the way that Akbar dealt with the threat of his brother’s rebellion and the treasonous actions of Shah Mansur. Shah Mansur was an extremely able financier in Akbar’s court who was believed to be in communication with Akbar’s younger brother, Mirza, to encourage him into rebellion. Monserrate described the treasonous letters and actions that Shah Mansur was accused of in detail throughout the Commentary.\footnote{116} Akbar did not execute Shah Mansur immediately; Monserrate credited this with how good Shah Mansur was at his job and the confidence Akbar had in his own personal security.\footnote{117} However, after multiple repeated letters, Akbar condemned Shah Mansur to death. Monserrate related that “Xamansurus was hanged, thus reaping the fitting reward of his

\footnote{114}{Ibid., 165.}
\footnote{115}{Ibid., 73, 79, 80, 109-10.}
\footnote{116}{Ibid., 65-70, 73, 77, 98, 99.}
\footnote{117}{Ibid., 61.}
faithlessness and treason,” and that it “was all carried out in such a way that those who were present were convinced of the justice of the measures taken by the King against Xamansurus and were incited to do their duty better in the future.” In all of Monserrate’s descriptions of Akbar, it is obvious that he fully admired Akbar as a leader, and he wanted his audience to admire him as well. There are multiple examples where Monserrate and the other fathers criticize Akbar for his beliefs and actions, but they never do so in the same manner that they condemn the other Muslims at the court.

Monserrate’s admiration of Akbar and his leadership demonstrates Monserrate’s openness to observing positive attributes in other cultures. Travel writing theory provides a lens through which to view the humanist side of Monserrate that was open to new ideas and customs, as well as how his vows to the Church limited the extent to which he could be open. As a learned man, he was observant; he demonstrated this when describing the local geography, animal life, and vegetation. When encountering new cultures, such as the Zoroastrians and the inhabitants of the Satpura Mountain Range, he tried to find a way to describe the people and practices so that the European reader might visualize them. This became an act of translation with new practices being equated with familiar practices in Europe and new hierarchies being established. Monserrate felt free to praise cultural customs but always ensured that he condemned religious beliefs as the deception of the Devil. The same was true of the Muslims he encountered. Certain cultural activities were described through comparisons but religion was always condemned. The difference is that less description was necessary as Muslims already had an established image among European readers. The fact that he was willing to praise

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118 Ibid., 98-9. Xamansurus is the way Monserrate Latinised Shah Mansur’s name.
anything about Muslims is remarkable for his time. Although his exclusivism prevented him from trying to further understand Islam, he was observant of the good also present within the culture.

**Monserrate the Exclusivist**

As mentioned in the introduction, Monserrate was tasked with being the record keeper of the time at Akbar’s court in order to create an edifying account of the mission to be distributed among a wider Catholic audience. The *Commentary* was a pious text, first and foremost. Information was presented to educate and entertain other European Christians on matters that were foreign to them, but he also included material that was meant to instruct and edify the reader on religious matters. As seen in the previous section, one of the methods he used to do this was presenting various examples of pious behaviour among heathens to shame those who were supposed to know better. These cosmographical examples were woven into the larger narrative of the mission itself. Monserrate fashioned his account of the mission upon the literary model of the Catholic martyr stories represented in the widespread martyrologies.¹²⁰

Alice Dailey argues that the martyrological mold is rigid. The martyr has to face persecution for their faith and boldly confess it in the face of all adversaries. The martyr must be killed in the act of defending the faith while not seeking death. Furthermore, the way the martyr is killed needs to reflect the constancy of his or her belief.¹²¹ While not one of the missionaries was martyred on this mission, Acquaviva was martyred shortly after his return to Goa, and Monserrate dedicated a substantial section to the description of that martyrdom in the conclusion of the *Commentary*. All of the essential elements

¹²⁰ A martyrology is a collection of martyrs’ stories that are ordered according to their feast days.
required for a martyrology are present within Monserrate’s account of the first Jesuit mission to Akbar.

It is possible that Monserrate was trying to redeem the mission by including the account of Acquaviva’s martyrdom within the text of the Commentary, as the mission was perceived to be a failure since Akbar was not converted nor were any of the three martyred at Fatehpur Sikri. However, it is more likely that Monserrate wanted to ensure that his good friend’s murder was portrayed in the proper manner to ensure that he was recognized as a martyr by the Society of Jesus and the Catholic Church. In the sixteenth-century the Jesuit Order promoted martyrdom as an instrument of conversion, and the stories of martyred Jesuits were circulated widely and celebrated. Although it is hard for a modern reader to comprehend, Acquaviva’s thirst for martyrdom was seen as admirable and praiseworthy among his fellow Jesuits.

Martyrdom was, and continues to be, one of the core influences in the development of the Christian faith. During the sixteenth century, Jesuit formation was heavily shaped by the stories of both early church martyrs and modern contemporaries who were murdered for their faith as their mission field expanded. For example, in 1611, Louis Richeôme described the many images of global Jesuit martyrdoms that were hung in the recreation room of novitiate Sant’Andrea in Rome. The novices would have the daily opportunity to reflect upon these images, which had been chosen to “push you softly toward your duty.” Luke Clossey, a historian who specializes in the global implications of early Jesuit missions, states that Acquaviva would have reflected on

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123 Clossey, Salvation and Globalization, 82.
these martyrdom images as a novice at Sant’Andrea, and a depiction of his own martyrdom soon graced the same walls, inspiring other novices.124

There was nothing unusual about the novitiate displaying multiple depictions of martyrdom, for the narrative model of martyrrologies had long been established within both popular and elite culture. The book most responsible for establishing the accepted formula for martyrrologies was *The Golden Legend*, which was written by a Dominican monk in the mid-late-thirteenth century.125 It was a popular book that contained the legends of 160 saints, 93 of which were martyrs, organized according to the Church’s feast days.126 *The Golden Legend* demonstrates that by the late Middle Ages there was a common belief that the ultimate demonstration of Christian faith was the committed quest for a martyr’s death, which created in some an obsessive fixation with martyrdom.127 The martyrs in *The Golden Legend* are zealous in their drive to create scenes and provoke their opposition into extreme acts of violence.128

Acquaviva was a man who had an obsessive thirst for martyrdom and often went out of his way in challenging the Muslims in Fatehpur Sikri, as evidenced by the writing of both Monserrate and Acquaviva himself. A recurring theme that was present in most of Acquaviva’s letters was his desire to be deemed worthy to be a martyr. In one of his letters to the Superior General, Acquaviva stated:

> the greatest joy which I have here, which is to be very close to martyrdom, because [We have confessed and not denied; we have confessed that Mahomet is not a prophet of God, and we have not denied] that Christ is the son of God, of which things the second they cannot hear and close their ears. The first, whoever should say it, has the

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124 Ibid.
126 Ibid., 11-12.
127 Ibid., 17.
128 Ibid., 18.
death penalty *ipso facto absque iudicio*, and we in the presence of the
King and all of his people have said that Mahomet was Antichrist. So
that for the execution of the sentence already given only the death of the
King is awaited. To this is added that the Hindus too wish us evil,
because we have publicly censured the custom that here exists of
burning in the fire the living wives with the bodies of their husbands;
and we have told the King that he was not doing right in countenancing
such a thing. \(^{129}\)

In a later letter to his uncle, Claudio Acquaviva, he laments that his “sins have so far
barred me from [martyrdom].” \(^{130}\) In the *Commentary*, Monserrate states that Acquaviva
“was full of religious zeal and fervour, and eagerly sought any opportunity of facing
death for Christ’s sake…” \(^{131}\) When Monserrate described Acquaviva’s actual
martyrdom, he stated:

> He burned with a great desire for a martyr’s death. For he often said,
> ‘Will these Musalmans never martyr us?’ To which the other priest
> used to reply, ‘The King is too fond of us; no one dare touch us.’ At
> this Rudolfus used to frown as if in deep chagrin. However God, of
> His own hidden purpose, denied Rudolfus martyrdom when he was
> expecting and longing for it so eagerly, and then gave it to him
> when he expected it not at all—though perhaps I should not say that
> he was not expecting it; for when it came suddenly upon him, he
> gladly stretched out his neck and offered his throat to the savages
> who slew him. And from this I conclude that he was wont
> frequently to meditate on martyrdom and to pray for it. \(^{132}\)

The events of Acquaviva’s murder are unrelated to the mission being recorded in the
*Commentary*, yet Monserrate chose to include them, thereby making the *Commentary* a
detailed martyr story of Acquaviva with the mission being his testing ground.

> No proper martyr’s account would be complete without the inclusion of
> miraculous events. \(^{133}\) Monserrate reported several occurrences that were, in his

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\(^{130}\) Ibid., 94.
\(^{131}\) Monserrate, *Commentary*, 40.
\(^{132}\) Ibid., 195.
estimation, miraculous. Most of these situations involved the fathers and their company escaping death by the hands of various “heathen” groups. There was one example that was slightly different—instead of escaping death at human hands, the father escaped death by reptile. While travelling through the city of Sironj, one of the fathers tried to catch a small, brightly coloured lizard. This lizard, which Monserrate calls a many-coloured Regulus, was believed to “[kill] by the glance of its eye.”¹³⁴ The father who pursued this lizard was not aware of its deadly capabilities, and Monserrate reported that “[w]hen he returned to his quarters and asked the inhabitants of that place what sort of lizard it was that he had seen, they were no less surprised at his having escaped the glance of the Regulus than were the inhabitants of Malta at Saint Paul’s remaining unharmed by the bite of the snake.”¹³⁵ Miracles were deemed necessary for determining the legitimacy of one’s claim of representing God. The perceived lack of miracles in the Qur’an was one of the major refutations that the fathers used during the debates, which will be covered subsequently.

To be considered a proper miracle, the situation needed to meet certain criteria; namely, it had to be presented directly from God and build up the faith of believers. It would not have been acceptable to request a specific miracle, as that would be perceived as testing God. During the debates, the ‘ulama and Akbar repeatedly requested the fathers to partake in a trial by fire.¹³⁶ Each time Acquaviva refused, using biblical quotations to assert that miracle-hunting was not divinely inspired but prompted by the “Evil One”. On the other hand, when the ignorant father was protected from the deadly

¹³⁴ Monserrate, Commentary, 20.
¹³⁵ Ibid.
¹³⁶ Ibid., 39-43, 50-51.
glance of the Regulus, it was perceived as a gift from God, and therefore a proper miracle.

After all the essential components for a martyrological account are met, Dailey identifies a pattern in the way the saints are depicted in their communication with “pagans.” She divides pagans into two groups: those marked for conversion and the “hopeless pagan” or tyrant. To illustrate the differences between the two categories, Dailey used the story of St. Cecilia from *The Golden Legend*. Cecilia, a young Roman noble woman, was forced by her family to marry a pagan man. God heard her desperate pleas to remain a virgin, and helped her to persuade her husband on her wedding night to convert to Christianity. After her husband was baptised, he was granted one wish by the angel who guarded Cecilia’s chastity. Cecilia’s husband wished for the conversion of his brother. In this narrative, Cecilia’s husband and brother-in-law are both characters marked for conversion; therefore, she speaks to both in a patient and logical manner.137 Further into the narrative, Cecilia is brought before the prefect Almachius, who filled the role of the pagan tyrant. For the duration of their dialogue, Cecilia continually insults him. Repeatedly, Almachius tried to reason with her, but Cecilia does not see a reason to try and convince him of the truth; the tyrant was always someone who was “spiritually blind, intellectually crippled, and morally corrupt.”138 Monserrate follows these same tropes in the *Commentary*.

Akbar and Abul Fazl filled the role of the pagans marked for conversion. Right from the start of their mission, the fathers believed that Akbar was destined to be converted. It was a rare occurrence for a Muslim ruler to invite Christian missionaries

into his territory, yet that is exactly what Akbar did when he sent his embassy to Goa. The arrival of the unsolicited invitation created great excitement and high expectations among the fathers in Goa, as Matteo Ricci, who was in Goa when the letters arrived, wrote: “We are all very excited because we expect much, and nothing less than the conversion of the whole of India, if it should go off well.”\(^{139}\) When the fathers finally arrived in Fatehpur Sikri, they were “delighted at the King’s kindly reception,” and “they were persuaded that these signs foretold the speedy conversion of the king to the true religion and the worship of Christ.”\(^{140}\) As the fathers were convinced that it was only a matter of time before Akbar accepted Christianity as truth, the way that they interacted with him was remarkably different than with most others in the discussions.

The only other person at the court whom the fathers conversed with in a similar manner was Akbar’s advisor, Abul Fazl. Monserrate introduced Abul Fazl as “the son of an exceedingly pious old man, who was devoted to the study of religious commentaries and of books of religious mediation, and who had little faith in Muhammad and his book.”\(^{141}\) He continued to state that all of this pious man’s sons followed his example in openly condemning the Qur’an for containing “many impious, wicked and highly inconsistent passages.”\(^{142}\) Abul Fazl impressed Monserrate and his fellow priests on multiple occasions with his knowledge and understanding of the tenets of Christianity. For example, Monserrate described one day when the King ordered the priests to read portions of the Gospel that they had translated into Persian to the gathered assembly. After the passages had been heard a discussion about the divinity of Jesus Christ began:

\(^{139}\) Matteo Ricci quoted by Correia-Afonso, in *The Jesuits in India*, 79.
\(^{140}\) Monserrate, *Commentary*, 28.
\(^{141}\) Ibid., 54-55.
\(^{142}\) Ibid., 55.
At this time Abdulfasilius seemed to be inspired by a divine earnestness, so clearly did he demonstrate how we believe that God has a Son. The Fathers themselves were greatly astonished as they listened to him. Rudolf not only agreed with his expressions, but also upon opportunity being given for a fuller statement of our position complimented Abdulfasilius upon what he had said; so that some of our opponents declared that they could believe in God’s having a Son in the manner thus expounded.\textsuperscript{143}

It is not hard to understand why the fathers believed that Abul Fazl would also be converted. If Abul Fazl could understand the Truth, it was incomprehensible that he would not choose to follow it. Thus, the way that the fathers spoke to Abul Fazl and Akbar was different than they spoke to the ‘ulama.

Just as Akbar and Abul Fazl fit neatly into the pagan marked for conversion category, the ‘ulama fit into the role of the persecutor in the \textit{Commentary}, for the fathers considered the ‘ulama their only real opponents in the religious debates in the \textit{Ibadah Khana}. It was an easy fit. Europeans had already established Islam as the natural enemy of Christianity both politically and academically. Soon after the death of Muhammad in 632, his successors began to encroach on Christian held territory. By 750, the Islamic caliphate had extended to include northern Africa, Spain, and a large part of the Byzantine Empire.\textsuperscript{144} Although this was the height of a unified Islamic state, the caliphate did not stop militarily challenging the borders of Europe and Constantinople. By the eleventh century, Europeans had united in an effort to remove the Islamic threat from Christian holy lands, and so began over a century of papal-endorsed Crusades against the “Muslim adversary.”\textsuperscript{145} As the political scene became charged there was an increased academic output that discussed the enemy. By the late sixteenth century when

\textsuperscript{143} Abdulfasilius was the way that Monserrate Latinized Abul Fazl; Monserrate, \textit{Commentary}, 57.
\textsuperscript{144} Hugh Goddard, \textit{A History of Christian-Muslim Relations} (Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2000), 34.
Monserrate, Acquaviva, and Henriquez were in Fatehpur Sikri there existed an eight-century-long academic tradition of anti-Muslim polemic.  

The first debate that the fathers participated in at Fatehpur Sikri centered on the truth of the Qur’an. According to Monserrate, by the end of the discussion “the opponents of the fathers were reduced...to an inability to prove the very points by which they were attempting to defend their own book from attack... they retired from the debate, and finally became entirely silent.”  

The second debate was held several days later, and it focused on the concept of “heavenly bliss” that “Muhammad most wickedly and lyingly asserted to consist in feasting and impure delights, and in other things absolutely the reverse of the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.” Following along the line of traditional polemics,

The Fathers and the religious leaders of the Musalmans held frequent debates concerning an infinite variety of points—the Trinity, God the Son, his death, Muhammad, Alcoranus, the day of judgement, death, resurrection, and various philosophical and political subjects. However, be it recorded without pride or boasting that, by the help of God, the Fathers so effectually silenced their opponents that they frequently demanded miraculous portents as proof of the truth of Christianity...  

The goal of the fathers was to win the debate by silencing their opposition. There was no consideration of coming to a compromise, or a new understanding.

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146 The first major Christian author to examine Islam was John of Damascus (c. 652-750). John was a Syrian Christian who held a prominent position in Muslim controlled Damascus. He was educated and worked alongside prominent Muslim leaders. After he retired he began to write religious texts. In two of his works he refers to Islam as a Christian heresy. For more information see Goddard, A History of Christian-Muslim Relations, 38-41. Also, Bernard Heyberger, “Polemic Dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the Seventeenth Century,” Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 55 (2012): 495-516; Emanuele Colombo, “‘Infidels’ at Home: Jesuits and Muslim Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Naples and Spain,” Journal of Jesuit Studies 1 (2014):203.
147 Monserrate, Commentary, 38.
148 Ibid., 39.
149 Ibid., 50.
This can also be seen in the third debate, where the topic centered on the character and pride of Muhammad. In traditional polemic style, the fathers attacked Muhammad’s claim of being a prophet:

For in Alcoranus he writes that Christ was righteous and without fault, was born of a virgin who conceived him by the Holy Ghost, and had no earthly father. On the other hand Muhammad records that he himself had been a sinner and a worshipper of idols, and moreover that he had never performed miracles. Nevertheless he shamelessly and arrogantly claims to be greater and more powerful than Christ. The Fathers maintained, first, that a man, who in his own defense used his own testimony against himself, must of necessity be both shameless and ridiculous... second, that mighty testimony is born to Christ, both by the Prophets, famous men who foretold his coming, and by the Gospel itself which narrates his virtues and his wonderful works, and was not, moreover, written by Christ himself, as Alfurcanus was patched together by Muhammad: thirdly, that Muhammad is the only witness to himself, the only writer about himself, the only authority for his own wonderful experiences—there is no one but himself.\(^{150}\)

The fathers did not try to understand anything new about Muhammad. They already felt that they knew enough. The goal was to convince Akbar to turn to Christianity, not to enter into a truly philosophical theological discussion. As they perceived it, Akbar only had two viable alternatives: Islam and Christianity. The old polemics worked, in their understanding, to demonstrate the ridiculousness of the first option, thereby ensuring that any rational person would see the truth of Christianity. Though they believed that the religious leaders were spiritually blind, and that there was no hope for them, they felt that Akbar was a rational man.

When Akbar asked the fathers a question it was treated with serious consideration and thought. At no time was silencing Akbar’s question ever considered. For example, when Akbar asked what the priests believed about the Qur’an, they answered:

\(^{150}\) Ibid., 39.
Muhammad indeed declared that God had given him that book; but we deny that this was true. For God is not wont to gainsay through one messenger what He has said through another, nor to contradict himself, nor to be inconsistent. The Law and the Gospel, the books of God, say one and the same thing. Alcoranus says things very different indeed to what the Law and the Gospel say. Wherefore we must either say that the Law, the Psalms and the Gospel are not sacred books, in order that we may regard Alcoranus as sacred, or we must say that Alcoranus is profane, forged and lying, in order that we may regard the other three as sacred.\footnote{151}

The topic was similar to that which the fathers debated with the ‘ulama; however, the approach that they adopted when replying demonstrates that they viewed Akbar in a different light. They sought to appeal to his reason.

Ultimately, Akbar was not converted, and the mission was perceived as a failure. The reason that Akbar gave to Acquaviva was, “I cannot follow your teaching about there being three Gods.”\footnote{152} The fathers were aware that the King, like many Muslims, had difficulty accepting the concept of the Trinity. When they first arrived in Fatehpur Sikri, they met with the priest Francis Pereira, who had served there prior to their arrival. In an effort to advise the Jesuits of Akbar’s knowledge of Christianity and his general feelings towards it, Pereira told them that, “as the King himself said, his judgement is dulled and clouded, as it were, when he heard that there are three persons in one God, and that God had begotten a son from a virgin, had suffered on the Cross, and had been killed by the Jews.”\footnote{153} Sometime later, after one of the religious debates, the King requested a private audience with the fathers where he said, “Now I want more enlightenment on these points—how the Most High God can be both three and one, and how He can have a son, a man born of a virgin. For these ideas are entirely beyond my

\footnote{151} Ibid., 131. \footnote{152} Ibid., 172. \footnote{153} Ibid., 29.
The priests then replied that Akbar should “pray for enlightenment on it from God, who hath abundance and giveth generously to all men; then humbly wait to hear His answer to your prayer.”

The fathers did not attempt to answer the King’s question about the Trinity in a rational manner—the method they adopted when he questioned them on the Qur’an, Muhammad, and the Bible—until it was too late. After he advised Acquaviva that he could not accept the teaching on three Gods, Acquaviva quickly stated that “We never say, O King, that there are three Gods; for this is blasphemy and contrary to the Christian faith. But we worship one God and three persons in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” In reply to this, Akbar told Acquaviva, “Write to your superiors and ask them to search diligently for a man who knows well both Persian and Portuguese—one, if possible, who has once been a Musalman, and is well-versed in both Laws.” The fathers were never able to satisfactorily answer Akbar’s main question. Dr. Hassan Bashir, a political theorist at the Texas A&M University in Qatar, also speculates that the fathers probably would have been more successful with Akbar if they had engaged him “from a philosophical rather than a religious standpoint.” It is difficult to know how Akbar would have responded, but it seems likely that it was this philosophical approach that he was seeking.

The fathers could not have engaged with Akbar in a philosophical manner, however, as they were essentially bound by their religious conviction and goal to convert Akbar. Monserrate demonstrated repeatedly that their basic understandings and

\[154\] Ibid., 38.
\[155\] Ibid.
\[156\] Ibid., 172.
\[157\] Bashir, *Europe and the Eastern Other*, 76.
stereotypes limited the extent to which they could understand and respond to the new
groups of people that they encountered on the mission. The situation was different with
Muslims as Islam was not new to the fathers. They did not try to understand any
alternative views brought up in question or debate; rather, they felt they knew the truth
about Islam and continued in the polemic tradition at Fatehpur Sikri. They were further
encouraged in this tradition by their underlying attachment to martyrs and their stories.
Martyrs were the heroes of the faith. People of all classes in Europe looked up to the
martyrs and the saints. Their stories were well-known and woven into the fabric of
sixteenth century Europe, and these stories taught how to address those infidels and
heretics who would never convert. The combination formed a worldview that made it
impossible for Acquaviva, Henriquez, and Monserrate to have handled the debates and
Akbar in any other fashion.

**Conclusion**

Monserrate, Acquaviva, Henriquez, and their contemporaries were pushing the
edges of cultural acceptance in early modern Europe. The practices of inculturation and
accommodation that were practiced by Jesuits during the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries were criticized and opposed by others within the Church. Indeed, resistance to
Ricci’s accommodationist approach to Confucian rites in China, for instance, led Rome
to reverse its earlier acceptance of his stance. True to its roots in Renaissance humanism
and Ignatian spirituality, such accommodation necessarily entailed a certain rhetorical
skill. Engaging the whole person—mind, body, senses, heart, and soul—was essential in
developing well-rounded men. This practiced engagement influenced how the Jesuits
saw the world and recorded it, and allowed for the detailed descriptions that have
become valuable to historians today. The belief in a universal truth permitted the Jesuits to find aspects of other places and cultures that were admirable and praiseworthy, even though they were foreign and different. But accommodation and acknowledgement of truth stopped short of syncretism. The basis for truth remained that which had been revealed by God in Jesus Christ, as defined by God’s holy church. If a belief or custom were contradictory to Catholic teachings on the surface, there was no further attempt to understand or describe it.

This contrast between an inclusive and humanistic inculturation, on one hand, and a Christian exclusivism, on the other, demonstrates an inherent tension within Monserrate’s *Commentary*. Significantly, it is a tension that can also be found within the *Spiritual Exercises*. While Ignatius instructed the spiritual director to accommodate the *Exercises* to the strengths and needs of the particular exercitant, the story of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus remained central and foundational. His inclusion of “The Rules for Thinking with the Church” in the *Exercises* reaffirmed that such individual spiritual experiences were valid only if it occurred within the parameters of the church. Within this context, Monserrate demonstrated both a humanism and an exclusivism that characterized—and continues to characterize—the Order to which he belonged.
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