

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

# THE RITES CONTROVERSY IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD

Paris (France), 26-27 May 2011

Convened by:  
**Ines G. Županov, first convenor**  
**Pierre Antoine Fabre, second convenor**

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## SCIENTIFIC REPORT

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## 1. Executive summary

### *Date and Place:*

*The Rites Controversy in the Early Modern World Workshop* was held in Paris at the **Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CEIAS)**, a joint department of the **Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)** and the **Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)**(190-198, Av. de France, Paris, 75013). We had two days of presentations and discussions (May 26 and 27) from 9am to 6pm. The participants coming from outside of Paris arrived on May 25 and stayed in the same hotel ("All Seasons Paris Tolbiac Bibliothèque Nationale", 21 rue de Tolbiac, 75013 Paris, France) until May 28 in the morning.



### *Atmosphere at the Workshop*

Perhaps the only thing we lacked during those two days was time. It was, in fact, drastically rationed between a tight schedule of 25-minute presentations and 20 or 30 minutes discussion after each two or three presentations depending on the schedule. The commentators had up to 10 minutes to make comments and to ask the first question. The presidents or "session chairs" were in charge of time and they did a very good job. They were also moderators of discussions. This was a harder task since there were many more demands for questions than the time to answer them. Given the lack of "official" time, we continued to debate during the breaks, lunches and dinners. The atmosphere was one of intellectual effervescence and we never failed to laugh at a good joke. English and French were two official languages, but we slipped into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Flemish, and Chinese. We also had Bengali, Hungarian, Romanian and Croatian native speakers around the table. Of the 26 participants (see official ESF classification of participants according to the countries of affiliation at the end of the report), we had 4 French, 5 Italians (one of Indian origin), 3 USA citizens (two of whom of Chinese origin and one of Indian), 2 Argentineans, 1 Chilean, 3 German (one of whom of Indian origin), 2 Belgians, 1 Swiss, 1 Hungarian, 1 Romanian, 1 Croatian, 1 Catalan, 1 British.



### *Scientific Objectives and Agenda of the Meeting*

The convenors and more than half of the participants in the workshop have been in the past ten years and more engaged in research on Catholic missions in the early modern world between the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As some of us were Indian and Chinese “area studies” scholars, the Malabar and Chinese rites controversies were part of our fields. It is precisely our awareness that these two controversies were connected, but never studied as such, that made us look for links and to revisit our sources in Rome, in Lisbon, and other European archives, as well as in local archives in Goa and in China, in European and Asian languages. Besides being interesting and poorly studied, mostly from apologetic and partisan points of view, at last in the case of the Malabar rites, this controversy that lasted for more than a century is also important because it opened an epistemological gap between “religion” and “society”. If *Christianitas* was a way of life and a way of salvation, from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there is a doubt that grew as a result of the encounter with the New World and the non-Christian traditions in Asia and elsewhere. Both doubt and the controversy came from the need to “accommodate” Christianity to a different hermeneutic (religious) tradition and to different cultural practices. It is from the quarrel on how and to what extent the

accommodation is or should be possible that the distinction between the religious and the civil or political became one of the master categories of modernity.

The goal of this conference was to understand to what extent the Malabar and the Chinese rites controversies were part of a larger, even global current of doubt and religious disenchantment filliped into being by Catholicism itself. As one of the participants remarked in the conference, as Catholicism expanded in the early modern period it encountered difficulties (“idolatry,” “superstition”, apostasy, etc.) in the colonies and started losing ground at home in Europe. In a word we wanted to know whether there were rites controversies in Americas and elsewhere. We wanted to understand a global chronology of these events and their mutual interlinking.

In order to do that, we needed to gather around the same table experts in particular area studies working on China, India, Europe, Peru, Chile, Rumania and compare notes. As one of the participants, perhaps slightly annoyed at some point, remarked, we do indeed come from historiographies that hardly communicate, our references are not the same, and “I could have invented it all, and you wouldn’t know”. The workshop was, in fact, instrumental in showing us to what extent we are already connected, to what extent the history we are studying is comparable and linked to other histories that national, regional, disciplinary historiographies managed to separate and tried to keep in watertight compartments. None of us could have “invented” a story and get away with it.

In a word, this kind of research - federated around the concept of rite (ritual) and focused on the particular moment in history (a whole century) when its meaning (as concept and as practice) was chiselled out in the controversies - is fruitful and is capable of stimulating transnational and transdisciplinary approaches.

If we started with rites controversy as a transversal concept to be taken apart and reconstructed from our different fields (history of science, religious history, cultural history, Chinese history, etc.), we ended also debating (and not always agreeing on) other concepts, such as “ethnography”, “idolatry”, “adiaphora”. The questions of what is secularism and secularisation and how it is connected to religious pluralism came up in the final discussion and we regretted that there was no time (and money) to continue with the workshop for another day.

### *Conclusions*

One of the questions asked early in the workshop was: What does a rites controversy teach us and how useful is it as an object of a study? We agreed that it was useful for understanding the history of the Catholic Europe and for the construction of the global world. We also realized that since the controversy travelled around the globe through missionary networks, we have to proceed with comparisons but we also need to look more closely into linkages, many still invisible because we were not expecting them to exist. Another point of agreement reached by the participants is that the rites controversy is an important “window” into the history of the disciplines that belong to human and social sciences, in particular anthropology, Sinology, Orientalism, Indology.

What we did not do, but should have, also came up in the final discussion. For various reason we were not able to invite experts on missions in Japan, Canada, Africa and in Protestant lands. We now think that it will be important to solicit their expertise in future. The conspicuous absence of women as objects of research is also surprising, given that women, as anthropologists know very well, are transmitters of religion, or at least what is called “domestic” rituals in most of the societies. And finally, when we study accommodation it is not enough to study only texts. In our workshop we have neglected visual and embodied objects. We hope to remedy that next time around.

## 2. Scientific content of the event

Thursday 26 May 2011

### Introduction:

The workshop started with a short presentation of the programme and the main goals by the two convenors. The principal intellectual objective, the way we saw it before the conference, was to understand how the concept of “rite”, with its religious connotation of *ritus* or liturgy, developed during the early modern period into a secular concept of ritual and how it opened the debate on religious pluralism. We were interested in particular in the way in which the meaning of this word can open a window to understanding a larger sociocultural transformation in which religion and ethics, piety and morality came to be defined as two separate spheres. Then as today, this transformation was negotiated through a series of intellectual and political “quarrels”.

An additional objective was to gather together around the same table historians working on rites and rituals within missionary context, from different perspectives and from different area studies in order to chisel out appropriate methodologies for approaching our object in the long and the short “durée”. We invited Sinologists, Indologists, Americanists and Europeanists working from different historical subfields (ethno-history, religious history, social history, cultural history, history of a book, etc.).

Our final objective was to see in which way to expand and enrich our topic of research in order to connect with researchers in other fields such as anthropology, sociology, political sciences, etc.

In the two days that followed, we discussed and tried to answer these and similar questions, but there were also other questions in relation to categories and methodology that predictably came to the fore of the discussion. Some of these were “old” debates about fundamental concepts such as what ethnography is and what science is. Others were debates about the nature of the rites controversy. Are they purely textual? Who were the actors in the controversy and what was at stake? Whether it is a purely European phenomenon? How important were local “informants”?

**Session I: *Encounters with Historical Cultures; Missionary Practices, Intellectual Fronts.* Chair: Antonella Romano, discussant: Pierre-Antoine Fabre.**

The presenters had 25 minutes for their papers followed by the comments of the discussant on both papers and by 20 minute discussion.

**Catherine Jami** (CNRS, Université Paris 7, Paris, France), “**The Jesuits at the Astronomical Bureau in Beijing: science, rites and politics in early Qing China (1644-1669)**”

Catherine Jami was interested in understanding how institutions, ideas and practices prevalent in other civilisations may have contributed to shaping the concept of “rites” as it emerged in the early modern Europe. She looked specifically at the case of the “calendar” controversy in Beijing in which the prominent role was played by a Jesuit mathematician Johan Adam Schall von Bell (1592-1666), who resided in Beijing and presented the Manchu conquerors (who ousted the Ming dynasty in 1644) with the new calendar system that he had been working on for the Ming since 1629. Schall was then put “in charge of the affairs of the Astronomical Bureau which was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Rites, this gave rise to a number of conflicts and controversies. They shed light not only on some Jesuits’ perceptions of Chinese rites and of how astronomy related to them, but also on different approaches to this issue among “the Chinese”. Although through high office in the imperial structure, Schall was able to protect the Jesuit missions, some of his co-religionists such as Magelhães saw this charge as inappropriate for the missionaries because it was not just about mathematics, but also about, in Chinese view, “reading the heavenly signs”.

astronomy and correct calendars were used by the Chinese emperors to validate their own and their dynasty's political (and providential) mandate. In a word, the order of the heavenly bodies reflected the order of the terrestrial present and future. The Jesuits, such as Schall and Verbiest after him, applied European mathematical knowledge in order to gain access to the Emperor and to promote Christianity and therefore earned a plethora of enemies, in particular among the Muslim astronomers at the Bureau. Jami also shows that at a later stage, the Jesuit fall (sentenced to death) and rehabilitation had a lot to do with emperor Kangxi's political struggle with the appointed Manchu regent Oboi. She concluded that the controversy over mathematics was deeply entangled with the political enmities. It was also crucial for the continuation of the Jesuit mission in China.

**Gita Dharampal-Frick** (Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany)

**“The Malabar Rites Controversy (ca. 1600-1744): A Paradigm of Ritual Dynamics in the Early Modern Catholic Missions of South India; with a focus on Roberto Nobili's method of accommodation (1606-1623)**

Gita Dharampal-Frick first gave a brief topical chronology of the Malabar Rites controversy. In her opinion, the controversy was not only crucially consequential for missiological practice and ecclesiastical history but also important for our understanding of ritual dynamics. She examined Roberto Nobili's innovative method of accommodation comprising a classification of certain South Indian practices as acceptable social or civil customs as opposed to their conventional rejection as being tainted by “paganism” to show that the phenomenon of ritual, but also the very concept and categorisation of ritual, had a dynamic and shifting quality. She underscored the potential of rituals as performative and communicative instruments, whose efficacy as status symbols and/or as ludic topoi, facilitated through mimicry the construction of a transcultural third space.

Discussion:

Pierre-Antoine Fabre, in his commentary, opened the debate about what is religious and what is scientific in the case of Jesuits at the Qing court and how can one distinguish between secular and religious rituals. He also invited the discussion to focus on our concept of the “rite” and its definition. Catherine Jami responded that it is not fruitful to separate religion and science. Among the historians of science, the definition of science is as controversial as is the definition of religion for the historians of religion. There is a permanent tension between the categories of the historical actors and our own “analytical” research categories. Alan Strathern then asked a question about the relationship between astronomy and astrology, remarking that the early modern empires such as Moghul and Safavid, also looked to the sky to see what will happen to them, to which Catherine Jami responded by stating that the distinction between the astronomy and astrology is controversial. While astrology is considered “rubbish” (by the scientists and traditional current of the history of science) and impossible to circulate transnationally, astronomy is taken to be immutable truth about the world. Jami said that Magelhães translated from Chinese as mathematics what in fact in literal translation means “Observation of the Heavenly Signs”. The historians of science never noticed this ambiguity. Christian Grosse then remarked on Gita Dharampal-Frick's paper and said that Roberto Nobili's definition of “mere symbols” for certain objects around which the rites controversy was developed reminded him of the problems discussed in the treatises of civility in Europe at the same time, especially the notion of detaching interior from exterior. Gita Dharampal-Frick remarked that Talal Asad treats of this problem in his *Towards genealogy of ritual*. He tackled the same notion of detaching interior from exterior. Sabina Pavone warned that the word “rites” is ambiguous in our “rites controversy” because it was used to define the rites permitted to the converts by the Jesuits as well as their modification in relation to sacraments. Gita Dharampal-Frick mentioned that shastra in Sanskrit is very similar to German Wissenschaft. There is no distinction between natural and human sciences. No distinction between religion and sciences. There was no distinction in Europe as well in that period. Perhaps, she said, the category of religion appears in this period and maybe as a result of the rites controversy. Nicolas Standaert reminded us that there is no term “secular” in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and even what was defined as “civil” or “political” was also religious, but on a different level. Rites performed as a father of a family,

emperor and civil servant were civil, but they were also religious. Giuseppe Marcocci and Ananya Chakravorty then asked question about the “third space of enunciation” in which the new [Christian] rituals were established in Madurai, developed by Gita Dharmapal-Frick and questioning the notions of mimicry (a term borrowed by Homi Bhabha) as applied to Brahmins. Ines G. Zupanov remarked that we still don't know enough about Jesuit libraries and what they read or didn't. They knew the Renaissance treatises on civility but they probably also knew Protestant literature and especially that in which *adiaphora* was used against the Catholic Church. If we are talking about the “third space” created in the encounter, we may also think about the fourth space or sub-interior space, which is the space of intention. The Jesuits often argued in the course of the controversy that the rite's meaning comes from the intention of the one who performs it.

**Session II: *Chinese Rites and Jesuit Missions*. Chair: Ines G. Zupanov, discussant: Alan Strathern**

The presenters had 25 minutes for their papers followed by the comments of the discussant on all three papers and 25 minute discussion.

**Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia** (Pennsylvania State University, University Park, United States)  
**“Rites controversy. Chinese Converts’ Reaction”**

Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia started with three provocative arguments. That the Chinese Rites Controversy has :1) nothing to do with rituals but has everything to do with texts; 2) nothing to do with performance, but with interpretation or textualisation; 3) nothing to do with religion, but everything to do with power. He then tried to prove his points by looking at the texts written by Chinese converts and by trying to reclaim their voices in the Chinese Rites Controversy. His conclusion was that the cultural authority of these elite Chinese converts did not translate into *ethnographic* authority for the simple fact that the Christian literati belonged to the *ethnos*, whose erudition in Chinese texts at best qualified them as biased native informants in the ultimate elaboration of an “objective” ethnographic discourse. Missionary observation ultimately turned into ethnography, while Chinese voices did not matter.

**Isabelle Landry-Deron** (EHESS, Paris, France)  
**“Les éclaircissements sur les cérémonies chinoises de Mgr de Basilée, Gregorio Lopez, premier évêque chinois (1684)”**

Isabelle Landry-Deron presented the life and work of a Chinese convert, Luo Wenzao, who became the bishop Basilée and who wrote in favour of Jesuits in the rites controversy. Baptised by a Franciscan missionary, he became Dominican only to support Jesuit side in the controversy. He studied in the Philippines (under the Spanish crown after 1556) and was important for the conservation of Christianity during the difficult times of Ming-Qing transition when the missionaries were not able to circulate freely in the interior. Today, there are about 60 letters written by him, mostly in European languages (Spanish and Latin), Luo's opinion on the rites was translated and disseminated in Paris in two books, both of which were condemned by the Sorbonne de 1700.

**Florence Hsia** (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, United States)  
**“Writing rites in Le Comte's *Nouveaux Mémoires* (1696)”**

At the heart of Florence Hsia's paper was Louis Lecomte's *Nouveaux mémoires sur l'état présent de la Chine* (1696), published in the wake of Charles Maigrot's 1693 mandate concerning Chinese Christian orthopraxis. This work marked a turn of the tide in the controversy over the Chinese rites that engulfed the Jesuit mission to late imperial China, moulded early modern European conceptions of comparative religion and ritual, and still haunts the history of Chinese Christianity today. The multiple editions of the *Nouveaux mémoires* suggest quick success in the early modern marketplace of print, popularity soon turned into notoriety, its characterizations of Chinese beliefs and rituals fuelling a renewed wave of polemical pamphleteering by Maigrot and his allies that culminated in 1700 with

censure by the Sorbonne theological faculty. From its title and prefatory material to its formal structure and rhetorical style, the work pointed to alternate modes of writing (memoir, travel narrative, familiar letter) and authorial position (eyewitness, voyager, correspondent). If the *Confucius sinarum philosophus* (1687) – a Jesuit translation of three of the “Four Books” (the *Great learning*, *Doctrine of the mean*, and *Analects*) central to the Confucian canon – attempted a translation of matters Chinese from the arena of theological controversy and jurisdictional squabbles to the early modern Republic of Letters under the aegis of *le Roi très-chrétien*, the *Nouveaux mémoires* (1696) put in play yet another distinctive strategy for reasserting Jesuit credibility with respect to the Middle Kingdom and the representation of ritual practice.

#### Discussion:

Alan Strathern brought up in his comment the question of ethnography raised by Ronnie Po-cha Hsia about the ethnographic encounter in which Chinese informants wanted to get an upper hand but could not be successful because Chinese voices were transformed in writing. Because they operated in a particular (European) genre, these Chinese voices were doomed to be subordinated. He then proposed a comment comparing the relationship between Chinese literate converts and missionaries with the contemporary relation between informants and anthropologists. This kind of relation (Chinese-missionary and informant-anthropologist) is about knowledge and power. The Chinese participate in two worlds and rather than resembling anthropologists they resembled more scholars, “like us”, who use and explain texts rather than working from observation. The mendicants (Franciscans and Dominicans), on the other hand, were more interested in popular culture and everyday life. They were more like anthropologists. Antonella Romano remarked that the difference between China and America is that cultural authority is based on textual authority. Her comment on Florence Hsia paper was that she did not say anything on Jesuit genre of letter writing and how this production is a predecessor of Lecomte’s type of narrative. According to Catherine Jami, textual authority is central in the whole Chinese tradition, Jesuit or no Jesuit. In China, the divide is not between Chinese and westerners but between a literatus (*zhu*) or a vulgar person (*su*). She also protested against the term proto-ethnography (used by Gita Dharampal-Frick in her presentation). Jami also asked: “What do we gain to project modern academic categories by saying that someone is a good sinologist or that something is ethnography”? Ethnography, in her view was devised by literate and colonizing societies to produce a discourse on illiterate colonized society. The problem with the Jesuits in China was that, it could not be colonized. Joan Pau Rubiés suggested to Florence Hsia that the most important model for Lecomte was François Bernier, who was very critical of Jesuits. It may seem that Lecomte therefore adopted the tool of the enemies in order to fight them. His comment for Ronnie Po-cha Hsia was that the Jesuits in China were both ethnographers and antiquarians. In Paraguay they were only ethnographers. Nicolas Standaert remarked that these texts by Chinese converts were used and some of them were translated in Latin in order to be presented to Roman authorities. According to him, the question we should ask is: what is the authority of Christian converted elites who did not study theology? Also, what is the authority of non-Christian texts since the Catholic converts often quoted Confucius in order to confirm Jesuit side in the controversy? Ronnie Po-cha Hsia responded with an example: Nicolas Trigault who went to Rome in 1615 and wrote the petition to the Pope asking that the Mass be celebrated in Chinese because the Chinese cannot pronounce Latin. He said that the Jesuits would train Chinese scholars to become Jesuits, but that the Chinese should never be put Chinese in a position of authority. Ronnie Po-cha Hsia continued that the Jesuits field that they lacked linguistic authority, but that they belonged to a universal system that orders all the languages and rituals. Ronnie Po-cha Hsia also commented that all the Chinese converts he discussed in his paper belonged to large lineages and that we have no information how the common people practiced family rituals.



**Session III: *Malabar Rites between Mission and History, and Beyond.* Chair: Istvan Perczel, discussant: Antje Flüchter**

The presenters had 25 minutes for their papers followed by the comments of the discussant on all three papers and 25 minute discussion.

**Paolo Aranha** (Warburg Institute, London, United Kingdom)

***Malabar Rites: Towards a history of the early modern controversies on accommodation in the Jesuit missions of South India***

Paolo Aranha first offered a short overview of the abundant primary sources available on the topic, scattered across Europe, America and Asia. They point to the fact that there were many different actors and that the controversy was primarily framed within the history of Christianity in India and in relation to the early colonial European activities in the subcontinent. He also showed that the notion of the Malabar Rites controversy can be deconstructed in its terminology, chronology, context and content. He then followed step by step in order to chart continuities and ruptures between the seventeenth century controversy on Nobili's method and the eighteenth century controversy on the Malabar Rites properly called. He also showed that the Jesuits were not the only missionaries who explored forms of adaptation to the local Indian context. And, finally, he argued that an exhaustive list of all the Malabar Rites is impossible by definition, but he presented as case study a recently discovered document in which the Archbishop of Cranganore Estevão de Britto gave concession (1625) to the Christians in the Madurai Mission to cremate their dead. This permission was confirmed in 1650 by the Goa Inquisition, while rejecting the further request made by Roberto Nobili of extending the method of accommodation to São Thomé de Meliapur. In 1678 Propaganda Fide had warned the Jesuits against being dressed as Brahmans in the Madurai mission and in 1680 the Carmelite missionary Pietro Paolo di San Francesco had entered the Madurai mission on the invitation of Jaganada, a *paṛaiyar* catechist who opposed the caste discriminations tolerated by the Jesuits. He also made three further points: 1) that during his stay in Pondichéry Tournon fought mainly with the Capuchins and sided with the Jesuits on various occasions and circumstances and that the decree *Inter graviores* cannot be explained in terms of an innate anti-Jesuitism of the Patriarch of Antioch and its effects most probably exceeded what its author really meant; 2) that it is impossible to understand the Malabar Rites controversy without considering the concomitant beatification process of João de Britto. It appears very likely that the continuation of the cause, decreed by the Benedict XIV on 2 July 1741 notwithstanding the toleration and use of the Malabar Rites by the missionary, was a compensation to the Jesuits for the final ban of those same Malabar Rites, eventually sanctioned by the Bull *Omnium Sollicitudinum* in 1744; 3) that the Malabar Rites were christianized *saṃskāras*, expressing the overwhelming agency of the native converts rather than some enlightened vision of early modern missionaries who anticipated the contemporary notion of enculturation.

**Margherita Trento** (EHESS, Paris, France)

***Hindus? Some observations on the social, cultural and religious value of Hindu rites adapted and adopted by Roberto Nobili***

Margherita Trento wanted to understand the agency of the Indian converts in the development of the Malabar rites controversy. She studied the strategies of the social groups in contact with the missionaries and how they made themselves heard even as far as Rome. She was also interested in historical processes going on in India that influenced what was going on in the mission. She principally analysed a treatise written by Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso in 1616 edited and published by Joseph Wicki in 1963 and entitled by the editor: *Tratado sobre o Hinduísmo*. This treatise, an answer to Roberto Nobili's *Informatio de quibusdam moribus nationis indicae*, is extremely rich and Margherita Trento tried to identify in it multiple voices and different presences that inhabit it. She, therefore, addressed the question of its sources, and of the person/s who were selecting, translating, and providing Fernandes and Nobili with the texts, but also the intellectual 'object' - Brahmans, and Brahmanical culture - to which they directed their attention. The person responsible for this is a Brahman convert, Śivadharmā or Bonifacio Xastri, who was first Nobili's Sanskrit teacher and informant. He offered the same information to both Nobili and

his adversary Fernandes. Śivadharma's life and his social and religious strategies reveal the role of Brahmanical self-representation in the controversy on Malabar rites. He offered to the missionaries the "facts" on Brahman life-cycle ceremonies and learned quotations from the Sanskrit texts. The missionaries, each in a different, even opposite, way, built on it their own representation of and subsequent discourse on India.

**Ananya Chakravarti** (Centro de História de Além-mar, Lisbon, Portugal)  
**"Counter-factual rites controversies, or why Brazil isn't India"**

Ananya Chakravarti tried to understand by casting a comparative look, why India and Brazil mission history seem to be very different. Jesuit missionaries were the first and the most important actors there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and both India and Brazil were under Portuguese royal padroado. However, the Tupi tribes of sixteenth century lacked the most basic features of civilization, in the eyes of European observers, such as: *fé, lei, rei* (faith, law, king). And yet early Jesuit missionaries observed and recorded their mythologies and most importantly, the *santidade*, the central ritual feature of Tupi society and life. At much the same time, in India, the Jesuit engagement with Brahmanical Hinduism had also begun. Yet, while this latter engagement could lead to the development of the Malabar rites controversy, where fraught attempts were made to distinguish between socio-cultural and religious features of Hindu society, no such controversy could develop in Brazil. Taking seriously Jonathan Z. Smith's observation that "religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study," this paper explored how the different development of a Jesuit ethnographic "eye" in Brazil and India, undergirded by European civilizational assumptions and by the radically different nature of European power in these colonial theatres, circumvented the development of a "rites controversy" in Brazil but not in India.

Discussion

Antje Flüchter praised the comparative efforts made in several papers, especially in Ananya Chakravarty's effort at understanding both Brazilian and Indian missions. She also praised Paolo Aranha's discussion of sources from Propaganda Fide and the Inquisition in Rome that have not yet been studied. Margherita Trento's paper on Shivadharmā, according to Flüchter resurrected wonderfully the agency of this Indian Brahman convert and she underlined the importance of Ananya Chakravarty's question "why was there a lack of deeper exploration about the rites of the natives in Brazil". Flüchter's comment then addressed more general and theoretical issues. The first was how to understand accommodation? How different was it from the missionary efforts in still pagan Bavaria and among the Protestants in the north western Germany? She proposed that accommodation should be taken in a much wider sense, Flüchter said, there was a quarrel and because of it this accommodation appears special. The papers, however, in her opinion seem to have an "either or" perspective. Coming from Heidelberg where transculturality and transreligiosity are at the center of research, she proposed to see the rites as evolving, transcultural, transreligious practices. She warned about the dangers of anachronism. What is cultural in the context of the Malabar rites? The idea of the development of religious into secular should not lead us to construct just another teleology of modernity. There is no one and only "secularization" but rather "waves of secularization". There were many different waves of secularization in different periods. We are living through a "religious turn" at this point in the academia. Alan Strathern suggested, citing Marshal Sahlins, that some societies used "foreigners" to enhance their social prestige and that Tupi may have fallen into that category. The sorcerers in *santidaes* were always foreign. Ananya Chakravarty stressed again that what is important about *santidade* is that they come from the Tupi world and the Jesuits accommodated themselves into these ceremonies. Ines Zupanov suggested that *santidades* were like bhakti sects who used Christian symbols in India. Pierre-Antoine Fabre asked when the concept of "Malabar Rites" was first used. Paolo Aranha identified the moment as 1708. The discussion was then on what it means "Malabar". The conclusion is that it is because of the Jesuit institutional division called the Malabar Province. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia asked about Indian voices in the documents. Are there any and if no, why not. The consensus is that there are Indian voices. St. Thomas Christians left abundant materials,

according to Istvan Perczel. Margherita Trento also mentioned “mediated” Indian voices in her Indian corpus of documents on Nobili. Paolo Aranha saw a volume in the *Archivo Secreto Vaticano* with depositions by Tamil catechists as witnesses for the beatification of João de Brito. Antonella Romano asked to what extent the archives we look at coined controversy in question and if the Jesuits in Brazil talked about India, Japan and China. Paolo Aranha responded that the history we write is biased by our archives. But we have a dream – reading against the grain. Everyone would like to do Cheese and Worms, that is to work on a culture encapsulated in the inquisitorial archives. If we work on inquisitorial sources or Propaganda – we get different pictures. He proposed ecumenical approach as better. Antonella Romano rephrased the question in methodological terms – how do we combine different sources. She is neither for ecumenism nor would want to be Carlo Ginzburg. She asked Margherita Trento if she should not look at the relationship between Nobili and Shivadharma from the “friendship” angle. Margherita Trento agrees, although the flow of friendship goes both ways and is complicated to study. Ananya Chakravorty answered that the Brazilian Jesuits were obsessed with India. But the idea of St. Thomas’s stay in Brazil dies away. Fernandes Sardinha who came from India to Brazil used his acquaintance with Xavier as part of his authority to speak against Nobrega. He would constantly say that this is not how it was done in India. The early Jesuit mission is haunted by India and Nobrega is aware of it. Giuseppe Marcocci stated that Sardinha had two different opinions regarding the Indians of the East and of the West. For the comparative reflection on India and Brazil the most interesting feature, he said, would be to consider the space. The Jesuit missionaries do not inhabit the *sertão*. No missionary activity there. In the Christian world, there is only *aldeia*, a space for education of the natives. The main problem of why there was no accommodation in Brazil can be found in the question of space. Ananya Chakravorty responded that there was Jesuit accommodation in Brazil but it was not as radical as in India. Jesuit Theater for example is accommodatio. The question of space is important. Portuguese India is also gated space. She works on Salcete – later addition to Goan colony – different relationship of power mediating that space. In Brazil, the *sertão* is not the colony but is brought into the colony. *Aldeia* is not equivalent with the colony. The fight between *aldeia* and the slave plantations is what defines early colonial Brazilian history. *Sertão* is the space that gets eaten by both of them. Sabina Pavone raised the question of antijesuitism around 1730s in Rome, because the Jesuits are increasingly seen as disobedient.

**Session IV: *Mission and Inquisition*. Chair: Guillermo Wilde, discussant: Annick Delfosse**

**Michela Catto** (Istituto per il Lessico Europeo e storia delle idee Consiglio Nazionale LIESI/CNR - Marie Curie Fellow, Roma, Italy)

**« Le monothéisme comme la réaction de la Compagnie de Jesus face aux accusations de l’athéisme à la Chine »**

According to Michela Catto the Society of Jesus presented Confucianism as an ethical, moral, or philosophical system fully compatible with Christianity. However, the Jesuits distinguished between ancient Confucianism which was monotheist and new Confucianism, which was verging on atheism. This suspicion of “atheism” was much discussed and denounced during the Chinese rites controversy (the Maigrot-Tournon’s period). It was then that the question of Chinese rites grew larger, to attack not just the issues of the translation of the name of God and of the rites practiced by Chinese converts, but the Chinese philosophical culture as a whole. The solution to this question and defence of Chinese monotheism by the Society of Jesus was to focus the debate on the value of the historical and theological sources in Chinese books. Were these texts or commentaries? Ancient or modern? Where was the germ of Chinese monotheism hidden? The taking apart of the accusation of atheism levelled at an entire nation became a tool to defend the Chinese rites which slowly moved the debate from China to Europe, as Chinese atheism could not be accepted and supported because it maintained the existence of moral atheism, and therefore weakened the indissoluble link between religion and morality in European culture.

**Giuseppe Marcocci** (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Pisa, Italy)  
**“Rites, Customs and Religions: the Portuguese Inquisition in India (16th-17th Century)”**

Giuseppe Marcocci focused on the impact of the Portuguese Inquisition on the Indian society in the 16th and 17th centuries. His aim was to understand what Inquisitors defined as a rite, as a custom or as a religion, and what effect this had on the strategies of religious dialogue and control in that colonial area. In particular, he analysed a dossier containing the first reactions of the Portuguese Inquisition to controversy about Roberto Nobili's method in the first half of the 17th century. To what extent did these reactions belong to a supposed ethnographical tradition of the Iberian Inquisitions? This paper answered this question, for the Portuguese case, by looking, on the one hand, at the configuration of the relationship between Inquisitors and the so-called crypto-Jewish rites in Europe and, on the other, at the prosecution of local ceremonies in Goa between the late 16th century and the early 17th century.

**Sabina Pavone** (University of Macerata, Fermo, Italy) **“Jesuits and Oriental rites in the documents of the Roman Inquisition”**

Sabina Pavone examined the rites quarrel by looking at the role of the Jesuits from the documents preserved in Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF) in Rome. She worked on the exchanges between the center and the periphery by emphasizing the role of the different actors engaged in the evangelization of the oriental world and by looking into different opinions with the Company of Jesus. She worked especially on the document series called *Dubia circa sacramenta*.

Discussion

Annick Delfosse provided a point of view from her European field. Tridentin Catholicism is faced with twofold impossibility, to follow the given norm and to enforce the centrality of Rome. Therefore, it has to make adjustments all the time. Quarels help this kind of adjustments. The Congregation of rites has millions of documents arriving from the Catholic world. The same liturgy is imposed to all, in spite of the fact that there are many local differences. The fear is that the change in rites may affect the essential quality of the rites – salvation. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia commented on all three papers. They show that the rites controversies were rooted in European context. Langobardo's treatise was written in China and suppressed and it only came out in Navarette's translation. For Langobardo the question was of materialism which is New Confucianism. The question of Judaism, as stressed in Giuseppe Marcocci's paper is important. Problem with all conversos, Jews or Chinese is the fear of recidivism. Sabina's paper showed that the Jesuits have very little lobbying power in Rome and the Holy Office. It is a controversy about Jesuits and an attack on the Jesuits. Jesuits were also theologically weak (probabilism). Holy Office was also a “local” tribunal – local politics. Isabelle Landry-Deron asked a question of links between the Sorbonne and Rome. Also stressed the fact that Louis XIV allowed public condemnation of the Jesuits. Sabina Pavone does not think that there is a direct link. Paolo Aranha asked a “big question” about Madurai Mission controversy. He is perplexed by Nobili success. Against Jesuit internal historiography that created the Madurai Mission as a teleological development towards religious toleration. For Giuseppe Marcocci, Nobili's case is the demonstration that the controversy was more played in Europe than in India. Sabina Pavone asked the question why clerical superiors change their mind. Is it because of a well-argued text? Pierre-Antoine Fabre commented on Michela Catto's paper and the two notions of superstition and atheism. The absence of religion can be used to “recharge” (according to Alphonse Dupront) it with

Christianity. On Sabina Pavone's paper he commented the link between the sacrament and authority. The controversy precisely started because of the delinking of the two. Joan Pau Rubiés asked a question about the chronology. Why the debate takes place at one moment and not others. He does not agree that Jesuits were theological weak. There are within Christianity a variety of theological positions. There is a clear distinction between what you do with apostates and what you do with gentiles. One could be coherently flexible with converts from gentelism and intolerant with Christians who were apostate. The Inquisition has jurisdiction over those who have agreed to join. There are varieties of theologies and within these varieties of theologies – there is a variety of options. This is why there was a debate. Nicolas Standaert commented on the notion of atheism. The atheism of Matteo Ricci is not the same as atheism of the French Enlightenment. Matteo Ricci's is much more neutral. And it can be slightly positive because it can be infused with Christianity and it rejects superstition. This atheism was not combative. The same term is used differently hundred years later. Ines G. Zupanov commented on Nobili's argument about atheism which is for him Buddhism. The ceremonies performed by Buddhists cannot be religious, Nobili argued, because they are atheists. He uses it as an argument for his religious – civil distinction. Michela Catto responded that during the time of Maigrot, atheism was used and discussed but it is no more in use at the time of Tournon

**Session V: *Rites Controversies: Far and Near*. Chair: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, discussant: Christian Grosse**

**Antonella Romano** (European University Institute, Florence, Italy),  
**"The Chinese Controversy of Science between the Ming and the Qing Dynasties"**

Antonella Romano's paper placed the question of Jesuit participation to the Chinese tribunal of Mathematics within the broader context of the rite controversy. It developed the connection between both issues through the analysis of the debate which took place within the Society of Jesus around the 1640's. The actors and their arguments were then replaced in the crucial framework of the Manchu conquest of Ming China and the contrasted allegiances, among Jesuits, to either the former or the incoming rulers of the Empire. It also paid attention to the echoes these conflicts had in Catholic Europe.

**Istvan Perczel** (Central European University, Budapest, Hungary),  
**"The secret Chaldean movement among the Catholic St. Thomas Christians (the Pazhayakur) in the 18<sup>th</sup> c in Kerala"**

Istvan Perczel's paper documents the resilient resistance of the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala against conversion to Catholicism and even more importantly against Catholic missionary efforts at expurgating and destroying their liturgical and sacred books in classical Syriac. These books were brought to Kerala by monks and bishops sent from the Middle East for at least a thousand years before the arrival of the Portuguese in the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The culmination and most symbolic event of the process in which the St. Thomas Christians were being "reduced" to Catholicism was the Synod of Diamper held in 1599 and organised by Aleixo de Menezes, the Archbishop of Goa, when the customs and the Syriac books of the local Christians were condemned. In the wake of this Synod a new Syriac liturgy was elaborated and partly authored by Francisco Roz SJ, the first Latin Archbishop of Angamaly/Cranganore (1601-24). The text of the new liturgy largely consisted of translations from the Latin and intended to replace the original Nestorian/Chaldean rite of the local Christians. It is also known that the Saint Thomas Christians revolted against the Jesuits, the Portuguese and the forced Latinisation at the Bent Cross Oath in Mattanserry in 1653, which resulted, in the long term, in a split between the Catholic faction and an independent faction led by the Mar Thoma Metropolitans, which gradually joined the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. However, it has remained virtually unknown that within the Catholic faction the majority of the Indian Christians also resisted the Latinisation and that, after the Bent Cross Oath, a long struggle began for maintaining, be it illegally, the Chaldean rite and the contact with the Church of the East and the Chaldean patriarchate.

**Ovidiu Olar** ("N. Iorga" Institute of History of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania)  
**"Orthodoxy and Politics: The Patriarch Nikon of Moscow, the Prince Mihnea III Radu of Wallachia and the Great Church of Constantinople"**

Ovidiu Olar discussed in his paper the letters and responses patriarch Nikon of Moscow sent to Constantinople on June 14, 1654 and the response to it, on the one hand, and the letters of the Wallachian prince Radu III Mihnea to the on January 21 1659 and the response of the official theologian of the Big Church, on the other. The first letters were focused on the questions of ritual and liturgical ceremonies, while the second on the canon laws. By analysing these texts – all preserved in Leiden (BGE 65A et 73G), Ovidiu Olar tried to understand what was at stake in the manner in which they constructed the « true faith » in the middle of the 17th century South-eastern Europe.

#### Discussion

Christian Grosse commented on the two presentations, by Olar and Perczel, referring to the correction of the liturgical texts. The question of rites in Christian culture is always about texts. The anthropological notion of "ritual", invented in the 19<sup>th</sup> century comes from a technical term "ritual" which means the code of the rite and it is a text as well. The rite not just about text, but also about politics. Rites are important for collectivity. The liturgy links the community with its past. Reform usually means getting rid of innovation. To innovate is not to innovate. Reform is also a moment of decision what is in and what is out. The criteria is adiaphora (necessaria or fundamentalia). But it is impossible to know what is universal and what is necessary. It differs in time. Another criteria is idolatry and superstition. Ines Zupanov commented on Perczel's paper and the fact that St. Thomas Christians have been historically conscious community, but also that the knowledge of classical Syriac was in hands of a tiny elite which communicated with the even tinier Jesuit elites that knew Syriac. For all other purpose they used Malayalam. Florence Hsia asked Antonella Romano about the geography or reading and writing and the politics of publication of the Jesuit texts produced in China. How these materials were disseminated and how they travel since some texts have difficulty gaining publicity. For Paolo Aranha all papers deal with power. Gita Dharmapal-Frick wanted to know when the name St. Thomas Christian appeared. Ananya Chakravorty was interested in the diglossia. Dyglossia is showing up wherever there are Jesuits. Classical Syriac and Malayalam are the case in point. What do these two languages mean to St. Thomas Christians? Antonella Romano responds that those who were procurators were in better position to publish their texts. The question is also what is Europe interested in. Istvan Perczel responds and underscores that the St. Thomas Christians wrote their church history in Malayalam where Syriac documents are quoted in Syriac. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were written histories and it is already a colonial situation. Moreover, they have carefully kept archives. The connection with St. Thomas was boosted by Portuguese because it was important for them. Now that they are constructing a new Indian identity they also use St. Thomas.

**Session VI: *Idols, Idolatry and Catholic Mission (I)*. Chair: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, discussant: Joan-Pau Rubies**

**Guillermo Wilde** (University or Organisation: Universidad Nacional de San Martin - CONICET, Buenos Aires, Argentina)"A Rites controversy in the South American Rainforest? Research Hypothesis"

#### *A Rites Controversy in the South American Rain-Forest? Hypothesis of Research*

This exploratory paper discusses some aspects of what could be defined as a "rites controversy" in the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, in the regions of the Moxos, Chiquitos and Guarani Indians, especially in the early phase of missionary action, during the 17th century. In this period, Jesuits had ambiguous attitudes towards native rites of indigenous peoples of the South American rain-forest. Jesuits either recognized the relative legitimacy of native

rites and beliefs as equivalent to Christian sacraments and doctrines, supposing they had been implanted by Christians who had preached in those regions before, or they openly condemned indigenous rites as signs of paganism, superstition and idolatry, or, in some cases, they characterized them as “costum,” that is to say, as harmless civil practices with no religious meaning. These alternatives are in the core of the Jesuit discussion about methods of conversion and ways to attract the Indians to Christianity. They also contribute to the production of cultural, political and religious typologies that would be inherited by modern anthropology and contemporary debate on cultural and religious dialogue.

**Juan Carlos Estenssoro** (Université de Lille 3, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France)

**Une querelle des rites péruviens avant la Querelle des Rites : monopole spirituel et orthodoxie coloniale (1562-1588).**

Juan Carlos Estenssoro showed in his paper that the American rites quarrels, as opposed to those in Asia, were resolved definitely by the imperial authorities. Nevertheless, one of the most famous books *De procuranda indorum salute* by José de Acosta can be read as an invitation for a long quarrel. This text was not merely foundational, but a combative machine that worked on closing and annihilating a missionary experience that was already in use for half a century.

**Nicolas Standaert** (University or Organisation K.U. Leuven, Leuven, Belgium)

**“Intercultural Arguments in the Chinese Rites Controversy: the Case of Chinese Collective Letters dating from 1702”**

Nicolas Standaert showed in his paper that there were important Chinese voices involved in the Chinese rites controversy as evidenced in a series of Chinese and European manuscript and printed sources (in total some 60 letters with the impressive number of ca. 430 different signatories) dating from the years 1701-1704. The main purpose of his presentation was to explore through this specific set of documents, how knowledge about Chinese rites was “produced, distributed, and exchanged” within the early eighteenth-century intellectual world between China and Europe. In these documents the Chinese Christians presented in various ways their arguments concerning key-issues in the rites controversy. They did that by using analogies that do not only refer to Chinese culture but that are transcultural as well.

Discussion

Joan Pau Rubiés started with the key issue noticed in various interventions: are we talking about an interactive model between Christian missions and other societies or are we talking only about a European debate? Is the controversy about Europe? Chinese converts were crucial in the rites controversy, according to Standaert and other presentations pointed to the same importance of the native mediation. Nobili also tried to mobilize native experts for the Catholic arguments. He mobilized Brahmans who were not even converts. But, to what extent is this a genuine native intervention or was it orchestrated by the Jesuits. How decisive were these interventions? Ultimately, the Jesuits lost out everywhere. The center still seems to be in Rome or in European court. Multi-layered process in which there is native intervention but it is marginalized. Juan Carlos Estenssoro also showed politics in action. There was nothing in terms of genuine religious program in Peru, but a colonial program of control. The harsher policy comes from the royal patronage and not from Rome. In the Asian debates Rome is not necessarily against accommodation but is forced by the padroado to position itself in a certain way. Wilde’s paper shows that there is accommodation everywhere (taking a dance as a case study), but the limits a different in different spaces and times. A dance may be seen as dangerous in certain areas and not as dangerous in another. It is a question of contextuality. There can be no theological answer and for that reason the debate goes on. Theology defines idolatry as worshiping a creature and not the creator, but cannot interpret particular cases. In order to do so, one had to know ethnography and antiquarianism. Missionaries were anxious. The more they felt anxiety the more they had to push the theological definition towards ethnography and antiquarianism. In the 16<sup>th</sup> c.

onwards there is an erosion of the concept of idolatry as useful because it was being subjected to more and more pressure from ethnography and antiquarianism. The increase of anxiety comes with less control a church can exert. In non-colonial context church has less control and with literate cultures even lesser control. Two logics: the logic of needing to accommodate more because you have less control. The logic that was even more dangerous was to create a native church. Catherine Jami commented Joan Pau's point about the inclusion of the Chinese voices and whether they were manipulated or genuine. The historiographical point of including them into the narratives, she said, has to come first and only then can we think about whether or not they were manipulated. Not everywhere did the natives get to write. She also wanted to know more about dances (Wilde's paper). Is there any other point of view but missionary? Margherita Trento spoke about the importance of the "living libraries" in China. In India there is also the accumulation of textual knowledge and of knowledgeable people. Ananya Chakravorty raised the question of adiaphora on the native side and referred to earlier comment by Alan Strathern. Paolo Aranha commented on native testimonies in India. They are extracted and bribed by the Jesuits. Not trustworthy. What makes a testimony reliable? Involvement of notaries and seals is important.

**Session VII: *Idols, Idolatry and Catholic Mission (II)*. Chair: Florence Hsia, discussant: Joan-Pau Rubies**

**Claudia Brosseder** (University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany) "**Fearing the Power of Symbols: the Antagonism between Andean, Creole, and Afro-American Rites in Colonial Peru.**"

Claudia Brosseder discussed the impact of the European discourse about rituals on Andean rituals in colonial Peru. She showed that from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the Peruvian discourse had five decisive stages: the Spanish discourse about Incan rituals versus rituals of Andean commoners; the attempt of the Second Council of Lima to introduce a "secular" connotation of an Andean healer and his rituals; the Jesuit domination of the discourse and their propagation of the categories *hechizería* (sorcery) and idolatry, which lead to the persecution of Andean ritual specialists. Ultimately, this discourse narrowed the meaning of *hechizería*. It began to serve as shortcut for malicious harm. The notion of idolatry came second. The last stage of the discourse was shaped by secular institutions that persecuted Andean ritual specialists for cases of murder. Apart from the evolution of this discourse—from an almost secular connotation to a religious one to a secular one once again—the paper showed how the discourse coincided with transcultural interactions that, then, indeed, changed Andean rituals.

**Ana Hosne** (Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Buenos Aires, Argentina) "**Creation and shaping of idolatry in the doctrinal works of Jesuits José de Acosta and Matteo Ricci in the respective missions of Peru and China in the late 16th century**"

Ana Hosne's paper showed that Christianity in the mission space immediately defined itself in opposition to false religions, which usually comprised sects of idolaters. This was a necessary and vital demarcation in all the missions. But the definition of idolatry, and also of idolatrous sects, became specific, according to the historical and local conditions in the places where the missions were established. In sum, Christianity became specific and so did idolatry.

The Society of Jesus as the most rapidly expanding order in the early modern world contributed to establishing the distinction between the true religion and false religions. It also formulated this demarcation in doctrinal texts, and specifically catechisms. Hosne approached this subject by analysing two mission contexts, Peru and China, through the catechisms composed by two contemporary Jesuits: José de Acosta (1540-1600) in Peru and Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) in China.

Hosne, in addition, discussed how the Jesuits shaped and articulated idolatry in their respective catechisms, testifying to the process through which idolatry becomes defined by the local context. These two contemporary Jesuits' catechisms offer the possibility of



observing this process of shaping idolatry in doctrinal texts, in a line that would be continued by their successors. She also showed how the broader political frameworks where these missions were established influenced this process of shaping idolatry. Indeed, the Spanish Patronato and the colonial imprint in Peru and a Portuguese Padroado overshadowed by the local politics in the Ming Empire respectively conditioned and inspired Acosta and Ricci in the task of demarcating idolatry.

## Discussion

Guillermo Wilde reiterated the importance of comparing the contexts in which we study rites. Andean rituals are very different from those in the lowlands or borderlands. Jesuits realized that they were in front of the radically different conception of religion and their strategies changed. Guarani, for example, hated images and laughed at the Jesuits for worshiping painted images. The presence of the sorcerer who fabricates the body shows that they were facing different ontologies of the person. Claudia Brosseder made a distinction between bruxeria and hechiceria. The demonic dimension comes into hechiceria in Peru. Andeans are talking to the demons via stones. They were possessed by the demons. The Peruvian discourse is influenced by the European discourse on witches, but they are careful when using the word witch. Later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the European discourse on witches does influence the Peruvian discourse via Martim del Rio. We need to analyse how late antiquity models were working. The Jesuits often said that they felt like being in Egypt. The fear of the Protestants is omnipresent. Andean Iconophobia is interpreted as affinity with Protestantism. Joan Pau commented on antiquarian dimension and the work of Sabine MacCormack. She addressed parallels perceived by the missionaries between the late antiquity and Peru. Las Casas uses the late antiquity argument just like Nobili. The argument is: to be more accommodating to gentiles than to heretics. You first bring them in and then slowly you discipline them.

## General discussion and Conclusions/Highlights

The discussion picked up the topics that emerged in the two days of presentations and debates.

Since the participants were mostly cultural and social historians and the historians of science, belonging to distinctive historiographies based on the area study division, it was something of a challenge to define a common ground for the debate. There were many references that we shared but there were some we did not. However, we had a common topic and proceeded by looking at similarities and differences, before engaging in proper comparative analysis.

### *Historiography:*

The study of the rites controversy in the early modern world is divided along historiographical lines: national, transnational, regional, missionary, church history, colonial, religious, etc. By exchanging notes we were working on bringing these barriers down and creating intellectual linkages. For example, several papers, two in particular aimed at constructing their object of study in relation to two geographical areas. Ananya Chakravorty studies Jesuit missionary strategies and parallels between them in India and Brazil. Ana Hosne studies the notion of idolatry in China and Peru. All the participants agreed that this is what should be done in the best of all worlds.

### *Textes or rites :*

One of the general and repeated questions that we debated for the two days was whether the rites controversy was *about texts or about rites*. The answer is both, but as historians we are, of course, limited by texts. In studying the rites controversy as texts we have to keep in mind their intertextuality. The issues in one part of the globe are discussed in another. For example, Acosta's distinction of barbarians is influential in discussing Indian, Japanese and Chinese idolatry. Even the texts written in response to an opponent are reincorporated (used and misused) in fragments in further debate. There is the battle of the texts as much as a battle among the actors. Especially the printed texts are important for dissemination of the particular arguments.

### *Archives:*

The result of the war of texts was the *creation of the archives*. The question is can we trust our archives since they are most of the times a selection of certain type of documents. For example, the Jesuit documents are often accused of preserving selectively only a Jesuit point of view. The question of non-European voices involved in the controversy is a problem for historians regardless if we are dealing with literate or non-literate cultures. In several presentations this issue was tackled and it seems that even when the “*native*” voices were included there remained suspicion of the missionary manipulation. On the other hand, these voices are precious and may be read against (or along) the grain and in any case have to be taken seriously.

### *Space:*

This leads us to another topic of the debate which is: *was the rites controversy primarily European affaire* (Giuseppe Marcocci, Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia) or was it transnational and to what extent? Some participants insisted that it was principally European problem that was debated. All the major decision (suppression of the Malabar and Chinese rites) took place in Rome and the native voices were not really consulted. However, the situation is more complex, argued other participants, because certain key events were triggered “outside” and perhaps manipulated by local political actors (Nicolas Standaert, Paolo Aranha, and Margherita Trento). Also, the major political and institutional actors acted in different ways. The outcome of the American rites, according to Juan Carlos Estenssoro, was decided by the Spanish crown. On the other hand, the position taken by the Portuguese padroado was constantly opposed to the Propaganda Fide and Rome in Asia. The local (Indian, Chinese, American) contexts were also important because they were the space of encounter and dialogue between different cultural and religious traditions. Certain rites in a particular space were not contested or seen as “dangerous” for the church, while in other spaces they were forbidden (Guillermo Wilde). More than European or non-European space we are witnessing a space of entanglement and intercultural negotiation.

### *Accommodation:*

The rites controversy starts and ends with the question of accommodation, which some of us have studied in our field in India and in China in considerable detail. It is this “method” that ultimately produced the much discussed cleavage between “religious” and “social” acts and objects. During the conference, the Europeanists (who were mostly discussants) remarked that accommodation was not only used in the overseas missions, but also in the “pagan” Bavaria, among the Protestants, that is, in what the historians call the “interior missions”. They suggested that we should open the debate to include European accommodationist missions. The question was also raised about different degrees of accommodation in different spaces. While missionaries like Nobili and Ricci donned habits of Indian ascetics or Chinese literati elite, they did not tattoo their bodies as the Indians in the Amazon region. Where is the limit of accommodation? One of the suggestions is that we should be looking into political context and the question of power (Joan-Pau Rubiés). Where the church is stronger (supported by the colonial state), the accommodation is lesser. Inversely, accommodation in non-colonial spaces such as China and India pushes the limits further on and provoked the reaction such as the “Malabar and Chinese rites controversy”. When we take accommodation as the starting point, we can see that the native mediation is crucial. Indigenous knowledge, especially in India and in China, where literate tradition was strong, was required for constructing the accommodationist method and indigenous religious specialists were solicited for the task. It is only when the rites controversy started and was being decided in Rome that the native intervention was marginalized.

### *Ethnography*

The fact that the native experts were mobilized for contributing arguments for and against the rites brought us to the question of ethnography and the problem of using an anachronistic term to refer back to the early modern descriptions of customs and ceremonies (Catherine Jami). There was a proposition to use a term proto-ethnography (Gita Dharampal-Frick), which was criticized for its teleological framework (Ines G. Zupanov). Finally, a middle ground was found to take ethnography as a “corpus of texts” (Catherine Jami) one works on, and to accept the fact that we are dealing with fragments of descriptions, present in different genres of writing, that will much later become the field of

ethnography. Ethnography is therefore used in much the same way as “science” and “religion” - as analytical (with uncertain boundaries that constantly change) concepts that belong to our intellectual tools. Another concept to encapsulate missionary analysis and definition of indigenous religious tradition is antiquarianism. Missionaries often used ethnography and antiquarianism in tandem (Joan Pau Rubiés). These two kinds of knowledge were crucial for the missionaries in order to discern what is “idolatrous” and “pagan” from what is *adiaphora* or indifferent in terms of religion. Since the information was always precarious and potentially differently interpreted by local informants, the missionary interpretation was always on the negotiated, shifting ground. The controversies made all parties take clear-cut decisions although they were not such in the beginning.

*History of humanities and social sciences:*

The single most important reason for studying the rites quarrel in the early modern world is in what they tell us about the history of humanities and social sciences and this is why they have to be studied as a global phenomenon and not just as “Malabar and Chinese rites” or as merely “Jesuit history” (Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia). In particular the concepts of rites and its derivative ritual were discussed in detail during the workshop. We raised more questions than answers. For example, it is still not clear to us what would be a “secular ritual” in the early modern, in the late antique, and even less in Indian and Chinese context. What the Jesuits separated from religious and termed as political or civil was still “religious” (Nicolas Standaert). The early 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropological distinctions that explained ritual by distinguishing “outward signs” and “inward meaning” (W. Robertson Smith, 1910, quoted in Talal Asad, 1993:58), seems to be a direct echo of the rites controversy and the insistence on intentionality or lack of it. The lack of time did not allow us to pursue further this potentially important research track.

### **3. Assessment of the results, contribution to the future direction of the field, outcome**

The Workshop showed us clearly that the rites controversy in the early modern world is a research topic that needs to be approached transnationally and in its global scope, and that we need to engage specialists on mission history in other geographical areas (i.e. Japan, Canada, Vietnam, Africa, Europe, etc.). We also realized that we have not included papers on *visual accommodation* and that we have left out *women* who were universally present “natives” and “*subalterns*” in the early modern history. We plan to emphasize these two topics in our further research.

We would, certainly, like to apply for a research grant to continue our project. Unfortunately, European grants are poorly suited to this kind of projects and excessive administration procedures that they involve seem to stimulate bureaucratic rather than intellectual practices. Instead of huge grants that kill fundamental research, smaller grants (for particular demands) would be much more efficient and satisfying (something in a line of an ESF exploratory workshop, which was an excellent formula).

We are planning to publish the papers in an edited volume. Since we were not able to mark out 10% of the ESF grant for the publication (due to monopolistic practices, as explained earlier), we are now working on finding a publishing house and an additional sources of funding.

Our plans are to organize a series of additional conferences with the help of the participants in the network that we established with this workshop. We are in the process of negotiating a conference in Buenos Aires with our participant Guillermo Wilde as principal organizer.

We are also continuing our research seminar at the CARE/EHESS in Paris on the same topic.

In the long run we want to widen the debate both in terms of chronology and towards an interdisciplinary approach by inviting a wider spectre of social scientists, in particular, anthropologists.

4. Final programme  
 (Programme, CV and abstracts at the website:  
<http://ceias.ehess.fr/document.php?id=1806>)

## PROGRAMME

*Papers presented in English or French.*

### Thursday 26 May 2011

- 09.00-09.20      **Inaugural Address / Discours d'ouverture**  
**Pierre Antoine Fabre** (EHES, Paris, France) **and Ines G. Zupanov** (CNRS, Paris, France)
- 09.20-09.50      **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**  
**François-Joseph Ruggiu** (Standing Committee for the Humanities)
- 09.50-11.00**      **Session I: Encounters with Historical Cultures; Missionary Practices, Intellectual Fronts. Chair: Antonella Romano, discussant: Pierre Antoine Fabre**
- 09.50-10.15      "The Jesuits at the Astronomical Bureau in Beijing: science, rites and politics in early Qing China (1644-1669)"  
**Catherine Jami** (CNRS, Université Paris 7, Paris, France)
- 10.15-10.40      "The Malabar Rites Controversy (ca. 1600-1744): A Paradigm of Ritual Dynamics in the Early Modern Catholic Missions of South India"  
**Gita Dharampal-Frick** (Heidelberg University, Heidelberg, Germany)
- 10.40-11.00      **Discussion**
- 11.00-11.10      *Coffee / Tea Break*
- 11.10-12.50**      **Session II: Chinese Rites and Jesuit Missions. Chair: Ines G. Zupanov, discussant: Alan Strathern**
- 11.10-11.35      "Rites controversy. Chinese Converts' Reaction"  
**Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia** (Pennsylvania State University, University Park, United States)
- 11.35-12.00      "Les éclaircissements sur les cérémonies chinoises de Mgr de Basilée, Gregorio Lopez, premier évêque chinois (1684)"  
**Isabelle Landry-Deron** (EHES, Paris, France)
- 12.00-12.25      "Writing rites in Le Comte's Nouveaux Mémoires (1696)"  
**Florence Hsia** (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, United States)
- 12.25-12.50      **Discussion**
- 12.50-13.50      *Lunch*
- 13.50-15.25**      **Session III: Malabar Rites between Mission and History, and Beyond. Chair: Istvan Perczel, discussant: Antje Flüchter**
- 13.50-14.15      "Malabar Rites: An eighteenth-century Controversy on the Catholic Missions to South India"  
**Paolo Aranha** (Warburg Institute, London, United Kingdom)
- 14.15-14.40      "Becoming men or becoming Hindus? Some observations on the social, cultural and religious value of Hindu rites adapted and adopted by Roberto Nobili"  
**Margherita Trento** (EHES, Paris, France)

- 14.40-15.05      **"Counter-factual rites controversies, or why Brazil isn't India"**  
**Ananya Chakravarti** (Centro de História de Além-mar, Lisbon, Portugal)
- 15.05-15.25      **Discussion**
- 15.25-15.35      *Coffee / tea break*
- 15.35-18.00**      **Session IV: Mission and Inquisition. Chair: Guillermo Wilde, discussant: Annick Delfosse**
- 15.35-16.00      « **Le monothéisme comme la réaction de la Compagnie de Jesus face aux accusations de l'athéisme à la Chine** »  
**Michela Catto** (Istituto per il Lessico Europeo e storia delle idee Consiglio Nazionale LIESI/CNR - Marie Curie Fellow, Roma, Italy)
- 16.00-16.25      **"Rites, Customs and Religions: the Portuguese Inquisition in India (16th-17th Century)"**  
**Giuseppe Marcocci** (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Pisa, Italy)
- 16.25-16.50      **"Jesuits and Oriental rites in the documents of the Roman Inquisition"**  
**Sabina Pavone** (University of Macerata, Fermo, Italy)
- 16.50-17.20      **Discussion**
- 17.20-18.00      **General Discussion**
- 20.00              *Dinner*

## Friday 27 May 2011

- 09.25-11.00**      **Session V: Rites Controversies: Far and Near. Chair: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, discussant: Christian Grosse**
- 09.25-09.50      **"The Chinese Controversy of Science between the Ming and the Qing Dynasties"**  
**Antonella Romano** (European University Institute, Florence, Italy)
- 09.50-10.15      **"The secret Chaldean movement among the Catholic St. Thomas Christians (the Pazhayakur) in the 18<sup>th</sup> c in Kerala"**  
**Istvan Perczel** (Central European University, Budapest, Hungary)
- 10.15-10.40      **"Orthodoxie et politique. La patriarche Nikon de Moscou, le prince Valaque Radu III et la Grande Eglise de Constantinople"**  
**Ovidiu Olar** ("N. Iorga" Institute of History of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, Romania)
- 10.40-11.00      **Discussion**
- 11.00-11.10      *Coffee / Tea Break*
- 11.10-12.50**      **Session VI: Idols, Idolatry and Catholic Mission (I). Chair: Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, discussant: Joan-Pau Rubies**
- 11.10-11.35      "A Rites controversy in the South American Rainforest? Research Hypothesis"  
**Guillermo Wilde** (University or Organisation: Universidad Nacional de San Martín - CONICET, Buenos Aires, Argentina)
- 11.35-12.00      **"The Extirpation of idolatry"**  
**Juan Carlos Estenssoro** (Université de Lille 3, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France)
- 12.00-12.25      **"Intercultural Arguments in the Chinese Rites Controversy: the Case of Chinese Collective Letters dating from 1702"**  
**Nicolas Standaert** (University or Organisation K.U. Leuven, Leuven, Belgium)
- 12.25-12.50      **Discussion**

12.50-13.50	Lunch
<b>13.50-17.30</b>	<b>Session VII: Idols, Idolatry and Catholic Mission (II). Chair: Florence Hsia, discussant: Joan-Pau Rubies</b>
13.50-14.15	<b>"Fearing the Power of Symbols: the Antagonism between Andean, Creole, and Afro-American Rites in Colonial Peru."</b> <b>Claudia Brosseeder</b> (University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg, Germany)
14.15-14.40	<b>"Creation and shaping of idolatry in the doctrinal works of Jesuits José de Acosta and Matteo Ricci in the respective missions of Peru and China in the late 16th century"</b> <b>Ana Hosne</b> (Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Buenos Aires, Argentina)
14.40-15.00	<b>Discussion</b>
15.00-15.20	Coffe / Tea Break
15.20-17.30	<b>General discussion, including discussion on future activities, and conclusion</b>

## 5. Final list of participants

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**6. Statistical information on participants**

Age bracket	%
20-29	8%
30-39	27%
40-49	34%
50-59	31%
Total	100,0%

COUNTRY	%
Germany	11,5%
UK	11,5%
Argentina	7,7%
Belgium	7,7%
France	23,1%
Hongrie	3,8%
Italy	15,4%
Portugal	3,8%
Romania	3,8%
Switzerland	3,8%
USA	7,7%
	100,0%

M/F repartition	%
F	54%
M	46%
Total	100%