

For Barr, whilst the Big Bang is ‘very likely a “natural event,” in the sense of obeying the laws of physics’ (p. 96), this is not the same as a self-making universe. I really liked Barr’s contribution, perhaps because by training and inclination I am also a physicist (sadly not to his level!), perhaps because he showed the most obvious facility and engagement with current cosmology. He is also the author I most wanted to quibble with—and that’s a good sign in my book! He presents his case largely via two analogies for creation. The first is authorship of a play, which offers a nice parallel for primary causation (the work of authorship) and secondary causation (the internal logic of the plot). But Barr pushes his image too far. He wants to get away from the idea that creation is about the beginnings of things, yet the fact that the plots of plays begin out of the blue without a full pre-history is surely a clear indicator that they are indeed created by authors. Again, whilst the characters in a play do not interact with the person of the author, the whole point of creation is so that God *can* enter into living relationship with his creatures. Barr’s second analogy is much happier: just as a bank account with no money in it is still a very definite something which needs a bank to create it, so too are the laws of physics even prior to bringing the cosmos into existence.

Another key theme, developed by Walsh and by Purcell commenting on Thomas Nagel, was the inadequacy of reductionist materialism to explain the whole of reality. Both identify human consciousness and reason—in Walsh’s case, science itself—as the grounds for this. Walsh, following Darwin, tellingly asks whether evolutionary theory is any more than a monkey’s idea, and argues that science is not reducible to neurological phenomena. He suggests that the unacknowledged tension between the ideology of materialism and science’s corresponding claim to explain everything, including itself, is what leads to the acrimonious nature of so many contributions to the science–religion debate. A paradigm shift is overdue!

The end of the book is the end of the world. Whilst the precise fate of the universe is still unclear scientifically, there is no doubt that the future for human life is pretty pessimistic on a cosmic timescale. Wilkinson points out that it is only a transcendent Creator who can give hope. A merely immanent Creator will suffer the same fate as the cosmos and a deistic first cause doesn’t care! But a transcendent God can bring about ‘new creation,’ neither merely the continued natural existence of the cosmos nor its replacement, but rather its real transformation and renewal. For Christians, the Resurrection of Jesus is the key.

**The Visitor: André Palmeiro and the Jesuits in Asia.** By Liam Matthew Brockey.

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The missionary expansion of the Church in 16th/early 17th-century Asia is a story of ebb and flow, a recounting of pioneering adventure coupled with complexity and setback. In the slow burning glow of Tridentine reforms which were seeping their way throughout the Church, the Jesuit missions in Asia and elsewhere are often represented as a vigorous

and renewed Catholicism establishing an ecclesiastical infrastructure in countries and cultures far removed from the dominant Eurocentrism which often characterized the faith. Names like Francis Xavier (d.1552; 'the Apostle of the Indies'/'the Apostle of Japan'), Matteo Ricci (d.1610), and Roberto de Nobili (d.1656) are known as leading figures in this missionary thrust. However, a nuanced understanding as well as a more comprehensive view of missionary historiography in Asia must look beyond the leading figures and their contributions.

The volume under consideration is precisely a historical account that assists in assembling a careful picture that yields a scholarly and judicious description of this missionary expansion. André Palmeiro was born in 1569 in Lisbon and entered the Society of Jesus at the Colégio de Jesus in Coimbra in 1584. This college remained his home for the next 30 years while he advanced through his stages of Jesuit formation and eventually joined the academic staff of the college teaching philosophy and theology. He had a long career in a distinguished academic centre in early 17th-century Portugal, even earning praise from the eminent Francisco Suárez. In 1614 he was sent from Coimbra to become rector of the Colégio de São Paulo at Braga. In 1617 he received word that he was to be Visitor to Jesuit missions in Asia on behalf of the Jesuit Superior General in Rome, Muzio Vitelleschi. Palmeiro's remaining 18 years were spent traversing Jesuit foundations from Malabar to Goa, as well as the East Asian missions in the Ming Empire and beyond. A constant preoccupation was the Jesuits' Japanese mission since persecutions had escalated there by the 1620s. His responsibilities as Visitor also led him to focus on the needs of missions in places like Ethiopia, Tonkin, Cochinchina, Champa, Cambodia, Laos, and Siam.

Palmeiro, in the execution of his task as Visitor, approached the needs of the Jesuit missions with a clear headed view of what was necessary. As Visitor he had considerable authority, something which he exercised with directness and firmness such as his issuing instructions on the correct observance of ecclesiastical discipline within the Order in Asia. Yet one could not accuse him of intemperateness. In the face of many unfinished controversies concerning the appropriateness of inculturation and the necessary adaptation of Christian terms and practices in Asian culture, Palmeiro participated in these disputes issuing rulings that did not always meet with a universal welcome. The close dependence of the missionary foundations on the Portuguese colonial rulers added yet another complicated factor to the evangelical activity of the Jesuits. Palmeiro was called to negotiate the necessary balance between maintaining cordial pastoral and commercial relations with the colonizing powers and attempting to keep a certain distance so as not to compromise the imperative of spreading the Gospel. At the heart of these debates was the matter of what constituted the most effective missionary strategy, a topic that did not lead to great unanimity. His journeys in Maritime Asia become a type of travelogue offering an insight into the strangeness felt by the European missionaries.

The increasing persecution of the Church in Japan overshadowed Palmeiro's later years as Visitor. The *inclusio* in this volume of the case of Cristóvão Ferreira, a Jesuit priest who apostatized in the face of persecution in Japan in 1633, adds poignancy and pathos to the story of Palmeiro and the missions in Asia.

Liam Matthew Brockey has presented a narrative of the first order on a personality and topic that was rich in possibility. Yet the research necessary for such a narrative has

also been of the first order. Of particular note is the meticulous use of archival sources at the Jesuit General Curia in Rome. However this book is no dry tome. It is an excellent biography of a second tier but indispensable figure in the missionary history of 17th-century Asia. Because of this, the understanding of the Jesuit missions in this period moves beyond a one-dimensional presentation focused on leading personalities and issues. Studies like the volume under consideration might be classed as a type of 'micro history' which contributes greatly to comprehending the general theme of Jesuit missions in Asia. Nevertheless much more than a biography is contained in the book. Theological controversies are referred to adroitly and an assured knowledge of commercial and social dimensions of the missions is displayed. The waning of the Jesuit missions, due to the political vagaries of Maritime Asia, in the decades following Palmeiro's death is dealt with in summary form in the conclusion and the author gives a judicious assessment of the anachronistic temptation to view the missions as a type of globalization *avant la lettre*.

Studies like this one genuinely assist in seeing the characters and the missions on their own terms in so far as that is possible—a crucial litmus test for balanced historical writing. This book is to be welcomed as a richly textured, scrupulous, and beautifully written account of a figure and theme that still excites.