

# Tangled Threads: World History through a Portuguese Lens

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**Abstract.** Using the example of the headquarters of the Society of Jesus in Lisbon during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this article presents a vision of world history as seen from the perspective of the Portuguese empire. It evokes the air of “pious agitation” that once filled the historic church of São Roque, describing the figures who fill the space in paintings, tombs, sculptures, or in memory alone. Through the prism of the Portuguese Jesuits, it shows that notions of globalization and cosmopolitanism had roots that stretched back over at least five hundred years to the heyday of the Iberian Expansion.

Sitting atop a hill overlooking the central plaza of the city of Lisbon, the church of São Roque has an unassuming façade of unadorned pinkish marble and a similarly unremarkable bell tower. Thanks to the same 1755 earthquake that reduced the city to rubble and provoked *Candide* to ponder the question of evil, only a short set of steps and an imposing door suggest something of the treasures held within. Once inside, however, one is immediately confronted by a spacious open hall lined with high rounded arches whose volume appears larger due to the optical illusion of three openings to the heavens painted on its flat wooden ceiling. Clear windows forming the highest gallery flood the church with light, illuminating its eight lateral chapels and revealing the richness of the materials used in its construction. Two mar-

ble pulpits face each other across its center, mounted high up to provide gathered listeners with unimpeded lines of sight and sound for preachers. Recessed side altars in the church's chapels contend with the main altar for beauty, each a composition of inlaid marble, painted tile panels, and gilt carved wood, and all striking examples of the Portuguese baroque style. The primary altar, however, towers above these smaller chapels, itself an architectural composition with columns, paintings, and four life-sized statues of saints, all covered with a layer of gold. On either side of this central sanctuary are two further alcoves, each the size of a small chapel, with reliquaries ranked in ascending rows, their painted heads and blessing arms appearing as a stilled choir. Yet for all of its majestic beauty, the church is more compelling for another reason—it is where the course of many of the otherwise parallel strands of world history converge.

The church of São Roque is a space filled with figures: some painted, some sculpted, some partially present in the flesh, some wholly present, and some present only in the long-faded echoes of their words, but whose crossing in this edifice has given it a global significance. In this respect, it mirrors more recognizable sites such as the United Nations Building in New York, the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, or the imperial audience chambers of the Forbidden City in Beijing. It is far from recognizable to most, however, since it belongs to a world whose institutional trappings and cultural influence have long since decayed or been actively dismantled. Yet in the early modern period, from the middle of the sixteenth until the middle of the eighteenth century, it was one of the busiest spaces in the city of Lisbon, reflecting the glory of the Portuguese capital during its age of greatest prosperity. During that age, the concerns of the denizens of that space were truly global, involving affairs from the remote jungles of the Congo to the even remoter jungles of Brazil. Their involvement in matters temporal and spiritual stretched from the bustling markets of the Swahili coast to the commercial entrepôts of the South China sea, not to mention all of Europe, from the yet unformed Catholics of Lithuania to the rebellious Calvinists of the Dutch Republic and on to the galley slaves of Mediterranean fleets and isolated rustics of the Azorean archipelago. Indeed, few spaces can boast of having had inhabitants with such ambitious worries or such grandiose plans as the church of São Roque, the former headquarters of the Society of Jesus in Portugal.

Upon entering São Roque, the visitor, awed by the church's silence, directs the eye towards the artistic beauty that fills the space. Yet, without the

crucial dimension of human action, the historical importance of this space is hard to discern. From our modern vantage point, we may find it hard to envision the church full of movement, abuzz with pious agitation far surpassing the subdued atmosphere of current worship there. In fact, even before the Jesuits commissioned the present church of São Roque in the 1570s, the spot that it stands upon was thronged by pilgrims. They made the climb up to one of the highest points in the city, just outside the farthest northwestern corner of the city walls, to pray for health at a shrine to Saint Roque (also known as Roch or Rocco), the patron saint of plague victims. In what appears to have been a shrewd combination of piety and public health planning, a small chapel was built at the beginning of the sixteenth century to accommodate the cult of this popular devotional figure as well as to encourage the afflicted to leave the densely packed heart of the city below. On the hilltop, however, they could get some of the best medical treatment that contemporary science had discovered: a constant breeze bringing fresh air from the waterfront, the services of clergy devoted to helping the infirm, and the chance for prayers at the shrine of a heavenly intercessor.

For sixteenth-century Europeans, an opportunity to pray for health in times of plague was often the best therapeutic measure available. Given the variety of treatments for illnesses—ranging from bleeding to herbal potions or compresses—the expense of hiring anyone with enough knowledge to be beneficial, as well as the normal estimate that medical interventions most often made matters worse, devotions to figures such as St. Roque promised to be in their own way more efficacious. If nothing else, they comforted the soul and prepared the afflicted for their impending eternal reward. Yet one could hope for more. Through praying to a saint who had devoted himself to helping victims of the bubonic plague, one might be cured by the lingering miraculous effects of his presence or by his personal supplications to the Almighty. According to tradition, St. Roque had gained his powers on leaving his native Languedoc for Italy, where he tirelessly attended others, saving enough of them to earn a reputation as a healer. Intimate contact with contagion eventually left him infected and desirous to return to France. As recounted in the paintings and tile panels on the walls of the Lisbon church, he collapsed on his way home under a tree where he engaged with angels and had his daily bread delivered by a faithful greyhound until he recovered—only to be imprisoned as an impostor or spy in his hometown. Soon after his death and subsequent burial in Venice, reverence for his healing powers

spread along with the deadly waves of disease that repeatedly swept across Southern Europe. After an outbreak of plague in 1505, supposedly brought to Lisbon by a Venetian ship, King Manuel I requested a relic of the saint from the Signoria of the Most Serene Republic. "In this way," wrote a later Jesuit author, the city that "caused our illness gave us the medicine"—in the form of a part of a leg bone. Recent excavations under the paving stones in the floor of the Jesuit church confirm St. Roque's popularity in Portugal. The numerous hastily dug graves found there attest to the desperate efforts plague sufferers made to worship in his chapel.

While the dance of death dominated this corner of Lisbon in the early sixteenth century, its rhythms gradually faded under the din of other activities that occurred on this spot after the Society of Jesus moved in. The arrival of the Jesuits in Portugal, the prelude to their spread into the Portuguese overseas empire, occurred within a year after the order itself was officially founded in 1540. In tune with the heightening tenor of spiritual renewal then on the rise in Iberia—the same that produced the mystics Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross—King João III invited Ignatius Loyola to send a pair of his followers to Lisbon for service both there and abroad. The two who came, Simão Rodrigues and Francis Xavier, had been Ignatius's colleagues at the University of Paris and later in Italy, and were counted among his most trusted friends. Shortly after they arrived, Dom João, the man who styled himself "King of Portugal and of the Algarves, and of the Near and Far Seas of Africa, the Lord of Guinea and of the Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India," requested that Xavier head off to convert the masses of heathens nominally under his control. Rodrigues, the only Portuguese member of Loyola's original band, was asked to stay in Lisbon in order to tend the new order's roots there. The Society grew quickly in Portugal under Rodrigues's stewardship. The new houses founded under his direction in the country's key cities would turn out generations of confessors, scholars, preachers, and missionaries. Similarly, Xavier started missions throughout maritime Asia, following Portuguese traders and adventurers to ever-farther shores. Both founding fathers would find their places amid the figures on the walls of São Roque within two generations—Rodrigues in an ossuary, Xavier in a set of statues and narrative paintings.

Of these two individuals, however, it was Francis Xavier who was directly responsible for creating the global enterprise that would be run from São Roque. To be sure, his actions merely laid the groundwork for what his

Portuguese, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Polish, and Flemish (not to mention Indian, Chinese, and Japanese) successors would develop in Asia. The powerful impulse to follow in the footsteps of Padre Mestre Francisco by embarking at Lisbon or Seville for the overseas missions, cited in the numerous requests for such assignments held in the order's Roman archives, was both encouraged and commemorated by the images of the saint at São Roque. In a lateral chapel, above the high altar, and most dramatically in a series of paintings ringing the massive vestment drawers in the sacristy, the figure of Xavier reminds the visitor of the Society's missionary vocation—always appearing cloaked in the order's simple black robes and with cross and gospel in hand. The priests and brothers who were bound for the East or West Indies, no less than the provincial superiors who lived in the residence adjoining the church, were meant to derive inspiration from the key episodes of the saint's life. As they prepared for mass, they could contemplate his preaching to a crowd of Indian men, women, and children in the colonial Portuguese city of Goa. They could wonder at his ability to communicate with a group of fierce samurai, all bedecked in kimonos and bearing swords, at Yamaguchi on the Japanese island of Honshu. For these Jesuits, however, the most stirring episodes in Xavier's life were, in all likelihood, the miracles shown in these paintings: Francis dangling his cross from the deck of a troubled ship into crashing waves and imploring the Lord to spare the lives of its passengers; or Francis himself being lowered from a ship's deck into the sea along with an empty porcelain jar only to return with fresh water for the parched crew. Many men said their last confessions in Europe at São Roque before sailing out of Lisbon harbor on a one-way voyage to unknown lands, emboldened by the saint's example.

While the triumphant figure of Francis Xavier may have been captivating enough to spark many missionary vocations, the images of martyrs found in the church also contributed to maintaining the tenor of zeal required for a global enterprise. Although it may be difficult to understand nowadays, martyrdom was a very real goal and a very desirable fate for many early modern Christians, and it did not necessarily require sailing to remote corners of the world. Yet since the Society of Jesus depended on its Portuguese and Spanish provinces to provide the bulk of the missionaries for the Iberian empires in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, these Jesuits had to content themselves with the possibility of suffering for the faith at the hands of infidels overseas. At times, such as in the violent destruction of the Japanese mission by the



shoguns bent on national unification in the first half of the seventeenth century, foreign rulers were only too happy to oblige. On either side of the main altar at São Roque, three life-sized painted figures bearing the palms of martyrdom peer down, warning viewers of the mortal dangers—and glorious rewards—of missionary work. These three Japanese martyrs, Paulo Miki, Diogo Kisai, and João de Goto, had joined the Society of Jesus as brothers and perished in Nagasaki at the order of Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1597. While only these men appeared in this space on gilt panels, the builders of São Roque might just as easily have affixed images of João de Brito (slain in Southern India in 1693), Inácio de Azevedo (killed by French Calvinist pirates along with thirty-nine other Jesuits near the Canaries in 1570), or Luiz de Figueira (consumed by Brazilian cannibals in 1643). Any of these could have served the same purpose of providing the fervor necessary to maintain morale in regions where many missionaries found only despair.

One should not think, however, that the church of São Roque merely served as a starting point for overseas adventures. It was one of the first places visited by some of the Asians, Africans, and Americans who returned to Europe in Jesuit care. Although its trace is impossible to discern today due to a lack of artistic representations, São Roque served as the guest quarters for the first Japanese “embassy” to the West. Four youths, specifically chosen by the Jesuits for their relations to the recently converted daimyo (regional lords) of Kyushu, were escorted to Portugal and onward to Spain and Italy by the missionaries in 1584. This grand tour, a dramatic publicity coup for the Society of Jesus, saw the teenagers, bedecked in either their Japanese finery or European costume, paraded through the streets of many cities such as Madrid, Alicante, Florence, Milan, Rome, Naples, and Coimbra, as evidence of the Jesuits’ apostolic triumphs overseas. During their travels, their hosts included the King of Spain, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Pope, not to mention the local nobles and clergy (especially Jesuits) in each place they visited. Not only did this permit the “ambassadors” to learn more about Europe with the hope of them telling their compatriots of the glories of Europe, it gave many Europeans their first glance at the people of East Asia. Subsequent visitors from China, India, Kongo, and Brazil would also pass through São Roque to admire its splendor in the company of returning missionaries, aiming to foster European interest (and financial support) for the Society’s activities throughout the globe.

The Jesuits of São Roque intended for all those who passed within, including foreign visitors, to be awed by the majesty of their surroundings. But religious awe for the Catholic men and women of four hundred years ago went beyond remarking the lifelike statues of the Jesuit saints Loyola, Xavier, Gonzaga, and Borja mounted above the main altar—their piety required the physical presence of the blessed. This meant relics. Here too, the presences at São Roque originated far beyond the narrow confines of Lisbon or even Portugal itself, from a realm encompassing the better part of Europe. Seated inside the numerous niches within the golden carved wood panels of the chapels of the *Santo Sacramento* and *Nossa Senhora de Piedade*, as well as in the enclosed reliquary stands on either side of the main altar, one finds a considerable collection of holy bones. These range in size from the smallest sliver of a femur to an entire skeleton (and perhaps more). Most of them belong to the trove of relics given by Juan de Borja, son of former Spanish Duke of Gandía and third General of the Society of Jesus St. Francis Borja, to the Lisbon Jesuits in 1587. The younger Borja, acting as the ambassador of Philip II to the king's Austrian Hapsburg cousin Emperor Rudolph II, purchased most of the pieces from German Catholics who had smuggled them out of Protestant territories. Knowing that the Society's new church had recently been completed, he sent them to Portugal where they might be "more decently kept and more venerated, honored, and visited by the faithful with more devotion than in other parts"—especially the heretical North where iconoclasm was the order of the day. Although the late sixteenth century witnessed the active efforts of reforming clergy to remove relics from the hands of lay men and women and collect them in guarded sanctuaries, the traditional Catholic devotion to holy objects retained its luster. On the occasion of this donation, the Jesuits held an elaborate celebration where a figure of St. Roque was mounted on the church's façade, welcoming a procession bearing the Borja legacy through the city streets. Among the new acquisitions were to be found golden heads of some of the 11,000 virgins slaughtered at Cologne along with St. Ursula, arm bones of bishops and cardinals whose painted reliquary cases extended a gesture of blessing, and a skull reportedly from the brilliant fifth-century nun, St. Bridget of Ireland, in a golden coffer.

But besides housing bits of the mortal remains of the blessed in reliquaries, São Roque serves as the final resting place for other individuals who passed through its doors. In the church's central area, today covered by ranks

of pews, one finds scores of unmarked (yet numbered) graves covered by polished pine planks. Likely belonging to the Jesuits from the adjacent Professed House (for the highest, or professed, members of the order), these tombs purposely reveal nothing about whose bones they contain—perhaps in deference to the Society's ideals of poverty, humility, and corporate identity. Nevertheless, the church contains the clearly marked resting place of more than one Jesuit. In addition to Simão Rodrigues's ossuary, the visitor also finds that of Francisco Suárez, the famous Spanish theologian and philosopher who contributed to the reinvigoration of Aristotelian philosophy in the sixteenth century. Suárez spent the last twenty years of his life at the University of Coimbra, the Society's main intellectual center in Portugal, after having taught theology at Salamanca and Rome. At that university he joined the set of Jesuit scholars who produced the *Cursus Conimbricensis*, a set of commentaries on the works of Aristotle that became the standard philosophy textbook used in Jesuit schools across Europe and throughout the globe for the following two hundred years. His own famous work, the *Disputationes metaphysicae*, would have a similar impact on the study of scholastic thought, influencing such intellectuals as Leibniz and Descartes. More importantly for the modern world, however, Suárez is also remembered for the concept of international law that he helped create with Spanish Dominican Francisco de Vitória. Drawing on both Stoic precepts and the Aristotelian definition of Natural Law, he developed a concept of national sovereignty that he employed to philosophically challenge the notion that the Spanish empire had a right to enslave the native populations of the Americas. In Suárez's view, the world consisted of a community of nations whose interactions were governed by certain universal principles—granting none any more legitimacy than another.

A further figure, not a Jesuit, is also conspicuously present in the middle of the Lisbon church. According to the plaque attached to his vertical tomb, he is Francis Tregian, an Englishman who was sent to prison for twenty-eight years by Queen Elizabeth I for standing "in defense of the Catholic religion." Among the many crimes he committed in Britain was the damnable offense of remaining faithful to his wife despite the Virgin Queen's unwanted romantic overtures at court. When finally freed from captivity in 1606, he abandoned his homeland for Lisbon where he joined the ranks of other English and Irish Catholics living in exile, awaiting the return of a monarch willing to take the British Isles back into the Roman church. In Portugal, France, the Lowlands, or neighboring Spain, Tregian and other Britons sent their sons to seminaries such as the



Jesuit-run College of St. Patrick in Lisbon where they might be trained as priests for covert pastoral work back home. They also contributed to the welfare of the poor of their adopted cities, at times gaining a reputation for piety, as Tregian did. Such was his fame that seventeen years after his burial in 1608, his body was exhumed at the behest of the other English expatriates in Lisbon. Finding it uncorrupted—a sure sign of saintliness—they created another tomb for him in a wall under one of São Roque's pulpits, and enclosed him standing, a literal reminder for posterity of his uprightness.

Today, neither Rodrigues, Suarez, nor Tregian make any sounds from beneath their stone covers, and only periodically do musicians come to play the beautifully painted organ hung from the interior balcony. This is a pity since the church has wonderful acoustics, and in fact was specifically designed according to standard Jesuit practice as an open hall to give pride of place to preaching. As such it represented a dramatic improvement over the cavernous Romanesque cathedral across the city in the Alfama quarter, or the gothic expanses of either the Carmelites' or Hieronymites' churches where soaring columns and tent-like vaults diffused the human voice. The pulpits at São Roque were frequently filled with gifted sermonists, men whose fame commanded capacity crowds and whose oratorical style won them multiple invitations to preach each Lent at cities around Portugal. Foremost among the voices heard from above the crowds at the Society's church was António Vieira, the most talented Portuguese-language author of the seventeenth century and a preacher unmatched in his day. In the present silence of the church one can strain to hear the echoes of this Jesuit's voice, filling the space from end to end and commanding attention and reflection. In an age when sermons were considered spectacle, Vieira was a superstar who combined the intellectual subtlety of the most sophisticated contemporary thought with stylistic elegance and dramatic incisiveness. Of all the renowned preachers in seventeenth-century Lisbon, it was he who made "laying a rug in São Roque at dawn" a popular expression for the only sure way to hear the best oratory.

Surprisingly, António Vieira is little known in the Anglophone world despite his colossal importance in its Lusophone counterpart. Born in Lisbon in 1608, he spent most of his early life in Brazil where he joined the Society of Jesus as a novice at the age of fifteen. At the Jesuit college of Salvador da Bahia he was exposed to both the study of the Latin classics and the rigors of missionary work among the Brazilian Indians. It did not take long for his talents as a writer and preacher to be noticed by his superiors, who entrusted him

with producing official correspondence and presenting sermons on major feast days. Sent back to Lisbon in 1641 as one of the city of Bahia's representatives to the restored Portuguese monarchy (restored after sixty years of Castilian domination), Vieira quickly gained renown as a talented orator. After impressing the new king, João IV, he was made the royal preacher and sent on diplomatic missions to England, France, and the Netherlands. Still committed to his earlier formation as a missionary, he returned to Brazil in the 1650s where he devoted himself to organizing the Society's efforts in the Amazon basin. Thoroughly disgusted with how the area's colonists treated the local Indians, he left for Lisbon again where he actively denounced the settlers at court. Back in Europe, he returned to writing, producing a number of messianic texts that spoke of the dawning of a new era of world peace under the aegis of the Portuguese crown. Many of the ideas he used in these texts came from the friendly contacts he had made with the Portuguese Jewish communities in Northern Europe—and for this he ran afoul of the Inquisition. Only a direct appeal to the papacy in the 1670s, based in large part on his fame as a preacher, saved him from a life sentence from the Holy Office or worse. After spending almost a decade in Rome, Vieira returned to Brazil where he served as missions inspector and continued to write until his death in 1697.

On several occasions, António Vieira climbed up to the pulpit at São Roque to deliver sermons designed to shake his listeners from their complacency. For example, on the saint's feast day (August 16) in 1642, he combined the exegesis of that day's reading from the gospel of Luke with a retelling of the legend of that day's patron saint. Following this initial part, Vieira shifted his discourse to a current topic, the defeats that signaled the waning of Spanish power in Europe and the danger that even this decaying power still posed to Portugal. For although Spain had recently strained to control revolt in Catalonia, had lost its hold over the Portuguese empire, had suffered surprising reversals at the hands of the Dutch rebels during more than seventy years of war in the Netherlands, had seen official revenues from the American silver mines dry up and bankruptcy recur, and had been eclipsed militarily (and soon culturally) by France, it remained a major force in Europe. From the pulpit, therefore, Vieira chastised his listeners for collective dismissal of this danger. He decried their unwillingness to pay for the war against Castile and their excessive confidence in their military prowess, calling these faults "two very dangerous plagues" and imploring Saint Roque for aid. Vieira warned of too much self-congratulation in the wake of the

1640 rebellion, recalling that Portugal had shared prosperity under Castilian power for the previous sixty years:

Why, when Castile heads precipitously toward such a heralded ruin, do we see ourselves safe? What misery! Why, when Castile is found in such a state that it can no longer resist its enemies, do we imagine ourselves to have conquered ours? What blindness! [...] I ask you, gentlemen, why God is enraged with Castile and punishes her so rigorously? No doubt it is for her sins, for her iniquities, for her injustices, for her vanity, for her incontinence, etc. We are good witnesses since we were complicit for a time of the same crimes. I ask further, is the God of Castile the same as that of Portugal, or some other? This question has no answer, for if the God is the same, and in Castile punishes sins, how can He reward sins in Portugal? If Castile finds her ruin in her vices, how can we find security in ours?

The remedy that Vieira suggested consisted in a return to prudence, liberality, and renewed virtue, qualities the Spanish oppressors clearly had lacked. Before ending his sermon, he issued a last warning, urging those gathered in São Roque to consider the fate of the Israelites during the Exodus and fear that it might become their own: “God liberated them because they were tormented, and then punished them because they were ungrateful.” Yet by the time that Vieira had made this call, the God of Portugal and Castile had chosen other stars to rise in the East (and the West) to outshine their deeds.

Sounds from the pulpit at São Roque, such as the final intonation of *Laus Deo* ending a dramatic oration, dissipate quickly. With a last shuffle of leather soles on marble, the figure of António Vieira disappears, leaving the visitor back in the beautiful, yet silent, space filled with inanimate figures. To those who cannot read the inscriptions on the walls, nor understand the significance of the artifacts stacked in the chapels, the church is a place without memory of the individuals who passed through it. Yet to those who stood here in centuries past, São Roque brimmed with global significance. It was here that King Philip II, whose domains stretched from Manila to Madrid and from Peru to Portugal, had passed to observe the construction of the new church during his stay in Lisbon in the 1580s, arranging afterwards for the purchase and shipment of its massive roof beams from the forests of Prussia. It was for this community that António Andrade longed as he became the first European to venture up to the highlands of Tibet in the 1620s. It was to the priests of this residence that Pedro Dias dispatched his *Art of the Angolan Language* for pub-

lication in the 1690s. It was in this church that King João V decided to install the extremely ornate chapel of St. John the Baptist, commissioned from the most talented Italian artists in the 1740s and paid for with part of the royal share of Brazilian diamonds and gold. And it was to this building that the Marquis of Pombal sent royal troops in 1759 to enforce the suppression of the Society of Jesus in Portugal and its empire, beginning the series of extinctions of the order in European nations that would culminate in the final disbanding of the "Old Company" by Pope Clement XIV in 1773.

The figures mentioned above constitute a select group whose personal paths took them all over the globe, but who shared the common experience of having been present at São Roque. In this way, they suggest a historical pedigree for the fashionable term "globalization" when defined as the interconnectedness of peoples throughout the world. The movements of the individuals mentioned above created new links between the largely parallel histories of many of the world's peoples. The threads of their own personal histories therefore cut through those of others much in the same way Broadway cuts across the rigid parallels of the Manhattan city grid. Their paths, converging in São Roque, reveal the church as one of the first physical spaces in human history where those passing through could behold an image of a single world. In this way, these men possessed the uniquely modern capacity to think on a global scale. Beyond merely conceiving of a vast world as many of their predecessors had done, they envisioned the earth as a space proportionate to the ambitions of their order. Their universal Christian ideals—similar to our modern concerns of individual liberty, democracy, or free trade—impelled them to move throughout the world. And their common bond of membership in the Society of Jesus, one of the largest Catholic religious orders then as now, provided them with an institutional legacy molded by the worldwide travels of their brethren. As such, they represent an identifiable group of the early modern precursors of those people today whose personal combinations of travel and education permit them to understand the sheer scope of global interconnectedness.

The presences found in the church of São Roque were not, however, the only people to have possessed this scope of vision. While other "worldly" individuals since antiquity have at times left their marks on the historical record, their numbers only begin to expand in the early modern period. Besides the Portuguese Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one could sketch the history of Dutch merchants of the United East India

Company, the Catholic prelates of the Roman curia, the South Asian nobles gathered at Akbar's court, or the English adventurers led by Walter Raleigh in a similar fashion. By substituting an Amsterdam council chamber, the Piazza Navona, an audience chamber in Agra, or the Tower of London for São Roque, one can find other tangles in the strands of world history. Still further spaces emerge as useful starting points for such analyses when one scans the early modern globe for points of interaction: the wharves of Cartagena de las Indias on the Spanish *Tierra Firme*, the warehouses on the banks of the Pearl River in Canton, the pilgrims' hostels surrounding the central sanctuary at Mecca. Like the space enclosed by the walls of São Roque, these places were where the paths of diverse groups of people crossed for a variety of reasons—political, religious, or economic—and where the lingering presence of their passage was felt by others.

Although it is not a towering presence on the Lisbon skyline today, the church of São Roque is a potent reminder for us to think in historical terms about our present global awareness. The church's history challenges us to try to understand the breadth of vision of those who passed through it, either as missionaries, ambassadors, martyrs, or preachers. The vision of these individuals, so similar to our own in its scope but so different in its origins, was created through movements, again reminiscent of our global wanderings yet unlike in their purpose, and through the convergence of ideas. In this way, the figures at São Roque foreshadowed today's global citizens whose restless intellects produce the types of intercultural encounters that we prize so highly. This does not mean that those men and women whose lives did not intersect with others around the globe do not constitute equally important subjects for historical inquiry, or that their pasts do not tell us even more about today. Rather, the presences in the Lisbon church remind us that our form of modernity is much older than we think and that our novel thoughts on global interactions also have a history.

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