

A case of empire envy? German Jesuits meet an Asian mystic in Spanish America*

Ulrike Strasser

Department of History, 200 Murray Krieger Hall, University of California, Irvine,
CA 92697-3275, USA
E-mail: strasser@uci.edu

Abstract

This essay deals with the hagiographic afterlife of Catarina de San Juan, the seventeenth-century slave from Asia who became a renowned mystic in colonial Mexico, in writings by German Jesuits, notably Joseph Stöcklein's popular Welt-Bott. Why and how was Catarina de San Juan's story told for a German-speaking audience in Central Europe? The specific German appropriations of her vita suggest that missionary writings could serve as a transmission belt for 'colonial fantasies', linking the early modern period when the Holy Roman Empire did not have colonies to the modern period when the German Nation acquired colonial holdings in the Pacific.

Introduction

In 1688, the populace of Puebla in colonial Mexico mourned the death of an unusual woman in their midst, a global figure turned beloved local saint. Born in Asia in 1608, captured by pirates and sold as a slave in the Philippines, Catarina de San Juan had journeyed to New Spain on a galleon. As a nonwhite lower-class laywoman, she was a rather unlikely candidate for sanctity. Yet over time Catarina achieved a reputation of holiness that rivaled that of her white and wealthy counterparts behind convent walls.

Catarina's steep rise to fame was due in no small part to Puebla's Jesuits. One of them, Alonso Ramos, Catarina's confessor in her old age, wrote a prolix hagiography of the unusual mystic, granting her a type of written attention otherwise reserved for persons of much higher social and ethnic standing. The first volume of his *vita* of Catarina saw the light of day in 1689, and two more volumes were published in 1690 and 1693, with the promise of yet another volume in the making. But Ramos turned out to be a hapless promoter in the end. By 1692 the Spanish Inquisition issued a decree banning the work. In 1696, the Mexican Holy Office followed suit and stipulated that no-one own or read copies of

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Ramos's multi-volume *vita*. Catarina's reputation lived on amongst the people of Puebla in spite of such interferences from above. Father Ramos, however, spent the rest of his days drowning his disappointments in alcohol.¹

Little did he know that more than three decades later, another Jesuit in a place geographically and culturally far away from Catarina's Puebla would once again put her story into print. In 1721, the Bavarian-born Jesuit Joseph Stöcklein, who had relocated to Graz, launched the first German publication of its kind: a collection of accounts from Jesuit missions around the world, many of them written by German members of the Society of Jesus, to be disseminated in instalments. This comprehensive and serial approach earned the *Neue Welt-Bott* (New World Messenger) the distinction as the 'first German missionary journal'.²

When he compiled his first edition, Stöcklein decided that a letter from 1688 was worthy of inclusion. Written by another Jesuit from the German Empire, Adam Kaller, on his travels through New Spain at the time of Catarina's funeral, this missive contained a brief account of the life, visions and miraculous deeds of Catarina de San Juan. Thus knowledge of the woman from Asia who became a mystic in colonial Mexico reached a German-speaking audience in central Europe more than three decades after her death. What was it about this woman that persuaded Keller to commit her story to paper in 1688? Why did Stöcklein resolve to print it in 1721? To pose the question another way: What stakes might the two German Jesuits and their readers have had in a nonwhite female saint who had come from Asia to Spanish America?³

This essay seeks answers to these questions in the broader context of Kaller's and Stöcklein's retelling of Catarina's life. More specifically, it suggests that their investment in the story of a foreign female figure had much to do with the Holy Roman Empire's lack of colonies and the importance of missionary work as a site for imaginary colonialism. Edward Said famously (and not without self-reproach) excluded German writings from in-depth analysis in his study of *Orientalism* because the German Empire did not have the same geopolitical presence in the Orient as the British or French; hence German Orientalism could

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- 1 Kathleen Myers, 'Testimony for canonization or proof of blasphemy: the new Spanish Inquisition and the hagiographic biography of Catarina de San Juna', in Mary E. Giles, ed., *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 270–96; Michelle Molina, 'True lies: Athanasius Kircher's *China illustrata* and the life story of a Mexican mystic', in Paula Findlen, ed., *Athanasius Kircher: the last man who knew everything*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 365–82, and Molina, 'Visions of God, visions of empire: Jesuit spirituality and colonial governmentality in New Spain', 1571–1767, PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2004, especially chapter 6 'Visions of empire', pp. 242–74.
 - 2 Joseph Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief, Schrifften und Reis-beschreibungen, welchen von denen Missionariis der Gesellschaft Jesu aus beyden Indien, und andern über Meer gelegenen Ländern seit An. 1642 biss auf das Jahr 1726 in Europa angelangt seynd. Erster Bund oder die 8. Erste Teil*, Augsburg und Grätz: Verlag Philips, Martins und Joh. Veith seel. Erben, 1726; Anton Huonder, 'Joseph Stöckleins "Neuer Welt-Bott" ein Vorläufer der "Katholischen Missionen" im 18. Jahrhundert', *Die katholischen Missionen*, 33, 1904/05.
 - 3 'German Jesuit' while used frequently in the sources for purposes of identification of self and other remains a slippery term in the early modern period. Its meaning covers the whole spectrum from belonging to the Holy Roman Empire to speaking German or being a member of the German Jesuit Assistancy. Thus it is resonant with nationalist sentiment yet irreducible to proto-nationalism. For a critical as well as pragmatic approach see Bernd Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa im kolonialen Mexiko. Eine Bio-Bibliographie*, München: Oldenbourg, 1995, pp. 26–33.

never join forces with a 'sustained *national* interest in the Orient'.⁴ Susan Zantop, by contrast, argued that the very absence of colonies made writing about places afar a politically potent undertaking in the German context, where it gave rise to an especially vivid colonial fantasy life that culminated in the acquisition of actual colonies in the 1880s.⁵ To make her case, she traced patterns of 'German Occidentalism' in fictional and secular texts of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Todd Kontje has recently made similar claims in his study of German Orientalism in literature from the Middle Ages onward.⁶

This essay proposes that a comparable dynamic of elaborating colonial fantasies was operative in early modern German religious writings and deserves more systematic study. The Jesuit order's truly global evangelization drive, which allowed Jesuits from German lands to enter areas in which very few of their countrymen ever set foot, makes Jesuit writings a particularly rich body of sources.⁷ As they ventured into the colonies of other European powers, Jesuits from the Holy Roman Empire accorded those who sponsored them and/or consumed their reports 'back home' a vicarious colonial experience. Against this backdrop, colourful life histories like Catarina de San Juan's could provide a potent symbolic means for fostering attachments to places afar.

This mechanism played out differently in the case of the two Jesuits at the centre of our story, reflective both of their distinct historical moments and the role of each man in the Jesuit enterprise. Kaller wrote his *vita* of Catarina during the latter part of the seventeenth century after the Spanish crown had finally begun to lift restrictions on the access of missionaries from the Holy Roman Empire to Spanish colonial holdings. One among very few German Jesuits to venture abroad, Kaller deployed Catarina's story to negotiate the encounter with the doubly unfamiliar terrain of the 'New World' under Spanish rule, as well as the likely prospect of his martyrdom in the 'two Indies'. In adaptation of Natalie Davis's phrase, one might say that he was 'a man on the margins'.⁸

Stöcklein never left Europe, but he viewed the *Welt-Bott* as his special contribution to the global evangelization drive and a window onto the world for fellow Germans. In the early eighteenth century, the number of German Jesuits abroad had indeed grown significantly, and so had the interest of the broader German public in their exploits. Stöcklein published Kaller's *vita* of Catarina because the life history of the Asian-born woman in the Americas fitted very well with his larger project of writing Germans into a narrative of Christian expansion across the globe. More important still, Catarina's story incidentally underwrote the presence of Germans on the Marianas. This set of islands in the distant Pacific enjoyed a special place not only in Stöcklein's imagination but also in the imagination of the Austrian Habsburgs, the ruling house of the Holy Roman Empire and principal sponsors of Jesuit missions overseas.

4 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 16–19; quote p. 19.

5 See Susanne Zantop, *Colonial fantasies: conquest, family, and nation in precolonial Germany, 1770–1870*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 7–10.

6 Todd Kontje, *German orientalisms*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004, pp. 1–14.

7 On the Jesuit missions as 'a single world-spanning unity' see Luke Clossey, 'Distant souls: global religion and the Jesuit missions of Germany, Mexico and China, 1595–1705', PhD thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 2004.

8 Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the margins: three seventeenth-century lives*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Mapping the unknown, finding the familiar: Adam Kaller's Catarina de San Juan

Even in the notoriously formulaic genre of the female saint's life written by a male clergy, local colour and individual lives leave their indelible traces. These texts have much to reveal not only about religious women but about the religious men who wrote their stories.⁹ To be sure, Adam Kaller's *vita* of Catarina de San Juan bears the imprint of his own life history, in particular his outsider status in the Spanish Empire and his missionary journey towards potential martyrdom in Asia.

Adam Kaller had spent all his life in the lands of the Austrian Habsburg monarchy. Born in Eger in 1657, he attended the local Jesuit school before he resolved to join the Society. In 1674 and 1675 he completed his novitiate in Brünn and then went on to study philosophy in Olmütz for three years. After a brief teaching stint in Glatz, Kaller moved to Prague in 1684 and studied theology there until he was sent to 'the Indies' in the spring of 1687. He headed for Cadiz and together with other missionaries from German lands boarded a ship for the long and perilous journey to Vera Cruz. From there the group journeyed onward on the back of mules into the Mexican highlands towards Mexico City. A part of the group, Kaller included, was to go on to the Philippines and Marianas, but had to await the annual departure of the fleet from Acapulco to Manila.¹⁰

At the time of his travels, Kaller was one among very few German Jesuits abroad even as their numbers were growing. German involvement in the Jesuit missions had come very slowly, not for lack of interest among Germans but rather on account of formidable inner and outer obstacles to their participation in evangelization abroad. Within Germany, the religious conflicts and confessional divisions following the Reformation tied down the energies of the German Society of Jesus until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Some German Jesuits themselves wondered about the wisdom of leaving their country behind for the overseas missions. When the first four Germans departed for 'the Indies' from Ingolstadt in 1616, their rector, Jakob Rem, objected: 'Why do they to go to faraway lands? The time is nearing when we in Germany will have our own India for which the number of workers that are now in our province will not suffice.'¹¹

On the colonial stage, the Spanish and Portuguese crown put the brakes on the admission of foreign missionaries in the territories over which they claimed political control, or where they hoped to extend their influence through evangelization.¹² Between 1600 and 1620 a mere eleven Germans were admitted to the missions in 'the Indies'. Another twenty

9 Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related lives: confessors and their female penitents, 1450–1750*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

10 Rudolf Grulich, *Der Beitrag der böhmischen Länder zur Weltmission des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Königstein, 1981, p. 95; Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, p. 192.

11 Anton Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1899, pp. 11–14; quote p. 14.

12 Bernard Duhr, *Deutsche Auslandssehnsucht im 18. Jahrhundert: Aus der überseeischen Missionsarbeit deutscher Jesuiten*, Stuttgart: Ausland und Heimatverlags-Aktiengesellschaft, 1928; Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, pp. 34–6.

followed between 1620 and 1670, bringing the total for the period from 1600 to 1670 to thirty-one German Jesuits in ‘the Indies’.¹³

By the time Kaller embarked upon his journey, the Spanish crown had pushed open the door to greater involvement of Germans, and northern Mexico slowly turned into a stomping ground for German Jesuits.¹⁴ Kaller’s journey then coincided with a moment of possibility when Germans began to claim their place in the global evangelization drive but were also just beginning to write their participation into the narratives of the conversion of ‘the Indies’ that were circulating in seventeenth-century Europe in growing numbers. While waiting for his boat to Manila, Kaller took the time to write down his own story of a pagan convert in a letter he sent to another Jesuit and former fellow student in Prague on 8 March 1688. As he put it, Catarina’s life was ‘a story surely worthy of being put in writing for posterity’.¹⁵

In all likelihood, Kaller knew of Ramos’s more ambitious hagiographic undertaking. The two men moved in the same clerical circles, and they could easily have met in 1688 when both spent time at the Jesuit colleges in Puebla and Mexico City. Indeed, Kaller’s short account parallels Alonso Ramos’s verbose tale in very broad outline. It is possible that Kaller had seen the Spaniard’s text or had spoken to him about Catarina, or that both men based their narratives on the hagiographic sermon that the Jesuit Francisco de Aguilera had delivered at Catarina’s funeral.¹⁶

But even if Kaller drew on Ramos as a source and inspiration, he rendered Catarina’s life story in a distinct idiom reflective of his own situation and cultural background. At the time of writing, Kaller, unlike Ramos, negotiated a doubly unknown world: the culture of the Americas under another European power’s system of colonial rule. The culture of the colonizers, and not just the colonized, represented a *terra incognita* he had to learn to master. Among the first things he discusses in his letter are the difficulties that Spaniards put in the way of foreign missionaries, a distrust he was not alone in noticing.¹⁷ In this instance, his group of German-speaking missionaries initially had to suffer a bit because the Spaniards refused to speak Latin with them. Only after the German speakers improved their Spanish to the point of being able to hear confessions were they treated well, virtually like peers. Aware of the imperial usages of language, Kaller commented how ‘the Spanish in the two Indies, like the ancient Romans, insist that their language together with their authority be perpetuated throughout the world’.¹⁸ He understood that he was dealing

13 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, p. 14; Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, pp. 37–8.

14 Charles G. Herbermann, ‘Der Neue Welt-Bott: Introduction’, *Historical Records and Studies*, 8, 1915, pp. 157–67.

15 Printed in Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Briefe*, ff. 72–5. I am extremely grateful to one of the readers for providing me with a photocopy of the original Latin letter, which can be found in Státní Ústřední Archiv v Praze (henceforth cited SUA), Jesuitica, Kall 6, ff. 113–14.

16 On the funerary sermon as source for Ramos, see Myers, ‘Testimony for canonization’, p. 276. For a more detailed juxtaposition of Ramos’s and Kaller’s accounts, see Michelle Molina and Ulrike Strasser, ‘The global currency of female sanctity: a seventeenth-century Mexican mystic and her Jesuit biographers from the Spanish and German Empires’, in Danna Kostroum and Lisa Vollendorf, eds., *Women, religion and transatlantic world* (in preparation).

17 Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, pp. 87–92.

18 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Briefe*, f. 73. SUA, Jesuitica, Kall 6, f. 114.

with an imperial power in some ways as far removed from his home as that of ancient Rome.

Kaller also struggled with questions of cultural classification. A recurring theme in his *vita* of Catarina is that of appearance and recognition, which Kaller uses to map his struggles with perceiving and classifying an unknown world onto her and her story. The account is sprinkled with the vocabulary of seeing and perceiving. The act of seeing occurs in dreams, apparitions, and visions. It happens on the level of human interaction where Catarina's sanctity at times remains hidden and invisible, at others becomes revealed and obvious. More crucially still, what had Kaller's mind turning was the question of Catarina's descent, skin colour and place in the colonial Empire he had just entered. This stands in sharp contrast to Ramos, who was highly attuned to colonial hierarchies to the point where he anticipated and tried to fend off any questions that his readership might have had about Catarina's ethno-social status in his writing of her story. Not so Kaller. He wrote to understand rather than explain.

How does an enslaved woman from pagan Asia become a Christian saint? To answer this (implicit) question satisfactorily, Kaller's account of Catarina's early life in the East and her travels to New Spain has her pass through several sets of quasi-parental figures who moved her further and further into the orbit of the European Christianity he knew: first, noble-yet-impooverished birth parents in Cochinchina; second, pirates who kidnap her on account of her noble looks and bring her to the Philippines; third, Jesuit fathers who baptize her in the Philippines and bring her into the Christian fold; and finally, a Portuguese man who purchases her on the local slave market to take her to New Spain 'so that she be raised there not as a slave but like a daughter of his own flesh'. The fictional rebirthing thus culminates in an acquisition of European descent as Kaller re-interprets her enslavement by a European into racial and social upward mobility. The real nature of the relationship between the European man and the Asian woman, however, shines through the interstices of Kaller's text. The following sentence relates the fate of Catarina's fictive adoptive father upon arriving in New Spain and gives away her true status: 'the unfathomable foresight of God soon called her *master* and his wife from this world (...) [and] she found herself forced to be a *servant to another woman*'.¹⁹

Catarina's dark appearance presented another puzzle for Kaller. It marked her as a person of low status and object of colonial domination in New Spain but made her an opaque person for the Central European who had little knowledge of racialized colonial hierarchies. How to explain the dark face of the holy woman? 'When she noticed in her youth that her beautiful appearance endangered her chastity, she received through prayers an ugly, wrinkled, and brown visage from God.'²⁰ Kaller thus interpreted Catarina's appearance as God's ultimate safeguard against sexual impurity – a second hymen that sealed her body from the desires of others. This metaphysical explanation turned upside down the social logic of racialized colonial hierarchies in which women of colour as slaves and servants were most vulnerable to sexual assault and exploitation. Perhaps the browning-miracle resonated with Kaller because of the famous European precedent of Catherine of Siena, whose

19 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Briefe*, f. 74. SUA, Jesuitica, Kall 6, f. 114.

20 *Ibid.*

pockmarked face allegedly spared her from unwanted courtship. Did God extend the salutary disfigurement to the nonwhite Catarina by adding colour to the scars? Certainly, this could be one way of translating the culturally opaque into familiar categories of recognition.²¹

A similar epistemological transposition into a Central European register occurred with respect to Catarina's racial classification in New Spain. The text continues: 'on account of this she was thereafter known as *mulata*' or 'Catherine the Mule' (as Stöcklein later added for his German readership). Kaller explained that this was the local nomenclature given to those who just like mules had a dual pedigree, white as well as black (Stöcklein translated the original *nigro* as 'brown').²² So here we have Kaller trying to make sense of Spanish colonial society with his knowledge of Latin. Perhaps as a nonwhite outsider, the Asian Catarina was indeed misread as partially black in colonial Puebla. Kaller apparently associated the term *mulatto* with *mula*, the Latin word for the female mule, a term which resonated with European assumptions of the animal nature of indigenous people (and a translation that still worked for the Latinist Stöcklein in the eighteenth century). Simultaneously, Kaller's interpretation of 'mulatto' again enabled him to claim some European ancestry for his Catarina. It is noteworthy that Ramos never referred to Catarina as 'mulata'. African ancestry would have made it all the more difficult for Ramos to make an argument for Catarina's noble ancestry. Did Kaller's use of the term reflect the 'street' view of Catarina, or does it reflect his own confusion about colonial *casta* categories, which arguably were confused to begin with? Kaller's narrative arc of Europeanizing the dark-skinned heroine fittingly culminates in the description of her death. Rather than saintly odor, Catarina's dead body emitted a luminous whiteness. Kaller recounts how 'the brown color of her entire body turned to white while simultaneously her beautiful appearance was restored'.²³ Arguably one glimpses in this bleaching miracle a fantasy here of the 'whitening' powers of Jesuit missionary work that can turn any savage into an European-like Christian.

A second leitmotif distinguishes Kaller's narrative. While the Spaniard Ramos had come to New Spain in order to stay, the German Kaller used the Americas only as a springboard to reach his final destination: the Mariana Islands, known as the most perilous site of Jesuit missionary work. Just three years before Kaller set out on his own journey, a group of Central European Jesuits, including a man named Augustinus Strobach, had been brutally murdered on the islands during an uprising of its inhabitants.

Kaller's letter about Catarina alluded to the fate of these men repeatedly, starting with the very first paragraph in which he remarked that there were all of five lone Jesuits on the Marianas after the killings.²⁴ Their martyrdom could not help but bring to mind his own potential death for the faith, especially since Strobach could have been a powerful figure of identification for Kaller. Eight years older than Kaller, Strobach came from the same Jesuit province of Bohemia and had been a student in Olmütz like Kaller. In 1682

21 On the issue of cultural opaqueness and the inevitability of mis-translating into the familiar, see Anthony Pagden, *European encounters with the New World*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

22 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, f. 74. SUA, Jesuitica, Kall 6, f. 114.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, f. 73. SUA, Jesuitica, Kall 6, f. 114.

Strobach travelled to the Philippines and the Marianas on essentially the same route that Kaller would take – via New Spain to Manila.²⁵

To be sure, the prospect of martyrdom drew men like Strobach and Kaller into the overseas missions in the first place, and the Society of Jesus, more than other religious orders, commemorated and celebrated its martyrs.²⁶ Facing the reality of martyrdom was a different matter, though. The overseas journeys themselves were perilous and frightening, not in the least because they threatened to cut short any hopes for a more glorified death. Between 1686 and 1727, at least 113 Jesuits died in shipwrecks, and Jesuit letters contain many a tale of hardship and danger on the ocean journey.²⁷ Those who survived the tumultuous seas, pirate attacks, hunger and disease on board faced an uncertain future that was bound to raise ambivalent feelings. Martyrdom was what they wished for but it often also spelled the end of a missionary presence in a given locale; it represented a setback on another level and conflicted with a contradictory impulse – the pronounced sense of responsibility for preserving one's life for the missions that also characterized the order.²⁸ Moreover, even some of the most devout Jesuits were no strangers to fear when the time of death came and might find themselves longing for a quick death.²⁹

Kaller's stay in New Spain marked a liminal time in his life when conflicting feelings could easily arise. He had survived the first half of his dangerous journey but was now waiting to travel to an even more dangerous place. Writing Catarina's story helped him grapple with his potential fate in the East from whence she had come and where others from his homeland had lost their lives. Kaller's Catarina is cast as a protective patroness of travelling missionaries and a visionary witness to acts of redemption. Tellingly, her missions are connected to places Kaller either came from or was about to travel to. Since he was on his way from New Spain to the Mariana Islands via the Philippines, Kaller was actually retracing a good part of Catarina's journey in reverse. But in Kaller's version, unlike Ramos's, Catarina, at least in her visions, reaches Central European regions. In 1664, before the news could reach Puebla, she 'announced and described in all its circumstances the battle at St. Gotthard during which the Turks were defeated by the [Austrian] Imperial [forces]'. While Kaller, the Jesuit, was confronting the prospect of dying at the hands of infidels in the pagan Indies, Kaller, the author, narrated how an infidel-turned-convert watched a major Christian victory of his imperial overlords in the heart of Europe.³⁰ The narrative reversal of Kaller's situation in time and space registers the psychological difficulties of his situation.

25 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, pp. 33–41.

26 Peter Burschel, *Sterben und Unsterblichkeit. Zur Kultur des Martyriums in der frühen Neuzeit*, Munich: Oldenbourg, 2004, especially pp. 229–45, pp. 263–88.

27 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, pp. 38–9.

28 Ines G. Zupanov, *Missionary Tropics: the Catholic frontier in India (16th–17th centuries)*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005, chapter 4 'The art of dying in the Tropics', pp. 147–71.

29 For example, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's famous account of the early history of the Paraguay missions relates how Father Cristobal de Mendoza, whom he calls a 'dauntless martyr', expressed his desire 'for a short, quick martyrdom so that he would not have to stare death in the face for long'. *The spiritual conquest: accomplished by the religious of the Society of Jesus in the provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay, and Tape written by Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (1639)*, trans. C. J. McNaspy S.J., St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1993, p. 173.

30 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Briefe*, f. 74. SUA, Jesuitica, Kall 6, f. 114.

Kaller's Catarina also journeyed with his fleet across the perilous ocean. 'Before they knew anything in Puebla of the arrival of our fleet on which we came she told that she had been present to the same (fleet) from Puerto Rico to Vera Cruz.' Kaller was convinced that Catarina's protective presence thwarted the efforts of 'devilish spirits that would otherwise have drowned them in the sea'. But the laywoman was in illustrious company on this rescue mission for 'Saints Ignatius and Franciscus Xavier (...) accompanied the same (fleet)'.³¹ This unusual troika of European male saints and a nonwhite holy laywoman offer an ideal representation of the kind of universal patchwork family that Jesuits strove to establish through their global missionary work. On this imaginary level, differences of race, class and gender are resolved in the congenial collaboration to save Kaller's fleet and secure the generational continuity of this global Christian family, as well as the safety of those working for this family.

Not surprisingly, Catarina's visionary powers extend to the Mariana Islands as well. Once she reportedly saw the Virgin of Guadalupe, herself a powerful female symbol of the sanctity of the Americas, 'fly across [the islands] and shield [them] against imminent demise'. More poignantly still, Kaller's Catarina has an encounter with the Marianas' martyrs. It occurs in Puebla, through which Augustinus Strobach and his companions, like Kaller himself, had travelled on their journey to the Pacific. An otherwise virtually blind Catarina discovers the group during a celebration of the Eucharist in the local cathedral. She 'saw nothing else except Christ present in the holy sacrament among various groups of people but nonetheless she recognized the face of each one of our missionaries and described them'.³² The vision thus blends the successful Christianization of the foreign woman who is completely focused on Christ – blind to everything else – with her appreciative recognition of the European men who sacrificed their lives to bring people like her to Christ. With the Bohemian Strobach as his proxy, Kaller was virtually foreseeing his own potential martyrdom through Catarina's eyes and envisioning its redemptive meaning.

Kaller, when all's said and done, indeed spent some time evangelizing on the Mariana Islands but he did not lose his life there. In 1792, he died peacefully in the Philippines where, according to his own account, the Jesuits baptized Catarina.³³ Kaller had committed Catarina's story to memory during a transitional moment in his life when he first entered the alien world of the Spanish overseas empire but had not yet arrived in his final destination. His investment in her story seems rooted in this positionality. For the German Jesuit, Catarina de San Juan was a fantastic – in both senses of the word – figure for integrating the known and the unknown and moving the missionary along his journey to the East. She helped normalize unfamiliar places, and she offered much-needed consolation. Exotic-slave-cum-comforting-Christian, she was as much a part of the 'marvels' of the New World as she was a part of the miracles of God that made the evangelization of unknown worlds a cognitive and psychological possibility in the first place. She was also a global traveller who had traced Kaller's future footsteps from Occident to Orient in reverse; the Orient, her saintly life proved, was not a dreaded destination but already a home to Christians and Christians-in-the-making.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Ibid.*

33 Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, pp. 192–3.

'Traveling the entire world by merely reading': Catarina de San Juan in Joseph Stöcklein's *Welt-Bott*

By the time Kaller's handwritten *vita* of Catarina de San Juan reached a broader German audience, the conditions for German missionary work abroad had changed significantly. Gone were the days when Spain and Portugal slowed German participation in the foreign missions to a mere trickle and applicants outnumbered those admitted to 'the Indies'. The field of global evangelization was wide open to Germans, and the Jesuit leadership found itself dispatching requests for qualified Germans willing to work abroad.³⁴ At the request of the Jesuit General Tamburini, German Jesuits even developed special training programs for those preparing to 'go to the Indies'. In 1722, a seminary was established in the city of Landsberg where German candidates for the missions would spend at least a year preparing for the foreign apostolate.³⁵

In other respects, too, systematization and large-scale promotion of German missionary work was the order of the day in the early eighteenth century. Parishes all over Germany embraced the new practice of the 'Missionskollekte', special church collections on behalf of the world missions and its agents.³⁶ These acts of collective, ritualized giving inevitably tied the minds and emotions of local parish members into the global evangelization enterprise by giving people a stake in its successes and failures, financial needs and spiritual rewards.

The same German global imagination that was in the air also fanned the multi-volume publication project of the Jesuit Joseph Stöcklein who would bring Kaller's *vita* of Catarina de San Juan to the attention of the reading public. In 1721, the first volume of Stöcklein's *Welt-Bott* saw the light of day, containing letters from Jesuits working in the 'two Indies'. Like the popular French collection entitled *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* after which Stöcklein modeled his work, the *Welt-Bott* addressed a broad readership with an attractive mix of ethically uplifting and intellectually interesting materials. Stöcklein indeed presented a selection of these French letters in German translation, but he also offered a whole array of previously unpublished letters from German missionaries in the vernacular. He had requested these letters mainly from the Jesuit provinces of Bohemia, Upper Germany, and Lower Germany.³⁷ The German authors were often the first missionaries to have set foot in a given region of the world.³⁸ Stöcklein also incorporated cartographic materials, such as Eusebius Chino's map of California.³⁹ By 1761, Stöcklein's *Welt-Bott*, a financially profitable undertaking, had appeared in no fewer than thirty-eight parts, filling thousands of printed pages with the global exploits of German Jesuits.⁴⁰

34 Duhr, *Deutsche Auslandssehnsucht*, pp. 10–11.

35 Duhr, *Deutsche Auslandssehnsucht*, pp. 42–5.

36 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, p. 61.

37 Claudia Collani, 'Der Neue Welt-Bott: a preliminary survey', *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, 25, 2003, pp. 16–43; p. 16.

38 Herbermann, 'Der Neue Welt-Bott', p. 160.

39 Herbermann, 'Der Neue Welt-Bott', pp. 161–2.

40 Herbermann reports that the publication made profit but offers no evidence beyond its frequent reprinting, Herbermann, 'Der Neue Welt-Bott', p. 159.

If used appropriately by the ‘benevolent reader’, the text functioned as a means for tying the thoughts and desires of Germans back home into quasi-colonial adventures under the sign of evangelization. It drew on the old monastic tradition of *memoria*, or the remembrance of the dead and their deeds, but nationalized, even globalized it to encompass Germans around the world. Stöcklein dedicated the book to ‘those missionaries of the Society who already jubilate in heaven and those who still fight on earth against hell in all parts of the world’.⁴¹ His dedication concluded with the promise to the missionaries that he and his readers were ready to ‘aid your work through industrious prayer and wish you with a truthful German heart a rich harvest of souls’.⁴² In return, he asked the missionaries to take note of his and his readers’ labour of prayer and keep them present in their own devotion. Stöcklein’s *Welt-Bott* thus was a textual instrument for forging an imaginary global community of German Christians united in prayer and the common goal of conversion.

Stöcklein’s letters came from virtually all parts of the globe.⁴³ Each volume of the *Welt-Bott* was divided in parts (the first volume has eight parts, for instance), and each of the parts was sub-divided into geographic sections. Within sections dealing with a specific region, Stöcklein strove to arrange his letters in chronological order thereby tracing the history of German involvement in the Jesuit overseas missions and making a claim to the historic presence of Germans in different parts of the world. Finally, each part concluded with a list of ‘martyrs’, ‘blood witnesses’ or ‘holy persons’; Stöcklein was always careful to reserve the ultimate judgement of sanctity to the Holy See. He listed the names, the places of origin, and the manner of their often very violent deaths.

These were the heroes German readers were asked to remember, and they were generally men, with very few exceptions, that is, like Catarina de San Juan. Stöcklein recorded the life and death of the holy woman from faraway Puebla in part two of the first volume of his *World-Messenger*. The part concludes with a list of twenty men, all Europeans, who were either beaten to death, decapitated, starved in cages, tortured, or strangled. Then there is Catarina, the only non-European and woman, a ‘noble and miracle-working Indian’ and ‘virgin considered holy by everyone’, as Stöcklein describes her. Whereas Kaller, who faced the reality of colonial hybridity on his travels, felt compelled to sort out the question of Catarina’s descent and ethnicity, Stöcklein, who never ventured outside Europe, had few qualms about putting her into an uncomplicated category. For Kaller, Catarina de San Juan became known as a ‘mulatto’ with a history in Cochinchina and the Philippines. For Stöcklein she remained a generic ‘Indian virgin’. As such, he listed her among the ‘witnesses of Christ who (. . .) whitewashed their garb in the blood of the lamb’ even though Catarina simply ‘fell asleep in a state of holiness’ (*entschlafft heilig*) at the end of her life.⁴⁴

What made Stöcklein include the ‘Indian virgin’ who died peacefully among the German men who had been brutally murdered? Did Stöcklein know that at least one Jesuit *vita* of this woman, Alonso Ramos’s account, was subject to an inquisitional verdict and officially

41 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, vol. 1, part 1, Vorrede.

42 *Ibid.*

43 The letters are from all over the world, but approximately a quarter of them are of Chinese provenance. Collani, ‘Der *Neue Welt-Bott*’, p. 19.

44 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 2, ff. 115–16.

banned? The stunning global information network among Jesuits makes it conceivable that he did know, especially since Ramos's work had notoriety as the only hagiography in colonial Mexico to be approved first and banned afterwards.⁴⁵ But there was also a considerable time lag between the inquisitional verdict and Stöcklein's publication, and the Viennese Jesuits might not have been aware of the troubles around Ramos's *vita* of Catarina.

At any rate, Stöcklein was generally not afraid to exercise a heavy editorial hand in assembling his publication. For instance, he professed to have omitted all information from the China letters that pertained to the famous rites controversy because he deemed it unwise to risk getting his fingers burnt.⁴⁶ He also made it known that letters that were not dated properly or whose provenance was otherwise unclear did not make it into his publication. And neither did those that did not contain 'anything new or unknown'. By his own admission, Stöcklein cut any material, entire letters or sections of letters, that he found repetitious so that the first volume 'became three-quarters tighter' than it might otherwise have been. Instead of thirty-two parts, he revealed, it contained only eight.⁴⁷ But while Stöcklein made cuts to Kaller's letter, he left Kaller's narration of Catarina's life largely intact.⁴⁸ From the editor's perspective too, it was 'a story surely worthy of being put in writing for posterity'.

The reasons behind Catarina de San Juan's appearance in the German *Welt-Bott* are multiple. They have to be sought in Stöcklein's personal experience and his goals in disseminating the letters of fellow German Jesuits in print. They also have to be located in broader German politics, including the politics of publishing, in the first half of the eighteenth-century, and the shifting tastes of German audiences. Last but not least, it is necessary to consider the specific place and function of Catarina's story in the second instalment of the World-Messenger series where this story underwrites assertions of a strong affiliation between German Jesuits and the Mariana Islands, named not coincidentally in honour of the Austrian Habsburg Maria Anna.⁴⁹

To begin with, Catarina de San Juan's life history fitted well with Stöcklein's propagandistic project of touting the accomplishments of the Society of Jesus. Notably, Catarina de San Juan is not the only non-European woman, and not even the only Catarina, to appear in the first volume of the *Welt-Bott*. In part four, Stöcklein presented the first German translation of Pierre Choleneq's 1715 *vita* of Catherine Tekakwitha, the Mohawk holy woman from New France who was a contemporary of Catarina de San Juan.⁵⁰ The only

45 Molina, 'Visions of God, visions of empire', p. 280.

46 General Tamburini also urged Stöcklein to be cautious about such controversial issues related to the China mission but also commended him for countering the negative impact of the Chinese Rites controversy on the reputation of the order. Duhr, *Deutsche Auslandssehnsucht*, p. 46, note 2.

47 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, 3. Absatz, Vorbericht an den Leser. On the Jesuit tradition of strategic uses of letters, see Grant Boswell, 'Letter writing among the Jesuits: Antonio Possevino's advice in the *Bibliotheca Selecta* (1593)', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 66, 2003, pp. 247–62.

48 Stöcklein abbreviated Kaller's discussion of Catarina's funeral but elaborated the introductory passage somewhat to highlight the importance of the story about to be told.

49 Father Sanvitores, 'Memorial to the Queen', July 1667, in Rodrigue Lévesque, ed., *History of Micronesia: a collection of source documents*, vol. 4, *Religious conquest 1638–1670*, Gatineau, Canada: Lévesque Publications, 1995, pp. 341–5.

50 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 4, nr 139. On Catherine Tekakwitha and her Jesuit biographers, see Allan Greer's exhaustive and fascinating account *Mohawk saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

female *vitae* in a publication otherwise devoted to praising male accomplishments, the success stories of the two Catarinas ultimately amplified the praise of men. ‘Natives’ and ‘women’, spiritually disadvantaged and sexually vulnerable, the two Catarinas from the Americas were trophy converts, so to speak. Their life histories reflected particularly favourably on the Society and its global missionary work. They demonstrated the Christian potential of ‘savages’, widely disputed at the time, and the Jesuits’ stellar capability of actualizing this native potential.⁵¹

The women’s life stories also pandered to the evolving tastes of Germany’s reading public. Interest in stories from afar was growing steadily in the early decades of the seventeenth century, to take off full force by the second half and make Germans the most avid readers of travel literature in all of Europe. This surge of curiosity about foreign lands, Zantop has shown, was fuelled by fantasies of participation in colonial adventures of which other nations, Spain, Portugal, England or the Netherlands, were the true protagonists.⁵² One wonders to what extent earlier publications like the *Welt-Bott* laid the cultural groundwork for this later surge. Stöcklein certainly did not hide his intention to tap into his readers’ curiosity as well as their burgeoning sense of national identity.

He deliberately published his collection ‘in our common mother tongue (*in unserer allgemeinen Mutter-Sprach*)’ and not in Latin in order to reach a broader German-speaking public, while also promising his readers to tell tales that ‘have not yet been told by any author in the German language so elaborately’.⁵³

Stöcklein’s *Welt-Bott* was a book for Germans about Germans. He even streamlined the use of German orthography, in a pre-Humboldt effort to advance the uniformity of his mother tongue. Although difference in speech struck him as inevitable, the Jesuit considered existing variations in German orthography indicative of a lack of ‘willingness and harmony’ among Germans, something he attempted to rectify in his editorial work.⁵⁴ Accordingly, his linguistic harmonizing seems symptomatic of a deeper desire for the synchronization of national sentiments.

Textually, such synchronizing happened through the interplay of the local and the global. Stöcklein was only the third author to make use of a new linguistic creation of the eighteenth century, a German term that would acquire much resonance and popularity in subsequent centuries: ‘*Heimweh*’ or ‘longing for home’.⁵⁵ The desire for one’s place of origin, Germany, was ascribed to the missionaries in his text. Readers, so the implication, were fortunate to dwell in the country for whom those heroic men longed and laboured abroad. For those back home, it was not so much ‘*Heimweh*’ but ‘*Fernweh*’, or the ‘longing for places afar’ that came into play. ‘Just like almost everyone thinks that the bread of strangers tastes better’, Stöcklein predicted, so his readers would find reports from foreign lands most

51 See the polemical uses of Catherine Tekakwitha’s biography in contemporary debates among Jesuits, Deists, and Augustinians. Greer, *Mohawk saint*, p. 187. See also Alan Greer, ‘Iroquois virgin: the story of Catherine Tekakwitha in New France and New Spain’, in Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff, eds., *Colonial saints: discovering the holy in the Americas*, New York, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 235–51.

52 Zantop, *Colonial fantasies*, pp. 32–3.

53 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, ‘Vorrede des ersten Theils’.

54 *Ibid.*, 3. Absatz, ‘Vorbericht an den Leser’.

55 Herberman, ‘Der Neue Welt-Bott’, p. 163.

palatable. Moreover, his collection made it possible that ‘a curious reader without taking a step outside could be sitting at home while travelling the entire world by merely reading this type of writing, whereby he can acquire almost complete knowledge of the entire globe with no danger, costs or efforts’. This then was a book for German armchair travellers.⁵⁶

As it happens, a disproportionate number among those imaginary travellers were drawn to locations associated with Catarina de San Juan. Since the failure of the German colony in Venezuela in the sixteenth century, Germany continued to cultivate a fascination with things, places and peoples in the southern part of the Americas. This ‘German Occidentalism’ gained new momentum in the eighteenth century amidst the general surge of interest in travel literature. It made Jesuit writing from colonial Mexico increasingly relevant and riveting reading. Simultaneously, new frontiers of exploration and interest appeared on the horizon with the Pacific Islands, culminating in the circumnavigation of the world by Captain Cook later in the century.⁵⁷ German-reading audiences, while ever more fixated on ‘South America’, now also developed a taste for stories from this part of the world, Catarina’s original stomping ground. Spanning Cochinchina, the Philippines and Puebla, her life story hence allowed Stöcklein to satisfy old and new readers’ appetites in one fell swoop.

Others appetites and aspirations mattered no less, such as Stöcklein’s individual desires and those of his most powerful patrons, the ‘Austrian Habsburg of the German Nation’ as they are called in the *Welt-Bott*. Stöcklein had been an adventurous man himself, and his greatest adventures tied him inextricably to the House of Austria. Born in Bavaria, he came to Vienna, the Habsburg capital, to study at the Jesuit college. He held a position at the Cathedral of St. Stephan for a while but then switched to a more ambitious and more dangerous apostolate on Europe’s battlefields. For the next ten years, Stöcklein served as a military chaplain in the service of the Empire’s leading generals, rallying the troops for the imperial cause. Under Prince Eugene of Savoy’s leadership, he participated in the bloody campaigns against the Turks in central Europe. He also followed the general into battle against the French during the War of Spanish Succession, which ultimately brought the Spanish Netherlands to Austria. It was only during the last nine years of his life, when he was ill and exhausted, that he retreated to the less taxing environment of the Jesuit college in Graz and started his *Welt-Bott*.⁵⁸

Compiling the stories of German missionaries from the safe confines of his college accorded the ageing Stöcklein a vicarious experience of adventure abroad and even of martyrdom. In the same prologue to the first volume in which he recommended to his readers the advantages of armchair travel, Stöcklein expressed that he was after armchair martyrdom: ‘How lucky I’d consider myself if I were to die the same death, or rather I should say depart to such eternal life? It is this desire (for eternal life) that made these

56 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, ‘Allgemeine Vorrede des Verfassers über dieses gantze Buch’.

57 Zantop, *Colonial fantasies*, pp. 31–5.

58 For short biographies of Stöcklein, see Duhr, *Deutsche Auslandssehnsucht*, p. 46, and Collani, ‘Der Neue Welt-Bott’, p. 17. A longer *vita* of Stöcklein can be found in the later editions of his own *Welt-Bott* published after his death. The first editor of this project of memorializing the deeds of German Jesuits was thus himself memorialized. Like the few indigenous women whose *vitae* he had printed, he died peacefully rather than a martyr. See Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 29, nr 572.

brave men travel to India and become a sacrificial victim according to their wish.⁵⁹ The death wish of its editor, it seems, was a decisive factor in the compilation of the *Welt-Bott*.

War, death and martyrdom, prominent themes in Stöcklein's life, resonated powerfully with the story of Catarina, as well as the place and function of this story in the first volume. Two of Catarina's visions involved the affairs of the Austrian Habsburgs and their enemies, the Turks and the French, against whom Stöcklein had preached on the battlefield. In addition to her vision of the defeat of the 'infidel' Turks at St. Gotthard, the holy woman also witnessed a peace accord with Catholic France, two seventeenth-century events that seemed to prefigure the fortuitous outcome of the early eighteenth-century conflicts for which Stöcklein had risked his life. Her visions made the case for a historical pattern of divinely ordained good fortune for the Austrian Habsburgs.

More crucial still, there were the specific deaths with which Catarina de San Juan was connected through her visionary powers: the martyrdom of German Jesuits on the Mariana Islands. Their fate loomed large in Stöcklein's collection. Indeed the very first saints whom Stöcklein commits to German memory are six men 'killed on the Mariana Islands because of hatred of our faith'.⁶⁰ They include Augustinus Strobach from the province of Bohemia, Kaller's home, as well as Carolus Boranga from Vienna where Stöcklein was a resident during his early days as a Jesuit. These are the men whom Catarina supposedly recognized in Puebla and identified individually in the presence of Christ on their journey towards martyrdom.

Stöcklein's commemoration of this event in the *Welt-Bott* worked on multiple levels. Setting a pattern for future installments, part one commenced with an entire section on the Mariana Islands. Most of the letters were either by Boranga and Strobach themselves, or mentioned their work and fate in some fashion. Strobach's letters stand out for their detailed descriptions of topography of the various islands.⁶¹ Alongside this extensive information about the local terrain, Stöcklein placed material about Jesuit missionary work and, of course, the martyrdom of Boranga and Strobach. The section concludes with a *vita* of Boranga that recounts how he and his Jesuit companions were killed.⁶²

Stöcklein returned to the theme of martyrdom on the Mariana Islands one more time when he concluded part one. As he would do in future editions, he listed 'names of those martyrs and blood-witnesses of Christ whose glorious death was discussed in this first part'. It begins with a list of six Jesuits, Boranga and Strobach among them, who were 'strangled on the Mariana Islands because of our faith'.⁶³ Numbered references next to each one of the names direct the readers to specific letters for more details.⁶⁴

Yet another reiteration of the material occurs in part two where Stöcklein prints Kaller's letter. Almost a spiritual echo of the earlier stories, the seer's vision provides divine verification of the preceding materials. Anchored in the metaphysical, the story of Strobach, Boranga and their comrades on the Mariana Islands takes on a kind of hyper-reality through the saintly

59 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, 'Vorrede des ersten Teils'.

60 *Ibid.*

61 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, f. 1ff.

62 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, map ff. 6–7.

63 Stöcklein, *Allerhand so lehr- als geistreiche Brief*, part 1, f. 115.

64 *Ibid.*

witness. Recall that Catarina also had a vision of the Mariana Islands themselves, when she observed the Virgin of Guadalupe soaring across the sea to protect the islands against an unspecified threat of destruction. Thus Catarina functions both as a witness to the dangers of these savage lands and the possibility of Christianization through redemptive suffering.

Stöcklein, the editor who proudly declared that he cut materials that did not contain ‘anything new or unknown’ and reduced the first volume of his *Welt-Bott* by three-quarters, apparently did not mind repetition and liberal cross-referencing when it came to martyrdom on the Mariana Islands. We have already encountered his fixation on martyrdom, but why this fixation on the Mariana Islands as a site?

Just as the Bohemian Strobach was a possible figure of identification for Kaller, the Austrian Boranga who volunteered for the perilous missions on the Mariana Islands might well have been such a figure for Stöcklein. Boranga began his life as a Jesuit in 1656 as a novice in the same Viennese college in which Stöcklein would receive his training in the early eighteenth century. Moreover, Boranga’s remains were shipped to Vienna and buried in the Jesuit church next to the college in 1702.⁶⁵ Object of devotion and constant reminder of martyrdom on the Mariana Islands, Boranga’s relics forged a potent link between Vienna and these Pacific islands, and surely helped forge emotional ties to distant regions among Viennese Jesuits if not the larger public.

But Jesuit investments in Pacific islands also received powerful backing from political quarters. The Austrian Habsburgs were major sponsors of Jesuits abroad, combining support for missionary endeavours with a drive towards economic and political expansion. The House of Austria undertook various efforts to establish a protectorate for German Jesuits in China that would encompass their entire travel route across the Asian continent.⁶⁶ Charles VI (1711–40) entertained this idea at the same time as he worked towards the foundation of an Imperial East Indian Trading Company. Austria’s acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands following the Spanish War of Succession made this a possibility, and in 1722 Charles established this company in Ostende. Prince Eugene, Stöcklein’s former general, was put in charge perhaps as a reward for his contribution to this and other Habsburg victories.⁶⁷ If we are to trust the letters that began to appear in the *Welt-Bott* around the time of its foundation, German missionaries were very enthusiastic about Austria’s East India Company. They proudly took note when they encountered one of its ships with the familiar imperial flag waving above faraway seas, including a stately vessel christened ‘Prince Eugene’ whose very name announced the imperial aspiration of the Habsburgs in the remotest regions.⁶⁸

Naming and claiming possession had accompanied the grab for colonial power since the days of Columbus. Once faraway lands were associated with familiar names, usually those of secular monarchs, they could be altered from a foreign place to an intelligible site and a legitimate domain of power in the European mind.⁶⁹ (Re-)Naming then was a colonial

65 Hausberger, *Jesuiten aus Mitteleuropa*, pp. 130–1.

66 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, p. 47.

67 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, p. 49.

68 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, pp. 49–51.

69 Pagden, *European encounters*, pp. 17–49.

power's non-negotiable prerogative. As minor players on the colonial stage, the Austrian Habsburgs generally had to leave such prerogatives to others; they could name boats but rarely lands.

The Mariana Islands, however, were named in recognition of the pivotal patronage of an Austrian Habsburg: Maria Anna, daughter of Emperor Ferdinand III and widow of Philip IV of Spain. She provided Jesuit missionaries with a regular flow of cash, their own boat as well as military troops for their protection. The house of Austria was thus connected to the colonial Spanish Empire through a female family member, giving the Austrians a stake in the fortunes of these Pacific islands.⁷⁰

In this world of ersatz colonialism by female proxy, a collection like Stöcklein's *Welt-Bott* arguably could play an important role in sustaining attachments. The Habsburgs at least found the publishing venture worthy of support and put out the last volumes of the *Welt-Bott* in their imperial print shop.⁷¹ It seems no coincidence that the first instalment of the *Welt-Bott* commenced with a long section on the Mariana Islands and that an island map was the first image from afar that a reader encountered in the *Welt-Bott*. From the Marianas, subsequent sections of the *Welt-Bott* moved eastward through the Americas and back to Asia to arrive in India at the very end, all the while populating the world with German missionaries. The same act of phantasmal circumnavigation from the Habsburg base in the Pacific repeated itself in other volumes. When it came to the Mariana Islands and the Jesuit missions on this 'Habsburg land', Catarina's *vita* represented a very small but no less crucial piece in a big puzzle of imaginary connections and ownership.

It is intriguing that the imaginary claims supported by the figure of Catarina de San Juan, a seventeenth-century female slave-turned-saint, became a political reality at the end of the nineteenth century. When Spain lost possession of the Marianas after the Spanish-American War, the recently founded German nation took advantage of the opportunity, purchased the Northern parts of the islands and claimed them as a German colony in 1899. The idea of proudly purchasing a set of small islands in the middle of the Pacific arguably would have been much less likely to occur to late nineteenth-century Germans, had it not been an idea that had long been in the making. Powerful fixations and fantasies of colonialism preceded actual colonial acquisitions in a country that was a latecomer to nationhood and did not control colonies in the early modern period. In Zantop's words: 'Imaginary colonialism anticipated actual imperialism, words, actions. In the end, reality just caught up with the imagination.'⁷²

This essay suggests that collections of missionary texts like Stöcklein's *Welt-Bott* played an important role in sparking a colonial fantasy life. It remains to be seen whether and how they ushered in the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'colonial fantasies' analysed by Zantop. Unlike fictional characters, missionaries were both bearers of fantasy and historical actors who could receive material and political support, tying their work more directly back into the Empire's evolving institutional structures. The German Empire may have had no colonizers abroad in the early modern period, but it had many missionaries who joined

70 Huonder, *Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre*, pp. 51–2.

71 Collani, 'Der *Neue Welt-Bott*', p. 19.

72 Zantop, *Colonial fantasies*, p. 9.

other European powers in creating a colonial world in Asia and the Americas. German Jesuits in particular were part of a unique institutional and information network that tied together all parts of the world and fostered a truly global imagination.⁷³ For the German context we have to fully explore how missionary writings functioned as a transmission belt for colonial ideas, linking the world of early modern colonialism when a decentralized German Empire was excluded from the inner circle of colonial powers to that of modern colonialism when a newly unified German nation at last joined the circle of colonial powers. In light of Kaller's and Stöcklein's story, it seems plausible that such an exploration will turn up more remarkable holy women like Catarina de San Juan whose life histories helped generate and sustain investments in places afar.

Ulrike Strasser is Associate Professor of History and Affiliate Faculty in Women's Studies and Religious Studies at the University of California, Irvine.

73 Johannes Meier, ed., '*... usque ad ultimum terrae. Die Jesuiten und die transcontinentale Ausbreitung des Christentums 1540–1772*', Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, pp. 5–9. Clossey, 'Distant souls'.