

“Jesuit Missionary Partnerships: Morisco, Indian, and Filipino Evangelists in the Spanish World,” paper presented for *Early Colonial Missions, Colonial Christian Missions and their Legacies* Conference, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark, April 29, 2015.

Jesuits in the early modern Spanish world described their work of evangelization as a “spiritual conquest” of native souls. In their provincial chronicles, mission histories, devotional histories, and sacred biographies they exalted the men of their religious order as self-sacrificing men willing to die for the sake of the Christian gospel. But if the triumphant rhetoric of their narrative accounts is stripped down, an alternative and perhaps unintentional story of a different kind of missionary emerges. Whether it was the fallen Muslim kingdom of Granada, the northern missions of New Spain, the reductions of Paraguay, or the islands of the Philippines, the Society of Jesus depended on native inhabitants to evangelize and catechize local peoples. Early modern Jesuit chroniclers emphasize the role Moriscos, Indians, and Filipinos played as preachers and teachers of Christian doctrine to their own people and other neighbouring groups. In this paper I analyze textual images of non-European missionaries under Jesuit supervision in their sacred histories, arguing for an expansion of the colonial category of “missionary” in the Spanish world. Generally speaking, only Spaniards and creoles were considered “missionaries” because they were the only ones who were ordained into the priesthood. But many of the tasks that converts on Jesuit missions performed were similar to their own, turning them into carriers of the Christian gospel and hence co-creators in the development of local Christianities. Drawing inspiration from Matthew Restall’s notion of the “myth of the white conquistador,” I believe it is time to question the “myth of the white missionary” by breaking down the traditional binary between European missionary and native convert.