

2 Sessions at RSA (Chicago, 21-23 Mar 24)

Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America, Chicago, IL, Mar 21–23, 2024

ArtHist.net Redaktion

[\[1\]](#) The Environmental Impacts of Early Modern Catholic Missions: A Global Perspective

[\[2\]](#) Cabinet-Thinking

[\[1\]](#) The Environmental Impacts of Early Modern Catholic Missions: A Global Perspective

From: Alysée Le Druillenec

Date: Jul 26, 2023

Deadline: August 10, 2023

Venturing wide and far beyond the familiar European sphere, early modern missionaries frequently used the rhetoric of *Theatrum Mundi* to reflect on their encounters with previously unknown cultures. What has escaped scholars' attention, however, is how these rapidly evolving dramas of evangelization in turn shaped the seemingly timeless backstage setting of Nature. As the missionaries voyaged away and established new religious communities, they not only faced social and cultural challenges raised by the vastly different linguistic, political, and philosophical traditions, but they also had to adapt to unfamiliar geographical, climate, and material conditions as they sought to construct churches or adapt their liturgical rituals, or simply survive in often severe natural conditions.

The *DéfEnCli* project, supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, is planning a round table for the upcoming Renaissance Society of America conference in Chicago (21-23 March 2024) about the environmental impacts of catholic missions. This round table aims to offer a comparative analysis of two areas occupied in the early modern period by the same missionaries and civilizing impulses: the trans-Atlantic and the trans-Pacific. What are the environmental impacts of the missions in these distinct areas? Was there any consistency in the missionaries' discourse and actions on nature between these two areas? What knowledge was created about the natural environment, how was it created and how did it circulate between the peripheries and the centers – such as Rome - and from one ocean to the other?

We are looking to current scholarship that explore these questions through the following topics:

- Usage of food in religious rituals in reaction to local natural resources
- Church construction in adaption to local climate, sunlight, and material conditions
- Survival precautions during uncertain stages of the evangelization
- Dialogue between missionary activities and broader environmental crisis, such as the epidemics and the Little Ice Age
- Knowledge exchanges in the areas of cartography, botany, zoology, and medicine

We invite papers that will present either an analysis of specific environmental impacts in the Atlantic of

Pacific space, or that address the methodological and theoretical issues of writing an environmental history from ecclesiastical sources. Papers should be 15-20 minutes long.

Please email your abstract by August 10, 2023, to Isabel Harvey (harvey.isabel@uqam.ca) Alysée Le Druillenec (Alysee.Le-Druillenec@univ-paris1.fr) and Wenjie Su (wenjies@princeton.edu), with your full name, current affiliation, and email address; a paper title (15-word maximum), and an abstract (150-word maximum).

[2] Cabinet-Thinking

From: Brantly Moore

Date: Jul 27, 2023

Deadline: Aug 7, 2023

In the twelfth century, mystic and theologian Hugh of St. Victor equated the mind to a complex furnishing: "Knowledge is a treasury and your heart is its strongbox...orderly arrangement illuminates the intelligence and secures memory." By 1653, poet and natural philosopher Margaret Cavendish continued to visualize the brain as a cabinet, stating "In Nature's cabinet, the brain, you'll find / Many a toy which doth delight the mind." How do we account for the particular power of the "cabinet" as a multivalent material (and mnemonic) form in the early modern period? And how do tropes of the cabinet extend beyond the physical objects themselves, traveling across text, image, and material culture? How might the function and form of early modern cabinets follow or diverge from medieval predecessors, and what do these changes tell us about changes in epistemology? This panel asks how the cabinet (as metaphor or physical object) reveals insights into natural philosophical inquiries including body-mind dualism, macro/microcosms, taxonomy and ecology, as well as debates around political identity, and material self-fashioning. We also invite papers exploring connections between portable furnishings and European colonialism, extractive environmental practices, enclosure and secrecy, practices of material luxury, and "damnable curiosity." How might these connections illuminate the role of "cabinet-thinking" as an essential yet plastic intellectual and cultural framework in the early modern period?

We invite paper proposals from a variety of disciplines on extant early modern cabinets and caskets, cabinet making and display, the cabinet as a conceptual framework or literary trope, and cabinets as collection or taxonomic tools. Interdisciplinary papers are especially welcome.

Please send proposals (PDF or Word document) to thinkingincabinets@gmail.com. Please include:

- Presenter's first and last name
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Paper abstract (300-word maximum)
- Short CV including terminal degree completion date (past or present) and institutional affiliation

Deadline: August 7

Notification Date: August 14

Co-Organizer: Katharine Landers, Illinois State University, kelande@ilstu.edu

Co-Organizer: Brantly H. Moore, Basel University, bhmoore@live.unc.edu

Reference:

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/39906>>.